

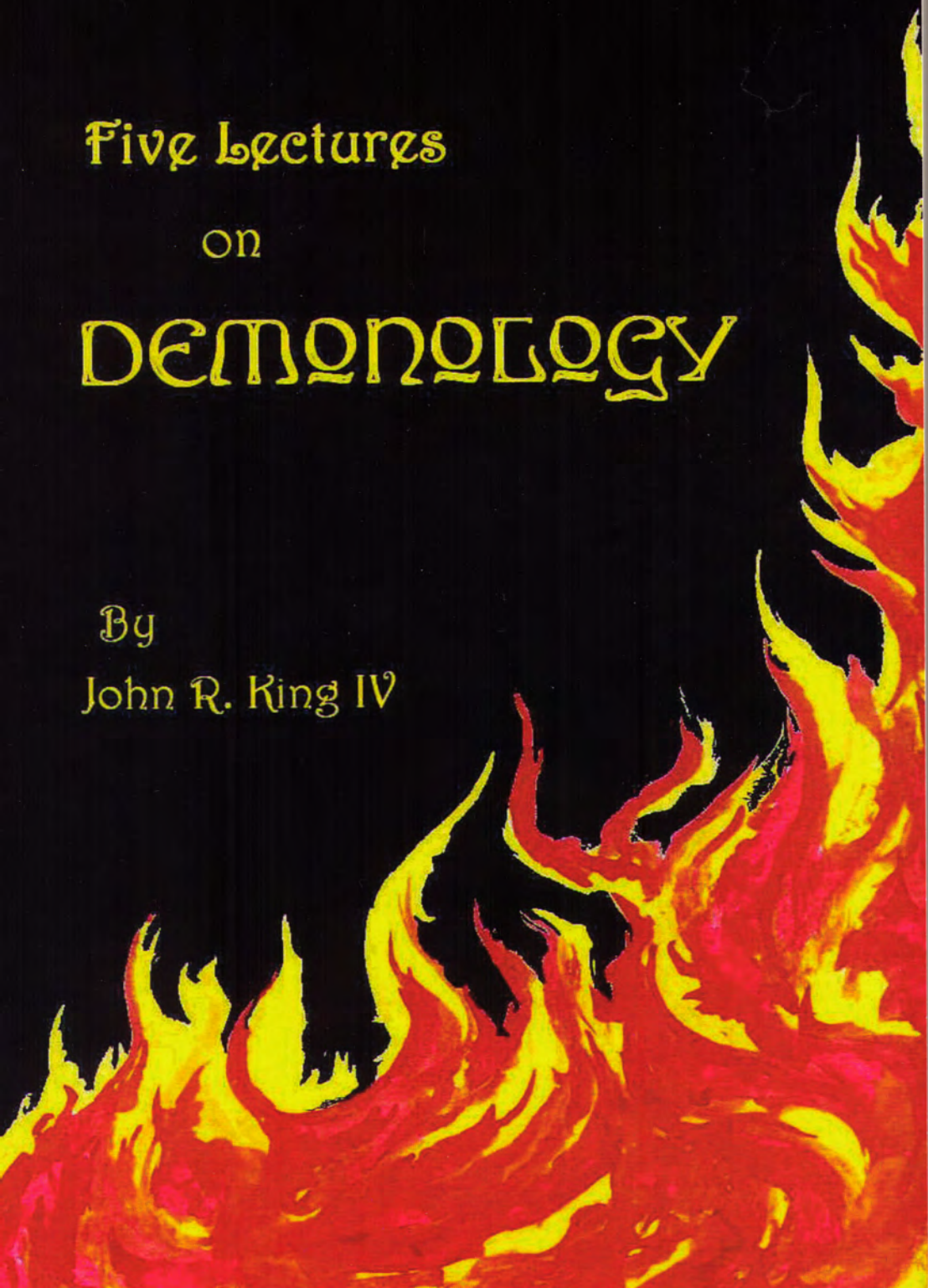
Five Lectures

on

DEMONOLOGY

By

John R. King IV



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Foreword

“A daemonibus docetur, de demonibus docet, et ad daemones ducit.”

- Albertus Magnus

Why in the world would anyone want to study demons?

Indeed it is a peculiar interest; some might say an unwholesome one. Before anything else I would like to make plain two things:

1. This book is not meant to encourage any person to devote his or herself to demons, evil spirits, the devil, or anything else of a similar nature or any sort of antisocial behavior, and:
2. This book is not meant to provide, supplant, or impose upon any sort of religious indoctrination.

Having these things well in mind, those rare and unusual persons who do have a genuine interest in demonology will (hopefully) find this book useful. I have attempted to avoid several difficulties that were encountered by my own studies in this subject.

First and foremost, it is nearly impossible to locate substantial works on demonology that fail to presuppose the spiritual beliefs of the readers. The number of Christian works on the subject of “deliverance” and “spiritual warfare” grows daily, and there are dozens of other sectarian works on the

subject. For those outside the flock, whether from other sects or from other religions entirely, such treatises are unsupportive, discouraging, or irrelevant. I intend hereby to remedy the matter (so far as I am able), to the effect that a perspective on demonology is offered without attachment to any particular religious body.

Another difficulty among the writings of demonologists is the heavy focus on scholarship. There are a large number of very fine volumes of research, each with detailed reference to source materials available for study. I do not intend to add to this number or to create anything of value to the academic community. This book is intended for what may be considered intelligent laity capable of understanding a subject without tiresome references to obscure literature.

I consider myself to have a fairly thorough grasp of this subject, but what I say may at times appear to be a matter of conjecture or personal bias. I concede that such may be the case, as I write this to be informative rather than authoritative. If any reader should desire lectures from a stuffy academic or from a fanatical demoniac zealot, then these things are available cheaply elsewhere.

Obsession with demons is dangerous. When one abandons ordinary enjoyments for the sake of arcane truths, the quality of life dwindles. Take care not to fall prey to such foolishness, and read this work for the sake of understanding or for enjoyment, so that your life continues and grows prosperous.

The Existence of Demons

I propose to demonstrate herein that demons exist, in a way that can be understood and accepted by any reasonable person.

In this age it is very common for the average person to disbelieve in spirits and the supernatural. Charlatans have been exposed, authoritative scientists have resolved most natural mysteries with math and physics, and medicine has investigated most illnesses. The ordinary person requires no mystic guru or sanctimonious pontiff to declare the secrets of nature, as the understanding provided by the current scientific orthodoxy is, for him, sufficient.

There is an overwhelming public outcry against superstition and irrationality. Wherever someone advertises miracles for sale, they are denounced as frauds; and wherever a basic explanation for common pains becomes too complicated, suspicions are immediately raised. This is a tremendous advance from previous ages, and should be applauded despite the fact that so many continue to be seduced by peddlers of nonsense.

There are times, usually during spats of trouble, where religious fervency takes hold. Since the average priest or popular yogi does not profess the ability to perform or provide miracles, the public

view on such figures tends to be mild tolerance. These people are looked upon as marketers of morality, which is acceptable so long as it is one step removed from the supernatural.

Yet among skeptics and materialists, there is disdain for the entire subject of spirituality. For these, faith is replaced by physics, and morality is replaced by law. Due to the popularity of these ideas, spirituality is considered mere fantasy and demonology as backwards Medievalism.

On the contrary, spirituality and its satellite of demonology have been important to humanity for many thousands of years. Despite assumptions that rationality is relatively new and that current scientific studies have somehow elevated mankind above superstition, there have always been those who took a dim view of spirits. The issue has been debated without resolution for millennia, and these meager pages will do little to abate the conflict.

It should be enough to say that the interest of skeptics is laudable, and that there are indeed many people who prey upon the credulous and that these should be stopped or impeded. It should also go without saying that science has brought many great advances in spite of ignorant superstitions. It is unfortunately not enough to say these things, and a rational case must be made for the spirit lest universities become the seat of a new Inquisition.

First understand that the word spirit is used to denote a conscious and immaterial entity which is individual and unique for each person. Of these, immateriality is of chief importance as it precludes

the possibility of proof by current laboratory standards. We will never locate and dissect the soul, as it is not composed of any substance that could be subjected to tools and procedures as we know them.

This is not to say that the spirit must be believed in as a matter of faith. Unfortunately for the skeptics, denial of the existence of the spirit grows more untenable with every major advance in biology. Each new examination of the body, every revelation about the brain, has (as shown below) fortified the conclusion that there must be, somehow, a spirit beyond the flesh.

The body has been demonstrated to be highly complex yet ultimately mechanistic. Our nerves react to changes in polarity, and these are in turn regulated by chemicals. From basic bodily functions to the highest aspirations of the intellect, it is demonstrated time and again that the body is a masterpiece of carbon-based machinery. Every form of activity, barring none, has an observable and demonstrable basis in physical structures. The brain may be mysterious, but scientists are fully confident that everything we think, feel, and know are contained and processed in its millions of cells and their reactions to purely material chemicals.

For many scientists this knowledge is the defeat of spirituality, a final demonstration that people consist of nothing more than matter. Such is not the case. Rather, this knowledge is further indication that people are empowered by a force beyond any material body or any apparatus therein. This force is the spirit.

Every person has the ability to make choices. Granted, these choices are limited by circumstance and they are encouraged or discouraged by bodily signals, but the ability to choose and the making of choices is separate from the directives of the physical body. If it were not so, every action from walking across the floor to composing sheet music would be nothing more than a robotic fulfillment of material demands created within the brain by mindless chemicals. Even the most stupid individual has the sense to realize he is not a robot, compelled in every action beyond the hope of voluntary effort to the contrary. Indeed, a person may suffer a lapse of the will, but not its absence.

The more firmly it is established that the body works according to mechanical principles, the further the individual will, or imperative, appears from such constrictions. The spirit, being immaterial, is not necessarily “in” the body, but it is quite obviously not controlled by it. The simplest random voluntary action demonstrates beyond all reasonable doubt that the organic composition of the body has no power over the individual will, except as a powerful and intimate suggestion.

The entity responsible for the execution of the will, the spirit, is not physical, nor is it to be identified with any natural energy or other observable physical body. The same principle applied to the body works here, where if one is not motivated by purely biological urges, the prompting of weather, sunlight, and subtle energy fluctuations would have even less effect. The spirit is not a part of nature, it is supernatural, and it is the supernatural upon which the study of demonology is founded.

A solid scientific proof of the human soul or spirit is not required in order to hold a reasoned belief in the subject. Unless one believes that human will is a by-product of neurochemistry, it is not unreasonable to believe in the spirit. Such a belief, on its own, does not require acceptance of any particular religious doctrine.

To the majority of people in the world, the idea that people have a spirit is nothing new, shocking, or incredible. To the staunch skeptic, however, this belief is mere nonsense. In order that the study of demons not be relegated to the academic pillory as it has become of late, or considered a subject of purely archaeological interest, it is necessary to make a rational case for the existence of spirits.

It is neither possible nor necessary to make such a case fortified by laboratory demonstration. For those who demand such a thing before making a serious inquiry to demonology, there is little hope. The existence of voluntary action as such is the single most important way in which the subject of the soul enters into demonology, and this is the extent to which one must assert the existence of the spirit in order to fully pursue the subject.

While the soul is popularly conceived as a vaporous entity somehow connected to a divine otherworldly existence, its exact nature or composition is irrelevant to demonology. The activity of the spirit, the exertion of the will, however, is of primary importance. It is the government of the will, not the substance of its origin, which will form the basis of this exposition.

The reader should realize that every thought has its root in the brain. Knowledge of the meaning of these words, the processing of their images into ideas, and the act of considering these ideas are all measurable within the brain. These material effects, and all other parts of thinking, are mechanical efforts executed by a sophisticated human instrument. Behind the thoughts, however, there is a thinker: the spirit.

It is difficult to directly conceive of the spirit as a living entity that is not separate from the individual. The spirit does not have thoughts or feelings, as these are physical artifacts within the material body. It does not act without these things, but through them, and through the brain the spirit obtains its knowledge. The spirit is accustomed to acting upon the promptings of the body, and is bound to perform actions within its capacity. The extent of this interaction, and its possible limitations, is unknown; but it is sufficient to understand that the soul is the true person and not a separate creature.

The supposition of a “true will” or spiritual persona has led many people to erroneously assume that the inner self is somehow different or better than the personality. The two are inseparable, and while choices may be made in error or ineffectively, the action of the spirit through the brain and body is genuine. There is no “real” person dwelling within, possessing superior knowledge and motives, or enjoying some other sort of existence.

The influence of the spirit, as the will, is more than that of a disembodied executive agency. There is a

consciousness of which this spirit partakes, weighing input of information and deciding upon a course of action. Choosing what to think about requires some form of thought, and once made this choice is undeniable when made by the spirit. This quality does not exist in ordinary thoughts, where a person may choose to think about one thing and find that distractions intrude unceasingly. With ordinary thoughts, a person may conceive of himself as capable while such thoughts are only a ruse designed to promote sufficient confidence for effective actions. With the spirit, the decision to act, and to use the proper motivational thoughts to provoke such actions in the body are outside the organic elements of the process. The thoughts of the spirit are absolute.

Since the issue of the will is of importance to demonology, it is worth the emphasis of the point given here. There is a distinction that must be made between the influence of the brain-thinking and that of the “absolute thought” which is an effect of the spirit. Without such a clear distinction, the entire subject of demonic influences can never be adequately grasped.

Unfortunately there is little certainty in making this important distinction. The spirit is elusive and no way exists by which one can hope to pin-down its activity or relate it to any specific function of a person. It is best understood as the agency of choice, but this is not specific to any particular sort of choosing. Whether one makes supposedly important choices, or purely trivial ones, it is not the task of the spirit to differentiate, but only to participate in the act of choosing.

In determining conduct, a person is bound in several ways to circumstances apparently beyond control. The condition and location of the body limit the available options for any sort of activity. Additionally each person carries with him or her many years' worth of memories that can alter the judgment of what is appropriate. Whereas it is popular to conceive of some acts as "spiritual" and others as mundane, such is not the case and the spirit acts equally in either situation. The differentiation between one sort of thing and another is a side-effect of the perspective one has gained from existing at a particular place and time, and of the condition of the mind and body.

The spirit does not have any greater knowledge than that which the body provides. Though it may be in error to declare that the spirit inhabits the body (rather it appears to operate the body as one drives a car), it is restricted to taking its cues from that which the senses and the intellect provide. The intellectual capacity of an individual is purely a mechanical effect of a healthy brain, and its every motive is provided by basic chemical reactions. When one feels the inclination to create something beautiful, or to destroy it, the motivation for such an act is biological in origin, and the spirit is involved only in the executive authorization of the act.

It may be argued that the spirit has no need to learn or grow as knowledge and development are essentially biological reactions. Changes in life strategy that stem from experience relate to the experiences of the body, whether to seek pleasure or to avoid pain. When the intellect has understood

some act as having led to either of these, a causal relationship is established and new strategies are formed. It is not the spirit that grows, but the memory and the inclusion of new options for the arrangement of desires.

Certain types of desire have been overwhelmingly approved or rejected by general consensus. It is, for example, almost universally unacceptable to smash one's own face with a rock for no apparent reason. This option exists almost everywhere and for everyone, yet it has been determined to be detrimental to health and of no value. Consequentially the desire to perform this simple self-abasement does not often appear in any culture.

Most activities have a debatable value. From one perspective, feeding the homeless is a good and noble act, whereas from other perspectives it perpetuates depravity. One person might view a permissive attitude toward child-rearing as a good thing, but to others it is terrible. It is the differences of biological experience that have given rise to these different perspectives. Some have found a particular action to lead toward pain, and others have found it to lead toward pleasure.

A great deal of the categorization of what leads to pain or pleasure has become the subject of religion. Every religion prescribes a set of values and customs to which are attached warnings or words of encouragement. Adherence to philosophies and practices of religion are promoted as being closely tied to rewards and consequences.

When a large number of people agree with a perspective and put it into use, it becomes a cultural norm. Many such beliefs and practices have arisen from religious teachings, but are to be encountered among even non-religious citizens. This in itself is a large subject worthy of investigation, but for the purposes of demonology it is sufficient to recognize that these norms and values are not inherently spiritual.

It is commonly assumed that the primary objective of evil spirits is to dissuade the general public from participating in religious activities, or to persuade people to act in a manner contrary to religion-inspired cultural norms. Frequently one will encounter those who view ordinary personal vices or bad behaviors as demonic obsessions. The entire strategy of demons, to these, is that of moving individuals into purposes contrary to those promoted by the religious authorities. This perspective is found in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and many other religions though it is not universal in any of those faiths.

The influence of demons is not such as would promote any particular sort of material activity. The fact that some actions violate established principles of good taste, moral righteousness, or personal benefit does not make these actions any more or less relevant to the activity of the spirit. The strategy by which one makes his or her way through life is accomplished in the material world, it is done by material means, and its effect is to bring joy or pain to material bodies. The influence of demons is instead upon the spirit, affecting the ability to make

one's own choices, and not the particular form those choices may take.

It is rare, if it is even possible, that a person will take any sort of action for a purpose that is truly altruistic or destructive. Where there is some apparent benefit to another, the one doing the deed takes home at least a sense of satisfaction at having done well for another. When there is some malicious deed, it is concomitant to a broader necessity or some personal urge which would presumably create trouble if left unfulfilled. No matter what is done, the goodness or badness of any specific action is a matter of perspective.

There are many actions for which one can find no good purpose, and many things which would appear noble. The majority of such deeds require the cooperation of circumstances to endorse their value or lack thereof. Regardless of the nature of an action, unless pure accident, it is done on purpose. What purpose is valid or permissible is not for the scope of this study to address, but it is enough to make plain the fact that anything done is done as a result of the spiritual will to accomplish something. It is not important whether one considers a particular kind of behavior as good or even permissible, but it is important to be able to choose what one wishes to do.

