

H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophy in Context:

The Construction of Meaning in Modern Western Esotericism

**Submitted by Tim Rudbøg to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Western Esotericism
In December 2012**

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Abstract of PhD Thesis by Tim Rudbøg, 15 December 2012

H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophy in Context: The Construction of Meaning in Modern Western Esotericism

H. P. Blavatsky's (1831-1891) Theosophy has been defined as central to the history of modern Western spirituality and esotericism, yet to this date no major study has mapped and analysed the major themes of Blavatsky's writings, how Blavatsky used the concept 'Theosophy' or to what extent she was engaged with the intellectual contexts of her time. Thus the purpose of this thesis is to fill this gap.

The proposed theoretical framework is based on the centrality of language in the production of intellectual products, such as texts—but contrary to the dominant focus on strategies, rhetoric and power this thesis will focus on the construction of meaning coupled with a set of methodological tools based on contextual analysis, intellectual history and intertextuality.

In addition to an overview of Blavatsky research this thesis will map and analyse Blavatsky's use of the concept 'Theosophy' as well as Blavatsky's primary discourses, identified as: (1) discourse for ancient knowledge, (2) discourse against Christian dogmatism, (3) discourse against the modern natural sciences and materialism, (4) discourse against modern spiritualism, (5) discourse for system and (7) discourse for universal brotherhood. In mapping and analysing Blavatsky's discourses, it was found that her construction of meaning was significantly interconnected with broader intellectual contexts, such as 'modern historical consciousness', 'critical enlightenment ideas', studies in religion, studies in mythology, the modern sciences, spiritualism, systemic philosophy, reform movements and practical ethics. It, for example, becomes clear that Blavatsky's search for an ancient 'Wisdom Religion' was actually a part of a common intellectual occupation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that her critique of the Christian dogmas was equally a common intellectual trend. To read Blavatsky's discourses as the idiosyncratic strategies of an esotericist, isolated from their larger contexts or only engaged with them in order to legitimise minority views would therefore largely fail to account for the result of this thesis: that in historical actuality, they were a part of the larger cultural web of meaning.

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List of accompanying material

Two Appendices: Appendix I and Appendix II

Abbreviations and punctuation

(1) Throughout this thesis, articles and other material written by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky collected by Boris de Zirkoff into *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings* have been abbreviated for the sake of clarity in the footnotes, as in the following examples:

A reference in the bibliography:

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writing*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), I (1988) 101-119 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-7)

A first time reference in each chapter in the footnotes:

HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I (1988), 101-119 (p. 103) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-7)

A subsequent reference in the footnotes:

HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 103

(2) Throughout this thesis the original punctuation in quotations from Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's works is retained. This has been done to avoid misrepresentation and misquotation of original source material now and in the future. Furthermore, Blavatsky's work and style is already so complex that changing the format could produce further distortion. Finally, it will make any electronic search in this thesis and in Blavatsky's writings, available in electronic format, easier. Particularly, are double quotes used when single quotes would be the standard according to the style guide.

(3) In the bibliography and in the footnotes the publishing year of the first edition of a work, if known, is added in [square brackets] after the publication date if different from the used edition.

Introduction

H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophy has been a longstanding interest of mine, which began even prior to my enrolment as a student in the department of the history of religions at the University of Copenhagen in 2001. At the time, particularly the scope of Blavatsky's writings fascinated me—as it still does now. It seemed that no matter which esoteric, philosophical or religious tradition, be it the Kabbalah, ancient magic, Neo-Platonism, Christianity, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Egyptian religion, Chinese traditions and modern philosophy, they were all present in Blavatsky's writings. Additionally, Blavatsky also had an opinion of modern culture and many of the modern sciences of her day. Blavatsky also spoke of the important, philosophical and ethical contributions offered by many of the above-mentioned traditions and combined their ideas in a grand synthesis in her final major work *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* (1888). *The Secret Doctrine* thus combined ancient traditions with modern traditions and offered a comprehensive alternative cosmology and anthropology—a meta-narrative—of the origin of the cosmos, spirit and matter, and the evolution of mankind. When reading *The Secret Doctrine* it, however, soon becomes clear that the ideas offered and the premises on which they were founded did not belong to mainstream intellectual traditions even though Blavatsky used such traditions extensively in the construction of her work.

When first envisioning a topic for my PhD thesis, I imagined mapping the doctrines proposed in *The Secret Doctrine*, analysing their premises and tracing their historical and textual sources. During the first months as a PhD student at the University of Exeter I was, however, soon confronted with the fact that even though much research exists on Blavatsky and specific topics of her Theosophy, no major study had yet analysed how Blavatsky conceptualised the concept 'Theosophy' or how she had used this concept in her many articles and major works. I equally found that no major study had mapped and critically analysed 'what Blavatsky talked about the most' in her many works in relation to her intellectual contexts. It seemed to me that it would not be possible to adequately move forward with an analysis of her particular doctrines and world-view—the 'Cosmogogenesis' and 'Anthropogenesis' of her *The Secret Doctrine*—

before an overview of the scope of her engagement with various topics and historical or intellectual contexts had been analysed.

The task of analysing Blavatsky's use of the concept Theosophy and particularly her major discourses therefore soon became the aim of this thesis. Blavatsky's world-view and doctrines will thus have to wait for a future project. I would, thus, like to emphasise that this thesis will not, unless when absolutely relevant, discuss her actual doctrines in relation to the topics discussed in the individual chapters in part II of the present thesis, such as Theosophy, religion, science, spiritualism, occultism and ethics. Instead, the focus will be placed on analysing which major themes she talked about and their relation to her intellectual contexts.

Thus, the major task of the present thesis is to map and analyse Blavatsky's theosophical discourses and it should be noted that the focus of this mapping and analysis will primarily be placed on intellectual contexts—the history of ideas—rather than on sociological, economic and political contexts. The formulated set of research questions is therefore: (1) how did Blavatsky use the concept 'Theosophy', what did it mean to her and from where did she derive the term? (2) what did Blavatsky talk about the most in her works? and (3) in what way and to what extent were Blavatsky's discourses influenced by their intellectual contexts.

It is the working hypothesis of this thesis that, even though Blavatsky is primarily thought of as an esotericist, her construction of meaning was, to a greater extent than has hitherto been analysed, influenced by and intertextually connected with many of the major intellectual trends of her time. In order to demonstrate this and to answer the primary research questions this thesis will be divided into the following parts and chapters.

The two major parts of this thesis

The two major parts of this thesis are: (1) The Academic Study of Blavatsky's Theosophy and (2) Blavatsky's Theosophy, Sources and Discourses (this second part is the main, analytic part of the thesis).

The Chapters of Part 1

The first chapter of the first part (1.1) constitutes an overview of Blavatsky research from the end of the nineteenth-century to the present. In addition to providing an overview of Blavatsky research and a launching pad for the thesis, the aim of this chapter is also to set the stage for the second chapter (1.2) wherein the theoretical and methodological reservations will be discussed. In recent years, a dominant approach to esotericism in general, as well as to Blavatsky, which focuses on discursive interchanges, rhetoric, strategies and power, has emerged. While the study of these mechanisms is no doubt important to historical study, this thesis is based on a set of slightly different theoretical assumptions and offers the use of an alternative approach to better analyse Blavatsky's discourses in relation to the construction of meaning and in relation to their intellectual contexts and thereby to assist in the answering of the primary research questions.

The Chapters of Part 2

The first chapter of the second part (2.1) is devoted to a *Begriffsgeschichte* of the word 'Theosophy' and a historical and thematic analysis of how Blavatsky used this concept. The finer nuances of Blavatsky's use of the term will be mapped and the semantic inheritance will be discussed.

The following six chapters will each analyse one of Blavatsky's major discourses with a primary focus on the intellectual contexts—that is, the history of ideas.

The first discourse chapter (2.2) will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge by discussing her critique of modern culture, her reception of modern historical consciousness, including the idea of progress, and her relation to the wider contexts of the study of religion and mythology during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The second discourse chapter (2.3) will map and analyse Blavatsky discourse against Christian dogmatism in relation to the Enlightenment tradition, secularization, the crisis of faith, new critical studies in religion and mythology and her relation to the Orthodox Russian Church.

The third discourse chapter (2.4) will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse against the modern natural sciences and materialism by discussing the history of the relationship between natural philosophy and esotericism, the *etic* construct 'occultism', the philosophical and methodological stances of the dominant naturalists of the day and the impact of scientism on Blavatsky's construction of occultism in her major works *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine*.

The fourth discourse chapter (2.5) will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse against modern spiritualism by discussing her relation to both spiritualism and esoteric traditions. It will furthermore explore whether Blavatsky's 'new occultism' originated in spiritualism and whether it was a form of spiritualism.

The fifth discourse chapter (2.6) will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse for 'system'—by situating her discourse in relation to the larger intellectual context of philosophical system building—and how this discourse clashed with the Theosophical emphasis of non-dogmatism.

The sixth discourse chapter (2.7) will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse for universal brotherhood by discussing the wider history and intellectual context of similar ideas and the historical transfer of the Theosophical Headquarters to India.

The two appendices

Finally, two appendices have been constructed for the research undertaken in the primary chapters. These will, however, also in themselves further map and substantiate Blavatsky's intertextual relation to her greater intellectual contexts. The first appendix is a bibliography of all the many texts or sources Blavatsky referred to in her first major work *Isis Unveiled*. The second appendix is a bibliography of all the many sources Blavatsky referred to in her second major work *The Secret Doctrine*. Both appendices have been constructed through the collection and identification of all of Blavatsky's references (references that often times were only partially or incorrectly rendered, leaving out author, publisher, year, title or exact title). After the collection of these references, they

were ordered alphabetically into subjects, such as: anthropology, natural sciences, orientalism and philosophy, to better serve as a review of Blavatsky's reception of ideas or her intertextual use of intellectual contexts.

PART I

THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF H. P. BLAVATSKY'S THEOSOPHY

1.1 Major Trends in Blavatsky Research – Literary Review¹

As a point of departure for the succeeding chapter, on theory and method, and for the second part of this thesis, the aim of this chapter is to outline some major trends in the study of Blavatsky's Theosophy from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. These previous studies on Blavatsky can heuristically be divided into a fourfold taxonomy, as follows:

- (1) Early encounters
- (2) Sceptics
- (3) Historical studies
- (4) The academic study of Western esotericism

1.1.1 Early encounters

This first section will outline five early encounters with Blavatsky that became influential to later accounts of her life.² The purpose of this section is, however,

¹ This literary review is by no means intended to be exhaustive. Studies by theosophists have generally been left out and many important academic articles and books have also been left out (many studies not mentioned here will, however, be used and discussed in the second part of this thesis). Instead of being an exhaustive account this review will provide a concise overview of some of the major trends that have moved Blavatsky research forward. In relation to this it should, however, also be noted that not all of the studies reviewed here are directly relevant to the present thesis.

² Numerous biographies of Blavatsky exist. Many of these are, however, sensationalistic, hagiographical or sceptical. No comprehensive historical/critical account of her life exists to date. The most comprehensive is Sylvia Cranston, *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky Founder of the Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993). For an overview of other biographies, see A. P. Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky: Compiled from Information Supplied by her Relatives and Friends and Edited by A.P. Sinnett* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1886, rep. New York: The Arno Press, 1976); Countess Constance Wachtmeister and Others, *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and "The Secret Doctrine"* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1893); Arthur Lillie, *Madame Blavatsky and her "Theosophy" A Study* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1895); Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, trans. and ed. by Walter Leaf (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895); Samuel Studd, *Concerning H. P. B.: An Examination into the So-called Proofs of Fraud on the Part of Madame Blavatsky* (Melbourne: Theosophical Book Depot, [1903(?)]); J. D. Buck, *Modern World Movements: Theosophy and the*

not to provide detailed historical accounts of each of the persons discussed but simply to show, as a counter-point to the next section on early sceptics, that upon meeting Blavatsky several high standing members of society came to admire her.

1.1.1.1 Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907)

Prior to his famous encounter with Blavatsky and his central role in the Theosophical Society for which he now is most commonly known Olcott had a significant background in both law and agriculture. He attained the rank of Colonel after enlisting in the American Civil War and was appointed special

School of Natural Science (Chicago, IL: Indo-American Book co., 1913); Annie Besant, *H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters of Wisdom* (Krotona, CA: Theosophical Publishing House, 1918); Alice Leighton Cleather, *H. P. Blavatsky: Her Life and Work For Humanity* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1922); Alice Leighton Cleather, *H. P. Blavatsky: As I Knew Her* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1923); Alice Leighton Cleather, *H. P. Blavatsky: A Great Betrayal* (Calcutta Thacker, Spink & Co., 1922); G. Baseden Butt, *Madame Blavatsky* (London: Rider, [1926]); *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, compiled by Mary K. Neff (London: Rider & CO., 1927); William Kingsland, *The Real H. P. Blavatsky: A Study in Theosophy and a Memoir of a Great Soul* (London: Watkins, 1928); *In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: By Some of her Pupils* (London: Blavatsky Association, 1931); Josephine Ransom, *Madame Blavatsky as Occultist* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1931); C. E. Bechofer-Roberts, *The Mysterious Madame: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: The Life & Work of the Founder of the Theosophical Society* (New York Brewer & Warren, 1931); Gertrude M. Williams, *Madame Blavatsky: Priestess of the Occult* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1946); John Symonds, *Madame Blavatsky: Medium and Magician* (London: Odhams Press, 1959); Victor A. Endersby, *The Hall of Magic Mirrors* (New York: Carlton Press, 1969); Geoffrey A. Barborka, *H. P. Blavatsky: Lightbringer* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1970); Howard Murphet, *When Daylight Comes: A Biography of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1975); Marion Meade, *Madame Blavatsky: The Woman Behind the Myth* (New York: Putnam, 1980); Jean Overton Fuller, *Blavatsky and her Teachers: An Investigative Biography* (London and the Hague: East-West Publications, 1988); *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky: Insights into the Life of a Modern Sphinx*, compiled by Daniel H. Caldwell (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing house, 2000 [1991]); Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1993); Gary Lachman, *Madame Blavatsky: The Mother of Modern Spirituality* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2012).

investigator for rooting out corruption in the War Department.³ Olcott met Blavatsky for the first time in October 1874 at a spiritualist séance at the Eddys' Homestead—a subject he had been interested in for some time and had set out to document for several interested newspapers.⁴ At the homestead, he came into contact with Blavatsky, who was also visiting, by offering her a light for her cigarette. Olcott reported:

Madame Blavatsky rolled herself a cigarette [...] I said “Permettez moi, Madame,” and gave her a light for her cigarette; our acquaintance began in smoke, but it stirred up a great and permanent fire⁵

Even though both had an interest in modern spiritualism, Olcott already at this point got the impression that Blavatsky was critical towards the so-called ‘materialistic tendency of American spiritualism’.⁶ In 1875, Olcott’s many popular newspaper articles were published in book form under the title *People from the Other World* in which also an account of his encounters with Blavatsky is given. Concerning this encounter and besides from his appraisal of her many virtues and exalted social stature, he reported that:

her mediumship is totally different from that of any other person I ever met; for, instead of being controlled by spirits to do their will, it is she who seems to control them to do her bidding. Whatever may be the secret by which this power has been attained, I cannot say, but that she possesses

³ Cranston, *HPB*, p. 123, for further details about Olcott’s life and work, see Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996); Howard Murphet, *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light: Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1988 [1st edn 1972 entitled *Hammer on the Mountain. The Life of Henry Steel Olcott*]); *Reminiscences of Colonel H.S. Olcott*, comp. by Hridaya N. Agarwal (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1932).

⁴ Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002 [1895]), I, 1-26; Boris de Zirkoff, ‘General Bibliography’, in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91, I, 443-538 (pp. 508-509). For further information on Olcott’s and Blavatsky’s meeting at the Eddys and for further details on modern spiritualism, see chapter 2.5 in the present thesis on Blavatsky’s Discourse against Modern Spiritualism.

⁵ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 3-6.

⁶ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 3-6.

it I have had too many proofs to permit me to doubt the fact.⁷

Olcott's first encounter with Blavatsky, documented by himself, not only came to have a bearing influence on the development of Theosophy and later accounts of it, but also captured some of the early distinctions between Theosophy and modern spiritualism. Especially, the idea that modern spiritualism was somewhat 'materialistic' and even dangerous became a common argument among many theosophists as well as the notion of latent powers in man that can be awakened to control spirits—rather than man being controlled by them in order to produce psychical phenomena.⁸

Olcott was no doubt impressed by Blavatsky and her ideas and as a result devoted the remains of his long life to the Theosophical Society, which he co-founded with Blavatsky and others in 1875 and in which he served as president until his death in 1907. Following the death of Blavatsky in 1891, he began publishing his diaries (1895) related to the Theosophical Society, which he had kept since 1878. These diaries continued until 1907 and now constitute a remarkable source for Theosophical history under the title *Old Diary Leaves* (1895-1935 [1878-1907]). The theosophical historian Michael Gomes has remarked that these publications became the first major history of the Theosophical Society and that they contain a quite realistic portrayal of what actually took place during the time.⁹

1.1.1.2 Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840-1921)

A. P. Sinnett, who was born in England, had taken a journalistic appointment in

⁷ Henry S. Olcott, *People from the Other World* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Company, 1875), p. 453.

⁸ See *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 'Letter 5' [March or April 1872], pp. 20-21. See also chapter 2.5 of the present thesis, in which this topic will be dealt with more extensively.

⁹ Michael Gomes, *Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), p. 19; for short, useful histories of the Theosophical Society, see Josephine Ransom, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1938) and Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

colonial India November 1872 as the editor of the governmental mouthpiece *The Pioneer*, which at the time was a leading daily newspaper.¹⁰ With a lively interest in “spiritualistic phenomena”, he invited Blavatsky to visit him in his residence at Allahabad upon her famous arrival in India in 1879 in order to report it.¹¹ His encounter with Blavatsky and her “psychical powers” was later published in his book *The Occult World* (1881). Sinnett’s early interest in and reflections on Blavatsky were concentrated on the “powers” she was rumoured to possess and the masters or mahatmas she was said to be in contact with. The general picture laid out for the public to consider in *The Occult World* was: that ‘occultism’ or ‘occult Philosophy’ is to be regarded as a spiritual counterpart to natural science. When, for example, physiology deals with the circulation of the blood, occultism deals with the circulation of the life principle and the soul. The principles of occultism, it was argued, are however in no way the same as those of religion, which can only believe in and not know spiritual realities.¹² Sinnett proclaimed that occultism provides experimental knowledge of spiritual principles and that it can be called ‘the science of religion’.¹³ The ‘experimental’ idea was furthermore related to the notion of higher sense faculties, because occultism is, as it was argued, a psychological science of latent faculties in man.¹⁴

The secret knowledge of occultism is immensely ancient and has been preserved by a circle of adepts. These adepts are beyond the common world and reside in what Sinnett calls ‘the occult world’¹⁵ as the title of the book also indicates. In this relation, Blavatsky is described as an initiate, only—not yet an adept—who fills the function of representative and communicative link for the mahatmas in the world.¹⁶

¹⁰ Cranston, *HPB.*, p. 208; A. P. Sinnett, *The Occult World* (London: Trübner & Co., 1881), p. 42. For further details, see also A. P. Sinnett, *Autobiography of Alfred Percy Sinnett*, ed. by Leslie Price (London: Theosophical History Centre, London, 1986).

¹¹ Sinnett, *The Occult World*, pp. 42, 50.

¹² Sinnett, *The Occult World*, pp. 4-7.

¹³ Sinnett, *The Occult World*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Sinnett, *The Occult World*, p. 5.

¹⁵ Sinnett, *The Occult World*, p. 29.

¹⁶ Sinnett, *The Occult World*, p. 33.

After his meeting with Blavatsky in India in 1879, Sinnett gradually became one of the leading Theosophists and one of the primary recipients of the famous *Mahatma Letters*.¹⁷ Based on the rich and in many ways novel esoteric information found in the *Mahatma Letters*—the contents of which were

¹⁷ The Mahatma Letters were received by A. P. Sinnett, and some by A. O. Hume (1829-1912), between 1880 to 1887. They were, however, not published collectively until 1923 in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K. H.*, transcribed, comp. and intro. by A. T. Barker (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1923). Other Theosophists also received letters, see *Letters from The Masters of Wisdom 1881-1888*, transcrib. and comp. by C. Jinarājādāsa (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919); *Letters from The Masters of Wisdom Second Series*, transcrib. and comp. by C. Jinarājādāsa (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925); The best edition of the letters is *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998). Vernon Harrison's recent studies are particularly thorough and balanced, see Vernon Harrison, 'J'Accuse: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885', *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research*, 53, 803 (April 1986), 286-310; Vernon Harrison, *H.P. Blavatsky and the SPR: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1997), the online facsimile version of this book has been used, see <www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-spr/hpbspr-h.htm> [accessed 15 October 2011]. For further studies devoted to the topic, see Mary K. Neff, *The 'Brothers' of Madame Blavatsky* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1932); C. Jinarājādāsa, *Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1934); Harold E. Hare and William L. Hare, *Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1936); Adlai E. Waterman [Waiter A. Carrithers, Jr.], *Obituary: The 'Hodgson Report' on Madame Blavatsky, 1885-1960. Re-examination Discredits the Major Charges against H. P. Blavatsky* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1963); V. A. Endersby, 'Battle Royal of Hodgson versus Hartmann versus Waterman: Refereed by the Editor of Theosophical Notes' *Theosophical Notes* (April 1964), 1-66; C. Jinarājādāsa, *The Story of the Mahatma Letters* (Adyar, Madras; Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977 [1946]); Geoffrey A. Barborka, *The Mahatmas and their Letters* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1973); Leslie Price, *Madame Blavatsky Unveiled?: A new discussion of the most famous investigation of The Society for Psychological Research* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1986); Leslie Price, 'Massey's Resignation and the S. P. R.', *Theosophical History*, 1, 5 (1986), 112-14; Leslie Price, 'So P. R. Press Statement', *Theosophical History*, 1, 6 (1986), 126-28; Brendan French, *The Theosophical Masters: An Investigation into the Conceptual Domains of H. P. Blavatsky and C. W. Leadbeater*, 2 vols (PhD thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Sydney, 2000), I, pp. 135-57.

largely unknown to the public at the time¹⁸—Sinnott composed his influential book *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883). In *Esoteric Buddhism*, Sinnott presented its contents as a doctrine given to him by the custodians of esoteric truths and therefore not as Sinnott's own speculations.¹⁹ The content was furthermore stated to be a secret doctrine as well as Buddhism.²⁰ However, a distinction was made between exoteric Buddhism and esoteric Buddhism. Esoteric Buddhism is Buddhism, but it is also the inner 'penetralia' of other faiths—one with the esoteric doctrine of other religions.²¹

For many years, Sinnott and his wife Patience Sinnott remained in close contact with Blavatsky. Thus, as a reaction to the critical report from the committee of the Psychical Research Society on Madam Blavatsky issued in 1884/5 (see next section), Sinnott wanted to write an objective and positive biography about Blavatsky,²² which resulted in the first full length biography about Blavatsky published in 1886—five years prior to her death—entitled *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*.

1.1.1.3 Countess Constance Georgina Louise Wachtmeister (1838-1910)

The Countess Constance Wachtmeister was a socially distinguished lady whose family origins (*De Bourbel*) can be traced back to the tenth century Normandy through a long line of nobles. She was, however, raised in England and in 1879 she married her cousin Count Karl Wachtmeister (1823-1871). Also in 1879, the countess nourished her interest in modern spiritualism, but after dissatisfaction joined the Theosophical Society in 1881. It was not until 1884, however, that she encountered Blavatsky for the first time in London.²³ The Countess and Blavatsky soon became close friends and stayed together alone on several occasions when Blavatsky was ill and when she was intensively writing on her magnum opus *The Secret Doctrine* (1888).

¹⁸ Even though the *Mahatma Letters* were not published until 1923, Sinnott used quotes from them in his works.

¹⁹ A. P., Sinnott, *Esoteric Buddhism*, 5th ann. and enlarged edn (San Diego, CA: Wizards Bookshelf, 1994 [1883]). pp. xxi, 3.

²⁰ Sinnott, *Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. vi, 3.

²¹ Sinnott, *Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. vii-viii, 3.

²² Sinnott, *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. viii-x.

²³ Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, p. 8.

Especially in relation to the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*, the Countess plays a significant role to the historian, because in 1895 she published a short volume entitled *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and 'The Secret Doctrine'*, which gives several important accounts of both her own personal memories as well as the memories of other prominent theosophists who were instrumental in the production of *The Secret Doctrine*, such as Bertram Keightley (1860-1944) and his slightly older nephew Dr. Archibald Keightley (1859-1930).²⁴

The portrait of Blavatsky that emerges from the Countess' memories is that of a virtuous, but unconventional woman who despite her illnesses wilfully and laboriously worked on *The Secret Doctrine* in order to serve humanity. The foreknowledge, which the Countess had had of Blavatsky, as 'the messenger of men who had advanced beyond average mankind in mental and spiritual attainment,'²⁵ also became her own experience of Blavatsky and she also experienced the rumoured 'occult phenomena' on several occasions according to her own account.²⁶ To Wachtmeister, Blavatsky thus became, not only a close friend but also, a spiritual teacher of great ethics and wisdom.²⁷

1.1.1.4 George Robert Stowe Mead (1863-1933)

In 1889 at the age of twenty-six, G.R.S. Mead became the private secretary of Blavatsky. He first met Blavatsky in London 1884 but prior to their meeting, he had studied at Cambridge and Oxford.²⁸ Because of his many studies,

²⁴ See Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*; for further details on Wachtmeister, see Boris de Zirkoff, 'General Bibliography', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91, VI, (1989) 427-51 (p. 448), Caldwell, *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 409.

²⁵ Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, p. 8.

²⁶ Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, pp. 43-47.

²⁷ Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, p. 86.

²⁸ *G. R. S. Mead, and the Gnostic Quest* ed. by Claire Goodrick-Clarke & Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2005), p. 2. For further details on Mead, see Boris de Zirkoff, 'General Bibliography', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91, XIII, (1982) 369-406 (pp. 393-97); Claire Goodrick-Clarke, 'Mead's Gnosis: A Historical Exegesis of an Ancient Heresy,' *Theosophical History*, 4, 4-5 (Oct. 1992–Jan. 1993), 134-48; Joscelyn Godwin, 'Mead, George Robert Stowe,' in

translations and influential publications related to Hellenism, early Christianity, Gnosticism and Hermetism, Mead is generally known as the “scholar of the Theosophical Society”.²⁹ As private secretary to Blavatsky, until her death, and as a critical scholar—who not only edited many of Blavatsky’s major works³⁰ but also later in 1909, broke with the Theosophical Society and founded the Quest Society³¹—he holds an interesting position as one who encountered Blavatsky and later retrospectively came to reflect on this encounter. Especially one written piece by Mead is of note here: ‘Concerning H.P.B., Stray Thoughts on Theosophy’ (1904).

Contrary to the SPR report (see next section), Mead’s personal experience of Blavatsky convinced him that Blavatsky was *more than genuine*. She was portrayed as a spiritual titan who reached far beyond the known world; she was in a sense so mysterious to him that he thought that she must remain an ‘enigma’. Whatever people might say about Blavatsky, in Mead’s opinion her Theosophy stood firm and independent of Blavatsky as a person, who without being a scholar, as such, had access to unknown resources of knowledge.³²

Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism, ed. by. Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill 2005), II, 785-86; Leslie Price, ‘G.R.S. Mead and the Quest for Gnosis,’ *The Academy of Religion and Psychological Research 1983 Annual Conference Proceedings* (Bloomfield, CT: 1983), pp. 24-33.

²⁹ Among his many well known works and translations are, G. R. S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia* (London & Madras: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896); G. R. S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (London & Benares: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1900); G. R. S. Mead, *Thrice Greatest Hermes: Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis. Being a translation of the Extant Sermons and Fragments of the Trismegistic Literature, with Prolegomena, Commentaries and Notes*, 3 vols (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, London, 1906).

³⁰ Mead together with Annie Besant edited the third and revised edition of Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine* in four volumes (1893-1897), *The Theosophical Glossary* (1892), *Key to Theosophy* 3rd edn (1893), see Clare Goodrick-Clarke, *G. R. S. Mead*, pp. 4-5.

³¹ See *The Quest A Quarterly Review: The Quest Reprint Series, No. 1: ‘The Quest’—Old & New: A Retrospect and Prospect.*, ed. by G. R. S. Mead (London: John M. Watkins, 1926), 296-98; Zirkoff, ‘General Bibliography’, in *HPBCW*, XIII, 394-95.

³² G.R.S. Mead, *Concerning H.P.B.: Stray Thoughts on Theosophy*, Adyar Pamphlets, 111 (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1920), 1 (first publ.

Later in life G.R.S. Mead slightly altered some of his views. He still maintained that Blavatsky was not a trickster or a charlatan, at least not while he knew her. Mead, however, no longer subscribed to her work as he once had or as he stated

‘I retain a great personal affection for her bohemian and racy personality; but much she wrote I know to be very inaccurate, to say the least of it; while her whole outlook on life was that of an ‘occultist’—a view I now hold most firmly to be fundamentally false.’³³

1.1.1.5 Annie Besant (1847–1933)

Prior to encountering Blavatsky in 1889, Annie Besant was well known to the public for her unconventional devotion to free thought, women’s rights, socialism and secularism.³⁴ As a dynamic public figure, she was asked by the noted journalist and editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, William Thomas Stead (1849-1912), to write a review of Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine* for the *Gazette*.

Besant agreed, and in comparison with other reviews of Blavatsky’s work at the time, Besant wrote a thorough, elegant and open-minded presentation of

in *The Theosophical Review*, XXXIV (1904))

³³ *The Quest A Quarterly Review: The Quest Reprint Series*, ed. by G. R. S. Mead, p. 291.

³⁴ Anne Taylor, *Annie Besant: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) provides a good overview of Besant’s life, but numerous biographies exist, see Annie Besant, *Annie Besant: An autobiography* (London: Unwin, 1908); Claude Bragdon, *A Brief Life of Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society* (Rochester, NY: Manas Press, 1909); Theodore Besterman, *A Bibliography of Annie Besant* (London: Theosophical Society in England, 1924); Geoffrey West, *The Life of Annie Besant* (London: Gerald Howe Ltd., 1933); Theodore Besterman, *Mrs. Annie Besant: A Modern Prophet* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1934); Sri Rakasa, *Annie Besant: As Woman and as Leader* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1941); Arthur H. Nethercott, *The First Five Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis: 1961); Rupert Hart-Davis, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* ([Chicago, IL]: University of Chicago Press, [1963]); Catherine Lowman Wessinger, *Annie Besant and Progressive Messianism (1847-1933)* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1988); Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 41-66; Isaac Lubelsky, *Celestial India: Madame Blavatsky and the Birth of Indian Nationalism* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2012), chapters 6 and 8.

The Secret Doctrine, which appeared in the *Gazette* on 25 April 1889.³⁵ While she admitted that the work was very difficult and different from conventional modes of Western thought, she was no-doubt impressed and concluded that it deserved to be read and contemplated.³⁶ After reviewing *The Secret Doctrine*, Besant sought a personal interview with Blavatsky, which took place in Paris that same year. After their first encounter Besant—like Olcott, Sinnett and Wachtmeister and to some extent Mead—came to dedicate her life to the Theosophical Society and soon became one of its leading members. In 1907, after the death of Olcott, she became the second president of the society and also came to play an important role for the Indian home rule or independence movement until her death in 1933.³⁷

While the above encounters with the charismatic Blavatsky do not belong to the academic study of Blavatsky and Theosophy, they do provide the historian with a sense of how people with a positive interest in esotericism reacted to her at first hand. They thus provide a contra-point to the following more sceptical evaluations of her character and ideas.

1.1.2 Sceptics

Already during her lifetime many respected scholars and members of high society deemed Blavatsky a charlatan. While Blavatsky received both positive and negative critique from many spiritualists and scholars in relation to her articles and her first major work *Isis Unveiled* (1877),³⁸ a highly negative report was eventually issued by The Society for Psychical Research. Briefly stated, the

³⁵ Besant also wrote a second review of *The Secret Doctrine* for the *National Reformer*, 23 June 1889. Compare Besant's reviews with the more sceptical review in *Science*, 13, 313 (1 Feb. 1889), 89-90, for further historical details on Besant's review for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, see Caldwell, *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 363-370.

³⁶ See Annie Besant, 'Among the Adepts Madame Blavatsky on The "Secret Doctrine"', at www.blavatskyarchives.com/besant1888.htm (first publ. in *The Pall Mall Gazette* (25 April 1889), 3, rep. in *The Theosophist* (August 1889), 696-8).

³⁷ See Raj Kumar, *Annie Besant's Rise To Power In Indian Politics 1914-1917* (New Delhi: Naurang Rai, 1981), pp. 71-131.

³⁸ For details on the response, which *Isis Unveiled* received, see Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987), pp. 137-58.

report has effectively branded Blavatsky as a charlatan in public opinion ever since.

1.1.2.1 The Society for Psychical Research

The SPR was founded in London (1882) by Sir William Fletcher Barrett (1844-1925) an English physicist and Edmund Dawson Rogers (1823-1910) a journalist with a background in modern spiritualism. In the vogue of modern spiritualism, Barrett and Rogers wanted to create a forum for an impartial scientific study of such phenomena.³⁹ Not long after the founding of the SPR, its founders became interested in Blavatsky. They wanted to examine the rumored psychical phenomena surrounding her and thus in 1884 formed a committee in order to collect information and evidence. The committee started out in the summer of 1884 in London by interviewing notable theosophists such as Olcott, Mohini M. Chatterji (1858-1936), Sinnett and Blavatsky herself. Generally, the information gathered was inconclusive with regards to occult phenomena and because of the good reputation of many of the theosophists interviewed, the SPR committee decided to issue a "preliminary and provisional Report" in December of the same year (1884).⁴⁰ This provisional report, which was only circulated privately, was fairly open-minded and indefinite in nature.

³⁹ The SPR, focused on six specific areas: (1) thought transference or telepathy, (2) Mesmerism, hypnotism, clairvoyance and related phenomena, (3) "sensitives" and "mediums", the ability to communicate with the dead, (4) apparitions, (5) levitations, materializations, and other physical phenomena, and (6) the history of the above and data collection/collation. For the history of the SPR and psychical research, see Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), but see also, Alexander Baird, *Richard Hodgson: The Story of a Psychical Researcher and His Times* (London: Psychic Press, 1949); Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968); Robert Ashby, *The Guidebook for the Study of Psychical Research* (London: Rider & Co., 1972); Hereward Carrington, *The World of Psychical Research* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1973); Renee Haynes, *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882-1982: A History* (London: Macdonald, 1982); Leslie Price, *Madame Blavatsky Unveiled?*; Michael Gomes, 'Archives of the Society for Psychical Research, London' *Theosophical History*, 1, 6 (1986), 144-55.

⁴⁰ Society for Psychical Research Committee, *First Report of the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research, Appointed to Investigate the Evidence for Marvellous Phenomena Offered by Certain Members of the Theosophical Society* (London: [n. pub.] [1884]).

1.1.2.1.1 The Society for Psychical Research and the 'Coulomb case'

However, around the same time in Adyar, India at the Theosophical headquarters the so-called 'Coulomb case' was about to unfold.⁴¹ While Blavatsky and Olcott were away—in Europe for several months between March 1884 and October 1884—the couple Emma and Alexis Coulomb had turned against Blavatsky. With the help of the editor Rev. George Patterson, they had published several letters, purportedly written by Blavatsky, entitled 'The Collapse of Koot Hoomi' in the September and October (1884) issues of *Madras Christian College Magazine*.⁴² The letters suggested among other things that Blavatsky had engaged in producing fraudulent occult phenomena on a large scale, a notion with which Mme. Coulomb entertained the people of Madras on 18 October (1884) by telling them that she had helped Blavatsky in the production.⁴³ The controversial news from India, stirred up by the Coulombs, soon became known in Europe—more specifically, to Blavatsky in Elberfeld, Germany and to the SPR in London. Blavatsky therefore rapidly returned to India with Olcott. The SPR found this new situation highly interesting and wanted to examine it for themselves before judging the veracity of the recently published letters.

1.1.2.1.2 The Society for Psychical Research and the 'Hodgson's report'

The SPR appointed a young Cambridge scholar and student of psychical phenomena, Richard Hodgson (1855-1905), to travel to India and investigate firsthand the circumstances that had occurred at the Theosophical

⁴¹ For details on the 'Coulomb Case', see Michael Gomes, *The Coulomb Case, Occasional Papers*, X (Fullerton, CA: Theosophical History, 2005).

⁴² See George Patterson, 'The Collapse of Koot Hoomi', <www.blavatskyarchives.com/pattersoncollapse.htm> [accessed 15 October 2011] (first publ. in *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (September 1884), 199-215 with a 'Postscript', 241-42).

⁴³ See K. F. Vania, *Madame H. P. Blavatsky: Her Occult Phenomena and The Society for Psychical Research* (Bombay: SAT, 1951), pp. 238-41. It should be mentioned that a few months prior to publishing these letters Emma and Alexis Coulomb had been dismissed for misconduct by the Board of Control appointed by Olcott in Adyar. It was claimed that Alexis Coulomb had been working on constructing a secret passage in the wall behind the "shrine" in Blavatsky's quarters in Adyar as well as several trap-doors and sliding panels elsewhere in her rooms, see Gomes, *The Coulomb Case*, pp. 7-8.

headquarters. Hodgson arrived at the Theosophical Headquarters in December (1884) and was welcomed by Blavatsky and her disciple Damodar K. Mavalankar (1857- never to be seen again after 1885, when he departed to the Himalayas) who worked full time at the headquarters. Blavatsky told Hodgson that the letters published in the *Christian College Magazine* were forgeries but after some investigation Hodgson, surprisingly soon, adopted Emma Coulomb's view. All of the above was put into the two hundred pages which constitute what is now known as the Hodgson's report or *Account of Personal Investigations in India, and Discussion of the Authorship of the 'Koot Hoomi' Letters*.⁴⁴ A very large part of the report is focused on Blavatsky's alleged forgery of the *Mahatma letters*.

In brief, the Hodgson's report on Blavatsky therefore came to state:

For our own part, we regard her [H. P. Blavatsky] neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history. — Statement and Conclusions of the Committee⁴⁵

The report by the SPR has, of course, continually and since its appearance, been refuted by Theosophists,⁴⁶ but none the less the report has put a continuing stamp on Blavatsky as a charlatan—a fact evidenced by almost every published article on her in mainstream encyclopedias, dictionaries and in popular biographies. However, in more recent times a new assessment of the Hodgson's report has been undertaken by Dr. Vernon Harrison of England (1912-2001). Harrison was president of the Royal Photographic Society (1974-1976), co-founder of The Liszt Society, a long-standing active member of the

⁴⁴ See Richard Hodgson, 'Account of Personal Investigations in India, and Discussion of the Authorship of the "Koot Hoomi" Letters', *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 3 (1885), 207-380.

⁴⁵ Hodgson, 'Account of Personal Investigations in India', 207.

⁴⁶ See A. P. Sinnett, William Q. Judge, and Annie Besant who were among the first to react and the following books later written a defence against the claims: Kingsland, *The Real H. P. Blavatsky*; Beatrice Hastings, *The 'Coulomb Pamphlet', Defence of Madame Blavatsky, Volume II* (Worthing: The Author, 1937); Vania, *Madame H. P. Blavatsky*; Waterman [Carrithers, Jr.], *Obituary*.

SPR, and a professional handwriting and documents expert. For many years Harrison had privately been occupied with the Hodgson's report and the so-called "Blavatsky case" not only because he found it to be interesting, but also because he found it to be highly problematic. In 1986, his first critical results on the Hodgson's report were published in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* under the title: 'J'Accuse: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885'.⁴⁷ Harrison's main focus in this piece was to analyze if Blavatsky had produced the early *Mahatma Letters* received by A. P. Sinnett and Hume in a disguised handwriting.

In 1997, he continued his research with the publication of 'J'Accuse d'autant plus: A Further Study of the Hodgson Report'.⁴⁸ In Harrison's extended study he analyses each of the 1,323 slides comprising the complete set of the letters found in the British Library, and as he writes 'wherever appropriate I read the writing in a line-by-line scan at a magnification of x50 diameters'.⁴⁹

According to his research, the Hodgson Report is unscientific or as he writes:

I shall show that, on the contrary, the Hodgson Report is a highly partisan document forfeiting all claim to scientific impartiality. It is the address of a Counsel for the Prosecution who does not hesitate to select evidence to suit his case, ignoring and suppressing everything that tends to contradict his thesis. The Counsel for the Defense was never heard.

I make no attempt in this paper to prove that Madame Blavatsky was guiltless of charges preferred against her. [...] My present objective is a more limited one: to demonstrate that the case against Madame Blavatsky in the Hodgson Report is NOT PROVEN—in the Scots sense.⁵⁰

Harrison also affirms in conclusion (affidavit §4):

⁴⁷ Vernon Harrison, 'J'Accuse: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885', *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 53, 803 (April, 1986), 286-310.

⁴⁸ Harrison's 1986 and 1997 reports have been published together, as Vernon Harrison, *H. P. Blavatsky and the SPR: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1997).

⁴⁹ Harrison, *H. P. Blavatsky and the SPR*, Affidavit, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Harrison, *H. P. Blavatsky and the SPR*, Affidavit, p. 4.

Having read the Mahatma Letters, I am left with the strong impression that the writers 'KH' and 'M' were real and distinct human beings, not demi-gods or 'shells'. . . .

and he further declares (affidavit §8):

I have found no evidence that the Mahatma Letters preserved in the British Library were written by Helena Blavatsky consciously and deliberately in a disguised form of her own handwriting cultivated over a period of several years, as claimed by Richard Hodgson. [...] In any ordinary legal case I would regard them as different scripts and attribute them to three different persons.

Hence, he concentrated on what is available: the handwritings of the Mahatma letters and of the Blavatsky letters in the British Library. He concludes his analysis with the following (affidavit §10):

BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE that it is my professional OPINION derived from a study of this case extending over a period of more than fifteen years, that future historians and biographers of the said Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the compilers of reference books, encyclopaedias and dictionaries, as well as the general public, should come to realise that The Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Phenomena Connected with The Theosophical Society, published in 1885 by the Society for Psychical Research, should be read with great caution, if not disregarded. Far from being a model of impartial investigation so often claimed for it over more than a century, it is badly flawed and untrustworthy.

1.1.2.1.3 The Society for Psychical Research and *A Modern Priestess of Isis*

The next phase in the SPR campaign, in relation to Madam Blavatsky, was their request to have Walter Leaf produce an abridged English version of the Russian historical novelist Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff's (1849-1903) work on Madam Blavatsky under the title *A Modern Priestess of Isis* (1895) which also came to include the influential article/appendix by William Emmette Coleman (1843-?): 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings.'⁵¹

Solovyoff originally published his account of Madam Blavatsky in eight

⁵¹ For further details on Solovyoff, see Zirkoff, 'General Bibliography', in HPBCW, VI, 446. For detail about Coleman see, Zirkoff, 'General Bibliography', in HPBCW I, 449-50. Jeffrey D. Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement* (Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2012), pp. 262-74.

instalments with the Russian title 'Sovremennaya Zhritza Isidi' in the *Russkiy Vestnik* (Russian Messenger), but the SPR found it to be such an important work that it was translated into English, or as Henry Sidgwick wrote in the 'Prefatory Note' to the English translation:

*I Am authorized by the Council of the Society of Psychical Research to state formally on their behalf that the present translation of Mr. Solovyoff's Modern Priestess of Isis has been made and published with their approval, and to express their sense of service which Mr. Leaf has rendered to the Society by undertaking the labour of translation.*⁵²

Sidgwick furthermore explained that '*it is not likely that any book will be written throwing more light on its origin [the Theosophical Society] than A Modern Priestess of Isis*'.⁵³ In the opinion of the SPR, Solovyoff's book should thus be regarded as an important supplement to their own report. The book is not supposed to show that Blavatsky was a charlatan because this was 'a question already judged and decided'⁵⁴ in the Hodgson's report, it was rather intended to provide the interested reader with an understanding of how such an 'imposture' as Blavatsky could become so successful.⁵⁵ It is not the place here to enter into further details of Solovyoff's work but the general biographical picture, which it paints of Blavatsky, was more along the line of a controversial personality with great limitations rather than the heroine of divine wisdom portrayed by the theosophists.⁵⁶

The 'appendix' includes, as noted, Coleman's 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky writings', which is an important work, as it is the first work to attempt to critically trace Blavatsky's sources. Coleman argues that Blavatsky did not give credit to most of her sources.⁵⁷ According to his analysis, nearly all her

⁵² Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, trans. and ed. by Walter Leaf (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), p. iii.

⁵³ Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, p. iv [brackets are mine].

⁵⁴ Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, p. iii.

⁵⁵ Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, p. iv.

⁵⁶ Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, 209-21.

⁵⁷ Wm. Emmette Coleman, 'The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings', in Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, trans. and ed. by Walter Leaf (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), 353-66, p. 351. For critique of Coleman's study, see Gomes, *The Dawning of the*

work is one big plagiarised assemblage. His short tract of 16 pages was later to be backed by a much more detailed, critical publication on Theosophy to prove his preliminary assertions—but such an *exposé* of Theosophy was never published.⁵⁸ Coleman argued that: (1) *Isis Unveiled* contains about two thousand passages copied from other books without any credit given and (2) only one hundred books were actually used in writing *Isis Unveiled* even though about one thousand four hundred books are directly quoted and even more referred to.⁵⁹

Blavatsky intentionally gives the false impression in her work that she was a learned person, or as Coleman wrote: '[the reader is] misled into thinking Madam Blavatsky an enormous reader, possessed of vast erudition; while the fact is her reading was very limited, and her ignorance was profound in all branches of knowledge.'⁶⁰ Coleman also argued with regard to Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*⁶¹ that it was permeated with plagiarisms and primarily based on only two books: (1) the English orientalist Horace Hayman Wilson's (1786-1860) *Vishnu Purana* (1840) and (2) the American geologist and author Alexander Winchell's (1824-1891) *World-Life* (1883).⁶²

The so-called *Stanzas of Dzyan*, supposedly an ancient text—on which *The Secret Doctrine* is based,⁶³ is according to Coleman a product of Blavatsky's own brain—rather than ancient texts existing in some obscure corner of the world.⁶⁴ The same judgment was placed on Blavatsky's other

Theosophical Movement, pp. 143-58; Cranston, *HPB*, pp. 379-87; see also *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Western Esoteric Masters Series (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 49-53.

⁵⁸ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 353.

⁵⁹ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 354.

⁶⁰ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 354, see also pp. 356-57.

⁶¹ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', pp. 358-59.

⁶² See *The Vishnú Puráña: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*, trans. by H. H. Wilson (London: J. Murray, 1840); Alexander Winchell, *World-life; or, Comparative Geology* (Chicago, IL: S. C. Griggs and company, 1883).

⁶³ For further details, see chapter 2.6 on Blavatsky's Discourse for System in the present thesis.

⁶⁴ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 359.

works, such as *The Theosophical Glossary*,⁶⁵ *The Voice of the Silence*,⁶⁶ *The Key to Theosophy*,⁶⁷ *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan*⁶⁸ and related writings, such *The Mahatma Letters* and thereby *Esoteric Buddhism*, as well.⁶⁹

The critique did not stop there. Blavatsky's works were not only direct plagiarisms', every idea she used and developed was actually taken from others.⁷⁰ Other characteristics of Blavatsky's writings were according to Coleman: (1) distortion and forgery, (2) mis-statement in all branches of knowledge, (3) mistakes and errors, and (4) contradictions and inconsistency.⁷¹ Coleman conclusively wrote:

'There is not a single dogma or tenet in theosophy, nor any detail of moment in the multiplex and complex concatenation of alleged revelations of occult truth in the teachings of Madam Blavatsky and the pretended adepts, the source of which cannot be pointed out in the world's literature. From first to last, their writings are dominated by duplex plagiarism, --plagiarism in idea, and plagiarism in language.'⁷²

All in all, Coleman's analysis defined Blavatsky's works as unsystematic compilations, which not only neglect to give the rightful credit to its sources, but also misstates and distorts what it steals from others and finally combines them with pure fabrications.⁷³ While a thorough analysis of Coleman's work is something which needs to be done in a future study,⁷⁴ it will become quite clear how limited Coleman's critique was: (1) by the end of the second part of this thesis (2) by a glance of the two appendixes and (3) from a historical perspective and the analysis of how extensive, critical and informed Blavatsky's engagement with the intellectual contexts of her day was.

⁶⁵ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 359.

⁶⁶ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 361.

⁶⁷ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 364.

⁶⁸ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 364.

⁶⁹ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 363.

⁷⁰ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 364.

⁷¹ Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 364.

⁷² Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', p. 366.

⁷³ See Coleman, 'The Sources of Madam Blavatsky's Writings', pp. 365-67.

⁷⁴ In the meantime, see note 57 above.

1.1.2.2 Conclusion to the sceptics

The investigations undertaken by the SPR including the translation of Solovoyoff's *A Modern Priestess of Isis* and Coleman's work were a blow to Blavatsky and The Theosophical Society and their judgements have been responsible for much of the negative publicity published ever since. Even though new light has been cast on the matter within recent years, particularly with the work of Harrison and the historical studies outlined in the next part, this is only now beginning to precipitate into more mainstream knowledge.

The above has demonstrated that the first studies of Blavatsky and her ideas from outside of the Theosophical or esoteric milieu were generally sceptical, negative and critical of her.

1.1.3 Historical Studies

The modern academic, historical study of Blavatsky is, however, not concerned with normative judgments about Blavatsky's character and her Theosophy, but with analysing Blavatsky's Theosophy in relation to her historical and intellectual contexts. To the historian Blavatsky (and Theosophy) emerges as a cultural research object rather than an object of critique or praise. The emergence of such historical studies is the topic of this category.

1.1.3.1 The academic study of Blavatsky's Theosophy, 1930-1971

The first academic study of Blavatsky's Theosophy was undertaken by Alvin Boyd Kuhn (1880-1963) when he enrolled at Columbia University in the late nineteen-twenties to write his PhD thesis on Theosophy entitled *Theosophy: A Modern Revival of the Ancient Wisdom* (1930). Later in life Kuhn wrote the following about his own thesis and accomplishment:

'Yes, my book (351) pages on THEOSOPHY: A MODERN REVIVAL OF THE ANCIENT WISDOM was my Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University, the first and only time that any modern university in Europe or America had ever permitted any one to win the degree with a thesis on Theos. It is in a way quite a distinction.'⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Richard Alvin Sattelberg, 'Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Ph.D.: Biographical Sketch of his Life and Work', appended to Alvin Boyd Kuhn, *Christ's Three Days in Hell & Case of the Missing Messiah* (Pomeroy, WA: Health Research Books, 1985), p. ii.

The thesis reads much like a history of the Theosophical Society, including a historical documentary review of its doctrines and the life of Madam Blavatsky. Kuhn did not agree with the Hodgson's report and viewed Solovyoff's statements and judgments of Blavatsky to be self-contradictory.⁷⁶ Kuhn furthermore argued, much as Blavatsky herself had done, that Theosophy cannot be classified as a 'modern cult', because Theosophy 'in the sense of an esoteric philosophic mystic system of religious thought, must be ranked as one of the most ancient traditions'.⁷⁷ Historically Kuhn did, however, identify some of the intellectual currents important to Blavatsky's Theosophy, such as Swedenborgianism,⁷⁸ Mormonism,⁷⁹ American Transcendentalism⁸⁰, New Thought,⁸¹ and Spiritualism.⁸² Kuhn especially found the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) to be important.⁸³

Kuhn's study thus initiated the historical study of Blavatsky and Theosophy. E. M. Butler (no date), the Cambridge scholar of German and of the Faust legend, followed this in 1948, by including a chapter on Blavatsky in her *The Myth of the Magus*. Butler argued that the life-narrative of the legendary

⁷⁶ Alvin Boyd Kuhn, *Theosophy: A Modern Revival of the Ancient Wisdom* (New York: H. Holt, 1930) p. 304.

⁷⁷ Kuhn, *Theosophy*, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Kuhn, *Theosophy*, p. 19.

⁷⁹ Kuhn, *Theosophy*, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁰ Kuhn, *Theosophy*, p. 24.

⁸¹ Kuhn, *Theosophy*, pp. 31-32.

⁸² Kuhn, *Theosophy*, pp. 32-39.

⁸³ Kuhn, *Theosophy*, p. 24, 'It may seem ludicrous to suggest that Emerson was the chief forerunner of Madame Blavatsky, her John the Baptist. Yet seriously, without Emerson, Madame Blavatsky could hardly have launched her gospel when she did with equal hope of success. There is every justification for the assertion that Emerson's Orientalistic contribution to the general Transcendental trend of thought was preparatory to Theosophy. It must not be forgotten that his advocacy of Brahmanic ideas and doctrines came at a time when the expression of a laudatory opinion of the Asiatic religions called forth an opprobrium from evangelistic quarters hardly less than vicious in its bitterness. Theosophy could not hope to make headway until the virulent edge of that orthodox prejudice had been considerably blunted. It was Emerson's magnanimous eclecticism which administered the first and severest rebuke to that prejudice, and inaugurated that gradual mollification of sentiment toward the Orientals which made possible the welcome which Hindu Yogis and Swamis received toward the end of the century.'

Faust was very similar to the life of a whole range of other mysterious personages⁸⁴ known to Western history, including Blavatsky.⁸⁵ However, contrary to Kuhn's analysis, Butler's analysis was to a large extent based on the Hodgson report⁸⁶ and to some extent on Coleman's research,⁸⁷ yet Butler at times appears more open minded about Blavatsky and her Theosophy than these predecessors.

As far as such Masters are concerned [Blavatsky's mahatmas], the burden of disproof is on the sceptics. There is a great deal of evidence in their favour, and since it is next to impossible to investigate it, one should keep an open mind.⁸⁸

All in all, Butler viewed Blavatsky as an exceptional living example of the Magus Myth, 'She was certainly great; equally certainly she was not a saint'⁸⁹—her whole 'undertaking was a very interesting effort, a modern attempt to establish a new religion on ancient lines'.⁹⁰

In 1971 the Cambridge historian James Webb (1946-1980) devoted a chapter in his first book *Flight from Reason*, on the history of modern occultism, specifically to Blavatsky and Theosophy.⁹¹ While Webb sought to place Theosophy and other modern forms of spirituality in relation to their historical contexts and argued for the importance of such historical study,⁹² he construed 'occultism', including Theosophy, as a form of irrationality that would erupt into mainstream society from time to time.⁹³ Webb equally defined 'the occult' as

⁸⁴ E. M. Butler, *The Myth of the Magus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 2.

⁸⁵ Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, p. 2, 'I realised that all of Faust's predecessors and successors as well as Faust himself were essentially one and the same person under different names.

⁸⁶ Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, pp. 247, 252, 253, 260.

⁸⁷ Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, pp. 243-45.

⁸⁸ Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, p. 252.

⁸⁹ Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, p. 260.

⁹⁰ Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, p. 260.

⁹¹ James Webb, *The Flight from Reason: The Age of the Irrational* (London: Macdonald, 1971), pp. 44-65 (Chapter III)

⁹² Webb, *The Flight from Reason*, pp. v-vii.

⁹³ Webb, *The Flight from Reason*, pp. ix-xiv (p. xiii).

‘rejected knowledge’.⁹⁴ Wouter J. Hanegraaff has later shown how such a thesis in reality hinders a truly historical study of esotericism and occultism, because it disregards esotericism, and related ideas, as being a continuous historical current in Western culture.⁹⁵

1.1.3.2 The academic study of Blavatsky’s Theosophy in the 1980s

In 1980, Bruce Campbell’s book *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of The Theosophical Movement*, was published. His book was the first contemporary full volume, historical study of the Theosophical Movement and included information on many of the important groups and branches of the movement that had emerged since the first founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875. Campbell’s book also includes useful historical chapters on the formation of the Theosophical Society,⁹⁶ its early formative years⁹⁷ and an overview of Blavatsky’s main works and ideas.⁹⁸ The year 1985 marked another important event for the historical study of Theosophy as the *Theosophical History: An Independent quarterly Journal* was founded in London. Leslie Price was the primary editor from its founding until January 1990 when James Santucci took over—a post he holds to this day. The *Theosophical History Journal* and its related publication *Occasional Papers*, published as pamphlets on specific relevant topics, is an invaluable source for the historian of Theosophy with its wealth of material.⁹⁹

In 1986 the historian of religions and theosophist Robert S. Ellwood published his concise and still useful overview of Blavatskian Theosophical ideas, *Theosophy: A Modern Expression of the Wisdom of the Ages*, that to some extent, as the author wrote, was his personal ‘pilgrimage and voyage of discovery.’¹⁰⁰ The following year, the noted historian of Theosophical history

⁹⁴ Webb, *The Flight from Reason*, pp. 120, 148-54

⁹⁵ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: SUNY, 1998 [1996]), pp. 407-408.

⁹⁶ Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, pp. 1-29.

⁹⁷ Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, pp. 75-111.

⁹⁸ Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, pp. 31-74.

⁹⁹ For more information see <http://www.theohistory.org>

¹⁰⁰ Robert S. Ellwood, *Theosophy: A Modern Expression of the Wisdom of the Ages* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1994 [1986]), pp.

Michael Gomes published *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*. This study is especially important, as it is the first thorough, pioneer, historical study of the early days of the Theosophical Society in New York from 1874-1878. Gomes has, exceptionally well, documented the establishment of the Theosophical Society in New York (1875) in the climate of modern spiritualism and occultism at the time¹⁰¹ and has excavated much historical data on the response, which Blavatsky's first major work *Isis Unveiled* received, in newspaper reviews and among intellectuals.¹⁰² The last major study of Blavatsky during the nineteen-eighties was the British author Jean Overton Fuller's (1915-2009) biographical study of *Blavatsky and Her Teachers* (1988), which offered a useful historical, yet sympathetic, account of Blavatsky, her Theosophy and the mahatmas.

1.1.3.3 The academic study of Blavatsky's Theosophy in the 1990s

The nineteen-nineties marked an even more productive period of historical studies of Blavatsky and Theosophy, which was coupled with the consolidation of the study of Western esotericism within academia.¹⁰³ In 1992, a volume entitled *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* edited by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman was published. Among its important articles, it included one on 'Theosophy and The Theosophical Society' by Emily B. Sellon and Renée Weber. The article did not offer particularly many, new insights, but it did briefly note Theosophy's influence on wider contexts such as abstract expressionism found in the paintings of Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky (1866-1944), Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) and Paul Klee (1879-1940) and the Irish literary renaissance of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as expressed in the works of George William Russell (1867-1935), William Butler Yeats (1865-

ix-x.

¹⁰¹ Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 19-109.

¹⁰² Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 110-58. In addition to numerous articles Michael Gomes published a large-scale documentation of texts belonging to nineteenth-century Theosophy, see Gomes, *Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century: An Annotated Bibliography*.

¹⁰³ For a full, recent study of the development of the academic study of Western Esotericism, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

1939), and Charles Johnston (1867-?).¹⁰⁴ The article also associated Blavatsky and Theosophy more firmly with the academic discipline of Western esotericism as the collected volume also included Faivre's first English exposition of his now well-known definition of Western esotericism.¹⁰⁵ In 1993 the most comprehensive biography of Blavatsky's life and intellectual influence to date was published, *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement* by Sylvia Cranston. While this work has a hagiographical touch to it, it also contains many important historical details about Blavatsky's life and her works. Additionally, it is the first work to outline comprehensively the significant impact of Blavatsky's ideas on the scientific, religious and cultural life of the twentieth century (including The World Parliament of Religions, Science and *The Secret Doctrine*, The Irish Literary Renaissance, British and American Authors, Children's Stories, The World of Art, The World of Music, Religious Studies, Modern Spirituality and Modern Psychology).¹⁰⁶

In 1994 K. Paul Johnson's major study on Blavatsky's masters, *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge*, was published.¹⁰⁷ The thesis of this study was that Blavatsky's mahatmas or

¹⁰⁴ Emily B. Sellon and Renée Weber, 'Theosophy and The Theosophical Society', in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, ed. by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992), 311-329 (pp. 326-27).

¹⁰⁵ Faivre's definition for a historical current, from the early modern age until today, to be classified as esoteric entails the presence of the following 4 characteristics as well as possibly the last 2 characteristics: (1) correspondences, (2) living nature, (3) imagination and mediation, (4) the experience of transmutation, (5) the practice of concordance, (6) transmission, see Antoine Faivre, 'Introduction I', in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, ed. by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992), pp. xi-xxii (pp. xv-xx). Faivre's thesis was first outlined in Antoine Faivre, *L'ésotérisme* (Que sais-je 1031) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), pp. 13-21; see also Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1994), pp. 10-15.

¹⁰⁶ Cranston *HPB*, pp. 423-554 [part 7 of the book].

¹⁰⁷ This study was based on Johnson's previous work, Paul Johnson, *In Search of The Masters: Behind the Occult Myth* (South Boston, VA: printed by Hedderly-Benton, 1990).

masters were in reality historical personages whom Blavatsky knew and shared spiritual, political and ideological ideas with, but whom she purposely had shrouded in myth.¹⁰⁸ In addition to demonstrating this significant thesis, Johnson's book also provides useful historical material about several of the otherwise forgotten people who were important to Blavatsky and the early Theosophical Society.¹⁰⁹ Johnson's book also explores many of the less documented aspects of Blavatsky's life and traces some of the important occult sources and traditions with which Blavatsky became acquainted during her many travels, such as the Druzes of Lebanon, Freemasonry, magic, Kabbalah and the occult sciences (and several native religious traditions in the near and far Orient, Russia and the Americas).¹¹⁰

In the same year that Johnson's book was published (1994) another major historical study, related to Blavatsky and Theosophy, was published (in the same book series as Johnson's book, *SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions*) by Joscelyn Godwin, entitled *The Theosophical Enlightenment*. The main thesis of Godwin's book was 'that Blavatsky's Theosophy owed as much to the sceptical Enlightenment of the eighteenth century as it did to the concept of spiritual enlightenment with which it is more readily associated.'¹¹¹ This novel thesis runs through the book and ties the individual chapters beautifully together and in so doing the book offers much new historical data that has greatly aided in contextualising Blavatsky's Theosophy. Godwin has shown that Blavatsky, contextually, was a part of a long line of mythological studies and occult theories that sought to find the original principles behind all the great mythologies of the ancient world, such as solar worship, astronomy and phallicism.¹¹² Godwin also argued that Blavatsky's Theosophy or her 'public life'

¹⁰⁸ K. Paul Johnson, *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 1-15.

¹⁰⁹ For a list of the historical people dealt with, see Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, pp. xi-xiii, but as a whole, the book also deals with the historical personages behind the myth of the masters.

¹¹⁰ Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, pp. 4-15, 19-22, 23-24, 31-32, 47-51.

¹¹¹ Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), p. xi.

¹¹² The first fourteen chapters of the book deal with this background, before entering into Blavatsky's Theosophy.

in relation to the Theosophical Society could be divided into two main periods: (1) an Egyptian/Hermetic period (1872-1879) and (2) an Indian/Oriental period (1879-1891).¹¹³

In 1996 Wouter J. Hanegraaff's doctoral thesis was published as a book entitled: *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (1996). This work particularly dedicates a significant string of chapters to modern esotericism, including Blavatsky's Theosophy, as an important precursor to New Age Religion.¹¹⁴ Hanegraaff summed up previous research and found that Blavatsky's Theosophy was a synthesis of comparative religion, mythological studies, spiritualism, orientalism, *Magia naturalis*, including the occult sciences, Eliphas Levi, Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* 1842 and Francis Barrett's *The Magus*, secret societies, freemasonry and modern science.¹¹⁵ Hanegraaff also argued that the idea of spiritual evolution was central to Blavatsky's Theosophy, but that even though Blavatsky claimed that her Theosophy was Eastern esotericism it actually was based on the Western idea of progress rather than the Eastern framework of historical circularity.¹¹⁶

Her fundamental belief system was an occultist version of romantic evolutionism from beginning to end; and karma was adopted in order to provide this evolutionism with a theory of "scientific" causality.¹¹⁷

Hanegraaff thus argued that Blavatsky took the concept of karma from the Hindus and the Buddhists, made it into a form of causality and thereby got rid of Christian morality, as an explanation for the spiritual progress of mankind.¹¹⁸

In 1998 a collected volume entitled *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion* was published consisting of papers presented at the 17th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions in Mexico City 1995.

¹¹³ Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 277-78.

¹¹⁴ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 384-513.

¹¹⁵ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 442-48.

¹¹⁶ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 455, 462-82.

¹¹⁷ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 472.

¹¹⁸ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion* pp. 480-81.

In this volume is an important article by Garry W. Trompf entitled 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon' that contextualised Blavatsky's conception of history in relation to older esoteric ideas of emanation and reabsorption, Hindu cosmology and modern Western theories of evolutionism, such as those of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919).¹¹⁹ Trompf argued that with the emergence of a purely naturalistic conception of evolution the concept of a divine plan was threatened. This evoked response from several intellectual and spiritually minded people among whom Blavatsky was one of the most prominent. Blavatsky did not denounce evolutionism but instead re-translated it into a spiritual macro-drama.¹²⁰

In 1999 the result of David and Nancy Reigle's twenty years of research on Blavatsky's obscure and unknown oriental sources, such as the *Stanzas of Dzyan* that formed the basis of Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, was published in *Blavatsky's Secret Books*. The book consists of several (updated) articles published since the early nineteen-eighties that identified the 'Books of Kiu-Te', as Blavatsky referred to them, with the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras (rGyud-sde).¹²¹ The Reigles also contextualised some of Blavatsky's technical terms—of purported Tibetan and Sanskrit origin.¹²² This marked the end of a century.

1.1.3.4 The academic study of Blavatsky's Theosophy from 2000 to now

The new century was initiated by Brendan French, who in the year 2000 submitted his PhD thesis *The Theosophical Masters: An Investigation into the Conceptual Domains of H. P. Blavatsky and C. W. Leadbeater*. French's comprehensive thesis includes a detailed historical account of Blavatsky's life and an overview of her major works,¹²³ but devotes the greatest part of the

¹¹⁹ Garry W. Trompf, 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon', in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, ed. by A. Faivre & W. J. Hanegraaff (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), pp. 269-86.

¹²⁰ Trompf, 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon', pp. 271, 273-74.

¹²¹ David Reigle and Nancy Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books: Twenty Years' Research* (San Diego, CA: Wizards Bookshelf, 1999), pp. 21-23, 43-51; see also David Reigle, *The Books of Kiu-Te or The Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis* (San Diego, CA: Wizards Bookshelf, 1983), p. 2.

¹²² Reigle and Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books*, pp. 57-137.

¹²³ French, *The Theosophical Masters*, I, 60-247.

thesis to a further study of the typology of the Theosophical Masters. The methodological approach used and argued for was based on Hanegraaff's methodological agnosticism and phenomenology, in the sense of typology. In conclusion, French stated that the myth of the masters was a rhetorical device that in part served Blavatsky's and other Theosophists' occult attempts to reconsecrate the world, combined with the modern idea of progress.¹²⁴ The following year Olav Hammer's *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* was published. The new approach developed in this study was to analyse Blavatsky's Theosophy and other modern esoteric groups and currents as 'discursive strategies' or 'ideologies' and to analyse the basic strategies the spokespersons of these modern esoteric groups used in order to legitimise their beliefs in the modern context.¹²⁵ Hammer found that especially three strategies were used: (1) the appeal to tradition, (2) scientism as a language of faith, and (3) narratives of experience.¹²⁶ The same year an important historical article, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society' by James Santucci, was published. In this article, Santucci explored the use and meaning of the term 'Theosophy' in the early Theosophical Society and during the nineteenth century and questioned to what extent the Theosophical Society defined the term and to what extent the term defined the Theosophical Society.¹²⁷ In this process, Santucci excavated much important historical material related to the early Theosophical Society and concluded that in the beginning the term was adopted as an overall term that encompassed other related words such as occultism, magic and the traditional currents associated with the word, but that during the eighteen-eighties and nineties it was the Theosophical Society (and Blavatsky) who defined the word in a manner

¹²⁴ French, *The Theosophical Masters*, II, 602-607.

¹²⁵ Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 42-45.

¹²⁶ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 44-45. The main chapters of the book largely reflect Hammer's analyses of these three strategies.

¹²⁷ James A. Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', in *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, ed. by Richard Caron and others, *Gnostica*, 3 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2001), 471-89 (p. 473).

particular to it rather than *vice versa*.¹²⁸ In 2003 another PhD thesis was submitted, on *The Theosophical Movement of the Nineteenth Century: The legitimation of the Disputable and the Entrenchment of the Disreputable* by Arnold Kalnitsky. In this study, Kalnitsky analysed the intellectual and religious premises of Theosophy as a 'world-view', in the sociological sense and discussed how this 'world-view' legitimized itself philosophically and sociologically.¹²⁹ In 2004, the late Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke published his book *Helena Blavatsky*, which consists of his introduction, notes and edited selections of Blavatsky's own texts on specific topics. In addition to being a historically well-founded, introductory overview of Blavatsky's work, the book facilitated the conceptualisation of the major themes in Blavatsky's work, such as spiritualism and occultism, ancient wisdom, secret brotherhoods, Oriental kabbalah, mesmerism and magic, Hermetic philosophy and Rosicrucianism, Buddhism and Brahmanism, cosmogony and personal growth.¹³⁰ The same year a work by Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, was published, which re-evaluated the role of modern occultism, including Blavatsky's Theosophy, in post Enlightenment culture. It cautioned the secularisation thesis or the notion of decline in religious expression in proportion to the rise of intellectualisation and Max Weber's theory of 'entzauberung' or 'disenchantment'.¹³¹ It showed that the 'new occultism', rather than being opposed to modern rationalism and thus out of synch with reality,¹³² was an integral part of modern culture and incorporated rationalisation into its world-views.¹³³

Finally, in 2012, Jeffrey D. Lavoie's, *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement*, was published. This study has two main

¹²⁸ Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', p. 489.

¹²⁹ See Arnold Kalnitsky, *The Theosophical Movement of the Nineteenth Century: The legitimation of the Disputable and the Entrenchment of the Disreputable* (PhD thesis, in the subject of Religious Studies at the University of South Africa, 2003), pp. 384-404.

¹³⁰ See *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Goodrick-Clarke.

¹³¹ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 11.

¹³² Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 12, 15.

¹³³ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 12, 16.

aims of (1) analysing the historical interconnections between Theosophy and spiritualism¹³⁴ and (2) providing updated biographical accounts of the important figures related to both of these movements.¹³⁵ The author argues that while Theosophy has generally been viewed as a Western esoteric tradition, the author, however, finds that the Theosophical Society and Blavatsky never really abandoned its supposed origin in spiritualism. Blavatsky's esoteric ideas were later interpolations and the Theosophical Society fundamentally remained interconnected with spiritualism during Blavatsky's lifetime.¹³⁶

The above part of the review showed that during Blavatsky's lifetime camps were divided about Blavatsky and Theosophy. Several prominent people admired Blavatsky and her ideas while others of a more sceptical nature portrayed her as a charlatan. During the nineteen-thirties Kuhn initiated the academic or historical study of Blavatsky and since then the historical study of Blavatsky has advanced to a considerable extent. However, even though the study of Blavatsky's Theosophy has advanced, no larger study exists of how Blavatsky used the term 'Theosophy' throughout her many articles and works; and no comprehensive study has attempted to analyse the major themes of Blavatsky's Theosophy—that is, which subjects Blavatsky discussed the most throughout her articles and major works and how they related to their historical contexts. To accomplish this is the aim of the present thesis.

1.1.4 The Academic study of Western esotericism

Before bringing this review to an end, it should be noted that the academic study of Blavatsky's Theosophy has recently been deeply associated with the academic study of Western esotericism. Especially since the early nineteen-nineties, the study of Theosophy has grown in proportion to the development of the academic study of Western esotericism and continues to grow in relation to this larger field of research. Furthermore, in the history of modern esotericism Blavatsky's Theosophy has been recognised to occupy a central position,

the Theosophical Movement founded in 1875 by the Russian Madam

¹³⁴ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 2, 9.

¹³⁵ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, p. 5.

¹³⁶ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 4-5, 8.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) is certainly the most important [among the modern occultist movements] in terms of its influence, and the basic metaphysical system of modern Theosophy may be considered the archetypal manifestation of occultist spirituality at least until far into the 1970s.¹³⁷

Blavatsky's Theosophy has thus been included in most recent histories of Western esotericism, such as Kocku von Stuckrad's *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (2005)¹³⁸ and Nicholas Goodrick-Clark's *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (2008);¹³⁹ and James Santucci has written two instalments (one on Blavatsky and one on The Theosophical Society) for the *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (2005),¹⁴⁰ a work which, in many respects, can be said to define the boundaries of the field at present. In other words, Blavatsky's Theosophy is now treated as an important part of the history of Western esotericism. This, however, also means that the way Blavatsky's Theosophy is constructed mirrors the dominant theoretical and methodological stances in the field of Western esotericism.

Since Faivre's noted phenomenological definition from 1992, of what Western esotericism entails, and as a part of the anchoring of the field in the larger academic community, it has been necessary for scholars of Western esotericism to discuss and develop theories and methods in trend with the larger context of the humanities. Thus, this sub-section will briefly discuss some of the recent dominant theoretical developments in the study of Western esotericism as a platform for the discussion on theory and method in the next

¹³⁷ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'The Study of Western Esotericism: New Approaches to Christian and Secular Culture', in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion I: Regional, Critical, and Historical Approaches*, ed. by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne, Religion and Reason, 42 (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 489-519 (p. 496).

¹³⁸ See Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge*, trans. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2005), pp. 122-32.

¹³⁹ See Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 211-28.

¹⁴⁰ See James A. Santucci, 'Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), I, 177-85; James A. Santucci, 'Theosophical Society', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 1114-23.

chapter of the present thesis.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ This is not the place to discuss or outline the many important developments and theories in the study of Western esotericism, but for standard references see, Antoine Faivre and Karen-Claire Voss, 'Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion', *Numen*, 42 (1995), 48-77; Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*; Antoine Faivre, 'Questions of Terminology proper to the Study of Esoteric Currents in Modern and Contemporary Europe,' in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion: Selected Papers presented at the 17th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions Mexico City 1995*, ed. by Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 1-10; Riffard, *L'ésotérisme*; Pierre A. Riffard, 'The Esoteric Method', in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Antoine Faivre (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 63-74; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Empirical Method in the Study of Esotericism', *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 7, 2 (1995), 99-129; Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'On the Construction of "Esoteric Traditions"', in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion: Selected Papers presented at the 17th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions Mexico City 1995*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Antoine Faivre (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 11-61; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Some Remarks on the Study of Western Esotericism', *Esoterica*, 1 (1999), 3-19; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Beyond the Yates Paradigm: The Study of Western Esotericism between Counterculture and New Complexity', *Aries*, 1, 1 (2001), 5-37; Hanegraaff, 'The Study of Western Esotericism', pp. 489-519; Wouter, J., Hanegraaff, 'Esotericism' in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, ed. by Hanegraaff, Wouter J. and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), I, 336-40; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge: Anti-Esoteric Polemics and Academic Research', *Aries*, 5, 2 (2005), 225-54; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'The Trouble with Images: Anti-Image Polemics and Western Esotericism', in *Polemical Encounters: Esotericism and its Others*, ed. by Olav Hammer & Kocku von Stuckrad (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 107-36; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'The Birth of Esotericism from the Spirit of Protestantism', *Aries*, 10, 2 (2010), 197-216; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Western Esotericism in Enlightenment Historiography: The Importance of Jacob Brucker', in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, ed. by Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 91-111; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*; Kocku von Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation,' *Religion*, 35 (2005), 78-97; Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2005); Kocku von Stuckrad, *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Arthur Versluis, 'What is Esoteric? Methods in the Study of Western Esotericism,' *Esoterica*, 4 (2002), 1-15; Arthur Versluis 'Mysticism, and the Study of Esotericism: Methods in the Study of Esotericism, Part II,' *Esoterica*, 5 (2003), 27-40; Arthur Versluis, *Restoring*

Hanegraaff has argued that in the past, there have been several ways of approaching esotericism, such as that of: (1) the perennialists, (2) the religionists, (3) the historians of science, (4) specialists, and (5) Western esotericism as a historical field.¹⁴² Furthermore, within the fifth way, there are two important overall disciplinary paradigms: (1) 'the hermetic tradition' outlined by Frances A. Yates from the 1960s to the 1980s and (2) esotericism as a 'form of thought' outlined during the 1990s by Antoine Faivre.¹⁴³ Additionally, Hanegraaff has since 2004 argued that Faivre's model is being superseded by a new third paradigm of a postmodern bend¹⁴⁴ concerned with deconstructing grand narratives of both Western esotericism and Western culture as a whole.¹⁴⁵

This so-called 'postmodern approach' constitutes an adaptation to and use of dominant theories prevalent in the humanities.¹⁴⁶ Olav Hammer's *Claiming Knowledge* (2001) was the first major study to introduce critical discourse theories from the humanities to the study of Western esotericism and in particular to the study of Theosophy. Hammer argued that the claims and texts of religious/esoteric 'spokespersons' are entirely human constructions, or as he stated

Their claims are human constructions, and it is therefore relevant to ask how, by whom and for what purposes these claims are produced, legitimized, disseminated and reproduced.¹⁴⁷

Hammer generally argued that the elaborate human claims, such as those produced by esotericists and found in esoteric texts, could be analysed as 'discursive strategies', as rhetorical devices and ideologies that seek to

Paradise: Western Esotericism, Literature, Art and Consciousness (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004); Arthur Versluis, *Magic and Mysticism: An Introduction to Western Esotericism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁴² Hanegraaff, 'The Study of Western Esotericism', pp. 500-503.

¹⁴³ Hanegraaff, 'The Study of Western Esotericism', pp. 507-508.

¹⁴⁴ Hanegraaff, 'The Study of Western Esotericism', pp. 509-12.

¹⁴⁵ See, Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', pp. 225-54.

¹⁴⁶ Theories related to the humanities will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁷ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, p. xv, see also p. xiv.

persuade people of their truth.¹⁴⁸ In order to expose and analyse the 'mechanisms' of these claims Hammer adopted what he termed 'the analytic method', which

implies a strategy of reading that attempts to find subtexts that are implicit in the data but which are not part of the self-representation of the religious tradition itself.¹⁴⁹

In adopting this *epistemology of suspicion* or 'analytic method', Hammer argues against the 'hermeneutical approach' that maintains that critique of religious texts should be postponed (*Epoché*) in order to correctly reconstruct the world-view of the believers.¹⁵⁰ In such a theoretical framework, as Hammer's, Blavatsky thus emerges as an esoteric 'spokesperson' who makes use of discursive strategies to obtain power and authority (i.e. to take or to have the right to speak).¹⁵¹ Blavatsky's Theosophy, and her work, likewise becomes an ideology, 'a strange borderland between factual and fictional narratives'.¹⁵²

Since 2005, Kocku von Stuckrad has further developed the discursive approach to and definition of Western esotericism. Briefly stated, Stuckrad constructed esotericism as an esoteric discourse with specific dimensions.¹⁵³ It is perfectly possible, Stuckrad argued, to establish a field for the study of 'Western esotericism' without a general definition of it, as a thing in itself.¹⁵⁴ Stuckrad therefore sets up an analytic instrument, a model, to identify and interpret that which he identified as the two most important dimensions of esoteric discourse. These dimensions should in turn be understood in relation to greater 'problems' in the plurality of European history, such as religious diversity and truth claims.¹⁵⁵ The dimensions are: (1) 'Claims of higher knowledge' and

¹⁴⁸ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 36-37, 42-45.

¹⁴⁹ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, p. xv.

¹⁵⁰ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. xiv-xv.

¹⁵¹ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, p. 37.

¹⁵² Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, p. 38.

¹⁵³ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', p. 88.

¹⁵⁴ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', p. 93.

¹⁵⁵ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', p. 94.

(2) 'Ways of accessing higher knowledge'.¹⁵⁶ The first dimension 'Claims of higher knowledge'¹⁵⁷ suggests that a central part of any esoteric discourse is to state that its 'esoteric knowledge' is higher and more sublime than any other form of knowledge. A claim of higher knowledge is thus a powerful rhetoric strategy used to legitimize the 'esoteric knowledge' in its power struggle with the many other discourses that, at any given time, constitutes the cultural landscape. The second dimension of the esoteric discourse is a consequence of the first. Esotericists commonly argue that their higher knowledge is hidden, esoteric or inaccessible; consequently there is a need to find 'Ways of accessing higher knowledge'.¹⁵⁸ Stuckrad especially identifies two such common ways as: (1) mediation and (2) individual experience.¹⁵⁹ Esotericists use these two ways as strategies for 'substantiating the claim of secret or higher wisdom'.¹⁶⁰ Stuckrad finds his 'discursive model of esotericism' useful because it facilitates the uncovering of the dynamic discursive strategies behind esoteric claims and shows how such claims make up the complex process of identity formation and cultural interaction.

In 2007 Olav Hammer and Kocku von Stuckrad collaborated on producing and editing a collected volume entitled *Polemical Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others*. The general thesis of this work is that 'the history of religions in Europe has been marked by an extreme pluralism and by a high level of antagonism towards other religious alternatives than one's own'.¹⁶¹ The individual chapters in this volume thus explore the rhetoric mechanisms used by various esotericists in the climate of hostile interchanges. Stuckrad further developed his thesis of discursive strategies, interchanges and

¹⁵⁶ For examples of these dimensions please consult Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation,' pp. 88-93.

¹⁵⁷ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', pp. 88-91.

¹⁵⁸ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', p. 91.

¹⁵⁹ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', p. 91.

¹⁶⁰ Stuckrad, 'Western Esotericism: Towards an Integrative Model of Interpretation', p. 91.

¹⁶¹ See *Polemical Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) ed. by Olav Hammer and Kocku von Stuckrad, p. xi, see also p. xii.

claims of higher knowledge in his *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities* (2010).¹⁶²

Since 2005, Wouter J. Hanegraaff has equally argued that not only is the study of discourse and identity construction central to the study of Western esotericism, but the goal of the study of Western esotericism itself is to understand that, given the fact that all is discourse, the historical domain generally associated with the term Western esotericism is in reality the result of a 'grand polemical narrative'.¹⁶³ Put briefly, in the plurality of religious traditions¹⁶⁴ and forms of knowledge in Western culture, Western esotericism is a construct that has been produced by a long history of *arguing against* or 'othering' certain religious ideas and currents. In Hanegraaff's view, the notion of 'Western esotericism' as a specific category or a sub-culture in Western culture and religion is thus actually the product of 'polemical discourse'.¹⁶⁵ Hanegraaff argues that the polemical construct 'Western esotericism' has been construed and simplified through five major phases:¹⁶⁶ (1) the construction of paganism,¹⁶⁷ (2) the construction of heresy,¹⁶⁸ (3) the construction of magic,¹⁶⁹ (4) the reconstruction of paganism during the Reformation,¹⁷⁰ and (5) the construction of the occult during the Enlightenment.¹⁷¹ These constructions led to a reification of Western esotericism into a coherent domain by the use of strategies of falsity, danger, irrationality or immorality. According to Hanegraaff, to study elements of Western culture and religion that have been targeted as 'polemical others' and the mechanisms by which they have been made 'other' is one of the central concerns for the 'new' study of 'Western esotericism'.¹⁷²

¹⁶² See Stuckrad, *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities*.

¹⁶³ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', pp. 230, 234.

¹⁶⁴ Hanegraaff, 'The Trouble with Images', p. 109.

¹⁶⁵ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', pp. 226, 228, 231; Hanegraaff, 'The Trouble with Images', pp. 109-10, 112, 131.

¹⁶⁶ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', pp. 230-47.

¹⁶⁷ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', p. 232.

¹⁶⁸ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', p. 236.

¹⁶⁹ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', p. 238.

¹⁷⁰ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', p. 241.

¹⁷¹ Hanegraaff, 'Forbidden Knowledge', p. 247.

¹⁷² Hanegraaff, 'The Trouble with Images', p. 111.

The above clearly illustrates the “state of affairs” in modern scholarship on Western esotericism and how the work of so-called ‘esotericists’, like Blavatsky, might be analysed and approached according to this ‘new paradigm’. The present thesis seeks an approach that on the one hand takes recent theoretical developments within the humanities into account, but on the other hand will be able to avoid analysing Blavatsky’s Theosophical discourses as idiosyncratic strategies or rhetorical devices concocted to obtain power. This is not to say that the above approach(es) and the assumptions that follow are irrelevant—but this thesis will, instead, construct an approach that, more firmly, places Blavatsky and her Theosophy in the intellectual contexts that are the bases and sources for the construction of meaning, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

1. 2 Theory and Method¹⁷³

In relation to the foregoing chapter this chapter will: (1) specify the theoretical assumptions that form the basis of this thesis and (2) outline the approach or methods that will be used.

Theoretically, it has been well demonstrated over the past fifty years that it is impossible to write history or undertake any form of research without certain assumptions entering into such research.¹⁷⁴ Pure, objective or unmediated knowledge no longer seems theoretically tenable— in other words

*There is no perspective from nowhere.*¹⁷⁵

All knowledge and knowledge production is mediated by 'language use' and if the theoretical assumptions or the theoretical foundations of ones research are not specified they will simply enter ones knowledge production unconsciously. To avoid this, this section will specify the theoretical assumptions that inform the present thesis:

(1) The main assumption of the present thesis is that all human intellectual activity and intellectual products, such as texts, are formulated in language.

¹⁷³ The author is aware that many of the intellectual currents discussed in this chapter have been presented in a simplified manner, but it has been found necessary not to over-clutter the chapter with references and details and thereby risk losing sight of the basic argument. It has also been found necessary in order to limit space in preference of the actual chapters that analyse Blavatsky's Theosophy.

¹⁷⁴ The theoretical reasons for this will be specified below.

¹⁷⁵ Hilary Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 17-18, 'The notion of a 'God's-eye View,' the epistemic ideal of achieving a view from an 'Archimedean point'—a point from which we can survey observers as if they were not *ourselves*, survey them as if we were, so to speak, *outside our skins*—is involved in both cases (i.e. in Putnam's discussion of the relationship between observer and system). The same notion that ideal knowledge is *impersonal* is involved. That we should not be able to attain this ideal in practice is not paradoxical—we never expected this. But that there would be *principled difficulties with the ideal itself*—that it would turn out that we can no longer visualize what it would *mean* to attain the ideal—this is a fact which constitutes for us,—constituted as we are—the most profound of paradoxes [bracket are mine].

(2) The second assumption is that the primary function of 'language use' (discourse) is construction of meaning.

(3) The third assumption is that 'language use' (discourse) or the construction of meaning is done in relation to historical or intellectual contexts.¹⁷⁶

To substantiate these assumptions, it is necessary to briefly outline several important theoretical developments, related to the humanities and the importance of language, that have taken place over the past one hundred years.

Already in the late nineteenth century, in the domain of philosophy, language became increasingly important with the development and influence of positivism and a little later with logical positivism. Positivism, which became dominant with Auguste Comte (1798-1857), portrayed all metaphysical and religious knowledge as belonging to lower evolutionary stages¹⁷⁷ and argued that we need positive knowledge—knowledge gathered not from speculation but directly from sense experimentation. Positive knowledge was regarded as the most certain and objective form of knowledge. In terms of epistemology it was regarded as free from too much complication since—on the basis of René Descartes (1596-1650), Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and John Locke (1632-1704), among others—it was thought possible to separate the subject from the object in pure unmediated observation and thus to construct concepts and theories that directly reflect the empirical data. This is also known as 'the correspondence theory of truth'.

In linguistic terms the idea was inferred in the following manner: a concept must refer to or correspond directly to an empirical object (experience), otherwise it would be a meaningless concept. A concept such as 'soul', for example, has no positive and verifiable empirical referent and is therefore

¹⁷⁶ In this thesis the term 'intellectual context' means a 'context of ideas', as in the history of ideas.

¹⁷⁷ Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. by Harriet Martineau, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1893 [1830-1842]), I, 1-4.

largely a meaningless concept. Meaning is in the object of experience and truth is when the concept corresponds exactly to the object. A theory was therefore in its ideal sense: a perfect reflection in the form of statements of empirical data and could thereby explain that data.

For philosophers such as Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970), Willard Van Orman Quine (1908–2000), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) and Karl Popper (1902–1994) to name but a few, understanding truth and meaning in relation to language in a *positive* way became central. This positive outlook later intermixed with the so-called ordinary language philosophy, as it is found in the work of George Edward Moore (1873–1958), J. L. Austin (1911–1960) and Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976). This influential tradition of philosophy was thus engaged in language and its common point was that philosophy itself, problems of knowledge and the relation between truth and fact became a question of semantics and language or as ‘the early’ Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) argued: philosophical problems do not arise from the world, but from our wrong understanding and use of language.¹⁷⁸ Even though problems and philosophy were reduced to linguistic phenomena, these linguistic phenomena were still more or less directly related to the empirical world of consciousness independent, objective data.

Developments in linguistics during this same period took a more revolutionary direction, especially due to one simple, but fundamental, rearrangement of the relation between language and the world. The changes in the understanding of the significance of language or ‘language theory’ began with Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and especially with his *Cours de*

¹⁷⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1958 [1922]), §4.003, pp. 62-63, ‘Most propositions and questions, that have been written about philosophical matters, are not false, but senseless. We cannot, therefore, answer questions of this kind at all, but only state their senselessness. Most questions and propositions of the philosophers result from the fact that we do not understand the logic of our language. (They are of the same kind as the question whether the Good is more or less identical than the Beautiful.) **And so it is not to be wondered at that the deepest problems are really no problems** [bold emphasis is mine]; see also Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, §6.53 pp. 186-89.

linguistique générale published posthumously in 1916. In this work his famous judgment is found, that *the connection between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary*. With this statement Saussure abandoned former linguistic traditions which more or less relied on the idea that the signifier (*le signifiant*, the sound image) and the signified (*le signifié*, the concept) were naturally related and, as he joked, could be traced back to Adam himself naming the animals in the Garden of Eden.¹⁷⁹ The arbitrariness of the link between the sound image and the concept became for Saussure the first principle of linguistics.¹⁸⁰

Although Saussure primarily formulated his ‘arbitrariness theory’ in relation to language or ‘inner-mental phenomena’, others were soon to extend the idea of reference in language to the domain of the extra-mental. Emile Benveniste (1902-1976) redefined the ‘arbitrariness theory’ as relating not to the signifier and the signified—but to the signifier and an extra-mental referent or ‘things’.¹⁸¹ Benveniste thus argued that when Saussure discussed the words *boeuf* and *ochs*, he was not only illustrating the difference between signs in two different languages; he was referring them to an external reality, as well.¹⁸² According to Benveniste, Saussure had actually signalled the philosophical problem of mind and its relation to the external world. Of course, some linguists held that Saussure’s theories applied only to systems of language and not to extra-linguistic realms—but the general philosophical trend moved in the latter direction,¹⁸³ and it can equally be argued that Saussure’s work actually encouraged elaborations in the direction of Benveniste.¹⁸⁴

On the basis of Saussurean linguistics it was asserted: (1) that the ‘real’ or ‘things’ only can be known through their discursive construction in language or theory; (2) that theory is an arbitrary/a construct—and not a positive

¹⁷⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris: Payot, 1976), pp. 439-40n.

¹⁸⁰ Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, pp. 100, 182.

¹⁸¹ Emile Benveniste, ‘Nature du signe linguistique’, *Acta Linguistica*, 1 (1939), 23-29.

¹⁸² Benveniste ‘Nature du signe linguistique’, 24, 28.

¹⁸³ Roy Harris, *Saussure and his interpreters*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), chapters 8 and 10.

¹⁸⁴ Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* pp. 33, 35.

statement of objective facts; (3) that the construction is established through an inter-linguistic system of differences.¹⁸⁵ In short, language, including theory, is not naturally connected to the world. This of course deeply challenged ‘the correspondence theory of truth’, that if words relate only to each other in the production of meaning—how can language be deemed to refer to the world? And if theory is largely arbitrary in its relation to the world, how do we ever know *facts* in themselves, unmediated?

Language soon became all-important and all encompassing both in relation to the construction of meaning and to the construction of culture as evinced in Ernst Cassirer’s *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen* (1923-1929).¹⁸⁶ This ‘Linguistic turn’ coupled with the rise of structuralism—which was firmly established and elaborated by Claude Lévi Strauss (1908-2009) who for a time studied under Cassirer—strongly suggested the basic idea that all humans use language to construct meaning, especially through *oppositions and interrelated webs*, and that this construction underlies all cultural products. Culture, found all over the world, could be regarded as an extension of language and could be studied as an expression of an inter-mental linguistic pattern of meaning as it was constructed in oppositions and through relations within language itself by the people of each culture.

Anthropology’s quest to understand the ‘other’ ‘out there’ in different cultures soon reflected back upon Western culture itself. Early in this field’s history, under the influence of positivism and evolutionism, the quest to understand the ‘other’ was viewed as relatively unproblematic. Other cultures were simply more or less the same as Western culture—just in more primitive stages

¹⁸⁵ Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* pp. 168-69.

¹⁸⁶ See Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume One: language*, trans. by Ralph Manheim, 4 vols (New haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953-1957, 1996 [1923-29, 1995]), I, 84, ‘If we can find a medium through which all the configurations effected in the separate branches of cultural life must pass, but which nevertheless retains its particular nature, its specific character—we shall have found the necessary intermediary link for an inquiry which will accomplish for the *totality* of cultural forms what the transcendental critique has done for pure *cognition*’; see also pp. 80, 85-114.

of evolutionary development. Gaining access to them was not a question of penetrating foreign meaning constructions—but simply an understanding of *diachronic* causality. In France, more functionalistic approaches were, however, also advanced. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939) at an early date argued in his *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910) that the ‘others’ might actually have an entirely different ‘mentality’, ‘think differently’ or ‘pre-logically’.¹⁸⁷ Under the sway of structuralism, anthropology, however, began to focus more on how people use other cultural frames, social norms or language structures—also known as ‘webs of significance’. But if ‘the others’ are able to construct whole cultures of meaning and maintain functional lives, because of language then we are able to read such cultures as texts, Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) argued.¹⁸⁸ However, what about Western culture? Is it just *one* way of living and viewing the world—among many others? This self-reflection, which was the natural outcome of years of anthropological studies, was also the beginning of a serious impact of cultural relativism.

As with philosophy, anthropology and linguistics found language to be highly important. These disciplines now argued, more radically than early positivism, that concepts and language construct meaning independently of the world of empirical data. The world of empirical data seemed to be an extension of language rather than the reverse, when language was a copy of the world, as positivism once asserted. To access the world of others, the approach has focus on the significance of how they think and how they use language, which can be done only through a reading, as a text, of the arrangement or the structure of the empirical data of a culture or a historical period.

In the domain of sociology, Alfred Schütz’s (1899-1959) was fundamental

¹⁸⁷ See Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *How natives Think*, trans. by Lilian A. Clare (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985 [1910]), pp. 105-36.

¹⁸⁸ See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1973), p. 5, ‘The Concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.’

in integrating William James's early (1842-1910) observations on psychological reality construction with Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) phenomenology and his notion of 'life-world'.¹⁸⁹ Similar to anthropology, sociology became engaged with theories that explained the social interaction between people in terms of inherent phenomenological and linguistic structures and also explained how these structures produced different 'worlds', both internally and externally. The ideas of Schütz were elaborated and developed further by Peter L. Berger's (1929-) and Thomas Luckmann's (1927-) in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1967) among other works and sparked what is now termed 'social constructivism'. Social constructivism generally argues that everything is a social construction. Taken to its extreme this implies that there are no facts/meaning beyond the social level. Everyone creates his or her own world in social relations. A 'world' is a framework made up of language, which constructs meaning, and this framework does not necessarily have to have an empirical extension in order to be experienced as real. A linguistic world can have meaning in itself and many such worlds can exist. The latter Wittgenstein had equally argued this in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). According to Wittgenstein, language has no direct connection to reality and can produce meaning without reference to any empirical reality. People use language in different ways that produce meaning and these different usages of language can be defined as individual 'language games' with their own sets of rules.¹⁹⁰ In this sense one religion or form of esotericism might construct meaning and reality in one way and another religion might do it in another way—each making sense to their respective members. Philosophers such as Karl Popper (1902-1994), Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996), and Louis Althusser (1918-1990) also showed how much theories and concepts themselves shape our formation of knowledge and our view of the world.¹⁹¹ Karl

¹⁸⁹ For some of Schütz's early articles from the 1940s and 1950s on social construction, social reality, multiple realities and the 'life world', see Alfred Schütz, *Collected Papers, I: The Problem of Social Reality*, ed. by Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973).

¹⁹⁰ See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958 [1953]) (§7), p. 5.

¹⁹¹ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971); Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations:*

Popper argued that there is always a theory before facts; consequently there is no theory-free access to reality.¹⁹²

In relation to the history of science, Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) worked with a combination of philosophical, historical, anthropological and sociological ideas in his famous *Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). Kuhn explained the different revolutionary shifts in the history of science as ‘paradigm shifts’ or shifts in the overall conceptual frameworks. One theoretical framework explains the world in one way and a new succeeding paradigm or theoretical framework, which takes over the position of the old one, has another way of explaining the same data. The old paradigm is not necessarily completely wrong; it is just socially and intellectually out-dated, especially because new generations of scientists move in new directions. Like his predecessors Kuhn thus argued that there is no theory-free reality to be accessed—we create the world through our theory. New scientific discoveries are therefore not just new ways to learn about nature, but also new worlds to work in, as he argued.¹⁹³

In 1978 Nelson Goodman published his *Ways of Worldmaking*, which integrated many of the ideas described above, and summed up the *epistemic condition* of the age, as follows

With false hope of a firm foundation gone, with the world displaced by worlds that are but versions, with substance dissolved into function, and with the given acknowledged as taken, we face the question how worlds are made, tested, and known.¹⁹⁴

The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (London: Routledge, 1963); Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002 [1935, 1st Eng. edn 1959]); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific revolutions*, 3rd edn (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1962]).

¹⁹² Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, p. 90n; see also Johannes A. Van der Ven, ‘An Empirical or Normative Approach to Practical-Theological Research: A False Dilemma’ in, *Normativity and Empirical Research in Theology*, ed. by Johannes A. Van der Ven & Michael Scherer-Rath (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2005), pp. 101-35, pp. 104-107.

¹⁹³ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific revolutions*, pp. 11, 118, 120-21, 135, 150.

¹⁹⁴ Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1978), p. 7.

Similarly, but in terms of pragmatism, Richard Rorty (1931-2007) argued both in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) and in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989) that a theory of science is not a discovery of the world or an explanation of the world, as it is in itself—but a *pragmatic way of viewing the world*. The better the theory, the more pragmatic it is.

In sum, the move from positivism to what, in the history of science, is called ‘*post-positivism*’ brought with it some serious changes; theory and meaning were now, neither to be found in an unproblematic positive manner nor in a *diachronic* narrative of historical development—but rather in a linguistic, *synchronistic* or functional analysis of language structures, because this produces meaning and frames empirical data.

But even further reaching were the changes of the theoretical move from post-positivism to post-structuralism in relation to construction of meaning. Michel Foucault (1926-1984) initiated his work as a structuralist, linguist and historian of ideas but soon became associated with post-structuralism. In *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (*Les Mots et les choses* 1966), he questioned how and why meaning actually becomes structured, the way it does, in specific discursive contexts.¹⁹⁵ In *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (*L’Archéologie du Savoir* 1969 and *L’ordre du discours* 1971), he defined his use of the term ‘discourse’ as a group of statements belonging to a single system of formation¹⁹⁶—a group of statements limited by a specific location or space—in which a statement can be more than just a postulate and can be any formula, taxonomy, table or any simple way a science or person expresses himself. Any

¹⁹⁵ See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1970 [1966]), p. xix, ‘When we establish a considered classification, when we say that a cat and a dog resemble each other less than two grayhounds do, even if both are tame or embalmed, even if both are frenzied, even if both have just broken the water pitcher, what is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification?’

¹⁹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972 [1969 and 1971]), pp. 116-17.

group of such statements will always be determined and indirectly controlled by an underlying system/framework specific to: the time, the place or the historical period it is expressed in. Such a time and place might be any specific social, economic, geographic or linguistic location. Some statements will for example be meaningful in one place and not in another. Some will be true in one place and not in another, because they only convey meaning within the group or in relation to other statements. Such a group of statements form a discourse. Foucault further argued that meaning, truth and power are inseparable in social reality and knowledge production. Not only is truth something we have constructed, as he showed in his genealogical studies, but the way meaning is structured into different relations or structures is also not a question of universality or fundamental language structures, but a question of what the power of a society implicitly dictates. In this regard, Foucault was of course deeply influenced not only by structuralism, but also by Marxism and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900); but his theory, that a statement or a whole conceptual system of meaning usually is formed as a 'discourse' in terms of *an interrelated set of terms that implicitly contains a powerful argument for its right to power* in its struggle against other discourses, was his own potent and critical contribution. A theory can equally be viewed as a discourse and the arts and sciences were actually re-examined this way by Foucault and others at the time. Many ideologies, Eurocentric and postcolonial biases were critically exposed for the first time and power structures, which hitherto had been just as invisible as our own language is to us, were made explicit.

This made the idea of an unmediated, unbiased or a 'pure theory' directly reflecting empirical data even more problematic, because it was made clear that often, if not always, strong motivations were behind the construction of theories and not only that; theories also generally serve some underlying political or religious power—not just the quest for pure objective knowledge, as hitherto thought.

Thus, Foucault in a sense broke with structuralism (post-positivism) and paved the way for what has been termed 'post-structuralism', especially because of his emphasis on the ideas: (1) that power and subjectivity structure

meaning, but also because he thought; (2) that no definite fundamental structures can ultimately explain the human condition and finally (3) that it is impossible to step outside of discourse and survey the situation/world objectively, as the structuralists still did.

Parallel to the above developments, historians were faced with new problems. In short, if the historian collects the historical-empirical data—motivated explicitly or implicitly by an overall discourse and by a process of selection, which in itself poses a limitation—and thereafter constructs a sense of continuity out of the historical material and events collected through theoretical constructions, then the history, the historian has constructed, can first of all never be 100% objective neither 100% complete because first of all, a selection can never represent all data and secondly the construction will always be the construction of the historian (and includes the risk of serving a specific discourse). In this way, the history, the historian is telling, is a continuous narrative formed in a discursive and often political way, as much as it is history. The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), who combined phenomenology with Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900-2002) hermeneutics in his narrative theory, also observed that the construction of history and meaning bore all the qualities of a *narrative*¹⁹⁷—with its beginning, development, themes, oppositions, causality, and explanations of events. Louis Mink (1921-1983) equally argued that narrative is the natural medium of historians and that it is 'a primary and irreducible human capacity'.¹⁹⁸ Arthur Danto (1924-) has noted that 'History tells stories'.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, Roland Barthes (1915-1980) has also shown that in every literary output there is always some inherent argument and that the narration proposed is proposed as reality itself—or as he wrote,

¹⁹⁷ See Paul Ricoeur, 'The Narrative Function', in *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: essays on language, action, and interpretation*, ed. and trans. by John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 274-96.

¹⁹⁸ L. O. Mink, 'Everyman His or Her Own Annalist', in *On Narrative*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press 1981), 233-39 (p. 239).

¹⁹⁹ A. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 111.

narration is instituted as 'the privileged signifier of the real'.²⁰⁰ Hayden White (1928-) supported this and said that every construction of history inherently contains an ideology prior to the writing of history and argued that this 'tropological mode' shapes the narrative construction of history from beginning to end.²⁰¹

Post-structural constructionists have therefore been eager to revise history or to engage in a re-visioning of history, the purpose of which is to examine and expose the biases behind former historical narratives and to write back into history all those marginalised currents, events and people, not earlier taken into account. This revisionist-program is particularly present in recent theories related to the study of Western esotericism and is a part of the general scepticism towards ideologies that have previously determined the writing of history. The postmodern scepticism, of grand-narratives or ideology, was also one of the reasons why Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) originally in 1979 defined the 'post-modern condition' in terms of a distrust of 'meta-narratives'.²⁰²

In addition to Foucault's influential theories, post-structuralism is especially related to Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), his analysis of Western thought and his theory and method of deconstruction.²⁰³ Derrida analysed the Western philosophical tradition, since Plato, and concluded that it had been one long quest for *logos*—a centre of absolute meaning to which everything or all *signifiers* could refer back to. Influenced by Martin Heidegger's critical method

²⁰⁰ Roland Barthes, 'The Discourse of History', trans. by Stephen Bann, *Comparative Criticism*, 3 (1981), 7-20 (p. 18); Roland Barthes, 'To Write: an Intransitive Verb?', in *The Structuralist Controversy: the Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. by R. Macksey and E. Donato (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 1970) pp. 134-44 (p. 144).

²⁰¹ H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 1973), pp. 13, 30-31, 431.

²⁰² See Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge', in *The Postmodernism Reader: Foundational texts* ed. by Michael Drolet (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 123-24.

²⁰³ See Jacques Derrida, 'Cogito and the History of Madness' in *The Postmodernism Reader: Foundational texts* ed. by Michael Drolet (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). This was the first article (1967) in which Derrida demonstrated his deconstructive method.

of 'Destruktion', Derrida criticised the so-called logo-centric way of thinking.²⁰⁴ Logo-centric thought, or the notion that there is an ultimate centre of meaning, is always thought-out in binaries with one term, or one centre, which is more important and its less important satellite. Some well-known binaries are: God—world, mind—body, man—woman, world of ideas—world of phenomena, language—speech, and rational—irrational. Modernism including structuralism might have changed the patterns or binaries of traditional societies but still thought within the structure of an assumed centre of meaning. According to Derrida, the problem is simply that there is no such centre of meaning. Derrida's deconstruction is thus an attempt to decompose all such centres and binaries and replace them with a free play of meaning that knows no boundaries. Meaning is constructed through differences, but the web of differences never stops. There will always be another signified, *ad infinitum*. Meaning is 'always already differed' in a state of suspension or 'aporia'. Language is thus not able to capture or construct a final meaning because there never was a natural link between the signifier and the signified.

So whereas post-positivism argued that meaning is produced in language instead of in the world, as positivism originally argued, post-structuralism actually abandoned *final* meaning altogether. To Derrida this is not a dire thing for it activates free play and creativity without the dictates of false limits. It is our choices that matter, not our predispositions. A theory is therefore a choice, which constructs a specific meaning or perspective for us to play with.

Thus, the above concise narrative of theoretical developments in the humanities provides the *rationale* behind the primary theoretical assumptions of this thesis that language is central to all intellectual activity (primarily because the problem of mediation has not yet been solved) and it strengthens the assertion that all knowledge is based on assumptions. However, a consequence of the above is also that, because all knowledge is mediated, theoretical assumptions (theory) both construct and form the data as much as

²⁰⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997 [1967]), pp. 12, 22-23, 43, 49, 74, 78-79, 90, 97, 99, 167.

they present its actual meaning.

we cannot go further to appreciate [... our theories] from the point of view of the extent to which they describe the world as it really is, simply because we do not have access to the world independently of our theories in a way that would enable us to assess the adequacy of those descriptions.²⁰⁵

This does not mean that theory is irrelevant, but merely that one should be aware of one's assumptions at all times, as they will *form* the result. Theory can function as a qualified perspective—a useful tool to reach a specific goal. If another theory, or another set of assumptions, is used another result will emerge. However, as the problem of mediated knowledge has not been solved and language has been demonstrated to be central to human intellectual activity this stance seems qualified as a tool to study Blavatsky's Theosophy and will thus inform the background of this thesis.

It should, however, be noted that the developments outlined above have not only led to the second assumption of this thesis (that the primary function of 'language use' is the construction of meaning), but have more generally led to the notion that the primary function of 'language use' (discourse) is *rhetoric* and *power*. This conviction is widely distributed in the theoretical landscape of the humanities and social sciences and has become a dominant theoretical assumption in the study of Western esotericism (including Blavatsky), as shown in the previous chapter.

The main reasons, that rhetoric and power are seen as the basic functions of 'language use', are related to a long tradition of the so-called *epistemology of suspicion*, which has become increasingly dominant in the intellectual climate since the Enlightenment.

In brief, Enlightenment thinkers, such as Voltaire (1694-1778) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) questioned theology and traditionalism as valid bases for truth. Kant argued that it is the courage to use one's 'reason'

²⁰⁵ A. F. Chalmers, *What is this thing called Science? An assessment of the nature and status of science and its methods*, 2nd edn (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982), p. 163 [brackets are mine].

independently that characterizes true enlightenment.²⁰⁶ Philosophers thus sought to construct *reason* as the new basis of truth and of ethics and began to question religious and traditionalist claims. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, empiricism loosened the grip of transcendental German philosophy and gained the upper hand with the development of positivism and naturalism, but was again challenged by neo-Kantianism and phenomenology in the early twentieth century. In short, it was no longer tradition or God that were regarded as the bases for true knowledge, but reason (man) and empiricism (or nature) depending on the philosophical tradition. Human reason was, however, challenged by the—to many people at the time—incomprehensible outbreak of the first World War. Hereafter emerged the Dadaist movement and Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) psychoanalytic theories also gained popularity, as a result. Freud had demonstrated how influential the *irrational* element is in the human psychological makeup and that reason has a less dominant role than Enlightenment thinkers would like to acknowledge. One of its roles is for example to *rationalise* (explain away, limit and legitimize) unconscious drives and desires.²⁰⁷ Human beings fundamentally consist of drives (the Id) and certain socially convenient psychological regulatory functions (such as the super-ego, and to a lesser extent the ego). In relation to the age-old question: what comes first reason or action, theory or practice, the answer was now, in contrast to Enlightenment and Victorian values, action! The combination of Saussurean linguistics, Freud's psychoanalysis, Karl Marx's (including critical theory's) suspicion of social structures and Nietzsche's ideas of the 'Will to Power' and the 'genealogy of truth' the advent of the postmodern *epistemology of suspicion* was not far away. Many of these ideas were combined in Foucault's notion of discourse: that the largely invisible structures of 'language

²⁰⁶ Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?', in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Mary J. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1784]) (8:35), p. 17-20; see also Immanuel Kant, 'What is Orientation in Thinking', in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. by H. Reiss, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1786]), pp.237-49.

²⁰⁷ See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1978), XIV, 288.

use' consist of a combination of ego, power and truth. We should therefore be suspicious of the claims human animals assert as the truth. Discourse always contains an argument (that in the end can not be substantiated by anything else than subjective opinion (the ego, drives, power)) and the *appearance* of truth. In other words discourse is similar to Aristotle's basic definition of rhetoric: *the art of persuasion* (Rhetoric, 1.1. 135a 13-14).

This has become the basic assumption underlying postmodern analysis of intellectual, social, religious and creative products. In short, humans desire, humans want and humans will argue through 'language-use' to get what they want or to obtain the power they seek no matter if their discourse is religious or political, because discourse is power.

The present thesis however seeks an alternative route to this. It does not deny that humans seek self-assertion, individuality and power and use language in a number of ways in the quest for fulfilment, but it must be asked if this assumption regarding the basis of 'language use' really is the most suitable theoretical assumption in relation to the study of esotericism and more specifically H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophy. The stance of this thesis is that it is not the most suitable assumption, because Blavatsky was more engaged in writing on spiritual matters and constructing a 'world-view' (i.e. meaning) than obtaining high social position, wealth or worldly power. It seems highly plausible that many esotericists did not seek power, but instead what they believed to be truth, religious experience, and without monetary gain to communicate or formulate that truth in order to enlighten others. This thesis therefore offers an alternative assumption: that the primary aspect of 'language use' is not rhetoric, but the construction of meaning.

Basically, the construction of meaning in relation to 'language-use' can be said to have two dimensions (1) classification and (2) interconnections. This is not the place to enter into the many debates regarding the origin of language (i.e. whether language comes from an inherent 'language organ' as Noam Chomsky has argued, cognitive structures, or from 'experience', including the evolution from primitive sounds), but rather to briefly note how language or the

use of language at the most basic level facilitates an ordering or classification of the world without which humans would not be able to function the way they do.

In brief, concepts define and identify things, feelings and values. If we name a thing, the name becomes associated with the being of the thing. This does not mean that the relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified* is one of *essence* in “reality”, but that it is a common *experience* that a cat (word) is a cat (animal). Once we have comprehended the connection between the two, they automatically become inseparable to our unreflective experience. Furthermore, when I learn the word ‘cat’ I know what a ‘cat’ is and can communicate this knowledge to others in a way that will be recognised by others (in a common understanding and experience). General concepts or universals (whether ideal, inherent or constructs) group experiences, values and things into the same unified container. No matter how many cats I perceive, I know what they all are in an instant, due to the linguistic categorization ‘cat’ (*universal*). I don’t need to have 26 different individual words (one for each cat) in my mind (such as the ancient textless Eskimo culture had for snow) to know and communicate what I see. Language thus basically categorises and secondarily makes it possible to communicate and navigate with greater ease. The sciences recognised this basic function from an early date and have to a great extent been occupied, since the days of Aristotle, with classifying the world into groups or *genera* and *species* in order to understand the meaning of things. In a like manner various religions or religious people categorise the world into systems of value and beings that give meaning to their lives.

The second dimension of language, in terms of the construction of meaning, is meaning *proper*, which consists of all the links and networks, which the individual words (whether they are *particulars* or *universals*) enter into (through the laws of grammar, syntax and cultural norms). Saussure, as mentioned above, defined meaning in terms of context. An individual word gains its specific meaning from the context or the sentence it is a part of. A word has no universal meaning, which is inherent in the word itself from the beginning. A word is given meaning. A word is an artificial set of signs (letters) to which meaning is associated through a context. Meaning is dependent upon its place

in a larger web of meaning. An idea, word or symbol can thus have a number of meanings and each culture, religious group or individual person can in principle construct its meaning as he/it sees fit, but the meaning is always constructed in relation to something else and some larger context. If one does not try to understand that context the meaning of the religion will be senseless (or suffer interpolation).

'Language use' thus categorises the world of experience and gives it meaning according to the manner in which the categories are related and interconnected. The construction of meaning is fundamental to human life. The psychiatrist Victor Frankel (1905-1997) has precisely—based on several years in a concentration camp and through treatment of numerous victims and other patients—demonstrated how fundamental meaning is to human psychology, human existence and as a basic human need.

'Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives.'²⁰⁸

Frankel found the basis for many psychological and existential illnesses to be rooted in meaninglessness or a 'frustrated will to meaning'. He has demonstrated that people are more likely to commit suicide or become depressed due to the experience of meaninglessness than most other forms of frustration.²⁰⁹ In other words the 'will to meaning' is just as central, if not more so, to human 'language use' than the 'will to power'. Scholars as theoretically wide apart as Cassirer, Levi-Struss, Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) and Goodman have all in their own particular manners shown how fundamental the construction of meaning is to the human being, or to *Homo Symbolicus*.

The assumption of meaning has at least one advantage over the *epistemology of suspicion*: The rhetoric theory of 'language use' is inherently sceptical or *suspicious* and if not used carefully tends to reduce all its research objects to the same basic structure of power (including its own discourse! and

²⁰⁸ Victor Frankel, *Man's Search for Meaning*, rev. and updated edn (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), p. 121.

²⁰⁹ Frankel, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pp. 166, 129-30.

thereby really annuls itself from the beginning). An example of the preconceived suspicious approach would entail that the reason that a Mormon has written this or that text or idea is primarily due to power and the same would go for Blavatsky or any other research object. The theory tends to form its object unitarily, beforehand, no matter how unique or specific it is. The reason Blavatsky says this or that could easily be construed as a rhetorical device for power, if not careful. Her notion of an ancient secret universal religion would be construed as a rhetoric device used by her to place her in a privileged position. Alternatively, the assumption of the construction of meaning is that humans employ language to make sense of their world or in more classical philosophical terms to find and communicate what they believe/experience to be the truth. The unique intellectual products that are the results of the construction of meaning can, however, as demonstrated above, not be understood or mapped without analysing them in conjunction with their specific intellectual or historical contexts, as meaning is produced in contexts. This is the third assumption of the present thesis. The third assumption (that the construction of meaning always is constructed in a historical and intellectual context) thus makes sure that the specific research object is given an empirical basis, which will facilitate an understanding of its ideas, as these ideas relate to the broader web of meaning in which they were constructed. In order to analyse Blavatsky's construction of meaning or her intellectual products, her texts, the following approaches will thus be used:

(1) *Historical and intellectual-historical methodology*.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ The studies that inform this methodology include, *Palgrave advances in Intellectual History*, ed. by Richard Whatmore and B. W. Young (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Arthur Oncken Lovejoy was to a great extent responsible for the modern study of intellectual history or the history of ideas. For one of his classic studies, see Arthur O Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 [1936]); see also the following remarks on the relevancy of the history of ideas in the study of Western esotericism, Antoine Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000), pp. xxviii-xxix; Antoine Faivre & Karen-Claire Voss, 'Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions', *Numen*, 42 (1995), 49-77 (pp. 63-64); Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Empirical Method in the study of esotericism' *Method and Theory in the study of Religion*, 7, 2 (1995), 99-129 (p. 117); Wouter J.

This approach will place Blavatsky's texts and ideas in their historical and intellectual contexts and help identify Blavatsky's sources in a twofold manner: (1) on an abstract level Blavatsky's work will be read in conjunction with the leading ideas and discourses of her time and (2) on a particular level Blavatsky's work will be analysed in conjunction with particular intellectual and historical currents, such as esotericism and spiritualism.

(2) *Inter-textual methodology*.²¹¹

*This approach will help identify and demonstrate in a more concrete way what specific sources (texts) Blavatsky used in the construction of her own works.*²¹²

Both of these approaches will facilitate the demonstration of Blavatsky's 'input' or the identification of the material, ideas and circumstances that

Hanegraaff, 'On the Construction of "Esoteric Traditions"', in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, ed. by A. Faivre & W. J. Hanegraaff (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 11-61 (p. 13); Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: SUNY, 1998 [1996]), pp. 3-4; see also Louis Montrose, 'New Historicisms' in *Practicing New Historicism*, ed. by Gallagher, Catherine & Stephen Greenblatt, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), pp. 392-418, see also book as a whole. This last study, related to the approach of 'new historicism', is important to this work in the sense that focus is placed on how a work is constructed in relation to its intellectual contexts, but the common assumption of 'new historicism', that the basic structure or lowest common denominator is power, is here replaced with meaning.

²¹¹ The notion of 'intertextuality' was originally formulated in 1966 by Julia Kristeva and has since been changed and used in various ways. The notion that the meaning of a text primarily is constructed in relation to other texts is of special importance to this thesis. The studies that inform the methodology used here include, Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2011); Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003); *Across the Lines: Intertextuality and Transcultural Communication*, ed. by W. Kloos (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998); J. Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by L. Roudiez, trans. by T. Gora, A. Jardine and L. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader* ed. by Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

²¹² In relation to this, see appendices I and II.

determined and influenced her particular construction of meaning. The above approaches will also serve to demonstrate in which contexts Blavatsky's output or intellectual products were produced. This will firmly place Blavatsky's work in interaction with her surroundings and map the meaning of her central discourses.

In this thesis the term 'discourse', which in its most basic definition means 'language-use', will be used in another manner than that of the more common definition associated with Foucault, postmodernism and recent developments in Western esotericism. In this thesis 'discourse' will imply a combination of 'input' and 'output' or context and intellectual product.

A discourse is an elaborate argumentative talk about a central idea/conviction; based on material from larger contexts (input) and expressed as an intellectual product in relation/opposition to larger contexts (output) that constructs meaning.

The chapters in the second part of this thesis, except chapter 2.1, will include the term 'discourse' in their headings in the above sense of the term to underscore the assumptions and approaches specified above.

PART II

**H. P. BLAVATSKY'S THEOSOPHY, SOURCES AND
DISCOURSES**

2.1 The Nature of Theosophy according to Blavatsky

This chapter will analyse how Blavatsky construed the concept 'Theosophy'—from her first use of the term to her last use of the term. As such, this chapter will not critically discuss Blavatsky's construction of 'Theosophy' in relation to her social or intellectual historical contexts but rather systematically follow the various remarks on 'Theosophy' found in her writings. Furthermore, in doing so, it should be noted that, this chapter will only concentrate on Blavatsky's 'formal remarks' about 'Theosophy'—that is broad overall statements about the concept 'Theosophy' rather than specific doctrines and institutional/social applications that have become associated with this concept.

As far as the author knows a comprehensive mapping of Blavatsky's use of the concept 'Theosophy' has not previously been established. An analysis of this will, however, be overtly useful prior to a critical analysis of Blavatsky's main discourses, because it will establish the basic idea or center around which her discourses oriented themselves. In order to account for the fact, that Blavatsky's view of Theosophy underwent changes and developments throughout her active writing period, historical reflections on such developments will be included below as a part of the close textual analysis of the meaning of Theosophy. Furthermore, Blavatsky's various and often non-systematic 'formal remarks' on Theosophy, scattered sporadically through her writings, and its main synonyms, will inductively be organized under a scheme of headings derived from concordant textual material.

Before proceeding to Blavatsky's construction of meaning of the concept 'Theosophy', a *Begriffsgeschichte*—a history of the use of the word—'Theosophy' will be beneficial for analysing and contextualizing Blavatsky's semantic inheritance.

2.1.1 Origin and use of the word Theosophy through Western history

It is quite commonly known, Blavatsky did not invent the word Theosophy. The English word Theosophy is derived from the Greek substantive θεοσοφία (théosophia, from θεός *theos* or divine and σοφία *Sophia* or wisdom), which

most commonly is translated as 'wisdom in divine things'²¹³ or as Blavatsky preferred 'Divine Wisdom'.²¹⁴ Its exact origin is unknown, but the substantive has been quite widely used in its various grammatical cases, such as *théosophia* (θεοσοφία, singular-nominative), *théosophian* (θεοσοφίαν, singular-accusative), *théosophias* (θεοσοφίας, singular-genitive) and *théosophia* (θεοσοφία, singular-dative/ablative).²¹⁵

The first traceable use of the term is found in a fragment of the Church Father Origen's (c. 185-254) commentary on the *psalms*.²¹⁶ The next and perhaps

²¹³ See Jean-Louis Siémons, *Theosophia: in Neo-Platonic and Christian Literature* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1988), p. 3.

²¹⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), p. 1; HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 431-39 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 26 (1889), 85-91).

²¹⁵ A search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) indicates that the term occurred ninety-two times in Greek sources up til the year 1453, see the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (<www.tlg.uci.edu> [accessed 1 May 2013]). Related terms such as *théosophos* (wise in things divine), *théosophôs* (with knowledge in divine things) and *théosophein* (to have knowledge of divine things) have also been used throughout Western history especially among the neo-Platonists and the Church Fathers, see Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 3, see also below. An early Greek instance (*Théou Sophian*) similar to the word *Théosophia* is also found in Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (c. 53-57) in the following verses 'But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God [*Théou sophian*]' (I Corinthians 1. 24 (KJV).) and 'But we speak the wisdom of God [*Théou sophian*] in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory' (I Corinthians 2. 7 (KJV); see also Siémons, *Theosophia* p. 10). The following discussion of Greek sources will focus on *Théosophia* (in its four grammatical cases).

²¹⁶ Origen, *Fragmenta in Psalmos 1-150*, psalm 118, verse 77, line 14. Origen here uses the accusative *théosophian* (θεοσοφίαν). In 1988 Siémons stated that this could not be verified in the Greek text through the TLG, but today it can positively be verified, see the TLG; Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 11. As far as can be presently ascertained in relation to the fact that Origen was the first to use this word, it is interesting to note that Origen attended lectures by the neo-Platonist "founder" Ammonius Saccas (3rd cent.), because Blavatsky stated that the term *Theosophy* 'dates from the third century of our era, and began with Ammonius Saccas and his disciples', see Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 2, see also James A. Santucci, 'Correspondence on Theosophia and Related Terms', *Theosophical History*, 2, 3 (July 1987), 108. The famous neo-Platonists Plotinus (c. 204-270) and another Origen (3rd cent., not to be confused with the Church Father

more significant trace is in *De Abstinentia* by the neo-Platonist Porphyry (c. 234–c. 305). Here Porphyry argues that the ‘divine man’ who seeks to liberate himself from the lower passions is fed with divine wisdom (θεοσοφίαν).²¹⁷ In book four of the *De Abstinentia* Porphyry speaks of the théosophias (θεοσοφίας) or divine wisdom of the Egyptians²¹⁸ and also states that

For the polity of the Indians being distributed into many parts, there is one tribe among them of men divinely wise [*théosophôn*], whom the Greeks are accustomed to call Gymnosophists. But of these there are two sects, over one of which the Bramins, preside, but over the other the Samanæans. The race of the Bramins, however, receive divine wisdom [*théosophian*] of this kind by succession, in the same manner as the priesthood. But the Samanæans are elected, and consist of those who wish to possess divine knowledge [*théosophiein*].²¹⁹

Several other neo-Platonists after Porphyry such as the Emperor Julian (c. 331-363), Proclus (412-485) and Damascius (c. 480-6th century) also used the term *Theosophy* in their writings.²²⁰ Jean-Louis Siémons has however noted

Origen) also attended Ammonius Saccas’ lectures in Alexandria. Finally, it should be noted that Santucci has observed and privately communicated that the term *Théosophias* (θεοσοφίας) is found in an early fragment from the great scholar Apollodorus of Athens (b. c. 180 BCE) who was a pupil of Aristarchus of Samothrace (c. 217-145 BCE) the head of the Alexandrian library (c. 153 BCE), see Santucci, ‘Correspondence on Theosophia and Related Terms’, 109, see also Apollodorus of Athens, ‘fragment 102d’ in *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. by Felix Jacoby, J. Bollansée, G. Schepens, and Pierre Bonnechere, 18 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1962), II, line 35. Siémons however convincingly argues that the term used (θεοσοφίας) was Porphyry’s interpolation, see Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 17. Siémons argues the same in relation to a fragment containing the word *Theosophy* from the Syrian gnostic Bardesanes (154-222) (i.e.) that it is in fact Porphyry’s interpolation, see Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 18.

²¹⁷ Porphyry, *De Abstinentia*, book two, section 45, line 17.

²¹⁸ Porphyry, *De Abstinentia*, book four, section 9, line 55.

²¹⁹ Porphyry, *De Abstinentia*, in *Selected Works of Porphyry*, trans. by Thomas Taylor (Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 1999) book four, section 17, p. 129; see also Siémons, *Théosophia*, pp. 7, 17; Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*, ed. by Michel Tardieu, 2nd edn (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978), p. 444. Here it is interesting to note that this early use of the word *théosophia* is directly related to Indian wisdom or the ‘Gymnosophists’, as such an Indian association also became a part of Blavatsky’s theosophical discourse.

²²⁰ Flavius Claudius Julianus Imperator, *Epistulae*, in *L’empereur Julien: Oeuvres complètes: 1.2 Lettres et Fragments*, ed. by J. Bidez, 4 vols, 2nd

that this word in all its variations and related terms is found no more than about twenty times in all of the writings of the neo-Platonists combined, which of course means that even though this word was important to them it was used only occasionally and did not figure as a central notion.²²¹

Outside the circle of the neo-Platonists *Theosophy* was continuously used in Greek from the Church Father and historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c 260-340) to the time of the fall of Constantinople (29 May 1453).²²² Eusebius

edn (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1960), epistle 12, line 13; Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, in *Procli Diadochi in Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, ed. by W. Kroll, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1965 [1899, 1901]), II, 225 line 4; Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II, 255 line 21; Proclus, *Theologia Platonica (lib. 1–6)*, in *Proclus: Théologie platonicienne*, ed. by H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink, 6 vols (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1987 [1968-1997]), V, p. 127, line 16; Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, in *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, ed. by E. Diehl, 3 vols (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1965 [1903-1906]), II, 57, line 10; Damascius, *Vita Isidori (ap. Sudam, Hesychium, Photium et e cod. Vat. 1950)*, in *Damascii vitae Isidori reliquiae*, ed. by C. Zintzen (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967), fragment 109 line 13; Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, in *Damascii successoris dubitationes et solutiones*, ed. by C.É. Ruelle, 2 vols (Paris: Klincksieck, 1899 [1889, 1899]), II, 212, line 19. For further references on the use of the word *Theosophy* and its related terms among the neo-Platonists see Siémons, *Theosophia*, pp. 4-10; see also Santucci, 'Correspondence on Theosophia and Related Terms', 107-110. It appears that the most common connotations of the terms *théosophia*, *théosophos*, *théosophôs* and *théosophein* among the neo-Platonists were those of divine wisdom, interacting with the divine, being divinely inspired, secret or occult doctrines, Egyptian wisdom, and the *Chaldean Oracles*.

²²¹ Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 10. For use of the word among early writers see also Santucci, 'Correspondence on Theosophia and Related Terms', 107-110.

²²² For Eusebius see note below. For the use of this term in the Greek tradition outside the circle of the neo-Platonists see: **Johannes Stobaeus** [5th cent.] *Anthologium*, I. 49, 54. Siémons, however, shows that this reference in Stobaeus is a quotation from Porphyry, see Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 19. **Theodotus Ancyranus** [?-446], *Expositio Symboli Nicaeni - Homiliae* (J.-P. Minge, 1859), 1345 D, in Siémons, *Theosophia*, p.14; **Zacharias of Mytilene** [c. 465-536], *Capita vii contra Manichaeos*, line 223, see *Iohannis Caesariensis opera quae supersunt, Corpus Christianorum*, ed. by M. Richard, Series Graeca 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), pp. xxxiii-xxxix; **Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite** [6th cent.], see note below for full references; **John Philoponus** [490-570], *De opificio mundi*, in *Joannis Philoponi de opificio mundi libri vii*, ed. by W. Reichardt (Leipzig: Teubner, 1897), p. 200, line 22; **Achmet (Oneiromancer) son of Seirim** [653/4-

728/9], *Achmetis Oneirocriticon*, section 245, line 6, see *Achmetis Oneirocriticon*, ed. by F. Drexel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925); **Theodore Studites** [759-826], *Epistulae*, epistle 276, line 95, see, *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, ed. by G. Fatouros, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis 31, 2 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992); Theodore Studites, *Sermo de Sancto Bartholomeo Apostolo*, in *Anastasius Bibliothecarius: Sermo Theodori Studitae de Sancto Bartholomeo Apostolo*, ed. by U. Westerbergh, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Latina Stockholmiensia 9, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1963), pp. 41-48 (p. 47, line 28); **Photios** [c. 810-893], *Bibliotheca*, codex 170, Bekker 117b, line 7, see *Photius: Bibliothèque*, ed. by R. Henry, 8 vols (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959-1977); Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, Epistle-Amphilochia, Amph epistle 34 line 167, see, *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, ed. by B. Laourdas and L.G. Westerink, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 6 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983-1988); Photios, *Fragmenta in epistulam ii ad Corinthios (in catenis)*, in *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt*, ed. by K. Staab (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), pp. 583-604, (p. 599, line 14); **Nikephoros I** [9th cent.], *Refutatio et eversio definitionis synodalis anni 815*, chapter 185, line 37, see *Nicephori Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Refutatio et Eversio Definitionis Synodalis Anni 815*, ed. by J. Featherstone, Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 33 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997); **Nicetas David** [9th cent.], *Homiliae septem*, in *Nicétas le Paphlagonien, Sept homélies inédites*, ed. by F. Lebrun (Leuven, 1997), homily 2, p. 187, line 11; homily 3 p. 205, line 27; In the **Suda**—the massive tenth-century Byzantine encyclopaedia of the ancient Mediterranean world—the term *Theosophy* (*théosophian*) was used as Siémons writes ‘Theosebios, a Greek Philosopher, is said to have written a short tract about Plato’s great *Republic*, in which he extolled the “divine Wisdom” (*théosophian*) that came from the gods’, Siémons, *Theosophia*, p. 29, see also the alphabetic letter epsilon entry 2424, line 17, in *Suidae lexicon*, ed. by A. Adler, Lexicographi Graeci 1.1-1.4, 4 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1928, 1931, 1933, 1935); **George Kedrenos** [11th cent.], *Compendium historiarum*, in *Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope*, ed. by I. Bekker, Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, 2 vols (Bonn: Weber, 1838-9), I, 795, line 23; **Nicephorus Basilaces** [11th cent.], *Orationes*, in *Nicephori Basilacae orationes et epistolae*, ed. by A. Garzya (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984), oration A, p. 4, line 24; **Michael Choniates** [c. 1140-1220], *Orationes*, in *Μιχαήλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. by S.P. Lampros, 2 vols (Athens, Ek tou typographeiou Parnassou, 1879-1880), I, oration 16, p. 304, line 7; **Nicholas of Methone** [12th cent.], *Orationes*, in *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* [Bibliotheca ecclesiastica], ed. by Andronikos Demetrakopoulos (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1965 [1866]), pp. 219-380 (oration 1 p. 221, line 27); **Eustathius of Thessalonica** [c. 1115-1195/8], *Sermones*, in *Eustathii Thessalonicensis opera minora* (magnam partem inedita), ed. by P. Wirth, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis 32 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), oration 1, p. 10, line 25; **Nicephorus Blemmydes** [13th cent.], *Laudatio Sancti Ioanni Evangelistae*,

section 11, line 4, see 'Blemmydes' Encomium on Christ's holy apostle and evangelist, John the theologian', ed. by J.A. Munitiz, *Analecta Bollandiana* 107 (1989), 302-344; Nicephorus Blemmydes, *Laudatio Sancti Ioanni Evangelistae*, section 31, line 4, see 'Blemmydes' Encomium on Christ's holy apostle and evangelist, John the theologian', 302-344; **Theodore II Laskaris** [1221/2-1258], *Epistulae CCXVII*, epistle 100, line 36, see *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII*, ed. by N. Festa, Pubblicazioni del R. Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento in Firenze, Sezione di filosofia e lettere 29 (Florence: Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento, 1898); **Gregory Palamas** [1296-1359], *Pro hesychastis*, triad 2, part 1, section 34, line 30, see *Grégoire Palamas: Défense des saints hésychastes, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*, ed. by J. Meyendorff, Études et documents 30 (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1973); **Gregory Akindynos** [c. 1300-1348], *Refutatio magna*, oration 1, section 9, line 36, see *Gregorii Acindyni Refutationes duae operis Gregorii Palamae cui titulus dialogus inter Orthodoxum et Barlaamitam*, ed. by J.N. Cañellas, Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995); **Nicephorus Callistus Zanthopulus** [14th cent.], *Historia ecclesiastica*, book 2, chapter 20, line 78, see *Historia ecclesiastica, Patrologiae cursus completus*, ed. by J.-P. Migne series Graeca (Paris: Migne, 1857-1866), 145-47; Nicephorus Callistus Zanthopulus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, book 2, chapter 34, line 42; Nicephorus Callistus Zanthopulus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, book 3, chapter 33, line 74; **Philotheus Coccinus** [c. 1300-1379], *Antirrhethici duodecim contra Gregoram*, oration 5, line 251, see, *Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου δογματικά έργα Μέρος Α'*, ed. by D.V. Kaimakes, Thessalonian Byzantine Writers 3 (Thessalonica: Centre for Byzantine Research, 1983); Philotheus Coccinus, *Antirrhethici duodecim contra Gregoram*, oration 11, line 1880; **Gennadius Scholarius** [c. 1400-1473], *Tractatus de Processu spiritus sancti II*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, ed. by M. Jugie, L. Petit, and X.A. Siderides, 8 vols (Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1929), II, 269-457 (p. 278, line 32); Three Greek text collections also include the term *Theosophy*: **The Greek Magical Papyri (Papyri Graecae Magicae)** [2nd – 5th cent.], in *Papyri Graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, ed. by A. Henrichs and K. Preisendanz, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973-4), Preisendanz number 13, line 234 (P12-P13 (P. Mus. van Oudheden, Leiden J384 & J395), II, 57-131); see also Siémons, *Théosophia*, pp. 18-19; **Analecta Hymnica Graeca, Canones Januarii**, day 14, canon 23, ode 8, line 55, see *Analecta hymnica graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae inferioris*, ed. by A. Proiou and G. Schirò, 12 vols (Rome: Istituto di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici, Università di Roma, 1971), VI; **Concilia Oecumenica, Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum**, in *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, ed. by R. Riedinger, Series secunda, volumen primum: Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum, 2 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), act 2, p. 40, line 36. Related terms such as *théosophos*, *théosophôs* and *théosophhein* were in addition to many of the above sources (not referred to) also used in other Greek sources from an early date with a number of different connotations. Church Fathers such as Clement of

was the first to use the word (*théosophia*) polemically as a reference to Porphyry's teachings or 'what he [Porphyry] pleases to call *théosophia*' and he was also the first to use it discursively as an appellation to Christianity itself as 'a new and a real *théosophia*' implying a new and superior divinely inspired religion.²²³

In relation to Blavatsky's notion of Theosophy as a primordial wisdom tradition found among various cultures during Antiquity, as will be discussed later, an early sixth-century Byzantine manuscript known as *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia* is of special interest here.²²⁴ This manuscript, which includes the word *Théosophia* in its title, can be read as a climactic part of an apologetic tendency already found in early Christianity, which instead of disregarding pagan philosophies and religions sought to polemically incorporate their teachings within Christianity. Justin Martyr (103-165), for example, already argued that Christ is the Universal Logos (reason, word) and that it was from this same Universal Logos the great pagan philosophers such as Heraclitus and Socrates got their wisdom. This made him argue that in fact Heraclitus and Socrates were Christians.²²⁵ They did of course not comprehend the whole logos, he argued, which only was revealed through the Incarnation of Christ the logos, but their wisdom did still represent a part of the divine wisdom revealed in pre-Christian times. In a similar line of thought Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Alexandria (c. 150–215), Methodius (end 3rd century), Didymus the Blind (c. 311-398), Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444) and Sozomen (c. 400-443) each used the word in ways that best suited their purpose. The philosopher and statesman Themistius (317-388) also used the related term *théosophos*; see Siémons, *Theosophia*, pp. 10-19. Use of the related terms continued well into the Byzantine tradition with scholars and theologians such as Leontius of Byzantium (c. 485–542), Sophronius of Jerusalem (6th-7th cent), Maximus the Confessor (580–662), and Joannes Damascenus (c. 675-749), see Siémons, *Theosophia*, pp. 16, 19-20.

²²³ Eusebius quoted in Siémons, *Theosophia*, pp. 11-12; see Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, I. 5, 12 line 7. The *Praeparatio evangelica* can be found in *Eusebius Werke, Band 8: Die Praeparatio evangelica*, ed. by K. Mras, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 43.1 & 43.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954-56).

²²⁴ See *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia An Attempt at Reconstruction*, ed. by Pier Franco Beatrice, (Leiden: Brill 2001).

²²⁵ Justin Martyr, *Apologies*, I, 46, II, 10.

argued that there existed a Christianity among the ancients before the Incarnation of the Christ.²²⁶ And Clement of Alexandria in the *Paedagogus* stated that 'Homer is a prophet without being aware of it'.²²⁷ Pseudo-Justin in *Cohortatio ad Graecos* equally acknowledges the prophetic authority of Orpheus, the Sibyl and Hermes Trismegistus.²²⁸ This means that eventhough this apologetic tradition²²⁹ generally viewed paganism as somewhat distorted the pagan sages were regarded as pre-incarnation messengers from God who had learnt their wisdom, if not directly from the logos then from the Hebrew Prophets including Moses. The apologetic Church Fathers thus also made use of pagan philosophy/texts in their own arguments for the superiority of Christianity and its specific doctrines.

The *Theosophy* manuscript equally attempts to show that the oracles of the Greek gods, the theologies and philosophies of the Greek, Persian and the Egyptian sages, and the oracles of the Sibyls agree with and can be read in concert with the Christian Scriptures. Many of the great names from the *Prisca Theologia* tradition, as it arose during the Renaissance,²³⁰ are already mentioned alongside each other in the *Theosophy* and were perhaps so ordered by this early apologetic tradition in its syncretistic attempt to systematize, harmonise and absorb pagan thought. Such syncretism under the heading *Theosophy* would again become current with Blavatsky.

During the Middle Ages sixth-century, Greek texts entitled *Mystical Theology* (Gr. *Peri mustikes theologias*) and *On the Divine Names* (Gr. *Peri theion onomaton*) which used the word *Théosophias* became widely read due to an incorrect notion of their authorship. They were thought to have been written

²²⁶ Augustine, *Retractations*, I. p. xiii.

²²⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* I, 6, 36, 1 quoted in, *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia*, ed. by Beatrice, p. xxi.

²²⁸ See *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia*, ed. by Beatrice, p. xxi, n52.

²²⁹ See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Tradition', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 1125-35.

²³⁰ See, Daniel Pickering Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1972); See also chapter 2.2 on 'Blavatsky's Discourse for Ancient Knowledge' in the present thesis for a more thorough discussion.

by Saint Paul's first convert in Athens as described in *Acts* 17:34, but were most likely written by a Syrian monk and Christian Platonist who presumably had been educated in the Platonist school of Athens by Proclus or Damascius now known as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 500). *The Mystical Theology* for example states

Triad supernal, both super-God and super-good, Guardian of Theosophy of Christian men, direct us aright to the super-unknown and super-brilliant.²³¹

The text further distinguishes *Théosophia* as a form of gnosis (or knowledge which is experienced) from theology, which was seen as a learned knowledge (*logia*) of God (*theo*).²³² The Irish theologian and philosopher Scotus Erigena (c. 815-877) who translated the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite into Latin adopted this use of *Théosophia* in the 9th century.

In a thirteenth-century work known as the *Summa philosophiae*, attributed to Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), bishop of Lincoln and an early Oxford scientist, a fourfold distinction of terms is made in which Théosophy is included: 1. Philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Rushd, etc. 2. Moderns: Alexander of Hales, Albert of Cologne. 3. Theosophists: All authors who inspired the holy books. 4. Theologians: Those whose task it is to teach Theosophy or the holy books, such as Areopagite, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Origen, etc.²³³

During the Renaissance the use of the word became more frequent,

²³¹ Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Mystic Theology*, ed. and trans. by John Parker, *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite* (London: James Parker and Co., 1897), p. 130; see also *Corpus Dionysiacum ii: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita: De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae*, ed. by G. Heil and A.M. Ritter, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 36 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 141-50 (p. 141, line 3); see also, *Corpus Dionysiacum i: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita: De divinis nominibus*, ed. by B.R. Suchla, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 33 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 107-231 (p. 125, line 2; p. 199, line 19).

²³² See Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 24; Antoine Faivre, 'Theosophy', ed. by Mircea Eliade *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols (London: Macmillan and Free Press, 1987), XIV, 465-69.

²³³ See Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, p. 24. Faivre, 'Theosophy', TER.

especially in the Protestant world, but the meaning of the word continued to change. Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522), for example, used the word *theosophistae* to designate decadent scholastics, which also seems to be the way Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) used the term for a prodigious maker of syllogisms.²³⁴ Another non-esoteric use of the word can be seen from the title of a massive theological work in several volumes by Johannes Arboreus (Alabri), *Théosophia complectens difficillorum*, published between 1540 and 1553.

According to Antoine Faivre, it was not until a Latin magical work published around 1575 entitled *Arbatel concerning the Magic of the Ancients* that the word Theosophy, at least in Germany, gained a clear esoteric meaning.²³⁵ The *Arbatel* defines Theosophy as a part of the 'Good science' i.e. as

Knowledge of the word of God, and arranging one's life according to the Word of God. [And] Knowledge of the government of God through the angels, which Scripture calls watchmen; and understanding the mysteries of the angels.²³⁶

This was distinct from another aspect of the 'good science' termed Anthroposophy, which was defined as 'Knowledge of natural things' and 'Wisdom in human affairs'.²³⁷

An adaptation of the *Arbatel* was later published in 1686 as *Clavicula Salomonis et Theosophia Pneumatica* where *Theosophia* was now a part of the title.

The meaning given to Theosophy in the *Arbatel* was continued by Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) in his *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (1595), in which the title page is signed 'Henricus Khunrath Lips. Theosophiae Amator, Et Med. Doct.' and also includes the title 'Theosophice Doctis'. In the

²³⁴ See Antoine Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), p. 12.

²³⁵ See Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, p. 12.

²³⁶ *Arbatel: Concerning the Magic of the Ancients*, trans. and ed. by Joseph H. Peterson, (Lake Worth, FL: IBIS Press, 2009), p. 101.

²³⁷ *Arbatel*, p. 101.

same line of thought was *Libellus Theosophiae* (1618) by Valentin Weigel (1533-1588), the radical Protestant pastor and Paracelsian.

The influential German Protestant mystic Jacob Böhme (1575-1624) used the word to designate the interior word (*Mercury*)²³⁸ and was later called the theosophical philosopher *par excellence*. Böhme's follower Johann George Gichtel (1638-1710) also gave his edition of Böhme's collected works the title *Alle Theosophische Wercken* (Amsterdam, 1682) and the revised edition after Gichtel's edition was called *Theosophia Revelata* (Hamburg, 1715). Through these publications Christian theosophy was achieving a distinct canonical identity. Gichtel's own correspondence with his friend Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714) also included the word in its published title *Theosophia Practica* (published posthumously in 1722). Gottfried Arnold's work *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie [Impartial History of Church and Heresy]* (1699-1700) included this Christian theosophical current in its historical survey and gave a sympathetic outline of it. The German 'Rosicrucians' of the seventeenth century designated themselves *Theosophistae* as witnessed in Adam Haslmayr's "Response" (1612) to the 'Laudable Fraternity of the Theosophers of the Rosy Cross' and also in the visionary city of Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654). His *Christianopolis* (1619) specifically reserves one of the many auditoriums in the Christian city for *Theosophia* or higher metaphysical contemplation.²³⁹

In the Catholic domain during the seventeenth century the polymath Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680) followed the Greek tradition and used the word in his famous *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652-1654) to designate the esoteric wisdom of the ancients as divine metaphysics.²⁴⁰

In the English esoteric domain the hermetic alchemist Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes) (1621-1666) wrote in his *Anthroposophia Theomagica*

²³⁸ See Faivre, 'Theosophy', TER, pp. 465-69.

²³⁹ See Faivre, 'Theosophy', TER, pp. 465-69; Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, p. 13.

²⁴⁰ Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, p. 14.

(1648) of 'the ancient, real theosophy, of the Hebrews and Egyptians'.²⁴¹ The Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) wrote in 1678 in a discussion of ancient philosophy: 'But Xenophanes' Theosophy, or divine philosophy, is most fully declared by Simplicius'²⁴², and the other famous Cambridge Platonist Henry More (1614-1687) wrote in 1681 of 'The sound Principles of Theosophy and true Divinity'.²⁴³ The English follower of Jacob Böhme, Edward Taylor, also brought Theosophy into English usage with his *Jacob Behmen's Theosophick Philosophy Unfolded* (1691) in which he asks: 'What is all Sacred Theosophy, but the very understanding of a certain Divine Art, to receive and assimilate the evermore over-flowing Effluence of God's Bounty.'²⁴⁴

At the end of the seventeenth century the German scholar Daniel Morhof (1639-1691) sought to write an encyclopedia-type work, which would sum up the learning of his time, entitled *Poythistor sive de auctorum notitia et rerum commentarii* (1688, complete 4th ed. 1747). Morhof here construed a list of theosophers which, according to him, is as follows: Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Iamblichus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Böhme, Paracelsus and the Jewish Kabbalists.²⁴⁵ The above indicates that the word certainly had entered the usage of authors on esoteric topics and to some extent the mainstream intellectual currents of the time.

Through continued and more extensive usage by major Christian Theosophical figures, such as Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782) and Franz von Baader (1765-1841) and still by a few theologians as a synonym for theology, the word also entered common language in the eighteenth century.

²⁴¹ Thomas Vaughan, *Anthroposophia Theomagica*, ed. by Arthur Edward Waite, *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1919), p. 9.

²⁴² Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, ed. by J. L. Mosheim, trans. by John Harrison [3rd(?) edn], 3 vols (London: Thomas Tegg, 1845), II, 22.

²⁴³ Henry More, 'I. Postscript', in Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus triumphatus*, 4th edn (London: A. Bettesworth and J. Batley, 1729), p. 29.

²⁴⁴ Edward Taylor, *Jacob Behmen's Theosophick Philosophy Unfolded* (London: Printed for Tho. Salusbury, 1691), p. 171.

²⁴⁵ See Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, p. 14.

In particular because of the famous German historian of philosophy Johann Jakob Brucker (1696-1770) who included a whole chapter “*De theosophiis*” on theosophy in his influential work *Historia critica philosophiae* (1741-1744).

Later the French Enlightenment philosopher and encyclopedist Denis Diderot (1713-1784) wrote an article on Theosophy (Theosophers) for his great *Encyclopédie* (1750-1765) which was, to some extent, based on Brucker's without giving him due credit. Among the ‘Theosophers’ Diderot included Paracelsus (1493-1541), Julius Sperber (1540-1616), Robert Fludd (1574-1637), J. B. Van Helmont (1579-1644), John Pordage (1607-1681), and Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651-1689).²⁴⁶

During the eighteenth century variations of the word Theosophy were also included in numerous esoteric publications around Europe; among such titles were *Monarchia arcanorum theosophica* (1709) by J. F. Helvetius, *Theophilosophia theoretica et practica* (1710) by Sincerus Renatus, and *Opus mago-cabalisticum et theosophicum* (1721) by George von Welling.²⁴⁷

The prominent German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) even made use of the word *theosophism* as a description of philosophers, such as Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), who thought they could explain everything in relation to God. The famous German poet Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) also entitled one of his texts *Theosophie des Julius* (1787) and the Italian priest and philosopher, Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797-1855), thought of Theosophy as the metaphysics of being in his *Teosofia* (1859).²⁴⁸

At the dawn of the Victorian age the word continued to announce its presence in discourse on religious matters in a variety of senses. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) for example wrote (1831) ‘Among the Germans, That deep-feeling, deep-thinking, devout temper, now degenerating into abstruse

²⁴⁶ See Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, pp. 18-19.

²⁴⁷ For more details and for many more important titles published during this period employing the word Theosophy see Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, pp. 19-26.

²⁴⁸ See Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, p. 26.

theosophy [...] was awake in this era.²⁴⁹ And Sir W. Hamilton (1788-1856) wrote in his *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1836-1837) 'An organ of Imagination is intimately connected with that of Theosophy or Veneration.'²⁵⁰

The use of the word in relation to the Wisdom of the ancients and the mystics of the Middle Ages, however, also continued in a variety of ways on both French and English soil. The French scholar Jacques Matter (1791-1864) wrote of the followers of Porphyry and Iamblichus as embracing the 'spéculations théosophiques' of all sages and religions (1820)²⁵¹ and L. J. Dehaut (1805-1841) compared the different philosophies and 'théosophiques' of ancient Alexandria (1836).²⁵² Meanwhile, in England Henry Hallam (1777-1859) could write 'His own models were the oriental reveries of the Cabbala, and the theosophy of the mystics,' and also wrote of 'the theosophy of Paracelsus'.²⁵³

In 1850 Mary Anne Atwood (1817-1910) anonymously published her significant work on the hermetic tradition and the alchemical philosophers entitled *A Suggestive Inquiry into Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy* wherein she used the word Theosophy as a term for a divine wisdom or universal art practised by alchemists and mystics since earliest times.²⁵⁴

W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson wrote in their classic *The Life and*

²⁴⁹ Thomas Carlyle, 'Early German Literature', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 7 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1872), III, 194.

²⁵⁰ Sir W. Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, 4 vols (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859-60), I, 416.

²⁵¹ Jaques Matter, *Essai Historique Sur L'École D'Alexandria*, 2 vols (Paris: F. G. Levrault), II, 272.

²⁵² L. -J. Dehaut, *Essai Historique Sur La Vie et La Doctrine D'Ammonius Saccas* (Bruxelles: M. Hayez, 1836), p. 59.

²⁵³ Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the History of Literature in Europe*, 4 vols (London: John Murry, 1837-39), I, §17, §20, pp. 308, 309.

²⁵⁴ See [Atwood, Mary Anne], *A Suggestive Inquiry into Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy* (London: Trelawney Saunders Charing Cross, 1850), pp. 15, 31, 74. Atwood also used the variation 'theosophic' in relation to 'Wisdom' with a capital 'W' denoting a universal Wisdom principle and a Wisdom tradition with which the following names were associated 'Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, Roger Bacon, the fiery Lully, and his preceptor Arnold di Villanova, Ficinus, Picus di Mirandola, Spinoza, Reuchlin, the Abbot Trithemius, Cornelius Agrippa, and all the subsequent Paracelsian School', p. xv.

