

Divination Nick Campion

Definitions

By divination we mean the attempt to elicit from some higher power or supernatural being the answers to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding. Questions about future events, about past disasters whose causes cannot be explained, about things hidden from sight or removed in space, about right conduct in a critical situation, about the time and mode of religious worship and the choice of persons for a particular task – all these have from ancient times and in all parts of the world been the subject of divinatory enquiry.¹

the foreseeing and foretelling of events considered as happening by chance.²

Divination is found in all societies, ancient and modern, though methods vary. In the West, psychics claim innate ability to predict the future, and [horoscopes](#), palm reading, and [tarot](#) cards are popular methods of divination. Other methods involve or have involved interpreting dreams, discovering [omens](#) in natural events, reading the entrails of animals, casting lots, and consulting [oracles](#). Divination has long been viewed as the province of specially gifted persons, such as prophets, shamans, and magicians. *See also* [astrology](#).³

The wish to know what is going to happen is deeply rooted and widely spread among men.⁴

the art, practice, or gift of discerning or discovering future events or unknown things, as though by supernatural powers.⁵

How Divination Works

There are various theories:

1.Communication with Divinities

A major statement on the mechanics of divination was made by the Neoplatonic philosopher Iamblichus in his *De Mysteriis* The passage is III.1 (p. 64) in the Thomas Taylor translation and Part III, chap 7 in the Wilder translation:

1 Blacker, Carmen, and Michael Loewe, *Oracles and Divination*, Boulder: Shambhala 1981, p. 1.

2 Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I.v.9, II.v.13.

3 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166528/divination>.

4 P.J. Heather, 'Divination', *Folklore* 65 no 1 (1954), p. 10.

5 'divination' in the online Collins English Dictionary <http://dictionary.reverso.net/english-definition/divination> (accessed 04/09/09).

The chief remedy for all doubts of such a kind is this: to know the origin of the Divining Art, that it is **neither set in motion from bodies nor from the conditions incident to bodies**, nor from a **peculiar nature and the faculties incident to the nature**, nor from **human preparation or experience pertaining to it**; but on the other hand, not **from any skill acquired externally in relation to some part of which may be attempted in every-day life**. Its entire validity **pertains to the gods, and is conferred by the gods**. It is **perfected by the divine Performances and symbols, and there are likewise divine spectacles and learned theorems**. All other things are subject as instrumentalities for the gift of foreknowledge which has been transmitted from the gods. These include both such as relate to our soul and body and such as are inherent in the nature of everything or in the individual natures of every one. Some things, however, are subordinate beforehand, as being in the realm of Matter; such, for example, as places, or other things of a like character.

If, however, any one thinking that he is saying something erudite, shall refuse to consider the **primary causes**, but shall attribute the art and faculty of divining to operations of an inferior character, such as to the activities of bodies, or changes of conditions, or to different movements or operations of human life, or to reasons of a psychic or physical nature; or if he shall argue from the correspondence of these things to others as being causes, presuming that he is setting forth what is true, he has gone entirely wrong.² On the contrary, the one right goal, and the one principle in relation to all these matters, will be found to be: that in no case do we derive the divination of the future from any of those things that have no foreknowledge in themselves, **but that we shall contemplate the mantic power which is apportioned over all the world and to all the natures distributed therein from the gods who possess in themselves the entire compass of the knowledge of the things that have a being**. For such a cause is not only primal, and, in the fullest sense, universal, but it also contains in itself primarily whatever it imparts to those that participate of it; and it especially bestows the true knowledge which the divining art requires. It likewise comprehends beforehand the essence and cause of the things about to take place, from which, of necessity, the attaining of foreknowledge comes unceasingly.

This is not an easy passage. The original meanings are subtle and the archaic translation gives appearance of self-contradiction. Essentially Iamblichus is arguing that divination is not made possible by the movement of bodies (including planets) and their consequences, nor skills which one might learn.