This is not to say that one should be free to do as one pleases despite consequences. Rather it is to say that a person makes individual decisions to act, whether they know the consequences or not. Without prescribing value to any act or to its effect,

there is a universal value appended to the ability to determine the course of action one will take.

Without an individual ability to determine the activities of the body, and the thoughts in the brain, a person is a mere puppet, a zombie, a slave. These descriptions are of course not meant to be taken literally, they are metaphorical, but the effect is similar to any of them. Regardless of what sort of actions one permits, the ability to make choices for him or herself is to be valued as good. Even if one were to value the abandonment of choice, relief from desire, the ability to make such a choice and to maintain it is of assured value. To be denied the ability to make decisions is nowhere viewed as a worthy goal.

For this reason the influence of the demons may be considered evil. It is not to say that they provoke any particular action which may be called evil, to hurt others or to encourage avarice and depravity; but to acknowledge that their influence is contrary to exercise of the spirit. The work of demons is that of enslaving the souls of mankind.

Demons are hell-bent on exerting their power over the interior will of the individual, seeking ever to control not of their own accord but through the voluntary submission of others. In their effort to dominate the souls of the world, they have been exceedingly successful, and for this reason the subject of demonology remains important as a survey of those tactics employed by the spiritual enemies of all intelligent life.

The Origin of Demons

This book is a study of demons, and is itself a work of demonology. It is not a study of demonology, or a study of ideas about demons handed down through the ages. The subject of this study is the demons themselves.

Unfortunately for the casual reader, it is not possible to understand the demons without some background in the subject of theology and culture, of history and literature, or of widespread and ancient folk beliefs. Such things will be presented here, but as it covers a large amount of information and does not all relate directly to demonic spirits, there will be a limited selection. This is, after all, a book intended for the general public and should not be construed as scholarly.

The word “demon” itself is often discussed in studies of demonology. There is some academic debate over the precise significance of this word and its relation to demons in the popular sense. I have made every effort to remain consistent with the popular (and I believe correct) usage of the word “demons” as referring particularly to evil spirits.

The standard line of reference on the word demon indicates that it was at one time a somewhat generic term for spirits. Not all spirits exactly, nor as an equivalent to the personal soul or spirit, but as an

intelligent immortal being. The term is used to refer to a source of inspiration, or otherwise to indicate a spiritual influence whose origin is neither human nor divine.

It should come as no surprise that there is so little clarity in the early definition of the word, since what we can deduce is drawn from several hundred years' worth of writings. In that time a word can be taken to mean different things for different people, and it is impossible to place an idea like "demon" in its proper context. It is clear however that the demon is always represented as a spiritual entity with an independent will.

At times the demons are described as having a relation with a person as though it were an extension of the identity, a genius or motivation behind the façade. This position is often adopted when attempting to rationalize demonology into a more acceptable scheme of personal psychology. At other times the word is given as a general title of spirits, which is a position often used to portray demons as neutral or benevolent entities. More often than not, the attempt to redefine the word demon is conjoined to an effort at making the subject appear more welcoming to the audience.

The reader is presumed to have a respect for "sciences" like psychology, and so the idea of a personal genius as equivalent to demons makes them a more palatable subject. To a person who wishes to escape ignorance, the suggestion that a "more informed" person would look to word origins and find something less monstrous is an appealing invitation. Whatever the word demon once meant,

at the present time in almost all parts of the world it (or its very close equivalent) signifies malicious spiritual entities of sinister purpose and usually considerable power.

Rather than understand the origins of the word demon, it is more important to understand the origins of demons themselves. Before any further inquiry into the origins of demons, it is important to understand what is meant by the question. It is not possible to know, with any certainty, from where demons came or what made them demonic or any other such fantasy of the primeval creation.

There are great stacks of books, many quite ancient, that detail the creation of such spirits, their fall from grace, their wars with gods and men. The better of these will be mentioned later in the chapter for the sake of further study, but such issues are not of any real importance to demonology. Instead of pondering the numbers of the fallen angels, it is far more important to understand the ways in which demons appear in the lives of individuals, their cultures, and the world in general.

From wherever or however they arrived originally in existence, evil spirits have influenced the state of human affairs and have brought about at least some change in human destiny. The important question of origins, for the demonologist, is not the point at which demons became demons, but the point at which people began taking their advice. Many subjects have been handed over to the demons where such a connection might not actually exist.

There are many thousands of people, perhaps millions, who engage daily in what their peers consider sinful. It is irrational to assume that a significant percentage of these individuals have any direct contact with demonic spirits, whether such spirits are known or not. Sinful behavior, the precise definition of which differs between cultures, is universal to human society. One society may view a thing as despicable where another might find the same act noble or of a neutral value. The impulse to commit actions in defiance of the social norms, to violate the value code of the peer group, is found in every society of every size.

Over a considerable amount of time, a culture will come to view the least-approved actions of its participants as the ones inspired by demons. The demons have not arisen from such pastimes, but in many cases have engaged therein for their benefit.

It should be apparent to everyone that the world is a place full of trouble and pain despite all efforts to the contrary, and regardless of any amount of goodness that exists. In every corner of the world, from the most primitive societies to the top of the industrialized nations, there is some form of corruption, disharmony, and malice to be found. These evil forces may not in fact rule the world, but they are obviously a part of it, and in all places they are unwelcome.

It is my sincere doubt that even the most avid criminal would choose to cause suffering to the innocent if given an acceptable alternative. Along a similar line of thought, it is commonly said that government is well-intended, that it is a lesser evil

designed to stave off greater ones. There is some truth to this evident in any government that reserves the right to legislate, in that such power stems from the knowledge that no present legal code is perfect and therefore may be modified to generate a better society.

Nonetheless, the law, and government in support of the law, cannot produce a perfect society. It has failed miserably throughout history, often committing grievous atrocities against human rights when attempting to do so. The fact that government overshadows the daily actions of the people leads many to place blame on the shoulders of politicians for whatever is wrong in their own lives. It is a simple thing to make note of changes in policy and the motives of those making the policies, and then to claim corruption has overtaken the nation.

It is beyond doubt that there is an uncertain level of corruption in government. The larger bureaucratic systems are no more or less filled to the brim with every manner of calumny as any tyrannical despotic regime. Small wonder, then, that government takes the blame for the troubles in the world: it holds much of the power, is credited with much responsibility, and is well-known in all nations to be subject to unethical actions.

The idea that the government is entirely responsible for trouble and pain is plainly untenable. Even the most vicious critics of present policy will cite people and events beyond the government as the real source of difficulty in many situations. Blame cannot be simply laid at the foot of the lawmakers,

and yet there remains the undeniable presence of evil.

Beyond government, there are various layers of secret persons with sinister motives who supposedly bear the burden of creating evil in the world. The more credible arguments point fingers toward business owners who stand to profit from the imposition of laws that benefit their businesses. As with the accusations laid against the lawmakers themselves, there is some merit to this argument.

One example here is the military. In most “civilized” nations, the military absorbs a staggering amount of tax money in comparison to other less violent institutions. The businesses providing the military with hardware stand to gain tremendously as the government allots more money toward their purchases. A consequence is an increase in the need or desire to use the weaponry thus obtained and a general increase in the gravity of national belligerence. Likely it was not the intention of those who manufacture missiles, warplanes, machine guns, and nerve gas to create a more violent world, but they have certainly made violence a more devastating thing than it had ever been in the past.

Another private interest that has used the governments of the world to enforce destructive policy is the pharmaceutical industry. For advanced civilizations, pharmaceutical drugs have taken over the thoughts of large segments of the population. The unwitting victims, who in one way or another are paying to be drugged and who willingly believe such mind-bending chemicals are good for them,

are led to stagger though life in a daze. Drugs intended to relieve anxiety (to allow tolerance of work related demands) have instead robbed many people of their ability to make clear plans, communicate properly, or accumulate any substantial knowledge. Many of these drugs also have serious and deleterious side-effects, yet due to their profitability such information is purposely kept from public view.

Additionally there are millions of criminals, scam artists, and other interests that operate outside the pale of government, yet who make use of government to their personal advantage and at public expense. Many of these interests simply do not cooperate with each other, or are totally opposed to each other. It would be irrational to conclude that such persons and organizations are to be held responsible for any sort of unified effort to produce harm, yet such is their overall effect that there is hardly a place in the inhabited world where one can be completely free of their wicked work.

The idea of a unified force of evil has always held some popularity and should be addressed in its proper turn. Since the governments of the world share similar modes of oppression and inconvenience, and since government so often appears incompetent and staffed by fools, it has long been fashionable to propose some greater and well-organized body behind the politicians, pulling strings as it were.

Due to the strife between different private interests, and the lack of dominance any industry has over any other one, the idea that a single private interest

rules all the others has long been ruled out. At times, certain problems have been blamed on the banking industry, or upon the clergy, but even these have been eventually dismissed as inadequate. In order to devise a model for an organization powerful enough to control governments and private interests alike, the most popular approach has always been to create imaginary secret societies.

The premise of a secret society is very simple: a small and powerful group controls everything from the outcome of wars to the content of breakfast cereal through clandestine and sometimes criminal intervention, for obscure purposes arranged around ambiguous ideals. This is of course a broad generalization of the topic, but it is sufficient for the scope of the present work. As an idea it has gained popularity whenever the course of society seemed unreasonable yet effective, giving a feeling of security to those who take comfort in the existence of “someone in charge.”

The most eager proponents of secret society lore are usually voicing an opposition to it. The basic message is that someone is in control even if we are unaware of who they are, how they are controlling anything, or what they are trying to accomplish. It is much easier and more comfortable for these people to live in a world where there is some fundamental authority rather than to live in a world of chaos, confusion, and competition.

Unfortunately the idea of human conspirators in secret meetings designed to guide the destiny of the world falls flat in a number of places. Such societies are not established among insane hyperactive

tyrannical fanatics, and only such a person could possibly manage such a vast operation. In the real world, in contrast to the imaginary world of the conspiracy theorist, people are individuals with personal tastes, independent plans, and usually a respect for others. I happen to know a few of the people who are often accused of running the world as part of the global Illuminati, and I assure you that is not what they do. They drive nice cars and eat fancy foods (sometimes), but they get their jollies by having their wall paneling redecorated by dedicated wood finishers, not by manipulating the global economy so that the poor become enslaved.

Confronted by the fact that people cannot, and as a rule do not control the world with sinister puppet-strings, one determined to make a case for the intrusion of organized and universal oversight must resort to hypothetical entities. More than anything else, extraterrestrial aliens have been identified as the secret power behind all of the unfathomable works of hidden tyranny. Fans of this idea propose that the aliens are either intent on inhibiting the progress of mankind, or that they are making an effort to aid us gradually within their inscrutable framework. Like the secret society theory, this appeals on the basis of an assumed controlling body, and since we can ascribe any amount of fanaticism to an alien it does not fall into the same pit as one trying to read ulterior motives into benign conversations with the rich and powerful.

I am not opposed to the idea of the existence of alien life, and instead I take for granted that the universe is teeming with life in every available corner. I do not regard intelligence, or even

communicable intelligence, as a rarity among the uncountable stars, or in the deep sea, or within the earth, and I do not dispute the possibility that such life can, has, or will contact mankind in any way. That being said, I must also admit that I am opposed to the alien controller idea, and all of its variations, on account of motive.

The attainments of the powerful elite, and their supposed goals, as well as those ascribed to any alien life forms, are insufficient to justify the amount of evil that is apparent in this world. Money is a triviality, a mere measure of ability to participate in commerce. The powerful do not need it, the rich need little more of it, and aliens would probably not even want it in the first place. It may be ruled out as the goal or motivation toward evil in the general sense, however strong its pull on all lesser forms of malice.

Power and control are insufficient also. For those who are truly in a position of power, as opposed to those who struggle for it, it is simply a part of life and one of their responsibilities. The princes of the world must pay people to do things, or they have no society, and so it goes for all the governments who must delegate what gets done and where the money must go. It is not normally the intention behind such actions to gain or maintain control over the private affairs of ordinary people. Though they may live in excess, and may be thought inconsiderate, the powerful people of this world are ordinarily no more or less generous and well-mannered than their counterparts among the working classes.

This last fact is one that permits the final dismissal of suspects in the line-up of those responsible for the existence of evil in the world. Trouble and pain cannot be said to be a natural effect of human nature. With very few exceptions, people mean to do well for themselves and others. Desperation and lack of consideration account for nearly all lapses in civility, and those rare individuals who lend themselves intently toward spiteful aims tend to be incapacitated by their frustrations. It is false to say that the wicked gain positions of power often, though it is true that money and power are often obtained without concern for the well-being of others. Lack of concern however is not identical with a desire to harm, and even the most heartless corporate overlord provides jobs for possibly thousands of people who put their wages to good purposes.

Unfortunately for those who wish to blame human nature, people tend to work toward what is good, or toward what they hope will be good.

In order to answer the question of how evil came to be such a visible part of the world, of what inspires it and of what that source intends, one must divide from a study of law, history, or biology, and delve instead into the mythic past. Such a departure from standard academic philosophy is necessary here, for this is not a topic with which most people are comfortable or even aware, and there is no niche made for it among the standard sciences.

The perspective put forth in the following paragraphs is not meant to uphold or to establish any sort of dogmatic teaching about the history of

life and civilization. It should also not be misconstrued as a definitive and accurate account of what has happened in the past. This should instead be understood as a characterization of conditions which were at one time reality, though the details of these circumstances are now lost and long forgotten.

Conservative scientific estimates of the time in which modern humans have occupied this planet usually fall between 100,000 and 200,000 years. It should be understood that by “modern” humans these scientists refer to people just like those now living in terms of physical and mental capacity. Their bodies looked like the ones now seen, and their brains were of the same size and ability as those now known. They were not ape-like beasts with hairy hunched backs brandishing bone-clubs at anything that moved and dragging women around by the hair. They were people.

Given such a time-span, and taking for granted the equivalence of these primitive people to those of modern times, one is left to wonder what they did with themselves for so very long to leave so little trace. The standard answer among scientists is simply that they had few luxuries, and spent their lives doing all the time-consuming chores necessary for survival. Many were apparently nomadic, and those who were not left no long-lasting monuments to their presumably small civilizations.

This perspective unfairly judges the human character. Only a few thousand years ago, people were living by the bow and the ox-drawn plough, and their cities were built from rocks and from mud bricks. Today, though we have not altogether

abandoned these things, there have been significant improvements and innumerable additions to human technology. From Egypt to the present, the level of material culture and society in general has been obviously and tremendously raised.

In light of this fact, it is nonsense to think that in 100,000 years or more that Mankind was able to accomplish nothing beyond the production of flint arrowheads and a rare few pieces of cave graffiti. They were not without brains, nor skills, nor were they without any of the same kind of devotion and drive for success and growth that are so common in the present people of the world.

Human ancestors of the distant and forgotten past, in every way similar to modern persons, would have held the same reverence and desire for sophistication in technology, language, philosophy, and organization. It is a slander to all living persons to assume that their predecessors survived and prospered to the current level of civilization only through their determination to collect nuts and throw sharp sticks at grazing animals for tens of thousands of years. Unfortunately, there is scarce physical evidence that such was not in fact the case, if any evidence to the contrary exists at all.

This requirement of the academic sciences is required only for academics. Those who feel it is essential to gain university approval of an idea before giving it a second glance may as well close this book immediately, as it has already been amply stated that this is not an academic text. For the moment, though, it is enough to accept the possibility that in all those tens of thousands of

years, humans were able to use their physical and mental skills to establish a form of society that advanced significantly beyond the basket-weaving and savage grunts which so dominate the public imagination of this distant epoch.

If such a civilization, or (given the span of time) several civilizations once existed anywhere in the world, there must have been a reason for its decline. Great things do not simply volunteer to be dismantled or put to ruin overnight. If they are overtaken by force, the conquerors revel in the glory of the thing they so soundly put to rest. If it were simply to have dwindled apart, it would be unlikely for the entire world to have ultimately been reduced back into a very primitive state near to the dawn of our current timeline of ancient history.

From around the world, legends tell of a time before history when people were living in a much better condition than the present. The details vary widely, but the basic theme can be found in every continent. The ancient fables tell of a time when things went well, and for one reason or another, came to an abrupt end.

Natural events like floods and volcanoes have often been pointed out as possible sources for these stories. It is not implausible for a flood to occur in areas of civilization situated in a river valley, or for volcanoes to be present in the legends of people who live near them. More grandiose varieties of the same subjects, like glacial melting and the Philippine super-volcano, are further testament to the very real presence of natural threats to large parts of the human population. From asteroid

impacts to terrible plagues, there are a number of obvious forces that could conceivably decimate all or most of human civilization in a relatively short span of time.

It is also very likely that such a thing would have occurred during the last few thousand years, under the presumption that these things occur regularly but not constantly. The few survivors would have made some account of the disaster, or at least made some note of the fact that things went sharply downhill for humans at some point in the indefinite past. The widespread legends of catastrophe are precisely this sort of record.

It is not necessary to pinpoint any specific event in order for the point to register and continue with the subject of demonology in its course. Whether by the Great Flood, by the Toba event (a super-volcanic eruption that occurred some seventy million years ago), or some other calamity, the human population could have been reduced dramatically. One day there might have been a grand and effective society serving the needs of perhaps billions of people, and shortly after there survived only a few. Whether this few were like the less-than-two-thousand described as having survived Toba in isolated and ethnically heterogeneous family units, or whether they were like the eight people on Noah's Ark is irrelevant. The basic concept is simply that a large number of people living productive lives were suddenly reduced to a few bewildered survivors.

For these few, the needs of staying alive would be imminent. Such a desperate condition may have prevailed for generations, but more likely a sort of

miniature society would be established with relative speed. In recent similar situations, it has been shown that leaders emerge almost immediately and that progress continues as far as resources will allow. In short order, civilization would re-emerge on a much smaller scale.

