

The Rise of and Dangers of Dualism in Western Esotericism

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From Introduction to Treatise on Angel Magic
(1989) 2006 Weiser Books

The second main section of the work is Dr. Rudd's *Nine Hierarchies of Angels and their Conjunction to Visible Appearance*. There is a most interesting item, for here Rudd reveals himself as a practicing magician, rather than merely a collector or scholar of esoteric material.

He reveals in the structuring of his conjurations an almost obsessive concern with identifying the invoked spirit as a 'good' Angel. There is a hint of paranoiac insecurity about getting in touch with an 'evil' spirit. Consequently, his conjurations are hedged around with tests to trap and make an 'evil' spirit reveal its true colors. Rudd reveals himself here as being immersed in a dualistic picture of the spiritual world. This dualism also shows itself in other sections of his manuscript, particularly in the sections on Demons or Witches and Enchanters, and the fact that he sets great store by the *Malleus Malleficarum*, that tissue of lies and propaganda dreamt up by two Dominican inquisitors to justify their unwholesome imaginings.

Rudd's *Nine Hierarchies of Angels with their Invocations to Visible Appearance* reminds one of the atmosphere of the John Dee and Edward Kelley workings. Dee and Kelley also were almost obsessively concerned with whether they had invoked a 'good' or 'evil' spirit, and went to great lengths to develop methods of working which could protect them against stray 'evil' spirits.

Indeed, both Dee and Kelley remained uncertain even years after they had ceased to work together on their Enochian magic, as to whether the spirits they had then contacted were 'good' or 'evil.'

THE CENTRAL ISSUE

The question of dualism is of great import in esotericism. Western occultism has been much influenced by the Kabbalistic stream which, being the esoteric tradition of the Jewish peoples, could not help but have the

polarized naïve dualism of the Jewish patriarchal religion impressed into its symbolism and method of working. The formative idea of the Fall of Man being linked with a 'Fall' of rebel Angels, which then became 'Demons' bearing special relationship to Man, lay at the heart of this spiritual dualism.

Norman Cohn, in his excellent book *Europe's Inner Demons* (1975), which I recommend to be read in conjunction with this Treatise, shows how this view was consolidated in history from the twelfth century and led to the establishment of a stereotyped picture of the Magician figure, conjuring Demons, making pacts with the Devil, etc., and later also regrettably brought about great suffering through the projection of such dualistic archetypes onto women, in the witchcraft persecutions.

With the greater understanding of the psyche that has arisen since the identification of the realm of the unconscious within our being, and the recognition by Jung and others that these different facets of the psyche must be integrated in order to avoid pathological conditions arising through repressing in a dualistic way a side of our being, esotericists and occultists in the twentieth century have been able to see more clearly the dangers of dualism and seek for a balanced esotericism.

It has, therefore, become obvious that occultists of an earlier time, especially during the transition of the middle ages into the Renaissance, were strongly influenced by the prevailing current of dualism that was given fresh energy through the impulse of naïve Protestantism.

Before this period, magicians could work naturally to invoke spirits without any great inner qualms. They saw that such spirits were, after all, part of God's creation and worthy of the occultist's attention. The earliest grimoires, the books of conjuration, describe elevated spiritual rituals that would not be out of place in any religious tradition, requiring fasting, abstention and a period of celibacy, prayers to God, purification and remission of sins, and petitions and addresses to the supreme God, in whose name they undertook their occult work. One suspects that few priests or bishops of the time took their church rituals quite so seriously as their magician contemporaries.

With the inpouring of the dualistic philosophical view into the collective consciousness, which one sees beginning in the twelfth century or thereabouts, these magical exercises or rituals are seen in a different light, both by outsiders to the experience and by the practitioners of the art itself. From that time on, ritual magic becomes plagued by dualism, and the magician's healthy relationship to the realm of spirits, his personal exploration through ritual of the spiritual world, becomes diseased by a concern about 'evil'.

This 'evil,' of course, we can see as being nothing else but an encounter of the magician with his unconscious mind, though it was to be many hundreds of years before this realm was recognized by our consciousness in such a way that the possibilities of an integrated relationship transcending dualism could come about.

Magical philosophy and ritual thus suffered an intrusion of the naïve dualistic preoccupations of churchmen and scholars, struggling with their polarized patriarchal Christian religion whose internal contradictions were beginning to impinge upon their consciousness during the transition of the medieval period into the Renaissance.

The result of this struggle within the collective psyche of man can be seen mirrored in this Treatise on Angel Magic.

Here, we have a compendium of material on 'Angels,' the spiritual beings of God (under a dualistic theology). But in order to fully describe these angels and the means of working with them, Dr. Rudd has to outline a list of other spirits which under the same dualistic theology he must identify as 'Demons'. Thus he lists 'good' and 'evil' spirits, their characters and operation, and later has to expand at length on ways of avoiding working with 'evil' spirits.

It is interesting that he occasionally uses the word 'daemon' in place of 'demon,' where he experiences internal contradictions as to whether the being is 'good' or 'evil'. Thus Socrates' 'daemon' – his spiritual genius. In this earlier sense a 'daemon' meant a 'spirit' and was not colored with associations of good and evil.

The Treatise on Angel Magic gives us, in a sense, a thin slice of the collective psyche or Western humanity seen through the being of a magician who, sensitive to the reality of the existence of the realms of spiritual beings, nevertheless has to struggle with the prevailing naïve dualism inherent in the Western religious tradition, which had been imported into his psyche. Rudd's struggle to unite these poles of dualism in his magical philosophy is quite transparent and should be of continuing interest in our time, when the process of integration, though collectively embarked upon, is in no sense completed. We can often witness our contemporaries descending into the same primitive dualisms that lived in and motivated peoples of earlier times, projecting such dualistic archetypes upon individuals, nations or events. This dualism which still lives in the atmosphere around us and within us, is perhaps the greatest problem that Western humanity has to face. We can only hope that an integration of these polarities in the Jungian sense can lead to a personal and societal 'individuation' that can heal this disease of the psyche.