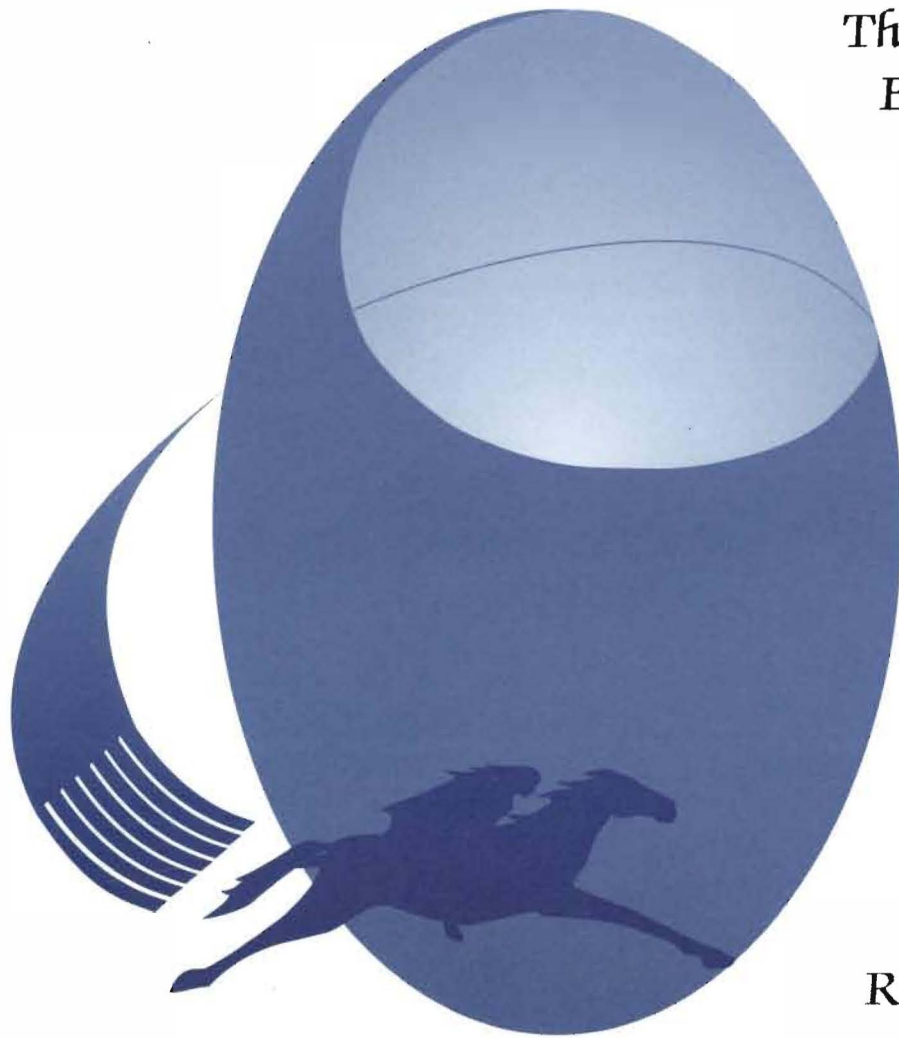


# FOHAT

Volume X, Number 2

Summer 2006



*Things That Go  
Bump in the  
Night*

*Examining  
H.P. Blavatsky's  
Genealogy*

*Denis Saurat:  
An Unenrolled  
Theosophist?*

*The Lunar  
Link to  
Racial Pralayas*

A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition

*This magazine is an invitation for followers of all traditions to enter into a dialogue whose goal is Truth and whose means is Universal Brotherhood.*

### **Black Magic or Simple Bird Flu?**

In an *Associated Press* article printed in *The Edmonton Journal*, dated May 29, 2006, villagers from a small mountain village are looking to black magic as a reason why seven members of a village family have become sick and died. While health experts consider the less superstitious explanation of bird flu to be more reasonable, they cannot find any instances of the virus among the local poultry population. However, some family members have tested positive for H5N1. Even if that is the case, as there are some researchers who claim the virus is man-made, it still might be a case of black magic perpetrated by the shadowy elite on the rest of mankind.

### **The Chupacabra Has Relocated to Russia?**

In a story found at: [www.mosnews.com/news/2006/04/27/chupacabra.shtml](http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/04/27/chupacabra.shtml), sightings of this quintessential Puerto-Rican beast have been made in Central Russia in the region of the village of Gavrilovka. It was reported that two adults, one reddish and one dark grey, were spotted along with a pack of pups. The animal was 1.2 metres high and estimated to weigh about 35 kilograms. Various livestock were found dead, drained of blood, with puncture wounds on their necks.

### **What's New at Bimini?**

At the website: [www.mysterious-america.net/bimini-caysal200.html](http://www.mysterious-america.net/bimini-caysal200.html), an expedition by researchers into the Bimini area is detailed in a paper by Dr. Greg Little. He writes:

From late February to early March of 2006, an underwater expedition was conducted to Bimini and the Cay Sal Bank on the 87-ft. research boat, Dolphin Dream. Accompanying the research team was a production crew from NBC News who were making a documentary on the expedition. The two-hour documentary is scheduled to be shown on Sci-Fi Network during the summer of 2006 and will include other explorers around the world. This paper summarizes the major finds of the expedition.

The expedition included the collecting of stone anchors, the detailing of stone wedges beneath the large Bimini stones as well as analysis detailing the possibility that the Bimini road is a breakwater for an ancient harbor.

### **Electric Lights in Egypt?**

In an article by Frank Dörnenburg, inspired by a relief at the ancient Egyptian site of Dendera, the possibility of electric lights in Ancient Egypt is explored. Why is there no soot laying on top of the many colorful paintings and reliefs found throughout the ruins of Ancient Egypt? Were copper mirrors really a viable light source? Evidence from Iraq, not too far distant, indicates the ancients were aware of electricity. Finally, this relief at Dendera is suggestive of an electric lamp to some electrical engineers. Read the article at: [www.world-mysteries.com/sar\\_lights\\_fd1.htm](http://www.world-mysteries.com/sar_lights_fd1.htm).

### **Romania's First Legal Witch**

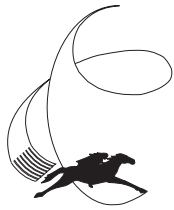
A short article at: <http://phenomena.cinescape.com/> describes how Gabriela Chukur, age 31, has become Romania's first legal witch since the government has changed regulations allowing witchcraft to become a legal occupation. The land of Dracula still has a sizeable rural population catering to a belief in the supernatural.

### **India, Witchcraft and Beheadings**

In another article at: <http://phenomena.cinescape.com/>, it is reported that members of one family were beheaded over accusations of witchcraft in an area where 200 people a year are killed for such practices. The article explains that in this case:

Those killed were 60-year-old Amir Munda and four of his children. Police said Mr Munda and the villagers are tribals belonging to the Adivasi Santhal community, which believes in the powers of witchcraft, black magic and sorcery.

A warning to certain Romanians, stay out of India.



# FOHAT

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### To be featured in coming issues:

**Blavatsky, Chelas and  
Misleading Directions**

## Canadian Nordicity

Canada is a northern nation with parts of its territory stretching up well beyond the Arctic Circle. It can be argued that nations have their own unique psychology, and there has been no shortage of attempts by Canadians over the years to define their identity. As well as stretching into the Arctic Circle, the very word, “Canada”, has some interesting properties. Numerically written, the digits of its name correspond to 315141, while the first 6 digits of pi are 314159. Canada is almost a perfect anagram of pi, the number of the circle or cycle.

H.P. Blavatsky writes in *Isis Unveiled*:

In the Indian Pantheon there are no less than 330,000,000 of various kinds of spirits, including elementals, which latter were termed by the Brahmans the Daityas. These beings are known by the adepts to be attracted toward certain quarters of the heavens by something of the same mysterious property which makes the magnetic needle turn toward the north, and certain plants to obey the same attraction. The various races are also believed to have a special sympathy with certain human temperaments, and to more readily exert power over such than others. (*IU* 1, 313)

In the same way that the various races of elementals affect the individual, they no doubt affect the destiny of nations. Further, Blavatsky reminds us:

There is occult philosophy in that Roman Catholic doctrine which traces the various public calamities, such as epidemics of disease, and wars, and so on, to the invisible “Messengers” from North and West. “The glory of God comes from the way of the East” says Ezekiel; while Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the Psalmist assure their readers that all the evil under the Sun comes from the North and the West — which proposition, when applied to the Jewish nation, sounds like an undeniable prophecy for themselves. And this accounts also for St. Ambrose (*On Amos*, ch. iv.) declaring that it is precisely for that reason that “we curse the North-Wind, and that during the ceremony of baptism we begin by turning towards the West (*Sideral*), to renounce the better him who inhabits it; after which we turn to the East.” (*SD* 1, 123)

There is a sense that from the North comes death and renewal. As winter approaches in the Northern Hemisphere and the winds come down from the North, everything in its path falls into its annual Pralaya. In the North the people are aware all too well

of the inevitable march of the seasons; spring to summer, summer to autumn, autumn to winter and then back to spring again — the great yearly cycle running its course in a strongly defined way. Life depends on heeding these cycles, as any attempt to deviate is sure to be met with the death of the foolish transgressor. Death is the gift of the North.

All this affects the psyche of the Northerner. He cannot escape the North wind and its Pralaya-inducing effects. In fact, the further North you go, the more dominant these effects become until the growing seasons become too short to support any type of tree. Life thins right out and a sense of being alone fosters itself upon the imagination of the inhabitants. In the autumn months, the Northern Lights can be seen dancing in the sky, sometimes crackling and hissing in the silent expanse of the North. These lights that follow the eleven year cycle of the Sun are themselves a reminder of another wind, the Solar Wind. Ultimately the energies that come flowing down from the North spiraling from East to West and exiting at the South Pole, are the fohatic energies of the Sun. New energies are always coming; today is temporary. As the refreshing energies sweep across the globe, the hot tired energies are swept to the South where they exit the pole as a hot breath. The Inuit of the North know this temporary present better than anyone. At one time they traded their houses constructed of animal hides for the better insulated houses of snow in the winter months only to switch back when their snow houses melted in their short summers.

Nordicity is a concept familiar to all northern nations. The emptiness of the northern regions fosters the self-sufficiency of these people. There is not a great sense of permanence. All of Canada’s great cities lie within a narrow band along its most southern border. Bustling activity is not an idea that is synonymous with the North. Canada ends the old cycle, and it also starts the new cycle. It is a land of perpetual endings and beginnings. When the world is in need of new ideas, new beginnings, this is where Canada excels. Diplomacy is the art of seeing old problems in a new way. Canadians may not develop these ideas into their highest expression for there is always something new blowing in from the North. For this reason Canada may be forever in search of an identity, forever redefining itself.





## Letters to the Editor:

### William Q. Judge

Having read the articles in the recent *Fohat*, I was set to searching for what it is was, lurking in the back of mind that is most disturbing about this state of affairs regarding the negatively skewed memory of WQJ.

