Conspicere

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Dell J. Rose, editor

Contents:

Reviews:

Conspicere: Journal Introduction and Focus

Dell J. Rose, editor.

Conspicere is a scholarly journal which publishes original material, academic or otherwise, from individuals who have spoken at the Swedenborg Library Chicago or by writers who feel they have something to contribute to discussions about the cultural significance of Swedish visionary Emanuel Swedenborg, as well as topics broadly engaged by him. All scholarly articles undergo a review process similar to other academic journals, and creative materials are likewise submitted for review. However, there is no barrier to participation, and we welcome anyone who would like to contribute to our project. All materials submitted must be the original work of the author and not be in print in other journals etc. We welcome contributions in the following ways: academic studies, fiction, poetry, artwork, and book reviews.

Although our journal often focuses on cultural history, it does not preclude devotional material or works of theology. At times the journal will also delve into contemporary events, and we also seek to inspire greater engagement with Swedenborg's works. Although it is a messy assortment of goals, we seek to mirror the way individuals throughout the centuries have used Swedenborg's works to direct and propel their own ideas, as well as deepen their internal relationship with heaven.

Sometimes given the wide variety of topics being discussed in public programming at the Swedenborg Library Chicago, it is difficult to get a grasp on the particularities of the intellectual traditions we are engaging, and for this reason we have decided to produce a journal. The title of our journal comes from the Latin meaning, 'to glimpse' or poetically 'to catch sight of' and it expresses our hope to engage deeply and seriously with the topics discussed and of interest to our patrons. Our journal allows our patrons to engage more deeply with the material and information we are presenting, and it provides a way forward with scholarly material on the subjects.

For Contributors:

Individuals interested in contributing to our journal, or those contracted to do so, should send their contributions directly: dell@swedlib.org

Both endnote and footnote paper formats are accepted. In this early stage, we will accept all formatting styles, provided they are consistent. However, beginning with Vol 4, the following style guide will be required.

Scholarly contributions with footnotes should follow the Chicago Manual of Style with *Conspicere* footnote format + an ending bibliography. Though there is no official word limit, most contributions should be between 1500-300 words. 3-6 Keywords should be added at the end.

Footnotes should go at the end of a sentence, and if more than one note is needed the footnote should follow the order of topics presented in the sentence. Footnotes should be formatted as follows:

Books:
First name, Surname, *Title of Book*, (Publishing City, Publisher, Date): Pages.

Articles:
First name, Surname, date, 'Article Title in Single, straight Inverted Commas,' *Journal title in Italics* (vol, Issue): pages. The exception is for titles which include “” marks.

Quotations:
Short quotations should also be formatted thusly: 'comment or phrase.' Longer quotations of more than one line should be marked with double-inverted commas.

In-text citations:
(Scholar first initial. Surname date: page number).

Bibliographic format:

In alphabetical order,
Books:
Surname. First Name + Initial. *Title in Italics.* Publication City: Publisher, date.

Articles:
Surname. First Name + Initial. Article title. *Journal Name.* vol. Pages.

Creative/ Non-Scholastic submissions:

In the first email include the following acknowledgement. "This material is the original work of the creator, and is not in publication or distribution anywhere else."

Book Reviews:

Unlike a solely academic journal which is concerned with the most up to date research in the field, book reviews for *Conspicere* are concerned solely with the content of the books reviewed and what they might add to Swedenborgian studies more specifically, but also be of interest to followers of Swedenborg interested in the broad reception of his work, and in knowing more about the historical assessment of Swedenborg's work. Person's interested in writing a review for us should contact the editor and request the book.

A Missouri Platonist Meets Swedenborg: Thomas Moore Johnson

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In the following pages I shall sketch a brief introduction to Thomas Moore Johnson's thought, with a special attention to his engagement with Emanuel Swedenborg's ideas. The Missouri Platonist encountered the Swedish mystic's teachings through the books he amassed and read, in his work as editor of the journals The Platonist and Bibliotheca Platonica, and in the activities he engaged in as part of his involvement with occultist groups, such as the Theosophical Society (TS) and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (HBL). Undergirding these three pursuits was Johnson's zeal in corresponding with a wide variety of intellectuals from across the United States, Europe, and Asia. This situation placed a man living in a tiny Midwestern town right at the center of a network of ideas and activities that characterized the blossoming interest in esotericism and the occult in both Britain and the US in the 1870s-1880s.

Letters to the Sage

Thomas Moore Johnson (1851–1919), nicknamed 'The Sage of the Osage,' was a lawyer and dedicated Platonist from Osceola, Missouri. He practiced law primarily to fund his passion for philosophy, served as Osceola's mayor, and promoted education reforms, including Latin in public schools. Johnson participated in regional philosophical circles but preferred solitary study over group discussions, ultimately dismantling a local philosophical club he founded.[1] His relative isolation in Osceola afforded him the freedom to independently develop his ideas while maintaining ties to Midwestern philosophical communities.

[1] For a full biography of Johnson, see Paul Anderson, Platonism in the Midwest (New York/London: Columbia University Press, 1963), 153-154.

Despite limited travel and an insular lifestyle, Johnson's intellectual pursuits and extensive correspondence connected him with prominent philosophers, scholars, and political figures both nationally and internationally.[2] As a result, the missives he exchanged are key to understanding his thought and interests, encompassing Neoplatonism, modern Idealism, and esoteric studies. Accordingly, a possible first way to evaluate Johnson's encounter with Swedenborg is to look into the people he corresponded with who identified as followers of the Swedish polymath's ideas. Perhaps the most prominent among them was the American theologian Henry James Sr., who, upon experiencing a 'vastation' in 1844, had become a lifelong Swedenborgian. Unfortunately, James's only letter to Johnson, dating 1876, does not mention Swedenborg;[3] nor did the Missouri Platonist own any of James's works.

However, explicit references to the Swedish mystic appear in the letters Johnson received in the 1880s from an Ohio inventor and enthusiastic promoter of both The Platonist and the HBL Silas Herbert Randall (1852-1901).[4] As he introduced himself to

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[2] Johnson's collection of extant letters has been fully catalogued, and a significant portion of it has recently been published in Patrick D. Bowen and K. Paul Johnson (eds.), Letters to the Sage: Selected Correspondence of Thomas Moore Johnson (Forest Grove: The Typhon Press, vol. 1, 2016, vol. 2, 2018). However, one should note that, except for four missives Johnson himself penned, such collection only comprises letters that other individuals sent to him. Locating and analyzing the letters Johnson wrote to his many correspondents over the years is indeed a scholarly desideratum, as it would deepen and potentially alter our current understanding of his thought and work.

[3] This unpublished letter (James to Johnson, February 25, 1876) deals with James's controversy with American pragmatist and advocate of 'free religion' Francis Ellingwood Abbot (1836-1903) about spiritual creation vs. a self-existent universe. Abbot, a supporter of Darwin's evolutionary theory, maintained that the universe is an eternally self-evolving and self-involving unity of the real and the ideal, at once machine, organism, and person. James views this position as thinly veiled materialistic atheism, and contrasts it with his contention that nature is an illusion, since true reality is thoroughly spiritual, as is the process of creation. For more on Abbot, see Creighton Peden, *The Philosopher of Free Religion: Francis Ellingwood Abbot, 1836-1903* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992). Henry James's critical notes to Abbot can be found in Frederic Young, *The Philosophy of Henry James, Sr.* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), 135-136.

[4] For more on Randall, see Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 363. His extensive correspondence with Johnson, though lasting only from 1882 to 1886, testifies to the vicissitudes of Cincinnati's esotericist community and of the HBL in the US, as well as providing insight into the variety of literature circulating in these groups.

Johnson as a student of mysticism with an interest in Plato and his followers, Randall declared Swedenborg his favorite teacher. In subsequent missives, he mentions having read the Swede's "Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love, and some in his works here and there,"[5] and eventually owning his "theological works except *The Apocalypse Explained*"[6]. Randall also offered to lend Johnson his copies of Swedenborg's texts,[7] alongside Henry James's *The Nature of Evil*[8] and *The Secret of Swedenborg.*[9] Judging from his letters, it appears that for Randall Swedenborg represented required introductory reading for the study of esotericism, Neoplatonism, and Indian philosophy. Some other missives Johnson received attest to the fact that even self-professed Swedenborgians tended to view the latter as one piece in the mosaic of occult spiritual knowledge. So, for example, while a member of the British Swedenborgian Church, TS member and practitioner of homeopathy Thomas Docking (1826-1902) was keen on discussing with Johnson Rosicrucianism and ancient Greek philosophy.[10]Similarly, Swedenborgian-Methodist spiritualist William Oxley (1823-1905) exchanged with Johnson letters concerning Indology, Egyptology, and the origins of the HBL in England.[11]

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[5] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 367.

[6] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 404. The work Randall mentions should be identified as *The Apocalypse Revealed* (*Apocalypsis Revelata*, 1766), a text about the inner meaning of the Book of Revelation.

[7] Ibid. According to Randall (Bowen and Johnson, vol. 1, 428), a collection of quotes from Swedenborg was also compiled and sent to Johnson by fellow HBL affiliate Elmira Y. Howard (1841-1921). Although no record of her exchange with Johnson remains, Dr. Howard was a subscriber to *The Platonist* and served as secretary of the Cincinnati lodge of the TS. Also trained in homeopathy, she is credited with being the first woman to open a medical practice west of the Allegheny mountains.

[8] Henry James, *The Nature of Evil, Considered in a Letter to the Rev. Edward Beecher, D.D., Author of "The Conflict of Ages"* (New York 1855).

[9] Henry James, *The Secret of Swedenborg, being an Elucidation of his Doctrine of the Divine Natural Humanity* (Boston 1869).

[10] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 147-149. Although information about his life is sparse and contradictory, it appears that Docking lived between England, Australia, and the US, pursuing an interest in spiritualism while practicing medicine.

[11] Similarly, Swedenborgian-Methodist spiritualist William Oxley (1823-1905) exchanged with Johnson letters concerning Indology, Egyptology, and the origins of the HBL in England.

