



ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY

Modern DNA evidence and the link between European and American civilisations

Plato was an Initiate and sometimes puts geography in veiled terms. According to HPB, he occasionally mixes the large continent of Atlantis with the last island – Poseidonis – which went down about 11,000 years ago, and was the one mentioned by the Egyptian Initiates to Solon.

From the following passage of Timaeus:

and there was an island situated in front of the straits which are by you called the Pillars of Heracles; the island was larger than Libya and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands, and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean.¹

some researchers believe that by "the opposite continent" Plato was referring to America.

Plato, through the scripts of Solo the Athenian obtained this knowledge from the Egyptian priests. Plutarch on his book "On Isis and Osiris"², a crucial source of information on the Worship of Isis and on Egyptian religious rites, attested that many ancient Greek adepts visited Egypt. They included Solon, Thales, Plato, Eudoxus, and Pythagoras. Eudoxus was initiated by the Egyptian priest Chonuphis of Memphis, Solon was initiated by Sonchis of Sais, and Pythagoras of Oenuphis of Heliopolis. Diodorus in his Historical Library³ adds to the list of those who visited Egypt Orpheus, Musaeus and Homer.

¹ Plato, Timaeus, 24e – 25a

² Moralia, volume VI
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Isis_and_Osiris*/A.html#ref43

³ Book I, chap. VI

Accounts by ancient authors

Traditionally it is believed that the known geography of the ancient world was confined to Europe, including the Eastern coast of the Atlantic Ocean, North Africa, the Middle East up to India, the Caspian Sea and the surrounding lands. These known lands were described in detail by Strabo, Diodorus, Pausanias and other ancient geographers and writers. This article will examine if other ancient authors wrote about geographical locations beyond the above boundaries such as Plato's "opposite continent" and if there is any scientific evidence today supporting the presence of ancient Europeans in America in ancient times.

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Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 –7 BC)

In his comment on the myth of Theopompus, Dionysius gives his belief that the land of the Meropians is a great continent across the Atlantic (Humboldt Hist. 1: 205), while the land he himself inhabited was but an island in comparison.

Seneca the Younger (4 BC – 65 AD)

Seneca in his Medea, where the chorus closes the second act, and begins with celebrating the daring of the earliest voyagers who sailed out into the unknown seas before even they had learned to direct their course by the stars; then, when the Argonauts returned in triumph, the ocean lost its terrors, and men had no need to ask goddess Athena to construct another Argo. Thenceforth they built their own ships, and sailed them whither they would. Then the chorus ends with the following prediction: "In later years an age shall come, when the ocean shall relax its bonds and a great continent shall be laid open, and new lands revealed; and Thule shall not then be the remotest land known on earth.

Plutarch (46 - 120 AD)

Plutarch was born in Chaeronea a small town near Delphi at Boeotia, Greece at about 46 AD. Plutarch studied for many years in Athens. He then travelled extensively throughout the Mediterranean world before settling down to Chaeronea, to teach and to write. He is best noted for his detailed biographies of famous Greeks and Romans¹. He was initiated into the mysteries of the Greek god Apollo. He was senior priest of Apollo at the Oracle of Delphi, where he was responsible for interpreting the predictions of Pythia. He led an active social and civic life while producing an incredible body of writing, much of which is still extant. He was distinguished not only as a historian but as a man versed in all the philosophy and science of his day. In his book of Morals he runs through the scale of human knowledge and speculation in all things material, moral and intellectual.

In his book "Concerning the Face Which Appears in the Orb of the Moon", Plutarch

¹ 'Parallel Lives' is a series of biographies of famous men, arranged in tandem to illuminate their common moral virtues or failings. It is not concerned history, as such, but in exploring the influence of character—good or bad—on the lives and destinies of famous men.

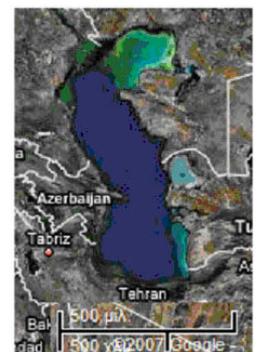
describes **four islands west of Britain as well as a continent located roughly 800 miles from these islands**. He repeats what Plato said that this continent (together with Africa and Europe) surround the Atlantic Ocean on all sides.

An isle, Ogygia, lies far out at sea, a run of five days off from Britain as you sail westward; and three other islands equally distant from it and from one another lie out from it in the general direction of the summer sunset. In one of the islands, according to the tale told by the natives, Cronus is confined by Zeus, and the antique Briareus, holding watch and ward over those islands and the sea that they call the Cronian main, has been settled close beside him. The great mainland, by which the great ocean is encircled², while not so far from the other islands, is about five thousand stades from Ogygia, the voyage being made by oar, for the main is slow to traverse³ and muddy as a result of the multitude of streams. The streams are discharged by the great land-mass and produce alluvial deposits, thus giving density and earthiness to the sea, which has been thought actually to be congealed.⁴

He then gives a remarkable description on how Greek colonists under Heracles arrived at what is now known as the Gulf of Mexico to strengthen the existing colonies. He describes the size of the Gulf of Mexico bigger than the Sea of Azof (Maeotis) and the Caspian Sea put together.



Gulf of Mexico



The Caspian Sea

² Plato, Timaeus, 25d

³ He is possibly referring to Sargasso Sea.

⁴ Concerning the Face Which Appears in the Orb of the Moon http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/The_Face_in_the_Moon*/D.html#ref301

He calls the Native Americans "peoples of Cronus".