On the other hand, it is made possible by the divine realms (**the gods, primary causes**) and the diviner may make use of ritual (**divine Performances**) and ritual magic (**symbols, learned theorems**)

The actions of ordinary astrologers and mediums are therefore not divinatory, in the sense that they are not accessing divine wisdom.

2. Reading an Ordered Universe.

The following passage is from the I Ching:

The idea of RETURN is based on the course of nature. The movement is cyclic, and the course completes itself. Therefore it is not necessary to hasten anything artificially. Everything comes of itself at the appointed time. This is the meaning of heaven and earth. All movements are accomplished in six stages and the seventh brings return. Thus the winter solstice, with which the decline of the year begins, comes in the seventh month after the summer solstice; so too sunrise comes in the seventh double hour after sunset. Therefore seven is the number of the young light, and it arises when six, the number of the great darkness, is increased by one.⁶

3. Enchantment:

Patrick Curry argues that divination works as a result of ‘enchantment’, the direct experience of a meaningful world.⁷

Function

George K. Park argued that divination had the following functions.⁸ It:

- provides security, relieving fear of the future
- establishes consensus on correct or appropriate action
- legitimises a course of action (he uses the term ‘derandomizing’, meaning to enable a decision on a single course of action out of a series of possibilities.)

If these functions are examined carefully it becomes apparent that those who are both genuine and sceptical about divination may agree. One function not included, though, is the acquisition of divine wisdom. Another is the straightforward prediction of the future.

Typologies of Divination in the Ancient World

1. Mesopotamia

The distinction between science and religion as two explanatory models is one which only makes sense in the modern west but, as to applied Mesopotamian astrology, it's not a matter of either/or but both: astrology was clearly scientific in its analytical and experimental rigour. It posed hypotheses which could be tested and sought to explain humanity's relationships with the natural environment. Mesopotamian cosmology, though, differed from modern science in its purely descriptive nature. It had no need of complex explanatory models to explain the origins of the cosmos for these were provided by the cosmogony of the *Enuma Elish*, in which the gods emerged out water, moulded human beings out of clay and obligated them to serve their creators.⁹ Astrology was

⁶ Wilhelm Baynes *I Ching*, Hex 24, Return; The Judgement.

⁷ Willis and Curry, p. 88.

⁸ Park G.K., 1963. Divination and its Social Contexts, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 93(2), pp. 195-6, 200..

⁹ For the discussion of Mesopotamian astrology as scientific see Larsen, Mogens Trolle, ‘The Mesopotamian Lukewarm Mind: Reflections on Science, Divination and Literacy’ in Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, ed., *Language, Literature and History*, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1987, esp. p. 212 and Bottéro, Jean, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 135.

religious in the sense that it involved gods and goddesses, rituals, sacrifice and worship, but these beliefs and practices were all part of the scientific model. The evidence for the gods' existence was found in the workings of the everyday world: when the wind blew something had to make it blow and that thing was naturally its controlling force, the lord of the air, Enlil. And if a ritual to a god averted danger then that was *prima facie* evidence that the ritual had worked. If it failed then, as with any good scientific practice, one had to try again or think again, refining and adjusting the procedures.

But, above and beyond the question of whether astrology was religious or scientific is its linguistic nature. Its political purposes could not be achieved unless a two-way communication could be maintained with the divine council in heaven. The movement of the stars was understood as *šitir šamê*, the 'writing of heaven'.¹⁰ The world, it was thought, could be 'read' and understood in a logical manner, an idea which remained a constant in divination, astrology and magic until well into the Renaissance, when it began its gradual evolution into modern science.

Modern scholars have retrospectively divided Babylonian divination into two forms, known respectively as **intuitive, natural, unprovoked or inspired** on the one hand, and **inductive, artificial, operational deductive or provoked** on the other.¹¹ The former relies on spontaneous messages from the gods, as in dreams, while in the latter specific techniques are employed to solicit an answer, as in extispicy, the casting of lots or the pouring of oil into water. Astrology seems to cross the boundaries between the two. It

10 Reiner, Erica, *Astral Magic in Babylonia*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society 1995, p. 9. See also Gadd, C.J., *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East*, Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1945, Munich: Kraus Reprint 1980, p. 57. Bottéro, Jean, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 133, pointed out that in extispicy Shamash was thought to write his messages directly on to the liver; the inference is that divine messages were written on to the sky in a similar fashion.

