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followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy 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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Brief communications, review articles, and book reviews are welcome. They should be submitted double-spaced.

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On the cover: The young Walter Carrithers. Thanks to Daniel Caldwell for providing the picture and granting permission for its reproduction.

Editor's Comments

In This Issue

The Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) has been the subject of a number of articles in past issues by the Swiss researcher, Robert-Peter König. In this issue, PierLuigi Zoccatelli adds an insightful and detailed examination of the organization in Italy. Explained by the author as “an important crossroads in the Occult world in the period straddling the 19th and 20th centuries,” the O.T.O. deserves a careful examination from a dispassionate perspective, and Mr. Zoccatelli's study is indeed one of the few articles that has been thoroughly researched from this standpoint. It is encyclopedic in content and should be considered to be an indispensable source of information for any person interested in this area of research.

Regarding Mr. Zoccatelli's background and credentials, he was born in Verona and is a member of CESNUR (the Center for Studies on New Religions) and of the SIPR (the Italian Society of Psychology of Religion). He is the author of a number of essays and articles on esotericism and new religions. Mr. Zoccatelli is also the editor of the collected writings of Louis Charbonneau-Lassay (to which, see his website at <http://www.paracllet.org>), and has edited or translated a dozen books on anthropology, symbolism, ancient Christianity and literature. Currently, he is the assistant editor of the important collection *Religioni e Movimenti*, which currently has seventeen titles published with an additional thirty projected to be published by 2003.

In addition to this article, there is an interesting communication by Leslie Price on the veracity of the Eddy mediumship, the Spiritualist brothers who were investigated by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. Mr. Price raises two questions about the implications of their mediumship and phenomena: what if the phenomena were not produced by the dead, and what if the Eddys were charlatans? This was Emmette Coleman's suspicion, who may have had as his true target not the Eddys but the two who investigated the Eddys; Olcott and Blavatsky.

Obituaries are usually written within a few days of the demise of the individual in question, so one may wonder why an obituary for a person who died in 1994? Walter Carrithers' passing was indeed recorded in the July 1995 (V/7) issue of *Theosophical History* (p. 218), but it was hoped that an account of his life would supplement the notice therein. When Leslie Price informed me that he had written an introduction to the forthcoming online web edition of Carrithers' 1963 book, *Obituary: the "Hodgson Report" on Madame Blavatsky* (which is due out on Oct. 26, 1999 at <http://www.azstarnet.com/~blafoun/obituary.htm>), I immediately requested that it be reprinted in *Theosophical History* because of the two purposes that it serves: to remind Theosophists of the contributions of Mr. Carrithers to their cause, and to inform readers of his involve-

ment with *Theosophical History*. Mr. Price possesses the unique perspective of observing first hand the impact of Carrithers' contribution to correcting the false impressions created by the Hodgson report to the Society of Psychical Research. However Mr. Carrithers is regarded as an individual or researcher, there is no doubt that he made a significant contribution to restoring Madame Blavatsky's reputation.

In addition to the obituary notice, Daniel Caldwell has provided a select bibliography of Mr. Carrithers' writings.

Among the other entries in this issue, the "Book Reviews and "Literary Notes" section reveal an increased research activity on Theosophical subjects. Of special note are the publication of two significant books: *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo Nazism* by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke and *The Astral Tramp: A Biography of the Astrologer Sepharial* by Kim Farnell.

* * *

Blavatsky Archives

The Internet is quickly becoming the research tool of choice *apropos* the retrieval of difficult to find documents and archival material. One such example is "The Making of America" web site, acknowledged in the last issue (VII/7: 238-39) as one of many new sites that will prove to be indispensable to researchers. Another example is the Blavatsky Foundation, which houses a library and archives containing Walter Carrithers' papers and books. The Foundation's web site (<http://www.azstarnet.com/~blafoun>) is in the

process of publishing web editions of Carrithers' published and unpublished writings on Blavatsky. His first published work, *The Truth About Madame Blavatsky*, is already online at <http://www.azstarnet.com/~blafoun/carrith1.htm>. As mentioned above, Carrithers' major work, *Obituary: The "Hodgson Report" on Madame Blavatsky* will appear on October 26 at <http://www.azstarnet.com/~blafoun/obituary.htm>.

The second site, the Blavatsky Archives Online, whose address is <http://sites.netscape.net/dbcblainfo/index.htm>, can also be accessed from the home page of the previous site. This site publishes documents from Daniel Caldwell's personal library and archives. It is a rich trove of important but obscure sources, including:

H.P. Blavatsky's Adieux: The Ci-Devant Countess Ready to Depart for the East. [Reprinted from *The Daily Graphic* (New York), December 10, 1878.]

Citizen Helen P. Blavatsky: That Newly Naturalized Personage Explains Some Interesting Matters. [From *The Daily Graphic* (New York), July 9, 1878.]

The Kiddle Incident. [More than 20 original articles and letters from the 1883-1884 controversy concerning charges of plagiarism against the Master Koot Hoomi.]

Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to Her Family in Russia. [More than 60 pages of text with scores of HPB's letters] written to her relatives.

A Hegira of Theosophists: Priestess Blavatsky and Hierophant Olcott Fly Hastily to Bombay.

[From *The New York World*, December 19, 1878.]

The Theosophical Mahatmas by Mohini M. Chatterji

The Theosophical Tempest by William Q. Judge

The So-Called Esoteric Bosh by Veritas

The Theosophists and “The Occult World” by S.J. Padshah

Occult Phenomena by A.P. Sinnett

Madam Blavatsky: Her Opinions and Her Book by Elizabeth L. Saxon

Dreams about Mahatmas Realized [Part I] by C. Ramiah

Psychological Experiences [Part II] By C. Ramiah

Mme. Helene Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91) by Nandor Fodor

“H. P. B.”: Personal Recollections of Madame Blavatsky by Esther Milworthy

A Facsimile of a Letter from Master Koot Hoomi to Franz Hartmann

Pledge Folder issued in 1888 by H.P. Blavatsky to all applicants seeking admission to the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. [Photographic reproduction of this never before published document.]

The Esoteric Section T.S.: Reorganization of the Section in America by H.P. Blavatsky. [Photographic reproduction of this never before published document from the summer of 1889.]

H.P. Blavatsky’s E.S. Notice dated Jan. 1, 1891. [Photographic reproduction of this never before published document.]

A Mahatma Letter to Mrs. Laura C. Holloway. [A complete transcription of an 1884 letter from KH.]

The Late Madame Blavatsky: Her Life as a Theosophist. [An Interview with Colonel Henry S. Olcott in *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, Australia), May 12, 1891.]

Madame Blavatsky by Hannah M. Wolff.

Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky by Archibald Keightley

Report of the Committee Appointed by the Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society to Advise Madame Blavatsky as to the Best Course to be Taken by Her with Reference to Certain Letters Published in the September [1884] and Following Numbers of the *Christian College Magazine*.

Statement of Mr. Bhavani Shankar [on the Theosophical Mahatmas].

Theosophic Thaumaturgy—A Startling Story [from *The Bombay Gazette*].

Critical Historical Review of The Theosophical Society [An Exposé of Madame Blavatsky] by William Emmette Coleman.

Extracts from a Private Letter of Col. Olcott to Damodar K. Mavalankar, Assistant Corresponding Secretary, dated, Simla, October 4, 1880.

[Madame Blavatsky's Occult Phenomena in the New York Days] by William Quan Judge.

The Theosophists [Mme. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott Among the Brahmins] by Moncure D. Conway.

Mr. Caldwell, who operates this site, reports that in addition to the more than fifty now published on this site, two hundred additional documents will appear by Christmas 1999.

Again, the site address is <http://sites.netscape.net/dbcblainfo/index.htm>.

* * *

American Academy of Religion

In the April 1999 issue of *Theosophical History* I announced the formation of a new session, "Western Esotericism from the Early Modern Period," in the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting. Since that time, the program and date have been finalized. The Academy of Religion's Annual Meeting will be held at Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Boston Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, from Saturday through Tuesday, November 20-23. Infor-

mation is available at <http://www.aar-site.org/scripts/AAR/members/annmtg.html>. The Western Esotericism consultation (session number: A211) will convene on Monday, November 22, from 1:00 to 3:30. The online Program for all sessions of the AAR can be accessed at http://170.140.130.112/program_database_99. The consultation, as it appears in the Program Book that is scheduled to be mailed out in October, will consist of the following presentations:

Western Esotericism from the Early Modern Period

James A. Santucci, California State University, Fullerton, Presiding

Theme: Western Esotericism: Definitions, Personalities, and Methodologies

Antoine Faivre, École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne),

History and Present State of the Discipline
Modern Western Esotericism in the Study of Religion

Jean-Pierre Laurant, École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne),

The Term Esotericism in the Nineteenth Century

Wouter Hanegraaff, University of Utrecht,
Western Esotericism in the Academy: Beyond the Yates Paradigm

Dan Merkur, University of Toronto
Methodology in the Study of Alchemy

David L. Smith, Central Michigan University
Esotericism and Modernism: The Case of
Emerson

James Burnell Robinson, University of North-
ern Iowa
The Esoteric, the Prophetic, and the Mystical

Maureen Temple Richmond, Raleigh, North
Carolina
The Central Metaphysical Doctrines of the
Alice Bailey Writings and Their Roots in the
Theosophy of H.P. Blavatsky

Jane Williams-Hogan, Bryn Athyn College of
the New Church
Swedenborg and the Christian Kabbalah:
Brothers or Distant Cousins?

Geoffrey McVey, Syracuse University
Rethinking the Magic of Giordano Bruno

* * * * *

Associate Editor's Comments

The Eddy Family: An Unorthodox View

Leslie Price*

Readers of Mrs. Britten's *Nineteenth Century Miracles* will find there engravings of Spiritualist worthies of the second generation, among them William Emmette Coleman of San Francisco, whose literary efforts are also saluted in the text. But here is the opening of a letter he wrote to *Light* (December 9, 1893).

One of the most serious obstacles impeding the advance of genuine scientific Spiritualism has been the persistent "vindication" of fraudulent mediums (?) by well-meaning but uncritical Spiritualists. No matter how patent and glaring the trickery, or how thorough and complete the exposure of the pretended mediums, there have always been plenty of honest, worthy people, credulous, devoid of the faculty of rational discrimination, who rush to the defence of the exposed cheats, and solemnly aver that they are true mediums, sadly abused by the ungodly exposers.

By this time some readers will be uncomfortable. The main targets of Coleman in the letter that followed were the Eddy brothers, physical mediums of Vermont USA, and to a lesser extent the Holmes.

Until recently the Eddy family were forgotten in the U.K. but in 1998-99, N. Riley Heagerty published in *The Ark Review*, the journal of the Noah's Ark Society,¹ a detailed study of the Eddy family (including local history material gathered on personal visits) which is now on

the NAS web site. Heagerty praised the Eddy mediumship highly.

Coleman had claimed some eminent Spiritualist witnesses, both British and American, against the Eddy family, as well as some Eddy family members. Whether they would have been happy to be quoted in those precise terms must be a matter for detailed research. In any case none of these find any place in the Heagerty study. Only believers in the phenomena are quoted.

Two witnesses of the Eddy phenomena occupy an anomalous position. It was here at Chittenden, Vermont, that Col. Olcott, a lawyer from New York, met Madame Blavatsky (he then styled her "de Blavatsky") of Russia. He wrote newspaper articles and later a book (*People from the Other World*) about the mediumship—she testified to Russian evidence in the materializations.

Olcott and Blavatsky went on to form with others the Theosophical Society in New York, 1875. If they had not met watching the Eddy family, would that Society have come to be?

So the memory of the Eddy family, who have been largely forgotten by Spiritualists, has been preserved by Theosophists, for whom the episode forms part of their creation story.

But there are two problems with this Theosophical link. The first is that Madame

Blavatsky (HPB) soon set to work to convince Col. Olcott, a Spiritualist since 1853, that the phenomena of Spiritualism were not produced by the dead, but by other entities. Col. Olcott more or less endorsed that line to the end of his life in 1907, though my impression is that he always hankered after a simpler Spiritualist view and gave elementals and astral shells reluctant recognition as causes of mediumship.

Undeniably this interpretation of Spiritualism, in which the movement was seen as the plaything of occult forces and of behind the scenes occultists, created immense discord. Olcott was seen as a traitor to the movement.

The second problem is the implications for HPB's reputation if the Eddy family were not genuine. Skeptics believe that Blavatsky perhaps wished to get herself known among American Spiritualists as an authority on the occult, and that she deliberately placed herself in the path of Olcott so that his articles could make her famous. They further believe that she knew perfectly well what the Eddy family were doing, and that she went along with it, adding some Russian "evidence" of her own that was in reality spurious. She later went on to write articles herself defending Spiritualist mediums for a time, but after she became well-known and the center of an unofficial salon, she attacked Spiritualism, notably in *Isis Unveiled* (1877).

