

The Beautiful Side of Evil Study Guide

The Beautiful Side of Evil by Johanna Michaelsen

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Plot Summary

This autobiographical narrative is the story of the author's experiences with the occult. While the first three quarters of the book are taken up with details of those experiences, the final quarter consists of an intensely worded and deeply researched warning against the pervasive presence of the occult in contemporary society. Both sections of the book explore themes relating to the deceptive nature of occult practice, the necessity of adhering firmly to Christian faith, and the Bible as the only true source of inspiration for that faith.

The narrative begins with a vividly worded description of the author's increasingly desperate search for the home of Pachita, a psychic healer whom the author has been eager to meet for some time. Upon arriving at the house, the author is shown into Pachita's presence, where she learns it is possible that she (the author) is as powerful a psychic as the renowned Pachita.

The next several chapters relate how the author came to be at the point in her life where meeting Pachita became so important. She describes her family background (a turn-of-the-century female relative was, she says, a renowned psychic), her childhood encounter with what she portrays as a malevolent spirit, and her troubled adolescence (during which her interest in the occult triggered the general suspicion that she was a witch), and her deep faith in God and Christ. She then writes of her experiences at two different colleges, where she developed her interest in theater and the occult, where she became involved with drugs, and where two very different experiences with two very different young men led her to two very different changes in the direction of her life. During this time, she writes, her faith in God is what kept her safe from the influence of evil and also kept her searching for the truth. The final chapters of this section are taken up with a description of the author's experience with Mind Control, a technique built upon the premise that individuals can tap into the power of their own brains and develop psychic abilities. As a result of work with this program, the author writes, she became increasingly drawn to psychic healing, an interest which leads her to Pachita and to the belief that both her and Pachita's abilities are gifts from God.

The narrative then returns to the point from which it left off at the end of Chapter 1 - the beginning of the author's deepening relationship with Pachita. The author describes witnessing several of Pachita's apparently miraculous "operations", her own experience of seeking help in becoming a healer like Pachita, her frustration that that help doesn't come, and her growing doubts that Pachita's work is actually of God. She then writes of how her doubts led her to take some time away from Pachita, how that time away led her to understand that Pachita, her work, and indeed all forms of occult practices are actually manifestations of Satan and his desire to win control over humanity. She describes her process of renouncing all occult practices and embracing the teachings and influence of Jesus Christ in her life.

The final quarter of the book is taken up with the author's strongly worded warnings against the presence of occult practice in contemporary society. Illustrating her points



with considerable amounts of quotation from the Bible and from other sources, she strongly suggests that Eastern spirituality, yoga, elements of popular culture, and even certain spiritual practices within the Christian church are actually occultist. She contends that only fully tested practices, considered in light of intense Biblical study and careful Biblical interpretation, can be regarded as truly Godly, and warns that unless an individual fully and unconditionally accepts the word, examples and teachings of Christ, that person's soul is lost to God and has become the property of Satan.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

This autobiographical narrative is the story of the author's experiences with the occult. While the first three quarters of the book are taken up with details of those experiences, the final quarter consists of an intensely worded and deeply researched warning against the pervasive presence of the occult in contemporary society. Both sections of the book explore themes relating to the deceptive nature of occult practice, the necessity of adhering firmly to Christian faith, and the Bible as the only true source of inspiration for that faith.

Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

"The Encounter"

The chapter begins with a description of the author's frustration at being late for a meeting with someone named Pachita, and therefore unable to "witness any of the operations scheduled for that night". As she (the author) hands over what happens next to God, her friend/teacher Tom pulls up in front of Pachita's home, where they are confronted by Dr. Carlos (see "Important People"), who accuses the "Mind Control" people with whom Tom works as being disrespectful to Pachita and her work. Carlos then shows Tom and the author into Pachita's home, which the author describes as dirty and messy, decorated with dead roses and an altar in one corner. On that altar, she writes, there is a crucifix and a statuette of Cuauhtemoc, an Aztec warrior prince "who had defiantly borne torture and death at the hands of Spanish [invaders]." The author describes how, as she mentally recited the Lord's Prayer, touching the statuette awakened in her a sense of peace "which wrapped itself around [her] like a mantle on the shoulders of a priest", and thanks God for bringing her to this place after "all the years of terror."

On a metaphoric level, the author's search for Pachita in the first part of this chapter can be seen as representing the search for truth undertaken by the author throughout the narrative. In this context, the truth initially encountered by the author (a dirty home, death, the crucifix and statuette of what the author would doubtlessly define as a pagan god) can be seen as representing the truth she believes to be at the core of Pachita's work. This "truth" is that the work is corrupt and unclean, a trigger of spiritual death, and a manifestation of a pagan evil (ie Satanic) entwined with the disguising power of Christianity. For further consideration of this aspect of the chapter, see "Style - Tone."

On a narrative level, this chapter is an effectively shaped introduction to the author and her story, offering just enough information to draw the reader further in but not so much that the reader believes him/herself to have the full picture. In other words, there is a great deal of foreshadowing here, not only in terms of specific events or circumstances (such as, for example, the author's reference to being brought to a place of peace after



"all the years of terror" - an ironic comment if ever there was one). There is also foreshadowing in the stormy, dark, oppressive atmosphere evoked in the author's writing, a sense of darkness that isn't fully dispelled by the glimpse of hope (which, as discussed, is completely ironic) offered at the chapter's conclusion.



Chapters 2, 3 and 4

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 Summary and Analysis

"Great-Great Aunt Dixie"

In this brief chapter, the author writes of her Great-Great Aunt Dixie, famous in America and Europe in the late-19th and early-20th century for apparent spiritual powers. Dixie, the author writes, died "sometime in the 1920s, alone, forgotten, and a pauper," but not before she had predicted someone in the author's generation of the family would inherit her talent.

"The Intruder"

The first part of the chapter is taken up with the author's narration of a night when she and her younger sister were left alone in their suburban Mexican home. She describes how she thought she heard the sound of parents' return, how she realized that she had heard something that hadn't happened, and how she heard deep, sinister laughter in her head. Finally, she describes how "the being" that had moved into their home that night made life grotesquely unpleasant for her, but no-one else in the family. The narrative of these circumstances is contrasted with descriptions of happy family memories and recollections of attending a Catholic school under the tuition of outwardly stern but inwardly warm and caring nuns.

"Turning Point"

The author describes the circumstances of her family's friendship with the family of a visiting bishop - in particular, her sense of connection with one of the bishop's sons, a connection that grows after he commits suicide and she learns of the occult-like circumstances of his death (see "Quotes," p. 26). She describes how her interest in the occult led to a deepening sense of separation from other people in general and people her age in particular, and how it also led to the development of her reputation as a kind of witch. This, she writes, led to her being confronted with a cross which, she suggests, was held to her face to see if she was "a true witch after all and would fall writing to the floor...". She comments, however, that "ironically, it was the cross she clung to in the midst of the agonizing loneliness and despair [she] felt closing in on [her] from every side."