It finally came clear: As devious as it is to have deliberately maligned Mr. Judge, it is far worse in the process, to have made the message questionable. For this I think is the effect of calling into question his personal integrity. Many have studied his works for decades and would probably agree that he was the first to ignore any kind of personal attack. Like HPB, his concern was the solemn duty with which he had been entrusted by the Great Lodge of Bodhisatvas. Those who were not fooled by their own ambition and susceptibilities to the behests of others, knew well that there rarely existed such a conduit for wisdom and compassion. Even those who were failures, in that they were fooled by their own ambition and were susceptible to the behests of others, ultimately admitted their errors. The fact that these statements, which have been recently re-published, were not immediately made of the highest importance by Adyar, once these admissions became known to them, is a gross error. It is this kind of lack of integrity, which must have been perceived early on by HPB, as she points out in her own hand, and which announced her separation from Adyar, as well as the Master's.

For those of you reading this, as well as previous documentation regarding this issue, and are still confused or in a state of simple disbelief that such divisive and according to human need — criminal, since the Society of the name Theosophical was no longer an organ of those who founded it, such that it could no longer continue to dispense therapeutics into the world, and was therefore no longer within the umbrella definition of Theosophical; need to take a breath, and dare to believe in this instance that what their physical senses are telling them is true. Frankly, this would not be difficult for them had they known that there was a Genuine outpouring through HPB and Judge to be continued by Robert Crosbie, that when followed would have allowed all of this to be glaringly obvious. However, as criminal as the Adyar Society was and is, they — students of today's Adyar, must be responsible for allowing themselves to be led astray. Propriety says that they should admit their gullibility, as difficult as that may be. After all, eating crow is never pleasant. But the sooner this is done perhaps the sooner there will be a larger body of students to whom can be given more of what they then will deserve. Also, they should not demure in their admission, for they owe such as William Quan Judge a great deference. Theirs should be on the order of these letters

to the editor of various Theosophical publications, with as much clarity as to their new position as possible. For their admission is similar to a doctor who, having done a complete review of all biopsies, imaging and blood tests, and having misdiagnosed cancer, ultimately realizes their error. Such awful consequences for the one patient, and how much larger on an enormous world size scale for the oversight of which we are speaking. For that was the effect of those who fell in the past, some 110 years ago, and the consequences of such a fall.

Having said all of this, HPB once said that a 100 failures are not as important as the quickness with which one stands up again. She always held a hand out to others, as did WQJ, for others' Karmic opportunity on the Path. For they knew full well that a moment's introspection can alter any shadowy way and bring them into the sunlight.

Steven Levey  
Beltsville, MD

---

### H.P. Blavatsky

Seeing that *Fohat* magazine consistently defends H.P. Blavatsky's honour as an honest and decent woman, Ms. Katinka Hesselink, from The Netherlands, felt she had to interfere — and wrote a letter to the Editor.<sup>1</sup>

Ms. Katinka probably calls herself a Theosophist, and certainly is a member of the Adyar Society, besides being, it seems, a follower of Paul Johnson's ideas.

For Ms. Katinka, "the real Blavatsky" is that imaginary and fraudulent person which was entirely invented by Blavatsky's libelers. Katinka wrote:

It is from the work of people like [Daniel] Caldwell and [John] Algeo that the real Blavatsky can perhaps be seen. Blavatsky DID perform phenomena. She also probably faked a few.

Who says so?

Katinka is implicitly quoting Solovyof and the Coulobms, without having the nerve, though, to quote them openly, as they are universally recognized as mere liars.

This absence of evidence against HPB's innocence is one of the reasons why Paul Johnson, John Algeo and other libelers as Katinka herself rather "suggest" that HPB was a fraud, instead of clearly stating it. These persons can use only gossips and innuendos, for which there is no need of evidence.

. . . continued on page 45

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<sup>1</sup> *Fohat*, Vol. IX, Number 4, Winter 2005, p. 77.

# Ghosts and Apparitions

Rogelle Pelletier

Ghosts have haunted man's psyche presumably since time immemorial. A wide array of ghostly manifestations have been documented over the centuries but it is the phantasms of the human dead that attract the greatest fascination.

The following is a modern example of haunting ghosts. In this example, there seemed to be several ghosts manifesting in different ways. A 'homestead' farm was held by one family for many years; members of this family suffered ill health. The son who became the eventual owner committed suicide. The next purchasers lost a teenage son in a vehicle accident that claimed the lives of seven people. The father was diagnosed with brain cancer and died a few years later. This family also had a horse that absolutely refused to go into the barn. He would rise on his back legs, place his front legs up to the top of the door frame and neigh loudly in protest. There were also strange goings-on in the house. The next owners rented the house to a young man for a while. His banjo played by itself, wall hangings dropped to the floor, things were knocked off shelves, footsteps were heard on the second storey at the same time every night and, although the front door was double-locked, it was always wide open upon his return. Although living by himself, he never felt he was really alone. He did not stay long. It was then rented to a young mother. The situation was explained to her but she decided to rent anyway as the price was right for her financial circumstances. The weird events carried on in the house. She decided to use the barn as well and kept a few chickens. Occasionally she found one with its head cut off. At Easter she decided to give a bunny to each of her three children and hid them in the barn overnight to surprise them in the morning. The bunnies were decapitated. Investigation into the early history of the area revealed that one settlement of natives had been massacred by another in that general vicinity. Some of us think we know *exactly* where!

A common thread running through writings concerning ghosts and ghost-lore is the conviction that ghosts are 'troubled' entities, trapped in the earthly plane after their physical death. This might be one reason why there are no ghosts of infants (*ML*, p.95). In 1893 T.J. Hudson wrote that throughout his investigations it was observed that in authenticated ghost phenomena:

*All phantasms of the dead are of those who have died under circumstances of great mental stress or emotion. No one whose death was peaceful and*

quiet, no one who left this life with no unsatisfied longing or desire present in the mind at the time of death, ever projected a phantasm upon the living objective world.

Again, the strength, persistency, and objectivity of the phantasm seem to be in exact proportion to the intensity of the emotion experienced at the moment of death. . . . (*The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, p.296)

Whether through emotional stress generated by a violent death, or a railing against death caused by strongly developed but unsatisfied passions and desires, the common thread seems to hold for many cases.

There are other types of cases, however, and the average person does not differentiate between one such case of the apparitions which are simply the result of the disintegration process of a life ended under normal circumstances versus the sighting and/or sensing of something altogether more sinister.

H.P. Blavatsky (HPB) explains the disintegration process that manifests as ghostly sightings in graveyards:

[T]he *Linga-Sarira* ". . . is the subtle, ethereal element of the *ego* of an organism [whether human or animal or vegetable]; inseparably united to . . . the latter; it never leaves it but at death." . . .

Thus the "*Linga-Sarira*" is "dissolved with the external body at the death of the latter." It dissolves slowly and gradually, its adhesion to the body becoming weaker, as the particles disintegrate. During the process of decay, it may, on sultry nights, be sometimes seen over the grave. Owing to the dry and electric atmosphere it manifests itself and stands as a bluish flame, often as a luminous pillar, of "odyle," bearing a more or less vague resemblance to the outward form of the body laid under the sod. Popular superstition, ignorant of the nature of these *post-mortem* gaseous emanations, mistakes them for the presence of the "suffering" soul, the personal *spirit* of the deceased, hovering over his body's tomb. Yet, when the work of destruction has been completed, and nature has broken entirely the cohesion of corporeal particles, the *Linga-Sarira* is dispersed with the body of which it was but an emanation. (*BCW*: IV, pp.53-54)

Clearly this manifestation can happen with nearly any decaying body and has nothing to do with emotion or stress. This case is not unfamiliar with societies from the past.

Primitive as well as more complex societies have held that ghosts remain in the vicinity of their bodies if they have been improperly buried, not buried at all, or if their graves have been disturbed. Under normal circumstances, what is observed is more than likely the disintegration process outlined above by HPB. In this regard, it may be well to add what Eliphas Levi mentions on the subject in “Death”<sup>1</sup>

The preservation of corpses is a violation of the laws of nature; it is an outrage on the modesty of death, which hides the works of destruction, as we should hide those of reproduction. Preserving corpses is to create phantoms in the imagination of the earth [to intensify these images in the astral or sidereal light. – Ed. *Theos.*]; the spectres of the nightmare, of hallucination, and fear, are but the wandering photographs of preserved corpses. It is these preserved or imperfectly destroyed corpses, which spread, amid the living, plague, colera, contagious diseases, sadness, scepticism and disgust of life. Death is exhaled by death. The cemeteries poison the atmosphere of towns, and the miasma of corpses blight the children even in the bosoms of their mothers.

To this Mahatma K.H. adds a note: “We never bury our dead. They are burnt or left above the earth.” The advantage of cremation is succinctly expressed in the following explanation:

[L]eave the body to Nature and it will be months, perhaps years, before the slow decomposition of Nature sets the astral body free; but [cremate the body] and it can be set free in half an hour, an hour, or two hours. (*Theosophical Movement* 22:6, p.127)

Natural decomposition is not the only case where a phantasm may appear for less than sinister reasons.

Another case of phantasms is the after-death visitation scenario where, just prior to departing completely from their earthly frame, a dying individual may appear to say farewell. It is explained in *The Mahatma Letters*:

His *Mayavi-rupa* may be often thrown into objectivity, as in the cases of apparitions after death; but, unless it is projected with the knowledge of (whether latent or potential), or, owing to the intensity of the desire to see or appear to someone, shooting through the dying brain, the apparition will be simply — automatical; it will not be due to any sympathetic attraction, or to any act of volition, and no more than the reflection of a person passing unconsciously near a mirror, is due to the desire of the latter. (pp.128-129)

HPB explains:

[T]hat which appears, or the “double” is called *Mayavi-Rupa* (illusionary form) when acting blindly; and — *Kama-Rupa*, “will” or “desire-form”

when compelled into an objective shape by the conscious will and desire of its possessor. (*BCW*: IV, p.53)

In such instances, a presence is seen, felt or heard and percipients tend to get the message that this is ‘good-bye’. Death of the visitor is usually confirmed shortly thereafter. This species of phantom is commonly referred to by the German word *Doppelgänger*. Technically, this can be considered ghostly but at this stage of the death process there is as yet no “elementary” to which the proper appellation of ghost can be correctly applied.<sup>2</sup>

HPB differentiated three further types of apparitions in a letter to her sister in 1875 where she described her observations at séances held by a family of strong mediums, the Eddys, in Vermont:

You remember, Vera, how I made experiments for you at Rougodevo, how often I saw the ghosts of those who had been living in the house, and described them to you . . . Well, it was the same daily and nightly in Vermont. I saw and watched these soulless creatures, the shadows of their terrestrial bodies, from which in most cases soul and spirit had fled long ago. . . . And I remarked under the advice and guidance of my Master, that (1) those apparitions which were genuine were produced by the ‘ghosts’ of those who had lived and died within a certain area of those mountains; (2) those who had died far away were less entire, a mixture of the real shadow and of that which lingered in the personal aura of the visitor for whom it purported to come; and (3) the purely fictitious ones, or as I call them, the reflections of the genuine ghosts or shadows of the deceased personality. (*BCW*: XIV, pp.490-491)

These examples are not bound to the grave nor are they temporary manifestations generated from the mind of the dying person.