Epistles of St. Paul (1852) that 'There was a strong affinity between the Neo-Platonic philosophy of Alexandria and the Oriental theosophy which sprang from Buddhism and other kindred systems.'²⁵⁵

In Germany Joseph Ennemoser (1787-1854) wrote on the 'Die Theosophen' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who searched after the divine light and the secrets of nature in his famous *Geschichte der Magie* (1844).²⁵⁶ Among these 'Theosophists' who he also called 'Feuerphilosophen' he included Theoprastus Paracelsus, Adam von Boden, Oswald Croll, Valentine Weigel, Robert Fludd, Jacob Böhme and Peter Poiret.²⁵⁷

A few years later (1855) in London *An Introduction to Theosophy or the science of the "mystery of Christ" ... Embracing the Philosophy of all the working powers of Life, Magical and Spiritual ...* was published anonymously and R. A. Vaughan's classic work *Hours with the Mystics* was published the following year (1856) nearly summing up the entire tradition of Theosophy. He mentions Theosophy numerous times and devoted more than one chapter to it. Among other things he wrote

Among the Germans I find mysticism generally called theosophy when applied to natural science. Too narrow a use of the word, I think. We should have in that case scarcely any theosophy in Europe till after the Reformation. The word itself was first employed by the school of Porphyry. The Neo-Platonist would say that the priest might have his traditional discourse concerning God (theology), but he alone, with his intuition, the highest wisdom concerning him.²⁵⁸

A decade after Vaughan's work the biblical scholar Christian D. Ginsburg (1831-1914) defined the Jewish Kabbalah in terms of 'Theosophy' on several occasions in his *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and literature: An Essay* (1865).²⁵⁹ A few years later the occult scholar Hargrave Jennings (1817-

²⁵⁵ W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1852), I, pp. xiii, 483.

²⁵⁶ Joseph Ennemoser, *Geschichte des thierischen Magnetismus: Geschichte der Magie* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1844), pp. 615-16.

²⁵⁷ Ennemoser, *Geschichte der Magie*, pp. 615-16.

²⁵⁸ Robert Alfred Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, 6th edn (London: Gibbings & Company, LTD. 1893 [1856]), p. 39.

²⁵⁹ See Christian D. Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and*

1890) wrote in his *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* (1870), under a chapter heading entitled 'Fire-Theosophy of the Persians', on the 'Fire-Philosophers' and 'Theosophists' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁶⁰

The American scholar and Platonist Alexander Wilder (1823-1908) added to the neo-Platonic associations of the term in his *New Platonism and Alchemy: A Sketch of the Eclectic Philosophy of the Alexandrian School* (1869). Wilder for example wrote,

Writers have generally fixed the time of the development of the Eclectic theosophical system during the third century of the Christian era. It appears to have had a beginning much earlier, and, indeed, is traced by Diogenes Laertius to an Egyptian prophet or priest named Pot-Amun, who flourished in the earlier years of the dynasty of the Ptolemies.

The first proposition set forth by Ammonius was that of a primeval system of theosophy, a system which was essentially alike, at first, in all countries.

Proclus elaborated the entire theosophy and theurgy of his predecessors into a complete system.²⁶¹

F. W. Farrar in his *The Witness of History to Christ* (1871) equally wrote that 'Porphyry and Hierocles met them [the Christians] with haughty mysticism

literature: An Essay (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1865), pp. v, 1, 2, 4, 56, 61, 89, 101, 102, 111, 119, 135, 148, 149.

²⁶⁰ See Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870), pp. 67-68. Jennings includes here the following 'Theosophists' in his list: Paracelsus and, as he writes, 'In England, Robert Flood, or Fludd, was their great advocate and exponent. Rivier, who wrote in France; Severinus, an author of Denmark; Kunrath, an eminent physician of Dresden; and Daniel Hoffmann, professor of divinity in the University of Helnstadt,—have also treated largely on Paracelsus and on his system.' (p. 67) and 'Adam von Boden, Oswald Croll; and, later, Valentine Weigel, ... Jacob Böhmen, Peter Poiret' (p. 68). This list was largely derived from W. Howitt's English translation of Ennemoser's *Geschichte der Magie* (1844) see Joseph Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, trans. by W. Howitt, 2 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 457.

²⁶¹ Alexander Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy: A Sketch of the Eclectic Philosophy of the Alexandrian School* (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1869 (repub. Minneapolis, MN: Wizards Bookshelf, 1975)), pp. 3, 4, 18; see also pp. 9, 11, 12, 17. Wilder and his work had a great influence on Blavatsky as will be discussed later in this chapter.

and intellectual theosophy';²⁶² and the philosopher Edward Caird in his *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant* (1877) wrote of 'The philosophies or theosophies that close the record of Greek speculation.'²⁶³

This historical survey extends to Blavatsky's use of the term and the formation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 in New York, where the word Theosophy no doubt was present, not only in the esoteric cultural undercurrent, but also among theologians, historians and philosophers. Thus the intention of this historical survey of the word Theosophy was to show that Theosophy already existed in the Western esoteric and intellectual tradition with a great variety of rich connotations, before Blavatsky used this word for the first time prior to the formation of the Theosophical Society. This *Begriffsgeschichte* is intended to present a background whereupon Blavatsky's use of the word can be contrasted and conceptually contextualized, thus facilitating a better understanding of her semantic inheritance.

2.1.2 Blavatsky's first use of the term Theosophy

Blavatsky, as far as can be ascertained, used the word 'Theosophy' for the first time in a personal letter 'Letter 21' dated 16 February 1875, Philadelphia and addressed to, Hiram. P. Corson (1828-1911), the spiritualist and professor of English at Cornell University, about nine months before the founding of the Theosophical Society on 17 November 1875.

When I became a Spiritualist, it was not through the agency of the ever lying, cheating mediums, miserable instruments of the undeveloped Spirits of the lower Sphere, the ancient *Hades*. My belief is based, on something older than the Rochester Knockings, and spring out of the same source of information, that was used by Raymond Lully, Picus of Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd Henry More etc etc all of whom have ever been searching for a system, that should disclose to them the "*deepest depths*" of the Divine nature and show them the *real tie which binds all things together*. I found at last—and many years ago—the cravings of my mind satisfied by this theosophy taught by the Angels and communicated by them, that the protoplast might know it for the aid

²⁶² Frederick William Farrar, *The Witness of History to Christ* (London & New York: Macmillan and Co. 1871), p. 102.

²⁶³ Edward Caird, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant* (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1877), p. 17.

of the human destiny.²⁶⁴

This earliest use of the word 'Theosophy' or in fact a major part of this whole quote from Blavatsky's letter was taken directly, verbatim and without acknowledgment, from Christian. D. Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and literature: An Essay* (1865) as if it was her own sentiment it expressed.²⁶⁵

The discovery of the true source of this first use of the word clearly reveals Blavatsky's semantic inheritance or her reception of the meaning of the concept 'Theosophy'. The paragraph in Blavatsky's letter also included many

²⁶⁴ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [complete number of volumes not yet published] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 'Letter 21', p. 86.

²⁶⁵ See Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and literature*, p. 1. Compare Ginsburg's text: 'A SYSTEM of religious philosophy, or more properly of theosophy, which has not only exercised for hundreds of years an extraordinary influence on the mental development of so shrewd a people, as the Jews, but has captivated the minds of some of the greatest thinkers of Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, claims the greatest attention of both the philosopher and the theologian. When it is added that among its captives were **Raymond Lully**, the celebrated scholastic, metaphysician and chemist (died 1815); **John Reuchlin**, the renowned scholar and reviver of oriental literature in Europe (born 1455, died 1528); John **Picus di Mirandola**, the famous philosopher and classical scholar (1463-1494); **Cornelius Henry Agrippa**, the distinguished philosopher, divine and physician (1486-1535); John Baptist von Helmont, a remarkable chemist and physician (1577-1644); as well as our own countrymen **Robert Fludd**, the famous physician and philosopher (1574-1637), and Dr. **Henry More** (1614-1687); and that these men, after restlessly **searching for a scientific system which should disclose to them " the deepest depths" of the Divine nature, and show them the real tie which binds all things together, found the cravings of their minds satisfied by this theosophy**, the claims of the Kabbalah on the attention of students in literature and philosophy will readily be admitted.' [Bolds are mine]. It is difficult to say why Blavatsky made near verbatim use of this entire paragraph, perhaps it was in part due to her unfamiliarity with English, i.e. she might have thought it easier to use another's expression for views she shared [?]. The above text from Ginsburg also appears, with acknowledgment, in the second edition of Hargrave Jennings' *The Rosicrucians* (1879, 1st edn 1870), which Blavatsky used on several occasions, but that edition was not available to her at the time, see Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries*, 2nd edn (London: Chatto and Widnes, 1879), pp. vii-viii.

elements that became central to Blavatsky's later conceptualizations of Theosophy. The following observations stand out: Blavatsky argued that her knowledge was not derived from spiritualism in the common mid-late-nineteenth-century sense of the term, but from 'something older' which she to her satisfaction found 'many years ago'. This more ancient knowledge she identified as 'theosophy' stemming from the 'same source of information' used by earlier Western Platonists and esotericists. This 'theosophy' was furthermore communicated by angels (recall the *Arbatel*) and related to deep truths about the 'Divine nature' representing a 'system' of that which '*binds all things together*'. The idea that this 'information' can aid 'human destiny' is also important here. Even though some of these ideas were derived from elsewhere they nonetheless became important to Blavatsky's construction.

The choice of the paragraph from Ginsburg gives the letter a distinct Western coloring, evinced by its exclusive reference to Western thinkers. The reason for this Western emphasis can be manifold as Blavatsky did have a knowledge and interest in Oriental thought, whether mediated by Western scholars or not, at the time.²⁶⁶ One explanation for this Western emphasis in relation to her first use of the word 'Theosophy' could be that Blavatsky, in her letters, had a habit of presenting herself and her ideas in various ways to different people, in this case to the Western scholar and spiritualist H. P. Corson who would be more receptive to Western ideas. The most plausible explanation is, however, obvious from the overview of the word given above (2.1.1) in which it was shown that the word had been commonly used in the West in relation to the thinkers or theosophers mentioned by Ginsburg/Blavatsky, which might indicate that Ginsburg/Blavatsky here simply inherited and used the word in this common Western sense.

²⁶⁶ In Blavatsky's first occult article 'A Few Questions to "HIRAF"', published in the *Spiritual Scientist* 15 and 22 July 1875 (about 5 months later) she refers quite strongly to the East as 'that cradle of occultism', HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiraḥ', in HPBCW, I (1988), 101-119 (p. 103) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-7); and she further writes that 'I will say from personal knowledge that such places [initiatory brotherhoods] there are in the East—in India, Asia Minor' HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiraḥ', in HPBCW, I, 103 [brackets are mine], see also 104-105, 106, 116.

Blavatsky's presumed second usage of the word 'Theosophy' is found in a short undated letter to her sister Vera P. de Zhelihovsky (1835-1896).

Humanity has lost its faith and its higher ideals; materialism and pseudo-science have slain them. The children of this age have no longer faith; they demand proof, proof founded on a scientific basis—and they shall have it. Theosophy, the source of all human religions, will give it to them.²⁶⁷

Here Blavatsky employed the word 'Theosophy' in a very specific sense as 'the source of all human religions'. This meaning had not been given to the word prior to Blavatsky and was later to become one of Blavatsky's preferred connotations (see section 2.1.4 below and see also chapter 2.2). To some extent it is, however, for the following reasons doubtful if this letter actually was written in late 1875 or a bit later as the editors of *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky* (2003) suggest²⁶⁸: The original letter in Russian is unavailable and undated wherefore the letter is copied from *Lucifer* 15 December 1894, p. 274; secondly it is worth noting that following her two initial and unpublished usages of 'Theosophy' quoted above, Blavatsky, in fact, only used the word 'Theosophy' about six times prior to 1878.²⁶⁹ Three times in unpublished sources in relation to the 'Theosophical Society' and its objects and another three times all of which are found in *Isis Unveiled* (1877), and even here the word is not used in any new or significant manner as in 'Letter 58'. The three instances in *Isis*

²⁶⁷ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 58', p. 201.

²⁶⁸ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 58', p. 201.

²⁶⁹ These instances are in (late 1875-1876), *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 63', p. 217; (late 1877), *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 104', p. 395 and in a very short note in her *Scrapbook*, IV, p. 79 where she used the word 'Theosophy' in an unspecific meaning, but most probably in relation to the Theosophical Society. The note is a response to a positive (pre)review of *Isis Unveiled* in the journal *Banner of Light* 8 September 1877, HPB, 'H.P.B's Scrapbook', in HPBCW, I (1988), 260 (unpubl., IV (1877), 79). HPB also uses 'Theosophical' a few times prior to 1878, but in all except one instance it is in relation to 'The Theosophical Society'. The exception is in the title 'A Theosophical Tale' from January 1876 in HPB, 'The Luminous Circle', in HPBCW, I (1988), 177-86 (p. 177) (first publ. in *The Sun*, XLIII, 111 (1876)). In July 1877 she makes use of 'Theosophist' once: *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 88', p. 321; and in 'Letter 110' she employs 'theosophically' once, *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 110', p. 401. From 1878 and on she also used the word a few times in various connections until her first major conceptualization of the term in 1879—see below.

Unveiled are:

Thus Theology has disfigured ancient Theosophy, and Science ancient Philosophy.²⁷⁰

Proclus, who "elaborated the entire theosophy and theurgy of his predecessors into a complete system," according to Professor Wilder.²⁷¹

But when the theurgists of the third Neo-platonic school, deprived of their ancient Mysteries, strove to blend the doctrines of Plato with those of Aristotle, and by combining the two philosophies added to their theosophy the primeval doctrines of the Oriental *Kabala*, then the Christians from rivals became persecutors.²⁷²

In these three usages of the word Blavatsky simply adopted the ancient neo-Platonic associations of the term from Alexander Wilder whose work, including *New Platonism and Alchemy: A Sketch of the Eclectic Philosophy of the Alexandrian School* (1869), Blavatsky used in *Isis Unveiled*.²⁷³ Wilder, himself, even edited and wrote a part of *Isis Unveiled*, as he was the editor assigned to the book by J. W. Bouton, the publisher.²⁷⁴

Thus, if 'Letter 58' belongs to a later date, which is probable, Blavatsky only used the word 'Theosophy' four times between 1874-1878 with a connotation, which she inherited from common usages during the time.²⁷⁵ Only

²⁷⁰ H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877), I, 13.

²⁷¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 489.

²⁷² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 34.

²⁷³ See appendix 1 to this thesis.

²⁷⁴ See Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987) pp. 119-124; Boris de Zirkoff, 'Introductory: How "Isis Unveiled" was Written' in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings 1877: Isis Unveiled*, new edn, rev. and cor. with add. mat. (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972), 1-61, (pp. 16, 46, 51-52).

²⁷⁵ Blavatsky did, however, already talk about a 'cradle of occultism' at the time (July 1875), HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 103; and 'the primeval sources of all religions' (Vedas-India and Hermes-Egypt) was mentioned in H. S. Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society', delivered 17 November 1875, <www.theosophical.ca/adyar_pamphlets/AdyarPamphlet_No150.pdf> [accessed on 13 January 2011] but if she used the word 'Theosophy' in this specific new sense to her sister why did she not publish anything the like

after 1878 did she conceptualize her own idea of the term, at least publicly, in a couple of important articles (see section 2.1.4 below).

2.1.3 The formation of the ‘Theosophical Society’

17 November 1875 is generally recognized as the official date for the inauguration of the ‘Theosophical Society’, but why was the society named the ‘Theosophical’ Society and who suggested the word?²⁷⁶

In his *Old Diary Leaves* Olcott recalled the selection of the word ‘Theosophical’ at a pre-formation gathering 13 September 1875:

The choice of a name for the society was, of course, a question of grave discussion in Committee. Several were suggested, among them, if I recollect right, the Egyptological, the Hermetic, the Rosicrucian, etc., but none seemed just the thing. At last, in turning over the leaves of the Dictionary, one of us came across the word “Theosophy,” whereupon, after discussion, we unanimously agreed that was the best of all; since it both expressed the esoteric truth we wished to reach and covered the ground of Felt's methods of scientific research.²⁷⁷

The events leading up to the selection of the word began with a group of significant people in the spiritualist and occult milieu who had gathered on 7 September 1875 at 46 Irving Place, New York—Blavatsky's place of residence at the time—to listen to George Henry Felt's (1831-1895) lecture on ‘The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians’. Felt recounted the secrets of Egyptian

before much later?

²⁷⁶ This is not the place to examine the reasons and details of the formation of the Theosophical Society. This short section will focus on why the name ‘Theosophical’ was chosen for the society.

²⁷⁷ Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002) [1895], I, 132. For more details on the choice of the word Theosophy/Theosophical see Quaestor Vitae, ‘The Real Origin of the Theosophical Society’, *Theosophical History*, 1, 7 (July 1986), 177-87; James A. Santucci, ‘Theosophy, *Theosophia*’, *The American Theosophist*, Special Issue (Autumn 1987) 333-36; John Algeo, ‘Review on H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement’, *Theosophical History*, IV, 6-7 (April-July 1993), 223-29; James A. Santucci, ‘Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society’, in *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, ed. by Richard Caron and others, *Gnostica*, 3 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2001), pp. 471-89.

architecture and hieroglyphics, but he also argued that a series of animated beings (elementals) exist in the evolution of species, which are invisible to us but which he could make visible by chemical means, just as the ancient Egyptian priests had done.²⁷⁸

Olcott was so inspired by Felt's paper that he suggested that a society be formed to investigate the occult ideas and phenomena Felt had talked about.²⁷⁹ The next day, 8 September, 16 people signed their names in agreement to found and belong to a society that would investigate the ideas talked about the previous evening.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ On Felt and his lecture see: Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 85; James A. Santucci, 'Forgotten Magi: George Henry Felt and Ezekiel Perkins', in *Le défi magique*, ed. by François Laplantine, (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1994), pp. 131-42; Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 113-20, 126-33; Boris de Zirkoff, 'General Bibliography', in HPBCW, I (1988), 443-538 (p. 463); Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 26-27; John Patrick Deveney, *Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society*, Theosophical History Occasional Papers, 6 (Fullerton, CA: Theosophical History, 1997), pp. 58-60; see also the foreword by James Santucci.

²⁷⁹ See Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 119-20. A controversy exists as to whether Olcott, Blavatsky, the mahatmas, or perhaps Henry J. Newton was the one to come up with the idea for founding the Theosophical Society; see Blavatsky's statement in HPB, 'H.P.B.'s Scrapbook', in HPBCW, I (1988) 94 (unpubl., I (July 1875), 58); HPB, 'Original Programme', in HPBCW, VII (1987), 145-75 (p. 145) (unpubl. manuscript, (1886)); *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 55', p. 195; HPB, 'H.P.B.'s Scrapbook', in HPBCW, I, 260. On the formation, see also William Quan Judge, *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*, comp. by Dara Eklund, 3 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 1975-87), II, 197; see Dara Eklund and James A. Santucci, 'Communications', *Theosophical History* 7, 1 (January 1998), 9-15; James A. Santucci, *Theosophy and the Theosophical Society* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1985), pp. 4-6; Vitae, 'The Real Origin of the Theosophical Society', pp. 177-87; see also the often overlooked but important remarks in *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, ed. by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1987 [first publ. 1877]), p. 731 in which Mackenzie states 'Theosophical Society of New York.— Formed in 1875 by Colonel Olcott and others, for the scientific investigation of so-called occult phenomena, such as magic, white and black; astrology, alchemy, Hermeticism, and the like. Similar to modern scientific societies, it is open to both sexes.'

²⁸⁰ For a list of the 16 founding members see Gomes, *The Dawning of the*

This brings us to the next meeting, 13 September, the meeting mentioned by Olcott above, where the discussion of a name for the society was settled.

At this time several words with esoteric implications were in the air to choose from. Theosophy was one such word with a popular meaning similar to the supernatural, occultism, Hermeticism, Rosicrucian, mysticism, cabalism, alchemists, occult sciences and magic. These words were generally associated with the extraordinary phenomena, rumors and superstitions of the Middle Ages or in more learned circles with the Christian mystics/theosophists and neo-Platonists throughout Western history. The German physician and scholar Joseph Ennemoser's (1787-1854) encyclopedic *History of Magic* (1854 translated by Wm. Howitt, first published in German as *Geschichte der Magie*, 1844) is one example of a work, which was widely read at the time. Another widely read work was W. Howitt's (1792-1879) own book *History of the Supernatural* (2 vols, London 1863). Both books were extensively used by Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (see appendix I) and also appear to have been used in the construction of the 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society' by H.S. Olcott, delivered 17 November 1875.

The person responsible for turning the pages in the dictionary and landing on the word 'Theosophy', mentioned by Olcott above, is generally regarded as the bookseller and biographer Charles Sotheran (1947-1902) who delivered a paper entitled 'Ancient Theosophy or Spiritism in the Past' on 1 December 1875 to the newborn society which greatly contributed to the early Society's and Blavatsky's conceptualization of 'Theosophy'.²⁸¹

It is not known which dictionary was used, but the theosophical historian Michael Gomes, has examined Olcott's own *Webster's American Dictionary* (1868, signed by Olcott 1872 and now held in Adyar). The definition of Theosophy found therein is as follows:

Theosophical Movement, p. 86.

²⁸¹ See Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', pp. 474-86; see Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 87.

Supposed intercourse with God and superior spirits, and consequent attainment of superhuman knowledge by physical processes, as by the theurgic operations of some ancient Platonists, or by chemical processes of the German fire philosophers; or as a direct, as distinguished from revealed knowledge of God, supposed to be attained by extraordinary illumination; specially, a direct insight into the processes of the divine mind, and the interior relations of the divine nature.²⁸²

This definition presumably played a role in the founding members' understanding and use of the word, which can be seen reflected in the first 'Preamble and By-laws of the Theosophical Society' dated 30 October 1875.

The title of the Theosophical Society explains the objects and desires of its founders: they seek "to obtain knowledge of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Power and of the higher spirits *by the aid of physical processes.*" In other words, they hope, that by going deeper than modern science has hitherto done, into the esoteric philosophies of ancient times, they may be enabled to obtain, for themselves and other investigators, proof of the existence of an "Unseen Universe," the nature of its inhabitants, if such there be, and the laws which govern them and their relations with mankind.²⁸³

Here the inspiration of Felt's lecture is reflected in the 'objects' of the Theosophical Society. Felt had promised that he could bring forth to visible appearance otherwise unseen beings and that he had discovered this by studying ancient knowledge. This is presumably why the word 'Theosophy' was chosen, as it best captured the wish to investigate, produce and prove the nature of occult phenomena by 'physical or chemical processes' and through knowledge of ancient mysteries rather than through modern spiritualistic means.

This theme and use of the words 'Theosophy/Theosophical' inspired by Felt's lecture and of course based on the knowledge possessed by the founding members is continued in the 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of the

²⁸² *Webster's American Dictionary*, 1868, p. 1373 in Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 87; HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II (1967), 87-97 (p. 87) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 2-5); and Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 9-10, as the exact same quote from Webster is referred to and commented on by Blavatsky.

²⁸³ 'Preamble and By-laws of the Theosophical Society' 30 October 1875 (rep. in *The Theosophical Forum*, September 1947), 515-18. In the above quote is the first formulation of the object(s) of the Theosophical Society. The objects of the T.S. were however reformulated many times during Blavatsky's lifetime in 1879, 1881, 1882, 1886 and 1888.

Theosophical Society' by H.S. Olcott, delivered on 17 November 1875, in which Olcott compares the establishment of the Theosophical Society to the ancient schools of the neo-Platonists who used theurgy to produce phenomena, or as he stated: 'They believed in elementary spirits, whom they evoked and controlled—a point of especial interest to us.'²⁸⁴ Olcott thus gave the distinct impression that the Theosophical Society would seek and explore ancient knowledge, the 'unseen universe' and test occult phenomena. According to Olcott, this last point distinguishes the modern Theosophical Society (1875) from former Theosophists, because they, as Olcott stated 'had dogmas to impart, which under our by-laws we have not; and, further, they were all believers in Theosophy, while we are, with two or three exceptions, simply investigators, undertaking a task far more difficult than theirs, since we have no ready-made material for belief at our hand, but must create it for ourselves.'²⁸⁵ Olcott was himself 'a believer in Theosophy, theoretical and practical',²⁸⁶ but he emphasized a strong modern empirical or experimental approach to what he termed 'alleged Theosophic discoveries' and stated,

here is where Mr Felt's alleged discoveries will come into play. Without claiming to be a theurgist, a mesmerist, or a Spiritualist, our Vice President promises, by simple chemical appliances, to exhibit to us, as he has to others before, the races of beings which, invisible to our eyes, people the elements. Think for a moment of this astounding claim!²⁸⁷

This practical dimension is also coupled with the future destiny of the Society.

The day of reckoning is close at hand, and the name of the Theosophical Society will, if Mr Felt's experiments result favourably, hold its place in history as that of the body which first exhibited the "Elementary Spirits" in this nineteenth century of conceit and infidelity, even if it be never mentioned for any other reason.²⁸⁸

It seems that such experiments with the 'unseen universe', based on ancient esoteric knowledge—practiced in a modern empirical fashion—was the new primary and initial meaning applied to the word Theosophy/Theosophical in

²⁸⁴ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of T.S.'

²⁸⁵ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of T.S.'

²⁸⁶ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of T.S.'

²⁸⁷ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of T.S.'

²⁸⁸ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of T.S.'

relation to the objects of the Theosophical Society.²⁸⁹ The inherited neo-Platonic associations of the word were retained, but the Christian theosophical current was not present here to any significant extent presumably because of Olcott's and Blavatsky's sparse knowledge about that tradition during this early period of The Theosophical Society.²⁹⁰ The Theosophical Society was largely to be a society to test and examine occult phenomena of both a physical and spiritual nature based on secret ancient knowledge in contrast to what was viewed as the often naïve uncontrollable and fraudulent phenomena associated with modern spiritualism. This distinction they initially sought to imply by the wording 'The Theosophical Society.'

²⁸⁹ On the practical dimension of the early society see Deveney, *Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double*; see also *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, ed. by Mackenzie, p. 731; Judge, *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*, II, 197.

²⁹⁰ Blavatsky's first references to Jacob Böhme (Boehme, Boehmen) are, for example, first briefly made, thrice, in Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (1877) where one of them is in a quote from Charles Sotheran, see Blavatsky *Isis Unveiled*, I, 221, see also xxxvii; II, 390. In her defining article HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 94 from 1879 Böhme is mentioned again and from thereon gets occasional mention (under the spelling Jacob Boehme and Jacob Böhme). Blavatsky's most extensive account of him is found in H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), p. 60, see also pages 328-29 for the influence of the Christian Theosophists on Blavatsky's definition of 'Theosophists.' William W. Quinn Jr. has, among others, distinguished between 'Theosophia Antiqua' and 'Modern Theosophy'. Quinn argued: (1) that the [etic] term 'Theosophia Antiqua' includes all currents he thought were related to the concept from antiquity up to the time of Blavatsky including as wide a scope as the ancient *Upanishads* and Jacob Boehme and (2) that the [etic] term 'Modern Theosophy' should be used to refer to the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky's Theosophy and later modern Theosophists, see William W. Quinn, Jr., *The Only Tradition* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), pp. 93-102, 102-108. James Santucci has, however, confirmed, based on Antoine Faivre's definitions of Christian theosophy, that the relation between so-called 'Modern Theosophy' and earlier forms of 'theosophy' is less clear-cut. According to Santucci the word retained some of its semantic content when first used by the modern Theosophists (especially as a concept that could embrace the connotations of similar words such as magic and occultism), but that the modern Theosophists also defined the term in their own ways (esp. from the eighteen-eighties and nineties), see Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', pp. 473, 489.

2.1.4 Blavatsky's conceptualization of Theosophy

It was not until 1879, four years after the inauguration of the Theosophical Society, that Blavatsky began conceptualizing her idea of 'Theosophy' to the public in her two important articles 'What is Theosophy?' and 'What are the Theosophists?'. This conceptualization should be viewed in conjunction with the launch of the first Theosophical journal *The Theosophist* on 1 October 1879 wherein both articles appeared. The main object of the two articles was to clear up the confusion and opposition, which had spread among spiritualists, Hindus, Christians, and even among Theosophists themselves as to what 'Theosophy' is and who the 'Theosophists' actually are.²⁹¹

The content of the two articles is rich. Specific themes, which continued to be the central elements of her definition throughout her life, will, however, be drawn forth here. These elements are: 1. the neo-Platonic roots; 2. the Wisdom-Religion; 3. the transcendental psychology and divine inspiration; 4. the practical Theosophy, divine ethics and universal brotherhood; and 5. the secrets of nature. It will also be demonstrated below that Blavatsky's construction of Theosophy or her various usages of the word relates to various ontological modalities, namely: 1. absolute or a-historical; 2. historical; and 3. practical.

The following analysis of the primary themes in Blavatsky's construction of Theosophy will thus take the two above-mentioned articles as its point of departure, follow the changes in her conceptualization over time, show that Blavatsky retained these themes throughout her later discussions of Theosophy and demonstrate that her construction operated on three distinct ontological levels.

Close source-analysis of the first two articles reveals that Blavatsky especially made use of: Alexander Wilder's *New Platonism and Alchemy* (1869); Robert Alfred Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics* (1856); Kenneth Mackenzie's, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*; ideas developed in *Isis Unveiled* (1877); Oriental notions from the works of authors such as Sir William Jones;

²⁹¹ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 87. HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II (1967), 98-106 (p. 105) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 5-7).

Max Müller; Émile-Louis Burnouf; Henry Thomas Colebrooke; Martin Haug; J. Barthélémy de Saint-Hilaire; and the naturalist and spiritualist Alfred R. Wallace (see appendix I for details).

2.1.4.1 Neo-Platonic roots and etymological definition of the term

As shown above, the original neo-Platonic association of the word theosophy goes back to Blavatsky's pre-1879 use of the term. In her article 'What is Theosophy?' Blavatsky opened with this association and adds a few more details.

According to lexicographers, the term *theosophia* is composed of two Greek words—*theos*, “god,” and *sophos*, “wise.” So far, correct.²⁹²

Blavatsky finds this correct, but dislikes Webster's general definition of theosophy (Webster's definition was quoted above and Blavatsky's critique will be discussed below 2.1.4.3).

In relation to her critique of Webster, she adds the names of the 'Egyptian Hierophant' Pot-Amun²⁹³ and the neo-Platonists Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyry and Proclus. She talks of them as founders and exponents of 'the Eclectic theosophical system' and of Ammonius Saccas' object being to

prove a primitive system of Theosophy, which at the beginning was essentially alike in all countries,²⁹⁴

This object Blavatsky found so important that she, in her next article 'What are the Theosophists?' (1879), wrote

While, as observed, one of our objects [studying occult phenomena], it yet is but one of many; the most important of which is to revive the work of Ammonius Saccas ...,²⁹⁵

²⁹² HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 87.

²⁹³ For information of Pot-Amun see Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 3; Jean-Louis Siémons, *Ammonius Saccas and His "Eclectic Philosophy" as presented by Alexander Wilder*, Theosophical History Occasional Papers, ed. by James Santucci, III (Fullerton, CA, 1994), p. 14.

²⁹⁴ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 88.

²⁹⁵ HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 100.

Blavatsky conceived the object of Ammonius Saccas to be to harmonize all religions and thus all nations. This emphasis on the neo-Platonic roots does not mean that only neo-Platonic associations were important to Blavatsky's conceptualization, as other philosophies and religions were clearly also important to her at this point,²⁹⁶ but that she did inherit the neo-Platonic associations of the word Theosophy.

These neo-Platonic roots and the notion of an 'Eclectic theosophical system' or a 'primitive system of Theosophy' were clearly derived directly from Alexander Wilder's *New Platonism and Alchemy* (1869). In his book Wilder used the word Theosophy seven times and, as shown by Jean-Louis Siémons, the way Wilder made use of the term was two-fold. One way was with reference to specific systems such as Philaletheian Theosophy²⁹⁷ and the Theosophy of the eclectics.²⁹⁸ The neo-Platonists themselves used the word in this specific way, but Wilder also used the term in a much more general sense which is precisely or nearly verbatim how Blavatsky used it (see quote above).

The first proposition set forth by Ammonius was that of a primeval system of theosophy ... which was alike, at first, in all countries. [and] All the old worships indicate the existence of a single theosophy anterior to them.²⁹⁹

Siémons has shown that Wilder presumably used this sense of the word Theosophy as an elaborated notion of what the Platonist translator Thomas Taylor (1758-1835) and Wilder himself on other occasions had termed *Sophia* or (Divine-) Wisdom (of the ancients).³⁰⁰ As will be shown below both Wilder and Blavatsky were however in relation to this designation (Wisdom) also, and perhaps more immediately so, inspired by Godfrey Higgins' (1772-1833) thesis of the 'Divine Wisdom' of the ancients.

²⁹⁶ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 89, 91-4, 96; HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 99, 104.

²⁹⁷ Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 9; Siémons, *Ammonius Saccas*, p. 18.

²⁹⁸ Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 17; Siémons, *Ammonius Saccas*, p. 18.

²⁹⁹ Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 4.

³⁰⁰ Siémons, *Ammonius Saccas*, p. 18.

In *The Key to Theosophy* (1889), which to a great extent summarizes Blavatsky's ideas in a popular form, Blavatsky correlated the term 'Divine Wisdom' with the term Theosophy or with the original Greek term 'Theosophia' in the following manner:

The word theos means a god in Greek, one of the divine beings, certainly not "God" in the sense attached in our day to the term. Therefore, it is not "Wisdom of God," as translated by some, but Divine Wisdom such as that possessed by the gods.³⁰¹

This basic notion of Theosophy as 'Divine Wisdom' was expressed in HPB's writings as early as August-November 1880 in response to Monsieur Charles Fauvety (President of the Society for Psychological Studies, Paris) entitled 'Qu'est-ce Que La Théosophie?' or 'What is Theosophy?'

The Theosophical Society, then, does not derive its name from the Greek word *Theosophia*, composed of the two words "God" and "wisdom" taken in the dead letter, but rather in the spiritual sense of the term. It is the Society for searching into *Divine Wisdom*, occult or spiritual wisdom which, while hardly yielding itself either to the crucible of an entirely physical science, or to the investigation of the materialist, lies, however, at the foundation of everything, material or immaterial, because it is the *omega* or last word of creation, or rather of the evolution of every form, of every idea, even the most abstract.³⁰²

This shows that between 1880 and the end of her life (1891) Blavatsky, in the most general etymological sense of the word, consistently conceived of Theosophy as a totalizing 'Divine Wisdom', 'the Wisdom of the gods' or the Wisdom 'possessed by the gods'. This equally counts for her narrative of the neo-Platonic origins of the term. As late as 1889 in *The Key to Theosophy* Blavatsky still strongly relied on Alexander Wilder in her exposition of the neo-Platonic origins of the word and its basic meaning.³⁰³

³⁰¹ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 1. This indicates a consistency in Blavatsky's definition of the term because every time she gives a basic definition of the term 'Theosophy' she gives 'Divine Wisdom' or 'the wisdom of the gods'. For other instances of the correlation between Theosophy and Divine Wisdom see below.

³⁰² HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II (1967), 500-507 (first publ. in *La Revue Spirite* (1880), as QU'EST-CE QUE LA THÉOSOPHIE?)

³⁰³ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 1-3.

It comes to us from the Alexandrian philosophers, called lovers of truth, Philaletheians, from $\phi\iota\lambda$ (*phil*) "loving," and $\alpha\lambda\acute{\eta}\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ (*aletheia*) "truth." The name Theosophy dates from the third century of our era, and began with Ammonius Saccas and his disciples, who started the Eclectic Theosophical system.³⁰⁴

The neo-Platonic roots of the term clearly relates to the historical ontological level, but 'Divine Wisdom', as will be shown below relates to an abstract level.

2.1.4.2 The Wisdom-Religion

Blavatsky's article 'What is Theosophy?' is the first instance in which her concept of a 'Wisdom-Religion' is directly correlated with 'Theosophy'.

Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization.³⁰⁵

The 'Wisdom-Religion' is a concept first developed by Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and elaborated on throughout her life as one of her most important concerns. While the wording 'Wisdom-Religion' and its direct correlation with the term 'Theosophy' is new with Blavatsky, the idea was clearly first conceptualized extensively by Godfrey Higgins in his major two-volume work *Anacalypsis An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions* (1833-1836). In this work Higgins argued that he had discovered that in antiquity nearly all nations had a common secret doctrine, which was hidden from the masses. This secret doctrine was a system centred on 'Wisdom', which he at times called 'Divine Wisdom' or the incarnating logos.³⁰⁶ There is evidence to show that Blavatsky read the said work at an early date and found it very useful. In a letter to H. P. Corson, assumed to date from October 13 -16 1875, Blavatsky wrote:

³⁰⁴ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 1-2. Compare with Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy*, pp. 3-4.

³⁰⁵ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 89.

³⁰⁶ Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions*, 2 vols (New York: Macy-Masius Publishers, 1927 [1833-1836]), I, pp. xx-xxi, 187-90, 204, 234, 308, 444, 518, 533, 629, 699, 700, 731-33, 755, 786, 796, 807, 808, 822, 825; II, 128, 307, 343, 441.

I am nailed up like a slave to my chair writing all day as I did in your place. I have found some very precious rare works at Mr Ditson, like B. Higgins' *Anacalypsis* for instance, and its very useful to me.³⁰⁷

All the themes and exact wording developed by Higgins were used by Blavatsky, as will be evident below. In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky introduced the importance of the concept 'Wisdom-Religion' already in its first pages,

Our work, then is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology.³⁰⁸

The idea here presented is that the so-called ancient 'Wisdom-Religion' or 'Hermetic philosophy' is an ancient esoteric wisdom and that it is the only solution to reconciling the conflict in the nineteenth-century between science and religion.³⁰⁹ Blavatsky's project was to revive this ancient wisdom—a project she continued in her second major work *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) 'The aim of this work may be thus stated: to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring'³¹⁰ It should be noted that Higgins was not interested in reviving the secret doctrine like Blavatsky, but rather in

³⁰⁷ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 57', p. 197.

³⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. vii.

³⁰⁹ Blavatsky used the term 'hermetic' in a number of ways. She used it in reference to the *Hermetica*, which she was already familiar with in *Isis Unveiled*, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 15-16, 255, 407, 551, 574, 613-614, 623-26; II, 50, 298. Blavatsky also used the term in reference to the hermetic tradition of the alchemists or 'hermetic philosophers' who wrote during the Middle ages and during the Renaissance, which was a common use of the word during the time, see Blavatsky *Isis Unveiled*, I, xxv, 306, 413, 504, etc.; *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Western Esoteric Masters Series (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 103-106. Finally, Blavatsky used the term in a very broad sense as a reference to universal secret wisdom, see for example *Isis Unveiled*, I, xxii; HPB, 'Eastern and Western Occultism' in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 232-45 (p. 233) (first publ. in H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, III (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1897). Since the word is directly correlated with the Wisdom-Religion in the quote above, it is possible that it was used in this broad sense, yet still retaining the Egyptian and Western esoteric quality otherwise associated with the word.

³¹⁰ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 2 vols (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1888), I, p. viii.

revealing its existence as he somewhat disliked the idea of priests keeping wisdom secret.

In relation to the development of Blavatsky's ideas, the 'Wisdom-Religion' was, already in *Isis Unveiled*, presented as the primeval source from which all the world-religions derived their ideas³¹¹ and was also presented as the profoundest of all philosophies.³¹² It seems to constitute certain sacred books³¹³ (unless this is to be understood metaphorically, as the true wisdom of mankind); it has true doctrines;³¹⁴ it was and is kept secret,³¹⁵ but still studied among initiates in the Orient;³¹⁶ it is somewhat identical to esoteric Buddhism³¹⁷ and its first traces in known history can be found in what Blavatsky termed pre-Vedic Brahmanism, which she also links with a pre-schismatic Zoroastrianism in India and simultaneously claims to be identical to the secret doctrines of the 'Magi', the 'Chaldean kabalists', the 'Jewish Nazars' and the 'hierophants of the Egyptian Thoth or Hermes.'³¹⁸

Blavatsky in her concluding remarks in *Isis Unveiled* summed up her stance with regard to the Wisdom-Religion:

Our examination of the multitudinous religious faiths that mankind, early and late, have professed, most assuredly indicates that they have all been derived from one primitive source [i.e. the wisdom-religion]. ... As the white ray of light is decomposed by the prism into the various colors of the solar spectrum, so the beam of divine truth [i.e. presumably the wisdom-religion], in passing through the three-sided prism of man's nature, has been broken up into vari-colored fragments called RELIGIONS. And, as the rays of the spectrum, by imperceptible shadings, merge into each other, so the great theologies that have appeared at different degrees of divergence from the original source, have been connected by minor schisms, schools, and off-shoots from the one side or the other. Combined, their aggregate represents one eternal

³¹¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 216. This idea is also found in *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 58', p. 201.

³¹² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 39.

³¹³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 417.

³¹⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 457.

³¹⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 289.

³¹⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 392.

³¹⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 142.

³¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 39, 142.

truth [i.e. the wisdom-religion]; separate, they are but shades of human error and the signs of imperfection.³¹⁹

The above was Blavatsky's first conceptualization of the Wisdom-Religion, which she from 1879 and onwards directly correlated with Theosophy. While the typology of a *Prisca Theologia* is ancient, the term Wisdom-Religion is, as mentioned, new with Blavatsky. As a correlate with Theosophy the idea of a Wisdom-Religion or a universal source and *harmonia* of all religions was, however, to some extent already present in the *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia* as shown earlier and in Alexander Wilder's exposition of the term (as quoted above).

After *Isis Unveiled*, in her first two articles she furthermore presented the Wisdom-Religion in the following manner:

This "Wisdom" all the old writings show us as an emanation of the divine Principle; and the clear comprehension of it is typified in such names as the Indian Budha, the Babylonian Nebo, the Thoth of Memphis, the Hermes of Greece; in the appellations, also, of some goddesses—Metis, Neitha, Athena, the Gnostic *Sophia*, and finally—the *Vedas*, from the word "to know."³²⁰

Here Theosophy or the Wisdom-Religion is furthermore presented as an abstract divine principle of Wisdom or 'Divine Wisdom' found under various names used by the ancients.

This indicates a double modality in Blavatsky's presentation of the Wisdom-Religion/Theosophy in which she presents a historically present wisdom-religion, which can be historically traced and which has, in secrecy, been handed down through the ages, as well as an abstract universal wisdom, which is a divine principle.

2.1.4.2.1 The Abstract Theosophy, Wisdom-Religion or 'Divine Wisdom'

As mentioned there is often a subtle distinction or reference in Blavatsky's use

³¹⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 639 [brackets are mine]. Compare with HPB, 'Editor's Note to "Drama of the Latter Days"', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 183 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 6(54) (1884), 149-50); HPB, 'Neo-Buddhism', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 334-49 (p. 347) (unpubl. article (1890)); Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 58.

³²⁰ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 89.

of the concepts Theosophy, Wisdom-Religion and Divine Wisdom to either an abstract a-historical Truth or a historical tradition or historical source of wisdom.³²¹ When Blavatsky referred to an abstract, a-historical Wisdom she most often used the designation 'Divine Wisdom', but this term also in itself holds subtle reference to Truth; a divine entity/emanation and the wisdom of the higher self in man.

The correlation between Theosophy and 'Divine Wisdom' with Truth is clearly stated, as follows:

Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom or TRUTH [April 1891]³²²

The distinction between an abstract modality and a historical is also clearly stated in the following from *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) that sums up the stance:

Theosophy, in its abstract meaning, is Divine Wisdom, or the aggregate of the knowledge and wisdom that underlie the Universe -- the homogeneity of eternal GOOD; and in its concrete sense it is the sum total of the same as allotted to man by nature, on this earth, and no more.³²³

Here it appears that the designation 'Divine Wisdom' is Theosophy in its abstract sense. This Divine Wisdom is eternal Truth or as stated in one of the Mahatma letters:

Buddhism, stripped of its superstitions, is eternal truth, and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theos-Sophia, Divine Wisdom, which is a synonym of truth.³²⁴

³²¹ For a discussion of the relation between Blavatsky's Wisdom-Religion and the concept *Prisca Theologia* see chapter 2.2. 'Blavatsky's Discourse for Ancient Knowledge' in the present thesis.

³²² HPB, 'The Negators of Science', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 138-51 (p. 148) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VIII (1891), 89-98) *brackets mine*; see also HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X (1988), 159-74 (p. 169) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 15 (1888), 177-87).

³²³ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 56. For this distinction see also HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 165.

³²⁴ *Letters from The Masters of the Wisdom 1881-1888*, ed. by C. Jinarājadāsa, (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919), 'Letter 1', 1881, pp. 3-4.

Truth is ‘the knowledge and wisdom that underlie the Universe’³²⁵ or as Blavatsky elsewhere stated:

The “beacon-light” of Truth is nature without the illusory veil of the senses. It can be reached only when the adept has become absolute master of his personal self, able to control all his physical and psychic senses by the aid of his “seventh sense,” through which he is gifted also with the true wisdom of the gods—*Theo-sophia*.³²⁶

For what is “Divine Wisdom,” or *Gnosis*, but the essential reality behind the evanescent appearances of objects in nature—the very soul of the manifested LOGOS?³²⁷

According to Blavatsky there is thus an abstract Theosophy or Divine Wisdom, which is eternal Truth or reality, as it is in itself, beyond phenomena or beyond how it appears to our senses.

Blavatsky first used the concept ‘Divine Wisdom’ in *Isis Unveiled* and her next mention of it is in her article ‘What is Theosophy?’ (1879).³²⁸ Here her idea of an abstract ‘Divine Wisdom’ was inherited from Godfrey Higgins as a divine entity or emanation (quoted above) but it was not used again in any elaborate manner until *The Secret Doctrine* in which Blavatsky continuously applied and developed the idea. As mentioned earlier, ‘Theosophy’ was hardly used in *Isis Unveiled* and this also applies to *The Secret Doctrine*. The term Wisdom-Religion was used more often than Theosophy in both her works (9 times in the S.D.), but ‘Divine Wisdom’ was used more frequently than both the other terms combined, in terms of a divine emanation or entity.

In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky wrote:

³²⁵ See Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 56 quoted above.

³²⁶ HPB, ‘The Beacon of the Unknown’, in HPBCW, XI (1973), 248-83 (p. 249) (first publ. in *La Revue Théosophique*, I, 3,4,5,6 (1889), 1-6, trans. from the French).

³²⁷ HPB, ‘The Esoteric Character of the Gospels’, in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 172-84 (p. 177) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 3 (1887), 173-80).

³²⁸ Blavatsky did, however, already in October 1877 use the word ‘Divine Truth’ in relation to a Universal wisdom, *The Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 92’, pp. 343-4. Her first use of the word was in April 1875, HPB, ‘Who Fabricates?’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 75-83 (p. 78) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, II (1875), 44-5), but she never conceptualized the term in any extensive manner. See also Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 639.

With the Ophites and other Gnostics who took their models direct from more ancient originals, the unrevealed Bythos and her male counterpart produce Ennoia, and the three in their turn produce Sophia, thus completing the Tetraktys, which will emanate Christos, the very essence of the Father Spirit.

As the unrevealed One, or concealed Logos in its latent state, he has existed from all eternity in the Arba-II, the metaphysical abstraction; therefore, he is ONE with all others as a unity, the latter (including all) being indifferently termed Ennoia, Sigè (silence), Bythos, etc. As the revealed one, he is Androgyne, Christos, and Sophia (Divine Wisdom), who descend into the man Jesus.³²⁹

In these paragraphs 'Divine Wisdom' is equated with the revealed logos, Christos or Sophia, which descends into the realm of matter. In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky wrote along the same lines. Kurios, Mercury and the Egyptian Phta among others all represent the logos, which revealed itself as 'Divine Wisdom'.

Hence, born from it, the *Kurios* or Logos was, with the Greeks, the "God, mind" (*nous*). "Now Koros (*Kurios*) signifies the pure and unmixed nature of intellect—wisdom," says Plato in "Cratylus"; and Kurios is Mercury, the Divine Wisdom, and "mercury is the Sol" (Sun) ("*Arnobius*" vi., xii.), from whom Thot-Hermes received this divine Wisdom. [...] Even Æsculapius, called the "Saviour of all," is identical, according to ancient classics, with *Phta*, the Egyptian Creative Intellect (or Divine Wisdom), and with Apollo, Baal, Adonis and Hercules.³³⁰

These quotes among many in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*³³¹ equate with how Blavatsky presented Theosophy as a principle of 'Divine Wisdom' in her first conceptualization of it in 'What is Theosophy?' as quoted above.³³² This signification of Theosophy or 'Divine Wisdom' also shares some of the earlier common usages of the word Theosophy as related to divine inspiration (see section 2.1 above, see also more on this in section 2.1.4.3 below). In *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky indicated that Divine

³²⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 171-72.

³³⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 353. Blavatsky's source for this and much on 'Divine Wisdom' was S. F. Dunlap, *SŌD: The Mysteries of Adoni* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1861), pp. 23, 95.

³³¹ See the following references for 'Divine Wisdom' as a divine emanation or entity: Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 272, 298; II, 169, 172, 505; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 197, 353; II, 124, 230, 293.

³³² HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 89.

Wisdom descended on or inspired Jesus,³³³ Thoth-Hermes,³³⁴ the Kumaric Yogies³³⁵ and says 'It is the spirit of Divine Wisdom and chaste asceticism itself which incarnates in these Elect.'³³⁶

The third a-historical abstract sense of Theosophy or Divine Wisdom is Blavatsky's notion that the term correlates with the Higher Self in man or that we have the principle of 'Divine Wisdom' within us. She clearly expresses this for the first time in *The Secret Doctrine* and continues this theme in her following writings:

Now, "thy name" means the name of Christos, or Logos, or the spirit of true divine wisdom, as distinct from the spirit of intellectual or mere materialistic reasoning—the HIGHER SELF in short.³³⁷

For, divine Wisdom being diffused throughout the infinite Universe, and our impersonal HIGHER SELF being an integral part of it, the *atmic* light of the latter can be centred only in that which though eternal is still individualized— *i.e.*, the noëtic Principle, the manifested God within each rational being, or our Higher *Manas* at one with *Buddhi*.³³⁸

A distinction between the three abstract connotations of 'Divine Wisdom' can thus be delineated in Blavatsky's writings: Universal Truth; a Divine emanation/entity/principle; and the Higher Self's participation in 'Divine Wisdom'.

These three subtle distinctions, however, seem to have continued to produce confusion among Blavatsky's critics which in part was responsible for Blavatsky's further conceptualization of Theosophy or what from now on will be termed her second major conceptualization of Theosophy (1888-1889), especially in four articles 'Is Theosophy a Religion?' (November 1888,

³³³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 171-72.

³³⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 353.

³³⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 281-82.

³³⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 282.

³³⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 231n.

³³⁸ HPB, 'The Dual Aspect of Wisdom', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 309-320 (p. 313) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 37 (1890), 1-9); see also for further references Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 197, 459; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 282, 230-31n, 377. HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 249.

published around the time of *The Secret Doctrine* October-December 1888); 'Le Cycle Nouveau' ('The New Cycle') (May 1889) 'Le Phare De L'Inconnu' ('The Beacon of the Unknown') (May-August 1889); and 'Philosophers and Philosophicules' (October 1889), as well as, in the publication of *The Key to Theosophy* (July 1889).

Blavatsky especially sought to untangle the continuing problem: that she and the Theosophical Society had from the very beginning argued that Theosophy is without dogmas and open to truths in all religions, and on the other hand that she and the Society were more and more associated with certain specific occult doctrines and teachings, which critically resulted in calling The Theosophical Society a religion, a sect or a specific philosophy.³³⁹

Blavatsky therefore iterated that Theosophy in its abstract sense is universal Truth or 'Divine Wisdom' and in this capacity cannot be the property of any one person or society. A distinction should therefore be made between Theosophy/Truth and the Theosophical Society:

The two—Theosophy and the Theosophical Society—as a vessel and the *olla podrida* it contains, must not be confounded. One is, as an ideal, *divine* Wisdom, perfection itself; the other a poor, imperfect thing, trying to run *under*, if not *within*, its shadow on Earth.³⁴⁰

This abstract conception of Truth furthermore laid the basis for the motto of the society 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth'.³⁴¹ It should, however, be noted that Theosophy and the Theosophical Society became more and more

³³⁹ The original 'Preamble' of the Theosophical Society, 1875, already stated 'Whatever may be the private opinions of its members, the society has no dogmas to enforce, no creed to disseminate.' For other early references see also Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. vii, xlv; *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 92', p. 344. HPB, 'A Society Without a Dogma', in HPBCW, I (1988), 301-306 (p. 304) (first publ. in *The Spiritualist* (1878), 62-3); HPB, 'Fragments from Madame Blavatsky', in HPBCW, I (1988), 365-68 (p. 365) (first publ. in *The La Revue Spirite* (1878)); HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 100-101, 104-105; HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 504; For Blavatsky's 1888-1889 discussion see HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 160-1 and HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI, 431-2.

³⁴⁰ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 165.

³⁴¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xli.

associated with certain doctrines which, to some readers, was and can be confusing.³⁴²

Blavatsky had earlier responded to a charge of dogmatism in a technical metaphysical discussion with the Theosophist and Vedantian scholar T. Subba Row (1856-1890). Row raised the risk of dogmatism in relation to developing a specific occult classification of the constitution of man (1887)—largely as it was beginning to develop in Blavatsky's writings, his own writings and in 'Fragments of Occult Truth' (1881-1882) written by A. O. Hume and in *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883) written by A. P. Sinnett on the basis of the early *Mahatma Letters*.³⁴³ Blavatsky simply argued that the doctrines and teachings she expounded were not Theosophy in the abstract sense but the *Trans*-Himalayan esotericism into which she had been initiated.

Everyone is free in the Theosophical Society to give full expression to his own ideas—I among the rest; especially when I know that those views are those of *trans*-Himalayan esotericism, if not *cis*-Himalayan esoteric Brahmanism. To charge me on such grounds with dogmatism and a desire to evolve “an orthodox creed” ... is rather hard.³⁴⁴

No one is forced to accept my opinions or teachings in the Theosophical Society, one of the rules of which enforces only mutual tolerance for religious views.³⁴⁵

Thus the doctrines Blavatsky claimed to expound were according to her, specifically *trans*-Himalayan teachings.

³⁴² See for example HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 90-93; Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 39-226.

³⁴³ See T. Subba Row 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part I]', in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spiernburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 2001), II, 557-70 (p. 560) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII (1887). It is also worth noting that Anna Kingsford voiced a similar concern for the possible rise of dogmatism within the Theosophical Society in relation to the publication of Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* in 1883, see Alan Pert, *Red Cactus: The Life of Anna Kingsford* (Watsons Bay: Books & Writers, 2006), pp. 117-18. For a fuller discussion of Blavatsky's debate with Row and the schism with Kingsford, see chapter 2.6 'Blavatsky's Discourse for System' in the present thesis.

³⁴⁴ HPB, 'Re-classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII (1987), 345-51 (p. 346) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII, 95 (1887), 651-55).

³⁴⁵ HPB, 'Re-classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 351; see also HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 101.

Another point which became central to Blavatsky in relation to her late conceptualizing and elaboration of Theosophy in its abstract sense—and as a defence against the critics' claim of dogmatism—was the notion that Theosophy is not a religion, a science or a philosophy—but Religion, Science and Philosophy in the singular. This Blavatsky stated and sought to prove by placing Theosophy within the definitions of Philosophy at the time—: 'Theosophy is certainly not a philosophy, simply because it includes every philosophy as every science and religion.'³⁴⁶ She also argued that the statement "Theosophy is not a Religion" by no means excludes the fact that "Theosophy *is* Religion" thereby implying that Theosophy in its abstract sense is not a particular religion but the basis of all religions.³⁴⁷ The definition Blavatsky offered for Religion in singular was not a set of dogmas, but a bond uniting all men, and in its wider sense uniting everything in the universe.³⁴⁸

Blavatsky thus wanted to clarify her position by stating:

Thus, unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore becomes essentially Religion, and must be called in its integrity and universality by the distinctive name of Wisdom-Religion.³⁴⁹

The unity of all knowledge was important to Blavatsky and thus included in her conceptualization of Theosophy. This unity of all knowledge is particularly seen in her two major works *Isis Unveiled*, which was to be 'A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology' as its subtitle indicates; and *The Secret Doctrine*, which was conceived of as 'The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy' as its subtitle indicates.

2.1.4.2.2 The Historical Wisdom-Religion

The term Wisdom-Religion is most often used as a term for the first

³⁴⁶ HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI, 434.

³⁴⁷ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 161, 163.

³⁴⁸ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 161.

³⁴⁹ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 166-7, 171; HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 96; HPB, 'The Negators of Science', in HPBCW, XIII, 145.

manifestation of 'Divine Wisdom' in history, or the source of all religions. Since its first presentation as such in *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky, through the years, especially in *The Secret Doctrine*, developed an esoteric historiography,³⁵⁰ however scattered on numerous disjoint pages, of the historical origin, development, demise, nature and historical traces of the so called Wisdom-religion.³⁵¹

The idea of the Wisdom-religion as the source of all religions was, in addition to the already quoted above, presented in *Isis Unveiled* in the following manner.

As cycle succeeded cycle, and one nation after another came upon the world's stage to play its brief part in the majestic drama of human life, each new people evolved from ancestral traditions its own religion, giving it a local color, and stamping it with its individual characteristics. While each of these religions had its distinguishing traits, ... all preserved a common likeness to one prototype. This parent cult was none other than the primitive "wisdom-religion."³⁵²

In this quote the wisdom-religion is distinctly historical in contrast to the transcendental divine wisdom outlined in the previous section. In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky further specifies:

In the sublime and profoundest of all philosophies, that of the universal "Wisdom-Religion," the first traces of which, historical research now finds in the old pre-Vedic religion of India.³⁵³

Blavatsky thus identified the first historical traces of the wisdom-religion

³⁵⁰ By 'esoteric historiography' is here meant Blavatsky's construction of an account of history that was in accordance with her own belief system rather than following the accounts produced by the mainstream historical authorities of the time.

³⁵¹ See chapter/section 2.2.1.1 in the present thesis.

³⁵² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 216. This idea was re-stated on multiple occasions thereafter, see for example HPB, 'Editor's Note to "Drama of the Latter Days"', in HPBCW, VI, 183; HPB, 'Re-classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 347; HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 166-7, 169; HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI, 432. HPB, 'Mistaken Notions on *The Secret Doctrine*', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 234-37 (p. 234) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VI, 34 (1890), 333-35); Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 328.

³⁵³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 39, 142, 639.

as 'pre-Vedic Brahmanism' or 'pre-Vedic religion of India'.³⁵⁴ Blavatsky laid great emphasis in *Isis Unveiled* on the importance of such a Pre-vedic civilization as the source of the Egyptian and subsequent civilizations.

It is on the strength of such circumstantial evidence — that of reason and logic — that we affirm that, if Egypt furnished Greece with her civilization, and the latter bequeathed hers to Rome, Egypt herself had, in those unknown ages when Menes reigned received her laws, her social institutions, her arts and her sciences, from pre-Vedic India; and that therefore, it is in that old initiatrix of the priests — adepts of all the other countries — we must seek for the key to the great mysteries of humanity.³⁵⁵

Later, especially in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) and articles published around the time of its publication, Blavatsky specified that this primeval source once was the common religion of all mankind³⁵⁶ and that mankind also at an early point in history shared the same 'universal mystery language'.³⁵⁷ This primeval source of all religions or the wisdom-religion is now the common inheritance of all mankind,³⁵⁸ the elements of which can still be found in the symbolism and mythologies of the religions and philosophies of antiquity,³⁵⁹ hence the great emphasis placed on the comparative method in the study of religions by Blavatsky and Theosophists in general.

The scope of *The Secret Doctrine*, however, stretches much deeper into occult historiography by placing the origins and transmission of the Wisdom-

³⁵⁴ The idea of an ancient Indian source of wisdom had been greatly emphasised by Louis Jacolliot whom Blavatsky used extensively, see Louis Jacolliot, *Le Spiritisme Dans Le Monde*, (Paris: Librairie Marpon & Flammarion, 1892 [1875]) pp. 1-3; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 38, see also 263-65; Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 76.

³⁵⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 589; see also II, 435.

³⁵⁶ HPB, 'The Esoteric Character of the Gospels', in HPBCW, VIII, 182; HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI, 432; HPB, 'Neo-Buddhism', in HPBCW, XII, 347; HPB, 'The Babel of Modern Thought', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 83-103 (p. 98) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 41 (1891), 353-60); Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 1-15; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxxiv, xxxviii; II, 760.

³⁵⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xliii, 303-323; II, 760.

³⁵⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xviii; HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 170.

³⁵⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 303-23, 379; II, 438.

Religion in an emic narrative of cosmological implications.³⁶⁰ The wisdom-religion was first given by divine beings to men of the Third Root Race in Blavatsky's scheme of seven Root Races that populate the earth during its fourth round in the theosophical cosmology.³⁶¹

However, the Wisdom-Religion imparted by divine beings to the Third Root Race was abused by evil sorcery during the sway of the Fourth Root Race, which led to war and a catastrophe of their Atlantean civilization on the continent of Atlantis.³⁶² Here the teachings became shrouded in secret symbols and maintained only in the inner sanctuaries of holy temples by the esoteric tradition of initiates and the Masters of the Wisdom,³⁶³ which led to a division in religion between esoteric and exoteric religion.³⁶⁴

The Wisdom-Religion was therefore—at the beginning of what Blavatsky termed our present Fifth Root Race—no longer publicly available, and up until Blavatsky's time and work³⁶⁵ only fragments of it could be found beneath the exoteric dogmas and symbols of the great world religions and ancient philosophies, many of which were established or inspired by teachers or great sages who under cyclic law come onto the world stage when righteousness has become corrupted by human ignorance.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁰ This is not the place to outline Blavatsky's esoteric cosmology and anthropology. Suffice it to say here that Blavatsky envisioned seven great races of men called 'Root Races' with additional sub-races, which systematically through cycles of time evolve on various related continents on this planet. Humanity is primarily at present in the cycle of the Fifth Root Race with four preceding it and two to follow it.

³⁶¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 207-209; II, 198; HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 166-69.

³⁶² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 494-95, 636-37, 760, 762, 771-72, 785.

³⁶³ HPB, 'Preliminary Survey', in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 16-33 (pp. 27-28); HPB, 'Spiritualism and Occult Truth', in HPBCW, III (1995), 468-76 (p. 472) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, III, 5 (1882), 113-15); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 270, 272-73; II, 124, 250, 375, 443, 763; Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 8; H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 123.

³⁶⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 124; HPB, 'The Eastern Gupta Vidyā and Kabbalah', in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 167-91 (pp. 180-1).

³⁶⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xxii.

³⁶⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 207-208, 378; II, 483; HPB, 'The Doctrine of Avatāras', in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 370-85 (p. 372); HPB, 'Cycles and

During documented history, Theosophy or the Wisdom-Religion can, according to Blavatsky, be traced somewhat in the following line of descent:

First the ancient Veda religion as Blavatsky alluded to in *Isis Unveiled*—stemming from the Pre-Vedic Brahmanism and Buddhism³⁶⁷ and as repeated in *The Secret Doctrine*:

the *Veda* of the early Aryans, before it was written, went forth into every nation of the Atlanto-Lemurians, and sowed the first seeds of all the now existing old religions.³⁶⁸

The subsequent development of the known religions of the world is set forth by Blavatsky in the following way:

The oldest religions of the world—exoterically, for the esoteric root or foundation is one—are the Indian, the Mazdean, and the Egyptian. Then comes the Chaldean, the outcome of these—entirely lost to the world now, except in its disfigured Sabeanism as at present rendered by the archaeologists; then, passing over a number of religions that will be mentioned later, comes the Jewish.³⁶⁹

In addition to this and in accord with her spiral-cyclical conception of history, Blavatsky also added both in *Isis Unveiled* and in her second major conceptualization of Theosophy that the ancient Wisdom-Religion is the religion of the future

Be this as it may, the religion of the ancients is the religion of the future. A few centuries more, and there will linger no sectarian beliefs in either of the great religions of humanity. Brahmanism and Buddhism, Christianity and Mahometanism will all disappear before the mighty rush of facts.³⁷⁰

2.1.4.3 Theosophy as Psychology and Divine inspiration

In Blavatsky's first major conceptualization of the concept 'Theosophy', in her article 'What is Theosophy?' (1879), Blavatsky expressed dissatisfaction with Webster's definition of Theosophy (quoted earlier), especially its emphasis on

Avatāras', in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 353-57 (p. 356); HPB, 'The Doctrine of Avatāras', in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 370-85 (p. 372).

³⁶⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 639.

³⁶⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 483.

³⁶⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 10–11.

³⁷⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 613; HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 258–62.

‘physical processes’ and ‘chemical processes’, because according to Blavatsky the great philosophers of the Alexandrian neo-Platonic school were not materialists. Already at this stage a move away from Felt’s initial inspiration of being able to make elementals visible by chemical processes is apparent. Blavatsky finds R. A. Vaughan’s ‘philosophical definition’, as she calls it, much more favourable, ‘the theosophist is one who gives you a theory of God, or of the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis.’³⁷¹ With Theosophy thus defined Blavatsky reasons: ‘Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.’³⁷² This also indicates that unlike other religious knowledge Theosophy is not a revelation—a point that Blavatsky stressed continuously.³⁷³

Following this definition Blavatsky continued to emphasize that Theosophy is intimately related to ‘inspiration’ and what she called ‘higher intuition’.

To fully define Theosophy, we must consider it under all its aspects. The interior world has not been hidden from all by impenetrable darkness. By that higher intuition acquired by *Theosophia*—or God-knowledge, which carries the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world.³⁷⁴

Blavatsky thereafter sought to show that in ‘every age and every country’ divine inspiration and the union of the soul with an over soul have been

³⁷¹ HPB, ‘What is Theosophy?’, in HPBCW, II, 88. This ‘Vaughan’ whom Blavatsky quotes is not Thomas Vaughan (1622-1666) as Santucci assumes in Santucci, ‘Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society’, p. 475, but Robert Alfred Vaughan (1823-1857), author of *Hours with the Mystics* (1856), this quotation on p. 40.

³⁷² HPB, ‘What is Theosophy?’, in HPBCW, II, 88.

³⁷³ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 36; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. vii.

³⁷⁴ HPB, ‘What is Theosophy?’, in HPBCW, II, 92, see also HPB, ‘The Beacon of the Unknown’, in HPBCW, XI, 249; see also on the intuitive faculty HPB, ‘What are the Theosophists?’ in HPBCW, II, 103; and on inspiration HPB, ‘What is Theosophy?’, in HPBCW, II, 91 and HPB, ‘What are the Theosophists?’, in HPBCW, II, 103.

experienced in similar ways. This includes the experiences of the samadhi state of the Hindus; the experiences of the yogis: Patanjali; Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883); the Greek mysteries; the Pythagoreans; Plato; the Alexandrian Theosophists; the neo-Platonists with an emphasis on Porphyry and Plotinus; the Rosicrucians; the fire-philosophers, Jacob Böhme; Swedenborg; F. W. Schelling; R. W. Emerson; and Alfred R. Wallace.³⁷⁵

This supposed intercourse with the divine in all ages leads Blavatsky to state that 'Theosophy is the exact science of psychology'³⁷⁶ The faculty of intuition was thus already included in Blavatsky's first major conceptualization of 'Theosophy' and intimately linked with it as the epistemological means whereby 'Divine Wisdom' can be acquired. The faculty of the intuition was already important to Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* wherein it was mentioned many times and continued to be so as a faculty, which Blavatsky wanted to develop in her students. In *Isis Unveiled* she for example wrote:

the faculty of intuition — which, if we call reason the eye of the mind, may be defined as the eye of the soul.³⁷⁷ [and] Reason is the clumsy weapon of the scientists — intuition the unerring guide of the seer.³⁷⁸

In her later conceptualization of intuition (1889) she wrote:

It is not such as these that can ever give a correct idea of practical Theosophy, still less of the transcendental Theosophy which occupies the minds of a small group of the elect. Everyone of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, known as *intuition*, but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is, however, the only faculty by means of which men and things are seen in their true colours. It is an *instinct of the soul*, which grows in us in proportion to the use we make of it, and which helps us to perceive and understand real and absolute facts with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and the exercise of our reason. ... This is true Theosophy, inner Theosophy, that of the soul.³⁷⁹

The notion of an intuitive faculty (*Nous*, *Buddhi* or the *Intellectus* of the

³⁷⁵ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 91-96.

³⁷⁶ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 95; see also HPB, 'The Drift of Western Spiritualism', in HPBCW, II (1967), 107-110 (pp. 107-108) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 7-8).

³⁷⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 16.

³⁷⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 433 see also xiii, xviii-xix, 16, 61, 174, 307, 433-35, 467; II, 163, 583, 636.

³⁷⁹ HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 253.

Middle Ages) in order to acquire *gnosis* has been central to the Western esoteric tradition and one of its distinctive features in contrast to reason and faith.³⁸⁰ Blavatsky's insistence on the relation between *Theosophia* and intuition was thus to a great extent inherited from the more or less common connotations of the word accumulated through Western history as shown earlier.³⁸¹

2.1.4.4 Practical Theosophy, Divine Ethics and Universal Brotherhood

The practice of ethics and the idea of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity were already important in Blavatsky's first major conceptualization of 'Theosophy' in the period 1879-1880.³⁸²

Aside from that special branch of esoteric studies, our society, as its name indicates, is nothing but the "Universal Brotherhood; the Brotherhood of Humanity!"³⁸³

She furthermore wrote of this ethical engagement that

Day and night, we work in common for the spiritual regeneration of morally blind individuals, as well as for the elevation of fallen nations.³⁸⁴

This early practical dimension of her conceptualization was, however, more related to 'The Theosophical Society'—which she here conceived of as synonymous with a 'Brotherhood of Humanity'—than 'Theosophy' in the abstract sense.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁰ See Gilles Quispel, 'inleiding', in *Gnosis: De derde component van de Europese cultuurtraditie*, ed. by Gilles Quispel (Utrecht: Hes Uitgevers, 1988), p. 9; Roelof van den Broek and Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'preface' in *Gnosis and Hermeticisme* ed. by Broek and Hanegraaff (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998) p. vii; and repeated many times after these publications.

³⁸¹ Here again Alexander Wilder was a significant influence, see his *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 14; see also Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 433-37; II, 587; HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 253-58.

³⁸² HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 89, 97; HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 105; HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 503, 505.

³⁸³ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 502.

³⁸⁴ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 502.

³⁸⁵ It is to be noted that Blavatsky did not construe this ethical effort as a political engagement and distanced her idea of brotherhood from communism and socialism. HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 105; Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 231. Several Theosophists did however become greatly involved in politics.

The above could lead one to think that the Theosophical Society had been synonymous with the idea of a 'Brotherhood of Humanity' from the days of its inauguration, but there is no historical evidence to substantiate this.³⁸⁶ The first public mention of a 'Brotherhood of Humanity' in relation to the Theosophical Society is usually dated by historians of Theosophy as late as 3 May 1878 in a Circular primarily drafted by H. S. Olcott entitled 'The Theosophical Society Its Origin, Plan and Aims'.³⁸⁷

Herein the object of a 'Brotherhood of Humanity' was presented publicly for the first time, as one of the Society's chief objects:

The Society teaches and expects its fellows to personally exemplify the highest morality and religious aspiration ... and chiefly, to aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity, wherein all good and pure men, of every race, shall recognize each other as the equal effects (upon this planet) of one Uncreate Universal, Infinite, and Everlasting Cause.³⁸⁸

It has, however, gone unnoted that Blavatsky herself presumably used the designation 'Brotherhood of Humanity' in relation to The Theosophical

³⁸⁶ Some theosophists like Dara Eklund *op. cit.* argue that it was an object of the society from the beginning based on what Blavatsky wrote in 1886 that 'broadly stated' Universal Brotherhood was an object among the objects of the society in 1875, but this rather seems to be a re-mindful summary made by her than an exact historical account. HPB, 'Original Programme', in HPBCW, VII, 145. As early as 1879 Blavatsky, herself, gave a rather overlooked account stating 'When it was decided to reorganize the Theosophical Society upon the basis of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity' HPB, 'Buddhistic Exegesis', in HPBCW, II (1967), 138-40 (p. 138) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 2 (1879), 34). In clear support of this, see also HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 123-36 (p. 125) (first publ. in *La Revue Théosophique*, I, 1 (1889), 3-13); HPB, 'Our Three Objects', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 391-400 (pp. 392-96) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 25 (1889), 1-7); HPB, 'The Drift of Western Spiritualism', in HPBCW, II, 107-8; and Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 328. Finally, it should be noted that before the establishment of the T.S. Blavatsky wrote of the mission of occultism to 'unite for ever in one Immortal Brotherhood all antagonistic races' HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 114; and Alexander Wilder – upon whom Blavatsky relied above anyone else in her construction of 'Theosophy' – already mentioned a 'Human Brotherhood' in *New Platonism and Alchemy*, p. 20, *op. cit.*

³⁸⁷ H. S. Olcott [mainly], 'The Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I (1988), 375-78 (printed for the information of correspondents (1875)).

³⁸⁸ Olcott, 'The Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I, 377.

Society before this Circular in her 'Letter 104' with the presumed date 'late 1877'³⁸⁹ wherein she wrote to her relatives:

Our business concerns philosophy, morals, and science alone. ... Our theosophical brotherhood must strive after the ideal of general brotherhood throughout all humanity; after the establishment of universal peace and the strengthening of charity...³⁹⁰

The circumstances surrounding the 'reorganization' of the Theosophical Society upon the basis of a 'Universal Brotherhood of Humanity', as Blavatsky called it,³⁹¹ was done in relation to the initial cooperation with the Hindu reformist organization Arya Samaj (est. 1875) headed by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-1883) and in relation to the launch of Theosophy in India. The first steps were taken by a correspondence in 1877 between Olcott and his Hindu contact Moolji Thakurshi (Moolji Thackersey);³⁹² the unification of the two societies on 22 May 1878 (the same month the circular appeared); and Blavatsky and Olcott's voyage to India in December 1878. While the cooperation with the Arya Samaj ceased in March 1882, the designation 'Universal Brotherhood' remained primary to the objects and identity of the Theosophical Society, and Blavatsky continued her emphasis on its importance along the lines of ethical responsibility, humanitarianism, the unity and dignity of all men and altruism.³⁹³

The foundation of a Brotherhood of man or a 'Republic of Conscience',

³⁸⁹ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 104', p. 395.

³⁹⁰ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 104', pp. 395-6.

³⁹¹ HPB, 'Buddhistic Exegesis', in HPBCW, II, 138.

³⁹² See Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 319-20.

³⁹³ See for example HPB, 'Correct Definitions and Incorrect Insinuations', in HPBCW, IV (1991), 22-26 (p. 25) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, III, 6 (1882), 161-62); HPB, 'Let Every Man Prove His Own Work', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 159-71 (p. 170-71) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 3 (1887), 161-69); HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 125, 126-27, 135-36; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 161-69 (pp. 164-65, 168) (rep. from the *Report of Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, American Section* (1889)); see also Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 328; HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 127, 130.

as she also called it,³⁹⁴ was clearly founded on Blavatsky's already developed abstract definition of Theosophy—the one, universal Truth. But her second major conceptualization of 'Theosophy' (1888-1889), namely Theosophy in itself, not only in connection with the 'Theosophical Society', was increasingly perceived as, what the *Theosophical Glossary* summarily described as, 'Divine Ethics', as well.

In its practical bearing, Theosophy is purely *divine ethics*;...³⁹⁵

In this capacity, Theosophy as 'divine ethics', 'Practical Theosophy' emerged.³⁹⁶

In 'Is Theosophy a Religion?' (1888) Blavatsky wrote:

Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal "coach," a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, ...³⁹⁷

'Practical Theosophy' was thus a universal code of ethics taught by every ancient sage such as Krishna, Confucius, Buddha and the Christ³⁹⁸ and it represented the key to right living or as Blavatsky further wrote in a concluding remark:

And now we have shown, it is hoped, what real Theosophy is, a code of ethics so sublime that no theosophist is cable of doing it justice;...³⁹⁹

And a year later she repeated this:

³⁹⁴ HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 129; HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 276.

³⁹⁵ Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 328.

³⁹⁶ First used by Blavatsky in praise of the president founder H. S. Olcott in 1886, HPB, 'Original Programme', in HPBCW, VII, 166, but not commonly defined before 1888-1889.

³⁹⁷ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 165; HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 253, 275; HPB, 'The Last Song of the Swan', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 104-116 (p. 113) (first publ. in *Lucifer* V, 30 (1890), 445-53).

³⁹⁸ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 164.

³⁹⁹ HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X, 173.

Theosophy is no national property, no religion, but only the universal code of science and the most transcendental ethics that was ever known; that lies at the root of every moral philosophy and religion ...⁴⁰⁰

The most clear and elaborate presentation of 'Practical Theosophy' is found in *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) that dedicated two whole sections to it.⁴⁰¹

This connotation of the concept 'Theosophy' is not found earlier in history and is thus an innovation made by Blavatsky alongside its connotations with Truth, the wisdom of the higher self, and with that of the Wisdom-Religion. Blavatsky's late conceptualization of 'Theosophy' as 'Divine Ethics' does, however, not imply that other dimensions of Theosophy mentioned above were diminished in any way, but only that Theosophy was given an extra dimension. This development of Theosophy as 'Divine Ethics' has its roots in the 'Indian' reorganization of the Society in relation to a Universal Brotherhood and on an individual level in the reception of *The Mahatma Letters* wherein the so-called Mahatmas often talked about T.S. members becoming a disciple (chela) of the masters and of a practical spiritual path leading to enlightenment or masterhood.⁴⁰² This relation with the Himalayan Brothers and with Hindu Yogis in India, Vedantic scholars (Row), Buddhist practitioners (Sumangala), and a more intimate relation with the concept of karma progressed Blavatsky's focus in the direction of a comprehensive philosophy of life with a marked religious aspiration. The 'true theosophist' dedicated to the inner work of the society was now also one who lived its moral code in his daily practice.⁴⁰³ This is for example seen in the 'Rules for the Residents of the London Headquarters' (1890):

Regularity in life consists of regularity in speech and action, and these cannot exist apart from regularity in thought and feeling. In Practical

⁴⁰⁰ HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI, 437.

⁴⁰¹ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 52-53, 227-77.

⁴⁰² *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence* ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998), pp. 73, 167, 217, 218, 221, 225, 227, 230, 239, 248, 250, 254, 276, 287, 293, 319, 345, 378, 391-92, 398, 429, 436, 440-41, 444; HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 135-36.

⁴⁰³ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 52.

Theosophy, therefore, it is necessary that these five conditions should coexist viz.

RIGHT THOUGHT,
RIGHT SPEECH,
RIGHT

RIGHT FEELING,
RIGHT ACTION,
LIVING.⁴⁰⁴

Admission into the 'Esoteric Section' (founded 1888) and into the 'Inner Group' (founded 1890) also emphasized this 'religious' dedication in order to be a 'true theosophist', while regular members could live as they preferred.⁴⁰⁵

The theme of Blavatsky's final book publication *The Voice of the Silence* (1889) equally exemplifies this 'new' spirit of esoteric practice or group-work that now took place within the Theosophical movement, as outlined above. It was completely dedicated to defining the true spiritual path as the practice of self-conquering and compassion towards all beings in a way that brings it into close proximity with the Mahayana Buddhist Bodhisattva ideal. Blavatsky's final publication and her function as a spiritual teacher thus in some sense stands in contrast to her first articles and *Isis Unveiled* (1875-1877) which, while emphasizing living experienced knowledge or occultism,⁴⁰⁶ were primarily focused on reviving knowledge of ancient Magic and The Wisdom-Religion than giving instructions on practising it.

2.1.4.5 Theosophy and The Secrets of Nature

In Blavatsky's first major conceptualization of 'Theosophy' the secrets of nature, occult phenomena, and *magia naturalis*, were overshadowed by the other dimensions of the term discussed above. Blavatsky did briefly mention the *siddhis* or powers of the soul of the ancient gymnosophists or yogis in her 'What is Theosophy?' essay, but this was in relation to esoteric psychology rather than as a connotation of 'Theosophy' itself.⁴⁰⁷ In 'What are the Theosophists?' she briefly mentioned the study of occult phenomena, spiritualism and 'The Book of

⁴⁰⁴ HPB, 'Rules for the Residents of the London Headquarters', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 212-13 (p. 213) (first publ. in *News and Notes* V, 30 (1949)).

⁴⁰⁵ HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 251; HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 136.

⁴⁰⁶ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 101, 103.

⁴⁰⁷ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 93.

Nature', but again these themes were also related to the objects of the Theosophical Society and to psychology rather than as something included in the concept 'Theosophy'.⁴⁰⁸ In Blavatsky's first major articles on the conceptualization of 'Theosophy' the secrets of nature and occult phenomena were thus not a significant part of her definition of 'Theosophy'.

However, Blavatsky was certainly interested in these topics. In Blavatsky's early writing-phase (1875-1878) she was very occupied with what she generally termed 'Magic', 'Occultism', 'Occult Sciences', and 'Ancient Spiritualism' and did not significantly use or define 'Theosophy', as has been shown earlier.

In her first occult article 'A Few Questions to "HIRAF"' (July 1875) the word, which Blavatsky used on almost every page to embody her stance was 'Occultism' which, to her, was synonymous with 'Magic'.⁴⁰⁹ Blavatsky was presumably the first to introduce this concept ('occultism') to the English-speaking world and most likely borrowed it from Eliphas Levi's (1810-1875) book *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie* (1854-1856), while the first appearance of the substantive 'l'occultisme' seems to have occurred in Jean-Baptiste Richard de Randonvilliers' *Dictionnaire des mots nouveaux* (1842).⁴¹⁰

In 'Hiraf' Blavatsky presented occultism as the ancient parent cause of spiritualism⁴¹¹ or, as she stated elsewhere, as 'ancient spiritualism',⁴¹² which clearly had an ancient origin in the East.⁴¹³ Blavatsky further stated that this

⁴⁰⁸ HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBCW, II, 99-101.

⁴⁰⁹ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiraf', in HPBCW, I, 101, 104, 117. On this topic, see also Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', pp. 478, 489.

⁴¹⁰ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Occult/Occultism', *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 884-89 (p. 887).

⁴¹¹ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiraf', in HPBCW, I, 101.

⁴¹² HPB, 'A Crisis for Spiritualism: The Jesuits to show their hands—what the medium Home is doing for Mother Church' in HPBCW, I (1988), 194-203 (p. 199) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, IV (1876), 32-34). This concept was used March 1876 and recalls Charles Sotheran's early Theosophical lecture on 'Ancient Theosophy' *op. cit.*

⁴¹³ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiraf', in HPBCW, I, 103, 104, 111, 112, 116.

secret science had been orally handed down through the ages and kept secret in certain Brotherhoods in the East and later in the West among the Rosicrucians, Alchemists, Cabalists and Theosophists, but emphasized that the 'Oriental Cabala'⁴¹⁴ and the lodge of 'Oriental Rosicrucians',⁴¹⁵ so-called due to secrecy of their name, were the more pure exemplars, because alterations had crept into the written Western esoteric tradition.⁴¹⁶ The theme of 'secrets of nature' or *magia naturalis* was equally a prominent feature of Blavatsky's discussion and definition of occultism at the time.⁴¹⁷

Blavatsky's second major occult article, entitled 'The Science of Magic Proofs of its existence—Mediums in Ancient Times, Etc., Etc.' (October 1875), was written in response to the spiritualist Luther Colby (1814-1894), who had denied the existence of Magic. This article continued Blavatsky's focus on the concepts 'Occultism' and 'Magic', whereby she defined magic as a science of the occult forces in nature, or as she stated:

Magic is but a *science*, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world.⁴¹⁸

To her 'magical power' or occult phenomena were natural and not miraculous, but only a part of the hidden laws of nature.⁴¹⁹ In defence of this view and the existence of magic, she summoned almost all of the important names in the history of Western esotericism since antiquity and included the more modern Mesmerism as a form of magic or knowledge of nature's hidden laws.⁴²⁰

This focus on 'occultism'—as opposed to spiritualism—was general among the early Theosophical Society and works published around that time such as Emma Hardinge Britten's (1823-1899) *Art Magic* (1876) and *Ghost*

⁴¹⁴ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 104, 106, 109, 111, 112.

⁴¹⁵ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 107, 109.

⁴¹⁶ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 110-11.

⁴¹⁷ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 102, 104, 106, 107, 108.

⁴¹⁸ HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I (1988), 134-43 (p. 137) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, III (1875), 64-65).

⁴¹⁹ HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I, 137, 142.

⁴²⁰ HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I, 137-38.

Land (1876). In 1879 Blavatsky herself wrote about the early days that

The founders of our Society were mainly veteran Spiritualists, who had outgrown their first amazement at the strange phenomena, and felt the necessity to investigate the laws of mediumship to the very bottom. Their reading of mediaeval and ancient works upon the occult sciences had shown them that our modern phenomena were but repetitions of what had been seen, studied, and comprehended in former epochs. ...

Thus thinking, and impressed with the great importance of a thorough knowledge of mesmerism and all other branches of Occultism, these founders established the Theosophical Society, to read, enquire, compare, study, experiment and expound, the mysteries of Psychology.⁴²¹

Her focus on the related concepts 'Occultism', 'Occult Sciences', 'Occult phenomena' and especially 'Magic' rather than 'Theosophy' continued in *Isis Unveiled* in which these concepts figured very prominently.⁴²² Volume one was especially devoted to this theme whereas the second volume was more devoted to the theme of the 'Wisdom-Religion', as shown earlier.

Up until Blavatsky's first major conceptualization of 'Theosophy' in 1879, Blavatsky still wrote separately on the theme of 'Magic' as 'the higher study and knowledge of nature and deep research into her hidden powers ...' known to and practised by the ancients.⁴²³ In an article entitled 'Occult Phenomena' (28 October 1880) Blavatsky wrote:

Theosophy believes in *no miracle*, whether divine or devilish; recognizes nothing as supernatural; believes only in facts and Science; studies the laws of Nature, both Occult and patent; and gives attention particularly to the former, just because exact Science will have nothing to do with them. Such laws are those of Magnetism in all its branches. Mesmerism, Psychology, etc.⁴²⁴

The only connection between 'Theosophy' and 'Occult Laws' here (1880) is that students of the Theosophical Society study such occult laws as one of

⁴²¹ HPB, 'The Drift of Western Spiritualism', in HPBCW, II, 107-8.

⁴²² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xxxvii, 17, 18, 25, 26, 30, 42, 66, 67, 90, 94, 115, 129, 137, 167, 205, 218, 244, 247, etc. etc.; II, 587-90.

⁴²³ HPB, 'Magic', in HPBCW, II (1967), 31-39 (p. 32, see also p. 37) (first publ. in *The Dekkan Star* (1879)).

⁴²⁴ HPB, 'Occult Phenomena', in HPBCW, II (1967), 489-92 (p. 490) (first publ. in *Bombay Gazette* (1880)).

their prime objects and not that 'Theosophy' *per definition* is the occult laws in nature or the study of such laws.

The use of 'Magic', 'Occultism' and the 'Occult sciences' continued throughout Blavatsky's life, but even though her definitions of 'Magic' and 'Theosophy' at times came close in their capacity of being an ancient universal wisdom studied by the same personages through history, Blavatsky still kept the two somewhat separate in her *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) and in her posthumously published *Theosophical Glossary* (1891), wherein 'Theosophia' and 'Wisdom-Religion' were connected, but the concept of magic was treated separately and still kept its connection to: hidden laws of nature, occult phenomena, and the practice of occult sciences.⁴²⁵

Blavatsky's continued use of the concept 'Occultism' is, however, a different story. Throughout the period 1880-1887 Blavatsky continuously used the concept 'Occultism' as the study of the occult sciences, but made a persistent effort to keep it separate from 'Theosophy' in her brief discussions with critics. This does not mean that occultism was not regarded as important. It was still regarded so being a topic studied by some theosophists in the society, and occultism was also perceived as a part of the universal 'Wisdom-religion'.⁴²⁶

Around the time of the launch of *Lucifer*, the second major Theosophical journal on 25 September 1887, Blavatsky however added several dimensions to her conceptualization of 'Occultism' in her articles: 'Aphorisms' (1887), 'The Great Paradox' (1887), 'Conversations on Occultism' (1888), 'Practical Occultism' (1888), 'Occultism versus the Occult Arts' (1888), and 'Practical Occultism' [Part Two] (1888). This elaboration brought 'practical Theosophy' and 'Occultism' together, but somewhat distanced 'occultism', *sui generis*, from 'magic' and the 'occult sciences'.

Occultism was now construed in itself as a serious practice of living according to the hidden laws of nature or the soul in daily life, or as Blavatsky

⁴²⁵ See Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, pp. 197, 198, see also p. 237 on occult sciences as the sciences of the secrets of nature.

⁴²⁶ HPB, 'Re-classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 347.

wrote: '*Occultism is the science of life, the art of living.*'⁴²⁷ Blavatsky furthermore added:

remember always, that *true Occultism or Theosophy* is the "Great Renunciation of SELF". It is ALTRUISM ... "Not for himself, but for the world, he lives," as soon as he has pledged himself to the work ... his personality must disappear, and he has to become a *mere beneficent force in Nature.*⁴²⁸

'True occultism' is thus defined in terms of a spiritual path of self-transformation that is correlated with Theosophy or what was shown earlier to be 'Practical Theosophy'. Occultism as a path or spiritual practice can, however according to Blavatsky lead to the development of the Intuition (see section 2.1.4.3 above) and thus to obtaining 'Theosophy' or 'Divine Wisdom'.⁴²⁹

In her articles on 'Occultism', mentioned above, Blavatsky greatly emphasized this dimension, the art of living, though occultism was also still associated with the occult sciences including magic but the occult sciences were now regarded as tools, which can be used by the occultist and not as occultism itself. Thus she wrote: 'Occultism is not magic, though magic is one of its tools.'⁴³⁰ Furthermore, as a spiritual path to inner soulful development 'Occultism differs from Magic and other secret Sciences as the glorious sun differs from a rush-light'.⁴³¹

Such tools, while neutral in themselves can be dangerous, Blavatsky argued and thus advised the student of occultism not to pursue the 'occult arts' but rather to pursue Atma-Vidya or knowledge of the soul and the spirit. Knowledge of the soul was perceived to be what lifts man out of his lower constitution (or egotistic animal part) into the higher life—meaning the more ethical and pure life—since the soul is the loving and higher aspect of man's

⁴²⁷ HPB, 'Aphorisms', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 14 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 1 (1887), 7).

⁴²⁸ HPB, 'Occultism Versus the Occult Arts', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 249-61 (p. 254) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 9 (1888), 173-81).

⁴²⁹ HPB, 'Occultism Versus the Occult Arts', in HPBCW, IX, 258.

⁴³⁰ HPB, 'Aphorisms', in HPBCW, VIII, 14; see also HPB, 'Occultism Versus the Occult Arts', in HPBCW, IX, 249-61.

⁴³¹ HPB, 'Occultism Versus the Occult Arts', in HPBCW, IX, 250.

constitution. Blavatsky specifies that there are four aspects of occultism or four kinds of “esoteric knowledge” using Eastern Sanskrit terminology: 1. Yajna-Vidya; 2. Mahavidya; 3. Guhya-Vidya; and 4. Atma-Vidya.

(1) *Yajña-Vidya*, knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites. (2) *Mahavidya*, the “great knowledge,” the magic of the Kabalists and of the *Tantrika* worship, often Sorcery of the worst description. (3) *Guhya-Vidya*, knowledge of the mystic powers residing in Sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words a magical performance based on Knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and (4) ATMA-VIDYA, a term which is translated simply “knowledge of the Soul,” *true Wisdom* by the Orientalists, but which means far more. This last is the only kind ... [the] wise and unselfish, ought to strive after.⁴³²

To Blavatsky it was certainly Atma-vidya which came closest to her view of true practical occultism.

The traces of this ‘new’ construction of occultism, as a spiritual discipline, can be seen in Blavatsky's second major conceptualization of ‘Theosophy’ (1888-1889), except perhaps in her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), which, like *Isis Unveiled*, hardly mentions ‘Theosophy’ and instead discusses ‘occultism’ as an esoteric science of the laws of nature superior to “exoteric” science rather than as a spiritual discipline.⁴³³ During her second major conceptualization, Blavatsky was still very interested in the Magic of the ancients and in the occult sciences, as she was in the early days of the Theosophical Society, and continued to discuss them side by side with ‘Theosophy’, but the idea that Theosophy and Occultism are deeply related to a serious spiritual path or art of living, which will develop latent powers in man, is much more central in her articles and teaching activity than in earlier days.⁴³⁴ The relation between the two is now defined in the following way:

⁴³² HPB, ‘Occultism Versus the Occult Arts’, in HPBCW, IX, 251-52.

⁴³³ For a fuller discussion of the term ‘occultism’ in *The Secret Doctrine*, see chapter 2.4 ‘Blavatsky’s Discourse against modern science and materialism.’ As in *Isis Unveiled*, ‘Theosophy’ is hardly mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine*.

⁴³⁴ HPB, ‘The New Cycle’, in HPBCW, XI, 127, 134-36; HPB, ‘The Beacon of the Unknown’, in HPBCW, XI, 249, 251, 253-58, 266, 267; HPB, ‘Our Three Objects’, in HPBCW, XI, 398-99.

Theosophy being the way that leads to Truth, in every religion as in every science, occultism is, so to say, the touchstone and universal solvent.⁴³⁵

and furthermore

Occultism itself being but one of the Sciences of Theosophy, or the Wisdom-Religion, and by no means the whole of Theosophy⁴³⁶

'Theosophy' is thus not 'Occultism', but the two are closely related. Theosophy in its abstract sense embraces 'Occultism' and Occultism is that part of 'Theosophy', which, if practised, transforms man. The distinction between the two was still kept and emphasized in Blavatsky's final statement on the matter in *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) in a section entitled 'The Difference between Theosophy and Occultism' in which Blavatsky warns against practicing occultism without being a true Theosophist.⁴³⁷ Blavatsky's teachings in relation to the Esoteric Section and Inner Group during this time were also deeply related to the dedicated practice of Occultism.⁴³⁸

2.1.5 Concluding summary

The aim of this chapter was to analyse Blavatsky's use of the word 'Theosophy' through a close study of her texts. It was shown that use of the word 'Theosophy' stretches back to antiquity and that it has been used throughout Western history up to Blavatsky's time. In relation to this semantic context, it was shown that Blavatsky clearly inherited some of its accumulated semantic content, but also that she added several innovations.

Blavatsky's construction of the concept 'Theosophy' could be classified into three phases: (1) early use, (2) first major conceptualization (1879), and (3) second major conceptualization (1888-1889). While the changes and elaborations of her initial usages were analysed, four general themes in her

⁴³⁵ HPB, 'The Beacon of the Unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 266.

⁴³⁶ HPB, 'Philosophers and Philosophicules', in HPBCW, XI, 433.

⁴³⁷ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 25-27.

⁴³⁸ See HPB, '[First three originally written] 'E. S. T. Instructions: Instruction No. I: Instruction No. II: Instruction No. III', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 513-662 (first printed privately on the Aryan Press, 1889-1890); H. P. Blavatsky, *The Inner Group Teachings of H. P. Blavatsky to her personal pupils (1890-1891)*, 2nd rev. and enl. edn, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 1995).

usages could be inductively established and shown to operate subtly in her text on three ontological levels (a-historical, historical, and practical) more or less continuing throughout her use of the term.

It was shown: (1) that Blavatsky retained the reference to the term's origin with the Neo-Platonists but also (2) that she construed 'Theosophy' innovatively on an abstract level as a synonym for an absolute Truth and (3) that on a more historical level, she used it as a synonym for what she termed 'Wisdom-Religion' in its capacity as the common source of all religions; (4) that its older and common connotation of 'divine inspiration' or 'intuition' was also kept by Blavatsky, and (5) that she furthermore construed 'Theosophy' innovatively as 'Divine Ethics' or what she perceived to be its practical bearing.

It was furthermore demonstrated that Blavatsky distinguished between 'Theosophy' and Occultism/Magic and that she came to regard her own exposition of specific doctrines as stemming from what she termed *trans-Himalayan* esotericism.

The above historical account of the term 'Theosophy' and the textual analysis of Blavatsky's use of it, throughout her textual corpus, have thus thrown light on how Blavatsky constructed the meaning of 'Theosophy'. Blavatsky, to a great extent, argued for this 'Theosophy' (and 'Occultism' and '*trans-Himalayan* esotericism') against what she perceived to be modern materialistic science, dogmatic theology, and spiritualism as will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.2 Blavatsky's Discourse for Ancient Knowledge

*Verily, then, to antiquity alone have we to look for the origin of all things.*⁴³⁹

In retrospect, the long nineteenth century has often been characterized as the dawning of modernization.⁴⁴⁰ As new ways of thinking became dominant and old social structures were overthrown, nineteenth-century post-Enlightenment culture witnessed a great number of rapid changes through processes of industrialization, urbanization and secularization. Darwinism redefined man's origin and positivistic science 'demystified' the world. These developments led many among the optimistic intellectual elite such as August Comte (1798-1857), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), John Lubbock (1834–1913), and Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) to assert that Western culture, as a whole, stood at the acme of progress and civilization.⁴⁴¹ Tylor for example wrote:

Seeking something like a definite line along which to reckon progression and retrogression in civilization, we may apparently find it best in the classification of real tribes and nations, past and present. Civilization actually existing among mankind in different grades, we are enabled to estimate and compare it by positive examples. The educated world of Europe and America practically settles a standard by simply placing its own nations at one end of the social series and savage tribes at the other, arranging the rest of mankind between these limits according as they correspond more closely to savage or to cultured life. The principal criteria of classification are the absence or presence, high or low development, of the industrial arts, especially metal - working, manufacture of implements and vessels, agriculture, architecture, &c., the extent of scientific knowledge, the definiteness of moral principles, the condition of religious belief and ceremony, the degree of social and political organization, and so forth. Thus, on the definite basis of compared facts, ethnographers are able to set up at least a rough scale of civilization. Few would dispute that the following races are arranged rightly in order of culture:—Australian, Tahitian, Aztec, Chinese, Italian.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877), I, 35.

⁴⁴⁰ See Marion Joseph Levy, *Modernization & the Structure of Societies: Aspects of social structure in Modernized & Nonmodernized Societies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996), pp. 35, 85.

⁴⁴¹ See George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 112-32.

⁴⁴² Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the developments of*

For others this cultural self-assurance was not as marked. Many, especially among the well-educated and increasingly socially active segment of the middle class, felt that the old 'great chain of being'⁴⁴³ was broken and that the above-mentioned changes produced a sense of social uncertainty and cultural decay; a sense of rootlessness and a crisis of faith. In response to these cultural changes and in combination with the newly gained religious freedoms, the freedom of press, the freedom to form societies, greater mobility and a more loosely defined place in the world, these creative people began a critical debate of the modern state of affairs, envisioning utopias and searching for answers to the meaning of life outside conventional modes of thought.⁴⁴⁴

H. P. Blavatsky, although of noble Russian decent—rather than middle class, was such a socially engaged person unafraid to utter her opinions in public through books, journals, magazines, and newspapers even though they were often regarded as unconventional. Blavatsky's passionate engagement is deeply reflected in her writings, in which she manifests herself as an inflamed, intelligent, educated, and tirelessly rebellious critic of the modern social, intellectual, scientific, and religious climate of her time.⁴⁴⁵ Throughout her

Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1891), I, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁴³ For the term 'Great Chain of Being', see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 [1936]). Lovejoy shows in this important study how everything in the world has been ordered and structured according to a scheme, largely derived from Platonism, that links everything together in metaphysical or rational hierarchies and natural species. This idea can be extended to the social realm where members of a specific craft or social class were born into their fixed places. The great social changes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries however produced much more freedom and mobility, especially for the middle class and thereby challenged the old fixed order. The great chain was also challenged on a number of other points, especially the metaphysical dimension of God as the *prima causa* and the origin of man.

⁴⁴⁴ See also James Webb, *The Flight from Reason: The Age of the Irrational* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1971), pp. ix-xiv, 48, 52. This is not an endorsement of Webb's 'irrational thesis', but a reference to his useful characterization of changes in the nineteenth century in relation to the rise of spiritual currents.

⁴⁴⁵ As examples of this, see articles such as HPB, 'The Struggle for Existence', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 147-56, (p. 150-51) (first publ. in *Lucifer* IV, 20

writing career, Blavatsky expressed, along Rousseauian lines, that she did not find a highly enlightened culture around her and that she therefore could not regard the achievements of her time as superior to those of the ancients.⁴⁴⁶ Her perception of nineteenth-century Western society and the self-assured claims of infallibility and superiority made by the modern intellectual elite simply did not match. She could not find a meaningful correlation between the claimed superiority and the poor condition of modern society she perceived around her.⁴⁴⁷ We find this general critique of modern progress in the following, written in response to an anonymous correspondent “Aleph”.

We are told that progress is *meillorisme*, “social evolution incessantly ameliorating the physical, intellectual and moral conditions of the greatest number of people.” Where did “Aleph” get that? Did he find it in London with its four million inhabitants, one million of which eat but every three days, if that often? Is it in America, where progress necessitates the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Chinese laborers, sent elsewhere to die from hunger, and the immediate expulsion of thousands of Irish immigrants and other paupers of which England is trying to rid itself? A progress built on the exploitation of poor people and of laborers is but another car of Juggernaut plus a false nose. One has the right to prefer even a quiet death under the manchineel tree to the progress of the rich and learned classes achieved over the bodies of thousands of poor and ignorant people. The Chinese of California, are they not our brothers? The Irish driven from their huts and condemned with their children to die of hunger, do they prove the existence of social progress? No, a thousand times no! ...

Are three quarters of humanity happier due to the progress of science and its alliance with industry, about which you seem so happy? Has the

(1889), 104-11); HPB, ‘The Tidal Wave’, in HPBCW, XII (1980), 1-8 (first publ. in *Lucifer* V, 27 (1889), 173-78); HPB, ‘The Fall of Ideals’, in HPBCW, XII (1987), 33-52 (first publ. in *Lucifer* V, 28 (1889), 261-74); HPB, ‘Progress and Culture’, in HPBCW, XII (1980), 266-79 (first publ. in *Lucifer* VI, 36 (1890), 441-50); HPB, ‘The Babel of Modern Thought’, in HPBCW, XIII, (1982) 83-103 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 41 (1891), 353-60); HPB, ‘Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty’, in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 177-190 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VIII, 45 (1891), 177-186).

⁴⁴⁶ See note 445, but see for example also the conclusion to H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877) I, 618-28.

⁴⁴⁷ Both volumes of *Isis Unveiled* were dedicated to disproving the ‘Infallibility’ of Modern Science and Theology, see table of contents to both volumes for this (except the first edition, which did not have a table of contents); see also chapter 2.4 on Blavatsky’s Discourse against the Moderns Natural Sciences and Materialism.

invention of machines done any good to manual laborers? No, for it has resulted in one more evil: the creation among the workers of a superior caste, semi-instructed and semi-intelligent, to the disadvantage of the less favored masses which became more miserable yet. You confess it yourself: "The excessive production of things and workers [. . .] creates encumbrance, plethora, poverty, deficiency, *i.e.*, idleness and misery." Thousands of poor children in the factories, representing for the future whole generations of crippled, ricket-ridden and unhappy people, are sacrificed in a holocaust to your progress, an insatiable and forever hungry Moloch. Yes, we protest, we say that "*today* is worse than yesterday," and we deny the benefits of a progress which aims only at the welfare of the rich. The "happiness" you speak of will not come as long as moral progress slumbers in inactivity, paralyzed by the ferocious egotism of everybody, the rich as well as the poor.⁴⁴⁸

Blavatsky's critique and rejection of modern progress is marked. Blavatsky did clearly not find the modern state of things progressed. The following quote or response to another anonymous correspondent in *Lucifer* is exemplary of the numerous instances where Blavatsky expressed her dissatisfaction with modern culture in contrast to and defense of the ancients which she in many respects found to be at least as 'progressed' as the moderns if not higher in terms of moral status and spirituality.

It is in defense of the "wisdom" of our century that we are taken to task, and charged with "preferring barbarous antiquity to our modern civilization and its inestimable boons," with forgetting that "our own-day wisdom compared with the awakening instincts of the Past is in no way inferior in *philosophic wisdom* even to the age of Plato." We are lastly told that we, Theosophists, are "too fond of the dim yesterday, and as unjust to our glorious [?] present day, the bright noon-hour of the highest civilization and culture"!

Well, all this is a question of taste. Our correspondent is welcome to his own views, but so are we to ours ... Our age, we say, is inferior in Wisdom to any other, because it professes, more visibly every day, *contempt for truth and justice, without which there can be no Wisdom.*⁴⁴⁹
...

⁴⁴⁸ HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII (1987), 70-91 (pp. 85-86) (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, I, 6 (1887), 321-38).

⁴⁴⁹ The important part left out in the quote above is: 'Because our civilization, built up of shams and appearances, is at best like a beautiful green morass, a bog, spread over a deadly quagmire. Because this century of culture and worship of matter, while offering prizes and premiums for every "*best thing*" under the Sun, from the biggest baby and the largest orchid down to the strongest pugilist and the fattest pig, has no encouragement to offer to

Where then is the Wisdom of our modern age? In truth, it requires but a very few lines to show why we bow before ancient Wisdom, while refusing absolutely to see any in our modern civilization.⁴⁵⁰

What Blavatsky found lacking in modern culture compared to ancient cultures was the cultivation of genuine moral standards, wisdom and spiritual progress. Throughout Blavatsky's writings it stands clear that modern culture was too occupied with intellect, materialism and selfishness for her taste and thus had not, in her opinion, grown beyond its stage of infancy.⁴⁵¹ The modern period was, in short, for Blavatsky a time of reversal of values or as she wrote:

Instead of truth and sincerity, we have propriety and cold, cultured politeness; in one plain word, *dissembling*. Falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food and the same falsification of eatable food. *Margarine* butter for the soul, and margarine butter for the stomach; beauty and fresh colours without, and rottenness and corruption within. Life—a long race-course, a feverish chase, whose goal is a tower of selfish ambition, of pride, and vanity, of greed for money or honours, and in which human passions are the horsemen, and our weaker brethren the steeds. At this terrible steeplechase the prize-cup is purchased with the hearts' blood and sufferings of countless fellow-creatures, and won at the cost of spiritual self-degradation.⁴⁵²

The great gulf, which Blavatsky found between modern social reality and educated claims of superiority or progress, thus became the impetus for Blavatsky's significant discourse for ancient knowledge constituting a major

morality; no prize to give for any moral value. [...] Because, finally, this is the age which, although proclaimed as one of physical and moral freedom, is in truth the age of the most ferocious moral and mental slavery, the like of which was never known before. Slavery to State and *men* has disappeared only to make room for slavery to *things* and *Self*, to one's own vices and idiotic social customs and ways. Rapid civilization, adapted to the needs of the higher and middle classes, has doomed by contrast to only greater wretchedness the starving masses. Having levelled the two former it has made them the more to disregard the substance in favor of form and appearance, thus forcing modern man into duress vile, a slavish dependence on things inanimate, to use and to serve which is the first bounden duty of every *cultured* man.'

⁴⁵⁰ HPB, 'The Dual Aspect of Wisdom', in HPBCW, XII, (1987), 309-320 (p. 309-11) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 37 (1890), 1-9).

⁴⁵¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6.

⁴⁵² HPB, 'Our Cycle and the Next', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 186-202 (p. 187) (first publ. in *Lucifer* IV, 20 (1889), 177-88).

dimension of her construction of meaning. It was shown in the previous chapter that a significant dimension of her construction of the concept Theosophy was the idea of ancient knowledge or a 'Wisdom Religion'. According to Blavatsky, this 'Wisdom Religion' was defined as being sublime already early in history, yet in this chapter it will be discussed to what extent Blavatsky accepted the idea of progress dominant in her contemporary intellectual climate. Even though her critique of modern society was as passionate as that of her contemporary Karl Marx (1818-1883), it will be shown (in section 2.2.1.1) that she was still considerably influenced by the modern idea of progress and by the modern historical consciousness but had to redefine these in order to be able to maintain a meaningful or coherent argument for the existence of a superior knowledge in the distant past. This chapter (section 2.2.1.2) will furthermore situate Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge or her idea of a superior primordial wisdom in her immediate intellectual contexts and thereby demonstrate that this was a common intellectual pursuit not reserved for occultists and their discursive strategies or other minority literati.

2.2.1 Modern Historical Consciousness

Most of Blavatsky's writings are deeply historical in nature as they often treat topics in a historical manner: (1) they are conscious of the scope of history; (2) they deconstruct topics by way of historical critique; (3) they often judge topics with regard to their historicity; and (4) they nearly always refer to historical sources. In other words, they were to a great extent embedded in what has been called 'historical consciousness' or the historical way of thinking that emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴⁵³ This rise of a 'historical consciousness' with the embrace of change in the modern West does not imply that there had been no 'sense of history' in previous epochs and in other cultures, to use Horst Kirchner's distinction between the two terms⁴⁵⁴—but

⁴⁵³ For historical consciousness as a way of thinking in the West, see John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness: The Remembered Past* (Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), p. 5.

⁴⁵⁴ Horst Kirchner, 'Über das Verhältnis des schriftlosen frühgeschichtlichen Menschen zu seiner Geschichte', *Sociologus* n.s. 4 (1954), 9–22 (with an English summary entitled 'The Attitude of Prehistoric Man towards his History').

merely that history, as an ever changing process, increasingly became the dominant epistemological framework for understanding humanity and human culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴⁵⁵

In the following analysis, two important dimensions of modern historical consciousness have been identified as having been intertwined with the rise of historical consciousness and as having had particular significance to Blavatsky's discourse: (1) the first is the idea of linear progress running from a primitive past to a highly civilized present. This discourse of progress and Blavatsky's discursive response to it will be dealt with in the first section below, with special reference to cultural progress; and (2) the second dimension will in the following be termed 'the quest for origins'. As a part of the new historical consciousness a quest for new historical origins of the universe, man, and culture emerged due to the secularization of history and the temporalisation of the 'great chain of being', in combination with the idea of progress. This led to a general conception of ancient knowledge as primitive, yet others found ancient knowledge to have been the most pure. Blavatsky's contexts in her 'quest for origins' will be dealt with in the second major section below, especially in relation to the quest for the origins of religion and mythology as this was of particular importance to Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge.

2.2.1.1 The modern discourse of progress

During pre-modern and early-modern times the gaze of the intellectual elite was largely turned backwards in time towards a superior knowledge of the ancients; a golden age; mythological forefathers or original revelations of God.⁴⁵⁶ This, however, began to change with the French philosopher Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle's (1657-1757) work *Digression sur les anciens et les modernes*

⁴⁵⁵ Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness*, pp. 16-22.

⁴⁵⁶ See Section 2.2.1.2 of this chapter for more on this topic. For Renaissance views, see Daniel Pickering Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1972). For views in antiquity, see Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and related ideas in antiquity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). For ancient and non-Western cultures, see Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1959).

(1688) responding to the famous ongoing 'querelle des Anciens et des Modernes' that preoccupied the Académie française at the time. The 'quarrel' was to a large extent ignited by the 'new' scientific methods proposed by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who argued for the possibility of a gradual advancement of knowledge and René Descartes (1596-1650) who systematically doubted all previous knowledge and laid the foundation for a new philosophy.⁴⁵⁷

Fontenelle's text was important to this debate in several ways. It popularized the notion 'modern' and thus set in motion the wider intellectual debate of ancient versus modern knowledge, with which Blavatsky was later concerned long after the 'moderns' had won.⁴⁵⁸ The 'modern' or 'modernity' in this context thus came to imply that which is new; a break with the old; something of the present rather than of the past. It was furthermore the first modern text to expound the idea of cultural progress in terms of a naturally occurring process analogous to the development of a single human being.⁴⁵⁹ Not long thereafter the Italian philosopher Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744) proposed a new science of history with the publication of his *Principi di Scienza Nuova d'intorno alla Comune Natura delle Nazioni* (1725) in which he viewed humanity's historical process in a cyclic manner as passing through three stages (a divine, a heroic, and a human stage) and in a novel way argued that mankind progressively develops from sensory thought to abstract thought and from a heroic ethic to morality.⁴⁶⁰

The idea of progress along more linear lines⁴⁶¹ was further developed by

⁴⁵⁷ See A. Owen Aldridge, 'Ancients and Moderns in the Eighteenth Century', in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. by Philip P. Wiener, 5 vols (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), I, 76-87.

⁴⁵⁸ Here it is to be noted that ancient knowledge has been an important idea to Western esotericism since the Renaissance in one way or another. In relation to Blavatsky's discourse this will be dealt with in section 2.2.1.2.

⁴⁵⁹ Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Poésies pastorales avec un Traité sur la nature de l'églogue et une Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes* (The Hague: Louis Dole and Estienne Foulque, 1688), pp. 227-228.

⁴⁶⁰ See Robert Nisbet, 'Vico and the Idea of Progress', *Social Research* 43, 3 (1976), 625-37.

⁴⁶¹ Karl Löwith has argued that the modern linear conception of progress is

many influential Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire [François-Marie Arouet] (1694-1778), Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727-1781), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783) and Nicolas de Condorcet (1773-1794).

In his *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756) Voltaire firmly expressed his belief that humanity as a whole would progress towards a more enlightened condition with the aid of reason and education. He was also the first to coin the expression *philosophie de l'histoire* or the 'Philosophy of History'⁴⁶² and one of the first to treat history outside of the Christian framework. Many of the same ideas were expressed by Turgot at the Sorbonne (1750) in his discourse *Tableau philosophique des progrès successifs de l'esprit humain* in extension of his *Recherches sur les causes du progrès et de la décadence des sciences et des arts* (1749) and shortly thereafter in the *Plan de deux discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1751). Turgot also strongly believed in human progress, especially as something driven by a better understanding of the casual mechanisms of natural laws and the human will. Knowledge of such mechanisms would accumulate, he argued, through a secular historical process and thus lead to human perfection. Condorcet's posthumously published *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795) can be regarded as the climax of this very influential Enlightenment idea of progress. Here he argued that the continual development of human knowledge in the form of science would in the future automatically lead to a better society and a higher moral state in which all ignorance is overcome.

essentially a secularised form of redemption inherited from Judeo-Christian notions of history (from paradise to judgment day), see Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 1-19; Hans Blumenberg has however argued contrary to this that modernity and its view of history is legitimate in its own right contrary to Löwith's critique, see Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. by Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983 [1966/1976]), pp. 27-61.

⁴⁶² Vico spoke of the 'history of philosophy narrated philosophically' already in 1725, see Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. of the 3rd edn (1744) by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984 [1725]), p. xxxvi [§1043].

Condorcet's progressivist classification of ten historical periods mirrored this ideal of the advancement of science and made it possible to access the value of each stage from a universal Enlightenment, a-historical, standard in terms of such advances.⁴⁶³ Thus the major Enlightenment thinkers not only cultivated a new interest in many aspects of history and an optimism for the future, but came to view and judge the history of mankind, completely outside of the theological framework, as a single linear process of the progress of humanity and its sciences as a whole, leading from ignorance to enlightenment; a progress which was viewed as analogous to the development of a human being from childhood to adulthood.⁴⁶⁴

An early exception to this progressivist enthusiasm was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who, especially in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) and *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), argued that modern society and, in many respects, the sciences had actually corrupted human nature. He did therefore not regard 'primitive' man and society as inferior. Rousseau also criticized the Enlightenment emphasis on reason in favour of 'feeling' and argued that in order to truly understand any society, one would have to understand the general 'feeling' it expressed.⁴⁶⁵ Especially among German thinkers, these early-Romantic ideas sparked a reevaluation of the qualities and 'feeling' of so-called 'primitive' societies and thus gradually lead to the abandonment of an a-historical, universal, Enlightenment rational ideal upon which one could judge all human progress.⁴⁶⁶

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) was one of the first to adopt

⁴⁶³ See Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 52-53.

⁴⁶⁴ See Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, pp. 53-54. For an overview of the Enlightenment of progress, see John Bagnell Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), pp. 144-77, 202-38; Robert Nisbet, *History of the idea of progress* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), pp. 118-70.

⁴⁶⁵ See Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, p. 54.

⁴⁶⁶ For further details on Rousseau and progress, see Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, pp. 177-91.

this new idea of 'feeling' and thus talked of the 'Volk' or of the living unity, composed of inheritance and language, that binds a people together in his *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-91). Herder thought of human history as a progress towards what he termed 'humanity' and even though Herder spoke of natural laws as factors in this process, the Enlightenment focus on Newtonian mechanics as a model for understanding man and history was here replaced by the idea of divine immanence or the presence of a 'world spirit' working its way through history as progress. Such a living process was thus understood as analogues to the natural organic developments observed in plants and other organisms.⁴⁶⁷ Between this new German development and the Enlightenment thinkers stood the influential thinker Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) who in his *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780) viewed the progress of history as the planned education of mankind; but just as a child receives guidance, humanity is guided by divine revelation until the truths of the divine revelation are perceived and discovered by man himself. Herder's thought inspired significant German thinkers such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854), and saw its culmination in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).

Hegel's organic philosophical system was among other endeavours, an attempt to synthesize philosophy, religion, fine art, science, politics, and history into one comprehensive and interrelated whole dominated by a natural, but spiritual, teleological historical activity.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, according to Maurice Mandelbaum, Hegel's system represents true *historicism* in which everything is part of history, including reason and abstract divine ideals and ideas.⁴⁶⁹ The unity of all of the above aspects of Hegelian thought was undertaken through an understanding of the necessary unitary systematic evolution and development of reason or spirit through (or as) world history. In his foreword to

⁴⁶⁷ See Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, pp. 56, 58.

⁴⁶⁸ This is embodied in all his works, but can especially be seen in the threefold structure of his *Enzyklopädie* (Logic, Nature, Spirit).

⁴⁶⁹ Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, pp. 59, 60.

Phänomenologie des Geistes (1807) Hegel, in accordance with Herder, describes the stages or 'moments' of history and the dialectic realization of spirit by an analogy to the various stages a plant undergoes in its life-development.⁴⁷⁰

Post-Hegelian *historicism* found expression in Karl Marx who, like Blavatsky, was critical of many aspects of modern society. It also found a more subtle expression in a resurgence of the Enlightenment tradition of progress, especially in the work of Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) who, with Isaac Newton (1643-1727) as an exemplar, held that the universe is material and thus sought the laws which govern human history. This represented a challenge to the German Romantics and Hegel. Saint-Simon conceived of man as a machine and argued that as all machines function in a causal way, so must human history. Human progress was to Saint-Simon as natural as the physiological development of an individual human being. Saint-Simon laid the first ground for positivism, having the young August Comte (1798-1857) as his collaborator and secretary.⁴⁷¹ Comte was of course later to break with Saint-Simon and develop the positive philosophy into a comprehensive and influential philosophy in its own right.

Comte began his work, on positive philosophy, by criticizing certain aspects of Enlightenment historiography especially the idea that one could pass judgment on past civilizations based on modern Enlightenment standards. Instead, Comte argued that each civilization or epoch reached its own highest point possible. Everything, however, drives forward which means that there is no retrogression. Humanity as one whole develops through overall stages. He, along with Saint-Simon, termed the first stage the theological stage (subdivided into three stages of (1) fetishism, (2) polytheism and (3) monotheism) in which man does not fully understand the world he lives in and what maintains its

⁴⁷⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. by Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Reinhard Heede, *Gesammelte Werke* [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1980), IX, p. 10. For the idea of progress among the German philosophers, see Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, pp. 238-59.

⁴⁷¹ See Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, pp. 64-65; for an overview of the Enlightenment of progress, see Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, pp. 278-89.

order. Consequently, he imagines invisible entities such as gods and spirits as the cause of order and human destiny. In the next stage, termed the metaphysical, the personified aspects of the invisible causes behind the physical world gradually fall away. This transitional stage is much like the theological stage, but now the spirits and gods are described in terms of essences and substances or general abstractions. In the final stage—modern society in the nineteenth century—we have reached the positive stage of science in which it is realized that man’s intellectual abilities are limited and knowledge therefore must be concrete and empirical. Comte’s philosophy and ideas of progress became dominant in the nineteenth century and can be said to characterize the general attitude towards the present and the past.⁴⁷² Other important fields developed along these similar lines of progressivist thought, such as modern geology, biology, Darwinism and archaeology.

In 1785, the Scottish physician and geologist, James Hutton (1726-1797) presented a paper to the Royal Society of Edinburgh entitled ‘Theory of the Earth’ wherein he argued for the Earth being much older than hitherto assumed. In 1830, Charles Lyell (1797-1875) published his ground-breaking book, *Principles of Geology*, influenced by Hutton’s doctrine of uniformitarianism or the theory that the Earth changes over long periods of time through geological processes (in contrast to catastrophism). This work later influenced Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Among scholars, such as the physicist William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) (1824-1907) and the Darwinian Thomas H. Huxley (1825-1895), these ideas of course led to great debates concerning the age of the Earth ranging from a few million to four hundred million years thus widening the scope of history and its possible progress considerably.⁴⁷³

Biology also underwent major changes with its revolutionary theory of the evolution of species and the new origins of mankind advocated by Charles

⁴⁷² See Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, pp. 65-70; for an overview of the Enlightenment of progress, see Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, pp. 290-312.

⁴⁷³ See G. Brent Dalrymple, *The Age of the Earth* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 14-17; for an overview, see also Martin Rudwick, *Bursting the Limits of Time* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) and Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel (1834–1919). Especially Darwin's works *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* (1871) had a revolutionary influence on society as a whole.

In archaeology new related developments in terms of progress also occurred. In 1836 the Dane Christian Jürgensen Thomsen published a *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed (Guideline to Scandinavian Antiquity*, Eng. edn 1848) in which he proposed the foundational thesis of the three-age system of Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. These ideas caught on fast and led to theories of social progress later combined with evolutionism. An important bridge between Thomsen and evolution was for example John Lubbock (1834–1913) who in 1865 published his *Pre-historic times, as illustrated by ancient remains, and the manners and customs of modern savages*, wherein he added the terms Palaeolithic and Neolithic to Thomsen's classification to make a distinction between the Old and New Stone Ages and also merged Darwinism with human social progress. Among other influential theorists of social progress and cultural evolution was Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), the notable English anthropologist, whose significant works *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (1865) and *Primitive Culture* (1871) gained wide influence. The philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was undoubtedly also among the most comprehensive exponents of social progress and its association with the concept of evolution. Spencer's first embrace of evolutionism occurred in his article 'Progress: Its Law and Cause' published in the *Westminster Review* in 1857. Between 1862 and 1892 he developed an all-embracing system of evolution in his ten volumes *System of Synthetic Philosophy* that explored the progressive development of all aspects of human, biological and cultural domains.⁴⁷⁴

In one way or another almost all major nineteenth-century thinkers were

⁴⁷⁴ For details on post-Enlightenment views of progress, see Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, pp. 171-78; for progress and evolution, see also Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, pp. 334-50; see also Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

deeply embedded in historical, progressivist, evolutionist discourses⁴⁷⁵ and during the nineteenth century history itself, including natural history and geology, had rapidly widened in scope beyond traditional recognition. Blavatsky's works clearly demonstrate that she was aware of many of the above-mentioned thinkers and used the works of many of them. Evolutionary thinkers such as Darwin, Huxley, Wallace, Haeckel, Spencer and to some extent Lubbock are the ones most represented in Blavatsky's works. Other thinkers related to the idea of progress such as Voltaire, Lessing, Rousseau, Herder, Schlegel, Lyell, and especially Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Comte are also used and mentioned throughout her works. A study of the sources used by Blavatsky in her two major works *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) also reveals that she was well acquainted with and interested in works of anthropology, evolutionism, archaeology, geology and history.⁴⁷⁶

Scholars of Western esotericism such as James Webb, Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Olav Hammer, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke and Garry W. Trompf have also all noted that Blavatsky was embedded in this context of historicism, progress, and evolutionism.

James Webb in *The Flight from Reason* (1971) only briefly made the connection between Blavatsky and evolutionism by observing her reformulation of evolutionism in terms of spiritual evolution as a method for reconciling science and religion and restoring man's divine destiny in a time of spiritual and social crisis.⁴⁷⁷ Hanegraaff, in his influential book *New Age Religion and Western Culture* (1996) while dealing with evolutionism in 'The Theosophical Context', argued that 'Since everything (both visible and invisible) is seen as a part of Nature and subject to its universal laws, the theory of evolution emerges as fundamental to all aspects of Blavatsky's thought, whether pertaining to the "physical" or the spiritual domains.'⁴⁷⁸ However, Hanegraaff primarily focused, in

⁴⁷⁵ There are of course notable exceptions, such as Nietzsche.

⁴⁷⁶ See appendix 1 and 2.

⁴⁷⁷ Webb, *The Flight from Reason*, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁷⁸ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998 [1996]), p. 472.

some detail, on Blavatsky's ideas on (individual) spiritual progress, such as after death stages and reincarnation and suggested that Blavatsky's ideas of spiritual progress are primarily situated within a Western framework derived from German Romantic *Naturphilosophie* and especially from Western exponents of progress and reincarnation, such as Lessing.⁴⁷⁹ To Hanegraaff Blavatsky's 'fundamental belief system was an occultist version of romantic evolutionism from beginning to end',⁴⁸⁰ to which she added the oriental idea of Karma by reformulating it in terms of a scientific law of causality.⁴⁸¹

Olav Hammer, in his *Claiming Knowledge* (2001), also acknowledges that 'Blavatsky's writings are permeated with evolutionism'.⁴⁸² Hammer gives a few more details about Blavatsky's ideas of evolution and progress by specifying: (1) that Blavatsky's view is an uneasy mix of progress and cyclic recurrence; (2) that her theory is anti-mechanistic; (3) that it includes a divine plan in history mediated by spiritual beings; (4) that it is non-Christian; and (5) that it is more compatible with Hegel's view of history as it includes a pre-existing plan.⁴⁸³ He also finds that her view is a synthesis of oriental cyclic schemes and modern scientific notions. Hammer's brief treatment primarily concentrates on spiritual and biological evolution in order to demonstrate his thesis that Blavatsky defined her concepts in a 'scientific' manner in order to better legitimize them.⁴⁸⁴

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's concise treatment of Blavatsky in his *The Western Esoteric Traditions* (2008) equally mentions Blavatsky's (or the Mahatma letters' and A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism's*) embrace of evolutionism and its reformulation in terms of spiritual evolution.⁴⁸⁵ Goodrick-

⁴⁷⁹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, pp. 476-81. It should, however, be noted that there is no evidence that Blavatsky actually read Lessing.

⁴⁸⁰ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, p. 473.

⁴⁸¹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, p. 482.

⁴⁸² Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 256.

⁴⁸³ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 256-57.

⁴⁸⁴ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 256-58.

⁴⁸⁵ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical*

Clarke also takes note of this larger cosmology's synthesis of ancient emanationist theories associated with Neoplatonism, Hermetism and Gnosticism, Buddhist and Hindu cyclism with modern Western scientific notions of evolution in its comprehensive embrace of 'planetary, geological, paleogeographical (the creation and disappearance of continents), and biological and racial evolution.'⁴⁸⁶

Garry W. Trompf presents a more detailed study of Blavatsky's embrace of progress and evolutionism in his paper 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon' (1995/1998) in which he, prior to the above scholars, notes Blavatsky's attempt to construct an all-embracing evolutionary cosmology as a spiritual answer to materialistic Darwinism and Haeckelianism.⁴⁸⁷ Trompf considers Blavatsky's theory to be the most comprehensive attempt to date⁴⁸⁸ and is aware of the many historical currents of Blavatsky's all-embracing theory of progress and evolution⁴⁸⁹ and of its many dimensions—though systematically, he deals mainly with Blavatsky's theory of root-races.⁴⁹⁰

While the observations made by the above scholars are undoubtedly correct in many respects they leave the impression that Blavatsky's view of progress, history and evolution only embraces biological and spiritual progress and that Blavatsky's thought, while including ideas of a cyclical history, primarily is oriented towards the future or higher attainments. This is, however, not the case and would fail to account for the meaning of Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge and her ideas of cultural decline and progress. If Blavatsky was exclusively interested in progress, evolution, or the driving forward of everything, why was she so critical towards modern self-assertive claims of progress and superiority and the devaluation of the ancients, as discussed above, and why, at all, was she interested in the ancients if they were merely

Introduction (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 211.

⁴⁸⁶ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 223.

⁴⁸⁷ Garry W. Trompf, 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon', in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, ed. by A. Faivre & W. J. Hanegraaff (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), p. 276.

⁴⁸⁸ Trompf, 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon', pp. 276, 280.

⁴⁸⁹ Trompf, 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon', pp. 281-82.

⁴⁹⁰ Trompf, 'Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guénon', pp. 282-86.

‘primitive’, undeveloped ancestors as nineteenth-century social evolutionism generally construed them to be? Trompf was actually aware of this problem without answering it in any detail.

Her idiosyncrasy has to do with the will to dissolve apparent tensions between the (oftentimes cosmic) ‘primitivism’ of spiritual traditions (the *Mahâbhârata*, Hesiod, Genesis) and newly emergent Anthropological constructions of ‘the primitive’ (Spencer, Tylor, Lubbock). The myth of the Golden Age somehow had to be squared with Science’s contrary projection of dull-witted stone-chipping hominids *in fonte et origine*.⁴⁹¹

As will be shown in the following, this problem was deeply intertwined with Blavatsky’s discourse for ancient knowledge. While her work, especially in its mature period, includes detailed theories of evolution and progress (both physical and spiritual) in relation to the cosmos as a whole, the solar system, planet Earth, the various continents and climate changes, the kingdoms of nature, the seven great root-races, their sub-races, branch races and family races, the human individual and his spiritual nature, the following section will primarily deal with Blavatsky’s overlooked thoughts on human cultural progress and evolution as these are especially related to her discourse for ancient knowledge.

2.2.1.1.1 Blavatsky’s embrace of progress prior to *Isis Unveiled* 1875-1877

In her early articles such as ‘A Few Questions to “HIRAF”’ (July 1875)⁴⁹² and ‘The Science of Magic’ (October 1875)⁴⁹³ Blavatsky sought to show that a comprehensive wisdom-science among the ancients, generally referred to as magic, actually did exist. Thus already prior to the publication of *Isis Unveiled* (1877) in which she continued her project of proving the existence of a universally known and superior ancient science of magic,⁴⁹⁴ her thought was directed backwards in time but, at this early stage, she only occasionally talked of ‘progress’ and ‘evolution’. In ‘A Few Questions to HIRAF’ she for the first time briefly mentioned that there is such a thing as ‘spiritual progress’ just as there is

⁴⁹¹ Trompf, ‘Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guenon’, p. 283.

⁴⁹² HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I (1988) 101-119 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-7).

⁴⁹³ HPB, ‘The Science of Magic’, in HPBCW, I, (1988), 134-43 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, III (1875), 64-65).

⁴⁹⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 623-24.

physical progress.

With our passage into each subsequent sphere, we throw off something of our primitive grossness. Hence, there is eternal progress—physical and spiritual—for every living being.⁴⁹⁵

One year later in an article entitled ‘Huxley and Slade: who is more guilty of False Pretences?’ (1876), wherein she defended the researches of the spiritualist Henry Slade (1835-1905), Blavatsky criticized what she terms the ‘materialistic theory of evolution’ and the Darwinian biologist Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895) for not grasping that there is a ‘spiritual evolution’ as well as a physical one.⁴⁹⁶ She finds Huxley’s arguments for human evolution preposterous, especially when materialistic evolutionists slander spiritualist ideas of spiritual evolution. Blavatsky furthermore argued, as a part of her emerging discourse for ancient knowledge, that modern exponents of evolution should not receive all the credit for this idea, because it is an ancient idea originating in the *Rig-Veda* and the *Books of Hermes*, or as she stated

the doctrine of evolution, as a whole, was taught in the *Rig-Veda*, and I may also add that it can be found in the most ancient of the *Books of Hermes*. This is bad enough for the claim to originality set up by our modern scientists.⁴⁹⁷

It is, however, to be noted here that Blavatsky’s conception of ‘evolution’ was much broader than the narrower Darwinian sense of the term and could be interpreted as a process of unfolding including metaphysical differentiations or the differentiation of one God/emanation/principle from another, which, for example, is seen in religious mythologies. This is, in part, why she claimed that ‘the doctrine of evolution, as a whole, was taught in the *Rig-Veda*’.

Furthermore, Blavatsky added that the ancient idea of ‘evolution’ is actually superior to the modern exposition of it, because it includes the idea of

⁴⁹⁵ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiraḥ’, in HPBCW, I, pp. 101-19 (p. 112).

⁴⁹⁶ HPB, ‘Huxley and Slade: Who is More Guilty of “False Pretences”?’ in HPBCW, I, 226-33 (p. 226) (first publ. in *Banner of Light*, XL, 5 (28 October 1876) 1).

⁴⁹⁷ HPB, ‘Huxley and Slade: Who is More Guilty of “False Pretences”?’ in HPBCW, I, 226-33 (p. 232), see also (pp. 226-27).

spiritual evolution and because it bases the whole great evolutionary chain of being in a first cause.⁴⁹⁸

In her conclusion to this article, her discourse for ancient knowledge in relation to the modern idea of progress and its lack of the spiritual element is clearly seen:

There can be no real enfranchisement of human thought, nor expansion of scientific discovery, until the existence of spirit is recognized, and the *double* evolution accepted as a fact. Until then, false theories will always find favour with those who, having forsaken “the God of their fathers,” vainly strive to find substitutes in nucleated masses of matter. And of all the sad things to be seen in this era of “shams,” none is more deplorable—though its futility is often ludicrous—than the conspiracy of certain scientists to stamp out spirit by their one-sided theory of evolution, and destroy Spiritualism by arraigning its mediums upon the charge of “false pretences.”⁴⁹⁹

At this early stage Blavatsky had already embraced evolution, but also sought to expand it into the domain of spirit, which she found lacking in modern discourse. Furthermore, she argued that the idea of evolution itself was ancient and that the theories of the ancients to some extent were superior to those of the moderns. It was, however, not until the publication of *Isis Unveiled* that Blavatsky’s discourse of ancient knowledge seriously got intertwined with the idea of cyclic progress as a substantial basis for claiming, in some respects, the superiority of the ancients to the moderns.

2.2.1.1.2 Blavatsky’s embrace of progress in *Isis Unveiled* 1877

In *Isis Unveiled* (1877) the idea of spiritual evolution was more fully developed and Blavatsky’s argument that it was an ancient idea was elaborated in greater detail.⁵⁰⁰ In the beginning of *Isis Unveiled*, as a part of her discourse for ancient knowledge, Blavatsky for example wrote

Modern, or so-called exact science, holds but to a one-sided physical evolution, prudently avoiding and ignoring the higher or spiritual

⁴⁹⁸ HPB, ‘Huxley and Slade: Who is More Guilty of “False Pretences”?’, in HPBCW, I, 226-33 (p. 227).

⁴⁹⁹ HPB, ‘Huxley and Slade: Who is More Guilty of “False Pretences”?’, in HPBCW, I, 226-33 (p. 233).

⁵⁰⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xxx-xxxii.

evolution, which would force our contemporaries to confess the superiority of the ancient philosophers and psychologists over themselves.⁵⁰¹

Blavatsky's remarks on evolution in *Isis Unveiled*, which includes ancient theories of emanation and re-absorption,⁵⁰² embraced lawful meta-historical cycles of human races descending from spirit and re-ascending.

The "coats of skin," mentioned in the third chapter of Genesis as given to Adam and Eve, are explained by certain ancient philosophers to mean the fleshy bodies with which, in the progress of the cycles, the progenitors of the race became clothed. They maintained that the god-like physical form became grosser and grosser, until the bottom of what may be termed the last spiritual cycle was reached, and mankind entered upon the ascending arc of the first human cycle. Then began an uninterrupted series of cycles or yugas; the precise number of years of which each of them consisted remaining an inviolable mystery within the precincts of the sanctuaries and disclosed only to the initiates.⁵⁰³

According to Blavatsky these ideas, which were set forth in much greater detail in *The Secret Doctrine*, indicate that once there were times of greater spirituality than the present. Within the above framework of larger cyclical descent and ascent Blavatsky, also in *Isis Unveiled*, launched a theory of cultural progress and, as will be shown below, it is especially in relation to such social progress that Blavatsky found the basis for her high estimate of the ancients. In order to argue against the common notion of modern cultural superiority and the devaluation of the ancients by many of the modern authorities mentioned earlier—substantiated by their historical framework of linear cultural progression—Blavatsky thus construed her discourse for ancient knowledge in relation to an alternative theory that could substantiate her own views. The theory Blavatsky argued for, as an alternative to linear cultural progression, was a theory of cyclical progression.

The following quote is representative of Blavatsky's general view of cultural progress as it was formulated in *Isis Unveiled*.

⁵⁰¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xxx.

⁵⁰² For the relation between emanation and evolution, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xxxii, 7.

⁵⁰³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 293; see also II, 263.

The revolution of the physical world, according to the ancient doctrine, is attended by a like revolution in the world of intellect -- the spiritual evolution of the world proceeding in cycles, like the physical one. Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended.⁵⁰⁴

While this view clearly embraces the idea of progress and thereby is situated in the larger intellectual context of the nineteenth century it also implies that civilizations, including their spiritual and physical attainments, lawfully undergo cycles of ebb and flow or an ascending and a descending arc before humanity continues its progress in new and higher civilizations. The primary sources used by Blavatsky in the establishment of her view of cyclic progression were, as far as can be ascertained: Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis, an Attempt to draw aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions* (1833-1836);⁵⁰⁵ Christian Charles Josias Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in Universal History* (1848-67);⁵⁰⁶ Charles Coleman, *The Mythology of the Hindus* (1832);⁵⁰⁷ I. P. Cory, *Ancient Fragments of the Phoenician, Chaldean, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and other Writers* (1828, 2edn 1832);⁵⁰⁸ Samuel Davis 'On The Astronomical Computations of the Hindus' (1789), in the *Asiatic Researches*, II;⁵⁰⁹ Charles-François Dupuis, *Origine de tous les cultes, ou religion universelle* (1795, new edn with Zodiac of Denderah, 1822; 1835);⁵¹⁰ J. W. Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* (1863);⁵¹¹ A. Schliemann's *Die Clementinen nebst den verwandten Schriften und der Ebionitismus* (1844);⁵¹² Constantin

⁵⁰⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 34, see also 5-6, 283-94.

⁵⁰⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 30, 347.

⁵⁰⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 30-34.

⁵⁰⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 30.

⁵⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 30.

⁵⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 32.

⁵¹⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 347.

⁵¹¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6, 294, 520-1.

⁵¹² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6.

François Volney, *Ruins: or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires* (1795);⁵¹³ and Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788).

Throughout *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky associates the doctrine of cycles with ‘Hermetic Philosophy’,⁵¹⁴ ‘Chaldean Philosophy’,⁵¹⁵ the third century (BCE) Babylonian priest and astronomer ‘Berosus [Berossus, Berosos]’,⁵¹⁶ ‘Kabbalah’,⁵¹⁷ Egyptian doctrines,⁵¹⁸ Hindu doctrines or Brahmanism,⁵¹⁹ Buddhist doctrines,⁵²⁰ and the Bible.⁵²¹ The above outlined sources do not all offer theories of cycles, but in dealing with ancient conceptions of historical cycles, Higgins and others do describe cyclical theories. Contrary to Trompf’s assessment, that Blavatsky did not make use of Hindu cycles until after *Isis Unveiled*—supposedly due to the late translation of the *Mahābhārata*, all of the above mentioned titles indicate that Blavatsky’s early embrace of cyclic theories, though primarily through secondary sources, was not only oriental in nature.⁵²² Hanegraaff argued that Blavatsky’s concept of progress and evolution, especially as related to spiritual progress, was primarily modern Western in nature because ancient oriental cyclic cosmo-theory is circular. While this is correct, it has often been overlooked that the ancients did know of the idea of progress and cyclic progression.⁵²³

Blavatsky furthermore specified that her own time or cultural cycle might actually have begun fairly recently and that modern knowledge therefore is in its

⁵¹³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 347.

⁵¹⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6.

⁵¹⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6.

⁵¹⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 30-31.

⁵¹⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 348; II, 144.

⁵¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 347.

⁵¹⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 347; II, 219.

⁵²⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 347; II, 219.

⁵²¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 150, 294.

⁵²² Trompf, ‘Macrohistory in Blavatsky, Steiner and Guenon’, p. 275.

⁵²³ See G. W. Trompf, *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought: From Antiquity to the Reformation*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 16-17, 216-217; Robert Nisbet, *History of the idea of progress*, pp. xi, 10-46; see also E. R. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress and other Essays on Greek Literature and Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

infancy.

Every true savant admits that in many respects human knowledge is yet in its infancy. Can it be that our cycle began in ages comparatively recent?⁵²⁴

The cycle is truly at its lowest point, and a new era is begun. The earth stands still, and Joshua is vindicated!⁵²⁵

Blavatsky made use of this observation in several cases by questioning how modern authorities can judge the nature of ancient knowledge, as it is found in ancient India or ancient Egypt, when the science of religion, oriental studies including Egyptology, and other modern academic disciplines dealing with exotic cultures are as young as they are. She also argued that much ancient knowledge has actually been lost which makes it even more difficult to understand the ancients, but argues that this knowledge soon might be rediscovered.

though in the opinion of most of our contemporaries, there has been but one day of learning, in whose twilight stood the older philosophers [...] and all knowledge were of recent growth, we will not lose hope or courage. The moment is more opportune than ever for the review of old philosophies. Archaeologists, philologists, astronomers, chemists and physicists are getting nearer and nearer to the point where they will be forced to consider them. [...] Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts long time lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof⁵²⁶

Furthermore she argued that not all nations necessarily undergo the same cycles or arcs at the same time.

⁵²⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6, for many more sources, see also p. 247.

⁵²⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 622.

⁵²⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 38.

These cycles, according to the Chaldean philosophy, do not embrace all mankind at one and the same time.⁵²⁷

Blavatsky used Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* in support of this, especially against John Fiske (1842-1901) with whom she disagreed on several occasions.

Professor Draper partially corroborates this view by saying that the periods into which geology has "found it convenient to divide the progress of man in civilization are not abrupt epochs which hold good simultaneously for the whole human race"; giving as an instance the "wandering Indians of America," who "are only at the present moment emerging from the stone age." Thus more than once scientific men have unwittingly confirmed the testimony of the ancients.⁵²⁸

John Fiske was, according to Blavatsky, against such a view, because as he argued 'we have never known the beginning or the end of an historic cycle, and have no inductive warrant for believing that we are now traversing one.'⁵²⁹ In response to this critique Blavatsky stated that

Professor Fiske might, with profit, read Herodotus over again. The "Father of History" confesses more than once that Greece owes everything to Egypt. As to his assertion that the world has never known the beginning or the end of an historical cycle, we have but to cast a retrospective glance on the many glorious nations which have passed away, i.e., reached the end of their great national cycle. Compare the Egypt of that day, with its perfection of art, science, and religion, its glorious cities and monuments, and its swarming population, with the Egypt of to-day, peopled with strangers; its ruins the abode of bats and snakes, and a few Copts the sole surviving heirs to all this grandeur -- and see whether the cyclical theory does not reassert itself.⁵³⁰

This is one example of the principal proofs Blavatsky offered in support of the idea of cyclic progression, that if we look at all the amazing achievements of ancient cultures that are still visible today, such as the Pyramids, we would not

⁵²⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6.

⁵²⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 6, see also 293-94. Even though Draper did talk of historical cycles in his *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* his view was, however, not one of cyclic progression but one of linear progression in the Enlightenment sense, as Blavatsky also acknowledges by saying 'partially'.

⁵²⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 521.

⁵³⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 521, see also Blavatsky's critique of Fiske's idea that ancient cultures and buildings were primitive p. 525.

be able to judge them to be of a lower order.

To what eminence the race in its progress had several times arrived may be feebly surmised by the wonderful monuments of old, still visible, and the descriptions given by Herodotus of other marvels of which no traces now remain. Even in his days the gigantic structures of many pyramids and world-famous temples were but masses of ruins. Scattered by the unrelenting hand of time, they are described by the Father of History as "these venerable witnesses of the long bygone glory of departed ancestors." He "shrinks from speaking of divine things," and gives to posterity but an imperfect description from hearsay of some marvellous subterranean chambers of the Labyrinth, where lay—and now lie—concealed, the sacred remains of the King-Initiates. We can judge, moreover, of the lofty civilization reached in some periods of antiquity by the historical descriptions of the ages of the Ptolemies, yet in that epoch the arts and sciences were considered to be degenerating, and the secret of a number of the former had been already lost.⁵³¹

Another type of proof, according to Blavatsky, is related to human knowledge and its visible cycles of barren periods and rich periods:

To our mind, no stronger proof of the theory of cyclical progression need be required than the comparative enlightenment of former ages ... Even were other evidence wanting, the ignorance of Augustine and Lactantius, misleading the whole of Christendom ... until the period of Galileo, would mark the eclipses through which human knowledge passes from age to age.⁵³²

This view of historical processes has a legitimizing function for entertaining the notion that the ancient civilizations might actually have possessed a higher knowledge, now lost, than that of a civilization situated further ahead in time, if that culture is at a significantly lower step on its ascending arc. The modern scientific claims of novelty and superiority, which was the main target in the first volume of *Isis Unveiled* and Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge, hinged on cyclical progression, can clearly be seen in her concluding remarks to the said volume.

Although it would seem as if we had already furnished sufficient proofs that modern science has little or no reason to boast of originality, yet before closing this volume we will adduce a few more to place the matter beyond doubt. We have but to recapitulate, as briefly as possible, the

⁵³¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 5-6.

⁵³² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 293, see also 526.

several claims to new philosophies and discoveries, the announcement of which has made the world open its eyes so wide within these last two centuries. We have pointed to the achievements in arts, sciences, and philosophy of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Chaldeans, and Assyrians; we will now quote from an author who has passed long years in India studying their philosophy. In the famous and recent work of *Christna et le Christ*, we find the following tabulation.⁵³³

Blavatsky then quotes from Louis Jacolliot's (1837-1890) work in order to prove how advanced ancient India was in relation to philosophy, astronomical science, mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, pharmacology, surgery, grammar, poetry, music, and architecture.⁵³⁴

Such were the results attained by this ancient and imposing Brahmanical civilization. What have we to offer for comparison? Beside such majestic achievements of the past, what can we place that will seem so grandiose and sublime as to warrant our boast of superiority over an ignorant ancestry? [...] Name to us any modern discovery, and we venture to say, that Indian history need not long be searched before the prototype will be found of record.⁵³⁵

Here we see clearly Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge: that even the ancient cultures, which began to come to light during her lifetime, had actually accomplished as much as the moderns, if not more. Blavatsky furthermore hoped that her own work and the new knowledge which continued to be unearthed about the ancients would lead to a re-evaluation of the ancients, or as she stated:

Thus, gradually but surely, will the whole of antiquity be vindicated.⁵³⁶

In conclusion, it is important to note that Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge in *Isis Unveiled*, while based on a genuine interest in the revival and vindication of ancient knowledge, at the same time was grafted on disproving modern superiority, as well, whereby she actually initiated a reformulation or new understanding of world history, which only grew more and more complex and comprehensive in her writings following *Isis Unveiled*.

⁵³³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 618.

⁵³⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 618-20.

⁵³⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 620.

⁵³⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 621.

2.2.1.1.3 Blavatsky's embrace of progress between *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* 1877-1887

Isis Unveiled consolidated Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge in relation to her cyclical view of cultural progress. In this section, Blavatsky's continued operation within the framework of progressive cycles—as a part of her discursive critique of modern claims to superiority, between the publication of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, and the subsequent significant new developments in what will be termed esoteric history—will be briefly shown. In her article 'A Land of Mystery' (1880) Blavatsky for example discussed the, at the time, rather unknown history of the Americas with an undercurrent argument of progressive cycles.

Having well defined ideas as to the periodicity of cycles, for the world as well as for nations, empires, and tribes, we are convinced that our present modern civilization is but the latest dawn of that which already has been seen an innumerable number of times upon this planet.⁵³⁷

As in *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky here argued that the modern world is not the crown of all civilization, but is actually just at its beginning and that it thus, to a large extent, suffers from amnesia, in this case about the actual history of native American cultures.

There must exist geological and physical cycles as well as intellectual and spiritual; globes and planets, as well as races and nations, are born to grow, progress, decline and—die. Great nations split, scatter into small tribes, lose all remembrance of their integrity, gradually fall into their primitive state and—disappear, one after the other, from the face of the earth. So do great continents.⁵³⁸

In the same year Blavatsky published another article entitled 'The Theory of Cycles' (1880) wherein she thought to have found support for the theory of cycles in the work of the German mathematician Dr. E. Zasse published in the *Prussian Journal of Statistics*.⁵³⁹ According to Blavatsky, the theory of cycles

⁵³⁷ HPB, 'A Land of Mystery', in HPBCW, II (1967), 303-338 (pp. 310, see also 312, 336-37) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 6 (March 1880), 159-61; *The Theosophist*, I, 7 (April 1880), 170-73; *The Theosophist*, I, 9 (June 1880), 224-27; *The Theosophist*, I, 11 (August 1880), 277-78).

⁵³⁸ HPB, 'A Land of Mystery', in HPBCW, II, 336-37.

⁵³⁹ HPB, 'The Theory of Cycles', in HPBCW, II (1967) 418-26 (pp. 420-21) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 10 (July 1880), 159-61). No data on Zasse's

was an almost lost ancient art which had been used by diviners in the ancient kingdoms to foretell the future, but she now found that modern statistic science and meteorology produced some evidence in its support.⁵⁴⁰

Between 1880 and 1882 the theory of progressive cycles and esoteric history was greatly elaborated upon—in private—in the *Mahatma Letters* to A. P. Sinnett and to A. O. Hume.⁵⁴¹ Some of the esoteric doctrinal content of this rich material was rewritten by A. P. Sinnett and published as his *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883) and, as will be shown below, Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) also elaborated on the ideas first expressed in the *Mahatma Letters*. In *Isis Unveiled* the theory of cultural progress and cosmic evolution was sporadic and rather fragmentary, but the *Mahatma Letters* and Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* represent the first major steps towards a more systematic exposition. Especially, letters 62, 66, 67 and 93b (all from 1882) deal with cosmology and cycles and in letter 93b cultural progress is elaborated, as well. Already in letter 11 (December 1880) we find the Mahatma Koot Hoomi Lal Singh arguing that the Mahatmas work for the revival of ancient knowledge from a previous, higher civilization, which will re-emerge by cyclic law.⁵⁴² In Koot Hoomi's first letter to A. O. Hume (1 November 1880) he also talks about history progressing by the alteration of cycles of moral light and moral darkness and that Earth is a battleground between these opposing forces.⁵⁴³

article can be found.

⁵⁴⁰ HPB, 'The Theory of Cycles', in HPBCW, II, 418-26.

⁵⁴¹ 'Mahatma Letter No. 12' (ML-6) (rec. Dec. 10, 1880), in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998), p. 39; On 'ideas' and 'progress', see 'Mahatma Letter No. 11', (ML-28) (rec. Dec. 1880), p. 35; 'Mahatma Letter, Appendix I' (First Letter of K. H. To A. O. Hume) (dated Nov. 1, 1880), p. 474; for major letters on cycles and humanity, see 'Mahatma Letter No. 62' (ML-18) (dated June 1882), pp. 159-62; 'Mahatma Letter No. 66' (ML-14) (rec. 9 July 1882), pp. 171-80; 'Mahatma Letter No. 67' (ML-15) (rec. July 1882), pp. 180-89; 'Mahatma Letter No. 93b' (ML-23B) (rec. October 1882), pp. 308-32, much of the material of these letters was assimilated into A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism* (London: Trübner & Co., 1883), see especially pp. 148-66 on the progress of humanity.

⁵⁴² 'Mahatma Letter No. 11', (ML-28) (rec. Dec. 1880), p. 35.

