

The life and spiritual sex magic of Dion Fortune

Dion Fortune (1890-1946) was many things in her life; she was an occultist, a magician, a philosopher, a psychologist, a trance medium, a priestess and a writer. She is recognized as one of the most luminous and significant figures of 20th-century esoteric thought.

Author: **F.C. Polet**

Dion Fortune dedicated her life to the revival of the Western Mystery Tradition. Her slogan was: "I desire to know in order to serve". Dion stated that magic is the art of causing changes to occur in consciousness, in conformity with will. The spiritual sex magic she and her priests performed benefitted the whole human race. Dion Fortune is a pen-name she took on for her occult writing which means "God, not luck".

Young Violet and college years

Dion Fortune was born by the name of Violet Mary Firth on the 6th of December in 1890 in Wales, UK. Her father was a lawyer and her mother a Christian Science healer. Violet's mother thought Violet was a changeling; she believed that her soul was changed at birth. When Violet was 4 she started having visions and memories of an ancient civilization, called Atlantis. She believed she had been a temple priestess there in a former life. Violet was a bright and intelligent child who wrote poetry at the age of 13. She was also highly imaginative and hypersensitive. Violet was determined to make it on her own. So

when she was 20 years old she joined Studley College, in Warwickshire, where she would learn to be a gardener. The warden of this College was Dr. Lilius Hamilton, who possessed a lot of occult knowledge, as well as hypnosis. This warden tried to ruin the reputation of staffpersonel and robbed students of their money. Violet decided to leave, but the warden told her she could only leave if she admitted that she lacked self-confidence and was incompetent. The warden repeated these remarks for four hours, after which Violet had a nervous breakdown. Back in her room she drifted in a half-state of consciousness for 30 hours. Her parents came and took her home. Her aura was damaged and was leaking prana and vital energy. This affected her logic and weakened her physically and emotionally for several years. This experience made her wonder about the powers of the mind and she started a study in psychology and psychoanalyses at the University of London. At the age of 23 she was one of the best paid lay-analysts in London. Though she first concentrated on Freud, this quickly changed to Jung. She agreed with his statement that mystics knew more about

Dr. Moriarty



the secrets of life than scientists would ever know. While working in a clinic, she sometimes took part in a lecture at the Theosophical Society nearby. She also started reading books from their library. She quickly found out that she was highly telepathic and she started to notice that psychology alone was often not sufficient to help her clients. In the years 1929/30 she would write a book about this period in her life called *Psychic Self Defense*. With this book she warned for the misuse of occult powers and gave the readers advice on defending themselves. Her best remark is that the aura is always damaged from the inside out by reactions of fear or longing. If you can withhold this instinctive emotional reaction then the aura will be impenetrable, and the attack will return to the sender.

Dr. Moriarty

There is this occult saying: “*When the student is ready, the master will appear*”.

At the end of the First World War, in 1917, Violet met Dr. Theodore Moriarty, a Freemason, solo magician and occultist, with a special interest in psychology and healing. He was convinced that diseases or mental illnesses could only be explained by investigating previous lives. Moriarty could read aura's, project his astral body and could make objects from an unknown location appear in his room. He knew how the universe worked and he remembered previous lives as a priest in Egypt and Atlantis. He had a strong belief in astrology and knew how to deal with entities or thoughtforms by absorbing their energy into his own aura.

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Moriarty trained Violet until she had sufficient knowledge of the Western Mystery Tradition. In 1926 she wrote a novel of short stories about him, called: *The Secrets of Doctor Taverner*. In this book she changed the name of Moriarty into Taverner, but she insists that the stories in the book are literally true and even toned down to make them fit for print. In the introduction to this book she writes: “*To ‘Dr. Taverner’ I owe the greatest debt of my life and without ‘Dr. Taverner’ there would have been no ‘Dion Fortune’.*”

