THE TEXTS OF ALICE A. BAILEY: AN INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF ESOTERICISM IN TRANSFORMING CONSCIOUSNESS

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IN APPRECIATION

This thesis would not have been possible without the care, support, enthusiasm and intellectual guidance of my supervisor, Dr Lesley Kuhn, who has followed my research journey with dedicated interest throughout. I also acknowledge the loving kindness of Viveen at Sydney Goodwill, who has continuously praised and encouraged my work, and provided me with background material on the kind of activities that the worldwide community of Alice A. Bailey students are involved in. I sincerely appreciate the role my husband, Greg, played, as my cosmic co-traveller. Without him this thesis would never have materialized, his tireless engagement throughout these years has bolstered my drive to proceed to the very end. Finally, I acknowledge my children, Victoria and Elizabeth, for tolerating my reclusive behaviour, and giving me the space I have needed to write.
Philosophy, in one of its functions, is the critic of cosmologies. It is its function to harmonise, refashion, and justify divergent intuitions as to the nature of things. It has to insist on the scrutiny of ultimate ideas, and on the retention of the whole of the evidence in shaping our cosmological scheme. Its business is to render explicit, and –so far as may be – efficient, a process which otherwise is unconsciously performed without rational tests (Alfred North Whitehead 1938:7).
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LETTER CODE FOR ALICE A. BAILEY’S TEXTS

Ordered as per the list found in the front of every volume. Letter code from Master Index Of The Books of Alice A. Bailey (1998).

IHS  Initiation, Human and Solar
LOM  Letters on Occult Meditation
CA   The Consciousness of the Atom
TCF  A Treatise on Cosmic Fire
LS   The Light of the Soul
SIM  The Soul and Its Mechanism
ITI  From Intellect to Intuition
TWM  A Treatise on White Magic
BC   From Bethlehem to Calvary
DNAI Discipleship in the New Age, Vol.I
DNAII Discipleship in the New Age, Vol II
PH   Problems of Humanity
RC   The Reappearance of the Christ
DN   The Destiny of the Nations
GWP  Glamour: A World Problem
TEV  Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle
UA   The Unfinished Autobiography
ENA  Education in the New Age
EXH  The Externalisation of the Hierarchy

A Treatise on the Seven Rays
EPI  Esoteric Psychology, Vol I
EPII Esoteric Psychology, Vol II
EA   Esoteric Astrology
EH   Esoteric Healing
RI   The Rays and the Initiations
ABSTRACT

The Texts of Alice A. Bailey: An Inquiry into the Role of Esotericism in Transforming Consciousness

This thesis places for consideration the esoteric teachings of Alice A. Bailey, written between 1919 and 1949, as part of the theosophical current of western esotericism. Bailey’s overarching concern for human betterment underpins her appropriation of esoteric thought, into a reformulation that incorporates her own version of Christian faith. Bailey argues that humanity faces a major turning point, involving a reorientation towards spiritual living. Alongside the vast number of contemporary writers seeking similar goals, Bailey’s work constitutes another voice attempting to foster such change. Investigating how well the esoteric contents of Bailey’s work serve her intention drives this research.

I commence this inquiry by adopting a constructivist research paradigm within which I apply hermeneutic and heuristic research methods, informed by a phenomenological philosophy, to explore Bailey’s texts. After situating Bailey’s work within western esotericism, I take three pathways into Bailey’s work.

First I apply a hermeneutic method to present my interpretation of Bailey’s esoteric cosmology, construed as a mythic theory of everything, through which to explore Bailey’s metaphors. I consider some metaphysical aspects of her work, followed by a discussion of her cosmology as an alternative model of evolution.

Next I present a heuristic investigation of the more psychological aspects of Bailey’s work in terms of how they impact upon my own sense of self, particularly in relation to how the texts foster esoteric ways of knowing. The ensuing narrative spans three chapters, each focusing on one aspect of Bailey’s developmental stage model of the evolution of human consciousness along the spiritual path.
To complete the research journey I return to a hermeneutic approach to Bailey’s texts, taking a dialectic stance, and interpreting her work as a kind of revealed theology. Bailey’s commitment to her metaphysical notions as literal truth and her application of these notions to world affairs is critiqued with regard to some ideological consequences of this way of treating esotericism.

I follow with some critical reflections upon Bailey’s work in relation to its potential to transform consciousness, reorienting a reader towards spiritual living and human betterment. After exploring aspects of her work considered apposite to transforming consciousness, I speculate upon how Bailey’s texts might achieve her goal. In essence, I find that any transformation that may occur through exposure to Bailey’s texts results from a reader’s own efforts at penetrating to the heart of esoteric thought, and not through the adoption or application of esotericism.
CHAPTER ONE
RESEARCHING THE WORK OF ALICE A. BAILEY

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the writing of Alice A. Bailey, a twentieth century esoteric thinker, with the aim of evaluating how well Bailey’s work serves her intention to reorient humanity towards spiritual living and human betterment through transforming consciousness. To achieve this aim I have sought a way to study Bailey’s construction of esoteric knowledge that provides space for my experience of esoteric ways of knowing fostered by her texts. I adopt a constructivist research paradigm to support my research design with which to explore: Bailey’s use of esoteric metaphors and her literal truth claims; and the effects Bailey’s esoteric views have when subjectively experienced by the researcher. This latter exploration involves the researcher (me) in adopting the position of a seeker of esoteric wisdom to reveal how the texts impact upon my own self understanding. Through the entire research process any transformational power and possible mitigating aspects found in Bailey’s texts are evaluated. This presentation emphasizes the metaphysical aspects of Bailey’s work, the subjective impression they make, and some ensuing ethical implications.

I wish to make explicit that I do have a deep personal affinity with Bailey’s work. I am, however, not an adherent to this, nor indeed, to any other body of doctrine. Rather, I consider myself a seeker of meaning, and a perceptively esoterically inclined individual, who is seriously concerned with contributing to human betterment.

This thesis commences with a brief biographical introduction to Bailey and her work, followed with: a comment upon the circumscription of this research;
an introduction to the research paradigm; a synopsis of the research approach; and an outline of the thesis structure. References to Bailey’s texts in this thesis use a letter code following the Master Index Of The Books Of Alice A. Bailey (1998). A list of these references is provided on page vii of the current work.

1.2 Introducing Alice A. Bailey

Alice A. Bailey, born Alice La Trobe-Bateman (1880-1949) in Manchester, England, of aristocratic lineage, wrote a collection of volumes in the esoteric tradition, concerning ‘the next phase in the continuity of the Ageless Wisdom teaching for the present and the immediate future’ (Lucis Trust:2003).

Whilst Bailey’s work may be regarded purely as an esoteric outpouring of relevance to an atemporal esoteric readership, in my view Bailey was deeply affected by the climate of the times she lived through, and like many other intellectuals and writers, and using the lens esotericism provided her, she sought to articulate her own response.

The following quotations express Bailey’s quest for understanding as she lived through and attempted to make sense of the turbulent times of World Wars I and II:

Why should the world as a whole be in the thrall of direst poverty, of sickness, of discomfort? What is the purpose underlying all that we see around us, and what will be the outcome of world affairs viewing them as a whole? What is the destiny of the human race, what is its origin, and what is the key to its present condition? (CA:12).

First of all, it must be recognized that the cause of all world unrest, of the world wars which have wrecked humanity and the widespread misery upon our planet can largely be attributed to a selfish group with materialistic purposes who have for centuries exploited the masses and used the labor of mankind for their selfish ends (PH:70).
The first quotation indicates the motives that underlie Bailey’s construction of an esoteric cosmology. The second quotation reflects Bailey’s understanding of the primary cause of World Wars I and II, one that informs the construction of her argument for the need for a change in the orientation of humanity in order to foster human betterment. To achieve her aim, Bailey draws upon esotericism to answer her questions in the first quotation.

In her *Unfinished Autobiography* Bailey describes how she became an evangelical Christian early in life, working in soldiers’ homes for the British army in Ireland and India in the early 1900’s, when India was under British rule. After a physical breakdown Bailey moved to California where she bore three children to a violent husband who eventually left her. Left impoverished Bailey worked in a sardine factory to feed her family. During this difficult time she encountered two English women from the Theosophical Society. Inspired by the esoteric teachings this society offered, Bailey joined her local Theosophical Society Lodge and quickly adopted the esoteric worldview presented by the tradition. There she met her second husband and Theosophist, Foster Bailey.

After joining and then leaving the Theosophical Society, Bailey spent the next thirty years writing her own version of theosophy, and establishing several organizations that continue to this day to have influence on a global scale. Her *Arcane School* (established in 1923), is a non-sectarian international school of esoteric training by correspondence (UA:297). *World Goodwill*, established in 1932, is a non-government organization recognized by the United Nations (Newcombe 1999). The *Lucis Trust* was incorporated in 1922, as a tax-exempt, religious, education corporation. The *Lucis Publishing Company*, a non-profit organization owned by the *Lucis Trust* (EH:iv) continues to keep Bailey’s texts in print. Finally, *Triangles* is a network under the auspices of the *Lucis Trust*, and described by its own literature as ‘a service activity for men and women of goodwill who believe in the power of thought. Working in groups of three, they establish right human relationships by creating a worldwide network of light and goodwill’ (Triangles Pamphlet). Bailey’s
intention underpinning these organizations was not simply to promote her own views, but to help to improve the human condition.

Adherents of Bailey’s work seem to share her intentions and can be found pursuing peace and human betterment through the United Nations (including: McLaughlin and Davidson 1994, Ida Urso 1995 (a) and (b), and Dot Maver 2003). It would appear that the Bailey texts foster an urge for social reform amongst at least some adherents. Whilst it may also be the case that those who already have this tendency are drawn to the texts, there remains the implication that the texts contain a perspective commensurate with social improvement aspirations.

1.3 Research Motivations Made Explicit: Contributing to a New Perspective?

If we assume that the current state of global affairs is in a condition of crisis, and that there is merit in thinking that a change in perspective is either a necessary prerequisite for finding, developing and implementing solutions, or can help in the process of resolution, then the introduction of a system of thought postulated as able to contribute to the development of a new perspective seems valuable. So this research is motivated by aspirations congruent with writers arguing for change, a point returned to in Chapter Ten of the current work.

I also aspire to follow Renaissance historian Francis Yates (1964 and 1975) who, in her studies of Giordano Bruno and Hermeticism, and the Rosicrucians, was motivated ‘to open up for serious research those areas in the thought of the past which have for too long been the happy hunting ground of sensational occultism’ (1975:18). In this comment Yates notes that popularised versions of esotericism draw upon ideas found in typically abstruse esoteric texts. Similar tendencies have been recognised by some critical writers of New Age practices (Bloom 1996 and Sutcliffe 2000), and many New Age seekers are also influenced by Bailey’s work. I seek to understand and articulate the whole of Bailey’s work, in as far as this is possible, which seems appropriate in light of my thesis aims.

1.4 Circumscribing Limits of the Current Work

Before describing my research approach, I shall briefly state limitations I have imposed upon the current work. I have not chosen a comparative approach to Bailey’s work. I rely upon historical empirical research conducted in the field of western esotericism to provide a situational sketch of Bailey’s work. I have limited biographical and historical detail to the above few paragraphs and an outline in Chapter Two. I have sought to condense Bailey’s main argument and present it to a non-esoteric reader. Therefore much detail remains extraneous to my presentation. I stress that my presentation is only one

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1 Since the term New Age is attributed to Bailey (Haneegraff 1998 (b)), her work regarded as an influential New Age predecessor (Hammer 2001), this observation seems appropriate, although a thorough investigation of the matter is tangential to the current work.
reading of Bailey’s work and cannot substitute for a direct involvement with
the texts, or be held to be an authoritative interpretation.

The psychological aspects of Bailey’s work are viewed only in relation to my
self. Other qualitative research methods, such as interviews with adherents or
a focus group inquiry, have not been pursued. Other possible approaches not
used in the current work include: a structuralist analysis of the Bailey texts,
involving a deconstruction of the language of the texts, drawing attention to
implicit and embedded meanings; a Marxist perspective employed to explore
the historical conditions at the time that Bailey wrote the texts and those of
our contemporary age, set within particular dominant ideological and
economic contexts; and a Feminist perspective raising a series of relevant
concerns in relation to Alice A. Bailey as a female writer. Here complex
issues surrounding patriarchy, the nature of the subject matter Bailey was
concerned with (mystical associations with the feminine) and the gender mix
of her readership are of central concern.

All of the approaches mentioned above have merit for exploring the Bailey
texts, each potentially fulfilling particular research objectives and generating
meaning within the confines of theory and method.

Bailey claims not to have been the author of most of the texts that carry her
name, but merely the scribe for a ‘spiritual master of the wisdom’ she names
Djwhal Khul. The texts, according to Bailey, were written in telepathic
rapport\(^2\). This problem of authorship leads to a further problem, that of
authority. The texts are written as instructional books, apparently by someone
who, through virtue of his elevated position, knows more than us less
advanced beings. Such contentious and unsubstantiated knowledge claims
may discredit Bailey’s work as an object of academic scrutiny. For the
purposes of this inquiry I have taken Bailey as the author of all the texts. I
cannot verify her claim to be in communication with Djwhal Khul and
speculations of authenticity drawing on parapsychological research are
beyond the scope of the current work.
1.5 Research Paradigm

In view of Engler’s (2004) observation that ‘the overwhelming lack of explicitly developed theory has obscured and obstructed the usefulness of constructionism in religious studies’ (2004:291), I have chosen to elevate a constructivist research paradigm in this thesis. This contrasts with the positivist paradigm that dominates current research in the field of western esotericism. ‘A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles’, [italics theirs] (Guba and Lincoln 1994:107). A constructivist (subjectivist) paradigm asserts that the qualities of the world we perceive by means of our senses are dependent upon the mind of the perceiver, so that the object and the subject of an inquiry become fused. This contrasts with a positivist (objectivist) paradigm in which subject and object are regarded as separate (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

My paradigm includes a soft relativist ontology (Guba and Lincoln 1994), regarding meaning as not separate from consciousness (Crotty 1998:8). This view regards knowledge (of objects and ideas) through the lens of multiple subjectively and socially constructed realities (Kelly 1991), or as contextually contingent (Engler 2004), without denying the existence of a reality (including a transcendent metaphysical reality) these constructions point towards. In my view ontological realism (Schwandt 1994), combined with soft relativism, is an appropriate ontological position from which to study esotericism, since esoteric thought concerns constructed depictions of a transcendent reality, whilst each form of esotericism reflects its own contingency in time and space.

Bailey may be regarded as following in a tradition of revelatory writing, exemplified in scriptural texts such as the Bible, itself considered by Christian adherents to be the Word of God, revealed through intermediary scribes.
1.5.1 A Constructivist Epistemology

The epistemological dimensions of the constructivist paradigm are subjectivist and transactional (Guba and Lincoln 1994), and expressive (Willis 2000). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a subjectivist transactional epistemology believes in an interactive link between researcher and the object of inquiry, in which research findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds. Knowledge is created through this interaction and reconstructed through the researcher’s presentation of the findings. For Willis (2000), knowledge is expressive when the researcher adopts a receptive (contemplative and reflective) stance in the inquiry. Knowledge of the object under investigation is created through how it appears in the consciousness of researcher (Willis 2000:37). An expressive subjectivist transactional epistemology, explicitly portrayed in the research design and data presentation acknowledges Sutcliffe and Bowman’s (2000) comment that ‘researchers must remain aware of their evolving role within the research ‘ecosystem’’ (2000:3), when exploring contemporary spirituality.

Drawing upon the views of Berger and Luckman (1966), whose The Social Construction of Reality shifted the way sociological thinking views the nature of knowledge (McCarthy 1996), I follow McCarthy’s relativist view of knowledge(s) as:

Those organized and perpetuated ways of thinking and acting that enable us to direct ourselves to objects in our world (persons, things, and events) and to see them as something [italics his] (1996:23).

From a constructivist perspective knowledges are interpretations of information, systematized by thought (Burke 2002:11), socially produced and distributed (McCarthy 1996:16). Knowledge and reality ‘exist in a reciprocal or dialectical relationship of mutual constitution’ (McCarthy 1996:2). This approach includes ‘rarefied knowledges of, say, astrologers’ (McCarthy 1996:2), thus incorporating esotericism as one form of knowledge. Esoteric knowledge is regarded as a mental map that has emerged out of real life as a
reflection of ‘actual social conditions that particular individuals share’ (McCarthy 1996:12). Reality is then shaped by this esoteric map, generating meaning for a subject, providing a ‘coherent and meaningful sense of reality’ (McCarthy 1996:5). Esoteric knowledge carries an ideological function too, legitimating action and authority.

Esotericism as *a priori* propositional knowledge provides a cosmological representation of an assumed metaphysical reality, regarded by scholars of western esotericism as a *higher knowledge* (von Stuckrad 2005). From a constructivist perspective esotericism as propositional knowledge is ontologically, epistemologically, and functionally (ideologically) problematic through claims made in esoteric knowledge that it constitutes representations of an objective reality separate from any knower, or as a metaphysical realism. Whilst ontological realism does not deny metaphysical reality, a relativist ontology regards all knowledge of this reality as subjective, limiting human capacity for gaining access to objective truth.

The metaphysical realism in esotericism as propositional knowledge is epistemologically problematic. The metaphysical contents (information) in esotericism become objects thought about by a thinker as subject/reader of an esoteric presentation. Such thought separates the subject/reader from a direct perceptual experience of assumed metaphysical entities, creating a veil in language. In this sense esoteric texts represent a mediating bridge between a metaphysical ‘reality’ and a reader. Further, esotericism as knowledge is accessed subjectively, having no tangible objective aspect since it pertains to an unseen metaphysical reality intuitively perceived and experienced within the mind of the subject. This reality (should it exist) is accessed, via esoteric texts, from within the self. This shifts the kind of knowledge found in esotericism from its *a priori* basis as truth, towards its justification in an empirical *a posteriori* response in a subject. Consequently, any validation of esoteric knowledge as *a priori* truth requires an *a posteriori* empirical evaluation. Yet the metaphysical reality indicated through esotericism relies upon direct subjective experience unmediated by the esoteric language used to reveal such truth.
Issues of power and authority, the functional (ideological) consequences of this esoteric knowledge claim, when situated alongside the subjective nature of esoteric thought, renders esotericism controversial as an alternative discourse within religious studies, in which similar absolutist claims are made.

How can I as a scholar study Bailey’s texts in light of the subjective nature of esoteric knowledge and my desire to explore esotericism as a way of knowing or perceiving the world whilst confronting the above ontological, epistemological and functional problems?

In addressing these issues the constructivist research paradigm deployed in this thesis informs a particular separation of knowledge and knowing, used to construct a research framework through which to explore Bailey’s texts. As a noun, knowledge refers to objects or things. Knowing, as a verb, relates a subject to knowledge of things. A constructivist view highlights the contextual relatedness of knowing. I regard knowing as a dynamic process of being-in-experience, or becoming as we live. This view honours the relatedness of knowing and known, an interdependence through which knowing as subjective perception grows or changes through the interplay between knowledge and knowing. In my view, knowledge of any object cannot be separated entirely from a perceiving subject, so that objective truth eludes the human thinker. Knowledge of an object is both perceived or known, and thought about, by a subject. Following Arendt’s (1978) observation, ways of thinking may be thought of as processes of reasoning in developing meaning, and ways of knowing involve cognition, and perception as meaning making processes. As humans, or embodied conscious beings, we are involved with both thinking and knowing as distinct albeit inextricably linked processes. This appears the ground of our being. Knowing (perceiving-in-experience) and knowledge (propositional systematizations of information) are intertwined in one seamless whole, in a continual feedback loop of knowing informing knowledge and knowledge informing knowing, or as James (in McDermott 1967) argues ‘concepts flow out of percepts and into them again, they are so
interlaced, and our life rests on them so interchangeably and undiscriminately’ (1967:232).

However, I argue that a study of esotericism as knowledge and knowing remains valid, since the distinction allows for an exploration of ways of treating esotericism as knowledge and as knowing, with a further examination of how these interact, including pragmatic consequences esoteric knowledge may have in terms of how we think and act (James, in McDermott 1967:237).

1.5.2 A Constructivist Axiology

The particular view of knowledge and knowing adopted in this research informs my constructivist axiology. A constructivist paradigm: is interpretive so that research is guided by the researcher’s own beliefs and assumptions, rather than any objective criteria (Denzin and Lincoln 2000); and is anti-foundationalist, regarding criteria for judgment, standards of verification and truth as negotiable (Lincoln and Guba 2000:177).

Evaluating data within a constructivist paradigm generally involves processes of critical reflection, speculation, attention to the coherency of argument, and the extraction of themes. Analysis tends to be descriptive and creative. There are a range of criteria that may be used to judge data within this paradigm, which according to Schwandt (1994) evaluate pragmatic rightness or functional fitness, rather than truth. In developing my constructivist axiology, I have identified five criteria through which to evaluate Bailey’s work and four criteria to evaluate the research process, drawing upon the work of Douglas and Moustakas (1985), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Garman and Piantanida (1996), Lincoln and Guba (2000). Through the use of these judging criteria, I intend to evaluate how well Bailey fulfils her intention to reorient

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Footnote: A separation of knowledge and knowing has influenced a range of scholarly thought, including: In the field of education, the distinction between knowledge and knowing, developed through the work of Piaget (1954), Friere (1972 and 1985), and Bruner (1996), leads to the pedagogical teaching and learning principle encapsulated in ‘learning about’ (knowledge) and ‘learning from’ (knowing). Polanyi (1961) makes the knowledge and knowing distinction in arguing for harmony between faith and reason. Hufford (1995) relies upon the same distinction in arguing for the reflexive voice in Belief Studies. Maturana and Varela (1998) have sought to develop a biological basis for the knowledge/knowing distinction. The psychological aspects of this distinction have been explored in Hofer and Pintrich (2002). Finally, organizational science literature, as described by Gergen (2001), emphasizes knowing as distinct from knowledge.
humanity towards spiritual living and human betterment through transforming consciousness.

*Five criteria for judging Bailey’s work are: ontological authenticity* (Guba and Lincoln 1994), or the extent to which the research enlarges my personal constructions; *catalytic authenticity* (Guba and Lincoln 1994), or whether Bailey’s work empowers me to action; *integrity* (Garman and Piantanida 1996), or the coherency and consistency of Bailey’s work; *verisimilitude* (Garman and Piantanida 1996), or evocative power of Bailey’s work realized through my subjective resonance with its content; *aesthetics* (Garman and Piantanida 1996) or the personal significance (Douglas and Moustakas 1985) arising from my engagement with Bailey’s work.

*Four criteria for judging the inquiry are: reflexivity* (Lincoln and Guba 2000) involving critical reflection upon my self as a researcher; *vitality* (Garman and Piantanida 1996), or how powerful and vital my research might be; *integrity* (Garman and Piantanida 1996), or the coherency and consistency of the research; and *utility* (Garman and Piantanida 1996), or how useful my inquiry may be as a contribution to the field of western esotericism.

At this juncture I reiterate that this thesis has two distinct yet interrelated aims:

- Finding ways to explore esoteric texts that provides space for esoteric ways of knowing, through which,
- To evaluate how well Bailey’s texts serve her intention to reorient humanity towards spiritual living by transforming consciousness.

In fulfilling these aims this thesis seeks to contribute to:

- Epistemological approaches to the study of esotericism that centralize the researcher as the subject of an inquiry
- The exploration and development of research methods commensurate with a subjective mode of inquiry.
1.6 Research Approach

The breadth and complexity of Bailey’s work presents a research challenge. My own approach is informed by current developments in the field of esoteric studies which have sought to find appropriate ways to engage with esotericism. Holder of the Chair of the History of Esoteric and Mystical Currents in Modern and Contemporary Europe at the Sorbonne, Paris, France, Faivre (2000), considers the value of studies in esotericism as being able to offer new perspectives upon contemporary concerns. However he goes on to say that:

The interest shown today in esotericism, even by serious people, does not always yield the best fruits. One often sees specialists of a given discipline speaking about esotericism without possessing any particular competence (2000:xx).

According to Faivre, this apparent lack of expertise is partly a result of the absence of a clearly demarcated field engaged in scrutinizing esoteric texts. This difficulty is currently being addressed as studies in western esotericism, through the tenacity of a small cohort of dedicated scholars, slowly gain academic status (Ellwood 1986, Roe 1986, Faivre and Needleman 1992, Hanegraaff 1998 (a) and 1999, Faivre 1994 and 1998, Godwin 1994, Faivre and Hanegraaff 1998, Goodricke-Clarke 1998, and Versluis 2000 (b)). This thesis, resting upon the hard work of these scholars, seeks to enhance the esoteric inquiry from a constructivist perspective, consonant with my thesis aim and with esoteric thought, since both require a reflective subjective approach as a method of engagement and a means of evaluation.

My constructivist methodology, explored in Chapter Two, incorporates hermeneutic and heuristic methods, both drawing upon a phenomenological philosophy, and a dialectic critique using the criteria for judgment delineated below, to evaluate whether Bailey fulfils her intention.
Phenomenology generally seeks to gain access to ‘things in themselves’ without pre-judgment or the influence of theoretical perspective (Crotty 1998). Whilst apparently incongruous with a constructivist view, I argue that phenomenology recognizes the inseparability of knowledge and knowing. Phenomenology is concerned with the kind of knowing affecting the human quest for understanding (Copleston 1965).

Since this thesis aims to study texts, a hermeneutic style of approach is applicable. Rather than look beyond the texts for interpretation, via any empirically gathered data, I have simply attempted to tell the story that I have found to exist in the texts. Through this approach I develop two narratives. The first narrative highlights Bailey’s use of metaphor in a presentation of her cosmology, which I construe as a metaphysical theory of everything. The second narrative discusses Bailey’s literal truth claims in a critique of her work viewed as a textual foundation for a new world religion. These two presentations surround a third narrative depicting my treatment of Bailey’s work in terms of an esoteric way of knowing, in which I adopt a heuristic research method.

Briefly, a heuristic research approach encourages the expression of the interface between subjective consciousness and the object (the texts), as explicitly portrayed in the process of engagement. The heuristic method developed by Douglas and Moustakas (1985) and continued by Moustakas (1990 and 1995) involves perceiving and reflecting, concentrating upon the object of the research as it is experienced by the researcher, in order to gain clarity and depth of understanding.

Approaching the Bailey texts in this manner has congruence with their nature. Faivre and Hanegraaff (1998) also recognize that some personal engagement with the content of esoteric teachings is an essential aspect of academic research in esotericism, acknowledging that the nature of esoteric knowledge is hidden, veiled and needs a method that can reveal its essence. The heuristic method respects Hanegraaff’s (1998 (a)) emic level of inquiry, referring to the process of entering into the world of the believer as if the inquirer were a
seeker of an esoteric way of knowing. According to Schwandt (1994), the emic point of view understands meaning by ‘grasping the actor’s definition of a situation’ (1994:118). My approach is also commensurate with Faivre’s recognition that esoteric texts must be read with ‘eyes of fire’ (Faivre 1992:70), or with a full and active engagement.

The subject matter of the Bailey texts concerns the nature of the inner self and its interaction in the world. A scholar of Bailey’s work is immediately positioned by the texts as a ‘student’, ‘aspirant’ or ‘disciple’, indicating the consonance between a constructivist research paradigm that provides space for an exploration of: the experiential and subjective responses to the texts; and the texts themselves. Any reading of the Bailey texts seems unavoidably to involve a process of deep self-examination and it is through this process that the reader of this thesis will be presented with both a detailed exposition of the Bailey texts, and my response to them.

This approach finds support in the field of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, where qualitative research methods have influenced contemporary approaches to studies of human experience (Douglas and Moustakas 1985, Braud 1998, Braud and Anderson 1998, and White 1998). This thesis is psychological only in the limited sense that it is concerned with self-awareness in relation to an esoteric psychological model.

The interface between the texts and the researcher’s own responses to them may reveal explanations possibly overlooked by other research methods. In allowing the texts to speak through the researcher a deeper level of inquiry of a more subjective nature should emerge. In this process esotericism as a way of knowing becomes experientially embodied, enabling an exploration of how Bailey’s aspiration for the spiritual reorientation of humanity, fostered at the individual level, might unfold.

This research process has generated three voices presented in this thesis. The first voice is that of the seeker, presented in the heuristic research sections.

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4 This is explored more fully in Chapter Two.
The second voice is the scholar, who functions as a narrator for the heuristic presentation and as a critically reflective voice throughout the entire thesis. The third voice emerges in the final pages of this work, where I become myself as a writer reflecting upon how the thesis journey has affected my self perception.

1.7 Thesis Structure

In Chapter Two I present a detailed description of my research design. To provide contextual substance to this inquiry, Chapter Three explores Bailey’s esoteric worldview situated within western esotericism, her work presented as an example of the theosophical form of esotericism. In Chapter Four I present Bailey’s cosmology as metaphoric knowledge, which I construe as an evolutionary theory of everything that overcomes any tendency to separate explorations of nature from a quest for self-knowledge.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven concern my subjective experience of Bailey’s particular view of the human constitution and our evolutionary path. In these chapters I become Amelia Hewman, a seeker of esoteric wisdom. Amelia’s journey with the texts is presented as a narrative, divided into three chapters, following a logical division that emerged out of the heuristic process. Chapter Five concerns Bailey’s model of the human constitution. Chapter Six explores her developmental stage model of the evolution of consciousness. Chapter Seven concerns my engagement with the problems (and their solutions) Bailey identifies which thwart a seeker’s progress along the spiritual path.

Bailey’s application of an esoteric epistemology and ontology are explored in Chapter Eight, where I present Bailey’s foundational truth claims within the context of a treatment of her work as the textual basis of a new world religion. Central themes in the texts are critically discussed highlighting tension between the meaning Bailey seeks to convey and the methods she adopts to carry her meaning forth.
In Chapter Nine I discuss Bailey’s texts in the light of my constructivist axiology. Here I revisit each of my three narratives of Bailey’s work: as metaphoric knowledge; as an esoteric way of knowing; and as literal knowledge. I explore some of the broader implications of my research findings, touching upon a problem with literal truth claims and textual adherence, before discussing the heuristic research journey as a form of spiritual experience. I return to my treatment of Bailey’s work as a cosmic theory of everything, exploring the notion of metaphor more closely, following this with some ethical speculations. I complete the research journey with an evaluation of the research approach in which I make recommendations for further studies. Finally, I conclude in Chapter Ten with my own understanding of the value of Bailey’s esotericism in terms of contributing to a narrative of human and planetary betterment that emerged as a consequence of this research.
CHAPTER TWO

CONSTRUCTING A RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates upon the brief outline of my research approach in Chapter One. Through this approach the Bailey texts are explored as esoteric knowledge (propositional systematizations of information in thought); and as potentially cultivating an esoteric way of knowing (perceiving-in-the-experience). After a brief review of current research in the field, I argue the relevancy or fitness of this approach in the context of western esotericism, before describing how I use it to conduct my research.

2.2 Research Methods and Esoteric Texts

The primary research concern within the academic field of western esotericism has been the provision of a clearly defined empirical/historical framework best suited to an academic investigation of western esotericism as a whole, and as a useful scaffold to support specific enquiries. This has been beneficial in establishing western esotericism as an academic field of inquiry. This approach draws upon a broadly positivist research paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a positivist paradigm involves: a naïve realist ontology (1994:109), which for esotericism pertains to a metaphysical realist reality as well as an objective or extramental reality; an objectivist epistemology whereby an investigator and an object of inquiry are regarded as separate and non-mutually influential (1994:110), and ‘knowledge consists of verified hypotheses that can be accepted as facts’ (1994:113); an experimental methodology (1994), which for western esoteric studies has involved the application of an empirical/historical method; and criteria for judgment based on notions of internal (isomorphic) and external validity (generalizability),
reliability (stability) and objectivity (distant and neutral observer), (1994:114).
In western esotericism evaluation may be conducted through defining categories, (Faivre 1994) as standards of verification to foster certainty.

Some variation from a strict positivist paradigm is evident in the field, which is drawn towards a postpositivist paradigm through attention paid to methodology, in recognition of a need for ‘soliciting emic viewpoints’, by adopting qualitative methods (Guba and Lincoln 1994:110). For example, Needleman (1992) asserts that a scholar needs to find the seeker within themselves to facilitate a connection with the object of inquiry (1992:xxix). However, Needleman (1992) also claims that the seeker needs the scholar for the purposes of discrimination *vis a vis* the assimilation and integration of absorbed knowledge, and the application of analysis and objective criticism (1992:xxix), thus retaining an overarching positivist/postpositivist paradigm.

A general acknowledgement that studies of esotericism require a subjective engagement is encapsulated by Riffard (1998) in his attempt to identify an esoteric research method. Riffard presents two approaches as the external (objective) method of scholars of the history of esotericism and the internal (subjective) method of esotericists themselves (1998:73). The former, he argues, tends towards scholarly methodology, objectivity and impartiality (1998:71), the latter tends to be a form of self-analysis, concerned with spiritual interpretations of experiences (1998:70). Whilst Riffard argues that both approaches are indispensable tools in the investigation of esoteric thought, he approaches this distinction from a positivist paradigm, which foregrounds scholarly pursuit of objective truth. A serious incongruity arises through evaluating an internal or subjective method from an external or objective direction. In my view, if researching esotericism is to involve the seekerly level, then a positivist or postpositivist paradigm becomes inappropriate.

Prominent scholars within the field support Riffard’s view. Hanegraaff (1998) acknowledges Riffard’s distinction through his construction of two levels of
inquiry; the *emic* level and the *etic* level. As noted in Chapter One, *emic* refers to the process of entering into the world of the believer as if the inquirer were a seeker of an esoteric way of knowing (1998:12). *Etic* refers to the interpretation made by the researcher in the light of a theoretical perspective (1998:12). For Hanegraaff (1998), at the emic level, the researcher must hermeneutically bracket his/her own biases, and describe their findings as completely and honestly as possible, evaluating and interpreting them at the etic level, so that a dialectical relationship develops between them, in which the process of understanding is both reflective, and continuous (1998:12-13). Hanegraaff constructs his distinction between emic and etic levels based on a separation of knowledge and knowing. At the emic level, the researcher explores an esoteric way of knowing, in order to present, at an etic level, the research findings as a form of knowledge. According to Riffard (1998), for the purposes of clarity, the emic and etic levels of inquiry need to remain clearly demarcated in the articulation of the results of this style of inquiry, since when the internal or emic level becomes positioned within the external or etic level the distinction between these two levels may become blurred, obstructing objectivity (1998:73).

The current work reverses this trajectory, the etic is contained within the emic frame. From this direction, within the context of a constructivist research paradigm, any blurring of levels is transmuted through reflexive criteria for judging the research process into a research opportunity. A hermeneutic/dialectic approach to esoteric knowledge keeps the etic level close to the emic, through the acknowledgment of the interaction between reader and text generating meaning, and drawing primarily upon integrity as a criterion for judgment. However, I take seriously Versluis’ (2003) comment that, ‘in the study of esotericism…it is essential for scholars to engage at minimum in a process of imaginative participation’ (2003:30). It is heuristics that maximizes this process and develops the emic level of inquiry, providing a scholarly opportunity to present the seeker’s story in a direct, explicit manner, stripped of any need to clothe the research findings within a scholarly discourse prior to their presentation as research data. Simultaneously, the research is engaged at the etic level, in epistemic reflections, drawing upon the
remaining constructivist criteria for judgment (ontological and catalytic authenticity, verisimilitude and aesthetics). In the current work this process, in turn, melds with the hermeneutic research data, all criteria drawn together reflectively.

A heuristic approach is consonant with the Bailey texts which explicitly call for a direct personal engagement and the current work seizes this opportunity for an insight into how the texts affect the mind of one reader. Following a path carved by a few writers who also foreground their personal, spiritual or reflexive process in their research (including McNeill 1998, Maheshvarananda 2003, and Sutcliffe 2003), my thesis journey is introspective and reflexive, involving speculation upon my own personal and spiritual development in response to the texts.

2.3 Research Design: Knowledge and Knowing Revisited

Following a constructivist approach to knowledge and knowing presented in Chapter One, I propose a refinement suited to the study of esotericism by arguing that there are two distinct ways that we might study esotericism as propositional knowledge, which mirror the ways that esoteric writers present esoteric material. These, in turn, reflect two distinct forms of esoteric perception. The first way is to regard esoteric propositions as foundational, and esoteric knowledge as absolute, or literal truth. This approach to esoteric knowledge as a representation of metaphysical truth has been strongly affirmed by Schuon (1974, 1975 and 1981) and Guénon (1974), who sought to promote a scholarly recognition of the existence of an esoteric thread that unified all religions of the world in a transcendent unity, by identifying the continuous articulation of esoteric knowledge described as a primordial tradition containing eternal truths.

A second way to study esoteric propositional knowledge is in the form of esoteric descriptors of a metaphysical reality expressed in metaphor, narrative,
myth, or symbol. Such descriptors may be considered referential viewed in this way, rather than as conveying absolute truth. This approach to esoteric knowledge finds support in the writings of Jung (1992 (b)) and Hillman (1994 and 1996), whose influential work into the psychological value of symbolic, metaphoric and mythic approaches to meaning intersects with esotericism, especially with regard to understanding of the soul, its function or purpose and the means of access to the soul’s realm. Esoteric writers such as Versluis (2002 and 2003), and Cheetham (2002), express an equivalent keenness to adopt this approach to esoteric texts.

The distinction I have made between esoteric propositions as literal or metaphoric is subtle since esotericism uses symbols and metaphors to describe transcendent reality, firmly asserting the truth of the metaphysical claims apparently embedded in these symbols. The symbols of esotericism may be thought to be not only representative reflections, but authoritative, objectively true depictions of an absolute metaphysical reality.

This thesis contests esotericism as objective knowledge separated from a subject, and by engaging in a reflexive analysis, honours the centrality of the subjective experiencer (Hufford 1995). Whilst esoteric propositional knowledge pertains to reason, I assert that an esoteric way of knowing perceives, beholds or experiences alongside the mediating separations of language, often using alphanumeric symbols and metaphors as perceptual tools held within the imagination. These tools are also considered to be a means of accessing a metaphysical reality. To be esoteric is to rely on intuitively perceiving an instantaneous inwardly felt resonance drawn from the universal aspect of a particular object (symbol, metaphor, principle or idea) out of which meaning or significance may flow. The intuition is regarded by Hillman (1996) as ‘the traditional mode of perceiving the invisible’ (1996:97), involving direct and immediate apprehension (1996:97). For Jung (1990) the intuition is an irrational event, occurring as an involuntary sense perception (1990:49). Through the imagination and the intuition meaning within, and significance of, esoteric knowledge is grasped in a
revelatory way. An esoteric way of knowing becomes the means of accessing a metaphysical reality via esotericism as knowledge (von Stuckrad 2005). Such a way of knowing becomes developed through practice, and it might be claimed that esotericism, along with other forms of spiritual practice, aims to develop this quality in a seeker.

In light of Needleman’s (1965) observation that esoteric ideas put into question our ordinary ways of viewing reality, a non-everyday way of knowing may be regarded highly beneficial in researching esoteric ideas. Or, for Versluis (2002), research approaches:

That also seek to reveal the kinds of consciousness esotericism entails, that seek to bring us into new ways of seeking and knowing...[are where]...the most vital and profound contributions of this emerging field will be, [ ] mine (2002:13).

I concur with Hanegraaff (1992) that an esoteric seeker approaching esoteric texts is likely to carry with them a latent way of knowing commensurate with esotericism. An inquiry into esotericism appears to require a particular type of scholar/seeker with a predisposition towards esotericism as a gnostic way of knowing. For Faivre (1994):

Gnosis is an integrating knowledge, a grasp of fundamental relations including the least apparent that exist among the various levels of reality, e.g., among God, humanity, and the universe...[permitting] access to a higher level of intelligence, [ ] mine (1994:19-22). ¹

Inspired by Quispel’s investigations (1988, cited in Hanegraaff, 1992) into ancient gnosticism, Hanegraaff (1992) argues that some individuals carry a latent gnostic disposition through which they are drawn to a gnostic view of life, defined by: a general existential feeling that there is more to life than

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¹ This view is broadly supported by Merkur’s (1993) work *Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions.*

² Quispel’s work, to the best of my knowledge, remains untranslated into English.
meets the eye; a fascination for the depths of the human mind; a belief that there exists an ultimate purpose to existence and that this lies within the individual, waiting to be realized; and a basic feeling of wholeness (1992:11-12). These qualities become heuristic pre-requisite tendencies if a scholar chooses to become a seeker entering the *emic* level. A gnostic way of knowing values inner revelation gained through personal experience as a pathway to truth, over two other western epistemologies identified by Hanegraaff (1992), as faith in spiritual authority informing beliefs as truth claims; and reason, or the application of rational faculties (1992:10). I suggest that neither faith nor reason enters the esoteric world with the same openness and sympathy that allows for a full and direct engagement with esoteric knowledge.

While each seeker brings their personal uniqueness to any experience, I consider along with Hanegraaff (1992) that there are two ways the gnostic disposition may be expressed, as occultistic or as artistic gnosis. According to Hanegraaff (1992), the occultistic gnostic rationalises experience, reducing the symbolic to the concrete, adopting a literal interpretation of symbol and metaphor, as descriptions of fact (1992:15). Occultistic gnosis perceives esoteric knowledge as absolute authority and is likely to lead to adherence.

The artistic gnostic draws on metaphor and paradox to support a coherent gnostic worldview, realising that rational explanations of the non-rational and ineffable, are reductionist (Hanegraaff 1992). According to Hanegraaff, for the artistic gnostic metaphorical language reflecting imagination as image maker, is the keynote of communication (1992). This faculty of creative imagination allows the individual to make his/her own interpretation of the symbol and metaphor, concomitantly cultivating intuitive perception, regarded by Hillman (1996) as able to know the unknown.

This distinction between occultistic and artistic gnosis provides an additional layer of meaning to my research approach. A heuristic method provides a means to explore these gnostic approaches to esotericism, potentially
revealing through the journaling of the indwelling experience, whether this seeker gravitates towards occultistic or artistic gnosis. Further, a gnostic predisposition qualifies the criteria for judgment, since personal significance and resonance are contingent upon any pre-existing disposition. In turn this disposition contributes to any expansions of personal constructs and consequent actions.

Where this may lead a researcher of esotericism remains open, the complexities of individual biography and disposition, the type of esoteric material, and many cultural and historical contingencies, rendering any conclusions drawn from a heuristic approach to esoteric ways of knowing speculative.

2.3.1 Researching Esotericism and Phenomenology

In this section I justify my use of hermeneutic and heuristic research methods, before discussing my engagement of both methods in this study. Phenomenology philosophically ties together my use of hermeneutics and heuristics to esotericism, providing theoretical justifications for these qualitative methods (Smith 1997, Trigwell 1997, Crotty 1998, Lawler 1998, Charmaz 2000, Conlan 2000, Denzin and Lincoln 2000), commensurate with a constructivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

For the founder of phenomenology, German philosopher Husserl (1859-1938), philosophy ought to attempt to describe the essential nature of things in themselves, beyond the influence of preconceptions, using a method of bracketing which Husserl terms the phenomenological epoché (Audi 1999:403-407). Phenomenology recognizes that the meaning of things is not inherent in ‘the object’ as such, but in the subject’s engagement with it. Phenomenology approaches ‘the object’ through the experience of the subject’s consciousness of it, in order to discover new, fuller or renewed meanings (Smith 1997, and Crotty 1998). Or as Copleston (1965) argues, the phenomenological epoché directs the subject’s attention to the experience of a
thing as it appears to consciousness without judgments concerning the ontological status of an object of consciousness (1965:208).

Both phenomenology and esotericism are concerned with engaging with an object by a subject, and the subject’s experience of this object. For Husserl (1970), this engagement should involve recognition of intentionality, or the way that perception ‘is in itself a perception of something’ [italics his] (Husserl 1970:85), so that an object perceived is included in perceptual experience. The phenomenological notion of intentionality contains the recognition that we, as human beings, cannot separate ourselves from the world we live in and view it from the outside. Whilst phenomenology concerns this intentionality as pertaining to the conscious subject, positioned within his/her own mind, or mental sphere, according to Faivre (2000) esotericism is concerned with the conscious subject positioned within his/her own soul.

According to philosopher and esotericist Abellio (cited in Faivre 2000), Husserl’s intentional consciousness also has the power to ‘intensify the self, and to transfigure things beyond things themselves’ (Faivre 2000:241). In my view this intensification refers to additional layers of meaning provided in esoteric representations of the individual’s relationship with a metaphysical reality. Abellio recognises the connection between phenomenology and esotericism, since both concern ‘the interiorization of the world in our mens [mind]’, ([ ] mine, Faivre 2000:241), esotericism involving a dialectical relationship between natural (mental) reason and transcendent or supramental reason (2000).

So the process of engagement with an object by a subject within the phenomenological movement requires a bracketing of our own constructs and cultural meanings, laying them aside as best we can, temporarily, to allow the experience of an object to speak prior to any interpretation. Whilst it is not possible to completely transcend our beliefs, values, thought processes, responses and reactions, phenomenology demands that at least these are not taken for granted. In approaching esoteric texts, not only must the researcher
lay bare her own worldview in the everyday social and cultural context, but also her inner, spiritual framework. Both, with their particular set of significant symbols and meanings, will draw the researcher’s attention to particular aspects of the texts, perhaps overlooking those that do not seem to fit and interpreting each new idea presented in the text in terms of the pre-existing worldview. Phenomenology thus presents a challenge to the researcher to move beyond her own concepts, ever watchful for the distortions that follow, to allow the texts to speak with their own voice.

2.3.2 Incorporating Hermeneutics

I adopt a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to the Bailey texts as esoteric knowledge. Hermeneutics has its origins in the exegetical practice of Scriptural interpretation, and has since been developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by a number of European philosophers. After Dilthey (1833-1911) incorporated hermeneutics into philosophy, Heidegger (1889-1976) further developed the philosophical aspects of hermeneutics through his determination that meaning is contingent upon historical factors, and generated out of particular perspectives.

Hermeneutics is especially relevant when researching texts whose contents are beyond our everyday perspectives and understandings of the world. According to Crotty (1998), hermeneutics views such textual interpretation as problematic, requiring an empathic rapport from the reader, with an ability to enter the mind of the author, revealing authorial intention, implicitly embedded in the texts, even gaining a deeper textual understanding beyond that of the author. Hermeneutics may also consider the application of textual contents. Generally a hermeneutic method views textual interpretation as a circle within which the meaning of each part is dependent upon the meaning attached to the whole. The whole, in turn, can only be understood when the parts are understood (Eagleton 1983:74, and Audi 1999:378). In my view understanding gained through the use of a hermeneutic circle requires an

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3 Phenomenology also enables the researcher to see more clearly the ground upon which and from which those concepts arise.
4 These philosophers include Friedrich Ast, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer (Crotty, 1998: 87-111).
intuitive response in the reader, such as Husserl’s proposed need for eidetic intuition\(^5\), or the ability to perceive the essence within any feature or part of a whole thing (Audi 1999:405). Hermeneutic circularity also provides dialogical openness, whereby textual meaning may evolve, each interpretation contributing to a larger narrative. The hermeneutic circles created in the current work explore esotericism as knowledge, involving both the emergence of each theme (the ‘wholes’) through a subjective engagement with the content (parts), and, in the presentation of the research findings, the prior interpretive construction of each of these themes as ways to approach Bailey’s esoteric content.

Heidegger fused hermeneutics to phenomenology, because he recognised the revelatory power of hermeneutics when deployed in the service of ‘phenomenological seeing’ (Crotty 1998:96), or field of awareness. Phenomenological seeing recognizes that there is more that exists beyond our perceptual horizons (Heidegger 1966:63-4). Such seeing involves adopting an attitude of openness towards the revelation of Being (1966:64). Since esotericism concerns things not only far from ordinary experience, but pertaining to Being, this attitude appears to be prerequisite.

As Smith (1997) highlights, hermeneutics produces ‘interpretive descriptions’ (1997:79) of the research phenomena. Through hermeneutics I procure an opportunity to portray the complex and vast metaphysical world Bailey presents, whilst attending to the epistemological distinction I made above between regarding esoteric knowledge as literal truth or as metaphoric representation. Drawing upon Origen’s aforementioned identification of the need for continual interpretations of spiritual texts, I claim that hermeneutics allows the scholar to derive meaning within such texts through a subjective engagement with them. The hermeneutic method allows Bailey’s work to be displayed as a differentiated unity in that its aspects, implications and consequences are explored without the use of a positivist method that seeks objective truth.

\(^5\) Eidetic intuition is developed, according to Husserl, through the use of imaginative variation, or the process of removing features of an object without destroying the object itself, until the object is stripped bare of all non-essential features (Audi 1999: 405).
However, a hermeneutic treatment of esoteric texts does not seek to explore how a reader may be affected by them. A hermeneutic interpretation of what Bailey ‘really’ means will involve in the process an interaction between text and interpreter, yet this interaction remains implicit. I seek an explicit portrayal of the process of not interpretation alone, but of the application of esotericism to the self. In this way I can explore how Bailey might achieve her intention to foster spiritual growth in the reader. This intention is echoed in Sellon and Weber’s (1992) analysis of theosophical teachings. These writers argue that it is through:

The use of paradox and symbolic language as a valid method for conveying truth [that is] central to the theosophical epistemology, which regards the awakening of the intuition (*buddhi*) as essential to spiritual growth, [italics theirs], [ ] mine (1992:320).

Furthermore, as James (1902) argues, philosophical and theological pursuits for metaphysical knowledge leave open the effects of such knowledge manifested in the life of the reader. To explore any transformational power in Bailey’s texts, my research approach follows James’ (1902) observation that the fruits of mystical, (or in this instance, esoteric) experience are rooted in pragmatic consequences, beneficent perhaps, for both the individual experiencer and the world they may influence. To explore such fruits, a more direct, personal involvement with esotericism seems to be required.

### 2.3.3 Esotericism And a Heuristic Method

Husserlian phenomenology underpins the heuristic method I have adopted to engage subjectively with Bailey’s texts, allowing me to experientially explore esotericism as a way of knowing (Reason 1988). Heuristic research, as a qualitative research method, (Douglas and Moustakas 1985, and Moustakas 1990 and 1995), relies solely upon the researcher’s subjective responses to an object of inquiry. Heuristic research encourages a reflexive expression of the relationship between researcher and researched (Moustakas 1990, and Conlan
2000). Or, as a scholar, I study own my responses and reflections, valuing the personal voice (Hufford 1995), with the research process and findings explicitly portrayed as subjectively lived experience. This approach values the revelatory or intuitive power of tacit knowing, or Polanyi’s (1961 and 1998) observation, echoed in hermeneutics, that the ability to sense the whole of something is gained through the silent contemplation of its parts. This emphasis upon an apparent hermeneutic circularity in the construction of knowledge based upon the re-telling of another’s text is a vital point of similarity between hermeneutic and heuristic inquiries. In my view heuristics concerns the intuitive generation of the whole of something as a result of a subjective experiencing of its parts.

I connect the heuristic method to a theological practice noted by Braud and Anderson (1998) whereby traditional theological narrative is considered in terms of the emergent analogous patterns of the personal life of the reader and scriptural stories. This process of engagement is commensurate with esoteric texts, written to involve a reader in an experiential process of ‘imaginative participation’ (Versluis 2003:39). For Versluis (2003) scholarly engagement with any text involves an experiential component, a ‘kind of shared consciousness through the medium of written language’ (Versluis 2003:32). Esotericism, along with mysticism, extends this sharing far beyond participation, inner reflection and ensuing comparisons between the self and the text. According to Underhill (1956), ‘we know a thing only by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by an interpenetration of it and ourselves…’ (1956:4). Echoing Heideggerian hermeneutics, it is an interpenetrating union of self and text that the heuristic process deployed in the current work seeks to achieve and express. So the texts become embodied as the central part of the research journey, in full, open and transparent participation.

Consequently heuristics places a number of demands upon the researcher of esotericism. Firstly, the researcher’s inner life is laid bare. Such self exposure poses a seriously confronting challenge, necessary so that the research can reveal the kind of relationship emerging between subject and object, the ensuing outcomes evaluated within this context.
Secondly, in the phenomenological bracketing of pre-existing systems of meaning to allow a more direct relationship to develop between texts and reader, the researcher’s current meanings are also called into question alongside meanings presented in the texts. I have found that this inner dialectic praxis seems to be the seed bed of insight and intuition.

Thirdly, heuristic research involves self-searching and self-dialogue, the researcher becoming fully immersed in the process of the research, trusting and valuing their subjective reflections and responses, and creating a story that depicts, according to Moustakas, the ‘qualities, meanings and essences of universally unique experiences’ (1990:13). Consciousness, or awareness, is not taken for granted, it is seen as something that can be expanded and enriched. Moustakas (1990) notes that heuristic indwelling requires a direct (intuitive), inner encounter with the phenomenon, involving sustained immersion and focused concentration (skills enhanced through meditative practices), integrity and trust in one’s own understanding. An internal frame of reference involving the expression of the researcher’s point of view from the perspective of their life journey underpins the heuristic inquiry. The quality of the heuristic process is dependent upon the researcher’s own ability to recognize and respond to insights as they emerge.

The heuristic approach provides an opportunity to explore Bailey’s texts as a lived experience through a form of inner dialogue, or captured reflections that emerge in the researcher’s mind as the texts are read. The texts become absorbed into the inner world of the researcher who is prepared for and open to the experience in consciousness that may ensue. As writers on transpersonal methodology Valle and Mohs (1998) argue:

> For if, indeed, we each identify with the contents of our reflective awareness and speak to and/or share with one another from this perspective to better understand our depths and richness of our meaningful experience, then phenomenological philosophy and

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6 The term *indwelling* has been used by Heidegger to refer to meditative thinking (1966:82), and Polanyi, to refer to intuitive perception (1961:242). In my view Moustakas draws on both definitions in his use of the term.
method offer us the perfect, perhaps only, mirror to approach transcendent experience (1998:104-5).

The outstanding feature of heuristics is the explicit honouring of the research process. All assumptions are exposed, all aspects of the process questioned. Heuristics demands and fosters self-awareness and a preparedness to be changed through the research, mitigating against adherence to a fixed perspective. Heuristic process blends well with esoteric texts which also place heavy demands upon the reader to suspend his or her point of view and adopt an esoteric way of knowing grounded in an intangible, imaginal reality, for which validation can only be found through subjective engagement. The results of heuristic research reveal an esoteric way of knowing, and the inner life of the researcher is put on full display, thereby confronting the tension found between esotericism as a type of knowledge (systematized information), and as a way of knowing (lived experience).

Heuristics is rooted in psychological research and as such defines a particular and psychological ‘looking within’. However, esoteric texts merit a refinement upon the heuristic method of self-observation. Esoteric practice rests upon recognition, cooperation and at times manipulation of certain ‘universal laws’ which esotericists postulate as reflecting processes of energy and matter. If the content of esotericism is to be engaged with heuristically then the existence of such laws or universal principles must be accepted as a working hypothesis. Upon this assumption, understanding the workings of these laws require more than simply introspective self-observation. According to Needleman (1965), to observe the laws of the universe operating within oneself, a highly disciplined skill must be developed through a subtle training and guided experience. Self observation becomes a spiritual practice. It is, for Needleman, what is required of us if we are to understand sacred language as symbolic. The esoteric ideas can then act as Needleman suggests, ‘to evoke an echo in the psyche of man, so that for a moment he glimpses a deeper law of reality’ (1965:98-99). An attempt is made in the heuristic process to penetrate this esoteric realm of energies and living matter that the Bailey texts
affirm. Heuristic immersion becomes a sustained experiential training in esotericism.

However, an obvious limitation with heuristics (and hermeneutics) is that conclusions are drawn upon only one generated view of the texts. Each reading generates different and unique data, the result of historical, cultural and psychological contingencies. Whilst restrictive in its ability to make claims that satisfy a positivist view, I argue that the more these studies occur, the greater the opportunity for such individual testimony to be collated, resulting in a unique collection of research data that might serve the purposes of a constructivist or positivist research paradigm.

2.4 My Research Journey

My research journey is crafted around natural divisions discovered in Bailey’s work. Three broad areas of her esoteric presentation (cosmology, psychology, and a commentary upon world affairs) could be studied using a combination of hermeneutic and heuristic methods, providing a sense of wholeness that I consider important in the light of my research aim of evaluating how well Bailey’s work may transform consciousness leading to a reorientation towards spiritual living.

I approach Bailey’s work by initially adopting a hermeneutic research method, creating a hermeneutic circle within which to explore Bailey’s use of metaphor. I construe Bailey’s cosmology as a *theory of everything*, reflecting upon, and tentatively comparing it with some contemporary trends in metaphysics. My aim is to provide an overview and interpretation of Bailey’s esotericism in its most abstract form, which I consider imperative contextual material without which the heuristic portion of my work that follows would remain vacuous and shallow, and esotericism as knowledge under-explored.

For my first hermeneutic interpretive description I have drawn upon only one of Bailey’s texts, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, which was written as a key to the Theosophist Blavatsky’s major work, *The Secret Doctrine. A Treatise on*
*Cosmic Fire* is written as a technical manual, offering a detailed explanation of every cosmological aspect that this perspective contains. This is a dense, abstruse volume, over a thousand pages in length, and described in the Lucis Trust’s brochure of Bailey’s writings, *Thirty Years Work* as ‘probably the most timeless, profound and least understood’ (No date: 21) of her work.

