

GLOSSARY

abductee Someone who believes that he or she has been taken away by deception or force against his/her will.

aboriginal Refers to a people that has lived or existed in a particular area or region from the earliest known times or from the beginning.

abyss From late Latin *abyssus* and Greek *abusos*, which literally means “bottomless,” stemming from *bussos*, meaning “bottom.” A gorge or chasm that is inconceivably deep, vast or infinite, such as the bottomless pit of hell or a dwelling place of evil spirits.

alchemy From Greek, *khemeia* to Arabic, *alkimiya* via medieval Latin *alchimia* and Old French, fourteenth century *alquemie*, meaning “the chemistry.” A predecessor of chemistry practiced in the Middle Ages and Renaissance principally concerned with seeking methods of transforming base metals into gold and the “elixir of life.”

alien A being or living creature from another planet or world.

amnesia The loss of memory which can be temporary or long term and usually brought on by shock, an injury, or psychological disturbance. Originally from the Greek word *amnestos*, literally meaning not remembered and from a later alteration of the word *amnesia* forgetfulness.

anomalous Something strange and unusual that deviates from what is considered normal. From the Greek *anomalos*, meaning uneven.

anthropology The scientific study of the origins, behavior, physical, social, and cultural aspects of humankind.

Antichrist The antagonist or opponent of Jesus Christ (c. 6 B.C.E.–c. 30 C.E.), who is anticipated by many early as well as contemporary Christians to lead the world into evil before Christ returns to Earth to redeem and rescue the faithful. Can also refer to any person who is in opposition to or an enemy of Jesus Christ or his teachings, as well as to those who claim to be Christ, but in fact are false and misleading.

- anthroposophy** A spiritual or religious philosophy that Rudolph Steiner (1861–1925), an Austrian philosopher and scientist, developed, with the core belief centering around the human accessibility of the spiritual world to properly developed human intellect. Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society in 1912 to promote his ideas that spiritual development should be humanity's foremost concern.
- apocalypse** From the Greek *apokalupsis*, meaning “revelation.” In the Bible, the Book of Revelation is often referred to as the Apocalypse. Comes from many anonymous, second-century B.C.E. and later Jewish and Christian texts that contain prophetic messages pertaining to a great total devastation or destruction of the world and the salvation of the righteous.
- apothecary** From the Greek *apotheke* meaning “storehouse.” A pharmacist or druggist who is licensed to prescribe, prepare and sell drugs and other medicines, or a pharmacy—where drugs and medicines are sold.
- apparition** The unexpected or sudden appearance of something strange, such as a ghost. From the Latin *apparitus*, past participle of *apparere*, meaning to appear.
- archaeologist** A person who scientifically examines old ruins or artifacts such as the remains of buildings, pottery, graves, tools, and all other relevant material in order to study ancient cultures.
- archipelago** From the Greek *arkhi*, meaning “chief or main” and *pelagos* meaning “sea.” Any large body of water that contains a large number of scattered islands.
- Armageddon** From late Latin *Armagedon*, Greek and Hebrew, *har megiddo*, *megiddon*, which is the mountain region of Megiddo. Megiddo is the site where the great final battle between good and evil will be fought as prophesied and will be a decisive catastrophic event that many believe will be the end of the world.
- astral self** Theosophical belief that humans possess a second body that cannot be perceived with normal senses, yet it coexists with the human body and survives death.
- astronomy** The scientific study of the workings of the universe—of stars, planets, their positions, sizes, composition, movement behavior. Via the Old French and Latin from Greek *astronomia*, meaning literally star-arranging.
- automatic writing** Writing that occurs through either an involuntary, or unconscious, trance-like state with the source being the writer's own unconscious self, from a telepathic link with another, or from a deceased spirit wishing to communicate a message.
- banal** Boring, very ordinary and commonplace. From the French word *ban*, originally used in the context of a mandatory military service for all or common to all.
- barter** The exchange or the process of negotiating certain goods or services for other goods or services.
- Bedouin** A nomadic Arabic person from the desert areas of North Africa and Arabia. Via Old French *beduin*, ultimately from Arabic *badw*, or desert, nomadic desert people.
- betrothal** The act of becoming or being engaged to marry another person.
- Bhagavad Gita** From Sanskrit *Bhagavadgi ta*, meaning “song of the blessed one.” A Hindu religious text, consisting of 700 verses, in which the Hindu god, Krishna, teaches the importance of unattachment from personal aims to the fulfillment of religious duties and devotion to God.
- bipedal** Any animal that has two legs or feet. From the Latin stem *biped*, meaning two-footed.
- birthstone** Each month of the year has a particular precious gemstone or a semi-precious stone associated with it. It is believed that if a person wears the stone assigned their birth month, good fortune or luck will follow.
- bitumen** Any of a variety of natural substances, such as tar or asphalt, containing hydrocar-