

The Occult Novels of Dion Fortune

partly written by Alex Sumner.

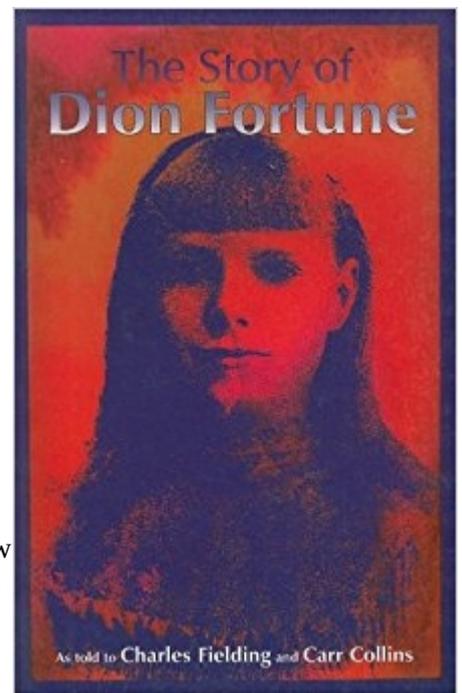
Foreword, intro;

THOSE WHO KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT THE SPIRIT SCIENCE, know that [a cosmic world impulse](#) entered the earth and our part of the galaxy, in the late 1800s. This was the forerunner of what [the danish wiseman Martinus](#) calls "the new world impulse". Astrology - which learns how macrocosmic forces of consciousness affect our planet - knows this time as **the entrance into Aquarius** - or Aquarius' age.

It was this cosmic impulse that also "lay behind" the incipient technological revolution that had begun to emerge at the dawn of this impulse.

The early beginnings of this age also left their mark on the whole world, as new ideas began to emerge in the spiritual realm, which at that time was still completely dominated by the ancient religions - but which had gradually begun to play a *lesser role* as spiritual food for more and more seeking souls.

Many known and unknown writers and philosophers were part of the "soil" in which these new cosmic currents of consciousness could take root. We know some of these as Madame Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Annie Basant, Rudolf Steiner and later also then Dion Fortune. But the main impulse came, as I see it, through the yet unknown Danish "clairvoyant/seer" Martinus (1890-1981) - who in the year 1921 experienced a very far-reaching spiritual "initiation" - whose effects enabled him to write many books and articles about the basic cosmic / spiritual laws of life. In addition, many artists and writers had "come", who in many fields, let new ideas and forms of expression incarnate through them - or rather, they could capture part of this cosmic life impulse, and use and pass it on their own creative fields, from this inflowing field of inspiration, which increasingly began to take hold throughout the 20th century.



on this staircase of insight and knowledge we all walk - but sometimes the stairs are steep and heavy to walk. But "on top" of this one gets the "salary" paid **in the form of true insight and wisdom**. IT IS THAT WHICH GIVES THE REAL AND DEEP JOY - BECAUSE IT COMES FROM THE ONLY "REAL, spiritual I" BEHIND the MATTER - LIFE ITSELF (the consciousness center in Martinus' explanations)

Introduction. (Alex S.)

"Dion Fortune" was the pen-name of Violet Mary Firth, 1890 -> -1946: it is derived from "Deo Non Fortuna" ("By God not Luck"), which she adopted as her motto when she was a member of the AO.



Dion was, (along with Israel Regardie), one of the most prominent members of the first wave of occultists who joined the Golden Dawn tradition after the split at the turn of the 20th century. A former member of the Theosophical Society, she was inspired by Annie Besant's description of the later Masters, and believed that she herself had made contact with two of them. It was whilst attending a Theosophical meeting that Fortune discerned she had a gift for psychism. Indeed, when she later joined the AO, it would appear that Fortune already had enough confidence in her abilities to believe that she didn't have to thank her superiors in that Order for them.

It is crucial to understand Dion Fortune that she was a "Free Thinker". She developed her own views on the Qabalah, on mystical cosmology, paganism, etc which were unlike those taught by either Theosophy or the AO - in this she relied purely on her own genius. It was this tendency to be a Free Thinker which eventually got her into trouble with Moina Mathers, the head of the particular lodge of the AO to which Fortune belonged. Moina pointed out that the writings which Fortune was channelling from her occult sources were not consistent with AO teaching - this led Fortune to leave, and eventually set up her own occult organisation, the Society of Inner Light.