I have carried the hermeneutic interpretation into the heuristic sections of my work, so that the reader may continue to be presented with Bailey’s work. Heuristics provides me with an academic opportunity to explore as fully as I am able my own gnostic fascination with esotericism, with a willingness to engage with Bailey’s esotericism as a passionate participant (Guba and Lincoln 1994:112). As a seeker, I explore esotericism as depicting and fostering both a literal (occultistic gnosis), and a metaphoric (artistic gnosis) way of knowing, drawing upon the Bailey texts that are primarily concerned with her esoteric psychology. I reflectively question whether my own consciousness has changed as a consequence of reading Bailey’s work, whilst honouring the complexity of the experiential process.

My engagement with Bailey’s texts broadly follows Douglas and Moustakas’ (1985), heuristic research design comprising three research phases:

- The first heuristic phase, *immersion* (1985:45), found me reading Bailey’s work and keeping a series of journals. This phase proved all-consuming, my dedication to sit and read for hours a day proved a unique and extraordinary opportunity. Hours of sustained concentration were required to enter into Bailey’s world. The pace of reading was slow and ponderous. All personal insights, thoughts, reflections, ideas, examples drawn from my own life experience and inner understanding were documented as they emerged. To do justice to this most central aspect of the heuristic inquiry I drew upon my enormous passion for my subject that carried me through a reading program of astounding intensity. I also had the necessary undisturbed solitude in pleasantly peaceful surroundings. I could take short walks through the garden and return to my reading chair. Such simplicity of lifestyle cannot be
overstated. The meeting of esotericism and heuristics stimulated a process of almost monastic introspection.

- During the second phase, *acquisition* (1985:46) I found myself digging holes and shoveling piles of dirt underneath my old home, combining strenuous physical activity with background reading, copy typing, ordering and framing journal material. I became open and intuitively receptive, elaborating upon meaning and insights gained. I began to devise a narrative to contain my research findings, mindful of the demands for quality, evocativeness, honesty and resonance that such narration places upon the researcher (Goodfellow 1997, Smith 1997, Charmaz 2000, and Janesick 2000). In the narrative: I named myself Amelia Hewman, a seeker of esotericism; I constructed a narrative voice as the scholar and guide to the inner dialogue of the seeker; I included extracts from Bailey’s texts.

Positioning myself as the narrator telling the story of my experience of the texts, created a sense of detachment from the deeply personal, experiential level. I became the observer of myself and Bailey. I notice that as narrator I adopted a judgmental stance, my scholarly voice necessarily analytical. However, the narrator was performing self-analysis, the distance between the research material at the *emic* and *etic* levels were still very close.

While every effort was made to keep these two voices separate, the seeker relying on the journal material, and the narration a later construction, the two are clearly both one person and the boundary between them from the point of view of the reader fuzzy. Indeed, the seeker is constructed through the narrator’s control, the *emic* level containing yet paradoxically being framed by the *etic*. As the scholar, it was the narrator that selected the material to use, editing parts judged as superfluous and ordering the material to mould it into a form accessible to a reader and relevant to the inquiry. The narrator was the illuminator. So the journals’ temporal sequence became disrupted and fragmented, the continuous unfolding stream in the journals lost. I stress, however, that the heuristic data was presented as close to the truth of the experience as could be achieved.
Although this presents a difficulty in terms of the authenticity of the presentation of the heuristic data, as a true representation of the reality of the heuristic process as a lived experience, this is a difficulty with research itself, whether qualitative or quantitative. Further, the application of scholarly reason to ‘seekerly’ gnosis creates a tension, a source of possible conflict, and a second reference frame held within academic discourse.

The last of Douglas and Moustakas’ (1985) heuristic stages, creative synthesis, involved me in a process of exploring the whole that I created, and drawing from this whole some emergent themes, including the tension between ‘seekerly’ gnosis and scholarly reason. I began to think about my own thinking, reflecting upon my own epistemological assumptions and the outcomes resulting from the heuristic inquiry. This allowed me to evaluate the advantages and the possible dangers and shortcomings of heuristics, and completes the heuristic process.

I return to a hermeneutic research approach, to present Bailey’s social commentary and vision of a new world order, involving Bailey’s application of esoteric principles to world affairs. I draw another interpretive hermeneutic circle within which to contain Bailey’s esotericism, this time construed as a revealed theology of a new world religion. I focus upon those texts that centralize Bailey’s view of world affairs. In this chapter I am concerned with Bailey’s use of esotericism as foundational knowledge. Since I approach esotericism from within a constructivist research paradigm that contests foundational truth claims of an assumed objective metaphysical reality, my emphasis is dialectic. Here I consider limitations and obstacles found in Bailey’s commentary that may restrict any heiroeidetic potential for transforming consciousness. This is the most accessible part of Bailey’s work, comprehensible to a non-esotericist or a reader who only wishes to tread lightly in an esoteric world.
My research journey culminates in a process of critical reflection upon the research data gathered through my hermeneutic and heuristic approaches to Bailey’s work in the light of my constructivist axiology.

2.4.1 Selection of Bailey’s Texts

Bailey’s texts divide easily into the three broad themes discussed above: cosmology, psychology and social commentary.

Below I list all of Bailey’s texts which I have categorized in terms of the major themes emerging from my initial scanning of them. This categorization process precipitated the crafting of my research design. The texts in bold were read for this research, the material utilized across all sections of my work, where relevant. The exception is Chapter Four of this thesis which relies entirely on A Treatise on Cosmic Fire. Bailey claims to have been the amanuensis (secretary) for the master Djwhal Khul, her texts written in telepathic rapport. Italicised texts were written by Bailey. These texts concern Bailey’s own interpretation and application of ancient wisdom.
The Bailey Texts

Cosmology

A Treatise on Cosmic Fire
The Consciousness of the Atom
Initiation, Human and Solar
Esoteric Astrology

Psychological

Esoteric Psychology Vol I
Esoteric Psychology Vol II
The Soul and Its Mechanism
Glamour: A World Problem
From Intellect to Intuition
Letters on Occult Meditation
The Light of the Soul
A Treatise on White Magic
Esoteric Healing
Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle
From Bethlehem to Calvary
The Rays and the Initiations

Social commentary

Problems of Humanity
The Destiny of the Nations
Education in the New Age
The Externalisation of the Hierarchy
Discipleship in the New Age Vol I
Discipleship in the New Age Vol II
The Reappearance of the Christ

Alice Bailey’s

Unfinished Autobiography

Some texts were considered beyond the scope of this thesis. For example, texts concerning technical procedures for meditation, healing or astrology I felt were applications, rather than explanations, of the esoteric perspective.
I read some five thousand pages of material at about the rate of 10 pages per hour. I covered six texts over a period of six months (between September 2002 and March 2003), amounting to 1500 pages. The second, more intensive phase involved a further 6 texts, some 3500 pages and the three months between September 2003 and December 2003.
CHAPTER THREE
WESTERN ESOTERICISM

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief overview of western esotericism, situating Bailey’s work as a twentieth century version of esoteric thought. The discussion begins with a synopsis of some contemporary views of esotericism. This is followed with a brief history of western esotericism serving to identify some central motifs and ontological assumptions. A review of an esoteric epistemology completes this background sketch, before turning to one form of esotericism, theosophy, in which to locate Bailey’s work.

3.2 Approaching Esotericism

Western esotericism arguably depicts a distinct and definable form of a more universal pursuit of meaning regarding the nature and purpose of humanity, including ultimate values, metaphysics and spirituality, concerns found more generally within the scriptural texts and adjunctive belief systems of the major world religions. To help to describe western esotericism, as distinct from these other texts and belief systems, I explore understanding of the notion *esoteric* itself, and follow this with a short discussion of Bailey’s view of *spirituality*. Since these notions can be described in a range of ways, a need for clarity and congruence of understanding with the current work becomes essential.

3.2.1 Describing Esotericism

*Esotericism* is broadly regarded as pertaining to certain kinds of religious or spiritual teachings and practices considered inaccessible without specialized training (Irwin, 2001). Some of these teachings have been
identified by Faivre (2000) as alchemy, astrology and magic, along with later ‘currents’, including hermeticism, paracelsism and theosophy (2000:xiii). Faivre refers to these forms of esotericism as ‘currents’ in an esoteric ‘stream’, to draw attention to the interconnectedness of esoteric thinking, and particularly the way each ‘current’ shares similar ontological and epistemological assumptions. Faivre’s approach is shared by scholars of western esotericism who have sought to open inquiry into esoteric teachings by elucidating the rich interconnected history of esotericism, and simultaneously identifying the nature of esoteric thought as a distinct way of knowing our world and ourselves (Von Stuckrad 2005). Within the academic field of western esoteric studies, the term esoteric is used to categorise as a whole this unorthodox form of thought and its variants (Versluis 2003). Versluis encapsulates the view with:

Esotericism, as a field of academic study, refers to alternative, marginalized, or dissident religious movements or philosophies whose proponents in general distinguish their beliefs, practices, and experiences from public, institutionalized religious traditions (2003:27).

According to von Stuckrad (2005), earlier scholarly studies into gnosis and mysticism\(^1\), were motivated by a sense of cultivating an alternative countering the ‘institutionalized scriptural religions of Europe’ (2005:80). A similar motivation is apparent in studies of esotericism, expressed in the views of Faivre (2000), who considers that esotericism and academic studies of esotericism are marginalized, and neglected by orthodox religions and concomitant academic studies (2000:xx). Faivre speculates upon possible causes by commenting that:

Such a neglect could well be but the secular form of a Christian polemic: esotericism appeared too late to become a scientific problem inside theological discourse, which rid itself of it [esotericism] by attaching it sometimes...to mysticism, or

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\(^1\) Examples of such studies, cited by von Stuckrad (2005), were conducted by Henry Corbin, Mircea Eliade, Martin Buber and Carl Gustav Jung.
condemned it by identifying it with gnosis – understood as Gnosticism, [ ] mine (2000:xx).

In contrast, Versluis (2003) reverses this trajectory, elevating esotericism as an overarching term able to include notions of gnosis and mysticism. For Versluis, gnosis means ‘experiential insight into the nature of the divine as manifested in the individual and the cosmos’ (2003:28), and mysticism:

Represented the purest form of esotericism, in that mystical experience is inherently esoteric, that is, an inner dimension of religious experience clearly distinguished from ritual or institutional religious practice (2003:28).

It is apparent, even from these brief comments, that distinguishing between these terms is a slippery process. I follow Versluis’ path, viewing mysticism as pertaining to direct experience of divinity, gnosis to refer to an intellectual, perceptual and motivational orientation towards divinity (perhaps gained or enhanced through mystical experience), and, following von Stuckrad (2005), I take esotericism to refer to depictions of, and means of access to (including methods, practices, textual instructions and symbolic representations), divinity.

Esoteric textual depictions tend to be abstruse and complex. This inaccessibility of esoteric thought has fueled views that consider esotericism a dangerous alternative, particularly from within the Christian orthodoxy, providing a certain justification for claims of heresy during the inquisition (Yates 1975 and Wertheim 1995). Even today some Christian traditionalists take the view that matters esoteric are tantamount to devil worship (Cumbey 1983 and Zwartz 1987). Practitioners and sympathizers may seek to defend the secrecy and elitism they associate with esotericism, arguing that esoteric practice involves the acquisition of highly specialized knowledge that must be protected from possible abuses. One example pertinent to this inquiry is the manner in which some writers sympathizing with Bailey’s work stress that no quotations may be taken from the Bailey
texts without the permission of the publisher, the Lucis Trust (Abraham 1989, and McLaughlin and Davidson 1994). This protective attitude helps to perpetuate the view that esotericism refers to obscure, secret practices reserved for a select group.

These varying negative depictions seem to have spawned a defensive reaction amongst enthusiastic scholars, who desire to create a fresh and positive view of esotericism, one that supports their own investigations of the field. Faivre (2000) summarizes this negative view, adding his own interpretation in the following depiction of esotericism which:

Currently signifies “secret knowledge,” or a “secret science,” which is reserved for an elite and submitted to the discipline of the “arcane.” Then, it also designates a type of knowledge or experience referring to a “place,” to a spiritual “center” – known as “esoteric” – situated in the depths of the Being and, consequently, the means and techniques meant to reach this center (2000: xiii).

Needleman (1992) continues in this vein, arguing that esotericism is closer in affinity to science than religion and contains a strong psychological thrust supportive of self development without, he argues, the reader’s need to adopt a dogma or creed. Furthermore, Needleman claims that whilst the psychological and philosophical language of modern esoteric spiritualities ‘resonates with the scientific tenor of modern psychology, their vision of the nature of the self soars far beyond the ideals of ‘normality’ and ‘ego strength’ of modern psychology’ (1992: xxiv).

According to Needleman (1992), the heart of esotericism is its worldview that embraces the inner or subjective human world and the outer world in which we find ourselves, seeking to reconcile the ‘transcendent reality’ contacted within the self, with functioning effectively and coherently in the environment. Whilst perhaps currently lacking the credentials of established orthodoxies, Needleman comments that esotericism appeals to the type of contemporary thinking that shuns authoritarianism, choosing

Paradoxically, and as this thesis reveals, esotericism offers other versions of authoritative, structured currents of thought, attracting, I believe, followers who do not fit easily into Needleman’s category of contemporary thinking. Yet Needleman has touched upon two important esoteric principles, expanded upon in Chapters Eight and Nine: firstly, the value esotericism places upon the relationship between the inner subjective and outer world (or extramental reality) and, secondly, how esotericism particularly as theosophy, places a strong emphasis upon individual interpretation of theosophical teachings. The relationship between personal interpretation and textual authority remains problematic, particularly when combined with an esoteric perspective that seeks to reconcile inner/outer relationship within the self. From a constructivist perspective, that a transcendent reality exists, in the same way that an objective reality exists as things in themselves (ontological realism) is not contested in this thesis. However, that this transcendent reality can be subjectively known as a separate, identifiable ‘objective’ reality, beyond our constructed interpretations, becomes questionable. Further, textual authority presupposes an authorized objective view of a transcendent reality existing counter-intuitively with personal interpretations of textual content and meaning. Further a move to reconcile a transcendent reality with an extramental reality through reading esoteric texts, carries ethical implications regarding the way we act in the world, apparent processes of reconciliation resulting in actions informed by an esoterically formulated transcendent reality. Consequently textual authority becomes moral authority, and esotericism becomes functionally problematic as an assumed higher knowledge.

Needleman displays great sympathy for esotericism, casting a benevolent light upon the field, a view shared by Bailey, who also emphasizes the psychological aspect found in esotericism. Much of her work concerns her notion of esoteric psychology. Bailey is also aware of the negative views of esotericism, which she regards as not entirely unfounded, citing the
exclusive and elitist practices of certain esoteric schools, particularly the Theosophical Society (UA:158), and the conflation of esoteric practice with magic. For Bailey ‘magic is a mode of working on the physical plane relating substance and matter, energy and force in order to create forms through which life can express itself’ (UA:213), whereas ‘esotericism is in reality the science of the soul. It concerns the living, spiritual, vital principle found in every form. It establishes a unity both in time and space’ (UA:213).

3.2.2 Esotericism as Spiritual Practice

Esotericism, for Bailey, is a form of spiritual practice. In using the terms spiritual or spirituality, Bailey is primarily concerned with the methods of establishing and maintaining a connection with spirit within the self and the consequent actions taken by the individual in the light of this connection. Spirit, for Bailey, is an ontologically real metaphysical entity, and accessing this entity results in a renewed sense of purpose, or wise action, actualised in service of humanity, and expressed through her notion of right human relations (PH:169). According to Bailey, the quality of spirituality is Love, the quality of divinity is Will and the mediating principle is Wisdom (RI:204).

King (1997) identifies three understandings of spirituality broadly pertaining to the human relationship to the divine. Firstly, according to King (1997), the term spirituality may connote a dualistic formulation, where spiritual sits in contrast to material. Secondly, spiritual may be construed in contrast to the notion of religious with its institutional connotations. Thirdly, spirituality may be regarded as lying at the heart of religion as the highest ideal.

All of these understandings of spirituality are present in Bailey’s work, along with a narrower depiction, central to esotericism; spirituality as a seeker’s journey along a path to a divine centre. Her construal of

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2 Bailey construes right human relations in terms of the Buddhist eight-fold path, rendering these terms synonymous. Chapter Eight provides a fuller discussion.
esotericism to include techniques aimed at facilitating a return to the centre of one’s being finds support from writers concerned with spirituality in general (Principe 1983, King 1996, and McNeill 1998). So esotericism becomes simply one way to explore spirituality.

For Bailey, striving to access, attain and maintain a transcendent state of spirituality within the self involves a transformation of the individual personality, leading to actions inspired by aspirations for human betterment and social justice, qualities Bailey construes as evidence of spiritual growth. So Bailey’s esoteric methods and techniques may be regarded as tools in the service of a spiritual goal. She presents a reader with an expansive and detailed body of work that seeks to explain how a reader might strive towards attaining their own spiritual goal, her work a form of spiritual instruction. Texts as spiritual instruction are clearly not exclusive to esotericism. According to King:

Almost all religions recognise the need for spiritual direction in some form [and however provided, this involves instruction that] can initiate the adept into the teachings and disciplines linked to a particular path of spiritual perfection. Such paths often include multiple stages ranging from general acts of renunciation and purification to very specific intellectual and physical practices, [ ] mine (1997:670).

Viewed this way, Bailey’s esotericism becomes one of many different forms of spiritual instruction, granted a provisional equitable status alongside the myriad of other religious and spiritual pathways. This approach to esotericism helps to ameliorate the negative connotations associated with perceptions of esotericism as obscure, secret and elitist. When esoteric methods, practices and instructions are placed in the service of spiritual aspirations, western esotericism becomes one of multiple approaches to spirituality, carrying its own distinctive style, evident in esotericism’s motifs, ontology and epistemology.

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3.3 Identifying Motifs in Western Esotericism

Identifying some esoteric motifs that inform a western esoteric ontology, along with the philosophical origins of these motifs, helps to reveal the distinctive style of esoteric thought. One overarching motif in western esotericism is the tendency of its various ‘currents’ (Faivre 1994), to use ideas, postulates and hypotheses drawn from the distant past to validate or explain a particular worldview, often referring to the existence of a body of knowledge known as the *Ancient* or *Ageless Wisdom*. I find that academic studies of western esotericism, informed by a positivist paradigm, also have this historical drive. The field is charted with a backward gaze, a trajectory into the present motivated by a desire to connect various ‘currents’ in terms of their philosophical and historical roots (Hanegraaff 1998(a), and Faivre 2000), to form what these writers describe as the *Western Esoteric Tradition*. This approach serves to consolidate our understanding of how esotericism has existed within or alongside orthodox religious doctrines.

Studies of western esotericism rely upon a particular geographical and temporal demarcation that circumscribes *western esotericism* as a distinctive category. This approach has been adopted by Faivre (2000), who offers the following clarification:

The word “Western” here designates the medieval and modern Greco-Latin world in which the religious traditions of Judaism and Christianity have co-existed for centuries, visited by those of Islam. And “modern” refers to the period that goes from the end of the fifteenth century to our days (2000:xiv).

Following Faivre (ibid), western esotericism began to emerge in its apparently ‘modern’ form during the Renaissance. This initial identification serves to construct an academic specialism, through the

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3 Faivre and Hanegraaff, in their introduction to ‘Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion’, note that whilst the study of Western esotericism has found an academic niche, it needs to extricate itself from the perception of a ‘lost heritage’ that has been brought to light, consisting of an alternative spirituality ‘obscured and marginalised by mainstream religion and mainstream academic research’ and a ‘dependence upon modernist narratives of secular and scientific progress’ (1998:xii-xiii).
creation of a demarcating spatio-temporal boundary within which esoteric ideas may be explored.

Studies of western esotericism trace the historical roots of esoteric motifs to derivative ideas founded upon the premises postulated by ancient Greek philosophers, embraced and enhanced by thinkers from various esoteric ‘currents’. These premises, largely Platonic and Neoplatonic, are understood as being drawn together by esoteric writers and practitioners during the Renaissance. According to Faivre (2000), it was in the late fifteenth century that scientists and humanists developed a perennial philosophy through a desire to reconnect earlier esoteric traditions with each other, including Jewish Kabbalah, Alexandrian hermeticism, Neoplatonism and Neo-Pythagoreanism (2000:xiv). The intention, Faivre argues, was to procure a higher knowledge, or gnosis. Bailey’s work carries the same motif, drawing upon a wide range of ideas extracted from these traditions in combination with eastern mysticism and Christianity to create her own version of esotericism, grounded in an ‘Ageless Wisdom’.

One motif central to western esotericism and incorporated in Bailey’s work is the Platonic conception of the other world, denoting a transcendent reality, or Platonic world of Forms, with which to evaluate its reflection, the tangible world of appearances (Russell 1984:135). The Platonic perfect One, or Absolute, seeks nothing for Itself, and possessing nothing, of necessity produces the other, or world of appearances, out of Its own Abundance. In his A Survey of Metaphysics and Esotericism Schuon (1986), explains how the Absolute ‘is in the first place Potentiality or Possibility as such, and ipso facto the Possibility of things, hence Virtuality’ (capitals his, 1986:15). This Platonic idea becomes an esoteric motif, forming the ontological ground upon which esoteric or metaphysical systems of thought are built.

For example, Bailey draws upon Plato’s distinction between a transcendent reality and a sensible world of appearances, arguing that the world experienced by us through our senses is illusory, a mere reflection of divine Truth or Goodness. This motif informs Bailey’s view of the
spiritual path, enabling her identification of the many illusory obstacles that confront a seeker upon the spiritual path of return to the Divine Source⁴.

Bailey also relies on a later development of Plato’s separation of Being and Becoming, drawing on the work of Neoplatonism. Plotinus (204-70 CE), the founder of Neoplatonism, developed Plato’s deist Form or Idea of the Good, the supreme Deity residing in Plato’s transcendent reality, in his (Plotinus’) formulation of three hypostases or levels of reality. According to Wallis (1972), Plotinus proposed these hypostases to explain the cosmos (1972:16). Wallis (1972) identifies these Neoplatonic hypostases as: firstly, the Platonic conception of a formless, ineffable principle, or First Cause, known as the One or the Good; the second hypostasis as intelligence presented as a timeless, self-contemplating divine mind containing Platonic Forms (or Ideas); and the third as the Soul, or mediator between eternity and time, and the producer and order-maker of the sensible cosmos (ibid:16). For Plotinus the sensible cosmos constituted an image of the Forms cast by the Soul on the formless substratum of Prime Matter (Wallis 1972). Drawing upon Plotinus’ hypostases, western esoteric thought, as expressed in Bailey’s work, assumes the existence of divine intelligence residing in a transcendent reality, and the soul as mediator between this realm and the world of appearances.

In Bailey’s world Prime Matter becomes the pre-existing matter of an earlier solar system. Intelligence, for Bailey relates to the matter of this earlier system, conditioned by her third Logos⁵. The first hypostasis in Bailey’s model is the first Logos of Divine Will, conditioning the first solar system which temporally rests in the future. Bailey’s second Logos, conditioning the present solar system relates to the Soul manifesting as consciousness. For Bailey the Soul is the mediating principle between the realms of spirit and matter, the accumulator of sensible experience upon an evolutionary trajectory.

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⁴ Bailey’s identification of these obstacles is explore in Chapter Seven of the current work.
⁵ For the purposes of consistency and respect for Bailey’s work, I have chosen to follow her capitalization of terms referring to God or pertaining to the Divine.
Another core esoteric motif is *hierarchy of being*, also grounded in Neoplatonic interpretations and extrapolations of earlier Greek philosophical ideas. This motif is contingent upon western esotericism’s commitment to a broadly pantheistic model of God, whereby God is to be found in everything and everything in God. Humanity and nature are therefore, in part at least and to varying degrees, divine. Relying upon this model and its panentheistic variation, Plotinus utilised Aristotle’s development of the idea of a continuum in the creation of the natural world, with hierarchies of being, located on a scale according to the ‘powers of the soul’ (Lovejoy 1936:58-59). This conception of the soul is expressed through abilities. A frog has the ability to breathe out of water, whereas fish do not. The idea is that each higher order possesses all of the powers below it and an additional power of its own.

The Neoplatonist Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE - 54 CE), in developing this Neoplatonic idea of hierarchy, asserts that God does not affect the world directly, but through intermediaries (Wallis, ibid). The soul needs the assistance, or mediation of such beings as angels, the word of God, and wisdom, to connect with or return to the One. According to Faivre (1992) within the Neoplatonic tradition, a significant contribution to this notion of intermediaries was proposed by Pseudo-Dionysius (writing in the early 6th century) who developed it into an angelology, or celestial hierarchy, resonant with the spiritual hierarchy central to theosophical thinking, within which Bailey is located. The notion of hierarchy appears throughout Bailey’s work; informing Bailey’s kingdoms in nature constituting an evolutionary chain; in her articulation of the role of her angelic or deva hierarchy evolving alongside human evolution; and in her use of a celestial hierarchy, headed by the Cosmic Christ. Bailey, like her theosophical predecessors, derives support from the work of Origen (185-254 CE), an early Christian Father and Plotinus’s contemporary who integrated Christ’s work in a cosmic process of returning souls (Faivre 1992).

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*Bailey adopts a panentheistic variation, regarding God as concomitantly transcendent, the universe constituting the body of God.*
From this hierarchical view of the cosmos grew a conception of a structure and plan (telos) of the world that informs Bailey’s esoteric model of the evolution of matter and of consciousness. This idea of evolutionary process relies upon a further Neoplatonic notion and esoteric motif, emanationism. Lovejoy (1936) notes how the Neoplatonists developed Aristotle’s idea of hierarchy to apply to emanationist explanations of the universe. Emanationism refers to creation as emanating or involving (a descent into matter) out of the Absolute, and then, eventually, evolving back to this Source on a path of return.

The motif of emanationism is based on dualistic thinking in which the descent into matter is considered antithetical to the transcendent Good, and the arduous ascent out of matter, a necessary healing of this duality. However, Faivre (1992) argues that western esotericism displays an absence of the ‘absolute ontological dualism’ (1992:5) found in Gnosticism, where Good and Evil are viewed as two equally powerful and competing entities (also found in Zoroastrianism). Yet the idea of the Fall, or descent into matter, as a result of the desire for the sensual, and the inevitable return to the Divine Source, is prevalent in theosophy and Alexandrian Hermeticism (Faivre 1992), and also influential in Bailey’s work. At times, particularly in Bailey’s commentary upon the World War period, this sense of good and evil forces competing for supremacy overshadows her own panentheistic view.

Finally, embedded in the motifs I have identified as central to esoteric thought (notions of: an Ageless Wisdom; a transcendent reality; hierarchy of being; and emanationism), along with a commitment to the idea that all of nature is alive (hylozoism), is an idea of universal interconnected interdependence. According to Faivre (2000) esotericism involves ‘a vision of universal correspondences inseparable from the idea that the cosmos is alive’ (Faivre 2000:xiv-xv). Simply expressed, each single living entity’s evolutionary progress is contingent upon and concomitantly impacts upon, all other entities, whether embodied (animal, mineral or vegetable) or not (angelic). This idea informs Bailey’s cosmology,
explored in the following chapter, and adds a teleology central to explaining her spiritual path.

Thus western esotericism has its ontological basis in: Plato’s conception of Being and Becoming; Aristotle’s formulation of hierarchy informing an explanation of evolution; and Neoplatonic developments of these two ideas, to include an explanation of an evolving soul (emanationism). This brief historical account of motifs found in western esotericism indicates certain characteristic ontological assumptions. Ontologically western esotericism assumes the existence of:

- A transcendent reality
- Absolute Godhead residing in a transcendent reality as intelligence
- Soul
- A hierarchy of mediatory beings
- An emanationist path of return
- Universal Interconnectedness
- An Ageless Wisdom as a body of knowledge that conveys these ontological assumptions.

Next I look at western esotericism’s epistemology.

### 3.4 Some Characteristics of an Esoteric Epistemology

I argue that it is an esoteric epistemology that distinguishes esotericism from its philosophical roots, gives shape to its ontology, and leads to its distinctively hidden, unorthodox and perhaps marginal location within the broader sweep of western thinking, and to the more popular understanding of esotericism as obscure and elitist. While both western science and religion make claims to higher knowledge, and can be seen to be informed by ideas drawn from the same early Greek philosophers, each took a different trajectory, based upon particular evolutions in scientific or religious epistemologies and methodologies. While science and religion may continue to contest each other for hegemonic supremacy, science asserting the power of reason and the empirical method, and religion
asserting the importance of faith, the esoteric path may be described as _gnostic_, referring to the means of accessing a higher knowledge that esotericism claims to reveal.

An esoteric epistemology takes metaphysics out of the domain of philosophical reason, and turns it into religious experience. Esoteric knowledge, according to Versluis (2000) has ‘initiatory hieroeidetic power [able to] reveal what transcends language’ (2000:20). Esoteric texts, for Versluis, ‘are charged with visionary or spiritual experiences, and are meant to lead their reader towards those experiences’ (2000:22), leading to transmutations of consciousness.

To gain a preliminary understanding of an esoteric epistemology I turn again to the work of Faivre (1994), who provides a useful set of seven defining characteristic beliefs of western esotericism. These are: Correspondence; Living Nature; Imagination; Mediation; Transmutation; Praxis of Concordance; and Transmission. In my view these characteristics provide a general description of an esoteric epistemology and help to reveal how this epistemology has utilized and shaped the ideas of its philosophical predecessors. Whilst these characteristics, as noted by Versluis (2002), may also apply to other religious traditions and may not be treated as exclusively esoteric, I assert that when taken together, Faivre’s characteristics nevertheless facilitate an initial broad understanding of the terrain.

The first and perhaps most significant of Faivre’s defining characteristics, based on an ontological assumption of universal interdependence, is belief in the notion of _correspondences_. Relationships or connections between the seen and the unseen are thought to exist, with all things being signs that can reveal meaning when deciphered (Faivre 1994:10). For Bailey, this sense of correspondence is explicitly drawn upon as an interpretive ‘Law’: As a law this belief ‘explains God to man [sic]’ (TCF:7). In

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7 Bailey uses the term _man_ in this instance to refer to humanity as a whole and at the individual level. Out of respect for Bailey’s work I have left her use of _man_ as I have found it in her texts where I quote her directly, without any further qualification from this point forward. However, in my own writing, including any paraphrasing of Bailey’s ideas, I have chosen contemporary conventions.
Bailey’s view, this law also promotes individual evolutionary growth in the following way:

He who reasons by the Law of Correspondences and who has grasped the basic essential relativity of the three aspects to each other has arrived at the knowledge that back of all form is a subjective Life which is known by its quality, its colour, and its attributes; he has expanded his consciousness until gradually he has ascertained and made a part of his own conscious ensemble those attributes and qualities (TCF:1241)\(^8\).

An epistemology that includes correspondence will actively seek to recognize connections between things seen and unseen. One consequence of perceiving the universal in the particular is that meanings contained within that particularity are transcended. Correspondence takes the ordinary human practice of comparing and ties to it a method of interpreting observations, events and circumstances by treating them as metaphors or symbols indicating, or relating to, an unseen reality. Thus in taking correspondence seriously, the esotericist looks beneath the surface of things, beyond appearance, in an attempt to uncover deeper significances. Correspondence informs an esoteric style of writing, triggering a method of interpretative understanding for a reader/seeker. Correspondences are often complex and evocative, the reader needing to ponder each item in its myriad possible symbolic meanings and hold that item in relation to a second treated in a similar way. Correspondence may also relate aspects of the unseen to each other. So developed is this in Bailey’s work that the reader may feel overwhelmed by her depiction of an intricate complexity of universal interdependence in an unseen metaphysical reality. An example described in Chapter Four of the current work is Bailey’s system of forty nine ‘planes’ and ‘sub-planes’. These planes provide a metaphysical location for all existence, and depict an

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\(^8\) The three aspects referred to in this quotation pertain to Divinity. The term *aspect* refers to the point of view emanating from a particular location and orientation or direction in time and space.
emanationist path of return, whilst also corresponding to her angelic or ‘deva’ hierarchy of intermediary beings.\(^9\)

The second characteristic of an esoteric epistemology is described by Faivre (1994), as belief in a *living nature*, which relies upon a pantheistic model of God. An esotericist does not observe material things as separate from that which is alive. Deriving meaning through correspondence is contingent upon the notion of *living nature*, or hylozoism. The esotericist views the created world as a rich book of life that can be read, with all its parts alive, infused with ‘light’ or ‘fire’ (Faivre 1994:11). Light and fire are metaphors for energy. For Bailey, each atom in the universe represents a tiny evolving, soulful (conscious) life and all of God’s creation, including the inanimate world, is energized by fire. The notion of *living nature* provides the ground for the fundamental esoteric assertion that energy follows thought, so that matter can be manipulated by a focused act of will, whether human or Divine. Just as I may influence through speech the actions of a child, so as an esotericist, I may believe I can influence tiny, yet aware, atomic lives to do my bidding. In both examples I form my intent in language and transmit it to another living being.

Faivre’s third characteristic of an esoteric epistemology is belief in the importance of *imagination*, seen as a necessary attribute to gain hylozoistic knowledge using the method of correspondence, and in formulating ways to influence other living entities. The imagination visualizes, creates mental images and so allows the esotericist to picture the world in an esoteric way. Esoteric ways of knowing value the creative imagination over reason, the world is drawn into the mind of the observer who seeks to resonate with, rather than analyse or rationalize, events or circumstances, with the intention of gaining an experiential understanding, or the revelation of ‘a deeper dimension of the world in which we all live’ (Hanegraaff 1992:32). Bailey describes the imagination as a quality of the

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\(^9\) Astrology provides another example of the use of correspondence in esoteric writing and practice, astrologers perceiving relationships between the visible cosmos and an imaginal heavenly hierarchy of being (Schoener, 2002:45). For Bailey, esoteric astrology concerns, “Universal relationships, the interplay of energies, the nature of what lies behind the Great Illusion, the deluding “Appearances of things as they are,” and the destiny of our planet, of the kingdoms in nature and of humanity as a whole” (EA:6).
emotional and lower mental ‘bodies’ combined, emphasizing its importance through particular functions which are:

An ability to expand our mental concept and to build the...bridge...between higher and lower mind; hence the necessity for the use of the imagination (which is the astral [emotional] equivalent to mental discrimination), and its ultimate transmutation into intuition, [ ] mine (TCF:173).

Faivre’s fourth characteristic of an esoteric epistemology is belief in mediations, which include the use of ritual and symbol as ways of connecting with the Divine, along with methods of connecting with intermediary entities. Mediation relies upon ontological assumptions of emanationism and hierarchy. Now although esotericism, along with Neoplatonism does not view God as personal and actively assisting individuals, it does, according to Faivre, propose a ‘means of attaining an “intelligible” transcendent reality’ (1992:2-3). Esoteric practice involves the construction of a variety of methods that may assist the seeker in making his/her own journey towards transcendent reality. These methods rest upon the notion of mediation, or the means of connecting the seeker to a transcendent state of Being. To address this need for mediation, Alexandrian Hermeticism, (a form of esoteric thought based on the texts ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, a product of 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. (Audi 1999)), developed a theurgy, or:

The knowledge of the theory and practice necessary to connect us with gods and spirits, and not only through raising our understanding but also through concrete rites and material objects that set in motion divine influences where and when we want, thus allowing angelic beings to appear before us (Faivre 1992:4).

Bailey’s work relies heavily upon theurgical principles, emphasizing imaginal symbols, meditative mantras and invocative prayer, rather than tangible objects, as the means to obtain similar goals. Bailey uses number in particular to articulate the interrelatedness of all the parts contained in our universe. Features of Bailey’s cosmology discussed below include
seven planes, seven rays, seven sacred planets and seven major etheric centres.

Theurgical methods use the imagination, in creative visualisation. According to Faivre:

It is the imagination that allows the use of these intermediaries, symbols, and images to develop a gnosis [way of knowing], to penetrate the hieroglyphs of Nature, to put the theory of correspondences into active practice and to uncover, to see, and to know the mediating entities between Nature and the divine world, [ ] mine (1994:10-15).

Esotericism, as seen from its ontological assumptions is teleological, its purpose underlying mediatory theurgical practice, and the cultivation of imagination is to promote an evolutionary path of return to a divine state of Being. This teleology is apparent in Faivre’s fifth characteristic, described as belief in the experience of transmutation. For Faivre (1994), this is the change that occurs through the combined processes of inner experience and an esoteric epistemology that interprets this experience. The ability to see correspondences in living nature through the use of the imagination and to affect living nature through the use of mediations are attributes that are sought to be cultivated in the development of an esoteric epistemology as a spiritual path. Here we find the need for some training and perhaps the recognition of achievement. Transmutation involves the controversial notion of initiation, or ‘second birth’, and is based on the assumption that esoteric perception is understood as developing progressively\(^{10}\). For Cheetham (2002), transmutation is:

An alchemical process: the very substance of things is the locus of the work, both container and content, and the goal is the transmutation of each being into a more subtle, more definite, more real state….It is in the imaginal world that the alchemical transformation takes place (2002:63).

\(^{10}\) In the current work, preference is given to the construal of this process as expansions of consciousness, and an evaluation of how well this might be achieved through engagement with Bailey’s work, is my central concern. I return to this matter a length in Chapters Five, Six and seven.
Such transformation involves a drenching of the mind in a metaphysical cosmology, as suggested by Hillman (1989:35), in which the imagination is fully absorbed in the process.

The final two of Faivre’s characteristic beliefs, the *praxis of concordance* and *transmission*, often present in esoteric currents, (although Faivre argues that they are not necessarily determining), are seen to facilitate imaginative development and processes of transformation. According to Faivre, the *praxis of concordance* refers to attempts to find key points of similarity between earlier traditions, in order to obtain a superior form of knowledge (1994:14). *Transmission* refers to relaying knowledge from master to disciple. These practices enhance a distinctively esoteric epistemology, through circumscribing the sources from which an esoteric epistemology is drawn. Bailey, engages with the praxis of concordance in developing a synthesis between western esotericism and eastern mysticism. Bailey’s texts are also characterized by the notion of transmission in two ways. The texts were purportedly transmitted via telepathic rapport from the master Djwhal Khul to Alice Bailey as a disciple, and the product of this relationship forms a series of instructions to the reader, should they choose to construe themselves as a seeker or disciple. So the disciple is informed by Djwhal Kuhl’s instructions, via Bailey as his intermediary.

A summary of an esoteric epistemology in combination with the esoteric ontology identified above, shows an interrelatedness or mutual contingency:

- Correspondence (relating to universal interconnectedness)
- Living nature (relating to soul and emanation)
- Imagination (an esotericist’s point of entry into an esoteric way of knowing)
- Mediation (relating to hierarchy)
- Experience of transmutation (relating to hierarchy, soul)
- Praxis of concordance (relating to existence of an ‘Ageless Wisdom’)

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 Transmission (relating to hierarchy).

All these features are held within an ontologically essential transcendent reality.

### 3.5 Theosophy as Esotericism

Of the various western esoteric formulations to have emerged since the late fifteenth century, it is theosophy that largely informs Bailey’s work. As noted in Chapter One, Bailey became interested in theosophy upon meeting with two Theosophical Society members in 1915 (UA:133-134), later joining the Society herself and then leaving to form her own organizations. Bailey synthesizes a range of largely theosophical and Christian notions into one explanatory system, drawing heavily upon the earlier writings of the Theosophical Society’s founding member, Helena P Blavatsky.

Theosophy has, according to Faivre (2000), an earlier history beyond the fifteenth century, the word *theosophy* first used by Neoplatonist Porphyry (234-305 C.E.) to depict a combination of the capacities of a philosopher, an artist and a priest. Faivre notes that through the various uses and meanings ascribed to theosophy by Christian and Platonist writers, the term was adopted in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century by Jacob Boehme, who created a theosophy rooted in Judeo-Christianity, inspired by the writings of Paracelsus (1493-1541 CE).

However, it is the theosophy of the Theosophical Society (founded in New York in 1875), with its infusion of eastern mysticism, which Bailey relies upon. *Theosophy* was chosen as the name for the society, taken by founding members Blavatsky and Olcott to mean divine wisdom, or more specifically from *theos* meaning God, and *sophia* meaning wisdom (Campbell 1980).
3.5.1 Bailey and the Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society emerged within a broad range of esotericism that developed in the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century in the English speaking world. Interest in Swedenborg, Mesmerism and Freemasonry, as well as the more broadly appealing Spiritualist movement, all drew heavily upon esoteric thought (Campbell 1980). As the nineteenth century progressed, many seeking a more universal approach to spirituality were drawn to the newly emerging esoteric formulations (Roe 1986). The late nineteenth century saw a growing disenchantment with Christian doctrine, with its institutionalized structures and fundamentalist interpretations. There was also a keenness to respond to a contemporaneous wave of scientific discoveries, particularly Darwin’s evolutionary theory, which not only threatened to undermine the Christian creation story, but also threatened the foundation of faith in a non-material reality. This led many seekers to pursue esoteric interests as a new spirituality (Godwin 1994, Washington 1993). According to Washington, ‘spirituality itself was not in question, so much as a secure source of spiritual authority…the search for a single key that would solve the mysteries of the universe’ (1993:19).

Drawing upon eastern mystical notions of karma and reincarnation allowed theosophists to propose their own evolutionary theory, in contrast to both the biblical Genesis of Christianity and the scientific Darwinian theory. Theosophists claimed that theosophy transcended the cleavage between science and religion through its return to an ancient wisdom tradition (Campbell 1980). The mysteries of the universe were explained in theosophy through an elaborate cosmology which had the potential to become the spiritual authority sought by individuals distanced from Christian traditions.

Since its foundation the Theosophical Society has been the object of criticism, both from within, depicted in internal power struggles, and from without. Reliance upon eastern mystical ideas aroused annoyance from adherents to the more western centred esoteric currents of the day (Godwin
Charismatic figurehead Blavatsky, whose written work formed the basis of the theosophical worldview, suffered allegations of plagiarism, fraud and deception regarding much of her work, including her claim that the source of her written material, received telepathically, was the *Masters of the Wisdom*, a hierarchy of more spiritually advanced beings overseeing the evolution of humanity (Ryan 1975, Campbell 1980, and Tingay 2000). (Similar accusations could equally be launched against Bailey).

Controversy continued into the second generation of the Theosophical Society, involving power struggles, schisms and crises of authority over claims made by prominent leaders that they were operating under the direct guidance of spiritual masters (Roe 1986, Tingay 2000). Bailey left the Society in 1920 (along with her second husband, Foster Bailey) to form her own Arcane School (established in 1923), a correspondence school for esoteric training. Bailey’s motivation for leaving the society concerned organizational issues, which she describes as ‘reactionary and old-fashioned’ (UA:157), and her frustration with what she perceived as the exclusive practices of the esoteric section of the Theosophical Society:

> The society was founded for the establishing of universal brotherhood but it was degenerating into a sectarian group more interested in founding and sustaining lodges and increasing the membership than in reaching the general public with the truths of the Ageless Wisdom. Their policy of admitting nobody into the E.S. [esoteric section] for spiritual teaching unless they have been for two years a member of the T.S. [Theosophical Society] is proof of this, [ ] mine (UA:157-8).

However, Bailey’s claim that she was in direct contact with one of Blavatsky’s masters exacerbated an already tense situation. The existence of the master Djwhal Khul, with whom Bailey is said to have collaborated, was investigated by Johnson (1994), who undertook historical research into the existence of figures whose lives appeared to parallel certain claims made by Blavatsky. These claims concerned the myth of the masters as an

11 Bailey named her Arcane School following Blavatsky’s wish that the esoteric section of the Theosophical Society be so named (UA:190).
enlightened body of spiritually advanced beings guiding and instructing humanity vis a vis spiritual and eternal truths (Johnson 1994 and Hammer 2001). Johnson sought to counter the view that the existence of the masters constitutes the weakest of the Theosophical assertions (Campbell 1980). Blavatsky’s adherence to a belief in the existence of these masters is continued in Bailey’s work, which is difficult to examine with any sympathy without some provisional acceptance of the possibility that a hierarchy of masters may exist. Indeed, following Hammer’s (2001) assertion that ‘the existence of the Masters is…an indispensable prerequisite if the teachings are to have any validity’ (2001:384), whilst other aspects of Bailey’s work may be regarded as peripheral, the notion of the masters forms a pivotal axis through her work.

Johnson considers Sirdar Dayal Singh Majithia, born in 1849, in Majithia, near Amritsar, India, as the most likely identity of the figure both Blavatsky and Bailey identify as Djwhal Khul. In Johnson’s view, Majithia was a Sikh and:

Advocate of women’s rights, religious reform and liberal education…His status as a journalist, educational philanthropist, and Indian nationalist all link him with the concerns of the previously identified Mahatmas (1994:187-8)

Johnson considers the evidence of Dayal Singh’s presence at the 1884 annual convention of the Theosophical Society, and on other significant occasions as confirmation that Djwhal Khul and Sirdar Dayal Singh were the same entity. Whether Johnson is correct or not makes no contribution to a validation of Bailey’s assertion of being in telepathic rapport with Djwhal Khul. According to Bailey, in November 1919 she was contacted by this master, manifesting as a voice she heard whilst taking a walk, and who requested that she write a series of books on his behalf (UA:162-163). Bailey states that she reluctantly agreed to become Djwhal Khul’s amanuensis (secretary) through telepathic rapport. This co-operation eventuated in the production of eighteen volumes written with Djwhal Khul, another two co-written and five volumes by Bailey herself.
After leaving the Theosophical Society Bailey continued to write within the theosophical tradition. Bailey presented her work as the new improved version of theosophical truth, the next outpouring of what Bailey calls the ‘Ageless Wisdom’. Upon her departure and subsequent early efforts to publish her work, Bailey confronted more controversy with the Theosophical Society, this time involving allegations of plagiarism and fraud. According to Bailey’s biographer Sinclair (1984) controversy between Bailey and the Theosophical Society emerged regarding Bailey’s attempt to publish her first work. The controversy involved another prominent Theosophist and writer Leadbeater, whose book, *The Masters and the Path* was published, argues Sinclair, after Bailey’s first book, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, was allegedly written with Djwhal Khul. According to Sinclair, Leadbeater’s work derived its inspiration from Bailey’s book. The early chapters of the Bailey text were purportedly sent to Theosophical Society headquarters at Adyar, India (where Leadbeater was based) to be published in the magazine, *The Theosophist*. This apparently provided Leadbeater with an opportunity to plagiarise Bailey’s work. However, as a consequence of attempting to attain publication through the Society, it was Bailey who was officially criticised by the Society for falsely claiming to be in communication with Djwhal Khul. Sinclair’s allegation that Leadbeater had taken Bailey’s ideas and re-worked them to form the basis of his own book remains open to speculation. Indeed, Hammer’s (2001) recent epistemological study of theosophy continues to support the Theosophical Society’s view that it was Bailey who was influenced by Leadbeater (2001:385).

It has become clear that as a second generation Theosophist Bailey’s work belongs to theosophy as a form of western esotericism, even if it was discredited by some Theosophists when Bailey attempted to publish. I argue in the following section that key themes in Bailey’s work fit comfortably within a theosophical epistemology, other themes providing a distinctive flavour, rendering Bailey, in my view, a significant contributor to theosophical discourse.
3.5.2 Bailey as a Theosophical Exemplar

Analysis of theosophical discourse conducted by Sellon and Weber (1992) has generated a number of synoptic categories which adequately summarise the theosophical worldview. These categories, also present in Bailey’s work, include the notions of *cosmic mind*, *evolutionary theory*, *hierarchy of being*, and the *role of humanity*. Theosophical epistemology is based upon some key ontological assumptions, commensurate with the esoteric ontology described above. For Ellwood (1986:20), these are the existence of:

- Transcendent being
- An eternal universe as a boundless plane out of which particular universes emerge
- The human soul as part of a universal oversoul, incarnating (emanating) cyclically under karmic law (also ontologically assumed).

Upon these ontological assumptions, a theosophical epistemology demonstrates the characteristic beliefs (as proposed by Faivre), of correspondence, mediation and living nature. Using Bailey as a theosophical exemplar, I explore *cosmic mind* and *evolutionary theory* in Chapter Four. The notions of *hierarchy of being* and the *role of humanity* form key descriptors for Chapter Eight which concerns Bailey’s social commentary on contemporary global affairs of her time.

Development of a theosophical epistemology, according to Faivre (1992), also rests upon the emphasis that Origen placed upon textual interpretation:

Origen recommends first a constant effort to interpret texts – that is, spiritual hermeneutics – to pass from faith to knowledge (to gnosis), to structure in our mind what is by nature impenetrable (1992:16).
According to Faivre, Origen recognised that interpretation could occur on three distinct levels, literal, moral and spiritual. Meaning arising within the individual in response to texts at the spiritual level was regarded by Origen as fundamental, whilst he also stressed that the individual be free to investigate texts, not bound by creed or dogma. Freedom to interpret texts, a central principle of the Theosophical Society (Sellon and Weber 1992), is re-iterated in Bailey’s work, whilst sharing Origen’s homage to spiritual interpretation.

Esotericism’s ontological commitment to an ‘Ageless Wisdom’ is not only the reason esoteric writers draw on earlier forms of esoteric thought, it also informs notions of revelation emanating from transcendent reality, via mediating entities (Theosophy’s masters), and transmitted to receptive minds.

Bailey adds her Christian ideas, re-shaping theosophical discourse. Firstly, Bailey adds her interpretation of the Christian notions of goodwill and service. These, in my view contribute to Bailey’s pragmatic approach to theosophical epistemology (Hammer 2001:377). Secondly, Bailey’s claim that Christ will reappear as head of her spiritual hierarchy is a powerful driving force in her work, underpinning her instructions to her readers to become useful workers in the fulfillment of her Plan, in preparation for the approaching New Age (of Aquarius).

Written during the period of both World Wars the Bailey texts delineate solutions to global problems framing these initially through individual human agency. The texts emphasise the need for individuals to recognise the need for, and be prepared to, change themselves. Such change is seen as a prerequisite for an individual to function effectively within a group. The texts provide detailed methods for such change. Change is construed in terms of spiritual evolution through various states of consciousness in developmental stages.

Bailey’s desire for change informs her discussion of the theosophical model of the human constitution, since Bailey takes the view that it is
through the individual, working to change themselves and consequently the conditions in life that they may affect, and that through this any larger objective may be fulfilled. So, Bailey extends the theosophical view of the human constitution, described by Tingay (2000) as, ‘functioning in a series of interpenetrating ‘bodies’ from physical, etheric, emotional, mental, to ‘higher self’” (2000:37). Bailey’s esoteric psychology deals with the energies and forces impacting on bodies that comprise an individual’s personality, describing these energies as the Seven Rays. These seven Rays are said to operate through the various and defined planes of consciousness, impacting upon the personality, and the Soul (or Higher Self).

Bailey incorporates these notions in drawing together her psychological model of human development and her belief in Christ’s second coming, arguing that the manifestation of the latter is contingent upon the evolutionary advancement of humanity. Bailey argues that through the practice of goodwill and service, human betterment will be advanced, culminating in a new, spiritually informed world order. This combination carries a strong moral tone that imbues all her work. Further, Bailey argues that it is through people working collectively in groups, and the resultant energies that emerge from group activity, that human betterment will proceed. This is exemplified in Bailey’s New Group of World Servers\textsuperscript{12}, whose efforts are intended ‘to anchor on earth…an externalization or a symbol of the work of the Hierarchy’ (UA:250). Bailey calls for others, suitably equipped through inner work, to become involved with making goodwill a motivating force internationally, in order to attain her right human relations, as an expression of her second Ray of love and wisdom.

Bailey seeks to provide an alternative to her perception of the Theosophical Society’s version of universal brotherhood. For Campbell (1980), the Society’s view constitutes an ethical weakness, with its focus upon the destiny of the individual, a lack of attention upon the nature of society and the absence of a formalised ethical code countermanding the

\textsuperscript{12} Defined as comprising all men and women who are open to developing a new form of human relationship, based on mutual understanding and mental cooperation. They are not a group of individuals in physical contact with one another (EXH:633).
ideal of brotherhood within the Society. However, many scholars stress the theosophical ideals of brotherhood, tolerance and inter-cultural understanding as evidence of strong ethical concerns (Roe 1986, Ellwood 1986, Sellon and Weber 2000, Tingay 2000), pointing to a number of outstanding individuals involved in the Theosophical Society, some as central organisational members (Annie Besant and Katherine Tingley), and others, as prominent breakaway figures (Rudolph Steiner) who have contributed in various ways to social causes (Roe 1986, Sellon and Weber 1992, Washington 1993, Tingay 2000). According to Tingay, many second generation theosophists have been involved in ‘alternative medicine, vegetarianism, animal welfare, progressive education, female suffrage’ (2000:46), all indicators, in Tingay’s view, of the ‘inner or spiritual aspect of [theosophical] teachings’, mine (2000:46).

Whether such social concerns result from an innate disposition quite apart from any individual esoteric interest, perhaps growing as a direct result of involvement with theosophy, or whether theosophical teachings provide ideas that foster such motivation remains open. Yet, as Sellon and Weber note, the Theosophical Society:

> Stresses that the task for humanity is to become aware of its innate spirituality, to give sovereignty in life, and to use it as the basis for action, it is not enough to grasp the essentials of the theosophical worldview intellectually. Principles must be practiced in daily life, used as the grounds for choice, and pursued for their ethical consequences in all human relationships (1992:327).

Similar observations can be made of Bailey adherents. As outlined in Chapter One, some adherents are active within the organizations that Bailey established (Triangles, World Goodwill, the Arcane School and the Lucis Trust), others forming their own organizations, such as the Vermont Peace Institute (founded by Dot Maver), creating websites\(^\text{13}\), or building

\(^{13}\) Such as [www.aquaac.org](http://www.aquaac.org) and [www.intuition-in-service.org](http://www.intuition-in-service.org)
upon their background in Bailey’s esotericism, to foster global, spiritually informed social change (McLaughlin and Davidson 1994).

The activities of Bailey’s adherents suggest that her work continues to inspire her readers and followers. Perhaps such readers aspire to fulfill Bailey’s aspirations, identifying themselves as the carriers of Bailey’s message, or perhaps the texts function as a motivational device that stirs the reader into actions that promote human betterment. One may speculate upon whether the text’s presentation of an esoteric psychology, with its cosmological underpinnings, has any effect upon the subjective life of the reader or, indeed, whether the texts themselves can promote the kind of inner psychological changes or spiritual growth that Bailey stresses is required of anyone aspiring to bring goodwill and right human relations into human relations.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored western esotericism, identifying Bailey’s work as part of theosophical esoteric thought. I have indicated esotericism’s interest in spiritual growth through developing skills and attributes identified as esoteric, leading to a transformation of the self, and have demonstrated how this is echoed strongly by Bailey. This journey of spiritual development, which for esotericism, is firmly located within the metaphysical system proposed by the Neoplatonists, in which ultimate spiritual expression may be stated as purely Good, places the entire edifice of esoteric knowledge in the service of a goal similarly aspired to by all major world religions.

In the following chapter, I present Bailey’s cosmology, construed as a theory of everything, and containing a multitude of metaphoric descriptors of aspects of a metaphysical reality that, for Bailey, carry power to transform consciousness.
CHAPTER FOUR
ALICE A. BAILEY’S COSMOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present and explore Bailey’s esoteric cosmology, adopting a particular interpretation of this aspect of her work congruent with the notion of esoteric knowledge as metaphoric and Bailey’s own claim that her cosmology is a symbolic construction.

I construe Bailey’s cosmology as an esoteric theory of everything, depicting some salient features of Sellon and Weber’s (1992) theosophical epistemology, as outlined in the previous chapter. I begin with Bailey’s solar Logos, turning to her evolutionary theory before exploring aspects of her cosmic scheme. Next I present a central metaphor of Bailey’s work, fire, which Bailey uses to advance her evolutionary theory. I complete this presentation with a brief portrayal of her model of the human constitution. I then discuss Bailey’s cosmology with reference to relevant material concerning science and metaphysics, in light of Hammer’s (2001) observation that ‘one of the most striking characteristics of the Esoteric Tradition is precisely its use of contemporary science as a source of legitimacy’ (2001: 203).

Bailey’s cosmology is an extended re-formulation of Blavatsky’s (1938), The Secret Doctrine. Some may consider Bailey’s A Treatise on Cosmic Fire simply as a set of derivative fusions of Blavatsky’s earlier work. I acknowledge Bailey’s strong theosophical influences, whilst arguing that the nature of esoteric writings is that they draw upon, synthesize and re-work temporally earlier works, each new presentation reaching a different audience in a different socio-historical and cultural context. When referring to theosophy in this thesis, I restrict my understanding to that of the Theosophical Society.
4.2 A Theory of Everything?

From the Biblical Genesis story through to the Dreamtime stories of Indigenous Australians, mythical representations and explanations of the cosmos imbue religious doctrines with a sense of wonder or awe. All seek to explain the origins and purpose of the universe. I regard these stories as myths, or meaningful stories (Barrow 1991:4), focusing upon Campbell’s (1993) assertion that, ‘myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation’ (1993:3). The significance of mythic cosmologies lies in the ideological function of metaphor, conceptually affecting the way that we think and act in the world (James, in McDermott 1967: 237). Such mythical presentations provide us with a sense of purpose. As Jungian psychologist Hillman (1996) highlights:

> These cosmological myths place us in the world and involve us with it. The cosmologies today – big bangs and black holes, antimatter and curved, ever-expanding space going nowhere – leave us in dread and senseless incomprehensibility. Random events, nothing truly necessary (1996:47).