What constitutes a ‘genuine’ ghost? In theosophical terms, it is a kama-rupic shade which has a strong attachment to the physical plane. The definition of *elementary* (and the various stages of its density) precludes that ‘genuine’ ghosts are the most material — the earth-bound as opposed to the “reflections” alluded to by HPB in her letter to her sister. They are, therefore, the ones in closest physical contact with the living. The evil impulses and gross appetites, still inhering in these kama-rupic phantoms, draw them to physical spheres congenial to them. They pose a danger to the psychological health of the living, and literally haunt those possessing tendencies akin to their own. They are soulless but do possess a certain degree of consciousness and are filled with energies of a depraved and ignoble type (*Occult Glossary*, pp.44-45). Devoid of awareness or mind, but with very strong

<sup>1</sup> Originally published in *The Theosophist* for October 1881, and later included as Appendix I in *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, edited by A.T. Barker, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA, 1973, pp.369-373.

<sup>2</sup> See “Death: The Dying Process and Thereafter” (*Fohat* IX:4 Winter 2005, pp.84-86, 94-95).



molecular and astral attachments to the earthly plane, they comprise embodied emotions whose energies are heavy and dense. Their bonds of attraction are too overpowering to enable the kama-rupic remains mired at the lower levels of kama-loka to dissipate quickly. There are numerous examples of ghosts showing up in photographs as they are dense enough to record on film in the proper light.

HPB's definition of 'elementaries' reads:

Properly, the disembodied *souls* of the depraved; these souls having at some time prior to death separated from themselves their divine spirits, and so lost their chance for immortality. . . . (*Theosophical Glossary*, p.112)

The term has eventually come to include disembodied ex-humans in general whose astral atoms are ultimately destined to disintegrate and dissolve. Even if not depraved, the term 'elementary' is applicable to the phantoms of especially materialistic formerly embodied persons. It is attachments that cause them to remain as the fading two-principled remnants that they are (*Pisachasin Sanskrit, ML*, p.107), and it is attachments that keep them near us.

In *Isis Unveiled* HPB provides the following information about "a *genuine* elementary apparition" which a lady had described as having suddenly appeared as "a *cloud or column of luminous vapor* . . . hovering about the spot rendered accursed by his evil deed . . .":

[It] made itself visible of its own free will — in short, an *umbra* — it was, as every respectable shadow should be, visible but impalpable, or if palpable at all, communicating to the feeling of touch the sensation of a mass of water suddenly clasped in the hand, or of condensed but cold steam. It was *luminous* and *vapory*; for aught we can tell it might have been the real personal umbra of the "spirit," persecuted, and earth-bound, either by its own remorse and crimes or those of another person or spirit. (*IU:I*, p.69)

We are here introduced not only to the idea of ghosts being attached to place, in this case "the spot rendered accursed by his evil deed", but also of the tactile quality of "condensed but cold steam."

As mentioned earlier, there are no 'happy' earth-bound ghosts. Tragedy, love, or intense materiality bind them to the lower planes. Many accounts of sightings mention that the apparition seems to glide soundlessly along, oblivious of any living presence observing them, while others seem to delight in physical contact, bestowing a ghostly kiss or a cold touch — some even going so far as to wake people up by shaking their beds or sitting on the mattress making it sink by their presence. Some produce ghostly lights, pungent odors, or various kinds of noises. Another German word, poltergeist, describes a ghost responsible for loud noises and physical disturbances

such as throwing things around or knocking things down. Whether seeing or merely 'feeling' the presence of a ghost, such sensation is usually accompanied by a sudden chill in the surroundings. Perhaps one explanation for this sudden chill can be found in the following definition of *umbra*:

They may become visible by attracting ethereal material elements from the body of a medium, or any other person in whom there is little cohesion of his lower elements in consequence of some disease, or on account of inherited peculiarities of his organisation; or they may attract them from the surrounding atmosphere. (*Life of Paracelsus*, p.43)

One explanation for the chill may be that vitality is being withdrawn from a living victim and sensed as a drop in body temperature, rather than there being an actual chill in the surroundings, although a combination of both may be more probable. Regardless, this chill can be unsettling to most.

Haunting ghosts provoke the most interest in the annals of ghost lore. These hauntings seem to have a defining criteria; the situations and appearances change but the general circumstances are similar. T.J. Hudson in *The Law of Psychic Phenomena* writes:

The murdered man feels, at the supreme moment, an intense longing to acquaint the world with the circumstances of his 'taking off;' and he conceives the thought of reproducing the scene on the spot until its significance is understood and the murderer is brought to justice. (p.296)

The intense desire having defined the manifestation, no further thought is needed (nor indeed possible) to continue the repetition of events. Desire attracted the elements required and the playing out of the scene is a mere reaction to the intense thought-form generated and established at the moment of the tragedy.

One of the most distinguishing features of a haunting ghost is that it is not known to have more than one idea or purpose, which it follows intently while utterly ignoring everything else. Hudson claims:

The emotions attending a death by violence are necessarily of the most intense character. The desire to acquaint the world with the circumstances attending the tragedy is overwhelming. The message is not for a single individual, but to all whom it may concern. Hence the ghost does not travel from place to place, and show itself promiscuously, but confines its operations to the locality, and generally to the room in which the death-scene occurred. There it will remain, nightly rehearsing the tragedy, for days and months and years, or until someone with nerves strong enough demands to know the object of its quest. When this is done, the information will be given, and then the phantom will fade away forever. (p.301)



It has been recorded that ghosts that seem restricted to particular surroundings generally disappear with the demolition of the building or other change in the physical environment they have been haunting. Fire is supposedly the best cleanser for such circumstances, particularly with the nastier type of ghost. Exorcism is apparently not successful in these cases; only the playing out of the objective of its existence is effective.

Animal-ghosts are also an interesting study. In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky writes:

Before venturing to decide the question whether the spectral animal forms so frequently seen and attested are the returning spirits of dead beasts, we must carefully consider their reported behavior. Do these spectres act according to the habits and display the same instincts, as the animals during life? Do the spectral beasts of prey lie in wait for victims, and timid animals flee before the presence of man; or do the latter show a malevolence and disposition to annoy, quite foreign to their natures? . . . [S]pectre animals do appear and manifest all the worst traits of depraved human nature, without themselves being human. What . . . can they be but elementals? (*IUI*, p.71)

Thought-forms are animated by elementals (a generalizing term for all beings below the minerals on the scale of evolution), and the survival of a thought-form is determined by the intensity of the mental/emotional energy infused into it. One type of apparition is the result of such thought-forms or memories, established over time and left behind by the person who built them. This type is sometimes seen as a ghostly presence just going about its business. An example is a long-deceased chambermaid who still tends to guests in a particular room in an English inn. The owners described that she appears at the foot of the bed, dressed in Victorian era attire and carrying a bundle of keys. She smiles at the astonished guests and departs. She worked at these premises most of her life and apparently died in the room where she is often perceived.

In other instances of a similar nature, while no ghostly phenomenon as such is associated with it, an influential mental atmosphere can sometimes be discerned in certain premises, particularly if the previous inhabitants experienced great sorrow or strong emotion of any kind. While no ghost is seen or heard, an influence is felt that cannot be ignored. Some individuals cannot handle it and must move out; others feel compelled to do something about which they previously had no interest, such as develop a love of art or music after living in a home where, unknown to them, the previous owner had played out their passion for such things. Here again, thoughts (embod-

ied elemental energies), the so-called memories in the walls, have left their impressions.

Mention must also be made of apparitions at séances through mediums, now more commonly referred to as 'channellers'. HPB claimed she was sent to America "to unveil what [mediumship] is and [to] expose what [it] is not" (Cranston, p.117). It is *not* direct communication with the spirit of the dearly departed as presumed by those hoping to make contact with their loved one.<sup>3</sup> W.Q. Judge explains how apparitions at séances are materialized:

The astral shells together with the still living astral body of the medium, helped by . . . "elementals," produce nearly all the phenomena of non-fraudulent spiritualism. The medium's astral body having the power of extension and extrusion forms the framework for what are called "materialized spirits," makes objects move without physical contact, gives reports from deceased relatives, none of them anything more than recollections and pictures from the astral light, and in all this using and being used by the shells of suicides, executed murderers, and all such spooks as are naturally near to this plane of life. . . . [T]he astral shells of suicides and executed criminals are the most coherent, longest lived, and nearest to us of all the shades . . . and hence must, out of the necessity of the case, be the real "controls" of the *séance* room. (*Ocean*, pp.48-49)

In literature going back to before Moses, mediumship is denounced as necromancy and, obviously, not something to be dabbled with. However, mediums are not the only ones to attract dark energies.

"Dwellers on the Threshold" do not specifically fall into the category of 'ghosts' *per se*, but they definitely haunt their makers. The term was coined by Bulwer-Lytton in his novel *Zanoni* where he did in essence present an occult fact. G de Purucker explains that

They are verily ghosts of the dead men that the present man formerly was, now arising to dog his footsteps, and hence are very truly called "Dwellers on the Threshold". In a specific sense they may be truly called the Kama-rupas of the man's past incarnations arising out of the records in the astral light left there by the "old" man of the "new" man who now is. (*Occult Glossary*, pp.40-41)

The online *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary* ([www.theosociety.org/pasadena/etgloss](http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/etgloss)) adds the following:

A person who gives way to strongly material impulse and desires forms for himself a kama-rupa which, when the person dies, can persist without undergoing complete dissolution until the quick return of such materially-minded human soul to reincarnation, when the kama-rupa is then strongly attracted to the person thus reembodyed

<sup>3</sup> This has been detailed in "Death: The Dying Process and Thereafter" (*Fohat IX:4* Winter 2005, pp.86, 94).

and haunts him as an evil genius, continually instilling by automatic psychomagnetic action thoughts and impulses of evil, temptations, and suggestions of fear and terror — all of which the person himself was responsible for in his last life.

Naturally, if an aspirant determines to overcome certain weaknesses in his nature (which are ghosts of evil habits, thought-creations which have established a magnetic connection — his 'dweller' of sorts), forces are aroused to try to prevent such change as the 'life' of the dweller depends on the continuation of circumstances (energies) which are feeding it. This battle is intensely amplified in the case of an initiate determined to progress along the path of enlightenment. He "must face these old 'selves' of himself and conquer or — fail, which failure may mean either insanity or death" (*Occult Glossary*, p.41). W.Q. Judge adds that "the only appropriate channel for exhausting the energies centered in kama-rupa is through the Ego who brought them into existence" (*Echoes III*, p.341).

Judge explains that the Dweller is the combined evil influence of wicked thoughts and acts of the age in which one lives and assumes a definite shape at each appearance — always the same for some and changing each time for others, while still others perceive it as a dread horror. Judge wrote:

It is specialized for each student and given its form by the tendencies and natural physical and psychological combinations that belong to his family and nation. (*The Path* 3:9, Dec. 1888, p.282; *Echoes I*, p.90)

It can never simply be gotten rid of, and it "will stay as a constant menace until it is triumphed over *and left behind*" (*ibid*, pp.282, 289), through a persistent act of *Will*. The dweller is created by will and ultimately destroyed by a use of will which is not unlike our next case.

