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of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had an influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

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There is no limitation on the length of manuscripts. In general, articles of 30 pages or less will be published in full; articles in excess of 30 pages may be published serially.

Brief communications, review articles, and book reviews are welcome. They should be submitted double-spaced.

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Editor's Comments

In this Issue

As a follow up to the announcement made in the IV/8 issue regarding the publication of the fifteen unpublished Andover-Harvard letters from H.P. Blavatsky to William Quan Judge and two letters from Bertram Keightley to Judge in forthcoming issues of *Theosophical History*, I am happy to announce the appearance of the first letter (chronologically) in the series. Dated May 1, 1885 and mailed from Naples, this is the longest letter of the series revealing H.P.B.'s reactions to a number of personalities who were at Adyar shortly following the Coulomb affair and her subsequent resignation as Corresponding Secretary of the T.S. The letter is printed as it is written, without any corrections to the spelling or grammar. This and subsequent letters were transcribed from the microfilm of the letters supplied by the Andover-Harvard Divinity School Library, but due to the difficulty in deciphering some passages because of the ink bleeding through paper (the letters were written on both sides of the sheet), the letters were subsequently checked by Mr. Michael Gomes against the originals at the Andover-Harvard Divinity School Library. Any words that cannot be read with certainty are indicated in brackets. Page numbers are also given in the body of the text in brackets.

Mr. Gomes' experience in transcribing letters of H.P.B. has been well-established over the last ten years, as is evidenced by "The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to Elliott Coues" appearing in *The Canadian Theosophist* (Sept.-Oct. 1984-Jan.-Feb. 1986), "H.P. Blavatsky's Annotations in Madame

Coulomb's Pamphlet in the Archives of the Society for Psychical Research, London" (*Theosophical History* I/6), and in a series appearing in *The Theosophist* (May-Nov. 1991) featuring the manuscript of Mme. Blavatsky's translation of her sister's article about her.

Readers will find a wealth of information about H.P.B.'s observations on a number of personalities, especially the main villain, Franz Hartmann, but also H.S. Olcott, A.O. Hume, and St. George Lane-Fox (later Fox-Pitt) among others. There are some intriguing passages in the letter that demand careful examination as to their full meaning. For instance, what are we to make out of the seemingly contradictory statements that mention her resignation as Corresponding Secretary of the T.S. in the early part of the letter and her stating in a later portion of the letter that she "was kicked out of the Society," "I need you for nothing now that I left the Society," and "[r]emains to be seen what the Occult Doctrine, Society etc. will become without me." These are curious statements to say the least, especially since the common wisdom is that she simply resigned an office within the governing body of the T.S. Before anyone jumps to any judgment, however, all the available facts about this important period in the Society's history should be reexamined together with the subsequent actions of H.P.B. in Europe and England.

Mr. Gomes adds the following note on this letter:

The letter that initiates the series is, as far as can be ascertained, the earliest surviving original letter from Blavatsky to Judge. Information on W.Q. Judge, Counsel to the Theosophical Society at its inception in 1875 and later Vice-President, is available from a number of sources, including *The Dictionary of National Biography*, in Volume I of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, and in the first volume of *Echoes of the Orient*, a collection of Judge's articles compiled by Dara Eklund.

The letters of H.P.B. to W.Q. Judge that will follow in future issues are listed below:

V/3: November 3, 1886 (Ostende)

V/4: March 19, 1887 (Ostende)

V/5: August 12, 1887 (London) and the letter from B. Keightley to Judge

V/6: September 15, 1887 (Maycot) and September 27, 1887 (London)

V/7: Undated (1887) and undated [June 5, 1888]

V/8: July 7, 1889 (Fontainebleau)

VI/1: August 5, 1889 (Jersey)

VI/2: Undated [1889]

VI/3: Undated [1889–1890] and February 9, 1890 (London)

VI/4: August 1890 (London) and B. Keightley to Judge (August 9)

VI/5: November 19, 1890

* * *

The Theosophy Seminar

The American Academy of Religion, a professional association of teachers and scholars in religion, has recently given its approval to include within its annual national meeting a seminar devoted to the study of theosophy, "Theosophy

and Theosophic Thought." This is only one of six seminars included in the national program and speaks well of the openness of the Academy. The idea of establishing a program unit in the AAR resulted from conversations over the course of many months among Karen-Claire Voss, Joscelyn Godwin, Antoine Faivre, Jean-Pierre Laurant and myself. At the last national meeting held in Washington, D.C., a panel entitled "Neoplatonism and Issues in Theosophical Thought" was presented as part of the program within the Platonism and Neoplatonism Group under the general direction of Robert M. Berchman of Dowling College, New York. The panelists in the Issues in Theosophic Thought portion of the Group included those named above. It was our opinion that the panel was well received, so the next step was to become a more permanent part of the AAR program. My statement that was presented to the AAR Program Committee is quoted as follows:

Statement Defending the Formation of the Group "Theosophy and Theosophic Thought"

The term "theosophy" usually connotes the teachings and philosophy of Helena P. Blavatsky, specifically as they appear in her book, *The Secret Doctrine*. This understanding, however, does not do justice to the term nor to the philosophies that come under its rubric. It is only within the past five years that a detailed analysis of the Greek *theosophia* and its derivable forms appeared in print: by J.P. Siémons, A. Faivre, and myself. Such studies have led me to the conclusion that the term "theosophy" connotes a broad semantic field that pervades a wide area of topics that includes cabala, gnosticism, esotericism, occultism, Hermeticism, and Hermetism. Of all these terms theosophy (*theosophia*) is the

earliest term to appear in print. My own research suggests that the term (*theosoph-*) first appears in the writings of Clemens Alexandrinus (c. 150–211). Esotericism, on the other hand, does not appear until 1828, at which time Jacques Matter (1791–1864) introduces the term in his *Histoire critique du gnosticisme* and associates it with *gnose* and *théosophie*. The question arises as to the relationship among these terms not only in Matter’s work but also in subsequent works in Europe and America. Added to this association is the introduction of the term “occultism” in 1840, which semantically is not very different from esotericism. By the concluding decades of the nineteenth century, these terms would no doubt confuse the observant reader of books, articles and pamphlets at this time when confronted with such titles as *The Occult World* or *Esoteric Christianity*, both included in the corpus of the Theosophical Society as “Theosophical” works. Add to this a definition of cabala in an 1876 Prospectus (unpublished) on the Cabalism of the Greeks and Egyptians that is no different from Blavatsky’s definition of Theosophy in her article “What is Theosophy?”

These are but a few of the difficulties that one faces when attempting to employ a precise definition of the above terms. It is the purpose of this new group, therefore, to establish two goals that should be realized within the five year period granted by the AAR. The first goal is to answer the question “What is theosophy and what are its phases of development?”; the second goal is to investigate theosophy in relation to esotericism, occultism, and gnosticism, and whatever other terms scholars in this area of research deem appropriate. A long-range third goal that cannot be separated from these two goals is an investigation of the philosophy or theosophy of those individuals who either are identified as the-

osophists, associated with theosophical topics, or mention theosophy in their philosophy. . . .

The group “Theosophy and Theosophic Thought” is designed to have a narrow enough range of topic matter so that after the period of five years there will be a body of papers that will shed considerable light on the topic. We believe that five years would be an appropriate time to bring closure on the topic. It is our hope that the papers presented over the course of the five year period (approximately 20 papers are planned) will serve as the basis of a publication in one of the presses either in the U.S. or France. In sum, therefore, what we are proposing is to be given the opportunity to form a group under the auspices of the AAR in order to coordinate research on the above topic. At the end of five years, we would like to consider either a new topic that may arise out of this initial research (and so submit our new proposal at that time) or simply allow the group to lapse in order to devote the time to publish our findings at the end of the stipulated period of time.

Methodology and Scope

The methodology of such an investigation would include philological and philosophical investigations of those individuals and groups that may be considered theosophical in nature. The first question that we wish to answer is whether or not theosophy can be given a substantial definition. If not, what are the forms in which it can be manifested? Thus the question of “substance vs. phenomenon” would naturally arise as basic to our discussion. This is important because it would determine whether there is only one theosophy that is capable of taking on many permutations or whether there are only many

theosophies without any essential connection. This is a subtle point which covers both semantic and epistemological concerns. A second question that should be considered, and this in relation to the first, would be the specific issue of one theosophy or many theosophies. It has been noted by M. Faivre that there are as many theosophies as there are theosophers. If this is the case, just how different must they be before they move out of the semantic sphere of theosophy into, say, esotericism or occultism. Furthermore, will discussion center around doctrine or common tendencies? These are the underlying concerns that will govern much of the work of the group. Finally, it is not expected that each presentation will have a definitive answer to the question. We would expect detailed presentations on specific theosophies. Toward the end of our tenure as a group (the fifth year), we would hope that selected presenters (the editors of the publication) could compare-contrast the observations of the various papers of the previous four years and add their own insights as well as have the original presenters reconsider their papers.

Regarding the scope of the work, it should cover both Greek and Latin writers from the second century on. Such authors who employ the term include Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, Didymus, Cyril of Alexandria, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, on down to the tenth century (Suda). The main focus of the group, however, will center on those authors of the early Modern Age, the 16th century on, including Boehme, Bourignon, Poiret, Kuhlmann, Arboreus, Khunrath, von Baader, Solovyev, Berdiaev, Corbin, and of course those associated with the Theosophical Society. Although it is natural to discuss authors in isolation, we would like to investigate the possibility of grouping theosophers into certain classifications based on such tendencies associated with theosophy.

Benefits

The benefits of forming a Theosophy and Theosophical Group are both obvious and unexpected. From our point of view, a group within the AAR will enable scholars in this area of research to participate in a centralized project. This is the obvious benefit. Our goal, however, is more ambitious. For the first time, we hope to induce European scholars who have been writing in the field for many years to come to the AAR meetings to share their research with their American colleagues. This will open up contacts where there were none before between Europe and the U.S. . . . [The rest of the proposal repeats some of the observations given above and the names of some of the scholars who have been invited to attend the Seminar.]

The seminar status granted to “Theosophy and Theosophic Thought” means—to quote the Executive Director of the AAR, Dr. Barbara DeConcini, in a letter addressed to me—that

[t]he main role of this unit is to foster such collaboration and to do so in a public setting that allows auditors to gain insight into the project, process, and people involved. Seminars typically find ways to continue working throughout the year, meet for one session at the annual meeting to discuss pre-circulated papers, and are authorized for one non-renewable five-year period. At the session, only active members of the seminar (initially up to 20) participate, though auditors are permitted. There should be a clearly projected publication plan.

This Seminar intends to carry out the mandate of the AAR. At the moment, the Steering Committee includes Dr. Antoine Faivre (Professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Haute-

New Mailing

Normandie and Director of Studies at the Ecole pratique des hautes études in Paris); Professor Jean-Pierre Laurant of the Ecole pratique des hautes études (Sorbonne); Karen-Claire Voss, a Ph.D. candidate in the History and Phenomenology of Religions at the Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley, California) and the Ecole pratique des hautes études; Dr. Joscelyn Godwin, Professor of Music at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York; and myself. I also serve as Program Unit Chair of the Seminar.

Since the Seminar is still in the process of being organized, we, the Steering Committee, will consider all proposals from perspective participants in the Seminar. Decisions must be made by April, but I will accept late arrivals with the understanding that this notice may be received after April. It would be best to fax your proposals (714-449-5820) as soon as possible.

We hope to complete our goals in the five years assigned to us and to publish the results in book form. *Theosophical History* will also contain progress reports. As for the annual meeting, we hope to have as many of the participants who are capable of attending present their research results beginning with the 1994 meeting in Chicago (19-22 November). Following meetings will be in Philadelphia (18-21 November 1995) and New Orleans (23-26 November 1996). Information about meetings sponsored by the AAR and membership in the AAR may be obtained by addressing the American Academy of Religion at 1703 Clifton Road, NE, Suite G5, Atlanta, Georgia 30329-4075.

Beginning with this number, all journals (with some exceptions) that are normally sent by first class mail within the U.S. and Canada and surface mail to Europe, Asia, and the Pacific, will be sent via second class. Although the U.S. Postal Service has given its assurance that the journals will be delivered in a timely fashion, I would like to monitor the mailing as closely as possible. Regarding the mailing of overseas mail, I may ask you to supply me with the date that you received the current issue should you be requested to do so. If an issue posted overseas is not received within four months of the issue' date, please notify me at your earliest convenience. In the past, some journals were never received by subscribers regardless of class, especially outside the U.S. Should this occur, please inform me so that I may send you the missing issue(s).

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Book Notes

THE TRANSCENDENTAL UNIVERSE. SIX LECTURES ON OCCULT SCIENCE, THEOSOPHY, AND THE CATHOLIC FAITH, DELIVERED BEFORE THE BEREAN SOCIETY. By C.G. Harrison, edited with an Introduction by Christopher Bamford. Lindisfarne Press 1993. \$18.95. ISBN 0-940262-58-4 (U.S.A., pbk.) and 0-904693-44-9 (U.K.).