11 Gadd, C.J., *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East*, Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1945, Munich: Kraus Reprint 1980, p. 51; Bottéro, Jean, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 125; Koch-Westenholz, Ulla, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*. Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 1995, pp. 9-10; Hunger, Hermann and David Pingree, *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia*, Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999, p. 5; Oppenheim, A. Leo, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilisation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, p. 208; Cicero *De Divinatione*: I.vi. The retrospective division of divination into two types follows the division of astrology itself into two branches by Isidore of Seville, natural, which observed the planets' general influences, and superstitious, which relied heavily on the use of horoscopes for making precise judgements over such matters as future events and auspicious times for action; see Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach and Oliver Berghof, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, III.xxvii, p. 99. This distinction was then adopted by cuneiform scholars in the nineteenth century. See Jastrow, Morris, *Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria*, New York: Putnam, 1911, p. 795; Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, *Aspects of Babylonian Celestial Divination: The Lunar Tablets of Enuma Anu Enlil*, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 22, 1988, p. 5 and Brown, David, *Mesopotamian Planetary Astronomy-Astrology*, Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000, p. 7, n.16, citing R. French, *Ancient Natural History* 1994, where the two terms are changed to natural and superstitious.

was unprovoked in the sense that the astrologers had to wait for the gods to send omens, and if the omen didn't come there was nothing the astrologer could say, but it developed an interpretative procedure as complex as extispicy and, eventually, much more so.

2. Plato

In spite of Plato's respect for the east, there was a certain 'nationalism' (I have put the world in quotation marks because it may be anachronistic to talk of nationalism in the modern sense in the ancient world) in his position, and his rejection of Babylonian astrology was contradicted by a respect for native Greek oracles, which he saw as vital to the smooth running of the state, as well as a powerful source of truth. He had the highest respect for the political advice received from the great oracles, mentioning specifically Delphi, Dodona or Ammon (note the Egyptian influence - Ammon was the Egyptian solar deity Amon or Amun, equated by the Greeks with Zeus: his oracle was in Egypt). He argued that such advice, whether from 'visions' or 'inspiration from heaven' should no more be altered than should rules derived from sacred numbers.¹² He was the first thinker we know of to introduce a typology of divination, dividing it into two forms, which he attributed to Socrates.¹³ The **first, mantic prophecy**, was the product of frenzy or inspired madness, as found in the oracles, such as Delphi. He preferred to call this variety manic, rather than mantic, on the grounds that true madness could take one close to the divine. From this he distinguished the **second type, augury**, based on rational methods, such as the observation of birds and signs and their interpretation in line with established rules.

3. Cicero

Cicero's scepticism actually enabled him to analyse and define divination as a whole, as well as astrology in particular, which he quite clearly regarded as one of its branches. He had Quintus define divination as 'the foreseeing and foretelling of events considered as happening by chance'.¹⁴ He considered the theoretical arguments for its veracity: on the one hand if the gods exist then they must want to speak to us but, on the other, they have far more interesting things to bother about than us mere mortals. But then again, he argued, perhaps nature can give us signs without divine intervention while, even if the gods exist, the power to talk to them might be a special one which they have not conferred on humanity as a whole. **Quintus also adapts Plato's distinction in the *Phaedrus* between rational and 'manic' prophecy**, offering a division of divination into two forms which remains a major template for the analysis of ancient forms of prophecy and prediction.¹⁵ **The first he called 'artificial', or 'by art'**, an insight into the meaning of our modern word. This, he insisted, required the analysis of empirical or observed data and proceeded by clear rules of deduction. Entrail divination was artificial,

12 Plato, *Laws* V.737E-738A.

13 Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans H.N.Fowler, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1914, 244-5.

14 Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I.v.9, II.v.13.