References to Swedenborg also appear in the letters of Johnson's most prolific correspondent, Alexander Wilder (1823-1908). Wilder was a pioneer of holistic medicine and a polyglot (he knew Latin, Greek, German, French, Hebrew, and Sanskrit) interested in a variety of forms of esoteric thinking—from Platonic philosophy and Hermeticism to Emerson's transcendentalism, and more. Among others, he read with interest Swedenborg's philosophical and theological works in his 20s, in addition to Ethan Allen Hitchcock's *Swedenborg: A Hermetic Philosopher*.[12] As a professional editor, he worked on Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* in 1876 as well as for various other journals, including Johnson's *The Platonist* and *Bibliotheca Platonica*. A member of the TS since the late 1870s, Wilder remained skeptical about their purported success in India and their claims to occult powers, and eventually came to view all their leaders as charlatans. His aversion to practical occultism eventually led to a fall with Johnson when the latter became active in the HBL in 1885.[13] In the letters Wilder sent to Osceola between the late 1870s and the early 1880s, he voices with Johnson his dislike for what he regards as the purposefully obscure style adopted by Swedenborgian translators of the Swede's works into English.[14] He also reveals his familiarity with George Bush, the editor of the Swedenborg Library Collection,[15] as well as with a Mr. Baldwin, the publisher of the Swedenborgian

[12] Published New York 1858. See Robert Gunn, 'Alexander Wilder, M.D., F.A.S.: His Life and Work,' *The Metaphysical Magazine* 23 (1908): 282-283; Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 2, 18, 20.

[13] For more on Wilder in general, and his relationship with Johnson, see Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 2. A member of the Oneida cult in his youth, Wilder became a journalist, publicly supporting the abolition of slavery and equal rights for women. In addition to pursuing his medical, linguistic, and literary talents, Wilder fought corruption as an elected New York official and lectured at the New England Transcendentalist Concord School of Philosophy. While the focus of this essay is on Johnson and his points of contact with Swedenborgianism, Wilder's engagement with the Swede's ideas was arguably more substantial and would deserve a separate study.

[14] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 2, 96.

[15] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 2, 94, 431.

magazine *New Jerusalem Messenger*.[16] More importantly, in a missive from 1883 Wilder describes to Johnson an acquaintance of his as someone who "wants to be like Hermeticism, Epimenides, Swedenborg and then Yogis and go at evil from one world to the other,"[17] bespeaking thereby his fundamental, if Platonically inflected, syncretism. Taken together, what these letters reveal is that, as was the case for the Missouri Platonist, for most of their authors Swedenborg was not the sole spiritual guide to faithfully follow; rather, he was part of a chain of illuminati with converging transcendental worldviews.

Johnson's Esoteric Platonism

Johnson's philosophical allegiance to Platonism was profound and evident throughout his life, and it constituted a second opportunity to encounter Swedenborgian ideas, albeit indirectly. Influenced by Thomas Taylor's mystical interpretation of Neoplatonism, he believed that Plato's teachings were best understood through his Neoplatonic interpreters, such as Proclus and Plotinus.[18] Insofar as Taylor's translations of Plato and the Neoplatonists were the most readily available to the English-speaking public of the time, his syncretistic understanding of Platonism was widespread among late nineteenth-century American intellectuals, and influenced, among others, major New England transcendentalists like Bronson Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In these authors, who were equally influenced by Swedenborg, young Johnson found

[16] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 2, 149.

[17] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 2, 159.

[18] In Johnson's own words (quoted in Anderson, *Platonism in the Midwest*, 181), "[T]he true interpreters of Plato are his genuine disciples,—falsely named 'Neo-Platonists'—Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Proclus, Damascius […]. In the writings of these thinkers alone may be found the keys to the inner chambers of Platonic thought."

like-minded souls, and they enthusiastically encouraged him to pursue his promotion of Neoplatonism.[19] As a result, he dedicated himself to studying, translating, and publishing the works of the Neoplatonists, contributing significantly to the diffusion of their ideas in the Anglophone world.

It seems clear that, to Johnson, the main attraction of Platonic philosophy resided in its doctrine of the soul's immortality and purification. As he defined it in the opening statement of *The Platonist*, Platonism is "a philosophy totally subversive of sensualism, [and] materialism," which "recognizes the essential immortality and divinity of the human soul, and posits its highest happiness as an approximation to, and union with, the Absolute One."[20] In this perspective, Johnson (and others in his milieu) viewed Platonism as a form of mystical idealism with religious overtones, being the philosophy which, in Proclus's words "came to mankind for the benefit of terrestrial souls, in lieu of statues, temples, and the whole of sacred institutions."[21] Essentially a substitute for religion, Platonic philosophy thus understood is 'the leader of intellectual salvation'[22] insofar as its ideas are "primarily in the noumenal world, and our apprehension and

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[19] On Swedenborg's influence on the New England transcendentalists, see Richard Silver, *The Spiritual Kingdom in America: The Influence of Emanuel Swedenborg on American Society and Culture,* 1816-1860 (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1983); Eugene Taylor, 'Emerson: The Swedenborgian and Transcendentalist Connection,' in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision,* ed. Robin Larsen (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), 127-136. For a more recent and comprehensive—if academically controversial—assessment, see Arthur Versluis, *The Esoteric Origins of the American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17. In Johnson's correspondence with Alcott, which also refers to exchanges with Emerson, Swedenborg is never mentioned.

[20] *The Platonist* 1, no. 1 (February 1881): 1.

[21] Thomas Moore Johnson, 'Introduction,' in Proclus, *Metaphysical Elements* (Osceola: Republican Press, 1909), xv, reprinted in *Journal of the Johnson Library and Museum* 3 (2009): 16.

[22] Johnson, 'Introduction,' xv.

participation of them here, in the region of time and space, is a foretaste of a perfect participation thereafter."[23]

Because of its goals and promises, Platonic thought had a unique status in Johnson's estimation. According to him, in fact, "Platonism in its essence is Universal Philosophy."[24] By this, the Sage of the Osage meant that in Plato's thought various truthful ideas manifested in different ancient religious traditions around the world found their correct formulation, and that the Neoplatonic interpreters of this philosophy made the true meaning of these principles known for all ages. (Neo)Platonism, in this sense, was to Johnson an authoritative body of truth, "immortal because its principles are immortal in the Human Intellect and Heart."[25] In other words, he conceived of Platonism as perennial philosophy, in fundamental agreement with the Renaissance notion of 'prisca theologia.' In this spirit, Johnson developed a syncretistic attitude, maintaining that a single, united truth best understood as (Neo)Platonism had been variously recognized in the esoteric teachings of different religions. This particular mindset sparked his curiosity for religions other than the Christianity prevailing in his Midwestern environment, such as Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. However, Johnson's interest was confined to the mystical currents and supposedly esoteric traditions within these religious systems—including newer or newly 'discovered' ones, such as Swedenborgianism—inasmuch as he perceived that their doctrines and practices aligned with his understanding of Platonism. This attitude also colored his complex relationship with Christianity. Johnson's son Franklin recounted that his father was

[23] Johnson, 'Introduction,' xvi.

[24] *The Platonist* 3, no. 1 (January 1887): 1.

[25] *The Platonist* 1, no. 1 (February 1881): 1.

scornful of it in his youth but later developed an appreciation for Christian theologians such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, and even considered joining a Unitarian church.[26] To explain this development, Bregman has suggested that while Johnson's early reading of Emerson contributed to his distaste for institutionalized, dominant Christianity, he acknowledged the latter 'as part of a syncretistic synthesis with Platonism.'[27] As Johnson himself claimed to believe in "the harmony of the teachings of pure Christianity with the esoteric doctrines of the various ancient faiths,"[28] one might view this form of 'pure,' neoplatonically bent Christianity as yet another component of Johnson's 'Universal Philosophy.'

'You Lavish too Much Love on Your Books, I shall be Jealous'[29]

Johnson built a remarkable library of over 8,000 volumes, which included late fifteenth-century incunabula and hundreds of sixteenth and seventeenth-century rare works on Greek philosophy and Western esotericism. His collection reflected his deep engagement with Neoplatonism and esoteric traditions, featuring works by Plato and Neoplatonic philosophers, alongside texts on astrology, magic, and Kabbalah.[30]

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[26] See Franklin Johnson, *The Thomas Moore Johnson Collection* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1949), 5.

[27] Jay Bregman, 'Preface,' in *The Collected Works of Thomas Moore Johnson: The Great American Platonist* (Westbury: Prometheus Trust, 2015), iv.

[28] *The Platonist* 2, no. 1 (January 1884): 1.

[29] Letter by Alice Barr Johnson to her husband Thomas Moore Johnson, Jan. 23rd, 1881. In *Journal of the Johnson Library and Museum* 2 (2008): 114.

[30] For more on Johnson's library holdings related to philosophy and esotericism, see my 'Heretical Orthodoxy: Eastern and Western Esotericism in Thomas Moore Johnson's 'Platonism',' in *Esoteric Transfers and Constructions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Francesco Piraino and Mark Sedgwick (New York: Palgrave MacMillan), 278-280.

Among them, two books authored by Swedenborg are extant: *The Soul or Rational Psychology*[31] and *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom*,[32] reflecting Johnson's interests in how, on the one hand, the soul, as the divine essence within humans, allows them access to higher spiritual realities; and in how, on the other hand, wisdom, as a supernal principle governing creation and sustaining life, impacts human spiritual growth and alignment with divine order.

In addition, the Missouri Platonist owned a copy of Philangi Dasa's *Swedenborg the Buddhist*, sent to Osceola by the author and enthusiastically reviewed in *The Platonist* by TS and HBL member Louise A. Off (1864-1895).[33] A Swedish Swedenborgian minister born Herman Vetterling (1849-1931), Philangi Dasa had become a homeopathic doctor and TS member after moving to the US. In *Swedenborg the Buddhist* he argued that the Swedish mystic also agreed with Theosophy's notion of primitive, esoteric

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[31] Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Soul, or Rational Psychology* trans. and ed. Frank Sewall (New York: New Church Board of Publication, 1887). At the time of completing this article, I was unable to inspect this volume and most of those mentioned below as belonging to Johnson's library, in order to look for his likely extant annotations. I will hopefully manage to attend to this task in the near future.

[32] Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom* (New York: American Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society, 1875). Johnson's copy of this work was gifted to him by S. H. Randall.