On the coast of the mainland Greeks dwell about a gulf which is not smaller than the Maeotis and the mouth of the Caspian Sea. These people consider and call themselves continentals and the inhabitants of this land islanders because the sea flows around it on all sides; and they believe that with the peoples of Cronus there mingled at a later time those who arrived in the train of Heracles and were left behind by him and that these latter so to speak rekindled again to a strong, high flame the Hellenic spark there which was already being quenched and overcome by the tongue, the laws, and the manners of the barbarians.

Orpheus

Orpheus, the "tawny one". Mythology makes him the son of Oeagrus and the muse Calliope. Esoteric tradition identifies him with Arjuna, the son of Indra and the disciple of Krishna. He went round the world teaching the nations wisdom and sciences, and establishing mysteries. The very story of his (Krishna's) losing his Eurydice and finding her in the underworld or Hades, is another point of resemblance with the story of Arjuna, who goes to Pâtâla (*Hades* or hell, **but in reality the Antipodes or America**) and finds there and marries Ulupi, the daughter of the Nâga king. This is as suggestive as the fact that he was considered *dark* in complexion even by the Greeks, who were never very fair-skinned themselves. (from the Theosophical Glossary).

Modern research

If ancient Europeans had reached America several years ago, there should be some short of evidence of their presence. Several findings have been reported all over America. They include Roman, Carthaginian and ancient Greek coins, pottery, inscriptions etc. but they are not considered important or reliable evidence by mainstream archaeologists.

In 1998 a new discovery came up that can hardly be disputed. Michael Brown and colleagues reported in 1998 that mitochondrial-DNA (mtDNA) haplogroup X, a genetic marker

of population groups¹, is found in low frequencies in both European and Native American populations, but not among Asians. This indicated to them that some of the American founders might have come from Europe between 36,000 and 12,000 years ago. Concentration of Haplogroup X located in North American Indians indicates an early immigration of bearers of this haplotype from Europe. It is also found in smaller percentages in other regions, among the Sioux, Nuu-Chah-Nulth, and Yakima in western North America as well as the Yanomani in Brazil. (Based on work quoted in the American Journal of Human Genetics²).

Conclusions

Surprisingly the summary from the American Journal of Human Genetics is in agreement with what Plato wrote

and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean.

Plato's description is not mythical, allegorical, symbolic, or philosophical as some assumed; it appears to be an accurate historical and geographical description. Plato estimated this to have occurred before the destruction of Atlantis

¹ Haplogroups are used to define genetic populations. The mtDNA Haplogroup X is present in North American Indians, as well as in Brazil, the Near East, the Caucasus, and Mediterranean Europe, and in the rest of Europe. Particular concentrations appear in Georgia (8%), the Orkney Islands (in Scotland) (7%).

² It has been inferred that the majority of Native American mtDNAs belong to one of four major founding mtDNA lineages, designated haplogroups AD. It has been proposed that a fifth mtDNA haplogroup (haplogroup X) represents a minor founding lineage in Native Americans.

Unlike haplogroups AD, haplogroup X is also found at low frequencies in modern European populations. To investigate the origins, diversity, and continental relationships of this haplogroup, some network analysis was done. This indicated that European and Native American haplogroups, although distinct, nevertheless are distantly related to each other.

Time estimates for the arrival of X in North America are 12,000 - 36,000 years ago, depending on the number of assumed founders, thus supporting the conclusion that the peoples harboring haplogroup X were among the original founders of Native American populations. To date, haplogroup X has not been unambiguously identified in Asia, **raising the possibility that some Native American founders were of Caucasian ancestry.**

or more than 13,000 years ago. So even the dates of the American Journal of Human Genetics coincide with those of Plato.

Vital questions arising from the above hypothesis are "in what numbers" and "how" did these ancient peoples cross the Atlantic? It would be reasonable to assume that in order to affect the Native American population, there would be several thousand or even hundreds of thousands. An isolated group of a few dozens wouldn't have any significant effect on Native American population.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHELASHIP

This article written by Mohini M Chatterjee¹, also co-author of "Man – Fragments of Forgotten History", which Madame Blavatsky called "a mystical little romance", was first read before the London Lodge, and printed in the *Theosophist* for September, 1884. Chatterjee was one of the accomplished writers and speakers of the time, of whom H.P.B. was very fond. The article, reprinted in *Theosophy* for the first time is of especial interest in that it defines more fully the "six glorious virtues" as presented by Robert Crosbie in *The Friendly Philosopher*, pages 81 - 82. – Editors. (*Theosophy* December 1956.)

THE power of the Adepts over the forces of Nature, not generally recognised, has been enlarged upon on various occasions, but no account of them can possibly be satisfactory without bringing into prominence their goodness and their solicitude for the welfare of the race,

¹ One of the brilliant Indians who have helped in taking Theosophical ideas to the West. He was accepted by the Master K.H. as a pupil. About 1886, however, after splendid service, he fell out with H.P.B., and bit by bit lost his interest in the T.S. He rendered valuable aid with lectures and discourses both in Paris and London, and many European Theosophists still remember the brilliance of presentation of spiritual truths by the young Hindu.

which an ordinary man can no more comprehend than the Polynesian savage measure the intellectual heights of a Newton or a Galileo.