Dion's writing career can be divided into two phases, corresponding to her AO and post-AO periods. It was in the first part (which lasted up to about 1930), she seems to be careful to appease her superiors, and conform to the loyalty and confidentiality expected of a "good little initiate". However, this was completely against her nature, and towards the later part of this first phase one can recognise Fortune asserting her own Will and her own ideas through her writing, leading inevitably to the confrontation with Moina. It was during this time that Dion wrote *Psychic Self-Defence*, and the fictional works *The Secrets of Doctor Taverner* and *The Demon Lover*.

In the second, post-AO phase, from 1930 until the end of her life in 1946, Dion gave up any pretence of toeing the line as just another initiate, and was quite blatantly using her writing to set out her own magical manifesto. It is from this period that her classic work *The Mystical Qabalah* dates, as well as her fictional novels *The Winged Bull*, *The Goat-Foot God*, and her *pièce de resistance*, *The Sea Priestess*. Dion also worked on a further novel, *Moon Magic*, though this was unfinished in her lifetime, and published posthumously in 1956.

Fortune herself said of her fictional output from the post-AO period:

"The 'Mystical Qabalah' gives the theory, but the novels give the practice. ... [T]hose who study the 'Mystical Qabalah' with the help of the novels get the keys of the Temple put into their hands."

The Secrets of Doctor Taverner.

Dion's first attempt at fiction was this collection of short stories. John Taverner MD is a Harley Street physician, and the proprietor of a sanatorium in the west country. He engages a young doctor, Eric Rhodes, who has been discharged from the Army following World War One. Rhodes soon discovers some strange things about his employer: that he belongs to some kind of secret society, that he believes in astrology, that he regularly deals with paranormal phenomena, that mysterious people address him as "Greatly Honoured Frater", etc.

In short, Taverner is a powerful Hermetic magician, who uses Magic to cure the afflictions of the patients that come to him. It appears that "Taverner" is based on a real-life character - Theodore Moriarty, a 7=4 of the AO under whom Fortune studied - whilst the character of "Rhodes" is Fortune herself in the thinnest of disguises.

Fortune therefore uses this scenario to relate a number of incidents which she apparently witnessed whilst under Moriarty's tutelage. For example, in the story "Blood Lust", Taverner deals with a Vampire, which is in fact an etheric being or ghost which is sucking the vitality of the living: an incident which Fortune later stated happened in real-life.

Fortune uses the various stories in this book to outline her views on reincarnation: not just the fact that it occurs, but that previous lives exert a strong influence on the present one. Unusually strong in fact: it seems that the characters who become involved in the various plots of the stories are usually destined to have done so by their "ante-natal" activities. Fortune takes this to the extent that people who were lovers in former lives are again drawn together by their karma.

There is at least one incident inspired by her connection to Theosophy. In "Recalled" Fortune writes about a messianic child, The Reconciler between East and West, described as a "mahatma-soul". The imagery is pure Besant, with "the Reconciler" being modelled on the concept of "the World Teacher" which Besant was grooming. Indeed in *The Training and Work of an Initiate* Fortune admits she believes in this concept. However, this dates the story terribly, as "the World Teacher" idea disappeared in 1925 when Besant's protégé, Krishnamurti, publicly disowned Theosophy. Yet in this story we have a quote which reveals another of Fortune's ideas. When a woman discerns, through occult means, that her husband has had an affair with a native girl in India - and that the girl, pregnant, committed suicide - she says of the girl:

"...[I]t was a woman, and I am a woman, and it seems to hurt me because it hurts womanhood. I can't put it plainly, but I feel it, I feel it as a hurt to all that is best in me."

Clearly, Dion is an early Feminist, and is using this story to put forward her beliefs.

However there are a number of problems with "The Secrets of Doctor Taverner" which mark it out as Fortune's least successful venture into Occult fiction. Firstly, it is written from the viewpoint of a non-psychic (Rhodes). All the interesting phenomena happen to Taverner. Thus whilst Taverner is off in the various regions of the Astral plane, we are often left with Rhodes' description of these incidents, i.e. that he watches over Taverner lying on a couch. This is quite a serious flaw, as the plots of several of the stories rely on the fact that Taverner gets a number of psychic messages via his astral contacts, and often works his cures on the astral. Hence most of the action is happening in invisible realms which, because the narrator is a non-psychic, we are unable to observe.