That would be a sceptical view. However, although some Theosophical historians are interested in the Eddy case, Theosophists as a community normally just accept the view given by Olcott in his book *People from the*

Other World—though they do not usually read it. His later memoirs, *Old Diary Leaves*, which includes the Eddy family, is much more widely studied.

There is another aspect to this case which had lasting effects. Though they had both moved about Europe and America, Madame Blavatsky and the medium D.D. Home seem never to have met, though that has not stopped imaginative writers claiming that they knew each other. Certainly Home developed a great dislike of Blavatsky, Olcott and of the infant T.S. Michael Gomes considers the reasons for this in his invaluable account, of *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton: Quest, 1987).

In 1876, Home criticized the Russian evidence offered by Blavatsky about the Eddy mediumship. He ridiculed Olcott's book (*People from the Other World*) in his own revealing *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism* (1877). His attitude appears to have contributed first to a decision to make activities of the T.S. private, and then to a decision by the two main founders to leave America in 1878 for India.

Much then hangs on the Eddy mediumship, and one may well feel that Coleman's real target in his references to them is not the mediums, but the possibility of discrediting the Theosophists, against whom he waged a long campaign.

The Eddy mediumship was being discussed at meetings of the British National Association of Spiritualists in 1875 and 1876, but despite visits to the States by Algernon Joy, their secretary, and by C.C. Massey (soon to be president of the British T.S.) and

others, opinions remained divided. It is to be hoped that more documentation will become available soon.

*Leslie Price is also editor of the forthcoming internet newsletter *The Psychic Pioneer*.²

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Notes

¹ The NAS promotes the revival of physical mediumship internationally. The unusual name is derived from Noah Zerdin, a pioneer of home circles who inspired the formation of the society.

² This informal article is expected to appear in the Spiritualist monthly newspaper *Psychic World* (October 1999) published in London.

Walter Carrithers: An Obituary

Leslie Price

If Madame Blavatsky (HPB) was the most influential occultist of the nineteenth century, Walter Carrithers was her sustained twentieth century champion against the charges of fraud. *Obituary—The “Hodgson Report” on Madame Blavatsky* is his only book on the case, though

some of his articles achieved a wider if temporary circulation. It shows him at the height of his powers and going where no historian had previously trodden.

There had been many defenses of HPB, but Carrithers went back to the earliest versions of the charges made by the Coulombs (disgruntled former household staff), exposing inconsistencies. He went forward also, comparing the different conflicting explanations offered by Richard Hodgson, the investigator from the Society for Psychical Research who went to India.

But he had an uphill struggle. He received little help from the Theosophical establishment, to whom the Blavatsky case was an embarrassment. Only a handful of people, such as Mr. Jinarajadasa, (eventually to become the T.S. president) had any knowledge of the details. Moreover, the imperial myth of the shrewd white psychical researchers of the SPR who had fearlessly exposed the machinations of the Russian agent and her dupes was still powerful, and dominated all coverage of the subject from encyclopedia entries to full histories of parapsychology.

In this book (starting with its puzzling title) Walter is not at his best as a communicator. The focus moves too much from broad questions to minute detail about the Shrine (an area associated with some of HPB’s phenomena).

Moreover he maintains the fiction of a separate person, Adlai Waterman, who had recently persuaded the SPR to permit micro-filming of the surviving Blavatsky case papers. In fact, it was one of his own major achievements. The historian can also see how Walter anticipates on several points the argument

used by Dr. Vernon Harrison in his 1986 *Journal SPR* paper which finally dethroned the Hodgson report.

When I joined the SPR thirty years ago, Walter Carrithers was regarded as a bit of a nuisance. The founders whose portraits adorned the walls had supposedly enjoyed one of their greatest triumphs in exposing Madame Blavatsky. Many books defending HPB had not been reviewed in the *Journal*, (*Obituary* eventually became an exception in September 1968), but books attacking her could be. The work of Beatrice Hastings was not in the library. It seemed unlikely this situation would ever change.

But Walter lived to see it change decisively, as HPB had predicted. The microfilm yielded evidence of SPR concealment of phenomena, for example. Then in the 1980s, the editor of the *SPR Journal*, Dr. John Beloff, was willing to take a serious look at historical cases of physical phenomena. Dr. Hugh Gray, as general secretary of the English Section of the T.S. Adyar (which I joined in 1980), encouraged historical inquiry. I wrote him a note suggesting Dr. Gray invite Dr. Vernon Harrison, though not a member, to lecture at T.S. headquarters. Dr. Harrison was invited and chose as his subject a re-examination of the Hodgson report. He brought to that task some impressive qualifications. Afterwards, he sent his paper to Dr. Beloff, who eventually published it. Walter was involved in this effort, making some of his own findings available.

When my own lecture to the SPR, "Madame Blavatsky Unveiled?" was published as a booklet in February 1986, I was proud in the "Introduction" to offer the paper to Walter.

Later, I was delighted when he accepted the annual presidency of the Theosophical History Centre. All historians of modern Theosophy will welcome the new and wider publication of his book.

Leslie Price

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Selected Writings of Walter A. Carrithers, Jr.

**(Arranged in chronological order
of publication)**

Daniel Caldwell

The Truth About Madame Blavatsky: An Open Letter to the Author of "Priestess of the Occult" Regarding the Charges Against H.P. Blavatsky. Covina, California: Theosophical University Press, 1947. 27 pp.

"Madame Blavatsky: 'One of the World's Great Jokers.'" *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* (New York) 56 (July 1962): 131-39.

Obituary—The "Hodgson Report" on Madame Blavatsky: Re-Examination Discredits the Major Charges Against H.P. Blavatsky. Preface by N. Sri Ram. Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1963. xx + 92 pp. [Published under Carrithers' pseudonym of Adlai E. Waterman.]

“Richard Hodgson (1855-1905).” Pp. 612-26 in *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Compiled and annotated by Sven Eek. Adyar, Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965.

“Jiddu Krishnamurti and ‘The Return of Madame Blavatsky.’” *Theosophical History* (London) 2 (Oct. 1987): 126-33 and 2 (Jan. 1988): 165-83.

* * * * *

“The ‘Hodgson Report’ on Madame Blavatsky.” Letter to the Editor. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45 (London) December 1969: 188-97. [Published under Carrithers’ pseudonym of Adlai E. Waterman.]

[Letter to the Editor Rebutting Certain Statements by Russell M. Goldfarb on Carrithers’ *Obituary Book*.] *Journal of Popular Culture* 6 (Spring 1973): 859-864. [Published under Carrithers’ pseudonym of Adlai E. Waterman.]

“Madame Blavatsky and Occult Tibet: A Critique on the History and Menace of Black Tantrism.” *Theosophical Notes* (Napa, California) Sept. 1974, 19 pp. Addendum of 4 pp. on “Magic Black Versus Magic White.”

“The Founding of the Theosophical Society.” Pp. 6-20. Published as the “Epilogue to the Centenary [Abridged] Edition” of Henry S. Olcott’s “Inaugural Address of the President of the Theosophical Society.” Fresno, California: No publisher, 1975. [Published under Carrithers’ pseudonym of Adlai E. Waterman.]

“A Word of Warning. . . To Reviewers, Buyers, and Readers of *Madame Blavatsky*. . . by Marian Meade. . . [and] *Ancient Wisdom Revived*. . . by Bruce F. Campbell. . . : A Summary of Findings Exposes the ‘Exposers.’” *Theosophical History* (London) 2 (Jan. 1987): 32-36.

Communications

From Peter Tuffnell (Porthmadog, Great Britain)

First, I must express my real pleasure that Jean Overton Fuller (JOF) has put the “Cyril Scott Hidden School” on the Theosophical agenda. I have long been an admirer of the body of work written by Scott, H.K. Challoner, David Anrias and others in the twenties and thirties, and it is wonderful to see new light being shone on the characters and events of that period.

Joscelyn Godwin’s review (VII/7, July 1999) was also most important in objecting to JOF’s pro-Krishnamurti “sermonette,” and in pointing out several errors of detail. I would suggest that JOF has opened up a significant discussion—rather than having written a definitive work—upon this fascinating group.

I would like to make two points, one on the matter of bias, and one on some significant errors of detail.

The main problem with the Krishnamurti bias is that JOF takes the view that—as Krishnamurti was basically “right”—no true Master would say a word against him. Therefore any Master quoted speaking against Krishnamurti must be a “fake,” or—as she tries to establish—a literary montage of Scott’s.

In fact, all the various quotations about Krishnamurti in *Initiate in the Dark Cycle* and *Through the Eyes Of the Masters*, seem to me to be intrinsically wise, balanced and compassion-

ate. In all cases, the motivation of the reported Masters appears to be to give reassurance through explanation.

It is only necessary to read Krishnamurti’s famous speech of August 2nd, 1929, dissolving the Order of the Star, to understand the intense wave of spiritual abandonment that swept Theosophical circles in the 20s and 30s (<http://www.kfa.org/pathless.html>).

Krishnamurti is very clear that of the 3000 or so members of the Order of the Star, only a “very, very few” were capable of achieving his kind of truth. This poses the simple question: Where would a Compassionate One be in this situation? With the elite handful of strong and enlightened graduates of the “pathless path?” Or with the multitude of lost and struggling seekers—those followers, many of them Theosophists, who he variously describes in this speech as “sterile,” “stagnant,” “embalmed in prejudice,” “false,” “hypocritical,” “absurd,” “weak” and “childish”?

He insists he is not lacking in compassion. “If you go to a surgeon for an operation, is it not kindness on his part to operate even if he cause you pain?” I would simply say that should I need an operation, I pray for a surgeon with a more sensitive bedside manner!

There is no doubt the world needed (and still needs) a powerful antidote to the worn-out crystallised forms of belief that enslave billions of humans. The mystery is that Krishnamurti

initially chose to target—not the countless prisoners of the many limiting belief systems that litter the earth—but a little pioneering bunch of Theosophists who naturally had some problems of attitude themselves, but were at least struggling toward more universal approaches to spirituality!

A psychologist might well conclude that Krishnamurti was blurring a most timely spiritual message, with some “unfinished business” about his Theosophical parents and patrons. Thus the highly charged and emotionally wounding language he used to cut himself away from his philosophical roots.

It seems to me, therefore, to be eminently reasonable that the Compassionate Ones—especially those with a specific concern for Theosophical evolution—would indeed want to send a message of reassurance to those left confused and battered by the World Teacher drama: an assault on their most treasured beliefs by the very teacher they had expected to vindicate them.

I therefore suggest that the Masters reported in the Scott group books are speaking and behaving with precisely the degree of wisdom and compassion one would expect, and that there is no evidence here to suggest fakery or undue literary licence.

My second point deals with some significant errors of detail in JOF’s work that might clear the way further to establishing the identity of “The Initiate.”

JOF fails to mention a most relevant statement of Scott—both in his *Outline of Modern Occultism* and in his autobiographical *Bone of Contention* (176)—that, while he wrote the Initiate books, the material for them was “given

to me by someone else.” This statement is somewhat supported by the fact that the person clearly identifiable as Scott in the Initiate books is the composer character Lyall Herbert, not the poet narrator, Charles Broadbent.

I certainly don’t dispute JOF’s contention that the books are “faction,” though I incline to believe there is a great deal more spiritual integrity and authenticity in the works than her paper allows.

At this time, it seems to me that the closest contender for the actual identity of “JMH” is the remarkable Dr P.A. Bernard, as suggested to JOF by David Harvey of the Bristol Lodge (*Cyril Scott and a Hidden School*, 30-31).

JOF accepts that Bernard may well be the model for the Initiate in the second book, but not in the first, partly on account of his cigar use: “These he did not smoke in the first book...” In fact, on p.125 of the first Initiate book, we find that JMH was—to the narrator’s surprise—“smoking a very large cigar, from which the room was rendered unpleasantly thick with fumes.” (On being questioned about this, JMH laughs loudly and answers, “Smoking, my dear fellow, is a vice of mine which I need to use on some of my hyper-sensitive students as a medicine for their spiritual welfare.”)

Dr Bernard, it appears, was a regular cigar smoker, although he would give it up for periods of time to demonstrate to his pupils that it was a habit of choice, not of addiction.

Regardless of cigars, however, JOF also points out that Scott did not meet Bernard until his American tour of 1921, whereas *The Initiate* was published in 1920. This causes her to look elsewhere for the JMH of the first book. This overlooks a most significant fact.

Scott tells us in *Bone of Contention* (165) that he first “made contact” with Dr Bernard “through one of his pupils who, during the war, had visited England and given some lessons in physiological Yoga.”