15 Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I.vi.12, xviii.34, xix.37, lv.124, lvi.127, II.iii.9, II.xi.25; Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans H.N.Fowler, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1914, 244.

as was astrology. **The second was defined as ‘natural’ in that it proceeded from human nature unmediated by external data.** Prime examples of natural divination included dreams, ‘mental excitement’ and ‘frenzy’. The famous oracle at Delphi would have been classed by Cicero as ‘natural’. There is a parallel here with the modern functional classification of Babylonian omens as ‘provoked’ or ‘unprovoked’ – resulting either from a divinatory procedure or sent by the gods. Except, of course, that, from the point of view of the diviner, all messages were sent by gods and goddesses. In the context of later developments, though, we can identify a ‘natural’ divination which should include astrology in the sense that it is based on general influences. The concept that Mars, as a planet with a hot-dry nature, can be responsible for fevers and drought, is clearly astrological but requires no divinatory constructs and no horoscopes.

Astrology as Divination

The definition of astrology as divination is current amongst various groups of people:

1. some astrologers, especially those who combine the use of astrology with other ‘divinatory’ methods.
2. sociologists and other academic commentators.
3. hostile critics of astrology.

Other astrologers resent the description of astrology as divination, which tends to be classed together with ‘fortune telling’ and is disreputable.

Addey’s Typology

In response to Geoffrey Cornelius (who is not mentioned in the article) John Addey distinguished three types of divination:¹⁶

1. the invocation of higher powers by divine ritual or prayer (not concerned with astrology).¹⁷
2. the use of psychic sensibility, such as dowsing which, do not involve reason and intuition, are not, contrary to common usage, to be described as spiritual, and may rely on natural faculties.¹⁸
3. the interpretation of symbols to reveal unrecognised truths: astrology belongs in this final class. However, it is misleading to confine astrology to a form of divination.¹⁹

Campion: A Suggested Typology of Astrology as Divination²⁰

16 Addey, John M., ‘Astrology as Divination’, *Astrology*, 56:2 (1982), pp. 39-44.

17 Addey p 39.

18 Addey, p. 40.

19 Addey, p. 40.

20 Campion, Nicholas, ‘Divination as an Authoritarian System’, paper presented at the Bath Spa University Sophia Centre postgraduate conference, 9 June 2007. Wouter Hanegraaff distinguished the New Age *sensu stricto*, in a restricted sense, from the New Age *sensu lato*, that is, in a wide sense; see Hanegraaff, Wouter J., *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, New York, 1996, pp. 96-103.

In his analysis of New Age culture, Wouter Hanegraaff distinguished the New Age *sensu stricto*, in a restricted sense, from the New Age *sensu lato*, that is, in a wide sense.²¹ Following Hanegraaff's New Age typology, I have identified three modern attitudes to astrology amongst astrologers as divination *sensu lato* (wide sense), and *sensu strictu* (strict sense), which itself comes in two forms.²²

1. Divination *sensu lato* = assumes an element of intuition or communication with psychic realms, assumed to be either a higher intelligence or, less commonly, an external agency; is not considered to replace definitions of astrology as science, art or a form of psychology, but is compatible with them; historically modern. In the UK, this form has been identified with the cultural milieu represented by the British Astrological Psychic Society (BAPS)

1A All astrology is divinatory

As an example of astrology as divination *sensu lato*, note the way in which Sasha Fenton's biography assumes that astrology is divinatory as a matter of course:

Biography of Sasha Fenton

http://www.zampub.com/html/sasha_fenton.html (accessed 21 March 2007)

Sasha was born in Bushey, North London in 1943. Her mother, psychic herself, encouraged Sasha's interest in **divinatory** subjects, although it was to be some time before Sasha put her natural abilities to full use.

Sasha worked as a professional Astrologer, Tarot Reader, consultant and Palmist from 1974 until the mid '90s. During this time, she rapidly developed into an energetic (well, Leo is a Fire sign...) dynamo:- besides her writing and consulting careers, Sasha has held the posts of President of BAPS (British Astrological & Psychic Society), Chair of the British Advisory Panel on Astrological Education and member of the Executive Council of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain.