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In one of his lectures Manly P. Hall adds a psychological angle to ghost lore when he explains the truth of the statement "haunted by guilt". He claims that ghosts can be man's recognition of guilt personified that comes into his consciousness as an avenging force which he believes he deserves. The psychological pressure from having wronged an individual can perhaps be rationalized during the day but becomes an element of his dream mechanism. If this persists over a long enough period of time, eventually the injured party may appear as a ghost. "As the pressures of moral circumstances become more intense there is a tendency to precipitate them into waking life" and the ghost of the victim appears to rise before him. Hall concluded that a burdened mind is a confused mind and can impose a phantom of its own creation into a scene ("The Fascination of the Supernatural", 1983).

It becomes evident that there is no *one* explanation for the origin of ghosts. It can only be agreed that they are not physical, in the sense of flesh-and-blood material bodies. Their gradations and densities are varied and, like the ex-humans from which they mostly originate, no two are exactly alike. Ghosts may have an inherent degree of consciousness but are mindless. Their 'materials' so to speak can be attracted and used by mediums, consciously or unconsciously, to build apparitions which present at séances. Some apparitions are simply memories built over time and intensified by the sheer repetition of actions during a lifetime. Others are elementals manifesting traits of depraved human nature as spectre animals. There are as many possibilities as there as humans to create them. We have only ourselves to fear. 

# Open Questions in H. P. Blavatsky's Genealogy:

Review of:

**“Peter Laur: Ein deutschbaltischer Hintergrund der “Theosophie”?”, in: Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums, Band LIII (2006), Carl-Schirren-Gesellschaft, Lüneburg 2005**

**[“Peter Laur: A German-Baltic background of “Theosophy”?”, in: A Yearbook of the Baltic Germanity, vol. LIII (2006), Carl-Schirren-Society, Lüneburg 2005]**

Frank Reitemeyer (Berlin, Germany)

Peter Laur is a Professor in Chemistry at the University of Aachen. Over the years he did extensive research on the “Occult Chemistry” of Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater, which he found to be false. This research led him to an interest in Theosophy in general and with the founder of its modern form, Helena P. Blavatsky, in particular.

His article in the recent issue of the 2006 Yearbook of the Carl-Schirren-Society, which preserves the rich 800-year long cultural heritage of Germanity in the Baltic area, is the result of his research on H. P. Blavatsky's genealogy. He discovered some new facts, which have not been published by any Blavatsky-biographer as of yet, and he wonders why modern biographers have accepted what has come before in such an uncritical fashion.

Laur's definition of the term Theosophy is that of most dictionaries: a syncretic doctrine with Christian, Hindu and Buddhist elements, but the author is fair enough to mention, that for theosophists the view is quite contrary: That there existed an Ur-Religion, an original religion, of which the religions of today contain portions of it. The author dwells on the fact that Helena P. Blavatsky's modern form of Theosophy allegedly has nothing to do with the “classic” Theosophy of the Christian mystics like Jacob Boehme or William Blake and there exists only a similarity of the names. This is a common stereotype, stressed in Germany especially by theological authors and by Anthroposophists, the latter speaking always of the “Anglo-Indian Theosophy”, which they want to classify as different (not understanding the

thread that runs through both) from the medieval Theosophy<sup>1</sup>.

After a short introduction into the historical events of the Theosophical Movement, Laur opens his debate on Helena's genealogy with the concession, that as yet no satisfying answer about H.P.B.'s ancestry is possible. He describes the known and always republished details about her birth and her ancestors, coming to the conclusion that the relationship from her mother's side is well documented and without question. What is problematic is the lack of, or even wrong, information of her paternal heritage. Prof. Laur guesses that this may be the result of rancor against the Germans in her family, which began with the mother's brother Rostislav (1824-1884), a known Panslavist, which was continued by Helena's first cousin Sergej Witte (1849-1915), the known minister of finance and prime minister of Russia, whose counterparts denounced him ironically enough a “German”.

To have a career within the Russian hierarchy the von Hahns had to downplay their Germanity, and consequently, needed information on the ancestry of Helena's father (Peter von Hahn, 1798-1873) had been lost, so that he, as the story went, even held seances in order to discover them. Even the birth place of Peter is unknown today. The author guesses that it could have been Narva, as with his brother Gustav Adolf. Also it is not clear how much Peter was still influenced by his Germanity and whether they even spoke German at home. Also information is missing



about Helena's grand-parents Axel Heinrich (russianized Aleksej Gustavovic) and Elisabeth (Maksimovna) von Pröbsting. It seems that the Pröbsting knight family has declined, the genealogic handbook of the Estonia Knighthood has no entry for Elisabeth, although the author has recognized a likelihood in look and temperament of Helena's family with that of her grand-mother Elisabeth von Pröbsting. The father's name Gustavovic refers to a father named Gustav, but no information of him could be found.

The pedigrees as given by Boris de Zirkoff in his *Blavatsky: Collected Writings*<sup>2</sup> is described by Prof. Laur as highly selective, partly misleading and wrong. Here Helena's grandfather Alexis Gustavovich is placed in the same line as Fedeor Gustavovich and Karl Gustavovich as to indicate that they were brothers, which is not correct according to well documented sources. Also the family name Rottenstern-Hahn is an invention, as no such or similar family name ever existed. The same for the father's name Gustavovich. The correct names of Fedor and Karl have been identified as Friedrich August (Fedor Avgustovic) and Otto Karl (also: Carl August) (Avgustovic) von Hahn. The death date of Fedor was identified as 1851 in St. Petersburg; he had married Gerduta Wilhemine Augusta von Stryk in 1805. His brother Otto Karl von Hahn was born 1782 and his first marriage was to Marie Elisabeth Findeisen in 1803 in Wesenberg. There was no information to be found that there exists any relationship between Axel von Hahn (and therewith with Helena) and the two brothers Friedrich August and Otto Karl von Hahn. The author believes that this relationship had probably been constructed arbitrarily. For this the author gives Boris de Zirkoff the main responsibility who is described as being through his mother a great grand-son of Otto Karl von Hahn. It was de Zirkoff who was attributed with bringing forth most of the genealogical information, with additional information from Helena's sister Vera Jachontov or Zhelihovsky, which information Laur describes as a vivid fantasy. That de Zirkoff is labeled in theosophical circles as grand-nephew or even as nephew of Helena is at best only "cum grano salis" correct, according to the author.

It was striking to Prof. Laur that de Zirkoff gives no proof of a direct relationship between Helena and the von Hahn family, who are mentioned nevertheless numerous times in a selective fashion, while on the other hand clearly documented near relatives of Helena such as the numerous progenies of her father's siblings, her ten cousins, whose families may be in existence even today, are ignored. With one of them, Nikolay, Helena had lived with in Paris in 1873.<sup>3</sup>

Theosophists repeat always that Helena's Hahn line came from Mecklenburg in Germany and settled later in the Baltic states. Laur writes that he did extensive research with members of the Hahn families of this region and consulted various of the families, and associations' genealogies, but he did not find any proof that Helena was related to these Hahn families. It is also often believed that the famous authoress Ida Gräfin Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880) was a "cousin" of Helena's father or even a "grand aunt" of Helena, which designation must not be understood literally, as there exists also no proof for that relationship. That some ancestor's name was allegedly "Rothenstern-Hahn" or "Rottenstern-Hahn" is, according to the author, a claim based on "clairvoyant experiences" (of Peter von Hahn together with his daughter Helena), and therefore, as Prof. Laur decides, not to be taken seriously.<sup>4</sup>

From the reviewers point of view it is to be regretted that 115 years after the death of Helena Blavatsky no more information about her German ancestors is available. Prof. Laur's research deserves the attention of all theosophists and theosophical historians and it is to be hoped that this impulse encourages further research on Blavatsky's genealogy and that more reliable information concerning her ancestry will soon enter the theosophical literature. It is further hoped that in the future, German theosophists will not be so ready to ignore, bury or even destroy anymore historical documents but rather embrace it in the true spirit of theosophical inquiry as espoused by H.P.B. — of open-mindedness, readiness to search for the truth, and freedom of speech. Therefore the reviewer thanks the Editors of *FOHAT* for giving him the opportunity to share this information with the theosophical public. 🐞

<sup>1</sup> Cp. my reader's letter in: Communications, Theosophical History, July 2003, pp. 6ff.

<sup>2</sup> Wheaton, Illinois, Third Edition 1988, pp. lxix-lxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Wheaton, 1988, vol. I, Third ed., p. I.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. A. P. Sinnett: *Incidents in the Life of Madame H. P. Blavatsky* London, Redway 1886, p. 97.

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# Theosophy and Denis Saurat

John Robert Colombo

## Preliminaries

There will be more discussion in this article of Denis Saurat than there will be of Theosophy. There are two reasons for this imbalance. The first reason is that I know more about Saurat (a limited and little-known subject) than I do about Theosophy (a vast and well-known subject), despite devoting only a few years to studying the former and a great many years of exposure to the latter. The second reason is that readers of *Fohat* may be expected to know more about Theosophy than they do about Saurat. Let me set the stage and tell you about the man and the reason for my interest in him.

## My Research

About 1965, in a used bookstore in Toronto, I bought a copy of one of Saurat's early books, *Literature and Occult Tradition* (1930). I was attracted to the book because of its four-word title, which highlighted my own interests in literature, the occult, and traditional lore and learning. The four syllables of the author's name, "Den-is Saur-at," had no meaning for me at the time.

I must admit that when I began to read the book I had purchased, I was initially disappointed. I appreciated the author's style, exuberant though flashy, but I noted the lack of scholarship, or at least the lack of source-notes, etc. As well, I was fresh from studying John Milton and William Blake with the best — A.S.P. Woodhouse at University College and Northrop Frye at Victoria College — and I was not all that surprised with what Saurat had to say about the English poets. I was less familiar with Victor Hugo so the discussion of him and his work, especially his decade-long psychical research, was new to me, yet I wondered how representative it all was of French scholarship.

Still, the author's thesis stuck with me as interesting and important and brave. Basically what he wanted to demonstrate is the following proposition: There is an ancient system of belief or beliefs held by the European peasantry, held earlier in antiquity and in prehistory, which continues unabated despite social and cultural forces and pressures to the contrary; from time to time these beliefs are drawn to the attention of the *bourgeoisie* and the *intelligentsia*, by leaders and teachers, by scriptures and literature, especially when they are given expression by great poets and authors like Milton, Blake, and Hugo, not

to mention Spenser and Whitman. Saurat identified these poets as "philosophical poets" in the sense that they deal with the great issues that philosophers face rather than with the standard concerns of non-philosophical poets and authors, that is, human psychology and social interactions. So it was the tributary of "philosophical poetry" that interested him rather than what might be described as the mainstream of "psychological poetry." In time I would realize that Saurat in common with many metaphysical writers and occultists held the tributary to be the mainstream and the mainstream to be the tributary. After all, it is the headwaters rather than the downstreams that are of perennial interest, importance, and concern.