The author's description of her early life in this chapter is notable not only for its often chilling sense of atmosphere and impending darkness. It's also noteworthy for what is missing - any information of how the author's Christian faith began. Yes, there is the reference to attendance at Catholic school and the inspiring presence of the nuns, but there is no sense of religious background in her family, no stories of attendance at church, no stories of personal encounters with inspiration and faith. In other words, the author clearly presents evil and satanic influences as being present in her life even



before she was born, but offers no parallel presentation of where her Christian faith came from. Does this mean she wants the reader to believe that said faith appeared spontaneously, or was innate? In any case, the content of this chapter and of other, similarly presented portrayals of her family, might understandably lead a reader to question whether the author, consciously or unconsciously, is portraying her parents and her family life as being at least partially responsible for what she believes to be the darkness that so dominated her early years. For further consideration of this question see "Important People - The Author's Family" and "Objects/Places - Teresias and Mephistopheles."



Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 Summary and Analysis

"Wesleyan"

In this chapter, the author describes her deepening interest in both theatre and occultism which flourished during her time at Wesleyan College in Georgia. She narrates an encounter with what she portrays as an angry female spirit haunting the theatre where she (the author) participated in plays, and also describes several other occasions (including an encounter with a Ouija Board) which, she contends, were manifestations of her growing connection with the spirit world.

"Chapel Hill"

This chapter contains the author's narrations of her experiences early in her enrolment at the Chapel Hill campus of the University of North Carolina, where she went after leaving Wesleyan. She describes how she became connected with what she portrays as a friendly spirit haunting the theatre who she names "Professor Koch." She also describes the several young men with whom she became friends, and how they "learned" things about her from Ouija Board (that she was a medium, that she could communicate in a strange language, and that she had powers she was beginning to explore). She writes of how one of them, Damon, hinted she and he would become better friends when she needed them to. Finally, she describes an encounter with "Professor Koch" in which a strange melody moved through her (see "Quotes," p. 45) and how shortly afterward she started seeing the Little People, who began to accompany with her on her walks. She writes that "unlike the certainty of what [she] saw in the theatre, [she] wondered ... if they were really there."

"Damon"

Here the author narrates an evening with Damon - how she introduced him to her statues (see "Objects/Places - Tiresias and Mephistopheles"), how he got her to take hallucinogenic drugs and took her to a graveyard, and how the drug intensified her experience of hearing the dead who, she suggests, were not as at peace as she had believed (hoped?). As the influence of the drug wears off, she tells Damon of her feeling that her spirit feels trapped in her body, that part of her simply wants to separate from herself, to "fly and soar into the air with my people and serve upon the altar of my God." At the conclusion of the chapter, she describes feeling like she and Damon are kindred spirits (see "Quotes," p. 52).

"Angry Shadows"

This chapter begins with the author's narration of an injury she suffered while performing at Ford's Theatre in Washington DC (see "Objects/Places"), describes her purchase of (and the reactions to) a pet snake (see "Objects/Places" - Quetzalcoatl"),



and narrates her deepening friendship with Beck, another of the boys from the theatre department. She writes how he helped her through a series of encounters with angry spirits that, as she describes it, drove her and her sense of belonging from the theatre, and how together they experienced an awakening of an interest in God (see "Quotes," p. 63). She also describes how this interest led to increasing depression, since the other, darker spirits around her intensified their attraction to her, and how she realized the nature/source of that depression (see "Quotes," p. 65). Finally, she writes how Beck's continued comfort led her to accept his proposal of marriage.

The author's self portrayal in this section may seem recognizable to contemporary readers familiar with so-called "goth" sub-culture, which on a certain level seems to celebrate separation and/or difference from the so-called "norm." It may be that on some level, here and throughout the narrative, the author is adding a warning about embracing such separation to her warnings about occultism, that such an embracing leaves room for Satan's influence to come into a life and take control.

This section is also notable for its increasing narrative attention to the entwining belief systems at work in the author's life - her faith in God and her faith that her gifts are somehow a manifestation of God's spirit. The inner conflict engendered by these ultimately contradictory beliefs finds apparent resolution in Chapter 9, but ultimately comes to a confrontational head in Chapters 10 through 14.

It's interesting to consider at this point whether, given the author's ultimate agenda (see "Style - Perspective"), in presenting events in the way she does she is making a comment about the nature of the theatre. In other words, because she portrays herself as having so many frightening spiritual encounters within the walls of various theatre buildings, there is a certain sense of suggestion that the theatre itself is a kind of occult practice, an emotional and spiritual masking of true identity (i.e., in the craft of an actor) that echoes and perhaps even manifests Satan's practice of disguise.

For further consideration of the metaphoric value of the snake, see "Objects/Places - Quetzalcoatl." For further consideration of similar metaphoric value in the names of the young men, see "Important People - Damon and Beck." For further consideration of the thematic and/or intentional value of the author's choices here and throughout the narrative, see "Style - Tone."



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

"Mind Control"

At the beginning of this chapter, the author describes the end of her relationship with Beck (the result of her father's intense dislike of him), her graduation from college (at which time she realized that a career in theatre was not for her), and the depression she sank into afterward. She then narrates her father's discovery, through reading a newspaper, of a program called Mind Control, which advertised relief from mental troubles, improved mental capacity, and increased psychic ability. The author then narrates, in considerable detail, her experiences in the Mind Control Method (led by Tom, who first appeared in Chapter 1). The program, he suggests, teaches people to tap into the power of the Alpha Waves produced by the brain (perceivable by scientific tests) and, through relaxation and imagery, increase their psychic perceptions and abilities. The author describes her enthusiastic embracing of the program and its work, including the creation of a mentally imaged "laboratory" (see "Objects/Places") and the request for two "counselors" to work with her there. She asks that one of her counselors be Jesus Christ and is humbly gratified when he appears, but is shocked when, on a second appearance, he appears with the face of a werewolf-like monster. In response to her fear, the author writes, "Jesus" tells her the monstrous face is a projection of the fear, doubt, and lack of faith she has to work through in order to achieve her spiritual goals. Once she has worked through them, Jesus says, she will see his true face - and, the author writes, she eventually does.

The author then describes the depth and power of her psychic experiences, including her deepening skill at psychic healing, connecting over long distances with people with physical and/or psychic troubles and diagnosing them. At this point, she writes that Tom's philosophy in teaching the Mind Control program was to help participants become aware of their potential for helping humanity (see "Quotes," p. 81), potential that she and others in the program realize as they continue to practice their healing. The chapter concludes with the author's description of how her second "counselor" was replaced by a middle aged Mexican woman who asks to be called "Mamacita." It was then, the author writes, that "the time had come ... to meet Pachita."

The author's experience of the face of Jesus in this chapter can be seen as representing her overall experience with occultist practice - that such practices can, and usually does, manifest in the disguise of godly, Christly influence. The encounter also continues the narrative and experiential entwining of occultist and Christian perspectives and events that to this point have defined the author's spiritual quest and, indeed, her life.