So we may consider Bailey’s cosmology in the light of her provision of a sense of wonder, purpose and meaning, in contrast to contemporary scientific cosmologies, which appear not to offer the same explanatory comforts. As a myth, Bailey’s esoteric presentation may be regarded as her attempt to create a Theory of Everything (TOE). It may also be argued that in trying to piece together the accumulation of knowledge, experience and insights gained over a life time, we may all in our unique ways, attempt to create for ourselves some kind of theory of everything. Bailey’s version, following esotericism, may be respected as just one effort. According to Barrow (1991) creation myths and cosmologies have an air of theory of everything about them, and while lacking in scientific precision, these myths seek to unify all knowledge into one single explanation (1991:7). The resulting complex labyrinth of information viewed scientifically may seem to the myth’s detriment. Further, a summary of Bailey’s cosmic scheme cannot hope to reveal the intricacies of her design of the universe engaging the reader in a breathtaking process of intense visualisation should they attempt to gain a clear comprehension. As Needleman
(1965) highlights, you have to embrace the whole esoteric teaching with the whole of yourself to gain from the training the texts offer, or indeed to acquire any depth of understanding.

In a process of immersion Bailey’s cosmology serves an ideological function, fulfilling a psychological need for reassurance in the face of the unknown. According to Barrow (ibid) this ideological function provides an antidote for humanity’s psychological suspicion of smallness and insignificance in the face of things we cannot understand (ibid:5). Reflecting an urge for completeness and unity, theories of everything seek a single overarching explanation for the universe and its order, an urge equally satisfied for the religious adherent through faith.

Bailey achieves this in her cosmology through a number of complex metaphors, each a partial explanation of the one reality. Together these metaphors provide an all encompassing perspective or theory of everything, drawn together through arguments by analogy and correspondence. Every metaphor relates to the evolution of consciousness, in terms of energy, matter and forms. By placing humanity at the centre of her cosmic reality, Bailey fulfils the ideological function of a theory of everything, providing psychological comfort alongside a powerful moral imperative: since we are at the centre of things (from the human point of view), it is we who have responsibility for the evolution of ourselves and the entire system\(^1\).

Scientific quests for a theory of everything may derive from a similar psychological need for comfort. Science is built almost entirely upon mathematics, particularly numerical relationship, the natural world curiously depicted with ease through number, the logic of mathematical language in tune with the logic of reality. The scientific approach to a theory of everything condenses patterns made out of the information gathered from observations, first into strings of symbols, and then hopefully further abbreviating these strings into algorithmic compressions carrying predictive power. A scientific theory of everything would be a single algorithm with vast explanatory and predictive power, the whole of nature explicable through a single mathematical formula. Attempts have been termed Grand Unified Theories (GUTs), and supersymmetries (Davies 1984, Barrow 1991, and Lazlo 1996).\(^1\)

\(^1\) This resonates with the notion of vice regency, or God’s representative, in Christianity.
Attempts to find a scientific theory of everything have not been as fruitful as some may have hoped. Interestingly, Bailey also uses numerical relationship in her theory of everything, but rather than seek to compress or reduce an explanation into a tight cluster of symbols, Bailey expands upon or extrapolates from such symbols to create meaning\(^2\).

So both science and Bailey’s esotericism focus on numerical relationship as an explanatory tool. Bailey’s use of Pythagoras’ natural progression may seem childishly simplistic in the light of the impenetrability of abstract mathematical concepts, which appear as esoteric to the outsider as esotericism itself. Yet here there exists a shared ground, the pursuit of a unifying explanation of all aspects of our reality, even if the approaches are entirely different. As Yates (1964) points out, the scientist seeks to externalise the world and impersonalise it, the magician seeks to draw the world into himself.

Furthermore, scientific theories of everything seek to explain the whole by drawing everything towards a single point using as few mathematical symbols as possible. Bailey’s esoteric view uses language to express her whole in as many words as deemed necessary, intentionally attempting to expand her reader’s consciousness, whilst she concomitantly strives to take her reader towards a single unified point at the centre. This reveals an important paradox. We reach unity in Bailey’s model, through expansion, not contraction.

### 4.3 Entering Bailey’s Cosmology: Solar Logos

Entry into Bailey’s cosmology begins at the macrocosmic level with an explanation of her metaphor of God, as the controlling principle in the universe, which she bases upon the following claim:

> Certain fundamental hypotheses are assumed, which must form the background for all we would say. We must first assume that a Builder, or some Creative Mind, is working to bring about an ordered production, and is seeking to

\(^2\) Science also extrapolates from symbols to create meaning in contexts beyond the quest for a TOE.
manifest through a demonstrable objective. The objective universe is but the product of some subjective mind. Next we must posit that the material for the building of this universe lay ready to the hand of the Builder, and that this material itself is the fruit of some previous system, all that is left of some past consummated product. Given, therefore, the Builder and the material, we must next accede to the proposition that this Builder proceeds with His building under some definite Laws that guide His choice of material, control the form that He erects, and that indicate to Him the process to be followed in the consummating of His idea (TCF:572).

Bailey’s teleological metaphor of a builder erecting a living creation, assumes the existence of goal-directedness in nature, a purpose as well as a cause to existence. For Bailey, this assumption is contingent upon the existence of an intelligent being. Bailey displays a theistic belief in a transcendent creator God that is actively involved in a world created out of pre-existing matter. The omnipotence of God is constrained by primordial matter and the laws under which this matter can be used. Bailey follows a design argument, proposed by William Paley (1743-1805), which seeks to prove the existence of God as the intelligent designer of the world using the analogy of the complexities of a watch, itself the product of human design (a watchmaker). The watch is brought into comparison with the complexities of nature, considered to be profoundly more complex than the watch, and therefore requiring a nature-making designer of equivalent profundity. This designer, according to the design argument, is God. Bailey’s adoption of a teleological design argument is a necessary foundation for the construction of her cosmology, which is essentially an elaboration of both the design and the purpose inherent in our solar system.

Bailey supports the theosophical postulate that there is one Absolute Reality anteceding all manifested conditioned being that has created and continues to create the totality of the manifested universe and is the fundamental ground within which our solar system exists. This system is viewed as being the manifestation or incarnation of our solar Logos, a great Cosmic Existence within the overall cosmic hierarchy of being. Capra (2000), identifies Milesian philosopher Heraclitus (c.500 BC) as providing an early explanation of Logos:
All changes in the world arise from the dynamic and cyclic interplay of opposites and he saw any pair of opposites as a unity. This unity, which contains and transcends all opposing forces, he called the Logos (2000:20).

While Absolute Reality may not be actively involved in the world, Bailey’s panentheistic solar Logos is both active and evolving. So the complex cosmological scheme presented by Bailey begins with an abstract conscious Being or Pure Spirit that exists outside our solar system. This Being, for a reason that remains obscure, seeks to work out some purpose through manifestation and chooses its opposite pole, pre-existing intelligent substance with which to blend. This meeting of Pure Spirit and intelligent substance creates a sun, resulting in light or objectivity. Inside the solar system, Bailey argues, Pure Spirit can only manifest through the medium of intelligent substance and is therefore limited by this substance during evolution.

Already Bailey’s vision deviates from traditional views, uncomfortably placing an unorthodox proposition that there exists two metaphysical entities, one a transcendent builder of the universe, the other an evolving Logos governing our solar system, alongside an orthodox philosophical argument for the existence of God. Her claim that primordial matter was conditioned in a previous solar system, or that God is really the solar Logos, begins to suggest a scientific fictional cosmology more relevant for treatment within a literature genre, than philosophical inquiry.

According to Bailey the solar Logos ruling our solar system is formulated as one of a trinity of logoi, each a conscious entity manifesting a particular form of divine energy (TCF:3). Here Bailey follows the theosophical current. In his summary of the theosophical worldview, Ellwood (1986) explains this theosophical argument in the following manner:

Theosophy also emphasizes that this same triune Logos is reflected throughout the universe, wherever there is a “local” center of creativity recapitulating the cosmic (1986:63).

Bailey claims that these three outpourings of divine energy occurring in the process of the manifestation of a solar system, are each ruled by a logoic essence. The three
Logoi refer to will, wisdom and activity\(^3\). According to Bailey, the first Logos to manifest was the third in her series, or active intelligence. In this phase of creation all that pertained to evolution concerned matter itself. The current creation phase, our manifested solar system, pertains to the second Logos (of wisdom) and the evolution of consciousness, being the sum-total of all states of consciousness within the solar system (TCF:7). The first Logos (of will) remains unmanifested.

Bailey’s cosmology is emphatically concerned with occurrences *inside* our solar system, stressing that whatever occurs beyond it is of no concern to us at our present stage of evolutionary development.

Within the context of a theory of everything, Bailey’s solar Logos may be regarded as a mythic entity, the embodiment of an idea of purposive creation. As an overarching metaphor of macrocosm that contains microcosmic humanity, the solar Logos may also serve as a microcosmic example of more transcendent aspects of the cosmos.

## 4.4 The second Logos and the evolution of consciousness.

Bailey provides an evolutionary theory to support her teleological argument, exploring energy interplays through metaphor. Bailey’s design argument supports her proposition that there exists a divine Plan, a template that in turn supports her evolutionary theory. According to Bailey, evolution progresses to certain goals:

\[
\text{The goal for the evolution of the atom is self-consciousness as exemplified in the human kingdom. The goal for the evolution of man is group consciousness, as exemplified by a planetary Logos. The goal for the planetary Logos is God consciousness, as exemplified by the solar Logos (TCF:7).}
\]

Evolution is taken as both subjective and qualitative. Bailey argues that it is through each individual human’s developed ability to control his/her own mental, emotional and physical nature that the purpose of the solar Logos is achieved. Whilst

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\(^3\) Or atma (will), buddhi (wisdom), and manas (activity). These also relate to Shiva (the first Logos of will), Vishnu (the second Logos of wisdom) and Brahma (the third Logos of activity) (TCF:38). As shown here Bailey draws upon many Hindu terms following the theosophical current. She provides explanatory footnotes throughout *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* to show how her theosophy (and that of her predecessor Blavatsky) utilises these terms.
combining a hierarchical view of organization and an ecological view of an interdependent interrelated world (explored at length below), Bailey places a psychological emphasis upon evolution. An unfolding plan within this system concerns consciousness.

In Bailey’s view, evolution is a vast group experiment, to make each ‘atom’ an intelligent co-operator, responsive to forces impinging upon it externally, aware of both its own internal economy, and the latent forces and energies which it has to contribute to the good of the whole⁴.

Bailey’s portrayal of the process of evolution involves the manifestation of active intelligence in order to develop love wisdom, or the energy of attraction. Within this system Bailey argues that it is the aim of all conscious entities to unite. For Bailey it is evolution that leads to synthesis, integration, and the intelligent cooperation of the individual for the good of the whole. This process which eventually leads to the liberation or freeing of spirit from matter, requires the control of the form or body within which the conscious entity dwells, so that the body becomes adapted to the needs of the conscious entity or soul (TCF:231).

Bailey adopts an emanationist view of evolution, following the theosophical formulation, expressed in the following quotations:

All the involutionary lives…form the vehicles for the spirit of the planet, or the planetary entity, who is the sumtotal of the elemental essences in process of involution (TCF:302).

All lesser spheres…include all grades of manifestation down to the elemental essence on the arc of involution (TCF:144).

Involution involves the descent of spirit into matter, and evolution the ascent of spirit. Involution refers to differentiation. The One becomes many. Bailey argues that involution culminates for humanity in the formation of the individual personality, who finds himself/herself as separated, selfishly motivated. A reorientation must

⁴ ‘Atom’ is often used by Bailey to refer to any unit in her system, from the atomic level through to solar Logos.
occur whereby the individual begins to see himself/herself as part of the whole. ‘On the Path of Evolution the work of the second Logos is felt’ (ibid), the individual conscious entity taking the first steps in re-orientation towards the goal of planetary consciousness.

Construed in such abstract terms, Bailey’s evolutionary theory can be viewed as pertaining to everything in the cosmos, from an individual atom of matter through to the solar system as a whole, and, by analogy, the entire universe. A theory of everything, however, must offer a much more detailed explanation of how all the various parts of this ordered whole relate to each other. One way Bailey ties her argument together is through her use of cosmic Laws.

### 4.4.1 Evolution and Metaphysical Laws

Congruent with Bailey’s version of the design argument, her ordered universe is governed by a set of laws justified, ‘because their results are immutable, irresistible and their effects remain unchangeably the same, varying only according to the form as receiver’ (TCF:1182).

According to Bailey our solar system is ruled predominantly by the Law of Attraction and Repulsion (TCF:6). In Bailey’s triune system, the previous solar system, which pre-conditioned the matter of our present solar system, is governed by the Law of Economy, and the next solar system comes under the Law of Synthesis (ibid). Bailey claims these to be natural laws, evoking a scientifically based justification for the use of the term.

However, these Laws may be regarded metaphorically as references to the way that energy may be manipulated by any conscious entity. The terms attraction, economy and synthesis are powerfully evocative, particularly with regard to motives that may lie behind human action. We may treat these Laws as descriptions of energy dynamics that drive evolutionary processes.
4.5 Some of the complexities of Bailey’s cosmic scheme

Bailey’s laws govern her cosmic scheme in which her evolutionary processes function. For Bailey, Absolute Reality manifests through infinite possibility, or the energy of the cosmos. Bailey argues that all the energy within the solar system flows in and out of the myriad of different energy centres contained within a great hierarchy of entities. The evolutionary goal becomes the unimpeded flow of energy throughout the solar system in a particular and unspecified pattern. Following Bailey’s logic, the expression of energy in manifestation involves the qualitative aspect of relativity, whereby each form is a microcosmic representation or appearance of a Neoplatonic idea of ultimate Good.

According to Bailey, our solar system is electrified by energy emanating from the cosmic mental plane (TCF:317). The Logoiic entities within our solar system are said to be cosmic beings who originate from elsewhere in the universe. The interrelatedness of all beings within our system is depicted through a variety of metaphor sets, or groups of descriptors that pertain to a central theme within Bailey’s worldview. One metaphor set, derived from eastern mysticism, comprises seven etheric centres, or whirling concentrations of energy that Bailey believes exist within the etheric body of the solar Logos. Each energy centre can receive, absorb and transmit energy from outside of the etheric body in which it is located, and energy that circulates within this body itself (TCF:77-133).

Each of the seven solar centres represents a planetary scheme of one of the seven sacred planetary Logoi. The planetary Logoi each have their planetary scheme. Each scheme contains another seven etheric centres (TCF:359, 381). This metaphor set continues to become yet more complex, as Bailey states that each of the seven planetary etheric centres is also known as a chain or field of evolution. Within this evolutionary chain are seven globes, or mini-wheels within each centre/chain (TCF:382). Furthermore, this metaphor set connects to another metaphor set, pertaining to the planes. Each of the seven chains or planetary etheric centres is also a plane of existence.
4.5.1 Planes of manifestation

Following in the theosophical current, Bailey argues that all manifestation within our solar system progresses through seven planes. The planes are a central component within theosophy, and as Ellwood (1986) notes, formulations of the planes differ considerably from source to source (1986:69). For Bailey, the first of the seven planes represents energised space, or matter in its most transcendent form, a universal field of potential, waiting to take form. In Bailey’s model, each descending plane reflects an ever denser domain, the seventh is solid or dense matter, such as the earth itself. Moving up the planes, we progress through to the liquid, gaseous and then etheric planes finally reaching the first plane, described by Bailey as pure spirit. These seven planes are ‘regarded as seven vast spheres, rotating latitudinally within the solar periphery’ [italics hers] (TCF:152), from east to west (TCF:153).

Here we enter more intricacies of the Bailey model: each of the seven planes comprises a further seven divisions, described as sub-planes. All that exists within our solar system is located on the cosmic physical plane, the lowest or densest of the cosmic planes. The cosmic physical plane has seven subplanes, and these become the seven planes of our solar system, or the systemic planes. So the objects within our physical world, that are composed of the densest of matter, like minerals, are situated on the seventh systemic subplane, the dense physical, which is part of the systemic physical plane, itself only the lowest subplane of the cosmic physical plane (see appendix B).

Bailey’s metaphor of the planes, whilst elaborate and confusing has the effect of locating the affairs of our world at the bottom of a vast layering of planes, continuing above and beyond our existence, the reader may feel quite small and insignificant.

Already evident is a confusing re-positioning and re-languaging occurring in Bailey’s cosmology. Her planes, from the point of view of a planetary Logos, have become planetary etheric centres. Even the numbering of the seven planes is contingent upon whether Bailey chooses to count from the top down or the bottom up. So the first plane is also the seventh, the third becomes the fifth and the fifth the third and so on. I suggest that the value in exploring these metaphors lies in the realisation of the re-
positioning that Bailey demands of us, as she invites us to view her cosmology from different locations, whether adopting the perspective of a planetary Logos, a solar Logos, a human being or a tiny atom. Each time we take on one of these perspectives, the metaphoric language Bailey uses changes. I suggest that each metaphor Bailey uses to refer to the same thing from each one of these perspectives points towards, but is not in essence the thing being described, which remains a mystery.

4.5.2 The Seven Rays

Bailey’s adds to her notion of the seven planes an additional set of seven Rays:

The seven rays, regarded as the seven veiling forms of the Spirits, themselves spheroidal bands of colour, [rotate] longitudinally…forming a vast interlacing network. These two sets of spheres (planes and rays) form the totality of the solar system, and produce its form spheroidal [italics hers] (TCF:152).

For Bailey these seven Rays are energy streams that cut a vertical swathe through the seven horizontal planes. The Rays provide Bailey’s cosmology with an explanation of purpose from a psychological perspective, and as such are explored more fully in the heuristic study. Briefly, Bailey’s Ray formulation follows the Pythagorean harmonic system, where the One becomes three (while remaining One) and unfolds into seven by natural progression (a, b, c progress into: ab, ac, bc, abc). For Bailey, the seven Rays or energy streams, flowing through seven centres of force (or planetary Logoi) within the body of the solar Logos, influence all manifestation within the system. Bailey divides the seven Rays into two groups, a group of three, known as the Rays of Aspect, and a group of four, known as the Rays of Attribute (TCF:5), or as follows:
Bailey’s portrayal of the three Aspects or emanations of divine essence may be understood metaphorically to refer, not simply to neo-platonic emanations of appearance, or emergence, but also to the way that this appearance as a mental image changes depending upon the direction from which you view it. The point that Bailey makes here, is that how we interpret reality is contingent upon the direction we look, and the images we create through language. Although Bailey may appear to provide the reader with a simple explanation of reality, her dense layering of metaphor reveals a complexity only made apparent when attention is paid to the meaning associated with the language she uses.

Following the emanationist roots of the theosophical tradition, our solar Logos is described as the second of three Logoi. The first emanation is taken to be Intelligence, existing in matter, the second is the Soul. Each of the Logoi corresponds to one of the three major Rays of Aspect. So our solar Logos corresponds to the second Ray of Love-Wisdom. Primordial matter is said to have been conditioned in a previous solar system, and is conditioned by the third Ray of Active Intelligence. The first Ray of Divine Will is yet to fully manifest as it relates to a future solar system, governed by the last of the Logoi.

Bailey’s use of numerical correspondence, based largely upon multiples of seven, has taken the ancient Greek assumption that the universe is rationally ordered according to mathematical principles to an extreme in terms of permutations of a simple
numerical pattern. This pattern is used by Bailey to illustrate the interconnected interdependence of all existence.

4.5.3 Humanity as Cells in Body Earth

According to Bailey, through the process of experiencing and evolving, a planetary Logos stimulates the vibratory capacity all the little evolutionary lives in His [sic] body (TCF:232). The lowest of these lives are the groups of causal or soul bodies of humanity (TCF:249, 251). Although humanity appears tiny in relation to the vast cosmic picture Bailey portrays, we have an important role to play, associated with the number four. Bailey describes humanity as the fourth creative hierarchy, currently experiencing the fourth round of the fourth planetary chain, attempting to master the fourth systemic plane, the plane of intuition (TCF:362-363)\(^6\). According to Bailey our solar system, planetary scheme, earth chain and physical planet are all of the fourth order (TCF:362-363). The numerical synchronicity is considered highly significant and humanity is bestowed the opportunity through this extraordinary alignment to evolve along the lines offered by the fourth ray of harmony through conflict. Our own evolutionary potential is said to affect our planetary Logos and the solar Logos, who, according to Bailey, is facilitating human evolution through energetic stimulation, so that Logoiic advancement can progress.

Consequently the sorrow and pain that is experienced upon our planet is construed in terms of the required evolutionary development of the planetary Logos, and as cells in the planetary body we become the sensory entities through which this Logos can feel and experience, learning to become dispassionate and unattached to form, as this Logos and ourselves as constituent parts, develop intuition. Humanity can also, Bailey warns, obstruct this evolutionary course, by practicing desire and attachment to the material side of life.

We can now see Bailey’s evolutionary purpose played out through humanity. We may be somewhat intrigued by the numerical correspondence Bailey has constructed in support of her conviction that humanity is currently at the centre of systemic evolution. The number four carries powerful symbolic associations, some of which

\(^6\) The fourth plane is the only one of Bailey’s seven planes that does not change its number whether she counts from the top down or the bottom up.
are considered to be esoterically and mystically significant. The four directions (north, south, east and west) and the four elements (earth, air, water and fire) underpin the astrological chart. There are four arms on the cross of the crucifixion, a symbol of human suffering as a result of incarnating as a conscious entity in matter. According to Schuon (1981), the quaternity as a square represents a static equilibrium, and as a cross, a dynamic radiating unfolding of potential (1981:71).

Already we can see the way that Bailey ties her cosmology directly to humanity. Somehow, her theory of everything is all about the psychology of us. Yet there is so much more than humanity in the physical world, features that Bailey also ties to the human unit, the fulcrum of the evolutionary process. To see how Bailey achieves this, I turn to her use of another powerful metaphor, fire.

### 4.6 Bailey’s use of the metaphor of fire as energy in motion

Bailey’s uses the metaphor of fire as an expression of will or motive to explain movement within her cosmology. According to Bailey, all existences within our system work with fire:

> Fire internal, inherent and latent; fire radiatory and emanative; fire vivifying, stimulating and destroying; fire transmitted, reflected, and absorbed; fire, the basis of all life; fire, the essence of all existence; fire, the means of development, and the impulse behind all evolutionary process; fire, the builder, the preserver and the constructor; fire, the originator, the process and the goal; fire the purifier and the consumer… The wheel of fire turns and all within that wheel is subjected to the threefold flame, and eventually stands perfected (TCF:97).

The *fire* metaphor brings dynamic vitality to an otherwise static portrayal of the cosmos, as the producer of both heat and light. *Fire* explains how evolution advances, according to a theosophical view, where it is used as a general term that includes notions of electricity and magnetism, both central to Bailey’s hypothesis. According to Goodrick-Clarke (2003), Blavatsky incorporated the notion of electricity, in her explanation of *Fohat*, ‘the cosmological agent responsible for impressing the ideas of the Absolute onto matter as the laws of nature’ (2003:5).

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Goodrick-Clarke also notes how scientific discoveries may become utilised by the esotericist in metaphoric ways to explain the workings of the universe, a point to be mindful of when evaluating esoteric perspectives, to avert the assumption that the esotericist, and not the scientist, intuited the idea and thus presaged later scientific developments. Goodricke-Clarke encapsulates the theosophical idea of fire with:

Magnetism and electricity emerged as the most tangible manifestation of the hidden presence of divine power in the world and its objects – as the concealed power that creates life, movement and warmth; that permeates the whole universe; that causes the attraction of opposite poles (2003:4).

Bailey develops this fire metaphor, depicting a threefold formulation of correspondence presented in the following tabulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Three Fires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire by Friction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(my own tabulation derived from TCF:4-5, 42-43).

In our solar system it is the second Aspect, the second Ray and solar fire that are the focus of evolution. Consequently Bailey lays emphasis upon ideas of relationship between two entities, in terms of magnetic polarity:

Everything in the solar system is in a state of flux, as is everything in the universe, and the vital energy circulates, as the blood or the nervous energy of the body circulates, throughout the entire system…Under this type of solar activity, the ultimate good is attained by the method of interplay, interchange, and in mutual attraction and repulsion (TCF:1030).
For Bailey the third Ray embodies the basic vibration of our solar system, being the energy developed in a previous solar system. Matter in our solar system is infused with the active intelligence of the third Ray, manifesting as the internal fires of any atom, providing the whole with vitality and causing rotary motion in spheres. It is the ground upon which evolution proceeds and it is the merging and synthesis of fire by friction with the solar fire that directs our current solar system.

Fire by friction, Bailey argues, is the energy and activity of matter and causes latent heat within each atom (TCF:37-68). This latent heat is the basis of rotary motion, the atom spins on its own axis, resulting in its spheroid shape and its internal coherency. Frictional fire also results in active radiatory heat or *prana* (ibid).

All rotating spheres, including the etheric bodies belonging to a form, display three types of activity sequentially, described by Bailey as inertia, mobility and then rhythm (TCF:129). Inertia refers to the slow activity of matter not in form. Form is not synonymous with object and may be regarded as a living entity:

It might be of value here to remind the student also that three things have to be recognised in all manifestation:
First, that the tangible objective exterior, negative, receptive, and occultly unorganised, is without form and usefulness apart from the inner energy. Second, that the “true form” or the force-vehicle energises and produces the cohesion of that which is unorganised. Third, that the “volatile essence,” or the spiritual essential Life, focuses itself in some one point within the “true form” [italics hers] (TCF:1061).

Thoughts are also regarded as being forms, or, as Bailey names them, *thoughtforms* (TCF:560-1). From this perspective an entire kingdom of nature is the outward manifestation of a thoughtform of some macrocosmic entity (TCF:564-6).

Where form exists the laws of attraction and repulsion come into play and the second type of activity, mobility is displayed as experience, chaos, experiment and extreme movement. Eventually rotating motion leads to radiation. Finally, the third type of activity of the rotating sphere is reached. This is rhythm and refers to a state of

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3 A fuller discussion of Bailey’s notion of *thoughtforms* is provided in the current work in Chapter Eight.
balance and stabilisation, leading eventually to the death or destruction of that form (TCF:157-9).

Bailey describes her second fire metaphor, solar fire, as an impulse emanating extraneously to any atom (TCF:1031). Solar fire moves in spirals or orbits and cycles of periodic manifestation and is referred to as spiral cyclic motion (TCF:143). This motion leads to expansion, through the magnetic attractive power of a greater entity that draws forth or pulls into its own radius of influence, some smaller sphere. This magnetism expands the smaller sphere’s realm of experience. Since evolution in our solar system proceeds under the second Aspect and the second Ray of Love-Wisdom directed under the influences of solar fire, motion that leads to expansion in spirals and through cycles is the means through which this evolution can reach its goal.

Briefly, Bailey’s third fire metaphor is electric fire, relating to the first Aspect and Ray and displaying progressive forward motion (TCF:47).

Bailey’s depiction of creative processes uses scientific concepts such as the atom, rotation and radiation and the electrical reference of attraction and repulsion to depict a quasi-scientific explanation of how forms are made. In summary, the latent heat of the atom described by Bailey refers to potential energy, in a state of inertia. This latent heat becomes active heat or kinetic energy through the action of an external agent. In a metaphysical context Bailey defines this agent as the intention or will of Spirit. Active heat refers to the ability of the atom to radiate energy and become mobile. This mobility demonstrates as direction, or intentional orientation of spiritual will. Finally, the atom settles into a rhythm. Eventually entropy will cause the motion of the atom to settle.

Evolution in this system, argues Bailey, does not proceed smoothly, since matter, as it adapts itself in time following its own line of least resistance (that of economy, or basic necessity), tends to retain its own separation; each spinning sphere will resist or repel attachment to another spinning sphere (TCF:144). For Bailey, spirit in our solar system is naturally attracted to matter and through this attraction enables matter to cohere (TCF:316). It is spiritual will or electric fire that shapes matter into form
(TCF:316), transcending the impulse inherent in matter to differentiate rather than form a unity (TCF:142).

Although the rotational spin of each sphere maintains separation, Bailey argues that each sphere is also dependent upon other spheres as a result of absorbing the radiation emanating from them.

Radiation is the outer effect produced by all forms in all kingdoms when their internal activity has reached such a stage of vibratory activity that the confining walls of the form no longer form a prison, but permit the escape of the subjective essence [italics hers] (TCF:1060).

It is not the tangible objective form that creates this radiation, but rather the force vehicle or etheric body that organises and energises this tangible form. When the indwelling entity can no longer be contained by the etheric body, this entity is pulled by the force emanating from the enveloping greater existence. It is at this point, Bailey argues, that radiation occurs.

So evolution for Bailey proceeds in the following manner. When an atomic sphere revolves around its own axis it can be said to be aware of its own internal life. Gradually, as the internal frictional fire of the atomic sphere increases in vibration, the atom becomes magnetically aware or conscious of the attractive nature of the form within which it is a part and the other atoms within that form. Then the atom becomes aware of its orbit around a greater centre and this centre’s magnetic pull, caused by solar fire. The magnetic pull eventually becomes so powerful that the essential positive life within the atom feels this force drawing it to itself. The atom spirals inward towards the life at the centre, its spiralling progress energised by the combination of the spiral-cyclic motion of solar fire and forward progressive motion of electric fire. The central life of the atom is of the same nature as the greater life that pulls or draws. This magnetic pull results in the positive central atomic life becoming negative and drawn to this greater centre. Thus a change in the polarity of the atom

8 This summary is a synthesis of numerous references found throughout A Treatise on Cosmic Fire.
has occurred. Esoterically understood this magnetic reorientation refers to a change
of focus, from inward to outer, from a concern for self-preservation in disregard to
other spheres, towards an acceptance of collective union, a union that revolves around
and is receptive to the purpose of a larger sphere. All atoms become radioactive,
releasing their own inner potency, through responding to a stronger magnetic centre
and the process is contingent upon, whilst generating the evolution of, consciousness.

4.6.1 The Three Fires and Humanity

Bailey explains the evolution of consciousness through the individual human being,
in terms of a notion of material bodies, or sheaths of the human personality (mental,
emotional and physical) which are understood as three channels for fire by friction.
According to Bailey it is frictional fire as active radiatory heat, or prana that holds the
personality in objective manifestation allowing the spiritual unit to contact densest
matter (TCF:46).

In summary, the human individual solar fire is taken as the vitalising fire of the soul,
seeking to evolve love-wisdom through the mind. Each human soul uses the spiral-
cyclic motion of solar fire to sweep together the atoms needed to create an incarnated
human being, through which this soul can develop full consciousness, or awareness.

4.6.2 Interconnectedness through the notion of Prana

Within the solar system Bailey construes the effects of the union of spirit and matter
as an intricate interplay of energy. For Bailey, the recognition of the
interconnectedness of all of manifestation in an unfolding evolutionary plan, designed
for the fulfilment of the purpose of Deity carries with it an important ordering
function, bringing:

order into the thoughts of men as they view the apparent chaos of the
moment. Let us not forget, that when order is brought about, and united
thought produced on the mental plane, then order transpires eventually on the
physical plane (TCF:361).

Bailey takes the eastern mystical term Prana and incorporates it into her cosmology. Prana, in the Hindu tradition, is central to
the practice of Yoga. Prana is defined by Bailey, not as breath, as she states is the more usual translation, but as ‘the sum total of
the cosmic energy’ (LS: 218), in its etheric aspect (EH: 328).
One key to Bailey’s portrayal of interconnectedness is the notion of prana that penetrates and circulates throughout the entire solar system. As noted above, prana is the active radiatory heat of frictional fire and is produced by matter itself. The importance of prana is that it shows the interdependence of all existences, through its reception, distribution and transmission.

According to Bailey, the internal energy of the sun radiates as an akashic current, an electric current and a pranic current or life force. Internal planetary fire radiates forth as the productive substance or the matter of the planet combined with the heat that vitalises and nourishes, electrical fluid and planetary prana, thus providing the health giving qualities found in nature (TCF:91-3). The internal fires radiating from the human form provide bodily warmth, nervous response and pranic emanation or the health aura, animal charisma and magnetism (TCF:53, 77-104). All of these internal fires, radiating from all forms within the solar system are considered, in their sumtotal as the life of matter, of the cosmic Lord of the third Ray.

According to Bailey, the human physical body is comprised of three kinds of matter (dense physical, liquid and gaseous) and an etheric counterpart, existing on the four higher subplanes of the systemic physical plane (see chart, Appendix B). The etheric body is the mould of the physical body, comprising a web or network of fine interlacing channels formed of matter of the four etheric subplanes, and forming a focal point for certain radiatory emanations which vivify and stimulate the rotary action of matter (TCF:79-80). The etheric web forms a barrier between the physical and astral planes, and it is the scaffolding or framework upon which dense matter is built. In both the physical and etheric bodies are found energy centres, both major and minor and it is through these centres that the internal fires, the fires of matter or the third Aspect, are focussed and energy distributed (TCF:99-100). The etheric body composed of active or radiatory fire (prana), stores up the rays of light and heat radiating from the sun, and transmits them via the spleen to the physical body (TCF:99-100).

Bailey argues that for the individual human, prana is blended with latent fire in the matter of their etheric/physical body, in an increasingly more perfect manner. This
produces a quickening of the normal vibration of the body so that it responds more readily to the higher note of soul. This, for Bailey, results in a quickening of evolutionary progress, formerly held back due to the unresponsiveness or inertia of the physical (also the emotional and mental) body (TCF:102-3).

4.6.3 Interconnectedness through Polarities and Permanent Atoms

Interconnectedness does not simply refer to the transmission and reception of pranic emanations. The relationship between and mutual dependence of each atom, unit or entity to all that comes within its sphere of influence involves the operation of the mechanism of attraction and repulsion. Every feature of Bailey’s cosmology, whether plane, ray or atom, has either a positive or negative polarity in relation to other features (TCF:322-325). Attraction leads to coherence, repulsion to differentiation. Whilst repulsion is used by the personality to preserve identity and individuality, it leads to separation of one unit from another, thus posing an evolutionary challenge in the context of the goal of cohesion, merging and synthesis. The basis of the evolutionary process involves the awakening of the atoms in the etheric centres in the body of a human being, and in a planetary Logos, which are then stimulated into positive activity through the pouring upon these centres of positive force (TCF:1185-1226).

The notion of interconnectedness has a temporal as well as a spatial dimension. Temporal interconnectedness is viewed through the abstract notion of the permanent atom. It concerns an explanation of how spirit can influence the progression of each individual incarnation. Bailey explains how reincarnation occurs, with the life of each individual becoming part of a successive chain of lives of progress:

Each body or form wherein Spirit functions has, for its focal point on each plane, an atom composed of matter of the atomic subplane of each plane. This serves as a nucleus for the distribution of force, for the conservation of faculty, for the assimilation of experience and for the preservation of memory. These atoms are in direct connection with one or other of the three great rays in connection with the microcosm (TCF:69-70).
Permanent atoms relate to the third Aspect and frictional fire. Evolution in the current solar system proceeds in direct relation to pre-existing intelligent matter. The manner in which this occurs is depicted as the consciousness Aspect, or the Rays, impacting upon the matter Aspect or permanent atoms. According to Bailey each permanent atom contains a number of spirillae or tiny whirling forces. ‘The spirillae therefore are but streams of force, or second aspect vitality which circulates geometrically within the circumscribing wall of substance’ (TCF:527). Each permanent atom contains ten spirillae, four influenced by an individual’s personality Ray, the fifth and sixth by the soul Ray\(^{10}\) (TCF:531). The Ray energy stimulates these spirillae into activity in the following manner. The Rays first play on the wall of the atom as external force, affecting the rotary action and vibration of the atom. Then the Ray stimulates the inner fire of the atom, causing its light to increasingly shine. Finally the Ray brings the spirillae into play (TCF:507-530).

Evolution of consciousness, with regard to the whole system or the human unit proceeds via the action of the seven Rays upon a pranically energised system. The evolution of matter, with its ability to radiate heat is perceived as being directly affected by any external stimulation. Each atom progresses from inertia, through mobility to rhythm. As evolution proceeds matter is energised. The more abstruse notion of permanent atoms, enables Bailey to argue that each human being enters each incarnation with an amount of stored material left over from past lives, the residue of their handling of the Law of Cause and Effect, or the eastern mystical notion of karma, which Bailey describes as ‘the law that governs the matter of the solar system’ (TCF:274). ‘The Law of Karma, or cosmic Fixation, is the law of the cosmic mental plane, and controls the corresponding law in our system’ (TCF:592). ‘This law governs the crystallisation of all forms prior to their shattering in the process of evolution’ (ibid). I return to the notion of Karma below.

### 4.6.4 Hylozoism

Discussion of Bailey’s complex cosmology would be incomplete without reference to Bailey’s explanation of hylozoism. Following theosophy, Bailey defines hylozoism

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\(^{10}\) The four spirillae influenced by the personality Ray are synthesized by the fifth spirilla. This results in there being seven spirillae, corresponding to the seven planes and Rays. The fifth spirilla is also the third, from the perspective of the atomic pole, vibrating to five types of force. The role of the remaining spirillae is not given in the text (TCF:531).
as ‘the doctrine that all matter is endowed with life’ (TCF:693). Each plane may be regarded as the material sheath of some living entity, or Deva. We must remember that the devas are the qualities and attributes of matter, the active builders, who work consciously and unconsciously upon the plane’ (TCF:468).

According to Bailey, all forms are fabricated by building devas out of matter from their own bodies. This is the case for a tree, a rock, an animal, and humanity. The deva hierarchy is considered to be a parallel evolution of entities closely related to human and planetary progress. As active builders, the deva hierarchy are ‘that which embodies thought, and that which gives it [thought] its separated energy’ (TCF:621). This vast hierarchy of entities is explained in considerable detail in Bailey’s work, providing the reader with an extraordinarily complex account of the intricate workings of the various kinds of devas, and how they may be harnessed by an individual human, to carry out some purpose. Through her explanation of her deva hierarchy Bailey seeks to convey to the reader the serious consequences of their own thought making capacity, that in Bailey’s view triggers an automatic, often unconscious response from devas. For Bailey all of matter is alive, and because it is alive, matter can be controlled, manipulated, and commanded to serve a superior conscious entity. Bailey’s theory of everything is not simply an explanation of what is (or may be), rather, it is an examination of and justification for the esoteric methods (theurgy) we may employ to execute our objectives.

In explaining hylozoism, Bailey states that ‘all the planes of our system, viewing them as deva substance, form the spirillae in the physical permanent atom of the solar Logos’ (TCF:693). Once again Bailey’s metaphor sets intersect through her translation of one term into another. To understand the whole of Bailey’s cosmology, each of Bailey’s metaphor sets requires comprehension and inclusion into the whole. Bailey’s depiction of her deva hierarchy is too complex to condense within the confines of this thesis. However, even this brief outline suggests that the task of synthesising Bailey’s cosmology, involving understanding how she incorporates her

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11 The eastern mystical term deva is known in western nomenclature as angel.

12 The deva hierarchy explains the practice of magic, defined by Bailey as ‘the manipulation of the lesser lives by a greater life’ (TCF: 638). According to Bailey, black magical practice involves the manipulation of the lesser deva builders, those pertaining to substance or form. The white magician harnesses the cooperation of the greater builders of the deva hierarchy who function on the higher planes in accordance with soul purpose (TCF:984-6).
metaphor sets into one coherent whole, is seriously challenging. One way to begin a synthesis is through Bailey’s model of the human constitution.

4.7 Bailey’s Model of the Human Constitution

Bailey views the individual human being as comprised of a personality, (which Bailey considers to be the combination of human physical, emotional and mental bodies), a soul and spirit. Each of the three bodies of the personality is said to function through one of the seven planes. The physical body (including the human brain), with its etheric counterpart, is construed as being composed of matter on the seventh plane. For Bailey, the emotional body is composed of matter on the sixth plane and the human mind or mental body on the fifth. So the personality becomes a combination of matter of the three densest planes of matter (see chart, appendix B).

We begin to see the coherence of Bailey’s cosmology through the lens of her system of planes. Each plane, as we saw earlier, has seven sub-planes, and each of these sub-planes has, according to Bailey, an associated group of devas who embody the matter of that particular sub-plane, and consequently, represent the motivational force of matter. So within us, following Bailey’s argument, is found various kinds of matter associated with the seven sub-planes of each plane, each with its own deva representative following its own agenda. The human personality becomes the overseer in charge of a vast cohort of little deva lives whose evolutionary trajectory may be distinct from that of the human entity.

The overarching purpose within Bailey’s cosmic scheme is teleological in nature, concerning the evolution of consciousness. For Bailey, we exist in the second of three solar systems, our solar Logos embodying the energy of the second of the seven rays, that of love-wisdom. In Bailey’s model the human personality represents the culmination of the involutionary processes of matter. To begin the process of evolution Bailey argues that each personality needs to re-orient him/herself and trace the path back from whence they came. This is the spiritual path. To make this journey, argues Bailey, the personality needs to relinquish control to the soul.
4.7.1 The Soul

It is evident that the notion of the soul in Bailey’s cosmology is of paramount importance. For Bailey, the dual aspects of spirit and matter produce a third aspect out of their union, the soul. Her third postulate in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* states that ‘all souls are identical with the Oversoul’ [italics hers] (TCF:7). So no form is taken as an isolated unit, but rather as forming part of an interconnected Whole.

As part of the human constitution, the soul occupies a particular location on the fifth or mental plane in Bailey’s model, closely associated therefore, with mind. The soul resides in the causal body on the higher sub-planes of the mental plane, regarded as the seat of consciousness. Consciousness, or the soul’s mental function, is therefore an aspect of mind. Bailey considers consciousness to pertain to awareness, the faculty of apprehension or comprehension. Consciousness concerns the relationship between the self and not-self, the knower and known, or the thinker and that which is thought about (TCF:243).

For Bailey, consciousness, or awareness gradually evolves through expansion (TCF:295). Expansion occurs through love, which is energetically considered to be magnetic attraction. The soul emanates a radiatory magnetism (spiral cyclic motion) or love which attracts to itself that which is seen to be desired or aspired to, understood as aspects of will. In summary, Bailey claims that in this, our second solar system, governed by the second Ray, it is through expanding consciousness (solar fire), that will (electric fire) is served. The expansion process involves continual experimentation in lived experience, which produces reactions and responses within the individual. With each ensuing expansion comes the gradual realization of the self, or self understanding, followed by an awareness of the group (planetary consciousness), leading eventually to consciousness of the totality of groups, or God consciousness\(^\text{13}\). Bailey summarises this process in the following passage:

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\(^\text{13}\) Bailey describes this process using another metaphor set, that of the Egoic (soul) lotus. This lotus comprises a series of twelve petals, each unfolding into activity as evolution proceeds (TCF: 822-4). A full explanation of Bailey’s Egoic Lotus is considered beyond the scope of this presentation.
[It is] the development of consciousness, which is the gradual expansion of the realization of the Indweller [soul] in the form [personality], the apprehension by the Self [soul] of the relation of the form to Itself, and of its slow utilization and control. This persists until that Realisation includes the cell [the human unity], the group, and the totality of groups, [ ] mine (TCF:295).

So as consciousness expands, so does the sphere of influence of the soul. For Bailey this influence involves the spiritualization of matter (TCF:51), leading eventually to the liberating release of spirit (TCF:144-5). Bailey argues that initially consciousness is narrow and individualised, functioning in a separative manner, influenced by the frictional fires of matter in form. As presented above, these fires cause a rotational spin that repels other rotating spheres. Consciousness at this stage, Bailey argues, shows a general lack of response, inertia and limited radiation. What may be more directly described as dull. As consciousness expands to include more and more matter, this matter becomes energised or spiritualised. The spiritualisation of matter, according to Bailey, involves conscious control of innate tendency within matter to separate. Since the personality is thought to be comprised of three vehicles or forms made out of physical, emotional and mental matter, these areas, and through them the personality itself, become the initial sphere of influence in which the soul gains mastery or control. Consciousness in this sense provides the soul with new material to work with, or condition so that it suits the purpose of spirit. Matter in form, Bailey argues, must learn to cohere, merge and blend.

For Bailey, evolutionary progress is cyclic, and is governed by the Law of Karma as discussed above. Each incarnation involves further expansions of consciousness or increases in awareness along with increases in the contents of the causal body. Each incarnation makes karma, until the soul decides to work off its accrued karma to become a perfected son [sic] of mind (TCF:304-5).

Karma can be viewed as the transmutation of effects within the personality as it moulds, influences, stimulates or retards other personalities (TCF:76). As progress is made the soul begins to dominate and eventually takes full authority of the personality, enabling the fusion of spirit and matter which results in the blazing forth of solar fire.
Just as a human thinker, or soul, is thought to gain control of the three vehicles of the personality, vitalizing to full capacity each of the three permanent atoms pertaining to these three vehicles (mental, emotional and physical), so in Bailey’s cosmology, a planetary and the solar Logos are engaged in processes of aligning and adjusting, energizing and gaining complete mastery of aspects of their own nature(TCF:1042-3). For the solar Logos this involves the unification of each of the seven subplanes of each systemic plane, eventually enabling a synthesis of all of the seven planes themselves, into one unified whole (TCF:143-5, 344).

In summary Bailey’s argument is that the soul is the Thinker, which uses consciousness to control the mind, or the faculty of intelligence which, in combination with the physical brain comprises the thinking mechanism. The soul, through this mechanism, is able to construct thoughtforms (TCF:968).

According to Bailey the soul and the personality are entities that operate through the same system, serving an evolutionary purpose. The personality utilises the mind and the brain in order to carry out its individual agenda. The mind-brain are to be regarded as the thinking mechanism oriented to material life, in the three worlds of human endeavour (physical, emotional and mental), through experience conferred by the senses ( TCF:185-200). A second mechanism, consciousness, operates within the same system, serving the intentions of the soul. The soul is situated within the abstract mind, and potentially has access to intuitional, revelatory ways of knowing. The primary task of the soul is to reorient consciousness towards these more rarified perceptions and through the soul’s own veil, towards spirit (TCF:287, 814).

Spirit has its own location in Bailey’s model of the human constitution (see appendix B). Whilst the human spirit or monad finds its existence upon the second of Bailey’s planes, spiritual expression functions through the next three descending planes in the form of a spiritual triad. On the third plane, spirit as will, is expressed as a permanent atom located on the first subplane of the third plane. Spirit as intuition finds expression as a permanent atom on the first subplane of the fourth plane of intuition. Spirit as mind is found on the first sub-plane of the fifth or mental plane. To make a connection with the spiritual triad the soul in the causal body on the third subplane of
the mental plane must construct a bridge (or antaskarana) between itself and the permanent atom of mind (TCF:137, 173), once another part of this bridge has been constructed, by the soul and the personality together, between the mental unit on the fourth sub-plane of the mental plane and the causal body on the third sub-plane (TCF:137). All of these processes occur within the abstract mind in the service of the individual’s awareness.

According to Bailey, once this process begins to be accomplished consciousness is then able to function in two directions, towards the objective, tangible world, and the subjective inner world, in service of spiritual will enacted in love and wisdom. This reorientation process allows the indwelling entity to use the entire system to construct thoughtforms for the good of the whole.

The thinking mechanism and the awareness mechanism are distinct in quality, in method and in epistemology. These two operating systems find their place in the dual nature of the mental body, the lower, concrete and higher, abstract mind. In Bailey’s scheme the critical division lies between these two mechanisms and not between the mind and the brain, or the problem of a metaphysical mind/brain disjoint informing philosophical discourse.

This completes my summary of Bailey’s cosmic theory of everything. The following section provides a discussion of several aspects considered salient within the context of evaluating how well Bailey’s work transforms consciousness.

### 4.8 Discussion

The above presentation provides much material displaying Bailey’s explanation of evolution, drawing upon a range of metaphors and certain claims to truth. I begin this discussion with a brief historical sketch of a relationship between esotericism and science, followed with a return to metaphysical matters arising from Bailey’s ontological commitments and her use of metaphor. Bailey’s planes, Rays, devas, permanent atoms and fires all function as explanatory metaphors, providing her cosmological theory of everything with a coherent articulation of her teleological design argument of evolution. I follow with speculation upon the relevance of
Bailey’s theory with regard to contemporary cosmological discourse, drawn from the scientific community.

4.8.1 Science and Esotericism

Whilst Bailey may present a cosmic realm alien to science, a connection between scientific and esoteric thought is recognized by many writers (Yates 1964, Needleman 1965, Ellwood 1986, Wertheim 1995, Laszlo 1996, Wilber 1998, Capra 2000, and Hammer 2001)\(^{14}\). The scientific milieu is not entirely averse to metaphysical ponderings, expressed by science writer and physicist Davies (1992), a self-confessed Platonist, as follows:

many scientists are religious and many of those who are not confess to a vague feeling that there is something beyond the surface reality of daily experience, some meaning behind existence (1992:15).

However, esoteric thought does not carry the hegemonic authority of either scientific or religious discourses, both of which occupy foreground positions in western society regarding their power to explain the universe.

Scientists may be thought of as pursuing explanations for, and models (metaphors) of, the workings of the natural world, using the empirical method to produce provable or testable results. In brief, one model, the clockwork universe, supported by Newtonian physics, was later challenged by discoveries of the chaos and complexities of nature, revealed at sub-atomic levels through quantum physics. Temporally between these two vastly differing conceptions of nature emerged Darwin’s theory of evolution which seemed able to explain biological processes without any need for God as creator of the universe.

It was at this historical juncture that Bailey’s theosophical predecessor, Blavatsky, introjected with an alternative explanation of the universe, which, in turn directly informed Bailey’s *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, written during the time of the next

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\(^{14}\) Yates (1964) argues that a direct descent can be traced between Renaissance Hermeticism and modern science. According to Australian science writer and feminist Wertheim (1995), it was Newton’s fascination with alchemy that fed his acceptance of the notion of some mysterious energy emanating from celestial bodies, one that required an explanation. This, in turn, led to Newton’s law of gravity.
wave of this debate as quantum physics entered the scene. According to Hammer (2001), Blavatsky’s theosophical proposal is a form of scientism, or:

The active positioning of one’s own claims in relation to the manifestations of any academic scientific discipline…without, however, the use of methods generally approved within the scientific community (2001:206).

As apparent proponents of scientism, theosophists formed their own esoteric responses to serve as contributions to the various scientific and religious (creation through biblical Genesis) arguments. Trompf (1998) views these responses as involving ‘translating processes of the world into a re-spiritualized, occult macro-drama beginning and ending in the Divine’ (1998:274).

Blavatsky embraced Neoplatonic emanationist theories of evolution, involving both the cosmos and humanity’s spiritual progress out of (involution) and back to (evolution) the Source. This was not only an affront to the Christian orthodoxy, but a direct response to the materialism of Darwinism or Haeckelianism. Blavatsky’s macrohistory was not so much an original formulation as unique in its organised, highly detailed presentation. According to Trompf:

Blavatsky appropriated the Indian epical visualization of great cycles (of *kalpa* and *manvantara*) as the conceptual vehicle by which to view cosmo-history undergoing periodicity and constant renewal through time, yet presented her ‘total vision’ – her neo-Gnostic *mythos* included – in the guise of a synthetic teaching deriving from a far-distant Source in time (Trompf, 1998:281).

The ‘Source’ referred to in this quotation is claimed to be the Akashic Record, or Book of Dzyan. Bailey expands upon these Stanzas of Dyzan, which she regards, as does Blavatsky, to be a source of the ‘Ageless Wisdom’. Bailey develops them in her *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, taking Blavatsky’s macrohistorical explanation of the universe as the ground upon which to develop a psychological interpretation of cosmic creation. Before discussing Bailey’s cosmology in the light of explanations of evolution, I turn to some metaphysical problems arising from my presentation.
4.8.2 Evaluating Bailey’s Metaphysical Proposal

Bailey’s theory of everything presents a panoply of metaphysical entities performing a range of functions within a grand cosmic scheme. Considered in the light of Polkinghorne’s (2000) insightful comment upon how we might evaluate metaphysical proposals, we could argue that:

The test of the enterprise will be the degree to which it can attain comprehensiveness of explanation and overall coherence, including an adequate degree of consonance with human experience (2000: 147).

I have shown the comprehensiveness of Bailey’s cosmology, and the internal coherence of its related parts, which seamlessly interconnect. In terms of Polkinghorne’s view, we may consider Bailey’s cosmology an adequate mythical theory of everything constructed on firm metaphysical ground. Metaphysics is concerned very broadly with the nature and structure of reality, particularly in relation to non-physical entities. Debates within metaphysics associated with the constitution of entities range from the materialist view that denies the existence of non-physical entities, through a dualist view that grants reality to both physical and non-physical entities, to an idealist view that regards only mental states as real (Audi 1999). I focus upon two areas in Bailey’s metaphysical proposal, beginning with Bailey’s commitment to certain ontological assumptions in the light of her use of metaphor. I follow this with a speculative discussion concerning how Bailey overcomes a key metaphysical problem, the disjoint between mind and matter.

Bailey’s ontological assumptions are empowered through her appropriation of key scientific ideas, particularly the scientific notion of natural law, redeployed as a persuasive ideological device. This move seriously challenges an interpretation of Bailey’s work as metaphoric, since her metaphoric edifice is constructed upon a foundation of absolute truth, buttressed by a powerful quasi-scientific explanation. Bailey’s scientism, expressed here in her use of law, explains some of the difficulties in a theosophical epistemology. The existence of the laws of nature as depicted by physics and mathematics to explain how our world works forms part of a scientific worldview. According to Davies (1992), the scientific study of nature involves the
notion of natural law, or the regularities, patterns and rhythms that have explanatory power (1992:81). Davies argues that natural law is taken by science to be universal, absolute and omnipotent and that this is the case whether these laws are taken as discovered and therefore transcendent, or invented by scientists to explain nature, therefore constructed and contingent upon the particular cultural context of the scientist (1992:82).

The laws of physics are based on inductive logic whereby an assumption predicts certain outcomes, or generalises to create hypotheses. Each outcome or hypothesis is then tested. Accordingly, a law becomes such because, however tested, it always holds. A law may not be absolutely true, since it is always possible that new and contradictory evidence may emerge.

The laws of the esotericist likewise explain to them the workings of the natural world. Yet, Bailey’s esoteric laws cannot be verified using the scientific method. Furthermore, a description of cosmological processes controlled through a set of laws that rule our solar system seems an unacceptably rigid contrivance. Bailey’s overarching Law of Attraction and Repulsion, Law of Synthesis and Law of Economy, which she regards as governing the whole of creation seems to pertain to an inflexible system with little room for spontaneous emergence or unpredictability. Such laws appear remote from laws such as Newton’s law of gravity, which offers an explanation of a single, albeit universal physical phenomenon, yet both types of law are proposed to have a foundation in fact. The rigidity implied by such esoteric laws is exacerbated when treated as having a factual basis. Each of Bailey’s laws also have a metaphoric application, explaining the activities of spirit and matter, depicted through her metaphor sets (planes, Rays, fires). Both the literal and metaphoric aspects of Bailey’s laws carry an ideologically persuasive power, a reader confronted with an apparent need to make an ontological commitment to Bailey’s metaphysical claims, in order to garner an esoterically informed way of knowing.

Further evidence of the tension between literal truth and metaphoric constructions may be drawn from Bailey’s notion of the soul. Bailey’s explanation of the soul has both a literal and a metaphoric component. For Bailey the soul exists as a metaphysical fact. This aspect of Bailey’s work appears to indicate some literal
existence or manifestation whilst concomitantly indicative or referential and hence described in metaphoric terms. The soul is of fundamental importance in Bailey’s work, providing a sense of purpose, a goal and an explanation of ‘who we really are’.

In congruence with interpretations of the soul as the spiritual and immortal dimension of humanity that enables us to reach our spiritual goal (Underhill 1956, and MacGregor 1987), Bailey follows Neoplatonism and views the soul as an active principle that imposes the rational structure of intelligence upon matter that itself has emanated from the soul. The soul for Bailey is also the mediator between matter and spirit, a view congruent with esotericism. Defined by Needleman (1980) in teleological terms:

The soul is the name for that force or principle within human nature that can bind together all the intellectual, emotional and instinctual aspects of the human being through a mediating relationship to the highest principles of order and mind in the universe (1980:221).

Bailey also refers to the soul as the Christ principle, embodying divine purpose, imbuing her form of esotericism with a layer of Christian inspired metaphor, which she uses to inform her conception of the spiritual path. Central to Bailey’s work are the methods that may be employed to establish and maintain a connection between the personality and the soul through the mind and brain.

Whilst Bailey’s claim that occult laws and the existence of the soul have a factual basis may be at odds with my own metaphoric presentation of Bailey’s work, such metaphysical assertions may paradoxically strengthen the metaphoric aspect of Bailey’s cosmic reality. Bailey’s scientism, rather than simply serving to discredit her work from the perspective of the academic disciplines of science, becomes a powerfully persuasive way of supporting notions of interconnectedness essential to any theory of everything. Bailey’s commitment to explanatory laws provides a binding potency that attempts to reveal, through metaphoric interpretation, underlying motives, causes and an overarching purpose in her cosmology. Further, without Bailey’s ontological commitment to soul, her theory of everything collapses, her
metaphors becoming contextually meaningless through a lack of any means through which to fulfill her purpose of transforming consciousness.