Surprise is often expressed that the philanthropy of the Mahatmas does not induce them to abandon their seclusion and work for men, among men. But the reason for such apparently strange conduct on the part of these Godlike men is not very far to seek. The productive power of our energies varies in accordance with the plane on which they operate. A bricklayer labouring from sunrise to sunset produces work which, when estimated in money, will be found to be but a small fraction of the money-value of an hour's work by a man of science. The difference in the effects generated by a given quantity of energy on the physical and intellectual planes is thus apparent. Those who are acquainted with the laws of spiritual dynamics know that the work produced by a given amount of energy on the intellectual plane is in its turn immeasurably less than that produced by the same quantity of energy acting upon the plane of spirit — the highest principle in man, according to occult doctrine. It is more unreasonable, therefore, to expect an Adept to work with us on the ordinary plane than it would be to suggest to Sir William Thompson to turn shoemaker.

The value of a scientific discovery as an intellectual triumph can be best estimated by a proper study of the various steps which have led up to it. Similarly, the excellence achieved by an Adept can only be appreciated, though in a very rough and incomplete manner no doubt, by a careful consideration of his preliminary training.

According to the most authoritative treatises on that occult science of which the Adept is a master, verified by the experience of its living students, none are admitted into the inner sanctuary for instruction until they reach a stage of spiritual development, characterised by the attainment of what, in the Brahmanical books, are called the four "sadhanas" or accomplishments.

The first accomplishment, which a neophyte must have, is the right knowledge of the real and the unreal. The object to be attained by the help of the "Great Science" as it is called, being the realisation of the true, and Adeptship being but

the mark of a certain stage of this realisation, it is clear that the first step to be taken is to gain an intellectual apprehension of what the truth is. But what is the truth ? It will not do for the neophyte to ask the question like the jesting Pro-consul, and refuse to wait for the answer. Had Pilate asked the question in Sanskrit he might have been answered out of his own mouth. For the Sanskrit word itself offers a clue to the nature of truth. In that language truth and reality bear the same name, and reality is defined to be that which is unaffected by time, or, in the quaint phraseology of the original, remains witness of the three divisions of time — the past, the present, and the future. The first accomplishment, therefore, consists in an intimate intellectual conviction of the fact that all and everything which appears to have an existence separate from Parabrahm is merely illusion (Maya). Hence, it is clear that at the present stage of the Theosophical movement, the duty that lies upon the Society and all its members is to disseminate the knowledge of the Esoteric Doctrine, the true philosophy of the real and the unreal, as that alone is capable of laying the foundation of any progress whatever.

The second accomplishment marks the next step on the path, and is the permanent effect produced on the mind by the theoretical knowledge, which forms the preceding accomplishment. When the neophyte has once grasped the unreal character of the objects around him, he ceases to crave for them, and is thus prepared to acquire the second accomplishment, which is **a perfect indifference to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions**, both here and hereafter.

Exoteric students fall into a grievous error by their failure to catch the true spirit of the injunction against acting under the impulse of desire. They erroneously suppose that the best preparation for spiritual life is to forcibly repress all outward expressions of desire, entirely losing sight of the fact that even the most rigid abstinence from physical acts does not produce inactivity on the higher planes of spiritual or mental existence. Sankaracharya, in his commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of the most authoritative of the Brahmanical sacred writings, says that such a conclusion is simply delusive. A hasty supposition might here be made that these considerations will have the effect of sanctioning persistence in evil, but

when the desire for improvement is constantly in the mind, and the character of the evil thoroughly realised, each failure to harmonise the inward with the outward nature will, by the revulsion of feeling thus produced, strengthen the determination to such an extent that the evil desire will be speedily crushed. This is why Eliphaz Levi so vehemently denounces the institution of forced celibacy among the Romish priests.

The personality of a man at any one moment is the result of all his previous acts, thoughts, and emotions, the energy of which constantly inclines the mind to act in a particular way. All attempts, therefore, to cure this mental bias by repressing its expression on the outer plane is as hurtful as to throw back into circulation unhealthy blood, seeking a natural outlet. The internal desire is always forging fresh links in the chain of material existence, even though denied outward manifestation. The only way to free oneself from the bonds of Karma, producing birth and death, is to let the stored-up energy exhaust itself merely as a portion of the great cosmic energy, and not to colour it with personality by referring it to self.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* itself speaks on this subject with no uncertain sound. The great Teacher Krishna reproves Arjuna for having expressed a disinclination to perform the duties pertaining to his sphere of life. The reason is perfectly plain: in reference to the great reality everything of this world is unreal: therefore to renounce the duties entailed upon us by our birth for something equally unreal only accentuates the ignorance which makes the unreal appear as the real. The wisest course, suggested by Krishna, is that Arjuna should perform all his duties unselfishly. "Thy right is only to the act", says the teacher, "it ends with the performance of the act and never extends to the result". We must perform our duty for its own sake and never allow the mind to dwell on the fruit of our actions, either with pleasure or pain. Purified from the taint of selfishness, the act passes by like water over the lotus-leaf, without wetting it. But if the act is done as a means to the attainment of a personal end, the mind acquires a tendency to repeat the act, and thus necessitates further incarnations to exhaust that tendency.

From the above considerations it is abundantly clear that occultism enjoins upon its votaries the necessity of an ardent and sleepless

desire for the performance of duty, the sphere of which is enlarged by the first accomplishment, which requires a thorough recognition of the unity of the individual with the all. It is not enough to have a sentimental perception of this great truth, but it must be realised in every act of life. The student, therefore, to begin with, must do everything in his power to benefit all on the ordinary physical plane transferring his activity, however, to the higher intellectual and spiritual planes as his development proceeds.