There is an interesting double meaning in the phrase "Mind Control." On one level, it can be seen as referring to an individual's control over his/her mind. On another level,

however, and one tied neatly to the author's experience and agenda, it can be seen as referring to the control an outside influence can (does?) have over the individual's mind - brainwashing. Within the context of the book, the inference is obvious - the author, Tom, and the others who participate in the program are having their minds controlled by Satan.

Meanwhile, the conclusion of this chapter returns the narrative line to the chain of events begun in Chapter 1. In other words, the intervening chapters (2 through 8, most of 9) have been exposition, laying out the background and context of the story to come. The seeds of the narrative and spiritual exploration to come, the principal focus of the author's intent, have been planted, and the reader now has a clearer understanding of both who the author is and why this particular story is so important to her.



Chapters 10, 11 and 12

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 Summary and Analysis

"The Beautiful Side of Evil"

This chapter picks up the author's story after her first encounter with Pachita in Chapter 1. In the weeks after that visit, the author experiences a series of circumstances that lead her to believe she is becoming more and more deeply connected to the spirit of God working through her. Among these experiences are two "operations" conducted by Pachita - or more accurately by Hermanito, the spirit who takes control of Pachita's body. The author describes these operations, and her participation in them, in considerable detail. She also writes of her wonder at how they could have happened, commenting that the vertebrae replacement in particular was medically impossible - but, she adds, she was there, she saw what happened, and knew there was no way that the operations could have been performed using any kind of slight of hand. She concludes that the operations were miracles, and that God and the power of Spirit were working through, and manifesting in, Pachita, writing that through intense work, she came to believe she was deepening her relationship with God (see "Quotes," p. 103), but was unable to connect with a particular healing spirit in the same way as Pachita. She was also aware, she writes, that there were also evil spirits around her, but adds that Hermanito told her she has a powerful guardian that will protect her. As he speaks, the author writes, she caught a glimpse of a raging hatred in "his" (Pachita's) eyes. Finally, she also writes of a post-operation encounter with Pachita in which she (the author) briefly seemed to see the kind of hatred and rage she saw in the ghosts in the theatre at her second college.

"Signs and Wonders"

This chapter begins with the author's description of her father's worries over her course of work, worries she describes as being eased first by the comments of Dr. Carlos and then by his witnessing of several of Hermanito's operations. At this point, the author presents an extensive quote from another respected surgeon who observed Pachita and other spiritual healers at work (see "Quotes," p. 112) and suggested that their work may help those in "academic medicine" come to a clearer, fuller understanding of how the human body works. Finally, the author narrates the experience of her childhood friend David, diagnosed with untreatable cancer. He is, at first, given a treatment by Hermanito, but when it doesn't work and the author confronts Hermanito, he says he felt the cancer was inoperable but wanted to give David a bit of hope. Later, David's pain becomes too intense to be borne, and the author (along with David's family) insists that Hermanito operate. Hermanito agrees, but in the middle of the operation David's heart stops. Hermanito conducts a "transfusion" (cutting open "his" and David's veins and mingling their blood), and David both survives the surgery and heals. Hermanito, however, breaks down in tears and calls himself a coward.



"Pachita"

This chapter contains several anecdotes about Pachita and her relationship with Hermanito. The first is Pachita's story of how she first became aware of, and eventually connected to, him, and how he said he had chosen her for a joint mission to bring healing to humanity. The second anecdote concerns Hermanito's disgust with Pachita's habit of wearing garish nail polish. The next anecdotes concern miraculous healing operations conducted by Hermanito, but the concluding ones concern operations that didn't work, and in which healing didn't occur. The last contains a lengthy quote from a well known author (here given a pseudonym) referring to the pain and lack of healing she experienced, her searing awareness that she "was in the hands of great evil," and the "hatred" from Hermanito (which she attributes to her commitment to Christ). The quote, and the chapter, conclude with the author suggesting that what healing she did realize only "due to God's help in answer to prayer."

There are several pieces of evidence to suggest that with this section, the author begins to tell her story with her agenda closer to the surface (for further consideration of that agenda see "Style - Perspective"). The most vivid evidence is the reference to the flash of evil in Hermanito's eyes, juxtaposed with his reference to the spirit protecting the author. Taking into consideration the author's agenda, the inference here is that the flash of evil comes from Hermanito himself, that he is in fact one of the evil spirits around the author, and that her protective spirit is a true manifestation of Christ. Other pieces of evidence include the author's commentary on Hermanito's apparent failures, the extensive documentation by the famous author, and the author's commentary on her own failures at achieving connection with a healing spirit (which can be seen as her protective spirit manifesting its power, given that in the author's perspective most healing spirits are satanic in origin). Evidence of her agenda can also be found in her commentary on the acceptance shown by her father, Dr. Carlos, and the other investigating doctor, which can all be seen as proof of the author's point about the deceptive power of Satan's lies.

A not-unrelated point is the sense, re-emerging here as it does several times throughout the narrative, that on some level the author at least bears resentment towards her parents for their support of her involvement with Pachita. The point must be made that such resentment is never stated overtly, but is in fact implied - in her repeated references to their support, and in the notable lack of reference to their support for her conversion to Christianity.

Here and throughout the narrative, however, there is the unfortunate sense that the author is shaping her narrative to reflect her agenda, that she is moving beyond mere storytelling and into what might almost be described as propaganda. This sense takes stronger form in this section, increases in the following section, and becomes significantly heightened in the narrative's final chapters. The intensity of the agenda in those sections, in fact, is such that the objective reader may well, in hindsight, begin to question the objectivity of the writing in the first three quarters of the book.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary and Analysis

"Exodus"

This chapter begins with the author's narration of her parents' participation in a few of Pachita's operations, their resultant deepening of belief in her work contrasted her own growing uncertainty of the rightness of what she was doing (triggered by the death of David), and her decision to travel to Europe for some time to rest and reflect. She describes several horrifying visions she experienced on her travels, and narrates a reluctant conversation with her sister Kim (see "Quotes," p. 136), in which Kim's questions seemed to echo some of her own. Kim convinces the author to travel to Switzerland to talk with a pair of Christian friends, Os Guinness and Sheila Bird (nicknamed Birdie) about her concerns. When the author arrives in Switzerland (see "Objects/Places - L'Abri"), she first speaks with Birdie, defending what she is doing with Pachita as a manifestation of God. Birdie, however, directs her to read the Bible, leading her (the author) to realize that her relating the life and work and teachings of Jesus to the life and work she and Pachita were / are doing is wrong.

After quoting several Bible verses to support these contentions, the author narrates a series of dangerous, life-threatening encounters with what she describes as evil spirits, describing how her cries to Hermanito for help are ignored and her cries to Jesus are suffocated. Birdie helps her through these attacks, and on "Friday November 17, 1972, at ten a.m." Os and Birdie supported the author "in prayer" as she renounces her "involvement with the occult and [commits herself] to Jesus Christ as [her] Lord and savior."

