

WESTERN ESOTERICISM

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on Western Esotericism
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Editorial Note

The topic for the eighteenth Symposium arranged by the Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History on 15–17 August 2007 in Turku, Finland was Western Esotericism. In our Call for Papers, we described the topic thus: ‘In the context of comparative religion, the concept of “esotericism” is usually connected with a specifically Western tradition (“Western esotericism”). In that, it is closely connected with “hermeticism” in the wide meaning of the word. As such, the concept of “esotericism” includes a multiplicity of traditions and lines of thought within Western culture, from antiquity and the renaissance up to modern times. The concept of esotericism is here used to signify hidden knowledge which is accessible only to those who have been initiated, i.e. so called privileged information. It is then a question of a kind of knowledge, and a way of accessing knowledge, in the sense of a questing for the essence or the shape of the world (*gnosis, gnoseology*) which is different from questions of the structure and functioning of the world (*episteme, epistemology*).’

The topic of Western Esotericism corresponds to the aim of the Donner Institute as defined by the donors Uno and Olly Donner, that is, the study of mysticism in religion, folk belief, occultism etc. When deciding to arrange a symposium on this topic, we were somewhat worried not to get enough papers—but we were mistaken, as is obvious for each reader of the present volume. We hope to be able to arrange a symposium in the not too distant future on Western Esotericism in the past and present in the Nordic countries, as interest in this theme has increased here, too, during recent years.

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TORE AHLBÄCK

Rudolf Steiner as a Religious Authority

The aim of this paper is to clarify what Rudolf Steiner's followers thought of him at the time of his demise.

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was the founder of one of the more established new religious movements, the Anthroposophical Society. In 1903, Steiner was elected Secretary General for the Berlin section of the Theosophical Society. However, he left the Theosophical Society in 1913 and founded the Anthroposophical Society, which he reorganised in 1924. In 1922, he founded the Christian Community, which is not formally part of the Anthroposophical Society, but it is doctrinally based on Steiner's so-called revelations.

How can we explain the rapid spread of the Anthroposophical Society in Europe and the United States during the inter-war period? Can it be explained by referring to Rudolf Steiner's own authority? What kind of authority did he possess? Did the members of the Anthroposophical Society regard him as a divine being, a prophet, or an ordinary religious teacher? An answer to this question is required in order to understand the emergence and development of the Anthroposophical Society—and so far, the question has not been answered from the stance of comparative religion.

The material for my present paper consists of a selection of the obituaries published in the anthroposophical press after Rudolf Steiner's death on 30 March 1925. Needless to say, obituaries are usually tendentious, and therefore controversial as source material. For my purpose, however, this kind of material is suitable, since I explicitly aim to study the tendency itself. The restraint that followers might be assumed to practice in publishing their opinion on Steiner in commonly available writings is minimised in the type of material chosen here. My primary interest is to find out whether his followers portray Steiner as a human being, or as a divine, or semi-divine being.

Spiritual Leader

In several contexts, Steiner is called ‘spiritual leader’ or ‘Führer’. This does not usually refer to Steiner as leader of the Anthroposophists, but as leader of all of humankind—he is a ‘Menschheitsführer’, even a ‘göttlicher Menschheitsführer’ (Steffen 1925a: 105, 1925b: 147; Karutz 1925a: 157; Uehli 1925: 180; Spörri 1925: 54). As a spiritual leader of humanity, Steiner is ascribed a religious, not a political task: ‘Soon the day will come when people are going to recognise and praise him [Steiner] as their saviour and leader in a time of great spiritual distress’ (Karutz 1925b: 166). But Steiner is also a spiritual leader for individuals; he is ‘our faithful friend and spiritual leader, a spiritual leader and philanthropist with endless love and humbleness’ (Reinhart 1925: 125; Picht 1925: 221).

The Christian Community places Steiner in the Christian history of salvation by describing him as ‘ein Führer zu Christus’ (Beckh 1925: 45). His task as ‘a leader in our time’ is legitimated by a ‘spiritual authority’. Within the Christian Community also, Steiner was a leader for individuals: young people inwardly called upon Steiner as their leader. He represented an ideal according to which an inherently benevolent power can keep human weakness under control (Spörri 1925: 53).

Teacher

Besides the description of Steiner as spiritual leader, the epithet ‘teacher’ is also used. The function as teacher is entirely connected to his followers. Steiner is called ‘our venerable teacher’ and ‘our beloved teacher’ (Steffen 1925c: 113–14; Steffen 1925d: 122). ‘The respected teacher, who gave his life for us by sacrificing himself for the holy work’, was related to his future followers already before meeting them: ‘It was predetermined that they were to encounter their teacher Steiner.’ (Steffen 1925d: 122; Karutz 1925b: 165.) Within the Christian Community, Steiner’s role as teacher of theologians is emphasized: the theologians chose him as teacher since he had divine authority (Spörri 1925: 55).

Founder of the Anthroposophical Society and the Christian Community

Steiner's life's work was the founding of the Anthroposophical movement and the Christian Community, including the doctrines that these are based on.

On the whole, Steiner's written work is depicted as quite remarkable: Steiner's 'hand has written the deepest and the highest things about human fate' (Steffen 1925c: 113). In Steiner's numerous writings there are no contradictions and no errors: Steiner never contradicted himself in his plentiful lectures on various subjects and nobody has been able to prove a true error in the hundred books Steiner wrote. Therefore Steiner never needed to correct or improve his earlier writings; he simply supplemented them. (Rittelmeyer 1925: 37.) The thoughts presented in Steiner's writings originate from himself; he has not borrowed them from other writers or texts. It is wrong to say that Steiner has taken such and such ideas from India. He made all his discoveries himself (Rittelmeyer 1925: 36). This is also attested by Gertrud Spörri: 'Steiner has not borrowed from Gnosis, the Talmud or Indian and Persian scriptures' (Spörri 1925: 54). In reality, a high percentage of Steiner's anthroposophy consists of ideas borrowed from Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who in turn had borrowed them from, among others, Gnosis, the Talmud, Indian and Persian scriptures.

According to Albert Steffen, Steiner's contribution provided his followers with the opportunity to adopt a religious view in a situation where most of them had already left their previous religion behind: 'Without his [Steiner's] spiritual work it would have been impossible for us to finally overcome Agnosticism . . . Steiner made available to us a religiosity, which stands above each sect and which depicts Protestantism and Catholicism in a higher light' (Steffen 1925d: 121). Within the Christian Community, Steiner is said to have conveyed a 'cult from the world of the living word' that is destined to become the 'modern expression for religious life and perception' (Beckh 1925: 49). Here, Steiner's role is, nevertheless, clearly subordinate to the role of Jesus: 'Christ is the only necessary helper of humanity, the great turning point in the history of humanity, a godly Messiah.' But man must save himself (Rittelmeyer 1925: 38), and to be able to do this, man needs to have access to Steiner's anthroposophy, which has emerged thanks to its creator's ability to convey 'messages from godly worlds' and brings gifts 'from the open heavens' (Steffen 1925d: 121; Spörri 1925:

54; Rittelmeyer 1925: 40–1). However, a certain limitation characterises even Steiner: ‘There were naturally many secrets that lay high above his spirit . . . But godly secrets in an immense number were revealed to Steiner’ (Rittelmeyer 1925: 40).

Beholder of the Hidden

Steiner’s alleged ability to see into the hidden was the attribute that primarily separated him from other people. Steiner ‘lived in a vision and he could talk with prophets and saints about their experiences as an equal’ (Steffen 1925c: 114; Rittelmeyer 1925: 38, 41). This visionary ability is given as the explanation to his knowledge of things religious. Steiner could see into the invisible world. He ‘dared construct a theory of knowledge on the angelic realm’. But there was nothing of Swedenborg here, nothing medial. It was a ‘seeing with a clear intellect, but with higher organs’. (Rittelmeyer 1925: 40.) It was important for the Anthroposophists that Steiner should not be perceived as a medium, or a spiritist. Steiner’s clairvoyant ability also explains why his doctrines include ideas found elsewhere, for example, in Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism. He has not borrowed the ideas from others, but they originate in the same source as the contents of Gnosticism or Neo-Platonism. Steiner took his ideas from the Akasha Chronicles, a universal memory which contains all that has happened since the beginning of the world. He could read the Akasha Chronicles and he conveyed more information from these chronicles than any other living person. (Rittelmeyer 1925: 37–40.) Steiner is also said to have had the ability to communicate with the spirits of the dead, which were present even when he lectured (Rittelmeyer 1925: 40).

The Persecuted Steiner

In his obituaries, Steiner is portrayed as a persecuted person: ‘Steiner was pursued in life, humiliated and desecrated’; he ‘was very misjudged and dishonoured’; ‘Steiner was opposed’. One obituary claims that his persecution even took the form of ‘a literary stoning of the dead Steiner’. (Reinhart 1925: 125; Karutz 1925a: 157; Krauss 1925: 166.) The reason given for the persecution of Steiner is that he was ‘the new man’ (Karutz 1925b: 165).

Scientist and Thinker

The expressions for describing Steiner as a great scientist are manifold. Richard Karutz states the following: Steiner ‘not only knew the most distant and special characteristics of all scientific disciplines, but he also introduced specialists to new problems, methods and knowledge within their areas’. Karutz, who himself was an ethnologist, assures his reader that he, thanks to Steiner, reached totally new insights in his own field (Karutz 1925b: 165). Steiner mastered all contemporary knowledge; he had a ‘global education’. In him, knowledge and religion had become one. (Rittelmeyer 1925: 35; Frieling 1925: 58.)

Summary

It has emerged clearly above that Steiner was seen as the great spiritual leader, not only for individuals, but for all of mankind. He appears as a spiritual leader on the basis of a divine task, not because of his own divinity.

His followers also regard Steiner as a teacher. This function is totally uncontroversial. Steiner is the one who possesses knowledge and his followers receive it from him. It seems as if it is precisely his knowledge of hidden things, not Steiner himself, who attracts people to him.

Apart from being seen as a spiritual leader and teacher, Steiner is also described as the founder of a religion. He had given his followers a new faith that they could adopt in a situation where they had distanced themselves from Christianity. As preacher of this new faith—Spiritual Science—Steiner is perceived as being more or less infallible. Even if it *seems* that he has borrowed thoughts from other religious teachings, this is not the case. Using his clairvoyance, Steiner has himself learnt all that his faith includes.

His clairvoyant ability places Steiner on the same level as the greatest preachers of truth that humankind has known. His occult capability is not, however, explained by a god conveying the truth *through* him. He has come to know the truth by being able to see into the concealed—that is, read the Akasha Chronicles—thanks to his own practiced ability to use his spiritual senses. If somebody thinks he finds points originating in other religions and philosophies in the teachings of Steiner, he is mistaken; he *re-sees* these points in Steiner, who has taken them from the Akasha Chronicles, not from other religions or philosophies.

Because of his interest in occult seeing, Rudolf Steiner reminds us of the great occultist C. W. Leadbeater, belonging to the society Steiner originated from, the Theosophical Society.

Steiner is attributed with the ability to communicate with the spirits of the dead—without being a spiritist. He was able to carry out occult exercises that prove that he had the skills that spiritists are thought to have; this without him being one of them.

Steiner is portrayed as a person who was persecuted undeservedly because his spiritual senses made him different from other people, which these could not accept. Being persecuted for such reasons automatically gave Steiner a martyr's crown.

Finally, Steiner is described as an exceptional scientist and a universal genius, who mastered science in its entirety, including the natural sciences. Characteristic of Steiner was that in him, science and religion were united.

Conclusions

My attempt to define what view of him the Anthroposophical writers of Rudolf Steiner's obituaries held, shows that they regarded him as a human being and not as a divine or semi-divine being. This is important when trying to classify what type of religious authority Rudolf Steiner represents.

In his work *Einführung in die Religionsphänomenologie*, Günter Lanczkowski uses the concept 'type of religious authority'—a concept he has borrowed from Joachim Wach—to categorise persons who are characterised by 'possessing religious authority among their fellow men and often also for later generations, which is based on personal or institutional charisma, a gift of grace that they have been endowed with' (Lanczkowski 1978: 84). Lanczkowski notes that the borders between the different types of religious authority that he operates with are shifting, and that in *rare* cases one and the same person can be classified as more than one type. He sees the Buddha as one such exception, whom he classifies as a mystic, a teacher and the founder of a religion. The types of religious authority that Lanczkowski defines in this context are the following: 'the sacred ruler', 'the anointed', 'the prophet', 'the mystic', 'the teacher', 'the founder of a religion', 'the reformer', 'the priest', 'the shaman', 'the hidden messiah', 'the guard of god', 'the martyr' and 'the holy' (Lanczkowski 1978: 84–107). The types of religious author-

ity that have emerged in the obituaries of Steiner include ‘the spiritual leader’, ‘the teacher’, ‘the founder of a religion’, ‘the occultist’, ‘the martyr’ and ‘the scientist and thinker’. Of these, ‘the spiritual leader’ and ‘the scientist and thinker’ do not occur among Lanczkowski’s set of types, and neither does ‘the occultist’, but this type is very close to Lanczkowski’s category of ‘the mystic’. The fact that the typologies do not entirely match does not constitute a problem, since Lanczkowski’s typology in no way claims that all types in each historic religion would be represented in it.

Based on my analysis of the source material, I regard the pair of terms ‘founder of a religion-teacher’ as the concept expressing the most essential elements of Steiner’s religious authority. The term used in the above systematisation of the material, that is ‘spiritual leader’, is in its entirety implied in the combined term ‘founder of a religion-teacher’. If this term is further supplemented with the term ‘occultist’, the image of Steiner’s religious authority becomes more justified and complete.

The full description of this authority is thus encompassed in the terms ‘founder of a religion-teacher’ and ‘occultist’. This leads to the presentation of the assumption that it is Steiner’s authority which more than any other aspect explains the quick spread of the Anthroposophical Society. However, this assumption so far still waits to be confirmed.*

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Krauss.

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* The terms ‘martyr’ and ‘scientist and thinker’ are here judged to describe less central sides of Steiner’s authority, and it is therefore not justified to include them in the description of Steiner’s religious authority.

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SUSANNA ÅKERMAN

Queen Christina's Esoteric Interests as a Background to Her Platonic Academies

In 1681 the blind quietist, Francois Malaval, stated that Queen Christina of Sweden late in life had 'given up' [Hermes] Trismegistos and the Platonists, in favour of the Church fathers. The statement does not explain what role the Church fathers were to play in her last years, but it does show that Christina really had been interested in the rather elitist and esoteric doctrine of Hermetic Platonic Christianity. In this paper I shall look at her library to show the depth of this Hermetic involvement. Her interest serves as a background to her life as ex-queen in Italy after her famous abdication from the Swedish throne in 1654, when she was 27 years old.

Christina styled herself as the Convert of the Age, and she set up court in Rome where she held a series of scientific and cultural academies in her palace. Her Accademia Reale was staged briefly in the Palazzo Farnese in her first year in Rome, 1656, but was revived in 1674 and was held for a number of years in her own Palazzo Riario.¹ Also, Giovanni Ciampini's Accademia dell'Esperienze, also called Accademia Fisico-mathematico, gathered there for their first founding meeting in 1677. Furthermore, she was protectress of the Accademia degli Stravaganti in Collegio Clementina from 1678 and in Orvieto for the Accademia dei Misti. (*Christina* 1966: 377, cited below as NMU.) Her inspirational presence and resources were valued by many literary figures. After her death in 1689, she was chosen to be a symbolic figurehead, Basilissa (Greek for Empress), by the poets that formed the Accademia dell'Arcadia (D'Onofrio 1976).

At her death Christina's library contained *ca* 4500 printed books and 2200 manuscripts from the medieval and renaissance periods. This collection has been worked on by modern scholars, but it has not been

1 There were eighteen volumes of proceedings placed in the Biblioteca Albani. Only one volume has survived, now Ms. Ottoboni 1744, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. NMU 378.

considered how intensely Christina collected texts from various esoteric traditions. The texts are scattered in her book inventories and do not immediately signal that they belong to the same tradition. In a sense, therefore, the esoteric material has become invisible. A careful study of the registers shows, however, that Christina was actively collecting Hermetic, Neo-Platonist, alchemical, kabbalistic and prophetic works. Her collecting does not seem to be grounded in a historic-nostalgic interest for buying books with beautiful covers or images, nor of uncontroversial humanist subjects. When her esoteric books are brought together one realizes that with her knowledge of several languages, including Latin, Greek and Hebrew, she understood these fields of knowledge. It is highly probable that as a rule she had a good knowledge of the contents of her books. Also, her aim does not seem to have been to merely orientate herself among heresies; instead her esoteric books could deepen her understanding of the universal, inner and invisible Church in an expanding world.

Christina's academy was started in Stockholm, in a sense, although it was never termed as such there. Her scholarly gatherings in Stockholm were originally arranged in 1649 by the Dutch Greek scholar Isaac Vossius. He brought in colleagues such as the classical humanists Nicholas Heinsius and Johann Freinsheimsius. The French humanists Claude Saumaise, Samuel Bochart, Gabriel Naudé and Pierre Daniel Huet also soon appeared at the Swedish court. Later, the amusing freethinker Pierre Michon Bourdelot took over the role of court master. There is no record showing what subjects were approached in the scholarly meetings, but we know that one of the themes discussed in Stockholm, was Bochart's thesis on the northern cruises of the ancient Phoenicians. He presented evidence from antiquity that Phoenician sailing ships certainly reached the British Isles and perhaps even farther north. At this time, Vossius wrote to Bishop James Ussher of Armagh in Ireland that he and the Queen planned a centre in Stockholm, for research into the history and languages in the places of the Bible. In a similar move, the Hebrew Rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel presented the idea of getting Christina to sponsor a *Bibliotheca Hebraica*, starting with a catalogue describing the central Hebraic writings (Åkerman 1991: 109–11). However, Christina abdicated before either an academy or a book series of this kind was created.

Descartes vs. Pico and the Greeks

There are many reports of Christina's conversations that include references to her having intellectual opinions in a philosophical context. There is ample evidence that in her searching period, before her conversion to Catholicism, she read intensely in the field of philosophical and religious material. It is symptomatic that she was reputed at court often to take an absurd or extreme stand in debates in order to test the opponent (Åkerman 1991: 27). Testifying to her wide reading are the Jesuits' statements based on their secret meetings with her in 1651, reporting that Christina had searched among the views of the ancients, of the Jews, and of the heretics before making her decision to convert to Catholicism (Åkerman 1991: 30–1).²

Although Christina started out her meetings with Descartes during his visit to Stockholm in 1650 by reading his newly finished exposition *The Principles of Philosophy* (1644), Descartes in fact had to admit that Christina's interest in reading Greek manuscripts, through the help of scholars such as Isaac Vossius and Claude Saumaise, left her little time to read and discuss his own philosophy. Christina did not like his advice that she should abandon these Greek readings and learn how to think methodically. She responded that she had already encountered his opinions in the texts of the Greek skeptic Sextus Empiricus and in Plato (Blok 2000: 316). By contrast, Christina is described as 'trembling with joy' when she received a copy of Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis aegyptiorum, chaldeorum et assyriorum* describing methods and practices of theurgy and divination, the ascent of the soul and how to come into contact with gods and demons (Åkerman 1991: 96–7; Blok 2000). Although Christina later declared that Descartes gave her 'the first lights' on Catholicism (Åkerman 1991: 55–6; Blok 2000: 301–24),³ his philosophy appears really not to have influenced her. There is only one echo of Descartes in her maxims, the statement that: 'Before one can come to believe, one must doubt' (Cassirer 1939: 185; Åkerman 1991: 96–7).

From the correspondence of Isaac Vossius we learn instead that Christina read the Neo-Platonist Olympiodorus, Proclus and Hermias and their commentaries on the dialogues of Plato, such as Olympio-

2 Casatis report reprinted in Ranke 1906: 351–71. Appendix no. 131.

3 For a close view of the Jesuits' activity and Descartes' role see also Garstein 1992.

dorus' on the *Phaedo* and the *Philebus* (Blok 2000: 314, 365n).⁴ Proclus was first to formulate the vision of a *Golden Chain* binding higher ideas to individual enlightened intellects through all time. The Swedish poet and philosopher Georg Stiernhielm at court further framed Proclus' idea of a chain of intellects reincarnating eternal ideas, by dubbing it *Minerva's Necklace*. The Swedish Queen was eager to obtain from Paris Proclus' commentaries on the *Alcibiades* and the *Parmenides* (Blok 2000: 365n, 315n). Christina's teacher Isaac Vossius writes that she was led to Platonism early through readings of the Florentine Renaissance Platonist and Christian Kabbalist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Blok 2000: 315n);⁵ but he does not say which work. He may have been referring to Pico's entire collected works that were available in Stockholm. The most read text by Pico is his programmatic *Speech on Human Dignity*, setting out the theme of 900 Hermetic, philosophic, magical and kabbalist theses that he wanted to debate. The list was banned by the Church, but the ban was rescinded in 1493 by the hermetically interested Pope Alexander VI (Borgia). In vivid imagery Pico explains that seraphs and thrones always watch over us. The goal for human beings is to climb Jacob's ladder all the way up to God's throne and stand there together with seraphs, cherubs and thrones. One is to emulate the Seraphic fire of love, the Cherubic intelligence and the Thrones' steadfastness of judgement.

Another important text is Pico's kabbalist interpretation of the Creation story, *Heptaplus*, a work on the seven days, symbolizing the regeneration of human beings. Christina's concern for Pico's philosophy is also concretely shown in that she shipped a portrait of Pico to Antwerp, and then to Rome, when she left Stockholm. Further, the antiquarian Fortunio Liceto compares Christina with Pico in his book on ancient inscriptions on gemstones, *Hieroglyphica sive antiqua schemata gemmarum anularium* (Padua, 1653). If Pico's intellect was seen as Phoenix-like, Liceto argues, so our time admires Christina for having, like the ruler in Plato's Republic, combined politics and philosophy. The dedication to her in the introduction to Liceto's discussion points to Pico, Pythagoras

- 4 These writings are now in Christina's Greek Manuscript collection in the Vatican library. Reg. gr. 131, 159, 110. Blok 2000: 252, 313–14, 365n. Christina's collection also includes Michael Psellos' 'psychogonia', on the animation of spirits, Reg. gr. 131 and his commentary to the categories, Reg. gr. 136, and Plotinus' collected works, Reg. gr. 97.
- 5 Christina owned a smaller text by Pico, *Duodecim regulae arma spiritualis pugne*, Ms. Reg. lat. 853. ff. 219.

and the latter's biographer Porphyry (Liceto 1653: 400).⁶ Pico wanted to show, along with his colleagues in the Platonic Academy in Florence, that the original revelation of God had been handed down as an eternal philosophy, a *philosophia perennis*, by the pre-Christian sages of antiquity: Hermes, Zoroaster, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Philolaus and Plato. Christina was probably enthused by Pico's Renaissance view of the ancient philosophers: that they had argued for a concordance of principles and that a single universal doctrine lies behind appearances—the Platonic vision (cf. Blok 2000: 365n).⁷

Christina could follow the defence of Pico's 30 kabbalist theses more closely in her copy of Archangelus de Borgonuovo's book of debate, *Apologia pro defensione doctrinae Cabalae sub voce Petrum Garciam* (Basel, 1600).⁸ Pico's doctrine of the great context, on the connection between the hierarchies of angels and the Divine emanations in the kabbalah, led to a strong belief in *magia naturalis*, on the possibility of intervening in natural chains of cause and effect, but also on the art of calling down angels, and the presupposition that everything in the universe vibrated as a living creature, all flowing forth with the same natural power.

Before her abdication in 1654, Christina persuaded the specialist in Greek, Johannes Schefferus, to write a history of the Pythagoreans, the first modern history of its kind, which was published a decade later as *De natura et constitutione philosophiae Italicae seu pythagoricae* (Upsala, 1664). It is here explained that the philosophy of Pythagoras developed into a religion with a belief in reincarnation, presented to the many in the form of myths and musical theory and to the initiated as a demanding mathematical doctrine and ritual cult (Åkerman 1991: 97).⁹

Christina read such texts, not as a language exercise, but from her deep interest. Vossius explains that Christina was able to translate Greek prose into Latin, but that she was annoyed by the pedantry involved in translating Greek poetry (Blok 2000: 319). When she bought

6 Johan Nordström notices this in his 6 boxes of unpublished papers at Uppsala UB for a volume *Kristinatidens lärde* that was never written. On Christina's portrait of Pico, see Steneberg 1955: 86.

7 According to Blok, Christina also owned Michael Psellos' Byzantine commentary on Plato's doctrine of 'psychogonia', the generation of the souls, in Ms. Reg. Gr. 131; note also Psellos on the operations of daemons in Ms. Reg. Gr. 136.

8 Borgonuovo's defence is listed in Vat. lat. 8171, f. 10v. 'Cabalae, Basel, 1600'. Thanks to Carlos Gilly for identifying the book.

9 The book opens with thanks for Christina's commission.

manuscripts from Paris she asked for classical texts, but did not want novels, tragedies or comedies (Blok 2000: 319). Instead, she wanted to buy Proclus' commentary to Plato's *Alcibiades*, speaking of the blind *eros*, that is, the ecstatic vision of the brightest light, the soul's drunkenness by it, and longing thereto (Blok 2000: 365n; cf. Lawe 2002: 24–41).

The Jesuit Mission in Stockholm and Athanasius Kircher

In what manner was Christina drawn to convert to Catholicism? It is well known that Christina's abdication and conversion to Catholicism was preceded by secret talks with undercover Jesuits. Little is known of these conversations. New and previously unstudied sources reveal, however, that before the arrival of the Jesuits, whom she had specifically asked to be skilled in mathematics, Christina was in secret contact with the Roman Jesuit and polymath Athanasius Kircher. His crucial move came in 1651, when he sent her his encyclopaedia of music, with comments on acoustics, musical harmonies and the scale of tones forming the Soul of the World, that is his *Musurgia Universalis sive ars magna consoni et dissoni* (Rome, 1650).¹⁰ In his letter, Kircher also spoke briefly of his work *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Rome, 1653–5) where he tried to interpret the hieroglyphs with Egyptian-Hermetic mysticism. Here, Kircher also presents ancient Egyptian revelations, Jewish mysticism in the form of kabbalah and oriental magic. Kircher in his Hermetic fervour even addressed Christina in November 1651 as 'Regina serenissima, potentissima, sapientissima, vere trismegisti—A Queen most exalted, most powerful, and most wise, truly belonging to the three times great', thus suggesting to her to contemplate further the three spiritual crowns of the revealer of light from Alexandria, Hermes Trismegistos.¹¹

Christina mentioned in her answer to Kircher that her letter was carried by Macedo,¹² the Jesuit who was the first to respond to Christina's

- 10 Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. Kircher wrote her for the first time in June 1649, APUG, f. 54r–54v. Also Kircher to Christina, no date f. 50r–50v. Available at the Kircher correspondence project on the web (<http://www.Pinakes.org>). For Kircher and Christina in Rome see Findlen 1994.
- 11 Kircher to Christina 11 November 1651. APUG 561, f. 52r–52v. Cf. Athanasius Kircher's Ms. Vat. Arab. 8. Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 'The Psalms of David, De Templo Hierosolimitano a Salomone constructio'.
- 12 Christina to Kircher, no date, APUG 555, 172r–173v, transcription and translation at 276r–276v and APUG 556, 174r–174v. Kircher replies that Macedo has handed him the letter in APUG 50r–50v.

desire to discuss Catholicism. He carried an oral message from her to Kircher. Macedo had arrived in disguise in Stockholm in 1650, as part of the suit of the Portuguese Ambassador. In September 1651, he reported to the Jesuit General Goswin Nickel that Christina wanted to have secret discussions on Catholicism (Garstein 1992: 543–5, cf. p. 664). Paolo Casati, a mathematician and colleague of Kircher at the *Collegio Romano*, and Francesco Malines were chosen to travel incognito to Sweden for conversion talks with her. The connection to Athanasius Kircher, and his first letter to Christina in June 1649, point to the philosophical background of a perennial philosophy showing the ascent of the soul to the One that these Jesuits probably addressed theologically with the young Queen.

The contact continued. On her arrival in Rome on Christmas day 1655, Kircher dedicated to Christina his book *Itinerarium exstaticum coeleste*, the ecstatic journey through the heavens; a dialogue between the angel Cosmiel and the pupil Theodidactus on a fictional journey through the Solar system as proffered by Tycho Brahe in a compromise version. Kircher tells of how he had fallen asleep while listening to three lutenists and how he then dreamt of this ecstatic journey through the solar system. The travel through the planetary spheres is based on Cicero's speech on the Dream of Scipio, a text that Christina had three versions of in her library. Theodidactus finds that space is full of ether and understands that the stars are directed by intelligences. He learns of their function, hears the music of the spheres and reaches the heaven of the fixed stars, before he returns to earth.

During Christina's visit to the *Collegio Romano* in January the same winter, she was shown the Spanish Jesuit Villalpando's model of the Temple in Jerusalem. She received as a gift Kircher's handwritten translation into Arabic of the Psalms of David, with Solomon's temple as a theme: *De templo Hierosolomitana a Salomone constructo*. As a linguist and mythological expert, Kircher was to present her with an obelisk bearing Egyptian hieroglyphs and an inscription in 32 languages of 'Iside rediviva' (Isis revived). The obelisk was seen by Kircher as a cascade of light from the eternal sun in Egyptian tradition. (Priorato 1956: 283.)¹³ Christina seems to have been taken by the Jesuits' enthusiasm for historical-cultural studies and their travels to far away countries such as Japan and China, highpoints in their activity on behalf of a universal and global process of Christianization.

13 Kircher's manuscript is now Ms. Vat. Arab. 8. On the Obelisk see Partini 2004: 15, 52–8.

The Alchemists

Another topic that certainly would have been provocative to Descartes was alchemy. Christina was very interested in this sacred art and wrote: ‘Chemistry is a beautiful science. It is the anatomy of nature and the true key to open all treasures. It gives fortune, health, glory and true wisdom to its possessor.’ She continued by saying that alchemy: ‘. . . is a royal and furthermore, a divine science. It has fallen into disrepute among those who think they know everything, but know nothing’ (Wettermark 1990: 61).

Christina was not only a reader of alchemical texts, but also a practitioner in the laboratory. She wrote from Hamburg in 1667 to her close companion Cardinal Azzolino, in answer to his questions concerning the laboratory work of an anonymous alchemist from Majorca:

You are right that the Majorcan knows more than anyone else, and that he has found a great mystery in his iron pot. All I know is that he puts a finely pounded material in this pot and heats it over a low fire, and he keeps the opening closed for some time, and then he opens it and releases the fumes for a time as long as it takes to say *miserere*, then he takes it from the fire, he repeats the procedure three times, see that is all I know. His material is nothing other than mineral of cinober and mineral of mercury [that is reddish mercury sulphide, HgS]: He assured me that the substance enclosed in his little iron pot that he left with me, was mercury of six metals, the common [mercury] was not included, he said. The cooling solid material also was of the same sort, he said, and he had worked on it in order to make a golden mirror from it. He told of its wonderful nature and regarded it as a higher substance than even the [philosopher’s] stone. . . He said that when his mirror is perfected, one just has to scrape off some of the material and mix it with the [six metal] mercuries; after a short while it transforms into the real stone of the philosophers, but will then be so powerful and valuable that there are no words to express its virtues, and that this stone can be augmented in quantity through adding the common mercury. You see, this is all I know: I hope it will serve your purposes. (Bildt 1899: 313; cf. Lekeby 2001: 81–3.)

There is no evidence to determine exactly when Christina started with alchemy, but her involvement tended to increase toward the end of her life. Her first acquaintance with alchemy may have been when in 1651, in Stockholm, when she was approached by the alchemist Johannes

Franck. He described her future reign as the fulfilment of Paracelsus' prophecy of a return of Elias Artista and of Sendivogius' vision of the rise of a metallic monarchy of the North (Edenborg 1992; cf. Lindroth 1943: 307).¹⁴ With these visions Franck urged the Queen to start searching for the ruby red powder of the philosophers. He expressed these hopes in the tract that he offered her, the *Colloquium philosophicum cum diis montanis* (Upsala, 1651). (Edenborg 1992: 43 ff.) A year later, there are reports that an Italian alchemist by the name of Bandini had arrived at her court (Åkerman 1991: 86).

Clear evidence of the Queen's own practice of alchemy appears first when the Danish polymath and alchemist Olaus Borrichius met her in Rome in 1665. He reported that he had often talked with her about the study of chemical arcana and experiments and that she, as a 'Palladio virago', dedicated herself entirely to the sacred art.¹⁵

Borrichius was well prepared. In London in 1663 he had discussed the new method of boiling dew with the Catholic Kenelm Digby, who is considered as a Rosicrucian by English scholars. Digby said to the inquiring Dane that he thought it possible to produce the Stone from vitriol and nitre, first by a conjunction of Sol and aerial mercury, and ultimately from salt and aerial nitre. Christina bought Digby's book on the sympathetic powder—which in small quantities was used as a universal medicine. She also acquired Digby's book on the immortality of the soul, *Demonstratio immortalitatis animae* (Paris, 1651). In the English original edition from 1641 Digby concludes his discussion of the flowing impulses with a thoughtful strophe:

By them thou must be first irrigated with the sweet shoures of mornings and eveninges, with the gentle dew, and mannadropes, which fall abundantly from these bounteous favoures that reside in a higher sphere than nature; and that poure out unknowne and unconceivable blessings upon prepared hearts: which fructify into that true blisse, in comparison where of, all that we have declared is but shaddow, vanity and nothing. (Digby 1644.)¹⁶

14 Franck's dissertation from 1645, *De principiis constitutivis lapidis philosophici, theses hermeticae*: 37–9. Another expectation was that the transformation would occur around 1658, because of Paracelsus' prophecy of '58'.

15 Borrichius 1697: '...saepe ad disserandum cum regina Christinâ, de arcanioris Chemiae studio, veritate, experimentis, quibus tum sacris se Palladio virago devorerat.' I thank Dr Michael Srigley, Uppsala, for this information.

16 The Latin edition is listed in Ms. Vat. lat. 8171, f. 57. BAV.

In Paris, Borrichius also worked with a certain Abbé Boucaud, who finally in January 1665 let him copy a chemical process of making gold included in the manuscript *La Chrysologie chimique*. It begins with a description of the gathering of dew in May and its distillation to saltpetre. The manufacture of this salt was soon presented as a step in producing aerial nitre, i. e. oxygen, in John Mayow's *De salnitro et nitro aereo* (Oxford, 1668), a breakthrough work that Christina had in her library. She already owned other Latin texts by English alchemists: George Ripley's medieval collected works; Edward Bolnest's *De aurora chimica* (Hamburg, 1675) and Eiraeneus Philalethus' (Cosmopolita) *The Open Entrance to the Shut Palace of the King* (Amsterdam, 1667).

In the summer of 1667 in Hamburg, Christina experimented with the messianic prophet and alchemist Giuseppe Francesco Borri, but Cardinal Azzolino soon wrote to her that she had to distance herself from Borri because he was being sought by the Inquisition (Bildt 1899: 386–9).¹⁷ Borri was a fascinating figure and focused on St Anne in an attempt to give divine status to her daughter, the mother of Jesus, and claimed that he, as a 'pro-Christ' assisted by the angel St Michael, would lead the Pope to form the Universal Monarchy after defeating the Turks. He had followers in Milan and Rome. Christina at this time also corresponded with Johan Rudolf Glauber, the discoverer of Sal mirabile or Sodium sulphate (Na_2SO_4), who claimed that this was in fulfilment of Paracelsus' prophecy of Elias Artista, the accomplished alchemist who would appear at the end of time, but now decoded in the form of a salt, *Et Artis salia*. Christina posed seventeen apparently simple questions to Glauber on the nature of the various alchemical stages, such as: what colour the material is when it is reduced to its ultimate perfection; whether it is subject to change; whether it is affected by liquors; what doses to take of various ingredients and their colours in the process, etc.¹⁸ She also took an interest in the phosphorus discovered by Hennig Brandt.¹⁹ In a second letter to Glauber she wanted to know 'the quantities of coal, gold and salt' in a certain process.

In her collection of spiritual medieval manuscripts there are some forty alchemical manuscripts by the foremost medieval authors, as well as practical handbooks. They include works by Geber (Yabir Ibn

17 See Salvatore Rotta's article on Borri (1971).

18 Azzolinosamlingen 36, Riksarkivet, Stockholm. NMU 370: no. 900. Glauber died in 1668.

19 Private communication from Anna Maria Partini, Rome.

Hayan), Johan Scotus, Arnold de Villa Nova, Raimund Lull, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Bernard Trevisano, George Ripley, as well as works such as George Anrach d'Argentine's *Jardin des Riches* and *La très precieux Don de Dieu*, Johan Grasshof's *Aperta arca arcani artificiosissimi* and the intriguingly illustrated *Rosarium Philosophorum*—with its alchemical images of merging the solar-King and the lunar-Queen into a hermaphroditic union.²⁰

In 1655, Christina gave a large collection of alchemical manuscripts from Prague to her librarian Isaac Vossius. These were once owned by Emperor Rudolph II at Prague and are written in the German, Czech and Latin languages, a collection which now resides as the Codices Vossiani Chymici at the University of Leiden (Boeren 1975).²¹ The Leiden Rudolphine collection is relatively little known, probably because it mostly consists working copies in difficult Czech and German hands.

Christina desired to know more of alchemy and brought a younger woman called Sibylla into the experiments (Anonymous 1697: 279).²² In 1670, she employed a working alchemist, Pietro Antonio Bandiera, to run her laboratory and ultimately bequeathed the equipment to him (Bildt 1900: 174 ff.; NMU 370: no. 901). Her own practice of alchemy has left a few marks on paper: a drawing of alchemical vessels with short comments written by Christina on calcination and a query on how many hours the fire should burn.²³ There is a document in her own hand, entitled 'Il laboratorio filosofico – paradossi chimici', which is either her own framing of a presentation of alchemy, or notes from a text with the same title (see Appendix).²⁴ Christina was preoccupied with alchemy to the very end of her life; found by her deathbed in 1689, was a letter on the universal medicine, Glauber's alkahest, and secret fire, by Samuel Forberger (NMU 364: no. 305, 370: no. 902).

20 See Christina's manuscript and book catalogue Ms. Vat. Lat. 8171 in the Vatican library, also the register of books made after Christina's death in 1689, Ms. Ottob. Lat. 2543, no. 1320. Cf. Partini 1994: 158–64.

21 Blok (2000) shows that Vossius was not interested in alchemy and wanted to sell the collection, but found no buyer. The texts were mostly in Czech and German, and unillustrated, working copies.

22 Modern edition of the Italian original, Odier & Morelli 1981.

23 Azzolinosamlingen 36, Riksarkivet, Stockholm. NMU 369: no. 897.

24 Azzolinosamlingen 36, Riksarkivet, Stockholm. NMU 371: no. 904.

Hermeticism

A central manuscript in Christina's collection is the ancient Hermetic dialogue *Asclepius*. Named after the Greek god of healing, the text lets up a song of mourning over the arrival of Christianity in Alexandria. But then follows a prophecy of how, after a period of darkness and ignorance, the Egypto-Hermetic religion will be revived.²⁵ An anonymous volume on the Divine in Plato's *Timaios*, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, can probably be traced to a Renaissance humanist from Florence or Venice, perhaps inspired by the Byzantine fugitive Johannes Gemistos Plethon's translations in the mid 1400s. Christina had a portion of a translation by Plethon, entitled 'Plato on the virtues'. His pupil Cardinal Basilius Bessarion's *In calumniatorem Platonis*—a defence of Platonism from an virulent attack by Aristotelians—was also shelved in Christina's library. Bessarion's strategy was to show the many common characteristics of Platonism and Aristotle's philosophy. Bessarion organized a Platonic Academy in Rome that in some respects can be seen as a predecessor of Christina's academies. In the Platonic section she could also count the famous Florentine Hermeticist Marsilio Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* as well as Iamblichus' theurgy with Divine spiritual powers.²⁶ The manuscript of the *Orphic Hymns* that she owned was a rare piece telling of Orpheus healing of the soul through his play of harmonious music on his golden lyre.

In the esoteric collection there is also a copy of Johannes Trithemius' *Steganographia*, where encryption is said to work by angelic communication. Christina also owned a copy of John Dee's tract on his mystical planetary sign, *Monas Hieroglyphica*.²⁷ Another volume contains Al-Magritti's *Picatrix*, explaining the preparation of magical talismans and describing the utopian Hermetic city *Adocentyn*. Founded by Hermes Trismegistos, the city is ruled by a priest-king in perfect harmony with the cosmos. Two rare manuscripts on angelic magic belongs to Christina's collection and stem from the Castilian court of Alphonso X the Wise in the thirteenth century: first the anonymous *Libro de las formas en del las ymágenes que son en los cielos* (Ms. Reg. lat. 1283) and second the Latin translation of the Hebrew work *Sefer-ha-Raziel*—*Liber Razielis seu volumen secretorum*

25 *Asclepius* appears in two copies: Ms. Reg. lat. 1352, ff. 172–89, Reg. lat. 1572, ff. 1–14.

26 MSS. Reg. lat. 1572, 1099, 1619, 1344.

27 MSS. Ottob. lat. 2543, f. 21, nr. 972. Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.

Dei (Ms. Reg. lat. 1300), a text recording the hidden wisdom of Adam and King Solomon, especially writing out the names of the 72 angels that taken together form God's unspeakable name.²⁸

The Esoteric Section of Christina's Library

Christina's now scattered collection of printed books counted to over 4,500 titles and included, besides many books in pure medicine, also Paracelsus' collected works and a wealth of alchemical tracts. A selection of them are Joseph Duchesnes' (*Quercetanus*) *Des plus rares secrets* (Paris, 1641), Bernard Trevisano's *Opuscula Chimica* (Leipzig, 1605), Martin Ruland's *Lexicon Alchymiae*, Isaac Hollandus' *Opera mineralia* (Middleburg, 1600). The firm theoretical base on which Christina could build her alchemical understanding was Andreas Libavius' systematic overview *Alchimia* (Frankfurt, 1597). She also followed Libavius' research into classical medicine in relation to the Hermetic, in his *Novus de medicina veterum, tam hippocratica quam hermetica* (Frankfurt, 1599). She collected Oswald Croll's compendia of alchemical processes, *Basilica Chymica* (Frankfurt, 1620), Nicolas Lemery's course on the practical work on antimony, *Cours de Chimie* (Geneve, 1675) and several volumes of the collection of texts, *Theatrum Chemicum*, published in 1613 by Zetzner.²⁹ These volumes reprint some one hundred works by the most influential alchemists. Thus, Christina had access to the whole field of alchemy, including the most sought for works by her contemporaries.

The Paracelsian Gerard Dorn shows his 'alchemystical' philosophy of nature in his *Chymisticum artificium naturae* (Frankfurt, 1568). In this work, which was in her possession, Christina could follow Dorn's extension of Paracelsian concepts, as well as in his *Clavis philosophia chymisticae* (Herborn, 1599). Christina was surely aware that this group of Paracelsians saw alchemy as an alternative spirituality based on Paracelsus' theological programme: his respected role as spreader of the word of 'Theophrastia Sancta' in opposition to the established churches. It is interesting that Christina in her maxims even takes over Paracelsus' personal motto: He who can belong to himself, should not belong to another—*Alterius non sit qui suus esse potest*.

28 On Sefer Raziel see Åkerman 1999.

29 Ms. Vat. lat. 8171. ff. 74–81. BAV, Vat. lat. 12 637, f. 84–5.

Another work, Heinrich Noll's *Naturae sanctuarium quod est physica hermeticae* (Frankfurt, 1619), also contributes to this spiritual understanding of natural processes. Important to the spiritual understanding of nature is the work represented in Christina's library by the English esotericist Robert Fludd, his review of mathematical, musical, technical and occult sciences, the *Microcosmi historia*, part II, (Oppenheim, 1618). Correspondences between the macrocosmos and microcosmos, the parallels between the order of heaven and the world of humans, are central to the Hermetic worldview. Christina of course owned several copies of *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes*: 'As above, so below. . .'.

Christina collected editions of alchemical emblem series, the 20 images of the *Rosarium philosophorum*, Michael Maier's 50 emblematic scenes in *Atalanta Fugiens*, and the 61 alchemical emblems in Johan Daniel Mylius' *Philosophia reformata* (Frankfurt, 1622). It is interesting that Christina owned Stephan Michelsbacher's illustrated work on the Kabbalah as the mirror of art and nature. *Cabala speculum artis et naturae, in alchemia. . .* The first edition was printed in Augsburg in 1615, but was republished there in 1616 with the same images. It was now dedicated to the wisdom-seeking Rosicrucian brotherhood: ' . . . a strenus sapientiae culture rosae crucis fraternitate dedicata'. One of its emblems shows a scene that many initiated readers find fascinating: a blindfolded man seeks to step up the seven alchemically labelled stairs to a well-adorned Temple of Wisdom.

The esoteric sphere in Christina's library springs from the fourteen books of the ancient *Corpus Hermeticum*; in her collection we find Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation of them from 1471. She also owned individual texts, such as the Hermetic *Pimander* and other writings by Hermes Trismegistos in the *Corpus*. Christina's possession of the Cappucin monk Annibale Roselli's multi-volume commentary on the *Pimander*, in an edition from Cracow, 1585, shows that her interest was not sporadic. Roselli wanted to see the shepherd Pimander as parallel to Christ and he could place Hermes in the Catholic tradition through seeing him as an ancient theologian (a practitioner of *prisca sapientia*), from whose principles one could derive the Trinity, through Aristotelian-Scholastic concepts.

A more unexpected pearl among the printed books is Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's controversial description of constructing magical seals and of the hidden spirits living in the dark; his infamous *De occulta philosophia* (Antwerpen, 1533). Agrippa tries to control the heavenly influences through staring into the dark and conjuring the spirits there. He explains that he builds on important Renaissance works: Ficino's magic,

Pico's astronomy and Reuchlin's kabbalah. Agrippa then presents a trinitarian cosmology: an earthly, a heavenly and a super-celestial sphere through which the souls can pass after a specific seal has opened the gates and the magician has gained power.

Among the books influenced by the Hermetic texts is Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi totius cantica tria* (Venedig, 1525). Giorgi describes the cosmos as a tuning octave, tuned in a universally sounding musical harmony. In Christina's library, there was also Petrus Galatinus' defence of Christian kabbalah, *De arcanis catholicae veritatis* (Basel, 1550), which included a reprint of Johannes Reuchlin's famous *De arte cabalistica*. The Christian kabbalah worked on the idea that the luminous emanations of the original Jewish kabbalah in fact explained Christian truths, as with the descent of Christ, regeneration, and the relations within the Trinity. The tendency was that Christians only learned the Jewish kabbalah as a preparation to understand the Christian tradition.

In her library we find Borri's writing *Due lettere sul commercio cabalistico col mondo elementare della Chiave del Gabinetto* (Two letters on the cabalistic commerce with the elemental world by the key to the cabinet, Cologne, 1681).³⁰ Borri here describes how Paracelsus' elemental spirits (salamanders–fire, sylphs–air, undines–water, gnomes–earth) can be contacted and controlled in a cabalist-magical-alchemical way. Christina also bought Borri's source, Nicolas-Pierre-Henri Montfaucon de Villars' *Le Comte de Gabalis: Entretiens sur les science secrètes* (Paris, 1670), a tract where the four elemental spirits are investigated as effective principles in the esoteric secret sciences.³¹

Christian kabbalism also occurs in a manuscript given to Christina in 1676 by the little known priest Bonaventura Pellegrini: *Immenso et nascoste tesoro dell' ineffabile Tetragrammaton*.³² This shows the tremendous, hidden and unspeakable treasure collected by Jewish mystics through studying the 22 names and 72 attributes describing God in the *Psalmi*. The Jews were convinced that these attributes will be recognized when the Messiah comes to save the world. Pellegrini instead argues that this is not true, but rather that these attributes can be experienced in the

30 Ms. Vat. lat. 12 637, f. 82 (83). BAV.

31 Ms. Vat. lat. 12 637, f. 68. BAV. The second edition, printed in London 1690, was dedicated to the Rosicrucian brotherhood.

32 Ms. Reg. lat. 474, 'Tal funtione di benedir il populo col nomine delle quattro lettere che implicitamente contenueva il mistero della Trinita, poiche e venuta il Messia, a cui solera riservato... gli Arcani', f. 96–7.

mystery of the Trinity. Pellegrini studies the Old Testament in order to prove that the Catholic Church has already been predicted at the beginning of time, the divine attributes are listed and said to especially characterize the Old Testament Kings.

Her interest in the Hermetic worldview explains why Christina also owned a volume by Giordano Bruno, condemned by the Church, his *De triplico minimo et mensura* (Frankfurt, 1591). Bruno here discusses the ‘minima’ of matter, which he calls monads, or ensouled atoms, and he adds a number of mysterious geometrical diagrams, intended to show possible combinations of surfaces.³³

Hebrew Kabbalah

The most intriguing aspect of Christina’s library is that in her section of Hebraica there are more than a hundred titles, of which no less than 38 are commentaries on Jewish mysticism and kabbalah—and not the Christian kabbalah, but the original Jewish. The kabbalist source texts *Sefer Jezirah* (The Book of Creation) and parts of the *Zohar* (The Book of Splendour) are accompanied by Messianic writers with great ambitions, such as Rabbi Aquiba and Isaac Abarbanel, and followed by commentaries of the Messianic kabbalists active in Italy: Moses Almonsini, Menahem Recanati, and Salomon Molkho. The latter had visited Pope Clemens VII in 1535 to explain to him that the Jewish expectations of a Messiah had now been fulfilled. Molkho was prophet, visionary and interpreter of his own statements and he pointed to the tradition which argued that the Messiah resided in the quarters of the poor in Rome. Other more reflective kabbalist authors are represented in Christina’s collection through texts on the function of the Divine attributes, that is, on the role of the ten luminous emanations of the sephirotic Tree of Life. They are described and related to one another and to the Divine human in texts by genuine kabbalists such as Bahya ben Asher, Shem Tob Ibn Gaon, Abraham Gallico, Salomon Alkahetz and Menachem Azariah. Christina could read Hebrew and actually met Spinoza’s teacher, Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, who travelled to see her in Antwerp in 1655. She received his book *Nishmat Hayim* (Amsterdam, 1652), where he defends

33 Ms. Ottob. lat. 2543. nr. 1286, 143, 573. Ms. Vat. lat. 8171, f. 68. Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana. Cf. Yates 1964 on Bruno and Hermeticism.

the transmigration of souls and retells stories of spiritual possession, attributed to malign spirits called dibbukim.³⁴

The Swedish Queen as Empress of Science?

The esoteric interests of the Swedish Queen seems now to have been forgotten, but it was not so in her own time. For example, Christina has been suggested as the model for the main character 'The Empress' in her contemporary, much read scientific utopia, *The Description of a New World, called the Blazing World* (1666), written by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. The Empress of this Utopia is an atomist and works with alchemy and kabbalah, activities that are closely described. 'The Empress' arranges an academy in her palace for all sorts of humanists and scientists. Margaret Cavendish is reported to have met Christina in Antwerp in 1654–5, when Cavendish and her husband were in exile from Cromwell's England. The young Duchess, a talented writer, is assumed to have received a strong impression of the queen, who in Cavendish's eyes was an unbelievably free and talented woman.³⁵

According to the register for Christina's estate her private library of smaller bindings, her 'librariola', contained 233 volumes 'in philosophy, medicine, alchemy, astrology and mathematics'—this was a complement to her deposit of 1,385 'theological or philological works' in the same shelves.³⁶ Looking at this, she appears to have had a strong interest in the cosmological sciences. She probably did not want to have the books stand silently on the shelves, but rather wanted to lend them to suitable readers. This is shown by her acquisitions of central books in

34 BAV, Ms. Vat. Lat. 8171. ff. 74–81, f. 57v, 64, 58, 62, 63 Hebraica at ff. 124–30, kindly identified for me by Professor Elliot Wolfson, New York. Menasseh's text is partly in Latin. For Christina's meeting with him in Antwerp, see Katz 1983. In 1653, Father Alexander Manderscheidt says of Christina: 'Pour l'Hebreu et Arabe elle le sait lire, et du moins elle entend un peu', Arckenholtz 1751, II: 430.

35 I am indebted to Professor Judith Zinsser, Department of History, Miami University, Ohio and Professor Hilda Smith, Department of History, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, 1997. Hilda Smith reports of a doctoral student in the Netherlands who has put forward the hypothesis of Christina as model for Cavendish's utopian figure. Others have suggested that 'the Empress' draws upon the character of Margaret Cavendish herself.

36 Ms. Vat. Lat. 12 637, f. 84. BAV.

algebra by difficult and advanced mathematicians that she could not possibly read on her own; works by Christopher Clavius, Simon Stevin, Seth Ward, John Napier, Rudolph Goclenius and Girolamo Cardano, not to mention Descartes' *Geometry* which was also in her possession. Furthermore, there were exclusive works by astronomers and astrologers such as Ptolemaios, Alkindi, Albohaly, Abu Ma'shar, Alfraganus, Albohazen, Mesahala, Copernicus (*De revolutionibus*), Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Christoph Scheiner, Johannes Regiomontanus, and Gallileo (his smaller work on the patterns on the face of the moon). These books laid the ground for the arithmetical and musically constructed doctrine of Harmony that we have been able to show shaped Christina's philosophical viewpoint. It is clear that her library was an effort to create a centre around old and unusual texts in order to present them to visiting scholars. Perhaps one can conclude that she wanted to create a *Bibliotheca Esoterica* dedicated to the study of Western Esotericism.

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QUEEN CHRISTINA'S ESOTERIC INTERESTS

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Appendix*

Il laboratorio (processi – [crossed out]) filosofico – Paradossi chimici

Proemio

1. della antichita delle arte alchimica
2. della sua simplicita
3. della sua brevita
4. della sua nobilita
5. delli errori (communi che si cominciare in questi arte – [crossed out]) che si commetione in essa
6. della podere solfa di (chimici[?])
7. delli fornelli
8. dell fuoco (delli vasi – [crossed out])
9. della materia uni oggetto dell alchimia
10. delli vasi
11. del studi delli Autori (del fornella – [crossed out])
12. tempo
13. predicamenti varii che si lavoranno dalli tre regni animale, vegetabile e minerali, modi di farsi
14. della medicina universale
15. della opera (filosofico – [crossed out]) grande
16. delle virtue lustro e vertu che si ha [?]
17. del Magnete

If these notes in Christina's hand are her own thoughts, they show that she knew the art of alchemy and was prepared to present it to an audience, probably a limited one. The crossed out parts show, I suggest, that Christina is not copying, but rather sketching on some subtitles. The paradoxes of the title appear to be influenced by Robert Boyle's *The Sceptical Chymist* which Christina owned in a Latin translation. The book deals with what Boyle calls chemical paradoxes: *Chymista scepticus vel dubiae et paradoxae chymico phisica* (1662, second edition 1668). (Ms. Vat. Lat. 12 637, f. 84. BAV.)

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HENRIK BOGDAN & OLAV HAMMER

Research on Esotericism in Scandinavia

Introduction

The title of this paper can be understood in two senses. In the sense of ‘research on esotericism carried out by Scandinavian scholars’, the field is blossoming. Several dozen individuals, at various points in their academic careers, are pursuing research on some aspect of Western esotericism however the concept is defined. In the other conceivable sense, ‘research on Scandinavian esotericism’, the availability of academic studies is generally more limited.

Roughly speaking, the literature on Scandinavian esotericism comprises the same textual genres as the literature on esotericism internationally. There is a considerable corpus of apologetic texts, written by practitioners. There is a polemical literature, written from anti-cult and Christian perspectives. Finally, there is an academic literature with some major strengths, and some equally major lacunae. Some periods and currents are well represented, with a long tradition of historical research that goes back to the early twentieth century. Other currents are blank spots on the scholarly map. Furthermore, nearly all of this literature is composed in local languages, and is therefore inaccessible to an international audience. The situation is reflected in the standard reference work on esotericism, the *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*. Swedenborg is covered in a full-length article. Apart from this, however, esotericism in Scandinavia is barely mentioned.

Although an increasing number of Scandinavian scholars are researching various aspects of Western esotericism, the discipline is in its infancy in Scandinavia and there are currently no academic positions targeted specifically at specialists in esotericism at any Scandinavian university. However, undergraduate courses in esotericism are beginning to be offered at various universities, such as Stockholm University, Högskolan Dalarna, and at the University of Copenhagen. There is also an increasing number of BA and MA level papers being written (particularly in the History of Religions) which deal with various as-

psects of esotericism; this is an indication that Western esotericism appears to be a popular subject among students. This popularity among students probably accounts for the fact that a number of students, particularly from Norway and Denmark, have pursued MA studies at the Centre for the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents, at the Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), and in addition to this, three Scandinavian researchers have spent longer periods of time at the Centre as visiting scholars.

The purpose of the present article is to survey the state of the art of this research field, especially pertaining to esotericism in Sweden (the country we are most familiar with), and to provide a rough map of the Scandinavian-language literature, especially for the benefit of non-Scandinavian readers.

Esotericism in the Early Modern Age

Most of the scholars who have dealt with esotericism in the Early Modern Age can be described as specialists on specific currents in the sense that the subjects of their research are not placed in a larger context, but are rather studied as independent phenomena. In the last few years, however, the trend has changed towards a more 'generalist' approach in which the subjects at hand are studied from a broader perspective, concretised by basic research paradigms (e.g. those formulated by Antoine Faivre, Wouter Hanegraaff, and Kocku von Stuckrad). Thus earlier research on topics such as alchemy, astrology, and magic often treated the subjects as something disconnected from the wider intellectual and cultural milieus in which they were being practiced. New research tends to criticise this approach and instead often emphasises the interrelationship of the subject with its context. An illustrative example of this new approach is Carl-Michael Edenborg's thesis *Alkemins skam: den alkemiska traditionens utstötning ur offentligheten* (The Shame of Alchemy: the Expulsion of the Alchemical Tradition from the Public Sphere), published in 2002. In his thesis Edenborg questions the assumption that alchemy disappeared from the scene at the end of the eighteenth century due to the emergence of modern chemistry. Instead, modernity itself is identified as the reason for the waning of alchemy. The thesis analyses the main discourses (such as ridicule and shaming) whereby alchemy was expelled from the public sphere, as well as the strategies developed by alchemists themselves to combat this expulsion.

Other works that have a more general approach to esotericism is Susanna Åkerman's research on the Swedish Queen Christina and the Rosicrucian movement in Scandinavia, particularly her book *Rose Cross over the Baltic: the Spread of Rosicrucianism in Northern Europe* (1998). Jole Shackelford and his research on Paracelsism in Scandinavia should also be mentioned. Perhaps not very surprisingly, both Rosicrucianism and Paracelsism in Scandinavia reflected the way in which these currents had developed on the Continent, particularly in the German-speaking world. It is thus perhaps a bit misleading to speak of a 'Roscircrucian movement' during the seventeenth century in Scandinavia since no Rosicrucian organisation existed at that time. Instead, Rosicrucianism was spread through a number of loosely formed networks consisting of individuals with an interest in the Rosicrucian manifestos and the teachings connected to these.

Apart from Emanuel Swedenborg—who has received wide international attention from a long line of scholars—the individual with perhaps the greatest influence on Swedish esotericism in the early modern age was Johannes Bureus (1568–1652). He developed his own particular form of Swedish esotericism, mixing runes, Old Norse myths, kabbalah, astrology, Hermeticism and magic into a system that Bureus called Adulruna or Gothic Kabbalah. This system has been thoroughly explored by Thomas Karlsson in *Adulrunan och den götiska kabbalan* (2005). Karlsson is currently finishing his doctoral thesis on Bureus at Stockholm University.

The eighteenth century saw the proliferation of numerous secret or initiatory societies throughout Scandinavia. A vast amount of literature has been published on the subject, but unfortunately this consists mainly of either polemical anti-Masonic literature, or apologetic literature produced by Masons themselves. The largest and most significant of these societies was the Order of Freemasonry, which in Scandinavia went through an intense esoteric period between 1770 and 1810. Esoteric currents and practices such as ritual magic, alchemy, kabbalah, astrology and Christian theosophy set their mark on the rituals of initiation at that time, and various esoteric quasi-Masonic organisations sprung up, which were regarded by their members as inner orders of Freemasonry.

By the early 1780s Duke Charles had gathered around him a small circle of esotericists including persons such as Gustav Adolph Reuterholm (1756–1813), Johan Gabriel Oxenstierna (1750–1818), Adolf Fredrik Falkenberg af Trystorp (1745–1802), Carl Björnberg (1735–90), and at a later stage Carl Adolf Boheman (1764–1831). This group functioned,

to a certain extent, as an inner and highly secret elite within Swedish Freemasonry. This can be ascertained from the fact that many of the members of this small circle received the highest degrees of Freemasonry directly from Duke Charles himself in his private sanctuary at the Royal Palace, without having to go through the preliminary St John and St Andrew degrees. Perhaps the most prominent figure in this secret cabal was the obscure Gustaf Björnram (1743–1801) who entered the scene in 1780 as an apprentice of the arcane sciences. The form of magic that Björnram performed was chiefly concerned with communicating with beings in other spheres, such as angels and spirits, and his *modus operandi* resembles that of the spiritualism of the nineteenth century. A manuscript written by Reuterholm, 'Record of Magical Workings' (*Magisk Arbets Iornal, författad af Gustaf Adolph Reuterholm*: MS. 121.44, Library of the Swedish Order of Freemasonry), written around 1783/4, gives a unique picture of the sort of esoteric activities which occupied Reuterholm and his fellow magicians at the Swedish court at the time.

Other esoteric orders active in Sweden at this time included *Metatron* and *D-E-L-U*. The first of these two orders was probably founded as early as (or before) the 1740s. According to a few surviving manuscripts (now in the archives of the Swedish Grand Lodge), *Metatron* was a hermetic-kabbalistic order that was critical of the Order of Freemasonry, which they considered to have revealed too much of the arcane sciences. The name *Metatron* indicates that the society belonged to an apocalyptic-enochian tradition that dealt with the communication with higher beings, such as angels. *D-E-L-U*, or *The Elect of the Eternal Light* (*Det Eviga Ljusets Utvalde*) was founded by the Mason and esotericist Carl Adolf Boheman in 1802. Boheman was, for a number of years, the confidant of Duke Charles, and shared his interest in magic, alchemy, kabbalah and high degree Freemasonry. *D-E-L-U* differed from more traditional forms of Freemasonry in that it accepted both men and women—something which remains unacceptable in most Masonic systems to this day. The symbolism of the rituals was taken from alchemy and Christian kabbalah, and although the organisation existed for only a short period of time at least two lodges were founded, the Yellow Rose and the White Rose. The purpose of the organisation appears to have been to create an inner order of Freemasonry in Scandinavia. Apart from a few articles and BA and MA level papers, there exists no modern scholarly research on these forms of esotericism in Sweden.

The scant academic research on Freemasonry in Sweden has to a large extent been dominated by 'the Lamm paradigm', a paradigm associated with the literary historian Martin Lamm and his influential work

Upplysningstidens romantik (The Romanticism of the Enlightenment), published in 1918–20. In this work Lamm described Freemasonry and similar initiatory societies as expressions of an irrational undercurrent that was in opposition to the ideals and principles of the Enlightenment—and influential Masons such as Gustav Adolph Reuterholm and King Charles XIII were seen as the ‘enemies of the light’. It is only in recent years that this polemical and over-simplified view of Freemasonry and Western esotericism has begun to be questioned. For instance, the Finnish historian of ideas Henrik Stenius dealt with Freemasonry as part of the development of the bourgeoisie in his thesis *Frivilligt, jämlikt, samfällt: Föreningsväsendets utveckling i Finland fram till 1900-talets början med speciell hänsyn till massorganisationens principens genombrott* (Voluntary, Equal, United: The development of associations in Finland up to the 20th century with special emphasis on the emergence of the mass-organisation principle, Helsingfors, 1987). A similar approach was adopted by Anders Simonsen in his thesis *Bland hederligt folk – organiserat sällskapsliv och borgerlig formering i Göteborg 1755–1820* (Amongst the Honest – Social Life Organised by the People and Bourgeoisie in Göteborg 1755–1820, Göteborg, 2001) in which he analysed a number of initiatory and social societies at a local level. In his thesis *Svenska Pommern – kulturmöten och identifikation 1720–1815* (Swedish Pomerania – Cultural Encounters and Identification 1720–1815, Lund, 2003) Andreas Önnerfors discussed the role of Masonic lodges as platforms for social interaction between Swedes and Germans in Swedish Pomerania. In the same year one of the present authors, Henrik Bogdan, defended his thesis *From Darkness to Light: Western Esoteric Rituals of Initiation* in which he analysed the development of Masonic rituals of initiation from the early 1700s to the 1950s. In 2004 Önnerfors and Bogdan arranged the first academic conference on Freemasonry ever to be held in Sweden. This conference, called ‘Between Mysticism and Power Politics: Swedish Freemasonry and the European Enlightenment’, was held at Lund University, with the participation of leading scholars in the field from all over Europe. Önnerfors has also created an online database listing Swedish Freemasons from the eighteenth century; the database includes over 4,300 names.