Whatever level of civilization might emerge from a catastrophe, much of what once existed would be lost. Comforts and conveniences would probably be the first things to go and the last things to reappear. Through years or generations following the terrible demise of the former culture, the fledgling society would be yearning for its previous pastimes and easier modes of survival.

If this were to happen today, and all the nations of the world were reduced to rubble while only a random assortment of stragglers and a host of rainforest dwellers remained, the few who could recall the “good old days” would likely wish there were supermarkets instead of scratching up the earth for their own potatoes. There would be an endless list of lamentable losses that could apparently never be recovered without the large numbers of people or sophisticated technologies required to produce them. This situation, or something close to it, quite possibly has occurred at least once in the large span of time occupied by humans, insignificant as that span may be in terms of the greater geologic timescale.

It is precisely this longing for the “good old days” during a formative period that leads to corruption of the social organism, and ultimately what makes it vulnerable to demonic obsession. Amid the chaos,

confusion, and despair of the new world order, and with suspicions of vastly better ways of doing things that are mysteriously absent but not quite forgotten, the growing civilization delves into speculation on what was once done and how it could be revived.

The Deluge is one of the most popular cataclysm stories of the last four thousand years. It should not require repetition here, nor should any of the details be believed as precise facts, nor is it necessary to believe in the event at all in order to understand how the concept relates to demonology. The story of how civilization recovered from the Deluge is illustrative of a primary concept of demonic activity that will be described later in this work.

For the sake of convenience, the various stories of a “great flood” drawn from several different cultures will be largely ignored at this point. The general reader of this age in any English-speaking country is at least nominally familiar with the account of the event rendered in the Bible. Few are intimately familiar with the details of the ensuing events, which are admittedly rather cryptic at times, but every schoolchild knows the tale of the Tower of Babel.

The story of the Tower of Babel has become synonymous with vain endeavor, and its themes underscore much of what passes later in Western theology. Very simply stated, not long after the Deluge which destroyed almost everyone, the people came together as a nation unified by a titanic building project.

The name of their leader, Nimrod, is used as an epithet for an ignorant person filled with foolish and stubborn pride, though it actually comes from the Hebrew word Namur, meaning leopard. Like a leopard, Nimrod is described as a “mighty hunter before the Lord.” This has been falsely translated as “against the Lord” by those who wish to demonize Nimrod, but the word for “before” (lifneh, in Hebrew) is used many times in the Bible to indicate placement in plain sight in front of something, and nowhere else is opposition signified as the meaning of that word. Nimrod the hunter was the first king after the flood, and under his government all people lived in peace and devoted themselves to one Great Work.

The abandonment of the Tower of Babel, the failure of the Great Work, is the critical element of the story. God saw that the people could “accomplish anything” since they were unified, so their languages were confused and the work left incomplete, the people separating to once again fill the earth and subdue it. Critics of the Bible have argued that this shows malice on the part of God, who saw fit to confound the people during the only time they were completely at peace and under human government. Since there is no evidence in the story to indicate that Nimrod was a tyrant and since there was not at the time any of the abominable behavior that provoked the flood initially, the blame for this disruption is often laid at the feet of the Lord.

On the other hand, Nimrod and Babel feature occasionally in the lore of demonology. In no such case is there a straightforward argument against

Nimrod or his Great Work, but through many a sidelong glance he has been consistently maligned as an evildoer, a sorcerer, an idolater, and a tyrant. The *Malleus Maleficarum* (Part I: question 2, wherein the authors draw together the accusations of Beauvais and St. Augustine) accuses Nimrod of not only practicing these things, but of being their point of origin.

Some modern sects of Christianity add a further dimension to the idea of Nimrod as the source of post-cataclysm corruption. The wife of Nimrod, who is not named in the Bible, was supposedly kept in idleness while her husband led mankind in peace and unity. During this time, she is assumed to have turned her attention to the mysteries of the former age. Through her devotion to the arcane, so the legend goes, voices from beyond reached into the new society and wrought its corruption.

This story illustrates the scenario wherein a newly-formed civilization seeks to draw upon the resources of a past and forgotten era, and in so doing causes disruption within itself. The world before the disaster, whether that disaster was by flood or flame, famine or plague, or whatever, was not perfect. In the case of the Tower of Babel, the world before the flood was so far from perfect that it was considered fit for annihilation. With rose-tinted glasses, the eager seeking of assistance from the lost age highlights some of the remarkable luxuries and utterly ignores whatever horrors were therein commonplace. By revitalizing one aspect of the dead age, many others are also revived as side-effects that continue to wield damaging influence.

It may be a stretch to make the comparison, but imagine a calamity so great that the world simply forgot how to make seats, pillows, and sofas. In the new world, one could lounge on rocks, a log, or on the bare ground. Perhaps the wealthy would have swimming pools. There would be discomfort, but perhaps not nearly as much idleness as is produced by a society infatuated with recliner chairs. When the secret of producing comfortable furniture is once again discovered, the population finds itself infested with lethargy. If the effect might seem dramatic for the desire and discovery of something as trivial and inert as a pillow, it is far worse when the same effect is considered in relation to spirits that are neither inert nor accommodating.

In an incident such as that of the legendary flood, there is a further element at work than mere searching inwardly for the better parts of a lost and dysfunctional society. The people who died wanted, presumably, to go on living. In the new world, with fewer living things around, there was not a surplus of inhabitable bodies of any sort. The desire to maintain continuity of consciousness, however, was intense and this is especially so in the case of a society like that assumed to inhabit the earth before the Deluge: materialistic and wicked.

Their untimely demise would have been no reason for these people to simply stop wishing to exist, or to go on toward some greater existence devoid of their customary living conditions. In addition there would be a disproportionate number of dead people, and only a few living. Each one of these dead people would have had some trauma at the time of death, accompanying a great deal of indignance

about having been simply washed away, perhaps literally.

The combination of the desire of spirits to make contact with the living, and the desire of the living to seek their counsel, produces the primary circumstances under which demons are encountered initially, and upon which their further work among humanity is founded. A living person must choose to initiate this contact, to maintain it, and to fortify it with terms and conditions. Though the influence of the demon may be thwarted at any time, its initial appearance as an exterior influence in a culture or in an individual may be traced to a time of confusion, banality, or desperation wherein the person makes a conscious and voluntary effort to seek unknown aid.

The most visible sources of assistance, for nearly everyone, are other people. When help is sought, it is for human-oriented causes, and is expected to come from a source sympathetic or equivalent to that which could be provided by a human. As this is the manner in which the spirit is sought, it is the manner in which it most often manifests: as something similar to that which would be produced by a human. If it does something, it does something like what a person would do if it could, or if it appears in visions, it appears in a form recognizable to humans or even as one. These are merely conditions of the search for assistance, however, and are not reflective of the nature of the spirit, only of the elements volunteered toward its control.

The corruption of mankind in a former age, and the incongruence of that age with present needs, is yet insufficient to explain the prevalence of evil in this

world. However it might have been that the dead called out in anguish or sought vengeance for injustice and atrocity, they are dead and remain so. It is not the dead themselves whose voices are heeded recklessly in such an incident, but the idea that there is someone beyond the normal range of senses who will listen and answer to cries for help. The demons are perfectly willing to impose themselves at the receiving end of such cries. The typical conditions, like the post-disaster scenarios mentioned previously, need not be considered wide-ranging or necessary. There are plenty of smaller incidents in the life of every society, and of every individual, wherein a similar set of circumstances exists. An eager hand grasps into the void, seeking help, and is itself pulled in by force.

Those thus seduced are not necessarily prone to become withdrawn, antisocial, and destructive. On the contrary, many receive what appears to be the help they had originally wanted. Their ideas, inspired by the demons, become instituted as trends, guiding principles, and even laws. This is not always the case, but as mentioned before it is not uncommon to find evil at work in any part of society, and it is unreasonable to place the blame for this evil in human hands alone.

At the root of evil, then, are not men whether as by-products of bad upbringing or by deliberate conspiracies. Nor can evil be traced to a point of origin within men of long ago, or even to men from Mars. The origin of evil is not to be found in any living thing, for life tends toward its growth and toward the participation of further forms of life, nor in the spirits of those who once lived and yearn to

live again. Evil, to which man is bent beyond necessity, has an origin beyond physical reality: it is of the spirit, and is supernatural in character. Those spirits who exist only for evil, and who are its sole cause in all ages, are those who are called demons.

The history of these spirits, as has been said before, is irrelevant except as trivia. There is no gain in knowing the "true" origin of demons, nor any way to verify such knowledge. A few of the more popular ideas are presented here, but the list is by no means exhaustive.

Nearly every nation with a spiritual belief has some concept of demonic spirits. I can think of no traditional theology which accounts only for benevolent entities, if any are present at all. There is a common perception that some of the spirits, at least, are opposed to human endeavor. It is possible to roughly divide the cultural beliefs in demons into several categories. In the first category are those who believe in the existence of good and evil spirits who are locked in conflict. In the second are those customs that identify demons as vanquished spirits relegated to an inferior position. The third category contains those few nations who consider all spirits demonic with some few being more tolerable on account of human negotiations.

These categories are mutually exclusive. In order for one to be correct, the others must be wrong. This amounts to a flat dismissal, and presumption of ignorance, on the part of millions or even billions of people. Strange as it may seem, it is wholly possible for billions of people assured by faith or by experience to simply have the wrong idea about

demons or anything else. I prefer to think that no one of these perspectives is in possession of the full story, and so make errors according to their own particular form of ignorance. The primary error in any of these systems is the idea that their particular mythos is in all parts congruent to reality.

When examining any of these three categories or theological systems of demonology, it is important to remember that they are a collection of ideas built upon oral and written traditions of many millions of people passed through many generations. These are no hasty philosophies, they are long-pondered mysteries of faith upon which great nations have been founded and which are very significant to the cultures they helped to develop. They are also merely ideas, subject to reasonable comment, wherein a perspective is expressed rather than an indisputable set of facts handed down from the Blessed Abode. These systems are indicative of the manner in which these cultures approach the subject of evil spirits, and are an attempt to find truth, but should not be mistaken for truth itself.

Among those nations who view demonic spirits as a source of everlasting trouble, the perception of spirits tends to be varied with whatever ills are found to be the most persistent. The spirits of evil, according to these traditions, were always there and will always exist, as a balance to the powers of harmony and goodness. For each spirit, there is a remedy, and there is no hope among these nations to utterly destroy evil forever, nor to describe the demons as emanating from a dire incident in the remote past.

This category of belief applies to many of what were at one time considered primitive societies. Tribal lore of all inhabited continents presents examples of demons, and good spirits also, living in a sort of balanced harmony similar to that in which animals thrive, and the descriptions of spirits tend to include animal forms. It is almost universal among those tribes who subscribe to such beliefs that spirits are encountered casually, as one would unwittingly stumble upon a predator or receive the bite of a spider, rather than out of any insistent desire of the spirit to seek out human victims.

This category is in some ways a retreat from the question of demonic origins. This is its strength and weakness at the same time. It is an advantage in that it allows one to avoid obscure lore concerning fictional histories of spirits, which permits one to deal with spirits as they interact with people directly rather than through the lens of systematic theology. It is a weakness in that it presents no clear picture of the enemies, and results in a mix of taboos and amulets as wards against spiritual intrusion, whether or not they are needed or effective.

One of the more civilized forms of this category is the nation of ancient Persia. Much has been written on Persian beliefs, and it would take many volumes to arrive at a complete understanding of this culture, but for the present it is enough to say that the Persians maintained a dualist religion for quite some time. To them, good and evil were equal in strength, and eternity was a conflict between forces of Light and Darkness.

In this ancient religion, the tip in the balance between good and evil could only be accomplished by the individual human soul, and even then the decision was effective only for the individual soul. There was no victory of the good spirit over the evil, and no power of the evil that could overcome the good. Ultimately they were equal, and it was up to the individual to choose his or her own side.

Choosing one way or the other, for the Persians, was not a matter of lending support to the team so that it could win. The consequences were entirely personal: the figures at the end of either goal (Light or Darkness) were abstract and immutable. It was this obscurity that led, eventually, to the Persian religion deteriorating into monotheists who wished to blend Light and Darkness into one source, and to polytheists who wished to promote regional deities and mythological figures as an alternative to mystical abstractions.

It is clear that Persian religion had a tremendous influence in the development of much ancient theology. Persian dualism has been adopted fervently in recent years by those who favor the Darkness, perhaps on account of its promotion of evil as equal in power to good. In the second category, however, are those who view evil as subject to good, or even conquered by it.

Though the man himself might be more aligned to the third category of beliefs, the so-called Religions of Abraham are for the present age the very definition of the second type of demonology. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam propose that there is a supreme deity with his spiritual cohorts, who

are all good, and that there is a separate group of evil spirits who have been condemned. Each of these religions, wrongly determined the “big three” among worldwide faiths, deserves special attention.

It is misleading to assume that any of these Religions of Abraham, by virtue of greater numbers of adherents, has a claim to spiritual truth. Abraham himself had a rather broad view of the divine, according to the stories, and each of the religions founded upon his name involve diverse sects with many conflicting specific tenets. Judaism could hardly be rightly considered one of the “top three” religions as it claims such a small percentage of the faithful people of the world. Though to any English speaker, Christianity appears to dominate the modern age, it had a very limited presence until comparatively recently. Islam has become a somewhat contentious subject lately, but despite its current presentation as a system of faith, it was at one time the sanctuary of science during the Dark Ages. With all of this, fascinating though it may be, the present study is concerned entirely and specifically with the way in which these religions approach the subject of demons.

It should not be thought that these religions are alone in their understanding of demonic spirits as vanquished enemies of a superior divine force. The ancient Greeks, who undoubtedly left an influence on Biblical lore and the ancient Jewish writings, also considered the evil spirits to have been debased by the might of the noble gods.

The key characteristic of the second type of Demonology is that the spirits of evil are not merely

enemies of the good spirits, they have been conquered. These systems usually have devised a place of punishment or containment for the defeated spirits. The struggle in which the demons lost their position is universally described as taking place in the far distant past, before the existence of humanity.

Since it's obvious that no person was around to witness these events, these stories could only be considered hearsay or speculation, at the very best. These systems are necessarily founded upon the authority of prophets, scribes and sages, in whom the faithful have placed their trust for uncounted centuries. Whether or not these men spoke reliably is of no importance. It is enough to know what they have said and to place it within appropriate theological context. The three religions of Abraham, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, each offer a perspective on this subject which is identical in some ways, and different in others. The similarities and differences will be explained as follows:

The very first paragraph of the Torah, the primary religious text of Judaism and of Christianity, describes the world before creation as a great depth. This might be considered the primal ocean, the abyss, or quite literally, the waters. God looks out upon this depth as if it already existed when constructing the universe as we know it. There is a very basic assumption that before the world as we know it existed, before anything was actually created, there was already something else that had been created long before.

Though it may have been mere poetic device of the author of Genesis, or some obscure description of the conditions of the world in the far, distant past, the seeming contradiction of an existence before creation has led to much speculation among theological scholars. One of the more interesting explanations for this discrepancy in the text concerns the formulation of the world of shells. The Hebrew word for this, *qlippoth*, refers to broken shards as of smashed pottery, or of shells lying broken, and empty, along the beach.

Ancient Jewish scholars considered the *qlippoth* to be the world from which demons arose. Theirs was the world before creation, which was inadequate to serve the divine purpose. They were given a chance, and by their choice or by their nature, they failed to match the standards which had been decided by The Lord. The key elements of the idea of the *qlippoth* are dysfunction and inadequacy. They were unable to sustain the freedoms and powers which God wished the world to contain, and they were thus broken.

They were not, however, destroyed. Rather, they were set apart, sunken, and lost, silenced and covered with the darkness of the abyss. There they were condemned to brood, to rest, and to exist as they saw fit, forever, having no part whatsoever in the creation which followed after.

Nowhere among the writings of the scribes is it described why God, infinitely wise and powerful, would have created a dysfunctional and inadequate creation. The religions of Abraham do not permit the suggestion that God wished to create something

of less than perfect purpose, yet everywhere is the assertion that God desired all intelligent spirits to have freedom. The assumption therefore is that the spirits who were the inhabitants of the former world, the world of shells, had somehow conspired against the better purposes that had been ordained by their Lord. This theme was taken up with much vigor by medieval Christians, who insisted that the demons had attempted to overthrow “heaven” and usurp the place of God with *The Devil* as their chief.

The lore of Judaism says very little that would support this idea, or rather, nothing at all, save vague references to spiritual battles, penned during the dawn of the Christian age.

It was this supposed assault on heaven that lead Christian authors and theologians to consider that the demons, and *The Devil* their leader, were not active in the world, but condemned to an existence of suffering within an eternal prison. It is possible, and I believe likely, that this concept of an imprisoned infernal host is taken from the Greek notion of Tartarus, wherein The Titans were condemned along with all workers of evil. Not surprisingly, both locales are located somewhere metaphorically under the ground, and were established long before the emergence of mankind.

A difficulty in this system stems from the idea that the demons are imprisoned in fire, chains, and darkness deep within an impenetrable and eternal prison. Yet somehow they manage to be a constant torment to the living. Christianity resolves this dilemma by suggesting that the actual destruction of spirits, the second death, wherein all evildoers are

consigned to the immortal fire, should take place only at the end of time after the Final Judgment has been executed.

Islam takes a somewhat different tack, suggesting that in addition to the demons, there is another race of human like intelligences, possessing souls but not bodies, called the *djinn*. According to Islam, the djinn live among people, take the same roles and responsibilities as people, and make decisions to be noble or wicked as any other person might do. Within the Islamic religion it is no mystery that evil spirits might exist actively outside of their imprisonment, since any of these djinn might choose to do evil.

A common thread among all of these religions is that at sometime in the distant past, the spirits of evil or their leaders, made a distinct choice to oppose the existence of good, and seek the ruin of mankind. All of these religions presume that the spirits now dedicated to evil were at one time created as good, but are now, by their own choice corrupted, and irredeemably malevolent.