⁵⁴³ 'Mahatma Letter, Appendix I' (First Letter of K. H. To A. O. Hume) (Dated

In letter 62 (June 1882) it is stated that the ancient civilizations were not only populated by primitive men compared by today's standard, thus a considerable number of highly enlightened minds existed in ancient India, Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome, but modern education is, in a sense, too materialistic and therefore makes moderns unable to grasp the wisdom of the ancients.⁵⁴⁴ In letters 66 (9 July 1882) and 67 (10 July 1882)⁵⁴⁵ doctrines of cosmological evolution are explained in greater details including the Hindu doctrine of periods of cosmic activity known as 'manvantaras' and periods of cosmic dissolution known as 'pralayas'. The letters further speak of our planet as being part of a sevenfold 'string of worlds' or a 'chain' of globes in which Earth is the fourth or dense physical globe and the other six are of more subtle material. Through seven 'rounds' the 'monads' or spiritual entities circulate the 'chain' of globes. The globe rounds are arranged in a circle of spiritual descent and ascent and individual monadic evolution is undertaken through reincarnation, evolving through various kingdoms on Earth including the human kingdom which is composed of seven root races which, as everything else in cosmos, progress through historical cycles. Human evolution is at present focused in the 'fourth round' and the fifth root race on globe D (our Earth).⁵⁴⁶ In the 'fourth round'—the major period we are in now—the intellect undergoes an enormous development and after the mid-point of a 'root race' evolution—passed in the fourth root race—knowledge of physical things increases and spiritual activity decreases.⁵⁴⁷ It is furthermore stated that

In the first half of the fourth race, sciences, arts, literature and philosophy were born, eclipsed in one nation, reborn in another, civilization and intellectual development whirling in septenary cycles as the rest; while it is but in the latter half that the spiritual Ego will begin its real struggle with body and mind to manifest its transcendental powers. Who will help in the forthcoming gigantic [spiritual] struggle? Who? Happy the man who helps a helping hand.⁵⁴⁸

Nov. 1, 1880), p. 474.

⁵⁴⁴ 'Mahatma Letter No. 62' (ML-18) (dated June 1882), pp. 159-62.

⁵⁴⁵ 'Mahatma Letter No. 66' (ML-14) (rec. 9 July 1882), pp. 171-80; 'Mahatma Letter No. 67' (ML-15) (rec. July 1882), pp. 180-89.

⁵⁴⁶ 'Mahatma Letter No. 67' (ML-15) (rec. July 1882), p. 185.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Mahatma Letter No. 66' (ML-14) (rec. 9 July 1882), p. 179.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Mahatma Letter No. 66' (ML-14) (rec. 9 July 1882), p. 180.

Letter 93b (October 1882) provided A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume with greater details on ancient civilizations and the scope of esoteric history in their struggle to understand the occult philosophy. In this letter they were told that different races are in different cycles at the same time and that a race cycle or the cycle of a civilization has an intellectual/material arch and a spiritual arch. While each new civilization forgets former knowledge, this new civilization is actually an inheritance of the achievements of former and overlapping civilizations and races. With the dawn of each new major race in a new 'round' a spiritual being or an avatar, termed a 'planetary', comes to refresh the memories of the new race under the new conditions as to the knowledge known in former periods. In that sense knowledge is something, which, in terms of ideas, is, permanent but is forgotten and then re-memorized through historical cycles.

It is furthermore stated that this present fifth root-race, of which the Indian is the oldest sub-race, is 1 million years old and that human civilizations existed even before that time. Civilization actually began with the third root-race and reached great heights during the fourth root-race that inhabited the fabled continent of Atlantis—still higher than the Egyptian civilization known to history. It is even contested that modern Western history knows close to nothing about the past. Yet the civilizations, which modern history knows something about, such as the ancient Indian, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Chaldean are much older than otherwise thought.⁵⁴⁹

Between the publication of *Esoteric Buddhism* and *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky met with criticism due to her constant defence of the ancients in favour of the moderns. In this period she, and others, defended the historiography set forth in *Esoteric Buddhism*, in relation to cyclical cultural progress, in a long text entitled 'Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism' (September 1883) which greatly expanded her esoteric conceptions of cultural history.⁵⁵⁰ She also wrote on individual 'Spiritual

⁵⁴⁹ See 'Mahatma Letter No. 93b' (ML-23B) (rec. October 1882), pp. 308-313; see also Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 45-65, 122-39.

⁵⁵⁰ HPB, 'Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism', in

Progress⁵⁵¹ and commented in her 'Conversations on Occultism' (1888) on the nature of the present age in terms of the Hindu Dark Age known as Kali Yuga.⁵⁵²

2.2.1.1.4 Blavatsky's embrace of progress in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888)

However, as the Secret Doctrine teaches history—which, for being esoteric and traditional, is none the less more reliable than profane history—we are as entitled to our beliefs as anyone else, whether religionist or sceptic.⁵⁵³

The Secret Doctrine is Blavatsky's most comprehensive work embracing complex aspects of religion, science and philosophy. It was published in two volumes, the first volume in late October 1888 and the second volume most likely in December 1888, containing over fifteen hundred closely written pages.⁵⁵⁴ *The Secret Doctrine* can therefore not be reduced to one discourse alone, but Blavatsky did explicitly define one of its major aims, directly relating it to her discourse of ancient knowledge, in the following manner:

The aim of this work may be thus stated: [...] to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring;⁵⁵⁵

The Secret Doctrine is thus steeped in ancient knowledge, both Eastern and Western. In short, Blavatsky sought to prove in *The Secret Doctrine* that the ancients, at least, possessed knowledge of most of the modern scientific discoveries in relation to cosmology and anthropology; that there once existed a universal Wisdom-Religion and thus to 'rescue' the 'archaic truths' from

HPBCW, V (1950), 139-262 (pp. 163-71, 211-26) (first publ. in *The Theosophist* IV, 12, 48 (September 1883), 295-310); HPB, 'Question VI', in HPBCW, V (1950), 198-210 (first publ. in *The Theosophist* V, 1 (1883), 3-10); HPB, 'Question VII', in HPBCW, V (1950), 227-41 (first publ. in *The Theosophist* V, 2 (1883), 35-44).

⁵⁵¹ HPB, 'Spiritual Progress', in HPBCW, VI (1975), 331-37 (first publ. in *The Theosophist* VI, 8 (1885), 17-21, 54-58, 94-96, 125-29, 160-63, 187-92).

⁵⁵² HPB, 'Conversations on Occultism', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 99-128 (pp. 99-104) (first publ. in *The Path*, III, 1-6 (1888), 17-21, 54-58, 94-96, 125-29, 160-63, 187-92).

⁵⁵³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 267.

⁵⁵⁴ See Boris de Zirkoff 'The Secret Doctrine', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), X (1964), 157-59.

⁵⁵⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. viii.

'degradation'. Blavatsky argued that modern authorities, such as Max Müller (1823-1900), had simply not grasped that ancient knowledge was hidden in complex myths and symbolism that require esoteric keys to unlock their significant contents.⁵⁵⁶ Blavatsky sought to demonstrate this in *The Secret Doctrine* and thereby challenged the interpretation and construction of ancient mythology as 'primitive' by modern orientalists and scholars of religion. *The Secret Doctrine* is in this sense a major statement of her discourse for ancient knowledge, as she continued her comparison and argumentation with the moderns. At the same time, it was her first major systematic exposition of esoteric cosmology and anthropology, which also embraced the teachings previously embodied in the *Mahatma Letters* and Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*. Thus Blavatsky tried to unveil what she believed to be the true significance of ancient knowledge; (1) to prove its once universal existence; and (2) to pose it as an alternative and more full understanding of the universe including mankind and its history. Blavatsky's context for her quest for the origin of the once universally diffused Secret Doctrine of the ancients, as she called it,⁵⁵⁷ will be dealt with below in section 2.2.1.2. The present section will be confined to her argument for cyclic progress, as an alternative to linear progress, and her continued construction of esoteric cultural history, as it was an important part of her discourse of ancient knowledge to show that the ancients were not necessarily more primitive than the moderns, even though everything in the universe seemingly progresses onwards. In *The Secret Doctrine*, more than anywhere else, this aspect of her discourse has two dimensions: (1) the theory of progressive cycles, including esoteric history, which asserts that the ancients did possess higher knowledge, even though they were in the past, because their civilizations, in their own historical cycles, had reached higher levels than ours; and (2) the notion that true knowledge does not really progress, but is timeless and therefore revealed to mankind by higher beings.⁵⁵⁸

The Secret Doctrine is remarkably rich in terms of material and details in relation to progress and evolution, but since many aspects of Blavatsky's

⁵⁵⁶ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xvii-xlvii.

⁵⁵⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xxxiv.

⁵⁵⁸ The second dimension was defined in chapter 2.1.

embrace of this has already been dealt with in relation to her earlier writings above, the following treatment will seek to avoid too much repetition. As mentioned earlier, scholars of Western esotericism have observed that Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* embraces progress and evolution on a grand scale and was thus situated in this specific intellectual context.⁵⁵⁹ This is also evinced in *The Secret Doctrine* by statements such as the following:

The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a higher life.⁵⁶⁰

Hers is, however, not a pure mechanistic Darwinian evolution, but the evolution of a design or a divine plan.⁵⁶¹ Especially the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine* entitled 'Cosmogogenesis' deals with the 'involution' and 'evolution' of spirit and matter on a universal scale in relation to our solar system and our planet.⁵⁶² This is dealt with according to the standpoint of, what Blavatsky perceived to be, the ancient secret doctrine and, in part 3 of volume 1, in relation to modern scientific theories.⁵⁶³ While the cyclical theory of progression, as the pattern of evolution, was established in Blavatsky's previous works, the theory is greatly elaborated upon in *The Secret Doctrine* which states, along with her previous work, that:

Everything in the Universe progresses steadily in the Great Cycle, while incessantly going up and down in the smaller cycles. Nature is never stationary during manvantara, as it is ever becoming.⁵⁶⁴

The Secret Doctrine, however, for the first time construed the concept of 'karma' on a grand scale as the all embracing natural and causal law that guides and balances the pre-ordained cyclical evolution. The philosophical and historical work of Hegel is also, for the first time, invoked in support of the

⁵⁵⁹ See also appendix 2 for the material Blavatsky used.

⁵⁶⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 277.

⁵⁶¹ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 274-78, 281.

⁵⁶² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 27-293. 'Involution' is a word Blavatsky makes use of to refer to the descent of spirit into matter - the involvement of spirit with matter - whereas evolution in this connection becomes the (re)-ascent of spirit out of matter, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 416.

⁵⁶³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477-675.

⁵⁶⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 257, see also 537, and II, 80.

existence of a pre-ordained purpose in history. After quoting from the English translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, Blavatsky states:

The fine philosophical remarks of Hegel are found to have their application in the teachings of Occult Science, which shows nature ever acting with a given purpose, whose results are always dual.⁵⁶⁵

In relation to 'karma' as the law guiding cycles Blavatsky furthermore states

No metaphysician or theosophist could demur to these truths [of Hegel in relation to a purpose in history], which are all embodied in esoteric teachings. There is a predestination in the geological life of our globe, as in the history, past and future, of races and nations. This is closely connected with what we call Karma and Western Pantheists, "Nemesis" and "Cycles." The law of evolution is now carrying us along the ascending arc of our cycle, when the effects will be once more re-merged into, and re-become the (now neutralized) causes, and all things affected by the former will have regained their original harmony. This will be the cycle of our special "Round," a moment in the duration of the great cycle, or the Mahayuga.⁵⁶⁶

Here 'karma' is employed as the guiding law of the historical cycles, balancing out the causes and effects accumulated through history. In relation to Blavatsky's use of Hegel it should, however, be noted that Blavatsky's theory of history and progress is distinct from that of Hegel and other Romantic philosophers of history. For Hegel everything is historical or *in history*, whereas for Blavatsky not everything is historical. As shown in chapter 2.1, 'Theosophy' as 'Truth' is eternal and outside of history and therefore does not evolve or progress. Thus even though scholars, such as Hanegraaff and Hammer, have emphasized the connection between Blavatsky's system of progress and the German Romantics, as shown above, Blavatsky's system is not *historicism*

⁵⁶⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 641. Blavatsky's own reference to Hegel is as follows: "On World History" in "Philosophy of History," p. 26. (Sibree's Eng. trans.), but see G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888 [1837]), p. 26; see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 257.

⁵⁶⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 641 [brackets are mine]. For the relation between cycles and karma, see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 637-38, 642. Hegel's view of history was in fact indebted to Western esoteric traditions, see Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 227-47.

(according to Maurice Mendelbaum's definition of the term, as discussed above). While Blavatsky's progressive history shares the idea of a purpose in history with German, Romantic *historicism*, she, in some respects, also shares the existence of a-historical ideals with the Enlightenment thinkers and is *in fact* closer to the Platonic tradition of eternal ideas outside of the realm of *becoming*. Furthermore, it appears that the oriental law of 'karma', as a natural, harmonizing and purposeful factor controlling history, was adopted by Blavatsky as an alternative both to Hegel's dialectic and the more mechanical law of history as embodied in materialistic Darwinism and other nineteenth-century thinkers' ideas on progress.⁵⁶⁷

In the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine* entitled 'Anthropogenesis', Blavatsky deals with: (1) the major continents,⁵⁶⁸ (2) the geological periods,⁵⁶⁹ (3) the origin and evolution of animals and human root races,⁵⁷⁰ and (4) the history of root-races and civilizations⁵⁷¹ which, according to herself, make up the esoteric history as it is found in the ancient secret teachings; and she critically compares it with modern theories.⁵⁷²

The second volume also offers a major tabulation of calculations of the age of the universe and its various cyclical ages or developments according to the 'chronology of the Brahmins'.⁵⁷³ In relation to these extensive calculations Blavatsky sets out to challenge the geological calculations set forth by Lyell, Lubbock, Wallace and Darwin, among many others.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁶⁷ In addition to this observation it should be noted that Hanegraaff has argued that Blavatsky incorporated the idea of Karma as a blind natural force of universal justice that could function as an alternative to the Christian doctrine of predestination, yet uphold the Enlightenment ideal of personal responsibility, see Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 482.

⁵⁶⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 1-11, 742-98.

⁵⁶⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 690-730, 778-98.

⁵⁷⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 15-185.

⁵⁷¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 191-409.

⁵⁷² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 645-798.

⁵⁷³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 66-70. While this represents the major chronological outline of esoteric history it, in some respects, diverge from other dates given in Blavatsky's writings.

⁵⁷⁴ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 645-798.

Blavatsky's historical account of ancient civilizations generally follows her description of the seven root-races. However, already in the introduction to volume 1, Blavatsky argues that there once existed great civilizations, much older than even the Egyptian, which are now completely lost to modern history.⁵⁷⁵

According to Blavatsky the first civilizations arose during the latter part of the third root-race and were in some respects higher than our civilization, but their great knowledge is now lost.⁵⁷⁶

The man who preceded the Fourth, the Atlantean race, however much he may have looked physically like a "gigantic ape" ... was still a thinking and already a speaking man. The "Lemuro-Atlantean" was a highly civilized race, and if one accepts tradition, which is better history than the speculative fiction which now passes under that name, he was higher than we are with all our sciences and the degraded civilization of the day: at any rate, the Lemuro-Atlantean of the closing Third Race was so.⁵⁷⁷

In Blavatsky's view, this first great stage of human *civilization* (late third root race), which began with a Golden Age⁵⁷⁸ and not a 'primitive state', took place between 18-10 million years ago, according to a rough estimate based on the chronology and data given in *The Secret Doctrine*. The civilizations of the following fourth root race—related specifically to the esoteric history of the continent of Atlantis, the great race that preceded the fifth race, the Aryan race representing our present stage of human evolution—existed roughly from 18 million years to 10 thousand years BCE and equally cultivated high levels of culture throughout that long period of time.⁵⁷⁹ Blavatsky's esoteric history thus presents a completely different view of human history than the one, generally prevalent at the time, of primitive men slowly developing into higher states of culture and civilization.

⁵⁷⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxxii-xxxiii; see also II, 334, 679.

⁵⁷⁶ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 198, 316-18, 429-30, 722-23. The specific reason for the origin of the first civilization will be discussed in section 2.3.1.2 as it relates to the quest for origins.

⁵⁷⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 191.

⁵⁷⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 722.

⁵⁷⁹ See for example Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 192n. It should be noted that the root races overlap each other. The fourth root race therefore to some extent existed along side the third root race.

The construction of such an alternative view of history was, however, fundamental to Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge as it made it possible, in debate with her context, to pose the possibility of 'excavating' an ancient, once universal, Wisdom-Religion from a distant past in a now lost Golden Age. The interconnection between the construction and excavation of history with a superior ancient wisdom that makes a significant part of her discourse for ancient knowledge is clearly seen in the following, concluding remark in *The Secret Doctrine*:

We have concerned ourself with the ancient records of the nations, with the doctrine of chronological and psychic cycles, of which these records are the tangible proof; In dealing with the secret annals and traditions of so many nations, whose very origins have never been ascertained on more secure grounds than inferential suppositions, in giving out the beliefs and philosophy of more than prehistoric races, it is not quite as easy to deal with the subject matter as it would be if only the philosophy of one special race, and its evolution, were concerned. The Secret Doctrine is the common property of the countless millions of men born under various climates, in times with which History refuses to deal, and to which esoteric teachings assign dates incompatible with the theories of Geology and Anthropology. The birth and evolution of the Sacred Science of the Past are lost in the very night of Time; and that, even, which is historic -- i.e., that which is found scattered hither and thither throughout ancient classical literature -- is, in almost every case, attributed by modern criticism to lack of observation in the ancient writers, or to superstition born out of the ignorance of antiquity. It is, therefore, impossible to treat this subject as one would the ordinary evolution of an art or science in some well-known historical nation. It is only by bringing before the reader an abundance of proofs all tending to show that in every age, under every condition of civilization and knowledge, the educated classes of every nation made themselves the more or less faithful echoes of one identical system and its fundamental traditions -- that he can be made to see that so many streams of the same water must have had a common source from which they started. What was this source? If coming events are said to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them. It is, then, by those shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy, that we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them. There must be truth and fact in that which every people of antiquity accepted and made the foundation of its religions and its faith.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁸⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 794.

The aim of *The Secret Doctrine*—as stated in the beginning of this subsection, to rescue from degradation the archaic truths or ancient knowledge—was thus very closely intertwined with the construction of an alternative or esoteric macro-view of history in debate with and in contrast to modern authorities and their construction of the past. Blavatsky's discourse of ancient knowledge was thus interwoven with the very structure of the work, but the fabric itself was partly modern and partly ancient. Her result was an alternative meaning or understanding of the world and thus an answer to what Blavatsky perceived to be the problems of the modern condition.

2.2.1.1.5 Blavatsky's embrace of progress after *The Secret Doctrine*

After *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky continued her interest in ancient knowledge and her discourse against modern claims of genius superiority and their devaluation of the ancients till the end of her life in 1891. *The Secret Doctrine* had now sufficiently established her own major framework for: (1) the theory of progressive cycles, (2) the existence of a universal Wisdom and (3) the scope of esoteric history. Thus, she could now return to a more direct critique of the modern condition. This is especially seen in many of her late articles such as: 'The Struggle for Existence' (1889),⁵⁸¹ 'The Tidal Wave' (1889),⁵⁸² 'The Fall of Ideals' (1889),⁵⁸³ 'Progress and Culture' (1890),⁵⁸⁴ 'The Babel of Modern Thought' (1891),⁵⁸⁵ and 'Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty' (1891)⁵⁸⁶, which all call for moral and spiritual progress in contrast to the material evolution of things of which she thought the moderns were so fond.

In relation to cyclical law Blavatsky actually saw her own work as a part of the revival of spiritual progress—a concept that she claimed her masters worked for or as she stated in *The Key to Theosophy* (1889):

But I must tell you that during the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those "Masters," of whom I have spoken, to help on

⁵⁸¹ HPB, 'The Struggle for Existence', in HPBCW, XI, 150-51.

⁵⁸² HPB, 'The Tidal Wave', in HPBCW, XII, 1-8.

⁵⁸³ HPB, 'The Fall of Ideals', in HPBCW, XII, 33-52.

⁵⁸⁴ HPB, 'Progress and Culture', in HPBCW, XII, 266-79.

⁵⁸⁵ HPB, 'The Babel of Modern Thought', in HPBCW, XIII, 83-103.

⁵⁸⁶ HPB, 'Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty', in HPBCW, XIII, 177-90.

the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. Towards the close of each century you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality -- or call it mysticism if you prefer -- has taken place. Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge and teaching has been given out. If you care to do so, you can trace these movements back, century by century, as far as our detailed historical records extend.⁵⁸⁷

2.2.1.1.6 Conclusion to the modern discourse of progress

This section explored what was identified as the first dimension of modern historical consciousness: the idea of linear progress and how the writing or construction of history including natural history to a increasing extent became tied up with this idea in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the introduction to the present chapter, it was shown that Blavatsky did not find her own time or Western civilization to be at the height of civilization or enlightenment especially due to, what she perceived to be, lack in moral status and spirituality. Therefore, she also disagreed that the moderns are vastly superior to the ancients and thus disliked claims of superiority and the devaluation of ancient knowledge by modern authorities. This ignited her discourse for ancient knowledge. It was, however, also shown that contrary to Blavatsky's critique of the moderns Blavatsky's own work was deeply situated in the intellectual context of progress and that she embraced progress. Blavatsky did, however, not primarily embrace progress as a rhetoric device, but rather used it to construct meaning in relation to her context. Blavatsky scholars have previously noted Blavatsky's embrace of progress and evolution, but her construction of cultural decline and progress has been left unexplored. It was, however, shown that this dimension of Blavatsky's work was central to her discourse of ancient knowledge, as an explanation of how the ancients could be more advanced even if everything progresses to higher stages. In other words, it was shown that Blavatsky was influenced by the idea of progress, but to vindicate the ancients and to prove that they possessed significant knowledge, she was in a sense forced to construct an alternative view of progress. This

⁵⁸⁷ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* p. 306; see also HPB 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 123-36 (p.130); HPB 'The Tidal Wave', in HPBCW, XII, 1; HPB, 'The Cycle Moveth', in HPBCW, XII (1980), 120-32 (pp. 121, 125) (first publ. in *Lucifer* VI, 31 (1890), 1-10).

alternative view was that of cyclic progression. It would make little sense to analyse this stance as a discursive strategy since the intellectual elite argued for a linear progress from primitive to moderns. It made it possible for her, though, to coherently or meaningfully claim in the modern context that once belonging to earlier cycles of greatness a superior knowledge existed. In the development of Blavatsky's thought, it was shown that prior to *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky argued for a spiritual evolution in addition to the physical evolution entertained by the Darwinians. *Isis Unveiled* was her first major statement of the idea of cyclical progression as an alternative to linear progression and her challenge to the idea of modern superiority. Between the publication of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky, in relation to the *Mahatma Letters* and A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*, began the construction of an alternative macro-view of history that peaked in *The Secret Doctrine*. In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge thus became intertwined with cosmology to such an extent that her talk of the ancients became macro-historical and indistinguishable from cyclic progress and esoteric history.

2.2.1.2 The Quest for Origins and Ancient Knowledge

In section 2.1.4.2 of the previous chapter it was demonstrated that Blavatsky's construction of the concept 'Theosophy' was very closely aligned with her concept of an ancient esoteric 'Wisdom Religion', as the source of all religions. Both of her major works, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, were to a great extent occupied with demonstrating the historical existence of such a common source of all religions and in proving that it was this ancient 'Wisdom Religion' or 'Secret Doctrine' that contained the highest truth in its pure form. Blavatsky was thus preoccupied with exploring the myths, religions and traditions of all ancient nations to comparatively prove their similarities. Scholars of Western esotericism have most commonly asserted that Blavatsky's 'Wisdom Religion' was a re-manifestation of the concept of the *Prisca Theologia* as defined by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) and other humanists during the Renaissance.⁵⁸⁸ While this is certainly true in a typological

⁵⁸⁸ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Coming of the Masters: The Evolutionary Reformulation of Spiritual Intermediaries in Modern Theosophy', in

sense, Blavatsky's more immediate intertextual context for her concept of a 'Wisdom Religion' has been left largely unexplored with no evidence to show that Blavatsky, textually, was familiar with the concepts *Prisca Theologia*, *Philosophia Sacra*, (and the related *Philosophia Perennis*) or similar terms used by Renaissance philosophers and classical scholars to describe an ancient primordial tradition of Wisdom.⁵⁸⁹ Furthermore, while many Renaissance humanists sought to harmoniously unify the so-called *Prisca Theologia* with Christianity, Blavatsky's program was rather one of proving the reverse—that there once had existed a pure wisdom before the advent of Christianity and that the dogmas of the Catholic Church in fact were nothing but distorted imitations of the principles of this more ancient wisdom.⁵⁹⁰ Blavatsky's notion of a 'Wisdom Religion' or ancient knowledge could be viewed as a discursive strategy or claim of 'higher knowledge', in Stuckrad's sense, but analysing Blavatsky's discourse in this sense would risk perceiving Blavatsky's discourse as her

Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism, ed. by Andreas B. Kilcher, Aries Book Series, 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 113-60 (p. 114-15); Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 212; Brendan French, *The Theosophical Masters: An Investigation into the Conceptual Domains of H. P. Blavatsky and C. W. Leadbeater*, 2 vols (PhD thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Sydney, 2000), pp. 57, 230-35; Jeffery D. Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement* (Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2012), p. 169-70; Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 390 n32; James Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', in *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, ed. by Richard Caron and others, *Gnostica*, 3 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2001), 471-89 (pp. 478, 484); see also Tim Rudbøg, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's Esoteric Tradition', in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, ed. by Andreas B. Kilcher, Aries Book Series, 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 161-77 (p. 164); for more details on the *Prisca Theologia*, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Tradition', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 1125-35; D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1972).

⁵⁸⁹ Nowhere in her works does Blavatsky use these terms. Blavatsky mentions Marcilius Ficinus (Marsilio Ficino) four times in *Isis Unveiled*, but she criticises him and seems unaware of the wider implications of his work for the *Prisca Theologia* tradition, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 8, 244n, 385, 407.

⁵⁹⁰ See the next chapter (2.3) on Blavatsky's Discourse against Christian Dogmatism for further details.

particular ‘embodiment’ of a common rhetorical devise used primarily by so-called esotericists. Instead, the aim of this section is to historically excavate and demonstrate how Blavatsky’s discourse for ancient knowledge was significantly related to the immediate intellectual contexts of the study of religion and mythology spanning from the early eighteenth century to Blavatsky’s own time.⁵⁹¹

2.2.1.2.1 Origins as a way of thinking

Arthur O. Lovejoy has notably demonstrated how traditional Western thought—from the classical Greeks up to the so-called modern demystification of the world⁵⁹² during the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods—tended to construe the order of the world as a formal ‘Great Chain of Being’ with God or a first principle as the universal source of all.⁵⁹³ This great chain can be viewed as a linguistic superstructure giving each individual thing a specific place in the whole and thus also a specific meaning and value. With the great revolutions in Western thought inaugurated by: (1) the scientific revolution, (2) the gradual secularization of society and history, (3) the increasing, new and better knowledge of other cultures and religions, (4) the great social revolutions, (5) the emergence of the new historical consciousness and (6) the establishment of the modern secular cultural and natural sciences, the great chain of being and the Christian world-view were greatly challenged and finally replaced with new temporalized models of order and origination.

⁵⁹¹ It should be noted that this section will not define Blavatsky’s concept of ancient knowledge or the ‘Wisdom Religion’, since this was already sufficiently done in the previous chapter. It should also be noted that particular aspects of Blavatsky’s discourse for ancient knowledge were part of the esoteric traditions of her day but were from the beginning largely derived from larger intellectual contexts. The notion of an ancient wisdom tradition was therefore not a specifically esoteric discourse.

⁵⁹² ‘Demystification’ is of course Max Weber’s concept, see Max Weber, ‘Science as a Vocation’, in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958 [1918]), p. 155, but see also pp. 138-39, 142.

⁵⁹³ From the eighteenth century the ‘great chain of being’ was gradually challenged by the new historical consciousness and the idea of change leading to the so-called temporalisation of the ‘great chain of being’, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 [1936]), pp. 242-333.

The 'paradigm-shift' that took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a shift in structure and meaning. Western thought did, however, not abandon the general way of thinking in terms of origin, but God was perhaps no longer the *prima causa* or major source of origination in the great chain. New secular chains and sources of origin were constructed in both history and biology replacing the old chain of being. In relation to this, new origins were sought that could replace the first metaphysical principle. The old metaphysical way of thinking was thus translated into the quest for a new temporal order and meaning, which here, as a general thought-pattern, is termed the quest for origins.

The quest for origins can be construed as having one major dimension and several sub-dimensions. The primary dimension, important to this section, is the general 'way of thinking' that correlates origin with essence and essence with truth.⁵⁹⁴ If one could find the historical origin of a thing, a practice or an idea then that origin or first instance was perceived to be the purest or original exemplar and therefore the closest to truth. This constituted the new temporal/historical search for 'origin'. Such search for origin, or for an *original unitary meaning* exemplified by a first instance, is an aspect of logo-centrism founded on the same early and pre-modern metaphysical notion that to understand the origin, or the cause of a thing, is to understand the thing's essence and thereby it's being and it's 'why'.⁵⁹⁵ The great chain of being gradually became temporalized and secularised, but the *diachronic* way of thinking was still a major pattern in intellectual thought from the early eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century when it, to a large extent, was replaced with the *synchronic* way of thinking at the onset of structuralism and post-structuralism. Thus, (1) exponents of materialism sought the origin of everything in matter (2) biologists sought the origin of man, (3) scholars of history and philosophers sought the origin of culture and society, (4) linguists the origin of

⁵⁹⁴ See Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 219-36.

⁵⁹⁵ For critique of logocentrism, see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997 [1967]), pp. 12, 22-23, 43, 49, 74, 78-79, 90, 97, 99, 167.

all languages, (5) historians of religions the common origin of all religions, (6) psychologists and psychoanalysts sought the origin of human nature, and so forth.

Within this abstract intellectual context or way of thinking, it will be shown that Blavatsky's quest for ancient knowledge was not the bizarre occupation of a lone or obscure occultist, but a part of the general way of thinking that permeated the intellectual culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More specifically, this section will limit its demonstration to the quest for origins in the history of religions and mythology, as these fields were central to Blavatsky's quest for and construction of ancient knowledge.⁵⁹⁶ The science of religion and the study of mythology were no doubt related, but for the sake of clarity and because they represent two slightly different intellectual traditions, they will be dealt with separately in the two following sections.

2.2.1.2.1.1 *Origins and The History of Religions*

The intellectual changes caused by the Enlightenment during the eighteenth century made room to explore other possible origins of religion than divine revelation. A century later, among nineteenth-century historians of religion, philosophers and anthropologists, it had already become a common quest to search for the ultimate origin of religion in human nature. Naturalistic and evolutionistic explanations of religion, most prominently expressed by Herbert Spencer and E. B. Tylor came into full force intertwined with the evolutionism of the mid-nineteenth century and the modern academic discipline respectively known as, The Science of Religion, The History of Religion, Comparative Religion or *Religionswissenschaft*—as distinct from theology—was established by the German philologist and Orientalist, Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) and the two Dutch theologians, Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848–1920) and Cornelis Petrus Tiele (1830–1902).⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ This general tendency to think in terms of origins, however, has several other dimensions related to other equally important fields such as biology, physics, cosmology and cultural history.

⁵⁹⁷ Chantepie, who was also the first to coin the term 'phenomenology of religion', for example wrote: 'The unity of religion in the variety of its forms is what is presupposed by the science of religion', see P. D. Chantepie de la

The first steps in the quest for a natural and historical origin of religion were however already taken by the famous Scottish philosopher and historian David Hume (1711-1776). In his *Natural History of Religion* (1757) and *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779; published posthumously) Hume defined his new approach to religion and its origins. In the *Natural History of Religion* (1757) he, for example, argued that he would not be dealing with the original universal *ideal religion* based on *rational principles*, but would rather concentrate on the origin of religion in human nature and history.

It appears to me, that, if we consider the improvement of human society, from rude beginnings to a state of greater perfection, polytheism or idolatry was, and necessarily must have been, the first and most ancient religion of mankind. [...] The farther we mount up into antiquity, the more do we find mankind plunged into polytheism. No marks, no symptoms of any more perfect religion. [...] Shall we assert, that, in more ancient times, before the knowledge of letters, or the discovery of any art or science, men entertained the principles of pure theism? That is, while they were ignorant and barbarous, they discovered truth: But fell into error, as soon as they acquired learning and politeness. But in this assertion you not only contradict all appearance of probability, but also our present experience concerning the principles and opinions of barbarous nations.⁵⁹⁸

Many influential remarks are present in the above quote. First of all Hume initiated the non-theological quest for the historical origins of religion, which he asserted to be that of 'polytheism'. It is also clear that Hume regarded the history of religion in terms of a progressive development from the most primitive to higher stages. In relation to this last point Hume argued that it is unsound to entertain the notion that Religion could possibly have been 'perfect' or of a higher nature in ancient times. This critique seems to have been specifically directed against deist works on the origin of religion, such as Herbert of Cherbury's (1583-1648) work *De religione gentilium* (1663) and John Toland's (1670-1722) *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) that both asserted similarly to Blavatsky that there once had been and still exists an original

Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religions*, trans. by Beatrice S. Colyer-Fergusson (London: Longmans, 1973 [1891]), p. 109.

⁵⁹⁸ David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, in David Hume, *Essays, Literary, Moral and Political* (London and New York: George Routledge and Sons, [n.d.]), p. 515.

universal *rational* and *ethical* religion common to all mankind, which had degenerated through time.⁵⁹⁹ Hume's view was, however, also implicitly against a long line of theologians whose study of comparative mythology had brought them to the conclusion that once there existed an original revelation still present in the various mythologies of the world (see below).

The great German philosopher Hegel, whose view of history Blavatsky generally found compatible with her own, argued in a similar way to Hume, yet on quite different philosophical premises,⁶⁰⁰ that it is naïve to imagine that the first form of religion could have been the most elaborate and highest. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (delivered five times between 1822-1831, first published posthumously 1837) he stated:

It is, for example a widely current fiction, that there was an original primæval people, taught immediately by God, endowed with perfect insight and wisdom, possessing a thorough knowledge of all natural laws and spiritual truth;⁶⁰¹

Hegel's critique was primarily aimed at the claims of Friederich von Schlegel's (1772-1829) *Philosophy of History* (1829). Schlegel's work had been highly regarded and was fundamental to the new science of the Philosophy of History, but much to the dismay of Hegel, Schlegel had asserted quite similar to Blavatsky, that there once had been given a primeval revelation of the highest intellectual wisdom to the first men of mankind.⁶⁰² According to Schlegel this

⁵⁹⁹ Herbert of Cherbury, *Pagan religion: A translation of De religione gentilium*, trans. by John Anthony Butler (Binghampton, NY: Dovehouse editions, 1996), pp. 11-13; John Toland, *Mangoneutes: being a defence of Nazarenes* (London: [n. pub.] 1720), p. 217; in relation to Cherbury, see also Walker, *The Ancient Theology*, pp. 164-93; John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious: or, a Treatise Shewing That there is nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor Above it: And that no Christian Doctrine can be properly call'd A Mystery* (London: Sam. Buckley, 1696); in relation to Toland's Universal Religion, see also Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 66.

⁶⁰⁰ See above in part 2.2.1 for details on Hegel's view of progress.

⁶⁰¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888), p. 11, see also pp. 60-61.

⁶⁰² Frederick [Friederich] von Schlegel, *The Philosophy of History: In a Course of Lectures delivered at Vienna*, trans. by James Burton Robertson

wisdom had, however, degenerated through history or as he stated:

As the sacred knowledge derived from revelation flowed on every side, and in copious streams over the succeeding generations of men, the ancient and holy traditions were soon disfigured and covered over with fictions and fables.⁶⁰³

The distortion of the primeval wisdom that followed thus led to the development of confused religious myths and symbols and to the so-called 'Babylonian confusion of languages'.⁶⁰⁴ Yet, even after the fall it is still possible to spot the common divine elements in the multifarious religious traditions.⁶⁰⁵ Contrary to Blavatsky, Schlegel operated within the Christian framework and argued that the rise of Christianity during the first centuries of the Common Era was a restoration of the primeval wisdom revelation and it is equally the task of the true modern science of history and of religion to recover and reconstruct the true ancient religion from beneath the 'heathen fictions'.⁶⁰⁶

According to Hegel, however, this view was mythic nonsense as the new historical philosophy plainly demonstrates that everything progresses, unfolds and develops including religion—though, like Schlegel, Hegel regarded Christianity to be its highest and purest expression. He in fact constructed Christianity as the fullest expression of religious spirit—but, according to Hegel, religion itself develops through specific purposive stages before it culminates in Christianity and before 'world spirit' moves on to philosophy and thereafter reaches its goal in absolute self-knowledge or freedom. The stages Hegel proposed for the development of religion were: (1) Natural Religion (found mainly in India and Egypt) in which the absolute is perceived in nature and natural objects;⁶⁰⁷ (2) Religion of Arts (Greek and Roman) in which the absolute

(London: Henry G. Bohn, 1859), pp. 59-60. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 198, 351-78.

⁶⁰³ Schlegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 59.

⁶⁰⁴ Schlegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 59.

⁶⁰⁵ Blavatsky also asserted that one could spot the original religion behind the myths, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 449-641.

⁶⁰⁶ Schlegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 60. For Blavatsky's view of Christianity see the next chapter, 2.3.

⁶⁰⁷ See Hegel, *Phänomenologie Des Geistes*, IX, 369-75; or G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J. B. Baillie, 2 vols (London:

is perceived in art(s);⁶⁰⁸ (3) Religion of Revelation (Christianity) in which the absolute is perceived in the true form of spirit.⁶⁰⁹ Unlike Hegel, Blavatsky, as shown above, did not think that everything evolves. The 'Divine Wisdom' in the ideal or abstract sense of the term never changes and therefore has to be implemented *in history*, first as an original revelation and then as a re-implementation when it's conceptualisation has been distorted through the cyclic rise and fall of nations.⁶¹⁰

Here, it is important to observe that in the early phase of the science of religion there were still two prominent views on the origins of religions. One in which the first form of religion was construed as the most primitive form (Hume and Hegel) and another where the earliest form of religion was construed as the highest form (deists and Schlegel). When the origins of religions was construed as the most primitive, elaborate schemes of historical development were proposed and when it was the highest form, the aim of historical science was to uncover and reconstruct the original form of religion from beneath the historical distortions.

The ideas of Hume and Hegel inspired a new generation of scholars in the nineteenth century, such as the prominent thinker Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte formulated his tripartite paradigm of intellectual development that became highly influential. As mentioned earlier Comte argued that human history in general has evolved through three stages. The first stage was the theological stage and it is important to note that this stage contains three historical sub-stages specifically related to religion: (1) fetishism (or

George Allen, 1910), II, 698-711.

⁶⁰⁸ See Hegel, *Phänomenologie Des Geistes*, pp. 376-99; Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, II, 712-58.

⁶⁰⁹ See Hegel, *Phänomenologie Des Geistes*, pp. 400-21; Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, II, 759-99. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel elaborated on the concept of religion and its development and also proposed several intermediate stages, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. by Peter C. Hodgson, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007-2008). It should however be noted that Hegel's classification of the various religions varies according to the year of the lecture series.

⁶¹⁰ See chapter 2.1, section 2.1.4.2 in the present thesis.

superstition),⁶¹¹ (2) polytheism (or idolatry) and (3) monothesim (or ethical religion). The second stage was the mystical or abstract stage whereas the final stage was the positive stage (the nineteenth century).⁶¹² In this scheme of progress, the earliest forms of religion were construed as the most undeveloped and were correlated with superstition.⁶¹³

Herbert Spencer (1820-1904) who integrated naturalism into his progressive scheme similarly argued that just as humanity's social forms have evolved from primitive to civilized forms, so religion has also evolved from a primitive state to a more complex theology and finally to the agnostic standpoint of modern naturalism.⁶¹⁴ Inlaid in this evolutionary process was the modern value-assumption, which Blavatsky argued against, that higher is better than lower because the highest is the *natural* development and course of things. Contemporary 'savages', as Spencer and anthropologists in general called them, were regarded as the key to understanding the origins of religion and culture in the distant past and as the argument sounded: the 'savages' were on the same intellectual level as children and could therefore not have developed any elaborate rational systems of ideas or religion.⁶¹⁵ Blavatsky combated this analogy by arguing that there could just as well have been different stages of culture present at the same time during former historical periods as there are today.⁶¹⁶ Anyhow, according to Spencer with the "primitives" religion generally sprang from their "primitive" imagination when for example they were watching their own reflections in water or when they were reflecting on their dreams. In

⁶¹¹ The idea of 'fetishism' to explain religion was first introduced by Charles de Brosses (1709-1777), in Charles de Brosses, *Du Culte Des Dieux Fétiches, ou Parallèle de 'ancienne Religion de l'Egypte avec la Religion actuelle de Nigritie* ([n.p.]: [n. pub.], 1760).

⁶¹² Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. by Harriet Martineau, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1893 [1830-1842]), I, 1-4.

⁶¹³ Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*, I, 6, 143.

⁶¹⁴ See Herbert Spencer, *The principles of Sociology*, 2 vols in 1 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897 [originally 3 vols: I, 1874-75, enlarged 1876, 1885; II: 1879-1885; III: 1885-1896]), esp. appendices A, B and C pp. 777-849. Here Spencer asserts that religion developed from a primitive state of mind and he criticises Max Müller's theories (see below).

⁶¹⁵ Spencer, *The principles of Sociology*, pp. 834-35.

⁶¹⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 716.

other words, from the idea of ‘another me’ outside of the body came the first idea of spirit(s), ghosts and thereafter of departed ancestors—known as ‘the ghost theory’ of the origin of religion.⁶¹⁷ In terms of the development of religion Spencer presented the following scheme: first the primitive origins in fetishism; then the polytheism of the Hindus, Greeks and the Roman religions; then the monotheism of the early Israelites, the Muslims, the Catholics, the Protestants, the deists and finally the modern agnostics.⁶¹⁸

E. B. Tylor worked in a similar direction when he formulated his theory of ‘animism’. Tylor defined religion in broad terms as ‘the belief in spiritual beings’⁶¹⁹ and ‘animism’ as ‘the deep-lying doctrine of Spiritual Beings, which embodies the very essence of Spiritualistic as opposed to Materialistic philosophy.’⁶²⁰ This belief in spiritual beings is at the origin of religion. Animism, however is, not just the belief in other beings than oneself, but also includes ‘the belief in souls and in a future state, in controlling deities and subordinate spirits.’⁶²¹ The idea of animism began with the so-called *primitive races* of man and has continued its existence in the various religions up till today in a progressively modified, refined and expanded form, or as Tylor writes: ‘Animism characterizes tribes very low in the scale of humanity, and thence ascends, deeply modified in its transmission, but from first to last preserving an unbroken continuity, into the midst of high modern culture.’⁶²² No matter how opposed Blavatsky was to the type of theories developed by Spencer and Tylor; they evince the same quest for origins that permeated the age.

Based on his extensive research of the origin of languages and his interest in German idealism the great scholar and founder of the science of religion Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) formulated an alternative approach to

⁶¹⁷ Spencer, *The principles of Sociology*, pp. 788, 795, 800 808, 813, 815, 823, 836.

⁶¹⁸ See, Gary Trompf, *In Search of Origins: The Beginnings of Religions in Western Theory and Archaeological Practice* (UK, USA, India: New Dawn Press, INC., 2005), p. 34.

⁶¹⁹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 424.

⁶²⁰ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 425.

⁶²¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 427.

⁶²² Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 426.

and opinion of the origin of religion and 'primitive' man.⁶²³ Müller argued against the naturalistic approaches of progressive development because, as he said, there are no half-languages.⁶²⁴ Thus, there has been no slow development of language from primitive sounds and gestures to advanced languages, as the naturalists argued, and since language is covalent with the essence of man's reason, thoughts and ideas, the ideas, thoughts and religions of earliest man could have been just as prominent and well developed in their own way as those of the moderns.⁶²⁵ Müller's approach was thus theoretical, linguistic and historical rather than naturalistic. Therefore like Blavatsky, yet on other grounds, he challenged the analogy between contemporary 'savages' and humans of the distant past.

More and more the image of man, in whatever clime we meet him, rises before us, noble and pure from the very beginning [...] As far as we can trace back the footsteps of man, even on the lowest strata of history, we can see that the divine gift of a sound and sober intellect belonged to him from the very first, and the idea of a humanity emerging slowly from the depths of an animal brutality can never be maintained again⁶²⁶

To Müller, the human intellect had been constant through history and he therefore formulated another history of religions than that of Comte, Spencer and Tylor. Blavatsky was aware of Müller's theories and used them against the idea of descent from a primitive ancestor.⁶²⁷ In Müller's later writings the history of religion and the concept of God was formulated as having three basic stages following a proto-historical stage: (1) the first real stage of religion was, what Müller termed 'Henotheism', represented by the ancient Aryans or Indo-Europeans, (2) the second stage was polytheism and finally (3) the third stage

⁶²³ For an overview of Max Müller's thought and works, see *The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology, and Religion*, ed. by Jon R. Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 1-23.

⁶²⁴ Trompf, *In Search of Origins*, pp. 54-55.

⁶²⁵ Max Müller, *Lectures on The Science of Language* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864 [1861]), pp. 29- 81, 399-401.

⁶²⁶ Max Müller, *Chips from A German Workshop: Essays on Mythology, Traditions, and Customs*, 2 vols (New York: Charles Schibner and Company, 1869), II, 7. Even though the essay was written in 1856, i.e. before Darwin's publication *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, Müller never retracted his view.

⁶²⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 661.

was monotheism.⁶²⁸ These stages were constructed in conjunction with Müller's theory of the 'disease of language',⁶²⁹ in which he criticised the 'ghost theory' of the origin of religion as being only relevant to the secondary phase in the history of religion, which was a mythic deterioration of rational thought expressed by the earliest forms or first stage of religion.⁶³⁰ Blavatsky similarly criticised the 'ghost theory', but did not agree with Müller's reduction of much of ancient mythology to a disease of language because, to Blavatsky, they not only contained esoteric meaning, but also historical truths.⁶³¹

THE study of the hidden meaning in every religious and profane legend, of whatsoever nation, large or small -- pre-eminently the traditions of the East -- has occupied the greater portion of the present writer's life. She is

⁶²⁸ See Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892), pp. 75-76 where Müller states 'After these two stages, which I called *Henotheism* and *Polytheism*, follows in the end that of real Monotheism.' (p. 76) and 'These stages in the development of the idea of the godhead are not therefore merely theoretical postulates. They are historical realities which we may watch in many religions, if only we are enabled to follow their history in literary documents. [...] the henotheistic, the polytheistic, and the monotheistic, representing the different levels of religious thought that had been reached at that early time by different classes of the same society.' (p. 76). For further details on the 3 stages mentioned here see, Max Müller, *Origin and Growth of Religion: As Illustrated by the Religions of India* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1878), esp. Lecture VI 'On Henotheism, Polytheism, Monotheism, and Atheism', pp. 254-309. It should also be noted that Müller used various models of development that often intertwine. In relation to language there are for example the following 3 stages: 'Rhematic', 'Dialectic', 'Mythological' (for this see for example Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, II, pp. 8-9. In relation to major stages in the history of religion: 1. Physical/Natural, 2. Anthropological, 3. Theosophical/Psychological (this division of course follows Müller's three books/lecture series: Max Müller, *Natural Religion* (Longmans, Green, and CO., 1898); Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion* (Longmans, Green, and CO., 1898); Max Müller, *Theosophy or Psychological Religion* (Longmans, Green, and CO., 1898). For a useful overview and discussion of Müller's stages see also Trompf, *In Search of Origins*, pp. 59-66.

⁶²⁹ See F. Max Müller, *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, 2 vols (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), I, 68-70.

⁶³⁰ Trompf, *In Search of Origins*, p. 64.

⁶³¹ HPB, 'The Popular Idea of Soul-Survival', in HPBCW, II (1967), 168-79 (p. 172) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 3 (Dec. 1879), 60-62); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 303-304.

one of those who feel convinced that no mythological story, no traditional event in the folk-lore of a people has ever been, at any time, pure fiction, but that every one of such narratives has an actual, historical lining to it.⁶³²

Finally, in contrast to the naturalists and the evolutionists, several theologians and historians of religion during the nineteenth century held to the so-called 'Ur-Monotheismus' theory. In accordance with the concept of a primeval revelation given to earliest mankind, scholars, such as the German theologian Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) and the noted historian of religion Andrew Lang (1844-1912), claimed that from the beginning of time, the original universal religion common to all mankind had been one of 'Ur-monotheism', but that its original revelation was forgotten by subsequent cultures due to their primitive mental capacities.⁶³³

In this brief section (2.3.2.1) three things were shown: (1) that it was a common intellectual endeavour to seek out ancient knowledge or to trace the historical origins of religion, (2) that Blavatsky argued against certain of these theories such as the naturalistic/evolutionist theories and (3) that influential intellectual theories, similar to Blavatsky, argued that there once had existed an original religion or wisdom common to all mankind.

2.2.1.2.1.2 The Common origin of all Mythology or the Primeval Religion

Parallel to the development of the history of religions, several significant and widely read scholarly works from the early eighteenth century till the mid-nineteenth century, such as Joseph-François Lafitau's (1681–1746) *Moeurs des sauvages Américains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1724); Jacob Bryant's (1715-1804) *A New System, or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology: Wherein an Attempt is made to divest Tradition of Fable; and to reduce the Truth to its Original Purity* (1774-1776); Charles-François Dupuis's (1742-1809) *Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle* (1795); George Stanley Faber's (1773-1854) *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry ascertained from*

⁶³² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 303, see also 304-5.

⁶³³ See Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 44-50; Trompf, *In Search of Origins*, pp. 66-68.

Historical Testimony and Circumstantial Evidence (1816) and Georg Friedrich Creuzer's (1771-1858) *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810–12), among others (see below), dealt more specifically with analysing the history and nature of ancient mythology. To define the intellectual contexts surrounding Blavatsky's quest for ancient knowledge or the 'Wisdom Religion', it is relevant to show that these works all, in their own particular manner, argued that the reason behind the fact, that most religious mythologies and symbolisms are comparatively similar, is due to an ancient common source.

At first the study of mythology was largely undertaken from within the Christian framework (i.e. in relation to the narratives in the *Bible*). The growing intellectual pressure from Enlightenment thinkers, however, caused that the narratives from the Old Testament—such as the story of Adam and his knowledge from before the fall; the great deluge and Noah's Ark; and the Tower of Babel—were attempted synchronised with secular history. Another challenge that caused the new interest in mythology was the growing knowledge of cultures beyond the classical Western ones (Greek and Roman). Renaissance humanists (fifteenth century to the sixteenth century) revived much of the classical learning of the Greeks, the Romans and the Jews. Scholars of the seventeenth century were greatly occupied with ancient Egypt. During the eighteenth century new reports from missionaries and travellers about the strange beliefs in the Americas became available; the wisdom of Egypt and the hieroglyphs were still a major topic; and by the end of the eighteenth-century much material from the great Oriental cultures such as India, China and ancient Persia was systematically translated into Western languages for the first time. This 'Orientalism' somewhat relativized Western religious authority and religious truths but at the same time, many of the myths from various cultures displayed such striking similarities that, to many scholars, they pointed to a common source.

Ralph Cudworth's (1617-1688) *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678 [completed in 1671]) was perhaps the bridge between the Latin concept of *Prisca Theologia* and the new occupation with the study of ancient mythology and Orientalism. The *Prisca Theologia* of Ficino and extensive knowledge of

ancient religions and philosophies informed Cudworth's work in its attempt to disprove atheism (a stance that had become influential in early Enlightenment philosophy) and to prove the existence of a primeval monotheism common to all men.⁶³⁴ Blavatsky used Cudworth's work on several accounts as a source of and authority on ancient knowledge.⁶³⁵ In the same trend, to disprove atheism, several early eighteenth-century scholars such as Joseph-François Lafitau and Michael Andrew Ramsay (1686-1753) furthered the idea of an ancient universal religion. In *Moeurs des sauvages Amériquains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1724), Lafitau sought to explore the most ancient of religions⁶³⁶ and found that all religions, even those of more recent times and of the 'Barbarians', showed such great conformity that they all must be based on the same principles.⁶³⁷ Lafitau believed that once, even prior to Moses, there had existed a common 'system' of a holy religion that had emanated directly from god to the first human forefathers, and that this 'system' thus must be as old as mankind itself.⁶³⁸ The primeval universal religious system, however, became distorted as it was handed down from generation to generation, but at the same

⁶³⁴ Charles C. Taliaferro, *Cambridge Platonist Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), pp. 20-25; Robin Atfield, 'Cudworth, Prior and Passmore on the Autonomy of Ethics', in *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Douglas Hedley and Sarah Hutton, 147-58 (The Netherlands: Springer, 2008), p. 141; Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, ed. by J. L. Mosheim, trans. by John Harrison [3rd(?) edn], 3 vols (London: Thomas Tegg, 1845).

⁶³⁵ See HPB, 'The Eastern Gupta Vidyā and The Kabbalah', in HPBCW, XIV (1995) 167-91 (p. 186); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 159; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 251.

⁶³⁶ Joseph François Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages Amériquains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (Paris: Saugrain, 1724), p. 3.

⁶³⁷ 'Non seulement les Peuples qu'on appelle Barbares, ont une Religion; mais cette Religion a des rapports d'une si grande conformité avec celle des premiers temps, avec ce qu'on appelloit dans l'Antiquité les Orgyes de Bacchus & de la Mere (sic) des Dieux, les mysteres d'Isis & d'Osiris, qu'on sent d'abord à cette ressemblance que ce sont par-tout & les mêmes principes & le même fonds.' Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages*, p. 7.

⁶³⁸ 'Dans ce système, on voit une Religion pure & sainte en elle-même & dans sons principe: une Religion émanée de Dieu qui la donnat à nos premiers Peres. Il ne peut y avoir en effet qu'une Religion, & cette Religion étant pour les hommes, doit avoir commencé avec eux, & doit subsister autant qu'eux. C'est ce que la Foy nous enseigne, & que la raison nous dicte.' Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages*, p. 14.

time as humans spread across the globe they brought the fundamental principles with them even though they were now clouded in distorted forms.⁶³⁹ Andrew Michael Ramsay (1686-1743), who was one of the first to study the Asian religions argued like Cudworth for the existence of an original monotheism.⁶⁴⁰ Especially the second part of his *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un discours sur la mythologie* (1727) was dedicated to the study of the universal principles of the 'ancient theology' in myths of all nations.⁶⁴¹ Similar to like-minded thinkers, Ramsay argued that the original divine prediluvian theology had, however, been distorted through history. He pointed to Plato's theory of three ages and regarded this as a universal notion.⁶⁴² To Ramsay the study of the ancient religions and myths of all nations, in addition to the Old Testament, was important, because the closer one comes to the origin of these the closer one comes to the purest form of religion.⁶⁴³ Ramsay especially found that the religious texts of ancient India, which principally were common to many of the most ancient ideas of Persia, Egypt, China and Greece, perhaps were the oldest.⁶⁴⁴ According to Ramsay there was however one important key to understanding the ancient texts: the ancients divided their religious and philosophical doctrines into esoteric doctrines for the elite and exoteric doctrines for the masses.⁶⁴⁵ The notion of 'esoteric' and 'exoteric' doctrines had been introduced into English and other European languages in Thomas Stanley's *The History of Philosophy* (1655-1662) in which he showed that Pythagoras and others ancient schools of philosophy divided their doctrines into these two

⁶³⁹ 'Il est facile dans ce système de concevoir comment cette Religion ayant été donnée à nos premiers Peres, doit avoir passé de générations en générations comme une espece d'héritage commun à tous, & s'être répandue par-tout' Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages*, pp. 14, 15.

⁶⁴⁰ Andrew Michael Ramsay, *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un Discours sur la Mythologie*, ed. by Georges Lamoine (Paris: Honoré Champion 2002 [1727]), p. 177.

⁶⁴¹ Ramsay, *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un Discours sur la Mythologie*, p. 177; see also Walker, *The Ancient Theology*, pp. 231-63.

⁶⁴² Ramsay, *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un Discours sur la Mythologie*, pp. 177, 200.

⁶⁴³ Ramsay, *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un Discours sur la Mythologie*, p. 210.

⁶⁴⁴ Ramsay, *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un Discours sur la Mythologie*, p. 210.

⁶⁴⁵ Ramsay, *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un Discours sur la Mythologie*, pp. 180, 181.

categories.⁶⁴⁶ Cudworth had picked up the idea from his fellow countryman and Ramsay had now applied it as an important key to understanding ancient mythology. Thereafter a whole range of scholars, including Blavatsky, used it as a way to distinguish between the true ancient religion and exoteric distortions (see below).

In his very popular and influential work, *A New System, or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1874-1876), Bryant chose to base his study of ancient mythology on the stories narrated in *Genesis*, supported by the writings of the 'gentiles'.⁶⁴⁷ To Bryant, as to his predecessors, most, if not all, of the world's mythologies and rites were basically similar and this similarity was due to their common origin.⁶⁴⁸ Bryant however argued that the common religion or mythology originated in historical or post-deluge times with the descendants of Noah's son Ham, or the so-called 'Amonians', who had spread the basic system of religious truths and mythology across the world when they settled there and that most mythologies centred on the story of the deluge.⁶⁴⁹ The descendants of Ham had originally deified him as the sun, thus the Egyptian sun worship of the god Amon was an early deification of Ham, hence the 'Amonians'.⁶⁵⁰ Each civilization that arose after Ham's time might have had its own local formulation of the original religious ideas or myths, but Bryant believed that he through close analysis of the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Canaanites, Helladians, Ionians, Leleges, Dorians and Pelasgi could show their similarity and common origin or as he wrote

to divest mythology of every foreign and unmeaning ornament; and to show, that all the rites and mysteries of the Gentiles were only so many memories of their ancestors; and of the great occurrences, to which they

⁶⁴⁶ Thomas Stanley, *The History of Philosophy: Containing the Lives, Opinions, Actions and Discourses of the Philosophers of every Sect*, 4th edn (London: A. Millar, 1743 [first pub. in 4 vols, 1655-1662, the 4th edn being the most complete]), pp. 242-44, 422, 427.

⁶⁴⁷ Jacob Bryant, *A New System, or, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, 3 vols (London: T. Payne, 1774-76), I, p. v.

⁶⁴⁸ Bryant, *A New System*, I, pp. vi-vii.

⁶⁴⁹ Bryant, *A New System*, I, pp. vi-vii, xii-xiii.

⁶⁵⁰ Bryant, *A New System*, I, p. vii.

had been witnesses.⁶⁵¹

Blavatsky used Bryant's work in her discussions of ancient mythology, but criticised Bryant's notion that Noah was the supposed prototype of all the bringers of the original wisdom to mankind (including all the pagans such as Hermes, Orpheus, Cadmus, Asclepius, the demi-gods and heroes).⁶⁵²

Jean-Sylvain Bailly's (1736–1793) important historical work *Histoire de l'astronomie ancienne* (1775) was the first to propose the idea of an original "people instituteur" who once had instructed mankind in religion and the sciences.⁶⁵³ In his letters to Voltaire he furthermore argued that the common cradle of man was in India, an idea Voltaire also entertained.⁶⁵⁴ The ancient Indians had thus been instructed by the original 'instructor people' in a pure monotheism or sublime philosophy and from ancient India humanity had spread across the globe and brought their common traditions with them.⁶⁵⁵ The original wisdom had, however, degenerated into materialism and various distorted religious cults.⁶⁵⁶ Like others, Bailly, however, believed that the original principles of the pure religion of the golden age and ancient India could be reconstructed through historical study.⁶⁵⁷ Bailly's works and ideas were central to Blavatsky's own construction of ancient knowledge and occult history.

⁶⁵¹ Bryant, *A New System*, I, p. xiii.

⁶⁵² See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 359-60; II, 364, 444, 483.

⁶⁵³ This idea is of course ancient and can be found in both The Book of Enoch and Gilgamesh among many other ancient works but, see also Manfred Petri, *Die Urvolkhypothese – ein Beitrag zum Geschichtsdenken der Spätaufklärung und des deutschen Idealismus*, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1990), p. 120; Jean Sylvain Bailly, *Lettres sur l'origine des sciences, et sur celle des peuples de l'Asie* (Paris: Debure, 1777), p. 204, see also pp. 205, 208: 'Ce coup d'oeil suffirait à un Philosophe comme vous, Monsieur, pour lui démontrer l'esistence de ce peuple instituteur de tous les autres; & je ne conçois pas, d'ailleurs, ce que cette idée pourrait avoir d'étrange. En voyant la génération présente, je conclus qu'elle suit une génération passée: il me paraît aussi naturel qu'un peuple ait succédé à un autre, & que les Indiens, vos amis, soient les héritiers d'une nation plus puissante & plus éclairée.'

⁶⁵⁴ Bailly, *Lettres sur l'origine des sciences*, p. 204.

⁶⁵⁵ Bailly, *Lettres sur l'origine des sciences*, p. 203; Jean Sylvain Bailly, *Histoire de L'Astronomie Ancienne* (Paris: Debure, 1775), pp. 17-18.

⁶⁵⁶ Bailly, *Lettres sur l'origine des sciences*, pp. 205, 210.

⁶⁵⁷ Bailly, *Lettres sur l'origine des sciences*, pp. 214.

Especially in *The Secret Doctrine*, she discussed his ideas and referred to his works numerous times.⁶⁵⁸ Bailly's notions of an original 'instructor people', higher ancient knowledge, India as an early centre of Wisdom, the preservation of ancient wisdom and lost continents all entered Blavatsky's own construction.

The great Orientalist William Jones (1746–1794), who also was a great

⁶⁵⁸ In Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 742-3 she stated: 'In a letter to Voltaire, Bailly finds it quite natural that the sympathies of the "grand old invalid of Ferney" should be attracted to the "representatives of knowledge and wisdom, the Brahmans of India." He then adds a curious statement. "But," he says, "your Brahmans are very young in comparison with their ancient instructors."* Bailly, who knew nought of the esoteric teachings, nor of Lemuria, believed, nevertheless, unreservedly in the lost Atlantis, and also in several pre-historic and civilized nations which had disappeared without leaving any undeniable trace. He had studied the ancient classics and traditions extensively, and he saw that the arts and sciences known to those we now call the "ancients," were "not the achievements of any of the now or even then existing nations, nor of any of the historical peoples of Asia." And that, notwithstanding the learning of the Hindoos, their undeniable priority in the antiquity of their race had to be referred to a people or a race still more ancient and more learned than were even the Brahmans themselves. Voltaire, the greatest sceptic of his day, the materialist par excellence, shared Bailly's belief. He thought it quite likely "that long before the empires of China and India, there had been nations cultured, learned, and powerful, which a deluge of barbarians overpowered and thus replunged into their primitive state of ignorance and savagery, or what they call the state of pure nature." ("Lettres sur l'Atlantide," p. 15). That which with Voltaire was the shrewd conjecture of a great intellect, was with Bailly "a question of historical facts." For "I make great case of ancient traditions preserved through a long series of generations," he wrote. (Ibid.) It was possible, he thought, that a foreign nation should, after instructing another nation, so disappear that it should leave no traces behind. When asked how it could have happened that this ancient, or rather archaic, nation should not have left at least some recollection in the human mind, he answered that Time was a pitiless devourer of facts and events. But, the history of the Past was never entirely lost, for the Sages of old Egypt had preserved it, and "it is so preserved to this day elsewhere." "You do not know which was the best and most handsome generation of men which has ever lived on this earth," said the priests of Sais to Solon, according to Plato. "Only a weak seed of it, of which you (Greeks) are the descendants, is all that remains." "Their books," they added, "preserved the records of a great nation, which emerging from the Atlantic sea had invaded Europe and Asia (Timaeus). The Greeks were but the dwarfed and weak remnant of that once glorious nation. . . ." See also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 264-5.

source of information on oriental religions for Blavatsky,⁶⁵⁹ had also keenly read many of the works of the above-mentioned scholars, especially the works of Bailly, and he repeated many of their observations in his early article ‘On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India’ (1784).⁶⁶⁰ Jones argued that the different systems of polytheism witnessed in the religions of the ancient Greeks, Italians and Hindus (and those of Egypt, China, Persia, Phrygia, Phoenicia, Syria, America and the ‘gothic system’ of northern Europe, which was the same just in another dress), are too similar for them to be accidental.⁶⁶¹ Thus, all the polytheistic religions and myths had a common source, which was not the true primeval religion but a deviation from it, because the original religion consisted of ‘the rational adoration of the only true GOD’, or in other words monotheism.⁶⁶²

The French Dupuis took another approach in his *Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle* (1795). Instead of seeking for a common origin in the Biblical account of Noah or an original ancient people, he thought that all religious myths were derived from common astronomical observations.⁶⁶³ The well-known scholar of esotericism Joscelyn Godwin has noted that

In his earlier *Mémoire*, Dupuis had said that man’s first error—meaning the first divergence from a primordially revealed religion—was embodied in the first inscription on the temple of Isis at Saïs: “I am that which was, is, and will be. No mortal has yet lifted my veil.” He promised that his larger work would develop the theme [...] thus he stands first in the line of self-proclaimed unveilers of Isis, which would include Godfrey Higgins [...], J. C. Colquhoun [...], W. Winwood Reade [...], and H. P.

⁶⁵⁹ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 57, 379, 380, 623; II, 48. Blavatsky was however also critical of Jones’ Christian interpolations of Hindu texts, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxx-xxxi.

⁶⁶⁰ This was written in 1784 and revised later, before publication in the first volume of the *Asiatick Researches* but, see William Jones, ‘On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India’, in *The Works of Sir William Jones*, 13 vols (London: John Stockdale, 1807), III, 319-97.

⁶⁶¹ Jones, ‘On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India’, pp. 319-20.

⁶⁶² Jones, ‘On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India’, p. 320. For more on Jones and his reception of the idea of a primeval religion from many of the above mentioned scholars, see Urs App, ‘William Jones’s Ancient Theology’, *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 191 (2009), 1-125. Part of the material and inspiration for this chapter have been derived from App’s excellent work.

⁶⁶³ Charles Dupuis, *Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle*, 3 vols (Paris: An III [1795]).

Blavatsky⁶⁶⁴

Dupuis' astronomical approach no doubt initiated a whole series of works that sought the original principle of all religions in solar myths and phallicism.⁶⁶⁵ Blavatsky, however, did not agree with Dupuis emphasis that astronomy alone could explain all the esoteric symbolism of the ancients as Blavatsky came to believe that there are at least seven keys to their mysteries.⁶⁶⁶

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Faber the next great scholar of mythology reoriented the quest for origins to the Biblical account in his major work *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry* (1816). Faber like previous scholars and like Blavatsky firstly observed that

The various systems of Pagan Idolatry in the different parts of the world correspond so closely, that they cannot have been struck out independently in the several countries where they have been established, but must have all originated from a common source.⁶⁶⁷

Faber secondly asked how this could have been possible and concluded that it must have been because all nations 'in their infancy of the world have been assembled together in a single region and in a single community' and thereafter they were dispersed to all quarters of the globe.⁶⁶⁸ Faber's main focus was thus on the dispersion and the theology of the gentiles after the period of the Tower of Babel.⁶⁶⁹ Blavatsky used Faber's work and his arguments for a common religion to support her own view of an ancient and universal religion⁶⁷⁰ and also used his first great work *A dissertation on the mysteries of the Cabiri; or, The great gods of Phenicia, Samothrace, Egypt, Troas, Greece, Italy, and*

⁶⁶⁴ Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 32.

⁶⁶⁵ Godwin deals with this extensively, see Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*.

⁶⁶⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 24. See also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxxviii, 155n, 310-1, 318, 323, 325, 341, 363; II, 99, 291n, 471, 517, 523, 632, 795, 797.

⁶⁶⁷ George Stanley Faber, *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry ascertained from Historical Testimony and Circumstantial Evidence*, 3 vols (London: A. J. Valpy, 1816), I, p. vii.

⁶⁶⁸ Faber, *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry*, I, pp. viii, 60-82.

⁶⁶⁹ Faber, *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry*, I, p. ix.

⁶⁷⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 460n, 472.

Crete; being an attempt to deduce the several orgies of Isis, Ceres, Mithras, Bacchus, Rhea, Adonis, and Hecate, from a union of the rites commemorative of the deluge with the adoration of the hosts of heaven (Oxford 1803) as a source of comparative mythology and ancient history, but she did not agree with Faber that the myths of the Hindu's were later perversions of the Biblical account.⁶⁷¹

According to Walter Burkert, one of the last large-scale works to trace the common origin of all mythology and symbolism was Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1810-12, 2nd edn 1819, 3rd edn 1837).⁶⁷² In this work, which Blavatsky admired, Creuzer argued: (1) that the original common revelation was specifically located in ancient India; (2) that the highest form of Greek religion, represented by the mysteries and Neo-Platonism, was derived from India and (3) that popular Greek religion was a degraded form of polytheistic mythology.⁶⁷³ Creuzer furthermore argued that the primeval revelation appeared out of the divine in symbols, however only the initiated wise men or priests were able to understand these symbols. Symbolism was a high state of cognition or realization where spirit and matter still retained their unity just like when we learn directly or in an instant by observing an image.⁶⁷⁴ Only the initiated wise men or priests were thus able to interpret and reformulate the divine symbolism into stories and language or speech for the masses to understand—resulting in the various myths. Thus, the myths have a common origin in the original divine symbolism, but are in reality only the exterior form of symbolism. Furthermore, while the symbols embody

⁶⁷¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 142-3, 264-65, 360.

⁶⁷² Georg Friedrich Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, 3 vols (Leipzig: Heyer und Leske, 1810-1812) [enlarged and corr. 2nd edn 1819; 3rd edn 1837]; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1985), p. 1.

⁶⁷³ Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, I, pp. 208-209; see also *The Rise of Modern Mythology: 1680-1860*, comp. by Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 388; Edward Allen Beach, *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 21-23.

⁶⁷⁴ *The Rise of Modern Mythology*, p. 388.

monotheism, the myths represent polytheism, which is a lower level of truth.⁶⁷⁵ Creuzer, whom Blavatsky called the ‘greatest of the symbologists of his time, the most learned among the masses of erudite German mythologists’⁶⁷⁶ was a great source of inspiration to her. Against the new generation of critics, Blavatsky would use Creuzer’s confirmation of the existence of ancient esoteric knowledge and initiated priests possessing such higher, secret knowledge. His work had in fact sparked a new critical generation of classicists and philologists who would redefine the historical approach to mythology, the classics and ancient religion, such as Johann Gottfried Jakob Hermann (1772-1848), Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1826), Karl Otfried Müller (1797-1840) and Christian Lobeck (1781-1860). Lobeck’s *Aglaophamus, sive, De theologiae mysticae Graecorum causis libri tres* (1829) became particularly influential as it marked the beginning of the modern philology of Greek religion⁶⁷⁷ and for seriously counteracting Creuzer’s most central theses’—that the mysteries were derived from India and that a profound esoteric religion only understood by priests had existed. According to Lobeck such esoteric religion had never existed in ancient Greece, the mysteries consisted of banalities and had not significantly influenced the early Greek philosophers, the Neo-Platonists were charlatans and the Oriental elements were merely later interpolations.⁶⁷⁸ Lobeck’s work thus demystified the ancient religions, especially the Greek, in much the same way as Isaac Casabeau (1559-1614) had historically demystified the history and significance of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, central to the Renaissance *Prisca Theologia*, in his *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI* (1614) during the early seventeenth century.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁵ *The Rise of Modern Mythology*, p. 388.

⁶⁷⁶ HPB, ‘The Denials and the Mistakes of the Nineteenth Century’, in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 224-42 (pp. 227, 228) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, X, 58 (1893), 273-83); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 285.

⁶⁷⁷ Chr. Augustus Lobeck, *Aglaophamus, sive, De theologiae mysticae Graecorum causis libri tres* (Königsberg: Fratrum Borntraeger, 1829); W. Burkert, ‘Griechische Mythologie und die Geistgeschichte der Moderne,’ in *Les études classiques aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles: leur place dans l’histoire des idées*, ed. by O. Reverdin, B. Grange (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1980), pp. 159-207 (pp. 162-63).

⁶⁷⁸ Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, pp. vi, viii, 4-10, 632-33.

⁶⁷⁹ See Florian Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegitus: Hermeticism*

Already in *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky of course responded to this new construction or reinterpretation of Greek religion and philosophy⁶⁸⁰ and she was continually critical of the modern scholarly denial of any esotericism in antiquity and of the low opinion the new generation of scholars held of the ancients. The following potent statement by Blavatsky in the 'Introductory' to the posthumously published third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (1897) sums up Blavatsky's general critique of modern authorities.

According to the modest claims of contemporary authority on genuine Science and Philosophy, the Tree of Knowledge has only now sprung from the dead weeds of superstition, as a beautiful butterfly emerges from an ugly grub. We have, therefore, nothing for which to thank our forefathers. The Ancients have at best prepared and fertilized the soil; it is the Moderns who have planted the seeds of knowledge and reared the lovely plants called blank negation and sterile agnosticism.

Such, however, is not the view taken by Theosophists. [...] It is not sufficient to speak of the "untenable conceptions of an uncultured past" (Tyndall); of the "*parler enfantin*" of the Vaidic poets (Max Müller); of the "absurdities" of the Neo-Platonists (Jowett [and Lobeck]); and of the ignorance of the Chaldaeo-Assyrian initiated Priests with regard to their own symbols, when compared with the knowledge thereon of the British Orientalist (Sayce). Such assumptions have to be proven by something more solid than the mere word of these scholars.⁶⁸¹

Though Lobeck and others transformed the study of ancient religion and mythology and generally banished the idea of esotericism, a group of lay as well as professional scholars of mythology and religion, perhaps less know to

from Ancient to Modern Times, trans. by David Lorton (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 91-114.

⁶⁸⁰ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xii, 'The philosophy of Plato, we are assured by Porphyry, of the Neoplatonic School was taught and illustrated in the MYSTERIES. Many have questioned and even denied this; and Lobeck, in his *Aglaophomus*, has gone to the extreme of representing the sacred orgies as little more than an empty show to captivate the imagination. As though Athens and Greece would for twenty centuries and more have repaired every fifth year to Eleusis to witness a solemn religious farce! Augustine, the papa-bishop of Hippo, has resolved such assertions. He declares that the doctrines of the Alexandrian Platonists were the original esoteric doctrines of the first followers of Plato, and describes Plotinus as a Plato resuscitated. He also explains the motives of the great philosopher for veiling the interior sense of what he taught.'

⁶⁸¹ HPB, 'Introductory', in HPBCW, XIV (1985), 1-16 (pp. 5-6); see also HPB, 'The Denials and the Mistakes of the Nineteenth Century', XIII, 224-42.

history,⁶⁸² continued to argue for the existence of a an ancient universal religion. Thus, Richard Payne Knight's (1750-1824) *A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus and its connection with the Mystic Theology of the Ancients* (1786) and *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology* (1818);⁶⁸³ William Drummond's (1770-1829) *The Oedipus Judaicus* (1811);⁶⁸⁴ Godfrey Higgins' (1772-1833) *The Celtic Druids* (1829) and *Anacalypsis An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions* (1833-36);⁶⁸⁵ Isaac Preston Cory's (1801-1842) *The Ancient Fragments* (1828, 2nd edn 1835);⁶⁸⁶ Hargrave Jennings' (1817-1890) *The Rosicrucians* (1870) and *Phallicism* (1884);⁶⁸⁷ Charles William King's (1818-1888) *The Gnostics and their Remains* (1864, 2nd edn 1887);⁶⁸⁸ Edward Vaughan Hyde Kenealy's (1819-1880) *The Book of God: the Apocalypse of*

⁶⁸² Godwin has dealt with many of these scholars in Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*.

⁶⁸³ Richard Payne Knight, *A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus and its connection with the Mystic Theology of the Ancients* (London: privately printed, 1865 [1786]), p. 14; Richard Payne Knight, *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876 [1818]), p. 3-7; see also Alexander Wilder, 'Introduction', in Richard Payne Knight, *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876), pp. xiii-xxvii.

⁶⁸⁴ William Drummond, *The Oedipus Judaicus* (London: A. J. Valpy, 1811), pp. xxi-xxii.

⁶⁸⁵ Godfrey Higgins, *The Celtic Druids Or, An Attempt To Shew, That The Druids Were The Priests Of Oriental Colonies Who Emigrated From India, and were the introducers of the first or Cadmean system of letters, and the builders of Stonehenge, of Carnac, and of other cyclopean works, in Asia and Europe* (London: Rowland Hunter, 1829); Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions*, 2 vols (New York: Macy-Masius Publishers, 1927 [1833-1836]), I, pp. xx-xxi, 187-90, 204, 234, 308, 444, 518, 533, 629, 699, 700, 731-33, 755, 786, 796, 807, 808, 822, 825; II, 128, 307, 343, 441.

⁶⁸⁶ Isaac Preston Cory, *The Ancient Fragments of the Phoenician, Chaldæan, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and other writers*, 2nd edn (London: William Pickering, 1832 [1828]), pp. iv-vi.

⁶⁸⁷ Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870); pp. 94-104, 334-39; Hargrave Jennings, *Phallicism: celestial and terrestrial, heathen and Christian: its connexion with the Rosicrucians and the Gnostics, and its foundation in Buddhism: with an essay on mystic anatomy* (London: G. Redway, 1884), p. xvii.

⁶⁸⁸ Charles William King, *The Gnostics and their Remains: Ancient and Mediæval* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1864), pp. vi.

Adam-Oannes (1867) and *The Book of God: An Introduction to the Apocalypse* (1870),⁶⁸⁹ Thomas Inman's (1820-1876) *Ancient Faiths embodied in Ancient Names* (1868-1869), *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism* (1869) and *Ancient Faiths and Modern* (1876);⁶⁹⁰ Samuel F. Dunlap (1825-1905) *Vestiges of the Spirit-history of Man* (1858), *Sōd: The Mysteries of Adoni* (1861) and *Sōd: The Son of the Man* (1861);⁶⁹¹ Gerald Massey's (1828-1907) *A Book of the Beginnings* (1881) and *The Natural Genesis* (1883),⁶⁹² J. Ralston Skinner's (1830-1893) *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in The Source of Measures Originating the British Inch and the Ancient Cubit* (1875),⁶⁹³ and Louis Jacolliot's (1837-1890) *La Bible dans l'Inde, ou la vie de lezeus Christna* (1869) and *Histoire des Vierges: Les Peuples et les Continents disparus* (1874),⁶⁹⁴ all represented variations of the stance of a universal religion which had been esoteric and that in order to understand it or rediscover it, the exoteric veil would have to be drawn aside from the esoteric core.

⁶⁸⁹ [E.V.H. Kenealy], *The Book of God: The Apocalypse of Adam-Oannes* (London: Reeves & Turner, [1867]), p. 28, 142-3; [E.V.H. Kenealy], *The Book of God: An Introduction to the Apocalypse* (London: Trübner & Co., [1870]), p. 2.

⁶⁹⁰ Thomas Inman, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names or an attempt to trace the Religious belief, Sacred Rites, and Holy emblems of certain Nations*, 2 vols (London: Trübner & Co., 1872-3 [1868-1869]), I, pp. 141-70; Thomas Inman, *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism Exposed and Explained*, 2nd rev. and enlarged edn (London: Trübner & Co., 1874), pp. xi-xii; Thomas Inman, *Ancient Faiths and Modern: A Dissertation upon Worships, Legends and Divinities* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876), pp. 10-18.

⁶⁹¹ Samuel F. Dunlap, *Vestiges of the Spirit-History of Man* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1858), p. iii; Samuel F. Dunlap, *SŌD: The Mysteries of Adoni* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1861), p. iii, xv; Samuel F. Dunlap, *SŌD: The Son of the Man* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1861), pp. 19-20, 65.

⁶⁹² Gerald Massey, *A Book of the Beginnings, containing an attempt to recover and reconstitute the lost origins of the myths and mysteries, types and symbols, religion and language, with Egypt for the mouthpiece and Africa as the birthplace*, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1881), I, 18; Gerald Massey, *The Natural Genesis: or the second part of A Book of Beginnings*, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883), I, pp. x-xi, 3.

⁶⁹³ J. Ralston Skinner, *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in The Source of Measures Originating the British Inch and the Ancient Cubit* (Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clarke & Co, 1875), pp. 4, 12, 177, 179.

⁶⁹⁴ Louis Jacolliot, *La Bible dans l'Inde, ou la vie de lezeus Christna* (Paris: Lacroix, 1869), pp. 4-6.

The intellectual current(s) these works represented⁶⁹⁵ and the ideas they produced were central to and permeated Blavatsky's own works.⁶⁹⁶ In combination with such works, Blavatsky also relied considerably on the works of the significant French occultist Eliphas Levi [Alphone Louis Constant] (1810-1875). Levi wrote on practical occultism and magic but had also picked up the idea of a universal religion and wrote on the *History of Magic (Histoire de la Magie*, 1860).⁶⁹⁷ Levi had read Dupuis's great work, but argued in *History of Magic* that the common principle behind all religions was 'magic' rather than astronomy.⁶⁹⁸ In his *Transcendental Magic (Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, 1855-56) written a few years previously he stated the following:

Behind the veil of all the hieratic and mystical allegories of ancient doctrines, behind the darkness and strange ordeals of all initiations, under the seal of all sacred writings, in the ruins of Nineveh or Thebes, on the crumbling stones of old temples and on the blackened visage of the Assyrian or Egyptian sphinx, in the monstrous or marvellous paintings which interpret to the faithful of India the inspired pages of the Vedas, in the cryptic emblems of our old books on alchemy, in the ceremonies practiced at reception by all secret societies, there are found indications of a doctrine which is everywhere the same and everywhere carefully concealed.⁶⁹⁹

To Levi this universal and concealed 'doctrine' was no other than 'Occult Philosophy'.⁷⁰⁰ The idea that magic or occultism was a universal religion in antiquity entered Blavatsky's early articles as well as *Isis Unveiled*⁷⁰¹ and

⁶⁹⁵ This will be discussed in the next chapter (2.3).

⁶⁹⁶ See appendices I and II.

⁶⁹⁷ That 'magic' had been a universal sacred science among the ancients was of course also noted by Henry Cornelius Agrippa in the early sixteenth century from whom Levi derived many of his ideas, see Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, ed. and ann. by Donald Tyson (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1998), p. 6.

⁶⁹⁸ Eliphas Levi, *The History of Magic*, trans. by A. E. Waite (London: William Rider & Son Limited, 1913 [1860]), p. 4.

⁶⁹⁹ Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic, Its Doctrine and Ritual*, trans. by A. E. Waite (London: William Rider & Son Limited, 1923 [1855-1856]), p. 1.

⁷⁰⁰ Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, p. 1.

⁷⁰¹ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 110, 118; HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I 141-42; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xxxiv, 18, 25, 414, 624, and other places.

influenced her historical construction of the 'Wisdom Religion'.⁷⁰² Blavatsky was, however, bolder in her claims than her predecessors and contemporaries by asserting that her *The Secret Doctrine* actually contained the original universal religious system, not just a key to it, but a real part of the ancient 'Secret Doctrine'. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* was the actual demonstration and revelation of the most ancient system, which previous generations of scholars had searched for and had tried to reconstruct for over a century. The way Blavatsky substantiated this claim was not only by employing the scholarly key of comparative analysis, but also by asserting that the original 'Wisdom Religion' had only been lost to the masses. Through the ages, it had been preserved by initiates in secret brotherhoods and secretly handed down through history.⁷⁰³ Blavatsky had thus been initiated into such a brotherhood and was in direct contact with members or masters who still had access to the pure 'secret doctrine', the original ancient texts and she had been given the task of explaining parts of it to the world once again.⁷⁰⁴

2.2.1.2.2 Conclusion to the Quest for Origins and Ancient Knowledge

The aim of this major section was to show that Blavatsky's construction of a 'Wisdom Religion' was inspired by a more immediate intellectual context than the Prisca Theologia of the Renaissance. It was demonstrated how the second major dimension of modern historical consciousness, the quest for origins, permeated the study of religion and mythology during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge was deeply, textually intertwined within these intellectual contexts.

2.2.2 Conclusion

In sum, this chapter situated Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge in the

⁷⁰² Blavatsky's conceptualization and wording of 'Wisdom Religion' was however based on Higgins 'Wisdom', see Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis: or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions*, 2 vols (New York: Macy-Masius Publishers, 1927 [1833-1836]), I, pp. xx-xxi, 187-90, 204, 234, 308, 444, 518, 533, 629, 699, 700, 731-33, 755, 786, 796, 807, 808, 822, 825; II, 128, 307, 343, 441.

⁷⁰³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xx-xxvii, 272-3.

⁷⁰⁴ Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Coming of the Masters', pp. 117-36.

context of modern historical consciousness and two of its major dimensions: (1) the idea of progress and (2) the quest for origins. It was shown that Blavatsky, contrary to modern discourse, did not find modern society, culture and knowledge superior to the ancients or more advanced. Blavatsky's dissatisfaction with the moderns prompted her discourse for ancient knowledge or her argument that the ancients were more advanced in several respects and that once there had existed a 'Wisdom Religion'. However, even though Blavatsky's discourse was anti-modern in several respects, she was still highly influenced by the modern idea of progress. It was further demonstrated that to sustain her discourse, in the modern context, of higher ancient knowledge, she had to reconstruct or alter the modern idea of linear progress. This alteration was not done primarily to function as a rhetoric strategy—but to construct meaning. As result, Blavatsky formulated a theory of progressive historical cycles and an alternative account of history to account for her discourse of ancient knowledge. In *The Secret Doctrine* the two ideas (historical cycles and ancient wisdom) finally merged in a grand narrative of cosmology and world history, the aim of which, in part, was to disprove the notion of modern superiority. The second major section in this chapter demonstrated that the quest for ancient knowledge or for origins was a common occupation or way of thinking among intellectuals during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—not just a rhetoric strategy—and that Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge was significantly embedded in this larger context. More specifically, it was demonstrated how the contexts of the science of religion and mythology were the immediate sources and contexts in relation to which Blavatsky formulated her idea of an ancient 'Wisdom Religion'.

2.3 Blavatsky's Discourse against Christian dogmatism

This chapter will analyse the extensive 'discourse against Christian dogmatism' launched for the first time by Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (1877).⁷⁰⁵ During the nineteenth century, in which Blavatsky wrote *Isis Unveiled*, secular forces increasingly challenged Christianity.⁷⁰⁶ However, as Christianity was still the dominant religion in the West, it was impossible for anyone posing new perspectives on religion not to take Christianity and its dogmas into consideration. 'Meaning' is produced in a specific cultural context and in contrast to an 'other' and as Christianity represented the primary religious authority, it followed that Blavatsky had to engage with it discursively.

Like many other intellectuals of her time, Blavatsky chose to challenge Christianity and thereby formulated her own perspectives on religion and Christianity. To date no comprehensive critical study of Blavatsky's relation to Christianity exists, but Blavatsky continues to be regarded as strictly anti-Christian by many influential scholars such as James Webb, who argued that

⁷⁰⁵ It is to be noted that Blavatsky had already privately, prior to the publication of H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877), expressed her critique of Christianity. This is attested by several of her early letters. See *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky: 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 2003), 'Letter 23' (26 December 1872), p. 26, 'Letter 59' (16 November 1875), pp. 205, 212, 'Letter 75' (ca. 6 December 1876), pp. 281-84, 'Letter 77' (February 1877), p. 289, 'Letter 88' (19 July 1877), p. 314. Blavatsky also criticized Christianity for having borrowed its rites from occultism and ancient religions in HPB, 'A Few Questions to "Hiraf"', in HPBCW, I (1988) 101-119 (p. 118) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-37). The 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of Theosophical Society', from 17 November 1875 by H. S. Olcott <www.theosophical.ca/adyar_pamphlets/AdyarPamphlet_No150.pdf> [13 January 2011] continued the critique from HPB, 'A Few Questions to "Hiraf"', in HPBCW, I, 3. While Blavatsky was critical towards many aspects of Christianity in several of her later works this chapter will primarily focus on Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*. However when relevant, it will also trace Blavatsky's continued discourse against Christian dogmatism in her later works.

⁷⁰⁶ For further details on Christianity's exposure to secular challenges during the nineteenth century consult: Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

Blavatsky entertained a ‘vicious anti-Christian bias’;⁷⁰⁷ Carl T. Jackson who suggested that *Isis Unveiled* more correctly should have been entitled: ‘The Horrors of Christianity Unveiled and the Excellencies of Hinduism Praised’;⁷⁰⁸ Wouter J. Hanegraaff continued this critique by stating that Blavatsky’s work contained an element of ‘obsessive anti-Christianity’;⁷⁰⁹ Olav Hammer has similarly remarked that Blavatsky’s attitude towards ‘Christianity in particular was almost entirely negative’⁷¹⁰ and more recently Alex Owen briefly stated that Blavatsky ‘had little time for Christianity (particularly Catholicism)’⁷¹¹ and that it was Anna Kingsford (1846-1888) who was the primary exponent of ‘esoteric Christianity’.⁷¹² While it is true, as Hanegraaff also has argued, that Blavatsky used an ‘anti-Christian polemic’,⁷¹³ the overall picture produced by these scholars could mistakenly be taken to mean that Blavatsky was anti-Christian *in toto*—as has unfortunately often been the case—but as will be demonstrated below such a view of Blavatsky’s work is too simplistic to bear much scrutiny when faced with the complexity of her thought and the historical and intellectual contexts in which she was situated.

In brief, this chapter will trace Blavatsky’s intellectual contexts (2.3.1 and 2.3.2 below) in order to understand what prompted her critique of Christianity (2.3.3 below) and will in this regard also analyse her specific way of constructing ‘meaning’ (2.3.4 below).

2.3.1 The Major context of Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment Critique

The Enlightenment critique and debate of religion as expressed by philosophers

⁷⁰⁷ James Webb, *The Flight from Reason* (London: Macdonald, 1971), p. 46.

⁷⁰⁸ Carl T. Jackson, *The Oriental Religions and American Thought: Nineteenth-Century Explorations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 160.

⁷⁰⁹ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998 [1996]), pp. 450-51.

⁷¹⁰ Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 141, see also p. 143.

⁷¹¹ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 40.

⁷¹² Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, p. 41.

⁷¹³ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 451.

such as Voltaire (1694-1778)⁷¹⁴ and David Hume (1711-1776),⁷¹⁵ among many others,⁷¹⁶ grew stronger towards the middle of the nineteenth-century in what popularly has been termed 'the great conflict between Science and Theology in the nineteenth century'.⁷¹⁷ This intellectual conflict was socially enforced by the breakdown of traditional power structures, industrialization, major social changes, more widespread implementation of regular education, new public freedoms, the success of science in terms of industry, and the continued critique of religion voiced by influential exponents of 'free thought'⁷¹⁸ and

⁷¹⁴ See for example Voltaire, [François-Marie Arouet], *God and Human Beings*, trans. by Michael Shreve (New York: Prometheus Books, 2010 [1769]).

⁷¹⁵ See for example David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, in *Dialogues and Natural History of Religion*, ed. by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993 [1779]).

⁷¹⁶ For an overview see: Margaret C. Jacob, 'The Enlightenment critique of Christianity', in *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660–1815*, ed. by Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 265-82.

⁷¹⁷ Whether or not a great conflict between 'science' and 'theology' has existed throughout history is a complex issue. John William Draper's work, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882 [1874]); and Andrew Dickson White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (London: MacMillan, 1896) are now largely viewed as responsible for distorting the history of the relation between science and theology by construing it as a great conflict and by neglecting the fact that most scientists were also religious practitioners. On the other hand Blavatsky, who had read a great deal of Draper, clearly experienced the conflict as real and many social changes and scientific discoveries clearly did challenge theology and religion during the nineteenth century. For a more thorough overview see: James C. Livingston, 'Natural Science and Theology', in *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology*, ed. by David Fergusson (Chichester, U.K. and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 141-64; John Brooke and Geoffrey Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science & Religion* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); Peter Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion: The Debate in Early Twentieth Century Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001); *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* ed. by David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

⁷¹⁸ For an overview of 'free thought' and its influence see: Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: a history of American secularism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Edward Royle, *Victorian Infidels: the origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791–1866* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974); Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans:*

philosophers such as Auguste Comte (1798-1857),⁷¹⁹ Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-1872),⁷²⁰ and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903).⁷²¹ When Charles Darwin (1809-1882) finally and innovatively questioned the divine origin of man by pointing to a biological origin and genealogy, the conflict between religion and science became marked.⁷²² Blavatsky lived in the midst of this eventful context and clearly perceived the conflict between the two to be real and relevant to a better understanding of truth and reality.⁷²³

Between these two conflicting Titans—Science and Theology—is a bewildered public, fast losing all belief in man's personal immortality, in a deity of any kind, and rapidly descending to the level of a mere animal

popular freethought in Britain, 1866–1915 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980); David Tribe, *100 Years of Freethought* (London: Elek Books, 1967); John Mackinnon Robertson, *A History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Watts & Co., 1929); Adam Storey Farrar, *A critical history of free thought in reference to the Christian religion* (New York: D. Appleton, 1863).

⁷¹⁹ For Comte's general scheme including his view of religion see Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. by Harriet Martineau, 3rd edn (London: Kegan Paul Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1893 [1830-1842]), pp. 1-4.

⁷²⁰ Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1841).

⁷²¹ See Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1906 [1874-1875]), I, 3-395.

⁷²² See James Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggles to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 193-353. See also Frank Turner, *Between Science and Religion: the reaction to scientific naturalism in late Victorian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

⁷²³ Blavatsky mentioned this conflict throughout her works and it is clearly reflected in the titles of her two major works: *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols, in which volume 1 is entitled 'Science' and volume two 'Theology'; and *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 2 vols (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1888). For Blavatsky's experience of the growing secularisation and how it undermined Christianity, see *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky: 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 75' (ca. 6 December 1876), p. 282; HPB, 'The State of Christianity', in HPBCW, II, 378-82 (pp. 379, 381) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 7, (1880), 181); HPB, 'Lucifer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 268-83 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 4, (1887), 242-51); HPB, 'Our Christian XIXth Century Ethics', in HPBCW, X (1988), 81-88 (p. 81) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 12, (1888), 482-84).

existence. Such is the picture of the hour, illumined by the bright noonday sun of this Christian and scientific era!⁷²⁴

Blavatsky had read the works of many of the influential post-Enlightenment thinkers such as Comte and Spencer and much of Blavatsky's critique of the Christian institutions and dogmas were, as Joscelyn Godwin has suggested, largely a result of the 'skeptical Enlightenment'⁷²⁵ and the influence of the broader post-Enlightenment context. But Blavatsky was simultaneously critical of the secular changes and worried about the demise of spirituality in their wake. Thus her partial embrace of the Enlightenment resulted in an attempt to transform what religion is (or to discover its true nature) rather than question its value altogether, as did other intellectuals at the time, such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900).⁷²⁶ Blavatsky sought rather to restore religion to what she believed to be its true basis than to discard it.

2.3.1.1 The embrace of Enlightenment critique and free thought

It is not alone for the esoteric philosophy that we fight; nor for any modern system of moral philosophy, but for the inalienable right of private judgment, and especially for the ennobling idea of a future life of activity and accountability.⁷²⁷

In the preface to each of the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled* and in the introduction to volume one entitled 'Before the Veil' Blavatsky's general tone or rhetorical style is clearly that of the Enlightenment. Blavatsky speaks of the importance of how well the public will receive her work, which asserts a certain disregard for the opinions of traditional authorities, and the aim of the work is defined as a defence of Truth and to dethrone institutionalized error and false authorities.⁷²⁸ This was to be accomplished in an intellectual manner submitting to modern academic standards including references, footnotes, etc.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. x.

⁷²⁵ Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), p. xi.

⁷²⁶ For Nietzsche's critique of religion see especially Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (Leipzig: C. G. Naumann, 1886); Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift* (Leipzig: C. G. Naumann, 1887).

⁷²⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 120.

⁷²⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. vi.

⁷²⁹ Blavatsky was as an occultist author and rather exceptional in this regard,

Blavatsky supported 'free thought'⁷³⁰ and was concerned about the possible constraints on 'public opinion' due to what she perceived to be reactionary forces in society such as the Christian Church(s).⁷³¹ For example, in the preface to volume two she clearly stated that while the said volume deals with 'religious beliefs in general' its aim is 'in particular directed against theological Christianity, the chief opponent of free thought.'⁷³²

By 'theological Christianity' Blavatsky in fact most often meant the Roman Catholic Church or as she stated

We cast our gauntlet at the dogmatic theologians who would enslave both history and science; and especially at the Vatican, whose despotic pretensions have become hateful to the greater portion of enlightened Christendom.⁷³³

Blavatsky thus viewed 'theological Christianity' as retarding the development of free thought, which is clearly a new secular development in Western esotericism, which to a considerable extent, up to this time, operated within a Christian framework (in other words the debate was here whether Christianity was suitable to the cultural evolution of mankind rather than whether the Christian doctrines should be interpreted in a literal or spiritual manner). The 'theological Christianity' criticised by Blavatsky did however not, as remarked, include all of Christianity but particularly the Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy. In the preface to volume one Blavatsky for example in addition to the above critique disapprovingly expressed that the Pope (Pius IX, 1846-1878)

even though some of the great humanists during the Renaissance—who have also been categorized as esotericists, such as Henry Cornelius Agrippa and Marsilio Ficino—also used a similar scholarly approach.

⁷³⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. iv; see also Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 292; Stephen R. Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 64. Blavatsky, at times, spoke as a supporter of free thought; an intellectual current she regarded the Church to have unconsciously produced as a reaction to its own cruelty; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 27n. It is however important to note that Blavatsky did not agree with the atheistic and materialistic standpoint entertained by many 'freethinkers'.

⁷³¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. vii.

⁷³² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. iv.

⁷³³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. iv.

was against the liberty of press and of free speech⁷³⁴ and that he undermined civilized social order via his corrupt and bigoted network of agents.⁷³⁵ Blavatsky thus clearly in an Enlightenment manner viewed institutionalized Christianity (especially the Roman Catholic Church) as a reactionary movement hindering the progress of ‘free thought’, science, and Culture.⁷³⁶ This furious critique of The Vatican, the Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy extends throughout her writings.⁷³⁷ It is, however, important here to briefly note that Blavatsky did not criticize Christianity *in toto*. She clearly made a distinction, common in the critical scholarly milieu of the nineteenth century and early twentieth-century, between the teachings of the so-called historical Jesus and later Christian theology or ‘Church-Christianity’ and ‘Churchianity’ as Blavatsky often termed it.⁷³⁸ In the preface to the second volume of *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky stated that her critique does not contain ‘one word against the pure teachings of Jesus’.⁷³⁹

Blavatsky was thus opposed to Christian theology and dogmas, not the gospel account of the life and sayings of Jesus, for which she generally had

⁷³⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. vii.

⁷³⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. ix.

⁷³⁶ Godwin has also pointed to the context of Enlightenment criticism of Christianity as a context for Blavatsky’s so called anti-Christianity, Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 292, 305.

⁷³⁷ It is difficult to point to one specific work by Blavatsky for her criticism of the Catholic Church as she does so sporadically in many of her larger and lesser works, but see for example HPB ‘Star Angel Worship in the Roman Catholic Church’, in HPBCW, X, 13-32 (p. 13-24) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 11 (1888), 355-65); HPB ‘[Unsupported Claims of the Roman Catholic Church]’, in HPBCW, IX (1986), 339-41 (p. 339) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 10 (1888), 337-39); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xlv.

⁷³⁸ Blavatsky states that she has derived the concept ‘Churchianity’ from ‘Lawrence [Laurence] Oliphant’ (1829-1888), Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 479, but the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by John Simpson, 2nd edn (CD Rom (v. 4.0), Oxford University Press, 2009) traces the coinage of ‘Churchianity’ to B. Barton, 1837. For Blavatsky’s usage see also HPB, ‘Answers to Queries’, in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 292-99 (p. 296) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 4 (1887), 325-28); HPB, ‘The Secret Doctrine’, in HPBCW, X (1988), 243-45 (p. 243) (first publ. in *Light*, VIII, 416 (1888), 634); HPB, ‘The “Nine-Days’ Wonder” Press’, in HPBCW, XI (1973), 366-377 (p. 377) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, IV, 24 (1889), 441-49); HPB, ‘Going to and fro in the Earth’, in HPBCW, XII (1987), 27-30 (p. 28) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 27 (1889), 251-54); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 748.

⁷³⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. iv.

high respect.⁷⁴⁰

On a more optimistic note Blavatsky however sensed that some positive progress had already been made in the battle between Enlightenment discourse and the Church.

The contest now going on between the party of public conscience and the party of reaction, has already developed a healthier tone of thought. It will hardly fail to result ultimately in the overthrow of error and the triumph of Truth. We repeat again—we are laboring for the brighter morrow.⁷⁴¹

Blavatsky clearly embraced the Enlightenment tradition and to some extent saw herself as a part of the battle between Science and Theology. Her vision for the future and the mission expressed in her work was, however, more in the direction of a restitution of what she perceived to be the ancient universal wisdom religion and also what later was defined as a ‘universal brotherhood of man’ rather than an agnostic society based on free enterprise and materialism.⁷⁴²

2.3.1.2. Blavatsky’s critique of secularization

The increasing secularization of society, the demystification or ‘Entzauberung’ of the world, as the great sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) termed it,⁷⁴³ and

⁷⁴⁰ Blavatsky’s view of Jesus (and of the Christ) is complex but see section 2.4.4 in this chapter and HPB, ‘Facts Underlying Adept Biographies’, in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 137-62 (pp. 137-55); HPB, ‘Notes on the Gospel According to John’, in HPBCW, XI (1973), 482-503 (pp. 493-503) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, XI, 66 (1893), 449-56); HPB, ‘Misconceptions: Reply to the Article “Révolution,” by Aleph, in the *Revue du Mouvement Social*’, in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 70-91 (p.76) (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, I, 6 (1887), 321-38); HPB, ‘On Pseudo-Theosophy’, in HPBCW, XI (1973), 45-61 (p. 61) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, IV, 19 (1889), 1-12); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 577-78; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 33; *Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 75’ (ca. 6 December 1876), pp. 282-83; *Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 88’ (19 July [1877]), p. 315; Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age*, p. 143; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 292.

⁷⁴¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. viii.

⁷⁴² See chapter 2.1 and chapter 2.7 on the universal brotherhood in the present thesis.

⁷⁴³ Max Weber, ‘Science as a Vocation’, in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958 [1918]), pp. 138-39, 142, 155.

the growing materialism were all causes of what Blavatsky, like many others at the time such as the spiritualists, esotericists, utopists, and religious conservatives,⁷⁴⁴ perceived to be a general loss of genuine spiritual aspirations or religious meaning.⁷⁴⁵ Blavatsky felt that something needed to be done in order to counter this development and secure the survival of what she conceived to be the true essence of religion. Blavatsky and her work *Isis Unveiled* were opposed to Christian dogmatism, Catholicism and theology, but not religion.⁷⁴⁶ In this sense Blavatsky's project is a direct response to the process of secularization. The Christian Church, as the major religious authority in the West was not only a corrupt and distorted form of religion in Blavatsky's view, mirroring Enlightenment critique, but also appeared to be incompetent in the urgently necessary battle against materialism.⁷⁴⁷ In relation to this concern Blavatsky wrote

To prevent the crushing of these spiritual aspirations, the blighting of these hopes, and the deadening of that intuition which teaches us of a God and a hereafter, we must show our false theologies in their naked deformity, and **distinguish between divine religion and human dogmas**. Our voice is raised for spiritual freedom, and our plea made for enfranchisement from all tyranny, whether of SCIENCE or THEOLOGY.⁷⁴⁸

The challenge, which secular materialism continually offered to spirituality, thus prompted Blavatsky to fight for spiritual rather than secular enlightenment and to develop ways to distinguish between that which she

⁷⁴⁴ See for example *Victorian Faith in Crisis: essays on continuity and change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief*, ed. by Richard J. Helmstadter and Bernard Lightman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990) and Inga Sanner, *Att älska sin nästa såsom sig själv: Om moraliska utopier under 1800-talet* (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 1995).

⁷⁴⁵ Blavatsky's concern for the survival of true spirituality goes hand in hand with her *Zivilisationskritik* previously discussed in chapter 2.2.

⁷⁴⁶ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 75' (ca. 6 December 1876), pp. 282-83; an interview with Blavatsky in 'Introduction to 'Letter 78'', p. 290; 'Letter 88' (19 July [1877]), p. 315.

⁷⁴⁷ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. ix. See also HPB, 'Answers to Queries', in HPBCW, VIII, (1990), 292-99 (p. 296) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 4 (1887), 325-28); J. Jeffrey Franklin, *The Lotus and the Lion: Buddhism and the British Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 66.

⁷⁴⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xlv [bold emphasis is mine]; see also Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 3.

perceived to be the divine or true in religion and the merely humanly constructed dogmas.⁷⁴⁹ Such a distinction between divine and human religion could help rescue religion from ridicule and demise by convincingly stripping religion and its dogmas of all that was conceived to be superstitious (in the view of Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment critique) and on the other hand find those divine elements that could be asserted to be rational, (even anticipating modern scientific discoveries and be superior to the theories of modern science).⁷⁵⁰ Then again religion and spirituality could regain 'meaning' and 'truth value' in a time of religious critique and crisis.

In her attempt to accomplish this task of deconstructing, comparing and criticizing the human and superstitious aspects of the Christian dogmas and at the same time demonstrating the existence of a unified Universal Wisdom Religion that once existed among the secret doctrines of ancient philosophies and religions as a more original, rational and true Religion,⁷⁵¹ Blavatsky keenly employed the results of the recently developed Science of Religion headed by F. Max Müller and others as will be discussed below.

While her general critique of Christianity can be viewed as a necessary part of her fiery quest, in *Isis Unveiled*, for what she believed to be the Truth behind false authorities, thus liberating true spirituality from false conceptions in an age of increasing materialism, and the defence of free thought, one cannot neglect to consider her personal relation with the Orthodox Russian Church as a more or less ulterior cause for her opposition to the Catholic Church.

2.3.1.3 Blavatsky and the Orthodox Russian Church

Blavatsky's strong emotional ties with Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church have often been overlooked in Blavatsky scholarship and by Blavatsky

⁷⁴⁹ As will be discussed below in section 2.4.4 this distinction between divine religious ideas and human religious ideas is deeply related to her distinction and significant use of the categories: exoteric and esoteric religion.

⁷⁵⁰ See chapter 2.4 in the present thesis (on science and materialism). See also Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 25-26.

⁷⁵¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. vii, xlv; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 2, 25, 39; Franklin, *The Lotus and the Lion: Buddhism and the British Empire*, pp. 65-66.

biographers.⁷⁵² These personal ties are evidenced in several of Blavatsky's early letters and might also help explain her passionate hatred towards the Roman Catholic Church.

In an early letter dated 26 December 1872 and addressed to the Director of the Third Department⁷⁵³ Blavatsky offers to serve her motherland with the implication of volunteering as a papal spy for the Russian state by using regular, as well as paranormal means.⁷⁵⁴ In this relation Blavatsky clearly states that she has an 'inborn hatred of the whole Catholic clergy'⁷⁵⁵ and that she is prepared to devote all of her remaining life to Russian interests.⁷⁵⁶ Some doubts exist as to whether the letter to the Director of the Third Department is genuine or not, but the same sentiments are expressed in another early letter by Blavatsky to her

⁷⁵² Scholarship on Blavatsky's connection with Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church is relatively limited. A few important studies exist: Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 'First Russia, then Tibet': Hermetic Sources of Modern Theosophy' (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2010); Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 'Discovery of Egypt: H. P. Blavatsky in the Near Orient' (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2010); Richard A. Hutch, 'Helena Blavatsky Unveiled', *Journal of Religious History*, 11, 2 (1980), 320–41; Brendan French, 'Blavatsky, Dostoevskii, and Occult Starchestvo', *Aries*, 7, 2 (2007), 161-84, (pp. 165, 173-76, 180-82). See also, Mary K. Neff, (comp.) *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky* (London: Rider & CO., 1927), pp. 281-289. The following two, relatively recent, biographies on Blavatsky contain details on Blavatsky's Russian background, but do not address the question of Blavatsky's personal ties with the Russian Church (presumably due to the fact that many of Blavatsky's early letters important to this question were not made widely available before 2003 with the publication of the first volume of *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky: 1861-1879*; Jean Overton Fuller, *Blavatsky and Her Teachers: An Investigative Biography* (London and the Hague: East-West Publications, 1988), pp. 1-4; and Sylvia Cranston, *H. P. B.: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky Founder of the Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993), pp. 3-38. For useful references to Blavatsky's tie with the Russian Church among her own writings, in addition to Blavatsky's personal letters, see HPB, 'Unsupported Claims of the Roman Catholic Church', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 339-41 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 10 (1888), 337-39); HPB, 'Neo-Buddhism', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 334-49 (p. 348) (unpubl. article (1890).

⁷⁵³ The third department was a secret police unit formed by Tsar Nicholas I in 1826 to take care of political security.

⁷⁵⁴ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 7', p. 27.

⁷⁵⁵ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 7', p. 26.

⁷⁵⁶ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 7', p. 29.

sister Vera de Zhelihovsky.⁷⁵⁷ This particular letter consists of a short note letting her sister know what she had told the first American Cardinal, John McCloskey (1810-1885), who according to Vera was sent to Blavatsky in New York because of Blavatsky's public stance against the Pope's support of the Turks in the Serbo-Turkish war (1876), which continued with the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878). Blavatsky stated that she had told Cardinal McCloskey

That the Orthodox faith of my Russian brethren was sacred to me! That I will always defend that faith and Russia, and shall challenge the attacks of the hypocritical Catholics upon them, as long as my hand can hold a pen, without fear of either the threats of their Pope or the wrath of the Roman Church—*la Grande Bête de l'Apocalypse*.⁷⁵⁸

While writing *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky was anxious to make sure that the extensive critique of Christianity found within its pages would not be understood amiss by her favorite aunt Nadyezhda A. de Fadeyev (1829-1919). In a letter dated 19 July 1877 Blavatsky wrote

Understand me; our own Orthodox Faith stands by itself. The book does not mention it. I have *refused point blank* to analyze it, as I wish to preserve at least one small corner of my heart where suspicion could not crawl in, a feeling put down with all my strength... The Master himself admits this and says that the only people in the world whose *faith is not a speculation*, are the Orthodox people.⁷⁵⁹

In a later letter dated 28-29 October 1877, shortly after the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, to N. de Fadeyev Blavatsky in like manner wrote

Of course you will not find one word therein against the Orthodox Church. Why? Your Church is the purest and the truest, and all the ugly human things, as well as all the little "enemies" of Father Kiriak will not suffice to desecrate it. In the Russian Orthodox Church alone is *Divine Truth* established, firmly established.⁷⁶⁰

Blavatsky however adds that this 'divine truth' is not to be found on the surface, but in the foundations of the Russian Church.

The personal convictions expressed in these early letters are important to

⁷⁵⁷ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 77', see p. 289.

⁷⁵⁸ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 77', p. 289.

⁷⁵⁹ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 88', pp. 315-16, 327.

⁷⁶⁰ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 92', p. 343.

a better understanding of her critique of Christianity and undoubtedly shine through in her writings. Combined with her embrace of Enlightenment critique the notion that Blavatsky was anti-Christian is already made more complicated, because on the one hand she was a part of a common trend during the time, which means that critique of Christianity was not an intellectual mutation Blavatsky promoted alone and on the other hand she had positive ties with Russian Christianity. Also one cannot exclude the possibility that her critique of 'Christian dogmatism' might have been motivated by spiritual idealism or the search for true religious 'meaning' in a time of religious crisis.

In sum, this section (2.3.1) has shown that Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism was contextually influenced by Enlightenment critique. But it was also shown that Blavatsky only partly adopted secular thought as it also prompted her to fight for and seek what she perceived to be the original truths in religion in contrast to the humanly constructed parts. This quest led to a further critique of Christian dogmatism because Blavatsky felt that Christianity was incompetent in the battle against secular materialism. It was also shown that a part of the motivation behind Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism or the Roman Catholic Church was contextually rooted in her Russian nativity and emotional ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. Finally, the notion that Blavatsky was anti-Christian was complicated by the above (i.e. Blavatsky was part of a common critique of religion; had personal ties with Russian Christianity and challenged all that stood in the way of her search for religious truth).

2.3.2 The specific contexts: historical critique, mythographers and the Western esoteric traditions

On a more specific level there are some important historical and intertextual contexts that have also influenced Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism as expressed in *Isis Unveiled* and her later works.

2.3.2.1 Historical critique and the Science of Religion

Blavatsky was versed in orthodox histories of Christianity, but she also had a keen interest in the new critical histories of Christianity and the new studies in

the science of religion.⁷⁶¹ Critical historical revisionist studies of the origins of Christian symbolism, theology and liturgy had hardly been advanced prior to the Enlightenment, but thereafter and well into the nineteenth century such studies were published in proportion to the advance of secular forces. Studies that questioned the historicity and Orthodox interpretation of Jesus Christ began to emerge by the end of the eighteenth century with French Enlightenment scholars such as Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) and Charles François Dupuis (1742-1809). With regard to Jesus Christ, both scholars argued that the gospel-narratives were a synthesis of earlier mythologies, especially of sun worship.⁷⁶² The anonymously published *Histoire critique de Jésus-Christ* (1770) also stirred a great *furor* for its innovative, strictly human portrayal of Jesus, especially when it was translated into English under the title *Ecce Homo* (1799, second edition in 1813) by George Houston (?-1840) who was duly prosecuted for blasphemy and sentenced to two years in Newgate Prison. The influential German historian and philosopher, Bruno Bauer (1809-1882), a former pupil of Hegel, had also initiated a series of influential works between 1838 and 1882 that criticized the origin of Christianity and the historicity of Jesus among which were *Kritik der Evangelien und Geschichte ihres Ursprungs* (A Critique of the Gospels and a History of their Origin) (1850), as well as *Kritik der paulinischen Briefe* (Critique of the Pauline Epistles) (1852).⁷⁶³ In these works Bauer initiated a historical and critical approach to the Bible texts. David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) was early influenced by

⁷⁶¹ See Appendix I. Blavatsky made use of a wide range of works related to theology and the study of religion.

⁷⁶² See Constantin-François Volney, *The Ruins: or a Survey on the Revolutions of Empires: with notes historical, geographical and explanatory: To which is annexed The law of nature* (London: T. Davison, 1819), pp. 88n, 127-35, [Constantin-François Volney, *Les ruines, ou Méditations sur les révolutions des empires* (Paris: Desenne, 1791)]; Charles-François Dupuis, *The Origin of All Religious Worship* (New Orleans, LA: C. C. W. Müller, 1872), pp. 43, 96, 116, 128, 214-99, 298 [Charles François Dupuis, *Origine de tous les Cultes, ou la Religion Universelle* (Paris: An III), 1795]. Much of their work was continued by Godfrey Higgins and from there largely mediated to Blavatsky. See also Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 34-37.

⁷⁶³ Blavatsky knew of Bauer but appears only to have used him as an authority once: HPB, 'The Theosophists and Irenaeus', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 148-55 (p. 152) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 5(53) (1884), 129-30).

Bauer's lectures and already published his notorious *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* (1835-1836) (translated from the 4th German edition by George Eliot as *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, London, 1848). After these German works followed other influential critical works around Europe such as Ernest Renan's (1823–1892) *Vie de Jésus* (1863, English translation *Life of Jesus*, 1863), Evan Powell Meredith's (1811-1889) *The Prophet of Nazareth* (1864) and Thomas Scott's (1808-1878) *The English life of Jesus* (1871).

Blavatsky preferred the work of Strauss to that of Renan⁷⁶⁴ even though she criticises both for not having 'the remotest suspicion of the real meaning of many of the parables of Jesus, or even of the character of the great Galilean philosopher.'⁷⁶⁵ Blavatsky especially disliked what she called 'Renan's distorted outline-sketch of Jesus'⁷⁶⁶.

We cannot think what led Renan into such an erroneous delineation of character. Few of those who, while rejecting the divinity of the Nazarene prophet, still believe that he is no myth, can read the work without experiencing an uneasy, and even angry feeling at such a psychological mutilation. He makes of Jesus a sort of sentimental ninny, a theatrical simpleton, enamored of his own poetical divagations and speeches, wanting every one to adore him, and finally caught in the snares of his enemies. Such was not Jesus, the Jewish philanthropist, the adept and mystic of a school now forgotten by the Christians and the Church—if it ever was known to her; the hero, who preferred even to risk death, rather than withhold some truths which he believed would benefit humanity. We prefer Strauss who openly names him an impostor and a pretender, occasionally calling in doubt his very existence; but who at least spares him that ridiculous color of sentimentalism in which Renan paints him.⁷⁶⁷

This shows that Blavatsky engaged with her sources and that she were even critical of the critiques of Christianity.⁷⁶⁸

By the mid-nineteenth century the ground was prepared for the famous historian of religions Max Müller to authoritatively raise the possibility of comparing Christianity with other religions on non-theological grounds. In his

⁷⁶⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 340-41n.

⁷⁶⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 562.

⁷⁶⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 340n.

⁷⁶⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 340-41n.

⁷⁶⁸ See section 2.4.4 for more on Blavatsky's view of Jesus.

Chips from a German Workshop (1867), which Blavatsky used extensively,⁷⁶⁹ Müller argued that ‘In the Science of Religion, we can decline no comparisons, nor claim any immunity for Christianity.’⁷⁷⁰ Such an approach to Christianity, with its secular implications, was still somewhat controversial but Müller, who himself found truth in Christianity, assured his readers that such an undertaking would actually be beneficial to Christianity itself as it would place Christianity in its rightful place among the religions of the world.⁷⁷¹ However, Blavatsky regarded Müller’s studies as a great threat to the Roman Catholic Church;⁷⁷² a new scientific development that she could not resist exploiting in her own critical narrative of Church history and deconstruction of Christian dogmas (see below).

Other scholars whose work Blavatsky used also saw themselves as part of the conflict between religion and science. John William Draper (1811-1882) in his influential work *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874) showed that Christianity had borrowed fundamental principles from the pagans in its attempt to gain political power.⁷⁷³ The anonymously published work entitled *Supernatural Religion: An Inquiry into the Reality of Divine Revelation* (1874), generally presumed to have been written by Walter Richard Cassels (1826-1907), also tested Christianity by critically exploring the historical origins of Christianity and the New Testament.⁷⁷⁴

The ground for Blavatsky’s discourse against Christian dogmatism was diligently prepared by the new Biblical criticism, which also formed an intertextual part of Blavatsky’s own works. This also implies that there is no historical reason to categorize Blavatsky’s *Isis Unveiled* solely as a work of occultism. The entire second volume can equally be historically and

⁷⁶⁹ See for example Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 548, 550 and II, 26, 318, 342, 345.

⁷⁷⁰ Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop* (New York: Charles Scribner and Company, 1872 [1867]), p. xx.

⁷⁷¹ Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, p. xx; see also pp. xix-xxviii.

⁷⁷² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 30, 49.

⁷⁷³ Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, pp. 45-56, 66-67.

⁷⁷⁴ [Walter Richard Cassels], *Supernatural Religion: An Inquiry into the Reality of Divine Revelation*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1874).

intertextually viewed as a part of the new Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment critique of Christianity, a fact that will be strengthened by the next specific context of importance to Blavatsky's discourse.

2.3.2.2 Mythographers

The second specific context of importance is a part of *Isis Unveiled's* paratext—more specifically the publications of its publisher J. W. Bouton.⁷⁷⁵ J. W. Bouton, situated in New York, published a wide range of books and magazines in the nineteenth century, especially studies related to comparative symbolism, religion, mythology, and the occult, which were critical of Orthodox interpretations of the Christian dogmas. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* and its discourse against Christian dogmatism can be viewed as a part of this specific context of works.⁷⁷⁶ The following chronological list of works published by J. W. Bouton share many features with Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*.

- *Ancient symbol worship. Influence of the phallic idea in the religions of antiquity.*
Hodder Michael Westropp & Charles Staniland Wake. With an introduction, notes, and an appendix by Alexander Wilder. New York: J.W. Bouton & London: Trübner & Co. 1874.
- *The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries. A Dissertation.*
Thomas Taylor, with Introduction, Notes, Emendations and Glossary by Alexander Wilder. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1875. (Third Edition).
- *Monumental Christianity or the Art and Symbolism of the Primitive Church as Witnesses and Teachers of the One Catholic Faith and Practice.* John P. Lundy. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876.

⁷⁷⁵ On why and how *Isis Unveiled* was published by J. W. Bouton see: Alexander Wilder, 'How "Isis Unveiled" Was Written' <www.theosociety.org/pasadena/isis/iu2-ap3.htm> [15 November 2011] (first publ. in *The Word*, 7, 2, 1908); see also Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987), pp. 116-24; Algeo, John, 'Background Essay K: The Writing and Publication of *Isis Unveiled*', in *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by Algeo, John and others [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, pp. 330-40.

⁷⁷⁶ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke also makes this point about J. W. Bouton and his contemporaneous authors/publications in *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Masters* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), p. 53.

- *Ancient Faiths and Modern: A Dissertation upon Worships, Legends and Divinities in Central and Western Asia*. Thomas Inman. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876. First US Ed.
- *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology. An Inquiry*. Richard Payne Knight. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876. A new edition with introduction, additions, notes translated into English and a new and complete index by Alexander Wilder.
- *Serpent and Siva Worship and Mythology, In Central America, Africa, And Asia. And The Origin Of Serpent Worship*. Two Treatises. Edited By Alexander Wilder, Hyde Clarke, [1815-1895] & Wake, C[harles] Staniland [1835-1910]. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877.
- *The Bible of Humanity*. Jules Michelet. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877.
- *Anacalypsis, An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; Or, An Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions*. Godfrey Higgins. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1878 [Volume one only].
- *The Obelisk and Freemasonry [According to the Discoveries of Belzoni and Commander Gorringe][also Egyptian Symbols Compared with Those in American Mounds]*. John A. Weisse. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1880.
- *Bible myths, and their parallels in other religions: Being a comparison of the Old and New Testament myths and miracles with those of heathen nations ... considering also their origin and Meaning*. Thomas William Doane, New York: J. W. Bouton, 1884.
- *Bible Folk-Lore: A Study in Comparative Mythology*. James Edwin Thorold Rogers. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1884.
- *Ancient Pagan And Modern Christian Symbolism* (With an Essay on Baal Worship, on the Assyrian Sacred "Grove", and other allied symbols by John Newton). Thomas Inman. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1884. Fourth edition.
- *The Real History of the Rosicrusians*. Arthur Edward Waite. New York: J. W. Bouton, 1888.
- *Witch, Warlock, And Magician: Historical Sketches Of Magic And Witchcraft In England And Scotland*. W. H. Davenport Adams. New York: J.W. Bouton, 1889.

From these titles alone a similarity with Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology* (1877) is plainly evident.⁷⁷⁷ All these works share a new 'amateurish', yet critical enthusiasm for the origins of religion, Christianity, symbolism, and mythology made possible by the increasingly secular milieu at the time (including the freedom of press) and by a much wider availability of religious source-texts stemming from interactions with the Far East and Middle East since the end of the eighteenth-century. The bibliography (appendix I) for *Isis Unveiled* clearly

⁷⁷⁷ For an overview of the nineteenth-century mythographers in relation to Blavatsky see Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*.

demonstrates that Blavatsky made use of many works published by Bouton⁷⁷⁸ and many of them were in fact, like *Isis Unveiled*, edited and annotated by Alexander Wilder (see list above).

Other mythographers from this period (though not published by J. W. Bouton) represented the same current of thought and were important to Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism in *Isis Unveiled* and her later works. These included Hargrave Jennings (1817-1890),⁷⁷⁹ Charles William King (1818-1888),⁷⁸⁰ Edward Vaughan Hyde Kenealy (1819-1880),⁷⁸¹ Samuel F. Dunlap (1825-1905),⁷⁸² Gerald Massey (1828-1907),⁷⁸³ J. Ralston Skinner (1830-1893),⁷⁸⁴ and Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890).⁷⁸⁵ Blavatsky undoubtedly shared much of the quest for the origins of religion and the meaning of ancient symbolism with these authors and used their works in her discourse against

⁷⁷⁸ See Appendix I.

⁷⁷⁹ Especially Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870); in relation to her later works, see Hargrave Jennings, *Phallicism: celestial and terrestrial, heathen and Christian: its connexion with the Rosicrucians and the Gnostics, and its foundation in Buddhism: with an essay on mystic anatomy* (London: G. Redway, 1884).

⁷⁸⁰ C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains: Ancient and Mediæval* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1864).

⁷⁸¹ In relation to her later works, see [E. V. H. Kenealy], *The Book of God: The Apocalypse of Adam-Oannes* (London: Reeves & Turner, [1867]); [E. V. H. Kenealy], *The Book of God: An Introduction to the Apocalypse* (London: Trübner & Co., [1870]).

⁷⁸² S. F. Dunlap, *SŌD: The Mysteries of Adoni* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1861); S. F. Dunlap, *SŌD: The Son of the Man* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1861); S. F. Dunlap, *Vestiges of the Spirit-History of Man* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1858).

⁷⁸³ In relation to her later works, see Gerald Massey, *A Book of the Beginnings, containing an attempt to recover and reconstitute the lost origins of the myths and mysteries, types and symbols, religion and language, with Egypt for the mouthpiece and Africa as the birthplace*, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1881); Gerald Massey, *The Natural Genesis: or the second part of A book of the beginnings*, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883).

⁷⁸⁴ In relation to her later works, see J. Ralston Skinner, *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in The Source of Measures Originating the British Inch and the Ancient Cubit* (Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clarke & Co, 1875).

⁷⁸⁵ Louis Jacolliot, *La Bible dans l'Inde, ou la vie de Iezeus Christna* (Paris: Lacroix, 1869). Louis Jacolliot, *Histoire des Vierges: Les Peuples et les Continents disparus* (Paris: Lacroix, 1874).

Christian dogmatism;⁷⁸⁶ however, it is important to note that Blavatsky was critical towards what she insisted were their many limitations and false interpretations. In other words, while her work can be regarded as a part of the context of the nineteenth-century mythographers both paratextually and intertextually, she did not use their works uncritically as has been overlooked by critics such as William Emmette Coleman, who has accused her of direct plagiarism and argued that there is absolutely nothing new or original in Blavatsky's writings.⁷⁸⁷

We eagerly applaud such commentators as Godfrey Higgins, Inman, Payne Knight, King, Dunlap, and Dr. Newton, however much they disagree with our own mystical views, for their diligence is constantly being rewarded by fresh discoveries of the Pagan paternity of Christian symbols. But otherwise, all these learned works are useless. Their researches only cover half the ground. Lacking the true key of interpretation they see the symbols only in a physical aspect.⁷⁸⁸

Blavatsky thus found the discovery of 'the Pagan paternity of Christian symbols' to be highly useful for her own purposes (more on this below) but the mythographers lacked the true key of interpretation.⁷⁸⁹ Blavatsky even found that their works seemed to actually 'strengthen materialism'⁷⁹⁰ with their purely physical interpretations of religious symbolism, which was contrary to her own project, and that they were too one-sided and crude, especially the phallic

⁷⁸⁶ This was demonstrated to a considerable extent in the previous chapter of the present thesis (2.2).

⁷⁸⁷ Wm. Emmette Coleman, 'The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings', in Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, trans. and ed. by Walter Leaf (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), pp. 353-66 (pp. 364-66).

⁷⁸⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 120. It should, however, be noted that even though Blavatsky criticised the works of these authors she made extensive use of them and depended upon them in her quest for knowledge of the subjects she dealt with in her own works, and only subsequently she rhetorically claimed to possess greater knowledge on account of her own esoteric insight and the wisdom of the Mahatmas. Although the context is later and set in India, this is the subject of J. Barton Scott, 'Miracle Publics: Theosophy, Christianity, and the Coulomb Affair', *History of Religions*, 49, 2 (2009), 172-96.

⁷⁸⁹ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 75' (ca. 6 December 1876), p. 283.

⁷⁹⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 120.

school of interpretation represented by Knight, Inman, and Jennings among others.⁷⁹¹

2.3.2.3 The Western esoteric traditions

Blavatsky's work was not merely written in an attempt to historically re-evaluate, deconstruct or reconstruct Christianity and other religious symbolism on a phallic or similar foundation, nor was it written to simply compare the various religions but to show that there once existed a universal esoteric tradition or divine spirituality and to construct occultism.⁷⁹² It is also from within the 'esoteric tradition', as she understood it, that she sought to reinterpret what she believed to be the true hidden or underlying meaning of the Christian dogmas and the teachings of Jesus.⁷⁹³ Blavatsky thus made a distinction between her own esoteric keys to interpretation and what she saw as the merely physical aspects represented by the interpretations of the mythographers and other modern critics.⁷⁹⁴ Blavatsky needed to make this distinction because she was also intertextually anchored in the Western esoteric traditions, while critics and many Theosophists often tended to confuse the two currents.⁷⁹⁵

Even though Blavatsky was influenced by the mythographers to attain

⁷⁹¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 120; HPB, 'From the Note Book of an Unpopular Philosopher: Thoughts on the Birthday of Lucifer', in HPBCW, X (1988), 97-108 (p. 99) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 13 (1888), 84-88); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 405-406.

⁷⁹² In Blavatsky's early conceptions (up to and including *Isis Unveiled*) occultism bore close relations to both magic and spiritualism, even though not identical, which she defended against Christianity and from which some of her critique of Christianity equally was derived. See for example Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 2-15, 69, 97. For another early occult work with similar ties to spiritualism and its critique of Christianity, see *Art Magic*, ed. by Emma Britten (New York: Author, 1876), pp. 58, 343-50; see also Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 451.

⁷⁹³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 405-406, see also section 2.4.4 of this present thesis.

⁷⁹⁴ HPB, 'E. S. T. Instructions: Instruction No. I', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 513-41 (p. 520) (first printed privately on the Aryan Press); and other references in HPB, 'Buddhism, Christianity and Phallicism', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 254-61 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, XVIII, 107 (1896) 361-67); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 405-406.

⁷⁹⁵ HPB, 'Buddhism, Christianity and Phallicism', in HPBCW, XIII, 254-55.

her own ends, her general way of thinking⁷⁹⁶ was closer to what now in the broad sense of the term is referred to as the Western esoteric traditions and their various esoteric interpretations of Christianity. In fact, it is precisely this additional background that distinguishes her work from that of the mythographers. Blavatsky wrote from within the framework of the esoteric tradition. She used the works of modern scholars and the mythographers to deconstruct what she saw as false religious dogmas—and used the esoteric traditions to rescue or reconstruct true religion. In this sense the esoteric traditions constitute the third important specific context, which Blavatsky's work represented. Blavatsky both borrowed from and sought support for her esoteric interpretations of Christianity in original ancient Gnostic,⁷⁹⁷ Kabbalistic⁷⁹⁸ and neo-Platonic⁷⁹⁹ texts. She also found inspiration for her interpretations in the works of Philo,⁸⁰⁰ Renaissance hermeticists,⁸⁰¹ Freemasonry,⁸⁰² Rosicrucianism,⁸⁰³ and the works of Eliphas Levi.⁸⁰⁴ Among her more obscure and unidentifiable sources are the *Chaldean Book of Numbers*⁸⁰⁵ and a *Rosicrucian cipher manuscript* supposedly left by Count St. Germain after his death/disappearance.⁸⁰⁶

In sum, in this section (2.3.2) it was shown that the more specific intellectual contexts that made it possible for Blavatsky to formulate her

⁷⁹⁶ By way of thinking is here meant a pattern of associated ideas that determine one's world-view or mode of reasoning. Antoine Faivre has defined the mode of thought characteristic to Western esotericism in Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 10-15. Blavatsky's esotericism included the characteristics defined by Faivre in addition to several modern elements such as instrumental causality, see Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, pp. 141-42.

⁷⁹⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 2, 138, 300n; II, 36, 41, 128, 132, 168, 174, 176-77, 185, 205, 238, 296, 452, 505, 513.

⁷⁹⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 138; II, 85-87, 195-96, 204-206, 222-24, 299, 415, 418, 421, 424.

⁷⁹⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 84, 192, 195, 198, 253, 325.

⁸⁰⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 2; II, 36, 41, 144, 177, 210, 216, 246-47, 546.

⁸⁰¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 50, 295, 349-50, 550, 564.

⁸⁰² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 90-91, 255, 449-50.

⁸⁰³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 445,

⁸⁰⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 87, 127, 201-202, 270, 386, 398, 511-12.

⁸⁰⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 575.

⁸⁰⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 575.

discourse against Christian dogmatism was the vivid post-Enlightenment rise of critical-historical works on the Bible and the new scholarly discipline of the History of Religions. It was also shown that Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* was part of a current of mythographical works published largely by her publisher J. W. Bouton with the common aim of discussing the origin and meaning of religious symbolism in a new light. Finally, it was shown that what distinguishes Blavatsky's work and discourse against Christian dogmatism, from the other intellectual contexts discussed, was Blavatsky's sympathetic use of material from the Western esoteric traditions and her self-identification with these traditions.

2.3.3 Blavatsky's deconstruction of Christian dogmas

In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky launched her discourse against Christian dogmatism by first questioning the status of the truth of the Christian dogmas just as she had questioned the authority of the modern scientists. She employed the *Religious Statistics of the United States* (1871)⁸⁰⁷ and referred to the existence of large numbers of Christian denominations, communities, and sects which each claimed to possess the true divine revelation in order to critically demonstrate the relativity of the authority of the Christian truths and to show the great diversity of Christianity's claimed divine revelation.

And now, with Pilate, let us inquire, What is truth? Where is it to be searched for amid this multitude of warring sects? Each claims to be based upon divine revelation, and each to have the keys of the celestial gates. Is either in possession of this rare truth?⁸⁰⁸

Blavatsky's answer to this question was no; not because there is no truth to religion in Blavatsky's view, but because Truth is One and fundamentally transcendental.⁸⁰⁹ Blavatsky's critique was thus clearly a part of her Theosophical project, to counter sectarian truth-claims or dogmas, to show that there is only One universal Truth—'No Religion Higher Than Truth'—thus no

⁸⁰⁷ [*Religious Statistics of the United States* (1871)], in *The American Annual Cyclopædia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1871* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1872).

⁸⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 2.

⁸⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 2; see also chapter 2.1 of this present thesis.

religion can claim truth as theirs alone.⁸¹⁰

The second form of critique, which Blavatsky posed, was to what extent the Christian institutions are able to claim, as they often did in Blavatsky's view, to be morally superior to other religions, especially to the pagans, the neo-Platonists and the Gnostics, whom Blavatsky regarded as erudite and enlightened.⁸¹¹ Again, Blavatsky reviews statistical reports and accounts from the history of witchcraft on witch burnings, hangings and persecutions throughout Christian history to show that Christian history is filled with blood and terror even though the Christian Church generally claims to be morally superior.⁸¹² It is worth noticing that less than a century before Blavatsky's lifetime, the Church had acted with official authority in persecuting people for beliefs Blavatsky found to be true, such as occultism and magic, etc. and that Blavatsky in fact, after long centuries of opposition, was among the first in modern times to seriously and publically defend the occult or esoteric standpoint without risking persecution.⁸¹³

There has never been a religion in the annals of the world with such a bloody record as Christianity. All the rest... pale before the murderous fanaticism of the alleged followers of Christ!⁸¹⁴

Blavatsky's primary critique, based on the contexts discussed above, was however a deconstruction of the claimed divine origin of the Christian dogmas by showing what she perceived to be their true historical origin. This Blavatsky did in a way that can be analysed as a narrative.

2.3.3.1 Blavatsky's narrative of the origins of Christian dogmas

Even though Blavatsky's critical discussion of the origins of the Christian dogmas appears fragmentary, discontinuous, and complex—it functions, from an overall perspective, as a narrative and will be analysed as such in the

⁸¹⁰ See chapter 2.1 of the present thesis.

⁸¹¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 12, 436; II, 333.

⁸¹² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 58-59, 61-66; see also II, 32-34, 53, 78-79. See also HPB, 'The State of Christianity', in HPBCW, II, 378-79.

⁸¹³ Even so, Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* was placed on the 'Index Expurgatorius' (a Catholic index of prohibited books). See *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 99', p. 377.

⁸¹⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 53.

following. Louis Mink has argued that narrative is the natural medium of historians and that it is ‘a primary and irreducible human capacity’⁸¹⁵—or as Arthur Danto has noted: ‘History tells stories’.⁸¹⁶ Furthermore, Roland Barthes has affirmed that in every literary output there is always some inherent argument and that the narration proposed is proposed as reality itself—or as he wrote, narration is instituted as ‘the privileged signifier of the real’.⁸¹⁷ Hayden White equally supports this, i.e. that every construction of history inherently contains an ideology prior to the writing of history and argued that this ‘tropological mode’ shapes the narrative construction of history from beginning to end.⁸¹⁸ This is also true of Blavatsky’s history of Christianity as found in *Isis Unveiled*.

Blavatsky was well read in the history of Christianity and referred to over two hundred major works related to Christianity in *Isis Unveiled* alone and made use of important modern histories of Christianity such as Joseph Priestley’s (1733-1804) *General History of the Christian Church to the Fall of the Western Empire* (1790) and *General History of the Christian Church from the Fall of the Western Empire to the Present Time* (1802),⁸¹⁹ Johann August Wilhelm Neander’s (1789–1850) *Allgemeine Geschichte der Christlichen Religion und*

⁸¹⁵ L. O. Mink, ‘Everyman His or Her Own Annalist’, in *On Narrative*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press 1981), 233-39, p. 239.

⁸¹⁶ A. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 111.

⁸¹⁷ Roland Barthes, ‘The Discourse of History’, trans. by Stephen Bann, in *Comparative Criticism*, 3 (1981), 7-20 (p. 18); Roland Barthes, ‘To Write: an Intransitive Verb?’, in *The Structuralist Controversy: the Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. by R. Macksey and E. Donato (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 1970) pp. 134-44 (p. 144).

⁸¹⁸ H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 1973), pp. 13, 30-31, 431.

⁸¹⁹ Joseph Priestley is, among others, credited with the discovery of Oxygen. He invented soda water and was among the early founders of Unitarianism. Joseph Priestley, *A General History of the Christian Church, to the Fall of the Western Empire* (Birmingham: printed by Thomas Pearson, sold by J. Johnson, 1790); Joseph Priestley, *A General History of the Christian Church from the Fall of the Western Empire to the Present Time* (Northumberland: printed for the Author by Andrew Kennedy, 1802).

Kirche (1825-1852),⁸²⁰ and Henry H. Milman's (1791-1868) *The History of Christianity, from the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire* (1840).⁸²¹ It should however be noted that Draper's *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874), Cassels's *Supernatural Religion: An Inquiry into the Reality of Divine Revelation* (1874), and Thomas Inman's works were especially important to Blavatsky's account.

Blavatsky's narrative of the origins of Christianity, erected on the basis of her intellectual contexts, supported her discourse against Christian dogmatism and her Theosophical project in general. The underlying story of *Isis Unveiled* and later works such as *The Secret Doctrine* begins in the distant past with the existence of a now historically lost universal wisdom tradition.⁸²² The principal ideas of this wisdom tradition informed both the ancient Indian and Egyptian religions in relation to which Blavatsky points to a statement by Max Müller that the science of religion and thereby our knowledge of religion and its origins are just beginning; and she points to modern scholarship, including Herder's observation, that the origin of many of the ideas that make up the great world religions presumably arose before Christianity in ancient India.⁸²³

According to Blavatsky, this universal tradition, still known in antiquity, was a part of the mystery religions, the traditions of Gnostics, and was known by early philosophers such as Pythagoras (ca. 570–ca. 495 BCE) and Plato (ca. 424-348 BCE) and later thinkers such as Philo (20 BCE–50 CE) and Proclus (412-485 CE). It was, however, kept secret and only known by those who had

⁸²⁰ Neander was a student of the German Romantic theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and his history of Christianity was considered a great intellectual foundation for modern Church history. J. A. W. Neander, *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche*, 6 vols (Hamburg: F. Perthes, 1825-52), trans. from 2nd German edn by J. Torrey, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 9 vols (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1847-55).

⁸²¹ Henry H. Milman, *The History of Christianity from the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1866, [1840]).

⁸²² Blavatsky's view and account of the ancient wisdom religion was demonstrated and discussed in chapters 2.1 and 2.2.

⁸²³ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 26, 30, 259.

been initiated into its mysteries.⁸²⁴

Church Christianity or Christian theology did not begin with the divine revelation of Jesus who actually, according to Blavatsky, was learned in the principles of the ancient wisdom tradition.⁸²⁵ Blavatsky argues like contemporary critical scholars that actual historical knowledge about Jesus is very limited⁸²⁶ and that historically it was Saint Paul who was the real founder of the religion of Christianity.⁸²⁷ Blavatsky also points out that St. Paul was an initiate and that he based many of his teachings on the mystery religions, the Gnostics and the Essenes.⁸²⁸ Shortly after St. Paul, the Church Fathers began to debate and progressively constructed Christian theology. According to Blavatsky's narrative, the central problem of the Christian dogmas emerged with this theological phase in Church history.

In the course of the establishment of Christian doctrines⁸²⁹ many of the Church Fathers, as Draper had shown, extensively borrowed ideas from the ancient 'heathen' religions and according to Blavatsky especially from oriental religions, Gnosticism and the neo-Platonists or 'Eclectic School', as Blavatsky called it (influenced by Alexander Wilder's work and usage), in order to construct their own dogmas.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 287, 442; II, 38-39, 94, 146. For more on Blavatsky's relation to the the so called *Prisca Theologia* see chapter 2.2 Blavatsky's Discourse for Ancient Knowledge.

⁸²⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 191-92; see also section 2.3.4 in this chapter.

⁸²⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 335-36.

⁸²⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 574-75; see also HPB, 'Simon and His Biographer Hippolytus', in HPBCW, XIV (1995), 120-24 in which Blavatsky follows the views of Alexander Wilder, 'Paul, the Founder of Christianity', in *The Evolution* (a New York journal), September (1877).

⁸²⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 89-90, 206-207, 277, 574.

⁸²⁹ Regarding the development of Christian doctrine through successive Councils, see *Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents illustrating the history of the Church AD 337-461*, ed. by J. Stevenson, rev. edn (London: SPCK, 1989); N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th edn (London: A. & C. Black, 1977).

⁸³⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 2, 34, 41, 51-53, 80-81, 84-85, 108-109, 211, 346, 405, 501. *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 59' (16 November 1875), p. 205; see also Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, pp. 45-56, 66-67.

Like other critical scholarship, her narrative seriously questioned Christian theology as divine revelation. The borrowed nature of Christian theology was repeatedly mentioned throughout Blavatsky's writings.⁸³¹ This claim was important to Blavatsky's narrative because it enabled her to challenge the long-standing Christian assertion that the pagan religions were superstitious whereas, according to Blavatsky, it was the other way around. The esoteric knowledge of the pagans was distorted in the exoteric Orthodox Christian dogmas and thus became pure superstition open to Enlightenment criticism.⁸³² Blavatsky's narrative was thus constructed to help redeem the true esoteric doctrine from false superstition.

Especially important to Blavatsky's argument of the borrowed nature of the Christian dogmas was Thomas Inman's *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism Exposed and Explained* (Second edition 1874).⁸³³ Here Inman argued that the outer or exoteric costume of Christian theology and liturgy is actually heathen in origin and that these heathen elements are continuously used and worshipped by Christians ignorant of their true origin.⁸³⁴ Inman sought to deconstruct and expose these heathen elements present in Christianity in order to purge them finally and reveal what he perceived to be *true religion*.⁸³⁵ Blavatsky distinctly spoke favourably of Inman's work and used it to prove the borrowed nature of the Christian dogmas, but her agenda was quite different. While Inman wanted to rid Christian religion of heathenism and thus explain *true religion*, Blavatsky intended to purge *true religion* (i.e. the

⁸³¹ See for example HPB, 'The Esoteric Character of the Gospels', in HPBCW, VIII (1990) 172-239 (pp. 185-86) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 3 (1887), 173-80; I, 4, (1887), 299-310; I, 6 (1888), 490-96); HPB, 'Symbolism of Sun and Stars' in HPBCW, XIV, (1995), 314-25 (p. 318); H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), p. 94; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xl-xli, 312, 402, 410n, 440.

⁸³² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 25; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 467.

⁸³³ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 80-81.

⁸³⁴ Thomas Inman, *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism Exposed and Explained*, 2nd rev. and enlarged edn (London: Trübner & Co., 1874), pp. xv- xvii.

⁸³⁵ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 80-81 and Inman, *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism Exposed and Explained*, pp. xv- xvii; see also Thomas Inman, *Ancient Faiths and Modern: A Dissertation upon Worships, Legends and Divinities* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876), pp. ix, 2-3.

universal wisdom tradition) of distorted exoteric doctrines, whether Christian or heathen in origin. Such a deconstructive undertaking would furthermore not only facilitate the discovery of *true religion*, Blavatsky claimed, but also the discovery of the Christ-principle, which Blavatsky believed was known and practiced even before the Christian apostles among the Buddhists and so-called “heathens”.⁸³⁶

In Blavatsky’s discourse the ‘heathens’ were clearly and uniquely superior to the Christians.⁸³⁷ She argued that the texts portraying the religious experiences of the desert Fathers and early Christian ascetics were poor prosaic copies of narratives by writers such as the Latin prose writer and Platonist Apuleius (ca. 125–ca. 180) and the famous neo-Platonist Proclus (412-485), to name but a few. At the same time, she paid tribute to the modern English Platonist Thomas Taylor (1758-1835) for his many translations of the works belonging to the Platonic tradition and for his defence of ‘the ancient faith’.⁸³⁸ Blavatsky’s narrative largely suggested that she herself was representative of the ancient Neo-Platonic and pagan traditions and she utilized their ancient secret doctrines as the standard by which to judge Christian theology (based on the assumption that they were closer to the ancient wisdom-religion, the origin of true religion and thus true essence of religion).⁸³⁹

Blavatsky continued her discourse of the borrowed nature of the Christian dogmas in later polemical works, especially in her lengthy articles ‘The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry’⁸⁴⁰ and in ‘The Esoteric Character of the Gospels’.⁸⁴¹ *The Secret Doctrine* also continued this grand narrative.⁸⁴² The following text from late material published in the posthumous third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (1897) adequately sums up this essential part of her

⁸³⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 81n; HPB ‘The Esoteric Character of the Gospels’, in HPBCW, VIII, 191.

⁸³⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 51, 84, 108-109.

⁸³⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 108-109.

⁸³⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 2.

⁸⁴⁰ HPB, ‘The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry’, in HPBCW, XI (1973) 62-101 (pp. 64, 70-71, 89) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, IV, 19 (1889), 32-44; 21 (1889), 226-36).

⁸⁴¹ HPB, ‘The Esoteric Character of the Gospels’, in HPBCW, VIII, 179n, 181.

⁸⁴² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xl-xli, but see whole ‘introductory’, 312, 402, 440.

argument:

Thus it is not Judaism and Christianity that remodelled the ancient Pagan Wisdom, but rather the latter that put its heathen curb, quietly and insensibly, on the new faith; and this, moreover, was still further influenced by the Eclectic Theosophical system, the direct emanation of the Wisdom-Religion. **All that is grand and noble in Christian theology comes from Neo-Platonism.**⁸⁴³

In order to avoid being exposed, the Church Fathers furthermore clothed the old Neo-Platonic and pagan ideas in new dress and under new names⁸⁴⁴ and, according to Blavatsky, of course denied the fact.

One could make a curious list of the excuses and explanations of the clergy to account for similarities daily discovered between Romanism and heathen religions. Yet the summary would invariably lead to one sweeping claim: The doctrines of Christianity were plagiarized by the Pagans the world over!⁸⁴⁵

Blavatsky mentions how the Alexandrian Fathers claimed that Plato's ideas were stolen from the Christian Revelation; how the Brahmans had borrowed from Jesuit missionaries their ideas including the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which Christian missionaries claimed to have been written by Father Augustin Calmet (1672-1757). The narrative of Apollonius of Tyana's (ca. 15–ca. 100 CE) life was of course also a Pagan mocking forgery of the life of Jesus.⁸⁴⁶

Blavatsky, however, devotes much effort in *Isis Unveiled* and later works to showing that some of the central Christian dogmas were plagiarized versions of more ancient religions. She criticizes the factuality of the power-laden dogma of apostolic succession and that the apostle Peter ever instituted the Papacy by first showing that his name, *Peter*, was actually a designation used in earlier mystery religions for the hierophant who bore the title *pether*. The Hebrew root of the word *peter* furthermore means *a rock* and this was what Jesus meant when he, in the Gospel of Matthew (xiv, 18.), said that he would build his

⁸⁴³ HPB, 'The Post-Christian Successors to the Mysteries', in HPBCW, XIV (1995) 300-313 (p. 305) [bold emphasis is mine].

⁸⁴⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 13; II, 26, 34, 36, 41, 478.

⁸⁴⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 346.

⁸⁴⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 346.

Church upon *peter* (i.e. upon a stabile rock and not the disciple Peter).⁸⁴⁷ Based on George Reber's critical *The Christ of Paul* (1876), Blavatsky further attempts to prove that Peter was never actually in Rome as his character was to cowardly disposed to come into close proximity to Nero and because he was in Babylon at the time (64 CE) as evinced by his first epistle.⁸⁴⁸

Blavatsky argues that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was nothing more than a simplified and distorted variation of the more ancient doctrine of emanations found in a wide variety of sources such as the ancient Hindu, Egyptian, Hermetic (*Corpus Hermeticum*), Gnostic, Kabbalistic, and Platonic (*Timaeus*) traditions.⁸⁴⁹ Regarding the putative Egyptian source of the Trinity, Blavatsky wrote

When Cyril, the Bishop of Alexandria, had openly embraced the cause of Isis, the Egyptian goddess, and had anthropomorphized her into Mary, the mother of God; and the trinitarian controversy had taken place; from that moment the Egyptian doctrine of the emanation of the creative God out of Emepht began to be tortured in a thousand ways, until the Councils had agreed upon the adoption of it as it now stands ...⁸⁵⁰

The Christian doctrine of atonement was likewise traceable back to 'heathendom', according to Blavatsky.⁸⁵¹ She shows that Draper, already in his *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874), had demonstrated that the doctrine of atonement was practiced among the Gnostics and that it derived originally from them.⁸⁵² Blavatsky argued that the origin of the doctrine was even more ancient than Draper maintained.

The [Egyptian] hierophants had their atonement enacted in the Mystery of Initiation ages before the Gnostics, or even the Essenes, had appeared. It was known among hierophants as the BAPTISM OF BLOOD, [...] The hierophant had the option of either offering his pure and sinless life as a sacrifice ... or an animal victim... At the last moment

⁸⁴⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 29-31.

⁸⁴⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 124-26, 326; see also George Reber, *The Christ of Paul* (New York: Charles P. Somerby, 1876), pp. 107-35, 230, 244-56.

⁸⁴⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 39-41, 45-51.

⁸⁵⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 41.

⁸⁵¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 41.

⁸⁵² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 41, see also p. 501; Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 224.

of the solemn "new birth," the initiator passed "the word" to the initiated, and immediately after that the latter had a weapon placed in his right hand, and was ordered to strike. This is the true origin of the Christian dogma of atonement.⁸⁵³

Blavatsky also utilized Godfrey Higgins' comprehensive comparative work *Anacalypsis* (1833-36) to show that the central Christian dogma of the Eucharist was nothing but an ancient esoteric doctrine practiced among many nations.⁸⁵⁴ It was clearly present in the Bacchic rites and Eleusinian mysteries in which it had nearly the same meaning as in the Christian doctrine.⁸⁵⁵ Blavatsky recounts the Roman philosopher Cicero's (106-43 BCE) observation in *De natura deorum* (iii, 16) that the god Ceres signified bread and Bacchus the wine.⁸⁵⁶ The original esoteric meaning of this was, however, according to Blavatsky as follows:

the former [bread] meaning regeneration of life from the seed, and the latter—the grape—the emblem of wisdom and knowledge; the accumulation of the spirit of things, and the fermentation and subsequent strength of that esoteric knowledge being justly symbolized by wine. The mystery related to the drama of Eden; it is said to have been first taught by Janus, who was also the first to introduce in the temples the sacrifices of "bread" and "wine" in commemoration of the "fall into generation" as the symbol of the "seed."

