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13 The magical battle of Britain

The spatialities of occult geopolitics

Julian Holloway

Introduction: religion and geopolitics

Where the geography of religion and political geography meet, a productive range of writings have emerged around the theme of religious geopolitics (see Dijkink 2006; Dittmer 2007, 2009; Dittmer and Sturm 2010; Megoran 2010). In his agenda setting piece on this conjunction, Sturm (2013) sets out a distinction between 'the geopolitics of religion' and 'religious geopolitics'. The former refers to actors who view the geopolitical map of the world through theological spatial divisions and religious discourses of valued significance; here one may cite the contrasting contemporary examples of Daesh's self-declared caliphate or the Dali Lama's vision of Tibet as a regional 'zone of peace' facilitating a 'scalar jump' to world peace (McConnell 2013: 164). On the other hand, 'religious geopolitics' demarcates how manifestly secular geopolitical discourse often deploys and is organised through religiously inspired ideas, languages and practices; here one might mention the Christian Right in the USA whose policies, both foreign and domestic, are often framed or underpinned by Evangelical readings of Scripture. Sitting somewhere between these demarcations, one could also look to debates over postsecularism and its (re)configuration of state and religious relations and practices, to see further intersections between religion and (geo)politics (Cloke 2010, 2011).

This chapter develops Sturm's (2013) notion of geopolitical religion, and hence religious and spiritual discourses and practices which give meaning to, predict or seek to intervene in the relations between nations and the map of political spaces. Thus, it aims to explore how religious and spiritual actors give meaning to, practice and create visions of geopolitical space, and how they seek to enact religious and political power both within and beyond the nation (Dittmer 2007). However, as McConnell (2013: 162) points out, critical analyses of the geopolitical-religious nexus have 'been dominated by the study of two faiths: Anglophone Christianity and, post 9/11, Islam'. In light of this, this chapter seeks to supplement the scope of these analyses by taking as its primary focus a spiritual movement with both a long and varied history and a diverse constitution: the Western Occult tradition and movement.

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For the purposes of the analysis presented here, the Occult tradition is a broad philosophical practice that concerns itself with unseen or hidden forces or aspects of cosmic reality which can, in various ways, be contacted, drawn upon or manipulated in the service of particular goals. These concealed 'realities' pervade the universe and Occultists often argue that knowledge of these forces has been lost or obscured. Therefore, uniting occult thinking from Renaissance Hermeticism, through to the nineteenth century occult revival and more contemporary visions of the contemporary New Age and magick, is the assurance that there is a Universal, underlying hidden structure to the world and cosmos, that has been forgotten or deliberately masked. Via practice, training and knowledge the occultist thus seeks an awareness of the secrets of nature and the cosmos and hence seeks some form of union or realisation with them.

Interest in the occult and the supernatural more broadly has grown in human geography in recent years (see Bartolini *et al*. 2013; Dixon 2007; Holloway 2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; MacKian 2012; Pile 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2012; Thurgill 2015). However, there has been little work in human geography that seeks to explore the connection between the occult and geopolitics despite the numerous examples wherein the occult has intersected with, arguably influenced, contested and ran as a counter-geopolitical reality to more mainstream geopolitics. Acting as a hidden shadow to these explicit geopolitical strategies, imaginaries and practices, the geopolitics of the occult has drawn and practiced its own spatialities of the map of power. Thus, occult geometries of power often reproduce, but also skew and refract, national, militarist, statist and popular geopolitics. In particular, the occult simultaneously resonates with and differs from explicit meanings and narratives of national identity, history and destiny. Furthermore, how the geopolitical map is shaped, the processes that configure it and how it might be re-drawn, are re-imagined by occult movements which develop spatialities driven and organised by irrational forces, other cosmic realms and topologies of unseen power. Simultaneously sharing commonalities with mainstream geopolitical strategies and discourse whilst running counter to them, occult geopolitics seek to understand or shape national and world affairs according to their own visions, esoteric imaginaries and cosmic goals.

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In this chapter, I will seek to analyse a particular example of occult geopolitics – Dion Fortune's Fraternity of Inner Light and what has become known as the 'Magical Battle of Britain' – which sought to direct the course of World War Two through connecting to and manipulating an esoteric topology of unseen forces. This occult geopolitics both drew upon and differed from more secular geopolitics whilst being formed through a series of material, immaterial and affective spatialities that were patterned through a judgemental and essentialist cosmology of difference and divine destiny.