Secondly, Fortune unwisely decided to tone-down some of the more interesting incidents. For example, in "Blood Lust", the Vampire is dispatched in the following manner:

"Then the end came. Taverner leapt forward. There was a Sign then a Sound."

This is the extent of the detail concerning the method which Taverner used to destroy this fearsome entity, and note that neither the Sign nor Sound was defined. Taverner makes a lot of undetailed Signs throughout the book. Yet in *Psychic Self-Defence*, Fortune goes into much more detail about what Moriarty did: apparently he surrounded it with Love, and absorbing it into his own aura, he neutralised the creature by meditating on Peace. As a result of this venture,

Moriarty lay unconscious for three days - but the Vampire was successfully consigned to oblivion. Clearly, the version in *Psychic Self-Defence* is both more dramatic and gives a better idea about the magical principles involved. It would appear that Dion was still trying to observe her vows of secrecy and loyalty at this point: hence, she was unwilling to give away anything that might be construed as a secret of the order.

The Demon Lover.

Fortune's first attempt at a novel per se is a much more interesting affair from a literary point of view. She avoids the mistake of the previous book of having the stories told from the position of a non-psychic, by making sure that the view-point character gets to participate in and observe in the phenomena which underlie the plot.

Moreover, it has a plot to engage the interest: a classic horror story, which could easily be adapted into a film comparable with, e.g. *The Exorcist*. A sinister black magician plans to cynically use an innocent young girl as part of a magical war against his occult Lodge. However despite the fact that he could easily have sacrificed her when his plan is discovered, he has an attack of conscience (he is falling in love with her), and incurs the supernatural wrath of the Lodge on himself. However, because he cannot completely renounce his evil ways, he eventually pays a terrible price for what he has done.

There is a similarity in subject matter - for example, Fortune re-works the vampire idea of Taverner, but does so in a manner which is more reminiscent of a conventional horror story. Indeed, throughout the work she seems now to be displaying the sensibilities of a novelist, as opposed to an initiate-playing-at-being one.

We also have some indication of Dion beginning to display her independence of thought. Lucas, the "Demon Lover" of the title, is unquestionably evil, but the Lodge against which he intrigues does not provoke our sympathy, as it is painted as full of old men, stuck in the mud, convinced of their own self-righteousness. The resolution of the novel proposes that it is only through the intervention of the pure young heroine, who can use her femininity to restore the balance of the moribund lodge, which can save all parties concerned. This heroine turns out to be the reincarnation of Lucas' lover in a previous life. And note, that the heroine defies the strict regime of the Lodge, but is backed up by a higher power - a high Adept who seems to be a member of the Third Order.

In the light of Dion's later work, it might not be stretching the imagination to say that she identified herself with the heroine, with the Lodge as a metaphor for the AO: Fortune's justification for her actions being that she claimed she was in contact with the Masters, quite independently of her connection with the AO.

The Winged Bull.

The "Winged Bull" of the title is a large Babylonian sphinx: it has the body of a bull, wings covering its back, and the head of a Babylonian nobleman, with the characteristic beard and head-dress. It may still be seen to this day in the British Museum in London, where the plaque in front of it describes it as a "Guardian Spirit" i.e. it would have been set at the entrance to a temple to guard it, along with its counterpart. I must admit that when I myself saw it just last year, I found it interesting to think that I was probably standing on the same spot as Dion herself had done some 70 years previously.

But to Dion's fervent imagination, this Winged Bull is not so much a guardian spirit but a metaphor for sexuality (the Bull) which is sublimated by Spirituality (its Wings). Dion extends this metaphor, by talking of a fictional "Mass of the Bull" (i.e. sans wings) which is enacted by a lodge of black magicians: this is impliedly a kind of "black mass" of the kind that was conducted by La Voisine - although in the novel the infamous ritual never gets to be carried out.

The central theme is the magical healing of a man and woman. She ("Ursula") has been reduced to a neurotic and uncharismatic wreck by involvement with a black magician. The man ("Murchison"), who is persuaded into helping to save her, finds he has to battle shortcomings in his own personality. A proud but lonely man, for a long time he finds it hard to feel compassion towards the damsel he is supposed to be rescuing.

The agent for this magical change is a wise old magician, who, significantly, is not connected to any magical organisation. This same magician not only owns his own pad in London but also has a private income - so that he doesn't have to work but can devote all his time to the occult. (Ah, if only...)