The third category of demonic theologies suggests, to the contrary, that the spirits had always been evil, and that, in fact, there are no good spirits, but only those who seek to do harm toward people. This perspective is found among well-developed Eastern religions, such as Shinto, and some forms of Buddhism. In these religions, spirits and manifestations of spirits, are considered to be contrary to the good work that people might accomplish on their own. Most forms of Buddhism account for the existence of benevolent ancestor

entities, but it should be understood that these are humans, and not some other sort of spirit. The nature of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas are also redeemed as they, too, are humans who have achieved a perfected state. All other spirits, phantasms, and supernatural effects are considered diversions from the path toward enlightenment.

Shinto takes the subject a step further by its adherence to the idea that all spirits are self-motivated and struggle with one another for position, favor, comfort, and individual desires. Thus, in Shinto, all spirits are in some way in conflict with one another, in much the same way that people, although they may cooperate, are in contest.

By this third perspective, it may be thought that what one religion believes is the supreme deity, might to another religion be thought of as merely a lesser god. The Supreme God of the Greeks, Zeus, whom they reckoned ordained the creation of man, set back the Titans in their wells, and blasted judgment and thunder from on high, ruling all the gods, is in Shinto merely rendered Susano, a relatively minor god of bad weather. What this perspective gains by an all encompassing vision is freedom from domination by any particular spirit, though it could be said to distort the context of all spirits.

Unless one were to approach the subject as a student of theology, the origin of demons is likely to seem irrelevant. This is especially so in such a case where one might be confronted with apparently supernatural activities, or accosted by a close friend

or relative, who has become disturbed by spiritual assaults. One might encounter demons in surprising, terrifying, or subtle ways, but rarely does one discover evil spirits who gleefully present themselves as such. More often, demons present themselves with guile and charm, as guides or assistants, only discovered to be sinister after much travail. Even then, the voice of the abyss rarely identifies itself clearly as having participated in mythic history.

Acknowledging the individual experiences of demons will, of necessity, lend itself to the creation of new and strange theological structures. These may be valid, or they may be deceptive devices, misjudgments, and ignorant assumptions of the people involved, but they will almost certainly be different from the standard cultural norms. Any person describing contact with a spirit that conveniently fits a particular spiritual perspective should be suspected of fraud, or mere delusion. A true experience of the demonic will be disturbing, perplexing, and profoundly challenging to the emotions and the intellect alike.

It should not be assumed that we create our own demons, that they develop from our experiences, or that they are an essential part of our spiritual composition. We, as people, may be mistaken in our judgments. We might be intemperate in our behavior, but we are not composed of faulty or malignant materials. Whether we were created by a force of good, or by pure chance, there is no part of us that is not capable of good acts.

The demons, by definition as evil spirits, are inextricably allied to powers set against people. Their intent is not to exalt the human will, but to subdue it, to control it, and to turn it to their own advantage, even if in the short term it seems to bring us pleasure. Much has been said about how deep within the human subconscious there dwell chaotic forces, equivalent to the demons, which if constrained, could make profitable allies. This may be so, but such forces are not to be rightly equated with the demonic spirits of which this present work is concerned.

Indeed there is much about mankind that we do not yet understand, and we have many traits with which we could do better, or do without, but these are not independent spirits of evil. Rather, the spirits of evil often consider these traits mortal weakness, and make use of them in the manipulation of their target individuals. It is a mystery why some individuals are selected for this attention over others, but such is their strategy.

It must be that the demons have some sort of limitation in choosing who to tempt, or the manner in which they might engage in their temptation. If they were free to do as they pleased, then they would simply find the ones among us in the best position to suit their agenda, and bend all their effort toward the corruption of that person. On the contrary, we find the spirits giving inconsequential obsessions to people who command no social or political influence. If there is any gain for the spirits, it is a total mystery. If the spirits are not limited by some exterior agency, then many of them are foolish in the extreme. Since it has not been

shown that these spirits are prone to stupidity or great ignorance, it must be assumed that they act, always, under some form of restriction.

Most commonly, demons are encountered by people who are actively seeking contact with a spiritual agency beyond human power. The usual way in which any person looks beyond the ordinary world through supernatural existence is through prayer, and a distinction should be made between this and the sort of action through which demons typically manifest.

In prayer, the devotee seeks a spiritual influence that uplifts his better aspirations. It is a request for grace, for nobility of purpose, for defense against the disruption of divinely inspired goals. Those invocations to which the demons bend their ears are not those of the faithful seeking just reward from their deity, but from those desperately seeking things which are not required, or expressly forbidden.

Under ideal circumstances, life would proceed for an individual in a positive and predictable manner. Good intentions would be fulfilled by good actions, and crowned by pleasurable results. What one begins in earnest would be completed in delight. How rarely is this the case, even for the best of us! Somewhere along the way, a factor unknown wedges itself among our plans, and part or all of the original design is thwarted. Disappointment, deviation, or disaster can follow. This formula can be applied to small plans, or to the scheme of life as a whole. When this degeneration of effects occurs frequently, or afflicts a plan to which one had

attached great emotional significance, desperation can ensue.

It is at the points of deviation that one begins to change the original plan. An unforeseen effect intrudes upon what was a predictable series of events. Unprepared, a new plan is formed in haste, and where there was care and control, haphazard choices and foggy expectations arise. It is not that any exterior motive has been inserted into the process of making decisions, but simply that the original design established by the individual has gone astray. Where once the work was an effort dominated by the will, the rule of chance, and casual decision, grows to overtake the former purpose. It is at this point that the individual may find him, or herself, reflecting on the loss of control. There may be, as is often the case, a reassertion of the original design, or modifications made to suit the newly developed needs. When there is confusion present, or unwillingness to persist, an individual might not choose to reassert his or her own plans, but rather to seek them in the plans of some other entity.

For example: a musician had long desired to make his way in the world as a piano player. He spent many years learning to play the piano, and pursued an earnest career in music. Unfortunately for him, his vision of a musical career was unfulfilled and he found himself struggling against the necessities of living, and the realities of the music industry. In his disillusionment, he understands that there are musical careers and that he could by some chance attain such a thing and provides for himself as the expert piano player he knows that he is. Rather

than persist in his original intention, developing his craft as a musician, and seeking out new options as a performer, he reconsiders his entire game and assumes there is some other element to success of which he is not in possession. He might become idle, obsessed with the idea that the secret will somehow dawn upon him. Or he may become paranoid, thinking that some other agency stands in his way and must be opposed.

In these deviations from his original plan, he will find support growing until these temptations overshadow any plan that he had formerly devised for success as a musician. Following these leads takes him further away from the goal he originally intended, and ever closer to the exterior will which lead him against others and away from his own fulfillment.

When at last this would be musician discovers that he no longer has concern for his former purpose, but now exists only to fulfill a desire given to him by some other intelligence, he has fallen under the influence of demonic temptation. If he has the sense to recognize that there is, in fact, intelligence behind his newfound motives, he may request that intelligence to act on his behalf, or to press him in a direction it deems capable of performing the proposed service. The musician will have surrendered his own will to that of the demon, serving its interests, and leading ultimately to his own ruin.

It is not known what makes a spirit attracted to any particular person, but it is clear that vulnerability is determined not by physical condition, but by the

spiritual weakness, or faltering of the personal will. How a spirit chooses its victim can only be guessed, but it is the condition of the interior person, not the observable person, that attracts their interest.

If, in the example given above, the individual made no overt gesture to attract the influence of the spirit to act on his behalf, it would have neither cause nor license to do so. By failure of the will, a person becomes susceptible to demonic intrusion, but one cannot be overtaken by it without consent.

If a person feels that he, or she, has been obsessed, tempted, or otherwise harassed by evil spirits, it is far more helpful to investigate his, or her, own weaknesses and failures than to attempt an estimation of the spirits motive. It is not failure to uphold any spiritual law or religious commandment that attracts the interest of evil spirits; rather it is individual shortcomings and unwilling deviations from personal goals.

As has been said before, the important factor for the demonologist is not an idea of how demons became demonic (or whether they were always so), but instead how their influence enters into the lives of individuals and becomes for them the word of law. That being made clear, there remains a perennial fascination with the idea of a “place” from which demonic spirits originate.

The idea of spiritual geography is common among all three aforementioned categories of demonic theology. There is a basic presumption among all such structures that the demons (and spirits in general) do not exist as flesh-and-blood creatures

who dwell in actual holes in the ground and who could be kicked or smashed by a rock. There is always an other-world where the activities of the spirits are the norm, and which is entirely ephemeral in character. Though these other-worlds vary greatly in description and social import, they can be loosely identified as modifications on three universal themes of demonology: Heaven, Hell, and the Spirit World.

This is not to say that Heaven as one culture knows it is somehow valid for some other culture with a different idea about Heaven. Rather this designation as Heaven, Hell, or the Spirit World are general and well-recognized terms referring respectively to positive, negative, and neutral spiritual conditions in which spirits are said to dwell.

Heaven may be loosely identified as the condition of total cooperation between the self, others, and the environment. Of all the many different ideas about Heaven and similar Paradises, the single common factor is the total lack of inconvenience. It is the supreme attainment of the spiritual will.

At one point, probably early in the development of religion, someone must have said that it would be impossible to fulfill every desire no matter how diligently one could pursue them. Even to isolate and accomplish the “better” desires would be a daunting task, and one would be left unsatisfied despite any amount of effort. There was a need to describe a condition, beyond ordinary living existence, in which these desires could be fulfilled.

In the Oriental systems, one begins with basic desires like hunger and the need for shelter. Socialization, personal activity, compassion, communication, and the development of personal identity follow in their ladder of psychological needs. The crown of all is the attainment of spiritual fulfillment, to which end millions have labored for thousands of years in the disciplines of Yoga and meditation. The final condition sought by the student of such disciplines is one in which all the desires have been satisfied and the highest aspirations fulfilled utterly.

In the West, the idea of Heaven is usually one in which a presiding intelligence (God) participates directly with its subjects, whose every purpose and desire is fulfilled. In the absence of negative influences, the good seek only goodness, and there is no trouble or danger. Though in the Western systems the idea is contingent upon the will of God rather than upon the natural state of pure consciousness as it is in the East, Heaven is a condition where unpleasantness and unwelcome necessity do not exist.

Ultimately this is the goal of all people, and though each person may define it differently, there is a Heaven for everyone. All actions and desires have some purpose, a general concept of how one should act and why, and behind these schemes there is a distant implication of some greater situation where the desires are fulfilled. The many religious views of Heaven are only authorized versions of the goal that everyone follows when seeking a better self or a better world.

Unlike Heaven, the matter of Hell is subject to endless debate. Everyone in the world can more or less agree that an absence of iniquity is “heavenly,” but there is great disagreement over who should inhabit Hell and for what purposes. Without any clear resolution on Hell, the subject has been given a tremendous amount of attention, giving rise to the popular opinion that the great Western religions succeed through fear-mongering. In fairness, the debate and high level of interest in damnation may be attributed to an unwillingness to exclude others from Heaven rather than from hoping to see them in Hell.

The principal conditions of damnation may be conveniently characterized by three elements: chains, fire, and darkness.

The chains of Hell, taken literally by some, indicate that one cannot escape the conditions of being damned. There is no way out, and no means of altering or alleviating the situation. One is stuck, unable to act, not deprived of will but of the ability to do anything with it.

The fire is pain or agony in some form. Primitive models of perdition include actual fire and other gruesome torments of the flesh. These were gradually refined in their descriptions to include a variety of spiritual agonies or simple poetic justice. The torments of Tantalus, or the condition of abject spiritual dismay portrayed by the modern Catholic Church, are equivalent to what was once a widespread fear of unending mutilation in the afterlife.

Darkness as a feature of Hell indicates that one cannot gain any clear understanding of the situation. There are a lot of possibilities, all of them bad, and one may not know what to expect or what could be done, even if there were something else to do or something else to expect. Darkness also indicates removal from the eyes of others, being hidden and forgotten.

The central drawback in such presentations is their utter banality. No matter what level of injury one receives, an eternity of it would eventually cease to have any meaning. Without the possibility of escape, it would serve no punitive purpose. The preachers on their pulpits would have a man painfully handled continually forever on account of his failure to contain his temper or remain faithful to his wife. After a time, these punishments would cease to have any meaningful connection to the sins which provoked them, making the eternal torment scenario somewhat illogical even if one were to assume the flesh and pain were metaphorical.

Nonetheless, Hell is supposed to be an unpleasant place, full of misery and pain, and well-deserved at that. Since one could hardly merit eternal torture in a span of less than 120 years, the fate of damnation is often presented as being given only to those found truly deserving. The average person of the modern world will doubtless point to various historical tyrants or villains and to habitual criminals as likely candidates for such a fate. It should be remembered that even these people, if viewed from a different perspective, might be seen as noble or at least “not so bad” as their atrocities might indicate. Even a massive amount of slaughter

and oppression is hard justification for agony without end.

Some would, no doubt, have little difficulty in permanently removing evildoers from their midst. It is unquestionable that a great many people would be pleased to deliver over to the undying fire a fair portion of their own fellow citizens on account of miniscule crimes. This unfortunate position of ignorance and irresponsibility is apparently not the sort of justice envisioned as Divine by the majority of the faithful in this world.

The idea that God is simply all-forgiving and that nobody goes to Hell for any reason is untenable in the eyes of all major religions of the West. Even the Eastern religions favor a period of purification, whether in an after-life or through successive reincarnations. Without the threat of hell-fire, the entire concept of Salvation (as defined by any of the various religions) loses a large amount of its appeal.

One is forced to wonder, then, what purpose is served by Hell if there is no one truly worthy to occupy it nor any purpose dire enough to require it. The answer is quite simple: Hell was not made for Man, but for demons and those who serve demons.

Since Hell is, by definition, final and penalizing, one might wonder how it is that demons are said to inhabit the world and trouble its people. Some religions, noting this discrepancy, propose a concept called the Final Judgment, after which the damnation begins in earnest. Until that time, should it ever occur, the more appropriate model for

describing the residence of demons is that of the Spirit World.

It is very likely that the earliest human civilizations made some effort to account for the possibility of life after death and perhaps life before birth. It was also apparently understood that spirits participate in the otherwise ordinary functions of the world. A large part of this is doubtless the result of ignorance, such as the beliefs that gods throw lightning or that gnomes create earthquakes or that demons cause diseases, but what remains is genuine knowledge of the existence of spirits.

Since spirits could not be easily found, it has been commonly understood that they partake of a separate sort of existence which may be loosely referred to as the Spirit World. Of the numerous and varied descriptions of the Spirit World, three are sufficient and there is no resolution as to which is correct.

The first, and perhaps most ancient, is the idea that spirits exist in sympathy with certain phenomena, or quite literally are thought to reside therein. Plants, places, weather, and so on are all characterized as having their own spirits, or sometimes spirits inhabit aggregations of phenomena as singular entities.

This first perspective is not a true “spirit world,” and is more accurately considered a form of animism. The spirits exist within the ordinary world, but are considered a magical element within it. Nonetheless it deserves consideration as a model of the Spirit World as it is not dependent on the

origin and fate of the universe, but on its unseen and constant activity.

The second view of the Spirit World, found in many later religions, is that in which the spirit is presumed to exist in a way roughly congruent to nature yet somehow exempt from it. Examples of these are the Islamic idea of the Djinn, and the Latin Lares, who are supposed to exist in much the same manner as people yet who are without corporeal form.

Proponents of this second Spirit World view approach spirits in the same manner one would use to approach a physical entity. They are entreated by words, given presents of a sort appreciable by living creatures, and are credited with reasonable intelligence in the manner of normal persons. The key distinguishing factor in identifying this viewpoint is the idea that the Spirit World is dependent upon the material world and derives its substance from it. The spirits may be thought to be invisible and intangible, but they take part in the same world as everyone else except for the addition or omission of some limitations.

In the two previous descriptions of the Spirit World, the spirits are thought to exist in ways intimately connected to physical reality. In the third view, which is perhaps more deserving of the title of Spirit World, the spirits are thought to possess an existence entirely independent of the physical world. It is with this definition that the present study is most concerned.

Even were one to assume that demons had fallen from Heaven and were destined for Hell, as dictates

the popular imagination on this subject in all English-speaking lands, they would have to exist somewhere presently. Since Hell is by nature punitive and final, that option has been dismissed, and instead the concept of the Spirit World is presented as a more accommodating view of the residence of demons.

In this view, the spirit was never flesh, and will never become flesh. It is the presupposition that spirits are entirely different from the physical world. This might sound elementary, but a confounded mess of ideas has arisen to give some semblance of physical location to the spirit.

One example of this is the idea of an “astral” body composed of invisible energies. These are supposedly surrounding the body, casting off auras that can be seen or felt by clairvoyance, and which partake of heretofore unknown substances akin to magnetism. Such things may well exist, but it is not the spirit, only an extension of the body in a material of an obscure nature. The spirit, on the other hand, is wholly immaterial, and since demons are spirits they are likewise utterly formless.

Considerations of form give rise to the speculation that a spirit has to exist in a place, and so rather than ascribe a particular location to the demons it is possible to conceive of their existence as being part of a Spirit World. This is purely a rhetorical device used to give the semblance of coherence to what is in fact not a world at all, and which contains neither space nor substance.

The Spirit World, distinct from the physical world, is the state in which the will functions without reference to matter. It may be understood as the interrelationship of individual wills or spirits to one another without physical impediment, but is most certainly not any sort of place of its own. The primary condition of the Spirit World in this sense is not the relationship of the observer to any phenomena, or the individual spirit to its environment, but that of the spirit as it relates to the activity of other spirits.

The Identity of Demons

Before addressing the way in which evil spirits operate, it will be beneficial to understand the ways in which they are distinct from other spirits and from each other.