Briefly expressed, that was his thesis, not a novel one today perhaps; but bear in mind the notion was advanced publicly in 1930 not by a metaphysician, a Traditionalist thinker, or by an occultist, but by "a somebody" — a forty-year-old professor with a doctorate from the Sorbonne and a professorship at King's College London as well as the directorship of the prestigious French Institute in London, an institution that continues to this day.

Over the decades I kept a "watching brief" on Denis Saurat. No one I knew had ever heard of him, except, oddly, Northrop Frye, one of the world's leading literary critics, an authority on William Blake, and in the 1970s the world's most cited academic scholar. (He was up there with Marx and Freud in citations in scholarly papers!) I learned that when Frye was a student at Victoria College he worked at the Toronto Reference Library, then located at the corner of College St. and St. George St., where he chanced upon Saurat's *Blake and Modern Thought* (1929). Frye would arrive at the Library earlier than required to read Saurat on Blake. Excited by Saurat's willingness to take Blake's "Prophetic Books" seriously, Frye was encouraged to write an undergraduate paper on Blake and then devote many years to the study of Blake's "Prophetic Books" which would culminate in the publication in 1947 of *Fearful Symmetry*, a great work of scholarship. I studied Blake under Frye but never once did he mention Saurat, though in later years, when interviewed, integrity led him to acknowledge the Blake-Saurat-Frye lineage. Similar semi-evasive tactics are in evidence when Mircea Eliade, the scholar of archaic practices at the University of Chicago, took pains to ignore the impressive contributions made by René Guénon and Traditionalism to his own thought.

When I began to read the periodical literature published in Britain during the interwar years — the 1920s and 1930s — I would encounter passing references to Saurat. He had a hand in naming a movement — the “Scottish Literary Renaissance.” In the 1940s, he wrote and delivered broadcasts on the BBC devoted to France, its society and culture. He was among the first French citizens in Britain to respond to Charles de Gaulle’s appeal broadcast over the BBC to form the Free French movement. (The first book I dedicated to his work includes a photo of De Gaulle and Saurat standing side by side, which, given the disparity of their heights, I like to call “six-foot-six and five-foot-five.”) Then there were his contributions to *The New Age*, edited by A.R. Orage, subsequently a disciple of G.I. Gurdjieff; and to *The Listener*, the BBC weekly founded by R.S. Lambert, the psychical researcher (who is the subject of my monograph *Lambert’s Day*). In the late 1950s, while an undergraduate at University College, I recall seeing a poster thumb-tacked to the bulletin board of the Department of French that drew attention to studies for foreign students to be held at the *Centre international d’études françaises* in Nice. Saurat was its director at the time.

### **Making Contact**

I am a long-time subscriber to *The Times Literary Supplement* and I noticed that a year does not go by without at least one passing reference to Saurat in its columns. “The cultural conference in 1936 was attended by Stephen Spender and Denis Saurat” is a typical note. Nobody felt the need to identify Saurat. In a sense, he was a “period piece,” part of the woodwork.

I found myself wondering about Saurat’s standing in French circles. It turned out the Chair of the Department of French at Victoria College knew nothing about him (though she tried to hedge rather than admit this scholarly lapse of knowledge). I kept a “weather eye” open for references to Saurat, but nothing substantial came my way. I thought there must be some scholarly activity in French or English, perhaps an essay of appreciation, a monograph on his life or work, possibly a bibliography. Nothing. I wondered what Anglo-French scholars were doing with their spare time. About 1990, I opened two files — a file folder and an electronic file — and began to list his books and my impressions of them.

One day I asked my researcher, an older woman who has in turn been a Presbyterian, an Anglican, a Mormon, a Theosophist, etc., to undertake research for me at the Toronto Reference Library, to begin to photocopy biographical entries on the man and reviews of his books in the periodical literature. With the arrival of the Internet and its two treasures — the re-

search engine Google and the website Advanced Book Exchange — I was able to learn a lot more about him and his achievement. After all, there were some 800 references to him on Google. Most of these “hits” were passing notices of the availability of his books, which I began to purchase, spending over a thousand dollars to build up a library of his twenty-eight publications in French and English. In comparison, at the same time, for “Theosophy,” Google offered 1,110,000 “hits.”

I soon had the bare outline of his life. He was born of French peasant stock in Toulouse in 1890. He died in Nice in 1958. He took his doctorate (in the work of John Milton) at the Sorbonne and began his association with the French Institute in London and Kings College London. The Institute became the meeting place in London for *francophones* and *francophiles* in England. He was well known and well respected in various circles: for his promotion of Scots literary nationalism; for his studies of Milton, Blake, and Hugo; for his work on “philosophical poetry”; for his classic interview with G.I. Gurdjieff at the Prieuré at Fontainebleau-on-Avon; for his tracing the influence of the Cabala on imaginative literature; for his interest in folklore, dream lore, and psychical research; for his championing of Charles de Gaulle and the Free French; for his BBC Radio broadcasts especially during the Second World War; for his efforts on behalf of the revival of the Occitan language of Languedoc; for his postwar efforts to promote a pan-European federation, a pre-configuration of the UN and the EU; for his theories of Atlantis and giants of the prehistoric era.

I began to read his books and digest their contents, preparing abstracts of their arguments. There was no problem doing this, though the fact that some titles appeared only in French slowed me down considerably. (Saurat translated many of his own books from French to English or from English to French.) All the while I kept expecting a breakthrough in the form of encountering a major essay on the man’s life and work, but none appeared. No *festschrift*; not even an appreciation of his achievement.

Establishing the bibliography was straight-forward enough, but learning even the most elementary biographical facts was more difficult than I had expected. Did he die on June 5 according to *The Times of London* or June 7 according to *The New York Times*? It was June 6. Was he married to Ella Bocquet, Ella Smith, or Alice Helena Schmidt. (The latter.) Did their union produce two, three, or four children? (Four, three daughters and one son.) Why was he so little regarded in his native France? (A question for another occasion.) It was frustrating, and many a time I silently cursed the fact that I was marooned in Toronto far from the great libraries and

resource centres of Paris and London. No funds were forthcoming for research or travel.

I was determined to self-publish my commentaries on his publications in semi-print format (to satisfy my own curiosity and also to make their arguments accessible to people who had no ready access to the books and periodical contributions). But I needed more biographical and other information. I also felt impelled to establish a connection with the Saurat family. In turn I wrote to the Collège Denis Saurat (a high-school named in his honour, it being the French government's policy to honour its literary figures, both major and minor) and to the French Institute (which houses the Bibliothèque Denis Saurat) but received no reply to my queries, even though I had taken pains with the letters of inquiry and had them rewritten by a French scholar.

Then it occurred to me to place a personal advertisement in *The Times Literary Supplement* to request reminiscences and information about family members. It cost about \$28 and duly appeared. Even before my copy of the *TLS* arrived from London, I had an email from a family friend in Canterbury, England, that led me to the author's son. Harold Saurat was glad to hear from me. He is now in his mid-eighties, a retired petroleum engineer, a resident of Croissy-sur-Seine outside Paris. We began a correspondence, tentative at first, initially complimentary on both sides, soon friendly, then warm and most accommodating. It resulted in the pooling of information and manuscripts. In brief, Harold blessed the project. (I believe he was secretly relieved that someone, if an unlikely Canadian with limited French, had blundered onto the scene determined to do justice to his father's memory.) On our visit to France in September 2005, Ruth and I finally met Harold and his friend Claude Oyer and were entertained by them in style. We were prepared to meet a *French* gentleman; we were unprepared to meet an *English* gentleman, as Harold had been born in Glasgow and raised in Kensington! He had spent much of the Second World War in a prisoner-of-war camp. After the war he worked as an engineer with British Petroleum and contributed the entries on oil-related subjects to the *Larousse* dictionaries.

I had in mind issuing the work that I decided to call *O Rare Denis Saurat* in semi-print form, but as luck would have it, in the nick of time, a medical doctor named George A. Vanderburgh arrived in style, not in his capacity as a general practitioner, but in his chosen work as a reprinter of pulp literature and a publisher of quality books of limited interest, especially scholarship related to the Sherlock Holmes "canon." He said he would be pleased to issue my manuscript as a trade paperback in record time. He did it in better-than-record time. We met for the first

time on our front porch in North Toronto a Tuesday afternoon. A few hours later he drove back to Shelburne, a distance of about 100 km. The next morning he phoned and asked me to check my email, which I did while we chatted on the phone. There, as an attachment, was the first half of the book on the screen, formatted and paged! I had loaned him a disk of the first half of the book. I was still working on the second half, but had that been ready for him, he too would have formatted within eighteen hours the entire work! It seemed like a visual hallucination!

A short run of *O Rare Denis Saurat* was published, then *The Denis Saurat Reader*, a selection of the man's writings, and finally *Early Earth*. The latter volume translates in full for the first time Saurat's last two books: *Atlantis and the Race of the Giants* and *The Religion of the Giants and the Civilization of the Insects*. These are instances of "speculative non-fiction" in the vein of Immanuel Velikovsky. I will resist summarizing their arguments in favour of concentrating on Saurat and Theosophy.

### His Theosophy

Saurat was not a member of the Theosophical Society. One did not have to be a member in Western Europe during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be a lower-case theosophist and to take its ideas seriously. It was enough to be a reader of *The Secret Doctrine* — Saurat was in his eighth year when it was published — and to have metaphysical interests, which he did and had.

Does the word "theosophist" describe someone who speculates on the evolution and devolution of life on Earth? Does it describe someone who is sympathetic to notions like karma, reincarnation, and secret wisdom? Does it describe someone who saw in intuition and imagination forms of knowledge compatible with and superior to science and reason? Does it describe someone who considers himself a pilgrim in the supersensate world of values and realities? I believe it does, and as Saurat took such subjects and interests seriously, I have no hesitation considering him a lower-case theosophist. Another person who has no such hesitation is Ted Davy, TS historian and member of the Calgary Theosophical Society. As he wrote in *Fohat*, the quarterly publication of Edmonton Theosophical Society ("Book Review," Spring 2004, p.23):

*The Lamp* magazine once ran a series of profiles under the general title "Unenrolled Theosophists." They were intended to identify those who — such as Mark Twain in the editor's opinion — might have been attracted to the Theosophical Movement had it lived up to its initial promise — "public men whose 'facilities of observation' have given 'a greater breadth of view, a more pronounced and imperial, a more widely spread humaneness.'" [The source is Albert E.S. Smythe's *The Lamp*,



Aug. 1900.] A first impression after reading John Robert Colombo's new book is that Denis Saurat could well be described as an unenrolled theosophist.

Davy concluded:

Colombo observes that "[I]n Saurat's eyes Blavatsky is something of a philosophical poet." A rather unusual assessment, but probably few readers of the thousands of pages of her writings will argue with it.

*O Rare Denis Saurat* is a most interesting study. It imparts much useful information of an unusual — no, extremely "rare" scholar and his work. Not for the first time John Colombo has succeeded in reviving interest in one who might qualify as an "unenrolled Theosophist."