Esoteric thought shares with Platonic and Neoplatonic formulations, such ontological commitment to foundational truths, yet esotericism, in addition, constructs a metaphoric world upon these foundations, suggestively drawing the reader into an acceptance of the foundational ground upon which these metaphors rest, whilst imbuing powerful explanatory power into each metaphor. Further, these truth claims, in Bailey’s case, may also contribute clarity and precision with regard to our understanding of the human constitution.

Contingent upon a firm understanding of human nature grows any system of ethics, any moral attitude towards self and others. However, humanity continues to debate the nature of the division of categorial entities pertaining to the human constitution, such as mind, brain and consciousness. Needleman (1965) highlights the confusion in categorial precision with regard to consciousness, noting:

The word is used these days in so many different ways that out of sheer impatience one is tempted to single out one or another aspect of consciousness as its primary characteristic (1965:20).

The philosophical problem of mind continues to arouse interest and debate, broadly between objectivist positivist views relying upon a materialist perspective of mental states, and subjectivist and dualist views relying upon metaphysical explanations of the nature of the relationship between mind and body, and confronting the need to explain a causal link between consciousness and the brain (Lyons 1995). In his essay entitled *The Stream of Consciousness*, James (in Lyons 1995) argues in favour of an introspective analysis of consciousness which he regards as a fundamental fact of human existence. However, introspective studies of mind, reliant upon a Cartesian dualism, were succeeded in the early twentieth century by objectivist, positivist approaches (Lyons 1995). Lyons (1995) notes that consciousness tends to be passed over in these materialist explanations of the mind. More recent attempts to overcome the Cartesian mind/body split have come from a materialist perspective.

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15 Materialist perspectives such as Behaviourism, Identity Theory, and Functionalism focus upon brain states and operations.
According to American philosopher John Searle (2000), the division between materialist and dualist explanations of mind is solved when consciousness (the essence of mind), is viewed as a biological phenomenon that involves inner subjective states and processes, contingent upon, albeit irreducible to other physical features such as the physical brain\(^{16}\).

In my view Bailey bases her cosmological edifice upon a dual aspect monism (Polkinghorne 2000:154-5), relying on the Neoplatonic premise that there exists one single reality in which two opposite poles, spirit and matter constitute the foundations of the origins and evolution of life. For Bailey, “God is One” is the utterance of truth…Life in manifestation produces existence and being. It is the root cause, therefore, of duality’ (TWM:8). Whereas dualists tend to view the physical and mental realms as completely separate, Polkinghorne argues that dual aspect monism overcomes the disjoint between mind and matter, which cannot be integrated from a dualist position (2000:154-5).

For Bailey, the metaphysical problem of duality cannot be solved unless we:

Recognize the possibility of two occult facts:

1. That the entire solar system embodies the consciousness of an Entity, who originates on planes entirely without the solar ring-pass-not.
2. That manifestation is periodical and that the Law of Rebirth is the method that evolution takes in dealing with man, a planetary Logos, and a solar Logos (TCF:238).

Expressed in abstruse terms, Bailey refers to the problems thinkers create through not accepting reincarnation, and the idea that all individual conscious entities form part of a larger entity. Bailey sees humanity as inseparable from the natural world of living matter, and each incarnation as inseparable from its part in an incarnation cycle. Bailey’s hylozoistic understanding of our universe in which all entities are essentially focal points of energy, varying in complexity, in function and ability, sees no problem with the notion that thought has an effect upon matter. Indeed, esoteric practice is

\(^{16}\) This view finds support in Santiago Theory, developed by Maturana and Varela, drawing upon Bateson’s conception that the process of cognition is identified with the process of life through complex biological systems (Capra, 1997 and 2004).
based upon the premise that thoughts themselves are alive, imbued with intention and able to fulfill some purpose.

Bailey’s model differentiates between: Brain and mind, each composed of grades of matter; and consciousness and the soul, each with its own characteristics and functions. In Bailey’s model, mind refers to the entire ground upon which consciousness functions. Consciousness itself operates as a camera lens, able to expand or contract in terms of breadth and depth of field. When consciousness expands the mind and brain are also affected, new contents or information may be incorporated, new neural pathways built and old ones left. Consciousness becomes aware of its own limits, its horizon and I argue that Bailey’s esotericism is able to stretch this horizon.

Bailey provides us with a model that places consciousness as a separate category within the realms of mind, able to interact or inform the mind, yet somewhat dependent upon the mind for its continual expansion, or growth. By asserting the various categories of the human constitution as metaphysical facts, Bailey is able to build an entire explanatory system of interacting metaphors for evolutionary growth. This explanation provides validity to these categories in a circular argument of causality that seeks no verification beyond itself. Whilst perhaps alarming for the scientist, this approach has the presuppositional advantage of a top-down interactive system, in which human constitutional categories become brute facts. Causality begins in Bailey’s model with spirit, not matter. So explanations from the perspective of matter are informed by spirit.

Bailey’s model of the human constitution is explored more fully in the following chapters. This brief sojourn into metaphysics provides some context through which to view Bailey’s ontological commitment to her argument that soul, consciousness and mind are separate categories within her cosmological theory. In order for Bailey’s theory of everything to have truth value, these categories must exist. Bailey’s theory of everything is essentially a description of how and why consciousness evolves, and the metaphors she uses serve to support this.
4.8.3 Bailey’s Cosmology as an Alternative Model of Evolution

I turn now to the evolutionary theory that underpins Bailey’s cosmology, exploring its teleological foundations before suggesting the relevance of Bailey’s work as a valuable alternative contributing to some contemporary evolutionary discourse.

Bailey’s evolutionary theory is informed by a teleological argument in which a designer God (solar Logos) created the solar system in order to fulfill a particular purpose. Bailey’s combination of design and purpose provides a further explanation of the significance of human consciousness. Whilst a design argument may be appreciated for its aesthetic acknowledgment of creation alone, according to Needleman (1965), design arguments that deny purpose in our vast and intricate universe crush humanity. When design is tied to purpose, man is both located and hailed since ‘a conscious universe is the only reality that can include human consciousness’ (1965:18).

As scientist Mosterin (1989) argues, concerns about the presence or absence of purpose in cosmic evolution affect our philosophy and world view, and it is because science can offer answers to such concerns that many of us value science so highly. Some scientists deeply question the meaning and purpose of creation, including evolutionary theories, often intrigued by their sense of an underlying mystery which they feel may be able to be unraveled by the pursuits of science itself. According to Davies (1992) humanity has been written into the laws of nature in a deep and meaningful way, and some meaningful resonance exists between the human mind and the underlying organization of the natural world. Scientists seek to demonstrate this relationship using their own methods of inquiry, yet many physicists drawn to cosmology find themselves in metaphysical terrain. Some, like Davies, find Plato provides metaphysical answers to the questions left unanswerable by modern science which is founded on the hope that the world is rational in all of its observable parts, and that a rational designer lies behind an ordered world.

According to McFague (1993) science constructs and/or utilises explanatory metaphors to interpret the world (1993:93), drawn anthropomorphically from human
experience. McFague highlights two competing models emerging within our post-modern scientific community, the organic model and the mechanistic model.

Drawing upon the mechanistic explanations provided by Newtonian physics, the metaphor of the machine continues to inform scientists who gravitate towards a materialist metaphysic, one that denies the existence of non-physical entities. This view has gained an additional metaphorical layer with the progress of computer science (cognitive science, neurobiology), imbuing the machine (the human body) with the computer language of hardware, software and programs (Broderick, 1999). Critics of the materialist viewpoint towards its reductionism, humans reduced to machines and hence potentially denied free will and independence (Davies and Brown, 1986). Some critics suggest the materialist viewpoint enables scientists to pursue investigations into the physical world with impunity, able to dominate nature without any moral sense of doing any damage to it, pushing spiritual or transcendent ideas of soul or consciousness into the backwaters of myth and falsehood (Wertheim 1995, and Capra 1999). As Rucker aptly states, ‘are people just complicated robots…or do we have souls?’ (1997:157). However, the explanatory difficulty for science continues to surround the way ‘consciousness somehow “infuses” the atoms and molecules that constitute physiological gray matter in the brain’ (Laszlo 1996:43).

The organic model, in contrast, draws upon complexity, holism and the interrelatedness and interdependence of all life. An organic philosophy, underpinned by pantheism or panentheism, views nature as a living organism. Our planet becomes a living body. As suggested above, some scientists adopting an organic model are troubled by the materialist view of human nature in general, arguing that it does not explain inspiration, or intuition, which seem to have a source other than the human brain or mind, and point towards the possibility of ideas having an independent existence. These scientists argue that abstract ideas, particularly within the realm of mathematics simply cannot be viewed as human invention, and that they have some pre-existing metaphysical reality that is not tied to our biological evolution, even when extended in argument to encompass consciousness itself. According to Davies (1992), the abstract way of knowing is of a higher order, beyond cultural perceptions, and evolutionary necessity (1992:152-3). In his critique of the strong artificial intelligence view, Penrose states, ‘when one “sees” a mathematical truth, one’s
consciousness breaks through into this world of ideas, and makes direct contact with it’ (1989:428).

Complexity provides another metaphoric layer to the organic model, affirming the interconnectedness and interdependence of whole systems (Davies 1987 and 1992, Bateson 1988, Edelman 1992, Waldrop 1992, Goertzel 1993, and Goerner 1994). Bateson (2000) argues that mind is a system of networks of pathways that operates upon difference (the idea that lies behind our ability to distinguish between this and that), ‘mind is a necessary, an inevitable function of the appropriate complexity, wherever that complexity occurs’ (2000: 490).

Indeed, as some complexity theorists argue, it is the force of mind constructing thoughts that causes the condensation of solid matter, in form, out of the vast field of quantum material (Capra 1999:143). If indeed it is the case that the mind is this kind of powerful creative tool, able to manifest through the power of thought alone, then it becomes of paramount importance that a clearer understanding of its nature is achieved.

In my view the boundary between these two models is fuzzy, blurred in part through adherence or non-adherence to design and purpose in the universe, which may inform both mechanistic and organic models. Furthermore, it is possible within an organic model, to adopt a materialist stance, arguing that higher-order complex systems, such as consciousness, emerge out of lower order systems. Theories of everything are also informed by the mechanistic/organic debate, scientific quests for a single unifying theory able, through the reduction of all living and non-living entities to ‘nothing but’ their constituent atoms and molecules (the domain of physics and chemistry), to simplify purpose into a single mathematical formula.

These two models continue to be debated within the scientific community. Some scientists believe that teleological arguments, informing an organic worldview, have received severe blows from twentieth century neo-Darwinian scientists, who argue that teleological views lack explanatory power with regard to the adaptation of living things (Barrow and Tipler 1986). Neo-Darwinian adherents (Gould 2002) who take the view that all biological evolution, including the evolution of mind and
consciousness has proceeded through a cluster of explanatory concepts including random mutation, natural selection and survival of the fittest, currently hold a strong position, supported by advances in genetics and molecular biology (Davies 1997). This perspective is able to deny the existence of a superior divine Intelligence, directing progress.

Concerns over neo-Darwinian explanations of evolution raised by prominent scientists supportive of teleological arguments, range from; questions raised over explanatory adequacies and reductionist tendencies with regard to such complex biological features as the eye (Davies 1987, and Peacocke 1994); the evolutionary relevance of natural selection pertaining to abstract knowledge; and ethical concerns regarding the consequences inherent in the view that humanity has evolved largely through natural selection and survival of the fittest (Crick 1981). This latter creates another powerful metaphoric layer, informing a competitive individualistic worldview.

Amongst the various evolutionary theories proposed by science, some adopt radical views that were they voiced outside of the rigorous justifications and explanations offered by mathematical formula, would be deemed just as fanciful and contrived as Bailey’s argument. One example is proposed by Tipler (1995), who builds an argument around the resurrection of Christ, which Tipler considers to refer to the immortality of human consciousness made possible through the development of artificial silicon based life forms. Another view proposed by Kaku (1997) involves humanity, having outgrown planet earth through its own population expansion, evolving into a galactic civilization supported by scientific and technological innovation.

Bailey’s view may remain peripheral as an esoteric theory of evolution able to contribute to a scientifically informed contemporary debate, yet the above examples show that arguments that may dismiss Bailey on the grounds that her hypothesis is an unsubstantiated fabrication, containing metaphysical notions too far removed from scientific verification, or is merely unfounded speculation containing no relevant or externally supportable explanations, also lack foundation. The teleological aspect of Bailey’s model may not find general support from the scientific community, her top-
down argument running counter to bottom-up models of higher order complex systems evolving from lower order systems without the need for an overarching conscious entity or creator informing the universe.

The evolution of consciousness towards a spiritualised teleological goal within Bailey’s theory of everything contrasts with scientific views that are concerned with the evolution of living physical forms. It may be regarded as anthropocentric, placing humanity at the pivotal centre of the evolution of our entire solar system, yet it is consciousness, not ego, that has centre stage. Whilst the interplay of energies and forces would proceed regardless of the individual, Bailey argues that humanity is of central importance. It is through consciousness that each human evolves and in so doing affects every cell and atom in their body, the rest of humanity and our planetary evolution, through thought and action. As Teilhard de Chardin (1969) states, consciousness evolves through expansion in ‘a progressive realization of the universality of the things surrounding each of us’ (1969:17).

There appear to be three general ways to approach the notion of evolution, cosmological evolution (portrayed in Blavatsky’s The Secret Doctrine), the evolution of the natural world (as depicted in Darwinian, neo-Darwinian and complexity views) and of humanity (psychological evolution). In Bailey’s model these three are intertwined into one whole. Whilst the explanation of the evolution of the cosmos and of the macrohistory of earth is covered by her reliance upon theosophy, Bailey emphasises the psycho-social evolution of humanity, an approach supported by Eigen (1992), Peacocke (1994) and Teilhard de Chardin (1969).

Peacocke (1994) argues that human evolution goes far beyond that of the highest primates, is psycho-social as consciousness evolves:

In human beings part of the world has become conscious of itself and consciously and actively responds to its surroundings; in human life a new mode of interaction is introduced in the world (1994:91).
Since humanity can respond to the environment through conscious choice, questions concerning not only free will, but what we should strive for and what kind of future we should try to create become important issues.

Echoing Bailey’s view, psycho-social evolution in Teilhard de Chardin’s model involves a striving towards ‘Unity’ rather than dispersal or plurality, and a development of self-knowledge ‘to the point of becoming conscious of our place and responsibility in relation to the universe’ (1969:16). He argues that humanity has reached a critical stage in psycho-social evolution and must now co-ordinate itself as a whole social system functioning in such a way that each individual’s well being is granted. For Teilhard de Chardin (1971), in humanity, evolution has led to the formation of the *noosphere*, a thought atmosphere enshrouding humanity through which psycho-social evolution proceeds. The *noosphere* and *omega point* have attracted some interest from scientists such as Barrow and Tipler who have transcended their ambivalence towards Teilhard de Chardin’s mystical language. For those thinkers drawn towards a teleological argument involving psycho-social evolution, Bailey’s theory of everything appears to have relevance.

As an indicative voice from the western esoteric community Bailey’s cosmology certainly conveys a radical alternative to contemporary scientific discourse. Yet, for Versluis (2000 (b)), as ‘many people today are searching for other ways of understanding the cosmos and our human place within it’ (2000(b):14), in response to the destructive consequences of the ‘materialist-rationalist paradigm’ (2000 (b):14). Versluis also notes that western esotericism remains under-explored as a possible source in this regard. Works such as Capra’s *Tao of Physics* (1999), which explores the parallels between the world views of eastern mysticism and science, appears indicative of a shift in favour of esoteric and metaphysical ways of knowing previously shunned by materialist adherents in the scientific world (Wertheim 1995 and Capra 1999). Capra firmly believes that mysticism ‘provides a consistent philosophical background to our modern scientific theories’ (1999:9).

Some scientific writers (Goerner 1994) feel that humanity requires a shift towards ways of knowing premised upon cooperation, inclusivity and mutual interdependence, notions commensurate with Bailey’s cosmology. The simple
purpose postulated by Bailey, that evolution leads to the development of love-wisdom in full consciousness may lack a scientific foundation, yet there remains a compelling resonance in the metaphoric correspondence between consciousness, love as attraction and Bailey’s development of the notion of electrical interplay, consonant with the views expressed by Teilhard de Chardin, 1969, Goerner 1994, Capra 1999, Zukav 2001, and Dimitrov 2003.

Many of the terms Bailey employs have been taken from their scientific context and re-deployed as metaphors to explore the interconnectedness and purpose of creation. Bailey’s quasi-scientific explanation merges with a metaphysical construction of the purpose of creation and evolution in a seamless manner. It is precisely this blending of scientific concepts with an idea of a metaphysical reality that may create a somewhat repellent presentation to the scientific mind, garnering criticisms through the notion of scientism argued by Hammer (2001). Bailey’s scientific explanations become subsumed under the enormous weight of her esoteric perspective. Indeed, the tendency to utilise concepts drawn from science highlights a much broader acquisitive drive in Bailey’s work (as seen in her use of eastern mystical terms), reflective perhaps, of an urge to include, and synthesise a vast range of human thought into a much larger whole. Indeed, this is the trajectory of a mythic theory of everything, as indicated by Barrow (1991) in the start of this chapter.

Consequently Bailey’s work may be treated as providing another example of the congruity between notions of ecological interconnectedness and interdependence generated from science and the metaphysical conceptualisations of a spiritual vision of the natural world. Bailey’s esotericism straddles this ground, creating a space in-between, in which her explanation of energy systems, and her corresponding portrayal of evolving consciousness (the energetic interplays within the Bailey model pertain to the psychological unfolding of love and wisdom), carry explanatory power; internal coherence; provide a complete metaphysical picture; and relate directly to the human condition with a clear moral intent.

Bailey also launches a powerful argument against individualistic competitive approaches to the way we conduct our lives, supplying an intricate map of cosmic interrelated interdependence, at all levels, from atomic through to planetary. Bailey
places a high value upon abstract thought, locating the next evolutionary step for humanity within this domain. Further, Bailey provides her own rather puzzling explanation that addresses Davies (1987) observation, in pondering the possibilities of the existence of a global plan:

Somehow the microscopic one-dimensional strand of genetic information has to exercise a coordinating influence, both spatial and temporal, over the collective activity of billions of cells spread across what is, size for size, a vast region of three dimensional space (1987:105).

Recognition amongst scientists drawing upon the organic model that complex patterns of organization are found throughout nature, systems apparently chaotic yet displaying seemingly extraordinary, albeit unpredictable regularities, resonates with Bailey’s system of energy flows, whirling sub-atomic strands, constant motion, attraction and repulsion. All movement drawn towards or resisting the ultimate evolutionary goal of the spiritualization of matter through the intermediary of consciousness. However, Bailey’s cosmology also portrays a rigidly structured hierarchical chain of contingent beings, more in keeping with a Newtonian clockwork universe in which immutable natural law determines the course of events.

I suggest that Bailey’s contribution to this debate may be located in her theosophically informed desire to produce a unity out of the diversity of metaphors within her cosmic theory of everything, which may be considered an example of a transcendence of the mechanistic/organic divide. Through the use of hylozoism Bailey unites all matter into one interrelated whole. Her explanatory trajectory seeks the unity also valued by the mechanists, through a metaphoric depiction of the diversity sought in the organic model. For Bailey the atom of the mechanists becomes a metaphor of all higher order entities, the problem of reductionism transcended through the use of the argument through analogy and correspondence. Such arguments provide a two-way explanatory trajectory, averting the materialist uni-directional approach of reductionism. By placing consciousness at the centre of evolution, and applying the same arguments of analogy and correspondence, the complex interdependent relationships of every thing in our universe are organically
depicted as designed with a purpose in mind. So Bailey provides an example of the ‘third way’ valued by McFague (1993:93).

4.9 Conclusion

Scientific debates do not occur in a vacuum separate from any wider social and economic factors. Issues pertaining to the human constitution are intertwined with evolutionary theory, cosmology and metaphysics. Questions regarding the nature and origins of biological life and the origins of the universe combine with our understanding of ourselves with profound ethical implications. For Bailey, the binding force in our universe is love (evidenced in her second Ray of love-wisdom), which motivates choices directed towards the Good. In making a clear distinction between consciousness and the thinking mechanism, Bailey’s model provides support for both the materialist view of the human mind exemplified in the hardware/software analogy, whilst also providing the Platonists with the comfort of an indwelling soul, a non-material entity able to contact the realm of Platonic Forms.

This brief journey into metaphysics has revealed a serious difficulty in holding Bailey’s cosmology tightly within a metaphoric interpretive framework. Bailey’s model of the human constitution, involving soul, consciousness and mind appears to be presented more as metaphysical truth, whereas her notions of a vast cosmic scheme of Rays, planes, fire, permanent atoms and a deva hierarchy lend themselves to a metaphoric interpretation. This creates a perhaps irreconcilable tension in Bailey’s work when viewed as a coherent whole. I argue that viewing Bailey’s cosmology as either a literal or a metaphoric construction does not serve Bailey’s objective. If we treat her work as having both literal and metaphoric dimensions, then we come closer to understanding the direction she asks us to embody.

The type of knowledge contained in A Treatise on Cosmic Fire is a priori, or propositional knowledge not derived from empirical observation. The reader is encouraged by Bailey to become acquainted with this knowledge subjectively, through the reader’s own direct awareness, gaining a non-propositional understanding of the material, through blending it with inner states of consciousness, and the subjective realm of experience. Her formulation purposively directs the attention of
the reader towards the subjective realm of his/her own inner life. Extramentally, in
the world of tangible and intangible objects, a measure of worth may be found in the
effects her model may have, upon the individual and his or her environment or sphere
of influence.

Further, I suggest that an experiential quest for understanding Bailey’s labyrinth,
demanding intense focused visualization, fosters the development of intuitive
perception, described by Wilber (2000), as ‘integral vision’. Such vision draws
disparate ideas or theories together into larger wholes, seeking inclusive synthesis.
Wilber offers his own psychologically informed theory of everything based upon his
notion of integral vision, whereas I claim that Bailey may provide the reader with a
means of developing integral vision as a way of knowing, (rather than learning about
knowledge of integral vision) as a consequence of engaging with her cosmology as a
theory of everything.

The discussion thus far has been an external examination of Bailey’s work in relation
to wider metaphysical debates. It is now time to journey inside the work itself.
Whether Bailey’s worldview resonates with human experience forms the basis of the
heuristic study to follow.
CHAPTER FIVE
ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS OF SUBJECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS: PART ONE

5.1 Introduction

Entering Bailey’s esoteric world and confronting her rich cosmic panoply for the first time may evoke confusion, incomprehension or a sense of wonder. We may choose to regard the abstract concepts and metaphors as pertaining to some extraneous metaphysical reality or unreality alone. I argue that there is something compelling about esotericism that invites the reader to draw the esoteric world into the self, or the self into this esoteric world, embodying the various metaphors, principles, symbols and concepts. The reader may then see through the lens of esotericism as a way of knowing and look into themselves accordingly. In the next three chapters I present my heuristic exploration of a selection of Bailey’s texts in an effort to portray my own experience of an embodiment of esotericism as a way of knowing.

In this chapter I present the first part of this journey, where I engage with aspects of Bailey’s construction of the human constitution and her notion of the seven Rays, discussed briefly in Chapter Four. The heuristic journey continues in Chapter Six with my engagement with Bailey’s presentation of a spiritual path, which I have construed as a developmental stage model of the evolution of human consciousness. In Chapter Seven, I visit Bailey’s description of some of the various obstacles that may impede progress along this path.

Using the heuristic method creates a particularly concentrated individual experience of the Bailey texts. I found the experience was deeply moving. The heuristic journey was a period of time in which I was enormously occupied with walking in an esoteric landscape, profoundly absorbed with the unfolding story as it revealed itself to me in the texts. I felt that I began to change as my experiential journey advanced. I
connected with the texts and as I did so more and more my own inner life began its own metamorphosis, the results sometimes subtle and unexpected, and at others turbulent and intense. It seems that what I had deliberately brought into my own conscious field resulted in a realizable yet ineffable opening of this field itself.

For clarity I re-list Bailey’s texts, highlighting in bold those with which I heuristically engaged. Texts in italics were written by Bailey as herself.

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5.2 Describing Transformations of Consciousness

Since this thesis carries the aim of evaluating Bailey’s work in the light of transforming consciousness, before proceeding with my heuristic study, I clarify my own view of consciousness (as distinct from mind) and how it might change. I take a phenomenological view of consciousness as intentional observer (Husserl 1970), knowing through perceiving objects through the physical eye, and the inner subjective eye, somewhat like a camera lens. I also adopt a social constructivist view whereby consciousness is conditioned through social context and culture (Velmans 2000).

I follow Bateson (1998) in simply regarding mind as ‘an aggregate of interacting parts or components’ [italics his], (1988:97), and take these parts to refer to various kinds of inner mental processes, closely related with the physical brain through which access to extramental reality is gained via sensory experience. In this broadly functional view, mind registers and stores information, systematized as knowledge through the application of reason or thought. This view of mind is the ground upon which the vision of consciousness or awareness can shift location. Mind, therefore, pertains to knowledge (constructs and concepts) and consciousness to knowing, or being-in-experience.

As James (1902) acknowledges, wherever your attention is continually drawn, as a result of your own interest, excitement and devotion, becomes a place where change can occur:

All we know is that there are dead feelings, dead ideas and cold beliefs, and there are hot and live ones; and when one grows hot and alive within us, everything has to re-crystallize about it (1902:193).

This re-crystallizing process provides the opportunity not only for transformation as new ideas upset an equilibrium, but also, I postulate, the process allows consciousness to expand. I rely for support of this view upon the developmental stage models of Graves (1970, 2002), Jung (in Campbell 1971), Wilber (1977),

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1 Evaluating the fifth of Faivre’s (1994) categories of an esoteric epistemology, which he construes as experience of transmutation.

2 I regard thoughts as objects in consciousness.
Fowler (1981), and Beck and Cowan (1995). I draw upon these writers in Chapter Six where I present Bailey’s own stage model. In discussing the various ways to describe consciousness, James refers to a realm of consciousness beyond the normal mental field, one that is ‘extra-marginal and outside of the primary consciousness altogether’ (1902:228). This realm is acknowledged within the discipline of transpersonal psychology (Assagioli 1965 and Wilber 1977). Founder of psychosynthesis, Assagioli (1969) argues that it is our duty to know and explore the different inner worlds that comprise inner space. For Wilber (1977), these inner worlds reflect the variety of conscious states we can experience within a spectrum of consciousness. An expansion of consciousness becomes a broadening to encompass more bands in the spectrum, more varieties of subjective states of consciousness.

Whilst these observations touch upon important aspects of consciousness, processes of re-crystallization (James 1902) and explorations of various states of consciousness do not necessarily involve expansions of consciousness. In my view Graves (1970) provides insight into how such expansions might occur. Graves considers existential crises resulting from inadequate explanatory models, metaphors, and concepts in the face of a new experience, to cause consciousness to expand (1970:133-6). This leads to a more expansive, inclusive consciousness of extramental reality, or an awareness of a larger objective landscape, involving a formation of a new perspective, new values and renegotiated approaches to knowing and knowledge. For clarity transformation refers to how consciousness expands, and expansion pertains to what may occur.

Finally, both James (1902) and Jung (1970), identify a particular existential crisis, involving a sense of a divided self, a lower and a higher self co-existing in a state of opposition demanding resolution. It is this particular conceptualization of expanding consciousness that is pertinent in the current work.

Whether an expansion of consciousness can occur through an engagement with Bailey’s texts, following an esoteric epistemology (Faivre 1994) is explored throughout this heuristic journey, in light of Bailey’s own claim that her work should stimulate its occurrence.  

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3 In *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* Bailey states ‘the teaching in this book should tend to an expansion of consciousness’ (CF:xiii).
5.3 Introducing Amelia Hewman

Commensurate with the research requirements of a heuristic approach, involving an explicit portrayal of myself as researcher, I offer the following autobiography as Amelia Hewman. This autobiographical sketch is framed within the context of an inquiry into the role esotericism might play in transforming consciousness. The journey Amelia takes into Bailey’s world is viewed through the lens of Hanegraaff’s (1992) artistic and occultistic gnosis.

Amelia may be described as having a variety of tendencies that create within her an interest and sympathy with esotericism. Amelia was born in the early 1960’s of working and lower middle class parentage. She had a tense childhood, the result of her parents’ unhappy relationship. Amelia’s life was not fun: it was crowded with violence, fears, nightmares, taboos, judgments and disapproval. She retreated into her own inner life, a rich dreamworld of escapist fantasies of a loving and kind place to compensate for her unease.

Amelia dragged her past along with her like a ball and chain for many years, having internalized so much of the attitudes and behaviour of her parents. Her salvation proved to lie in the fantasy world she had created. This world led her to understand desire, longing, fear and the dark monsters of the deep. Amelia’s introspection, her unhappiness, and the sense that something was missing made her search for meaning. She discovered that her maternal great grandmother, a German born American, was strongly involved with spiritualism and practiced faith healing. Amelia shared the same birthday and had always felt a strong connection with this mysterious figure. Her paternal grandmother was known to be psychic, read tea leaves and saw ghosts. Amelia reflected upon the possibility that she had inherited similar tendencies.

Amelia has a temperament that may be construed as religious using James’ (1902),

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4 Hanegraaff’s (1992) notions of artistic and occultistic gnosis were presented in Chapter Two, page 23. Broadly occultistic gnosis rationalizes experience, typified in literal interpretations, whereas artistic gnosis relies on metaphor and paradox, preferring open-ended interpretations.

5 Spiritualism emerged as a popular movement in late nineteenth century America, drawing upon a belief in an immortal soul to contact the spirits of the dead via mediums (Campbell 1980).
description of a person whose emotionalism leads them to moral perception: an intensity and emphatic nature that leads to practical moral vigour; and a love of metaphysics and mysticism that leads beyond the tangible world (1902:24). Amelia may also be considered as having Hanegraaff’s (1992) gnostic disposition that confers openness or receptivity to engage with esotericism.

Amelia’s concern for her own wellbeing became a quest for healing that took her down many paths generally included within the term New Age, engaging in practices including the occult. By the time Amelia had reached the middle of her life, she felt as worked over as anyone ought to be, and that any more therapy would belie self indulgence. So she took life’s hard knocks on the chin, pulled herself up by the bootstraps and decided to be happy, enough.

Finally, Amelia is a thinker, an intellectual who ponders the meaning of her experiences. She remains a deeply introspective person and yet she is also pragmatic, searching for the value of an idea through its application.

5.4 An Initial Conversation Between Amelia and Alice Bailey

Amelia Hewman sits at her desk, observing the view from her study window. Rolling green hills rise to merge with mountains shrouded in gum trees. Below lies the village where the sounds of trucks thundering down the highway urgently meeting their deadlines and the fizz wizz lawnmowers taming nature do not disturb her, but blend in harmonious luxury with the squeals and chirrups of the local bird life. The time is 11:11am, befittingly noteworthy as a recurrent jolt of recognition of the general mystery of things.

‘Weird’, thinks Amelia as she reflects back on the heuristic journey, recalling those first moments of entering Bailey’s spiritual ‘wonderland’, a new reader construed by the texts as an aspirant on a quest to discover her own spirituality and gain an understanding of her soul. She remembers finding herself surprisingly repelled by the texts. Her previous experience with a wide range of New Age self-help books and her personal studies in astrology which had led her to discover Alice Bailey’s work, left Amelia feeling cautious. She knew that the task before her was enormous.
I am outside the work. I feel as I read that I am inadequate to the task. As if I too ought to train to attain greater soul contact to enhance my understanding. Yet even this thought is a sign of me engaging with the ‘truth’ in the text, adopting at least part of the worldview as true, or worthy of exploration. Here I reach a barrier, immediately. I see a razor edge between the necessity of intellectual or academic distance and the necessity, if I am to understand the texts at all, of going some way towards putting into practice the teachings, and thence having adopted them as my own worldview. I notice that the work affects my thinking. I seem to unwittingly adopt parts of the text and find myself interpreting my own experiences in my daily life and my thoughts of others in terms of the framework and worldview offered by Bailey. I start to judge myself, watch myself. It makes me question myself and seek to strive to improve who I am.

I realise that whilst it is important to me not to become dogmatic about Bailey’s work, or to adhere exclusively to the framework, it seems equally important not to dismiss as quite fanciful, absurd or ridiculous aspects of the cosmology that seem strange.

Amelia is concerned with her own resistance, paradoxically observing her own willingness to be open and non-judgmental. Amelia also acknowledges her own limitations.

I do not know the nature of ultimate reality. I do not know God. Therefore I cannot fully assess the validity of any cosmological schema. I cannot know these things because I’m merely a human, and therefore limited within my own body and mind. The best of us strive to know. We come up with hypotheses. We seek evidence and application. That is all we can do. We can monitor our progress through the course of history and use our powers of discernment to differentiate over time between which of the various hypotheses contain any merit and which do not.

As Bailey states:
We need to see the vision and understand the oneness of approach and a unanimity of purpose and objective and not argue over detail, method or interpretation of principles as we all grow in our unique way (EPII:106).

5.4.1 Personality, Soul and Spirit

All that Amelia has come to understand as ‘her’ is redefined within the Bailey model. Thus Amelia faces herself. According to Bailey each human is a trinity comprising a personality, soul and spirit. In the simplest terms, Bailey construes spirit as life, soul as quality and personality as appearance (EP Vol I:18).

In Bailey’s model the personality is comprised of the physical/etheric, emotional and mental bodies with the mental body or mind divided into a lower, concrete and a higher, abstract mind:

It is the lower concretizing mind which must be awakened, understood and used with definiteness before the higher mind can become the medium through which knowledge can be gained of those realities which constitute the kingdom of God (EP Vol II:68).

Amelia ponders upon this apparently simple categorization.

_I can accept the distinction between the lower and higher minds, since it is easy for me to observe the two in operation. When I am engaged in the ordinary affairs of life I operate down habituated pathways, automatic responses. I see life in practical terms. I hold conversations about the weather and my children’s achievements at school. Should I venture to draw some general statement on the basis of these ordinary observations, I am aware that some of those with whom I converse retreat and seek ways to change the subject. With others my higher mind can sweep over vast terrains. It flies and it penetrates, just like the eagle. I see huge expanses of thought. This is a cool, detached place. I am no longer constrained by my conditioned responses, I am free, liberated and most at home. I am very happy to be informed by Bailey that this is the pathway to something higher still._
Now I read that as a personality I am the sumtotal of three bodies, three ways of expressing myself and experiencing. I have a physical, emotional and a mental body. I cannot deny that this is the case, although I might not have considered these three as separate vehicles. What combines these three bodies into one whole is the personality. Sometimes I do not know my own personality. I have a sense of it, I can draw some impression of it and pay attention to it, but so much of what I do is automatic. I do not act in the world fully aware of ‘Amelia’. I would not wish to be so self-conscious. Am I a unified whole? Bailey states that one must be so in order to seek contact with the soul. Have I sought such contact through my life? Which part of me is the soul? How would I know that the soul exists, let alone that I had contacted it. Who is this I?

If I am a personality, a soul and a spirit all in one being, then how do I know which of me is the I that I know at any given moment? Bailey says appearance veils quality and life purpose. That it is my own personality that is a screen, a barrier to knowing the soul. Somehow I must unveil myself through self expression and self realization. I realize myself or come to know myself through experience.

Bailey describes the soul as a centre of consciousness, the Knower, observer and interpreter of experience, and the nature of awareness:

Many are as yet in the initial stage of registering an awareness of a field of expression which they know exists – the field of soul awareness – but which is not yet for them their normal field of expression (EP Vol II:13).

Amelia spends many hours of reflection and inner searching in order to find some point of reference, some understanding of the distinction between the personality and the soul as if they were two distinct ways of knowing. Amelia observes herself and strives to know herself.

Thoughts swirl in great flurries as I focus upon knowing the Knower. I feel stretched thin in observation. I focus in upon a blank screen. I know I am not my own thoughts but that which thinks. I see my thoughts dance around and lead me in many directions. I notice the differing quality of my thoughts. Some lead me to dark
places. Some trigger strong emotions. I penetrate the blank screen into nothing. I shift location. Am I the screen or that which looks at it from over here? What is it that I am looking at? I am aware. I am aware that I am aware. Is this awareness of awareness always the same. How long does it last and when do I have it. Do I watch myself reflecting upon myself, and how can I come to know the watcher. Is it the case that I can not know but only become?

If I behold and interpret experience am I the soul? The personality in Bailey’s world is the mask of the soul. Must I penetrate the mask? Sometimes I am the mask and at others I wear the mask. Sometimes I strip myself bare.

Amelia appears to have become somewhat exhausted by this introspective sojourn. She seems to have a difficulty that has arisen out of the idea that there exists a separation between soul and personality as ways of knowing. Might it not be the case that movement from personality to soul orientation carries the personality into the soul, so that the two become one, thus dissolving the distinction. Perhaps this explains why Amelia has trouble discerning the difference. As Amelia continues to explore she becomes caught in an apparent infinite regress of being aware that she is aware and so on. It appears that Amelia has become entangled in an effort to grasp definitions as clarity eludes her. She turns to the texts for assistance and reads:

Let me again repeat:
1. The soul is the son of God, the product of the union of spirit and matter.
2. The soul is an embodiment of conscious mind, the expression, if one might so phrase it, of divine intelligent awareness.
3. The soul is a unit of energy…(EP Vol I:42).

It seems that I must be comfortable with the notion that the aspect of myself that I wish to know, the soul, is paradoxically that part of myself that knows!

Bailey identifies a key aspect of the evolution of consciousness of humanity as the soul gaining increasing control of the personality. The personality is intended to embody love and the soul is intended to embody divine purpose. Bailey argues that
when the personality recognizes the demands of the soul a duality of purpose emerges between the soul and the personality:

The tragedy, the problem and the glory of man is that he can identify himself with both aspects – the form [personality] and the life [spirit]; and his psychological state is such that during the period wherein he forms part of the human kingdom, his kingdom, his consciousness fluctuates between these pairs of opposites, [ ] mine (EP Vol I:249-50).

The difficulty of discrimination in terms of awareness that Amelia faces might also be depicted as an acceptance that knowledge and knowing are contingent upon the point of view of the knower. Another metaphor that may assist Amelia is the arguably inseparable nature of meaning and context in discourse analysis, which may lead to an acceptance of the changing and somewhat ephemeral nature of the self, as contextually constructed (Gergen 2001). And therefore meaning is bound within that constructed system and resolved in the acceptance of a both/and notion of inclusivity. Such subtleties may help Amelia in accepting Bailey’s notion of identification, which shifts awareness in one of two directions, towards the spiritual or the material life.

*If I accept that I am both a personality and a soul and that these two drive in differing directions, then of course I am split. Straight away I must try to decide whether at any given moment, when faced with a choice, a decision or a course of action, the underlying motive is coming from the soul or the personality. Before I thought of myself as comprising this duality there was no problem. Now I am forced to question. However, if I view myself as two in one, as a merged being, then I ponder the possibility that I can locate a synthesis of identification that resolves the pull of oppositions within myself.*

Amelia continues to search. Accepting that the soul and the personality represent two directions, creating a duality that is itself an illusion, she still seeks to understand how the soul can grow and gain control of the personality and how that might manifest in her own life, since ‘all life is opportunity and individual reaction to opportunity is one of the factors which indicate soul growth’ (EP Vol I:xviii).
‘Well’, thinks Amelia, ‘this is comforting’.

As Amelia ponders the statement more deeply she realizes that the assessment of soul growth lies in the nature of her reaction to opportunity. There is no escaping self examination.

Yet paradoxically it is the attention that I pay, not to my own self, but to humanity’s needs that indicates soul growth. The attention I pay to human betterment is congruent with my own self improvement.

Bailey states that the soul has a purpose and I am to discover what that is. I am to know it, and in so doing I become that which I seek. The soul is the model maker, the engineer following a pattern. The soul is the agent, consciousness is the function of the soul. The soul uses consciousness, uses awareness.

Amelia ponders upon what this means in terms of her own life.

I am burdened with the need to concentrate upon the motives that lie behind my choices in life as the path to the discovery of soul purpose. I forget to pay attention. I am sure that with practice I could consider every single choice, every word spoken. This seems too heavy and controlled. Perhaps my motives, choices and words could more simply arise from some deeper orientation within myself. Finding this, to my mind, is the spiritual path, involving conscious intelligent adaptation. I am becoming increasingly aware of various thought patterns, where they come from and where they may lead. Less and less I get consumed by them. More and more I am familiar with the gentleness of being centred in awareness. Yet this is all very well when life is easy! Try remaining in control of one’s mental and emotional apparatus under pressure or stress.

The unfolding of consciousness can be looked at in terms of what it is that I am observing. Self observation, the observation of others, of world affairs, of abstract thought. It is like looking out at life through a window.
When I read Bailey, I find myself alert, aware and illumined. I notice that as I descend into the regions of my concrete mind, my emotions or my physical body, the realms of my conditioned responses, reactions, unexamined opinions and habits of thought, this awareness progressively recedes, unless I actively focus my awareness into these domains. Yet it is in these locations that change would be beneficial and also where the resistance to change is greatest. I freeze in these places. There is no doubt in my mind that being seated in my own consciousness, on the higher mental plane, is a serene and pleasant place. The abstract mind is the bedfellow and the two unite. The battleground is in drawing down this peaceful state, of awareness and making it control the other parts of me. If I choose to do it, then I do. If I choose not to, then I don’t. It is a question of daily practice and persistence. I am not struggling to attain the state of serenity in the abstract mind. That is also mine whenever I choose it. Indeed, all my own inner growth now occurs from this position, looking down, as it were, on all my weaknesses. I am not perfect. I judge some of my failings as dreadfully limiting.

I understand the need for silence and do not practice it. I grasp the need to conserve energy and find myself busily dissipating my own resources. I am aware that there exists an opportunity to consider the consequences of my actions and to act responsibly and I still react.

After spending months deeply immersed in Bailey’s world, Amelia has reached a new understanding.

Now I ask myself when does the soul speak. I know when the soul light infuses me. I know when I become soul, I register, in my mind and brain, illumination, insights, wisdom, and when love flows in response to a call from others. I trust this, I believe that in less potent ways this is beginning to occur much more often. I liken the light of the soul to a kind of drawing down process. This to me is inspiration. As an experience it is expansive. My heart beats faster and my body seems to vibrate similar to an adrenalin rush. My mind feels vast. Still I question the authenticity of the congruence between my own experience and what I read.
I am aware that my mind is now heavily occupied with placing Bailey’s framework within myself. However, the picture is not complete. Bailey states that I am not simply a soul and a personality, I also have a third part of my nature, that of spirit, the divine aspect associated with will, purpose and life itself. Am I to know this spirit within myself? Somehow the notion of soul is much more real, tangible and comprehensible. Spirit defies comprehension. It seems to me that Spirit must be lived.

According to Bailey there exists a final state of consciousness, a state of spiritual or monadic being that realises identification with the Whole, at the same time as it holds, below the threshold of consciousness, all the lesser identifications. ‘The soul itself is a major centre of experience in the life of the monad’ (EP Vol II:314). Bailey’s work does not focus greatly upon monadic consciousness as Bailey is more concerned with familiarising the reader with the soul. However, a unified state in which divine purpose is known is purported to exist as a point of attainment within the kingdom of God itself. Whilst the human kingdom may not be able to reach this stage as yet, it is still a goal, a purpose that gives direction and the beginning and end of Bailey’s explanation of the evolution of consciousness.

It seems to me that spiritual energy uses the energy pathways constructed by the soul. The energy is very different. The vibration is higher and clearer. The will aspect is surely felt and one becomes single-pointed, intensely focused, yet simultaneously relaxed. Charged and elevated, using the expansion already existent in consciousness, spirit extends it further and yet brings it to a point.

I realise the flowing of soul energy and its effect on my lower self and my environment. Basically the energy penetrates, impacts on all corners of the self and adjusts whatever remains that still vibrates in an inharmonious way, over time, and raises each to its own vibration. In trusting that this occurs it is no longer necessary to self-analyse, and agonize over defects. It is a more relaxed, peaceful way of being. The real work becomes watching – energy, speech and thought.

Knowing she is only at the beginning of the journey, piecing together each concept into this emerging whole, Amelia returns to the notion of herself as a macrocosm of
her physical, emotional and mental bodies, and simultaneously a microcosm of divinity. If spirit, soul and personality are expressions of energy, then Bailey’s work ought to explain the way that these energies flow, some structure or field through which they operate in the human being. As I described in Chapter Four, Bailey uses the eastern mystical notion of the etheric centres, or nodal intersections within an etheric web to describe the main energy flows within the human body. According to Bailey these centres receive, absorb and transmit energy that circulates within and without the etheric web (EP Vol II:63-66).

Amelia realizes that Bailey’s world constitutes a dynamic interplay of interconnected energetic systems, and evolution concerns the manipulation of those systems for some purpose.

*My own being becomes a combination of consciousness and life forming a whirlpool of force that can be shaped to act and thus affect my surroundings. I can now feel both power and responsibility. I have the power to shape and I have a responsibility in the actions I create. Perhaps the idea of karma, or reaping what we sow, is a useful reminder of the responsibility we have. The idea that there are consequences for our actions has both a tangible dimension and a metaphysical one. The tangible is clear in actions that have an immediate and observable effect. Metaphysical consequences could be realized in the notion of reincarnation.*

*Perhaps I am more comfortable with the abstract description of myself than I am with the idea that I am a human soul subjected to the energies of the physical, emotional and mental bodies that I created out of the best material I could gather, under karmic constraints, in this one of many incarnations. Bailey describes the process of reincarnation, a recapitulation of Theosophical teachings derived from eastern mysticism. I can neither concur or deny this. I notice that I am wary. I have a handle with care warning thought around the notion of reincarnation, the result of my own feelings of embarrassment when I recall the past life regression I engaged in during my New Age phase. I endeavour to remain open whilst ambivalent.*

Amelia continues to gather together Bailey’s central definitions of the self, reflecting upon the implications embedded in this way of knowing.
Am I to gauge my own soul activity by the measure of conscious use I make of the mind and my ability to express loving wisdom through it? Bailey argues that in order to improve the relationship between the soul and the personality, the individual must learn how to be of service to humanity. It is becoming clearer in my mind that the main thrust of Bailey’s argument is to urge each reader to act in the world as benevolently as he or she can. The personal reward is my own evolutionary growth. In other words, I grow as a result of focusing my energies upon the needs of others and not upon my self. If I use my energies wisely I will establish a rhythm, a magnetic field in which all my virtues and good inclinations can find expression. All that is good in me, judged against generally accepted notions of goodness and virtue, like being kind, loving and compassionate, are soul qualities. When I do good things to please myself am I selfish? Whatever I do that serves myself is to be regarded as separative and leads not towards the evolution of consciousness, to an expansion of awareness. I am certain that it is never so straightforward and clear in practice. Sometimes we can serve others and ourselves in one action.

Bailey teaches that individual spiritual progress lies in awareness of the locus of attention and the recognition, through discernment, detachment and dispassion, of life’s processes. In recognition we name. I name the kingdom of God on earth as all those loving wise gentle magnetic people who sacrifice their personal desires to the more worthy desire to save humanity. I see examples everywhere, amongst senior statesman, politicians, NGO workers, idealists, scientists, all visible in the world today. I know that thousands more exist beyond the reach of media attention working equally as hard. Am I amongst this cohort? I would argue, in spite of feeling like I may be construed as a mediocre type suffering from an inflated sense of my own importance, that I have made my own contributions.

As Amelia immerses herself in Bailey’s work, she becomes increasingly more accepting of framing herself, re-languaging herself in Bailey’s terms.

The centre of my attention fluctuates between the hold the past has on me, the future that has not yet revealed itself to me and the present in which I work. Still, I am accustomed to the feeling of being stretched every which way. I have fought many
long years heroically amidst a myriad of apparent contradictions. I have developed and maintained alertness, awareness, watchful unfolding, and discernment, in terms of where my purpose lies and what the point of everything that was happening to me was. I have become attached and lost. I have suffered as humanity suffers. My attention like a silver birch in a tempestuous winter, sways and wavers retaining its own luminosity. I resonate with Bailey’s work most strongly around the notion of purpose. All other aspects of Bailey’s esotericism pivot upon my own all pervasive deep seated desire to know purpose.

5.4.2 Preliminary Reflections on Bailey’s World Through Amelia’s Eyes

As Amelia wrestles with some core concepts of Bailey’s model, an increasing acceptance of the perspective seems to be evident in the journal entries. Whilst this is just the beginning of Amelia’s journey, the work has made a deep impression upon the way that Amelia construes herself. This impression has continued throughout the heuristic journey, eventually manifesting itself in the following manner.

Since reading Bailey I notice that when I am feeling troubled by something and I ponder upon my state of mind or the way I feel, small quotations from Bailey’s texts float into my awareness unsolicited, like thoughts on wings. These apparent quotations carry a voice of authority reminding me of the way that Bailey would approach or interpret my problem. I am divided by this experience. Do I agree with this thought? Do I feel judged or is it helpful? I am amazed at the way my mind works!

Amelia draws attention to the way that the texts seem to encourage the construal of the self as divided. This is a powerful device that creates a dualistic state whilst pointing to unity. The division is thus a problem to be resolved in order to gain unity. This sense of duality and the possibility it offers for growth has been recognized by Jung (in Campbell, 1971) who states, ‘the essential feature of the dualistic phase is the widening of the horizon of life, and it is this that is so vigorously resisted’ (Jung, in Campbell 1971:10). Jung argues that consciousness can be expanded through ‘the tension of opposites and building up a state of wider and higher consciousness’(1971:10).
There is also a glimmer of moral pressure that Amelia responds to. The texts seem to be encouraging Amelia to improve herself so that she can serve humanity. A moral imperative constitutes a powerful tool that exerts ideological pressure upon the individual made vulnerable through an acceptance that their life be judged by the interpretation the texts offer of the inner self. Yet Bailey exerts this pressure in recognition of a pragmatic approach to the spiritual life in which goodness is not only an ultimate value, it is also a moral attribute imbuing action with its own virtuous purpose. This aspect of Bailey’s work will be explored more thoroughly below.

5.5 Amelia and Bailey’s Construct of The Seven Rays

The evolution of humanity and each individual within it is depicted from Bailey’s perspective as an ever increasing alignment to the pre-existing pattern held in the mind of Deity. Throughout the solar system many kinds of energy are said to impact upon every entity and each individual responds to these energies, receiving, absorbing, transmitting, attracting or repelling them. The idea is that the energies within the solar system can carry the intent of a higher order entity, the designer or pattern maker. Somehow the energies carry the potential to influence the unfolding of this pattern, and carry evolution forward. It becomes the task of the individual to respond to the impact of these energies in accordance with the intended pattern. ‘Consciousness is literally the reaction of active intelligence to the pattern’ (EP Vol II:57).

Amelia interposes –

*How do we learn to discern this intended pattern, or is the process inexorable? I might imagine some geometric template of energies radiating in a harmonic symphony. This appeals to me. I am taken into an abstract metaphysical realm of possibilities and begin to feel a little ethereal. I search for glimpses of understanding in my effort to grasp the entirety of this unfolding picture.*

It is the psychological interpretation of this postulated metaphysical system of Ray energy that is central to Bailey’s esoteric worldview. Esotericism generally tends to
depict a quasi-scientific realm of energies and forces acting upon living matter within a complex dynamic system. For Bailey the purpose of this landscape is not to offer an external reality that challenges the reality depicted by science. Esotericism turns metaphysics back into the subjective realm, metaphysics becomes metaphor and the inner world of the microcosm becomes the panoramic stage.

As we saw in Chapter Four, Bailey identifies seven major energy streams that function within our solar system. Called the ‘Seven Rays’, this formulation is derived from Plotinus’ Hypostases, or the three levels of divine reality, the Soul, Intelligence and the One (Wallis 1972:2). Plotinus based this metaphysical formulation on the Platonic theory of Forms. According to Wallis, it was Plotinus who identified the metaphysical realities postulated by earlier thinkers, with states of consciousness. The Hypostases can be considered as having an objective transcendent reality and subjective dynamic contents of an individual’s inner life. The three hypostases correspond to the first three of Bailey’s Rays. The first Ray refers to the One, the second Ray to the Soul and the third Ray to Intelligence. The three unfold into seven using a Pythagorean progression:

The whole system of ray influence, or radiatory warmth, considered both physically and psychically, is one of an intricate circulation and interaction. The radiation or vibration passes in ordered cycles from its originating source, the One ray, or systemic Logos, to the different centres in His body (TCF:437).

The Rays wax and wane in cycles of varying degree. These waxing and waning cycles are contingent upon the receiving body’s functional mode, which can either absorb the Ray energy or act as a channel, transmitting the energy elsewhere:

It will consequently be apparent how the knowledge of these cycles, and of the force manifestation or obscuration of a Ray will eventually lead to a working with the Law, and to an intelligent co-operation with the plan of evolution (TCF:440).

Bailey states that the second Ray of Love-Wisdom, the Ray of our solar Logos is the one permanent Ray within our solar system. The will or purpose of Deity is
expressed through the second Ray. All other systemic Rays become sub-rays of this Ray.

According to Bailey, the subrays of the solar Logos permeate our system, animated by their corresponding cosmic Rays. To these six cosmic influences the planetary Logoi respond. They absorb the influence, being centres in the body of the solar Logos, and pass it through their schemes, circulate it through their own centres (chains) and transmit it to other schemes, colouring it with their own shade, qualifying it with their own note. The force or vibration of any ray is the intelligent purpose of a planetary Logos, His [sic] life energy working in and through His body of manifestation. Thus the point of evolution of one planetary Logos will affect the whole system (EP Vol I:404).

The energy alignments of the system that are achieved through humanity are governed by the fourth Ray of harmony through conflict. This fourth Ray alignment, ‘results in a clearing of a direct channel from the heart of our scheme through every ring-pass-not to the cosmic correspondence outside the solar system’ (EP Vol I:363). Bailey stresses the importance of the fourth Ray and the numerical correspondence of the number four throughout the cosmology emphasizes humanity’s centrality, obligation and opportunity.

Within Bailey’s model humanity moves in a whirlpool of forces of all types and qualities being composed of energies in every part of his manifested and unmanifested expression and is therefore related to all other energies. According to Bailey the aspirant is aware that the physical body is an automaton, obedient to whatever forces (energy directed by human will) and energies are the controlling factors in the subjective, conditioning individual.

Bailey invites the reader to understand themselves in terms of the Rays. To facilitate this Bailey provides several detailed descriptions of the Ray types as psychological profiles in her *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*, comprising five volumes. Amelia found these descriptions compelling, reading each delineation deeply absorbed in the process, as if these Ray descriptions would contain power to explain some aspects of Amelia’s life story: her disposition; her responses to life’s events; her strengths and
weaknesses; areas where she might grow; in what direction ought she to progress; and what aspects she ought to decrease in potency in her life. The key to this procedure lies in ascertaining the Ray of Amelia’s soul and contemplating this Ray quality in her life in contrast to the Ray of her personality. The task before Amelia is to use her powers of discernment to decide upon these Rays and then orient her life in favour of her soul Ray. If Amelia were to make a mistake then she would inflate her personality which would lead her away from spiritual growth. Amelia is also invited by the texts to decide which Rays her mental, emotional and physical bodies are on.

After much reflection upon the profiles Bailey provides I am now convinced I have a second Ray soul and a third Ray personality.

The second Ray:

Is called the ray of wisdom from its characteristic desire for pure knowledge and for absolute truth – cold and selfish, if without love, and inactive without power. When both power and love are present, then you have the ray of the Buddhas and of all great teachers of humanity,-those who, having attained wisdom for the sake of others, spend themselves in giving it forth. The student on this ray is ever unsatisfied with his highest attainments; no matter how great his knowledge, his mind is still fixed on the unknown, the beyond and on the heights as yet unscaled (EP Vol I:203).

If I assume that I do have a soul that pulls me in the direction of matters spiritual, then this second Ray description fits me well. My personality might be described in the following passage:

The aspirant upon the third ray is apt to waste much energy in perpetuating the glamourous forms with which he persistently surrounds himself. How can he achieve his goal when he is ceaselessly running hither and thither – weaving, manipulating, planning and arranging? (EP Vol II:360),

And:

6 Bailey is not consistent in her use of capitals for the Rays.
This is the ray of the abstract thinker, of the philosopher and the metaphysician…His imaginative faculty will be highly developed…his idealism will often be strong; he is a dreamer and a theorist, and from his wide views and great caution he sees every side of a question equally clearly (EP Vol I:204-5).

I prefer the latter description but admit to the tendency expressed in the former. I do weave and plan and I am a great organizer. These plans are indeed the ‘glamourous forms’ Bailey suggests and I acknowledge that life unfolds according to some other agenda, hidden from my view.

Rather curiously I spoke of my third Ray personality in terms of weaving and my description turned out to be similar to that written on the pages of text immediately following and which I had yet to read. Perhaps the description given on the page of the third Ray was a culmination of previous descriptors provided in earlier parts of the text, and my mind simply assembled the information using the same metaphor that Bailey employed. I have found that I become so absorbed in the descriptions, so embracing of the worldview that I can at times pre-empt the next section of the work. Yet I notice a resistance to categorizing myself in Ray terms. It seems to shape how I think of myself and in this way limit me. When I think of myself through the categories or profiles given, I seem to lose sight of what does not fit, of other ways of viewing myself.