Christian dogmatism has lost this esoteric key, but as Blavatsky argues, it was known to Jesus (or the authors of the Gospels) for Jesus said:

"I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman," [John xv, 1] says Jesus, alluding to the secret knowledge that could be imparted by him. "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." [Mark, xiv, 25]⁸⁵⁷

The Christian reconfiguration of pagan ideas led to a distortion of the original principles of the wisdom-religion because their inner, esoteric dimension

⁸⁵³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 42 [brackets are mine].

⁸⁵⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 43-45; see also Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis: an Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis: or, An inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions*, 2 vols (New York: Macy-Masius Publishers, 1927 [1833-1836]), II, 58, 253.

⁸⁵⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 44.

⁸⁵⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 44.

⁸⁵⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 44.

and the correct key to their true meaning were lost and only the exoteric ideas, rituals and imagery were left—and now in a new form.⁸⁵⁸ For fear of being exposed and in order to maintain political power orthodox Christians (not to be confused with Orthodox Eastern Christians) began to persecute the so-called heathens and to destroy their texts, temples, and icons as Draper and others have also showed in their works.⁸⁵⁹ The result was a decline in the presence of the wisdom-religion and knowledge about its existence.⁸⁶⁰ In relation to this Blavatsky recounts the fierce rhetoric against the so-called Gnostics found in the Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus 's (2nd century CE) *Against Heresies* (ca. 180) and the gruesome murder of Hypatia (ca. 350/70–415 CE), the head of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic academy.⁸⁶¹ She invokes the arguments of the second-century Platonist Celsus, that the Christians plagiarized the worst superstitions from the pagan religions and criticizes Origen's (184/5–253/4 CE) defence as unconvincing.⁸⁶²

Blavatsky also describes the continued persecution of the occult sciences and magic through the Middle Ages, devoting an entire extensive and documented chapter in *Isis Unveiled* to demonstrating that Christian priests and bishops actually practiced sorcery to a great extent while persecuting others for doing the same.⁸⁶³

The only Christian dogmas that were not culled from ancient religions, according Blavatsky, were the dogmas of Hell and the Devil. Blavatsky found that these two interconnected dogmas were unique to Christianity.⁸⁶⁴ Blavatsky

⁸⁵⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xliv, 436; II, 41, 52-53, 121, 249, 430; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xliv, 312.

⁸⁵⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 26, 37, 41, 51; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xl-xli.

⁸⁶⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 436; Blavatsky, II, 249; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xvii-xlvii.

⁸⁶¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 53, see also 51-52.

⁸⁶² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 51-52.

⁸⁶³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 20-24, 55 and chapter 2.

⁸⁶⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 8-16; *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 88' (19 July [1877]), pp. 325-26; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 60. Blavatsky later incorporated the Sanskrit term 'Avîchi' into her own theosophical terminology, but even though the term denotes hell, it signifies

eagerly showed, by quoting Max Müller, that no other religion has a similar doctrine and that both doctrines are central to the Catholic Church because they provide the Archimedean point by which Christian theology can function and the point wherefrom the Church can maintain its power over the general population.⁸⁶⁵ It supports the function of the Pope and can be used to condemn all other world-views such as those of science, spiritualism, heathen religions, and the occult sciences.⁸⁶⁶

Blavatsky furthermore claims that the general public has been kept in ignorance of the truth for generations ever since these early days. Religious writ and rituals were equally kept and practiced in the Latin language for reasons of power.⁸⁶⁷ Blavatsky however surprisingly points out that not all lost pagan religious, scientific, and occult texts were destroyed by the Christian Church and that many of the manuscripts from the Alexandrian library might even someday be discovered. Such future discoveries, she claimed, will prove the true origin of the Christian dogmas.⁸⁶⁸ Blavatsky also suggests that the Vatican still possesses original manuscripts in their secret libraries that could prove the true course of historical events. She does however not agree with the conspiracy theory of Higgins that the Vatican elite still secretly knows the true esoteric meaning behind the Christian (popular) dogmas.⁸⁶⁹

In sum, this narrative of Christian origins was clearly structured according to a traditional narrative structure of: beginning, crisis, and recovery. In the beginning a wisdom-religion existed. The wisdom religion was then historically lost in a time of crisis when the negative other (Christianity) overthrew it. Then the time of crisis was overcome by new scholarship and occult inspiration and the wisdom-religion could begin to emerge again. This narrative served several

a state of consciousness—not a locality—and does not embody the lack of final release, one of the prime aspects Blavatsky criticised the Christian concept of Hell for. See H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), p. 45.

⁸⁶⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 11-14.

⁸⁶⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 16-26.

⁸⁶⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 85.

⁸⁶⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 16, 19, 26, 27-29.

⁸⁶⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 16-19, 121.

functions for Blavatsky: 1. it served to dismantle Christian authority as she had set out to do in Isis Unveiled by employing a combination of secular scholarship and Theosophical doctrine; 2. it provided the opportunity to (re)discover the ageless and divine truth Blavatsky thought to exist behind the dogmas of the Church, which secular critique had proved to be irrational and historically incorrect. In other words, it provided an opportunity to pose her own view of religion and Christianity and thereby rescue the essence and meaning of religion in a secular climate (as will be discussed below).

2.3.4 The Construction of Meaning in relation to Christianity

Blavatsky embraced much of the critique of religion of the intellectual context of the times, but she opposed their frequent conclusion that religion contained no or little truth-value. Blavatsky's embrace of the logic and results of critical scholarship was a stage in her quest for meaning and truth. She intended to search for divine or true religious ideas with the help of modern historical and comparative scholarship rather than using it to disqualify religion. Blavatsky's embrace of the modern critique of Christianity provided an opportunity to dismantle Christianity, the major religious authority in the West, by constructing a rival narrative account of its origin in a universal wisdom tradition. Blavatsky's narrative did however differ from other critical scholarship of the times as it supported her Theosophical doctrine (see Chapter 2.1) rather than materialism, by asking the question, if Christianity is not the origin and source of true religion, then what is? Whence did Christianity borrow its ideas? How can one discover these supposedly true religious ideas? And is there any truth to be found in Christianity in the light of this new knowledge? Blavatsky attempted to answer these questions.

2.3.4.1 Blavatsky's Pan-esotericism—a new origin of true religious ideas

Still in tune with secular scholarship, Blavatsky's narrative attempted to historically show that Christianity is not based on a divine revelation. Blavatsky also attempted to show that Christianity is not the true authoritative historical source of religious ideas. This enabled her to suggest an alternative source and historical origin, which she, from *Isis Unveiled* onwards, termed the ancient and

universal 'Wisdom-Religion'.⁸⁷⁰

While discrediting Christianity, Blavatsky could dialectically substantiate her claim of the existence of a former universal wisdom-religion common to all mankind by filling this supposed vacancy in the history and origin of religious ideas.⁸⁷¹ Through the construction of Christianity as a fallen, unoriginal, state of universal religious ideas, it was possible to construe another source. From a cultural *epistemic*⁸⁷² point of view, Blavatsky's line of thinking generally followed that of nineteenth-century historians of religions that origin equals essence and essence equals truth. Thus if one can trace something back to its origin, one is closer to its essence and this essence is the truth of the matter.⁸⁷³

Among the major methods for proving the existence of the 'new' origin, namely the Wisdom-Religion, Blavatsky used a historical genealogy of religious ideas, as witnessed in her narrative, derived from historians of religion such as Max Müller and mythographers such as Godfrey Higgins. Another major approach was to use recent methods from the comparative study of the world religions, mythologies, and languages. In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky diagrammatically compared various religious theologies and ideas to prove their similarity, common origin and/or borrowed nature.⁸⁷⁴

2.3.4.2 Blavatsky's divine religion

Blavatsky sought to discover and disseminate what she believed to be the true principles of religion in an age of increasing secularization and materialism. She did not find this need fulfilled by Christianity because, in the light of new critical and historical scholarship and her own Theosophy, Blavatsky found the

⁸⁷⁰ The nature of the wisdom-religion has been discussed in chapters 2.1 (2.1.4.2.1) and 2.2. and will therefore not be discussed in any further details here.

⁸⁷¹ See also Franklin, *The Lotus and the Lion: Buddhism and the British Empire*, p. 66.

⁸⁷² Used here in the sense of Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), p. xxii.

⁸⁷³ See for example Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 218-28.

⁸⁷⁴ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 209, the diagram and comparative tables between 264-65, 266-72, 338, 537-41, 556.

Christian dogmas to be irrational, false, and distorted versions of true religious principles. Christianity, as an authoritative exponent of spirituality was thereby unable to counteract the pressing threat from materialism. Furthermore Christianity was not, in Blavatsky's view, the original source of religion—thus not the divine religion she sought. But how did she set out to discover the original true religion? As employed by Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled*, the historical method of genealogy and the comparative method had both pointed to a common ancient origin of religious ideas, a pan-esotericism universal to all mankind,⁸⁷⁵ but what was the meaning of these ancient universal ideas now generally clothed in irrational dogmas, myths, and symbols?

The method Blavatsky utilized to discover, understand and disseminate the principles of true religion, was a categorical and hermeneutical distinction between so-called 'esoteric' and 'exoteric' aspects of religion. Blavatsky's immediate modern source for this idea was no doubt Godfrey Higgins⁸⁷⁶ (and Alexander Wilder⁸⁷⁷ and Thomas Inman⁸⁷⁸ who also both used Higgins' work) who made use of the distinction to prove the existence of a common esoteric doctrine among the ancients.

The basic idea behind the categories was, according to Blavatsky, that ancient religious ideas and symbols were in reality codes veiling the true meaning only known to those who had been initiated into an understanding of their true meaning or who had been given the correct keys to decipher them.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 561, 577; II, 99, 146n, 263.

⁸⁷⁶ Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis: an Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis: or, An Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, Paternoster Row, 1836), I, 113, 325, 338, 380, 509, 571, 614, 647; II, 22-23, 43, 57, 92, 117, 122-24, 367, 386, 426.

⁸⁷⁷ Alexander Wilder, 'Introduction', in Richard Payne Knight *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876), p. xviii.

⁸⁷⁸ Thomas Inman, *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism: With an essay on Baal worship, on the Assyrian sacred "grove" and other allied symbols by John Newton*, 2nd edn (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1876), p. xii.

⁸⁷⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 24, 287, 581; II, 34, 44, 100, 109, 121, 412; see also Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age*, pp. 170-79. This idea also became a frequent

This is also, at least in part, why a part of the subtitle of *Isis Unveiled* included the Masonic notion of 'A Master-Key'. The problem with much religion, including modern Christianity and its dogmas, was that the keys to understanding the dogmas had been lost and only the codes or exoteric mythological symbols remained and that these symbols were now mistakenly taken at face value. To understand the true religious principles one would have to rediscover the esoteric keys according to their true meaning.⁸⁸⁰

Once the keys are rediscovered and the true meaning of religion or divine religion is unveiled, the modern critique of religion that had been successful in dismantling Christianity would find it difficult, Blavatsky thought, to direct the same critique at true esoteric religion because the wisdom-religion is much more rational than even modern science itself.⁸⁸¹ Blavatsky's use of the distinction exoteric-esoteric should thus not only be viewed as a legitimizing strategy by appealing to tradition, as Olav Hammer has suggested, but as a way of solving the semantic problem of religious meaning in a context of religious crisis.⁸⁸²

2.3.4.3 Blavatsky's reconstructed esoteric Christianity

Contrary to the usual stigma that Blavatsky was anti-Christian, there is evidence that Blavatsky had a deep interest in Christianity: she was personally fond of the Orthodox Russian Church; she devoted the entire second volume of *Isis Unveiled* to discussing theology; and discussed Christianity and related subjects such as Gnosticism in lengthy articles such as 'The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry',⁸⁸³ 'The Esoteric

device in twentieth-century occultist discourse, see Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany 1890-1935* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1985), pp. 66-77.

⁸⁸⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 287, 581; II, 100, 109, 121; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 467; *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 59' (16 November 1875), pp. 212; 'Letter 76' (late 1876), p. 288.

⁸⁸¹ See chapter 2.4; but see also for an example Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 235.

⁸⁸² See Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age*, pp. 172-79.

⁸⁸³ HPB 'The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry' in HPBCW, XI, 62-101.

Character of the Gospels',⁸⁸⁴ the correspondence with 'The Archbishop of Canterbury',⁸⁸⁵ the extensive 'Controversy between H. P. Blavatsky and the Abbé Roca',⁸⁸⁶ 'Commentary on the Pistis-Sophia',⁸⁸⁷ etc. Or as she stated in a personal letter to her relatives 'Do not believe that Theosophy contradicts or, much less, destroys Christianity. It only destroys the tares, but not the seed of truth.'⁸⁸⁸ Of course, it is no secret that she did not agree with the way the Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, had abused its power, interpreted the Christian scriptures, and construed its dogmas. However, Blavatsky thought it actually possible to reinterpret the Christian dogmas and scriptures, the early Church history, and the identity of Jesus, once the true origin of religious ideas was rediscovered and the correct keys to interpretation were found. It would be possible to peel off what she perceived to be wrong interpretations of the Christian scriptures and the distorted image of Jesus and Christ. Even post-*Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky argued in her 'greeting' to 'The Archbishop of Canterbury' that it was possible to rescue what she believed to be true or esoteric Christianity.

Theosophy not only rescues these precious gems [the theosophic truths in Christianity] from the fate that threatens the rubbish in which they have been so long embedded, but saves that rubbish itself [Christian theology] from utter condemnation; for it shows that the result of biblical criticism is far from being the ultimate analysis of Christianity, as each of the pieces which compose the curious mosaics of the Churches [elements of Judaism, paganism, gnosticism and neo-Platonism] once belonged to a religion which had an esoteric meaning. It is only when these pieces are restored to the places they originally occupied that their hidden significance can be perceived, and the real

⁸⁸⁴ HPB, 'The Esoteric Character of the Gospels', in HPBCW, VIII, 172-239.

⁸⁸⁵ HPB, '*Lucifer* to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!', in HPBCW, VIII, 268-83. Boris de Zirkoff notes that this 'greeting' was presumably written in a collaboration between H. P. Blavatsky and Richard Harte, a friend of Blavatsky who worked for the New York Telegram, Boris de Zirkoff, '268n', in HPBCW, VIII, (1990).

⁸⁸⁶ HPB and Abbeé Roca, 'Controversy between H. P. Blavatsky and the Abbé Roca', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 341-91 (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, II, 9 (1887), 149-60, trans. from the French); IX (1986), 179-237 (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, II, 11 (1888), 258-71 and *Le Lotus*, II, 13 (1888), 3-19, trans. from the French); HPB, 'Miscellaneous Notes', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 341-98 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 10 (1888), 278, 329, 340)

⁸⁸⁷ HPB, 'Commentary on the Pistis-Sophia', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 7-81.

⁸⁸⁸ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 104' (late 1877), p. 395.

meaning of the dogmas of Christianity understood. To do all this, however, requires a knowledge of the Secret Doctrine as it exists in the esoteric foundation of other religions; and this knowledge is not in the hands of the Clergy, for the Church has hidden, and since lost, the keys.⁸⁸⁹

Once this secret doctrine had been established, Blavatsky believed she could counter modern biblical criticism, comparative-mythology and modern science that all threatened Christianity, and thus rescue the true spirituality of Christianity from complete degradation.⁸⁹⁰

In Blavatsky's reinterpretation of Christianity especially the role of Gnosticism in early Church history, the identity of Jesus (and Christ), and his teachings were of special importance. Gnosticism had for a long time been regarded as a heresy but Blavatsky, largely based on the positive account of Gnosticism by Charles William King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains* (1864, 1887 2nd ed.), sought to show that in reality many of the Gnostics were true early Christians.⁸⁹¹

CLEMENT describes Basilides, the Gnostic, as "a philosopher devoted to the contemplation of divine things." This very appropriate expression may

⁸⁸⁹ HPB, 'Lucifer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!', in HPBCW, VIII, 272.

⁸⁹⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 249; HPB, 'Lucifer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!' in HPBCW, VIII, 272-73. In relation to construction of a new Christianity for the West to replace Catholicism, see also Franklin, *The Lotus and the Lion: Buddhism and the British Empire*, pp. 66-67.

⁸⁹¹ See C. W. King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains: Ancient and Mediæval* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1864). In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky used this edition. After 1887 she made use of the much-expanded second edition, see C. W. King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains: Ancient and Mediæval*, 2nd edn (London: David Nutt, 1887). This second edition has been reprinted as a part of *The Secret Doctrine Reference Series* with additional notes to the bibliography, C. W. King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains: Ancient and Mediæval*, 2nd edn (Minneapolis: Wizards Bookshelf, 1973). King, who was a senior fellow at Trinity College at the time of his death in 1888, contributed greatly to the resurgence of Gnosticism among modern esotericists and especially to the extensive presence of Gnosticism in Blavatsky's works. King also expounded the idea that Gnosticism was largely derived from Buddhism, which became important to Blavatsky, see King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains: Ancient and Mediæval*, (1887), pp. xiv-xv, 13, 49-57, 390. For more details, see Clare Goodrick-Clarke, 'Mead's Gnosis: A Theosophical Exegesis of an Ancient Heresy', *Theosophical History*, 4 (1992-93), 134-48 (p. 143).

be applied to many of the founders of the more important sects which later were all engulfed in one -- that stupendous compound of unintelligible dogmas enforced by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others, which is now termed Christianity. If these must be called heresies, then early Christianity itself must be included in the number. Basilides and Valentinus preceded Irenaeus and Tertullian; and the two latter Fathers had less facts than the two former Gnostics to show that their heresy was plausible. Neither divine right nor truth brought about the triumph of their Christianity; fate alone was propitious.⁸⁹²

Blavatsky also argued that the Gnostics were, as Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) had earlier remarked in his famous *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1789), the most worthy of the name 'Christian'.⁸⁹³

Such is the sad result of the fanaticism of the "orthodox" sects, who, to borrow an expression of the author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," never were, like the Gnostics, "the most polite, the most learned, and most wealthy of the Christian name."⁸⁹⁴

In fact Blavatsky believed the Gnostics to be the true exponents of 'primitive Christianity' even though they were persecuted and their doctrines largely obliterated and that this fact would soon be rediscovered through historical research.⁸⁹⁵

In relation to this Blavatsky also, like other Bible scholars of the time, sought to restore what she believed to be the now lost, but true historical identity and pure teachings of Jesus by placing him and his teaching in a new context.⁸⁹⁶ *Isis Unveiled* therefore, as Blavatsky claimed, 'contains not one word against the pure teachings of Jesus, but unsparingly denounces their debasement into pernicious ecclesiastical systems that are ruinous to man's faith in his immortality and his God, and subversive of all moral restraint'.⁸⁹⁷

According to Blavatsky, Jesus had been initiated into the mysteries of the Essene brotherhood whom Blavatsky argued were converts of 'Buddhist

⁸⁹² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 213.

⁸⁹³ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vols 6 (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), I, 461.

⁸⁹⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 249, see also 307.

⁸⁹⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 249, 253; HPB and Abbeé Roca, 'Controversy between H. P. Blavatsky and the Abbé Roca', in HPBCW VIII, 375.

⁸⁹⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 33-34.

⁸⁹⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. iv.

missionaries who had overrun Egypt, Greece, and even Judea at one time, since the reign of Asoka the zealous propagandist;⁸⁹⁸ and that Jesus once belonged to the 'older' nazars (Nazarenes), an Essene group, which he reformed, resulting in a new reformed nazar group founded by Jesus himself.⁸⁹⁹ This is also the true meaning of why he was known as Jesus of Nazareth, i.e. not because he came from that town—but because he was a 'Nasaria'.⁹⁰⁰ The Nazars were, according to Blavatsky, fundamentally a Gnostic group, which also explains her view that the Gnostics to some extent were the true members of primitive Christianity.⁹⁰¹

Besides Jesus' relation to the Essene and Nazar groups, Blavatsky also argued that much of the account of Jesus' life, as we know it from the gospels, reflects a universal mythological narrative essentially moulded after the Indian Krishna.⁹⁰² Yet, Jesus was also a historically real man, an initiate and prophet

⁸⁹⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 133. This relation between Buddhism and the Essenes was a common idea found in the works which Blavatsky read at the time such as Inman, *Ancient Faiths and Modern: A Dissertation upon Worships, Legends and Divinities* pp. 143, 145, 180-81; King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains* (1887), pp. xiv-xv, 51-52, 390.

⁸⁹⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 33-34, 37n, 90, 127-28, 133, 137, 144.

⁹⁰⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 151.

⁹⁰¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 154. Blavatsky's primary source for the Nazars was the *Codex Nasaraeus: liber Adami appellatus, syriace transscriptus, loco vocalium, ubi vicem literarum gutturalium praestiterint, his substitutis*, ed. by Matthias Norberg, 3vols (Hafniae [i. e. Copenhagen]: F. Brummer, 1815-1817); but Blavatsky also used Dunlap, *SOD: The Son of The Man*; see also *H. P. Blavatsky On the Gnostics*, comp. and ann. by H. J. Spierenburg (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 1994), pp. 51-74; *The New Testament Commentaries of H. P. Blavatsky*, comp. and ann. by H. J. Spierenburg (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 1994), pp. 29, 32, 33, 42, 49, 76, 96, 134. The Nazars mentioned by Blavatsky are not to be confused with the later Moslem Nusa'iri, see John Patrick Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian, and Sex Magician* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), pp. 211-40. For relations between groups of similar names and common confusions with other groups, see Ray A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period until its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1988), pp. 11-18.

⁹⁰² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 337-42, 536. Comparisons between the narrative of the life of Krishna as found in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the narrative of Jesus as expounded in the *Gospels* became the topic in several works

illuminated by the intuition⁹⁰³—but not the unique son of the Jewish god Jehovah as the Christian Church otherwise had construed him to be.⁹⁰⁴ Jesus was also not the Christ *per se*, but was overshadowed by, what Blavatsky called, the Christ principle which according to her view of Christianity is a distinct, more universal principle—not identical to the person Jesus.⁹⁰⁵

Like most other ancient religions and philosophies Jesus had, according to Blavatsky's research, an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine.⁹⁰⁶ The secret doctrine, which Jesus had been initiated into, was essentially one with the universal secret gnosis of antiquity taught by Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Plato, and Moses⁹⁰⁷ and its teachings particularly resembled the teachings of Buddhism.⁹⁰⁸ Blavatsky did therefore not agree with the critical scholar Ernst Renan's accretion in his *Vie de Jésus*, that Jesus ignored and never read anything from the Buddha, Zoroaster or Plato and that even though his teachings evidently

during the nineteenth-century after the first English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in 1785 by Sir Charles Wilkins (1749-1836), *The Bhagvat-Geeta Or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon: In 18 Lectures with Notes; Transl. from the Original, in the Sanskreet, Or Ancient Language of the Brahmans* (London: C. Nourse, 1785). Higgins' *Anacalypsis* is among the first to show the similarities between these two narratives, see Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis: an Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis* (New York: Macy-Masius Publishers, 1927 [1833-1836]), I, 129-44, 144-66. In 1875 Kersey Graves produced what he termed 'Three Hundred and Forty-Six Striking Analogies Between Christ and Chrishna' in *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors: Or, Christianity Before Christ* ([www. books.org](http://www.books.org): Forgotten Books, 2007 [1875]), pp. 201-41. Even though Blavatsky clearly used these works already in *Isis Unveiled* the more immediate source for the relation between Jesus/Christ and Krishna was Jacolliot, *La Bible dans l'Inde, ou la vie de lezeus Christna*. For an overview of the reception of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in the West (not the Krishna/Christ parallels), see Eric J. Sharpe, *The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavad Gītā a bicentenary survey* (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1985).

⁹⁰³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 435; II, 198, 307.

⁹⁰⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 193, 195.

⁹⁰⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 154, 198; see also HPB 'The Esoteric Character of the Gospels', in HPBCW, VIII, 172-239 in which this concept is fully developed by Blavatsky.

⁹⁰⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 2; II, 146-47, 183, 191-92.

⁹⁰⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 38-39, 44, 94, 124, 192, 305, 387.

⁹⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 123, 133.

contains elements from all of these, Jesus was ignorant of the fact.⁹⁰⁹ To Blavatsky Jesus was an adept of the mysteries of the ancient gnosis well-aware of the doctrines he had been initiated into and the universal principles he taught.

In summary, it was shown in this section that Blavatsky used her critique of Christianity to construct her own alternative view of the origin of religion in an ancient universal pan-esotericism and that true religion could be rediscovered with the help of esoteric keys or initiated knowledge. It was also shown that while Blavatsky made use of modern biblical-criticism, she used it to reinterpret Christianity rather than dismiss it altogether. According to Blavatsky true Christianity has its roots in early Gnosticism and the true historical identity of Jesus, now generally lost, was that of an initiated adept, not a God, who belonged to and reformed the Essene community and later in life became overshadowed by the universal Christ-principle. Furthermore by constructing this new context of esotericism, both Jesus and the early Gnostics were shown to have derived their wisdom from the ancient pan-esotericism or real historical origin of true religious ideas. Blavatsky was thus not anti-Christian, but held another view of the origins of Christianity and the identity of Jesus.

2.3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism in relation to her intellectual contexts and her construction of meaning. First of all, it was shown that the common scholarly and popular picture of Blavatsky as an anti-Christian polemical occultist is an over-simplified portrayal. Firstly, Blavatsky followed a common Enlightenment trend of Bible-critique typical of the intellectual climate of the nineteenth-century; secondly, Blavatsky, while critical of the Roman Catholic Church in particular, was in no way critical towards all of Christianity. Blavatsky was positively inclined towards the Russian Orthodox Church and produced her own esoteric-religious views on Christianity.

Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism did not only arise from her allegiance to the Russian Church, in which case it would simply have

⁹⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 336-37; Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus* (London: Trübner & Co., Paternoster Row, 1864) pp. 308-309.

been a schismatic issue but it also arose from her historical context as a spiritual-semantic problem. To simply read Blavatsky's critique of Christian dogmatism as a discursive strategy, a polemical encounter, would not properly account for her crisis of faith and her search for religious meaning in the wider intellectual contexts. Blavatsky eagerly embraced the Enlightenment tradition of dispelling superstition and honouring truth but did not agree with the consequences that often followed Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment critique of religion and the general secularization of society, such as increased materialism and a decline in spirituality. These trends represented a major crisis to her and she clearly regarded it as important and necessary to fight against secularization. However, Blavatsky had absorbed so much modern Bible-critique that she was unable to regard Western Christianity and its dogmas as an institution that could counteract the growing materialism of her age. Like others at the time who felt a crisis of faith Blavatsky studied alternative forms of spirituality, notably Western and Eastern esoteric traditions, as a solution to the modern critique of religion.

It was furthermore shown that Blavatsky sought to restore the authority of religion not by dismissing modern scholarship but by using it to her own advantage. She used works from Bible criticism, the science of religion and the mythographers to criticize Christianity. In fact, it was shown that the paratextual context of Blavatsky's first major work *Isis Unveiled* was that of the so-called mythographers and not simply that of occultism. It was however also shown that what made Blavatsky's discourse distinct from the mythographers was her identification with the esoteric traditions. It was demonstrated that Blavatsky used all these contexts to claim dogmatic Christianity as a false religious authority and thus attempted to create space for a new form of spirituality that could withstand modern criticism and counter materialism. In order to deprive dogmatic Christianity of its authority she constructed a historical narrative account of its origins to show that both its origin and its dogmas were historically borrowed from older religions. Once the deconstruction of dogmatic Christianity was accomplished, it was demonstrated how this facilitated Blavatsky with the opportunity to reconstruct what she believed to be true

religion in its stead—an ancient universal pan-esotericism, the origin of all religions. In relation to this it was shown that, according to Blavatsky, the true way of interpreting religious ideas had been lost until now, which implied that the modern secular critique of religion could not be directed against true religion or esotericism because this critique lacked an understanding of the esoteric dimension of religion.

Finally, once this true origin of religion had been established and the key to its correct understanding demonstrated, it was shown that Blavatsky read Christianity into a new context by claiming to demonstrate that the true early Christianity was Gnosticism and that the true identity of Jesus was as an adept of the universal secret doctrine.

Blavatsky's discourse against Christian dogmatism used her historical and intellectual sources to challenge the religious authority of the time, Christianity, in order to construct what, to her, seemed to be a more meaningful perspective of religious truth and Christianity in general in the light of critical scholarship and Western esotericism. In this sense Christianity was central to her Theosophical project.

2.4 Blavatsky's Discourse against the Natural Sciences and Materialism

*'whatever the writer may do, she will never be able to satisfy both Truth and Science.'*⁹¹⁰

This chapter will analyse Blavatsky's 'discourse against the natural sciences and Materialism'⁹¹¹ chiefly found in her first major work *Isis Unveiled* (1877), volume I, subtitled 'Science', and in the addenda to the first and second volumes of her second major work *The Secret Doctrine* (1888).⁹¹² The

⁹¹⁰ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 2 vols (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1888), I, 478.

⁹¹¹ To reasonably restrict the scope of this chapter focus will first of all be placed on Blavatsky's discourse against the natural sciences and materialism rather than on the human and cultural sciences. Furthermore and since this is still comprehensive, focus will be on mapping overall tendencies and points of critique rather than on details. The broad discourse against the natural sciences will centre on physics, even though her discourse also encompassed biology, natural history, geology and other areas in a comprehensive and significant way. For an overview of the many-faceted term 'materialism' in the nineteenth century, see Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 20-28. For Blavatsky's use of the term 'materialism', see section 2.4.2.4 of the present chapter.

⁹¹² Blavatsky also wrote several articles related to her discourse against science and materialism, see for example HPB, 'An Old Book and a New One', in HPBCW, II, 182-91 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 3 (1879), 77-79); HPB, 'The Pralaya of Modern Science', in HPBCW, II, 483-86 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 1 (1880), 11-12); HPB, 'The Bugbears of Science' in HPBCW, IV, 307-25 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 5 (1883), 105-108); HPB, [Comments on Henry G. Atkinson] 'From Theosophy to Shakespeare', in HPBCW, IV, (1891), 599-601 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 10 (1883), 260-61); HPB, 'The High Water Mark of Modern Philosophy', in HPBCW, VI, 172-73 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 6 (54) (1884), 131); HPB, 'Occult or Exact Science?', in HPBCW, VII, 55-70 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VII, 79 (1886) 422-31; *The Theosophist*, VII, 80 (1886), 481-94); HPB, 'Ancient Magic in Modern Science', in HPBCW, VII, 91-103 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII, 85 (1886), 1-8); HPB, 'Modern Idealism, worse than Materialism', in HPBCW, VIII, 93-98 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, XVIII, 1 (1896), 9-12); HPB, 'The Signs of the Times', in HPBCW, VIII, 98-108 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 2 (1887), 83-89); HPB, 'The Substantial Nature of Magnetism', in HPBCW, VIII, 315-33 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, IX, 49 (1891), 8-20); HPB, 'The Life Principle', in HPBCW, IX, 72-80 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 7 (1888), 37-42);

importance of science to Blavatsky's work will be discussed by critically situating her discourse in the historical context of nineteenth-century 'occultism' (2.4.1). Based on this discussion, her critique of the sciences and scientists of her time will be systematically mapped and the significance of her critique will be analysed (2.4.2). Finally, what she thought to be true science or esoteric philosophy will be analysed in relation to the *etic* construct of 'occultism' and its inherent notion of 'scientism' (2.4.3).⁹¹³

2.4.1 The relation between science and esotericism⁹¹⁴

Positivist accounts of the history of science, since the mid-nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, generally portrayed science and occultism⁹¹⁵ as two incompatible domains—the former rational and the latter irrational.⁹¹⁶

HPB, 'The Tidal Wave', in HPBCW, XII, 1-8 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 27 (1889), 173-78); HPB, 'Going to and fro in the Earth', in HPBCW, XII, 55-57 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 28 (1889), 349-50); HPB, 'The Cycle Moveth', in HPBCW, XII, 120-32 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VI, 31 (1890), 1-10); HPB, 'The Negators of Science', in HPBCW, XIII, 138-51 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VIII, 44 (1891), 89-98).

⁹¹³ Like the other discourse chapters, this chapter is not intended to analyse Blavatsky's scientific, occult theories/doctrines, but to map and discuss her historical context, her discourse against science and her construction of what she believed to be true science. As noted in part one of this thesis, here 'discourse' is used generally as 'how Blavatsky talked about a specific topic' and 'the context in which she talked' rather than focusing on the details of actual doctrines.

⁹¹⁴ In this section the terms science and esotericism will be used in *singular* in order to speak of them in general terms as domains, while still retaining an awareness of their complexity.

⁹¹⁵ Occultism is here used in a very broad sense synonymous with esotericism, as an umbrella term for several currents displaying several familiar characteristics such as magic, the occult sciences, occult philosophy, Hermeticism. For a recent discussion of the complexities of this term and others related to it, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 177-91.

⁹¹⁶ See Allen G. Debus, 'Science and History: The birth of a new field', in *Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought*, ed. by Stephen A. McKnight (Columbia, MO and London: University of Missouri Press, 1992), pp. 1-36; Brian Vickers, 'Introduction' in *Occult & Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. by Brian Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1-55; Håkan Håkansson, *Seeing the Word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism*, Ugglan Minervaserien, 2 (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2001), pp. 35-72; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the*

However, in the twentieth century, a new wave of historians—for example Lynn Thorndike (1882-1965)⁹¹⁷ and later Frances Yates (1899-1981)⁹¹⁸—began demonstrating how science and Western esotericism (including magic, Hermeticism, and the occult sciences) have been closely related domains throughout Western history with many important points of contact.⁹¹⁹ In the

Decline of Magic (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp. 641-68. For continuing discussions on the topic, see also Mary Hesse, *Revolution & Reconstructions in the philosophy of Science* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 3-28; see also Mary Hesse, 'Hermeticism and Historiography: An Apology for the Internal History of Science', in *Historical and philosophical perspectives of Science*, ed. by R. H. Stuewer (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp. 134-62; Paolo Rossi, 'Hermeticism, Rationality and the Scientific Revolution', in *Renaissance Magic*, ed. by Brian P. Levack (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1992), pp. 133-59; Maria Mavroudi, 'Occult Science and Society in Byzantium: Considerations for Future Research', in *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, ed. by Paul Magdalino and Maria Mavroudi (Geneva: La Pomme d'or, 2006), pp. 39-95.

⁹¹⁷ See for example Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic & Experimental Science*, 8 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923-1958).

⁹¹⁸ See for example Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964); Frances A. Yates, 'The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science', in *Art, Science and History in the Renaissance*, ed. by C. S. Singleton (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), pp. 255-74; Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972); Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). For debates on the 'Yeats thesis', see Edward Rosen, 'Was Copernicus a Hermeticist?', in *Historical and philosophical perspectives of Science*, ed. by R. H. Stuewer (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp. 163-71; Hesse, 'Hermeticism and Historiography', pp. 134-62; Robert S. Westman, 'Magical Reform and Astronomical Reform: The Yates Thesis Reconsidered', in *Hermeticism and the Scientific Revolution*, ed. by Robert S. Westman and J. E. McGuire (Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1977), pp. 5-91; Vickers, 'Introduction', pp. 1-55; Brian P. Copenhaver, 'Natural magic, hermetism, and occultism in early modern science', in *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* ed. by David C. Lindberg & Robert S. Westman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 261-301; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Beyond the Yates Paradigm: The Study of Western Esotericism between Counterculture and New Complexity', *Aries* 1, 1 (2001), 5-37.

⁹¹⁹ See for example Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret knowledge* (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2005), pp. 99-104; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 234; Alison Butler, *Victorian Occultism and the Making of Modern Magic: Invoking*

Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, natural philosophy and the occult sciences were closely related,⁹²⁰ but after the scientific revolution (from the

Tradition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. viii-ix; Floris H. Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 239-377; David C. Lindberg, 'Conceptions of the Scientific Revolution from Bacon to Butterfield: A Preliminary Sketch', in *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* ed. by David C. Lindberg & Robert S. Westman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-26; Copenhaver, 'Natural magic, hermetism, and occultism in early modern science', pp. 261-301; Eugenio Garin, 'Martin Mersenne: Renaissance Naturalism and Renaissance Magic', in *Renaissance Magic*, ed. by Brian P. Levack (New York & London, 1992), pp. 105-16; Samuel Clyde McCulloch, 'John Dee: Elizabethan Doctor of Science and Magic', in *Renaissance Magic*, ed. by Brian P. Levack (New York & London, 1992), pp. 118-31; Charles B. Schmitt, 'Reappraisals in Renaissance Science', in *Renaissance Magic*, ed. by Brian P. Levack (New York & London, 1992), pp. 160-74; Rossi, 'Hermeticism, Rationality and the Scientific Revolution', pp. 133-59; Debus, 'Science and History The birth of a new field', pp. 1-36; Vickers, 'Introduction', pp. 1-55; Håkansson, *Seeing the Word*, pp. 35-72; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 641-68; Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London & New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 231-41; Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian science and medicine in the sixteenth and seventh centuries* (New York: Dover Publications, 2002 [1977]); Allen G. Debus, *Chemistry, Alchemy and the New Philosophy 1550-1700: studies in the history of science and medicine* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987); Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy: or The Hunting of the Green Lyon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 91-92; Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus faces of genius: The role of alchemy in Newton's thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1991]), pp. 1-18, 166-68, 210-12; Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An introduction to philosophical medicine in the era of the Renaissance*, 2nd edn (Basel: Karger Publishers, 1982 [1958]); Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990); James E. McClellan and Harold Dorn, *Science and Technology in World History: An Introduction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 206; Stephen A. McKnight, *The Modern Age and the Recovery of Ancient Wisdom: A Reconsideration of Historical Consciousness, 1450-1650* (Columbia, MO and London: University of Missouri Press, 1991), pp. 6-26; Christopher I. Lehrich, *The Occult Mind: Magic in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 114-19; Brian J. Gibbons, *Spirituality and the occult: from the Renaissance to the twentieth century* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 38-55. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, pp. 164-91.

⁹²⁰ See note 919, but see also Edward Grant, *A History of Natural Philosophy: From the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, NY:

sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries) the close relationship began to disintegrate.⁹²¹ In the nineteenth century with the advance of secularisation and the rise of the new scientific professions, a clearer distinction between the scientific and the sacred domains arose in both public and intellectual awareness.⁹²²

Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 170-78, 308; William Austin Stahl, Robert A. Campbell, Gary Diver and Yvonne Petru, *Webs of Reality: Social Perspectives on Science and Religion* (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 89; Corinne J. Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), p. 4; Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman, 'Introduction', in *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus*, ed. by Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. xxx-xliii; Paul Magdalino, 'Occult Science and Imperial Power Society in Byzantine History and Historiography (9th-12th Centuries)', in *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, ed. by Paul Magdalino and Maria Mavroudi (Geneva: La Pomme d'or, 2006), pp. 118-62.

⁹²¹ See notes 916, 918 and 919, but see also Wilbur Applebaum, 'Epistemological and Political Implications of the Scientific Revolution', in *Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought*, ed. by Stephen A. McKnight (Columbia, MO and London: University of Missouri Press, 1992), pp. 167-202; Danny Ethus Burton and David A. Grandy, *Magic, Mystery, and Science: The Occult in Western Civilization* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 184; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 643. In relation to the scientific revolution, see Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry*; Peter Dear, *Revolutionising the Sciences: European Knowledge and its Ambitions, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* ed. by David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1996). For older, now classic, accounts, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957); Alexandre Koyré, *The Astronomical Revolution: Copernicus-Kepler-Borelli* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973); Angus Armitage, *Sun, stand thou still: the life and work of Copernicus, the astronomer* (London: Sigma Books, 1947); Jacques Roger, *Les sciences de la vie dans la pensée française du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Colin, 1963); Robin Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945); Romano Harre, *Matter & Method* (London: Macmillan, 1964); Marie Boas Hall, 'The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy', *Osiris*, 10 (1952), 412-541.

⁹²² It is, however, important to note that a definite demarcation between science and religion has never existed and that the two domains have influenced

One of the foremost reasons for this gradual separation was that of the scientific revolution and its new mathematical, mechanistic, experimental and empirical theories and methods. Knowledge of nature acquired via the essentialist methods and theories of correspondences, analogy, deduction, gnosis, revelation and the authority of ancient tradition, generally associated with esotericism, were largely questioned and finally abandoned as epistemologically flawed and unproductive.⁹²³ Even the hitherto accepted notions of 'occult qualities' inherent in natural objects—a mutual reference point for both occultism and natural philosophy—were criticised on several fronts, yet

each other and adapted to each other in varying degrees throughout history, see *John Brooke and Geoffrey Cantor, Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science & Religion* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), pp. 15-74; Peter Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion: The Debate in Early Twentieth Century Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 1-24, 59-86; Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, pp. 100-103, 133-34; Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 210-18.

⁹²³ Copenhaver, 'Natural magic, hermetism, and occultism in early modern science', pp. 261-301; Brian P. Copenhaver, 'The Occultist Tradition and its Critics in Seventeenth Century Philosophy,' in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth Century Philosophy*, ed. by Michael Ayers and Daniel Garber, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), I, 454-512; J. L. Heilbron, *Electricity in the 17th and 18th Centuries: A Study of Early Modern Physics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 19-30, 34, 51, 190, 194, 209-10. On correspondences, see Brian Vickers, 'Analogy versus identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580-1680', in *Occult & Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. by Brian Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 95-164; Brian Vickers, 'On the Function of Analogy in the Occult', in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus (Washington, D.C.: Folger Books, 1988), pp. 265-92; S. J. Tambiah, 'Relations of analogy and identity: toward multiple orientations to the world', in *Modes of thought Explorations in Culture and Cognition*, ed. by D. R. Olson and N. Torrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 34-52; Leirich, *The Occult Mind*, pp. 103-15; Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1994), pp. 10-11.

assimilated into the new experimental and mechanistic models.⁹²⁴ Another major reason for the separation was that from the Enlightenment onwards the technological and industrial results produced by the new natural sciences and their empirical methods raised their social, cultural and economic importance and this fuelled the professionalization of the sciences in the nineteenth-century.⁹²⁵ Those scientific practitioners who still held on to more metaphysical

⁹²⁴ For a brief overview of the idea and history of ‘occult qualities’ and ‘occult forces’, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, ‘Occult/Occultism’, in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 884-89; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, pp. 178-80. Even though the natural sciences of the post-scientific revolution period have been popularly portrayed as freeing themselves of ‘occult qualities’ and unexplainable entities—a process that began with the mechanistic model originally formulated by Rene Descartes (1596-1650)—the new natural sciences from Isaac Newton (1642-1727)—the icon of the scientific revolution—sought to reformulate them and mathematically/experimentally prove their existence through their effects. Newton thus accepted the existence of ‘occult qualities’ and when Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) argued that his explanation of gravitational attraction was no better than ‘scholastic occult quality’, Newton merely denied that it was scholastic and not that it was occult. For references on the important debate for and against ‘occult qualities’ and the debate with Newton, see Victor D. Boantz, ‘From cohesion to *pesanteur*: The Origins of the 1669 debate on the causes of gravity’, in *Controversies Within the Scientific Revolution*, ed. by Marcelo Dascal and Victor D. Boantz (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2011), pp. 77-100 (pp. 81-84); Nir Grannot, ‘Leibniz versus Newton on the nature of gravity and planetary motion’, in *Controversies Within the Scientific Revolution*, ed. by Marcelo Dascal and Victor D. Boantz (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2011), pp. 101-122 (pp. 105-112); Gregory Brown, ‘“... Et serai toujours la même pour vous”: Personal, Political, and Philosophical Dimensions of the Leibniz-Caroline Correspondence, 1714-1716.?’’, in *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, ed. by Paul Lodge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 262-92 (p. 291); J. L. Heilbron, *Elements of Early Modern Physics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 15-22, 41-43; J. L. Heilbron, *Electricity in the 17th & 18th Centuries: A Study of Early Modern Physics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 24-30, 176-77; Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton’s Alchemy*, pp. 197, 211; Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius*, pp. 230-31; Richard S. Westfall, ‘Newton and the Hermetic Tradition’, in *Renaissance Magic*, ed. by Brian P. Levack (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), pp. 217-52; see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 490-91.

⁹²⁵ See Frank M. Turner, ‘The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension’, in *Isis*, 69, 3 (1978), 356-76 (pp. 359, 362-63);

methods and the centrality of occult forces in the unveiling of the secrets of nature, were socially and philosophically marginalized, if not ridiculed, by the new growing scientific elite, as irrational and superstitious in an age of rationalization and science.⁹²⁶

Yet, some thinkers continued the attempt to bridge the spiritual and material domains, as it had earlier been done in *magia naturalis*,⁹²⁷ and fought for their continued interrelation under the pressure of the new intellectual and cultural conditions. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century this spiritual bridging, in an increasingly secular and naturalistic milieu, formed part of the counter-Enlightenment current of Romanticism and *Naturphilosophie*, and from the middle of the nineteenth century continued in the modern spiritualist

Bernard Lightman, 'Introduction', in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed. by Bernard V. Lightman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 1-14 (p. 10); Martin Fichman, 'Biology and Politics: Defining the Boundaries', in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed. by Bernard V. Lightman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 94-118 (p. 101); Evelleen Richards, 'Redrawing the Boundaries: Darwinian Science and the Victorian Women Intellectuals', in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed. by Bernard V. Lightman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 119-42 (pp. 120, 134); Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 647-56.

⁹²⁶ J. D. Bernal, *Science and Industry in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006 [1953]); Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 656-68; see also James Webb, *The Flight from Reason* (London: Macdonald, 1971). For a broad discussion of the construction of magic and the occult sciences as the 'other' of science, see Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, pp. 164-91.

⁹²⁷ *Magia naturalis* was originally employed as a new term during the Middle Ages to enable the legitimate study of the ancient sciences on the processes of nature and its hidden forces against theological censure. In 1558 the term functioned as the title of Giovanni Battista della Porta's (1535-1615) famous *Magia Naturalis* (1558, enlarged edn 1589), but the term has undergone many mutations and usages through the course of history. In this chapter, unless otherwise stated, it will refer to the study and knowledge of nature that includes hidden or occult causes, qualities and modes of explanation including correspondences, sympathies/antipathies, hidden connections and spiritual forces, see Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, pp. 173-81; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Magic V: 18th-20th Century', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 738-39. For a classic study see, W.-E. Peuckert, *Gabalia: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der Magia naturalis im 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1967).

and occultist movements.⁹²⁸ The latter two movements gained some popularity and momentum due to the increasing religious crisis and dissatisfaction with the growth of materialism expressed by a large segment of a growing middle class, but proponents of marginalized esotericism and rejected occult sciences, such as Blavatsky, were gradually forced to accommodate the new dominant historical and intellectual contexts. The resultant reformulation and transformation of esotericism however often meant that the language of the new prevailing intellectual developments and authorities that they sought to counter, entered into their own language and terminology.

2.4.1.1 The transformation of esotericism

Given recent scholarly awareness of the importance of esotericism in Western intellectual history, several scholars have discussed how esotericism responded to the challenges of a new hostile, dominant, intellectual climate. Its earlier traditional defining principles *au Faivre*⁹²⁹ and its discourses shadowed the development of the sciences.⁹³⁰ Hanegraaff has especially pointed to the increased 'rationalization' and 'secularization' of the world as causes of what he terms the decisive watershed in the history of Western esotericism and the new major challenges confronting esotericism from the Enlightenment onwards.⁹³¹ Similar to a number of scholars before and after him, such as James Webb, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Olav Hammer, Alex Owen, Alison Butler, Antoine Faivre, Kocku von Stuckrad and others, Hanegraaff has analysed how thinkers

⁹²⁸ See *Isaiah Berlin*, 'The Counter-Enlightenment', in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. by Philip Weiner, 5 vols (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1973), II, 100-12; *Isaiah Berlin's Counter-Enlightenment*, ed. by Joseph Mali and Robert Wokler (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2003); see also articles on *Naturphilosophie* in *Epochen der Naturmystik: Hermetische Tradition in wissenschaftlichen Fortschritt*, ed. by Antoine Faivre and Rolf Christian Zimmermann (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1979); Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Romanticism and the Esoteric Connection', in *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. by Roelof van den Broek and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Albany, NY: State University Press, 1998), pp. 237-68.

⁹²⁹ See Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, pp. 10-14.

⁹³⁰ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 210-218; Butler, *Victorian Occultism*, p. 162.

⁹³¹ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: SUNY, 1998 [1996]), p. 406.

involved with esoteric ideas have attempted to adapt to these new challenges.⁹³²

Hanegraaff particularly mentions the 'Romantic stream' including *Naturphilosophie* (1795-1830) as one of the first secularized forms of esotericism. Romanticism, influenced by Renaissance esotericism and the Enlightenment, was an attempt to maintain the interrelation between spirit and matter in the Great Chain of Being.⁹³³ Its proponents continued to make a consistent defence of a cosmology based on correspondences, but by adaptation incorporated (cultural) evolutionism into the traditional framework of esotericism *sensu* Faivre in order to meet the new intellectual challenges.⁹³⁴ Related to German *Naturphilosophie* was Franz Anton Mesmer's (1734-1815) theory of 'animal magnetism', which also revitalized older esoteric ideas of 'subtle matter' and 'occult force' by reformulating them in a more modern naturalistic and scientific garb of experimental verifiability.⁹³⁵ Mesmer thus bridged the spiritual and material with his notion of a universal natural force and thereby continued a harmonisation of religion (including the occult) and science, which were threatening to separate completely.⁹³⁶ For this reason, Hanegraaff has argued that Mesmer's theory can be viewed as a modern presentation of *magia naturalis*.⁹³⁷ The work of the Swedish natural philosopher, theologian and esotericist Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) can equally be viewed as an

⁹³² Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 411-513; Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, p. 100; Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 48-53.

⁹³³ For further details on the idea of the great chain of being, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 [1936]).

⁹³⁴ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 409, 419, 421; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 235.

⁹³⁵ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 430, 433; see also Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, pp. 173-90, 235; Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, pp. 103-104; Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1995 [1968]); John Warne Monroe, *Laboratories of Faith: Mesmerism, Spiritism and Occultism in Modern France* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2008); Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁹³⁶ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 435.

⁹³⁷ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 433.

early encounter with secularization that transformed the traditional outlook of esotericism. Contrary to Mesmer's work, Swedenborg's visionary cosmology was not influenced by esoteric *Naturphilosophie* to any great extent—but rather by Cartesian and Christian dualism.⁹³⁸ Swedenborg furthermore reformulated the theory of correspondences central to traditional esotericism in terms of mechanistic philosophy.⁹³⁹ He presented his spiritual visions in a rational and systematic way that made the spiritual more concrete and tangible to the new age of reason.⁹⁴⁰

From 1848 and onwards the reformulated esotericism of Swedenborg and Mesmer combined into modern spiritualism.⁹⁴¹ Spiritualism itself was a diverse modern religious movement, which, in the light of the increasing materialistic scientific climate, became popular by claiming scientific proof for its seance phenomena.⁹⁴² Again religion, including the domain of the trans-empirical or spiritual, was linked to the realm of the empirical or material at a time when the distance between the two domains seemed wider apart than ever.⁹⁴³ The spiritualist movement was at the origins of modern occultism in the eighteen-seventies, around the formation of the Theosophical Society (1875)⁹⁴⁴

⁹³⁸ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 424, 428, 429; see also Ernst Benz, *Emanuel Swedenborg: Visionary Savant in the Age of Reason*, trans. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke from the 2nd German edn, 1969 (West Chester, PA: The Swedenborg Foundation, 2002); Martin Lamm, *Emanuel Swedenborg: The Development of his Thought*, trans. by Tomas Spiers and Anders Hallengren from the 1st Swedish edn, 1915 (West Chester, PA: The Swedenborg Foundation, 2000); Inge Jonsson, *Visionary Scientist: The Effects of Science and Philosophy on Swedenborg's Cosmology* (West Chester, PA: The Swedenborg Foundation, 1999); Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Swedenborg, Oetinger, Kant: Three Perspectives on the Secrets of Heaven* (West Chester, PA: The Swedenborg Foundation, 2007).

⁹³⁹ Hanegraaff, *Swedenborg, Oetinger, Kant: Three Perspectives on the Secrets of Heaven*, pp. 3-11.

⁹⁴⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, pp. 155-71, 235; Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, pp. 100-103.

⁹⁴¹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 435.

⁹⁴² See Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 44, 63.

⁹⁴³ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 435, 439-40, 441-42.

⁹⁴⁴ See Nancy Rubin Stuart, *The Reluctant Spiritualist: The Life of Maggie Fox* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2005); Barbara Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead: Kate*

and to some extent it was the constituent paradigm for the emergence of the occultism that Blavatsky and others developed.⁹⁴⁵

Apart from the emerging *emic* use of the term ‘occultism’ in the works of Blavatsky and authors such as the English medium Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899) to distinguish themselves from the modern spiritualists,⁹⁴⁶ Hanegraaff has proposed an *etic* construct of ‘occultism’ designed heuristically to specify the historical transformation which traditional esotericism underwent in the late-nineteenth century. The term is intended to signify that in addition to the traditional view of correspondences and analogy, central to Renaissance esotericism, esoteric cosmology also came to be understood and constructed in terms of ‘instrumental causality’, which resulted in an unstable and incoherent new hybrid reformulation of esotericism (i.e. ‘occultism’).⁹⁴⁷ Closely associated with this historical construct ‘occultism’ is Max Weber’s classic concept of ‘entzauberung’ or ‘disenchantment’.⁹⁴⁸ Hanegraaff for example argues that ‘occultism’ in its broad sense can be viewed as *‘all attempts by esotericists to come to terms with a disenchanted world or, alternatively, by people in general to make sense of esotericism from the perspective of a disenchanted secular world.’*⁹⁴⁹

An increasingly materialistic, naturalistic, rationalistic and secular mainstream climate no doubt challenged religious and esoterically minded thinkers in the nineteenth century, particularly as the proponents of naturalism progressively gained authority in defining nature upon such a “disenchanted” foundation.⁹⁵⁰ Especially scientific naturalists and public intellectuals, such as

and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism (New York: HarperOne, 2004).

⁹⁴⁵ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 435, 441-42.

⁹⁴⁶ See chapter 2.5 on ‘Blavatsky’s discourse against spiritualism’ in the present thesis on the distinction between spiritualism and ‘occultism’ emerging in the nineteenth century.

⁹⁴⁷ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 406-407, 409, 422-23, 442.

⁹⁴⁸ See Max Weber, ‘Science as a Vocation’, in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958 [1918]), p. 155, but see also pp. 138-39, 142.

⁹⁴⁹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 422.

⁹⁵⁰ See Turner, ‘The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension’, pp. 359, 362-63; see also *Brooke and Cantor*,

Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), John Tyndall (1820-1893), George Buck (1807-1886), Edward Frankland (1825-1899), Thomas Archer Hirst (1830-1892), Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911), John Lubbock (1834-1913), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), and William Spottiswoode (1825-1883), related to the X-Club (a social-group formed in 1864 by T. H. Huxley), publically sought to cultivate naturalism, support the work of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and forcefully establish a scientifically directed culture to minimise the authority of theology and all other 'schemes and systems' of thought in the domain of the natural sphere. As Tyndall notoriously remarked in his Belfast Address of 1874, 'We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, in so far as they do this, submit to its control.'⁹⁵¹ In order to mark his position and further separate and demarcate the natural sphere from the religious or *a priori* notions making room for purely scientific explanations and

Reconstructing Nature, p. 30; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, p. 14; Bernard Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions: Discordant Harmonies', in *Science in Theistic Contexts: Cognitive Dimensions*, ed. by John Hedley Brooke, Margaret J. Osler and Jitse M. vander Meer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 343-66 (pp. 346-47); Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian intellectual life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁹⁵¹ John Tyndall, 'The Belfast Address delivered before the British Association on Wednesday evening August 19, 1874', in John Tyndall, *Fragments of Science: A Series of Dedicated Essays, Addresses, and Reviews*, 2 vols (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), II, 135-201 (p. 197). It should be noted that the simplistic meta-narrative of a mutually exclusive battle between religion and science (the conflict-model)—which would read 'the Belfast Address' and the views of naturalists, such as Tyndall and Huxley, as being against religion—is no longer complete even though many scholars, including Butler, *Victorian Occultism*, pp. 99-100, still add to it. In general, both Tyndall and Huxley regarded the moral, social and cultural aspects of the Christian teachings and religion as beneficial. Turner has argued that their objection was to the cultural and intellectual power wielded by the clergy and to the authority they upheld on matters where the natural sciences have a greater claim. Topics beyond the natural sphere can however be left to theologians and philosophers, they argued. For further details, see Ruth Barton, 'John Tyndall, Pantheist: A Rereading of the Belfast Address', in *Osiris*, 2, 3 (1987) 111-34; Bernard Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions: Discordant Harmonies', pp. 343-45, 347-48, 350, 364-66; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, pp. 25-86; Turner, 'The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension', pp. 356-76; *Brooke and Cantor, Reconstructing Nature*.

research in a climate still intertwined with theology, Huxley coined the term 'agnostic' in 1869.⁹⁵² Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) had earlier, along the same lines of thought, proposed his concept of 'the unknowable', in *First Principles* (1862), to clearly separate metaphysical, absolute "truths", or that which we fundamentally cannot know, from the natural, yet relative "truths", which we can come to know through natural science.⁹⁵³ On the other hand, modern occultists, such as Blavatsky, were eager to maintain the spiritual and occult as both knowable quantities and as parts of the natural domain. They therefore protested against this new dominant focus on matter and its limited approaches to and definitions of the natural world now strongly upheld by the modern naturalists. Through such protests and the formulation of more comprehensive concepts of nature they sought to bridge the two domains and retain the old union between spirit and matter, but this could not be done without some reaction, adaptation, reformulation and transformation of their own notions, stances and discourses in order to accommodate the dominant scientific, naturalistic and rationalistic discourses.

2.4.1.2 The New Occultism and Science

Several scholars, such as James Webb, Alison Butler, Nicholas Goodrick-

⁹⁵² Huxley suggested the term 'at a party held previous to the formation of the now defunct Metaphysical Society, at Mr. James Knowles's house on Clapham Common, one evening in 1869.' Huxley supposedly 'took it from St. Paul's mention of the altar to 'the Unknown God.' R. H. Hutton, 'letter 13, Mar. 1881', in *New English Dictionary* ed. by James A. H. Murray (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1888), p. 86. According to Dixon the term agnostic was used to clarify his position and thereby distance it from atheism, materialism, and positivism. See Thomas Dixon, 'Agnosticism', in *new dictionary of the history of ideas*, ed. by Maryanne Cline Horowitz and others, 6 vols (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), I, 35-38; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, pp. 16-17; Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions', pp. 347-48. For a comprehensive discussion, see Bernard V. Lightman, *The origins of agnosticism: Victorian unbelief and the limits of knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987).

⁹⁵³ See Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1922 [1862]), pp. 1-96. Other significant scientists such as James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) and William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) (1824-1907) displayed a less stringent distinction between the sphere of the natural sciences and that of theology in their popular discussions by showing the compatibility between science and theology, but they did equally work to demarcate the two domains, see Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions', pp. 353-55.

Clarke and Kocku von Stuckrad, confirm that central to the construction of a new occultism in the nineteenth century was the continued attempt to bridge the spiritual and the material realms or *secure the transcendental element within the modern world*, as Stuckrad has termed it.⁹⁵⁴ In this regard, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke has significantly stated that the ‘scientific aspect of modern esotericism is much more than mere terminology; it reflects an ongoing effort to bridge the worlds of spirit and physical matter.’⁹⁵⁵

Such bridging of spirit and matter was no doubt problematic in the new intellectual climate and within the more restricted definitions of nature posed by the new authorities such as the naturalists, materialists and positivists.⁹⁵⁶ However, scholars have, still more specifically, defined the *etic* construct ‘occultism’ in such a way that nineteenth-century ‘scientism’ is central to its very nature—even though modern science was also perceived as the primary cause of the separation of the two domains by many occultists.⁹⁵⁷ According to Hanegraaff, ‘occultism’ is for example further defined as ‘the product of a syncretism between *magia* and science, correspondences and causality.’⁹⁵⁸ In a similar manner, Alex Owen has, while both emphasising the ‘disenchantment’

⁹⁵⁴ Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, p. 100.

⁹⁵⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 235; Webb, *The Flight from Reason*, p. 53; Butler, *Victorian Occultism*, p. 117. This effort, central to modern esotericism, has furthermore been understood as a reaction to the ‘disenchantment’ (i.e. rationalization and secularization) of the world or as an attempt to ‘re-enchant’ the world, see Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 10-16; Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, pp. 133-34; Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 422. Such re-enchantment is related to the attempt to bridge spirit and matter and retain their union.

⁹⁵⁶ For this reason ‘occultism’ has been defined as ‘*all attempts by esotericists to come to terms with a disenchanted world or, alternatively, by people in general to make sense of esotericism from the perspective of a disenchanted secular world.*’ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 422.

⁹⁵⁷ By ‘scientism’ is here meant the formulation of ideas in the language and/or terminology of the modern academic sciences, because, due to the modern historical and social context, this is implicitly or explicitly regarded as ‘social capital’—a useful strategy to substantiate and legitimize ones ideas, see also Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, p. 205-10. Hammer has, however, adopted a broader definition of scientism than the one used here.

⁹⁵⁸ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 423.

aspect of occultism and the implementation of rationalization in occultist discourse, stated that the new occultism ‘sought to mobilize a reworked notion of science in the name of the religion of the ancients, and represented a paradigmatic shift in which the universe and the place of humankind within it were rationalized but brought back into sharply spiritual focus.’⁹⁵⁹ More recently, Alison Butler similarly stated that this ‘conflation of science and sorcery is characteristic of Victorian occultists and is a key feature in the nineteenth-century revival of magic.’⁹⁶⁰ In specific connection with Blavatsky, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke further emphasizes that one of the main innovations and contributions of Theosophy to Western esotericism was precisely ‘the presentation of esoteric ideas in the context of modern science.’⁹⁶¹

In other words, modern ‘occultism’, as a specific historical phase of esotericism in the dominant climate of the secularization and rationalization of the world, was ancient magic reworked in the image of modern science—a complicated syncretism between the two. The reaction on the part of the occultists to this new context was thus primarily the adaptation to or incorporation of causality (Hanegraaff), rationalization (Owen) and Scientism (Goodrick-Clarke and Hammer)—and yet a re-enchantment of the world by retaining spirit.

It is only natural to ask why esotericism adapted to the scientism of the day. Olav Hammer has devoted a large part of *Claiming Knowledge*, specifically sub-titled *Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age*, to analyse just this. Hammer’s proposal is that modern occultists adopted ‘scientism as a language of faith’ or as a strategy to legitimize their claims in the new context.⁹⁶² Yet, the occultists profoundly believed that their enterprise was congruent with the new natural sciences in several significant respects.

Certainly, these observations are important contextual keys to understanding modern esotericism as well as Blavatsky’s relation to modern

⁹⁵⁹ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, p. 8.

⁹⁶⁰ Butler, *Victorian Occultism*, p. viii.

⁹⁶¹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 225.

⁹⁶² Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 201-330.

science. However, the fact that the larger part of Blavatsky's occultist discourse in relation to the modern sciences constitutes a severe critique of the modern sciences has been somewhat understudied.⁹⁶³ Since Blavatsky's occultist critique of the modern natural sciences has not yet been systematically documented, the 'etic' construct 'occultism', as it now stands, could leave the impression that modern 'occultism' was simply an uncritical adaptation to and incorporation of modern science—ancient magic reformulated in the mirror of modern science, an adaptation primarily motivated by *power* or the acquisition of strategies to legitimate marginal views. While this to some extent might be the case, researching and analysing Blavatsky's extensive critique of the modern natural sciences and materialism in particular calls for a more nuanced view that, in addition to examining in more detail how Blavatsky incorporated 'scientism' into her discourse, also takes into account the reasons why science and materialism were regarded as 'negative others' in the search for and construction of independent and alternative forms of meaning in the modern context.

The following analysis will thus systematically map and explore Blavatsky's, as yet largely unstudied, discursive critique of materialistic science (2.4.2) and show how it was a central aspect of her 'occultist' reaction to her historical contexts and search for meaning—succeeded by a discussion of her construction of, what she regarded as true science and to what extent this conceptualization was influenced by 'scientism' (2.4.3.).

⁹⁶³ It should be noted that Hammer has balanced his study by discussing, yet without going into specific details, how Blavatsky was also critical towards contemporary science, Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, p. 218-22. Hanegraaff, Owen and Butler also express an awareness of the complicated relationship between magic and modern science. They imply that many occultists not only adapted their ideas to contemporary discourse but also characteristically criticised modern science, as a 'negative other', for its materialistic nature, Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 28, 36-38; Butler, *Victorian Occultism*, pp. xii, 113, 117; Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 440, 457, 480.

2.4.2 Blavatsky's general critique of Science

*Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute (Parabrahm), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective.*⁹⁶⁴

Blavatsky had no formal college education or any university degree to account for her scientific knowledge. This is partly why her comprehensive scientific knowledge and critique, expressed in her major works *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), are surrounded by mystique and why their origin have often been ascribed to the realm of the occult or to her contact with secret spiritual mahatmas.⁹⁶⁵ A significant part of her upbringing was however in an atmosphere of scientific learning and perhaps she, on this basis, developed an early and stimulating familiarity with many of the modern sciences, their general perspectives, and methods of argumentation that later prompted her to continue to read and respond to what she read.⁹⁶⁶

⁹⁶⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 15, for the union of spirit and matter, see also p. 628.

⁹⁶⁵ Not only Theosophists in general ascribe Blavatsky's knowledge to her occult powers and her contact with the mahatmas, Blavatsky herself did it, as well. For information about how Blavatsky's major works were written, see Boris De Zirkoff, 'Introductory: How "Isis Unveiled" was Written', in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings 1877: Isis Unveiled*, new edn, rev. and cor. with add. mat. (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972), pp. 1-61; Boris De Zirkoff, 'Historical Introduction: How "The Secret Doctrine" was Written', in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings 1888: The Secret Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1979), pp. 1-76. For Blavatsky's astonishment about her own knowledge, see especially her letter to N de Faeyev [March 1 1877] *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 'Letter 79', pp. 297-99.

⁹⁶⁶ Blavatsky's maternal grandmother Helena Pavlovna, née Princess Dolgorukova (daughter of Prince Paul Vassilyevich Dolgorukov, 1755-1837), was for example an unusually accomplished woman of academic attainments and cultured endowments in Russia at the time. She is said to have been very proficient in the natural sciences, a noted botanist, an accomplished historian with a thorough knowledge of archaeology and numismatics and to have had a great collection of books on these subjects. She also mastered five languages, see Boris De Zirkoff, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: General Outline of her life prior to her public word', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), I (3rd edn 1988), pp. xxiii-iii

(pp. xxvii-xviii), which was useful in her extensive correspondences with both Russian and foreign scientists and explorers that attest to her learning. Among her correspondents were the famous Prussian botanist, geographer, naturalist and explorer Baron F. H. Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) the younger brother of the philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835); the British geologist and one of the founders of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir Roderick Impey Murchison (1792-1871) who undertook an extensive expedition in Russia; the Swedish botanist Christian Steven (1781-1864); Otto Wilhelm Hermann von Abich (1806-1886) the well-known German geologist, mineralogist and explorer; the traveller, geographer, ethnologist and natural scientist G. S. Karelin (1801-1872), Zirkoff, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: General Outline of her life prior to her public word' in HPBCW, I, p. xxviii; Silvia Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993), p. 3-5. Blavatsky's mother Helena Andreyevna von Hahn (1814-1842) was also an unusually accomplished woman who came to be known as the George Sand of Russia due to the success of her many novels. It is however not known to what degree, if any, she studied the natural sciences, Zirkoff, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: General Outline of her life prior to her public word' in HPBCV, I, pp. xxix, xxxii; Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky*, pp. 3, 12-13. As a child, Blavatsky spent much time with both her grandmother and her mother (while still alive) and was thereby exposed to the rather unusual atmosphere of women spending long hours writing and working intellectually. After the early death of Blavatsky's mother, at the age of 28, Blavatsky came to live with her grandparents in Saratov for several years (between 1841-1845). Later in life, Blavatsky displayed great interest in the sciences as is attested in her comprehensive works and many articles. It appears from an interview at the office of the New York *Daily Graphic* newspaper (ca. November 1874) that she might already have translated works or sections of the works of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and the British historian Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) into Russian while she was in Africa during the early eighteenth-seventies (around the age of 40) before taking up residence in New York (July 1873), see *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 10', p. 43. In New York she would continue her translation into Russian of English literature and works, especially related to spiritualism, *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, 'Letter 8', p. 35. She also translated an article by the great American inventor Thomas Edison (1847-1931) who also became (an inactive) member of the T.S., *The Letters of HPB*, I 'Letter 113', pp. 422-24. For more on Edison's relationship with the Theosophical Society, see John Algeo and others, 'Background Essay M: Thomas Alva Edison', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 418-22; John Patrick Deveney, Joscelyn Godwin and Michael Gomes, 'Correspondence of H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott with Thomas A. Edison', in *Theosophical History: A Quarterly Journal of Research*, VI, 2 (1996), 50-57.

The scope of Blavatsky's scientific reading, as it appears from the references in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, is extensive by any standard.⁹⁶⁷ Blavatsky was clearly interested in the sciences, but had also great concerns for the effects of a purely materialistic model of the world upon the spirituality of humanity.⁹⁶⁸ This overarching concern, shared by many spiritually minded people at the time, however generally affected her use of and discourse against the modern sciences.⁹⁶⁹

The following four points of critique of the modern natural sciences, inductively gathered from her many writings and constructed on that basis, systematically summarises Blavatsky's discourse against science and materialism in both *Isis Unveiled* and the *Secret Doctrine*. Related to the context of 'occultism' (including secularization, rationalization or the demystification of the world) discussed above, the four points reflect Blavatsky's concerns for the negative influence on humanity produced by the sciences and her concerns for the authority that scientists had gained in the nineteenth century.⁹⁷⁰ To Blavatsky the modern natural sciences and their exponents were, in their present condition, new authorities standing in the way of a general recognition of spirit and its rightful place in nature, and materialism was largely regarded as the ideological cause corrupting them. These new authorities thus stood in the way of a reunion with the spiritual dimensions of human life and a world without these would be a meaningless machine separated from the 'great chain of being', a view that to Blavatsky, as to most occultists, was absurd and had to be countered. From another perspective, Blavatsky's critique may, at the same time, also be read as a way of constructing and asserting her own views, which to some extent were those of a pre-scientific revolution *magia naturalis* (in which the union between spirit and matter still existed) intermixed with modern rational discourses and oriental ideas. In other words, by criticising the authorities and the results of modern sciences, Blavatsky's 'esoteric science',⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁷ See appendix I and II.

⁹⁶⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 521, 651.

⁹⁶⁹ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 17-50.

⁹⁷⁰ This authority has been discussed above, see also note 938.

⁹⁷¹ See for example Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxii, 588; II, 154, 195,

as she at times termed it, could be constructed and defined in a way that would satisfy her search for meaning and the continuation of an esoteric world-view in modern times.

2.4.2.1 Science as false authority

Common throughout Blavatsky's work is the first point of critique directly related to the context of the new authority that the natural sciences and their proponents had gained.⁹⁷² The first volume of *Isis Unveiled* subtitled 'Science' was especially designed to question or dispute the authority of science and its reputation of infallibility. Blavatsky, for example, clearly states that

In discussing the merits of our scientific contemporaries, their own confessions of failure in experimental research, of baffling mysteries, of missing links in their chains of theory, of inability to comprehend natural phenomena, of ignorance of the laws of the causal world, have furnished the basis for the present study.⁹⁷³

Isis Unveiled thus made critique of contemporary naturalists, such as Tyndall and Huxley, a basis for its study. Blavatsky's problem was especially that these prominent scientists spoke vehemently against the influence of spiritualism, in the general spiritual sense of the term, in defining the natural realm.⁹⁷⁴ Blavatsky also thought that their new scientific theories were replacing the "infallible" dogmatism of the Church and thus discouraged any understanding of the still unknown or occult laws of the universe important to a better understanding of the world and man.

Huxley, Tyndall, and even Spencer have become lately the great oracles,

286, 711, 731, 787.

⁹⁷² See Turner, 'The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension' pp. 359, 362-63; see also *Brooke and Cantor, Reconstructing Nature*, p. 30; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, p. 14; Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions', pp. 346-47; Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority*.

⁹⁷³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xlv.

⁹⁷⁴ See for example Thomas Henry Huxley, *Essays upon Some Controversial Questions* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1892), pp. 241-43, 276-78, 281-82; John Tyndall, *The beginnings of things, or, Science versus theology: an address by Prof. Tyndall before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, August 19, 1874* (Boston, MA: Josiah P. Mendum, 1874); Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 249.

the "infallible popes" on the dogmas of protoplasm, molecules, primordial forms, and atoms.⁹⁷⁵

In the fight between theology and science, the Catholic Church had in 1870 declared 'Papal infallibility' in order to arm itself,⁹⁷⁶ but Blavatsky felt that

⁹⁷⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 249, see also p. vii. This was a common critique during the nineteenth century to pejoratively argue that the naturalists were the new 'popes'. See also Cantor and Brooke who discuss how scientists such as Huxley 'behaved as preachers', Brooke and Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature*, p. 30, see also p. 28; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, p. 17. It is also clear that Huxley saw his own project in the narrative of a new and final 'protestant' reformation, Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions', p. 347. It is also well known that Auguste Comte's Positivism had a 'religious dimension' as a moral '*Religion de l'Humanité*' or 'religion of humanity' that would replace the present forms of religion in a future positivist society with a priesthood in Paris (rather than Rome) and a church, see Andrew Wernick, *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity: The Post-theistic Program of French Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 2-7. Blavatsky made great use of many works by (and directly related to) Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. In ***Isis Unveiled***: John Tyndall, *Professor Tyndall's Fragments of science for unscientific people,—in relation with theology and religion*, ed. by William J. Irons (London: Wyman & Sons, 1872); John Tyndall, *Sound: A course of eight lectures delivered at the Royal institution of Great Britain* (London: Longmans, Green, and company, 1867); Tyndall, 'The Belfast Address delivered before the British Association on Wednesday evening August 19, 1874'; Thomas Henry Huxley, *The Physical Basis of Life; and, Lectures on Evolution* (New York: Humboldt Library Series, 1877); Thomas Henry Huxley, *Protoplasm: The Physical Basis of Life* (Melbourne: Peter C. Alcock, 1869); Thomas Henry Huxley, *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1871). In ***The Secret Doctrine***: Tyndall, *Professor Tyndall's Fragments of Science for Unscientific People,—in relation with theology and religion*; John Tyndall, *Faraday as a Discoverer* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1868); a review by T. H. Huxley, 'First Volume of the Publications of the 'Challenger',' *Nature*, 23 (1880), 1-3; T. H. Huxley, 'On the Persistent Types, of animal life', in *Notices of the Proceedings at the Meetings of the Members of the Royal Institution*, 3 vols (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1858-1862), III (1862), 151-53; Huxley, *On the Physical Basis of Life*; T. H. Huxley, *On Yeast* (Manchester: a lecture, 1872); T. H. Huxley, *Evidence as to Man's place in Nature* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1863); Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology*, 2 vols (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864-67); Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology* (London: Longmans & Co., 1855); Spencer, *First Principles*.

⁹⁷⁶ See Don O'Leary, *Roman Catholicism and Modern Science: A History* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), p. 55.

the trouble which occultism and spiritualism had faced in the past from the now declining theological authorities, was currently being supplanted by the new, and in her eyes, equally dogmatic scientific authorities.

Not many years ago, the person who questioned the infallibility of some theological dogma was branded at once an iconoclast and an infidel. *Vae victis!* . . . Science has conquered. But in its turn the victor claims the same infallibility, though it equally fails to prove its right. "Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis," [times change, and we change with them] the saying of the good old Lotharius, applies to the case. Nevertheless, we feel as if we had some right to question the high-priests of science.⁹⁷⁷

Just as Blavatsky challenged Christian dogmatism or the Roman Catholic Church, so she questioned contemporary scientific theories and the new form of dogmatism it represented by launching a liberal Enlightenment critique to test if they were truly infallible.⁹⁷⁸ One way to demonstrate that scientific authority and its reputation of infallibility were false was by showing that scientists often contradicted each other on important issues.

The glaring contradictions, the mutually-destructive hypotheses of world-renowned Scientists, their mutual accusations, denunciations and disputes, show plainly that, whether accepted or not, the Occult theories have as much right to a hearing as any of the so-called learned and academical hypotheses.⁹⁷⁹

Her tactic here is clear: If scientists' theories and doctrines proved to be contradictory, then it was possible to challenge their general claim to be supreme authorities on nature, and that spirituality was irrelevant to natural understanding. Other theories, such as those associated with the esoteric tradition, *magia naturalis*, spiritualism/modern spiritualism and Blavatsky's occultism needed to be seen as equally legitimate. On this crucial point, Hammer has critically observed, that Blavatsky, like other spokespersons of the 'Esoteric Tradition', tends to treat 'science' as a set of doctrines that can be criticised like any other world-view and thereby disregards the fact that science

⁹⁷⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 40, [brackets are mine], see also pp. vii, 223.

⁹⁷⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. vii, xlv, 105, 165, 249, 622; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 520; see also chapter 2.3 of the present thesis.

⁹⁷⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 587.

is primarily a set of methods.⁹⁸⁰ Focusing on doctrines rather than the basic methodology of the sciences thus reveals that Blavatsky's critique was somewhat one-sided or perhaps self-serving as it served her purpose of breaking down the aura of infallibility and authority, she rebelled against.⁹⁸¹ On the other hand, it should be added to Hammer's observation that her critique was not only directed against specific scientific doctrines, as discussed in section (2.4.2), but also specific contemporary ideologies endorsed by many scientists such as 'materialism', 'positivism', 'agnosticism' and 'naturalism', which historians now generally agree tend to constitute distinct 'sets of ideas' or 'world-views' and not just methods.⁹⁸² However, there is no doubt that Blavatsky skilfully employed all the means of critique she could think of and "scavenger-

⁹⁸⁰ Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge*, pp. 203-204. Not many historians of science would however today accept that science is just doctrines or methods. It's both and a good deal more, such as social practices, skills, values, institutions and instruments.

⁹⁸¹ Blavatsky does in fact also criticise scientific methodology, see for example HPB, 'Occult or Exact Science? II', in HPBCW, VII (2nd edn 1975), 71-90, (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VII, 80 (1886), 481-94); HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X (1988), 159-74 (p. 171) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 15 (1888), 177-87); HPB, 'Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge', in HPBCW, X (1988), 301-406 (p. 313) (transcript of meetings held at 17 Lansdowne Road, London: 1889); HPB, 'A Paradoxical World', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 1-13 (p. 4) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 18 (1889), 441-49); Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 13-14, 146, 387, 424-25; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 260-61, 477-78, 485. She not only criticised specific doctrines and theories, see below.

⁹⁸² For Blavatsky's critique of science in terms of general ideologies like 'materialism', see below but see also as examples, Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xlv, 15, 71, 78, 80, 86-87, 114, 336, 419; see also, Michèle Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: from Marx to Foucault* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 38-39; Randall Albury, 'Science Teaching or Science Preaching: Critical Reflections on School Science', in *Science under Scrutiny: The Place of History and Philosophy of Science*, ed. by Roderick Weir Home (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983), pp. 159-72; Thomas S. Khun, *The Structures of the Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 109-10; Robert C. Scharff, *Comte After Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2002), p. 191; Deborah Cook, *Adorno, Habermas, and The Search for a Rational Society* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 103-104; Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1979); *Science and Ideology: A Comparative History*, ed. by Mark Walker (New York: Routledge, 2003). For Blavatsky's critique of materialism in general, see further below.

like” collected all the data suitable for such critique in her attempt to break the new scientific authorities that she thought stood in the way of a recognition of spirit and an esoteric world-view.

In both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky thus attempted to show in great detail how scientific theories contradict each other, in order to challenge their authority and make room—in the midst of agnosticism—for the more ancient view of *magia naturalis* in the modern age.⁹⁸³

2.4.2.2 Science as old wine in new bottles

In the following point of critique Blavatsky’s *discourse of ancient knowledge* and her *discourse against the modern sciences and materialism* converge. In the nineteenth century numerous scientists rose to prominence on the basis of new discoveries.⁹⁸⁴ A large part of Blavatsky’s critique of modern science consisted in the critical view that many of these so-called new discoveries and theories were actually known to the ancients, but lost to the moderns due to their arrogance. In other words, any “new” discovery⁹⁸⁵ was, to a large extent, simply “old wine in new bottles.” Blavatsky, for example, wrote in *Isis Unveiled* that

In undertaking to inquire into the assumed infallibility of Modern Science and Theology, the author has been forced, even at the risk of being thought discursive, to make constant comparison of the ideas, achievements, and pretensions of their representatives, with those of the ancient philosophers and religious teachers. [...] for only thus could the priority and parentage of discoveries and dogmas be determined.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸³ This strategy is found throughout *Isis Unveiled* volume 1 and in the ‘addenda’ to both volumes of the *Secret Doctrine*, see especially Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 47-48, 223-24; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 438.

⁹⁸⁴ See for example Butler, *Victorian Occultism* p. 162; For general studies of this see, Bernal, *Science and Industry in the Nineteenth Century*; Richard G. Olson, *Science and Scientism in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008); *Repositioning Victorian Sciences: Shifting Centres in Nineteenth-Century Scientific Thinking*, ed. by David Clifford, Alex Warwick, Elizabeth Wadge and Martin Willis (London: Anthem Press, 2006); *Science, Technology, and Social Progress*, ed. by Steven L. Goldman (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1989).

⁹⁸⁵ Blavatsky did appreciate many of the modern discoveries, but generally saw them as re-discoveries of nature’s hidden forces known to the ancients and medieval esotericists, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 50, 126-28, 164, 305, 532.

⁹⁸⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xlv.

Blavatsky thus argued—based on her Theosophical program of proving the existence of an ancient superior knowledge—that the real origins of so-called modern scientific discoveries might lie in ancient times rather than in the modern age.⁹⁸⁷ In a discursive article entitled ‘Occult or Exact Science’, Blavatsky even argued that

Every new discovery made by modern science vindicates the truths of the archaic philosophy.⁹⁸⁸

Readings of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* seem to present no limit to the theories and sciences that originated in ancient rather than modern times. *Isis Unveiled* discussed how almost all of the sciences including architecture originated in ancient India.⁹⁸⁹ A chapter of *The Secret Doctrine* rhetorically entitled ‘Ancient Thought in Modern Dress’, specifies and sums up Blavatsky’s standpoint:

MODERN SCIENCE IS ANCIENT THOUGHT DISTORTED, and no more.⁹⁹⁰

Modern science of course helped vindicate ancient knowledge, but it could claim no real originality and was distorted due to its materialism. Blavatsky further argues that the origin of many of the modern scientific theories really belongs to ancient Greece and India, especially when it comes to cosmogony, physics and theories of primeval matter.⁹⁹¹ The principle modern theories which, Blavatsky argues, originated with the ancients, are the following: (1) the nebular hypothesis,⁹⁹² (2) atomic theory,⁹⁹³ and (3) the theory of ether.⁹⁹⁴

⁹⁸⁷ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. viii, xi, 89-90, 249; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 478, 479-80; HPB, ‘The Pralaya of Modern Science’, in HPBCW, II, 484-86 (p. 483) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 1 (1880) 11-12).

⁹⁸⁸ HPB, ‘Occult Or Exact Science?’, in HPBCW, VII, 55.

⁹⁸⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 618-20.

⁹⁹⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 579.

⁹⁹¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 579-87. For Blavatsky’s extensive reading of works related to these areas (cosmogony, cosmology, astronomy and physics) see appendix I and II.

⁹⁹² The so-called ‘nebular hypothesis’ became the most influential philosophico-scientific explanation of the formation of the solar system in the nineteenth century generally arguing that the planets of the solar system were formed

from rotating nebular matter, see Stephen G. Brush, *A History of Planetary Physics: Nebulous Earth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 8. The roots of the modern hypothesis were first formulated by Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) in his *Principia* (1734) and were elaborated on by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in his *Universal Natural History and theory of the Heavens* (1755). In 1796 another more widely accepted version was formulated by Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827) in *The System of the World* and yet another was formulated by William Herschel (1738-1822). In 1833, William Whewell (1794-1866) termed his combination of Laplace's and Herschel's theories the 'Nebular Hypothesis'. In the nineteenth century, especially Hermann von Helmholtz's (1821-1894) further developments of the theory and William Thomson's/Lord Kelvin's (1824-1907) calculations of the age of the Earth, based on the nebular hypothesis, escalated the theory to great prominence, Brush, *A History of Planetary Physics*, pp. 8-12; Gerald Holton, *Physics, the Human Adventure: From Copernicus to Einstein and Beyond* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp. 487-88. Blavatsky argued that the idea of the 'nebular hypothesis' was very similar to ancient hypotheses on prime-matter and the formation of cosmos formulated by ancient philosophers such as Anaximenes (585-528 BCE), Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 590, and Anaxagoras (500-428 BCE), Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 595, see also p. 579. Blavatsky did not regard the 'nebular hypothesis' as incorrect, but as incomplete, especially because it neglected an explanation of the guiding force in planetary formation and rotation that are best explained by intelligent forces, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 590-591, and more generally pp. 588-600.

⁹⁹³ The atomic theory had been revived by John Dalton (1766-1844) in the early nineteenth century, most fully in his *New System of Chemical Philosophy* (1808), for further details see Elizabeth Chambers Patterson, *John Dalton and the atomic theory: the biography of a natural philosopher* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970). While Daltons book evoked a revolution in chemistry, his model of the atom, as small billiard balls, remained somewhat controversial throughout the nineteenth century and Blavatsky made a great display of its weaknesses in her attempt to demolish materialism. First of all, she argued that this was no new idea but simply copied from the ancients such as Leucippus (5th cent. BCE), Anaxagoras, Democritus (ca. 460- 370 BCE), Epicurus (341-270 BCE), Kanada (2nd or 6th cent. BCE) and Lucretius (ca. 99-55 BCE), Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 567-69, 579, see also 518. Blavatsky further claimed that different scientists constructed the atomic theory variously according to their own theoretical needs and that in reality, it was a purely metaphysical concept—thus not material at all, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 482-83, 485, 486-511, 512, 513. Blavatsky further argued that if, as Dalton suggested, the atom is an indivisible unit how do you account for elasticity? On the other hand, if you accept the divisibility of the atom, matter becomes superfluous, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 519, 617. According to Blavatsky's theories no dead billiard balls exists, thus every true atom—derived in part from the Pythagorean and Leibnizian concept of 'monad' and

the Hindu concept 'Anu', Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 148, 357, 567, 632—is a living unit, a centre of force, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 76, 248-49, 258, 454, 507, 511-12, 630 and atoms are infinitely divisible. As Blavatsky wrote, 'It is on the doctrine of the illusive nature of matter, and the infinite divisibility of the atom, that the whole science of Occultism is built', Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 519-20.

⁹⁹⁴ The concept of 'ether' (or 'aether', æther) has a long history in natural philosophy and science, see Joe Milutis, *Ether: The Nothing That Connects Everything* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. xiii-xvii. Aristotle thought of the ether as an *unchanging* fifth element beyond the sphere of the moon. Descartes, like Aristotle, believed that the world is a plenum (or that nature abhors vacuum, as Aristotle argued). To Descartes space—not occupied by objects—is thus filled with continuous ether that mediates the interactions between bodies by means of a system of vortices. Newton did not include the ether in *Principia*, but speculated in his notes and other works on the mechanism of gravity being a stream of ether particles. In *Optics*, Newton argued that light rays consist of a stream of particles in rectilinear motion and that vibrations in the all-pervading ether accompanied these light particles. This is the foundation of the so-called 'Luminiferous ether' theory. In the late seventeenth century, especially Christian Huygens' used (1629-1695) the ether theory in relation to his wave theory of light. Other significant ether theorists prior to the nineteenth century were Evangelista Torricelli (1608-1647), Georges-Louis Le Sage (1724-1803), Leonhard Euler (1707-1783) and Laplace, see E. T. Whittaker, *A History of the Theories of Aether and Electricity: From the Age of Descartes to the close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1910). During the nineteenth century, ether theory was widely accepted, see Peter M. Harman, *Energy, Force and Matter: The Conceptual Development of Nineteenth-Century Physics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 3; Kenneth F. Schaffner, *Nineteenth-century Aether Theories* (Oxford: Pergamon press, 1972); Whittaker, *A History of the Theories of Aether and Electricity*, especially Thomas Young's (1773-1829) wave theory of light and gas-ether theory (1801). Other theorists of the nineteenth century were Étienne Louis Malus (1775-1812), George Stokes (1819-1903), Augustin Cauchy (1789-1857), Augustin-Jean Fresnel (1788-1827), Michael Faraday (1791-1867), George Green (1793-1841), Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879), Lord Kelvin/James MacCullagh (1809-1847), Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge (1851-1940), Joseph John Thomson (1856-1940), among others. Up till the Michelson-Morley ether experiment of 1887 set up to measure the so-called 'ether wind',—conducted by Albert A. Michelson (1852-1931) and Edward Williams Morley (1838-1923)—the ether was widely used to account for light, gravity and waves of the electromagnetic spectrum, but because the Michelson-Morley experiment failed to measure the 'ether wind' to a satisfactory degree the ether theory soon began its decline. Blavatsky's relation to the ether theory was comprehensive. First of all, she argued, as in the case of nearly all other modern scientific theories, that the theory of ether originated with the ancients and thus was no new idea, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 507,

A great part of this specific, critical discourse was thus Blavatsky's self-styled mission to rescue what she considered the 'lost arts' (based on the lecture on 'The Lost Arts' of Wendell Phillips (1811-1884))⁹⁹⁵ or sciences that once had possessed superior knowledge of the occult forces in nature and the ability to use them.⁹⁹⁶ Moderns did not possess this knowledge, Blavatsky argued:

even in the nineteenth century, with all our claims to supremacy in arts and sciences, we are totally unable, we will not say to build anything like the monuments of Egypt, Hindustan, or Assyria, but even to rediscover the least of the ancient "lost arts."⁹⁹⁷

This general critique of "old wine in new bottles" should not be understood only as a legitimizing strategy, but also as a specific concern for the modern lack of enthusiasm for, and historical understanding of, ancient wisdom.⁹⁹⁸ It is, however, important also to note that the modern natural sciences during the nineteenth century, to a large extent, were highly regarded and praised as advanced by intellectuals and by the public, not only for their intellectual insights, but because of the many new technological advances, they had facilitated and the significant changes these technological advances had caused, culturally, socially and economically since the inauguration of industrialisation.⁹⁹⁹ Blavatsky was, however, not impressed by these

485-86. Furthermore, Blavatsky argued that the present ether theories of Fresnel, Cauchy, Maxwell, Lodge and others were too limited, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 485-96. Finally, Blavatsky argued that the ether of the modern scientists is the lowest principle of the akasa (sk.) or primordial substance corresponding to the Astral Light of Eliphas Levi, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 61, 76n, 197, 254-55, 326, 331n, 343, 534n.

⁹⁹⁵ Wendell Phillips was an American orator and lawyer who sought to abolish slavery, 'The Lost Arts' (Boston, MA: Redpath Lyceum Lecture). He delivered this lecture several hundred times in the 19th century. For a quote from his lecture, see also John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations: A Collection of Passages, Phrases, and Proverbs Traced to Their Sources in Ancient and Modern Literature* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1919).

⁹⁹⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 50, 211, 239, 536-38, 584; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 430-31.

⁹⁹⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 526.

⁹⁹⁸ This has been discussed at greater length in chapter 2.2.

⁹⁹⁹ See, *Science, Technology and Society*, ed. by John Dewey and Julius A. Sigler, Lynchburg College Symposium Readings, Classical Selections on

developments, as her concerns were primarily the cultivation of spirit and the revival of ancient occult knowledge, but Blavatsky did nonetheless talk about the great changes and technological advances in ‘machinery’ and ‘industry’ during her age. However in nearly every instance in which Blavatsky discussed these achievements, she pointed to the negative industrial conditions that they had created for the new working class and how much more advanced were the ‘industry’ and ‘machinery’ of the ancients.¹⁰⁰⁰

2.4.2.3 Science and nescience

Another criticism that Blavatsky levelled at modern sciences was that despite their claims to certitude and exactitude, the sciences remained undeveloped compared with occultism.¹⁰⁰¹ True occultism or true science has known the *secrets of nature* for ages (such as the occult forces in nature, atoms, ether, prime-matter); secrets of which modern science sometimes rediscovers aspects of and distorts by materialistic explanations.¹⁰⁰² In other words, modern sciences still knows next to nothing about the so-called *secrets of nature* and of man (known to the ancients). According to this third critique, modern sciences

Great Issues, 8 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997); Todd Timmons, *Science and Technology in Nineteenth-Century America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), pp. 1-20.

¹⁰⁰⁰ See, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 209n, 555, II, 373; HPB, ‘The New Vimâna’, in HPBCW, III (1982), 70-71 (p 70) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 6 (1881), 138-39); HPB, ‘Misconceptions’, in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 70-91 (p. 86) (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, I, 6 (1887), 321-38); HPB, ‘Conversations on Occultism’, in HPBCW, IX (1986), 99-128 (p. 99) (first publ. in *The Path*, III, 1-6 (1888), 17-21, 54-58, 94-96, 125-29, 160-63, 187-92); HPB, ‘Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention’, in HPBCW, IX (1986), 241-48 (p. 244) (first publ. in ‘Report of the Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society’ (1888)); HPB, ‘The Babel of Modern Thought’, in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 83-103 (pp. 87-88) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 41 (1891), 353-60); HPB, ‘Civilization, The Death of Art and Beauty’, in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 177-90 (p. 188) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VIII, 45 (1891), 177-86). While we are used to talk about ‘technology’ as the major advancement of our age, the nineteenth century talked about ‘machinery’, ‘industry’ and ‘manufacture’ as just referenced. Blavatsky however also use of the word ‘technology’ a few times, most of which are in *Isis Unveiled*, twice in relation to the ‘Stevens Institute of Technology’ and once in relation to the technology of the ancient Pagan temples, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 169n, 282; II, 108.

¹⁰⁰¹ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 475-676; II, 643-798.

¹⁰⁰² See notes 992-4 and 1001.

actually know very little about the subjects with which they claim to deal:

Psychology, according to the greatest authorities on the subject, is a department of science hitherto almost unknown. Physiology, [...] is in so bad a condition [...] Chemistry has been entirely remodelled within the past few years; therefore, like all new sciences, the infant cannot be considered as very firm on its legs. Geology has not yet been able to tell anthropology how long man has existed. Astronomy, the most exact of sciences, is still speculating and bewildered about cosmic energy, and many other things as important. In anthropology, [...] there exists a wide difference of opinion on some of the most vital questions [...] Medicine has been pronounced by various eminent physicians to be nothing better than scientific guess-work. Everywhere incompleteness, nowhere perfection.¹⁰⁰³

In stark contrast to Auguste Comte's (1798-1857) tripartite and 'triumphalist model of history'—that modern positive science represents the climax of human knowledge¹⁰⁰⁴—Blavatsky thus sought to create epistemological space for another view that proved the existence of ancient superior lost arts and unknown secrets or forces of nature by showing just how undeveloped the modern sciences still were and how little modern scientists actually know of the universe and its forces, even though they claim authority.¹⁰⁰⁵ Since the lost arts included spiritualistic phenomena, mesmerism, miracles, ancient theurgy, magic and occult forces, this third discourse can be viewed as an attempt to re-enchant the world, but it can equally be defined as an attempted defence of occult ideas now marginalised in an unsympathetic intellectual naturalistic and agnostic environment, though once closely related to natural philosophy.¹⁰⁰⁶ In this connection, it was for example important to

¹⁰⁰³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 407; see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 670-71.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. by Harriet Martineau, 3rd edn (London: Kegan Paul Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893 [1830-1842]), pp. 1-4.

¹⁰⁰⁵ This is a major topic in *Isis Unveiled*, volume 1 and in the addenda to *The Secret Doctrine*, volumes 1 and 2.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Alex Owen has shown in *Place of Enchantment* that occultism was as much an expression of modernity as was other currents incorporating processes of secularization and rationalization in its own way. The idea of a re-enchantment of the world in relation to occultism does therefore not imply that occultism was an attempt to return to another time, create a fantasy world-view or become an anachronism detached from the modern world.

Blavatsky to show that many of the great scientists known to history had actually—yet, controversially in the eyes of the modern scientists—argued for and knew several of the hidden forces in nature now dismissed by contemporary physicists and naturalists. In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky points to Isaac Newton’s ‘occult causes’ in relation to his theory of gravity;¹⁰⁰⁷ to Johannes Kepler’s (1571-1630) idea of spiritual agents causing the movement of planets;¹⁰⁰⁸ to Hans Christian Ørsted’s (1777-1851) correlation between the forces of nature and spirits in nature;¹⁰⁰⁹ to Tycho Brahe’s (1546-1601) view that the stars embody a triple force: divine, spiritual and vital;¹⁰¹⁰ and William Herschel’s (1738-1822) notion of spiritual forces.¹⁰¹¹

It was equally important for Blavatsky to show that none of the occult phenomena or forces were in fact ‘supernatural’. To show that occult forces are natural was not an attempt to imitate the discourse of modern sciences, but to criticise its new narrow agnostic approaches to and limited definition of nature.

Occultism has never believed in anything whether animate or inanimate, *outside* nature.¹⁰¹²

Both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* thus discuss occult phenomena and forces in order to (re)-assert their existence within the confines

Thus occultism was not merely an expression of an irrational survival from the past, as—from the Victorian anthropologists to James Webb’s *Flight from Reason* in the twentieth century—magic and the occult had been construed to be.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 479, 484, 490-91, 494-95, 498.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 479, 493, 497, 499.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 484

¹⁰¹⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 493

¹⁰¹¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 499. Blavatsky also points to older scientists (and mystics) such as Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and Paracelsus, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 492-93, as well as Jacob Boehme, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 494.

¹⁰¹² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 194. According to Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* nature is: (1) an aggregate of nature spirits, II, 732; (2) an aspect of absolute consciousness I, 277n; (3) ever-becoming motion I, 97, 250, 257; (4) creative, II, 153; (5) teleological, II, 298; (6) alive, I, 281, 507, 626n; (7) illusory, I, 36, II, 475; (8) septenary, II, 574; (9) one with space, I, 555n. Blavatsky therefore argued against the idea that nature is mechanical, II, 298, and dead and inorganic, I, 507.

of nature—rather than as super-natural and superstitious as its opponents would have it.¹⁰¹³ Yet Blavatsky's main argument was that all forces of nature are caused by 'Creative Forces', 'spirits' or super-sensuous substances or *noumenon*, and could therefore not be reduced to physical matter.¹⁰¹⁴

Blavatsky further argued that 'If [modern] scientists had studied the so-called "miracles" instead of denying them, many secret laws of nature comprehended by the ancients would have been again discovered.'¹⁰¹⁵ Butler points out that recent historical studies actually show that many scientists in the nineteenth century were willing to experiment with occult or unknown forces.¹⁰¹⁶ This is true and Blavatsky also discusses the observations and experiments of scientists such as Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913) and Sir William Crookes (1832–1919) as well as the demonologist Jules de Mirville (1802-1873) on spiritualistic and occult phenomena.¹⁰¹⁷ However, even though Blavatsky made great use of Crookes' research throughout her works in support of her own views on spiritual and occult phenomena,¹⁰¹⁸ a "sympathetic" scientist as Crookes was still more reserved and ambiguous towards spiritualism than

¹⁰¹³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 40-49, 57-77, 99-125, 163-206, 379-416, 462-514; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 447-676 (p. 555 for not supernatural, but natural); II, 194.

¹⁰¹⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 499, 510, 515, 517-18.

¹⁰¹⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 49, see also 222. [brackets are mine].

¹⁰¹⁶ Butler, *Victorian Occultism*, pp. viii-ix. A major study on this is Oppenheim, *The Other World*.

¹⁰¹⁷ See Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 41-50, 100-24, 195-203. Blavatsky for example made use of the following works by these scholars, J.-E. de Mirville, *Pneumatologie: Des Esprits et de leurs manifestations diverses*, 6 vols (Paris: H. Vrayet de Surcy, vols 1-5, 1863-64 and F. Wattelier, vol 6, 1868); J.-E. de Mirville, *Question des esprits et de leurs manifestations diverses: Appendices complémentaires et défenses des Mémoires publiés* (Paris: H. Vrayet de Surcy, 1863); A. R. Wallace, *On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism: 3 Essays* (London, J. Burns, 1875); William Crookes, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, 1874).

¹⁰¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 44-45, 47, 112, 199, 202, 281; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 546-54, 580-87, 620-26. It should further be mentioned that Crookes became a member of the Theosophical Society 20 November 1883 and that he was a friend of Blavatsky. For Further details, see *Theosophedia: The Theosophical Eyclopedia*: <http://theosophy.ph/encyclo/index.php?title=Crookes,_William > [accessed 7 August 2012]

Blavatsky hoped for and therefore she also criticised him.¹⁰¹⁹ Crookes was genuinely interested in modern spiritualism, but as a nineteenth-century scientist he also clearly sought to examine the spiritualistic phenomena or 'psychic force', as he initially termed its cause,¹⁰²⁰ by physical experimentation in order to discover the physical and psychic mechanisms by which they operated. He thus stated

In presenting this article [Psychic Force and Modern Spiritualism: A Reply to the "Quarterly Review"] to the public, let me take the opportunity of explaining the exact position which I wish to occupy in respect to the subject of Psychic Force and Modern Spiritualism. I have desired to examine the phenomena from a point of view as strictly physical as their nature will permit.¹⁰²¹

In other words, much to Blavatsky's disappointment, he eschewed the question of any truly "spiritual" or noumenal provenance of the cause of spiritualistic phenomena.¹⁰²²

Blavatsky's general (third) point of critique was thus that the mysteries of nature and spirit are still unknown to most modern scientists precisely because their scepticism, agnosticism and fixed view of nature prevent them from studying these as occultists do and have done in the past. Furthermore, Blavatsky in this relation rhetorically challenged contemporary scientists by arguing that they even neglect their own scientific principles when they neglect to study the occult.

At the Edinburgh meeting of the British Association, in 1871, Sir William Thomson said: "Science is bound by the everlasting law of honor to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it." In his turn, Professor Huxley remarks: "With regard to the miracle-question, I can only say that the word 'impossible' is not, to my mind, applicable to matters of philosophy." The great Humboldt remarks that "a

¹⁰¹⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 48-49, 195-204.

¹⁰²⁰ Crookes, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, pp. 9-19, 21-43, 98-101.

¹⁰²¹ Crookes, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 45.

¹⁰²² Crookes asserted that the phenomena must originate with some unknown psychological force of the individual medium (psychic force) – this Blavatsky, of course, criticised as she argued for spiritual agents (but generally, not the spirits of the dead as with most spiritualists). See note 1014.

presumptuous skepticism that rejects facts without examination of their truth is, in some respects, more injurious than unquestioning credulity.” These men have proved untrue to their own teachings.¹⁰²³

Here Blavatsky perhaps forgets to mention that many of these scientists generally sought to demarcate the study of the realm of nature from the theological, spiritual, metaphysical and occult and to explain any unknown phenomena in terms of matter or other quantifiable terms (energy, radiation, electricity) in order to better produce more valid and efficient scientific results. But Blavatsky’s critique was meant to support a discourse for the legitimate and meaningful, scientific study and embrace of the occult, yet natural, laws still unknown to modern science—an esoteric science that represented a return to the *magia naturalis* of the Renaissance and magic of the ancients.¹⁰²⁴

This modern scientific lack of knowledge of the occult forces in nature leads to Blavatsky’s fourth critique—a more extensive critique of scientific materialism as the root cause of her stance against the modern sciences.

2.4.2.4 Occultism versus Materialism

*And here steps in the killing materialism of the age; that peculiar twist in the modern mind, which, like a Northern blast, bends all on its way, and freezes every intuition, allowing it no hand in the physical speculations of the day.*¹⁰²⁵

Blavatsky opposed the authority of the modern scientists and many of their theories because they severed nature from spirit, thus she sought to dismantle

¹⁰²³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 223. The quote from Sir William Thomson was most likely culled from Crookes, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 23. The quotes by Huxley and Humboldt were most likely taken from Wallace, *On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism: Three Essays*, from the unnumbered page facing the preface in the beginning of the book, which—in addition to the two quotes used by Blavatsky—has a quote by Sir Humphrey Davy as well as one by Sir John Herschell. Blavatsky used the following works by Jules de Mirville in *Isis Unveiled*: Mirville, *Pneumatologie: Des Esprits et de leurs manifestations diverses*; Mirville, *Question des esprits et de leurs manifestations diverses*.

¹⁰²⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 126-53, 168-69, 170, 180, 207-92, 465-66;

Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 518, 521, 603, 604, 640, 670.

¹⁰²⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 521.

their authority. Blavatsky, however, perceived materialism¹⁰²⁶ to be the root cause of the many failures of the modern sciences and scientists.

Natural sciences *cannot* go hand in hand with materialism.¹⁰²⁷

According to Blavatsky, the historical root of materialism in the West was to be found around the time of Aristotle (384-322 BCE) in ancient Greece. Here materialism slowly began to challenge faith, especially because the mystery-religions had degenerated into mere speculations and religious fraud, and because the true initiated adepts of occult spirituality began to be fewer in number compared to even more ancient times.¹⁰²⁸ As materialism grew and the esoteric keys to true spirituality were gradually lost, due to the Christian persecution of the pagans and the Christian construction of false conceptions of spirituality, materialism gained a strong foothold in religious ideas in the form of concrete materialistic dogmas from the early Middle Ages up to modern times.¹⁰²⁹ In this connection, Blavatsky argued on several occasions that in fact the Christian priesthood itself was responsible for the victory of modern materialism since the rise of modern materialism can be viewed as a natural reaction to the bigotry and religious brutality which the Christian Church exercised for centuries, or as Blavatsky stated

Sickly and deformed child as it now is, the materialism of To-Day is born of the brutal Yesterday. [...] It is the bastard progeny of the French Revolution and its reaction against ages of religious bigotry and repression.¹⁰³⁰

Materialism was now (i.e. in the nineteenth century) the limited frame of mind—strongly opposed to the spiritual fanaticism of the past—cultivating the general lack of interest among the scientists in and knowledge of the hidden

¹⁰²⁶ Blavatsky used the term materialism in a very broad sense that often connoted cultural materialism rather than specific scientific philosophico-schools of materialism. This section 2.4.2.4. sums up her critique of materialism when it, in broad terms, indicates something other than or opposed to the spiritual. For an overview of 'materialism' in the nineteenth century, see Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason*, pp. 20-28.

¹⁰²⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 518.

¹⁰²⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 15.

¹⁰²⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 183, 578.

¹⁰³⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xlv.

aspects of nature once known to mankind. It was the primary hindrance to the cultivation and understanding of the spiritual. Blavatsky thus clearly perceived a great part of her own mission as a thinker and an occultist to counter the further growth of materialism and disbelief during her age of disenchantment.¹⁰³¹ To this end she used all discursive means available. Her dislike of materialism (or the reduction of everything to matter) was to some extent derived from ‘Modern Spiritualism’. She had on the one hand been greatly involved in spiritualism as a movement seeking to prove the reality of the spiritual realms,¹⁰³² but on the other hand, she increasingly came to dislike what she saw as its ‘materialistic tendency’ and vulgar manifestations.¹⁰³³ Spiritualism had stimulated her interest in the spiritual, but had also proved to her the evasive influence of materialism and its negative effects (even on spiritualism), which she sought to counter with Theosophy and Occultism.¹⁰³⁴ Blavatsky’s dislike of ‘materialism’, under which she often included positivism, naturalism and agnosticism,¹⁰³⁵ furthermore originated from the evasive influence of naturalists such as Huxley and Tyndall.¹⁰³⁶ Her major concern was that, if something were not done soon on behalf of the spiritual dimension in man and cosmos, materialism and material interest would become the master of all human endeavours and thereby destroy the last sense of spirituality—just still present in her time.

¹⁰³¹ HPB, ‘Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention’, IX, 244.

¹⁰³² See chapter 2.5 on ‘Blavatsky’s Discourse against Modern Spiritualism’.

¹⁰³³ Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002 [1895]), I, 6; H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), p. 307; *The Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 30’, p. 112; H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), p. 33; HPB, ‘Science, Phenomena and the Press’, in HPBCW, III, 227-33 (p. 229) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 10 (1881), 218-20).

¹⁰³⁴ See chapter 2.5 on ‘Blavatsky’s Discourse against Modern Spiritualism’.

¹⁰³⁵ Blavatsky was aware of the distinctions between materialism, naturalism, positivism, agnosticism, see for example, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 650n.

¹⁰³⁶ See Turner, ‘The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension’, pp. 359, 362-63; see also Brooke and Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature*, p. 30; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, p. 14; Bernard Lightman, ‘Victorian Sciences and Religions’, pp. 346-47; Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority*.

Deeply sensible of the Titanic struggle that is now in progress between materialism and the spiritual aspirations of mankind, our constant endeavor has been to gather into our several chapters, like weapons into armories, every fact and argument that can be used to aid the latter in defeating the former.¹⁰³⁷

Clearly, scientific materialism was Blavatsky's great enemy in her struggle for spiritual meaning. She expressed admiration for the great learning of many contemporary scientists, such as the Scottish physicist Balfour Stewart (1828-1887), the British chemist and physicist William Crookes,¹⁰³⁸ the French naturalist Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages (1810-1892), the British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, the Swiss palaeontologist, glaciologist and geologist Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807–1873), and several others, even though she did not agree with them all on all points—but viewed thinkers such as the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), the German scientist Carl C. Vogt (1817-195), the German scientist Friedrich Ludwig Buchner (1824-1899) and the British biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, as intellectually and morally harmful to the progress of mankind due to what she perceived to be their materialistic stance:

[these men] are simply the intellectual and moral murderers of future generations; especially Haeckel, whose crass materialism often rises to the height of idiotic *naïvtés* in his reasonings.¹⁰³⁹

The so-called materialism of these thinkers is in reality more complicated. Even though Huxley, for example, advocated a naturalistic and agnostic approach to nature, he did not regard himself as a materialist. In his lecture on 'Physical Basis of Life' (1868), the address that provoked so many charges of materialism, he emphasised that 'I, individually, am no materialist, but, on the contrary, believe materialism to involve grave philosophical error.'¹⁰⁴⁰ Naturalism was thus not the same as materialism, but due to the extensive accusations of being a materialist, he further defined his stance as

¹⁰³⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xlv.

¹⁰³⁸ Sir William Crookes was knighted in 1897.

¹⁰³⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 651, [brackets are mine].

¹⁰⁴⁰ T. H. Huxley, *On the Physical Basis of Life* (New Haven, CT: The College Courant, 1869), p. 18.

'agnostic'.¹⁰⁴¹ Blavatsky does not seem to have cared much for these finer nuances, as she saw all of them limiting the study and scope of nature to matter and motion.¹⁰⁴²

Blavatsky also found several specific, yet correlated, problems with materialism and reasons as to why it is incompatible with occultism. The following three points were her main concerns.

2.4.2.4.1 Materialism reduces everything to matter

Blavatsky's first specific critique of materialism is directed towards its reductionism. She argues that as long as science is subdued by materialism, it would reduce everything in the universe to matter and thus deny everything outside matter.¹⁰⁴³

The Satan of Materialism now laughs at all alike, and denies the visible as well as the invisible. Seeing in light, heat, electricity, and even in the phenomenon of life, only properties inherent in matter, it laughs whenever life is called VITAL PRINCIPLE, and derides the idea of its being independent of and distinct from the organism.¹⁰⁴⁴

The materialistic, scientific reduction of all things to matter was opposed to the occult explanations and theories given by Blavatsky in her works. To Blavatsky the "physical" or the perception of 'matter' is fundamentally an illusion, in the abstract philosophical sense.¹⁰⁴⁵ Furthermore Blavatsky thought that everything in the universe is fundamentally alive (e.g. conscious and in

¹⁰⁴¹ Dixon, 'Agnosticism', pp. 35-38; Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, pp. 16-17. Lightman, 'Victorian Sciences and Religions', pp. 347-48. For a comprehensive discussion, see Lightman, *The origins of agnosticism*.

¹⁰⁴² A materialistic world-view was to Blavatsky morally depraved, but even so and even though this is also how popular accounts of the nineteenth century portray the 'materialism' of the age, it is often overlooked that the nineteenth century in no way was deprived of moral concerns even among the materialists, positivists, naturalists and agnostics or great British scientists such as Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer, among others, who all wrote on ethics. For an overview, see L. Becker, *A History of Western Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 95-112.

¹⁰⁴³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 517-20, 587.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 602-603.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 39-40, 108, 274, 278, 517-20.

motion)¹⁰⁴⁶ and that scientific laws, motion and forces, are the effects of hidden or occult trans-empirical entity-agents.¹⁰⁴⁷

Blavatsky also found the 'agnostic' stance to primarily be materialism hiding under another terminology.¹⁰⁴⁸ For example, she criticised the metaphysical speculations of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) on the 'unknown' absolute principle or first cause, as discussed in *First Principles of a New System of Philosophy* (1862),¹⁰⁴⁹ to be 'little better than veiled materialism.'¹⁰⁵⁰

Even so great a thinker as Mr. Herbert Spencer speaks of the "Unknowable" occasionally in terms that demonstrate the lethal influence of materialistic thought, which, like the deadly Sirocco, has withered and blighted all current ontological speculation.¹⁰⁵¹

Blavatsky thought Spencer's 'unknown', or the power manifesting through phenomena, or the infinite eternal Energy to be only conceptualizations of what she regarded as 'the Energies of Cosmic Substance' (i.e. still aspects of the manifested and differentiated cosmos) and therefore it did not capture the more spiritual and abstract philosophical notion of the One absolute principle i.e. the absolute boundless immutable principle that is philosophically beyond the manifested cosmos.¹⁰⁵² In other words, Spencer's 'unknown' or 'infinite

¹⁰⁴⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 274, 280-81, 507, 626n; II, 672.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 274-87, 517-20. Blavatsky found not only the so-called physical sciences of modern sciences to be too reductionistic: 'While Materialists deny everything in the universe, save matter, Archaeologists are trying to dwarf antiquity, and seek to destroy every claim to ancient Wisdom by tampering with Chronology. Our present-day Orientalists and Historical writers are to ancient History that which the white ants are to the buildings in India. More dangerous even than those Termites', Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 676.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 327. It was common among critics of the nineteenth century to claim that naturalism and agnosticism were nothing more than materialism, see Bernard Lightman, 'Unbelief', in *Science and Religion around the World: Historical Perspectives*, ed. by John Hedley Brooke and Ronald L. Numbers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 252-77 (p. 267); Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴⁹ See Spencer, *First Principles*, pp. 1-96.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 327.

¹⁰⁵¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 327.

¹⁰⁵² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 327n; also on the boundless immutable principle, p. 14; Spencer, *First Principles*, p. 73.

energy' is still a reduction to a material conception of the most abstract philosophico-spiritual principle known to man.

2.4.2.4.2 Materialism rejects occultism

According to Blavatsky's perception, it was precisely because the materialistic sciences reduce everything to matter or always think in terms of quantity that they constantly reject occultism, which argues for forces, principles and entities that are entirely independent of matter, yet still within the confines of nature.¹⁰⁵³ Presenting the minority standpoint of occultism in both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky thus sought to respond to this and to defend occultism against the new arrogant authority of science.¹⁰⁵⁴ As has been shown above, one of her strategies of defending occultism was to directly challenge the authorities of the sciences by showing the contradictions in many of their statements. Given this plurality of opinion, Blavatsky thought that occultists had also a right to be heard.¹⁰⁵⁵ It should however be noted that, in Blavatsky's view, science was not as much a 'negative other' as was dogmatic Christian theology, but still it was too far from "true science" in its present materialistic form to be a positive complement to occultism.¹⁰⁵⁶

According to Blavatsky, 'Neither the Occultists generally, nor the Theosophists, reject, as erroneously believed by some, the views and theories of the modern scientists, only because these views are opposed to Theosophy.'¹⁰⁵⁷ Blavatsky actually did find intrinsic value in the modern sciences—but she also sought to defend esotericism against the scorn of scientists and the 'unphilosophical, self-contradictory, and simply absurd' notions of materialistic science compared with the more holistic embrace of esotericism.¹⁰⁵⁸

Blavatsky claimed, that in addition to the tendency to reduce everything

¹⁰⁵³ For the change in relationship between science and occultism after the scientific revolution, see note 921.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxxv, 298, 504-505.

¹⁰⁵⁵ See also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 279, 296, 298, 517-20, 601.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 323, 477-78.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 296.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 296, 477.

to matter, a fundamental cause of occultism's unacceptability to materialistic science was due to scientists' refusal to cross the boundary of their ideologies and agnostic methods. On the one hand, this rendered science unable to explain occult phenomena; on the other hand, it produced absurd reductionist theories, such as the explanation of spiritual and psychological phenomena on the basis of matter.¹⁰⁵⁹

Blavatsky saw another problem in this methodological limitation of modern natural science, which legitimized its rejection of the occult, in that the scientists themselves constantly crossed their own line and entered the realm of metaphysics.¹⁰⁶⁰

But we see, whenever the Occultists are bold enough to raise their diminished heads, that materialistic, physical science is honey-combed with metaphysics; that its most fundamental principles, while inseparably wedded to transcendentalism, are nevertheless, in order to show modern science divorced from such "dreams," tortured and often ignored in the maze of contradictory theories and hypotheses.¹⁰⁶¹

As a part of this critique of science, Blavatsky points to the hypothetical ether prevalent in nineteenth-century physics and the supposed physicality of the supposed indivisible atom, which she discussed to some length in *The Secret Doctrine*.¹⁰⁶²

Furthermore, in contrast to the limitations of science, Blavatsky argued

¹⁰⁵⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 61. Blavatsky often termed the reduction of psyche to matter 'scientific psychophobia', see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 46, 104.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 408; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 506-23, 544.

¹⁰⁶¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 485.

¹⁰⁶² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 339, 485, 517-20. For Blavatsky's extensive reading of physics, see appendix I & II. One of her major sources for criticising modern physics was, however, the widely read work by J. B. Stallo, *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*, 2nd edn (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885 [1881]). Several physicists criticised this book, P. G. Tait especially. Also Blavatsky did not read it uncritically, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 510, but made use of all the points of critique serving her own purpose, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 482-88, 508, 511, 544, 546, 556; see also notes 281 and 282 for more details.

that 'the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes.'¹⁰⁶³ Blavatsky's method of doing this was by developing 'faculties which are absolutely dormant—save in a few rare and exceptional cases', the difficulty of this presumably also being the reason as to why occultism always seem to rely a great deal on tradition.¹⁰⁶⁴

2.4.2.4.3 Materialism is blind

Finally, Blavatsky concluded in relation to the modern scientific rejection of occultism that materialistic science is blind. First of all, science is only able to study phenomena or the world of appearances, which is not the source of true knowledge.¹⁰⁶⁵ Furthermore, since science dogmatically must limit everything to matter, it must also turn a blind eye to all the forces that we perceive around us such as life or a living body—in contrast to death or a dead body. Blavatsky's advice was therefore that 'The pupil must either, like his master, rest satisfied with the explanation that protoplasm made the man, and force vitalized and will now consume his body, or he must go outside the walls of his college and the books of its library to find an explanation of the mystery.'¹⁰⁶⁶

If science remains blind to what Blavatsky calls the mystery of life and other unexplained forces or secrets of nature

many other mysteries, will remain non-existent to the materialists of our age, in the same way as America was a non-existent myth for Europeans during the early part of the mediaeval ages, whereas Scandinavians and Norwegians had actually reached and settled in that very old "New World" several centuries before.¹⁰⁶⁷

To Blavatsky, the occultists are actually by analogy these Scandinavians who had discovered new domains or mysteries of nature before the modern scientists (due to their materialism), but in the future when modern science

¹⁰⁶³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477; see also Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Tradition', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 1125-35.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 610; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 12-14.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 336.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 297.

catches up with what the occultists have known for ages the scientists will explain the same old truths in a new terminology.¹⁰⁶⁸

The time will come when the children of men of science, unless they inherit the soul-blindness of their skeptical parents, will be ashamed of the degrading materialism and narrow-mindedness of their fathers.¹⁰⁶⁹

Blavatsky argued that the day must come when occultism will win the day and science will lose its materialistic blindness.¹⁰⁷⁰ The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were, however, according to Blavatsky's spiral-cyclic view of history, enmeshed in a barren period or cycle in which all contact with and thus knowledge of the spiritual was lost.¹⁰⁷¹ When did she think that occultism would return to take its rightful place? Blavatsky foretold, according to her view of history, that because a minor cycle of 5,000 years of the kali yuga period (dark ages) was about to end during the end of the nineteenth-century, materialistic science would receive a 'death blow'¹⁰⁷² and that occultism hopefully would win the day by the end of the twenty-first century.¹⁰⁷³ Elsewhere, Blavatsky argues that as long as the present gross condition of humanity is not superseded by a more spiritual condition and as long as the spiritual faculty of intuition is not balanced with that of scepticism or mental discrimination, materialism will continue to exist.¹⁰⁷⁴

The above systematic exposition of Blavatsky's discourse clearly shows that Blavatsky's occultist reaction was an intelligent, rational, yet critical response to what she felt to be real problems with the limitations of contemporary sciences or the so-called disenchantment of the world. The main cause of the problem was no doubt materialism as it simply posed a too limited universe incompatible with occultism. This polemic reaction and defence of her

¹⁰⁶⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 297.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 409.

¹⁰⁷⁰ HPB, 'Preliminary Survey', HPBCW, XIV (1995), 16-33 (p. 27) (first publ. in Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 3 vols (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1897), III, 14-29, p. 23.

¹⁰⁷¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 247.

¹⁰⁷² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 612.

¹⁰⁷³ HPB, 'Preliminary Survey', in HPBCW, XIV, 27.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 480.

own views was thus central to the fulfilment of Blavatsky's Theosophical project, as it actively engaged with a major cultural authority in its struggle for an alternative construction of meaning that included spirit. However, by engaging critically with the modern sciences and materialism, they of course also practically and linguistically served as the contrast against which Blavatsky could define and present her own views and place 'occultism' in a more privileged position—rather than the marginalized position to which, it had been relegated since the scientific revolution—by constructing it as an advanced and more comprehensive form of science embracing a wider scope of the secrets of nature, which only, one day in the future when materialism has ceased, contemporary science will do.

2.4.3 Blavatsky's construction of occultism or true science

As a historical phenomenon, 'occultism' has been defined as a reformulation of esotericism in the light of science. Even though Blavatsky was deeply dissatisfied with the materialism of contemporary sciences (see 2.4.2), this section will, from a historical perspective, analyse to what extent Blavatsky's discourse for what she believed to be "true science" was formulated in the mirror of scientism.¹⁰⁷⁵

2.4.3.1 *Isis Unveiled*

Isis Unveiled (volume 1) was primarily concerned with proving the existence and relevance of ancient 'magic', spiritualistic phenomena, the occult sciences and with, in the light of these currents, discursively challenging contemporary scientists.¹⁰⁷⁶ Thus in 1877, Blavatsky had not yet fully formulated her own systematic occultism or set of doctrines, as she would do later particularly in *The Secret Doctrine*. Consequently, *Isis Unveiled* contains no particular scientism about her discussion and construction of the 'occult sciences' (i.e. she primarily presents what she herself had read about the occult sciences);¹⁰⁷⁷

¹⁰⁷⁵ See note 947.

¹⁰⁷⁶ As shown in chapter 2.1.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Blavatsky did use a wide variety of early sources on the 'occult sciences', see Appendix I under 'esotericism', but her most immediate sources appear to have been: Eusébe Salverte, *The Occult Sciences: The Philosophy of Magic, Prodigies and Apparent Miracles*, trans. by Anthony Todd Thomson,

however, as Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke has observed, her discussion of ‘magic’ is at times given a scientific flavour mediated through her reception of mesmerism.¹⁰⁷⁸

Blavatsky was eager to show that magic is as ancient as man¹⁰⁷⁹ and that in ancient times it was universal.¹⁰⁸⁰ She makes use of the pagan neo-Platonist Proclus’ (412-485) statements on magic to prove that magic was a science.¹⁰⁸¹ After quoting Proclus on magical affinities, Blavatsky states that

2 vols (London: Richard Bently, 1846); Eliphas Levi, *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, 2 vols (Paris: Germer Baillié, 1856); Thomas Wright, *Narratives of Sorcery and Magic: from the most Authentic Sources* (New York: Redfield, 1852); Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870); Alexander Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy: A Sketch of the Eclectic Philosophy of the Alexandrian School* (Minneapolis, MN: Wizards Bookshelf, 1975 [Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1869]); William Howitt, *History of the Supernatural*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1863); Joseph Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, trans. by W. Howitt, 2 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854); and William Godwin, *Lives of the Necromancers* (London: Frederick J. Mason, 1834).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Helena Blavatsky, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Masters Series* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 87-92; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, ‘The Esoteric Uses of Electricity: Theologies of Electricity from Swabian Pietism to Ariosophy’, *ARIES*, 4, 1 (2004), 69-90 (pp. 74-77); Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, ‘The Divine Fire: H.P. Blavatsky and the Theology of Electricity’, in *Theosophical History*, 9, 4 (2003), 4-19 (pp. 9-12); see also appendix 1 for Blavatsky’s extensive use of works related to animal magnetism.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 18-19.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 25.

¹⁰⁸¹ Blavatsky used Marsilio Ficino’s edition of Proclus, *Procli de anima ac daemone, de sacrificio et magia* (Venice: 1497). It is, however, important to note that Blavatsky’s notion of the word ‘science’ was not the same as that of the modern naturalists or positivists. The term ‘science’ or the Latin *scientia* originally implied an organised body of reliable knowledge. Often this was how Blavatsky used the term, see for example Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477. Alternatively, she used the term as the ‘true science’ meaning the science of occultism or of hidden forces in nature and an unbiased science open to a wider understanding of nature, see for example Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 446, 514. It was not until the nineteenth century professionalization of science with its struggle for authority that ‘science’ obtained its more specific meanings of being directly associated with the natural sciences and the specific, restricted ways of obtaining such knowledge. Furthermore, it was not until 1834 that the designation

Evidently Proclus does not advocate here simply a superstition, but science; for notwithstanding that it is occult, and unknown to our scholars, who deny its possibilities, magic is still a science.¹⁰⁸²

Blavatsky furthermore does not claim that this magic is based on mechanistic causality, but that it is

firmly and solely based on the mysterious affinities existing between organic and inorganic bodies.¹⁰⁸³

These 'mysterious affinities' are further described by Blavatsky in terms of 'magnetism', 'attraction' and 'repulsion', terms which she claims the medieval hermetists used instead of the modern universal law of 'gravitation' to describe natural phenomena—but nowhere is the law of mechanistic causality, important to the *etic* construct 'occultism', particularly visible at this point in Blavatsky's discourse.¹⁰⁸⁴

In chapter XII of the second volume of *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky summarises her view of magic in the following manner: everything that happens is the result of a law even though this law might be hidden to modern

'scientist', coined by William Whewell, distinguished those who sought such natural knowledge from those who pursued other forms of knowledge, see Turner, 'The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension', p. 360.

¹⁰⁸² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 244.

¹⁰⁸³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 244. The idea of affinities—such as sympathies and antipathies, or attraction and repulsion—between seemingly distinct objects in nature was common to early magic and natural philosophy. This has been well demonstrated by Lynn Thorndike in *History of Magic & Experimental Science*, see for example I, 68, 84-87; V, 390, 409, 424, 481, 551, 561, 599; VI, 26, 128, 186, 234, 241, 282, 287, 292, 294, 297, 318, 323, 350, 354, 392, 397, 419, 434, 456, 460, 500, 508, 564, 601; VII, 287, 290, 391, 406, 415, 500, 505, 507, 642, 653, 656, 660, 670, 689, 694; VIII, 15-16, 18, 88, 198, 291, 312, 330-331, 436, 438, 517, 561, 567, 581, 584; see also Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, I, pp. 148-52, which was available to Blavatsky.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 244. For Blavatsky's complete lack of emphasis on the notion of instrumental or mechanistic causality in her later works, such as her 'Esoteric Instructions' written for the pupils of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society (est. 1888), and the prevalence of the notion of correspondences, see Tim Rudbøg, 'The Mysteries of Sound in H. P. Blavatsky's 'Esoteric Instructions'', in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. by Laurence Wuidar, Aries Book Series, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 248-49 (pp. 252-54).

science.¹⁰⁸⁵ Magic is thus scientific or systematic knowledge of these hidden laws

Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice.¹⁰⁸⁶

It is clear that Blavatsky wanted discursively to emphasise that magic is a 'science'. Nevertheless, it is important to observe that this is not the same 'science' as that of the positivists, materialists, physicists and biologists of her own historical context, but rather that of mesmerism, Eliphas Levi (1810-1875) and the older *magia naturalis*.¹⁰⁸⁷

The corner-stone of MAGIC is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies. Especially necessary is a familiarity with their effects in and upon the animal kingdom and man. There are occult properties in many other minerals, equally strange with that in the lodestone, which all practitioners of magic must know, and of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant. Plants also have like mystical properties in a most wonderful degree, and the secrets of the herbs of dreams and enchantments are only lost to European science, and useless to say, too, are unknown to it, except in a few marked instances, such as opium and hashish.¹⁰⁸⁸

It is clear that Blavatsky's correlation of magic with magnetism and electricity was partly derived from theories related to mesmerism,¹⁰⁸⁹ from

¹⁰⁸⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 587.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 588.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 588-89; Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, pp. 87-102.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 589.

¹⁰⁸⁹ It is an often-overlooked fact that for a long time the ancients, and later natural philosophy and the magical tradition, have known of magnetism and electricity even though the theoretical conceptions, of course, have changed through time. According to Aristotle, magnetism was for example already known to Thales of Miletus (c. 640-546 BCE), Aristotle, *De Anima*, 405a19; see Brian Scott Baigrie, *Electricity And Magnetism: A Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), pp. 2-6; Gerrit L. Verschuu, *Hidden Attraction: The History and Mystery of Magnetism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 8-12. For a contemporary source, see also Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, I, 152-71. The phenomena of electricity such as static electricity were also, according to Aristotle, known to Thales, Aristotle, *De Anima*, 405a19. It was also known

Eliphas Levi¹⁰⁹⁰ and that the talk of ‘occult properties’ of minerals and ‘secrets of

to the ancient Persians and Chinese, see Baigrie, *Electricity And Magnetism*, p. 1. For an account of esoteric uses of electricity, see Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, ‘The Divine Fire’, pp. 12-18; see also Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science*, for numerous details on the use of magnetism in relation to magic from late antiquity to the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century magnetism and electricity became central to Anton Mesmer’s conceptualisations of the operations of ‘animal magnetism’, a definition he coined to distinguish it from other forms of magnetism. For further details, see Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 430, 433; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 173-90, 235; Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, pp. 103-104; Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*; Monroe, *Laboratories of Faith*; Winter, *Mesmerized*. This catapulted magnetism and electricity into new heights now also embracing the human sphere and deeply influencing successive occultists, such as Eliphas Levi who integrated them into magical practice (see note below), see also Blavatsky’s article, HPB, ‘Electric and Magnetic Affinities between Man and Nature’, in HPBCW, III (1982), 21-26 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 5 (1881), 98-99). Furthermore, it is true that Blavatsky refers to the importance of being familiar with the ‘effects’ of magnetism and electricity ‘in and upon the animal kingdom and man’ and that this could be read as a movement away from affinities based on correspondences (associated with Renaissance Platonism and Hermeticism) to one based on modern mechanistic causality. However, it should be remembered that Aristotelian causality, and its adaptations through Western history—as distinct from mechanistic causality and Platonic/Hermetic analogy—has been central to the natural magical tradition as a model for explaining the operations of natural and hidden forces, virtues and affinities. Most likely, it is this form of causality Blavatsky refers to here as her next sentence talks about ‘occult properties’, a notion that was a part of the Aristotelian/Scholastic approach to nature. Blavatsky constantly argued for the existence of occult properties, causes and forces related to *magia naturalis*. Contrary to medieval scholasticism, Blavatsky believed, it was possible to ‘familiarize’ or come to know these causes and the effects they have on animals and men. For a very good overview of occult qualities, virtues and causes related to this discussion, see Keith Hutchison, ‘What Happened to Occult Qualities in the Scientific Revolution?’, *Isis*, 73, 2 (1982), 233-53.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Eliphas Levi embraced electricity in relation to magic and often spoke of it, see Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual*, trans. by Arthur Edward Waite (London: William Rider & Sons, 1923), pp. 67, 92 and Arthur Edward Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic: A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi*, 2nd rev. and enlarged edn (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1897), pp. 32-33, 148, 300, 301, 305, 360, 362, 371. Levi also used the concept of magnetism extensively, see Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 67, 83-84, 90-92, 263, 302, 371-72, 447, 449. Blavatsky especially made use of Levi’s *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, (1856) in *Isis Unveiled*, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 125; II, 511.

herbs', lost to European science, is a reference to *magia naturalis* prevalent in books of secrets ascribed to Albertus Magnus, *De occulta philosophia* (1533) of Henry Cornelius Agrippa and to John Baptista Porta's *Magia Naturalis* (1558) and others.¹⁰⁹¹

Blavatsky also retained the idea that magic was an 'art' to be practiced by an individual magician through the exercise of will, thus not directly associated with the modern natural sciences.

To sum up all in a few words, MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will. The adept can stimulate the movements of the natural forces in plants and animals in a preternatural degree. Such experiments are not obstructions of nature, but quickenings; the conditions of intenser vital action are given.¹⁰⁹²

Blavatsky also made extensive use of Eliphas Levi in the comprehensive development of her concept 'Akasa' (the universal primordial substance principle), 'Fohat' (cosmic electricity and propelling vital force) and magnetism in *The Secret Doctrine* (but as this chapter is not intended to discuss particular doctrines, but discourses, further details on these topics will have to be eschewed). For Blavatsky's use of electricity, see Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Esoteric Uses of Electricity', pp. 74-77; Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Divine Fire', pp. 4-19; For a more general study of electricity in relation to theology and esotericism, see Ernst Benz, *The Theology of Electricity: On the Encounter and Explanation of Theology and Science in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. and intro. by Dennis Stillings (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989).

¹⁰⁹¹ See for example Albertus Magnus, *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus: of Virtues of Herbs, Stones and Certain Beasts*, ed. by Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1973); Cornelius Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia Libri Tres*, ed. by V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992); John Baptista Porta, *Natural Magick* (New York: Basic Books, 1958 [1st Latin edn, Naples 1558, this 1st English edn, 1658]). Compare also above quote with Francis Barrett's definition of 'natural magic' in Francis Barrett, *The Magus: A Complete System of Occult Philosophy* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 2000 [1801]), p. 13. For a general study of the so-called books of secrets, see William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁹² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 590; The importance of 'will' in magical work has antecedents to the notion of the Magus in Renaissance magic and Hermeticism, but Blavatsky's immediate source was Eliphas Levi, *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, in which Levi constantly argues that the 'will' is

Blavatsky's discourse or construction of 'occultism' or 'magic' in *Isis Unveiled* is thus not directly influenced by modern 'scientism'. 'Magic' was not *presented* in a manner much transformed from its earlier formulations and these formulations did not appeal to the modern sciences. In other words 'magic' had not yet become a direct mirror of the modern natural sciences. It should however be noted that the immediate sources for Blavatsky's discourse, such as mesmerism and Eliphas Levi, were early-secularised forms of esotericism (as for example witnessed by the presence of electricity) and therefore in this indirect sense Blavatsky's construction was influenced by 'scientism'.

It has thus been shown that the way Blavatsky *presented* 'magic', or what we might call the discursive level of her work, was not impacted by 'scientism' in any significant sense. The 'doctrinal level', or the discussion of the actual doctrines of magic, was influenced by 'scientism' in the sense that the "doctrine" of electricity was adopted as central to magic. Blavatsky's discourse of magic, occultism or "true science", *in toto*, was thus only indirectly secularised. The observation, that Blavatsky's discourse or construction of the concepts 'occultism' and 'magic' still retained their former definitions, therefore calls for some nuances in Hanegraaff's *etic* construct 'occultism', including the notion that occultists adopted mechanistic or 'instrumental' causality and the notion that occultists supposedly mirrored the modern sciences.

2.4.3.2 The Secret Doctrine

The *Secret Doctrine*—Blavatsky's second major work after *Isis Unveiled*, based on: (1) the Stanzas of Dzyan;¹⁰⁹³ (2) Blavatsky's extensive reading in Hindu and

the central element in effectual magical work, see Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual*, trans. by Arthur Edward Waite (London: William Rider & Sons, 1923), pp. 84, 249-55. For Blavatsky's use of Levi on the 'will', see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 137-38.

¹⁰⁹³ Blavatsky states that *The Secret Doctrine* is based on the Book of Dzyan, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 13. From pp. 20-22, she gives summaries of the seven stanzas in volume 1. In pp. 27-34, she gives details on their ideas of cosmic evolution. The next 12 stanzas are given in Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 15-21. For more details on the *Book of Dzyan*, see chapter 2.6 in the present thesis.

Buddhist philosophy¹⁰⁹⁴ and literature; (3) Western esoteric traditions;¹⁰⁹⁵ as well as (4) the material she had allegedly received from her Masters in India¹⁰⁹⁶—represents Blavatsky’s most extensive formulation of a coherent esoteric philosophy and cosmology. The teachings outlined and discussed in *The Secret Doctrine* were no longer discussed, as much, in terms of ‘magic’ as in *Isis Unveiled*—but instead as ‘Secret Doctrine’,¹⁰⁹⁷ ‘Secret Science’,¹⁰⁹⁸ ‘Occultism’,¹⁰⁹⁹ ‘Occult Philosophy’,¹¹⁰⁰ ‘Occult Science(s)’,¹¹⁰¹ ‘Esoteric Doctrine’,¹¹⁰² ‘Esoteric Teachings’,¹¹⁰³ ‘Esoteric Philosophy’,¹¹⁰⁴ ‘Esoteric Science’¹¹⁰⁵ and ‘Esotericism’,¹¹⁰⁶ among many other terms. The primary terms are, however, ‘Secret Doctrine’, ‘Occultism’ and ‘Esoteric Philosophy’. This section will analyse to what extent these primary terms in the *presentation* of the teachings of the *Secret Doctrine* were influenced by ‘scientism’.

The primary term, the ‘Secret Doctrine’, is formulated in the following manner:

¹⁰⁹⁴ See appendix II for Blavatsky’s reading of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy.

¹⁰⁹⁵ For Blavatsky’s reading of Western esoteric traditions see appendix II; see also Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, pp. 21-118.

¹⁰⁹⁶ For textual material ascribed to the mahatmas, see for example *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998).

¹⁰⁹⁷ This is the title of the work itself and the term is used numerous times in the work.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xiii, xxxv, 583n.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 2, 65, 111m 219, 484, 507, 530-31, 540, 604, 618, 649, and other places.

¹¹⁰⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 154, 209, 541, 556, 618, and other places.

¹¹⁰¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 12, 120, 142, 249, 551, 583, 623, and other places.

¹¹⁰² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 107, 243, 545; II, 354, 449, 590, and other places.

¹¹⁰³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 162, 623; II, 391, 510, 650, 742, and other places.

¹¹⁰⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xx, 36, 218-219, 277, 357, 451, 614, and other places.

¹¹⁰⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxii, 588; II, 154, 195, 711, 785.

¹¹⁰⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 110; II, 22n, 88, 609. The term esotericism is mostly used as denoting secret or secrecy.

The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system¹¹⁰⁷

and

it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity.¹¹⁰⁸

This direct definition of the 'Secret Doctrine' appears more religious, esoteric and philosophical than strictly modern and scientific. Blavatsky further states that the 'Secret Doctrine' teaches the following central propositions:

(a) An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude.¹¹⁰⁹

(b) The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing"¹¹¹⁰

(c) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—a spark of the former—through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.¹¹¹¹

Again, these fundamental propositions are more related to Platonism and Eastern philosophy than to modern science.¹¹¹² They are of course formulated

¹¹⁰⁷ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272.

¹¹⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272-73.

¹¹⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 14.

¹¹¹⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 16.

¹¹¹¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 17.

¹¹¹² Since Plato, Western metaphysics have—especially, within Platonism, including middle- and neo-Platonism, Christianity, including Christian mysticism, and Romantic philosophy—conceived of an 'absolute principle' or 'the one' that transcends the limitations of reason. The doctrine of an absolute principle, beyond reason, can also be found in Eastern philosophy, especially in the concept of 'Brahman' within Advaita Vedanta and the Upanishads. The second proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* is similar to the Hindu doctrine of the periodic incarnation of the cosmos. The identity between the soul and the universal soul can be found both in neo-

in terms of propositions and laws that, from the seventeenth century, became widely used terms in relation to natural philosophy. But such concepts and means of expression were not unknown to the philosophy of antiquity, medieval scholasticism, or to Arabic philosophers during the European Middle Ages.¹¹¹³

In recapitulating, Blavatsky further defines the secret doctrine in terms of six points and she hopes to have proven five further points in the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The six points are in sum: (1) that the 'secret doctrine' is the wisdom of the ages; (2) that the fundamental law of the secret doctrine is the existence of one homogeneous divine Substance-principle; (3) that the universe is the periodic manifestation of this one absolute essence; (4) that the universe fundamentally is an illusion; (5) that everything in the universe is conscious and (6) that the universe is guided by spiritual entities from within outwards.¹¹¹⁴

The five points Blavatsky hopes to have proven are the following: (1) that the 'secret doctrine' does not teach atheism; (2) that the creative logos or god-head is a collective host of lesser creator gods; (3) that the creator gods or 'Dhyan-Choans'¹¹¹⁵ are dual in character being both brute energy inherent in

Platonism, Christian mysticism and Upanishadic mysticism. The cyclic-historic nature of cosmos is found in most ancient cultures and the idea of 'karma' is likewise an ancient Hindu and Buddhist doctrine—however different schools use the term variously. (References would be too numerous to list here).

¹¹¹³ For a discussion, see Lorraine Daston and Michael Stolleis, 'Introduction: Nature, Law and Natural Law in Early Modern Europe', in *Natural Law and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy*, ed. by Lorraine Daston and Michael Stolleis (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 1-12.

¹¹¹⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272-79.

¹¹¹⁵ The compounded term 'Dhyan-Chohan' was introduced for the first time in 'Mahatma Letter No. 30' (ML-134) (Rec. Nov. 4, 1881), in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998), pp. 94-96. It is a compound of the Sanskrit word 'Dhyan' meaning 'meditation' and the Tibetan word 'Chohan' meaning 'lord'. In H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), p. 101, Blavatsky defined the term as follows: 'Dhyan Choans (Sk.) *Lit.*, "The Lords of Light". The highest gods, answering

matter and the intelligent soul which directs and guides the brute energy; (4) that matter is eternal and everything is alive and (5) that there is a universal plan or ideal design in the universe.¹¹¹⁶

These central points of the ‘secret doctrine’ are again not particularly construed in the image of ‘scientism’, but more in terms of Eastern philosophy and ancient Greek philosophy.¹¹¹⁷

However, it is important to point out that throughout *The Secret Doctrine* the teachings or doctrines of the ‘secret doctrine’ are constantly and extensively, compared with the results and opinions expressed by the main proponents of the modern sciences—not only in the ‘addenda’ appended to each of the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* but on nearly every page of the entire work. The same can be said of *Isis Unveiled* (volume 1), but again such structural ‘scientism’ was not only an appeal to the sciences or an attempt to legitimize occultism by appearing scientific, but also to defend, revive and construct the domain of occultism as alternative meaning in the “new” or modern contexts.

The reason Blavatsky gives for including these extensive comparisons to the theories of the modern sciences, is that some of her fellow theosophists had

to the Roman Chatholic Archangels. The divine Intelligences charged with the supervision of Kosmos.’

¹¹¹⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 279-88. For the propositions and conclusions of *The Secret Doctrine*, volume 2, related to geology and anthropology, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 1-12, 437-46, 794-98. Blavatsky’s relation to anthropology and her adaptation of evolutionism to occultism are more intermixed with modern science than her presentation of or discourse of ‘the secret doctrine’.

¹¹¹⁷ It should be noted, that clear evidence exists that, on what could be termed the doctrinal level—as distinct from the *discursive* level, or how Blavatsky talks *about* various topics—Blavatsky did integrate several modern theories with more ancient ideas. In the case of evolutionism—including the mechanism of karma, reincarnation and spiritual evolution—it is particularly significant, but requires much more space than this chapter allows, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 176-77, 186-87, 191, 202, 211, 224, 277-78, 332, 416, 600, 620, 634-47; II, 66, 87-88, 153, 164-65, 170, 180-81, 241, 257, 259-63, 411, 545, 649, 731-36; Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 470-82.

found it to be a bad strategy to criticise the assertions of the modern sciences, as Blavatsky had done it in *Isis Unveiled*, and that they themselves also wished to understand the teachings of the 'secret doctrine' in the light of the modern sciences in order to better be able to critically examine its doctrines.¹¹¹⁸ Blavatsky stated that this could be fruitful

So far as Science remains what in the words of Prof. Huxley it is, viz., "organized common sense"; [...]—every Theosophist and Occultist welcomes respectfully and with due admiration its contributions to the domain of cosmological law.¹¹¹⁹

Blavatsky however explains that she would not want to stop criticising the modern sciences and its proponents, because they dogmatically reject occultism and at the same time often step into the domain of occultism without any valid warrant.¹¹²⁰ Or as she explains

It is only when its more ardent exponents, over-stepping the limits of observed phenomena in order to penetrate into the arcana of Being, attempt to wrench the formation of Kosmos and its *living* Forces from Spirit, and attribute all to blind matter that the occultists claim right to dispute and call in question their theories.¹¹²¹

This irritated Blavatsky. The sciences had methodologically limited themselves and yet they saw themselves fit to judge the claims of the occultists. Blavatsky admitted that occultism was based on certain 'metaphysical data' or premises, but saw these as a more fruitful foundation for a deeper study of nature's secrets than agnosticism or materialism, which could only lead to absurd theories.¹¹²² The theories and foundation of the modern sciences and the teachings of the 'secret doctrine' were thus according to Blavatsky not in complete accord.¹¹²³

¹¹¹⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477.

¹¹¹⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477, see also 480 in which Blavatsky explains that the teachings of the 'secret doctrine' are so ancient and foreign that comparisons with the modern sciences might help even theosophists understand its teachings better, which otherwise they might not be able to [brackets are mine].

¹¹²⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477.

¹¹²¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477.

¹¹²² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 477.

¹¹²³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 478.

In her construction of meaning, Blavatsky construed distinctions between occultism and the modern sciences to further define 'Occultism' as the soul of materialistic science and to argue that the two could complement each other that way.¹¹²⁴ 'Esoteric philosophy', another important term often used in *The Secret Doctrine*, is equally defined in terms of this complementary function

Esoteric philosophy, let us remember, only fills the gaps made by science and corrects her false premises.¹¹²⁵

However, no matter how much Blavatsky sought to position the 'secret doctrine' or 'occultism' as distinct from modern science or superior to it, from a critical historical perspective, Blavatsky's work was permeated by 'scientism' in several respects. Modern science, despite her critical stance, influenced *the context* in which she discussed and presented her 'occultism'. It was a 'significant other', the authority formulating mainstream approaches to nature—but it was also a 'negative other' standing against a more comprehensive spiritual account of nature, against which she could (re)-construct 'occultism'. Yet another manner in which modern scientism influenced Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* was through her integration of facets of modern evolutionism and geology into her doctrines on cosmology and anthropology, but this doctrinal aspect of Blavatsky's great work is beyond this chapter, which has been primarily concerned with the way she *talked about*, criticised and

¹¹²⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 634. In *The Secret Doctrine* the term 'occultism' was also often used in reference to the belief in spiritual and vitalistic forces rather than materialistic, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 484, 507, 540, 604.

¹¹²⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 196. Blavatsky also argues that 'Esoteric Philosophy' is close to Advaita Vedanta, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 55; and that it generally reconciles all Eastern schools of philosophy and all religions, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xx, 55, see also *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 3. 'Esoteric Philosophy' is also defined as 'objective idealism', *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 631 and generally reflects the reception of Eastern philosophy more than modern Western science, see Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Theosophical Society, Orientalism, and the "Mystic East": Western Esotericism and Eastern Religion in Theosophy', *Theosophical History*, 13, 3 (2007), 3-28. The idea of closing the gaps left by science is also a clear indication of a wish to maintain the great chain of being dismantled by the new limited focus of modern sciences.

presented her 'occultism'.¹¹²⁶

Finally, the above analysis has demonstrated that 'occultism' as a historical category contains a more nuanced fusion of science and magic/occultism than otherwise thought, especially because Blavatsky's discourse incorporated less of modern scientific ideas into its *presentation* of her fundamental 'occultism' or 'secret doctrine' than otherwise implied, yet 'scientism', as the authoritative context for the construction of meaning in relation to nature, was extensively used for comparing the two world-views.

2.4.4 Conclusion

This chapter on Blavatsky's discourse against modern sciences and materialism showed how, in mainstream culture, the close relation between natural philosophy and esotericism gradually disintegrated after the 'Scientific Revolution' (2.4.1), but that in this increasingly secularised modern context several movements—such as Romantic *Naturphilosophie*, mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, spiritualism and modern occultism—continued the attempt to bridge the spiritual and material domains (2.4.1.1).

Blavatsky's discourse has been placed and discussed in the context of the *etic* construct 'occultism' (2.4.1.2). It has been demonstrated that—despite previous arguments that 'occultism' was largely an adaptation to modern scientism and thereby a way to legitimize its marginal views in the modern context—'occultism', as expressed in the works of Blavatsky, contains greater nuances. Blavatsky's attitude towards the modern sciences primarily consisted of a severe critical reaction to the disenchantment of the world and a specific critique of the limitations of contemporary scientists, especially their apparent materialistic ideology and narrow methodology. Rather than appealing to them they were perceived to stand in the way of an understanding of and reassertion of spirit in the natural domain (2.4.1.1) & (2.4.1.2).

It was demonstrated that Blavatsky's four-point-critique of modern sciences and materialism could be read as a defence of occultism and the

¹¹²⁶ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 470-82; see also notes 899, 901, 1104-5.

magia naturalis of the past by directly challenging the new intellectual authorities (2.4.2). Blavatsky's first point of critique—that modern sciences were not infallible and represented new, but false, authorities constantly contradicting each other—had her argue for a continued place for occultism in the modern landscape (2.4.2.1). Her second point of critique was that most new discoveries made by science are in reality facts known to the ancients; hence the need to rescue the lost arts (2.4.2.2). Her third point was that science, because of its new limited naturalistic and agnostic methods and consequently narrow definitions of nature, claimed to know or to be exact, but in reality knew very little about the various forces in nature and man compared to ancient occultism which knew the secret forces and laws of nature (2.4.2.3). Her fourth point was that the overshadowing influence of materialism is essentially at the root of the problems with modern sciences and scientists (2.4.2.4). Summed up in three major points: (1) materialism reduces everything to matter; (2) materialism rejects occultism because of its limited approach and thereby produces absurd theories often forcing modern scientists into the realm of metaphysics; (3) modern sciences are blind. According to Blavatsky, these are the reasons why occultism must be revitalised and at the same time the reasons why modern sciences cannot at this point be (re)-united with occultism.

Blavatsky thus posed 'occultism' or the 'secret doctrine', as an alternative, more comprehensive science of the whole of nature (including the material and spiritual dimensions), to the new natural sciences and agnosticism that excluded spirit from nature. Through her criticism of modern sciences, Blavatsky attempted to construct a meaningful cosmos in which spirit and the wisdom of the ancients were still preserved. Historically, her discourse was however manifested within a specific context that influenced her work.