[33] Philangi Dasa, *Swedenborg the Buddhist: or The Higher Swedenborgianism. Its Secrets and Thibetan* [sic] *Origin* (Los Angeles: Buddhistic Swedenborgian Brotherhood, 1887). Vetterling adopted a Tibetan name and persona after embracing Buddhism in 1884. Once he moved to California in 1887, he started publishing the pioneering periodical *The Buddhist Ray*, before turning to the study of Jakob Boehme later in his life. For more on Vetterling/Dasa, see Paul Tutwiler, 'Herman Vetterling, The Philosopher of San Jose; Philangi Dasa, The Buddhist of Santa Cruz' *Studia Swedenborgiana* n.d., https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5d8a6932689f27623370a73e/5db21a82014ef811ec8a2232_Herman%20Vetterling.pdf. For Off's review, which praises the book while criticizing the New Church's 'fossilized' reading of Swedenborg, see *The Platonist* 3, no. 10 (October 1887): 560. See also Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 264-266. Louise Off was the secretary of the Los Angeles branch of the TS and editor of its journal. Active in the Nationalist movement, Off was well acquainted with Vetterling/Dasa and published articles and poems in various journals devoted to esotericism.

Buddhism—the ancient wisdom that originated in India and was the source of all religions. Such a stance likely resonated with Johnson's own syncretic attitude and perennialist convictions about Platonism.

As part of this third point of entry for Swedenborg's ideas into Johnson's thought, it is also worth returning to the New England transcendentalists. In an autobiographical note from 1909, Johnson mentions reading Emerson's works for the first time in the summer of 1870, and declares him "one of the best stimulants to the study of Philosophy."[34] Over the years, the Missouri Platonist proceeded to acquire dozens of Emerson's writings, including the 12-volume collection of his complete works, which features the essay 'Swedenborg; or, the Mystic.'[35] Alcott's book *Concord Days*, which devotes a few pages to Swedenborg as part of the author's conversation on enthusiasm and his discussion of Boehme, was also part of Johnson's personal library and could provide another occasion to encounter the Swede's ideas.[36]

Lastly, several periodicals concerned with spiritualism and Theosophy that the Missouri Platonist subscribed to featured essays referencing Swedenborg and his teachings. Johnson would have thus been exposed to Swedenborgian ideas as he flipped through the pages not only of the New Church journal *The Dawn*, but also of the theosophical magazines *The Quest*, *Broad Views*, *Lucifer*, and *The Vahan*, of the spiritualist-leaning

[34] Johnson, 'Introduction,' xiv.

[35] Ralph W. Emerson, *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1903-4). Emerson's essay on Swedenborg appears in vol. 4, subtitled *Representative Men*.

[36] A. Bronson Alcott, *Concord Days*, (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1872).

Herald of Health, *Light*, and *The Spiritualist*, and of the occultist *Light and Life*—to which he also contributed.[37]

Editing *The Platonist* and *Bibliotheca Platonica*

Johnson was responsible for two out of the three journals devoted to Platonism that were published in the US in the late nineteenth century: *The Platonist*, which appeared from 1881 to 1888 and attracted the interest of subscribers from as far as India and Europe, and *Bibliotheca Platonica*, which lasted until 1890. As the main editor and publisher, Johnson used these journals as a platform to explore Platonic philosophy along with a broad spectrum of esoteric traditions, including Kabbalah, Tarot, Gnosticism, Sufism, and Yoga. Insofar as *The Platonist* declared that "the Esoteric doctrine of all religions and philosophies is identical,"[38] Swedenborgian teachings could find a home in the journal's pages. Indeed, while no article appearing in *The Platonist* is specifically and entirely devoted to Swedenborg, he is frequently mentioned in Wilder's contributions as a believer in divine creation[39] and one whose soul was in communion with higher spirits.[40] In addition to Off's review of *Swedenborg the Buddhist*, the Swede's idea that the phenomenal universe only represents the outward manifestation of the real, spiritual world is equated to a Druidic notion in an article by leading Theosophist

[37] See in particular *Light and Life. An Unsectarian Magazine of Mystic Literature* New Series 5 (1886), where an article by Johnson and an extract from the Swedenborgian *New Church Independent* appear in consecutive pages.

[38] *The Platonist* 2, no. 1 (January 1884): 1-2.

[39] See Alexander Wilder, 'Creation and Evolution,' *The Platonist* 3, no. 10 (October 1887): 533.

[40] See Alexander Wilder, 'Entheast,' *The Platonist* 1, nos. 5-7 (June-August 1881): 81; Id., 'The Soul,' *The Platonist* 2, no. 1 (January 1884): 11-12.

James M. Pryse (1859-1942).[41] While in the translations of Eliphas Levi's works published in Johnson's journal Swedenborg is christened a dreamer and a religious *illuminato* who could fathom the divine Kabbalistic synthesis,[42] he is also criticized for his wild 'delirious visions' in an introduction to Orphic theogony by Thomas Taylor.[43] Perhaps more surprisingly, the Swedish mystic is also mentioned in the other literary brainchild of Johnson's, *Bibliotheca Platonica*. Despite its shifting away from esoteric religious traditions in favor of a narrower focus on Plato and Neoplatonism, articles published in this journal could still claim Swedenborg as an expositor of the 'Eclectic doctrine' formulated in ancient Alexandria,[44] and as a witness to the validity of Plato's conclusions.[45]

Given that Johnson was both a primary contributor and curator of *The Platonist* and *Bibliotheca Platonica*, often annotating submissions to align them with his views, one may venture to say that his editorial work for these journals did not only constitute a fourth way in which he became acquainted with Swedenborgian ideas, but also suggests the Missouri Platonist's overall endorsement of them.

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[41] 'Druidism and Popular Welsh Occultism,' *The Platonist* 4, no. 6 (June 1888): 301. Pryse was an American printer and editor of theosophical publications, as well as the author of various esoteric readings of New Testament books. He corresponded with Johnson in 1887-1888, mostly on issues related to practical occultism, such as magnetism and astral bodies. See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 349-356.

[42] See Eliphas Levy, 'Kabalistic Doctrine of Spirits,' trans. Abner Doubleday, pt. 2, *The Platonist* 2, no. 1 (January 1884): 14; Thomas Moore Johnson, 'Notes on the Kabbalah,' *The Platonist* 3, no. 2 (February 1887): 94.

[43] See the footnote to Thomas Taylor, 'Orpheus: His Life Writings and Theology,' *The Platonist* 3, no. 9 (September 1887): 488.

[44] See Alexander Wilder, 'The Later Platonists,' *Bibliotheca Platonica* 1, no. 3 (May-June 1890): 185.

[45] See Margaret L. Dwight Wolcott 'The Plato Club of Jacksonville, Ill.,' *Bibliotheca Platonica* 1, no. 4 (November-December 1890): 301.

Practical Occultism and Swedenborgian Ideas

A fifth and final way in which Johnson encountered, however tangentially, Swedenborgian ideas was through his involvement with two esoteric circles, the Theosophical Society and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor. The Missouri Platonist officially joined the TS in 1883, and was appointed to its American Board of Control in 1884. In that same year he joined the HBL and became President of its American Central Council (aka the Committee of Seven) in 1886. Johnson shared with these organizations an anti-materialistic and syncretic outlook. His conception of Platonism, which blends secret wisdom, spiritual practices, and a universal inner reality, made groups like the TS and the HBL ideologically compatible with his interests. Furthermore, the Neoplatonic authors Johnson was most appreciative of, such as Iamblichus, Damascius, and Proclus, identified spiritual union with the divine as the end of philosophy, and maintained that one's soul could achieve this goal through theurgy. Up until the TS and the HBL kept promoting soul-uplifting practices—such as astral magic, yoga, and Tarot divination—which he viewed as modern analogs to Neoplatonic theurgy, Johnson remained an enthusiastic adherent of their occultism.[46]

The teachings of Swedenborg were one of the primary influences on pre-1880s US esotericism, and impacted, directly or indirectly, the formulation of doctrines and practices of the TS and the HBL.[47] For example, Blavatsky's theory of metempsychosis

[46] For Neoplatonic theurgy's similarities with spiritual doctrines and practices maintained by the TS and the HBL, see Putzu, 'Heretical Orthodoxy,' 284-285, 294-295 and references there. To give an example (for which see Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 420), as practiced in the HBL, yoga was intended to unite one's soul with God, defined as 'that perfect being which alone is manifested in its own light.'

[47] See Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 14, 54. See also Julie Chajes, *Recycled Lives: A History of Reincarnation in Blavatsky's Theosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 25-26.

was influenced by Andrew Jackson Davis's notion of evolutionary planet ascent and *The Unseen Universe*'s discussions of extraterrestrial spirits—both of which were explicitly dependent on Swedenborg's visions of the inhabitants of other worlds.[48] Similarly, Swedenborgian motifs were present in the HBL's myth of a sundered, originally androgynous monad, whose reunification for the sake of spiritual progress grounded the occultist group's practice of sexual magic.[49] Additionally, the HBL's praxis was mainly drawn from Paschal Beverly Randolph's teachings, which included some Swedenborgian-influenced concepts of spiritual breathing.[50] Indeed, this special 'inward' breathing, as elaborated by prominent Swedenborg follower James John Garth Wilkinson (1812-1899), was seemingly a key component in the practice of yoga for HBL members in training.[51]

Johnson's lifelong interest in practical occultism drew him to assume leadership roles in the TS and the HBL. His engagement with the doctrines and practices of these two esoteric groups was yet another conduit for his exposure to some Swedenborgian

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[48] For more on these Swedenborgian influences on Blavatsky's ideas, see Chajes, *Recycled Lives*, 95-96.

[49] See Joscelyn Godwin, Christian Chanel, and John P. Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: Initiatic and Historical Documents of an Order of Practical Occultism* (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1995), 81. The influence of Swedenborg's cosmogony on the HBL's doctrine was critically detected by British Theosophist and translator of Hermetic and Gnostic writings George R. S. Mead (1863-1933), who viewed the group's formulation as an inextricable confusion of plagiarized notions patched together to excuse its members' exercise of passions and indulgence. See his review of *The Light of Egypt* by Burgoyne in *Lucifer* 1889, reproduced in Godwin, Chanel, Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood*, 424.

