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Abstract: During the long nineteenth century, the technological and social developments witnessed in Europe and the Americas provided a diverse stage for occultic views. Occult groups flourished in the legalization of dissent and fervor of then recent revolutionary contexts. Prominent occultists such as the Theosophists viewed their beliefs and organizations to be spiritual defenses opposed to the secular materialists they derided. Others interested in the occult such as W.T. Stead sought to legitimize to the public through journalistic inquiry the study of spiritual phenomena. The nineteenth century occult saw both esoteric and exoteric trends in that certain occultists in the esoteric fashion were more interested in settling large-scale societal issues such as the relationship between church and state, while others involved in more exoteric practices viewed the occultism of the time as an additional pillar modern society could integrate and base itself on. Distinguishing exoteric and esoteric occult trends helps understand the spiritual and political anxieties of the time while also assisting in understanding the disestablished multiplicity of views held within occult organizations. The nineteenth century occult encompassed both solutions for then present political debates and spiritual questions such as life after death. Understanding the occult highlights a trend of attitudes regarding nineteenth century secularization while also revealing how individuals in the long nineteenth century built legitimacy for their beliefs.

Keywords: Occultism, Theosophy, Socialism, Spiritualism, Owenism, Disenchantment.