Although Fortune seemed to be a feminist in *The Secrets of Doctor Taverner*, in this novel, Ursula is not at first treated sympathetically. As readers we are made to feel that she herself is partly at fault for the lack of an early solution to her predicament. Why is this? To Fortune, the magical healing at the centre of the story is a metaphor for something that, in life generally, both sexes must undergo. Murchison, representing men, is healed when he learns the true meaning of self-sacrifice, and recognises his proper feelings of compassion and sensitivity towards Ursula. Ursula, representing women, eventually realises that she must embrace sexuality instead of repressing it: moreover she also realises that she has not been putting enough value on Murchison's efforts. Ultimately, she saves him from a nasty end at the hands of the black magicians by herself being brave.

Hence, he is healed by becoming sensitive and compassionate: she is healed by becoming proactive, brave, and responsible for her own sexuality. It is as if what is happening is that both of them are in fact healed by taking on what Fortune sees as the best characteristics of the opposite sex - a balancing of male and female energies.

The Goat Foot God

This book is Fortune's strongest assertion that Magical orders are irrelevant: as, in the course of the story, she reveals a possible method of how to create a viable magical system from books which are published and not subject to anyone's vows of secrecy. The hero, Hugh Paston, in the course of scouring the shelves of a very well-stocked second-hand bookshop, is able to perform this feat of ingenuity when he finds copies of *Là-Bas* and *À Rebours* by J K Huysmans; *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*; *On the Mysteries* by Iamblichus; and something that Fortune coyly refers to as "four tattered, dog-eared, paper-backed volumes on magic spelt with a K". We can probably guess the identity[2] of this last work, and speculate that if Paston had gone straight to this he needn't have bothered with the others!

Paston is a troubled man - he discovers that his wife and best friend were having an affair, after they are killed together in a car crash. We find out that it was his own fault that his wife was cheating on him, as, for all his wealth, he lacks basic charisma or sex appeal. Clearly a man in need of magical healing - so what does he do to relieve his torment? He gets the idea to invoke Pan, the Goat-Foot God of the title. This seems not the obvious course of action to take if one were at the nadir of both grief and low self-esteem, but apparently Paston is being driven by karma from a past-life: as a fifteenth century monk who was walled up in the cellar of a monastery for his own pagan beliefs.

In fact, the karma of previous incarnations plays quite a big role in this book,

manipulating characters and circumstances like a puppet master pulling the strings of his puppets. For example, the influence of Paston's previous incarnation not only causes him to rediscover Paganism - by what seems to be a remarkable set of coincidences - he by chance finds the very monastery in which his previous self met his end. Moreover, it so happens that Mona, the niece of the bookseller, at whose shop he makes his fortunate discoveries, turns out to be the reincarnation of a lover of one of Paston's more ancient incarnations.

In some ways this niece, the heroine, plays a role similar to the female character in *The Demon Lover*: both knew the central character in a previous life, and both help to save him. For it is only through Mona's loyalty that Paston is able to control the forces that he is invoking, as well as protecting him from the more mundane dangers of his family, who want to have him certified so they can get at his wealth.

Paston does heal himself eventually, but only after he has learnt that Pan, who is Nature, is a much bigger concept than he first thought. For originally he only wanted to invoke Pan for his own self-centred amusement, but he eventually understands that Nature includes both the masculine and feminine - i.e. that he must include Mona as well as himself to act as both terminals in a magical circuit.

The Sea Priestess.

Dion Fortune regarded this novel as her proudest achievement: she described it as "a literary Melchizedek. It is a book with an undercurrent; upon the surface a romance; underneath a thesis upon the theme; 'All women are Isis and Isis is all women.'"

The archetypal woman in this novel Vivien Le Fay Morgan, who like the female characters in Fortune's earlier novels is a reincarnation: in this case, of the Sea Priestess, a mysterious Initiate who came from Atlantis to ancient Britain to save the land from rising sea-levels, in a ceremony that involved a lot of human sacrifice. But Morgan is unlike Fortune's previous female leads: she is already a powerful adept, in control of her magical abilities, exotically beautiful, and described in such a mysterious manner that one gets the idea that she is not merely a reincarnation, but she actually is the Sea Priestess, who has survived, immortal, throughout the past thousands of years.