"New Foundation"

At the beginning of this chapter, the author describes the disbelief and uncertainty she encountered in her father when she came home from Europe and announced her acceptance of Christ. She then, however, describes the certainty she found in herself and in her new faith the more deeply she explored the Bible, its teachings, and the truths she discovered. She narrates her testing of both her old and new belief systems through Biblically defined techniques, each time proving that what she had believed was false and what she now believed was a divine truth. She describes joining several Christian organizations, including the Light and Power House where she met her beloved, a man named Randolph whom she married and built a life with (see "Quotes," p. 159). She describes how their life together deepened in mutual love of the Lord, how they came to understand that Randolph was being called to the ministry, and how their occasional confrontations with darker spirits have been won through faith. The chapter concludes with the author commenting that after saying goodbye to her before going to Europe, she and Pachita never saw each other again.



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In traditional narrative terms, this section marks the story's climax, the high point of confrontation between protagonist (the author) and antagonist (Satan). It is also the key point of transformation, the point at which the protagonist makes a vital, profound choice that changes the direction of both her life and the narrative of that life. In terms of this particular narrative, both the confrontation and the choice are defined by the author's realization of which of the parallel truths she has experienced throughout her life is, in fact, the "true" truth ... the life, witness and power of Jesus Christ. These two chapters effectively lay the groundwork for the revelation of the author's agenda, "preparing the way" (to use a Biblical paraphrase) for what the author clearly sees as the ultimate purpose not only of her book or of her experiences, but of her life.

Meanwhile, the author's negative portrayal of her parents seems to continue in this section, with her (apparently deliberate) reference to her father's disbelief and the (perhaps equally deliberate) elimination of them from the rest of the narrative. The sense that she has, in effect, divorced herself from her parents and their concern for her is reflected in her author's description of her transformation, completely focused as it is on her new relationship with on Christ (as manifest in her relationship with Randolph, among other choices and circumstances). In other words, this is the clearest indication of all that she has jettisoned her parents along with her belief in, and practice of, the occult.

Finally, the titles of these chapters are among the most vividly reflective, and evocative, in the book of the content that follows them. "Exodus" is the title of one of the most significant books in the Old Testament of the Bible, the book that contains, among others, the stories of the Jews leaving slavery and God's issuing of the Ten Commandments. It seems both significant and appropriate that the author chooses this title for this particular phase of her story. "New Foundation", meanwhile, can be seen as a paraphrase of a popular, traditional Christian hymn which states, in part, that "The Church's one foundation / is Jesus Christ her Lord" ... a foundation for a new life and a richer faith that the author has, according to this chapter, laid for herself and, according to the following chapters, is building upon.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary and Analysis

"Velvet Claws"

The author begins this section, with the statement that she has told her painful story with the goal of informing her readers (Christians, ex-occultists, the general population) that the growing influence of the occult is a sign that the world is entering the End Times as predicted in the Christian book of Revelation (see "Objects/Places"). She cites several manifestations of occult presence - yoga, Eastern spirituality, occult-inspired reading in schools, television and film presentations, horoscopes and astrology - that, she suggests, are preparing the way for the Anti-Christ and his apparent miracles. She also suggests that contemporary Christian preachers and theologians are downplaying the miraculous nature of Christ's life and teaching, quoting examples from their writings that illustrate these beliefs and juxtaposing them with quotations from the Bible that, she contends, prove those beliefs wrong. Again referencing Biblical sources, she describes the way Satanic miracles can be presented and/or perceived as coming from God, but suggests that invoking the name of Jesus in such miracles is often used to disguise Satanic influence (see "Quotes," p. 172). She points out that demons are happy and willing to offer power and knowledge, even disguising them as coming from God, in order to gain control of the world for Satan, their master. She goes on to say that even Christian teachers who "ascribe every possible human flaw, struggle or misfortune to direct demonic intervention" are themselves misguided, causing as much damage (via, for example, misdiagnosed exorcisms) as the demons themselves. She suggests that such pastors have a responsibility to discern genuine mental illness from Satanic possession.

"Genuine vs. Counterfeit"

Here the author suggests that even within religion and those who practice it, there is denial of occult presence, contending that even Evangelical and/or Pentecostal churches experience Satanic and/or occult events but convince themselves they are of God and of Jesus (see "Quotes," p. 180). She suggests that sincerity of Christian pursuit of faith isn't enough, and that personal experience of faith isn't enough (see "Quotes," p. 181). Her contention is that every Christian, every person, must study the Bible thoroughly to learn how to discern true manifestations of spirit, and again argues that for true faith and true miracles to manifest and be discerned, serious study of the Bible and its truths must take place. She says that the only true manifestation of God's power come through grace (see "Quotes," p. 188), referring in particular to the teachings of the apostle Paul and concluding this chapter with a reiteration that only true, committed study of the Bible will awaken questing believers to, and sustain them in, the true faith. 3154



There is an extreme shift of tone between this section and the previous one - indeed, between the rest of the book and its last four chapters (the final two make up the following section). That shift might most simply be summarized as a transformation from narrative into sermon - in the first fourteen chapters the author has told her story, and now is telling the reader in no uncertain (often very forceful) terms why. For further consideration of this shift in tone, see "Style - Tone."

In this final section, the author's agenda and purpose for writing become clear (see "Style - Point of View"). The validity of that agenda is perhaps beyond the scope of this analysis. Suffice it to say that several of the points made by the author are certainly arguable on several levels - for example, her contention that the Bible is the absolute word of God. This contention (conveniently?) disregards Biblical scholarship, which has over the centuries proven conclusively that the Bible has been edited, translated, shaped and otherwise manipulated by human beings, each with an agenda as deeply felt, and often as overtly expressed, as the author's. That simple fact aside, and given the evident passion and (self?) righteousness with which the author makes her points, it's almost equally certain that arguing with her would be pointless. She would, her writing implies clearly, simply contend that the arguer is proving her point - that s/he has fallen under Satanic influence, and as a result is simply refusing to face what she believes to be the ultimate truth.

The title of Chapter 15 is, like many of the other chapter titles in this book, an ironic one. Throughout the narrative, the author has portrayed herself as being fond of, and experiencing a special connection to, cats - which have, throughout history, been associated with witches and other manifestations of occultism. It's interesting to note that while the author never explicitly admits to having abandoned her affections for cats, she nevertheless titles a very anti-occult chapter of her anti-occult book with what seems to be a reference to cats (i.e., "claws").

Meanwhile, for further consideration of the author's perspective on personal experience and feelings in relation to occultism and faith, see "Topics for Discussion - What do you believe ..."