Researchers into the roots of Spiritualism, the T.S. and occultism in the second half of the nineteenth century can finally throw away their well-thumbed photocopies of C.G. Harrison's *The Transcendental Universe*. Christopher Bamford has now reprinted the work through Lindisfarne Press and has in addition supplied extensive notes on the text. He also includes lengthy and very thoughtful introduction on Harrison and on the whole question of competing interests at work in the revival of occultism in the last century. Readers of *Theosophical History* will be generally familiar with these questions already from the articles of Joscelyn Godwin ("The Hidden Hand," *TH* beginning with vol. 3, no. 2, April 1990), David Board ("The Brotherhood of Luxor and the Brotherhood of Light," *TH* 2/5, January 1988) and H.J. Spierenburg ("Dr. Rudolf Steiner on Helena Petrovna Blavatsky," *TH* 1/7, July 1986). Mr. Bamford's presentation is a helpful step in the same direction.

The six lectures that comprise *The Transcendental Universe* were apparently first delivered by C.G. Harrison a century ago before the "Berean

Society," an otherwise unknown esoteric group with obviously Anglo-Catholic tendencies—tendencies decidedly shared by Harrison himself. The stated purpose of the lectures was to assess the revolution effected by the publication of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888, but in making the assessment Harrison for the first time explicitly expounds and discusses the question of the secret and competing or conflicting influences at work on H.P.B. and on the revival of occultism generally. It is this part of the work that probably will be of greatest interest to readers of *TH*. In its barest essentials, Harrison's thesis is that there exist secret fraternities or orders of living men who possess real occult power and involve themselves in the conduct of world affairs; that there are factions (which he labels "Esoterics," "Liberals" and "Brothers of the Left"—the last of which, of course, is identified with the Jesuits) among these adepts whose goals and plans do not always agree; that the Spiritualist movement was deliberately created by certain of these adepts for the purpose of opposing the growing materialism of the mid-nineteenth century; that this effort backfired when mediums universally came to believe that they really were communicating with the spirits of the dead; and that H.P.B. because of her very peculiar occult characteristics became a shuttlecock, controlled first by one and then by another group of adepts for their own ends and in the process was subjected to the famous "occult imprisonment."

While Harrison was the first to develop fully this thesis, he was not the first to advance its constituent parts. It was a commonplace of the time, found repeatedly in the works of Paschal Beverly Randolph and Emma Hardinge Britten and others, that the Spiritualist movement was a planned or directed phenomenon, intended to convince the West of the existence of the Unseen Universe beyond the material world and destined to give way in turn to more elevated phases of real “occultism.” Similarly, the existence of a change in doctrine (or in emphasis—depending on the reader’s own point of view) in H.P.B.’s work, roughly corresponding with her arrival in India in 1879, was universally recognized at the time by her “Spiritualist” opponents, such as C.C. Massey, William Oxley and M.A. (Oxon.), and was also noted by Colonel Olcott himself, who was puzzled, among other things, by what he saw as the Masters’ changed teachings on reincarnation and on the nature and destiny of man. (*Old Diary Leaves* I, ch. xvii, 277f.) The same puzzlement has probably been experienced by everyone who has read *Isis Unveiled* and “A Few Questions to ‘Hiraf’” and then read “Fragments of Occult Truth” beginning in the October 1881 *Theosophist* and *The Secret Doctrine*.

Unlike the Spiritualists and the “Western” occultists, such as the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, who parsed H.P.B.’s writings finely, citing chapter and verse on the “early” versus the “late” H.P.B., Harrison speaks largely *ex cathedra*, as an initiate rather than a scholar—a role which brings into question the sources and authority of his own statements. Mr. Bamford has done a great service by uncovering the little that apparently can be known about Harrison himself, but Harrison’s sources and their authority still remain a mystery. In his lengthy introduction Mr. Bamford reviews

the later developments of this conspiracy theory in the mysterious “Swami Narad Mani” and in Rudolf Steiner and René Guénon. He also nicely summarizes the cast of likely suspects (ranging from the Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross through Godfrey Higgins, Frederick Hockley and Kenneth Mackenzie to Paschal Beverly Randolph and the H.B. of L.) among whose ranks we might expect to find some trace of the originals of Harrison’s competing factions. The summary is valuable and it is clearly in research into these obscure areas that real progress lies. If there is a criticism to be leveled at Mr. Bamford’s summary it would be for his reliance on the fictions of R.S. Clymer for information about Randolph, and also for positing Randolph as the founder of the H.B. of L. Whatever his relationship may have been with some unknown group common to both his work and to that of the H.B. of L., Randolph himself certainly did not found the H.B. of L. The H.B. of L., while it took over his practical methods wholesale, regarded him (as did H.P.B. herself) as a “half-initiated seer” who had fallen away into black magic and “paid the penalty of his obligation” for his default. Nitpicking aside, Mr. Bamford’s introduction is important and his republication of *The Transcendental Universe* with his helpful notes is a great service to researchers.

The book may be obtained from Lindisfarne Press, RR 4, Box 94 A1, Hudson, New York 12534.

John Patrick Deveney

* * *

ALEISTER CROWLEY & THE HIDDEN GOD.

By Kenneth Grant. London: Skoob Books Publishing, 1992. 245pp. Errata. ISBN 1 871438 36 5. [First published in Great Britain 1973 by Frederick Muller Ltd.].

As this book has been previously reviewed by Professor Gregory Tillet, further comment seems unnecessary except to indicate its most recent reprinting as part of the Skoob Esoterica Series. It contains a critical study of Aleister Crowley's system of sexual magick similar to that of the Hindu Tantric system in which there is a present wave of interest. The difference between conscious and subconscious thought is carefully examined solely in our criterion of what constitutes direct experience. 'Magick is successful, therefore, when it works through subconscious thought, for then only is the corresponding experience a sensual reality'. (p. 129) 'Incantations, magic spells, barbarous names of evocation. . . etc., are so many methods of locating and controlling subconscious energies'. (p. 140) Kenneth Grant believes Crowley's life was a struggle against an attitude of mind that led to killing . . . the secret and sacred source of life in favour of a deformed reflection of the psychological impotence which characterises those who prescribe suppression and restriction as a way of life. (p. 64) Interestingly, Grant mentioned in a 1990 interview in the *Skoob Occult Review* that his 'main purpose is to prepare people for encounters with unfamiliar states of consciousness'. (p. 5)

Robert Boyd

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Skoob Occult Review. Skoob Books Publishing Ltd. (17 Sicilian Avenue, Southampton Row, London WC1A 2QH). £18 for 4 copies per year/US Airmail.

Esoteric subjects are covered in this journal ranging from art to magic to witchcraft and alchemy and contributors have included Kenneth Grant, Nevill Drury, Ezid Abrile and Vivienne Browning. Entertaining and informative memoirs and insights should serve to enlighten even casual readers on arcane matters.

Robert Boyd

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Scholarly Research

From John Oliphant (Canada)

Brother XII

I am continuing my research into the life of Edward Arthur Wilson, especially his life as a young man before he became widely known as Brother XII. A research trip to New Zealand will include interviewing his daughter, Margery Ellen Bell; investigating his Catholic Apostolic Church affiliations; and attempting to locate articles by him published in occult or Theosophical journals. I would like to be notified *c/o Theosophical History* of any references to E.A. Wilson/Brother XII and the Aquarian Foundation that might be discovered by other researchers studying Theosophical literature, examining the private correspondence of individuals, or otherwise researching documents relating to Theosophical history, such references to have most probably occurred during the period 1910 to 1935.

* * *

From Kevin Tingay (England)

The Temple of the Motherhood of God

Around 1925 a ceremonial rite under this title was inaugurated in Sydney, Australia—"For the worship of God under the feminine aspect." It was under the leadership of Dr. Mary Rocke, but was

apparently discontinued after a short time. Dr. Rocke died after a fall in a ship at sea in 1927. I would be interested to have information about this group and its work, especially whether it was established anywhere else than Sydney.

Kevin Tingay
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* * *

From Bruce Coughran (San Diego, California)

The Development of the Headquarters of the T.S. on Point Loma

After the death of Madame Blavatsky, effective head of the Theosophical Society, there was a split within the Society that resulted in two Theosophical Societies: one headquartered in Adyar, India and one headquartered in New York. The American Society was led briefly by William Q. Judge and then by Katherine Tingley upon Judge's death in 1896. Under Mrs. Tingley, the Society founded a new headquarters and "School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity" at Point Loma, California in 1897. For the next four decades the Society operated from the expansive site on Point Loma with wide-ranging activities in publishing, education, art, music, drama, and

agriculture that drew prominent figures and, at times, worldwide attention.

Although a comprehensive history of the community was written in 1955 (Greenwalt, 1955, University of Cal. Press; revised 1978, Point Loma Publications), many details of the development of the site on Point Loma remain obscure. This study is intended to detail the development of the site over this period and to relate it to the overall development of Point Loma during the same time. Details of the construction history is particularly sought. Responses may be sent to 6180 Agee St. #176, San Diego, CA 92122.

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Communications

The Scope of *Theosophical History*

John Cooper

Re: Dr. Santucci's editorial in IV/2 (April 1992): 33-36, my letter in IV/3 (July 1992): 68-69 and Dr. Santucci's comments in IV/8 (October 1993): 235.

The question discussed in the above is what is the scope for articles etc. for publications in *TH*. My further comments follow.

1. I agree with Dr. Santucci on the importance of our discussing this issue and also, that we should err on the side of 'open' rather than 'closed' definitions.

2. However it seems to me to be obvious that as there are articles that would be unsuitable for *TH*, such as an article on "Flower Arrangement in Medieval Japan," we should arrive at some working definition of our boundaries.

3. In seeking this definition we should emulate the British in the 19th century Great Game with Russia where they kept their borders vague.

4. On "our" side of the border I would see:

a. Writings on the contemporary Theosophical Movement from 1875 to include all Theosophical groups and groups with links to the Movement such as Anthroposophy, the Hermetic

Order of the Golden Dawn, Co-Masonry, the Liberal Catholic Church and people such as Alexandra David-Neel.

b. Writings on statements made by any of group 'a' on esoteric or religious history. Here an example would be an article on Mead writing on the Gnostics.

c. Writings on people and movements before 1875 which will help to clarify our understanding of current esoteric traditions. Here examples would be the Templars, Masonry, Spiritualism etc.

Finally, the above is in no way a criticism of the contents of *TH* nor of the outstanding editorial work of Dr. Santucci. Your thoughts are welcomed.

* * * * *

Theosophists And Others In Fiction

John Cooper

Since the formation of the Theosophical Society in 1875, a number of Theosophists and people associated with Theosophy have been portrayed in fiction. The following list is an exploratory one and needs to be augmented with further research.

Annie Besant

Mrs. Lanfrey Clandon in Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* (1898)

Mrs. Agnes Ebbsmith in Pinero's play *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (1895)

Raina Petkoff in Shaw's *Arms and the Man* (1894)

Earl Henry Brewster (1878-1957) was President of the New York Lodge of the Theosophical Society early in this century. He knew D.H. Lawrence in Capri and later in Ceylon. He is Erasmus Melville in Lawrence's *The Lovely Lady* (1933).

Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) was never a member of the T.S., although he wrote an extended commentary on Blavatsky's *The Voice of Silence*.

Hamish Corbie in Dylan Thomas and John Davenport's *The Death of the King Canary* (1976).

Oliver Haddo in Somerset Maugham's *The Magician* (1908).

Le Chiffre in Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale* (1953).

Dr. Trelawney in Anthony Powell's *A Dance To The Music of Time* series (1951-75).

Dr. John Dee was an Elizabethan magus linked with the origins of the Rosicrucian Manifestos.

Dr. Faustus in Christopher Marlow's *Dr. Faustus* (1604)

Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (c. 1611).

Subtle in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610).

Florence Farr (1860-1917), actress, mystic and member of the T.S.

Grace Tranfield in Shaw's *The Philanderer* (1898).

Beatrice Hastings (1879-1943), writer and defender of Madame Blavatsky.

Mlle. R. in Jean Cocteau's *Le Livre Blanc* (1928).

Katherine Hillard, Dante Scholar, author of *An Abridgment of the Secret Doctrine* (1907) and member of the T.S. based in New York and linked with E.T. Hargrove. She met both William and Henry James

in London in 1877.

Henrietta Stackpole in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881).

Daniel Dunglas Home (1833-1886) medium and enemy of Madame Blavatsky.

Mr. Sludge in Robert Browning's *Mr. Sludge the Medium* (1864).

A.M. Jacobs (1836?-1907) a Simla jeweler well known for his expertise in the occult. He is, however, better known for his roles in fiction.