The narrator of the novel is Wilfred, estate agent and fairly well-off, but struck down by asthma as he undergoes a mid-life crisis. Then he encounters Morgan - and he is quite literally enchanted. Significantly, he first meets her after he has been under the influence of the Moon - remember that Isis is a moon-Goddess, after all. In Morgan's presence Wilfred discovers his own past-life memories: as the last of the Sea Priestess' sacrificial victims. Wilfred has a vision that, while making love to the Sea Priestess, he has a mystical revelation:

"And in those hours while the tide rose there were delivered to me things whereof but few have dreamed and fewer still have known, and I learnt why Troy was burnt for a woman. For this woman was not one woman, but all women; and I who mated with her, was not one man, but all men; but these things were part of the lore of the priesthood, and it is not lawful to speak of them."

Because Morgan's character is the Archetypal woman, Isis' very own avatar in other words, she is used as the standard by which other female characters in the book are judged. Molly, the girl whom Wilfred eventually marries, is nice enough, but she does not have "It" - feminine sex appeal. On the other hand, a girl who works in a sweet shop has no pretensions to breeding or learning, but has "It" certainly.

Morgan, however, disappears three-quarters of the way through the novel, leaving Wilfred in a quandary. In stark contrast to the adventure and excitement of his time with Morgan, he wanders into an unexciting marriage, desperately aware that he is in need of healing, but at a loss of how to achieve it: Molly eventually learns to emulate Morgan, invoking the Goddess and healing both herself and Wilfred in the process.

This book does indeed show Dion Fortune at the summit of her art as a novelist. She takes as much care with the prose as if it were poetry, often incorporating meter and rhythm into sentence structure. This is most noticeable in passages which Fortune wants to emphasise - those which we feel represent her underlying message.

It is the high quality of the prose which breathes fresh life into what are clearly concepts she has treated in earlier books. Like *The Winged Bull* and *The Goat Foot God*, we have a male lead in need of sexual healing. Like *The Winged Bull*, we have in Molly a woman herself in need of healing through the power of magic. Like *The Demon Lover* and *Goat Foot God*, the man is redeemed by the innate femininity of a woman: and like pretty much all of them we are introduced to powerful karmic forces at work across time.

Yet in the former novels, these ideas are used within the structure of what seem to be conventional romances or adventures: with *The Sea Priestess* the plot is not supported by the occult element, the occult element is the plot. Fortune had not done this in a fictional work since *The Secrets of Doctor Taverner*, but in that book the reader is often forced to accept a pat explanation from a character who does not reveal the full intricacies of the occult processes in operation.

I have only two real criticisms of *The Sea Priestess*. Firstly, Molly's character is badly underdeveloped - she is only introduced after Morgan has disappeared. This is far too late to flesh out someone who, after all, plays such an important role in the ending.

Secondly, Wilfred first becomes aware of the psychic influences which play such a large part in the plot when he is dosed up to his eyeballs on heroin. Remember that the novel is set before the days of the Ventolin inhaler: diamorphine hydrochloride was used to relieve such conditions, as one of its properties is to suppress the cough reflex, and relieve the muscle spasm which forms the basis of an asthma attack. Obviously this is a plot device, to make sure Wilfred gets into the action quickly, but I really feel it is sending out the wrong kind of message to those who are new to magic.

Moon Magic.

Fortune's last novel, published posthumously, was found amongst her papers at her death. It is a sequel to *The Sea Priestess*, and in it we find out where Morgan disappeared to - to London, to set up a temple in which she could practice the "Greater Mysteries". Morgan, now calling herself Lillith, takes the lease of a deconsecrated church off the Albert Embankment, which she sets about converting. As to where her money comes from, she invokes for it - exactly how is left unsaid, as this is one magical operation that is not described in the story.

The plot features yet another emotionally stunted man, in need of magical salvation - this time in the form of Dr. Rupert A. Malcolm, a brilliant neurologist and endocrinologist. Trapped in a sterile marriage for 20 years to an invalid, and having no particular social life, he is a complete workaholic, with no emotional side to his character of which to speak. His reputation for efficiency is matched by his unlikeability - a medical student sums him up:

"Nobody likes him ... but we jolly well trust him."

It is upon this most unpromising of prima materia that Lillith, over the course of time, works a veritable Alchemy. After first discovering his existence by unconscious telepathy on his part, she involves him in a series of magical workings which break down his old personality, causing him to rediscover his emotional nature, and ultimately the "Stone of the Wise", when he learns to become "god" to her "goddess".