This might correspond to 'Low astrology' (Curry) = regarded as a species of divination. cf. *Prediction* magazine

1B. Some astrology is divinatory

For example: 'Any definition of horary [astrology] has to accept that it is a method of divination, heavily reliant upon symbolic appreciation. The philosophy that lies at the heart of horary is the one that drives the whole spectrum of astrological techniques.'²³

21 See Hanegraaff, Wouter J., *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, New York, 1996, pp. 96-103.

22 See Hanegraaff, Wouter J., *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, New York, 1996, pp. 96-103.

23 Houlding, Deborah, *Learning Horary Astrology*, http://www.skyscript.co.uk/horary_intro.html.

2. Divination *sensu strictu*

In the 1980s in the UK the notion that astrology was divinatory in a strict, exclusive, sense, meaning that all other definitions and descriptions of astrology were more or less false and incompatible with divination was the cause of debate. We can identify two forms of astrology as divination *sensu lato* (wide sense), and *sensu strictu*.

2A. Divination *sensu strictu* I

This version is associated with Geoffrey Cornelius, who wrote that 'Astrology is properly defined as divination'²⁴. He described astrology 'as a pure divination' involving 'a profound dimension of psychic creativity'.²⁵

He accepted a traditional view of what divination involves 'Divination is here to be understood as the interpretation of the will of divine beings, as the Latin root of the word *divinus* suggests'.²⁶ The gods respond to our concern and speak to us through the omen. 'This' he wrote, 'is the root and origin of what we astrologers do.'²⁷

Cornelius' divinatory astrology also

- was allied with traditionally codified astrology, rule-bound, e.g. heavy use of 'strictures'; historical inspiration located in 17th c, incorporating medieval tradition with a modern approach (e.g. the use of modern planets).

requires a view of astrology as discontinuous, existing only in the moment that the astrologer makes an inquiry .

- was justified with respect to Jung's theory of synchronicity
- was influenced by theosophy.

Cornelius adheres to Isidore's distinction between supernatural astrology and natural astrology, regarding the former (which Isidore condemns) as his divinatory astrology. He allows for a natural astrology of physical influences, but this distinction is lost in his statements that all astrology is divinatory.

B. Divination *sensu strictu* II

Patrick Curry argues that 'Astrology has a divinatory dimension'.²⁸) = spontaneous, local, pluralistic, democratic and is historically positioned prior to codification of astrology. His theory is fundamentally different to Cornelius' in his rejection of divine beings and advocacy of enchantment (see Nick's Enchantment notes) as a rationale for divination.

The Current vogue for astrology-as-divination

24 Geoffrey Cornelius, Warburg Institute Workshop on Astrology in the Ancient World, 16 Feb 2007.

25 Cornelius, G., 1998. Is Astrology Divination and Does it Matter ?. *The Mountain Astrologer*. Oct-Nov, (81)

26 Cornelius, Geoffrey, *The Moment of Astrology: Origins in Divination*, London: Arkana 1994. p. 141.

27 Cornelius, G., 1998-1999, *Is Astrology Divination and Does it Matter?* Centre Universitaire de Recherche en Astrologie, p.1. Available at <http://cura.free.fr/quinq/01gfcor.html> 1998-1999 Geoffrey Cornelius

28 Patrick Curry, Sophia Centre seminar, Bath Spa University, 25 November 2006.

There is amongst some astrologers (Geoffrey Cornelius) and academics (Patrick Curry), a vogue for describing astrology as divination. Can this argument be located in recent history?

- Is it a golden age narrative, representing nostalgia for a lost period when human beings had a supposedly superior way of relating to the cosmos (see the disenchantment thesis)?
- Is it also a response to perceived failure of scientific programme into astrology in the 1970s/80s (see Geoff Dean)?
- Or a loss of faith in the 'modern', as some sociologists would say (see future post-modern notes)
- And/or a manifestation of the anthropological romanticisation of the 'primitive', in which the backward native is recast as the noble savage.