Mr. Isaacs in Francis Marion Crawford's *Mr. Isaacs* (1882).

Lurgan Sahib in Kipling's *Kim* (1901).

Gerald Massey (1828-1907) whose writings were praised by Blavatsky.

Felix Holt in George Eliot's *Felix Holt the Radical* (1866).

As mentioned above this is a very incomplete list. Blavatsky has been used in fiction by Franz Hartmann, A.P. Sinnett, Rosa Praed, and possibly Mabel Collins. Can others add to this list?

* * * * *

From the Archives

The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to W.Q. Judge: Part I: Letter Dated 1 May 1885

With Notes by Michael Gomes

Background commentary on the following 32-page letter from H.P. Blavatsky to William Quan Judge could fill an entire issue of *Theosophical History*. The document focuses on the events of 1884-85 culminating with Mme. Blavatsky's final departure from India at the end of March 1885. An overview of the period is given in my piece, "The Coulomb Case, 1884-1984," in *The Theosophist* (Dec. 1984–Feb. 1985). The main actor described herein is Dr. Franz Hartmann, who arrived at the Theosophical headquarters at Adyar, Madras, India in December 1883, and whom H.P.B. depicts as "a jealous, envious, cunning, malicious and wicked man."

Franz Hartmann (1838–1912), a native of Bavaria, had become interested in Theosophy while in America. After reading H.S. Olcott's *People From the Other World*, he corresponded with the author, and joined the Theosophical Society in 1882. He traveled to Adyar in 1883 to attend the yearly December convention of Theosophists. Col. Olcott named him to an eight-man Board of Control administering the affairs of the headquarters during the Colonel's and Madame Blavatsky's absence in Europe in 1884. In October of that year Hartmann published a 60-page pamphlet, *A Report of Observations Made During a Nine Month's Stay at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, India*, detailing the events that led to the expulsion of Monsieur and Madame

Coulomb from the Society during the summer of 1884, and edited the 152-page *Report of the Result of an Investigation into Charges Against Madame Blavatsky, Brought by the Missionaries of the Scottish Free Church at Madras and Examined by a Committee Appointed for that Purpose by the Council of the Theosophical Society*, issued in March 1885.

Hartmann, who remained a peripheral figure in the early Theosophical movement, is usually regarded in benign terms by modern Theosophists. Boris de Zirkoff's biographical sketch in Volume VIII of the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* series, when dealing with the events of 1884-85, states that "it would be a grave mistake to ascribe to Dr. Hartmann unworthy motives or evil designs, and to look upon his many actions with positive suspicion and mistrust." Sven Eek's portrait of the doctor in *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement* raises some doubts but upholds this picture. Only Victor Endersby in *The Hall of Magic Mirrors* (1969) calls Hartmann's veracity into question based on Blavatsky's statements in her letters to A.P. Sinnett.

The doctor's own version of his relations with the Theosophists is given under a thin guise of fiction in *The Talking Image of Urur* (1890), in his "Autobiography" published in the London *Occult Review* of January 1908, and in a long letter to Arthur Weber of Leipzig printed in German as

Wahrheit und Dichtung. Here his position is summed up when he writes, “I felt no longer drawn to Adyar, but I remained a faithful friend of Blavatsky’s right to her very end and call myself one today, in spite of all revelations which have been made with regard to her outer life. But I can’t see in her somebody who would want to deceive people. I see in her only that inward spiritual person, an ideal figure which came in order to draw people’s attention again, renewed, to old but forgotten truths, and who wished to lead them to the freedom of thought without which there is no spiritual progress possible. If it appeared to her to be necessary in the process to let the firework of her imagination play a bit in order to attract big children to this new light, I don’t want to hold this against her. Even if she went beyond the borders of what might be permissible.”

Mme. Blavatsky’s letter paints a different picture. No doubt Hartmann had contributed to the unfavorable impression made on Richard Hodgson, a member of the London Society for Psychical Research sent out to India to investigate the evidence for Theosophical phenomena there. Hodgson admits this much in his report in Vol. III of the S.P.R. *Proceedings* (1885): “he [Dr. Hartmann] gave me, on different occasions, accounts of his examinations, and these accounts, besides being inconsistent with one another, are inconsistent with his final statements—as he once cheerfully admitted, retracting all his previous utterances on the subject” (p. 226). No doubt Dr. Hartmann had also made life miserable for Damodar K. Mavalankar, the young secretary to the Board of Control during the doctor’s tenure as Chairman, and had antagonized Indian members at the headquarters. But at the same time he had received at least ten letters from the Mahatmas.

It remains a matter of conjecture how much of

a part Hartmann played in W.Q. Judge’s decision to leave India three months after his arrival, or if he really wrote a Mahatma letter giving Judge the desired “orders” to return home, or for that matter burned with Judge’s assistance the Shrine where phenomena occurred. Judge denies all these things in his reply to Blavatsky dated May 16, 1884, from New York. “All I ever said was that it seemed as if you had lied and played tricks now and then but I always said that I still believed in you. And I do. Let us not beat around the bush. You have lied now & then & perhaps played some tricks, but I tell you I do not care a tinkers’ damn.”

Judge (1851–1896), who had come from New York to be reunited with Olcott and Blavatsky during their 1884 visit to Europe, was sent out to India by Olcott to take charge of the situation at the headquarters until his arrival. He reached Bombay in July but by October left for America before the return of Olcott and Blavatsky, for which he was rewarded with letters of blame from Olcott and silence from Blavatsky. By the time of Richard Hodgson’s departure from Madras in March 1885, the Theosophists were well aware that his report to the S.P.R. would not be favorable. The following letter from Mme. Blavatsky, written soon after her arrival in Italy, may be regarded as part of their damage control.

* * *

Letter from H.P. Blavatsky to W.Q. Judge (1 May 1885)

Naples. Torre del Greco
Hotel del Vesuvio.
1 May, 1885.

My dear Judge,

There was a time that I regarded you as a true friend, & after your short note, or postal card, from London I have no reason yet to regard you otherwise. Still everything you said, say & did, would give me the right to think that there is a great change in you. For this change I do not blame you but other people, much as I may deplore it. However it may be, I write confiding in your honour as a gentleman not to betray that which I will have to say, for if you do, it will be of no profit to you, but will only add to the heap [2] of abuse showered upon me, and this is not what would give you any profit or pleasure.

Therefore, trusting in your honour if it were only for the sake of your past friendship I will narrate to you a legend, the morals of which is left to you to add or infer from.

Look at my address, and it will show to you that I am in the same bag with you, the victim of one & same man, than whom, no one in the world, not even the Coulombs or the padris has done us and me such harm. You left Adyar because he wanted to get rid of you—(sic, these are his own words); and I left because at the very moment when we were going to triumph, he lied so infernally that he upset in one day the work of truth & justice and, if he did not ruin the Society (for no one in heaven or hell can do so, except the Masters) it was because I sacrificed myself, and going away

into voluntary exile, took him away with me. And he went with me, because he cares not a fig for the Cause, the T.S. or even the Masters, and that as he is jealous of everyone having any relation with, or attention from Them so the one thing he longs for is to pump out of me [3] all the knowledge he can, and is determined to become an Occultist and an Occult literateur at my expense.

All this is riddle for you, is it? Listen. To begin with: if I did not write to you (or Olcott either) it is not because, as you satirically remark in your letter to him of Feb. 25th—(which he received at Naples and gave to me, I have it before me)—we received “orders” from Master “not to write” to you, and that it would be in the case we told him so a “fabrication of one or both”—but because from Jan. 14 to April 1st I was on my death-bed, doctors & all in the H. Quarters expecting me to die every moment; [4] and Olcott because, owing to the infernal intrigues of several theosophists—he was all that time on the verge of committing suicide. It is Master who saved me (something miraculous to the Doctors) and who ordered Olcott to be a man and take the whole as his Karma. This is why, my dear Judge we wrote “not a word” since we got back on December the 25th.¹ Indeed, indeed, you must be thoroughly under his influence yet, since you think and say of your best & truest friends, what you do in this letter to the Doctor! Listen Judge, [5] and see the difference between us two. When I received that horrid letter from your own brother², several from Harris and one from Mrs. Billing, instead of believing in the

¹ Actually Mme. Blavatsky returned on Dec. 21, 1884. See the “Arrival of Madame Blavatsky at Madras” in the Dec. 22 *Madras Times*, quoted in “The Coulomb Case” (*The Theosophist*, Jan. 1985).

² John H. Judge, married to the eldest daughter of the medium Mary Hollis Billing.

shameful story as told by them about you & your drama with Mrs. B.'s daughter I concealed it from Olcott, then two months later [gave ?] it to him to read, as ordered by Master and he & I said "We shall not believe it unless told so by Master." When in London, a week before leaving for India—about the last days in October³ Mrs Hollis Billing gave me to read your letters—to her & her daughter [6] I would not read them and when she left one with me "to keep" I never opened it, shut it in an envelope and put it away with other documents that are kept with Olcott. Now, it is no reason why, only because Master kept silent, and did not corroborate Mrs. H. Billing's & Harris' accusation that you should not be guilty of what they said. For Master lets us know rarely the truth leaving all the events to take their natural course, never interfering—unless it becomes quite necessary—with peoples Karma and having his own ways for his own purposes. But we would not and will not believe in any infamy said against a friend. I spoke to you about this at Paris. Neither Olcott nor I will ever turn against [7] you. If the Doctor, "the much despised (?) Doctor" told you that either Olcott or I have spoken to him about the money borrowed by you from Damodar⁴ in any other way but casually mentioning it—he lies. It is he who spoke to us, to me repeatedly what a liar you were; that you had given out that you had not only wife but children; that you who had called

³ 1884.

⁴ Damodar K. Mavalankar, Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society. His brief but influential connection with Theosophy is presented in Sven Eek's anthology *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1964).

Mohini⁵ & Damodar & Subba Row etc liars were the biggest liar yourself; that you were a fool & a conceited one, but that he has so cleverly got rid of you that we all had to thank him. To Lane Fox⁶ he wrote a letter, which I saw in London, that you had gone [8] away from Adyar because you became certain of my fraud and lost all your faith in Masters etc. To me and others he repeated heaven knows how many times that you had said that you were brought from America by fraud; that some letter to you from Master was a forgery of Damodar or of myself; that the "orders" received at Paris was a forgery of Mohini, myself or Olcott etc, etc, etc. If he made you believe all this or if led you by other means & insinuation to believe it, then you are indeed under dugpa influence. Yet you believed and said anything about us, while [9] we remained always true to you, and if Olcott has anything against you in his heart, as well as myself—it is only profound sorrow for the loss of one whom we have ever regarded as a staunch & true friend. This is the difference between us Judge. Now that I have resigned (owing to the same intrigues) my office of a Corres. Secy of the T.S.⁷ and as good as severed my connection with it, in order to save it,—I have no motive to tell you anything but the truth.

⁵ Mohini Mohan Chatterji (1858–1936), a charter member of the Bengal Theosophical Society, who accompanied Olcott and Blavatsky to Europe in 1884.

⁶ St. George Lane-Fox (*ca.* 1855–1932), a member of the London Lodge of the T.S., added by Olcott to the Adyar Board of Control. He came to India at the beginning of 1884 but had returned to England by October. He later wrote about his experiences in India in W.T. Stead's *Borderland* (April 1895), reprinted in *Theosophical History* 1/8.

⁷ Mme. Blavatsky resigned her position as Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society March 21, 1885. Her letter is printed as the "Retirement of Madame Blavatsky" in the Supplement to *The Theosophist*, May 1885: 195.

You call Damodar a liar. He is a Hindu, a chela, secretive, cautious & trembling to say more than he is permitted. Never a purer, nobler or more self-sacrificing soul breathed on this earth. If he refused you at first the money it is because he was in despair that you should leave us at such a moment. He really did not have the sum in the house but got it for you. This I know. He said to Colonel that he felt finally obliged to furnish you with the 500 (?) or 600 rupees (I forget which) because you were one of the Founders, had worked loyally in defending me & the Society, and that you were entitled to it. Neither Olcott nor I look upon the transaction as “borrowing” but as something due to you. These are our words to Hartmann & if he tells anything else he lies. Olcott said simply that it was not Damodar’s business but that of the Board of Control to have ordered the [sum?] [10] to be handed to you. He never blamed Doctor H., never reproached him with anything, but the Doctor hating him would like to turn everyone against him. He made me lose the friendship of more than one friend, wrote to Hume⁸, etc against me, while pretending to defend me, and his article in the “Bombay Gazette”⁹ was infamous—so much indeed, that even the editor published an editorial remark that “if such are Mme. B.’s friends what must be her enemies”,

⁸ Allan Octavian Hume (1829–1912), an Anglo-Indian administrator who joined the Theosophical Society in 1881. He was one of the recipients of the Mahatma letters. Hume’s political career as “father of the Indian National Congress” is the subject of a recent book by B.D. Yadav, entitled *A.O. Hume: Founder of Congress* (New Delhi, 1992).