This leads us to the consideration of **the third accomplishment, which is the acquisition of the "six Qualifications", in Sanskrit "Sama"; it consists in obtaining perfect mastery over the mind** (the seat of emotions and desires), and in forcing it to act in subordination to the intellect which has already been purified and strengthened in attaining the two degrees of development dwelt upon. This is done, the mind is thoroughly cleansed of all evil and foolish desires.

The injunction to chasten our minds before purifying our acts might at first sight appear strange, but the practical utility of the course laid down will be obvious on reflection. We have already seen how varying effects are produced by a fixed amount of energy, according to the plane on which it is expended, and certainly the plane of the mind is superior to the plane of the senses. In the next place, forced abstinence from physical evil goes but very little way towards the evolution of that energy which alone can give us the power of approaching the truth. Our thoughts, governed under ordinary circumstances by the law of association, make us contemplate incidents in our past life and thus produce as much mental disturbance and draw as much on our mental energy as if we repeated the acts in question many times over. "Sama" then is really the breaking up of the law of the association of ideas, which enslave our imagination; when our imagination is purified, the chief difficulty is removed.

The next qualification, the complete mastery over our bodily acts ("Dama" in Sanskrit) follows, as a necessary consequence, from the one already discussed, and does not require much explanation.

The third qualification, known by the Brahmans as "Uparati", is the renunciation of all formal religion and the power of contemplating objects without being in the least disturbed in the

performance of the great task one has set before oneself. What is here expected of the aspirant for spiritual knowledge is that he should not allow his sympathies and usefulness to be narrowed down by the domination of any particular ecclesiastical system, and that his renunciation of worldly objects should not proceed merely from an incapacity to appreciate their value. When this state is reached, danger from temptation is removed. They alone, the Hindû poet says, are possessed of true fortitude, who preserve the equanimity of their minds in the presence of temptation.

Fourth in order comes the cessation of desire, and a constant readiness to part with everything in the world (Titiksha). The typical illustration of this given in our mystical literature, is the absence of resentment of wrong. When this qualification is completely attained, there arises in the mind a perennial cheerfulness, washing away every trace of solicitude or care.

Then is acquired the qualification called Samadhana, which renders the student constitutionally incapable of deviating from the right path. In one sense this qualification is the complement of the third given above. First, all egotistical motives, tempting the man to travel out of his chosen path, lose their hold over him, and finally he perfects himself to such an extent that, at the call of duty, he can unhesitatingly engage in any worldly occupation with the certainty of returning to his habitual life after completing his self-imposed task.

One other qualification is necessary to crown the neophyte's work, and that is an implicit confidence in his Master power to teach and his own power to learn (Sraddha). The importance of this qualification is liable to be misunderstood. An unswerving confidence in the Master is not required as a means of building up a system of priestcraft, but for an entirely different reason. It will perhaps be readily granted that the capacity for receiving truth is not the same in every mind. There exists a saturation-point for truth in the human mind, as there is one for aqueous vapour in the atmosphere. When that point is reached in any mind, fresh truth becomes to it indistinguishable from falsehood. Truth must by slow degrees grow in our minds, and a strict injunction is laid down in the *Bhagavad-Gita* against "unsettling the faith of the multitude" by a too sudden revelation of esoteric knowledge. At the same

time it must be remembered that no man can be expected to seek after a thing, the reality of which is improbable; the dream-land of an opium-eater will never be a subject of exploration to anyone else. The truth perceived by the higher faculties of the Adepts cannot be proved to one who has not developed those faculties, otherwise than by showing its consistency with known truths and by the assertion of those who claim to know. The sanction of a competent authority is a sufficient guarantee that the investigation will not be fruitless. But to accept any authority as final, and to dispense with the necessity of independent investigation is destructive of all progress. Nothing in fact, should be taken upon blind, unquestioning faith. Indeed, the Eastern sages go so far as to say that to rely solely on the authority of the Scriptures is sinful. The wisdom of the course actually followed is almost self-evident. Reason is the immediate perception of the fact that the eternal is alone true, and reasoning is the attempt to trace the existence of a thing all through the scale of time: the longer the period over which this operation extends the more complete and satisfactory is the reasoning considered to be. But the moment any fact of knowledge is realised on the plane of eternity, reason becomes changed into consciousness — the son is merged in the father, as the Christian Mystic would say. Why then, it may be asked, should confidence in the teaching of the master be a requisite qualification at all? The reply lies on the surface. No one takes the trouble to inquire into what he does not believe to be true, such confidence in no way demands surrender of reason.

The second part of this qualification, the confidence in one's own power to learn, is an indispensable basis of all endeavour to progress. The poet uttered a deeper truth than he was aware of, when he sang:

Yes, self-abasement leads the way
To villain bonds and despot's sway.

The moment a man thoroughly believes himself incapable of realising the highest ideal he can conceive of, he becomes so: the conviction of weakness, that apparently supports him, really robs him of his strength: none aspire for what they consider absolutely beyond their reach. Occultism teaches us that infinite perfection is the heritage of man. He must not blaspheme against his innermost divine self, the

Augoeides of the Greeks and the Atma of the Brahmans, by self-abasement, for that would be the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Christian doctors have tried in vain to identify this particular sin the deadliest of all: its true significance lies far beyond the narrow horizon of their theology.

The last accomplishment required is an intense desire for liberation from conditioned existence and for transformation into the One Life (mumukshatva). It may be thought at first sight that this qualification is a mere redundancy, being practically involved in the second¹. But such a supposition would be as erroneous as to conceive Nirvana as the annihilation of all life. The second accomplishment is absence of desire for life as a means of selfish enjoyment: while the fourth is a positive and intense desire for a kind of life of which none but those who have attained the first three accomplishments, can form any adequate conception. All that need be stated is, that the Neophyte is expected to know the real nature of his Ego and to have a fixed determination to retain that knowledge permanently and thus get rid of the body, created by allowing the notion of "I" to fasten itself upon an illusory object.