Intersections of the occult and geopolitics

In addition to the case study that forms the majority of this chapter, examples of the intersections of the occult and geopolitics are manifold. Arguably, the strengths of

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these links range from the sturdy to the more tenuous, and as such can be given to considerable contest, both historically and evidentially. Here I will discuss briefly and sequentially some of the more well-known examples of these intersections. For example, in early seventeenth century Europe, the three infamous books associated with Rosicrucianism (*Fama Fraternitas*, *Confessio Fraternitatis* and *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*), filled with alchemical, hermetic and astrological knowledge, appeared at a time of Catholic and Protestant enmity across Europe. For some these books have been deemed as both occult treatise and geopolitical propaganda in their call for religio-political reformation in Europe, and as supporting the hermetically inclined Fredrick V (1596–1632) to lead the effort to undermine Catholic European supremacy (what Reformation Protestants deemed heresy). With the start of the Thirty Years War and the defeat of Fredrick V at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620 by Emperor Ferdinand II, this secret brotherhood supposedly fled east taking their occult knowledge and geopolitical discourses with them (directing the occult gaze of later nineteenth century groups, such as Theosophists, Eastwards). As such, the occult-geopolitical import of these works faded, but arguably was present and influential at their inception (Lachman 2008).

The philosopher, mathematician, astrologer, alchemist and geographer Dr John Dee (1527–c.1608) is a widely acknowledged thinker whose magical and occult work entwines in many ways with geopolitics. Not only did Dee astrologically calculate the date for Elizabeth I's coronation, he was asked by political advisers to the Queen to predict Spanish naval invasions which were expected as part of a more general Catholic conspiracy both within and beyond the borders of the realm (Parry 2012). Moreover, Dee is widely acknowledged with inventing the phrase 'The British Empire' in his writings on Elizabethan geography. Dee's mythological belief in the empire of the Welsh sixth century King Arthur (and before him Brutus) allowed him to assert that Elizabeth had a historical and genealogical right to the possession of certain territories, including Greenland, Iceland and into North America (MacMillan 2001; Parry 2006). This justification for the geopolitical expansion of the realm intersected with Dee's reading of Johannes Trithemius' philosophy of angelic spirits controlling different ages of history. He thus saw Elizabeth as having an eschatological and apocalyptic role and destiny to 'civilise' and restore these lands of the Empire in order to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ. Indeed, for the most part these geopolitical occult prophecies garnered their detail through the practice of ritual 'scrying', wherein his (ultimately treacherous) companion Edward Kelley summoned and received messages from angelic presences (Wooley 2001).

England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was another key period where links and intersections between occult knowledge and groups, and geopolitical events and discourses flourished. For example, the development and popularity of Speculative Freemasonry amongst liberal Whigs, including Prime Minister Robert Walpole (1676–1745), meant a belief in a Hanoverian monarchy and Protestantism mixed with esoteric lore of divine rationality and sacred geometries. Furthermore, the popularity of the fraternal Masonic lodges in

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pre-revolutionary France has been argued to have been a key aspect of the revolution itself, through the lodges facilitating a mixing of social strata and acting as forums for radical anti-Christian thought (Boyet 2014; McIntosh 2011). Indeed, in post-Revolutionary France occultism thrived particularly in the form of explicitly geopolitical prophecy wherein predictions for a return of the 'Great King', and reestablishment of a (reformulated) Ancien Régime, abounded: for example, the Prophecy of Orval of the 1830s predicted the overthrow of Louis-Philippe and the 'arrival of a Great King, who would establish the European peace under French hegemony' (Harvey 2003: 688; see also Holloway 2015).

In the same century, the Theosophical leader Helena Petrovna Blavastky (1831–1891) not only promoted a racialised view of the Aryan 'root' race with Altantean origins, but upon moving to India became a strong proponent of Home Rule. Here she laid the foundations for the social reformer, suffragette and theosopher Annie Besant (1847–1933) who 'was to be interned in India for activities relating to her support of Indian Home Rule, and in 1917 was elected president of the Indian National Congress' which itself was founded by another theosophist Octavian Hume (1829–1912) (Owen 2004: 31). Indeed, there is a need to explore the links between late nineteenth and early twentieth century occultism and geopolitics more widely. One possible avenue for such research are links and influences between the former Society for Psychical Research president and British Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour's (1848–1930) spiritualist experiences (known as 'The Palm Sunday Case'), The Balfour Declaration and Zionist messianic prophecies. Or one could pursue a critical analysis of the British Israelite Movement whose religious nationalism (active from the 1870s onwards) was worked through a reading of the Great Pyramid of Khufu as the 'Bible in Stone' and hence a material manifestation of the Egyptian possession of arcane and lost spiritual knowledge and truths. Through multiple geometrical calculations of the Pyramid's dimensions and structure, not only was the Movement's belief in the British as descendants of the Biblical Lost Tribes confirmed, but also the reading of geopolitical events of the two World Wars were interpreted in eschatological terms (see Moshenska 2008).