⁹ I have not been able to locate at present which of Hartmann’s letters pasted in Mme. Blavatsky’s scrapbooks this refers to. But in a letter in the Dec. 1884 *Arya* magazine of Lahore, Hartmann writes: “My letter to the *Bombay Gazette* has been made to appear to be what it was never intended to be by a slight of hand trick of the editor.”

and that he himself (H.) when pasting it into the scrap-book cut out the foul insinuating paragraph from his letter. The man is most intelligent or rather intellectual, cunning, crafty, having no feeling [11] for any one, or anything & is hundred times more dangerous than the Coulombs. He has all the stuff needed to make a black magician in him. That is why I refuse to enlighten or give him information.

Now this what he said to Mrs. Cooper Oakley¹⁰ who told me of it. Whether true or not I leave you to judge. When the C. Oakleys came to Adyar they were my most devoted friends. Then from the first days, he entered into their confidence & [made ?] such friendship with them that soon the Doctor became all that is good & wise, & me everything bad. Came Hume, & remained two days friendly with me after which he turned back on me owing to what the three said. I was sick & dying and left alone [12] day after day, Olcott being in Burmah, and Damodar, driven to despair by Hartmann’s insults & intrigues having left Adyar & gone to Sikkhim to see the Avatar Lama, then just arrived & going with him to Tibet. Where he is now I do not know; but I hope he is happier than I am.¹¹ Well the wiseacres having put their heads together, Hume decided to call the Gen. Council, and then gave Rangunath Row & Subramaniya Iyer a paper in which it was proposed that Olcott, I, Damodar, Ananda, Bhawani Row, Nivaran Babu, Mohini, etc. should be forced to resign since they

¹⁰ Isabel Cooper-Oakley (1854–1914). She and her husband Alfred Oakley joined the Theosophical Society in 1884 and accompanied Blavatsky on her voyage back to India in November of that year.

¹¹ Information on Damodar in Tibet is supplied by Mme. Blavatsky in a later letter to Hartmann printed in *The Path* (New York), Feb. 1896: 332–33, reprinted in the *Theosophical Quarterly*, Jan. 1926: 212–23.

believed or pretended to believe in non existing Masters & fraudulent phenomena, and the Society incorporated & entirely reformed [13] under the management of Hume, Hartmann, the Oakleys, and a few Hindus. Dewan Bahadur who was elected chairman, and all others—(Subba Row, Sreenevas Row, Ramaiyer, Subramania Iyer, etc. Dewan Bahadur especially) laughed the paper & proposal to scorn. They declared that they did not believe me guilty, that the Society without its President Founder, so long as the latter was alive, was unthinkable, that, in short, they would never consent to enter in his absence into such a mean conspiracy against Olcott & myself who was upstairs dying. They all came to see me and the little plot fell to pieces. I telegraphed to Olcott to return and had a relapse. In this, Doctor H. unable to conceal that he took a prominent part wants me now to believe that he only voted my resignation as an executive officer, so as to save me from any responsibility in the Society's management.

[14] Lane Fox who had returned¹² & gone before this final coup de theatre, had also attempted to take the Society in his hands: proposed an executive committee with himself, composed of Europeans, this committee having alone the right to govern Olcott and even to appoint new officers in the office—i.e. to turn out Damodar, Ananda, Bawajee, Nivaran etc. He wanted me to sign it, and when I said I would not without Olcott, he said (so Hartmann tells me & Bawajee now, at least) that if we did not do what he wanted us to, that he would go to Grant Duff¹³, tell him we

¹² Lane-Fox, who returned to England in the fall of 1884, was back in India by January 1885. Olcott's recollection of the event described in this paragraph differs from Blavatsky's. He says she did sign Lane-Fox's document. See *Old Diary Leaves* III (1972), 217–18.

¹³ Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff (1829–1906), Governor of Madras, 1881–1886.

were a political Society & for the rest a humbug and make him force all the Hindus to resign!! Nice theosophists, the lot of those Europeans.

Now to this day I be hung if I have arrived at any definite conclusion [15] as to what part the Oakleys played in this conspiracy. That they were for a time under H.'s influence—is sure. Yet all the time, while advising me to perform “the noble act of sacrificing myself for the good of the Cause” i.e. resigning, she assured me that she loved me as much as ever, believed in the Masters implicitly & finally confessed to me, that having been taken in by the Doctor for a short time, after catching him in thousand & one lies she was acting a part with him and had caught him. She said he was in love with her, & I believed it myself (though now I know he hates her). He had told her & her husband in confidence, laughing and as a good joke, she said—how he contrived to get rid of you. [16] He had written a bogus letter to you supposed to come from a Mahatma? (neither Master nor K.H.) & that when you were alone with him he let it drop on your nose (sic). The letter advising you to go away etc. he prevailed upon you to quit Adyar. Now is this true or false I do not know. That he said so to Mrs. O. I am sure, for she could not have invented the thing, but whether he (H.) told a fact or a lie it is known but to yourself. The result was all that ensued.

You know that Hodgson¹⁴ was sent by the London Society for Psychological Research, to which Olcott was fool enough to tell every possible and impossible phenomenon that he ever witnessed, and which, since it published these facts, after the Coulombs' lies, was entitled to investigate the truth or falsehood of our allegations. So Mr.

¹⁴ Richard Hodgson (1855–1905). See Walter A. Carrithers' sketch of his career in psychological research in Sven Eek's *Damodar*, 612–24.

Hodgson came to Adyar. Hartmann began by setting him against Subba Row, Bawajee, Damodar, etc. telling him that they all “awful liars”, thus prejudicing Hodgson against the chief witnesses. Then he, the Doctor testified to him that the shrine had been stolen from Damodar’s room; seriously & earnestly in the presence of numerous witnesses, he asked Hodgson to look about him when he went to the Coulombs, to see whether he would not find it hidden somewhere, for it was surely either Coulomb or the missionaries who had stolen it. He even went so far in his lying as to show Hodgson the imprint of feet & hands on the walls [17] under Damodar’s window. Well when the Coul. & padris had set, well with false & paid witnesses, Hodgson against us, the latter putting his wise head together with Hume’s head evolved a theory. It was I, HPB, who had sent Baboola¹⁵ from London home to Adyar, with orders to make away with the compromising shrine. This Hodgson had written in his Report already, when Hartmann who had confessed already to Mrs. Oakley that it was he who had burned the shrine got frightened and taking Hodgson to his room showed him the two velvet doors under his mattress where he had kept them concealed for months and said that he had burnt this, for the shrine had been desecrated. He said to Hodgson that it was you and him and Bawajee [18] who burnt the shrine. Bawajee denies it & says you will understand what he means. Result: his defence of me in the pamphlet against the Coulombs, all he ever said in my & the Society’s favour, all, all, became annihilated. He was proclaimed by Hodgson the biggest liar and one who

¹⁵ Mme. Blavatsky’s servant who had accompanied her to Europe in 1884. He returned to India reaching Adyar on the evening of September 20, 1884. When he was taken to examine the shrine the next morning it had disappeared.

had evidently helped me in my fraud!! He says it was to save me from a false accusation. I say he has two men in him. One highly intellectual, fit for an occultist, a man of the highest intention, the other cunning, lying, possessed by a Dugpa, in short. There is no reliance to be placed upon him. Today he is apparently a friend, an hour later he coolly damns you with one of his infernally cunning lies. He is either an irresponsible sensitive medium or—the most dangerous, heartless rascal one can meet. [19] I prefer the former conclusion, for otherwise Master would have never written to him, never pronounced Himself satisfied with some of his doings. But the fact remains the same: no one ought to trust him.

Thus he spoilt all and ruined the Society. He frightened Subba Row out of his senses by telling him that Garstin¹⁶ had proclaimed to the Oakleys & Hodgson at dinner at his house that Subba Row being my friend was suspected by Gov’t to be my accomplice in the “Russian spy” business; he made me lose the friendship of Khandalavala¹⁷, of Niblett, of Lane Fox (against whom he has now turned himself & calls him “Mahatma Lane Fox” laughing at him, proclaiming him crazy etc.), of Hume, of nearly every one. Finally Subba Row said [20] that unless Dr. H. left Adyar he would resign. All the Hindus refused unanimously to serve on the same Committee with him; and Olcott was notified that unless the Doctor was made to leave many theosophists would resign. A resolution was passed that no one except the executive officers should live at Adyar, and he

¹⁶ A Government official in Madras. See Blavatsky’s letter to Hodgson about this in *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, 94–95.

¹⁷ Judge N.D. Khandalavala of Poona, who joined the Society in 1880. He remained a member until his death in 1938.

was made a simple member. But in what shall it prevent him to make more mischief? He writes like St. Augustine twenty epistles a day, corresponds with the best Fellows and wrote only yesterday to the Duchess de Pomar¹⁸ (Heaven knows what!) Bawajee thinks he asked her for money for himself or perhaps for me. I will surely not accept it, if he has. He goes to Germany to his sister¹⁹ & will set the German Theosophists agog. Such is the state of affairs. Well, as Olcott returned to Adyar the padris came out again. Seeing that they would not force me to [21] sue them and that they had no chance to catch me for perjury or contempt of court; knowing I was sick and almost on my death-bed for nine weeks, and that the Doctor (Mrs. Scharlieb), who came twice a day & declared I would not live much longer (with the Bright's disease, and heart-disease developing so rapidly), had said that it was impossible under the circumstances that I should appear at Court, since the slightest excitement would kill me suddenly what did they do? Why, they had a stout French woman from Calcutta, who went in various shops & drug stores calling herself Mad. Blavatsky, speak seditiously against the British rule, threaten India with the Russian invasion, abuse the officials etc. Then she was packed off to Calcutta; and the [22] report being set abroad that the T.S. had bribed Dr. Scharlieb, that I was only shamming illness, and could be served with a writ to appear in Court, the padris sent a summons to General

¹⁸ Marie, Countess of Caithness, President of the Paris Branch, Société Théosophique d'Orient et d'Occident.

¹⁹ The Countess von Spreti.

²⁰ General Henry Rhodes Morgan of Ootacamund. He had examined the letters to Madame Coulomb attributed to Mme. Blavatsky and proclaimed them a forgery in his pamphlet *Reply by H.R. Morgan to a Report of an Examination of the Blavatsky Correspondence by J.D.B. Gribble* (1884).

Morgan²⁰ to appear for defamation of character, as in his pamphlet he calls the Coulombs “forgers” and “experienced forgers.” All this was intended (for the pamphlet was written six months before) to get hold of me. They would have forced me to appear for N against the General & then brought false witnesses to swear that I was a Russian spy or done some such horrible trick.

Now Dr. H. who understood that every one was against him & that [23] he had worn out his welcome at Adyar & [even ?] the T.S. began trying to entice me to go for rest to Ceylon or Japan with him; that we would write the Secret Doctrine together etc. I let him go on. I understood (I know it) that he tried to get me into his hands, by setting every one against me, and pretending he was my last refuge and friend. He wanted me as a weapon to break Olcott's & other heads with. He wants me now to set up a rival & secret occult Society & call around me all the best theosophists! All this I declined or rather said neither yea or no. Then came the secret information that the padris were to sue Morgan & their tricks & the Gen. Council decided to pack me off the scenes, the more so as Dr. Scharlieb said she did not answer for my life if I remained in Madras in my present state of health. The doctor²¹ offered to accompany me, believing I would then be entirely in his power and would do for him what I did for Olcott. When accepted,—for the Oakleys and Olcott & especially the Hindus were most anxious to get rid of him—then Master & Mahatma K.H. gave “orders” as you say, not to us but direct to Bawajee²² to

²¹ Hartmann.

²² Babaji Nath, an Indian chela resident at the Adyar headquarters. Olcott's diary for Mar. 30, 1885 records: “H.P.B. and party preparing to go. Bawaji [received ?] orders last night to go along. (Got word from his Guru with his pass-word).” By the end of the year he had parted company with her.

come with me and never leave me to my dying day: to bring me back alive or dead, when the time should come. And Mary Flynn²³ who was on a visit at Adyar, would not let me go alone but insisted on coming out with me. And then I decided, that if I had to go, I would go to Italy and not to Ceylon where I would be still troubled [24] & the Doctor return to Madras—if not to Adyar where the Gen. Council declared he would not be permitted to live any longer. And so, at 24 h. notice I was transported from my bed in an invalid's chair to a French steamer, and off we went and came here, where barring further developments & events I shall live till October, & then either return or go somewhere else. The Doctor pesters me to write the Secret Doctrine and Master forbids me saying [one ?] word on occultism or writing the smallest thing upon it until matters are settled. Virtually I was kicked out of the Society though of course if Master had wanted me to stop no one could have done so.