This surely raises the possibility that this pupil of Bernard’s, Florin Jones, is the very one who handed Scott the material upon which *The Initiate* was based. The timing is right: the Great War, 1914-1918; *The Initiate*, 1920. Scott then tells us that Jones later fulfilled his promise to introduce him to Bernard in person during Scott’s American tour of 1921. This would have furnished material for *The Initiate in the New World*. Indeed there are many correspondences between the chapter about Bernard in *Bone of Contention* (Chapter XXX), and this second Initiate book.

There is no space here to expand upon the extraordinary life and character of Dr Pierre Arnold Bernard. He undoubtedly deserves a biography all of his own. There is a chapter about him in Sir Paul Dukes’ *The Unending Quest*, and there is an interesting scholarly website under construction (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/~stringer/pab.htm>).

In very brief, he was a great Sanskrit scholar, is credited with introducing Yoga to America in 1905, created an Ashram in New York State disguised as a Country Club that embraced the Arts, Philosophy, Sport, Religion, Yoga, Science, Humanism, Psychology, Acrobatics, even elephant training... His wife reports that he was ill only once, just a few days before his death in 1955 at 80 years.

I hasten to add that this still does not “peel the onion” satisfactorily, for Scott tells us that he did not see Bernard again after 1921, which

would appear to rule out his appearance in the West Country in *The Initiate in the Dark Cycle*, where he meets again both the “Charles Broadbent” and “Lyall Herbert” characters.

Perhaps someone else out there can take this a little further?

* * *

From Leslie Price (Surrey, U.K.)

In his review of the latest occasional paper, Joscelyn Godwin raises important questions about method in our subject, in his paragraph about authorial asides. Although such asides may be better in footnotes, I would suggest they do have a place. Thus Jean Overton Fuller, for example, may surely be allowed to express a view on what Krishnamurti really meant, because he is a major figure in our subject and she knew him, wrote his obituary for *Theosophical History*, and recently completed a biography of him.

As to reincarnation, many of our characters such as Scott believed in it, and the belief shaped their life. Jean’s reference to Gluck begins, “But who was that other composer Scott was told he had been before the last?” She is speculating about what Scott was told.

But of course she had gone further. “If this was the pre-history of Rose and Cyril Scott, it explains so much,” she has argued. If I understand correctly, it is this kind of analysis which your reviewer feels has no place in scholarship, and one can sympathise—for how is it to be verified?

At least one recent biography, T.H. Meyer’s *D.N. Dunlop: a Man of Our Time* (1992) [re-

viewed by John Cooper in the April 1995 issue on page 187] did consider the previous life of the subject. It was an Anthroposophical biography—and it was surely scholarly. Dr Steiner laid the ground for such an approach in his lectures “Karmic Relationships.”

If “the consensus of informed readers” is to govern opinions expressed, are there other types of analysis which could be called “doctrinaire belief” and should be eschewed in our subject? Examples might be discussion of the astrological chart of both individuals or groups (such as the T.S. itself) or the employment of concepts from depth psychology (such as Jung’s), about whose truth there is no consensus. To discuss some of the paranormal phenomena around Theosophical figures like H.P.B. as if they really happened would also offend some scholars, and be seen as uncritical!

However, it would be wrong to imply that Jean accepts what Leadbeater says in any doctrinaire way. Having read much of her not yet published discussion of his many contributions, it is clear to me (whether one agrees or not) that she firmly rejects some of it, and reaches her views (now positive, now negative) on the basis of the evidence.

Finally, if past-life analysis of our subjects does have a future in your pages, I might argue that A.P. Sinnett can only be understood in relation to the Roman incarnation about which he wrote most vividly in his novel *Karma!*

* * * * *

Notes on the Ordo Templi Orientis in Italy

PierLuigi Zoccatelli

1. *The O.T.O. from Kellner to Crowley and Beyond*

This paper deals with the ways in which the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) has been received in Italy and, more in general, with the different groups claiming—often in dispute with each other, although, as we will see, with striking similarities in their mutual perspectives—Aleister Crowley’s (1875-1947)¹ heritage. The Ordo Templi Orientis is an important crossroads in the Occult world in the period straddling the 19th and 20th centuries. The O.T.O. was characterized by the elaboration of a system of sexual magic rooted in Tantrism by the Austrian industrialist Carl Kellner (1850-1905) who, during his travels in the East, is said to have come into contact with three “initiates” (a Sufi, Soliman ben Aifa, and two Tantrists, Bhima Sena Pratapa and Sri Mahatma Agamya Paramahansa), and with the organization called Hermetic Brotherhood of Light.² Kellner’s teachings were received with the purpose of founding an “Academia Masonica” by the German *fin de siècle* society, where Theodor Reuss³ (1855-1923) developed his ideas within a thriving *milieu* of magical movements. On 20th January 1906, Reuss—deeply involved with the world of

“fringe-masonry,” Rosicrucian movements, and Gnostic churches⁴—gave the O.T.O. its present organization. He introduced the movement as a Templar derivation and an “inner circle” of the various types of “fringe-masonry” under his control.⁵

However, it was only in 1909 or 1911, when Aleister Crowley joined the O.T.O., that the movement’s influence on the Occultist milieu of that period started to acquire an importance which today is unanimously recognized by all experts. Earlier, Crowley had joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn⁶ and became the founder of one of its branches (the A.∴A.∴, whose acronym’s real meaning is meant to be confidential, though the translation Argenteum Astrum, Astrum Argentinum or Argon Astron is now current), still in existence today. For a brief survey of the interests the O.T.O. has fostered in the Occultist world, it will suffice to mention some of its most famous members⁷:

- Harvey Spencer Lewis (1883-1939), founder in 1916 of A.M.O.R.C. (Anticus Mysticusque Ordo Rosae Crucis), the most widespread Rosicrucian movement in the world, with about six million members.⁸

- Gérard Encausse (Papus, 1865-1916), probably the most famous French Occultist, promoter of the initiatory system known as Martinism.
- Arnaldo Krumm-Heller (1876-1949), hypnotist and follower of Mesmer, one of Papus's friends, "fringe-mason" and Patriarch of a Gnostic Church, claimer of an ancient Rosicrucian heritage and founder of a *Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua* (which was also interested in some sexual magic practices).
- John Yarker (1833-1913), a prominent figure in "fringe-masonry" and important member of the "regular" Freemasonry, an initiate into different Templar rites, as the Heredom Rite, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite as 33° (Cerneau Council of New York, 1807), the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis as 97°, the Ancient Oriental Rite of Mizraim as 90°, and the Swedenborgian Rite. For a certain time, he was one of the leaders of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*, established in 1866 by Robert Wentworth Little (1840-1878), as well as a member of the Martinist Order, the Theosophical Society, and the Freemasonry open to full membership for women called Co-Masonry.⁹

Aleister Crowley's contribution to the *Ordo Templi Orientis* is undoubtedly the most eclectic one can imagine; in fact, already in a "Manifesto" of 1912 he described the O.T.O. as a body of initiates in whom are concentrated the wisdom and knowledge of the following bodies: the Gnostic Catholic Church, the Order of the Knights of the Holy Ghost, the Order of the Illuminati, the Order of the Temple, the Order

of the Knights of St. John, the Order of the Knights of Malta, the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the Hidden Church of the Holy Grail, the Rosicrucian Order, the Holy Order of Rose Croix of Heredom, the Order of the Holy Royal Arch of Enoch, the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Masonry (33 degrees), the Rite of Memphis (97 degrees), the Rite of Mizraim (90 degrees), the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Masonry (33 degrees), the Swedenborgian Rite of Masonry, the Order of the Martinists, the Order of the Sat B'hai, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn... and many others orders of equal merit, if of less fame.

2. The O.T.O., the O.T.O.s and Crowley's influence in Italy

After the death of its leading figures—especially of Theodor Reuss and Aleister Crowley (not always on idyllic terms with each other)—the O.T.O.'s history becomes extremely complex, involving rival claims about the Order's inheritance and, as a consequence, the legitimacy of various doctrines. In particular, there are two controversial points: a) whether or not the initiates should accept the "Law of Thelema" (which is *Do what thou wilt*) stated by Crowley in *The Book of the Law*, in which he announced the advent of the Aeon of Horus as well as the rites rewritten by Crowley between 1917 and 1942, which seem to have never been used by Reuss; b) the succession of Aleister Crowley as leader of the Order after Reuss's death—still a doubtful question today according to Swiss researcher Peter König.¹⁰ On April 21, 1912, Reuss was said to have simply appointed Crowley

as leader of an English section called *Mysteria Mystica Maxima*, and might have preferred as his own successor Hans Rudolf Hilfiker (1882-1955), who at the time of Reuss's death was Grand Master of the lodge "Libertas et Fraternitas" established in 1917 in Zurich.

To analyze the presence of O.T.O.—some would rather say *the* O.T.O.s—in Italy means to trace, at least briefly, the history of the various branches claiming a rightful succession (be it formal or "eggregoric," as we will see) to the original O.T.O., and of their subsequent offshoots deriving mostly from the impact of Crowley's system. Only those branches which existed or are still existing in Italy are taken into consideration, leaving out hundreds—some say thousands—of groups in the world.

Not much is known about the existence of O.T.O. in Italy during the Reuss-Crowley period, except the information about the initiation, dating not later than 1913, of Edoardo Frosini and of Arturo Reghini (1878-1946). The former was involved with the Egyptian rites circles of "fringe-masonry," who was the founder of the Masonic Rito Filosofico Italiano (Italian Philosophic Rite), and was active in the Martinist Order of Papus, where he would later be appointed Italian Venerable Master. Reghini was the promoter of the journals *Atanôr*, *Ignis* and *UR*, a Mason interested in the "fringe," a Martinist, the co-founder of the Theosophical Society in Italy, and an author particularly known for his anti-Christian ideas. Reghini appointed Crowley as an honorary member of the Rito Filosofico Italiano of which Reghini also became a leader on 20th October 1913. This O.T.O. organization apparently functioned in Italy until 1930.¹¹ After this date, the only known

line of succession appears from the 1970-1980 period, when a revival was initiated and which continues up to the present day.

2. 1 Ordo Templi Orientis

Setting aside the various debates animating the "Thelemic" circles, we must consider the fact that the O.T.O. called "Caliphate" is the only one that considers Crowley's writings as the heart of its own organization. The reason for the term "Caliphate" is unclear: some say that it is the abbreviation for California—"Calif."—the place of the group's origin, while some others underline its reference to the caliphs' role in Islamic Sufism. The Caliphate has even stated its position through a lawsuit. In fact, on 10th July 1985, the 9th Federal District Court in San Francisco ruled that the "[Caliphate] OTO now owns, holds all right and title to, has used, does now use, and has the right to use: the name 'Ordo Templi Orientis'; the initials 'OTO'; the various insignia, registers and symbols of OTO . . ." (the researcher should bear in mind that, on a previous occasion, the 1st Federal District Court in Maine passed a judgment apparently conflicting with the above). As the members of the order say, there is another substantial reason that makes the "Caliphate" predominant over other organizations. In fact, as is stated in *The Book of the Law* (the original is kept in the "Caliphate's" head office): "Success will be thy proof," and there is no doubt that the (Caliphate) O.T.O. is the most widespread O.T.O. in the world.

The origin of this line of succession is the foundation—in 1936, in Pasadena, California—of the Agapé 2 Lodge by Wilfred Talbot Smith (1885-1957). The O.T.O.'s beginnings in the

United States date back to 10th May 1921, when Theodor Reuss issued a charter to Crowley's "magic son," Charles Stansfeld Jones (1886-1950), better known as Achad (a figure who inspired others to form various "schismatic" branches). After Crowley's death, California remained the movement's core. The German Karl Germer (1885-1962)—the main supporter of Crowley in Reuss's succession—had moved here and become the main leader of the post-Crowleyan order, serving it until 1962, although with no great activity. Germer died without having named a successor, and his inheritance was claimed by Grady Louis McMurtry (1918-1985), one of the members of the old Agapé Lodge (dissolved in 1953). In 1977, McMurtry started the reorganization of the O.T.O., registering it in 1982 as a religious tax-exempt entity in the United States, and became its O.H.O. (Outer Head of the Order) with the name Hymenaeus Alpha. On 21st September 1985, McMurtry, who won the San Francisco court proceedings for the O.T.O.'s legitimacy (albeit *in extremis*, since he died on 12th July 1985, just two days after the favorable decision), was succeeded by a man from New York, born in France, who assumed control with the initiatory name of Hymenaeus Beta.¹² Even in this case the legitimacy of the succession is dubious, at least according to some scholars.¹³ Hymenaeus Beta had come into contact with circles linked to Kenneth Grant. The latter was considered by Crowley, at a certain point of his life, as a possible leader of the English O.T.O. This opinion was shared by Germer, who, actually—as one of his letters dated 3rd May 1952 proves—apparently made Grant international leader of the order, before finally expelling him on 20th

July 1955.¹⁴ Moreover, Hymenaeus Beta was on good terms with Michael P. Bertiaux (another important figure in the world of dissident O.T.O.s, as we will see) and was once connected to Marcelo Ramos Motta (1931-1987)—a Brazilian professor of Literature in the United States, one of the contestants in Germer's succession, and indeed the first to be recognized as such by Germer's widow. Motta had started a splinter *Societas Ordo Templi Orientis* (S.O.T.O.) due to his conflicting relations with the "Caliphate."¹⁵

The present structure of the Caliphate O.T.O. is divided into: "Camps," generally consisting of less than eleven persons, who can perform 0° and I° initiatory rituals; "Oases," with initiations to III°; "Lodges," performing all the grades up to VII°; and "Grand Lodges," for the initiation to the "Sanctuary of the Gnosis" (VIII°, IX°, XI°) and the control of a Province. Provided below is a concise survey of the meaning of the different degrees that one can receive in the O.T.O. There are a total of 21 Initiate degrees, including thirteen numbered degrees and eight unnumbered, intermediate or sub-degrees (the degrees are divided into three Grades or "Triads": the Hermit, the Lover, and the Man of Earth)¹⁶:

0° (Minerval): this is the entrance initiatory level, and is a trial or probationary level. It is metaphorically described as "attraction of a soul to incarnation."