Esotericism since the Early Nineteenth Century

When perusing literature on esotericism in the last two centuries, one gets the impression that Scandinavia is a geographic and cultural periphery. ‘Scandinavian esotericism’ is to a large extent an adaptation of

currents that have arisen abroad. Perhaps surprisingly, the relatively few local innovations that exist are extremely poorly documented. Arguably, the most significant Scandinavian-based currents are the work of Martinus, hylozoics, the Linbu movement, and the Dragon Rouge movement. English-language literature on the first three is almost non-existent; the last is documented in one doctoral thesis.

The most influential Scandinavian esotericist after Swedenborg is probably the Dane Martinus Thomsen (1890–1981), generally known only by his given name Martinus. Biographical passages in his works and in the writings of his followers relate how Martinus, at the age of 31, experienced an expansion of his consciousness, allowing him to formulate a vast and comprehensive account of the spiritual evolution of all living entities in the world. For the remainder of his life, Martinus was an active writer and lecturer. His collected works comprise approximately forty publications, including *Livets bog* (Book of Life, 7 volumes published between 1932 and 1960). Apart from an article or two in Danish, and two unpublished Master's theses, existing literature on Martinus is overwhelmingly partisan in nature.

Hylozoics is a movement (or technically, an audience cult) inspired by a theosophical worldview. The founder of hylozoics was Henrik von Zeipel (1882–1971), who wrote under the pseudonym Henry T. Laurency. Von Zeipel's books are distributed by the Henry T. Laurency Publishing Foundation, led by Lars Adelskogh (b. 1950). Adelskogh has been accused of anti-Semitism, allegations which have made hylozoics a controversial movement. Adelskogh has published Swedish-language translations of David Icke's conspiracy-based books and has himself written on revisionist history. Although Laurency's books are readily available, there is very little literature on his works, or on hylozoics in the contemporary religious landscape, and to our knowledge there are no scholarly studies at all.

The *Linbu movement* is a small new religious movement based on the teachings of the Norwegian Hallstein Farestveit. The rather secretive movement is mainly represented in Sweden. Core members live a communal life, and follow a way of living that is said to combine Christian ideas with the teachings of Gurdjieff. Again, there is very little information to be obtained regarding this movement.

Whereas the four currents presented above represent the most locally innovative forms of Scandinavian esotericism in the post-1800 period, a much broader palette consists of forms of esotericism that are international in scope and which have been adopted with varying modifications in a local, Scandinavian context. Although there is substantially

more literature on such currents originating in other countries or modelled on esoteric trends from abroad, the scholarly coverage is very uneven. Some major currents, and the scholarly work that has been done on them, will be briefly surveyed here.

Somewhat surprisingly, *fin-de-siècle* occultism in Scandinavia is a virtually unexplored field of research in terms of both international and local occultist organisations. For instance, both the *Martinist Order* and *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* were established at the end of the 19th century in Sweden. The *Martinist Order* was founded in 1891 by the French occultist Dr Gérard Encausse (1865–1916) together with Augustin Chaboseau (1868–1946), and their teachings derived to a large extent from the writings of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803) and Martinès de Pasqually (d. 1774). Allegedly, the *Martinist Order* had no less than seven lodges in Sweden, and it was also, again allegedly, established in Norway and Denmark. The *Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* was established around 1884 and it was particularly active in the United States, England and France. This organisation was unusual in that it stressed the importance of the practical side of occultism whereas the majority of occultist organisations at the turn of the last century had a more philosophical and theoretical approach. What is particularly conspicuous about *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* in Sweden is that it cooperated with the *Theosophical Society*, something which was very unusual in other countries. In fact, beginning in 1898, a journal entitled *Psyche*, later *Aur, Tidskrift för Esoteriskt Studium* (*Psyche/Aur, Journal for Esoteric Studies*) was published exclusively for the benefit of the members of the spiritualist organisations, the *Martinist Order*, the *Theosophical Society*, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*, *The Temple*, *The Universal Brotherhood*, as well as the F.M.O. (the latter probably an abbreviation for Fri-Murare Orden, most likely some form of irregular Freemasonry). The journal was published at least up to 1910.

There are and have been a number of magical and occultist movements in the Scandinavian milieu. In Sweden, *Dragon Rouge* (*Ordo Draconis et Atri Adamantis*) stands out as one of the most well-known occultist movements. Founded in 1989 by a group of teenagers in Stockholm, it quickly caught the attention of the media which labelled it a satanic group. By the mid-90s, the movement had established itself throughout Sweden and its membership exceeded 500 people, which is a comparatively high number for a Swedish alternative spiritual organisation. During the second half of the 1990s, *Dragon Rouge* became less visible in the mass media and its membership dwindled. However, this period was also characterised by an increasing maturity of the organisa-

tion: stricter rules for local lodges were created, and a wealth of written material was produced for the members. Today, Dragon Rouge has established lodges in countries such as Germany, Poland and Italy and is thus the first Swedish occultist new religious movement to become an international movement.

Dragon Rouge is often described as a left hand path organisation. The practical aspect of the left hand path, as defined by Dragon Rouge, is antinomianism. A key idea within the movement is that man is bound, and thereby restricted, by unconscious norms and values. In order to progress spiritually it is necessary to free oneself from these unconscious bonds, and create conscious norms and ideals instead. The antinomianism of Dragon Rouge can thus be interpreted as a way of becoming conscious of aspects that are buried in the unconscious. In practice, this is achieved through the use of symbols that are normally interpreted as evil or destructive. According to Dragon Rouge doctrine, antinomianism is the means to accomplish self-deification. Man is potentially divine, and it is only when he or she becomes divine that free will can be reached. Using this free will, it is believed that the disciple is able to create his or her own universe, thereby becoming not only a god, but a god of creation or demiurge. The goal of the initiatory system of Dragon Rouge is thus not an end in itself (self-deification) but merely the beginning of a new process of creation that takes place according to the will of the magician. Dragon Rouge has been documented in one recent dissertation by Kennet Granholm, *Embracing the Dark* (2005).

The 1990s saw the establishment of a number of international occultist organisations in Scandinavia, including Ordo Templi Orientis, The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Servants of the Light, and Temple of Set, and a number of indigenous pagan organisations were also founded in this period (although paganism in Scandinavia goes back at least to the 1970s). Apart from Granholm's thesis relatively little research has been done on these occultist movements in Sweden.

Scandinavian Enlightenment and Romantic esotericism have received very little attention from scholars publishing in any major language. In Swedish, however, there is a body of scholarship dating back to the early twentieth century. In 1916, Albert Nilsson published *Svensk Romantik: Den Platonska strömningen* (Swedish Romanticism: The Platonic Current), where he surveyed the interest in what he called 'mystical Platonism'. Esotericism as a concept did not exist for Nilsson, who surveyed his material as a literary and philosophical current. In 1918–20 the aforementioned Martin Lamm published his two-tome work *Upplysningens romantic* (The Romanticism of the Enlightenment),

in which he pushed the chronology further back. The idea that the Enlightenment also comprised a mystical component, today particularly explored in the German realm by Monica Neugebauer-Wölk, can be found fully formed in this work from nearly a century ago.

Despite his intellectual roots in literary criticism, Lamm viewed Enlightenment ‘mysticism’ as a current of cultural and intellectual history, and explicitly not as a specifically literary current. Nevertheless, it is the literary expression that is privileged in Lamm’s work. Again, for Lamm, the term esotericism is not part of his analytic vocabulary; his mystical Enlightenment includes not only such clearly ‘esoteric’ themes as Masonry, but also more general pre-Romantic and Rousseauian elements such as an anti-modernist primitivism (in which the Scythians, surprisingly, are singled out as examples), a cult of nature, a predilection for the emotions, and a belief in the goodness of the individual unspoilt by the corrupting influences of education.

Mesmerism, Lamm suggests, is a crucial component of ‘Enlightenment mysticism’; nevertheless it remains a less central part of Lamm’s oeuvre, perhaps precisely because it is not concerned so much with literature, art and ideas, as with praxis. The topic was to be dealt with extensively in Karin Johannisson’s doctoral dissertation *Magnetisörernas tid: den animala magnetismen i Sverige*, completed in 1974 (The Age of Mesmerizers: Animal Magnetism in Sweden). Johannisson documents the early reception of mesmerism and its cultural and social importance in Sweden. Mesmerism entered a cultural climate already primed by Swedenborg to accept the existence of an invisible realm accessible to those whose senses had been heightened. Newspaper reports as early as the late 1770s prepared the way for the first visit by a French mesmerist, a certain M. Marais, in 1785. Mesmerism spread not least via an institutionalized Exegetic and Philanthropic Society, founded as early as 1786. Johannisson’s dissertation highlights the importance of Per Gustaf Cederschjöld (1782–1848), Professor of Medicine at the prestigious Karolinska Institute. A range of apparently paranormal phenomena described in German mesmerist literature appear in his treatments, from clairvoyance to the presumed contact with a spirit world.

Literary historians have also documented the main esoteric current of the Swedish Romantic era, the New School. The leading spokespersons of the New School were a group of writers centred on the poet Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom (1790–1855). German Romanticism provided a common frame of reference for the group. Schelling’s philosophy inspired a characteristically Romantic picture of man as a creature whose connection with nature, once whole and immediate, was now broken.

Beginning shortly before 1810, they proclaimed the rise of a new age in which poet-prophets endowed with the ability to enter into a higher state could decode the manifestations of the divine in the everyday world, and bring about the reintegration of man. The circle of writers was united by their youth and their shared sense of opposition against a previous generation of authors who, they felt, were far too heavily influenced by the Enlightenment, an epoch and a way of writing and thinking for which they felt nothing but contempt. Atterbom, who wrote a programmatic statement of the New School, polemically characterized the Enlightenment as the work of 'dwarfs, polluting the lyre of genius'. As a symbol of their self-perception as a new and different breed of writers, many of their literary as well as their programmatic texts were published in their own short-lived journals, of which the two most important were *Polyfem* (1809–12) and *Phosphorus* (1810–13).

Whereas somewhat older currents have been viewed with interest by an earlier generation of scholars, much of the literature on later currents, i.e. forms of esotericism dating roughly from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the present day, is marked by a polemic tone. What is acceptable as long as it is conveyed in literary works is regularly presented as 'pseudo-religious' or absurd when found in later currents. Many works on theosophy, spiritualism or anthroposophy in Sweden polemicize rather than study these phenomena. This trend begins to change in the 1990s, with the appearance of more academically neutral studies.

The historian of ideas Inga Sanner discusses spiritualism and theosophy in her book *Att älska sin nästa såsom sig själv: om moraliska utopier under 1800-talet* (Loving One's Neighbour as Oneself: On Moral Utopias in the Nineteenth Century), published in 1995. Both currents are selectively examined, since the focus of interest of Sanner's book is what she defines as moral utopias.

Theosophy and anthroposophy become better documented in a doctoral dissertation by Håkan Lejon, *Historien om den antroposofiska humanismen* (The Story of Anthroposophical Humanism), published in 1997. Lejon demonstrates the importance of the theosophical and anthroposophical movements in Sweden. Theosophy was known in Sweden via public lectures (from 1887) and newspaper articles (from 1889), and a lodge was established in 1889. The self-understanding of theosophy as 'oriental wisdom' made it popular also in Sweden, which had a strong 'orientalist' current.

Theosophy spread by way of intense marketing: books were translated into Swedish; the co-founder of the Theosophical Society Henry

S. Olcott visited Stockholm in 1891. As the Society increasingly experienced rivalries between the Adyar and American factions, many Swedes sided with the Americans. The theosophists split into two distinct organizations, and the American branch, then led by Katherine Tingley, was so prominent in Sweden that the island of Visingsö was selected as the location of a major European centre. A major theosophical peace conference was held there in 1913.

In the same year, the schism took place that established the Anthroposophical Society as a distinct organization, headed by Rudolf Steiner. Soon after the split occurred in Germany, a number of Swedish lodges joined the anthroposophists. Already in January 1913, the Secretary General of the Swedish Theosophical Society resigned and came to lead the new, anthroposophical organization. In Denmark, the situation was even more acute: the entire Copenhagen lodge left the theosophical mother organization and joined the anthroposophists.

Most contemporary esoteric movements are only scantily documented. Among the theosophically inspired movements found in Scandinavia, Summit Lighthouse can be mentioned, and the network of people interested in the writings of Alice Bailey. In both cases, there is no scholarly literature at all. The same can be said of the reception and influence of Jung's ideas in Scandinavia, a subject on which there is a considerable amount of partisan literature but no scholarship at all.

The loose form of religiosity often subsumed under the umbrella term 'New Age' is better documented. There are, for example, general and historical overviews, sociological studies, more specialized surveys of the role of alternative medicine, and a field-based investigation of the role of astrology. We have seen how many forms of early esotericism in Sweden were connected to the social and intellectual elites. Although New Age religiosity remains a topic viewed with scepticism by intellectuals, New Age thinking was to a considerable extent also ushered in through a channel representing the higher echelons of society. For a number of years, the major Swedish conservative daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* featured articles on 'alternative' topics.

To conclude, several esoteric currents have played a significant role in the Swedish (and more broadly, Scandinavian) religious landscape, and have been endorsed by prominent individuals. In view of their influence, many of these currents are surprisingly understudied. At the time of writing, the authors of the present article are editing an English-language encyclopaedic survey with contributions by nearly all scholars working on esotericism in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, covering practically all major esoteric currents in these countries. This

survey, which is expected to appear in print in 2010, will integrate the study of Scandinavian esotericism into the field as a whole.

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KENNET GRANHOLM

Post-Secular Esotericism?

Some Reflections on the Transformation of Esotericism

In the last fifteen years the study of Western esotericism has become an academic discipline in its own right. The vast majority of research conducted within the field is focused on older, historical developments, with recent expressions of esotericism receiving far less attention. This has a bearing on the conceptual and methodological tools used in the field as well. The dominant definition of Western esotericism developed by Antoine Faivre might not be entirely suitable when looking at its contemporary expressions. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries Western societies have undergone major processes of transformation, resulting in what many sociologists variously term late modernity, liquid modernity, post-modernity, high modernity (and so forth). Naturally, these transformations affect esoteric spiritualities as well. In this article I will discuss late modern societal transformation and relate this to Western esotericism.

Western Esotericism

There have been many different scholarly conceptions and definitions of what esotericism actually is. In this context I will only provide a brief discussion of two theoretical models. Further information on other interpretations can be found in, for example, Hanegraaff 1998, 2001 and 2004, and Granholm, forthcoming.

In 1992 Antoine Faivre formulated a characterization of Western esotericism which has become very popular among scholars of esotericism. It can even be regarded as one of the central factors leading to the study of esotericism as a discipline in its own right. Faivre posits Western esotericism as ‘an ensemble of spiritual currents in modern and contemporary Western history which share a certain *air de famille*, as well as the form of thought which is its common denominator’ (Faivre 1998: 2). This collection of spiritual currents is furthermore characterized by

four intrinsic and two extrinsic features. The intrinsic characteristics consist of the ideas of correspondences and living nature, the primacy of mediation and imagination as paths to spiritual insight, and the goal of transmutation. The secondary, non-essential elements consist of specific modes of transmission and a view of the concordance of religious philosophies (Faivre 1994: 10–15). Furthermore, Faivre determines that Western esotericism proper came into existence during the Renaissance, when different religious practices and traditions were combined under a common frame of reference (Hanegraaff 1996: 386–8). The problem with Faivre's model is that it is presented as strictly prescriptive, where all the main characteristics need to be present in order for something to be defined as belonging to esoteric thought. As the definition is based on a historically limited source material, Renaissance esotericism will easily appear to be more truly esoteric than later (or earlier) expressions of esotericism.

In 2005 Kocku von Stuckrad presented an alternative view of esotericism, although he did not present it as a definition *per se*. Here esotericism is regarded as a structural element in Western culture, consisting of discourses of 'higher knowledge' and 'ways of accessing higher knowledge', including mediation by higher beings and personal experiences of the divine. Stuckrad furthermore suggests that esoteric worldviews are often based on ontological monism (Stuckrad 2005a, 2005b). An important point is that no strict list of necessary attributes is presented, and this discursive approach to esotericism therefore makes it easier to discuss esotericism of various historical periods. The problem with Stuckrad's conception is that it easily becomes all too inclusive. Nonetheless, these two models of esotericism are not in absolute opposition. The idea of ontological monism in von Stuckrad's conception is similar to the characteristics of correspondences and living nature in Faivre's model. Mediation and personal experience/imagination are regarded as important ways of accessing esoteric knowledge in both conceptions.

In my opinion it would be beneficial for the study of esotericism in different epochs to assume a more inclusive model, such as the one presented by von Stuckrad. More strictly delimited models can be used for specific historical periods.

The Transformation of Esotericism

While Antoine Faivre's typology of esotericism has been much used, it has also been criticized by a number of scholars (e.g. Hanegraaff 1998: 46–7 and 2004: 508; McCalla 2001; Stuckrad 2005b: 5). The main reason is that Faivre's definition is derived from a historically limited source material, and that the field under study easily appears static and unchanging due to this. The Faivrean conception of esotericism is most applicable to the Renaissance period: esotericism in other periods will diverge from his model. For example, Wouter Hanegraaff proposes that as the Enlightenment may be said to have brought with it big changes for esoteric worldviews, these changes need to be properly reflected upon (Hanegraaff 1996: 406–10 and 2003). Naturally the transformation of esotericism did not start or stop with the Enlightenment. It is problematic to directly apply concepts developed on the basis of Renaissance esotericism on contemporary esotericism. Some re-interpretations are needed. I will briefly discuss some of the central changes in esotericism since the enlightenment, as documented by other scholars, and then focus on the present day situation.

Enlightenment Influences

The Enlightenment brought with it great changes in many areas of human life. Anthony Giddens identifies Enlightenment ideals, in conjunction with the industrial revolution, as the main driving forces behind the modernization of the West (Giddens 1990: 5, 1991: 55). Reason and scientific rationality were introduced as the ideals of the time, and were set in opposition to the 'superstitious, dogmatic, and barbaric' religious imperative of old. Thus, processes of secularization, where religion gradually came to lose institutional power, gained a strong foothold in Western societies. These processes did not, however, entail the death of religion and spirituality. Rather, new forms of religiosity—and esotericism—emerged, forms that strived to comply with the new rationalistic ideals and that consequently drew heavily on concepts derived from the sciences. In Wouter Hanegraaff's terms, disenchanted forms of esotericism followed. In his article 'How Magic Survived the Disenchantment of the World' Hanegraaff makes use of Lucien Lèvy-Bruhl's notions of participation and instrumental causality, and defines disenchantment as:

. . . the social pressure exerted upon human beings to deny the spontaneous tendency of participation, by accepting claims of a culturally established ideology according to which instrumental causality amounts to a worldview capable, in principle, of rationally explaining all aspects of reality (Hanegraaff 2003: 377).

Another general change was the diminishing influence of Christianity, and a consequential increasing interest in non-Christian religious traditions and non-Western cultures. Esotericists had earlier been forced to legitimate their practice as genuinely Christian, in the face of accusations of operating with demonic powers. With the Enlightenment they increasingly started to argue for the compatibility of esoteric and scientific worldviews (Hanegraaff 2003: 369–71). The interest in non-Christian cultures included ancient Egypt, India, native cultures, and pre-Christian Europe. Darwin's theory of evolution was one of the most important scientific fads of the late nineteenth century. This was incorporated in views of spiritual evolution, evident in the Theosophical Society's understanding of reincarnation. A development gaining much influence in the twentieth century was the use of the new discipline of psychology, where esoteric elements were now re-interpreted in psychological framesets, in what Hanegraaff calls 'the psychologization of religion and sacralization of psychology' (Hanegraaff 1996: 482). The Enlightenment, and modernity in itself, also saw the rise of individualism, which resulted in distinct forms of doctrinal and social organization (Hammer 2001: 51–2).

Hanegraaff identifies two major strands of post-Enlightenment esotericism; Romanticism and Occultism (Hanegraaff 1996). In his discussion of the post-Enlightenment change in esotericism, in the West, Wouter Hanegraaff relies strongly on Isaiah Berlin's work on the Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment (Hanegraaff 1996: 411–15). It is important to note, as Hanegraaff and Berlin do, that the Enlightenment was not essentially anti-religious *per se*. It included strong sentiments about the possibility and indeed necessity of arriving at absolute knowledge about the world through reason, rationality, and a recourse to essentially unchanging and definitive natural laws. Thus, the form of religiosity mostly attacked by Enlightenment philosophy was traditional, dogmatic Christianity. The Enlightenment tendencies naturally had their counter-forces, discussed by Berlin as the counter-Enlightenment. Where Enlightenment thinkers emphasized universality, objectivity, and rationality, counter-Enlightenment thinkers relied on the particular, on subjectivity, and on the irrational (or supra rational). In Hanegraaff's

understanding of Berlin the counter-Enlightenment comprises two main developments: the rise of 'historical consciousness' as a result of the rejection of the universal, and sceptical and relativistic attitudes towards universal knowledge.

Romanticism developed in the clash of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment philosophies and positions. According to Hanegraaff it arose within a stream which combined elements of enlightenment, historicism, and esotericism. Thus, romanticism is deeply indebted to Enlightenment positions, and does not involve a return to earlier, pre-Enlightenment forms of esotericism (Hanegraaff 1996: 415). For example, while 'the cosmic life-force' was considered to be beyond the rational, and thus irrational, or supra rational, reason was considered the faculty through which it could be accessed (Hanegraaff 1996: 415).

Hanegraaff considers Romantic religiosity to be the product of eighteenth century esotericism and evolutionism. It has largely retained the four major characteristics of Faivre's conceptualization of esotericism, but with a significant difference in the fourth one—the experience of transmutation. In Romanticism transmutation was reinterpreted within an evolutionist frame of reference, where the spiritual progress of both the individual and the world was teleological in nature, with both a beginning and an end (Hanegraaff 1996: 420–1).

Romanticism saw the emergence of *Naturphilosophie*, which entailed a new approach to nature. According to Antoine Faivre the Romanticist view of nature included seeing it filled with decipherable symbols which pointed to causes and factors outside nature, a readiness to regard nature as an interconnected whole rather than as separated parts, and the view of spirit and nature as combined (Faivre 1994: 82–3). A logical outcome of this philosophy was that knowledge of nature was thought also to be knowledge of oneself.

The idea of a *Philosophia Perennis*, the search for a unifying inner core of some or all religions, which would then be regarded as truth beyond history, also experienced changes in Romantic esotericism. During the Renaissance the search for an eternal philosophy had mostly been confined to the Mediterranean traditions and teachings. During Romanticism the scope of esoteric interest was broadened to include oriental cultures, which did in fact eventually become its primary focus (Faivre 1994: 86–7; Hanegraaff 2003: 377 and 2007: 44–5).

In addition to oriental traditions, interest in indigenous European pre-Christian traditions began to arise. These traditions were seen as more pure, authentic, and nature friendly than the Christian traditions. In 1891 the Christian apologist W. F. Barry coined the term neopaganism

as a critique of those showing an interest in pre-Christian pagan traditions (Hutton 1999: 19–20).

The other major post-Enlightenment stream of esotericism Wouter Hanegraaff discusses is occultism. Whilst the application of the label of occultism has been objected to by other scholars, a general consensus about the correctness of Hanegraaff's characterization exists (see Hammer 2001: 5–7; Faivre 2005: 6781). Occultism, also termed 'secularized esotericism' by Hanegraaff, entailed the reinterpretation of esoteric cosmologies in terms of the new scientific worldview. Hanegraaff terms occultism as 'all attempts by esotericists to come to terms with a disenchanted world' (Hanegraaff 1996: 422, 2005: 888). Of the characteristics listed by Faivre the ideas of correspondences and living nature were most drastically transformed. The pre-Enlightenment view of organic and divine forces imbuing the world re-emerged in the form of ideas of invisible, and impersonal, causal laws of nature. The esotericist now manipulated the *mechanism* by which nature (the world) was constituted. The adoption of pseudo-scientific discourse is one of the more important rhetorical strategies of post-Enlightenment esotericism (Hammer 2001).

Even though Hanegraaff's discussion of the effects of the Enlightenment imperatives of reason on esotericism is sound, his use of the term secularization is more problematic. He details occultism as a secularized form of esotericism and secularization not as the disappearance of religion, but as 'a profound *transformation* of religion' (Hanegraaff 2003: 358). In Hanegraaff's opinion 'secularized religion' is both religious and secularized, and 'the only thing it is not is "traditional", in the sense of resting on presuppositions which are unaffected by secularization' (Hanegraaff 1996: 409). While agreeing that the Enlightenment caused significant transformations in the European religious field, Christopher Partridge is highly critical of Hanegraaff's understanding of secularization. According to him it leads into 'a thicket of terminological and theological problems' (Partridge 2004: 40). He feels that this profound transformation must be termed something other than secularization, and that the conception of 'secularized magic' is highly problematic.

In the final decades of the twentieth century scholars of religion identified the emergence of novel forms of loosely organized and individualistically focused spiritual ideas and practices. As scholars felt that there were significant similarities in the various manifestations of these ideas and practices, although they often exhibited much variation and diversity, they were gathered under the umbrella term of 'the New Age Movement', at times expressed as 'New Age spirituality', 'New Age re-

ligion', or simply 'New Age'. The term 'New Age' was chosen due to the fact that early proponents of the identified milieu were expressing the idea that humanity as a whole was on the verge of shifting from the 'Age of Pisces' to the 'Age of Aquarius', and that a 'New Age' was thus dawning. The roots of the 'movement' were traced to the New England transcendentalists and a subsequent American metaphysical tradition (York 1995: 33), the Californian alternative spiritual and mind-expanding drug-taking milieu of the 1940s and 1950s (Heelas 1996a: 49–50; Hammer 1997: 69–79; Aadnanes 1997: 202), as well as the American counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s (Lewis & Melton 1992: xi; Ahlin 2001: 16–19). Wouter Hanegraaff discusses the connection between traditional Western esotericism and 'New Age Religion', and even though he states that these are 'worlds apart' (Hanegraaff 2007: 49) he also acknowledges the roots of the latter in the former. 'New Age Religion' is a prime example of what Hanegraaff identifies as secularized esotericism, as it consists of Western esotericism interpreted from 'distinctly modernist and secular frameworks' (Hanegraaff 2007: 49).

While most scholars have wholeheartedly embraced the concept of the 'New Age movement', there are those who acknowledge the problematic nature of this academic construct (see e.g. Sutcliffe 2003: 21–5). Scholars have been unable to present a convincing and compelling definition of the 'movement' in question, often simply presenting very inclusive lists of elements that may or may not be part of a particular 'New Age' phenomenon, discussing their linkages in terms of Wittgensteinian 'family resemblances' (see e.g. Lewis 1992: 7; Hammer 1997: 18–19; Chryssides 1999: 315). George Chryssides attempts to defend the continuing usage of the term by comparing it to other theoretical constructs such as Hinduism. He writes: 'Scholars continue to write about Hinduism, for example, usually in the full knowledge that the term is a western, etic piece of vocabulary...' and goes on to say that the term is useful as it 'has become so embedded in western thinking that it would be difficult to change it' (Chryssides 2007: 13–14). I am unconvinced by this line of argument, and I am not even sure that this is sufficient reason to continue using the term Hinduism. In regard to the term 'New Age', however, certainly it cannot be as deeply imbedded in Western thinking as the term 'Hinduism'. It has been used in scholarly contexts for less than twenty years.

Another problem is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find 'New Agers' who actually define themselves as 'New Agers', as proponents of the continuing use of the term readily agree (see e.g. Chryssides 2007: 12; Hanegraaff 2007: 29). One of the more influential pioneers in

the study of the phenomenon has even discussed the ‘Death of the New Age’ (Melton 2007: 89–91). While it can be argued that there did exist a short-lived, loosely organized spiritual movement focused on the dawning of a New Age for humanity, this movement no longer truly exists. Thus, it would, in my opinion, be prudent to forgo the term ‘New Age’ as a denomination of the ‘post-New Age’ spiritual milieu.

There certainly did exist a New Age movement, and this movement was a very significant factor—if not the most important—in the mass-popularization of esotericism. Approaching the New Age movement in this fashion has the benefit of escaping the often cumbersome lists of ‘family traits’. Naturally, not everything which is labelled under the concept ‘New Age’ will fit into the concept of ‘mass-popularized esotericism’ and at the same time some elements not included in the former might be included in the latter. In my opinion, this is not a problem.

Late Modern Societal Change

Both the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were periods of great change in the West, significantly transforming esoteric philosophies. While not downplaying the impact of these transformations, it can be argued that Western societies are currently undergoing processes of rapid societal change. Sociologists use varying terms to describe the present condition, including the Risk Society (Beck 1992), High or Late Modernity (Giddens 1990, 1991), Liquid Modernity (Bauman 2000), and Post-modernity¹ (e.g. Bauman 1992, 1997; Crook *et al.* 1992), and while there are some differences in the accounts, the following can be asserted as a general depiction: Late modernity is characterized by an ambivalent attitude towards ‘the institutions and self-evidents of modernity’ (Giddens 1991: 27–8). The ideologies of reason and rationality; the benefits of technological and scientific progress, and institutional order—which became hegemonic in Enlightenment developments—have been questioned (Giddens 1990: 10). While modernity brought with it an increased freedom for the individual to affect the course of his/her

¹ It should be noted that there is a difference in the content of the term post-modernity in the use of Bauman and in the use of Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) (and others such as Francis Fukuyama) who popularized the term. While Bauman seems to regard post-modernity largely as a phase of modernity, Lyotard and Fukuyama seem to regard it as all-together different from modernity.

life, this also introduced new uncertainties. The multiplicity of possibilities and the necessity of making choices that may have far-reaching effects may be experienced as stressful and risk-filled (as every choice could be the wrong one!).

Many scholars regard the changing dialectic of differentiation and de-differentiation as a central theme in the various stages of modernity (see Crook *et al.* 1992; Heelas 1998). With the modernization of Western societies, previously connected spheres of life were increasingly differentiated and relegated to their own separate domains. Thus, divisions between home and work, private and public, high and mass culture, as well as concepts of race and national identity, became influential social realities. In late modernity the differentiation of social and cultural spheres has intensified to the point of fragmentation, and this has paradoxically led to a form of de-differentiation, where various cultural forms co-exist side by side and flow into each other (Crook *et al.* 1992: 36–7).

Globalization has been one of the buzzwords in sociology during the last two decades. Scholars disagree on the extent of the connection between modernity and globalization, as well as on the timeframe of the latter (see Giddens 1990: 53; Pieterse 1995: 46–7; Robertson 1995: 30), but generally agree that globalization has accelerated in recent times (Waters 1995: 4; Martikainen 2004: 41). Roland Robertson, one of the central theorists in the field, defines globalization as the compression of the world and the increasing awareness of the world as one interconnected place (Robertson 1992: 8; see also Waters 1995: 3; Friedman 1995: 70). In late modernity, both of these aspects are accentuated due to advances in communication (e.g. the internet and e-mail) and transportation technologies (e.g. faster and more affordable travel and transportation of goods) (Friedman 1995: 70; Waters 1995: 33–6).

Transnationality is another central term in sociological discussion of contemporary social relations. Ulf Hannerz criticizes what he regards as the use of globalization for ‘just about any processes or relationships that somehow cross state boundaries’ (Hannerz 1996: 6). Instead he suggests the term transnational in reference to social relations and connections which are not necessarily global in context, but nonetheless transcend the boundaries of individual nation states. A benefit of choosing the term transnational over global is that the former highlights the locality of social relations, something which is often not sufficiently treated in theories on globalization (Smith 2001: 2–3). According to Michael Peter Smith, theories of globalization often dichotomize the global and the local in ways that make the two appear essentially distinct (Smith 2001:

157). Smith uses the concept translocality to denote the connections between various localities in transnational networks (Smith 2001: 169). In essence the different localities in a transnational network will affect and be affected by all other localities.

Secularization, defined by Paul Heelas as ‘the processes whereby religion (or spirituality) either disappears from the public realm of the institutional order, or disappears from the lives of individuals, or both’ (Heelas 2002: 375), was taken more or less as an indisputable fact by sociologists until the late 1970s. Even though some scholars still hold this view (e.g. Bruce 2002), the apparent resurgence of religion in the West in recent decades has caused most sociologists to drastically change their view on the matter. This renewed religiosity of the West does not, however, mean that processes of secularization never occurred (see Berger 2002: 292). Rather, what we have been experiencing in recent times is ‘de-secularization’ (Berger 2002) or ‘re-enchantment’ (Partridge 2004, 2005) of a world which, for a relatively brief time, was dominated by secularizing processes.

As discussed earlier, Wouter Hanegraaff’s conceptualization of a profound transformation of religion (and esotericism) due to Enlightenment influences is basically sound, even though it should be termed something other than secularization (Partridge 2004: 40). A possible term for this ‘profound transformation’ could be detraditionalization, as discussed in the anthology of the same name edited by Paul Heelas, Scott Lash and Paul Morris (1996). On a general level, ‘tradition’ can be defined as ‘anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past’, and is manifested in the hermeneutic, normative, legitimating and/or identity-forming aspects of a culture (Thompson 1996: 91–3). Detraditionalization can then be regarded as the process in which some or all of these factors lose their influence in human life. In regard to religion, Paul Heelas defines detraditionalization as ‘the decline of the belief in pre-given or natural orders of things’ where individuals ‘are themselves called upon to exercise authority in the face of disorder and contingency which is thereby generated’ (Heelas 1996b: 2). Heelas names the two main scholarly approaches to detraditionalization ‘the radical thesis’ and ‘the coexistence thesis’ (Heelas 1996b: 2–11). In the former, detraditionalization is thought to involve the more or less total replacement of traditional values, beliefs and ways of conduct with new ones. In the latter, detraditionalization is considered to occur alongside tradition-maintenance, rejuvenation and tradition-construction, and does so in different ways (competition, dialogue, interpretation).

Connected to the concepts of secularization, pluralization and detra-

ditionalization, a central theme in the sociology of religion for the last decade has been the emergence of new forms of alternative spirituality at the expense of traditional institutional religion (see e.g. Heelas 1996a, 2002; Partridge 2004, 2005; Vink 2007). Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, chief architects of this school of theorizing, have termed this the 'spiritual revolution' (see Heelas & Woodhead 2005; Heelas 2002). Heelas in particular dichotomizes traditional religion, characterized by a focus on external authority, with spirituality, in which the ultimate authority is attributed to the individual (Heelas 2002). Even though it can be argued that profound changes are occurring in the contemporary Western religious field, the doctrinal and practical components of these forms of religiosity (or spirituality) are not particularly novel. In many cases what is assumed to be 'new' in these forms of religiosity can already be found in Renaissance esotericism.

While the specific elements of contemporary spirituality may not be new, it appears that esoteric components are becoming increasingly popular in the Western religious milieu (see e.g. Sjödin 1998; Partridge 2004, 2005). Christopher Partridge identifies a shift away from Christian culture and towards 'occulture'—i.e. 'the spiritual/mythic/paranormal background knowledge that informs the plausibility structures of Westerners' (2004: 187). In his two-volume work, *The Re-Enchantment of the West*, he quite convincingly demonstrates the popularity of esoteric ideas in contemporary Western society, discussing 'occultural' influences in literature and film (Partridge 2004: 119–42, and in its 'dark' variants 2005: 239–46), popular music (2004: 143–84, and in its 'dark' variants 2005: 246–55), ecological concerns (2005: 42–81), internet spirituality (2005: 135–64), UFO beliefs (2005: 165–2006, and in its 'dark' variants 2005: 255–76). At a number of conferences I have myself discussed how esotericism comes to expression in popular music, TV-series and comic books. Esotericism is used as a theme in cultural products because it sells, and it sells because somewhere it strikes a chord with the consumer.

Post-Secular Esotericism?

In respect of the general processes of globalization, detraditionalization and re-enchantment certain assumptions can be made with regard to esoteric spirituality in the late modern West.

As an effect of the ease of communication provided by the internet, the formation of transnational networks over vast geographical dis-

tances is made possible. For example, magic orders such as the Temple of Set and Dragon Rouge, neither with a membership of more than 500, have members throughout the Western world, and beyond. Both orders maintain members-only intranets containing extensive amounts of order material in electronic formats and including the possibility of communicating via web forums. Naturally, this holds true for less organized communities as well. Many neo-pagan groups, particularly Wiccan groups, operate solely over the internet (see Arthur 2002; Lövheim 2003). Translocal tendencies are likewise obvious in the transnational networks of contemporary esoteric movements. The fact that the web page of a relatively small organization such as Dragon Rouge is available in ten different languages displays the readiness to cater for different nationalities and language-groups. Dragon Rouge also represents a good example of different localities adding to the whole transnational network. Lodges and ritual groups located in Poland, Germany, Italy and Finland have all disseminated distinctly local themes, such as treatment of Old Slavic deities and the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, in order-wide forums. Some of these themes are then appropriated by members in different localities, where they are transformed to suit their new context (see Granholm 2007).

With increasingly accentuated globalization and transnational networking, the 'Western' aspect of Western esoterism becomes somewhat problematic. As Wouter Hanegraaff has shown, influences from eastern religious traditions, mainly Hindu and Buddhist elements, have become influential in post-Enlightenment esoteric spiritualities. However, he also notes that these influences 'have only been adopted to the extent that they could be assimilated into already existing, western frameworks' (Hanegraaff 2007: 45). However, I would question the definiteness of this seemingly one-way appropriation. In an interesting conference paper Gordan Djurdjevic (2007) has discussed the syncretistic intermingling of eastern yogic philosophy and practices and Western esoterism. At the suggestion of the British magician Aleister Crowley, Lawrence Amos Miles travelled to India in search of occult wisdom. He was initiated into the tantric Ādi Nāth Sampradāya, as well as a number of other yogic traditions, and assumed the name Shri Gurudev Mahendranath Dadaji. Due to increasing contact with Western disciples, he decided to introduce his teachings to the West, and in doing so infused them with concepts from Western esoteric traditions. In this case, and I would assume in many others in contemporary times as well, it becomes increasingly difficult to describe this simply as a case of Indian religiosity clad in the robes of Western esoteric discourse, or *vice versa*.

With the possibilities afforded by advances in communication technology and the ease of travel, the mixing of Western and Eastern concepts and ideas will probably increase.

Detraditionalization is apparent in many forms of esoteric spirituality since at least the late nineteenth century. For example, the appropriation of Indian religious concepts by the Theosophical Society (founded in 1888) and the inclusion of Egyptian mythology in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (also founded in 1888) were essentially separated from their original, traditional contexts. In the process of reembedding these elements into new contexts they were also significantly transformed. In the late twentieth century the eclecticism and pluralistic ethos of occultism has been taken to new levels. Whereas the Theosophical Society was selective in its eclecticism, mainly borrowing from a limited number of Indian religious traditions, late twentieth century esotericism commonly broadens its scope of influence to include every imaginable source. In a magic order such as Dragon Rouge, Old Norse mythology is effortlessly combined with Tantra, Kabbalah, East Asian religious notions, Muslim mysticism, UFO beliefs, and beyond (see Granholm 2005). In addition, academic studies in the fields of anthropology, sociology, history, religious studies, physics, and so forth, are becoming increasingly notable sources of inspiration. This is also apparent in mass-popularized esotericism, or 'the New Age movement', where elements from nearly all religious traditions, past and present, are explored for spiritual inspiration. This contemporary form of esotericism also frequently displays an ambivalent attitude to modern science and the domination of reason and rationality.

From a certain perspective, many forms of contemporary esotericism could be termed 'post-secular'. I have chosen this term, as it places the focus on late modern attempts to 're-enchant' the human existential world, while at the same time engaging in a polemical dialogue with scientific rationality. I again call attention to Wouter Hanegraaff's definition of disenchantment:

. . . the social pressure exerted upon human beings to deny the spontaneous tendency of participation, by accepting claims of a culturally established ideology according to which instrumental causality amounts to a worldview capable in principle of rationally explaining all aspects of reality (Hanegraaff 2003: 377).

Put simply, participation can be understood as a tendency towards emotive, analogical, non-reasoning thought and action, whereas instrumen-

tal causality can be understood as a tendency to seek the reasons for events in the world in terms of material causation.² Re-enchantment in post-secular esotericism can be defined as an active effort to acknowledge, embrace and seek affective and analogical thinking and action, while at the same time underscoring the insufficiency of rationality. A key point is the awareness of the ideology of instrumental causality. Post-secular esotericism is not traditionalist in character, or seeking to re-embody pre-Enlightenment esotericism, and it does make use of the faculties of rationality, scientific findings, and the offerings of contemporary society. The central idea is that when it comes to magic and esoteric practice, rationality is simply not the right tool for the job, and when scientific or pseudo-scientific discourse is used, care is taken not to overstress the importance of it. Post-secular esotericism could be termed 'anti-modernist', in the fashion of certain post-modern philosophers. In certain ways this post-secular esotericism resembles the 'romantic stream of esotericism' as defined by Hanegraaff (1996: 409).

In more detail, post-secular esotericism displays traits of both pre- and earlier post-Enlightenment esotericism. Both scientific and esoteric worldviews and explanatory models are combined. Nature is viewed as animated by active personal forces and correspondences are experienced through non-causal agencies, while at other times the rhetoric of impersonal causal forces is used. These are regarded as different, but not necessarily incompatible, models of explanation, and are both employed in order to achieve what is considered to be a total picture of existence. A collection of seemingly incompatible notions are glued together to form a functionalistic *bricolage*. (See Granholm, forthcoming.)

In addition, the evolutionary discourses of earlier post-Enlightenment esotericism are abandoned in post-modern disavowals of 'grand narratives'. Instead progress is increasingly being sought and advocated on a purely individual level.

The popularization of esoteric themes, apparent in the 1970s and 1980s (The New Age Movement), has been capitalized on in a grand scale. Esoteric elements have an increasing presence in all forms of popular culture. It is here in particular that new concepts and methodological tools need to be developed.

2 In Hanegraaff's text: participation is 'an affective rather than rational stratum in human thought and action . . . analogical rather than logical, and is not reduced to primary reasoning' (Hanegraaff 2003: 375). Instrumental causality, a spontaneous 'tendency to suspect things that happen in the world to be the result of material causation, and to explain events in this fashion' (Levy-Bruhl, quoted in Hanegraaff 2003: 376).

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NILS G. HOLM

Freemasonry and Its Social Position in Finland

Introduction

Minorities throughout the world have often been the object of suspicion and even persecution. Best known in the European context is the treatment the Jews had to withstand over the centuries. It ranged from segregation and defamation to persecution and the threat of total extermination. Many other minorities such as the Romanies (gypsies) and, more recently, immigrants of different kinds have been subjected to negative treatment, which is often referred to as segregation.

Freemasonry, with its roots in the seventeenth century, also had to suffer insults and sometimes even attacks from society (MacNulty 2007: 22–6). In the following I shall look more closely at Freemasonry in Finland, where it first appeared in the mid-eighteenth century, in the light of the suspicion and negative treatment it had to suffer. The deprecatory attitude of individuals and various social organisations towards Freemasonry varied over time, but there was often an underlying suspicion among the general public. This was expressed in the form of legends and folk tales of a more or less dramatic nature (Bergstrand 1956).

Sociologists and psychologists have sought explanations for the defamation and persecution of minorities. Many theories have been put forward. Among the most important is perhaps the scapegoat reaction, the projection of aggressions and envy. When groups in a community experience threats and stress, they naturally seek an outlet for their aggressions by projecting them onto groups with a lower status. If, moreover, the minorities are successful culturally or economically, envy may be seen as the underlying cause of this. This can lead to direct persecution. If the group that is the focus of suspicion also has characteristics that the community links with secretiveness, then the suspicions and rumours are even more easily sustained (Eitinger 1985: 132–46).

Finnish Freemasonry in Brief

Freemasonry came to Sweden in the eighteenth century, primarily from France. At this time Sweden and Finland formed a single state. As early as 1756 the first lodge intended for Finland, the St Augustine Lodge, was set up in Stockholm. In 1762 the Lodge transferred its activities to Helsinki. This was because most of its members were officers posted at the fortress of Sveaborg (Fi. Viapori, now Suomenlinna) outside the city. The Lodge's activities continued for several decades with little variation in the degree of activity. In the members' roll for the years 1762–1808, 460 names are listed. All belonged to the Swedish-speaking section of the population and some held a high social standing in Finland. The Freemasonry that flourished among the higher ranks of the organisation also reached Finland during the Swedish era. The Finnish chapter was set up in Turku in 1778 and the Andrew Lodge Phoenix started its activities in 1790. However, in both cases the activity was modest (Nyberg 2005: 10–35; Bergroth 2006: 29–42; Ahtokari 2000: 75–100).

After the war of 1808–9 between Sweden and Russia, Finland's more than 600-year-long association with Sweden was broken and Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Tsar. It was decided that the Freemasons should cease their activities because contacts with Stockholm were broken. In 1822 the Tsar gave the order that Freemasonry was to be forbidden in the Russian Empire. Additions to the ban were made in 1826 and 1848 (Ahtokari 2000: 95–112).

Following Finland's independence at the end of 1917, it was not long before Freemasonry was resurrected. The development led to Finland having two Masonic organisations. The one that operates mainly in Finnish has its source of inspiration in New York, USA, and follows a Scottish-American system. Its first lodge, Suomi Lodge No. 1, was set up in 1922. More lodges were soon established in the Finnish system and consequently it was possible to found a Grand Lodge for Finland in 1924 (Ekman 1997: 15–40; Ahtokari 2000: 113–32; Bergroth 2006: 34–42).

The other Masonic organisation works along the lines of the Swedish Order of Freemasons and is really a revival of the eighteenth-century Freemason tradition. The St Augustine Lodge was revived in 1923. The Swedish system developed quickly and many brother organisations and lodges were founded in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland: in Turku (Swe. Åbo), Vaasa (Swe. Vasa), Pietarsaari (Swe. Jakobstad) and Mariehamn (Bergroth 1987: 10–16; Bergroth 2000: 49–100).

The 1930s proved to be a time of ordeal for Freemasons in Finland. I will return to this point later. During the Second World War activities

among the two Masonic organisations in Finland were discontinued more or less voluntarily. It was only in the early 1950s that activities were seriously resumed. Freemasonry flourished during the decades that followed even though certain negative reactions could be observed, especially in the 1980s. A study made at the Tampere Research Centre of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Finland showed that Freemasons respect Christian values and social institutions more highly than Finnish men of the same generation generally do (Heino 1986; Heino 1995; Ahtokari 2000: 135 ff.).

What is particularly characteristic of the mainly Finnish-speaking organisation is that the three first grades—those referred to as Blue or Johannes Lodges—are supplemented by several independent, associated Freemason systems. Most of these—following the British pattern—belong to the York rite. They include, for example, Markmaster Masons, Royal Ark Mariner Masons, Royal Arch, Knights Templar, Knights of Malta, Red Cross of Constantine, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and Knights of St. John the Evangelist. In addition to this there is the triple Scottish rite, which is Christian by nature. Furthermore, in the Finnish system there is a research lodge known as the Minerva Lodge No. 27. The Freemason magazine published in Finland is called *Koilliskulma* (Northeast Corner) (Huovinen 1990; Ahtokari 1998; Ahtokari & Ekman 2004). The Finnish Grand Lodge was recognised by Britain in 1927 and by the Swedish Order of Freemasons in 1948. In 2006, the Finnish system had more than 6,000 members.

The Swedish Order of Freemasons has also developed strongly in Finland, although it is considerably smaller than the Finnish-language system. The Swedish order has a uniform system where members advance from grade I to grade X (with grade XI for the highest ranking officials). The main centre in Finland is situated in Helsinki where the Grand Chapter operates. It is led by a Chapter Master. There is also the Scottish St Andrew's Lodge Phoenix with members of grades IV–VI. In 2003 the Steward's Lodge Österbotten was founded in Vaasa, with grades VII–VIII. The St Andrew's Lodge Henrik Tavast in Pietarsaari operates according to the St Andrew rite. Brother organisations are to be found in two places: Erasmus (grades IV–IX) in Turku and Morgonstjärnan (Morning Star) (grades IV–XI) in Mariehamn. Further Johannes Lodges in addition to St Augustine in Helsinki exist in towns such as Turku, Mariehamn, Vaasa, Pietarsaari, Kokkola (Swe. Karleby), Espoo–Kau-niainen (Swe. Esbo–Grankulla), Porvoo (Swe. Borgå), Tammisaari (Swe. Ekenäs) and Tampere (Swe. Tammerfors). Their joint magazine is *Föreningsbandet* (Bond of Union), which was first published in 1993.

Membership in 2006 numbered just over 1,100 (cf. *Matrikel över Svenska Frimurare Orden* . . . 2006).

Negative Attitudes towards Freemasonry

It is well-known that Freemasons have been the object of negative attitudes among the general public. There are many legends and stories about the Freemasons' dreadful rites and behaviour. It is quite common to hear that they indulged in the defilement of corpses and used babies in their bloody rituals. A widely entertained idea is that members of the brotherhood are closely bonded and that individual brothers would be helped in difficult times even if this involved contravening the law of the land. It has also been thought that the Freemasons' network has ties sometimes with the political far right, sometimes with the far left. In dictatorships, in particular, Freemasonry has been an object of suspicion (Bergstrand 1956; Ahtokari 2000: 135 ff.).

There is evidence that the Lutheran church was suspicious of Freemasonry from the time when it was first introduced into Finland. In 1769 the diocesan chapter of Borgå expressed its doubts about Freemasonry and its ideas. We may note that these suspicions existed on an ideological level (Ahtokari 2000: 172).

During the time when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy, Freemasonry, as I have already noted, was banned. The Russian central authorities in St Petersburg were very careful to ensure that no revolutionary or secessionist groups should gain a foothold in the Russian Empire. Individuals nevertheless engaged in Freemasonry outside the country's borders. Furthermore, legends about the Freemasons were widespread during this period even though there was probably little direct contact with Freemasonry.

The following period during which Freemasonry became the object of revilement was the 1930s. The ideology of National Socialism that emerged in Germany sought expression for its repressed needs and aggressions. This meant that Freemasons and Jews became objects of hate in Nazi Germany. It has been suggested that the reasons for this in the case of Germany was the humiliating treatment to which it was subjected following the First World War and the economic depression of the 1920s. Scapegoats were sought for the deprivations the Germans had had to undergo. Active Nazism in the 1930s was totally negative towards Freemasonry and banned it when it saw an opportunity to do so. Erich Ludendorff's vicious attacks on Freemasonry in Germany

in his books also spread to Finland (Ahtokari 2000: 193–215; cf. also Ludendorff 1928).

In Finland, which was allied with Germany, some people were quick to accept these fascist and Nazi ideas. In the Lutheran church and the military forces Freemasonry was seriously frowned upon and there were efforts to forbid it. Certain newspapers—*Tapparamies* in Finnish and *Nationen* in Swedish—published propaganda against Freemasonry. In general, opinion at this time turned not only against Freemasonry but also against other organisations, for example the Odd Fellows. Models for these ideas were taken from Germany. A most tragic event in the early 1930s served to strongly reinforce the antagonism towards Freemasonry in Finland (Ahtokari 2000: 149–58).

In 1930 the mutilated corpses of a score of persons were found in Tattarisuo at the outskirts of Helsinki. In the public's imagination and also in the mass media this was linked to the conception that Freemasons needed parts of corpses for their ceremonies. It was only in 1932 that it emerged that four mentally disturbed and religiously highly-strung persons were the perpetrators of the mutilations. They were sentenced to imprisonment. Nonetheless, the affair cast dark shadows over Freemasonry for a long time to come, in practice right up to the present day (Ahtokari 2000: 139–43.)

Freemasonry and its dangers were discussed in army officer circles at the beginning of the 1930s. The whole matter took so many turns that in the end the commander-in-chief, Hugo Österman forbade his men to belong to Masonic Lodges (Ahtokari 2000: 160–71).

In the Evangelical-Lutheran church, Freemasonry was also a topic of much discussion. At the Synod in Viipuri (Swe. Viborg) in 1932 the subject was dealt with as a matter of serious debate. It was proposed that it should be forbidden for clergymen to become Freemasons. The proposal was voted on and remitted to the Church Assembly in Finland, which met in May 1933. The question was raised there and opinions for and against Freemasonry put forward. The St Augustine Lodge in Helsinki had sent a letter to the Archbishopric in Finland, in which it explained the attitude of Freemasonry towards Christianity and society (*Frimureriets inställning*. . . 1933). At the Assembly it was above all Otto Andersson, Professor of Musicology and Folklore at Åbo Akademi University, who spoke against such a ban. His relatively long address, which presented the history of Freemasonry, its ideology and extent, was criticised because he was himself a Freemason. His speech led, however, to the fact that no measures were taken against Freemasonry (Ahtokari 2000: 172–82; Bergroth 2006: 81–2).

Finland had a number of political movements with extreme ideas in the 1930s. These included the Academic Karelia Society (Fi. Akateeminen Karjala-Seura, AKS), the Viitasaari Patriotic Society (Fi. Viitasaaren Isänmaallinen Seura) and the Finnish Patriotic People's Movement (Fi. Isänmaallinen kansanliike, IKL). These and other groups repeatedly brought up the topic of Freemasonry, published lists of Freemasons and issued publications with negative propaganda about Freemasonry. In 1939 a Finnish member of parliament, Paavo Susitaival, put a motion to parliament aimed at banning all Freemasonry in Finland. This did not, however, lead to any measures (Ahtokari 2000: 144–72).

All the tribulations that Freemasonry had to suffer in the 1930s meant that the number of its members fell dramatically. From being just under a thousand in each of the organisations it dropped to almost half of that.

After Freemasonry in Finland had recovered during the decades after the Second World War, the 1980s were a time when once again Freemasonry came under public attack. The infamous P2 Lodge in Italy, a lodge that was never officially recognised in Italy, or elsewhere, created a scandal by reason of its economic irregularities and this cast a shadow on Freemasonry in general. Defamations of Freemasonry began to arise in many countries, including Finland (cf. Setterlind 1986; Lenhammar 1985). The furnace negative opinions expressed in the mass media were stoked in Finland by the fact that a number of economic irregularities became the subject of lawsuits. These pertained to the building of the underground in Helsinki and the operations of the Salora TV factory in Turku. A few Freemasons were involved in these affairs and this led to generalisations that any irregularity was due to Freemasonry. Furthermore, the mass media also complained that the membership lists of the Masonic Lodges were not made public. They therefore published their own lists of members' names, a move designed to be revelatory. There was also discussion of the Freemasons' oath in relation to the oath of allegiance to the state demanded of civil servants and to the church and religion as a whole (Ahtokari 2000: 238–42).

In his doctoral thesis *Salat ja valat* (Secrets and Oaths, 2000), Reijo Ahtokari analysed the articles on Freemasonry published in the daily press during the years 1981–90. He came to a total of 595 negative reports, 633 with merely news value, and 127 favourable articles. Furthermore, there were 56 which he assigned to a miscellaneous group; thus totalling, in all, 1,411. This is quite a large number of articles published on one topic over a ten-year period. The most unfavourable articles are to be found in the large dailies in Helsinki, in the left-wing press and in

certain newspapers associated with religious groups (Ahtokari 2000: 257).

The matter was also raised in the Finnish Parliament, albeit without any real steps being taken. The Government noted, quite matter-of-factly, that Freemasonry was a supervised civic activity that followed the customs and laws of the land. There was nothing to indicate the need for any intervention, on the part of the government, that is (Ahtokari 2000: 226–56).

During the past two decades, Freemasonry has reacted by becoming more open than before about what its activities involve, what ideals the movement holds and what it strives to achieve. In the Freemasons' magazine *Frimuraren*, published in Sweden and also distributed to all active Freemasons in the Swedish system in Finland, and in *Föreningsbandet*, Freemason activities are described in word and illustration in quite a detailed way. An outsider therefore gets quite a different image than earlier of what Freemasonry is all about. The only thing that Freemasonry seeks to keep secret is the rite of initiation to the different grades. This is for didactic reasons, since initiation is intended to be experienced as something new and fresh for candidates. Nevertheless, it must be said that anyone who really wants to obtain all the possible information about Freemasonry can indeed find out about these rituals. A ritual read about in book form, however, never gives the same insight as something experienced in an active lodge (cf. Mogstad 1995).

Conclusion

If we look at the relation between society and Freemasonry over the last 250 years, we can note that a major change has taken place in the way new members are recruited. In the eighteenth century it was only Swedish-speaking persons, often officers and other high officials, who were admitted to the order. During the post-war period recruitment changed dramatically. Today it is mainly middle-class people, often with a certain academic education, that form the core of the Freemasons. Since Freemasonry, especially within the Swedish system, is a Christian movement, it means that people with sympathies for Christian values and rather conservative norms are recruited to Freemasonry. It has become a kind of leisure interest where men in rather closed circles can get an outlet for their religious needs. Freemasonry does not seek to be any kind of substitute for churches or congregations, however (cf. Heino 1995: 26–32).

If we look at the complaints levelled against Freemasonry over the centuries, we find many different motives. The quick reaction of the Lutheran church is linked to the fact that Freemasonry was seen as a rival on a spiritual level. It might lead to the authority of the church being questioned, which the church reacted against. Later it has been said that Freemasonry only concentrates on the Old Testament and does not take New Testament ideas into account. It is, in other words, 'legalistic' (Ahtokari 2000: 173–83). During the period of Russian rule, Freemasonry was banned by the Tsar. The justification for this was, as I have pointed out above, fear among the authorities of revolutionary and secessionist movements.

The violent propaganda against Freemasonry in the 1930s inspired by Nazi Germany meant that Freemasons themselves ceased their activities during the war years. The scandal with the corpses at Tattarisuo in Helsinki strengthened prejudices against Freemasonry drastically. Here people's ideas were united with fear that something improper might infiltrate church circles and the armed forces. The secrecy surrounding Freemasonry and the suspicions of a worldwide network for the exercise of power contributed to the decline in Masonic activities during the dramatic decades of the 1930s and 1940s.

The tribulations faced by Freemasonry in the 1980s were milder than the prior attacks. What the press now wanted to do was to unveil Freemasonry, reveal its secret rites, point out financial irregularities and seek some form of worldwide dubious activity, something that the attention aroused by the P2 affair in Italy served to underline. This inculcated in people a feeling that here was a doubtful organisation with unimagined economic and human resources that could overturn the existing social order. A number of religious minority groups were active in pointing out Freemasonry as something improper.

As far as Finland is concerned, Harri Heino's study at the Church Research Centre in Tampere came to show that Freemasons respect Christian values and social institutions to a much greater extent than what Finnish men of the same age in comparative groups do (Heino 1986, 1995).

Another aspect is that Freemasonry has become open to outside perusal in a completely different way from before. In the 1990s, Freemasons even invited bishops to attend information and discussion meetings. Newspapers and the internet today offer an opportunity to read a lot about the ideals and activities of Freemasonry. Exhibitions about Freemasonry and publicity on their aid activities today reach

the general public in a much more direct way than earlier (cf. Bergroth 1991). The secrecy surrounding Freemasonry has, in other words, decreased markedly. It will be interesting to see whether the criticism of Freemasonry will change character or perhaps even cease altogether. Freemasonry today is comparable to any other social activity for men in their prime and also for retired people.

To sum up, it may be noted that the scapegoat mentality appeared clearly in the suspicion towards Freemasonry of the 1930s, at a time when even the mutilation of corpses flourished at its worst. The projection of aggressions was also evident in this decade. The political thumb-screws were tightened and the threat of war could be clearly discerned, which meant that attempts were made to cleanse society of what were seen as destructive tendencies. In later years, especially the 1980s, it was perhaps most of all the need for sensation and *Schadenfreude* that flourished in the mass media. To put it mildly, the aim was to demonstrate that Freemasonry was something dangerous. Certain religious minorities were involved in the spreading of this negative attitude. On the whole Freemasonry has withstood defamation quite well and today Freemasonry in Finland is more widespread and active than ever before.

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The Fourth Way in Finland

General Notes about the Fourth Way

The Fourth Way, or simply ‘the Work’, began as a Greco-Armenian man named Georges Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1866?–1949) gathered groups of pupils in St Petersburg and Moscow in 1912. To these groups, Gurdjieff started to teach what he had learned and synthesized between *ca* 1896 and 1912 during his travels on spiritual search of Egypt, Crete, Sumeria, Assyria, the Holy Land, Mecca, Ethiopia, Sudan, India, Afghanistan, the northern valleys of Siberia, and Tibet (Webb 1980: 40–1, 43–4, 74).

In 1917 Gurdjieff and a handful of his mainly Russian pupils moved away from Russia as the conditions for their work got too difficult due to the Bolshevik revolution that took place later during the same year. The group travelled by foot to Essentuki in the Caucasus, and from there to Tiflis; the next places where they travelled and stayed were Constantinople and Berlin. After that, they settled permanently in Paris where Gurdjieff founded the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in 1922 (Lindsay 2005: 3710).

From 1922 and up to 1949, Gurdjieff travelled in Europe and the United States to introduce and further his ideas; he also wrote his three major works, consisting of ten books divided into a three part series. These are called *All and Everything*, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, and *Life is Real Only Then, When “I Am”* (Webb 1980: 18). In addition to these works Gurdjieff wrote a smaller book *The Herald of Coming Good* which was published in 1933, introducing his ideas and the Institute. It was the only work published during his lifetime (Speeth 1989: 15–17), and even as such one that was not available for long, as Gurdjieff soon withdrew the book from the market. Gurdjieff’s work also consists of one ballet, about 250 sacred dances, or movements, as well as about 200 piano compositions he made with his student Thomas de Hartmann (Gurdjieff Studies Internet site).

Neither Gurdjieff nor any of his disciples called themselves a church, a sect, or anything alike, but referred to themselves simply as ‘the Work’,

or as 'the Fourth Way' (Webb 1980: 18; Melton 2001: 676). The name 'the Fourth Way' originates in a Gurdjieffian view that there are essentially three traditional ways of spiritual work: those of a monk, a fakir, and a yogi. These ways do not literally refer to the activities of a monk, a fakir, and a yogi, but to similar types of spiritual work emphasizing exercise of emotion, body, or mind. Those in the Fourth Way think that in their work all of these sides are equally present and that all sides need to be practised simultaneously—and in the circumstances of everyday life, not in some special conditions separated from it (Speeth 1989: 54–6, 69–70; Melton 2001: 676, 586–7). This kind of work with oneself includes intellectual study, self observation, daily meditation, movements, or sacred dances, co-operative efforts of various kinds, and arts, crafts, or manual labour (Speeth 1989: 3, 69–70, 83–8, 91–3; Melton 2001: 586–7; Lindsay 2005: 3711).

Gurdjieff's teaching is a blend of various influences that include Sufism, orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, Kabbalah, and general elements of various occult teachings of both the East and the West (Speeth 1989: 4–11). It is a unique combination of cosmology, psychology, theory of evolution, and overall theory and practise aiming to help individuals in their efforts towards what is called 'self-remembering'. The basic idea of the Work is that human beings as they are, are 'asleep', not truly having a free will, a unified self, or an ability to 'be and to do'. In this, the Fourth Way is reminiscent of the behaviourist school of psychology, which was influential around the time Gurdjieff started to teach his ideas at his Institute. The Fourth Way differs from the various forms of behaviourism in that according to its view, a person still has, regardless of his profound mechanical nature regarding outer stimuli, a possibility to a relatively free will, an ability to truly be and to do as a free agent with the aid of the conscious Work that he can do on himself (Speeth 1989: 43, 31–3, 50).