If I had to go further and explain Saurat's particular approach to the subject of "the occult," I would make the following two points:

1. Saurat's curiosity knew few bounds. He was interested in the Cabala, Buddhism, and Hinduism; in the "philosophical poets," Milton and Spenser; in the eccentricities of the English and the peculiarities of the French. He was blessed with what someone called "holy curiosity." He was quite learned in the mainstream of European thought as well as in the tributaries of Eastern and esoteric thought, but what surprises me is that it seems he knew nothing about Traditionalism and Perennialism, movements that were specially favoured by the French at the time. Krishnamurti did not impress him; the triumvirate of Freud, Jung, and Adler failed to excite him. One may be curious, I guess, but not about everything.

2. Saurat's specific interests lay in recovering the folklore of the peasantry of France — familiar to him from his childhood — and in relating it to four spheres of interest: (a) to the lore of dreams; (b) to the revelations of spirit mediums; (c) to the literature of Western Europe; and (d) to the definitions of man provided by the great religions of the East. Now these interests (especially the influence of folklore on contemporary learning) are part and parcel of the spirit of Modernism of the interwar years: Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartok in music; Nicholas Roerich and Lawren Harris in fine art; Yeats and Kathleen Raine in poetry; revived interest in poets like William Blake and Walt Whitman; anthropologists like Franz Boas and folklorists like Millman Parry; such theorists as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Mircea Eliade. His interests were in keeping with his times but hardly ahead of them. To my sorrow, it seems he has never been identified as a member of the (fabled) Priory of Sion!

### Madame Blavatsky

Saurat is one of the few scholars to acknowledge in print the influences and contributions made by Ma-

dame Blavatsky. What follow are some explicit references to her and her work.

The title of *Literature and Occult Tradition: Studies in Philosophical Poetry* (1930) has always struck me as unidiomatic. I continue to think it should be called "Literature and **the** Occult Tradition" or possibly "Literature and **an** Occult Tradition."

By "philosophical poetry" he means poetry that addresses grand ideas usually associated with philosophical inquiry and interest. There are four reasons why poets are attracted to ideas that are philosophical, theosophical, metaphysical, or occult:

1. Poets balance a "primitive" side with "contact with the classics."
2. Poets are attracted to occultism because it offers "a whole world of artistic possibilities." He says, interestingly, "Occultism is the place of refuge of all vanquished religions and philosophies."
3. Poets are "rebels against Christianity."
4. "The philosophical poets are by their nature destined to remain heretics even in the bosom of heresy, and consequently independents." (ORDS, p. 141)

Saurat traces these ideas not to primitive, savage, pagan, shamanistic, or archaic practices, as we would today, or even to Classical Antiquity, Greece and Rome, but to the neo-Platonic revival of the Renaissance — Pico della Mirandola, etc.

When he looks directly at "Occultism and Literature," he offers what I feel to be a brilliant insight into the personality and character of Blavatsky. The first two words offer a key to the entire passage:

I imagine Madame Blavatsky in her unhappy youth, in the depths of the Russian country, shut up in the castle of one of those nobles of the time of Catherine II, who had collected for herself vast libraries of French works published between 1750 and 1800. In such a retreat this effervescent brain was able to formulate its doctrine at leisure, and to acquire that passion for things Indian which had raged in Europe at that time. A certain amount of travelling in the East must have enabled her to convince herself of the identity of the doctrine of visionary encyclopaedists with Indian ideas; if one is looking for them, the resemblances are striking, and we shall see our poets from Blake to Whitman following the same path. In any case the theosophical synthesis allows us to compare the idea of our philosophical poets with a complete doctrine. This procedure has the advantage of giving us as evidence not a synthesis made *in abstracto* by a scientific mind but a living and fairly widespread religious system. (ORDS, p. 142)

This is a powerful passage based on intuition and imagination. I am tempted to parse the ideas here, for every sentence, every phrase, indeed every word,



is relevant and pregnant with possible meaning. Instead, I will resist the temptation and offer his following assessment:

Therefore we have in Madame Blavatsky a precious witness: she gives us in a genuinely rough state the only material in the great occultist quarry which was capable of being worked by the poets. What she rejected was, no doubt, almost totally impossible for the modern mind to assimilate. (ORDS, p. 142)

### Theosophy and the Cabala

The study that inspired Northrop Frye is *Blake and Modern Thought* (1929). In this work Saurat presents his theory that the Cabala was an important influence on Milton and Blake, a novel but not unique notion at the time but one that has since become widely accepted.

During Saurat's student years the Cabala was published in French translation, so he was familiar with the *Zohar*, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century work of the Spanish Jew Moses of Leon. A central notion that Saurat took from the Cabala is familiar enough to Theosophists. Here is what he writes:

. . . the *Zohar* is our great encyclopaedia of occultism and we are tempted to use it to explain many things which perhaps come from other, though parallel, sources. For instance, there is hardly anything in the general ideas of H.P. Blavatsky which cannot be explained by the *Zohar*, if we allow for a rather slight admixture of Indian lore. So we are tempted to say that Madame Blavatsky, although rather contemptuous in her tone towards the Cabala, derived most of her ideas from it. Perhaps this is not fair to her, but until we have more documents, how can we judge? (ORDS, p. 122)

Saurat finds the following notion to be central to the Cabala and Theosophy:

The conception of the Many into the one: devolution and evolution, as theosophy names it. (ORDS, p. 122)

### Comparative Religions

Saurat's most popular book was *A History of Religions* (1934) — six editions in two languages during his lifetime — but it is also the weakest. It is not a "history of religions" at all, but "the story of religions," for it describes the outer forms of the world's major religions — the fixed religions — in the manner of such popularizers of the period as Will Durant, H.G. Wells, and Lin Yutang. Christianity is given the lion's share of its pages, informed by the fact that Christianity once embraced the principles of Gnosticism:

All the conquered religions: Gnostic beliefs, Neo-platonism, Hermeticism, Manichaeism, Mithraism, Zoroastrian, Judaism to a certain extent,

will go to subsisting under official Christianity right down the centuries. They are the constituting elements of what is known as occultism; they came to strange and monstrous alliances and we shall find them again and again ready to burst through the crust of official religion. Dead beliefs do not disappear: they rot. (ORDS, p. 162)

Near the end of this popular history, Saurat returns to occultism.

None of the ideas of theosophy is new. But style and imagination make *The Secret Doctrine* a remarkable book. (ORDS, p. 166)

He then yields to the temptation to offer the Theosophical world-view:

The history of the human race is perhaps the most original part of the system. It is a mixture of Hindu legends, cabalistic myths, geological data and classical tradition, which works up into a fascinating historical novel on a cosmic scale. The Earth was first inhabited by hyperborean races, which were not sexed, and were made of a vaporous substance; then came the Lemurians, races in which each individual had two sexes, and who lived in a continent now destroyed, but of which Australia was a part — which explains many queer things in Australia; then came the Atlantis, in whom the sexes were at last separate, but whose country is now under the Atlantic; and then our own race came: the fourth of seven. Three more are yet to come. There are seven races, seven bodies to each man, seven astronomical cycles, etc., in the true Indian manner. Immortality is a series of reincarnations which bring each soul seven times through each race of each cycle, and so on. But the whole process is not unpleasant, and the general tone is vigorously optimistic. (ORDS, p. 166)

### The Occult

"The Occult in English Literature" is the title of the published version of one of Saurat's BBC broadcasts on the Third Programme. The transcript appeared in *The Listener*, 14 Aug. 1947. Here is how it begins:

What is the occult? The word merely means "hidden" and has come to mean a secret doctrine, to use Madame Blavatsky's title, a belief or a knowledge given only to a few. We find many references to such knowledge in literature, both contemporary and classical. (TDSR, p. 239)

Saurat then discusses some popular imaginative books written by C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, John Masefield, John Buchan, and H. Rider Haggard, distinguishing along the way the different meanings of the words "spiritual," "psychic," "occult," and "mystic." He then says:

Occultism proper has a double source: tradition and personal experience. The occultist is never quite sure that he is not crazy, and nothing reassures him like a text from Plato or Plotinus. Occult tradition goes back to antiquity and is made up of

. . . continued on page 45

# The Moon, The Earth and Racial Pralayas

Robert Bruce MacDonald

“When the Wheel runs at the usual rate, its extremities (the poles) agree with its middle circle (equator), when it runs slower and tilts in every direction, there is a great disturbance on the face of the Earth. The waters flow toward the two ends, and new lands arise in the middle belt (equatorial lands), while those at the ends are subject to pralayas by submersion. . . .”

And again:—

. . . “Thus the wheel (the Earth) is subject to, and regulated by, the Spirit of the Moon, for the breath of its waters (tides). Toward the close of the age (Kalpa) of a great (root) race, the regents of the moon (the Pitar fathers, or Pitris) begin drawing harder, and thus flatten the wheel about its belt, when it goes down in some places and swells in others, and the swelling running toward the extremities (poles) new lands will arise and old ones be sucked in.” (SD II, 324 -25)

The question that leaps to mind when one reads the above passages is why does the Moon’s gravitational pull increase at certain times? What does HPB mean by this?

*The Secret Doctrine* is in many ways a puzzle. One puzzle that stands out is the duration of cycles. Is there some way to correlate the decline of a Root Race with astronomical cycles? Clues from *The Secret Doctrine* point to some very interesting answers. First what is the duration of a Root Race? *The Secret Doctrine* explains:

Now our Fifth Root-Race has already been in existence — as a race *sui generis* and quite free from its parent stem — about 1,000,000 years; therefore it must be inferred that each of the four preceding Sub-Races has lived approximately 210,000 years; thus each Family-Race has an average existence of about 30,000 years. Thus the European “Family Race” has still a good many thousand years to run, although the nations or the innumerable spines upon it, vary with each succeeding “season” of three or four thousand years. It is somewhat curious to mark the comparative approximation of duration between the lives of a “Family-Race” and a “Sidereal year.” (II, 435)

Commentators such as David Pratt have noted that given the duration of the Races, and the 18.5 million year figure given as when the division of the sexes took place (SD I, 150fn), these numbers do not seem to add up. Two possible solutions that Pratt offers is that 18.5 million years is a blind, or the precessional cycles which seem to match in duration the length of a Family-Race lasted longer during the previous two Root-Races.