We shall now pass to the consideration of the minimum amount of these accomplishments indispensable to a successful study of occultism. If the desire for liberation, which constituted the last accomplishment, is only moderately strong, but the second, indifference to the fruits of one's action, is fully developed and the six qualifications well marked, success is attained by the help of the Master, who moulds the future incarnations of the pupil and smooths his path to Adeptship. But if all the accomplishments are equally well marked, Adeptship is reached by the pupil in the same incarnation. Without the second and fourth accomplishments, however, the six qualifications "water but the desert". In

¹ The four accomplishments and six qualifications:
1st knowledge of the real and unreal;
2nd hence, indifference to the fruits of actions (Viraga in another system);
3rd "the six qualifications" (the glorious virtues):
mastery of the mind;
mastery over bodily acts;
renunciation of all formal religions, undisturbable nature;
cessation of desire & willingness to part with all (Titiksha);
incapability of deviating from the right path; and
confidence in Master's teaching & in our power to learn;
4th intense desire for liberation & for transformation into the One Life.

recent Theosophical publications two classes of the Mahatma's pupils are mentioned — accepted and probationary pupils (chelas). The first class consists of those who have acquired the four accomplishments up to a certain point and are being practically trained for Adeptship in this life: to the other class belong such pupils as are qualifying themselves, under the guidance of the Masters for acceptance.

A few words may here be said regarding those who study occultism without any intention of aspiring for regular chelaship. It is evident that by theoretical study of the Esoteric Doctrine the first of the four accomplishments can be achieved: the effect of this in regulating a person's next incarnation cannot be over-estimated. The spiritual energy thus generated will cause him to be born under conditions favourable to the acquirement of the other qualifications and to spiritual progress in general.

One of the greatest of India's occult teachers says on this point that a theoretical study of the philosophy, though unaccompanied by the requisite accomplishments, produces more merit than the performance of all the duties enjoined by the formalities of religion eighty times over.

SURVIVAL OF THE SELFLESS

For years, biologists have been trying to explain how social traits like altruism evolve – the answer



has been staring us in the face all along, say David Sloan Wilson and Edward O Wilson.

<http://www.newscientist.com/channel/life/evolution/mg19626281.500-evolution-survival-of-the-selfless.html>

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"ALTHOUGH a high standard of morality gives but a slight or no advantage to each individual man and his children over the other men of the same tribe... an advancement in the standard of morality will certainly give an immense advantage to one tribe over another."

In this famous passage from *The Descent of Man*, published in 1871, Charles Darwin perceived a fundamental problem of social life, and a possible solution. The problem is that for a society to function, its members must perform services for each other. Yet members who behave "for the good of the group" often put themselves at a disadvantage compared with more selfish members of the same group. If so, then how can altruism and other prosocial behaviours evolve?

The solution, according to Darwin, is that groups containing mostly altruists have a decisive advantage over groups containing mostly selfish individuals, even if selfish individuals have the advantage over altruists within each group.

Darwin's insight would seem to provide the basis for understanding the evolution of social behaviour, a field known as sociobiology. That's not what happened, however, as anyone familiar with the subject knows.

During the 1960s evolutionary biologists, while agreeing with Darwin's logic, decided that between-group selection - the evolutionary force favouring altruism - is almost invariably weak compared with within-group selection, the evolutionary force favouring selfishness. As George C. Williams put it in his 1966 book *Adaptation and Natural Selection*, "group-related adaptations do not, in fact, exist".

Pariah concept

The consensus that formed in the 1960s turned group selection into a pariah concept, taught primarily as an example of how not to think. Interpreting behaviours as "for the good of the group" was said to be just plain wrong. Inclusive fitness theory (also called kin selection), evolutionary game theory and selfish gene theory were all developed to explain the evolution of apparently altruistic behaviours in

individualistic terms, without invoking group selection.

This received history is still taught in many textbooks and popular accounts of evolution, but a closer look reveals a field in disarray. In the modern sociobiological literature it is possible to find the following contradictory positions: nothing has changed since the 1960s; group selection is an important evolutionary force after all; there is a new concept of group selection that bears little relationship to the old version; and no mention of group selection, as if the idea never existed.

We think that sociobiology's theoretical foundation can be as clear today as it appeared to be on the basis of the 1960s consensus, but only if we revisit the pivotal events of that period. Why was group selection rejected so decisively? Do the arguments against group selection remain valid after 40 years of subsequent research? What are the consequences of acknowledging that group selection might be a significant evolutionary force after all?

Profound consequences

To begin with the third question, the consequences of regarding evolution as a multilevel process, with higher-level selection often overriding lower-level selection, are profound. The 1960s consensus was essentially a denial of the concept of society as an organism. It claimed traits can evolve for the good of the individual, but not for the good of the group.

Turning individuals into a privileged level of the biological hierarchy was a momentous event in the history of evolutionary thought. If it was unwarranted, then its retraction is equally momentous.

Multilevel selection theory is relevant to any trait that affects the fitness of other individuals in addition to the individual possessing it, which includes but goes far beyond the stock example of altruism. The theory can help explain the origin and major transitions of life, the structure of animal societies and multi-species ecosystems, and human evolution - even including the rise and fall of empires and the nature of religion.