Moina Mathers



The Masters

From 1916 until 1919 Violet served in the Woman's Land Army, where she was put to work in a laboratory. There, all alone, she started developing astral visions. She went back to the library of the Theosophical Society to find explanations for her visions. Violet could not agree with Madame Blavatsky's conviction that Ascended Masters lived in Tibet or would walk the streets of London. But a book of the assistant of Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant, caught her attention. It was written in 1911 and was called *The Ancient Wisdom*. When Violet read the words: “*The Brotherhood of the Great White Lodge, who guide the evolution of humanity, still They teach eager pupils, still They may be reached by all who seek Them*”, her higher self seemed to suddenly wake up. Violet became obsessed with the need to contact the Masters, even her dreams were affected by the

same desire. Ten nights later she dreamt she was in the library of the Theosophical Society. One side of the room opened out and Violet found herself on a plateau in the Himalayas, kneeling before the feet of two of the Masters. She knew that the one with the white robe was the Master Jesus, the Lord of Compassion. The other, clad in a robe of dark indigo blue she did not know, but she felt him to be a tremendous intellectual force. Violet adored him and asked to enter upon His Service. Violet woke up with the certain knowledge that she had been accepted as a pupil by the Master of Compassion, and she was not at all happy about it. In time she learned why; the intellectual part of her character had been sufficiently developed, but she lacked in compassion. During the next three days the memory of past incarnations starting in Atlantis returned to her. Violet got back not only the memory of initiations and temple lives, but also the memory of the teaching she had received during those lives. She also began to receive ideas that had never come to her before, which formulated themselves in her mind.

The Golden Dawn

In 1919 Violet joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The Golden Dawn was a secret society dedicated to spiritual, philosophical and magical development. They brought together the best ancient traditions like Hermetism and Qabalism and collected magical books such as *The Book of Enoch*, the *Key of Solomon* and *The Book of Abramelin*. During the initiation-ceremony in the Golden Dawn

Violet's damaged aura was healed. This was also the moment she chose her new name of Dion Fortune, under which she would write many books. Directly after the ceremony her mental and physical problems disappeared never to return. And again she started remembering thousands of years of former lives. During her time in the Golden Dawn she found a very good teacher in Maiya Tranchell-Hayes. Maiya had exceptional knowledge of occultism and was skilled in the use of ritual magic. It was this woman that gave Dion her training in trance mediumship. In 1920 Dion wrote *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage* about the esoteric concept of sex and sexual polarity. This book was soon followed

by *Sane Occultism*, in which she warns for the dangers of occult science. These books enraged the head of the Golden Dawn, Moina Mathers, widow of one of the founders, McGreor Mathers. She felt that Dion was betraying the secrets of the order. Although Dion had not advanced to a sufficiently high grade to access such 'secrets', (they were given to her in trance), Moina

astrally attacked her. But now Dion knew how to deal with astral attacks and she won the battle.

At the same time Dion got bored with the members of the Golden Dawn who mainly consisted of widows and elderly men because of the First World War. So in 1924 she formed her own secret society, the 'Community of the Inner Light' in Glastonbury.

Glastonbury years

Dion was very much drawn to Glastonbury and went there regularly. She felt that Glastonbury was once a colony of the lost Atlantis, called Avalon. She

considered Glastonbury the most holy place on earth and knew it was very strong in elemental forces. She started her trance mediumship here in 1921, under the guidance of Maiya Tranchell-Hayes. In a state of trance Dion learned about the thousands of years of tradition in Glastonbury. From the Atlantian, the pagan, to the Christian faith, when the worship of the sun was replaced by the worship of the son. Years later she would write the book *Glastonbury, Avalon of the Heart*, about her ongoing love affair with Glastonbury. When in Glastonbury Dion would often stay with Alice Buckton, owner of the Chalice Well, underneath the Tor. Here she met Charles T.

Loveday, who would become her secretary and protector during the rest of her life. Loveday in 1924 got hold of a piece of land underneath the Tor at Well House Lane, opposite Chalice Well. This was basically an overgrown apple orchard, not worth a lot of money. Next he purchased an unused army barrack, which they rebuild as a lodge and called it Chalice Orchard.