[50] On the African American doctor, occultist, and writer Randolph (1825-1875), see John P. Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph: A Nineteenth-Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian, and Sex Magician* (Albany: SUNY, 1996). For his influence on the HBL, see Godwin, Chanel, Deveney, *The Hermetic Brotherhood*, 40-50.

[51] See Randall, in Bowen and Johnson, *Letters to the Sage*, vol. 1, 420. Swedenborg's spiritual breathing must have been perceived as akin to yogic breathing, which the HBL was interested in. Wilkinson was an English homeopathic physician, social reformer, and translator of many of Swedenborg's works, who greatly influenced Emerson and Henry James Sr.

teachings. All in all, while Swedenborg may have not represented a primary point of reference for the self-elaboration of Johnson's thought, his ideas filtered, if unacknowledged, in all the interrelated intellectual and spiritual pursuits of the Missouri Platonist.

Gender and the Southcottian Tradition: Thoughts about Theological Femininity in a 19th Century Millennial Tradition and its Followers Today.

Dell J. Rose

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Genesis 3:16)

On December 25, 1814 the 64 year old Joanna Southcott lay in the pains of labor. Like so many women who had gone before her, arguably the greatest female prophet of modern times was experiencing the result of what she theologically understood to be the result of woman's first indiscretion; Eve eating first of the Tree of Good and Evil. More than that however, this birth also represented to the followers of Joanna Southcott something infinitely more important, because in the sufferings of her labor she was giving birth to one of the central myths of an emergent religious tradition, one which had at its core the redemption of the world and true equality among the sexes. I want, through the course of this article to show the distinct interpretation of the role of 'the woman' in the Southcottian tradition, and to elaborate these theological viewpoints; also, I would like to show that Southcottian approaches to the role of the woman correspond to what modern feminist scholarship has identified as women's spaces in and among dominant ideological constructs. To be more explicit, how women within this tradition created their own theological niche within the patriarchal atmosphere of late nineteenth century Britain. As much as anything, the Southcottian tradition is a testimony to the strength of female theological thought and practice, and now since the 200th anniversary of the spiritual birth of Joanna it remains an important tradition in the lives of many.

The primary sources for this paper have been drawn from the work of Joanna Southcott, and to the writings of other prophets within this particular tradition, though there are some debates about who exactly is in the line of succession (Allan 2006: 213-236). In addition to these primary documents, I will be relying on interviews and conversations that I have had with Louise P., founder of a new Southcottian group, The Tabernacle of Wisdom. Louise comes from a very old Southcottian family, and her uncle and father held study sessions where they read Southcott and prophetic writings, for over half a century.

I would also like to introduce the way that I will be speaking about the larger movement under consideration. For one, I have decided to refer to these various different groups under the term Visitationism, or the Visitationists. This term, I feel, speaks more accurately of the sense of continuity of prophetic voice, and refers not just to individual movements, Philadelphian, Behemenist, Southcottian, etc. but to a wider contextual understanding; that each one of these movements, relied on a more expansive system than the teaching of any one specific prophet themselves. I also want to make emphatically clear that by talking about the work of Joanna and the other prophets as part of a broader historical reality, I am not for any moment saying that I am explaining away their authority. I am only saying that revelation is as much a historical process as anything else, and this does not diminish in the slightest the contribution of these individuals.

'A System Made New'

In this section, I am going to address the historical and ideological tradition from which Joanna and her latter followers would look toward in developing their own ideas about the nature of the Godhead, and the role of 'the woman.' It has been asserted by several prominent thinkers who have examined the ideological history of populist millenarian movements that the Southcottians were just another voice in an already thriving millennial biosphere which had its roots in the dramatic sectarianism of the seventeenth century. As J.F.C. Harrison, author of the seminal introduction to the

broader Southcottian world has written: "When we probe below the surface into popular beliefs in the eighteenth century we find much that is familiar from a previous age. A popular (should one fashionably say underground?) tradition of sectarian belief and practice runs continuously from the seventeenth century (and probably earlier) to the 1790's and beyond." (Harrison, 1979:13) The unique thing about this 'underground sectarianism' is that, unlike in the broader church, women were given positions of power and authority, where they could speak to their own beliefs, and of their own volition.

Of course, even to say this is unique is not entirely accurate, as heresy and women have always been linked in Western Christianity. Paul of Tarsus was one of the first to make this connection when he writes to his disciple Timothy:

> Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. (1 Timothy 2:11-15)

Furthermore, later in his second letter to Timothy he warns specifically of the special susceptibility he felt women had toward heretical notions: "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts." (2 Timothy 3:6) Thinkers like Carol Christ believe that women's attraction to heretical movements come from the fact that heretical notions oftentimes challenge the established order, and women who feel usurped in their authority then turn to them as a way of overcoming social repression. (Christ 1978: 260-280) I agree with Christ, that heretical religiosity was a way for women to gain power, and to subvert the established structures that existed around them, and I certainly feel as though this was the case with members of the Southcottian community, and I feel that a conversation about coding is

especially needed to consider the way in which this new theological interpretation was to take place, and furthermore, what I am suggesting is that there was an underground system of available theological coding which women could access, and would later become the foundation of Southcottian theological language. By using the nuances, which came from this tradition, women were given access, and theological systems were opened to include the input and ideas of women, and how these nuances created a distinct female space within larger period religiosity.

To begin with, I think I need to define how I am going to use the term. To define this term I am turning to the work of Folklorists Joan Radner and Susan Lanser, who provide one of the most broadly applicable definitions of Coding that I know: "Coding, then, is the expression or transmission of messages potentially accessible to a (bicultural) community under the very eyes of a dominant community for whom these same messages are either inaccessible or inadmissible." (Radner & Lanser, 1993) The dominant narrative of English church history, based on the central authority, which was based around the central authority of the Bishops and on strict adherence to the typically male-enforced doctrines, forms the broad culture to which Southcottianism would react. Southcottians drew on alternative sources of power and legitimacy and turned to more customary conventions of British populism, embracing the imagery of the 'Wise woman,' and validating popular eschatological thinking, what Harrison calls 'folk millennialism.' (Harrison 1979)

Southcott, and other female workers in the Visitationists movement, conform to the patterns which were suggested by Christ in that they seek their own authority outside the control of the church, and work with those systems which embrace the place of the woman. Also Britain seems to have been a unique place in its willingness to embrace the authority of visited women. There is a strong tradition from the sixteenth century in the Lollard tradition, which was examined by Shannon McSheffre in her book, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities*. There are even earlier traditions of women being the chief leaders of antinomian groups from the latter Middle Ages,

analogously to the Brethren of the Free Spirit; which, appropriately, had some of its most prominent documents written by women, as Marguerite Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls* and Mechthild von Magdeburg's *Light Flowing From the Godhead*. Closer still to Joanna's time, and it is unclear whether or not she would have had any direct knowledge, there was the emergent theology of Mother Ann Lee founder of the United Society of Believers in Christ Second Appearing (The Shakers); as well as the teachings of Elspeth (Luckie) Buchan, founder of the Buchanites, and a claimant to being the woman 'clothed with the sun,' spoken of in Revelation 12:1.

I include this rather lengthy historical list, not simply because they represent some of the most interesting people of the historical record, but also because it seems to add more credibility that there was a wide body of theological thought which was being produced by female prophets and mystics, and this existed outside of the authority of the church, and which might be drawn on by other female thinkers, and I think this is definitely the origin of much of the conceptual language which will be used by later Visitationists movements, and which would have also been the historical background which Joanna herself would draw from. To narrow our topic down further, without a doubt, the first Woman who was to have a significant contribution to Joanna's understanding of her own role was Jane Leade. Although it is difficult to say with certainty how many of the works of Jane Leade Joanna would have read, Jane Leade represents, especially for latter Visitationists, the first link in the chain.

"And if anyone is dissatisfied with any point handled in this book, the author is ready to give an answer thereunto, while she is yet living."
The above extract was taken from Leade, and I think it presents much about the personality of Jane Leade, and also about the openness with which she discussed and taught on religious topics. In this same work, it also goes into an address of where the Prophet was living toward the end of her life. Although very little is known about Leade's early life or her growing up, for our purposes, the most central part that she was to play in the story of the Visitation, is that she was to lead a group who were active

enthusiasts of the work of German mystic Jakob Böhme. They called themselves the Philadelphian society, in a reference to the book of Revelation 3, the only one of the seven churches which kept the faith. The group had as one of its main intentions the preparing the way for the coming of the kingdom of God, in a literal sense, and in a spiritual one, meaning that there were also certain new teachings which would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. "To you is this little tract commended, that you may with joy observe by the forerunning signs of the blessed kingdom, that is even now at hand; that you may lift up your eyes and see that the fields are already white unto the harvest, that you may with holy boldness and assurance, lift up you heads upon your redemption thus drawing nigh… and see actually performed the blessed solemnization of your nuptial tye (sic) with him, in the New Philadelphian temple, which is consecrated to and built up by love." (Leade 1699)

Although language about the church being the bride of Christ, the Philadelphian society would also highlight a unique doctrine which came from Böhme, and that was the femininity of the Godhead. Böhme had as a fundamental understanding of the Godhead as being non-gendered, as a special type of presence that had within it, a female essence which Böhme called *maennliche Jungfrau* (A man-like virgin). (Böehme 1699; Berdyaev translation) It is a non-defined or hemaphroditic quality of the godhead, that is not identifiable with either the male or the female principles of God, and the continual references to this virginal quality, and not to the essential femininity of the perception. For instance, his prayer to the *maennliche Jungfrau* was "Gieb mir zu trinken deines suessen Wassers der ewigen Jungfrauschaft!" (Give me to drink of thine sweet waters of an eternal virginalness!) (Böehme 1699; Berdyaev translation)

However, when the teaching is brought through Jane Leade, I think she emphasized this neutered concept with explicitly feminine language. The rationale behind this, I feel is also easily understood, because while Böehme was not explicit in his depiction of the Godhead as containing a female element, in part this was due to the pressures of the Lutheran church, it was a more open theology, and this doubtlessly had an attraction to

the intelligent Leade. Thus, when Leade comes in contact with the work of Böehme, She recasts his writings into language that more distinctly feminizes referring to God as 'The divine Sophia, and the Virgin Spouse of God.' (Leade 1699)

Leade also, which would be an extremely important element in the writing of Joanna, was the explanation of daily events as having divine or revelatory elements inside them. An example of this which has strong implications for a gendered reading of her text, comes from a revelation she received after she had been a widow seven years: "Thou shalt no more be termed desolate or forsaken, for thy widowhood shall be turned into a Virgin Solacement, because the Lord thy Maker hath pleasure in thee. For as much as thou has cleaved with all thy heart unto him, in this seven year probation-day, oh my Lord shall I now come to inherit such grace and mighty love, and espousal joy, in the life of spiritual virginity, oh Jesus let it be." (Leade 1678) Here we see a spiritual reworking of a very real concern for widowed women, and often a source of rebuke and scorn, the term 'old-maid' for instance, was taken and subverted through divine revelation. This sentiment will also be echoed in the work of Joanna and in the work of Octavia, with Joanna being a virgin, and Octavia being early-widowed. The sense of agency which these women found in their single states also allowed them to have greater agency over their life, and as Shaw's work on Octavia has shown, many of the female members of Octavia's society were also involved in suffragette activities. (Shaw 2002)

'The Woman Clothed with the Sun.'