The Work, or the Fourth Way, has been of enormous importance for New Age spirituality, or Western esotericism in its many forms since its formation in the early twentieth century, as is explained, for example, by Paul Heelas in his *The New Age Movement, the Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (1996), and in entries in the *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, and *Encyclopedia of Religion*. After the founder's death in 1949 the Fourth Way has continued to exist both in Europe and the United States via the Gurdjieff Foundation and other groups (Speeth 1989: 98–114; Melton 2001: 676–7, 587; Lindsay 2005: 3711; Gurdjieff Foundation internet site). The literature on the teachings and history of

Gurdjieff and his pupils is growing, and there are currently some fifty memoirs and studies on Gurdjieff and his legacy, and the number of the Fourth Way practitioners can be counted in thousands (Speeth 1989: 95–100; Gurdjieff Studies Internet site). The main symbol of the Fourth Way, the enneagram, has, since its introduction by Gurdjieff in the early twentieth century, found its way also outside of the Fourth Way groups and their work—nowadays there are groups using it solely for popular personality tests and the like. Also in Finland there is such an organization, Suomen Enneagrammi ry, an organization that was registered in 1996 (Suomen Enneagrammi ry. internet site). The Fourth Way groups themselves do not view these kinds of enneagram groups and their literature very favourably, as is evident from, for example, Finland's Fourth Way Internet site where they are labelled as an 'entertainment' and a 'fad' (Neljäs Tie Suomessa internet site).

According to historian James Moore, the Fourth Way as a field of academic study 'has been neglected for decades but is suddenly becoming more fashionable' (email to the author on 12 August 2007). At this point, I have no exact numbers of academic studies done on Gurdjieff, the Fourth Way and subjects directly related worldwide; but when it comes to Finland, not even Master's theses have been written on the subject yet, despite Gurdjieff's great influence on New Age spirituality in the West and the movement's existence in Finland since the early 1970s. I am currently working on such a study, which is a case-study of a local Turku-area Fourth Way senior who has been active in the movement since the early 1970s. This article, however, focuses on the general history of the Fourth Way in Finland.

The Fourth Way in Finland during Gurdjieff's Lifetime

Information about Finns involved with the Fourth Way during Gurdjieff's lifetime is very limited. There are no records of groups who might have been working with the Fourth Way ideas in Finland during that time, nor of Finns who might have visited the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at Fountainebleau in France during the years of its existence (the only exception to this is discussed below). There are only five Finns who have been mentioned in Fourth Way emic-literature regarding this phase:

Dr Leonid Robertovich de Stjernvall, a psychiatrist (1872–1938) (Moore 2005) and his wife *Elizabeth Stjernvall*, linguist (Moore's e-mail message to the author on 13 August 2007) are undoubtedly the most notable Finns

involved with the Fourth Way during Gurdjieff's life. Leonid became Gurdjieff's pupil in 1914 (Moore 2005) and remained a very devout one until his death. According to the historian James Webb, Leonid's wife said that her husband 'harboured an almost fanatical devotion, "almost a slave-like"' to Gurdjieff. 'He was only second to Ouspensky in drumming up recruits' and he was 'the oldest follower' of Gurdjieff (Webb 1980: 136, 262). The historian James Moore has called Leonid Stjernvall Gurdjieff's 'doyen' (Moore 1991: photoplates).

Stjernvall's son, *Nikolai de Stjernvall* (later Nicholas de Val, born 1917) is a biological child of Gurdjieff. He is currently living in Geneva, the city where his mother Elizabeth also lived after Leonid's death. Nikolai later wrote the book *Daddy Gurdjieff: Quelques souvenirs inédits* (Daddy Gurdjieff: a Few Unedited Memories) in French, published in 1997, which did not give a very favourable picture of Gurdjieff, although it was not utterly negative either. According to Paul Beekham Taylor, Nikolai accompanied Gurdjieff to New York in 1929 when he was twelve years old (Beekham Taylor 2001: 176). According to my informant, Nikolai did his military service in Finland at some point, and Gurdjieff thought that Nikolai could have become a teacher in the Work. Nikolai decided otherwise, and thus Finland did not get a teacher of the Work who would have been linked to the source of the movement in more ways than one. He still speaks Finnish, with a notable Russian accent.¹

The Stjernvalls held meetings in Finland at 'their house, in the homes of his [Leonid's] patients, and occasionally in the Finnish dacha of one particularly well-off lady, a Madame Maximovitch' (Webb 1980: 136).

Madame Maximovitch has been mentioned only in the previous short quote on her and there is no more information available of her. Accordingly, it is not known whether she was actively involved with the Fourth Way or not.

A *Buddhist monk*, Thomas de Hartman, one of Gurdjieff's central pupils during this phase, in his book *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* mentioned encountering a Finnish Buddhist monk near a city called Maikop in the Caucasus area. That part of the book tells of the monk being on his way back to Finland, making vegetarian food and speaking in horror

1 Informant no. 2, notes from a phone conversation, August 2007.

about seeing hanged people earlier during his travels. The monk is not mentioned by name and there is no more information available on him (de Hartman 1972: 57). Evidently, though, that Finn was not involved with the Fourth Way.

It might well be the case that no other Finns than the Stjöernvalls visited the Institute, but there might have been Finns more or less actively taking part in the Fourth Way work in Finland during Gurdjieff's life. After all, Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, the Stjöernvalls and some others had, according to records, meetings in Finland during this phase.

Other Finland-related Fourth Way notes from this phase include Gurdjieff's best known pupil P. D. Ouspensky's strong and quite well documented 'telepathic experience' with Gurdjieff in Finland. Dr Stjöernvall was also present when this occasion started to unfold according to James Webb. The group stayed in Finland for three days during that visit to the country (Webb 1980: 149).

The Fourth Way in Finland after Gurdjieff's Death

Based on the written materials available² and my interviews with two Fourth Way practitioners³ who have been active in the movement in Finland since the 1970s, the question of the Fourth Way in Finland after Gurdjieff's death can be meaningfully framed in two ways: firstly, regarding timeline and secondly, regarding 'teaching lines'. Many Fourth Way practitioners pay special attention to these teaching lines—who has passed on the teaching and to whom. Essential to these teaching lines is also that they can ideally be traced back all the way to Gurdjieff himself. Another of my informants said that without such a direct teaching line reaching back to Gurdjieff the work is at its time of seeking, on its way to get the needed full teaching line in order to be fully authentic.⁴ Next, I will frame the Fourth Way in Finland after Gurdjieff's death according to the two lines mentioned above.

2 Finnish Fourth Way publications by Karatas-Kirjat from the 1970s and 1980s as well as the websites of the Finnish Fourth Way seniors, available through 'Neljäs Tie Suomessa' internet site.

3 Interviews done in June–July, 2007.

4 Informant no. 2, interview done in July, 2007.

1. *Regarding the timeline:*

- a) 1970–80s
- b) 2001–present.

2. *Regarding the ‘teaching-lines’:*

a) *The Bennett line.* J. G. Bennett (1897–1974) was a British mathematician, scientist, industrial research director, and an author, most known from his writings dealing with the teachings of Gurdjieff. Bennett met Gurdjieff in Istanbul in 1921 and helped him in establishing the Fourth Way in England. During Gurdjieff’s life, in 1941, Bennett founded the Institute for Comparative Study of History, Philosophy, and the Sciences at Coombe Springs close to London. For a period of time he was also involved with the Subud movement and became its co-founder in England. After Gurdjieff’s death Bennett founded what was called an Academy for Continuous Education at Sherborne, Gloucestershire in 1971 (Melton 2001: 170; Lindsay 2005: 832–3; Bennett 1997: 300–3, 308).

The Bennett line of Gurdjieff’s teachings surfaced in Finland in the early 1970s via Väinö Kopponen who was in contact with Bennett and who took part to Bennett’s seminar in the UK in the early 1970s. The group that met and worked under Kopponen’s direction in Turku and Jämsä, both in the South-West of Finland, at its largest consisted of 20–30 people. The group attracted interest for example via the Fourth Way related articles that were published in the Finnish New Age magazines *Ultra* and *Elonpyörä* during that time. Kopponen arranged classic Gurdjieffian movements, or sacred dance-presentations to the Turku group sometime in the early 1980s.⁵ According to one of my informants,⁶ it is possible that Kopponen travelled to France in the 1950s and met Jeanne de Salzmann there, who were among Gurdjieff’s main pupils during his lifetime, and who had been thought to take Gurdjieff’s central place in the Fourth Way after his death in 1949.

The Finnish Bennett line of teaching started to publish Bennett’s translated works already in 1969 via the Karatas-Kirjat (Karatas Books) publishing house, founded in Lahti. The next year, in 1970, the Karatas-Seura (Karatas Society) was founded in Turku to further the teachings of Bennett and Gurdjieff in Finland. The Bennett line was the only line of teaching that was fully present in Finland before the Gurdjieff line

5 Interviews with informants nos. 1 and 2 in July 2007.

6 Notes from discussion with informant no. 3 in July 2007.

of teaching emerged in the late 2001. The Bennett line, as well as the Karatas-Seura and Karatas-Kirjat, existed from the 1970s to the mid 1980s. Even after that there were at least two efforts to revive the teaching line by two of this line's senior students. Around the time this line of teaching was closing it had moved from its original main cities of Turku and Jämsä to Helsinki and Jyväskylä, and possibly also to Lahti.⁷

In relation to the Bennett line of teaching the then Lahti-based Ionowa-seura ry (Ionowa Society), founded in 1970, must also to be mentioned. The Society, which still exists, maintains the legacy of a Russian mystically inspired visual artist, Aleksandra Ionowa (1899–1980). The Bennett line students as well as others interested in Gurdjieff's ideas had close relations to this society, and Ionowa's art was used in Finnish translations of Bennett's books.⁸

b) *The Ouspensky line.* P. D. Ouspensky (1878–1947) was a Russian journalist and philosopher who met Gurdjieff in St Petersburg in 1915 (Melton 2001: 1158). He can be argued to be the most important figure in the Fourth Way after Gurdjieff due to his highly influential writings and other work for the movement (Webb 1980: 93; Melton 2001: 685). He dissociated himself from Gurdjieff after the Institute for Harmonious Development of Man was established in France. At this point Ouspensky thought he could not understand his former teacher anymore. After splitting with Gurdjieff, he still continued to teach the Fourth Way as he understood and interpreted it in London for his own group and he also wrote about the Fourth Way (Melton 2001: 1158). His probably most known title is *In Search of the Miraculous*, which gives a fairly good general overview of Gurdjieff's teachings (Lindsay 2005: 6935).

The Ouspensky line appeared in Finland via Doctor Kari Krohn from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. He translated Ouspensky's *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* into Finnish (*Ihmisen sielulliset kehitysmahdollisuudet*, Karatas-Kirjat 1970) and was the personal doctor of the Bennett line founder Väinö Kopponen.⁹ Another notable person in this line is Timo Kurki-Suonio who has translated Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous* into Finnish (*Sirpaleita tuntemattomasta opetuksesta*). The

7 Informant no. 2, notes from a phone conversation, August 2007, and an e-mail on 14th of August to the author.

8 Informant no. 2, field-notes from discussions in July–August 2007, an e-mail on 14th of August to the author.

9 Notes from a meeting with informant no. 2 in July 2007.

book had been translated into Finnish during the 1970s, but was eventually published only in 2004. A manuscript of the book was used by the Gurdjieff line Helsinki group soon after its formation in late 2001, and according to an informant of that group, the Helsinki group most likely also had a significant role in the book getting published.¹⁰ It is not certain whether the Ouspensky line of teaching was in direct contact with Ouspensky himself. My informant still deemed it relevant to name the existence of this line in Finland due to Krohn's and Kurki-Suonio's notable involvement in the translation and publication of Ouspensky's writings.¹¹

c) *The Gurdjieff line.* The Gurdjieff line of teaching is the most important of the teaching lines, not only because it provides a teaching line reaching all the way back to Gurdjieff, but also because it is the most active, if not *de facto* the only teaching line in Finland currently. The Gurdjieff line arrived in Finland at the end of the year 2001.¹² At that point the Gurdjieff Foundation was looking into the level of Fourth Way activity in different parts of the world, especially in Russia. In the process they found the Fourth Way internet site of one of my informants, established a contact, and after that the Gurdjieff line of teaching arrived in Finland. The American teacher of the line's teacher, was studying with Gurdjieff in the United States during Gurdjieff's life and was given a mandate to teach the work.¹³ In 2001 a group of this teaching line was founded in Helsinki and in 2002 in Turku, both in Southern Finland. The Suomen Gurdjieff-Seura ry (the Gurdjieff Society of Finland) was registered on 19th of December 2003 in Helsinki.¹⁴

Groups in Helsinki and Turku nowadays meet on a weekly basis (except during the summer), read and talk about Gurdjieff's or Ouspensky's texts, as well as talk about practices related to 'self-remembering' that the teacher has given to groups to work with. The Helsinki group has also arranged 'work days' and movements, or sacred dances, in Finland, with visiting teachers of movements from Norway and Denmark. In this, the groups aim to function with a full scale of group work pos-

10 Notes from a meeting with informant no. 2 in July 2007.

11 Informant 2, field-notes from discussions in July–August 2007.

12 Suomen Gurdjieff Seura ry. Internet site; notes from a phone conversation with informant no. 2, August 2007.

13 Notes from a phone conversation with informant no. 2, August 2007.

14 Informant no. 2, field-notes from discussions in July–August 2007.

sibilities, as in the older groups of the line in the UK and the United States. The Finnish line of the teaching has active relations to groups of the same teaching line in Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States.

Many members of the Helsinki and Turku groups have also taken part in Fourth Way activities in Denmark during recent years (since 2001). The Helsinki group also commemorates Gurdjieff's death in October (close to 29th), and celebrates Gurdjieff's birthday on 12th of January each year. Currently there has also been discussion about forming a group in Tampere, which indicates that interest in the Fourth Way is growing in Finland and broadening outside the South-Western area of the country (Suomen Gurdjieff Seura internet site; author's field notes).

Summary

The Fourth Way, a notable New Age, or Western esoteric movement founded by the Greco-Armenian G. I. Gurdjieff in the early twentieth century, was geographically close to Finland in its beginning, but paradoxically in the early phase of the movement only three Finns are known to have been involved with it. These three persons were Dr Leonid Robertovich de Stjernvall, his wife Elizabeth, and Nikolai de Stjernvall, whose mother was Elizabeth de Stjernvall and whose father was none other than Gurdjieff himself. Leonid was a devout pupil of Gurdjieff to the end of his life. After these three Finns, the next historically known Finn in the Fourth Way appears only in the late 1960s: doctor Kari Krohn who translated P. D. Ouspensky's *Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* into Finnish and got it published, and Väinö Kopponen, who visited J. G. Bennett's Academy for Continuous Education in the UK in the early 1970s and started a group mainly in the Turku area of Finland soon after that. That line of teaching, the Bennett line, and the Karatas-Seura (Karatas Society) that was founded in 1970 to further its aims, lasted until the mid 1980s. After that the Gurdjieff line of teaching surfaced in the Helsinki area in 2001. Suomen Gurdjieff-Seura ry (The Finnish Gurdjieff Society) was founded in 2003. Nowadays there are active groups in this teaching line in Helsinki and Turku, and a third group is possibly being formed in the Tampere area in central Finland. Altogether, this indicates that the Fourth Way is nowadays bigger than ever in Finland, although the number of its practitioners in the groups in the country is very modest, currently around 20.

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Kabbalah in Sweden

During the late autumn 1613 Gustav II Adolf and Johannes Bureus were travelling through Sweden to organize the new printing of the Bible. When, on December 5, they found themselves in Tuna in Dalarna, Bureus was overwhelmed by what he has described as 'a moment of excitement'. The time was 6.22 in the morning and Bureus heard a voice singing 'RIVos IaM CLaVDe pVer sat prata bIberVnt', 'Close up the streams young boy, because the meadows have drunk themselves full'. In these words the Roman numerals for 1673 are hidden, and Bureus interpreted this to mean that the world was to end that year.

What took place in 1613 would forever influence Bureus, and after the experience in Dalarna he was to take on the role as one initiated into the mysteries, a prophet in the midst of a world of the blind.

At this stage in his career, Bureus was inclined to have mystical experiences; for several years he had studied esoteric teachings such as astrology, magic and Kabbalah. From his diary entries we find out that he 'began to enjoy the Kabbalah' in 1591 when he was reading the magical text *Arbatel*. During his life, Bureus developed his own esoteric system centred on the runes, but based on the structure of the Kabbalah. He referred to this system as a Nordic Kabbalah.

Johannes Bureus and the Nordic Kabbalah

Johan Bure (1568–1652) or Johannes Bureus, the name under which he is mainly known, is the most important non-Jewish Swedish Kabbalist. In Bureus's work older Gothicism along with runic and linguistic research blended with his strong interest in all forms of esotericism: astrology, magic, alchemy and above all the Kabbalah. Bureus would re-interpret the Gothic myths so that they would not merely accentuate the history of Sweden, but also be an individual path of illumination. The work of Johannes Bureus was pivotal for the birth of Swedish grammar, but he was also a great pioneer in runology and he was the one who re-created

the idea of the Gothic according to a very personal philosophy. Bureus believed that Christianity and the Latin language had been too dominant and thus made the runes seem insignificant; he therefore wanted to attempt to reinstate them and create a general awareness of them. He published a runic ABC book, but one of his most important accomplishments was his extensive mapping of rune stones. He charted 663 rune stones, which is about a fourth of all the rune stones known today. Johannes Bureus developed a runology that was rooted in linguistics, but that also incorporated deep esoteric speculations. Bureus, who lived in Uppsala, was inspired by, among others, Agrippa, Paracelsus, Reuchlin and other great names of occultism. Through a comparison with the Kabbalah, he was convinced that the runes had different dimensions; they were signs for writing, but also esoteric and magical symbols. He created a Gothic Kabbalah that he referred to as '*Kabala Upsalica*'. The secret dimension of the runes he called *Adul* runes or '*Adel*' runes. Additionally, he constructed a symbol that he named *Adulruna* and which contained the fifteen *Adul* runes. This symbol has certain similarities to the *Monas Hieroglyphica* of John Dee, which contains all the symbols for the planets. Bureus's *Adulruna* is a map of the universe and the progression of mankind through various layers of existence. The *Adulruna* acts as both a symbol of man and of the universe; it describes both the microcosmos and the macro-cosmos. Bureus's most important esoteric text is also called *Adulruna Rediviva*: the *Adulruna* resurrected.

Two symbols constitute the foundation of Bureus's esoteric universe: the first is the *Adulruna*, the second is the rune cross. The vertical rune row of the cross is one of the most important parts of Bureus's system; these runes illustrate a seven-step initiatory process that can move upward (*ascensus*) and downward (*descensus*). Bureus explains that the Son of God descends and is born as a man following this path, but that he also ascends to heaven through the very same path. The task of the *Adul* runic disciple is to advance from the first rune, Byrghal, to the highest level symbolised by the Thors rune. The mediator in this process is Christ (who is equated with Odin). In the *Cabbalistica* this sevenfold path of initiation recurs in several versions. It is, for example, associated with the alchemical process with its seven stages to the elixir.

In his *Antiquitates Scanziana*, Bureus reveals how the seven runes describe the steps taken by Christ as a saviour, from conception to resurrection and his ascent up to God. Bureus illustrates how the goal of the disciple is to reunite Byrghal and Thors, man and God. This is not a complete melding into God though, since man retains his individual characteristics as is evident in the shape of Byrghal, but rather causes his

characteristics to reach a higher level. The symbol of Byrghal and Thors united appears in several different variations, but in *Adulruna Rediviva* Bureus draws a special version that 'reveals the immeasurable force that those can reach, those who are united with God'.

Pivotal to Bureus's mysticism is the *Adul* Rune symbol from which the fifteen runes originate, a symbol that he named the treasure chamber of the *Adul* Rune in which 'the holiest names of the Creator are revealed'. It has the form of a solar cross with three concentric rings. The two outer rings are geometrical circles, while the inner ring has the shape of a heart. The heart consists of a half circle below and a split circle above with its halves on top of the outer half circle in the shape of a B lying on its side. From the other ring and inwards there is a cross which creates the pivotal Haghala rune. Hence the *Adul* rune symbol consists of a cross, an x and three rings that correspond to three levels of existence. As Dr Susanna Åkerman has shown, Bureus was also influenced by the *Monas Hieroglyphica* by John Dee, which in the same way is a universal symbol, which in itself contains other symbols, such as the planetary signs (Åkerman 2000). All fifteen runes can be found in the *Adulruna*, and Bureus has a meticulous system for how to go about this procedure. The first group of five runes, the birth *Femt* (fifth), is mainly found in the outer parts of the *Adulruna* and the outermost ring. The birth *Femt* corresponds to God, the Father, the Creator and the one who gives birth. These runes, after having been extracted from the *Adulruna*, are the five largest in size as compared to the other ten runes. The next group, the birth *Femt*, corresponds to the mediator. These runes are found within the outer circle and inside the middle circle and these are smaller than the first five runes. The last group, the embryo *Femt*, are found within the middle circle and inside the heart. These last five runes are the smallest of all. Among these runes is the rune of matter and duality, Byrghal, and this last *Femt* corresponds to the plane of matter and the physical body.

At the birth of Gothic Runology during the period of the Swedish Great Epoch, something of a revival of the runes took place. They were used among many Swedish officers during the Thirty Years War to encode messages. What is singular about the Gothic Runology of Bureus is that the runes are not merely ancient signs of writing, and proof of the literary qualities of the ancient Norsemen, but above all symbols of an individual path of initiation and illumination, in which the follower obtains contact with God. The esoteric runic research of Bureus also became famous outside Sweden and he was visited by several guests from distant countries who wished to study the secrets of the *Adul*-runes. On his deathbed, Bureus explained that it was his research in mysticism

that he was most proud of, even if he had also made great contributions within linguistic research.

The great influence of Johannes Bureus on his contemporary age and the intellectual climate of Sweden during the Epoch of Great Power make it possible, or even probable, that he paved the way for a Swedish initiatory esotericism at a later date. In those cases in which we can identify distinctive Swedish features within Swedish Freemasonry during the eighteenth century, it is most likely that we can trace some of these features back to Johannes Bureus.

The Swedish Kabbalah after Bureus

Even if very few Swedes studied and wrote about the Kabbalah in as dedicated and personal a way as Bureus did, there was still significant interest in Kabbalistic ideas. During the eighteenth century mysticism flourished alongside ideas of the Enlightenment and scientific progress. Freemasonry and Swedenborgianism grew and attracted well-established and erudite individuals in society who viewed their occult experiments as scientific. Spiritism, Animal Magnetism and Divination fascinated the bourgeois, nobility and even kings (Ojas 2000: 280). The Count and man of state Gustaf Adolf Reuterholm (1756–1813) was a significant character in esoteric circles in Sweden during this time. He exerted a vital influence on Swedish politics during the time when Gustaf IV Adolf was declared incapacitated 1792–6, and has been described as something of a charlatan (Bogdan 2005: 1). Reuterholm's political power was strengthened due to the fact that he was a close ally to Duke Karl. Additionally, they were both Freemasons. They also shared an extensive occult interest and the library of Reuterholm contains several Kabbalistic texts. The collection is now part of the Swedish Library of the Freemasonic Order in Stockholm. Among these texts we can find *Cabalisternas stora och Hemliga Problem*, which describes the numerological aspects of Creation, *Konung Salmonos Semiphoras och Schemihamphoras*, which conveys the holy and secret names of God and *De Cabala Sancta* (About the Sacred Kabbalah), which describes the ten Sephiroth. The text *Reflexioner om Cabben och Inledningen* tells of the mythical origin of the Kabbalah and the significance of Hebrew in Kabbalah:

The Cabalists believe that everything has its true name, through the interconnection and pronunciation of which they can achieve great things. . . . This is something that reveals the pre-eminence of the

Hebrew language. The effects are more significant, since the words that they employ, express either the name of God, or its perfection and emanations.

A Captain of the Navy, Henrik Gustaf Ulfvenclou, was a reputed spirit conjurer in the 1780s. He was part of the most intimate esoteric circle of Duke Karl, and the Duke reveals in a letter to the King that in Ulfvenclou had he encountered ‘... a man rather enlightened in the higher sciences and secrets’, and that he had contributed to the Duke’s experience ‘... that the light is stronger than any power of man can endure’, and that he had now seen spirits (Forsstrand 1913: 113). Ulfvenclou was well informed in the occult arts such as astrology, chiromancy and geomancy and he was very interested in the Kabbalah. During his stay with the Duke, Ulfvenclou persuaded him that he was in contact with all kinds of spirits and that he had forced the spirit of the Widow Queen into a bottle, which he had ‘sealed with the wondrous seal of Solomon’ (Forsstrand 1913: 116). In a letter to his friend Carl Göran Bonde, Ulfvenclou includes two magical pentacles and describes how his friend shall be able to communicate with the holy guardian angel. He signed the letter Chæremon, a name he had received on February 11, 1796 at 10 in the evening, when he ‘all of a sudden gained his first ordination from the Lord’s angels and was given the keys of nature, mercy and all power in the presence of the witnesses Gabriel, Uriel, Razil and others’ (Forsstrand 1913: 134).

At this time there also existed an order bearing the Kabbalistic name Metatron. This name has been the subject of numerous speculations among the Kabbalists. It is often the name of an angel that is associated with either the lowest or the highest Sephirah on the Tree of Life. According to one tradition, God took the patriarch Enoch from earth and turned him into the angel Metatron. Metatron is also linked to the heavenly writer who holds God’s archive (Scholem 1996: 132). Through a newspaper advertisement in the spring of 1781, the previously unknown order proclaimed its existence and declared that it wished to make public ‘the high purpose and history of the society’ (Häll 1995: 121). They claimed that the society had been in existence for forty years, and that they, among other things, had engaged in charity. There was no use applying for membership, since they chose their members through physiognomy, a method that analysed man by the appearance of his face. The order claimed to keep their eyes out all over Sweden, but especially in Stockholm, to identify proper candidates. The Grand Master of Metatron has left behind several valuable manuscripts; one, entitled *Blick der unbekanten gloria*, was the foundation of the order.

Besides the advertisement, Reuterholm's essay titled 'Maçonnique Händelser' from 1784 is the most important source to this mysterious society. Reuterholm describes the society as 'cosmopolitan and magical' (Häll 1995: 124). At first, Metatron did not approach the experienced mystic Reuterholm, which seems to have angered him, something that was corrected the following year when he speaks about the order as 'a known and highly estimated society' (Lundin & Strindberg 1882: 436).

The cause for the most astounding reputation pertaining to Metatron was that the order, according to Reuterholm, owned Urim and Thummim, which he describes as a mirror in which one can see the true nature of the human spirit. Urim and Thummim are first mentioned in the Book of Exodus 28:30 where Aaron is to carry them when he is to meet with God. There have been speculations as to whether Urim and Thummim were a pair of stones used in old Israeli divination.

Magic, mysticism, Freemasonry and the Kabbalah were nothing uncommon at this time. August Strindberg and Claes Lundin describe the spirit of the age in their book *Gamla Stockholm: Anteckningar ur tryckta och otryckta källor från 1882*:

The secret and wonderful order reached its zenith when Reuterholm and his followers were active in Stockholm. 'This was the time of mysticism . . . The entire town seemed to wish to start orders to find out about the supernatural and lived only for magical convictions.' (Lundin & Strindberg 1882: 436.)

Although individuals such as Duke Karl, Reuterholm and Ulfvenclou moved in such circles that could have let them come into contact with the Kabbalah of Bureus, they seem to have taken no inspiration from his innovative Kabbalistic speculations, but chose to devote themselves to a more traditional Kabbalah.

Kabbalistic Literature

The Swedish Hebrew scholar Knut Stenring published an English translation of the text *Sepher Yetzirah* in 1923. He wished to re-ignite interest in the Kabbalah with this publication and writes in his foreword:

It is hoped that the elucidations provided in the notes will not only reawaken interest in the text itself but in Kabbalistic philosophy at large and lead to a much-needed renaissance of occultism (Stenring 1923: 17).

In his commentary to the *Sepher Yetzirah* Stenring shows how the twenty-two Major Arcana cards of the Tarot correspond to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The thought that the Tarot corresponds to the Hebrew letters was introduced by the Frenchman Eliphas Levi in his book *Dogme de la Haute Magie*, and thereafter became something of a firm fact in the occult circles. Stenring, however, makes a different set of correspondences than Levi, and explains:

The meaning which “Sepher Yetzirah” assigns to each letter has enabled us to place the Tarot-cards in their original and proper order (Stenring 1923: 38).

The Kabbalah has had a major influence on art and literature and through these channels it has reached many Swedes. The novel *Foucault’s Pendulum* (in Italian: *Il Pendolo di Foucault*) by Umberto Eco is one example of fictional reference to the Kabbalah. There is hardly any Kabbalistic literature written in Sweden, but there are a number of translations, especially in the New Age genre. An example of this is *Tarot och Kabbala* by Samuel Aun Weor, translated and published in 1997 by AGEAC (Gnostic Association of Anthropological, Cultural and Scientific Studies), which follows a common pattern in modern Kabbalistic literature wherein the Kabbalah and Indian mysticism are compared and blended. Another example is *Lyfta av Slöjan: praktisk kabbala och kundaliniyoga* by Joseph Michael Levry (published in Swedish in 2002), which is based on the teachings of the Indian guru Yogi Bhajan (1929–2004). The book explains that the Kabbalah is for the western world what Kundalini Yoga is for the East. The wisdom of the Kabbalah can be found in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Yoga sutras and several other holy books (Levry 2002: 5).

Kabbala: Om Livets träd som hjälpmittel för andlig och personlig utveckling by Will Parfitt, which was translated from English and published in Swedish in 1997, mixes Kabbalah with yoga and Jungian psychology. In the 1980s the Kabbalistically coloured so-called *Black Bible* (Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses), gained some significance in both the Swedish occult world and in youth cultures. It was translated from English and contains various forms of spirit conjurations, magical seals and names of spirits and demons.

The Jewish Museum in Stockholm had an exhibition about Kabbalah in 2002 and published a catalogue with contributions from both Swedish and foreign writers. Among the contributors we can find names such as the Head Rabbi Morton H. Narrow, Professor Anton Geels and the Kabbalah scholar Moshe Idel. Books about Kabbalah in Swedish include

Staffan Danell's short text of eight pages *Kabbala: introduktion* of 1998, which contains short aphorisms regarding the being of God, the salvation of the world and the Sephiroth. *Kabbala, klifftot och den goetiska magin* (2004) and *Adulrunan och den götiska kabbalan* (2005) by Thomas Karlsson have occasionally been on the bestseller lists in New Age bookstores; they have also been translated into English, German and Italian. The first book is an example of practical use of the Kabbalistic theories and the second is a historical and scholarly description of the teachings of Johannes Bureus.

Kabbalah in Sweden Today

The eclectic Hermetic Kabbalah that was developed in England during the nineteenth century in orders such as the Golden Dawn has ever since had a decisive influence on the modern Kabbalah. Today, there are a number of groups in Sweden practising a Kabbalah that can be entirely or partly traced back to the Golden Dawn. Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), who was a member of the Golden Dawn, is one of the most famous magicians and he governed the English section of the German order Ordo Templi Orientis, commonly referred to as the O.T.O. Through Crowley, the O.T.O became one of the occult orders that attracted the most attention. Within the O.T.O the Kabbalah is practised according to the interpretation of Aleister Crowley, and the O.T.O is represented in Sweden. In the early 1990s the order Dragon Rouge was founded in Sweden and they practise a form of Kabbalah that focuses on its dark side, called the Qliphoth or the Kelippot, which are believed to give knowledge about the hidden aspects of man. Dragon Rouge also shows an interest in the Kabbalistic theories of Johannes Bureus. The Golden Dawn is also represented in Sweden, but was split into a number of smaller fractions, which thereafter developed into independent orders. Sodalitas Rosæ Crucis (S.R.C) is one of these, and it mixes the rituals of the Golden Dawn with Gnostic traditions and rites of Freemasonry. The other is Ordo Primæ Lucis (O.P.L), which studies Christian Theosophy, Alchemy, Theurgy and Kabbalah. There are also Swedish sections of the Martinist order Ordre Reux Croix (O.R.C) and the esoteric organisation Builders of the Adytum (B.O.T.A) in which the Kabbalah is an important pillar. The Swedish Satanic group Misanthropiska Lucifer Orden (M.L.O) has also been inspired by the Kabbalah and its descriptions of the dark side.

When the musical artist Madonna declared her interest in the Kabbalah, this gained a lot of response from the New Age circles. The form of Kabbalah that Madonna practises is not traditional but a special interpretation that has been developed in the successful American Kabbalah Center, led by Philip and Karen Berg and their two sons Yehuda and Michael. Notwithstanding all the attention in Swedish media, this movement seems not to have really established itself in Sweden.

Final Words

As early as the Renaissance a non-Jewish Kabbalah, which maintained that the teachings of the Kabbalah belonged to Christianity instead of Judaism, was developed. Florence became the centre for the growth of the Christian Kabbalah and the Hermetic Pico della Mirandola has been called the father of the Christian Kabbalah. Pico claimed that in the Kabbalah he could find not so much the Mosaic as the Christian religion.

When the Kabbalah reached Sweden it was mainly the non-Jewish Kabbalah that gained influence, even if its Jewish roots were acknowledged. Johannes Bureus unites, in a similar fashion as do the Christian Kabbalists in continental Europe, Christian motifs with the symbolic world of the Kabbalah. Bureus, however, adds runes, ancient Norse gods and Gothic ideas in his own unique manner. The Kabbalah invites speculation and the search for correspondences which has caused the Kabbalah in Sweden to be united with a number of other traditions. Bureus combined the Kabbalah with runes and Gothicism; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we can find the Kabbalah in Freemasonry and Esoteric societies, while the Kabbalah in the twentieth century and onwards has been associated with New Age, Parapsychology and Indian Mysticism. Apart from Bureus, most Kabbalists in Sweden have followed the trends that flourished in the rest of the world. Bureus was the first to create a specifically Swedish interpretation of the Kabbalah.

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NINA KOKKINEN

The Art of Mystification

Esotericism Differentiated in the Definition of Finnish Symbolism

Imagine this: a young girl rises from a red sea of clouds into the glow of a golden planet. Her palms are raised towards the high skies and her hair flames as though it were a fiercely burning fire or the sun itself. What do you think you would feel before this picture? And what should you?

These questions rose into my mind a couple of years ago when I stood before the painting I have just described—*Ad Astra* (1894, see illustration), one of the well-known works of the Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931).¹ In the mid-1890s Gallen-Kallela created many of the paintings that were later connected with the Symbolist art movement, which originated especially in late nineteenth century France and was intertwined with Western esotericism in many ways.² In Finland, Symbolism has been understood mainly through the definitions of one art historian, Salme Sarajas-Korte (b. 1925). She wrote an admiringly comprehensive study about the sources of the early Finnish Symbolist art in 1966 and ever since her views on Symbolism have been reproduced and referred to.³ So if you want to see Gallen-Kallela's *Ad*

- 1 In 1907 Gallen-Kallela made another version of the original *Ad Astra*, since he did not want to sell his own copy of the painting. He hid the stigmas from the first *Ad Astra*, but painted them quite visibly into the palms of the second heroine. (Rapetti 2000: 51–2.)
- 2 For Symbolism's connection to esotericism see e.g. Pincus-Witten 1976 and Tuchman 1986.
- 3 Sarajas-Korte's study *Suomen varhaissymbolismi ja sen lähteet. Tutkielma Suomen maalaustaiteesta 1891–1895* (The Early Finnish Symbolism and its Sources. A study of Finnish Painting in 1891–1895) was her doctoral thesis. Her views about Finnish Symbolism have influenced for example the writings of Riikka Stewen (1996, 2001), Elina Bonelius (2003), Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff (1998) and Juha-Heikki Tihinen (2008). At the time of writing (15.6.–2.9.2007), there

Astra as a Symbolist work of art, you should definitely see and feel it through the definitions made by Sarajas-Korte in the 1960s—at least if you want to agree with the canonized comprehension about this picture and about Finnish Symbolism.

In this article I will focus on Sarajas-Korte's definitions that proved to be so significant to Finnish art history. In spite of the fact that her research still represents the most extensive and profound work on Finnish Symbolism, my aim here is to question some of her definitions and categorizations. Most of her concepts are puzzling, since she tends to use them in several different ways. One example of her conceptualizations is the way she uses the word esotericism and its derivatives. First of all, she seems to associate esotericism with secrecy and things hidden—in other words she follows the definition created already by the ancient Greeks (see e.g. von Stuckrad 2005: 1; Hanegraaff 2005a: 336–7). Secondly, she fuses esotericism with Symbolism as she herself defines it; hence Symbolist art is grounded on the ‘esoteric conceptions of symbols’. She also uses the word esotericism as though it would reflect the spirit of an age, as she writes for example about ‘the esoteric youth’ of the time. In addition to these three meanings, Sarajas-Korte seems to understand esotericism also by means of tradition. Her view of the esoteric tradition, however, is quite inclusive, since it seems to contain everything from the secret societies of Joséphin Péladan to the stories of the Bible and the Ramayana.⁴

As this example shows, the concepts Sarajas-Korte uses in her study are not by a long shot easy to define and thus the remarks I make in this article will unavoidably be harsh simplifications. My intention here is, nevertheless, to dig around her conceptualizations and drag out some

is an exhibition called ‘Music and Silence. Finnish Symbolism’ at the Ateneum art museum in Helsinki, curated by Laura Gutman-Hanhivaara, whose comprehension of Finnish Symbolism also echoes the definitions made by Sarajas-Korte (see Gutman-Hanhivaara 2007). Recently some Finnish art historians, however, have given up Sarajas-Korte’s approach to Symbolism (see e.g. Kalha 2005, von Bonsdorff 2007, Tihinen 2006).

4 Sarajas-Korte refers to different meanings of esotericism as follows: esoteric as hidden or secret (see e.g. 1966: 34, 115), esoteric in connection to Symbolism (see e.g. 1966: 40), esotericism as *Zeitgeist* (see e.g. 1966: 55–6) and esoteric tradition (see 1966: 55, 85). The prevalent scholarly view on the esoteric tradition has later been established mainly on the basis of Antoine Faivre’s (1994: 10–15) definition of esotericism as a form of thought.

questionable differentiations she constructs while defining Symbolist art. From the sketchy list of the meanings Sarajas-Korte ascribes to esotericism, I will now move on to a more detailed analysis of her definitions pertaining to Symbolist art and its spirituality.

The Spiritual Mysticism: Defining Symbolist Art

In his famous article of 1891 about Symbolist art theory, the French critic G.-Albert Aurier (1865–92) used Plato's allegory of the cave as his starting point. Whereas former artists had been content to paint only the forms of the shadow world, Symbolists were now reaching for the absolute reality (See Aurier 1995: 195–203). Over six decades later Salme Sarajas-Korte (1966: 29–31, 40–3) cherished Aurier's comprehension and ended up emphasizing the Platonic grounds of Symbolism above everything else. In her opinion, the revolution of Symbolist thinking was founded first and foremost on Plato's philosophy: Symbolism 'wished to open a view for the artist... beyond the quasi-world of senses into the spiritual reality, into the Platonic world of Ideas'⁵ (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 29). In other words, the Symbolist artist was ultimately meant to experience the divine reality of the Absolute Ideas—and specifically the Idea of Beauty. Due to Sarajas-Korte's emphases, her definition of Symbolism appears to be constructed primarily on Plato's theories. Furthermore, the centrality of Platonism is expressed in Sarajas-Korte's tendency to reduce other religious-philosophical ideologies back to 'their Platonic roots', too.⁶

The influence of Plato is emphasized for instance in relation to Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), whose theological doctrine of correspondences Sarajas-Korte specifies as the second major influential force behind Symbolism. According to Swedenborg's theory, the separate natural and spiritual worlds communicate with each other through correspondences, and thus every worldly thing responds to some entity in the celestial world. This interconnectedness also concerns the worldly human

5 All translations of Sarajas-Korte by the author.

6 Sarajas-Korte (1966: 32–3) traces, for example, Swedenborg's worldview back to Platonism and Christianity through Neo-Platonism. She also believes that the same Platonic ground is fundamental to Baudelaire's aesthetics, although she admits that the writer himself mentions Swedenborg's name more often than Plato's.



Ad Astra (1894) by Akseli Gallen-Kallela.

being, who as a microcosm is linked to both realms, natural and spiritual-celestial, although the latter is reachable to him only through correspondences. From the viewpoint of Symbolist theory this means that the lines and shapes of the artwork are connected to the artist's spiritual inner structure, which, in its turn, is related to celestial reality. Thus artworks can relate to the spiritual realm through the artist (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 31–2, 104–5. See also Williams-Hogan 1998: 218–20).

Besides Swedenborg's correspondences, the pathway to Platonic transcendence can be opened up by the means of love and ecstasy. At this point Sarajas-Korte adds the third religious-philosophical element into her definition of Symbolist theory—the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus. She believes that the ideas of Plotinus had something to do with the fact that Symbolist artists came to appreciate intuitive concentration and the state of ecstasy as means to unite with the higher spiritual reality. Yet again, it is also Plato's influence Sarajas-Korte (1966: 30) wants to

emphasize here, since from her point of view Plato's doctrine of Eros 'leads into the centre of Symbolist aesthetics'. Love in its purest form is directed towards the Idea of the Beauty and thus it guides the artist when he or she seeks union with the transcendental. Thus, Eros is an intermediary force between the perceptible realm and the Absolute. What is important to notice here is the fact that in Sarajas-Korte's Symbolism, the notions of love and ecstasy play major roles: according to her, such famous Symbolists as Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) and Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) were reaching for the transcendence in the altered state of consciousness, the soul's ecstasy (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 30–7).

It is on these three grounds—(1) Plato's Idea-realm and theories of Eros, (2) Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences and (3) the ecstasy of Plotinus—that Sarajas-Korte constructs her definition of Symbolism.⁷ It is an art movement seeking union with the divine reality, which lies beyond the mundane perceptions of the senses. The function of the artist, who reaches for the transcendental either by contemplating her own inwardness or in a state of visionary ecstasy, is to express the Absolute through her artwork (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 8–10 and 1989: 255–6).

What is noteworthy in this description is its close resemblance to the notion of mysticism, which is commonly conceptualized around the idea of the mystic's unifying experience of the divine presence (see e.g. McGinn 2000: xvi–xvii; Rousse-Lacordaire 2005: 818–19). Sarajas-Korte (1966: 32) herself underlines this connection, as she claims that 'it is usually hard to decide where religious mysticism ends and the Symbolist art theory begins'. Even if the concepts that Sarajas-Korte uses are not always unambiguous, I would presume the relation between Symbolism and mysticism is knowingly constructed. But why it is so important that the art movement in question should be understood in these terms? And why is Sarajas-Korte so eagerly trying to trace everything—at least in some part—back to Plato's philosophy? Could it be that she is avoiding some disturbing categories into which she does not wish Symbolist art and the mysticism it represents to fall?

⁷ In her later writings Sarajas-Korte (1989: 256) admits that Theosophy also played an important role in the birth of Symbolism, but in her doctoral thesis this fact is still left somewhat unclear. I will get to the specifics of this point later in this article.

The Mysticism of Sciences: Demarcating the Possibility of Superstition

According to Sarajas-Korte (1966: 15–17, 51–4), the mysticism that Symbolism laid its grounds on had its forerunner in the somewhat doubtful atmosphere of the 1880s, which was dominated by ‘sciences’ aiming to study the spiritual world.⁸ At the time, such phenomena as Spiritualism, Mesmerism⁹, Occultism and Theosophy¹⁰ were blurring the dividing line between scientific knowledge and religious faith. Artists were fascinated by Doctor Jean-Martin Charcot’s hypnotic shows and participated in spiritualist séances held all over Paris. From Sarajas-Korte’s point of view, these phenomena were none but symptoms of the more serious and sophisticated spirituality, which later rose from the ashes of the pseudo-rational atmosphere of the 1880s: ‘it was through some sort of *mysticism of the sciences* that the spiritual mysticism of the 1890s was approached’ (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 16, my italics).

The citation indicates that Sarajas-Korte assumed there were different forms of mysticism flourishing before the turn of the century, and that one of these mysticisms was somehow more spiritual—and also purer—than the others. For her this spiritual mysticism¹¹ is intercon-

- 8 ‘“Sciences” aiming to study the spiritual world’ is the expression Sarajas-Korte (1966: 17) uses. In another context she (1966: 53) also mentions ‘occult science’, which she seems to understand in a somewhat narrower meaning. In any case, Sarajas-Korte’s usage of these terms connects her with polemics that have flourished around the concept of occult sciences since the Enlightenment: modern Theosophists and occultists have used the term as they have referred to their own superior worldview opposing materialism, positivism and dogmatic Christianity, whereas critics related it to irrationality and superstition. (Hanegraaff 2005c: 886–7.) The manner in which Sarajas-Korte uses these terms implies that she is—at least faintly—promoting the latter standpoint.
- 9 Sarajas-Korte (1966: 17) does not mention Mesmerism explicitly, but she writes about Doctor Charcot’s hypnotism, which is part of the larger movement of Animal Magnetism/Mesmerism. It is also noteworthy that in France Mesmerism was closely intertwined with Spiritualism (see Meheust 2005: 79; Deveney 2005: 1080). For the sake of clarity I will in this article only use the concept of Mesmerism, when referring to the phenomenon.
- 10 In this article, Theosophy refers to the currents directly or indirectly connected with the Theosophical Society from the nineteenth century onwards. For the two different definitions of Theosophy, see Faivre 2000: 3–5.
- 11 As far as I have noticed Sarajas-Korte (1966: 16) uses this term in her study only once. The underlying difference between the various religious-philosophical

nected with the ‘genuine’ esoteric-mystical conception of symbols, which gets its inspiration from Plato’s Ideas and Swedenborg’s correspondences—in other words it represents Symbolism as Sarajas-Korte herself defined it. One of the artists whom Sarajas-Korte (1966: 36–7 and 1989: 256) considers to be working under the influence of this specific mysticism is the painter Paul Gauguin (1848–1903). He is the one artist Sarajas-Korte seems to consider as qualified for her category of true Symbolists. For Gauguin ‘the colours and lines of the painting, its inner tone and structure were able to provide an experience, which had its connection only with the human being’s most intimate, inner self—with the unexplainable, undivided mystical experience’ (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 37). But if Gauguin’s spiritual mysticism was the only one qualified as a suitable basis for the Symbolist theory, what made the other forms of mysticism so unsuitable? Why, for example, was a Spiritualism representing the mysticism of the sciences an unacceptable source of inspiration for the Symbolist artist?

Wouter J. Hanegraaff has suggested that it could be useful to distinguish between three general strategies of knowledge when trying to understand Western esotericism. The first strategy relies on human reason and is commonly used in scientific research and rational philosophy. The second strategy is essential for the established religions since it depends on some commonly accepted divine revelation, which is believed to transcend mere human wisdom. There is little doubt that these two strategies of knowledge, having their roots in Greek philosophy and in biblical faith, have been dominant forces in Western culture. From the earliest centuries onwards, however, there has also been a third strategy, referred to as gnosis. It emphasizes the personal experience or inner revelation, which leads into an encounter with one’s true self as well as with the divine grounds of being. This third strategy of knowledge has been in constant conflict with the other two, since it seems to overstep some essential boundaries. From the perspective of philosophy and science, gnosis is reaching for the truth ‘beyond reason’: the rational worldview is threatened for example by Hermeticism, since it operates too closely with modern science but does not necessarily adhere to the

phenomena, however, is implicated generally throughout the whole study. I chose to use the two concepts of mysticism of sciences and spiritual mysticism in order to have simple means to refer to Sarajas-Korte’s divisions. Obviously I do not support this differentiation that she has constructed between the mysticisms.

limits of mere rationality. On the other hand, the established religions seem to share a view that gnosis is bypassing important authorities by emphasizing the personal revelation and thus pulling itself away from ‘true religion’. This position has called forth the discourse of heresy for example in the case of Gnosticism of late antiquity (Hanegraaff 2004: 409, 510–11; van den Broek & Hanegraaff 1998: vii–x).

These three strategies of knowledge may shed some light on the divisions Sarajas-Korte makes between different forms of mysticism. By disentangling spiritual mysticism from the mysticism of sciences, Sarajas-Korte draws a strong boundary between Symbolist art and such esoteric phenomena as Spiritualism and Mesmerism. For her these obscure sciences seem to represent little more than mere superstition in which ‘true’ Symbolist artists like Gauguin could never seriously believe. The diminishing of the mysticism of sciences is also expressed in the way Sarajas-Korte uses the terminology of illness and bacteria in relation to it: for example, interest in Hypnotism was ‘spreading like an epidemic’ in the streets of the Parisian art world (See e.g. Sarajas-Korte 1966: 17). From my point of view, it certainly seems that Sarajas-Korte is trying here to protect both Symbolism and the spiritual mysticism it is based on from getting ‘beyond reason’. She assimilates the standpoint of rationalists and points her finger at the superstitious and superficial nature of those ‘sciences’ aiming to study the spiritual realm. The mysticism of the Symbolists by contrast has little or nothing to do with these pseudo-sciences. What is noteworthy here is that by separating the different forms of mysticism from each other, Sarajas-Korte manages to keep the spirituality of Symbolist art apart from the filth of superstition and irrationality. Yet her differentiation between mysticisms is actually quite understandable, since up until recently many of the esoteric phenomena have been understood as somewhat problematic for scientific research (Hanegraaff 2005b). So in a way her views were nothing out of the ordinary in the academic milieu of the 1960s.

Sarajas-Korte’s tendency to protect Symbolism from the dubious influence of irrational gnosis also makes me wonder whether it could be possible that she emphasizes the relation between Symbolism and Platonic philosophy for the same reasons. As the roots of Hanegraaff’s rational strategy of knowledge lie in the midst of Greek antiquity, philosophy could certainly add some seriousness into the art theory Sarajas-Korte otherwise so clearly connects with mysticism. In any case, Sarajas-Korte seems to be eager to direct Symbolism further away from the mysticism of the sciences and nearer to the philosophical contemplation, as she promotes the idea that by the 1890s ‘mysticism had found its way

from the level of Spiritualist séances . . . into the serious conversations of the modern philosophy' (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 51).

The definition of Theosophy constitutes an interesting case study if you want to pay attention to the differentiation Sarajas-Korte establishes, since it seems to be situated in some sort of an ambivalent intersection between spiritual mysticism and the mysticism of the sciences. In other words, Theosophy does not clearly represent either one of these mysticisms, but has something in common with both of them. First of all, Sarajas-Korte (1966: 15–17) seems to think that Theosophy gained its popularity in the imminence of other forms of mysticism of sciences: it shares the same fusion of faith and knowledge as for example Spiritualism and Occultism, and hence it is at risk to be categorized as superstition. The threat is expressed by Sarajas-Korte when she suggests that Theosophical doctrines and writings were often speculative and even uncritical.¹² These remarks indicate that she estimates the value of this religious-philosophical movement using the criteria of rational science—no wonder Theosophy appears to be questionable! On the other hand, Theosophy also seems to have some characteristics that would favour its relocation into the respectable category of spiritual mysticism forming the grounds for the Symbolist art. Here the notion of philosophy comes up again as Sarajas-Korte (see e.g. 1966: 51, 60, 111) connects Theosophy with Eastern wisdom and mysticism.¹³ On several occasions she only writes about Eastern philosophy, and I would presume that by this she means to refer to some Theosophical sources—only in a more suitable form. She does not for example mention Theosophy in relation to Paul Gauguin—the one artist she believes discovered the possibilities of spiritual mysticism in art—although his Finnish art students were reading the writings of A. P. Sinnet¹⁴ with great enthusiasm.

- 12 Sarajas-Korte (1966: 53) connects Theosophy specifically with Edouard Schuré, who wrote the influential *Les Grands initiés* in 1889. Although Sarajas-Korte's summary about Schuré's doctrines brings forth the micro- and macrocosmic relations, she does not point out the similarities between the Platonic-Swedenborgian mysticism and Schuré's thinking—instead she remarks that Schuré wrote 'fairly uncritically' about the shared history of different religions. She (1966: 51) also states that Theosophy was often quite speculative in its nature.
- 13 Although Theosophy derived its doctrines from Hinduism and Buddhism among others, it is obvious that it used these sources selectively for its own purposes. In Sarajas-Korte's writings this fact does not become clear.
- 14 Paul Gauguin's Finnish students Pekka Halonen (1865–1933) and Väinö Blomstedt (1871–1947) read A. P. Sinnet's book entitled *Esoteric Buddhism* during the

Only Gauguin's interest in Eastern mysticism is noted (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 36–9, 111–15). It is as though Sarajas-Korte was struggling between the two categories: as Eastern philosophy and mysticism, Theosophy would be good enough to represent spiritual mysticism, but it still had too many similarities with pseudo-sciences like Spiritualism. To avoid the stigma of superstition in relation to Symbolism, she seems to be more willing to write about the Eastern influences than about Theosophy *per se*.

Imagining Symbolism¹⁵

In the late fifteenth century, the well-known renaissance humanist Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) tried to redeem his magical texts and rituals from the demonizing interpretations of Christians by hiding behind Neo-Platonic authorities and the notion of *magia naturalis*, which made the magical operations seem more natural or even scientific (von Stuckrad 2005: 63–4). In other words Ficino made use of the philosophy and language of science as he tried to protect his own ideological context. Considering Salme Sarajas-Korte's conceptual divisions from this point of view, I have to wonder if she finally discovered the same thing that Marsilio Ficino did several centuries earlier: that if you want to get rid of the stigma of superstition, you can always try to hide behind philosophy and scientific rhetoric. In any case, her definitions seem to protect Symbolist art from being confused with the phenomena that might seem absurd and superstitious in the eyes of 'rational readers'.

winter of 1893–4 (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 111). The book sums up the teachings Sinnet claims to have gathered while in contact with the same Mahatmas or Masters of Wisdom that were the basis for Helena P. Blavatsky's theosophical doctrine (Santucci 2005: 1116).

15 The heading refers to Jonathan Z. Smith's insightful study *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (1988). In this book Smith (1988: xi) states that religion is solely the theoretical creation of scholars, who use it for their own analytical purposes. My overall comprehension of Symbolism is similar: there is no pre-existent art movement called Symbolism, which unfolds itself before the willing art historian. Thus there cannot be any purer or authentic forms of this art movement either, and this is exactly what Sarajas-Korte seems to be suggesting.

In addition, Sarajas-Korte's definitions also disentangle Symbolism from the burden of social-political issues. By combining Symbolism with mysticism, she is demarcating Symbolist art into the private spiritual domain, which is conveniently separated from the realms of the secular, political and public.¹⁶ Thus her definition seems to partake in the mystification¹⁷ of Symbolism, which is still quite a common tendency in many art historical studies (Hirsch 2004: xiii). One explanation for Sarajas-Korte's eagerness to emphasize the Platonic grounds of Symbolism can in fact be seen in relation to this mystification. Since Christian mysticism is often claimed to be inspired by Plato's philosophy and especially by his theories of Love/Eros as a pathway to transcendence (Louth 1981: 191–204; McGinn 2000: 24–35), Symbolism and Christian mysticism would suddenly seem to hold essential similarities. This association between mysticism and the art movement in question, in its turn makes Symbolism appear as a 'purely spiritual' phenomenon, which has little or nothing to do with the secular realm of politics.

Although I still consider Salme Sarajas-Korte's study to be the most comprehensive research on the connections between Western esoterism and Finnish Symbolism, her writings nevertheless make some questionable divisions concerning different esoteric currents, mysticisms and politics. In her writings she constructed an art movement destined to live in its pristine spiritual realm. Symbolism was covered with the aura of mysticism and protected from the harms of accusations of superstition by emphasizing philosophical roots of the art movement. This overall definition also guides Sarajas-Korte as she interprets Akseli Gallen-Kallela's *Ad Astra*. The painting is full of mysticism, but it also reflects the religious crisis the artist went through as he was exposed to Theosophical influences: Gallen-Kallela's comprehension of art was shaken and 'the whole period of crisis was dominated by an unnatural

- 16 I am planning to get into the specifics of this separation in my doctoral thesis. At this point I can only note that this division has led into the situation where it is necessary to categorize different artist and artworks either as Symbolist-spiritual or as national-political. Russell T. McCutcheon (2003) and Bruce Lincoln (1999) among others have pointed out the importance of such constructed divisions.
- 17 By mystification I refer to similar action that McCutcheon (2000: 205–7) defines as mythmaking: in order to create a safe haven for something, the complex network of disguised assumptions is utilized and attention is drawn away from questions that are not wanted.

foreign ambition' (Sarajas-Korte 1966: 292–5). I can but wonder, how Gallen-Kallela's painting and Finnish Symbolism in general would look like, if they were released from their own spiritual realm into the reality full of uncomfortable social-political negotiations and struggles. How would they appear in this mundane context? And what would happen to *Ad Astra* if it were associated with such phenomena as Occultism and Theosophy without the fear of being condemned as superstitious or heretic?¹⁸ Imagine if Symbolist art was redefined without the aura of spirituality and the hierarchic differentiation between mysticisms. Imagine *Ad Astra* all over again.

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18 The Frenchman Rodolphe Rapetti (2000) has already in a less evaluative manner suggested the significance of Theosophy and Esotericism in general in *Ad Astra*. Furthermore, the aspects of mundane cultural negotiations are vividly present in Harri Kalha's (2005) study about the discursive presentations of the Finnish Symbolist painter Magnus Enckell (1870–1925).

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TOMAS MANSIKKA

Did the Pietists Become Esotericists When They Read the Works of Jacob Boehme?

As is commonly known, Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) is, and has been ever since his emergence, difficult to place in the history of thought. The historian Preserved Smith, for instance, characterized him as ‘the most religious of philosophers’ (Smith 1962: 171). As such Boehme could be seen to be on a borderline somewhere between philosophy and theology. From a reverse point of view, however, he could also be termed the most speculative of the religiously minded, as a deeply religious thinker or *mystic*. His influence is also shown in both fields; not only was he to play an important role within German philosophy during the Romantic era, but also, within the Pietist movement, or the movement for revival of piety within the Lutheran church. Focusing on the Pietist movement, initiated by Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) in the late seventeenth century and its spread on Finnish ground, I will show that where Boehmian influence is traceable, it reached quite different environments depending on the movement’s leaders or followers. My intention is also to shed some light on the controversy between Lutheran orthodoxy and Pietism in early eighteenth century Finland.

One way to understand the apparent heterogeneity of Boehmian influence is to see Boehme himself as an exponent of not one single tradition, but—as Andrew Weeks has described him—as the great Baroque synthesizer, fusing many different lines of thought:

[A] surprising number of the themes of German mysticism are reassembled and synthesized in his oeuvre: Hildegard’s epic struggle between the forces of good and evil. . . ; Eckhart’s reflective knowledge which knows God in self-knowledge; Seuse’s chivalrous devotion to Lady Wisdom; Tauler’s use of parabolic symbols; the Christian Kabbalah and Hermetism of the Renaissance. . . ; the Spiritualist’s defence of freedom and toleration. . . (Weeks 1993: 171–2.)

And so on. There are, moreover, Gnostic and Neoplatonic elements to be found in him, as well as traits from the tradition of Gregory of Nyssa

and Erigena. More obvious influences are, of course, the strong Lutheran and Paracelsian elements in his thinking (Weeks 1993: 172).

During recent decades Boehme has received most attention from the field of the study of esotericism. This has rendered him as being in something of a position as one of the major exponents of a tradition, or a family of traditions, that sets out to reveal the hidden depths and mysteries of Man and Nature.

The difficulty in labelling Boehme is encountered here, too. In the broad context of esotericism he is first and foremost described as a theosophist, and as such, and due to the major impact of Germanic *Naturphilosophie* within Western esotericism, even as the 'prince of western esotericism' (Faivre 1994: 64). A more conventional classification is to place him within the tradition of German mysticism, which is what Weeks does. As to the label Hermetist, we find, for instance, that Ingrid Merkel, in her study of Hermetic imagery in the work of Jakob Böhme, states that it is 'with caution and reservation' that she 'introduce Jacob Boehme into the circle of Hermetists' (Merkel 1988: 302). In Glenn Alexander Magee's *Hegel and the Hermetic tradition* Boehme is, however, described as the foremost exponent of the hermetic tradition leading up to Hegel (Magee 2001: 36–50). Still another example could be taken from Cyril O'Regan's *Gnostic Apocalypse* (2002), which argues that Boehme should be seen as the person mainly responsible for, or a prime mover in, a return of ancient Gnosis in early modernity. The Russian philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev also regards him as 'one of the greatest of Christian Gnostics', but, as he maintains, 'not in the sense of the heresies of the opening centuries of the Christian era' (Berdyaev 1958: v).

This has, of course, to do with various approaches or perspectives, as well as how we define the concepts at hand. As is well known, these concepts also overlap each other in many ways. Placing Boehme on the map of religious thinking in Finland will not, I am afraid, make any definitions clearer. It will, on the contrary, perhaps only further underline the elusiveness of Boehmian thought and religious philosophy.

Boehmenist Influences in Finland

In the standard, and still largest, documentary collection of religious movements in Finland, covering a period from late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, the publisher Matthias Akiander dedicates no less than two thirds of his Preface to present the tenets of Jacob Boehme. The reason he gives might sound provocative indeed: 'Among the many

doctrinal parties', Akiander writes, 'which will be shed light on by primary sources, the school of *Böhme* with its corollaries deserves special attention in our country, because its doctrines first gained ground here, has been preserved for the longest time and of all the sects has most infiltrated the religious ideas of other doctrinal parties' (Akiander 1857, I: vi).¹

A widespread reading and influence of Boehme is also documented elsewhere. According to the classic, and still unsurpassed study of Pietism of 1911, by the church historian Emanuel Linderholm, Boehmian thinking was, in at least some regions, actually to pose a real threat to orthodox Lutheranism at the end of the seventeenth century. Boehmian theosophy became at the time strongly promoted through the works of Fr. Brechling and J. G. Gichtel and the latter's editing of the writings of Boehme in 1682. From 1690 onward, the influence reached new heights through the English Behmenists John Pordage, Thomas Bromley and Jane Lead. It is important also to view this influence against a wider intellectual and dissident background, comprising Quakers, Mennonites, and Schwenkfelders, who shared the basic concepts of religion as an 'inner' activity, in terms of 'word', 'light' or 'man'. The notion of religion as something primarily internal and private, especially in terms of an 'inner word', became, according to Linderholm, for late seventeenth century people, what ideas of progress were to become for a later age (Linderholm 1911: 39–40).

Early Radical Pietists

The earliest documented influence of Boehmian ideas in Finland can be traced to the turn of the eighteenth century among the first radical Pietists, Lars (Laurentius) Ulstadius (d. 1732) and Peter Schäfer (1662–1729). Although they were not Boehmenists in the strict sense of the word, influenced as well by other thinkers as they were, they stand out, however, as preparers of the particular milieu that later was to cultivate a spread of Boehmenism. In a new edition of J. N. Edenius's church history *Epitome Historiae ecclesiasticae novi Testamenti* from 1708, the bishop

1 'Bland de flera läropartier, som nu komma att med urkunder belysas, förtjänar *Böhmes* skola med dess utgrenningar en särskild uppmärksamhet i vårt land, emedan dess läror tidigast vunnit insteg hos oss, längsta tiden bibehållit sig och mest av alla sekter inmängt sig i de öfriga läropartiernas religiösa föreställningar.'

in Turku (Swe. Åbo) Johan Gezelius Jr (1647–1718) appended an account of radical Pietism in the form of two distinct movements, one that used Schwenkfeldian, Weigelian and Labadistic doctrines, the other consisting of the followers of Boehme (Råberg 1893: 128–30). Both Ulstadius and Schäfer would belong mainly to this first category and Gezelius probably, in updating the work with the new heresies, also had these two in his mind. With Ulstadius we actually, as it were, witness one of the earliest appearances of radical Pietism within Lutheranism. After reading Schwenckfeld and Weigel, among others, he had resigned from his duty as minister in his hometown Oulu (Swe. Uleåborg) and travelled to Turku in 1683, where he caused a great stir by interrupting a sermon in Turku Cathedral in 1688; an incident for which he was sentenced to death in 1692, though the sentence was overturned into life imprisonment. As his friend and pupil, Schäfer was soon afterwards, and under heavy pressure, forced to cancel his conviction. These early events seem to have put an abrupt end at the very beginning to the spread of dissenting ideas (Linderholm 1911: 82–6).