Major transitions have occurred repeatedly during the history of life, perhaps beginning with the origin of life itself as groups of cooperating molecular reactions. Other examples include complex cells, which arose from groups of simpler cells, and multicellular organisms, which arose from groups of complex cells.

"It's heresy to view groups as organisms, yet today's organisms are yesterday's groups."

The social insects

The evolution of "eusocial" colonies like those of bees falls squarely within the paradigm of major transitions. These colonies were widely regarded as superorganisms until the rejection of group selection made this interpretation inadmissible. Kin selection then became the primary explanation for eusociality, as if this was an alternative to colony-level selection. Hamilton's original theory claimed that the extra-strong altruism exhibited by eusocial insects could be explained by the extra-high relatedness of workers and queens, due to the unusual system of reproduction in ants, bees and wasps (but which is not found in termites)...

Explaining history

These ideas might explain the broad sweep of recorded history in addition to the remote past. In his book *War and Peace and War: The rise and fall of empires*, biologist Peter Turchin argues that virtually all empires arose in areas where major ethnic groups came into contact with each other. Intense between-group conflict acted as a crucible for the cultural evolution of extremely cooperative societies, which then expanded at the expense of less cooperative societies to become major empires.

Their very success was their undoing, however, as cultural evolution within such empires led to myriad forms of exploitation, free-riding and factionalism. Turchin has marshalled an impressive amount of evidence to support his thesis, with profound implications for understanding conflict and cooperation in modern human societies.

Rethinking sociobiology

It is difficult to revisit an important decision that has been made and acted upon, but that is precisely what needs to be done in the case of the rejection of group selection in the 1960s. This is not a return to the sort of naive group selectionism that interprets all traits as "for the good of the group".

On the contrary, modern multilevel selection theory affirms key parts of the 1960s consensus, including the idea that group-level adaptations require group-level selection and tend to be undermined by lower levels of selection. It is only the categorical rejection of group selection that must be reconsidered.

When Rabbi Hillel was asked to explain the Torah in the time that he could stand on one foot, he replied: "Do not do unto others that which is repugnant to you. Everything else is commentary." In closing, we offer this one-foot summary of sociobiology's new foundation: "Selfishness beats altruism within groups. Altruistic groups beat selfish groups. Everything else is commentary."

From issue 2628 of New Scientist magazine, 03 November 2007, page 42-46



"Are you... desirous of pursuing occultism as such, or of studying philosophically, or as enthusiastic adherents of a cause whose aim is to raise as far as possible the race – to put it esoterically: "of lifting some of the heavy Karma of the world?"

Practical Occultism, p. 57

TO TEACH THE UNWILLING

A look at how Buddha answered the problem of enlightening unwilling minds.

An account of the enlightenment of Gautama Buddha was given in the November edition, which showed that the first problem he overcame was the one that humanity again faces, "***the caged bird off shuns its opened door***"... how to teach those who are unwilling to listen.

He identified them in terms we can understand today, those...

who love their sins and cleave to cheats of sense, and drink of error from a thousand springs – having no mind to see, nor strength to break the fleshly snare which binds them – how should such receive the Twelve Nidānas and the Law redeeming all.

'The Light of Asia', the 7th Book

However, to think that we 'know' the answer, and are fit to point it out to others critically, is a path to certain failure. The Bhagavad Gita teaches "Unto him who findeth no fault", which is a necessary balance to the desire to say "so far and no further shall thee go".

Let me try to explain. There are in periods of declining morals – the Gita calls these cyclic events "an insurrection of vice" – a time when each one feels called on to make an effort to put into practice what he has studied.

What we see in the world spurs us on to redress the balance; what we have learnt teaches us how.

***A pleading sigh borne on the western wind,
"Sruyatām dharma, Bhagwat!" OH, SUPREME!
LET THY GREAT LAW BE UTTERED! Whereupon
The Master cast his vision forth on flesh...***

ibid

'The western wind' means here, perhaps, a call for release, through the enlightenment of man, coming from very Nature herself.

Buddha's response is ***to teach the Law***, not only through words, but by 'casting his vision forth on

flesh', creating an interpretation or exposition of the Great Law that is best suited for the times.

This is similar to Mme Blavatsky's role in 1875 when she gave out a formulation the Perennial Wisdom, in a scientific framework, which was adapted to the minds of the day: to do that she and W.Q.Judge laid down *lines of force* in various parts of the world, in which these ideas were contained.

Returning to our dilemma, after Chapter 2 of the Gita Arjuna decides that the fight must be fought, and while the battle is **almost entirely** an inner one – and more so at first, for how can one teach until one has learnt? – he must then call up all that is best in his nature to achieve the victory within... and the fight outside him by the example of teaching¹.

We may be familiar with the inner battle – over each one's peculiar mix of the demons of greed, lust, pride, fear and ambition – but we must **also** think about the outer battle.

To be anything of a useful servant to suffering humanity, and to an equally suffering Nature, to be able to carry out the work of a Companion of the Lodge of Masters, one must be tested and found completely reliable, physically, mentally and morally.

Dependability and facility of purpose combined with an unwavering adherence to one's sense of justice is the goal of the would-be chela...

... and in the midst of that struggle over oneself and the elements (not of others, NB) it's also to retain a placid, cheerful disposition, a care for one's neighbour and a keen humour for our follies.

Its not much then! "Let me try!"

All can; we are Chelas of the Masters to the extent that we set our minds on it and live up to the mark. Once on that path, whatever answers we look for and deserve will arise through that very process of devotion and study.

Namaste! Peace.