[25] Remains to be seen what the Occult Doctrine, Society etc. will become without me. I do not care. I am so disgusted with their eternal intrigues, lies, conspiracies and so on that on the slightest provocation I shall resign even my membership & sever for ever all connection with the Society. Olcott prepares, as he writes to me, to sacrifice me for the good & salvation of the Society & firmly believes he is doing what is right. He would not hesitate to sacrifice himself; this I know.

Therefore, and unless you think the whole of the above is fabrication & lies—in which case, pray write to Olcott & ask, or even the Oakleys—you must see [26] how unjust you were to us—

²³ Mary Flynn of Bombay was a frequent visitor to the Adyar headquarters. Her testimony on behalf of Mme. Blavatsky is printed in the 1885 *Report of the Result of an Investigation...*, 128–29.

O. and myself. Judge my friend, I will never forget you. You are poor, without any or much influence, I need you for nothing now that I left the Society—so you may believe me. Beware of Hartmann. Even were you to show or tell him of this letter I do not care an halfpenny damn for him, or anyone else. If he had known and understood me I would have made an occultist of him. He was & is false to me as to every one else. I would not believe, much less trust him on his oath. He believes like Olcott used to and you sometimes also that I am usually a “shell” which becomes good for something only when some one else enters it. Believe what [27] you please. But know that I was ever faithful to my friends & remain grateful for the little they may do for me even when they become enemies. Oh gods what a dirty world what false people! Look at Mrs. Holloway.²⁴ Do you still admire her?

What you mean in your letter to H. by saying that you “hit upon another little matter which places the leaders in the position that either great lies have been told or Mahatmas are absolutely useless as guides”—is a mystery to me. What is it that “happened in London & involved the reception of numerous letters from both Mahatmas” and that Mohini, the Arundales²⁵, O.²⁶ and HPB know all about it? Is it the Sinnett-Holloway imbroglio, when she bamboozled all of us & tried to bamboozle the Mahatmas but came out second

²⁴ Laura Holloway (1848–1930), a clairvoyant from Brooklyn, New York, who joined the Society in January 1884 and traveled to England later that year.

²⁵ Miss Francesca Arundale and her mother Mary Ann Arundale were Mme. Blavatsky's hosts during her 1884 stay in London.

²⁶ Olcott.

²⁷ A.P. Sinnett, former editor of the Allahabad *Pioneer*, who had returned to England in 1883.

best? When she set Sinnett ²⁷against Olcott & me & the Mahatmas [28] and O. me & the Arundales against Sinnett etc etc? I do not know what you mean. If you are still a friend you will write to me & say it; if not do as you like. But know that General Howard L.C.H.'s pious friend, is in the padri conspiracy against us he & his Y.M.C.A.

I do not believe that “chelas could project letters” in the Mahatmas name without their supervision or knowledge. When done it is always by their Master’s “orders” at which you are now made to laugh. Lane Fox wrote a letter from Calcutta to Hartmann in which says he has “met a chela of K.H.” sent to him to tell him that “the Founders having betrayed the sacred trust given to them by the Mahatmas, having mismanaged the Society [29] and failed in their duty” the Mahatmas were going “to entrust him (Lane Fox) with the reforms in the Society”, and kick out, I suppose, the Founders. L.F. believed in it implicitly & thereupon went to Ladak. It was Mohini’s brother who translated for L.F. the wise & truthful speech of the Mah. K.H.’s chela—who proved a chela of the Almora Swami²⁸, Hume’s ex-and late guru & a humbug. Yet even his action was permitted by the Masters for purposes of their own.

Ah, my poor Judge, how deceived & bamboozled you have been only neither by O., myself, D.K.M. nor any one else but our witty D. Hartmann!

[30] You do not know—though by this time you ought to—what a hard, arduous task is probationary chelaship. You have failed once before, and still the Master was ready to receive you back. You went to Adyar and fell into the snares of a jealous, envious, cunning, malicious and wicked man. May the Master—who I know

pities you—be permitted to forgive your weakness & lack of trust in those who have always [loved ?] & regarded you as a brother. Were there no “Masters” would I, after what you say of us, and, your leaving Adyar & us in the lurch, still love you? What would I care for your opinion & what you may say—a drop added to an ocean of abuse. It is, because Master is my barometer & I blindly trust in Him [31] even when I do not understand His policy, & when to all intents & purposes He is the first to sacrifice me and allow most cruel things to befall me, that I am what I am—only a capricious “howling” old woman in the sight of the blind—always an Upasika²⁹, acting under “orders” in the eyes of those “who know”—ever so little [even?].

Good bye, my poor Judge and do not reject the friendly & true hand I extend to you. Use your own judgement, never that of those who have an interest in mixing up the cards. H. will not end well—you will see, and I pity him profoundly. He is his own executioner. I wish you could hear once how, with what contempt & sneers he speaks of you, who believe in him. He going to edit a paper on Buddhism? I should say not. Buddhists of Ceylon all hate him and Sumangala³⁰, nor any other eminent [32] Buddhist of Ceylon, will ever write a line for him. They told me this themselves. Why they should hate him I do not know, but they collectively sent a request to Olcott not to send Dr. Hartmann to Ceylon. They won’t have him.

As to your receipt for the money had not Damodar gone to Tibet I would have insisted upon his sending it to you back [torn?]. But I learnt

²⁹ One of the names used by Theosophists to refer to Mme. Blavatsky. It relates to a lay disciple in Buddhism.

³⁰ H. Sumangala, the High Priest of Adam’s Peak, Ceylon, and a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society.

²⁸ Almora, the Himalayan hill station in north India; the Swami had died on December 31, 1883.

of the receipt only now, from your letter. So you do well to feel easy about the money. Money [?] asked! No money will ever pay true friendship. But you have always mistrusted me. You called me “mean” in one of your letters to O. about Wimb. & Sarah [Cowles]³¹ & you have never had but half a faith in me. Well, my friendship for you of [nine ?] years is unaffected by all this. May the Powers that be grant you peace & happiness, is the sincere wish

of yours ever

H.P. Blavatsky

³¹ Probably Sarah Cowell of New York. Wimb. is Edward Wimbridge who had accompanied Blavatsky and Olcott to India in 1878. He left the Society two years later.

Review Essay

Basarab Nicolescu's SCIENCE, MEANING, & EVOLUTION: THE COSMOLOGY OF JACOB BOEHME

Karen-Claire Voss

SCIENCE, MEANING, & EVOLUTION: THE COSMOLOGY OF JACOB BOEHME. By Basarab Nicolescu. With a Foreword by Joscelyn Godwin, an Afterword by Antoine Faivre, and a Preface by the author. Translated from the French by Rob Baker. New York: Parabola Books, 1991. Originally published as *La Science, le sens, et l'évolution: Essai sur Jakob Boehme, suivi d'un choix de textes*. Paris: Editions du Felin, 1988. 235 pp. Illus. \$17.95 ISBN 0-930407-20-2. Includes various frontispieces from Boehme's original works and various editions and a 1682 drawing of Boehme's tombstone. Contains selections in English from *The Aurora*, *Mysterium Magnum*, *Mysterium Pansophicum*, *Sex Puncta Theosophica* and *Sex Puncta Mystica*.

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In his Preface Basarab Nicolescu tells us that he stumbled upon Jacob Boehme's work in the early seventies. He apparently found the work of the humble shoemaker as revelatory as the latter found the fabled pewter vessel. In his view, Boehme should not be considered "a precursor of modern philosophy, but a modern philosopher himself." [9] While he is aware that some have complained about Boehme's obscure and cryptic

style, he says that when we approach his writing using the method of "symbolic interpretation," it results in making "Boehme's writings become crystal clear." These "writings are alive," he says, "like all the great texts . . . they nourish themselves on time and on history . . ." and they reveal "a vision of the double nature of Nature: a Nature which is *at once* eternal and anchored in time." [9] This tension of opposites runs like a leitmotif through Boehme's work, where it is reflected symbolically rather than captured analytically. If Boehme had tried to do otherwise, it would have resulted in the reduction of his account of universal being to a static model. According to Nicolescu, nothing could be further from the case, for the very schema that Boehme articulates is itself as incessantly vibrant, refractory, and multiphonic as that which it intends to model. Moreover, and to his credit, Nicolescu's own exegetical method and sensitivity to the capacities and the limits of language permit us to enter Boehme's universe, rather than condemn us to gaze on it from afar.

This potential of language to be hierophanic is repeatedly emphasized throughout Nicolescu's first chapter, "Jacob Boehme, the Man," in which we are given Boehme's description of his initial experience of the whole which was published twelve years later in his first work, *The Aurora*:

In this light my spirit suddenly saw through all, and *in* and *by* all the creatures, even in herbs and grass it knew God . . . suddenly . . . my will was sent on by a mighty *impulse*, to describe the *being of God*. [14]

Nicolescu puts great store in Boehme's "impulse . . . to describe the being of God" and reflects on how profound a struggle Boehme must have had to find language which could express his experience of God.¹ In any case Boehme eventually "arrived at a powerful point of equilibrium where the written word did not betray the depth of the experience." Even so Boehme lamented that "I can but stammer of the great mysteries like a child that is beginning to speak . . ." [17]² Rather than dismissing Boehme's writings as crudely unreasonable Nicolescu sees in them the evidence of Boehme's long struggle to "explain, analyze, and rationalize, [16] and also to make them be truly symbolic. Quoting Gilbert Durand who wrote: "The symbol is . . . a representation which makes a hidden meaning apparent; it is the epiphany of a mystery'." Nicolescu elaborates: "The symbol brings about the interaction of subject and object. It is founded on the logic of the included middle, which

demands a language that breaks with every day 'material language'." [18] Boehme's first work, *The Aurora*, is just such an "epiphany'." It is not only Boehme's first text, but the most "fundamental" of all his writings, because it is the one in which we find the richest expression of symbolic language. [18] Nicolescu believes that Boehme's subsequent writings reflect a self-imposed restraint in that they seek to be more precise rationalizations of the whole which he had experienced and had intentionally symbolically expressed in *The Aurora*. [18]

Since Nicolescu has distilled the essence of Boehme's cosmological schema for the reader with all the skill of a master, it would be foolhardy for this reviewer (a non-scientist at that) to try and render an even more concentrated distillation, or to attempt a more refined summary. While the following remarks convey something of the flavor of the painstaking work which Nicolescu has done in the second chapter, "Structure and Self-Organization in the Bohemian Universe," they cannot substitute for a first-hand experience of the repast Nicolescu has prepared for us. He has succeeded in making Boehme *accessible* and my suggestion is for interested readers to press this chapter into service as a guide to understanding Boehme's thought.

Boehme's schema "is based on the *interaction* between a threefold logic or structure and a sevenfold, self-organizing cycle or process." The three parts of Boehme's universe are necessarily "determined" by the activity of three principles. Nicolescu describes them as a "negative force," a "positive force," and a "reconciling force." They are not themselves actual, but virtual; i.e., "they exist outside our space-time continuum," [22-23] and are the elements which comprise Boehme's conception of the "unground," [23], a concept equivalent to the *Deus absconditus* of the theolo-

¹One cannot help but be reminded of Giordano Bruno's similar struggle to communicate his experience of a cosmic unity comprised of an exquisitely dialectical tension within the confining framework of Aristotelian terms.

²Cf. p. 29 where Nicolescu observes that Boehme was "Restricted by everyday language . . ." See also Plotinus: "We must be forgiven for the terms we use . . . we have to use language which we, in strict accuracy do not admit to be applicable. **As if** must be understood with every term." (*Enneads* VI.8.13. English translation of this passage is from A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), p. 56.)

gians.³ The tension emerging from the continual interplay of its three principles results in manifestation: the “ground” of being arises within the “unground.” Boehme’s *Deus absconditus* “can show himself, he can manifest, he can respond to the wish to understand himself.” Then, as Nicolescu puts it: “God hidden thus becomes God manifest (*Deus revelatus*).” [23] Mindful of the intrinsic character of any manifestation, Nicolescu reminds us that revelation is always necessarily partial and hence also evolutionary in character, and quotes a statement from Boehme’s *Six Theosophic Points*: “His [i.e., God’s] hunger and desire is after substance and he is obliged to accept a certain determination, a certain contraction’.” [34]

Nicolescu also notes analogies to Boehme’s schema in Stéphane Lupasco’s triad of “actualization, potentialization and the T-state,” the “included middle”; and Charles Peirce’s “firstness, secondness, thirdness.”[27]⁴ Warning us that these analogies do not make for identity, they nevertheless *do* appear to show that “one and the same law seems to manifest itself, under different facets, in all who think in threes, and it is that which produces the threefold structure of reality . . .”[27]

In Boehme’s cosmology, while one partner in

³ It would be fruitful to compare Boehme’s conception of “unground” with Whitehead’s delineation of the emergence of form within what he calls “the present cosmic epoch.” See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929; reprint ed., New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960), p. 140. Whitehead says that within this cosmic epoch “arise the four dimension of the spatio-temporal continuum, the geometrical axioms, even the mere dimensional character of the continuum and the fact of measurability.”