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The relationship between occult practice, knowledge and the geopolitics of war is where this chapter sits. As such, one might look to the work of anthropologists on war magic and warrior religion which 'demonstrate that warrior religion and war magic are ubiquitous social phenomena that have arisen across the globe in a diverse range of cultures' (Farrer 2014: 3). Here ritual practices are embodied and performed in order to harness occult and magical forces to inflict harm on enemies, or sometimes heal (in various ways) the victims of war. In the extreme one might discuss war sorcery as a form of occult geopolitics whereby ritual practices are deployed to 'harness magical, spiritual, and social-psychological forces that result in an opponent's misfortune, disease, destruction and death' (Farrer 2014: 4). Yet this more strategically offensive practice is often only part of the broader war magic which also seeks to counter harmful forces and offer safeguards in times and spaces of conflict. One example is that of Javanese *kanuragan*, a ritual process wherein cosmological knowledge and entities named *aji* are used to foster

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invulnerability and power, which was practiced amongst fighters in the Indonesian War of Independence (1945–1949) against the Dutch colonial powers (de Grave 2014).

Of course in discussing the occult in relation to war and geopolitics it is impossible not to mention the links between Nazism and the occult tradition. A source of considerable debate, contest and popular myth (propagated by many non-academic books, TV shows and, of course, films), this intersection is one of some legitimacy and definite complexity. Colouring rather than directly causing Nazism, some of the occult intersections with the Third Reich include: the influence of Guido von List's völkisch and esoteric ideology of Ariosophy, and the supposedly ancient Aryan Teutonic Gnostic religion of Wotanism; the anti-Semitic and proto-Nazi Thule Society and its links with the DAP of whom Hitler joined; the self-proclaimed mystical teacher Karl Maria Wiligut who was made head of the SS Pre-and Early History department; Hess and Himmler, who 'trafficked themselves in a range of esoteric beliefs, from astrology and pendulum dowsing to natural healing' (Kurlander 2015: 504); and the supposedly magical space for the SS 'brotherhood' at Wewelsburg which Himmler allegedly believed would be a stronghold for a millennial conflict between a Germanic Europe and Asia, and where the room of the 'Obergruppenführersaal' was purportedly designed for twelve officers of the SS, akin to the Knights of the Round Table, to 'commune' with the 'Aryan Race Soul'. Add to this list the 'acceptable border sciences including World Ice Theory, cosmobiology . . . "scientific" astrology, and biodynamic agriculture' and the mix of racism, occultism and geopolitical thought under National Socialism is a heady, disputed and often conflated one (Kurlander 2015: 521; see also Black and Kurlander 2015; Goodrick-Clarke 2003; Trietel 2004).

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Therefore, the geopolitical hostilities of World War Two had an occult shadow that accompanied and coloured some of its discourses and events. To this end the so-called Nazi Occult is well known. What is less well known are the occult activities leading up to and during the war that occurred in Allied nations, particularly Britain. Indeed, subject to much speculation and a degree of conjecture, the Great Beast himself, Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) was said to have links to British Intelligence in the 1930s, and in the 1920s he and his followers were expelled by Mussolini's authorities from Sicily and the 'Abbey of Thelema' allegedly due to the Italians believing him to be a British spy. One of Crowley's friends, whom he dubbed the magical 'Adept of Adepts', was the bohemian and notoriously eccentric Evan Morgan, 2nd Viscount Tredegar (1893–1949), who was both a member of the occult group The Black Circle in London and was appointed in 1939 head of MI8, the Radio Security Service. Admiral John Godfrey, who himself seemingly recruited astrologers in the war effort, was boss to Ian Fleming at British Naval Intelligence and it was the latter who exploited (through producing fake astrological charts) Rudolf Hess' pre-war British high society links and occult interests to persuade him to fly to Scotland (to seek a meeting with the Duke of Hamilton – a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn) to seek peace with Britain. This, in part, was due to Hess' own astrologically influenced concerns over Hitler's second front with the Soviet Union (see Howard n.d; Spence

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2008). Finally, the 'Father of Wicca' Gerald Gardner (1884–1964), by his own account, performed 'Operation Cone of Power' in 1940 wherein 'a Great Circle was cast at night in the New Forest and a cone of magical energy raised and directed against Hitler' (Hutton 1999: 208). It is to a similar attempt to thwart and undermine Nazi war efforts through magickal means that this chapter turns now, namely Dion Fortune and her Fraternity of Inner Light.