Bailey states that there is rarely, if ever, a pure manifestation of any Ray type in human form. The Rays become distorted through the imperfectly evolved human form. The further a woman or man evolves, ‘the ray qualities begin to dominate. The impress of the controlling rays can be more clearly noted and the point in evolution can be more accurately realized’ (EP Vol I:347).

The Rays are a central part of Bailey’s world. They form the foundation of her psychological model. I find them a useful template and as I have become accustomed to reading lists of qualities in terms of astrological signs, planets and their various configurations, I can approach the Rays with relative ease, a sense of familiarity. What is much more challenging is the practice of discerning which Rays are
associated with the physical, emotional and mental bodies, which I find harder to do than the identification of the personality and the soul Rays. For the sake of completeness, I have identified that I have a fifth Ray mind, a sixth Ray emotional nature and a seventh Ray physical body. My mind may be described in the following way:

The man on this ray will possess keen intellect, great accuracy in detail...He will generally be extremely truthful, full of lucid explanation of facts, though sometimes pedantic and wearisome from his insistence on trivial and unnecessary verbal minutae. He will be orderly, punctual, business-like, disliking to receive favours or flattery (EP Vol I:208).

*My emotional nature, I must confess, resonates well with the following passage:*

This [the sixth ray] is called the ray of devotion. The man who is on this ray is full of...intense personal feeling; nothing is taken equably. The man on this ray is often of gentle nature, but he can always flame into fury and fiery wrath. He will lay down his life for the objects of his devotion or reverence, but he will not lift a finger to help those outside of his immediate sympathies, [ ] mine (EP Vol I:209).

*My physical body is summed up in the next passage:*

This [the seventh ray] is the ceremonial ray, the ray which makes a man delight in “all things done decently and in order,” and according to rule or precedent, [ ] mine (EP Vol I:210).

*Again I see that in making this self assessment I presuppose my agreement, even hypothetically, with the Ray formulation itself. Nevertheless, the above quotations capture me rather effectively. Bailey argues that:*
Mental comprehension of the ray teaching, and the study of the rays in relation to evolving nature, are of mental importance and of spiritual import, but of no practical value in the living of the daily life, except in so far as they serve to shift the polarization of the aspirant off the emotional plane and on to the mental, and thereby produce alignment and stabilization (EP Vol I:232).

*It is this practice that teaches discrimination, and perhaps in focusing upon the task, we actually intentionally create, mould and shape each body, so that it becomes an ever purer example of one or other of the Rays. Within an esoteric perspective in which energy is simply direction in time and space, directed by an act of will, through the mind, then in the process of attempting to know oneself, we re-create ourselves.*

There is much inner work to be done in order to tread this path that Bailey describes. Amelia notes some of the many tasks that may lie before her. She has practiced discrimination and has identified which Rays her various bodies, personality and soul are on. Now she can watch these in operation in her life to monitor her progress. She must ask for no gratification for herself so that she can become decentralized, she must learn to feed the energy of the soul in others and not their personalities. Above all she must be pure in body, emotionally controlled and stable in mind. She must learn to induce soul control by following certain rules, which involve the cultivation of the seven Ray qualities, expressed as the urge to synthesise, which is a first Ray tendency; to illuminate (second Ray); to plan (third), to reveal (fourth), to analyse, to idealise and to respond to rhythm in life.

*If I accept as a working hypothesis that there is an evolutionary purpose played out in consciousness, which Bailey argues is the development of love wisdom involving expansions of a particular nature, then it makes me feel not only responsible but obligated. It re-languages my inner self. Its power lies in its impact on the self. It radically shifts how one looks at oneself. Instead of there being a myriad of disturbing bits of me, all broken up and analysed and compartmentalised. Bailey’s teachings lead me to view all of the parts of myself I may be unhappy with as one lump. One cohesive lump of yuk that can take control if my attention strays in its*
direction and I dwell there. I see myself dividing into what holds me back and what moves me forward. The lower verse the higher.

5.5.1 Reflecting on Amelia’s Journey With Bailey’s Rays

Bailey’s Rays facilitate a convergence of metaphysics and psychology. The Rays are a tool to interpret reality, informed by the background of esoteric cosmology. These Rays are emanating streams of energy that serve to facilitate the unfolding of consciousness of both the individual and humanity as a whole.

The Rays are a central component of Bailey’s psychological model. The Ray profiles, when combined with the model of the human constitution described above may promote self-understanding in esoteric terms. These seven delineations of temperament and disposition appear narrowly culturally specific. They contain esoteric and spiritual references and reflect an intellectual and introspective type of person. This limits the scope of the model. Amelia is one example of the type of person that may be drawn to the texts, certain to find themselves depicted through the seven Rays.

Whilst each Ray has a psychological description, the Rays remain energies. Amelia seems less concerned with the former and more the latter. One possible advantage in viewing ourselves as comprised of various combinations of the Rays is the potential re-orientation towards the life to the soul. However, the model itself constructs this distinction between the soul and the personality and the various Ray qualities each of these may have. Is it possible to attach language and analysis to a spiritual entity without limiting that entity within the language and analysis used, drawing the spiritual into the sphere of rational human experience. I would argue that it is not possible, and that consequently any psychological delineation of the soul is only a metaphoric signpost pointing the way but never the way itself. Amelia touches on this point in the following passage.

Is it the case that any reader of these texts would find their own lives take the form of an illustrative example? What about the tendency to make our lives fit the theory and the theory fit our lives? Have such experiences of consciousness really occurred or
are we fooling ourselves? It seems that whenever I read explanations concerning the nature of the human psychic constitution, I am drawn in, reflecting upon my own life. I take the personal and fit the ideas to it and me to the ideas. Is this what seekers do to try to find meaning? Seeing congruences, points of resonance, and particular experiences as significant, building a mental a picture in relationship to these ideas. There seems to be something fundamental that is not drawn into question in this process, some lack of objectivity created by the importance or centrality we ascribe to ourselves.

It seems to be prudent if I consider this tendency to potentially lead me to adopt a narrow perspective, that I must make a choice about what I expose myself to, knowing I will be influenced by it. I must also consider how I am to relate to such models. (discernment). Otherwise I am just making an automatic response that may appear reflective, but is not. So in applying the Rays to myself, in order to test out the effectiveness of the insightful descriptions they offer, my own response, the descriptions themselves and the process involved in their adoption all need to be drawn into question. This seems to me to be the case regardless of whether the model or the perspective I am exposing myself to and considering adopting, either entirely or in part, is intended to foster my own growth. I cannot simply assume that any growth has occurred. Maybe all I am doing is stepping sideways.

In my view, psychological profile models tend towards self absorption, self analysis and through these tendencies an overly self-focused or ego-inflated attitude. This may be exacerbated through the allure of esotericism. When Amelia became engaged with the material on the psychological Ray profiles her absorption was total. Amelia spent hours identifying the Ray profiles of herself and her family. Once she was satisfied with the results, Amelia responded to her activities critically. Amelia felt the process to be self-indulgent.

I found that when I read Bailey’s work on energy portrayed through the metaphors of the three fires and motion and the notion of polarities I was lifted beyond myself. I found the exploration of energy to be a powerful simplifier. Construing psychological processes in terms of energy flows seems to keep me located in a
transcendent state of awareness. When the Rays become reduced to psychological descriptors I feel this simplicity is lost in a fog of words.

Bailey’s motivation in delineating the seven Rays is not only to promote self understanding. Bailey applies the Ray model to an understanding of spiritual growth of humanity as a whole, including nations, organizations and leaders. The individual becomes a microcosm of a cosmological macrocosm and a microcosmic example of humanity. Again, this way of viewing the self creates a symbolic image of crucifixion, related to the number four. So the turning inward involved in contemplating Bailey’s esotericism involves the reader in two kinds of introspective worlds, the metaphysical intricacies of a grand cosmic scheme and an esoteric understanding of a humanity that lives in the tangible world experienced through the senses. In this respect Bailey argues that the discipline of psychology ought to address the whole of humanity and not simply have the individual as the locus of concern. The usefulness of psychology:

Lies in the fact that it lays the emphasis upon the relation of the unit to the whole, to the environment and contacts; it studies man’s equipment and apparatus of such contact, and seeks to produce right adaptation, correct integration and coordination and the release of the individual to a life of usefulness, fulfillment and service (EP Vol II:402-3).

Amelia responds with the following comment.

I am amazed by the way that I embrace Bailey’s esoteric world. When I am immersed in this esoteric way of knowing, of looking inward at myself and outwardly upon the world, both in relation to Bailey’s cosmology, I find that at each turn things make sense. I find it hard to be critical or find any inconsistency in the work. It all seems to make logical sense within itself and it also seems to make nearly perfect sense of my own inner world. Will it also make sense of the world I view through my own eyes? I am pleased to find that Bailey insists that self exploration is only a means to a greater end, that of helping others, even the whole of humanity!

See Bailey’s Destiny of The Nations.
5.6 A Concluding Pause

Throughout Part One of Amelia’s journey with Alice, tension has emerged from Amelia’s engagement with the texts. Amelia already seems drawn towards taking any one of Bailey’s notions and applying them to herself as interpretive tools. Amelia does not seem able to resist treating the notions literally. She begins to describe herself through Bailey’s notions, especially when exploring the Ray descriptors. It seems that Bailey’s metaphors do not remain quite so symbolic when they are applied to the self. Amelia’s use of the esoteric technique of correspondence seems to have become reduced to a simplistic interpretive mechanism. When Amelia draws a metaphor to herself she is adopting occultistic gnosis (Hanegraaff 1992), and in that action, she loses sight of another possible direction she might have taken, involving the drawing of herself out to meet the metaphor on its own ground. This is artistic gnosis involved in imaginative abstraction, rather than literal interpretation. To be fair to Amelia, she is aware of this, as she has indicated above in relation to the abstract symbols of fire and motion.

To Amelia’s credit, she has treated her engagement with the Bailey texts very seriously indeed, making a tremendous effort to know herself through the lens of esotericism. Later we may see if Amelia also manages to see esotericism through the lens of herself. In Part Two Amelia continues her journey as she explores the radical esoteric notion of *initiation* through Bailey’s work.
CHAPTER SIX
ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS OF SUBJECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS: PART TWO

6.1 Introduction

Amelia’s journey into Bailey’s world deepens as she continues to seek correspondences between herself and features of Bailey’s esotericism, struggling with occultistic and artistic gnosis. We find Amelia sufficiently imbued with Bailey’s conceptual framework of the self to tackle the dynamic features of Bailey’s developmental stage model of spiritual discipleship. This model depicts Bailey’s interpretation of humanity’s greatest and highest aspirations, and is concerned with identifying key transition points in the unfoldment of soul consciousness.

Bailey uses the term unfoldment to convey the manner in which evolution proceeds:

   The life at the heart of the solar system is producing an evolutionary unfoldment of the energies of that universe…Through the use of matter the soul unfolds and finds its climax in the soul of man (TWM:13).

Attached to ‘unfold’ is the suffix ment, which indicates the process, the means and the end result of that process, used by Bailey to stress the more formal, structured processes involved in spiritual growth. Spiritual unfoldment in Bailey’s sense implies that contained within each individual exists an implicate order (Bohm 1998:105) that pertains to the spiritual life, and that evolution is the process whereby that order becomes explicit, realized or revealed1.

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1 David Bohm uses the term implicate order to refer to an enfolded order contained within an object that unfolds into an explicate order. Bohm uses the example of a hologram in which the whole object is contained within each part (Bohm 1998:105).
6.2 Bailey’s Notion of Initiation

Bailey’s developmental stages are only concerned with the evolving spiritual life construed in terms of control of the individual’s (and humanity’s) personality by the soul. This control is depicted as slowly increasing in magnitude, and marked by certain leaps, made at key moments, to another level. These leaps are called *initiations*. Paradigm shift, turning point, transformation, transfiguration, rebirth, baptism, epiphany, quantum leap and even spontaneous emergence relate to the notion of *initiation*. Within the esoteric world however, initiation refers to a particular event of serious importance, one that helps to generate esotericism’s reputation as indicative of secret, elitist groups (Irwin 2001:1-2). Bailey attempts with considerable force to universalize the notion of initiation and detach it from its occult ritual associations. Bailey says of initiation that it:

Has nothing to do with societies, esoteric schools and organizations…The Teachers of the race, and the Christ, Who is the “Master of all the Masters and the Teacher alike of angels and of men,” are not more interested in these organizations than They are in any movement in the world today which carries illumination and truth to men. The initiates of the world are to be found in every nation, in every church, and in every group where men of good will are to be found working, and where world service is rendered. The modern so-called esoteric groups are not the custodians of the teaching of initiation, nor is it their prerogative to prepare man for this unfoldment (BC:25).

There are thirty-nine definitions of initiation listed in the *Master Index of the Books of Alice A. Bailey* and I have selected the more salient and accessible references to quote below. Overall these definitions convey an understanding in terms of universal turning points involving expansions of consciousness on the spiritual path of discipleship. These expansions of consciousness include pre-existing aspects of the individual, a new, broader awareness of reality, a new way of being and a new sense of direction. The individual gains a renewed grasp of the Plan or Great Design and the ‘lower nature’ becomes energetically changed and thus better able to fulfill new intentions:
It [initiation] is first of all the entering into a new and wider dimensional world by the expansion of a man’s consciousness so that he can include and encompass that which he now excludes, and from which he normally separates himself in his thinking and acts. It is, secondly, the entering into man of those energies which are distinctive of the soul and of the soul alone,—the forces of intelligent love and spiritual will, [ ] mine (EP Vol II:12).

Bailey makes it clear that expansions of consciousness in themselves are not the same as initiation. Rather, initiation is regarded by Bailey in the abstruse argument that it is the effect of the recognition of the expansion (DNA Vol II:339-40). Bailey explains that initiation embodies a series of recognitions by the initiate, including a retrospective recognition of the end of a cycle of happenings, the recognition of the appearance of an eventual yet imminent cycle, or prevision, and the acceptance of initiation or recognition of its occurrence (DNA Vol II:339-40).

Recognition is based, according to Bailey, on an inner reflective life, through which change or growth can occur. So change, valued as desirable becomes contingent upon the faculty of recognition, itself contingent upon an inner reflective life. Whilst we may all experience growth and change in our lives without this meta-level of awareness, perhaps it is the case that the spiritual unfolding of primary concern in Bailey’s work only occurs in individuals who are subjectively oriented (seeking knowledge from within the self) and think reflectively or epistemically (Kuhn and Weinstock 2002).

In Bailey’s view through initiation each individual has the potential (once they have integrated their physical, emotional and mental bodies into one coordinated whole) to go through the same type of expansion of consciousness. These initiations are thought to mark the beginning of the end of human evolution, and entry into the spiritual kingdom. Individual consciousness expands to recognize, or intuit group or planetary consciousness. So evolution of consciousness progresses from the instincts of early man, through the development of the intellect, typified by average contemporary humanity, to the intuitive awareness and wholistic vision which are attributes of the soul.
The initiations are described as a series of universal benchmarks, nine in all\(^2\). The first two are regarded as initiations of the threshold or preparatory initiations. The third refers to the first initiation in which the soul gains complete control of the personality and the individual enters the spiritual kingdom. From there each initiation marks ascension to a completely realized spiritual consciousness. Below I detail the nature of the first three of Bailey’s initiations. Bailey describes the fourth initiation as the renunciation or crucifixion, a time when ‘the spiritual will is released in full service and with full comprehension’ (RI:225). The remaining five initiations receive less attention in Bailey’s work. They are referred to generally in the following way:

Where atma or pure spirit is in control, where the Spiritual Triad is expressing the nature of the Monad, where identification with the purpose of deity has transcended illumination of the mind, and has also transcended cooperation through pure love with the Plan (RI:225).

Bailey describes the initiatory process in considerable technical detail, much of it highly abstract in flavour. Some of her ideas are encapsulated in the following quotations:

Initiation has been defined as a “progressive sequence of directed energy impacts.” These impacts are characterized by points of tension, and these lead inevitably to points of crisis (RI:724).

[These]:

points of tension (when \textit{consciously} attained) become the actuating energy which enables the disciple to “stand in the light and in that light see greater Light; within that greater Light he knows and sees, grasps and absorbs that which has hitherto been dark and secret and unknown.” This is initiation (RI:538).

Periods of search, periods of pain, periods of detachment, periods of revelation producing points of fusion, points of tension and points of energy projection-such is the story of the Path of Initiation (RI:538).

\(^2\) Refer to appendix A.
The point of crisis Bailey refers to involves decisions which are voluntarily or involuntarily made. Having made a decision the disciple stands at a point of tension (stress and strain) between the decision having been made and the next step to be taken becoming clearer, influencing his attitude to the future. ‘A point of tension is, symbolically, a storehouse of power’ (RC:73). Energy is generated and held for future use. This point of tension is a “static moment of concentrated contemplation” (DNA Vol II:419), and an intense interior preoccupation with the world of significances. When the work is done in the period of tension, there comes a point of emergence. This is an emergence from and an emergence into a new field of experience. Bailey argues that, ‘there is no initiation possible without a preceding revelation, and yet each initiation leads to a subsequent revelation’ (DNA Vol II:417). For Bailey, the former is self-engendered, the latter conferred.

The process of initiation is explained by Bailey from a variety of angles within her esoteric model. One approach is through recourse to her model of the seven Rays. Initiation involves the disciple recognizing that his or her personality Ray is a sub-Ray of the Ray of the soul (EP Vol II:13-16). This process is preceded by a purification of all the physical, emotional and mental bodies of the individual, so that energy can flow through them unhampered (EP Vol II:13-16). Energy that does not flow with ease through the physical, emotional or mental bodies is dissipated, scattered and distorted. Purification may occur through a variety of practices, Bailey stressing that good diet and exercise purify the physical body. Bailey also proposes her own esoteric methods. One way favoured by Bailey is the imaginative use of light in meditation, a technique I outline in Chapter Seven. As each body (physical, emotional and mental) is purified, its Ray energy becomes a sub-Ray of the personality Ray. The bodies are thus integrated, and, as the personality becomes infused by the energy of the soul, so the three bodies come under soul control.

Another way that Bailey construes the initiatory process is through the construction of an imaginary bridge to connect the lower to the higher self (DNA Vol II:193-4). A symbolic depiction of the initiation process involves the conscious construction of this bridge or antahkarana, linking the mental unit on the lower mental plane to the causal (soul) body and the manasic permanent atom on the higher mental plane.
(TCF:137, 173). This bridge does not exist other than in the imagination of the aspirant, it simply conveys a state of awareness, symbolically created through the power of thought, enabling access to the higher planes in Bailey’s model, particularly the plane of intuition (see chart, appendix B).

6.3 Amelia and Bailey’s Initiations

Having absorbed a great deal of this technical information, Amelia reflects upon how this informs her own life.

*I can feel aspiration in my veins, muddied by a conglomeration of conditioned thoughts and feelings, of self esteem, of being worthy, the struggles of the life of an outsider feeling never quite understood. I can feel myself drawn in by the notion of initiation, thirsty for more. I seem to resonate with the notion of initiation. I find the idea intriguing and engaging, yet initiation evokes thoughts of righteous superiority and secret ceremonies. I hope to be mindful of humility.*

The texts seem to encourage Amelia to wonder whether she constitutes a candidate for initiation and whether such an event has ever occurred in her own life. There seem to have been a few major turning points in her life, but how can she discern whether they were initiations, even if she accepts that both the notion and the interpretation are valid. How can it be the case that an individual with no particular faith or adherence to any creed, who follows no daily spiritual practice can entertain the idea that an event of such significance may have happened, bestowing upon her erratic existence some deeply personal explanation that many around her would not see. Considering this Amelia reflects upon her life. An intense, highly charged and somewhat nervy personality with a cool, detached and forthright exterior, Amelia has lived life at full pelt, exhausting herself in the turbulence of living, bored and restless whenever there seems nothing to do.

*I seem to have packed many lives into this one. I might exhaust myself sometimes but I seem to have access to an enormous powerhouse that keeps me going. There has always been an urgency in my life, a sense of having to get things done as fast as possible. I seem to catapult myself into new experiences when I have barely*
assimilated the previous phase. Rather than reach some perfected conclusion, I seem to scrape through, dragging all parts of me forward.

Amelia finds a simple congruence between Bailey’s explanation of the process of initiation and certain events of long duration in her experience. Amelia reads that it is up to each individual to ascertain how far they have evolved in consciousness and which initiation lies before them:

He has to become consciously aware of his exact point of attainment before he can really know what the next step is which he must consciously take. He is presented at this stage with a vast body or structure of truth (DNA Vol II:414).

Amelia feels that she may have just such a vast body of truth in her hands!

I converge upon Bailey’s teachings, devouring every word as it explains to me certain dramatic turning points over the past decades. One or two events enter my field of awareness, involving strange, mystical experiences, visions and a synchronicity of events that seem to turn the every day into a stream of weirdness pregnant with meaning. Turning points that built like waves pounding against a crumbling tower, that saw my life wrenched from me, people, places and possessions, ideas, outlook, attitude and understanding. When I thought it was over and I strived to put my life in order, I was in the middle of it. Months of reflection, of learning, of readjustment and of profoundly intense introspection ensued. Always to find myself back in the world of everyday people, engaged in some new activity. I found these transitions distressful and if I consider these processes as initiations then status has been granted to them. I may value these phases more highly. The notion of initiation elevates these turning points to a level laden with significance beyond mere expansions of consciousness, which have a profundity of meaning too. If I consider these tremendous upheavals to be initiations I wonder whether it helps me in understanding myself? I am plagued with not wishing to feel superior, advanced or special, knowing that these wishes I am quite capable of secretly feeling. I can see how the texts might feed a sense of self-importance, in spite of countless warnings within the texts to the contrary. Why must it be important to judge where or who I am?
Even if I accept this model, I feel I should be humble and place myself, along with hundreds of thousands of others, at the beginning, when the personality throws its weight on the side of soul influence. Like Christians calling upon the inner Christ, or New Age seekers trying to align with the Higher Self.

In spite of these reservations, Amelia continues to read the descriptions of the stages making an effort to find her place in Bailey’s model as suggested by the texts. The first initiation is described as a birth into the spiritual life, when the very first glimmerings of recognition of the light of the soul occur. ‘That which has been slowly gestating in man comes at last to birth, and the Christ, or soul, is born consciously’ (BC:42). This can only take place, argues Bailey, once the personality has become fully integrated (EP Vol II:264-7). For Bailey, an integrated personality functions through each of its three bodies which “focus their intention” through the medium of the physical brain, thus enabling the personality to be a self-directed entity upon the physical plane (RI:563). This type of individual may display many talents, be extremely versatile, charming and attractive (EP Vol II:14-15):

Preparatory to this first initiation, there has always to be…the denial of the lower self and the fervid acceptance by the personality of the loss of all the material factors which have held the soul a prisoner in the womb of time (DNA Vol II:244).

The first initiation occurs to individuals in this cohort who choose to orient themselves to a more spiritual way of living, beckoning through the Christ within (BC:44). For Bailey:

The life of the individual disciple, prior to taking initiation and passing through the experience of the new birth, is ever one of the utmost difficulty and hardness (BC:68).

It occurs to me that this stage of spiritual unfolding has become of considerable interest for the contemporary seeker, extending the notion of personal growth to embrace making a connection with a higher self and commencing a spiritual journey. My own interest was aroused as a consequence of my first encounter with Rebirthing
breathwork, nearly twenty years ago. An acquaintance, herself an inexperienced practitioner, wanted some people to practice on. The one distinct memory I have of that time was the euphoria I felt for hours afterwards, a kind of flooding of luxurious light that enfolded me in a bubble of happiness. I felt delightful comfort and a real sense of being loved by the source of this feeling.

The feeling of euphoria soon subsided, and I was left to face my life as ever. However, since that day I have carried with me a sense of mystery and purpose, a renewed sensed need for direction. Does my experience place me within this cohort of seekers, or initiates of the first degree? My understanding is that this orientation to the spiritual life found within the self reflects a collective human search for meaning and for dignity in an age of uncertainty, rapid change and threats to survival.

Even so, Amelia’s experience appears to converge with the following description:

An initiation is a blaze of illumination thrown upon the river of existence, and it is in the nature of a whole experience. There is not indefiniteness in it, and the initiate is never quite the same again in his consciousness (BC:105).

Amelia is now challenged by the task of ascertaining whether she fits the next category, the initiate of the second degree. The second initiation deals with the emotional plane as the aspirant tries to gain control of their emotional body. According to Bailey this is a very difficult stage when the inflowing energy of the soul intensifies the emotional nature. An individual reaching this stage needs to be able to demonstrate the ability to be steady, be in command of or purify their emotions so that all that remains is aspiration and a ‘sensitive response to all forms of divine life’ (RI:578). Bailey stresses that:

The initiatory process between the first and the second initiations is for many the worst time of distress, difficulty, realization of problems and the constant effort to ‘clear himself” (RI:577).
The second initiation stands for the demonstrated control and consecration to divinity of the desire nature, with its emotional reactions and its potent “wish life” (BC:100).

Bailey likens the second initiation to the Baptism of Christ, drawing upon Christ’s orientation to future service in teaching and healing that occurred after his baptism in the river Jordan at age thirty, and after the three temptations or tests of purity that took place in the wilderness (BC:96-132).

My goodness! I can very easily describe the last twenty years of my life in terms of increasing self understanding as a result of the dredging up of the bowels of my emotional being, to me all part of growing and maturing. I have dealt with an abundance of emotional matters arising from my past and how I responded to it, although with varying degrees of success, clearing away obstacles that prevent me from fulfilling my aspirations. What I may have considered to be a natural, taken for granted process, supported by the abundance of self-help books that reflect contemporary awareness of this same process, has now become, through Bailey’s ideas, another part of the spiritual journey.

Amelia proceeds with some reticence.

The first two initiations are considered to be threshold initiations, each preparing the disciple for the initiate life that occurs once the third initiation has been passed through. Bailey states that it is not always the case that the individual is aware of having passed through the first two stages, unlike the third initiation, which might be regarded as the milestone in Bailey’s model. With the exception of *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, the twenty four Bailey texts were written for aspirants and disciples who are passing through the first or second initiations, in preparation for the third:

Up to the third initiation, man has been occupied with the process of fusing soul and body into one unity. After the third initiation...man is oriented towards and becomes occupied with, a further fusion in consciousness, that of spirit-soul-body. I speak of a fusion in consciousness. The unity is ever there, and man in evolution is really becoming aware of that which already exists (EP Vol I:328-9).
According to Bailey, the third initiation occurs on the mental plane in full waking consciousness. The procedure involves an alignment of the concrete and abstract mind, and the creation of a direct channel for vision received by the ‘third eye’ or eye of the soul, which temporarily turns inward towards the higher spiritual light. The objective of this initiation is the sudden inflow of spiritual energy. The process flashes into being then fades out, leaving permanent, new, spiritual, instinctual trend towards spiritual perception and livingness. The third eye is now receptive to light from the highest source and functions like a lens for the reflection of light and for the attaining of the highest possible inner vision for the particular point in evolution reached (DNA Vol II:400). The keynote of this initiation is radiance and the initiate also displays detachment, endurance and power (EP Vol II:69-72, TCF:259-60 and DNA Vol II:289-291).

The initiate, released into a particular vortex of force, sensitive to the energy of pure electric fire, or life, must now learn methods of handling on a global scale, whatever the initiate has individually transcended, thus transmuting personal knowledge into wisdom (DNA Vol II:399). The initiate has dealt with his or her own personality and now must deal with the personality of humanity as a whole, in loving understanding and intelligent service. Having learnt to see through illusion, the initiate is now able to mentally register, interpret and transmit wisdom. Inner reflection and outer service merge into a single life activity. Personal will and God’s will are fused in the life of the initiate who sees not choice but an inherent impulse to act in accordance with spiritual will (DNA Vol II:286-7). According to Bailey, the initiate works behind the scenes, unknown, unrecognized and unacclaimed, even prepared to sacrifice his identity, instituting, or initiating any needed activities without a personal need for reward (DNA Vol II:288). Bailey uses the transfiguration of Christ as an exemplar of this stage, in which the divided self is finally healed, the higher self or soul able at last to control, in synthesis, the lower self or personality. Through the transfiguration, Christ ‘passed in His consciousness to the realm of inclusive realization…standing forth as the perfect expression of the uttermost possibility to which humanity could aspire’ (BC:141-142).
This pinnacle of achievement leads the individual into the initiate life. More initiations lie ahead, following the model Bailey adopts using the life of Christ as an illustration. As progress is made through these stages a more rarified form of consciousness is said to develop:

An initiate is essentially one whose sense of awareness is occupied with subjective contacts and impacts and is not predominantly preoccupied with the world of outer sense perception (EP Vol II:247).

Bailey does not consider spiritual unfoldment to be a linear progression. She stresses that the unfolding of consciousness occurs with much overlapping, fusing and inter-relating much like a spiral. Large portions of Bailey’s work concern problems arising from, and ways of dealing with, the personality, particularly in the early stages after the initiatory process has occurred. Inner chaos and turmoil may arise as the new spiritual energies flow through the individual:

Later ensues a period of synthesis, of organised activity and of a fuller expression of divinity. But there remains for a long time the need for recognition of energy and its right use (EP Vol II:412).

6.3.1 Amelia Describes Some Strange Experiences

A symbolic imaginative depiction of an initiatory expansion of consciousness may lead Amelia to believe she has passed through the process and grant herself a privileged status within her own sphere of influence. Even providing a concrete example of an initiate, or indeed the qualities that constitute or indicate the point of attainment, (inevitably implying those that do not), contains the same danger. There will always be those whose desire to believe will lead them to construct such a sense of achievement. Amelia acknowledges the ease with which she can adapt Bailey’s depiction of the spiritual path to her own life and history, supported by her own strange experiences occurring within the heuristic process.

_I had two weird experiences during my study of Bailey’s works. The first involved a kind of fit, where I shook uncontrollably for a few minutes, collapsed on the floor –_
my consciousness abstracted briefly and I became cleaved. I remember an in-flood of inspiration and a confrontation of fear. I was in a state of extreme nervousness and agitation and had been for a month prior. This ripping feeling was like an expansion of consciousness that in a flash ripped away the veils I had been hiding behind. Since this moment I appear to myself more illumed, with what seems to me at times as enormous electrical energy coursing through me. I seemed able to step into a new and subtle state of consciousness, be in it for sustained periods and feel comfortable if somewhat drained afterwards. The next experience was much more intense and of longer duration. It was the week of my first research residential. It involved a twelve hour journey by car, bus, train and taxi there and another twelve hours back. It was the very first week of my thesis on Alice A Bailey and I was naturally very excited to have an opportunity to embark on this study. I found myself in an extraordinarily heightened and joyous state, beaming radiance. Events during that week became laden with a deeper meaning and significance, involving chance meetings with strangers and a disconnected yet continuous stream of people seeking my advice as if I were somehow special. What made this time so strange was the continuous layering of event upon event, until, towards the end of the week, circumstances had become so strangely synchronous and demanding of my attentive examination that I still feel incredulous about them.

I arrived home in a bubble of euphoria. The experience will stay with me forever as one of those amazing, arresting times when somehow you know that life, beneath the surface, is far greater, far more magnificent than the imagination can bear. The mystical experience that followed, however, was even more profound. I experienced a stream of pure white light that coursed up my spine and exited at the crown of my head. I recall gasping as wave after wave of electric ecstasy enveloped my whole body. I placed my hand on the top of my head because I felt as if I were leaving my body. It was a rapturous experience in which every cell in my body came alive.

Since that day my life has changed completely. I now have an old life and a new life. My new life has involved a lot of adjustments and some turbulence. A lot of physical, emotional and mental tension.
I could detail this experience even further and compare it to descriptions offered by Bailey and identify points of convergence and the similarities that arise. Through this matching, I could then identify a particular stage that I have reached. I find that whilst I acknowledge the experience I had as spiritual, I cannot interpret that experience in terms of Bailey’s ideas, because in doing so I will unavoidably, be making claims of status, even if I leave such statements implicit. The experience I had parallels the raising of the kundalini fires, or the energy stored in the etheric centre at the base of the spine. Bailey correlates this experience with that of the third initiation. However, even if I accept the model Bailey proposes, I am confronted with the possibility that I may mis-interpret an experience and accord it a higher status.

Amelia reveals her acceptance of Bailey’s authority enough to doubt the authenticity of her own experience, after reading the following passage:

It might be of value to students to point out that frequently when a student is under the impression or belief that the kundalini fire has been aroused in him, all that has really happened is that the energy of the sacral centre (ie the sex centre) is being transmuted and raised to the throat, or that the energy of the solar plexus centre is being raised to the heart (EP Vol II:302).

Amelia’s reticence is compounded when she reads that, ‘the existence of claim-making is a guarantee of imposture’ (UA:291).

Amelia is also painfully aware of the disapproval one attracts when describing experiences that contain apparent evidence of a particular claim to status. These moments are deeply private.

Yet curiously, those interested in my thesis on Alice Bailey have asked me if I have had any mystical experiences, as if these events were proof of my suitability to the task or perhaps they were ranking me according to their own system.
6.4 Amelia and the Spiritual Path

Leaving the categorization of spiritual stages, we turn now to Bailey’s explanation of the spiritual path in general, described by Bailey through the arduous life led by the disciple, who continues to wrestle with their personality. Bailey’s esoteric view of the spiritual path is summarized as a process of increasing openness and receptivity to spiritual energy existing in the cosmos. As the disciple or initiate progresses along the path, the spiritual energy they receive stimulates their three bodies (physical, emotional and mental), which consequently increase in rate of rhythm and vibration (EP Vol II:451-3). It is this stimulation that creates the mental illumination, the sense of inspiration and vision experienced by the disciple:

Upon this reception, there eventuates a speeding up of the atoms which compose the personality vehicles; there follows a galvanizing into activity of cells in the brain which have been hitherto dormant and also of the body areas around the seven centres (EP Vol II:453).

In Bailey’s view this spiritual stimulation affects the disciple’s physical body, sensitizing their nervous system. A greater sensitivity and at times, hypersensitivity, to environment or surroundings may result. The disciple’s life is lived with greater pace and intensity. Some disciples, Bailey states, may suffer from psychological problems resulting from these changes that have created inner turmoil and initial distress for the disciple, who is left to cope with stimulatory increases and the need to adjust themselves to the new rhythm, to finding a new equilibrium (EP Vol II:452-463).

Bailey emphasizes a need for balance within the life of a disciple, to counter the intensifying effects of new inflowing spiritual energies, which blend with, and stimulate, the forces of the lower self (DNA Vol II:65-6). Bailey stresses the importance of diverting attention away from the lower self so as not to concentrate this mix of spiritual energy and personality forces further, focusing instead upon the utilization and expression of energy in service to others (DNA Vol II:185). Again and again Bailey stresses the need for all spiritually oriented people to express love and wisdom in service to others, and to turn away from self-aggrandisement.
Amelia contemplates her own current inner condition and realizes that her own cyclic inner turbulence could be attributed to the impact of spiritual energy over-stimulating various parts of her self.

*If I attribute moments of anger, frustration, moodiness or excitement to my response to a downpouring of spiritual energy I find this confirmation that I am a disciple. The advice given may then help me to maintain equanimity whilst feeling empowered to use my own energy for the betterment of humanity. On the other hand, if I attribute the same emotional and mental states to biological causes, then I may seek medical assistance if they are deemed serious enough. I may be described as having a hormone imbalance or some other physiological condition that renders me irritable, or I may have a psychological problem that could be aided through counseling or the consumption of psychotropic medication. I may decide I am perfectly normal, that everyone has their ups and downs and we all must learn to put up with each other. None of these latter explanations would lead me to be of service to humanity in the way that Bailey demands.*

Overall Bailey depicts the path of discipleship as one of hardship, sorrow and testing, stressing the need for a disciple to practice a focused control in their daily life and to use their awareness in constant recognition of the meaning of life events and circumstances and to remain conscious of their destiny (BC:54). The disciple is both an onlooker and a dramatic participant in their own life. It is this simultaneous or dual role that leads to the suffering the disciple experiences, as they struggle to shape their lower selves in accordance with their perception of their higher self (BC:139).

Amelia responds to the duality the disciple experiences as they function in the world of human activity, fulfilling the responsibilities that life demands.

*I cannot escape every day life whilst pursuing higher realms. The difficulty lies in marrying the two together so that they merge and synthesise into one whole. I feel very split, as if there are two of me, one wretched pathetic specimen of a human with issues and fears about everything, and one powerful, rich, interested and loving self who visions, inspires and elevates others. The heuristic process has been an*
insightful and elevating experience. Sitting for hours studying page after page is an arduous mental activity. I also feel as if it cleaved me in two. I open up to a new vista, yet all that I already was is carried with me, and worse, inflated by the extra energy that seems to pour in to me. Things are harder to deal with because the context in which they sit is larger, and I seem better able to see more clearly how destructive certain parts of me are. Whatever may have seemed to me to be a broadly tolerable defect, glossed over with due allowances made, seems now to be in stark relief, stripped of the gloss, intolerable. Now that I am in Bailey’s world there is no longer any allowance that I can make for my own weaknesses. I feel duty bound to improve myself and live up to my fullest potential.

To avert or solve the difficulties presented by the spiritual journey, Bailey advises the disciple to act in accordance with a number of spiritual laws. ‘A law is only an expression or manifestation of force, applied under the power of thought by a thinker or group of thinkers’ (EP Vol II:193).

According to Bailey, the most important of these laws for the disciple is the Law of Repulse, which activates in the mind of the disciple a sense of purpose. This law, ‘is dissipating in its effect…it causes an active scattering or rejection of the aspects of form life’ (EP Vol II:147). The Law of Repulse is activated by the disciple’s desire to be of service to humanity and obedient to the light of the soul, and consequently to reject aspects of their own personality and life circumstances that obstruct the fulfillment of this sense of purpose:

Repulsion, the desire to repudiate, and repulsive attitudes words and deeds evoke in our minds all that is unpleasant to contemplate. Yet, spiritually considered and scientifically viewed, the word “repulse” indicates simply “an attitude towards that which is not desirable.” This, in its turn (as we seek to determine that which is desirable), calls into activity the virtues of discrimination, dispassion and discipline in the disciple’s life (EP Vol II:161).

Amelia is troubled by this notion of a Law of Repulsion.
At first I find that I accept the idea of laws governing the path, since these laws serve to generalize and universalize individual experience, offering guidance and an explanation of circumstance. However, my own way of thinking does not meld well with such a rigid notion.

The notion of repulsion raises concerns of a psychological nature. Would it be possible for a negative person who said no to everything, who repelled people, opportunity, any event or circumstance, to re-construe this tendency and then justify their actions in terms of this Law of Repulse. So much of Bailey’s work seems to lose its meaning when removed from the overall context. Each concept forms part of this intricate whole and does not to translate well, if taken from the original context. The texts demand careful study. They demand much pondering, and then pondering upon one’s ponderings.

I used to be someone who tried anything, and took everyone’s advice, so hungry for experience and learning. Now I find myself discriminating, choosing, rejecting, as I am much more certain about my own being. I do not need an army of teachers. I have matured. So when Bailey talks of the Law of Repulse it would be easy for me to use this as evidence to support a claim of discipleship, when all it might really be evidence of is maturity. Worse, if I place a positive value upon the notion of repelling that which does not serve me or my interests, then I am strengthening my own self and benefiting no-one else.

In grappling with Bailey’s Law of Repulse, Amelia has touched upon an interesting parallel between the human maturing process and spiritual growth. It might be argued, for example, that the same discriminating faculty that develops with age is also a spiritual faculty when utilized for the purpose of spiritual growth. This is echoed in Amelia’s next statement.

The things that Bailey advises seem to me to be practical common sense. The spirituality Bailey presents is not some great transcendent state, some ecstatic high, or vision in the distance. Spirituality is part of all of our existence, the very nuts and bolts of it.
6.5 Critical Commentary

In the above narrative Amelia was challenged by an occultistic gnostic pull fostered by the texts through: the problematic notion of *initiation*; Bailey’s stage model; the ideological pressure Amelia experienced; and Amelia’s use of correspondence. However, Amelia’s mystical experience drew her into an artistic gnostic way of knowing also supported by the texts. These challenges of occultistic and artistic gnosis are explored in the following discussion.

Firstly, as I have shown, the notion of initiation is contentious, apparently locking in with esotericism the spiritual journey to be made. The term *initiation* is commonly associated with secret sects whose members are required, during and after an initiatory rite to swear oaths of allegiance and obedience, and make promises of duty resulting in a firm adherence to that group’s set of beliefs and practices (Irwin 2001).

Bailey seeks to set her own formulation of the path of initiation apart from these groups, by stressing that, ‘*Initiation is a strictly personal matter with a universal application*’, [italics hers] (IHS:102). This sentence contains the thrust of Bailey’s argument. By laying stress upon the personal nature of initiation, the associated practices of group or sect affiliations is averted, whilst the claim to universality indicates Bailey’s desire to demonstrate that each and every human being can experience the same kind of initiation event, thus denying any exclusive claim or privileged status that may be attributed to the process. ‘Initiation is not a process which a man undergoes when he joins certain organizations, and which can be understood only be joining such groups’ (BC:25).

Whilst this may appear to clarify Bailey’s position and provide some comfort for an apprehensive reader, the method Bailey, (herself a former evangelical Christian), employs to support her argument is the use of the life of Jesus Christ as a mythic exemplar *par excellence* of an initiatory path into the kingdom of God. *Initiation* is now no longer a secretive pagan or occult practice, it has become the unfoldment of Christ consciousness within, increasing in strength and power, eventually unifying the divided self:
Only through the revelation of the Christ within each human being can this at-one-ment be made. Only through the new birth, the baptism of spirit and of fire, and the transfiguration of the nature can deliverance be found, can unity with God be achieved (BC:27-8).

In interpreting the life of Christ in this way, Bailey may have solved one problem only to create another, upsetting any Christian believer adhering to his or her own version of the faith, not open to this radical treatment of Scripture. Any interpretations of Christian scripture that lie outside the traditional theological perspectives of the day may be open to criticism and shunned as peripheral to orthodox concerns (works such as Fox, 1983). However, if the texts are viewed as one part of the continuing reinterpretation of scriptural texts, this difficulty may be averted.

Since Bailey writes within the esoteric tradition then it follows that she will claim esoteric terminology. Whilst posing the difficulties outlined above, there remains the possibility of moving beyond the connotations and associations of the word *initiation* to evaluate the meaning, the intention and the value behind it.

The current heuristic study contributes to this ‘moving beyond the obstacles’. Amelia re-languaged her own self-observations in terms of Bailey’s ideas, taking on board the conviction contained in the texts that personal development is not an end in itself, but a means to foster the development of humanity. Amelia found that whilst deeply confronting, construing her life transitions as possible initiations carried explanatory power. Perhaps certain types of experiences are helpfully construed as initiations. Amelia does seem to imply that she has found herself along the path described by Bailey although it remains unclear where she has located herself. Amelia remains humble and highly concerned that she can help humankind in some way.

Furthermore, Amelia’s openness to finding a place within Bailey’s model did not appear to elevate Amelia’s sense of self. She refused to consider herself to be a member of some elite, highly advanced group of initiates.
6.5.1 Bailey’s Developmental Stage Model of Spiritual Progress

There are many developmental models that recognize the unfolding of stages of psychological and spiritual progress. Some refer to intuitive and inclusive stages of consciousness as part of their model (Underhill 1956, Graves 1970, Wilber 1977, Fowler 1981, Beck and Cowan 1995). Each of these models may find its place and its value in application within a particular group of people.

Developmental stage models are depicted by their creators as generalized reflections of observations gained through experiment and data collection, with the intended hope that they may serve to foster understanding of or for others, and possibly be used to promote growth in terms of movement through these stages. In this sense all such models are metaphoric.

Developmental models are generated from a variety of starting points motivated by differing objectives. Some, like Bailey, are concerned with consciousness itself. For example, Jung (in Campbell 1971), developed a very general model of the stages of human life to depict an ‘unfolding picture of psychic life in its entirety from cradle to grave’ (1971:3). Jung harnessed the daily progression of the sun as a metaphor to describe the building up of ‘a state of wider and higher consciousness’ (1971:10), a growth that leads to the existence of problems that through resolution, may lead to a further widening of consciousness. Jung’s recognition of the development of consciousness or awareness provides an important opportunity for further inquiry into the inner life, one detached from biological reductionism. Jung’s model carries a therapeutic intention.

Graves’ (2002) modeling of unfolding consciousness, which he derived from his inquiry into the normal human personality, resulted in a theory of levels of human existence traversed through the confronting and resolving of existential problems. Bailey’s model of spiritual development similarly argues that growth occurs through the confrontation with, and resolution of, problems experienced by the individual. Bailey’s categorizations of stages of spiritual unfoldment are qualitative observations reflecting humanity’s highest and broadest spiritual possibilities. However, the
development of spiritual faculties to carry the evolution of consciousness beyond human personality centred limitations becomes more an imperative and less a description of observation gained through an empirical method. Bailey’s model remains a hypothesis based on metaphysical speculation. Interestingly, Beck and Cowan (1995) developed and popularised Graves’ work into *Spiral Dynamics*, a model they claim to be universal in application, transcending race, gender and ethnicity. ‘It [spiral dynamics] offers a unifying framework that makes genuinely holistic thinking and actions possible’, [. . .] mine (1995:30). Bailey’s work makes a similar claim of universality.

Graves’ developmental model transcends the individual, each stage reflecting the collective consciousness of various human groups. The last stages identified pertain to spiritual states of consciousness, although largely underdeveloped they reflect Graves’ conviction that there is no limit to human expansions of consciousness. Such progression of levels of consciousness is echoed in Wilber’s (1977) work, in which each level carries its own way of knowing.

Another recent development grounded in a different psychological school of thought is the work of Fowler (1981). Basing his ideas primarily upon Piaget’s (1954), structural developmental theory, Kohlberg’s (1976), moral stage model, and Erickson’s (1965), stages of psychosocial development, Fowler devised his own model of stages of faith. According to Fowler, faith ‘is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence’ (1981:14).

In Fowler’s work, faith stages progress to depict a commitment, a trust and a vision towards increasingly more universal and inclusive transcendent conceptualizations, from a literal attachment to a particular creed through to a universalized faith approach. The identification of a progressive unfolding of faith converges with Spiral Dynamics’ stages of an expanding worldview, suggesting that certain branches within the discipline of psychology have become more accepting of spiritual stages as well as states of consciousness. Wilber’s (2000) ambitious synthesis of models of consciousness, (including Beck and Cowan’s Spiral Dynamics), resulting in a full-spectrum map of human possibilities including the spiritual realm reveals how far
contemporary psychological thinking has developed, and is indicative of the need for
greater explanatory power regarding spirituality within such models. Some
contemporary thinking has begun to acknowledge and value intuitive, mystical,
spiritual and inclusive ways of knowing (Wilber 1977, Fowler 1981, Moore 1992,
spirituality contains any academic merit, I suggest that her place may be found
amongst this group of thinkers. With this in mind a useful way to evaluate Bailey’s
model may be to situate it within this community of similar models and adopt a
comparative methodology.

All the models mentioned above make some claim towards universal application or
strive to encompass within their sphere of influence the whole of humanity, contained
within a hierarchy of ascending or expanding stages. Such hierarchical models of
development have been fiercely criticized, as noted by Wilber (1995) who writes:

All sorts of theorists, from deep ecologists to social critics, from ecofeminists
to postmodern poststructuralists, have found the notion of hierarchy not only
undesirable but a bona fide cause of much social domination, oppression, and

Critics object to the ranking of various cohorts which they argue carries the dangers
associated with hegemonic domination and the marginalization of other groups.
Clearly the structure of Bailey’s model itself contains similar difficulties. Wilber
defends the notion of hierarchy, by reframing the word to refer to it as the organizing
principle behind wholeness. Each hierarchical stage, argues Wilber, is simply more
inclusive, more encompassing than the previous. Even though Wilber’s defence
would find sympathetic ears amongst the creators of stage models, the difficulty with
the notion of hierarchy remains contentious and divisive. Whilst already established
models have found various locations and niches within which they can be utilized,
this issue is highly problematic for a new contender, should they not only propose as
Bailey does, another hierarchical model, but go so far as to accord the notion of
hierarchy a prominent place within it, alongside the perhaps even more controversial
notion of initiation discussed above.
With all developmental models, there is a tendency to locate oneself amongst the various descriptions, as Amelia clearly demonstrates. As soon as this occurs, the reader applies the model literally to themselves, along with a tacit acceptance of the model itself. All developmental stage models carry the possibility that exposure to the model fosters conformity to one of the stages and therefore, the model itself. The less this occurs, the more limited the model becomes in terms of its descriptive and explanatory power. Any individual may interpret any circumstance in terms of any psychological model and find justification for any belief they may hold about themselves. I argue that each individual constructs his/her own understanding of themselves in relation to the world around them and this may be shaped by the depictions of selfhood these models offer.

A difficulty arises when a model is attached to a larger belief system of which it forms a part, as is the case with Bailey’s work. This creates a further tendency to textual adherence; if the reader accepts the model, he or she may well simultaneously accept the worldview. How can we know that a subjective construct has any objective reality or truth beyond ourselves? The Bailey texts seem to suggest that there exists some correct way of understanding ourselves and that when we have followed her suggested procedure we can truly recognize the stage we have reached. Yet no model can be definitive, (or universal), all are culturally specific and are constructed with a particular contextual reference in mind. Bailey attempts to universalize the esoteric notion of initiation, stripping the mystery and secrecy surrounding what many may regard an esoteric practice. Bailey’s intention is to help to promote the spiritualization of humanity and to encourage every reader to recognize themselves as a ‘spiritual being’, duty bound to take the spiritual seed within them and encourage it to grow. Yet no matter how hard Bailey may try to create a universal model, this model remains firmly placed within her esoteric worldview. In effect, it is esotericism itself which is heavily promoted, offered almost as a panacea and foundation of a new world religion.

Bailey’s efforts to convey ultimate reality, to touch upon what humanity may sense from deep within yet cannot express in words, may fail as her work limits, defines
and confines this other within her model of evolving consciousness. Yet, as Lewis (1964) states:

No model is a catalogue of ultimate realities, and none is mere fantasy. Each is a serious attempt to get in all the phenomena known at a given period, and each succeeds in getting in a great many. But also, no less surely, each reflects the prevalent psychology of an age almost as much as it reflects that state of the age’s knowledge (1964:222).

6.5.2 Ideological Problems

Bailey’s attempt to provide a universal view of the evolution of consciousness through her stage model carries particular ideological difficulties. The reader is positioned as a student of the work and an aspirant or disciple of the spiritual path, invited to locate themselves amongst the various stages and confront the obstacles, challenges and diversions that lie along it by employing the methods provided for dealing with these problems. The work thus assumes that the reader has spiritual aspirations and is either on or very near to making a spiritual journey. The direct instructional literary style, with the reader taught by Bailey/Djwhal Khul as the teacher/authority, deftly combines with the assumption of reader type to create a powerfully persuasive device, fostering its own kind of exclusivity, the intimate realm between text and reader. This boundary setting includes the reader in a fascinating esoteric world of understanding deeply touching the central parts of the self whilst concomitantly demarcating another realm lying beyond this sphere, that of critical scrutiny.

Upon entry into this esoteric world, the reader is confronted with an epistemological claim to truth. The texts carry an explicit assumption that absolute truth exists. ‘The books and pamphlets have been my responsibility and carry the authority of truth – if truth is there – and not the authority of my name or of any status which I might claim’ [italics hers] (DNA Vol I:785). In other words, if truth exists at all, then Bailey’s work reveals it. ‘My work is to teach and spread the knowledge of the Ageless Wisdom’ (DNA Vol I:vii). This combines with Bailey’s advocacy of a particular interpretive method applied to the texts to create an atmosphere of special
authority. Claims of absolute truth and authority are commensurate with an occultistic gnostic way of knowing that seeks to rationalize esotericism through attachment to the self as personal authority.

Bailey argues that the subjective-intuitive level of analysis is the highest response one can make to these texts and that through this individual inner response a much wider reality of truth can be obtained than that gained through observation or language study. This is compounded through Bailey’s assertion that the reader’s ability to perceive meaning is entirely dependent on his or her current stage of development:

Your important principle may be realized by an abler mind than yours and by a more advanced disciple as embodying an aspect of a greater principle, an interpretation of a principle, correct and proper at a certain time, but capable of a different application at another time, and by another mind (EP Vol II:107-8).

Bailey suggests that the quest for Absolute truth involves a continual unfolding of relative or partial truths. It is not truth itself that is relative, rather it is the relative perception of the observer, with his or her limited view of reality:

Definition is simply the expression of the immediate understanding of a human mind. But a definition may later be seen to be imperfect and even false, from the angle of a wider knowledge and a more inclusive grasp of wholes...all definition, and eventually all facts, will be known to be temporary...basic truths today may be seen later as simply aspects of still greater truths (EP Vol II:20).

In this way an ideological pressure is exerted by the texts with regard to the interpretation of them as teachings and through the hypotheses and definitions proposed in combination with the advised method of analysis in application to the self. If Amelia agrees with Bailey with respect to the notion of recognition and then proceeds, with the aid of the texts themselves to apply this notion to discern her ability to practice the principle of detachment to her own inner life, then unwittingly,
Amelia has entered an ideological circle of belief, paradoxically attached to the texts whilst applying the principle of detachment to her life.

Perhaps such ideological pressure also undermines Bailey’s own position with regard to removing the exclusive connotations of *initiation*. A sense of belonging to a spiritual community is enormously enhanced by the notion of initiation, even if such a community is a relatively unknown group of Bailey readers and followers, from the point of view of each individual reader. A sense that out there in the world exist other readers of Bailey, practicing her ideas may provide psychological comfort or a sense of membership status, subjectively felt.

### 6.5.3 Amelia’s Difficulties with Correspondence

All of the Bailey teachings concern various aspects of the unfolding of spiritual consciousness. When Bailey claims that the teachings in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* ‘should tend to an expansion of consciousness’ (TCF: xiii). She refers perhaps to the kind of expansion that may occur through the relationship of a subject to any knowledge gained from any source, and especially when pertaining to an unfolding of human consciousness, Bailey may be additionally implying the existence of an initiatory or heiroeidetic quality in the text. Work that reveals and evokes a response in the reader, widening deepening and raising the inner landscape, providing new meaning, stimulating the reader’s own spiritual nature or motivating them to strive for further attainment, will expand that reader’s consciousness. Each time an individual engages with a new perspective, their consciousness may expand in order to embrace it and this expansion occurs in accordance with the depth and breadth of the new perspective and the ability of the reader to undergo the process of expansion. This is one way to approach learning.

However, the claim that the Bailey texts can lead to an expansion of consciousness of this kind is an epistemological claim to knowledge or truth that begs verification through further inquiry. This unfounded claim is exacerbated when placed within the overall context of Bailey’s work, the expansion of consciousness referred to relating to the spiritual path, so through exposure to the Bailey texts it is possible to make spiritual progress. This implies that the texts can foster a permanent shift in awareness.
pertaining to the inner and spiritual life. This is a contentious assumption, arguably contingent more upon the nature of the qualities the reader brings to the texts, than the words the texts contain.

Returning to Hanegraaff’s (1992), notions of occultistic and artistic gnosis, and Faivre’s (1994), identification to correspondence as a keynote of an esoteric epistemology, helps to clarify the difficulties with assuming any heiroeidetic (Versluis 2000(a)), potential in Bailey’s work. Amelia continued to resist her own tendencies to apply Bailey’s model to herself, tendencies she also encountered when engaging with Bailey’s Rays in Chapter Five. Amelia found that using her own life and self understanding, she could easily, and somewhat irresistibly, find correspondences between herself and Bailey’s various descriptors and stages. Amelia practiced occultistic gnosis with ease, rationalizing Bailey’s notions through making links to herself, potentially resulting in the creation of a new set of personal constructs (Kelly 1991). This process involves perceiving the universal in the particular, through making the individual a particular example of an apparent universal feature of human existence expressed through each notion. This might be regarded as evidence of expanding consciousness.

However, any transformational power Bailey’s texts carry, able not only to expand the consciousness of a reader, but also to reorient him/her towards spiritual living, lies, I argue, in that reader’s ability to engage in artistic gnosis. This type of gnosis applies the notion of correspondence to esotericism in a different way. The second way uses the imagination to take the self to meet these notions in an act of self negation. Here, ordinary awareness is bracketed, the reader engaging in an imaginative response that seeks to penetrate beyond Bailey’s notions as metaphoric constructs, seeking to grasp the intentionality (Husserl 1970) latent within them. This approach penetrates each metaphoric construct, seeking any universal qualities (or essences) in an intuitive, self-transcending way. It is each metaphor that becomes a particular expression of a universal quality, and not the self. Artistic gnosis is thus contingent upon an ontological commitment to a transcendent reality.

In this heuristic study, any artistic gnostic potential latent within Amelia, seemed to find expression through her strange experiences, and not through her subjective
engagement with Bailey’s esoteric psychology. Evidence of the potential for Bailey’s work to foster artistic gnosis was also found in Chapter Four, through my experience of Bailey’s labyrinthine cosmology. I return to this matter in Chapter Nine.