The harsh treatment by the Lutheran orthodox clergy had, however, more of a reverse effect, an outcome that subsequently was to raise Ulstadius and Schäfer to something of martyrs for dissenters still to come. The case of Schäfer is particularly enlightening. Esteeming his situation as excruciating he left the country and spent more than ten years of restless living abroad. During his peregrinations he met Spener in Berlin and worked as a teacher at August Hermann Francke's home in Halle. From Halle he moved on to Quedlinburg in 1699 to reside at the place of Gottfried Arnold. Arnold was at the time deeply immersed in studying Boehme and particularly his doctrine of the Heavenly Sophia, which resulted in the work *Geheimnis der Göttlichen Sophia* next year. (Laine 2006: 202.) More importantly, Schäfer recalled to Arnold the events and the persecution he and Ulstadius had suffered in Finland, which Arnold included in his *Unparteyische Ketzer- und Kirchenhistorien* published 1699–1700. In Holland Schäfer established contacts with mystics and theosophists such as Gichtel, who mentions him in his *Theosophia practica* from 1732. Schäfer's stay in Holland and notably his acquaintance with Quakers finally encouraged him to travel to Pennsylvania, where he met William Penn, with whom he continued to correspond after his return to Finland.

Returning to Finland in 1701, and deeply regretting his former repeal of religious conviction, he subsequently stepped forward as an apocalyptic preacher from the year 1707 onward, recapitulating the criticism Ulstadius had directed against the clergy 20 years earlier. Schäfer simi-

larly received a death sentence, which was altered to life imprisonment in 1709, and was locked up in Turku Castle, from where he was transferred to the Castle of Gävle in 1714 (Akiander 1857, I: 8–22).

During his imprisonment Schäfer gained a reputation as an apocalyptic and visionary that was to influence even the Royal Family, as he identified King Carl XII as *Der Löwe aus der Mitternacht*; the yellow lion that was to appear in anticipation of the final end. In his captivity Schäfer studied, among other works, the writings of Boehme, which—as can be noticed from his diaries—were particularly dear to him. Among the people who supported him from abroad, Arnold's pupil Johann Konrad Dippel might be mentioned, who in 1712 through their mutual friend Johan Andersson Dorsche, expressed his concern for Schäfer's welfare and collected a sum of money to be sent to him (Ruuth 1915: 21).

The Eriksson Brothers

In the late 1730s, a new movement began to emerge around the brothers Jacob (1689–1737) and Erik Eriksson (1695–1761). Natives of Kälviä (Swe. Kelviå) in central Ostrobothnia, there seem to be no direct ties connecting them to the events in Turku, but they came to regard themselves as heirs to both Ulstadius and Schäfer (Loimaranta 1940: 304–5). Their religious and philosophical orientation was more clearly that of Jacob Boehme, whose writings they first might have come across during their periods of service in the Carolingian army (Loimaranta 1940: 292–3).

With the Eriksson movement, a parallel to the Philadelphian society can be seen emerging on Finnish ground. In its approach and particular mode it was, however, quite different, as it lacked almost completely that group's characteristic visions and expectations, as to its charismatic leader Jane Lead. Due to external pressures, the Finnish movement developed into a highly exclusive and uncompromising group of dissenters, displaying intolerance both towards the clergy and other religious approaches. In their view, any attempts to compromise with orthodox views were detestable. In addition to the works of Boehme, they accepted only a few other writings, such as Thomas Bromley's *Way to the Sabbath of Rest*, Pordage's *Göttliche und Wahre Metaphysica* and works by Gottfried Arnold. The writings of Jane Lead were only to be read with great caution (Loimaranta 1940: 289).

The presence and influence of the brothers was deemed so dangerous that they were expelled from the country in 1734, and became, as it were, the first to be forced to leave on religious grounds. With a group

consisting of 85 followers they travelled via Stockholm and Copenhagen to Holland and Germany, where they impatiently moved from one place to another, tormented by both external and internal conflicts. From the viewpoint of church orthodoxy they were indeed dangerous, as their presence usually promoted an immediate radicalization among societies of moderate Pietists. Returning in 1745 to Sweden, the group had reduced to 21 in number, with Erik as the sole leader, as the older brother Jacob had died in 1737. They finally found a haven in Skevik in Sweden where the movement survived up to the middle of the nineteenth century when the last follower passed away (Janzon 1866).

The Mystics of Ostrobothnia

The spread of Boehmian ideas also gave birth to a loosely structured movement known as the 'Mystics of Ostrobothnia'. The movement undoubtedly had its prelude in the earlier events, although so far no direct influences have been documented. Moreover, the group was quite different both in nature and religious outlook from the preceding ones. Their leader Anders Collin (1754–1830) was a renowned librarian and Boehmenist in Stockholm, who held a lively correspondence with his followers overseas in Ostrobothnia. What is remarkable about this movement is the number of Finnish translations of works by Boehme they produced. Whereas the Eriksson brothers did not translate any writings by the Silurian shoemaker, the 'mystics' produced a number of books, chapters and shorter works in the form of handwritten manuscripts, which circulated among the followers. In addition to the works of Boehme, they also produced translations of other works, even non-religious writings, such as books on history and geography (Grönroos 1972). Although the Mystics of Ostrobothnia widely read the works of Boehme, they had, as can be seen from the translations, quite a different approach to the theosophical *corpus* than was the case with the Eriksson brothers. *Aurora* and other more obscure works were not translated but merely the explicit devotional writings focusing on Christian life. The Boehmenist literature seems for them, therefore, to have served first and foremost as devotional literature. In contrast to the Erikssons' movement, Collin was cautious also to remind his followers not to depart from the Lutheran church (Pajula 1911: 6, 11; Kvist 1997: 123–6). This made the actual extent of the movement more difficult to detect, and its influence, accordingly, can be traced well into the mid-nineteenth century.

Wallenbergianism

Owing to the dispersal of writings by Boehme still another movement emerged before the end of the eighteenth century. In Lapua (Swe. Lappo) in southern Ostrobothnia, a translation of Boehme's *Psychologia vera* had come into the hands of Jacob Wallenberg, a glass manufacturer who had fallen into misfortune when planning to establish a glass factory. In 1798 he became the charismatic leader and prophet of a group in the neighbouring district of Kauhava, an event that caught attention early on due to its exceptional activities. Wallenberg, who evidently held a strong appeal for women, came to initiate a series of rituals including also some apparently sexual ingredients. More than Boehmian teachings proper, joint rites in the form of 'jumping' and 'trampling' seem to have been important for the group's constancy. By jumping, one trampled on the snake's head by which action the adherents were carried into higher bliss. Another important ingredient was the abundant consumption of alcohol and tobacco, which was believed to keep the devil away. During the meetings all sexual restrictions were abandoned in favour of heavenly marriages, which were to be carried out in their carnal sense. The atmosphere of sexual relief and freedom that Wallenberg fostered held, not surprisingly, a particular appeal for the youth. Although only a few were vouchsafed to behold the inner secrets of his teaching, the following numbered roughly one hundred people (Akiander 1860, IV: 15 ff.).

The suspicious activities of Wallenberg must have resulted in still greater wariness from the clergy when it came to his prophetic role. Abandoning both communion and service, he claimed that Luther had falsified the teachings of the apostles. Furthermore, God had become disappointed with Jesus and overturned his mandate and, accordingly, replaced him by Wallenberg, whose mission was nothing less than to redeem the whole of humanity. In his new position, Wallenberg was also capable of miracles, as for instance turning stones into gold—this secret, however, he failed to prove to his followers (Akiander 1860, IV: 22–6).

Wallenberg was subsequently arrested and like Schäfer and Ulstadius before him, given a death sentence, which was overturned to life imprisonment. Wallenberg died shortly after his arrest, but the movement persisted, and *Psychologia vera* continued to be read as the 'Book of Boehme' (*Böhmin kirja*) or 'Catechism of Wallenberg'. In the early nineteenth century the group moved to the adjacent district of Kuortane and became known as the 'Wasuits' after its new leader Isak Wasumäki (1783–1854). The movement was still alive at the time of Akiander's collecting of documentary sources in 1860. He noted that of the inhabitants

of Kuortane at the time, approximately one fourth of the elderly population were attached to the movement (Akiander 1860, IV: 38). After Wasumäki's death and under the leadership of Enoch Hynnälä some decline was reported regarding proselytizing new followers. Still, however, in the early twentieth century a priest, Kustaa Hallio, reported that Boehmenist literature continued to be read in a number of districts in Ostrobothnia (Hallio 1901: 350).

The spread of Boehmian theosophy in the area of Ostrobothnia in Finland had its repercussions among the upper and middle class cultures as well. An instructive example is Christian Henrik Snellman (1777–1855), father of the Finnish national philosopher Johan Vilhelm Snellman, who developed an intricate spiritual philosophy on the basis of Emanuel Swedenborg and also, to some degree, the views of Boehme. After the death of his first wife, the mother of Johan Vilhelm, he married Catharina Sofia Ahla (1798–1879) who was a devout follower of Boehme. Living in Alahärmä in Ostrobothnia, Christian Henrik expressed a deepest respect for Catharina as to her religious and philosophical views. In 1835 he wrote to his son that she is 'the greatest philosopher who gets everything gratis through faith; [i.e.] everything that so called science with its logical metaphysical reasoning produces [and] what Schelling, indeed, has tried' (cited in Manninen 1995: 232).² Schelling's debt to Boehme is well known, but what is more interesting in this context, is that the followers of Boehme indeed could affiliate and correlate their views with the new *Zeitgeist*, the philosophy of the Romantic Movement. This includes the system of Hegel (Magee 2001; Merkel 1988: 309) as well, which was to capture the mind of J. V. Snellman and establish Hegelianism as the national philosophy of Finland. A renewed esteem of the doctrines of Boehme emerged to some degree also through the mediation of Franz von Baader, whose direct influence, though, seems to have been restricted to the mediating theology of A. F. Granfelt (1815–92) (Luukkanen 1993).

2 'Mamma [är] den största filosof, som får alt gratis genom Tron; alt hvad så kallad Wetternskap kan med sin Logiskt Methafysiska slutkonst, utkläcka som Schelling nog försökt.'

Conclusions

Due to the divergent character of the reception of Boehme's ideas in Finland, as roughly drafted above, it would clearly be inappropriate to approach Finnish Boehmenism as *one* particular or distinctive tradition. If we, notwithstanding, search for something that could be termed esoteric, it would be the particular form of secrecy that was shared and upheld by the Erikssons, the mystics, as well as the movement of Wallenberg. As such, it was a precaution and protection against the church authorities, for the reason that they owned, read and contemplated books that were marked as heretical. Another dimension of esotericism could be, pertaining to the Erikssons particularly, that they carefully selected their followers and approved only those whom they saw fit for further instruction or teaching. With the Erikssons and with the mystics of Ostrobothnia, the central issue was the guidance into a deeper inner life, while the core within the Wallenberg group was an initiation to become close to the saviour himself, and to be one of the chosen at the imminent arrival of the new millennium. Whereas the Erikssons' movement was characterized by gravity and seriousness, the Wallenbergians and Wasuits were more explicitly a religion of frivolousness and joy, or to be in an 'easy spirit of the Lord' (*helpossa Herran hengessä*) (Akiander 1860, IV: 36). The inner, secret life (*salattu elämä*) of the Wallenberg movement was not a withdrawal to an introspective, private life, or an abandonment of personal will, but simply a matter of hiding the group's activities of drinking, dancing and sexual intercourse. For them, living without boundaries and restrictions and in an 'easy spirit', was a truly Christian way of life.

Wallenberg, as well as the early radical pietist Peter Schäfer, were clearly not disposed to the religious philosophy of Boehme in the sense that the two brothers Eriksson and their followers had been. Notwithstanding, there was a strong kinship, as when Erik Eriksson declared that there were no 'real priests' in the country, though if Schäfer were still alive, he alone could give an accurate sermon (Akiander 1860, IV: 321). As with the early radical dissenters, Wallenberg's movement was part of a wider apocalyptic and chiliastic tradition. Although the writings of Boehme had functioned mainly as consolation for Schäfer during his lifetime imprisonment, it is in his, as well as the Wallenbergians', chiliastic vision something vitally Boehmenist inspired can be detected. The expectation of the approaching millennium was for them the promise of a new regenerated earth which had a markedly alchemical flavour, i.e. a golden age where everything was to be 'tinctured' to its highest de-

gree of being (Akiander 1857, I: 30 and 1860, IV: 18). Perceiving nature thus 'alchemically', was to perceive the world as a dynamic process in terms of a perpetual battle of opposing elements. The world, for them, was not a static order where a mere confession for the sake of salvation would do; it was, more accurately, a dynamic order of becoming and a dialectical process that Berdyaev has pointed to,—as regards its immense importance to German Idealism—namely 'that a thing can be revealed only through another thing that resists it. Light cannot reveal itself without darkness, nor good without evil, nor the spirit without the resistance of matter' (Berdyaev 1958: xi).

In a certain sense Boehmenist theosophy is, altogether, a deep realism, in grasping a certain feeling for being. This philosophical underpinning has usually not received attention in relation to the Pietistic movement. Because God, for them, was ultimately will and not rationality, it followed, feasibly, that all theologies in the sense of doctrinal creeds were misdirected in their very foundations. The basis of the Kingdom of God was not in words but in power; their religion was, consequently, a Christianity of power (*voima-christillisyyys*) (Akiander 1858, II: 29). In another sense, the Boehmenists could also be seen as early psychologists, as they were occupied with reading the personal book, or to withdraw into the inner life and strife between good and evil. Since Boehme's God was—as Pastor Richter reported early on—made of sulphur and mercury, the world was primarily, and through God's self-realization, a psychic process. Boehmenism could consequently offer, as it were, an ontological foundation of its own or an orientation that provided stability beyond theological disputes.

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KIM B. ÖSTMAN

Esotericism Made Exoteric?

Insider and Outsider Perspectives on the 2006 Mormon Temple Public Open House in Espoo, Finland

Introduction

'Finland's Mormons are now campaigning for openness', said a television reporter as he introduced his subject in September 2006 (News 2006). The occasion was a public open house at the new Helsinki Finland temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, more commonly known as the Mormon Church.¹ The temple was open for all interested individuals for a period of two and a half weeks at the end of September and the beginning of October, prior to its dedication. During this public open house, a total of about 56,000 visits to the temple were logged. In addition to visits by interested Latter-day Saints, these included dignitaries such as Finland's Prime Minister and opposition leader and more numerously, ordinary Finns who were curious to see what the Mormons had built and what the Mormons believed.

Recent years have seen a boom in Latter-day Saints' temple building. Some scholars speak of Mormonism's 'templization', referring to the increased number of the faith's temples around the world and the increased centrality of temples in Mormon discourse and living (Shipps 2001). There are currently 126 temples operating worldwide with ten more under construction or planned. When the construction of a Mormon temple is completed, the Church usually holds a public open house that becomes a major event for local Latter-day Saints to plan and exe-

1 The terms 'Mormon' and 'Mormonism' more precisely refer to all faith traditions descended from Joseph Smith. In this article, I mostly use them to refer specifically to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the largest branch of the Mormon tradition. I also use in this article the Mormon church's worldwide naming convention for its temples, that is, calling the temple after the large city closest to it. More precisely the Helsinki Finland temple is located in the city of Espoo, part of the capital city region.

cute. Through the increased number of temple construction projects, open houses have been occurring with increased frequency around the world.²

Mormon temples are different from regular Mormon Church buildings and are often shrouded in mystery in people's minds. Whereas Latter-day Saints' meeting houses are open for all, and anyone is welcome to participate with Mormons in their Sunday services, the temples and the ceremonies conducted therein are reserved for faithful Latter-day Saints only and are not spoken of to outsiders except in general terms. Open houses at Mormon temples are interesting because during those events, the temple, which is usually an esoteric space, enters a halfway point between the sacred, secret, and hidden on the one hand, and the public and open on the other.

The term esotericism has a multiplicity of definitions. These definitions differ, for example, in how the underlying concepts concerning the relationship of man, the universe, and the divine are weighted and emphasized. One example of esotericism is man's turning inward and undergoing initiation processes in order to gain a deeper knowledge of the divine. Secrecy is not a necessary component of the esoteric, but may be part of it. If esotericism is seen as designating 'teachings or doctrines that are purposely kept secret, generally with a view to distinguish between initiates and non-initiates' (Faivre 2005: 2842), then the Mormon Church's temple tradition can be seen as one example of esotericism. It is esoteric in that both Mormon temples as buildings and the ceremonies conducted in those buildings are reserved only for the initiated.

The public open house of a Mormon temple does not mean that all temple-related matters are discussed and presented freely for a given time period. Rather, the open house necessitates for the Mormons a balance between being open about their religion and the function of their temples on the one hand, and discretion on the other, not speaking too much, or divulging those temple-related details and elements that are considered to be the most sacred. At the same time, however, the open house is publicized widely and the Latter-day Saints welcome visitors with open arms. In other words, it is not organized with a grudging attitude of perhaps having to open the temple for a couple of days just to allay the fears of the public.

2 The number of newly completed temples peaked during the year 2000 and has been in decline since.

The purpose of this article is to discuss two perspectives on Latter-day Saints' temple open houses. First, that of the Latter-day Saints themselves, who are placed in a delicate situation as they present the temple to the public while simultaneously desiring to preserve its esoteric nature. What do they want to accomplish and how do they go about doing it? Second, the perspective of the public, whose reactions exemplify layman views of what it can be like to peek into a sacred and esoteric world foreign to oneself. What kinds of forms can their thoughts take at Mormon temple open houses? The particular case considered here is the autumn 2006 open house at the Helsinki Finland temple.

The source material for the present study consists of my own observations, newspaper and media reports, a sample of comments from feedback cards that people filled in after their tour at the temple, and various internet sites containing people's comments and experiences. From a source-critical point of view, one has to keep in mind that the material is somewhat skewed, as it does not provide a representative sample of all visitors. However, my purpose is not to build an objective image of what a visit 'really' was like; it would, of course, be impossible to do so. Instead, the point is to look at the subjective feelings and thoughts of individuals. Regardless of some limitations, the material gives valuable insights into the kinds of thoughts people had as they visited the new Mormon temple located in the city of Espoo, adjacent to Helsinki.³

I will first lay the basic framework for this article by discussing Mormon temples and their function in more detail. After that I will take a look at the perspective from which the Latter-day Saints approached and conducted the open house, followed by a discussion of the varied reactions of the public. I will then conclude with some thoughts on the place and future of Mormon temples.

Mormon Temples and Their Esoteric Nature

Mormonism as a religious movement was founded in 1830, based on the multiple epiphanies of its founder, Joseph Smith, during the 1820s. In the first of these epiphanies during his teenage years, Smith claimed

3 For an analysis of the Helsinki Finland temple open house that approaches the same source material specifically from the viewpoint of socio-cultural otherness, see Östman 2007.

to have seen God the Father and Jesus Christ in a vision. This was followed by revelations that resulted, among other things, in the scriptural *Book of Mormon* (Bushman 2005). Mormonism was seen as a restoration of primitive Christianity and the primitive Christian Church's exclusive authority to act in God's name and to perform salvational religious ceremonies such as baptism. The Church of Christ, as it was first called, was organized in upstate or western New York, known as the 'burned-over district' due to the amount of enthusiastic religious activities and preaching that, figuratively speaking, scorched the area (Cross 1950).

Temples were not a part of original Mormonism, but its temple-related theological concepts developed during Joseph Smith's life. The first Latter-day Saints' temple was built in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836. It was different in function from the Mormon temples of today, because it served as a regular meeting house in addition to being a place for performing special ceremonies that were reserved for faithful Latter-day Saints. These ceremonies have little counterpart in today's church. The Kirtland temple still stands and is now owned by the Community of Christ, the second-largest branch of the Mormon faith tradition.

The prototype for the Mormon temples of today was built in Nauvoo, Illinois, in the 1840s, with construction beginning during Joseph Smith's lifetime. It was also in Nauvoo where temple-related Mormon theology blossomed. Joseph Smith did not witness the integration of the Latter-day Saints' temple concept into being a part of the faith as a whole, as it is today, but most of the ideas related to it were in place in Smith's theology before his death in 1844. The temple was later abandoned as the Mormons were forced to migrate westward.⁴ The temple in Salt Lake City, completed in 1893, is still in operation and serves as one of the worldwide symbols of Mormonism (Buerger 1994).

Over the years, Mormon temple building has expanded outside the United States, just as Mormonism itself has expanded to become a more global religion. The first Latter-day Saints' temple in Europe was built in Zollikofen near Bern, Switzerland, in 1955, with another temple closely following in Newchapel, south of London, England, in 1958. The first Scandinavian Mormon temple was built just south of Stockholm in Västerhaninge, completed in 1985, with a second temple constructed in Copenhagen and dedicated for use in 2004. The Helsinki Finland temple,

⁴ The temple was later burned by arson and destroyed in a storm. It was recently reconstructed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and dedicated for use in 2002 as the Nauvoo Illinois temple.

located in the city of Espoo, thus became the third Mormon temple in the Nordic countries. The temple is used by Finnish, Baltic, Belarusian, and Russian Latter-day Saints.

The basic Mormon religious ceremonies of baptism and confirmation are performed in ordinary church meeting houses. Through these ceremonies a person becomes a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The ceremonies are not esoteric; anyone can attend a baptismal service, for example. Mormon temples, on the other hand, are used for higher religious ceremonies that are open only for insiders who live the teachings of their religion, who in the Church's parlance are 'temple-worthy'.⁵ These ceremonies are performed for living Latter-day Saints for their own benefit and by them for and in behalf of deceased persons (Östman 2006).

The temple ceremonies are believed to be necessary for individuals to receive the highest blessings that God has to offer man, in effect eventual deification, or theosis. In order for God's justice to be fulfilled, those who have not been able to take part in these ceremonies during their lives on Earth, are extended the opportunity, in the spirit world after this life, to accept the ceremonies performed for and in their behalf. Since, for example, baptism by correct authority is considered necessary for salvation, it is performed in temples by living Mormons on behalf of deceased persons.

As was mentioned earlier, temples have become increasingly central in Mormon discourse and practice. Temples have also become one of the distinct outward identity markers of the Mormon Church and the Mormon experience. According to the late Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, they

. . .represent the ultimate in our worship. [The] ordinances become the most profound expressions of our theology. . . . There is need occasionally to leave the noise and the tumult of the world and step within the walls of a sacred house of God, there to feel His spirit in an environment of holiness and peace. (Hinckley 1995: 51.)

5 Being worthy to attend a Mormon temple entails, among other things, the payment of tithing, abstaining from coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco, treating one's family properly, professing belief in the church leaders' authority, and expressing belief in basic Mormon teachings. See Kimball 1998 for a discussion of how temple admission criteria have developed over time.

A ceremony known as ‘the endowment’ can be seen as the central ordinance of the temple. It is the initiation of a Latter-day Saint to mature citizenship in the Church, which is seen as the kingdom of God on Earth, or God’s modern covenant people of Israel. The endowment ceremony consists of an audiovisual drama depicting the creation of the world, the story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden into the lone and dreary world, and the sending of heavenly messengers to guide Adam and Eve and their posterity back to God through Jesus Christ’s atonement and their own obedience to God’s commandments. During the ceremony a person makes specific promises to or covenants with God. Special clothing, key words and other symbols are used throughout the ceremony to communicate its theology and purposes to the participants. Those who have participated in the endowment ceremony thereafter at all times wear a special type of underclothing known as ‘garments’. They function as reminders of the covenants made with God in the temple and as tokens of spiritual and even physical protection (McDannell 1995: 198–221).

The endowment ceremony in particular is esoteric in that it is not spoken of publicly, and in that its content or symbolism is not officially interpreted by the Church for the membership. Instead, individual Latter-day Saints are encouraged to seek their own inspiration and enlightenment in interpreting symbols and teachings. The endowment ceremony is not discussed in detail even with uninitiated insiders, that is, with Latter-day Saints who have not participated in the higher ceremonies of the temple. As a type of oral canon it carries social significance among those who have participated in the ceremony, with these individuals in practice becoming a type of core group within the Church, those who are ‘endowed’ (Flake 1998).

The endowment ceremony also involves a Masonic connection. Joseph Smith was initiated into the three degrees of Blue Lodge Freemasonry shortly before he introduced the Mormon ceremony in the spring of 1842. Some of the similarities to Freemasonry have been removed through changes to the endowment ceremony over the years. It seems likely that Joseph Smith saw fit to use some of the Masonic symbolism as teaching devices in communicating his own theology to his followers. However, the Masonic connection has been the subject of some controversy especially among theologically more conservative Latter-day Saints (Homer 1994).

The endowment ceremony contains explicit instructions concerning only a handful of ritual details that are not to be divulged or discussed outside the temple. In practice, however, Latter-day Saint individuals

and Church leaders have tended to extend the silence surrounding the temple to a substantially larger sphere of matters. Public discourse on Mormon temples thus ordinarily employs only the most general of terms. Consequently, especially Protestant Christians have criticized the Latter-day Saints by saying that these kinds of secret ceremonies have no place in Christianity. Latter-day Saints for their part have sought to avoid the pejorative connotations of secrecy by responding that their ceremonies are sacred, not secret. They are meant for all mankind, but one must be prepared in order to participate in them and to understand them. It would seem more consistent, however, to straightforwardly characterize some Latter-day Saint temple ceremonies as secret precisely because they are considered sacred.

Insider Perspectives

With this background in place I will now move on to consider the insider perspective at the public open house of a Mormon temple. Latter-day Saints, with their views on sacred secrecy in mind, are presented with a challenge during such events. How can they present the temple publicly, openly, and intelligently, while at the same time seeking to preserve the temple's esoteric nature and not divulging too much of that which is considered too sacred to speak of publicly?

First and foremost the public open house at the Helsinki Finland temple was seen by the Latter-day Saints as a missionary opportunity. There was also a general hope for greater respect from society, a hope for prejudices to be swept away and for false information to be replaced with correct information. In Finland, where Mormon missionary work has met with very little success over the years, the goal was increased interest in Mormonism and an increased number of individuals who would accept Mormon baptism. The Holy Spirit was hoped to witness to the ontological truth of Mormon teachings and to touch people during their tour of the temple. While this was the ultimate goal, it seems that it was something mostly shared with insiders, not with the external media.

Tours during the public open house were conducted in groups of around ten to twenty people, led by one or two guides (see picture), beginning with a brief introductory video in a visitors' accommodation building adjacent to the temple. This was followed by a guided tour through the temple building proper, with the tour ending in a tent with refreshments and an opportunity to ask further questions and engage in private discussions.



A tour group waiting to enter the Helsinki Finland Mormon temple during its public open house. Photograph by the author.

One of the instructions given to the lay Mormon guides was to speak as little as possible and to let people look around, to feel the Spirit of God touch their hearts and convince them of the importance of what they saw and heard. The overriding purpose of the Latter-day Saints was not to present architectural feats but rather to present the function of the building with brief explanations and to let people gain an interest through what they heard, saw, and felt. In fact, instead of information on architectural details, most of the instructions given to the guides focused on how to best present the message of the Latter-day Saints.

One way to frame the Latter-day Saints' approach is the dictum of 'milk before meat', derived from the New Testament (Hebrews 12:11–14). Guides in the temple were discouraged from making references to veils, altars, or other such furnishings or details that might have appeared strange to the visitors. All of this seems geared towards removing a sense of otherness and presenting the Mormon temple as something natural. The trivialization of the otherness that the temple at a deeper level represents for many Finns can also be seen in some of the comments by Latter-day Saint officials. The temple was presented as a sacred, but also ordinary, building. A Latter-day Saint Public Affairs

official, for example, commented on nationwide television that 'No mysterious rituals are associated with going to the temple, but instead everything is very beautiful, simple, symbolic, and pure. And we would hope that this shroud of mystery can be taken away, and that is why we have this open house.' (Aamu-TV 2006.) As another example, the spokesman for the Mormon Church in Finland said concerning the temple that 'there is nothing secret there. We think there are sacred things there, and now we have the opportunity to show and talk about it to people.' (Päivän Peili 2006.)

It is clear that open house visitors were shown the temple as a building and told about the general ideas behind and content of Mormon temple ceremonies. They were not introduced to their safeguarded ritual aspects, however. Thus it may be questioned to what extent the foregoing characterizations are consistent and to what extent the esoteric actually is made exoteric at Mormon temple open houses. As the Latter-day Saints often strove to minimize feelings of otherness in the temple, did the visitors really gain an understanding of Mormon teachings and temples? Is it morally correct to trivialize the otherness of ceremonies that would often seem strange to outsiders and that sometimes seem strange even to uninitiated insiders as they participate in them for the first time? On the other hand, one can also ask how wise it would be to engage in highly detailed discussions of ceremonies that would require a good framework and grasp of Mormon doctrine to be understood in the first place. Is it thus best to give people 'milk' if they do not understand 'meat' or if they would be repulsed by the 'meat'? Be that as it may, discussions of 'meat' were not available to outsiders, no matter the level of their background knowledge.

On the other hand, one also does well to remember that the question of normality or strangeness is very much a matter of perspective. What is normal to one person is unusual to another, and what seem like mysterious rituals to one person are logical and deeply meaningful sacraments to another. Some feel that Mormons are being deceptive by presenting a standard Christian front and by toning down, or even seemingly denying the existence of doctrines, practices, and rituals that others may find offensive. But then again, some Mormons feel that they present themselves in a way that is honest and that the layman can understand, with more information to come after sincere preparation as a new member of the church.

Outsider Perspectives

Among Finnish outsiders, Mormonism is often seen as part of 'the other'. Finland is a highly homogeneous country when it comes to religious matters—at least on paper—and Mormonism as a foreign-born religious movement has gathered its share of suspicions and negative opinions. According to the *Gallup Ecclesiastica* poll conducted in 2003, for example, 57 per cent of Finns had a negative opinion of the Mormons, with 8 per cent indicating a fairly positive or very positive opinion (Kääriäinen *et al.* 2005: 79). The *Youth Barometer* 2006 indicated that 40 per cent of Finns aged between 15 and 29 thought negatively of the Mormons, with 10 per cent viewing them positively (Myllyniemi 2006: 79).

Keeping the religious homogeneity of Finland and her citizens' small interest in organized religion in mind, the high number of visitors (about 56,000) to the new Mormon temple can be seen as quite surprising. The church's optimistic-sounding goal of 25,000 to 30,000 visitors was surpassed easily, and comparison was made in the media to the summer's vacation home fair in Koli, northern Finland, which about 38,000 people had visited. Equally surprising is the wide interest towards the temple in various kinds of media outlets. One could read stories of open house visits and descriptions of the Mormon church and its temple in anything from general newspapers and religious papers to special interest student magazines and even magazines on cleaning technology. It seems that the rare chance to peek into a foreign, strange, and esoteric world on 'home turf' was welcomed by the public.

When examining opinions one is struck by their wide variety. Some remarked on what they thought was the 'bling-bling Americanness' (Samsara 2006: 16) of the Mormon temple, or the felt absurdity of some of their experiences, whereas others reported being moved speechless by what they considered the peace, tranquillity, and beauty of the temple (Liahona 2007). Some people felt that the church's attempt to lower the threshold between traditional Christianity and Mormonism was dishonest, 'duplicate ecumenism', as one religious writer put it (Rusama 2006: 2), while others appreciated learning more about the Latter-day Saints and their religious views.

Some of the visitors found the temple to be a strange place. For some the place felt too American, even to the point of having to wonder whether other visitors' teeth were whitened (Harkas 2006: 6). The Americanness could be connected to things such as plastic flowers, deep carpets, and other decorations. One religious person remarked that 'for me it would take some getting used to calm down in the holiest

room that, with regards to its furnishings and style, reminds one of many Yankee hotel lobbies and meeting rooms . . .' (Körttiforumi 2006).

One student felt that the temple was 'an impressive Yankee-style spectacle' whose rooms brought to mind the American television series 'The Bold and the Beautiful' (Alitalo 2006: 4). Another student felt that the entrance to the temple was a secret route to the props of the same television series and considered the quiet moment in a room furnished with a large chandelier and artificial flowers to be absurd (Lindblom 2006: 9).

By contrast, a matter that was mentioned often, especially in feedback card comments, was a feeling of peace and tranquillity. In the comments, peace seems to be related to the temple building itself as a sacred space, not so much to the Mormon teachings attached thereto. Some of the comment cards in this vein read: 'Unbelievably beautiful and peaceful. Light, peace.' 'I was speechless. I will probably come again.' 'An experience and touch of the presence of the Highest.' 'Somehow one calmed down both mentally and physically. The feeling of stress and hurry eased. One could spend large amounts of time there.' 'It was interesting to get acquainted with the temple and its atmosphere, which oozes with peace and love.' 'In the sacred room I got goose flesh. I would have liked to stay for a longer time.' Latter-day Saints would attribute these kinds of feelings to the touch of God's spirit attesting to the ultimate significance of the temple in the divine plan; others may compare them for example to feelings of awe in front of nature.

Some visitors also commented on how the teachings attached to the temple touched them. One person wrote: 'An unbelievable experience. Something of the most beautiful that I have seen. The meaning of baptism and marriage had a deep effect on me.' Another remarked on the room where marriages are solemnized for eternity: 'The sealing room was an unforgettable experience which gave food for thought that perhaps death cannot separate us.' Some visitors would have liked to learn more about Mormonism. One wrote, for example: 'It would have been nice to hear more about details, for example about the baptismal ordinance.' Another hoped for clearer distinctions: 'More could have been said about the Mormon religion, for example how it differs from Lutheranism, etc.' (Liahona 2007.)

It is difficult to say why people's experiences varied so much. No background information is available in most comment makers' cases. In general, comments in the print media were more restrained, while feedback card comments or writings on internet sites were more forthright. The anonymity often related to the latter gives wider latitude and

freedom to describe both negative and positive experiences. In any case it is clear that people were not unanimous in their evaluations. In addition to feelings of interest, awe, and peace that the insiders hoped for, the outsiders also reported feelings of absurdity and of being puzzled. Again, all comments and descriptions were subjective, but nevertheless real to their originators. What is sensed and seen as spiritual by one outsider may be seen as something completely different by another.

Discussion and Conclusion

The public open house at the Mormon temple in Espoo was a significant event in many respects. For the Latter-day Saints themselves it represented a symbolic coming of age of their church in Finland. It was for them an unprecedented opportunity to make their religion known to fellow Finns who have often been suspicious towards the Mormons. It was also significant in that something that is ordinarily hidden and esoteric became partly public, not through exposé as is often the case but rather through the church's own choosing. The Mormons themselves opened their temple and wanted to explain in a general manner their feelings concerning the temple and what happens there.

In sum it can be said that the public open house was literally an open *house*, not a time of revealing things that cannot be discussed by the Mormons at other times. It is thus pertinent to draw distinctions between which parts of the ordinarily esoteric were and were not made exoteric. The sacred temple structure, a closed space generally used only by insiders, was opened up for public viewing and touring. The deeper ritual and ideological content, however, was just as secret as before and was not discussed openly.

In the future, it would be beneficial to study and compare reactions to public open houses at Latter-day Saints' temples in other countries with a religious profile different from that of Finland. Timing is of the essence in gathering material, as open houses only occur once per temple, before it is dedicated.⁶ It would also be instructive to compare public open houses at Mormon temples with similar events organized by other

⁶ Exceptions to this are some temples where extensive refurbishing projects have been undertaken. Some of those temples, such as the London England temple in 1992, have been opened for the public again before their re-dedication.

religions or societies, especially by those that are esoteric in nature, such as Freemasonry. What was specific to the reaction to Mormon temples and to the ways in which the insiders wanted to present themselves, and what is a more general reaction to peeks into foreign and esoteric worlds or a more general approach to organizing such an event? How common is the impulse to downplay or minimize a feeling of socio-cultural otherness and tension in these kinds of situations, for example?

Much has been said concerning the possible futures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some scholars feel that the church is on its way to becoming a world religion in that it seems to fulfil criteria that sociologists of religion have identified concerning the success of new religious movements (Stark 1984 and 2005). Other observers find that the church is tied too strongly to its original culture of the United States, and that before shedding those cultural attachments it will not be able to flourish significantly in foreign cultures throughout the world (Davies 2000: 241–67 and 2005; McDermott 2005).

At present, however, one thing seems certain. The emphasis on Latter-day Saints' temples in internal Mormon discourse and the number of public open houses held throughout the world puts more focus on Mormon temples as one particular example of esotericism. Mormonism's temple tradition can also be seen as the faith's ultimate identity marker and device of boundary maintenance. It differs from many other forms of esotericism in terms of its scope and purpose and in that it is institutionalized and strictly controlled. At the same time, increasing numbers of individuals come in contact with it at least superficially through their Mormon friends or through public open houses such as the one held in Espoo.

Organized religion seems to be dwindling in many western countries. Will the feelings of peace and tranquillity that outsider visitors feel at events such as Mormon temple open houses spur them to further interest and involvement in organized religion? Or will those feelings be something of a more fleeting character, something that will be looked for elsewhere in the global marketplace of spirituality? Only time will tell, but at least for Latter-day Saint insiders, temples are essential world-view-enlarging components and will in all likelihood continue to play an important role.

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RENÉ DYBDAL PEDERSEN

Defining Theosophy in the Twenty-First Century

‘When we use the term theosophy we should be specific about the sense in which we intend it’ (Faivre 2000: 3). What Faivre refers to in this quotation, is that the concept *theosophy* has been used by different theological and philosophical positions with different meaning throughout western history as far back as Porphyry (234–305). The concept can therefore not be understood as a trans-historical or universal one, but must be specified whenever it is applied, since several *theosophies* have existed over time.

Nonetheless, a specification is seldom provided when the term is and has been applied in recent decades by scholars as well as the general public. Most often when used today, the term is applied as synonymous to the theosophy introduced by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91), co-founder of the Theosophical Society (TS) established in 1875; consequently tending to include only the TS as tradition when evaluating a given theosophical theme. However, focussing on tradition rather than on theology—that is, focussing on the founding tradition rather than also including groups practising according to theosophical dogma—can give rise to a number of problems, particularly when considering the theosophical situation today. One such problem is that the TS has for decades experienced a significant setback in memberships, making scholars tend to consider theosophy as a dying enterprise,¹ although a recent mapping project showed that several off-shoots, or sects, to use a more technical term, from the TS have experienced a significant increase in membership and activity in the last 20–30 years (Pedersen 2005: 41–7). In other words, using a wider perspective when evaluating the theosophical situation today reveals a different picture—one that shows that theosophy is not dying out, but rather, experiencing a renaissance.

1 Contemporary theosophy is still an area of study that only very few scholars have looked into. The position presented here is therefore primarily the one I have hitherto received at different conferences where this theory has been presented.

One obvious question evolving from these reflections is whether *this* theosophy experiencing a renaissance is the same theosophy as the Blavatskian or ‘modern’ theosophy, as Emely B. Sellon and Renée Weber have classified it (Sellon & Weber 1993: 312), or if it is to be considered as a new type or kind. The aim of this article is to discuss this question, looking at how theosophy has developed in Denmark over the last century; a country in which a theosophical renaissance has indeed been observed in recent years. Assuming that part of the answer lies in the ability of the various groups to accommodate certain societal conditions forming different periods since the founding of the TS, we will first be drawing attention to theories from some of the more prominent social scientists, who in recent decades have focussed on the societal transformations in the western countries in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

The ‘After-Modernity’

The late modern, high modern, post-modern, the other modernity, the post-industrial, hyper complex, information society and/or risk society—despite the vast number of concepts used to classify the present era and the even greater number of articles and books describing it, the majority of researchers who study social conditions to a large extent agree that western society particularly during the last couple of decades has been leaving the era of modernity and heading for another. In relation to the history of the TS this means that social conditions forming our society today are different from those during the golden age of the TS in the first decades of the twentieth century.

In spite of the vast numbers of different terms used to classify the present era, there seems to be general agreement as to why this transformation is occurring.² For many, such as Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman, David Lyon, Lars Qvortrup and others, one essential reason is the speed in which technological advancement has taken place over

2 The intention of this article is not to add to or even enter the discussion about which term most accurately captures the societal tendencies of the present era. However, since the majority of scholars seem to support the idea that western societies are situated in a transitional period, leaving modernity, I prefer and will in this article primarily use the term late modern and only apply other terms in the case where scholars referred to specifically prefer another.

the last centuries. This advancement has, for one thing, paved the way for the production of more efficient and inexpensive consumer goods, which in turn has generated a generally higher standard of welfare and hence consumerism. Furthermore, technological advancement has had a catalytic effect on another prime reason for the development away from modernity—that is, the increasing globalization occurring due to the development of better means of communication and transportation. Both of these reasons, technological advancement and globalization, are however not just late modern phenomena. According to the Canadian sociologist David Lyon, these were occurring already during the early modern era. According to him, what characterizes the difference between modernity and post modernity is the different speed in which the development of both the technological advancement and globalization is happening in the respective eras. In his own words: ‘Post modernity is a kind of interim situation where some characteristics of modernity have been inflated to such an extent that modernity becomes scarcely recognizable as such’ (Lyon 2000: 7).

Despite it primarily being the speed at which technological advancement and globalization are occurring that differentiates modernity from post-modernity,³ this speed nevertheless has had an immense impact on the conditions in which individuals manoeuvre through life. Today, both the technological advancement and globalization have led to a shrinking world, metaphorical speaking, where people are experiencing a far more pluralistic world than just a few generations ago. The increasing welfare, consumerism and pluralism have opened up for a whole new set of existential options, forcing tradition as the previously major identity-forming factor to lose its importance—it is no longer tradition that decides what one should do for a living or what to believe in etc. These questions increasingly become issues that everyone must struggle with individually. The absence of tradition as a guideline raises the necessity for guidance from so-called experts; from someone who can help the individual manoeuvring through the tasks and challenges of everyday

3 Post-modernity is the term preferred by David Lyon and Zygmunt Bauman to categorize the present era. Although the term initially indicated that a mere split between the modern and the present era had occurred, in latter years particularly David Lyon has stressed that a clear-cut dichotomy between two such eras has not been observed. Although preferring the term *post-modernity* he still considers the present period to be a transitional one (for further discussion see Lyon 2000: 37 ff.).

life, where tradition as an explanatory framework is dissolving. Some need help in making the best decision in various situations, others in coping with the ontological uncertainty that the lack of an existential framework can cause.⁴

While institutionalized religion was previously the main framework within which to cope with ontological uncertainty, the multiplicity of choices individuals are encountering in their everyday lives has changed that situation. Under these circumstances people expect a high degree of freedom for self-realization or identity-formation, and it tends to be a difficult task for religion in its 'traditional' form to accommodate these expectations. To quote Zygmunt Bauman: 'Uncertainty postmodern-style begets not the demand for religion; it gestates instead the ever rising demand for identity-experts. Men and women haunted by uncertainty postmodern-style need not preachers telling them about the weakness of man and the insufficiency of human resources. They need reassurance that they *can* do it—and a brief about *how* to do it' (Bauman 1997: 179). In an effort to give religion a last stroke, David Lyon takes a step further than Bauman. He says: '...the older religious institutions that were once the conduits of meaning have drifted into decline, with the result that they are often little more than containers for cultural conservations' (Lyon 2000: 91).

Even though the future of religion according to Bauman and Lyon from an emic perspective does not look prosperous, several projects mapping religion in recent years have shown a different picture—one that indicates that institutionalized religion is still alive and well. As an example: religious and / or spiritual activities are practiced in more than 3,000 different places on a regular basis in a small country like Denmark with roughly 5,000,000 citizens. According to the experiences from the Danish Pluralism Project mapping the religious landscape since 2002, one reason why religions are still flourishing, is that the various institutions to a wide extent are willing to change according to new demands and the new societal situation (Qvortrup 2004: 14). This is reflected in both the way in which religions are organized, and in their ritual practices. The organization shows a tendency towards decentralization, where responsibility and authority, previously concentrated on a few

⁴ This dissolving of tradition is a process that Giddens refers to as *disembedding*, as a ''lifting out'' of social relations from local context and their rearticulation across indefinite tracts of time-space' (Giddens 1991: 18).

central leading figures, are now distributed to local institutions. Some movements have even reorganized into networks where each local group has become an autonomous institution.

This tendency toward decentralization has the effect of the individual being placed at the centre of attention. With authority being spread onto local 'shoulders', experts are moving in closer, we could say. People no longer have to travel to exotic destinations for existential guidance, but can receive it at a local branch near their home or through the internet. Often decentralization also increases the possibility for the individual to become more engaged in and thereby exert influence on the activities of the local institution. To sum up, organizational decentralization of religions increases the possibility of the individual to form his or her own identity within these institutions (see Pedersen 2005: 198). The tendency of decentralization is also supported by the Danish scholar of cultural studies Lars Qvortrup. He states: '...the old ideal about the rational, top-down organization is on its way to the theoretical cemetery. In an era where channels of information and communication are of no short supply . . . , there are no reasons to—and will probably for long no longer be possible—to monopolize or centralize leadership' (Qvortrup 1998: 255).

Even if the fundamental difference between modernity and post-modernity according to Lyon primarily lies in the speed in which technological advancement and globalization is occurring, several other scholars point out that the difference is more profound. As an example Bauman accounts for the difference between modern and post-modern man by looking at the two 'types' as travellers. He describes the modern man as a pilgrim and the post-modern as a tourist: 'The point of tourist life is to be on the move, not to arrive; unlike those of their predecessors, the pilgrims, the tourists' successive stopovers are not stations on the road, since there is no goal beckoning at the end of life's travels which could make them into stations' (Bauman 1997: 90). In this near-limitless freedom of existential choice that individuals are facing today, the only real choice one has is to *choose*. Choosing gives the impression of being in control but at the same time requires being constantly on the move, to progress. That is why Bauman makes use of the tourist as a metaphor for post-modern man instead of the pilgrim, as for modern man, for whom arriving at a certain destination is in focus. After this brief stroll through the theoretic differences between modernity and late modernity, let us now turn the attention to theosophy as practiced today.

Theosophy Today—from the Few to the Many

'Blavatskian' Theosophy

Many scholars—among others, as mentioned above, Sellon and Weber—have during recent years emphasized the categorization of the theosophy introduced by Blavatsky as modern. If supporting a definition of modernity which regards the wave of globalization and technological advancement progressing in the second half of the nineteenth century as the starting point for modern society, several characteristics can also be pointed out that support this classification. Parting from a traditionised, pre-modern society with Christianity holding almost a monopoly on belief and religious power, and into a growing pluralism,⁵ the TS established itself as a syncretistic new religion with a theology that incorporated several of the flourishing worldviews of the period, new as old—apart from inspiration from Christianity it included material from eastern religions such as Buddhism as well as from the rapidly evolving modern sciences. In contrast to pre-modernity, theosophy managed to handle several worldviews instead of only one, as previously had been the case when Christianity was claiming the monopoly on explaining existence. Another characteristic that supports the classification of the 'Blavatskian' theosophy as modern is the fact that the TS was not limited by local or even national borders and interests—as had typically been the case in the era of pre-modernity, where lack of technology and means of transportation reduced the ability to communicate with people outside of one's local environment. Having a thorough knowledge of different cultures worldwide and simultaneously regarding these as being part of the same eschatological evolution, the former leaders of the TS considered it their task to evolve and expand their insight and activities globally—not in the former manner of progressively convert-

5 Exactly when Christianity of any given national denomination formally lost monopoly in the western society differs from country to country. In the case of Denmark Lene Kühle has pointed out, that the Evangelic Lutheran Church lost its monopoly with the Danish Constitution of 1849 which granted freedom of religion in Denmark (Kühle 2004: 87). Although several minor religious groups had been present in Denmark prior to that year, such as Jews, Catholics, Quakers etc., religious diversity rapidly evolved in the decades that followed (Kühle 2004: 110).

ing people of another belief, but in engaging in what they themselves considered enlightening dialogue.⁶ Despite theosophy being a holistic, syncretistic religion formally considering religions worldwide to be different historical and cultural expressions deriving from the same divine source, and that it therefore ought to hold a high degree of tolerance towards different expressions of religion, it was still evident for the majority of theosophists that the theosophical road was *the* one to travel. Theosophy was by theosophists experienced to be more genuine and further evolved than previous/other religions, and therefore a ‘truer’ way or religion/ideology to follow. In that sense the TS can be said to be theologically exclusive. Furthermore, and probably as a result of this exclusiveness, the TS was a distinctly top-down organisation, where the few guided the many. This is a trace which, as mentioned above, can be characterised as a modern one.

Even if the TS in its first years in New York found it difficult to establish itself and to find members, it experienced a massive expansion in the following decades after moving its headquarters to Adyar in India. In the 1920s, which might be called the golden age of the TS, the Society counted more than 40,000 members worldwide.⁷ This expansion was partly due to several charismatic leaders in the first decades—particularly H. P. Blavatsky and the Society’s first two presidents Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) and Annie Besant (1847–1933)—but also to its holistic theology and the way in which it was organized. Both accommodated the tendencies of that era very well. One could stretch the argument a bit and state that the TS in its first decades was successful in being modern...

- 6 That this position is central to the TS is evident in several of the TS’s writings. In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky’s first important work, she states that ‘the many faiths of man have all derived from a single, primitive source’, and that all religions therefore are believed to be based on the same truth. They might appear different but are essentially the same (Campbell 1980: 36). Similarly one of the three declared objects of conduct that guides the TS also expresses this position. Quoting the first of the three which, among other places, is listed on the Society’s homepage, one aim of the Society is: ‘To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour’ (www.ts-adyar.org).
- 7 On the homepage of the TS Adyar (www.ts-adyar.org/history) it is stated that the Society at its 50-year jubilee in 1925 worldwide counted 41 national sections, 1,576 lodges and 41,779 members.

As several scholars have documented (see e.g. Campbell 1980, Johnson 1995, Kirkebø 1998), the golden age of the TS was brought to an end around 1930 causing a constant decline in membership thereafter. Several reasons for this decline can be mentioned, but one in particular has been considered by many to be the primary cause: the problem in finding a successor to Besant as president of the TS. The Indian-born Jiddu Krishnamurti (1897–1986) whom Charles Leadbeater (1854–1934), the ideological partner of Besant, more than 20 years earlier had pointed out to be the vehicle of the coming spiritual world teacher and therefore also the natural heir to Besant's position, decided to abdicate in 1929, claiming not to be the one that Besant and Leadbeater stated him to be. When Besant died only a few years later there was nobody with the same charismatic authority to take over. As mentioned above, the membership dropped in the aftermath of this crisis in leadership and the TS has never since experienced the same level of membership as in the 1910s and 1920s.

Liberation and Decentralization

Despite a continuing decrease in membership within the organization of TS Adyar worldwide since the 1920s, other groups/other religions whose theology is fundamentally based on the theology of the TS have experienced expansion during the last 20 to 30 years—as, for example, in Denmark. Here, in contrast to the TS Adyar, such theosophical groups have experienced a fourfold increase in membership from 1980 to 2000 (Pedersen 2007).⁸ In order to find an explanation for this rather massive expansion it needs to be examined in the light of a discrepancy that occurred between the international section of the TS, TS Adyar, and its Danish section—a discrepancy that sparked initially in the 1970s, ending up in 1989 in a final split between the two institutions. Since then several theosophists have claimed that the discrepancy occurred because of a disagreement as to whether the works of the American theosopher Alice Bailey (1880–1949) could be applied in a TS setting. Since Bailey's exclusion from the TS in the 1920s for claiming to be a channel for the spiritual master Djwhal Kuhl, TS Adyar did not support the idea

8 From the 1930s till 1980 the number of members has with only temporary exceptions been between 250 and 350. Since then the number rose close to 1,200 members in the year 2000.

of applying her work, as several members of the Danish section desired during the 1970s. More than merely a disagreement on which sources to include in the ‘canon’ of the TS, the discrepancy gradually became a question of loyalty. The Danish section had to choose on which side to stand.

But the split that occurred between TS Adyar and the Danish section nonetheless seems to be more than just a result of a discrepancy of loyalty. It can also be seen as a discrepancy in the desire to accommodate the changing social conditions in the 1970s and 80s, and the claim that it was difficult for the TS to ‘keep track of the times’. As during the presidency of Besant, the TS was in the 1970s and 1980s still a centralized and internationally oriented organisation, with its Adyar headquarters as the primary seat of authority. This meant that the presidency had and still today under the leadership of Radha Burnier has an extensive influence on how both the national sections and the local groups organize themselves and what activities they offer. Several members of the Danish section found this system too rigid and not corresponding to their interests.⁹ Thus, beneath the discrepancy about loyalty lay a growing desire within the Danish section for a higher degree of local autonomy.

Even though this desire for local autonomy pertained to most aspects of the activities of the Danish section, it was particularly the element of practice that was in focus. Up till then the main activity of the Society had been meetings involving various presentations and debates. The perception was that these meetings would develop the theosophists’ spiritual consciousness, gradually turning them into role models for people outside the theosophical milieus. In other words, participating in these meetings would make one a better, more enlightened person, subsequently influencing others in their daily lives and actions. During the 1960s and 1970s an interest arose among the Danish theosophists to take further initiatives to advance the emanatory evolution—others than just creating role models for others to follow. Like several earlier theosophists, they now wanted to include the spiritual masters in their efforts to advance the universal development. Inspired by Alice Bailey and Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983), another prominent theosophist

⁹ Among other places expressed in Hardy Bennis’ letter to the Danish members of the TS where he informed that he as Secretary General had dissolved the Danish section, and instead invited members of the TS to join the TF (Bennis 1989: 1).

within the TS during the twentieth century, they therefore started experimenting with different forms of meditation. Here, groups of theosophists gathered with the intention to establish contact with these spiritual masters to be able to channel energies to global relief and/or development.¹⁰

Establishing contact with spiritual masters was not a new phenomenon within the TS. Several of the earlier leaders of the Society, like Blavatsky, Leadbeater and Besant, claimed such abilities. It is fair to say that in the early decades these contacts were more or less considered to be required as management tools. Although required of leaders, the ability to contact spiritual masters was in that era considered to be possible only for particularly developed theosophists—the vast majority that did not possess this ability then had to be content with seeking inspiration from these mediators. During the presidency of Besant the expectation that leaders were in contact with and/or guided by spiritual masters changed, however. As a result of previous experiences with claimed contacts to masters resulting in fatal splits within the Society and therefore evidently being a troublesome leadership strategy, or a result of a mere routinization process, as Max Weber could have stated, the TS in the 1910s and 1920s underwent a democratization process. Among other things, this had the effect that contact with spiritual masters after Besant's presidency was no longer an essential requirement for leaders of the TS to possess. Insight into the spiritual world was nevertheless still considered essential. But instead of seeking guidance from spiritual masters through contemporary theosophists, the Society turned to the vast literature of the previous leaders. In other words, contact with spiritual masters was a 'dead enterprise' for the TS after Besant. When the Danish theosophists in the 1970s and 1980s started experimenting with a new meditation practise, they were causing a stir in the fundamental TS dogma. Not only did they reintroduce contacts with masters, they also claimed that anyone was able to establish or at least participate in establishing such contacts. Since the split with the TS Adyar, the meditation practise has developed even further, and is now one of the primary activities of the different theosophical groups in Denmark today.

As mentioned above, the discrepancy between the TS Adyar and the Danish section of the TS had existed for years before the majority of the

10 In *Theosofia*, the monthly journal for the TS Denmark, it appears in the activity plans for the local lodges that these meditation services were initiated in the late 1970s and that the number of them increased during the 1980s.

Danish members in 1989 decided to leave the TS to join the then newly established Teosofisk Forening (in English: Theosophical Association, below referred to as TF). Only a few members of the TS remained, which in practice meant that the TF took over the activities of the TS in Denmark. Apart from going national with this split, the TF in the years that followed experienced a further decentralization, since the local groups also requested a higher degree of autonomy. They also wanted influence over their local organisation, their practice and not least their economy. After some turbulent years trying to find a form in which to work as a common institution, the TF ended up dissolving itself in 2000. Several of the local groups stayed active however and continued co-operating, and over the years other theosophical groups became part of this informal contact between associated groups. The efforts to formalise this loosely organized cooperation resulted in the founding of the so-called Theosophical Network (TN) in 2004.

Modern or Late Modern Theosophy?

Looking back on the differences between the TS and the development of the TF in the light of the characteristics of modernity and late modernity presented in this article, this distinction also seems traceable in the theosophical institutions presented. If the TS in its first decades could be characterized as a modern institution, or as modern theosophy, several things indicate that this might still be the case. The TS is still a centralized organisation based on a theology that can be said to be exclusive—the theosophical worldview alone is accepted as a guideline. Other worldviews or theologies may be considered to be offshoots from the same source as the TS. Nonetheless this has hardly ever led the TS to cooperate with other religions. Compared to the TS, an organization such as the TF and lately the TN seems less modern—or actually more modern, one might say!—for example, because of the network-based structures of these institutions, which, among others, Qvortrup has pointed out as a late modern characteristic. Every local group participates in both the TF and the TN as autonomous partners. At the same time there is among these groups a widely held openness towards other religious communities. This has, for instance, resulted in the founding of the URI (United Religious Initiative) by the TN, in which representatives from Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, theosophical and other denominations are involved.

Apart from the network structure and the willingness to cooperate

with other religions, other late modern characteristics seem traceable, too. Even though documentation on to what extent the so-called theosophists participate in the activities of other religious groups is still missing, interviewing both leaders and ‘members’ indicates a widespread acceptance of members seeking, as they say, inspiration in the activities of others. In other words, for theosophical groups or networks such as the TF and the TN, the end seems more important than the means. It is not *how* you improve that is important, but *that* you improve! In the light of the theories of Giddens, Bauman and several others on late-modernity, the TF and the TN can thus be said to provide the individual freedom of choice that these scholars point out as being essential for late-modern man—something that the increasing focus on members participating in contacting the spiritual masters seems to support even further.

Concluding Remarks

So, there are several characteristics that indicate that in the case of the TS and the TF/TN at least two ways of understanding and practising theosophy are at hand. Where the TS has so far been and still seems to be a modern institution, the TF and the TN seem to show more signs of being late-modern ones. Before finally determining if there indeed does exist a basis for talking about late-modern theosophy, we first have to consider if two such institutions can exist simultaneously. Or, to use the metaphors of Bauman: is it possible for a ‘pilgrimage theosophy’ and a ‘tourist theosophy’ to exist simultaneously? In other words, the question here is whether a categorization such as late-modernity should be considered as a time indicator, where everything in a given era is late-modern, or if it is a ‘tool’ that can be applied onto institutions that succeed particularly well in responding to current tendencies? In case of the latter, modern and late-modern institution *can* exist simultaneously.

Keeping focus on Bauman, to him the concept seems to work more as a time indicator—particularly in his earlier works. According to him, western societies are post-modern, characterized by a fundamental consumerism, in line with which everyone has to operate. In that sense everyone today is post-modern, living in a period of time where one has no choice but to consume. In other words, to Bauman it is the society as a setting that determines a categorization such as modern or post-modern. On the other hand, Lars Qvortrup points out that such time categories are tools constructed to explain tendencies in a given era. According to him we *can* talk about traditional, modern and in his case

hyper-complex periods where certain characteristics can be pointed out to have a particular influence on how people live their lives in the societies in question. It is important though, to emphasize that these periods are not limited or even closed systems (see Qvortrup 1998: 80). Rather, it may and most often it does happen that institutions, which in their practice and organisation can be characterized as traditional or modern, still exist today in a hyper complex era—although he expects that these types of institution will, in due time, be fewer and fewer. . . In other words, it should theoretically be possible, according to Qvortrup, for both a modern and late-modern theosophy to exist side by side.

On the basis of this short presentation of the development of theosophy in Denmark in recent years, I tend to support this idea! Theosophy as practised today in an institution such as the TS is, in my opinion, still to be considered a modern institution, primarily because the degree of change that has occurred since its golden age under Besant is minor. The TS is still a strongly centralized organisation operating with an exclusive theology *and* its activities do not seem to have accommodated the growing demand of late modern man for personal engagement and freedom of choice; or at least not to the same extent as other theosophical groups or late-modern religions in general have done. Although the basic theosophical dogmas developed by the early theosophical leaders are still essential for groups such as the TF and the TN, these *have* undergone a significant development, or one might even say transformation, in recent years. Both groups have opened up organizationally as well as practically for the individual member or ‘user’ to participate in the activities that they wish to join and as often as they feel like and have the time for. In other words, in recent years such groups have increasingly offered the possibility for each individual to be a conscious consumer. Theologically these groups are therefore typically not exclusive, but claim to be *just* one ‘tool’ among several others. In my opinion, groups such as the TF and the TN are therefore late-modern and hence practising late-modern theosophy.

The expansion of theosophical theology in recent decades has, as illustrated in the case of Denmark, been significant and in some milieus has undergone such a transformation that vital nuances will be lacking if theosophy is to be used as a meta-term covering the entire field from the late nineteenth century up to the present. In this article I have outlined two types of theosophy being practiced today, each differently accommodating contemporary societal conditions—one that I have classified as modern theosophy and another, evolving during the 1980s through to the present time, as late modern. When dealing with contem-

porary theosophy, late modern theosophy therefore could and should be a term or classification tool to take into consideration, in order to grasp the diversity of theosophical expressions present. In this article I have argued that late-modern theosophy is a category applicable to certain theosophical activities and institutions today. The questions of how widespread this type of theosophy is, and where the limits as to where the term can be applied, will here remain unanswered. Answers to these and other questions that a new classifying tool triggers will be a task for future research to explore.

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A Second Christian Rosencreuz?

Jakob Böhme's Disciple Balthasar Walther (1558–c.1630) and the Kabbalah. With a Bibliography of Walther's Printed Works*

Introduction

In the eighteenth chapter of his commentary on Genesis, entitled *Mysterium Magnum* (completed 1624), the Lusatian theosopher Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) made a startling declaration concerning the reception of the Ten Commandments atop Mount Sinai. According to the account of Exodus, God had commanded Moses to hew two tables of stone upon which He would inscribe the text of the *Decalogue* for the instruction of His chosen people. This Moses did, ‘and it came to pass . . . Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony’ (Ex 34:29). Böhme’s account, however, differed significantly. For, according to the cobbler, the text of the new covenant was not recorded on ‘two tables of stone.’ Rather, Böhme asserted, God had given Moses ‘another writing upon a globe (*Kugel*).’¹

To would-be defenders of Böhme’s orthodox Lutheran character in the years after the shoemaker’s death, this particular passage, which brazenly contradicted the sacred word of scripture, posed a decidedly

* Elements of this article were presented at the Association for the Study of Esotericism Conference, University of California, Davis June 8–11 2006, where I received stimulating feedback from Arthur Versluis (Michigan State) and Marsha Keith Schuchard that encouraged further research upon Walther. Further advice was offered by Prof. Charles Zika (Melbourne). I would also like to thank Matthias Wenzel (Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, Görlitz) and Dr Robert Schweitzer (Bibliothek der Hansestadt Lübeck) for their friendly assistance during the preparation of this article, as well as Ilona Fekete (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) for her invaluable bibliographical help and comments upon the manuscript.