Analysing the influence of the nineteenth-century context of scientism on Blavatsky's construction or self-representation of: (1) 'magic' in *Isis Unveiled*; and (2) 'occultism', 'the secret doctrine' and 'esoteric philosophy' in *The Secret Doctrine*, it was demonstrated that scientism was, contrary to what one could expect from the present *etic* construct of 'occultism', not particularly significant in either *Isis Unveiled* or *The Secret Doctrine* (2.4.3). In *Isis Unveiled*, scientism

only entered indirectly into Blavatsky's definitions of 'magic' through mesmerism and the works of Eliphas Levi. In *The Secret Doctrine*, it was rather the comparative context in which Blavatsky discussed the 'secret doctrine', 'occultism' and 'esoteric philosophy' that was marked by scientism, which is significant, but not the whole story. The definitions, discourses or *presentations* of these terms (magic, occultism and the secret doctrine) were more aligned with Eastern and ancient Greek philosophy than modern sciences (Blavatsky's work was, however, scientised in ways only indicated in this chapter, such as contextually and doctrinally). In terms of authority, presentation and self-identification the ancients thus weighted more than the moderns. Blavatsky's discourse was thus not one primarily of appeal to the modern sciences or the adoption of scientism as a legitimising strategy, but rather one of a meaningful revival of ancient science in the modern context. This chapter has thus pointed out the complexity between modern sciences and occultism in Blavatsky's works and calls for more nuances in the present portrayal of occultism and science, which includes her comprehensive critique of the new sciences as hindrances to an occult conception of nature and a meaningful survival of occult ideas in the modern context.

2.5 Blavatsky's Discourse Against Modern Spiritualism

For the most part, Blavatsky is associated with Theosophy though she has often been related to modern spiritualism, as well. Her relation to spiritualism has, however, only recently been given scholarly attention and even though some progress has been made in excavating this relationship, many uncertainties and details about Blavatsky's actual engagement with the spiritualist movement still remain. The observations on Blavatsky's relation to spiritualism found in scholarly studies have generally agreed that she represented the new wave of occultism developing from the late eighteen-seventies, but also that she had been involved in spiritualism for a time and might have had her own plans for being so. It has also generally been agreed that she soon moved on and became increasingly critical of modern spiritualism. Bruce Campbell notes in his pioneer study of the Theosophical movement from 1980, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, that spiritualism was historically important as the immediate context from which the Theosophical Society emerged, but specifies that the modern spiritualist movement itself was dependent upon older occult traditions.¹¹²⁷ Campbell also notes that Blavatsky had an ambiguous relationship with spiritualism,¹¹²⁸ as she on the one hand identified herself with it, but soon moved away from it again.¹¹²⁹ Janet Oppenheim brought further historical details to the table in her *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychological Research in England, 1850-1914* (1985). Oppenheim includes the Theosophical Society alongside spiritualism and argues that much of the success of the Theosophical Society was due to its social and ideological relationship with spiritualism.¹¹³⁰ Oppenheim also observes that both movements struggled against materialism in their common belief in and emphasis on the spiritual.¹¹³¹ Oppenheim however also notes that Blavatsky was highly critical of mainstream spiritualism and

¹¹²⁷ Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), p. 9, 10, see also 20.

¹¹²⁸ Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, p. 26.

¹¹²⁹ Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, p. 22-23.

¹¹³⁰ Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychological Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 164-74.

¹¹³¹ Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 166.

attempted to distinguish the ‘true spiritualism of her Theosophy from the false spiritualism of the spiritualists.’¹¹³² In *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (1987), Michael Gomes is in agreement with Campbell’s observation that the Theosophical Society emerged out of the context of spiritualism, or as he states: ‘Out of this social ferment [modern spiritualism], and Olcott’s attempt to interest spiritualists and scientists in investigating the phenomena on a mutually agreeable basis, came the founding of the Theosophical Society.’¹¹³³ Gomes furthermore recognizes Blavatsky’s background in spiritualism, but at the same time emphasises her basis in the Western esoteric tradition.¹¹³⁴ Jean Overton Fuller (1988) equally emphasises Blavatsky’s reservations towards modern spiritualism, or as she states ‘At that date, the term ‘Spiritualism’ was still used as the simple opposite to materialism, but [...] one sees that Madame Blavatsky never approved Spiritualism in the narrower sense to which it was later limited, of attempted communication with the dead through séances.’¹¹³⁵ Silvia Cranston’s biography, *HPB* (1993), similarly states that Blavatsky for a time was engaged in spiritualism, but primarily emphasises, based on some of Blavatsky’s own statements, that she had her own specific plans with spiritualism as she was part of an occult lodge seeking to counter-act materialism.¹¹³⁶

In *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (1994), Jocelyn Godwin briefly treats Blavatsky’s background in spiritualism and, like Cranston, indicates that Blavatsky, rather than being a spiritualist herself, belonged to an occult lodge in connection to which she used spiritualism for a specific purpose.¹¹³⁷ In *New Age Religion* (1996) Hanegraaff states that ‘Blavatsky’s early involvement in

¹¹³² Oppenheim, *The Other World*, pp. 165, 166.

¹¹³³ Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987), p. 6.

¹¹³⁴ Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 62-63.

¹¹³⁵ Jean Overton Fuller, *Blavatsky and Her Teachers: An Investigative Biography* (London and the Hague: East-West Publications, 1988), p. 36.

¹¹³⁶ Sylvia Cranston, *H. P. B.: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky Founder of the Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1993), pp. 117-18, 122.

¹¹³⁷ Jocelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 281-82, 292.

spiritualism, as a medium and a defender of the authenticity of spiritualist phenomena, is not in any doubt. It is a matter of debate, however, to what extent she ever accepted spiritualist teachings.¹¹³⁸ Like Oppenheim, Hanegraaff finds that Blavatsky attempted to distinguish true spiritualism or occultism from false spiritualism,¹¹³⁹ but he also notes that this did not mean that Blavatsky repudiated spiritualism; she simply reinterpreted it within a 'larger occultist framework'.¹¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, as noted by Hanegraaff and based on Godwin's work, this larger framework was in itself not only based on spiritualism, but also on a number of currents such as the occult sciences and theories of comparative religion.¹¹⁴¹ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke confirms this in his study and compilation of Blavatsky's writings, *Helena Blavatsky* (2004) and in his history of Western esotericism *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (2008). Goodrick-Clarke notes that Blavatsky's esoteric career as a writer began in the context of spiritualism,¹¹⁴² but states that 'Blavatsky saw spiritualism at this stage [during the early New York days] as a useful vehicle to prove the validity of non-materialist ideas,'¹¹⁴³ and that 'soon she turned away from spiritualism'¹¹⁴⁴ towards the development of modern occultism.

While the above studies note that Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society had a background in spiritualism and that Blavatsky soon became critical of spiritualism, none of them have, in any greater detail, systematically examined or mapped Blavatsky's involvement with spiritualism and her critique thereof. This picture recently changed with the publication of Jeffery D. Lavoie's *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement* (2012)

¹¹³⁸ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998 [1996]), p. 449.

¹¹³⁹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 449.

¹¹⁴⁰ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 450.

¹¹⁴¹ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 450.

¹¹⁴² Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 214.

¹¹⁴³ *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Western Esoteric Masters Series (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), p. 7.

¹¹⁴⁴ Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 7; this general notion was repeated in Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 214.

specifically devoted to the study of Blavatsky's relationship with spiritualism.¹¹⁴⁵ However, quite contrary to most of the previous views, the overall thesis of this new historical study is that Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society never moved far away from its, supposed, origin in mainstream spiritualism—defined by Lavoie as communication with the dead through a medium.¹¹⁴⁶ In other words, Blavatsky was fundamentally a spiritualist and the occult dimension of her Theosophy—including terminology, ideas and references—was merely an outer dress, which Blavatsky adopted and used as a 'brilliant marketing strategy'.¹¹⁴⁷ Blavatsky's ideas, derived from Western esotericism, were later interpolations introduced into her spiritualism—and not vice versa—in a failed effort to reform spiritualism.¹¹⁴⁸ According to Lavoie, the philosophy and teachings of the Theosophical Society thus, at least until 1892, remained open to and compatible with spiritualism.¹¹⁴⁹ As a result of his study of the two movements, even though admitted inconclusive, Lavoie 'feels completely justified in claiming' that the Theosophical Society could have been considered a spiritualist organization.¹¹⁵⁰

Lavoie's study is the most comprehensive and the most recent to date on Blavatsky's relation to spiritualism and since its thesis is contrary to the previous scholarly remarks on Blavatsky's background in occultism, this new focus calls for further debate and necessitates a closer historical examination or re-evaluation of her background in both spiritualism and esoteric traditions. This chapter will thus through close textual and contextual analysis systematically explore, analyse and map Blavatsky's relation to modern spiritualism, her relation to esotericism and her discourse against spiritualism, in an attempt to give answers to some of the uncertainties left unanswered by former studies, such as: (1) was Blavatsky a spiritualist? (2) what was her critique of

¹¹⁴⁵ See Jeffery D. Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement* (Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2012), pp. 2, 9; see also Tim Rudbøgg, 'Review of The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement', *Theosophical History* (April 2013), *forthcoming*.

¹¹⁴⁶ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 2-3, 4-5, 8.

¹¹⁴⁷ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 28, see also 8, 363, 364.

¹¹⁴⁸ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 8, 9, 28.

¹¹⁴⁹ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 5, 9, 363.

¹¹⁵⁰ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, p. 363.

spiritualism? and (3) what is the relation between occultism and spiritualism?

2.5.1 Blavatsky and Spiritualism

Before documenting Blavatsky's actual involvement with 'spiritualism', a brief outline of nineteenth-century spiritualism is useful as, unfortunately, much confusion has arisen in previous studies¹¹⁵¹ about Blavatsky's relation to spiritualism from the simple fact that the word 'spiritualism', from the early nineteenth century and throughout this century, was widely used both in common language and in a philosophical sense as meaning any perspective, set of values or system of beliefs emphasising the spiritual in favour of the material or physical.¹¹⁵² From 1848 and onwards, a loosely defined movement arose in the United States (and thereafter elsewhere), which is now generally designated 'spiritualism' and popularly defined in terms of belief in the possibility and practice of communicating with the spirits of the deceased through a medium.¹¹⁵³ This practice of communication was one of the first principles common to most parties involved in this new form of spiritualism or in the first stages of modern spiritualism; while, the movement in general held no common belief-system or set of 'dogmas' and had no common organization, towards the end of the nineteenth century modern spiritualists came to agree on many beliefs, such as an immortal soul and its progress in the afterlife.¹¹⁵⁴ Today, this loosely defined and loosely organised movement is often heuristically referred to as 'modern spiritualism' to distinguish it from 'spiritualism' in the general sense of the term. This useful convention will be adopted throughout this chapter to avoid terminological confusion,¹¹⁵⁵ to avoid reduction of the plurality of meanings present during the period, and because also Blavatsky used this

¹¹⁵¹ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 42-44.

¹¹⁵² See 'Spiritualism' in *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by John Simpson, 2nd edn (CD Rom (v. 4.0), Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹¹⁵³ See 'Spiritualism' in *Oxford English Dictionary*, definition 3; John Patrick Deveney, 'Spiritualism', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 1074-82 (p. 1074).

¹¹⁵⁴ Deveney, 'Spiritualism', p. 1077.

¹¹⁵⁵ In relation to this and for the sake of clarity it should be noted that the term 'modern spiritualism' is subsumed or included in the term 'spiritualism' and not *vice versa*.

distinction. In her later writings, such as *The Theosophical Glossary* [published posthumously, 1892] she plainly explains how she made use of this distinction,

Spiritualism. In philosophy, the state or condition of mind opposed to materialism or a *material conception* of things. Theosophy, a doctrine which teaches that all which exists is animated or informed by the Universal Soul or Spirit, [...] is *pure* Spiritualism. As to the belief that goes under that name, namely, belief in the constant communication of the living with the dead, whether through the mediumistic powers of oneself or a so-called *medium*—it is no better than the materialization of spirit, and the degradation of the human and the divine souls.¹¹⁵⁶

In her earlier writings this distinction between ‘spiritualism’ and ‘modern spiritualism’ is more implicit, yet nonetheless present. There are, in fact, several fine nuances present in Blavatsky’s early use of the term ‘spiritualism’. In a private letter to the Russian philosopher and investigator of spiritualism, Alexander Nikolayevich Aksakoff (or Aksakof or Aksakov) (1832-1903), dated 12 April 1875, Blavatsky already specifies her position: ‘Since I have been in America I have devoted myself entirely to Spiritualism, not to the phenomenal, material side of it, but to spiritual Spiritualism.’¹¹⁵⁷ Here the term ‘spiritual Spiritualism’ is contrasted with ‘phenomenal’ or ‘material spiritualism’. In her article from July (1875) ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’ Blavatsky refers to the last thirty years of ‘modern Spiritualism’¹¹⁵⁸ and also uses the concept ‘American Spiritualism’,¹¹⁵⁹ but in more general terms she also makes use of the word ‘Spiritualism’ (without placing ‘modern’ before it) as something opposed to materialism and scepticism.¹¹⁶⁰ The more general form of spiritualism, as something more spiritual that has existed in almost all ages, Blavatsky defined as ‘Ancient Spiritualism’ (this, to her, was also synonymous with ‘Occultism’).¹¹⁶¹

¹¹⁵⁶ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), p. 307.

¹¹⁵⁷ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, ‘Letter 37’, p. 141.

¹¹⁵⁸ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I (1988) 101-119 (p. 101) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-7).

¹¹⁵⁹ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I, 110.

¹¹⁶⁰ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I, 113, 114, 118.

¹¹⁶¹ HPB, ‘A Crisis for Spiritualism: The Jesuits to show their hands—what the medium Home is doing for Mother Church’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 194-203

‘Modern spiritualism’ has been the subject of a number of important academic studies over the past sixty years, which have explored its social, historical and intellectual background, as well as its religious status and practices. The many facets and voices belonging to this movement have been well documented and its general impact and importance in the nineteenth-century context has been demonstrated.¹¹⁶² It is commonly agreed that ‘modern spiritualism’ originated in upstate New York—which has already been the birthplace of many new, religious, reformation groups such as Adventism, Millerism and Mormonism—when the daughters of a Methodist named John D. Fox claimed to be able to communicate with spirits. The famous first

(p. 199) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, IV (1876), 32-34). James Santucci has demonstrated that Charles Sotheran, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society used the term ‘Ancient Theosophy’ in 1875 and correlated it with ancient spiritism, see James A. Santucci, ‘Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society’, in *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, ed. by Richard Caron and others, *Gnostica*, 3, 471-89 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2001) pp. 474-75, 481, 483.

¹¹⁶² See Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-century America*, 2nd edn (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); Deveney, ‘Spiritualism’; Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008); Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); Robert S. Cox, *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2003); John B. Buescher, *The Other side of Salvation: Spiritualism and the Nineteenth-century Religious Experience* (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 2004); Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Amy Lehman, *Victorian Women and the Theatre of Trance: Mediums, Spiritualists and Mesmerists in Performance* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2009); Robert Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Logie Barrow, *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebians 1850-1910* (London & New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986); Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Spiritualism and society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969); Ruth Brandon, *The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1983). The present outline of modern spiritualism is primarily based on these works and the ones referenced to hereafter, but not listed here.

communication began one late evening 31 March 1848 as the family prepared for bed in their recently acquired farmhouse near Hydesville, Rochester, New York. They heard strange knockings to which the two unmarried daughters, Margaretta Fox (1833-1893) and Catherine Fox (1837-1892), or the 'Fox Sisters' as they came to be known as, responded. Typically, it was Catherine (or Kate, as she was called) who either snapped her fingers or clapped her hands where after the "spirits" would imitate the sound pattern. Margaretta would then say 'Now do just as I do' and then she counted numbers, which the "spirits" followed by knocking. Mrs. Fox would then ask if the source of the knockings was a "spirit" and then she asked it to respond with one knock for 'no' and two for 'yes'. They then heard two knocks. This was the beginning of modern spiritualism. The Fox sisters soon attracted many visitors, first neighbors, but soon thereafter people from afar. The first official public demonstration of the sisters' abilities for communicating with the spirits of the dead was held at Corinthian Hall in Rochester on 14 November 1848 with 400 attendants.¹¹⁶³

The example set by the Fox sisters was soon imitated, became fashionable and spread far and wide in America within the next few years and many new 'mediums', as people with the ability to communicate with the spirits of the dead were generally called, came to prominence. It has been estimated that only seven years after the beginning of the movement, one to eleven million people were in some way associated with spiritualism—at a time when the American population was only twenty-eight million people.¹¹⁶⁴

Many modern intellectual ideas entered into the milieu cultivated by the

¹¹⁶³ For more details, see Nancy Rubin Stuart, *The Reluctant Spiritualist: The Life of Maggie Fox* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2005); Barbara Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism* (New York: HarperOne, 2004).

¹¹⁶⁴ Deveney, however, notes that this estimate like most others is unreliable, but that it was a large number, see Deveney, 'Spiritualism', p. 1076. For other estimates, see Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 220-21; See also David K. Nartonis, 'The Rise of 19th-Century American Spiritualism, 1854-1873', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 49, 2 (2010), 361-73.

modern spiritualists. It has been argued that the spiritualist movement cultivated everything with the word 'reform' attached to it.¹¹⁶⁵ Socialism, community living, individual freedom, anti-authoritarianism, anti-dogmatism, progress, equality and democracy were important values to many in the spiritualist environment. Everyone, it was held, could be a potential medium no matter what social class, religion, gender or intellectual abilities one might possess or adhere to. No specific norm or dogma could determine the authenticity or legitimacy of the spirit messages. Women, especially, took this opportunity to raise their voices and be heard with new power.¹¹⁶⁶ The movement also sought to base religious experiences on science, demonstration, reason and facts—as the discourse often sounded—to prove the reality of spirit(s) and thereby counter the cultural and scientific materialism, rather than base their belief on authority and tradition as the Christian churches did.¹¹⁶⁷

The movement and its discourse was clearly an expression of the cultural logic of the age—a mirror of the great social and ideological changes of the nineteenth century—but it also had its origins in many of the spirit communications associated with various protestant sects and denominations from the past century. Furthermore, spiritualists often referred to similar phenomena in the Bible, such as speaking in tongues and communication with spirits. They also used esoteric theories associated with mesmerism and Swedenborgianism to frame and explain their spiritualistic practices.¹¹⁶⁸ This set of ideas (i.e. The Bible, Swedenborgianism and mesmerism) and the common practice of spirit communication thus gave some coherency to the otherwise highly individualistic new movement. When the spiritualists wanted to

¹¹⁶⁵ See Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, pp. 205, 259, 267; Braude, *Radical Spirits*, pp. 1-9; Robert S. Cox, 'Spiritualism', in *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America: Metaphysical, New Age, and Neopagan Movements*, ed. by Eugene V. Gallagher and W. Michael Ashcraft, 5 vols (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), III, 27-47 (p. 35);
¹¹⁶⁶ Hudson Tuttle and James M. Peebles, *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871* (Boston, MA: William White and Company, 1871), p. 21.
¹¹⁶⁷ See Braude, *Radical Spirits* and Owen, *The Darkened Room* as these books are specifically dedicated to this.
¹¹⁶⁸ See Oppenheim, *The Other World*, pp. 44, 63.
¹¹⁶⁸ See Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, p. 435.

substantiate and elaborate their views in a more comprehensive philosophical manner they also relied on ideas derived from the contemporary clairvoyant Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910), who is known for his 'Harmonial Philosophy', which is also associated with 'spiritualism' in the more universal sense of the term. In 1847, a year before the "Rochester Rappings", Davis had published his *The Principles of Nature* and he expanded his comprehensive philosophy in *The Great Harmonia* in five volumes (1852-1866). Another important factor in uniting the movement was the major Spiritualist journals, such as the Boston-based *Banner of Light* (est. 1852) and the *Spiritual Philosopher* (est. 1850) as well as the Chicago-based the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* (est. 1865).¹¹⁶⁹

Beyond these frames, the general movement was not particularly systematized and from its conception centred more on spiritual phenomena such as knockings, rappings, table turnings and materializations to which 'test mediums' and theatrics became deeply associated. In France, Allan Kardec (the penname of Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail) (1804-1869), however, developed a particular branch of spiritualism (or an independent religion depending on the perspective), which was a systematic–philosophical form of spiritualism often termed 'spiritism' to distinguish it from the broader movement.

Due to the rather simple nature of modern spiritualism and the growing claims of fraud associated therewith, the mediums soon had to develop new public means of presenting their abilities and communications with the spirits—some to raise their profile others to spread their spiritual mission more effectively. This led to sophistication in their theatrical stage performances where showmanship and entertainment often seemed to have taken precedence over the interest to learn about and demonstrate the reality of spirits. Some of the better-known mediums, who made use of theatrical display, were the Davenport Brothers, Ira Erastus (1839-1911) and William Henry (1841- 1877), who, as part of their display, were bound in a special cabinet

¹¹⁶⁹ For more details on the background of modern spiritualism, see Al Gabay, *Covert Enlightenment: 18th Century Counterculture and its Aftermath* (West Chester: Pa. Swedenborg Foundation, 2005), pp. 1-42, 103-92.

while the spirits entertained the audiences. The English medium Florence Cook (1856-1904), whose spirit form, 'Katie King', William Crookes investigated, was another famous performance medium. The Eddy Brothers, William (1838-1932) and Horatio (1842-1922) were also well known mediums, especially in relation to Blavatsky as will be shown below, who materialized several spirits in their farmhouse in Vermont.¹¹⁷⁰

Finally, it should be mentioned that in the middle of the *furor* of spiritualism more scientifically grounded societies were established to systematically investigate and document the phenomena witnessed and described by the spiritualists, mesmerists and others. Among the more prominent societies were The Ghost Club (est. 1862, London)¹¹⁷¹ and The Society for Psychical Research (est. 1882, London. The American sister society was est. 1884, Boston, MA). The Theosophical Society (est. 1875) itself was also, it must be remembered, established along a similar ambition to systematically investigate spiritualistic, occult and psychic phenomena.¹¹⁷²

2.5.1.1 Blavatsky's involvement with Spiritualism

*I am a Spiritualist, but of another sort, and I flatter myself of a little more philosophical sort.*¹¹⁷³

There is no doubt that Blavatsky was involved with spiritualism to a considerable extent already from an early date even though, she also became quite critical of mainstream spiritualism. Historical information of her life prior to her shift of residence to New York on 7 July 1873 is, however, difficult to

¹¹⁷⁰ Deveney, 'Spiritualism', 1074-84.

¹¹⁷¹ It should be noted that The Ghost Club met to discuss ghost stories and haunted houses; however, it is not clear whether or not it had been established to investigate spiritualism.

¹¹⁷² See chapter 2.1 of the present thesis, but see also *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [complete number of volumes not yet published] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 'Letter 63', p. 217; *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 66', p. 250; John Algeo and others 'Background Essay I: The Founding of the Theosophical Society and Controversy over the Inaugural Address', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 218-29.

¹¹⁷³ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 110', p. 411.

reconstruct owing to lack of sufficient source material.¹¹⁷⁴ This section will not attempt to reconstruct all the details of Blavatsky's early life, but focus on chronologically tracing and reconstructing the major facets of Blavatsky's involvement with spiritualism and occult/spiritual phenomena.¹¹⁷⁵

According to Blavatsky's younger sister, Vera Petrovna de Zhelihovsky (1835-1896), Blavatsky was an unusual child to whom all of nature was permeated with life and spirits or as Vera later wrote, 'She [Blavatsky] heard the voice of every object and form, whether organic or inorganic; and claimed consciousness and being, not only for some mysterious powers visible and audible to herself alone in what was to everyone else empty space, but even for visible but inanimate things such as pebbles, moulds, and pieces of decaying phosphorescent timber.'¹¹⁷⁶ While it is beyond the scope of this section to relate all of the numerous occult phenomena reported to have occurred around Blavatsky throughout her life, Vera's account does leave the overall impression that Blavatsky was an imaginative and spiritually sensitive child. It also appears that Blavatsky, already as a child, not only sensed a spiritual reality in nature

¹¹⁷⁴ Some of the sources available are what remains of her personal letters (here the oldest known letter is from somewhere between 1861 and 1864; there is Blavatsky's sketchbook (residing in the archives of Adyar); Blavatsky's notebook of travel impressions (at Adyar); secondary reports from people who knew Blavatsky or met her (both retrospective and contemporary accounts) and Blavatsky's own later retrospective narrations of her life. For some important published contemporary sources, see A. P. Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky: Compiled from Information Supplied by her Relatives and Friends and Edited by A.P. Sinnett* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1886, rep. New York: The Arno Press, 1976); Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002 [1895]); Vera Petrovna de Zhelihovsky, 'The Truth about H. P. Blavatsky' ('Pravda o Yelene Petrovne Blavatsky') *Rebus*, II, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48 (1883); Vera Petrovna de Zhelihovsky, 'H. P. Blavatsky: A Biographical Sketch', *Russkoye Obozreniye (Russian Review)* VI (November and December 1891), 242-94, 567-621.

¹¹⁷⁵ It should be noted that in order to reconstruct this, it is necessary to also use sources written later than the actual circumstances and therefore might contain risk of historical inaccuracies.

¹¹⁷⁶ Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, p. 35; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 29.

but also displayed phenomena of a spiritualist and occult nature.¹¹⁷⁷ Blavatsky recalls an incident in 1843 where she and her aunt for a brief moment saw the spirit of their elderly governess who had just passed away a few minutes prior to the incident.¹¹⁷⁸ From the age of 8 or 9 (1839/1840) to approximately the age of 15 (1846), Blavatsky also seems to have been extensively engaged with what was first believed by herself and her family to be the spirits of a dead woman and her dead son.¹¹⁷⁹ The spirit of the lady, identified as Tekla Lebendorff, would come every night and write through the young Blavatsky (or Héléne von Hahn as she was then known) often in the presence of her father, aunts and other people present in their household at the time. The spirit of Tekla would give detailed information about her life, marriage and children, who also sometimes appeared, especially her son who, as the story would have it, had committed suicide.¹¹⁸⁰ The communications were so numerous and comprehensive that heaps of manuscripts of their interaction were the result.¹¹⁸¹ At times, a priest with an interest in such phenomena would attend the “séances”, even though the phenomena at that time were regarded as *possession* rather than as a mediumistic séance, which after 1848 came to be a more conventional and popular designation of such spirit interaction.¹¹⁸²

Several apparently successful attempts to verify the information given by the spirit(s) were undertaken.¹¹⁸³ Blavatsky however discovered later, as she narrates, that the woman and even the son had not died at all, but were still alive!¹¹⁸⁴ Blavatsky explained the confusing circumstances of this case in the following manner: her undeveloped psychic powers had unconsciously read about Mrs. Lebendorff in the ‘astral light’ and tapped into her psychic current and thereafter through various associations of ideas concocted the whole

¹¹⁷⁷ Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, pp. 20, 32, 42-43, 49-50.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, comp. by Mary K. Neff (London: Rider & CO., 1927), p. 18.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, pp. 18-22.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 18.

¹¹⁸¹ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 19.

¹¹⁸² *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 19.

¹¹⁸³ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 19.

¹¹⁸⁴ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 20.

scenario.¹¹⁸⁵ Blavatsky further argued that the reason why, she thought the spirits were of dead people, was because her family, automatically and from the beginning of the contact, thought it to be so. In this context, Blavatsky too naturally came to believe her contacts to be dead people.¹¹⁸⁶

In October 1848, at the age of only 18, Blavatsky embarked on her first series of extensive travels around the globe. It appears that she may have arrived in Cairo, Egypt from Constantinople in 1850-51 where she and her friend the American writer and artist Albert Leighton Rawson (1828-1902) met the Copt occultist Paulos Metamon with whom Blavatsky wanted to form a society for the study of occult research in Cairo. This was however not fulfilled until her second visit to Cairo in 1871.¹¹⁸⁷

During the early eighteen-fifties Blavatsky also appears to have been in Western Europe, particularly London and Paris. In London she, according to René Guénon, 'frequented both spiritist and revolutionary circles'¹¹⁸⁸ and in Paris she was in contact with the spiritualist and magnetiser Victor Michal (1824-1889) who, according to Godwin, also practised crystal gazing, astral projection, table turning and the use of hashish.¹¹⁸⁹ After further extensive travels in Canada, USA, Mexico, South America, West Indies, Ceylon India, possibly Tibet, Japan and Burma, Blavatsky was supposedly back in Paris in

¹¹⁸⁵ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, pp. 21-22.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, pp. 21-22; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 29-30.

¹¹⁸⁷ John Algeo and others 'Background Essay A: HPB's Early Life', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 5; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 278, 281. According to Godwin's research Blavatsky's presence in Egypt in 1851 is cooperated by the independent testimony of Rawson, Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 278. For further details on Paulos Metamon and Rawson, see K. Paul Johnson, *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 25-30, 31-32.

¹¹⁸⁸ René Guénon, *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion*, trans. by Alvin Moore, Jr., Cecil Bethell, Hubert and Rohini Schiff (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004 [1921]), p. 6.

¹¹⁸⁹ Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 281; Guénon, *Theosophy*, p. 7; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 44.

1858 and according to an interview with Blavatsky, published in *Daily Graphic*, New York, November 1874, she was converted to spiritualism by the famous medium and spiritualist Daniel Dunglas Home (1833-1886). H. S. Olcott later seems to have confirmed this by including the following abstract from the interview in his seven-volume work on Theosophical history, *Old Dairy Leaves*

In 1858, I [Blavatsky] returned to Paris and made the acquaintance of Daniel Home, the Spiritualist... Home converted me to Spiritualism... After this I went to Russia. I converted my father to Spiritualism.¹¹⁹⁰

Many historical problems exist regarding this supposed conversion and meeting between the two. First of all, Home later stated in an article, dated 1884, that 'The name of Madam B. was well known to me (but not as a medium) in the spring of 58' in Paris, but I never met with or ever saw her.'¹¹⁹¹ Likewise Blavatsky, as Michael Gomes has uncovered, already somewhere prior to 1878, annotated and specifically underlined the above section/quote in the reprint edition of the interview published in the *Scientist* 19 November 1874 and wrote in the margin: '*I never saw in my whole life* neither D. D. Home or his wife; I was never in the same city with him for half an hour in my life'¹¹⁹² It appears that Blavatsky regarded these details about her in the interview as lies circulated by American reporters.¹¹⁹³ Thus it is difficult to judge if Blavatsky was actually involved with Home or not. Nevertheless, Blavatsky was interested in spiritualism, among many other esoteric traditions, at this time.¹¹⁹⁴

The next trace of Blavatsky's involvement with spiritualism or display of spiritual/occult phenomena is from her sister Vera's accounts of Blavatsky from the period when Blavatsky returned to Russia in December 1858 and seemed to have stayed until 1865.¹¹⁹⁵ According to William Q. Judge (1851-1896), a co-

¹¹⁹⁰ Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Dairy Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society, First Series 1874-78*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002 [1895]), I, 70; Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 35-36.

¹¹⁹¹ Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 217 n92; Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, p. 36.

¹¹⁹² Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 217.

¹¹⁹³ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, p. 36.

¹¹⁹⁴ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 36-37.

¹¹⁹⁵ Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, pp. 75-85; Cranston, *H.*

founder of the Theosophical Society and leader of the American section, this was a period in which Blavatsky gave free play to her abilities and gradually gained control of them.¹¹⁹⁶ From the moment Blavatsky first arrived in Russia, on Christmas Night, at her sister Vera's father-in-law's house in Pskov, Vera felt and saw several extraordinary phenomena taking place around her, such as strange communicating taps and sounds. Vera could ask the spirits questions and they would make tapping sounds to answer, yes or no, just like the Fox sisters.¹¹⁹⁷ Blavatsky's father, Colonel Peter von Hahn (1799-1875), and her brother, Leonid, were the most sceptical of Blavatsky's powers, but one evening she managed to convince her brother of her powers when she in the midst of a room full of visitors made a small chess table so heavy with her power that no one could lift it.¹¹⁹⁸

In early 1859, Blavatsky followed her father and half sister Liza (a child of his second marriage) to St. Petersburg where they took residence in a hotel. Here they were primarily engaged in business matters and in receiving visitors.¹¹⁹⁹ While not much time was available for spiritual phenomena, Vera relates that one particular evening Blavatsky's father, who still did not believe in spiritualistic phenomena, became convince of their reality when Blavatsky and her sister were entertaining two of their father's old friends with a display of Blavatsky's unusual abilities. Blavatsky's father was uninterested, but they managed to convince him to write a question on a piece of paper to which several raps would spell out the answer in good mediumistic fashion. In this case, the answer spelled out by the raps was the word 'Zaitchik'. Blavatsky's father and the guests had expected an elaborate answer, as was usual with spirit communications, but to everybody's surprise the simple answer appeared to have been the correct one as it was the name of Blavatsky's father's favourite

P. B., pp. 63-64.

¹¹⁹⁶ Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 71.

¹¹⁹⁷ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky: Insights into the Life of a Modern Sphinx*, comp. by Daniel H. Caldwell (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing house, 2000), p. 16; Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, pp. 85-111.

¹¹⁹⁸ Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, pp. 87-91; *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 17-19.

¹¹⁹⁹ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 19-20.

warhorse, which he rode during the Turkish campaign (1828-1829).¹²⁰⁰ Only thereafter, Blavatsky's father became convinced of the reality of such phenomena, and perused such phenomena further on his own and with great interest. The guests equally left the house joyfully and spread the word among their friends, which soon attracted numerous visitors to witness Blavatsky's unusual phenomena.¹²⁰¹ Blavatsky was however more inclined to perform phenomena after people had left the dinner parties. Vera explains that when the guests had left 'everything in the room seemed to become endowed with life. The furniture acted as though every piece of it was animated and gifted with voice and speech, and we passed the rest of the evening and the greater part of the night as though we were between the enchanted walls of the magic palace of some Scheherazade.'¹²⁰² Many other phenomena were observed during this time, such as the piano playing by itself, movement of objects without touching them, all the lights going off and coming back on, furniture moving and standing upside down.¹²⁰³

Sometime during spring 1859 Blavatsky moved to Vera's recently inherited country house in the village, Rugodevo.¹²⁰⁴ From Vera's account it appeared that during this period the occurrence of phenomena became a nearly daily habit around the house until Blavatsky got severely sick due to the reopening of a serious, yet mysterious wound beneath her heart, from which she had suffered since travelling in Asia.¹²⁰⁵ One year later, in the spring of 1860, Blavatsky and Vera left for the Caucasus to visit their grandparents in Tiflis where Blavatsky would reside for another 2-3 years.¹²⁰⁶ While being based here, Blavatsky would spend much time, which seemed to have extended her

¹²⁰⁰ Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, pp. 94-97; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 71.

¹²⁰¹ Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 71; *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 19-20.

¹²⁰² Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 71. 'Scheherazade' is a legendary Persian queen and the storyteller of *One Thousand and One Nights*.

¹²⁰³ Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 71-72.

¹²⁰⁴ Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, 115-16; *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 22-23; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 71-73.

¹²⁰⁵ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 23; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 72.

¹²⁰⁶ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 23; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 73, see also 65-69, 75-77.

stay with a couple of years, traveling around the Caucasus including Imeretia, Georgia and Mingreliya (Mingrelian), on the coasts of the Black sea, where she bought a house. During these years she spent time with native tribes and magicians known as the *Kudyani* and became loved and feared among the locals as a magician. Everywhere Blavatsky went occult phenomena seemed to follow her. While it would be too comprehensive to enumerate all the phenomena here, it is important to note that it seems to have been during these last years in Russia that a radical shift in the nature and control of Blavatsky's powers occurred. In relation to this shift, she also began to live a sort of double life in connection to which we have the earliest of Blavatsky's letters, presumably dated somewhere between 1861-1864.¹²⁰⁷ About the shift in Blavatsky's powers during this time Vera wrote

Her occult powers, all this while, instead of weakening, became every day stronger, and she seemed finally to subject to her direct will every kind of manifestation.¹²⁰⁸

This shift in her powers made Blavatsky communicate with the spirits in another manner than through raps and taps. Blavatsky now preferred to answer people's queries verbally or through a form of 'automatic writing'; sometimes entering into a coma or magnetic sleep while doing so. The sporadic and uncontrolled phenomena that reportedly often surrounded her now slowly died out.¹²⁰⁹

Sometime in 1865 Blavatsky left Russia (for good, though at the time,

¹²⁰⁷ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 1', p. 10.

¹²⁰⁸ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 23; and furthermore "Now [in 1865] I shall never be subjected to external influences." *It is not HPB who was from that time forth victim to "influences" which would have without doubt triumphed over a less strong nature than was hers; but, on the contrary, it is she who subjected these influences—whatever they may be—to her will.*' from *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 26-27; Blavatsky also similarly wrote in a letter to her relatives, 'The last vestiges of my psycho-physiological weakness is gone to return no more [...] I am cleansed and purified of that dreadful attraction to myself of stray spooks and ethereal affinities (?). I am free, free, thanks to Them whom I now bless at every hour of my life', *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 2', pp. 11-12.

¹²⁰⁹ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 23-24, 26-27; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 75-77; *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, pp. 124-28.

she did not know that she would never return) and travelled through the Balkans, Egypt, Syria, Italy, India, possibly Tibet, and Greece until she finally arrived in Cairo in late 1871 for the second time after surviving the shipwreck of the SS *Eunomia* from Greece to Egypt via Alexandria.¹²¹⁰

In Cairo Blavatsky mingled with spiritualists on a visit to the pyramids¹²¹¹ and she formed a society named 'Société Spirite' for the investigation of mediums and phenomena according to Allen Kardec's theories and philosophy.¹²¹² The society, however, proved a disappointment to Blavatsky and she therefore left Cairo for Paris in the spring of 1873 where she planned to stay with one of her von Hahn cousins.¹²¹³ Her stay, however, lasted only two months as she, according to Blavatsky's narrative, was ordered by her lodge to go to the United States 'to *prove* the [spiritualistic] phenomena and their reality and—show the fallacy of the Spiritualistic theories of "Spirits".'¹²¹⁴

Blavatsky arrived in New York on 7 July 1873. Upon arrival Blavatsky was short of money as the income from her father had mysteriously stopped. She therefore moved into a cooperative-living arrangement with other women.¹²¹⁵ Already here it appears that Blavatsky was thought of as a spiritualist medium of sorts by some of the other tenants as Blavatsky displayed clairvoyant abilities.¹²¹⁶ After a few months Blavatsky was informed that her father had died on 27 July 1873 and she inherited her part of her father's estate.¹²¹⁷ Hereafter Blavatsky entered various business ventures¹²¹⁸ and one

¹²¹⁰ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 10', p. 13, see also p. 183 n6.

¹²¹¹ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 3', pp. 15-17.

¹²¹² *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 4', pp. 17-19; *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 5', pp. 20-21; *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 6', pp. 21-23; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 279-80; *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 32-36.

¹²¹³ Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 280.

¹²¹⁴ Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 281-82; John Algeo and others, 'Background Essay C', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 31 [brackets are mine].

¹²¹⁵ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, pp. 41-44, 44-49.

¹²¹⁶ *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 42; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, p. 116.

¹²¹⁷ Algeo and others, 'Background Essay C', p. 32.

year later she encountered Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) at a series of séances at the Eddy farmhouse 14 October 1874.¹²¹⁹

In July, a few months prior to the meeting of Olcott and Blavatsky, Olcott was working as a lawyer in his New York law office when he thought he would catch up on his interest in spiritualism. He bought a copy of the *Banner of Light* and therein read about the marvellous phenomena taking place at the farmhouse of the Eddy brothers Horatio and William Eddy, in Chittenden, Vermont.¹²²⁰ Olcott set out to investigate this for himself and when he came back, he wrote an article on his observations that was published in the *New York Sun*.¹²²¹ Olcott's article received wide attention and the *Daily Graphic* therefore asked if he would to go back to the Eddys and investigate further to write a series of articles for them on the topic. Olcott agreed and went back 17 September (1874) expecting to stay twelve weeks with an artist who could draw sketches of what they witnessed.¹²²²

On 22 September Blavatsky applied to become an American citizen and 14 October, after having read Olcott's letters in the *Daily Graphic*, she went to Chittenden to meet him and investigate the Eddy phenomena for herself.¹²²³ Blavatsky and Olcott met the first day at noon and as Olcott wrote 'It was a very prosaic incident: I said "*Permettez moi, Madame,*" and gave her a light for her cigarette; our acquaintance began in smoke, but it stirred up a great and permanent fire.'¹²²⁴ In the course of a nine-day period (15-24 October) at the Eddys, Blavatsky would also take the stage. During the séances she would materialise "portrait-pictures", produced by her own powers, of friends, relatives and exotic foreigners.¹²²⁵

¹²¹⁸ Algeo and others, 'Background Essay C', p. 32.

¹²¹⁹ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 1-26; Algeo, and others, 'Background Essay C', p. 32; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 123-26.

¹²²⁰ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 1-3; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 123-26.

¹²²¹ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 1-3; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 123-26.

¹²²² Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 1-3; Cranston, *H. P. B.*, pp. 123-26.

¹²²³ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 3-5; Algeo and others, 'Background Essay C', p. 33.

¹²²⁴ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 1.

¹²²⁵ See Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 24; Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I,

These were the circumstances under which two of the most important founders and developers of the Theosophical Society met for the first time. Immediately following their visit to the Eddy homestead, Blavatsky began her writing-career publishing articles in newspapers and spiritualist journals. Her first article appeared in the *Daily Graphic*, New York, 30 October 1874 with the title ‘Marvellous Spirit Manifestations’.¹²²⁶ Other articles related to matters of spiritualism soon followed.¹²²⁷

After returning from Chittenden, Olcott paid Blavatsky a visit at her address, 16 Irving Place, New York, where Blavatsky gave her own private séance including table tapplings and spirit-messages received through rapping, especially from a spirit-intelligence called John King.¹²²⁸ In fact, Blavatsky never stopped her display of spiritualistic phenomena, even though she later argued that the true student of occultism should not put any value on them.¹²²⁹

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¹²²⁶ HPB, ‘Marvellous Spirit Manifestations’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 30-36 (first publ. in *The Daily Graphic*, V (1874), 873)

¹²²⁷ See for example HPB, ‘About Spiritualism’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 36-44 (first publ. in *The Daily Graphic*, VI (1874), 90-91); HPB, ‘Madame Blavatsky: Her Experiences—Her Opinion of American Spiritualism and American Society’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 46-49 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, I (1874), 148-9); HPB, ‘The Philadelphia “Fiasco,” or Who is Who?’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 56-72 (first publ. in *Banner of Light*, XXXVI (1875), 2-3); HPB, ‘Who Fabricates? Some Light on the Katie King Mystery—More Evidence—A Statement, at last, which seems consistent with circumstances—A Letter from Madame Blavatsky’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 75-83 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, II (1875), 44-5). Blavatsky continually published articles related to spiritualism until about 1883 where after her articles do not touch much upon the subject of modern spiritualism. Her interest in spiritualism and modern spiritualism is, however, still found in H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), pp. 27-35. For an overview of Blavatsky’s reading of spiritualist literature, see appendix I and II.

¹²²⁸ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 10. For more details on ‘John King’, see Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 65-71; John Algeo and others, ‘Background Essay F: The John King Portrait’, in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 78-85; Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 50-56.

¹²²⁹ See chapter 2.7 in the present thesis for further details.

After Blavatsky's visit to the Eddy's she also socialised and corresponded with several spiritualists in addition to Olcott, such as Alexander Nikolayevich Aksakoff, the General Francis J. Lippitt (1812-1902), Hiram Corson (1828-1911) professor of literature at Cornell University, the English clergyman and medium William Stainton Moses (1839-1892), Charles Carleton Massey (1838-1905) an English Barrister and writer, Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910) the well-known, clairvoyant spiritualist and prolific writer and the important spiritualists Emma Hardinge-Britten (1823-1899) and her husband William Hardinge-Britten (date of birth and death unknown).¹²³⁰

In 1875 Olcott published his book *People from the Other World* reporting on his findings at the Eddy Homestead, Blavatsky's occult phenomena and many other matters related to spiritualism, with illustrations by Alfred Kappes and T. W. Williams. In May 1875,¹²³¹ prior to the founding of the Theosophical Society, Olcott, with Blavatsky's support, also formed a secret club called the 'Miracle Club' for the practice and investigation of spiritualist and occult phenomena in New York.¹²³²

Finally, it will here be documented that Blavatsky on numerous occasions, especially throughout her years in America (during the mid/late eighteen-seventies) stated that she was a spiritualist. It will however also become clear from the following chronological documentation of this that Blavatsky did not state so without having important distinctions of the term in mind and that she did so in various, relevant contexts to achieve her self-

¹²³⁰ See for example *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 11', p. 44, to Aksakoff in which she mentions being friends with Davis; *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 14', pp. 59-61; *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 15', pp. 66-69; Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 61, 119, 298-329.

¹²³¹ Henry S. Olcott, *People from the Other World* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Company, 1875).

¹²³² This club never developed into much. See Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, p. 26; Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 81; Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 2; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 289; Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, p. 55; Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, p. 275; Algeo and others, 'Background Essay I, 218; *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, pp. 248-54; Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 25-26.

perceived mission (proving the truth in spiritualism).

The first instances, in which Blavatsky stated that she was a spiritualist, were in a couple of letters to Olcott between 31 October and 6 November 1874.

I speak to you as a true friend to yourself and (as a) Spiritualist anxious to save Spiritualism from danger.¹²³³

Shortly thereafter on 13 November (1874), the interview with Blavatsky in the *Daily Graphic*, mentioned above, was published stating that Blavatsky had proclaimed that in 1858 the well-known spiritualist Daniel Home had converted her to spiritualism.¹²³⁴ The same day (13 November 1874) the *Daily Graphic* also published an article by Blavatsky 'About Spiritualism' wherein Blavatsky spoke of her 'duty as a spiritualist.'¹²³⁵ The following day (14 November 1874) Blavatsky wrote to Aksakoff in Russia whom she had initiated a correspondence with after coming back from the Eddy's on 28 October (1874).¹²³⁶

I am a "spiritist" and "spiritualist" in the full significance of these two terms. ... I was a "materialist" till I was 30, and both believed and did not believe in spiritism. [...] I have now been a *spiritist* for more than 10 years, *and now all my life is devoted to this doctrine*. I am struggling for it, and try to consecrate to it every moment of my life.¹²³⁷

The next trace of Blavatsky's proclamations of being a spiritualist is in an article 'Madame Blavatsky: Her Experience—Her Opinion of American Spiritualism and American Society' written for *Spiritual Scientist*, 3 December 1874, in which Blavatsky narrates that she left her home and came to America because it was the land of her faith, i.e. spiritualism, and that she came to defend it.¹²³⁸ However, already in 1875 many nuances were added to her proclamations of being a spiritualist. In an important manuscript note found in her scrapbook (vol I, between pages 20-21, in Adyar) and written at an

¹²³³ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 9', p. 36. This letter was a summary by Olcott of letters he received from Blavatsky. The originals are lost.

¹²³⁴ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 10', p. 42.

¹²³⁵ HPB, 'About Spiritualism', in HPBCW, I, 43.

¹²³⁶ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 8', p. 33.

¹²³⁷ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 11', p. 45.

¹²³⁸ HPB, 'Madame Blavatsky: Her Experiences—Her Opinion of American Spiritualism and American Society', in HPBCW, I (1988), 46-49 (p. 47) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, I (1874), 148-9).

uncertain date in 1875, but prior to the founding of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky specified her private intentions for being involved with spiritualism.

I am sorry to say that I *had* to identify myself [...] with the Spiritualists. I had to save the situation, for I was sent from Paris on purpose to America to *prove* the phenomena and their reality and--show the fallacy of the Spiritualistic theories of "Spirits". But how could I do it best? I did not want people at large to know that I could *produce the same thing at will*. I had received ORDERS to the contrary, and yet, I had to keep alive the reality, the genuineness and *possibility* of such phenomena.

The world is not prepared yet to understand the philosophy of Occult Sciences [...] When I am dead and gone people will, perhaps, appreciate my disinterested motives. [...] Let them abuse and revile me. Let some call me a MEDIUM and a Spiritualist, and others an *impostor*. The day will come when posterity will learn to know me better.¹²³⁹

The date of this note might be placed around January or February 1875 as she wrote a historically important letter to Hiram Corson 16 February (1875), which included a discourse along the same lines, i.e. that she was sent to America on behalf of her lodge and that her belief in spiritualism was derived from the Western esoteric tradition that long antedated the Rochester Rappings.¹²⁴⁰ Outwardly, Blavatsky more casually continued to identify with the spiritualists in several letters by proclaiming 'we spiritualists',¹²⁴¹ but she also began to specify her own definition of spiritualism more openly as is exemplified in a letter to Aksakoff 12 April (1875):

since I have been in America I have devoted myself entirely to Spiritualism, not to the phenomenal, material side of it, but to spiritual

¹²³⁹ HPB, 'Important Note', in HPBCW, I (1988), 73 (source: manuscript note placed between pages 20-21 in Blavatsky's *Scrapbook*, vol 1, in the Adyar Archives).

¹²⁴⁰ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 21', p. 86.

¹²⁴¹ The 30 January 1875 Blavatsky states 'we spiritualists' in HPB, 'The Philadelphia "Fiasco," or Who is Who?', in HPBCW, I, 67-68. A letter to Lippitt 13 February 1875 also states 'we spiritualists', *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 20', p. 75; again in April 'we spiritualists' in HPB, 'Who Fabricates? Some Light on the Katie King Mystery—More Evidence—A Statement, at last, which seems consistent with circumstances—A Letter from Madame Blavatsky', in HPBCW, I, 82; see also the June article in HPB, 'To the Spiritualists of Boston', in HPBCW, I (1988), 91-93 (p. 93) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, II (1875), 183).

Spiritualism,...¹²⁴²

And she further specifies that she wanted to purify spiritualism, the new religion, of phenomena by collecting 'adepts' for this purpose.¹²⁴³ To Aksakoff she identified this more spiritual form of spiritualism with the theories of Davis and Kardec:

I have decided to devote myself to Spiritualism from the point of view of Andrew Jackson Davis and Allan Kardec ...¹²⁴⁴

However, in her letter to Corson she told him that she based her belief on something older and that Davis and Kardec were mere school boys compared to what is now termed the Western esoteric tradition.¹²⁴⁵

In her two occult articles from (July and October) 1875 she stated that she was a follower of Eastern spiritualism¹²⁴⁶ and that she was a heterodox spiritualist.¹²⁴⁷ After the founding of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky from time to time in various contexts defined herself as a spiritualist,¹²⁴⁸ but she also

¹²⁴² *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 37', p. 141.

¹²⁴³ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 37', pp. 141-42.

¹²⁴⁴ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 37', p. 142.

¹²⁴⁵ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 21', pp. 86-87.

¹²⁴⁶ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 110.

¹²⁴⁷ HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I (1988), 134-43 (p. 135) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, III (1875), 64-65). Blavatsky also wrote, in p. 140 of the same article, that 'I am myself a Spiritualist, if, as says Colonel Olcott, a firm belief in our souls immortality and the knowledge of a constant possibility for us to communicate with the spirits of our departed and loved ones, either thought honest, pure mediums, or by means of the Secret Science, constitutes a Spiritualist'. However, later Blavatsky altered this in her *Scrapbook*, to say that she was not a spiritualist, see *ibid* p. 140 the notes.

¹²⁴⁸ 8 Jan 1876 Blavatsky wrote to Corson: 'My dear Mr Corson, will you doubt me being a Spiritualist?'; 'I am a Spiritualist'; 'I *am* a true Spiritualist', *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 64', pp. 233-34. 19 Nov. 1877 Blavatsky wrote to W. H. Burr: 'Let us settle, once for all if you please, as to the word "Spiritualist." I am not one—not at least in the modern and American sense of the word. I am a Shwabhavika, a Buddhist Pantheist, if anything at all.' [...] 'Thus, as I do not believe what your Spiritualists teach, I am *not* a Spiritualist,' *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 97', pp. 370, 373. 26 Jan 1878 Blavatsky wrote to J. C. Bundy 'I am a *true, firm*, and if anything too *exalted Spiritualist*,' *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 107', p. 398. To P. C. Mitra, Blavatsky wrote the following 10 April 1878: '*I am a Spiritualist*, but of

later in other contexts denied ever having been a spiritualist in the mediumistic sense of the term.¹²⁴⁹ According to the sources available, Blavatsky did not discuss whether she was a spiritualist or not after her denials in late 1884 of Arthur Lillie's claim that she once was one.¹²⁵⁰ Blavatsky seems to have discussed the matter one final time in her explanatory book, *The Key to Theosophy* published in 1889, in the form of questions and answers.

ENQUIRER. But do you not believe in Spiritualism?

THEOSOPHIST [Blavatsky]. If by "Spiritualism" you mean the explanation which Spiritualists give of some abnormal phenomena, then decidedly *we do not*. ... But in *psychic*, and so to say, "Spiritual" Spiritualism we do believe, most decidedly.¹²⁵¹

This final confirmation of believing in spiritualism, or 'spiritual spiritualism', confirms that Blavatsky was open to the term in its broader sense, meaning that which is concerned with the spiritual or non-material, but dismissed the theories of modern spiritualism regarding communication with the deceased. However, apart from definitions, all of the above clearly demonstrates that Blavatsky was involved with spiritualism, yet she had her own more private reasons for this involvement. It does, however, not answer why and in what way. This will be discussed in the next sections.¹²⁵² Furthermore, one should not overlook the fact that besides from spiritualism, Blavatsky was involved in numerous other intellectual currents from an early

another sort, and I flatter myself of a little more philosophical sort.' in *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 110', p. 411.

¹²⁴⁹ See Blavatsky's articles in which she responds to Arthur Lillie's claims that she had been a spiritualist. Here Blavatsky perhaps incorrectly stated that she had never been a medium, a spiritualist and that she never really knew much about spiritualism in her early days in, HPB, 'Mr. A. Lillie's Delusions', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 269-80 (first publ. in *Light*, IV, 188 (1884), 323-24); HPB, 'Mr. Arthur Lillie', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 288-94 (first publ. in *Light*, IV, 197 (1884), 418-19); for more details on Arthur Lillie see, Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 249-53.

¹²⁵⁰ HPB, 'Mr. A. Lillie's Delusions', in HPBCW, VI, 269-80; HPB, 'Mr. Arthur Lillie', in HPBCW, VI, 288-94.

¹²⁵¹ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 27-28.

¹²⁵² Even though all this evidence shows that Blavatsky was involved in spiritualism, the circumstances of her involvement were much more nuanced, as will be demonstrated below.

date.¹²⁵³

2.5.2 Blavatsky's discourse and the context of occultism

The previous section (2.5.1) mapped and demonstrated Blavatsky's specific involvement in spiritualism and modern spiritualism, but it did not discuss her discourse related to spiritualism/modern spiritualism as well as why and how she was involved in spiritualism/modern spiritualism. In order to answer these questions this section will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse against modern spiritualism and the background on which this discourse was based. It will be shown that even though Blavatsky was involved in spiritualism/modern spiritualism, Blavatsky was also acquainted with occultism/esotericism from an early date and that it was especially this intellectual background that served as the foundation for her construction of spiritualism and her discourse against modern spiritualism and not *vice versa*. Even though Lavoie has recently argued that Blavatsky's occult and hermetic terminology was merely an epiphenomenon or a façade behind which Blavatsky was really a modern spiritualist,¹²⁵⁴ several scholars have argued that historically a 'new occultism' arose during the late nineteenth century, which was both historically (emic) and categorically (etic) distinct from 'modern spiritualism'.

In his classic study, *Access to Western esotericism*, Faivre noted that modern spiritualism is distinct from Western esotericism and does not belong to the category proper.¹²⁵⁵ Faivre also distinguished modern spiritualism from the current of modern occultism associated with the French occultist-magician Eliphas Levi (1810-1875).¹²⁵⁶ Hanegraaff has noted that modern occultism, including Blavatsky's Theosophy, only partly emerged from the spiritualist

¹²⁵³ More on this in the sections to come, see below.

¹²⁵⁴ Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, 26-28, 30, 34, 40-41, 45, 61, 71, 148, 169-72, 181, 192, 205, 214-15, 219, 256-57, 262-69.

¹²⁵⁵ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 87; Antoine Faivre, *Western Esotericism: A Concise History*, trans. by Christine Rhone (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010), p. 79; For a discussion of Faivre's stance, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism in the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 354.

¹²⁵⁶ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, p. 88; Faivre, *Western Esotericism*, pp. 79-80.

movement,¹²⁵⁷ but he also includes spiritualism/modern spiritualism in his *etic* category of ‘occultism’, because both movements have roots in Western esoteric traditions and because both can be regarded as esotericisms transformed by nineteenth-century secularism.¹²⁵⁸ Patrick Deveney and Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke have both emphasised that while the two currents were historically related, modern spiritualism (defined in terms of communication with the dead) is a much more simplistic current in terms of its simple reliance on ideas from older esoteric traditions and cosmology than modern occultism or esotericism which were more heavily steeped in older traditions.¹²⁵⁹ Finally, Alex Owen has noted that the ‘new occultism’ that arose during the late nineteenth century ‘In certain respects [...] represented a somewhat elitist counterpoint to the hugely successful Victorian spiritualist movement that had preceded it.’¹²⁶⁰ In short, we have to be careful to accurately distinguish the two movements from each other even though they were historically interconnected.

Among the important differences between the ‘new occultism’ and the Victorian spiritualist movement is the emphasis, which the occultists placed on the importance of ancient secret teachings as the source of true knowledge, since this stands in contrast to the essentially democratic practice of the mediums.¹²⁶¹ Another important difference is that occultists emphasised discipline, initiation and learning, which stands in contrast to the more unreliable dependence on mediumistic “gifts.”¹²⁶² While both currents sought to access the spiritual universe, the occultists saw self-empowerment and self-control as the

¹²⁵⁷ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 441, 442, 449-50, 452.

¹²⁵⁸ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 422, 423, see also 441, 442, 449-50, 452; see also Hanegraaff, *Esotericism in the Academy*, p. 282 n86.

¹²⁵⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 188; Deveney, ‘Spiritualism’, pp. 1074, 1077-78.

¹²⁶⁰ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 5, see also pp. 1-5, 19-20.

¹²⁶¹ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, p. 5.

¹²⁶² Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, p. 5. Though, budding mediums could enter certain ‘developing circles’ to ‘learn’ skills in spiritual communion, but the skills learnt here were rather practical than consciousness transforming.

way—rather than spirits of the dead.¹²⁶³ It is this ‘new occultism’ that Blavatsky was central and instrumental in constructing.

2.5.2.1 Spiritualism and its relation to magic and occultism¹²⁶⁴

Occultism is the essence of Spiritualism, while modern or popular Spiritualism I cannot better characterize than as adulterated, unconscious magic [8 February 1878].¹²⁶⁵

The Fox sisters initiated modern spiritualism in 1848 but that, which is now defined as ‘Western esotericism’ or ‘the Western Esoteric Traditions’, is vastly older.¹²⁶⁶ Later in Blavatsky’s life, she was no doubt steeped in esoteric traditions, but evidence also suggests that already from an early point in her life, she was drawn to the study of these older Western esoteric traditions. If this is the case, it would be inaccurate to infer that her knowledge of esoteric traditions were later interpolations. As a child, Blavatsky for example read works related to Western esoteric traditions in the large library of her grandmother’s father, Prince Paul Vassilyevich Dolgoroukov (1755-1837)

You have perhaps heard [...] that my great grandfather on my mother’s side, Prince Paul Vasilyevitch Dolgorouki, had a strange library containing hundreds of books on alchemy, magic and other occult sciences. I had read them with the keenest interest before the age of 15. [...] soon neither Paracelsus, Kunrath nor C. Agrippa would have had nothing to teach me.¹²⁶⁷

This quote indicates that Blavatsky from an early age was exposed to

¹²⁶³ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 5, 14, 20.

¹²⁶⁴ In Blavatsky’s first articles and in H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877) the two words (‘occultism’ and ‘magic’) are deeply associated with each other and often used synonymously.

¹²⁶⁵ HPB, ‘Madame Blavatsky on the views of the Theosophists’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 290-300 (p. 295) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, III (1875), 64-65) [italic style is mine].

¹²⁶⁶ See Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism in the Academy*, and others.

¹²⁶⁷ *H. P. B. Speaks: Letters written by H. P. Blavatsky from 1875 onwards, H. P. B.’s Diary for 1878 and some extracts from Scrapbook No. 1*, ed. by C. Jinarājadāsa, 2 vols (Adyar, Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1986), II, 62-63; see also Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 241; HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiraḥ’, in HPBCW, I, 107; see also *The Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 69’, p. 260 in which she states that ‘I have devoted my whole life to the study of the ancient Kabbalah and occultism, the “occult sciences.”’

some of the most prominent names in the history of Western esotericism, especially from those on the northern side of the Alps.¹²⁶⁸ It is quite plausible that Prince Paul Vassilyevich Dolgorukov possessed such a library, because as Paul Johnson has demonstrated, Dolgorukov belonged to the ‘Rite of Strict Observance’, founded in Germany by Baron von Hund around 1754 and had been initiated into Rosicrucian Freemasonry at the end of the 1770s.¹²⁶⁹ Johnson also explains that the rite in Russia adopted higher degrees, which included the study of Kabbalah, magic and alchemy.¹²⁷⁰ Johnson’s conclusion is that ‘Several themes in HPB’s adult life can be traced to her exposure to the books in Prince Pavel’s library’ and that ‘Her fascination with alchemy, magic, and the occult sciences was only part of the profound impact of the hours spent poring over his hundreds of books.’¹²⁷¹ K. Paul Johnson and Joscelyn Godwin have also convincingly shown that among the many esoteric traditions and secret societies, which Blavatsky became acquainted with during her many travels before settling in America in 1873, were the teachings of the Druzes of Lebanon, Freemasonry, magic, Kabbalah and the occult sciences (and several native religious traditions in the near and far orient, Russia and the Americas).¹²⁷²

Blavatsky’s involvement in such esoteric traditions was in fact so extensive that Godwin concluded, ‘Everywhere she was involved with Freemasonry, Oriental secret societies, occult fraternities, and with the spiritualists who constituted, as it were, the exoteric “church” from which doors opened to the more esoteric circles.’¹²⁷³

¹²⁶⁸ It appears that Blavatsky’s reception of ‘Western esotericism’ was primarily mediated through the Germanic and French branches, as there are only few indications of acquaintance with Marsilio Ficino and Pico Della Mirandola in her writings.

¹²⁶⁹ Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, p. 20; Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, pp. 2-3; Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopædia of Freemasonry*, 2 vols (London: William Rider and Son, Limited, 1922), II, 19.

¹²⁷⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 3.

¹²⁷¹ Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, p. 2.

¹²⁷² See Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, pp. 4-15, 19-22, 23-24, 31-32, 47-51; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 280-306; *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 131.

¹²⁷³ Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 281. For further details on

Blavatsky was also one of the first to introduce the ideas and concepts of Eliphas Levi to the English-speaking world. Already in 1872, Blavatsky used his terminology such as 'astral light', and among her early articles (November 1875) is a translation of a part of Eliphas Levi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (1855-56) entitled 'The Magical Evocation of Apollonius of Tyana'.¹²⁷⁴ As early as 1874, Blavatsky also used other terminology from the Western esoteric traditions in her letters, such as 'astral body' to explain the phenomena of the spiritualists.¹²⁷⁵

Given the above context, one would expect that Blavatsky's acquaintance with the literature of the Western esoteric traditions—from her early youth and her first-hand experiences among freemasons, magicians, kabbalists and other esoteric teachers already prior to coming to America—would be reflected in her early construction of modern or American spiritualism and her discourse against it.

Blavatsky's early interest in esoteric traditions see Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Coming of the Masters: The Evolutionary Reformulation of Spiritual Intermediaries in Modern Theosophy', in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, ed. by Andreas B. Kilcher, Aries Book Series, 11, 113-60 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 115-27; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 'The Theosophical Society, Orientalism, and the "Mystic East": Western Esotericism and Eastern Religion in Theosophy', *Theosophical History: A Quarterly Journal of Research*, XIII, 3, (July 2007), 3-28 (pp. 3-5).

¹²⁷⁴ See *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 5', p. 20; see also *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 60', pp. 213-14, here Blavatsky states that 'All phenomena are produced by currents of the astral light or the ether of the chemists'; see also below (note 1299); 'The Magical Evocation of Apollonius of Tyana: A chapter from Eliphas Levi', trans. and comments by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, in *HPBCW*, I (1988), 144-150 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, III (1875), 104-5).

¹²⁷⁵ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 13', p. 54; for more information on subtle bodies and its terminology in the Western tradition see G. R. S. Mead, *The Doctrine of The Subtle Body in Western Tradition: An Outline of what the Philosophers Thought and Christians Taught on the Subject* (London: J. M. Watkins, 1919).

2.5.2.2. Blavatsky's construction of spiritualism in the light of magic/occultism

This section will demonstrate that Blavatsky's construction of spiritualism was based on her background in and knowledge of various esoteric traditions. Blavatsky in fact, as will be demonstrated, continued to argue that spiritualism has a deep relation to occultism/magic.

In early 1875, only months after first becoming actively involved in spiritualism, Blavatsky found it necessary to write to Hiram Corson, 16 February 1875 that she had been sent by her occult lodge to America to defend the '*Truth in modern Spiritualism*', but more significantly that her own belief 'is based, on something older than the Rochester Knockings, and springs from the same source of information, that was used by Raymond Lully, Picus of Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd Henry More etc etc.'¹²⁷⁶ Here her occult discourse stands out clearly for the first time and interestingly enough, Blavatsky already identifies this 'source of information' with the word 'Theosophy'.¹²⁷⁷ In the same letter Blavatsky, finally, states that the cabala 'with its *ten Sephiroths* or Emanations goes more towards opening your eyes than all the hypothetic teachings of the leaders of Spiritualism.'¹²⁷⁸ This, according to Blavatsky, even includes the most elaborate spiritualistic philosophies formulated by such spiritual pioneers as Allan Kardec (1804-1869), Nicholas Camille Flammarion (1842/3-1925), Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910), and John W. Edmonds (1799-1874) who according to Blavatsky 'are but school boys just trying to spell their *A B. C.*' when compared to the cabala.¹²⁷⁹ This indicates that at this early point of her career as a writer Blavatsky regarded these traditions as far more advanced than modern spiritualism. If the letter to Corson is read in conjunction with Blavatsky's 'Important Note',¹²⁸⁰ presumably written during the same time, it indicates that Blavatsky saw her own role in

¹²⁷⁶ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 21', p. 86. As noted in chapter 2.1. of the present thesis, Blavatsky took part of her letter directly from Christian D. Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and literature: An Essay* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1865), p. 1.

¹²⁷⁷ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 21', p. 86.

¹²⁷⁸ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 21', p. 86.

¹²⁷⁹ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 21', p. 87.

¹²⁸⁰ HPB, 'Important Note', in HPBCW, I, 73.

modern spiritualism as part of a mission to correct it in the light of the Western esoteric traditions or occultism.

In the 'Important Note', Blavatsky also indicates that she did not believe that the world 'is prepared yet to understand the philosophy of Occult sciences', and she indicates that spiritualism could be used to first assure people that 'there are beings in an invisible world, whether "spirits" of the dead or *Elementals*.'¹²⁸¹ In other words, as Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke has also observed, Blavatsky seems to have used modern spiritualism as a tool with which she could fight off materialism and prove the existence of spirits or a spiritual world.¹²⁸²

The most noteworthy aspect of Blavatsky's discourse particularly related to spiritualism, as it emerged in Blavatsky's writings from 1875 onwards, is the notion that magic or occultism is the historical and philosophical predecessor of spiritualism. Many modern spiritualists did not regard 'modern spiritualism' as a successor of anything, but rather as a 'new dispensation.'¹²⁸³ However already in July 1875, Blavatsky wrote the following about the relationship between spiritualism and occultism in her first major article 'A Few Questions to HIRAF'

how can we hope that Occultism, or Magic, which stands in relation to Spiritualism as the Infinite to the Finite, as the cause to the effect, or as unity to multifariousness, how can we hope, I say, that it will easily gain ground where Spiritualism is scoffed at?¹²⁸⁴

Here, one first notices Blavatsky's frustration over her contemporary intellectual climate and its resistance to occultism, as this was her more or less secret belief-system, but the quote also reveals how Blavatsky evidently perceived occultism or magic as superior to spiritualism/modern spiritualism. In the same article, Blavatsky elaborated this perspective further by stating that

¹²⁸¹ HPB, 'Important Note', in HPBCW, I, 73.

¹²⁸² Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 214; HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 117.

¹²⁸³ Edward S. Cutler, *Recovering the New: Transatlantic Roots of Modernism* (Hanover: University of New Hampshire Press, 2003), pp. 46-47; McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past*, p. 14; Owen, *The Darkened Room*, p. 27.

¹²⁸⁴ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 101-102.

‘the first parent of spiritualism was occultism’¹²⁸⁵ and that spiritualism is nothing but a baby of this older and more comprehensive science.¹²⁸⁶ This might seem to be a critique of modern spirituality, but this was not Blavatsky intention. At this point, Blavatsky saw spiritualism in the universal sense of the term, as the purest child of ancient magic¹²⁸⁷ and wanted to redefine or expand the frame in which spiritualism and spiritualistic phenomena were understood in modern times. Ann Braude has noted that many spiritualists did not share this novel view that spiritualism/modern spiritualism was connected to occultism, as they generally thought of spiritualism/modern spiritualism as something modern and scientific—contrary to the mysterious and superstitious which many, due to heavy Enlightenment discourse, associated with the terms occult and magic at the time.¹²⁸⁸

Luther Colby (1814-1894), the editor of the major spiritualist journal the *Banner of Light* (1857-1907), was for example highly critical of this new association of occultism and spiritualism, which, he felt, was being pushed forward by Blavatsky and claimed in the *Banner of Light* that there never existed such a thing as magic.¹²⁸⁹

Blavatsky’s second major article on magic and occultism entitled ‘The Science of Magic: Proofs of its existence—Mediums in ancient times, ETC., ETC.’ (October 1875) was a defensive response to Colby’s claim. In discussing the rich history of magic, from Homer to Hermes and from Albertus Magnus (1193/1206-1280) to Heinrich Khunrath (ca. 1560-1605),¹²⁹⁰ Blavatsky provocatively continued her discourse of the association between ancient magic and spiritualism—deeply related to her discourse of ancient knowledge—that modern spirituality and modern spiritualism in fact are nothing but the re-

¹²⁸⁵ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I, 114.

¹²⁸⁶ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I, 117.

¹²⁸⁷ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I, 118.

¹²⁸⁸ Braude, *Radical Spirits*, pp. 177-79; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism in the Academy*, pp. 152-90.

¹²⁸⁹ Braude, *Radical Spirits*, pp. 177-79.

¹²⁹⁰ HPB, ‘The Science of Magic’, in HPBCW, I, 139.

emergence of the magic of the ancients.¹²⁹¹ The sub-title of Blavatsky's article strongly indicates her particular historical approach: 'Proofs of its Existence—Mediums in Ancient Times, ETC., ETC.'. Blavatsky's interest in and construction of spiritualism was thus also centred on the history of spiritualism and occultism and her overall discourse of ancient knowledge.¹²⁹²

This historical approach to spiritualism is an important aspect of the debate that arose from the founding of the Theosophical Society in the fall of

¹²⁹¹ HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I, 139.

¹²⁹² Blavatsky's and Olcott's historical knowledge and approach owed much to the works of Joseph Ennemoser and William Howitt who wrote on the history of magic, the occult and spiritualism, see Joseph Ennemoser, *Geschichte des thierischen Magnetismus: Geschichte der Magie* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1844), or the English translation Joseph Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, trans. by Wm. Howitt, 2 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854); see also Wm. Howitt *History of the Supernatural*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Green, Roberts and Green, 1863); see HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 108; HPB, 'The Science of Magic' in HPBCW, I, 139; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 26, 52, 171, 264; H. S. Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society', delivered 17 November 1875, <www.theosophical.ca/adyar_pamphlets/AdyarPamphlet_No150.pdf> [accessed on 13 January 2011]; Not much work, however, existed on the history of spiritualism at this point. In addition to Ennemoser and Howitt there was George W. Samson's, *Spiritualism Tested, or, the facts of its History Classified: and their Cause in Nature Verified from Ancient and Modern Testimonies* (Boston, MA: Gould and Lincoln, 1960). Emma Hardinge Britten later, in 1876, shared Blavatsky's and Olcott's historical interest, see [Emma Hardinge Britten], *Art Magic; or, Mundane, Sub-mundane and Super-mundane Spiritism* (New York: published by the author, 1876), or the new revised edition Emma Hardinge Britten, *Art Magic*, ed. and ann. by Marc Demarest (Oregon: The Typhon Press, 2011). Blavatsky's historical interest in spiritualism appeared for the first time in December 1874 when in a letter to the Russian spiritualist A. N. Aksakoff, Blavatsky wrote: 'The most eminent Spiritualists, such as Robert Dale Owen, Dr. Child, and others have written me letters, and the editors of the largest publishing company in America, here at Hartford, have written me asking me to get together a volume of letters concerning different phases of Spiritualism'—nothing ever came of this project, see John Algeo and others, 'The Writing and Publication of *Isis Unveiled*', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 330.

1875 and particularly from Olcott's 'Inaugural Address'.¹²⁹³

In the 'Inaugural Address', Olcott connected the existence of true spiritualism with the days of Emperor Flavius Julius Valens Augustus (328-378 CE) and the practice of theurgy.¹²⁹⁴ Olcott similarly stated in relation to mesmerism that

The mesmeric phenomena, which will of necessity invite us to careful study, were known in the most remote periods, and are described by Seneca, Martial, Plautus, and Pausanias.¹²⁹⁵

This clearly marked Olcott's and the Theosophical Society's new historical focus, but the spiritualist, Blavatsky's friend, Hiram Corson soon commented critically on the 'Preamble of the Theosophical Society' and particularly on Olcott's 'Inaugural Address' in a letter addressed to the editor of the *Banner of Light* who published it in the *Banner* (50, 2 (8 January 1876)).¹²⁹⁶

Corson greatly valued the emphasis which the modern spiritualist movement placed on practicing the modern ideals of individual freedom, individual inspiration and individual beliefs and therefore voiced profound dislike of the new Theosophical ideal of ancient knowledge, which to him signified tradition and authority. Corson did not perceive the ancients as superior and was not interested in any new religious authority and generally disliked the idea of only being able to acquire true knowledge through elitist initiation practices

¹²⁹³ See Algeo and others, 'Background Essay I, pp. 222-29; Algeo and others, 'Background Essay J: Further Controversy over the Inaugural Address', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [complete number of volumes not yet published] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 238-45. It is also worth noting that one of the first lectures delivered to the Theosophical Society, by Charles Sotheran was entitled 'Ancient Theosophy; or Spiritism in the Past' (1 December 1875), for further details see Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', p. 474.

¹²⁹⁴ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address'; for further details on ancient theurgy see Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the late Roman Empire*, 3rd edn (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Brepolis Publishers, 2011); Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), pp. 1-46.

¹²⁹⁵ Olcott, 'Inaugural Address'.

¹²⁹⁶ See Algeo and others, 'Background Essay I', pp. 222-29.

and organizations. Furthermore, Corson argued, if the ancients had really had some knowledge of a superior nature, as the Theosophists now claimed, this would have to stand the test of modern procedures for valid knowledge like everything else. Corson also found that the two documents were pretentious, because they talked too much about what they would do rather than what they have proved and done.¹²⁹⁷

Olcott defended his views, which no doubt were heavily influenced by Blavatsky, in a letter to the *Banner* specifying his views in nine articles of faith, while Blavatsky wrote a personal letter to her friend Corson trying to tone down any future controversy. Olcott and Blavatsky, however, maintained the new Theosophical discourse that spiritualism (including modern spiritualism) is nothing but a new manifestation of ancient magic.

Olcott's seventh article of faith expressed in his reply to the *Banner of Light* (38, 1 (22 January)) specifically stated:

I regard Mesmerism and Spiritualism as portions of a broader and a demonstrable science—that of Magic. This science was known to the ancient[s], has been practiced for countless ages, and is now practiced, in the Orient.¹²⁹⁸

Blavatsky's reconciliatory letter to Corson still, yet in a more positive tone, connected spiritualism to ancient magic and provided new details.

White or Sacred Magic of the Theurgists is Spiritualism in its most *sublime, pure state*. [...] for us Occultists, Spiritualism is the most sacred belief, that can be given to humanity, and [...] we consider the communication between disembodied Spirits and ourselves such a mysterious sacred affair as not to contaminate it through such channels as most mediums are. Iamblichus, Porphyry, Plutarch Apollonius, and all the Neo Platonists wrote hundreds of volumes, on the difference existing between bad demons or Elementaries, and good demons or the souls of the departed.¹²⁹⁹

¹²⁹⁷ Algeo and others, 'Background Essay I', p. 228.

¹²⁹⁸ John Algeo and others, 'Introduction to Letter 64', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo, and others, 1 vols [complete number of volumes not yet published] (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 230.

¹²⁹⁹ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 64', p. 236.

In this historically important letter, Blavatsky clearly constructs modern spiritualism in its most spiritual aspect as identical with the theurgy of the ancients. In relation to this, it is interesting to note that Blavatsky often correlated modern mediumistic spiritualism with necromancy.¹³⁰⁰ Spiritualism was thus clearly understood and viewed through the lens of ancient magic and the Neo-Platonist tradition. It has also been shown previously in the present thesis, that Neo-Platonism was central to the founding of the Theosophical Society and to Blavatsky's first major conceptualization of Theosophy.¹³⁰¹ Blavatsky had already a month prior to her letter to Corson, written to Aksakoff (6 December 1875) about Plutarch (ca. 46-120 CE), the high priest of the temple of Apollo, Hermes Trismegistus and others in relation to spiritualism¹³⁰² and stated:

It is possible to understand the phenomena of the present day only by studying the ancient theurgists such as Iamblichus, Porphyry, Plotinus, and others.¹³⁰³

Blavatsky thus constructed spiritualism in this sense during 1875 and did her utmost from the beginning of her career as a writer to spread and negotiate this historically founded view of spiritualism/modern spiritualism.

Blavatsky's first major work *Isis Unveiled* (1877) continued this discourse by more extensively reading the phenomena associated with spiritualism into the intellectual context of magic and Hermeticism in order to prove their reality.¹³⁰⁴

No other claim is advanced for a hearing of the opinions contained in the present work than that they are based upon many years study of both ancient magic and its modern form, Spiritualism. The former, even now, when phenomena of the same nature have become so

¹³⁰⁰ HPB, 'Madame Blavatsky on Indian Metaphysics', in HPBCW, I (1988), 325-37 (p. 329) (first publ. in *The Spiritualist* (March 22 1878), 140-41); Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 307; Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 307.

¹³⁰¹ See chapter 2.1 in the present thesis.

¹³⁰² *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 60', pp. 213-14.

¹³⁰³ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 60', p. 214.

¹³⁰⁴ This was one of the major themes of the first volume of Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*.

familiar to all, is commonly set down as clever jugglery. The latter, when overwhelming evidence precludes the possibility of truthfully declaring it charlatany, is denominated an universal hallucination.¹³⁰⁵

A few later articles such as 'Magic' (1879) and 'The Drift of Western Spiritualism' (1879) also continued this historical discourse¹³⁰⁶ Hereafter Blavatsky did not discuss the relation between occultism or magic to any greater extent,¹³⁰⁷ which indicates that the synthesis Blavatsky sought for of the two currents, prevalent during the period 1875-1885, was part of her own process of harmonising or making sense of the two currents she had become acquainted with and defining her own stance which was instrumental to the new occultism of the late nineteenth century.

2.5.2.3 Blavatsky's critique of modern spiritualism

Blavatsky's critique of modern mainstream spiritualism was largely based on her reading of Western esoteric traditions, and particularly the works of Eliphas Levi. Since Blavatsky was already acquainted with esotericism when she joined the spiritualist movement in the United States during the eighteen-seventies, traces of her critique are already present at an earlier stage of her thought. To begin with, her critique centred on understanding spiritualism and constructing it in a meaningful relation to magic as shown above. Later, and as her critique of mediumistic spiritualism grew, it largely became a means of constructing meaning and negotiating the distinctive identity of Theosophy and the new occultism. This is clearly seen around the founding of the Theosophical Society and the debate that arose thereafter¹³⁰⁸

Some aspects of Blavatsky's critique of spiritualism was shared by other spiritualists at the time—especially the dislike of the theatrical sensationalism

¹³⁰⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 42.

¹³⁰⁶ HPB, 'Magic', in HPBCW, II (1967), 31-39, (first publ. in *The Dekkan Star*, March, 1879); HPB, 'The Drift of Western Spiritualism', in HPBCW, II (1967), 107-110 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 7-8).

¹³⁰⁷ It should however be noted that Blavatsky did still regard Theosophy as *pure* spiritualism till her last days, see Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 307. *The Theosophical Glossary* was Blavatsky's last contribution to Theosophical literature.

¹³⁰⁸ See Algeo and others, 'Background Essay I' pp. 218-29; Algeo and others, 'Background Essay J', pp. 238-45.

associated with test mediums, the widespread fraud and trickery and the materialistic focus on phenomena¹³⁰⁹—while other more unique aspects of her critique, such as the explanations of spiritualistic phenomena and the dangers of mediums and séances, drew directly from her interest in esotericism.

Before discussing her particular points of critique, it is historically relevant to show that textual evidence demonstrates that Blavatsky, as early as her days in Cairo in the early eighteen-seventies (March or early April 1872), already disputed the current spiritualistic explanations of the communications with the dead. Blavatsky wrote in a personal letter to her relatives that

Their [the mediums' or spiritualists'] spirits are no spirits, but spooks—rags, the cast off second skins of their personalities that the dead shed in the astral light as serpents shed theirs on earth, leaving no connection between the new reptile and his previous garments.

They know no better and it does me no harm—for I will very soon show them the difference between a passive medium and an active *doer*.¹³¹⁰

This early critique, of what Blavatsky observed among the Cairo mediums, contains several significant elements that for the rest of her life became central to Blavatsky's view and critique of modern spiritualism and thereby became ingrained in the identity of the Theosophical Movement and the associated new occultist movements. First of all, it is relevant to note Blavatsky's use of the term 'astral light', as a part of her explanation of the spirits of the modern spiritualists because this term, as mentioned earlier, was derived from Eliphas Levi.¹³¹¹ In other words, in 1872 Blavatsky was already

¹³⁰⁹ Andrew Davis Jackson was the first American spiritualist to criticise many "sensationalistic" spiritualists in order to distinguish this form of spiritualism from his own system. It should, however, be noted that he also criticised Blavatsky's stance as "magical spiritualism", see Braude, *Radical Spirits*, p. 181.

¹³¹⁰ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 5', p. 20.

¹³¹¹ Eliphas Levi's 'astral light' builds on other older concepts such as the 'sidereal light' and 'archaeus' of Paracelsus and Anton Mesmer's 'invisible fluid.' The concept served many functions, but generally referred to a universal agent that mediates all things, has magnetic properties and is the vehicle of all ideas or forms. For the 'astral light', see Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic, Its Doctrine and Ritual*, trans. by A. E. Waite (London: William Rider & Son Limited, 1923 [1855-1856]), pp. 15, 52, 67, 69, 82, 84, 90, 92, 93, 95, 106, 108, 135, 138, 139, 149, 175, 182, 184, 185,

criticising spiritualism based on her knowledge of French occultism. The second idea derived from the magical tradition is that there is a vital difference between a passive medium—through which a spirit communicates—and an ‘adept’ who actively and wilfully directs or controls the spirit instead of being controlled by it.¹³¹² The modern spiritualist idea—that it was the spirit or soul of the recently deceased who communicated through the medium—was also criticised as Blavatsky found that it was rather the cast off personalities who communicated (i.e. the elements of the deceased that cannot follow the soul of the deceased to higher spiritual realms, but is left behind in the lower spheres to disintegrate).

After her move to New York the following year (1873) for the sake of *Truth* in spiritualism/modern spiritualism¹³¹³ and after close observation for a year Blavatsky soon again wrote critically to her relatives conveying what she had seen

The more I see of Spiritualistic *séances* in this cradle and hotbed of Spiritualism and mediums, the more clearly I realize how dangerous they are for humanity.¹³¹⁴

The dangers, Blavatsky perceived, were mainly that the spirits were for the most part not really the spirits of the recently deceased, but left-overs (elementaries) or tricky nature spirits (elementals) that would feed off the mediums and drain their vitality and health. In the same critical letter Blavatsky further specified some of the dangers,

For these are only such earthly dregs, irresistibly pulled, as they are, towards the earth, that could not follow the liberated soul and spirit, the higher principles of man’s being, and are left for a second death in the terrestrial atmosphere. I have often observed with repugnance how such a revived shade separated itself from within the medium; how, oozing out of his astral body, it took a stranger’s integument and impersonated some other *dear one*, moving them to rapture, making them open their

189, 237, 272, 302, 303, 304, 345, 452; see also Christopher McIntosh, *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival* (London: Rider and Company, 1972), pp. 149-50; Thomas A. Williams, *Eliphas Levi: Master of Occultism* ([Tuscaloosa], AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), pp. 100-103; Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 38.

¹³¹² For further details on the ‘adept’, see below.

¹³¹³ *The Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 21’, p. 86.

¹³¹⁴ *The Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 13’, p. 52.

hearts and embraces wide to these shades, which they sincerely mistook for their beloved fathers and brothers, resuscitated to convince them of life eternal and of their eventual meeting. ... If only they knew the truth! If only they could believe it! ... If only they could see what I have often seen, how an ugly, bodiless creature pounces at times upon one of those present at these Spiritualistic enchantments. It envelops the man as if in a dark pall and slowly disappears within him, as if sucked into his body through every living pore.¹³¹⁵

Not long after observing these dangers and what she believed to be the ignorance prevailing in modern spiritualism, Blavatsky wrote a letter to her friend general Lippitt (30 January 1875) in which she indicates that spiritualism/modern spiritualism must be reformed, so as to eliminate all the distortions now prevailing in its theories.¹³¹⁶ This wish to reform modern spiritualism was thus a mission Blavatsky felt called to or was sent to accomplish at an early point and ultimately resulted in the emergence of the 'new occultism'.

The critical ideas outlined here, which already fluctuated in Blavatsky's mind prior to her first major articles and prior to the founding of The Theosophical Society, were developed further throughout Blavatsky's writings in an effort to reform modern spiritualism and define occultism, as will be explored in the following sub-sections.

2.5.2.3.1 Learning: Critique of the modern spiritualist theories of spirits

Alex Owen has observed that the 'new occultism' was characterised by 'learning', which stood in contrast to the reliance on 'mediumistic gifts.'¹³¹⁷ This observation is reflected in and was developed by Blavatsky's discourse against spiritualism. According to Blavatsky the common notion among modern

¹³¹⁵ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 13', pp. 53-54.

¹³¹⁶ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 14', p. 59, 'The time is close, my dear General, when Spiritualism must be cleansed of its erroneous misinterpretations, superstitions, and ignorant notions, all of which only make sceptics and unbelievers laugh at us.'; see also *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 37', pp. 141-42. It should also be noted that Blavatsky's sister Vera expressed in her comments to the very early 'Letter 5', fragment b (March or April 1872), that first Blavatsky would give room for already established theories in her spiritualistic demonstrations and only when these had failed, she would give her own explanations, *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 5', p. 21.

¹³¹⁷ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, p. 5.

spiritualists, that it is the spirits of the recently deceased that mediums communicate with during the séances, is based on ignorance and is far too simple compared to the knowledge of spirits possessed by proponents of Western esotericism (including Eliphas Levi and Neo-Platonism) and several Eastern philosophies.¹³¹⁸ Blavatsky often throughout her works pointed to the existence of a much greater knowledge of spirits among the ancients and the Hermetic philosophers and pointed to the special significance the spirits of the four elements (earth, air, water and fire) had for spiritualistic practice or communication with the dead. The notion of beings inhabiting the four elements has roots in antiquity, but were introduced to the early modern esoteric tradition by Paracelsus (1493-1541) in the sixteenth century¹³¹⁹ and popularised by the literary piece *Comte de Gabalis* first published in 1670, which was later attributed to the French clergyman Abbé N. de Montfaucon de Villars (1635-1873/75).¹³²⁰ The four groups of beings, known in the Western esoteric traditions as gnomes (earth), sylphs (air), undines (water) and salamanders (fire), were revived by Eliphas Levi in the nineteenth century from whom Blavatsky picked them up.¹³²¹ Blavatsky generally termed these four groups of

¹³¹⁸ HPB, 'Elementals', in HPBCW, VI (2nd edn 1975), 184-85 (pp. 187-201) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, XII, 72, (1893), 537-48; XIII, 73-74, (1893), 30-39 and 111-21); see also HPB, 'Kabalistic Views on "Spirits" as Propagated by the Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I (1988), 283-89 (first publ. in *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, 23 (1878), 2).

¹³¹⁹ See Paracelsus [Theophrastus von Hohenheim], *A Book on Nymphs, Sylphs, Pygmies, and Salamanders, and on the other Spirits*, in *Four Treatises together with Selected Writings by Paracelsus*, trans. and ed. by Henry E. Sigerist, 215-253 (Birmingham: The Classics of Medicine Library, 1988); *Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus Von Hohenheim, 1493-1541): Essential Theoretical Writings* trans and ed. by Andrew Weeks (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 2, 23, 283, 406, 830; Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), pp. 88-91; see also Jean-Pierre Brach, 'Intermediary Beings III: Renaissance', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols, 623-628 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 626-27.

¹³²⁰ For the most complete edition, see Mondfaucon de Villars, *Le Comte de Gabalis, Ou Entretiens Sur Les Sciences Secrètes*, 2 vols (Londres: Fr. Vaillant, 1742 [1670]); see also Brach, 'Intermediary Beings III: Renaissance', p. 626.

¹³²¹ See Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, 74, 77, 84, 281, 285, 286, 288; Williams, *Eliphas Levi*, p. 103; HPB, 'Kabalistic Views on "Spirits" as

elemental spirits 'elementals'¹³²² and even though it is the most common term for these beings today, Blavatsky might in fact have been the one who constructed this particular term (or variant of the older terms).

Blavatsky's first textual use of the notion of 'elementals' was in a personal letter to her relatives (unknown date in 1874).¹³²³ The second time was in her 'Important Note', which, as conjectured earlier, is likely to have a date somewhere in January or February of 1875.¹³²⁴ The idea of elementals or the 'elementary spirits' as they were earlier called was used a few times by Blavatsky in her articles from 1875 to 1877.¹³²⁵ Blavatsky was thus instrumental in introducing the term to the spiritualist milieu,¹³²⁶ but it was not until 1877 and 1878 in a few important articles such as "'Elementaries'" (17 November 1877) and 'Kabalistic Views on "Spirits" as Propagated by The Theosophical Society' (26 January 1878)¹³²⁷ and in her first major work *Isis Unveiled* (29 September 1877) that Blavatsky offered a fuller definition of the concepts. In *Isis Unveiled*,

Propagated by the Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I, 283-289; Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 112.

¹³²² See Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, pp. 111-12.

¹³²³ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 13', p. 53.

¹³²⁴ HPB, 'Important Note', in HPBCW, I, 73.

¹³²⁵ See HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 112; HPB, 'The Science of Magic', in HPBCW, I, 135.

¹³²⁶ Blavatsky however also acknowledges similar concepts to the elementals, elementaries or elemental spirits in the works of other spiritualists, such as P. B. Randolph and A. J. Davis, see HPB, "'Elementaries": A letter from the Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I (1988), 265-71 (p. 269) (first publ. in *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, 23 (1877)); for more on Randolph's use and his teachings and their relationship to Blavatsky's see John Patrick Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian, and Sex Magician* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), pp. 36, 44, 96, 121-22, 263-64, 273, 274, 275, 441, 518; for further details on Davis's Diakka, see Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Harmonial Philosophy*, ed. by a Doctor of Hermetic Science [A. E. Waite] (London: William Rider & Son, LTD., 1917), pp. 184-87. It should also be noted that spiritualist/occultist Emma H. Britten also discussed these spiritual intermediaries, see Britten, *Art Magic*, ed. and ann. by Marc Demarest, pp. 323-42; Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph*, p. 428 n26.

¹³²⁷ HPB, "'Elementaries'", in HPBCW, I; HPB, 'Kabalistic Views on "Spirits" as Propagated by the Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I; see also HPB, 'Madame Blavatsky on Indian Metaphysics', p. 328.

Blavatsky added a vocabulary appended to the introduction ('Before the Veil'), in which she defined 'Elemental Spirits' and 'Elementary Spirits' and a chapter has the title 'The Elements, Elementals, and Elementaries'.¹³²⁸

In the introductory vocabulary Blavatsky defines the 'Elemental Spirits' or 'elementals' in terms of the four classic groups belonging to the four elements that originated with Paracelsus and as natural forces.¹³²⁹ Elsewhere in *Isis Unveiled*, she divides the spirits hitherto associated with the term 'elementary' by Eliphas Levi, Emma Hardinge-Britten and others into three types: (1) the first class is 'terrestrial spirits' or 'elementaries', which are the 'shadows of those who have lived on earth,' yet have refused all spiritual light and have separated from their immortal spirit;¹³³⁰ (2) the second class is 'composed of the invisible antitypes of the men *to be* born.'¹³³¹ Blavatsky further states that this second class, which is devoid of immortal spirits, are 'elementals', but cannot communicate objectively with human beings;¹³³² (3) the third class is 'elementals in the true sense of the term. These beings are the 'nature spirits' and will never evolve into human beings. They are in principle forces that can take on various forms and are often the causes behind spiritualistic phenomena.¹³³³ Blavatsky, in fact, controversially states that 'These elementals are the principal agents of disembodied, but *never visible* spirits at seances, and the producers of all phenomena except subjective.'¹³³⁴ Blavatsky also emphasises the trickery and deceit, which these beings could cause and associates them with the 'Diakka' of Andrew Jackson Davis and with earlier suggestions offered by James Peebles (1822-1922) and Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825-1875).¹³³⁵

¹³²⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 206-52 (chapter VII). Even though this chapter has this title, it does not offer much information on elementals. The chapter titles, as found in the table of contents, did not appear in the first print of *Isis Unveiled*, but were included later.

¹³²⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xxix.

¹³³⁰ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 310, see also p. xxx.

¹³³¹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 310.

¹³³² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 311.

¹³³³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 311.

¹³³⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xxx.

¹³³⁵ See HPB, "Elementaries", in HPBCW, I, 269; Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I,

In later writings, Blavatsky developed the notion of 'elementals' further, such as the extensive article that includes revised material from *Isis Unveiled* entitled 'Elementals' (published posthumously from August 1893 - October 1893) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888).¹³³⁶ Blavatsky's point at this stage was to

show why we hold fast to the wisdom of the ages, in preference to any new theories that may have been hatched from the occurrences of our later days, respecting the laws of intermundane intercourse and the occult powers of man. [...] Undoubtedly, believers in the modern phenomena can claim for themselves a diversity of endowments, but the "discerning of spirits" is evidently absent from the catalogue of "spiritual" gifts.¹³³⁷

In other words, according to Blavatsky's discourse it is important to have knowledge of the ancient knowledge of spirits and elementals, who are the real causes behind the phenomena of modern spiritualism because otherwise people will, out of ignorance, be exposed to the trickery and dangers of the elementaries and the elementals.

This discourse was an important aspect in her construction of the meaning of the 'new occultism' she and others came to represent. At first Blavatsky hoped to 'cleanse' or reform modern spiritualism in the mirror of esoteric traditions and when this largely failed, she further developed her own occultism/Theosophy. However, it would be historically incorrect to simply regard this 'new occultism' and Theosophy as a reformed branch of modern spiritualism or as merely a façade covering a form of modern spiritualism, as Lavoie has conjectured, because many of the ideas important to this 'new occultism' were derived from older esoteric traditions outside of modern spiritualism and because Blavatsky had been acquainted with them as early as she had. New occultism was rather as has been shown here the confluence of two currents (and several others not discussed in this chapter).

218-19; see also note 1313.

¹³³⁶ HPB, 'Elementals' in HPBCW, VI; H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 2 vols (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1888), I, 146, 176-7, 184n, 188, 233-4, 277-78, 294-95, 331n, 372-73, 454-55, 461, 514n, 630-32; II, 34, 102, 232-33, 272-74, 312n, 386n, 427, 616, 737.

¹³³⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 218.

2.5.2.3.2 Control: The dangers of modern spiritualism

*it is not against true Spiritualism that we set ourselves, but only against indiscriminate mediumship and physical manifestations, - materializations and trance-possession especially.*¹³³⁸

Alex Owen also noted that self-mastery, self-development and discipline characterised the approach of the 'new occultism' to the mysteries of the spiritual world and the forces of nature.¹³³⁹ This stood in contrast to the practices of spiritualism, which generally demanded no special effort from the medium, if only the presence of an inborn "gift". This new occultist approach was strongly reflected in Blavatsky's discourse against spiritualism, which helped define the identity of the 'new occultism' in the spiritual landscape of the nineteenth century and distinguished it from modern spiritualism.

Blavatsky showed that lack of knowledge of the Western esoteric traditions and the various classes of spirits inhabiting cosmos could lead to dangers, obsession, possession, disease and distortion because the medium and the surrounding participants could either be tricked by elementals or contaminated by elementaries. Blavatsky already discussed these dangers in some of her early letters and it was a continued, emphasised point through out her writings.¹³⁴⁰

The alternative, Blavatsky proposed, hinged on the notion of the 'Adept' derived from Eliphas Levi and Freemasonry. The adept was, unlike the medium, one who through his own will and effort had acquired the powers, which the spiritualists attributed to the spirits, and thereby could avoid any dangers.¹³⁴¹

Eliphas Lévi, discussing spiritistic phenomena, says: "...the elementary

¹³³⁸ 'Mahatma Letter 68', in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998), p. 201 [italic style is mine].

¹³³⁹ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 14, 20.

¹³⁴⁰ *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 13', pp. 52-57; Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, 27-35. Blavatsky shared this form of critique with P. B. Randolph and Eliphas Levi, see Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph*, pp. 241-308; McIntosh, *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival*, pp. 125-28.

¹³⁴¹ It has been shown that Blavatsky already spoke of the *active doer* versus the *passive medium* in 1872, *The Letters of HPB*, I, 'Letter 5', p. 20.

spirits are like children curious and harmless, and torment people in proportion as attention is paid to them.” These he regards as the sole agents in all the meaningless and useless physical phenomena at *séances*. Such phenomena will be produced unless they be dominated “by wills more powerful than their own.” Such a will may be that of a living adept, or as there are none such at Western spiritual *séances*, these ready agents are at the disposal of every strong, vicious, earthbound, human elementary who has been attracted to the place. By such they can be used in combination with the astral emanations of the circle and medium, as stuff out of which to make materialized spirits.¹³⁴²

Blavatsky thus invoked the notion of the ‘magus’, central to the Western esoteric traditions,¹³⁴³ and later coupled it with the notion of hidden or latent powers in man, prevalent in mesmerism, as well as the notion of the significance of the human/divine will in magical practice as defined in Eliphas Levi’s writings.¹³⁴⁴ The active and will-full adept was thus construed as far superior to the passive medium and opened up new avenues for self-development and introspection that became attractive practices in the new climate of individualism and social and religious uncertainty.¹³⁴⁵ ‘The adept’ became synonymous with ‘the true occultist’, i.e. one who can control the hidden forces in nature. Blavatsky herself was widely regarded as a magus or adept¹³⁴⁶ and the spiritual masters or mahatmas associated with Blavatsky and Theosophy became the mysterious living examples of the new occult ideal

¹³⁴² HPB, ‘Kabalistic Views on “Spirits” as Propagated by the Theosophical Society’, in HPBCW, I, 285; see also HPB, ‘The Science of Magic’, in HPBCW, I, 137. See also Blavatsky’s historically important letter to C. C. Massey (February 1876) related to the debate with spiritualists which the founding of the Theosophical Society and its occult approach had incurred, *The Letters of HPB*, I, ‘Letter 65’, pp. 246-50, here Blavatsky speaks about: the dangers which the medium is exposed to; adepts; phenomena and the Will of the magician.

¹³⁴³ The concept ‘magus’ generally refers to the Renaissance interpretation or ideal of the divine man who can control the elements of nature as he is described in the Hermetic writings. In the Renaissance, Hermes Trismegistus himself was actually regarded as this typological ideal for the magus character, see Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 6-12, 45; for further details and for later usages of the concept, see E. M. Butler, *The Myth of the Magus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848).

¹³⁴⁴ Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 252, 255, 297, 340. Blavatsky was also well versed in mesmerism, see appendix 1 and 2 of this thesis.

¹³⁴⁵ Owen, *The Place of Enchantment*, pp. 14, 20.

¹³⁴⁶ See for example Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, pp. 243-60.

setting the 'new occultism' apart from modern spiritualism.

2.5.2.3.3 Occultism or true spiritualism

*Spiritualists wrench the soul from true Spiritualism by their degradation of spirit. Of the infinite they make the finite; of the divine subjective they make the human and limited objective.*¹³⁴⁷

In July 1875 Blavatsky published, what she later called a 'first occult shot', her early article 'A Few Questions to Hiram' launching the basis for the 'new occultism' that would develop in the succeeding decades. This article included the first use of the substantive 'occultism' in English directly derived from Eliphas Levi's construction and use of it in French (*l'occultisme*).¹³⁴⁸ In 'Hiram' Blavatsky already argued that she felt, based on her knowledge of older esoteric traditions and Eliphas Levi's works, that it was necessary to reform and alter much of the modern spiritualistic theories,¹³⁴⁹ but she also regarded modern spiritualism as a tool to be used against the materialism of the age.¹³⁵⁰ When it seemed impossible to control and reform modern spiritualism by connecting it with older esoteric traditions, Blavatsky instead sought to launch and develop the doctrines of occultism, which she regarded as 'true spiritualism' or 'ancient spiritualism.' In relation to this, one of Blavatsky's major points of critique of modern spiritualism was its lack of a systematic spiritual

¹³⁴⁷ HPB, 'A Society Without a Dogma', in HPBCW, I (1988) 301-306 (p. 305) (first publ. in *The Spiritualist* (1878), 62-63) [italic style is mine].

¹³⁴⁸ As far as can be ascertained, Blavatsky was the first to use of the substantive 'occultism' in English in her article HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 101, 103. There is little doubt that she borrowed the term from Eliphas Levi. In Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. xxxvii and Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, p. 238, she clearly connects the term with Eliphas Levi and French occultism. Eliphas Levi presumably derived the term from Henry Cornelius Agrippa's (1486-1535) notion *Occulta Philosophia* and used it widely (*l'occultisme*, 'science occulte' and 'philosophie occulte') in his *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, see Eliphas Levi, *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, 2 vols, 2nd exp. edn (Paris: Germer Baillié, 1861 [1856]), I, 3, see 63; see also Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, p. 1; see also Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Occult/Occultism', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), II, 884-89 (p. 887).

¹³⁴⁹ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram' in HPBCW, I, 117.

¹³⁵⁰ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram' in HPBCW, I, 114, 117-18; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, p. 214.

philosophy.¹³⁵¹ From the early nineteen-eighties to her death in 1891, Blavatsky invested a great deal of her time to the development of such a systematic, esoteric or pure, spiritual philosophy—resulting in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), *The Key to Theosophy* (1889), *The Voice of the Silence* (1889) and her instructions to the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society and the Inner Group (1889-1891).¹³⁵²

This occultism or ‘true spiritualism’ (e.g. systematic philosophy of the spiritual worlds) thus became central to Blavatsky endeavours.

Because I study Occultism, or *Ancient Spiritualism*, I am thought an enemy to the cause pure and simple. Never was there a more erroneous impression.¹³⁵³

Blavatsky did, however, in no way perceive herself to be against spiritualism in the sense of spirituality, but primarily disliked modern mediumistic spiritualism and materializations and the theories associated herewith, as these were too ignorant, simple and materialistic.¹³⁵⁴ Blavatsky’s critique of modern spiritualism, however, became the contextual launching point for developing and defining the identity of Theosophy and the new occultism, as discussed above.

in truth, modern Spiritualism is but an earlier revival of crude Theosophy,

¹³⁵¹ This critique entered the formation of the Theosophical Society and only increased thereafter, see 'Preamble and By-laws of the Theosophical Society' 30 October 1875 (rep. in *The Theosophical Forum*, September 1947), 515-18, 'The Spiritualists, who profess to be in constant relations with the departed, are unable to agree upon a system of philosophy. Thus the longing of the race for a practical demonstration of its future existence goes unsatisfied; the laws of intercommunication between the visible and the invisible worlds are not accurately defined; and the problem of the two eternities which bound this life remains unsolved, despite a multitude of churches and academies'. See also Algeo and others, 'Background Essay I', p. 224; Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 31-32.

¹³⁵² As noted in the introduction to this thesis, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse Blavatsky’s doctrines (cosmology and anthropology). The next chapter (2.6) will, however, analyse Blavatsky’s discourse for system or systematic philosophy.

¹³⁵³ HPB, 'A Crisis for Spiritualism', in HPBCW, I, 199.

¹³⁵⁴ See Patrick Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph*, pp. 272-76.

and modern Theosophy a *renaissance* of ancient Spiritualism.¹³⁵⁵

The revival of older occult ideas that emerged during the late nineteenth century both conceptually and organizationally—facilitated by Blavatsky and others such as Emma Hardinge-Britten who also was one of the first to use the term ‘occultism’ in English¹³⁵⁶—was thus moulded by the context of modern spiritualism—but emerged as something distinct. Hanegraaff, has constructed the term ‘occultism’ as an *etic* term signifying a period after romanticism, where esotericism became further secularised, and he includes modern spiritualism in this scholarly construct. But as this chapter has specified, it is also necessary to study the *emic* construction of ‘occultism’ in more details in order for the historian to understand the important historical differences between the two distinct currents of modern spiritualism and the new occultism, which

¹³⁵⁵ HPB, ‘The Cycle Moveth’, in HPBCW, XII (31 March 1980), 120-32 (p. 123) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VI, 31, (1890), pp. 1-10).

¹³⁵⁶ See *Ghost Land or Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism, Illustrated in a Series of Autobiographical Sketches*, trans. and ed. by Emma Hardinge Britten (Boston, MA: Published for the Editor, 1876), p. 6, here an early use of the word ‘occultism’ appears in English and the same occult discourse Blavatsky also expressed in her early articles, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’ and ‘The Science of Magic’, appears to the dismay of several modern spiritualists: ‘That those persons who call themselves "spiritual teachers" and claim to be "interpreters and exponents" of the spiritual philosophy (?) have not *all* the truth—nay, not even a tithe of the experience necessary to qualify them for the office they have assumed—becomes more and more painfully evident to the earnest student into spiritual *mysteries* the more he compares the immensity of the realms to be traversed with the shallow pretences at *explanation* put forth by the self-elected spiritual teachers of this generation. [...] By those great authorities occultism is assumed to be a word invented by a few individuals, whose chief aim is to destroy Spiritualism and substitute "black magic" in its place, whilst occultists are renegades, who would "roll back the car of progress" (a favorite expression, by the way, of those who deny the right of any one to progress beyond their own standard of knowledge) and presume to add to the sublime philosophy enunciated through the table-tipping and trance-speaking media for "spirits of the seventh sphere," the antiquated stuff of Oriental cabalists, Chaldean astrologists, Hindoo, Egyptian, and Persian magi, Greek philosophers, Arabian alchemists, and mediæval Rosicrucian mystics. Of course all these are mere *ignoramus*, who for thousands of years have been blundering through the mysteries of occult science, which the aforesaid table-tipping and seventh-sphere-inspiring spirits instantly sweep away with the knock-down argument of "What I don't know isn't true; and what I can not explain has no existence."’

Blavatsky's discourse was widely responsible for initiating.¹³⁵⁷

2.5.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to analyse Blavatsky's relation to modern spiritualism and answer several questions that remained uncertain due to debate in previous studies, such as: Was Blavatsky a spiritualist? What was her critique of spiritualism? What is the relation between occultism and spiritualism?

It was pointed out that Blavatsky's own use of the term spiritualism contained several nuances common during the nineteenth century. This involved the term 'modern spiritualism', which refers to the movement initiated in 1848 and to the term in its general sense as 'spirituality' or the opposite of materialism. Blavatsky also used uncommon terms such as 'ancient spiritualism', which referred to an ancient esoteric tradition. Section 2.5.1.1 demonstrated that Blavatsky was a spiritualist in the wider sense of the term and that she had been extensively involved in spiritualism/modern spiritualism. Her life narrative is spun in occult/spiritualistic phenomena, she confirmed on several occasions that she was a spiritualist, she published in modern spiritualist journals and corresponded and met with several prominent spiritualists. However, section 2.5.2 demonstrated how and why she was involved in modern spiritualism and that in addition to spiritualism, Blavatsky also had a wide background in Western esoteric traditions that was central to her understanding and construction of spiritualism/modern spiritualism. It was shown that Blavatsky constructed spiritualism/modern spiritualism as a modern presentation of ancient magic and occultism, a notion that proved controversial to many modern spiritualists. Blavatsky thus took a historical approach to spiritualism but from an early date disliked the common modern spiritualistic theories of spirits and that what supposedly happened at the séances were communication with the spirit of a deceased person. At the outset, Blavatsky thought she could reform modern spiritualism and cleanse it of such ignorant materialistic theories but as she did not succeed, Blavatsky used modern spiritualism as a launching pad for the further development of 'new occultism'

¹³⁵⁷ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, pp. 422, 423, see also pp. 441, 442, 449-50, 452; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism in the Academy*, p. 282 n86.

and Theosophy. Blavatsky's critique of modern spiritualism, based on Western esoteric traditions and particularly on Eliphas Levi's writings, thus also became the opportunity to define her own occultism characterised by (1) knowledge of ancient esotericism and associated theories of spirits, (2) the ideal of the adept and (3) a systematic spiritual philosophy. In relation to her first point, Blavatsky introduced the idea of elementals and elementaries and argued that these beings were the real causes of spiritualistic phenomena. These beings were however tricky and association with them could be dangerous as the medium had no control over the situation. The second notion, the adept, was Blavatsky's alternative to the dangerous situation of the medium. Blavatsky argued for the possibility for human beings to develop powers otherwise associated with the spirits and that the adept or the fully realised occultist could control the spirits rather than be controlled by them. This became a defining feature of the new occultism that emerged during the late nineteenth century and opened up new avenues for self-development and the study of man's hidden potential. The third notion was that of a systematic esoteric philosophy, the discourse of which will be analysed in the next chapter.

In her construction of meaning Blavatsky thus first sought to remove what she perceived to be the false theories and the ignorance of the modern spiritualists by relating spiritualism to magic, which she regarded as true or ancient spiritualism. When this endeavour failed, she developed occultism further and gave it several defining characteristics to distinguish it from spiritualism. New occultism thus arose out of the meeting between modern spiritualism and older Western esoteric traditions. However, this new occultism cannot be regarded as modern spiritualism, as Lavoie has indicated, because it was also based on Western esoteric traditions and received distinct features from this tradition in the process. Finally, this chapter showed that while spiritualism and the new occultism can both be placed in the container construct 'occultism' defined by Hanegraaff, they none the less historically represent two distinct intellectual and religious currents—with new occultism more firmly based in older traditions of Western esotericism—that both deserve closer analysis.

2.6 Blavatsky's Discourse for System

*The Secret Doctrine [...] and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system*¹³⁵⁸

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that Blavatsky's work evinces a 'will to system'. By 'will to system' is here meant the construction of a specific system of thought. Furthermore, this chapter will relate this aspect of Blavatsky's work to its intellectual-historical contexts.¹³⁵⁹

2.6.1 The Will to System

*It may be correctly stated that were Leibnitz' and Spinoza's systems reconciled, the essence and Spirit of esoteric philosophy would be made to appear.*¹³⁶⁰

The Will to construct all comprehensive universal systems or the intellectual systematization of the world, history and man on the basis of a few universal principles is no longer in fashion.¹³⁶¹ The decline of these intellectual systems began when Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), among others, broke with this long-standing modern philosophic-scientific tradition in *Götzen-Dämmerung, oder, Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* (1889) by proclaiming

Ich misstraue allen Systematikern und gehe ihnen aus dem Weg. Der Wille zum System ist ein Mangel an Rechtschaffenheit.¹³⁶²

¹³⁵⁸ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 2 vols (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1888), I, 272.

¹³⁵⁹ It should be noted that it is beyond the aim and scope of this chapter to enter into any details of the actual contents of the 'system' of thought, which Blavatsky discussed and expounded. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that Blavatsky's discourse embraces the will to system and that this mirrored her intellectual contexts. In the previous chapter, it was noted that Blavatsky criticised the modern spiritualists for the lack of a system of philosophy.

¹³⁶⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 628-629.

¹³⁶¹ With the rise of the linguistic-turn, narratology, post-structuralism and post-modernism since the Second World War, all 'grand narratives' and formal systems have gradually fallen out of favour among many philosophers and many academic theoreticians in the humanities. Nietzsche has played a significant role in these developments. This is not the place to divulge into a discussion of these developments, but for a critique of philosophy and history as system, see Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, trans. by Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1965), pp. 41-56.

¹³⁶² Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem*

But there was a time, just prior to Nietzsche's proclamation, when such distrust in grand systems was of no consequence since they were regarded as authoritative exemplars of how proper philosophy and science (coherent thought) should be done.¹³⁶³ In this first section of the present chapter (2.6.1), it will be demonstrated that in her construction of meaning, Blavatsky adopted the 'will to system' prevalent at the time (see entire section 2.6.1.2) and that her discourse for system can thus be regarded as a reflection of this intellectual tendency.¹³⁶⁴

2.6.1.1 The century of Grand Systems (1790-1890)

Before engaging directly with Blavatsky's 'will to system', this section will briefly sketch the intellectual context of 'system' that became increasingly important in modern philosophy and science from the seventeenth century to Blavatsky's time as a means of expressing one's ideas authoritatively, coherently and scientifically.¹³⁶⁵

René Descartes (1596-1650) is widely recognised as having played an influential role in the inauguration of this new form of modern philosophy when he broke with the scholastic tradition by systematically doubting everything before re-constructing it again, as he did, in his famous *Meditationes de prima philosophia, in qua Dei existentia et animæ immortalitas demonstrator* (1641), and by approaching the world according to a new method, as he elaborated, in his *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité*

Hammer philosophiert (Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1889 [released 1892]), p. 57 (§26). Eng. trans.: 'I distrust all systematizers and I avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity.'

¹³⁶³ See, Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell publishers Ltd., 1997), pp. 265-68.

¹³⁶⁴ By the term occult is here meant post-Enlightenment esotericism, a phase in the history of Western esotericism that incorporated modern scientific ideas and mirrored the secularization process. See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998 [1996]), pp. 406-407, 409, 422-23, 442.

¹³⁶⁵ Sadly not much has been written on this structural element of modern philosophy, but see Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, pp. 265-68, for details on 'Science and System'.

dans les sciences (1637).¹³⁶⁶ In combination with his other researches, this resulted in what came to be called the 'New System of Philosophy' embracing both the natural and rational domains.¹³⁶⁷ This combined use of methodology, mathematics, empirical observation and reason also set the standard for any new systematic approaches to the world. Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) soon followed with his 'geometrical demonstrations' in his *Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata* (1677);¹³⁶⁸ and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) who, though he never produced an elaborate coherent system, did write *Système Nouveau de la Nature et de la Communication des Substances* (1695)¹³⁶⁹ and left behind a small but famous systemic treatise known as *La Monadologie* (1714).¹³⁷⁰ In England the Cambridge Platonist Henry More (1614-1687) critically discussed Descartes' new philosophy in his many philosophical works;¹³⁷¹ and his colleague Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) also responded to the new mechanistic and atheistic philosophy with *The True Intellectual System*

¹³⁶⁶ René Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia, in qua Dei existentia et animæ immortalitas demonstrator* (Parisiis: Apud Michaellem Soly, 1641); René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* (Leyde: Jan Maire, 1637).

¹³⁶⁷ See Catherine Wilson, *Descartes's Meditations: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Chambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 234-235.

¹³⁶⁸ Baruch Spinoza *Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata*, in *Opera Posthuma: Quorum Series Post Praefationem Exhibetur* ([Amsterdam: J. Rieuwertsz], 1677).

¹³⁶⁹ See G. W. Leibniz, 'A New System of Nature and Communication of Substances, and of the Union of the Soul and Body (1695)' in *Readings in Modern Philosophy: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Associated Texts*, ed. by Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, 2 vols (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), I, 279-84.

¹³⁷⁰ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *La Monadologie* (1714). Leibniz wrote this work when he stayed in Vienna for the last time between 1712-1714. It was meant to be a short exposition of his philosophy. Together with another small tract, it was first known in French as *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace fondés en raison*. In 1720 it was translated by Christian Wolff and others as *Lehrsätze über die Monadologie* and acquired its present title. The next year a Latin version was published entitled *Principia philosophiae* (1721). For the first English translation, see Leibniz, *The Monadology and other Philosophical Writings*, trans. by Robert Latta (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1898).

¹³⁷¹ Henry More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr Henry More* (London: printed by James Flesher for William Morden, 1662). Many subsequent editions.

of the Universe (1678).¹³⁷² Isaac Newton (1642-1727) on the other hand expanded on Descartes (among others) and produced a new revolutionary system of natural philosophy with the publication of his *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) that embraced the universe and the earth alike under the common law of gravity.¹³⁷³

The true century of grand systems (1790-1890) was, however, born on German soil. It is correct that Jacob Boehme (1575-1627) had already at an early date formulated a mystical system of philosophy¹³⁷⁴—yet, it was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who initiated the new German approach to philosophy and science. Based only on the premise of “thinking”, Kant demonstrated in his revolutionary *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781)¹³⁷⁵ that reason structures the way we perceive the world. Thus we have only mediated access to the world and can never truly know the world as it is in itself. This transcendental critique of reason and its epistemological capability, however pessimistic, managed to establish phenomena as our common and thus objective experience of the world and thereby laid the foundation for philosophy as science. This provoked the emergence of a whole number of systems that both sought to map more extensively how reason or consciousness implicitly systematizes the world and how philosophy could move beyond the claimed epistemological limitations of Kant. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) was the first to extensively and systematically discuss and expand on Kant’s philosophy in his major works *Versuch einer kritik aller Offenbarung* (1792), *Grundlage der gesamten*

¹³⁷² Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London: R. Royston, 1678). For the most complete edition, see Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, ed. by J. L. Mosheim, trans. by John Harrison [3rd(?) edn], 3 vols (London: Thomas Tegg, 1845).

¹³⁷³ Isaac Newton, *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Londini: Jussu Societatis Regiæ ac Typis Josephi Streater, prostat venales apud Sam. Smith ad insignia Principis Walliæ in Coemiterio D. Pauli, aliosq, nonnullos Bibliopolas, (1687)).

¹³⁷⁴ For the first publication related to Jacob Boehme’s philosophy, see Jakob Böhme, *Aurora: Das ist Morgen Röthe im Aufgang und Mutter der Philosophiæ: Oder Beschreibung der Natur* ([Amsterdam: Joh. Jansson], 1634).

¹³⁷⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: J. F. Hartknoch, 1781); see also Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Riga: J. F. Hartknoch, 1788).

Wissenschaftslehre (1794/95, 2nd edn 1802), *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (1796), *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797/1798) and *Die Wissenschaftslehre* (1804).¹³⁷⁶ Fichte argued that there is no need for the skeptical distinction that separates the world from the way it appears to us, because in reality there is only consciousness and its self-knowledge. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) continued in the same tradition and produced his own system in works such as *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur als Einleitung in das Studium dieser Wissenschaft* (1797) and *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800);¹³⁷⁷ but the new German 'will to system' culminated with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) who commenced his philosophical career by discussing Fichte's and Schelling's systems in *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (1801).¹³⁷⁸ Henceforth, Hegel unfolded his own elaborate system that came to embrace the dialectic movement of spirit through logic and nature embracing world history, the arts and religion before it culminated in the supreme act of self-knowing in

¹³⁷⁶ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Versuch einer kritik aller Offenbarung* (Königsberg: Im Verlag der Hartungschens Buchhandlung Hartung, 1792); Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (Leipzig: Bei Christian Ernst Gabler, 1794/95); Fichte did not manage to publish his *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*, which was an attempt to revise his system based on his lectures held between 1796/1799. For a recent edition of this work, see Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of transcendental philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) nova methodo (1796/99)*, trans. by Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797/1798) for this work, see Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre: Vorerinnerung, erste und zweite Einleitung, erstes Kapitel (1797/98)*, ed. by Peter Baumanns (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1984); and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Die Wissenschaftslehre* (1804), for this, see Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Die Wissenschaftslehre : Zweiter Vortrag im Jahre 1804 vom 16. April bis 8. Juni*, ed. by Reinhard Lauth, Joachim Widmann and Peter Schneider (Hamburg: Meiner, 1986).

¹³⁷⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur: als Einleitung in das Studium dieser Wissenschaft*, 2 vols (Landshut: bei Philipp Krüll, 1803 [1797]); and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (Tübingen: J.G. Cotta, 1800).

¹³⁷⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (Jena: Seidler, 1801).

absolute philosophy as set forth in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), *Wissenschaft der Logik*, (1812, 1813, 1816), *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, (1817; 2nd edn 1827; 3rd edn 1830) and in his many lectures.¹³⁷⁹ According to Hegel, philosophy could only be a science if it was a system that embraced all differentiation of spirit in the world.¹³⁸⁰ In unsuccessful competition with Hegel's system was that of Arthur Schopenhauer's (1788-1860), *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1818, 2nd expanded edn 1844), wherein everything is explained based on 'Will' and appearance.¹³⁸¹ The final great and famous German system of philosophy was that of Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906) who reformulated the principles of spirit, reason and will, which had been the basis of the German idealists, into the concept of the unconscious in *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten* (1869).¹³⁸²

The post-enlightenment tradition in France and Great Britain continued the Hegelian inheritance of constructing comprehensive systems of philosophy

¹³⁷⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Bamberg und Würzburg: Bey Joseph Anton Goebhardt, 1807), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, 3 vols (Nürnberg: Schrag, 1812, 1813, 1816); Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1817; 2nd edn 1827; 3rd edn 1830), see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse: 1830: mit den mündlichen Zusätze*, 3 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996-1999).

¹³⁸⁰ See Martin Heidegger' discussion of Hegel's conception of a system of science, Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Pavis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington & Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 9-28.

¹³⁸¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung: Vier Bücher, nebst einem Anhang, der die Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie enthält* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1819 [Dec. 1818]). A second and expanded edition was published in 1844 and again in 1854. During the spring of 1818 Schopenhauer wrote to Friedrich August Brockhaus (the publisher) inviting him to publish his 'new philosophical system: but new in the full sense of the word: not a new presentation of what existed before, but a chain of thought linked to the highest degree, such as has not previously entered any man's head', see Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the wild years of Philosophy*, trans. by Ewald Osers (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), p. 238.

¹³⁸² Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten: Versuch einer Weltanschauung* (Berlin: C. Duncker (C. Heymons), 1869); see also Eduard von Hartmann, *System der Philosophie im Grundriss*, 8 vols (Bad Sachsa: Harz, H. Haacke, 1907-1909).

in order to be scientific yet along more empirical lines and with the integration of many of the new sciences, which had emerged. In this new tradition, Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) attempted to establish a basis for a new social system in his *Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du XIX siècle* (1807), *Du système industriel* (1821) and in *Catéchisme des industriels* (1823–1824).¹³⁸³ The founder of the system of positivism, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), was at an early date the pupil of Saint-Simon but he soon formulated his own elaborate system, with his publication of *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830-1842) and *Système de politique positive* (1851-54), among other works, based on the principles of cultural progress and empiricism.¹³⁸⁴

In Britain John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) had published *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843), in which he formulated his five principles of inductive reasoning as a basis for his moral and political philosophy.¹³⁸⁵ Finally, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) formulated his elaborate *System of Synthetic Philosophy* in ten volumes (1862-1892) embracing philosophy, biology, psychology, sociology and ethics in one system based on the principle of evolution.¹³⁸⁶

The above systems were quite dominant in the intellectual landscape of their time. Blavatsky, being a learned woman with a taste for knowledge, was well acquainted with most of them, which is evidenced from her numerous references to these systems in many of her works and from her critical

¹³⁸³ Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, *Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du XIX siècle* (Paris: impr. de J.-L. Scherff, 1807); Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, *Du système industriel*, 2 vols (Paris: Chez A.-A. Renouard, 1821-22); and Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, *Catéchisme des industriels*, 3 vols (Paris: Imprimerie de Sétier, 1823–1824).

¹³⁸⁴ Auguste Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive*, 6 vols (Paris: Bachelier, 1830-1842); and Auguste Comte, *Système de politique positive*, 4 vols (Paris: L. Mathias, 1851-54).

¹³⁸⁵ John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a connected view of the principles of evidence, and methods of scientific investigation*, 2 vols (London: J.W. Parker, 1843).

¹³⁸⁶ Herbert Spencer, *System of Synthetic Philosophy*, 10 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862-1892).

discussion of their ideas in comparison to her own views and system.¹³⁸⁷ Blavatsky thus adopted the intellectual currency or social capital of ‘system’¹³⁸⁸ from this larger intellectual context as a frame in which to construct meaning. However, while the discourse to construct a system became increasingly important to her own project, it, at times, opposed the non-dogmatic policy of the Theosophical Society and thereby caused difficulties within the society, as will be discussed below (section 2.6.1.2.1).

2.6.1.2 Blavatsky’s Esoteric System

From an early point, Blavatsky argued that the Theosophical Society should be free from any form of dogmatism.¹³⁸⁹ She thus defined Theosophy in its abstract sense as universal Truth itself.¹³⁹⁰ However, especially during the eighteen-eighties, Blavatsky adopted the ‘will to system’, prevalent in the academic climate, as the informal intellectual standard for construction of meaning.

In some of her significant, early articles¹³⁹¹ and especially in *Isis Unveiled* (1877), Blavatsky already, as previously shown,¹³⁹² sought to prove the existence of an ancient universal wisdom tradition, but it was not until after the publication of *Isis Unveiled* that she began to depict this ancient wisdom tradition as a ‘system’.¹³⁹³ In the Theosophical ‘New York circular’ (May 1878)

¹³⁸⁷ See below, but see also appendix I and II.

¹³⁸⁸ For the concept ‘social capital’, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 260-317.

¹³⁸⁹ See chapter 2.7 on Blavatsky’s Discourse for Universal Brotherhood, see also below.

¹³⁹⁰ See chapter 2.1.

¹³⁹¹ HPB, ‘A Few Questions to Hiram’, in HPBCW, I (1988) 101-119 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-37); HPB, ‘The Science of Magic’, in HPBCW, I (1988), 134-43 (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist*, III (1875), 64-65).

¹³⁹² See chapter 2.1 and 2.2.

¹³⁹³ It should be noted here that Blavatsky had already written the following in a letter to Hiram P. Corson February 1875 ‘My belief is based, on something older than the Rochester Knockings, and spring out of the same source of information, that was used by Raymond Lully, Picus of Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd Henry More etc etc all of whom have ever been **searching for a system**, that should disclose to them the “*deepest depths*” of the Divine nature and show them the *real tie which binds all things*

supervised by Blavatsky, it is for example stated that the mission of the Theosophical Society is 'to disseminate a knowledge of the sublime teachings of **that pure esoteric system of the archaic period**, which are mirrored in the oldest Vedas, and in the philosophy of Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius.'¹³⁹⁴ Around this time (1878), Blavatsky also indicated a connection between this 'system', the spiritual practices of the Indian yoga tradition, the Neo-Platonists such as Ammonius Saccas, Porphyry and Proclus¹³⁹⁵ and the 'Jewish cabala'.¹³⁹⁶ She also stated that the Theosophists of the inner section adhere to such a specific 'system' not to be confused with Buddhism or any other known religion.¹³⁹⁷

From the eighteen-eighties onwards—in relation to the gradual unveiling of the specific, esoteric system propounded in the *Mahatma Letters*, related publications and in *The Secret Doctrine*, see below—Blavatsky variously referred discursively to it as 'a perfect system',¹³⁹⁸ a 'philosophical system',¹³⁹⁹

together. I found at last—and many years ago—the cravings of my mind satisfied by this theosophy taught by the Angels and communicated by them', see *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others, 1 vols [total number of volumes not yet published] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 'Letter 21', p. 86, *bold font is mine*. In chapter 2.1 it was demonstrated that much of the content of this letter was derived verbatim from C. D. Ginsburg. In the previous chapter 2. 5 it was shown that Blavatsky and the 'Preamble and By-laws of the Theosophical Society' 30 October 1875 criticised the modern spiritualists for not having a proper 'system' of philosophy. However, as far as can be ascertain, Blavatsky did not directly coupled the idea of system with the *ancient* wisdom tradition until after the publication of *Isis Unveiled* .

¹³⁹⁴ HPB, *The Theosophical Society: its Origin, Plan, and Aims*, in HPBCW, I (3rd edn 1988), 375-78 (p. 377), (first printed for the Information of Correspondents, New York, (May 1878)) [bold emphasis is mine].

¹³⁹⁵ HPB, 'Comments on *A Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy*', in HPBCW, II (1967), 453-73 (p. 466), (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 12 (1880), 312-15; II, 1 (1880), 4-6; II, 2 (1880), 29-32, *Ibid* (1881), 72-75, *Ibid*, 3 (1881), 144-47).

¹³⁹⁶ HPB, 'The Five-Pointed Star', in HPBCW, III (1982), 250-54 (p. 254), (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 11 (1881), 240-41).

¹³⁹⁷ HPB, 'The Real Madame H. P. Blavatsky', in HPBCW, I (3rd edn 1988), 400-403 (p. 403), (first publ. in *La Revue Spirite*, (1878), trans. from the French).

¹³⁹⁸ HPB, 'The Five-Pointed Star', in HPBCW, III, 254.

¹³⁹⁹ HPB, 'Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*', in

‘that grand system of philosophy, called by its disciples the Archaic Wisdom Religion, or the Secret Doctrine’,¹⁴⁰⁰ the system of ‘Secret Archaic Doctrine’,¹⁴⁰¹ ‘the Esoteric system’,¹⁴⁰² ‘the great archaic system known from prehistoric ages as the sacred Wisdom Science’,¹⁴⁰³ a ‘symbolical and allegorical system’,¹⁴⁰⁴ or simply as the ‘primordial system’.¹⁴⁰⁵

Also the *Mahatma Letters* refer to their teachings as a specific ‘system’¹⁴⁰⁶ and this was also the case with the presentation of the specific doctrines given by Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840-1921) in *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883) in addition to the more traditional word for religious philosophy, ‘doctrine’.

The doctrine or system now disclosed in its broad outlines ...¹⁴⁰⁷

In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky argued provocatively that ‘The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the **most stupendous and elaborate system**’¹⁴⁰⁸ and that this system ‘is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted

HPBCW, VI (2nd edn 1975), 139-42 (p. 141), (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 12, 48 (1883), 295-310).

¹⁴⁰⁰ HPB, ‘The National Epic of Finland (Review)’, in HPBCW, X (2nd edn 1974), 143-48 (p. 143), (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 14 (1888), 149-52).

¹⁴⁰¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xxxviii.

¹⁴⁰² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xxxviii; II, 57n.

¹⁴⁰³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 310.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 765.

¹⁴⁰⁵ HPB, ‘The Babel of Modern Thought’, in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 83-103 (p. 84), (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 41, (1891), 353-60).

¹⁴⁰⁶ ‘Mahatma Letter No. 46’ (ML-2) (Rec. Feb. 1882), in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998), p. 128; ‘Mahatma Letter No. 67’ (ML-15) (Rec. July 10, 1882), p. 182; ‘Mahatma Letter No. 92’ (ML-54) (Rec. Oct. 1882), p. 293; ‘Mahatma Letter No. 128’ (ML-63) (Rec. Summer, 1884), p. 428.

¹⁴⁰⁷ A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism* (London: Trübner & Co., 1883), p. xi; see also p. 29 [5th ann. and exp. edn (1885) pp. xx and 37].

¹⁴⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272 [bold emphasis is mine].

beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity.’¹⁴⁰⁹ Blavatsky clearly invested in the social capital of ‘system’ and claimed that this ‘system’ was superior to all others, especially modern systems. She viewed the ‘archaic system’ as scientifically coherent and legitimate by stating that it had been tested by no less than ‘thousands of generations’ and that it had originally been given by ‘higher and exalted beings.’ This ancient esoteric system, whether philosophical or occult, also seems to cover or mirror and combine many of the topics prevalent among intellectuals of the time such as cosmology,¹⁴¹⁰ anthropology,¹⁴¹¹ psychology,¹⁴¹² physiology¹⁴¹³ and ethics.¹⁴¹⁴ On a more esoteric note, Blavatsky also stated that there are seven sub-systems or branches of the system¹⁴¹⁵ and that there are seven keys to understanding the entire system implying that the system is not readily available to reason alone, as other systems of the day, but requires privileged access (i.e., it is esoteric).¹⁴¹⁶

This discourse of ‘will to system’ and the esoteric mystique surrounding its trans-human and trans-rational origin attracted many spiritually inclined intellectuals to Theosophy. It added a sense of scientific coherency to the teachings of Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society by submitting to the intellectual standard of ‘system’ which, as shown above, functioned as an authoritative stamp of semantic coherency at the time. The discourse of ‘system’ also made it possible for Blavatsky to compare her own ‘system’ to other relatively contemporary prestigious ‘philosophical systems’ such as those of Herbert Spencer,¹⁴¹⁷ Schopenhauer,¹⁴¹⁸ Comte,¹⁴¹⁹ Kant,¹⁴²⁰ Spinoza,¹⁴²¹

¹⁴⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272-73.

¹⁴¹⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272; II, 251.

¹⁴¹¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 251.

¹⁴¹² HPB, ‘Comments on *A Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy*’, in HPBCW, II, 466.

¹⁴¹³ HPB, ‘Comments on *A Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy*’, in HPBCW, II, 466.

¹⁴¹⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), pp. 2-3.

¹⁴¹⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 311.

¹⁴¹⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xxxviii, 155n, 310-1, 318, 323, 325, 341, 363; II, 99, 291n, 471, 517, 523, 632, 795, 797.

¹⁴¹⁷ There are numerous references to Spencer throughout Blavatsky’s many

Hegel,¹⁴²² Fichte,¹⁴²³ Schelling¹⁴²⁴ and Hartmann.¹⁴²⁵ Some unnamed critics apparently argued that the teachings of Blavatsky's 'system' were rationally incoherent and not at all a system. In this regard, Blavatsky simply claimed that such criticism was due to a lack of understanding of the entire system, which—like the study of Kant's system—would take several years to complete if one had even been so lucky as to having been initiated into it.¹⁴²⁶ Furthermore, Blavatsky discursively claimed that she had given only fragmentary indications that such a supreme secret system—existing behind all world religions and transmitted only by initiates to initiates—once existed and still exists among initiates in India and Tibet in its pure form i.e. she had never given the whole coherent system.¹⁴²⁷ Anyhow, this section has shown that Blavatsky did use the

articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 12n, 14-15, 19n, 54n, 94n, 124-5n, 281, 293, 327, 496, 528n, 600, 622, 675; II, 156n, 348-9, 451, 490, 671, 730, 736-7.

¹⁴¹⁸ There are numerous references to Schopenhauer throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 19n, 96n; II, 156n, 304n, 528.

¹⁴¹⁹ There are several references to Comte throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 528; Blavatsky, H. P., *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877), I, 75-6.

¹⁴²⁰ There are numerous references to Kant throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 79n, 103, 133n, 149-50n, 589, 597-8, 601-3, 614; II, 706.

¹⁴²¹ There are numerous references to Spinoza throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 628-30; II, 1.

¹⁴²² There are numerous references to Hegel throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 16, 50-1, 52n, 96n, 106, 257n, 640-1; II, 449n, 490.

¹⁴²³ There are several references to Fichte throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 50-1, 79n, 281n.

¹⁴²⁴ There are several references to Schelling throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 50, 52n, 510; II, 114, 209, 461, 463-4, 706.

¹⁴²⁵ There are numerous references to Hartmann throughout Blavatsky's many articles and works but, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 1-2n, 19n, 50, 133n, 281-2, 615n; II, 156n, 304n, 648-9, 662, 670.

¹⁴²⁶ HPB, 'Mistaken Notions on The Secret Doctrine', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 234-37 (p. 235), (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VI, 34 (1890), 333-35).

¹⁴²⁷ HPB, 'Mistaken Notions on The Secret Doctrine', in HPBCW, XII, 235; HPB, 'The Babel of Modern Thought', in HPBCW, XIII, 84, 93; 'Mahatma Letter No. 128' (ML-63) (Rec. Summer 1884), pp. 428-29; Blavatsky, *The Secret*

discourse of ‘system’ in relation to the construction of the ancient Wisdom-Religion.

2.6.1.2.1 The Gradual Unveiling or Construction of Blavatsky’s System

The specific “mature system”, which today is often associated with Theosophy and Blavatsky, was not expounded all at once but evolved gradually over several years.¹⁴²⁸ As shown in the previous section, Blavatsky depicted the pre-historic Wisdom Religion as a ‘system’ and generally sought to prove its existence. This ‘primordial system’ was believed to underlie most of all of the great world religions and philosophies,¹⁴²⁹ but Blavatsky at the same time encouraged members of the Theosophical society to adhere to whichever religion they like, if any at all.¹⁴³⁰ Blavatsky and other Theosophists, however, gradually began to construe or reveal and discuss a specific esoteric system of doctrines that was generally regarded by Blavatsky as the purest transmission and representation of the ancient Wisdom Religion in our time.¹⁴³¹ As will be shown below, this discourse of ‘system’ significantly clashed with the other important Theosophical discourse of universalism—the cultivation of a non-dogmatic research society and universal brotherhood.

Aspects, of what later became the core doctrines of this specific Theosophical system, were already to some extent discussed by Blavatsky in

Doctrine, I, pp. xxxviii, 13; II, 310, 476; HPB, ‘Mistaken Notions on The Secret Doctrine’, in HPBCW, XII, 234-5. For the use of secrecy as social capital in esoteric discourse, see Kocku von Stuckrad, ‘Secrecy as Social Capital’, in *Constructing Tradition: Means and Myths of Transmission in Western Esotericism*, ed. by Andreas B. Kilcher (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 239-52.

¹⁴²⁸ See below. After Blavatsky’s death, the Theosophical ‘system’ was also expanded by several Theosophists and neo-Theosophists. Adyar Theosophists such as Charles W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant changed, rearranged and expanded on Blavatsky’s ‘system’ in several of their books. American Theosophists, such as Gottfried de Purucker and Geoffrey Barborka also systematized Blavatsky’s ‘system’ in many of their comprehensive works. Among the most elaborate neo-Theosophists was Alice A. Bailey whose 24+ books also greatly expanded the Theosophical ‘system’.

¹⁴²⁹ See chapter 2.1 and 2.2.

¹⁴³⁰ See chapter 2.7 Blavatsky’s Discourse for Universal Brotherhood, and see below.

¹⁴³¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 636.

her first occult article 'Hiraf' (1875) and in *Isis Unveiled* (1877), such as the triune nature of man,¹⁴³² lost continents,¹⁴³³ earlier races of men¹⁴³⁴ and cosmic time cycles.¹⁴³⁵ But from 17 October 1880 and onwards, when A. P. Sinnett and Allan Octavian Hume (1880-1886) began to receive the so-called *Mahatma Letters* from what was believed to be Himalayan adepts of esoteric science, many new specific details were added for the first time.¹⁴³⁶ These correspondences with the Mahatmas and the reception of their teachings inaugurated the gradual exposition of the esoteric system that came to be defined by Blavatsky as the 'trans-Himalayan esoteric doctrine'¹⁴³⁷ or the system of 'Trans-Himalayan Esotericism'¹⁴³⁸ or the 'Arhat Esoteric School'¹⁴³⁹ or the 'Tibetan Brotherhood' of mahatmas.¹⁴⁴⁰ This trans-Himalayan esoteric doctrine was also intimately related to what was defined as the 'Cis-Himalayan' or ancient Aryan esoteric doctrine (see below for more details).

In the *Mahatma Letters* to A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume several original, esoteric, cosmological and psychological ideas were given (even though parallels of course can be found among many esoteric traditions).¹⁴⁴¹ The first

¹⁴³² Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 309; II, 114, 362, 587-88.

¹⁴³³ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 413, 529, 545, 557-58, 590-98.

¹⁴³⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. xxxviii, 51, 116, 294, 303, 545, 590.

¹⁴³⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 30-35, 293.

¹⁴³⁶ See *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*.

¹⁴³⁷ T. Subba Row and Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), III (1982), 400-24 (p. 419) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, III, 4 (1882), 93-99); see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 636.

¹⁴³⁸ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII (2nd edn, 3rd print. 1987), 345-51 (p. 346) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII, 95 (1887), 651-55); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 110; II, 22.

¹⁴³⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 157. For 'Arhat esoteric doctrine', see also HPB, 'The Septenary Principle in Esotericism', in HPBCW, IV (1991), 574-82 (p. 574) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 10 (1883), 253-56); HPB, 'Tibetan Teachings: A Long-Delayed Promise Fulfilled', in HPBCW, VI (1991), 94-113 (pp. 99-112, but esp. 99) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, XV, 85-86 (1894 [but older material]), 9-17 and 97-104).

¹⁴⁴⁰ Row and HPB (comments and appendices), 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 400-424 (p. 400).

¹⁴⁴¹ It should be noted that Hume lost interest in The Theosophical Society in

public exposition of the ideas expressed in the *Mahatma Letters* was published anonymously in a series of articles in *The Theosophist* between 1881 and 1882 as 'Fragments of Occult Truth'.¹⁴⁴² Especially the first article, which for the first time presented a sevenfold schema of the esoteric constitution of man, among other ideas¹⁴⁴³, initiated a long debate between the Vedanta scholar, theosophist and disciple of mahatma Morya, Tallapragada Subba Row (1856-1890)¹⁴⁴⁴ and Blavatsky on the classification of the esoteric constitution of man (esoteric psychology) and more importantly, to the purpose of this present chapter, about the distinction or similarity between the so-called secret Tibetan or Trans-Himalayan Arhat system expressed in the *Mahatma Letters* and 'Fragments of Occult Truth' (and other later works, see below) and what was defined as the esoteric Aryan or ancient Brahmanical secret doctrine, which initially formed the foundation for Row's own thoughts or views that were related to the teachings of Vedanta and Raja Yoga. This early and important defining discussion of the similarities and distinctions between the two specific esoteric systems, originating with 'adepts', began with Row's response to the first article of 'Fragments of Occult Truth' in a private letter to Blavatsky that was published, without Row's knowledge, as 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man' in the *Theosophist*, January 1882, edited by Blavatsky and with her many comments, which included the construction of the

1883, but partly influenced by the mahatma letters he later became instrumental in the formation of the Indian National Congress, see Mark Bevir, 'Theosophy and the Origins of the Indian National Congress' in *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 7, 1-3 (2003), 99-115; W. Travis Hanes III, 'On the Origins of the Indian National Congress: A Case Study of Cross-Cultural Synthesis', *Journal of World History* 4, 1 (1993), 69-98.

¹⁴⁴² A. O. Hume was the author, see [A. O. Hume], 'Fragments of Occult Truth [No. 1]', *The Theosophist*, III, 1 (1881), 17-22; [A. O. Hume], 'Fragments of Occult Truth (No. 2 of the Series)', *The Theosophist*, III (1882), 157-60; [A. O. Hume], 'Fragments of Occult Truth (No. 3 of the Series)', *The Theosophist*, III (1882), 307-14.

¹⁴⁴³ [Hume], 'Fragments of Occult Truth [No. 1]', 18-19; see also Julie Hall, 'The Saptaparṇa: The Meaning and Origins of the Theosophical Septenary Constitution of Man', in *Theosophical History*, XII, 4 (2007), 5-38.

¹⁴⁴⁴ For more on Tallapragada Subba Row, see Henk J. Spierenburg, 'The Life of T. Subba Row', in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), I, pp. xv-xxiv.

title of the article.¹⁴⁴⁵

In this noteworthy article/letter, the existence of the two esoteric systems becomes clear for the first time. Row however argued, as also Blavatsky continually asserted later on, that the 'Aryan' and the 'Chaldeo-Tibetan' esoteric doctrines, as he called them, are fundamentally identical.¹⁴⁴⁶ He further states that the 'Chaldeo-Tibetan' doctrine is divided into two parts: (1) the doctrines of the Lamaists; and (2) the doctrines of the Arhats (or initiates) 'adopted by the Himalayan or Tibetan Brotherhood.'¹⁴⁴⁷ Thus Tibetan Buddhism as such is not identical with the teachings of the adepts—though often associated in Theosophical teachings. The real ancient 'Aryan' is further specified as a secret doctrine pre-dating the compilation of the *Vedas* and as the key that unites and harmonizes all the orthodox Indian systems of philosophy.¹⁴⁴⁸ Row, however, finds it difficult to say which of the two systems (the Indian or the Tibetan) came first, whether one of them is derived directly from the other or if they were both derived from the same source.¹⁴⁴⁹ In the first appendix to the article Blavatsky specifies that they had a common source, which she eclectically terms 'the Aryan-Chaldeo-Tibetan doctrine' (indicating its ancient geo-universal disposition), a direct synonym of the 'Wisdom-Religion', as it was common to the 'esoteric doctrines of every people who once had or still have it.'¹⁴⁵⁰

The historical source of the ancient Aryan esotericism is speculated by Row to be, what he termed, the 'sacred Island', based on Blavatsky's passage on occult history in *Isis Unveiled*,¹⁴⁵¹ now located in the area of the Gobi

¹⁴⁴⁵ See Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 400-24.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 400.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 400.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 401.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 401.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 419.

¹⁴⁵¹ See Blavatsky, *Isis unveiled*, I, 589.

desert.¹⁴⁵² Blavatsky identifies this location in a note to Row's text with the mythic 'Scham-bha-la' [Shambhala].¹⁴⁵³ According to Row, the 'Aryan' doctrine is, however, distinct from the 'Chaldeo-Tibetan' in one respect: the ancient Aryan adepts appended their secret teachings to the occult powers of nature originally taught by the ancient Atlanteans,¹⁴⁵⁴ this the Tibetan adepts did not, which is thus the main cause of difference between the two systems.¹⁴⁵⁵ In the remaining part of this historically central article Row and Blavatsky compare the two esoteric doctrines and often associate the 'Chaldeo-Tibetan' with Buddhism and the Aryan with Brahmanism as their respective exoteric inheritors. Blavatsky also equates the 'Chaldeo-Tibetan' system with the 'Trans-Himalayan esoteric doctrine'.¹⁴⁵⁶ Later on in the debate the ancient Aryan Secret Doctrine became associated with 'Cis-Himalayan' (South of the main Himalaya mountain range) esotericism to distinguish it from the 'Trans-Himalayan' (North of the main Himalayan mountain range) esotericism.¹⁴⁵⁷

This first defining article of the 'will to system', deeply related to the gradual unveiling of the esoteric system of the adepts, however, evoked debate and criticism because of the seeming confusion of the existence of two—

¹⁴⁵² Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 402.

¹⁴⁵³ In Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 402n this is rendered 'Śambhala', but in the original in *The Theosophist*, III, January 1882, pp. 93n the rendering 'Scham-bha-la' is used. According to Henk J. Spierenburg this is derived from the German transcription of I. J. Schmidt, *Tibetisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch* (St. Petersburg und Vienna: W. Gräffs erben, 1841), p. 574b, see, *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), I, 18 (note 78); see also HPB, 'Classification of "Principles"', in HPBCW, VII, 284-300 (pp. 287-8) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII, 91 (1887), 448-56).

¹⁴⁵⁴ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 402-403.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 402-403; Blavatsky, *Isis unveiled*, I, 589-94.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Row and HPB, 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man', in HPBCW, III, 419.

¹⁴⁵⁷ See Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 308, 574, 602-603.

perhaps mutually incompatible—esoteric systems.¹⁴⁵⁸ Other points of critique, that arose, were that the sevenfold classification was to be found nowhere in ancient oriental doctrines and some Hindu members of the T.S. began to view the Theosophical Society as masked Buddhism.¹⁴⁵⁹ However, soon thereafter Blavatsky made great effort in her article ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ published July 1883 to maintain coherency and uniformity by arguing that the sevenfold constitution in nature, cosmos and man was supported by the Vedanta scholar Row’s own research and was in fact to be found in many early oriental sources such as the *Atharva-Veda*,¹⁴⁶⁰ *Laws of Manu*,¹⁴⁶¹ the *Nyaya Sutras*,¹⁴⁶² the *Upanishads*,¹⁴⁶³ the *Sankhya-Karika*,¹⁴⁶⁴ the *Atma Bodha* by Sankaracharya¹⁴⁶⁵ and elsewhere such as in the Chaldean account of the Deluge¹⁴⁶⁶ and the Mosaic books.¹⁴⁶⁷ In other words the septenary division of cosmos and man was defined as the basic principle of the esoteric system whether ancient or modern.

In the meantime, A. P. Sinnett, who recently had returned to London after having lost his post in India as editor of the leading English daily of India, *The Pioneer*, had published the first major systematization of the Trans-Himalayan ideas presented in the *Mahatma Letters*, including cosmological, spiritual and psychological doctrines on the sevenfold constitution of man in his book problematically entitled *Esoteric Buddhism* (ca. 11 June 1883).¹⁴⁶⁸ The book provoked much debate and interest but because of its title, it also added to the confusion between the so-called Trans-Himalayan teachings of the mahatmas, Theosophy in general and Buddhism.¹⁴⁶⁹ It also furthered the notion of Tibetan

¹⁴⁵⁸ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 574.

¹⁴⁵⁹ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 574.

¹⁴⁶⁰ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 575, 579.

¹⁴⁶¹ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 576. .

¹⁴⁶² HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 579-80.

¹⁴⁶³ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 579-80.

¹⁴⁶⁴ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 580.

¹⁴⁶⁵ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 582.

¹⁴⁶⁶ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 578.

¹⁴⁶⁷ HPB, ‘The Septenary Principle in Esotericism’ in HPBCW, IV, 578.

¹⁴⁶⁸ See A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism* (London: Trübner & Co., 1883).

¹⁴⁶⁹ Blavatsky summed up some of these problems, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xvii-xix; HPB, ‘[Comments to] *Esoteric Buddhism* and *The*

or Trans-Himalayan esotericism rather than that of Cis-Himalaya or the Brahmanical esotericism. Blavatsky and others such as Row discussed Sinnett's book at length and in several articles prior to the publication of the *Secret Doctrine* in 1888, especially Blavatsky added numerous significant details on esoteric cosmology, occult history, including lost civilizations of pre-history, to the development of 'the system'.¹⁴⁷⁰

Row addressed some of the arisen confusion among Hindu Theosophists by stating that Sinnett had not intended to argue that Buddhism was the religion closest to the ancient Wisdom-Religion, but that exoteric Buddhism, at present, is closer to the esoteric doctrine than any other exoteric religion.¹⁴⁷¹ Row also sought to counter some of the confusion that had arisen from the sevenfold classification of the constitution of man in comparison to the 'Āryan Hindu Occult System', as modern Vedanta teachers represented it. This was done by comparing the various systems with the help of a diagram, which became

Secret Doctrine', HPBCW, X (2nd edn 1974) 177-88 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 15 (November 1888) 247-54).

¹⁴⁷⁰ HPB, 'Cosmical Rings and Rounds', in HPBCW, IV (1991), 538-40 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 9 (1883), 231-32); HPB, "'Esoteric Buddhism'", in HPBCW, IV (1991), 573-74 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 10 (1883), 253); HPB, 'The Septenary Principle in Esotericism' in HPBCW, IV; HPB, 'Devachan: Western Structure and Eastern Version', in HPBCW, V (1991), 70-94, (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 11, 47 (1883), 266-72); HPB, 'Transmigration of the Life-Atoms', in HPBCW, V (1991), 109-17 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 11, 47 (1883), 286-88); see especially HPB, 'Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism', in HPBCW, V (1991), 139-262, (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 12, 48 (September 1883), 139-97; *The Theosophist*, V, 1, 49 (October 1883), 3-10; *The Theosophist*, V, 2, 50 (November 1883), 35-44); HPB, 'Esoteric Buddhism and its Critic', in HPBCW, V (1991), 329-34, (first publ. in *Light*, III, 147 (1883), 473); HPB, 'The *St. James' Gazette* and *Esoteric Buddhism*', in HPBCW, V (1991), 342-51 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 2, 50 (1883), 46-48); see also T. Subba Row's 'Note to 'Esoteric Buddhism and Hinduism'', in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spiereburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), II, 267-68 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, (June 1884), 223-25). As late as May 1888, before the publication of *The Secret Doctrine* in October-December the same year, *Esoteric Buddhism* was still discussed by Blavatsky, see HPB, 'A Puzzle in *Esoteric Buddhism*', in HPBCW, IX (2nd edn 1986), 280-85 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 9 (1888), 254-60).