6.5.4 Amelia’s Strange Experiences Revisited

In spite of these difficulties, there remains for Amelia an inescapable quality in Bailey’s work, a magnetic pull that seems to stimulate her into self reflection and self improvement. Bailey’s model of spiritual development seems to lift the reader out of the everyday lived world and brings another world into being that seems, according to Amelia, to descend upon you like a shroud, changing the way you think and feel.

*I feel it like a vibration. I recognised yesterday that reading these texts in the order I have chosen has engaged me in a prolonged spiritual experience – an unfolding, awakening of a rarefied kind as I resonate with the texts. I would imagine any intensive study of any similar type of text would have the same result.*

In Amelia’s testimony her strange experiences, construed here as mystical, influenced her esoteric way of knowing. According to Evans and Kourie (2003), a mystical experience refers to a direct experiential sense of unity with ultimate reality (2003:149-150). James (1902) identifies four distinguishing features of mystical experiences as their; ineffability, transiency, passivity (the event happens to you) and their noetic quality, or as:

States of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect.  
They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain (1902:371).

James stresses that these revelatory depths of insight and meaning exist as truth for the individual alone. Yet Amelia’s mystical experiences not only seemed to open within her a receptive centre of spiritual energy, they coincided with her reading of the Bailey texts, offering material that could be interpreted within Bailey’s framework. This coincidence may have contributed to her sense of spiritual engagement and unfolding, the texts carrying an additional force of revelation since
they were read within the overall context of Amelia’s life at the time. According to James mystical experience carries an enormous sense of inner authority, illumination and revelation for the individual themselves. The individual’s life may become cleaved in two as ‘a complete division is established in the twinkling of an eye between the old life and the new’ (1902:213).

Living up to the ideas conveyed through mystical experiences, especially when they carry with them the force of revelation may play a transformational role in the life of the experiencer, described in religious terms as conversion (James 1902 and Jung 1992 (a)). According to James the most characteristic feature of such episodes, and also evidenced in Amelia’s testimony is ‘the ecstasy of happiness produced’ (1902:249). James goes on to identify other characteristics of such states of spiritual excitement, such as:

The humility as to one’s self and the charity towards others’ and ‘religious rapture, moral enthusiasm, ontological wonder, cosmic emotion, [which] are all unifying states of mind, [ ] mine (1902:273-4).

However, the rarefied awakening that Amelia identifies, reflecting a transformation occurring in the mystical realm of consciousness, has not led to a religious conversion. Amelia has not adopted Bailey’s worldview as her own interpretive framework, although her own perspective has changed enormously through the heuristic study.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter Amelia engaged with Bailey’s notion of the initiation and the spiritual path, applying the notion of correspondence to Bailey’s work. Amelia found a strong resistance to locating herself within this path. This may be indicative of Amelia’s overarching resistance towards the occultistic gnostic way of knowing. The further Amelia draws esotericism to herself as a way of knowing the more resistant she seems to become. Interestingly, Amelia has accepted that in some way she has been transformed through her journey. This apparent transformation has resulted not from Amelia’s direct engagement with Bailey’s work, but more from Amelia’s efforts to
maintain a distance from it, to observe the pull of the texts, and to foster within herself a way of seeing through the ideas presented. This process involves Amelia in drawing herself into an esoteric way of knowing, an act commensurate with artistic gnosis.

Bailey’s ideas in combination with Amelia’s life experience, including the mystical episodes, have also upset Amelia’s inner equilibrium. Since Bailey’s model of initiatory stages is bound with an identification of the problems and the suffering that the disciple faces the distress that Amelia feels converges with the heuristic study to form the basis of the next chapter.

*I question how I can entertain Bailey’s notions of initiation, the spiritual path and her portrayal of higher states of consciousness when I know myself to be riddled with ordinary human qualities like jealousy, fear and depression. How can I even consider that I may be capable of attaining any such spiritual quality when I know how difficult I can be?*

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3 Maintaining distance from, whilst immersed in, spiritual (including esoteric) texts, might be generally regarded as a spiritual practice leading to the kind of transformation sought. It is a challenge for the reader, easily forgotten in the alluring complexity of Bailey’s work.
CHAPTER SEVEN
ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS OF SUBJECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS: PART THREE

7.1 Introduction

Amelia continues to journey in Bailey’s world, this time focusing upon the notion of, and human responses to, duality. These responses, according to Bailey, thwart progress along the spiritual path. Bailey builds her argument upon the Platonic assumption that appearance veils reality. For Bailey, the way the world appears to us and the way we subjectively experience it are conditioned by illusory dualities. Bailey provides the reader with methods to deal with these impediments to growth, with the intention of helping a reader to prepare for the next initiation that they may face. This proves the most confronting part of Amelia’s journey, touching deeply personal matters. Only general observations pertinent to the inquiry have been included.

This completes Amelia’s journey. After presenting Amelia’s reflections, I discuss: Bailey’s notion of duality; a ‘problem of adherence’ emerging from Amelia’s insights; and finally, aspects arising from the heuristic process.

7.2 Bailey’s Metaphors of Duality

For Bailey, progress through her stages of the spiritual path is made through the aspirant’s cultivation of the ability to move closer to unity by recognizing and learning how to dispel duality. Even the dualism of spirit and matter inherent in Bailey’s model is, she claims, an illusion. Unity, where all is One, refers to a synthesis, based on the premise of antecedent differentiation. Unity ‘refers to his Oneness in the world of energies in which he moves’ (RI:265-6).
The notion of unity that Bailey employs does not refer to a state of complete oneness in which all is merged, it refers to a recognition of diversity, the result of differentiation emanating from and returning to unity through synthesis (RI:266). When unity is achieved as a state of awareness, difference is embraced. ‘When [differentiation is] studied from the consciousness or sentiency aspect, unity emerges’ (EP Vol I:56). So the spiritual path to inner unity becomes in outward expression actions that mitigate against separation and tend towards cohesion, blending, sharing and understanding of the myriad differentiations of existence. The inner life and its outward expression also become one, and when this is achieved the suffering of the aspirant, the result of all wrestling with dualities, is finally released (GWP:100-103). To achieve this, Bailey advocates an outward orientation of life developed through, and expressed in, goodwill.

Bailey describes the path to unity as being littered with dualities or pairs of opposites (right and wrong, good and bad) that create in the inner world of the seeker a great deal of confusion. Dualities are transcended through a process Bailey describes as disillusionment, a term employed to indicate that all dualities are illusory. Bailey conceptualizes the problem through the metaphor of glamour, used ‘to cover all aspects of those deceptions, illusions, misunderstandings and misinterpretations which confront the aspirant at every step of his way until he reaches unity’ (GWP:94). In this definition Bailey is using the glamour metaphor to include two other metaphoric concepts, maya, or physical (etheric) plane confusion, and illusion, which refers to lack of clarity arising on the mental plane. These are explored below.

Bailey’s metaphor of glamour, more narrowly defined, refers to emotional reactions to a sense of duality on the emotional plane. Bailey identifies many types of glamour and their causes, some as relating to the individual and others that she considers to be universal. The dominant glamours of humanity are regarded as those of materiality, sentiment, devotion, the pairs of opposites and the spiritual path (GWP:73-4). However, she regards the glamour of materiality to be slipping away from humanity as a whole, as we collectively enter the ‘wilderness experience’ (a biblical reference to Christ’s three temptations in the desert) (GWP:75). For Bailey, in the wilderness humanity becomes stripped bare of all possessions whilst learning that desire for ownership of things offers no liberation for the soul (GWP:75). However, Bailey
considers that ‘*the glamour of materiality* is the cause of all the present world distress, for what we call the economic problem is simply the result of this particular glamour’, [italics hers] (GWP:74).

The glamour of sentiment refers to the fogs created through emotional reactions to our objects of desire and attachment (GWP:76-7), stating that ‘the selfishness of the people who are desirous of being unselfish is great’ (ibid). Devotion creates a glamour summarized succinctly by Bailey as ‘a rapturous mist’ (GWP:78). ‘One illustration of this is the sentiment of devotion poured out in a glamourous ecstasy by probationary disciples upon the Masters of the Wisdom’ (GWP:78).

The glamour of pairs of opposites refers to the swinging back and forth between feelings of joy and despair that occurs when the seeker is unable to see the middle way or point of balance between extremes. ‘This condition persists just as long as the emphasis is laid upon feeling…’ [italics hers] (GWP:79). Finally, she describes the glamour of the Path itself in which those seeking to serve humanity succumb to feelings of pride or self-importance:

Emphasise in your own mind, the spontaneity of the life of the soul and spoil it not with the glamour of high aspiration selfishly interpreted, self-centredness, self-immolation, self-aggressiveness, self-assertiveness in spiritual work – such are some of the glamours of the Path (GWP:80).

According to Bailey, all of these glamourous fogs may be dispelled through particular meditative techniques designed to foster illumination, or the shining of the light of the soul (GWP:36-7). This process creates a dispassionate attitude or a detached distance from the intensity of emotion that such glamours cause and can be used upon personal and impersonal forms of glamour.

The second concept Bailey uses to convey the forces that blind us to reality is the eastern mystical notion of *maya*. Bailey describes *maya* as the aggregate of forces experienced by an individual emanating from sources other than that of the individual’s own soul (GWP:148). These forces can control an individual’s etheric

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1 Bailey uses the term *feeling* to refer to emotional responses. For Bailey, transcendence of any glamour involves an emphasis on the mental rather than emotional aspect.
centres, serving to stimulate the personality. ‘When a man is under the control of physical, astral [emotional] and mental forces, he is convinced at the time that they are, for him, the right forces’ [ ] mine (GWP:148).

In other words, *maya* refers to the identification of the self with outer appearances, particularly their own physical body. Bailey asserts that *maya* is overcome through the study of motives (GWP:148-9). The aspirant is advised to practice discernment and discrimination so that they develop the ability to recognize the source of the energies or forces they feel, through a study of the nature or quality of these energies. The individual may then choose which of these forces to respond to or be influenced by and which to cultivate an attitude of indifference to.

The third concept of *illusion* refers to the distortion of any truth as a result of grasping this truth in a separative, narrow manner (GWP:131). Where partial ideals and humanly constructed thoughtforms are seen as whole truths:

> An illusion can, therefore, be defined as the consequence of an idea (translated into ideal) being regarded as the entire presentation, as the complete story or solution and as being separated from and visioned independently of all other ideas (GWP:131).

Bailey highlights the dangers that may come with adopting an exclusive attitude to ideas that denies the interconnectedness of human thinking. In this way adherence to any dogma or creed may be classed as illusion, fanaticism and fundamentalism providing more extreme examples. In order to counter the tendency to illusion, Bailey affirms the need for inclusive vision and the treatment of all ideas as temporary, limited or incomplete:

> When ideals and mental concepts and formulated thoughtforms dominate the mind of an individual, a race or humanity in general, to the exclusion of all perspective or vision and to the shutting out of the real…they prevent the free play of the intuition (GWP:135).
7.2.1 Bailey Defines Intuition

The ‘real’ that Bailey refers to resonates with the phenomenological search for ‘things in themselves’, rather than things as we see them. A conceptual tool, harnessed by Bailey to be cultivated upon this quest for the ‘real’, is the intuition, or revealer of truth. Intuition, for Bailey, is a quality of the soul, and as such a more spiritually oriented attribute. Bailey views the intuition as synthetic understanding, inclusivity and a solid comprehension of the principle of universality (GWP:2-3). So intuition as perception beyond preconception serves to transcend mental illusion. Intuition is a way of knowing rather than a way of thinking (constructing knowledge) and:

*Intuition is the synthetic understanding which is the prerogative of the soul and it only becomes possible when the soul, on its own level, is reaching in two directions: towards the Monad [spirit], and towards the integrated and perhaps (even if only temporarily) coordinated and at-oned personality, [italics hers], [ ] mine (GWP:2-3).*

According to Bailey the intuitive faculty is developed through the utilisation of sensitive awareness, a quality of sensibility cultivated on the emotional plane through a felt identification with the object of attention or attraction (GWP:9). The intuition can be fostered by its utilization in the study of symbols. Bailey conceives of the ability to study symbols as the faculty of an esoteric sense (TWM:601-604). My own understanding is that the esoteric sense is the ability to perceive truth hidden or embedded in form. The esoteric sense sees beyond surface appearances, penetrating the symbolic meanings and significances, and identifying analogous patterns. The esoteric sense involves the ‘inner sensitive awareness’ (TWM:609), of the ‘detached observer’ (TWM:604). I infer from this that, for Bailey, esoteric knowledge itself cannot be grasped, unless this faculty is unfolded. Indeed developing the esoteric sense is seen as necessary pre-requisite if the evolution of humanity is to progress beyond the second initiation of the spiritual path (EXH:99).

To illustrate the explanatory power these notions have, Bailey divides the whole of humanity into several groups representing stages along the path of unfolding consciousness. The first stage, corresponding to the first initiation or birth into the
spiritual life, is represented by ‘the masses’ who are said to be currently dealing with pairs of opposites on the physical (etheric) plane, immersed therefore in *maya*.

The average educated individual represents the second stage, corresponding to the second initiation or baptism in Bailey’s categorization. Bailey argues that this group faces the ‘Arjuna experience’. Arjuna, the warrior-prince in Hinduism’s *Bhagavad Gītā*\(^2\), is confronted with the glamours of the emotional plane. Problems for this group of individuals are associated with desire:

> Hence the intense feeling abroad in the world; hence also the search for illumination, through education, through religion, and through the many agencies of mental instruction, with the consequent growth of knowledge, wisdom and right relationship (GWP: 100).

At the third stage the intelligent thinking woman/man faces illusion on the mental plane. This cohort, argues Bailey, must develop the intuition in order to ‘distinguish between truth and truths, between knowledge and wisdom, between reality and illusion’ (GWP:101).

This leads to the third initiation or the transfiguration. These stages reflect a cycle of crises of duality, each leading to a relative unity, this unity disturbed by a renewed recognition of a higher and deeper duality:

> This duality temporarily produces another cleavage in a man’s life, and thus re-initiates a torturing process of bridging or “occultly healing” this break in the continuity of the spiritual consciousness (GWP:101-102).

The aspirant eventually develops the capacity to handle the forces of maya, balance themselves between pairs of opposites and use the intuition to foster mental clarity.

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\(^2\) Bailey relies upon many notions found in Hindu scripture, following her theosophical predecessors. Theosophist Annie Besant translated *The Bhagavad Gītā*, which was first published in 1895.
7.3 Amelia’s Engagement with Bailey’s Concepts

Amelia responds to Bailey’s proposal by first summarizing her understanding of the underlying message this particular aspect of the work conveys.

The main argument proposed in this text is that it is now humanity’s task to dispel glamour and illusion. In other words, it is incumbent upon us to aim to think clearly, with reason, to steady our emotions, to transcend the destructive power of materialism and the wrong use of power, to overcome hatred and greed. We need to recognise clearly our problem today. This is our work, our obligation. We must use the light of the soul that illuminates the mind and cast it upon life, circumstances and events to reveal the causes and the meaning of experience, and thus dissipate our glamour.

Amelia considers herself an incisive thinker, paradoxically inclusive in vision. Consequently Bailey’s notion of illusion did not trigger a deep personal response. Neither did the notion of maya impact upon Amelia. Glamour, in contrast, managed to cause quite a stir. Events in Amelia’s life have become laden with meaning. Feeling immersed in a stream, Amelia explores her emotional nature in the light cast by the concept of glamour.

I think of glamour as enchantment. This makes it easy to say that I am dis-enchanted with my own sense of glamour, even though this seems to lead into another form of glamour.

I have to deal, periodically, with my emotional nature and my conditioned thought patterns. I know that my turbulent past conditions the present. I can’t always be the best I can be and I can’t always see with clarity.

Bailey writes, ‘a deep distrust of one’s reactions to life and circumstance, when such reactions awaken and call forth criticism, separateness or pride, is of value’, [italics hers] (GWP:82).
Bailey uses the notion of separativeness to convey an attitude that divides or separates self from other, or spiritual from material; an attitude that creates or exacerbates duality. The term refers primarily to selfishness.

Amelia responds to Bailey’s argument by identifying what she believes best fits the description of a glamour of sentiment.

*I do not like being dragged into my own glamour which I have identified as a glamour of sentiment. Inside this glamour lies a separativeness of monstrous proportions. I may distrust my reactions that lead to separativeness but my physical brain and my body seem hardwired into a different agenda, so strong that it defies my efforts to dissipate it. I said earlier that I know when the soul speaks. I know how powerful, loving and keen to give to others and respond to their needs this aspect of my being is. I also know that when I am in an intimate relationship I can become jealous, possessive and a dependency grows out of an enormous fear of loss. I seem to lose my ability to relate to the world when I have in my life a beloved. Alone I can fulfill my high aspirations, conquering my fears as I strive for human betterment. When partnered I become a vulnerable child, openly wounded. Fear closes all the doors. I fear that I may become impotent with regard to my urge to change the world.

Trying to overcome this problem is like wading through treacle, blinded, tortured and unable to let go. A desire to feel safe and secure choking the life out of me. Despair contests the arduous task of going into this battlefield. I find no distractions. No switching off. Deep emotions of eternal loneliness. I try not to let this aspect of my being influence my actions and behaviour. I fail as I find myself wary and untrusting, guarded and withdrawn. Separate! I can’t bear the pain of separation!

This is such a destructive, controlling side of me. My heart bleeds and I am ashamed. Old wounds now in my face, painfully trivial, almost self-indulgent. Yet with pain so real. I resist the violence I also feel, the urge to smash things, tear things apart, scream. It blinds me. It stops me hearing. It locks me inside myself. How do I get myself out of this hole. I have been in it often enough, you would think I would have the answer by now! Perhaps more importantly is understanding what triggers the shift into this mode of being.
How useful is the glamour metaphor in helping Amelia understand and resolve aspects of herself that cause her to suffer? In the above paragraphs Amelia has clustered her perceptions around the notion of a glamour of sentiment. Her self understanding has become generalized through the naming of the glamour and this tendency is enhanced when Amelia is invited to dispel her glamour using the methods Bailey provides.

In meditation, Bailey argues, the causes and meaning of experience may be revealed through the light of the soul, flowing through the mind and illuminating the emotional plane. Bailey provides a specific meditation formula that can be used to dissipate glamour, referred to as the ‘technique of the light’ (GWP:171-2). Once the glamour has been identified, and after following some simple procedures, the aspirant is invited to repeat the following, inaudibly and with focused intent:

The power of the light prevents the appearance of the glamour (naming it).
The power of the light negates the quality of the glamour from affecting me.
The power of the light destroys the life behind the glamour (GWP:236).

Amelia has not practiced this technique of destroying glamour, intentionally. Amelia found that whenever she came across such meditative formulae in Bailey’s work, she avoided their implementation. The formula carried the connotations of magical incantations or mantras. The drawing upon ‘the power of the light’ sounded like there was an external power being invited in, subjecting the practitioner to a higher authority rather than promoting ownership of responsibility.

For me meditation is a purely personal affair and I am very wary of adopting a particular practice. I view meditation practices as tied to the particular belief systems from whence they came and to adopt the practice in my mind means to adopt the belief system, or at least certain premises upon which the system is built.

Amelia has failed to recognize that the light Bailey refers to in the above formula pertains to the reader’s own soul. Light is a metaphor for illuminating awareness, clarity. Light is an energy perhaps capable of burning away any glamour. The
formula focuses the intention or will of the reader, who then uses this energy to destroy the glamour. So the higher power that Amelia shies from is far from external. Rather, it is the power of her own soul. Still, Amelia’s reaction to this formula may be considered as part of her broader reluctance to engage with Bailey’s work too didactically.

However, I feel that in my own way I have used this casting of the light of the soul in order to gain an understanding of the roots of my problem. I am certain that whatever words I may use to describe my inner nature, the basic understanding now remains the same. I consider solutions to this part of my being to be located elsewhere. If I construe my emotional body as being on the sixth Ray and my soul on the second, then I can speculate that since these two form a path of least resistance, the energy of the soul harmoniously flowing into my emotional body, then perhaps the more spiritually focused I become, the more energy flows into this difficulty.

To deal with this part of my emotional nature my mind needs some distance from it. Yet it is my thoughts that have either created or are combined with my emotions which makes the problem so stressful. So I am fully within the experience, using everything I have to move through the distress – that I have inflicted on myself. Looking for causes and explanations is mentally exhausting, too complex and intricate. This vortex is a shapeshifter, defying definition. It takes a hold of me and will not be taken hold of by me. I push through it. I upset people, I hurt those closest to me. Too much introspection causes brain fever. A great sucking inner black hole. The more energy I give it by trying to understand it the worse it becomes. The Hydra!

Somewhere in the distance I see that this is not about doing battle with the hydra. Casting a search light, having a good look around and being persistent. Recognising that all that the mind and the emotional body throws in the way of that light, is illusory, are veils and blinds to the deep inner core they seek to protect. The light is on. It must shine persistently until all the little tricks are ignored, all the game playing is over, the fake causes, the defences and justifications. Once gone then there is the horror of self inflicted pain. Here is a deep cause of experience, of circumstance. The tendency to wound, oneself, over and over.
I see the solution to my problem through the experience of recognising love reflected back to me through others eyes. We all get negative and feel heavy and hard. And we can all love each other anyway. That loving acceptance and ignoring other’s negativity springs being back to life. Love is magnetic, it attracts love to itself. And when two pairs of eyes meet, eyes of strangers, and in all innocence on the part of either party, this great mystery is played out.

If I make an effort to respond to someone’s kindness a tremendous and intense release occurs, and in my intense, heightened agitated state I notice these exchanges as small treasures, life’s gifts. If this goes on in me, it must in so many others, no wonder the world is as it is. Yet again I am reminded of the great spiritual need of humanity and the planet.

It occurs to me that expansions of consciousness involve a new value base, a re-evaluation of old values, a new standard, a new sense of what is important. The more my own consciousness expands, the more it includes. The more it includes, the more I have to deal with and re-arrange.

Amelia has construed an inner conflict using the metaphor of glamour. This might otherwise and perhaps aptly have been described as an example of the experience of depression, as vividly portrayed by Rowe (1996). How useful has Amelia found Bailey’s way of construing aspects of her personality which seem to conflict with Amelia’s growth? Before responding to this question, I now present Amelia’s engagement with Bailey’s notion of the dweller. With this notion, Bailey describes all that stands in the path of spiritual growth, rather than any individual part.

7.3.2 Amelia Confronts Bailey’s Notion of the Dweller

Bailey argues that when an aspirant reaches a particular stage along the spiritual path, they are confronted with a very powerful duality, the dweller on the threshold and the angel of the presence. Bailey conceptualizes all aspects of an individual or humanity that stand in the way of spiritual progress beyond this stage as the Dweller. It is the
personality that becomes the dweller, facing the soul, or Angel, when a certain threshold of growth is reached:

The dweller takes form when a re-orientation of man’s life has taken place consciously and under soul impression. The whole personality is then theoretically directed towards liberation into service. The problem is to make the theory and the aspiration facts in experience (GWP:154).

Amelia finds herself responding to this metaphoric description with interest.

*If I am an individual theoretically and practically oriented towards service, then according to Bailey, there will be habits of thought, emotional responses and personality traits that obstruct, impede or distort the ability to serve. In self examination I can quickly recognize, as well as anyone else, certain qualities that I would happily shake off. Certain emotions, like fear, that clearly obstruct my activities, limit my scope. I wonder how useful it is to cluster all these features of my being into one named entity, the dweller. This seems a powerful way of construing the self, like the notion of a repressed shadow, only the dweller does not concern features that have been pushed out of the light.*

Bailey states that:

The dweller in the body perceives wrongly: he interprets incorrectly that which is perceived; he proceeds to identify himself with that which is not himself; he shifts his consciousness into a realm of phenomena which engulfs him, deludes him and imprisons him until such time as he becomes restless and unhappy under the sense that something is wrong. Then he comes finally to the recognition that he is not what he seems to be and that the phenomenal world of appearances is not identical with reality (GWP:94-5).

The aspirant comes to a new sense of the duality discussed above, and to a sense that this duality should be ended through a process of unification or at-one-ment, thus reaching a culminating point along the path Bailey describes. This duality which lies in the path of unity, is construed in the dweller metaphor in terms of a division between the personality as dweller and the soul as Angel. In meditation the constant
fluid changefulness of the dweller is gradually overcome and the personality merges with the Angel or soul. So now we find that the notions of glamour, maya and illusion are contained within a larger framework, the personality as a whole and all the pairs of opposites Bailey refers to as dualities have reached a culmination in the notion of the dweller.

Amelia notices two layers of meaning in Bailey’s notion of the dweller.

Firstly, to dwell is to live in a place. Secondly, to dwell upon is to focus attention upon. So the dweller on the threshold, the thing that obstructs full soul consciousness is the thing we dwell on, what draws our attention away from the soul. It is also the house we choose to live in. Thirdly, the meaning of ‘dwell’ is a moment of resistance to ceasing to be the past and moving into the future.

The notion of the dweller impressed Amelia deeply. She makes a series of responses that convey her own sense of imperfection and striving towards self-acceptance. Amelia uses the metaphor of the cave to show how she feels.

I know the cave. I live in the cave. Sometimes, I am inspired and the cave is lighted. Later still, when the inevitable descent is made into the three planes of increasing gloom, I notice I have left my torch behind. I notice that there is a need to be equipped with a flaming torch, carried from the high place of light, and taken into the blackness made blacker in contrast to the vibrant light. Without the torch, without the constant contact with the high place, to recharge, to take more light back down into the cave of living, then the blackness consumes, the vortices persist and sweep me in no matter what resistance I apply. With the illumined knowledge, with the extra light bestowed upon the seeker, the sensitivity is likewise greater. Overload, thence depression descends with the descent. Exhaustion.

I dig in the dirt. I dig huge holes and I smell the dark damp earth. There is peace in the earth, solace, calm. I penetrate as deep as my arms will reach, and I dig and I dig until my arms are so sore.
Is it rhythm that is needed? Routine? Am I to allow the soul to smooth the ruffles of my personality? Is this what I am doing?

The wound I described that has led me into the glamour of sentiment has also brought me to an attitude of laying my life down to help others, has fostered in me a deep empathy with human suffering and has been the cause of my inner searching bringing me to the knowledge of inspiration and vision. This same wound crucifies me. I dwell on it as it dwells in me. This wound lives in the cells of my being, in the depths of my physical brain. If ever there was a razor’s edge, this is it! Humanity suffers as a result of the same type of wounds, of violence and abuse. My inner searching has revolved around a quest for purpose in my life, of trying to find my life’s work, my contribution. Yet all my personal insights stem from my suffering. When I reach out to help others, I am released from my own pain. It simply disappears. Bailey’s notion of dwelling seems of real value to me. I seem to stare at myself full in the face as a result of my reading of Bailey’s work.

Whilst I can reach some of the most elevated thoughts and spiritual aspirations that humanity has, I can also experience the very depths of anguish and despair. I feel tied to a cross, from which there is no escape. I suffer twice. I suffer and I suffer because I am suffering. If I did not have the awareness, if I did not have some knowledge of what it means to be the very best human, then my suffering could be justified. For example, I could blame someone or find some other justification. My wounds are self-inflicted. I do myself and humanity a disservice every time I fall, every time I sink down. Every time I am weak.

I notice that there is a vast difference between the soul driving and the personality driving me. My personality now seems a conglomeration of thoughts and feelings that sometimes serve the soul so that light pours through me (which other people seem to recognize and feed back to me). When the soul is in charge I may feel elevated, blissful, I notice my ability to work with insights, ideas and inspiration. Nothing seems to matter other than a deep love of humanity, a seeking to know and keep on knowing, watching and seeing.
When my personality is in charge I can now see with increasing clarity the results of anxieties and fears, lack of trust and ambition, influencing the strengths I also have. I am busy harnessing myself, determined to steadfastly maintain what I now see I have.

Yet I cannot say with absolute certainty that the soul exists other than that it is the best, most transcendent me I have witnessed as a natural state experienced in the general course of living. I notice that Bailey explains myself to me in the simple, repeated statements concerning the personality verses the soul.

Is it the recognition of the struggle which I face that brings that struggle into the light, positioning me in relation to it. Do I really know with what I am faced because I believe I am able to recognize it? Language and the meaning I attach to the struggle seems to play a vital role in this. I have found Bailey’s language of esotericism helpful in describing the enormity of the human struggle, the battlefield of the evolution of consciousness. In the end I feel that the final pair of opposites may be the inner and the outer realms, the subjective and the objective realities. Perhaps, this too is an illusion.

The more I read of Bailey’s work the more I analyze past events in terms of her perspective. The explanatory power of these teachings in a deeply personal sense is quite alarming. My life seems to take shape through Bailey’s concepts. Am I becoming feverish?

7.4 An Evaluation of Amelia’s Journey along the Path

In this chapter growth through Bailey’s developmental stages has been explored through Bailey’s use of a set of conceptual constructs that portray aspects of duality. These constructs are intended to be transformational tools, helping to promote a clearer understanding of the inner work the reader may then engage in. Through the use of these tools in reflection, contemplation and meditation, all ways of describing a sustained inner focusing, each individual may have the chance to grow. Bailey’s self-help model portrays the potential for, and aims to help foster, spiritual growth.
In the following section I evaluate Bailey’s esoteric constructs pertaining to the notion of duality, speculating upon their transformational potential. I continue with critical reflections upon Bailey’s work concerning a ‘problem of adherence’, as a limitation upon any transformational effects of Bailey’s work on a reader. I complete this chapter, and Amelia’s journey, by reflecting upon the heuristic process.

7.4.1 Evaluating Bailey’s use of Duality

In this section I explore Bailey’s metaphors of duality in the light of any transformational power her texts may carry. Bailey places a spiritual value upon the notion of unity, identifying many factors that obstruct progress towards unity as a spiritual goal. These factors are not unified, they are the divisions within our differentiated existence. On the path to unity certain fragments of difference or of divided parts become the negative aspect of dualities, the positive aspect being that which is granted a higher status, an ultimate value by human thought. So whatever is bad is judged against that which is good, what is deemed right condemns that which is wrong. In recognizing these dualities we can either try to beat the negative pole into submission, from a position of righteousness, or we can embrace both poles from an inclusive perspective. Bailey adopts the latter view in arguing that the evolution of consciousness leads to an expanded more unified self, which is more open and receptive to life, having transcended (embraced) the dualities of the limited self whose consciousness identifies with the duality of self and other. This fundamental duality of self and other forms the ground upon which the fogs and mists of confusion depicted in Bailey’s notions of maya, glamour and illusion are formed.

How helpful are these metaphors in promoting growth from a limited to an expanded self that Bailey advocates? Does the use of metaphor to language the subjective world of the self foster unity, when these metaphors help to describe the conditions that create the dualities and the consequences or effects of them within the inner life of the limited self? Even the notion of unity may obscure a direct experience of unity. Furthermore, might it not also be the case that such a construal of duality exacerbates the problem through over-identification of it? Perhaps the intensification of meaning involved in this process is a pre-requisite for eventual transcendence? Perhaps the
process of identifying these dualities helps to transcend habituated thinking patterns of polarization.

Navigating through these dualities in Bailey’s model becomes the task of the seeker and Bailey offers assistance in the form of the concepts of glamour, illusion and maya. Once understood, each of these metaphors concentrates meaning, summarizing the enormous number of permutations of attitude, behaviour, response, perspective, and attachment that, according to Bailey create confusion within the human personality. This simplifies self-understanding, and may also help to foster detachment, since once a particular personal quality has been duly categorized, some epistemic distance from the quality is gained. In this way the metaphors become powerful descriptors.

The sense of detachment that Bailey’s work seems to foster, however, does not in my view equate with transformation or in Bailey’s language, constitute a release from the hold that maya, glamour and illusion can have. Amelia showed how powerful some of these confusing features can be and how difficult they are to move beyond. An evaluation of the efficacy of the transformational potential held within these metaphors may be gleaned through practicing meditative formulas provided in the texts that are designed to dispel any glamour, or release the hold it may have. However, as Amelia indicated, her own reluctance to comply with Bailey’s instructions prevented her from such a direct engagement. Whilst willing to reflect upon the impact the texts may have in terms of their descriptive power, Amelia resisted any possible prescriptive potency inherent in practicing any techniques offered. Amelia drew a demarcating line between being a seeker of meaning and a practitioner of belief.

As discussed above the notions of glamour, illusion and maya eventually converge in the dweller. The dweller (personality) and the angel (soul) offer an even greater simplification into a single pair of opposites, that of the personality and the soul, or the limited self and the expanded self. The dweller draws into one single unified cluster all fragments of a person that obstruct spiritual progress. Here the myriad of possible personality attachments, traits, habits and responses finally become one. This single category worked powerfully upon Amelia, intensifying her self understanding.
When confronted by her limited self as an illusory dweller, constructed out of all the thoughts and emotions, experiences, memories, habits accrued in life, juxtaposed with another entity, supposedly more real, the Angel or soul and the spiritual life, Amelia appeared to be cleaved in two. The potency of this metaphor becomes apparent when we realize Amelia’s awareness has been shifted through language into a position of Angel (soul, observer) looking at the dweller:

Do you comprehend that whereof I speak? As yet, my words embody for you symbolically a future condition and event. The day will surely come, however, when you will stand in full awareness between these symbols of the pairs of opposites, with the Angel on the right and the Dweller on the left (GWP:39).

We might wonder who the ‘you’ is that stands between these metaphors. Even so, through the reader’s recognition, the language of the texts has brought the soul into imaginary existence!

It is also possible that a reader may find himself or herself reflecting upon the notion of the dweller within himself or herself, bracketing the angel as pertaining to an other realm, denoting a spiritual awareness he or she does not feel he or she has. In this way the reader observes the dweller and the angel in the wings from a third position. How is this possible? If we follow Bailey’s metaphor the answer can only be that the dweller is not fully formed and the third position is really an aspect of the dweller. The dweller/angel metaphor is then an interesting speculation representing to a follower of the work, a point of future attainment. However, when the metaphor speaks loudly, when a convergence of a reader’s own way of knowing and a representative reflection in language occurs, a moment of real potency is created for that individual. This became clear for Amelia.

The sense of cleavage Amelia felt when reading this aspect of Bailey’s work has been identified by James (1902) as one aspect of religious experience, in which the individual feels divided, through identifying themselves with something higher as their ‘real’ self. This real self then turns back to observe some wrongness in the human condition, only resolved through establishing a firm connection with the real
or higher self. James regards the normal evolution of character to involve a unifying of the chaos of the inner self into some kind of stable functioning being. ‘Unhappiness is apt to characterize the period of order-making and struggle’ (1902:167). However, as James suggests, for the mystic this period of struggle becomes a negation of the lower self:

Since denial of the finite self and its wants, since asceticism of some sort, is found in religious experience to be the only doorway to the larger and more blessed life, this moral mystery intertwines and combines with the intellectual mystery in all mystical writings (1902:409).

Amelia’s subjective experiences whilst reading the dweller aspect of Bailey’s work, delving and dwelling within her own inner life, reflects James’ mystical interpretation of the divided self. The Bailey texts provided the language and the world within which Amelia could re-explore her self. The distress Amelia felt in becoming aware of a cleavage of selves within her may be considered an opportunity rather than an impediment. That a text can provide material that assists this process, carrying initiatory potential, is evident in the continual communication of humanity’s highest aspirations, the revealed theology of scripture taking the supreme position of provider of text induced religious experience. In this particular case Bailey’s texts had a similar effect.

Amelia’s apparent shift in self-understanding, finds culmination in Bailey’s work, in the following passage:

The two factors involved (and forget not, my brother, that all this takes place within the field of consciousness of the disciple) move together and towards each other. In the center of the burning ground they meet, and then the lesser light…of the personality is absorbed into the greater light of the Angel or soul. The Angel, therefore, “occultly obliterates” the Dweller who becomes lost to sight in the radiant aura of the Angel…The personality still remains…but it is seen no more as of old (GWP:269).

So the feverish exhaustion and suffering that Amelia experienced through her reading of Bailey may be regarded as a process of letting go, or surrendering the ego to a
process of transformation, involving, not necessarily a conversion to the particular system being studied, but towards the spiritual life itself. According to James, ‘so long as the egoistic worry of the sick soul guards the door, the expansive confidence of the soul of faith gains no presence’ (1902:208).

In identifying the worries and confusions of the limited self in the final notion of dweller, it is Bailey’s intention to bring the reader to this door. It appears that Bailey’s work is more effective in cultivating this possibility for a reader when he or she engages with the metaphors of duality that Bailey presents. This seems to allow a reaching forth, a striving beyond our own personal limitations. Whereas in other parts of Bailey’s work, particularly her seven Rays as psychological descriptors, or her presentation of various stages of the path, Amelia drew Bailey’s concepts towards herself, seeking subjective correspondences, and in the act of doing so, adopting a literal mapping of equivalences or similarities. Whilst her life was still re-construed in esoteric language, this language seemed to be reduced to fit the individual personality, the work lending itself more to an occultistic gnostic interpretation. Certainly we may regard this process as possibly gratifying to the ego. We may imagine ourselves, for example, as initiates of the third degree! Amelia certainly followed the same method of applying Bailey’s notions in seeking to subjectively experience Bailey’s dweller. Yet a subtle shift in direction seems to have occurred, with Amelia drawing herself outwardly, to meet with another notion that was beyond herself, an angel. This same direction of the drawing forth to meet something transcendent was also apparent for myself as researcher for Chapter Four, where the most abstract part of Bailey’s material was presented. In both cases an artistic gnostic way of knowing seems to have been fostered.

Perhaps the convergence of Amelia’s life and the texts represents an experiential high water mark for Amelia, leaving behind some residue or permanent effect. It is this residue that we look to through pragmatic eyes, supported by James (1902) who values the outcomes or effects that religious experience may have on the life led by the believer, over investigations into the roots of religious beliefs. Amongst these fruits James identifies a new level of spiritual vitality and a renewed passion for growing ideas that may help to foster spiritual vision. Both of these seem to be born out by Amelia. Bailey’s work appeals to Amelia’s sense of goodness and justice
towards humanity. James argues that these notions in a religious sense become mental ‘abstractions…polarizing and magnetizing us’ (1902:56). In many places Amelia writes of her aspiration to be of service to humanity. From Amelia’s own admission, both fear and love bound together within her and became blended with the language of Bailey’s world, resulting in a passion to transcend her inner melancholy, through a renewal of purposeful action as contribution to humanity.

7.4.2 A Problem of Adherence

Treating Bailey’s constructs as metaphors that may be interpreted by the reader according to their own way of knowing, draws into question how helpful or powerful these metaphors may be in facilitating the growth Bailey advocates. The metaphor of the dweller resonated with Amelia’s own self understanding and through the blending of metaphor and understanding a new self concept emerged around which Amelia may drive her life in the future. As with any text of this nature, the reader is provided with ample opportunity to find some idea they can relate themselves to, if prepared to take the initial steps into the esoteric world itself.

In entering the world Bailey has constructed the reader to some degree suspends their own way of knowing. Amelia has shown that even with reservations, initial resistance and a certain guardedness in her approach, she eventually embraced Bailey’s wonderland, and her self image began to change as a result. This process, which the texts themselves tend to promote through the way they position the reader, can make that reader vulnerable and suggestible. The Bailey texts carry an air of authority, the reader, who is construed by the texts as a student, is invited to believe that a master of the wisdom wrote them, and this master, as teacher, emphatically tells the reader the facts pertaining to a metaphysical reality. Consequently, the reader may easily slip into a passive role, absorbing the material rather than actively engaging with it. Since the texts were written in this way, this places a heavy onus of responsibility on the author not to manipulate or control their readership. The reader is faced with the challenge of engaging with rather than passively absorbing Bailey’s world, adopting an artistic gnostic approach that provides for an opportunity for individual transformation as a consequence of embodying and living through that which these metaphors point towards. The texts lend themselves easily to the
occultistic gnostic passivity of tying these metaphors to the self unreflectively. So the reader faces the challenge of engagement and the challenge of resisting the passive adoption of the teachings. The student of the spiritual path is a far cry from the student in the classroom!

An example of the manipulative tendency these texts have is evidenced when Bailey proposes the development of the esoteric sense, construed as a special skill required by the seeker, who is confronted, through their reading of the texts, with their own apparent need for greater intuition. Bailey appropriates one human ability, the ability to penetrate symbolic meaning, re-describes this in terms of her esoteric world. In so doing she is appropriating an apparently universal intellectual attribute used by literary and art critics, hermeneutic students of scripture, and scholars of culture alike. This ability now becomes the esoteric sense. This implies either that Bailey believes all these writers who utilize interpretations in their work are themselves esoteric practitioners, or, more likely, Bailey is making an exclusive claim. The notion of an esoteric sense creates an atmosphere of special access to the intuition within the esoteric domain and in so doing, serves to keep non-esotericists at bay.

This is a serious concern since Bailey argues that the esoteric sense is required to make progress beyond a certain stage, making spiritual progress contingent upon esoteric practice (EXH:99). Bailey’s notion of the esoteric sense is therefore manipulative in two ways. Firstly, it manipulates language and meaning to serve a persuasive purpose, and secondly it manipulates the reader into the belief that esoteric practice is a pre-requisite for spiritual growth.

When viewed from inside the esoteric world, however, a different interpretation becomes apparent. Bailey argues from within the esoteric world, and consequently argues the need to penetrate the meaning behind esoteric symbols, as signifiers of cosmological structures. In this way Bailey is using the word esoteric to convey the need to develop an inner sense, a new way of knowing. Whilst Bailey’s definition of an esoteric sense creates another barrier for those outside this world, I do not believe it to be her intention to create an air of exclusivity. Rather, Bailey is simply stressing the need for introspection, turning the intellectual attribute used by many of us to penetrate meaning in the world, towards our own inner life. Bailey’s symbols and
metaphors are presented to provide an opportunity for the reader to develop this sensibility. To approach Bailey’s esotericism as a way of knowing, we are clearly challenged to adopt an artistic gnostic way of perceiving, involving penetrating symbolic meaning, cultivated in an esoteric sense.

However, an occultistic gnostic way of knowing that Amelia wrestled with when she found herself applying Bailey’s notions to herself has powerful implications with regard to the problem of adherence. The texts did impact upon the mind of the reader, leading to an at least temporary shift in perspective. As Amelia’s progression through the texts advanced and a greater understanding of the reality they depicted was grasped, more and more material appeared relevant. The reader and the texts seemed to merge, the perspective adopted without judgment. All life experience, attitudes, beliefs, values and ideas, indeed the entire contents of her personal existence were interpreted and evaluated in the light of this new perspective. The texts were not simply read, they were lived. The particular way that the texts invite the reader to construe themselves was found to foster a sense of personal growth. Simply through adopting the view offered by the texts, one felt advanced and advancing.

The texts re-language my inner nature and it is very easy to find myself believing that I am a disciple with certain key stages in my past and a future stage demanding preparation. The curious way that my life seems to be an exemplar of a certain stage in the psychological model Bailey proposes is alarming. The rapport is profound. I find the process of finding evidence within my self to support the hypotheses contained in these texts a slippery road. In an exalted state of mind, sentences leap out with significance and meaning, triggering personal insights. I notice how much my worldview adjusts to Bailey’s, the ease with which I wear the words. Metaphors and symbols become concrete, the suggested, imperative and the possible, absolute. I can see how easy it would be to adopt a literal and absolutist view of the texts. Yet I am also well aware that much of the material Bailey articulates is derivative and I could find the same advice through looking at many spiritual and psychological teachings and texts. I could therefore never be a devotee. However, I simply cannot escape the way that the texts steel my resolve to be a better person and to help humanity to overcome its ills.
Another example of how Amelia became strongly influenced by the texts, is evidenced in the way her own writing changed to emulate the authoritative imperative style in which the texts are written, revealing perhaps a sympathy, openness or acceptance.

*My struggle is a universal one. The path to unity is the path of unification of the idea of what is right and true and the behaviour, actions and words of the individual. Herein can lie separation and herein must eventually occur a synthesis of the idea, the thought, the word the action. Coherence and integrity are keywords and recognition through discernment. Knowing makes it obvious, it does not make it easy. My whole life has been an unfolding of consciousness, ever expanding awareness, learning, seeking and on and on.*

It appears that Amelia had become conditioned by Bailey’s world. Her thoughts were not always ‘her own’. Her own inner reasoning, her reflections upon herself and her surroundings took on a new colouring, fragments of Bailey’s work creeping in as interpretations of events and circumstances. Full immersion in any circumstance or text might have a similar effect. However when Bailey became a voice of authority in Amelia’s head, challenging her sense of self, this effect seemed more profound. Should she shun or disregard these thoughts? Perhaps over time, advice, instructions and interpretations of who we are and how we should conduct our lives become part of our tacit knowing, unexamined and taken for granted responses that shape our perspective, our understanding of the world around us, our moral life. So by exposing myself heuristically, and becoming Amelia Hewman, I may be thought of as a risk taker. However, I had prior faith in my own inner strength and in the texts, which I considered would not create an impression detrimental to my own well being. The single, outstanding impression the texts left with me as Amelia can be summarized in the following passages.

*I know I am capable of contributing to the betterment of humanity, of being part of the forward march of servers, of goodwill, of right human relations. I know I fall foul of wrong human emotions, and I know with precision the difference between these two. I am hailed by Bailey’s work, her conviction has become mine. The same deep
emotions of pain and suffering are the powerhouse that drives me to help set the world to rights. I do feel cleaved in two and my impression is that Bailey’s work has brought this to light through her conceptual presentation of the personality and the soul as one of the pairs of opposites. The dweller and the angel, glamour and all the inner confusions resulting from the wounds of a harsh life, juxtaposed with high ideals of service and goodwill. I draw strength from the work. In spite of the hierarchical and authoritative language. In spite of the notion of initiation and the life of Christ. I have no answers except to stay in the game of life. To do this requires an openness not always easy to achieve and maintain.

In the context of my own life, the notion of locating myself on initiatory stages of a spiritual path does not serve to inflate my own sense of importance so much as it motivates me to pull out the stops and dedicate myself to helping others, of using all my skills and talents in the service of humanity. I do not feel superior even if I consider myself some way along the path. I feel humbled, my failings feel heavier, my responsibility weighty. My arrogance is not fueled, my sense of duty is.

Amelia’s testimony reveals the difficulty that a reader interested esotericism is confronted with. It is a problem compounded by the disposition that a reader may bring to the texts, described by Hanegraaff (1992) through the distinction he made between the occultistic gnostic who brings a literal interpretation to bear upon textual metaphor and the artistic gnostic with their comfortable acceptance of paradox and metaphor. Amelia displays openness to the texts and an awareness that she tends in both gnostic directions, pulled at times into a more factual adherence and at others in wonder at the symbolic mystery the texts convey, drawn by the effects the texts themselves have upon her.

Whilst writers in the esoteric community may stress that esoteric texts should not be regarded as dogma, a view shared by Bailey herself, Amelia reveals just how difficult this becomes when the esoteric perspective is applied to the individual as a psychological model, and the author of the perspective carries the voice of authority (a spiritual master). According to John Sinclair (1984), Bailey’s contemporary and biographer, Bailey constantly stressed that the texts should be approached with ‘sympathetic sincerity of thought, common-sense discrimination and spiritual
intuition’ (1984:22). Sellon and Weber (1992) concur, noting that theosophical epistemology requires the student to query all statements and accept no truth unless it concords with one’s own reason. However, if a reader does not question his/her own reason, where is the growth? All that happens is the adherence of parts of a work that a reader finds in accordance with his/her own perspective, to that perspective. No challenge to the self is apparent. The scholar remains the scholar. The promotion of a non-dogmatic interpretation of the ideas esotericism proposes, is of no assistance to the reader who embarks on a seeker type heuristic journey.

This problem of adherence has a double edge. Whilst blind acceptance or fanatical adherence are not recommended, an openness to the texts, allowing any meaning to flow in relation to subjective experience, makes a reader vulnerable to unwitting adherence. Yet if the reader remains closed, an opportunity for growth is denied. A process of openness followed by a second phase of critical reflection upon the entire relationship between reader and texts and the resulting understanding cannot be understated in value. In this way, the heuristic approach may foster both the ‘spiritual life and intellectual apprehension of the reader’ (TCF:xv). Both subjective process of engagement with the texts as a way of knowing, alongside the application of reason in a consideration of the contents of esotericism as knowledge appear required.

Yet any process of artistic gnostic engagement combined with reflective reasoning is undermined through statements such as, ‘every aspect of truth, progressively grasped, has to be assimilated and welded into the experience of the student’ (TCF:868).

This statement assumes not only the existence of a body of absolute truth but also that the contents of the text are part of this body of truth. The statement positions the reader as the recipient of such truth, whose task it is to assimilate, or incorporate it into one’s own being, and weld (two metals each lose their identity and become one), or merge with the aspect of truth. Whilst Bailey is referring here to the need for esoteric knowledge to become more than intellectually stimulating, to be applied to the life of the student, the language used suggests more than thoughtful reflection. Weld and assimilate also suggest adherence. In Chapter Four I presented a synopsis

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3 This is explored in more detail in Chapter Nine.
of *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* as an elaborate metaphor. In so doing I used an artistic
gnostic way of viewing this text which seemed to allow me to see through the way
Bailey presented the material and in this sense circumvent a literal approach. Yet this
seems to contrast with the above quotation. Have I gone against Bailey’s wishes?
Over and again this tension emerges in Bailey’s work, between a literal interpretation
of metaphysical facts or a metaphoric interpretation of metaphysical possibilities.

Amelia has shown the struggle confronting the reader wishing to explore and gain
insights through Bailey’s work and not simultaneously slipping into adopting a literal
interpretation of the texts. Towards the end of the heuristic study, a new insight into
the texts emerged through Amelia’s own artistic gnostic approach. This appeared to
Amelia as an elegant, deeply embedded paradox, almost a secret message contained
within this vast scheme of teachings. This paradox was gleaned through Amelia’s
constant wrestling with her own occultistic gnostic potential, the air of authority that
the texts have and the insistence by Bailey, that all contained within the volumes is
hypothetical.

*These texts reveal the problem of adherence for any seeker, the way we construct
meaning, associate and select. I sense a ‘secret’ message in the texts, whether witting
or unwitting, that exists in the dynamic between ‘this must not be treated as dogma’
and how one is drawn in to treat it as such, suspending that necessary detachment.
This message is simply that this is the value of the texts. This seems to reveal
something very important about the way we think. The Bailey texts have an air of
authority and yet one is asked to apply the teachings to one’s life to test it out. In so
doing one is drawn in, adopting the frame of reference and suspending judgment, in
the complex puzzling out. This is the razor edge. This is the teaching. Not the
content, not the application, nor the adoption of the perspective, but the mental poise
required not to be drawn in whilst engaged in something so complex and abstract. It
isn’t that the content is necessarily false. It is simply that the spiritual training lies in
the poise the reader needs to develop to retain the detachment of non-adherence at
the same time as evaluating the concepts and ideas by applying them to the self. And
that training opens the mind to a very different way of knowing, to being in the world
but not of it. An approach to life, to ideas, that is inclusive and synthetic. It seems to*
develop a cognitive process but only if one is able to live with the paradox. Of authority and instruction and application, verses non-adherence.

I cannot say, many months after my immersion in the texts, that the set of ideas Bailey uses has become embedded into my own way of knowing. However, my way of knowing has changed considerably through this process, I believe through the months of intensive wrestling with the myriad of metaphors, their explanations and interconnections, layering of meaning. This has led me to realize the mystery of an in-between place, a way of knowing that embraces paradox. I accept multiple ways of viewing the world with a sense of empathy.

I speculate upon the pursuit of truth in the inner realms may be best served by an attitude of uncertainty, since certainty implies that whatever we meet along the way, we will treat as objective or absolute truth. Uncertainty refers to an openness to possibility. The paradox of being absolutely certain that no absolutes, when constructed in language, exist.

Amelia’s experience suggests that these texts can help to foster a kind of religious experience and spiritual growth, through an artistic gnostic engagement with the complexities and interrelatedness of metaphors, alongside the challenge not to practice occultistic gnosis, or literal interpretations that become attached to the self. The distinction can be subtle and difficult to maintain as the texts seem to ‘suck the reader in’ to a position of adherence as Amelia has continuously found. I return to the problem of adherence in Chapter Nine, after exploring an occultistic gnostic view of Bailey’s work, displayed by Bailey herself, in Chapter Eight.

7.5 Reflections on the Heuristic Process

To complete this discussion of the Amelia chapters, I turn to three aspects of the heuristic process meriting a brief reflective elucidation, each aspect impacting upon the appropriateness of this kind of study.

Firstly, the heuristic process provided the ground upon which Amelia experienced the challenges of engaging with Bailey’s work. Perhaps it is the case that such an
intensive study, creating sustained spiritual excitement, can also cause mental and emotional strain. James (1902) and Bailey both recognize the need for a spiritually inclined person to lead a well rounded life, where one strong faculty is balanced by another, to avert pathological consequences due to too much stimulation. The focal intensity my heuristic study seemed to demand of me was rigorous and placed great strain on me, physically, emotionally and mentally. I often felt ungrounded, or that my head would explode! I continually felt aroused, awakened, stimulated by the texts and this excitement exhausted me. Engaging with the texts heuristically meant that I adopted the phenomenological *epoché* (Husserl 1970), suspending my own beliefs, drawing from the texts how they impressed or spoke to me as an individual. This lack of distance from the texts exacerbated my exhaustion, presenting a barrier to similar studies, since only a scholar sharing my own apparent strength and keenness of interest would embark on such an arduous task. In order to penetrate the heart of esotericism, with fiery eyes (Faivre 1992), a reader must be prepared for the consequences! The results of such studies may lead to a profound destabilization of the scholar’s inner life.

Secondly, writing my research findings as a narrative in which a central character engages in self-dialogue in response to the texts she reads, highlights and challenges a problem with language presented as narrative. My approach to the narrative brings the Bailey texts alive; they form part of Amelia’s lived experience.

In her insightful work, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Iris Murdoch (1993) comments upon the perhaps obvious yet equally easily forgotten observation that written words as representations falsify, since the written word is only a copy and can therefore only be a reflection of unity:

> Any use of written signs, is falsifying in so far as it professes to be a permanent record of an understanding which can only occur in ephemeral contexts of real person-to-person communication (1993:19).

If presented as an authorized interpretation of Bailey’s work, my own efforts may be even more spurious in this regard. My treatment of the heuristic data in the construction of a narrative provided space for the existence of: a pre-textual Amelia,
or myself, existing prior to this research; a textual Amelia in a constructed dialogue with the Bailey texts; and a post-textual narrator, functioning as an intermediary between Amelia and the texts. The narrator contextualizes this presentation through providing some evaluative comments and observations. I have not created a virtual voice on Bailey’s behalf, leaving the various quotations and explanatory narrative to serve as the material that Amelia responds to. Yet Bailey’s material remains an authority, cast in the role of teacher and existing as a voice within my narrative, carrying an assumption that Bailey exists as a voice in dialogue with the narrative reader. Amelia becomes an illustrative example as a student of the texts, and the reader of the narrative may be drawn towards a tacit acceptance of Bailey’s authority, were it not for the addition of scholarly comments.

Thirdly, a complete lack of any objectivity provided by an observing researcher may invalidate this type of research from a broadly positivist perspective. A positivist approach requires distance from the object of inquiry, and methods of testing able to be compared externally to other research in a field. A positivist approach would aim to empirically test the data, seeking evidence of any transformation of consciousness through an analysis of pre-textual, textual, and post-textual Amelia, in comparison with each other, and an external (to this inquiry) set of data, identifying various features indicative of transformation. However, a problem arises in applying this approach in the context of a heuristic study, through demarcating boundaries between these different voices. The heuristic process is fluid, boundaries become fuzzy; the illusion of separation created by these voices making a positivist analysis a contrivance in my view.

This approach has not been adopted in the current work. Rather, a constructivist approach seeks to evaluate any transformation of consciousness by exploring Amelia’s testimony in relation to the texts, including any post-heuristic insights emerging in reflections. This approach also explores the texts themselves. Evidence of transformation is partly embedded in the critically reflective process itself, hence the need for reflective reflexivity, or the ability to reflect upon our own reflections. Again this places a particular demand upon the researcher. A constructivist paradigm also values a functional approach to evaluating research, through exploring consequences evidenced in the personal life of the researcher. A constructivist
evaluation retains an emphasis on subjective introspection, even if some empirical evidence is pragmatically identified in the life of the researcher, since it is only through the voice of the researcher that such evidence is presented. In this research, there is no onlooker able to record observations of change. Frankly, I might lie about any changes to provide evidence to support my inquiry, or unwittingly overlook contradictory evidence.

These difficulties may serve to discredit this thesis as valid research. Any reader of the current work is requested to trust the authenticity of the presentation. Some may find this impossible. However, in my view, the heuristic approach is an invigorating, dynamic, intensely introspective approach to research that may have many under-explored applications in a variety of contexts, and may be particularly useful in conjunction with other methods.

7.6 Conclusion

Across Chapters Five, Six and Seven Amelia perceived herself through esoterically informed eyes. Amelia sensed a tension in reading work between metaphoric and symbolic interpretations, and factual and concrete ones. Bailey’s work fostered both occultistic or artistic gnosis. It appears that when we draw aspects of the self into the abstract world of symbol and metaphor an air of detachment and transcendence becomes apparent. When we descend into the depths of ourselves and drag Bailey’s concepts with us, then we seem to concretize and personalize the notions.