¹ Arjuna became the travelling teacher Orpheus, lit. 'the tawny (dark) one', who taught the Greeks and other Europeans. See p 4. (Ed.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Astronaut Edgar Mitchell searches for 'inclusive view of reality'



By [Melissa E. Holsman](#)

Friday, November 30, 2007

Edgar Mitchell

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Apollo 14 astronaut and retired Navy captain Dr. Edgar Mitchell, who in 1971 was the sixth man to walk on the moon, was to be interviewed late Thursday by CNN's Larry King for a segment expected to air in December.

Mitchell, 77, who was to record his appearance from a West Palm Beach TV studio, said he expected King to inquire into studies at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, a research facility he founded 35 years ago in Northern California.

Mitchell's passions for such studies, he said, were a direct result of his astonishing 216 hours and 42 minutes of space travel as a pilot aboard Apollo 14.

During his trip home from the moon, Mitchell became "engulfed by a profound sensation 'a sense of universal connectedness,'" according to his Web site, <http://www.edmitchellapollo14.com/>

"He intuitively sensed that his presence, that of his fellow astronauts, and that of the planet in the window were all part of a deliberate, universal process and that the glittering cosmos itself was in some way conscious," Mitchell's biography noted.

"The presence of divinity became almost palpable," he added. "And I knew that life in the universe was not just an accident based on random processes, the knowledge came to me directly."

Soon after his return to Earth, Mitchell, a 30-year resident of Palm Beach County, retired from NASA and set out to find others who "likewise felt the need for an expanded, more inclusive view of reality."

The work of noetic scientists, Mitchell noted, provide a new understanding of how beliefs, thoughts, and intentions affect the physical world.

"Because 400 years ago, (French philosopher) René Descartes made the pronouncement that body, mind, physicality and spirituality belonged to two different realms of reality," said Mitchell during a phone interview. "That had the nice effect of getting the Inquisition to get off the backs of European intellectuals and allow science, as we understand it classically, to arise.

"But the bad side is that for all those 400 years, science has avoided the subject of what is consciousness and why are we conscious at all."

Now, 35 years later, Mitchell said their research is being noticed by the mainstream academic scientific world.

"It's helped us to understand we're really dealing with a quantum phenomenon here," he said. "And that's been a no-no for about 80 years — to think that quantum physics had anything to do with us, or our scale size — the dogma was that no, it only has to do with subatomic matter.

"Of course, that's pretty heavy stuff for a Larry King show."

Joining Mitchell during the King interview was Dean Radin, a senior scientist at IONS, and author of "Entangled Minds."

In his book, Radin shows how we know that psychic phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis are real, based on scientific evidence from thousands of controlled lab tests.

Dr. Mitchell's website:

<http://www.edmitchellapollo14.com/books.htm>

Our thanks to Odin for this piece, Ed.

Wizard of Oz

By Lee Randall, Sat 24 Nov 2007

WHERE I COME FROM, THE WIZARD of Oz airs on telly every Easter, not at Christmas, but regardless of the timing, it's safe to say that of all the films I revisit, I've seen this one most of all - probably more than 50 times in multiple formats, including last year's oh-so-enjoyable re-release into cinemas...

Just how bad is my addiction? Well, friends won't watch with me because I can't help reciting dialogue. I own L Frank Baum's entire Oz series, and a much-thumbed copy of *The Annotated Oz*, by Michael Patrick Hearn.

You can never get too much of a great thing. It's not just me. Statisticians estimate that more people around the world have seen *The Wizard of Oz* than any other film in the history of cinema. But when we head off to see the Wizard, just what is it we're seeing? As a kid I viewed the story as pure entertainment. As an adult who writes, I appreciate how tightly the film is structured. Nothing is wasted; every word, song and scene advances the story at a breathtaking pace.

But more than any other story I know, *The Wizard of Oz* is all things to all people. Though WH Auden cautioned that "to hunt for symbols in a fairy tale is absolutely fatal", there's no shortage of speculation about its "true" meaning. Here, then, is a light-hearted and by no means comprehensive tour of some of the theories.

...

If You're an Environmentalist:

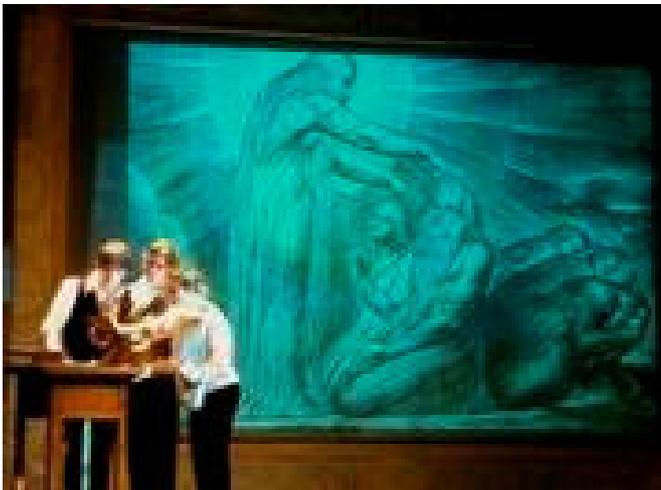
Baum was fascinated by Theosophy, sometimes called the religion of nature. Some feel his book reflects their belief that "God is Nature and Nature God". Baum viewed mankind's keenness to probe the secrets of nature, and the late 19th century's fascination with science, with some trepidation. According to some, Dorothy's companions represent the three states of nature: animal, vegetable and mineral...