I° (Man and Brother, Woman and Sister): the beginning of life-long membership, it symbolizes birth and a dedication to Thelema. At this point, initiates can apply to open a "Camp" for holding meetings of fellow initiates.

II° (Magician): the degree of "coming of age."

The initiate can serve as a tiler of the temple. III° (Master Magician): permits the initiate with proper aptitudes to apply for powers of initiation from Minerval through III°, and to apply to lead an Oasis.

IV° (Perfect Magician and Companion of the Holy Royal Arch of Enoch): it is a more elaborate ritual, and draws the initiate toward the middle range of O.T.O. “Perfect Initiate,” or Prince of Jerusalem and Knight of the East and West are two intermediate degrees after this one.

V° (Sovereign Prince Rose-Croix, and Knight of the Pelican and Eagle): it is the minimum degree required for running a lodge, and the V° degree can apply for Senate and may volunteer for Electoral College—which body governs the Camps, Oases and Lodges of the Order. Knight of the Red Eagle, and Member of the Senate of Knight Hermetic Philosophers are the intermediate degrees after this one.

VI° (Illustrious Knight [Templar] of the Order of Kadosch, and Companion of the Holy Grail): prepares the initiate for the inner work of the O.T.O. Grand Inquisitor Commander, and Member of the Grand Tribunal and Prince of the Royal Secret are two intermediate degrees after this one.

VII° (Theoreticus, and Very Illustrious Sovereign Grand Inspector General): it starts the inner work, and members of this rank can act as Inspectors. Episcopal consecration occurs at this degree. Magus of Light, and Bishop of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica and Grandmaster of Light, and Inspector of Rites and Degrees are two intermediate degrees after this one.

VIII° (Perfect Pontiff of the Illuminati): continues sex magick training (linked to autoerotic practices), empowers the mem-

ber to vote in general O.T.O. elections and allows application for some higher initiatory powers. Epopt of the Illuminati is the intermediate degree after this one.

IX° (Initiate of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis): it completes the normal sex magick training (heterosexual intercourse) and grants the member opportunity to represent the head of the order directly.

X° (Rex Summus Sanctissimus): this degree is held by the National Grand Master General of O.T.O. in a particular country.

XI°: at present closed to aspirants, and yet an outer degree of the regular structure of the O.T.O., is characterized by homosexual magick practice.

XII°: this degree is a category sometimes used to refer to the international head of O.T.O., also called the O.H.O. (Outer Head of the Order) or the Frater Superior.

The Italian offshoot of the O.T.O. Caliphate was founded in 1982, when Alberto Moscato¹⁷ received his initiatory degree of Minerval (0°) in Germany, thanks to his contacts with Bill Heidrick (one of the refounding members of the present O.T.O.) and Norbert Straet, Master of the O.T.O. Lodge of Aachen. In 1987, in Rome, Moscato, with the support of Fiorella Di Rico Alberoni, founded the first official Italian body and appointed himself national leader, as he had been chartered for the initiations. Soon, the Italian camp became the “Khem Oasis.” In 1990 the Khem Oasis numbered some thirty members, in Rome, Florence, Milan, and was the reference point for the Mercurius Camp of Turin (no longer existing today, but refounded in March 1998, under Claudio Marucchi’s directions, as Shanty

Camp). In 1992 the Khem Oasis was made a Lodge and officially undertook the task to coordinate the Italian branches of the Caliphate. Alberto Moscato (still Venerable Master of the Khem Lodge) was appointed Hymenaeus Beta's Italian representative. In addition to the Khem Lodge, the Teth Camp of Florence—under the leadership of Jean-Matthieu Kleemann since March 1997—and the Shanty Camp of Turin are both active in Italy. The Samekh Camp of Bologna had been operative as late as December 1998. Its members no longer belong to the O.T.O. It was run by Massimo Mantovani from Modena, a graduate student of Political Science. He was already leader of the famous—at least in some avant-garde musical circles—rock band Thelema, conceived as the “musical arm of the Italian group O.T.O. Antiqua,” and the publisher of the esoteric-musical review *ANKH*. It is worth adding that Mantovani had left the O.T.O. Antiqua—joining, as we have already said, the Caliphate O.T.O., then leaving this affiliation too—and that the rock band Thelema is no longer a vehicle for Crowley's thought.¹⁸

Some statistics concerning the international Caliphate O.T.O. diffusion are supplied below: since 1988 there has been a general increase of about 270% despite a small downturn which occurred in 1998-1999; presently, its members number 3,125—of which 2,678 are Initiates, divided into 149 official groups (Camps, Oases and Lodges) present in 42 countries. Available data of known members' addresses (associates and initiates alike) include 2,953 people in all, geographically distributed as follows:

- Almost 50% (1,664 members) reside in the United States (Alabama 16, Arizona 50, Ar-

kansas 4, California 344, Colorado 23, Connecticut 7, Delaware 3, Dist. of Columbia 3, Florida 51, Georgia 55, Hawaii 3, Idaho 11, Illinois 37, Indiana 50, Iowa 3, Kansas 29, Kentucky 6, Louisiana 18, Maryland 29, Massachusetts 35, Michigan 32, Minnesota 31, New Hampshire 5, New Jersey 33, New Mexico 9, New York 106, North Carolina 15, Ohio 24, Oklahoma 30, Oregon 116, Pennsylvania 80, Rhode Island 1, South Carolina 4, South Dakota 1, Tennessee 23, Texas 156, Utah 20, Virginia 30, Washington 74, West Virginia 6, Wisconsin 16, Wyoming 1).

- In Europe there are 903 affiliated members (of whom more than 25%, surprisingly, reside in the former Yugoslavia) divided as follows: Austria 1, Belgium 2, Bulgaria 14, Croatia 92, Denmark 26, England 142, Finland 4, France 20, Germany 98, Greece 2, Iceland 7, Ireland (North and South) 8, Italy 60, Macedonia 8, Netherlands 19, Norway 101, Poland 2, Portugal 1, Russia 2, Scotland 7, Serbia 84, Slovenia 78, Spain 6, Sweden 118, Switzerland 1, Ukraine 1, Wales 2.
- The Oceania-Asia area numbers 145 associates: Australia 90, Bahrain 1, Israel 1, Japan 20, Malaysia 1, New Zealand 30, South Korea 1, Turkey 1.
- Canada has 152 members: Alberta 27, British Columbia 59, Manitoba 1, Ontario 50, Quebec 14, Saskatchewan 1.
- The Pan American area has 84 members: Brazil 79, Martinique 1, Mexico 3, West Indies 1.
- Africa has a small affiliation, with just 2 members in South Africa.
- There are also 348 Associate members (Asso-

ciate membership is in the ordinary sense of informal or external membership), and those called ADV (free Associate membership, available to inmates in public jails) are 99.

Worldwide, there are 64 Initiates to higher degrees (VIth Degrees 30, VIIth Degrees 9, VIIIth Degrees 8, IXth Degrees 15, Xth and O.H.O. 2), of whom 9 in Europe (no one in Italy: VIIth Degrees 3, VIIIth Degrees 3 and IXth Degrees 3). Besides 9 European initiates to higher degrees, there are 2 VIIIth's in Canada and 1 VIIth in Australia (the VIths are a little more widely distributed); the others are in the United States. **These are the world percentages of various degrees Initiates:**

ADV	99	—
Associate	348	—
Minerval (0°)	820	30.6 % of Initiates
Ist	670	25 % of Initiates
IIInd	459	17.1 % of Initiates
IIIrd	307	11.4 % of Initiates
IVth	239	8.9 % of Initiates
Vth	119	4.4 % of Initiates
Higher Degrees	64	2.4 % of Initiates

A further chart gives us a precise idea of international statistics year after year:

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<i>ADV</i>	—	42	49	54	72	91	90	87	104	118	88	99
<i>Ass.</i>	170	194	245	211	273	317	221	246	286	375	223	348
<i>Min.</i>	397	403	443	526	605	660	642	706	889	890	898	820
<i>Ist</i>	236	358	380	457	483	485	487	573	700	685	727	670
<i>IIInd</i>	154	173	217	249	291	290	311	378	441	447	451	459
<i>IIIrd</i>	97	109	145	178	198	221	226	225	296	325	331	307
<i>IVth</i>	35	64	66	80	111	125	160	194	204	212	239	239
<i>Vth</i>	40	49	63	65	67	70	66	102	113	107	118	119
<i>High</i>	16	16	19	24	31	29	35	35	41	57	54	64
<i>TOT</i>	1145	1408	1627	1844	2131	2288	2238	2546	3074	3216	3129	3125

As far as Italy is concerned, the division of the 60 members is: Associate 1, Minerval 13, I° 29, II° 7, III° 7, IV° 4 and one in the intermediate degree Vth-VI° (another three members live abroad and we do not know the degree of three others). The Italian province, however, is occasionally responsible for the initiation of foreign members too, and, in this way, the number of people co-opted through Italy is about 60 (included people coming from Serbia, Croatia and France); to these

we must add some ten Italians who are inactive. Almost half of the Italian affiliates reside in Rome, taking part in the work of four operative groups; the others are divided among Florence, Verona, Milan, Turin, Aosta, and Trent.

In Italy the O.T.O. seems to have little interest for the media, and its activities are mostly devoted to the Order itself, through the organization of courses, the production of original material, publishing Italian translations of the great amount of works belonging to the O.T.O., debates, meetings with the performance of classical rituals of the Thelemic repertoire. It also deals with Thelemic software—such as the computer game called *Magick*, featuring an O.T.O. Initiate's life and his alchemy, ritual, Masonic and astral work—and musical productions (“Rock, Techno, Jungle, Metal, Ritual, or Symphonic!” as the website of the Khem Lodge¹⁹ informs us). Furthermore, the order has started a relationship with the Grande Oriente d'Italia (Grand Orient of Italy), the largest Italian masonic body—about 10 members of the O.T.O. are, or have been, Masons—from which, in future, an official recognition is expected.²⁰

2. 2 Sovrano Ordine del Tempio della Via della Luce (S.O.T.V.L.)

After Crowley's death and during the Germer years, Crowley's O.T.O. had not been involved in any particular activity until it came under McMurtry's direction in 1977. There was, however, another body—deriving from Reuss's activities in forming various societies and, therefore pre-Crowleyan in some respects—which had been continuously active and was rooted in

Herman Joseph Metzger's (1919-1990) activities. In 1943 Metzger joined the Swiss section of the O.T.O., and then claimed for himself a succession in the *Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua* of Arnoldo Krumm-Heller, in the Gnostic Church as reformed by Reuss, and in the *Illuminati Order*, an organization founded in 1895-1896 by Leopold Engel (1858-1931) with the help of Theodor Reuss, and lately “incorporated” by Metzger in his own O.T.O.²¹ (In Italy, on July 2, 1977, the leader of the main Italian Gnostic Church, the Florentine Loris Carlesi, joined Metzger's O.T.O., and through a filiation tracing its origins to Michael Bertiaux—with no validity, according to Peter König—one of the branches is said to have genealogically connected to the O.T.O. of Roberto Negrini, which will be discussed further).²²

Metzger, who is said to have been considered by Crowley's first successor (Karl Germer) as his only heir in O.T.O. leadership, as is attested in a letter by Germer,²³ managed to establish and publicize the O.T.O. in Stein, in the Swiss canton of Appenzell. There he built a hotel-restaurant, an “Abbey of Thelema,” a farm specializing in beekeeping and a series of small concerns. Up to now, in the Abbey of Stein, Crowley's Gnostic Mass has been celebrated every Sunday, though from 1970 Metzger's O.T.O. has abandoned all reference to sexual magick and to Crowley, leaning more towards Theodor Reuss's Masonic rituals.

