

Contents

Acknowledgments — V

1 Introduction — 1

- 1.1 The Theosophical Society — 3
- 1.2 Chapter Overview — 4
- 1.3 A Note on Citations, Diacritics, and the Use of Proper Names — 5
- 1.4 For Reasons of Readability — 7

2 The Problem of the “Western” in “Western Esotericism” and in Research on the Theosophical Society — 8

- 2.1 The Problem of “Western Esotericism” — 9
- 2.2 The History of the Theosophical Society: A History without Indian Theosophists? — 16
- 2.3 Conclusion — 33

I Encounters in the Global Colonial Discursive Continuum: A Theoretical Framework

3 Postcolonial Studies, Hybridization, and the Global History Approach — 39

- 3.1 Why Hybridity? — 43
- 3.2 The Idea of “Beyond” and “In-Between” — 46
- 3.3 Inherited Instability — 48
- 3.4 Mimicry as a Strategy of Resistance — 49
- 3.5 “Hybridity” and “Hybridization” — 51
- 3.6 A First Summary — 53
- 3.7 Overlaps and Common Claims of “Global History” and “Postcolonial Studies:” Global Connections, Relations, and Encounters — 54

4 Towards the Conceptualization of an Analytical Tool — 59

- 4.1 What are the Pitfalls? A Proposal for Operationalizing “Hybridization” — 59
- 4.2 A Proposal for the Operationalization of a Neighboring Term — 61

- 4.3 “Hybridity” and “Hybridization” in Bhabha’s Theory: A Reevaluation and Augmentation — **64**
- 4.4 A Proposal for Operationalizing “Global History:” Wenzlhuemer’s *Globalgeschichte Schreiben* — **69**
- 4.5 The Notion of the Global Colonial Discursive Continuum — **75**
- 4.6 Proposal for a Systematization of “Hybridity” — **76**

II The Theosophical Society in the “Indian Middle Class,” (Theosophical) Evolutionism, and the Narrative of the Theosophical Masters: Three Essential Contexts

- 5 The Indian Middle Class as a Field of Colonial Encounters — 83**
 - 5.1 Why a “Field of Colonial Encounters”? — **94**
 - 5.2 The Emergence of the Indian Middle Class: Historical Background — **95**
 - 5.3 Encounters Between Individuals: Texts as Manifestations of Encounters and Established Relations — **97**
 - 5.4 Writing the Public Sphere: Journals, Magazines, and Public Speeches as Media for Encounters — **99**
 - 5.5 The Indian Middle Class in the Global Colonial Discursive Continuum — **100**
 - 5.6 Preliminary Conclusion: Encounters in the Indian Middle Class — **101**
- 6 Theosophical Evolutionism, or the Narrative of Progress — 103**
 - 6.1 Historicism, Evolution, and the Idea of Progression in-between Darwin and Theosophy — **103**
 - 6.2 Herbert Spencer’s Progressive Evolution — **106**
 - 6.3 Darwin, Orthogenesis, and Lamarckism — **107**
 - 6.4 Evolutionist Ideas of Race — **108**
 - 6.5 Ideas of Progressive Development — **109**
 - 6.6 Science, the Colonial Setting, Learned Societies, and Popular Reception — **110**
 - 6.7 The Problem of Human Intelligence and Morality: The Uptake of Evolutionism in Annie Besant’s Theosophy — **112**
 - 6.8 Evolution, a Universal Principle?: The Problem of Translation and Hybridization — **115**
 - 6.9 The Reception of Evolutionist Concepts in India — **117**

- 7 Masters and Disciples, or: How to Transfer Knowledge — 121**
 - 7.1 The Master Narrative in the Theosophical Society: From Exclusiveness to the “Quickening of Evolution” — **123**
 - 7.2 Masters and Disciples Between Freemasonry, “Hinduism,” and Theosophy — **127**
 - 7.3 Succession, Charisma, and Office — **131**
 - 7.4 Preliminary Conclusion: Transfer of Knowledge, Forms of Succession, and Claims of Charismatic Leadership — **134**

III The “Quickening of Evolution” 1: The Stages of Initiation in Annie Besant’s Early Theosophy and *The Voice of the Silence*

- 8 The “Quickening of Evolution”: The Stages of Initiation as the Cornerstone of Besant’s Early Theosophy — 141**
 - 8.1 The Problem of Describing Annie Besant’s Life: State of the Research — **144**
 - 8.2 The Importance of the “Quickening of Evolution” in Besant’s Early Theosophical Writings — **146**
 - 8.3 Preliminary Conclusion: Exponential Evolution, Self-Development, and the Bridging of the Master Paradox — **166**
 - 8.4 Hybridization and Encounters in Besant’s Early Theosophy: The Textual Level and the Level of the Discourse — **169**
- 9 Following the Traces of Hybridization: The Stages of Initiation in Blavatsky’s *The Voice of the Silence* — 171**
 - 9.1 The Gurvi and her Disciple: Annie Besant’s Initiation and *The Voice of The Silence* — **171**
 - 9.2 The “Already Hybrids” of the Stages of Initiation in *The Voice of the Silence* — **174**
 - 9.3 Why Do I Speak of “Already Hybrids”? — **176**
 - 9.4 A Close Reading of *The Voice of the Silence*: Following the Traces of New and Altered Relations — **179**
 - 9.5 Part Three: The Seven Portals, or: The Stages of Initiation — **188**
 - 9.6 Preliminary Conclusion: The Hybrid Voice of the Silence; A Book of Initiation Based on “Already Hybrids” — **193**
 - 9.7 Results and Traces of Hybridization, “Already Hybrids,” and Tradition Through Repetition — **197**