REVIEWS

WILLIAM BLAKE'S DIVINE HUMANITY

Dramatisation of Blake's life & work on his 250th anniversary

*New Players Theatre, London,
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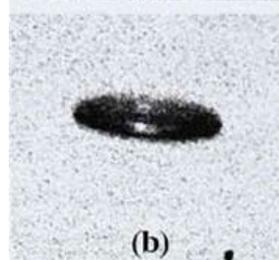
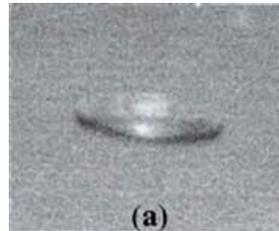
Misunderstood by much of 18th-century English society, Blake is today recognised as a leading poet and artist, confounding the intellect with works that appeal directly to the human spirit.

This theatrical journey through Blake's prophetic books has been specially created to mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of this painter, poet, prophet and visionary. Here the story of Jerusalem is set against living tableaux of Blake's masterly engravings from THE BOOK OF JOB and interspersed with key moments in Blake's life, incorporating original music and contemporary dance.

View production pictures at
www.blakedivinehumanity.blogspot.com

Former pilots and officials call for new U.S. UFO probe

VIDEO <http://www.yahoo.com/s/735972>



This photo depicts a possible UFO sighting as reported by the Journal of Scientific Exploration...

Mon Nov 12, 5:58 PM ET

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democratic U.S. presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich may have been ridiculed for saying he had seen a UFO, but for some former military pilots and other observers, unidentified

flying objects are no laughing matter.

An international panel of two dozen former pilots and government officials called on the U.S. government on Monday to reopen its generation-old UFO investigation as a matter of safety and security given continuing reports about flying discs, glowing spheres and other strange sightings.

The panellists from seven countries, including former senior military officers, said they had each seen a UFO or conducted an official investigation into UFO phenomena.

The subject of UFOs grabbed the spotlight in the U.S. presidential race last month when Kucinich, a member of Congress from Ohio, said during a televised debate with other Democratic candidates that he had seen one.

"It's a question of who you going to believe: your lying eyes or the government?" remarked John Callahan, a former Federal Aviation Administration investigator, who said the CIA in 1987 tried to hush up the sighting of a huge lighted ball four times the size of a jumbo jet in Alaska.

The panel, organized by a group dedicated to winning credibility for the study of UFOs, urged Washington to resume UFO investigations through the U.S. Air Force or NASA.

http://news.yahoo.com/nphotos/Dennis-Kucinich-unidentified-flying-objects-UFO-sighting/photo//071112/ids_photos_ts/ra1626261432.jpg//s://nm/20071112/od_uk_nm/oukoe_uk_usa_ufos:_y1t=ArvHRtyu4c5Vl6zLDg1pqiyek3QF

WISDOM IN ACTION



**'All are Chelas, if they
determine to be'**

***Every Chêla (and we are all that once we
determine to be) has these same difficulties.***

Patience and fortitude!

For an easy birth is not always a good one. The kingdom of heaven is taken only by violence, and not by weakness of attack. Your constant aspiration preserved in secret has led you to that point where just these troubles come to all. Console yourself with the thought that others have been in the same place and have lived through it by patience and fortitude. . . . Fix your thoughts again on Those Elder Brothers, work for Them, serve Them, and They will help through the right appropriate means and no other. To meditate on the Higher Self is difficult. Seek, then, the bridge—the Masters. "Seek the truth by strong search," by doing service, and by enquiry, and Those who know the Truth will teach it. Give up doubt, and arise in your place with patience and fortitude. Let the warrior fight, the gentle yet fierce Krishna, who, when he finds thee as his disciple and his friend, will tell thee the truth and lighten up the darkness with the lamp of spiritual knowledge.

Attacks cannot hurt: they must needs come, but all we have to do is to keep right on, working steadily, and Masters will see after the rest. For, that which is done in Their name will come right; and this whole thing has arisen because I have chosen to proclaim my personal belief in the existence of these beings of grandeur. So, let us shake again with the confidence born from the knowledge of the wisdom of the Unseen Leaders, and we go forth once more, separately, again to the work, even if not to meet until another incarnation is ours. But,

meeting then, we shall be all the stronger for having kept faith now.

I am glad that you have such a faith in the Great Workers who are behind us; They *are* behind us, to my personal knowledge, and not behind me only, but behind all sincere workers. I know that their desire is that each should listen to the voice of his inner self and not depend too much on outside people, whether they be Masters, Eastern disciples or what not. By a dependence of that kind you become at last thoroughly independent, and then the unseen helpers are able to help all the more.

We are all human, and thus weak and sinful. If, in one respect, we are better than others, then, in some other way, they are better than we are. We would be self-righteous to judge others by our own standard. . . . Are we so wise as never to act foolishly? Not at all. . . . Indeed I have come to the conclusion that in this nineteenth century a pledge is no good, because everyone reserves to himself the right to break it, if he finds after a while that it is galling, or that it puts him in some attitude inconsistent with some thing he may have said or done at some other time. . . . In ———'s case, . . . everyone should never think but the very best, no matter what the evidences are. Why, if the Masters were to judge us exactly as They must know we are, then good-bye at once! We would all be sent packing. But Masters deal kindly with us in the face of greater knowledge of our faults and evil thoughts from which none are yet exempt. This is my view, and you will please me much if you are able to turn to the same (view) and to spread it among those on the inside who have it not. It is easy to do well by those we like; it is our duty to make ourselves do and think well by those we do not like. Masters say we think in grooves, and but few have the courage to fill those up and go on other lines. Let us who are willing to make the attempt try to fill up these grooves, and make new and better ones.

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