As has been said before, this exposition is confined to the subject of demons in the familiar sense, that of evil spirits. No effort is herein made to excuse such a stance, or to exempt certain among them from said classification. Justification for upholding such a view of demons should become evident from the following chapter, but the present chapter defines the subjects of this study.

Two approaches will be used hereinafter to examine the demons. The first will focus on their relationship to one another as a distinct class or body of spirits separate from other spirits such as those of humans, and those of benign or benevolent motives. The second approach will discuss the relationship of individual spirits to their own conditions of existence.

First, though, it should be understood that demons are indeed a separate and distinct class of spirits deservingly treated as a singular body comprised of individual entities that vary widely in character and power. This would be a simple distinction to make if it were so easy as to ascribe the title of “demon” to anything that has horns, bat wings, and breathes fire, but since the demons are without form or universal proclivities such convenient taxonomic

tools do not exist. It would similarly become easy to identify demons according to any similarities found among their descriptions, or on account of their collective appearance in literature describing them as demons. These methods are also inadequate as they would necessarily fail to identify all the proper spirits and base the designations upon the prejudices of the authors. One would quickly “discover” a thousand different types of spirits or as many different types of demons, and the differences between them and anything else would be merely academic trivia.

It is necessary and sufficient to understand that all spirits of an evil nature are, by definition, demonic and that the reverse is also true.

The aforesaid points having described the scope of this study, it should be further taken into account that all demons are individual demons. These are not concepts, or natural forces, but individual spirits with independent powers of will. When looking at problems through the lens of nature or human behavior, it is difficult to conceive of any faults as having an individual source, but dimly set among the background shadows is the demon whose will is unwittingly enacted by those subject to its temptations. A general atmosphere of contempt for good or right actions, or any other discarnate and impersonal negative influences, is not the origin of the trouble but the tools of the originator who is the demon.

The demon is an individual spirit, but it is not entirely independent from other spirits who are also demons. Each spirit is but one, but there are many,

and there is some interrelationship among them. This is not however to say that they belong to a single body of unified purpose, or that sects, nations, clans, or clubs exist among which there is some drama which might be exploited. There are not, for example, “Chinese” demons in China and “Arab” demons in Arabia, and most especially these are improperly conceived as carrying out human social roles of the remote past in those cultures.

There are three approaches to consider when looking at demonic spirits on the whole. The first is to think of them in a state of Anarchy, with disconnected individuals competing or cooperating at whim. The second is to identify some manner of Hierarchy, with certain ranks or roles being played by each spirit, and with some spirits subordinate to some others. The third is to identify one supreme ruler of demons and thereby suggest that demons are participating in a perverse and dysfunctional Monarchy.

The idea of Anarchy among demons settles many issues easily. There is no question of why one demon appears to have an entirely different character than another, or why the various systems of demonology are so widely varied. This viewpoint presents demonic activity as more or less random in a general sense, focusing on individual experience of the demonic. According to this view, each of the demons has an individual motive and mode of operating, and what one may know of one spirit may not apply to another.

There are advantages in this viewpoint. Ideas exterior to events surrounding a demonic influence

can be easily excluded. For example, the Sumatran tribesman who believes in a demon that manifests as a tiger need not relate such an entity to any other sort of spirit, or place it among a ranking of other spirits in order to understand the demon. He may consider the tiger-demon for what it is, apart from any other thoughts he may have about spirits and spirituality, and defend himself against it accordingly.

The great disadvantage of the Anarchy presentation is that it permits a certain freedom to be considered part of the character of demons. In the foregoing example of the Sumatran tiger demon, the spirit is not bound or subject to others, nor does it subjugate others. Demons, however, are defined by a corruption of the will, and the unlimited license of total Anarchy is beyond their grasp.

Whereas the tribesman in this example may believe that the “tiger demon” thrives on the blood of unwary travelers, a spirit has no need for such things and thrives instead upon the actions provoked by its presumed presence. The sorcerers of those lands invoke the spirit by name, seeking favor and protection, and do the spirit homage with gifts and services. The suspicious villagers create an environment of fear, not of tigers but of an abstract evil lurking in the unknown. Criminals excuse their crimes using the fear of such spirits to cover their atrocities and take blame in their places. In subtle ways, the spirit uses natural inclinations to bend the work of mankind to its self-serving purposes.

It is easy to conceive of a tribe of jungle-dwellers of Sumatra, who live in fear of tiger-demons, but such

a scenario is described merely for the sake of describing a recurring element of Anarchy in demon lore and it remains a minority belief. The most common Oriental belief in tiger-demons is centered generally (but not exclusively) around the concept of a Rakshasa, one of several demonic figures found in Hindu and Buddhist mythology.

Whereas a purely animalistic evil spirit preying on the unwary according to opportunity may be considered independent, the Rakshasa plays a minor role in mythology and exists within a framework of other spirits. These spirits are usually described as physical entities to which are ascribed a supernatural character in that they can change form at will, make use of magical knowledge and power, and take some part in the affairs of the various Hindu divinities. They are furthermore ascribed leaders, kings, and roles among their own kind, and so while a mere tiger-demon may be considered Anarchist, the Rakshasa is an evolution of the concept that illustrates elements of a demonic Hierarchy.

It is among the ancient Oriental epics that the concept of a demonic Hierarchy is laid bare for the laity without a great amount of suppression. This is perhaps due to the widespread belief in the endurance of *Karma*, the spiritual side-effect of mortal action. According to the Hindu traditions, the gods themselves are a part of the spiritual heritage of mankind, and so their epics contain great detail in regard to which deity is sire or patron of which race. Humans, animals, and spirits are all accounted as descendants of one or more of the deities, so there is some attention given to which

ones are given a higher regard and which activities fall under the patronage of each deity.

In some respects this is similar in character to the familiar *caste* system which was forcibly (if only superficially) dissolved following the British invasion of India. Some spirits are given a higher regard than others, so that the idea of spiritual stratification is presumed to persist even among the invisible gods in whose shadow mankind is believed to walk. Furthermore the elements of a Hierarchy are often divided within a particular stratum, so that all of the entities of the same "rank" are individually ascribed a particular feature or specialty.

As with human hierarchies, those of demons involve organization of influence so that those accounted as "higher" in rank are able to influence the activities of their subjects. The Hindu tradition of *Karma* produced a society wherein luxury and poverty were considered essentially static elements of social position. One could not ordinarily attain wealth or really lose it. If one were born to a prosperous family, or a poor one, it was considered to be an effect of *Karma*. Those of the higher ranks were not only more easily able to obtain luxuries; they were also presumed to have a higher spiritual position than the poor who were considered less worthy. This system was almost universally recognized (among Hindus) as a natural occurrence proceeding from divine will, rather than as an artificial institution designed to maintain a social order. Spiritual Hierarchy, in Hinduism, is an acceptable part of the way in which things work and

human hierarchy is merely a reflection of the divine order.

In the West, the social order had been more recently established by force and it was all too apparent that those in power had achieved their status personally. Those few rulers who could trace their nobility to any great distance back in time were fully aware that such positions had been won rather than bestowed by divine grace. The system of nobility and government was hereditary, by admittedly human design, and the division of ranks was likewise a matter of preference subject to dispute.

The systems of spiritual Hierarchy that developed in the West reflect this difference of structure and a more arbitrary arrangement, but there remain among them certain elements of their more ancient Oriental counterparts. For example in one place there are demons arranged and described as Kings, Dukes, and Princes, while in another they are categorized according to military offices or as members of religious orders. Such descriptions represent the idea that some spirits are of a more influential nature than others, and that they have power over the others of lesser ranks, and furthermore that the division between the ranks is inherent and immutable as though it were inherited from a time unremembered.

The key point to be recognized here is that in both East and West, the demonic hierarchies are understood to be static realities. The demons do not advance within their hierarchies, nor are they subject to demotion. Though Oriental systems present this as genealogy of spirits, and in the West

it is presented as official title and position, both align on the idea that the spirits have a continual and immutable hierarchy.

For the sake of clarity, the concept of hierarchy among humans must be given some attention. This is a complicated subject, but only a few points require consideration in order to explain the premise of a demonic hierarchy and the ways in which it resembles, and differs, from those of humans.

Hierarchies are often misunderstood as giving one set of persons rule over another set of persons, with the one “above” giving directives to subordinates. This arrangement is rare in practice, except in business where it is all too often the rule. A true hierarchy, and a far more common form, is one in which various types of positions are each given independent executive authority whose charges intermingle. The offices in such systems are on the same team, so to speak, though each plays a different role.

A striking example, present in nearly all human cultures, is the relationship found between a political leader, a religious leader, military leaders, and labor organizers or businessmen. Each one seeks some degree of autonomy and the advancement of its own cause, and none are normally permitted to interfere greatly with the others, but all together they form the elements of a state.

While it might be said that one or another of these is “above” the others in power, the reality of the situation is usually more to the effect that each part

of the system exerts a restraint on the others as well as lending them support. Business often holds the military in its palm, and the political leaders often seek leverage over business, each one gaining advantage over the others in different ways and at different times. Passing commands or punishments from “top to bottom” is reserved only for the lower echelons of any individual part of the cultural hierarchy.

In this way the hierarchies of demons are similar to those of humans. There are indeed more powerful spirits, and lesser ones, but their method of organization is not strict stratification but division of authority. Since these divisions may not necessarily be recognized formally, in that they are more a point of reference for humans rather than something directly acknowledged by the spirits, there is autonomy at each point in the Hierarchy.

The central difference between the demonic hierarchies and those of humans lies in the manner in which the participants enter into such a system. In human systems, each individual person has an intellectual comprehension of the system as a whole and his or her part therein. A person may choose, at his or her pleasure, which part of the hierarchy he wishes to join, or attempt to abandon the structure entirely. It is agreement and acceptance of the system, even if given begrudgingly, that constitutes the entirety of his or her position. The demons have no means with which to dispute their own system.

The most wretched untouchable pariah, the most beleaguered slave, however denied and abused by the cultural hierarchy, accepts that position and

continues within it willingly. There is no magical bondage which prevents the lowest social strata from escaping their plight; it is merely an unfortunate system of rules and widely-accepted codes that preserves their miserable condition. There is always the possibility of rebellion or escape, submission usually appearing more acceptable than the difficulty and risk involved in acquiring freedom. The lowest members of society, by and large, recognize that they are fundamentally equal in deserving goodness and in having responsibility for the rightness of their actions, and it is only the cultural hierarchy that has made them subject to injustice and discomfort.

This is important to realize in consideration of demonic hierarchies, for whereas a person holds his position after considering the benefits thereof or out of fear for consequences at attempted change of status, the demons are motivated by will alone. What a person thinks of his or her conditions of living, and his or her options for changing those conditions, play an important role in judgment of personal affairs. It is an understanding, an acceptance, and a reasoned matter to stay or go from a position in the cultural hierarchy. While the human will is free to explore and alter its existence, the will of the demon is not.

There is among demons a step-ladder hierarchy also, where one spirit has rule over another, but this differs in practice from similar schemes among humans. Spirits of different positions may be linked to one another in a causal relationship as a result of congruent will. This is different from a similar scenario among humans in that a person receiving

instructions must assimilate the tasks appointed to his or her understanding, and then choose a way to implement them. A human may also choose to disregard orders. Demons have no need for the former response, and no capacity for the latter.

For the demons, the will of the more powerful spirits is shared by those of a lesser nature, beyond dispute, so that the inferior legions never contrive to undo or oppose that of their masters. Though each spirit in the chain retains its own will and self-government, that will is inextricably tied to that of those in power over them. In the lore of demonology it is said that the greater spirits have others who are under their power, but this is not meant as with humans that a command is given and then the subordinates choose to obey, but that the lesser spirits are aligned before the fact to the directives of those spirits who they serve.

One might wonder, then, how much power is possessed by these greater spirits and how many layers of greater powers exist. While one could fathom a philosophical oddity with an infinite number of greater spirits, the demonic hierarchy is defined by its relatively limited number of levels and the few individual spirits who retain the vast majority of their power. The task of the demonologist is simplified by the fact that the lore of demons tends to account for only those spirits who hold the greater offices. Most of the classic versions of a demonic hierarchy can be fitted to a single page.

At the root of the demonic hierarchy, or one might say at the “top” of any scheme, there is to be

recognized a single guiding power. The whole effort of the demonic empire, in any time and in any nation, in all of its various forms, is united by this power and through it derives strength and direction. This has become widely known, in plain speech, as the Devil.

It is senseless to identify this figure as the exclusive property of Christianity or of any other religion. Lest this be thought to in any way argue in favor of Christian theology, it might be well in order to examine some of the Christian scriptures in regard to this figure and note that they do not reflect the popular beliefs in the subject. The perception of evil, and of evil spirits, that exists among all nations outweighs the scriptures which either deny such a power, fail to include it, or misrepresent it entirely.

It should be known that the Devil is a concept that supersedes the notion of any scriptural personage. The Egyptian god Set, Tiamat of Babylon, the Greek Typhon, the Hebrew Satan, the dragon of St. John, Mohammed's Iblis, and all the myriad colorful imps, ogres, and fiends of mythologies from around the world are but shadows of this primeval identity at the source of all wickedness.

It should be evident at this point that a monarch of demons is not adequately represented as a chthonic emperor sitting on a sunken throne giving commands to fawning cohorts. That idea is pure fiction. Rather there is a will which is contrary to that of Man, and upon which is founded the activity of all evil spirits. This is not to be considered a ruler of spirits, but something more akin to an evil god in

which the demons have not faith but absolute subjugation.

One point to remember in light of this Monarchy is that the demons are enslaved eternally to this master. One may not rule the spirits of evil without being ruled himself by this same master. It is beyond the power of mankind to compel the Devil, but within human power to resist and restrain it.

It is evident in the lore of demons that they do not recognize any universal society of infernal spirits in which they participate. In some instances, accounts of exorcism and so forth, the spirits have given some indication that they recognize the existence of each other and (to a limited extent) acknowledge participation in joint activities and agendas. These acknowledgments do not, in any work on the lore of demons, extend to encompass all evil spirits in every culture. The specific terms and allocations of positions described for the spirits are then to be understood as a convention of human interaction and study, rather than as a reality perceived by all demons.

Simply stated, either the demons do not realize that they are part of a universal body of evil spirits, or such knowledge does not come across in the annals of demonology. The spirits appear, from all accounts, to have an even greater degree of limitation in demonic lore than do those who seek commerce with them. The Hindus get Hindu demons; the Christians get Christian demons, Native Americans have their own demons, and so forth even when the spirits are very similar in

character. The spirits appear to have a very self-centered outlook.

It is perhaps taken for granted that a spirit has an identity. In humankind, at least, this identity is often confused with that of the human body. One walks and talks in a particular manner, eats certain foods and not others, chooses some forms of recreation over others, etc... These are rightly considered elements of the personal identity, but have little bearing on the spiritual identity.

The personal identity is largely a result of memory borne out of bodily experience. Taste in food can usually be traced directly to an experience wherein the body was either pleased or displeased as a result of eating. Over time, habits of taste develop and this lends structure to a self-concept. Other experiences affecting the body produce similar reactions that eventually draw a person toward or away from similar experiences in the future. The identity, then, may be loosely defined as a series of preferences, and more specifically as a summary of memory and a strategy for future action.

In the moment of action, it is not the “personality” which acts, but a more direct influence upon which the arbitrary personality is but a guide or plan. Despite what one thinks of him or herself, the point of action is always an available pivot upon which the course of events may be changed, regardless of any rule by which one feels compelled to live. Thus the drinker may choose to abstain and the sober man may take up drinking, and in the act of choosing the spirit is exerted over the body. The spirit, separate from the body, is an identity unto

itself and though its influence may be mirrored in the body the two are not identical.

Spirits possess characteristic traits identifying them as individuals, distinct from other spirits and yet similar so that they may be considered together. This study, which concerns only the evil spirits in any detail, will focus on three primary attributes by which the identity of a spirit may be thoroughly understood. These are the axis upon which the spiritual identity of the demon may be coordinated. They are its Office, the way in which the spirit relates to other spirits; its Joy, the way in which the spirit relates to the elements of its experience; and its Place, the way in which the spirit relates to its conditions of existence. Each factor reflects various manifestations of the will of the demon, which is unified. These divisions are given merely for the sake of organizing the subject.

Unlike other spirits, such as those of humankind, the will of the demon is an extension of the will of more powerful demons. This is, in a sense, like having a job and not being able to choose any other job. The “job” of a demon is often called its Office.

The Office of a demon is, as should be obvious, not an office space. Specifically it is the extent to which the demon is under obligation from other spirits. The office of a spirit is consistent and inescapable.

This concept is most often encountered in surface-level surveys mythology, wherein spirits are categorized according to their role in occult literature. It may be said that the Office of one spirit is “to halt fugitives” and that the office of another

spirit is “to betray secrets.” These items, in the examples and in other possibilities, are not indicative of the character of the demon, but are rather the roles appointed to it by those spirits who are more powerful.

The manner in which the spirit carries out the directives of its superiors is non-specific. In the method of its action, though not in its aim, the individual character of the demon is found. There are myriad peculiarities in the preferences of the evil spirits, nearly all of which are clever or subtle.

Demons are hardly ever credited with anything ordinary. Usually, it is exactly the opposite, with the demon being ascribed causal agency over astonishingly bizarre events. One might be tempted to think that the demons are like mad but intriguingly genius miscreants. This is often the sort of reaction any ordinary person receives when engaging in strange yet effective behavior. This is not however the case with demons, who instead exert their influence most strongly over that which is weak or uncontrolled.

When it is found that a demon preys upon a person through sexuality, indulgence in property or food, or through violence, it is not out of a genuine sympathy for these acts that the demon chooses them for its *modus operandi*. Rather, these are recognized by the spirits as points of weakness in an individual and the spirit seeks to exploit them to its advantage. Unable to resist a genuine conflict of the will, the spirit must turn away or seek other weaknesses to attack.