This branch has its own history even in Italy. There, on the Vernal Equinox in 1987, Marzio Forgione (*Frater Magis Magisque*) founded the *Sovrano Ordine del Tempio della Via della Luce* [Sovereign Order of the Temple of the Way of Light] (S.O.T.V.L.) in Novara,

divided it into three internal orders (Ordo M.'.M.'. , Ordo R.'.R.'. , Ordo A.'.A.'.), and followed the Crowley-Germer-Metzger succession line. The S.O.T.V.L., it is worth stating, though keeping fraternal contacts with the Swiss O.T.O., does not take part in the initiatory heritage of the order: "Given the specific Italian situation, it has been decided not to act as O.T.O., though we recognize our source in the O.T.O. in Stein, and only to declare our belonging to A.'.A.'. [Astrum Argentinum]."²⁴ This new organization was characterized by an ambitious publishing plan which included the translation of some of the main prescriptive books of the O.T.O. and of the A.'.A.'. , and the publication of the only Thelemic Italian biannual review, *LASH TAL*. Moreover, it has founded an auxiliary research center—called CTA 102—which is open not only to its own scholars but also to a small number (five to ten) of uninitiated scholars. Finally, in its effort to embark on a "new phase of mutual understanding and cooperation"²⁵ of the various groups belonging to the Current 93, on 22nd March 1997 (on the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of the Aeon of Horus), in Novara the S.O.T.V.L. organized an event that can be in all respects considered as the first Thelemic Conference in Italy. On 7th December 1997, in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of Aleister Crowley's death, a new and larger conference followed, with the support of O.T.O.-Fraternitas Hermetica Luciferiana, whose subject was "The Magic of the Star and the Serpent: Arts, Sciences and Eroticism of a New Renaissance," and which was also supported by the O.T.O. Foundation of Manchester (formerly belonging to the Caliphate O.T.O.).

2. 3 O.T.O.- Luciferian Filiation

The most important of the "fringe" initiatives—through the "syncretic foundation of new Filiations"²⁶—differing from the major, historical line of the Ordo Templi Orientis, is the one that currently refers to the O.T.O.-Fraternitas Hermetica Luciferiana, run by Roberto Negrini, from Bologna. It defines itself as "an eclectic, all-embracing, virtually international structure."²⁷

From 1972 to 1978, Roberto Negrini was involved with the activities of an UFO contactee cult, the Fratellanza Cosmica (Cosmic Brotherhood), founded by the Sicilian Eugenio Siragusa. Negrini was coordinator of the Central Italy Secretariat and leader of the Centro Studi Fratellanza Cosmica in Bologna—founded by Nadia Scandellari in the early 1970s. Following the break with Siragusa, the Center was renamed the Ordine Solare del Centro Studi Fratellanza Cosmica (Solar Order of the Cosmic Brotherhood Institute) and then Ordine Solare (from 1978 to 1982). In this last Order, Negrini, "claiming a direct contact with the 'Impero Confederato Intergalattico' (Intergalactic Confederate Empire), suggested a series of subjects coming from Occultism and neo-paganism (included neo-German mythology) and presented them in a context characterized by Crowley's sexual magick and an anti-christian titanism that adopted figures and symbols occasionally close to Satanism."²⁸ Towards the end of the 1970s, the relations between Negrini's group and the new Italian branch of the French-Haitian O.T.O. became a reality. The French-Haitian O.T.O. came to the attention of the other O.T.O. organizations thanks to Nevio Viola (1953-1993) from Trieste (who will be discussed below).

In 1911 the O.T.O. French body—established in 1908 thanks to the patent Theodor Reuss granted to Papus—is said (but with no clear documentation, however) to have supplied a charter to the Haitian initiate Lucien-François Jean-Maine (1869-1960), who developed an independent magic-vooodooist synthesis as an O.T.O. current. In 1921 Jean-Maine founded a new O.T.O. organization, amplifying the most obscure and inner aspects of the current, arranged into sixteen operative degrees. In this way came into being the Ordo Templi Orientis Antiqua (O.T.O.A.), not to be confused with the “classical” O.T.O. tradition. At a later date, Jean-Maine joined to his organization a more secret “inner circle” of the order, known as La Couleuvre Noire (abbreviated as L.C.N.: The Black Serpent, in Italy also called “Comunione Tradizionale Franco-haitiana Voodooista della Serpe Nera e Rossa L.C.N.” [Voodooist French-Haitian Traditional Communion of the Black and Red Serpent L.C.N.]). When Lucien-François Jean-Maine died, the succession was granted to his son Hector-François (1924-1993), who, in his turn,—in 1970—recognized Michael Bertiaux as his heir.

In the 1970s, Michael Bertiaux, at that time one of the most prominent figures on the international scene of new magical movements,²⁹ started an ambitious plan inserting Crowleyan currents into his Monastery of the Seven Rays, where many of the topics developed by various dissident orders of the O.T.O.-galaxy converged. The Monastery claimed to represent the syncretic version of different currents: the Hermetic Alchemical Order of the Q.B.H.L.³⁰ inspired by the thought of Charles Stansfeld Jones (mentioned above when discussing of O.T.O.’s ori-

gin in the United States), prophet of an Aeon of Maat subsequent to the one of Horus predicted by Crowley; the Choronzon Club, a Thelemic dissident filiation, founded in 1931 by Cecil Frederick Russell, who stayed in the Abbey of Thelema in Cefalù,³¹ where he split with Crowley in 1921; and the Typhonian Current of the O.T.O. established by Kenneth Grant,³² one of the most important promoters of Crowley’s thought, who accepted as sacred books (besides Crowley’s basic *Book of the Law*) the *Liber Pannae Praenumbra* and *Liber Oblitorium*. These books were received in Ohio through a form of channeling by Maggie Crosby, known as Soror Andahadna, who was the leader of an independent Thelemic body, and who followed Charles Stansfeld Jones’s idea of an Aeon of Maat. The books were considered as prescriptive also for the French-Haitian current of Bertiaux’s O.T.O. in parallel with a *Liber Meon*, received by Bertiaux himself.

On September 30, 1978, Michael Bertiaux accepted Nevio Viola in his O.T.O., appointing him “Grand Master of the Ordre du Temple d’Orient of Italy and the Two Sicilies, the Kingdom of Corsica, Sardinia and Italian Switzerland.” On 7th June 1982, Viola was given a patent by Manuel Lamparter (appointed by Bertiaux as his successor in the O.T.O.A., and who in 1988 renounced his post in favor of the Californian Courtney Willis). Through this patent—whose formal validity has been questioned by Peter König³³—Viola became the representative of the O.T.O.A. in Italy. Based on these contacts, the French-Haitian O.T.O. and the O.T.O.A. started to become active in Italy, consolidated also by the foundation of the movement Corrente 93-Società Pansophica per

la Nuova Era (Current 93-Pansophic Society for the New Age), whose main locations were in Trieste (with the review *Abraxas*), in Locri (*Sixtrum*, edited by Aurelio Palmieri) and in Bergamo (*Studi Iniziatici*, edited by Giuseppe Bonaita).

As the Italian activities of Nevio Viola's O.T.O. started in Trieste, Roberto Negrini's Ordine Solare led its action towards the reactivation of the "eggregoric" foundations of O.T.O.'s Italian branch, that are said to have been started by Aleister Crowley himself in 1920, in Cefalù. Plainly, in Negrini's words, this is the "creation of some Power-Zones of contact with Extradimensional Beings symbolically defined as Extraterrestrials."³⁴ (The creation of these "Power-Zones" is an important topic in Negrini's activity, and the main operations of this kind have been performed by him in Cefalù, Ife (Nigeria), Cairo, "besides other historical and geographical places, which at the moment we prefer to keep secret"³⁵).

The reference to Trieste, a city clearly rich in Crowleyan movements, gives us the opportunity to mention another series of autonomous filiations of the "Current 93," starting—a further coincidence—just in the same period Viola joined the O.T.O. in the Bertiaux line. Between winter 1978 and March 1979, in fact, a number of initiatory Thelemic organizations, not linked to the O.T.O. as far as succession claims are concerned, were founded around the figure of Frank Giano Ripel (the pseudonym of one Gianfranco Perilli), who claimed to be Crowley's reincarnation as well as the Antichrist. Ripel is the author of various books on these subjects,³⁶ that he also tried to circulate abroad, and the founder of a magic-sexual doctrinal system,

inspired by H.P. Lovecraft. This system includes not only "Qabalah, Hermeticism, Taoism, Alchemy, Yoga and pre-Colombian magic" interpreted according to individual circumstances, but also "UFO contactism," New Age and a Draconian cult [or Cult of the Dragon King] (three shared points with Negrini's interests, despite the different views concerning organization and other important topics). The original Ordo Templi Orientis of Aleister Crowley is said to have mutated into the Ordo Rosae Mysticae by Ripel himself. Today, this order has been "put to sleep" but it is linked to eight other initiatory bodies, all officially coordinated by the Orion Association. These bodies are: Crowley's Argenteum Astrum turned into the Ordine della Stella d'Oro (Order of the Golden Star) and an Ordine della Stella di Diamante (Order of the Diamond Star); the Draconian Cult; the Ecclesia Gnostica Spiritualis Universalis; the Confederazione Mondiale dei Centri Ufologici (World Confederation of UFO Centers); the Movimento Integralista Alternativo (Fundamentalist Alternative Movement); Orion University; and a so-called Ordine Orientale Egizio dell'Antico e Primitivo Rito di Memphis e Misraim (Eastern Egyptian Order of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis and Misraim). The latter, a fringe Masonic body, originated through contacts with the famous Italian Martinist and Freemason Francesco Brunelli (1927-1982). Among those interested in Frank G. Ripel's networking, it is worth mentioning Licio Gelli—the notorious Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge P2, deeply involved in Italian political, legal and economic news since the 1970s—who in a letter gave Ripel his "complete positive opinion about your [Ripel's] previous books."³⁷

Returning to Negrini, his move closer to Nevio Viola's O.T.O. was consolidated on 4th September 1983, when Negrini was co-opted by Viola in the O.T.O. and the O.T.O.A., and was entrusted with a VRIL Abbey in Bologna. On 25th September 1988, Nevio Viola—whose O.T.O. had never numbered more than fifteen members, with only half of them active—transferred to Roberto Negrini (from then on called “Frater Tau Moloch”) all his leadership positions and offices, not without changing his mind a few days later, since, on 9th October 1988, he published a “reprimand” that invalidated his previous act. Also related to these incidents was Paolo Fogagnolo of Milan, who, on 16th August 1985, had received an O.T.O.A. patent for Italy from Manuel Lamparter. Fogagnolo is a character in his way unique to the Italian Occultist world, with a CV ranging from his participation in the Lo Muscio column of the Red Brigades, to the Church Rosicruciana Apostolica, the Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua, the O.T.O., and so on. He, however, “put himself to sleep” as far as the O.T.O. is concerned, in 1989.³⁸ But he continued to claim for his Lodge Agape a filiation from the O.T.O.A., within the framework of his activity as founder of the Gruppo Prometeo (Promethean Group) and, more recently, as a member of the Collettivo Chapas (Chapas Collective), a political organization close to the “autonomous social centers” in Milan. At the same time, on April 10, 1989, Roberto Negrini was to publish “the minutes of a judgement and conviction for high treason and sovereign bull of expulsion and excommunication” against Viola. The story, as we see, is rather intricate. As the “affaire” went on, Roberto Negrini considered his position

ratified through an inscription dated March 3, 1989 by Michael Bertiaux on the title page of one of his books³⁹: “To my mystical Brother + only chela in Italy: Lotario Roberto Negrini, the canonical successor of Nevio Viola” Bertiaux does not seem to have ever considered this book inscription as a charter for a “succession,” as later he was to affirm: “I never issued a charter to Mr. Negrini . . . Nevio Viola is my true rep. in Italy.”⁴⁰

Be that as it may be, Nevio Viola re-established his own O.T.O.-Arcana Aeterna which was recognized by Courtney Willis on 8th September 1989. Negrini, on the other hand, even without the support of Viola's ex-members, re-founded the Italian branch of the organization, on 21st June 1989, calling it *Ordo Templi Orientis – Fraternitas Hermetica Luciferiana*, and declaring it to be autonomous from every kind of external approval. It would be impossible to summarize in a few lines the complex and articulate doctrines promoted by Negrini and his organization (an organization which, however, does not seem particularly widespread). Nevertheless, besides the theoretical topics already pointed out, it seems important to underline Negrini's effort towards a cultural dialogue in the field of “border researches,” though often characterized by the re-emerging of rather ambiguous expressions which risk damage to it from the beginning.⁴¹ Negrini's new organization—known for its acrimonious, in particular antichristian, tones—proved to be remarkably open to other occult traditions. This led to the creation—on 1st November 1989—of an *Akkademia Pan-Sophica Alpha Draconis*, and to some recent contacts with the *Fratellanza di Miriam* (Brotherhood of

Miriam), one of the movements originated by the sex magician Giuliano Kremmerz (Ciro Formisano, 1861-1930).⁴² Negrini's organization and the branch of the Brotherhood of Miriam he contacted proclaimed that they share an effort of "inculturation" of the contemporary New Age.⁴³

In conclusion, it seems that the new frontier of the contemporary O.T.O. milieu in Italy lies in this crossing between Crowley's thought and the New Age. This is a feature of Roberto Negrini's O.T.O.-F.H.L.—vividly defined as "magic philosophy and social praxis of the Neopagan Revolution." Negrini now calls forth the "main values of our time, like ethical relativism"⁴⁴ to justify his own approach to the Occult themes, involving in his view "the violent assertion of values like bisexuality"⁴⁵ and "the exploration of new worlds . . . supported also by the correct scientific use of recreational drugs."⁴⁶ All this may persuade the reader that really the world of "new magical movements," may have more surprises in store for us in the future.