¹⁴⁷¹ Row, 'Note to 'Esoteric Buddhism and Hinduism'', II, 267.

central to future discussions on the subject (see below).¹⁴⁷²

| CLASSIFICATION IN ESOTERIC BUDDHISM. | VEDANTIC CLASSIFICATION. | CLASSIFICATION IN TARAKA RAJA YOGA. |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Sthula Sarira. | Annamaya kosa.* | } Sthulopadhi.§ |
| 2. Prana.† | } Pranamaya kosa. | |
| 3. The vehicle of Prana.‡ | | |
| 4. Kama Rupa. | } Manomaya kosa. | } Sukshmopadhi. |
| 5. Mind { (a) Volitions and feelings, etc. (b) Vignanam. | | |
| 6. Spiritual Soul. | Anandamaya kosa. | Karanopadhi. |
| 7. Atma. | Atma. | Atma. |

Other important theosophists such as Anna Kingsford (1846-1888)—who had recently (7 January 1883) become president of the British Theosophical Society, which upon her suggestion was renamed the ‘London Lodge’, May 1883—and her spiritual companion Edward Maitland (1824-1897)—who was elected co-vice president with the former president Dr. George Wyld, 1821-1906, at the same time¹⁴⁷³—however contested the new oriental emphasis and the emergence of a specific system within the Theosophical Society resulting from the publication of Sinnett’s book and the authoritative standing of the secret Tibetan mahatmas among the theosophists. Kingsford complained of the ‘hero worship’ that now surrounded the mahatmas¹⁴⁷⁴ and that A. P. Sinnett was now regarded as an apostle of a ‘new system’¹⁴⁷⁵ due to his *Esoteric Buddhism* by many regarded as ‘orthodox people regard the Bible’.¹⁴⁷⁶ This emerging sectarian tendency was in no way the purpose of the T.S., Kingsford

¹⁴⁷² Row, ‘Note to ‘Esoteric Buddhism and Hinduism’’, II, 267-68.

¹⁴⁷³ Alan Pert, *Red Cactus: The Life of Anna Kingsford* (Watsons Bay, Australia: Books & Writers, 2006), p. 107; Anna (Bonus) Kingsford, Edward Maitland (some Letters) and Samuel Hopgood Hart (biographical preface and ed.), *The Credo of Christendom and other Addresses and Essays on Esoteric Christianity* (London: John M. Watkins, 1916), p. 13.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Pert, *Red Cactus*, p. 117.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Pert, *Red Cactus*, p. 121.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Pert, *Red Cactus*, p. 117.

complained.¹⁴⁷⁷

Row responded to Kingsford's *A Letter Addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge*¹⁴⁷⁸ by stating that while Sinnett's book was a specific 'system', however fragmentary it was at present, it did not endorsed a single system and 'merely intended to be an important contribution to the mass of information' researched by the Theosophical Society, as it otherwise, correctly stated by Kingsford, would go against the rules of the Theosophical Society's no-dogma policy.¹⁴⁷⁹ The conflict between the two great personages, Sinnett and Kingsford, however split the London Lodge and led to the establishing of another lodge, the 'Hermetic Lodge' of the Theosophical Society in London, chartered 9 April 1884, to be directed by Kingsford herself.¹⁴⁸⁰ This Theosophical lodge, however, never saw the light of day as Kingsford formed her own society instead, 'The Hermetic Society' on 22 April 1884.¹⁴⁸¹

This early conflict within the Theosophical Society, caused by the emerging 'will to system' and more immediately by the publication of Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*, is historically important as an indicator of the first symptom of a change of focus within the society from a more open-ended universalistic curiosity to the construction of a specific Theosophical system of meaning or a world-view based on the authority of hidden and extraordinary spiritual adepts.

Following this conflict, the system development continued in light of Blavatsky's extensive comments on *Esoteric Buddhism* and the work of other

¹⁴⁷⁷ Pert, *Red Cactus*, pp. 118, 120.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, *A Letter Addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society by the President and a Vice-President of the Lodge* (Shrewsbury: Printed by Atcham, December 16, 1883) [pamphlet of 33 pages].

¹⁴⁷⁹ T. Subba Row, *Observations on "a letter addressed to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, by the President and Vice President of the Lodge*, in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), I, 225-63 (p. 235) (first publ. by [same title], Madras: Graves, Cookson & Co., 1884) [pamphlet of 45pages].

¹⁴⁸⁰ Pert, *Red Cactus*, pp. 128-29.

¹⁴⁸¹ Pert, *Red Cactus*, p. 130.

Theosophists on the system. Mohini Chatterji and Laura C. Holloway, two theosophists, reworked much of the material given to Sinnett and Hume in the *Mahatma Letters* and anonymously published a small book or pamphlet entitled *Man: Fragments of a Forgotten History by "Two Chelâs"* (1885, 2nd edn 1887).¹⁴⁸² By now the main contours of the system had thus been formed, but Row began cautiously to rebel criticising the sevenfold scheme in several lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita* (27 December - 30 December 1886).¹⁴⁸³

Row was no doubt aware of Blavatsky's strong discourse of 'system' structured around the sevenfold constitution of macro- and micro-cosmos. He therefore began his first lecture on the Gita by carefully repeating that the T.S is without any specific creed or particular system of religious philosophy and that not all members agree on one specific system.¹⁴⁸⁴ Along the same lines of thought, he also stated that the ideas expressed in his lectures are his own personal views and not the views of the Society.¹⁴⁸⁵ Not far into his lectures, however, he soon began to dispute the sevenfold classification of principles in man in preference of the fourfold Tāraka Raja Yoga classification.¹⁴⁸⁶

¹⁴⁸² Mohini Chatterji and Laura C. Holloway, *Man: Fragments of a Forgotten History by "Two Chelâs"*, 2nd rev. edn (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887 [1885]); see also Blavatsky's notes for the revised edition in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett and other Miscellaneous Letters*, transcribed and compiled by A. T. Barker (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1973 [1925]), pp. 254-61.

¹⁴⁸³ T. Subba. Row, 'Bhagavad Gītā', in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), II, 450-538 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII (February 1887), 299-311; March 1887, 359-70; April 1887, 430-47; May 1887, p. 511 (corrections); July 1887, 633-48).

¹⁴⁸⁴ Row, 'Bhagavad Gītā', 450.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Row, 'Bhagavad Gītā', 450.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Row, 'Bhagavad Gītā', 453-54; Tāraka Raja Yoga is not a widely known form of yoga and what it exactly entails does not seem to have been explored further in Theosophical literature or in scholarly studies on Blavatsky. Tāraka means 'deliverer' and the yoga form is medieval and also called the secret doctrine, based on light phenomena, for further details see, Georg Feuerstein, *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2002), pp. 435-36; see also *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation*, ed. by Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattcharya, 13 vols [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Delhi:

Row was a highly regarded member of the Theosophical Society and was a key figure for Blavatsky in India, being an educated Indian scholar, so his divergence from the ‘system’, as Blavatsky and others had formulated it, was upsetting. Soon after the publication of Row’s first lectures in the *Theosophist* (February-July 1887), Blavatsky, in her article ‘Classification of “Principles”’, therefore found it necessary to respond discursively in an effort to maintain coherency in the system.¹⁴⁸⁷ Blavatsky sought to make sense of what Row had said as she deemed that such apparent inconsistencies expressed by Row in relation to the system might be misused by critics of theosophy.¹⁴⁸⁸ Blavatsky also reminds her readers that Row had previously acknowledged the sevenfold classification¹⁴⁸⁹ and that the difference between the two systems does not include the sevenfold classification, as this is primary to all esotericism.¹⁴⁹⁰ She furthermore indicated that the classification adopted by Row was a practical classification—not the ancient Aryan-Arhat esoteric classification. Blavatsky’s response, however, only initiated a new article by Row entitled ‘The Constitution of the Microcosm’ (May 1887).¹⁴⁹¹ In this article Row asserted that his views were not based on any orthodox Brahmanical or exoteric practical standpoint as Blavatsky had claimed and as she had wanted her reader to believe.¹⁴⁹² Provoked, Row now set out to dissect and compare the so-called original teachings, as he called them, expounded in ‘Fragments of Occult Truth’, *Esoteric Buddhism* and *Man: Fragments of a Forgotten History* in order to show how the doctrine on the sevenfold constitution of man was never fixed but had undergone change and had evolved and that the above works contain several

Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2008), XII, 361, 364, 589-92.

¹⁴⁸⁷ HPB, ‘Classification of “Principles”’, in HPBCW, VII, 284-300.

¹⁴⁸⁸ HPB, ‘Classification of “Principles”’, in HPBCW, VII, 285.

¹⁴⁸⁹ HPB, ‘Classification of “Principles”’, in HPBCW, VII, 286.

¹⁴⁹⁰ HPB, ‘Classification of “Principles”’, in HPBCW, VII, 286-87.

¹⁴⁹¹ T. Subba Row, ‘The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part I]’, in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), II, 557-70 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, VIII (May 1887), 504-11).

¹⁴⁹² Row, ‘The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]’, II, 558-59; see also T. Subba Row, ‘The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]’, in *T. Subba Row Collected Writings*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2 vols (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 2001), II, 577-88 (p. 583) (first publ. *The Theosophist*, VIII (August 1887) 699-707).

inconsistencies.¹⁴⁹³ Pressed by Blavatsky's discourse, Row also raised the concern previously raised by Kingsford that the T. S. was evolving 'an orthodox creed from the materials supplied by the above mentioned sources and ... [was raising] the publications above named to the dignity of an original revelation'¹⁴⁹⁴ which, Row argued, is not in accord with the original policy of the T.S.¹⁴⁹⁵ In answer to this, Blavatsky pressed on and responded in 'Re-Classification of Principles' (August 1887).¹⁴⁹⁶ Here Blavatsky called Row's article a new 'manifesto'¹⁴⁹⁷ and iterated that everyone was free to give full expression to their own ideas or personal views and that Blavatsky herself stood for Trans-Himalayan esotericism and in some respects ancient Cis-Himalayan Brahmanism.¹⁴⁹⁸ Blavatsky thus confirmed that the T.S. had no creed, but maintained that the sevenfold classification is the true esoteric one. In the long run this double message proved difficult for Theosophists to follow as the charismatic Blavatsky focused much of her own work on the elaboration of the specific system, raised to be the purest transmission, and backed by the mahatmas. Yet, Blavatsky maintained

'No one is forced to accept *my* opinions or teachings in the Theosophical Society'¹⁴⁹⁹

In her reply to Row, Blavatsky further substantiated that 'Fragments of Occult Truth' and *Esoteric Buddhism* were meant to explain Trans-Himalayan wisdom originating from 'Shambhala',¹⁵⁰⁰ but still held that all esotericism is basically the same—the universal wisdom religion—only the modes of thought and expressions differ.¹⁵⁰¹ Blavatsky apologetically writes: 'I claimed to know the esoteric philosophy of the trans-Himâlayan Occultists and no more' and states that when she came to India she did not know much of the six schools of

¹⁴⁹³ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part I]', II, 559-70.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part I]', II, 560.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part I]', II, 560-61.

¹⁴⁹⁶ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 345-51.

¹⁴⁹⁷ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 345.

¹⁴⁹⁸ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 346.

¹⁴⁹⁹ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 351.

¹⁵⁰⁰ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 347.

¹⁵⁰¹ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 347-48.

Brāhmanism.¹⁵⁰² Blavatsky furthermore argued that some confusion between various systems might have arisen due to the fact that she had rendered the trans-Himalayan teachings in Sanskrit terms used in Brahmanical philosophy.¹⁵⁰³ But in response to Row's claim that the doctrine had changed, Blavatsky stated that she was never the sole expounder of all the works mentioned above and that she would never change the classification.¹⁵⁰⁴ Blavatsky's discursive solution to the controversy over the development of a specific system in the T.S. was thus, simply put, that the Theosophical Society has a non-dogmatic openness to all religions and philosophies, but that Blavatsky and some other theosophists believed in and represented trans-Himalayan esotericism. Other systems might differ from the trans-Himalayan and anyone is free to believe in them, but Blavatsky herself believed that the sevenfold classification is the true esoteric model behind them all.

Row's final reply to Blavatsky was published as the second part of his article 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]' (August 1887).¹⁵⁰⁵ In conclusion, Row states that he had never denied the importance of the sevenfold classification, but again states that his own views are not simply orthodox Brahmanism.¹⁵⁰⁶ Row specifies that the Taraka system and Vedanta, from which he derived his views, are not two different systems¹⁵⁰⁷ and rhetorically claims that the Taraka is actually the most important branch of the wisdom-religion itself and that it equally comes from Shambhala.¹⁵⁰⁸ Finally, Row argues that the reason he disputed the sevenfold classification by discussing other classifications was to pave the way for the 'real sevenfold classification' that is still esoteric¹⁵⁰⁹ and he ends by stating that he regrets the dispute with Blavatsky.¹⁵¹⁰

¹⁵⁰² HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 347-48.

¹⁵⁰³ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 348-50.

¹⁵⁰⁴ HPB, 'Re-Classification of Principles', in HPBCW, VII, 349.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]', II, 577-88.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]', II, 577, 581.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]', II, 580-81.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]', II, 581.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]', II, 587.

¹⁵¹⁰ Row, 'The Constitution of the Microcosm [Part II]', II, 588.

In the quest for meaning, as ‘system’, the above discussion had thus led to the weighing of esoteric, social capital against each other, such as ‘the true esoteric classification’, the closest relation to the wisdom-religion or the origination in Shambhala. The esoteric system was not and could not be balanced out on reason alone but on authoritative origination. Blavatsky, however, sympathetically ended her discussion with Row and others on the apparent inconsistencies between the two systems and the classification of the human constitution with the publication of her massive two-volume work *The Secret Doctrine*—published the following year, in October-December 1888.¹⁵¹¹ Even though Blavatsky knew that her work would settle many discussions—and perhaps initiate new ones—she was careful not to stir up further conflicts by cautiously stating in numerous instances that

In some places [the Sanskrit words placed in brackets in the stanzas] ... may be incomplete and even inadequate from the Hindu standpoint; but in the meaning attached to them in Trans-Himalayan Esotericism they are correct. In every case the writer takes any blame upon herself.¹⁵¹²

Blavatsky was, no doubt, respectfully influenced by Row and included material from his articles, discussed above. She stated that ‘as some discussion has arisen of late about the best classification to be adopted for the division of the microcosmic entity, **two systems** are now appended with a view to facilitate comparison’.¹⁵¹³ Here Blavatsky includes Row’s diagram appended above and states that Row

¹⁵¹¹ For details on the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, see Boris De Zirkoff, ‘The Secret Doctrine’, in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), X, 157-59. A third volume was added to the to *The Secret Doctrine* in 1897. It consists of material left behind by Blavatsky after her death. G. R. S. Mead and Annie Besant included this material and some of the ‘Esoteric Instruction’ material, used in the Esoteric Section of the TS, as the third volume of their ‘Third and Revised Edition’ of *The Secret Doctrine*, see H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1897), III. Much of this material is included in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), XIV (1995).

¹⁵¹² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 22, see also 110.

¹⁵¹³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 157 [bold emphasis is mine].

prefers the Brahmanical division of the Raja Yoga, and from a metaphysical point of view he is quite right. But, as it is a question of simple choice and expediency, we hold in this work to the “time-honoured” classification of the trans-Himalayan “Arhat Esoteric School.”¹⁵¹⁴

This clearly sets *The Secret Doctrine* in relation to the trans-Himalayan system, but Blavatsky also maintained that the two systems—the cis- and trans-Himalayan—are fundamentally identical and that both are based on the septenary division in their esoteric aspects.¹⁵¹⁵

Blavatsky had originally hoped that Row would have played a greater role in the production of *The Secret Doctrine*, but he declined the editing¹⁵¹⁶

¹⁵¹⁴ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 157; For the various classificatory schemes of the constituents of man, which Blavatsky discussed in her works, see HPB, ‘E. S. T. Instructions: Instruction No. 1’, in HPBCW, XII (1987), 515-41 (pp. 530-31) (first printed privately on the Aryan Press, 1889-1890); *The Inner Group Teachings of H. P. Blavatsky to her personal pupils (1890-1891)*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg, 2nd rev. and enlarged edn (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 1995), pp. 28-40, 54, 105-109, 128-47; Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 90-93.

¹⁵¹⁵ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 635-37, see also 602-603; Blavatsky also specifies that the Cis-Himalayan is the original cosmology behind the *The Laws of Manu*, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 574, see also 308.

¹⁵¹⁶ Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002 [1895]), III, 398: ‘About the same time [the first week of December 1886] I received from H.P.B., for reading and revision by T. Subba Row and myself, the MS. of Vol. I of *The Secret Doctrine*; but in his then captious mood the former refused to do more than read it, saying that it was so full of mistakes that if he touched it he should have to rewrite it altogether! This was mere pique, but did good, for when I reported his remark to H.P.B. she was greatly distressed, and set to work and went over the MS. most carefully, correcting many errors due to slipshod literary methods, and with the help of European friends making the book what it is now’. See also Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002 [1895]), IV, 23, 25: ‘It is painful beyond words to read her [HPB’s] correspondence from Europe [in 1887], and see how she suffered from various causes, fretting and worrying too often over mare’s nests. Out of the sorest grievances I select the defection of T. Subba Row [...]; the refusal of Subba Row to edit the *Secret Doctrine* MSS., contrary to his original promise, although she had it type-copied at a cost of £ 80 and sent me for that purpose; his wholesale condemnation of it’ and ‘As regarded her return to India, she had no heart

and, like Kingsford, resigned from the Theosophical Society in 1888, yet still on friendly terms.¹⁵¹⁷ In the production of *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky, however, corresponded with Sinnett who wanted a role in this but was generally refused even though the letters to Sinnett contain some significant esoteric material that never became part of *The Secret Doctrine*, at least not in that same form.¹⁵¹⁸

No matter how eclectic Blavatsky's work had been and continued to be and no matter how universal and dogma-free the Theosophical Society sought to be, Blavatsky presented the core of her new major work *The Secret Doctrine* as an exposition of the esoteric system of trans-Himalayan wisdom—a connection that was especially emphasised as each of the first major parts of each of the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* consist of Blavatsky's commentaries on selected and sometimes paraphrased¹⁵¹⁹ translations of stanzas (Sk. slokas) from what Blavatsky termed *The Book of Dzyan*.¹⁵²⁰

According to Blavatsky, this *Book of Dzyan* is completely unknown to Western scholarship and philology,¹⁵²¹ but she claimed to have gained access to the archaic palm leaf manuscript that had mysteriously been 'made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process.'¹⁵²²

for it if Subba Row was to be her enemy, so much had she loved and respected him'.

¹⁵¹⁷ See Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, IV, 43, 74.

¹⁵¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, pp. 241-54, see also pp. 254-61.

¹⁵¹⁹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 15n; John Algeo, *Senzar: The Mystery of the Mystery Language* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1988), p. 3.

¹⁵²⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 13. Blavatsky states that *The Secret Doctrine* is based on the *Book of Dzyan*, Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 13, and that there are a few ideas which constitute the main ideas of the system such as the three fundamental propositions see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 14-18. From Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 20-22, she gives summaries of the seven stanzas. And in Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 27-34, she gives details on their ideas of cosmic evolution. The next 12 stanzas are given in Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 15-21. The Book of Dzyan was also termed *The Secret Book of Dzyan* in Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 25, and Blavatsky also refers to *Commentaries on the Book of Dzyan* throughout *The Secret Doctrine*.

¹⁵²¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xxii.

¹⁵²² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 1. One can only presume that the palm leaf MS mentioned here is the *Book of Dzyan*, as the *Book of Dzyan* is not

Blavatsky asserts that ‘Dzyan’ (or ‘Dzyn’, ‘Dzen’, ‘Dzan’) is a Tibetan corruption (again the Tibetan association) of the Sanskrit ‘Jnana’ (wisdom, knowledge, gnosis) as ‘Dzin’ also means knowledge in Tibetan¹⁵²³ and elsewhere she maintains that the Sanskrit ‘Dhyan’ or ‘Dhyana’ denotes mystic meditation/contemplation.¹⁵²⁴ Even though these two terms (Jnana and Dhyana) have different connotations this might not indicate a contradiction of terms, as Guénon argued,¹⁵²⁵ because in a few places Blavatsky actually states that Jnana leads to Dhyana and that the term Dzyan is an approximation of this process.¹⁵²⁶ In this connection Blavatsky also associates the trans-Himalayan Dzyan with ‘Theosophy’, ‘Jñana-Vidyâ’, ‘Brahma-Vidyâ’ of the Hindus and ‘the science of the *true* Râja-Yogis’ taught in many schools in the East as an indication of the mystic process that leads from contemplation to true wisdom.¹⁵²⁷ At times Blavatsky simply indicates that the term Dzyan is used to refer to ‘esoteric schools’ of trans-Himalayan esotericism or yoga as

Dan, now become in modern Chinese and Tibetan phonetics *ch’an*, is the general term for the esoteric schools, and their literature. In the old books, the word *Janna* is defined as “to reform one’s self by meditation and knowledge,” a second *inner* birth. Hence Dzan, *Djan* phonetically, the “Book of *Dzyan*.”¹⁵²⁸

The cause of the transliteration problem is, according to Blavatsky, due

mentioned directly in relation to the description of the palm MS.

¹⁵²³ Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, p. 107; HPB, ‘Notes on Abbé Roca’s “Esotericism of Christian Dogma”’, in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 372-91 (p. 380) (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, II, 9 (1887); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, xxi.

¹⁵²⁴ HPB, ‘The Secret Books of “Lam-Rim” and Dzyan’, in HPBCW, XIV, 422-24 (pp. 422); Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, xx, 434. See also the previous note.

¹⁵²⁵ René Guénon, *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion*, trans. by Alvin Moore, Jr., Cecil Bethell, Hubert and Rohini Schiff (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004 [1921]), p. 85n.

¹⁵²⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xx, 434.

¹⁵²⁷ HPB ‘The Beacon of the unknown’, in HPBCW, XI, (1973) 248-83 (p. 271) (first publ. in *La Revue Théosophique*, I, 3, 4, 5, 6 (1889), 1-9, 1-7, 1-6, 1-9, trans. from the French); see also ‘The Bowen Notes’ on ‘The Secret Doctrine and its Study’ in John Algeo, *Getting Acquainted with The Secret Doctrine*, Appendix III (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 1989), p. 59, where the study of the *Secret Doctrine* is described by Blavatsky as an exercise in Jnana yoga.

¹⁵²⁸ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xx.

to the fact that the original *Book of Dzyan* is expounded in a lost language, which she terms 'Senzar'.¹⁵²⁹ She thus claims to make use of the Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit translations of the original Senzar commentaries and glosses on the *Book of Dzyan* in addition to the actual *Book of Dzyan*, in order to render it meaningful to modern Western readers and for the instruction of students in Occultism.¹⁵³⁰

The specific historical details given by Blavatsky on the *Book of Dzyan* and its trans-Himalayan association were first published posthumously in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (1887) from papers found in Blavatsky's desk after her death, edited by Annie Besant and G.R.S. Mead.

The *Book of Dzyan* ... is the first volume of the Commentaries upon the seven secret folios of *Kiu-te*, and a Glossary of the public works of the same name. Thirty-five volumes of *Kiu-te* for exoteric purposes and the use of the laymen may be found in the possession of the Tibetan Gelugpa Lamas, in the library of any monastery; and also fourteen books of Commentaries and Annotations on the same by the initiated Teachers. Strictly speaking, those thirty-five books ought to be termed "The Popularised Version" of the Secret Doctrine, full of myths, blunders, and errors; the fourteen volumes of *Commentaries*, on the other hand—with their translations, annotations, and an ample glossary of Occult terms, worked out from one small archaic folio, the *Book of the Secret Wisdom of the World*—contain a digest of all the Occult Sciences. These, it appears, are kept secret and apart, in the charge of the Teshu-Lama of Shigatse. The *Books of Kiu-te* are comparatively modern, having been edited within the last millennium, whereas, the earliest volumes of the *Commentaries* are of untold antiquity, some fragments of the original cylinders having been preserved.¹⁵³¹

¹⁵²⁹ For more on 'Senzar' see, Algeo, *Senzar*.

¹⁵³⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 22-23, here Blavatsky also gives an example of how the text would sound and look if rendered in its "original" Tibetan and Senzar versions. For similar Tibetan rendering's of trans-Himalayan material, see also H. P. Blavatsky, 'Cosmological Notes from A. P. Sinnett's MS. Book' in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett and other Miscellaneous Letters*, transcribed and comp. by A. T Barker (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1973 [1925]), Appendix II, pp. 376-86; David Reigle and Nancy Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books: Twenty Years' Research* (San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1999), pp. 57-72.

¹⁵³¹ HPB, 'The Secret Books of "Lam-Rim" and Dzyan', in HPBCW, XIV, 422, see also 423-24 for more details; see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xlili.

In a letter to Sinnett, Blavatsky also connects the *Book of Dzyan* to ‘the Secret Book of “Maytreya Buddha” *Champai chhos Nga* (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind)’ and indicates that the *Secret Doctrine* is based on this book in addition to the stanzas of Dzyan.¹⁵³² Until fairly recently, the *Books of Kiu-te*, associated with the *Book of Dzyan* were unidentified but in the nineteenth-seventies and early nineteenth-eighties after many years of perplexity, they were identified (see below).

The *Book of Dzyan*, however, also took on a more religio-cosmic significance when Blavatsky stated in *The Secret Doctrine*, in connection with the mystical origins of the book, that

Tradition says, that it was taken down in *Senzar*, the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of the Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race ...¹⁵³³

This mythic trope has parallels to the traditional origins of the *Rig-Veda*, which is said to have been shown and sounded forth from eternal reality, perceived by the ancient sages (Sk. rishis) and thereafter handed down through oral tradition or transferred orally as sound (Sk. sabda) and speech (Sk. vac) from one generation of sages to the next to preserve its original form.¹⁵³⁴ Strong parallels can also be found in the mythology and tradition surrounding the Quran and numerous other religious texts throughout history.¹⁵³⁵

Blavatsky however further states that nearly every esoteric and holy book in the world are derived from it, as it

is the original work from which the many volumes of *Kiu-ti* were compiled. Not only this latter and the *Siphrah Dzeniouta* but even the *Sepher Jezirah*, ... the book of *Shu-king*, China’s primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Purânas in India, and the

¹⁵³² *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 195. It is uncertain if this book actually was used in the published version of *The Secret Doctrine*; for more on ‘the Secret Book of “Maytreya Buddha”’, see David Reigle and Nancy Reigle, *Blavatsky’s Secret Books*, pp. 85-86, 88.

¹⁵³³ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xliii.

¹⁵³⁴ William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1987), p. 70.

¹⁵³⁵ Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, pp. 49-66, 79-115.

Chaldean *Book of Numbers* and the *Pentateuch* itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume.¹⁵³⁶

In this sense, as a prototype of holy books, the *Book of Dzyan* hermeneutically becomes the embodied form of wisdom *per se* and thus parallels the idea of Blavatsky's source of all wisdom, the Wisdom-Religion itself.

The *Book of Dzyan*, the basis of Blavatsky's trans-Himalayan system, has however never been identified. Only, almost endless scholarly speculations exist as to its identity. Among the first critics was Arthur Lillie (1831-?) who sought, in *Madame Blavatsky and her "Theosophy" A Study* (1895), to show in parallel columns that Blavatsky's *Book of Dzyan* was copied or paraphrased from a *Rig-Veda* passage translated by Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837).¹⁵³⁷ While there are similarities, there is no direct evidence that this was the source of Blavatsky's *Book of Dzyan*. In the same year (1895) William Emmett Coleman also critically argued in his study of Blavatsky's sources that 'The Books of Dzyan was the work of Madame Blavatsky, —a compilation, in her own language, from a variety of nineteenth-century sources', but he unfortunately failed to give any concrete examples.¹⁵³⁸ The great Sanskrit scholar and historian of religions Max Müller (1823-1900) also appears to have indicated in a private correspondence with the scholar and theosophist G.R.S. Mead (around 1894) that he regarded Blavatsky's work as a misunderstood

¹⁵³⁶ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xliii.

¹⁵³⁷ Arthur Lillie, *Madame Blavatsky and her "Theosophy" A Study* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), pp. 8-9. Lillie does not give any reference to Colebrooke, but see Henry Thomas Colebrooke, *The creeds of India: an Historical Sketch: A Lecture Delivered to the Uddingston Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, October 9th, 1879* (Glasgow: Printed by W.G. Blackie, 1880), p. 23.

¹⁵³⁸ Wm. Emmette Coleman, 'The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings', in Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, trans. and ed. by Walter Leaf (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895), pp. 353-66 (p. 359). Coleman argued that the same was true of Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*, Coleman, 'The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings', pp. 361-62; See Cranston's experiment of verifying and disproving Coleman's statements in Sylvia Cranston, *H. P. B.: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky Founder of the Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993), pp. 382-84.

translation of Sanskrit and Pali texts—but according to Mead, he could not specifically point out from where the *Book of Dzyan* might have been copied.¹⁵³⁹

In 1909 the results of Giovanni Hoffman, professor of Chinese and Japanese in Rome, on the Dzyan stanzas were published in the *Theosophist*. Hoffman observes that Ly-tzian (Dzyan in Tibetan), a 4th century CE Taoist, retired into the mountains, perhaps Tibet, in order to meditate. During meditation he received a book entitled *Yu-Fu-King* or the *Book of Correspondences* used in the ‘tzainite priesthood’ containing teachings on being and non-being similar to those of Blavatsky.¹⁵⁴⁰ Hoffman refers to a publication on these teachings published in Florence 1878 and argues that Blavatsky presumably read this work and re-arranged the Taoist ideas found therein and falsely portrayed them as Vedic ideas.¹⁵⁴¹ The work published in Florence in 1878, loosely referred to by Hoffman, was *Il Buddha, Confucio e Lao-Tse* by Carlo Puini.¹⁵⁴² While it is true that Puini relates the story of the ‘*Yin-Fu-King*’, or as he translates it *Libro delle corrispondenze segrete*, and the story of ‘Li-tsiuan’ (or Ly-tzian, as Hoffman has it)¹⁵⁴³ there is first of all no evidence that Blavatsky ever read this work. Secondly, the work does not abound with material and does not offer any significant details or doctrines that are even close to or identical with Blavatsky’s *Book of Dzyan*. Finally, Blavatsky never claimed that the *Book of Dzyan* was, as Hoffman stated, Vedic.

In 1916 the theosophist L. A. Bosman pointed, in his pamphlet *The Mysteries of the Qabalah*, to a relation between the *Book of Dzyan* and a

¹⁵³⁹ See G. R. S. Mead, *Concerning H.P.B.: Stray Thoughts on Theosophy*, Adyar Pamphlets, no. 111, (Adyar, Chennai [Madras], India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1920), pp. 6-7 (first publ. in *The Theosophical Review*, XXXIV (1904)); see also Cranston, *H.P.B.*, pp. 384-85; Maria Carlson, “No Religion Higher than Truth”: *A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia 1875-1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 229.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Giovanni Hoffman, ‘The Book of Dzyân’, *The Theosophist*, XXXI, 1 (October 1909) 64-65.

¹⁵⁴¹ Hoffman, ‘The Book of Dzyân’, 65.

¹⁵⁴² Carlo Puini, *Il Buddha, Confucio e Lao-Tse; notizie e studii intorno all religion dell’Asia orientale* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1878).

¹⁵⁴³ Puini, *Il Buddha, Confucio e Lao-Tse*, pp. 464-65.

Kabbalistic work. Bosman wrote: ‘As one of the Zoharistic works, the Sepher Dzyaniouta must be mentioned, especially for its likeness to the Stanzas of Dzyan of the “Secret Doctrine.”’¹⁵⁴⁴ Bosman thus presumed both a likeness of title, Dzyaniouta, and content. However, Blavatsky had already made this connection herself in *Isis Unveiled* and in *The Secret Doctrine*.

The most ancient Hebrew document on occult learning—the *Siphrah Dzeniouta*—was compiled from it.¹⁵⁴⁵

The traditionalist René Guénon (1886-1951) brought the attention back to the Tibetan connection when he critically argued in *Le Théosophisme: Historie d’une Pseudo-Religion* (1921) that while the stanzas of Dzyan

contain many passages which are obviously ‘interpolated’ or even wholly invented, as well as others that at the very least are ‘arranged’ to accommodate Theosophical ideas¹⁵⁴⁶ [the authentic parts] ‘are quite simply borrowed from a translation of extracts from the *Kandjur* and *Tandjur*, published in 1836 in the twentieth volume of the *Asiatic Researches* of Calcutta, by Alexander Csoma de Körös.’¹⁵⁴⁷

Blavatsky certainly knew of Körös’ travels and his work, which she made use of and sometimes praised, but as with most of the orientalists, she also criticised Körös for not having known the deeper or more esoteric aspects of Tibetan Buddhism.¹⁵⁴⁸ Soon after the publication of Guénon’s work, in 1927, the Tibetan scholar W. Y. Evans-Wentz stated in his introduction to *The Tibetan*

¹⁵⁴⁴ L. A. Bosman, *The Mysteries of the Qabalah* (London: Dharma Press 1916), p. 31.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 1; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. xlii-xliii. Blavatsky had access to this work and information about it from Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala Denudata* (Sulzbaci: Typis Abrahami Lichtenthaleri, 1677-1684); Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and literature: An Essay* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1865); AD. Franck, *La Kabbale ou La Philosophie Religieuse des Hébreux* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette, 1843); S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *Kabbala Denudata: The Kabbalah Unveiled* (London: George Redway, 1887); Isaac Myer, *Qabalah. The Philosophical Writings of Solomon Ben Yehudah Iben Gebirol or Avicbron* (Philadelphia, PA: Published by the Author, 1888). For more details see appendix I and II.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Guénon, *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion*, p. 86.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Guénon, *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion*, p. 86.

¹⁵⁴⁸ H. P. Blavatsky, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, HPBCW (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, [n. number] (1983 [1883-1886]), pp. 114-16.

Book of the Dead that

The late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup was of the opinion that, ... there is adequate internal evidence in them [Blavatsky's works] of their author's intimate acquaintance with the higher *lāmaistic* teachings, into which she claimed to have been initiated.¹⁵⁴⁹

The important Kabbalah scholar, Gershom Scholem, however brought

¹⁵⁴⁹ *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, trans. and ed. by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, 3rd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1957 [1927]), p. 7n. For the more on Blavatsky's Tibetan connection, see also Cranston, *H.P.B.*, pp. 84, 502; Geoffrey A. Barborka, *H. P. Blavatsky, Tibet and Tulku* (Adyar, Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1986); Leslie Price, 'Madame Blavatsky, Buddhism and Tibet', A Spoken Paper at the Theosophical History Conference London, Sunday 15 June 2003, with revisions <www.blavatskyarchives.com/price.pdf> [accessed 24 November 2012]; Reigle and Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books*; HPB, 'Tibetan Teachings: A Long-Delayed Promise Fulfilled', in HPBCW, VI, 99-112; Blavatsky, 'Cosmological Notes from A. P. Sinnett's MS. Book', in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, Appendix II, pp. 376-86; HPB, 'The Mystery of the Buddha', in HPBCW, XIV, 369-453. There is no doubt that Blavatsky found the Tibetan or trans-Himalayan association central to how she presented her work and herself. Blavatsky used the words Himalaya and Trans-Himalayan as early as in *Isis Unveiled*, see Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 589, but only in relation to locations. In 1880 the Mahatma known as Koot Hoomi Lal Singh presented himself for the first time in a letter, see Letter No. 5, *ML-4*, Rec. Nov. 3, 1880, to A. P. Sinnett as 'a *Cis* and *Trans-Himalayan* "cave-dweller" whom you have honoured with your confidence.' *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, p. 19. From then on there was much talk of the Himalayan brothers or adepts. It was, however, not until 1882 – in commenting on T. Subba Row's 'The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man' (January 1882) – that Blavatsky used the designation 'trans-Himalayan esoteric doctrine' for the first time, HPB, 'Editorial Appendix to the Above: Note I', in HPBCW, III (1982), 419 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, III, 4 (1882), 93-99). Following this comment, Blavatsky did not concentrate on the term trans-Himalayan esotericism until the above mentioned discussion in 1887, where after it became more central as is witnessed by its occurrences in *The Secret Doctrine*, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 110, 136, 156; II, 22, 88, 636. However, this does not signify that 'Tibet' or 'Thibet' was neither present nor central to Blavatsky's self-conception prior to 1887. Tibet and its 'Lamas' figured several times in *Isis Unveiled* (1877). She also had childhood contacts with the Kalmucks—near Saratov on the River Volga, who embraced Tibetan Buddhism in the seventeenth century—and early controversial travels or attempted travels to Tibet in 1853, 1856-1857, and 1868. Later of course Tibet came to be absolutely central to Blavatsky's work basing *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence* on supposedly ancient Tibetan related works, as discussed in this chapter.

the attention back to the Kabbalah when he wrote in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1946) that

There can be little doubt in my opinion that the famous stanzas of the mysterious *Book of Dzyan* on which Madame H. P. Blavatsky's *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine*, is based owe something, both in title and content, to the pompous pages of the Zoharic writings called *Sifra Dtzeniutha*.¹⁵⁵⁰

Scholem thus concluded that Blavatsky derived the *Book of Dzyan* from Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's (1636-1689) *Kabbala Denudata* (1677-1678) and that 'The Book of Dzyan is therefore nothing but an occultistic hypostasy of the Zoharic title.'¹⁵⁵¹ In 1887 Samuel L. Macgregor Mathers (1854-1918) had published his translation of selected works from Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata* entitled *The Kabbalah Unveiled*.¹⁵⁵² The first text in Mathers' work was the *Siphra Dtzenioutha* or *The Book of Concealed Mystery* (Mathers' translation). Blavatsky, who was a friend of Mathers, extensively used his work in manuscript form in her production of *The Secret Doctrine*, which indicates that Mathers, rather than Rosenroth, was her more immediate source. Close comparison between the stanzas of Dzyan and Mather's translation of the *Siphra Dtzenioutha* does reveal similarities in title, style and content—yet, there are differences as well.¹⁵⁵³ No matter how similar the two works are, it is difficult to conclude anything as in the case of Lillie's comparison with the *Rig-Veda* and one must assume that if the *Book of Dzyan* was based on actual historical texts that it is, in some way, related to the *Books of Kiu-te* and to the same trans-Himalayan source, which Blavatsky otherwise made great efforts to claim.

In more recent times, the historian of occultism James Webb followed Scholem's conclusion in his *Flight from Reason* (1971) and¹⁵⁵⁴ in the same

¹⁵⁵⁰ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, rev. edn (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), p. 398n2.

¹⁵⁵¹ Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 399.

¹⁵⁵² See Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*. Mathers' translation includes: (1) *The Book of Concealed Mystery*, (2) *The Greater Holy Assembly* and (3) *The Lesser Holy Assembly*.

¹⁵⁵³ For comparison of the paragraphs, see Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, [Stanza 1] pp. 27-28, and Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁵⁵⁴ James Webb, *Flight from Reason* (London, Macdonald, 1971) p. 182.

year, the popular explorer of the occult, Jacques Bergier, perhaps surrounded the *Book of Dzyan* with even more mystery¹⁵⁵⁵ when—with no references—he pointed to the French astronomer Jean-Sylvain Bailly (1736-1793) as the first to mention this book and to Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890) as the originator of the name of the *Book of Dzyan*.¹⁵⁵⁶ Even though Blavatsky did use the works of both of these authors to a considerable extent and Jacolliot likely did invent his own mystical Sanskrit work *Agrouchada-Parikchai*,¹⁵⁵⁷ it has not been possible, from consulting their works, to verify Bergier's claim.¹⁵⁵⁸ A few years later a serious breakthrough however emerged in relation to the Tibetan connection when the theosophical scholar Henk J. Spierenburg was the first to identify the *Books of Kiu-te* mentioned by Blavatsky in relation to the *Book of Dzyan*. Spierenburg published his result in a Dutch article 'De Zeven Menselijke Beginselen in het Werk van H. P. Blavatsky en het Tibetans Boeddhisme' (1974). According to Spierenburg the *Books of Kiu-te* were in fact the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras (rGyud-sde),¹⁵⁵⁹ 'Khiute' or 'Kiu-te'—being the Christian missionary Horace della Penna's 1730 transliteration used by Blavatsky.¹⁵⁶⁰ David Reigle, independently of Spierenburg, identified the *Books of Kiu-te* in 1983 in *The Books of Kiu-Te or The Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis* offering a more extensive analysis of the Tibetan Tantras.¹⁵⁶¹ Reigle

¹⁵⁵⁵ See Jacques Bergier, *Les Livres Maudits*, (Paris: J'ai lu, 1971), pp. 37-50.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Bergier, *Les Livres Maudits*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁵⁷ See Louis Jacolliot, *Occult Science in India and among the Ancients*, trans. from the French by Willard L. Felt (London: William Rider & Son, LTD., [1919(?)][1875], [first English trans. 1884]), pp. 17-18, 24, 32 and continuously throughout the book.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Bailly did talk of an original 'instructor people' who were the original source of culture and the sciences. This notion did influence Blavatsky's own work, see chapter 2.2 in the present thesis for more details.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Henk J. Spierenburg, 'De Zeven Menselijke Beginselen in het Werk van H. P. Blavatsky en het Tibetans Boeddhisme' ([n.p.]: [n. pub.], 1974), p. 74; see *The Buddhism of H. P. Blavatsky*, comp. and ann. by Henk J. Spierenburg (San Diego, CA: Pint Loma Publications, 1991), p. 138n, and in general, pp. 135-50.

¹⁵⁶⁰ See Clements Robert Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, 2nd edn (London: Trübner & Co, 1879 [1876]), p. 334; see also David Reigle, *The Books of Kiu-Te or The Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis* (San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1983), p. 2.

¹⁵⁶¹ Reigle, *The Books of Kiu-Te*, (p. 2).

and his wife Nancy Reigle have since produced further extensive work to discover the *Book of Dzyan* by exploring its terminology and providing an important context for future studies that cannot be neglected.¹⁵⁶² The Reigles furthermore point out that the *Book of Dzyan* might be the so-called lost *Mula-Kalachakra Tantra*, but in this connection no definite conclusions on the *Book of Dzyan* have been arrived at, yet.¹⁵⁶³ In 1984 in his pamphlet *Senzar: The Mystery of the Mystery Language*, John Algeo undertook a study of the so-called Senzar language in which, Blavatsky claimed, the original *Book of Dzyan* was written. Algeo concluded from his study of Blavatsky's statements that the stanzas from the *Book of Dzyan*, as Blavatsky had given them, were less a translation than a paraphrasing;¹⁵⁶⁴ and that the Senzar language most likely was the universal 'mystery language', now called symbolism, which Blavatsky spoke of more extensively in her works indicating that the *Book of Dzyan* was simply written in symbolism or Senzar—the first "language" of humankind.¹⁵⁶⁵

In more recent scholarship, K. Paul Johnson has speculated in *The Masters Revealed* (1994) that Blavatsky might have had actual access to the Tibetan Tantras or *Books of Kiu-te* via the Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir (1830-1885) who had his Sanskrit scholars translate these Buddhist scriptures and whom, according to Swami Dayananda's testimony, Blavatsky knew well.¹⁵⁶⁶ Other than this, not much new historical research has been done. Maria Carlson, in "*No Religion Higher than Truth*" (1993), mentions Max Müller's critique of Blavatsky's work without referencing to his correspondence with Mead.¹⁵⁶⁷ Silvia Cranston briefly sums up parts of the state of research in her *H.P.B.* (1993) such as Coleman's work, Max Müller's and Mead's discussion, and Reigle's (1983) work.¹⁵⁶⁸ In recent times, regretfully, almost only Nicholas Goodrick-Clark's *Helena Blavatsky* (2004) expresses an awareness of the

¹⁵⁶² See Reigle and Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books*.

¹⁵⁶³ Reigle and Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books*, pp. 25-41.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Algeo, *Senzar*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Algeo, *Senzar*, pp. 26-31.

¹⁵⁶⁶ K. Paul Johnson, *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 203.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Carlson, "*No Religion Higher than Truth*", p. 229n3.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Cranston, *H.P.B.*, pp. 384-87.

major trends of research related to the Dzyan stanzas.¹⁵⁶⁹ In his well acclaimed *New Age Religion* (1996) Wouter J. Hanegraaff for example criticises Scholem for having been too quick to suggest that the *Book of Dzyan* was a Kabbalah work and refers instead to Giovanni Hoffmann's Taoistic suggestion repeating the mistake that Blavatsky misrepresented a Taoistic work as Vedic without any awareness of the extensive work done by David Reigle in 1983.¹⁵⁷⁰ Brendan French's *The Theosophical Masters* (2000) typologically connects the *Book of Dzyan* with the *Prisca Theologia* or an ur-religion¹⁵⁷¹ and typologically connects the Senzar language with the idea of the *lingua adamica* prevalent during the Renaissance and early modern periods.¹⁵⁷² In relation to his section on the *Book of Dzyan* he primarily refers to Scholem, Hanegraaff and the Reigles.¹⁵⁷³ With Tim Maroney's work *The Book of Dzyan* (2000) a new sceptical wave arose. Maroney is, as noted, aware of Reigle's work, but dismisses it as inconclusive and simply treats Blavatsky's *Book of Dzyan* as a work of fiction instead, as occult authors and other religious authors often invent mythic works for various purposes.¹⁵⁷⁴ Olav Hammer similarly regard Blavatsky's work as a work of fiction or a 'Pseudo-philological work' in *Claiming Knowledge* (2001) discussing it as a part of his analysis of processes of invention and legitimization in the modern esoteric tradition.¹⁵⁷⁵ Hammer does not, however, show any awareness of the history of scholarship related to the identification of

¹⁵⁶⁹ *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Western Esoteric Masters Series (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 75-76, see also pp. 131-32 in relation to Reigle's work. Furthermore, only Goodrick-Clarke's work in addition to Cranston's *H.P.B.*, Leslie Price's 'Madame Blavatsky, Buddhism and Tibet' (2003); Brendan French, *The Theosophical Masters: An Investigation into the Conceptual Domains of H. P. Blavatsky and C. W. Leadbeater*, 2 vols (PhD thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Sydney, 2000), I, 180 and the more critical work of Tim Maroney, *The Book of Dzyan* (2000) (see references below) refer to the work of the Reigles.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, p. 453.

¹⁵⁷¹ French, *The Theosophical Masters*, I, 182.

¹⁵⁷² French, *The Theosophical Masters*, I, 181.

¹⁵⁷³ French, *The Theosophical Masters*, I, 180.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Tim Maroney, *The Book of Dzyan* (Oakland, CA: Chaosium, 2000), pp. 57-59.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 157, 254.

the *Book of Dzyan*, the Tibetan or trans-Himalayan connection and the *Books of Kiu-te* discussed above. Anita Stasulane in *Theosophy and Culture: Nicholas Roerich* (2005) simply bases her discussion of the *Book of Dzyan* on some of Guénon's and Carlson's remarks.¹⁵⁷⁶ Finally, Jeffrey D. Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society* (2012) states that the Senzar language is a fictitious Eastern tongue and that the idea of the *Book of Dzyan*, written in an unknown language, is comparable to the notion of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, who claimed to have found mysterious golden plates in the mountains of Western New York on 27 September 1827 written in a mystical language of 'reformed Egyptian' that only he could decipher. In other words, Lavoie suggests that it is a common feature of new religions and especially spiritualism during Blavatsky's time to claim access to strange unknown languages and books. Yet again, he does this without reference to previous research related to the *Book of Dzyan*.¹⁵⁷⁷

Before concluding this discussion of the *Book of Dzyan*, it should be noted that many theosophists have, of course, used the myth of the *Book of Dzyan* and added more material to it as a part of the growing theosophical tradition. In a work published by the Theosophical group in Halcyon, California the 'Temple of the People' entitled *Theogenesis*, the so-called third section of the stanzas of Dzyan were given by the masters Hilarion, Morya and Koot Hoomi between 1906-1918.¹⁵⁷⁸ The prolific theosophical writer Alice A. Bailey included more stanzas in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925) received from the Tibetan master Djwhal Khul.¹⁵⁷⁹ Adyar Theosophists such as Charles Webster

¹⁵⁷⁶ Anita Stasulane, *Theosophy and Culture: Nicholas Roerich* (Roma: Pontificia università gregoriana, 2005) pp. 250-51.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Jeffrey D. Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement* (Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2012), pp. 213-14.

¹⁵⁷⁸ [Harold E. Forgostein and William H Dower] *Theogenesis* (Halcyon, CA: The Temple of the People, 1981), pp. xxv-xxxvii. Much of this material was first published in *The Temple Artisan* between 1906 and 1918 as channeled messages from the Theosophical masters Hilarion, Morya and Koot Hoomi under the heading 'More Stanzas Revealed'; see also A. S. Raleigh, *The Stanzas of Dzjn: Theogenesis* (San Diego, CA: Hermetic Publishing Company, 1915).

¹⁵⁷⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 2 vols (New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1925), II, pp. 1267-282.

Leadbeater also gives numerous occult details in his many works about the *Book of Dzyan* from personal clairvoyant handling and observation of the book.¹⁵⁸⁰ George S. Arundale included the stanzas in *The Lotus Fire: A Study in Symbolic Yoga* (1939) as an important part of yoga practice.¹⁵⁸¹ Finally, Sri Krishna Prem and Sri Madhava Ashish freely interpreted what they believed to be the spiritual meaning of the stanzas in *Man, The Measure of All Things: In The Stanzas of Dzyan* (1966) and Sri Madhava Ashish extending this understanding in *Man, Son of Man: In The Stanzas of Dzyan* (1970).¹⁵⁸²

No matter what the historical origin of the *Book of Dzyan* may be, if any at all, Blavatsky was keen to give it a Tibetan connection and thus relate *The Secret Doctrine* and its 'system' to trans-Himalayan esotericism.

After the publications of *The Secret Doctrine*, based on the *Book of Dzyan*, the so-called trans-Himalayan teachings became the primary metaphysical focus of Blavatsky and many theosophists. Soon thereafter (between 10 January and 20 June 1889), Blavatsky held regular sessions in the well-attended 'Blavatsky Lodge'—established as a new lodge upon her residential move to London in 1887—on the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*.¹⁵⁸³ She published various articles directly related to the 'system'¹⁵⁸⁴

¹⁵⁸⁰ Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House 1996 [1910-1911]) p. 95; C. W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1975 [1925]), p. 20-21.

¹⁵⁸¹ George S. Arundale, *The Lotus Fire: A Study in Symbolic Yoga* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1976 [1939]), pp. 13-14, 23-40.

¹⁵⁸² Sri Krishna Prem and Sri Madhava Ashish, *Man, The Measure of All Things: In The Stanzas of Dzyan* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1966) and Sri Madhava Ashish, *Man, Son of Man: In The Stanzas of Dzyan* (London: Rider and Company, 1970).

¹⁵⁸³ Before they became regular *Secret Doctrine* sessions, the meetings had already begun 20 December and 27 December 1888 at Lansdowne Road 17 in London. See also HPB 'Dreams: Meetings held at 17, Lansdowne Road, London, W., on December 20th and 27th, 1888; Mr. T. B. Hardbottle in the Chair', in HPBCW, X, 246-64; HPB, *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, in HPBCW, X, 301-406 [this covers meeting material from January 1889 - March 1889, more material exists]; H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries: The Unpublished 1889 Instructions*, transcribed and ann. by Michael Gomes (The Hauge: I.S.I.S. Foundation,

and in 1889 Blavatsky also published *The Key to Theosophy* (approx. July 1889)¹⁵⁸⁵ that included more details on what was now increasingly becoming the core Theosophical teachings, especially in direct relation to individual man, such as: (1) the sevenfold constitution of man,¹⁵⁸⁶ (2) after death states,¹⁵⁸⁷ (3) karma¹⁵⁸⁸ and (4) reincarnation.¹⁵⁸⁹ Later that same year *The Voice of The Silence*¹⁵⁹⁰ was published. It was written in July and August 1889 and published later that year and was purported to be a translation of fragments from an esoteric Buddhist-related treatise on discipleship entitled the *Book of Golden Precepts* originating from the same series as the stanzas of the *Book of Dzyan*.¹⁵⁹¹ This book is among the most spiritually practical works produced by Blavatsky giving details on how to walk the secret bodhisattva path of compassion towards all beings.¹⁵⁹²

2010).

¹⁵⁸⁴ See HPB, '[Comments to] *Esoteric Buddhism and The Secret Doctrine*', [November 1888], in HPBCW, X, 177-88; HPB, 'Mistaken Notions on *The Secret Doctrine*', in HPBCW, XII, 234-37 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VI, 34 (June 1890), 333-35); HPB, 'My Books', in HPBCW, XIII, 191-202 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VIII, 45 (May 1891), 241-47); HPB, '[On Cosmic Cycles, Manvantaras, and Rounds]', in HPBCW, XIII, 301-12 (unfinished MS. in HPB's handwriting, first publ. in *The Theosophist*, LXXIX (March 1958), 367-72).

¹⁵⁸⁵ See Boris De Zirkoff, 'The Key to Theosophy', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), XI, (1973) 365.

¹⁵⁸⁶ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), pp. 88-100, 117-22, 134-37, 171-96.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 101-16, 137-45, 157-71.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 196-226.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 123-33, 146-57, 196-226.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Boris De Zirkoff, 'The Voice of the Silence', in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, ed. by Boris de Zirkoff, 15 vols (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), XII, (1987), 64.

¹⁵⁹¹ See Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, pp. vi-xi. For further discussion on this work, see Reigle and Reigle, *Blavatsky's Secret Books*, pp. 139-53; Cranston, *H.P.B.*, 84-87, 389-92; Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *Liber XXI: The Voice of the Silence, The Two Paths, The Seven Portals by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky 8°=3° with a Commentary by Frater O.M. 7°=4°*, comments and prefatory note by Aleister Crowley, in Aleister Crowley, H. P. Blavatsky, J.F.C. Fuller and Charles Stansfeld Jones, *Commentaries on the Holy Books and other Papers* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, INC., 1996), pp. 221-336; Maroney, *The Book of Dzyan*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁵⁹² See Blavatsky, *The Voice of The Silence*, pp. 23-44; Tim Rudbøg, 'The

In 1888 the independent 'Esoteric Section' of the Theosophical Society had been established for serious students of Theosophy¹⁵⁹³ in relation to which, between 1889-1890 Blavatsky wrote three confidential 'Esoteric Instructions' expanding greatly on the teachings of the esoteric 'system'. In addition three oral instructions were typed and published later.¹⁵⁹⁴ In 1890 "two students" [anonymous] also sought to extract and systematise the material directly relating to 'the system' from Blavatsky's comprehensive eclectic commentaries on the stanzas of Dzyan in *The Secret Doctrine*. Under the supervision and approval of Blavatsky, this resulted in the publication of several articles in *Lucifer* entitled 'Theosophical Gleanings or Notes on the "Secret Doctrine"' between March 1890 and September 1890.¹⁵⁹⁵ To some extent these articles represent the first condensed presentation of the cosmological 'system' of trans-Himalayan wisdom, as expounded by Blavatsky.

Finally, between late 1890 and 1891—that is, until Blavatsky's death 8 May 1891—Blavatsky gave oral lectures to the most esoteric section of the Theosophical Society—composed of her closest associates in London, known as the 'Inner group'—directly related to the system of trans-Himalayan wisdom, as well.¹⁵⁹⁶ Briefly stated, the above shows that the content and concern of

Mysteries of Sound in H. P. Blavatsky's Esoteric Instructions', in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. by Laurence Wuidar, Aries Book Series, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 251, 260.

¹⁵⁹³ HPB, 'E. S. T. Instructions', in HPBCW, XII, 477-713; *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, comp. by Daniel H. Caldwell ([<http://www.kessinger.net>]: Kessinger Publishing, [n.d. 2004(?)]); *The Inner Group Teachings of H. P. Blavatsky to her personal pupils (1890-1891)*; R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn and The Esoteric Section* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1987); Rudbøg, 'The Mysteries of Sound in H. P. Blavatsky's Esoteric Instructions'.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Jan.-Feb. 1889, March-April 1889, Dec.-Jan. 1889-1890. Later oral instruct IV, (from rearranged inner group material (published April 1891)), 'Instruction No. V' (from rearranged inner group material from 1890-1891 (published later)), 'Instruction No. VI' (oral instructions (published 1901)), see above note for further details.

¹⁵⁹⁵ [Anonymous], *Theosophical Gleanings* (Wheaton IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1978) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VI, 31 (1890); VI, 33 (1890); VI, 34 (1890), VI, 35 (1890); VI, 36 (1890); VII, 37 (1890).

¹⁵⁹⁶ *The Inner Group Teachings of H. P. Blavatsky to her personal pupils (1890-1891)*.

Blavatsky's literary output and oral teachings, increasingly throughout the eighteen-eighties and early nineties, were directed towards the exposition of the so-called trans-Himalayan system—or will to system.

2.6.2 Conclusion on Blavatsky's Discourse for System

Nietzsche might have initiated the death of systems at the apex of Blavatsky's writing career and for the philosophy to come in the twentieth century—but in this major section (2.6.1) it was demonstrated that Blavatsky, increasingly through the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties, adopted the will to system prevalent in the preceding and immediate intellectual context as a way of constructing meaning and as intellectual social capital. Blavatsky's discourse was, however, not only based on reason and empirical experimentation that substantiated the philosophical systems of the day but on mystical divine origins, initiated access, exotic texts and spiritual authority, as well. First of all, it was demonstrated in section 2.6.1.2 that Blavatsky, after the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, began to portray the ancient Wisdom-Religion as a 'system' and secondly in section 2.6.1.2.1, it was demonstrated that Blavatsky, in collaboration with other central theosophists, also began to construct a specific system that was persistently through the years defined as trans-Himalayan esotericism originating from the mahatmas and ultimately from Shambhala. The publication history, specifically related to the construction of the system, was followed and it was shown how the will to system, which these publications expressed, clashed with the more general Theosophical policy of non-dogmatism and soon led to several significant conflicts within the Theosophical Society such as the resignation of Anna Kingsford and, after a long discussion on the centrality of the sevenfold constitution of man, to the resignation of T. Subba Row. In other words, the 'will to system' gradually changed Blavatsky's metaphysical focus, especially throughout her last years (1888-1891) with the publication of *The Secret Doctrine* based on the claimed trans-Himalayan *Book of Dzyan* and her esoteric teaching activities in London.

2.7 Blavatsky's Discourse for Universal Brotherhood

*The wheel of sacrifice has Love for its nave, Action for its tire,
and Brotherhood for its spokes.*¹⁵⁹⁷

Although Blavatsky vouched for universal brotherhood as an important part the mission of the Theosophical Society, the background, history, discourse and content of Blavatsky's use of this idea has never been explored in any greater detail. This chapter will map and analyse Blavatsky's discourse for Universal Brotherhood by exploring earlier usages of the idea, possible sources for Blavatsky's own use and by examining when Blavatsky began to use the idea and under what circumstances it became important to her construction of meaning

2.7.1 Historical Background of the idea of Universal Brotherhood

*We teach something very old, and yet which needs to be taught.
We teach universal brotherhood.*¹⁵⁹⁸

The idea of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity became a constitutional platform of the Theosophical Society in May 1878¹⁵⁹⁹ and Theosophists have often regarded this announcement as a unique prerogative. However, similar ideas have been widespread in philosophies, religions and reform movements throughout history prior to the Theosophical Society and some modern movements, contemporary with the Theosophical Society, also constructed versions of this idea.

In ancient India, King Ashoka (ca. 304–232 BCE) famously implemented a grand scale state based on the idea of a universal brotherhood between all living entities after awakening from the war and bloodshed he had caused.¹⁶⁰⁰

¹⁵⁹⁷ *Gems From the East: A Birthday Book of Precepts and Axioms*, comp. by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, in HPBCW, XII (1987), 421-76 (p. 441) (first publ. in Covina, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1948).

¹⁵⁹⁸ Charles Johnston and HPB, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 392-409 (p. 404) (first publ. in *The Theosophical Forum*, V, 12; VI, 1, 2, 3 (1900)).

¹⁵⁹⁹ See H. S. Olcott [mainly], 'The Theosophical Society' in HPBCW, I (1988), 375-78; see also below for more details.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Raj Kumar, *Early History of Jammu Region: Pre-historic to 6th century A.D.* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2010), p. 371; Jayant Gadkar, *Society and Religion: From Rugveda to Puranas* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1996),

The Buddhist movement that had influenced Ashoka continues to disregard the traditional social castes, opening its *sangha* (monastic community) to all, and cultivate respect for all life as does its ancient Indian brother, the Jain movement.¹⁶⁰¹ The Jains continue to live by a strict code of vegetarianism, and the Mahayana Buddhists cultivate the *bodhisattva* ideal of compassion for all life in the common quest for enlightenment. It is also commonly agreed that ancient Pythagoreanism cultivated the ideal of universal friendship or universal brotherhood including respect for differing religious traditions.¹⁶⁰² Stoicism is equally recognised as an early exponent of the equality of all men, because all men were thought to possess a part of the universal divine *logos* of the cosmos.¹⁶⁰³ Early Christianity is believed to have adopted the social idea of universal brotherhood from Stoicism¹⁶⁰⁴ and St Paul sought to establish a unified community of men and women, in the body of Christ, across national, ethnic and cultural barriers, an idea that has remained central to Christianity.¹⁶⁰⁵ This idea is expressed in his statement:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).¹⁶⁰⁶

p. 132.

¹⁶⁰¹ K. K. Sinha, *Social and Cultural Ethos Of India* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2008), p. 8; Sir William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Empire: Its People, History, and Products* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2005), p. 162; Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999), pp. 17-18.

¹⁶⁰² David Gerard Rice and John E. Stambaugh, *Sources for the Study of Greek Religion* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), pp. 122-23; Douglas A. Hume, *The Early Christian Community: A Narrative Analysis of Acts 2:41-47 and 4:32-35* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), pp. 69-70; Horst H. Freyhofer, *The Nuremberg Medical Trial: The Holocaust and the Origin of the Nuremberg Medical Code* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 124.

¹⁶⁰³ Samuel Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World: A Study in the Historical Background of early Christianity* (London: John Murray [1929]), p. 67; Antonía Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 38-39.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, p. 67. Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁰⁵ See Steven Elliott Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), p. 246.

¹⁶⁰⁶ King James Bible, Authorized Version, Oxford 1769; see also *ibid.* Rom. 10:12.

The idea of universal brotherhood was later assimilated by both Islam (seventh-century–onwards)¹⁶⁰⁷ and the Sikh movement (fifteenth-century–onwards).¹⁶⁰⁸

In the West, with the onset of the Enlightenment from the late seventeenth-century onwards, several philosophers, such as John Locke (1632-1704), Montesquieu (1689-1755), Voltaire (1694-1778) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) all discussed and proposed new rational secular models for ordering society and strengthening public opinion (however varied their models) based on principles of universal human-rights, equality and individual freedom.¹⁶⁰⁹ Many of these Enlightenment ideas were both supported by and cultivated the formation and growth of Freemasonic societies¹⁶¹⁰ and they became co-responsible for great social changes. These ideas also influenced the formulation of the United States Declaration of Independence (4 July 1776) wherein the second sentence famously states:

¹⁶⁰⁷ Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 10-13; Joseph Kenny, *Philosophy of the Muslim World: Authors and Principal Themes* (Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003), pp. 79-80; Howard R. Turner, *Science in Medieval Islam: An Illustrated Introduction* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), p. 13.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Shera Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, [1966]), pp. 243-45; Dalbir Singh Dhillon, *Sikhism Origin and Development* (New Delhi: Atlant. Publ. & Distributors, 1988), pp. 45, 82, 149, 157, 203, 219-21, 243, 272, 343.

¹⁶⁰⁹ See Milan Zafirovsk, *The Enlightenment and Its Effects on Modern Society* (New York: Springer, 2011), pp. 1-278.

¹⁶¹⁰ Peter Hanns Reill and Ellen Judy Wilson, *Encyclopedia Of The Enlightenment*, rev. edn (New York: Facts on File, 2004), pp. 209-211; Margaret C. Jacob, 'Polite Worlds of Enlightenment', in *The Enlightenment World*, ed. by Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Iain McCalman (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), pp. 272-87 (p. 285); James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 252-72; John Morris Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (New York: Scribner, 1972), pp. 132, 138, 354. For further discussion, see also Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966). See below for further details.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.¹⁶¹¹

These Enlightenment ideas and struggle for a new social order culminated in the French Revolution (1789-1799) under the slogan *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* (liberty, equality and brotherhood), which remain the motto of the French Republic).¹⁶¹² Of course, the French Revolution notably failed to implement the idea of brotherhood as witnessed by the immediate massacre during the Terror (1793-1794) and the succeeding Napoleonic wars (1803-1815) across Europe.¹⁶¹³

Aside from war, the impact of the increasing industrialization of Western nations through the nineteenth century produced new inequalities, harsh conditions for a new working class, and new social divisions with the growth of an ascendant middle class, all developments that compromised the Enlightenment ideal of universal brotherhood.¹⁶¹⁴ Imperialism also continued to segregate and suppress natives and the slave trade continued to flourish. The legal slave trade in the West did, for example, not end until after the American civil war (1861-1865) and finally in 1888, it ended in Brazil.¹⁶¹⁵

Even after the termination of legal slave trade, anthropologists continued, well into the twentieth-century, the discussion of the so-called inferiority of various human or so-called 'primitive' races.¹⁶¹⁶

¹⁶¹¹ *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2002), p. 9.

¹⁶¹² It has been long contested to what extent Enlightenment ideas influenced the American and French Revolutions but see Zafirovsk, *The Enlightenment and Its Effects on Modern Society*, pp. 192-93; Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 223; Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 688-89.

¹⁶¹³ For this overall period see Davies, *Europe: A History*, pp. 693-757.

¹⁶¹⁴ Davies, *Europe: A History*, pp. 679-82.

¹⁶¹⁵ Tom Monaghan, *The Slave Trade* (London: Evans Brothers, 2008), p. 75.

¹⁶¹⁶ See Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 92-119; see also Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (New York:

In order to counter these new social inequalities and problems—perceived as resulting from private property rights, capitalism and industrialism—radical thinkers proposed new alternative models of society. Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), François Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837), and Robert Owen (1771-1858) are credited with being among the first to define modern socialism;¹⁶¹⁷ Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) defined modern communism in 1848 with the publication of their *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*.¹⁶¹⁸ Numerous reform movements were formed and the literary landscape was flooded with many books in the utopian genre.¹⁶¹⁹ Instrumental to the idea of universal brotherhood was Elihu Burritt (1810-1879), an American blacksmith, pacifist and peace advocate with extraordinary autodidactic abilities. At the age of thirty Burritt was able to translate 30 languages increasing to about 100 languages by the time of his death. He was instrumental in the publication of a whole spate of short-lived magazines related to peace and brotherhood such as *Literary Geminæ* (1839-1840), *The Christian Citizen* (1844), *The Advocate of peace and universal Brotherhood* (1846), *The Bond of Brotherhood*, *Burritt's citizen of the world* (1855) and, *The North and the South*, and *New Britain Journal* (1857-1859). Burritt had also been a member of the American Peace Society until 1846 where after he founded his own League of Universal Brotherhood. Burritt was furthermore involved in international peace congresses in 1848, 1849 and 1850 and received an honorary doctorate from Yale University in 1874. Burritt's League of Universal Brotherhood was the first *international* peace movement, against war, slavery, social injustice, and solidarity between all colours and classes.¹⁶²⁰ James Otis

New York University Press, 1996); Louis L. Snyder, *The Idea of Racialism* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1962).

¹⁶¹⁷ Davies, *Europe: A History*, pp. 836-37.

¹⁶¹⁸ Davies, *Europe: A History*, p. 837.

¹⁶¹⁹ See Jean Pfaelze, *The Utopian Novel in America, 1886-1896: The Politics of Form* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984); James Morris and Andrea L. Kross, *The A to Z of Utopianism* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2004).

¹⁶²⁰ David Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 31-32; see also: Elihu Burritt, *Lectures and Speeches* (London: Sampson, Low, Son & Marston,

Wattles (1809-1859), a figure now more or less lost to history, is another important reform initiator relevant to the idea of universal brotherhood.¹⁶²¹ A Yale graduate, he fought for the abolitionist cause by freeing slaves and establishing black schools. He later became interested in Spiritualism and was instrumental in establishing several reform projects. In 1842 he co-founded the The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform (1842-1846) in Clinton County, Ohio with John A. Collins, Orson S. Murray and others, as 'an alliance of Hicksite Quakers and New England Garrisonian abolitionists.'¹⁶²² This society sought to implement a new social order upon the principles of liberty, justice and equality under the banner of fraternal brotherhood.¹⁶²³ Following its failure Wattles bought 'Utopia' a site in Cincinnati, Ohio formerly occupied by the utopian-socialist Fourierist community, which had closed the same year due to lack of funds. Here he, together with other reformers, significantly founded what they termed the 'Universal Brotherhood', also known as the 'Spiritualist Community' (1846-1848).¹⁶²⁴ The 'Universal Brotherhood' was to implement the principles of Christ as formulated in the gospels to rid the evils of society, but unfortunately the society was flooded by the great Ohio flood of 13 December 1847 in which over half of its members died and Wattles only barely

1869); Merle Curti, *The Learned Blacksmith: The Letters and Journals of Elihu Burritt* (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1937). Blavatsky knew of Burritt and mentions him in 1889, see HPB, 'On Pseudo-Theosophy', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 45-61 (p. 56) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, IV, 19 (1889), 1-12).

¹⁶²¹ Morris and Kross, *The A to Z of Utopianism*, pp. 321-22; see also, Thomas D. Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996).

¹⁶²² Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, p. xv.

¹⁶²³ Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, pp. 235-36. The society was organized into eight communities. 'One (Skaneateles) in New York, three (Marlborough, Prairie Home, and Highland Home) in Ohio, and four (Union Home, West Grove or Fraternal Home, Kristeen, and Grand Prairie) in Indiana.' None lasted more than a year, Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, p. xvi.

¹⁶²⁴ Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, p. 219; Morris and Kross, *The A to Z of Utopianism*, p. 322.

escaped.¹⁶²⁵ His final project was the Grand Prairie Harmonial Institute, an association for education and reform purposes, founded in Warren County Indiana in 1853. It however only lasted a year.¹⁶²⁶

The rise of Spiritualism in the late 1840s was closely related to this widespread reform milieu of its day.¹⁶²⁷ The spiritualist Hudson Tuttle (1836-1910), also from Ohio, and the spiritualist, Freemason, medical doctor (and future Theosophist) James M. Peebles (1822-1922) wrote in *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871* that spiritualism ‘underlies all genuine reform-movements, physiological, educational, social, philanthropic, religious.’¹⁶²⁸ Tuttle and Peebles also attempted to define the multifaceted spiritualist movement. They agreed that to define such a diversified individualistic movement was immensely difficult, but that the most basic belief common to all spiritualists must be the belief in the possible communication with the dead.¹⁶²⁹ However, they significantly argued that the most common aim of the spiritualist movement is ‘to reconstruct society upon the principles of eternal justice,—the principles of equality, charity, and a universal brotherhood.’¹⁶³⁰

The idea of universal brotherhood was important to a number of spiritualists in various guises. The prolific spiritualist writer Andrew Jackson

¹⁶²⁵ Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, p. 219.

¹⁶²⁶ Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, p. 221; Morris and Kross, *The A to Z of Utopianism*, p. 123.

¹⁶²⁷ Hamm, *God's Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*, p. 222; Robert S. Cox, ‘Spiritualism’, in *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America: Metaphysical, New Age, and Neopagan Movements*, ed. by Eugene V. Gallagher and W. Michael Ashcraft, 5 vols (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), III, 27-47 (p. 35); see also Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2nd edn (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, (2002) [2001]), pp. 1-9.

¹⁶²⁸ Hudson Tuttle and James M. Peebles, *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871* (Boston, MA: William White and Company, 1871), p. 21.

¹⁶²⁹ Tuttle and Peebles, *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871*, p. 21.

¹⁶³⁰ Tuttle and Peebles, *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871*, p. 21; see also Hudson Tuttle, *Arcana of Spiritualism: A Manual of Spiritual Science and Philosophy* (Boston, MA: Adams & Co., 1871), pp. 16, 22, 446; Cox, ‘Spiritualism’, p. 33.

Davis (1826-1910) laid the spiritual foundation for its importance throughout his writings.¹⁶³¹ He emphasised that everything in nature is harmoniously interlinked through what he termed the great 'Law of Association'.¹⁶³² This intimate connection unifies all life in a universal brotherhood.¹⁶³³ It is thus important to recognise and to live in accordance with this natural law in the human social sphere by eliminating prejudice and injustice—manifesting God's kingdom on earth—and thus implementing universal brotherhood.¹⁶³⁴ Many religions have tried to establish a universal brotherhood, Davis argued, but each sect or religion seeks to do this by converting others to their own beliefs and thereby by opposing other religions.¹⁶³⁵ This obviously causes more discord than unity; hence a new universal system is needed.¹⁶³⁶ In 1850 Davis established his Harmonial Brotherhood, organised according to the human body-organism, and inspired by Plato's *Republic*, with sectors of the new society functioning as the feet, heart, head etc.¹⁶³⁷ In 1855 T. E. Spencer (no

¹⁶³¹ For more details on Davis see Phillip Charles Lucas, 'Davis, Andrew Jackson, 11.8.1826 Blooming Grove, New York, 13.1.1910 Watertown, Massachusetts', in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and others, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2005), I, 299-301. For the distinction between spiritualism and Davis's 'Harmonial Philosophy' see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 400.

¹⁶³² Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Harmonial Philosophy*, ed. by a Doctor of Hermetic Science [A. E. Waite] (London: William Rider & Son, LTD., 1917), pp. 267-71; Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles: Her Divine Revelations and a Voice to Mankind* (Boston, MA: Colby and Rich, 1847), p. 734.

¹⁶³³ Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Great Harmonia: Concerning the Seven Mental States: The Seer*, 5 vols (Boston, MA: Benjamin B. Mussey & Co., 1853), III, 125; Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Penetralia: Being Harmonial Answers to Important Questions* (Boston, MA: W. White & company, 1868), p. 61.

¹⁶³⁴ Davis, *The Great Harmonia: Concerning the Seven Mental States: The Seer*, p. 391; Davis, *The Penetralia: Being Harmonial Answers to Important Questions*, pp. 23, 33, 35, 49.

¹⁶³⁵ Davis, *The Principles of Nature: Her Divine Revelations and a Voice to Mankind*, p. v, see also pp. 401, 575.

¹⁶³⁶ Davis, *The Principles of Nature: Her Divine Revelations and a Voice to Mankind*, p. v.

¹⁶³⁷ *The Spirit Messenger*, ed. by R. P. Ambler, 1, 42 (Springfield, MA: Saturday May 24, 1851), 333-34; *Hogg's Instructor*, ed. by James Hogg, 9, new series (Edinburgh: James Hogg, 1852), 500-501; Jean L. Silver-Ilsenstadt, *Shameless: The Visionary Life of Mary Gove Nichols* (Baltimore, MD: Johns

date) and his wife Martha Spencer (no date) established the controversial communal Harmonial Society in Harmony Springs, Benton County, Arkansas which according to Emma Hardinge Britten's account was to form one common brotherhood presided over by angels eventually leading to a universal brotherhood of man.¹⁶³⁸

Finally, it should be noted that it has been a part of the social-redemptive ideology of Freemasonry to practice the Enlightenment ideal of universal brotherhood, to reconcile distinctions between religions, classes and races and to work for its global implementation believed to lead to a new enlightened age.¹⁶³⁹ The prolific freemasonic writer Albert G. Mackey (1807-1881) stated in 1872 that

When the day comes in which all men shall acknowledge one strong tie of brotherhood, then, will be the true millennium; and it is a glorious thought that the mission of Masonry is to bring forth this consummation, to teach the doctrine of a universal brotherhood, and to enforce the necessity of man's giving a helping hand to man.¹⁶⁴⁰

Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 195, 287.

¹⁶³⁸ Geoffery K. Nelson, *Spiritualism and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969), p. 20. Emma Hardinge [later Britten], *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record* (New York: publ. by the Author, 1870), pp. 365, 367.

¹⁶³⁹ Philip G. Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 25-26, 85; Jessica Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism, 1717-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 235-36; Clifford Putney, 'Service over Secrecy: How Lodge-Style Fraternalism Yielded to Men's Service Clubs', in *Freemasonry in Context: History, Ritual, Controversy*, ed. by Art DeHoyos and S. Brent Morris (MD: Lexington Books, 2004), pp. 105-116, (p. 107).

¹⁶⁴⁰ Albert G. Mackey, 'The Letter G.', *Mackey's National Freemason: A Monthly Magazine devoted to the Science, Philosophy, History, Symbolism, and Jurisprudence of Masonry*, November 1872, 2, 2 (Washington DC: McGill & Witherow, 1872) (October 1872-September 1873), 57-60 (p. 60). For later Freemasonic accounts of the importance of 'universal brotherhood', see S. R. Pachment, *Ancient Operative Masonry* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Center, Rosicrucian Fellowship, 1930), pp. 10-12; Deman S. Wagstaff, *Wagstaff's Standard Masonry* (San Francisco, CA: Walter N. Brunt, 1922), p. 104. Annie Besant also later combined the Theosophical and Freemasonic ideal of 'universal brotherhood', see Andrew Prescott, 'Builders of the Temple of the New Civilization': Annie Besant and Freemasonry', in *Women's Agency and Rituals in Mixed and Female*

Clearly, ideas of universal brotherhood have a long history and the concept had been used both nominally and ideologically just prior to Blavatsky. Blavatsky herself acknowledges part of this historical background, and historically her discourse for universal brotherhood should be regarded as part of the wider historical Enlightenment and social reform milieu of the day.¹⁶⁴¹ Blavatsky's discourse and the relevance of the idea to the Theosophical Society did however also produce many new and unique facets.

2.7.2 Blavatsky's discourse for Universal Brotherhood

It is commonly argued that there was no mention of the idea of universal brotherhood in relation to the Theosophical Society prior to May 1878.¹⁶⁴² However, Blavatsky's first reference to a brotherhood of humanity had already occurred prior to the establishment of the Theosophical Society. In her first occult article 'A Few Questions to Hiram', Blavatsky argued that the role of modern science should be to enlighten humanity and that it had neglected this responsibility because it rigidly opposed spiritualism. The clergy and the many Christian sects whose obligation it was to guide in spiritual matters, furthermore, only confused the public in spiritual matters. Blavatsky thought that man's salvation or enlightenment would come, as spiritualism would rise with such strength that all religious confusion and materialistic skepticism would dissipate.¹⁶⁴³ Furthermore

Masonic Orders, ed. by A. Heidle and J. A. M. Snoek, Aries Book Series, 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 359-92, (pp. 374-75). See also Annie Besant, *London Lectures of 1907* (London and Benares: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1907), pp. 147-48. For more general accounts of Freemasonic beliefs, see David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); R. William Weisberger, *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment: A study of the craft in London, Paris, Prague, and Vienna* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Allen E. Roberts, *The Craft and Its Symbols: Opening the Door to Masonic Symbolism* (Richmond, VA: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply, 1974).

¹⁶⁴¹ The Enlightenment heir has been demonstrated in Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994).

¹⁶⁴² James A. Santucci, 'Communications', *Theosophical History*, 7, 1 (January 1998), 14.

¹⁶⁴³ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I (1988), 101-119 (p. 114) (first publ. in *Spiritual Scientist* (1875), 217-18, 224, 236-37).

Spiritualism, the new world's conqueror, reviving, like the fabulous Phoenix out of the ashes of its first parent, Occultism, will unite for ever in one Immortal Brotherhood all antagonistic races; for this new St. Michael will crush for ever the dragon's head—of Death!¹⁶⁴⁴

Read on its own account, it sounds as no more than a praise of spiritualism and occultism, but read in relation to its historical context it is clear that Blavatsky's first use of the idea of 'one Immortal Brotherhood [of] all antagonistic races' was directly influenced by the spiritualism Blavatsky had been and to some extent still was immersed in at the time.¹⁶⁴⁵ Blavatsky was certainly aware of the work of Andrew Jackson Davis, relating that she was a friend of him in a personal letter dated 14 November 1874 to the spiritualist Alexander N. Aksakoff (1832-1903)¹⁶⁴⁶ and in her article, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', she also mentions Davis.¹⁶⁴⁷ Blavatsky also knew of Hudson Tuttle whom she refers to in an article dated January 1875 prior to her first mention of a brotherhood of man and the establishment of the Theosophical Society;¹⁶⁴⁸ Tuttle's co-author James Peebles was a personal friend of both Olcott and Blavatsky prior to the establishment of the Theosophical Society and instrumental in re-connecting Olcott with Moolji Thakurshi of the Arya Samaj and eventually leading to the gradual organizational shift to India (see below for

¹⁶⁴⁴ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 114.

¹⁶⁴⁵ For Blavatsky's relation to spiritualism see chapter 2.5 in the present thesis, but see also Jeffrey D. Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement* (Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2012); *Helena Blavatsky*, ed. and intro. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Western Esoteric Masters Series (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 23-48. Blavatsky's attraction to the social and reformist aspects of spiritualism might be rooted in her childhood identification with the French Revolution and the goddess of liberty, see A. P. Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky: Compiled from Information Supplied by her Relatives and Friends and Edited by A.P. Sinnett* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1886), p. 29 (rep. New York: The Arno Press, 1976), p. 39.

¹⁶⁴⁶ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, ed. by John Algeo and others [total number of volumes not yet determined] (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 2003), I, 'Letter 11', p. 44. For more on Blavatsky's relation to Davis, see Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society*, pp. 109-130.

¹⁶⁴⁷ HPB, 'A Few Questions to Hiram', in HPBCW, I, 117.

¹⁶⁴⁸ HPB, 'The Philadelphia "Fiasco," or Who is Who?', in HPBCW, I (1988), 56-72 (p. 68) (first publ. in *Banner of Light*, XXXVI (1875), 2-3).

further details).¹⁶⁴⁹ However, even though Blavatsky mentioned the idea of a brotherhood of various races prior to the establishment of the Theosophical Society, the idea of a universal brotherhood did not play a significant formal role in the initial establishment of the Theosophical Society itself. In the original 'Preamble of the Theosophical Society' dated 30 October 1875 the closest relation to a brotherhood of man is the formulation that

In considering the qualifications of applicants for membership, it knows neither race, sex, color, country nor creed.¹⁶⁵⁰

Compared to other organizations during the time this formulation was no doubt progressive. The preamble also mentions the advancement of 'good morals', but has no direct mention of a brotherhood of man.¹⁶⁵¹ The president founder of the society, Henry S. Olcott, likewise does not make any mention of the idea in his 'Inaugural Address of the Theosophical Society' delivered the following month at Mott Memorial Hall in New York on 17 November 1875.¹⁶⁵² In fact, there is no further mention of the idea by Blavatsky until *Isis Unveiled* wherein there is only one single instance which is part of a lengthy quote related to Freemasonry from a letter by Charles Sotheran (1847-1902)¹⁶⁵³ to the New York Press Club, 11 January 1877.

Speculative Masonry has much, too, within its ranks to do. One is to accept woman as a co-worker of man in the struggle of life, [...] Another important thing is also to recognize practically the brotherhood of all

¹⁶⁴⁹ See K. Paul Johnson, *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 75-79.

¹⁶⁵⁰ 'Preamble and By-laws of the Theosophical Society', 30 October 1875 (rep. in *The Theosophical Forum*, September 1947) 515-18.

¹⁶⁵¹ 'Preamble and By-laws of the Theosophical Society', 515-18.

¹⁶⁵² H. S. Olcott, 'Inaugural Address of the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society', delivered 17 November 1875, <www.theosophical.ca/adyar_pamphlets/AdyarPamphlet_No150.pdf> [accessed on 13 January 2011].

¹⁶⁵³ For more on Sotheran and his important relation to the early Theosophical Society, see Boris de Zirkoff, 'General Bibliography', in HPBCW, I (1988), 443-538 (p. 526-28); Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, p. 80-89; James A. Santucci, 'Does Theosophy Exist in The Theosophical Society', in *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, ed. by Richard Caron and others, *Gnostica*, 3 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2001), 471-89 (pp. 475-6).

humanity by refusing none on account of color, race, position, or creed.¹⁶⁵⁴

Blavatsky does not comment on this aspect of the longer quote and there is no other mention of the idea elsewhere in *Isis Unveiled*, but the Masonic background is plainly evident when she writes in relation to the idea of universal brotherhood a few years later:

Our society [...] is nothing but the “Universal Brotherhood; the *Brotherhood of Humanity!*” Our society accomplishes what the Masonic societies promise, but never perform. All Brothers, without distinction of social position, race, or color.¹⁶⁵⁵

¹⁶⁵⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877), II, 391. During the time of writing and publishing *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky co-operated extensively with Alexander Wilder, as has been elsewhere discussed, who had, already prior to Blavatsky, talked of a 'Human Brotherhood' in Alexander Wilder, *New Platonism and Alchemy: A Sketch of the Eclectic Philosophy of the Alexandrian School* (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1869; repub. Minneapolis: Wizards Bookshelf, 1975), p. 20.

¹⁶⁵⁵ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II (1967), 500-507, (p. 502) (first publ., in *La Revue Spirite* (1880), as QU'EST-CE QUE LA THÉOSOPHIE?); see also HPB, 'Qabbalah: The Philosophical Writings of Solomon Ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol (or Avicbron)', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 21-33 (p. 24) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 18 (1889), 505-12). Already as a child, Blavatsky became acquainted with Freemasonry when she took advantage of her privileged access to Prince Paul Vassilyevich Dolgorukov's (1755-1837) large occult and Freemasonic library. Prince Dolgorukov, Blavatsky's grandmother's father, belonged to the Rite of Strict Observance founded in Germany by Karl Gotthelf Hund, Baron von Hund und Alten-Grotkau, (1722-1776) around 1751 and was later, at the end of the seventeen-seventies, initiated into Rosicrucian Freemasonry, Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, pp. 2-3; Boris de Zirkoff, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: General Outline of her life prior to her public word', in HPBCW, I (3rd edn 1988), pp. xxv-ly (p. xxvii). Later in life another Freemason and old family friend, Prince Alexander Nikolaevich Golitsyn (1773-1844) encouraged Blavatsky to travel abroad in search of ancient esoteric wisdom, Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 3. During her extensive travels, Blavatsky met many Freemasons, people involved in the fringe-masonic milieu, and members of various secret societies, Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 280-81. Already in the early eighteen-fifties, she discussed the contents of the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and the Rite of Memphis with Thevenot, Grand Secretary of the Grand Orient of France, who was astonished by her advanced Freemasonic knowledge, Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, p. 280. When she came to New York (7

July 1873), she became friends with several Freemasons and generally regarded Freemasonry as a transmitter of ancient wisdom, Goodrick-Clarke, *Helena Blavatsky*, p. 63; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 280-88. Among her Freemasonic acquaintances Charles Sotheran (1847-1902), a high grade Mason, member of the English Rosicrucian Society and one of the founders of the Theosophical Society, played a central role. During her writing of *Isis Unveiled* in New York, Sotheran suggested the works of his English freemason colleague John Yarker (1833-1913) Grand Master of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Freemasons to Blavatsky. Blavatsky referred to these in Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, II, 316-17, 374n, 376-77, 394. Enthusiastically reviewing *Isis Unveiled*, Sotheran suggested to Yarker that Blavatsky be given Masonic recognition for her great work and for her comprehensive esoteric knowledge. In response to this, Yarker first sent Blavatsky a certificate of the female branch of the Indian masonic system of the Sat Bhai (Seven Brothers, or seven birds of a species, which always fly by sevens), see *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 90', pp. 340-41 (note 2); see also *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 10', p. 43. Not long thereafter, Yarker also recognized Blavatsky by bestowing her with the highest degree of Adoptive Masonry, that of the Crowned Princess. Adoptive Masonry was an offshoot of the Rite of Memphis and the Mizraim created for the wives and daughters of prominent Masons symbolized great esteem, see *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 106', pp. 397-98 (p. 397); see also Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987) pp. 156-57; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 283-84; Silvia Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993), p. 162. For a reproduction of the degree in full, see front-piece of *H.P.B. speaks: Letters written by H. P. Blavatsky from 1875 onwards, H. P. B.'s Diary for 1878 and some extracts from Scrapbook No. 1*, ed. by C. Jinarajadasa, 2 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1986), II. On 17 April 1878, Olcott and Blavatsky even discussed with Sotheran and other Masons the possibility of transforming the Theosophical Society into a Masonic body with Rituals and degrees. For a long time, this Masonic transformation seems to have been a real probability in the minds of Blavatsky and Olcott, see Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, 6 vols (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2002) [1895], I, 468-69; Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 287-88. During her residence in New York, Blavatsky shows that she had access to or at least referred to the following Masonic works in *Isis Unveiled*: Léon Hyneman, *The Most Important Masonic Book of this Century: Ancient York and London Grand Lodges, a Review of Freemasonry in England, from 1567 to 1813* (Philadelphia, PA: W. Curtis, 1872); James Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-masons: Containing the history, charges, regulations, &c. of that most ancient and right worshipful fraternity* (London: William Hunter, for John Senex, and John Hooke. 1723); James Anderson, 'Defence of Masonry, Occasioned by a

Blavatsky's first real identification of the idea with the Theosophical Society, since her first mention of the idea in her first occult article, is not until in a personal letter presumably from late 1877.

Our theosophical brotherhood must strive after the ideal of general brotherhood throughout all humanity; after the establishment of universal peace and the strengthening of charity and disinterestedness; after the destruction of materialism, of that coarse unbelief and egotism which saps the vitality of our country.¹⁶⁵⁶

Pamphlet Called Masonry Dissected', in *The Golden Remains of the Early Masonic Writers: Illustrating the Institutes of the Order*, intro. and ann. by George Oliver, 5 vols (London: Richard Spencer: 1847-50), I, 47-73; J. G. Findel, *History of Freemasonry from Its Origin Down to the Present Day* (London: Asher & Co. 1866); Emmanuel Rebold, *A General History of Freemasonry in Europe: based upon the ancient documents relating to, and the monuments erected by this fraternity from its foundation in the year 715 B.C. to the present time*, trans. by J. Fletcher Brennan (Cincinnati, OH: Geo. B. Fessenden, 1867) from *Histoire générale de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, etc. (Paris: Franck 1851); F. T. B. Clavel, *Histoire pittoresque de la Francmaçonnerie et des sociétés secrètes anciennes et modernes* (Paris: Pagnerre, éditeur, 1843); C. Lenning, C., *Encyclopadie der Freimaurerei, nebst Nachrichten Über die damit in wirklicher Oder vorgeblocher Beziehung stephenden geheimen Verbindungen, in Alphabetischer Ordnung / c von C. Lenning, durchgesehen und, mit zusatzen vermehrt, herausegeben von Einem Sachkundigen*, 3 vols (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1822-28); *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia of History, Rites, Symbolism and Biography*, ed. by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1877); John Yarker, *Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity: the Gnosis and Secret Schools of the Middle Ages: Modern Rosicrucianism: and the various Rites and Degrees of Free and Accepted Masonry* (London, J. Hogg 1872); *Crata Repoa, or the Mysteries of the Ancient Egyptian Priests*, translated by John Yarker and originally published in Berlin by Carl Friedrich Koeppen, 1770 as *Crata Repoa oder Einweihungen in der alten geheimen Gesellschaft der Egyptischen Priester* and reprinted by Christian Ludwig Stahlbaum in Berlin, 1778, a French translation by Ant. Bailleul then appeared in Paris, 1821 from which stems John Yarker's translation now appended in Manly P. Hall's *Freemasonry of the ancient Egyptians: to which is added an interpretation of the Crata Repoa initiation rite & the initiation of Plato* (Los Angeles, CA: The Philosophers Press, 1937); Albert Pike, *Proceedings of the Supreme Council of Sovereign Grand Inspectors-General of the Thirty-third and Last Degree, etc., etc. held at the city of New York, August 15, 1876*; Humberto Malandrini, *Ritual of Initiations* (Venice: [n. pub.], 1657); finally see also John Algeo, *Blavatsky, Freemasonry, and the Western Mystery Tradition* (London: Theosophical Society in England, 1996).

¹⁶⁵⁶ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 105', pp. 395-96.

Here Blavatsky clearly identifies the Theosophical Society with the idea of universal brotherhood and again in a letter, presumably dated April 1878, to Hurrichund Chintamon (or Harischandra Chintamani), the leader of the Bombay Branch of the Arya Samaj, Blavatsky writes that it is important to establish relations with the Sikhs in India because they have for centuries been teaching ‘the great “Brotherhood of Humanity”—precisely the doctrine we teach.’¹⁶⁵⁷ This indicates that Blavatsky was aware of the Sikh background of the idea of universal brotherhood and that she at this point already talked as if the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood was a part of the Theosophical Society. It was, however, not until May the same year (1878) that the idea became an official part of the Society. Primarily Olcott, supervised by Blavatsky, was responsible for drafting a New York circular that was distributed from 3 May 1878 on ‘The Theosophical Society: Its Origin, Plan and Aims.’¹⁶⁵⁸ In this historically significant document the idea of a ‘Brotherhood of Humanity’ became an important object of the Theosophical Society.

The objects of the Society are various. ... chiefly, to aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity, wherein all good and pure men, of every race shall recognize each other as the equal effects (upon this planet) of the Un-create, Universal, Infinite, and Everlasting Cause.¹⁶⁵⁹

From then onwards, the idea of Universal Brotherhood was gradually emphasised and elevated within the Society, but the famous delineation of three specific objects of the Theosophical Society did not occur until the meeting of the sixth anniversary of the Theosophical Society, originally scheduled 17 November 1881, but postponed to 12 January 1882 because of Blavatsky’s and Olcott’s far-reaching travels in India.

The decisive events that led to the ‘reorganization’ of the Theosophical Society on the principle of universal brotherhood, as Blavatsky called it,¹⁶⁶⁰

¹⁶⁵⁷ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, ‘Letter 112’, p. 417.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Olcott, ‘The Theosophical Society’, in HPBCW, I, 375-78.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Olcott, ‘The Theosophical Society’, in HPBCW, I, 377.

¹⁶⁶⁰ HPB, ‘Buddhistic Exegesis’, in HPBCW, II (1967), 138-40 (p. 138) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 2 (1879), 34); see also HPB, ‘The New Cycle’, in HPBCW, XI (1973), 123-36 (p. 125) (first publ. in *La Revue Théosophique*, I, 1 (1889), 3-13); HPB, ‘Our Three Objects’, in HPBCW, XI

between late 1877 and January 1882, was a part of the gradual relocation of the Theosophical Headquarters from New York to India (first Bombay in May 1879 and then Adyar, Madras in 1882); and it is especially as a part of Theosophy's arrival in India that Blavatsky's discourse of Universal Brotherhood became important.

The first steps were taken by engaging in a correspondence, begun in 1877, between Olcott and his Hindu contact Moolji Thakurshi (Moolji Thackersey) whom he had previously met on board a transatlantic voyage in 1870 and with whom contact was re-established through James Peebles.¹⁶⁶¹ Olcott invited Thakurshi to join the Theosophical Society and Thakurshi then told Olcott about the Indian reform movement, the Arya Samaj, founded in 1875 by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-1883).¹⁶⁶² After further correspondence with Thakurshi, Chintamon and Dayananda, it was found that the two societies seemingly shared many goals. It was therefore decided at a meeting of the Theosophical Society on 22 May 1878 in New York (notably the same month the New York circular appeared) that the two societies should unite.¹⁶⁶³ The

(1973), 391-400 (pp. 392-96) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 25 (1889), 1-7); HPB, 'The Drift of Western Spiritualism', in HPBCW, II (1967), 107-110 (pp. 107-8) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 7-8); and Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), p. 328. In a couple of instances Blavatsky, however, mentions that the idea of universal Brotherhood had been a part of the Theosophical Society programme from the start, see for example HPB, 'The Original Programme Manuscript', in HPBCW, VII (1987), 145-71 (p. 145); H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, [1889]), p. 39. These instances, however, seem generalized and would contradict the instances above.

¹⁶⁶¹ See Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 76-78; Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 162-63; Howard Murphet, *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light: Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1988), p. 96.

¹⁶⁶² See Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, pp. 319-20.

¹⁶⁶³ Murphet, *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light: Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott*, p. 96. Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 162-69. Robert Ellwood, 'The Theosophical Society', in *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America: Metaphysical, New Age, and Neopagan Movements*, ed. by Eugene V. Gallagher and W. Michael Ashcraft, 5 vols

Theosophical Society changed its name to the *Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of Aryavarta* and on 27 June 1878 a branch of this society was founded in London by the English barrister Charles Carleton Massey (1838-1905) named *the British Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of Aryavart* (later, from June 1883, known as the 'London Lodge of the Theosophical Society').¹⁶⁶⁴ In December 1878 Blavatsky and Olcott embarked on their journey to Bombay in India where they arrived in February 1879 marking a new beginning of the Theosophical Society.¹⁶⁶⁵ In New York interest in the society had somewhat waned by 1878 and the conceptualization of both Theosophy and the Theosophical Society needed to be specified and perhaps reformulated in order to give it new life.¹⁶⁶⁶ This 're-embodiment' took place during: what has, earlier in this thesis, been termed the first major construction of the concept 'Theosophy' (1879-1880) in which 'Theosophical Society' became synonymous with Universal Brotherhood; the relocation to India discussed above (1879); and the founding of the first Theosophical Magazine *The Theosophist* (October 1879).

Precisely during this transition phase the idea of universal brotherhood seriously enters Blavatsky's discourse. From 1879 and onwards it is possible to inductively construct three major aspects of her discourse for universal

(Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), III, 48-66 (pp. 54-55).

¹⁶⁶⁴ This co-operation ceased in March 1882 due to disputes and obvious differences between the goals of the two societies, see K. Paul Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, p. 110. For more details on the co-operation between the two societies, see also John Patrick Deveney, *Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society*, Theosophical History Occasional Papers, 6 (Fullerton, CA: Theosophical History, 1997), pp. 61-65.

¹⁶⁶⁵ See Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of The Theosophical Society*, II, 1-14; Murphet, *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light: Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott*, pp. 94-101; Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, pp. 199-201; Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, pp. 159-98.

¹⁶⁶⁶ See Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, p. 76; Deveney argues that the problem of satisfying members and re-vitalising the life of the Theosophical Society was a challenge that continued up through the eighteen-eighties, especially in relation to the practise of practical occultism, see Deveney, 'Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society', pp. 58-80.

brotherhood.

2.7.2.1 Universal Brotherhood, India and Christian Missionaries

If I had a *hundred* lives I would give them all to the last drop of my blood to save India from this thrice accursed Christian system, and our President agrees with me fully.¹⁶⁶⁷

In order to revive and expand the Theosophical Society, India became central from 1879 and onwards. Both Blavatsky and Olcott regarded India (or Aryavarta as they often called the country) as a holy land, the origin of civilization (within historical time) and as the primary source of the Wisdom-Religion.¹⁶⁶⁸ The first major aspect of Blavatsky's discourse for universal brotherhood was thus related to disseminating Theosophy in India and reviving its cultural heritage. In so doing the Christian missionaries (and to some extent the British Government and the traditional Brahmin caste system) became the 'negative Others'. Traditionally, Christian missions in India stretch all the way back to St. Thomas who reached the Indian shores around 55 CE. Ever since, the missions have been an ongoing process though only around 2% of the Indian population today is Catholic. From 1732 onwards the Protestant churches organised missions in India, and Christian missions continued under British rule (1858-1947),¹⁶⁶⁹ but just prior to Blavatsky's and Olcott's arrival in India several Hindu reform movements had emerged as reactions to the proselytising activity and prejudices of the Christian missionaries and the pressing modernization of British rule threatening to undermine Indian culture.¹⁶⁷⁰ The Brahmo Samaj (est. 1830) and the Arya Samaj (est. 1875) and later the Ramakrishna Mission (est.

¹⁶⁶⁷ *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 116', p. 431.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Kenneth W. Jones, *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-religious Reform Movements in British India*, 22 vols (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), III.I, 173; Edward C. Moulton, 'The Beginnings of the Theosophical Movement in India, 1879-1885: Conversion and Non-Conversion Experiences', in *Religious Conversion Movements in South Asia: Continuities and Change, 1800-1900*, ed. by Geoffrey A. Oddie (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), pp. 109-172 (pp. 114-15).

¹⁶⁶⁹ British colonial presence in India stretches back to 1613, see *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia*, ed. by Melvin E. Page (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), pp. 273-74.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Raj Bahadur Sharma, *Christian Missions in North India, 1813-1913: A Case Study of Meerut Division and Dhara Dun District* (Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, 1988), pp. 171-77.

1897) all sought to reform traditional Hindu society in order to move towards a more modern society, yet retain and emphasise the importance of the ancient Vedas.¹⁶⁷¹ The Christian missions regarded these movements as a threat as the Arya Samaj for example sought to re-convert Hindus (Shudhi) and the Ramakrishna Mission even sought to proselytise in the West.¹⁶⁷² Not only had Hindus reacted against the Christian missionaries, but also Buddhists. As the culmination of debates since the early 1860s in Ceylon with Christian missionaries, the Buddhist orator Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera (1823-1890) became famous in 1873 for having won a public debate with the Christian missionary Rev. David de Silva. The debate resulted in a book by James Peebles entitled *Buddhism and Christianity Face to Face* (1878).¹⁶⁷³ Olcott and Blavatsky read their friend's book and were so enthusiastic about it that they initiated a correspondence with Gunananda and also with Unnanse H. Sumangala (1827-1911), another key figure in the Sri Lanka Buddhist-Christian debates (and later in the Theosophical Society)¹⁶⁷⁴ and promised to visit Ceylon in the near future to join their efforts.¹⁶⁷⁵

When two Westerners, such as Blavatsky and Olcott, came to India in February 1879 and contrary to all expectations regarded ancient India, Hinduism and Buddhism as superior to the West and to Church Christianity—they joined forces with the Indian reformers such as the Arya Samaj and the Sri Lankaen Buddhists—their stance of course held great appeal for the Hindus and Buddhists, but simultaneously, it was a major irritation to the Christian

¹⁶⁷¹ Sharma, *Christian Missions in North India, 1813-1913: A Case Study of Meerut Division and Dhara Dun District*, pp. 171-77. Panthapalli A. Augustine, *Social Equality in Indian Society: The Elusive Goal* (New Delhi: Ashok Kumar Mittal, 1991), pp. 128-30.

¹⁶⁷² Sharma, *Christian Missions in North India, 1813-1913: A Case Study of Meerut Division and Dhara Dun District*, pp. 172-76.

¹⁶⁷³ J. M. Peebles, *Buddhism and Christianity face to face or, An oral discussion between the Rev. Migettuwatte, a Buddhist priest, and Rev. D. Silva, an English clergyman: Held at Pantura, Ceylon* (Boston, MA: Colby and Rich, 1878).

¹⁶⁷⁴ For more on Sumangala, see Johnson, *The Masters Revealed: Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge*, pp. 189-90.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Joseph Cheah, *Race and Religion in American Buddhism: White Supremacy and Immigrant Adaptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 37.

missionaries who attacked the Theosophists in India from the very beginning.¹⁶⁷⁶

Blavatsky and Olcott's strategy was to undertake extensive travels throughout India with an outreach campaign to the Indians.¹⁶⁷⁷ Instead of converting the Hindus and Buddhists as the Christian missionaries had done, they themselves converted to Buddhism (took 'pansil') 25 May 1880 in Ceylon¹⁶⁷⁸ and helped in the design of the Buddhist flag as well.¹⁶⁷⁹ They supported the revival of Indian culture by establishing free schools teaching Sanskrit, constructing a massive oriental library in Adyar and promoting Hindu and Buddhist culture and philosophy through the activity of the Theosophical Society and *The Theosophist*, which in part was dedicated to 'Oriental

¹⁶⁷⁶ Jones, *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-religious Reform Movements in British India*, p. 171; Moulton, 'The Beginnings of the Theosophical Movement in India, 1879-1885: Conversion and Non-Conversion Experiences', p. 117; Augustine, *Social Equality in Indian Society: The Elusive Goal*, p. 130.

¹⁶⁷⁷ See Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, pp. 191-284.

¹⁶⁷⁸ See Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, II, 166-69; Chatherine Wessinger, Dell deChant, and William Michael Ashcraft, 'Theosophy, New Thought, and New Age Movements', in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, ed. by Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether, 3 vols (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), II, 753-67 (p. 755); Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, p. 214.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, III, 362-84; Richard Francis Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 2003), pp. 185-87; Richard Francis Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 204-205; Cheah, *Race and Religion in American Buddhism: White Supremacy and Immigrant Adaptation*, p. 33; Stephen R. Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 171; Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter With Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture & the Limits of Dissent* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p. 56; Murphet, *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light: Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott*, pp. 142, 320; George D. Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response* (Delhi: Mortilal Banarsidass, 1992), p. 49; Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, p. 193.

Philosophy, Art and Literature.¹⁶⁸⁰ Instead of regarding the Indian religion as heathen superstition, as many Christians tended to do, and the Indian people as inferior, as the British Government did, Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society promoted universal brotherhood without distinction of race, colour, sex or class. This overall strategy of extending the Enlightenment ideal of equality and human rights to the Indian natives helped return and even enhance the original dignity, unity and self-respect of the natives and proved a great success; so much so, that by 1884 the Theosophical Society in India alone had grown to 100 Indian branches.¹⁶⁸¹

A brief survey of the textual trace of Blavatsky's use of the idea of universal brotherhood more clearly demonstrates that the strategy of universal brotherhood was a part of her Indian mission, as opposed to the Christian missionaries, and that it appealed to many Hindus and Buddhists.

In an early letter to their Hindu contact Chintamon [April 1878] Blavatsky, as shown above, already emphasised the importance of 'the great "Brotherhood of Humanity"' and that it was central to Theosophical work.¹⁶⁸² In a reply to Mr. Rossi de Justiniani published in *La Revue Spirite*, Paris in September 1879,

¹⁶⁸⁰ Wessinger, deChant, and Ashcraft, 'Theosophy, New Thought, and New Age Movements', p. 755; Moulton, 'The Beginnings of the Theosophical Movement in India, 1879-1885: Conversion and Non-Conversion Experiences', p. 115; Cheah, *Race and Religion in American Buddhism: White Supremacy and Immigrant Adaptation*, pp. 36-38. Murphet, *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light: Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott*, pp. 131-52. HPB, 'What Good Has Theosophy Done In India', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 129-34 (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 8 (1888), 85-91); HPB, 'Our Three Objects', in HPBCW, XI, 391-400.

¹⁶⁸¹ Jones, *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-religious Reform Movements in British India*, pp. 171-74; Moulton, 'The Beginnings of the Theosophical Movement in India, 1879-1885: Conversion and Non-Conversion Experiences', pp. 116-17; W. Michael Ashcraft, *The Dawn of The New Cycle: Point Loma Theosophists and American culture* (Knoxville, TN: The university of Tennessee Press, 2002), p. 199 (note 68); Robert S. Ellwood, *Theosophy: a modern expression of the wisdom of the ages* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1986), p. 213.

¹⁶⁸² *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 112', p. 417; see also from the same period, how the TS was presented in HPB's Letters: *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky 1861-1879*, I, 'Letter 124' (New York, 30 July 1878), p. 455; 'Letter 131' (New York, November 29, 1878), p. 485.

Blavatsky criticises the Christian missionaries and Justiniani for seeking to 'convert the whole universe to his special beliefs' because in so doing one neglects to do justice to the beliefs of others and fail to look beyond the differences of religions and races. Being able to look beyond differences is the true 'love of humanity' and universal brotherhood which the Theosophical Society works for in India and elsewhere.¹⁶⁸³ Two months later Blavatsky praised Sumangala and Gunananda in *The Theosophist* for their immense knowledge, personal character and the debates they had undertaken with the Christian missionaries. In connection with this she mentioned their willingness to co-operate with the Theosophical Society.¹⁶⁸⁴ Blavatsky states that this willingness was especially due to the principle of Universal Brotherhood.

When it was decided to reorganize the Theosophical Society upon the basis of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity, uniting men of all creeds in an effort to spread throughout the world the basic principles of a true religion, he [Sumangala] cheerfully gave his adhesion to the movement, and accepted a place in the General Council; thus dignifying the Society and securing it the good-will of Buddhists, the world over.¹⁶⁸⁵

The following year, after having visited Ceylon Blavatsky gave a status report in *The Theosophist* (August 1880) wherein she declared that the 'Asiatic people' have greatly supported the cause of a 'human brotherhood' and that they have expressed great delight for the attempts to rescue from oblivion the 'Aryan wisdom'.¹⁶⁸⁶ Blavatsky also reports that *The Theosophist* has gained many supporters among the Indians and even among the Anglo-Indians as an important 'Oriental magazine'.¹⁶⁸⁷

¹⁶⁸³ HPB, 'Final Reply of a Theosophist to Mr. Rossi de Justiniani', in HPBCW, II (1967), 62-67 (pp. 62-63) (first publ. in *La Revue Spirite* (1879), trans. from the French).

¹⁶⁸⁴ HPB, 'Buddhistic Exegesis', in HPBCW, II, 138-39.

¹⁶⁸⁵ HPB, 'Buddhistic Exegesis', in HPBCW, II, 138 [brackets are mine]. Later, in 1889 Blavatsky also indicates that due to the increasing encounter with various races and religions the original program of the Theosophical Society was enlarged to include the most precious of Theosophical objects i.e. that of Universal Brotherhood, HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 125.

¹⁶⁸⁶ HPB, 'Our Second Year', in HPBCW, II (1967), 426-29 (pp. 426-27) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 11 (1880), 261-62).

¹⁶⁸⁷ HPB, 'Our Second Year', in HPBCW, II, 427-28; see also HPB, 'Our Three Objects', in HPBCW, XI, 392.

During the following ten years (1881-1891) heated debates with and critique of the Christian missionaries and their idea of brotherhood towards the Indians continued.¹⁶⁸⁸ Blavatsky acknowledged that the idea of universal brotherhood originated with the Christians and also praises them for this,¹⁶⁸⁹ but found more vice and strife in much Christian activity among the Indians than actual brotherhood.¹⁶⁹⁰ Blavatsky continued to focus on her idea of 'Universal Brotherhood' and the cause 'to revive the philosophical Self-respect of the Indian people'¹⁶⁹¹ and to 'prove to occidental scholars that the ancestors of those they now look down upon as of an "inferior race," were intellectual, moral and spiritual giants.'¹⁶⁹² Such recognition from the British, that the Indians are not inferior, Blavatsky hoped, would not only lead to a universal brotherhood of equal human rights, but also to a 'link between the East and the West, uniting them both in a bond of Intellectual Brotherhood.'¹⁶⁹³

¹⁶⁸⁸ HPB, 'A False "Witness"', in HPBCW, III (1995), 131-38 (pp. 132-37), (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 8 (1881), 174-76); HPB, 'A Word with "Zero" (Reply by a Theosophist)', in HPBCW, IV (1991), 358-65; HPB, 'Footnotes to "The Status of Jesus"', in HPBCW, IV (1991), 603-604 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 10, (1883), 261); HPB, 'The Rev. W. Hastie's Karma and the Progress of Poesy in Bengal', in HPBCW, V (1997), 350-51 (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 2(50) (1883), 51); HPB, 'The Neutrality of the Senate House', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 166-68 (first publ. in *Journal of the Theosophical Society*, I, 2 (1884), 33-34); HPB, "'The Theosophical Mahatmas'", in HPBCW, VII (1987), 241-49 (pp. 246-48) (first publ. in *The Path*, I, 9 (1886), 257-63); HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 70-91 (pp. 89-90) (first publ. in *Le Lotus*, I, 6 (1887), 321-38); HPB, 'Civilization, The Death of Art and Beauty', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 177-90 (p. 188) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VIII, 45 (1891), 177-86).

¹⁶⁸⁹ HPB, '*Lucifer* to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 268-83 (p. 273) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 4 (1887), 242-51); HPB, 'The Beacon of the unknown', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 248-83 (p. 282) (first publ. in *La Revue Théosophique*, I, 3, 4, 5, 6 (1889), 1-9, 1-7, 1-6, 1-9, trans. from the French). Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 41.

¹⁶⁹⁰ See note 1688.

¹⁶⁹¹ HPB, 'A Personal Explanation', in HPBCW, III (1995), 440-48 (p. 448) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, III, 4 (1882), 1-2); HPB, 'A Word with "Zero" (Reply by a Theosophist)', in HPBCW, IV, 360.

¹⁶⁹² HPB, 'Comment on "Practical Work for Theosophists"', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 211-12 (p. 212) (first publ. in *Journal of the Theosophical Society*, I, 4 (1884), 63); see also HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII, 90-91.

¹⁶⁹³ HPB, 'Comment on "Practical Work for Theosophists"', in HPBCW, VI, 212; HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII, 91; see also Johnston and HPB, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky', in HPBCW, VIII, 404-409.

Blavatsky however not only criticised the way the British and the Christian missionaries treated the native Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Muslims, and Parsees, etc. Her discourse of universal brotherhood was also aimed at a social reform of the traditional Indian societal-power structures, such as the caste system.¹⁶⁹⁴ Just as the Buddha originally had ‘opened his Church to all men, without distinction of origin, cast, nation, colour, or sex,’¹⁶⁹⁵ she wished to absolve the various boundaries separating the different Indians and their religions from interchanges of ideas, intermarriages and general communion, as she perceived these divisions, stubbornly upheld by tradition, to be equally obstructive to the realisation of universal brotherhood.¹⁶⁹⁶

It follows, therefore, from all that precedes, that it is not the “priesthood of India” that attempts to bring the Occident back to the ancient wisdom, but rather a few Occidentals from Europe-America [i.e. Blavatsky, Olcott and other Theosophists] who, led by their Karma to the happiness of knowing certain Adepts of the secret Himâlayan Brotherhood, attempt, under the inspiration of these Masters, to lead the priesthood of India back to the primitive and divine esotericism.¹⁶⁹⁷

Such fruitful brotherly interchanges between the different Indian creeds and a return to the original esotericism (i.e. the Wisdom-Tradition) which according to Blavatsky existed in a remote epoch prior to the implementation of the caste system had to some extent been accomplished within the confines of the Theosophical Society and its mission in India; and it had also helped interchanges between the Indians and the British.¹⁶⁹⁸

2.7.2.2 The Universal Brotherhood and ‘No-dogma’ politics

The principle of universal brotherhood in fact became so central to Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society after anchoring in India that, as Blavatsky argued, it was the primary defining principle of the Theosophical Society and of a true

¹⁶⁹⁴ HPB, ‘Misconceptions’, in HPBCW, VIII, 78, 82-83, 86-87.

¹⁶⁹⁵ HPB, ‘The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained by M. Émile Burnouf, The French Orientalist’, in HPBCW, X (1988), 63-81 (p. 65) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 12 (1888), 421-33).

¹⁶⁹⁶ HPB, ‘Misconceptions’, in HPBCW, VIII, 90-91.

¹⁶⁹⁷ HPB, ‘Misconceptions’, in HPBCW, VIII, 90, [brackets are mine].

¹⁶⁹⁸ HPB, ‘Our Three Objects’, in HPBCW, XI, 392-98, 400; HPB, ‘What Good Has Theosophy Done In India’, in HPBCW, IX, 129-34.

Theosophist.¹⁶⁹⁹ Blavatsky also continuously emphasised what Andrew Jackson Davis similarly had argued, that in order to counter sectarianism and cultivate intellectual as well as practical brotherhood, a Theosophist can believe whatever he likes, be a member of any religion he prefers or none at all, but he can only become a member of the Theosophical Society if he believes in and is willing to support the principle of universal brotherhood.¹⁷⁰⁰ In relation to this, Blavatsky firmly stated that the Theosophical Society has no specific dogmas one must adhere to¹⁷⁰¹ and that it is not concerned with any political conviction,

¹⁶⁹⁹ See below, but see also HPB, 'Explanations Relative to the Controversy on Occultism', in HPBCW, V (1997), 4-6 (p. 5) (first publ. in *Bulletin Mensuel de la Société Scientifique d'Études Psychologiques* (1883), 116 et seq., trans. from the French); HPB, 'Our New branches', in HPBCW, V (1997), 125-27 (p. 127) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 11(47) (1883), 3); HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII, 71; HPB, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 241-48 (p. 243) (first publ. in 'Report of the Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society' (1888)); HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 126, 128-29. Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁰⁰ HPB, 'Final Reply of a Theosophist to Mr. Rossi de Justiniani', in HPBCW, II, 62-63; HPB, 'Namastae!', in HPBCW, II (1967), 84-86 (p. 85) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 1-2); HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II (1967), 500-507 (p. 505) (first publ., in *La Revue Spirite*, (1880), as QU'EST-CE QUE LA THÉOSOPHIE?); HPB, 'Explanations Relative to the Controversy on Occultism' in HPBCW, V, 5; HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 126-27; H. T. Patterson, 'Comments on "The Theosophical Society and H.P.B."', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 115-21 (p. 121) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, VII, 42, (1891), 451-55);

¹⁷⁰¹ HPB, 'Namastae!', in HPBCW, II, 84-85; HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 504; HPB, 'The Chosen "Vessels of Election"', in HPBCW, IV (1991), 405-420 (p. 415); HPB, 'Explanations Relative to the Controversy on Occultism' in HPBCW, V, 5; HPB, '[Comments to] The Essentials of Religion', in HPBCW, V (1997), 95-100 (p. 95) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, IV, 11(47) (1883), 274-75) [brackets are mine]; HPB, 'Let Every Man Prove His Own Work', in HPBCW, VIII (1990), 159-71 (p. 164) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, I, 3 (1887), 161-69); HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 126, 128-29; Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, pp. 19-20. Certain explicit restrictions to the no-dogma policy should be noted, for example that Blavatsky continually refused to acknowledge the belief in a personal god in favour of an impersonal Absolute, HPB, 'A Christian Minister on Theosophy', in HPBCW, V (1997), 351-57 (p. 356) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 2(50), (1883), 52-53); HPB, 'Victims of Words', in HPBCW, VI (1989), 139-42 (p. 141) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, V, 5(53), (1884), 117). Blavatsky was also thought to propagate Buddhism, see discussion in HPB, 'The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained

such as socialism or communism.¹⁷⁰² This of course appealed to the Indians because both their religion and their dignity would be respected. The no-dogma policy can also be viewed as a natural extension of Blavatsky's abstract definition of Theosophy or universal Religion as the One Universal Truth and that there is no one religion higher than this truth i.e. that no one religion can lay absolute claims to the one truth.¹⁷⁰³ In this connection Blavatsky also states that the Theosophical Society was founded on the model of the United States of America (its birth place) because it does not include any pretence to founding a state religion and therefore accepts all religions.¹⁷⁰⁴

For Blavatsky the idea of universal brotherhood is theoretically based on what she regards as the logical, philosophical metaphysical and scientific principle that no matter how varied peoples' ethnicity or racial background might be, all individual people, as St Paul similarly had argued, share in the one common 'Christ spirit',¹⁷⁰⁵ 'common soul',¹⁷⁰⁶ or 'common humanity',¹⁷⁰⁷ which transcends all secular and sacral divisions; and that humanity, as the Stoics had stated, is essentially a brotherhood by virtue of the one common origin and sameness of the material from which it is formed physically, spiritually and morally.¹⁷⁰⁸ Humanity as a whole is also causally linked in such a way that every individual action will have repercussion on the whole.¹⁷⁰⁹ In practice

by M. Émile Burnouf, *The French Orientalist*, in HPBCW, X, 64-65.

¹⁷⁰² HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?', in HPBBCW, II (1967), 98-106 (p. 105) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 1 (1879), 5-7); HPB, 'Our Christian XIXth Century of Ethics', in HPBCW, X (1988), 81-88 (p. 82) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, II, 12 (1888), 482-84). Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, pp. 231-337.

¹⁷⁰³ See section 2.1.4.2.1 of the present thesis, but see also HPB, 'What Good Has Theosophy Done In India', in HPBCW, IX, 134; HPB, 'Is Theosophy a Religion?', in HPBCW, X (21988), 159-74 (p. 163) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 15 (1888), 177-87).

¹⁷⁰⁴ HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 126, 128. It is interesting to ask whether this arose through Olcott's influence on her.

¹⁷⁰⁵ HPB, '*Lucifer* to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!', in HPBCW, VIII, 273.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Johnston and HPB, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky', in HPBCW, VIII, 408.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Johnston and HPB, 'Helena Petrovna Blavatsky', in HPBCW, VIII, 406.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 146; Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 41; Olcott, 'The Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, I, 377; HPB, 'The Beacon of the unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 283.

¹⁷⁰⁹ Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 41.

universal brotherhood for Theosophists thus meant that one would pledge oneself to defend his brother, even if it meant one's own life¹⁷¹⁰ and to practice equality, charity, tolerance and universal love for all mankind without distinction of race, colour, caste, class or creed as this would strengthen unity and is the only foundation of universal morality.¹⁷¹¹ Universal Brotherhood should however also extend to what Blavatsky called 'intellectual brotherhood' in relation to which the no-dogma policy was central, because 'unless [...] it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals.'¹⁷¹²

Much confusion seems to have arisen among the members of the Theosophical Society because, according to Blavatsky, many misunderstood that the Theosophical Society primarily (since its transfer to India) was synonymous with Universal Brotherhood and many regretfully failed to practice it.¹⁷¹³ Many members primarily joined the Society to study occultism and regarded it as a college of occultism above all else.¹⁷¹⁴ This conflict is already evident in the early *Mahatma Letters* (1880 onwards) where Mahatma K.H. Morya and others constantly remind A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume that universal

¹⁷¹⁰ HPB, 'Final Reply of a Theosophist to Mr. Rossi de Justiniani', in HPBCW, II, 62-63; see also HPB, 'Is Denunciation a Duty?', in HPBCW, X (1988), 196-208 (p. 207) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, III, 16 (1888), 265-73).

¹⁷¹¹ HPB, 'Explanations Relative to the Controversy on Occultism' in HPBCW, V, 5; HPB, 'Let Every Man Prove His Own Work', in HPBCW, VIII, 164-65; HPB, 'Is Denunciation a Duty?', in HPBCW, X, 198-200; HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 126, 128-29; 'Mahatma Letter No. 5' (ML-4) (rec. Nov. 3, 1880), in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett: In Chronological Sequence*, ed. by A. T. Barker and Vincente Hao Chin, Jr. (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1998), p. 20.

¹⁷¹² Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, p. 146; HPB, 'Comment on "Practical Work for Theosophists"', in HPBCW, VI, 212; HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII, 90-91.

¹⁷¹³ HPB, "'The Theosophical Mahatmas'", in HPBCW, VII, 246-49; Boris de Zirkoff, '[Introduction to] An Explanation Important to All Theosophists', in HPBCW, X (1988), 134-36 (p. 134); HPB, 'Is Denunciation a Duty?', in HPBCW, X, 196-208; Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, p. 328.

¹⁷¹⁴ See HPB, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention', in HPBCW, IX, 244; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 161-69 (p. 167) (rep. from the *Report of Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, American Section* (1889)); see also next footnote.

brotherhood comes first and it is the *sine qua non* of the Theosophical Society and the foundation for the study of occultism.¹⁷¹⁵

Yet, you [A. P. Sinnett] have ever discussed but to put down the idea of a universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the T.S. on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. This, my respected and esteemed friend and Brother – will never do!¹⁷¹⁶

This ambiguity and confusion was of course to some extent galvanised by Blavatsky's reliance on and display of occult phenomena—from prior to the formation of the Theosophical Society in New York (1875) to her fruitful visit to the Sinnett's summer residence in Simla September 1880—but the effects of this she soon began to regret.¹⁷¹⁷

Blavatsky thus argued that the principle of universal brotherhood was to serve as an ethical safeguard in the study of occultism because one could be a Theosophist without being an occultist, but if one was an occultist without being a Theosophist one would either consciously or unconsciously become a black magician.¹⁷¹⁸ This means that studying and directing the occult forces of nature

¹⁷¹⁵ 'Mahatma Letter No. 2' (ML-2) (rec. Oct. 19, 1880), p. 2; 'Mahatma Letter No. 5' (ML-4) (rec. Nov. 3, 1880), p. 20; 'Mahatma Letter No. 11' (ML-28) (rec. Dec. 1880), pp. 30-31, 33, 35-36; 'Mahatma Letter No. 33' (ML-38) (Dec. 1881), p. 100; see also 'Letter No. 14a' (ML-142A) (rec. before Feb. 20, 1881), pp. 41-42.

¹⁷¹⁶ 'Mahatma Letter No. 2' (ML-2) (rec. Oct. 19, 1880), p. 8, [brackets are mine].

¹⁷¹⁷ A. P. Sinnett was for example very attracted to the physical occult phenomena which Blavatsky produced on her second visit in September 1880 right before Sinnett's correspondence with the Mahatmas was initiated the following month (October 1880). This means that Sinnett, like others, was "lured" into Theosophy through an interest in Blavatsky's phenomena and spiritualism in general. Sinnett's first impressive encounter with Blavatsky's phenomena was published in A. P. Sinnett, *The Occult World* (London: Trübner & Co., 1881), pp. 42-153; see also Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 343-93; II, 42-61, 126-46, 226-48; Cranston, *H.P.B.: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky: Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, pp. 221-26; Deveney, 'Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society'.

¹⁷¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 25; HPB, 'Let Every Man Prove His Own Work', in HPBCW, VIII, 170-71; HPB, 'Conversations on Occultism', in HPBCW, IX (1986), 99-128 (p. 123) (first publ. in *The Path*, III, 1-6 (1888),

was believed to be a dangerous endeavour and that if one's nature had not first been rid of personal desire and egotism one would use the occult knowledge and power for personal gain rather than to serve humanity and this Blavatsky sought to avoid.¹⁷¹⁹ To Blavatsky the idea of brotherhood was the true entrance to the mysteries.¹⁷²⁰

2.7.2.3 The Theosophical Cause

As the idea of universal brotherhood was only once and indirectly mentioned in *Isis Unveiled* and also only once directly mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine*,¹⁷²¹ it is fair to say that the idea played no real part of her major philosophical or occult works. The idea was however the most important reform cause for which the Theosophical Society strove, at least in Blavatsky's opinion, after the Society had moved to India in the years 1879-1882 and onwards.¹⁷²²

Blavatsky took the view that the French Revolution had not succeeded in implementing brotherhood among men,¹⁷²³ just as she criticised the

17-21, 54-58, 94-96, 125-29, 160-63, 187-92).

¹⁷¹⁹ Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, pp. 25-27; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 164-65. This caution towards practical occultism and magic, later led to members joining the more practically oriented Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn founded in 1887, see R. A. Gilbert, *Revelations of the Golden Dawn: The Rise & Fall of A Magical Order* (London: Quantum, 1997), pp. 39-40.

¹⁷²⁰ HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 165-66.

¹⁷²¹ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy*, 2 vols (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1888), I, 644.

¹⁷²² HPB, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention', in HPBCW, IX, 243.

¹⁷²³ HPB, 'Misconceptions', in HPBCW, VIII, 86. Blavatsky did, however, identify herself with the ideals of the French Revolution on numerous occasions (see for example Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky*, for her juvenile declaration that she wanted to be a 'Goddess of Liberty' all her life after hearing, Henriette Peigneur, her old French governess' memories of the Revolution), but did apparently not think that its attempted implementation of Brotherhood had succeeded. F. K. Gaboriau (editor of *Le Lotus*), however, argued in a footnote to 'Misconceptions', referenced to above, that Blavatsky was misinformed about the state of affairs in France due to her long time absence from France and due to the foreign newspapers, she read, which only sought to soil French democracy, see

Freemasons and Christians for having failed to practice it.¹⁷²⁴ The causes, Blavatsky found, still hindering its realization can be categorized as existing on sociological, ideological and individual levels. On the sociological level, all hegemonic structures upheld either by secular or sacral institutions and organizations, that unnaturally divide and separate people, are a hindrance to the true implementation of brotherhood as in the case of the British rule in India, the Christian Churches and the traditional Hindu caste system, mentioned earlier.¹⁷²⁵ This also included the un-brotherly strife between nations.¹⁷²⁶ On the ideological level, Blavatsky found modern materialism and conservative theological dogmas to be a great hindrance due to their reductionism and their intolerance.¹⁷²⁷ Finally on the individual level, Blavatsky generally argued that man's natural selfishness, prejudice, greed and bias are obstacles to be overcome.¹⁷²⁸

Similar to the cause of other reformers of the day, Blavatsky argued that

'Misconceptions', p. 86n.

¹⁷²⁴ See above, but see also HPB, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention', in HPBCW, IX, 243.

¹⁷²⁵ HPB, '*Lucifer* to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!', in HPBCW, VIII, 273; HPB, 'The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained by M. Émile Burnouf, The French Orientalist', in HPBCW, X, 75; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 163-68; Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, pp. 40, 305.

¹⁷²⁶ Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 40.

¹⁷²⁷ HPB, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention', in HPBCW, IX, 244; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 163-68; HPB, 'The Beacon of the unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 282; HPB, 'Letter to the Fifth Annual Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society', in HPBCW, XIII (1982), 171-75 (p. 174-75) (first publ. in 'Report of the Proceedings of the Convention held in Massachusetts' (1891), later publ. in *Lucifer*, (1891), 343-45); HPB, 'Civilization, The Death of Art and Beauty', in HPBCW, XIII, 188; For further details on Blavatsky's view of conservative theology see chapter 2.4 in the present thesis.

¹⁷²⁸ HPB, 'The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained by M. Émile Burnouf, The French Orientalist', in HPBCW, X, 75; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 163-68. HPB, 'The Fall of Ideals', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 33-52 (p. 51) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, V, 28 (1889), 261-74); Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 40.

it is the mission of the Theosophical Society to counteract these obstacles. This should however not be done in any manner involving bloody revolution,¹⁷²⁹ or the implementation of diplomatic policy,¹⁷³⁰ as it has to come naturally and voluntarily by moral, regeneration,¹⁷³¹ 'inner enlightenment',¹⁷³² and the gradual awakening of the realization among all men that humanity is naturally a brotherhood and that the true law that governs inequalities is karma.¹⁷³³

Blavatsky saw the mission of the Theosophical Society in the formation of a global 'Republic of Conscience'¹⁷³⁴ and work for the implementation of brotherhood,¹⁷³⁵ a task the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, established in 1888, as an independent organization, also sought to accomplish.¹⁷³⁶ Blavatsky hoped that the efforts of the Theosophical Society to establish brotherhood and break down divisions among men gradually would manifest themselves during the twentieth century.¹⁷³⁷ The main keys to counteract the negative causes, Blavatsky foresaw for the Theosophists, were

¹⁷²⁹ HPB, 'The Beacon of the unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 283.

¹⁷³⁰ HPB, 'The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained by M. Émile Burnouf, The French Orientalist', in HPBCW, X, 74.

¹⁷³¹ HPB, 'What is Theosophy?', in HPBCW, II, 502.

¹⁷³² HPB, 'The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained by M. Émile Burnouf, The French Orientalist', in HPBCW, X, 74.

¹⁷³³ HPB, 'The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and its Future: As Explained by M. Émile Burnouf, The French Orientalist', in HPBCW, X, 74-75; HPB, 'The Beacon of the unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 283; see also Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 644-45.

¹⁷³⁴ HPB, 'What are the Theosophists?' in HPBCW, II, 104; HPB, 'Closing Note to "Address of the President of the Ionian Theosophical Branch at Corfu"', in HPBCW, II (1967), 442-43 (p. 443) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, I, 12 (1880), 298); HPB, 'A Reply to our Critics (*Our final answer to several objections*)', in HPBCW, III (1995), 221-26 (p. 226) (first publ. in *The Theosophist*, II, 10 (1881), 217-18); HPB, 'The New Cycle', in HPBCW, XI, 129.

¹⁷³⁵ HPB, 'The Struggle for Existence', in HPBCW, XI (1973), 147-56 (pp. 153-56) (first publ. in *Lucifer*, IV, 20 (1889), 104-11); HPB, 'Third Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 151-56 (pp. 152-54) (first publ. in 'Report of the Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, American Section' (1890)).

¹⁷³⁶ HPB, 'The Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society [E.S. Introduction]', in HPBCW, XII (1987), 488-511 (pp. 489, 509, 511) (material from 1888-1889).

¹⁷³⁷ Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 395.

to cultivate altruism and selflessness towards all men,¹⁷³⁸ as unity is strength,¹⁷³⁹ and to destroy sectarianism and superstition by the policy of no-dogmas uniting all men in a global Religion including all religions. Above all, universal brotherhood is the Archimedean point from which the whole world can be advanced.¹⁷⁴⁰ Blavatsky also points to a 'golden chain' of four principles that will lead 'humanity into one family, one universal Brotherhood' which involves a correct understanding of 'universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; [and] Re-incarnation.'¹⁷⁴¹ This realisation, the mission of the Theosophical Society and the Freemasons alike, was believed to usher in the dawning of a better world, a New Age and a 'New Cycle'.¹⁷⁴²

After Blavatsky's death many of the above ideas were implemented on a wider scale by Theosophical leaders such as Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Katherine Tingley (1847-1929). Annie Besant became president of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) after Olcott's death in 1907 and made great efforts to steer India towards independence through her work in the Indian National Congress (est. 1885) and the Home Rule League (est. 1916), both organisations being founded by the help of Theosophists.¹⁷⁴³ Tingley became leader of the Theosophical Society in America in 1896-1898 and emphasised the idea of Universal Brotherhood by founding the International Brotherhood League (1897) and the Universal Brotherhood Organization (1898). At the American Theosophical convention in 1898 the Theosophical Society in America became an integral part of the Universal Brotherhood Organization,

¹⁷³⁸ HPB, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the second American Convention', in HPBCW, IX, 245-47; HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 164; Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 644 (the only direct reference to Universal Brotherhood in *The Secret Doctrine*).

¹⁷³⁹ HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 166, 168.

¹⁷⁴⁰ HPB, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', in HPBCW, XI, 163.

¹⁷⁴¹ Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy*, p. 233.

¹⁷⁴² HPB, 'The Beacon of the unknown', in HPBCW, XI, 282.

¹⁷⁴³ Anne Taylor, *Annie Besant: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 277-326; see also Isaac Lubelsky, *Celestial India: Madame Blavatsky and the Birth of Indian Nationalism* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2012), pp. 247-284.

later known as Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society (UB & TS). Tingley also initiated the first and only large-scale Theosophical experiment in communal living at Point Loma in California and held several international peace congresses.¹⁷⁴⁴

2.7.3 Conclusion

In this chapter it was shown that ideas of universal brotherhood have been current since ancient times and that Blavatsky's contemporary inspiration resided in the Enlightenment ideals of equal human rights and nineteenth-century initiatives of social reform. In particular, both Spiritualism and Freemasonry provided immediate Western sources for Blavatsky's early use of the idea. However, the idea was neither prominent in Blavatsky's two major works *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, and nor played any formal role in the Theosophical Society prior to May 1878. But after the move to India the following year and with the "re-invention" of the Society the idea became increasingly important to Blavatsky's discourse in her articles and talks. Since the launch of Theosophy in India this chapter demonstrated that it is possible to delineate three major aspects of Blavatsky's discourse of Universal Brotherhood. The first was a unique plan to revive ancient Indian culture, counteract the Christian missionaries and British rule, and spread Theosophy among the Indian people through Blavatsky's and Olcott's co-operation with Hindu and Buddhist reformers. The second aspect of her discourse was a strategy to unite the idea of universal brotherhood with the Theosophical policy of no-dogma, as this was believed to lead to intellectual unity and thereby avoid superficial divisions among men. It was also shown that Blavatsky's discourse of universal brotherhood was based on the belief that all individual people essentially are of the same origin and that this must be practiced as the first principle of Theosophy, even though many members thought the Theosophical

¹⁷⁴⁴ For further details see Emmett A. Greenwalt, *California Utopia: Point Loma: 1897-1942* (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, 1978); Ashcraft, *The Dawn of the New Cycle: Point Loma Theosophists and American culture*; Tim Rudbøg, 'Point Loma, Theosophy, and Katherine Tingley', in *Handbook of the Theosophical Current*, ed. by Michael Rothstein and Olav Hammer, Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion Series (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 51-72.

Society was primarily a college of occultism. The analysis of the third aspect of Blavatsky's discourse showed that universal brotherhood was construed as the central cause for which the Theosophical Society was intended to work since its reorganization by eliminating the obstacles that still hinder its realization and thereby naturally usher in a New Cycle. In conclusion it is fair to say that Blavatsky's discourse for universal brotherhood to a significant extent was a part of the general reforming milieu and ideology of the nineteenth-century in the West, but that the Theosophical mission in India was unique to Blavatsky's discourse and The Theosophical Society.

Conclusion

The primary objectives of the present thesis were to map and analyse Blavatsky's major discourses and to demonstrate that Blavatsky's construction of meaning was influenced by and intertextually connected with the wider intellectual contexts of her time such as modern historical consciousness, the critical enlightenment, studies in religion, studies in mythology, the modern sciences, spiritualism, systemic philosophy, reform movements and practical ethics.

In relation to the demonstration of these objectives the thesis also sought to answer the three interrelated research questions:

- (1) how did Blavatsky use the concept 'Theosophy' and from where did she derive the term?
- (2) what did Blavatsky talk about the most in her works?
- (3) in what way and to what extent were Blavatsky's discourses influenced by wider intellectual contexts?

The first question was primarily answered in chapter 2.1. In this chapter it was demonstrated that the word 'Theosophy' stretches back to late antiquity and that it has been used quite extensively in a number of ways throughout Western history up to Blavatsky's reception of the term. In relation to this *Begriffsgeschichte*, it was shown that Blavatsky clearly inherited some of the accumulated semantic content of the concept. Blavatsky especially retained the word's association with the Neo-Platonists and the common connotation of 'divine inspiration' or 'intuition'. It was furthermore shown that Blavatsky's first use of the term was in a private letter to Hiram P. Corson (February 1875) and that it was directly derived from Christian D. Ginsburg's *The Kabbalah Its Doctrine, Development and literature: An Essay* (1865). The word entered the soon to be 'Theosophical Society' at a pre-formation gathering, 13 September 1875, when it was derived from *Webster's American Dictionary* (1868). Thereafter Blavatsky only used the word 'Theosophy' four times between 1874-1878 in relation to which Alexander Wilder's *New Platonism and Alchemy* (1869) was the primary source. Blavatsky's further construction of the concept

'Theosophy' could be classified into two major phases: (1) first major conceptualization (1879), and (2) second major conceptualization (1888-1889). Four general themes in her further usage of the term could be inductively established and shown to operate subtly in her text on three ontological levels ((1) a-historical, (2) historical, (3) practical). The general ways in which Blavatsky came to use the term were in relation to: (1) Neo-Platonic roots, (2) Wisdom-Religion, (3) transcendental psychology and divine inspiration, (4) practical Theosophy, divine ethics and universal brotherhood, and (5) secrets of nature. Some of the innovative connotations with which Blavatsky infused the term were especially that it on the abstract a-historical level was used to refer to an absolute Truth and that it at the historical level became a synonym for the 'Wisdom-Religion' in its capacity as the ancient common source of all religions. On the practical level Blavatsky furthermore innovatively construed 'Theosophy' as 'Divine Ethics'.

It was also demonstrated that Blavatsky came to distinguish between 'Theosophy' (i.e. the abstract universal divine truth and its original historical manifestation) and Occultism/Magic and that in relation to the latter she came to regard her own exposition of specific occult doctrines as stemming from what she termed '*trans*-Himalayan esotericism'. Her major exposition of the doctrines of the '*trans*-Himalayan esotericism', *The Secret Doctrine*, therefore hardly mentioned the term 'Theosophy' at all. Thus, Blavatsky did not conceptualise her *trans*-Himalayan system of esoteric philosophy as 'Theosophy'—a term reserved for universal Truth and the ancient historical Wisdom Religion. On the other hand, her specific *trans*-Himalayan system, which increasingly became her focus from the eighteen-eighties to her death (as shown in chapter 2.6), was regarded as the purest transmission of the ancient Wisdom Religion in our time. Finally, for Blavatsky, the practical dimension of her construct 'Theosophy', as divine ethics, became the cause for which the Theosophical Society worked (as discussed in chapter 2.7).

The second and third research questions were primarily answered in chapters 2.2 to 2.7. The major topics, which Blavatsky discussed the most throughout her many works, were identified as: (1) 'Theosophy', (2) ancient

knowledge, (3) Christian dogmatism, (4) the modern sciences, (5) spiritualism, (6) her own system of esoteric philosophy or *trans*-Himalayan esotericism (while only her discourse for 'system' was discussed in this thesis, Blavatsky's doctrines, related to this 'system' and their demonstration through the comparative study of religions, accounts for the most substantial parts of her text *corpus*), and (7) universal brotherhood. These themes constitute her primary intellectual engagements and were therefore analysed and mapped as such in this thesis. The major theme of 'ancient knowledge'—which was also one of the primary connotations of Blavatsky's use of the concept 'Theosophy', in the sense of an ancient Wisdom Religion—was, however, more penetrating than any other of her discourses. Blavatsky discussed nearly all of her major topics in relation to this theme: (1) she criticised Christian dogmatism for having distorted the original ancient knowledge; (2) she criticised the modern sciences for having discovered nothing not already known to the ancients and for not having acknowledged their achievements; (3) she argued that the true source of spiritualism was the original ancient occultism/magic; (4) she argued that the true 'system' of esoteric philosophy was the ancient 'esoteric system' or 'secret doctrine' and; (5) she equally stated that the idea of universal brotherhood was an ancient idea. Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge was thus *the* major theosophical discourse in Blavatsky's work and underlies all of her other discourses to a varying degree.

In relation to the third question, it was shown in each of the discourse chapters that each of Blavatsky's discourses were influenced by their wider intellectual contexts to such an extent that these contexts not only supplied much of the data or input—but also formed her discourses.

In chapter 2.2 it was shown that contrary to modern progressivist discourse, Blavatsky did not find modern society, culture and knowledge superior to the ancients. However, Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge was to a considerable extent moulded by the context of modern historical consciousness and its two major dimensions: (1) the idea of progress and (2) the quest for origins. Blavatsky adopted the modern Western idea of progress prevalent among intellectuals at the time, but as the idea of linear progress

clashed with her view of the ancients possessing higher knowledge she had to reconstruct the idea of progress to accommodate this discrepancy. As a result, Blavatsky already in *Isis Unveiled* began to formulate a theory of progressive historical cycles including the notion of the rise and fall of civilizations. The second major section in this chapter demonstrated that the quest for ancient knowledge or for origins was a common way of thinking among intellectuals during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that Blavatsky's discourse for ancient knowledge was significantly embedded in this larger context. More specifically, it was demonstrated how the contexts of the science of religion and mythology were the immediate historical sources and contexts in relation to which Blavatsky formulated her idea of an ancient 'Wisdom Religion'. In other words, the historical search for an original religion was not only an occult strategy or rhetoric of higher knowledge—but was primarily an adoption of a common intellectual/historical occupation at the time.

In chapter 2.3 it was shown that Blavatsky's critique of Christian dogmatism was largely derived from the critical Enlightenment trend of Bible-critique—typical of the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century. However, even though Blavatsky eagerly embraced the Enlightenment tradition of dispelling superstition and honouring truth, she did not agree with the consequences that often followed Enlightenment/post-Enlightenment critique of religion and the general secularization of society such as increased materialism and the decline of spirituality. To her, these trends represented a major crisis and she clearly regarded it necessary to fight against destructive religious critique. However having absorbed so much modern Bible critique, Blavatsky was unable to regard Western Christianity and its dogmas as an institution able to counteract the growing materialism of her age. Like others at the time who felt a crisis of faith, Blavatsky therefore sought to restore the authority of religion not by dismissing modern scholarship but by employing it as part of her own discourse. She used works from Bible criticism, the science of religion and the mythographers to deconstruct the humanly constructed Christian dogmas and in its stead she reconstructed what she believed to be the truly divine aspects of religion or the principles of the ancient universal pan-esotericism. Blavatsky's

bible-critique was thus not only the anti-Christian polemics of an occultist, but was the adoption of one of the major intellectual discourses at the time in order to establish what she found to be true religion in a time of religious crisis.

In chapter 2.4 it was shown how, in mainstream culture, the close relation between natural philosophy and esotericism gradually disintegrated after the 'Scientific Revolution' and that in the increasingly secularised modern context several movements—such as Romantic *Naturphilosophie*, mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, spiritualism and modern occultism—continued their attempt to bridge the spiritual and material domains. Blavatsky's discourse was a part of this bridging activity as well as a direct response to the growing authority of the new naturalists. It was demonstrated that—despite previous arguments that 'occultism' was largely an adaptation to modern scientism and thereby a way to legitimize its marginal views in the modern context—'occultism', as expressed in the works of Blavatsky, contains greater nuances. Blavatsky's attitude towards the modern sciences primarily consisted of a severe critical reaction to what was perceived to be the methodological and doctrinal limitations of contemporary scientists. Rather than appealing to them, they were perceived to stand in the way of an understanding of and reassertion of spirit in the natural domain. This, however, implies that even though Blavatsky for the most part did not agree with the modern sciences, Blavatsky's discourse for occultism was formulated in relation to the sciences. In other words, Blavatsky defined occultism as the answer to the limitations of the modern sciences. Blavatsky thus posed 'occultism' or the 'secret doctrine', as an alternative, more comprehensive science of the whole of nature—inclusive of both the material and spiritual dimensions—to the new natural sciences and the agnosticism that excluded spirit from nature. In relation to her critique, an analysis—of how Blavatsky's discussion, definition or presentation of 'occultism' and 'the secret doctrine' was influenced by the context of 'scientism'—was thus relevant. This analysis demonstrated that in *Isis Unveiled*, scientism only entered indirectly into Blavatsky's definitions of 'magic' through mesmerism and the works of Eliphas Levi. In *The Secret Doctrine*, scientism rather marked the comparative context in which Blavatsky discussed the 'secret doctrine', 'occultism' and

‘esoteric philosophy’. The definitions, discourses or *presentations* of the terms magic, occultism and the secret doctrine were more aligned with religious and philosophical ideas than with the modern sciences. In terms of authority, presentation and self-identification the ancients thus outweighed the moderns. Thus, Blavatsky’s discourse was not primarily one of appeal to the modern sciences or an adoption of scientism as a legitimising strategy—but one of a revival of ancient science or *magia naturalis* to counter the materialism of the modern context that had recently deprived nature of its spiritual meaning.

In chapter 2.5 Blavatsky’s relation to the larger context of modern spiritualism was discussed, mapped and analysed. It was demonstrated that in the wider sense of the term—that is, being opposed to the values of materialism—Blavatsky was a spiritualist and had been extensively involved in spiritualism including ‘modern spiritualism’. However, in addition to spiritualism Blavatsky also had a wider background in Western esoteric traditions that was central to her understanding and construction of spiritualism/modern spiritualism. It was shown that Blavatsky from an early date criticised modern spiritualism and constructed spiritualism as a modern presentation of ancient magic and occultism. Initially, Blavatsky thought she could reform modern spiritualism or cleanse it of what she perceived to be ignorant materialistic theories, but as she did not succeed, Blavatsky used modern spiritualism as a launching pad for a further development of ‘new occultism’. Blavatsky’s critique of modern spiritualism, based on Western esoteric traditions and particularly on Eliphas Levi’s writings, thus became the opportunity to define her own occultism resulting in three primary characteristics: (1) a knowledge of ancient esotericism and associated theories of spirits, (2) an ideal of the adept, and (3) a systematic spiritual philosophy. These became some of the defining features of the new occultism that emerged during the late nineteenth century and can be said to represent the construction of meaning in Blavatsky’s work from the convergence of two intellectual contexts—modern spiritualism and older western esoteric traditions.

In chapter 2.6 it was demonstrated that, increasingly through the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties, Blavatsky adopted the ‘will to system’

prevalent in the preceding and immediate intellectual context as a way of constructing meaning. Blavatsky's discourse was, however, not only based on reason and empirical experimentation that substantiated the philosophical systems of the day but on mystical divine origins, initiated access, ancient texts and spiritual authority, as well. It was demonstrated that Blavatsky, after the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, began to portray the ancient Wisdom-Religion as a 'system' and that Blavatsky, in collaboration with other central theosophists, also began to construct a specific system that was persistently, through the years, defined as *trans*-Himalayan esotericism originating with the mahatmas and ultimately from Shambhala. This development of a specific 'system', however, clashed with the more general non-dogmatism policy of the Theosophical Society and soon led to several significant conflicts within the Society, such as the resignation of Anna Kingsford and T. Subba Row.

In the final chapter (2.7) it was shown that the idea of universal brotherhood, which became central to Blavatsky's and the Theosophical Society's intellectual and practical work in India, had been current since ancient times and that Blavatsky's contemporary inspiration resided in the Enlightenment ideals of equal human rights and nineteenth-century initiatives of social reform. In particular, both spiritualism and Freemasonry provided the immediate Western sources for Blavatsky's early use of the idea. It was demonstrated that especially the move to India (1879) became the unique platform for the practise of this Enlightenment ideal. In India the Society would work to revive ancient Indian culture as it was coupled with the idea of ancient wisdom, counteract the Christian missionaries and British rule, and spread Theosophy among the Indian people through Blavatsky's and Olcott's co-operation with Hindu and Buddhist reformers. The idea of universal brotherhood was furthermore specifically connected to the Theosophical policy of no-dogma, as this was believed to lead to intellectual unity and thereby to avoid superficial divisions among men. In India, universal brotherhood thus became the central cause for which the Theosophical Society was intended to work and a direct extension of the 'divine ethics' of Blavatsky's 'Theosophy'.

The working hypothesis of this thesis was that even though Blavatsky

primarily is thought of as an esotericist, her construction of meaning was to a greater extent, than has hitherto been analysed, influenced by and intertextually connected with many of the major intellectual trends of her time. In order to demonstrate this hypothesis a set of theoretical assumptions and a specific methodology, based on language, intertextuality and close contextual historical study, was adopted. After having analysed and mapped Blavatsky's major discourses and answered the research questions, it can thus be concluded that: simply to read Blavatsky's discourses and their ideas as the idiosyncratic strategies of an esotericist in opposition to mainstream culture would be to largely fail to see that they were in fact part of the larger cultural web of meaning and that they in fact only can be understood in this larger context. It was shown that the larger cultural web of meaning supplied the data and shaped her discourses to a considerable extent. Thus it can be concluded that Blavatsky was deeply engaged in the intellectual currents of her day and based on these engagements posed her own solutions to many of their problems. The construction of meaning in modern Western esotericism, in the case of Blavatsky, was thus based on and formed in interaction with larger intellectual contexts. Such a theoretical/methodological apparatus that can avoid an *a priori* reduction of the research objects to a specific form of discourse, strategy or rhetoric and thereby neglect their historical context, is profitable for the future study of Western esotericism, as it will facilitate a better understanding of how Western esotericism was a part of the intellectual landscape rather than something isolated from it or only engaged with it in order to legitimize its minority views.

In addition to the above general conclusions this thesis has demonstrated several particular and important historical details. For these see each of the chapter conclusions and their part-conclusions.

Finally, the author would like to express the hope that this thesis will serve as a contribution to future research into Blavatsky's Theosophy and imagines a fruitful future for this area of research thinking that an analysis of Blavatsky's particular doctrines now seems closer at hand than before this thesis was

completed.

Appendix I
A Bibliography
of the sources used in H. P. Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled –
arranged alphabetically by title within relevant categories –
including comments and additional information extracted from
the work of Boris de Zirkoff (HPBCW) and by Tim Rudbøg.

Version 2.0 (This is a work in progress. The fully annotated version 3.0 will include the exact references found in ISIS Unveiled, updated bibliographic details, explanative notes and the correction/addition to the titles with code)

[Code appended to certain of titles/sources:

-Titles with code = *** = This title can also be placed in an other category - reference still needs to be made to the other category.

-Titles with code øøø = Either this title does not belong properly to the bibliography or something still needs to be fixed.]