⁴ It would seem that important similarities also exist between Boehme’s “threefoldness” and Plotinian cosmology where the process of generation entails a similarly subtle recapitulation of the primordial dynamic between the One and Itself at every successive level of being. See for example *Enneads* II.91 and V.2.1.

the cosmic dance is these three principles (which form “the inner dynamics of all systems,” a dynamic repeated in varying degrees and forms throughout reality), the other partner is Boehme’s concept of “sevenfoldness,” which Nicolescu says is “the basis in its inexhaustible richness, for the *manifestation* of all processes.” [27] Entwined together in an increasingly complex—and also increasingly subtle—recapitulation of the same essential steps, these two partners alternately generate, respond to, and move through, each of the seven levels of reality.

Something of the same qualities of tension, conflict, and resolution which characterize the relationship within and between Boehme’s triadic structure and the seven levels of reality is also recapitulated in the following six chapters as Nicolescu takes up a series of issues related to the conflict between science and tradition.

In “Must a Cosmology of Self-Creation Necessarily be Tragic?,” the third chapter, Nicolescu finds in Boehme a help for creating a new “Philosophy of Nature” which will be needed, in his view, if we are to produce alternatives to certain current views of the universe which result in characterizing it as either “absurd” or “tragic.” [37-39] Just as Boehme’s philosophy shows us that “God, in order to understand himself, must first die to himself so that he can be born,” [37] so too did our world “die” in order to begin the process of humankind’s evolution. After a brief introduction to the prevailing accounts given by modern science of the birth of our world, and an account of some comments scientists have made regarding the apparent “absurd” or “tragic” aspects of that genesis, Nicolescu tells us that Boehme may be a help in creating a new and meaningful “Philosophy of Nature.” He then selects four themes in Boehme which he finds crucial: “On the Necessity of a Mirror: the Double Nature of

Nature”; “Instantaneity and Non-Separability in Boehme’s Cosmology”; “Unity in Diversity and Diversity Through Unity”; and “Space Time: Reality and Illusion.”

In the first part Nicolescu discusses the implications of the fact that, although the various material worlds “reflect the divine life as in a mirror . . . to say ‘mirror’ is also to imply warping or ‘distortion’.” [40] The “distortion” of which he speaks arises because some degree of materiality is requisite for manifestation and therefore inevitably has the ontological character of limitation, of determination, at the same time it has the ontological character of participating in its source: that which is limitless. Moreover, there are two senses of the term “nature” in Boehme’s thought, and in order to distinguish them, Nicolescu explains that he will designate the mode of nature “which takes in both the divine *and* the ‘creaturally natures’ by writing ‘Nature’ with a capital ‘N’.” [40] This is the mode with which Nicolescu is most concerned. When it is used in this sense, it is the most encompassing of the two, since the term Nature then designates a reality in which “*all*” levels interact with one another. [40] This interaction is a “subtle and alchemical operation” in which we as men and women help image God to Godself. Moreover, “the purity of this image” (that is, the extent to which we are able to function as mirrors, and the extent to which those mirrors are free of distortion) “depends on us, on our capacity to explore and to live both our own nature and the nature Boehme called “‘exterior.’” [41]⁵

⁵For the sake of precision, I would add here that “the purity of this image” *largely*, but not entirely, “depends on us...” since that relation is also conditioned by other relations. In addition, it would be worthwhile to compare what Nicolescu says here about the relation between the “purity of this image” and “our capacity” with Antoine Faivre’s statements about the progressive nature of “inward” and “outward” esoteric gnosis, and its

In the second part, Nicolescu introduces and develops the idea of comparing the cyclical nature of Boehme’s conception of the Deity as a “‘wheel” which is “closed into a ‘spherical globe,’ which is also open” to *certain* contemporary works based on a study of natural systems; an enterprise which he thinks would prove extremely worthwhile.[43]⁶ He also explains the similarity between a popular tendency to borrow the technical and very precise idea of “nonseparability” from contemporary physics and use it as a license to conflate the various levels of the universe with one another, and Boehme’s own warning about how we must be careful to distinguish the various qualities of one level of the cosmic from others. Again, as partners in a dance, unity and diversity are not to be confounded with each other, but celebrated.[44] Without this distinction there could be no dance, could be no cosmic process; the only result possible would be stasis.

In the third part, Nicolescu explains more fully how Boehme was able to resolve the two cosmic qualities universality and diversity, and says our understanding depends on consideration of his “concept of “‘embodiment’.” In Boehme’s view, he writes, “the different sevenfold cycles are in communication with one another: the different

character, which is inevitably conditioned according to an individual’s own context and experience. See for example Faivre’s article, “Esotericism”, in Lawrence E. Sullivan, ed., *Hidden Truths: Magic, Alchemy, and the Occult* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), p.39.

⁶“Certain” is qualified here because not all currently-fashionable systemic models possess the same profundity or meaning. Nicolescu makes this explicit on p. 98.

bodies would therefore be linked to each other, whether they are the body of God, the bodies of angels, the bodies of demons, or our own bodies. All the different bodies thus form a single body: 'For in the innermost birth the upper and nether Deity is *one body* . . . '.

Moreover, "Our own body potentially contains within it the whole universe," he writes, and quotes Boehme: "for the earthly body which thou bearest is one body with the whole kindled body of this world, and thy body qualifieth, mixeth or uniteth with the whole body of this world; and there is no difference between the stars and the deep, as also between the earth and thy body; it is all one body. This is the only difference, thy body is a son of the whole, and is in itself as the whole being is.'" [44-45] Nicolescu also remarks that the continuum which Boehme described appears today in particle physics, now tending toward "unified theories . . . theories [in which] our universe appears as 'a whole, from particle to cosmos'." [45]

Finally, in the fourth part, via an important transitional discussion about the interaction between the unity which is timeless and the diversity which takes place in space and time, we are moved into the next chapter.

In Chapter 4, "The Imaginal as the Source of Reality," Nicolescu begins by saying: "In Jacob Boehme's cosmology, the interaction between the three-part structure of reality and its sevenfold organization is intimately linked to the active, dynamic role of the imagination." [53] The middle term between Boehme's triad and his septenary is provided by "the active, dynamic role of the imagination." Readers familiar with Henry Corbin's work will find themselves on familiar ground as Nicolescu carefully invokes Boehme's distinction between "true imagination" and imagination which

is mere fantasy.⁷ Nicolescu quotes Pierre Degahye who says that: "the image in Boehme is . . . itself a reality which elaborates itself and becomes perceptible for the first time'." "In German,'" Degahye writes, "*imagination* is *einbildung* . . . formed partly by the verb *einbilden*, which perfectly reproduces the Latin *informare*: 'to give a form to, to fashion'. . . Boehme understands. . . *imagination* [to be] truly the creator of forms, that which models the substance and actualizes it'." [55]⁸ Most interesting is Nicolescu's explanation of the significance he finds in "the emergence of a new form of the imaginal in quantum physics, characterized by the total abolition of image, at least of that which is founded on information furnished by the sense organs . . . engendered by the confrontation between two different levels of reality: the macroscopic level (located at our own scale) and the quantum level." [59] He refers to the latter as a "Valley of Astonishment," [61] And it is in this "Valley," he explains, where we can embark upon "an imaginary journey into the imaginal," [63] and where we can find what he calls "the imaginal without images," [58 ff.] It is the imaginal without images since every 'thing' in the

⁷ Rob Baker's translation indicates his keen awareness of translation as a hermeneutical problem. His work is not merely a product made by someone who possesses the requisite technical skills for translating. Baker presents the reader with a translation which is transparent, and which thereby enables the meaning of the original French to shine through the English. Here he provides a note explaining his reasons for choosing to render Nicolescu's "*imaginaire*," which means "the imaginary," as "the imaginal", after Henry Corbin. Baker observes: "it is clearly a creative imagination or inspiration of the highest order, whether the term is applied to metaphysics or (as Nicolescu and Durand both do) to physics." [57]

⁸ It appears therefore, although Nicolescu does not make this explicit, that Boehme's understanding of imagination means that it is also linked to that which the latter understands by *embodiment*.

quantum world is inconceivably tiny, is only 'seen' by indirect measurement, and behaves according to a framework of 'discontinuity'[60-61] utterly unlike anything to which we are accustomed. Those who are prone to live life only on the horizontal will likely resist even the notion of such verticality as too disturbing; it is true that even those who are trained in classical physics—which can and has encompassed levels of the universe which exist far beyond the conceptual net which can be cast by those of us who are not physicists—have difficulty in articulating an adequate conceptual framework for quantum physics, even when they have actually experienced something of the quantum level. Nicolescu quotes from Max Planck's *Scientific Autobiography*, in which the great physicist speaks of the "total enlightenment" he experienced as he worked with quantum physics,[64] and then adds:

The confrontation between two different levels of reality through the action of the imaginal contains within itself an immense potential for revealing the poetic content of the universe, for the reenchantment of the world . . . The "well-informed imaginal" can incorporate mathematical abstraction as well as freedom of intuition, the data obtained from the exploration of Nature as well as the feelings awakened by the contemplation of these data. It is this "well-informed" imaginal which today allows the opening of a major dialogue between science, art, and Tradition.

Next, in the chapter, "Unexpected Encounter: Science and Tradition," Nicolescu confronts the question of the supposedly "impassable barrier" which exists between the two apparent poles of science and tradition. In a discussion informed by Boehme's description of how the various levels of reality interact with each other Nicolescu shows

that the barrier is not impassable but permeable. Modern science has paid a price for its technological advances and the price was that of "separating the subject from Nature which is perceived as an object of study." [71]⁹ And while science has often mistaken the physical part for the whole, thereby reducing reality to one "horizontal level" and excluding what is sometimes called spirit, "certain contemporary Traditionalists," ironically, make an analogous error. They exclude science, thereby relegating it to the same dark realm of otherness. [77]

Knowing full well that it is important to define our terms, Nicolescu is careful to delineate various understandings of the word "tradition." Not all traditionalists would exclude science. He refers us to an analysis which Antoine Faivre has made of the various forms of tradition which exist today in which he distinguishes three types: the "severe or purist" type, the "historical" type, and the "humanist" type. With the latter form, Faivre comments, "it is a matter of taking the world as primary material'." This is of course Nicolescu's understanding of Tradition, because it is the type which was exemplified by Boehme, and is the one which is fully compatible with science. [71]

Nicolescu then proceeds to speculate about how a philosophically-understood quantum physics (that is, a science which is engaged in by philosopher-scientists, rather than untrained, hence unqualified persons) could help provide a necessary bridge. In the quantum world all the contra-

⁹ Certain feminists have also commented on this bifurcation, and have arrived at very similar conclusions. For another account of the multi-dimensional and tragic effects this separation has had, written in a tone no less lyrical, powerful, and astonishingly analogous, for all its differences, than the one employed here by Nicolescu, see Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

dictory qualities of which Boehme speaks are found. It is a

veritable unity of contradictories: something not continuous *or* discontinuous, but continuous *and* discontinuous; not simplicity or complexity but simplicity and complexity; not unity or hierarchical structure, but unity and hierarchal structure; not constancy or change, but constancy and change.[79]

He continues:

The discovery of a level of reality different from our own brings our very selves into play: we are those who obligatorily must make the translation from one level to the other. A sense of verticality thus begins to make itself felt on the plane of language if not of understanding. At the same time, there appears to be a movement from the quantum level towards the macrophysical level. Our visible macrophysical world is built on the invisible quantum world. Our world thus appears, in a sense, as the invisible made visible.[79]

In “Jacob Boehme and the Evolution of Man,” Nicollescu treats the question of human development in terms of a concept on which Boehme’s entire thought is based: that of the unity of opposites. This unity lies at the base of, in the center of all things, and is beyond good and evil. Good and evil become actualized due to a “dysfunction” in the cosmic cycle or in the interaction between the seven levels such that that to which the cycle naturally tends is thwarted: “evil,” writes Nicollescu, can thus be thought of as “anything which opposes the birth of God.” [82] Among the various “signs” of evil we find: “the complete taking over of the cycle by one or several of the qualities in it, the stopping of the cycle, or . . . the

range of direction of the sequence of a cycle.” [83] Examples of the first two have been discussed in previous chapters, but in this context, after explaining how the dynamic intrinsic to the cosmos entails “tension,” “resistance,” and becomes “evil” when its function becomes something other than movement and growth, Nicollescu explores the implications of the mythic theme of the “backward glance”: Lucifer, Lot’s wife, Orpheus — each illustrates the dysfunction Nicollescu speaks of; each signify “an ontological catastrophe.” [84]

He asks if we, in the contemporary world, are about to recapitulate this “backward glance.” He observes that we now have the means to modify the very structure of our physical beings by making changes to genetic structure. And, like an Evil Genie enlarged beyond Descartes’ wildest dreams, we also have the capacity to call forth “an incredible energy hidden in the deepest part of Nature, an energy capable of burning up the whole earth.” [86] What Nicollescu is outlining here is a situation in which men and women are called on to make existential choices, as well as intellectual ones, if they are to evolve as individuals and if humanity is to evolve collectively, in order to escape being turned forever on Boehme’s wheel of anguish.

