



Victorian Occultism and the Making of Modern Magic: Invoking Tradition (Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic)

Alison Butler

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In the midst of increasing secularization and the birth of scientific naturalism, a curious group emerged in Victorian Britain. From 1888-1900, hundreds of men and women were initiated into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn at temples across Britain and in Paris. Amongst them were famous personalities such as William Butler Yeats, Florence Farr, Annie Horniman, Maud Gonne and the infamous Aleister Crowley. These men and women met in secret temples for even more secretive rituals, in order to learn the techniques of ritual magic. Members put this magic to use in various ways including attempting murder, preserving peace, and travelling to other planets.

This examination of the rituals and personalities associated with the Golden Dawn demonstrates how Victorian magic provided an alternative to the tightening camps of science and religion in an intellectual environment that heightened the allure of magic. *Victorian Occultism and the Making of Modern Magic* explores how nineteenth-century occultism encompassed many of the aspirations and ideals of the middle-class, while completely revolutionizing Western magic.

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