



Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic

Nevill Drury

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The Western magical traditions are currently undergoing an international resurgence. In *Stealing Fire from Heaven*, Nevill Drury offers an overview of the modern occult revival and seeks to explain this growing interest in ancient magical belief systems.

Gnosticism and the Hermetica, the medieval Kabbalah, Tarot and Alchemy, and more recently, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, collectively laid the basis for the modern magical revival, which first began to gather momentum in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. Western magic has since become increasingly eclectic, drawing on such diverse sources as classical Greco-Roman mythology, Celtic cosmology, Kundalini yoga and Tantra, shamanism, chaos theory, and the various spiritual traditions associated in many different cultures with the Universal Goddess.

Drury traces the rise of various forms of magical belief and practice, from the influential Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn to the emergence of Wicca and Goddess worship as expressions of contemporary feminine spirituality. He also explores Chaos Magick and the occult practices of the so-called Left-Hand Path, as well as twenty-first-century magical forays into cyberspace. He believes that the rise of modern Western magic stems essentially from the quest for personal spiritual transformation and direct experience of the sacred--a quest which the trance occultist and visionary artist Austin Osman Spare once referred to as "stealing fire from heaven." Considered in this light, Drury argues, modern Western magic can be regarded as a form of alternative spirituality in which the practitioners seek direct engagement with the mythic realm.

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