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary and Analysis

"Test the Spirits"

Here the author lists what she contends are the true tests for whether a preacher, prophet or experience is truly of the Holy Spirit of God, commenting that believers must apply all the tests in order to be certain. First - what does the preacher, prophet or practitioner, believe about Jesus, and is that belief truly Biblical, based in the Gospels? Second - is that person one hundred percent accurate, one hundred percent of the time? Third - "if a miracle or sign or prophecy or healing is performed by an occultist, or by means of occultic techniques, it is not from God." Fourth - is the daily life of the person questioned clearly of God (based on repentance, morality, and "a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior")? Fifth - what is the experience of "our subjective inner witness?" This, the author suggests, is the "deeply intimate and personal level in which ... we experience the joy and deep serenity of [God's] presence in our lives..." The experience of that "inner witness," she writes, must suggest a relationship between the practitioner and God. She admits that the inner witness is often made the first and most important criterion, adding that it can be fooled (as hers was). She then points out, however, that in conjunction with the other four tests, the inner witness is ultimately infallible.

"The Means of Freedom"

Here the author lists several ways in which a believer can free him/herself from occult influences. First - fully, and unconditionally, accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. She offers several quotes from the Bible illuminating both the dangers of Satan's influence and the joys/rewards of devotion to Christ. Second - renounce all occult influences, destroy all occult-related objects, offer a prayer of renunciation (she offers an example), and test all occult/psychic gifts through prayer. If the gifts remain, or if they are amplified or strengthened, they are of God. If they disappear, they are of Satan and are better off gone. Third - draw faithfully upon the power of the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross ("the blood of the lamb", the sacrificial cleansing of humanity's sins by Christ's death). Fourth - put on the full "armor of God" (see "Quotes," p. 215). The author concludes this chapter, and the book, with the admonishment to "Remember there is a beautiful side of evil - deceptive, subtle, adorned with all manner of spiritual refinements, but no less from the pit of hell than that which is blatantly demonic."

In this section, the author gives her writing a handbook-like sensibility, a literary checklist of how a Christian individual can protect himself from what she contends is the universal, omnipresent influence of Satan. She does so without any sense of irony, without any apparent awareness that according to her own central theory (that Satan can, and does, disguise himself in even the holiest behavior), each of these tests, each of these protections, could themselves be Satan's influence.



In other words, how does anyone truly know what is of God and what is of Satan? How can anyone know? If Satan's disguises are as powerful as the author says they are, how can she be absolutely sure that her own beliefs are not manifestations of ongoing possession? Ultimately, the author (like all spiritual writers) is professing knowledge of the ultimately unknowable, presenting opinion as fact, products of faith as manifestations, what might perhaps even be called wishful thinking as certainty ... an answer, ultimately unknowable, to the universal, eternal question of "Why?"



Characters

The Author

At the core of Johanna Michaelsen's self portrayal in this book are two central traits - a confident and absolute faith in the Christian God and His son Jesus Christ, and a searching desire to come to a deeper understanding of the Christian truth as revealed in the Bible. As a key component of this portrayal, she repeatedly points out that even in the depths of her involvement with Mind Control, with Pachita, and with other occult practices, she did what she did in the name of God, of getting closer to Him, and of doing what she believed to be His will. A reader might well be justified in perceiving this aspect of the author's self-portrayal as an attempt to excuse and/or justify her behavior.

An interesting point to consider is that while she portrays her commitment as going back into her college days (see Chapter 7), the author offers no real sense of where/how it began (unless one counts her passing reference to attending convent school and being influenced by the nuns there). Was she born with a desire to serve God? If not, when and how did it first manifest? A related point of interest is the fact that she is, on the other hand, very clear on when she believes her relationship with Satan and his manifestations of evil began.

In the final quarter of the book (Chapters 15 through 18), the author reveals an additional layer to what has, to this point, come across as an inwardly directed search for truth. This is an apparent re-direction of her faith and certainty outward, into a fervently evangelical mission to awaken her readers, Christian and non-Christian alike, to what she believes is a dangerous truth in their midst. This truth, as the author sees it, is the presence and influence of Satan at work in church and in society, simultaneously manifesting and disguised in growing acceptance of what she defines as occult beliefs and practices.

In short, for most of the book the author comes across as a spiritual seeker. In the final quarter, however, she (perhaps unwittingly) portrays herself as a spiritual revealer of truth - in other words, as a prophet.

Pachita and Hermanito

Pachita is the middle aged Hispanic psychic healer with whom the author spends a lengthy, intense apprenticeship. It's interesting to note that while the author disguises the identities of a great many of the people she portrays in this narrative, Pachita is one of the few persons whose identity is not hidden. This may be the result of Pachita, according to the author, having died before the book was written, but it may also be due to the author's agenda. Her clear intent is to expose Satan and his work, and given that she eventually came to believe that Pachita was an agent of both, exposing Pachita's true name is a manifestation of that intent. That said, Pachita is portrayed with an at



times uneasy blend of distaste and compassion, with the author on the one hand commenting negatively on the squalor in which Pachita lives and performs her "miracles," while on the other hinting that Pachita's life was destroyed and manipulated by the spirit possessing her.

Hermanito is the name given to the spirit that possessed Pachita's body and performed the miracles of psychic healing and insight for which she became renowned. He portrays himself as the spirit of a tragically killed young healer, but in the author's eventual perspective is that he is nothing short of a Satanic demon. This aspect of "his" identity is what the author believes she glimpses in Pachita's eyes at the end of Chapter 12.

Tom

Tom is the teacher and founder of the Mind Control program. He teaches the author and several other pupils how to tap into the power of the human mind, specifically the Alpha Waves it produces. He is portrayed by the author as well meaning but ultimately misguided, since (as she views it) his techniques are a manifestation of the will and power of Satan.

Dr. Carlos, Padre Humberto

Carlos (a respected physician) and Humberto (a priest) are two individuals who, as portrayed by the author, are respected within their professions but who are nevertheless duped by Pachita and Hermanito. Both can be seen as the sort of person the author refers to repeatedly in the book's final quarter, Christians whose well-intentioned, sincere belief in God is manipulated by Satan and his demons for their own purposes.

Great-Great Aunt Dixie

Dixie is a famous female ancestor of the author's, reputed (according to both family legend and the historical record) to be a powerful psychic and occultist whose abilities, the author at first believes, have been passed down to her. The author uses this aspect of her relationship with Dixie to support her Biblically-based contention that the passing of such power down through the generations is a manifestation of Satan's eventual plan to control the spirits of humanity. It's interesting, meanwhile, to note that the author clearly, and probably with her agenda in mind, portrays Dixie as being spiritually, physically and financially ruined by the end of her life.

The Two Spirits

These two entities are manifestations of the author's psychic abilities that emerged and deepened while she was at college. They bear names given them by the author, are two



of the friendlier spirits she encounters in her teen years, although "Professor Koch" (as the author suggests) inexplicably turns on her.