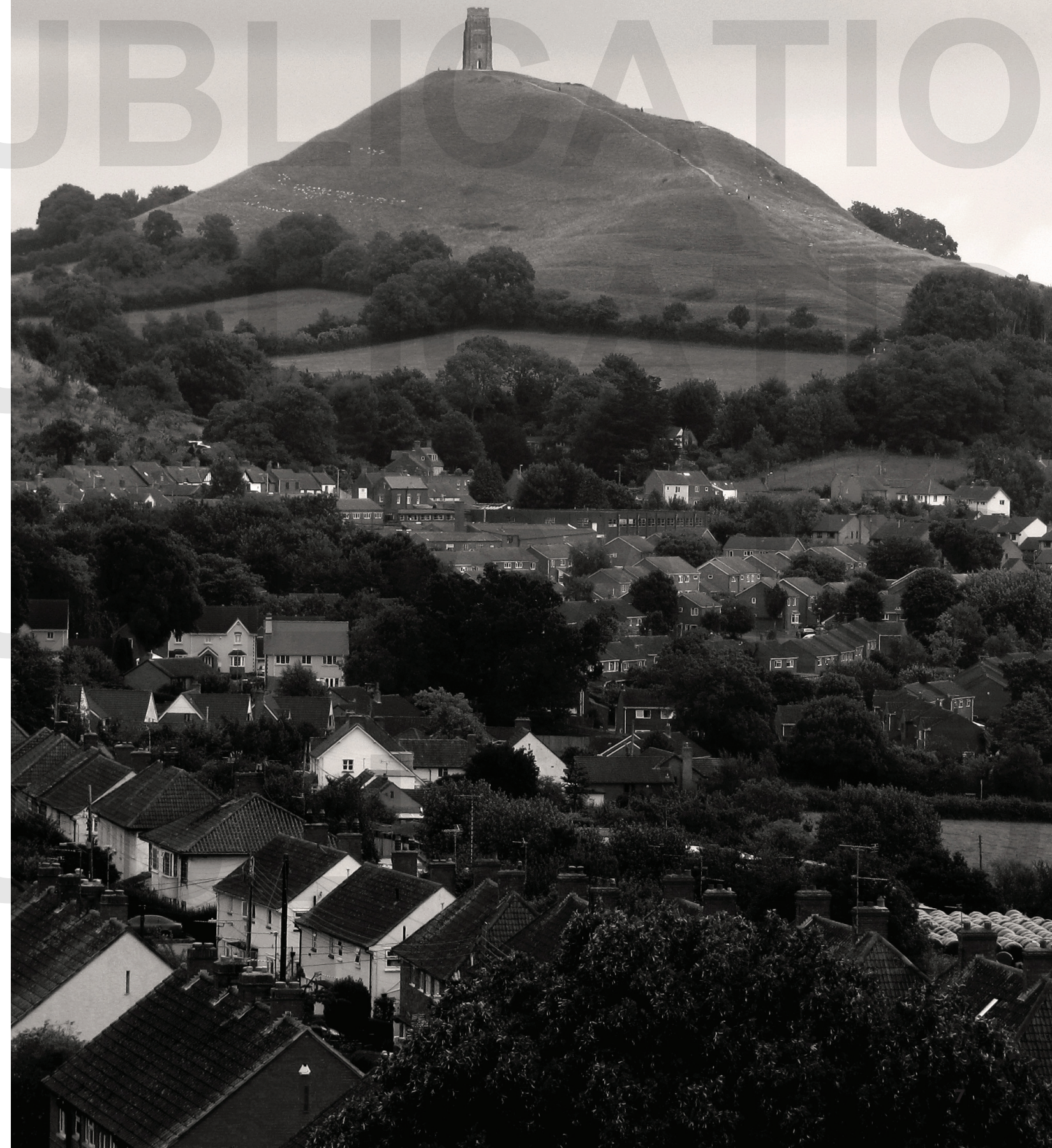
Here Dion could really start her society. Chalice Orchard became the focus of the Inner Plane work. In this place much of the esoteric material came through because of Dion's developing mediumship. During the summer Chalice Orchard was open as a guesthouse and a spiritual centre. Nowadays Chalice Orchard is rebuilt as a Bed and Breakfast. The name is changed into Berachach which means 'Place of special spiritual blessing'.