(Translated by M. Roberta Cattano)

Notes

¹ See John Symonds, *The Beast 666. The Life of Aleister Crowley* (London: The Pindar Press, 1997).

² The relations between the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light and an almost homonymous organization—the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor—are still not completely well defined. Nevertheless both have played an important role in the diffusion of Occultism in the period between the 19th and the 20th centuries, due to their close relations with the Theosophical Society and to the circulation of some of the

teachings of Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825-1875). About this subject see John Patrick Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph. A Nineteenth-Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian, and Sex Magician* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997). For further discussion, see Joscelyn Godwin, Christian Chanel, and John P. Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor. Initiatic and Historical Documents of an Order of Practical Occultism* (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1995); see also T. Allen Greenfield, *The Story of The Hermetic Brotherhood of Light* (Stockholm—Beverly Hills, CA: Looking Glass Press, 1997).

³ See Helmut Möller and Ellic Howe, *Merlin Peregrinus. Vom Untergrund des Abendlandes* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1986).

⁴ For a view of the Gnostic churches world and in particular of the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica (closely related to the O.T.O.'s history), see Massimo Introvigne, *Il ritorno dello gnosticismo* (Carnago [VA]: SugarCo, 1993): 149-75.

⁵ For an exhaustive approach to the O.T.O. see Massimo Introvigne, *Il cappello del mago. I nuovi movimenti magici dallo spiritismo al satanismo* (Milano: SugarCo, 1990), 267-91; for an extensive discussion on the same subject see also Peter-Robert König, *Das OTO-Phaenomen* (München: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Religions und Weltanschauungsfragen, 1994). König has recently denied that Kellner was ever a member of O.T.O. proper. He argues that O.T.O. started with Reuss (see "Carl Kellner: Never a member of any O.T.O.," <http://www.freespeech.org/koenig/ck.htm>).

A newly published book provides all of Reuss's and Crowley's O.T.O. rituals, with many other important documents related: see A. R. Naylor (ed.), *O.T.O. Rituals and Sex Magick by Theodor Reuss & Aleister Crowley* (Thame: I-H-O Books, 1999).

⁶ See Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn: An Encyclopedia of Practical Occultism*, 4 vols. (Chicago: Aries Press, 1937-1940).

⁷ In customary listings of the O.T.O.'s famous members there are usually the names of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), the founder of the Anthroposophical Society, and of Franz Hartmann (1838-1912), who is linked to the history of German Occultism and of the Theosophical Society. He was invited to the Society's headquarters at Adyar, India,

where he lived during the furor over Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's (1831-1891) alleged miracle working. Later, Hartmann founded the Esoteric Order of the Rosy-Cross. However, there is no doubt that Rudolf Steiner agreed to be co-opted by Reuss into more than one "fringe-masonry"; nevertheless, recent documents made available by his heirs prove, as well as in Hartmann's case, that he had never agreed to join the Ordo Templi Orientis (for a discussion see Peter-Robert König, *Der Grosse Theodor-Reuss-Reader* [München: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Religions und Weltanschauungsfragen, 1997]: 96-112).

⁸ An Ordo Templi Orientis affiliation charter, given by Theodor Reuss to Harvey Spencer Lewis, has been published by Robert Vanloo, *Les Rose-Croix du Nouveau Monde. Aux sources du rosicrucianisme moderne* (Paris: Claire Vigne, 1996): 145-55 and tav. VII. A.M.O.R.C. does not question the authenticity of this document, but underlines its merely honorary character, without any practical consequence. On the contrary, A.M.O.R.C. questions the authenticity of other documentary evidences about the alleged relationship between Lewis and the O.T.O., and in particular of the version of the *American Pronunziamento* dated February 1915, kept in the New York Public Library as it appears in *ibid.*: 244 (see also: 153). A.M.O.R.C. Supreme Grand Lodge has an original of this document (a copy is in my archive) where the O.T.O. is not mentioned (see A.M.O.R.C. communication to the author, 11th March 1998). Currently, as a ten-page letter from A.M.O.R.C. to the author, dated 23rd February 1999, states, the A.M.O.R.C. is examining in its archive the letters existing between H. Spencer Lewis and Theodor Reuss, for the period between December 1920 to May 1922. Its aim is to find out the context in which A.M.O.R.C.-O.T.O. relationships have taken place, what their purposes was, and the corresponding results. This archive research will hopefully be conducted at a later stage. In the present context all that is needed is an outline of the question, which maybe will shed light upon some inaccuracies that a number of scholars have run into up to now.

⁹ For a historical and bibliographical outline of these figures and their organizations, see Introvigne, *Il cappello del mago. I nuovi movimenti magici dallo spiritismo al satanismo*.

¹⁰ There is, on the other hand, evidence to the contrary like Aleister Crowley's letter to Charles Stansfeld Jones dated Sun in Capricorn, Anno XX (Dec. 1924 - Jan. 1925), where

the former states: "In the O.H.O.'s [Reuss] last letter to me he invited me to become his successor as O.H.O. and Frater Superior." From the "History of Ordo Templi Orientis" published on the official website of the present O.T.O. (<http://otohq.org/oto/history.html>), by Sabazius X° (David Scriven, current O.T.O. National Grand Master General for the United States of America) and AMT IX° we learn that "Reuss's letter designating Crowley his successor as O.H.O. has not been found, but no credible documentation has surfaced which would indicate that Reuss ever designated any alternative successor."

¹¹ The recent publication (*Politica Romana*, 4/1997: 296) of a note of the Italian Political Police Division (7th April 1930 - VIII° n° 500/7131) would suggest the O.T.O. affiliation of the Italian esoterist Julius Evola (1898-1974). But even if we consider his attraction for Crowley, the note—written in genuine intelligence style—does not seem, in my opinion, conclusive.

¹² This person has requested that his name not be revealed.

¹³ See P.-R. König, "Breve Storia dell'Ordo Templi Orientis," *Primordia*, supplement to n° IX ("Speciale O.T.O."), February 1997: 3-10 (9-10).

¹⁴ Recently on the web (<http://www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/doc.htm>), a handwritten document has appeared attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Crowley, who is said to have appointed Kenneth Grant as his real successor as leader of the O.T.O. This document has triggered a host of theories in favor of or against its authenticity. As far as we know, Kenneth Grant himself has never advanced any claim based on the content of the document up to today (even after its publication). Since the scholar should pay some attention to it, here its transcription is quoted: "Ex nemore inferiori [Netherwood] Aretae Porti Novi [Hastings] An Ixxi, Sun in Scorpio, Moon in Capricorn [18th/19th November 1947], Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law, Knowing my death is near, and knowing that my loyal Frater Saturnus, [Karl Germer] Grand Secretary General of the O.T.O. is capable only of the Office of Custodian, I hereby appoint Frater Aussik 400 [Kenneth Grant] as my successor as Outer Head of the Ordo Templi Orientis, upon whose acceptance of the X°, Frater Saturnus is to surrender any of my personal papers and belongings that he has Custody of, to Frater

Aussik. May Aussik fulfil his part in the Great Work. Love is the law, love under will. Baphomet 729 [Aleister Crowley] X° O.T.O.”

¹⁵ For this view of the real O.T.O. succession of the Societas Ordo Templi Orientis (S.O.T.O.) and of Marcelo Ramos Motta, who with the name Parzival X° and XI° claimed the title of Frater Superior O.T.O., and who at a certain stage—on 14th July 1984—“expelled” (it is difficult to say on which grounds) McMurtry from the O.T.O., see <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~realoto/otos.html>.

¹⁶ The international data and statistics that follow here have been tabulated by me following an exchange of letters with Bill Heidrick, O.T.O. Treasurer General, and Hymenaeus Beta—the present O.H.O. of the O.T.O.—during 1997, 1998, and 1999.

¹⁷ See Alberto Moscato, *Ars Gratia Artis. Il libro dell'Arte Regale. Dall'O.T.O. di Aleister Crowley alla Loggia di Khem dell'O.T.O. italiano* (Foggia: Bastogi, 1998).

¹⁸ According to Massimo Mantovani's letters to the author, 1997-1999.

¹⁹ <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/1418>.

²⁰ These accounts of the Italian situation are also based on information given to the author by Roberto Tifi, O.T.O. Italian Secretary (letters dated 14th, 17th e 20th February 1997; 7th and 10th January 1998), and by Jean-Matthieu Kleemann, Camp Master of the Teth Camp (letters dated 22nd, 25th and 27th January 1999).

²¹ About the Illuminati Order see P.-R. König, “Ordo Illuminatorum: World League of Illuminati,” *Nuit-Isis* (Oxford), 1/7 (1989): 19-21.

²² See M. Introvigne, *Il cappello del mago. I nuovi movimenti magici dallo spiritismo al satanismo*, 173-75.

²³ See the facsimile in P.-R. König, *Materialien zum OTO* (München: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Religions und Weltanschauungsfragen, 1994), 141-42.

²⁴ S.O.T.V.L., *Note informative sull'Ordine*, s.d., 5.

²⁵ <http://www.net-one.it/sotvl/storia.htm> (“Cenni sulla

struttura, sul sistema e sui programmi del Sovrano Ordine del Tempio della Via della Luce”).

²⁶ Roberto Negrini's letter to the author, 24th March 1997.

²⁷ R. Negrini, “Ordo Templi Orientis. Filosofia magica e prassi sociale della Rivoluzione neopagana,” *Primordia*, supplement of n° IX (“Speciale O.T.O.”), February 1997: 11-28 (23).

²⁸ M. Introvigne, *Il cappello del mago. I nuovi movimenti magici dallo spiritismo al satanismo*, 131.

²⁹ For an overview of these numerous activities, see M. Introvigne, *Il ritorno dello gnosticismo*, 190-95.

³⁰ See <http://www.qblb.org>.

³¹ On Crowley in Cefalù (1920-1923), see PierLuigi Zoccatelli (ed.), *Aleister Crowley. Un mago a Cefalù* (Roma: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1998), with documents and pictures published for the first time.

³² Kenneth Grant's Typhonian current is echoed in Italy by the position of the neuropsychiatrist Giuseppe Jerace in Polistena (Reggio Calabria), founder of the Società Psicofisica di Studi Metapsicologici [Psychophysical Society of Metapsychological Studies]; see Giuseppe M. S. Jerace, “Il Grimorio Grantiano (Le Trilogie Typhoniane e la Bibliografia Magica del Nuovo Eone),” *Primordia*, supplement to n° IX (“Speciale O.T.O.”), February 1997: 29-33.

³³ See P.-R. König, *Das OTO-Phaenomen*, op. cit.: 256, where the author also gives a chronology of Nevio Viola's initiations.

³⁴ Akkademia Pan-Sophica Alpha-Draconis, *L'Ordo Templi Orientis. Antecedenti e sviluppi storici del ramo italiano dell'antica fratellanza dei templari d'Oriente. Cefalù-Parigi-Haiti-Chicago-Trieste-Bologna. Nascita e sovranità internazionale della filiazione O.T.O. luciferiana*, leaflet, Perugia, September 1995: 8.

³⁵ R. Negrini, *O.T.O.-F.H.L. 1981-1991. Attivazione di Zone-Potere*, letter to the author of 9th February 1997.

³⁶ See, for instance (the bibliography is not complete), Frank G. Ripel, *La magia rossa* (Roma: Hermes, 1985); F. G. Ripel, *La magia di Atlantide. Sautheneron: la fonte del*

Necronomicon (Roma: Hermes, 1985); F. G. Ripel, *La magia stellare. Il vero Necronomicon* (Roma: Hermes, 1986); F. G. Ripel, *La magia della stella d'oro*, 3 vols. (Roma: Hermes, 1988-1989); F. G. Ripel, *Magia della stella di diamante* (Roma: Hermes, 1996); F. G. Ripel, *I libri proibiti* (Roma: Hermes, 1997); and F. G. Ripel, *Il Ritorno degli Dei* (Roma: Hermes, 1998). See <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/6095>.