Damon and Beck

Out of the several boys the author describes herself as becoming involved with (as friends) in her college years, these two are the most significant. Damon is portrayed as dark, troubled, drug-addicted, and much under the spiritual influence of Satan as the author was at the time. Beck is portrayed as starting out under such influence, but like the author awakening to the truth and power of Christ. It's interesting to consider here the value of their names. As previously discussed, throughout the narrative the author disguises the names of several of the individuals she encounters. Damon and Beck are both given false names, but consider the names she chooses. "Damon" bears an unavoidable (and perhaps predictable) resemblance to "demon," while "Beck" can be seen as a shortening of the word "beckon." This is noteworthy because the author, without actually using the word, portrays herself as being "beckoned" by God and Jesus.

The Author's Family

For the most part, the author's father and mother are portrayed throughout the book as being concerned for their daughter's well being no matter what she chooses to do with her life. Both worry about her apparent depression and loneliness, and both support her decision to enter the Mind Control program as a means to combat that depression. Both worry about her increasing involvement with Pachita, but both come to appreciate (and even participate in) the "miracles" their daughter assists Pachita perform. Both are careful to question the author when it seems that her decisions are leading her in a potentially dangerous direction. At the same time, however, there is a lingering inference of neglect. When the author, in Chapter 3, recounts the story of her first remembered encounter with a demon, she portrays her parents as both absent and unable to either protect or understand her. There is also a noteworthy absence of references to them once she portrays her conversion to Christianity. Do all these factors suggest that the author believes her parents to have been, on some level, aligned with Satan? That may be going a step too far, but there is certainly the sense that the author believes her parents to have been less than fully what they should have been.

Meanwhile, the author's sister (Kim) is portrayed, in the narrative's early stages, as being judgmental and negative, perhaps a typical response for someone as young, troubled, and willfully eccentric as the author portrays herself as being. Later, however, Kim is portrayed as being a key catalyst in the author's conversion to Christianity - and, in the light of this latter portrayal, the author re-defines her earlier opinion of her sister, suggesting she was in fact right. In other words, Kim is portrayed in a contrasting light to that of her parents - as connected to the truth, the author's definition of the truth (i.e., the truth of God, Jesus and the Bible), and as such ultimately being more supportive and more loving than her parents.



Os Guinness, Sheila Bird

These two individuals are, as portrayed by the author, instrumental in aiding her deepening awareness of Christian truth, and in supporting her as she becomes a fully saved Christian. They are, in a sense, replacement parents, truly enlightened spiritual parents who love her and guide her in the way that she seems to be suggesting her biological parents failed to do.

Randolph

Randolph is the author's husband, who (according to her portrayal) came into her life as the result of a chain of God-inspired truths/miracles of his own. Together, she suggests, their life together led them both to deeper understanding of God and of their individual purposes on Earth.

God and Satan

As they have been throughout the history of Christianity, God and Satan are portrayed here as being on opposite sides of the struggle for control over the definition and function of the human spirit. God is truth, light, insight, and purpose ... Satan is lies, darkness, manipulation, and random power. Eastern spirituality, if such perspectives were not held as being innately satanic by the author, might perceive God and Satan as the yin and yang of spiritual existence, two sides of the same coin, balancing forces at work throughout the universe and all life within that universe.

Jesus Christ

As portrayed by the author, and in the experience of other Christians, Jesus is portrayed throughout this book as the one true earthly manifestation of God in humanity. He is God's only begotten son, to use the words of a particular prayer, the savior of humanity, the Lamb of God, and the leader of the only way (according to both the author and the Bible) to encountering and understanding God. He is the way, the truth, and the life. It is the author's belief and contention that only a relationship with Christ, as Lord and personal savior, can protect an individual from the influence of Satan.



Objects/Places

Mexico

This is the author's home country, its rich and complicated spiritual history serving as a colorful backdrop for the author's questing encounters with both God and Satan.

The Author's Home

The house where the author's family lived (in Cuernavaca, Mexico) is the setting for many important confrontations - between the author and her family, between the author and her beliefs, and between the author and what she refers to as the demons that seem determined to influence those beliefs (one in particular - see Chapter 3).

Pachita's Home

Pachita's home in Mexico City is where she and Hermanito (the spirit that possesses her - see "Important People") perform their operations. The author describes it as dirty, cluttered, crowded, and essentially unsanitary, an unlikely setting for the miracles that apparently take place there. A reader may well be justified in wondering whether the author's portrayal of this house, like so many other portrayals in the narrative, may or may not have been colored by what has evidently become the author's agenda (see "Style - Point of View").

The Statuette of Cuauhtemoc

This little statue, on the mantelpiece in Pachita's home, stands alongside a statuette of Jesus in what the author implies is an attempt to link the power of Cuauhtemoc (another name for Hermanito) with that of Jesus - in other words, to make what comes to be revealed as a Satanic influence appear to be an influence aligned with Christ.

Wesleyan College

This the first school away from home that the author attends. It's here that she discovers her interest in theatre, and it is here that the author has further encounters with angry, Satanic spirits.

University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

This is the second of the two colleges attended by the author. It's here that her spiritual encounters become linked with her encounters with the opposite sex - specifically, her



encounters with Satanic spirits are linked with Damon, while her encounters with Christ and her deepening Christianity are linked with Beck (see "Important People").

Tiresias and Mephistopheles

These are the names of two statues owned by the author during her college years. Tiresias (named after the blind prophet in Classical Greek mythology) is, for her, a symbol of spiritual awareness and insight - it is he, according to the author, who brings a mysterious second language into her awareness - see "Quotes," p. 48. Mephistopheles (one of several names given to Satan) was a joking gift from the author's mother, given in reference to the old saying "He must needs go whom the devil driveth" (itself a reference to intense human passion and desire - in giving the gift, the author's mother is commenting on the author's determination to pursue theatre). The author eventually comes to see both as evidence of satanic influence in her life. There is perhaps an echo here of the inference throughout the book that as well meaning as they seemed to be, the author's parents were in fact unwitting instruments of their daughter's descent into the occult and its Satanic practices.

Ford's Theatre (Washington D.C.)

This is the theatre where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth. According to the author, the path she took as she crossed the stage and eventually injured herself is the same one taken by Booth as he escaped the theatre after killing Lincoln. The inference is that she was spiritually possessed, and injured herself as a result.

Quetzalcoatl

This is the author's pet snake, named after a powerful ancient Aztec god who, according to myth, demanded human sacrifice as part of his worship. Snakes have, throughout history and as the result of the Bible's influence, been perceived and/or portrayed as embodiments of evil and deception, manifestations of Satan. The inference contained in the author's adoption of such a pet is that she was herself being deceived into following the ways of Satan rather than God. She never explains what happened to it when she left college.

The Author's Work in Mind Control

According to the author's description of the work involved in the Mind Control program (see Chapter 9), she describes how she and other participants in the program are taught to envision a room for themselves at the core of their deepened consciousness, a room in which they can consult with their spirit counselors, explore their psychic/spiritual powers, etc. The author's description of her elaborately furnished "laboratory" portrays it as having walls of crystal, filled with the scent of flowers and



herbs, with wooden cabinets and furniture and an elevator through which the author and/or other "spirits" could rise and/or lower to other levels of consciousness.