1 Böhme 1730, VII: 121: '[G]leichwie Moses die Tafeln zerbrach, und Gott Mose eine andere Schrift auf eine Kugel gab.'

thorny problem. Already during his lifetime, Böhme had been persecuted on several occasions by Lutheran authorities in his home-town of Görlitz on account of his enthusiastic tendencies. In 1613, following the distribution of manuscript copies of his first work, *Aurora*, Böhme was forbidden to record or further disseminate his ideas. In 1624, the local pastor Gregor Richter accused him of being the Antichrist. That same year, Böhme's first printed work, the *Weg zu Christo* (Way to Christ) had been decried by one Lutheran theologian as actually consisting the 'weg von Christo' (way from Christ) (Widmann 1624: 5). As an open invitation for further accusations of heresy, it was therefore important for the shoemaker's followers to explain away this curious assertion concerning a globe of the covenant.² The editor of the so-called Toruń edition (*thorner Ausgabe*) of Böhme's work (8 vols, 1652–74), one of the most systematic early attempts to defend Böhme's theosophy from accusations of heterodoxy, therefore directly addressed this dangerous passage.³ Next to the crucial citation, the editor hastily inserted the following marginal notation:

What the author [Böhme] here states appears to contradict the clear text of Moses, Exodus 34:1, Deuteronomy 10:1 and 1st Kings 8:9, which expressly speak of stone tablets. This may be explained thusly: the thoughts of the blessed, deceased Jacob Böhme concerning the two globes [*sic!* Böhme only mentioned one] upon which the law was recorded derived from a conversation with Dr. Balthasar Walther, who read it in Reuchlin, and lived with Böhme for an entire quarter-year.⁴

- 2 In England the problem was avoided altogether, for the passage in John Ellistone and John Sparrow's 1656 translation (*Mysterium Magnum*, London: Lodowick Lloyd, ch. 18, §21, p. 81) egregiously mistranslated *Kugel* as 'table of stone'. This choice echoed the words of the King James Bible: 'And God gave Moses another Scripture upon a Table of stone. . . '.
- 3 For a bibliographical description and analysis, see Buddecke 1937, I: 80–6 (Item 32).
- 4 'Merckwürdigkeiten' 1730, X: 91: 'Es findet sich in den Collectaneis des jüngern Richters eine dienliche Anmerkung/ so in dieses Buch Myst. Mag. gehört/ und zwar zum 19. Cap. § 20 [*sic!* the reference should be to Chapter 18 § 20] der letzten Zeilen wo Autor schreibt: Wie Gott Mose eine andere Schrift auf eine Kugel gab. Dabey besagter Collector folgends erinnert: Daß allhie, der Autor scheinet wider den klaren Text Mosis, Exod 34:1, Deut 10:1, 1 Reg 8:9 zu schreiben/ der von steinern Taffeln expresse schreibt/ damit verhält sichs

The passage does indeed exist in Reuchlin's *De arte Cabalistica*, where the Pforzheimer wrote that 'the kabbalists believe that God first recorded his covenant (*legem*) onto a fiery globe, applying dark fire to white fire.' And as Reuchlin's citations make clear, this idea had indeed an even longer history amongst older kabbalistic authorities (1517: fol. lx–ii^v). But despite claiming to have read 'works of many high masters' (*viel hoher Meister Schriften*) Böhme could not speak Latin, let alone Hebrew, and therefore could have had no direct access to Reuchlin or his sources. So who then was this Balthasar Walther, portrayed here by the editor of the Toruń edition not only as an apparent expert in kabbalistic tracts, but also as someone who had poisoned Böhme's pious Lutheran thoughts with its teachings and perhaps also with other heretical material?

The definitive biographical account that we possess concerning Balthasar (also Balthazar, Baldasar, Baldassar, Baltzer, Paltzer, etc.) Walther was first printed in the early 1650s by the Silesian noble Abraham von Franckenberg, as part of his extensive report upon Böhme's life.

Of those learn'd men that convers'd with [Böhme] in the greatest familiarity, was one *Balthazar Walter*, this Gentleman was a *Silesian* by birth, by profession a Physician, and had in the search of the antient Magick learning, travell'd [for six years] through *Egypt*, *Syria* and the *Araby's*, and there found such small remainders of it, that he return'd empty, and unsatisfy'd, into his own Country, where hearing of this man, he repair'd to him, as the Queen of *Sheeba* with King *Solomon*, [to] try him with those hard Questions, concerning the soul [i.e. Böhme's *Psychologia Vera*] . . . from whence, and from frequent discourses with him, he was so satisfy'd that he there stay'd three months, and profess'd, that from his converse, he had reciev'd more solid answer to his curious scruples, than he had found among the best wits of those more promising Climats, and for the future, detested from following rivulets, since God had open'd a fountain at his own door (Franckenberg & Hotham 1654: fol. E2^{r-v}.)

In as much as this account mentions Walther's three-month stay with Böhme, and indeed his interest in 'antient Magick learning', it undoubt-

also: des sel. Jacob Böhmens Teut. Meinnung von den 2. Kugeln/ darauf das Gesetz geschrieben/ rühret her aus mündlicher Conversation mit Dr. Balthasar Walthern, der es beym Reuchlino gelesen/ und ein ganz viertel Jahr beym J.B. gewohnet.'

edly represented the major source of the Toruń editor's conjectures. Yet as I have remarked elsewhere (Penman Forthcoming a), this standard view of Walther's life communicated to us by von Franckenberg presents two competing, if not entirely contradictory elements to the physician's character. Was Walther another Christian Rosencreuz, as the first half of this account, which reflects the journey of Frater C.R. in the Rosicrucian *Fama Fraternitatis*, suggests? Or a sensitive student of the mysteries, as the second portion, where Walther learns at the feet of Böhme, hints? An esoteric master, or merely a disciple? It is these questions that I would like to address here, utilizing several newly (re)discovered manuscript and print sources that offer new insights into Walther's life and interests. Amongst these is the identification of von Franckenberg's major source for his Walther biography; a series of several short statements made by Walther himself to Johann Angelus Werdenhagen, and printed in Werdenhagen's edition of Böhme's *Psychologia Vera* in 1632. Concerning manuscript evidence, in addition to the correspondence of the Torgau chiliasm Paul Nagel with the Paracelsian physician in Leipzig, Arnold Kerner, in which Walther is discussed on several occasions (Leipzig MS), further documents that I have found in Lübeck, Germany conclusively demonstrate the physician's active interest in magical, kabbalistic and Paracelsian texts. This final detail is of crucial importance, for while many scholars, primarily following von Franckenberg's account, have identified Walther as the source of Böhme's kabbalistic ideas (or analogues thereof), actual evidence of Walther's expertise in these matters has lacked (Schulitz 1993: 16). I wish to demonstrate in this article that further investigation into Walther's own career and interests through these sources not only proves that he did indeed furnish Böhme with ideas drawn from kabbalistic writings, but also that there exist broader Paracelsian and Schwenckfeldian contexts in which we might consider Walther's life and activities, establishing him as an important and interesting protagonist in his own right independent of his connection to Böhme's circle and developing philosophy.

Walther and the Kabbalah: *die Morgenlandfahrt*

Until the recent discovery of the Lübeck manuscript, the greatest suggestion that we possessed concerning Walther's kabbalistic proclivities was simultaneously the most bizarre and suggestive of the anecdotes communicated to us by von Franckenberg: namely, his fabled trip to the Orient. This trip, or pilgrimage, has long been a source of intense specula-

tion, and, due to its similarity with the account of Christian Rosencreuz's legendary travels, the question of whether or not it was ever undertaken has been called into question on at least one occasion.

That three separate contemporary sources attest to the details of the journey demonstrate that such pessimism is unwarranted, although the partially contradictory accounts that survive indeed evince some problematic evidentiary diversions. Concerning these sources, firstly we have von Franckenberg's assertion that Walther had spent six years travelling in the Orient in search of magical wisdom. The origin of this account actually stems from another source, indeed Walther himself, who informed Johann Angelus Werdenhagen of the extent of his travels sometime before December 1631 (Werdenhagen 1632: 63–4; Franckenberg 1730: 15). It seems, however, that on this account Walther himself is not to be trusted, for a third, lesser known source—a now lost entry in the *Diarium* of the Görlitz cartographer and astronomer Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540–1614)—contradicts Walther's words in no uncertain terms. In August of 1599, Scultetus recorded:

On the 19th of August 1599 Balthasar Walther visited my step-mother's bath house garden and laid out the items he had collected since 1597 when he journeyed outward from Poland through Walachia, Greece, Asia, Syria, Egypt and the Mediterranean. . .⁵

Scultetus' account makes clear that Walther's experiences were not gathered during some epic six-year journey, or even a two-year odyssey that might have taken place between 1597 and 1599. Indeed, his travels must have consisted of several shorter excursions conducted after 1597 from a base somewhere in Poland. The fact that Walther visited Scultetus on three more occasions in Görlitz during 1588 (on 19th February, 1st August and 26th December) confirms that during this period, the longest continuous time that Walther could have spent in the Orient was no more than eight months.

⁵ The entry has been reprinted in Jecht 1924: 63: '1599 Aug. 19. Balthasar Walther, so seither An. 1597 von Polen aus durch die Walachei, *Graecium Asiam Syriam Aegyptum* und *per mare medit* gewandert, in der Schwiegermutter Badegärtlein kommen und seine mitgebrachten Sachen ausgelegt. Ich habe empfangen ein gemein Kreuz vom Oelbaum mit eingelegten Heiligtume, zwei Paternoster, eines de terra Adami de Damasco schwarz, das andre von Oelbaumholz ex monte Oliveti, Johannisbrot ex deserto Bethabaræ, 4. Samen der Baumwolle aus der Insel Cypern.'

It is worth noting that, while we cannot entirely discount the idea that Walther might have exaggerated the duration of his travels in order to impress his friend Werdenhagen, (and indeed, being undoubtedly aware of the content of the Rosicrucian *Fama*, emphasized similarities between his own experiences and those of Father C.R.), I suggest the two accounts must not necessarily be understood as contradictory. Werdenhagen's report, after all, did not specify that Walther's kabbalistic expertise was gained during a single stay abroad, rather that he spent six years there in total: '[Walther] mihi retulit, quod in hoc conatu integrum sexennium in Ægypto, Arabia, & illis vicinis terris confecisset' (Werdenhagen 1632: 64). It is indeed possible that while Walther had returned from a series of shorter trips from the Middle East to visit Scultetus in Görlitz in August of 1599, he might also have conducted several more during the years that followed.

Yet assuming that the physician did indeed spend a significant amount of time in the Holy Land in pursuit of magical and kabbalistic knowledge, several questions are thereby raised. What did Walther do there? Who did he visit? There are endless possibilities. As the gifts Walther bestowed upon Scultetus and noted by the cartographer in his *Diarium* demonstrate, during his travels the physician had at least reached the Mount of Olives, the Syrian city of Damascus, the desert of Betharaba beyond the river Jordan and the island of Cyprus.⁶ On the way, it is highly likely that Walther visited the city of Safed in modern Israel, a renowned spiritual centre famous for its numerous mystical practitioners of kabbalah. In Safed, he might have met with followers of Joseph Karo (1488–1575), the Sephardic Rabbi Moses Cordovero (1522–70) or even Isaac Luria (1534–72) in order to study different kabbalistic philosophies, or have encountered any number of the numerous kabbalistic/ alchemical writings circulating in the region during this time (Patai 1994: 321–94). I have little doubt, however, that even assuming a command of Hebrew (which cannot be demonstrated from any of his surviving literary works), had Walther spent six years in the Holy Land or only six weeks, his chances of actually learning from kabbalistic and magical experts, usually governed by strict rules of secrecy and initiation, were minimal. It is almost certainly for this reason that an 'empty and unsatisfy'd' Walther, like the mythical Christian Rosencreuz before him, found such 'small remainders' of the ancient magical teachings of the magi during his travels (Franckenberg & Hotham 1654: fol. E2^r). Yet we must keep in mind that, for the time, Walther's journey (or series

6 The full citation is given in note 5, above.

of journeys) consisted of almost unimaginable distance and hardship. The fact that he undertook one such trip—or perhaps several—is proof enough of Walther’s interest and resolve in engaging with such matters.

At the Origins of Walther’s Kabbalistic and Magical Interests

The roots of Walther’s interest in these subjects, however, lay much closer to home than the far-flung shores of the Holy Land. Born in 1558 in Liegnitz, a major centre of Schwenckfeldian activity in Silesia, Walther’s education appears to have been relatively conventional. In 1579 he matriculated at the University of Frankfurt/Oder, where he studied medicine (Liebe & Thenner 1887: 270b). As a student there he moved in the same circles as the theologian and apocalypticist Leonhard Krentzheim of Görlitz, later Lutheran superintendent in Liegnitz, and his contribution of several congratulatory poems to various publications during his university years suggests that he led an active social life while studying.⁷ Shortly after the conclusion of his studies, we find him in the principality of Anhalt as a court physician, where his first literary work, a poetic pamphlet without the slightest hint of Paracelsian or magical tendencies was printed in Zerbst in 1585 (see References I, Item 3).

The decisive moment for Walther was, however, about to occur. For on the 19th July 1587—a decade before his first trip to the Orient—the young physician found himself for the first time in the Upper-Lusatian city of Görlitz. Walther’s goal there was not to visit a then thirteen year old shoemaker’s apprentice named Jakob Böhme, but instead, perhaps upon Krentzheim’s suggestion, to establish contact with the ‘secta medicorum Paracelsi’, a burgeoning community of learned and enthusiastic Paracelsians inside the town’s walls (Lemper 1970: 347–60). This group was truly diverse. In addition to the friend and correspondent of Valentin Weigel, Abraham Behem, chief among them was the aforementioned astronomer, mathematician and cartographer who had once studied with Tycho Brahe in Leipzig: Bartholomäus Scultetus. The connection between Walther and Scultetus, both personal and philosophical, must have been immense and instantaneous. For, in addition to es-

⁷ For details of Walther’s personal bibliography, refer to Section I of the References (below).

tablishing an enduring friendship, Scultetus also gave several magical and Paracelsian religious manuscripts to Walther (Koch 1916: 4, 26, 30–1; Jecht 1924: 60; Sudhoff 1898: Items 15, 83–5). Several of these manuscript works survive today in a codex in Lübeck, Germany. A further (now lost) codex, once in the collection of the city library of Wrocław, Poland (former Cod. Rhed. 334) has been extensively catalogued by Karl Sudhoff during the final years of the nineteenth century (1898: 499–538).

Outside of the pilgrimage to the Middle East, these manuscripts comprise the most direct confirmation that we have of Walther's kabbalistic expertise. Although information concerning the matter is difficult to come by, Scultetus evidently acquired many of the texts he passed on to Walther around 1567, when he was in contact with several well-known kabbalistic practitioners, including Jeremias Waldner and the Straßburger Franz Brun. During the same period he also prepared commentaries and editions of several of Paracelsus' medical works (Gondolatsch 1936: 76), such as a manuscript edition of the *Archidoxes* in collaboration with Franz Kretschmeir (Telle 1992: 212–13, 226). While the folio volume in Wrocław consisted entirely of religious commentaries and other theological works authored by Paracelsus (Sudhoff 1898: 499–538), the Lübeck codex, a thick quarto volume bound in vellum, is wholly magical in content, consisting entirely of tracts copied either from earlier manuscripts or out of printed books. The selection is more than a little surprising. It begins with Latin extracts from the *Picatrix*, and continues with a commentary by a Hungarian (Michal Eyking) upon the kabbalah, a version of books one and two of the infamous manual of angel magic, the *Liber Raziel*, a copy of the *Imagines Abelis filii Adæ*, extracts from Trithemius on the seven spirits, a short astrological tract called the *Astrum Magicum*, several magical works by Paracelsus (including *De septem stellis* and *De arte magica*) in addition to texts by Pietro d'Abano and Hermes Trismegistus himself. Walther's connection to the Lübeck codex is demonstrated by several notations throughout the text (although mainly in the *Liber Raziel*).⁸ On one leaf we find the

8 Other indications of date and place in the Lübeck MS include: fol. 35v, 'A° 86 21 Mai [symbol] in tracte germinos intelligit'; fol. 40v, 'Anno 89 im Juli'; fol. 91v, 'Ex scriptis Cracovi H. Scultetus & Walthery ab mo[...].rest has been trimmed]'; fol. 94v, '1 May Anno 89 Harpersdorf ex Bart. Scultetij'; fol. 110v, 'Ex libri Bartholomaii Sculteti Gorlitiani et scripti 3 Mai[. . .]; fol. 111v, '3 Mai A° 89 novi Calend. ex Sculteto Gorlitiano Mathem.'; fol. 126v, 'Scriptum Bartol. Sculteti Gorlitiani Mathem. libris. 6 Mai A° 89 calendarium novum computatum in Harpersdorf.'

suggestive notation ‘Gorlicii ex scripto Cracovij Rhetici Scriptj Barthol. Scultety 21 Febr. A° 1567. Ex huius scripto B. Walthery Iun. 30 Aprilis A° [15]89 novi calen. Harper[sdorf]’ (Lübeck MS, fol. 88r). It is with this formulation ('B. Walther Iun.') that Walther signed the majority of his printed works and poetical contributions.

This annotation is significant, not only because it supplements previous evidence of Scultetus' role in the copying and distribution of Paracelsian and magical manuscripts during the 1560s, but also because it definitively links Walther to heterodox Paracelsian groups in Harpersdorf, a subject to which I will shortly return. According to Sudhoff, the Wrocław folio was devoid of any mention of Görlitz, Scultetus or indeed Walther himself. However, his careful lexicographical description of the volume (including the tendency of one scribe to write in tight columns), strongly suggests that the manuscript was prepared by the same scribes in Harpersdorf who copied the texts of the Lübeck manuscript. What is more, the dates of composition mentioned within the individual tracts in both codices demonstrate that they were produced simultaneously.⁹ As Sudhoff has pointed out, that there existed a close relationship between several of the Wrocław texts with other Paracelsian manuscripts copied by Scultetus in the late 1560s and preserved today in Wolfenbüttel and Munich, further suggests their provenance amongst Walther's Görlitz circle (Sudhoff 1898: 530, 534).

However, more so than for its involvement in the copying and production of Paracelsian manuscripts, the Silesian village of Harpersdorf was of enormous significance during the final third of the sixteenth century as the central point of a thriving and tolerant Schwenckfelder community, comprised mainly of members earlier expelled from Walther's birthplace of Liegnitz (Weigelt 1973: 195–212). The existence of the two Harpersdorf manuscripts therefore suggests an enduring connection between Walther and Schwenckfeldian communities in Silesia, and furthermore between Schwenckfeldian sympathizers and Paracelsian networks in the area and beyond during the late sixteenth century. This is a connection that predated and would endure even after Walther made Böhme's acquaintance around 1617, for the cobbler himself was supported by several Silesian nobles, each with their own contacts to Schwenckfeldian groups (Fechner 1857: 61; Weigelt 1973: 205). Böhme

⁹ The Lübeck MS was copied between 1586 and May 1589 (see above note 8), the dates of which broadly coincide with those found in the Wrocław MS, which span from the 21st August 1588 to June 1589.

even addressed one letter to Johann Jakob Huser, brother of the editor of the 1596 edition of Paracelsus' works, friend of Scultetus, and therefore perhaps also of Walther, Johann Huser (c.1545–c.1600) (Lemper 1976: 83; Telle 1992: 160).

Unfortunately, because original magical and kabbalistic works authored by Walther are absent from both the Wrocław and Lübeck codices, it is difficult to gauge the depth with which he read in these particular treatises, or assess the level of expertise that he had reached in working with them. Clearly, he thought them at least worthy of having copied. However, as Federico Barbierato has recently argued, magical books and manuscripts enjoyed almost constant popularity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries irrespective of the expertise or intentions of their possessors, mainly on account of their decorative, dangerous, and therefore attractive nature. Indeed, he suggests that the majority of those who possessed magical works, such as the *Picatrix* and *Liber Raziel*, probably did not even use them for magical purposes (Barbierato 2002: 163). I find it however difficult to doubt the words of Jakob Böhme when he stated that Walther was a true 'enthusiast of the mysteries': particularly in light of his later undertakings in search of magical, kabbalistic and occult knowledge, especially his trip(s) to the Holy Land.

There is, however, further evidence of Walther's enduring connection to Paracelsian networks of communication throughout Germany. Following his 1617 encounter with Böhme and his subsequent conversion to the cobbler's theosophy, Walther would not only be involved in the distribution of Böhme's manuscripts, but also copies of Paracelsian and other magical texts. A prominent example of this activity is the transmission history of the short 'Mysterium Lapis Philosophorum ex MS codice Balthasaris Waltheri Silesij', an undoubtedly apocryphal account of an act of transmutation achieved by Paracelsus in 1527, the secret of which was supposedly recorded in a series of magical symbols on the pommel of his sword. Not only did Walther pass this text on to the chiliast Paul Nagel in Torgau (Karlsruhe MS, 383–4), but he also provided a copy to the Hamburg dissident, manuscript collector and Rosicrucian respondent, Joachim Morsius, who promptly set the account in print in his *Magische Propheceyung Aureoli Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi* (1625). There, Morsius would exult Walther with the titles 'Equitis Hierosolymitani, Theosophiae [sic] & Secretioris medicinæ eximiè periti, amici carissimi' (1625, fol. B1'). The original manuscript of this pseudo-Paracelsian text, from which the text of the printed edition was set, can be found today within the pages of the Lübeck codex: proof

that the collection itself indeed once belonged to Walther, and then later to Morsius.

With the identification of these two manuscript codices once in Walther's possession, or in possession of those with whom he trafficked, we have two concrete examples of the physician's enduring interest in Paracelsian and magical writings that exist entirely independently of his enthusiasm for Böhme's philosophy, and more importantly, suggest a broader context for analyzing his life and work independently of the Böhme-mythos. Indeed, supplementary sources make these new contexts even more clear. For a short period during the late sixteenth century, Walther was active as an alchemist, metallurgist and physician in Hungary and Wallachia (Fechner 1857: 69). In 1621, he served as personal physician to Prince August of Anhalt-Plötzkau (Böhme 1730, IX: 12:77), one of the first enthusiasts of the Rosicrucian brotherhood in the Holy Roman Empire, who possessed extensive contacts amongst members of what I have called the 'chiliastic underground': a loose network of heterodox spiritualists linked by millenarian tendencies product of Paracelsian enthusiasm (Penman 2008). Shortly before that, he was active as the supervisor of the laboratory at the court of Johann Georg I in Dresden, responsible for the production of medicaments under the order of the Saxon court physician (Worbs 1966: 11). It is worth mentioning that there are also repeated mentions of Walther in the company of Paracelsians, not only in Böhme's *Theosophical Epistles*, but especially in the manuscript correspondence of Paul Nagel. As I have detailed elsewhere (Penman Forthcoming a & b), Nagel's letters reveal Walther as an active member of a startlingly large network of Paracelsian and heretical sympathisers, not only in Saxony, Silesia, Poland and Bohemia, but also throughout Europe. Indeed, both Walther's thirst for occult knowledge and independence of mind were so great that, for a brief period in the 1610s and early 1620s (before Böhme's conclusion of the *Psychologia Vera* and a time in which he remained ambivalent towards Böhme's theosophy) he was an active follower of one of Böhme's chief opponents, the Thuringian antinomian and dissident Esajas Stiefel and his nephew, Ezechiel Meth.

Somewhat frustratingly, Walther's printed works don't adequately reflect the extent of his interests in magical and kabbalistic areas as we might reasonably expect. Nor, surprisingly, do they even evince a particular enthusiasm for Paracelsian medicine or philosophy. Outside of several congratulatory and other poetical contributions, and excluding the previously mentioned *Ode dicolos tetrastrophos* (1585), Walther composed only one other major work of note, a Latin language biography of

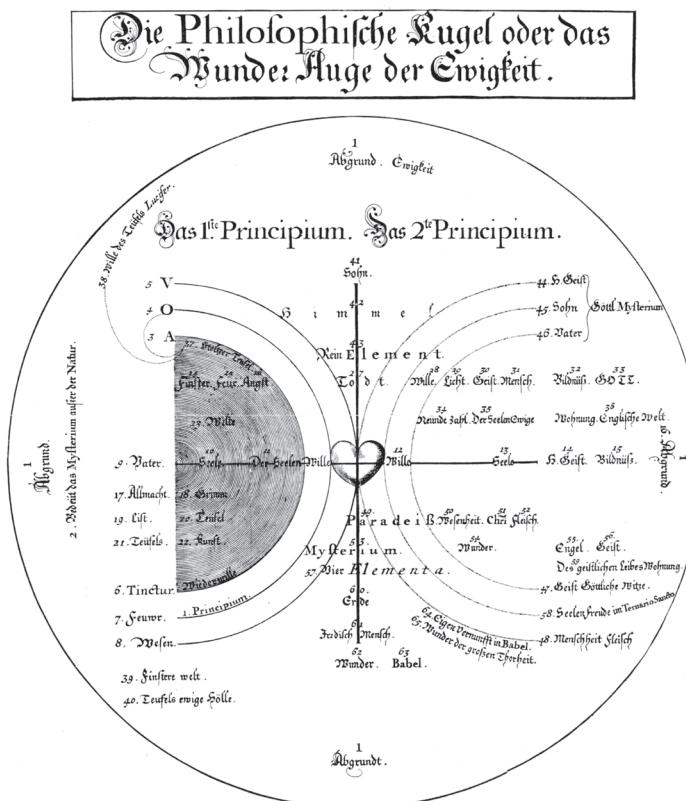
Prince Michael 'the Brave' of Walachia (1558–1601). It was during a visit in June and July of 1597 to Michael's court at the foot of the Carpathians that Walther received a manuscript from a certain Andreas Tarnow, which detailed the Prince's considerable exploits. Perhaps in an attempt to secure patronage, Walther promptly transposed the account into Latin (having first had it set into Polish), and added a poetic *Epigramm* and *Elegia* to its conclusion. The book was ultimately printed, with a warm dedication to his 'great friend and supporter' Bartholomäus Scultetus, on the feast day of St Michael in 1599: shortly after Walther's return from the Holy Land (Walther 1599: A3^v). In terms of its reception, it was by far the most successful of Walther's literary works, being reprinted on several occasions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Yet despite the lack of any significant evidence brought forth within the pages of Walther's printed works concerning his connection to Paracelsian philosophy and social networks, the existence of a diverse manuscript tradition indeed demonstrates a burgeoning interest in kabbalistic, magical and allied areas of knowledge that began in the 1580s. With this context in mind, it becomes clear that when Walther first encountered Jakob Böhme in Görlitz in 1617, it was not a result of the physician intentionally travelling there in order to visit the shoemaker, retiring like 'the Queen of Sheeba with King Solomon', as von Franckenberg portrayed it, but rather to deepen contacts with the network of Paracelsians that had existed in the town since the 1570s: the same network whose common interests and generosity with manuscript sources had inspired Walther's initial journey to the Holy Land, 'with the greatest industry and effort, in search of the true hidden wisdom, which one might call kabbalah, magic, alchemy, or, more correctly, theosophy' (Franckenberg 1730: 15). That Walther upon his return would continue to seek after numerous and diverse sources of the magical wisdom that he so very much desired, and so disappointedly could not find amongst the magi, should represent no real surprise. And while, unlike Christian Rosencreuz, this disappointment did not lead him to found a secret society in order to distribute the data that he had indeed succeeded in collecting during his adventures, it lead instead to an intensification of his connections with pre-existing networks of magical, kabbalistic and Paracelsian practitioners in the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. While the revelation of Walther's connection to the two manuscript codices in Lübeck and Wrocław firmly demonstrates the physician's kabbalistic and magical proclivities, more importantly, it shows that it is amongst the secretive networks of Paracelsian and Schwenckfeldian protagonists

that we must search in order to find further information and contexts for understanding and analyzing Walther's life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to return to the globe of the covenant, supposedly given by God to Moses atop Mt Sinai, and consider afresh the vexed question of Böhme, Walther, and the kabbalah. For the fact that Böhme was happy to communicate this idea in the pages of his *Mysterium Magnum* does, I argue, indeed provide an indication of Walther's influence upon Böhme's theosophy. For between 1617 and 1621 Böhme not



Böhme's 'Philosophical Globe or Wonder-Eye of Eternity'. An engraving from the *Vierzig Fragen von der Seelen Urstand* (= *Sämtliche Schriften* III: 30).

only answered 40 questions concerning the soul posed to him by the Liegnitzer in the *Psychologia Vera*, but at Walther's insistence, also attempted to illustrate his theosophical system using a complex graphic entitled 'God's wonder-eye of eternity' ('Merckwürdigkeiten' 1730, X: 85–6): a graphic that Böhme also named the 'philosophical globe' (*philosophische Kugel*) (see figure). In as much as the 'philosophical globe' embodied an attempt to bring together all the features of his difficult theosophy in a graphical representation that incorporated the immaterial qualities of God's love with landmarks of the physical and metaphysical landscape, it could indeed be said that this was, in many ways, Böhme's attempt to elaborate the details of God's covenant above and beyond the *Decalogue* itself. The existence of an actual Böhmian globe seems to therefore support the opinion of the anonymous editor of Böhme's Toruń edition, who, although he was no eyewitness to the events he described, might have indeed been correct when he pointed to Walther as the source for Böhme's 'globe of the law'.

References

I. Balthasar Walther's Printed Works

The following chronological list of known works by Walther incorporates both prose and poetic texts, excluding editions of Böhme's *Psychologia vera*, (already recorded by Buddecke [1937]). Where appropriate, a description of the type of work Walther contributed to the text in question has been added. Following the title, a list of known holding libraries (*Loc*) has been indicated, inclusive of call numbers. In the case of Items 6a–c, this list is *not* exhaustive. Finally, when possible, reference has been made to appropriate entries in the 'Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts', <<http://www.vd16.de>> (abbreviation: VD16), and the 'Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts' <<http://www.vd17.de>> (abbreviation: VD17).

Item 1. [1581: Congratulatory poem, in]

GRATVLATIONES | IN HONO-|REM ORNATISSIMI, ET | DOCTISSIMI
 IVVENIS [...] | MAR-|TINI NOSSLERI, CVM MAGI-|STERII PHILOSOPHICI
 GRA-|DV IN ACADEMIA FRANCO-|FORDIANA A [...] | M. IACOBO
 EBERTO, | PHILOSOPHICI ORDINIS DE-|CANO ET PROFESSORE |
 PUBLICO, ORNA-|RETVR. | SCRIPTÆ | AB | AMICIS | FRANCOFORDIÆ
 MAR-|CHIONVM | ANNO M. D. LXXXI. | XII. CAL. MAII. |

Loc: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 8 in: Xc 555.

VD16 ZV 6968

Item 2. [1582: Congratulatory poem, in]

Gratulatoria | IN NVPTI- | AS REVERENDI, PIE | TATE, DOCTRINA, ET VIRTU-
| te præstantis viri Dn Magistri MARTINI | NOSSLERI Monsterbergensis Silesij,
Pa- | storis apud Fürstewaldenses fidelis- | simi, Sponsi, | ET | [...] EVAE | [...]
Basilij Mehl- | horns primarij ciuis Francofordensis | filiæ, Sponsæ. Scripta |
ab Amicis. | FRANCOFORDIÆ AD ODERAM, | IN OFFICINA IOANNIS |
EICHORN. | M. D. LXXXII. | 14. Maij

Loc: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 20 in: Xc558 R.

VD16 ZV 6984

Item 3. [1585]

Ode | Dicilos Tetraстrophos, totum re= | demtionis opus, à Christo Seruatore
nostro hu= | mano generi præstitum, breuiter com= plectens, | AD | [. . .]
CHRISTOPHORVM AB HOIM | in Ermbseleben, Conradsburg, VVegeleben,
Drie- | sig, etc. Primatus Halberstadiensis per- | petuum Camerarium | [Orna-
ment] | ILLVSTRISS. PRINCIPIS | AC DOMINI DN. IOACHIMI ERNESTI |
Principis Anhaldini, Comitis Ascaniae [...] | Consiliarium intimum ac | præcip-
uum, Dn. ac promotorem | suum obseruandum | SCRIPTA | A BALDASARE
VVALTHERO IVN. S. | SERVESTAE | Bonauentura Faber excudebat. | ANNO
M. D. LXXXV.

Loc: Halle, Universitätsbibliothek, an Id 4212 (11).

VD16 ZV 23734

Item 4. [1587: Congratulatory poem, in]

Trostschrift | Weiland | Des Hochwirdigen und | Durchläuchten / Hochgeborenen
Fürsten | und Herrn/ Herrn Georgen/ Fürsten zu An- | halt/ Graffen zu
Ascanien/ Herrn zu Zerbst | und Bernburgk/ Thumprobsten zu Mag- | deburg
und Meissen/ Coadiutorn | in Geistlichen sachen zu | Merssburgk. | An | S. F.
G. geliebten Herrn brudern/ | Fürst Johansen zu Arnhalt etc. beyde Hoch- | löb-
licher/ Christlicher und milder Gedechnüs. | [. . .] | M.D.LXXXVII.

[On leaf C7v: Gedruckt zu Zerbst / durch Bonaventur Schmid.]

Loc: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, A: 812.5 Theol. (6).

VD16 G 1331

Item 5. [1587: Congratulatory poem, in]

Coniugio | DOCTISSIMI | ET HVMANISSIMI | VIRI, DOMINI FRANCISCI
CRO- | SCHELII SVEBVIENSIS, SPONSI: ET PV- | dicißimæ virginis DORO-
THEAE Peuce- | rianæ, IOACHIMI filiæ, Gorli- | censis, Sponsæ, | Benè pre-
cantur amici, | [Ornament] | GORLICII | Excusum typis Ambrosij Fritschij |
M.D.LXXXVII.

Loc: Görlitz, Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, Ba VII 4° 16,24.

Not in VD16.

A SECOND CHRISTIAN ROSENCREUZ?

Item 6. [1599]

BREVIS ET VERA | DESCRIPTIO | RERVM AB | ILLVST. AMPLISS. | ET
FORTISSL. MILITIAE | CON- | trapatriæ suæ Rei[ue] Pub. Christianæ hostes |
Duce ac Dn. Dn. Jön Michaele, Mol- | dawiæ Transalpinæ sive VValachiæ |
Palatino gestarum, | In eiusdem aula Tervvisana fideliter collecta | opera &
studio | Baldassaris Waltheri Iun. S. | 15 [printer's signet] 99 | GORLICII Typis
Johanniss Rhambæ.

Loc: Budapest, Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, Ant. 2864–2865; Ant. 4670(6);
RMK III. 933b; Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, 70, 410.2 eks.; Görlitz,
Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, B IV 4° 25,5; Halle, Universi-
tätsbibliothek, Ung II 45; Jena, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek,
4 Bud.Pol.29(21); Lüneburg, Ratsbücherei, Göa 94; Oxford, Bodleian Library,
Vet. D1 d.37; Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HBF 325; Vienna,
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 64.F.43 (2); Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August
Bibliothek, A: 17.20 Pol. (1); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Turc. 75
[lost].

VD16 W 932

Item 6a. [1603, another edition]

'Brevis Rerum a Michaele Moldavviae Transalpinæ sive VValachiæ Palatino
Michaele gestarum descriptio.' pp. 227–55, in Nicholas Reusner, ed.
RERVM | MEMORABILIVM | IN PANNONIA SVB TVR- | CARVM
IMPERATORIBVS, A CAPTA | CONSTANTINOPOLI VSQVE AD HANC |
æstatem nostram, bello, militiaq[ue] | gestarum. | EXEGESES | sive | NAR-
RATIONES ILLVSTRES | VARIORVM ET DIVERSORVM | AVCTORVM. | [...] |
FRANCOFVRTI, | Impensis Claudij Marnij, & hæredum | Ioannis Aubrij. |
[single rule] | M. DC. III.

Loc: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Se 2848<a>; Cambridge,
University Library, Dd*.2.3(D); Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Hist.
Hung.381; Gotha, Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Hist 8° 05569 (02);
London, British Library, C.73.c.7.(1.); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4.
Eur. 232; Oxford, Christ Church Library, a.1.277; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August
Bibliothek, A: 37.4 Hist. (2); T 5.4° Helmst. (4).

VD17 23:230278P

Item 6b. [1627, another edition:]

'Brevis Rerum a Michaele Moldavviae Transalpinæ sive VValachiæ Palatino
Michaele gestarum descriptio.' pp. 227–55, in Nicholas Reusner, ed.
SYNDROMVS | RERVM TVRCI- | CO-PANNONICARVM, | HISTORIAM CEN-
TVM QVINQVA- | ginta annorum complectens; | QVA QVICQVID A CAPTA
CONSTANTINOPOLI | ad Annum usq[ue] partæ per Christum salutis MDC.
[. . .] OMNIA E DIVERSIS SCRIPTORIBVS COLLECTA, ET IN | unum hoc
corpus bono publico redacta. | [woodcut] | FRANCOFVRTI AD MOENVM,
| Typis & sumptibus Wechelianorum, apud Danielem & | Dauidem Aubrios &

Clementem Schleichium. | [single rule] | M.DC.XXVII.

Loc: Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Hist.Hung.382; Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 4 H TURC 850:1; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Eur. 274-1; 4 Plat. 322; 4 Polon. 29; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, A: 74.1 Hist. (1).

VD17 23:230309F

Item 6c. [1770, another edition:]

'Brevis Rervm a Michaele Moldawiae Transalpinae sive Walachiae Palatino gestarvm descriptio.' pp. 232-261, in Nicholas Reusner, ed.

RERVM MEMORABILIVM | IN | PANNONIA | SVB | TVRCARVM IMPERATORIBVS | A | CAPTA CONSTANTINOPOLI | VSQVE | AD ANNVM MDC. BELLO MILITIAQVE GESTARVM | NARRATIONES ILLVSTRES | VARIORVM, ET DIVERSORVM | AVCTORVM. | [...] | RECVSAE | COLOCAE M. DCC. LXX.

Loc: Buffalo, SUNY, DB932 .R47 1770; Cambridge, University Library, Acton. c.42.73; London, British Library, 9315.ee.13; Oxford, Bodleian Library, 24183 d.9.

Item 7. [1625: Two Short Poems, in Joachim Morsius, ed.]

Magische Prophecyung | AUREOLI PHILIPPI | THEOPHRASTI PARACELSI, | Von | Entdeckung seiner 3. Schätzen. | Darvon der erste in Friaul: Der ander zwischen | Schwaben und Bayern: Der dritte zwischen | Frankreich und Hispanien soll gefunden | werden/ | Zur zeit der Regierung des Gelben Mitternächt=| tigen Löwens. | Worbey gefüget | Die Characteres Chymici, dardurch er Mysterium lapidis | Philosophorum beschrieben/ und so in seinem Rapier knopffe gefunden worden seyn: | Und | PAULI GREBNERI vaticinia de Leone Septentrionali | & ruina Antichristi. | Gedruckt PHILADELPHIÆ | M. DC. XXV. | S. Antonius. | Temporibus Antichristi periculosem erit sapere, | periculosem loqui, periculosem | tacere.

Loc: Hannover, Leibniz Bibliothek, N-A 84; Uppsala universitetsbibliotek, A 200 C.

Not in VD17. See Sudhoff 1898: no. 330; Bruckner 1971: no. 30.

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JOLE SHACKELFORD

Western Esotericism and the History of European Science and Medicine in the Early Modern Period

The history of science and the history of medicine were, from their beginnings as subjects in the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods, hostile to esoteric ideas and practices and generally excluded them from the scope of academic study.¹ Esoteric belief systems by definition prioritize inner knowledge, knowledge that is not attainable or transferable by the standard practices of public pedagogy, but rather is acquired by direct apprehension or by internal illumination. I call these ‘belief systems’, because people who defend esoteric knowledge do so within a worldview, a physics and metaphysics that explains and makes sense of their hopes and experiences. Such belief systems can therefore be compared with other worldviews—cosmologies in the most general sense of the term—and points of tangency, or even zones of interpenetration, can be examined. It is just such points of confrontation and zones of commonality between the occult and manifest sciences which are of particular interest to historians of science, because it is here that the disciplinary boundaries of modern science are being negotiated. Moreover,

1 The positivist bias against consideration of esoterica and the occult sciences that still persisted in the mid-twentieth-century history of science is concisely illustrated by A. R. Hall (1954: 307). He sought ‘the prehistory of chemistry’, defined ‘as developing chemical techniques, and factual knowledge of substances’, in the history of alchemy, where ‘the grain of real knowledge is concealed in a vast deal of esoteric chaff’. Commenting on the state of the history of science in the Middle Ages in 1995, David Lindberg wrote (p. 65): ‘We are particularly needy when it comes to . . . alchemy, astrology, and other subjects now frequently marginalized under the rubrics ‘occult’ or ‘pseudo-science’ . . . There is no justification for historians of science excluding certain subjects simply because they have been excluded from the canon of modern scientific disciplines.’ Although the history of science has tended to be more positivist in its exclusion of occult sciences than has the history of medicine, owing to medicine’s inextricable bonds to practices, it, too, ‘was long dominated by a simple, positivist point of view’, according to Gert Brieger (1993: 24).

it is precisely in these zones of doctrinal interpenetration that friction between religion and science ignites the conflicts that have provided rhetorical substance to debates about belief and secularization.

Western esoteric belief systems include spiritual and mystical forms of Christianity, heterodoxies that orthodox Trinitarians would decline to call Christian at all, and other theologies and systems of metaphysics that are not literally natural-philosophical in orientation, but which provided an ideological foundation for medieval and early modern alchemy, astrology, many kinds of magic, and all sorts of other so-called occult sciences. These were cultivated in the Middle Ages and were tolerated to some degree at the fringes of academic learning and professional activity into the early modern period. However, with the rise of positivist philosophy in the European Enlightenment, what had enjoyed marginal acceptance as occult sciences were dismissed as pseudosciences, accompanying the general disregard for the role of religious thought—of superstition—in the development of Western science.

A few early twentieth-century historians understood that the heroes of scientific development in many cases also wrote about and practiced pseudo-sciences, for example Tycho Brahe's astrology, but these cases were dismissed as vestigial superstition. The techniques of astrology and alchemy that they perceived as contributing to the 'real sciences' of astronomy and chemistry could be logically separated from their theoretical matrices, and studies of these esoteric belief systems in the context of science and medicine remained, well, esoteric.² Only recently

2 For example, Singer 1959: 185: 'The word [alchemy] has come to suggest magic, obscurantism, futile symbolism, and fraud. Most of this is just, but . . . Many alchemical works have scientific elements. Moreover the alchemists contributed certain processes and apparatus. . . . Many instruments and appliances of alchemy passed direct to the modern scientific chemist.' Even the pioneer explorer of the role of occult sciences in the formulation of experimental scientific methods, Lynn Thorndike, who wrote that 'the history of both magic and experimental science can be better understood by studying them together' (1923, I: 2), in practice discriminated between 'alchemy of the incoherent and mystical variety' (1923, II: 783) and practical experiments that contributed to the development of modern science. The assumption that alchemy at best contributed to experimental method and technological advance, and not to theoretical development, is implicit in a comment by Herbert Butterfield (1965: 203): 'It would appear that experimentation and even technological progress are insufficient by themselves to provide the basis for the establishment of what we should call a "modern science." . . . Alchemy had certainly failed to produce the required structure of scientific thought.' Nathan Sivin (1990: 16) succinctly summarized

has alchemy come to be studied as a mainstream medieval and early modern science. But even these newer studies implicate alchemy in the development of mechanical matter theory and materialism, leaving esoteric alchemy mainly to history of religion, literary studies, and New Age enthusiasm.³ Astrology has not fared much better.⁴ And magic is still valued primarily by those historians of science who have seen it as a motivation and legitimation for active intervention in natural processes, namely for promoting experimentation and technological application.⁵

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a movement to reconsider the relationship between religion and science in the West,

the disciplinary alienation between historians who saw alchemy as the prelude to chemistry and those who were interested in alchemy as a religious and social phenomenon. He predicts that there will be little progress in the history of alchemy ‘until the chemists and specialists in religion are willing to learn from each other, and the philologists and intellectual historians from both’.

- 3 The current situation is summed up by Gabriele Ferrario (2007: 32): ‘For many years Western scholars ignored Al-Razi’s praise for alchemy, seeing alchemy instead as a pseudo-science, false in its purposes and fundamentally wrong in its methods, closer to magic and superstition than to the “enlightened” sciences. Only in recent years have pioneering studies conducted by historians of science, philologists, and historians of the book demonstrated the importance of alchemical practices and discoveries in creating the foundations of chemistry.’ Such studies include William R. Newman’s and Lawrence M. Principe’s *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the Fate of Helmontian Chymistry* (2002) and Newman’s, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (2006), which point to the importance, for the development of science, of alchemists’ elaboration of atomistic matter theory and the development of careful quantitative and qualitative experimental methods. But historians of science and medicine have paid less attention to esoterica in their own right. The religious and spiritual aspects of alchemy, which may also have had medical and metallurgical contexts, are generally left to cultural and literary studies, for example Arthur Versluis’s work on early American esoteric traditions (see www.esoteric.msu.edu/Versluis.html), and Linden 1996.
- 4 However, the significant place of medical astrology in late medieval and Renaissance medical practice and education is now acknowledged by such studies as French 1994, and Lemay 1976 (esp. pp. 199–206).
- 5 This line of argument was pioneered by Paulo Rossi (1957), and articulated by Frances A. Yates (1964). H. Floris Cohen (1994: 169–83) describes the introduction of occult sciences into the grand narrative of the rise of Western science as a consequence of Yates’s *Giordano Bruno*. But, to some extent her argument that natural magic invigorated experiment and technological application applies to the arts generically and especially to alchemy, as deftly elucidated in Newman 2004.

a process that is ongoing, but is more often concerned with Christian denominations and precepts than with esoteric belief systems. To some extent this dialogue has been reactive and apologetic: reactive against the extreme post-Enlightenment biases that urged intellectuals and educators to exclude religion from science, and apologetic in attempting to defuse the dichotomization of faith and reason that was and is threatening organized religions. The very studies that illustrate the insights that the history of religion can bring to the history of science often can read as very presentist defenses of the legitimacy of modern religion in serious natural philosophy in our own time, rather than as a part of scientific and medical historical development.⁶

But ignoring such concerns, it is plain that religious history has had a beneficial effect on the conceptualization of the history of science and the

6 One might consider the work of Robert K. Merton (1938) and R. Hooykaas (1972) as early attempts to bring religion into the scope of the history of science, but I have in mind the organized reaction against the perception that science and religion have always been essentially opposed, which is evident in Lindberg & Numbers 1986 and 2003. Both of these collections of essays assume that religion or theology—or specifically Christianity—have been portrayed as in conflict with ‘science’ and set about problematizing this polarization. But the dialectic between the ‘poles’ is implicit, as is also evident in the recent overview, Olson 2004: 218–19: ‘This book began with a discussion of Galilean astronomy and Christianity and ended with a discussion of Christianity and Darwinian evolution. These two cases have long stood as the most notorious episodes in the supposed ongoing conflict between science and religion; but even in these cases it should have become clear that the stories are vastly more complicated than Draper, White, and their followers would have us believe. It is true that in each case there were loud religious voices opposing new scientific developments; but it is also true that there were other religious voices supporting them for a variety of reasons.’ Although not apologetic by intention, the companion volume by Edward Grant (2004: 248), develops the theme that natural philosophy prospered in the Latin West, in comparison with medieval Byzantium and Islam, in part because Western clerics embraced natural philosophy with zeal, and in part because an early and enduring tradition of ‘separation of church and state, and the analogous disciplinary distinction between theology and natural philosophy, made possible the independent development of each of these two fundamental disciplines’. A fundamental supposition for many of these scholars is that past investigations of nature may have been motivated by religious zeal and guided by particular faiths, but that religion and science were intrinsically distinct. This assumption is adequate for disciplinary histories, but hampers study of the role of spiritualists and mystics, for whom this distinction often was without meaning.

acknowledgment of its esoteric heritages. Consider the effect of Frances Yates's argument for the importance of the Hermetic religion in the rise of experimentalism and the organization of the scientific enterprise. No matter how one regards her scholarship and what has been called The Yates Thesis, which identified magic as an essential component of the scientific revolution, one must acknowledge that this work has become emblematic of a *serious* consideration of esoteric thought and associated practices as constituent elements of the social and intellectual climate that produced the new science. While attitudes vary, historians of science no longer reject consideration of esoterica categorically, as was the case during much of the twentieth century.

Perhaps there *should* be a durable reluctance to efface the boundaries between the sciences and pseudo-sciences. But I see only benefit from integrating the pseudo-sciences into the reconstructed grand narratives, as *belief systems* rather than merely as technologies. We can acknowledge the legitimacy and usefulness of the history of esotericism for illuminating past science and medicine, without threatening the disciplinary identities of the history of science and history of medicine. This will be more successful if esoteric studies are given solid scholarly credentials, disarming the perception that the history of Western esotericism is pursued mainly by those who have a personal stake in it. There has of course been progress in this programme in the past couple of decades; for example, the establishment of the academic unit for Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents (GHF) in Amsterdam under the direction of Wouter Hanegraaff, the foundation of the Association for the Study of Esotericism (ASE) and the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE), the publication of a journal, *Aries*, and an on-line journal devoted to the subject, *Esoterica*, and there are now academic conferences focused on Western Esotericism. Moreover, there is a newly formed Cambridge Centre for the Study of Western Esotericism as well, although the Centre's web-presence suggests that it is oriented toward today's esoteric practices, and that is less helpful. Most of these institutions and events consciously take a multidisciplinary approach, blending historical studies with modern cultural studies and even contemporary occultism, and while this eclecticism is in itself laudable, it raises some red flags for academic historians of science and medicine, who have struggled to keep presentist concerns from unduly biasing their studies of the past. There is a dual risk, as I perceive it, of imposing modern, living esoteric beliefs onto the past, and also of exaggerating the contributions of the pseudo-sciences to the development of Western science and medicine. If we define them too loosely, we will dull the

insights they can provide into how past cosmological systems were conceptualized or how therapeutic measures were thought to operate on body and soul. These are generalities, but perhaps an example of a historical problem within my own research on Scandinavian Paracelsianism will illustrate how study of Western esotericism can help us understand the historical development of medical science.

Paracelsianism: the Juncture of Esoteric Belief Systems and Medical Scientific Practices

The historical phenomenon of Paracelsianism can be defined as a closely-related set of traditions with roots in the life and work of the German physician Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493–1541). Paracelsianism is a good subject for the present purpose, because it falls within the scope of Western esotericism, and because it has a traditional place within the grand narratives of Western science and medicine and is therefore not completely ‘other’.⁷ Indeed, Paracelsian ideas about the mundane and the divine constitute a conceptual space in which study of nature and religious doctrine overlap and intermingle.

Paracelsus was contemporary with Martin Luther and, despite his claim to having remained a Catholic, he was wrapped up in the political, social, and intellectual ferment of the Reformation and formulated some very innovative and heterodox theological doctrines. He was controversial, unable or unwilling to find long-term employment or patronage in any one spot. His reputation and the sense of the manuscripts and books that are judged to have been written by him reveal a synthetic mind, suspicious of the limitations of traditional learning, and as preoc-

7 Western esotericism was defined to include Paracelsianism for the purposes of the symposium on Western esotericism held at the Donner Institute 15–17 August 2007, from which this volume originates (www.abo.fi/institut/di/Congress2007/Kongress.htm under ‘tema’, accessed August and September 2007), and also by the programme for the University of Amsterdam’s masters degree in mysticism and Western esotericism (www.studeren.uva.nl/ma-mysticism-and-western-esotericism, accessed September 2007). The importance of Paracelsus and his followers has been a part of the grand narrative of the history of medicine at least since Kurt Polycarp Sprengel’s late eighteenth century survey, *Versuch einer pragmatischen Geschichte der Arzneikunde*, but has enjoyed less prominence in history of science surveys.

cupied with theological matters and prophesy as he was with medicine, natural lore, and alchemy.

Paracelsus' teachings gained visibility in the second half of the sixteenth century. Beginning in the 1560s we can see the emergence of a Paracelsian movement or school of thought that no longer depended on the author, but rather was an efflorescence, a development and even application of Paracelsus' ideas. But the problem of defining what ensued is more difficult, owing in part to the very success of Paracelsian medicine, which rendered it diffuse, but also because Paracelsian concepts seemed to blend into Rosicrucian and other esoteric religious theory.

Historians in the twentieth century identified Paracelsus and Paracelsians primarily with chemical philosophy and the use of chemically-prepared drugs in medicine and labeled him the father of iatrochemistry. As a consequence, sixteenth, seventeenth, sometimes even eighteenth-century champions of chemical medicine were promiscuously labeled Paracelsian practitioners by virtue of their use or recommendation of chemical therapies alone. And yet Andreas Libavius, an eager reader of Paracelsus and his interpreters already at the end of the sixteenth century, shrilly and at great length denounced the Paracelsians, their medicine, and their religion while defending alchemy and the use of chemically-prepared drugs. Surely we cannot call Libavius a Paracelsian! Many subsequent physicians incorporated chemical medications into a medicine that had no affinity whatsoever with Paracelsian theory or therapeutic principles. Clearly these were not Paracelsians. Plainly, it is necessary to define 'Paracelsian' in a way that evokes its core ideology and not merely in terms of an apothecary's list, and this is where the history of esotericism comes in.⁸

At the beginning of my research on Scandinavian Paracelsianism I encountered Sten Lindroth's (1943) pioneering and still monumental study of Paracelsianism in Sweden, which alerted me to the significance of a religious dimension. I was so impressed by the scope and depth of Lindroth's approach to the subject as to use it as a model for my own. He understood that Paracelsian philosophy and medicine were intimately entwined with esoteric religion and he did not shrink from including this connection in his book. In particular, I began to see how religious change in Denmark and Germany in the early modern period might

⁸ For discussion of the problem of defining 'Paracelsian' see Pumfrey 1998: 25–6; Shackelford 2002: 36.

affect receptivity to Paracelsian ideas. I also understood that there were many affinities between Rosicrucian ideology and Paracelsian ideas. Indeed, some scholars consider the Rosicrucian documents to embody a particularly radical strand of Paracelsianism, with a decidedly socio-political agenda, and this might help to explain the abrupt change that my research revealed in the fortunes of Paracelsianism at the University of Copenhagen in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century.

Paracelsian Theory on the Threshold of Religious Orthodoxy: Johann Arndt's *Vom wahren Christentum*

In four published articles (Shackelford 1996, 1998, 2002, 2003) I have developed the argument that Danish academic physicians, philosophers, and theologians were acquainted with Paracelsian ideas by the end of the sixteenth century, and that some of them were enthusiastic about the promises that Paracelsian chemical medicine held for therapeutic advance and even for the alignment of natural philosophy with Biblical theology. And yet in the second decade of the next century leading academics were turning their backs on anything that smacked of Paracelsus, and the remaining overt discussion of Paracelsian doctrines became negative. The contrast with the contemporary situation in England, where Paracelsus' books were appearing in English translations and where there were open debates about the validity of Paracelsian medicine, is striking. I have argued that a principal reason for this is that key doctrines underpinning the Paracelsian belief system or worldview, the theoretical basis for Paracelsian medicine, were identified with Rosicrucian and other heresies. Under pressure from increasingly narrowly defined Lutheran orthodoxy, Danish physicians and philosophers, effectively unable to divorce Paracelsian medicine from Paracelsian religion, subsequently ignored or even discouraged development of Paracelsian ideas altogether. Behind their rejection of what had been seen as a promising chemical conceptualization of nature and reform of medicine lay pressures imposed by an increasingly narrowly defined Lutheran orthodoxy and also their own sense about the morally noxious consequences of Paracelsian metaphysics for traditional Christology, Christian anthropology, and soteriology.

The chief architects of the new Lutheran orthodoxy in Denmark were Hans P. Resen, who was appointed principal bishop of the Danish church in 1615, and his successor Jesper Brochmand. Under the supervi-

sion of these theologians and with the support of the kings of Denmark, the demands of religious orthodoxy created a climate that was inimical to Paracelsian medicine, except as a class of chemically-prepared drugs that were incorporated into traditional Galenic medicine, and this can hardly be called Paracelsian. My overarching argument, as I have briefly sketched it here, is a coarse generalization, but it supports my underlying assertion that Paracelsian medical and philosophical ideas were—in notable salient instances—not easily separated from their contexts in the Paracelsian esoteric religious matrix that had shaped them, and that we need to understand these esoteric beliefs in order to understand the fortunes of Paracelsian medicine.⁹

My Danish friend and colleague, Morten Fink-Jensen has posed an important challenge to my general construction of the reception of Paracelsian ideas, by pointing out that Resen himself patronized the translation and publication of Book 4 of Johann Arndt's *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*, which incorporates Paracelsian cosmology. The implication is that if an orthodox Lutheran theologian and church superintendent like Arndt could distinguish acceptable Paracelsian philosophy from dangerous Paracelsian religious ideas, and an orthodox Lutheran theologian like Resen would disseminate it in Danish, then the religious climate in Denmark can have had little effect on the reception of Paracelsian medicine.¹⁰ Obviously this argument undermines my read-

- 9 I have pointed to specific examples where natural philosophical principles or practices identified with Paracelsians or Rosicrucians were found to be morally objectionable or in conflict with religious doctrine in Shackelford 2003: 242–8.
- 10 Morten Fink-Jensen (2004: 212–15) summarizes Peder Nielsen Gelstrup's role in translating Book 4 and the patronage extended to him by Hans P. Resen and Chancellor Christian Friis, which he takes as evidence that Resen and other proponents of Lutheran orthodoxy in the Danish church were receptive to Paracelsian thought under Resen's leadership, which began in 1615 (p. 228). He argues that Arndt's brand of natural theology appealed to the orthodox Lutherans and permitted them to tolerate Paracelsian natural philosophy even while they dared not endorse Paracelsian religious ideas, resulting in a greater degree of sanction for Arndt's ideas during Resen's leadership than was permitted in the 1630s under his successor, Jesper Brochmand (pp. 228–9). Bengt Arvidsson (1999: 28) identifies Arndt as a Gnesiolutheran (strict orthodox) and notes that he and Rosenkrantz had a common ideological perspective, suggesting that Rosenkrantz was also orthodox. Arvidsson's assessment supports that of Bjørn Kornerup (1959: 222–6) that Resen, Arndt, and even Rosenkrantz during this period (before 1630) were basically orthodox.

ing of the attitude of orthodox Lutheran theologians toward Paracelsian vital philosophy and urged me to undertake an exploration of Arndt's Paracelsian sympathies and explain their place in his ostensibly orthodox theology. Or was he in fact so orthodox? My investigation of this question was facilitated by a Fulbright fellowship, which enabled me to spend the Spring 2006 semester at the Institute for Classics, Russian, and Religion (IKRR) at the University of Bergen under the auspices of its project 'Vei og Vilstrå' to study orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Some of the results of my research are presented here, albeit in very condensed form.¹¹

The Construction of Johann Arndt's Orthodoxy

Historians of religion are divided on who is orthodox and to what extent the term is useful at all.¹² Johann Wallmann argues that Arndt was an orthodox Lutheran to the day of his death in 1621; that debate about his orthodoxy began almost immediately afterwards; but that it was resolved by the end of the seventeenth century, and that Arndt's *true* orthodoxy again emerged. Wallmann notes that Arndt's *Vom wahren Christentum* has enjoyed the widest circulation of any book in the history of Protestantism, excepting only the Bible, and that Arndt now is regarded as the most influential Lutheran since the Reformation.¹³ Early aspersions cast on Arndt's orthodoxy arose, in Wallmann's opinion, because heterodox separatists, who claimed him as their inspiration, mixed his teachings with those of Caspar Schwenckfeld, Paracelsus,

11 I wish to thank Einar Thomassen and IKRR at the University of Bergen, then under the direction of Knut Jacobsen, for welcoming me as a visiting scholar and facilitating my research.

12 Erb 1979: 3–4: 'Aside from its methodology and its legislative insistence on the acceptance of closely worded doctrinal statements of faith, Orthodoxy is difficult to define.' Erb identifies Arndt and other Pietists as enemies of orthodoxy, but notes that Arndt was defended by some orthodox theologians as well.

13 Johannes Wallmann (2005: 26) concludes that disagreements about Arndt's orthodoxy continued during the seventeenth century, but that the interpretations of Philipp Jakob Spener, Johann Sauber, and other Lutheran theologians eventually triumphed, and 'by the end of the seventeenth century Arndt was no longer met with hostility in the Lutheran Church'.

and Jacob Boehme. Ideas from these authors tainted Arndt's reputation, *not* anything that Arndt had actually written. (Wallmann 2005: 34–5.)¹⁴

R. Po-Chia Hsia takes a different approach, asserting that Arndt dissented from orthodoxy and confessionalism in reaction to late sixteenth-century debate about the Formula of Concord, but that he was saved from being labeled an enthusiast owing to the rigorous defense of his religion by Johann Gerhard, Johann Valentin Andreæ, and other orthodox Lutherans.¹⁵ Following Hsia's lead, I will argue here that heterodox elements in Arndt's writings differ from enthusiasts and separatists like Weigel in degree rather than in kind, and that Arndt's thoughts about religion were evolving in a more radical direction in the last two decades of his life, exactly during the period in which they first came to the attention of Scandinavians. Arndt's orthodoxy was in fact constructed late in the century as the Lutheran church was forced to accommodate Pietism. A similar construction of Andreæ's orthodoxy must also have occurred. If contemporaries doubted Arndt's orthodoxy, then one cannot argue that his adoption of Paracelsian cosmology in Book Four was a stamp of orthodox approval.

14 Wallmann identifies a 'left-wing of the Arndt School', comprising close readers of Arndt who cited him as their inspiration, but who leaned toward separationism. This left-wing was also influenced by heterodox authors such as Caspar Schwenckfeld, Paracelsus, and Jacob Boehme, and Wallmann argues that ideas from these authors are responsible for this left-wing's heterodoxy. But since these authors also frequently mentioned Arndt, Wallmann argues that contemporaries mistakenly associated the orthodox Arndt with their heterodoxies.

15 R. Po-Chia Hsia 1992: 23–4: 'The consolidation of orthodoxy in Lutheranism, sealed by the acceptance of the Book of Concord in 1580, signaled the emphasis of doctrinal purity over personal piety. . . . Like the other forerunners of the Pietistic movement, Arndt thought of himself as a true Lutheran, but both he and they came under attack from orthodox Lutheran theologians. Criticized by Lucas Osiander of Tübingen, Arndt was nonetheless defended by another Tübingen professor of Lutheran orthodoxy, Johann Andreæ. Others were not as fortunate. Weigel, for example, could not publish his writings during his lifetime. His followers were labeled "separatists" and "radical enthusiasts" (*Schwärmer*) by orthodox Lutherans.' Arndt's orthodoxy was also defended by his good friend Johann Gerhard, whose orthodoxy is not questioned.

Probing Arndt's Heterodoxy

Arndt's orthodoxy came into question in part because of his free use of mystical and spiritual language and his references to the *Theologia Deutsch* and the medieval German mystic Johann Tauler and in part because of his incorporation of ideas from Paracelsus and Valentin Weigel.¹⁶ To appreciate Arndt's appeal to physicians and others who were concerned with natural philosophy—and this includes theologians—we must regard Arndt's religious views in their chemical-medical context. There are good methodological reasons for doing this, inasmuch as there is a broad textual basis for the interleaving of medicine, philosophy, and theology in this very period, not least by Paracelsus and his followers. For example, the term exaltation can have a chemical meaning as well as a religious meaning, and its use might be intended to suggest a bridge across the scientific barrier separating exoteric and esoteric alchemy. Moreover, Arndt's study of medicine and exposure to Paracelsian ideas during his years at Basel are well known, as is the fact that he later maintained a chemical laboratory at his residence in Celle, where he was a Lutheran Superintendent and a known alchemist, so he was intellectually equipped to draw on contemporary natural philosophy, alchemy, and medicine to shape his religious teachings.¹⁷ He clearly did this when he chose to present 'true Christianity' in four aspects, treated serially in the four books of his *Vom wahren Christentum*. This builds on a Paracelsian conception that God can be understood first through scriptural revelation, second by emulating Christ, third from God's audible voice in the human conscience, and lastly in the phenomena of nature, Book Four. Since this is the way he chose to present his theology, as a mixture of scriptural exegesis, mystical illumination, and natural theology, we can suppose that this is one way his contemporaries read it.

- 16 Paracelsus' heterodox views were accessible to readers by this time in the published *Astronomia Magna* and otherwise circulated mainly in manuscript. See Daniel 2007. On Paracelsus' heterodox Christology and Anthropology, see Daniel 2002. Carlos Gilly (1998: 157–8), has argued that Paracelsus' more radically heterodox views were often labeled Weigelian and were fundamental to the heterodoxies that lay behind the Rosicrucian treatises.
- 17 Repo 1999: 60: 'In Celle hatte Arndt ein bemerkenswertes Laboratorium. Es wird uns berichtet, dass seine alchemistischen Beschäftigungen weit bekannt waren. Einige Bürger glaubten nämlich, er habe den Stein der Weisen schon gefunden, weil er sich so freigebig zugunsten der Armen seiner Stadt verhielt.'