³⁷ Licio Gelli's letter to Gianfranco Perilli, 28th June 1989 (private archive).

³⁸ Paolo Fogagnolo's letter to Negrini, 29th May 1989: "We are currently in sleep in all O.T.O.I. [O.T.O. Italicus] degrees; [... in case...] we will ask to be awakened inside your Order and to be re-admitted to the degrees befitting us."

³⁹ The book is Michael Bertiaux, *Voudon Gnostic Workbook*, New York: Magickal Childe, 1988.

⁴⁰ M. Bertiaux, letter of 4th February 1990.

⁴¹ In the book we are referring to, not free from factual mistakes, this statement may suffice: "If Satanism is certainly too much for conformist Christians, it is absolutely not enough to those which have developed a magical view of History, mankind and the universe" (R. Negrini, *Il ritorno del Dio cornuto. Miti e realtà del satanismo*, leaflet, Perugia: Akkademia Pan-Sophica Alpha-Draconis, s.d.: 20).

⁴² On this subject, see my "Gli Arcana Arcanorum e la magia trasmutatoria: un'indagine," a paper read at CESNUR's 12th International Conference, "Religious and Spiritual Minorities: Towards the 21st Century," Torino, September 10-12, 1998 (unpublished).

⁴³ For a view of the New Age issue in Negrini's O.T.O. line, see R. Negrini, "Ordo Templi Orientis. Filosofia magica e prassi sociale della Rivoluzione neopagana": 19; Akkademia Pan-Sophica Alpha-Draconis, "La stella e il serpente. Matrimonio tra cielo e inferno," *Ars Regia* IV (17), March-April 1994; and the recent publication in collaboration with the Fratellanza di Miriam: AA. VV., *Tradizioni e culti pagani di Primavera. Risveglio della coscienza panica nel nuovo millennio* (Palo Del Colle (BA): Editrice Miriamica, 1996).

⁴⁴ R. Negrini, "Ordo Templi Orientis. Filosofia magica e prassi sociale della Rivoluzione neopagana": 27.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 24.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: 25.

* * * * *

Book Reviews

Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, The Hindu-Aryan Myth, And Neo-Nazism. By Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. New York: New York University Press, 1998. Pp. 269 with bibliographical references, index and illustrations. ISBN 0-8147-3110-4. \$24.95.

A dust-jacket blurb by Dr. Robert Ellwood states that this "(d)isturbing and important book. . . deserves to be widely read and pondered." Sure does. Re-reading it from time to time would even prove rewarding if only to recognize how far irrational behavior can go when fueled by misguided fanaticism. A minor league mischief-maker like Savitri Devi, born Maximiani Portas on 30 September 1905 at Lyon, France, of Anglo-Greek parentage was indeed a woman with a cause throughout her life. She pursued that cause mostly at the expense of others' misperceptions, not to mention her own, namely, the Aryan ideal espoused by Adolf Hitler, a man she never met. Furthermore, she sought to glorify the German nation and its people through her propagandistic efforts especially after the fall of the Third Reich in a series of books devoted to the exegesis and renewal of German National Socialist philosophy not only in accord with the official doctrine set out by Alfred Rosenberg but also as she interpreted its tenets. That in itself is not a particularly noteworthy endeavor considering the number of apologists for twentieth century dictators who have managed to find their way

into print. Rather it is the fascinating story of what led her to arrive at her conclusions and how she gathered round her a train of followers on three continents who were able to use her while she used them that illustrates the character and ability of a highly educated and sophisticated personality with alarming insights into esoteric paganism that provide some disturbing truths that continue to echo beyond her death in 1982. Her constant travel; ability to support herself by means of low-level part-time work or to gain the support of others owing to her enthusiasm; her anti-humanitarianism coupled with a willful and delusional misreading of history: all of these things have a certain curious parallel with events in the life of Madame Blavatsky. For instance, in Portas's view, if only the Emperor Constantine had not got in the way of history by declaring Christianity the accepted belief system of the Roman Empire in the 4th century CE, western Europe and its people would have happily continued in ethnic forms of worship. As Oxford Professor Robin Lane Fox observed in his seminal work *Pagans and Christians* in 1986, paganism was a number of cults that ultimately were manipulated by and served the ends of the state. Blavatsky, be it noted, expressed a certain enmity towards Charles II of England in the sense that his reactionary tendencies would have promoted Catholicism in place of Protestantism.

Owing to Maximiani Portas's having been born in France of alien parentage, she was made

aware of revanchist sentiments amongst the Greek people by her father and his friends who continued to debate the unfolding history of that country's independence by noting that like post-World War I Germany, Greece in her view had been betrayed by both Britain and France. That set her on course for a period of Hellenistic studies in Athens, where she became aware that Germans such as the 18th century art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the 19th century architect Leopold von Klenze and archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann were not merely philohellenists but active supporters of a classical tradition which obviously represented the best that Western civilization had to offer.

As a student in Athens in the 1920s, Portas noticed the swastikas that adorned Schliemann's palatial home and his speculations on their possible religious symbolism in linking the ancient Teutonic society in the Königswalde area on the Oder River in Germany to that of the Greek and Vedic Aryan. In that regard, comments made by the Greek ambassador Megasthenes to the court of Chandragupta in third century BCE India in his work *Ta Indika*, of which modern English translations exist, might be considered as well.

By 1926, Maximiani Portas had obtained her MA degree, having taken papers in psychology and logic, ethics and sociology, in Lyon, and thereafter, upon renouncing her French citizenship, returned to Athens in 1928 to spend two years in the study of modern Greek philosophy. One of the major turning points in her life was a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the Lenten season of 1929, when she decided for herself that Christianity was an accumulation of myth and legend in which a Judaic tribal god claimed

unmerited universal dominance and recognition and ultimately rejected such belief in favour of a nature-centered pantheism. Parenthetically, let us note here that Lord Krishna in the *Mahābhārata* made the same claim although he did not state how that was to come about. Maximiani thought she realised how much she had in common with the then nascent National Socialist movement in Germany and wanted to settle there but feared her early French background and eventual adoption of Greek citizenship would arouse suspicion. Instead, she sought to revive Greek nationalism and paganism. When her father died in 1932, she inherited a legacy enabling her to visit India where she hoped to find a modern equivalent of the old Aryan cults of Europe. Brahman India, as she understood it in the 1930s, was to help her to formulate an Aryan racial philosophy during the remaining years of her life.

True, Indic studies were given their greatest impetus by Friedrich von Schlegel in early nineteenth century Germany, but it must be remembered that the Aryan myth had become established dogma throughout European learned society by about 1860, as Dr. Goodrick-Clarke notes, and largely as the result of lectures and books by philologist Max Müller at Oxford and Ernest Renan in France. Even HPB included these ideas in *The Secret Doctrine*, while the swastika was incorporated into the Theosophical Society's seal from 1881.

Except for a brief sojourn in France in 1934 in academic pursuit of her doctorate, Portas returned to India in 1935, where she briefly settled at Tagore's ashram in Shantiniketan at Bolpur in Bengal. While teaching at Mathura in 1936, she adopted the Hindu name Savitri Devi, a female solar deity to whom morning prayers

are still offered. From early 1937, Savitri Devi, as we shall now call her, convinced the president of the Hindu Sabha (or Mission) in Calcutta that she should be engaged as a lecturer in behalf of the Aryan spirit against the Judaeo-Christian civilisation, and during her subsequent tours praised Hitler as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the preserver of cosmic order. At the same time, she sought to encourage a Hindu populism whereby a relaxation of the caste system with its rights and privileges might be attained. Perhaps present-day social tensions in India owe still somewhat to that period of the “Hindutva” agenda.

A Greek friend in Calcutta introduced Savitri Devi to Asit Krishna Mukherji in early January 1938. Mukherji had published a pro-German magazine with the support of the German Consulate in Calcutta until its suppression by the British government, and naturally she enlisted his enthusiastic support of her aims even to the point of marrying in June 1940 so that she might obtain a British passport and return to Europe to work for German National Socialism. That avenue was closed on 19 June 1940 when Italy declared war on the Allies so that she remained in India for the duration of the war.

If life is indeed a series of relationships, it certainly presented both Savitri Devi and her husband numerous opportunities during the war years to spy for and propagandise on behalf of the Japanese, at least until she was safely able to depart for Europe in November 1945, leaving Mukherji to practice as an astrologer owing to lack of further journalistic prospects in view of his wartime sympathies. Savitri Devi had begun work on the Egyptian pharaoh Akhnaton in 1942, which she had published by the Theo-

sophical Society in London in 1947 as *A Son of God*, which Dr. Goodrick-Clarke characterises as idealistic and nebulous in tone and “devoid of priorities,...(n)o guide for human conduct whatsoever in a complex world” (103) despite the author’s hope that it would gain a sympathetic readership.

With the help of a friend, Savitri Devi became wardrobe mistress of a touring theatrical company long enough to provide funds to enter Germany on 15 June 1948 on the Nord-Express from Stockholm. In any event she distributed Neo-Nazi tracts in food parcels to starving civilians until she was apprehended by British authorities and imprisoned for a time before being discharged on 18 August 1949 and expelled from the British zone for five years due to the petition sent by her husband for her release and deportation to India. Having sought martyrdom, she only shared the experiences of former concentration camp overseers whom she professed to admire.

Between 1949 and 1953, Savitri Devi traveled between France, England and Greece, always with the intention of returning to Germany, which she did by means of a Greek passport obtained in her maiden name, arriving in Austria in late April 1953 in the final stage of a pilgrimage of sorts. She made her way to the Westphalian forest where she reached the sandstone rocks of the Externsteine and the Tomb Rock containing a hollowed-out place similar to a stone coffin, where she lay chanting Sanskrit invocations to Lord Shiva followed by “Heil Hitler!” As her money began to run out, she returned overland to New Delhi arriving on 30 July 1957, having meanwhile lingered in the Middle

East—Egypt and Syria—visiting with ex-leaders of the Third Reich.

In March 1960, Savitri Devi's mother died in Lyon, so she returned to France via Spain. The convention of fascist and socialist leaders convoked by Sir Oswald Mosley in Venice in March 1962 saw Savitri Devi in attendance hoping to promote a revival of fascism in the postwar era. Subsequently, through various short-term teaching jobs, she existed on the margin of society until she reached retirement age in 1971, when a number of supporters provided her airfare from Paris to Bombay on 23 June 1971. Afterwards, she continued to write books with a racial bias of history.

Aryan supremacy, anti-Semitism, animal rights, a biocentric view of life—all of these things have found their way into occult, neopagan, New Age and even ecological groups. Behind most of these ideas lie strong antihumanist and romantic irrational sentiments such as tax-penalties for reckless breeding, denial of aid to the needy, the atom bomb as a destructive yet liberating solution to over-population. Such ideas find parallels in social Darwinism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which re-occur later occasionally in calls for “back-to-the-land” movements, healthful rural life and eugenics.

Savitri Devi's life came to an end on Friday 22 October 1982 at the cottage of a friend (who incidentally did not share most of her views) in the Essex village of Sible Heddingham in England, just as she was about to embark on a lecture tour of America sponsored by a racist group. In spite of her frail condition, she had hoped that her harsh voice would yet sound a message of both hate and warning in the New World, but that was to be denied.

In this reviewer's experience, people of similar notions held by Savitri Devi were from time to time encountered in India, although their more irrationally-conceived ideas about Hinduism were usually dispelled after a short stay, as they were forced to come to terms with the reality of daily existence and logistics of survival there. If Westerners, especially the young, learnt anything in India, one might suggest that it was compassion in the broadest sense of the term and possibly the realisation that instead of seeking yet another guru-cum-messiah what one really seeks is a change in the hearts of all men.

Robert Boyd

* * *

“Okkultismus und Phantastik. Eine Studie zu ihrem Verhältnis am Beispiel der Helena Petrovna Blavatsky” [“Occultism and Phantastical Thinking. A study in its relationship following the example of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky”]. By Marco Frenschkowski. In *Das schwarze Geheimnis. Magazin zur unheimlich-phantastischen Literatur*, Nr. 4 (March 1999): 53-104.

Marco Frenschkowski, a learned Protestant theologian and editor of the above-mentioned journal, presents an essay which has as its focus the intrusion of fictional and non-fictional literature in the works of H.P. Blavatsky, particularly with reference to the question:

“Was Blavatsky able to distinguish between occult phenomena and literal inventions?”