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1. Ancient world, Classics (Greek & Roman) and Fragments

Ancient Fragments of the Phoenician, Chaldean, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and other Writers (I. P. Cory), London: Wm. Pickering, 1828, 8vo; 2nd ed., 1832; lix, 361 pp. Greek, Latin and Engl, texts; *the most valuable edition.* – New & enlarged ed. by E. Richmond Hodges, London, Reeves & Turner, 1876 (xxxvi, 214 pp.); introduces various Editorial Comments of some historical value, but eliminates the famous *Chaldean Oracles*. ***

Bibliotheca or *Myriobiblon* (Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, 858-67 and 8/8 - 86), Gr. ed. by I. Bekker, 1824-25; it is a collection of excerpts from, and abridgments of, 280 vols, of classical authors (usually cited as *Codices*), the originals of which are now to a great extent lost. To Photius we are indebted for almost all we possess of Ctesias, Memnon, Conon, the lost books of Diodorus Siculus, and the lost writing; or Arrian. – Engl. tr. by J. H. Freese, New York, McMillan, 1920. ***

Chaldean Oracles (Psellus). See *Oracula Sibyllina* (J. Opsopaus).

Chronicon, or *Annales* (Joannes Zonaras). Compiled from various Greek authors by this Byzantine historian of the 12th century. First ed. by H. Wolf, Basel, 1557, 3 vols.; best ed. is by Pinder, Bonn, 1841, etc., 8vo., in the Bonn collection of Byzantine writers.

Creteis, De (Methodius Patarensis), in Photius, *Bibliotheca*. Text in Migne, PCC, Ser. Gr.-Lat., CIII-CIV.

Miscellanea eruditae antiquitatis (J. Spon), Lugduni, 1685, fol.

Monumens inédits d'antiquité figurée, grecque, étrusque et romaine (D. Raoul-Rochette), Paris, 1833, fol.

Periplus (Hanno). In I. P. Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, pp. 203ff., ed. 1832. Also: Dr. Const. Simonides, *The Periplus of Hannon*, King of the Karchedonians, 1864; 2 fcs., 82 pp., 4to.

Rerum memorabilium, etc. (G. Panciroli), Ambergiae, 1599, 8vo.; 1607, 1612, 1622; Frankfurt, 1629-31; 1660. Engl, transi, as *The Hist, of Many Memorable Things which were in Use among the Ancients*, London, 1715, 1727, 2 vols.

Greek

Argonautica (Apollonius Rhodius). This poem in Greek on the expedition of the Argonauts was based on the rich material of the Alexandrian library. It elicited many Commentaries by various writers and became very popular. Consult

Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium Vetera, recensuit Carolus Wendel, Berlin, 1935.
∅∅∅

Bibliotheca Graeca (J. A. Fabricius), Hamburg, 1705-28, 12 vols.; rev. and continued by T. C. Harless, 4th ed., Hamburg: Carolum Ernestum Bohn, 1790-1812. – Photographic reproduction of the latter ed. in 11 vols. publ. at Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966.

Chrysis (Euripides). Fragments only of a trilogy: *Phoenicians - Oinomaos – Chrysis*? which has not come down to us. See Pauly-Wissowa for data. ***

Eclogae (Joannes Stobaeus). Ed. princeps of all the works of the author is that publ. at Geneva in 1609, fol.; best ed. of the *Eclogae* are those of T. Gaisford, 1822, and A. Meinecke, 1860-64.

Fragment (Hermeias). Quoted by Cory in *Ancient Fragments*, p. 295, q.v.

Geschichte der griechischen Literatur bis auf das Zeitalter Alexanders (K. O. Müller), Breslau, 1 8 4 1 , 1857, 1875, 2 Vols.; Engl. tr. as *A Hist, of the Liter, of Ancient Greece*, London, 1858, 3 vols.

Itinerary or Description of Greece (Pausanias). LCL. See *Description of Greece by Pausanias* (Thos. Taylor) for Engl, transl. ***

Myths (Babrius or Gabrias). A work in which this Greek poet turned Aesopean fables into verse, and which, acc. to Suidas, comprised ten books, most of which have been lost. Several complete poems have been discovered later and publ. by de Furia (Florence, 1809). Others were ed. by J. Gl. Schneider (Vratislava, 1812), by Berger (Monach., 1816), and Knoch, 1835.

Pétrone, Apulée, Aulu-Gelle. OEuvres complètes (ed. by Désiré Nisard), Paris, 1842.

Roman

Commentaries on Virgil (Servius Honoratus). Best text is in Burmann's ed. of Virgil, 1746.

Die natali, De (Censorinus). Ed. princeps is in 4to. and without date, place or printer's name; 2nd ed. appeared in Bologna, fol., 1497; first critical ed. is that by Vinetus, Pictav. 4to, 1568, followed by those of Aldus Manutius, Venet. 8vo., 1581, and Carrio, Luet. 8vo., 1583. The most complete and valuable is that by Havercamp, Lugd. Bat. 8vo., 1743.

Censorinus, Roman grammarian and miscellaneous writer, flourished during the 3rd century AD. He was the author of a lost work De Accentibus and of an extant treatise De Die Natali, written in 238, and dedicated to his patron Quintus Caerellius as a birthday gift. The contents are of a varied character: the natural history of man, the influence of the stars and genii, music, religious rites, astronomy, the

doctrines of the Greek philosophers. The second part deals with chronological and mathematical questions, and has been of great service in determining the principal epochs of ancient history. The whole is full of curious and interesting information. The style is clear and concise, although somewhat rhetorical, and the Latinity, for the period, good. The chief authorities used were Varro and Suetonius. Some scholars, hold that the entire work is practically an adaptation of the lost *Pratum* of Suetonius.

The fragments of a work *De Natali Institutione*, dealing with astronomy, geometry, music and versification, and usually printed with the *De Die Natali* of Censorinus, are not by him. Part of the original manuscript, containing the end of the genuine work, and the title and name of the author of the fragment are lost.

Factis dictisque memorabilibus, De (Valerius Maximus). Often spoken of as *Memorable Deeds*. Ed. princeps by J. Mentelin, Strassburg, ca. 1470. Engl. tr. as *The History of the Acts and Sayings of the Ancient Romans*, etc., by W. Speed, London, 1678.

Florida (Apuleius). Eng. tr. in *Bohn's Class. Library*.

Mensibus, De (Joannes Laurentius of Philadelphia, the Lydian; or Joannes Lydus). Only two epitomae or summeries and a fragment of this work are extant. It is an historical commentary on the Roman calendar, with an account of its various festivals, etc., derived from authorities most of which have perished. Publ. by N. Schow, Leipzig, 1794; with Latin version, publ. by Roether, Leipzig & Darmstadt, 1827. Edited by R. Wünsch, 1898-1903. All the extant portions of the works of Joannes Lydus, with text rev. by Imm. Bekker (Bonn, 1837), form one of the volumes of the reprint of the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*.

2. Anthropology (See also 9, Evolutionism)

Amendâtes Academicae, etc. (C. Linnaeus), Erlangen, 1787, 85-90, 10 vols. ***

In *Amoenitates academicae* (1763), Linnaeus defined *Homo anthropomorpha* as a catch-all term for a variety of human-like mythological creatures, including the troglodyte, satyr, hydra, and phoenix. He claimed that these creatures not only actually existed but were in reality inaccurate descriptions of real-world ape-like creatures.

Ancient Cave Men of Devon (Wm. Pendeliv). Report of Two Lectures delivered at Worcester and Malvern, on Wed., Jan. 26, and Friday, Jan. 28, 1870 etc Worcester 1870.

Antigüedades Peruanas (J. J. von Tschudi & M. E. de Rivera), 1851, 4to.

The '*Antigüedades Peruanas*', was a thorough and critical archaeological, ethnographic and anthropological review for its time, although their conclusions about, for instance, racial groupings have been superseded. They believed that the

indigenous peoples could be divided into three groups according to skull shape and anatomy.

Crania Aegyptiaca; or, Observations on Egyptian Ethnography, derived from Anatomy, History and the Monuments (S.G.Morton), Philadelphia; London, 1844. (From the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. IX). ***

Outlines of lectures on the neurological system of anthropology, etc. (J. R. Buchanan), Cincinnati, 1854.

Transcaucasia (A. von Haxthausen), Leipzig, 1856, 2 vols.

Types of Mankind: or, Ethnological Researches (G. R. Gliddon and J., C. Nott), London, 1854.

Völker des östlichen Asien, Die (A. Bastian), Jena, 1866-1871, 8vo. ***

3. Archeology

Palestine. Description géographique, historique et archéologique (Salomon Münk), in *l'Univers: histoire et description de tous les peuples*, 1835, etc.

Premières civilisations: études d'histoire et d'archéologie, Les (F. Lenormant), Paris, 1874, 2 vols. ***

4. Art, artifacts, art history

Antiquität e urbis Patavii et claris civibus Patavinis libri très, etc. (Bernardino Scardeone or Scardeonius), Basileae, apud N. Episcopium juniorum, 1560, fol., 437 pp. Index.

Antiquities of Mexico, The (E. King, Viscount Kingsborough, in collab., with Agostino Aglio), London, 1830-48, 9 vols.

Iconographie chrétienne. Histoire de Dieu (A. N. Didron), Paris, 1843; in *Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France*, 3me. série, 1835, etc. — Eng. tr. in 2 vols., 1851.

5. Egyptology

Aegyptiaca (Manetho). From the Armenian version of Eusebius' *Chronica*. *Loeb Classical Library*. Also in *Cory's Ancient Fragments*, q.v.

Ancient and Modern Egypt, or, the Pyramids and the Suez Canal. A Lecture, etc. (W. B. Carpenter), 1866.

Ancient Egypt. Her Monuments, hieroglyphics, history and archaeology (G. R. Gliddon) New York, 1843; 10th ed., 1847; 12th ed., Philad., 1848.

Ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs (J. Kenrick), London, 1850, 2 vols.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Vol. 108, August, 1870; art. by Maj.-Gen. Wm. Hamley, on "What the Old Egyptians Knew."

Book of the Dead [Reu-nu-pert-em-hru, "Chapters of the Coming Forth into Day"]. H.P.B. uses in *Isis Unveiled* portions of the translation by Samuel Birch, as published in C. C. J. von Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History* (London, 1848-67, in 5 vols.) which is the Engl. tr. by C. H. Cottrell of Bunsen's *Aegypten's Stelle in der Weltgeschichte* (Hamburg: Gotha, 1845-57, 8vo.). See also Vol. X of the *Coll. Writings*, pp. 413-15, for Bibliogr. data concerning the *Book of the Dead*.

Crata Repoa oder Einweihungen in der alten geheimen Gesellschaft der Egyptischen Priester (Carl Friedrich Koppen), Berlin, 1770. Reprinted by Christian Ludwig Stahlbaum, Berlin, 1778. — French transl. by Ant. Bailleul, Paris, 1821, 8vo. — English transl., by John Yarker from French version; see Manly P. Hall's ed., Los Angeles, 1937. — Engl. transl., by Philip A. Palpas, as unpublished MS. ***

Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Aethiopien, etc. (C. R. Lepsius), Berlin, 1849-58, 12 vols, fol. (904 plates).

Divine Book, The. See *Semenuthi*.

Égypte ancienne (J. J. Champollion-Figeac), Paris, 1839, 1847.

Egyptian Medical Treatise. See *Papyros Ebers*.

Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity, with their Influence on the Opinions of Modern Christendom (S. Sharpe), London, 1863. ***

Egypt's Place in Universal History (C. C. J. Bunsen). Engl. tr. by C. H. Cottrell, (London, 1848-67, 5 Vols.) of the German text: *Aegyptens Stelle in der Weltgeschichte*. Hamburg: Gotha, 1845-57, 8vo.

History of Egypt (Manetho). Passages quoted in Eusebius and Julius Africanus; also *Ancient Fragments* (Cory).

Königsbuch der alten Ägypter (K. R. Lepsius), Berlin, 1858, 4to.

Lettres écrites d'Égypte et de Nubie, en 1828 et 1829 (J. F. Champollion), Paris, 1833.

Lettres sur l'Égypte, etc. (C. È. Savary), Paris, 1785, 8vo.; 2nd éd., 1786, 3 vols. Engl. transi., London, 1787, 2 vols.

Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians (J. G. Wilkinson), London, 1837-41, 8vo., 3 vols, ill.; 2nd Series under same title and date, in 3 vols.; 3rd ed., London, 1847, 8vo. New & rev. ed. by S. Birch, London, 1878, 3 vols. *MS. Ex. cod. reg. Gall. gr.* No. 2390, fol 154.

Narratives of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia, etc. (G. B. Belzoni), London, 1820, 1821, 1822.

Nekrokêdeia, or the Art of Embalming, etc. (Thos. Greenhill), London, 1705, 4to. ***

Operations carried on at the Pyramids of Gizeh in 1837 (Col. H., Vyse), London, 1840-42, 2 vols., 4to.,

Our inheritance in the Great Pyramid (Chas. Piazzzi Smyth), London, 1864, 1874, etc.

Pantheon aegyptiorum, sive de diis eorum commentarius, cum Prolegomenis de Religione et Theologia Aegyptiorum (P. E. Jablonski), Francofurti ad Viadrum, 1750-52, 8vo.

Papyrus Anastasi and Papyrus d'Orbiney. Consult lists of Egyptological sources and material.

Pyramids of Gizeh, etc., The (J. S. Perring), London, 1839-42, 3 pts., obi. fol.

Semenuthi (Divine Book) (Apollonides Orapius). Rf. to in Theophilus Antiochenus, *Ad Autolyicum*, ii, 6. ***

Stèle (E. de Rougé). Possibly *Étude sur une stèle égyptienne*, etc., Paris, 1858. *Tablet, British Museum*, 562. Quoted by Bunsen in *Egypt's Place in Univ. Hist.*

6. Esotericism (including Magic and Occultism)

Antiquity (see also 1)

Life of Apollonius of Tyana, The (Philostratus). Translated from the Greek, with Notes and Illustrations, by the Rev. Edward Berwick, London, 1809. ***

Oracula Sibyllina, etc. (Johannes Opsopàus) Fr. text with Latin tr. by Sebastian Castationis. Paris, 1607, 3 pts. in 1 vol., ill. Contains: *Oracula magica Zoroastriis cum scholiis Plethonis et Pselli*.

Summaria et brevis dogmatum Chaldaicorum (Pselli expos.), in App., to *Sibylinna Oracula* (S. Gallaeus), Amsterdam, 1689.

Gnosticism

Antitheses (Marcion).

Clementinen nebst den verwandten Schriften und der Ebionitismus, Die (A. Schliemann). Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte der ersten Jahrhunderte. Hamburg, 1844. ***

Codex Nazaraeus 'Liber Adami' appellatus Syriace transcriptus . . . Latineque redditus, etc (M. Norberg), London, 1815, 16, 4to, 3 vols. Text transcribed into Syrian characters, and the Mandaeans dialect of the original is mostly translated into High Syrian. ***

"Colarbasus-Gnosis, Die" (Volkmar), in *Zeitschr. Hist. Theol. Drei Programmm!* über die *Abraxas-gemmen* (J. J. Bellermann), Berlin, 1820-22.

Ginzâ ("Treasure"): *der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer*. German transl, by M. Lidzbarski. Göttingen, 1925. ***

Gnostics and their Remains, The (C. W. King), London, 1864; 2nd ed., 1887.

Histoire critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme (I. de Beausobre), Amsterdam, 1734-39, 2 vols. ***

Histoire critique du Gnosticisme, et de son influence sur les sectes religieuses et philosophiques des six premiers siècles de l'Ère Chrétienne (A. Jacques Matter). Paris, 1828, 2 vols.; 2nd éd., Strasbourg, 1843-44, 3 vols.

Hermetica

Asclepian Dialogue.

Books of Hermes.

Hermès Trismégiste (L. Ménard). Traduction précédée d'une étude sur l'origine des livres hermétiques. Paris, 1866, 8vo.

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7. History (about and relevant to)

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Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique (C. E. Brasseur de Bourbourg), Paris, 1857-59, 4 vols.

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History of Greece, A (Geo., Grote) ; first 2 vols., London, 1846; other 10 vols., 1847-56; new ed., 1862, 8 vols.

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Northern Antiquities (P. H. Mallett), London, 1770, 8vo., 2 vols.; also Bonn's ed.; this is an Engl. tr. by T. Percy of the French orig. work entitled *Introduction à l'histoire du Dannemarc*, Copenhagen, 1755, 56, 4to.

Old England: a pictorial museum of regal, ecclesiastical . . . antiquities (ed. by C. Knight), London, 1845 [1846], 2 vols.

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Primitive History: from the Creation to Cadmus (W. Williams), Chichester, 1789.

Ruins: or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires (C. F. de Volney). Transl. from French, 2nd ed., London, 1795, 8vo.

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Synopsis Historian (Georgius Cedrênus), or *Compendium historiarum ab orbe condita ad Isaacum Comnenum (1057)*; 1st ed., by Xylander, Basel, 1506, fol., with Latin tr.; by Goar and Fabrot, Paris, 1647, 2 vols., fol.; by I. Bekker, Bonn, 1838-39, 2 vols., 8vo. ***

Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time, An (Compiled from original authors), London, 1747-54, 21 vols.

Vita e lettere di Amerigo Vespucci (A. M. Bandini), Florence, 1868. With Notes by G. Uzielli. ***

8. Medicine (Including experiments with animal magnetism)

Anatomy of Melancholy, The (R. Burton), 1621; many subs, editions. ***

Archiv für den thierischen Magnetismus (ed. by D. G. Kieser), 1831.

Dietrich Georg von Kieser (1779-1862) was a German physician born in Harburg. He studied medicine at the Universities of Würzburg and Göttingen, receiving his doctorate from the latter institution in 1804. For most of his career he was a professor at the University of Jena, where from 1824 to 1862 he served as a "full professor". Kieser was also a learned scholar of natural sciences. While working as a professor at the University of Jena, Kieser operated a private ophthalmology clinic from 1831 to 1847, and from 1847 until 1858 he was director of the Grand Ducal Mental Hospital. He was an advocate of balneology, and beginning in 1813 was a physician at the therapeutic spas at Heilbad Berka. Kieser was politically active throughout his career; in October-1817 with historian Heinrich Luden and philosophers Lorenz Oken and Jakob Friedrich Fries, he partook in the historic Wartburg Festival. With Adam von Eschenmayer (1768-1852) he published the 12-volume Archiv für den thierischen Magnetismus (Archive for Animal Magnetism). Also, a magnesium sulfate mineral known as kieserite is named after him.

Archives du magnetisme animal (d'Henin de Cuvillier), Paris, 1820-23, 8 vols.

Bibliothèque du Magnétisme animal (by the Members of the Société du Magnétisme), Paris, 1817-18, 4 vols.

Buffon: histoire des ses travaux et de ses idées (M. J. P. Flourens), Paris, 1844.

Marie Jean Pierre Flourens was a French physician, famous for various significant discoveries relating to the nervous system, cerebral localisation and brain functions. He was also known for his studies on brain physiology. He was one of the pioneers in the usage of experimental methods in neuroanatomy.

Compositioe medicamentorum per genera, De (Galen). Ed. by C, G. Kühn, Leipzig, 1821-33, 20 vols.

Or De Compositioe Medicamentorum per Genera (Comp. Med. per Gen.); Of the compounding of remedies in relation with their genera (On the Composition of Drugs according to Kind).

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Cours de Magnétisme (J. Dupotet), Paris, 1834, 1840.

Diploteratology; an Essay on Compound Human Monsters (G. J. Fisher), Albany, van Benthuisen's Press, 1866; also 1868.

Full title: An essay on compound human monsters, comprising of the history, literature, classification, description, embryology of double and triple formation, including the so-called Parastici Monsters, Foetus in Foetu, and Supernumerary Formation of Parts of Organs in Man. Illustrated with drawings, starting with Figure 1, numbering to 120. Includes figures of humans and animals.

Examen de la doctrine médicale généralement adoptée (F. J. V. Broussais), Paris, 1816.

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Gradibus medicinarum, De (Maiolus), Venice, 1497.

Histoire de la médecine, Rapport du physique et du moral de l'homme (P. J. G. Cabanis). New éd., with a biography of the author. Paris, 1824.

Influence of the Blue Ray of the Sunlight and of the Blue Color of the Sky, The (Gen. A. J. Pleasonton). Address to the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture. Philadelphia, 1876. ***

General A. J. Pleasonton and Others, between the years 1861 and 1876 addressed the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, in an effort of developing Animal And Vegetable Life; In Arresting Disease, And In Restoring Health In Acute And Chronic Disorders To Human And Domestic animals. Illustrated By Their Experiments.

Institutiones physiologicae (J. F., Blumenbach), Göttingen, 1787; London, 1807; Engl, tr., by John Elliotson, London, 1820.

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Letters to a candid inquirer on Animal Magnetism (Wm. Gregory), London, 1851.

Lettre à un médecin étranger (A. Mesmer), in *Le Nouveau Mercure Savant*, Altona, Jan. 5, 1775; also as pamphlet, 22 pp. (Caillet 7418).

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Materia medica (Peri Hylês Yatrikês) (Dioscorides Pedacius). A work of great

labor and research, in five books, which for a long time was considered of high standard, and replete with most valuable information on herbal medicine. One of the best ed. is that of C. Sprengel, Lips., 1829-30, 2 vols. 8vo., in Greek and Latin, with useful commentary, forming Vols. 25 & 26 of Kühn's Collection of the Greek Medical Writers.

Médecine et les Médecins, La (L. Peisse): philosophie, doctrines, institutions critiques, moeurs et biographies médicales, Paris, 1857, 2 vols.

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"Opinion de van Helmont sur la cause, la nature et les effets du magnétisme" (J. Deleuze), in *Bibliothèque du magnétisme animal*, Paris, 1817. ***

Optima, etc., De (Hippocrates). The only complete translation of the Hippocratic collection is Emile Littré's *OEuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*, in 10 vols., Paris, 1839-69.

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Physician's Problems, A (Chas. Elam), London, 1869.

Physiologie du système nerveux cérébro-spinal d'après l'analyse physiologique des mouvements de la vie (É. Fournie), Paris, 1872.

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Science and Practice of Medicine, The (Wm. Aitken), 2nd ed., London, 1863, 2 vols.; 6th ed., London, 1872; American ed., from the 4th London ed., with additional material by Dr. Meredith Clymer, Philadelphia, 1866, 68, 72, 2 vols.

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9. Natural Sciences

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In the "Earth, a Great Magnet," Mayer presents an excellent resume of the subject of terrestrial magnetism, illustrated by many striking experiments, some of which were performed with the great electro-magnet of the Stevens Institute Laboratory, then believed to be the largest in the world. In this work he describes a new form of projection galvanometer, which was a decided improvement over previous forms and has been widely used in physical laboratories.

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e t c (Placidus de Titis), Vatavii, Typis Pauli Frambotti, 1657, 4to. — Revised by M. Sibly, London, W. Justins, 1789, 8vo. — Engl. tr. by John Cooper as *Astronomy and Elementary Philosophy*, "corrected from the best Latin editions," London, Davis & Dickson, 1814, 8vo,,.

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Chemistry

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Über die Auflösung der Arten durch natürliche Zuchtwahl oder die Zukunft des organischen Reiches mit Rücksicht auf die Cultur Geschichte. Von einem Unbekannten. I Hannover, 1872, v, 72 pp. Published by Rümpler, and actually authored by J. Wiegand. Cf. Heinsius, *Allgemeines Bücher-Lexicon*, 1868-74.

Works of Robert Boyle, The (R. Boyle), London, 1744, fol., 5 vols. (ed. by Thos. Birch); 1772, 6 vols. ***

Evolutionism/Darwinism/Man

Anthropogenie, oder Entwicklungs geschichte des Menschen (E. Haeckel), 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1874.

Contribution to the Theory of Natural Selection (A. R. Wallace), 2nd ed., London, 1871.

Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, On the, etc. (Chas. R. Darwin), 1859.

Geology (also geography and cartography)

Géographie mathématique du monde (Conrad Maltebrun), 1803-07, 16 vols.

Historia Chic hi meca – Relaciones (Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl), 1848.

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Recherches sur quelques unes des révolutions de la surface du globe (J. B. A. L. L. Élie de Beaumont); Mémoire lut par extrait à l'Académie des Sciences, le 22 juin, 1829; Paris, 1829-30.

Religion of Geology and its Connected Sciences, The (E. Hitchcock), Boston, 1851; Glasgow, 1856; London, 1860.

Report of the U.S. Geological Survey of the Territories (F. V. Hayden & C. H. Merriam), Washington, 1872 & 1873-90.

Situ orb is, De (or Chorographia) (Pomponius Mela); ed., Tzschukke, Leipzig, 1807; Parthey, Berlin, 1867; Finck, Leipzig, 1880.

Physics/Natural Philosophy (including optics)

Conservation of Energy, The (Balfour Stewart), New York, 1875.

Correlation of Physical Forces, On the (Wm. R. Grove); being the substance of a course of lectures delivered in 1843., London, 1843, 1846, 1850, 1855, 1862.

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Magnete, magneticisque corporibus, et de magno magnete tellure, De (Wm. Gilbert), London, 1600; Stettin, 1628, 1633; Frankfurt, 1629, 1638.

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Newtoni opera quae extant omnia, Isaaci (ed. by Bishop Horsley), London, 1779-85, 4 vols.

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Treatise on Optics, A (D. Brewster), London, 1831.

Psychical, Psychological research

Body and Mind (H. Maudsley), London, 1870, 1873, 1880.

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Observations on Trance; or Human Hibernation (J. Braid), London, 1850, 72 pp.

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Soul of Things, or Psychometric Researches and Discoveries, The (Wm. & Eliz. Denton). First ed. titled: *Nature's Secrets, or, Psychometric Researches*. Ed. and with an Introd. by a Clergyman of the Church of England, 1863, xvi, liii, 55, 335 pp.; 3rd rev. ed., Boston, 1866; also 1873 and 1881-84.

Zoology

Essay on Classification, An (L. Agassiz), London, 1859.

Geographical Distribution of Animals, etc., The (A. R. Wallace), London, 1876, 2 vols.

10. Orientalism

Asiatic Journal, (London). Vols. 1-25, 1816-28; vols. 26-28, 1828-29; New Ser., 1830-43; 3rd Ser., 1843-45; 4th Ser., 1845.

See also Vol. 2, 598, 624, (Isis Ref.: x).

Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Bibliothecae Bodleianae (Joannes Uri), 1781, 3 vols. [This item could also be placed in Category 3 Philology]. [Not found, but according to Boris de Zirkoff, Vol.2, 802] *** øøø

See Vol. x (Isis Ref.: x).

Décadas da Ásia, (Diogo do Couto), Lisbon, 1780.

Diogo do Couto (1542-1616) was a Portugise chronicler. Do Couto also functioned as official in the service of the Portugise Crown in Asia from 1559. From 1595 he became archivist in Goa and official historiographer for the Portugise coloniansim in Asia. His Primary work was Décadas da Ásia which is a continuation of João de Barros' Décadas, and covers the period from approx. 1526-1600.

See Vol. 2, 580-581 (Isis Ref.: "Dec.," v., lib. vi., cap. 2.).

Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Asia from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time (H. Murray), Edinburgh, 1820.

See Vol. 2, 554 (Isis Ref.: Murray's "History of Discoveries in Asia.").

"Letter of S. Turner to the Governor General," *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. I, 1801, pp. 197-205. [Not found, but according to Boris de Zirkoff, Vol.2, 821]

See Vol. x (Isis Ref.: x).

Mœurs et les femmes de l'extrême Orient, Les. – Voyage au pays des Bayadères . . . (Voyage au pays des Perles), (L. Jacolliot), Paris, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 8vo. [This item could also be placed in Category 9 Travel]. ***

See Vol. 1, 617 (Isis Ref.: L. Jacolliot: "Voyage au Pays des Perles.").

Nouveau Journal Asiatique, ou Recueil de Mémoires, d'Extraits et de Notices relatifs à l'Histoire, à la Philosophie, aux Langues et à la Littérature des Peuples Orientaux. Published in Paris by the Société Asiatique. Tome VII, March, 1831. Art. by Abel- Rémusat.

See Vol. 2, 114 (Isis Ref.: See also "Journal Asiatique," tome vii., p. 286.).

Oriental Memoirs: selected and abridged from a series of familiar letters written during seventeen years' residence in India, etc. (J. Forbes), Paris, 1813, 4 vols.

See Vol. 1, 383 (Isis Ref.: Forbes: "Oriental Memoirs," vol. i., p. 44; vol ii., p. 387).

Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record, Oct. 16, 1869: Lect. by F. Max Müller. [This item could also be placed in Category 1 under Buddhism]. ***

See Vol. 2, 432 (Isis Ref.: Trubner's American and Oriental Literary Record, Oct. 16, 1869).

Buddhism

Abhidharma (Pali, *Abhidhamma*). See *Tripitaka*.

Bouddha et sa religion, Le (J. Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire), Paris, 1860.

"Buddhist's Opinions of the Spiritual States, A." (P. C. Mitra). In *The Spiritualist*, London, May 25th, 1877, p. 246. A Letter addressed to Alexander Calder.

Culla-Niddesa. Commentary on the *Parayana-vagga* and the *Khaggavisanna-sutta*; together with the *Maha-Niddesa*, a comm. on the *Atthaka-vagga* of the *Sutta-Nipata*, forming the *Niddesa*, a Buddhist Scripture. Publ. by the Pali, Text Society, London.

Dhammapada. The Path or Way of the Buddha's *Dhamma* (Pâli) or Teaching. The most famous scripture in the Pâli Canon, a collection of 423 verses comprising a noble system of moral philosophy. Numerous translations into various languages.

History and Doctrine of Buddhism, Popularly illustrated, The (E. Upham). With notices of the Kappooism, or Demon Worship, and of the Bali, or Planetary Incantations of Ceylon. London, 1829.

History of Barlaam and Josaphat. Aside from the works of John of Damascus, the Greek text with an English transl. is given in *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, by G. R. Woodward and H. Mattingly, 1914. ***

Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme indien (Eugène Burnouf), Paris, 1844; 2nd éd., 1876.

Jâtakas. Stories of Buddha's former births. *The Jataka together with its commentary*, etc. Edited by V. Fausböll [Roman translit]. London: Trubner & Co., 1877-1897. 7 vols. — *The Jâtaka, or stories of the Buddha's former births*. Transl., under the ed. of Prof. E. B. Cowell. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1895-1913, 7 vols.

Lalitavistara. See *Rgya tch'er roi pa*.

Lankâvatâra Sutra. A scripture of the Yogâehâra School of Mahâyâna Buddhism, written in Sanskrit in India (ca. 350 A . D .); contains an epitome of nearly all Mahâyâna teachings. Expounds subjective idealism based on Buddha's enlightenment, and the doctrines of Sûnyatâ and Mind-Only. Said to have been given by Bodhidharma to his disciple, the Second Patriarch, Hui-K'o. For trans, see D. Suzuki, *The Lankâvatâra Sutra* (1932) and his companion vol. *Studies in the Lankâvatâra Sutra* (1930). Øøø

Lotus de la Bonne Loi, Le. See *Saddharma-pundarika*.

Mahavansa. The Sinhalese Pali chronicle; a record in verse of the early history of Ceylon, incl. its religious history. Compiled in the 5th or 6th century. -- Rev. and edited by H. Sumangala, Colombo, 1877; ed. by Wm. Geiger. London, for Pali Text Society by Oxford Univ. Press, 1908 [Roman]. PTS 63. — Transl. by H. Sumangala, Colombo, 1883; transl. by Wm. Geiger and Mabel Bode, London, for Pali Text Soc. by Oxford Univ. Press, 1912. PTS. tr. ser... 3.

Mahavansi, the Raja-Ratnacari, and the Rajavali, forming the Sacred and Historical Books of Ceylon, The (tr. and ed. by E. Upham), London, 1833, 3 vols.

Manual of Budhism, in its modern Development, A (R. Spence Hardy). Translated from Sinhalese MSS., London, 1853.

Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825, etc. (Bishop Reginald Heber). London: John Murray, 1828.

Open Court, The. Art. by Gen. J. G. R. Forlong: "Through what Historical Channels did Buddhism Influence Early Christianity," Aug. 18 and Sept. 1 and 18, 1887.

Parables (Buddhaghosa). Contained in his Commentary on the *Dhammapada*. Translated [from Pâli into Burmese and] from Burmese by T. Rogers [Col. H. T. Rogers]. With an Introduction containing Buddha's *Dhammapada*, or "Path of Virtue," translated from Pâli by F. Max Muller. London, 1870, 8vo.

Pitakattayan. Referred to by Spence Hardy in his *The Legends and Theories of the Buddhists*, p. 66, as being a generic term for Buddhist writings (*Pitakattaya* – Pali; and *Pitakatraya* – Sinhalese).

Prajnâ-Pâramitâ. Most likely the *Mahâprajnâpâramitâhridaya-sûtra*, also known as the *Heart Sûtra*. Together with the *Diamond Sutra*, it is the most popular of the many Scriptures contained in the vast *Prajnâ-Pâramitâ* literature. For transi, see D. T. Suzuki,

Manual of Zen Buddhism (with Chin, text), 1935, and E. Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books* (with comment.), 1958.

Prâtimoksha-Sûtra (Pâli, *Pâtimokkha*). The 227 disciplinary rules binding on the Buddhist Bhikkhu, and recited on *Uposatha* days or days of the four phases of the Moon. They are enumerated in the *Suttavibhanga*, the first part of the *Vinaya Pitaka*. See *S BE* 13.

Saddharma-pundarika. *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*. Transl. from the Skt. and with Commentaries, etc. (Eugene Burnouf), 1852. 4to.; 1925. 8vo.

Sutra of the Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness (Dhamma-chakka-ppavatana Sutta, meaning "Setting in motion the Wheel of the Law"). Woodward's transl. in the Pâli Text Series; also in Christmas Humphreys' *Wisdom of Buddhism*, No. 13; and in *SBE*, XI, ed. by F, Max Müller, 1881.

Tripitaka (Pali, *Tipitaka*, meaning "Three Baskets"). Chief Scripture of the Theravâda School of Buddhism, consisting of the *Vinaya-Pitaka*, or Rules of Discipline governing the Sangha; the *Sutta-Pitaka*, or Dialogues and Discourses of the Buddha, containing the five *Nikayas*; and the *Abbidhamma-Pitaka* (lit. "Higher Dhamma"), mainly a comm. on the *Sutta-Pitaka*. Issued by the Pali Text Society. – Consult also *SBE* X, XI, XIII, XVII, XX.

Über den Buddhismus in Hochasien und in China (W. Schott); Address given at the Prussian Academy of Sciences, Feb. 1, 1844. Berlin, 1846, 8vo.

Wheel of the Law, The (H. Alabaster). *Buddhism Illustrated from Siamese Sources by The Modern Buddhist; A Life of Buddha, and An Account of the Phrabat*. London, 1871. [Pt. I is called: "The Modern Buddhist; being the Views of a Siamese Minister of State on His Own and Other Religions."]

Tibetan Buddhism (Tibet)

Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama of Tibet, An (S. Turner) : containing a narrative of a Journey through Bootan and part of Tibet, London, 1800, 4to. [This item could also be placed in Category 9 Travel, Locations]. ***

Buddhism in Tibet, etc. (E. Schlagintweit), Leipzig, 1863.

Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, etc. (B. H. Hodgson), London, 1874.

Kanjur (Tib. sp. *bKah-hgyur*). "Translation of the Word," the first part of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. It contains 108 volumes, some of which concern the Vinaya or monastic discipline, while others set forth the prajñâ-pâramitâ philosophy and expound the Trikâya and the âlaya vijnâna doctrines. The second part of the Tibetan Canon is the *Tanjur* (Tib. sp. *bStan-hgyur*) or "Translation of Treatises"; this collection contains 225 volumes of works by Indian masters, being partly comm. on the Sûtras and partly on the Tantras. The Tibetan Canon consists mainly of translations from the Sanskrit and the Chinese collected and arranged into the above two groups by Bu-ston, a Tibetan scholar (1290-1394). Only partial translations into English are available such as the *Analysis of the Dulva*, by Alex. Csoma de Koros, 1836, 39.

Religions of Tibet, The (Helmut Hoffmann), London, 1961; Engl. tr. of the original German *Quellen zur Geschichte des tibetischen Bon-Religion*, Wiesbaden, 1950. øøø

Rgya tch'er rol pa [*rGya-chher-rol-pa*] ; ou, Développement des Jeux, contenant l'histoire du Bouddha Cakya-Mouni, traduit sur la version tibétaine du Bkah hgyour, et revu sur l'original sanscrit (Lalitavistara) par Ph. Ed. Foucaux, Paris, 1847-48. Vol. I, Tibetan; Vol. II, French transl. This work in Tibetan is in the Second Volume of the Fifth Section of the *Kanjur*.

Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine pendant les années 1844, 1845, et 1846 (Abbé E. R. Huc), Paris: A. Le Clère, 1850, 2 vols. 8vo.; 4th ed., Paris: Gaume frères et J. Dupray, 1860; new annotated ed. by J.-M. Planchet, Peking, 1924. Engl. transi, by W. Hazlitt as *Travels, etc.*, 1852; abbrev. ed. by M., Jones, 1867. ***

Tanjur. See *Kanjur*.

Weise und der Thor, Der (I. J. Schmidt), St. Petersburg, 1843. Tibetan orig. and transl. See also *Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen*.

China (Ancient)

Analects (Lun-Yu) (Confucius). W. E. Soothill, 1910. J. Legge, *The Life and Teaching of Confucius*, Vol. I of *The Chinese Classics*, 1861-72, 3 vols.; 2nd ed., 1869-76. Also in G. Pauthier, *Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient, etc.*, Paris, 1840.

Cathay, and the Way Thither, etc. (Col. H.. Yule), London, 1866; also 1913-16.

Chine, La (J . P. G. Pauthier), Paris, 1857, 2 vols.

Lun-Yu. See *Analects* (Confucius).

Relação da Propagação da Fé no Reino da China (Álvaro Semedo), 1638; Engl. tr. as *The History . . . of China*, London, 1655 fol.; French tr. as *Histoire universelle du Grand Royaume de la Chine*, Paris, 1645, 4to. ***

Shi-King SBE III.

Shu-King. SBE III.

Si-yu-ki (Hiuen-Tsang). See *Voyages* (S. Julien). Spelling of the famous traveller's name varies greatly: Hsüan-Tsang, Hiwen T'Sang, Yüan-Tsang, Yuan-Chwang. ***

Tratados históricos . . . de China, etc. (F. Navarette), Madrid, 1676, fol.

India/Hinduism

Aitareya Brâhmamam of the Rigveda . . . Edited, translated and explained by Martin Haug, Bombay, 1863, 2 vols. Reprint of translation in *Sacred Books of the Hindus*.

See Vol. 1, xliv (Isis Ref.: "Aitareya Brahmanam," Introduction).

See Vol. 1, 9-12 (Isis Ref.: From the Sanskrit text of the Aitareya Brahmanam. Rig-Veda, v., ch. ii., verse 23. (x., 189). Aitareya Brahmanam, book iii., c. v., 44. Ait. Brahm., vol. ii., p. 242.). Ait. Brahm., book iv).

See Vol. 1, 265 (Isis Ref.: See "Rig-Vedas," the Aitareya-Brahmanam).

See Vol. 1, 347-348 (Isis Ref.: Dr. Haug's translation of the "Aitareya Brahmana" ("Rig-Vedas"). Haug: "Aitareya Brahmanam." Ibid).

See Vol. 1, 580 (Isis Ref.: The "Brahmanas" were translated by Dr. Haug; see his "Aitareya Brahmanam.").

See also Vol. 2, 209-211 (Isis Ref.: x).

Akademische Vorlesungen über indische Literaturgeschichte (A. F. Weber), Berlin, 1852; 2nd ed., 1876. [This item could also be placed in Category 3 Philology]. ***

See Vol. 1, 56 (Isis Ref.: Weber: "Akad. Vorles," 213, 214, etc.).

See also Vol. 1, 583 (Isis Ref.:x).

Asiatick [Asiatic] Researches; or, Transactions of the Society instituted in Bengal, for inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature, of Asia.. Calcutta, 1788-1839; 20 vols., 4to.; London, 1801-12, 11 vols., 8vo.; new ed., Calcutta, 1875, etc. — Index to first 18 vols., Calc, 1835. See *Vedas*

(Colebrooke); "Astron. Computations" (Samuel Davis); "Letter of S. Turner, etc."

See Vol. 1, 32 (Isis Ref.: S. Davis: "Essay in the Asiatic Researches").

See Vol. 2, 269 (Isis Ref.: "Asiatic Researches," vol. viii., pp. 402, 403; Colebrooke's translation.).

See Vol. 2, 399 (Isis Ref.: See "Asiatic Researches," vol. ix., p. 279.).

"Astronomical Computations of the Hindus, On the" (Samuel Davis), dated 1789, in *Asiatick Researches*, etc., Vol. II (1799), pp. 225-87.

See Vol. 1, 32 (Isis Ref.: S. Davis: "Essay in the Asiatic Researches").

Atharva-Veda. Fourth *Veda*, said to have been composed by Atharvan, alleged to have been the first to institute the worship of fire and offer Soma. Consists chiefly of formulae and spells intended to counteract diseases and calamities. — *Atharva-Veda Sanhitâ*, ed. by R. Roth and W. D. Whitney, Berlin, 1855-56. — With the Comm. of Sâyaṇâchârya. Ed. by Shankar Pândurant Pandit, Bombay, 1895-98, 4 vols. — Translated into Engl. Verse by Ralph T. H. Griffith, Benares, 1895-96, 2 vols. -- Trans, by W. D. Whitney; rev. & ed. by C. R. Lanman, Cambridge, Mass., 1905. — Transl., into Engl, prose by M. Bloomfield, Oxford, 1897, in *SBE*, Vol. XLII.

See Vol. 1, 91 (Isis Ref.: The fourth Veda.).

See Vol. 2, 414-415 (Isis Ref.: We believe that we have elsewhere given the contrary opinion, on the subject of "Atharva-Veda," of Prof. Whitney, of Yale College.).

See also Vol. 1, xxxvi; Vol. 2, 47, 106-107, [262], 556-557, [563], [592] (Isis Ref.: x).

Âyurveda. The science of health or medicine, considered by some as a supplement of the *Atharvaveda*, by others as appended to the *Rigveda*, and containing eight departments. See *Upaveda*. [Not found, but according to Boris de Zirkoff, Vol. 2, 799] øøø

Bampton Lectures, 1809: "A View of the Brahmanical Religion, etc.," by Rev. J. B. S. Carwithen, London, 1810.

See Vol. 2, 537 (Isis Ref.: See Strabo and Arrian and Bampton Lectures, pp. 98-100.).

Bhagavad-Gitâ, or *Dialogues of Krishna and Arjuna*. Transl. by Charles Wilkins. London: C. Nourse, 1785. Repr. New York: G. P. Philes, 1867. Repr. for the Bombay Theos. Publ. Fund, Bombay, Tookaram Tatyâ, 1887. Innumerable other editions, though H. P. B. specifically refers to Chas. Wilkins' transl. which was also the first English edition. See also *Mahâbhârata*.

See Vol. 2, 562-563 (Isis Ref.: See the "Gita," translated by Charles Wilkins, in 1785).

See also Vol. 1, [92], Vol. 2, [346], (Isis Ref.: x).

[*Bhâgavata-Purâna*] *Le Bhagavata Purana Ou Histoire Poétique De Krichna* French tr. by Eugène Burnouf, Paris, 1840, 1844, 1847, and (vols. 4, 5) 1884, 1898. Later *Bhâgavata-Purâna*. Edited by Bâlakrishna Sâstrî Yogi, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1898. - *Pr o s e* Eng. tr., ed. and publ. by M. Nath Dutt, Calcutta, 1895-96. - *Srîmad Bhâgavatam*. Tr. By S. Subba Rau, Tirupati, 1928.

Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852) published the Sanskrit text and French translation of the Bhagavata Purana ou histoire poétique de Krichna in three folio volumes (1840-1847). His last works were Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien (1844), and a translation of Le lotus de la bonne loi (The Lotus Sutra, 1852). He had been for twenty years a member of the Academie des Inscriptions and professor of Sanskrit in the Collège de France.

See Vol. 2, 563 (Isis Ref.: the "Bhagavad-Purana," containing the history of Christna, translated into French by Eugene Burnouf. 1840.).

Bible dans l'Inde, La. Vie de lezeus Christna (L. Jacolliot), 1869. Engl. tr. as *The Bible in India*, London, 1870.

See Vol. 1, 579 (Isis Ref.: According to Louis Jacolliot ("La Bible dans l'Inde")).

See Vol. 1, 583-589 (Isis Ref.: "La Bible dans l'Inde.", "La Bible dans l'Inde.", "La Bible dans l'Inde.", Louis Jacolliot, in "The Bible in India," affirms the same).

Brâhmanas. Ancient Sanskrit prose treatises in close relation to the *Vedas*; ritual textbooks the main object of which is to explain the sacred significance of the ritual of sacrifice to those who are already more or less familiar with it. Their contents may be classified under the three heads of practical sacrificial directions (*vidhi*), explanations (*arthavâda*), exegetical, mythological, or polemical, and theological or philosophical speculations on the nature of things (*upanishads*). At the end of the *Brâhmanas* may be found the *Âranyakas* or "Forest Treatises," with their corresponding *Upanishads* which are either imbedded in them or form their concluding portion. These are the most mystical and esoteric treatises of ancient Hindu lore.

Bṛihad-Âraṇyaka and Bṛihadâraṇyakopaniṣad. The Twelve Principal Upanishads (Eng. Transl.), with Notes from the Comm. of Śâmkarâchârya and the gloss of Ânandagiri. Publ. by Tookaram Tatya. Bombay: Theos. Publ. Fund, 1891. Repr. 1906. - *The Upanishads*, Tr. by F. Max Muller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884. Part II, SBE 15.

"Burial in India, The" (R. von Roth), 1867. Source untraced. øøø

Chhândogyopaniṣad. See *The Twelve Principal Upanishads* (Engl., tr.), publ. by Tookaram Tatya. Bombay: Theos. Public. Fund, 1891; repr. 1906. - *The Upanishads*. Tr. by F. Max Muller, Oxford: Clarendon Press. Part I, 1879- SBE I. øøø

Christna et le Christ, etc. (L., Jacolliot), Paris, 1874.

Code of Gentoo [Hindu] Law, A. Or Ordinations of the Pandits, from a Persian translation, made from the original written in the Shanscrit language (N. B. Halhed), 1776.

Commercial Bulletin, Boston; art. by Hadji Nicka Bauker Kahn (pseud, of Capt. W. L. D. O'Grady), "Indian Sketches; or Rubs of a Rolling Stone." Published in 1876-77. [This item could also be placed in Category 17 Periodicals]. ***

Description of the Character, Manners, and Customs of the People of India; and of their Institutions, religious and civil (Abbé J. A. Dubois). Tr. from French MSS., Philad., 1818, 2 vols. [This item could also be placed in Category 4 History]. ***

Dhanurveda. The science of archery, a treatise regarded as an *Upaveda* connected with the *Yajurveda*, and derived from Viśvâmitra or Bhṛigu. See *Upaveda*.

Êrân, das Land zwischen dem Indus und Tigris (F. Spiegel), Berlin, 1863. [This item could also be placed in Category 9 Travel, Locations]. ***

Gândharvaveda. The *Veda* of music, considered as an Appendix to the *Sâmaveda* and ascribed to Bharata.

Harivanśa. See *Mahâbhârata*.

Hindoo Pantheon, The (E. Moor), 1810, 4to; new ed., cond. and annot. by W. O. Simpson, Madras, 1864, 8vo. lacks the plates.

Histoire des Vierges – Les Peuples et les Continents disparus (L. Jacolliot), 1874; another copy with new title-page, 1879.

During Jacolliot's time in India he collected sanskrit myths, which he popularized later, beginning with his Histoire des Vierges - Les Peuples et les continents disparus (1874). Among other theories, he claimed that hindu-writings (or unspecified "Sanskrit tablets") told a story of a sunken land called Rutas in the Indian Ocean. Later, however, he relocated this lost continent to the Pacific Ocean and linked it to the Atlantis-myth. Furthermore his 'discovery' of Rutas is quit similar to the origin of the Mu-Story.

History of Hindostan, its Arts and its Sciences, etc., The (Thos. Maurice), London, 1795-98, 2 vols., 4to (bound in three) ; 2nd ed., 1820, 4to.

History of the Suppression of Infanticide in Western India under the Government of Bombay (John Wilson), 1855.

India in Greece; or, Truth in Mythology, etc. (E. Pococke), London, 1852, 8vo.

Indian Antiquary. A Journal of Oriental Research, Bombay, 1872.

Indian Antiquities (Thos. Maurice), London, 1793-1800, 7 vols., 8vo., (intended as Introduction to *The Hist, of Hindostan*) ; also 1794-1800, and 1806.

"Indian Sketches; or Rubs of a Rolling Stone," by Hadji Nicka Bauker Khan (W. L. D. O'Grady), *Commercial Bulletin*, Boston, Mass.; series consisting of 49 chapters, from March 13, 1876 to April 14, 1877.

Indica. Same as Book VIII of Arrian's *Anabasis*, q.v.

Indica (Ctesias). Treatise on India the material for which this Greek writer collected during his stay in Persia. Known only as an abridgment in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, q.v.

Indica (Megasthenes): *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, etc.*, by J. W. McCrindle, London, 1877.

Indische Studien, ed. by Dr. Albrecht Weber, 1850-98, 18 vols.

Institutes of Hindu Law: or, The Ordinances of Menu, according to the Gloss of Culluca. Comprising the Indian System of Duties, Religious and Civil. Verbally translated from the Original Sanskrit. With a Preface, by Sir William Jones. In *The Works of Sir William Jones* (six vols.), London, 179.

Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China (J. Crawford), London, 1828, 4to.

Kâṭhakopanishad. Same as *Kâṭhupanishad*. See for bibliogr. *Data Chhandogyopanishad*.

Kaushṭiki-Brahmaṇa or *Kaushṭikibrâhmaṇopanishad*. Ed. with Engl. tr. by E. B. Cowell. Calcutta: As. Soc. of Bengal, 1861. *Bibl. Ind.* 39. — *The Upanishads*. Tr, by F. Max Müller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879, 1884. *SBE* I & XV. — *The Twelve Principal Upanishads* (Eng. tr.), Tookaram Tatya. Bombay: Bombay Theos. Public. Fund, 1899.

Mahâbhârata, meaning "Great War of the Bharatas." One of the two great epics of the Hindus, the other being the *Râmâyana*. The poem consists of about 215,000 Slokas and describes the acts and contests of the sons of the two brothers Dhṛita-râshṭra and Pâṇu, descendants of Bharata who were of the lunar line of kings reigning in the neighborhood of Hastinapura. It contains a mass of speculative, social and ethical discourse, notably the 18 chapters of the *Bhagavad-Gitd*, or the Song of the Blessed One, meaning Krishna, containing the renowned dialogue between the latter and Arjuna on some of the most vital subjects of the spiritual life. It teaches the bhakti yoga of devotion and the karma yoga doctrine of action. — The *Mahabharata* has been attributed to Vyasa, a name which in reality means "Arranger." — Edited (with the *Harivansa*, its

Supplemental portion) for the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, Calcutta, 1834-39. — Transl. by K. M. Ganguli and Pratap Chandra Roy. Calcutta: Bharata Press, 1883-96, 12 vols.; 2nd ed. Calcutta: Datta N. Bose & Co., 1923, etc. — Transl. by M. N. Dutt. Calcutta: Elysium Press, 1895-1905, 18 vols.'

Manavadharmasudra or *Manusmriti*. The most important and earliest of the metrical Smritis, probably based on a *Mdnavadharmasutra*. Closely connected with the *Mahabharata*, of which three books alone (iii, xii, xvi), contain as many as 260 of its 2684 slokas. Text crit. ed. by J. Jolly. London: Triibner's Oriental Series, 1887. Trans. by G. Bühler. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886. SEE X X V — *Manava-dharma-sastra. Lois de Menou . . . traduites du Sanscrit*, etc. (A. Loiseleur-Deslongchamps), Paris, 1833; also 1850.

Meghadûta or "Cloud Messenger." Kâlidâsa's lyrical gem of the Sanskrit lyrical poetry, the theme of which is a message which an exile sends by a cloud to his wife dwelling far away, — Transi, into Engl, verse by H. H. Wilson. 3rd ed., London, 1867. — Transl. by Thos. Clark, London, 1882.

Mîmânsâ. Meaning profound thought, reflection, examination, inquiry. Name of one of the great Schools of Hindu philosophy. It is divided into two systems: the *Pûrvamîmânsâ*, or "First Inquiry," also called *Karma-mîmânsâ* or simply *Mîmânsâ*, founded by Jaimini and concerning itself chiefly with the correct interpretation of Vedic ritual and text; and the *Uttara-mîmânsâ* or "Second Inquiry," usually termed *Vedânta* or "End of the Veda," dealing chiefly with the nature of Brahma or the one universal Spirit Jaimini's system is set forth in the *Jaiminisûtra*. Transi, (with text) by Pandit Mohan Lai Sandal, Allâhâbâd, 1923-25, SBH 27. Consult also the commentaries of Sabarasvâmin and Mâdhava. As to the doctrines of the Vedânta, they are laid down in the *Brahmasutras* of Bâdarâyana and the famous *bhâshyas* or Commentaries of Samkarâchârya. Consult Engl, transi, in Volumes 34, 38 & 48 of the SBE. øøø

Mythologie des Indous, La (Marie E. de Polier), Paris, 1809, 2 vols.

Mythology of the Hindus, The (Chas. Coleman), London, 1832.

Nabhaedishtha Hymn. In M. Haug's *Aitareya Brdhmanam* (q.v.).

Original Sanskrit Texts, on the origin and history and progress of the religion and institutions of India (J. Muir), London, Oxford, 1858; 2nd ed., London, 1868-70, 5 vols.

"Philosophy of the Hindus, On the," (Colebrooke), in *Trans, of the Royal Asiatic Soc*, London, 1827, Vol. I, xxxiii.

Purva-Mimamsa-Sutra. (Jaimini). Also known as *Jaiminisutra* or simply *Mimamsa-Sutra*. Transl. with text by M. L. Sandal, Allahabad, 1923-25. øøø

Ramdyana. Renowned Sanskrit epic which details the life and adventures of Ramachandra, his winning of Sita for wife, the rape of the latter by the demon-king Ravana of Ceylon, her rescue by Rama and the latter's final translation to heaven. It has been ascribed to Valmiki. In its present form, it consists of about 24,000 slokas, and is divided into seven books. It has been preserved in three distinct recensions, the West Indian, the Bengal, and the Bombay. — Translated into Engl, verse by R. T. H. Griffith. London: Triibner & Co., 1870-74; Benares, 1895. — Translated into Engl, prose by M. N. Dutt, Calcutta, 1891-94.

Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindu Mythology (Col. Vans Kennedy), London, 1831, 4to.

Rigveda-Samhitâ. Ed. by F. Max Müller (Samhitâ and pada texts in nâgarî). 2nd éd., London: Trûbner & Co., 1877; 2 vols. — Éd. by Theod. Aufrecht (Samhitâ text in transliteration). 2nd. ed., Bonn: Adolf Marcus, 1877; 2 vols. — Trans, by H. H. Wilson. London: Trûbner & Co., and Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1850, 54, 57, 66, 88. — Transi, by R. T. H. Griffith. Benares: E. J. Lazarus & Co., 1889-92. — Trans, by F. Max Muller and Hermann Oldenberg. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891, 1897. SEE 32, 46.

Sakuntala (or *Abhijñana-sakuntala*) (Kálidása). Devanagari recension of the text edited, and with literal Engl. tr. by Monier Williams; 2nd ed., London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1876.

Samaveda-Samhita. Ed. with Comm. by Sâyanâchârya by Satyavrata Sámasrami. Calcutta: As. Soc. of Bengal, 1874, 76, 77, 78; 5 vols. *Bibl. Ind.* 71, New Ser. Transl. by R. T. H. Griffith. Benares: E. J. Lazarus & Co., 1893; 2nd ed., 1907.

Sankhya-Sûtra (attributed to Kapila). Ed. and trans, by R. Garbe. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, *Bibl. Ind.*, 122, 131.

Satapatha-Brâhmana, SBE, XII, X X V I , XLI.

Siva-Purana. Consult *Die Legende vom Devaddruvana im Siva-Purdna*, by Wilhelm Jahn, in *ZDMG*, 71 (1917); Roman text and translation. øøø

Soul: Its Nature and Development, On the (Peary Chand Mitra [Pyârîchânda Mitra]), Calcutta, 1881.

Sthâpatyaveda. The science of architecture, considered as an appendix to the *Atharvaveda*, at least by some authorities. See *Upaveda*.

"Supposed Vaidik Authority for the Burning of Hindu Widows, On the" (H. H. Wilson), in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XVI (1854), pp. 201-14.

Sûrya-Siddhânta. Transi, by Rev. Ebenezer Burgess, former missionary in India; New Haven, Conn., 1860, iii, 356.

Taittirîya-Âranyaka. Belongs to the Black *Yajurveda*. Ed. with the Comm. of Sâyanâchârya by Râjendralâla Mitra, in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1872.

Taittirîya-Brahmana. Belongs to the Black *Yajurveda*. Ed. with the Comm. of Sâyanâchârya by Râjendralâla Mitra, in 3 vols., Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, 1859, 1862, 1890.

Tûzuk-i-Jahangiri, or, Memoirs of Jahangir. Tr. by Alexander Rogers . . . Ed. by Henry Beveridge (with portrait of Jahângir), London, 1909. *Oriental Translation Fund, New Ser.*, Vol. 19.

Upaveda, meaning "secondary knowledge." Name of a class of writings subordinate or appended to the four *Vedas*. It includes the *Ayurveda* or science of medicine appended to the *Rigveda*; the *Dhanurveda* or science of archery app. to the *Yajurveda*; the *Gândharvaveda* or science of music, app. to the *Samaveda*; and the *Sthapatyaveda* or science of architecture, app. to the *Atharvaveda*.

Vedângas, lit. "limbs of the Vedas." Any one of six classes of Sanskrit works written in the *sutra* style, including phonetics, meter, grammar, etymology, religious ceremony, and the ritualistic calendar. They are designed to teach how to recite, understand, and apply Vedic texts. — The Skt. text has been publ. in *Bombay*: Tattvavivechaka Press, 1892.

Vedanta. See *Mîmânsâ*.

Vedas. See *Atharvaveda*, *Rigveda*, *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Upaveda*.

"Vedas, On the" (Colebrooke). *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. VIII, pp. 391-92, ed. 1805.

Vedic Hymns (*Dîrghatamas*). See Vol. II, p. 654, note 56.

Vishnu-Purâna. Ed. by Jîvânanda Vidyâsagâra. Calcutta: Sarasvatî Press, 1882. - Transl. by H. H. Wilson. Ed. by Fitzedward Hall. London: Trübner & Co., 1864, 65, 66, 68, 70. Also in *Works by the late H. H. Wilson*.

Vridhdha-Manava. The "Older Manu" or an older recension of Manu's *Laws*.

Widow-Burning. A Narrative (H. J. Bushby), London, 1855, 8vo.

Yajur-Veda. Meaning the "Sacrificial Veda," a collection of sacred mantras, liturgical and ritualistic formulae in verse and prose. It is divided into two distinct collections: the Taittiriya-samhita called Krishna or "black" because in it the Samhita and Brahmana portions are confused; and the Vajasaneyi-samhita called Sukla or "white" because in this the Samhita is cleared from confusion and is orderly. Consult: 1) Black *Yajurveda*. Trans, by A. B. Keith. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ., 1914. *HSO*, 18, 19; 2) White *Yajurveda*. Trans, by R. T. H.

Griffith. Benares: E., J. Lazarus & Co., 1899.

Oriental Languages and dictionaries (See also category 12)

Bibliothèque orientale, ou dictionnaire universel contenant tout ce qui regarde la connaissance des peuples de l'Orient (B. d'Herbelot de Molainville). Based mainly on the Arabie dictionary of Hadji Khalifa. Completed in 1697 by A. Galland. Printed at Maestricht in 1776, and The Hague in 1777-99 (4 vols.). The latter ed. contains Supplements by C. de Visdelou and A. Galland. [Not found, but according to Boris de Zirkoff, Vol.2, 800] øøø

See Vol. x (Isis Ref.: x).

Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages, A (R. Caldwell), London, 1856; 2nd ed., 1875.

See Vol. 1, 136 (Isis Ref.: Dr. Caldwell, in his "Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages," p. 66).

Dictionary of Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases (Col. H. Yule & A. C. Burnell), 1886. Known as *Hobson-Jobson*. [Not found, but according to Boris de Zirkoff, Vol.2, 806] øøø

For 'Col. H. Yule' see Vol. 1, 471-473, 495, 505, 513, 599-600, 601n, 603-604, 606; Vol. 2, 474n, 554, 580, 587, 620-621.

Oriental and Linguistic Studies (Wm. D. Whitney), 2 Series, London, Cambridge, 1873-75.

See Vol. 2, 47-48 (Isis Ref.: W. D. Whitney: "Oriental and Linguistic Studies, The Veda, etc.)."

See Vol. 2, 534 (Isis Ref.: "Oriental and Linguistic Studies," "Vedic Doctrine of a Future Life," by W. Dwight Whitney, Prof. of Sanscrit and Comparative Philology at Yale College.).

See Vol. 2, 535 (Isis Ref.: "Oriental and Linguistic Studies," p. 48.).

Researches into the Origin and Affinity of the principal Languages of Asia and Europe (Col. Vans Kennedy), London, 1828.

See Vol. 2, 46n, 428 (Isis Ref.: x).

Sanskrit Wörterbuch (R. Roth & Otto Böhtlingk). St. Petersburg, 1855-75, 7 vols.

See Vol. 2, 47 (Isis Ref.: Professor Roth" in his Sanscrit Dictionary).

See also Vol. 1, [xxx], [589n], (Isis Ref.: x).

11. Periodicals (various)

Classical Journal, The. London, 1810-29, 40 vols., 8vo, Vol. LXXIII, March, 1828.

Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, March, 1875.

Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts (Thos. de Quincey). First publ. in *Blackwood Magazine*, February, 1827. See his *Miscellaneous Essays*.

Russkiy Vestnik (Russian Messenger). Monthly (at first twice a month), Moscow; founded by M. N. Katkov, 1856. After his death (1887), publ. by his widow, & ed. by Prince D. N. Tsertelev.

Russkoye Obozreniye (Moscow). Monthly. Vols. 1-9, 1890-98. Ed. by Prince D. N. Tsertelev. *Westminster Review*: "Septenary Institutions," Vol. LIV, October, 1850. *Martin de Haug*.

Culture and popular science

Belfast Address (J.Tyndall). Inaugural Address before the British Assn. at Belfast.

Popular Science Monthly, Vol. V, October, 1874.

Sillimarfs Journal of Science and Art, Vol. X; art. by Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell "On Two-Headed Serpents."

12. Philology, Linguistics, Bibliographies, Dictionaries, Encyclo.

Bibliotheca Classica; or, a Classical Dictionary, containing a full account of all the proper names mentioned in ancient authors, etc. (J. Lemprière), Reading, 1788, 8vo; many later ed.; French tr., 1805.

Bodleian Codex. Entry No. 37 of the year 1104 in Joannes Uri's *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Bibliothecae Bodleianae*, 1781, in 3 vols. No. 1 in Adolf Neubauer's *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, etc.*, 1886, 1906, in 2 vols.

Catalogue of Curiosities at Gresham College (N. Grew), London, 1681. ***

Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford (A. Neubauer), 1886, 1906; 2 vols.

Catalogue of the Manuscripts of the King's Library, A (D. Casley), London, 1734.

Classical Dictionary, etc., A (Charles Anthon). New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841, 8vo., viii, 1423 pp.; 4th ed., 1843; many subsequent editions.

Cyclopaedia, The (A. Rees), London, 1819, 39 vols., 4to.

Deutsches Anonymen Lexicon (Hanns Bohatta & M. Holzmann), Hildesheim, 1961.

Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, A (Ed. by Sir Wm. Smith), London, 1842; 2nd ed., 1848; many impressions; 3rd ed., rev. & enl, London: John Murray, 1890-91, 2 vols.

Dictionary of the English Language, An American (Noah Webster), Revised & Enlarged by Chauncey A. Goodrich & Noah Porter, Springfield, Mass., 1879.

Dictionnaire général des tissues (B. G. Sage), 2nd éd., Lyon, 1859.

Dictionnaire historique et critique (P. Bay le), London, Rotterdam, etc., 1697, fol.; Engl. tr., 1734-41, fol., 10 vols.

Dictionnaire universelle des contemporains (L.-G. Vapereau), Paris: L. Hachette, 1858; many subsequent editions.

General Catalogue of Old Books and Manuscripts (B. Quaritch). London, 1887-88, Index 1892; 7 vols. 8vo., with portraits.

Greek Lexicon (Suidas). Best ed. are those of T. Gaisford (without Latin version), Oxford, 1834, 3 vols., and of G. Bernhardt, Halle, 1834, which embodies the Latin version as well.

Inquiry into the Structure and Affinity of the Greek and Latin languages, etc., An (Geo. Dunbar), Edinburgh, 1828.

Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam atque Arménie am et decern alias linguas (Theseus Ambrosius), Pavia, 1539.

Lexicon (J. H. Zedler), 1732-54.

Lexicon Pentaglotton: Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, Talmudo-Rabbinical, Arabie (V. Schindler), Hanoviae, 1612, 1653, fol.

New American Cyclopaedia. Publ. by Daniel Appleton & Co. Ed. by George Ripley and Chas. A. Dana. 1858-63, 16 vols. Called *American Cyclopaedia* after 1868. New ed. prepared by same Editors, 1873-76, 16 vols.

Persian, Arabic, and English Lexicon (J. Richardson), Oxford, 1777, 1780, fol., 2 vols.; 1800, fol.; 1806-10, 4to.

Satyra de nuptiis philologiae et Mercurii (Martianus M. F. Capella). A voluminous compilation forming a sort of cyclopaedia of the polite learning of the Middle Ages, divided into nine books. Much of the learning is doubtless derived from sources which have long since perished. In Bk. VIII, para. 857, a remarkable passage distinctly states that the planets Mercury and Venus revolve around the Sun, and their position with regard to the Sun and the Earth, as well as to each other, is so correctly described, that one could easily assume that Copernicus,

who quotes Martianus, may have derived the first germ of his ideas from this source. Ed. princeps was printed at Vicenza by H. de S. Urso, 1499, fol.; the best ed. are those of Hugo Grotius, Leyden, 1599, and of U. F., Kopp, Frankf., 1836. ***

Works of Sir William Jones, The, London, 1799, 6 vols. ***

Worterbuch der lateinischen Sprache (Win. Fmuul), Leipzig; Ilalin, 1834 40, 4 vols., 8vo. (French tr. by N. Theil, Paris, 1835-65, 3 vols.)

13. Philosophy

Ancient

Abrégé des vies des anciens philosophes, avec un recueil de leurs plus belles maximes (F. Fénelon), Paris, 1726, 1740, 1822, 1823.

Abstinentia ab usu animalium, De (Porphyry). Gr. & Lat, J. J. Reiskii. Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1767, 4to, Eng tr. by S. Hibberd, London, 1851, 8vo.; and by Thos. Taylor in *Select Works of Porphyry*, q.v.

Alcibiade, On the First (Proclus). Quoted in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*.

Anima ac daemone, de sacrificio et magia, De (Proclus). Transl. M. Ficino, Venice, 1497; also Basel, 1576. See also *Prodi Opera*, ed. Cousin, Paris, 1820-27, III, 278; and Kroll,

Analecta Graeca, Greisswald, 1901, where a Greek transl, accompanies the Latin text.

Comment, in Timaeum (Chalcidius); also as: *Interpretatis Latina partis prion's Timaei Platonici*. First printed by Badius Ascensius, Paris, 1520, fol.; the best ed. is that of J. A. Fabricius, Hamburg, 1718, fol.

Compendium of Natural Philosophy (Manetho). This work, with its Greek title of *Ton physikôn epitome*, has been ascribed to the Egyptian priest Manetho who lived in the reign of the Ptolemies, by Diogenes Laertius, who gives excerpts from it. ***

Cratylus, On the (Proclus)., Ed. by Boissonade, Lips. 1820.

Deo Socratis liber, De (Apuleius), in *Pétrone, Apulée, Aulu-Gelle. OEuures complètes*, etc., ed. of Désiré Nisard, Paris, 1850. Latin and French. Engl. tr. in *Bohn's Class. Library*, London, 1853.

Dialogues of Plato, The (M. A. Jowett), Oxford, 1871; many later editions.

Elements (Stoicheia) (Euclid). Best edition of the text is that of *Euclidis opera omnia*, ed. by Heiberg and Menge, Leipzig, 1883-1916, 8 vols.; vols. i-v contain the *Elements* with Latin transl. — Engl, tr.: T. L. Heath, *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, transl. from the text of Heiberg, with Introd. and Comm., Cambridge, 1908, 3 vols.; 2nd ed. rev., 1926. Also *Loeb Class. Libr.* ***

Enneads (Plotinus). The best ed. of the original Greek text is that of F. Creuzer, with the Latin transl. and commentaries of Ficinus appended. Oxford, 1835, 3 vols., 4to. Among the partial translations into English, mention should be made of Thos. Taylor's *Concerning the Beautiful* (London, 1787 & 1792); *Five Books of Plotinus* (London, 1794, 8vo.); *On Suicide* (London, 1834, 8vo.); and his *Select Works of Plotinus*, q.v. — *Complete Works*, tr. with biogr. by Porphyry, etc., by Kenneth S. Guthrie, Alpine, N. J., Platonist Press, 1918, 4 vols.; *Plotinus . . . with Porphyry's Life of Plotinus*, tr. By S. Mackenna, London, P. L. Warren, 1917-30, fol., 5 vols. (Libr. of Philos. Translations, vols. 1-5).

Epistles (Hipparchus), Rf. to in Proclus, *On Plato's Republic*. See Thos. Taylor, *Works of Plato*, I, 467-68.

Epistles to Philip (Arrhidaeus). Rf. to in Proclus, *On Plato's Republic*; see Thos. Taylor, *Works of Plato*, I, 467-68.

Essay of Transmigration in defence of Pythagoras; or a Discourse of Natural Philosophy, An (W. Bulstrode), London, 1692.

Ethical Fragments (Pythagoras). See *Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras* (Thos., Taylor).

Forschungen auf dem Gebiete der alten Philosophie (A. B. Krische). Vol. I (Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker), Göttingen, 1840, 8vo. ***

Fragment from the writings of Marcus Aurelius. Unidentified.

Fragment (Theon of Alexandria). In MS. Ex. cod. reg. Gall. gr. No. 2390, fol. 154.

Fragments (Xenophanes). Quoted in the *Stromateis* of Clemens Alexandrinus.

Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras, or Pythagoric Life (Thos. Taylor). Accompanied by Fragments of the Ethical Writings of certain Pythagoreans in the Doric dialect; and a Collection of Pythagoric Sentences from Stobaeus and others. London, 1818, 8vo.

Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians. Transl. from the Greek by Thos. Taylor, Chiswick, 1821, 8vo.; 2nd ed., London, 1895; 8vo.; 3rd ed., 1968.

Lectures on the History of Ancient Philosophy (W. A. Butler), Cambridge, 1856, 1874.

Letter to Anebo (Porphyry). In Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries*, etc., q.v.

Life of Plotinus (Porphyry). In Thos. Taylor, *Select Works of Plotinus*, q.v.

Lives of the Sophists (Eunapius), Antwerp, 1568; ed. Boissonade, Amsterdam, 1822.

Logos alêthês (True Doctrine), by Celsus the Epicurean; known only through the writings of Origen.

Mathematica (Theon of Smyrna). See *Theoretic Arithmetic* (Thos. Taylor).

Minerva, To (Proclus). Transl., by Thos. Taylor in his *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, q.v.

Mysteriis, Liber de (Iamblichus). Often referred to as *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*. An Egyptian priest called Abammon is there introduced as replying to a letter of Porphyry. He endeavors to refute various doubts respecting the truth and purity of the Egyptian religion and worship, and to prove the divine origin of the ancient teachings, and also that men, through theurgic rites, may commune with the Deity. Greek text has been edited by Ficinus (Venice, 1483, 4to., with Latin transi.), N. Scutellus (Rome, 1556, 4to.), Thos. Gale (Oxford, 1678, fol., with Latin tr.), and G. Parthey (Berlin, 1857).

See *Iamblichus on the Mysteries*, etc., by Thos. Taylor, for Engl. transl.

Naturalium quaestionum libri VII (Seneca). Eng., tr. as *Physical Science in the Time of Nero*, by John Clarke, London, 1910, 8vo.

Parmenides, On the (Proclus). Publ. in Stallbaum's edition of that Dialogue.

Phaedo of Plato, On the (Olympiodorus). In Thos. Taylor, *Select Works of Porphyry*, London, 1823, q.v.

Physica auscultatio (Simplicius). A Commentary on Aristotle's work by one of the last Neo-Platonic teachers of Athens, who, together with six others, incl. Damascius, had found for a while refuge in Persia. Edited by Francisais Asulanus in 1526; also by H. Diels, Berlin, 1882, 2 vols.

Plato, The Works of (G. Burges), *Bohn's Class. Library*.

Plato and the older Academy (E. Zeller), being Engl. tr. of Vol. II, Sect 2, Part II, of Zeller's *Philosophie der Griechen*, from the 3rd and rev. ed. of the latter. By Miss

Alleyne and Alfred Goodwin. London, 1888 (new ed.); also New York, Russell & Russell, 1962. øøø

Plato's Republic, MS. Commentary on (Proclus). In Thos. Taylor, *The Works of Plato*, London, 1804, Vol. III, p. 328 footnote; also Vol. I, pp. 468-69.

Principiis rerum, De (Damascius). This work by the last of the renowned teachers of Neo-Platonism at Athens is also known as "Doubts and Solutions of the First Principles" and was of course in Greek. It was publ. in an incomplete form by J. Kopp, Frankf., 1828, 8vo.

Protreptics (Iamblichus). The Second book of a ten-book series on Pythagoras, of which only five books have survived. First ed. is by J. Arcerius Theodoretus, and the best that of Th. Kiessling, Leipzig, 1813, 8vo. See *Pythagoras*.

Pythagoras, Life of (Iamblichus). The first book of a Series of ten which expounded the philosophy of Pythagoras, as a preparation for the study of Plato. Only five of these books are extant, the second one being *Protreptics* (q.v.). The *Life of Pythagoras* was first edited in Greek and Latin by J. Arcerius Theodoretus, Franeker, 1598, 4to.; later by L. Kuster (Amsterdam, 1707, 4to.), and T. H. Kiessling (Leipzig, 1815, 2 vols. 8vo.); also A. Nauck (St. Petersburg, 1884). - See *Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras*, by Thos. Taylor, for Engl, transl.

Select Works of Plotinus, and Extracts from the Treatise of Synesius on Providence (Thomas Taylor). With an Introduction containing the substance of Porphyry's Life of Plotinus. London, 1817, 8vo.; repr. in *Bohn's Philosophical Library*, 1895 where it is edited, with Preface and Bibliography, by G. R. S. Mead; repr. in 1909, 1912 .& 1929.

Select Works of Porphyry (Thos. Taylor); containing his Four Books on *Abstinence from Animal Food*; his treatise on *The Homeric Cave of the Nymphs*; and his *Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligible Natures*. Translated from the Greek by Thos. Taylor. With an Appendix, explaining the Allegory of the Wanderings of Ulysses. By the Translator. London: printed for Thos. Rodd, 17, Great Newport St., 1823, xx, 271, 8vo.

Sleep, Treatise on (Clearchus). Ref. to by Proclus in *Comm. on Plato's Republic*; see Thos. Taylor. *The Works of Plato*, Vol. I, p. 469.

Soul, On the (Timaeus Loerius). Best ed. is by J. J. de Gelder, Leyden, 1836; also (with Plato's *Timaeus*) by C. F. Herman, Leipzig, 1852.

Thology of Plato. The Six Books of Proclus, the Platonic Successor, On the (Thos. Taylor), London, 1816, 2 vols, in one, 4to.

Theoretic Arithmetic in Three Books (Thos. Taylor). Containing the substance of all that has been written on this subject by Theon of Smyrna, Nichomachus,

Iamblichus and Boëthius, London, 1816, 8vo.

Timaeus, On the (Proclus). Transl. by Thos. Taylor, 1820, 2 vols., 4to.

Vita Pythagorae, De (Porphyry), Greek and Latin. Amsterdam, 1707; ed. Kiessling, Leipzig, 1816.

Vitis philosophorum libri X, De (Diogenes Laertius); also known as *De clarorum philosophorum vitis, dogmatibus et apophthegmatibus libri decern.* Editio princeps, Basel, 1533, ap. Frobenium; best modern ed.: H. Hübner and C. Jacobitz, 1828-33, 2 vols., with critical notes. Text and Engl, transl. as *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, in *Loeb Class. Libr.*; Engl. tr. alone, by C. D. Yonge, in *Bohn's Class. Libr.*

Works of Philo Judaeus, The (ed. Chas. D. Yonge), Transl. from the Greek. Bohn Eccles. Library, 1854-55, 4 vols. ***

Works of Plato, The (Thos. Taylor). Fifty-five Dialogues and Twelve Epistles translated from the Greek. London, 1804, 5 vols., 8vo.

Medieval

Ars Geometriae (A. M. S. Boethius), 1507. Migne, *Patrol*, Ixiii-lxiv, 1847; G. Friedlein, Leipzig, 1867. See also *Theoretic Arithmetic* (Thos. Taylor).

Divisione naturae, De (Joh. Erigena), Oxford, 1681; Munster, 1838.

Dono perseverantiae, De (St. Augustine). *Works*, ed. by M. Dods, Edinb., 1872-76.

Epistle II to Januarius (St. Augustine). *Works*, ed. by M. Dods, Edinb., 1872-76.

Renaissance

Varietaterum, De (G. Cardanus), Basel, 1557. ***

Modern

Catéchisme positiviste, ou sommaire exposition de la religion universelle, etc. (A. Comte), Paris, 1852; also 1874, 1890; 1891; Engl. tr. by Rich. Congreve as *The Catechism of Positivist Religion*, London, 1858.

Cours de l'Histoire de la philosophie moderne (Victor Cousin), Ser. 2, new éd., Paris, 1847.

Cours de Philosophie positive (A. Comte), Paris, 1830-42; 6 vols.; 2nd ed., 1864 (Preface by Littré); Engl. tr. by Harriet Martineau, 1853.

Dictionnaire philosophique (Voltaire), London [Geneva], 1764, 8vo.

Esprit des Lois, L' (C. L. Montesquieu), 1748.

Essay on Criticism (A. Pope), 1711. [Literary criticism]

Essay on Man (Pope), 1733. [Literary criticism]

Essays (T. H. Macauley), 1841-44, etc. [Literary criticism]

Ideen Zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (J. G. von Herder), Riga, Leipzig, 1784-91, 4 pts.

Inquiry into Human Understanding, An (D. Hume), London, 1861.

"Letter to Glanvill" (Henry More). See *Sadducismus*, etc. ***

Novum Organum (F. Bacon), 1620.

Parerga und Paralipomena. Kleine philosophische Schriften (A. Schopenhauer), Berlin, 1851.

Paroles de philosophie positive (P. M. E. Littré), Paris, 1859.

Passages from the Life of a Philosopher (Chas. Babbage), London, 1864.

Philosophical Works (D. Hume), Edinburgh, 1826; Cambridge, Mass., 1854; London, 1874-75; 4 vols.

Philosophie des Unbewussten (K. R. E. von Hartmann), 2nd éd., Berlin, 1870.

Principles of Science, The (Wm. S. Jevons), London, 1874.

Pseudodoxia Epidemica: or, Enquiries into very many received Tenents and commonly presumed Truth (Sir Thos. Browne), London, 1646. ***

Syllabus of Lectures on Natural and Experimental Philosophy, A. (Thos. Young), London, 1802, 8vo.

System of Logic, A (J. S. Mill), 8th ed., London, 1872, 8vo.

Système de politique positive ou traité de sociologie (A. Comte), 1852-54; Engl. tr. by Bridges, etc., 1875-79.

True Intellectual System of the Universe, The (R. Cudworth), London, 1668; 2nd ed., 1743; also 1845.

Über den Willen in der Natur (A. Schopenhauer). Eine Erörterung der Bestätigungen welche die Philosophie des Verfassers, seit ihrem Auftreten,

durch die empirischen Wissenschaften, erhalten hat. Frankfurt a. M., 1836.

Ober die Grenzen des Naturerkenntnis (Du Bois-Reymond), Leipzig, 1872, 1882, 1898.

Unseen Universe, The (P. G. Tait & B. Stewart), 4th ed., London, 1876. ***

Unseen World and Other Essays, The (John Fiske), 5th ed., Boston, 1876.

14. Poetry /fiction/music (Modern)

Amerigo. A Comedy of Errors, etc. (S. Zweig). Transl. from German by A. St. lamm, New York, 1942. øøø

Arabian Nights Entertainments (E. Wm. Lane), 1838-40. With Notes and 111. Designed to make the work an encyclop. of Eastern manners; 3 vols. ***

Course of Time, The (R. Poliok). A Poem in Ten Books. London, 1827, 2 vols.

Decameron (G. Boccaccio); 1st dated ed., Venice, 1471.

Demon, The (M. Y. Lermontov). Russian text, Berlin, 1856. Eng. tr. by A. C. Stephen., London, 1875, 1881, etc.

This is Lermontov's best-known poem (The Demon, 1842), about an angel who falls in love with a mortal woman, reflected the poet's self-image as a demonic creature. The melancholic Demon, exiled from Paradise, wanders on Earth, past hope of making peace again. At night he visits Tamara who says: "Come, swear to me to leave behind / All evil wishes from this hour". The Demon promises: "You are my holy one. This day / My power at your feet I lay. / And for your love one moment long / I'll give you all eternity." His kiss like deadly poison kills Tamara, who is saved by her martyr's pain: "She suffered, loved, laid down her life - / And Heaven opened to her love!" The Demon curses his dreams of better things - "Alone in all the universe, Abandoned, without love or hope!..." Lermontov drafted the sorrowful and self-accusing poem first at the age of 14.

Divina Commedia, La (Dante Alighieri). The first three editions were printed in 1472 at Foligno, Manua and Jesi.

Don Juan (Byron), 1818-23.

Ernani (G. F. F. Verdi), 1844.

Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit (John Lyly, or Lilly, or Lylie), 1578.

Faerie Queene (E. Spencer), 1617.

Faust (Goethe). First Part publ. in 1808.

Festus (Ph. J. Bailey), 1839.

Gerusalemme liberata, La (T. Tasso), 1580-81.

Giaour, The (Byron), 1813.

Hudibras (S. Butler), 1663, 1664, 1678.

Hypatia (Chas. Kingsley), 1853.

Last Days of Pompeii, The (Bulwer-Lytton), 1834.

Lay of the Last Minstrel, The (Walter Scott), 1805.

Lyrical Ballads (W. Wordsworth), 1798.

Old, Old, Very Old Man: or, the Age and Long Life of Thomas Parr (John Taylor).
In verse, 1635, 4to.; 3rd ed., 1700; repr. in *Harleian Miscellany*, Vol. VII, 1774, etc.,
and in James Caulfield's *Edition of Curious Tracts*, 1794. ***

Paradise Lost (J. Milton), 1668. ***

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Septuagint. Greek version of the Old Testament still in use in the Eastern Church. So called from the legend preserved in the Letters of Aristeas, that the *Pentateuch* was translated at Alexandria by seventy-two emissaries from Jerusalem at the request of Ptolemy II. Church Fathers extended the tradition to the whole of the Greek O.T. The *Septuagint*, usually ref. to by the symbol LXX,

differs from the Masoretic text, and is the version cited by Philo, Josephus, and in the New Testament. *Sermones* (St. Augustine). In Vol. V of the Benedictine ed. of his *Works*, Paris, 1679- 1700; a Selection from them was publ. at Oxford in 1844, 1845; transl. by R. G. Macmullen, and is incl. in the *Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*; also a Selection transl. and ed. by Q. Howe, New York, 1966.

Shepherd of Hermas or *Pastor of Hermas*. One of the works representing the so-called Apostolic Fathers and dealing with the problem of the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism. Text and Eng. tr. in *Loeb Classical Library*. Transl. in W. Hone, *Apocryphal New Test.*, q.v.

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Vulgate. Latin version of the Scriptures, in the main the work of St. Jerome in the 4th cent. The name was taken from that of the earlier Latin translations of the Septuagint, and was first used in the modern sense by Roger Bacon in the 13th cent. The O.T. was transl. directly from the Hebrew with the aid of the Septuagint and other Greek and Latin versions. Declared by the Council of Trent in 1546 to be the standard for the services of the Roman Ch. Standard text is that of Pope Clement VII of 1592. The Engl. version from the Vulgate is known as the *Douay Bible*; N.T. was publ. at Reims, 1582; O.T. at Douay, France, 1609-10. Various rev. ed. exist.

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Clarendon Press, BIBLIOGRAPHY 799 SBE IV, XXIII, XXXI. Orig. ed. is of 1880; 2nd ed. of 1895, somewhat abbreviated as far as Introduction goes. His French transl. is 1892-93, in the *Annales du Musée Guimet*, Vols. 21, 22, 24..

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suras or chapters; it is the basis for the religious, social, *civil*, commercial, military and legal regulations of the Mohammedan world. — Translations by G. Sale (1734, etc.), J. M. Rodwell (1876, etc., arranged chronol.), E. H. Palmer (1880, etc., *SBE*, 6 & 9), Muhammad 'Ali (1917). Rodwell's tr. is in *Everyman's Library*, London, 1909.

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Mishnah, pl. Mishnayoth, meaning instruction, oral law, from Hebrew *shânâh*, to repeat; in post-Biblical Hebrew, to teach, to learn. See Talmud for further data.

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Torah Khethubim (Hagiographa); Yôhânân. — Consult The Babylonian Talmud. Translated under the editorship of I. Epstein. London, Soncino Press, 1935-48, 34 vols. Targum (pl. Targumim or Targûms). Aramaic term meaning "interpretation." A translation or paraphrase of some portions of the Old Testament in the Aramaic of Judaea or Galilee (formerly erroneously called Chaldee), mostly dating in the present form from the Geonic period, but in part based on oral tradition of the pre-Christian Roman period. Among the important Targûms now extant are: for the Pentateuch — the Targum of Onkelos, or Babylonian Targiim, and the Targûm of Jonathan, or Targûm of Jerusalem; for the Prophets — the Targûm of Jonathan bar Uzziel.

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Edda, or *Eddas*. Either of two works in the Old Norse or Icelandic language: a) *The Younger* or *Prose Edda*, or *Edda of Snorri Sturluson*, a prose work treating of Norse mythology and the language and modes of composition of the skalds. Its most remarkable portion is the *Gylfaginning*, or the Delusion of Gylfi, which is a compendium of the mythological system of the ancient Nordic people. While written by Sturluson (1178-1241), it embodies traditions of earlier ages; b) *The Elder* or *Poetic Edda*, also known as *Edda of Saemund the Wise*, which is a collection of heroic chants and mythical legends of great antiquity, reduced to their present form between the 9th and the 12th centuries, and discovered in 1643 by Brynjólfur Sveinsson, Icelandic Bishop of Skálholt, who erroneously ascribed them to Saemundur Sigfússon (1656-1133). The most remarkable of the poems in this collection is the *Voluspá*, or prophecy of the Volva or Sibyl, containing some of the ancient cosmogonic ideas. The *Prose Edda* has been partially tr. into Engl, by T. Percy in his *Northern Antiquities* (q.v.) from the French of P. H. Mallett (1770) ; by G. Webbe Dasent (Stockholm, 1842); by R. B. Anderson (Chicago, 1880); by A. G. Brodeur (1916) . The first Engl, tr. of the *Poetic Edda* was that publ. by Benjamin Thorpe in 1886; more recent versions are those of Olive Bray (1908) and H. A. Bellows (1923).

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Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg, Les (J., M. de Maistre), Paris, Lyon, 1822. Universal Knowledge ***

Commentarii urbani (Volaterranus), in *Opera omnia*, Rome, 1506; Paris, 1526.

Raffaello Maffei (17 February 1451–25 January 1522) was an Italian humanist, historian and theologian. He was a native of Volterra, Italy, and is therefore called Raphael Volaterranus. Among the works of Maffei are *Commentariorum rerum urbanarum libri XXXVIII* (Rome, 1506; Paris, 1516), an encyclopedia of all subjects known at that time, prepared with great care, but not always with the best judgment. It consists of three parts; in the first, "Geography", he writes extensively of the Spaniards and of the Portuguese; the second part, "Anthropology", is devoted, more especially, to the contemporaneous history of that time; the third part is devoted to "Philology". This encyclopaedia was printed eight times up to 1603. The 1603 edition contains 814 folio pages. The first book consists of the table of contents and a classed index; books 2-12, geography; 13-23, lives of illustrious men, the popes occupying book 22, and the emperors book 23; 24-27, animals and plants; 28, metals, gems, stones, houses and other inanimate things; 34, de scientiis cyclicis (grammar and rhetoric); 35, de scientiis mathematicis, arithmetic, geometry, optica, catoptrica, astronomy and astrology; 36-38, Aristotelica (on the works of Aristotle).

17. Symbolism (Comparative, Theosophical Enlightenment)

Anacalypsis, an Attempt to draw aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions (G. Higgins), London, 1836, 2 vols, 4to; 2nd ed., Glasgow, 1878, 8vo.

"Bacchus the Prophet-God" (Dr. A. Wilder), in *The Evolution*, New York, June, 1877. ***

Celtic Druids (The); or, an Attempt to shew, that the Druids were the Priests of Oriental Colonies who emigrated from India, etc. (G. Higgins), London, 1829. ***

Discourse on the Worship of Priapus, and its connection with the Mystic Theology of the Ancients, A (R. Payne Knight). To which is added an Essay on the Worship of the Generative Powers during the Middle Ages of Western Europe. London: Privately printed, 1865; also 1871.

Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity (J. Yarker), 2nd ed., New York, 1878. ***

Oedipus Judaicus (Wm. Drummond), London, 1811.

Rosicrucians, their Rites and Mysteries, The (H. Jennings), London, 1870. 8vo.; 2nd ed., rev., corr. & enl., London, 1879; 3rd ed., newly rev., 1887. ***

Round Towers of Ireland; or, the Mysteries of Freemasonry, of Sabaism, and of Buddhism, for the first time unveiled, The (H. O'Brien), London, 1834, 1898.

Söd: The Mysteries of Adoni (S. F. Dunlap), London and Edinburgh, 1861, xvii, 216.

Söd: The Son of the Man (S. F. Dunlap), London & Edinburgh, 1861, xxxiv, 152.

Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology, The (R. P. Knight). An Inquiry. New ed., with intro., additions, notes and a new index, by Dr. A. Wilder. New York, 1876. — Orig. ed. was entitled *An Inquiry into the Symbolical, etc.*, London, 1818, 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1835.

Vestiges of the Spirit-History of Man (S. F. Dunlap), New York, 1858, vi, 404.

18. Travel and cultural/historical narratives, locations, geo., cosmo.

Account of the American Baptist Mission to the Burman Empire (Ann Hasseltine

Judson), 2nd ed., London, J. Butterworth, 1827. Includes *Diaries or Journal of Dr., Adoniram Judson*.

Améric Vespuce 1451-1512, etc. (H. Vignaud), Paris, 1917. ***

Amerigo Vespucci (1454 -1512) was an Italian explorer, navigator and cartographer. The continent of America derives its name from the feminized Latin version of his first name.

America, Its Geographical History, 1492-1892 (W. B. Scaife). Baltimore, 1892.

Amerigo and the New World (G. Arciniegas), Transl. from Spanish by Harriet de Onh New York, 1955.

Amerigo Vespucci. Son caractère, ses écrits, etc. (F. A. de Varnhagen), Lima, 1865.

Ancient America (J. D. Baldwin), London, 1869, 1872; New York, 1869, 1874, 1896.

Around the World: or, Travels in Polynesia, China, India, Arabia, etc. (J. M. Peebles), 4th ed., Boston, 1880. øøø

Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East (Marco Polo). Newly translated and Edited, with Notes, by Col. Henry Yule. London: J. Murray, 1871; 2nd ed., 1875; 3rd ed., 1902; repr., 1929; also in *Universal Library*, New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1931.

Cartas (Brasseur de Bourbourg). See *Lettres*. (1851 - *(las) Cartas para servir de Introducción á la Historia primitiva de las Naciones civilizadas de la América setentrional...* (Mexico), Spanish & French translations;) ***

His writings inspired Augustus Le Plongeon and also Ignatius L. Donnelly, whose book Atlantis: The Antediluvian World contains numerous references to Brasseur de Bourbourg's scholarship. However, an academic wrote in 1875 that not a single contemporary scholar accepted Brasseur de Bourbourg's theories about Atlantis.

Constituciones diocesanas de Chiapa (Francisco Nûnez de la Vega), Rome, 1702. ***
Cosmographiae Introductio (Martin Waldseemuller), St. Die, May, 1507.

The book includes a translation to Latin of the Quattuor Americi Vespuccij navigationes (Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci), which is apparently a letter written by Amerigo Vespucci, although some historians consider it to have been a forgery written by its supposed recipient in Italy. The Cosmographiae describes why the name America was used: ab Americo Inventore ...quasi Americi terram sive Americam (from Amerigo the discoverer ...as if it were the land of Americus, thus America).

Description du royaume Thai ou Siam, etc. (J. B. Pallegois), Paris, 1854, 12°.

Edward Meltons, Engelsh Edelmans, Zeldzaame en Gedenkwaardige Zee en Land Reizen, etc. (E. Melton), Amsterdam, 1702.

Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und ihrer Fürstenthäuser, etc. (Sanang Setsen). Translated from the Mongolian into German by I., I. Schmidt. Mongolian &

German texts. St. Petersburg, 1829. 4to. Photographic reprod. [1935?], St. Petersburg, Leipzig, xxiv, 509- This work is a transl. of Sanang Setsen's Mongolian Chronicles of 1662. He was the Chungtaidschi of the Ordos. ***

Land of Charity, The (S. Mateer). A descriptive Account of Travancore and its People, etc., London, 1871, 8vo.

Land of the White Elephant, etc., The (F. Vincent), London, 1873.

Deatils: The Land of The White Elephant sights and scenes in South-Eastern Asia. A personal narrative of travel and adventure in Farther India embracing the countries of Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and Cochin-China (1871-2) with maps plans, and numerous illustrations.

Mélanges d'épi graphie et d'archéologie sémitique (J. Halévy), Paris, 1874. ***

Mount Lebanon. A ten Years' Residence from 1842 to 1852, etc. (Chas. H. Churchill), London, 1853, 3 vols.

Mundus Novus (Amerigo Vespucci), 3rd ed., Augsburg, 1504. See Vol., I, pp. 651-52, Note 73.

Naturalist in Nicaragua, The (Thomas Belt): a Narrative of a Residence at the Gold Mines of Chontales, and Journeys in the Savannahs and Forests. London: John Murray, 1874; 2nd rev. & corr. ed., London: E. Bumpus, 1888.

Norsemen in Iceland, The (G. W. Dasent), London, 1855. ***

Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien, etc. (F. Valentijn), Amsterdam, 1724-26, fol., 5 Pts.

Paesi novamente ritrovati, e Novo Mondo da Alberico Vesputio Florentino tntitulato (F. Montalboddo), 1507.

This is a first edition, printed in Vicenza, on 3 November 1507, of an anthology that was a runaway editorial success during the 16th century. Organised by Fraanzano da Montalboddo, it compiled diverse accounts of voyages of discovery (or rediscovery) undertaken by Portuguese, Spaniards and Italians at the service of the Iberian monarchies. The work consists of six books that describe journeys ranging from Cadamosto's voyage to Cape Verde and Senegal at the service of the Portuguese monarch to the pioneering voyage from Lisbon to Calicut, Pedro de Sintra's expedition to Senegal, a narrative of Vasco da Gama's voyage and a description of Pedro Álvares Cabral's journey to India and Brazil. This was the first time that an account of Amerigo Vespucci's third voyage was published in Italian. However, far more important than all this, it included one of the first reports ever to be published about Pedro Álvares Cabral's voyage to Brazil. This was one of the main reasons for its success and explains why it was almost immediately translated into Latin and German.

Tales and Traditions of the Russian People (I. P. Saharoff), Moscow, 1836-37; 2nd ed., 1837; 3rd ed., St. Petersburg, 1841-49 [Russian text].

Travels along the Mediterranean . . . during the years 1816-17-18 (R. Richardson), London, 1822.

Travels in Central Asia (A. Vámbery), Being an Account of a Journey from Teheran across the Turkoman Desert, on the Eastern Shore of the Caspian, to Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarkand, performed in the year 1863, etc., London, 1864, 8vo.,

Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, ancient Babylonia . . . during the years 1817, 1818, 1819 and 1820 (R. K. Porter), London, 1821-22, 2 vols., 4to.

Travels in Timmannee, Kooranko, and Soolima Countries in Western Africa (A. G. Laing), London, 1825.

Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the years 1768-73 (J. Bruce), Edinburgh, 1790, 5 vols.; 2nd ed., 1805; 3rd ed., 1813.

Voyage à la Martinique, etc. (J.-B. Thibault de Chanvalon), Paris, 1763, 4to.

Voyage au pays des éléphants (L. Jacolliot), Paris, 1876, 1 2 °.

See Vol. 2, 321 (Isis Ref.: Jacolliot: "Voyage au Pays des Elephants.").

Voyage aux Indes Orientales (J. P. Paulin de St. Barthélémy). Trans, from Italian, Paris, 1808, 3 vols. (Orig. in Latin, Rome, 1794, 4to.) ***

Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte, pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte D. V. Denon); 4th ed., Paris, 1803, 3 vols.; Engl, tr., London, 1802, 2 vols. ***

Voyage dans l'Empire de Maroc et le royaume de Fez fait pendant les années 1790-1 (Wm. Lemprière); tr. from the English by de Sainte-Suzanne, Paris, 1801, 8vo., the orig. Engl, work being: *A Tour from Gibraltar to Tangier . . . over Mount Atlas to Morocco*, London, 1791; 2nd ed., 1793; 3rd ed., 1800..

Voyage dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique, etc. (G. T. Mollien), Paris, 1820, 2 vols., also 1840.

Voyage dans les royaumes de Siam, de Cambodge, de Laos et autres parties centrales de l'Indo-Chine, etc. (A. H. Mouhot), Paris, 1868; Engl, tr., London, 1864. ***

Voyage en Indo-Chine et dans l'empire chinois, etc. (L. de Carné), Paris, 1872. ***

Voyages and Travels in the Levant, in the Years 1749-52, etc. (F. Hasselquist), Engl. transl. London, 1766, 8vo. Original work was titled: *Iter Palaestinum el. Resa til Heliga Landet*, publ. by Linné, 1757.

Voyages, contenant la description des états du Grand Mogol, de l'Hindoustan, etc. (F. Bernier), Amsterdam, 1699, 2 vols. ***

Voyages des Pèlerins Bouddhistes (Stanislas A. Julien) : Vol. I — *Histoire de la vie de*

Hiouen-Thsang et de ses voyages dans l'Inde, depuis l'an 629 jusqu'en 645, par Hoeili et Yen-thsong; traduite du Chinois par Stanislas Julien. Paris, 1853. — Vol. II — *Si-yu-ki. Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales*, traduits du Sanskrit en Chinois, en l'an 648, par Hiouen-Thsang, et du Chinois en Français, par S. Julien. Paris, 1857-58. 2 vols.

The *Si-yu-ki* or *Ta-T'ang-Si-yu-ki* was compiled under the traveller's own supervision by order of the great Emperor Tai-Tsung. ***

Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah (Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah, called Ibn Batutah). Texte Arabe accompagnée d'une traduction, etc., Paris, 1853-58, 4 vols., 8vo. — *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, tr. by S. Lee, 1829, 4to. Oriental Translation Fund.

19. Unknown Sources

Account of the Origin and Attributes of the True Rosicrucians, MS. ***

Agrushada Parikshai. [L. Jacolliot]

Alexandrian MS. (Theodas).

Anatomia cérébrale (V. G. Malacarne), Milan.

Apocrypha [Secret Books of the Alexandrian Jews — unobtainable].

Âvrita. Untraced.

Book of Brahmanical Evocations.

Book of Common Prayer (Justice Bailey), 1813.

Book of Enoch (J. Gaffarel).

Book of Evocations.

Book of Numbers, Chaldean. Unavailable.

Book of the Babylonian Companions.

Book of the Historical Zodiacs.

Book of the Keys.

Catechism of the Pârsis. Tr. by Dâdâbhâi Naurozjî.

Chaldean Book of Numbers. See *Book of Numbers*.

Coptic Legends of the Crucifixion.

"Dogmatism in Science," (H. Corson).

Druze MSS. (transl. by Pétis de la Croix, 1701). François Pétis de la Croix (1653–1713) was a French orientalist.

Einl. in N. T. (untraced).

Epistle of Peter to James.

Fragment (Vyâsa-Maya).

Genealogy of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Faustus, Bishop of Riez). ***

Great Book, The (untraced).

History of India (Kullûka-Bhatta). ***

Hundert und eine Frage (F. N. Nork).

Jaina Books of Pattana.

Journal fur Freimaurer (Woog), Vienna, 1786.

Manuscript (Don Juan Torres).

Mukta and Baddha. Attributed to Kapila.

Mystères physiologiques (A. Everard). Untraced

New Materialism (J. Liebig).

Nivoids (Rishi Kutsa). No further data available.

On the Study of Biology (T. H. Huxley) No definite information.

Pagani e Cristiani (Martezi).

Pali-Buddhistical Annals.

"Paul and Plato" (Dr. A. Wilder). Source uncertain.

Phenomena of Mediumism (A. N. Aksakov).

Physica et Mystica (attrib. to Democritus).

Proofs that I am a Serpent (attrib. to Votan).

Prophecies (Ramatsariar).

Prophecies, Book of, ed. of 1453. Untraced.

Réponse aux Assertions. See *Collected Writings*, Vol. IX, p. 297 footnote.

Rosicrucian MS. (Count de Saint-Germain). Said to have been written in cipher.

Sdranga. Possibly the *Sârahga-sâra*, a poem.

Sceau rompu, 1745.

Secret Book (unknown).

Secreti nuovi (G. Ruseellius), 1567.

Tales of the Impious Khalif (Barrachias- Hassan-Oglu).

Theologumena arithmetica (Speusippus).

Thoughts on the Birth and Generation of Things (F. C. Oetinger).

Tinnevelly Shanars, The (E. Lewis).

Traditions (Schopheim).

Usa (Charaka).

Appendix II
A Bibliography

*of the sources used in H. P. Blavatsky's The Secret Doctrine –
arranged alphabetically by title within relevant categories –
including comments and additional information extracted from
the work of Boris de Zirkoff (HPBCW) and by Tim Rudbøg.*

Version 2.0 (This is a work in progress. The fully annotated version 3.0 will include the exact reference details as found in The Secret Doctrine; updated bibliographic details; explanative notes and the correction/addition to the titles with code)

[Code appended to some of the titles/sources:

-Titles with code = *** = This title can also be placed into another category - reference still needs to be made to the other category.

-Titles with code = øøø = Either this title does not belong properly to the bibliography or something still needs to be fixed.]

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1. Ancient world, Classics (Greek & Roman) and Fragments

Ancient Fragments of the Phoenician, Chaldean, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and other Writers (I. P. Cory) London: Wm. Pickering, 1828, 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1832, lix, 361 pp. Greek, Latin and English texts; *the most valuable edition*.—New and enl. ed. by E. Richmond Hodges, London, Reeves & Turner, 1876 (xxxvi, 214 pp.); introduces various editorial comments of some historical value, but eliminates the famous *Chaldean Oracles*.—Photographic reprod. of 2nd edition (1832) by Wizards Bookshelf (Secret Doctrine Reference Series), Minneapolis, Minn., 1975. ***

Archaic Dictionary, biographical, historical, and mythological, An. From the Egyptian Assyrian and Etruscan Monuments and Papyri (Wm. Ricketts Cooper). London, Bagster & Sons, 1876, 8vo., pp. xvi, 668. Repr., 1969. ***

Berosi Antiquitatum libri quinque cum Commentariis Joannis Annii, Rome, 1498, fol. This is one of the many fabrications of Giovanni Nanni, a Dominican monk of Viterbo, better known under the name of Anniius of Viterbo, who died in 1502. The work has been reprinted many times and even transi, into Italian. Cf. Fabric. *Bibl. Graec.* iv. p. 163, etc.; Vossius, *De Hist. Graec.* p. 120, ed. Westermann; and J. D. G. Richter's *Introd.* to his ed. of Berosus' *Fragments*. v

Berosi Chald. Historiae quae supersunt; cum Comment. de Berosi Vita, etc., ed. by J. D. G. Richter, Lipsiae, 1825, 8vo. This is *the best collection of fragments of Berosus' lost work Babylonica* that has come down to our time. ***

Bibliotheca or *Myrobiblion* (Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, 858-67 & 876-86). Greek ed. by I. Bekker, 1824-25; it is a collection of excerpts from, and abridgments of, 280 vols, of classical authors (usually cited as *Codices*), the originals of which are now to a great extent lost. To Photius we are indebted for almost all we possess of Ctesias, Memnon, Conon, the lost books of Diodorus Siculus, and the lost writings of Arrian.—Engl. tr. by J. H. Freeze, New York: McMillan, 1920.

Chaldean Oracles. See *Ancient Fragments* (Cory).

Fragment (Hermeias). Quoted by Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, q.v.

Geographi graeci minores (Karl Müller), Paris, 1855-61, 2 vols., 8°. ***

Géographie ancienne abrégée (Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville). Paris, 1768, 3 torn., 12°, Plates.—*Compendium of Ancient Geography*. Transl. from French. London: R. Faulder, 1791, 8vo., 2 vols.; and 1810.

Geschichte der griechischen Liter at ur bis auf des Zeitalter Alexanders (K. O. Müller,

Breslau, 1841, 1857, 1875, two vols.; Engl. tr. as *A Hist, of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, London, 1858, in 3 vols.

Periëgesis (Dionysius Periegetes) In Karl Müller, *Geographi graeci minores*, Paris, 1855- 61, 2 vols.

Dionysius Periegetes (literally, Dionysius of The Description) was the author of a description of the habitable world in Greek hexameter verse written in a terse and elegant style.

Greek

Analecta veterum Poetarum Graecorum or *Anthologia Graeca* (R. F. P. Brunck), Argentorati, 1772-76, Three Vols., 8vo.

Argonautica (Apollonius Rhodius). Best ed. is by Wellener, Leipzig, 1828, 2 vols. This poem in Greek on the expedition of the Argonauts was based on the rich material of the Alexandrian Library. It elicited many Commentaries by various writers and became very popular. Consult *Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium Vetera*, rec. Carlos Wendel, Berlin, 1935. Also ed. of Brunck (1780). Greek text and English transl. by R. C. Seaton in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Argonautica (Orpheus). In Eugene Abel's *Orphica*, Leipzig, Prague, 1885.

Auction (*Vitarum Auctio*) (Lucian). Greek text and English translation by A. M. Harmon in *Loeb Classical Library*. ∅∅∅

Bibliotheca (Apollodorus). Greek text and English translation by Sir J. G. Frazer, F.R.S., in *Loeb Classical Library*. Two Vols.

Bibliotheca historica (Diodorus Siculus). Greek text and English transl. by several scholars in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Cleomenes (John. Dryden), 1692.

Full title: Cleomenes, The Spartan Heroe. A tragedy, As it is Acted at the Theatre Royal. Written by Mr. Dryden. To which is prefixt The Life of Cleomenes. London, Printed for Jacob Tonson, at the Judge's-Head in Chancery- Lane near Fleet-Street. 1692. Where Compleat Sets of Mr. Dryden's Works, in Four Volumes, are to be Sold.

Cyropaedia (Xenophon). Greek text and English transl. by Walter Miller in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Dea Syria, De (Lucian). Greek text and English translation by A. M. Harmon in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Deipnosophists (Athanaeus). Greek text and English translation by Charles Burton Gulick in *Loeb Classical Library*. Seven Vols.

Dionysiaca (Nonnos). Greek text and English translation by W. H. D. Rouse in

Loeb Classical Library.

Dramas of Aeschylus, The (Anna Swanwick). London, 1873, fol.; [Bonn's Classical Library, 1881.]

Eclogae (Eklogai physikai kal ethikai, "Physical and Moral Excerpts"), by Johannes Stobaeus. Editio princeps, Geneva, 1609, fol.; best ed. is that of T. Gaisford, 1822, and A. Meineke, 1860-64.

Florilegium (Anthologion, "Sermons"), by Johannes Stobaeus. Ed. princeps, Geneva, 1609; best ed. is that of T. Gaisford, 1850, and A. Meineke, 1855-57.

Greek Questions, The (Plutarch). Greek text and English translation by Frank C. Babbitt in *Loeb Classical Library. Moralia*, Vol. IV.

Heroica (Philostratus). Consult *Philostrati Heroica* . . . ed. by J. F. Boissonade. Gr. & Lat, Paris, 1806, 665 pp., 8vo.; and his *Opera*, ed. by C. L. Kayser. Gr., 2 vols., Leipzig, 1870-71.

Hippolytus (Euripides). Greek text and English transl. by A. S. Way in *Loeb Classical Library*.

History (Herodotus). *Loeb Classical Library*. Transl. by A. D. Godley. Four Volumes. Consult George Rawlinson, *The History of Herodotus*, London, 1858, in four volumes, with copious Notes, references and commentaries; 2nd ed., 1862; also 1875, 1910, 1915, 1935.

Homeric Hymns. Greek text and English translation by H. G. Evelyn White. Together with the works of Hesiod in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Hymn to Jupiter (Pherecydes of Syros). No information.

Hymn to Minerva (Pindar). In Plutarch's *Symposiacs*, I, ii, 4, which see.

Hymn to Nemesis (Mesomedes). In Brunck, *Analecta*, Vol. II, p. 292; Jacobs, *Anth. Graec*, vol. III, p. 6; vol. XIII, p. 917; also in J. F. Bellermand, *Die Hymnen des Dionysius und Mesomedes*, 1840.

Idylls (Theocritus). Greek text and English translation by J. M. Edmonds. *Loeb Classical Library: The Greek Bucolic Poets*.

Iliad (Homer). Greek text and English transl. by A. T. Murray in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Ilios, Stadt und Land der Trojaner, Forschungen und Entdeckungen in der Troas und besonders auf der Baustelle von Troja.. (Heinrich Schliemann). Leipzig, 1881, 8vo., xxiv, 880 pp.; Engl. transl., London: John Murray, 1880, 8vo., xiv, 800 pp.

Iside et Osiride, De (Plutarch). Greek text and English translation by Frank Cole Babbitt in *Loeb Classical Library: Moralia, Vol. V.*

Itinerary (Pausanias). Greek: *Hellados Periegesis*. Text, Latin transl. and Index by L. Dindorf (Paris: Didot, 1845). Engl. transl. by Thos. Taylor as *Description of Greece by Pansanias*, with notes, maps and views. London, 1794, 3 vols., 8vo.; 2nd ed., with considerable augmentations, London, 1824 (publ. anonymously), 3 vols. Greek text and English transl. by W. H. S. Jones & H. A. Ormerod in *Loeb Classical Library*. ***

Jewish Antiquities (Josephus). Greek text and English transl. by H. Thackeray in *Loeb Classical Library*. ***

Lives (Plutarch). Greek text and English transl. by B. Perrin in *Loeb Classical Library: 11 Vols.*

Madness of Hercules (Euripides). Greek text & English transl. by A. S. Way in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Nemeonikai (Pindar). Greek text and English translation by Sir J. E. Sandys in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Odyssey (Homer). Greek text and English transl. by A. T. Murray in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Of Brotherly Love (Plutarch). Greek Text and English translation by H. Cherniss in *Loeb Classical Library. Moralia, Vol. VI.*

Olympian Odes (Pindar). Greek text and English transl. by Sir J. E. Sandys in *Loeb Classical Library*.

On the E Delphi cum (De E apud Delphos) (Plutarch). Greek text and English translation by F. C. Babbitt in *Loeb Classical Library. Moralia, Vol. V.*

Opera et Dies (Works and Days) (Hesiod). Greek text and English translation by H. G. Evelyn White in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Oratio V in Mantrem Deorum (Emperor Julian). *Loeb Classical Library*. Greek text and English transl. by Wilmer Cave Wright.

Phoröneidae. Also spoken of as *Phorönis*. An epic poem of which only some five fragments have been preserved. Consult Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-En cyclop aedie der Classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, s.v. *Phorönis*.

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Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium Vetera. See *Argonautica* (Apollonius Rhodius).

Scholia in Euripides Orestes. Consult *Scholia graeca in Euripides Tragoedias*, ed. by Dindorf, Oxoniae, 1863.

Scholia Vaticanum ad Euripides Troades. Consult: Carl O. M. Brennemann, *Commentatio de auctoribus scholiorum Vaticanorum ad Euripides Troades*, Berolini, 1846, 8vo., 52 pp.

Scholium on Pindar's *Olympian Odes* (III, 28), quoting Pherenikos.

Symposiacs (Plutarch). French translation as *Les Symposiaques, ou les Propos de Table* in Vol. 3 of *Les OEuvres de Plutarque*, transl. by Ricard. Paris. Lefèvre, 1844, Five Vols.

Theogony (Hesiod), Greek text and English transl. by H. G. Evelyn White in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Ventis, De (Theophrastus of Eresus). See *On Winds and on Weather Signs*. Translated by James G. Wood. Edited by G. J. Symonds, London: Edward Stanford, 1894, 97 pp.

Vita Apollonii, De (Philostratus). Translated from the Greek as *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by the Rev. Edward Berwick, with Notes and Illustrations. London, 1809.— See also Charles P. Eells, *Life and Times of Apollonius of Tyana rendered into English from the Greek of Philostratus the Elder*, Stanford University, California, 1923.— Greek text and English transl. by F. C. Conybeare in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Roman

Aeneid (Virgil). Latin text and English transl. by H. R. Fairclough in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Architectura, De (Vitruvius Pollio). Latin text and English transl. by Frank Grager in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Chorographia, De (Pomponius Mela). Also known as *De situ or bis libri III*. Best text is in the ed. of G. Parthey, 1867. Engl. tr. by A. Golding, 1585; by Philipp, 1912.

The Description of the World (Chorographia), written by Pomponius Mela, was last translated into English over 400 years ago, and is the earliest surviving geographical work in Latin. Although first

published at the height of the Roman Empire, in roughly 44 C.E., Pomponius Mela's work circulated during Europe's great Age of Exploration. His description is in the form of a voyage around the three "known" continents--Africa, Asia, and Europe. Mela integrates geographical description with more familiar historical, cultural, and mythological information. F. E. Romer's translation and commentary on this work help the reader to appreciate the intellectual and physical shape of the ancient world as Mela and the Romans perceived it. Mela knows of the Chinese and reports geographical and cultural information about Sri Lanka and India, as well as Mediterranean and European locales that are less remote to his experience. The outer edges of all the continents, including Europe, however, remained unfamiliar to the Romans, and it is on the inhabited world's outer edges that the creatures of legend and mythology were believed to live. Romer's commentary clarifies specific ideas raised in the text. He identifies and explains issues, and he points the reader to ancient sources and modern studies.

Collectanea rerum memorabilium (Solinus). Description of the ancient world, with remarks on historical, social, religious and natural history questions. Revised in the 6th Cent. under the title of *Polyhistor*, subsequently taken for the author's name. Best ed. by Mommsen, 1895, with valuable introduction. Old Engl. transl. by A. Golding, 1587.

Die natali, De (Censorinus). Ed. princeps is in 4to. and without date, place or printer's name; 2nd ed. appeared in Bologna, fol., 1497; first critical ed. is that of Vinetus, Pictav. 4to., 1568, followed by those of Aldus Manutius, Venet. 8vo., 1581, and Carrio, Lutet, 8vo., 1583. The most complete and valuable is that by Havercamp, Lugd. Bat. 8vo., 1743.

Eclogues (Virgil). Latin text and English transl. by H. R. Fairclough in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Fabularum Liber (C. Julius Hyginus). *Hygini Fabulae*, by H. I. Roose; 1st ed., 1933; 2nd ed., 1963. Also ed. by M. Schmidt, Jena, 1872. *The Myths of Hyginus*, transl. and ed. by Mary Grant. Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas, 1960, 244 pp.

Fasti (Ovid). Latin text and English translation by Sir J. G. Frazer in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Georgics (Virgil). Latin text and English transl. by H. R. Fairclough in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Itinerarium, or De Reditu (Claudius Rutilius Namatianus). Edited by C. H. Keene. Transl. into English verse by G. F. Savage-Armstrong. Latin & English. London: Geo. Bell & Sons, 1907, 8vo., 236 pp.

Rutilius Lupus or Rutilius Maximus or Rutilius Numatianus Claudius was a Roman poet, and a native of Gaul who lived at the beginning of the fifth century. He resided at Rome a considerable time, where he attained the high dignity of praefectus urbi, probably about C.E. 413 or 414. He returned, however, to his native country after it had been laid waste by the barbarians of the north, and appears

to have passed there the remainder of his life in peace. His return to Gaul he described in the elegiac poem, which bears the title of *Itinerarium*, or *De Reditu*, but which Wernsdorf thinks may have been entitled originally *Rutilii de Heditu suo Itinerarium*. Of this poem the first book, consisting of 644 lines, and a small portion of the second, have come down to us. It appears from internal evidence (i. 133) that it was composed in A. D. 417, in the reign of Honorius.

Mensibus, De (Joannes Laurentius of Philadelphia, the Lydian; or Joannes Lydus) Only two epitomae or summaries and a fragment of this work are extant. It is an historical commentary on the Roman calendar, with an account of its various festivals, etc., derived from authorities most of which have perished. Publ by N. Show, Leipzig, 1794; with Latin version, publ. by Roether, Leipzig & Darmstadt, 1827. Edited by R. Wunsch, 1898-1903. All the extant portions of the works of Joannes Lydus, with text rev. by Imm. Bekker (Bonn, 1837), form one of the volumes of the reprint of the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*. ***

Metamorphoses (Ovid). Latin text and English translation by F. J. Miller in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Natural History (Pliny). Latin text and English transl by H. Rackham & W. H. S. Jones in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Nychthëmeron (Apollonius of Tyana). Considered by some scholars as suprious. ***

Pharsalia (Lucan). Latin text and English translation by J. D. Duff in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Satires (Horace). Latin text and English translation by H. R. Fairclough. Together with the *Epistles* and *Ars poetica* in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Saturnalia (Macrobius). Editions by L. von Jan, 1848-52, with bibliogr. of previous editions, and of F. Eyssenhardt, 1893, Teubner text.

Satyricon (Petronius). Latin text and English transl. by H. Heseltine in *Loeb Classical Library*.

2. Anthropology (See also 9, Evolutionism)

Alter und der Ursprung des Menschengeschlechts, Das (Dr. Fr. Pfaff), Frankfurt, 1876, in Series: *Zeitfragen des Christlichen Volkslebens*, Bd. 2, Heft 2. 44 pp.

Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution. See "Present State of Ethnology, etc." (A. Retzius).

Anthropogenie, oder, Entwicklungsgeschichte des Renschen (Ernst Haeckel), 1874; 2nd. ed., Leipzig, 1874, 8vo.; 3rd ed., 1876; 4th ed., 1891; 5th ed., 1903; 6th ed.,

1910. English transl., as *The Evolution of Man*. London, 1879, 8vo., 2 Vols. Also by Joseph McCabe (from 5th ed.), London, Wats & Co., 1905 and later.

Anthropological Review. See "On the Naulette Jaw" (C. Carter Blake).

L'Anthropologie (Paul Topinard), Paris: C. Reinwald, 1876, 8vo.; Engl. tr., London: Chapman & Hall, 1877 & 1890. With Preface by Prof. Broca.

British Association for the Advancement of Science Reports. See "Study and Progress of Anthropology" (Wm. Henry Flower); "Continuity" (Sir Wm. R. Grove).

Cave Hunting. Researches on the Evidence of Caves respecting the early Inhabitants of Europe (Sir Wm. Boyd Dawkins), London, Macmillan Co., 1874, 8vo., pp. xxiv, 455, col. pl., 5 woodcuts. — Repr. by Zephyrus Press, 1975.

"Classification of the Varieties of the Human Species" (Sir Wm. H. Flower, Director of the Natural History Department of the British Museum). Presidential Address at the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Jan. 27, 1885. Published in their *Journal*, Vol. XIV, 1885, pp. 378 *et seq.* ***

Compte Rendu du Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistoriques, 2nd session, Paris, 1867: Report by Abbé Bourgeois. Publ. by C. Reinwald, Paris, 1868.

"Contributions towards determining the Weight of the Brain in different Races of Man" (Dr. J. Barnard Davis), *Philosophical Transactions*, Vol. 158, 1868, pp. 505-527 (with Tables).

Crânes des races humaines, etc. (de Quatrefages & E. I. Hamy), Paris, 1882, 2 vols. & atlas.

L'Espèce humaine (J. L. A. de Quatrefages de Bréau), 3rd éd., Paris, G. Baillière, 1877; Engl. tr. as *Human Species*, New York, D. Appleton, 1879, 498 pp.; also 1881, 1884.

Fortnightly Review, London. See "Who was Primitive Man?" (Grant Allen).

Heart of Africa, etc. (G. S. Schweinfurth). Transl. from the German by E. E. Frewer. London, 1873, Two Vols., 8vo.; 3rd ed., 1878. German original: *Im Herzen von Africa, etc.*, Leipzig, 1874, 2 pts.; 3rd ed., 1918, xviii, 578 pp.

Histoire générale des Races humaines. Introduction à l'étude des races humaines. Questions générales (J. L. A. de Quatrefages de Bréau). Paris, 1887; xxviii, 283 pp.; 4 pl., ill., 2 maps, 8vo.

Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain Sc Ireland. See "Notes on Human Remains, etc.," (C. Carter Blake); and "Classification of the Varieties,

etc." (Wm. H. Flower).

Knowledge (London). See "The Descent of Man" (E. Burke); "Antiquity of Man, etc." (Edward Clodd); "Solids, Liquids, etc." (Mattieu Williams); "The Evolution of Man" (Dr. Andrew Wilson).

Man and Apes: An Exposition of structural resemblances bearing upon questions of Affinity & Origin (Saint George J. Mivart), London, 1873, 8vo.

Matériaux pour l'histoire primitive et naturelle de l'homme (G. de Mortillet). Année 1-3, Paris, 1865-67, 8vo. Année 4, 1868, 8vo.

"Notes on Human Remains from Palmyra, with an Illustration by G. Busk" (C. Carter Blake). *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. I, 1871, pp. 312-19.

"Notes sur . . . la coexistence de l'homme avec l'elephas meridionalis" (Jules Desnoyers). *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, Vol. LVI, ' 1863.

"Nouvelles Recherches sur la co-existence de l'homme et des grands mammifères fossils réputés caractéristiques de la dernière période géologique" (Edouard Lartet), *Annales des Sciences Naturelles*, Series 4, tome XV, 1861, pp. 177-253.

"On the Naulette Jaw" (Dr. C. Carter Blake). *Anthropological Review*, Vol. V, September, 1867.

Preadamites; or a demonstration of the existence of men before Adam, etc. (Alexander Winchell), Chicago, 111.: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1880, 8vo., xxvi, 500 pp.

Préhistorique: origine et antiquité de l'homme, Le (Gabriel & Adrien de Mortillet), 1878.

"Present State of Ethnology in relation to the Form of the Human Skull" (Prof. Anders Retzius of the Carolinska Institute in Stockholm). Translated by C. A. A. Alexander from the *Archives des Sciences Physiques et Naturelles*, Geneva, 1860. See *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution* for 1859, pp. 251-70 (publ. Washington, D.G., 1960).

Primeval Man Unveiled: or the Anthropology of the Bible (James Gall of Edinburgh, the Younger), London, 1871, 8vo.; 2nd ed., London (Edinb. pr.), 1880, 8vo., pp. xvi, 372. ***

Studien zur Descendenz-Theorie (A. Weismann), Leipzig, 1875, 8vo.; tr. by R. Meldola as *Studies in the Theory of Descent*, etc. Prefatory Note by Darwin. London, Sampson Law & Co., 1880-82, 8vo.

"Study and Progress of Anthropology, The" (Wm. Henry Flower). Address delivered September 1, 1881, to the Anthropological Dpt. of the Biological Section of the British Association of Science, at York. Publ. in *British Assoc. of Science Reports*, 1881, pp. 682-89. London: John Murray, 1882.

Types of Mankind-: or Ethnological Researches, etc. (J. C. Nott & G. R. Gliddon). London, Philadelphia (pr.), 1854, 4to.; 6th ed., Philadelphia, 1854, 8vo.

"Who was Primitive Man?" (Chas. Grant B. Allen). *Fortnightly Review*, New Series, Vol. XXXII, Sept. 1, 1882, pp. 308-22.

3. Archeology

Annual Report and Transactions, Plymouth Institution. See "Extinct Lake, etc." (W. Pengelly). ***

Antiquités celtiques et anté-diluviennes, etc. (J. Boucher Crèvecoeur de Perthes), Paris, 1847-64, 3 vols., 8vo., plates.

Archaeologia, or Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Antiquity. Publ. by the Society Antiquarians of London. See: "Observations on Dracontia" (Rev. John Bathurst Deane); "Some Account of the Burial-places, etc." (Rev. Wm. Tooke).

"Archaeological Notes on Ancient Sculpturing on Rocks in Kumaon, India, etc." (J. H. Rivett-Carnac). Repr. from the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1870.

Assyrian Discoveries (Geo. Smith). An Account of Explorations and Discoveries in the site of Neneveh. during 1873 & 1874. London: S, Low, etc., 1875, xvi, 461 pp., ill., maps, pl.

Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, Vol. IV, 1880. [École française d'Athènes, Paris, 1877 – Index 1877-86; 1887-91.]

The BULLETIN DE CORRESPONDANCE HELLENIQUE BCH was intended as a vehicle for publication of information on the latest developments in archaeology in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean. Vols. 1-91. Paris, Athens, 1877-1967. With gen. index vols. 1-70.

Cavernes du Périgord; objets gravés et sculptés des temps préhistoriques dans l'Europe occidentale (Edouard A. I. H. Lartet). Reprinted from *La Revue Archéologique* (Paris), 1864, 37 pp., ill., pl.

"Conte des deux frères, Le" (Gaston Maspero), *Revue archéologique*, nouvelle série, 19th year, Vol. 35, March, 1878, pp. 164-79.

Mélanges d'épigraphie et d'archéologie sémitique (Joseph Halévy), Paris, 1874, 8°.

"Observations on Dracontia" (Rev. John Bathurst Deane), *Archaeologia*, London, Vol. XXV, 1834, pp. 188-229.

Revue archéologique. See: "Sur l'origine des monuments, etc" (Henry); "Questions relatives, etc." (Baron d'Eckstein) ; "Des Divinités . . . psychopompes, etc." (L. F. A. Maury) ; "Le Conte des deux frères" (G. Maspero) ; "Études sur le Rituel, etc." (J. de Rougé).

"Some Account of the Burial-places of the ancient Tartars" (Rev. Wm. Tooke). *Archaeologia*. Publ. by the Soc. of Antiquarians of London, Vol. VII, 1785, pp. 222-31. This is a Letter which the author, who was an F.R.S. and Chaplain to the English Factory at St. Petersburg, Russia, wrote to the Rev. John Glen King, D.D. It was read at the Soc. of the Antiq., March 25, 1784.

"Sur l'origine des monuments en pierres brutes, désignés sous le nom de *Monuments Celtiques ou Druidiques*" (Henry), in *Revue Archéologique*, First Series, Vol. VII, Part I, 1850, pp. 473-83.

4. Art

Land and Water; art. by Bartlett, Jan. 7, 1871

Promenades au Musée de Saint-Germain (Gabriel de Mortillet). Catalogue ill. de 79 figures per A. Rhone. Paris, 1869, 8vo. ***

In 1884, the Beaux-Arts inspector and art critic Armand Dayot indicated that the Musée des Antiquités Nationales in Saint-Germain-en-Laye was becoming 'a sort of prehistoric art gallery where we will be able to gaze with contemplation at the venerable figures of our antediluvian ancestors'. This pinacothèque préhistorique never fully materialized, but a few paintings representing the Stone Age were exhibited at this French institution. These representations established a context for the prehistoric fossils and artefacts housed at the museum, while, symbiotically, the Palaeolithic and Neolithic objects on display helped to validate the images that made reference to them. Similar works of art proposed for the museum were not acquired, however, and two of the paintings were subsequently given away. Only Fernand Cormon's Return from a Bear Hunt (1884) remains on view today, serving as a reminder of an era when artistic depictions of the past both excited and educated the public about prehistory.

5. Egyptology

Abydos; description des fouilles exécutées sur l'emplacement de cette ville (F.A.F. Mariette-Bey), Paris, 1869, 3 tomes, fol.

Academy, The (December 17, 1881), Letter of Sir Wm. M. Flinders Pétrie. (First to hold chair of Egyptology in the U.K.)

"Altagyptische Seelenlehre" Die" (Franz Lambert), in the *Sphinx*, Leipzig, Germany, Vol. IV, 1887. French transl. in *Le Lotus*, Paris, Vol. III, April through June, 1888. ***

Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Literatur, Kunst, Mythologie und Geschichte des alten Aegypten (Gustav Seyffarth). Seven issues. Leipzig, 1826-40, 4to.

Book of the Dead. Conventional title given to collections of funerary texts which were, during a period of at least 5,000 years, cut or painted on walls of pyramids and tombs in Egypt, and painted on coffins and rolls of papyrus. According to early documents, they were entitled "Reu nu pert em hru" meaning "Chapters of the Coming Forth [into] the Day." The presently known title is actually a translation of the Arabic "Kitab al-Maggitum," under which name any papyrus roll found with the mummies was sold by the Egyptian tomb-robbers. On numerous occasions, especially in her *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. used portions of the translation by Samuel Birch, as published in Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, Engl, transl, London, 1848-67, in 5 vols. In *The Secret Doctrine*, however, most of the passages have been taken from the French translation of P. Pierret, *le Livre des Morts des Anciens Egyptiens*, Paris, 1882. Consult for additional Bibliographical information, her *Collected Writings*, Vol. X, pp. 413-15.

Contes populaires de l'Egypte ancienne, traduits et commentés par Gaston Maspero, Les. Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1880; lxxx, 222 pp. 2nd éd., 1889; later editions also.

Cosmae aegypti monachi christiana topographia (Cosmas Indicopleustes). In Bernard de Montfaucon, *Collectio nova patrum et scriptorum graecorum*, etc., Paris, 1706, fol., Greek & Latin; torn. 2; also in J. P. Migne, PCC—Series greaca, torn. 88, 1857, 4to. Transl. & edited by J. W. McCrindle, London, 1897, 8vo., pp. xwii, 398 (Hakluyt Society, No. 98). ***

"De la Croix ansée, ou d'un signe qui y ressemble, considérée principalement dans ses rapports avec le symbole égyptien, etc." (Desiré Raoul-Rochette), *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2, 1846, pp. 285-382.

Desiré-Raoul Rochette (March 6, 1790–July 3, 1854), was a French archaeologist.

Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien, etc. (C. R. Lepsius), Berlin, 1849-58, Twelve Vols. fol. (904 plates).

Description of the Ancient Monuments of Egypt ('Abd Al-Latif Ibn Yüsuf, al-Baghdadî, called Ibn al-Labbäd). Physician and traveller; was born and died at Baghdad (1162- 1231). His MS. was discovered by E. Pococke and is preserved in the Bodleian Libr. Transl. into Latin, 1800, by Prof. White of Oxford; and into French, with valuable Notes, by S. de Sacy, 1810; excerpts in English, 1808.

Egypt's Place in Universal History (C.C.J. Bunsen). Engl. tr. by C. H. Cottrell (London, 1848-67, five vols.) of the German original text: *Aegypten's Stelle in der Weltgeschichte*. Hamburg: Gotha, 1845-57, 8vo.

Études égyptologiques. Series of essays by various scholars published in Paris between 1873 and 1878, in Three Volumes. Paul Pierret contributed therein the 1st, 2nd, and 8th sections, publ. in 1873, 1874 and 1878 respectively.

"Études sur le Rituel funéraire des anciens Égyptiens" (J. de Rougé), in *Revue archéologique*, 1860, Nouvelle série, Première année (Jan. to June), p. 249.

"Examen de l'Ouvrage de M. le Chevalier de Bunsen intitulé Aegyptens Stelle in der Weltgeschichte" (J. de Rougé), *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, Troisième Série, Tome 13me (32me de la collection), No. 78, June, 1846, pp. 432-458. First installment of a six-part Series.

Guide du visiteur au Musée de Boulaq (G. Maspero), Boulaq, Vienna (pr.), 1883, 438 pp., 8vo.

Historiae Aegypti Compendium. See *Description of the Ancient Monuments of Egypt. Kieou-tche*. No information available.

Liber de cultura Aegyptiorum (Abenephius). Transl. from the Arabic by Aben Vachasia. Mentioned in A. Kircher, *Obeliscus Pamphilius*. Romae: Typis Ludivici Grignani, 1650.

Livre des Morts des anciens égyptiens, Le (Paul Pierret). Traduction complète d'après le papyrus de Turin et les manuscrits du Louvre. Paris: Emest Leroux, 1882, ix, 661 pp. Notes and an analytical Index. Publ. also in Vol. XXXIII of the *Bibliothèque Orientale Elzévirienne*.

Oedipus Aegyptiacus; hoc est, Universalis Hieroglyphicae veterum doctrinae temporum injuria abolitae instauratio, etc. (A. Kircher), Rome, 1652-54, fol. ***

"On Egypt and the Nile" (F. Wilford). *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. III, 1799.

Operations carried on at the Pyramids of Ghizeh in 1837, etc. (Col. Howard Vyse), London, 1840-42, 3 vols. In Vol. II, p. 349, the author quotes brief passages from the writings of Shehab Eddin Ahmed Ben Yahya (or Ahmad Ibn Yahya, who died between 741 and 749 A. D.) in the Bodleian Library (J. Uri's Catalog, 900), without giving any title.

Origin and Significance of the Great Pyramid, The (C. Staniland Wake), London; Reeves & Turner, 1882, viii, 102 pp. The substance of this work was read as a paper before the Hull Literary Club, March 13, 1882. Photographic repr. by Wizards Bookshelf (Secret Doctrine Reference Series), Minneapolis, Minn., 1975. Includes valuable Appendices excerpted from the rare work of Col. Richard

Howard-Vyse on *Operations at the Pyramids of Gizeh*.

Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid (Chas. Piazzi Smyth), London, 1864, 8vo.; also 1874, 1877, 1880, 1890.

Pantheon aegyptiorum, sive de diis eorum commentarius, cum Prolegomenis de Religione et Theologia Aegyptiorum (P. E. Jablonski), Francofurti ad Viadrum, 1750-52, 8vo.

Panthéon égyptien, etc. (Jean François Champollion). Figures d'après les dessins de L. J. J. Dubois. Paris, 1823-25, 4to. Livr. 1-15, pi. 1-40.

Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh, The (W. M. Flinders Petrie), London: Field & Tuer, 1883, 1885, 4to., plates.

"Recherches sur le Culte du Cyprès Pyramidal chez les peuples civilisés de l'antiquité" (Felix Lajard). *Mémoires de l'Institut de France. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Tome 20, pt. 2 (1854), pp. 1-362, plates. This was read March 3rd and June 2nd, 1843. ***

Sphinx. See "Altägyptische Seelenlehre" (Franz Lambert).

Tale of the Two Brothers, The. Egyptian papyrus of the XIXth dynasty, now in the British Museum and known as the *Orbiney Papyrus*; it was purchased from Madame d'Orbiney in 1857. A French translation of it by Gaston Maspero was published as *Le Conte des deux frères*, Paris, 1878. An English translation by P. Le Page Renouf entitled *Tale of the Two Brothers* appeared in *Records of the Past*, 1873-81, Vol. II, pp. 137-52.

6. Esotericism (including Magic and Occultism)

Antiquity (see also 1)

Papyrus magique Harris, Le (F.-J. Chabas), Chalon-sur-Saône: J. Dejussieu, 1860, vi,, 250 pp., plates.

Sibyllina Oracula. Ex veteribus codicibus emendata (S. Gallaeus), Amsterdam, 1689. ***

Gnosticism

Codex Brucianus. Gnostic MS. which was brought to England from Upper Egypt in 1769 by famous Scottish traveler, James Bruce (1730-1794), and bequeathed to the care of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It is written on papyrus, in Greek cursive characters, in the Sahitic dialect, and consists of 78 leaves, in book-form. It consists of two distinct MSS., containing the remains of at least two Gnostic works and some fragments. One of them is the *Book of the Great Logos according*

to the *Mystery*, and the other is an untitled *Apocalypse*, The subject is thoroughly analyzed by G. R. S. Mead in his *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (London & Benares: Theosophical Publishing Society 1900), pp. 453 *et seq.* (repr. by University Books, New Hyde Park, N.Y., 1960 Mead gives a summary of the contents of the MSS. — Consult also: Charlotte Augusta Baynes, *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise contained in the Codex Brucianus* (Bruce MS, S Bodleian Library), which is a translation from the Coptic, with a transcript and commentary. Cambridge University Press, 1933, 8vo., xxv, 229 pp.

Codex Nazaraeus 'Liber Adami' appellatus Syriace transcriptus . . . Latineque redditus, etc. (M. Norberg), London, 1815, 16, 4to., 3 vols. Latin translation and text transcribed into Syrian characters, and the Mandaean dialect of the original is mostly translated into High Syrian.

Gnostics and Their Remains, Ancient and Mediaeval, The (C. W. King), London, 1864; 2nd ed., 1887. The 2nd ed. includes some translated excerpts from the *Pistis-Sophia*. Photographic reprint of 2nd ed., Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, Minn., 1973. (Secret Doctrine Reference Series.)

Histoire critique du Gnosticisme, et de son influence sur les sectes religieuses et philosophiques des six premiers siècles de l'Ère Chrétienne (A. Jacques Matter), Paris, 1828, two vols.; 2nd ed., Strasbourg, 1843-44, three vols.

Pistis-Sophia. H.P.B. in quoting passages from this Gnostic work uses such as have been translated by C. W. King in his *The Gnostics and their Remains*, 2nd ed., 1887. A good translation of the entire work is by G. R. S. Mead, London: The Theos. Publ. Society, 1896, xlv, 394 pp. — Consult Editor's Note No. 28, in *SD*, Vol. II, pp. 809-10.

Hermetica

Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus, The (transl. by Dr. John Everard), London, 1650, 8vo. Preface by "J. F."; 2nd ed., London, 1657, 12°; repr. by Fryar of Bath, 1884; by P. B. Randolph, Toledo, Ohio, 1889; and the Theos. Publ. Society, in *Collectanea Hermetica*, ed. by W. W. Westcott, 1893. Photographic reproduction of the 1884 ed., Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, 1973, xiv, 112 pp.

Hermès Trismégiste (L. Ménard). Traduction précédée d'une étude sur l'origine des livres hermétiques. Paris, 1866, 8vo.

Hermetic Books. See the following
Divine Pymander, etc. (John Everard).
Genesis of Enoch.

Hermès Trismégiste (L. Ménard).
Fimandre de Mercure, etc. (de Foix).

Poimandrês

Smaragdine Tablet.

Theological . . . Works of Hermes etc. (J. D. Chambers).

Thrice-Greatest Hermes
Virgin of the World (tr. by Kingsford).

Pimandre de Mercure Trismégiste de la Philosophie Chrétienne, Le (François de Foix). Sub-title: *Cognoissance du Verb Divin, et de l'Excellence des OEuvres de Dieu.*—The author is also known as Franciscus Flussas, Comte de Candalle, who was Bishop of Ayre, and Captai de Buchs. In 1574 he reprinted at Bordeaux (in 4to.) Adr. Turnebus' Greek text of *Mercurii Trismegisti Poemander, etc.*, with Latin translation of Ficino. This he followed with a French translation listed herewith and printed also at Bordeaux in 1579, folio.

Poimandrês. See *Hermetic Books.*

Theological and Philosophical Works of Hermes Trismegistus, The (Rev. John David Chambers, Transl.). Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882, 8vo.; 2nd ed., New York: Samuel Weiser, 1977, paperback.

Virgin of the World, The. Translation with Preface from Hermetic Writings. Introduction and Notes by Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford and Edward Maitland. London: George Redway, 1885,, 4to. Also Madras: P. Kailasam Brothers; Spiritualistic Book Depot, 1885, xxx, 154 pp. This work was reviewed at length by T. Subba Row (The Solar Sphinx) in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VII, Nov. & Dec, 1885, pp. 95-98 & 153-58 respectively.— Second edition by Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, Minn., 1977, with Biography of Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford.

Middle ages

Scholia in Zoroastrem (Psellus). Printed with various editions of the *Oracula Magica* of Zoroaster, 1599, etc.

Renaissance (1300 - 1650)

Concerning the Seven Secondaries, or Spiritual Intelligences who actuate the Universe, etc. (Johann Tritheim). This is a rendering of the Latin title: *De septem secundadeis id est intelligentiis, sive spiritibus orbes, libellus sans preciosissim* (ed. by J. Marquardus), Nürnberg, 1522, 4to.; also 1657, 8vo.; German tr., 1534, 4to.

Fundamento Sapientiae, De (Paracelsus). The Foundation and Origin of Wisdom and Arts. See *Life of Paracelsus* {Dr. F. Hartmann}.

"Jacob Böhme," signed C.W.H., in *The Athenaeum*, No. 2048, January 26, 1867, p. 127.

Liber Paragranum (Paracelsus). See *Life of Paracelsus* (Dr. F. Hartmann).

Life of Philippus Theophrastus, Bombast of Hohenheim known by the name of

Paracelsus, and the Substance of his Teachings, etc., The (Dr. Franz Hartmann). Extracted and Translated from his rare and extensive works and from some unpublished manuscripts. London: George Redway, 1887, xii, 220 pp., index. Repr. by Steiner Publications, 1973. Consult for Biographical Sketch of Dr. Hartmann, *Collected Writings*, Vol. VIII, pp. 439 *et seq.*

Malleus Maleficarum (Jacob Sprenger & Heinr. Institoris), 1487. Known also as *Hexenhammer*. Transl. with introd. and notes by Rev. Montague Summers, London: John Rodker, 1928, fol., xlv, 277 pp. Repr. by Dover, 1971.

Tractatus apologeticus interpretatem Societatis Rosea Cruce defendens (R. Fludd), Leyden, 1617.

Viribus membrorum, De (Paracelsus). See *Life of Paracelsus* (Dr. Hartmann).

Enlightenment (1650-1800)

Comte de Gabalis, Le. Ou entretiens sur les sciences secrètes (Abbé Nicolas-Pierre-Henry de Montfaucon de Villars). Paris: C. de Barbon, 1670, 12°, ii, 327 pp.; London: frères Vaillant, 1742, 2 t. in one vol. English transl. with a Commentary, publ. by The Brothers, 1914, xxvi, 352 pp.

Magia Adamica: or the Antiquities of Magic, etc. (Eugenius Philalethes [Thos. Vaughan]), London: J. Allen, 1650, 8vo.; also 1656, 8vo., 140 pp.

Manuscript of de Saint-Germain. Cipher Rosicrucian MS. mentioned by Ragon in his *Orthodoxie Maçonnique, etc.*, p. 434.

Occultism (1800 - 1950)

"Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man (T. Subba Row), *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, January, 1882, pp. 93-99; includes lengthy Editorial Appendix and footnotes by H.P.B. Reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy* as "Brahmanism on the Sevenfold Principle in Man." Also in H.P.B.'s *Collected Writings*, Vol. III. ***

Clef des Grands Mystères, suivant Henoah, Abraham, Hermès, Trismégiste, et Salomon, La (Eliphas Lévi), Paris: G. Baillièrre, 1861, 8vo., iv, 498 pp.; new éd., Paris: F. Alcan, 1897.

"*Clothed with the Sun*" (Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford) Edited by Edward Maitland. New York, 1889; 2nd ed., Birmingham, The Ruskin Press, 1906.

Coming Race, The (Bulwer-Lytton), 1871.

"*Constitution of the Microcosm, The*" (T. Subba Row), *The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, August, 1887.

Cultus of the Far East," (Omoie Tetszunotszuke), *The Theosophist*, Vol. X, December, 1888, pp. 146-50.

Day After Death, etc., The (Guillaume Louis Figuier), London, Guildford (pr.), 1872, 8vo.; transl. of his *Le Lendemain de la Mort ou la Vie future selon la science*, Paris, 1871, 8vo., ill.; 4th ed., 1872. (1819-1894)

*Guillaume Louis Figuier was a French chemist and writer on occult subjects. He was born at Montpellier, France, in 1819, where his uncle Pierre Figuier was professor of chemistry at the School of Pharmacy. Louis, having taken his doctorate in medicine and having completed his postgraduate study in chemistry at the laboratory of Balard in Paris, was made professor of chemistry at the same school in his hometown. In 1853 he exchanged this post for a similar one in the School of Pharmacy of Paris. Many honorary degrees in science and medicine were conferred upon him by various faculties during his career. In 1857 he left teaching and devoted himself to writing, specializing in the popularizing of science, mainly physiology and medical chemistry. He published many notable works and was equally distinguished for his prodigious output and literary quality. Those works having a bearing on occult matters include *Le Lendemain de la mort, ou La Vie future selon la science* (1872, dealing with the transmigration of souls), *L' Alchimie et les Alchimistes* (1860), *Histoire du merveilleux dans les temps modernes* (1860-74), and *Les Bonheurs d' outre tombe* (1892). In 1889 he published a volume of dramas and comedies, *La Science au Théâtre*. Figuier's four-volume *Histoire du merveilleux* was a well-documented study of the Jansenist convulsionnaires, the religious revival of the Cevennes, the divining rod, animal magnetism, table turning, mediums, and spirits. He died in Paris in 1894. See also: *Figuier, Louis. The Day After Death, or, Our Future Life, According to Science*. London: R. Bentley, 1874.*

Diaries. Col. Henry Steel Olcott's Diaries in the Adyar Archives; some Thirty Volumes. ∅∅∅

Dogme et Rituel de la haute magie (Eliphas Lévi), Paris: Germer-Baillièrre, 1856, 2 vols.

"Elementals, the Elementary Spirits, The" (C.H.A. Bjerregaard). The Relationship between them and Human Beings. A Paper read before the Aryan Theosophical Society of New York, December 14, 1886. *The Path*, New York, Vol. I, January, 1887.

"Elixir of Life, The" (From a Chela's Diary). By G. . . . M. . . . F.T.S. The initials stand for Godolphin Mitford who also used the pen-name of Mirza Murad Ali Beg. He was born in India, the Son of a Missionary, and died in 1884. (See the

General Index for passage where H.P.B. speaks of him.) His "Elixir of Life" first appeared in *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, March & April, 1882. It was reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*; also by the Occult Publishing Co., Boston, 1887, 42 pp.

Esoteric Buddhism (Alfred Percy Sinnett). There exist some uncertainties about the various editions of this work. What is definitely known is as follows: Five English editions were published, four of them by Trubner & Co., London: 1st ed., 1883; 2nd ed., 1883; 3rd ed., 1884; 4th ed., 1885, each of them with xx and 215 pages. The 5th English Annotated edition was issued in London by Chapman & Hall in 1885; it was enlarged by the author and contained annotations appended to several chapters; it had a new preface and contained xxvii and 239 pages. An edition called the 4th American edition was published by Houghton, Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, in 1884. In this edition, the new preface is slightly longer than in the 5th English edition, and the annotations are placed as a special appendix at the end of the volume which has 330 pages. Other editions or printings were issued by the same Publisher in 1886 (called 5th edition), 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1893, 1896 and 1912, all with 300 pages in the book. Two other editions, called 6th and 7th, were published by Chapman & Hall in 1888 and 1892, with xxiii and 248 pages. An edition called the 8th was published by The Theosophical Publishing Society of London in 1898, and reprinted in 1907 and 1911. An edition called the 9th was issued by Redway in London in 1949. A revised edition was published in 1972 by The Theosophical Publishing House in London, with all the changes incorporated. A facsimile of the 5th English Annotated edition of 1885 (with the word *Budhism* spelled with one "d" on the title page) was issued by Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, in 1973, as part of the Secret Doctrine Reference Series. It has xxvii and 244 pages, a new index, bibliography and notes. From the above mentioned facts, there seems to be no definite numerical connection between the English and the American editions of this work. The various editions exhibit a considerable difference in regard to the prefaces used and the emplacement of annotations.

"Esoteric Studies" (Visconde de Figaniere), *The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, August 8c September, 1887.

Fils de Dieu, Les (L. Jacolliot), Paris: A. Lacroix, 1873, 8vo., 362 pp.; also 1875; 3rd ed., Paris: C. Marpon 8c E. Flammarion, 1882. ***

Five Years of Theosophy. Mystical, Philosophical, Theosophical, Historical and Scientific Essays, selected from *The Theosophist*. London: Reeves and Turner, 1885, 575 pp., incl. Glossary & Index. Later reprints.

L'Histoire de la Magie, du monde surnaturel et de la fatalité à travers les temps et les peuples (P. Christian; pseud, of Christian Pitois), Paris [1870], 8vo., viii, 666. — Tr. by James Kirkup and Julian Shaw as *The History and Practice of Magic*. London: Forge Press, 1952, in 2 vols.

Histoire de la Magie (Éliphas Lévi), Paris: G. Baillière, 1860, 8vo., xvi, 560, 18 pl.; new éd., 1892.

Histoire des Vierges – Les Peuples et les Continents disparus (L. Jacolliot), Paris, Saint-Germain (pr.), 1874; another copy with new title page, 1879. ***

Idyll of the White Lotus, The (Mabel Collins), London, 1884, 141 pp.; 3rd ed., London: Theos. Publ. Society, 1896, 135 pp.; also New York: The Metaphysical Publ. Co., 1900; New York; Theos. Publ. Co., 1907; Adyar: Theos. Publ. House, 1919. Consult for biographical sketch, H.P.B.'s *Collected Writings*, Vol. VIII, pp. 424 *et seq.*

"Idyll of the White Lotus, The" (Review by T. Subba Row, under pseud, of "The Solar Sphinx"), *The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, July and August, 1886.

Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky (A. P. Sinnett). Compiled from Information supplied by her Relatives and Friends. London: George Redway, 1886; xii, 324 pp. Frontispiece portrait of H.P.B, by Hermann Schmiechen. – 2nd ed., London: The Theos. Publ. Society, 1913, slightly abridged.

Isis Unveiled (H. P. Blavatsky). A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology. New York: J. W. Bouton; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1877; Vol. I: xlv, 628 pp.; Vol. II: iv, 692 pp. The first edition was bound in red with the title and the figure of Isis in gold on the spine.

There is evidence to indicate that Bouton issued as many as a dozen subsequent impressions of this work printed from the same type plates, and all dated before the end of the century. In 1902, the original plates, together with the copyright in the work, were purchased by the Theosophical Publishing Company of New York which eventually was moved to Point Loma, California, where two more impressions were printed: the First Point Loma edition in 1906, and the Second in 1910. The Third and Revised Point Loma edition was reset on the monotype and published in 1919. A Revised edition was also published by the Theosophical Publishing Society of London and Benares in 1910, and reprinted in 1923. A facsimile edition was published by Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, Calif., in 1931, with both volumes under one binding. This edition has been reprinted several times. Another facsimile edition was issued by Rider & Co. of London in 1936. In January, 1950, Theosophical University Press at Covina, Calif, published a new edition completely reset. The latest edition of *Isis Unveiled* is the one published by The Theosophical Publishing House (Madras, Wheaton, London) in 1972 as an integral part of the *Collected Writings*. It contains an Introductory outlining how the original work was written. Notes by the Editor and an entirely new Index and Bibliography. Further details about the many editions of this work may be obtained by consulting PP- [56-58] of the 1972 edition mentioned above.

"Keely Secrets" (Mrs. Clara Jessup Bloomfield-Moore), *Theosophical Siftings*, London, Theosophical Publishing Society, Vol. I, July, 1888, 36 pp. Part I:

Etheric Force identified as Dynaspheric Force. Part II: One Phase of Keely's Discovery in its Relation to the Cure of Disease. Introduction by R. Harte, Sec'y T.P.S.