At the point of our transition from the work of Leade into the prophetic work of Joanna Southcott, we should look at the way Leade portrays the 'woman clothed with the Sun,' of Revelation 12:1, because this image will become an exceptionally important component in the thought of Joanna, and will have a high level of importance by the majority of Visitationists movements. "Cloathed (sic) with the Sun, and the Moon under her Feet & c. Of which the Church is made a Representative; as She shall open and display Herself within Her, travailing in and with Her, as the true Mother of this Divine Birth, the manchild that is to rule the nations with the rod of power." (Leade 1699) This

image of the 'woman clothed with the sun,' was the archetype that Joanna understood herself to fill, and through it she was to formulate an entirely new system which elevated the position of the woman, along with a literal virginal conception.

To start our overview of the theology which Joanna Southcott articulated, we fittingly enough must start with the beginning of our time, in the Garden of Eden. Joanna literally understood the account in Genesis to be the literal manner in which the world was created, and the literal cause for sin's presence within the world. Along with this, she then came to understand that if it was by woman's first sin that evil and death entered the world, must it not also be the case that woman must redeem the world?

> You say, as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall be made alive; and when the fullness of time shall come and when the fullness of the time has come, God sent his Son, made of a woman. Now, how do you prove your Bibles, where you say, that death passed on man, came first by the woman? Then it was by the woman all died, and by the woman all are to be made alive. You say, by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and by one man's obedience many were made righteous; yet you say, by the woman's disobedience many were made sinners, then by the woman's obedience many must be made righteous; if in the woman all died, even so ye must be all made alive. Now I shall come to the purpose. Ye cause your Bibles to become a mystery, and all is a mystery; for ye say, all came by the woman, and yet ye say again by the man sin entered into the world. Now I ask, how you prove it? But this I will prove, that all came from the man at first: He was the first in creation, not made of man, but of God; and the bone was taken from man to complete his happiness. But Satan found arts to rob man of that happiness, by breaking the bone; that is, she fell, and broke off all the happiness from man. Now Christ is compared to the second Adam; then there must come a second Eve, to bring the godhead and manhood to a perfect likeness. (Southcott 1802: V. 6)

The quotation listed above gives directly the way that Joanna would come to see her own special ministry, as a way to complete the redemption of human life, and to liberate it from the oppression of Satan, and his dark and fallen world. Joanna saw this as a fulfillment of Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Taking this as a divine mandate, Joanna then began to actively encourage members to 'petition for the destruction of Satan,' where people would sign a paper affirming that they were against the control of the world by Satan, and wanted his immediate overthrow. After this, Joanna would stamp these letters with a wax seal bearing the initials 'I. C.' which she had gotten from her employers, the Taylor family, in Exeter while she was working for them as a housekeeper.

The latter discussion about the sealing for the destruction of Satan is more than just a small aside in the history of this movement, it also reflects how seriously Joanna was to take the role of the woman in the final plans of redemption. It was Satan she was to declare that was responsible for the down-fall of human beings, because it was he that tricked Eve and led her to break the commandments of God. "It is the woman's innocence alone,/ That cast her Guilt upon the Serpent's Head,/ And so I died, her innocence to plead,/ That from the serpent I would set her free!/ and he (man) should bear his blame as well as me." (Southcott 1802) In this quotation, we see a transition in nuance, that is liberating to women and although I am hesitant to say that Joanna would have seen her theology as progressively feminist as we are likely to see it, I think her view of the millennium is definitely a place where men and women were equal in the sense that both were to share in the presence and glory of God.

Other thinkers, like Phillip Lockley in his book *Visionary Religion and Radicalism in Early-Industrial England: from Southcott to Socialism*, indicate that there is a strong connection between the millennial idea, and the improvement of the world at large. (Lockley 2010) Indeed from the Levellers, the Diggers, and the Fifth Monarchy Men, an actual political change was always a factor in the millennium where 'God would be all in

all.' (1 Corinthians 15:28) Also as both Lockley and Southcott biographer Frances Brown point out, it was not only women who were drawn to the movement of Southcott, and from looking at membership books, there seems to be a fairly even distribution of men and women who were associated members. (Lockley 2010; Brown 2002) However, aside from the very large amount of popular following, some estimate as many as 20,000 people, there was also a strong backlash on the part of the public. (Lockley 2010)

To introduce the particularly gendered backlash against Joanna, we first need to understand the central mystery which caused such wide-spread public attention, Joanna Southcott's virgin birth. As has already been alluded, Joanna had a very literal reading of the Bible, and in a revelation, she was told that the prophecy which spoke about the child of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent, was also something that was to be fulfilled in her, and that she was to be pregnant with the second coming, and was to give birth in 1814. She announced the coming in a book published called: *The Third Book of Wonders Announcing the Coming of Shiloh.*

The name of the child, Shiloh, was taken from a reference in Genesis, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:10) Although there were many who trumped the claim up to the simple credulity of the unlearned people, after the royal physician confirmed the pregnancy, the whole world was in an uproar. (Brown 2002) In all of these claims, Joanna was both subverting the assumptions made on the part of the greater public about the role and nature of women, and also, she was working very much within the cultural assumptions of her day. This brings me back to the issue of coding.

Elaine Lawless, in her work with Pentecostal women preachers, explains how women create places for themselves in religious communities where women were not encouraged to have a significant role, by recoding these spaces with new interpretations.In her 1992 article "I Was Afraid Someone like You... an Outsider... Would Misunderstand": Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers

and Subjects Lawless recounts some of the irritation that was reported by her collaborators at her not getting the subtlety of how they saw themselves. One of her collaborators, Anna, talked about how it was all through the power of God that she was able to do what she did, and I have found similar statements in Joanna's writings. (Lawless 1992: 308) For both Joanna and for Anna, they wanted to provide some context for the abnormality of their being in a leadership positions, and while Anna's coding relies on a traditional understanding of women's desire to help and to nurture, Joanna looks to God, who had chosen her and at numerous points in her writing, she expresses surprise at her being chosen. The evidence for her chosenness of course being in that while she had never known a man, she was to give birth. This of course was something that was very difficult for many people to conceive of, and newspapers were filled with strongly gendered cartoons lampooning Joanna, and indeed the idea of the visitation of the woman.

The cartoons that I have selected to examine this particular occurrence, included in the appendix, show how the issue of pregnancy was viewed as an aberration from the natural order, and also, there is a vulgarizing of the image of the woman. The first of the cartoons, titled 'A Peep into the Pump-Room, or the Zomersetshire Folk in a Maze,' by William Rodgers Richardson of 1818, show a group of poorly dressed individuals, undoubtedly they represent the 'incredulous common masses,' and an overly plump Joanna. The depiction of Joanna Southcott's breasts are almost twice the size of the faces of any of the individuals in the picture, which is a symbol both for her pregnancy, and also for her inflated status as a woman. The infamous image used by Thomas Tegg of 1814, which shows Joanna lifting her dress, and telling the assembled group of doctors 'seeing is believing.' Also, the contours around her face seem to be an allusion to facial hair. I think it is particularly evident, from reading Tegg's chronology, that he is overcome with a strong sense of male-domination, which leads him to classify a woman in authority, as a great offense against established culture. (Tegg 1844) The cartoonist Charles Williams, in his 1814 cartoon *Delivering a Prophetess* makes a play on the

importance of birth-water, and shows an overly caricatured Tozer, announcing that he intends to sell the water which 'our disciples will swallow it up at any price.'

Implicit within each of these cartoons is a specific view of gender performativity, coming from the work of Butler, a certain set of socio-cultural understandings about the specific roles that gendered individuals should follow. (Butler, 1988) As a result of Joanna not falling within her place as a subservient female, they ridicule her, making direct references to her body as female, and further distort her physically as a reflection of their personal understanding about her teachings. Humor is incredibly honest about cultural understandings, and it is evident from these cartoons, the broader societal thoughts about the potentials of a female prophet.

'The Mysteries of Faith:' Shiloh's Appearance as a Woman

The image of the female element of divinity would be something which would continue to be a part of so much of Visitationist thought. After Shiloh, there were several other groups which continued to teach that God had both natures, male and female within itself. Joseph 'Zebulun' Allman (Almond- he is sometimes called), who founded a church in Spaxton after the death of Joanna, taught the notion of a female divinity, called in later literature as the 'Female God.' (Balleine 1952; Allman 1821) Also the role of the woman was an issue for followers of Prophet John Wroe, who taught strict Levitical codes of conduct for both men and women followers. (Wroe, 1863) Also John 'Zion' Ward, taught a theology which equally included both men and women, and wrote thirteen volumes in which he spoke of the importance of recognizing both the gifts which come from both men and women. (Zion 1825-1837) However, the most direct group to fully embrace the doctrine of female divinity would be the followers of Mabel Baltrope, who was believed to be a fulfillment of Joanna's doctrine of the woman's redemption. The society which she was to found was known as the Panacea Society, and without a doubt, their understanding of the Visitation was based around a distinctly female reading of other prophets, and a very complex theological understanding of the woman's role.