Dion Fortune and the 'Magical Battle of Britain'

Described by Hutton (1999: 188) as a 'complex thinker, whose career defies any simple formulations', Dion Fortune (1890–1946) was one esoteric thinker and practitioner whose rituals and actions during World War Two allow us to explore the spatial intersections of the occult and geopolitics more closely. Born Violet Mary Firth in Llandudno on December 6th 1890, she was brought up in a household who followed the teaching of Christian Science. With the outbreak of World War One, Fortune joined the Land Army along with many other women and was given a laboratory job (where she discovered the possibility of making cheese from soya bean milk). After the war she had set herself up as psychotherapist in what was then still a nascent area of inquiry. Fortune then moved from her study of psychology to occultism; for her the two were not mutually exclusive as they both involved 'hidden forces'. As Benham (1993: 253) explains:

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> Although both defer to hidden forces that inform the appearances of life, the phenomena of psychology emerge from the inner depths of the individual psyche; the phenomena of the occult are understood as invisible forms and powers *outside* and *beyond* the psyche – although they may primarily engage it at the unconscious level. For Violet the two were quite compatible.

Post World War One, Fortune joined the Theosophy movement. Leaving in 1927 she became President of the Christian Mystic Lodge and a member of the London 'Alpha et Omega' temple of the (by then much divided) Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn wherein she changed her name to Dion Fortune (taken from her family's motto '*Deo non Fortuna*', approximately 'By God, not Fate'). By 1929 she had left the Golden Dawn and the Lodge and had formed her own Community of the Inner Light, later to become The Fraternity of Inner Light and today The Society of Inner Light.

Broadly one can divide Fortune's esoteric and occult biography into three periods: unorthodox and mystical Christianity (1914–30); more pagan and Goddess inspired thinking (1930s); and a return to esoteric Christianity after 1939 until her death in 1946 (see Hutton 1999; also Chapman 1993; Fielding and Collins 1998; Johnston Graf 2007; Richardson 2007). The events that concern us here occurred in this last period. However, it is important to consider her earlier thinking and writing in order that her actions and ideas during World War Two are suitably contextualised. In short, Dion Fortune's thinking was defined by a geopolitical discourse of race and nationhood wherein the two were often conflated – a mode

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of thought not uncommon at the time. Indeed, she believed that each race/nation had a 'Group Soul' based on racial differences (or subconscious) which gave rise to and could be influenced by the 'Group Mind' (or consciousness) of the nation:

> The innumerable individuals who make up a nation share a common subconsciousness [sic] below the personal subconsciousness of each one; this is called the racial or collective subconsciousness, and it plays a very important part in both individual and collective life. It is this level of the subconsciousness that is appealed to by national heroes; it is this level that is manipulated by spellbinding demagogues. It is here that the trend and limitations of the national character are determined, and from here that its inspiration is drawn. (Fortune 2012: 72)

Fortune's was very much a cosmological and esoteric form of nationalism and racism. She saw these Group Souls and races as ultimately descended from the oneness of the 'Divine Mind'. From there 'cosmic rays' descend to organise the 'group soul' of a race which, 'being rooted in the Earth, acquires a Place aspect with the passage of time', equating to both the 'Group Soul' and 'Group Mind' of the nation (Fortune 2012: 155). For Britain, Fortune portrays the three races of 'the Kelts, the Norse, and what can only be described as the Conglomerate, being that which is composed of all the different elements that have ever struck roots in British soil' and hence a 'unified Group Mind has grown up on the basis of a diversified Group Soul' (Fortune 2012: 155). Furthermore, for each Group Soul of nation/race there existed an ascended cosmic Master: 'racial types are guided in their destiny by Racial Angels and initiated by racial Masters' (Fortune 2012: 154, 158). However, and telling in the quoted passage above is the use of the word 'limitations', implying a hierarchical vision of the advancement of certain nations/races above and beyond others. As Hutton (1999: 182) reveals, in Fortune's writings, and particularly her novels, a racial hierarchy was presented through descriptions 'of the "wily Teuton" and the "savage races" of the Balkans' and a 'general fear of contamination by other nations, races or classes which runs through her books at this time'. Indeed, she stated 'the instinct for racial purity is a sound one' (Fortune 2012: 154).