Dr. Frenschkowski begins with a rather long (necessary for German readers) introduction into the life of Blavatsky, which is not in all parts sufficiently critical. In the following chapter on Blavatsky as an author of belletristic works he claims *The Secret Doctrine* to be a “fictional history of the world” (80). In addition to her extensive literary production is her knowledge of phantasmic literature. He points out her knowledge of Edward Bellamy, Henry Rider Haggard, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Victor Hugo, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson and some other writers. But he especially stresses the overwhelming importance of the novels of Edward Bulwer-Lytton to her own literary output in three theses:

1. Bulwer-Lytton’s ‘white magus’ is transformed into H.P.B.’s masters (91).

2. The conception of magic (in particular, of psychical ‘phenomena’) as an effect of imagination, will and initiation often corresponds in great detail between the two authors (94).

3. The sources of Blavatsky are, he believes, in concert with Bulwer-Lytton’s: *[e]x oriente lux, i.e.*, the wisdom of India, Tibet, and Egypt (95).

Frenschkowski is in my opinion correct in supposing an influence of Bulwer-Lytton on Blavatsky, but his genetic theory seems one-dimensional. Other possible sources, of which he certainly is familiar, are not discussed intensively.

Following Frenschkowski, the boundary between fictional literature and occult theories in Blavatsky’s work is not fixed, *e.g.* Blavatsky accepts literary inventions as occult realities or at least as hints of occult phenomena. He regards this process in mainly but not totally a critical manner because phantastical literature transcends in his opinion the boundaries of “reality.” Last but not least Frenschkowski classifies the *corpus* of Blavatsky’s works as primarily fictional, including *The Secret Doctrine*. One crucial problem, nevertheless, remains unsolved: the internal and external view on Blavatsky’s writings go asunder. How did Blavatsky herself try to differentiate between fiction and reality in the works which are in her perspective non-fictional (including *The Secret Doctrine*)?

Helmut Zander

* * * * *

Literary Notes

Architronic

Architronic, The Electronic Journal Of Architecture, has recently published a theme issue entitled "Architecture and Theosophy" and dealing specifically with the impact of Theosophy on twentieth-century architectural theory and design, mainly in the Netherlands. This issue is volume 8, number 1 (January 1999) and may be accessed free of charge on the World Wide Web at the following URL:

<http://www.saed.kent.edu/Architronic/v8n1/>

Guest-edited by Susan R. Henderson of Syracuse University, the contents of this issue are:

"Introduction" (Susan R. Henderson);

"J.L.M. Lauweriks And K.P.C. De Bazel: Architecture And Theosophy" (Susan R. Henderson);

"Abstraction And Theosophy: Social Housing In Rotterdam, The Netherlands" (Ken Lambla);

"The Van Der Leeuw House: Theosophical Connections With Early Modern Architecture" (Graham Livesey);

"A Survey Of Surviving Buildings Of The

Krotona Colony In Hollywood" (Alfred Willis).

Alfred Willis

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* * *

Mark Bevir

Mark Bevir, whose article "The West Turns Eastward: Madame Blavatsky and the Transformation of the Occult Tradition," appeared in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* in 1994 (vol. 62: 747-67), has two additional articles on a Theosophical subject, this time focusing on Annie Besant. The first, "In Opposition to the Raj: Annie Besant and the Dialectic of Empire," appeared in *History of Political Thought* 19 (1998): 61-77 and is abstracted as follows:

When Annie Besant landed in India she disavowed all political intent, but she soon became a militant nationalist—the only western woman ever elected President of Congress. This essay explains her entry into poli-

tics by tracing the way her secular and socialist heritage informed her intellectual challenge to the ruling discourse of the Raj. In Britain, her theosophy acted as an alternative religious discourse combining aspects of a secularist critique of Christianity with a defence of eastern religions. In India, it acted as a religious and social discourse that asserted the legitimacy, even superiority, of the indigenous culture. More generally, a study of Besant's opposition to the Raj illuminates the logic of a view of India shared by many nationalists. It shows how this view of India arose in dialectical opposition to the legitimating discourse of empire.

The second article, "Annie Besant's Quest for Truth: Christianity, Secularism, and New Age Thought," appeared in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 50 (1999: 62-93) and is abstracted as follows:

This essay examines the intellectual coherence of Annie Besant's life in such a way as to explore the rise of New Age thought in its relation to the Victorian crisis of faith. Scholars typically present Besant's life in terms of a series of commitments to incompatible movements, notably secularism, socialism, and theosophy. They explain her involvement in these movements by reference to her emotional needs, not to beliefs she held for reasons that made sense to her. In contrast, this essay suggests her life was a quest for truth, where the requirements she placed on the truth arose from her early break with Christianity, and where her social situation placed constraints on the sorts of movements through which she might pursue her quest. From this perspective, New Age thought appears as an intelligible response to the same crisis of faith that underlay much Victorian secularism.

Mr. Bevir is a faculty member of the Department of Politics, The University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU.

James Santucci

* * *

The Works and Influence of H.P. Blavatsky

The Edmonton Theosophical Society (Canada) recently published papers presented at its Conference, "The Works and Influence of H.P. Blavatsky, A Forum for Presentations and Open Dialogue," held on July 3-5, 1998. The quality of the papers is uniformly high, and it deserves to be included in all Theosophical libraries. The contents of the publication are as follows:

Sharon Ormerod, "Active Theosophy: The Meditation Diagram of H.P. Blavatsky"

David Reigle, "The Secret Doctrine: Original Genesis and the Wisdom Tradition"

Joan Sutcliffe, "HPB Library"

Anna Lemkow, "HPB's Visionary Presentations with Special Reference to Science and to Today's Societal Dilemma"

Michael Gomes, "Editing HPB"¹

New Books

John Patrick Deveney, "H.P. Blavatsky as a 'Spirit Painter'"

Dara Eklund, "Theosophy's Appeal for Harmony with Nature"

Robert Bruce MacDonald, "H.P.B.'s Legacy to the 20th Century"

Ted G. Davy, "'A Material Body Which Suffocates the Soul': H.P. Blavatsky's Attitude to Ritual"

Yuri Gorbunov, "H.P. Blavatsky and Russia"

Jerry Hejka-Ekins, "The Theosophy of William Butler Yeats"

Nancy Reigle, "The Voice of the Silence: Bringing the Heart Doctrine to the West"

The collection is published by the Edmonton Theosophical Society (P.O. Box 4587, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 5G4). Pictures of the presenters and attendees are also included. The bibliographical information is as follows:

The Works and Influence of H.P. Blavatsky: Conference Papers, July 3 - 5 1998. Edmonton: Edmonton Theosophical Society, 1999 (March), pp. vii + 121. ISBN 0-9681602-2-0. US\$16.00 + \$3.00 postage (U.S. and overseas), Can\$19.00 + \$3.00 (Canada). For multiple copies the postage is adjusted accordingly.

James Santucci

* * *

Just published are two books that I am sure will be of great interest to historians. The first, a biography of Walter Gorn Old (1864–1929), comes from England and is the product of research by Kim Farnell. Entitled *The Astral Tramp: A Biography of the Astrologer Sepharial* (London: Ascella Publications, 1998, ISBN 1-898503-88-5), the book is about the man who, in the words of Ms Farnell, came within a hair's breadth of going down in history as one of the most famous figures of the period—but failed. Today he is only remembered amongst those who have a special interest in the period and the characters who played their roles therein (xiv).

Old had a relationship with the Theosophical Society as had his brothers Sydney and Bernard. He engaged in correspondence with Madame Blavatsky in 1887, belonged to her inner circle and was Vice President of the Blavatsky Lodge. It was Old who was present when Blavatsky died on May 8, 1891.

There is much more to his life than this, of course, and from what I have read so far, the book provides a fascinating account of this Old and his times.

Information on the book is provided by Ascella Publications (54 Sprules Road, Brockley, London SE4 2NN, U.K. The Internet address is <http://www.astrology-world.com>.

The second book comes from Wizards Bookshelf and is a collection of David Reigle's research over the past twenty years. Mr. Reigle has been especially interested in locating the

source of the “Book of Dzyan” and so has carried on extended research in Tibetan and Sanskrit sources. The product of that search is contained in this book, *Blavatsky’s Secret Books: Twenty Years’ Research*. Co-authored with Nancy Reigle, it is published in 1999 by Wizards Bookshelf (P.O. Box 6600, San Diego, CA 92106). The ISBN number is 0-913510-76-9 and the price for this hardcover edition is US\$15.00. The length of the book is 181 pages.

James Santucci

* * *

“Back to Blavatsky”

The journal *Language & Communication* contains a most interesting article co-authored by Christopher M. Hutton of the University of Hong Kong and John E. Joseph of the University of Edinburgh. Entitled “Back to Blavatsky: the impact of theosophy on modern linguistics” (vol. 18 [1998]: 181-204), the authors attempt to revisit the history of linguistics by suggesting that

the history of linguistics and of linguistic ideas needs to be researched without the prior imposition of a sense of progress (Whig history), but also without simply slaying the disciplinary fathers (204).

Part of that accepted history includes William Jones, Franz Bopp, Ferdinand de Saussure: the first two standing “for historical order, for continuity and the reconstruction of lost unities (181),” in other words providing the origins of historical or comparative linguistics beginning

with Jones’ discovery of an underlying connection of Sanskrit with other Indo-European languages; the latter emphasizing that “we live now in our speech communities,” and who helped to establish the methodology of studying languages in their synchronic setting.

The involvement of Theosophy or any other non-mainstream movement is not emphasized in mainstream histories, so the authors attempt to offer an alternative history of modern linguistics by suggesting that since many linguists have had Theosophical connections, the Theosophical involvement with linguistics should not be ignored. The authors are to be commended for recognizing this connection and forgiven for committing the occasional error or exhibiting an obvious ignorance of Theosophical organization or literature. Thus, the continual misspelling of Joscelyn Godwin’s name (spelled as Godwyn) and the innocent observation of their discovery that John Algeo is the President of the Theosophical Society in America (“We had had no idea that he was its current president [182, note]”), or that the T.S. was founded in 1975 (an obvious misprint found in note 2). After all, the authors are linguists writing for linguists and language specialists and not Theosophists.

Among the prominent names mentioned is Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941), the advocate of linguistic relativism popularly known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. His connection to the Theosophical Society is never mentioned in standard accounts, but it does help to explain some puzzling observations and opinions that do not fit modern, scientific perspectives: unpublished manuscripts in the Whorf archives at Yale entitled “Ancient America and the Evolution of the Coming Race,” and “Why I Have

Discarded Evolution,” both influenced by *The Secret Doctrine*. The authors contend that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, may have had its origin from two sources—the “magic key” (language exerts “a positive, formative influence on thought”) and “metaphysical garbage” (language also “exerts a negative, deforming influence on thought”), both of which are first suggested and examined at length in J.E. Joseph’s “The immediate sources of the ‘Sapir-Whorf hypothesis,’” appearing in *Historiographia Linguistica* 23: 365-404. It is quite possible that these sources are discoverable not only in non-Theosophical sources but also in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 269 and 307), an important point that Hutton and Joseph make given Whorf’s Theosophical connections (196-97).

There is much more contained in the article that is of great interest. On page 188, for instance, there is this statement:

Theosophy can be understood as part of Orientalism, and can be seen as the particular institutionalization outside universities of a body of texts and a set of interpretive techniques. Alternatively one could see Orientalist scholarship as the academic branch of the wider phenomenon, Theosophy. What about the contemporary New Age movement? Should it count as a form of theosophy? Given that the periodical *New Age*, edited by A.R. Orage from May 1907, published writers such as Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, John Middleton Murray and Herbert Read. . . what should one make of the links between literary modernism and theosophy?

The possible connection of Theosophy with a variety of “isms” (such as Monism, modernism, primitivism, vitalism, occultism, esotericism,

fascism, socialism, Orientalism, vegetarianism: p. 189) suggest a vast and complex arena of research that would shed considerable light on the times. Perhaps too, the linguist’s search for “hidden patterns and concealed categories” or “a quasi-mystical quest for restoration (in the case of reconstruction and etymology)” is similar and reflective of the Theosophical quest for the origins and meaning of the Hidden Wisdom.

Prominent names such as Friedrich Max Müller, Paul Oltramare, Émile-Louis Burnouf (the younger brother of Eugène Burnouf), Max Ferdinand Sebalt von Werth, Heinz Kloss, and Alfred Korzybski all make for a fascinating and revealing account of the intellectual history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

James Santucci

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Note

¹ Mr. Gomes announced that plans were being made to bring out a color facsimile edition of the Mahatma letters in two volumes and suggested a Festschrift be presented to the former editor of *The Canadian Theosophist*, Ted Davy, on his seventy-fifth birthday in 2001. I sincerely hope that both projects will be brought to a successful conclusion.

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY: OCCASIONAL PAPERS

(ISBN 1-883279-00-3)

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