L'Abri

The author retreats to this community in Switzerland on the advice of her sister Kim in order to come to a deeper, truer understanding of both Christianity and Satanism as manifest in the author's occult practices.

The Light and Power House

This is the name given by the author to an educational institution devoted to in-depth exploration and understanding of the Bible and its teachings. It is, in her portrayal, something of a refuge, a place of healing from all the darkness and suffering she had previously experienced.

The Biblical Book of Revelation / The End Times

Revelation is the last book of the Bible, and contains St. John's narration of his visions of the times preceding the return of Christ to the Earth (referred to by charismatic and evangelical Christians as "The End Times"). The contents of Revelation have, over the centuries, been interpreted and re-interpreted in several ways, all of which relate to the belief that Christ's return is imminent. It is the author's belief that contemporary society is now living through The End Times that defines her narrative perspective and agenda (see "Style - Point of View").



Themes

The Dangers of Occult Practice

This is one component of the narrative's central thematic premise - that occult practices can be (and are, in the author's mind) perceived by both those who practice them and by society-at-large as gifts from God rather than as tricks played by Satan to win control of human souls (which is what she contends they are). In other words, the author is suggesting that apparent miracles cannot always be trusted as originating from the Holy Spirit, but can in fact be evil disguised as beauty and blessing. She makes her thematic point in two ways - by narrating her own experience with Satanic spirits, both disguised and undisguised, and in the final quarter of the book, stating the point outright and offering examples from the Bible and other sources to support her contention.

It's important to note here that the author defines a wide range of practices and belief systems as being occult based, everything from psychic healing to the use of tarot cards to yoga to Hinduism (and other Eastern spiritual belief systems). She also extends this definition to apparent manifestations of God and spirit in other Christian churches, referring specifically to the gift of "speaking in tongues," expressions of ecstatic feeling in strange languages experienced by Christian individuals in the throes of strong connections with the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, she suggests that unless a spiritual experience passes five tests (see Chapter 17, Summary and Analysis), then that experience is of Satan, not of God, and is expanding the power of Satan and his demons in the lives of both the individual involved in the practice and in the world as a whole.

The Necessity and Power of Christian Faith

The other component of the narrative's core thematic premise is the author's contention that only true Christian faith can counteract and eventually defeat the influences of Satan as manifest in occult practices. This faith, she suggests, must be grounded in the belief in, and practice of, accepting Christ as personal Lord and Savior. Manifestations of this belief and practice, in the author's perspective, are absolute trust in the Bible as the definitive Word of God, a practice of studying the Bible for deeper revelations of that truth, and day-to-day practice in applying that truth to the ways of life. The author suggests several ways in which such applications can take place. These include invoking the names of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit in the presence of demons in order to banish them, testing both occultic and non-occultic practices against her five measuring sticks (see again Chapter 17 Summary and Analysis), and basing all relationships and activities in the individual's ever-deepening understanding of the Bible and its teachings.

Meanwhile, it's important to note that in the final quarter of the book, the author repeatedly suggests that only a certain discipline of Christian faith will function as she



says true Christian faith should. This, she writes, is the charismatic faith to which she belongs, a faith that believes "the gifts of the Holy Spirit ... are operative within the body today." Other sorts of Christianity, she contends (not to mention other spiritual belief systems) are too open to the sort of corruption that Satan and his demons bring into the world through their deceptive miracles. She specifically cites examples of so-called Roman Catholic "miracles" as evidence that non-charismatic Christian faiths have been deceived and are indeed falling further into that deception.

The Bible as the Only Source of Truth

In the first three quarters of the narrative, the author portrays herself as judging the validity of her experience (specifically its relationship to/with God) by her own feelings, by whether an experience feels right or connected to God and/or spirit. She explains (justifies? rationalizes?) her choices in the earlier part of her life by saying that her positive experiences, for the most part, felt as though they were a manifestation of God's will. She also explains that her negative experiences were defused and/or headed off when she invoked either the names of God or Jesus, or professed her faith in them and in their truth, which felt to her as though she was having a deeper experience of that faith. This is a dramatization of another key point she makes in the final quarter of the book - that an individual's feelings, that an individual's experience of something that seems right isn't necessarily the best, let alone the only, way to judge whether something actually is right. The only true criteria for righteousness, she writes, for illumination and truth, is the Bible. Yes, she acknowledges the fact that the Bible's truths can sometimes be difficult to understand, and yes she does acknowledge that much study and skill at interpretation is necessary for those truths to be unveiled. At the same time, she strongly condemns contemporary society for turning away from the Bible as a source of God's revelation and towards the subjective study of and involvement with personal feelings as a—perhaps the—source of personal spiritual truth.



Style

Perspective

As previously suggested, the author is writing with a clear agenda - to warn her fellow Christians and the public at large about the dangers, potential and real, of what she calls "the beautiful side of evil." This, in her perspective, is the way in which Satanic, and specifically occult, influences, present themselves as miraculous, affirming, and even Godly. It seems clear that her background gives her specific and accurate insight into the issue she's addressing - she is, she says, the victim of exactly the kind of deception she's writing about, having experienced Satanic influence at the core of what she defines as occultic practices that she had once believed were manifestations of the miracles of God.

A key point to note about the author's perspective is her definition of "occultic." For her, the term seems to encompass any belief system or practice which isn't totally, overtly and absolutely grounded in Christian teaching as conveyed in the Bible. As previously discussed, everything from yoga to tarot cards, from television programs ("Bewitched," "I Dream of Jeannie") to films ("E.T."), from Hinduism to other "Eastern" religions to meditation, falls under her umbrella of "occultism" (one can only imagine what she would make of the adventures of Harry Potter). All these practices and belief systems, in the author's perspective, define those who participate in them as being under the same sort of spiritually destructive occult influence as she herself was. This means, again in her perspective and as she herself says, "...apart from Jesus there is no hope for you ...". The implication is clear - Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, atheist, agnostic ... all are under the influence of Satan, all are therefore evil, and all are therefore doomed.

Those of like mind - that is, those of conservative, charismatic/evangelical Christian beliefs - are likely to accept her argument, even when she challenges some of the beliefs and activities of other Christian churches as having come under Satanic influence. Those of unlike mind, those of non-Christian faiths and those who are merely curious about the relationship between the so-called occult and spirituality, might find themselves ultimately put-off by the author's perspective, both its content and the intensity with which that content is presented.