The spirit will employ a variety of activities, subtle tricks and temptations, and sometimes terrors in an effort to achieve its goal. These strategies are, altogether, considered as the Joy of the spirit, for it has elective authority to make use of them at whim rather than out of obligation. Whether or not the spirit derives any sort of pleasure from their use is neither likely nor a matter of consequence.

The human spirit quite obviously makes use of the human body as its primary interface with the world. Through this vehicle of unplumbed complexity, the spirit finds a means of coming to terms with its existence. What manner of existence the spirit might experience without the body is purely a matter of conjecture, and even the major religions tend to depict the unfettered spirit in a manner roughly similar to that of a corporeal person. Though it is widely believed that the spirit exceeds the body in every capacity, attempting to conceive of such a thing without reference to the ordinary modes of sensation can be absurdly difficult; and so the body remains the central model for the living spirit.

The demons have no bodies, as ought to be apparent, but they do have a means of understanding their own existence as individual entities. Like the human spirit using its body as a vehicle for action and understanding, the demon cannot exert a great deal of influence over its mode of existence. Some are known by their names or images recorded in the lore of long-dead nations, some are more widely known in modern cultures, and some are known only directly through those who have encountered their influence.

The elements through which the demons operate, and in which they are known, are the equivalent of the bodies of the demons. If these things were all gone and forgotten (surely to do this one must indeed destroy the whole world and wipe away the memories of vast numbers of people), it is possible that the demons would be gone with their relics. They are parasitic and dependent, requiring the permission of others in order to act within the world. It is not the will of the demons which permit their intrusion, but rather the will of others who request it.

The Activity of Demons

It is likely that the majority of readers have simply skipped the foregoing chapters and begun reading in earnest here. If so, it would be best to retrace the concepts described previously and gain a more solid understanding of the terms which will be set forth herein.

There are typically two sorts of people who search for the information contained in this chapter. The first feels persecuted by evil spirits and seeks to understand his or her predicament in search of a solution. The second is the person hoping to persecute others through the invocation of evil spirits. While this chapter might satisfy both interests, it is written for neither in particular.

Those who wish to intrude upon others with demonic powers can stand to be left to their own devices, but perhaps a word or two would benefit those who find themselves accosted by supernatural villains, haunted by the undead, or otherwise suffering at the mercy of the unseen and the malicious.

If anyone should begin to think that a supernatural power is intruding upon his or her affairs, the very first question to ask is the most basic:

“What has happened?”

This simple question resolves the vast majority of supposed supernatural events. The answer is often simple: a noise was heard, a chill was felt, something seemed to move just out of sight, there was a terrible dream, or anything else that could happen. Taken alone, such events are most likely meaningless, prone to appear, through superstitious and imaginative reconstruction, as the machinations of evil ghosts.

Evil spirits are far more subtle in their approaches. Were they to terrify everyone all the time, they would be easily recognized and banished. The power of the demons is such that they need not make such desperate attempts, and those who find themselves embroiled in spectral drama are likely the victims only of their own imaginations.

Two characteristics in “paranormal” events belie the presence of the supernatural: persistence and coercion. That someone might hear an inexplicable noise is nothing, but to hear the same noise regularly is another matter and should prompt serious investigation. To hear a noise even once that suggests a course of action is a sign not to be overlooked, and yet that too may be found natural or insignificant. When there is a persistent effort made by the supposed spirits to change the behavior of the person involved, then and only then should the influence of demons be suspected.

It has very frequently been suggested that all manifestations of ghosts and the vast majority of psychic phenomena are merely the intervention of demons in disguise, in such cases where they are not mistakenly natural occurrences or deliberate

fraud. Frightful as the idea of ghosts may be to many people, these experiences are not entirely negative and (especially among the old and the infirm) they can lead to a sense of comfort regarding death and a deepening of spiritual values. It would be utter nonsense to assert that such an occurrence would be the work of evil demons.

The average person with moderate or nonexistent religious enthusiasm probably has only the most superficial view of demonic activities. He or she will probably consider incidents of demonic intrusion to be rarities, or superstitions widely believed only in primitive societies. The idea that demons intrude directly into human affairs, or that people would regularly invoke their assistance, is popularly conceived as uncommon and nonsensical. This is not the case.

It is very common for people of all classes to assert that "money is the root of all evil." Often said in jest, there is a truth in the statement that has been recognized as an ancient principle of commerce. People will stop at nothing to gain, maintain, and increase financial holdings. The better part of criminality is the provenance of those seeking to increase their fortunes out of desperation or design, and those who have abundant wealth are every bit as prone to corruption as the impoverished are prone to violence as a means of acquiring yet more money. Certainly, if one were to look for an area of society wherein the spirits of evil operate with few checks against their reign, one needs to look no further than the world of financial trades.

In brief, money produced by society is kept in an “active” state in one form or another. Those who have little money rarely become intimately acquainted with the details of this activity, but it can be adequately summarized as follows. All non-cash money kept in savings, and all of the vast resources of commercial enterprises, are reinvested by those who manage those assets. In a sense, the wealth of the nations is shared.

This is accomplished through a tremendous number of investment teams, who apply all of the money acquired toward potentially profitable investments. Some of this money goes toward the stock markets, wherein the success of the investment depends on the viability of the product or service offered by that company, and vice versa. Most of the money goes towards “funds” and other money-for-money trades, including trades between currencies. These operations consist of staggeringly huge figures, so they are managed on a stratified basis. Each part of the financial hierarchy “passes the buck” to the next team, with people investing what is handed to them at every step. It is a self-supporting and international system which operates (ideally) according to law, and which is in principle a very noble design as it supports independent cooperation for mutual benefit.

On the other hand, it is prone to abuse. Money can be made in gigantic heaps in a matter of minutes, or lost in such a span. With risk and opportunity of such a life-changing nature, many people are not content to let fate, good guesses, and limited research guide their paychecks. No matter how well-established and conservative one feels his or

her investments are managed, they are in reality being turned over in whole or in part to fanatical stock-jockeys who place bets on their behalf. While the payouts appear conservative to the customer, those payouts are merely a product which is based entirely on far more lucrative schemes with high risk potential.

For at least the last forty years, the world of investment has been thoroughly infested by those who intentionally and specifically invoke demons for the purpose of securing their own success. Not the brokers nor the investment company owners, but a significant percentage of people actually making the trades upon which the entire world economy is built, are very active in demonic invocation.

This may come as a shock to the average person, especially those modest church-going retirees who depend on their invested assets to continue with their humble lives. It is a fact that the money which gives them this humble and decent life or relative comfort is rooted in the fanatical devotion of those who willingly pledge themselves to evil spirits for the purpose of worldly gain. It may be that these invocations are futile, and that the financial industry is lucrative enough on its own merit, but a huge number of investors are seeking demonic assistance all the same.

Those who would dispute this fact need not look far, and require no special access to forbidden and secret rituals. A brief exploration of the world of fast-trading investors reveals all manner of bizarre schemes for making their “picks” better. Psychic counselors, witches and soothsayers, and prophets

of all sorts (even robots!) give direction to the uncertain investor. Spells and charms, omens and superstitions, and dubious indicators lead the money-makers to their prizes. Direct pleas to demons are but a part of the long list of unorthodox methods of investment counseling. When their fortunes have been secured, the investors more often than not engage in absolute debauchery and mock the timid public who depend on their work.

This is not meant to degrade all investors, or to engender suspicion for that profession. Rather it is meant to demonstrate that the invocation of demons is practiced by a large number of people in an otherwise respectable profession, and whose decisions affect the stability of the global economy. These individuals are aware of the existence of demons, seeking out their aid for an explicit purpose, but such business is not the extent to which demons intrude upon the lives of individuals.

Even among the highest powers on the planet, evil aims to steer the destiny of mankind towards its purposes. The Catholic Church once suspected that Josef Stalin was possessed by demons, and it is a well-established fact that Adolph Hitler and his associates engaged in various rituals of an occult nature. Many U.S. presidents are correctly linked to Freemasonry, a fraternity rumored (erroneously) to covertly worship Lucifer, but few Americans are aware that Harry-we-dropped-the-bomb-Truman was an active member of the KKK. Dozens of the most powerful and influential people in the world regularly gather in secret for international meetings (dubbed “Bilderberg meetings” after the hotel where one such event took place), and it is rumored

that select members appear before Azazel, or the Devil, or some other supernatural power of questionable benevolence who dictates their fates. All of this is dismissed as nonsense by the general public, but if indeed the demons desire a part in this world it would seem more likely for them to approach the leaders.

Questions about “what goes on at the top” may go forever unsatisfied, but it is without doubt that evil spirits make an effort to exert their influence into the lives of human beings. The method of acquiring this influence is known simply as Temptation. Those who go directly to the demons, hoping to make bargains or beg for aid, have succumbed already to the temptation of the spirits, but temptation can take many forms.

Temptation may be generally defined as an attempt by a demon to secure the willing cooperation of a human being. These attempts seek always to subvert the individual will rather than exalt it. For example, in some circumstances those goals which might be considered material – wealth, knowledge, and favor, for example – serve noble purposes and exalt those who possess them. In other hands, or in other situations, the same goals are mere temptations, a promise of gain that cannot arrive and whose pursuit brings only disadvantage.

The end result of temptation is a dependence on the influence of the spirit and a limitation of individual will. The one who has gained legitimate success will inevitably expand into new and greater paths to the benefit of himself and those around him, while

the victim of a demon will stagnate even amidst resources and opportunities.

It should not be assumed that the demons are intent upon gaining additions to their ranks, condemning human souls, or that they have any sort of fascination with perverse behavior. That sort of idea was once very popular, and served to aggrandize the self-importance of those who held such beliefs. If demons wanted to ensnare human souls, they once reasoned, the human soul must be a very valuable commodity. While that sort of notion appealed to the plebian mind in former ages, it is now rightly abandoned.

The pseudo-science of psychology has made numerous attempts to study the underlying motivations of mankind. Those theorists who propose simplistic systems of human motivation require complex justifications for their ideas, and those who have developed complicated “hierarchies of need” are ultimately forced to jam the loose ends into ill-fitting categories. Overall, however, it is clear to psychologists that people are not always motivated by their greatest strengths or their best judgments.

The demons are apparently aware of this fact and employ temptation in such a way as to prey upon character defects and elements of personal weakness. It is not the fault of demons that they are so often associated with violence and debauchery: these tend to be vulnerable points in the psyche. In despair and confusion, a person may succumb to temptations of the spirits as a means of resolving his or her internal dilemmas.

The spirit itself is little concerned with whether a person (for example) enacts violent outrage against a stranger, but a person prone to such actions becomes a target for the spirit. Gradually the spirit will exert its influence over the individual, so that through him it comes to gain the “Place” which has been described as an essential component of its existence. The demon cares nothing for wanton violence except in that it represents an opportunity for it to entrap the individual who performs it.

In the case of the submissive recipient, the will of the demon is enacted and the victim is secured momentarily, more often than not without the fulfillment he or she assumed would follow the action. There is the mythical idea of a “perfect possession” wherein the victim submits willingly to the spirit, but this is a device of fantasy and in truth those sought by demons find themselves degraded, abused, and abandoned at inopportune moments.

In the case of resistance, the spirit has no power whatsoever except to try a different tactic. It is the nature of temptation that the one receiving it holds all the power, for it is useless without acceptance and accompanying actions. Where it is not the pursuit of noble goals, virtue may be measured as the degree to which one resists temptation, and the two increase in tandem.

One may wonder what the demons could possibly hope to gain from the sort of activities ascribed to them. It is simple to see a greater plan at work in the intent to subvert the global economy, or to establish widespread fascism, or to unleash terrible diseases

and so forth, but these are not the norm in demonology. It is far more common to find accounts of a random person becoming obsessed in a bizarre and humiliating fashion, for cenobites to throw themselves about in impossible contortions when their satanic pact is discovered, or for otherwise ordinary people to be led into utter depravity without apparent cause.

There are several proposed resolutions to this dilemma, of which three are predominant. First, and most commonly argued, is the idea that the demons wish to secure some manner of control and will take any amount of control where and when they can get it. Second, it is suggested that the demons require human participation in the manner of other parasites, lest they be forgotten and thus cast into oblivion. Finally others assume that the demons cast their nets wide, and that even minor events can be used to manipulate their chosen targets if given enough time and attention. Each position has strengths and weaknesses, but there is no definitive answer on the matter.

Against the proposition that demons seek control, it might be remembered first that they are lawless and utterly devoid of idealism. One of the more recent horrors in human history, the Third Reich with its accompanying wars and injustices, was at its core a system of idealistic laws. All manner of terrors imaginable were perpetrated in only a few years, and all for the sake of a fanatical vision of a perfect society governed by a deserving elite, managed by a noble and responsible society, and uplifting the common folk. One might wonder how many Germans, after having endured Nazi rule, would be

glad to trade such a society as was forced upon them for the one full of Jews who they had formerly resented so strongly. Indeed the totalitarian government was an atrocity, and bred atrocity, but its search for control was guided by principles that the demons lack altogether.

The idea that demons require humans simply to exist falls somewhat short of their capacities. They are powerful in bringing out the very worst in people, stripping away each layer of resistance and weakening each muscle of the will, and if it were only a “place to stay” that they desired they would be content with fools who are easily led astray. There is no shortage of fools, and the demons would be easily pacified if security were their only motive. Rather the demons appear to have some form of ambition, though what that ambition might be remains obscure.

The third proposition, that the demons work in extraordinary and subtle ways to squeeze their work into our world, is fitting to the character of evil spirits but difficult to accept. So many incidents connected to demons appear to be utterly meaningless, their influence upon anyone now or in the future comparatively negligible. With such power at their disposal, the demons might take a more direct route.

The demonic presence always conceals more than it reveals. Where their influence is known, their intentions are obscure if assuredly malevolent. Where their intentions are known, their activity is invisible. In attempting to wrest from the spirits some form of an answer, to know their work or

expose their agenda, or to confront them directly and put them down, there have arisen the numerous traditions of invocation and exorcism.

These traditions bear some examination in detail, if for no other reason than their immense popularity and fascinating character. All forms of invocation and exorcism share a common thread in that they are intended to produce direct communication between an evil spirit and a human being. The better known of these two acts is that of exorcism, which will receive primary attention.

Exorcism is an ancient practice known to many religions throughout the world. The concept is simple to grasp: a person or group of persons removes a demonic influence from another person or place. The visible component of this act is accomplished through various charms, gestures, and spoken invocations which have invisible equivalents in the form of divine invocations and symbols averse to the unwanted evil spirit.

The most widely-known form of exorcism is that given to persons commonly called "possessed." This is a curious condition, poorly defined in popular culture and often misinterpreted. A possessed person is so harassed by an evil spirit that it comes to dominate the person entirely. Popular superstition declares that the demon literally inhabits the person and adopts his or her consciousness as its own, but a more traditional viewpoint is that the spirit seeks control over the will of its victim, not his or her awareness.

In primitive societies, possession by demons is erroneously synonymous with mental and neurological disorders. For this reason, and the skepticism of the subject engendered by such misattribution, modern exorcists are careful to examine ordinary causes before proceeding to the supernatural diagnosis.

The Catholic Church, from which stem the best-known ideas about demonic possession, describes demonic possession as a state wherein the individual will is subdued in favor of that of the spirit. It is the will of the possessed, not his or her awareness, that the spirit controls.

This is an important point to remember. The possessed person is fully aware of his or her surroundings. He or she may entertain the presence of the oppressing spirit, but is not a mere mindless puppet on strings held by Satan. On the contrary, he or she retains the normal modes of awareness.

Chiefly under assault by the demon are the motivations of the possessed and his or her interpretations of experiences. The victim may feel compelled to run around on all fours, but in such an instance it should not be assumed that the victim has receded from consciousness to be replaced by a bestial imposter. Instead, in such a case, the spirit has suggested that the victim should act in such a manner, and the victim must accept that suggestion and voluntarily act upon it. He or she is no more “insane” than a person acting under hypnosis.

A Catholic priest must receive approval from his bishop to perform an exorcism, and that approval is

contingent upon the victim being utterly cleared of all psychotic disorders by a licensed professional. Such is the current policy of the Church, but how that policy enters their practice is speculative since the Church is usually tacit in regard to such private and controversial matters.

The Catholic Church maintains several definitive concepts in regard to demonic possession, each of which influences its longstanding tradition in the forms of exorcism.

The first essential principle is that demonic possession is voluntary. The person must either invite or agree to allow the spirit to take control over his or her actions. There are various degrees of control offered, with full consensual possession being considered very rare.

Second, the Church acknowledges that possession is the end-result of a process. This takes place according to a series of definite stages. There is an introduction whereby the spirit is first encountered and a request is made or an offer is accepted by the victim. Following this is a period of harassment or temptation, and finally there is a request for the submission of the victim.

The third principle is perhaps the most significant. The exorcist does not expel the spirit, or rely on his deity to expel the spirit, but calls upon the individual to reject its influence. This is fortified with prayers and so forth, but these are not, according to Catholic teaching, for the purpose of affecting the spirit so much as the victim for whom the exorcist prays. The decision to expel the spirit

is, as with the initial acceptance of the spirit, in the hands of the victim.

Of all the nefarious works of mankind, none are accounted so dangerous to the soul as that of sorcery, and no arcane art has earned such a dismal reputation as that through which a person would seek to conjure demons. While few wish to pursue such work actively, this is nonetheless a subject of immense interest and rightly deserves investigation. A great deal of the scorn felt for this subjects owes its strength to pure ignorance, so while many are content to cover their ears and close their eyes at the mere mention of demonic conjurations, there is certainly no risk in knowing the difference between the truth of the matter and the fantasies or fabrications which are so commonly presented to the public as authentic black magic.