Trance and Secret Chiefs

The type of trance Dion used would make her lose

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Glastonbury Tor



Marriage picture Dion Fortune and Penry Evans



total consciousness, surrounded by the group to take care of her. She would lie down, take a few deep breaths and would concentrate on abstract symbols. While doing this, thinking cannot interfere, and will eventually stop altogether. She would separate from her body and travel to an inner temple where she would be taken care of by very high beings. Then a Master would try to make contact with her physical body. At first a creaky sound would come through as a greeting. As soon as the group reacted the channel for communication would be open. During the communications wind and sound phenomena and changing of physical objects would take place. When Dion channeled her future book *The Cosmic Doctrine* the flames of the lighted candles rose up almost 6 feet high. In this case the elemental forces of the Tor were used to get a more solid channel, because the information was coming from a very remote place. During one of her trances 3 different masters made themselves known; a Greek, a lawyer and a soldier. She called them her Secret Chiefs, the lesser masters, the ones that gave her knowledge. Dion stressed that these inner plane adepts are like us, only without a body. They have gained wisdom, but they are no gods or angels. What they are, we can become. By thinking of them, the student can make contact. These thoughts will become astral thoughtforms and these are the channels that unseen forces will work through. They said: *“Use the method of the images. What we are you cannot imagine. But you can imagine us on the astral plane and we can*

make contact with your imagination. And even though the image is not totally correct, the results will be real.”

Fraternity of the Inner Light

In 1927 Dion married Dr. Thomas Penry Evans. She was introduced to him during one of her lectures.

Although he was a medical doctor, he was interested in psychology and in Dion's esoteric work. She recognized in him a priest from a former life.

At the moment that Penry joined the community he was a natural pagan, a kind of Merlin, so the group soon called him Merl. As a result of him joining the group, they became less Christian and more Celtic and pagan. The name of the community was changed into the 'Fraternity of the Inner Light'. The purpose of the fraternity was the study of occult, mystical and esoteric science. They became a school of initiation that could really deliver. The fraternity studied Dion's *Cosmic Doctrine*,



McGrecor Mathers

Dion did a lot of work with goddesses and started developing rituals for Isis and Pan.

the Qabalah and performed group rituals using archetypes such as King Arthur, Morgan le Fay, Merlin and the Holy Grail. Dion received many letters from people living too far away to join her, and this resulted in a written course by which people could get accepted into the fraternity. They published a magazine called *The Inner Light*, which was in circulation from 1922 until 1940 and had a worldwide audience. Every issue five hundred copies would be laid on an altar, in order to create a magnetic bond between Dion and her readers. Because the fraternity needed to expand Loveday

bought them a large house at no 3 Queensborough Terrace in London, soon called '3QT'. The house included a library, two big chambers for ritual temple work and lecturing and rooms for Dion and Penry and other members of the fraternity. In 1930 they also purchased an old church dating back to 1830, nicknamed 'the Belfry'. It served as a private retreat for Dion to write her books and she gave lectures there for small groups of people. During the years 1927-33 Dion gave many lectures, many of her books were translated and the fraternity possessed the best up to date library in the UK. The three temples in Glastonbury, at 3QT and in the Belfry were fully functional. She attracted a large and intelligent group of people who came back for more, and she could double the prizes.

Rituals and spiritual sex magic

Around 1936 the Secret Chiefs predicted there would be a change from mediumship to ritual. Dion stated that if you're doing esoteric work then you have to work with the conditions of the area you live in. In the busy and noisy West it is much harder to concentrate than in the East. That is why ritual was used as a powerful tool to concentrate; ritual is meditation in action. Ritual is frequently used in Hermetic occultism because it provides the essential link between the Inner Worlds achieved by visualization and the physical plane itself. Ritual embraces concentration, image building, physical movement and symbology. Candlelight, chanting, essence, wearing gowns and evoking spirits are also part

Hut used by Dion Fortune at Chalice Orchard Site circa 1926



of it. All of this increased the participation of the group. Dion did a lot of work with goddesses and started developing rituals for Isis and Pan. Two types of ritual were worked within 3QT: initiation and evocation. In the former, the candidate would be put in touch with the group mind of the occult tradition of the Inner Planes; in the latter, forces of different types were contacted and then used for whatever purpose may be at hand. There is a saying: “*If sex creeps in through the door, so magic flies out of the window*”. An important part of the rituals consisted of spiritual sex magic, without the need for intercourse.