But this transformation is not just for Malcolm's benefit: for it is also the vehicle by which Lillith intends to perform a greater task - it is here that we can read some of Fortune's own philosophy. By Lillith assuming the role of goddess, and Malcolm that of god, they are in fact acting on behalf of all those that their respective roles represent. Hence Lillith is "all-women", and Malcolm is "all-men" and as such, each of them is magically at one with them. Therefore, the "Alchemy", a kind of spiritual sex-magick (strictly right-hand path, as it happens), which they practice in fact benefits the whole human race.

Although it is called a sequel, Moon Magic is a book in its own right. Fortune deliberately adopts a different style of writing: the beginning and ending is written from Malcolm's point of view, but the middle (and main) section is a first-person narrative by Lillith. Whereas The Sea Priestess was really Wilfred's story, Moon Magic is the story of both priestess and priest.

A curious fact can be observed here: in later life, it was apparently Dion's habit to stroll about London wearing a cloak and a wide-brimmed hat, so that she almost looked like the character from the advert for "Sandeman's Port"[3]. It so happens that when Malcolm first sees Lillith, she is wearing just such a cloak and hat. It doesn't take a genius to deduce that Dion identified herself with the character of Lillith / Morgan when writing both The Sea Priestess and Moon Magic: or that when, in the latter, Lillith narrates in the first person, Dion is actually talking to us direct.

Despite the attractive theme, there are some indications within the novel that only a first draft was found in Dion Fortune's papers. Because of the change of narrative viewpoint during the novel, the prose only rises to the lyrical quality of its predecessor during the passages describing the actual magical operations. However, if we assume that this is deliberate, light is shed on the character of Wilfred in the Sea Priestess.

For a start, in Moon Magic, Lillith is not so mysterious as she was in the former novel. In opening up about herself though, she reveals that her history is equally fantastic: a cosmic adept who has discovered the elixir of life (she is apparently 120 years old - over 80 years older than how she looks). She is at once assured of her magical expertise, and a witty, modern metropolitan woman. Yet she makes no pretension to be the reincarnation of "the **Sea Priestess**": in this respect it would appear that the character in that novel was a projection from Wilfred's mind, a theory which fits in with the mysterious way she disappears three-quarters of the way through.

On another point, the ending appears to be rather abrupt. Malcolm finds what he has been looking for, which is tantamount to a mystical understanding of the meaning of initiation - and there it stops. The fact that the story ends at the high-point of the final ritual at least means that there is no danger of anti-climax: but neither is there any real discussion about how this success affects his life, or Lillith's for that matter, thereafter.

Conclusion

Dion Fortune's novels therefore display her own peculiar view of magic, which is a synthesis of the Golden Dawn, Thelema, Theosophy, Jungian and Freudian psychoanalysis, and personal philosophy which is based in part on channelled wisdom. And yet her own view never wholly endorses any one of her professed influences. For example, although she is indebted to Crowley as a scholar, she deliberately rejects the anti-nomian tone in his writing, preferring to adopt a form of Christianity which both accepts Jesus as the author of the modern

evolutionary current, yet accommodates her own views on mysticism and reincarnation.

Certain specific themes which are purely "Dion" occur throughout her works:

Feminism. Dion is an early believer in feminism, not only in the sense of the mere fact of female equality, but also in the idea of females working together to advance their own interests. However, unlike a number of modern feminist writers, Fortune's brand of Feminism is quite definitely a spiritual movement: whereas a modern feminist sees women working together as a sisterhood, Fortune sees it as a samadhi-like realisation of unity at the mystical level. It is as if the collective-idea of "Woman" is an archetype - "the Goddess", so that Goddess-worship and feminism are in effect one and the same thing.

Moreover, Fortune extends her theory of Spiritual Feminism into revising the history of the Western Mystery Tradition, by arguing that the aim of the Great Work is the balancing of "male and female energies". This idea, whose closest parallel is in the Taoist notion of balancing Yang and Yin, seems to be an innovation with Fortune. The idea is not present in the Golden Dawn for example, which despite recognising the equality of men and women describes the spiritual quest in a non-gender related manner. Not so, Fortune, who sees this male and female polarity as the central concept.