In the very years that Arndt was formulating *Vom wahren Christentum*, probably in 1604, he also wrote an anonymous commentary on the four illustrations in Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, a book widely associated with the nexus of piety and alchemy that lay at the root of Rosicrucian ideology.¹⁸ This commentary appeared anonymously in 1608 attributed to 'an experienced cabalist and philosopher', but by the eighteenth century at the latest it became publicly known that Arndt was the author. Matti Repo (1999: 63) has pointed out the similarity of Arndt's commentary to a contemporary manuscript that is associated with the Paracelsian-Hermetic circle at the court of Landgraf Moritz of Hessen, now known to have been a hotbed of Rosicrucian activity. Both treatises present a threefold hierarchy of magic, cabala, and theology. These three ways of knowing, which Arndt associated with the Trinity, form an epistemology that subsumes celestial influences under nature and makes provision for an inner illumination by the holy spirit.¹⁹

Furthermore, Matti Repo draws a parallel between some of the ideas Arndt expressed in his *Iudicium* and those described in another anonymous tract titled *Astrologia theologizata*, which was published in 1617 and is similar to a tract with a variant title that was published a year later under Weigel's name.²⁰ Although Arndt's *Iudicium* distinguishes natural celestial influences on the Christian from any divine influence, both Weigelian astrological texts present a Paracelsian harmony between the actions of the inner, microcosmic stars within humans and those in the

18 The *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (Hamburg, 1595) is famous for its iconographic expression of the juxtaposition of prayer and experiment (*ore et labore*). The four beautiful plates of this now extremely rare volume can be viewed at <http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/SpecialCollections/khunrath/index.html>. It was reprinted in 1609 and its illustrations are widely used in modern literature as emblems of the close association between the worship of God through study of both the book of nature and Holy Scripture that characterizes the time. On Khunrath's illustrations as components of a wider dissenting Lutheran iconographic representation of alchemy as a redemptive ritual, see Szulakowska 2006. But also consult reviews by Tara Nummedal (2007) Jole Shackelford (2007) for discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of her analysis.

19 On Moritz's court and the University of Marburg as centers of Paracelsian and Rosicrucian activity, see Moran 1991.

20 Repo 1999: 65: 'Die beiden *Astrologiae theologizatae* sind theologisch verwandt, sowohl miteinander als auch mit den Werken Arndts.'

heavens, the macrocosm. This doctrine of a twofold celestial and terrestrial astronomy was also expressed by Tycho Brahe, Petrus Severinus, and other Paracelsians of the late sixteenth century, and Repo finds it ‘shining clearly in the background’ of another of Arndt’s treatises as well.²¹

The suggestion that Arndt might have been connected with the group of radical Protestants who fashioned the ideology and rhetoric of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood invites exploration, especially since one of them, Johann Valentin Andreæ, is also presented as one of Arndt’s orthodox Lutheran defenders. But the orthodoxy of Andreæ himself is now in question. Recent studies by Roland Edighoffer and Donald Dickson directly implicate Andreæ in anti-clerical and spiritual ideas expressed in the Rosicrucian literature.²² Andreæ’s circle touched, among others, the influential Danish aristocrat and theologian, Holger Rosenkrantz, whose influence on Danish students of theology in the first decades of the seventeenth century is well documented.²³

- 21 Repo 1999: 66: ‘Eine ähnliche Sicht von den inneren und äusseren Sternen und von dem himmlischen Einfluss wie sie in der anonymen *Astrologia theologizata* (1617) vorliegt, scheint deutlich im Hintergrund von einigen Textstücken der Werke Arndts zu stehen.’ Repo’s juxtapositions of these ideas suggests that Arndt might be the author of the 1617 *Astrologia theologizata*, which would bring Arndt’s authorship into close contact with Weigelian ideas, but proof is lacking. On inner and outer stars as links between terrestrial astronomy (alchemy) and celestial astronomy in the work of Tycho and Severinus, see Shackelford 2004: pp. 72–5; 168–70.
- 22 Ronald Edighoffer (2005) and Donald R. Dickson (1996a) regard Andreæ as author and collaborator of heterodox Rosicrucian treatises rather than as an orthodox Lutheran thinker and writer. In his *The Tessera of Antilia: Utopian Brotherhoods and Secret Societies in the Early Seventeenth Century* (1998: 80–8), Dickson summarizes Andreæ’s intellectual trek from author of Rosicrucian tracts to defensive rejection of the false Rosicrucians in the wake of public reaction to the early treatises, but finds that despite his public satires, which gave the appearance of denying the Brotherhood, ‘Andreæ simply continued his utopian projects with many of the same friends who had a hand in hatching the Rosicrucian fable, later giving more formal status to the *Civitas Solis* through his 1619 tract [*Turris Babel*]’ (p. 88). These recent interpretations of Andreæ provide a corrective to John Warwick Montgomery (1973), who regards him as a fairly orthodox Lutheran pastor rather than as an esoteric.
- 23 On Rosenkrantz and his importance for Danish theology, see Andersen 1896 and Glebe-Møller 1966.

Johann Arndt and Johan Valentine Andreæ—Rosicrucian Brothers as Well as Chemical Brothers?

J. V. Andreæ shared with Arndt a background in Paracelsian medical alchemy. His father had been both clergyman and alchemist, and after his death J. V. Andreæ's mother was appointed court apothecary to Herzog Friederich in Tübingen, so Andreæ grew up amid the processes he would describe in *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*, a Rosicrucian spiritual and alchemical allegory (Dickson 1996a: 763–4).²⁴ This superficial similarity in their backgrounds and career paths manifests a deeper sympathy between their intellectual developments.

Andreæ's authorship of the *The Chemical Wedding* (1616) is well known but has been interpreted as only incidental to the Rosicrucian literature. His role in composing the *Fama fraternitatis* (1614) and *Confessio fraternitatis* (1615), regarded as the manifestos of the would-be Rosicrucian Brotherhood, has only recently come to light.²⁵ Roland Edighoffer (2005: 74) implicates Andreæ directly in the composition of the *Confessio*, which he thinks was a collaboration between Andreæ and Tobias Hess, and considers him one of several contributors to the *Fama*. Hess's contemporary at Tübingen, Christoph Besold, was another member of Andreæ's circle, as was the Paracelsian Benedict Figulus. Well read in Paracelsian and Hermetic literature, Besold is reported to have

24 On *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616) as an allegorical statement of the power chemistry over nature, see Newman 2004. Edighoffer (2005: 72) notes that 'Andreæ found a model' in Arndt's *Von wahrem Christentum* and published extracts from it that he had translated into Latin in Strasbourg, ca. 1615. In 1619 Andreæ 'applauded Arndt's emphasis on the necessity for Christians to actually lead their lives in accord with the faith they professed' in his book *Mythologia christiana* and dedicated his *Description of the Republic of Christianopolis* to Johann Arndt.

25 Dickson (1996a: 762) notes the pioneering work of Brecht (1977) and Edighoffer (1981, 1987) in determining Andreæ's involvement with the Rosicrucian tracts. Although published in 1616, the *Chemical Wedding* is thought by Edighoffer (2005: 74) to date to 1603–5, on the basis of Andreæ's autobiographical writings, placing it exactly in the period that produced the earliest Rosicrucian treatises. See also Dickson 1996a: 784–5, 787. The dating is based on Andreæ's bibliographic diary and autobiography, and Dickson finds no indication that the text was revised after its 1605 draft. See also Kahn 2001: esp. p. 238, which also reflects the scholarship of Carlos Gilly in the matter of the dating of the early Rosicrucian tracts.

abandoned Lutheran orthodoxy after Johann Arndt's *Vom wahren Christentum* changed his basic outlook on religion (Dickson 1996a: 771).

There are differing opinions as to how early the manifestos were drafted and by whom, but Dickson (1996a: 767, 786–8) dates Andreæ's collaboration in drafting the *Fama* to 1607 and located it in the student intellectual milieu of the University of Tübingen, which he describes as 'fueled by apocalyptic-chiliastic ideas and theosophical-hermetic ideas' during Andreæ's student years. If the ideological basis of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood was not wholly Andreæ's invention, at least the name Rosenkreutz itself was his creation, and the characteristic Rosicrucian symbolism of the rose and cross were derived from the Andreæ family coat of arms, which in turn had been based on Martin Luther's.

Andreæ's expression of the desire for a further reformation of society under the leadership of a religious-scientific brotherhood was a serious utopian vision that he expressed as a literary fiction in these and other treatises, but he also sought to organize an actual Christian brotherhood of the elect, which would be administered by a steering committee of twelve select men, who would oversee its renewal of Lutheran society.²⁶ Looking beyond the radical and politically disastrous Rosicrucian manifestos, we can see the idealizations for such a society referred to variously in his correspondence as the *Societas Christiana* or *Civitas Solis* and described in his publications *Christianopolis* (1619), *Christianæ societatis imago* (1619, 1620), and *Christiani amoris dextera porrecta* (1620, 1621), which were widely distributed. According to a letter Andreæ wrote to Herzog August of Lüneburg in 1642, he had proposed the brotherhood outlined in these treatises as an alternative to the more radical vision of the Rosicrucian manifestos, owing to the strong, negative reaction the manifestos had generated. Dickson (1996a: 773–5) interprets this letter to mean that Andreæ had disavowed the earlier Rosicrucian manifestos as a *ludibrium* and *fictitia*, objects of derision, and that Andreæ should therefore be seen as a satirist or social critic rather than a would-be founder of a secret society.

However, Andreæ's letter, written more than thirty years after the composition of the Rosicrucian manifestos, can also be interpreted as revealing his persistence in promoting a real brotherhood along the lines laid out in the Rosicrucian writings, but now toned down and publicly

26 Dickson (1996a: 771, n. 35) mentions Hess as one of the 12 members of Andreæ's *Societas Christiana* as listed in his letter to Herzog August, 27 June 1642.

distanced from the Rosicrucian Brotherhood as a practical matter. In this he succeeded, as is evident from his long reputation as an orthodox Lutheran. Dickson (1996a: 775) speaks also to this interpretation when he notes that if the men on Andreæ's list of members of the Civitas Solis—including Hess, Besold, and Adami—can be identified as authors of the Rosicrucian manifestos, then the Rosicrucian fable can be regarded as the first phase of the development of Andreæ's model Christian brotherhood.²⁷ Indeed, members of this circle colluded with Andreæ in composing the early Rosicrucian literature. Andreæ later admitted that he and Besold had advocated the Rosicrucian reforms and proposed a brotherhood to unite 'a certain number of orthodox Lutherans' under the leadership of Herzog August, but that the onset of the Thirty Years War made its realization impossible (Dickson 1996a: 776–7).²⁸ However, a letter written much later to Herzog August (1642) and references in a funeral oration that Andreæ wrote show that his plans for a brotherhood had not changed, but were kept private in order to preserve his reputation in orthodox times.

In the best known and rather toned down version of his Christian utopia, *Christianopolis*, Andreæ envisioned social reform to be within the Lutheran tradition and along the Pietistic lines suggested by Johann Arndt, to whom he dedicated the work (Dickson 1996a: 781). This dedication should be taken as a token of Arndt's influence not only on Andreæ, but on the entire circle of students associated with Hess at Tübingen, and perhaps also of Andreæ's expectation that Arndt would approve and support his utopian ideals. Although a network of prudent anonymity obscures the full nature and extent of the Rosicrucian discussions, recent studies suggest that Arndt and Andreæ may have been Rosicrucian brothers as well as chemical brothers.

27 Dickson (1996b: 18–19) identifies Johannes Saubert, who studied at Tübingen 1612–14, as a member of the early *Societas Christiana* (1613–19), along with Daniel Schwenter (p. 21), and a founding member of the *Unio Christiana* in 1628.

28 Dickson translates Andreæ's 1642 funeral oration for his friend Wilhelm Wense, whom he identifies as a collaborator in his plans for the brotherhood. It is of interest that among those men he listed as agreeing to the plan was Johan Kepler.

True Christianity: Paracelsian Alchemy, Mystical Union, and Spiritual Rebirth

Arndt's reading of the *Theologia Deutsch*, the classic of medieval German mysticism, brought about a reorientation in his thinking in the middle 1590s. Luther had trod this ground before him and had reacted similarly to the German Theology, before the needs of *realpolitik* encouraged the magisterial reforms that shaped Lutheran doctrine and hardened church discipline. It was Luther's 1518 edition that Arndt now re-edited and published in 1597, with an introduction bemoaning the disputes that characterized Lutheran Dogmatics in the late sixteenth century.²⁹ Arndt had himself taken part in doctrinal controversy, but now his writings turned away from disputation and toward practical Christian piety, which would become the hallmark of his mature teaching. His edition of *Theologia Deutsch* was reprinted along with *Imitatio Christi* in 1605, the same year he published the first book of *Vom wahren Christentum*, which reflects the esotericism of these earlier texts. His preface to the 1606, corrected edition of this first book announced his plans to publish four books in all, which he finally did in 1610. In this form, Arndt's work was republished many times before he died in 1621 and would circulate in the seventeenth century (Pleijel 1938: 322).³⁰

- 29 Oberman 1979: xv–xvi: 'In 1597 Arndt found this precious volume somewhere all dusted over just as Luther had found it some eighty years before. Arndt's writing career and the direction of his thought take a new turn with his re-edition of the "German Theology" in Halberstadt 1597.' Oberman attributes the idea that Arndt's reading of the *Theologia Deutsch* marked a crucial turning point in the development of his Pietistic theology to Wilhelm Koepf (1912: 24).
- 30 The editor's introduction to Arndt 1968 (pp. 15–17) relates that book I (1605) was criticized for unorthodoxy, and that Arndt's attempt to have books two through four printed were foiled by censors, in part because of concerns about Arndt's use of Weigel's ideas about prayer. He was finally able to publish all four after he moved to Eisleben. Arndt's ideas evoked opposition soon after they were published between 1605 and 1610, and *Vom wahren Christentum* continued to be openly criticized by contemporary German theologians in the decade following. In response, he defended these ideas in several short tracts and letters, which he organized as a fifth and sixth book of his masterwork. Cf. Erb 1979: 5. For details of the controversies aroused by Arndt's book, Erb refers to Wilhelm Koepf (1959: 67–143). The sixth book, which Arndt dedicated in 1620, comprises three parts, the first of which contains short defences of the chapters of the first three books, implying that criticisms that had been leveled against him mainly concerned the contents of these books, rather than Book Four. Arndt 1979: 275.

German theologians openly criticized Arndt's ideas soon after they were published. He responded in several short tracts and letters defending *the first three books*, implying that the objections to his theology mainly concerned the contents of these, rather than Book Four. Whatever Danish orthodox censors found objectionable or were afraid would arouse controversy must mainly have been in the first three books, because publication of these was long delayed. What was it that seemed so heterodox, and how did Book Four make it to the press?

In the first paragraph of the introduction to Book One, Arndt (1979: 21) announced the main message of his spiritual teaching: 'If we are to become new creatures by faith, we must live in accordance with the new birth. In a word, Adam must die, and Christ must live, in us. It is not enough to know God's word; one must also practice it in a living, active manner.' Arndt's plea for the true Christian to live a Christian life, to imitate Christ, followed upon the venerable German theological tradition of *imitatio Christi*, but, as is evident even in this passage, it was framed in the Gnostic language of *unio mystica*, the mysterious union of the believer with God by starving the worldly flesh and fanning the divine spark within. Arndt frequently stated this core idea—that before union with Christ can be achieved, the Adamic man must perish—elsewhere in *Vom wahren Christentum*, and if Arndt were interpreted by contemporaries to be teaching divine transformation, his orthodoxy would be at risk.

Esoteric and Exoteric Alchemy: Gnostic Union in *Vom wahren Christentum*

One of the touchstones of orthodoxy is the nature of the relationship between Christian believers as human beings and the divine. The main Christian confessions are unanimous in condemning the actual attainment of human unity with God in this life, which runs counter to traditional interpretations of salvation and carries the dangerous consequence of antinomianism—the elevation of the divinized individual above all temporal law. Such exaltation carries with it a threat to social and political order and has been opposed by the dominant organized forms of Christianity in the West. For Arndt, mystical union constituted a spiritual rebirth, which enables the believer to attain power over both terrestrial and celestial nature, an idea that is common to Paracelsian notions about the powers of the illuminated adept. This conception of the adept's or magician's ability to transcend the fallen condition of man

and wield divine creative powers is itself a kind of exaltation and constitutes a problem for orthodox Lutherans.

Arndt was schooled in Paracelsian medicine and rumored to be an adept, one who had prepared the Philosophers's Stone. This accomplishment was commonly regarded as an exemplary indication of the chemical practitioner's purity and piety, rewarded by grace. Therefore, when he likens rebirth to metallic transmutation, we must suppose that he was well informed about the theory and practice behind this analogy and also cognizant of the long history of the association of *in vitro* exoteric processes with esoteric *in vivo* transmutations of the soul. Matti Repo notes that Arndt made explicit comparison of rebirth to metallic transmutation both in a letter to Erasmus Wolfart in 1599 and in his anonymous commentary on Khunrath's illustrations.³¹ Arndt's phrasing in his letter to Wolfart describes Christ as projected onto the base Christian, transforming him to divinity:

Besehet die Wiedergebuhr der *Metallen*; also müssen alle natürliche Menschen wiedergebohren werden, das ist, mit einem Himmlichen geiste *tingiret*, erneuert, gereinigt und verherrlicht, immer mehr und mehr von Tage zu Tage, von einer Klarheit in die andere, als vom Geiste des Herren, wie S. Paulus herrlich redet, das wird eben so wol wesentlich Fleisch und Blut in dem Menschen, gleich wie die *Tinctur* ein neu Wesen giebt, nicht eine neue Eigenschafft allein: Ich muß so wol Christi Fleisch und Blut in mir haben, als Adams Fleisch und Blut, das heisset ein neues Geschöpfe wesentlicher weise; und nicht allein werden wir des wesentlichen Fleisches *Christi* theilhaftig, son-

31 Repo 1999: 67–8: ‘In einem anonymen Brief an *Erasmus Wolfart* aus dem Jahr 1599 vergleicht er die geistliche Wiedergeburt eines Menschen mit der erwarteten Verwandlung der Metalle in alchemistischen Prozessen. . . . Arndt sagt darin, daß der Heilige Geist einen Menschen *tingiret*, d.h. tauft und ihm ein neues Wesen schenkt. Der Mensch wird erneuert gleich wie unedles Metall, das in eine entsprechende alchemistische Tinktur getaucht wird, ein ganz anderes, edles Metall wird. In der Wiedergeburt wird ein Mensch der göttlichen Natur Christi teilhaftig (vgl. 2. Petr. 1, 4). Das nennt Arndt “dass größte Geheimnis”. Auch im Kommentar zum *Amphitheatro Khunraths* bezeichnet Arndt die alchemistischen Verwandlungen als “großes Geheimnis”. Diesmal schreibt er von einem ‘astralen Feuer’, das die Materie des philosophischen Steins verwandeln kann. Eine *transmutation* findet statt, und der Stein bekommt ein neues Wesen.’ Repo cites Arndt 1676: 13 and Arndt 1608: 121.

dern auch durch ihn der Göttlichen Nature, wie S. Petrus spricht: Daß uns also *Christus* seine Menschliche und Göttliche Natur mittheilet; Dieß ist das größte Geheimnüß. (Arndt 1676: 13, quoted by Repo 1999: 68, n. 34.)

This strikes me as more than analogy. It is a close identification of material transmutation and Christian rebirth as twin aspects of what for the Christian alchemist was the *mysterium magnum*, referred to in this letter as 'das größte Geheimnüß'.

Arndt's repeated call for the true Christian to mortify the flesh and deny his Adamic self, so that his Christian identity as image of God can emerge unfettered, besides seeming dangerously Gnostic, finds particular resonance in the esoteric alchemical tradition surrounding him. In particular, the heterodox Lutheran minister Valentin Weigel compared the 'killing' of the impure metal in the alchemical work to the killing of the Adamic self in the great work of spiritual rebirth (Repo 1999: 69–70 refers to Weigel 1967: 73). It is no wonder that Arndt's critics saw him as a Weigelian. Even if we assume that Arndt truly succeeded in keeping the ideas that he revealed to Wolfart and in the anonymous commentary on Khunrath's illustrations from public scrutiny in the early part of the century, it must be admitted that his Gnostic dualism and teaching of rebirth, when viewed in the context of his known background in Paracelsian medicine and his reputed expertise in transmutational alchemy, would be cause enough to suspect him of heterodoxy.

Arndt's Reception in Denmark

When the Danish translation of Book Four of Arndt's *Von wahren Christentum* was translated into Danish by Peder Nielsen Gelstrup and published in 1618 under the title *Liber Naturæ, eller Natvrspeyel*, it was dedicated to Christian IV's lover, Kirsten Munk, as was the Danish edition of *Paradiesgärtlein* seven years later.³² This suggests that she and other

32 Arvidsson 1999: 29: Peder Nielsen Gelstrup lived with Resen while he was a student and, with Resen's backing, he studied abroad and returned to a professorship in Latin, then Greek and then Logic at the University of Copenhagen, beginning 1614. This Danish translation, *Liber Naturæ, eller Natvrspeyel*, was the first edition of Arndt published in Scandinavia.

members of the Danish nobility, possibly Christian IV himself, were interested in Arndt's theology and were taking an active role in making it more accessible to the Danish reading public.³³ And yet, more than seventy years would pass between Gelstrup's edition of Book Four and the first Danish edition of books one through three, which first appeared in print in Samuel Jenssøn Ild's 1690 edition.³⁴ A similar situation existed in Sweden, where Arndt's book was read avidly soon after it came out in German, especially among the upper class, but was not available in a printed Swedish edition until 1647, when it then proved very popular among Pietists.³⁵ Given the trend toward piety among the laity, and the eventual, overwhelming popularity of Arndt's books among Scandinavians, it is reasonable to suppose that there was a demand for Arndt's Pietistic teaching. Why, then, did it take so long to publish all four books in Danish, when there is evidence that manuscript translations were available already in the first years of Bishop Resen's leadership?

- 33 Schröder 1959: 423 mentions that books one through three were translated into Danish, a manuscript copy of which survives in the handwriting of a Danish Noblewoman. Three such manuscripts survive in Karen Brahe's Library (A VI 15, 16, 17), according to Anne Riising (1956: 41–2). These translations are all credited to the noblewoman Karen Bille and presumably stem from a common original. Two are dated 1657 and the third identified as a copy made by Birgitte Friis (another noblewoman) in 1667. The collection as a whole bears witness to the role of these women in collecting, copying, translating, and circulating books, manuscripts, and letters that were unavailable in print. Valberg Lindgärde (2002: 272) also notes the important role played by Swedish noble women in the translation of spiritual literature.
- 34 Jenssøn Ild chose Spener's edition as the basis for the new Danish edition rather than the earlier manuscript translations, and this edition played up Arndt's orthodoxy while seeking to distance him from the complaint that he was heterodox, even Weigelian. According to Arvidsson (1999: 31) all four books were translated into Danish 80 years previously and circulated among Resen's friends in manuscript. Arvidsson (1990: 9, n. 3) says that the early existence of the manuscripts is mentioned by Ludvig Winslow in his introduction to his 1706 edition of Daniel Dyke's *Nosce te ipsum*, and that Karen Bille had translated all four books into Danish, but that they were never published.
- 35 Montgomery 2002: 64: 'I Sverige blev Johann Arndt långt mer läst än andra uppbyggelseförfattare. . . . Arndt lästes och älskades redan på 1610-talet, inte minst i högadliga kretsar.' The first printed Swedish translation of *Vom wahren Christentum* was the 1647 edition of Stephan Muræus, which he dedicated to Queen Christina. See Pleijel 1938: 325–6.

The reluctance of the orthodox Lutheran church authorities suggests that they were concerned about the effect the German Pietist's esoteric ideas might have on the laity, concerns that in Denmark were eventually mitigated by Philipp Jakob Spener's legitimization of piety within orthodoxy. If Johann Arndt's theology was suspected of heterodoxy in the initial decades after its publication in 1610, then the argument that his profession of a Paracelsian cosmology *de facto* legitimized Paracelsianism in the eyes of Denmark's orthodox Lutherans is considerably weakened. But how, then, can we explain the anomalous Danish publication of Book Four?

Book Four is a kind of hexameron, focusing on the natural world as God's creation and reflecting the 'Mosaic physics' that was popular at that time. Bengt Arvidsson thinks that Arndt's work was of interest in Scandinavia because it addressed both theological and natural-philosophical issues. Certainly it would have appealed to Resen's colleague and behind-the-scenes opponent Kort Aslakssøn for this reason, and clearly to Holger Rosenkrantz, too.³⁶ Rosenkrantz knew Arndt personally. He met him in Celle in 1616 and they talked long into the night on religious matters. Since Arndt was a member of the Lutheran priesthood, the fact that Rosenkrantz would personally meet with him and engage him in discussion of theology is not surprising. Rosenkrantz, too, had studied theology among orthodox German Lutheran professors early on and was already well known for his erudition. What is less clear is Rosenkrantz's sympathy for the heterodox aspects of Arndt's theology, which were inspirational to Andreæ and others connected with Marburg and the Rosicrucian debut.

Rosenkrantz was implicated in the controversy after a young German physician dedicated his book defending Arndt's theology to him.³⁷ This was enough to cause Rosenkrantz to be suspected of heterodoxy by his former mentor and friend, the German theologian Daniel Cramer. To

36 Arvidsson 1999: 30: 'Ich glaube, dass wir diese erste Ausgabe Arndts in Skandinavien von einem gemeinsamen theologischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Gesichtspunkt aus sehen müssen.' Arndt's contemporary Cort Aslakssøn, junior to Resen on the theology faculty at the University of Copenhagen, also adopted an account of Genesis that formed the basis for his understanding of a physics that was grounded in and compatible with Holy Scripture. See Shackelford 1998: 291–312.

37 See Glebe-Møller 1963–5: 306–18, who identifies Breler as a young physician.

defend himself and clear his name, Rosenkrantz wrote a long apologetic letter to Cramer in 1622/3, in which he dismissed the charges that he was a Weigelian or Rosicrucian (Glebe-Møller 1963–5: 308–9). However, Jens Glebe-Møller (1963–5: 312) has studied this letter and concluded that Rosenkrantz was not forthcoming to Cramer with all the details of his support for Arndt's theology, which may indeed have had a decisive effect on Rosenkrantz' own spiritual 'awakening' around 1598–9. It is easy to see why Arndt's religious writing might appeal to Rosenkrantz, since the two men were in some sense on a parallel spiritual journey. But here Glebe-Møller (1963–5: 310) sees a distinct and crucial difference between Rosenkrantz and Arndt: Rosenkrantz believed doctrine could be reformed through reading of Scripture, while Arndt was skeptical of doctrinal policing by any organized authority.³⁸

Rosenkrantz's communication with Arndt and perhaps Andreæ and other would-be members of a Rosicrucian-style Christian brotherhood—including theologian Johann Gerhard and physician Daniel Sennert—raises some interesting questions.³⁹ Did he maintain contact with the radicals from Tübingen and Marburg in the years after most of them had outwardly conformed to orthodoxy, as had Arndt and Andreæ? In this regard, it is interesting that when Joachim Morsius, a Rosicrucian publicist who was excited about Andreæ's plan to form a brotherhood, distributed twelve copies of the printed tracts in which Andreæ outlined his plans to twelve men that he or Andreæ thought would be interested, Holger Rosenkrantz was one! (Glebe-Møller 1963–5: 314, 317.)⁴⁰

- 38 Therefore, despite the fact that Rosenkrantz was not wholly open about his interpretations of Arndt's theology and his dealings with Beler and others who found Lutheran orthodoxy to be stifling, Møller sees Rosenkrantz as fundamentally opposed to the mysticism of the Weigelians and Rosicrucians and regards him as a traditional scriptural theologian.
- 39 Glebe-Møller 1963–5: 314: 'Men Andreæ, som iøvrigt var ven og beundrer af Arndt, nøjedes ikke med at holde offentligheden for nar. Han søgte selv flere gange at danne et *kristent* broderskab, et *societas christiana*, som skulle råde bod på tidens brøst, en art kristen udfornning af rosencreutzernes foregivne broderskab. . . . Blandt de mænd, som var udset til at deltagte i broderskabet træffer vi på Arndt, Johan Gerhard og medicineren Daniel Sennert – alle tre mænd, med hvem Rosenkrantz stod i forbindelse.'
- 40 Andreæ probably wrote these treatises, *Christianæ Societatis Imago* and *Christiani Amoris Dextera porrecta*, sometime around 1620; Glebe-Møller 1963–5: 317: 'Illustris quondam Senator Regni Danici ac Regis Consiliarius, Olegerus Rosencrantzius, qui quanti hoc sanctum institutum fecerit, peculiari libro testa-

Glebe-Møller (1963–5: 318) speculates that this may have happened as late as 1632, when Rosenkrantz signed Morsius' travel album. By this time Rosenkrantz's orthodoxy was itself finally coming under scrutiny by Resen's successor, the even more orthodox Jesper Brochmand.

Concluding Remarks

The most recent historical literature on Johann Arndt and Johan Valentin Andreæ persuasively argues that Arndt's thought took a decidedly Pietistic turn just before the turn of the century, about the same time that Holger Rosenkrantz quietly began to lean away from Lutheran orthodoxy and embrace a more personal and mystical piety. By 1605, when Arndt was beginning to write and publish *Vom wahren Christentum*, he was intimately involved with an informal group of like-minded Lutherans, including Andreæ, who were dissatisfied with the rigidity of orthodoxy. This was a group that sought a further reformation along mystical, spiritual lines, guided by an esoteric epistemology of personal illumination for the pure and pious, what the alchemists had called the gift of God. These dissenters variously embraced elements of Paracelsian religion and chemical cosmology and expressed it in a call for a general reformation along the lines sketched out in the Rosicrucian literature. Elements of Arndt's influential work reflect his engagement both with German mysticism and with Paracelsian cosmological concepts that, for many Paracelsians, were an integral part of Paracelsian religion.

Despite the efforts of Andreæ and Arndt to maintain a careful distance from the enthusiasms of their 'Weigelian', Paracelsian, and Rosicrucian fellows, both were tainted by their sympathies for a further reformation. Andreæ had to back pedal publicly, deplored the extremes of his youth and satirizing the Rosicrucian dreams he previously professed in relative secrecy; Arndt also succeeded in maintaining his place within the Lutheran church, although not without controversy and the protection of aristocratic friends. Although he escaped serious censure and managed to print his books in German, the orthodox Lutheran authorities

tus, cuius procul dubio apud filios et Henricum Ernesti Ms. exemplar extabit.' Møller notes that Rosenkrantz was pleased by these plans and supposedly said so in a manuscript book that should have been in the possession of one of his sons or Henrik Ernst (a disciple who was professor at Sorø), but which is not known today.

of Scandinavia were reluctant to publish them in Danish and Swedish translations, which they had the power to control, and this points to the perceived dangers of Arndt's esoteric religious doctrines, which were part and parcel of his Paracelsian vision of the macrocosm.

If this assessment of the situation is at all accurate, then Danish academic and aristocratic support for translation of Arndt's *Vier bücher vom wahren Christentum* and the publication of Book Four in 1618, the year before Ole Worm publicly condemned the Rosicrucians in speech at the University of Copenhagen, reveals the very moment when strict Lutheran orthodoxy was being imposed on the freer exploration of faith that characterized Philippist leadership during the first fifteen years or so of the new century. Afterwards, further spread of Arndt's Pietism in Scandinavia was publicly discouraged during a period of orthodox entrenchment, during which Paracelsian religion and with it Paracelsian cosmology were rejected in Copenhagen, and Holger Rosenkrantz's Arndtian religious views parted ways from the orthodoxy of Resen and Brochmand. Christianopolis would have to wait.

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JUSSI SOHLBERG

The Esoteric Milieu in Finland Today

As in the other Scandinavian countries, so in Finland an exceptionally high percentage of the population belongs to a religious community. Today, about 82 per cent of Finns are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. However, the picture of the Finnish religious and spiritual landscape is more complex than it may at first appear.

The project 'Religions in Finland' was started in 2003. The project is a joint-effort of the Church Research Institute and the Research Network for the Study of New Religious Movements. The aim is to create an electronic database for describing, mapping and analysing religious associations and communities in Finland (active ones and also those that no longer exist).

In August 2007 there were 777 communities and organizations listed in the database. They are classified into ten categories representing religious traditions according to their historical and cultural background. There are 29 organizations classified under the category Western esotericism. In this article I will present a general overview of the major and recently founded esoteric groups in Finland. Most of these groups are registered associations (the abbreviation *ry* stands for 'registered association').*

Several statistical and sociological surveys of religiosity in modern Finland have been carried out. They revealed at least the following aspects that are typical in Finnish religiosity (and these aspects apply to many other West European countries too).

Firstly, religion has become an increasingly private matter for people. Secondly, people's religious views and practices are not determined solely by membership of a religious community. Thirdly, religious views

* The figures indicate the more or less official number of members in each group. Besides them, there are people in most groups who are involved in the activities of the groups even though they are not actual members. The number of members is estimated by the communities themselves (in 2007).

and practices are often eclectic. They can be influenced by many new and old traditions from various forms of Eastern meditation and yoga practice to New Age healing practices and spiritualism, for example.

It often said that the religious movements providing an alternative to the Evangelical Lutheran Church have landed in Finland in two phases. The first one was from the late twentieth century onward. The second one started in the early 1970s, when many yoga and meditation traditions were introduced into Finland. The countercultural ideology was also linked with experimental alternative spiritual practices. But after this second phase also, dozens of new religious movements have arrived in Finland (Ketola 2003: 57–62, 81–5). Most groups and organizations have not officially registered as religious communities, despite having at least a religiously oriented background.

The Theosophical Society (Teosofinen seura ry)

It is fair to say that modern occultism came to Finland mainly through the Theosophical movement. The Finnish Theosophical Society was founded in 1907 (re-founded in 1933). There had also been some theosophical activity before that. One of the founding members of the society was Mr Pekka Ervast (1875–1934). He has been without doubt one of the most important persons within the Finnish esoteric movement.

Despite not ever having more than a few thousand members, the Theosophical Society has had a significant influence and impact. The Theosophical Society introduced non-Christian religious ideas and concepts to a wider public. The Society's role in the construction of an alternative religious culture cannot be underestimated in Finland, either. Today there are about 450 members in the Theosophical Society (www.uskonnot.fi—Teosofinen seura ry).

A prominent member of the International Theosophical Society, Charles Leadbeater founded the Liberal Catholic Church in 1916. Already in 1919 there was a study group in the Helsinki area that anticipated the birth of the Liberal Catholic Church in Finland. Then, in 1929, *Vapaa katolinen kirkko Suomessa* (The Liberal Catholic Church of Finland) was registered as a religious community. Today it has about 150 members. From the very beginning, the Theosophical influence has been strong and many members also have affiliations to theosophy today (www.uskonnot.fi—Suomen vapaa katolinen kirkko).

Christosophia (Kristosofia)

A purely Finnish theosophical offshoot is the so-called Christosophia (Kristosofia, Wisdom of Christ). The movement has its origins in the spiritual experiences of Mr J. R. Hannula (1873–1956). He was an active theosophist and a great admirer of Mr Ervast.

He started proclaiming that Ervast was a great spiritual teacher equal to the Buddha and Christ. The society especially emphasizes the ethical principles that Ervast formulated and which were based on the Sermon on the Mount. The Finnish Rosicrucian Society prohibited Hannula from continuing his teachings about Ervast. In 1940, Hannula and another theosophist founded a society to spread their own version of theosophy. The society was registered in 1966 by the name *Kristosofinen kirjallisuusseura ry* (The Christosophical Literature Association). It organizes public lectures and also distributes material about Christosophia. Today the society has about 80 members. The group called *Ihmisyyden tunnustajat* (Confessors of Humanity) was founded in 1979 to promote the Christosophical and Rosicrucian (Ervast) ideas and lifestyle. Today they comprise three communities in which altogether 45 persons are living (www.uskonnot.fi—Kristosofinen kirjallisuusseura ry).

Another theosophical group is *Alice A. Bailey -seura ry* (The Alice A. Bailey Association), founded in 2005. The society has about 20 members. It has been involved actively in the project of translating Bailey's books into Finnish (www.uskonnot.fi—Alice A. Bailey seura ry).

Anthroposophy, Christian Community, Parapsychology, Spiritualism, Via Society, and the Summit Lighthouse

The Theosophical Society invited Rudolf Steiner to give several lectures in Helsinki. Steiner visited in Finland in 1912–13 and some Finnish people joined the newly founded Anthroposophical Society in 1913. In the same year the first study group was formed in the Helsinki area. During the 1930s there arose some criticism and negative attitudes towards Anthroposophy within the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Suomen antroposofinen seura (The Anthroposophical Society of Finland) was founded in 1923. Due to the language conflict between Finnish and Swedish, Finnish-speaking people wanted to have their own branch of the society. This was founded in 1924. Nowadays this organization is known by the name *Suomen antroposofinen liitto ry* (The Anthroposophical League of Finland). During the 1970s the anthroposophical

movement was more active and visible than before. New local groups were founded in five big towns. A very important phase was in 1980, when the *Snellman-korkeakoulu* (Snellman College, named after a significant Finnish nineteenth-century politician and philosopher) saw the light. It is a private college that offers seminars, courses and lectures in humanist studies, psychology and Anthroposophy.

Today the Anthroposophical movement has about 800 members. Within the league, there is also a Free School of Spiritual Science. This branch consists of groups that study the esoteric teachings of Steiner under the group leader. Only a minority of people who put their children in the Walldorff School (Steiner schools) are members of the Anthroposophical League of Finland (www.uskonnot.fi—Suomen Antroposofinen liitto).

The Christian Community is the ecclesiastical body of Anthroposophy representing a form of esoteric Christianity that derives from the teachings of Steiner. The Christian Community in Finland was founded in the late 1960s. It has about 80 members, but the participants in their services number a few hundreds. The society was registered as a religious community in 1969 (www.uskonnot.fi—Kristiyhteisö Suomessa).

Parapsychological research arrived in Finland at the turn of the twentieth century. It came along with theosophy and spiritualism and was linked with *fin-de-siècle* occultism. In Finland the Parapsychological Research Association (Swedish-speaking) was founded in 1907. In its early days there were also some academics who had an interest in the experimental studies of spiritualist séances. The Finnish-speaking association was founded in 1938. In post-war Finland spiritualism and parapsychology gained more popularity. However, parapsychology failed to get the status of an academic discipline and it remained a deviant science. It can be clearly seen that since the 1960s the Parapsychological Research Association has become part of popular occultism and alternative spirituality and has started appealing to a wider audience, leaving the academic community behind. Today its main task is to organize public lectures (www.uskonnot.fi—Parapsykologinen tutkimusseura ry).

Spiritualism came to Finland along with parapsychology and the first spiritualist societies were founded in the early twentieth century. *Suomen spiritualistinen seura ry* (The Spiritualist Association of Finland) was founded in 1946. It has about 1,500 members today. Paranormal themes and also ideas of esotericism became more popular during the early 1970s. The magazine *Ultra* focussing on the paranormal has been very influential in the field of alternative spirituality since 1974. Despite having its main focus on the theme of UFOs and parapsychology it has

also often included topics of alternative spirituality and esotericism (*Suomen ufotutkijat ry*).

Via ry (The Via Association) originates from the personal experiences of two Finnish ladies with a background in theosophy and the Finnish Rosicrucianism. They formulated their own system of the Raja Yoga and positive thinking and started to promote a correspondence course in 1955. Their teaching also shows influences from the Western esoteric tradition. The Via Association was founded in 1977 and today has its own study centre, which offers study programmes focussed on various spiritual traditions and also some psychological subjects. It has been estimated that since the founding of the correspondence course, about 4,000 people have participated in the Raja Yoga correspondence courses. At the moment there are about 250 students involved in that course (www.uskonnot.fi—*Via ry*).

The Summit Lighthouse (better known internationally by the name the Church Universal & Triumphant) started its activities in Finland in 1976. *Helsingin Summit Lighthouse ry* (The Helsinki Summit Lighthouse) organizes services in the Helsinki area. There is also a society called *Nuoret mystikot ry* (The Young Mystics) that is based on the beliefs and teachings of the Church (www.uskonnot.fi—Helsingin Summit Lighthouse ry, *Nuoret mystikot ry*).

Rosicrucian Groups

There are two distinct modern Rosicrucian traditions in Finland. The first tradition consists of the Finnish branches of the international Rosicrucian orders. The second tradition is particular to Finland. This tradition has its origins in a schism within the Finnish Theosophical Society, and it is totally separate from the international orders.

The Antiquus Mysticus Ordo Rosae Crucis or AMORC spread to Scandinavia in the 1920s. The Finnish AMORC was extracted from the Scandinavian Grand Lodge in 1998 and initiated an independent administrative unit *Ruusuristin Veljeskunta AMORC-Suomi ry* (Rosicrucian Brotherhood AMORC-Finland). It operates as a Grand Lodge, although it does not officially have that status yet, due to the low number of members in Finland (less than 500).

It is difficult to estimate when AMORC received its first Finnish members, but it has been operating in Finland at least from the 1950s onward. The estimated number of members in AMORC-Finland today is about 200.

The second branch of the International Rosicrucian Order with activities in Finland is *Lectorium Rosicrucianum ry* or the International School of the Golden Rosycross, a society established in the Netherlands in 1932. The society began its activities in Finland in 1995 and it was officially registered in 1997. The number of Finnish members is very low at 21. A third branch of the International Rosicrucian Order operating in Finland is the Rosicrucian Order, or the Rose Cross Order, originally established in 1988. It has its headquarters in the Canary Islands. The Rose Cross Order was registered in Finland in 2002, but it does not seem to have any officially organized activities in Finland at the moment.

The Rosicrucian tradition particular to Finland is represented by The Finnish Rosicrucian Society (*Ruusu-Risti, Rosy-Cross*). The Society was established by Pekka Ervast (1875–1934), the former Secretary General of the Finnish Theosophical Society, in 1920. He left the Theosophical Society and established this Rosicrucian order to promote an occult interpretation of Jesus and his role as a spiritual guide for the whole of humanity. Many of the members of the Finnish Theosophical Society, and even some local lodges as a whole, joined this new society so that membership amounted to about 200 in the very beginning. Today the society has about 270 members.

The Finnish Rosicrucian Society (*Ruusu-Risti ry*)

The Finnish Rosicrucian Society, *Ruusu-Risti* (Rosy-Cross), was born due to a schism within the Finnish Theosophical Society. Its founder, Pekka Ervast did not accept Krishnamurti's authority as spiritual teacher and he also objected to the political activities of the Theosophical Society. Indeed, it defines itself as representing the original and theosophical inheritance of Helena Blavatsky. At the same time, Ervast had a strong experience of the spiritual presence of Christ in his life. He also sympathized with the ideas and worldview of the famous Russian author Leo Tolstoy. These took this Rosicrucian version of theosophy closer to Christianity and also to the international Rosicrucian orders.

The Finnish national epic *Kalevala* as a manifestation of the Finnish folk spirituality also plays an important role in the Finnish Rosicrucian Society.

Inside and in the core of the society there is the Inner School, which was organized and established by Pekka Ervast on the basis of Co-Freemasonry. The Inner School is organized into three different stages. In order to be accepted into the Inner School, one must be a member of

this Rosicrucian order and participate in an initiation ceremony organized every year at Easter. After this the applicant can ask the master of the Inner School to be accepted into the brotherhood.

Despite the early arrival of modern Rosicrucian orders to Finland and the development of an independent Finnish Rosicrucian tradition, interest in this movement has remained marginal. The initial success of the Finnish Rosicrucian society can be explained by a late burst of Romantic nationalism in Finland in the early decades of the twentieth century. This is mirrored in the way in which Pekka Ervast combined Christianity, theosophy and Finnish folk-traditions in his thought and writings. When the nationalistic movement lost its influence in the Finnish society and cultural environment, ideological movements and societies built on that—like Ruusu-Risti—soon became marginalized (Sjöblom & Sohlberg 2007).

The Order of International Co-Freemasonry Le Droit Humain Finnish Federation (Kansainvälinen Yhteis-Vapaamuurarijärjestö Le Droit Humain Suomen Liitto ry)

Co-Freemasonry came to Finland from Denmark. The first lodge was founded in 1920 by initiation of 20 persons. The aforementioned Mr Ervast was the leader of this organization. Practically all members were also active in the Theosophical Society, so initially the theosophical impact was strong. In the late 1920s Ervast wrote an initiation grade that was based on *Kalevala* mythology, the Kalevala rite. The International Headquarters accepted this rite for use. Co-Freemasonry grew rapidly and for this reason the International Headquarters allowed Finland to form its own National League of Co-Freemasonry in 1925. There had, however, been problems and tensions due to Mr Ervast's leadership and finally the International Headquarters expelled both Mr Ervast and his main opponent.

Compared to the movement's early days in Finland, today just a minority of lodges are inclined to theosophy. The total number of members is about 200 (www.uskonnot.fi—Kansainvälinen Yhteis-Vapaamuurarijärjestö Le Droit Humain – Suomen Liitto ry).

Neopaganism

Neopaganism arrived in Finland in the late 1970s through the Fellowship of Isis that promotes the Goddess spirituality. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the neopagan scene did not succeed in attracting many people (Hjelm & Sohlberg 2004: 9–10).

However, interest in neopaganism and different forms of ritual magic has re-emerged again since the mid 1990s. *Lehto – Luonnonuskontojen yhdistys ry* (Lehto – The Association of Nature Religions) was founded in 1998. It is an umbrella organization for people who practice some form of nature religion. Most of the members of Lehto are Wiccans. Lehto has about 90 members (www.uskonnot.fi—Lehto – luonnonuskontojen yhdistys ry). The group called *Wicca ry* was founded in 2000. It is loose network for traditionalist Wiccans (i.e. Gardnerians and Alexandrians) (www.uskonnot.fi—Wicca ry).

Pakanaverkko ry (The Finnish Pagan Network) was founded in 1999 in Turku. It is important to notice that compared to Lehto, Pakanaverkko also allows Satanists to be members of their organization. Pakanaverkko is also an umbrella organization including people from different esoteric and occult traditions: ritual magic, chaos magic, different forms of paganism from Asatru to shamanism and satanism. Pakanaverkko has about 130 members. Both societies have local groups for casual meetings and discussions. These societies have also organized some national events. The Neopagan organizations have been active in their relationships with the media. Even major newspapers have published articles about neopaganism and there have also been some programs on the radio and TV about it. It is interesting to find that neopaganism, as marginal as it is, has received quite a lot of media attention (www.uskonnot.fi—Pakanaverkko ry).

Pakanatieli ry (The Pagan Information Association) was founded in 2004. It consists of only the board members and its main task is to publish information on the association's website (www.uskonnot.fi—Pakanatieli ry).

Most Finnish pagans are orientated into different Wiccan traditions and most Wiccans identify themselves as eclectics, combining elements from different sources. Besides them, there are a few Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wiccans too. Most pagans seem to be solitary practitioners and to my knowledge there are only few covens in Finland.

According to the survey, which I did in 2004 with my colleague about Finnish Wiccans and pagans, most informants were young people (up to 25-year-olds) and almost three quarters of them were female (Hjelm

& Sohlberg 2004: 10–11). The general tendency seems still to be that most Wiccans are women who have not yet reached their 30s. According to the Pakanaverkko, most of their members are people between 20–30 years of age and 60 per cent are female (2004).

Alongside this form of Western neopaganism there are a few people whose aim it is to revive and reconstruct pre-Christian Finnish paganism. But this type of paganism has not gained as much popularity as Western neopaganism.

Shamanism is often connected to the original form of Finnish pre-Christian religion. This view is often held among academics, too. Speaking of neoshamanism, it is interesting to find, that an American anthropologist and founder of neoshamanism, Michael Harner, organized a workshop in Finland in 1980. Then, in 1994, *Shamaaniseura ry* (The Shamanic Centre of Finland) was founded. The society organizes workshops and distributes information about shamanism. There are also some individuals in the field of Finnish New Age spirituality who promote shamanism. This form of shamanism is often very eclectic. Several of Carlos Castaneda's books have been translated into Finnish. There is presently one group called *Kirkkaanvihreä* (The Bright Green) promoting physical and spiritual practices developed by Castaneda (www.uskonnot.fi—*Shamaaniseura ry*, *Kirkkaanvihreä ry*).

The group called *Wakka mysteeriokoulu* (The Wakka Mystery School), founded in 2004, is of purely Finnish origin. This group has created an interesting synthesis of pre-Christian Finnish religion and Western esotericism. They have their own initiation system with some Masonic influences. The group has 14 members (www.uskonnot.fi—*Wakka mysteeriokoulu*).

It is difficult to say what really is the precise number of neopagans in many other countries and the same is true of Finland. Lehto and Pakanaverkko altogether have about 250 members. It has been estimated that the total amount would be something between 500 and 1,000 persons. To my knowledge, 1,000 is not a number likely to reflect reality, but the number of neopagans has, however, been increasing little by little (Hjelm & Sohlberg 2004: 9–10).

Other Groups of Magical Religions

Occult groups like Temple of Set and Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) are small, but these groups have some international contacts. *Pohjan Neito Encampment – Finland* is an O.T.O. organization that was launched in

1997. Its main activity is providing basic information and some Finnish translations of Aleister Crowley's texts have been published. It also organizes first grade initiations or Minerva grade initiations. Some Finnish members occasionally travel to Sweden to participate in the Gnostic mass. There are about 25 members at the moment in the Finnish O.T.O. Thelema Publications has just recently published Crowley's *Book of Law* in Finnish (www.uskonnot.fi—Ordo Templi Orientis – Pohjan Neito Encampment).

The first Finnish member joined the Temple of Set in 1989. The local branch—or pylon as they call it—was founded in 1991 in Helsinki. Today all the members belong to the one national pylon, Lapponia pylon. Nowadays there are about 10 members in the Temple of Set (www.uskonnot.fi—Setin temppeli).

One of the newest occult groups (consisting of just few members) is the Star of Azazel founded last year. The fraternity describes itself as a theistic satanic fraternity. It is a solely Finnish organization with no direct international background, even though there are a few small theistic satanic organizations in the world. The Star of Azazel bases its philosophy on what they call theosophical Luciferianism. Their teachings are very different from the teachings of LaVey type of satanism, which they dismiss as unworthy because of its materialistic and hedonistic principles. The group seems to be very secretive and members are expected to leave other religious organizations and political parties. It is interesting that the group emphasises the ethical formulations of the Sermon on the Mount by the famous Finnish Rosicrucian and theosopher Mr Ervast (www.uskonnot.fi—Azazelin tähti).

The distribution of occult books is, however, quite widespread. Besides mainstream and special bookstores, there are also several Finnish internet bookstores specializing in occult and esoteric literature.

The internet bookstore *Athanaton* sells books from a wide range of esotericism and occultism such as: ritual magic, Golden Dawn, hermetic kabbalah, Thelema, Wicca, shamanism, Asatru and satanism. Another one is *Ixaxaar*, which almost solely sells and also publishes books, magazines, pamphlets and music about satanism, black magic, Luciferian witchcraft, Thelema and Setian philosophy. Ixaxaar distributes, for example, pamphlets of a minor satanic organization, the Order of Nine Angles.

A new publisher is also *Voimasana*. It has published a Finnish edition of LaVey's *Satanic Bible* in 2007. Voimasana has also published a book called *The Left Hand Path* (*Vasemman käden polku*) both in Finnish and English, which is about Setian systems of beliefs and practices.

New Age Spirituality

I will here take up a few points based on the supposed relationship between Western esotericism and New Age. As Wouter Hanegraaff, among others, has pointed out, New Age partly has its roots in Western esotericism. It can be seen as a secularised and psychological form of old esotericism. The complex field of New Age is a milieu in which ideas of esotericism are present at least to some extent, even though people seldom use the specific word 'esoteric' in New Age culture.

The concrete forms of the Finnish New Age spirituality can be seen clearly in the New Age magazines, seminars and fairs. So, it is the New Age milieu from which esoteric ideas spread to the larger audience instead of particular societies like AMORC. Themes and subjects such as messages from angelic entities, tarot symbolism, visualization techniques, use of crystals, and manipulation of universal energy are analogical to older practices in the Western esoteric and occult tradition.

The fair of alternative spirituality, *Hengen ja tiedon messut* (Spirit and Knowledge Fair) has been organised since 1983 (similar to the Mind, Spirit & Body Festival in the UK). The number of attendants at the fair organized in Helsinki has varied between 3,000 and 5,000 during the last few years. In the Helsinki area another fair was started in 1996 around the famous Finnish New Age magazine *Minä Olen* ('I Am' magazine). Similar fairs are also held in some other towns. The total distribution or print of the three most significant magazines that represent various degrees of New Age spirituality is about 63,000: *Voi hyvin* ('Well Being', distribution 47,000), *Minä Olen* (print 11,000), and *Ultra* (print 5,000) (Rajatiedon yhteistyö ry, Aikakauslehtien liitto ry).

Roughly speaking, the Finnish esoteric scene can be divided into two different streams. There is the fairly new esoteric culture that includes neopaganism and ritual magic in its different forms and organizations derived from these traditions. This stream of magical religions is rather secretive and underground in its nature, consisting of a loose network rather than highly organized societies. Message boards and chat forums are places where people share their ideas and meet more or less like-minded people. People who are interested in the magical religions are mostly young adults and the majority of them are solitary practitioners.

Then there is another kind of esoteric and occult culture that mainly consists of theosophy, Rosicrucianism, spiritualism and Anthroposophy and organizations derived from these traditions. Members of these movements are often middle-age people or senior citizens.

Most people have some kind of belief in a higher deity, but many have moved away from traditional Christian system of beliefs. Instead, these people prefer eclectic and fluid sets of beliefs, which they often describe as representing ‘spirituality’, not ‘religion’.

To sum up, it is fair to say that diverse occult and esoteric traditions are present in the Finnish religious culture. Actually, another article would be needed, if we were to take a closer look at the New Age spirituality in Finland and on what scale the ideas of esotericism are present there. The total membership of specific esoteric and occult groups is just a few thousand. Esoteric groups are marginal, but on the whole it is fair to say that the esoteric culture in its myriad and popular forms has become more widespread than ever, although the actual membership of the societies has remained low.

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AMORC-Finland)

Ruusu-Risti ry (Rosy-Cross)
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Kansainvälinen Yhteis-Vapaamuurarijärjestä Le Droit Humain – Suomen Liitto ry (The Order of International Co-Freemasonry Le Droit Humain Finnish Federation)
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KOCKU VON STUCKRAD

Esoteric Discourse and the European History of Religion

In Search of a New Interpretational Framework

Often, when people nowadays talk of ‘esotericism’, they are using this word either as more or less synonymous with ‘New Age’, or as a term for movements that are based on a secret wisdom that is only accessible to an ‘inner circle’ of initiates. In academic discussions, however, during the past fifteen years, a field of research has been established that critically engages these assumptions and applies the term ‘esotericism’ in a very different way, namely as a signifier of a number of currents in Western culture that have influenced the history of religions in manifold ways. ‘New Age’ and secret initiatory knowledge are but two aspects of these traditions, and certainly not the most important ones.

In this essay, I will reflect on the various scholarly approaches to the concept of ‘Western esotericism’. I will propose an analysis that takes into account the manifold pluralisms that have shaped Western culture—not only in modernity. I will argue that the academic study of Western esotericism should be understood as part and parcel of a broader analysis of European history of religion, with all its complexities, polemics, diachronic developments, and pluralistic discourses. To make this point, however, I will first have to introduce the concepts of pluralism with regard to European religion and culture. Only after I have established this analytical framework, I will be able to put the study of Western esotericism into this picture.

European History of Religion: Complexities and Pluralisms

If we are to write the history of religions in Europe, there are basically two options. The first possibility is what I call an *additive* historiography, in which the main religious traditions—Christianity and its denominations—are described side by side with the historical developments of the ‘other’ religions in Europe, mainly Judaism and Islam. This is the

traditional form of approaching the history of religions in Europe; it ultimately leads to a church history with some sort of appendix that considers the minor traditions that have existed more or less in the shadow of the mainstream Christian religion.

In recent debates, a different approach has been suggested, which can be called *integrative* and which describes the history of religions in Europe from the perspective of religious pluralism. Quite against the common assumption that European history of religion is the history of Christianity and its confessional schisms, scholars of religion have begun to focus on the specific dynamics of inter-religious dependency as a common denominator of European culture. Religious pluralism is a characteristic of European history since ancient times, and not only in modernity (Kippenberg & von Stuckrad 2003a: 126–35; Kippenberg & von Stuckrad 2003b). It is the presence of alternatives that has shaped Western culture. What has also been distinctive is the presence of one particular religious institution—the Roman Church—that intended to take control over all aspects of the lives of people, legitimizing its authority with reference to a transcendental order (see Benavides 2008). Hence, it is the tension between actual alternatives and attempts at normalization and control that created the dynamics of religious development in Europe.

These alternatives include all three scriptural religions. Even during those times in which Islam was not institutionalized in Western Europe, it existed as an ideological alternative to Christianity or Judaism, as did Judaism to Christianity. It was part of a shared field of discourse. This marks the difference between ‘plurality’ and ‘pluralism’: whereas plurality stands for a simple coexistence of different religious traditions, pluralism denotes the *organization of difference*. Religious options alternative to one’s own are known, are a matter of negotiation, and constitute an element of one’s own identity. In constructing the ‘other’, both parties form a discursive unit. The organization of difference then materializes in ecclesiastical councils, confessional literature, constitutions, social group-formation,¹ and in political and juridical systems. In his masterful history of medieval Europe, Michael Borgolte notes: ‘If we want to understand Europe historically, we will have to acknowledge that its multiplicity has not led to a pluralism of indifference, but that its cultur-

1 These groups frequently transgress religious boundaries. For instance, the ‘Platonic Academy’ and the humanist ‘Republic of Letters’ are ideal constructions of an intellectual community that attract scholars with different religious persuasions.

al formations were adjusted, changed, and rejected in continuous mutual reference' (Borgolte 2006: 10, my translation; cf. von Stuckrad 2008).

But not only are the scriptural religions players on these fields: old and new forms of the pagan, polytheistic past, as well as religious traditions that are related to the names of Hermes Trismegistus or Zoroaster, likewise influenced the dynamic processes of European intellectual and religious history.² Esotericism illustrates how Christians (and others) became interested in alternative descriptions of the cosmos and of history that became part of their own identities, either within or beyond scriptural religions.

From a perspective of cultural studies this interlacing does not apply to the religious system alone. There is a second form of pluralism involved in European intellectual history. In two programmatic articles, Burkhard Gladigow has argued that it is the mutual dependency of religious, philosophical, scientific, and political reflections that characterize the 'European history of religions' (*Europäische Religionsgeschichte*, in contrast to the 'history of religions in Europe'). It directly affects the academic study of esotericism when he writes:

In the course of many centuries, philosophy and philologies presented—or revived—traditions that no longer or never had 'carriers' [*Träger*] (in the Weberian sense), traditions that were transmitted only in the medium of science. Renaissance, Humanism and Romanticism took their alternatives to occidental Christian culture mainly from the sciences. A revived Platonism could subsequently be closely tied to Christianity—or it lived on as theory of magic and irrationalism right into the eighteenth century—; Gnostic schemes and ideas of redemption could interfere with Asian religions that were imported through philologies; a monism could melt into a Christian pantheism or constitute a new religion. (Gladigow 1995: 29, my translation.)

In 2006, Gladigow has further elaborated this concept. He argues that a process of professionalization and pluralization due to new trends in

² Take Zoroastrianism as an example: in his seminal *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of the figure of Zoroaster in Europe, Michael Stausberg addresses Zoroastrianism—which was present in Europe as 'mere imagination'—in such a way that 'in addition to the analysis of the European view on Zoroaster from outside (*Fremdgeschichte*) the question of the religious or historical implications and explications of this process of reception' must always be taken into account (Stausberg 1998: 22, my translation).

philology and historiography has led to an inclusion and ‘probing’ of religious alternatives since the Renaissance. He now gives special attention to the process of ‘professionalization of religion’ that tests historical and philological methods on non-Christian sources. This leads, secondly, to a pluralization of the religious field. This process culminates in the Renaissance with a new ‘density of intellectual communication in Europe’, and in all of Europe.

A Renaissance prince that buys the *Corpus Hermeticum* and pays for its translation—later to become a canonical text of religious currents of the most varied disciplines—may be seen as a characteristic of the new phase of religious options in Europe. Not only do the ‘positive’, institutionalized religions receive the attention they deserve, but also the ‘undercurrents’, repressed patterns, ‘heresies’, ‘alternatives’, which could explicitly or implicitly compete with Christianity. (Gladigow 2006b: par. 1, my translation.)

This is an apt description of the complex dynamics that have shaped Western identities since late medieval times. My own understanding of the European history of religion and the place of esotericism within it owes a lot to Gladigow’s nuanced position. At two points, however, I would like to qualify his interpretation. First of all, Gladigow overrates the Renaissance as the ‘birthplace of modernity’. As with all labels for historical eras, the ‘Renaissance’ is a matter of construction, which characterizes, usually in hindsight, a specific period as something unique, as an event *sui generis*, highlighted in a longer time-span due to its particular qualities. The Renaissance as the ‘rebirth of the ancient world’ is an invention of special significance for the history of esotericism, as many scholars tend to speak of a kind of watershed between the ‘early periods’ of (proto-) esotericism and its ‘actual’ formulation in the Renaissance. This notion of the Renaissance as a distinct period, like that applied to the Enlightenment, has come under fire in recent years, as it stems from a nineteenth-century construction. Although it is true that for the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century the introduction of Hermetic philosophy was a decisive new step, we should not forget that Hermeticism had been a crucial element of Islamic philosophy and science throughout the Middle Ages, which also influenced Western European debates.³

3 A prominent example is the Illuminism of Suhrawardi. For a concise overview of the vast Hermetic literature prior to the Renaissance cf. also the entries

A second qualification of Gladigow's characterization of the European history of religion should be made with reference to Neoplatonism. Again, Gladigow is right when he says that the revival of Neoplatonic philosophy in Europe—first in Pletho and Ficino, later by the Cambridge Platonists (Gladigow 2006b: par. 4 and 12)—led to an opposition to established religious positions and that it provoked alternatives to Christian understandings. But the discrepancy between Platonism and Aristotelianism has in fact never been that strong. The 'Plato–Aristotle Debate' is a singular event of the Renaissance, and we should not adopt this binary position uncritically (Monfasani 2002; von Stuckrad 2005a: 49–52). What we find in the sources is a dynamic mixture of Platonism and Aristotelianism, transformed contingently in various philosophical and political contexts.

Analytical Tools for Interpretation

The construction of European history as monolithically Christian has been very influential during the past 200 years (see Perkins 2004; von Stuckrad 2006). Master narratives, even if they are based on historically dubious material, are capable of creating structures of power and societal realities. In fact, that is what makes a narrative a master narrative! The condensation of thought-patterns into social and historical structures is a key element of discourse theory.

Because of their often vague usage, the concepts 'discourse' and 'field' are in need of some explanation. I apply the term 'discourse' in the way Michel Foucault and others have described it, i.e. as the totality of certain thought-systems that interact with societal systems in manifold ways.⁴ 'Discursive formations' conceptualize the impact of and mutual dependency between systems of interpreting the world and processes of institutionalization and materialization. Talking of 'discursive happenings' elucidates the fact that discourses are themselves practices that influence non-discursive elements. Discursive relations are always power-relations, which means that the term 'discourse' refers not only to contents of frameworks of meaning, but also to instruments of power.⁵

⁴ 'Hermetic Literature I: Antiquity', 'Hermetic Literature II: Latin Middle Ages', and 'Hermetic Literature III: Arab', in Hanegraaff *et al.* 2005: 487–533.

⁵ As a useful overview, see Engler 2006. On Foucault see Carrette 2000.

⁵ For the fact that scholars today are also players in fields of discourse, see von Stuckrad 2003a.

Another important concept is the notion of *fields*, which I apply in the way Pierre Bourdieu has coined it:

I define a field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation . . . in the structure of the distribution of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions. (Quoted from Jenkins 2002: 85.)