In her writings Dion gave the impression that actual intercourse was far less effective than the magical to and fro energies; the inner sex. She emphasized that when the Serpent Power was awakened such a form of coitus became redundant. She added that by controlling the sexual force this energy can be transformed to develop the Higher Self.

Her Secret Chiefs described it this way: “*Your leader has first to get the archetypal ideas, then give them form on the physical plane, then they are available for everyone. By doing this she is working by the law of polarity. First she will work with a Master on the Inner Planes, in which he gives, and she receives. Then she reverses and works with someone on the physical plane. She gives and he receives, and in order to achieve that reversal, she usually works with a man*”.

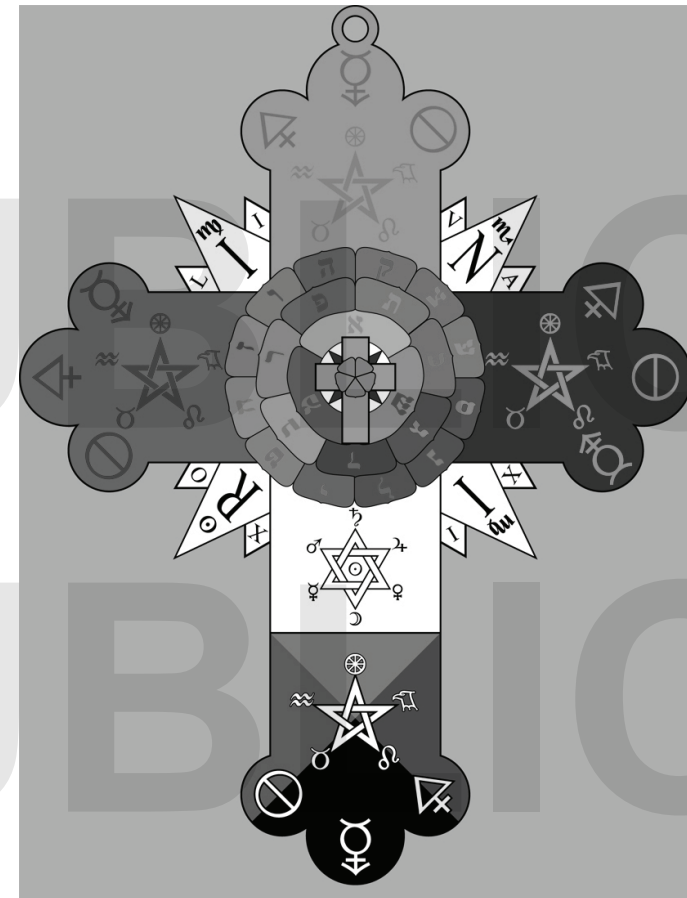
They also said: “*We ask you to assist that work, by making a circle of protection around it, for it is necessary for bringing through the teaching. There is nothing in that relationship to cause*

An important part of the rituals consisted of spiritual sex magic, without the need for intercourse.

scandal, it is a magical relationship. For this it is necessary that persons should be in sympathy, but the personal factor does not come into it. It is not easy for people to understand who have not known the impersonality of Temple work”.

Dion knew that in Atlantis selected priests and priestesses were paired off for magical work of this type. The aims were to correct personality faults, remedy deficiencies and extend the range of human capability. In short, to heal and to assist the evolutionary process.

When Dion and her priest worked on a certain problem in ritual, by playing it out symbolically,