In this context of a cosmological geopolitics of race and nation the 'Magical Battle of Britain' occurred (as it has become known). As such, between October 1939 and July 1942, Fortune and her Fraternity of Inner Light sent out 134 weekly letters that amounted to an occult and spiritual geopolitical strategy to magically defend Great Britain and counter the 'brute force' of Nazism, initiated in the belief that 'the knowledge of the Secret Wisdom is going to play an important part in what has to be done for the winning of the war and the building of the stable peace' (Fortune 2012: 40). This belief was driven by Fortune's understanding that the Nazis themselves were waging war on the astral or spiritual plane: Hitler, who surrounded himself by a 'relatively small and apparently obscure group of those who realise that there are subtle forces that can be enlisted to serve their ends', was according to Fortune 'a natural occultist and highly developed

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medium' (Fortune 2012: 81). Yet, the cosmological belief that necessitated this occult geopolitical strategy was wedded to a more material and mundane necessity: with travel restrictions in place during the war, and paper rationing meaning the printing of the Fraternity's magazine ceased in 1940, letters were a means by which the spiritual work of the group could be continued despite the geographical dispersal of its members. As such, the letters were sent out every Wednesday, to be read and consumed by the Sunday in order that the occult diaspora of the Fraternity could join in the 'united meditation' scheduled for that day at 12:15, whose 'nucleus of trained minds' would be based at the Fraternity's headquarters at Queensborough Terrace in London (Fortune 2012: 15).

Immediately we see that this occult geopolitics was played out across two interwoven and mutually dependent spatialities: one spiritual and imagined; the other material and this-worldly. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, what we might call a network spirituality is both mundane and cosmologically patterned (Holloway 2000). Here the material (the letters) and immaterial (the magical warfare) are necessary to the performance and perceived success and development of the spiritual geopolitics through which they take shape: the diasporic occult geopolitics of the Fraternity thus took form and coalesced through this material-immaterial spiritual network. Moreover, the materiality of the body and embodiment – its positioning, training and deportment – was central to the realisation of the Fraternity's spiritual geography and its occult geopolitics. As such, a preliminary document was sent out to members containing a series of instructions, composed of seven stages, on how to perform the 'work' of the esoteric warfare and hence generate this spiritually networked geopolitics. These included a series of directives on how to hold the body and its geographical positioning:

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> [. . .] take your seat if possible in a quiet, dimly lit room, secure from disturbance; face towards London; sit in such an attitude that your feet are together and your hands clasped, thus making a closed circuit of yourself. Your hands should rest on the weekly letter lying on your lap, for these letters will be consecrated before they are sent out in order that they may form a link. Breathe as slowly as you can without strain, making a slight pause at the beginning and ending of each breath.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 16)

The occult geopolitical strategy sought here thus began with a body composed and configured in immediate space. Yet the immediate was married to, supported and generated a scaling of the spiritual geography to an extended space, in both physical and cosmological senses. Moreover, this was a composed and trained body that would inform and configure an occult geopolitical sensibility of judgement and salience towards space and geopolitical events (Holloway 2012). In other words, this was a somatic composition which would seek to realise a psychic defence from the evil forces of (occult) German Nazism and its ultimate defeat, both in the seen and unseen world. This spiritual geography was one composed of an assemblage of geopolitical scales and spaces of practiced embodied

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cosmological evaluation, which were simultaneously immediate, distant, national and international, material and immaterial, ordinary and extraordinary, and patterned as good versus evil.

In order to understand this patterned occult geopolitical strategy and scaling more closely, we need to attend to the immaterial and spiritual geographies produced by the Fraternity's warfare. Therefore, in order to explore the geopolitics of occult and indeed wider spiritual movements, one must always seek to make sense and take seriously the spiritual geographies enacted and produced. These spiritual mappings often centre upon key places of divine and spiritual intervention, cosmological significance or mysterious events. Mostly due to her unorthodox Christian beliefs, Fortune's spiritual geography coalesced around the early medieval monasteries of Iona, Lindisfarne and Glastonbury (Hutton 1999: 184). This was further realised and strengthened during the Fraternity's occult warfare: early on in the geopolitical work conducted by the group, visions and symbols emerged through meditation which centred on Glastonbury.