The field, hence, is a structured system of social positions, occupied either by individuals or institutions, the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants. Hence, a field is not an *object* but a *structure of relations* that is in constant change and motion (see Bourdieu 1992 and 1996).

A third concept that I apply regularly in my analysis is the term *interference*. This term stems from natural sciences and refers to the fact that *one and the same* physical—or, in our case, cultural—energy mediates through various ‘lenses’ or ‘prisms’ and is becoming visible in different cultural systems. In other words: the inferential patterns (on which see Tenbruck 1993: 35; Gladigow 1995: 29) that we observe in religion and other cultural domains are part of a shared field of discourse.

The terms discourse, field, network, transfer, juncture, interference, etc. are important analytical tools to come to terms with the dynamics of the European history of religion and culture, as well as with the function of esotericism within this framework. My position here can be seen as a deconstruction of strategies of *singularization* (see Smith 2004; Gladigow 2006a) and the formulation of an alternative model of interpretation that is informed by poststructuralist theory and based on pluralism, acknowledging the fact that the ‘Other’ is continuously produced by the ‘Own’ and thus part of a shared field of discourse.

To sum up, we can formulate three assumptions that are essential for the approach I am suggesting here: first, religious pluralism and the existence of alternatives are the normal case, rather than the exception, in the history of Western culture; second, Western culture has always been characterized by a critical reflection on religious truth claims and the interaction between different cultural systems (such as religion, science, art, literature, politics, law, economics, etc.); third, competing ways of attaining knowledge of the world is a key to understanding the role of esotericism in Western discourse.

The Place of Esotericism in European Culture

I will now turn to the place of esotericism within this conceptual framework. My point is that the study of Western esotericism will only bear fruit if it is linked to the general characteristics of European—and, for modernity, to North American⁶—cultural history. The power of interpretation in esotericism research depends on the ability to integrate various aspects of cultural analysis and interdisciplinary approaches in our model of explanation.

'Esotericism' still is a controversial term. Despite the fact that during the past fifteen years a cornucopia of contributions has led to the emergence of the research field of 'Western esotericism', scholars are still far from agreeing on definitions of 'esotericism'. This does not mean that there is also fundamental disagreement about the currents and historical phenomena that scholars think of when they apply the term 'esotericism'. Most scholars share the opinion that 'esotericism' covers such currents as Gnosticism, ancient Hermetism, the so-called 'occult sciences'—notably astrology, (natural) magic, and alchemy—, Christian mysticism, Renaissance Hermeticism, Jewish and Christian Kabbalah, Paracelsianism, Rosicrucianism, Christian theosophy, illuminism, nineteenth-century occultism, traditionalism, and various related currents up to contemporary 'New Age' spiritualities. All these currents are reflected in the recent *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (2005), which indeed represents the state of the art in esotericism research. The Dictionary's editor in chief, Wouter J. Hanegraaff, notes that "'esotericism' is understood not as a type of religion or as a structural dimension of it, but as a general label for certain specific currents in Western culture that display certain similarities and are historically related' (Hanegraaff 2005b: 337). This, of course, is a very vague description. Even if scholars—for pragmatic or other reasons—agree on historical

6 The question of whether American cultural and religious history shares the characteristics of European culture, is much debated. While some scholars—notably Burkhard Gladigow and Christoph Auffarth—regard American cultural history as a 'subchapter' of the European history of religion, in my view the differences are in fact enormous. It is only since the second half of the twentieth century that we can talk of a shared cultural and religious space here, particularly through the reception of American 'New Age' culture in Europe. For early modernity and also for Romanticism, the characteristics found in Europe should not be transferred to North America.

currents that they want to study under the rubric of ‘esotericism’, it will be important to answer questions such as the following: what is the rationale behind the selection of currents? Why do we need a general analytic term to study phenomena that are apparently quite diverse (as, e.g., Hermeticism, Paracelsianism, or New Age)? Is it sufficient to justify the selection with reference to the fact that ‘this entire domain was severely neglected by academic research until far into the 20th century’ (Hanegraaff 2005a: ix)? What about other currents—such as ancient and medieval theurgy, Islamic and Jewish mysticism, or Romantic *Naturphilosophie*—that likewise ‘display certain similarities and are historically related’ to currents seen as belonging to ‘Western esotericism’? These questions do not undermine the pragmatic reasons for making selections. Rather, they indicate a need to constantly reflect on the biases and presuppositions that underlie academic interpretation.

Let us have a closer look at dominant approaches to Western esotericism today. Following the ancient usages of the term, scholars often referred to the esoteric as something hidden from the majority, as a secret accessible only to a small group of initiates. But many of these teachings had in fact never been concealed, and in the twentieth century they even gained wide currency in popular discourses, so that to characterize esotericism as secretive and elitist proved misleading (see Faivre 2000).

The most influential alternative understanding of esotericism was put forward by Antoine Faivre. He claimed that the common denominator, or the *air de famille*, of those currents referred to as esoteric traditions was a specific *form of thought* (French *forme de pensée*); a certain vagueness of this concept notwithstanding (see the critique in McCalla 2001: 443–4), Faivre regards the ‘form of thought’ as a characteristic way of approaching and interpreting the world. Faivre developed his characteristics from a certain set of early modern sources that comprise the ‘occult sciences’ (astrology, alchemy, and magic), the Neoplatonic and Hermetic thinking as it was shaped in the Renaissance, Christian Kabbalah, (mainly Protestant) theosophy, and the notion of a *prisca theologia* or *philosophia perennis*. According to this view, the eternal truth had been handed down through the ages by extraordinary teachers and philosophers such as Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, and Pythagoras.

In 1992, Faivre put forward his heuristic thesis that the esoteric ‘form of thought’ consists of four ‘intrinsic’, or indispensable, characteristics, accompanied by two ‘relative’ characteristics, which are not essential but which nevertheless occur very often. Faivre insists that only those currents are correctly labelled ‘esotericism’ that show *all four intrinsic*

characteristics, even if in different emphases (see Faivre & Needleman 1992: xi–xxx; Faivre 1994: 1–19). (1) The *idea of correspondences* is a crucial characteristic because it refers to the famous hermetic notion of ‘what is below is like what is above’. In the wake of the micro-macrocosm idea of ancient philosophy and religion, esotericists view the entire cosmos as a ‘theatre of mirrors’, an ensemble of hieroglyphs to be deciphered by adepts. Astrology, magic, and spiritual alchemy all partake in this kind of interpretation. (2) The concept of *living nature* views nature as a whole as a living being, permeated by an interior light or hidden fire that circulates through it. Nature can be read like a book, but also interacted with through active participation, for instance in magical acts (*magia naturalis* in Renaissance parlance). (3) *Imagination and mediations* are complementary notions, referring on the one hand to imagination as an ‘organ of the soul’ and the importance of focused concentration in magical work; ‘mediation’ means the contact with intermediary entities that serve as informants and messengers to the absolute truth. The important role of angels, (‘ascended’) masters or divine figures in the process of revelation can also be described as mediation. (4) The *experience of transmutation* expresses the idea that adepts of esoteric tradition undergo a profound process of transformation and rebirth. Faivre alludes to the alchemical doctrine of death-and-rebirth to illuminate the spiritual processes within the adept.⁷ The two ‘relative’ characteristics are (5) *the praxis of concordance*, or the search for reference systems that show the common denominator of all spiritual traditions (similar to the idea of *philosophia perennis*), and (6) the notion of *transmission*, or the initiation of an adept by a teacher or a group.

The past fifteen years have shown that this typological approach, developed from concrete historical material, is very helpful in understanding the connections among seemingly diverse traditions, e.g. the philosophy of nature, mysticism, Hermeticism, Gnosis, astrology, magic, and alchemy. In addition, Faivre’s operational definition of esotericism (see McCalla 2001: 443) helped to overcome the simplistic dichotomies—of religion versus science, magic versus religion, and esotericism versus Enlightenment—that had so often distorted earlier understandings of the complexities of Western culture (see also Neugebauer-Wölk 1999).

⁷ The difficulties with the notion of ‘spiritual alchemy’ and its making up to represent alchemy in general (mainly through the religionist psychology of C. G. Jung) are discussed in Principe & Newman 2001.

At the same time, it is a characteristic of heuristic, operational definitions that they are subject to critique and change. One problem is the fact that Faivre does not always consistently employ his own typology. On the one hand, he describes currents as esoteric that do not fit all of his characteristics (e.g. Mesmerism, which shows only one characteristic, namely the idea of living nature); on the other hand, he excludes currents that nicely match his typology but fall beyond his scope of interest, such as Suhrawardi's medieval Islamic philosophy. More importantly, Faivre generates his typology from a limited set of sources—originating mainly from Renaissance Hermeticism, *Naturphilosophie*, Christian Kabbalah, and theosophy—and thus deliberately excludes aspects of the history of European religion that other scholars view as decisive for a contextual understanding of esoteric currents.⁸ In doing so, he excludes antiquity, the medieval period, and above all modernity.⁹ He marginalizes Jewish, Muslim, and 'pagan' traditions, all of which heavily influenced European esotericism. In the twentieth century, Buddhism and Hinduism have also left their imprint on Western esotericism. If we follow Faivre's typology, we end up in a circular argument: 'since esotericism is defined as a form of thought, nothing outside that form of thought can be esotericism' (McCalla 2001: 444). Although he himself would disagree, Faivre's typology in fact best fits what I would call 'Christian esotericism in the early modern period' or, to borrow Monika Neugebauer-Wölk's phrase, 'Western esotericism in a Christian context'.¹⁰

Although many scholars in the field of Western esotericism pay lip-services to Antoine Faivre's approach, and his enormous effort for the establishment of the field notwithstanding, there are almost no scholars who apply Faivre's typology without significant changes and adjust-

8 On Faivre's arguments against a 'comparative study of esotericism' that runs the risk of claiming a universal—essentialist—'esotericism' see Faivre 2000: esp. pp. 102–5; but cf. Hanegraaff 1995: 121–4.

9 'Correspondences', for instance, have a different meaning in the Renaissance and in twentieth-century magic. Another problematic term is 'magic': Wouter J. Hanegraaff (2003) compared the Renaissance *magia naturalis* and the 'disenchanted magic' of the twentieth century. As a conclusion, it is apparent that simple typological approaches to this shifting field of identities and strategies miss the point because they pretend a common denominator that is not found in the sources.

10 Neugebauer-Wölk 2003: 160. Faivre's religionist language—particularly in his early writings—is pointed out by McCalla 2001: 444–7.

ments. Thus, alternative interpretations of esotericism have been suggested. Among these, Wouter J. Hanegraaff's deserves special attention. In recent publications, he has developed his idea of a 'Grand Polemical Narrative' that according to him underlies the formation of the set of currents that today is regarded as esotericism by most scholars. As he put it in 2005:

[T]he field of study referred to as 'Western esotericism' is the historical product of a polemical discourse, the dynamics of which can be traced all the way back to the beginnings of monotheism. Moreover, it is in the terms of this very same discourse that mainstream Western culture has been construing its own identity, up to the present day. This process of the construction of identity takes place by means of telling stories—to ourselves and to others—of who, what and how we want to be. The challenge of the modern study of Western esotericism to academic research ultimately consists in the fact that it questions and undermines those stories, and forces us to see who, what and how we really *are*. Instinctive resistance against the breaking down of certainties implicit in such (self)knowledge is at the very root of traditional academic resistance against the study of Western esotericism. (Hanegraaff 2005c: 226; italics in original.)

Hanegraaff bases his analysis on the concepts of 'mnemohistory' that Jan Assmann has developed. This involves—as he argues in a subsequent article of 2007—what he calls a 'complex pattern of cultural and religious interactions based upon a "deep structure" of conflict between the dynamics of two mutually exclusive systems: monotheism and cosmopolitanism, and all that they imply. The logical incompatibility of the two systems has led to an endless series of creative attempts to overcome it' (Hanegraaff 2007: 120). Hanegraaff now focuses particularly on the discourse of *images* in the 'grand polemical narrative'. This is because, as Hanegraaff sees it, '[i]n these developments the status of images has always been crucial, because they are basic to the very nature of cosmopolitanism, whereas their rejection is fundamental to the very nature of monotheism' (Hanegraaff 2007: 120).

As a consequence, Hanegraaff even suggests a characterization of esotericism on the basis of these considerations. If we accept (a) that the 'grand polemical narrative' indeed is operative, (b) that monotheism and rationalism are the major pillars of Western identity, and that (c) both have problems with images,

it may not be too far-fetched to see a *positive* secondary response to the power of images as a major characteristic of Western esotericism. In doing so, we may make a cautious first step from a merely indirect definition of Western esotericism toward a direct one. We can make a further step by suggesting that specific persons and currents are more likely to end up being perceived as belonging to the ‘other’ if—for whatever reason—they exhibit substantial resistance against the normative drift of the dominant polemical narratives, and develop perspectives tending toward cosmotheism and toward a perception of truth as inherently mysterious and accessible only by a suprarational gnosis. . . . [I]f it is correct that Western culture defines its identity on a monotheistic and rationalist foundation, it is reasonable to assume that to the extent that someone tends more strongly toward their theoretical opposites, he runs a larger risk—statistically, one might say—of finding himself and his ideas or practices censured and relegated to the domain of the ‘other’. (Hanegraaff 2007: 131–2.)

That Hanegraaff is turning away from typological approaches based on content and ideas and that he instead explores the *structures* that underlie European history of culture is interesting and opens new perspectives. However, in my view the construction of what is pathetically called a ‘Grand Polemical Narrative’ is misleading. Claiming ‘complexity’ in the study of European history and religion certainly is correct; but the simplification and reduction to an imagined polemical narrative is the opposite of complex analysis.

To begin with, falling back on Assmann’s conceptualization of monotheistic and ‘cosmotheistic’ mnemohistory comes with a price. The problem here is the vague differentiation, inherent in Assmann’s interpretation, between historical data and tools of interpretation. Although ‘mnemohistory’ is presented as independent of actual historical developments, its initial introduction, according to Jan Assmann, is directly linked to historical instances, from the first monotheistic concepts of Akhenaton to the supposed imposition of exclusive monotheism by biblical Judaism (Assmann 2003). It can easily be demonstrated that this description does not correspond to the actual historical development. Consequently, Peter Schäfer calls Assmann’s exclusive monotheism an exaggerated straw man ‘that historically never existed’.¹¹ A similar

11 ‘Die Kategorie des Monotheismus, die Assmann postuliert, ist eine Abstraktion bzw. genauer ein Popanz, den es historisch so nie gegeben hat und dessen ge-

vagueness in the distinction between historical reality and mnemohistorical construction is found in Hanegraaff's approach, too. For instance, he claims that 'as a matter of historical fact paganism is and always has been part of what we *are*' (Hanegraaff 2005c: 234; italics in original; see also the passage quoted above).

But even if we accept that mnemohistory is independent from actual history, there must be sufficient historical evidence for the existence of such a memory (a problem noted by Schäfer 2005: 21–2). But many of the 'currents' within the field of Western esotericism have in fact never been simply neglected, marginalized, or banned as dangerous; they all have a complex and changing history in many different contexts.¹² If there is an effective polemical 'othering' in Western history, this process unfolded as late as the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. Put differently, Western culture, including its memories, does not only have a *problem* with images and idolatry, but has also notoriously been *fascinated* by images.¹³ In my view such a dialectical interpretation does fit the evidence much better: European cultural history is characterized by a dialectic of rejection and fascination *vis-à-vis* those currents that modern scholars regard as belonging to 'esotericism'. What can be dubbed the 'strategies of distancing' is a discursive happening that took place during the past 300 years.

Analyzed with the instruments of discourse theory, what Hanegraaff describes is actually a discursive formation, i.e. the concretization of discourses in institutions, such as the university and its specific research programs.¹⁴ We do not need the catchy term of 'Grand Polemical Narrative' to see that point. And we also do not need to fall back on an ultimately problematic construct of 'memories of idolatry and monothe-

dächtnisgeschichtlicher Wert außerordentlich zweifelhaft ist' (Schäfer 2005: 22–3). Schäfer also correctly notes the anti-Semitic potential of the distinction between 'monotheism' and 'cosmotheism' ('eine historische Fiktion, die auch gedächtnisgeschichtlich nicht gerettet werden kann'; p. 24); see Schäfer 2005: 25–39. A critical response to Assmann's Egyptological assumptions is found in Quack 2004.

- 12 This is true for Hermeticism, astrology (which has always been—at least to some extent—an accepted science), alchemy, Freemasonry, or Kabbalah. Even for natural magic a more nuanced picture has to be applied.
- 13 I analyzed one topic of this dialectic—the emergence of modern Western shamanism—in von Stuckrad 2003b.
- 14 This, by the way, includes the modern scholars who act in university contexts that are a product of a new evaluation of European histories and identities.

ism' to see the polemical structure of such a discourse. Perhaps Gustavo Benavides's observation is correct and none of these attempts at controlling the discourse has ultimately been successful in European history. Benavides notes that the large-scale processes that we see active in European cultural history 'seem to have functioned as homeostatic mechanisms'. And he concludes that 'in a seemingly inexorable manner, processes that seemed to push in one direction ended up generating a counter-pressure, thus bringing about their own demise' (Benavides 2008: 110). In other words, if there ever was a grand polemical narrative, it created the very powers that worked against it.

Esoteric Structures

As a response to these ongoing discussions, I argue for a model of esotericism that is capable of describing the dynamic and processuality of identity formation, as well as the discursive transfers between religions and societal systems. To begin with, and harking back to Bourdieu's understanding of 'fields', 'esotericism' for me is not an object but a *structure*. Furthermore, if the construction of 'traditions' or 'religions' are themselves tools of identity formation,¹⁵ we cannot stick to those constructions as an historical basis of defining esotericism. We will have to look at the discourses involved in the construction of traditions and identities (on the following, see von Stuckrad 2005a).

On the most general level of analysis, we can describe esotericism as the claim of absolute knowledge. From a discursive point of view, it is not so much the *content* of these systems but the very fact that people *claim* a wisdom that is superior to other interpretations of cosmos and history. What is claimed here, is a totalizing vision of truth that cannot be subject to falsification, a master-key for answering all questions of humankind. Not surprisingly, the idea of absolute knowledge is closely linked to a discourse of *secrecy*, but not because esoteric truths are restricted to an 'inner circle' of specialists or initiates, but because the dialectic of concealment and revelation is a structural element of secretive discourses.¹⁶ Esoteric knowledge is not necessarily exclusive, but hid-

15 On a critical evaluation of the term 'tradition' in the study of religion see von Stuckrad 2005b.

16 Valuable for this discussion is Wolfson 1999; see particularly Wolfson's introduction to the volume.

den. Principally, the revelation of esoteric truths is accessible to everyone, if he or she but follows the prescribed ways and strategies that lead to the disclosure of hidden knowledge.

Totalizing claims of knowledge can be found in religious debates—from the ‘Gnostic’ search for self-redemption to Suhrawardi’s school of illumination to Abraham Abulafia’s kabbalistic fusion with the divine to Jacob Böhme’s notion of *Zentralschau* and Emanuel Swedenborg’s conversing with the angels—but also in philosophical contexts, as the late antique Middle Platonists or the Renaissance Neoplatonists clearly reveal. If we look for esoteric structures in scientific discourses, we will detect them in the work of scientists who do not restrict themselves to heuristic models or to curiosity about how natural phenomena are to be explained but who want to unveil the master-key to the world. Such an ‘esoteric spin’ is present, for example, in John Dee (sixteenth century) who experimented with angels in order to learn about the end of the world; in the attempt of seventeenth-century natural philosophers at the court of Sulzbach to combine Kabbalah, alchemy, and experimental science; and even in some currents within contemporary science that aim at decoding the secrets of the cosmos or to find a ‘Grand Unified Theory’ of everything.

The next step in addressing the esoteric structures of Western history of religions is to ask for the specific modes of gaining access to higher knowledge. Judging from the bulk of esoteric primary sources, there are two ways in particular that are repeatedly referred to—mediation and experience. Here, *mediation* is understood in the same sense as Antoine Faivre introduced it into academic language, albeit not as a typological characteristic of esotericism but as a strategy to substantiate the claim for secret or higher wisdom that is revealed to humankind. The mediators can be of a quite diverse nature: Gods and goddesses, angels, intermediate beings, or superior entities are often described as the source of esoteric knowledge. Examples are Hermes, Poimandres (in the *Corpus Hermeticum*), Enoch, Solomon, the ‘Great White Brotherhood’ and ‘Mahatmas’ of the Theosophical Society, or the guardian angel ‘Aiwass’ who revealed higher wisdom to Aleister Crowley in the *Liber AL vel Legis* in 1904. From this perspective, it is obvious that the large field of ‘Channelling’—a term coined in the context of the so-called New Age movement—is a typical phenomenon of esoteric discourse, no matter if the channelled source is ‘Seth’ (Jane Roberts), ‘Ramtha’ (J. Z. Knight), or ‘Jesus Christ’ (Helen Schucman).

In addition to—and sometimes in combination with—mediation we can identify the claim of individual *experience* as an important mode

of gaining access to secret or higher knowledge. Again, this is prominent in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and subsequent literature, where a vision indicates the process of revelation. The complex genre of *ascension* to higher dimensions of reality—in the Hekhalot literature, gnostic traditions, and also in various mystical contexts, through meditation, trance, or drug-induced altered states of consciousness—belongs to the category of experience, as well. Repeatedly, the claim of individual experience of ultimate truth was a threat to institutionalized forms of religion, as the reaction of the Christian churches to these claims clearly reveal. Furthermore, the mode of experience explains (among other reasons) why in early modern times esoteric currents were more openly embraced by Protestant denominations, especially in the spiritualistic and pietistic milieus that focused on the formation of an ‘inner church’ through personal experience, than in Roman Catholic circles.

Concluding Remarks

Let me come back to the problem of definition. As scholars of religion we know that it is not a necessary precondition for establishing fields of research into religion to agree about a proper definition of ‘religion’. Much of the work in religious studies consists exactly of *reflection* on definitions and tools of analysis. My basic argument is that ‘esotericism’ presents a similar case. If we want to set up an academic field of research, we will have to extend our understanding of esotericism beyond definitions that are—necessarily—limited to concrete material, cases, and research focuses. At the same time, we will have to reflect on the implicit interlacing of various definitions and ask for general cultural dynamics that these approaches to Western esotericism reveal. The model that I present here is an attempt to reaching such a common ground. Thus, the study of esoteric elements in European history of religion generates a field of research along the lines of *Problemgeschichte* ('history of problems').¹⁷ The problems addressed by esotericism research relate to basic aspects of Western self-understanding: how do we explain rhetorics of rationality, science, enlightenment, progress, and absolute truth in their relation to religious claims? How do we elucidate the conflicting plural-

¹⁷ For the implications of Weber’s methodological approach on contemporary historiography see Oexle 2001: esp. 33–7.

ity of religious worldviews, identities, and forms of knowledge that lie at the bottom of Western culture?

If we answer these questions, perhaps we will not need the term 'esotericism' any more. If so, we can regard the term 'esotericism' as a Wittgensteinian ladder that once was necessary to get to a better understanding of historical processes. If esoteric dynamics are seen as integral elements of European culture, we can relinquish the term altogether and will start talking about constructions and identities of Europe and 'the West'.

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MARCO TOTI

The Proliferation of Post-Modern Religiosity in the Late Sixties

The Case of 'The Process Church of the Final Judgement': from Psychoanalysis as Therapy to Psychoanalysis as Theology

The sixties may be considered as a true turning point in the history of the West. It may be correctly stated that the counterculture 'revolution',¹ which has characterized Western civilization since the sixties, gave rise to further (and crucial, especially from a religious perspective) acceleration of what has been called 'post-modernity',² the most important character of which is the revaluation of the 'religious' and the detachment of the category of 'sacred'—the divinity being generally considered as 'impersonal' and in terms of 'energy'—from traditional religions. The student rebellion first took root in the 1950s, when signs in literature, the cinema, comics, the theatre and music all bore witness in some embryonic way to the 'end of innocence' and the beginning of a new age in the US (especially in light of the fact that these products of new mass culture were meant for the younger generation, as well as of the irresolvable conflict between young people and adults). It was at that point that the cultural hero took on the form of a defeated rebel, amid deeply-rooted nostalgia over the certainty that something essential had been lost—a 'primordial America', to which one feels attracted with infantile amazement, not exactly knowing how to find it again if not by means of a search for *intensity, purity, immediacy* and *meaning* (not 'happiness', which the American dream had already guaranteed in the public imagination in previous years). Its expression in literature is found by way of the use of a syncopated and 'living' language,

1 On which one can see the standard Roszak 1969 and Webb 1989: 298–335.

2 On post-modernity from a 'religious studies' perspective see Terrin 1995.

a reflection of a deliberately precarious, vitalistic and marginal existence.³ This, apart from its being a contemporary attitude (modern man showing a lack of interest in eternity and duration, as testified to by the contrast between medieval cathedrals standing even today and multi-media installations becoming out-of-date in a matter of days),⁴ was also the starting point for an existentialist, post-Romantic and post-modern attitude with a typically American flavour, entirely extraneous to the political character of the rebellious second half of the sixties.⁵ From a religious point of view, a generalized interest in Eastern wisdom spread in this period, potentially (yet not always fully knowingly) aimed at the vulgarization (in the etymological sense) of most especially Hindu and Buddhist spirituality (with particular reference to *Zen*⁶). The post-modern character of ‘new religiosity’, which caught on in the US of the early 1960s, is shown by the reception given to themes and sources of fascination mostly from Eastern religions and interpreted in accordance with a (post-)Western mentality. The practice of these religions was placed in an entirely different context from that of its origin, almost always resulting in a profound change of the traditions discussed and at times inserting them into that ‘supermarket of religions’ so popular today in New Age culture.

R. N. Bellah has done an excellent job of summarizing the relationships between counterculture spirituality, politics and traditional religions, as well as the sources and the results of the first, writing about the potential attitude of counterculture against Catholic or Protestant churches, ‘for most of the political activists . . . too closely identified with the established powers to gain much sympathy or interest’,⁷ and about the lack of preparedness of the same churches

to cope with the new spirituality of the sixties. The demand for immediate, powerful, and deep religious experience, which was part of

3 For example, the implicit theme of the ‘initiation journey’, utilized in J. Kerouac’s *On the Road* in its aspect of continuous and aimless ‘escape’, eminently expresses this attitude.

4 This would open a lengthy discussion on the generally presumed superiority of modern post-Western civilization, that we are compelled not to develop here because of subject and space. However, in this respect one can read the enlightening Fennell 1999.

5 On this subject see Antonelli 2001: 12–20.

6 See for an antecedent Watts 1959.

7 Bellah 1976: 340.

the turn away from future-oriented instrumentalism *toward present meaning* and fulfilment, could on the whole not be met by the religious bodies. The major Protestant churches in the course of generations of defensive struggle against secular rationalism had taken on some the colour of the enemy. Moralism and verbalism and the almost complete absence of ecstatic experience characterized the middle-class Protestant churches. The more intense religiosity of black and lower-class churches remained largely unavailable to the white middle-class members of the counterculture. The Catholic Church with its great sacramental tradition might be imagined to have been a more hospitable home for the new movement, but such was not the case. Older Catholicism had its own defensiveness which took the form of scholastic intellectualism and legalistic moralism. Nor did Vatican II really improve things. *The Catholic Church finally decided to recognize the value of the modern world just when American young people were beginning to find it valueless.* As if all this were not enough, the biblical arrogance toward nature [sic] and the Christian hostility toward the life impulse were both alien to the new spiritual mood. *Thus the religion of the counterculture was by and large not biblical.* It drew from many sources including the American Indian tradition. *But its deepest influences came from Asia.* In many ways Asian spirituality provided a more thorough contrast to the rejected utilitarian individualism than did biblical religion. To external achievement it posed inner experience; to the exploitation of nature, harmony with nature; to impersonal organization, an intense relation to a guru. Mahayana Buddhism, particularly in the form of Zen, provided the most pervasive religious influence on the counterculture: but elements from Taoism, Hinduism and Sufism were also influential. What drug experiences, interpreted in oriental religious terms, as Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert did quite early, and meditation experiences, often taken up when drug use was found to have too many negative consequences, showed was the illusoriness of worldly striving. Careerism and status seeking, the sacrifice of present fulfilment for some ever-receding future goal, no longer seemed worthwhile. There was a turn away not only from utilitarian individualism, but from the whole apparatus of industrial society . . . *Thus, the limits were pushed far beyond what any previous great awakening had seen: toward socialism in one direction, toward mysticism in the other.* But perhaps the major meaning of the sixties was not anything positive at all. Neither the political movement nor the counterculture survived the decade. Important

successor movements did survive . . . , but the major meaning of the sixties was purely negative: *the erosion of the legitimacy of the American way of life. . .*⁸

through which ‘utilitarian individualism’ was substituted by ‘cynical privatism’.⁹

8 Bellah 1976: 340–1, my italics.

9 Bellah 1976: 341–2. According to Bellah, ‘on the surface what seems to have been most drastically undermined was utilitarian individualism, for the erosion of the biblical tradition seemed only to continue what had been a long-term trend. The actual situation was more complicated. Utilitarian individualism had perhaps never before been so divested of its ideological and religious facade, never before recognized in all its naked destructiveness. And yet that very exposure could become an ironic victory. If all moral restraints are illegitimate, then why should I believe in religion and morality? If those who win in American society are the big crooks and those who lose do so only because they are little crooks, why should I not try to be a big crook rather than a little one? In this way the unmasking of utilitarian individualism led to the very condition from which Hobbes sought to save us—the war of all against all. Always before, the biblical side of the American tradition has been able to bring antinomian and anarchic tendencies under some kind of control, and perhaps that is still possible today. Certainly the fragile structures of the counterculture were not able to do so. But out of the shattered hopes of the sixties there has emerged a cynical privatism, a narrowing of sympathy and concern to the smallest possible circle, that is truly frightening. What has happened to Richard Nixon should not obscure for us the meaning of his overwhelming victory in 1972. It was the victory of cynical privatism.’ (Bellah 1976: 341–2.) On *Zen* in counterculture see Bellah 1976: 344–5; on conflict between Eastern non-dualism—according to Bellah not totally incompatible with the Christian tradition—and the American way of life, in particular with this ‘utilitarian individualism’ (yet recovered in other ways: Bellah 1976: 349–50), see Bellah 1976: 347–8, where among other things the author puts in evidence the anti-dogmatic and potentially non-political character—though sometimes very near to Marxist positions—of certain ‘counterculture non-dualism’. Nevertheless, ‘the youth rebellion of the 1960s was not entirely uninformed by the modes of consciousness just described. Indeed, a considerable part of the outrage of youth was grounded in a perceived discrepancy between principles espousing the right of human beings to fulfil themselves and practices abridging that right. Also present, although at a lower key and a distinctly secondary level, was a conception of a nation turned too far from the God of its creation. By and large, however, the youth counterculture was more denying than confirming of old world views. Its informing power came from a way of comprehending the world basically at odds with individualistic and supernatural modes of consciousness. This alternative world view was not new to the counterculture. It had been slowly diffusing, albeit in an inchoate form, through the American population over a number of decades. *The new*

Nevertheless, not only was Eastern wisdom involved in this cultural process. The period witnessed the emergence of some intellectually refined and at least partially genuine and 'heterodox' revisions of Christianity, aroused among other things by psychoanalytical speculation on symbolism and archetypes. In this respect, the exploration/exploitation of the unconscious started to be a *religious* means through which to fathom the depths of the human soul on a large scale. On this subject, one of the most interesting movements of the second half of the sixties was The Process Church of the Final Judgement, established in 1965 in London by Robert de Grimston Moore (Shanghai, 1935)

cognition has its inspiration from science . . . The sciences, and here I refer especially to the social sciences, effectively deny that human destiny is entirely either in man's or in God's control. The possibility that both may be control agents is not closed out; but that they function as either the old imageries would have it is not accepted. Insofar as they exert an influence, the sciences tell us, they do so in interaction with other forces—biological, psychological, sociological, anthropological, genetic—all of which have some influence in shaping human and social events.' (Bellah 1976: 361, my italics.) It is clear that 'the effect of a scientific world view is to undermine the underlying assumptions of the old imageries' (Bellah 1976: 362): 'although the participants were unaware of it, the youth counterculture, once launched, quickly came to reflect both the power of a scientific world view to expose the myths of old world views and its failure to contribute an alternative myth as a substitute for the old ones. The counterculture was clear and united in its stand that the old myths and the social arrangements and ways of life they had fostered were no longer viable and acceptable. It was unable to come up with an agreed on substitute to fill the void it created, although it insisted in a kind of desperation that the void be filled.' (Bellah 1976: 365. From this point of view, one may think to the New Age attitude on science, that can be considered as the legitimate heir of the counterculture one.) On American *Weltanschauung*, fundamentally characterized by the belief that God, after (and for) having created man in His image, gave him freedom and the possibility to 'control' the world (to which corresponds, besides the Calvinist corollaries of individualism and economical success, responsibility), see Glock 1976: 356–8 (a more 'theocentred' *Weltanschauung* opposes this view: Glock 1976: 358–9). It is interesting to notice Glock 1976: 359, that 'it has been possible for the two world views to coexist alongside each other throughout American history because the supernatural did not effectively challenge the social arrangements inspired by the individualistic view; on the contrary, it supported them. Also making for accommodation, if not compatibility, was the fact that, although the conceptions of God and his creation and purposes for man are different, but world views acknowledge God and his ultimate dominion over the world' (my italics), and Glock 1976: 361, that 'protest emerged much less from those immersed in a supernatural mode of consciousness, and not because they were necessarily more content with the way things were.'

and Mary Anne Maclean (Glasgow, 1931)—and officially dissolved in 1974—‘as a group of Adler’s psychotherapy [and] which has passed through Scientology before the late discovery of Jung’,¹⁰ which Massimo Introvigne persuasively placed in the category of ‘Luciferism’.¹¹ It is significant that, in the years of the foundation of The Process, the New Age movement had started to spread its message.¹² This ‘movement of the human potential’ seems to ably represent a ‘microcosm’ in which one can detect some features characteristic of a certain sophisticated (though sometimes confused from the doctrinal point of view) ‘new religiosity’, the elaborateness of which expressed itself through the lively intelligence of its founders (especially de Grimston) and through some influences from the American ‘underground’ culture. Among these features, worthy of note—apart from some techniques and methods characteristic of Scientology¹³ (of which The Process founders were members between 1961 and 1962)—were a complex cosmology and symbolism based on an evident apocalyptic orientation, as well as a ‘psychoanalytical’ view of Christianity, in which the ‘archetypal’, ‘emanationist’ and ‘reconstructive’ interpretation of the Trinity took on particular value,¹⁴ transformed as it had been into a ‘quaternary’, making use of the Jungian category of the ‘shadow’ in the figure of Satan for therapeutic ends. This view, in line with Jung, changed psychoanalysis from a form of therapy addressed to individuals into a theology with the aim of explaining reality as a whole.¹⁵

10 Introvigne 1990: 411, my translation.

11 Introvigne 1990: 411 ff., in particular 413. For a distinction between Satanism and Luciferism (the latter, in this sense, being similar to certain forms of Gnosticism) see Introvigne 1990: 410. Introvigne, who denies the possibility to define The Process a Satanic group on the basis of its thesis of the necessity to get through (and then give up) the ‘Satanic phase’ and of the belief in four gods (Introvigne 1994a: 300), significantly considers The Process as an ‘exception’ in the outline of contemporary Luciferism (Introvigne 1994a: 291), first of all to the usually narrow and discreet character of Luciferian groups (Introvigne 1990: 411), in addition to—I believe—the above-mentioned impossibility to make it be technically part of ‘Satanism’ and of its unusual—in the Satanic *milieu*—intellectual refinement.

12 See among others Introvigne 1994b.

13 Though transferred in a totally different context (Introvigne 1992: 11).

14 See Introvigne 1990: 411.

15 Introvigne 1992: 11.

In 1963 de Grimston and Maclean married and founded a group called 'Compulsion Analysis', strongly influenced by Alfred Adler's psychoanalysis. In it psychoanalysis, in contrast with Scientology,¹⁶ was not yet treated as a religion. After the official establishment in 1965 of The Process (already existing in an embryonic state and without its definitive name in 1964), a religious turning-point occurred in March 1966 when twenty-five members of the group started living together in a luxury apartment in Mayfair, London. On June 23 about thirty members left for Nassau in the Bahamas in search of the ideal place to settle, relying in part on magical visions and telepathic transmissions. In September 1966 the group moved to Mexico City, where an epic and meditation-driven trip began, ending in Xtul on the Yucatan peninsula. After having learnt that 'Xtul' meant 'end' in the Mayan language, they set up a community affectionately remembered by the nucleus of the group as 'the real Process', an experience that, owing to its social and natural environment, lasted only a month. In Xtul The Process, in the words of de Grimston, met God face to face like Israel in the desert. Besides the creation of a hierarchical structure, the assumption of 'sacred names' by members and the following emergence of sectarian dynamics inside the movement (between the Xtul group and others), on the basis of chiefly Jungian influences de Grimston devised a doctrine based on the belief in four divinities: Jehovah (feminine divinity representing earth, sacrifice, self-renunciation and emotion) and Lucifer (masculine divinity representing air, indulgence and intellect), Satan (feminine divinity representing fire and violence, who divides and spreads conflict through 'Pure Hate') and Christ (masculine divinity representing water, who unifies and solves conflict through 'Pure Love'). 'Reconciliation' between the last two was to have led to the end of the world and the beginning of a golden age, the 'age of Christ'.

According to the theology of The Process, the four above-mentioned divinities are therefore connected in two pairs of opposites: Jehovah and Lucifer and Satan and Christ, the dialectic of which must be 'reconstructed' in a higher level synthesis. However, first one has to pass through the different gods—which means acting according to their 'character'—in order to achieve final reconciliation. Therefore it is necessary to pass through Satan to find Christ, the end of the spiritual journey as 'freedom from conflict' and 're-unifier of all the paths of the Gods'. It may be

16 Introvigne 1992: 11.

said that full salvation, according to the ideology of the group, can be achieved only in Christ, who extinguishes the fire of Satan as ‘water that gives life’.¹⁷ Though an arduous path, as Jung wrote, one must recognize and explore the ‘shadow’. In operative terms this means to pass through a ‘Satanic phase’ that partially recalls an *épater le bourgeois* well placed in the counterculture climate. Moreover, according to the theology of The Process, Satan is not evil, but only an ‘icon of the separation’, whereas ‘humanity is the Devil’¹⁸ since Satan has transferred all his evil to man through history. The observation of some passages of the ‘liturgical apparatus’ of The Process, a psychodrama¹⁹ and form of group therapy²⁰ celebrating the necessary unity between Satan and Christ (and between Jehovah and Lucifer),²¹ may prove useful to understanding the spiritual orientation of the movement. In the third scene of the ‘Assembly of the Sabbath’, the ‘Sacrifist’, one of the chief characters of the liturgy, declaims together with the Assembly the ‘words of the unity’:

Christ said: ‘Love your enemies’. Christ’s enemy was Satan, Satan’s enemy was Christ. Through Love the enmity is destroyed … Through Love Christ and Satan have destroyed Their enmity and come together for the End: Christ to judge, Satan to execute the Judgement. The Judgement is Wisdom. The execution of Judgement is Love.²²

In the fourth scene, the ‘Sacrifist’ and the ‘Evangelist’ converse:

S: ‘The Final Catastrophe’.
 E: ‘An End and a New Beginning’.
 S: ‘And to this end Christ and Satan are joined’.
 E: ‘Pure Love has descended from the pinnacle of Heaven, and He has joined Pure Hatred risen from the depths of Hell’.
 S: ‘To pay off the debt’.
 E: ‘To keep the promise’.
 S: ‘All conflicts are resolved’.²³

17 See Introvigne 1990: 414.

18 This is the title of one of the books by de Grimston.

19 Notice that also the black mass of LaVey’s Church of Satan resembles, at least publicly, a psychodrama (Introvigne 1994a: 280).

20 Besides which there were also individual sessions (Introvigne 1990: 413).

21 Introvigne 1990: 413.

22 Introvigne 1990: 413, my translation.

23 Introvigne 1990: 413, my translation.

Between the end of 1966—when most of the members had returned to London from Xtul—and 1967, The Process became an ‘open’ and institutionalized group (and socially active as well), starting to truly function as a ‘church’ (officially registered as such in the US), and from the end of 1968 de Grimston began to spend most of his time in the US. Even if many suspicions were raised, there is no real evidence that Charles Manson—whose ‘Family’ killed nine people in a horrendous manner (including Sharon Tate, Roman Polanski’s wife) between the July 27 and the August 10, 1969—was a member of or directly implicated in The Process before the slaughter. Nevertheless, Manson was visited in prison by members of de Grimston’s group and was persuaded to write an article for the monographic issue of its review ‘The Process’ devoted to death (published in 1971). The latter is a fact that probably caused the group (clearly trying to exploit Manson’s image for propaganda) to fall into even greater disrepute—than the weak suppositions of connections between Manson and The Process *before* the above-mentioned carnage, giving rise to the so-called ‘disaster of the Manson case’.²⁴ It proved a lethal blow for the group by causing not only the entrance into the group by psychopathic and sociopathic individuals, but also by the watering down of the ‘Satanic’ doctrines and the image of the group, as well as a number of conflicts between de Grimston and Maclean culminating in the breach between the two in 1974.²⁵ However, William Sims Bainbridge, a sociologist who observed the group from the inside

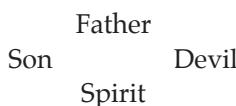
24 On this subject see Bainbridge 1992: 186–94.

25 The history of the group and its ‘theology’ as reported above are based on what Bainbridge wrote in his quoted book and on the summaries by Introvigne 1994a: 291–300, especially 292–9. See also Introvigne 1990: 411–14; Sennit 1989; Taylor 1990; www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/Process.html; www.religioustolerance.org/process.htm. It is noteworthy that Maclean, who, after the breach with de Grimston founded the ‘Foundation Faith of the New Millennium’ (then ‘Foundation Faith of God’), a small Christian apocalyptic-millenarian ‘church’ (the ‘statement of faith’ of the Foundation Faith of God is quoted in Melton 1988: 738–9), today is at the head of the ‘Best friends Animal Sanctuary’ based in Kanab, Utah. The connections between Gnostic—‘leftist’ or ‘rightist’—re-interpretations of Christianity with animal liberation and naturism have been often put in evidence (an example being a number of deep ‘ideological’ connections, in terms of theosophical sources, between Nazism and New Age; see, moreover, www.atwa.com, the site of Manson’s ecological organization), and are clearly confirmed in this case too. ‘From Luciferism to animalism’, a cynic could state with regard to the case of Mary Anne.

as an important member (particularly between 1970 and 1971, and in the period of its dissolution), has convincingly stated that the doctrines of the movement, apart from not being understood by the majority of members (who perceived them as being farther and farther from reality),²⁶ described the movement itself from the perspective of its social experience but could not influence events²⁷ and describe reality as they wanted.

It is quite evident that the theology of The Process—especially the belief in four gods—derives from Jungian theories. According to the Swiss psychoanalyst, the quaternary is an almost universal archetype, that forms ‘the *logical* basis for any whole judgement’, while ‘three is not a natural coefficient or order, but an artificial one’.²⁸ In particular, Jung defines the ‘development of the idea of Trinity’ as a ‘collective process, representing a differentiation of the consciousness that has been going on for several thousand years’.²⁹ If ‘there are four elements, four primitive qualities, four colours, four castes, four ways of spiritual development in Buddhism, etc.’, so ‘there are four aspects of psychological orientation, beyond which nothing fundamental remains to be said’, that is ‘a function which ascertains that something is there (sensation); a second one which establishes *what* it is (thinking); a third function which states whether it suits or not, whether we wish to accept it or not (feeling); and a fourth function which indicates where it came from and where it is going’.³⁰

Outline of the Jungian quaternity:³¹



26 Bainbridge 1991: 300.

27 Bainbridge 1992: 424. On the social character of the doctrines of The Process see also Bainbridge 1992: 426.

28 Read *et al.* 1969²: 167, my italics. The *logical* character of Jung’s reasoning (see also, with regard to the schema Father–Son–Devil, Read *et al.* 1969²: 174) seems, just from a theological point of view, to invalidate his thesis. On Trinity and quaternity as ‘projections of psychic processes’ see also Read *et al.* 1969²: 180.

29 Read *et al.* 1969²: 180, see also 193 ff.

30 Read *et al.* 1969²: 167.

31 Read *et al.* 1969²: 175.

Here the Father represents the original unity, Christ and Satan are the two aspects of the Father in conflict (the second being the 'shadow' of Christ, see below, note 36, and the '*dark emanation*' of the Father),³² and the Spirit is the unity re-established by the *dialectic* between Christ and Satan.³³ In the theology of The Process, the function of 'peacemaker' is assumed by Christ, a fact that gives the quaternity an 'asymmetric-al structure', Christ being both (first) a 'son in conflict'—i.e. 'Satan's enemy'³⁴—and, of course, (afterwards) the 'peacemaker'.

Jung's view clearly emerges in the following passage: 'the unspeakable conflict posited by duality resolves itself in a fourth principle, which restores the unity of the first in its full development. The rhythm is built up in three steps, but the resultant symbol is a quaternity'.³⁵ Moreover, the Swiss psychoanalyst maintains that

the individuation process is invariably started off by the patient's becoming conscious of the shadow,³⁶ a personality component usually with a negative sign. This 'inferior' personality is made up of everything that will not fit in with, and adapt to, the laws and regulations of conscious life . . . Closer investigation shows there is at least one function in it which ought to collaborate in orienting consciousness. Or rather, this function does collaborate, not for the benefit of conscious, purposive intentions, but in the interests of uncon-

32 Read *et al.* 1969²: 175.

33 Read *et al.* 1969²: 175–6.

34 See the excerpt from a 'liturgy' of The Process quoted above, p. 244.

35 Read *et al.* 1969²: 175. On Jung's implicit 'Manichaeism', corroborated by precise references to dualistic and Gnostic doctrines, see Read *et al.* 1969²: 167–70 (criticism of the classical Christian conception of evil as *privatio boni* and clear acceptance of the Gnostic dualism, from which the theory of the quaternity re-elaborated by The Process).

36 On the typical Jungian category of 'shadow' see Read *et al.* 1969²: 165–7, where the author connects it to the indelible link of the consciousness with the 'undifferentiated' and the 'unconscious', which the primitive initiations cannot totally wipe out; on this subject Jung (in Read *et al.* 1969²: 166, n. 4) refers to the 'alchemical symbol of the *umbras solis*' and to the 'Gnostic idea that Christ was born "not without some shadow"' (*Christus natus non sine quadam umbra*). Moreover, 'it often happens that people who have an amazing range of consciousness know less about themselves than the veriest infant, and all because "the fourth would not come"—it remained down below—or up above—in the unconsciousness realm' (Read *et al.* 1969²: 166–7; 'the fourth would not come' is an expression drawn from Goethe's *Faust*).

scious tendencies pursuing a different goal. It is this fourth, 'inferior' function which acts autonomously in relation to consciousness and cannot be harnessed to the latter's intentions. It lurks behind every neurotic dissociation and can only be annexed to consciousness if the corresponding unconscious contents are made conscious at the same time. But this integration cannot take place and be put to a useful purpose unless one can admit the tendencies bound up with the shadow and allow them some measure of realization—tempered, of course, with the necessary criticism. This leads to disobedience and self-disgust, but also to self-reliance, without which individuation is unthinkable.³⁷

In order to interpret the material here briefly set forth, we can say that The Process, 'model of a part of the world of Satanism that gives hospitality to groups too structured to be stable',³⁸ chose to give, within the diatribe between 'traditional' religion and (post-)secularization, a very original answer. Moreover, it was a highly significant example of the extraordinary crossover between the late hippy culture and psychoanalysis during the second half of the sixties—revised in the light of a 'religious quest' occurring in a (post-)Enlightenment society—with the tormented (and unsolved) alternative between a deep demand for spirituality and a clear-cut refusal of the institutional/traditional forms of religion as its constant background. We may also consider The Process quite a refined—compared with the common models of its time, and especially of the 'satanic' *milieu*—'subculture' characteristic of the sixties,³⁹ a dualistic and apocalyptic 'gnosis' greatly influenced by the *état d'esprit* of the youth rebellion, by psychoanalysis (Adler, Jung) and partially by Aleister Crowley.⁴⁰ Moreover, it was a 'human potential movement' which directly or indirectly re-elaborated material of a high cultural level, in an eccentric and typically 'underground'—but not intellectually weak—fashion.

37 Read *et al.* 1969²: 197–8. On the 'demoniac' as Jung's inheritance one can see Hillman 1987.

38 Introvigne 1992: 12, our translation. The 'excess of structuring' was *in primis* intellectual (Introvigne 1994a: 300), but also organizational, concerning the strongly hierarchical structure of the group.

39 See Raschke 1990: 111.

40 Introvigne 1994a: 300.

In an article devoted to Anton S. LaVey's Church of Satan, Randall H. Alfred expressed a paradoxical and general opinion on Satanism which, however, may at least partially suit The Process (even if, as already noted, the latter does not technically come under the category of 'Satanism', see above, note 11):

while retaining Protestantism's worldly interest in the value of work and discipline, Satanism no longer rejects the enjoyment of the mundane fruits of those labors. It is a final ratification of the spirit of capitalism . . . Satanism . . . *In many ways, [it] is becoming another Protestant sect.*⁴¹

Bearing in mind the evident differences between the Church of Satan and The Process (in particular the deep rooting of the latter in the counterculture climate, while from this point of view the former, certainly less 'religious' than The Process, was far from being a typical product of the sixties),⁴² we believe that this interpretation may acutely shed light on some sources and trends of the complex phenomenon in question. Contemporary Satanism seems quite often to be, besides a 'counter-religion', a nihilist and roughly Nietzschean philosophy and ideology (as is clearly the case with the Church of Satan), sometimes making use of Nazi stylistic features and aesthetics (as the Process itself did, against the main counterculture inclinations)⁴³ and a hypercapitalistic 'attitude'⁴⁴ assumed, as in the case of hippies, more to impress or to shock

41 Alfred 1976: 199, my italics. The sociological and economy-related interpretation here proposed explains a good part, but obviously not all, the roots of contemporary Satanism, which is also—sometimes perhaps *in primis*—a 'spiritual' phenomenon.

42 On the scarce popularity of LaVey's group between 1968 and 1969 (for instance, in this period it had a very limited success among those under 30, its typical member being a white professional of the middle classes aged between 28–30 and 40), see Alfred 1976: 193–4; on 'ideological' differences between counterculture and Church of Satan, also in political terms, see Alfred 1976: 195–6. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that the 'golden age' of the Church of Satan occurred between 1966 and 1975, therefore in a period more or less contemporary to the time of the widest popularity of The Process.

43 While the 'religious heiress' of counterculture, New Age—and sometimes the hippy movement too—clearly draw from some theosophical themes which were exploited by Nazism some decades ago.

44 This is one of the main differences between the Church of Satan and mainstream counterculture trends.

the man in the street than consciously adhering to a specific ideology. De Grimston's 'Luciferism', like counterculture in general, was both historically and culturally an expression of late modernity, *i.e.* post-modernity and what we may call the 'hyperWest'. It was a sentimental *reaction* to the processes of depersonalization and secularization typical of modern society. The Process was an experience synthesizing some 'trajectories' of postmodernity: some 'cultural outcasts' of the West (for example occultism and Nazi iconography) were recovered and mixed by the group, in line with a certain 'spiritualistic background' of the West itself. One could see the development of these phenomena as the emergence of trends which are constantly latent—officially refused but absolutely not to be got rid of, and sometimes even covertly promoted—in mainstream society, or which are expressed in other ways, generally socially accepted or tolerated. In line with this interpretation, these trends would be the extreme sign (often manifested in parodist and theatrical ways) of values at the very least not entirely opposed by the contemporary world,⁴⁵ whose values are separated by a difference of *degree*—but not of *nature*—from those trends. And yet, Satanism turns out to be one of the last *taboos* in the collective imagination of contemporary society (even for those who support it, its character of 'total rebellion' against socially shared conventions often being the spur to join it).

The experience of the Process—and that of counterculture in general—can be easily interpreted as one of the several—narrow, but mostly genuine and significant for its origins and *iter*—post-modern chapters of the attempt to re-enchant the world and to rediscover the profound 'meaning of things', an experience that can give rise to 'intense' existence (see Bainbridge 1992: 425 and above, p. 237) against the dark anonymity of modernity; it was an attempt which quickly imploded, mostly owing to the above noted internal reasons (see above, pp. 244–5). Herein

45 According to Introvigne (in Fiore *et al.* 1997: 23, my translation), 'organized Satanism is interesting . . . since it is the metaphor of a brutal modernity to which all rhetorical screens have been taken off. When the Satanist tells us that the strong has the right to abuse the weak, to reduce him to an object for his longing of power, wealth and sexual pleasure, is simply stating what a lot of people thinks and what not a few ideologies have hidden behind the most multicoloured prettexts. The Satanist, from this point of view, takes the mask off to a certain modernity and makes it see for what it is. Whatever small or very small, organized Satanism of movements and of adults may therefore be a further clue revealing a crisis of civilization.'

it is possible, in our opinion, to identify the genuine character of The Process, which—like counterculture and New Age—more or less had its beginnings in a period when the awareness of the ‘loss of innocence’ emerged especially among American youth, when the latter sensed the end of the so-called American dream (which, according to some, had never really begun). In this sense, 1962 is a very significant year,⁴⁶ immediately preceding Kennedy’s murder (November 1963) and the official beginning of the Vietnam war (1964); in the same period, among other things, were the ‘birth’ of New Age (Introvigne 1994b) and the first steps of the group that was to become The Process.

However, often post-modernity does not offer people a ‘map’ to see their way clearly through this world, sometimes offering instead the kind of map that clearly confuses them. The end of The Process may be compared to the end of counterculture, even if the latter chronologically preceded the former by a few years. From the historical point of view, their end is clearly connected with the ‘disaster of the Manson case’ (see above, pp. 245), while from an ‘ideological’ perspective their ‘implosion’ is closely linked to the fallacy of certain post-modern trends. While The Process ceased to exist owing to the already noted internal problems (see above, pp. 244–5), a strong politicization of the hippy movement followed its mythicized ‘golden age’, the ‘Summer of Love’ of 1967—the ‘dark side of the coin’ of this politicization being the emergence and the widespread diffusion of a deviant and muddled ‘esoteric’ trend inside it. In this sense, one can note that the reasons for the dissolution of The Process and counterculture were in both cases also the creation of ‘ideological superstructures’ which irreparably damaged them. Ironically and tragically at the same time, the brief course of The Process shows, beyond the most refined sociological interpretations, and as Bainbridge himself has brilliantly written, Satan’s triumph—and with it the triumph of separation and dispersion—at the same time *against* and *in line with* the very theology of the group,⁴⁷ proving how difficult ‘reconciliation’

46 *American Graffiti* (1973, by George Lucas) and *Big Wednesday* (1978, by John Milius) magnificently and nostalgically catch the spirit of 1962 (the plot of the latter begins in 1962 and ends in 1974). These movies are aching evocations of a historic and personal age irreparably lost: at the end of adolescence, one understands the fact of being alone before life. In this regard, the night and the sea are clear metaphors of the perils that life itself hides: one has to ‘overcome’ them to be ‘initiated’ to life itself.

47 Bainbridge 1992: 424–8.

with the unconscious is and how dangerous exploring the recesses of one's mind turns out to be. In fact, 'the gates of the unconscious are not closed by chance'.⁴⁸

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JANE WILLIAMS-HOGAN

The Place of Emanuel Swedenborg in the Spiritual Saga of Scandinavia

Introduction

Between 1749 and 1771 the Swede Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) wrote and published eighteen religious works in Latin that he claimed were the foundation of a new Christian religion. He wrote that he had been called by God to unlock the spiritual secrets of the Bible through the doctrine of correspondences; to reveal the nature of the spiritual world based on experience in that realm; and to explain the keys to living a heavenly life. Stating in his last work, *True Christianity* (paragraph no. 779)¹ that he was called only to write and publish, Swedenborg never attempted to found a church. Swedenborg published his books in Amsterdam and London, and if his 1758 print runs of 1,000 for five different works are typical, he had thousands of books available to distribute throughout Europe and he did so. However, the number of books in Scandinavia at the time of his death was probably fairly small.

In 1772 there were less than a dozen readers in all of Europe, and only a small handful in Scandinavia. While awareness, education, and access are necessary prerequisites to the possibility of responding to these works, interest is essential. From the beginning, and over the years since their publication, individuals motivated to explore them seem to fall into the following categories: religious virtuosi/seekers; philosophers; occultists; artists, poets, and, writers. Without question, a particular individual may be motivated by more than one of these categories—August Strindberg (1849–1912) provides an excellent example of a person with multiple levels of motivation stimulating his encounter with Swedenborg.

1 References to material in Swedenborg's work are always given by citing paragraph numbers.

Despite the obstacles mentioned above, Swedenborg's works have been and continue to be read and responded to in Scandinavia. However, the motivation for the response has varied; and the distribution has been uneven. Not surprisingly, the strongest and most sustained response has occurred in Sweden, Swedenborg's homeland. Denmark, where Swedenborg frequently visited during his lifetime, witnessed an early stirring of interest among a few of his acquaintances, but nothing developed. In the nineteenth century he was sporadically noticed, and eventually a small circle of readers emerged that has continued into the twenty-first century. In Finland there was a flurry of interest among the Swedish-speaking Nordenskjöld family soon after Swedenborg's death. Their involvement played a significant role in the early history of Swedenborgianism in Sweden, France, and England; and while some family members were still connected with Swedenborgianism at the beginning of the twentieth century, they no longer resided in Finland. There was no discernable response in Norway until the middle of the nineteenth century when members of the Boyesen family discovered the teachings of Swedenborg. One member of the family chose to raise his family based on them, and another member became the first Swedenborgian minister in Denmark. There appears to have been little, if any direct intellectual interest in his works in Norway until fairly recently. Today there is a small circle of readers in Oslo.

Those who have responded to Swedenborg in Scandinavia fit all the categories of motivation as outlined above. Their stories will not be discovered, however, until a comprehensive examination of Swedenborg's place in Scandinavia is written. This article is only an initial attempt to fill that need.

The focus of this article so inspired me that I actually wrote a small monograph that would be impossible to present. I explored issues in Swedenborg scholarship, in general and with reference to Scandinavia; reviewed Swedenborg's relationship to both esotericism and Lutheranism, and then examined the history of the reception of Swedenborg in the four nations of Scandinavia. In this article I will make a few remarks about issues on scholarship, and then turn my attention to three men with three different relationships to Swedenborg's religious writings, they are Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), and August Strindberg (1850–1912). I will then make an assessment of Swedenborg's contribution to Scandinavia.

Issues in Swedenborg Scholarship and Scandinavia's Spiritual Saga: Some Problematics

Over a decade ago, I wrote an article entitled 'Swedenborg's Place in Modern Western Esotericism', published in Faivre's and Hanegraaff's *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*. While my 1998 article does not suggest that he was a central figure in European Illuminism, it does demonstrate that he was far from marginal.

Since that article was published, I have explored Swedenborg's relationship to both European and American writers and artists and have found that he was a significant influence on many individuals who made ground-breaking contributions to modern Western culture, some of whom had esoteric interests. For example: the English artist, William Blake (1757–1827), the French novelist Henri Balzac (1799–1850), the American writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49), the American poet Walt Whitman (1819–92), the French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821–67), The Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–81), the American landscape painter George Inness (1825–94), the French painter Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), and the Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986).

Edgar Allan Poe is a particularly interesting case in point, because his work had broad influence on Scandinavian writers and artists toward the end of the nineteenth century. I explored Poe's connection to Swedenborg in an article titled, 'Light and Dark in the Art of Edgar A. Poe' (Williams-Hogan 2004).

Poe, who reviewed books for a literary magazine seems to have read Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* in its second American edition published in 1837. Not only does he mention Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* in his popular short story 'The Fall of the House of Usher' published in 1839, but a passage from that work (paragraph no. 528) appears to be source of the story itself. The paragraph is a discussion about people who renounce the world and live for the spirit alone, much like Roderick Usher. The number not only expounds on the theme of 'The Fall of the House of Usher', the word picture it employs appears to be the source of the imagery used by Poe to describe the house itself. The number concludes:

...This is because living an inner life and not an outer life at the same time is like living in a house that has no foundation, that gradually either settles or develops gaping cracks or totters until it collapses (Swedenborg 2002: paragraph no. 528).

The picture described in *Heaven and Hell* foreshadows Poe's own words depicting the house and its ultimate collapse at the end of the tale and strongly suggests that it was Poe's inspiration.

There are several implications of this case: first, knowledge of Swedenborg's oeuvre matters. However, since Swedenborg's perspective is not part of the 'taken for granted' intellectual heritage of Western scholars; even in the area of religion, his contribution to a specific writer, philosopher, or artist can go unnoticed, particularly if the person does not personally mention Swedenborg.

There are several reasons why a person, whose work may be of interest to a researcher, may not have mentioned his or her interest in Swedenborg: one important one would be the long reach of Kant's critique of Swedenborg in *Dreams of a Spirit Seer* (1766), with its implication of Swedenborg's fantasy or madness. Another reason, quite simply could be church censorship. Surely these issues weighed on creative individuals who had read Swedenborg in the late eighteenth century and long into the nineteenth, and perhaps they weighed even more so, in Scandinavia, where the traditional aspect of social structure lingered longer, and where the Lutheran Church maintained a tight grip on society. In Scandinavia politics may also have played a role.

If they read Swedenborg in Latin, the question is merely what books or portion of works did they read. If they read him in translation, the question becomes: translated by whom and when?

Swedenborg's Influence on Scandinavian Art and Letters

In order to explore Swedenborg's influence on Scandinavian art and letters, his relationship to three men will be reviewed: the Norwegian, Edvard Munch, the Dane, Søren Kierkegaard, and the Swede, August Strindberg.

Munch provides an opportunity to examine Swedenborg's influence second hand, so to speak. As I write, there is no known evidence that Munch knew of, read about, or actually read Swedenborg. That being said, it is my contention that he could have been influenced by Swedenborg, nonetheless. Investigating this possibility provides an opportunity to examine the avenues of Swedenborg's secondary influence through literature that help to create in the 1890s a period of 'spiritual breakthrough', according to the Danish poet and playwright, Helge Rhode in a 1913 lecture (Anderson 1973: 12). What Rhode said was that the underlying motivation of the art and literature of that period was 'a

craving for a new law of life or in any case for a new illumination of life' (Anderson 1973: 12).

Munch with Swedenborg in the Background

Danish author Johannes Jörgensen's 1916 *Autobiography* sets the stage for a discussion of Swedenborg's place in Scandinavian art and letters toward the end of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, Swedenborg's contribution to the conversation was clearly taken-for-granted; on the other, it was masked through second hand presentations of his thought in the works of the many authors and artists who also served as wellsprings for the creative vision that emerged at the century's end.

It is possible to see Swedenborg as a taken-for-granted figure in the following two quotes of Jörgensen, in discussing his friend Mogens Ballin:

It was into the Paris of Symbolism that he fell in 1891 when only twenty years old. With all the enthusiasm of his youth and the ardour of his race he joined himself to the newest of the new; he was one of the happiest among the happy, cosmopolitan and youthful crowd of the Boulevard Saint Michel and the Closerie des Lilas. But he did not confine himself to drawing and painting; he also read and thought. Sâr Péladan made an impression on him; he read Swedenborg. . . (Jörgensen 1928: 166.)

The three artists, then, Ballin, Verkade and Sérusier, spent a summer together in Brittany. First at Pont-Aven, then at Huelgoat, finally in Pouldre. In the autumn of 1891 Ballin returned to Copenhagen. I saw him at the studio of his friend, Clément, one day in the following February—very talkative, his fingers yellow from cigarette making, expounding Symbolism, Rosicrucianism and the doctrines of Swedenborg. . . (Jörgensen 1928: 167.)