IV The Stages of Initiation In-between “Hinduism” and Theosophical Evolutionism

- 10 The Reception of “Hinduism” in the Theosophical Society: Encounters in the Indian Middle Class — 203
 - 10.1 “Buddhism” versus “Hinduism”: Early Encounters with “Hinduism” in the Theosophical Society — 205
 - 10.2 Mapping Out a Field of Encounters: The Already Hybrid *Upaniṣads* — 206
 - 10.3 The Already Hybrid *Upaniṣads* in Annie Besant’s Work — 213
 - 10.4 Translations of the *Upaniṣads* Found in Besant’s Work — 215
 - 10.5 The Early Reception of “Hinduism” in *The Theosophist*: Indian Theosophists as “Experts” on South Asian Religions — 218
 - 10.6 Preliminary Conclusion: Benares, Calcutta, and *The Theosophist* as Spaces of Encounters — 234
 - 10.7 The Indian Middle Class in the Global Colonial Discursive Continuum — 236
- 11 Manilal Dvivedi, the Forgotten “Expert” on “Hinduism” — 240
 - 11.1 A Biography In Between Mesmerism, Theosophy, Sexual Abuse, Academic Success, and Constant Illness — 243
 - 11.2 Dvivedi’s Translation of the *Vākya Suddhā* — 250
 - 11.3 The Uptake of Yoga in the Theosophical Society: A Story With(out) Manilal Dvivedi? — 254
 - 11.4 Dvivedi’s *Rāja-Yoga* — 256
 - 11.5 Connecting the Discursive Fields: Translating *Cit* as Consciousness — 274
 - 11.6 Relationalization to European Orientalism — 276
 - 11.7 Preliminary Conclusion: Translating *Cit* into Theosophy; Advaitism as the Highest Form of Philosophy — 280
 - 11.8 Dvivedi’s Colonial Agency and the Meshing of Processes of Hybridization — 281
- 12 T. Subba Row, the “Expert” on “Hinduism” — 282
 - 12.1 Biographical Sketch — 282
 - 12.2 State of the Research — 283
 - 12.3 Divided Spheres of Expertise: Blavatsky’s “Chaldeo-Tibetan Esoteric Doctrine” and Row’s “Ancient Aryan Doctrine” — 287

- 12.4 Claiming Hegemony on “Hindu” Matters: Relationalization Between Swami Paramahansa and T. Subba Row — **290**
- 12.5 Contesting the Divided Spheres by Equalizing Relationizing: The Letter by H.X. — **294**
- 12.6 Recontextualizing Mill by Translating *Parabrahman* and Relationizing it to (Un)Consciousness — **296**
- 12.7 Translating “Adwaitism” and Relationizing it to Blavatsky’s “Arhat Doctrine” — **298**
- 12.8 Row’s *Discourses on the Bhagavat Gita*: An Accelerated Way to *Mokṣa* — **300**
- 12.9 The Aftermath of Row’s *Discourses on the Bhagavat Gita*: Relationalization contra Row and his Resignation from the Theosophical Society — **315**
- 12.10 Epilogue: Death and Obituary — **320**
- 12.11 Preliminary Conclusion: T. Subba Row, Blavatsky and “Ausseralltäglichkeit”; Relationalization, Power Asymmetries, and Claiming Charismatic Authority — **322**

V The “Quickening of Evolution” 2: The Pedagogy of Morality Based on the Stages of Initiation

- 13 The “Quickening of Evolution”: Education for Initiation in the Central Hindu College and the *Sanâtana Dharma Text Books* — 329**
 - 13.1 The *Sanâtana Dharma Text Books* and the Central Hindu College in the Research on Theosophy: Sources and Dispositions — **331**
 - 13.2 A Brief History of the Central Hindu College — **332**
 - 13.3 The *Sanâtana Dharma Text Books*: The Process of Editing and Implementing the Texts in the Central Hindu College — **339**
 - 13.4 The Ethics of Initiation — **347**
 - 13.5 The Indian Epics and Heroic Ideals — **357**
 - 13.6 Sat, Chit, Ânandam: Thought-Power instead of Consciousness and Love as the Guiding Principle for Universal Happiness — **360**
 - 13.7 Thought-Power and Emotional Power as Means for Helping Others: Cosmic Ideation and Its Repetition in Human Beings — **362**
 - 13.8 Excursus: Hindu Nationalism and British Royalism — **364**
 - 13.9 The Importance of Virtues for the “Quickening of Evolution” — **365**

- 13.10 Preliminary Conclusion: The “Science of Ethics” as the Means of the “Quickening of Evolution” and Preparation for Initiation — **377**
- 13.11 Multiple Relationalization and the Involvement of the Author — **378**

- 14 Conclusion — 379**
 - 14.1 The Emergence of the Stages of Initiation and the “Quickening of Evolution” From the Indian Middle Class: Mapping out a Multifaceted Discursive Field — **380**
 - 14.2 A View of Theosophy that goes “Beyond” — **383**
 - 14.3 An Analytical Tool to Describe Hybridization Processes on the Textual Level — **384**
 - 14.4 The Notion of “Already Hybrids”: Conceptualizing Non-Originals and Fields of Encounters as Premises for “Hybridization” — **386**
 - 14.5 Future Research — **386**

- Bibliography — 389**

- List of Figures — 409**

- List of Tables — 411**

- Historical Persons Index — 413**

- Person Index — 415**

- Publications Index — 417**

- Subjects Index — 419**