Mabel Baltrop, later called Octavia, was the widowed wife of a vicar, who was obsessed with the writings of Joanna Southcott, and in particular the doctrine of the Woman's seed which would overcome the world of the devil. The doctrines of this specific group were based around the understanding that Octavia herself was the physical embodiment of the child which was spiritually born in 1814 by Joanna Southcott. Octavia had this revelation given to her by Emily Godwin, who after reading the work of a man named James Jezreel believed that when Shiloh came it would be in female form; and upon seeing Octavia in 1920, publically exclaimed that it was her. (Shaw 2005: 93) The revelation that Octavia was the chosen vessel, brought in a new era of female empowerment for the movement, and it attracted various suffragettes to its cause. "They (the women) loved it, they were allowed to write books, to write theology; they were allowed to do what no other church would let them do." (Shaw, 2002)

Among the visible effects of this new revelation, Octavia gathered for herself twelve female apostles, and began to hold services which were recast in distinctly feminine language. Octavia was from that moment on, referred to as 'heavenly Mother,' by several members of the congregation. (Shaw 2005: 94) It was from the Panacea, that they began to formulate a view of the Visitation, which saw each one of the popular millenarian prophets as being another link in the chain back to divinity. Octavia illustrates this in a book titled *Keys to the Whole Body of Truth for the Whole Body of Believers*, in this work, she first articulates what had been previously an unwritten assumption about the work of the prophets, and made it a doctrine, they were all connected, and it started with a woman. "Jane Lead's works and those of the seven, [Panacea identified that there were 7 previous prophets with Octavia being the last, Oct-avia] are one grand continuous prophecy, which, together with the Bible from Genesis iii.15 to Revelation xxii. is COMING TRUE; at this the 'children of the Word' rejoice, lifting up their heads, for by those things which are coming to pass, they know that their redemption draweth nigh. Truly the promises of God are Yea and Amen!" (Octavia: 1920)

Part of Shiloh's appearance on earth included a daily dictation from God which Octavia would receive every afternoon at 5:30. (Shaw 2005) In these documents called collectively The Writings of the Holy Ghost, Octavia would bring in welcome news from heaven which would have its feminist pinnacle in a revised interpretation of the trinity, which would no longer be a trinity, but rather a quaternary consisting of Father-Son, Mother-Daughter. This female aspect of the Godhead, was the final and principal revelation of the nature of divinity, and was referred to within the community as 'Jerusalem,' a reference to Galatians 4:26 'Jerusalem above which is the mother of us all.' Although the inclusion of divine femininity was exceptionally important for members of the Panacea society, it also had its own share of complications, take for example the case of Edgar Peissart.

Edgar Peissart, was a seeker. He had been affiliated with various different societies which were promoting marginal religious ideas, and he had been a follower of the Koreshan unity, in Florida. After hearing of the Panacea society, Peissart travelled to Bedford, and attempted to join. However, in addition to being a seeker, Peissart was also gay, having a romantic relationship with another man in the society. When news of his choice was made known, it caused something of a scandal within the community, and the issue was quickly interpreted by Octavia as having universal religious significance. ‘Edgar Peissarts greatest offense was that, although he came to Bedford searching for the Woman, in the end he did not need woman, either as an authority figure or as a romantic partner. As Octavia put it in a letter to Henrietta Leach: “All women… were in danger till the man of sin was revealed and the peculiar nature of his sin revealed also, for it did away with womanhood.” (Shaw 2002:142)

The authority of the woman, the quintessential doctrine of the Panacea society had been violated in the 'crimes' of Edgar Peissart, and without a great deal of fuss, he was removed from the society's living quarters. I believe this example shows the role that later Visitationist groups saw the authority and unique nature of the woman, and it continues to be a major component in the writing of newer Visitationist groups.

The Tabernacle of Wisdom is a Visitationist movement that grew out of the conversations that took place between Arthur Carbis. and his nephew Peter P. during their weekly study groups at Arthurs's house in Cornwall. Arthur had been a member of the Panacea society, as had his son, and his children, one of whom, Louise, was the founder of the society. As it stands, they have very little in the way of dogma other than the acceptance that God did a mighty work in England during this period, although not greater than the movement that he has done in other parts of the world, and they covenant to believe that God is forever speaking. Also due to the sparse ability to meet and to converse, their theology does not leave these most basic commitments, and everyone takes their own understanding to the material. Aside from introducing this group as a component of a larger history of ideas, I think that the connection between the Tabernacle of Wisdom and the Panacea society is interesting because of one of the most interesting doctrines that Louise has recently considered, that the 'blasphemy against the Holy Ghost mentioned in Matthew 3:29, is in fact a rejection of the female aspect of God.

In a Skype talk which I had with Louise a couple of weeks ago, we were talking offering prayers and discussing the scope of the mission, and it was there that she asked whether or not I had read her most recent pamphlet, confessing I had not, she offered one of the most unique interpretation of this text that I had ever heard: "You see Dell, it could only be blasphemy against the Holy Ghost if someone rejected the woman's role in it; never could it have been possible to be committed before, because no one knew of the female nature of the Godhead, and now we do. That's really significant isn't it?" (Louise 2015)
Although I did not agree with her, I thought the conversation which we had was quite fruitful and it gave me the opportunity to think of the way that gender has been used throughout the entire history of the Visitation. Going further, what is it that I am wanting to elicit from looking at gender in the role of this specific theological movement? This article has been an attempt to show that the marginal religious sphere is a uniquely gendered space, and the decentralization of power within these spaces,

makes it possible to develop alternative perspectives, which are radically at odds with the major society. There is something about being on the margins that makes unconventional ideas seem more appropriate, more reasonable. I also believe that this tendency is also not unique to religion.

Amy Trauger in her fieldwork with women farmers on alternative agricultural models, is in a very distant sphere from the research which I conducted on the Visitationist tradition; however, what is similar to both of our research subjects was that in both cases, ideological marginality made allowance for the voices of those outside of the mainstream to be heard. "This research demonstrates that the sustainable agriculture community provides spaces that promote and are compatible with women's identities as farmers. Feminist analyses of space and agriculture suggest that productivist agricultural models marginalize women from spaces of knowledge, while sustainable agriculture provides spaces of empowerment for women farmers." (Trauger 2004) In mainstream farming, there is a strong emphasis on the idea of the male-farmer, who plants things in a row, and uses traditionally male-supported models.

to continue this tradition. This is opposed to emergent sustainable and organic models, which divorced from that male-centered model, create a freedom of access which encourages and views female farmers in the same light as male farmers. If one were to view the Church of England as the established 'mainstream farm,' then one can also see the freedom that many female religious thinkers had in going out to the 'organic farm.' It is as simple, or as complicated as that. Although the content of my paper is unique, I would say that what I have done in this work is very in-line with modern feminist scholarship, and if there were any scholastic agenda that I would advocate in this work, it would be to interest feminist scholars to consider and attempt to understand the genesis of traditions in marginal religious groups. Further, I am also proposing that although there has been a bias on the part of scholars to paint our religious past in very misogynistic terms, and undoubtedly this is a major component, I would also like to say

that there were many groups who acknowledged the power of women, and who freely embraced it.

To close, a quote taken from the Panacean selections from Jane Leade, which comes from the Zohar:

The world will remain under the domination of the
Serpent until the coming of a woman like unto Eve
(before the fall) and of a Man like unto Adam (the
Immortal Adam), who shall vanquish the evil Serpent
and him who rides thereon.
Zohar I, folio 1456

-O Let it be. (Fox and Octavia, 1921)

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Interviews

Louise P. with Dell J. Rose. April 22nd 2015, via Skype.

Images

Fig. 1. Richardson, William Rodgers. 1818. 'A Peep into the Pump-Room, or the Zomersetshire Folk in a Maze.' Etching, hand colored. 263mm x 363mm. Available from collections at the British museum: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1486732&partId=1

Fig 2. Tegg, Thomas. 1814. 'A medical inspection, or miracles will never cease' by Thomas Tegg concerning Joanna Southcott's 'pregnancy' with Shiloh. Etching, hand colored. 333mm x450mm. Found: http://www.diomedia.com/public/en/3770476/imageDetails.html

Fig 3. Williams, Charles. 1814. Spirits at work- Joanna conceiving- ie- blowing up Shiloh. Etching, hand colored. Found: https://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/2012/01/joanna_southcott_or_southcote.html


Well I declare I see nothing extraordinary to look at !!
Why Sham she do'nt look a bit better than Ordinary
Oh my belly ! my belly ! Oh the water the water !
Who said she did ? Eh Dame
Here Madam Maries Old Tom, they say he's the famous Doctor for the Belly Ache
Let me advise you to put Old Tom in it.
Brandy the specific for the Belly Ache Glorious & always ready Brandy

A MEDICAL INSPECTION
or MIRACLES WILL NEVER CEASE.

DELIVERING a PROPHETESS.
LIVING WATER
Well! Well! we must turn it to some account we'll call it Johannas cleansing water of salvation and our disciples will swallow it at any price!
Doctor here is Shiloh's cap, bless me! why he has got a watery head!
Pray Doctr take care of the cowl if there is one
Shiloh. Let not this groupe dismay thee Come forth into the World I pray thee!
Come my blessed Lady sip some of this heavenly cordile I have made you.
Thus is a very pretty rig! Nothing but water d...n my Wig!
What do you see in the water Doctor, !
Bubbles Doctr "the earth hath bubbles, as the water hath." I said it was all my eye.

Was Swedenborg Just a Sebellian?

Dell J. Rose

The theological views of Emanuel Swedenborg offer a profound challenge to traditional Christian doctrines and ideas of the Trinity.[1] Though his ideas have often been compared with Sabellius (3rd century CE), whose doctrine of *modalism* many people take to be identical with Swedenborg, they are not. In fact, Swedenborg presents a different interpretation of the Godhead altogether. While both Swedenborg and Sabellius addressed the unity of God, their approaches to the distinction and relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit diverge significantly.

The Trinity According to Sabellius

Sabellius, an early Christian theologian, formulated what came to be known as modalism. Modalism asserts that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not distinct persons but rather different modes or aspects of one God. Sabellius emphasized God's singularity, arguing that the three 'persons' of the Trinity were merely manifestations or roles played by the same divine being.[2] According to modalism, God assumes the mode of the Father in creation, the mode of the Son in redemption, and the mode of the Spirit in sanctification.