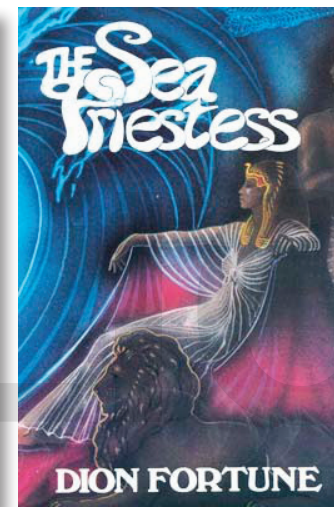
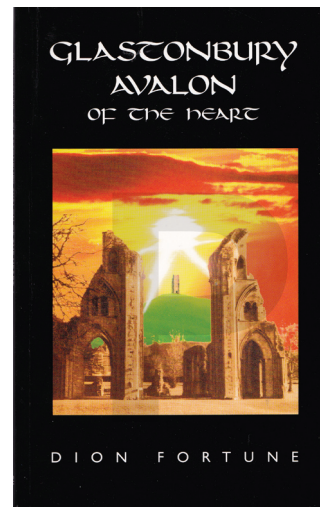
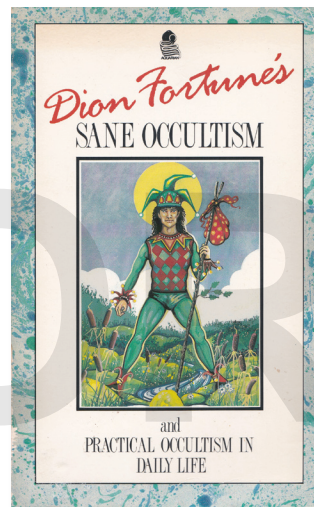
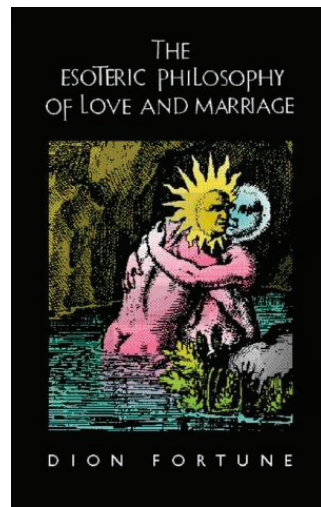
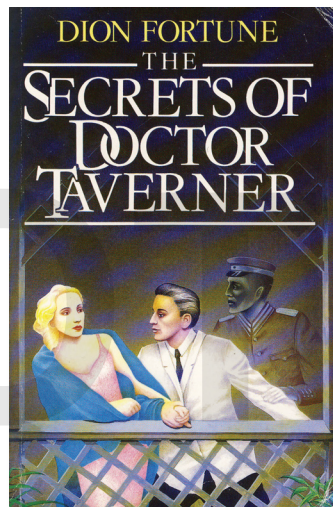
Golden Dawn Cross

has pointed out that in essence all magic is sex magic, although not necessarily on the physical plane. Some biographies state that at the end of her life Dion developed interest in Tantric Magic. She clearly saw the close connection between the great Tantric and Kabbalistic rituals. She realized that woman, considered in the West to be the negative or passive aspect of the Creative Energy, was on the contrary the dynamic awakener of the solar-phallic current, and as such the factor that made the male positive. After Dion's Death the magical polarity work continued until 1949 when the group was reorganized along different lines.

it would be solved for the entire race, because they are part of the group soul. This way something would be present in this world that was not here before and this would work itself out into the collective in its own way. So for the ‘polarity work’ that Dion performed it was necessary she had her priests. The priests she worked with were her husband Penry Evans, James T. Loveday, Charles ‘Kim’ Seymour, and W.K. Creasy. While Penry was with Dion this afforded her some protection, but the moment he left her in 1938, the group had to protect her. She had to be able to work without being exposed to scandalous tongues. Practices of this type were restricted to the higher grades under oaths of secrecy. Still the wives of the abovementioned priests accused their husbands of having an affair with Dion. One member has declared that the rites involved a certain degree of ‘intimate contact’. Another member