As suggested above, the heuristic method in this particular instance created the space for and may be regarded as having led to, a form of religious experience for the researcher. The outcomes of this experience have formed the content of this chapter: through my reflections upon the texts my own artistic gnostic way of knowing has grown, as I have wrestled with my own occultistic gnostic tendencies. I have suggested that occultistic gnosis which carries a literal interpretive approach is aided by Bailey’s authoritative air and that this combination may lead to adherence. The next chapter tackles this problem, exploring the way that Bailey presents parts of her work as literal truth, applying her metaphors in her social commentary.
CHAPTER EIGHT
A NEW WORLD RELIGION

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore Bailey’s construction of her work as a revealed theology, intended to form the foundational material for a new world religion. Thus I have created another hermeneutic circle within which I adopt a more prominent dialectic stance in relation to the texts, exploring some ideological consequences of Bailey’s esoteric view. The power of ideology in her work functions through a direct appeal to a reader, who is hailed to act in accordance with Bailey’s directives. Bailey also applies her esoteric epistemology to events and circumstances that can be known or experienced through the physical senses in observation, applying her esoteric metaphors as an interpretive framework to world affairs. This is a deterministic method of argument serving as an ideologically persuasive device.

Bailey utilizes two aspects of a theosophically informed esoteric epistemology in the construction of her argument. First, Bailey incorporates Sellon and Weber’s (1992) theosophical category, hierarchy of being, to inform her spiritual hierarchy, or inner government overseeing the evolution of consciousness of humanity. Underlying the theosophical notion of a hierarchy of being are the esoteric epistemological characteristics (identified by Faivre, 1994) of mediation (divine intermediaries) and transmission (relaying of knowledge from master to disciple), presented in Chapter Three. Second, to support her axiology Bailey harnesses the theosophical category identified by Sellon and Weber (1992) as role of humanity to explain what she believes a disciple should do to foster human betterment. Here Bailey utilizes imagination, another aspect of the esoteric epistemology outlined by Faivre (1994), in promoting her notion of thoughtform making.

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1 As highlighted in Chapter One, at least some Bailey adherents continue to this day to use Bailey’s ideas to try to improve the global situation, particularly through the United Nations, an organization Bailey felt held an important key to the resolution of the then global crisis.
Bailey asserts as fact the dawning of a *New Age*\(^2\), involving Christ’s reappearance on Earth as the head of her *spiritual hierarchy*. I begin this discussion by exploring this claim. After a critique of Bailey’s explanation of world affairs, and her New Age hypothesis, I explore her designated role for the reader. I examine her notions of revelation and transmission of a higher knowledge, paying attention to her notion of *thoughtform making*. I end with a discussion of some controversial claims made by Bailey, the consequences of her own tendency towards an occultistic gnostic application of her esoteric ontology and epistemology.

I draw upon the Bailey texts, highlighted in bold type, as listed below, most of which pertain to her social commentary.

**Table 2 - List of Bailey Texts Grouped Into Three Themes**

Texts in Italics are written by Alice Bailey, non-italicised written by Alice Bailey under the directive (she claims) of a Master of the Wisdom, Djwhal Khul. Texts in bold indicate those referred to in this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosmology:</th>
<th>Initiation, Human and Solar</th>
<th>IHS</th>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Consciousness of the Atom</em></td>
<td>CA</td>
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<td><em>A Treatise on Cosmic Fire</em></td>
<td>CF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Rays and the Initiations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological:</td>
<td>Letters on Occult Meditation</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Light of the Soul</em></td>
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<td><em>The Soul and Its Mechanism</em></td>
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<td><em>From Intellect to Intuition</em></td>
<td>ITI</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>A Treatise on White Magic</em></td>
<td>TWM</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>From Bethlehem to Calvary</em></td>
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<td>Glamour: <em>A World Problem</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle</td>
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<td>Esoteric Psychology, Vol I</td>
<td>EPI</td>
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\(^2\) The *New Age* refers to the ingress of our Sun into the constellation of Aquarius, the result of a precession of equinoxes (EA:20). This is an astrological interpretation, based on the way that the spring equinox, or zero degrees of Aries, appears to move backwards against the stars. Thus, all planets, including the Sun, appear to change their position in relation to the zodiac (Brady 1992:297). The last *Age*, of Pisces, commenced around the birth of Christ. Each *Age* spans approximately two thousand years.
8.2 The Bailey Texts as A Revealed Theology

In Chapter Four I argued that Bailey’s cosmology may be treated as a metaphoric theory of everything, drawing upon aspects of her work that portray a conceptual representation of a metaphysical reality she claims to exist. Other parts of Bailey’s work, however, do not easily lend themselves to this interpretation. Another way to view Bailey’s work is to treat it as a form of scripture. Her theory of everything provides the metaphysical underpinning of a theological treatise serving a particular purpose, the establishment of a new world religion with an esoteric flavour. Bailey advocates the establishment of such a new world religion (PH:65, 138-139, 140, 144-145, 152, 155-166), her texts providing what Bailey regards as all the necessary information for its inauguration.

If viewed this way then Bailey’s works may collectively constitute a form of revealed theology, or the word of God transmitted directly from a divine intermediary, the master Djwhal Khul via Bailey’s pen. The reader may draw comfort from this elaborate presentation, if we concur with James (1902) that this satisfies an inner need for:

Something institutional and complex, majestic in the hierarchic interrelatedness of its parts, with authority, descending from stage to stage, and at every stage objects for adjectives of mystery and splendour, derived in
the last resort from the Godhead who is the fountain and culmination of the system (1902:450).

It is through fulfillment of such a need for comfort in the face of the uncertainties of the unknown that provides the ground upon which the ideological power of Bailey’s work is enacted.

### 8.2.1 Guiding Governance as the Foundation of a New World Religion

Bailey’s presentation of her spiritual hierarchy carries a majestic splendour commensurate with James’ comment above, and provides an intermediate endpoint to the evolution of human consciousness, her spiritual hierarchy representing the next step into the heights of spiritual ascension. For Bailey, the evolution of consciousness beyond the third initiation sees the disciple become a spiritual master, part of a spiritual hierarchy of masters of the wisdom\(^3\). Within the context of Bailey’s work as scripture, her spiritual hierarchy may be regarded as a theocracy, an inner government guiding the evolutionary path of humanity. Bailey asserts as literal truth the existence of a spiritual hierarchy and makes one outstanding prediction upon this basis: the reappearance of the Christ.

Bailey draws upon her cosmology to describe her spiritual hierarchy in an abstract way, as an inner government with seven departments involved in one or other etheric centre of each planetary scheme in our solar system. According to Bailey these departments exist in matter of the systemic buddhic plane, the next ascending plane above the mental. These departments can be viewed as great wheels of manasic (mental) and electric fire that vitalize the body of each planetary Logos and hold all together as an objective whole (IHS:20-27).

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the notion of a spiritual hierarchy was introduced into Neoplatonism by Pseudo-Dionysius, who conceived of an angelology or celestial hierarchy of guiding angels, adding an anthropomorphic layer of meaning to the

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\(^3\) A feminist critique of Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy would note membership as exclusively male, reminiscent of the patriarchal Christian Trinity which is also used by Bailey as one metaphorical descriptor of spirit, soul and matter. Whilst beyond the scope of the current work, the issue of gender with regard to western esotericism as found evident in Bailey’s work certainly merits consideration.
Neoplatonic cosmology and forming a basis for Bailey’s cosmological system. Through the notion of hierarchy Bailey’s macrocosmic world of metaphysical entities is connected to her microcosm, humanity. Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy functions as an intermediary body between these macrocosmic and microcosmic realities.

Safely explained by reference to metaphysical hypotheses drawn largely from Neoplatonism, Bailey’s hierarchy of being finds some epistemological security, locked away inside a metaphysical belief system. As we saw in Chapter Three, the notion of a chain of being was developed by Aristotle to explain the idea of a continuum of creation. The Neoplatonists further developed Aristotle’s continuum, combining it with the Platonic conception of the Good to apply to their emanationist interpretations of the universe, informing a hierarchical cosmology. According to Lovejoy (1936):

The Scale of Being, then, as implied by the principle of the expansiveness and self-transcendence of “the Good,” becomes the essential conception of the Neoplatonic cosmology (1936:63).

Ontological commitment to a transcendent governing body is not unique to esoteric thought. James (1902) aptly notes, in his discussion of a ‘saint’s’ vision of a better world that:

The Utopian dreams of social justice in which many contemporary socialists and anarchists indulge are, in spite of their impracticability and non-adaptation to present environmental conditions, analogous to the saint’s belief in an existent kingdom of heaven (1902:352).

Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy carries similar aspirations, forming the institutional aspect of her axiology underpinning her desire to establish a new world religion, suggestive of a theocratic approach to governance and organization of power. Briefly this reflects a theocratic perspective informing state governance prior to democracy, associated with the divine right of kings. Here an ordered hierarchy of social ranks in the state is seen as a reflection of the universal hierarchy of being, ascending from inanimate matter through the vegetable and animal kingdoms to man, and thence through the spiritual orders to God. The spiritual and the human orders are thought of
in terms of active correspondence: heavenly eclipses resulting in the death of a king; a disturbance in the natural order, such as the death of the sun, corresponding to a disturbance in the human order. Esotericism retains these older views which seem to contest our hard fought for principle of democracy. Bailey refers to these views as part of the ancient or ageless wisdom, denoting for Bailey elevated, timeless, and superior knowledge.

Bailey is ontologically committed to her spiritual hierarchy as an indisputable fact:

> Either the spiritual Hierarchy exists, with all its potencies of love, wisdom and skill in action, or for ages humanity has suffered from hallucinations; either Christ and His group of Masters, initiates and disciples are facts in the natural processes of evolution, historically proven and known through Their spiritual activity down the ages, or men have been victims during those ages of a gigantic fraud – emanating from what and where? Either the consistency of the evolving presentation of the spiritual effort of the Hierarchy is a witness to a great reality or mankind has developed a mentality which is an instrument for the fabrication of non-existent facts, and this is in itself so paradoxical as to give the lie to the inference. Either the spiritual worlds and the three worlds of human endeavour can be related, or there is nothing to past beliefs, to ancient stories of manifesting divinity and to the constantly recurring periods of divine intervention (EXH: 224-5).

At this point the artistic gnostic reader, quite content with visualising Bailey’s intricate cosmology in terms of evocative metaphor is confronted with a considerable problem. Bailey’s argument may be conceived as an attempt to lead a reader into a more occultistic gnostic way of knowing, in which esoteric notions become literal and factual rather than metaphorical.

Needleman (1965) advocates a symbolic approach to the notion of hierarchy, stressing the ideological function of the hierarchy of being as the decentralization of the ego, or self-importance. Acknowledgement of beings far greater than ourselves ought it seems to foster humility. However, an anthropocentric interpretation of a hierarchy of being, in which certain humans may either evolve into some kind of
super-human being and/or be a recipient of their wisdom, may well serve to inflate rather than deflate the ego.

Even as a metaphor the spiritual hierarchy represents, in the Neoplatonic tradition, a pantheon of more unified beings; a cosmic order of greater organized unity than any humanly constructed order. Bailey’s hierarchy echoes McFague’s (1982), description of theological models or ‘dominant, comprehensive metaphors with organizing, structural potential’ (1982:193). McFague stresses that such models, ‘can never be taken literally since they are not descriptions but indirect attempts to express the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar’ (1982:193). Yet, the notion of a spiritual hierarchy, even when regarded as a metaphorical model, still carries forward Bailey’s intention of influencing the way that humanity constructs its society and government. In this way, Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy has an ideological function, her esoteric knowledge informing her interpretation of social reality. Mindful of McCarthy’s (1996) observation that ‘knowledges are consequential in generating what we know social reality to be’ (1996:6), the ideological function of Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy in influencing a reader’s interpretation of existing forms of governance is of serious concern. The power within this ideological function is evidenced through Bailey’s proposition that human society ought to develop a new world order based on practices of her spiritual hierarchy.

Another ideological consequence of Bailey’s hierarchy is found in the comfort a reader may draw from a belief in the existence of guiding entities nurturing human development. This sense of reassurance is supported through Bailey’s statement that since 1925 her spiritual hierarchy has been: pouring upon humanity the energy of spiritual love (brotherhood, peace and goodwill); attempting to impress the principle of relationship upon human minds to bring all parts of humanity together; and transmitting the energy of the first Ray to promote the initiation of the human race (EXH:106-7).

8.3 Bailey’s Overly Simplistic Interpretation of World Affairs

Bailey advances her argument of a spiritual hierarchy overseeing humanity’s progress within the historical context of both World Wars. Here the function of ideology in
Bailey’s work promotes divisions rather than spiritual unity, Bailey’s view rendered into a simplistic duality of good verses evil, reflective perhaps of a more fundamentalist approach. Bailey argues that the esotericist looks beneath surface appearances to underlying motives and causes, whether or not these causes are explicitly construed in terms of energy. The energies and forces in Bailey’s model as it applies to humanity, have their own colouring or psychological qualities and are not extraneous to the intent of any entity within the cosmic scheme of our solar system. The esoteric meaning sought is essentially moral, denoting or informing human action.

The problem of conflict, argues Bailey, results from the union of spirit and matter in one entity, the human being, and:

Had the spiritual entities which are humanity itself not taken unto themselves material forms, and had the positive spiritual element not attached itself to the negative material aspect the present world conflict would not be taking place (EXH:118).

Consequently it is within humanity that the battle between spirit and matter is fought. Bailey describes the material forces as those of crystallization and darkness, those that value the attractiveness of matter and consequently seek to preserve form. For Bailey these forces deliberately impede the spiritual or evolutionary forces by whipping up cruelty and criticism, hatred and fear, particularly of the new and the unknown. It is this ancient vortex of hatred, motivated by desires for revenge, restitution, territorial rights and land claims, rather than materialism itself or wrong economic conditions that for Bailey, led to the World Wars. In humanity, therefore, material forces have become laden with negative psychological qualities and in Bailey’s polarized account, these forces are overcome only through a tremendous redirection of human will.

For Bailey the war period represents ‘the death of a civilization or cycle of incarnation of humanity’ (EXH:114), auguring a worldwide expansion of consciousness, or ‘the death of the personality of humanity and the coming in of the soul’ [italics hers] (EXH:116). The expansion of consciousness symbolized by the
World Wars, argues Bailey, is a spiritual crisis involving a turning point or opportunity to change direction or motivation, from the material towards the spiritual. For Bailey the choice that humanity faces concerns the use of our existing intellectual, scientific and technological achievements in the service of either material (including personal) gain, or in accordance with spiritual values. Attachment to the material Bailey argues, results in a loss of spiritual values. In summary, Bailey’s view is that if we learn to use our intelligent understanding to harness our creative processes for the benefit of humanity, then we will no longer find ourselves oriented towards the ‘dark cave of selfish materialism’.

The critical nature of the world war period was acknowledged by Bailey in terms of the evolutionary progress of humanity. ‘Humanity is deemed to have reached a point in evolution where much can be done, because the minds of men – for the first time on a worldwide scale – are sensitive to spiritual impression’ (EXH:649).

Bailey is acutely aware that this same receptivity or openness can serve evil purposes. Evil forces, she states:

> Have used psychology in order to reach the ends they had in view…They use the press and the radio to distort human thinking; they present half-truths, impute false motives, rake up past grievances, foretell (with foreboding) imminent difficulties; they foster ancient prejudices and hatreds, and emphasise religious and national differences (EXH:451-2).

For Bailey the dangers of evil are compounded, by the strength of humanity’s desire nature, ‘for desire is, as yet, the strongest force in the world: organized, unified desire has been the basic reason for the appalling Axis successes’, [italics hers] (EXH:342).

According to Bailey, the only factor which can successfully oppose desire is the energy of the first Ray of spiritual will. ‘*The secret of the will lies in the recognition of the divine nature of man*’, [italics hers] (EXH:342).

Bailey’s explanation of the causes of world conflicts contains a reductionist simplicity that serves to polarize thinking into a rigid either/or duality. The reader is
pushed into the position of ‘us’, on the side of goodness and from that position is invited to analysis ‘them’. Her apocalyptic emphasis obstructs the complex thinking needed to identify and understand the various historical, cultural, political and economic factors contributing to any conflict. Bailey’s argument retains the internal logic present in all her material, serving as an ideologically persuasive device to garner support for her core hypothesis, that humanity has reached a major turning point in its evolutionary history that will hopefully lead to a new spiritual awareness across the globe. To foster this awareness Bailey promotes the notion of a new spiritually infused vision of a new world order.

The convergence of metaphysics with Bailey’s analysis of human society carries with it the intention of the establishment not only of a new world order, but a new world religion, informed by Bailey’s own esoteric worldview. It is a world where spirituality and politics merge, in a similar vein to that of the early Greek philosophers, who felt that reason and rationality would help solve social disorder. The texts, when applied to the world of extramental reality, are intended to provide the foundations for establishing a ‘kingdom of god’ on earth, and so the texts, as a whole, take on a form typified by the scriptures of major world religions, the realm of thought in which metaphysics and ethics merge.

8.3.1 Problems with Predictions

The ideological power in Bailey’s work is enhanced through her use of some general predictions concerning aspects of her new world order. She argues that the churches:

Will eventually and inevitably crash upon the rocks of unwarranted and abused authority, yet out of the wreckage will emerge those true and spiritually enlightened churchmen – with vision and sure knowledge, free from dogmatism and hating ecclesiastical authority – will develop the new world religion (EXH:578).

According to Bailey, life should be more comfortable, and we should have more time to learn and be creative. The constant movement of peoples through dispersal, drift or
removal results in there being a constant necessity to readjust viewpoints and change lifestyles. This:

Constitutes an educational system of untold value, leading as it does to the constant necessity to readjust viewpoints, to change modes of living, to intermarriage and so-called illicit relations. The outer change is producing an inner synthesis and outer dispersion, and cleavages are working out interiorly in closer relations and a more tolerant spirit of understanding (EXH:134).

Such predictions, even if found to be confirmed through evidence, do not constitute verification of Bailey’s worldview. The tendency to identify events or circumstances that correlate to any prediction can be regarded as fulfillment of that particular prediction, and testimony to the insightfulness of the predictor. However, no causal link should be made between the coincidence of predictions and events that seem proof of their accuracy, with any underlying metaphysical claims. Indeed, this tendency to attribute to the metaphysical worldview truth verification through correlated events, and predictive statements, functions, ideologically, to persuasively convince a reader into a complete acceptance of the authority of the texts.

The ideological effects of prediction compound a difficulty with avoiding occultistic gnostic interpretations of Bailey’s work. Paradoxically, Bailey’s critique of world affairs, using her esoteric epistemology, draws on notions of unity, synthesis and inclusivity to describe aspects of a new paradigm motivated essentially by the principle of love.

8.3.2 Evaluating Bailey’s Avatars and the Second Coming of Christ

A key prediction in Bailey’s presentation of her spiritual hierarchy is that all efforts of service performed by aspirants and disciples of her teachings will help to prepare for the reappearance of the Christ. Bailey’s advancement of the second coming of Christ may be seen to support her own evangelical Christian past, despite an esoteric context.
Bailey is adamant that Christ’s reappearance is imminent, in line with her assurances that throughout history humanity’s expectations and anticipations of a saviour have been fulfilled. Bailey argues that the world war period (through which she wrote her material), represents another plea from humanity, in desperate need for the alleviation of spiritual as well as material famine:

> When the times are ripe, the invocation of the masses is strident enough and the faith of those who know is keen enough, *then always* He has come and today will be no exception to this ancient rule or to this universal law, [italics hers] (RC:5).

Bailey construes Christ as an avatar, or divine intermediary, one who transmits spiritual energy, provides humanity with a new teaching, and anchors a new dynamic truth upon which to build a new civilization:

> An Avatar is at present usually a Representative of the second divine aspect, that of Love-Wisdom, the Love of God…Who preserves, develops, builds, protects, shields and succours the spiritual impulses by which men live (RC:11).

Bailey claims that Christ will also teach the true meaning of the resurrection, involving the law of rebirth, and the law of cause and effect and how these notions are tied to our evolutionary development (ibid). Both of these laws derive from eastern religious teachings and when tied to the Christian notion of the resurrection of Christ, reflect Bailey’s own desire to blend the central elements of some of our major world religions (Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism) and in the process, imbue them with an esoteric meaning. Bailey’s work contains an underlying intention not only to prepare the way for this apparent return, but also to provide the very quasi-scriptural literature that serves as textual foundation of this new world religion.

Bailey does not feel that this reappearance will come easily. She places a caveat on Christ’s reappearance as contingent upon the strength of the form of thought surrounding humanity’s call. The reader as disciple shoulders this responsibility. To garner the needed strength in this ‘thoughtform’, Bailey formulated a prayer, called
The Great Invocation, and distributed it through her publishing house, the Lucis Trust, through World Goodwill and the Arcane School:

The Great Invocation
From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men-
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth (PH:166).

The suggestion that humanity has called for and a response has been made by ‘the Christ Himself’, who will return to Earth to establish the new world religion, offers a war torn readership hope in the face of despair and a reason, purpose and goal to work towards. The reader is asked to participate in the process of invoking the return of the Christ by using this prayer in meditation. Readers are also told that Christ will not return unless preparations have been made in a variety of departments of human society, including the field of religion (RC:163).

Bailey goes on to warn her readers that unless a point of balance can be achieved between material and spiritual forces, obtained through the thinking minds of ‘the intelligent amongst us’, evil will proceed to hold sway over the destiny of the human race:
If the forces of evil, plus the groups of men who seek to control the human spirit (no matter in what country they are found), become dominant, the doors of evil will open and the life of man will lose its meaning; death will settle down upon our planet – death both spiritual and mental (EXH:653).

Considerable ideological pressure is placed upon the reader, who, by implication, is one of ‘the intelligent amongst us’, and who is told, effectively, that they carry the burden of responsibility for the return of Christ. If Christ does not reappear then the same factors serve as explanations of failure. Bailey’s hierarchical conceptualization of humanity, with her positioning of the reader as ‘intelligent’ is based upon a particular view of intelligence as: intellectual in orientation; abstract rather than concrete in thinking function; and introspective and reflective, or epistemic in cognitive development (King and Kitchener 2002). Further, this notion of intelligence is granted an elitist status by Bailey, more likely, in my view, to inflate a sense of self-importance in the reader, rather than humility in the face of the weighty task of making her prediction a fact. This elitist appeal separates an intelligent reader from those deemed somehow inferior. Such divisions are counter-intuitive to notions of inclusivity and interconnectedness, and whilst coherent and consistent when viewed from within her esoteric epistemology and ontology, these views undermine her argument for a spiritual reorientation of humanity.

8.3.3 A Critique of Bailey’s Theology as A New Age Hypothesis

Ideological consequences of Bailey’s interpretation of esotericism, in service of Christ’s reappearance, are compounded through the type of reasoning embedded in her argument. In this section I explore this in relation to her notion of an emerging New Age. Bailey hails her sense of an imminent new era with an evangelical zeal. According to Hanegraaff (1998), the term New Age has been attributed to her, and influential inaugural figures of the New Age movement that spawned much of the utopian writings regarding the dawning of a new civilization (including Spangler’s Emergence: The Rebirth of the Sacred, 1984) acknowledge Bailey’s work in this regard.
Bailey invites the reader to believe that the approaching millennium reflects the
dawning of the Age of Aquarius, in which the seventh Ray of ceremonial magic
significantly increases its impact, and the sixth Ray of devotion associated with the
Age of Pisces, recedes in influence (EXH:3). The New Age of Aquarius is said to
involve the seventh Ray energy of unity, synthesis, rhythm, order and organization,
which will establish a new world order based on the premise of universal
brotherhood. Since the New Age involves the emergence of an energy associated with
ritual and magic, esotericism will ironically have a renaissance. Bailey appears to
argue that an apparent emerging new world religion will be driven by an esoteric
worldview, thus displaying a self-reference and hence justification of her own
worldview, in terms of a predicted event.

Bailey supports her argument using a method of seeking evidence through penetration
of embedded esoteric significances in events and circumstances in the tangible world.
In accordance with her esoteric epistemology, Bailey argues that all ‘events,
circumstances, happenings and physical phenomena of every kind are simply symbols
of what is occurring in the inner worlds, and it is into these worlds that the esotericist
must enter’ (EA:62).

Bailey invites a reader to ponder upon social, political, economic and religious
situations and interpret these in terms of their inner or hidden meanings, particularly
with reference to the seven Rays. Bailey’s intention is to guide the reader away from
viewing things in the world from their own point of view and attempt to generalize
and universalize all human experience by attributing to them an esoteric significance.
The esoteric method takes an event as a symbol and seeks to penetrate that symbol to
reveal its energetic meaning. In her The Destiny of the Nations Bailey provides
several tabulations of planetary and Ray rulerships (DN:50, 67-9). Each nation,
argues Bailey, has a soul and a personality, both symbolic representations. Both are
then said to be conditioned by one or other of the Seven Rays, which affect how these
nations function:

All the nations are controlled by a personality ray, which is the dominant
potent and main controlling factor at this time, and by a soul ray which is

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4 Bailey states, for example, that Italy has a fourth Ray personality and a sixth Ray soul (DN: 67)
sensed only by the disciples and aspirants of any nation. This soul ray must be evoked into an increased functioning activity (PH:49).

It becomes the duty of any reader who regards him/herself to be amongst the cohort of aspirants and disciples, to draw forth the soul Ray energy within any and every individual or nation they contact. Bailey has pre-determined these sets of correspondences, relating a tangible object (a nation) in terms of a metaphysical entity (a Ray). A reader is no longer free to discern for him/herself any correspondences using their imagination and intuition, entering the ‘inner world’. The pre-determination of corresponding relationships fixes or limits any new meaning that may arise through subjective engagement, creating a closed system that leaves occultistic gnosis as the only avenue of approach.

An open approach to correspondence from an artistic gnostic way of knowing draws relationships between things creatively, imaginatively and intuitively. This technique of correspondence uses an argument by analogy to reveal the interconnectedness of all of life without claims of causality. The juxtapositioning is often suggestive and evocative, new meaning drawn out of the positioning of two objects so that connections and relationships are seen. To foster this, a text must remain suggestive. Indeed, the notion of esoteric veils obscuring hidden meaning embedded in alphanumeric symbols provides a clear example of how such texts function. As soon as correspondences are fixed in tabulations as knowledge, this possibility is overshadowed. Consequently, the possibility of transforming consciousness through the development of artistic gnosis is severely limited.

Even if the esoteric method helps us to transcend the appearance of things and gain distance from a person centred human viewpoint by reaching for underlying meanings, Bailey’s Ray formulation, intended as an aid to facilitate this process, only serves to provide another veil, another layer of language and metaphor that prevents the observer from accessing things in themselves. By concretizing the Rays through correspondence with nations this veil becomes a thick screen.

The problem is further compounded in that Bailey uses this type of reasoning as an implied method of verification or proof to make an epistemological claim to
knowledge. The cosmology that Bailey has constructed is used as an explanatory tool to explain world circumstances and events selected out of the general stream as significant, without the provision of criteria for justification:

The egoic ray of France is that of Concrete Science and this, working in conjunction with the energy of the fifth zodiacal sign, Leo, has given the French people their intellectual brilliance and their scientific bias (DN:72).

So these qualities of the French people become evidence that proves the fifth Ray influence, in a literal correspondence involving a gross generalization. That Bailey cites these circumstances to constitute evidence that then proves the truth of the cosmology is problematic.

Another example is found in Bailey’s oft reiterated statement of fact that the sixth Ray of devotion is passing out of manifestation, and the seventh Ray of ceremonial magic is coming into manifestation (DN:5), leading her to assert a consequent decline of religious devotion, replaced with ritualized esoteric practices, upon the causal basis that, ‘when the ray comes into manifestation it definitely…changes the nature of the civilization and the culture of humanity in any given period’ (DN:116).

That her esoteric cosmology constitutes knowledge becomes assumed, rather than proposed. This problem is exacerbated through the lack of a balanced argument, providing alternative interpretations of the same events, using different explanatory frameworks offered for contemplation. Instead, a reader is confronted with a claim of superior knowledge that appears to carry explanatory power. A reader who accepts as valid Bailey’s explanation of world events may unwittingly accept the whole esoteric work from which this explanation appears to have been derived. The technique of argument may then foster adherence, the reader using the esoteric cosmology as a deterministic interpretive framework. Consequently, the argument by analogy much favoured by the esoteric community loses credibility in a circular feedback loop of self-confirmation and the esoteric perspective becomes an idealization.

I argue that Bailey’s esoteric cosmology should not be used as an epistemological tool to explain events by imposing the cosmology as an esoteric framework informing
interpretations, thereby inventing correspondences through a comparison between an esoteric notion and a tangible circumstance, event or object. This way of using esotericism as knowledge presupposes esoteric contents as literal truth and involves occultistic gnosis as a way of perceiving extramental reality. This approach can serve as a justification for the way things are, rather than fostering transformation within the reader’s consciousness and consequently, leading through the reader’s action, to human betterment.

It seems paradoxical that the determinism and linear reductionist thinking anathema to the notion of soul consciousness in Bailey’s work is the very method of argument Bailey employs to project her message. I believe Bailey’s propensity to think in this counter-intuitive manner is strongly evident when the topic of concern is no longer the abstract metaphysical realm of symbol and metaphor, but the realm of extramental reality, or world of global affairs. A reader is thus led into an acceptance of a method of analysis incongruent with Bailey’s esoteric sense discussed in the previous chapter.

For Bailey, the reappearance of Christ as the head of her spiritual hierarchy marking the dawning of a New Age, indicates truth in principle, necessitating actualization through the mobilization of her readership. In my view Bailey seeks to motivate each reader into actions that comply with her model of a new world order. Bailey would see her texts as providing all the written material needed to support the development of a new world religion based upon esoteric thought. However, in the above few pages I have revealed a flaw in Bailey’s reasoning that consequentially leads to limitations of free will, and promotion of linear, reductionist thinking. No longer are we awash with the elegant metaphors of her elaborate cosmology. Instead, we are informed that certain esoteric features are literally true and it becomes incumbent upon us to act in accordance with this truth.

8.3.4 Evaluating Bailey’s Free Will Argument

Another significant difficulty with Bailey’s formulation of a spiritual hierarchy able to influence human affairs is that of human free will. Bailey places a serious
limitation upon human free will through her insistence that all ideas emanate from a
source beyond humanity, filtered and transmitted by the spiritual hierarchy.

For Bailey, further limits on free will, or the freedom an individual has to choose a
course of action are: Karmic constraints generated as a result of prior human actions;
the conditioning Ray energies which affect every aspect of an individual, a nation and
humanity; and natural law (EXH:253-4). The limits placed upon the individual
through the Rays and karma are, according to Bailey, self created and self imposed
from the point of view of the individual soul and as such place only a relative limit
upon free will. In discussing the Rays, Bailey stresses that:

This in no way infringes upon man’s freewill; these forces have both their
higher and their lower aspects and men respond to them according to their
mental and spiritual development, and so do nations and races as a whole
(DN:4).

What constitutes the free will Bailey refers to in this passage is unclear. Free will
itself is not defined in Bailey’s work. It appears that Bailey locates free will in the
domain of the response an individual makes to external controlling factors that
condition their own nature. An individual is able to make choices, but only within a
limiting set of conditions. The individual is far from entirely free, not only finding
himself or herself limited by physical conditions, but also emotional, mental and even
spiritual limitations pose constraints. There is a significant difference between an act
of choice and an act of response, the latter placing a definite constraint upon the
notion of free will itself, since a response is made to a prior set of conditions. Choice
grants the human agent more power in determining the decision they may make.

Bailey uses of the eastern mystical notion of karma or cause and effect, to denote
constraints upon the freedom of the individual, who is able only to choose to adjust
the workings of karma. For Bailey, karma:

Is not a hard and fast rule. It is changeable, according to man’s attitude and
desire. It is the presenting of the opportunity to change; this grows out of
past activities, and these rightly met and correctly handled lay the foundation
for future happiness and progress (EXH:255).
Bailey argues that free will and karma along with natural law are all aspects of one great law that embodies divine purpose. This purpose works out through the medium of humanity. ‘Natural law is the inevitable working out upon the physical plane of forces and energies which have long been generated [italics hers] (EXH:252). Natural law, conditioning Ray energies and the notion of karma portray how far human free will is constrained. Further:

It is a truism to remark that the history of the world is based on the emergence of ideas, their acceptance, their transformation into ideals, and their eventual superseding by the next imposition of ideas. It is in this realm of ideas that humanity is not a free agent [italics hers] (DN:8).

So whilst an individual remains free to respond to the set of limiting conditions posed by karma, natural law and the seven rays, Bailey accords no freedom to the individual or humanity with regard to ideas. Both the nature of ideas and the manner in which they are revealed are determined, Bailey argues, by a non-human source. This primary source of absolute truth, or God, from which emanates a continual unfolding of divine purpose and an evolutionary plan for its fulfillment may be considered in the light of the teleological design argument for the existence of God.

As we saw in Chapter Four, some scientists are supportive of the design argument, drawing their metaphysical beliefs from their own ponderings upon the source of their ideas. However, the proposition that ideas concerning the workings of nature may be discovered rather than created or invented by the human mind, is a rather different proposal than the argument that these, and other ideas are involved in a process of transmission and reception. The former hypothesis indicates that ideas are somehow inherent or written in to the design of the universe like a cosmic code. The creator of this code would not necessarily need to participate in their creation, as in a Platonic Deist God. Bailey’s hypothesis involves an active participatory God whose own evolutionary growth is itself contingent upon the progressive unfolding of his/her own creation, essentially a panentheistic God.
If God does have a design or plan that unfolds through continual creation in compliance with divine Purpose, then it may follow that divine intention may manifest through ideas revealed to humanity whose task it is to facilitate the working out of this divine intent. The spiritual Hierarchy in Bailey’s world constitute the intermediaries who attempt to fulfill God’s plan:

To the spiritual Hierarchy, the Plan involves those arrangements or circumstances which will raise and expand the consciousness of mankind and enable men, therefore, to discover the spiritual values for themselves and to make the needed changes of their own free will, and thus produce the demanded betterment of the environment, consistent with the unfolding spiritual recognition [italics hers] (EXH:670).

The spiritual Hierarchy may guide and impress the minds of the most advanced human beings, yet Bailey insists that humanity determines its own destiny with regard to how we may choose to respond to any idea (EXH:643).

For Bailey, human free will is confined to the ability to choose to cooperate with the divine plan, or to choose to follow personal desires, the pursuit of which will necessarily produce karmic consequences that will have to be worked out in the future. We seem ethically bound to dutifully foster our own adherence to this plan, in spite of knowing little about it.

Bailey’s axiological imperative that each aspirant to the spiritual path work hard to achieve the mental clarity necessary to clothe the ideas they may receive into forms adequate to convey the message contained in the idea drives Bailey’s entire body of work. A reader feels obliged to comply with this as a directive. To do so, a reader is instructed as to how they may achieve the needed clarity, through using a variety of techniques including; the study and application of Bailey’s model of the Rays; a study of personal motives; and meditative practices using Bailey’s mantras. Arguably these pose further limits to free will. Bailey’s constraints upon free will position a reader as a recipient of ideas emanating from a superior source. A reader is then told that they carry the responsibility of transmitting these ideas to the rest of humanity. In this way
a reader is locked in to Bailey’s system through an esoteric epistemology in the service of ideology.

### 8.4 Right Human Relations, Goodwill and their expression in Service

As Amelia reveals, the individual reader of the Bailey texts, aspiring to improve themselves and overcome their own obstacles to spiritual growth, is called to become a practitioner of goodwill, a seeker of relationship to others that fosters love and understanding. A reader is told that he/she is both a tiny fragment of the cosmic scheme and yet the responsibility for the progress of evolution of the entire solar system is, along with all other seekers, upon his or her shoulders. With this in mind, should a reader choose to rise to the call of the texts, then he/she may consider him/herself a disciple just as any walkers of the spiritual path, seekers of wisdom, or aspirants of truth may be considered disciples. Bailey describes the general psychological nature of disciple in terms of humanitarianism, a determination to help others, a receptivity to new ideas and strong motives (EXH:584). According to Bailey, all true spiritual endeavour has as its goal the arousing of public opinion to world rights, inclusive human interests and international cooperation (EXH:219). Bailey repeatedly calls for her readership to stand up and fight to combat selfishness and greed:

> Who will arrest the progress of aggressive selfishness if the men and women of goodwill rest back upon their idealism and do naught that is practical to justify their hope or aid in the materialization of the desired ideal (EXH:233).

As described above Bailey argues that humanity needs a vision of a better future and the determination to make that vision a fact in human experience, stating that ‘this better world is to be a world in which the spiritual values will control, viewing those values as that which is good and right for the whole of humanity’ (EXH:339).

There are two pivotal notions in Bailey’s vision of a new world order, goodwill and right human relations. Bailey argues that the former leads to the latter. Bailey
utilizes the Buddhist eight-fold path to define right human relations, stating that Buddha’s message:

Can be paraphrased in the following words: Cease to identify yourselves with material things; gain a proper sense of the spiritual values; cease regarding possessions and earthly existence as of major importance; follow the Noble Eight-fold Path which is the path of right relations – right relations to God and to each other – and thus be happy. The steps on this Path are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right Values</th>
<th>Right Aspiration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Right Speech</td>
<td>Right Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right Mode of Living</td>
<td>Right Effort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right Thinking</td>
<td>Right Rapture or true Happiness (EXH:463).</td>
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Bailey adds her own esoteric perspective to this central tenet of Buddhism, stating that right human relations involves the energy of the first Ray, or divine will. She argues that desire works from the material upwards and the will from the spiritual downwards, bending form consciously to divine purpose. Right human relations involves an understanding of compromise and the comprehension of the many and diverse points of view.

Bailey takes the notion of goodwill, arguing that through its practice right human relations may be achieved:

Goodwill nourishes the spirit of understanding and fosters the manifestation of the spirit of cooperation. This cooperative spirit is the secret of all right human relations and the enemy of competition, [italics hers] (EXH:206).

According to Bailey it the soul whose ‘major aspiration is to bring peace and goodwill among men and to see the consummation of the mission of Christ’ (EXH:217).

*Goodwill* is Bailey’s key axiological concept, drawn from her ontologically essential second Ray of love-wisdom. Whilst Bailey may be relying upon the Christian idea of loving one’s neighbour in her conceptualization of goodwill, in a deeper sense the
term connotes more than simply being kind. Goodwill refers to the ancient Greek word, eunoia, which is a form of altruistic love. The Platonic good, denoting ultimate worth or value is willed or directed by the subject in an action for the benefit of another. Goodwill carries dignity in its path, as the other is duly valued as worthy of such an act. The will itself is also conditioned by the good, hence will that is good is goodwill. Bailey seems to point here to a Kantian interpretation of goodwill. Kant (1962), asserts that nothing can be conceived in the world which is good, without qualification, except goodwill. According to Kant, intelligence may be good or bad, depending on motive or will. ‘Thus a goodwill appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of being worthy of happiness’ (1962:10).

For Kant, goodwill is good in itself, it is not contingent, arguing that the notion of a will which is good can be claimed without a view to anything further. Furthermore, Kant asserts that the practical love advanced in the Scriptural commandment to love thy neighbour is essentially:

A love which is seated in the will and not in the propensions of sense - in principles of action and not of tender sympathy; and it is this love alone which can be commanded (1962:18).

In Bailey’s esoteric language Kant’s argument becomes the blending of the first Ray of will and the second Ray of love-wisdom (the good), the development of which conquers material desire and draws forth into expression the divine will of the first Ray in right human relations.

In addition, Bailey takes a third notion of service, again apparently drawing upon her own Christian background, to explain to her readers how they are to go about expressing goodwill and fostering right human relations. Service is the active expression of goodwill, or:

The spontaneous effect of soul contact [and] the manner whereby the nature of that soul can demonstrate in the world of human affairs. It [service] is a soul urge, and is as much an evolutionary impetus of the soul as the urge to self-preservation or to the reproduction of the species is a demonstration of the animal soul, [ ] mine (EP Vol II:124-5).
Bailey describes service as; the characteristic of the soul, the urge to group good, and:

Service is a method of producing phenomenal outer and tangible results upon the physical plane; I call your attention to this as an evidence of its creative quality (EP Vol II:130).

Bailey stresses that service is a mental activity and not an emotional response to humanity’s needs. Service involves:

Much sacrifice of time and of interest and of one’s own ideas, it requires exceedingly hard work, because it necessitates deliberate effort, conscious wisdom, and the ability to work without attachment (EP Vol II:120).

For Bailey, a life of service is evidence of the soul increasing its influence over the personality. Soul energy then flows through the individual to their environment and this energy manifests as a life of service, energy that steadily increases in strength and expands in influence as the individual makes use of it, culminating in national and worldwide activities. This service is a natural expression that is only blocked, Bailey argues, by personality based ambition, desire for wealth, power, fame and control.

Within Bailey’s world service is a transformational concept that changes the lower nature as the personality turns towards larger issues and gains a sense of power to change conditions. Service results, for Bailey, in a deepening of the reflective life and the illumining of the mind by the light of the soul:

It takes the soul itself to reveal to the poised and peaceful mind the next step to be taken in the work of world evolution, through the impartation of ideas. Such is the Plan for humanity (EP Vol II:136).

According to Bailey only desire to serve can bring about the necessary reorientation and subjection to the new technique of living, including a willingness, at all costs, to be obedient to the light of the soul.
Bailey’s depiction of a life of service, oriented in goodwill and driven by right human relations as its goal conveys a sense of a noble cause of a spiritual warrior on a heroic quest to save humanity. It is not until these concepts are positioned more centrally within Bailey’s esoteric world that their purely esoteric meaning becomes apparent.

### 8.4.1 Revelation and Transmission

Following an esoteric epistemology, the primary service to humanity that Bailey suggests is the *modus operandi* of the intelligent esoteric disciple, is the manipulation of mental matter in the construction of thoughts, imbued with the energy of their creator to achieve some specific purpose. The spiritually oriented disciple, Bailey argues, uses the ideas that are revealed to them and transmits them to the rest of humanity. The notions of *revelation* and *transmission* are central to esoteric thought, so ‘the reader too becomes a kind of channel or conduit’ (Versluis 2000:28).

*Revelation* and *transmission* rest on the presupposition that a higher knowledge of reality exists, waiting to be discovered rather than invented by a human thinker. Bailey argues that spiritual energies can only make it as far as the mental plane and need the ‘potent, magnetic, *in-drawing* power of man himself’ (EXH:280), to be able to reach the emotional and physical planes.

So Bailey’s response to a sense of need for a new world order is her advocacy of the development of her new ‘revealed’ spiritual vision, transmitted creatively by her readers through the process of thoughtform making. It appears that Bailey assumes her work to be a form of revelation requiring the reader to interpret and transmit it in a form more accessible to the non-esotericist. This reinforces a sense of elitism, found earlier in Bailey’s use of the notion of intelligence.

According to Bailey the disciples of the spiritual path, under the guidance of her *spiritual hierarchy*, are working towards its externalization so that the kingdom of God will be known on Earth (EXH:4-5). Part of this process involves, Bailey argues, the dissemination of ideas through ten experimental seed groups, working in the construction of thoughtforms (DNA Vol I:35-40). These groups of disciples have as their task the presentation of certain ideas, or a certain perspective within nine key areas of human endeavour: the first group are called telepathic communicators and
their task is to foster human sensitivity to telepathy (Bailey’s *Telepathy* serves as instructions to this group). The second are called trained observers, who are instructed to develop the intuition to gain mental clarity (Bailey’s *Glamour* serves this group). The third group are described as magnetic healers, for which Bailey’s *Esoteric Healing* was written. The fourth group are involved in education, hence Bailey’s *Education in the New Age*. Political service is the role of the fifth group who are instructed to help foster true democracy. The sixth group are involved with religion in the new age, the seventh work with science, the eighth psychological service and the ninth deal with finance. The tenth are called *creative workers* whose role is to relate the work of the other nine groups with each other (ibid:40). So Bailey’s texts serve to shape the ideas that are to be seeded.

This formulation concretizes the top-down process of revelation. Bailey identifies the originating source of revelation as God immanent. She then argues that any revelation is transmitted by the spiritual hierarchy, functioning as intermediaries. They have the task of gauging the unfolding development of human consciousness and meeting humanity’s appeal and demand for further knowledge (EXH:363). So the ten seed groups represent a more recent effort by the spiritual hierarchy to meet its objectives and fulfill its obligations.

The rigidity inherent in this construction seems somewhat stifling. I wonder is it necessary to believe that our highest aspirations and our vision for their attainment emanates not from within ourselves, but directed from an organized group of higher beings, themselves functioning in accordance with an evolutionary plan?

The premise upon which Bailey’s model of thoughtform making sits is the transcendent nature of ideas emanating from higher spiritual planes. Each idea becomes an example of divine appearance, recognized by that divine part within each of us. Each revelation, Bailey argues, brings humanity closer to the realm of causes. Much revelation in the past has come along religious lines:

> There are certain fundamental truths which lie behind all revealed religions. They are essential to the spiritual growth and progressive realizations of divinity by man…These basic truths never change because they are related to
the nature of Deity Itself and have become apparent to mankind through revelation (EXH:288).

According to Bailey, these fundamental truths include the law of compassion, brotherhood, actively expressed love, inner unity and the fact of God both transcendent and immanent (EXH:288-290).

Whilst Bailey acknowledges that life is full of revelations, often of small importance except in their combined sequence, she stresses that revelations deal with great universals, are concerned with the whole and lead to a developed appreciation of the oneness of life. She claims that revelations reveal ideas that determine and condition the world process; in that a new light is thrown on old truths so that their significance is changed and in that changing, the plan of Deity takes on a fresh meaning. Major revelations have reached humanity through individuals, such as Buddha and Christ, whose lives expressed a symbolic representation of the message they taught. Bailey predicts that:

the next sequential revelation will be that of creativity, of the world of thoughtforms which humanity as a whole has created and the setting in motion – by humanity and in relation to its own destiny – of the Law of Cause and Effect or Karma (DNA Vol II:367).

Although the meaning of this statement is elusive, by focusing upon the revelation of ideas whose originating source Bailey identifies as God immanent, the task of the disciple has shifted away from self-serving esoteric practices. One of Bailey’s intentions is to re-describe esotericism and remove from her own esoteric system of thought and practice any emphasis upon personal aggrandizement or gain. Instead, and in an impressive effort to guide the esoterically inclined away from the dangers that may lie in occult practices, Bailey combines the practice of thoughtform making with the notion of revelation to construe the would-be disciple as a humble player in service to beings much wiser than him or her self. Perhaps Bailey’s own evangelical Christian background fuels a motivation to save esotericism from itself.

A central aspect of Bailey’s teachings is her identification of that group of individuals whose task it is to distil spiritual ideas, turn them into thoughtforms and convey them
to the rest of humanity. This is the work of disciples, and the responsibility for the survival of the human race rests, in Bailey’s view, on the shoulders of this group. The impression I gain from this part of Bailey’s work is a strong sense of her frustration and forceful determination to persuade the reader that the situation is dire and the need is great, and no time is to be wasted in the re-adjustment of human thinking so that it embraces spiritual values:

A man sees a vision and a possibility. He broods over it and it enters then into the realm of mental invention. A thoughtform is then organized, whether it is the thoughtform of a sewing machine, of a political party, of an economic idea... Much reflection and brooding will eventually produce a magnetic field which will become so potent that desire will enter in; then the dream or vision enters into a new stage of vitalization... [and] when the processes of desire have adequately developed, the vision will precipitate upon the physical plane [ ] mine (EXH:263).

Training in discipleship (through the texts and Bailey’s Arcane School) is given in the hope of stimulating the reader into becoming better equipped to perform the task of creating a new spiritual vision through thoughtform making.

Bailey considers thoughts to be the incarnation in forms (objective concretisations), of ideas emanating from some mind, whether human or Logoiic and ‘all [thoughtforms] have body, vitality, quality and purpose, and all are sent out by a greater life than their own upon a specific mission’, [ ] mine (TCF:564-6).

Thoughtforms are built in order to fulfill some purpose of the thinker who created them, in time, and all thoughtforms carry consequences or karmic effects as they impact upon their surroundings:

The effect of the life and persistence of a thoughtform, if malevolent and destructive, works out as “evil karma” if beneficient it works as “good karma” in the group in which the emanator has a place (TCF:563).

Each thoughtform provides a body for an idea and is intended to carry out a specific purpose in response to environing conditions:
It is always recognized in occult circles that the whole object of human evolution is to enable the Thinker to respond to every contact fully and consciously, and thus to utilize his material sheath, or sheaths, as adequate transmitter of such contact. The most easily studied human thought-form is the one the Ego [soul] creates through which to function, [ ] mine, (TCF:552).

Bailey expresses the notion of thoughtforms in purely esoteric terms, which are rather abstruse for the non-esotericist. A thoughtform is:

An embodied idea, therefore, is literally a positive impulse, emanating from mental levels and clothing itself in a veil of negative substance…a thoughtform, as constructed by man, is the union of a positive emanation and a negative. These two are the emanations of a Unity, the coherent Thinker (TCF:560).

This Thinker, for Bailey, is the soul.

Bailey forcefully asserts that humanity needs to pay much closer attention to the construction of thoughtforms, of the implications and consequences that the public portrayal of a particular idea may have and of how it is articulated. In particular, Bailey keenly points towards thoughtforms that have as their basis, wisdom rather than only knowledge. Bailey defines both knowledge and wisdom as forms of light.

All knowledge is a form of light, for it throws light into areas of awareness of which we have hitherto been unconscious. All wisdom is a form of light, for it reveals to us the world of meaning which lies behind the outer form (EP Vol II:467).

For Bailey, knowledge is associated with the factual world, concerning the accumulated information of the ages, whether it is expressed as concepts or precepts. The factor which is enduring in knowledge, argues Bailey, is simply the power to relate the past and the present. Wisdom, in contrast:
Is revealed through ideas, against which (very frequently) much mundane knowledge powerfully militates. The concrete mind often inhibits, as you well know, the freeflow of ideas intuitively impulsed; it is with this free flow of the new ideas...their right application and interpretation, which determine the future of humanity and of the planetary life (DNA Vol II:279-280).

According to Bailey humanity is in need of more wisdom to deal with world affairs:

The greatest contribution to world thought at this time is the emerging recognition everywhere to be found of the finiteness of man’s knowledge, of the insufficiency of his accumulated wisdom to cope with the world situation, and of his inability as yet to produce that workable plan which will lead the race out of its present difficulties and impasse (EP Vol II:624).

Wisdom, or the wise use of intuited ideas in the construction of abstract thought is, according to Bailey, the hallmark of initiate consciousness. Service for the initiate is to, ‘correctly apprehend the precipitating truth, information or revelation, and then to give it an equally correct format so that it can meet the immediate human need’ [italics hers] (DNA Vol II:313). Bailey’s ontological assumption that ideas exist as transcendent entities, transmitted and revealed through an intermediary spiritual hierarchy commensurate with an esoteric epistemology, logically informs her axiological commitment to wisdom as an act of esoteric service.

Through this line of reasoning Bailey reveals the centrality with which she places the initiate, in the fostering of a new world order based on spiritual vision. All the efforts a disciple may make to achieve this stage in consciousness serve this end. Thoughtform making is contingent upon the belief that thoughts are entities imbued with life and able to carry the intention of the thinker. That global transformation can occur through the creation of thoughtforms is a top-down model, with the initiate placed in the elite role, accorded enormous power to create change. The intellectual reader is hailed to either strive to become or construe themselves as being, an initiate.

The effectiveness of the ethical imperative in Bailey’s work depends upon the clarity with which such an individual can receive and transmit ideas. The ideas themselves are not the creation of the individual who intuits them. These ideas, are revealed,
they have another source beyond humanity. Not only does this view consider knowledge of a higher metaphysical reality as absolute, it also treats the individual as a receptacle or vessel for this knowledge. The task becomes one of transforming the individual so that they are more able to receive such knowledge. This draws into question the altruistic intention in Bailey’s work, obscuring the path of individual transformation through expansions of consciousness that lead to a renewed sense of morality regarding human betterment and spiritual living. Instead, a weighty intermediary role appears, the reader construed as in esoteric training for a quite specific task. The assertion that the meaning held in esoteric presentations be intuitively perceived seems to imply that the intuition has a specialized function, in the service of esotericism. Developing the intuition is now for the purpose of providing a pathway for revelation to be received by the individual. That esoteric presentations be evaluated upon the basis of subjective resonance has now become for the purpose of discerning whether any thought is an intuited idea, revealed to the individual who then transmits it. The reader has a passive role in this formulation, commensurate with occultistic gnosis, through an acceptance of absolute truth, its transmission by a higher authority, and a literal reception of this truth.

Artistic gnosis challenges this view. Perception for artistic gnosis is fluid, open and contestable. Whilst a hypothetical acceptance of an absolute reality may still inform artistic gnosis, recognition of the limitations of language to express or convey this reality is paramount. The heiroeidetic or initiatory power in esoteric texts, valued by the artistic gnostic, is still based upon the notion of revelation of higher knowledge. However, it is the pathway to illumination and transformation that is revealed, not any language attached to this path. This approach to esotericism presupposes the existence of a primordial or celestial language in which ‘every living thing is its transcendent or archetypal signature or word’ (Versluis 2000:24). Following Versluis, who claims that since primordial time language has become externalized, I argue that artistic gnosis recognizes that language is a ‘further means for our separation from and objectification of the world’ (2000:24).

Paradoxically Bailey’s argument of revelation and transmission may function to separate rather than unify, through the construction of thoughtforms in language.
Indeed, her entire argument concerning an esoterically informed revealed theology may have a similar separating effect.

### 8.5 Controversies

I now turn to some controversial aspects in Bailey’s work, of major concern with regard to adherence to a particular perspective. These controversies highlight the dangers of Bailey’s ideological persuasion, which serves to: Create divisions rather than unity; inflate a sense of self-importance rather than self-transcendence; and foster elitism rather than humility. In this section I discuss these controversies in which Bailey’s ontological claims in combination with her use of an esoteric epistemology from an occultistic gnostic way of knowing have startling implications. In this section I present how Bailey’s use of the esoteric technique of correspondence has gone awry drawing upon her views of: a new world order; the ‘Jewish problem’; the psychological nature of the Japanese people; and her perceived function of the atomic bomb.

Any statement made by a thinker who bestows upon themselves and or is granted legitimacy as an authority with access to higher knowledge by an adherent, involves the lack of contestability, the taken for granted acceptance of the contents of the view. If a believer should decide that a writer is correct about all other things, then they may choose not to dispute a particular statement. They are more likely to try to defend it. As illustrated by Amelia Hewman, Bailey’s worldview has a seductive power, seems to explain everything in and not in existence and hails the reader into believing themselves to be a disciple or aspirant of the spiritual path, privy to special knowledge. In this sense, Bailey’s knowledge has epistemological power. The problem is exacerbated through Bailey’s insistence that most of the texts she wrote were on behalf of Djwhal Khul. Bailey’s own evangelical Christian background may have informed the texts, presenting the reader with a difficulty in deciding upon the authenticity of authorship, whether the pen belongs to Bailey herself, the master Djwhal Khul as she claims, or a mixture of both.

Bailey presented her material for future use in the inauguration of the New Age. This assertion has fueled some vehement opposition from two Christian writers
investigating the New Age Movement in terms of its sinister implications for Christianity, Cumbey (1983), and Zwart (1987). Both writers demonstrate a particularly reactionary view of Bailey, whilst acknowledging her contribution to the New Age Movement. Cumbey and Zwart are foundational thinkers who focus on their perceived infiltration of New Age and therefore anti-Christian beliefs into national and global institutions, particularly the United Nations (Hexham 1992). Whilst their scholarship might be discredited, Cumbey and Zwart draw attention to some of the more controversial aspects of Bailey’s work.

Cumbey (1983) provides a detailed examination of the Bailey texts, in the light of their influence upon the New Age Movement. Cumbey parallels the New Age Movement with Nazism, calling supporters of the movement deluded, naive and held by mass hypnosis and mind control. (1983:17). Bailey’s contribution to the New Age is viewed by Cumbey as highly significant; ‘The Baileys did more than anyone, except perhaps HPB [Blavatsky], to build the foundations for the “New Age”’ (1983:49).

Cumbey states that Bailey showed a tenacious hatred for Orthodox Christianity, demonstrated in the different meaning Bailey attached to aspects of the faith, and Bailey’s belief in the divinity of man and reincarnation, which according to Cumbey are ‘the standard lies of the serpent of the Garden of Eden days!’ (1983:49).

Cumbey summarises Bailey’s work as a comprehensive conspiratorial undermining of her own Christian beliefs:

These teachings omitted little or nothing. They ranged from the attitude of the Hierarchy towards Jews (negative) through dietary advice. Step by step they plotted the coming “New Age”, with instructions for the institution of the necessary New World Order through the use of identifying rainbows. Plans for religious war, forced redistribution of the world’s resources, Luciferic initiations, mass planetary initiations, theology for the New World Religion, disarmament campaign, and elimination or sealing away of

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5 Cumbey’s work lacks scholarship. One quotation in Cumbey’s work attributed to Bailey, is actually a quote from one of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which Bailey interprets later in the same text.
obstinate religious orthodoxies – all were covered extensively in the Alice Bailey writings (1983:50).

Zwartz (1987), in her perhaps more severe attack on the New Age Movement, cites Bailey’s *Great Invocation* as evidence of an invocation of the anti-Christ. Both Cumbey and Zwartz are deeply concerned with Bailey’s appropriation of Christian language.