Some commentators have referred to an unfinished manuscript found in the Adyar archives for further clues. In this manuscript apparently written in HPB’s hand, we have the following (BCW XIII, 304):

## DURATION OF EACH RACE IN OUR ROUND ON OUR PLANET

First Race	1,574,344	Years
Second Race	3,148,688	
Third Race	4,723,032	
Fourth Race	6,297,376	
Fifth Race	7,871,720	
Sixth Race	9,446,064	
Seventh Race	<u>11,020,408</u>	
	44,081,632	Years

According to Brahmin numbers, we are 18,618,847 years into humanity’s existence on this globe as of 2006. However, elsewhere, HPB writes, “[t]he Occultists . . . calculate the age of Humanity, and assert that the latter (as separate sexes) has existed in this Round just 18,618,727 years . . .” (SD I, 150fn). It almost appears as if the parenthetical “as separate sexes” is simply a blind. If Humanity has existed on this Globe for 18,618,847 years, then according to the above numbers, we are 2,875,407 years into the Fifth Race. Apparently, the 1,000,000 years “as a race *sui generis*” refers to being free from the last remnants of the Fourth Race. Geoffrey Barborka, in *The Peopling of the Earth*, speculates further that we may only be part way through the Fourth Sub-Race of the Fifth Race with approximately 659,000 years to go before we enter into the Fifth Sub-Race. Barborka comes to these numbers using a 1:2:3:4:5:6:7 ratio which corresponds with the Races in the above chart and with the Sub-Races according to RR1 SR1: RR2 SR1: RR3 SR1: . . .<sup>1</sup>

Also, when we look at the figures given in our precession model, 30,000 years for a Family-Race, and 210,000 years for a Sub-Race, this leaves us at about 1.5 million years for a Root-Race, a number that is close to the number of years given for the duration of the First Race. Perhaps this is another clue that the First Race is the standard by which the calculations

<sup>1</sup> For details, see *The Peopling of the Earth*, pp.214-217.

for the remainder of the Races are figured out. The calculations then for figuring out the duration of the Family-Races, etc. of the Fifth Root-Race are a blind that more accurately reflect the First Root-Race and the basis for figuring out the rest.

Another interesting clue is that of the tilt of the axis. HPB writes in *The Secret Doctrine* that:

Every sidereal year the tropics recede from the pole four degrees in each revolution from the equinoctial points, as the equator rounds through the Zodiacal constellations. Now, as every astronomer knows, at present the tropic is only twenty-three degrees and a fraction less than half a degree from the equator. Hence it has still 2½ degrees to run before the end of the Sidereal year; which gives humanity in general, and our civilized races in particular, a reprieve of about 16,000 years. (II, 331)

Although HPB talks about a four degree change in the tilt of the axis each precession, perhaps this is a blind. If we take the actual change to be 4.32 degrees, then two complete cycles of the poles, totaling 720 degrees would equal exactly 4,320,000 years, a Maha-Yuga. When we describe a cycle in this instance we are referring to the North Pole going from straight up with reference to the ecliptic, spiraling down until the earth is on its side, continuing until the North Pole is where our South Pole is now, and then spiraling back up to its starting position. Each half turn of 180 degrees would last about a million years. Two complete cycles would correspond to a Maha-Yuga, this being highly suggestive.

Further, the Globe presently rotates with a 23.5 degree tilt. HPB suggests that in 16, 000 years we will be at 21 degrees, so we are on our way up. Using our 4.32 degree factor, 933,000 years ago the Globe would have been rotating with the North Pole at the South of the ecliptic, just as it would have been 3,093,000 years ago, and 5,253,000 years ago. This is significant as HPB writes:

The astronomical records of Universal History, however, are said to have had their beginnings with the Third Sub-race of the Fourth Root-race or the Atlanteans. When was it? Occult data show that even since the time of the regular establishment of the Zodiacal calculations in Egypt, *the poles have been thrice inverted.* (II, 353)

This seems to say that the Egyptian records go back 5.25 million years into the sixth Sub-Race of the Atlanteans, or if by inverted we mean the Earth has flipped 180 degrees three times, then we are looking at just over 3 million years ago, at the very end of the Atlantean Root-Race or the beginning of the Fifth Root-Race.

Now what has this all got to do with the moon? As the Fifth Root-Race is now going through a Kali-Yuga, we know that in 4,757,000 years we will be going through another. Where will the Earth be on its axis

at that time. If things remain constant we can expect it to be 793 degrees from its current position. That will put it at 50 degrees on the other side of a pole perpendicular to the ecliptic. That of course is two full cycles away from where our current Kali Yuga is going to end. Is there something about a 45 degree tilt that makes the earth susceptible to floods and vulcanism? If so, why does the earth not run into such problems every time it passes through a 45 degree angle? Perhaps there is something more to the problem. HPB writes that "*the regents of the moon (the Pitar fathers, or Pitris) begin drawing harder, and thus flatten the wheel about its belt*". Why would they pull harder, is gravity somehow increasing? Has the moon moved closer to the earth? HPB also talks about the Globe running slower. What would cause it to run slower?

David Pratt quotes Fred Dick who draws attention to an experiment done by Ampere:

A magnet, loaded with platinum at the lower end, floats upright in mercury contained in a circular glass vessel, at some distance from its center. On dipping a point, connected with one of the terminals of a battery, in the center of the mercurial surface, the other terminal being connected with the outer edge of the mercury, the magnet is seen to rotate on its axis. Here is a perfect analogy to the sun, considered as a radiator of electric forces. (<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/dp5/pole3.htm>)

This experiment suggests not only that the sun is electrically involved in the rotation of the Earth on its axis, but one could imagine how a greater current may speed up the rotation and less current may cause it to slow down.

Independent scientist James McCanney hypothesizes that the Solar System is a giant capacitor with the Sun at the center and its edge well beyond the orbit of Pluto. Generally the Sun's eleven year sunspot cycle is responsible for little more than a change in weather here on Earth. McCanney writes in *Planet-X, Comets & Earth Changes*:

As the comet develops and discharges the solar capacitor, the increased electrical energy imparted to the solar atmosphere ignites a higher level of nuclear fusion causing the Sun to become excited above its normal levels and may ignite small to very large solar flares. Small comets have many times been observed to directly cause solar flares as they pass near the sun. (16)

Comets are continually speeding through the solar system. HPB claims that some comets are captured by the solar system and become planets. Similarly, McCanney believes that the ancient Hopi and others speak of comets the size of planets that periodically move through the inner solar system. These comets

. . . continued on page 47



## BOOK REVIEWS



*Helena Blavatsky*, Edited and Introduced by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke in the “Western Esoteric Masters” Series. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004. xi + 220 pp. Softcover. Price \$14.95US.

Set the task of compiling a representative selection of Blavatsky writings between the covers of a small volume, most students of Theosophy would find it an overwhelming challenge. The difficulty, of course, would not be what to include, but what to leave out, especially considering the space limitations.

Professor Goodrick-Clarke has accepted the challenge and acquitted himself admirably. His general introduction includes a short biographical sketch of the subject and continues with notes on the T.S., *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. Based mostly on modern studies of her life and work, it avoids the scurrilous attacks that were the hallmark of early 20<sup>th</sup> century biographies. Bearing in mind the book is intended for readers unfamiliar with Blavatsky and her works, this frank but fair and balanced intro prepares them for the rest of the book.

Much thought was obviously given to the structure of this compilation, which is contained in eleven chapters in two sections: “The Western Esoteric Tradition” and “Theosophy”. The chapters contain appropriate quotations from all of Blavatsky’s works, including the E.S.T. Instructions, and each is introduced with an informed

summary, which in several instances includes mention of contemporary 19<sup>th</sup> century thought. This is helpful in understanding the intellectual climate during the years H.P.B. was writing.

Appropriate to the title of the Series of which this book forms part, “The Western Esoteric Tradition” section contains a selection of Blavatsky views on such topics as Spiritualism, Occultism, the Ancient Wisdom and the Hermetic Philosophers, while the Kabbalah is rightly seen an important tool in her workshop.

The second section, entitled “Theosophy”, looks at Eastern Religions, Cosmogony and Evolution, while the serious enquirer can also sample the complexities of the Macrocosm and Microcosm. The final chapter is entitled “Personal Growth and Devotion,” a topic which shows H.P.B. to be a genuine guide in spiritual matters, and not just a pen pusher on behalf of technical esotericism. Appropriately in this regard, the final pages are filled with quotations from *The Voice of the Silence*.

Hopefully this sampling of Blavatsky’s writings will attract many inquirers to her major works.

Ted Davy



*Terrors of the Night: Canadian Accounts of Eerie Events and Weird Experiences*, collected and introduced by John Robert Colombo. Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2005, 229 pp. Price \$22.99 US.

John Robert Colombo has once again amassed a compilation of weird and wonderful Canadiana for the reader’s enjoyment. Over one hundred items covering the last four hundred or so years, gathered from newspaper articles, journals and correspondence comprise this collection.

The book is divided into eight individual sections, with such attention-grabbing titles as “Witchery and Magic”, “Hardly Human”, and “Inquiry Into the Bizarre”.

Of particular interest to this reviewer is the section “Earthly Powers” which included a number of articles on mirages. It was made evident that my presumption one had to be under duress (for example dehydrated under the desert sun) to perceive a mirage, was quite mistaken. As it turns out, numerous mirages have been recorded in the Rocky Mountains where entire ranges of mountains have appeared, sometimes upside down, and have been seen by numerous individuals at the same time. One stunning description involves an image of “the town of Macleod” (in southern Alberta) being reflected in the sky one hundred or so miles north and visible ‘in real time’. In the mirage people were seen

walking and driving in the streets, the train was seen crossing the railway bridge, etc. This was witnessed by the settlers at Shepard for a period of approximately ten minutes before the mirage vanished (p.64)!

While the ‘weirdness factor’ of the events and experiences related are both entertaining and enlightening, a side-effect of reading witness accounts and reports of events dating back so many years is realizing the sometimes condescending character of the writing at the time. One example, in an item originally published in 1672 regarding the spotting of a ‘merman’ by a group of fishermen, the narrator comments (p.99): “They stared at it for some time without knowing what to make of it. Since the opinions about it were very much divided, *as it usually is among men who have little knowledge. . .*” [emphasis mine]. Such snide remarks seem reserved for average persons generally earning their living in non-professional occupations. There are also several instances of disrespect for aboriginal peoples, notwithstanding obvious examples of their wisdom in the circumstances being described.

Extraordinary creatures appear within the pages of this book (in the section “Wild Things”) as do examples of vi-



sions and clairvoyance (“Omens and Prophecies”), unexplained phenomena (“Powers Beyond Ours”) and accounts of spontaneous healings such as those recorded at Ste.-Anne-de-Beaupré in Quebec (“Miracles and Other Cures”). Many details, of course too numerous to mention, captivate the attention. Each item is introduced by Colombo providing pertinent information regarding time, place, setting and where originally published (if applicable). Each story also being relatively short, the book lends itself to short spurts of reading without fear of losing the thread of the section under scrutiny.

This title has been dedicated to Ted and Doris Davy, of Calgary, Alberta. Ted and Doris were co-editors of *The*

*Canadian Theosophist* for thirty or so years and Ted was General-Secretary of The Theosophical Society in Canada for eighteen years. The Theosophical Movement in Canada owes much to these two individuals and it is laudable that their friend, J.R. Colombo, has chosen to honour them in this way.

*Terrors of the Night* provides the dual benefit of being an interesting study of history presented in an entertaining as well as informative format. And, while the book does indeed provide “eerie events and weird experiences” which do lead one to reflect upon the ‘what if’ aspects, none are quite terrifying enough to keep one awake at night — but they are indeed quite fascinating.

Rogelle Pelletier

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. . . **Letters** continued from page 29

Katinka writes that “Blavatsky was no saint and never claimed to be one”. What does Katinka mean by the widely Roman catholic term “saint”? Is it an irony?