War, death and the Society of the Inner Light

Dion changed her mode of life with the onset of the Second World War. She met a more varied assortment of people, was not as exclusive as she used to be, and flung herself into society. The group spent most of their time in London and went to Glastonbury for weekends and holidays. In Glastonbury still most of the work was done on the elemental and spiritual level. At the beginning of the Second World War a lot of people were no longer able to attend Dion's lectures. For this, *The Inner Light* magazine proved to be a solution. But at the same time she started sending weekly magnetized letters to all her readers. The first letter she sent was on October 8th, 1939 and contained the message that Great Britain was in danger. People were expected to meditate on a theme, often Golden Dawn Symbols or national archetypes. They were asked to mentally imagine



standing on the Tor with King Arthur and Merlin. The Glastonbury forces were evoked in this way. These meditations had the aim to reach the group soul of the nation. This work went on throughout the whole war. By the time the fourth letter was sent Dion felt the symbols had come to life and contact was established with the Inner Worlds. Dion knew the Nazis used perverse powers to influence the outcome of the war. Dion in her place tried to transform these powers. She did nothing to hurt or destroy the enemy, she imagined a healed Germany in peace. The letters were published in the book *The Magical Battle of Britain*. Dion had given all her energy to this magical battle. In the autumn of 1945 she went on holiday to Glastonbury. She returned not feeling well en she was brought to a London hospital. She was suffering from a toothache, bloodpoisoning and acute leukemia. She died a few days later, aged 55, on the 8th of January 1946. People said she never looked more lovely. She was glowing as the inner light left her. She was buried at her beloved Glastonbury. After Dion's Death the group changed the name into the 'Society of the Inner Light'. To make sure that nobody else could contact Dion in the afterlife they destroyed almost all of her

photographs, diaries, personal objects and letters in a shameful ceremony. They were very much afraid a personal cult around Dion would start. The society still does publish her books but they distanced themselves from most of them, except the *Cosmic Doctrine* and *The Mystical Qabalah*. Information about the inner work and about Dion herself is kept secret. There is no talking with outsiders of the society. The only thing which does exist again is the magazine *The Inner Light*, which you can still subscribe to.

Best books

Dion had deep esoteric knowledge and a clear no-nonsense approach. This made her one of the most accessible occultists and writers of the 20th century. The conventions of occult secrets prevented Dion to be explicit about practical details of magic, except in work of fiction. *The Sea Priestess*, written in 1938 is Dion's best novel, in which she writes about magnetic relations between men and women. In this book the archetypal woman is Vivian le Fay Morgan, a reincarnation of the Sea Priestess, an initiate who came from Atlantis to ancient Britain to save the land from rising sea-levels, in a ceremony that involved human sacrifice. *Moon Magic*, is her most accomplished novel,

technically a superior masterpiece. Both novels give enough detail and lessons even for people without knowledge of magic to create their own rituals and get results. In *Moon Magic* Vivian, now called Lilith le Fay has travelled to London to start a temple where she can perform great rituals. By Lilith assuming the role of Goddess and the leading man that of God, they perform rituals for the advantage of the whole human race. She also teaches him to take the forces of the earth and lead them along the spine up to the brain (Kundalini). According to Dion only the ones who are able to do this, are able to perform magic. For sensitive people she produced books that when read have the same effect as a ritual initiation. Her novels were not written but wrote themselves to life. The book *The Mystical Qabalah* is the best book ever written about this subject. When Dion joined the Golden Dawn she was not satisfied with their interpretation of the Qabalah. So she used her own mediumship to explain the system of the Qabalah in a simple way. All of Dion's novels are packed with symbols directed at the subconscious. As she herself commented: "*The book 'The Mystical Qabalah' gives the reader all the theories he might need, but the novels give the actual practice, and between them it is like receiving the keys to the temple*". *

OTHER WORKS

Listed below are other books that are not mentioned in this article.

Esoteric works:

- Applied Magic and Aspects of Occultism
- Esoteric Orders and their Work
- Practical Occultism in Daily Life
- The training and Work of an Initiate
- Through the Gates of Death
- Mystical Meditations on the Collect
- The Problem of Purity
- Spiritualism in the Light of Occult Science
- Machinery of the Mind

Occult novels:

- The Demon Lover
- The Goat Foot God
- The Winged Bull

Biographies:

- Charles Fielding: The Story of Dion Fortune
- Alan Richardson: The Magical Life of Dion Fortune
- Janine Chapman: Quest for Dion Fortune
- Gareth Knight: Dion Fortune and the Inner Light

MORE INFORMATION

You can find more information on F.C. (Nancy Polet), LLM, at www.skyhighcreations.nl under "sprekers" (www.skyhighcreations.nl/?page_id=1583)