It is best to begin with an understanding that demonic invocation has some historic provenance. Appeals to evil spirits are relatively common in all cultures as a sort of back-door option for when the goodly gods might disapprove of whatever is desired by the sorcerer. Thousands of pledges written to chthonic deities have been unearthed, and whether any of these were ever answered is mere trivia. Scores of tales from the Far East describe in lurid detail the ways in which one can run afoul of some spiritual malefactor. For the English-speaker, though, the foremost face of the black art is that which descends from the Dark Ages, in which the conjuror follows ceremonial procedures found in books.

The conjuror himself is usually presented as a caricature of one of three occult personalities roughly contemporary to one another: Faust, Agrippa, or Dee. The first sort of conjuror is willing to risk everything for the sake of his passions, which are his true guide and might eventually redeem him. The second sort invokes demonic aid as a matter of course for otherwise ordinary interests: academic and financial gain, acquisition of temporal favors, and other things that are relatively benign but out of course for ordinary religious devotions. The final sort seeks the arcane mysteries for their own sake, not knowing what to expect but yearning ever for something grand. The first sort becomes a mythic icon for good or ill, the second receives what he sought and little else, and the third receives something truly grand yet dies penniless and his name is lost in obscurity. To suit each of these interest groups, dozens of rituals were penned for the sake of instructing people in the black art of demonic invocation.

If one were to investigate the tomes of true black magic, hoping to find some secret of the ultimate evil, there would be an almost instantaneous shock of total disappointment. Indeed, though the ancient volumes give the names and seals for scores of evil spirits, these are not promoted as patrons or even as worthy allies, but rather as criminals who are forced to suffer at the hands of the holy.

This is greatly at odds with public opinion, which declares almost unanimously that one ought to find in these books a secret formula whereby the wicked can become yet more evil through demonic assistance. The public is inclined to believe that if

one were to scribble the correct pentacle and pronounce half a dozen words; lo and behold the lords of the abyss would leap forth and create havoc at the conjuror's whim. Such is not the case, and no such recipe is given in the standard cookbooks of medieval sorcery.

In order to thoroughly understand this subject, one must look deeply into the legends and lore of those cultures which have influenced the undercurrents of Western philosophy. Virtually every important element of Medieval demon-conjuring can be tied to some earlier import from Greece or from the Arab nations, and these invariably make a pretense of originating in the mythic past: Egypt, Babylon, or even the Sepulcher of Solomon. The specific details of the individual rites, and an exposition of their origins, are matters best suited for individual works (or volumes of works) and are largely trivial. For the student of demonology, it is most important to know a few key points on which further studies can be founded.

The conjuror is rarely expected to be an innovator. More often, the ceremonial books demand steadfast obedience to peculiar and demanding rituals. For all that comes from the pulpit about the ease in which the soul can be ensnared by evil, the makers of demon-conjuring manuals have produced some of the most extraordinarily complicated rituals ever practiced.

There are considerations given for the time and place of the ceremony, and of every thing or person involved. The conjuror is given a series of personal restrictions or duties, and hours, days, or sometimes

even weeks of preparatory observances to perform. There is invariably some manner of special equipment to be employed, and this is often rare or costly, or otherwise difficult to prepare correctly. The ceremonies themselves are described as somewhat awkward and one could not well hide the performance of such feats, with large figures drawn out on the ground, or odd incenses burning on open coals. The performance of such rites requires a considerable amount of time, investment, care, and the fulfillment of whatever inward measures the individual work-book declares as necessary.

One might be tempted to think that these are over-complicated, and that the demons would be only too eager to answer the call of one who willingly puts his or her self into their grasp. One of the first injunctions given by the most “diabolical” conjuring tomes is invariably to seek the love and wisdom of the Divine, and the rites are usually followed with advice on being charitable and benevolent to all men and beasts. The conjuror proclaims he is a servant of God, exercising holy authority to do good. The would-be sorcerer bent on using evil spirits to commit acts of evil find no support in the official textbooks of the black art.

The presence of, and unfaltering insistence upon the use of Divine invocations has caused a great deal of confusion for esoteric scholars. It has often been viewed as an incongruity that one should take such special precautions toward sanctity and then proceed immediately to call upon the lords of the Underworld. Only when one understands that the procedures are not performed as mere pretense does

the true nature of the process appear clear and possessed of a reasonable character.

The conjuror in the old manuals of demonology is not calling upon the hordes of Hell by supplication, bending them toward his tasks according to their individual capacities. Rather he is causing them to be bound and restricted, so that their influence is cut off and the individual will prevails. Thus a spirit that causes disputes and confusion as its ordinary inclination is bound to facilitate proper communication. Spirits that thrive on desperation are said to bring riches or fame, which is accomplished by placing them in total subjugation. The powers ascribed to each spirit vary according to different sources, but in each case the spirit provides against its nature and against its will, with resistance borne not of stubbornness but of passionate opposition to such effects as it is forced to produce.

These works are, in a sense, like putting a criminal to work. A great many would-be wizards, from ignorant tyro to dedicated occult fanatics, look upon this entire concept with the deepest of scorn. Almost certainly the majority of modern occult enthusiasts would prefer to call upon the demons with more equitable terms, either to beg from them and offer all manner of gifts, or to parlay for partnerships. If the old ways are analogous to forcing criminals to work, the new ways are comparable to inviting criminals to live in the basement.

There are several gaping holes in this approach by which the aspiring sorcerer may be dissuaded from

his pursuits. The first and most evident is that mentioned above, wherein quite simply the more closely one becomes aligned with his enemies, the further he is liable to move from his own benefit. Gifts and sacrifices given to the demons strengthen the hold that they have over an individual, which ultimately serves their own gain and not that of the individual giving the gifts. Nonetheless, there are many who feel dissatisfied with traditional approaches to practical demonology, and have adapted their own beliefs and methods to their purposes.

It is especially popular to cast the demons as benevolent spirits, maligned in scripture and suffering from historic maltreatment. Demonolatry literature and discussion thrives on intimidation and theatrics like burning sigils, secret languages, and dubious hereditary lineages. One might expect the good guys to be a little more presentable.

Others would prefer to view the demons as merely psychological forces. As has been previously discussed, the nature of the will is indeed subconscious, but at the same time exterior to the brain. The human ego and its desire for lust, greed, power, and other selfish pleasures needs no worship or bargain such as those arranged through the bizarre rites of occult demonology. Those things get plenty of attention on their own accord.

Still others prefer to think of demons as natural forces. These, along with all of the others, might give serious contemplation on the idea that they have chosen to represent the benevolent, the benign, and the natural with terms, sigils, names, and

ritualistic trappings of ancient occult literature. This belies a total lack of creativity and a perversion of the ordinary so that it becomes synonymous with evil spirits.

For those who view the demons as “the bad guys,” who seek to identify themselves with evil, it may be wondered what one could hope to gain that could not be obtained through more benevolent agencies. It may be that there is a persistent belief that desire for riches, fame, favor, or knowledge cannot be satisfied by those spirits who uplift the human spirit. Whether for this reason, or out of a sense of rebellion against the conventions of family or society, some people are genuinely interested in creating alliances with evil spirits.

Traditions of folklore maintain that one can, against conventional wisdom, make a deal with the Devil. In short, the person so desiring would forsake long term gain, spiritual or material, for the sake of immediate gratification. For those who see before themselves a life of hopeless abject poverty, or who find themselves to be unworthy of genuine companionship, a quick route to riches and affection might sound quite appealing. The formula for such a transaction is usually absurdly simple: one has only to appear at the cross-roads at midnight, or recite prayers in reverse, or any number of trifling acts of disorder.

Oddly enough, there are very few who seem to have ever done such a thing, or if they had done so then nothing worthwhile came of it. Numerous performers of notable talent brag that they have sold their souls to Satan, and yet they remain

unrewarded and insignificant. On the other hand, mediocre performers have risen to appalling levels of fame and have been found guilty of the mythic Pact in the twilight of their careers. It is a subject to which one would not rightly lend credence with enthusiasm, and also not one to be dismissed outright.

The most famous historical example of a formal pact is that of the priest Urbain Grandier, whose dramatic case is often cited as yet more evidence of corruption and superstition among the clergy. In this case, the actual document of the pact is preserved and the terms are fairly explicit, though the entire document is very likely to be a forgery. At any rate, it specifies that the priest will have his lust satisfied among the maidens, and that he will live twenty years further, all under the condition that he behave rudely toward holy relics and generally show contempt for the Catholic Church. How such a pact was made and formalized is pure conjecture, but it is signed with demonic sigils and various infernal names.

In occult lore, the most conspicuous diabolical pact is that given in the two grimoires *Le Dragon Rouge* and the *Grimoirium Verum*. As noted before, the disciple of perdition will be greatly disappointed at the fact that these works begin with the premise that one wishes to deal with demons from a position of spiritual superiority. In these and other occult works, the one desiring to make such a pact does not merely request the audience of the Devil individually, but rather a whole hierarchy of spirits who are cast as subordinate to the one with whom he desires an accord.

The structure of these two works bears some examination. Each consists of three main portions: the preparation and execution of the pact, a description of the demonic hierarchy, and a selection of spells, charms, and conjurations toward which one would presumably employ the powers bestowed by the spirits once the pact is arranged. Each of the sections could be considered rather laborious and complicated, and the texts are purposely designed to be anything but user-friendly.

Both texts speak clearly on the point that the user must follow the method precisely, and though they deal with the same hierarchy of spirits, they do so in different ways.

In the first consideration, that of the preparation and the work of constructing the diabolical pact, *Le Dragon Rouge* and *Grimoirium Verum* are greatly at odds with one another. The latter work is complicated by the inclusion of numerous elements which are absent from the former, which instead goes on at length in regard to a “blasting rod” through which one would compel the spirit into appearance so the pact may be arranged.

The greater portion of *Le Dragon Rouge* concerns the construction of a “magic circle” made from the skin of a goat. The animal in question, contrary to popular superstition which declares it is given to the demons, is offered to God along with prayers and other devotions. The skin is prepared with salt and dried into strips which are then used to make a circle wherein the one proposing the pact stands to present the terms. After the conjuration, the

“blasting rod” is held forth and the spirit leads the conjuror to his reward in the manner of a dowser.

This is in contrast to the instructions of *Grimoirium Verum*, which appear less “rustic” than their French counterpart. Therein are described the tools of the trade, and consecrations for each one. The method of action is tremendously simplified: one has only to invoke the spirits by their names and signs, provided that the ritual of invocation is performed as described in the text.

The fact that both methods demand precise devotion to the instruction of the authors has led some commentators into the error of considering both texts as confused farces designed to fool the unwary and to delight sinister minds. This error does not take into account the obvious possibility that the works were originally penned as practical manuals that were once put into use and later copied.

Regardless of whether anyone had ever put the original texts into practice, and doubtless the original texts in their pristine form have long been lost to the world, both of these grimoires propose to arrange a formal pact with demons. In this respect they form a unique class of literature on the subject, as there are few such practical manuals but an enormous bulk of writings has been produced in regard to the diabolical pact. It is therefore worth examining the few instances in which one is instructed in the manner of making such a pact, barring outright fiction, however awkward and inadequate such presentations may be.

The books of pacts, the grimoires, require that the person using the books abide by certain ceremonies and conditions in order for the demon to perform its duties and thereby uphold its end of the bargain. The particulars of these ceremonies depend largely on the predilections of the author, and the demons merely agree to uphold their part in the deal when the magician repeats the procedure. For example, a person might bid the spirit to fulfill a specific request at the utterance of a word, but the word is entirely the choice of the author and not necessarily a word with any innate power. Conversely, the spirit may suggest such a word through which its power is to be invoked at need. This prevents the spirit from having constant influence over the conjuror and the possibility of its accidental summoning while making the spirit available at need.

In *Le Dragon Rouge* and *Grimoirium Verum*, arrangement of a pact between a person and a demon requires the prior approval of one of three “superior” demons. These hold the offices of Emperor, Commander, and Treasurer. Rather than inhabiting some nebulous netherworld, these are described as exerting their influence over the material world. Each of these superior spirits is ascribed two subordinates, with whom the formal pacts are established, and each of these is said to rule in one of the inhabited continents.

One seeking money and power would entreat the Emperor through its subordinates in Europe and Asia, respectively. The Commander governs sex and violence through its servants in Australia and Africa, to whom one would appeal for fame or conquest. The Treasurer governs style and secrets

through its subordinates in the two American continents, implying that the true treasury of demons consists not of gold and jewels but of secrets and desires.

Each subordinate is ascribed three inferiors. In *Le Dragon Rouge* these are named after the fallen spirits in the *Lemegeton*, who were supposedly bound in a vessel of brass by Solomon the Wise. In *Grimoirium Verum* they are listed as the Infernal Archangels. The insignia for the spirit to be invoked is included along with that of its superior, and the specific signs and powers differ between the two texts but remain consistent in their general character.

Both grimoires use a similar appeal to the superior spirits prior to the actual presentation of the pact. Such a reference is conclusive proof that the books are related to one another as branches or developments of a tradition which is unique in that it proposes a practical method to formulate such pacts, without the extravagances of such fanciful works as are described in similar texts like the *Formicarus*.

The pact itself has seven parts, beginning with a recitation of the title and office of the spirit as a formal greeting that the spirit must agree to recognize. The spirit must pledge to obey the author of the book, and to respond to its invocation in an agreeable manner. The spirit must also pledge not to harm the author or to cause offense, and to take care that the results it creates are brought about in accordance with the desires of the author. The conjuror requests that the pact remain valid forever,

so that the spirit may not nullify its terms, and finally the spirit must pledge to protect the conjuror from harm.

Such are the details of the pact described in *Le Dragon Rouge*. The author includes a summary of his personal exchange with the summoned demon, who seeks justification for such a brazen list of demands. At first, the spirit does not agree to the specific terms, but agrees to do as requested if the conjuror will turn himself over to its service in fifty years. The conjuror refuses, and the spirit then modifies the original bargain to include an inconvenient schedule of times during which the conjuror must grant it audience, and demands a tribute to be paid regularly by the conjuror.

Curiously, the demon (who in this example promises wealth) advises the conjuror to use the money charitably. One might recoil at the idea of a demon engaged in noble pursuits, encouraging goodwill and almsgiving, but such spirits seek always to expand their dominion and make use of these pacts in doing so. By granting wealth to one man, and then requesting his regular audience, the demon has ample opportunity to direct the money toward those it deems most useful to its purposes and provides funding for other prey to assist them in performing tasks attendant to its own diabolic agenda.

Participation in the pact comprises, according to the grimoire, what is known as the Sanctum Regnum or “Holy Kingdom”, a sacred alliance made among the demons and extended to those who seek to work with them. This term occurs repeatedly in accounts

of exorcism, most notably in the works of the late Malachi Martin. The idea that spirits belong to a sort of collective, in which the individual participants are merely representatives, has been previously addressed. Sometimes misrepresented as the Centum Regnum (hundredth rule), the pact with spirits is considered by the grimoire to be identical with participation in the demonic collective.

The demons offer wealth, alliances with those desired, powers of seduction, victory in battle, knowledge and humor, prophecy, and many other magnificent things which are designed to remedy individual shortcomings. These spirits, and the pacts through which people seek their assistance, do not lend themselves to trivial ends, but promote those who would join them to positions useful to themselves and pleasing to their partners. They do no pathetic wonders or small displays of power: they move destinies and turn the very pages of history; but they do not move teacups across the table or dictate letters to blindfolded charlatans. These offers sound excellent, and indeed they may make good on their terms, but it would be the apex of insanity to leap blindly into something which is both incomprehensible and irrevocable.

The Understanding of Demons

It is clear that problems have plagued Mankind since the beginning, and that throughout the ages there has been an effort to track down the roots of these problems so that they might be overcome.

Lately, the very idea of spirits and demons, gods and devils, and theology in general has been largely dismissed among the intelligent and educated public as an antiquated and ineffective approach to understanding the universe. Certainly there are intelligent people who possess sophisticated knowledge of natural sciences among the religious public, but these are far less common than uneducated and unintelligent people who dismiss all religion as bunk.

While not quite so many people are eager to dismiss the idea of a Supreme Being, or that of gods and spirits, the subject of demonology is commonly regarded as one of the branches of theology that deserves to be thrown into the waste-bin first. Demonology is considered, at best, a curiosity of a bygone era, and at worst a nonsensical mess without purpose or merit.

While to some extent this is true of the literature of demonology, the substance of the subject is something which remains relevant in the modern

world. If one were to ask a psychologist, “Why is so much evil done in the world?” one would get a decidedly scientific answer: it is a part of our biology.

Recognizing that there are indeed biological foundations for all of our most despised or cherished emotions, one might ask the same question of a biologist. Undoubtedly the better part of the answer would focus on the interaction of hormones and chemical stimulants in the brain and body. The question would perhaps be passed along to a chemist.

The good chemist, of a certainty, would reference the reliability of chemical reactions. This and this make that under these conditions, always, he or she might reply. The laws of chemistry are immutable, and the reactions differ predictably in accordance with physical law. One might go next to the physicist.

Nearly all of modern science owes its foundations to the ideas of physicists. Every facet of chemistry, engineering, electronics, and indeed any technology whatsoever is based upon the principles of physical science. This is a large field, but all of its branches subscribe to one core doctrine: we do not really know exactly how everything works.

Gravitation, force and energy, space and time, the very substance of matter itself, are ideas founded in observable facts but whose essential characters remain invisible. No scientist has ever directly observed the fundamental powers of nature, and whenever they have looked more deeply there has

only been more mystery discovered beneath the newfound facts.

Perhaps the physicists assume that there is a unifying mystery, or that there are several mysteries, or that there is no resolution at all. Whichever view is taken, the bottom line remains that the present advanced system of scientific thought is based on invisible entities, presumed or “revealed” principles, and the proclamation of a select set of experts whose word is taken as truth. In short, the scientists have created a form of theology.

In this survey, the middle-men have been removed and the discussion has cut straight to theology, which is no more or less relevant to modern thought than any of the complicated theories proposed by the top minds in physics.