Sabellianism arose as a reaction to perceived polytheism in the doctrine of the Trinity, seeking to preserve the oneness of God. However, the modalistic view was condemned by the Church as heretical during the early councils, as it denied the distinct and simultaneous existence of the three persons, and reduced the different actors of the godhead into *mere representations.*[3] This doctrine was criticized for undermining the relational aspects of the Trinity and the eternal coexistence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Swedenborg's Concept of the Trinity

Swedenborg, on the other hand, presented a radically different understanding of the Trinity in his theological writings, particularly in *True Christian Religion.*[4] He viewed the traditional conception of three separate persons as problematic, likening it to a form of tritheism. Instead, Swedenborg described the Trinity as a single Divine Person with three essential components: the Divine itself (the Father), the Divine Human (the Son), and the Divine Proceeding (the Holy Spirit). These components are aspects of one God rather than separate beings. For Swedenborg, the Trinity is not abstract but fully embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. The Father represents the divine essence, the Son reflects the human manifestation, and the Holy Spirit signifies the divine power emanating from both. This integrated view emphasizes the unity of God while preserving the distinct functions of each component within the divine framework.

Key Differences Between Swedenborg and Sabellius

Distinctiveness vs. Modalism. Swedenborg's concept retains the distinctiveness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit while maintaining their unity as aspects of one Divine Person. In contrast, Sabellius's modalism denies any distinction among the three, portraying them as successive modes of the same being. This key difference highlights Swedenborg's effort to reconcile the relational nature of the Trinity with monotheism.

Embodiment in Christ. Swedenborg's doctrine uniquely centers the Trinity within Jesus Christ. He argued that Jesus Christ fully embodies the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, uniting divinity and humanity in one person. Sabellius, however, did not relate the modalistic Trinity specifically to Christ in this way, focusing instead on the abstract roles or manifestations of God.

Eternal Coexistence. Sabellian modalism implies a sequential relationship between the modes of God (Father, Son, and Spirit), whereas Swedenborg emphasized their simultaneous existence within Christ. For Swedenborg, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not phases or roles but integral parts of a unified divine reality.

Relationship to time. For Sabellius, the Godhead took on distinct hypostasis but was in fact of the same essence insulated from time. He took great care to show that the differences in the godhead's appearance were significant, with each having its own role to play in the revelation, they were fundamentally unified, mere expressions of the singular God. For Swedenborg, there is always the temporal element and it exceeds anything like Sabellius's rather straightforward salvation history. The essence of the divine expression throughout is not a single eternal reality, but an emerging unity which was fulfilled in the incarnated body of the Lord. This is not possible in Sabellius's own conception, where time only ever serves as a context, but leaves the essence of the godhead untouched.

Swedenborg's integrated Trinity reflects his broader theological framework, which emphasizes divine love and wisdom as the essence of God's being.[6] By situating the Trinity within Christ, Swedenborg provides a deeply personal and accessible vision of the divine. This contrasts sharply with Sabellianism's abstract modalistic approach, which some critics argue diminishes the relational depth of the Trinity.[7]

Furthermore, Swedenborg's theology aligns closely with his cosmology and anthropology, wherein the divine interacts intimately with humanity. His understanding of the Trinity reinforces the idea of a God who is both transcendent and immanent, fully engaged in the process of human salvation.

Conclusion

The comparison between Swedenborg and Sabellius reveals two distinct approaches to understanding the Trinity. Sabellius's modalism, while preserving the unity of God, fails to account for the distinctiveness and relational aspects of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Swedenborg, through his Christ-centered vision, offers a harmonious perspective that integrates unity and distinction within the divine person of Christ. His concept of the Trinity not only addresses theological concerns but also provides a more personal and relatable understanding of the Godhead.

Footnotes

1. Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christian Religion*, trans. John C. Ager (Swedenborg Foundation, 1946), §§163–166.

2. Sabellius's doctrine is summarized in J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 120–122.

3. Swedenborg, *True Christian Religion*, §177.

4. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* pp. 122–124.

5. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Love and Wisdom,* trans. George F. Dole (Swedenborg Foundation, 1995), §§52–55.

6. Sabellius's modalism condemned at the Synod of Rome in 262 CE, as noted in Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553* (Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 210.

7.Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* pp. 122–124.

스베덴보리의 삼위일체 개념과 사벨리우스와의 차이점

Dell J. Rose

에마누엘 스베덴보리(1688–1772)의 신학적 견해는 삼위일체의 본질에 대해 깊은 통찰을 제공하며, 전통적인 기독교 교리를 새롭게 조명합니다. 그의 사상은 사벨리우스(3세기)의 관점과 두드러지게 대조됩니다. 사벨리우스의 교리는 삼위일체 내에서 세 인격 간의 관계를 다르게 설명합니다. 스베덴보리와 사벨리우스는 모두 하나님의 통일성을 강조했지만, 아버지, 아들, 성령의 구별과 관계에 대한 접근 방식은 상당히 다릅니다.

시벨리우스의 삼위일체 개념

사벨리우스는 초기 기독교 신학자로서 양태론(modalism)을 체계화했습니다. 양태론은 아버지, 아들, 성령이 독립된 인격이 아니라, 하나님의 다양한 양태나 역할이라고 주장합니다. 사벨리우스는 창조에서 아버지로, 구속에서 아들로, 성화에서 성령으로 하나님의 역할을 강조하며 하나님의 단일성을 주장했습니다.

양태론은 삼위일체 교리에서 다신교적인 요소를 제거하기 위한 시도로 등장했으며, 하나님을 하나의 존재로 유지하려는 의도로 교리화되었습니다. 하지만 양태론은 삼위일체 내 아버지, 아들, 성령의 독립적이고 영원한 존재를 부정하기 때문에 교회 초기 공의회에서 이단으로 규정되었습니다.

스베덴보리의 삼위일체 개념

스베덴보리는 그의 신학 저서 참된 기독교 종교(True Christian Religion)에서 삼위일체의 전통적인 개념을 비판하며, 세 인격이 독립된 존재로 간주되는 것을 문제로 삼았습니다. 그는 이것을 실질적인 다신교로 간주하며, 삼위일체를 단일 신의 세 가지 필수 구성 요소로 정의했습니다: 신성 자체(아버지), 신성한 인간(아들), 그리고 신성에서 발현된 능력(성령)입니다. 이러한 구성 요소는 각각 독립된 존재가 아니라 하나님의 다양한 측면으로 설명됩니다.

스베덴보리는 삼위일체가 추상적이 아닌 예수 그리스도 안에서 완전히 구현된다고 주장했습니다. 아버지는 신성한 본질을 나타내고, 아들은 인간의 모습을 반영하며,

성령은 아버지와 아들로부터 나오는 신성한 능력을 상징합니다. 이러한 통합적 관점은 하나님의 단일성을 강조하면서도 각 구성 요소의 기능적 차이를 유지합니다.

스베덴보리와 사벨리우스의 주요 차이점
구별성 vs. 양태론 스베덴보리의 개념은 아버지, 아들, 성령의 구별성을 유지하면서도 단일 신의 측면으로 통합합니다. 반면 사벨리우스의 양태론은 세 가지를 구별하지 않고 하나의 존재가 연속적인 역할을 맡는 양태로 묘사합니다. 이 핵심 차이점은 삼위일체의 관계적 측면을 모노테이즘과 조화시키려는 스베덴보리의 노력을 보여줍니다.

그리스도 안에서의 구현 스베덴보리의 교리는 삼위일체를 예수 그리스도 안에 중심으로 두는 독특함을 가집니다. 그는 예수 그리스도가 아버지, 아들, 성령을 완전히 구현하며, 신성과 인간성을 하나의 인격으로 결합한다고 주장했습니다. 반면 사벨리우스는 삼위일체를 추상적인 하나님의 역할로 설명하며, 이런 방식으로 그리스도와 연결하지 않았습니다.

영원한 공존 사벨리우스의 양태론은 하나님의 양태가 순차적인 관계에 있다는 것을 암시하는 반면, 스베덴보리는 삼위일체가 그리스도 안에서 동시에 존재한다고 강조했습니다. 스베덴보리에게 아버지, 아들, 성령은 단계적 역할이나 양태가 아니라 하나의 통합된 신성 실체의 본질적 부분입니다.

철학적 및 신학적 함의
스베덴보리의 통합된 삼위일체는 하나님의 본질로서의 신성한 사랑과 지혜를 강조하는 그의 신학적 틀과 일치합니다. 삼위일체를 예수 그리스도 안에 위치시킴으로써 그는 더 개인적이고 접근 가능한 신의 비전을 제공합니다. 이는 삼위일체의 관계적 깊이를 감소시킨다는 비판을 받는 사벨리우스의 추상적 양태론과는 대조적입니다.
또한 스베덴보리의 신학은 인간과의 친밀한 상호작용을 강조하는 그의 우주론 및 인간학과 긴밀하게 연결됩니다. 그의 삼위일체에 대한 이해는 하나님의 초월성과 내재성을 동시에 강화하며, 인간 구원의 과정에서 완전히 참여하는 하나님의 이미지를 제시합니다.

결론

스베덴보리와 사벨리우스를 비교하면 삼위일체를 이해하는 두 가지 뚜렷한 접근 방식이 드러납니다. 사벨리우스의 양태론은 하나님의 단일성을 유지하면서 아버지, 아들, 성령의 구별성과 관계를 고려하지 않습니다. 스베덴보리는 그리스도를 중심으로 한 비전을 통해 삼위일체의 통합적 관점을 제공하며, 하나님의 인격 속에 통일성과 구별성을 조화시켰습니다. 그의 삼위일체 개념은 신학적 문제를 해결하는 것뿐 아니라 더 개인적이고 관계적인 방식으로 신의 본질을 이해할 수 있도록 합니다.

각주

Emanuel Swedenborg, 참된 기독교 종교(True Christian Religion), trans. John C. Ager (Swedenborg Foundation, 1946), §§163–166.

시벨리우스의 교리는 J.N.D. Kelly, 초기 기독교 교리들(Early Christian Doctrines) (Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 120–122에서 요약되었습니다.

Swedenborg, 참된 기독교 종교, §177.