Tone

On a superficial level, the first three quarters of the book is presented in a relatively objective tone. The author tells her story with specificity of detail, clarity of thought, apparent fact, and an almost journalistic questioning of circumstance and response. In the final quarter of the book, however, the tone is altogether different. While detail and clarity remain, facts devolve into opinion (albeit presented as facts), objective journalistic perspective becomes subjective personal judgment, and questioning



becomes preaching. The author's mission becomes more than apparent - it becomes aggressive, condemnatory, and at times almost arrogant. In other words, she strongly believes in a certain truth, and gives the impression of being both willing and able to go to extreme lengths (including condemning those whose similarly Christian faith doesn't meet her exacting standards) to awaken the reader to that truth. In that context, a reader could well be forgiven if the apparent objectivity of the first section of the book becomes suspect.

Was Pachita's home as shabby as the author portrays it, or is her narration of that particular setting colored by what she later comes to believe about the work Pachita does? Were her experiences of both dark and light spirits as intense as she portrays them, or have the narrations of both been shaped to reflect the author's agenda? Was Damon as corruptive as her portrayal (and her creation of his pseudonym) suggests? Was Beck as supportive? These and other questions all logically arise as the result of the tonal quality of the book's final section, in which the author overtly proclaims her faith-based agenda and, less overtly but no less clearly, how far she is prepared to go to realize it.

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Quotes

"The night was clear and still, yet as we stood there the sky suddenly filled with a host of unseen beings who swirled and spun around us with a sound like that of wind gusting through tall trees." p. 10

"I ... eagerly read any book or article I could find on the occult. Strange dreams of myself in different forms and different places came to me as I slept and I would hear a voice within my mind tell me these were memories of different incarnations." p. 26

"A melody filled the theater - urgent, beautiful, a song of unrestrained longing and loneliness. The melody, in minor key like an old Hebrew desert song, rose and fell and spoke to me of the serenity of death." p. 45.

"...an unspoken language half Chinese, half Arabic in appearance, which, when written, could express every emotion, every raging passion of a soul, which was unable to, or perhaps, just too afraid to translate its surging life into the spoken word." p. 48

"[Damon's] face was composed, but his eyes reflected a soul - trapped and screaming - searching frantically for the soothing, healing waters of peace - searching with no real hope of ever finding what couldn't long be lived without. I recognized the look. It was my own." p. 52

"For the first time in my life I became acutely, overwhelmingly aware that Jesus had really lived, had really experienced death on a cross." p. 63

"The source of my problem wasn't psychological; it had its origin in a very different place, yet there was no-one to whom I could turn to set me free. No one, perhaps, but God, and He seemed so far from me. My heart longed for Him, cried out for him, but something barred my way." p. 65

"Our aim was to be the good of humanity. I don't think there was one of us there that day who was not awed at the possibilities and the power now within our grasp." p. 81

"I was aware of being far away in a new space beyond where I had been before. I had passed through a deep darkness, but now everything was filled with a pure white light. I now fully understood that my essence, my spirit did not have to be tied down into the sack of flesh beneath me. It had been given me for a while to facilitate the work which lay ahead, to help fulfill my karma and purify my spirit so it could rejoin God. But I, I was eternal, an inseparable part of the Living Force." p. 103

"Seeing is not believing. Seeing together with photographic documentation of the scene is still not believing. And the addition of confirmatory laboratory analysis only confuses further by posing impossibilities which are scarcely ponderable to the scientific mind." p. 111



"Twelve people were almost always called to form a half circle around the cot and pray to God for protection during the curse operations. The objects removed were always wrapped in dark paper, bound with string and covered with a leather thong studded with bells. The evil package, thus bound, was then laid upon the holy altar where it could do no further harm." p. 133

"As a committed Christian, Kim was certain all my pet activities, namely Yoga ... Mind Control and psychic surgery, were of the devil ...I was equally assured ... that she, on the other hand, was a narrow minded, bigoted, Bible-thumping evangelical, who wouldn't know a genuine miracle from God if it ran her down in the street." p. 136

"The Jesus I was encountering on the pages of that Bible was not only alive and real, but was filled with awesome power and majesty. A mere spoken word of healing or deliverance was sufficient to bring it about ... verse after verse asserted that apart from Him there was no forgiveness of sin." p. 143

"We were so alike in our interests and personalities that the limitations of our space merely served to bind us all the more closely in fellowship and love." p. 160

"The occult is not a passing fad. It is here and will continue to grow and spread like a mass of suffocating jungle vines until the promised return of Jesus Christ." p. 164

"It is from the very pulpits of our nation that the truth and power of the Word of God has been stripped naked, leaving the flock with a pathetic, milk-sop caricature of Jesus." p. 169

"...the existence of the counterfeit by definition must presuppose the existence of the original. Without it, a counterfeit is meaningless." p. 172

"We have, ever so subtly, allowed our base [of faith] to shift from the solid objective grounding of God's Word and have come instead to place our focus on our experience as the standard for our beliefs." p. 180

"My experience told me the healings and miracles I witnessed at Pachita's were of God. My feelings assured me the work there was holy ... my logic told me the Bible was too narrow in its view, and, as the work of men, was bound to be filled with error and mistranslation." p. 181.

"Power in our lives comes by grace, from the Holy Spirit, as we walk with Him in yielded obedience. Power to walk by faith, power to resist temptation, power to minister and witness - this power is available to every believer..." p. 188

"Unless the church ... repents before the Lord, seeking to bring restoration and purity to the body which is now polluted by counterfeits and false doctrines ... we will be as salt that has lost its taste, and how then will we be able to reach a world dying in the stranglehold of occult deception with the glorious truth of our victory in Christ?" p. 191



"...however subtle the deceit, however furious the warfare, the believer who clings in obedience and in faith to the Messiah need NEVER retreat in fear at the onslaught of the demons or their counterfeits. The one who in obedience to God's command puts the spirits to the test cannot long be deceived." p. 212.

"...the belt of His Truth ... the breastplate of righteousness of Christ ... the sturdy cleated shoes of the gospel of peace ... the shield of faith ... the helmet of our salvation...the sword of the Spirit which is the living Word of God ... " p. 215



Topics for Discussion

Do you accept the author's apparent contention that spiritual practices such as yoga and Eastern spirituality are as occultist in origin as, for example, psychic healing, tarot card reading, and Ouija boards? Why or why not?

What is your experience of so-called "occult phenomena?" Do you, for example, practice yoga? Have you had your tarot cards read? Have you "played" with a Ouija board? Have you ever had an encounter with a spirit?

What is your experience of the Christian faith, and of the Bible as a foundation and/or manifestation of that faith? Do you accept the author's contention that true Christianity and the Bible are the only "true" paths to spiritual enlightenment? Why or why not?

What is your experience of faith and spirituality? Do you believe there is only one way to enlightenment? Why or why not? If you do, what is that way? If you do not, what is spirituality to you?

Debate the eternal question - does God exist? Does Satan?

Consider the quote taken from page 172. Do you agree with this statement or disagree? Why or why not? Is there a difference between an "original" and an "ideal?" If yes, what is that difference? If no, why not?

What do you believe is the role of personal feelings and/or experiences in an experience of faith and/or occultism?