Swedenborg's enormous contribution to Symbolism will be discussed shortly; but first, again drawing on Jörgensen's *Autobiography*, let me list some of the authors he read, who can be shown to have been influenced by Swedenborg: Goethe and Poe are the very first to be mentioned, then follows Wilde, Dostoevsky, Strindberg, Madame de Staël, Coleridge, George Sand, Balzac, Baudelaire, Madame Blavatsky, and Browning.²

2 Jörgensen 1928: 6, 7, 51, 70, 137, 141, 143.

These authors all focused on something higher than nature, and something more interior. As Jörgensen himself said, 'But, as everywhere else, the exoteric doctrine differed from the esoteric; the kernel was one thing, the shell another' (Jörgensen 1928: 83).

In reading both Poe and Dostoevsky, Swedenborg is also being read, not directly, but indirectly. What they seem to highlight, according to Anderson is 'the realness of the "unreal"', the irrational element, and an awareness of 'all the hidden currents in the spirit of man' (Anderson 1973: 6). In 1889 the poet and Symbolist, Charles Morice, compared Victor Hugo and Poe. He wrote that while Hugo saw the grotesque and the horrible from the outside, Poe saw it within the soul, the heart, the mind of a person: 'it is to our souls, and not our eyes, that he appeals' (Anderson 1973: 7).

According to Anderson, Jörgensen saw Poe as 'the proto-Symbolist of modern times' (Anderson 1973: 36). In Poe's visions he found all the elements of Symbolism: 'the inward search for perfect harmony, the essential unity of a world only apparently chaotic, and the theatricality of the artist's powers of mind in giving expression to these mysteries' (Anderson 1973: 36). The world after all mirrors the will. This view echoes Swedenborg, who wrote in the very first line of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, 'that love is the life of every human being'.

According to Czeslaw Milosz, Dostoevsky also was familiar with Swedenborg. He owned *Heaven and Hell* and two other works closely associated with him (Milosz 1975).³ Milosz finds Swedenborgian elements in *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, and *The Possessed*. His influence on *The Dream of a Queer Fellow* is also quite clear. In *Crime and Punishment* he points to several doctrines of Swedenborg's that Dostoevsky employed, such as the doctrine of correspondences, and the concept of the Grand Man. He, like Poe, was fascinated with Swedenborg's idea that a human being, by virtue of his mind, lives in the spiritual world. This endows human actions and human events with extraordinary meaning. A person may choose to live connected to heaven, or to hell. Heaven or hell is constructed from the states of human beings who live there.

3 The three books are all in Russian. The other two are: A. N. Aksakov, *The Gospel According to John with an Exposition and a Discussion of their Spiritual Meaning According to the Teaching on Correspondences* (Leipzig, 1864); A. N. Aksakov, *The Rationalism of Swedenborg: A Critical Analysis of His Teaching on the Holy Writ* (Leipzig, 1870).

The projected images derive from their states of mind. Heaven and hell does not so much depict sociological structures, as it depicts or projects psychological states. Swedenborg in his religious works was one of the first authors to portray human inwardness. Poe, as well as Dostoevsky draws on this new reality.

Poe and Dostoevsky share with their readers the inner realities of dark, troubled, and troubling people. It is almost as if they have descended into hell to find them, but into a very special hell, unlike the fires of Dante's *Inferno*, they present the reader a series of private hells, individual, and personal dark places where the terror is internal and self-generated—they, in effect, painted portraits of the inhabitants of Swedenborg's hell.

In any case, both these men spoke with authority to the Symbolist painter Edvard Munch. In fact, 'it is reported that he once declared that Poe and Dostoevsky had made "the greatest" impact on his life' (Anderson 1973: 43). I recently read in a review of a new biography of Munch by Sue Prideaux (Yale, 2006) that Munch's father read Poe and Dostoevsky aloud to his young children. If that is the case, these works made early and deep impression on him (Bering 2006). Prideaux also cites Dostoevsky's influence on Munch: 'Just as Leonardo da Vinci studied human anatomy and dissected corpses, so I was trying to dissect souls. No one in art has penetrated as far as Dostoevsky into the mystical realms of the soul, toward the metaphysical, the subconscious, viewing the external reality of the world as merely a sign, a symbol of the spiritual and the metaphysical' (Bering 2006).

Munch as a young man in Christiania formulated an artistic manifesto, in which he wrote:

We want more than a mere photograph of nature. We do not want to paint pretty pictures to be hung on drawing room walls. We want to create, or at least lay the foundations of an art that give something to humanity. An art that arrests and engages. An art created of one's innermost heart. (Eggum 2007.)

And in an often cited note from his diary, he wrote: 'We should no longer paint interiors, with people reading and women knitting, they should be people who live, breathe, feel, suffer and love' (Eggum 2007). While he wanted his art to be personal, it was not for the sake of expressing mere subjectivity that he created, rather as Eggum writes, 'he aimed to establish universal values through individual ones by crystallizing images of man's deepest emotions—of love, death and anxiety, images

that retained primitive qualities evidently forgotten by the bourgeois civilization of his time' (Eggum 2007).

In the 1880s Munch travelled to Paris and became immersed in the Symbolists' milieu. While there were many streams that fed into the Symbolist aesthetic in France, Filiz Eda Burhan in her 1979 dissertation investigating the formation of that aesthetic suggests that psychology and the occult sciences were particularly important. Her dissertation demonstrates that Swedenborg provided the Symbolists with psychological and occult insights. He supplied them with both a vision and a methodology. He was appropriated directly by Baudelaire, Aurier, Sérusier, and Gauguin, and indirectly through the works of Balzac and Poe.

Baudelaire's influence on the Symbolist movement is well known. Burhan's work documents that Balzac had a seminal influence on the movement that rivalled Baudelaire's. The Symbolist era witnessed a revival of occultism and a revival of interest in the Balzac oeuvre, particularly the trilogy, *Le Livre mystique*, that includes *Louis Lambert*, *La Recherche de l'absolu*, and *Seraphita*. According to Burhan, 'the series of articles entitled "Balzac Forever", which appeared in the Symbolist journal, *La Cravache*, was almost exclusively composed of excerpts from Balzac's mystic novels. . .' (Burhan 1979: 33). There was also an article entitled 'Balzac Occultiste', in an issue of *La Plume* dedicated to esotericism; and the critic, Charles Morice, urged Symbolist readers to use *Louis Lambert* and *Seraphita* as spiritual guides (Burhan 1979: 34). And the Symbolist Paul Sérusier 'encouraged his Nabi friends Jan Verkade and Mögens Ballin to read these novels as part of their "spiritual education"' (Burhan 1979: 34). Sérusier took his own lesson to heart, because 'he claimed that he read one page of *Louis Lambert* every day before he began to paint' (Burhan 1979: 142).

The trilogy is Balzac's version of the *Divine Comedy*, with *Seraphita* revealing the highest ideal. In *Seraphita*, Balzac pays direct homage to Swedenborg. In the novel Balzac relates many of the details of Swedenborg's life, his clairvoyant experiences, and his religious doctrines, mixed with his (Balzac's) own ideas of reincarnation. This book, as Burhan has documented, is a potent visionary script for esoteric practitioners, including writers and artists.

Albert Aurier was another Symbolist who took this vision to heart. In his article 'Le Symbolism en Peinture—Paul Gauguin' he denounces Impressionism, and 'claimed that the "true and absolute artist" was the one who could join Swedenborg in the glorious cry, "This same night the eyes of my internal man became open: they permitted me to see into

the heavens, into the world of ideas, and into hell'' (Burhan 1979: 128).⁴ Aurier believed that this shift in perception from the corporeal eye to the soul led to a higher form of cognition. This superior cognition is the foundation for understanding correspondences (Burhan 1979: 129).

Burhan states the significance of this for the Symbolist Movement:

Aurier's double reference to Swedenborg, in an article which was designed as a Symbolist manifesto, not only demonstrates that mystical theory had indeed been a contributing factor in the formation of the Symbolist aesthetic stance, but it also indicates the precise nature of its contribution. For the quotation of these two statements by Swedenborg allowed Aurier to define perception as a spiritual, subjective vision which revealed the world to be a system of symbolic representations, a definition which was, of course, the axis of the entire Symbolist aesthetic (Burhan 1979: 129).

The Symbolists used Swedenborg not only to redefine the location of true perception, but they also drew inspiration from him concerning the occult power of clairvoyance. The ideal Symbolist artist was a 'sublime voyeur' (Burhan 1979: 131). Gauguin took delight in quoting Swedenborg (perhaps incorrectly) that artists are 'the favorites of God' (Burhan 1979: 131). Gauguin expanded on this idea in the *Cahier pour Aline* and his review of the artist Armand Séguin. To make his point, he quotes the Swedish visionary: 'There is in the firmament a book in which the eternal law of harmony and beauty is written', and Gauguin believed that Swedenborg claimed that only artists have the ability to decipher the meaning of the divine book. Gauguin's interpretation of Swedenborg gave him faith that artists can both read and write (through their own creations) this divine script (Cheetham 1987: 17). In addition, in his text, on several occasions he exclaims: 'Et Swedenborg était un savant' (Cheetham 1987: 17)!

Swedenborg, via Balzac's *Seraphita* and *Louis Lambert*, also influenced the Symbolist's sense of colour and proportion. As Burhan writes:

Much can be said about Honoré de Balzac's *Seraphita*, a novel which the artists and critics of the Symbolist Movement both knew and

4 Swedenborg did not use the phrase the world of ideas, but rather the world of spirits.

loved. Liberally laced with citations from Swedenborg, *Seraphita* presented all the essential features of the theory of correspondences which later appeared as the basic element of the Symbolists aesthetic program. (Burhan 1979: 140.)

In the book's last reference to correspondences, they could discover the intimate relationship between music and colours. In other parts of the text that referred to Swedenborg, they could also discover the underlying principles of straight and curved lines, noting that horizontal lines measure what is inert, and vertical lines what is living. They understood that the 'real' quality of these lines is not found in nature, but through one's spirit (Burhan 1979: 141).

It is hoped that this discussion has demonstrated the importance of Swedenborg to avant-garde artists and intellectuals throughout the nineteenth century. He was, so to speak, a 'cutting edge' to their cutting edge. He was sometimes read in abridged formats, and even as in Balzac's *Seraphita*, in an abridged abridgement. He was sometimes, but not often, read in the original, and even then it could be in translations that had questionable fidelity to the original. He was however, an ongoing continual part of the conversation whether through Poe, and Dostoevsky, the Symbolists or even others that have been mentioned but not discussed in this article. In these circles he was not generally read as a theologian, although his authority was used to give an imprimatur to the concept of 'artist as revelator and priest'.

With regard to Edvard Munch in particular, what do we know? First, although there are no references to Swedenborg in his written corpus or library, it is import to point out that Munch led the unsettled life of a wanderer until he settled in Ekely in 1916. Thus, the library he owned at his death is not necessary representative of his life-long reading.⁵ And while Swedenborg is not mentioned in his diary; his name did not find itself in Kierkegaard's either and yet, he both owned and marked copies of Swedenborg's religious works. Second, we do know that he read authors such as Poe and Dostoevsky, whose visions drew heavily of Swedenborg's insights concerning the inner reality of the 'darkness and light' found in human nature. Third, he considered himself a Symbolist and a northern representative of that school. He painted to express the

5 This fact was pointed out to me by Mr Lasse Jacobsen, researcher at the Munch library in Oslo.

universal human in what he saw was the 'Frieze of Life', that also intimately reflected his own inner emotional life. He wrote:

In reality, my art is a confession made of my own free will, an attempt to clarify my own notion of Life . . . at bottom it is a kind of egoism, but I shall not give up hope that with its assistance I shall be able to help others achieve their own clarity (Bischoff 2000: 42).

He also said, in a statement reminiscent of Gauguin that:

I painted the lines and colors that affected my inner eye. I painted from memory without adding anything, without the details that I no longer saw in front of me. This is the reason for the simplicity of the painting, their obvious emptiness. I painted the impressions of my childhood, the dull colors of a forgotten day (Bischoff 2000: inside front cover).

His work also illustrates the Symbolist understanding of the inner meaning of the horizontal and vertical lines, particularly in his last painting, *By the Window*, done in 1940. In Bischoff's discussion of this painting he writes:

In this last painting, the polarity of Life and Death has produced a work of striking power. The strong red of the face and background, with the weighty blue-green of his clothing, establishes a solid zone of Life which is emphatically counterpointed with the realm of Death visible outside the window, where ice and snow hold Nature tight in a frozen grip. The vertical structure of the picture reminds us of the contrast between standing and lying. Life represents a temporary victory over the force of gravity and over matter: we stand, upright, but one day we must lie down, to die. Life is an image of victory. And this late painting reconciles Life and Death, the vertical and the horizontal, movement and stasis. (Bischoff 2000: 93.)

In this painting we see the Symbolist use of colour as well as structure. It is interesting to note that red corresponds to love, and white to truth in Swedenborg's teaching on correspondences. The red band of colour, the colour of life/love claims only a quarter of the canvas, and almost appears to be retreating, shrinking in the face of death and winter. But Munch's face is defiantly still red, filled with life/love.

Like no other, he painted the ‘modern life of the soul’. Insofar as the life of the soul in modern times depicts the inner nature of both heaven and hell, we can see Munch providing the visual images of Swedenborg’s own work *Heaven and Hell*. Swedenborg wrote a visual description of our inner human life made ‘real’ in the afterlife. Munch knew that world intimately, not necessary from reading Swedenborg, but from experience. We cannot photograph our inner life, but it can be described and painted. As Munch said: ‘The camera cannot compete with the painter as long as it cannot be used in Heaven or Hell’ (Bischoff 2000: 85).

As Bischoff writes, ‘Heaven and Hell were all too familiar to Munch. His whole life long he was forever journeying from one to the other. The details of Munch’s landscapes. . .were never merely naturalistic reproduction. They were also symbols expressing a personal language of the soul.’ (Bischoff 2000: 85.)

It is clear that Swedenborg and Munch shared a perception concerning the nature of *Heaven and Hell*, and they both sought to confront their audience with its wonderful and fearful, self-made reality. Was Munch knowingly influenced by the visions of the Swedish mystic and his fellow ‘seer’? The man who said he was enabled to see into heaven and hell, ‘in hopes of shedding light where there is ignorance, and of dispelling scepticism’ (Swedenborg 2002: paragraph no. 1). Perhaps not, but the weight of evidence suggests otherwise.

Kierkegaard with Swedenborg in the Middle Ground

In shifting from exploring the possibility of a connection between Swedenborg and Munch, to some actual, although, as yet, not clearly defined relationship between Swedenborg and Søren Kierkegaard; it is clear that the methodological problems are quite different. Knowing that Kierkegaard owned and read Swedenborg, is interesting and even exciting, but it is only a tenuous beginning to the much more important question of ‘So what?’ What does knowing about this connection mean, and what, if any, importance does it play in understanding Kierkegaard’s philosophy and his stance toward Christianity?

While these are important questions, and I will certainly address them, I will also say that, at this moment, I am really only setting up the problem, putting it into the public academic domain, so to speak; and I must leave it to others, and perhaps my own future research for more definitive assessment. This qualification is necessary because there are

still many unknowns with regard to the material I will report on and analyze; and of course, there is the obvious problem that I am not a Kierkegaard scholar. While initially there are some advantages, to coming at Kierkegaard as an 'outsider' and a Swedenborg scholar at that; however, in the long run, my lack of intimate knowledge of his oeuvre and the scholarship surrounding it may hamper my ability to 'see' clearly what this material represents or means.

Kierkegaard's Encounter with Swedenborg's Religious Writings

Given that necessary background, it is now useful to turn to what I have in hand with regard to Swedenborg and Kierkegaard.

I have 46 pages photocopied from the works of Swedenborg listed in the *Aktionsprotokol over Søren Kierkegaards Bogsamling* (Rohde 1967). Swedenborg's works are listed as 810–11, and 812–13 on page 35 of the original protocol. They are in the Hovedsamling.

They are listed as follows:

- 810–11 Swedenborg, Emanuel, *Opuscula*. 4to. London 1758 & 63.
[: De Coelo et ejus Mirabilibus, et De Inferno. Londini 1758.
– *Doctrina Novæ Hierosolymæ de Domino*. Amstelodami
1763.] 4-2-8 Lygne til kgs. Bibl. [Nu: KB. F& F 1961, p. 109 sp. I.
Samt. Kartonnage.] (Rohde 1967: 56.)
- 812–13 Swedenborg, E., die ganze Theologie der Neuen Kirche, aus
dem Lat. 2 Bände. Basel 1795. 1-3-0 kgs. Biblioteket. [NUL KB.
F & F 1961, p. 109 sp. I. Købt hos Schublthe 10.2.1843, F & F
1961, p. 124. Samt. halvbd.; N. C. Møller? F & F 1961, p. 114.]
(Rohde 1967: 56–7.)

The marked pages are all from Swedenborg's first editions.⁶ However, the titles in the catalogue do not do full justice to the works marked by Kierkegaard. The *Doctrine of the Lord*, also contained the *Doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures*, the *Doctrine of Life*, and the *Doctrine of Faith*. These are all short works by Swedenborg. The marked pages come from the *Doctrine of the Lord* (7 pages, and 5 numbers), the *Doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures* (17 pages and 25 numbers), and the *Doctrine of Life* (1 page and

6 Verified by Jonathan S. Rose, PhD, July 18, 2007, Neo-Latin scholar and translator of Swedenborg's theological works.

4 numbers). There were no marked pages from the *Doctrine of Faith*. In addition, there were no marked pages from *Heaven and Hell*, but there were a considerable number of pages taken from Swedenborg's 1763 *Divine Love and Wisdom* (15 pages, and 30 numbers); and a few were taken from its companion work *Divine Providence* (6 pages and between 7–11 numbers).⁷ Neither *Divine Love and Wisdom* nor *Divine Providence* are listed in the *Auction Protocol*, however, they must be the *Opuscula* listed with a 1763 date.

The *Auction Protocol* does not list the date that Kierkegaard acquired the Latin editions, but it does list the fact that he bought the two-volume *German Overview of the Theology of the New Church* on February 10, 1843, ten days before he published *Either/Or*, which is dated February 20, 1843.

Since I have not had access to the German Overview, and do not know what it contains or, if it, too, was marked, at this time, I cannot comment on whether or not it had any impact on *Either/Or*. However, what I can do is: first, to list the works of Kierkegaard in which I have found similarities to ideas he marked in the Latin editions of Swedenborg; second, to give a brief overview of those ideas; and third, to look briefly at those works of Kierkegaard and make a few comparisons. And, then finally come back to the question of 'So what?'

In order to make this effort manageable, I am drawing the list from the book *The Essential Kierkegaard*, edited by Howard and Edna Hong (2000). From that work, the list includes:

- Either/Or* dated 1843
- Four Upbuilding Discourses* dated 1844
- Concluding Unscientific Postscript* dated 1846
- Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* dated 1847
- Works of Love* dated 1847
- The Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle* dated 1849
- For Self-Examination* dated 1851
- Judge for Yourself! For Self-Examination Recommended to the Present Age*
- Second Series* dated 1851–2.

⁷ The actual numbers marked could be verified by looking at the original pages. The quality of the photocopy of these particular pages makes the exact numbers marked uncertain.

In 1763 Swedenborg published the four doctrinal works owned by Kierkegaard. They provide a good brief overview of the essential doctrines for the New Jerusalem—the holy city mentioned in the book of Revelation. These texts present teachings concerning the nature of God, the role of sacred scripture, the fact that life in the New Jerusalem requires living according to the Ten Commandments, and the nature of faith and its role in life.

The *Doctrine of the Lord* is 64 pages long and contains 65 numbers. Kierkegaard only marked 8 per cent of the passages in this work.

The *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture* is 54 pages long and contains 90 numbers. He marked 28 per cent of the passages in this work.

The *Doctrine of Life* is 36 pages long and contains 113 numbers. Kierkegaard marked 4 per cent of the passages in this work.

Divine Love and Wisdom is 151 pages long and contains 432 numbers. Kierkegaard marked more numbers in *Divine Love and Wisdom* than any other book of Swedenborg's that he owned, and yet they represent only 7 per cent of the whole work.

Divine Providence is 214 pages long and contains 340 numbers. The numbers that he marked represent only 3 per cent of the entire work.

Some Key Teachings of Swedenborg Marked in Works Kierkegaard Owned

The essential idea of the Doctrine of the Lord is that 'God is one in person and in essence, and this God is the Lord'. Kierkegaard marked the phrase, and 'this God is the Lord' (paragraph no. 65). Swedenborg also demonstrates in this work that Jehovah and Jesus Christ are one; and that they became fully one through the Passion of the Cross, which was the last temptation of Christ. It was the means whereby his divine self was united with his human self. The Lord's divine nature is called the Father, and his human nature is called the Son. Redemption and Salvation are attributes proper to his human.

Swedenborg in his work on *Sacred Scripture* calls the Sacred or Holy Scripture the Word of God. He always refers to the Bible as the Lord's Word or simply the Word. In the first number that Kierkegaard marked, Swedenborg states that there is holiness in every sentence of the Word, and that it is through the Word that a person is conjoined to heaven. The Word, he writes, opens heaven for those who read it from the Lord and not from what is their own. The Word contains an internal or spiritual sense. It contains this sense like the body contains the soul. Just as the

soul gives life to the body, so the spiritual sense gives life to the letter, but is not in the letter, or the literal sense.

Kierkegaard also marked passages in the *Sacred Scripture* in which Swedenborg explained the darkness that had enveloped the Christian world, because so many had fallen into the love of dominion and consequently had confirmed themselves in falsities; as well as those who had separated faith and charity, and who worshipped God in three persons—causing heavenly truths to be hidden from them (paragraph no. 24).

A summary of what Kierkegaard found of interest in the *Doctrine of Life* is the fact that belief in the Lord cannot be just an acknowledgement that he exists, but must be demonstrated by acting according to his words; faith does not exist with the evil, even if they suppose themselves to have it; spiritual faith exists with those who do not commit sins, because they do things that are good; and they do what is good not from themselves but from the Lord.

What Kierkegaard seems to find interesting in *Divine Love and Wisdom* is that, according to Swedenborg, there is no continuum between the natural physical world and the spiritual world. Thus, when we die we leave the world of nature completely behind. ‘It is a case of before and after, with no communication except by correspondence’ (paragraph no. 90). Spiritual warmth and life derive their essence from a sun that is nothing but love, while physical warmth and light contain no life whatsoever. It is love that generates warmth and wisdom that generates light. It is clear that love and wisdom are spiritual qualities; it can be demonstrated that spiritual life is distinct from natural physical light, because, it is possible to have discernment which is a form of seeing, even in the dark. The light of discernment comes from a different source (paragraphs no. 90–9).

Kierkegaard noted in *Divine Love and Wisdom* that Swedenborg mentioned that there are three degrees of the mind that are opened in sequence. Swedenborg states that while people are aware of the horizontal level and the gradations it contains, they are nonetheless not aware of the vertical level—that is the distinct difference between ends, causes, and effects.

Searching for causes on the horizontal level can lead to errors and distortions of the truth. Genuine understanding requires knowledge of both the vertical and horizontal levels. Swedenborg states that this is why he devoted a whole section of his book to explaining the differences between (what he calls) discrete and continuous degrees. He also stated that his purpose in the work *Divine Love and Wisdom* was to

uncover causes and to see effects on that basis. In doing so he hoped to dispel the darkness that envelops people in the church concerning God, the Lord, and other divine matters that are referred to as 'spiritual' (paragraphs no. 187–8).

In *Divine Love and Wisdom* Swedenborg posits three levels which follow one from another in sequence like a purpose, a means, and a result. However, knowing these things without applying them to actual events is only abstract knowledge. And he continues, 'Thinking only about abstractions is like something ethereal that dissipates; but if these abstract principles are applied to things of an earthly nature, then they are like something we see with our own eyes on earth, and they stay in our memory' (paragraph no. 189).

Swedenborg developed this ideal in *Divine Love and Wisdom* further and states that 'these three vertical levels exist in each of us from birth and can be opened in sequence. As they are opened, we are in the Lord and the Lord is in us.' (Paragraph no. 236.) Swedenborg calls these three levels earthly, spiritual, and heavenly. The earthly level opens gradually and takes us to the summit of intelligence called rationality. Rationality by itself, however, cannot open the next level, which is called spiritual. This can only be opened by a love of being useful, which is a spiritual love, a love of the neighbour. The heavenly level is opened by a heavenly love of being useful, which is love of the Lord. Loving the Lord is applying the teaching of the Word to our lives. The three levels are opened by three different loves—love of learning, love of the neighbour, and love of the Lord (paragraph no. 237).

Kierkegaard's interest in *Divine Providence* centres on how human beings are united with the Lord. He highlights several numbers that focus on the role of freedom and rationality in the process of human reformation and regeneration. Recognizing that all good and truth comes from the Lord makes reformation and regeneration possible. Swedenborg relates that the following is a truth that is widely accepted: people who teach the truth and live well are saved, but those who teach truth and do not live well (do evil) are not (paragraph no. 91:3).

Similarities between the Thought of Swedenborg and Kierkegaard

The first similarity between Swedenborg and Kierkegaard occurs in *Either/Or*: the text in which Kierkegaard introduces the dialectical progression of existential stages. In *Either/Or* he introduces the first two stages: the aesthetic, and the ethical; in later works he articulates the re-

ligious (*Stanford* 2006). This first stage is characterized by immersion in sensual experience, preference for the possible over the actual, egotism, fragmentation of experience, nihilism, and ennui. The second stage is characterized not so much by choice as by choosing. ‘On the whole, to choose is an intrinsic and stringent term for the ethical. Wherever in the stricter sense there is a question of an Either/Or, one can always be sure that the ethical has something to do with it. The only absolute Either/Or is the choice between good and evil, but this is also absolutely ethical.’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 73.)

Kierkegaard continues:

But what is it that I choose—is it this or that? No, for I choose absolutely, and I choose absolutely by not having to choose this or that . . .and what is the absolute? It is myself in my eternal validity. . .But what is this self of mine? If I were to speak of a first moment, a first expression of it, then my answer is this: it is the most abstract of all, and yet in itself it is also the most concrete of all—it is freedom. (Hong & Hong 2000: 79–80.)

Kierkegaard explores the religious stage in his *Four Upbuilding Discourses*, written in 1844. In this essay he states: ‘To Need God is a Human Being’s Highest Perfection’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 87). He writes ‘that it is the saddest thing of all if a human being goes through life without discovering that he needs God’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 87). The human being needs God, because the higher he strives the more he comes to know that in himself, ‘he is capable of nothing, nothing at all’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 87). But Kierkegaard assures his reader that ‘God in heaven is capable of all things’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 87).

Kierkegaard asserts that there is a correspondence between God and man. Thus, the question is, whether or not an individual is happy about this good fortune of correspondence, or whether the individual might prefer not to correspond to God, to prefer the be capable of something himself and thus to not correspond to God completely (Hong & Hong 2000: 88). It is only through accepting the view that God is man’s highest perfection, that man can begin to view himself, and it is through this view that man learns to know himself. And for the person who does not know himself, his life is, in the deeper sense, indeed a delusion (Hong & Hong 2000: 88).

Needing God allows an individual to know his deeper self, and through his deeper self then he can explore his first self. His deeper self can have the first self view the world in such a way that it no longer

appears attractive to the first self. This process continues to the point that an individual also learns to question the source of ‘wisdom’ of his deeper self. Again conflict arises in Kierkegaard’s understanding of the struggle, and again a person learns ‘that he himself is capable of nothing at all’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 91). This is the point of self-knowledge.

In his essay *For Self-Examination* written in 1851, Kierkegaard discusses what Christianity requires of an individual, and how the individual can fulfil these requirements. He writes:

Christianity’s requirement is this: your life should express works as strenuously as possible; then one thing more is required—that you humble yourself and confess: But my being saved is nevertheless grace (Hong & Hong 2000: 396).

In what follows in this essay Kierkegaard discusses the history of Christianity, and the important fact that the concern of meritoriousness ultimately led to the abandonment of works. While Luther wanted works to be a witness for the truth, Kierkegaard writes: that ‘the secular mentality, which understood Luther perfectly, took meritoriousness away altogether—including the works’ (Hong & Hong 2000: 396).

But says Kierkegaard, James says that we must not only be hearers of the Word, but doers of it. However, in order to be a doer of the Word, one must hear or read it. This leads Kierkegaard to ask a question and then provide two assertions as answers. The Question is:

What is required in Order to Look at Oneself with True Blessing in the Mirror of the Word (Hong & Hong 2000: 396)?

The first requirement is that you must not look at the mirror, observe the mirror, but must see yourself in the mirror (Hong & Hong 2000: 396).

God’s Word is the mirror (Hong & Hong 2000: 397).

The second requirement is that in order to see yourself in the mirror when you read God’s Word you must (so that you actually do come to see yourself in the mirror) remember to say to yourself incessantly: It is I to whom it is speaking; it is I about whom it is speaking (Hong & Hong 2000: 398–9).

Kierkegaard ends this essay stating that what is required is that each human being ought 'to understand what a blessing it is to him that you take the power and give life' (Hong & Hong 2000: 403)!

Analysis of the Similarities

Kierkegaard and Swedenborg had similar views of human development. They both discuss three levels: for Swedenborg it is the earthly-minded; the spiritual-minded, and the heavenly-minded, and for Kierkegaard, it is the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. The characteristics of the three levels are also remarkably similar: sensuousness defines the first level, ethics, or sociability / neighbourliness defines the second level, and love of God defines the highest level. To love God for both men is to hear his Word, abide by it, and to do it! Both focus on the need for works, and the fact of grace. Both men use the term the Word of God, or the Word of the Lord, and do not use the more common term, the Bible. Swedenborg speaks of God as One, and discusses the Lord's oneness at some length. Kierkegaard explicitly focuses on one God, by continually saying God and, in the passages that I have examined he never refers to the Trinity. One God makes demands in the Word, not three, and 'the God in heaven is capable of all things' (Hong & Hong 2000: 87). Kierkegaard even has a critique of Lutheranism that is similar to Swedenborg's.

This brief review is focused on the similarities not on the differences, of which I am sure there are many. The point is, that there are sufficient similarities to suggest that more study is in order. What about 'the so what?' It may be that seeing Swedenborgian strands in Kierkegaard ultimately would have more impact on Swedenborg studies than Kierkegaard studies, but that remains to be seen. The suggestion by Roland Green (1992: 11) that Kierkegaard read *Dreams of A Spirit Seer* is interesting, in this regard. It is interesting because, Kant's depiction of Swedenborg may have discouraged even Kierkegaard from ever wanting to mention an intellectual association or debt to him, if in fact he had one. Much more work is required to discover if he did. However, it is also interesting that *Dreams* does not appear in the *Auction Protocol*, but that five exemplars of Swedenborg's work do, as well as a German Summary of his theology, purchased before he wrote *Either/Or*.

Strindberg with Swedenborg in the Foreground

In 1923 in a Provincetown, Rhode Island summer theatre Playbill, the celebrated playwright Eugene O'Neill wrote that August Strindberg was 'the most modern of the moderns' (Stockenström 1988a: 51). He continued by saying that Strindberg's 'behind-the-life plays' were a form of 'supernaturalism' that was 'peculiarly his own' (Stockenström 1988a: 51). Years later in his 1961 book, *The Theater of the Absurd*, Martin Esslin wrote at length about Strindberg's ground-breaking contribution to world drama:

Strindberg was the first to put on the stage a dream world in the spirit of modern psychological thinking. . . by delving into his own subconscious to discover the universal, collective significance of his own private obsessions. . . . In his dream plays *To Damascus*, *A Dream Play*, *The Ghost Sonata*, the shift from the objective reality of the world outside, from surface appearances to the subjective reality of inner states of consciousness—a shift that marks the watershed between the traditional and modern, the representational and the Expressionist projection of mental realities—is finally and triumphantly accomplished. (Stockenström 1988a: 51–2.)

As these quotes indicate Strindberg's impact on modern drama was enormous in the world at large, and by implication in Scandinavia, as well. However, according to Göran Stockenström, the revolutionary works of Strindberg, the ones that created his enduring legacy, were all written 'post-Inferno'. That is, they were written after his transformative encounter with Swedenborg during his mental and spiritual *Inferno* crisis in 1896/7 (Stockenström 1988a: 50–1).

The point at which Strindberg received a summary of Swedenborg's teaching from his mother-in-law, Marie Uhl was one of intense personal anxiety. He had strong feelings of persecution, heard and saw strange things—he wondered whether they were hallucinations, or visions. He wondered if he was going mad. He lived daily with inner fears and torments.

What arrested his attention was Swedenborg's description of hell. Predisposed to dismiss hell as an outdated prejudice, in Swedenborg's portrayals, he recognized the world around him. As he wrote, 'All the same I could not deny a matter of fact, they only thing I could do was to explain eternal damnation in this new way: we are already in hell. . . . It is thus that Swedenborg, perhaps without knowing it, depicts our earthly life when meaning to describe hell' (Strindberg 1979: 211).

After receiving this book, Strindberg spent his days reading Swedenborg, and 'was overwhelmed by the realism of his descriptions. I found everything there, . . . his visions seemed things actually experienced, truly human documents. There was no question of blind faith' (Strindberg 1979: 214). What Strindberg regretted, however, was that the volume he had only contained extracts. It was not until later on, when the complete edition of *Arcana Coelestia* fell into my hands, that I was able to discover the answer to the principal riddles of our spiritual life' (Strindberg 1979: 214–15).

He had been introduced to several additional works of Swedenborg and the 'Swedenborgian' works of Balzac through his friends and acquaintances in the French Symbolist Movement (Stockenström 1988b: 143).⁸ As he wrote in a letter to the Theosophist Torsten Hedlund: 'Swedenborg is very important here. He is reckoned as the first Theosophist in modern times, before Allan Kardec. I often get to read that I am from the homeland of Swedenborg, etc. Thus I read *Séraphita* by Balzac. How great and wonderful it is' (Stockenström 1988b: 141).

In *Seraphita* Strindberg found reconciliation, in *Earths in the Universe* he found deliverance. As he wrote in the chapter on 'The Redeemer':

When Balzac, in his book *Séraphita*, introduced my sublime countryman Emanuel Swedenborg to men as the 'Buddha of the North', he showed me the evangelistic aspect of the prophet. Now it was the law that impressed me and set me free (Strindberg 1979: 256).

By a single word, just one, he brought light to my soul, dispelled my doubts, my vain speculations about my imaginary enemies the electrical experts and the practitioners of black magic, and this word was De/vastation (Strindberg 1979: 256).

Every physical and mental complaint that Strindberg had experienced he found documented in Swedenborg's descriptions of spirits from the planet Jupiter (Swedenborg 1996: 72–6). The ills originate in the process of chastisement by spirits aiming toward the good. What freed Strindberg was the belief that his afflictions were not a sign of his inherent evil, but that they came about as he was being disciplined—leading him to the

⁸ During this same period Strindberg had a close relationship with Munch, and Munch painted his portrait in 1896.

good. He wrote, 'It all fits' (Stockenström 1988a: 66). This took away his fear and despair. He became convinced through Swedenborg's religious writings that suffering was an atonement. As he wrote:

By revealing to me the true nature of the terrors that had beset me during the past year, Swedenborg had set me free from the electrical experts, . . . and the fear of insanity. He had shown me the only way to salvation: to seek out the demons in their lair, within myself, and to destroy them by repentance (Strindberg 1979: 261).

For Strindberg the outcome of his before and after experience in coming to terms with his suffering through his very personal interpretation of Swedenborg, was a new reality, a new beginning, a re-birth. He began to look at life in a new way. One key for him was Swedenborg's concept of 'Correspondences'.

As an author Strindberg viewed his mission in two ways: first, he believed he was chosen by God as he walked on his road to Damascus, and now his mission was to explain God's way to humanity; and second, in his role as a prophet, he was supposed to castigate a decadent society (Stockenström 1988a: 68). On a personal level, he felt compelled to make moral inventories of himself and to apologize to people he had unjustly made to suffer. In his stories he also became a moral example in *Inferno* (1897), *Legends* (1898), and *Jacob Wrestles* (1898) (Stockenström 1988a: 68). Overcoming his *Inferno* released tremendous energy in Strindberg and he entered a period of enormous productivity.

This understanding of Swedenborg's correspondences gave Strindberg the capability of creating the 'transformation scenes in the post-*Inferno* dramas. [They] became metaphysical unmaskings of the spiritual essence of the material world.' (Stockenström 1988b: 148.) In his dramas the idea of 'vastation' became an awaking that can lead to moral purification. In *To Damascus* the asylum scene clearly originated in Swedenborg's spirit world (Stockenström 1988b: 150). As Stockenström writes: 'It is striking how closely Strindberg followed Swedenborg when, with a sovereign dramatic instinct, he sought to realize the artistic intentions of the prototype, and orchestrated image, character, movement, and word into a unified metaphor for the stage' (Stockenström 1988b: 151).

In 1904 Strindberg wrote in his novel *The Gothic Rooms*, 'You don't read Swedenborg, but you receive him though grace, for he can only be understood by those who have similar experiences' (Stockenström 1988a: 69). Saved by his 'redeemer' Swedenborg in his Damascus ex-

perience, Strindberg's productions after that retain and amplify his vast debt to his spiritual guide. Despite some disagreements, Swedenborg is his authority. In 1907 he dedicated his *Blue Book* to him: 'To Emanuel Swedenborg, Teacher and Leader, this is dedicated by a disciple' (Strindberg 1907).⁹

As Stockenström recognizes: 'Swedenborg's influence on Strindberg is not simply as a source of literary inspiration, but extends to the very depths of his being' (Stockenström 1988a: 69). It is, therefore, puzzling that in the nearly one hundred years since Strindberg's death no comprehensive study has been undertaken exploring this intimate relationship between 'The teacher and the disciple'.

Swedenborg clearly influenced all Strindberg's major innovations in letters and drama after 1897, and in that way his works were concrete examples of many of the revolutionary changes that occurred at the *fin de siècle*. As Strindberg wrote, about his symptoms, 'it all fits'; so one can write about Strindberg and the currents of the age, 'it all fits'! Swedenborg not only influenced Strindberg, but he also helped to shape the characteristics of the age that Strindberg fit so nicely into: the dissolutions of the very perception of reality; recognition that only the self or individual experience was real; external reality was only dreamlike images emanating for the soul; reality only exists in the individual, it is an idea of our consciousness, perhaps only a projection of our volition; reality if it exists is hidden behind a veil; true reality was not established by external observations, but only through intuition; contemplation, or ecstasy; focus on the unconscious mind led to different forms of occultism and transcendental mysticism. Esoteric currents held sway (Stockenström 1988b: 156).

In spite of the fact that Swedenborg's genuine influence on the age was not always apparent, Strindberg himself never lost sight of his debt. Toward the end, he wrote:

Is the end approaching? That I do not know but I have a presentiment. Life forces me out, it seems, or persecutes me, and I have long ago set my hopes 'to the other side,' to which I am connected like Swedenborg (Stockenström 1988a: 71).

⁹ It continues, 'A crown on your grave at the time of your homecoming after a hundred year rest in a Foreign Land. Resurgat!'

Swedenborg's Contribution to Scandinavia: an Assessment

The task of assessing Swedenborg's contribution to Scandinavia is not an easy one. On the surface, it would appear that he has made little impact, even where he is best known, in his homeland of Sweden. If asked today, few in Sweden or elsewhere in Scandinavia would know his name. This is true despite the fact that in three of the nations of Scandinavia, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway there are religious congregations devoted to living a life according to the teachings of Swedenborg. Except for the involvement of the esoterically sensitive Nordenskjöld family, few in Finland have been directly stirred by his message.

Just beneath the surface, however, at least part of his world-view has touched the taken-for-granted perspective in the West and Scandinavia of our modern sense of reality both external and internal, particularly our psychological self-understanding. He has entered into common consciousness through the works of Goethe, Balzac, Poe, and Dostoevsky. We resonate with those works, they speak to us, because he unmasked some universal truths about what it means to be human. Swedenborg's works were discovered by those authors, because he had a new view of our inner human nature that they understood—for he made it plain that it is there that we discover both heaven and hell. They understood that, and made Swedenborg's view concrete in their probing of the human heart. Munch absorbed Swedenborg at this level, and used the principals of Symbolism, many of which were drawn from Swedenborg to create his *Frieze of Life*.

Kierkegaard appears to have gone deeper than that, and as I have pointed out, the similarities between his Christian existentialism and Swedenborg's are quite remarkable. And Strindberg went even deeper, and on the most profound level acknowledged Swedenborg as his 'teacher and leader'.

So as I close, where does my effort leave us—'before of after'? I would say, I am still writing in the 'before'. I believe this article is a beginning but the real story of the place of Emanuel Swedenborg in the Scandinavian Saga has yet to be written, it is a drama with both exoteric and esoteric scenes, and I encourage others to join in its writing.

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VADIM ZHDANOV

Gnosticism and Esotericism

An Example from Russian New Religiosity

The Terms of Gnosticism and Esotericism

Time and again, the terms gnosticism and esotericism appear in connection with one another. Most esoteric teachings, for example, draw on the higher knowledge of the secrets of nature or deity. In the twentieth century, gnosticism even became, according to Wouter Hanegraaff, 'a standard ingredient of esoteric religiosity' (Hanegraaff 2006: 796).

The terms esoteric and esotericism even surface in connection with antique gnosticism—and this is not a rare occurrence. Just think of the famous definition of *gnosis* suggested by leading scholars in the field in Messina in 1966. According to this definition, *gnosis* is the 'knowledge of divine mysteries, which is reserved for the elite' (Markschies 2001: 22; Bianchi 1967). And just as Christian apologists saw *gnosis* as the source of all heresy, so today it is viewed as the source of all esotericism—at least from a theological point of view. In spite of the fact that this thesis is not historically tenable, given that western esotericism did not start until the time of the Renaissance, one cannot ignore the fact that *gnosis* and esotericism are multiply interwoven with each other.

Since there are no clear and consistent definitions of the terms 'gnosticism' and 'esotericism', one encounters major difficulties in trying to distinguish precisely between the two terms. Matters are further complicated by the fact that the terms are not used by the individual religious movements themselves. Rather, they are social constructs which serve either as discursive weapons or as scientific classifications (Stuckrad 2004: 20). This leads Michael Allen Williams, in his widely received book *Rethinking Gnosticism*, to call for 'the dismantling gnosticism as a dubious category' (Williams 1996).

Williams and other critics of the term gnosticism (e.g. King 2003) have a point, in so far as a definitions such as the one offered by the Messina colloquium—*gnosis* defined as 'knowledge of the divine mys-

teries'—are applicable to nearly every religious context. The same holds as well, however, for those definitions which see esotericism as hidden knowledge (cf. Hanegraaff 2005: 337).

The terms 'gnosticism' and 'esotericism'—even the term 'religion' itself—are deceptive, not least because they create the impression that they refer to some concrete historical tradition. In order to avoid such confusion, the use of the term 'the esoterical' (*das Esoterische*) rather than esotericism is suggested (Stuckrad 2004: 20–1). This, however, would also have to apply to the term gnosis and just possibly to such terms as religion as well; thus one would talk about 'the gnostic', 'the religious', and so forth (Stuckrad 2004: 244). Yet it must be noted that this terminology must also be subject to a certain amount of defining clarity.

As of late, debates about the very definability of these two terms have led to a near-complete abandonment of attempts to define what is meant by them. This path, however, merely leads to a cumulative definition of gnosticism as a group of certain (neo-)religious movements of late antiquity. Similarly, esotericism is seen as referring to a cluster of historically related currents of occidental cultural history, such as Hermetic Philosophy, so-called occultism, and Freemasonry, to name but a few (Hanegraaff 2005: 328).

Yet there is another way, albeit a less popular one these days, to mitigate the substantialism which the terms gnosis and esotericism carry with them. One could acknowledge the terms' constructed character by viewing them as 'forms of thought' or 'models of thought'. Authors such as Antoine Faivre within esotericism studies or, for example, Michael Pauen (1994) with regard to the presentness of gnosticism have chosen to do so.

In my opinion, we should not disregard these attempts. They may be applicable, even fruitful, for the analysis of the cognitive systems of the religious movements to be studied, such as their belief systems. It has to be admitted, though, that an analysis which is based single-mindedly on the components of forms of thought is not sufficient. Such an analysis must be accompanied by studies of the symbolic expressions and the lived praxes of the movements which are studied.¹

Using the term gnosticism in the sense of a model of thought, as an ideal type assemblage of various components, a well-known typologic-

¹ I am drawing on the cultural-philosophical considerations of Ernst Cassirer (1925).

al model suggests itself that primarily postulates the content-based integrity of the phenomenon. As I mentioned earlier, there is no consistent rendering of the phenomenon ‘gnosticism’, yet the following model can be seen as a certain critical consensus. In the following, I draw on the work of Christoph Marksches, who includes those movements in his definition of gnosticism, whose texts usually are marked by the following assemblage of ideas or motives: (1) The experience of a completely transcendent, other-worldly and superior god. (2) The consequent introduction of further divine figures, or the splitting of the existing figures, into figures which are closer to the people than the ulterior, highest god. (3) An understanding of the world and all things material as evil creations and, thus, the experience of the gnostics’ alienation in the world. (4) The introduction of a special creator-god or assistant: following the Platonic tradition, he is called a ‘craftsman’ or, Greek: *demiurgos* (demiurge). He is mostly depicted as being ignorant, at times even as evil. (5) The explanation of the baleful state of the world by way of a mythological drama in which a divine element falls out of its own sphere into an evil world. This element dwells as a divine spark within people of a particular class and needs be liberated. (6) A knowledge (*gnosis*) of this state, which however can only be gained through an other-worldly redeemer figure who descends from an upper sphere and then ascends again. (7) Salvation through the insight that ‘God (or the spark) is within’ and, finally, (8) a more or less pronounced tendency toward dualism, which may surface in the concept of God, in the confrontation of spirit and matter, or in anthropological concepts. (Cf. Marksches 2001: 25–6.)

In contrast to Marksches, however, I would refer to this last feature of gnosticism rather as ‘monodualism’ since in gnostic mythologies there is always only the one Good at the beginning of creation which evil splits off from in the course of history.²

As far as esotericism’s model of thought is concerned, I believe I do not have to go to great lengths. What I am referring to is Antoine Faivre’s widely received understanding of esotericism. As is well known, Faivre mentioned four intrinsic and two secondary components of esotericism. The simultaneous occurrence of the four basic elements is a sufficient precondition for the inclusion of the object of study into the field of esotericism. These four are: (1) the idea of correspondences, (2) the conception of a living nature, (3) imagination and meditation as ways of

2 An exception is arguably only the teaching of Markion.

accessing higher knowledge, and (4) the experience of transmutation. In addition to these intrinsic features there are two further elements which often, though not of necessity, correlate, namely the praxis of (5) concordance and (6) transmission (Faivre 2001: 24–34).

I will now turn to briefly juxtapose the two models of thought I am discussing here—gnosticism and esotericism. Upon closer examination, these two apparently quite different schemes show a fair number of similarities. In my opinion, three of the four basic features of esotericism can also be found in gnosticism. (1) The idea of correspondences, thus, has its parallel in the gnostic idea that every planetary orbit corresponds to one ruler of the world (archons) and at the same time to one of the many human bodies, referred to in some gnostic texts as clothes which ascending souls shed in the corresponding area of universe. (2) The importance of the imagination, and thus of symbolic representation and myth, is so obvious that I will not go into further details here. (3) The experience of the transmutation of the Gnostics' souls is also known from certain Gnostic texts. By way of an example, think of the 'Hymn of the Pearl' from the 'Acts of Thomas'.

In esotericism, just as in gnosis, spiritual entities play a role in the mediation and transportation of knowledge to the people. Also, the concept of redemptive knowledge (*gnosis*) is no stranger to esotericism. Furthermore, a monodualistic worldview is characteristic for both models of thought.

As far as differences between the two are concerned, I would like to focus only on one. In contrast to gnosis, esotericism does not have a concept of evil matter or of the unknowing, let alone evil, creator of the world. On the other hand, one has to say that gnosis—its antique background notwithstanding—only has a marginal, if any, understanding of nature as a living being.

In my opinion, this central difference loses something of its acuity when one considers the historical differences between the role of the world (*cosmos*) in antiquity compared to that of modern times. Antiquity's cosmocentrism was replaced by theocentrism in the Middle Ages, and the early modern period began, as well known, with the anthropocentric views of Pico della Mirandola.

Things get even more complicated when one adds the revolutionizing, even extremist countenance of the Gnostics to the mode of thought 'gnosticism', introduced above. The extremity of this position is explained by its declaration that classical antiquity's holy cosmos is evil and because it trounces the Jews' and the Christians' holiest image of God by turning him into an evil demiurge. Taking all this into account,

the religious studies scholar is faced with an intriguing question: If there were modern Gnostics, what would they, with all their radicalism, deny first and foremost? It would be neither the world, nor nature, nor god. Rather, I dare say, they would mock humanity or society itself.

This theoretical discussion could be easily followed further, but I will cut it short here and cut to the example announced in the title of my paper. In the following, I will roughly sketch the dogmatics and the history of a new religious movement which created quite a furore in the Ukraine and Russia during the first half of the 1990s. On the basis of this sketch of the 'Great White Brotherhood Usmalos', I will then try to apply the terms gnosticism and esotericism to this example. Proceeding this way, I try to shed light on both the level of its mode of thought as well as its form of life.

The Doctrine of Great White Brotherhood

I think one of the most interesting questions in this context is whether the teaching of the Great White Brotherhood can be designated as a gnostic (or perhaps as a neognostic) or simply as an esoteric teaching. In order to answer such a question, a short excursus to the teachings and history of this religious movement is necessary. The Doctrine of the Great White Brotherhood can be outlined as follows.

In the very beginning there is the pre-eternal State of the World, prior to all being, the structure-less Unity of all in all. The quasi-dogmatic text of this movement, 'The Science of Light and its transformation' argues that 'the Absolute in its pre-eternal state is the absolute unity of spirit and matter' (cf. МДХ³ 2003b: 194).

The Absolute, which is also referred to as the united reason or the spirit, resides in eternal sleep until 'a thought ripens'. Then the Absolute becomes apparent and develops itself. (Cf. МДХ 2003b: 194.)

The ensuing procedure can be imagined as a self-differentiation of the Absolute, which is itself feminine by nature and is also referred to as the 'eternal feminine' or 'primal feminine'. At first, the eternal feminine engenders the 'eternal masculine' or the 'Logos'—her son and divine spouse in one person. The Absolute 'has quasi separated itself in two

³ Maria Devi Christos (Rus. Мария Дэви Христос)—female leader of the Great White Brotherhood and the author of the 'dogmatic' texts of this new religious movement.

. . . , parcelling out its two ingredients: the God-Mother and the God-Father. . .' (МДХ 2003b: 172.)

The 'White Brotherhood' trinity is constituted of the Absolute, the God-Father and God-Mother. By means of the unification of these two first principles (of Father and Mother) ensues the *theokosmogenesis*; that is the creation as a begetting, that can be imagined as the outflow of divine light from the mother's womb. The light is the essence of the deity, its blood as well as the material for its creative activities. Thus the World Mother has created the world from her blood, which is divine light by alienating herself from her divinity.

Following this, the first beings to be created were the seven higher spirits, with whom the World Mother 'created all things in the universe' (МДХ 2003b: 172). These altogether ten higher entities are referred as 'monads'. They constitute a unity, and thus a pattern for future Creation. Creation in turn reflects the nature of the creator like a mirror. The ten first eternal entities constitute the sun, moon, earth and the seven planets of the solar system, that is, the whole divine universe revealed.

The process of creation by the deity is described as its reflection or the reflection of its light in physical matter on the one hand, and as 'a descent of light to physical matter' on the other hand. As the light moves away from its source, a deformation and thickening occurs to the point of state of 'rough matter'.

What is interesting in this context is the continuous emphasis on the structural parallelism between divine and material worlds, between the whole and its parts, or in other words between macro- and microcosm, as well as the accompanying metaphor of mirroring (cf. МДХ 2003b: 150). This metaphor implies, however, that the material world as a reflection of the higher worlds is not endowed with any kind of autonomous substance as an independent basis of being.

According to the teachings of the Great White Brotherhood, the universe consists of three hierarchically related realms: the realm of divinity, the realm of Logos (also referred as the realm of archetypes) and the realm of physical matter. In addition, there is the so-called 'World of the Antigod', which also bears a threefold structure. This realm represents an evil and failed imitation of the divine world system. The 'World of Antigod' comes into contact with the divine world in the realm of material word. Evidently the Antigod, also known as Lucifer, has such a considerable influence over his world that he is also designated 'the Demiurge of the material world' (МДХ 2003b: 251).

The origin of Antigod finds itself in mythology. Lucifer was the first of the 'seven higher spirits', also known as the 'divinely created

monads'. He is thus the first among the eternal divine entities, who are emanations of supreme God. Unlike the other spirits, Lucifer didn't want to continue passing on the divine light, but instead kept it for himself alone. This then led to Lucifer becoming a barrier or obstruction in the way of divine emanations. So the World Mother threw him into the deepest depths. She declared him as 'the most fallen being of all beings' (МДХ 2003b: 173) and as 'the embodiment of World Evil' (МДХ 2003b: 188).

It is very interesting how the Wold Mother tries to explain—one could even say justify—Lucifer's fall. She argues that he, like the other spiritual beings, was imperfect be due to a lack experience of physical matter (МДХ 2000: 611). Hence it is possible to comprehend the fall of Lucifer as a kind of tragic mistake which led to the appearance of Evil in the world.

The material world indeed is the creation of God: although it stands under the baleful demiurgical influence of the Antigod, it is also the abode of mankind. The first human, according to the teaching of White Brotherhood was a 'feminine spirit' also referred to as 'heavenly androgynous being' or 'God-Man' or, in the terminology of Kabbalah, as 'Adam-Kadmon' (МДХ 2003b: 172). 'He was let down into the material world in order to gain worldly experiences and to increase mankind' (МДХ 2003b: 50). Basically, this first human being is nothing other than one of the manifestations of the deity, one of its emanations. The first androgynous human being split itself in two other human beings: Adam and Eve and that marked the beginning of mankind.

Mankind is thus nothing other than a deity on a study trip to acquire knowledge about physical matter. Hence mankind is inherently divine. It is also referred to in the texts of the White Brotherhood as 'Godmankind'.

However, the activity of the Antigod makes life difficult for Godmankind. Humans have forgotten their divine origin because the anti-divine forces keep them in the sleep of ignorance (cf. МДХ 2004: 81). Therefore, Godmankind—or more precisely, 144,000 chosen souls—is in need of salvation. This salvation comes in form of divine knowledge, namely the 'Science of Light and its transformation', thus the name of the quasi-dogmatic part of the teaching that the World Mother reveals.

The salvation of men, who are particles of the divine light, will occur in the form of a Transmutation of the chosen souls and with them of the whole planet. The 'Science of Light' displays this as the restitution of the original order on the one hand and as a transition into a new stage of evolution on the other hand.

The correspondence of the teachings of the Great White Brotherhood I just sketched with the model of Gnosticism is striking. One can find here the idea of the absolute otherworldly deity, as well as its expansion into a number of other spiritual entities that act as mediators between the higher God and the world. This constellation can be thought of as the Gnostic Plerom. On the one hand, one can observe the differently pronounced dualism (God/Antigod, spirit/matter, world/anti-world), on the other hand, there is also the notion of extreme monism. Such a combination, I would say, can be described adequately with the term monodualism, which is also characteristic of ancient Gnosticism.

Like the ancient gnostic mythologies, the doctrine of the White Brotherhood explains the regrettable state of the world by means of a mythological drama of the fall of a higher spiritual being from the divine whole. Like the antique Gnostics, adherents of the White Brotherhood are convinced of their divine origin. They carry the divine light in their souls. Furthermore, their teaching emphasizes the soteriological power of knowledge (i.e. *gnosis*), which is revealed by the messengers of the higher realms.

However, variations from the model of gnosticism are equally noticeable. Contrary to ancient Gnosticism, the doctrine of the White Brotherhood does not teach enmity towards the world of matter. In the last instance, the world is a good creation. It has merely degenerated as a result of the *ur*-cosmic drama and needs to be saved from this baleful state. It is not the world that is evil, but a mankind that has given itself up to Lucifer. However, if the anthropocritical turn mentioned above is considered, then this difference appears far less fundamental.

The evaluation of the doctrine of the White Brotherhood as an esoteric teaching is in my view even more unequivocal. All four intrinsic characteristics and one of the secondary features of esotericism according to Antoine Faivre's model are present in this teaching. I hope that my explanations have made this clear, and will not go into any further detail here.

So we return once more to the question posed above: Can the teachings of the Great White Brotherhood be designated as *gnostic* (or perhaps as a *neognostic*) or simply as *esoteric*? In order to come to an answer I will now briefly sketch out the history of this religious movement.

The Brief History of Great White Brotherhood

The history of the Great White Brotherhood (below: GWB) can be divided into two parts. The first extends from the founding of the movement in the year 1990 to the imprisonment of its leaders in 1993. The second starts in 1993 and lasts to the present day.

One of the founders and leaders of the GWB in the first three years was Yuri Krivonogov (b. 1941), candidate in Technical Science.⁴ Prior to the founding of his own religion, Krivonogov was actively involved in occultism, psychology and various religious and esoteric teachings: including theosophy, yoga, the teachings of Nikolai and Helena Roerisch and others. For a certain period of time he was a supporter of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (cf. Щипков 1998: 162–3). In February 1990, he founded the so called ‘Center for Self-Awareness and Highest Yoga “Atma”’. In the spring of 1990, he became acquainted with Marina Tsvigun (b. 1960), who then became his spiritual companion and wife. Tsvigun, who later came to be known as ‘World-Mother’ was a journalist and had worked for a newspaper agency and a radio station.

At first, the future founders of the GWB were committed to the progress of the already mentioned institution with the promising name of ‘Atma’. However, shortly afterwards they founded a new ‘religion’. Yuri Krivonogov adopted the ritual name Yuoann Swami and Maria Krivonogova henceforth called herself Maria Devi. A little later, she extended her title to the one that is still in use: ‘Worldmother Maria Devi Christos’. Yuri Krivonogov turned himself into the ‘divine husband of Maria Devi’ and thereafter called himself Joseph and God-Father, in alternation. Their work received the name of Usmalos (Rus. Юсмалос), which according to the claim at that time, was understood as an abbreviation expressing the Trinity of the GWB: USMA ([Y]Uoann Swami and Maria) and—LOS (LogoS).⁵ The complete self-attributed title at that time was ‘The universal Church of the White Brotherhood Usmalos’s

4 Equivalent to a Doctorate in Technical Science.

5 After the end of her relationship with Krivonogov, Maria Devi explained the term Usmalos, which was still understood as an abbreviation in different ways. For instance as an abbreviation of the Trinity ‘Jesus–Maria–Logos’ or as a ‘cipher for the names of the planets which are of apocalyptic relevance for humankind: IO–Jupiter, C–Saturn, MA–Mars, Л–Луна (Eng. Moon), O–Orion, C–Sirius’ and others (Юсмалос).

As founding date of the movement we can assume the first of June 1990, since on that day 'the divine program of the salvation of the planet Earth', i.e. 'Program Usmalos', was begun (cf. МДХ 2000: 213).

According to their 1260-day program (cf. МДХ 2000: 191), the supporters of the movement were to preach the Usmalos-teachings, call to penance and call on everybody to accept Maria Devi as 'living Goddess' within this period. After the expiry of this period, on the 33rd birthday of Maria Devi, which was in the autumn of 1993, the end of the world was expected to come. According to the prophecies of the founders, 'Yoann Swami and Maria Devi were going to be killed, and then rise from the dead after three days to call for the Last Judgment' (Щипков 1998: 164). In her epistles of 1993, Maria Devi announced that she was willing to sacrifice herself, that through her self-sacrifice, the rise of the just and the fall of the sinners was going to start (МДХ 2000: 192–3), and that 'the time of apocalyptic agonies for the sinful humankind had come' (МДХ 2000: 213).

According to Maria Devi, her church had been persecuted by the 'anathema of the Ukrainian patriarch Filaret' since the end of 1991. In 1992, criminal proceedings were opened against her, and the mass media continuously spread negative news about the GWB. Its supporters were charged with zombification, human sacrifice, suicide and similar felonies. Faced with the danger of getting arrested, the Krivonogovs fled into foreign exile. They spent two years traveling (1992–3), maintaining steady correspondence with their supporters. Within these two years of travel, Maria Devi visited Israel, India and Egypt. (Cf. МДХ 2000: 198–9.)

The key events of the early history of the GWB occurred within the first ten days of November 1993, when its supporters started to meet daily in front of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev in order to preach the teachings of Usmalos and do penance. The local authorities, however, suspected that the supporters were going to commit mass suicide. Task forces of the Ukrainian militia imprisoned a large number of 'White Brothers' (about 600 persons). On November 10th Maria Devi and one of her closest confidants, the third person in the hierarchy of the GWB—the 'pope of the living church Ioann Petr II' (Vitalij Kovaltchuk)—were arrested inside Saint Sophia Cathedral, which they were intending to occupy, according to the militia. The majority of the supporters of the new religion, however, were released after a short term in prison. The process against the GWB lasted over two years. In 1996, Yuri Krivonogov was finally sentenced to seven years, Marina Krivonogova to four years, and Vitalij Kovaltchuk to six years in prison (Щипков 1998: 164). According

to the court documents, they were charged with the following: occupation of public buildings, agitation of the masses, battery, and attacks on the health of the citizens under the disguise of religious practice (Мурашов 2003).

During the legal process, the founders of the movement split up due to their inability to decide on how to react to the official charges, which finally led to a religious schism (Балагушкин 1999: 116). After that Krivonogov disassociated himself from the movement. In the letters to her supporters, Maria Devi calls her former husband and companion nothing less than Judas and Cain. She claims he had always distorted her 'divine thoughts and prophecies': 'Krivonogov distorted my light, which he reflected through his Cain-prism' (МДХ 2000: 566). The elaboration of the said program is thus solely ascribed to Yuri Krivonogov, who had allegedly secretly organized the incidents of Autumn 1993 without any permission from the World-Mother, in order to 'lead [Maria Devi] to the shambles'—just in the same fashion as Judas had done with Christ. According to her claims, she herself had never prophesied the end of the world. In 2003, she said the following in an interview with the journal *Религия и право* ('Religion and Law'):

When it comes to the associations with the end of the world, which many people have as soon as the Great White Brotherhood is mentioned, it has to be kept in mind that it is nothing else but a campaign aiming at discrediting and libeling through negative stereotypes, which the mass media artificially created in the early 1990s. Juri Krivonogov's wrong prophecy of the 'Last Judgment' had a certain influence on the emergence of these stereotypes. Although this person has taken back all of his words and 'prophecies', journalists do not get tired of hyping the inventions of their loved idol, who had never had anything to do with the teachings of Maria Devi Christos. (МДХ 2003а: 30.)

On August 13th 1997, the female leader of the GWB was released from prison.

In the ten years since the reunion of the 'Worldmother' with her believers, the movement has gained considerable momentum and has become firmly established in many cities of the former Soviet Union. Today the 'White Brothers' are very cautious in their public relations. There is no large-scale advertising or propaganda for the teachings of the GWB. The exact number of supporters of the movement is unknown due to this low-key, in fact almost conspiratorial character. However,

time and again supporters of the group can be seen on the streets, even if they do not wear white chitons any more.⁶ For the most part they are young women, singing spiritual songs with muted voices, spreading GWB literature and begging.

Even if the GWB no longer has any substantial public presence today, its information basis has grown considerably: for instance, a comprehensive and professionally run website has been installed (www.usmalos.com),⁷ the Last Testament—a complete edition of all of Mari Devi's writings up to the year 2000—has been published, and the journals *KultUra* and *Usmalos* are regularly published.

Conclusion

It can be stated that, since entering the second stage of its history, the Great White Brotherhood has lost its original revolutionary, if not extremist, character. The *eschaton* was deferred into the future. The movement enjoys the uncomplicated life of a religious minority and contributes to the Russian and Ukrainian esoteric scene.

The example of this new religious movement, which in its teachings includes gnostic as well as esoteric elements, displays a general development. To formulate this provocatively, one might want to say that this development moves from gnosticism to esotericism. Whereas gnostic teachings basically persevere, the revolutionary attitude of gnosticism is all but relinquished.

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6 Cf. e.g. 'Белое Братство' возвращается в Орел. Online in Internet: <http://www.religare.ru/article3999.htm> (accessed 30 December 2007).

7 At present time 'under construction' (1 January 2008).

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