I find it enormously significant that Nicollescu is insistent here about the fact that the choices we must make are *ontological* ones; they are not merely choices about which intellectual *ideas* to hold, which philosophical *positions* to take. Nicollescu laments the violence of today’s world; the fact that in our daily lives, we have become accustomed to violence through massive exposure to its myriad forms, both on an individual scale and on a scale so massive that, “in the name of good principles,” it has wiped out “the very existence of entire peoples.” [86]

Equally significant is the fact that Nicolescu clearly expects that the effects of these ontological choices will not remain privatized, but will result in changes of behavior in the world, i.e., they will take the form of acts performed in public. It seems that in Nicolescu's view personal spiritual growth is also inevitably political:

If we take seriously the hypothesis of a sevenfold cycle governing the evolution of humanity, this thinking layer of the earth, a first sign that the hypothesis is correct will be the appearance of a planetary civilization, where all violence of man against man, of one nation against another, will be completely abolished. [90]

Nicolescu is a realist in the best sense, for immediately after describing this utopian condition he comments: "Obviously we are a very long way from such a situation . . ." [90] But he is a realist with an optimistic spiritual vision too, and he sees the possibility for change. Although we can be said to be caught within "the first triad of the sevenfold cycle, inside the wheel of anguish . . . at the frontier of the second triad," Nicolescu imagines we can yet be helped to move humanity towards life" [90] if we adopt "A transdisciplinary dialogue between all forms of knowledge . . . which can contribute to the establishment of a long term, planetary dialogue, as a condition for our evolution of being." [91]

In the penultimate chapter, "Complexity and Levels of Reality," Nicolescu points out the urgent need for a new "epistemology of complexity." [95] "Everywhere we look, towards the infinitely large or the "infinitely small, or even at our own scale, we see complexity manifesting itself triumphantly." [95] In order that we may deal with this increasing awareness of the order of things, we need such an

epistemology. Just as in the previous chapter, Nicolescu relates this need not only to a necessity for enlarging our ability to treat the complexity we find in the physical world (although we need to do that too) but in our personal lives.

He proceeds to explain how Boehme's idea of "levels of reality" could be of assistance in the construction of such an epistemology. Any reader who has followed this far in his book will not be surprised to learn that Nicolescu does not understand reality as something which is purely a product of our conceptual process or as "something in itself, for we intervene in an essential way." Given that, he continues, we must carefully sort out the various types of "levels of integration or levels of organization" with which we deal. Moreover, we must perform a dissolution of what I would call conceptual over-concretisations (after Alfred North Whitehead's theory of "misplaced concreteness"). These include "a breakdown of language, a breakdown of logic, a breakdown of fundamental concepts (such as causality, for example)." [101] He continues by giving examples of what he means, and by developing the implications, which are characteristically wide-ranging and profound. Here, a representative comment:

Our age is thus potentially that of *the abolition of the single* (one logic, one language, one causality, one space-time, one reality, one knowledge) and of *the emergence of the plural* (logics, languages, causalities, space-times, different levels of reality, different types of knowledge).[101]

In his final chapter, Nicolescu begins by noting that forging a European identity (an enterprise currently very much on the minds of everyone who lives in Europe) cannot depend solely

on developing the spheres of politics, economics, or society. These are important to be sure, but Nicolescu states bluntly: “It is only by the rediscovery of a spiritual bond between the different European nations that we will succeed in revealing our own identity.” [110] It is this that will make the difference between success or failure. (As an American living in France, it certainly appears to me to be the case that Europe has come under the spell of a demon lover called ‘technological and economic progress’, and that it is an affair which can end but badly.)¹⁰ Nicolescu argues that thus far, science has been pressed into the service of furthering this relationship while “Tradition,” as he has defined it, has stood watching from the sidelines, commenting now and again, but unable to fully participate.

Calling for a New Renaissance, in true Hermetic fashion he shows that in this case, the wound indeed reveals the cure. He asserts that “We must invent a mediation between science and meaning. This mediation can only be a new Philosophy of Nature.”

¹⁰ Europe has now officially taken her place alongside other countries (e.g. the former Soviet Union) who are gleefully participating in what seems to me to be a global epidemic consisting of attempts to imitate the United States in what I view as that nation’s disastrous and soul-destroying economic imperialism. In one sense, Europe was forced to make this choice in order to survive; in another sense, it seems to exemplify the exercise of a kind of collective free will, which could have the same ontologically catastrophic results of which Nicolescu speaks here, but in another context. [84] My own fantasy is for a copy of this book to be sent to each and every politician, bureaucrat, technocrat, and educator in Europe, along with an official directive that its study be “*obligatoire*.” Its contemplation could mean that the “European Economic Community” which they are so intent on creating would truly be a community, a pluralistic community of *persons*, rather than merely an artificially-linked system of different currencies, and only superficially cooperative economic projects.

He then embarks on an explanation of how he thinks this mediation can occur, prefacing it with a discussion about the nature and significance of the rupture which occurred between science and the church, and the relationship which he sees between the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and science. Nicolescu’s delineation of this relationship is thoughtful, well-reasoned, and appropriately, very careful. He says that he finds that “the Christian contemplation of the Trinity has been the seedbed out of which modern science has sprouted.” Taking up the break which science made with the church he says that it was “a break . . . of a methodological order: it does not in any way make a total breach with the living thought which has permitted the birth of modern science.” I think we can reasonably assume that Nicolescu interprets the significance of this rupture, just as others which he has discussed, within a Boehmian framework; thus, the break between science and the church was necessary for the development of humanity. That assumption is supported by what he does say here: that the break “has been the condition *sine qua non* for development which has led to the notion of the Trinity and while in a great many traditions . . . the specific and single quality of Christian thinking on the Trinity can be strictly demonstrated” A critically-important element in the demonstration which follows is “necessity,” the absolute necessity in this case for all things to be *precisely* as they are, and as we find them to be. The Trinity

already implies the potential of manifestation of divinity through Nature. In order to come to the actualization of this potential, there was a necessity for this unique encounter between creative imagination, Christian thought, and Jacob Boehme’s genius. [110]

Earlier, with Paul Tillich's work on symbols in mind, I made reference to the characteristics of symbolic language to participate in the reality it designates. In the same context, I also commented on this quality as it seemed to me to appear in Boehme's cosmology and in Nicolescu's hermeneutical approach. In this sense, symbolic language can be said to possess a certain quality of circularity. We encounter that quality again, in Chapter 2, in Nicolescu's discussion about "On the Necessity of a Mirror" the Double Nature of Nature." Now, in contrast, I find I am somewhat uneasy about the degree of circularity which I find in Nicolescu's "demonstration." Nevertheless, while I think the reasons for my uneasiness are important enough to mention, and while I intend them to function as a caveat, I think it would be a mistake to allow the warning to serve as a licence to dismiss what is being said. It would be much too facile to absolve ourselves from careful consideration of what Nicolescu says about the Trinity by saying, for example, "His argument is circular. He's really privileging Christianity." He has shown himself to be a serious thinker. His thought deserves equally serious attention from us. Under no circumstances should we be relieved from doing the hard philosophical work of trying to think through and evaluate everything that Nicolescu is saying here.

If I am correct in what I am saying about the presence of circularity here, it seems to me now that it can mean at least one of two things: First, the circular character of this "demonstration" could be an indication that Nicolescu, Boehme, and the Christian theologians responsible for the careful delineation of the doctrine of the Trinity are all trapped in a hermeneutical circle that is their own "wheel of anguish." Alternatively, it might just be that Reality indeed possesses this structure, and that Nicolescu, Boehme, and the

Trinitarian theologians are all right. Nicolescu's thought seems to me to be very rigorous. For one thing, it would appear that he is well aware of the difference between circles and wheels which are closed (like the hermeneutical circle I just referred to) and those which are open.¹¹ For another, he simply seems to be right about a lot of things, as does Boehme. My own study of theologians has shown that great care must be exercised in studying what they say: *sometimes* they are right; and often they are not. Theologians of the stature of Paul Tillich are well-equipped to distinguish between things like Reason and Faith. He was at once a philosopher and a theologian who worshiped at neither of those altars, preferring instead to quest after that will-o'-the-wisp he called Ultimate Concern. Tillich was rare, but then so is Basarab Nicolescu, who calls his ultimate concern Reality.

At this writing I haven't yet made up my mind. I am still pondering, and I urge the reader to get this book and ponder with me. For the moment I can say only that I have a strong suspicion that in the end I'll cast my lot with Nicolescu.

In the last few pages Nicolescu tells us we stand now at the brink of a fateful encounter: "the contemporary encounter between science and meaning, a major event which will probably produce the only true revolution of this century." [111] We will need his "transdisciplinary approach," he says, in order to cope with the "different levels of reality opening a vertical, multiple, polyphonic dimension of being," and as a "means for exploring what circulates between these different levels." And as a final reminder of what he has found in Jacob Boehme, whom he says "is present among us, bodily present, a friend, a divine cobbler," and in physics, Nicolescu

¹¹ See p. 112 of *Science, Meaning & Evolution*.

writes: "What we call the 'real' is the result of the interaction between two facets of one and the same Reality: the physical universe and humanity." [112]

Basarab Nicolescu's book manifests all the characteristics of the Tillichian symbol; thus, it never pretends to encompass that to which it points.¹² *Science, Meaning & Evolution* is a *tour de force*. Nicolescu has given us a text which must be recognized and celebrated for the alchemical wedding it is: it joins symbolic language, poetical language, with the language of western analysis. Basarab Nicolescu has produced more than this, however. In writing this book, he shows how it is possible to be at once a scientist and a philosopher, and, like Jacob Boehme, also a human being who cares deeply about others and about the world.

After having read this, I look forward to more. The vision of the possible which Nicolescu has begun to articulate here is already stunning in its breadth, and certainly functions to sweep away much of the detritus left in the wake of other works which have been published by certain scientists, traditionalists, and popularizers during the past fifteen or twenty years. He will undoubtedly contribute even more by way of further development of his "transdisciplinary approach." While Nicolescu would be the first to say that this book does not, nor could it, purport to provide the single key which will open every door in the palace of wisdom, it is clear that his work does not leave us standing in the courtyard wondering

how to access the various rooms. Basarab Nicolescu enables us to begin to make our way through the innermost chambers.¹³

Karen-Claire Voss

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¹² See Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*. (New York: Harper Colophon, 1957), 41-48.

¹³ There are two flaws in the book which bear mention, but since neither one affects the substance of the work, I chose to note them here, rather than in the text of this review, where they could distract the reader.

The first is that the book uses sexist language. Generally speaking, European scholars and publishers are still using different conventions in this respect than are those in North America. As a European scholar Nicolescu is therefore following the conventions of most of his peers (male and female). In particular, given the approach which the author takes to the myriad topics he treats here and the views which he expounds, it is difficult to imagine that he would have used this language with the intention of oppressing women as a group. Since North American conventions have changed, the lion's share of responsibility in this case must rest with the translator and the publisher. One or both must have known (or should have known) better than to let this stand uncorrected.

The second flaw is that the book lacks an index. I have no way of knowing why or on what basis the decision to omit this indispensable scholarly apparatus was made. It would have been a relatively simple matter to have generated a list of words with the aid of a computer and then to have had someone connected with the press use that list to produce and index. I hope that this is corrected by the time the book is available in a soft-cover edition.

Book Review

ISLANDS OF THE DAWN: THE STORY OF ALTERNATIVE SPIRITUALITY IN NEW ZEALAND.

By Robert S. Ellwood. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993. Pp ix + 285. ISBN 0-8248-1487-8. \$32.00 (Cloth).