Blavatsky was not a ADEPT and never claimed to be one. Blavatsky was not beyond making mistakes and never claimed to be so. But by saying that HPB was “not perfect” Katinka means she was “not honest”.

Well, no one can be an aspirant to lay discipleship if one is not as honest to himself and to others as he can. The level of truthfulness has to steadily increase if he will ever turn into a lay chela. A REGULAR chela, on the other hand, has to have an even higher level of truthfulness, which implies a good deal of “viveka”, discernment.

HPB was a regular chela and more. She was also an Initiate, that is, someone who is essentially truthful in everything he or she does, and has a high degree of viveka, vairagya and compassion.

What Katinka is implying in her statements is that HPB was no disciple, or that the whole idea of discipleship is false. Katinka’s viewpoint is in fact Solovyof’s point of view. The only difference is that this time it is being defended inside the theosophical movement and by the tactics of innuendos and “maybes”.

Katinka is projecting over HPB, as Paul Johnson and John Algeo do, the entire falsehood of discipleship as it is described by C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant. These people are trying to build an alternative image of HPB as

an extension (in psycho-analytical terms, a “projection”) of Mr. Leadbeater’s ideas, which they have consciously and unconsciously absorbed and adopted as their own. (Leadbeater’s description of discipleship is entirely different from the one we see in the Mahatma Letters and in HPB’s writings — and utterly based on his own false clairvoyance.)

Naturally, Ms. Katinka did not have the courage defend in her letter to *Fohat* the accuracy of the sources according to which HPB “faked phenomena”.

Katinka presents herself as a modern and rational mind, yet she can’t do the most basic task of any real researcher: to examine the accuracy of his or her sources of information. She naturally has strong reasons not to do that!

The motto of the Adyar Society is, even today, “There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth”.

If those Adyar members who defend the idea that the founder of the Society faked phenomena had any self-esteem and self-respect, they would abandon such a Society.

If they think a Society for Truth was created by a fraudulent woman, what are they doing there? I wonder why they call themselves “theosophists”.

Carlos Cardoso Aveline  
Brazil

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. . . **Saurat** continued from page 41

the remnants of ancient religions which were banned by Christianity. (*TDSR*, p.240)

He makes an interesting point:

A learned neoplatonist of the sixteenth century could find confirmation of his ideas in the practices of an uneducated village witch. (p.241)

And then he asks a question:

How can we account for this persistence and popularity of occult themes in literature, from the highest poets of classic times to the most popular novelists of today? I have recently published a book, *Gods of the People*, which attempts an explanation. The masses of the people everywhere preserve a fund of ancient ideas, images, facts and superstitions which no

official education succeeds in eradicating. I believe it is one of the official delusions that the masses progress, become more and more reasonable and scientific. They do not. The modern mania for betting in all forms, on racehorses or on football teams, carries with it a belief in "luck" which has nothing Christian in it, which is rank occultism, or paganism if you will, of the worst and most powerful kind. And many people who do not bet yet carry this belief in the extremities in their own lives. (TDSR, p.243)

In the essay ominously titled "The End of Occultism" included in *Perspectives* (1938), there are a number of passages of particular interest to Theosophists. The first passage places in an historical context our contemporary notion that it was not until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that occult ideas became commonplace notions in Europe and the Americas. It happened earlier than that, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and even much earlier than that, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

But in another sense, they are still secrets in a room without walls, like a theatre. One can plainly see more or less what they are doing. (TDSR, p.244)

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Hermeticism *per se* must be dead; it is hardly ever mentioned. The hermetic books have been public property since the Renaissance. In our time, only Buddhism and the cabala still remain to be exposed. Buddhism, studied at first by scholars, has made little impression on anyone, but it exploded on the public in the form of theosophy. The derivative theosophy of Madame Blavatsky is simply a sect of Buddhism: The letters of the Tibetan founders, possibly forged, were published in 1923.<sup>1</sup> In 1883, A.P. Sinnett, the first of the Theosophists, had called his book *Esoteric Buddhism*. In 1888, Madame Blavatsky published *The Secret Doctrine*, which then, of course, was no longer secret. Madame Blavatsky, who had come to Buddhism after a very venturesome intellectual journey, amalgamated it with classical occultism derived from neo-Platonism and the Jewish cabala, but it was all cast in a Buddhist mold. At the same time, Edouard Schuré, more cultured and more timid than Madame Blavatsky and without her fiery temperament, brought us revelations of the same kind. (TDSR, pp.244-5)

\*

What, then, is the situation of occultism today? Occultism is no longer occult. It is a set of doctrines which is out in the world, in competition with other religious systems and, in Europe, clearly in competition with Christianity. Its active and organized centre is the Société de Théosophie (for the Jewish cabalists, true to their traditions, are not propagandists). But the theosophists, unfortunately for them, are even more opposed to all the data of modern science than they are to Christianity. They try to promote a fantastic story of human races, in which sexless Hyperboreans gave way to questionable Lemurians, then to hypothetical Atlantans, with geology coming to the aid of history to mingle races with continents. Their physiology is even more interesting, with its seven bodies fitted one inside the other to form the human organism. Free, secular, and compulsory primary education is the effective antidote to theosophy. (TDSR, p.245)

\*

Occultism, then, naturally attracts unstable people, whom the primary educational system had found refractory. However, the exposure of occultism is a cause for rejoicing. That has enriched our intellectual world, while complicating the intellectual and sentimental history of our fathers. The poets, who are often unstable (and are poets because it is in chaos that they know exactly how to find an equilibrium like that of flying birds), will benefit from it as well. Flying, like walking, is an interrupted fall, with alternating states of equilibrium and disequilibrium. In the same way, poetry is the equilibrium of the soul in accelerated breaks. (TDSR, p.245)

\*

But the land of occultism is still vast. Poets in search of subjects, and bored with Christianity, science, philosophy, and history, will find unpublished adventures there. *The Secret Doctrine* of Madame Blavatsky and Jean de Pauly's translation of *Le Zohar* are waiting for imaginations that dote on myths and for artistic masters of words and rhythms. And this material is so unrefined that the poet's work still has to be done in its entirety. The poets will find a profound meaning in these grotesque or fantastic concepts, of which the

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence is lacking that Saurat was ever a member of the Priory of Sion, the secret confraternity of the "holy blood" familiar to readers of the phenomenally successful novel *The Da Vinci Code*. But there is evidence that links Saurat with *The Mahatma Letters*.

Saurat made a weekend visit to the Château du Prieuré at Fontainebleau-Avon, the community established George I. Gurdjieff. The visit was arranged by the editor A.R. Orage, a friend of both Saurat and Gurdjieff, and it took place on February 17-8, 1923. Saurat interviewed Gurdjieff and published his impressions in both French and English ten years later, following Orage's death.

*The Mahatma Letters* is a collection of the texts of 148 letters of the teachers, the masters Morya and Koot Hoomi, to and from A.P. Sinnett, editor of *The Pioneer*, the largest English-language newspaper in India in the 1880s, and A.O. Hume, founder of India's National Congress. Four decades later, the task of editing the correspondence fell into the hands of A. Trevor Barker, a Theosophist, who joined Gurdjieff at the Prieuré. Here he worked on the manuscript of the correspondence, begun the previous February 1922 in London but finished at the Prieuré at Fontainebleau in September 1923. Saurat was there. Did he confer with Barker about the letters? Later that year the Theosophical Society published *The Mahatma Letters* to considerable controversy.

Saurat was certainly familiar with the correspondence, and so was Gurdjieff, as argued by Seymour B. Ginsberg, author of *Gurdjieff Unveiled: An Overview and introduction to the Teaching* (Lighthouse Workbooks, 2005).

imagination has only skimmed the surface. (*TDSR*, pp.245-6)

## Conclusion

I will not consider Saurat's use of Theosophical theories and insights with respect to the history of early earth and lunar disturbances. These are fully discussed in the chapter "The Theosophists" in *Atlantis and the Reign of the Giants* (written in the 1950s but translated for the first time in 2006). But I would be doing the man an injustice if I failed to quote a couple of his prescient statements:

With Helena Blavatsky, at least we touched on poetry; we may have even fully entered the poetic realm. (*EE*, p.135)

Then there is Saurat's view of the importance for mankind of occult thought:

If there is any value in occultism, it lies in the fact that occultism keeps alive, under some prevailing official philosophy or religion, a separate tradition, an element of deep thought which has been neglected by conventional thinking. (*EE*, p.317)

As an aside, I offer the following analogy or correspondence, which spans the mythic and mystic and the ironic and sardonic.

Madame Blavatsky had a profound experience in London's Hyde Park on August 12, 1851. As she ex-

Sources:

*EE*: *Early Earth* (Shelburne, Ont.: TBSDB, 2003).

*ORDS*: *O Rare Denis Saurat* (Shelburne, Ont.: TBSDB, 2004).

*TDSR*: *The Denis Saurat Reader* (Shelburne, Ont.: TBSDB, 2006).

*TBSDB*: The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box is a publishing imprint, based in Shelburne, Ont., which issues print-on-demand publications. Check the company's website for further details.

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. . . **Moon** continued from page 43

would be very rare, they would have very lengthy orbits and could be responsible for periodically pumping up the solar capacitor to unimaginable levels. McCanney talks of some of the gas giants like Jupiter actually discharging in what appears from Earth to be giant thunderbolts hurled across the heavens at another planet such as Saturn when Saturn orbits too closely. The giant comets would cause the Sun to provide the energy in terms of an electrically super-charged solar system, the Earth at a 45 degree angle could be induced to move through a period of instability quite readily. If the planets are more electrically charged, would those that are close together

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pressed it in correspondence: "I saw my blessed Master." In *Gods of the People* (1947), Saurat describes passing London's Marble Arch where he encountered "a man in rags . . . talking with sublime omniscience" and haranguing the crowd alongside a poster that bore the following message: "A Society for the Conversation of Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindoos, Totemists, Christians, Catholics, Mahomedans, Jews and other misbelievers." He felt he was in the company of Blake "come to earth again." To each age its revelation.

## L'Envoi

In conclusion, Saurat may be considered an "Unenrolled Theosophist." I like to express the same notion in the words of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley who referred to poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Saurat is one of the "unacknowledged *theosophists* of the world." Saurat shares this characteristic with many another student, seeker, or metaphysical thinker. Such men and women are to be taken seriously. Theosophists are in a position to learn from them. After all, they are legion — more numerous than are all the members of all the Theosophical societies, fraternities, chapters, and lodges, past, present, and future, combined. ☞

such as the Earth and the Moon naturally draw each other more strongly?

Although this is not a thorough look at the problem, it does give us a speculative pointing toward a direction that might be more fruitful as far as answers are concerned. The karma of the Earth might induce these huge comets to wander into the inner solar system at the appropriate time for a racial pralaya. If karma is a factor, maybe comets can be drawn in at other times to affect the globe in a less catastrophic manner. ☞

# *Fohat is the Steed, Thought is the Rider*

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*It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. . . . Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualized and attains to self – or reflective – consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life. – Secret Doctrine I, 16*

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