Criticism of Astrology-as-Divination

'Whilst it [the pro-divination view] appears to explain why quantitative research has found so little evidence to support astrologers' beliefs and experience, it at the same time seems to remove from astrological practice any secure basis for interpretation. ... More importantly, we are still left with the question as to how this astrological divination works? How can it be enhanced if the principles upon which its interpretations are based are not true in any testable sense or are of secondary significance? If this were actually the case, then it would be impossible to programme a computer to produce reports which, although imperfect, can often identify many of the key issues in an individual's life and psychology. Experience shows that some computerised reports can prove remarkably to the point. But perhaps the most potentially problematic and pernicious outcome of allocating an almost exclusively divinatory foundation to astrology is that it encourages the view that there is no systematic way in which astrological interpretation can be improved and enhanced. By such a move the magnificent contributions to astrology this century of, for example, Witte, Ebertin, Addey, Barbault, Liz Greene and Jim Lewis are all too easily marginalised and several whole dimensions of astrology's universe negated'.²⁹

Campion: Another typology of divination:³⁰

Divination: requires divinity. If there is no assumption of divinity, should the word be used?

Divination I: depends on the reading of established, divine order = Babylonian astrology, I Ching (above).

Divination II: depends on the unique encounter with a divinity, or supernatural entity.

These need not be mutually exclusive categories

²⁹ Charles Harvey, *Astrological Journal* (1994, 36, pp.396-398)

³⁰ Campion, Nicholas, 'Divination as an Authoritarian System', paper presented at the Bath Spa University Sophia Centre postgraduate conference, 9 June 2007.

Then

Divination III (without a divinity): depends only on the astrologer, is solipsistic: without the presence of an agent with whom one can communicate, with what or whom is the astrologer communicating – with him or herself alone?

Or

Divination IV: the gods recast as inner gods/archetypes, in which case we are back to Plato (see James Hillman).

In the Platonic cosmos: oracular divination was essential to the functioning of the well ordered state.

Questions:

Besides, is any form of astrology *necessarily* divinatory? It all depends what astrology is, and what a horoscope is.

In the Natural – Judicial Astrology dichotomy, is a horoscope necessarily Judicial?

If a horoscope is a diagram of something else then it is, in itself, dependent on what that other thing is.

To say that horoscopic astrology is necessarily divinatory may be monist – it claims a single answer to a complex problem.

Is divination prophecy?

- ‘And behold, a prophet came near to Ahab king of Israel and said, “Thus says the Lord, Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will give it into your hand this day; and you shall know that I am the Lord”’. I Kings 20.13.

Does divination require a vehicle – e.g. a horoscope?

Is Divination authoritarian – yes in the Babylonian and Biblical context:

In some situations, some *sign* suffices to indicate the sacredness of a place. “According to the legend, the *marabout* who founded El-Hamel at the end of the sixteenth century stopped to spend the night near a spring and planted his stick in the ground. The next morning, when he went for it to resume his journey, he found that it had taken root and that buds had sprouted on it. He considered this a sign of God’s will and settled in that place.” In such cases the *sign*, fraught with religious meaning, introduces an absolute element and puts an end to relativity and confusion. *Something* that does not belong to this world has manifested itself

apodictically and in so doing has indicated an orientation or determined a course of conduct.³¹

Does the idea that Babylonian divination involved negotiation, as if among equals, derive from cuneiform scholars desire to legitimize their subject to a modern audience?
Is Divination necessary as a model for *some* astrology. If so, how does divination function?

Does the claim that all astrology is divinatory universalize (i.e. raise to the level of universal law), a phenomenon which, as Curry would say, is local and particular to a special time and place. As Terry Eagleton wrote, 'An important device by which an ideology achieves legitimacy is by universalising and "eternalizing" itself. Values and interests which are in fact specific to a certain place and time are projected as the values and interests of all humanity'.³²

31 Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace 1959). The story of the *marabout* is from René Basset, in *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, XXII, 1907, p. 287.

32 Eagleton, Terry, *Ideology: An introduction*, London: Verso 1991, p. 58