New Zealanders are accustomed to thinking of themselves as pioneers of social reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but most would be surprised to learn that they are also world leaders in the practice of alternative spirituality. Until very recently the increasingly secular character of this major island society of the south west Pacific has been taken for granted. However as readers of this journal will know, New Zealand now has the highest proportion per head of population of Theosophists in the world; and in *Islands of the Dawn*, the first book-length study of the new religious movements in New Zealand, Robert S. Ellwood notes that in 1986 one in 1,000 New Zealanders subscribed to the spiritualist faith whereas only one in 10,000 in Americans did so (p. 250 n.1). Later he goes so far as to suggest that this “small and seemingly fairly homogeneous island nation is, actually, a carnival of diverse spirits” [229]

Islands of the Dawn is the outcome of a Fulbright-funded inquiry in 1988 into the extent and character of alternative spirituality in New Zealand. Ellwood is a professor of religion at the University of Southern California. Perhaps be-

cause, as he tells us in the preface, he is also a Theosophist and therefore predisposed to the longer view, he has taken an historical approach, focusing on the older European forms of alternative spirituality, specifically spiritualism, Theosophy and associated movements, plus the Golden Dawn, with occasional glimpses also of Maori spirituality (rightly said to be worth a book or books of its own). As well, there are two valuable appendices, the first an affecting document which collates the autobiographical writings of Jane Elizabeth Harris-Roberts, founder of spiritualist churches on the Australian model from the 1890s onwards whose sad story includes the death of her husband and four sons; the second, a substantial survey of developments since 1960, from the Ananda Marga to Wicca and Zen Buddhism. Although disclaiming comprehensiveness—readers are referred to the most recent edition of *Beliefs and Practices in New Zealand* (Department of Religious Studies, Massey University)—Ellwood does not seem to have missed much here. Clearly, “despite the colorless mediocrity that New Zealanders (and others) often imagine as characteristic of that society, a remarkable response to alternative spirituality has obtained” [193], and over a long period of time.

As Ellwood points out, the title *Islands of the Dawn* is appropriate to the New Zealand experience in more ways than one. Due to proximity to the international dateline, these islands are among the first places in the world to see the light of the

new day. And although New Zealand was one of the last areas of the New World to be colonised in the nineteenth century, its flora and fauna are amongst the most ancient. It is hardly surprising therefore that from the beginnings of large scale European immigration in the mid-nineteenth century there were always some settlers who felt that here if anywhere humanity might make a new start. Although numbers were never large, the new religious movements of the late nineteenth century attracted comparatively strong support from the beginning, as in the case of Theosophy: the first Theosophical lodge in New Zealand, founded in the capital, Wellington, in 1888 by Edward Toronto Sturdy and friends included the then Prime Minister Sir Harry Atkinson among its members. Even today, Ellwood observes, “there is something dawnlike about life and culture in New Zealand” [2], and in his admirably succinct opening chapter, “From Nineveh to New Zealand A Brief History of Alternatives,” he finds significant and enduring affinities between this ‘New Zealand myth’ of a potential utopia and the ancient alternative religious tradition of the West as re-constituted in the nineteenth century.

A lively assortment of characters and incidents await the reader of *Islands of the Dawn*, only a few of which can be mentioned in this review. Notable figures include Theosophists Edward Tregear, novelist and social reformer of the 1890s, and Henry Greathead Rex Mason, Minister of Justice to Labour governments in the 1940s and after; Dr Robert Felkin, under whom the Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in London in the 1890s, was to flourish at Hawke Bay on the North Island in the 1920s; and the Buddhist-influenced Blanche Edith Baughan (1870–1958), Canterbury poet and prison reformer. Likewise many interesting incidents are encountered along a path which seems to push ever northward, from the now

decayed mining towns and harsh coasts of the South Island with their old-style seances and sightings of airships, to the lush valleys and wide bays of the north where many temples and meditation centres have been built since the 1920s and mountain and moon rituals are now observed by more people than one might imagine.

The story of alternative spirituality in New Zealand is a rich one. It begins with spiritualism, as it does in neighbouring Australia, and at much the same time. Ellwood establishes that the first discussions of spiritualism in New Zealand occurred in the south island city of Otago in the late 1860s. Soon after, in 1870, a young newspaper editor in Dunedin, later Liberal Prime Minister Robert Stout published Emma Hardinge Britten on how to form a spiritualist circle. As elsewhere, spiritualism was at first sustained by colorful traveling lecturers, some from Australia, like the redoubtable not to say slightly unhinged journalist James Smith. Then in the 1880s local voices began to be heard—notably of Greymouth editor W. C. Nation, the ‘grand old man’ of the movement and later editor of its journal *Message of Life*, and Jane Elizabeth Harris, previously mentioned—and a century later they are still, though perhaps more fitfully, as in the case of sometime popular broadcaster Mary Fry, silently dropped by Radio New Zealand in the mid-1980s.

It is good to find the liberality of nineteenth century spiritualism and its relevance to women properly appreciated throughout this chapter (Ch. 2, “Unbroken Circles”). Of particular interest is Ellwood’s account of the 1890s split in the spiritualist movement between its religious and scientific sides; the lecture tours after the Great War of British spiritualist Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which made an impact in Australia, too; and the search by Wellington spiritualists aided by several

spirits, including an old-time Maori, Kanaaha, for two lost airmen who never arrived after a flight from Sydney in 1927. Other evidences of Maori spirituality include the 1920s Ratana movement.

In the following chapter, devoted to “Powers of the Air,” Ellwood examines manifestations of what he calls ‘teaching spiritualism’ in New Zealand, referring to individuals and groups pursuing more recent otherworldly intimations and revelations, such as the UFO movement. This is an area not usually covered in histories of alternative religions and mostly new to this reviewer, but seemingly of particular relevance to New Zealand with its clear skies and increasing reliance on air travel. Although the golden age of the flying saucer and Robert Adamski (the 1950s) has long since passed, the UFO saga persists in New Zealand, with an active Aetherius Society in Auckland in the 1980s and a temple nearby. It is interesting to learn that World War II pilots have featured prominently in sightings of what Jung once called ‘technological angels’, and that there has been conflict between the scientific and spiritually inclined in this area as well.

The chapters on Theosophy and related esoteric groups are of special interest. Thanks to the new interest in Theosophical history, it has been possible to add quite a bit to older records, for example on early lodges, and to obtain a much fuller picture of who the first Theosophists actually were in New Zealand. Thus Ellwood’s outline of Theosophy in New Zealand includes significant new research on Dunedin lodge, founded in 1893 by mostly British immigrants of the respectable and thoughtful classes, chemists, clerks, teachers and the like (including most probably Miss Mary King, the principal of Southland Girls High School at a later date and ‘not strictly a lady

¹ *The Press*, Christchurch (4 December 1991): 19. I am grateful to Bruce Harris for this reference.

according to the conventions of her day’).¹ There are helpful portraits of several early adherents, such as Wellington lodge founder Edward Toronto Sturdy and Lilian Edger, the young teacher and lecturer from Auckland lodge who was recruited by Colonel Olcott for work in India during his tour of Queensland in 1897.

Ellwood speaks of “a Theosophical subculture” developing in New Zealand. Although by the early twentieth century the story of Theosophy in New Zealand overlaps to a considerable extent with turbulent events in Australia and the movement flourished in both places at that time, it seems Theosophy was somehow stronger and ‘purer’ across the Tasman—or maybe just more respectable, like New Zealand in general? At least Theosophy’s early capacity to shake minds free of stuffiness and dogma [193] seems to have suited the New Zealand intelligentsia quite well. In its heyday the Society boasted some cultivated adherents, not only Tregear in the 1890s, but also poet D. W. M. Burn, New Zealand head of the Order of the Star in the East until its dissolution by Krishnamurti in 1929, and after settling in Auckland in 1940, the mystic Geoffrey Hodgson; and it seems to have maintained its influence longer, with the TS reported to be quite lively still, in a middle-aged way. It is to be hoped that its imposing city buildings have escaped the fate of the many fine Theosophical buildings of the interwar years in Australia now gone forever, fallen victim to the 1980s property boom.

A chapter headed “Magic in the Mind” surveys the other theosophic and esoteric traditions represented in New Zealand. These are helpfully classified in four groupings: Theosophical allies (co-freemasonry and the Liberal Catholic Church, ‘prematurely fossilized’); its liberalizing children, including a few friends of Krishnamurti and the Anthroposophists, about whom it would be good

to know more (they were visited like so many other groups *in situ* by the energetic Ellwood, who paused to ponder the efficacy of herbal remedies at an Anthroposophical pharmacy at Hawke Bay); new revelation Theosophy such as the Alice Bailey Arcane School in Wellington and the I Am Activity, apparently inactive; also and perhaps most curious, the communitarian/libertarian/Krishnamurti-following honey-producers of Beeville, south of Auckland, to which attached a rare whiff of scandal in the 1940s and 1950s, due to apparently bigamous relationships.

The pre-history of alternative European spirituality in New Zealand as recounted in *Islands of the Dawn* ends with the robed rituals of the Order of the Golden Dawn performed at Havelock North from before the Great War until as late as 1978. In Ellwood's words, "No story from the annals of alternative spirituality in New Zealand is more remarkable The Havelock North group . . . was probably the best twentieth century expression of the serious wizardry of the Golden Dawn's 1890s tradition" [156]; and there is a vivid account of his 1988 visit to 'Whare Ra' (House of the Sun), the magical-mystery house at Havelock North with its huge basement temple intact, the first reinforced concrete house in New Zealand.

Despite the intricate and largely unpleasant prior circumstances of the Order in England, something more worthwhile seems to have occurred in the course of 'the Havelock work', for example in associated publications such as *The Forerunner*, founded in 1909 to express "the ideals which well up from time to time from the deeps of our eternal self" [quoted p. 169]; and as is often the case with the better-off groups with valuable property, something has been salvaged, in the form of a 'new age' and meditation centre established nearby by the survivors of the amazing and unlikely 'wizards of Havelock North'

(many of them good Anglicans). It will be surprising if scholars of several stripes do not rush to examine further this exceptional 'cultural renaissance' achieved by upperclass aficionados of the Edwardian occult on the farthest shores of the Pacific.

In the concluding chapter, "Cults and the Commonwealth," Ellwood returns to religious sociology and the finding (by Roy Wallis in 1985) that New Zealand leads comparable first-world societies in receptivity to new religious movements. Since a definitive explanation of New Zealand's peculiar receptivity to alternative spirituality is not possible at this stage—there is for example no comparable study of the Australian experience, which seems equally open but less inclined to the utopian, though this is mere impression—we are offered instead some concluding reflections, 'a few insights'. [186]

This is too modest. Not only has 'a fuller picture' of the religious ecology of New Zealand been obtained, but the concluding comparison with other settler societies provides further perspective. It is surely correct to highlight the absence of either a state church (Britain) or a strong civic religion (America) and the resultant pluralistic religious/denominational culture where churches are equal but weak; also the imprint on the New Zealand mind of the timing and circumstances of European settlement from the mid-nineteenth century—overwhelmingly British, Protestant, male, anti-clerical, innovative, isolated, romantic—and the ever adaptable, occasionally authoritarian 'New Zealand myth'.

For Ellwood, in the end what stands out is the survival capacity of the various alternatives to orthodoxy. His concluding sentence is celebratory: "The institutional strength of the religions considered in this book . . . does not tell the whole narrative of their power. . . . [A]gainst the mighty

institutional churches they are like the amoeba to the whale, smaller and weaker yet in a real sense far more immortal.” [203] Given the apparently more ephemeral character of much alternative spirituality since the 1960s noted in Appendix 2—the more utilitarian spiritual supermarket effect as compared with the institution-building instinct of the past—it is interesting to speculate what another fifty years might bring. With the historic shift in the spiritual centre of gravity from Protestant Otago in the south to the warmer, more multicultural Auckland, it seems likely that alternative religion in New Zealand will move ever closer to Asian-Pacific cultures—perhaps even to the ‘genuine Kiwi zen’ dreamed of by one of Ellwood’s younger informants. The great unknowables pertain to Maori spirituality and to geography, the Pacific and an increasingly Asian dimension of New Zealand life. But Ellwood indicates, these too have been influential all along: the young Edward Toronto Sturdy began with the life of the Buddha and one of the first Theosophists in New Zealand was a Maori *tobunga* (shaman priest).

Whereas many studies of alternative spirituality are confined to developments since the 1960s, Ellwood has rightly perceived that a longer historical perspective adds depth to the findings of religious sociology, and is of interest in its own right. This warm, wide-ranging and often wise work is very welcome. It has been constructed with skill from many and diverse sources, most apparently previously unused by New Zealand historians, and is outstanding for its energy and empathy in the face of sometimes inaccessible and/or unrewarding materials. It is also well written and well produced, with an attractive personal touch, as in the post-1960 survey, when Ellwood calls at the Rajneesh address in Auckland ‘but found no sign of it’, and lunches at the

University with ‘a pleasant young man’, then a student and Master of the local branch of Aleister Crowley’s Order Templi Orientalis. The only regret is that there are no illustrations of the many intriguing people and places mentioned.

Islands of the Dawn is a landmark publication in the as yet rather thinly developed field of new religious movements in south west Pacific. It will be of interest and value not only to New Zealanders seeking to comprehend cultural change but to all who seek to understand how ‘alternative spirituality’ takes hold in modern societies.

Jill Roe²

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