Sexuality. In Fortune's view, healthy sexuality is mankind's inheritance. Here we see the influence of Freud coming through. It appears that Fortune, a former lay-practitioner of psychoanalysis, accepted Freud's notion that sexuality is at the root of psychological well-being: but moreover, she asserts that it is also the basis of Spiritual well-being. Thus, consistently throughout her novels, emotionally-stunted men and women, those with various neurotic conditions, those lacking the charisma that derives from "It" (i.e. sex appeal) - all achieve psychological and sexual healing when they learn to invoke either Pan or the Goddess properly.

Fortune's treatment of sexuality is a fine balancing act, in which she tries to simultaneously convey the erotic, without ever becoming in any way prurient. Thus, although overtly sexual acts rarely occur in the narrative, and a very discrete veil is drawn over the ones that do, yet we are left in no doubt that it is Fortune's firm belief that men' and women's natural condition is to enjoy full, healthy, emotionally satisfying sex, free from all hang-ups and repressions.

A Magical Manifesto.

There is a large number of details about practical magic, which, taken with The Mystical Qabalah, can be assumed to be an attempt by the author to teach us, her readers, how we might practice the occult without necessarily having to join a magical lodge or order. For example:

The Goat Foot God, The Sea Priestess, and Moon Magic all contains chants to invoke either Pan or the Goddess. It so happens that Wiccan groups have borrowed these chants for just these purposes.

Throughout all her novels, there is considerable discussion on the proper use of Sex Magic. Admittedly, most of it is what a tantrika would call "Right Hand Path" - i.e. it does not involve actual intercourse (at least not physically). And yet there is plenty of detail as to how a husband and wife can incorporate this Magic, with the implication that it then supplements and enriches their ordinary sex-life.

The Goat Foot God contains specific references to published literature from which it is possible to adduce the techniques of practical magic.

Moreover, there are plenty of throwaway references to basic techniques of magic. E.g. in Moon Magic, Dion mentions the use of the Banishing Ritual of the

Greater Pentagram for exorcism; she talks about the Qabalah, and the esoteric use of colour; she briefly refers to the "Body of Light" method of Astral Projection. (We are also told in this regard, in *The Secrets of Doctor Taverner* and *The Demon Lover*, to keep a thermos of coffee ready whilst projecting, as one experiences a loss of heat on re-entering the physical).

Throughout her novels, Dion talks about her theories on Reincarnation, the nature of the subtle bodies, and on various other points of esoteric philosophy.

Money.

Sci-fi author William Gibson once pointed out that in the science fiction which came before him, one would never find a hero who was "from the wrong side of the tracks". He might also have levelled the same criticism at the occult novels of Dion Fortune. Throughout her novels, the central characters are all rich, and usually have money coming in from private incomes. The protagonists which do not have any money are soon given some by wealthy benefactors. A main character who has to do something as menial as work for a living almost invariably owns their own business.

Clearly, Dion Fortune, who was middle-class herself and lived off an inheritance for most of her life, believed that in order to follow the Occult path, one must be materially well set-up, and able to be either free from not-so-great work altogether or at least able to have no trouble taking time off. Her view of wealth is similar to Charles Dickens': for the heroes of both authors, once rich, never actually taste poverty again.

Fortune shamelessly allows her own background to colour her view of the Occult - and this background is substantially different from the circumstances in which other occultists had found themselves, both then and today. For example, Macgregor Mathers eked out an existence only slightly above the poverty line for all of his life. Crowley made a great show of his poverty, implying that his humiliation at the hands of a corrupt OTO Treasurer was actually a sign of his sacrifice for Babalon.

Occult Secrecy / Openness.

Finally, whilst members of mysterious occult fraternities do exist within Fortune's novels, we see that for the most part the stories are all about great works of magic being worked by ordinary, non-initiates with little or no magical training. Obviously this is first and foremost a literary device: Fortune is making us feel sympathy for these characters. If we recognise them as people we ourselves could meet in real life, we identify with them and care for what happens to them. Moreover, we may be tempted to think, "if he or she can do it, so can I..."

But aside from arousing our curiosity in the Occult, we should remember something of Fortune's own background. She was famously demitted from the Alpha-et-Omega, and had to develop her main occult practice away from the Order which had initiated her. In "The Mystical Qabalah" she at several points criticises other occultists for excessive secrecy, including the practice of the Golden Dawn for swearing initiates to keep silent on things already openly published.

Therefore we can say that in her novels, the fact that non-initiates get to practice magic can be seen as a protest against her treatment at the hands of order chiefs who use their position to wield excessive power - and a plea for the recognition of the validity of works of independent genius, which she herself sought in her own life.