Kelly, 초기 기독교 교리들, pp. 122–124.

Emanuel Swedenborg, 신성한 사랑과 지혜(Divine Love and Wisdom), trans. George F. Dole (Swedenborg Foundation, 1995), §§52–55.

사벨리우스의 양태론은 262년 로마 공의회에서 이단으로 규정되었으며, Richard Price와 Michael Gaddis, 553년 콘스탄티노플 공의회의 행위들(The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553) (Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 210에 언급되었습니다.

The Religious Philosophy of L. L. Zamenhof: A Vision of Unity and Universal Brotherhood.

Dell J. Rose

Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhof (1859–1917), the creator of Esperanto, was not only a linguistic innovator but also a philosopher deeply engaged with questions of religion, ethics, and human unity. His aspirations for a universal language were inseparable from his vision of a world united by shared values of compassion, mutual understanding, and universal brotherhood. This essay explores Zamenhof's religious philosophy, particularly as expressed in his writings on Hillelism and Homaranismo, and situates it within broader intellectual and cultural contexts of his time.

Zamenhof's Religious Background and Influences

Born into a Jewish family in the multicultural city of Białystok, then part of the Russian Empire, Zamenhof grew up in an environment rife with linguistic and ethnic diversity but also marred by frequent interethnic tensions. The divisions he observed between Jews, Poles, Russians, Germans, and others in his hometown profoundly influenced his worldview. As a Jew, he was acutely aware of the challenges faced by minority communities, including anti-Semitism, and this awareness deeply shaped his ethical and philosophical outlook.

Zamenhof's religious upbringing included exposure to Jewish teachings, particularly the ethical traditions of Rabbinic Judaism. He was influenced by figures like Hillel the Elder, whose maxim 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow' became a cornerstone of Zamenhof's moral philosophy. This principle, emphasizing reciprocity

and empathy, resonated strongly with his lifelong quest for harmony and understanding among diverse peoples.[1]

Esperanto as a Tool for Ethical and Spiritual Unity

The creation of Esperanto was, for Zamenhof, more than a linguistic project; it was a moral and spiritual endeavor. He believed that a neutral, universal language could serve as a bridge between cultures, fostering mutual respect and reducing prejudice. In his view, linguistic divisions were symptomatic of deeper social and spiritual fractures, and the adoption of a common language could promote the kind of universal brotherhood he envisioned.

Zamenhof saw Esperanto as an extension of his ethical ideals. He imbued the language with a sense of egalitarianism, deliberately designing it to be accessible and neutral. Esperanto was to be a tool not only for practical communication but also for cultivating a shared sense of humanity. This vision reflects Zamenhof's broader philosophical and religious commitment to unity and inclusivity.[2]

Hillelism: Zamenhof's Early Ethical Philosophy

Zamenhof's early writings on Hillelism reveal his attempts to articulate a universal ethical system grounded in Jewish moral teachings but applicable to all humanity. In Hillelism, named after Hillel the Elder, Zamenhof sought to distill the essence of ethical living into a set of principles that transcended religious and cultural boundaries. Central to this philosophy was the idea of empathy and the Golden Rule, encapsulated in Hillel's famous dictum.

Hillelism reflects Zamenhof's efforts to find common ground among the world's religions. He believed that the core ethical teachings of all faiths were fundamentally aligned and that these shared values could form the basis for a universal moral code. However, Zamenhof eventually moved beyond the explicitly Jewish framework of Hillelism, seeking a more inclusive and secular approach to human unity.[3]

Homaranismo: A Secular Vision of Universal Brotherhood

Zamenhof's mature religious philosophy found its fullest expression in Homaranismo, a term he coined to describe his vision of universal brotherhood and ethical living. Homaranismo, derived from the Esperanto word 'homaro' (humanity), represented an evolution of Zamenhof's earlier ideas, incorporating elements of secular humanism, cosmopolitanism, and ethical universalism.

In his Deklaracio pri Homaranismo (Declaration of Homaranismo), Zamenhof outlined the principles of this philosophy. He called for the abolition of national, religious, and racial divisions, advocating instead for a world in which individuals identified primarily as members of the human family. Homaranismo emphasized mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation, rejecting all forms of sectarianism and exclusion.[4]

While Homaranismo was deeply ethical in its orientation, it also had spiritual dimensions. Zamenhof believed that the cultivation of universal brotherhood was a sacred duty and that true spirituality lay in the practice of love and compassion toward all people. Homaranismo thus reflects a synthesis of religious and secular ideals, grounded in Zamenhof's unwavering commitment to human unity.

Zamenhof and the Religions of His Time

Zamenhof's religious philosophy can be seen as both a response to and a critique of the religious and cultural milieu of his time. He was deeply influenced by the spirit of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason, universalism, and human rights. At the same time, he remained rooted in the ethical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and other world religions, which he saw as containing profound wisdom despite their institutional shortcomings.

Zamenhof's critique of organized religion focused on its tendency to create divisions and perpetuate conflicts. He was particularly critical of religious exclusivism and

dogmatism, which he believed undermined the shared ethical core of all faiths. In this sense, his philosophy aligns with broader trends in 19th- and early 20th-century thought, including liberal theology and ethical culture movements.[5]

The Legacy of Zamenhof's Religious Philosophy

Zamenhof's ideas have continued to resonate with proponents of Esperanto and advocates of intercultural dialogue. While Homaranismo did not achieve widespread adoption as a formal movement, its principles have influenced various initiatives aimed at fostering global understanding and cooperation. The ethos of Zamenhof's religious philosophy—emphasizing unity, empathy, and mutual respect—remains relevant in contemporary discussions of pluralism and global ethics.[6]

Zamenhof's vision of a world united by shared values and a common language reflects both the aspirations and the challenges of his time. His religious philosophy offers a compelling model for addressing the divisions of the modern world, rooted in the belief that humanity's shared humanity outweighs its differences.[7]

Ludwik Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, and Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish theologian, shared a profound vision of unity and universal connection. Both sought to transcend the barriers that divide humanity—Zamenhof through language and Swedenborg through spiritual understanding. Zamenhof believed that a neutral, universal language like Esperanto could foster peace and mutual respect among diverse cultures, breaking down linguistic and ethnic divisions. Similarly, Swedenborg emphasized the interconnectedness of all people through divine love and wisdom, advocating for a heavenly community where differences are harmonized.

Their visions converge in their belief in the transformative power of communication—whether linguistic or spiritual. Zamenhof's Homaranismo, a philosophy of universal brotherhood, echoes Swedenborg's teachings on the inclusivity of Heaven, where all who live by love and truth are welcomed. Together, their ideas

inspire a world where unity is not uniformity but a celebration of shared humanity and mutual understanding.

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A Review of Lynn R. Wilkinson's The Dream of an Absolute Language: Emanuel Swedenborg and French Literary Culture

Dell J. Rose

Lynn R. Wilkinson, The Dream of an Absolute Language: Emanuel Swedenborg and French Literary Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)

Lynn R. Wilkinson's The Dream of an Absolute Language represents a nuanced and interdisciplinary contribution to the study of Emanuel Swedenborg's intellectual legacy. By investigating Swedenborg's impact on French literary culture, Wilkinson weaves together threads of theology, linguistics, and literary criticism to illuminate the ways in which Swedenborgian thought resonated across centuries and disciplines. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) occupies a unique position in the history of Western thought as both a scientist and a mystic. Wilkinson situates Swedenborg as a pivotal figure whose ideas about language, symbolism, and the spiritual world profoundly influenced French literary culture, particularly during the 19th century. Drawing on Swedenborg's theological works, including Heaven and Hell and Divine Love and Wisdom, Wilkinson articulates how his metaphysical ideas about language as a divine medium were embraced by French writers and intellectuals seeking to bridge the material and spiritual realms.[1]

The Concept of an Absolute Language

At the heart of Wilkinson's analysis is the concept of an 'absolute language,' a central notion in Swedenborg's theology. Swedenborg envisioned a divine language of correspondences—symbols and words directly reflecting spiritual realities. Wilkinson demonstrates how this idea resonated with French writers such as Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, and others, who sought to convey ineffable truths through poetic and symbolic language.[2] The book explores how Swedenborg's linguistic theories dovetail with broader 19th-century philosophical movements that emphasized the transcendental and universal dimensions of language.

Swedenborg and French Literature

Wilkinson excels in tracing the pathways through which Swedenborgian thought permeated French literary culture. She examines Balzac's fascination with Swedenborg's metaphysical ideas, particularly in works such as Louis Lambert, where Swedenborg's influence is unmistakable.[3] Similarly, Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal reflects Swedenborgian themes of spiritual ascent and the divine correspondences between the natural and celestial worlds. Wilkinson meticulously analyzes these connections, providing compelling evidence of Swedenborg's enduring influence on French literary expression.

One of the strengths of Wilkinson's work is its interdisciplinary approach, which blends theology, philosophy, linguistics, and literary criticism. By situating Swedenborgian thought within the broader cultural and intellectual currents of the 19th century, Wilkinson offers readers a comprehensive view of the intersections between religion, language, and literature. Her analysis goes beyond textual interpretation, delving into the philosophical underpinnings of Swedenborg's theories and their implications for French writers seeking to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries.[4]

Wilkinson's scholarship has been praised for its originality and depth, particularly her ability to bridge disparate fields of study. Critics have noted her thorough engagement with primary and secondary sources, as well as her eloquent prose and rigorous methodology. At the same time, some reviewers have suggested that the book's ambitious scope occasionally detracts from its focus, with certain sections delving into tangential topics that may not be directly relevant to Swedenborg's influence on French literature.[5] Nonetheless, these minor critiques do little to diminish the overall impact of Wilkinson's work.

Conclusion

Lynn R. Wilkinson's The Dream of an Absolute Language is a landmark study that enriches our understanding of Swedenborg's intellectual legacy and its impact on French literary culture. Through her interdisciplinary analysis, Wilkinson sheds light on the profound ways in which Swedenborg's ideas shaped the artistic and philosophical pursuits of 19th-century French writers. The book's exploration of the concept of an absolute language invites readers to reconsider the transcendent dimensions of linguistic and literary expression. For scholars and enthusiasts of Swedenborg, French literature, or the intersections between religion and culture, Wilkinson's work is indispensable.

Footnotes

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