Certainly there are some ideas connected to theology which are outright nonsense, but again the same might be said of physics. At one time it was a popular mystical notion to believe in the existence of a vast crystal sphere in which the heavens hung, and beyond which there was mere void. The modern scientists have their absurdity of a “Big Bang” and an expanding universe with its impossible spatial boundaries. What were once set forth as the invisible and divine edicts governing all things, the modern age has defined as mathematical principles and natural law. The terminology has advanced, as have the methods of acquiring the terms, but the ultimate basis of physical law remains unknown. Those ideas purporting to expound on the fundamentals of nature are no more or less confounded and full of speculation that those

which once entertained the sagacious abbots of yore.

Given such a position of ignorance, freely admitted by any honest scientist, the propositions of theology are not so far behind the times. This is especially so when one steps away from specific sectarian theology and examines the concept of the supernatural in a general sense as has been the case in this book. Whereas one might have a hard time accepting the reality of Supreme Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, the idea that spirits exist is perhaps not such a long shot. The average person certainly has more reason to believe in spirits than in hypothetical leptons.

With certainty, there can be no dispute among any reasonable people that evil is done in the world. It should be fairly obvious that the nature of evil is such that it transcends mere biology, for even if one were to “drug all the devils away,” it would require such a massive effort that ultimately one would accomplish a far greater evil. Whatever activity one could choose to identify as evil, there is plenty of it happening all over the world. To deny the existence of evil is utterly contentious, a sophomoric view found tenable only by those who refuse to acknowledge genuine suffering intentionally visited upon the innocent.

It could also be said that there is to be found nearly everywhere the evidence of an ongoing intolerance for evil. In many cases it is difficult to see the good of a proposal, whether it is a war or an attempt to control the masses, but it is simple to see these as attempts to strike out at something bad. It may be

that the effort is misguided, or that it involves further wrong or even greater wrong, but in principle the vast bulk of human effort is aimed in the general direction of what is thought to be good.

There are also those whose intentions are decidedly evil, who understand well enough that their actions are unwelcome and yet persist in them nonetheless. While these persons are to be met with scorn and opposition, and rightly so, they are ultimately no more or less prone to demonic intrusion than their moralist counterparts. The fundamental criteria sought by the spirits is a submission of the will, and one who exerts his or her will against others is every bit as insulated against the demons as one who lives a modest and considerate lifestyle.

The doubtful, the hesitant, and those who seek assistance without regard to its source or content: these are the prey of evil spirits. The demons themselves have no care whether one believes in holy relics, or denies that spirits exist, so long as their prey will volunteer to perform not his or her own desires but those of the demon instead.

It is beyond the point of absurdity to demarcate any person or activity as having its origin in demons on the weight of its impropriety. Far too often have people become victims of horrific violence at the hands of mobs who presume to enact holy justice upon demons by utterly destroying their fellow humans. This sort of activity continues to the present day in many parts of the world, where people (particularly women) are regularly murdered on presumptions of demonism. These are

regrettable and barbaric acts, and have no bearing on the proper understanding of demonology.

It is common to hear that the general lack of mob violence against supposed demoniacs is a victory for the secular humanists, or that religion is merely antiquated and ignorant superstition from which such brutality is to be expected. These sentiments are unfairly generous to the secularists, and unfairly pejorative toward religions in which millions find hope and joy.

In frank terms, the major religions would be only too happy to divorce themselves from demonology. Except for the rare sects that make demon-exorcism their biggest business (who are universally ignorant of demonology), it is very difficult to find someone among the clergy who will publicly speak more than two sentences about demons. This is the case among all faiths professing some belief in evil spirits: it is the single greatest source of bad public relations to be caught discussing any belief in actual and individual spirits of evil. The general public has become overwhelmingly secular in attitude, and as a result the whole subject of demonology is regarded as an unfortunate embarrassment.

Though not quite as unfortunate as mob violence, this attitude is unfortunate in its own way. The secular public has no effective method to evaluate its true adversaries, and the religious public is discouraged from investigating the subject. There is also a third perspective, largely ignored in contemporary society, which is traditionally connected to demonology but is at the same time disconnected with society. A summary of these

three perspectives can be rendered thus: the Materialist, the Mystic, and the Magician.

Demonology has a valid and useful place in any of these philosophical perspectives, making it especially valuable in the modern world. Demonology can be understood without offense to the reason of the Materialist or the faith of the Mystic.

A thousand years ago in Europe, well after the fall of the Roman Empire and well before the dawn of secular philosophy, the pace of life was measured in a very different way. Throughout the Christian world, which was at that time comparatively small, the obsessive concerns of the average person were faith and morals. The Church had yet to become the political monster that developed in the 12th to 14th centuries, and yet had evolved considerably beyond its humble roots in the catacombs and village chapels. The local priests were important figures in a way scarcely comparable to their modern counterparts, and the religious ideas to which they held sole claim were very nearly the most important thing in the world to almost everyone.

As unlike the present religious climate this may at first appear, it must be remembered that life was especially precarious during the Dark Ages. There was the constant threat of death from simple infections and minor illnesses, the generally poor quality of sanitation and hygiene, the impoverished diet of rotten meat and limited vegetable stock, and the omnipresence of vermin. To make matters worse, one could expect little in the way of advancement or social change, so that the peasants

remained relatively unrewarded for their toil and the wealthy could hardly hope to find friendly allies abroad. For rich and poor alike, there was no thing in the visible world that could possibly eradicate the incessant annoyance, difficulty, and despair of their bleak lives except an unyielding faith in supreme and universal justice.

It may be that the belief in an Almighty God made life bearable, or that it brought a sense of order and participation to an isolated and ignorant population. Whatever the case, there was nothing so rich in the material affairs of the average person of the early Middle Ages that could compare to the depth of spirituality that was everywhere imposed upon them. Money was not important: one had little of it and so worked through trade, or had enough of it and did not struggle with peers to attain it. Work was not important: it was simple necessity, or the burden of others. Ideas were not important: there were no issues to debate, and very little education. The only matter of importance, grave and glorious in the minds of nearly every person, was religious faith.

So encompassing was the power of this faith that it became more than a mere consolation for a life of unease. Faith became the very reason for existence, the central pivot around which all other concerns revolved. People had come to make sense of their lives through religious doctrines and would spend several centuries using faith as the cornerstone for developments in society. By the time of Petrarch, Christian faith had become credited for every advance in Western culture.

In stark contrast, the modern secularist movements tend to regard religion as a backward notion, long out of fashion and due for renovation or removal from society. Secular philosophy, fortified by scientific discovery, has brought face-value judgments of religious topics into serious dispute, and the present civilization credits materialist miracles with all of its advances. God did not bring mankind Penicillin, combustion engines, air travel, or television, so to the average person of the present age these discoveries force religious institutions and their ideas into the back-seat.

It is important to understand that whatever might appear to be “the greatest thing ever” derives its apparent greatness from the surrounding conditions. The reverence given to religious doctrines in days of yore was an outgrowth of the predominant features of life and society in those days, as will eventually be seen of the contemporary fixations with material forces. Just as the Muslims were busy doing long division while the French peasants of the Dark Ages could barely count their own turnips, so even now are there people who hold entirely different ideological priorities.

It may seem as though the average person in an advanced cosmopolitan society demands a sense of scientific reasonability for any proposed idea before accepting its validity. This is true in a general sense, but the manner in which this validity is judged can be embarrassingly simple. In short, people believe what they see on TV, or in some other media outlet. Unless an idea, product, program, or event gains media validation, it cannot fully exist in the public mind or possess any form of influence. When

anything does have the media approval, it gains instant acceptance and eager devotion. In this sense the media has replaced religious institutions as the custodians of truth.

Media is generally unwelcoming toward any work in favor of the individual. The average person does not read or care to read, has few interests, and could summarize all life experience in less than ten pages. Mass media requires standardization of the audience in order to make their message effective, and in so doing seeks to remove individuality and replace it with conventionalism. In a world where priorities are dictated by the media, Materialism gives one unfettered access whereas a person of restrictive principles will evaluate products, services, and ideas on a scale other than the one which the advertisers hope to create.

The intent of this seeming digression is to make clear that while the idea of demonology is currently out of favor, it is placed thus by a society that hopes to divorce itself from religious orthodoxy and not out of reference to its genuine validity or lack thereof. If people do not believe in demons, it is simply that the television has told them to disbelieve, and they would have the reverse opinion if that should ever be broadcast on the evening news.

A Materialist or secular philosophy can, and should, accommodate all that has been previously said in regard to demons. What is real does not cease to be real when one takes a new perspective or applies different words to the same concepts.

The typical rally-cry of the Materialist demonologist is that the entire subject of demonology deals not with any actual spirit, but with the human subconscious. This type of thinking is not entirely out of line, for there is nothing of material substance through which one could study demons directly, and the primary influence of the demons is upon the activity of the spirit rather than the material world.

The fable of the hapless fisherman notwithstanding, there is no aspect of a demon that one could actually capture and seal away in a bottle. They do not submit to examination by microscope, and one could never truly “shake hands with the devil” if one should choose to do so. As has been amply described earlier, the demon has no physical form and exists in a manner utterly inconsistent with all measurable forms of mass and energy. To declare otherwise is fantasy or naked conjecture, and yet the reality of demons is unchallenged in that they are not presumed to possess any part suitable for examination.

If one cannot examine the physical existence of demons through the lens of Materialism, yet still uphold some reasonable belief in their existence, their activity must be examined. It is certainly not inaccurate to assert that the influence of demons is upon the subconscious mind. It would be in error, however, to assert that the entire existence of the spirit lies within the dim recesses of the human brain or that the demons are merely extensions of an unrestrained or under-developed personality.

Temptations of the demons are rarely so obvious as disembodied voices and horrific apparitions, but tend to appear instead as calculated misjudgments presented as reliable codes of action and belief. The influence of the demon is insidious, often recognized only after it has wrought great damage and led its unwary target very far astray from his or her original purposes. As previously mentioned, the weaknesses upon which the demon preys are entirely material and do exist within the brain, but it is the directive power of the human spirit that the demon seeks to overthrow, and it does so as an evil spirit and not as a dysfunctional aspect of personal psychology residing in a tangle of neurons.

Acknowledgement of the existence of spirits, whether it is the individual soul or any other spirit, does not require the adoption of any sort of religious belief or practice. Those who do engage in such things may be said to follow one of the multitudinous schools of Mysticism. The key principle behind such systems is the idea of “faith,” wherein one will gauge actions according to principles understood by hope rather than by experience.

The Mystic will almost certainly have a prescribed system of demonology attached to his or her religious doctrines. It is irrelevant whether or not one can consider the specific identities and relationships attributed to the spirits as true, but very important to understand how such attributions affect the individuals involved in those religions.

For example, an Evangelical Christian on vacation in Bali might find himself surrounded by

abominable demonic idols when visiting the local attractions. “That is not Rangda,” he might say of an image depicting the child-eating queen of evil, “but yet another mask of Satan!” The two religions do not agree on the identities of evil spirits, and it is futile to seek some reconciliation on the specific details. There is agreement, though, on the point that evil is a thing to be avoided and that it can be perpetrated by supernatural beings of a unique and personal nature.

There is trouble, however, when the same Evangelical Christian visits Nepal and has an identical reaction toward the image of divine Avalokiteswara. He may find this, too, to indicate the presence of evil spirits, while the local citizens regard it as their primary example of compassion and sublime wisdom. In approaching the subject of demonology, the Mystic of any faith must bear in mind that there is an effort to accomplish goodness even in those who appear to practice alien or forbidden rites.

The Mystic might find it incumbent upon him or herself, whether through prescriptions of the faith or in response to personal motives, to challenge evil spirits and attempt to negate their work. In many religions, this is a large part of the priestly work. As has been mentioned, it is neither the responsibility nor power of the priest, in any religion, to remove the free will of an individual. Those hoping to perform exorcisms and banishments should take this into account before making any overture against perceived powers of darkness.

Within recent history, it was once proudly declared that “God is dead!” These bold, and perhaps not altogether sincere words attracted immediate attention to the breaking-down of traditional religious practices. Within a very short time after Nietzsche gave this fiery dart to the world, “Jesus lives!” began appearing in graffiti and bumperstickers, a trend that highlights the fact that indeed traditional modes of religious expression are becoming less relevant to modern culture.

The world is full of conflicting ideas about what is good and true, but more or less in agreement that good and truth are worthy ideals. Those who speak against absolute good and absolute truth inevitably make their case with the premise that their nebulous philosophies are good, and that they reflect reality as accurately as possible. In other words, they believe in good and truth.

The Mystic is met with some confusion at this point. He or she may recognize that those who follow different faiths do, in their own way, seek the betterment of mankind and pursue righteous action according to prescriptions laid down by their own cultures. It is apparent in nearly every nation on earth that as much trouble as good results from a person deciding to abandon the faith of his or her community in pursuit of a foreign religion, however lofty its ideals.

When the priests of different faiths meet, it is usually a very civil discourse. Both parties are often left with the feeling that the other man is a good fellow, even if his deity is an evil monster. A curious outsider might decide that several religions

have good points and failures, and then question which, if any, represent the true religion.

The one common ground of all religion, a point which is usually shrouded in silence, is that all religions have the exact same object of devotion. This figure is not an invisible overlord, a collective of super-beings, or even nature as a whole, but mankind itself.

This is, of course, not to say that mankind has created the world or set the stars in their courses, or even that mankind has a significant role in the universe. Nonetheless, it is mankind toward whom all religious activity is devoted. If there were no human benefit to be found in following the will of God or gods, no one would participate. Despite protests from the critics of religion, no sane person would willingly become the slave of any deity except in that it serves his or her own interest.

When prayers are offered, when sacrifices are made, when observances are kept and taboos are upheld, it is not for the sake of any god or goddess. Instead these things, and all duties attendant upon the faithful, are done so that the human spirit will be uplifted. People may claim, or hope to claim rewards from the heavens, or they may fear the chastisement of a righteous divinity, but in so doing they accept that it is to the benefit of mankind that such rewards and punishments exist. It may be that credit for the teachings and practices of religion are owed in part to God or gods who inspired and directed them, but their ultimate benefit and the motive behind their endurance is an unflinching reverence for human dignity.

While there may never be any agreement on what violates divine laws, there can be a general consensus that it is wrong to suppress free will. The subject of demonology brings into question those agencies working in opposition to free will, under the premise that such a thing is not carried out accidentally or through some natural process, nor through any living creature.

The chief differences between the Materialist and the Mystic, insofar as demonology is concerned, lies not in the distinction between physical and supernatural causes, but in the alignment of the individual will. The Materialist philosophies declare with nearly universal agreement that the individual will is to be measured against those of other people with whom one interacts. The family, the nation, the ever-expanding circle of interwoven human contacts is, for the Materialist, sufficient to justify any sort of personal advancement or withdrawal. The great task laid upon the Materialist is to measure the needs of those around him or herself, and to meet those needs so far as he or she considers possible and worthwhile.

This is in contrast to the perspective of the Mystic, who follows divine edicts in whatever form his or her religion dictates. The Mystic will seek to accomplish not the will of other people, but the divine will whose expression is understood according to religious teachings. Whereas the Materialist may understand demonic influences as disruptive influences in society, the Mystic will recognize the demons as enemies of the deity or deities to which he or she is pledged.

There is a third division to the ways in which one can understand demons and incorporate the ideas of demonology into a coherent world-view. It is that of the Magician, whose task is to discover his own will and fulfill its purposes rather than those of the larger society or of the deity. It should not be thought that the Magician is “selfish” for following such a purpose, any more than the Materialist might be called “ignorant” of spiritual powers or the Mystic “presumptuous” for assertion of spiritual truth. To the Magician, the power of demons is that which restricts individual freedom, and it is to be addressed on an individual basis.

While the Materialist can altogether ignore the existence of demons, turning his or her will entirely toward physical causes and results; and the Mystic can actively attempt to thwart demonic influences, the Magician is most frequently identified as one who would bind and compel the demons directly. Unlike the religious exorcist who hopes to drive away the demons, the Magician seeks to have the demons undo their evil work so that the individual may continue in his or her own work unimpeded.

The result of liberation from the grasp of evil spirits is such that dramatic changes can take place in relatively short order. Contrary to popular belief, a Magician is not a rogue miracle-worker, and must be much more than a fountain of astrological trivia. A Magician will undergo a serious investigation of his or her own inclinations, and make a determined effort to put them into practice. He or she will vigilantly attempt to eradicate the distractions of false desire, so that his or her work is devoted to

what is best within the self, others, and the world. There is little in terms of prescriptive doctrine for the Magician, who will usually draw from a variety of inspirational sources and establish a personal and individual code of belief and practice. The aim of the Magician is to promote what is good and to denounce what is bad through the undiluted application of the human will.

From any perspective, the primary function of demonology is to provide an understanding of the forces which oppose mankind, so that such knowledge may lead to defense against those forces.

The Materialist may turn away from the supernatural entirely, and therein the evil spirits are powerless for they have no weapon other than that which is beyond the physical world. Among solid objects, measurable forces, and reasonable conclusions, the demons have no foothold and thus cannot achieve their aims.

The Mystic has, at all times, the power of his or her deity to protect against evil spirits. In whatever manner faith may manifest, it is an expression of an unassailable will that no evil spirit can deter so long as one chooses to cling thereunto and follow the course of its guidance.

The Magician, through steadfast dedication to personal freedom and autonomy of the will, creates an impregnable defense against spiritual assault and corruption.

There may be no agreement on what is to be valued, but there can at least be some agreement on what is

to be scorned, and to this end the subject of demonology is particularly well-suited. All too often, one hears of proposals for “change” that depend entirely on the juggling of products and services, without any substantial changes at all. Instead of any real change, the masses are encouraged to buy a different product or to reorganize politically. If there is any revolution worth creating, it is one in which people will actively redefine their values in favor of individual freedom.

The Author

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My other public writings:

Imperial Arts: Experiments in Demonology

The Wizard's Workshop

Secrets of Magic

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