> Starting from the symbol of the Rose upon the Cross, we immediately found it surrounded by golden light of great brilliance. [. . .] It was then perceived that the golden light and the Cross were formulated inside a cavern. [. . .] This cavern is known to the initiates as the cavern beneath Mount Abiegnus, the Hill of Vision, of which the earthly symbol is Glastonbury Tor. [. . .] [I]n future those who join with us in the meditation exercises should visualise the Rose Cross as standing in the cave under the Hill of Vision, for this is now our meeting place.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 23–24)

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Glastonbury, its earthly and material environs, is confirmed and made apparent here as a place of spiritual energy and insight. Through the embodied action of meditation, a space of spiritual centrality is performed and perceived. Patterning the network, this action simultaneously unites the dispersed Fraternity, as they supernaturally travel to and reside in the 'Hill of Vision', whilst enacting a mode of communal spiritual subjectification composed in and through this immaterial geography, and providing a place of identification for a scattered spiritual community. Moreover, the patterning, scaling and differentiation of this spiritual geography and the subjectivities produced, become central to the performance of the group's occult geopolitical action: for it is under the Hill of Vision where the group will meet and be contacted on the 'Inner Planes' by those Masters who will 'bring to the race mind a realisation of the support afforded to it by cosmic law' (Fortune 2012: 23). In other words, this (im)material space became the key geopolitical arena in which different geographies – astral, material, disaporic, conflicted – were performed and intersected. Hence, here the Fraternity were given the esoteric knowledge, sourced from otherworldly spatialities, of how to wage occult war and protect the nation.

At this juncture we see the Fraternity's spiritual geography finding some coincidence and overlap with more widely held nationalist geographies. Fortune and the

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Fraternity sought to 'evoke primordial energies from the primitive levels of the national group soul and harness them to archetypal ideas in the group mind of the race' (Fortune 2012: 84), and given that it was Glastonbury where their occult geopolitical strategies would be learnt and performed, it was the 'Watchers of Avalon' which would pursue war on the astral-spatial plane: 'Let us wake from their long sleep the primordial images of our race, King Arthur and his knights, with the wisdom of Merlin to guide them. These shall keep the soul of England against the invisible influences being brought to bear upon it for its undoing' (Fortune 2012: 85). Whilst these 'ideals' figure strongly in other British nationalist and populist geopolitical imaginaries, both in the past and in the present, it must be noted that they are deployed here in a manner which runs somewhat counter to their role as symbolic emblems of national identity. For here, the Fraternity evoked Arthur and Merlin as doing *actual* work on the soul and spirit of the nation, and hence were very much a real part of the conflict and war. Far from being just symbols to rally round and identify with, Fortune believed warfare was taking place in this otherworldly space and hence these figures were acting to shore up Britain's defences as the war ensued:

> In order to guard against any such subtle influencing, let us meditate upon angelic Presences, red-robed and armed, patrolling the length and breadth of our land. Visualise a map of Great Britain, and picture these great Presences moving as a vast shadowy form along the coasts, and backwards and forwards from north to south and east to west, keeping watch and ward so that nothing alien can be observed.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 34)

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In making sense of spiritual geographies, here manifest as occult geopolitics, we must therefore take seriously the reality of the formations, ideas and cosmologies generated by these groups in their discourses and practices.

One way in which we might pursue a more sympathetic understanding of these geographies, yet one which, importantly, allows for a critique of such groups to emerge, is through an attention to the forces that bind and pattern them, and allow them to work. More precisely, one might examine how occult geopolitics is formed and enacted through series of transfers that amount to an esoteric spatiality of diasporic affect. Therefore, the transfers that formed and produced this occult geopolitical network are very much akin to Pile's (2011) study of telepathy as a form of affect over distance. Pile (2011: 4) informs that telepathy, as multifaceted supernormal phenomena, 'refers to the ability to sense (to be affected) and also to perception beyond immediate cognition, such as intuitions, premonitions, or inklings'. As such, the Fraternity's occult warfare was composed and achieved through a series of transfers occurring at distance that welded imagined spaces, embodied acts and judgemental differentiations, such that a community of affected sensation emerged and solidified. Here 'the experience of shared affects between people at distance' was produced through an occult cosmology of racial-national differences and geopolitical esoteric conflict (Pile 2011: 7). These circulations

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allowed for an occult geopolitics to occur across distance and through im/material spaces and borders, melding the embodied and the imagined, the sensed and the spiritual. Essential to this network of geopolitical defence and combat was a series of binding occult transferrals. Here affect at a distance is envisaged as occult energies performed through supernormal flows across space. These transfers are understood through cosmologies of spiritual energy, thought-forms, visions and sensations circulating amongst the network. As this spiritual affect circulated, as the occult transference affected at a distance and as these energies bound the network, the geopolitical forces of the 'Watchers of Avalon' and their attendant geographies were generated.