Letters from H. P. Blavatsky to the American Conventions (H. P. Blavatsky). From the Reports of Proceedings of the Conventions held in Chicago and Boston, 1888-1891. Point Loma, Calif.: Theos. Univ. Press, 1934. Published also by Theosophy Company, Los Angeles. Included in the *Collected Writings* under proper dates. 000

Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, The (H. P. Blavatsky and Others). Transcribed, Compiled, and with an Introduction by A. T. Barker, New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1925, xvi, 404 pp., Index.—2nd ed., Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, Calif. 1973. 000

Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom. Transcribed and Annotated by C. Jinarâjadâsa. With a Foreword by Annie Besant. Fist Series. Adyar: Theos. Publ. House, 1919; 2nd ed., 1923; 3rd ed., 1945; 4th ed., with additional Letters (1870-1900), 1948; viii, 220 pp.—Second Series, Adyar, 1925 & Chicago, 1926; 191 pp. 000

Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers, The (anonymous). With a Critical Catalogue of Books in Occult Chemistry, and a Selection of the most celebrated Treatises on the Theory and Practice of the Hermetic Art. Publ. by Lackington, Allen & Co., of Finsbury Square, London, 1815.—A. E. Waite's work by the same title is based upon it, supplemented to some extent, enlarged as to the Catalogue. London: Geo. Redway, 1888, 315 pp. Index.

Lotus, Le (Paris, France). Revue de Hautes Études Théosophiques, etc. Sous l'inspiration de H. P. Blavatsky. Directeur-Gérant, F. K. Gaboriau. Published by Georges Carré, Paris. Vols. I-III, March, 1887—March, 1889. 000

Lucifer. A Theosophical Magazine, designed to "Bring to Light the Hidden Things of Darkness." Edited by H. P. Blavatsky and Mabel Collins. Vols. I-XX, September, 1887—August, 1897 incl. Later edited by Annie Besant and G. R. S. Mead. Superseded by *The Theosophical Review*. 000

Magic: White and Black (Dr. Franz Hartmann). London, George Redway, 1886, 8vo., pp. xii, 228; 3rd rev. & enl. ed., Boston, Occult Publ. Co., 1888; 4th American ed., York, J. W. Lovell Co., 1890, with latest emendations by the author. A German version (not a translation) is mentioned in *Lucifer*, XIV, p. 83. This work of Dr. Hartmann's was enlarged from what originally was but a small pamphlet. It has been said that the material contained in this work is the result of discussions with H.P.B. while Dr. Hartmann was at Adyar. A great deal of this material was published originally and serially in *The Theosophist*, under the title of "Practical Instructions for Students of Occultism," running from Vol. V, May, 1884, to Vol. VI, April, 1885, inclusive. The series was signed "American

Buddhist."

Magie der Zahlen, als Grundlage aller Mannigfaltigkeit und das scheinbare Fatum, Die (L. B. Hellenbach von Paczolay), Vienna, 1882, 199 pp., pi.

Magie et l'astrologie dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge, La (L. F. A. Maury), Paris: Didier & Co., 1860, 450 pp.; 3rd rev. & corr. éd., 1864.

Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, The (from the Mahâtmas M. and K.H.) (A. P. Sinnett). Transcribed, Compiled and with an Introduction by A. T. Barker (1893-1941). London: T. Fisher Unwin; New York: Frederick A. Stokes, December, 1923; xxxv, 492, no index. Second ed. (fifth impression), rev., London: Rider & Co., 1926, Index. Eighth Impression, London, 1948. Third ed., rev. and edited by Christmas Humphreys & Elsie Benjamin. Adyar: Theos. Publ. House, 1962, xliii, 524, incl. copious index. *The Mahatma Letters* were deposited in the British Museum (British Library) March 11, 1939, and are listed as Additional MSS. 45284-286 and 45289 A & B. ∅∅∅

Man: Fragments of Forgotten History. By Two Chelas in The Theosophical Society. London: Reeves and Turner, 1885, xxvi, 165 pp.; 2nd ed., 1887; 3rd ed., 1893. Actually written by Mohini Mohun Chatterji & Laura C. Langford-Holloway. See Compiler's Note no. 22 to page 151 of Vol. I of *SD*.

Masonic Review. See "Hebrew Metrology" and "Cabbalah" (J. Raison Skinner).

Mission des Juifs, La (Alexandre, Marquis Saint-Yves d'Alveydre). Paris: C. Levy, 1884, 8vo.; 947 pp., portrait; also Paris: Darbon aîné, 1928, 2 vols., 8vo.

Mystères de l'horoscope, Les (Ëly Star), Paris, 1888; author's real name is Engène Jacob.

Mysteries of Magic, The (A. E. Waite). A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi. With biogr. and critical essay by A. E. Waite. London: Geo. Redway, 1886, 8vo.; 2nd ed., rev. & enl., 1897, xvi, 523 pp.—New éd.: University Books, Inc., Secaucus, N. J., 1974, xvi, 513 pp. Index, Notes.

"Notes on 'A Land of Mystery'" (H. P. Blavatsky), *The Theosophist*, Vol. II, August, 1880. Also *Collected Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 431-35.

Notes on the Bhagavad-Gltâ (T. Subba Row). The introductory lecture of this series was given by him at the Anniversary Convention at Adyar, December, 1885, and was publ. in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VII, February, 1886, pp. 281-85. The four actual lectures were delivered a year later, at the next Convention, December, 27-31, 1886. They appeared originally in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, Feb., Mch., Apr. & July, 1887.

They were publ. in book form by Tookaram Tatyâ, Bombay, 1888, though some omissions occur in this edition. The best ed. of this entire series was publ. by

Theosophical University Press, Point Loma, California, in 1934, which incorporates corrections in the text which T. Subba Row himself considered necessary at the time (see *The Theos.*, VIII, May, 1887, p. 511). This edition includes a copious Index prepared by Geoffrey A. Barborka, giving the correct systemic spelling of all Sanskrit terms. Consult for Biographical Sketch of T. Subba Row the work of Dr. Sven Eek,

Damodar and the Pioneers of The Theosophical Movement, Adyar: Theos. Publ. House, 1965, pp. 661 *et seq.*; 2nd ed., 1978.

Occult World, The (Alfred Percy Sinnett). The first work embodying occult teachings received from the Adept-Brothers, subsequent to H.P.B.'s *Isis Unveiled*. Gives an account of the circumstances under which H.P.B. and Col. Olcott met The Sinnetts in Simla, and describes some of the earliest occult phenomena that took place there. Passages from some of the letters received from the Teachers are all included in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, except one letter to A. O. Hume which was received early in November, 1880, and was not published until it appeared in *The Theosophist*, Vol. 80, February, 1959. This historically important work was published in the following editions: 1st ed., London, Triibner & Co., 1881, 172 pp.—2nd ed., with a special Preface containing documentary evidence concerning H.P.B.'s family background and social identity; also a Conclusion embodying later occult phenomena. London, Triibner & Co., 1881, 172 pp. Reprinted by J. W. Bouton, New York, 1884.—3rd ed., Triibner, etc., 1883, xiv, 140 pp.—4th ed., Trübner, etc., 1884. With the Preface to the 2nd. ed. and an Appendix on the subject of Henry Kiddle and certain letters from the Teachers; xvi, 160 pp.—1st American ed., with the Preface to the 2nd English ed. Boston, Colby & Rich, 1882, 172 pp.—2nd American ed. (from the 4th English), Boston Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1885, xvi, 228 pp.—4th American ed. (from the 4th English), ditto, 1887.—5th American ed. (from the 4th English), ditto, 1888.—5th ed., London, Trübner & Co., 1889, xiv, 160 pp.—6th American ed. (from the 4th English), Boston, etc., 1889, xvi, 228 pp.—7th American ed. (from the 4th English), Boston, etc., 1891, 227 pp.—8th ed., London, Theosophical Publishing Society, 1906, xiv, 194 pp.—9th ed., ditto, 1913; repr. in 1921. Another edition was issued in London by The Theos. Publ. House in 1969, xix, 181 pp. as a reprint of the English 2nd ed.

Orthodoxie Maçonnique suivie de la Maçonnerie Occulte et de l'Initiation Hermétique (J.-B.-M. Ragon), Paris: E. Dentu, August, 1853, 613 pp., portrait. His *Maçonnerie Occulte* was also published as a separate work, with additional text on planets, genii and guardian angels.

Paradoxes of the Highest Science (Éliphas Levi).

Path, The—Monthly Journal published by Wm. Q. Judge in New York. Vols. I-X, April, 1886—March, 1896; continued from April, 1896, through September, 1897, as *Theosophy*. Contains a large number of essays, articles and tales by "Mr. Judge, now collected in one volume by Darà Eklund and published as *Echoes of*

the Orient by Point Lorna Publications, Inc., San Diego, Calif., 1975.—See "Elementals, etc." (C. H. A. Bjerregaard).

Perfect Way, or, The Finding of Christ, The (Anna B. Kingsford & E. Maitland), London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1882, 4to.; rev. & enl. ed., London: Field & Tuer, 1887; 3rd ed., 1890. American ed., Boston: Esoteric Publ. Co., 1888. This work was reviewed at great length by T. Subba Row in *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, May & June, 1882.

"Personal and an Impersonal God, A" (T. Subba Row), *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, February, 1883.

Phallicism, Celestial and Terrestrial, Heathen and Christian (H. Jennings). Its connexion with the Rosicrucians and the Gnostics and its foundation in Buddhism; with an Essay on Mystic Anatomy. London, George Redway, 1884, 8vo., xxvii, 298 pp., index. ***

Philosophia ad Athenienses (Paracelsus). Letters to the Athenians. See *Life of Paracelsus* (Dr. F. Hartmann). English transl. also in Waites *The Hermetiic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus*, London, 1894, Vol. II.

Philosophia de generatione hominis (Paracelsus). On the Generation of Man. See *Life of Paracelsus* (Dr. F. Hartmann).

Posthumous Humanity. A Study of Phantoms (Adolphe Dassier, or d'Assier), Translated and Annotated by Henry Steel Olcott. With Appendix showing the popular beliefs current in India respecting the post-mortem vicissitudes of the human entity. London, George Redway, 1887.—The original French work was: *Essai sur l'humanité posthume et le spiritisme, par un positiviste*, Paris, A. Ghio, 1883, 12°.

"Primeval Race Double-Sexed, The" (Dr. Alex. Wilder), *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, February, 1883.—Consult for Biographical Sketch of Dr. A. Wilder, *Collected Writings*, Vo. I, pp. 531 *et seq.*

Principia Rerum Naturalium, etc. (E. Swedenborg), Dresden & Leipzig, 1733-34, in 3 vols.; Engl. tr. by A. Clissold, London, 1846.

Rosicrucians, their Rites and Mysteries, The (Hargrave Jennings). London, 1870, 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1879; 3rd ed., London: John C. Nimmo, 1887.

Round Towers of Ireland; or, the Mysteries of Freemasonry, of Sabaism, and of Buddhism, for the first time unveiled, The (H. O'Brien), London, 1834, 1898.—Repr. as *Atlantis in Ireland*, New York; Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1976, 524 pp. ***

Sciences occultes, ou essai sur la magie, les prodiges et les miracles, Des (A. J. Eusebe

Baconniere de Salverte [Pseud.: Louis Randol]), Paris: Sedillot, 1829, in 2 vols., 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1843, xvi, 532 pp.; 3rd ed., 1856, lxxiv, 516 pp., portrait – Engl. tr. as *The Occult Sciences*, etc. Notes by A. Todd Thomson. London: Richard Bentley, 1846, in 2 vols.

"Septenary Principle in Esotericism, The" (H. P. Blavatsky), *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, July, 1883. Also *Collected Writings*, Vol. IV, pp. 574-82.

Séraphita (Honoré de Balzac). Originally in 1835. Recent ed., with Introd. by Paul M. Allen. New York: Steinerbooks Multimedia Publ. Corp., 1976, 179 pp.

"Some Things the Aryans Knew" (Brahmachâri Bawa), *The Theosophist*, Vol. I, June, 1880.

Theosophical Miscellanies, Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Co., Ltd., 5 Council House St., 1883. [Adyar Archives.]

Theosophical Siftings. See "Keely Secrets" (Mrs. Clara J. Bloomfield-Moore).

Theosophist, The. A Monthly Journal Devoted to Oriental Philosophy, Art, Literature and Occultism. Conducted by H. P. Blavatsky, under the Auspices of The Theosophical Society. Bombay (later Madras): The Theosophical Society, October, 1879 – , in progress. Volumes run from October to September incl. See: "Some Things the Aryans Knew" (Bawa); "Esoteric Studies" (de Figaniere) ; "The Elixir of Life"; "War in Heaven" (both by Godolphin Mitford); "Cultus, etc." (Omoie); "Personal, etc."; "The Constitution, etc."; "The Idyll, etc."; "The Twelve Signs, etc." (all four by T. Subba Row); "Primeval Race, etc." (A. Wilder).

"Transmigration of Life-Atoms" (H. P. Blavatsky), *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, August, 1883. Also *Collected Writings*, Vol. V, pp. 109-117.

"Twelve Signs of the Zodiac" (T. Subba Row), *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, November, 1881. Repr. in *Five Years of Theosophy*. Photographic repr. by Wizards Bookshelf (Secret Doctrine Reference Series), Minneapolis, Minn., 1975; includes H.P.B.'s footnotes, a biographical sketch of the author and his portrait.

"War in Heaven" (Godolphin Mitford), in *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, December, 1881.

Specific Topics

Alchemy

Arte Chymiae, De (Roger Bacon), This is an abbreviated form, used by some writers, for the full title of the work which is: *Sanioris Medicinae Magistri Rogeri D. Baconis Angli de Arte Chymiae Scripta*. It was printed in Frankfurt, in 1603, and reprinted in 1620 under the title of *Thesaurus Chemicus*, etc.

Smaragdine Tablet. Translated by Dr. John Everard and others, the Smaragdine or Emerald Tablet, attributed to Hermes, has puzzled scholars for centuries past. Tradition has it that Alexander of Macedonia discovered the tomb of Hermes in a cave near Hebron. In the tomb was found an emerald slab which "Sarah, Abraham's wife," had taken from the dead Hermes. The story is most improbable, but the text of the traditional Tablet is replete with occult precepts. Consult *Tabula Smaragdina*, by Julius F. Ruska, Heidelberg, 1926.

Christian theosophy

Aurora, das ist: Morgen Rothe im Aufgang und Mutter der Philosophie (Joseph Böhme Dresden (?), 1634, 12°, pp. 573; Amsterdam, 1656, pp. 607. transl. by J. Sparrow, London, 1656, 4to., pp. 643. Also: Watkins, London, 1914, 8vo.

Signatura rerum, De (Jacob Böhme), Amsterdam, 1635, 12°. Transl. by J. Ellistone as *Signature of All Things*, London, Gyles Calvert, 1651, 4to., pp. 224.

Freemasonry

Cours philosophique et interprétatif des initiations anciennes et modernes, Le (J.-B.-M. Ragon), Paris, 1840; 2nd éd., Nancy, 1842.

The Masonic brotherhood of Les Trinosophists which was founded in 1805 by the distinguished Belgian Freemason and mystic Jean Marie Ragon. The knowledge of occultism possessed by Ragon is mentioned in terms of the highest respect by H. P. Blavatsky who says of him that "for fifty years he studied the ancient mysteries wherever he could find accounts of them". Ragon was termed by his contemporaries "the most learned Mason of the nineteenth century". In 1818, before the Lodge of Les Trinosophists, he delivered a course of lectures on ancient and modern initiation which he repeated at the request of that lodge in 1841. These lectures were published under the title Cours Philosophique et Interprétatif des Initiations Anciennes et Modernes. In 1853 Ragon published his most important work Orthodoxie Maçonnique. Ragon died in Paris about 1866 and two years later his unfinished manuscripts were purchased from his heirs by the Grand Orient of France for one thousand francs. A high Mason told Madam Blavatsky that Ragon had corresponded for years with two Orientalists in Syria and Egypt, one of whom was a Copt gentleman.

Répertoire biographique des franc-maçons russes, Le (Tatiana Bakunin). Bruxelles: Les Editions Petropolis (n.d.).

Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia of History, Rites, Symbolism and Biography, The. Ed. by K. R. H. MacKenzie, known as "Cryptonymus." London, 1877 [1875-77], 8vo.

Kabbalah

Arte Cabbalistica libri tres, De. (Johann Reuchlin), Hagenau: Apud Thomam Anghelmam, 1517, ff. lxxix, fol.; also 1530, 1587, 1603, 1672.

Auszüge aus dem Buche Sohar, mit Deutscher Uebersetzung (Joachim Heinrich Biesenthal, born Raphael Hirsch; pseud. Karl Ignaz Corve). Based on F. A. G. Tholuck's *Wichtige Stellen des B. Sohar im Text und mit Uebersetzung*, 1824. Biesenthal's work was publ. in 1837; 3rd ed., Berlin, 1857, 46 pp.; 4th ed., 1876.

Book of Concealed Mystery. See *Siphrd di-Tseniuthd*, as explained under *Zohar*.

Book of Drushim (Sha' ar ha-Derushim) (Isaac ben-Solomon Ashkenazi Luria). Systematic presentation of Luria's theosophic doctrines, Embodied in Hayyim Vital's *Ets Hayyim* (Tree of Life), ca. 1573-76; and in Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*.

Book of Formation. See *Sepher Yetzirdh*.

Book of Hammannunah. See *Zohar*.

Book of Ruth and Schadash. See *Zohar*.

Cabbalah, The" (J. Ralston Skinner), in *Masonic Review*, Vol. 65, June, 1886.

"Hebrew Metrology" (J. Ralston Skinner), in *Masonic Review*, Vol. 63, July, 1885.

Idra Rabbd. See *Zohar*.

Idrâ Zütâ Qaddishâ. See *Zohar*.

Kabala, Kabbala, Kabbalah, Qabbâlâh. See *Zohar*. ∅∅∅

Kabbalah: its doctrines, development, and literature, The (C. D. Ginsburg), London, 1863, 1866, 1925, 1955. Expanded from his original essay in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition. Repr. by S. Weiser, 1970.

Kabbala denudata seu doctrina Hebraeorum transcendentalis et metaphysica adque théologie a, etc. (Christian Knorr von Rosenroth). The author, a Protestant Theosophist, Kabbalah scholar and poet, born in *Sihsia*. (1636-89), was a close friend of both Henry More and Dr. Franz Mercurius van Helmont. His work was the principal source for all non-Jewish literature on the Kabbala until the end of the 19th century. Volume I was published at Sulzbach, northern Bavaria in 1677-78, and Vol. II at Frankfurt am Main in 1684. The work is in Latin and includes long disquisitions by More and van Helmont, some of them anonymous, with Knorr's replies to them. Among the various Kabalistic texts included in Knorr's work are the following: *Siphrd di-Tseniuthâ*; *Idrâ Rabbâ*; *Idrâ Zütâ*; *Esh ha-Metsareph*—an Italian work on alchemy, the Hebrew original of which is no longer extant; and excerpts from Isaac Luria and Cordovero. Leibnitz, impressed by Knorr's work, visited him in 1687 to discuss kabbalistic subjects. See *Kabbalah Unveiled* by S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers for English

translations of Knorr's *Latin* texts.

Kabbalah Unveiled, The (S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers). Translated into English from the Latin Version of Knorr von Rosenroth, and Collated with the original Chaldee and Hebrew text. London: Geo. Redway, 1887, viii, 359, plates, index.

Kabbale, ou la philosophie religieuse des Hébreux, La (A. Franck), Paris; Hachette, 1843, iv, 412 pp., 8vo.; 2nd éd., Paris, 1889, vi, 314 pp.; 3rd éd., 1892. Engl. tr. by I. Sossnitz, New York, 1926. Somewhat abridged text publ. by University Books, 1967.

Kabbalistic Manuscript (S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers). Said to be an unpublished MS. Information unavailable.

Kabbalistic Manuscript (J. Ralston Skinner), unpublished MS. in the Adyar Archives. See *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures*.

Kether Malkhuth, "Crown of the Kingdom" (R. Solomon ibn Gebirol, known also as Avicbron). Hymn preserved in the Synagogue liturgy as prayer of the Kippür festival. Engl, prose transl. in the Prayer-Book of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews (ed. M. Gaster, *Day of Atonement*, Oxford, 1904), and partly in Engl, verse in Alice Lucas' *Jewish Year* (London, 1898).

Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures originating the British Inch and the ancient Cubit, etc. (J. Ralston Skinner), Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1875, xvi, 324 pp.; 2nd ed., same publisher, 1894; includes a *Supplement* of 63 pages, originally publ. in 1876. This ed. was accidentally destroyed by fire. — Reprinted by Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, 1972 (Secret Doctrine Reference Series). — Part III of this work, definitely stated by the author himself to be such, exists in the Archives of The Theosophical Society at Adyar, as a MS. of 358 pages written on one side only, interspersed with number arrangements and number diagrams. The MS. is bound in heavy cloth, with tooled leather spine; no name of author is on the spine, but on the front cover the name of H. P. Blavatsky appears in gold letters. Inside, on the fly-leaf, H.P.B. has written her name: H. P. Blavatsky, Ostende, 1887. This accords with the words at the end of the MS.: "I, Ralston Skinner, Jan. 10, 1887, shall send this original MSS. to Madame Blavatsky Ostend." The author also states that he completed this closing section of his work "on Monday the 18th day of February 1884, in the retiring of the flood of waters of the Ohio at 12 M." The work is in two Sections, the first one, in 53 pages, being an Introduction. The second Section is made up of 18 smaller sections dealing with subjects rather closely similar to the text of *The Source of Measures*. Throughout the MS. there are about 25 cases where H.P.B. made changes in the text, corrections, insertions of words and sometimes of short sentences; in seven cases, she wrote brief remarks on blank pages facing text. According to C. Jinaràjadàsa, this MS. was discovered by him among material found together with the First Draft of the *SD* at Benares in 1921. It has

never been explained why both of these MSS. were deposited at Benares. ***

Mantuan Codex. See *Zohar*.

Novelôth Hokhmâh (Rabbi Shiomo del. Medigo, from Kamdiâh). Mentioned by Isaac Myer in his *Qabbaiah*, p. 110. ***

Nychthemeron of the Hebrews (attributed to Rabbi Shimon). Quoted from Eliphas Levi in his *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, Paris, 1856, Suppl. to Vol. II. H.P.B. quotes from it in *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 467, 468. ***

Sepher Mevô-Sheârim (Isaac ben-Solomon Ashkenazi Luria). Attributed to Luria and compiled by Hayyim Vital (Korzec, 1784).

Sepher Yetztrâh or *Book of Formation*. Reputed to be the oldest Kabbalistic work, attributed to Rabbi Akiba. It deals with permutations of numbers and letters, and is our first source for the doctrine of emanations and the *sephirôth*. The *editio princeps* is that of Mantua, 1562, with several subsequent ones. Translated and annotated by P. Davidson, Loudsville, Georgia & Glasgow, Scotland, 1896, xvii, 27 pp. — Text and Comm. by Dunash ben Tamim have been published by M. Grossberg, London, 1902; by W. Wynn Westcott, 1887, 1911; by K. Stenring, 1923; and by Akiva ben Joseph, 1970. Consult *Encyclopaedia Judaica* for detailed account. ∅∅∅

Siphrâ di-Tseniuthâ. See *Zohar*.

Tractatus de Anima (Moses ben-Jacob Cordovero), 1677, in Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala denudata*, torn. I, pt. 2.

Zohar. The *Zohar*, known also as the *Midrash ha-Zohar* and *Sepher ha-Zohar*, meaning "Splendor," is the great storehouse of ancient Hebrew Theosophy, supplemented by the philosophical doctrines of mediaeval Jewish Rabbis. Together with the *Sepher Yetzirah*, or "Book of Formation," one of the most ancient Kabbalistic works, the collection of the *Zohar* represents the oldest extant treatises on the Hebrew esoteric doctrines. It consists of several distinct but interrelated tracts, each discussing some special branch of the subject; each of these tracts consists again of several portions, and contains a kernel of ancient teachings, around which are clustered comments and explanations written by several hands and at very different epochs. There is considerable evidence to show that the kernel of these doctrines is of very remote antiquity, and embodies the remnants of one of the oldest systems of philosophy that have come down to us. Sufficient proof exists to connect some of these tenets with the period of the return from the Babylonian captivity, as they bear the impress of the still more ancient Chaldean secret lore. The *Zohar* is largely a mystical and allegorical commentary on the *Pentateuch*. Together with various Appendices that must have been added to the collection at some later time, it deals with a large number of subjects, such as Ain Soph, the Emanations, the Sephiroth,

Adam-Kadmon, the Revolution of Souls (*Gilgullm*), the use of numbers and letters, the casting of lots, good and evil, etc., etc. The largest portion of this collection is written in one of the Aramaic dialects; other portions are in Hebrew; the presence of still other dialects adds greatly to the difficulties of an accurate translation. Tradition current among mediaeval Rabbis assigned the authorship of the *Zohar* to Rabbi Shimon ben-Yohai who lived in the reign of the Roman Emperor Titus, 70-80 A.D., and was one of the most important Tannai'm in the post-Hadrianic period. He was born in Galilee, and died at Meron, near Safid, in Palestine, where his traditional tomb is shown. His principal teacher was Akiba, whose Academy at Bene-Berak he attended for a good many years. Ordained after Akiba's death by Judah ben-Baba, he escaped from Jerusalem during the violent struggle of the Jews with the Romans, and hid himself in a cave for thirteen years. It is here that Shimon ben-Yohai, a profound Kabbalist already, was instructed, according to tradition, by the prophet Elias himself. In his turn, he taught his disciples, Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba, who committed to writing those traditional teachings of the earlier Tannai'm which in later ages became known as the *Zohar*. After his seclusion, Shimon ben-Yohai settled in Galilee and founded a school of his own, gaining the reputation of a wonderworker. He was sent to Rome with Eleazar ben-Jose, to obtain the repeal of imperial orders which had forbidden certain Jewish ceremonial observances, and returned after a successful mission. While the name of Shimon ben-Yohai is associated with the history of the *Zohar*, it is nevertheless certain that a very large portion of this compilation is not older than approximately 1280, when it was edited in manuscript form by Moses ben Shem-Tob de Leon. The latter was a famous Kabbalistic writer born at Leon, Spain, about 1250, and who lived in Guadalajara, Valladolid and Avila, and died at Arevalo in 1305. Familiar with the mediaeval mystical literature, he was especially conversant with the writings of Solomon ben Judah ibn Gebirol (Avicbron), Judah ha-Levi, and Maimonides. He led a wandering life, and was a man of brilliant intellect and lofty religious idealism. It is most likely that Moses de Leon was the first one to produce the *Zohar* as a whole, but many of its constituent portions date from the time of Shimon ben-Yohai and the Second Temple, even though historical evidence is not forthcoming of the many steps in the course of transmission of these doctrines from ante-Roman times. The *Zohar* in its present Hebrew form was *first* printed in Italy, namely in Mantua, in 1558-60, in 3 vols., 4to., and in Cremona, in 1558, fol.; only one MS. of it is in existence prior to the first edition. Preparations for the printing of the *Zohar* were made as early as 1556, the original stimulus having come from Moses Bassola, of Pesaro, whose father was proof-reader at the famous Sonsino Press. Later editions are those of Lublin (1623), Amsterdam (1714 and 1806), Livorno (1791) and Vilna (1911). Among the most important portions of the *Zohar* are the following: *Siphra di-Tseniutha* or "Book of Concealed Mystery" known also as the *Liber mysterii*; *Idra Rabba Qaddisha*, "The Greater Holy Assembly"; *Idra Zuta Qaddisha*, "The Lesser Holy Assembly." For Latin and English translations of these consult in the present Bibliography entries for *Kabbalah Denudata* (Knorr von Rosenroth), *Kabbalah Unveiled* (MacGregor Mathers), and *Qabbalah* (I. Myer). An English translation of the *Zohar*, with the omission of those sections which seemed to the translators to

be separate works or additions, is *The Zohar* by Harry Sperling, Maurice Simon and Paul Levertoff, published in five volumes in London, by the Sonsino Press, 1931-34 & 1949. Other portions of the *Zohar* mentioned by H.P.B. are: "*Patha Rabba*, the *Book of Ruth and Schadash*, and the *Book of Hammannunah*. The *Bereshit* (Genesis) section of the *Zohar*, translated into English by Nurho de Manhar, was published serially in the monthly periodical, *The Word*, edited at New York by H. W. Percival between 1900 and 1916. This translation has been photographically reproduced by Wizards Bookshelf (San.Diego, Calif., 1978), with marginal notes by John Draais, and numerous footnotes embodying passages concerning the *Zohar* from *The Secret Doctrine*. Very strong internal evidence of the translation suggests that the author thereof was Christian David Ginsburg (1831-1914), whose authoritative essay on the Kabbalah in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is reproduced on the end sheets of the Wizards Bookshelf edition. N. de Manhar's translation does not extend beyond Parcha Lekh Lekha (*Genesis* xvii, 27) and its original serial publication stopped abruptly in 1914, the year of Ginsburg's death.

Spiritualism

Des Esprits, etc. (de Mirville). See *Pneumatologie*.

Earth's Earliest Ages and their Lessons for us. Including a Treatise on Spiritualism (George Hawkins Pember). London, 1876, 8vo.; 2nd ed., London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1884; x, 481 pp., 8vo.; 15th ed. with add. by G. H. Lang [1942], 8vo.

Hauts Phénomènes de la magie, précédés du spiritisme antique, Les (H.-R. Gougenot des Mousseaux), Paris, 1864.

Pneumatologie. Des Esprits et de leurs manifestations diverses (J. E. de Mirville). Mémoires adressés aux Académies. This work contains three separate *Mémoires*, which have been published in different editions, the first *Mémoire* appearing in 1851. The most complete edition is the one in Six Volumes: Vols. I-V, Paris, H. Vrayet de Surcy, 1863-64, 8vo.; Vol. VI publ. by F. Wattelier, 1868.

Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism (Sir Wm. Crookes). Reprinted from the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, 1871, etc. London: J. Burns, 1874, 8vo., 112 pp. Also Rochester, N.Y.: The Austin Publ. Co., 1904.

Spiritismus, Der (K. R. E, von Hartmann), Berlin, 1885, 118 pp.

7. History (about and relevant to)

Pre-History

Antiquity of Man Historically Considered, The (George Rawlinson), 1883, 44 pp. *Present Day Tracts* (1882, etc.), 8vo.

Antiquity of Man in Western Europe, The (Edwin Clodd), *Knowledge*, London, Vol. I, March 31, 1882, pp. 463-64. ***

Atland eller Manheim (Atlantica) (Olof Rudbeck or Rudbeckius, The Elder). First Part issued in 1679; Second Pt. in 1689; Third Pt. in 1698; the Fourth Pt. was being printed in 1702, but a great fire destroyed almost all the copies. Photolithographed ed. of Part IV issued in 1863. Swedish original text of the entire work issued by A. Nelson in 1937-1950, incl. a vol. of atlases. ***

Rudbeck, - who became interested in Verelius's work - developed a theory that Sweden was the lost Atlantis and had been the cradle of Western civilization. He proposed this idea in Atland eller Manheim (1679-1702), which, translated into Latin as Atlantica, attained European fame.

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World (Ignatius Donnelly), New York & London: S. Low Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882; x, 490 pp., ill. — Repr. by Multi-media, 1973. ***

Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon et sur l'ancienne histoire de l'Asie (J.-S. Bailly). Paris: Debure; and London: M. Elmsly, 1779, 480 pp. Map.

Prehistoric Europe. A Geological Sketch (James Geikie), London, E. Stanford, 1881 [1880], 8vo., pp. xviii, 592. ***

Prehistoric Man: Researches into the Origin of Civilization in the Old and the New World (Sir Daniel Wilson). London and Cambridge, 1862, 2 vols., 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1865; 3rd ed., 1876.

Prehistoric Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains, etc. (Sir John Lubbock, Earl of Avebury), 4th ed., New York, 1878.

Ancient History 4000 BCE – 400 CE

Against Apion (Josephus). Greek text and English transl. by H. Thackeray in *Loeb Classical Library*.

L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures (Bernard de Montfaucon), Paris, 1719, 24, fol.; 2nd ed., 1722-24, fol., 10 tomes. Engl. tr. as *Antiquity Explained and Represented in Sculptures*, by D. Humphreys, London, 1721-25, fol. 5 vols.

Bamboo Books or *Annals of the Bamboo Books*. Containing the Ancient Annals of China, said to have been found A.D. 279, on opening the grave of King Seang of Wei (dice B.C. 295). Age prior to last date, undetermined; authenticity disputed; favored by James Legge.

The 'Bamboo Annals' is a chronicle of ancient China. It begins at the earliest legendary times (Huangdi, 2497 BC to 2398 BC) and extends to the Warring States Period (5th century BC-221 BC), particularly the history of the Wei State. It has 13 sections.

The original text was interred with the king of Wei (died 296 BC) and re-discovered in AD 281. For this reason, the chronicle survived the great burning of the books by Emperor Shi Huangdi.

The 'Bamboo Annals' is one of the three most important ancient texts on early China, the others being the earlier Zuo Zhuan and the later Shiji. However, the authenticity of the current version has been called into question, so that some (including Qing scholars and Karlgren) would not translate it.

Chronicon (P. Eusebius). Ed. of Cardinal Angelo Mai and Dr. J. Zohrab, Milan, 1816. ***

Chronographion or *World Chronicle*. Written by Panodoros, an Egyptian monk under Arcadius (395-408). Mentioned by Syncellus (Voss, *De Historicis Graecis Libri III*, ed. Westermann, p. 308) and by Fabricius, *Bibl. Graeca*, VII, 444. ***

Civilization of the Eastern Iranians in Ancient Times. With an Introduction on the Avesta Religion (Wilhelm Geiger). Translated from the German with biographical sketch by Dârâb. London, Oxford (pr.), H. Frowde, 1885, 86, 8vo. German title is: *Ostiranische Kultur im Alterthum*, Erlangen, 1882, 8vo., pp. viii, 520. ***

Dissertation Historique sur la Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie (B. N. Bonamy), in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, First Series, Vol. IX, 1736, pp. 397-415 (in 2nd Sect.).

"Early History of Babylonia" (George Smith), *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1872, Vol. I, Ft. 1, pp. 28-92.

"Eclaircissemens sur le Mémoire lû au mois de Novembre 1733, touchant l'antiquité & la certitude de la Chronologie Chinoise" (Nicolas Fréret). *Mémoires . . . de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*. Tome 15me (1743), pp. 495-564. Continued in Tome 18 (1753), pp. 178-295. ***

Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, The (George Rawlinson). London: John Murray, 1862-67, 4 vols., 8vo.; 3rd ed., London, 1873, 3 vols., 8vo.

Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Die (Felix Jacoby), Berlin, 1923 —, 8vo. ∅∅∅

Felix Jacoby's Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (FGrHist) or short the 'Jacoby' was first published between the 1920's and late 1950's. The Jacoby is a standard collection of and commentary on the fragments of 856 Greek historians whose works have survived only in fragmentary form. The Jacoby contains over 12,000 fragments from sources going up to the Byzantine period and, in addition to Greek, also from sources in other languages like Armenian, Syriac, and Arabic.

Histoire ancienne de l'Orient, etc. (F. Lenormant) ; 9th ed., rev., Paris: A. Lévy, 1881-88; 6 vols., ill., plates.

History of the Jewish War (Josephus). Greek text and English translation by H. Thackeray in *Loeb Classical Library*. Two Vols.

Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France. See "Mémoire sur quelques anciens monuments, etc." (É. C. Biot). ***

Shan Hoi Ching or "Book of Wonders by Land and Sea." According to the Commentator Kwoh P'oh (A.D. 276-324), this work was compiled some three thousand years before his time, or at seven dynasties distance. Yang Sun of the Ming dynasty (commencing A. D. 1368) states that it was compiled by Kung Chia and, possibly, Chung Ku, from engravings on nine urns made by the Emperor Yu, B.C. 2255. Chung Ku was an historiographer, and at the time of the last Emperor of the Hia dynasty (B.C. 1818), fearing that the Emperor might destroy the books treating of the ancient and present time, carried them in flight to Yin. ***

Shu-Ching. "The Book of Historical Documents," one of the Five Classics of China. This collection, which does not form a continuous history, falls into five divisions, the earliest documents referring to a period about 2000 B.C., the latest to 624 B.C. As a record of early moral and religious ideas, its value is considerable. Translated from the Chinese by James Legge in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. III; also Regnery Press, Chicago, 1971. ***

Midevael History 400-1400

Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons and Ornaments of Great Britain, The (Sir John Evans, K.C.B.), London, 1872, 8vo.; 2nd ed., rev., London, Longman's & Co., 1897, 8vo., pp. xviii, 747. ***

Historia de omnibus gothorum sveonumque regibus (The History of all the Gothic and Swedish Kings) (Johannes Magnus). Written in Venice in 1540 and published by his brother, Olaus Magnus, at Rome in 1554.

Modern History 1400→

Approaching End of the Age, viewed in the light of History, Prophecy and Science (Henry Grattan Guinness), Frome & London, 1878, 8vo.; 2nd ed., London, 1879, 8vo.; 8th ed., 1882, pp. xxxvii, 776.

Collectanea de rebus hibernicis (Col. Chas. Vallancey), Dublin, 1770-74, six vols., 2nd ed., 1776.

Vol. 1-4 published in 14 numbers, each having special t.-p. date of v. 1, no. 1 to 1774.

The general title usually appears only as caption on special title-pages: v. 1. no. 1. Piers, Sir H. A chorographical description of the county of West-Meath, 1770.--no. II. I. Davis, Sir J. A letter ... to the Earl of Salisbury. 2. Ussher, [J.] Original and first institution of corbes, erenachs, and termon-lands. 3. An account of two ancient instruments

lately discovered. 1774, no. IV. [Vallancey, C.] A critico-historical dissertation concerning the antient Irish laws, or national customs called gavel-kind and thamistry. 1774-75. v. 2. no. V. Vallancey, C. Of the literature of the Irish nation in heatherish times. Translation of a fragment of the Brehon laws. The gavel law of the ancient Irish explained. Of the literature of the Irish after the establishment of Christianity. An enquiry into the first inhabitants of Ireland. 1781. no. VI. Ledwich, E. 1. An essay on the study of Irish antiquities. 2. A dissertation on the round towers in Ireland. 3. Memoirs of Dunamase and Shean castle ... 1781. no. VII. Beauford, W. 1. Druidism revived. 2. Of the origin and language of the Irish; and of the learning of the druids. 1781. no. VIII. Vallancey, C. 1. An essay on the antiquity of the Irish language. 2d ed. 2. Remarks [signed Celticis] on the Essay on the antiquity of the Irish language. 1781.--no. IX. Ledwich, E. The history and antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny. 1781. v. 3. [pt. 1] no. X. Vallancey, C. 1. A continuation of the Brehon laws. 2. The Chinese language collated with the Irish. 3. The Japanese language collated with the Irish. 4. On the round towers of Ireland. 5. Pownall, [T.] An account of the ship-temple near Dundalk ... 6. O'Conor, C. Reflections on the history of Ireland ... 7. A letter from Curio. 1782. -- no. XI. Beauford, W. Antient topography of Ireland. Ledwich, E. Some observations on Irish antiquities. 1783.--v. 3. pt. 2. no. XII. Vallancey, C. Preface [to his Vindication of the ancient history of Ireland] Of all hallow eve. (clxxv p.)2. Of the gule of August, or Lammas day. 3. Description of the banqueting-hall of Jamar or Jara. 4. Of the kiss of salutation. 5. Conclusion; miscellaneous. 6. Second letter from Charles O'Connor, esq.; on the heathen state and ancient topography of Ireland. 1783. v. 4. pt. 1, no. XIII. Vallancey, C. [On the ancient implements, etc., of the Irish]. Mr. O'Conors third letter on the heathen state of Ireland. 1786. v. 4. [pt. 2] no. XIV. Vallancey, C. A vindication of the ancient history of Ireland. 1786. [For Preface, v. 3, pt. 2, no. 12] v. 5. Vallancey, C. The Uraikeft, or book of Oghams. An essay on the origin of alphabetic writing. Terms of the Brehon-Amham laws explained. Origin of the feudal system of government 1790.

Histoire de la littérature anglaise (Hippolyte Adolphe Taine). Paris, 1863, 64, 4 torn., 8vo; 2nd éd., 1866, 71; 10th éd., 1899-1902. Engl. tr. as *History of English Literature*, Edinburgh, 1871, 2 Vols., 8vo., 1873, 4 Vols., 1886, 1906.

Histoire de la vie de Henry, dernier duc de Montmorency; contenant tout ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable depuis sa naissance jusqu'à sa mort (Simon Ducros), Paris, Antoine de Sommaville & Augustin Courbe, 1643, 300 pp. — This account was published in 1665 under the title of *Mémoires*, etc., Paris, François Mavger, 276 pp.; reprinted in 1666. The Duc was also known as Comte de Damville, and Henry II, duc de Montmorency (1595-1632).

Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale durant les siècles antérieurs à Christophe Colomb, etc. (C. E. Brasseur de Bourbourg), Paris, 1857-59; 4 Vols., 8vo.

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Vero Anno quo eternus Dei Filius humanam naturam in Utero benedictae Virginis Mariae assumpsit, De {On the Year in which the eternal Son of God took on human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary) (Johann Kepler). This is his own Latin translation, publ. at Frankfurt in 1614. See for German transl. Vol. V. of Kepler's *Gesammelte Werke*, Munich: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953, with an important "Nachbericht" at page 397; subject of Jupiter and Saturn is on pages 403 *et seq.*

Biology

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Beginnings of Life, The (H. C. Bastian), London: Macmillan & Co., 1872, 2 volumes 8vo.; also New York: D. Appleton, 1872, 2 vols.

Henry Charlton Bastian (1837-1915) was an English Physiologist and neurologist. Fellow of Royal Society in 1868. Bastian graduated in 1861 at the University of London. He was an advocate of the doctrine of abiogenesis. Henry Charlton Bastian's support for spontaneous generation is shown to have developed from his commitment to the new evolutionary science of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall. Tracing Bastian's early career development shows that he was one of the most talented rising young stars among the Darwinians in the 1860s. His argument for a logically necessary link between evolution and spontaneous generation was widely believed among those sympathetic to Darwin's ideas. Spontaneous generation implied materialism to many, however, and it had associations in Britain with radical politics and amateur science. Huxley and the X Club were trying to create a public posture of Darwinism that kept it at arm's length from those negative associations. Thus, the conflict that developed when Huxley and the X Club opposed Bastian was at least as much about factional in-fighting among the Darwinians as it was about the experiments under dispute. Huxley's strategy to defeat Bastian and define his position as "non-Darwinian" contributed significantly to the shaping of Huxley's famous address "Biogenesis and Abiogenesis." Rhetorically separating Darwinism from Bastian was thus responsible for Huxley's first clear public statement that a naturalistic origin of life was compatible with Darwin's ideas, but only in the earth's distant past. The final separation of the discourse on the meaning of Brownian movement and "active molecules" from any possible link with spontaneous generation also grew out of Huxley's strategy to defeat Bastian. Clashes between Bastian and the X Club are described at the BAAS, the Royal Society, and in the pages of Nature and other journals.

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Island Life (A. R. Wallace). The phenomena and causes of insular faunas and floras, including a revision and attempted solution of the problem of geological climates. New York: Harper, 1881; London, 1880. Repr. by AMS Press, 1975.

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10. Orientalism

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Miscellaneous Essays (Henry Thos. Colebrooke), 1837, 1872, 1873. Originally publ. in the *Asiatick Researches*.

Orient und Occident, insbesondere in ihren gegenseitigen Beziehungen, etc. Quarterly Journal publ. by Theodore Benfey. Gottingen, Bd. 1-3, 1860-66, 8vo. ***

Oriental Collections, The. Consisting of original essays and dissertations, translations and miscellaneous papers, illustrating the history, the antiquities, the arts, sciences and literature of Asia. Edited by Sir William Ouseley (1767-1842). Vols. 1-3, January, 1797— June, 1799. London: Cadell & Davies, 1797-1800, 4to.

Original Sanskrit Texts, on the Origin and History and Progress of the religion and institutions of India (J. Muir), London, Oxford, 1858; 2nd ed., London, 1868-70, 5 vols. ***

Sacred Books of the East. Translated by various Oriental Scholars and Edited by the late Right Hon. F. Max Müller. Published with the sanction and co-operation of the Secretary of State for India in Council. Two Series comprising 49 Volumes. Vol. 50 is an Index Volume compiled by Prof. M. Winternitz (8vo., 700 pp). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879-1910.—Reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass (Delhi, Varanasi, Patna), 1965 ff. 000

Buddhism

Buddhism: being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama, the Buddha (T. W. Rhys Davids, London, 1877; last rev. ed., 1910. Twenty-sixth Thousand, London: Soc. For promoting Christian Knowledge, 1925, viii, 242 pp. incl. index. [SD1, p. 108?, 471, 539?]

Buddhism in Christendom; or, Jesus the Essene (A. Lillie), London, 1889, 410 pp. ***

Buddhismus, seine Dogmen, Geschichte und Literatur, Der (V. P. Vasil'ev), St.

Petersburg, 1860, 8vo. This is the German tr. Of his Russian work publ. in 1857.

Buddhist Catechism, The (Col. Henry Steel Olcott). Approved and Recommended for use in Buddhist schools by H. Sumangala, High Proest of Sripada, etc. Originally published on July 24, 1881, both in English and Sinhalese. A 3rd ed. Became necessary before the end of August of the same year. Has been published in dozens of editions and translations. The 45th ed. Is the 1st American edition. Publ. in 1970 by Theos. Pub House, Wheaton, Ill. As a Quest Miniature, xviii, 138 pp. ***

Chinese Buddhism: a volume of Sketches, historical, descriptive and critical (Rev. J. Edkins), Boston, 1880; 2nd. rev. ed., London: K. Paul, Trubner & Co., 1893.— Repr. by Paragon Corp., 1968.

Chin kuang ming ching. Short form of *Chin kuang ming tsui sheng wang ching*, or "Luminous Sutra of Golden Light" which is the Chinese translation of the Buddhist

Suvama~prabhâsa-Su~tra dating from about 414 A.D.—Consult: *Das Goldglanz-sutra*, Bin Text des Mahâyana-Buddhismus (German text). Leyden, Brill, 1958. ∅∅∅

Dhammapada. The Path or Way of the Buddha's *Dhamma* or Teaching. The most famous Scripture in the Pâli Canon. A collection of 423 verses comprising a noble system of moral philosophy. Many English translations from the Pâli version. For a translation of the Chinese version, see Beal's *Texts from the Buddhist Canon commonly known as Dhammapada*. [SD2, 110]

Ekaslokasâstra (Nâgârjuna, or Lung-Shu in China.) Called in Chinese *Yi chou lou kia louen*. Taisho, 1573; Nanjio, 1212. It sets out to prove that the true own being of things is in fact their non-existence. Engl. tr. in J. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 302-317; and by Iyengar in *Mysore University Journal for Arts and Sciences*, 1, 1927, number 2. [SD1, p. xxviii, 72, 126] ***

Fa-hua-ching (Saddharma-pundarika), or *Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law*. A favorite book of the T'ien-t'ai School of Buddhism. It is one of the Canonical Books of the Nepalese, the standard classic of the Lotus School. Its Japanese title is *Hokekyo*. It was written in India most likely in the 2nd century. A . D. and teaches the identification of the historical Buddha with the transcendental Buddha existing from the beginning of this age, his appearance in the phenomenal world being only a skilful device (*upâya*) adopted to preach the Dharma to mankind. Transl. with adaptation and condensation from the Chinese version attributed to Kumarajlva, by W. E. Soothill. Oxford, 1930. ∅∅∅

Foe koue ki ou relations des royaumes Bouddhiques (Fa-hien). Translated by Abel Rémusat, 1836.

Introduction d l'histoire de Bouddhisme indien (Eugene Burnouf), Paris, 1844; 2nd

ed., 1876.

Legends and Theories of the Buddhists, compared with History and Science, The (R. Spence Hardy), London 8c Edinb., 1866, 8vo.

Life of the Buddha, and the early history of his Order (Wm. Woodville Rockhill). Derived from Tibetan works, and translated by W.W.R., 1884, xii, 273.

Life of Vasubandhu (Paramartha). Translated by J. Takakuso. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1905; repr. by E. J. Brill, Leyden.

Vasubandhu was a prominent Buddhist teacher and one of the most important figures in the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. Though he is particularly admired by later Buddhists as cofounder of the Yogācāra school along with his half brother Asanga, his pre Yogācāra works, such as the Abhidharmakosha and his auto-commentary (Abhidharmakoshabhāṣya) on it, are considered masterpieces.

Light of Asia: or the Great Renunciation (Mahabhinishkramana). Being the Life and Teachings of Gautama, Prince of India and Founder of Buddhism. As told in verse by an Indian Buddhist (Sir Edwin Arnold). London, Trübner & Co., 1879. The author was formerly Principal of the Deccan College, Poona, and Fellow of the University of Bombay.—Innumerable later editions in several languages. Reviewed by H.P.B. herself in *The Theosophist*, Vol. I, Oct., 1879. Cf. her *Collected Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 130 *et seq.*

Mahāvamsa. Sinhalese Pali chronicle; a record in verse of the early history of Ceylon, incl. its religious history. Compiled in the 5th or 6th century. Revised and edited from 1st to 36th chapter by H. Sumangala, Colombo: Government Print. House, 1883, xxxii, 436 pp. [Sinhalese characters].—Edited by Wm. Geiger, London: for Pali Text Society by Oxford Univ. Press, 1908 [Roman], *PTS* 63.—Transl. by H. Sumangala, Colombo, 1883; transl. by Wm. Geiger and Mabel Bode, London, for Pali Text Soc., by Oxford Univ. Press, 1912, *PTS*. tr. ser. 3.—Ed. in Roman characters and translated by George Tumour. Ceylon: Cotta Church Mission Press, 1837; this was the first Pali text translated.

"Mystical Buddhism in connexion with the Yoga Philosophy of the Hindus" (Sir Monier Monier-Williams). Annual Address before the Victoria Institute of Great Britain, June 4, 1888. In *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 12 *et seq.* ***

"Notice on Buddhist Symbols" (Brian Houghton Hodgson). With Plates. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Old Series, Vol. XVIII, 1861, pp. 393-99.

Saddharmalamkara. Sinhalese compilation of Buddhist legends; largely a tree translation or adaptation of the *Rasavdhini* of Vedeha Thera. Out of 24 chapters, the last 21 are derived from the *Rasavdhini*.

Traces de Bouddhisme en Norvège, avant l'introduction du Christianisme (Christoph Andreas Holmboe), Paris, 1857, 8vo.

Tripitaka (Pali, *Tipitaka*, meaning "Three Baskets"). Chief Scripture of the Theravada School of Buddhism, consisting of the *Vinaya-Phaka*, or Rules of Discipline governing the Sangha; the *Sutta-Pitaka*, or Dialogues and Discourses of the Buddha, containing the five *Nikayas*; and the *Abbidhamma-Pitaka* (lit. "Higher Dhamma"), mainly a comm. on the *Sutta-Pitaka*. Issued by the Pali Text Society. — Consult also *SBE* X, XI, XIII, XVII, XX.

Yi chou lou kia louen. See *Ekaslōka-Sâstra*.

Tibetan Buddhism

Bodhimor. Mongolian translation of a Tibetan Sutra. It is a Manual of Tsong-kha-pa's *Lamrim*. Mor means Path. Entire title is: *Bodhi Mor-un Jerge-yin ulagan Kotelbiiri Gamug-yi Ayiladugci-dur Odqui Amur Mor Kemegdeku Orusiba*. Author is: bLo-bzan Chhos-kyi rGyal-mts'an, a Tibetan. ***

Buddhism in Tibet (E. Schlagintweit). Illustrated by literary documents and objects of religious worship, etc. Leipzig: E. A. Brockhaus, & London: Trüber & Co., 1863, 403 pp., Bibliogr., Glossary, Plates & Index.

Gyud (Tib. rGyud). Division of the *Kanjur*. See *Kâla-Chakra*.

History of Buddhism (Tàranàtha). German tr. from Tibetan by A. Schiefner, St. Petersburg, 1869. ***

Born in A.D. 1575, Lama Taranatha wrote this book in 1608. V. Vasil'ev of St. Petersburg translated it from Tibetan into Russian in April 1869 followed by the German translation of the text by Schiefner also published from St. Peterburg in October of the same Year. In view of the profound importance of the work for understanding Indian history in general and of the history of Buddhism in particular. modern scholars have extensively been using especially Schiefner's German translation of the History for decades and this for varied purposes.

Kala-Chakra. Tib.: Dus-kyi hkor-lo, pronounced: Tû-gyi kor-lo; Mong.; Tsakun Kiirden. First section in the *rGyud* division of the *Kanjur*.

Kanjur (Tib. sp. bKah-hgyur). "Translation of the Word," the first part of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. It contains 108 volumes, some of which concern the Vinaya or monastic discipline, while others set forth the prajñâ-pâramitâ philosophy and expound the Trikâya and the Alaya Vijnana doctrines. The second part of the Tibetan Canon is the *Tanjur* (Tib. sp. bStan-hgyur) or "Translation of Treatises." This collection contains 225 volumes of works by Indian masters, being partly commentaries on the Sûtras and partly on the Tantras. The Tibetan Canon consists mainly of translations from the Sanskrit

and the Chinese collected and arranged into the above two groups by Bu-ston, a Tibetan scholar (1290-1364). Only partial transl. into English were available such as the *Analysis of the Dulva* by Alex. Csoma de Koròs, 1836, 1839.

Ltung-bshags sangs-rgyas smon-lam or "Records of the Thirty-five Buddhas of Confession" – a Manuscript. (Mentioned by E. Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, Leipzig, 1863, p. 96).

Mani-bkah-hbum, "the hundred thousand precious commandments," a glorification of Avalokita, attributed to King Srong-stan-j-gam-po (d. 650 A.D.). One copy in St. Petersburg (Leningrad); the other in the Library of the French Institute, No. 58 of the Cat. of Tibetan works. Analysis of it in E. Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*, pp. 84 *et seq.* Mentioned on p. 212 of W. W. Rockhill's *The Life of the Buddha and the early History of his Order, etc.*, 1907 (Trübners Oriental Series).

Tanjur. See *Kanjur*.

China (Ancient)

Ch'un Ch'iu, "Annals of Spring and Autumn." The only one of the Chinese "Five Classics" ascribed to Confucius himself, although there is some doubt about it. It may be merely transcribed from the annals of Lu, Confucius native State. It is a record of such things as the beginnings of the seasons, State-covenants, wars, deaths of persons of high estate, and extraordinary events. The notices of eclipses are important as affording chronological data. The record runs from 721 B. C. to the 14th year of Duke Ai, when Confucius' work ends, and is supplemented by his disciples up to the time of his death, 478 B. C. The best known commentary on this work is the *Tso Chuan* which supplements it in a lively style.

Erh ya. Initiated according to tradition by Chow Kung, uncle of Wu Wang, the first Emperor of the Chow dynasty, B. C. 1122. Ascribed also to Tsze Hea, the disciple of Confucius.

Five Classics (China). See *Ch'un Ch'iu*; *I-Ching*; *Shu-Ching*.

I-Ching. "The Book of Changes" or of "Regeneration," one of the Five Classics of China. Based on Eight Trigrams made up of divided and undivided lines with a mystical meaning attached to them. These are followed by "Definitions" and "Commentaries." Translated into German from the Chinese by Richard Wilhelm, 1924. Translated into English by Cary F. Baynes. Bollingen Foundation, Series XIX, New York, 1950, Repr. 1952, 1955, 1961, 1962, etc. ∞∞∞

K'ung-tzu chia yü, or "Discourses of the Confucian School." Covers the legendary history of Confucius, much of which has little to do with accurate facts. The following works deal with it: *Kong-tze Kia-yu*. Les Entretiens familiers de Confucius, traduits pour la première fois par C. de Harlez. Paris: Louvain, 1899, 8vo., 196 pp.—*K'ung Tzu Chia yü* . . . The School Sayings of Confucius, Introd. & transl. of Sections 1-10. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1949, 8vo, xii, 379 (*Sinica Leidensia*, Vol. 7).

Lao Tseu Tao Te King: le livre de la voie et de la vertu (S. Julien), Paris, 1841.

Life of Confucius (James Legge). Untraced; but passage quoted by H.P.B. may be found in Legge's Preface (p. xiv) to *The Sacred Books of China. The Texts of Confucianism*, in *The Sacred Books of the East Series*, American edition, Vol. V, New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1899.

Lun-Yu (Analecta), by Confucius. In J. Legge, Vol. I of *The Chinese Classics*, 1861-72, 3 vols.; 2nd ed., 1869-76. Also in G. Pauthier, *Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient*, etc., Paris, 1840; also W. E. Soothill, 1910.

Si-yu-ki (Hiuen-Tsang). Originally translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in 648; then transl. from the Chinese into French by Stanislas A. Julien (Paris, 1857-58, 2 vols.), with the sub-title of *Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales*, and published as Vol. II of his *Voyages des Pèlerins Bouddhistes* (Paris, 1853). ***

Tao-teh-Ching (Lao-Tze). French transl. by Stanislas Julien, 1842, 8vo.—Engl. tr. by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vols. 39, 40.—Also by Bhikshu Wai-Tao and Dwight Goddard, Santa Barbara, 1935.—Also a Version entitled *The Book of the Path of Virtue*, by Walter R. Old. Madras: Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, 1894.

Ts'an t'ung ch'i (Wei Po-yang), meaning "The Kinship of the Three." Written about 142 A. D. by an alchemist. This work, the full title of which is *Chou i ts'an fung ch'i*, is the earliest extant Chinese work on alchemy.

India/Hinduism

Ain-i-Akbari (Institutes of Akbar), by Abu al-Fadi ibn Mubarak (1551 P-1602), in three vols. Vol. I tr. into Engl, by H. Blochmann; Vols. II & III tr. by H. S. Jarrett. Text in *Bibliotheca Indica* Series of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, work Nos. 61, 270, 271. Calcutta, 1873, 1891, 1894. Second ed. of Vol. I ed. by D. C. Phillott, Calcutta, Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, 1927-49. An earlier translation by Francis Gladwin (Calcutta, 1783-86) is now exceedingly rare. [SD1, p. xxiv note *] ***

Aitareya-Brahmanam of the Rigveda . . . Edited, translated and explained by Martin Haug, Bombay, 1863, 2 vols. Reprint of transl. in *Sacred Books of the Hindus*.

Aitareya Upanishad. See *Upanishads*. [SD, 1, p. 7, 74, 101; SD2, p. 47, 118 note †, 500]

Akademische Vorlesungen uber indische Literaturgeschichte (A. F. Weber), Berlin, 1852, 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1876-78. Transl. into Engl, from the 2nd German ed. by J. Mann & T. Zachariae, as *The History of Indian Literature*, Trubner's Oriental Series, Vol. III, 1878. [SD1, p. 47 note †?, 365 note †, 436?, 461 note †, 647?; SD2, p. 49-50. 67?, 165-166 note †?, 225?, 320?, 326?, 570?, 605 note †?]

Anugita. H.P.B. uses the edition entitled: *The Bhagavadgita with the Sanatsujatiya and the Anugita*. Translated by Kashinath Trimbak Telang. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1882. Volume VIII of the *Sacred Books of the East*, ed. by F. Max Muller. The

Anugita is one of the numerous episodes of the *Mahdbhdrata*, and forms part of its Asvamedha Parvan, namely chapters XVI to LI thereof.

Aphorisms of Sandilya, The. With the Commentary of Svapnesvara, etc. Tr. by E. B. Cowell, viii, 114 pp. Calcutta: Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, 1878. *Bibl. Indica*, work no. 409.

Atharvaveda Samhita. Text edited by R. Roth & W. D. Whitney, Berlin, 1855-56; 2nd ed., 1924.—Edited with the Commentary of Säyanächärya by Shankar Pändurang Pandit. Four vols., Bombay, 1895-98.—Translated by W. D. Whitney & revised by C. H. Lanman. Two vols., Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, 1905. *Harvard Oriental Series*, 1 & 8.—Transl. by M. Bloomfield, Oxford, 1897. in *SBE*, Vol: XLU.

Bagavadam. Tamil version of the *Bhdgavata-Purana*, which see.

Bhagavad-Gttä. The "Song of the Blessed"—celebrated religious and philosophical poem of India which is inserted as an episode in the Sixth Book of the *Mahābhārata*. First translation into English by Sir Charles Wilkins who was Senior Merchant of the East India Company. Published under the authority of the Company at the recommendation of Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India. London: C. Nourse, 1785. This original translation was reprinted for the Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund Society by Tukaram Tatyä, Bombay, 1887.

Innumerable translations and editions have appeared through the years. Among them should be mentioned: Recension with valuable Introductory prepared by William Quan Judge on the basis of the translation by J. Cockburn Thomson (1855) and others, and published by the Theosophical Publishing Society, New York and London, 1890. Many reprints since. Edition prepared by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, containing Sanskrit text in Roman letters, translation into English and Notes, as well as a valuable Introductory Essay. London: Luzac & Co., 1947. A number of other editions are listed in Vol. V of Blavatsky's *Collected Writings*, p. 363.

Bhāgavata-Purāna. See *Purānas*. [SD1, p. 10 note *, 79, 236, 371; SD2, p. 165 note *, 214 note **, 247, 320, "381 note **", 418 note **, 549, 550, 571, 572, 615 note *]

Bhavishya-Purāna. See *Purānas*. [SD2, p. 323]

Bible dans l'Inde, La. Vie de Iezeus Christna (L. Jacolliot), 1869. Engl. tr. as *The Bible in India*, London, 1870, 8vo.; also Allahabad, 1916; v, 376 pp. [SD1, p. 336?; SD2, p. 442]

Bibliotheca Indica; a collection of original works (in Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, and Arabic) publ. by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Calcutta, Benares, Tungoo, London & Hartford, 1845—. Old and New Series, 4to & 8vo. [SD2, p. 321]. ***

Book of Sarparajni. See *Aitareya-Brdhmanam* (Haug). Cf. Book V, ch. iv. [SD1, p. 74]

Brahmanas. Ancient prose treatises in close relation to the *Vedas*; ritual textbooks the main object of which is to explain the sacred significance of the ritual of sacrifice to those who are already more or less familiar with it. Their contents may be classified

under the three heads of practical sacrificial directions (*vidhi*), explanations (*arthavdda*), exegetical, mythological, or polemical, and theological or philosophical speculations on the nature of things (*upanishads*). At the end of the *Brdhmanas* may be found the *Aranyakas* or "Forest Treatises," with their corresponding *Upanishads* which are either imbedded in them or form their concluding portion. These are the most mystical and esoteric treatises of ancient Hindu lore.—Many texts and translations, some in the *Sacred Books of the East*. Mention of: [SD1, p. xxvii, 68, 165, 270, 271, 451, 571-572; SD2, p. 284, 409, 567] Direct reference: 0

Brahma-Purana. See *Purnnas*.

Brahma-Vaivarta. See *Purnnas*.

Brahmdnda-Purdna. See *Purnnas*.

Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad. See *Upanishads*.

Catechism of the Visishtâdvaita Philosophy of Sri Ramanujâchârya, A (N. Bhâshyâchârya). Compiled from the original Sâstras. Adyar, 1887.

Chhândogyopanishad. See *Upanishads*.

Crest-Jewel of Wisdom. See *Vivekachuddmani [Viveka Chudamani]*. [SD1, 569-570, 573].

"De quelques légendes brahmaniques qui se rapportent au berceau de l'espèce humaine" (Baron d'Ekstein), *Journal asiatique*, Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, Cinquième Série, Tome VI, August-September, October-November and December, 1855. [SD2, p. 204]

Garuda Purana. See *Puranas*.

Golâdhyâya. Being the fourth and last chapter of the *Siddhânta-siromani* of Bhâskarâchârya. Transl. by Lancelot Wilkinson. Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1861. Work 32, N.S. in the *Bibl Indica*.

Harivamsa. See *Mahâbhârata*.

Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks, Die (Franz Felix Adalbert Kuhn). Berlin: Dümmler, 1859, 8vo.

Hindoo Pantheon, The (E. Moor), 1810, 4to.; new ed., cond. & annot. by W. O. Simpson, Madras, 1864, 8vo.; lacks the plates.—Repr. of the 1810 ed., by Philosophical Research Society, Los Angeles, Calif., 1976.

Historical View of Hindu Astronomy, from the earliest dawn of that Science in India, down to the present time, etc. (John Bentley), Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1823, 4to., pp. xxvii, 228, pi. IX. Repr. by International Publ. Service, 1970. ***

India, What can it teach us? (F. Max Müller). A Course of Lectures delivered before

the University of Cambridge. London: Longmans & Co., 1883, x, 402 pp.; new ed., 1892.—The 1883 ed. has valuable Introduction and footnotes by Dr. Alexander Wilder.

Indian Antiquities (Thos. Maurice), London, 1793-1800, 7 vols., 8vo. (intended as an Introd. to *The Hist. of Hindustan*). Also 1794-1800 and 1806.

Indian Wisdom, or Examples of the Religious, Philosophical, and Ethical Doctrines of the Hindus, etc. (Sir Monier Monier-Williams). Oxford, 1875. Also in *The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies*, Vol. XXXVI, Varanasi, India, 1963. Also repr. by Lawrence Verry, 1974.

Indische Alterthumskunde (C. Lassen), Bonn: H. P. Koenig (Leipzig: L. A. Kittler), 1847-61, 4 vols., 8vo.; 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1866-74, 2 vols., 8vo.

Jnâna-bhâshara. A work in the Dharmasâstra; also a work in the Jyotisha (astronomyastrology) area.

Kathakopanishad. See *Upanishads*.

Kurma-Purâna. See *Purânas*.

Lalita-Vistara. Edited by R. Mitra (partially transl.). Calcutta: Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, 1877. *Bibl. Ind.* 15.—Transl. by R. Mitra. *Bibl. hid.*, New Series, vol. 90.

Laws of Manu. See *Manavadharmasastra*.

Linga-Purana. See *Puranas*.

Manavadharmasastra or *Manusmriti*. The most important and earliest of the metrical Smritis, probably based on a *Manavadharmasutra*. Closely connected with the *Mahabharata*, of which three books alone (iii, xii, xvi) contain as many as 260 of its 2684 slokas. Text crit. ed. by J. Jolly. London: Triibner's Oriental Series, 1887. Transl. by G. Buhler. Oxford: Clarendon Press. *SBE XXV*.—See also *Ordinances of Manu*, by A. C. Burnell.

Mandukya Upanishad. See *Upanishads*.

Mantra sastra. General reference; not to any specific scripture?

Manubhâshya (Medhâtithi). Edited with the *Manusmriti* by M. M. Gangânâtha Jhâ. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1932. *Bibl. Ind.*, work 256.—Translated by same author. Calcutta: Univ. of Calcutta, 1920-26, in 5 vols.

Markandeya-Purana. See *Puranas*.

Matsya-Purana. See *Puranas*,

Mitâksharâ (Vijnânesvara). Edited with the *Yâjnavalkyasmriti* by Wâsudev Laxrhan Sâstri Pansikar. Bombay, 1918.—Transl. by H. T. Colebrooke, Calcutta, 1869.—Transl.

by S. C. Vasu. Allahabad: Panini Office, 1909. Part 1 only, in *SBH*, vol. 2.

Mundaka Upanishad. See *Upanishads*.

Nāradapancharātra. Edited by Rev. K. M. Banerjea. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1865. *Bibliotheca Indica*, work 38. Translated by Swami Vijnanananda. Allāhābād: Pānini Office, 1921. *Sacred Books of the Hindus*, Vol. 23.

Naradiya-Purāna. See *Puranas*.

"On the Chronology of the Hindus" (Capt. F. Wilford). *Asiatick Researches*, London, Vol. V, 1799.

"On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India," (Sir Wm. Jones). *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. I, 1799, p. 272. ***

"On the Kings of Magadha" (Capt. F. Wilford). *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. IX (1809), London.

Ordinances of Manu, A Translation of the (A. C. Burnell). Unfinished work completed by the American scholar Dr. E. W. Hopkins. London: Triibner & Co., 1884. Recent Indian ed., Kalyana Publishers, Ludhiana, 1972.

Padma-Purāna. See *Purānas*.

Puranas. A class of Sanskrit works expounding ancient Indian theogony, cosmogony, genealogies and philosophical tenets. The word itself means *ancient* or *ancient lore*, indicating that these works hand down ancient traditions concerning profound subjects. They are usually reckoned as eighteen in number. Those mentioned in the *S.D.*, or quoted from are as follows:—*Bhagavata Purana*, Edited by Balakrishna Sastri, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1898.—Prose English translation, edited and published by N. Nath Dutt, Calcutta, 1895-96.—*Srimad Bhagavatam*. Transl. by S. Subba Rau, Tirupati, 1928.—French transl, by Eugene Burnouf, Paris, 1840-47 & 1884-98.—*Bhavishya-Purana*. MS. form, Bombay, Venkatesvara Press, 1910.—*Brahma-Purana*. Edited by the Pandits of the Anandasrama, Poona, 1895.—*Brahmanda-Purana*. MS. form, Bombay, Venkatesvara Press, 1912.—*Brahmavaivarta-Purana*. Edited by JIvananda Vidyasagara, Calcutta, Sarasvati Press, 1888.—Translated by Rajendra Nath Sen, Allahabad, Panini Office, 1920-22. *Sacred Books of the Hindus*, Vol. 24.—*Garuda-Purana*. Edited and translated by Manmatha Nath Dutt, Calcutta, Society for Resuscitation of Indian Literature, 1908. *Wealth of India*.—*Lin ga-Purdna*. Edited by Pandit JIvananda Vidyasagara, Calcutta, New Valmiki Press, 1885.—*Markandeya-Purana*. Edited by Rev. K. M. Banerjea, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862. *Bibliotheca Indica*, work 29.—Translated with Notes by F. Eden Pargiter, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1904. *Bibl. Ind.*, work 125.—*Matsya-Purana*. Edited by JIvananda Vidyasagara, Calcutta, Sarasvati Press, 1876. Translated by Talugdar of Oudh, Allahabad, Panini Office, 1916-17. *Sacred Books of the Hindus*, Vol. 17.—*Naradiya-Purana* (or *Ndrada-Purana*). Edited by Pandit Hrishikesa Sastri. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1891. *Bibliotheca Indica*, work 107.—*Padma-Purdna*. Edited by V. N. Mandalika, Poona, Anandasrama Press 1893-94.

Anandasrama Sanskrit Series extra. 1.—*Siva-Purdna* (or *Saiva-Purdna*). Ms. form, Bombay, Venkatesvara Press, 1906.—*Skanda-Purana*. MS. form, together with other excerpts, Bombay, Venkatesvara Press, 1908-09.—*Vdyu-Purdna*. Edited by Rajendralala Mitra, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1880, 1888. *Bibl. Ind.*, work 85.—*Vishnu-Purana*. Edited by Jivananda Vidyasagara, Calcutta, Sarasvati Press, 1882.—Translated by H. H. Wilson, London: John Murray, 1840.; his transl. was edited by Fitzedward Hall. London. Trübner & Co., 1864-77, in 5 vols. Also in *Works by the late H. H. Wilson*.

Pushkara-Mahatmya. An eulogy of the sacred place Pushkara. ***

Ramayana. Renowned Sanskrit epic, which details the life and adventures of Ramachandra, his winning of Sita for wife, the rape of the latter by the demon-king Ravana of Ceylon, her rescue by Rama and the latter's final translation to heaven. It has been ascribed to Valmiki. In its present form, it consists of about 24,000 slokas, and is divided into seven books. It has been preserved in three distinct recensions, the West Indian, the Bengal, and the Bombay.—Translated into English verse by R. T. H. Griffith, London: Triibner & Co., 1870-74; Benares, 1895; and into Engl, prose by M. N. Dutt, Calcutta, 1891-94.

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"Recherches sur le Zodiac Indien" (Ërard Molien). *Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de l'Institut de France*. Première Série: Sujets divers d'érudition. Tome III, 1853, pp. 240-276, plates. ***

Religions of India, The (Auguste Barth). Authorized transl. by Rev. J. Wood. London, 1882, 8vo., pp. xxiv, 309 (Triibner Oriental Series). ***

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Rig-Vidhâna. Attributed to Saunaka; a metrical work which describes the magical effects produced by the recitation of hymns or single verses of the *Rigveda*.

Saiva-Purana. See *Puranas*.

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Samkhya-Sara (Vijana Bhikshu). Edited by Fitzedward Hall. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862. *Bibl. Ind.*, work 54.

Sanatsujdtiya. Translated (together with the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Anugita*) by Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Oxford, Clarendon Press. *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. VIII; 2nd ed., 1908.

Satapathabrahmana. In *The White Yajurveda*, ed. by Albrecht Weber. Part 2. Berlin: F. Dummler's Verlagsbuchhandlung; London: Williams & Norgate, 1855.—Transl. by Julius Eggeling, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882, 85, 94, 97, 1900. 5 vols. *SBE* XII, XXVI, XLI, XLIII, XLIV.

Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus (H. H. Wilson), Calcutta, 1827. Also in his *Works*, Vol. 11.

Siddhânta-siromani. See *Golâdhyâya*.

Sûrya-Siddhânta. Translated by Rev. Ebenezer Burgess, former missionary in India, New Haven, Conn., 1860, *Hi*, 357 pages, Index. Assisted by the Committee of Publication of the American Oriental Society, notably William Dwight Whitney who wrote the exhaustive Commentary comprising one half of the text. The work was issued both in the *Journal* of the Society and in book form, with differing pagination.—Facsimile second edition published by Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, Minn., 1978, with additional Notes, excerpt from Bailly's writings, and a Bibliography of W. D. Whitney's writings. ***

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Traité de l'astronomie Indienne et Orientale. Ouvrage qui peut servir de suite à *l'Histoire de l'astronomie ancienne*. (J.-S. Bailly). Paris: Debure, 1787, clxxx, 417 pp. Index. ***

Upanishads. All those quoted from or referred to in the S.D. may be consulted in *The Twelve Principal Upanishads* (English Translation). With Notes from the Commentaries of Samkarâchârya and the Gloss of Ânandagiri. Published by the indefatigable early Theosophist, Tookaram Tatya, F.T.S., for the Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund, Bombay, 1891. The translations are by various scholars.—Except for the *BrihadÂranyaka* and the *Chhândogya*, they have also been translated by G.R.S. Mead and Jagadîsha Chandra Chattopâdhyâya as *The Upanishads*, London: Theosophical Publishing Society (Benares & Madras), 1896, in two small volumes. 000

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Vedas. See *Atharvaveda, Rigveda, White Yajurveda*.

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Viveka Ckûdâmani (Samkarâchârya), Translated by Mohini Mohun Chatterji for *The Theosophist*, Vol. VII, October, 1885; Jan., Mch., July, Aug., 1886—Translated also by Charles Johnston in the *Oriental Department Papers* issued by W. Q. Judge in 1894-95. This translation entitled *The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*, together with his translations of other writings of Samkarâchârya, was published by the Theosophical University Press, Covina, Calif., in 1946.

Vridhdha-Garga. Astronomical work attributed to the ancient sage by that name. More correctly *Vridhdhagarga-samhitâ*. ***

White Yajur-Veda. Text edited by Albrecht Weber. Berlin & London, 1852.—Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith. Benares: E. J. Lazarus & Co., 1899; 2nd ed., 1927.

Yâjnavalkya-Smriti, or Yâjnavalkya-dharmasâstra (Yâjfiavalkya). Rather concise, cont. only 1009 slokas. Probably based on a Dharma-Sûtra of the *White Yajur-veda*. Dated ca. 350 A. D. Its author probably belonged to Mithilâ, capital of Videha (Tirhut). Text and translation in *The Dharma Sûtras*, ed. by M. N. Dutt. Calcutta: Society for the Resuscitation of Ind. Literature, 1906-08.

Yoga Sâstra (Hemachandra). Edited by Dharma-vijaya. Calcutta: Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, 1907. *Bibl. Ind.*, work 172.—Text and transl. by F. Belloni-Filippo, in *Giornale della Societa Asiatica Italiana*, 1908-14.

Yogavâsishtha-râmâyana. Attributed to Valmiki. Translated by Vihârilala Mitra, Calcutta, 1891, 1893, 1898, 1899. An Advaita philosophic work supposed to contain teachings given to Râma when he was in a depressed mood.

Middle Eastern/Persian/Islam/ Zoroastrianism

Book al-Khazari, or Kitdb al-Khazari (Jehudah ben-Samuel Ha-Levi; Arab. Abu-l-Hassan Yehudah ibn Allavi). Written in Arabic, the book is based on a narrative dealing with the search of the King of the Khazars for the right belief. It was written about 1140. Translated into German by Dr. H. Hirschfeld, Breslau, 1885; also London, 1905;

and by D. Cassei, Leipzig, 1869.

Bundahish (in Pahlavi *Bûndahishar*). A Pahlavi text on creation, cosmogony, etc.; of the Scriptures of the Pârsîs. Translated by E. W. West in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. V.

Dabistan-al-Madhdhib (attributed to Muhsin Fânî and to Mûbad Shah or Mullâ Mûbad). Persian work written in the 17th century on the subject of religions and sects of various people and the India of that century. Partly derived from the *Desdtr*. English transl. by D. Shea and A. Troyer as *The Dabistan or School of Manners*, Paris, 1843, 3 Vols., 8vo. Inch preliminary discourse by Troyer.

Desâtir, The. Or Sacred Writings of the Ancient Persian Prophets; in the original tongue; together with the ancient Persian version and commentary of the Fifth Sasan. Together with an English translation by Mulla Firuz Bin Kaus, Bombay, 1818, 8vo., Two Vols. The original is in the Mahâbhadian language.—Edited and republished by Dhunjeebhoy Jamssetjee Medhora, Bombay, 1888. Includes Anthony Troyer's Discussion on the *Desâtir* from the English translation of the *Dabistân* by David Shea and Anthony Troyer. Photographic copy pr. by Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, 1975 (Secret Doctrine Reference Series).

Eternal Wisdom. See *Giavidân-khirad*.

Gathas. See *Avesta*.

Giavidan-khirad (Eternal Wisdom). Attributed to Hôshang, a mythological king of Iran, and is mainly a collection of moral sayings. Listed in the British Library under Ahmad ibn Muhammad (Abu Aji), called Ibn Miskaviah. Cf. entry in *A Catalog of the Persian Printed Books in the British Museum*, London, 1922: *Ijâvidân Khirad*. An abridged translation by Hâjî Shams ul-Dîn Muli. E. by Mânekjî Lîmjî Hûshang Hâtaryâ] 436 pp., lith. [Teheran?], 12°.

Muntakhab-ut-Tawârikh ('Abd-ul-Qâdir Bada'uni). Transl. by Lt.-Col. G. S. A. Ranking, in *Bibliotheca Indica* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1898. Text publ. in 1868. The author was the son of Mulûk Shâh of Badâon and pupil of Shaikh Mubarak of Nâgor. He was a very learned man employed by Akbar to make translations into Persian from Arabic and Sanskrit (such as the *Râmâyana*). Detailed biogr. in the *Journal* of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, 1869, Pt. I.

Nabathäische Landwirtschaft or *The Book of Nabathean Agriculture* (tr. from the Arabic by D. A. Chwol'sohn). See Chwol'sohn's *lieber die Ueberreste der altbabylonischen Literatur, etc.*, in *Mémoires des savants étrangers*, Vol. VIII, St. Petersburg: Imp. Acad. of Science, 1859.

Sabier und der Ssabismus, Die (Daniil A. Chwol'sohn), St. Petersburg, 1856. Two Vols.—Facs. ed., Amsterdam, Oriental Press, 1965.

Dr. Daniel Chwol'sohn, was Professor of Hebrew in the University of St. Petersburg, and first made himself known to Oriental scholars by the publication of one of the most able and profound works connected with the history and literature of the East which has ever

appeared. *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus—the Sabians and Sabian Worship—has for ever settled many doubtful and long-disputed points in religion; has thrown new and irresistible light upon earlier Eastern history; and placed its author at once in the highest rank as one of the most painstaking critics of the day.*

Vendidad Sadah. See *Avesta*.

Yasna. See *Avesta*.

Zamyâd Yasht. See *Avesta*.

Zend-Avesta. See *Avesta*.

Zlj-tlkhani (Ilkhani Tables). These are astronomical tables by Muhammad ibn Muhammad Nazir al-Din al-Tusi (1201-1274), originally issued in 1269. Translated into Arabic and Latin by John Greaves as *Binae Tabulae Geographicae*, etc., London, Typis Jacobi Flesher, 1652, 4to., 64 pp.; also in 1711. There is no translation yet into any modern language. The work contains calculations of planetary places, eras, movements of planets and astrological observations. ***

Oriental Languages and dictionaries

Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History, and Literature, A (John Dowson), Trubner's Oriental Series, Vol. 6, 1878, etc.; 6th ed., London, 1928; 10th ed., 1968.

St. Petersburg Dictionary. This is: *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*, by Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph Roth, publ. by the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 1855-75, in 7 Vols. 4to.

Sanskrit Dictionary (T. Goldstiicker). This is H. H. Wilson's *Dictionary. Sanskrit and English*, of 1855, to which Goldstiicker added the supplement, grammatical appendices and an index, as an extension of Wilson's 2nd ed., Berlin, 1856, etc.

Vdchaspatya. Sanskrit Dictionary by Taranatha Tarkavachaspati Bhattacharya. Calcutta, 1873, etc., 4to. (prts i-vii have 1680 pp.). Reprint available in Chowkamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi.

Other Orientalism

Dits Syriis, De (John Seldenus). London: G. Stansleius, 1617, 8vo.; also 1619, 1629, and Amsterdam, 1680. Transl. by W. A. Hauser as *The Fabulous Gods denounced in the Bible*, Philad. J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1880.

John Selden 1584-1654 was an English jurist and scholar. He studied at Oxford, was called to the bar in 1612, and was elected to Parliament in 1623. He had already assisted in preparing the protestation of Commons in 1621, asserting to King James I Parliament's rights in the affairs of state, and he had briefly been held in custody as a result. He continued to support the rights of Parliament in its struggle with the crown, was prominent in the trial of George Villiers, 1st duke of Buckingham, and helped to draw up the Petition of Right in 1628. For his activity in the recalcitrant

Parliament of 1629 he was imprisoned and was not released until 1631. He represented the Univ. of Oxford in the Long Parliament from 1640 to 1649. Selden was considered one of the most erudite men of his time. His *England's Epinomis and Jani Anglorum* (1610) established him as the father of legal antiquarianism.

The preface to his edition of the *Fleta* (1647) summarizes his lifelong study in the origins of British law. Selden's reputation as an Orientalist was begun with his *De Diis Syris* (1617), and he prepared a number of studies of rabbinical law. His *History of Tithes* (1618) involved him in a conflict with the clergy, and the work was suppressed. Among his other works is *Mare Clausum* (1635), a defense of England's right to sovereignty over the seas between that country and the Continent, written in response to Hugo Grotius's *Mare Liberum*. He is popularly best remembered for the record of his conversations kept by his secretary, Richard Milward, and published as *Table Talk* (1689, ed. by Frederick Pollock, 1927). **Bibliography:** See G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden* (10 vol., 1883-84).

11. Periodicals (various)

Builder, The (London). Illustrated weekly conducted by G. Godwin, Vols. 1-44, 1842+.

Building is one of the UK's oldest business-to-business magazines, launched as *The Builder* in 1843 by Joseph Aloysius Hansom – architect of Birmingham Town Hall and designer of the Hansom Cab. The journal was renamed *Building* in 1966 as it is still known today. *Building* is the only UK title to cover the entire building industry.

Calcutta Review, Vol. LXVI.

The *Calcutta Review* was founded in May 1844, by Sir John William Kaye. Through the journal, Sir Kaye aimed "to bring together such useful information, and propagate such sound opinions, relating to Indian affairs, as will, it is hoped, conduce, in some small measure, directly or indirectly, to the amelioration of the condition of the people". The periodical proved to be successful, and was published as a quarterly up until 1912.

Evening Telegraph, June 30, 1888.

Frazer's Magazine for Town and Country, London, 1830-69, 80 Vols., 8vo.; n.s. 1870-82, 8vo.

Journal des Colonies. Art. by Lavoisier, Missionary of Cochin.

Journal des Débats. See "Système nouveau, etc." (Leibnitz).

Journal des Sçavans, Paris, Jan. 5, 1665 – Dec, 1792. Index 1665-1750.

Macmillan's Magazine, London: 1st Series, Vols. 1-92 (no. 1-522), Nov., 1859 – Oct., 1905, etc.

Magasin Pittoresque. Edited by Edouard Charton, 1833– . See: "Les Rochers de Brimham" (unsigned but likely by É. Charton).

Nation, New York: criticism of Stallo's work. ***

National Geographic Magazine (National Geographical Society, Washington, D.C.). First issue in 1888; in progress.

National Reformer. See "Phreno-Kosmo-Biology" (Dr. Lewins).

New York Times, The.

O. E. Library Critic, The (Edited by H. N. Stokes), Weekly publ. in Washington, D.C, 1911-1942. ***

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Revue des Deux Mondes: March 1, 1858, pp. 5-32 (Littré); July 15, 1860 (Littré); 1865, pp. 157-58 (A. Thierry).

The Revue des Deux Mondes (English: *Review of the Two Worlds*) is a monthly literary and cultural affairs magazine published in the French language.

According to its website, "it is today the place for debates and dialogues between nations, disciplines and cultures, about the major subjects of our societies".

It was founded by François Buloz, first appearing on 1 August 1829. According to its website, it was created in order to "establish a cultural, economic and political bridge between France and the United States". It was purchased in 1831 by Buloz, who was its editor until 1877. Another influential editor in its history was Ferdinand Brunetière (after 1893).

"Rochers de Brimham, Les" (unsigned, but most likely by the Editor, Edouard Charton), *Magasin Pittoresque*, Vol. XXI, 1853, No. 1, p. 32. ***

Saturday Review, London, 1-163, 1855-1938.

Spectator, The. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Established in 1846 and in progress now.

Sun, The (New York).

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Athenaeum, No. 2048, Jan. 26, 1867, pp. 127-28. Art. on Jacob Böhme, Signed C.W.H. — Also No. 3069, August 21, 1886, pp. 242-43, remarks by "F.J.B." The *Athenaeum* was a weekly periodical published in London between 1828 and 1923, covering a wide range of topics in literature, fine arts, music, theatre,

politics and popular science.

"Audubon's Lily Rediscovered" (Prof. Samuel Lockwood), *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. X, April, 1877, pp. 675-78.

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"Dawn of Creation and of Worship" (W. E. Gladstone). *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. XVIII, November, 1885, pp. 685-706.

"Norwegian Lemming and its Migrations, The" (W. Duppa Crotch), *Popular Science Review*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 151-52.

Scientific American, July 28, 1877.

Scientific Arena. Monthly Journal devoted to current philosophical teachings and its bearing upon the religious thought of the age. New York: A. Wilford Hall, Editor. [Issues of July, August and September, 1886, referred to.]

12. Philology, Linguistics, Bibliographies, Dictionaries

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Bibliothèque Orientale ou Dictionnaire Universel, etc. (B. d'Herbelot). Maestricht: J. E. Dufour & Ph. Roux, 1776, 26, 954 pp. Copious Index. Contains also a Supplement by Monseigneur A. Visselou, Bishop of Claudiopolis, on the History of Tartary and Observations on various portions of d'Herbelot's work; and by C. Galand on various sayings, etc. by Oriental Authors. Copious Index also; iv, 954 pp. ***

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Borhan Quatiu [Burhan (Muhammad Husain ibn Khalaf) Tabrlzl]. A Dictionary of the Persian Language, explained in Persian . . . With a short Grammar by

Thos. Roebuck. Calcutta, 1818, fol. ***

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Greek-English Lexicon, A. Compiled by H. G. Liddell (1811-98) & Robert Scott (1811-87). First ed., 1819; 4th ed., 1831. New ed., rev. & augm. by Sir Henry Stuart Jones (1867-1937), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925 & 1940, 2 vols.

Greek Lexicon (attributed to Suidas). Best ed. are those of T. Gaisford (without Latin version), Oxford, 1834, 3 vols., and of G. Bernhardt, Halle, 1834, embodying the Latin version also.

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Pasigraphie, ou . . . premiers Éléments du nouvel Art-Science d'écrire et d'imprimer en une langue de manière à être lu et entendu dans toute autre langue sans traduction, etc. (J. de Maimieux), Paris, 1797, 4to. The German text is also an original edition; 564 pp. in 2 prts. *This book is related to universal language theory.*

Prairies d'Or, Les (al-Masudî). Arabic title of this work is: *Murûj' udn-Dhahab wa Ma'âdin ul-Jawâhir*, "Meadows of Gold and Mines of Precious Stones." It was completed in 947, with a 2nd ed. in 956. French translation of Barbier de Maynard and Pavet de Courteille in nine vols., Paris, 1861-77. ***

Satyr a de nuptiis philologiae et Mercuriae (Martianus M. F. Capella). Compilation forming a sort of cyclopaedia of the polite learning of the Middle Ages, divided into nine books. Much of it is derived from sources which have long since perished. In Book VIII, para. 857, a remarkable passage distinctly states that the planets Mercury and Venus revolve around the Sun, and their position with regard to the Sun and the Earth, as well as to each other, is so correctly described, that one could easily assume that Copernicus, who quotes Martianus, may have derived the first germ of his ideas from this source. Editio princeps was printed at Vicenza by H. -de S. Urso, 1499, fol.; the best ed. are those of Hugo Grotius, Leyden, 1599, and of U. F. Kopp, Frankfurt, 1836.

Science of Language, The (Abel Hovelacque). Linguistics, Philology, Etymology, Transl. by A. H. Keane, 1877, pp. xv., 340, 8vo. The French original was entitled *La Linguistique, etc.*, 1876.

Wörterbuch der lateinischen Sprache (Wm. Freund), Leipzig: Hahn, 1834-40, in 4

vols., 8vo. French tr. by N. Theil, Paris, 1855-65, in 3 vols.

13. Philosophy

Handbook of the History of Philosophy (Albert Schweigler). Engl. tr. by J. H. Stirling. 5th ed., Edinburgh, 1874; 11th ed., 1877. The original German title is: *Geschichte der Philosophie im Umriss*; 4th ed., 1861.

Historia Critica Philosophiae (J. J. Brucker), 1742-44 in Five Vols.; new éd., Lipsiae, 1766-67 in Six Vols. English tr. by W. Enfield, 1791.

History of Philosophy, The (Thos. Stanley, The Elder). London, 1655-62, Three Vols., fol., (Vol. III is on *Pythagoras*; 2nd ed., 1887); 3rd ed., 1701; 11th ed., London: A. Millar, 1743, 4to.

Ancient

Abstinentia, De (Peri apoche ton empsychôn, "On Abstinence from Flesh"), by Porphyry. Ed. by A. Nauck, Leipzig, 1885. Engl. tr.: S. Hibberd, 1857; Thos. Taylor, *Select Works of Porphyry*, 1823. — Valuable as having preserved numerous original statements of the old philosophers, and the essence of Theophrastus' *On Piety*.

Arenarius. See *Psammites*.

Ars Geometriae (Anicius M. S. Boethius). Migne, *Patrol.*, *Ixiii--lxiv*, 1847; G. Friedlein, Leipzig, 1867. Also in Thos. Taylor's *Theoretic Arithmetic*. London, 1816, 8vo.

Banquet (or *Symposium*) (Plato). Greek text and English transl. by W. R. M. Lamb in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Commentaries on the Timaeus (Proclus). Consult: *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, edited by Ernestus Diehl. Lipsiae, Teubner, 1903-06, in 3 vols.; also Amsterdam, 1965. — *Commentaire sur le Timée*. Transl. into French with Notes by A. J. Festugière, Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1966, in 3 vols. — Thomas Taylor, *Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato*, 1810, 2 vols.; 2nd ed., 1820.

Comment, in De Caelo (Simplicius). In I. L. Heiberg, *Simplicii in Aristotelis Quatuor Libros de Caelo Commentaria* [Greek text], Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1894, 780 pp., Greek Index. — Also *Scholia in Aristotelem*. ed. C. Brandis, Berlin, 1836.

Commentary on Euclid (Proclus). Consult: *In Primum Euclidis Elementorum Librum Commentarii*, edited by G. Friedlein, Lipsiae, 1873, Index. — Thomas Taylor, *The Philosophical and Mathematical Commentaries of Proclus, etc*, 1788-89, in Two Vols.,

4°.

Concerning the procreation of the Soul in the Timaeus (Plutarch). Greek text and English translation by Harold Cherniss in *Loeb Classical Library. Moralia, Vol XIII.*

Cratylus (Plato). Greek text & English transl. by H. N. Fowler in *Loeb Classical Library.*

Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides and Timaeus of Plato, The (Thomas Taylor), London, 1793. Second edition, entirely reset, and with modern Greek script, by Wizards Bookshelf (Secret Doctrine Reference Series), Minneapolis, Minn., 1976.

Critias (Plato). Greek text and English transl. by the Rev. R. G. Bury in *Loeb Classical Library.*

Epistle IX (Seneca). *Epistulae Morales* in *Loeb Classical Library.* Latin text & English transl. by R. M. Gummere.

Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Die (H. Diels), 4th ed., 1922. Fragment 31 is of Xenophanes. English translation by Kathleen Freeman as *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press [1948]; also 1956 & 1966.
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Fuga et Inventione, De (On Flight and Finding) (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and Eng. translation by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker in *Loeb Classical Library.* ***

Gigantibus, De (Philo Judaeus). *Loeb Classical Library.* Greek text and English transl. by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker. ***

Homoiomeria (Anaxagoras). Consult collection of his Fragments by E. Schaubach, Leipzig, 1827, vi, 191 pp.; and by Schorn, Bonn, 1839. Also H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, etc.*, 1903, 1922.

Laws, The (Plato). Greek text and English transl. by the Rev. R. G. Bury in *Loeb Classical Library.*

Legum allegoriae (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and English transl. by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker in *Loeb Classical Library.*

Lives (Diogenes Laertius). Greek text and English transl. by R. D. Hicks in *Loeb Classical Library.* ***

Mind (London). See "Notes on Aristotle's Psychology, etc," (J. M. Rigg).

Mysteriis, Liber de (Iamblichus). Greek: *Peri musterion*. Often referred to as *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*. An Egyptian priest called Abammon is there introduced as replying to a letter of Porphyry. He endeavors

to refute various doubts respecting the truth and purity of the Egyptian religion and worship, and to prove the divine origin of the ancient teachings, and also that men, through theurgic rites, may commune with the Deity. — Greek text has been edited by Ficinus (Venice, 1483, 4to., with Latin translation), N. Scutellius (Rome, 1556, 4to.), Thos. Gale (Oxford, 1678, fol. with Latin transl.), and G. Parthey (Berlin, 1857). — Engl. tr. from the Greek by Thos. Taylor as *Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*, Chiswick, 1821, 8vo.; 2nd ed., London: Theos. Publ. Soc, 1895; 3rd ed., 1968. Another transl. is by Dr. Alexander Wilder as *Theurgia or the Ancient Mysteries by Iamblichos*. New York: The Metaphysical Publ. Co., 1911, 283 PP.

Notes on Aristotle's Psychology in Relation to Modern Thought" (J. M. Rigg), in *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, ed. by G. C. Robertson. London, Vol. II, No. 41, January, 1886.

On the Cherubim (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and English transl. by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker in *Loeb Classical Library*. ***

On the Migration of Abraham (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and English transl. by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker in *Loeb Classical Library*. ***

On the Soul (Peri psychas), by Timaeus of Locri. Best ed. is by J. J. de Gelder, Leyden, 1836; also (with Plato's *Timaeus*) by C. F. Herman, Leipzig, 1852. Greek text with French tr. was publ. by the Marquis d'Argens, Berlin, 1762.

On the Theology of Plato (In Platonis theologiam) (Proclus). Consult Thomas Taylor, *The Six Books of Proclus, the Platonic Successor: On the Theology of Plato*, etc., 1816, Two Vols, in one.

Opificio Mundi, De (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and English transl. by F. H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker in *Loeb Classical Library*. ***

Phaedon (Plato). Greek text and English tr. by H. N. Fowler in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Phaedrus (Plato). Greek text & English transl. by H. N. Fowler in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Philebos (Plato). Greek text & English transl. by H. N. Fowler in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Placitis Philosophorum, De (Plutarch). French translation as *Opinions de Philosophes* in Vol. 4 of *Les OEuvres de Plutarque*, transl. by Ricard. Paris: Lefèvre, 1844, Five Vols.

Platonist, The. Edited by Thos. M. Johnson. Four Volumes; monthly. 22-35 mm. Vols. 1-3; Vol. 4, nos. 1-6; Feb., 1881-June, 1888. — Publ. in St. Louis, Feb., 1881-

Jan., 1882; in Orange, N.Y., Jan.-July, 1884; in Osceola, Mo., Aug.-June, 1888.—
Publ. suspended: Feb., 1882-Dec, 1883; Aug., 1884-July, 1885; Jan-Dec, 1886
incl.— Superseded by *Bibliotheca Platonica*. ***

Principes rerum, De (Péri ton prôtôn archôn), by Damascius, known also as
"Doubts and Difficulties of the First Principles.' This work by the last of the
renowned teachers of Neo-Platonism at Athens was edited in part by J. Kopp,
Frankfurt, 1828, 8vo., and in full by C. E. Ruelle, 1889- French tr. by Chaignet,
1898.

Protagoras (Plato). Greek text and English transl. by W. R. Lamb in *Loeb Classical
Library*.

Pythagorean Triangle, The; or, the Science of Numbers, The (Rev. Geo. Oliver),
London; John Hogg & Co., 1875. Photographic reprint by Wizards Bookshelf,
Minneapolis, Minn., 1975. ***

Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and English
transl. from an ancient Armenian version of the original Greek, by Ralph
Marcus, in *Loeb*

Classical Library (Supplement I).

Quaestiones naturalis (Seneca). Latin text & English transl. by Thos. H. Corcoran
in *Loeb Classical Library*.

Republic (Plato). Greek text and English Transl. by Paul Shorey in *Loeb Classical
Library*.

Rerum natura, De (Lucretius). Latin Text and English translation by W. H. D.
Rouse *Loeb Classical Library*.

Somniis, De (Philo Judaeus). Greek text and English translation by F. H. Colson
& G. H. Whitaker in *Loeb Classical Library*. ***

Timaeus (Plato). Greek text & English transl. by The Rev. R. G. Bury in *Loeb
Classical Library*.

Vita Pythagorae, De (Porphyry). Ed. by A. Nauck, Leipzig, 1885; Greek and Latin,
Amsterdam, 1707; also Kiessling, Leipzig, 1816.— Incomplete; probably formed
a part of a larger history of philosophy.

Works of Plato, The (Thos. Taylor). Fifty-five Dialogues and Twelve Epistles
translated from the Greek. London, 1804, 5 vols., 8vo. See therein his
Introduction to Plato's *Parmenides*.

Medieval

More Nebükhlm (Maimonides). Known as *Guide to the Perplexed* (Arabic: *Dalâlat al-Hairin*). Completed about 1190; tr. into Hebrew about 1480. Publ. by S. Münk, Paris, 1856-66, 3 vols.; Engl. tr. by M. Friedländer, 1889, 3 vols. Repr. in one vol., 1925.

Renaissance

Docta Ignorantia, De (Cardinal Nicholas de Cusa, actually Nicholas Khrypffs), 1440, and later editions. Transl. by Fr. Germain Heron, as *Of Learned Ignorance*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, 8vo.

Essais (Michel de Montaigne). First edition of 1580 was repr. by Dezeimeris and Burckhausen in 1870. Edition of Courbet and Royer (1872-1900) is considered the standard. A recent edition has been published by Gamier Frères, Paris, 1962, and follows the edition of 1595 issued in Bordeaux.

A. Ricii de motu octavae sphaerae, opus mathematica at philosophia plenum, etc. (Augustinus Ricius), Lutetiae, 1521, 4to.

Modern

Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels (I. Kant), Königsberg und Leipzig, 1755. Appeared at first without the author's name, publ. by Joh. Fred. Petersen, Leipzig, 200 pp. Later, formed tome VI of Kant's *Works, Oeuvres de Kant* (Rosenkranz et Schubert).

Correspondence of Spinoza, The. Translated and Edited by Abraham Wolf. London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1928, 8vo.; 502 pp., plates, portraits. øøø

Critique de la raison pure (I. Kant). Jules Barni's transl., Paris: G. Baillièrre, 1869, 2 vols.

Essay on Man (A. Pope), 1733.

Essays (Francis Bacon), orig. publ. in 1597. Among them, the one entitled "Of Truth." Many editions in various languages.

Examen des Principes du R. P. Malebranche (G. W. Leibnitz), ca. 1711.

First Principles (Herbert Spencer). Issued in Parts between 1860 and 1862. Second thousand, London: Williams and Norgate, 1863, 8vo., xii, 503 pp.; 2nd ed., 1867; 6th; ed., 1928.

Ideen zur einer Philosophie der Natur (F. W. J. Schelling), Leipzig, 1797.

Lectures on the Philosophy of History (G. W. F. Hegel). Transl. from the 3rd

German ed. by J. Sibree. London: H. G. Bohn, 1861, xxxix, 477 pp.; also London: G. Bell & Sons, 1881. This is the Engl. tr. of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, edited by Gans and Karl Hegel.

Leibniz (Johann Th. Merz), Edinburgh—London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1884, 216 pp.; German transi., Heidelberg: Weiss, 1886.

Letter to Father Des Bosses (G. W. Leibnitz), dated Hanover, September 8, 1709.
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Lettres Persannes (Chas. L. Montesquieu), 1721, 12°; also 1730 & 1744. Transl. by J. Davidson as *Persian Letters*, priv. printed, London, 1892 & 1923.

Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), was a French social commentator and political thinker who lived during the Era of the Enlightenment. He is famous for his articulation of the theory of separation of powers, taken for granted in modern discussions of government and implemented in many constitutions throughout the world. He was largely responsible for the popularization of the terms feudalism and Byzantine Empire. Soon afterwards he achieved literary success with the publication of his Lettres persanes (Persian Letters, 1721), a satire based on the imaginary correspondence of a Persian visitor to Paris, pointing out the absurdities of contemporary society.

Logic, deductive and inductive (A. Bain). London: Longmans & Co., 1870, 1873, 1910.

Monadologie (G. W. Leibnitz). Short treatise in French found among his papers without any title. Written in 1714, about two years before his death. German tr. publ. in 1720; Latin tr. from the German tr. included by Dutens in his collected ed. of *Leibnitii Opera*, 1768. Original French text was first publ. in Erdmann's ed. of Leibnitz Philosophical works, 1840. Cf. H. Wildon Carr, *The Monadology of Leibnitz*, London, 1930.

Sartor Resartus (T. Carlyle). First publ. in *11 roxer's Magazine* between November, 1833, and August, 1834; first separate ed., Boston, 1835; first Engl. ed., 1838.

Thomas Carlyle's major work, Sartor Resartus (meaning 'The tailor re-tailored'), first published as a serial in 1833-34, purported to be a commentary on the thought and early life of a German philosopher called Diogenes Teufelsdröckh (which translates as 'god-born devil-dung'), author of a tome entitled "Clothes: their Origin and Influence." Teufelsdröckh's Transcendentalist musings are muddled over by a skeptical English editor who also provides fragmentary biographical material on the philosopher. The work is, in part, a parody of Hegel, and of German Idealism more generally.

Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg, Les (J. M. de Maistre), Paris, 1822.

The Soirées de St. Pétersbourg ("The Saint Petersburg Dialogues", 1821) is a theodicy in the form of a Platonic dialogue, in which

Maistre proposes his own solution to the age-old problem of the existence of evil. He argues that evil throws light upon the designs of God. The shedding of blood, the expiation of the sins of the guilty by the innocent, is for Maistre a law as mysterious as it is indubitable, the principle that propels humanity in its return to God, supplying an explanation for the existence and the perpetuity of war.

System of Logic (J. S. Mill), 8th ed., London, 1872, 8vo.

Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien que de l'union qu'il y a entre l'âme et le corps (G. W. Leibnitz), in *Journal des Débats*, Paris, June 27, 1695.

Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik (I. Kant), Riga & Mitau: Hartknoch, 1766, 8vo., 128 pp.

Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, A (Geo. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne), Dublin: Jeremy Pepyat, 1710, 8vo.; also 1734, 1852, 1874, 1937, 1942, with variants and additions.

True Intellectual System of the Universe, The (Ralph Cudworth). London, 1678, in one volume; 2nd ed., 1743, in two volumes; new ed., 1820, in four volumes; includes an Account of the author's life and writings, by Thos. Birch. The 1845 edition includes a translation into English of Dr. J. L. Mosheim's Latin Notes and Dissertations, translated by John Harrison. Three Volumes with a copious Index.

14. Poetry /fiction/music (Modern)

Adonais (P. B. Shelley), 1821.

As You Like It (Shakespeare), ca. 1599-1600.

Dream of Ravan, The. A Mystery. Originally published anonymously in *The Dublin University Magazine*, 1853-54. Republished in London by The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1895, 248 pp. Preface by G. R. S. Mead. øøø

Epipsychidion (P. B. Shelley), 1821, 8vo., 31 pp.

Faust (J. W. Göthe). First Part publ. in 1808.

Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus (Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley, or Mrs. Percy Bysshe Shelley), London, 1818. 12°; many later editions. — Repr. by Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.

L'Homme rouge des Tuileries, etc. (P. Christian), Paris, 1863, 12°, pp. 464; 1937, 8vo. pp. 455. ***

King Henry IV (Wm. Shakespeare), ca. 1597-98.

King Henry V (Wm. Shakespeare), ca. 1598-99.

Measure for Measure (Wm. Shakespeare), ca. 1604-05.

Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality (Edward Young), 1742-1745.

Paradise Lost (J. Milton), 1668.

Requiem (W. A. Mozart), 1791. His last work.

Romeo and Juliet (Wm. Shakespeare), ca. 1594-95.

She; a History of Adventure (Sir Henry Rider Haggard), London, Longmans & Co., 1887, pp. 317, 8vo; 2nd ed., 1887; new ed., 1888; later editions also.

A novel by H. Rider Haggard, first serialized in The October 1886 to January 1887. In reprints it was extraordinarily popular in its time, and has remained in print to the present day. She is generally considered to be one of the classics of imaginative literature and with 83 million copies sold in 1965, one of the best-selling books of all time. In this work, H. Rider Haggard developed the conventions of the Lost World sub-genre, which many other authors emulated.

Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The (Robert Louis Stevenson). London: Longmans & Co., 1886, 8vo., 141 pp.; many editions since.

Task, The (Wm. Cowper). A Poem in Six Books. London: printed for J. Johnson, 1795. The quoted verses are from the section entitled: "The Winter Walk at Noon."

Thought on Eternity, A (John Gay). In *John Gay. Poetry and Prose*. Edited by Vinton A. Dearing. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

Uphill (Christina Rossetti), 1861

Zanoni (Bulwer-Lytton), 1842. ***

15. Religion and Mythology

American Natives, etc.

Popol-Vuh. Le Livre sacré et les mythes de Vantiquité américaine . . . Texte Quiché et trad, française . . . accompagnée de notes . . . (Brasseur de Bourbourg). In *Collection de documents dans les langues indigènes, etc.*, Vol. I, 1861.—Engl. tr. by Philip A. Malpas in *The Theosophical Path*, Point Loma, Calif., Vols. XXXVII-XXXIX, March, 1930—April, 1931.—Partial Engl. tr. by Aretas, *Lucifer*, London. Vol. XV, Sept.,

1894—Feb., 1895.—Adrian Recinos, *Popol-Vuh: las antiguas historias del Quiche*. Spanish tr. of original text with introd. & notes. Mexico City, 1947.—English version of Recino's transl. by Delia Goetz & Sylvanus G. Morley. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press. 1957.

Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas and the Quiches, 11,500 years ago, Free Masonry in times anterior to the Temple of Solomon (A. le Plongeon). New York: R. Macoy 1886, 8vo., xvi, 163 pp., ill.; also, 1909; 4th ed. (with portrait), New York: Macoy Publ., 1935.

Christianity

Acts of the Disputation of Archelaus . . . with the Heresiarch Manes. Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XX. Trans, by Rev. S. D. F. Salmond, MA., Edinburgh. 1871.

Adversus gentes (Arnobius the Elder). Cf. Migne, *Pair. Lat.*, IV, 349. A. Reifferscheich in the *Vienna Corpus Script. Eccles. Lat.* (1875); *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, VI.

Adversus Haereses (Irenaeus). Written about 180 A.D. and actually titled "Refutation and Overthrow of Gnosis, falsely so called." Of the Greek original only fragments survive; it only exists in full in old Latin translation. Consult J. P. Migne, *Patrol. Gr.*, Vol. V. English transl., in *Ante-Nicene Library*.

Baptismo, De (Tertullian). Latin & French in: *Traité du baptême*. Text by R. F. Refoulé, and transl. by Drouzy. Paris, 1952, 8vo. (*Sources chrétiennes*, No. 35.)

Book of Enoch, the Prophet, The. Translated from the Ethiopic MS. in Bodleian Library by Richard Laurence, Archbishop of Cashel. Oxford, 1821, 8vo.; 2nd ed., corr. & rev., 1832; 3rd ed., 1838; also Glasgow, 1878. With Introd. by Chas. Gill, London: Kegan Paul, & Co., 1883, 8vo., xlviii, 180.—Wizards Bookshelf: Secret Doctrine Reference Series. Minneapolis, 1976. Index.

Book of the Generations of Adam. Referred to in *Genesis* v, 1. ***

Catechism of Geneva (John Calvin). Drawn up originally in 1541.

Christianity and Greek Philosophy, etc. (Benjamin Franklin Cocker), New York, Harper & Bros., 1870, 8vo.

City of God (*De Civitate Dei*) (St. Augustine). Latin text and English translation by G. E. McCracken in *Loeb Classical Library*. Seven Vols.

Codex Alexandrinus. The second of the great Greek codices of the Old and New Testaments to become known, the others being the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*. It is written on thin vellum and is one of the chief treasures of the British Library. It was given to Sir Thomas Roe, English Ambassador to the

Sublime Porte, by Cyril Lucar (1572-1638), Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1627, and survived the disastrous fire at Ashburnham House, where the Royal Library was temporarily located, on October 23, 1731. The Codex contains a complete text of the Greek Bible. The Old Testament includes the Apocrypha (with all four Books of the Maccabees). At the end of the New Testament, *Revelation* is followed by two extra-canonical works, the First and Second Epistles of Clement to the Corinthians. Consult: *The Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Alexandrinus*, published by the Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1938; 2nd ed., 1951. With 7 Illustrations.

Codex Justinianus. In *Corpus Juris Civilis*, edition of the Brothers Kriegel, Leipzig, 1840; ed. Kruger, Berlin, 1906, — Tr. by J. B. Moyle, Oxford, 1937; also by C. H. Munro, Cambridge, 1909, 2 vols. Book I.

Collectio nova Patrum et Scriptorum Graecorum, Eusebii Caesariensis, Athanasii et Cosmae Aegyptii (Bernard de Montfaucon). Paris, 1706, 2 vols., fol. Preface, notes. During this, his most productive period, he supplemented the former edition of the Greek Fathers with a "Collectio nova patrum et scriptorum graecorum" (2 vols., folio, Paris, 1706).

Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles (St. John Chrysostom). Cf. J. P. Migne, *Patrol. Graec.*, XLVII-LXIV; and *Oxford Library of the Fathers*.

Commentarius Apocalipsis (Cornelius a Lapide, actually C. van den Steen). See *The Great Commentary of Cornelius a Lapide*, English transl. by Rev. Thos. N. Mossman, London, 1876.

Complete Concordance to the Holy Scriptures, A (Alexander Cruden), London, 1738, 4to., 1761, 1769, and many subsequent editions, such as those of 1849 and 1889.

Concilium tridentinum; diariorum, actorum, epistularum, tractatum nova collectio, ed. Societas Goerresiana, in successive volumes, 1901 ff. — This is the best source for all matters connected with the Council of Trent (1545-63). Special mention should be made of Paolo Sarpi's *Istoria del consilio tridentino* printed in London in 1619 under the name of Pietro Soave Polano, an anagram of Paolo Sarpi Veneto.

Contra Celsum (Origen). Principal apologetic work of the writer, in eight books, written at Caesarea in the time of Philip the Arabian. Contains nearly the whole of the famous work of Celsus, *Logos alêthes*, against Christianity. The work shows a close affinity between Origen's own views and those of Celsus on many subjects. Greek text in J. P. Migne, *Patrol. Gr.*, Vols. XI-XVII. English translation: by F. Crombie & W. H. Cairns in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vols. X & XXIII (Edinburgh, 1869-72) ; and by Henry Chadwick, with Introd. & Notes (Cambridge, University Press, 1953; xl, 531 pp., Index and Bibliography). ***

Cosmogonie de la révélation, La (N. P. Godefroy). Introd. by E. Breda. Paris, 1841;

2nd éd., rev. & augm., 1847.

Dialogue with Trypho (Justin Martyr). For English transl. consult *Oxford Library of the Bathers* and the *Ante-Nicene Library*.

Dictionary of Christian Biography (Wm. Smith & Henry Wace, D.D.). London: John Murray, 1877-87, Four Vols., 8vo.

Divine Institutes (*Divinarum Institutionum Libri Septem*) (Firmianus Lactantius). Text in Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, Vols. VI & VII, and in *Corpus Script. Eccles. Lat.*, Vienna, Vols. XIX, XXVII. Engl. transl. in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Edinb., 1867-72, and Buffalo, 1884-86; also in the American ed., 1965-66.

Élévations à Dieu sur tous les mystères de la religion chrétienne (Jacques Bénigne Bossuet). Paris, J. Mariette, 1727, two vols. 12°; also Paris, 1842, pp. xxxix, 506.

Evolution of Christianity, The (Charles Gill), London, 1883, 8vo., pp. vi. 397; 2nd ed., London, Williams & Norgate, 1884, 8vo., pp. xcvi, 397, ind., a dissertation.

God and His Book [A Critic of the Bible] ("Saladin" or Wm. Stewart Ross). London: W. Stewart & Co. [1887], 8vo., vi, 302 pp.; also 1906. ***

God in History or the Progress of Man's Faith in the Moral Order of the World (C. C. J. von Bunsen). Transl. from the German by Susanna Winkworth. London, Longman's, Green, 1868-70, Three vols. German title is: *Gott in der Geschichte, etc.*, Leipzig, 1857-58, in Six Books.

Grandezze dell' Arcangelo S. Michèle, etc. (Giovanni Marangoni), Rome: Lazzarini, 1763; xlv, 288 pp.

Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament, A (John Parkhurst). With a Greek Grammar. New ed. by High James Rose, B.D., London, 1829.

Hebräisches und Chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament (J. Fürst). Leipzig, 1851-61, 2 vols.; Engl. tr. by S. Davidson, London, 1867, 1871.

Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, A (H. Gesenius). Transl. from the Latin by E. Robinson, Boston, 1836; also 1844, 1892.

Histoire des origines du Christianisme (Ernest Renan). Paris, 1863-83, Eight Vols., 8vo.; repr. 1908, 1891-1908. English transl. as *The History of the Origins of Christianity*, London, Mathieson & Co. [1889, 90], Five Vols., 8vo.

Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae in Universum Novum Testamentum (Schottgen; actually Johann Christian), Dresden & Leipzig, 1733-42, 4to.

Il Penseroso (J. Milton), 1632. ***

Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures (T. H. Home), 1847, 1860, 1872.

Itinerarium Cambriae, etc. (Giraldus Cambrensis, Archdeacon of St. David's; actually Gerald de Barri), 1585, 8vo. Edited by Sir R. Colt Hoare, Bart., Londini 1804, 4to. — *The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales A.D. 1188*, transl. by Hoare, London, W. Miller, 1806, 4to, 2 vols. ***

Liber de praescriptione haereticorum (Tertullian). The subject discussed by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 350, is also explained in her essay on "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels" (see Vol. III of her *Collected Writings*). The background concerning Tertullian's work mentioned herewith may be found in the BCW Compiler's Notes, pp. 232-33 of Volume VIII.

"Livre de la Vision d'Enoch, Le" (J. F. Daniello), *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, Nouvelle Série, Tome 17, December, 1838, pp. 369-398. It deals with the views of Silvestre de Sacy. ***

Maccabees, Third Book of the. Books of Maccabees is the name given to several Apocryphal books of the Old Testament. The *Vulgate* contains two books of Maccabees. Three other books of the same name are extant, Book III being included in the *Septuagint*, but not in the *Vulgate*. It is estimated to have been written between 100 B . C . and A . D . 70, and is the story of the deliverance experienced by the Egyptian Jews from impending martyrdom at the hands of Ptolemy IV, who reigned in the century previous to the Maccabean rising (222-204 B.C.). The title is apparently of later origin, as a generalization of the name Maccabees so as to embrace all who suffered for the ancestral faith. Consult R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, Oxford, 1913, 4°; also 1963-64.

Monumental Christianity (J. P. Lundy): Or the Art and Symbolism of the Primitive Church as Witnesses and Teachers of the One Catholic Faith and Practice. New York, J. W. Bouton, 1876, demi-4to., 200 ill.

Mysteriis Liber Unus, De (St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan). Cf. Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, Vol. 16, Sect. IV, col. 391.

Notes and Observations upon several Passages in Scripture (John Gregory), London, 1684.

Panarion or Adversus Haereses (St. Epiphanius). Text in Petavius, Paris, 1622; and J. P. Migne, *Patrol, Graec*, Vols., XLI-XLII.

Patrologiae Cursus Completus (ed. by Jacques Paul Migne). *Series latina* (221 vols., Paris, 1844-64) covers Latin authors from Tertullian to Innocent III (A.D. 200-1216) *Series graeca* (161 vols., Petit-Montrouge, 1857-66) comprises Greek and

Latin texts of authors from the Pseudo-Barnabas to the Council of Florence (A.D. 120-1438) and 81 vols. (1856-67) of the Latin text only of the Greek Fathers.

Philosophumena (attributed both to Origen and to Hippolytus). See M. Emmanuel Miller's ed., Oxford, 1851, in *Ante-Nicene Library*, Vol. V; and ed. of Patrice F. M. Cruice, Bishop of Marseilles, Paris, 1860, 8vo.; translated by F. Legge, London, 1921, 2 vols., 8vo.

Praelectiones theologicae dogmaticae (Giovanni Perrone), Viennae, 1835-42, Nine Volumes, 8vo. (34 editions up to 1888). Abridged ed., Rome, 1845, Five Vols., 8vo. (47 ed. up to 1892).

Praeparatio evangelica (P. Eusebius). In J. P. Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*

Principiis, De (Origen). Consult: *Origen on First Principles*. Being Koetschus text transl. into English, with Introd. and notes, by G. W. Butterworth. London: S.P.C.K. (Madras pr.), 1936, 8vo., xlii, 342 pp. Also: *The Writings of Origen*. Tr. by Rev. Frederick Crombie. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869, 72, 8vo., 2 Vols. (*Ante-Nicene Christian Library* Vols. 10, 23).

"Proem to Genesis: A Plea for a Fair Trial" (W. E. Gladstone). *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. XIX, January, 1886, pp. 1-21.

Quaest. XV in Exodum (Theodoret of Cyrillus). In *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, Vols. 80-84.

Religio Laici, or a Layman's Faith, a Poem (John Dryden), 28 pp., London, pr. for Jacob Tonson, 1682, 4to.; 1683, 4to.

Resurrectione carnis, De (Tertullian). English transl. as *Tertullian concerning the Resurrection of the Flesh*, by A. Souter. London, 1922, 8vo., xxiv, 205 (*Translations of Christian Literature*, Series 2, Latin texts).

Sacra scriptura illustrata con monumenti fenico-assirj ed egiziani, La (M. A. Lanci), Rome, 1827.

Satan ou le Diable, etude de philosophie religieuse (Jules Baissac), Paris, 1876, 8vo., 33 pp. ***

Scientific Religion, or Higher Possibilities of Life and Practice through the Operation of Natural Forces (Laurence Oliphant). With an App. by a clergyman of the Church of England [i.e., Haskett Smith]. Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1888, 8vo.; xiii, 473 pp.; authorized American ed., Buffalo: Chas. A. Wenborne, 1889.

Second Apology (Justin Martyr). For Engl. transl. consult *Oxford Library of the Fathers* and the *Ante-Nicene Library*.

Septuagint. Greek version of the Old Testament still in use in the Eastern Church. So called from the legend preserved in the Letters of Aristeas, that the *Pentateuch* was translated at Alexandria by seventy-two emissaries from Jerusalem at the request of Ptolemy II. Church Fathers extended the tradition to the whole of the Greek O. T. The *Septuagint*, usually ref. to by the symbol LXX, differs from the Masoretic text, and is the version cited by Philo, Josephus, and in the New Testament.

Sermon (St. Bernard). Critical and complete ed. of his *Works* by J. Mabillon, 1667, reprinted in J. P. Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 1859.

Sermon the 160th (St. Augustine). Consult Volume V of the Benedictine edition of his *Works*, 1679-1700, in 11 vols., reprinted in Migne's *Patrologia*. See also *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vienna, 1866-1913.

Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, etc. (Wm. Whiston), London, 1702.

Stromateis (Clement of Alexandria). In his *Collected Works* by O. Stählin, Leipzig, 1905; and in *Ante-Nicene Library*.

Temple de Jerusalem (J. B. Villalpand). See L. C. Sturm, *Sciographia Templi Hierosolymitani . . . modicis in Vallalpandum animadversionibus . . . illustra*, etc., 1694. ***

Theologia Gentili et Physiologia Christiana: sive De origine ac progressu suâ idololatriæ; deque naturæ mirandis, quibus homo adducitur ad Deum, Libri IX. (G. J. Vossius), Amstelodami: ex Typographia P. & J. Blaev, 1668; 2nd ed., 1700. The author's actual name was Gerrit Jansz.

Trinité Chrétienne dévoilée, La (Henri Lizeray), Paris: the Author, 1887; 32 pp., 8vo.; also 1888, 36 pp. (réponse aux objections).

Twelve Lectures on the Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion (Card. N. P. S. Wiseman), 3rd ed., London: Chas. Dolman, 1849, 4th ed., 1851, 2 Vols.

Vie de Jésus, La (É. Renan), Paris, 1863; being Vol. I of his *Histoire des origines du Christianisme*, Paris, 1863-83, 8 vols.

Vie de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ (J. N. Sepp), Paris: Ve. Poussielgue-Rusand, 1854, two vols.; 2nd éd., 1861. This is a French tr. by Charles Sainte-Foi of Sepp's *Das Leben Jesu Christi* (Regensburg, 1843-46, in 7 vols.; 4th éd., 1898-1902), which covers only the first part of the German original text.

Vulgate. Latin version of the Scriptures, in the main the work of St. Jerome in the 4th cent. The name was taken from that of the earlier Latin translations of the

Septuagint, and was first used in the modern sense by Roger Bacon in the 13th cent. The O. T. was translated directly from the Hebrew with the aid of the *Septuagint* and other Greek and Latin versions. Declared by the Council of Trent in 1546 to be the standard for the services of the Roman Church. Standard text is that of Pope Clement VII of 1592. The English version from the *Vulgate* is known as the *Douay Bible*; N. T. was published at Reims, 1582; O. T. at Douay, France, 1609-10. Various revised editions exist.

Greek and Roman (See also 1; 6, Antiquity)

Commentarius de natura deorum (L. Annaeus Cornutus, sometimes Phurnutus). Also known as *Concerning Allegories*. Ed. by Gale in *Opuscula Mythologica Physica et Ethica*, Cambridge, 1670, p. 139; also by J. Hayes, Cambridge, 1670, pp. 31-32.

Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries, A (Thos. Taylor). Amsterdam [1790]. Fictitious imprint. Printed for, and sold by, J. Weitstein [London]; iv, 184 pp.

"Greater Gods of Olympos, The" (W. E. Gladstone). *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. XXI, March & May, 1887, pp. 460-80 & 748-70 resp.; Vol. XXII, July, 1887, pp. 79-102.

Griechische Götterlehre (Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker), Göttingen, 1857-63, 3 Vols., 8vo.

Mystical Initiations; or, Hymns of Orpheus, The (Thomas Taylor). Translated from the original Greek: With a Preliminary Dissertation on the Life and Theology of Orpheus. London: Printed for the Author, 1787; xii, 227 pp.; 2nd ed., 1792; repr., 1824, with considerable alterations & additions. The introduction is to be found in the *Classical Journal*, lviii, 322, 331; lix, 81-92. ***

On the Origin of Pagan Idolatry (G. S. Faber), London, 1816, 3 vols., 4to.

Orphic Hymns. See *Mystical Initiations, etc.* (Thos. Taylor).

Orphica (E. Abel), Lipsiae, 1885.

Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen (Georg Fr. Creuzer). Leipzig & Darmstadt, 1810-23, Six Vols., 8vo. Vols. 5-6 continued by Dr. Franz

Joseph Mone & publ. in 1822-23. Second ed. of earlier volumes, Leipzig: Carl Wilhelm Leske, 1821. See also *Religions de l'antiquité* (J.-D. Guigniaut). ***

History of Religions/Comparative Religion

Anacalypsis, an Attempt to draw aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions (G. Higgins, London), 1836, 2 vols., 4to; 2nd ed., Glasgow, 1878, 8vo. ***

Ancient Faiths, embodied in Ancient Names (Thos. Inman). An Attempt to trace the Religious Belief, Sacred Rites, and Holy Emblems of certain Nations. London, 1868-69; 2nd ed., Trübner & Co., 1872-73, 2 Vols.

Annales de philosophie chrétienne. See: "Le Livre de la Vision d'Enoch" (J. F. Daniello); "Examen de l'Ouvrage de . . . Bunsen, etc." (J. de Rougé); "Des Restes de l'ancienne littérature, etc." (F. de Rougemont). ***

Apocalypse of Adam-Oannes, The (E. V. H. Kenealy). This is Part I of *The Book of God*. Greek and English. London: Reeves & Turner [1867], 647 pp. ***

Chaire d'Hébreu au Collège de France, La (Ernest Renan). Explications à mes collègues. Paris, 1862, 8vo.; 3rd ed., 1862, 31 pp. ***

Ernest Renan (1823-1892) was a French philosopher and writer, deeply attached to his native province of Brittany. He is best known for his influential historical works on early Christianity and his political theories.

Chips from a German Workshop (F. Max Müller), London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1867-75, 4 vols.; later editions: New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1871-76; 1887-90, 5 vols.; 1889-91, 5 vols.

"Des Divinités et des Génies psychopompes dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge" (L. F. A. Maury), *Revue archéologique*, Vols. I and II, 1844-45, in three instalments, plus a Supplement; the latter in Vol. II, pp. 289-300.

Dictionnaire universel historique et comparatif, de toutes les religions du monde, etc. (Abbé François-Marie Bertrand), Paris, 1848-50, Four Vols. 4to. (Also in Migne, *Encycl. théol.*, torn. 24-27).

Dieu et les Dieux ou un Voyageur Chrétien devant les objets primitifs des cultes anciens, etc. (H.-R. Gougenot des Mousseaux), Paris, 1854. ***

Dissertation on the Mysteries of the Cabiri, A (G. S. Faber), Oxford, 1803, 2 vols., 8vo., xvi, 428 & 475 pp., incl. Index. ***

The Kabiri were in ancient religion of the Middle East, nature deities of obscure origin, possibly Phoenician. They were connected with several fertility cults, particularly at Lemnos and at Samothrace, where important mysteries were celebrated. According to one legend they were also patrons of navigation. In Greek religion they were associated with Hephaestus, Hermes, and Demeter.

"Dissertation sur les Baetyles" (E. M. P. C. Falconnet). Dated Sept. 1st, 1722. Publ. In *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale – des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Paris, Imprimerie Royale, Tome VI (1729), pp. 513-532. ***

God in History or the Progress of Man's Faith in the Moral Order of the World (C. C. J. von Bunsen). Transl. from the German by Susanna Winkworth. London,

Longman's, Green, 1868-70, Three vols. German title is: *Gott in der Geschichte, etc.*, Leipzig, 1857-58, in Six Books.

Heathen Religion, in its popular and symbolic Development (J. B. Gross), Boston, 1856, 8vo.

Hercule et Cacus. Étude de mythologie comparée (M. J. A. Bréal), Paris, 1863, 177 pp.

Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History (Thos. Carlyle), 1841.

Idololatria (Vossius). See *Theologia Gentili*.

India in Greece; or Truth in Mythology. Containing the sources of the Hellenic race . . . and the Buddhistic propaganda in Greece (Edward Pococke). London, 1852, 8vo. ***

Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians (A. H. Sayce), London: Williams & Norgate, 1888; 6th ed., 1909.

Lectures on the Science of Religion (F. Max Müller). Four lectures delivered at the Royal Institution, London, February and March, 1870, and printed in *Eraser's Magazine*, Feb., March., April & May, 1870. Small ed. was printed privately. In 1873, they were published by Longmans, Green & Co., London, as *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (ix, 403 pp.), together with two Essays: "On False Analogies in Comparative Theology" and "On the Philosophy of Mythology." Some additional text is included in this ed., which was not the case either in the Lectures or in *Eraser's Magazine*.

Luniolatry: Ancient and Modern (Gerald Massey). A Lecture. London: privately printed. ***

Manual of Mythology. Founded on the works of Proctor, Welcker, etc. (A. S. Murray). London: Asher & Co., 1873, viii, 399 pp., 8vo.; 2nd ed., enl, London, 1874, Repr. in 1971.

Mythical Monsters (Charles Gould), London, W. H. Allen & Co., 1886, 8vo., pp. 407. Repr. by Gale Research Co., 1969.

Mythologie de la Grèce antique (Paul Decharme), Paris: Garnier frères, 1879; xxxv, 644 pp., ill., 8vo.; 2nd ed., 1886; xxxvii, 693 pp.

Mythologie des Indous (Marie Elizabeth de Polier). Travaillée par Madame. de Polier sur les manuscrits authentiques apportés de l'Inde par feu Monsieur de Polier. Paris, Roudolstadt (pr.), 1809, 2 vols., 8vo.

Myths and Marvels of Astronomy (R. A. Proctor), London, 1878, 8vo.; London &

New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1889, 365 pp.

Myths and Myth-Makers. Old Tales and Superstitions interpreted by Comparative Mythology (J. Fiske). Boston, Cambridge (pr.), 1873, 8vo.; Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co, 1877.

New Aspects of Life and Religion (Henry Pratt, M.D.). London: Williams & Norgate, 1886, 8vo., xlv, 396 pp. ***

New System: or, An Analysis of Ancient Mythology, A (J. Bryant), London; T. Payne, 1774-76; 3rd ed., London: J. Walker, 1807, 8vo., Index & 41 pl., six vols.

Observations of Bel. Referred to by A. H. Sayce in his 1887 *Hibbert Lecture* on the Origin and Growth of Religion.

Origine de tous les cultes, ou Religion universelle (Charles-François Dupuis). Published in 1794 in 3 Vols., 4to, with an Atlas, and in 12 Vols., 8vo. These are identical editions, but differently set up. In 1798, the author published an Abridged Edition in 1 Vol., 8vo. (repr. in 1836 & 1847). In 1822, a revised and corrected ed. was published by Babeuf in Paris, in 7 Vols., 8vo.; a separate volume, 4to., contains a new astronomical atlas and an engraving of the Dendera Zodiac (Dupuis' dissertation about it, originally publ. in the *Revue philosophique* May, 1806, is contained in Vol. 7.) This ed. has also a biographical survey of Dupuis' life, by P.-R. Anguis.

Philosophie religieuse. Terre et Ciel (J. E. Reynaud), 2nd ed., Paris, 1854; 4th ed., 1864.

Progress of Religious Ideas, through successive Ages, The (Lydia M. Childs), New York, 1855.

Relations between Religion and Science, The (Bishop Frederick Temple). Eight Lectures, etc. London: Macmillan & Co., 1884; xi, 252 pp. (Bampton Lectures for 1884).

Religions de l'antiquité considérées principalement dans leurs formes symboliques et mythologiques, Les (J.-D. Guignaut), Paris, 1825-39, in 10 vols. Annotated and expanded transl. of Georg Fr. Creuzer's *Symbolik*, 1810-23, in 6 vols.

Rivers of Life . . . showing the evolution of faiths, from the rudest symbolisms to the latest spiritual developments (Gen. James Geo. Roche Forlong). London: B. Quaritch, 1883, 4to.

Unicorn, A Mythological Investigation, The (Robert Brown, jr., F.S.A.). London, Longmans & Co., 1881, 8vo., pp. vi, 97.

Indo-Iranian

Avesta. The sacred books of the ancient Zoroastrian religion and of the modified foci of it which survives among the Pärsis of Persia and India. The *Avesta* consists of the chief texts of varying antiquity. They are: the *Yasna*, which is the chief liturgical work and includes the *Gāthās* or hymns; the *Vispered*, a supplementary ritual; the *Yashts*, which are mostly hymns; and the *Vendidād*, which contains the account of creation. The name *Zend-Avesta* has been current in Europe since the time of Anquetil-Duperron (1731-1805), but is not the correct way of referring to these Scriptures. The Persian term *Zend* means interpretation, and is specially used to denote the translation and exposition in the Huzvaresh, or literary Pahlavi language, of the *Avesta*. The latter term is applied both to the collection of writings and to the language in which they are composed. The term *Zend* should therefore not be interpreted as meaning a language, but merely "commentary" or "explanation." Mention is made in the *SD* of the *Zamyād Yasht*, which is inscribed to the Genius at the Earth, and is devoted to a description of the mountains and the kingly Glory which are to be invoked. See James Darmesteter's translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIII.

Commentaire sur le Yaçna, l'un des livres liturgiques des Parses (Engène Burnouf), Paris: Impr. Royale, 1833-35.

Eugene Burnouf (1801-1852) was a significant French orientalist. His father Prof. Jean Louis Burnouf (1775-1844) was a classical scholar of high reputation, and the author, among other works, of an excellent translation of Tacitus (6 vols., 1827-1833). Eugene Burnouf published in 1826 an Essai sur le Pali ..., written in collaboration with Christian Lassen; and in the following year Observations grammaticales sur quelques passages de l'essai sur le Pali. The next great work he undertook was the deciphering of the Zend manuscripts brought to France by Anquetil du Perron. By his labours a knowledge of the Zend language was first brought into the scientific world of Europe. He caused the Vendidad Sade, part of one of the books bearing the name of Zoroaster, to be lithographed with the utmost care from the Zend MS. in the Bibliotheque Nationale, and published it in folio parts, 1829-1843. From 1833 to 1835 he published his Commentaire sur le Yacna, l'un des livres liturgiques des Parses; he also published the Sanskrit text and French translation of the Bhḡgavata Purana ou histoire poetique de Krichna in three folio volumes (1840-1847). His last works were Introduction a l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien (1844), and a translation of Le lotus de la bonne loi (1852). Burnouf died on the 28th of May 1852.

He had been for twenty years a member of the Academie des Inscriptions and professor of Sanskrit in the College de France.

See a notice of Burnouf's works by Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, prefixed to the second edition (1876) of the Introd. a l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien; also Naudet, "Notice historique sur M.

Historia Anteislamica (Abbü-l-Fidá Ismail ibn 'Ali 'Imâd-ud-Dni). Edited by H. O. Fleischer, 1831.

Historia religionis veterum Vers arum (Thos. Hyde), Oxoniae, 1700, 4to.; 2nd ed., 1760, 4to. ***

The famous Iranologist Thomas Hyde (1636-1703) was Professor of

Hebrew and Arabic at Oxford and inventor of the word cuneiform. The longer title is of the work is: Historia religionis veterum Persarum, eorumque magorum: ubi etiam nova Abrahami, & Mithræ, & Vestæ, & Manetis, &c. historia, atque angelorum officia & præfecturæ ex veterum Persarum sententia: item, perfarum annus ... Zoroastris vita, ejusque et aliorum vaticinia de Messiah è Persarum aliorumque monumentis eruuntur, primitiæ opiniones de Deo & de hominum origine referantur, originale Orientalis Sibyllæ mysterium recluditur, atque magorum Liber Sad-der, Zoroastris præcepta seu religionis canones continens, è Persico traductus exhibetur: dantur veterum Persarum scripturæ & linguæ, ut hæc jam primo Europæ producantur & literato orbi postliminio reddantur, specimina: de Persiæ ejusdemque linguæ nominibus, deque hujus dialecticis & à moderna differentiis strictim agitur.

The book also contains the lam-yig which was the very first Tibetan-language document made available through publication in Europe. The Tibetan document, in cursive script, was engraved and published in this book about Persia as a curiosity only. Hyde knew a number of languages, but Tibetan was not among them. He could make neither heads nor tails out of it. He even thought that it had to be read from right to left, like Persian.

Modern Zoroastrian, A (Samuel Laing), London: F. V. White & Co., 1887, 265 pp., diagr.; 2nd ed., 1888; many editions since.

Ormazd et Ahriman. Leurs origines et leurs histoire (James Darmesteter), Paris, 1877, pp. 360, 8vo. (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, fasc. 29).

"Supplément au Traité Historique de la Religion des Anciens Perses" (Abbé Foucher), *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Tome XXXIX, 1777, pp. 689-794.

Islam (This category overlaps with Orientalism – Middle East)

Koran. See *Qur'ân*. *Qur'ân* (Ar. *al-Qur'ân*, meaning recitation). Sacred Scripture of Islam containing the professed revelations of Mohammed. It is in Arabic, and is divided into 114 *suras* or chapters; it is the basis of the religious, social, civil, commercial, military and legal regulations of the Mohammedan world.—Transl. by G. Sale (1734, etc.), J. M. Rodwell (1876, etc., arranged chronol.), E. H. Palmer (1880, etc., *SBE*, 6 & 9); also by Maulana Muhammad 'All (1917); Arabic text, Engl, transl. & Comm., rev. ed., Lahore, 1963.—Rodwell's transl. is in *Everyman's Library*, London, 1909.

Judaism

Aloim, ou les Dieux de Moïse (P. Lacour, the Younger), with 26 drawings & Synoptic Table, Bordeaux, 1839. ***

Bävâ Bathrä. See *Talmud. Berështth Rabbah*. Expository Midrash to the first book of the *Pentateuch*, assigned by tradition to the amora Hoshaiah (or Oshayah), who flourished in Palestine in the 3rd century. It is a Haggadic commentary on the whole of *Genesis*. Best MS. is Codex Add. 27,169 of the British Library.

German translation by Aug. Wünsche, Leipzig, 1881.

Book of Jasher. Consult Editor's Note 26, in *Isis Unveiled* (1972), Vol. I, p. 637, for all pertinent data. ***

Book of the Wisdom of Solomon. One of the so-called Apocrypha of the Old Testament. An essay on Wisdom as divine agent in the creation and government of the world. Emanated most likely from intellectual circles of the Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria, and is not earlier than about 150 B. C. Exhibits Platonic and Pythagorean tendencies. Incl. in R. H. Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Oxford, 1963-64.

Ezra or Esdras. See *Fourth Book of Ezra*. *Fourth Book of Ezra* or *Apocalypse of Ezra*. One of the Jewish Apocalypses, a sister-work to the *Apocalypse of Baruch*. Often referred to as *IV Ezra*. The Latin version consisting of 16 chapters is derived from a Greek original. Consult G. H. Box, *The Ezra-Apocalypse*, 1912.

Le gibus Hebraeorum Ritualibus et ear urn Rationibus Libri Tres (Joannes Spencer). Cambridge, 1685, fol.; also The Hague, 1686, 4to. The whole of Book III, *Dissertatio viii*, deals with the scapegoat.

Mishnâh. See *Talmud*.

Nishmat Hayim (Rabbi Manasseh ben-Joseph ben-Israel), Amsterdam, 1652 (implied only). ***

Pirke de-Rabbi Eli'ezer. Haggadic-midrashic work on *Genesis*, part of *Exodus* and a few sentences from *Numbers*, ascribed to Eli'ezer of Hyrcanus and composed in Italy shortly after 833. It consists of 54 chapters in 7 groups. Editions: Constantinople, 1518; Venice, 1548; Amsterdam, 1712; Wilna, 1837; Lemberg, 1864. ***

Qé'dusheen. See *Talmud*.

"Questions relatives aux antiquités des peuples sémitiques, etc." (Baron d'Eckstein), *Revue archéologique*, Vol. XII, Part II (Oct., 1855 – March, 1856), pp. 573-602; 677-706; 724-756.

Sanhedrin. See *Talmud*.

Talmud (Heb., *talmudh*, instruction, teaching, from *lâmadh*, to learn). The great Rabbinical thesaurus reduced to writing during the second, fourth and sixth centuries of our era. It is the body of Jewish civil and canonical law, consisting of the combined *Mishnâh* or text (Heb., oral teaching by repetition), and the *Gemara* or commentary (Aramaic term for "completion" or "decision"). There are two *Gemaras*: the Babylonian, which is the record of the discussions of the Babylonian scholars on the laws and teachings of the *Mishnâh*; and the

Palestinian, which is a similar record in connection with Palestinian scholars. The *Mishnâh* together with one or the other of the *Gemaras* forms the Babylonian or the Palestinian *Talmud* respectively. The former is often called *Talmud Babli*, and the latter *Talmud Yerushalmi*. The Babylonian *Talmud* is about three times as large as the other one and considered as the greatest authority. The Teachers mentioned in the *Mishnâh* from the death of Hillel to its completion are the Tannaim. Those mentioned in the *Gemara* are the Amoraim. Later teachers who added comments to the *Talmud* (6th and 7th cent.) are known as Saboraim ("reasoned"). The Rabbis who interpreted the *Talmud* are known as the Geonim, if they were heads of academies, and as Posekim ("deciders"). The following Sections of the *Talmud* are referred to in the *S.D.*:—*Bâvâ Battra* London: Sonsino Press, 1935-48, in 34 volumes. The following Sections of the *Talmud* are referred to in the *S.D.*:—*Bâavâ Bathrâ* (The Last Gate). The 3rd of the three Talmudic treatises of the order Nezikim (injuries), dealing with man's responsibilities and rights as the owner of property. It is composed of 10 chapters.—*Kiddushin* (or *Qe'dusheen*, meaning betrothal). Treatise of the *Mishnâh*, *Tosefta*, and both *Talmudim*, devoted chiefly to discussion of various modes of betrothal and conditions which must be fulfilled to make a marriage valid. It is the 7th treatise in the order of Seder Nashim (women).—*Sanhédrin* (Court). Treatise of the *Mishnâh*, *Tosefta*, and both *Talmudim*, which is fourth in the order Nezikim in most editions and is composed of 11 chapters. It treats chiefly of Courts and their powers, legal procedures and criminal law. Consult for detailed and authoritative explanations and bibliographies the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*.

Targûm (pl. *Targûmim* or *Targûms*). Aramaic term meaning "interpretation." A translation or paraphrase of some portions of the Old Testament in the Aramaic of Judea or Galilee (formerly erroneously called *Chaldee*), mostly dating in the present form from the Geonic period, but in part based on oral tradition of the pre-Christian Roman period. Among the important *Targûms* now extant are: for the *Pentateuch*—the *Targûm of Onkelos*, or *Babylonian Targûm*, and the *Targûm of Jonathan*, or *Targûm of Jerusalem*; for the *Prophets*—the *Targûm of Jonathan bar Uzziel*.

Wisdom of Solomon. See *Book of the Wisdom of Solomon*.

Near eastern/Mediterranean

"Babylonian Account of the Deluge, The" (Chas. H. H. Wright), *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. XI, February, 1882, pp. 232-41.

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Cosmogony (Sanchoniathon). Ancient Phoenician writer whose identity has never been fully established. His work, known also as *Theologia*, is supposed to have been translated into Greek by Philo Herennius Byblius; a considerable fragment of this

translation is preserved by Eusebius in the first book of his *Praeparatio evangelica*. Called sometimes *Phoenician History*, this account has been transl. into English by R. Cumberland, 1720, 8vo.

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Theogony (Môchus). See Note No. 34 to page 365 of Vol. I of *SD*. ***

Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archeology, London. See "Early History of Babylonia" (George Smith).

Nordic/Germanic/Celtic

Asgard and the Gods (W. Wägner). The Tales and Traditions of our Northern Ancestors, forming a complete manual of Norse Mythology. Adapted from the work of Dr. Wägner by M. W. Macdowell, and edited by W. S. W. Anson. London, 1880; 2nd ed., 1882; 5th ed., 1887, xvi, 326 pp.

Beyträge zur Beförderung theologischer und andrer wichtigen Kenntnisse, etc. (Johann Andreas Cramer, Chanc. Univ. of Kiel, Editor). Kiel, and Hamburg, 1778, 8vo.

Bible de Vence. H. François, abbé de Vence (1675-1749), published at Nancy a new edition of the Bible of Carrières, in 22 vols., 12°, 1738-43. He included a number of dissertations which were included later in the Bible of Calmer. Rondet (1717-85) produced a new ed. thereof at Avignon, in 17 vols., 4to., 1767-73. It is this edition which is known as *Bible de Vence*.

Deutsche Mythologie (J. Grimm), 4th ed., rev. by E. H. Meyer, Berlin, 1875, 3 vols, in 2.

"Du Dragon de Metz" (Lenoir), in *Mémoires de l'Académie Celtique*, I, 11, 12.

Edda, or *Eddas*. Either of the two works in the Old Norse or Icelandic language:
a) The *Younger* or *Prose Edda*, or *Edda of Snorri Sturluson*, a prose work treating of Norse mythology and the language and the modes of composition of the skalds. Its most remarkable portion is the *Gylfaginning*, or the Delusion of Gylfi, which is a compendium of the mythological system of the ancient Nordic people. While written by Sturluson (1178-1241), it embodies traditions of earlier ages; b) The *Elder* or *Poetic Edda* also known as *Edda of Saemund the Wise*, which is a collection of heroic chants and mythical legends of great antiquity, reduced to their present form between the 9th and the 12th centuries, and discovered in 1643 by Brynjólfur Sveinsson, Icelandic Bishop of Skalaholt, who erroneously ascribed them to Saemundur Sigfusson (1056-1133). The most remarkable of the poems in the collection is the *Voluspá*, or prophecy of the Völva or Sibyl, treating of the origin of the world, the meetings of the gods, the conflict between the Aesir and the Vanir, the final struggle and catastrophe, and the restoration and return of the gods in a new existence.

Kalevala. Finnish national heroic epos taking its name from the three sons of Kaleva. It is a collection of mystical poetry, the chief monument of Finnish literature, organized and systematized as a national epic by Elias Lönnrot who, after years of wanderings, took down from the lips of peasants all they knew of their popular songs. His *latest* edition or 1849 contains about 23,000 lines, of unrhymed alliterative eight-syllabled trochaic verse, divided into 50 cantos or runes. The style of the poem may be obtained from Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, which is an imitation of the Finnish epic. H.P.B. used a translation by John M. Crawford, New York, J. B. Alden, 1888, in two volumes. The latest is the one by Lönnrot translated by W. J. Kirby, Dutton, 1907.

Völuspá. See entry for *Edda*.

16. Sociology, economics, society

Investigations in Currency and Finance (Wm. S. Jevons). Ed. with Introd. by H. S. Foxwell. Pref. by Harriet A. Jevons. London: Macmillan & Co., 1884, 8vo., xlv, 428 pp., ill. with diagrams.

17. Symbolism (Comparative, Theosophical Enlightenment)

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Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients Demonstrated, etc. (S. A. Mackey). (Part the Second; or the Key of Urania, etc). 2 pts. Norwich, 1822, 23, 12°; 2nd ed., 1824, 23 (Part I only is of the 2nd ed.); 2nd ed., 2 pts., 1824 (Part 1 a duplicate of Pt. 1 of preceding, but second differs entirely). — Photographic reprint of orig. edition by Wizards Bookshelf, Minneapolis, Minn., 1973.

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18. Travel and cultural/historical narratives, locations

Atlantic Islands as resorts of health and pleasure, The (S. G. W. Benjamin), New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878, 274 pp.

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Polynesian Researches during a Residence of nearly Six Years in the South Sea Islands, etc. (Wm. Ellis, Missionary), London, 1829, 2 vols. 8vo.; 2nd ed., enlarged, 1832-34, 4 vols. 8vo. Repr. by C. E. Tuttle, 1969.

Rambles in Western Cornwall by the footsteps of the Giants (J. O. Halliwell). With Notes on the Celtic remains of the Land's End district and the Islands of Scilly. London, 1861, 8°.

Stonehenge: plans, description, and theories (Sir Wm. M. Flinders Petrie), London: E. Stanford, 1880, 34 pp., 4to.

Three New Mexico Chronicles. The Expocicion (Don Pedro Bautista Pino). Translated with Introduction and Notes by H. Bailey Carroll and J. Villanova Haggard. The Quivira Society, Albuquerque University of New Mexico Press, 1942 [Vol. II of Series]. The Report is of 1812.

This narrative collection has long been regarded as the greatest single source for material on New Mexico under Mexican rule. It provides a wealth of details on the geography of the region, its government, people, educational and social systems, military and Indian problems.

Included are a glossary of Spanish terms, facsimiles of the original documents, and an index. Translated, with Introduction and Notes by H. Bailey Carroll and J. Villasana Haggard.

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View of the Levant, particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt and Greece, etc., A (Chas. Perry). London: T. Woodward, 1743, fol.; 4 parts, xxvi, 524 pp.

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19. Unknown Works

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Agrippa Manuscript. Most likely an untraced MS. SD2, 487.

Anthrôpos. Work on Occult Embryology. Untraced. SD1, 224

Aphorisms of the Bodhisattoas. An unavailable work. SD1, 48.

Arth. Index (Ackerman). Untraced. SD 2, p. 342n.

Book of Dzryan (Tibetan and Mongolian pronunciation of *Dhydna*). See *Kiu-ti*.

Book of Numbers (Chaldean). Unavailable.

Book of Rules, The. Term used for an occult work which is unobtainable. Not to be confused with *The Book of Rules* in the original Esoteric Section of the T.S. SD1 464.

Book of the Aphorisms of Tsong-Kha-pa. Untraced.

Book of the Keys. SD1 90n According to *The Theosophical Glossary*, it is "an ancient Kabalistic work."

Book of the Keys An ancient Cabalistic work. The original is no longer extant, though there may be spurious and disfigured copies and forgeries of it. See also *The Divine Pymander* cha. 13.31

[Book of] *The Mysteries of Rostan*. Supposedly an occult work in Manuscript. Ro-stan *Re-stau* (Egyptian) "Book of the Mysteries of Rostan; an occult work in manuscript" (TG 280). Sd 1 237.

Book of the Various Names of the Nile (Ahmad ibn Yusuf al-Taifashl, d. 1253). No information available. sd2 366 the historian Ahmed-Ben-Yusouf Eltiphas.

Books of Thoth. Generic name for original Hermetic writings, from which our present *Poimandres* has been abridged by a Platonist of Alexandria. ***

Catechism. Occult, Esoteric and Senzar. Terms used from what appears to be unobtainable occult treatises.

Champai chhos Nga. Known also as the Secret book of "Maitreya Buddha." It is in prose and should not be confused with the five books in verse, which apparently are known by the same name, according to H.P.B. The compound Tibetan term is derived from *champai*, meaning "whole," "unimpaired"; *chhos*, "doctrine"; and *ngang*, "essentiality." It can therefore be translated as "the whole doctrine in its essentiality."

China Revealed (Rev. Canon McClatchie). Untraced.

Commentary, Commentaries. Untraced.

Dirghatamas. There is considerable uncertainty about this title or name. H.P.B. uses it as the title of a work. As far as is known, there is no such work.

Dirghatamas, meaning "long nights," was the name of a Vedic Sage to whom a few of the *Rigveda* Hymns are attributed. He was born blind and the *Mahābhārata* (Adiparva, 1st Section) relates that at the request of King Bali he produced five sons by his wife Sudeshnā.

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Kiu-ti (or *Khiu-ti*). (Tibetan tantra texts see the Regiles)

Mirror of Futurity (Pesh-Hun Nârada). Unavailable treatise.

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