This form of spiritual geopolitics thus amounts to an occult topology of affect spatially manifest across different and dispersed geographies: a geopolitical spatiality and strategy was built and cemented with a 'glue' of occult affect transference binding the network:

> From our Inner Plane contacts we draw strength and inspiration [. . .] It is not enough to make contact and receive inspiration. The inspiration will soon dry up unless it flows through us, ever renewing itself in flowing. For those who have the deeper knowledge, participation in the national war effort is a sacramental act whereby the power that has been drawn down is put in circuit. Break the circuit, and the power ceases to flow.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 53)

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During the war years, this affective topology, composed of energetic circuits of 'sacramental' and 'inner plane' inspiration, produced and strengthened judgemental dispositions with regard to the events happening, how to affect these events and processes and, more significantly, why they were happening. Yet Fortune's letters rarely state, and at best only hint at, possible direct material impacts on the events of the war. For the most part, where a link is made it takes the form of prophecy: for example, on June 23rd 1940 she notes how the 'change of feeling' in the USA towards the war was seen in their meditation three weeks previous and 'how it will be recalled that the entry of Italy into the war was announced a fortnight before it occurred' (Fortune 2012: 54). However, Fortune warned her followers from dealing directly in this-worldly geopolitics stating:

> . . . our teaching concern[s] principles, not politics. [. . .] This is the way in which, as initiates, we work. We outline nothing; we meditate upon cosmic principles till these take intellectual form. [. . .] There is, in consequence, a gap between the initiates who bring through the archetypal ideas and the statesmen and economists who give them practical form. [. . .] The thought-forms that have developed as a result of group meditation work have to cross the gap by means of their own inherent energy.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 103)

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For Fortune and the Fraternity, their occult warfare was happening through an other-worldly spiritual geography, wherein the nation's group soul and, literally, spirit was being fortified and advanced.

At the heart of this occult geopolitical strategy was belief in cosmic destiny whereby the Fraternity 'have to simply pull the lever, and the Machinery of the Universe does the rest. Our work is to formulate and reformulate day by day the mental link between the spiritual influences and the group mind of the race' (Fortune 2012: 25). The notion that there is a 'cosmic plan' to the universe that each of us is living out (whether we realise it or not) and that we need to learn our spiritual and cosmological destiny is something common to occult, esoteric and spiritual groups (Holloway 2000). Consequently the more spiritually advanced and developed a seeker is, the more they are aware of their part in the divine plan and eschatological affairs: 'We believe that there is a cosmic plan being worked out, of which the present conditions form a phase, and that we can consciously co-operate with the working of that plan' (Fortune 2012: 20).

Fortune, given the spiritual messages she and others in the group received, was thus able to state as early as 1941 that 'the question of the ultimate outcome of the war and the form of the final peace was never considered a matter for speculation because it was taken for granted' (Fortune 2012; 90). This assumption was based on the very appearance and intervention of the Masters or Elder Brethren that waged astral combat, protected the nation and allowed the Fraternity to do their spiritual geopolitical work during the war. Indeed, Fortune argued that the 'opportunity to establish contacts with the Masters' was ripe during the war: 'for it does not often happen that the veil is as thin as it is at the moment' (Fortune 2012: 32). Moreover, this appearance signalled a proto-New Age version of history which envisioned the war as the movement from the Piscean Age 'as the pure Aquarian types made their appearance among us' (Fortune 2012: 148).

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With the spiritual assurance that a New Age was dawning and the nation would be protected through the astral combat of the Masters and the work done by the Fraternity, in her later weekly letters Fortune began to spell out her geopolitical spiritual vision for the future. This proposal took the form of a post-national cosmopolitanism wherein the spiritual would supersede the material geopolitical conflict experienced and suffered:

> Nations must not be looked upon, nor think of themselves, as self-contained units; they are simply sub-sections of human society thus divided up for convenience. [. . .] It is the men and women of the New Age in all nations who must take control across the national barriers as soon as the fighting is over, and they must meet as Aquarians, not as English, French or Germans.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 100–101)

Whilst this occult geopolitical future is shaped here by a doctrine of spiritual-global post-nationalism, Fortune's vision of the divine plan must still be read as one where racism and nationalism are driving forces. Therefore, generated

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through affective relation and communities of esoteric sensation, this was singularly *not* an ethics of open becoming, but one where differences were absolute and destinies preordained. Here a network of affective relations did not present a future open to becoming (contra Anderson and Harrison 2010; Connolly 2011), but a spiritual geography where the future is pre-given and closed down: as Fortune (1913: 158) opined, 'each race has its own destiny to pursue under its own leaders, and change can only come from within, if change be needed'. This destiny was a teleological path of spiritual enlightenment, yet one where history and fundamental differences in national Group Souls were paramount and conditional:

AuQ66

> When the Germans open up the primordial levels of their racial mind they release the elemental energies of the old gods – the bloodstained, mindless images of the heroes of Norse myth. [. . .] A good thousand years intervenes between the [Christian] conversion of Britain and the conversion of Germany; consequently the influences of Christianity reaches to a far deeper level of racial consciousness with us than with them, and when the surface consciousness of the British group soul peels off we find, not the mindless heroes of Valhalla, but the chivalry of the Table Round; Excalibur instead of Nothung; and the Quest of the Grail instead of the looting of Rhinegold.
>
> (Fortune 2012: 85)

As such, pre-destined spiritual enlightenment is made provisional across space due to evolutionary and essential cosmological differences. Indeed, Fortune (1913: 157) expands these national differences to a global scale in her discussion of the Western and Eastern mystery traditions when she states: '[t]o the East belongs the glory of a great past from which we may learn, but to which we may not return'. This occult geopolitics is thus one formed through a doctrine, embodiment and practice of essentialism, spiritual evolutionism and ultimately, esoteric supremacy at a national and global scaling, despite (or because) of her claims to a cosmopolitan New Age dawning.

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Conclusion

Understanding how spiritual geographies are produced and sustained through communities of sensation and affective topologies, and how they give rise to and pattern geopolitical discourses of essential division and hierarchical evolution, is one way a critical approach to such movements might be developed. Here I have traced how a spiritual geography is formed that seeks to intercede in national conflict and foresee and configure the future map of political spaces, both nationally and internationally. I have examined how occult geopolitics is played out and performed across two interwoven spatialities – the immaterial and the material. Spiritual geographies are manufactured through the real and the imagined, and are stitched together with the thread of spiritual energies and occult affective transfers. Dion Fortune and her Fraternity of Inner light sought to wage war on an

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immaterial plane against hostile forces, and in-so-doing plaited together an occult geopolitical imaginary and practice that simultaneously drew upon and differed from national symbolism organised around iconic material spaces. This was a spiritual geography performed through a network glued and bound by supernormal affects at a distance and embodied action that affected geopolitical judgement in and towards other nations and identities. This judgement was manifest as a spiritual evolutionism, with some identities and nations closer and more inherently capable of divine realisation than others.

This chapter has explored in detail an historical example of where occult discourses and practices coincide with and shadow geopolitical events. Yet to believe that the practices and discourses of occult geopolitics are a thing of the past would be a mistake. For example, Pop (2014) has examined how during the Romanian Presidential election campaign of 2009, Aliodor Manolea, a staff member of the incumbent president Traian Băsescu, used occult powers (specifically the energy of the 'violet flame', a source of mystical power) during a live television debate to 'negatively influence' the counter-candidate Mircea Geoană. Furthermore, there is a contemporary coincidence between the occult, geopolitical imaginaries and conspiracy theory.

For example, David Icke, whose popularity is widespread amongst New Age countercultures, has produced a series of publications and video podcasts detailing his discourse of geopolitical institutions, such as the European Union. Icke believes the world is being run by a 'hidden kabbal', deemed the Illuminati, whose goal is a 'Global centralised society, based on a world government, world central bank controlling all finance, and a world army imposing the will of the world government' (Icke 2016a). The EU is a 'Super State' within this 'world government': 'The plan within those [super states] is to destroy all countries, to end all sovereignty, to end all nations, and break these nations into regions. [. . .] The idea is to have a world government dictating to these union super states and the union super states dictating to the regions of the super state'. To this end, Icke has spent much time and effort revealing the 'evidence' that proves this occluded geopolitical agenda. For example, he notes how the 'Twelve stars of the union is the symbol of the Babylonian goddess. [. . .] The European Union is not a political union, it is the union of the Illuminati Goddess which they wish to enslave the whole of Europe within' (Icke 2016b).

Given the popularity of Icke – someone who can sell out the 6000 capacity Wembley Arena in 2012 – and the circulation of other occult inspired conspiracy theories both today and in the past, it seems appropriate and indeed crucial that geographers of religion and spirituality seek to analyse and critique the spatialities of occult geopolitics, and their significance and ramifications. Indeed, in a world where political power is increasingly practiced through statements of 'alternative facts', it seems imperative geographers of religion and spirituality seek to critically investigate and unpack the consequences and implications of the intersection of geopolitics and religion, especially in the 'post-truth' world of occult conspiracy theory wherein Icke and his ilk reside.

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