Highlighting Bailey’s presentation of Christ as the Universal Christ, viewed by Bailey as the God of all faiths and Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy, Zwartz construes Bailey’s call for a new world religion of peace and goodwill as evidence of:

> The idolatrous belief in the spiritual powers of mankind…a false religion and unity, the combination of which was to bring down one of the harshest judgments of God in man’s history (1987:65-66).

Whilst this example may appear rather extreme, it nevertheless reflects a more general view that the esoteric perspective is a subversive and highly dangerous form of indoctrination.

Unfortunately, this view is sustained by some of the content of Bailey’s work. At the time of her writing, certain attitudes prevalent in sections of western society with regard to matters of race in particular are reflected in Bailey’s work.

Bailey draws upon the Theosophical notion of root races, the fifth or Aryan root race being the current race, to support her interpretation on world affairs. Two examples suffice to highlight the problem, firstly Bailey’s view of Jewish people and secondly her view of the atomic bombing of Japan.

Cumbey states that the Theosophical Society belief in the existence of masters who were or are highly evolved beings, ‘was to have a substantial impact on the development of Hitler’s Nazism’ (1983:44). This problematic link with Nazism has
also been noted by Trompf (1998) and Goodricke-Clarke (2002), who highlight Blavatsky’s combination of emanationism and the Hindu notion of great cycles of constant renewal (Trompf 1998:281), in her root race scheme in which humanity is considered the Fifth or *Aryan* Root Race. According to Trompf this notion contains a ‘pro-Indo-European, anti-Jewish face [making it] vulnerable to later twists by Nazi and “right wing” esotericists’ [ mine (1998:285). This racist tendency is expressed in the following passages from Bailey:

> They [the Jews] constitute, in a strange manner, a unique and distinctly separated world centre of energy. The reason for this is that they represent the energy and the life of the previous solar system… The Jew, down the ages, has insisted upon being separated from all other races but he brought over from the previous system the knowledge (necessary then but now obsolete) that his race was the ‘chosen people.’ The ‘Wandering Jew’ has wandered from System One to this where he must learn the lesson of absorption and cease his wandering, [ ] mine (EXH:76-77).

Bailey argues that whilst the Jewish insistence upon remaining separated from the rest of society was a valid and necessary response to the demands of much earlier times, this attitude has now outgrown its use. Separation, or the creation of divisions, is fundamentally wrong in Bailey’s eyes, leading away from the spiritual direction of unity and synthesis. However, the following statement by Bailey may also be regarded as falling foul of the same tendency:

> The Jews are, for instance, the product of centuries of tent-dwelling and hence the untidy effect they have on any community in which they live and which the more organised Westerner (a cave-dweller) fails to recognise. They are also the product of their need, down the centuries, to *live off* the people among whom they wander, to seize the presented chance to take what they want, to see to it that their children get the best of everything available, no matter what the cost to others…[making] them the most reactionary and conservative race in the world [italics hers], [ ] mine (PH:97-98).
Bailey goes on to describe some more positive attributes of the Jewish community, attacking more the belief that the Jews are God’s chosen people, and stressing that this cannot constitute a justification for the ‘terrible tale of cruelty, torture and wholesale murder’ (PH:102), of the Jewish people. However, the solution Bailey offers involves the dissolution of Orthodox Judaism, and the determination of Jewish people to shake off their separative customs. In so doing Bailey places the responsibility squarely in the domain of the Jewish community, arguing that:

> The Jews voice loudly and constantly their demand for redress and help; they blame the non-Jewish nations for their miseries; they fail always to recognise any conditions on their own side which could account for some of the general dislike with which they are confronted (PH:102).

These excerpts from Bailey’s work reveal the extent to which Bailey’s opinions, imbued with the authority of authorship (that of an ascended Master), may carry the reader into adopting some ill-considered interpretations of world affairs. Never more than now, would the reader need to draw upon Bailey’s own advice that no statement written in the texts be adopted unless it concurs with the reader’s own reason.

The next example may be considered even more worrying still. Considering the surrender of Japan towards the close of World War II, Bailey states that the Japanese people’s:

> psychological make-up is totally different, as are their nervous systems, which are of fourth root race quality. They will be and are being defeated by physical war measures and by the destruction physically of their war potential and the death of the form aspect. This destruction……and the consequent release of their imprisoned souls, is a necessary happening; it is the justification of the use of the atomic bomb upon the Japanese population (EXH:495-6).

The racist perspective inherent in this statement parallels Bailey’s equally harsh judgment of Jewish people. How can the naming of a people via a macro-historical depiction of the underlying psychology of humanity supporting the destruction of so many lives, avoid the stamp of fascism being placed upon it?
Further controversy surrounds Bailey’s staunch support for the development of atomic energy, which she argues has grown directly out of the efforts of disciples working within the spiritual hierarchy. Bailey regards the release of atomic energy as esoterically symbolic of the inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth, through the liberation of the inner aspect of the atom. ‘It is liberation which is the keynote of the new era, just as it has ever been the keynote of the spiritually oriented aspirant’ [italics hers] (EXH:497).

A liberation that will be achieved through:

the constructive use of this energy and its harnessing for the betterment of humanity…this living energy of substance itself, hitherto shut up within the atom and imprisoned I these ultimate forms of life, can be turned wholly into that which is good and can bring about such a revolutionising of the modes of human experience that (from one angle alone) it will necessitate and bring about an entirely new economic world structure (EXH: 498).

Bailey argues that atomic energy will help to promote globalization, a true synthesis of humanity. She goes on to endorse the use of atomic weapons by the Untied Nations:

As a means in the hands of the United Nations to enforce the outer forms of peace, and thus give time for teaching on peace and on the growth of goodwill to take effect…[The atomic bomb] belongs to the United Nations for use (or let us rather hope, simply for threatened use) when aggressive action on the part of any nation rears its ugly head, [ ] mine (EXH:548).

Bailey’s support of the use of atomic weapons for United Nations peace keeping is abhorrent. It seems alarming to contemplate the notion of peace and goodwill as a goal with atomic weapons as the means. Bailey has strayed so far from her own principle of right human relations and reveals a far-right tendency cemented by her own esoteric system of thought. In just a few paragraphs of text Bailey has managed to undermine her entire esoteric system and highlights magnificently the problem of
applying esoteric principles in an analysis of extramental reality, devoid of balanced argument and scholarship. Whilst Bailey’s pronouncements may be the unsavory consequences of her own internal logic, such statements cast a shadow upon the entire work, and seriously undermine any heiroeidetic power within them.

This makes the problem of adherence to the Bailey texts more alarming, such adherence compounded if access to scholarly inquiry, comparative analysis and historical contextualisation are denied. A reader is otherwise alone in exploring the texts beyond themselves, devoid of scholarly critique. Consequently, a fictional ‘thoughtform’ around the texts may develop over time that may not reflect the text’s meaning or their value. Elements of the work may be taken up and employed to justify a purpose contrary to the overall intention of the work.

Further compounding any effects of Bailey’s contentious statements, is that they were made in her more popular texts, capable of reaching a wider audience. Her statements were written in Problems of Humanity and The Externalisation of the Hierarchy, this latter text comprising a series of monthly newsletters written by Bailey as the master Djwhal Khul’s amanuensis. These bulletins were distributed through Bailey’s organizational networks, any reader of them probably already familiar with Bailey’s ideas. These texts are considerably more accessible to the non-esotericist, lacking any abstruse metaphysical detail. They still carry the weight of Bailey’s esoteric cosmology with them.

These disturbing features of Bailey’s work cannot be ignored or overlooked. Bailey grants herself an absolute authority over the beliefs of her readers, in spite of her own statements to the contrary. The implications for a reader who decides they are themselves a member of one of Bailey’s seed groups, or simply one who decides to take on the mantle for creating thoughtforms following Bailey’s advice are disconcerting. The perpetuation of racial hatred via her Anglocentric views on Jewish and Japanese populations is perhaps the most distasteful aspect of Bailey’s work. Even if these attitudes were reflected in wider views at the time of their writing, Bailey, by her own admission, ought to be beyond such pronouncements. That is if she really is the amanuensis of the master Djwhal Khul. I cannot imagine that the prejudices and judgments explored above are the words of such an allegedly
purified being. Especially when Bailey reveals herself to be judgmental towards her own esoteric community, pacifists, and religious fundamentalists as well.

8.6 Conclusion

The tension between Bailey’s metaphors and her metaphysical truth claims (discussed in Chapter Four), and Amelia’s struggle between occultistic and artistic gnosis (Chapters Five, Six and Seven), have now another dimension through Bailey’s application of esoteric principles to world affairs. Bailey’s approach is based upon the esoteric technique of correspondence which may be considered a valuable feature of esotericism through its stimulation of the imagination and the intuition, matters discussed in the next chapter. However, Bailey’s use of this technique has been found to be concretized and contrived leading to some inappropriate and opinionated writing. Yet Bailey herself states, ‘in the study of this Law [of correspondence] we need to remember that the correspondence lies in its essence, and not in the exoteric working out of detail as we think we see it from our present standpoint’, [ ] mine (IHS: 7).

If the metaphor’s contained within Bailey’s cosmology are applied literally as tools to interpret world affairs carrying the full force of a new theology, then we see the majestic elegance of Bailey’s edifice dissolve into a reductionist mode of thinking leading potentially to dogmatic adherence to textual content, through the power of ideology. In my view, this results in an obscuration of the value I found in Bailey’s work through my subjective engagement with it.

Before we dismiss all further inquiry into Bailey’s work on the grounds discussed in this chapter, we must be mindful of the consequences for the adherent in adopting Bailey’s worldview and allowing it to inform their actions. If the overall effect is that this improves the human lot, then even if this body of mostly derivative material based upon epistemological claims that can lead (as is evident in the texts themselves) to a linear, reductionist and deterministic interpretation of world affairs, human betterment may still be an outcome. However, this tendency contradicts the potential for individual transformation through expansions of consciousness, more likely to be
fostered through artistic gnosis and a view of esoteric knowledge as evocative and metaphoric.

In the following chapter I draw together the threads of my presentation of Bailey’s texts across these five chapters, proposing my own recommendations regarding how we might treat her work.
CHAPTER NINE
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

9.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to evaluate how well Bailey’s work serves her intention to reorient humanity towards spiritual living through transforming consciousness. To address this investigation a constructivist research design was created that incorporated two approaches to exploring Bailey’s work, both under the philosophical umbrella of phenomenology. The first approach tackled esotericism as knowledge adopting a hermeneutic style of inquiry. The second used a heuristic method to explore esotericism as a way of knowing. The former resulted in, firstly, a synopsis of Bailey’s cosmology, treated as a metaphoric theory of everything, and secondly, Bailey’s social commentary construed as a kind of revealed theology. The heuristic study aimed to provide an experiential taste of the impact that the texts had on the researcher, through which the nature of esoteric ways of knowing was explored.

In this chapter I apply the constructivist axiology drawn from the work of Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Garman and Piantanida (1996), as outlined in Chapter One, to my research findings in a process of critical reflection. I begin a speculative evaluation of Bailey’s presentation by commenting on the criterion of integrity (coherency and consistency), before drawing upon aesthetics (personal significance), and verisimilitude (personal resonance), to discuss the ‘problem of adherence’, and a ‘New Age’ seeker. Next I take aesthetics and verisimilitude, along with ontological authenticity (enlarges personal constructs), returning to Amelia’s exploration of Bailey’s work. I continue applying these criteria, reflecting on Bailey’s cosmology as a metaphor, completing these critical reflections upon Bailey’s work by attending to her axiology in the light of catalytic authenticity (empowerment to action). An evaluation of my research design follows, applying further criteria: reflexivity, or self
reflection; vitality, or how powerful the research is; integrity; and utility, or how useful this thesis might be.

9.2 Judging Bailey through a Constructivist Axiology: Integrity, Aesthetics and Verisimilitude

The first constructivist criterion of integrity, applied to judge if and how well Bailey’s work transforms consciousness, involves a brief summary of the coherency and consistency found in her work. I then speculate upon some functional (ideological) consequences of Bailey’s ontological claims and epistemology.

Bailey’s metaphysical truth claims provide a layer of coherency that binds her entire work, rendering the work powerful. There have been many examples throughout the preceding chapters where Bailey has asserted that certain central postulates in her work should be regarded as foundational truths, forming the integral ground upon which her esoteric knowledge is built, expressing her ontological commitment to a transcendent reality. In Chapter Four I discussed how Bailey built her cosmology upon her notion of a solar Logos, a metaphoric description of God, which she construed as part of a trinity manifesting out of the One, or Absolute Reality. She then built a teleological argument for the evolution of consciousness, using a range of metaphors sets to explain how evolution proceeds. A central feature of her cosmology is her use of hierarchy, drawn from a Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle’s idea of a continuum of creation. Bailey’s model of the human constitution, influenced by her seven Rays, her depiction of a spiritual path of transformational initiations, and her notions of glamour, maya and illusion, are all based upon her ontological commitment to Platonic and Neoplatonic ‘truths’. These include the Platonic notion that appearance veils reality, and the Neoplatonic idea of emanationism. Bailey does not deviate from these underlying principles, consequently her argument is internally coherent and consistent, and entirely consistent with western esoteric views. Bailey’s commitment to esotericism is forcefully apparent in her application of the esoteric notion of mediation, including a hierarchy of intermediary metaphysical entities, to provide an interpretation of world affairs.
Evaluating Bailey’s work upon the criterion of integrity in isolation from other criteria, (particularly catalytic authenticity), provides very little with which to evaluate my thesis question. It is insufficient to simply conclude that Bailey’s work is coherent and consistent, both internally, and in the situational context of western esotericism. A constructivist judgment upon the texts alone becomes a form of etic circularity, incapable of going beyond contextual construction. However, ontological and catalytic authenticity seem partly contingent upon textual integrity, which fosters at least a reader’s comprehension of an abstruse argument, as well as making it convincing. The power of integrity to make a work convincing also becomes a pre-requisite for another functional consequence of Bailey’s work, leading a reader into a pathway counter to the possibility of transforming consciousness. This is an occultistic gnostic path of adherence, fostered in part through the role ideology plays within the texts in combination with issues of authority and literal truth claims.

9.2.1 An Ideology of Realism, Literal Truth and Occultistic Gnosis

As Chapter Eight showed, an interplay between the function of ideology in Bailey’s work and an occultistic gnostic reader may have two consequences: Occultistic gnostic interpretations of esoteric notions may foster egoic attachment to these notions, assisted through the ideological power the texts contain; and through this process textual adherence may also be cultivated, through the secure comforts of having found truth.

Drawing on Bailey’s own argument concerning the ideological power knowledge has to create illusory veils of thought through language, I suggest that any ideology can obstruct transformations of consciousness, since all ideological constructions fix or secure our thinking, circumscribing our thoughts to omit other’s views, consequently impeding an attitude of openness to change and a desire to include diverse and alternative explanations (which seem prerequisite to transforming consciousness). Ideological fixedness appeals to an occultistic gnostic rationalization of esoteric notions, whereas artistic gnosis prefers an open relativist approach, in which meaning is always negotiable.

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1 For aesthetic reasons, from this point forward I have chosen not to italicize these criteria.
I argue that Bailey’s ontological commitment to foundational truth carries with it an overarching ideology of realism. According to Eagleton:

In the ideology of realism or representation, words are felt to link up with their thoughts or objects in essentially right and incontrovertible ways: the word becomes the only proper way of viewing this object or expressing this thought (1983:136).

In Bailey’s work an ideology of realism enhances the potency of the ideological consequences of ego inflation, elitism and divisiveness that a reader may engage with, and any occultistic gnostic tendencies towards literal interpretations and adherence. Even Bailey’s metaphoric language contains an ideological realism, through an implicit assertion that her metaphors express correct and indubitable ways to view a particular metaphysical object. As Murdoch (1993) succinctly states, all language is but a reflection of and not the thing itself. Claims explicitly or implicitly made that a metaphysical world is essentially natural, presenting the world as it is rather than representing it and drawing that distinction, is of great concern for a critique of Bailey’s work. This ideology of realism is compounded through the mediatory nature of Bailey’s metaphysical presentation, which invites the reader to share in Bailey’s own understanding, in a similar way that a traditional novel carries the reader along by the single authoritative reality of its imagined world (Murdoch 1993:90). As Eagleton states, ‘‘experience’ is not only the homeland of ideology… it is in its literary form a kind of vicarious self-fulfilment’ (1983:26).

An ideology of realism might be innocent enough in the context of a literary novel, but in Bailey’s case, this realism, along with integrity, serve to support textual authority in a highly persuasive way. Bailey invites a reader not only to suspend his or her ordinary ways of perceiving the world whilst exploring Bailey’s texts; she seeks to persuade her readers to more or less permanently adopt her own views as an authentic alternative interpretation of a transcendent reality.

Bailey draws upon an illusory power inherent in written texts to further persuade her readers. No text has the ability to answer back to a reader, all the words written are simply statements that cannot defend themselves or respond to the reader. There is
therefore no dialogue. Communication is uni-directional. The teacher/student relationship fostered by many religious or spiritual groups (the Hindu guru, the Buddhist master, the Christian priest) involves direct spoken communication, which these groups consider appropriate in that the teacher can offer clarification, respond to any of the student’s questions or comments and through the exchange further insight may be gained by either party. Scriptural texts as teachings, including Bailey’s work, preclude this advantage, unless they are studied and interpreted, in study groups or under the guidance of a religious or spiritual authority figure.

In this way such texts are subversive, by creating an illusion of dialogue when there is none, a pretense of communication, and thus destroying the inert, mute nature of the written word. In Bailey’s work, a direct form of illusory communication is created, the texts are written as instructions provided by a voice of authority. The reader is therefore taught, and invited to follow, these instructions.

Occultistic gnosis may be enhanced through this illusory relationship of textual authority and reader. One way is through a popular use of the notion of synchronicity, referring to the chance intersection of two apparently unrelated chains of occurrences (Jung 1992:43). So an individual views his or her encounter with a text as a synchronous event, evoking a sense of mystery and portent. The text then seems to speak directly to them: answering, confirming, affirming, or validating a preconceived personal thought or feeling. The voice of the text may even be seen to be in direct communication with the reader, more magically alive, and containing more meaning and significance as a result. Yet no growth as expansion has occurred if the textual material only confirms rather than challenges the reader’s pre-textual nature.

It may even be possible, hypothetically, that a reader believes that through their own action of reading the texts, they invoke the presence of the master who wrote it. I may claim, for example, that I had some transpersonal relationship with the texts, through which I was able to believe that Bailey or Djwhal Khul was actually speaking to me, guiding me. The texts may then form part of a personal theurgical practice, an aura of intimacy between text and reader is built, the texts imbued with enormous power.
I argue that Bailey’s foundationalist approach to esotericism, further leads a reader into occultistic gnosis, whereby metaphysics becomes concretized, treated as a factual lens through which a reader’s inner life and extramental reality is interpreted. This hampers any heiroeidetic potential the texts may have, to transform consciousness via ontological authenticity. A reader may be motivated by the texts to act upon Bailey’s articulation of ideas of human betterment, through attaching these ideas to, and possibly inflating, the personality. A reader’s constructs may have enlarged through attachment of aspects of an esoteric ontology and epistemology to pre-existing constructs. Each pre-existing construct may be altered, expanded or replaced, but this does not equate to a transformation or expansion of consciousness.2

Bailey herself provides examples of possible consequences of an occultistic gnostic view of her work. My exploration of Bailey’s social commentary revealed the precariousness of using a metaphysical system of thought as an explanatory tool, functional consequences of its application as foundational truth shaping catalytic authenticity. One result found in the current study was Bailey’s justification of the use of the atomic bomb in Japan, exemplifying perhaps the dangerous way that a fundamentalist adherent may take any small part of a large body of text and use it to justify a heinous thought or action. Bailey engages in a literal interpretation of her own metaphors and shows the reader, perhaps unwittingly, the very dangers she so strongly alerts the reader to elsewhere in her work, especially regarding Bailey’s emphasis upon the need for care in the construction of thought.

9.2.2 Implications of Adherence for a New Age Seeker

A consequence of occultistic gnosis attachment of esoteric notions to the self, is a further attachment of the self to esotericism, or a problem of adherence. A brief description of a contemporary New Age seeker, or spiritual pilgrim (Taylor 1999), contextualizes the problem of adherence and Bailey’s work. The New Age has gained academic interest, many writers concerning themselves with issues of definition and demarcation within the field of religious studies, and conducting studies into the kinds of seekers within this cohort (Bellah 1970, Ferguson 1980, Spangler 1984, Barker 1989, Bednarowski 1991, Alexander 1992, Clarke 1992, Ellwood 1992, Lewis

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2 Refer to Chapter Five for an introduction to the notion of transformations or expansions of consciousness.
According to Heelas (1996), the overarching aim of New Age seekers is to make and maintain contact with the spiritual Self (1996:2). Some writers identify the fulfillment of this aim through New Age eclectic processes of selection, informed by a combination of a relativist and a subjectivist philosophy (Sutcliffe 2000). Such seekers generally shun the constraints of orthodox religions, in favour of various alternatives provided through eastern mysticism, traditional cultures, such as Native American, along with western esotericism. Indeed, according to Hanegraaff (1998 (b)), the New Age is a secularized form of western esotericism. Bailey, as a prominent New Age predecessor, provides the New Age seeker with a twentieth century version of western esotericism to explore.


Each seeker may therefore place any idea, belief or practice into their individually constructed metaphysical explanation or narrative. The seeker is free to choose, through subjective discernment (involving personal judgments of aesthetics and verisimilitude) those features of any presentation they will adopt, rather than following the guiding authority provided by a priest, teacher or guru.⁴ With esotericism, an occultistic gnostic may select aspects that lend themselves to rationalization, based upon their aesthetic responses. Aesthetic judgments are ‘rational’, relating to existing thoughts, values, beliefs, ideologies and perspectives, based on what an individual considers meaningful, expressive or important. Such judgments do not necessarily lead to expansions of consciousness.

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³ This comment relates to Yates’ (1975) concern for serious scholarship regarding esotericism, noted in Chapter One.
⁴ It is apparent from a constructivist viewpoint that all people are inherently free to construct their own perspectives, despite impositions from outside.
Verisimilitude refers to an imaginatively or intuitively felt response; a harmonious vibration. This more subtle criterion is a quality sought to be cultivated in Bailey’s work, relying upon artistic gnosis. Verisimilitude might be viewed as a contingency for transforming consciousness involving a reorientation towards spiritual living, if we regard the ‘voice of the soul’ as intuitive. Bailey supports an emphasis on intuitive subjective resonance (TCF: x). However, Bailey’s support of this relativist epistemology is logically inconsistent with her ontological commitment to foundational truth, such as the existence of a spiritual hierarchy. A reader is instructed by Bailey that her spiritual hierarchy is an objective fact whilst paradoxically told to decide whether to accept this claim on the basis of subjective resonance.

Esoteric epistemology logically flows out of its ontology as a means of accessing higher truth, represented in esoteric textual constructions, supporting an inner quest towards a transcendent reality. Bailey makes her esoteric ontology and epistemology a means of interpreting extramental reality. Through a circular argument extramental reality provides symbols of a transcendent reality, interpreted through an esoteric epistemology which Bailey explicitly endorses (EA:62). This method creates a powerfully persuasive and convincing presentation, providing comfort and security for a reader, who may feel that they have found truth.

This is compounded when combined with subjective resonance as an epistemological tool. First, a reader may be unclear as to whether their responses are aesthetic or verisimilitudinal. Second a reader may be induced by an ideology of realism into an acceptance of Bailey’s work as truth. If one or two parts of an esoteric whole powerfully resonate with the self, then it would be unsurprising if a reader then assumed that the whole must also be true, since, as Bailey states, all existence is interconnected. This is particularly the case in my view, for a seeker who renders themselves open to any higher authority outside themselves, as Bailey’s texts paradoxically tend to foster, in spite of their support of subjective discernment. Such acceptance is thus compounded rather than mitigated through the practice of subjective discernment, the struggle essentially one of ego attachment (via aesthetics) verses resonance (verisimilitude) with the inner spiritual Self. This highlights the problematic quality of subjective discernment, which the esoteric training advocated
by Bailey seeks to address through the cultivation of the esoteric sense. It seems that attachment to literal truth, possibly viewed as personally significant obviates any, or even may be construed by an individual as, intuitive resonance.

A problem of adherence to literal truth is further compounded in Bailey’s work through her promotion of theurgical practices, begging the question as to the nature of the catalytic authenticity Bailey seeks to promote. Does empowerment to action lie with adherence to literal truth, a reader effectively carrying forth Bailey’s instructions? In combination with the criterion of integrity, evaluating Bailey from a constructivist perspective raises some interesting questions in the light of my thesis aim. Catalytic authenticity may serve to evaluate Bailey, revealing a problem of adherence in its wake, but it does not of itself show how well Bailey’s work transforms consciousness, as a motivational precursor to human betterment.

Bailey adheres to her own system of thought, secure that her construction presents a fair representation of reality and able to solve her own existential problems. In finding theosophy Bailey states that she:

> discovered three new (to me) basic ideas and eventually they all fitted into the general programme of my spiritual life and gave me a clue to world affairs (UA:139).

These three ideas were: that there existed a divine Plan or design for the universe that involved the evolution of humanity on a path of return to God; that a spiritual hierarchy existed to facilitate this evolution; and that there existed a law of rebirth (reincarnation) and a law of cause and effect (karma) (UA:139-140).

As Bailey shows, in search for meaning and for growth a seeker renders him/herself open to new material. This material may, however, close the door behind the seeker, particularly when combined with organizational structures such as Bailey’s Arcane School and World Goodwill. Reliance upon subjective discernment may not preclude a tendency to adhere to textual authority in combination with any authority embedded in organizational structures based upon the same textual content. Indeed this three
way interaction, between the individual looking within, and looking up to both spiritual, and organizational authority, seems to create a closed system.

The tendency to adhere to any belief system is further enhanced when the written work is combined with practices that symbolically enact in ritual or ceremony certain aspects of the doctrine or creed. Bailey’s *Great Invocation* presented in Chapter Eight and her meditative mantras referred to in Chapter Seven may be viewed in this light. Esoteric theurgical practice, along with spiritual or religious practices, including prayer and meditation, seem contingent upon adherence. Esoteric practices rest upon the rationalization of esoteric notions, turning metaphor into a real object, either to be invoked, or to be charged to do one’s bidding. Metaphoric notions as indicators of, rather than actual expressions of, ineffable truths, shift easily into concrete contents of esoteric practice. So a presentation of esotericism as literal truth seems to invoke an occultistic gnostic response involving an attachment of esoteric metaphoric objects to the self, possibly resulting in an inflation of self-importance, echoing concerns raised by Sutcliffe above, rather than a fostering of the humility and detachment commensurate with a spiritual reorientation which Bailey’s work advocates.

As Amelia, I found that even the concepts in Bailey’s work that helped to show how adherence to an idea occurs, could also become adhered to. I could easily adopt as truth any idea when it spoke directly to me, explaining and validating my experience. I knew then, in my aspiration not to slip into occultistic gnostic interpretations that I had to distance myself from all of Bailey’s ideas.

### 9.3 Judging Bailey: Verisimilitude, Aesthetics and Ontological Authenticity

This section uses the criteria of verisimilitude (personal resonance), aesthetics (personal significance), and ontological authenticity (enlarging personal constructs) to begin reflecting upon how Bailey’s work might fulfill her intention to foster a transformation of consciousness in a reader, using the testimony of Amelia, to decide
if a reorientation towards spiritual living has occurred in her experience. Within the context of this thesis, only Amelia’s testimony provides research material with which to evaluate the heiroeidetic or initiatory power of Bailey’s work (Versluis 2000 (a)). This power lies in the relationship between the evocative resonance of the texts and Amelia’s own inner processes in an aesthetic response to them, drawing her towards both occultistic and artistic gnosis. At this juncture the heiroeidetic quality of Bailey’s work is taken to refer to artistic gnosis as an ontologically authentic transformation of perception.

Amelia’s testimony provides many examples of the tension she felt within herself between occultistic and artistic gnosis. The former draws Bailey’s esotericism towards and attaches it to the self (personality). The latter takes the self out to meet the esoteric world in an act of self negation and spiritual aspiration. Initially Amelia experienced some confusion as she construed herself using Bailey’s model of the human constitution. Amelia seemed unavoidably to adopt occultistic gnosis when she applied Bailey’s seven Ray model to herself. In Chapter Six Amelia resisted her occultistic gnostic tendency as she explored Bailey’s initiatory stage model of evolving human consciousness, even though her own experience led her in this direction. Finally, in Chapter Seven, as Amelia sensed herself divided by her own artistic gnostic aspirations and her occultistic gnostic urges, she explored Bailey’s notion of the Dweller on the Threshold and the Angel of the Presence as a culminating pair of opposites. Bailey’s work presented Amelia with a powerful argument concerning the illusory function of duality and its transcendence through a developed intuitive capacity.

9.3.1 Amelia’s Mystical Experience

A salient feature of Amelia’s testimony illustrating the extraordinary transformational potential in the union of text and the subjective experiences of the reader are her mystical experiences, described in Chapter Six. After a week of peculiar

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5 This discussion using a constructivist axiology contributes to studies of transforming consciousness through the application of techniques or disciplines, found in the work of some writers (Katz 1982, Peters 1989, Fontana 2000, and Evans and Kourie 2003).
6 I have distinguished between the notions of mystical and spiritual, the former referring to the ineffable nature of a largely sensory experience, the latter to a reorientation of awareness towards a sense of unity, oneness or Divinity. This is referred to in Chapter Six.
coincidences, events becoming charged with meaning and significance, Amelia experienced an electrical ecstasy of energy coursing up her spine and exiting from the crown of her head. When Amelia later read in Bailey’s work that this experience might be thought of as the rising of the kundalini fires at the base of the spine, and that such an experience may be considered evidence of having attained a certain, advanced initiatory stage along the spiritual path, Amelia began to doubt the authenticity of the interpretation offered by the Bailey texts; even though this interpretation seemed to resonate, it conflicted with Amelia’s sense of humility.

A constructivist perspective shares Amelia’s concerns. Hammer (2001) draws upon Katz (1983), assertion that it is impossible for any individual to completely transcend cultural and linguistic contexts, resulting in an ontological denial of unmediated mystical experience. On this basis Hammer claims that:

> Religious experience…basically has little or no epistemological value, since experience and its interpretation is crucially dependent on the worldview espoused by one’s reference group (2001:347).

My own constructivist perspective and concomitant axiology, in contrast, provides space for the existence of a mystical event as an ontologically real occurrence in itself, and a means of evaluation, whilst acknowledging Katz’s constructivist view as a limitation. Whether this event is ‘truly a pointer to an ultimate reality’ (Hammer 2001:344), remains speculative, and unresolved whether we adopt a positivist or a constructivist paradigm. Constructivism stresses that later sense making interpretations of such events, are contextually contingent. Thus the relationship between an event and personal narrative interpretations of the event is problematic, partly through difficulties of evaluating authenticity.

### 9.3.2 Authenticity and Mystical Experience

The notion of authentic mystical experience suggests that there exists an identifiable and objectively true version, a view commensurate with a positivist paradigm. Difficulties emerge with this approach, illustrated through Anthony and Ecker’s (1987) attempt to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic spirituality, which
led them to create a conceptual framework, establishing criteria with which to analyse
spiritual systems, organizations and groups. One feature of this typology is the notion
of unilevel and multilevel interpretive dimensions. The former are apt to interpret
mundane experience as spiritual, adopting literal interpretations and seeking tangible
evidence of transformation, resulting in a form of spiritual materialism (Anthony and
Ecker 1987:40). This is commensurate with occultistic gnostic interpretations that
tend to support and inflate the self. Multilevel groups or systems, in contrast, ‘foster
genuine spiritual inner development’ (Anthony and Ecker 1987:40), through an
appreciation of symbolic and metaphoric levels of meaning, which are consonant with
artistic gnostic interpretations requiring a measure of self transcendence.

Whilst such frameworks offer insight into the problem of authenticity, they require
the scholar to position themselves as an objective authority. Allegations of
inauthenticity, or ego-attachment to spiritual or mystical experience, are incongruent
with a constructivist paradigm, and are obviated through my self-reflective research
approach. As Amelia, I may have deceived myself into believing in the authenticity
of my own experience as mystical, but I consider this is a risk far more palatable than
engaging in accusations of deception and inauthenticity with regard to another’s
experience. Perhaps the exercise of caution regarding interpretations, and an abeyance
of the use of these events as evidential proof is a prudent intellectual move.

Now any heiroeidetic power potentially existing in Bailey’s work can only find
expression through a reader. Yet Amelia’s mystical experience highlights a
problematic relationship between a reader and esoteric texts, obscuring any
transformational power. If the mystical experience and textual interpretation become
bound into one, tendencies of adherence seem greatly exacerbated through the
combined effect in this instance of occultistic gnosis and literal truth claims within
the texts. Experiences (construed by the experiencer) as spiritual do not necessarily
require a scriptural context, they may occur outside of any belief system. The
experiencer may then turn to various forms of spiritual text in their search for an
explanation of the event, and perhaps then choose, consequently to believe in a
chosen interpretation, and thence it’s surrounding belief system or model. The drive
to construe every aspect, event or circumstance that pertains to the self within a new
narrative of understanding can lead to a circle of confirmation in which the texts
become validated through the supporting evidence provided in self examination, and the self examination is equally supported by the new material. After all, the experience happened, just as the texts described it may, and because it happened, the texts were right! This difficulty is compounded through Bailey’s claim that the key to ascertaining whether an initiation has occurred lies in the recognition of it. Perhaps the Bailey texts are constructed to foster adherence to textual metaphors and truth claims and become advocates of Bailey’s ideas, carrying forth her formulation of a new world religion. This can remain only speculation however. This research does reveal, however, the power that this kind of text can have over the reader.

This merging of experience and textual interpretation reveals tension between aesthetics, verisimilitude and ontological authenticity. A potent personal resonance is evident between Amelia, her experiences, and the interpretation offered by the texts. However, this does not necessarily suggest an enlargement of Amelia’s personal constructions. Bailey’s explanations could just as well reflect a contracting of her constructs, especially if they draw Amelia’s perception towards occultistic gnosis. The attainment of a non-ordinary, or a mystical state of consciousness in a momentary event does not necessarily lead to a permanent transformation of an individual’s ordinary consciousness per se, especially when, in esoteric terms, that particular individual tends towards occultistic gnosis.

Yet, the convergence of Amelia’s mystical experiences and their later interpretation by Amelia in the light of Bailey’s work provides the most aesthetically striking outcome of this research at the personal level, that the Bailey texts were somehow part of a profound awakening in the researcher. These events contribute greatly to the overall sense of unfolding spirituality that occurred through my reading of Bailey.

Aesthetic validation of Amelia’s mystical experience came largely through its spontaneous emergence. I suggest that this event may be construed as a pure consciousness event (Forman 1998). The experience was not contrived, although it occurred within the temporal context of the heuristic research.
At this juncture I introduce my third voice\textsuperscript{7}, expressing my immediate post-heuristic reflections upon my mystical experience:

I cast doubt, not in terms of its actual occurrence, but rather, in the meaning I may place upon it, including the interpretation of the significance of the event as epiphanous when situated in the general stream of my life. This self doubt contributes to my realization of artistic gnosis as an emergent and personal way of knowing. Since I am not able to know, test or evaluate in a concrete way the contents of my mystical episodes, I am left regarding them as non-rational events, defying explanation and consequently belonging to the class of things described as ineffable.

Furthermore, my approach allows for an openness to the potentiality or possibility of ultimate or absolute truth whilst simultaneously recognizing that all human formulations of truth are constructions by a human thinker, maps of the unknown rather than the unknown itself. To directly know the unknown, if such an act is possible, would then require the negation of, or bracketing of all that is already known and conceptually formulated in thought.

These passages reflect an artistic gnostic approach to mystical experience, in which a recognition of a paradox between non-ordinary experience and the inability to articulate this experience in any evaluative way, suggests an enlargement of my own personal construction pertaining to the unknown. However, such ontological authenticity pertaining to my own experience is not contingent upon Bailey’s texts and their ability to transform consciousness. It may be more indicative of the effects of the research process.

\textbf{9.3.3 Ontological Authenticity and Transforming Consciousness}

Another approach to an ontological authentication of mystical experiences, advocated by James (1902) is to look beyond the experience itself towards any pragmatic outcomes, in terms of moral actions in the world, or catalytic authenticity. I shall consider some of the moral implications of Bailey’s work later. Here I explore ontological authenticity through the notion of spiritual growth, upon which these acts are contingent. Spiritual growth within my conceptual framework may be viewed as a

\textsuperscript{7} Amelia Hewman constitutes the first voice in this work. The second voice is that of the scholar as both Amelia’s narrator and as the presenter and evaluator of the research findings. The third voice emerges in my own reflections of the entire research process in terms of how this has changed my own point of view.
tendency towards artistic gnosis and therefore my evaluation also involves reflection upon how the Bailey texts supported the mystical experience and ensuing outcomes.

As indicated in Chapter Six, mystical experiences are powerful, and potentially transformational, through providing the experiencer with aspirations to reach toward that which was experienced as something spiritual. Thus mystical experiences may foster spiritual growth.

Writers (Husserl 1970, Fowler 1981, Jung 1992 (a), Hillman 1996, Versluis 2000 (a) and Cheetham 2002) agree that spiritual growth necessitates, causes or is caused by a decentralization of the ego, the ‘I’, and dualists (including dual action monists) apportion the perceiving ‘eye’ of awareness as the eye of the soul, or assumed indwelling spiritual entity. This transition is said to result in the articulation of experience in universal terms, as the ‘I’ becomes increasingly absent or obscured, replaced with experiences of oneness with the universe (McNeill 1998). The problem for the scholar then becomes the method of analysis of this. The ‘I’ of the egocentric self, following esotericism’s model, observes appearances rather than an assumed reality, immersed in all the fogs of glamour portrayed in Bailey’s work. In contrast the ‘eye’ of awareness, cuts a swathe through the fog using intuitive perception to know reality. The intuition sees the universal in any particular. In my view the intuition fosters, and is fostered by, an openness to the unknown. As humans we cannot escape the ‘I’ of the ego, even when we may consider ourselves spiritually very advanced. A sense of egoic self comes, I feel, with being human.

As humans we have the ability to develop awareness of an object. We come to know a thing through sensing, and especially, seeing it. We may perceive things literally, using our five physical senses, and we may also use the intuition. Intuitive sensing, including Bailey’s esoteric sense, is contingent for Bailey, upon a developed imagination, able to visualize and perceive symbolically. As Cheetham suggests:

The whole difference between dogmatic, literal consciousness, and theophanic, imaginal consciousness lies in the mode of perception…The imaginal world is the realm of the symbolic, the alchemical, the visionary, the wonder-ful, [italics his] (2002:74).
For Bailey, this soulful eye of perception is contingent upon our humanity, just as the ‘I’ of the ego. This duality, or the illusion of it, is part of our existence. In my view spirituality becomes a matter of orientation, away from an emphasis upon the ‘I’ and towards the embodiment of the ‘eye’, whether the division is regarded as real or illusory. Nevertheless the sense of a divided self, subjectively experienced abounds in mystical testimony (including James 1985, King 1996, and Evans and Kourie 2003). I concur with Bailey that with this shift in orientation spirituality: embraces or includes the ‘other’; loves, and out of that love, is motivated to help the ‘other’; and this is the case for the whole of humanity and the planet. These are spiritual outcomes.

The movement from ‘I’ to ‘eye’ may also be construed in terms of occultistic and artistic gnosis. The former tends to draw metaphysical things to the ego at the centre, and the latter moves towards, and even through, these metaphysical things as indicators of the unknown. For Cheetham:

the gnostic journey is a process of becoming conscious. It accomplishes the interiorization of the world. This does not mean swallowing it, taking in into the ego…It is instead a “coming out towards oneself,” an *exodus*…. [italics his] (2002:64).

Amelia seemed to recognize this distinction, and supported by the material she read, she aspired towards that which she considered to be a worthy orientation, artistic gnosis.

Bailey argues that the shift to the ‘eye’ is achieved through intellectual and moral endeavour as well as a mystical turning within to inner experience and imagination. Amelia’s testimony suggests that Bailey’s texts have the potential to foster this shift of perception in a reader, carrying an heiroeidetic ability to transmute consciousness (Versluis 2000 (a)). This heiroeidetic quality is not found in Bailey’s descriptions of spirituality. Rather, it is through the process of negotiating a path through Bailey’s work that this quality is found.
9.3.4 Reflective Reasoning as a Catalytically Authentic Path

I take the view that negotiating such a path involves reflective reasoning. I argue that reason ought to serve to clarify, inquire, reflect upon, and critically evaluate experience. As a way of pondering (evaluating) aesthetic judgments, which otherwise remain tacit and uncontested, this process facilitates ontological authenticity. This thesis supports the view that we need both reason and gnosis⁸, in contemplating the mystery of our existence.

Hanegraaff (1992) argues that occultistic gnosis is a psychologically shallow halfway house between reason and artistic gnosis, whereby the latter is drawn down to meet the former (1992:15). However, I argue that instead of drawing artistic gnosis down to meet reason in a reductionist move, we can just as well draw reason into the realm of artistic gnosis. To achieve a meeting of reason and artistic gnosis without reducing artistic into occultistic gnosis, a particular type of reason, commensurate with artistic gnosis seems required, one that is reflective, inclusive, synthetic, responsive and open. Reflective reasoning, or epistemic cognition, has been construed by King and Kitchener (1994 and 2002) in their developmental stage model of reflective judgment as indicative of process driven critical inquiry involving abstract generalized principles (1994: 70-71). By reflective reasoning I refer to a process of subjectively experiencing, in imagination, reverie, meditation, dream or in vision, and then thinking about our thinking in relation to that which has been learnt from such experience. An experiencing subject, their aesthetic judgments and a metaphoric object are therefore brought into reflexive relationship with one another. A heuristic research method provides an example of this.

Drawing upon Dewey’s (1933 and 1938) work on reflective thinking, King and Kitchener (1994) argue that progression through the later stages of their model occurs when an individual encounters problems that involve doubt and uncertainty, so that solutions cannot be deduced logically, based upon absolute truths or fixed assumptions⁹. Artistic gnosis may foster awareness of uncertainty through an

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⁸ Gnosis refers to a view of life in which ‘truth can only be found by personal, inner revelation, insight or “enlightenment”’ (Hanegraaff 1992:10). In my view gnosis is tied to the notion of mysticism, which, for Underhill (1956), refers to transformative spiritual activity leading to a living loving unified Self (1956:81-85), as well as James (1985) definition of the mystic state referred to in Chapter Six.

⁹ This view is consonant with Graves’ (1970) view of expanding consciousness, summarized in Chapter Five.
engagement with esoteric texts, which contain much that contests or competes with other views of reality and provides the reader with an alternative view.

A reader using reflective reasoning and artistic gnosis may view themselves as knowledge maker through their own ability to perceive as a knowing subject, an abstract esoteric reality, and by their observations of the external world as another source of knowledge. As Fitzgerald and Cunningham (2002) observe, this conceptualization of knowledge and knowing is broadly dualist, knowledge residing in the interaction between knowledge and knowing (2002: 213). According to Kuhn and Weinstock (2002), ‘the coordination of subjective and objective dimensions of knowing…is the singular dimension that drives this progression [towards epistemic cognition]’, [ ] mine (2002: 123-5). In reflective judgment an esoteric reader adopting an interactionist view of knowledge and knowing is likely to use a method of correspondence, discussed in detail below.

I argue that such reflective reasoning grounds the transcendent aspect of artistic gnosis, translating into knowledge insights gained through intuitive perception. As King and Kitchener seem to suggest, reflective judgment is indicative of humanity’s highest cognitive achievement. In my view reflective judgment supports artistic gnosis, enabling an individual to remain a unity as a conscious embodied entity, rather than potentially developing a cleavage between artistic gnosis and ordinary perception, encumbering the reader with two possibly conflicting and competing views. Further, any apparent higher knowledge (assuming such knowledge exists) gained through artistic gnosis, without reflective reasoning, has little chance of becoming phronetic (practically wise). This places a limitation upon the possibility of Bailey’s work fostering a transformation of consciousness in the reader leading to a reorientation towards spiritual living and human betterment. Ideally, for the full force of heiroeidetic power to be felt by a reader, they will already have a latent artistic gnostic disposition along with a capacity for epistemic cognition.

If reason pertains to the personality, and artistic gnosis to the soul, then the sense of a divided self, noted by James (1902) and Jung (1992), may be healed through the combination of reflective reason and artistic gnosis. Reflective reasoning and artistic gnosis become qualifying contributions to the heiroeidetic power of Bailey’s texts to
enlarge personal constructs (ontological authenticity), through its potential to evaluate aesthetic judgments. However, the inseparability of Bailey’s epistemology and Amelia’s perceptive and cognitive abilities in relation to this epistemology, make an evaluation of the research question complex.

9.4 Judging Bailey: Ontological Authenticity and Integrity

This complexity continues to colour this evaluation, as I attend to my presentation of Bailey’s work as a theory of everything, the subject of Chapter Four, bracketing those aspects of the texts that concern the application of her work, either to the individual self or to world affairs, viewing in isolation those features that may be considered purely metaphoric, pertaining to an unseen metaphysical reality.

Using the criteria of ontological authenticity and integrity to evaluate Bailey’s work, I reflect upon the way that esoteric knowledge treated metaphorically can foster a shift of focus from the personality ‘I’ to the soul ‘eye’. Thus I continue to explore how effective Bailey is at fulfilling her own intention. I have suggested that literal knowledge tends to generate and be generated by a literal esoteric way of knowing, or occultistic gnosis. I have argued that this does not foster growth of ‘eye’ awareness. Rather its philosophical implications arising from processes of rationalisation tend towards an inflation of the self at the centre, exemplified in the current work with the problem of adherence. I also argue that reason, when reflective, can facilitate, and be facilitated by, an artistic gnostic way of knowing that treats esoteric contents metaphorically.

I now explore one way to view reflective reasoning in my discussion of Bailey’s use of metaphor. I follow this with a brief examination of the notion of esoteric veils, esotericism as technical language and a consideration of issues of language and power. Finally, I explore difficulties with describing the unknown.

9.4.1 Metaphor and Transforming Consciousness

Perhaps metaphor facilitates the recognition of some insight that will remain unformed until it is clothed in language. Perhaps the unfolding of human knowledge,
in its myriad forms built over time, may be viewed as comprised of metaphors of various kinds that provide meaning, explanation and particularly, conceptualization. Drawing upon Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) interpretation of metaphor, I argue that metaphors may be regarded as referential words or symbols that evoke meaning and leave interpretation open to extension, thus providing space for a subjective response. Metaphor derives its meaning through comparison. Therefore metaphor exists in relationship to some other thing or things. I suggest that we think about our world through metaphors, making conceptual sense through drawing links, connections, associations or correspondences. I also contend that we may unreflectively adopt metaphoric associations constructed by others. However, metaphoric meaning is not fixed, rather it is contestable. Consequently I argue that the treatment of knowledge metaphorically is congruent with reflective reasoning, since it is through the process of reflective reasoning, that metaphoric meaning can be drawn into the light of human understanding.

In viewing Bailey’s cosmology as metaphoric knowledge, I return to Faivre’s epistemological characteristics of esotericism, which I explored in Chapter Three. As Faivre (1994) indicates, esotericism seeks meaning through correspondence. I argue that correspondence is one aspect of reflective reasoning, pertinent to esotericism. Correspondence is a process of symbolically matching like with like to seek congruity of meaning, to put things together into a larger whole. The act of seeking correspondence is based upon the assumption that life is an interconnected whole, the universal perceived in the particular so that meanings of particularity are transcended. Correspondence relies upon imaginative perception and a grasp of symbolic meaning rather than through analysis.

In seeking to penetrate the deeper significance of our lives, astrologers are exemplars of the esoteric practice of correspondence. In locating a planetary position against constellations and comparing it to some event or circumstance occurring on our planet, astrologers generate evocative metaphors for reflection. Through the act of seeking correspondence, based upon the premise of metaphysical interconnectedness,

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10 As Amelia I sought metaphysical correspondence between aspects of myself and Bailey’s work. I found value in Bailey’s dweller, for example, as having personal resonance. By penetrating myself new meaning emerged, new questions arose. Through the act of correspondence I gained a sense of the universal within myself, I became a microcosmic example of humanity’s struggle.
the astrologer may invoke synchronicity, where two causally independent chains of events intersect and carry the same meaning (Jung 1992 (a):43). Hammer (2001) implies that an astrological invocation of synchronicity may be discredited as simply one of esoteric scientism’s ‘laws’ (Hammer 2001:308-9). Yet as an epistemological feature of an esoteric way of knowing, correspondence and synchronicity, as ways of seeking to know beneath the surface, opens an individual to the possibility of emergent insights and new associative meanings. Paradoxically, transcendence through esoteric penetration allows the whole of a thing to generate meaning which is then intuitively grasped. So it is not the act of recognizing emerging synchronicities that fosters Hammer’s scientism. Rather, it is consequent presentations of any apparent synchronous correspondences into a form of metaphysical knowledge. Through this process emerges an esoteric system of thought that tells a particular story about our world.

Extending the notion of metaphor defined above, I now re-introduce metaphor in an extended form, drawing upon the work of Goerner (1994), McFague (1982), Pepper (1946), Rowe (1989) and Tannen (1998). These writers share the view that we come to understand and accept cultural phenomena through metaphoric frames, or narrative scaffolds (Tannen:1998) upon which to hang, describe, define or categorise. These narratives, or discourses of shared language shape our experience (Rowe 1989). Rowe argues that we view reality through our senses, making patterns, constructing meaning from our observations. For Tannen:

Culture, in a sense, is an environment of narratives that we hear repeatedly until they seem to make self-evident sense in explaining human behaviour (1998:15).

Within an esoteric perspective the same argument can be made. If the basic esoteric premise is that energy follows, is harnessed by, and directed by thought, then it also follows that in the use of language in this way, the energy itself is shaped, given direction and purpose or intentionality. Language is therefore regarded by esotericists as powerful. This creates tension between language as metaphor that is open to interpretation, and the implication that in the construction of a thoughtform, the power (energy) contained within the original intention of the thinker is contingent.
upon the meaning of the thoughtform being fixed. As the thoughtform is engaged
with by other thinkers and interpreted by them, the focus and the power (energy) of
that thoughtform may be dissipated. This motivates Bailey to stress the moral
responsibility we as human beings have with regard to our thoughtform making
capacity. Bailey argues that energy clothed in language has the potential to be many
things, in accordance with the intention of a thinker. It is purpose that directs
language, and directs, therefore the form that the energy takes. How well does
Bailey’s own thoughtform, or metaphoric narrative perform in this regard? I also rely
upon Hillman’s (1996) assertion that it is the soul that communicates by means of
metaphor. How powerful is Bailey’s cosmology as a means of communicating
through metaphor the realm of the soul, and in so doing, carrying ontologically
authentic power through fostering growth towards the ‘eye’ of the soul in the reader?

Western esotericism can be viewed as a metaphoric narrative containing many
metaphoric concepts and frames. Bailey’s seven planes and seven Rays as
interconnected energy streams provide one metaphoric frame through which to view
the human constitution. Bailey’s three fires and motion provide another frame
through which to view the interplay of energy in matter and its connection to the
evolution of consciousness. In Chapter Four I presented some of Bailey’s frames, or
sets, each fitting congruously into her cosmology. Bailey’s use of metaphor binds her
work into an internally coherent whole.

We can view reality through these frames as Bailey herself did. Yet, in so doing, we
move out of the realm of metaphysics and into the tangible world, explaining events
and circumstances that occur around us in terms of metaphysical causes drawn out of
these frames. As I have continually argued, this move does not support our own
expansion of awareness, but merely confirms a preconceived metaphysical narrative.
Any metaphoric narrative can function in a similar way, supporting what is (the status
quo), rather than what could be (transformation). Since viewing reality through
metaphoric frames does not appear to automatically pertain to growth towards a
soulful way of knowing, then we must journey in another direction to discover
whether Hillman’s assertion finds validation through Bailey’s work.
How can an esoteric metaphoric narrative lead towards or support an ontologically authentic expansion of consciousness and shift personal emphasis towards the soul? To address this question, I return briefly to my earlier presentation of mystical experience.

Transformations of consciousness may be linked to mystical experiences, which are tied to particular historical and cultural contexts (Katz 1983), imbued with their own place in time and space, and so surrounded by and surrounding the individual’s own metaphoric narratives. Yet such experience points to the ineffable other, to unity, or the divine, that which is timeless and therefore not contingent upon history or culture. Perhaps it is possible to transcend metaphoric narratives in the immediacy of a mystical experience. From a constructivist perspective mystical experience might be regarded as an all-consuming resonance (verisimilitude) of Unity unmediated by thought. This experience of the ineffable might foster an existential crisis in which existing frameworks of interpretation lack explanatory power. Graves (1970) argues that such crises are necessary prerequisites for expansions of consciousness. Viewed in this way a transformation of consciousness (for example through a mystical experience) may lead to an expansion of consciousness. ‘Transformation’ refers to process, or how consciousness changes, and ‘expansion’ refers to what happens.11

Mystical experience may render an individual more open to spiritual texts of any kind. Further, the ensuing existential crisis may unfix an individual’s pre-existing aesthetic judgments, since they too, become inadequate, and questioned as personality constructs in the face of an emerging sense of ‘other’, or ‘eye of the soul’ within the self. The ground for ontological authenticity is thus provided in a chain of contingency. Enlarging personal constructs through engaging with esoteric texts relies upon aesthetic judgments (evaluated through reflective reasoning), which might in turn rely upon heightened (mystical) experiences of verisimilitude. So how can a textual representation of an ineffable reality support this process of transformation?

For Dimitrov (2003), soul narratives spread their influence beyond personality centred narratives, evoking ‘creative experiential insights [and] emergence of inspirational resonances between [reader and text]’ [ ] mine (2003:144). Soul

11 If consciousness should contract rather than expand, then no transformation has occurred, there being no change in form.

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The metaphoric narrative that Bailey presents in her theory of everything does, in my view, provide an opportunity for supporting the kind of transformation described above. I have described Bailey’s presentation of metaphoric frames as metaphor clusters or sets, interconnected in a complex labyrinth. Each cluster is presented from a particular viewpoint held within Bailey’s overall metaphoric frame in a self referential system. For example, Bailey’s seven Rays describe energy from the perspective of consciousness. This energy is also described as the three fires, from the point of view of energy and matter. Another example is Bailey’s depiction of the seven planes, viewed from the perspective of the human constitution. The planes become chains when viewed from the perspective of planetary constitution. The chains also become etheric centres when viewed from the perspective of the solar Logos. To comprehend Bailey’s system with its constant demand upon the reader to shift their orientation is analogous to entering the wilderness, lost, confused, disoriented, and stripped bare of the familiarity of all pre-conceived ideas, beliefs and concepts. According to Searle (1992), one aspect of ordinary consciousness is this capacity to recognize and organize information to interpret our world. Another feature of ordinary consciousness, according to Searle (1992:128), is perspective or ‘point of view’. Ordinary perspectives have no place in Bailey’s cosmic theory of everything. Instead, the reader journeys through this strange land bereft of the security of familiarity and perspective.

Each one of Bailey’s metaphor sets views things from a different perspective (whether psychological, physiological, quasi-scientific), yet each of Bailey’s perspectives concern the same model of a metaphysical reality. I contend that this constant shifting of point of view develops in the reader at least an ability to frame things within a greater context. In an attempt to comprehend this larger context no one perspective may dominate, or drive, or determine another perspective, all pertain in equal measure to the one reality. This constant shifting within Bailey’s metaphoric frame may develop a sense of the interrelatedness of all things. It also points beyond itself. For Bailey, lying behind all metaphor is some essential truth, and the thought constructed is meant to carry this truth with it. Curiously the reader may
imaginatively construct Bailey’s cosmology, literally visualizing or constructing its various components and drawing them together into a synthesized whole, a process I found to be extraordinarily complex. The effort made to visualize may develop the imaginative capacity, although this in itself is not analogous to an expansion of consciousness. We may argue that consciousness expands to include more information, consequently consciousness expands in line with the quantity of information. However, we may equally well argue that the addition of more information serves to foster an inflation of the egoic self through attachment and not the expansion of consciousness into a spiritual life. If we apply the new information and learn through the experiences this may generate, again we may say that consciousness has expanded. More has been brought into our field of awareness. Or we may simply shift our awareness back and forth between the new and old content and experience, without any expansion. I argue that it is through processes of interrelating, including and synthesizing, or practices of correspondence, that in this particular instance allows consciousness to expand, particularly with regard to a soulful awareness.

So Bailey’s cosmology provides opportunities for a reader to expand consciousness in two ways. Firstly, as argued above, consciousness may expand through a reader’s suspension of ordinary consciousness in a ‘wilderness experience’, in combination with Bailey’s encouragement for a reader to practice correspondence (interrelate, include and synthesize), as they read her work, thus cultivating a perhaps new epistemology commensurate, as a navigational device, with an experience of wilderness.

Secondly, a more subtle expansion that I perceive is possible occurs when a reader realizes their own ability to see through the construction they have built in their own minds! Rather than taking one part of Bailey’s work, a part perhaps more readily grasped, and then applying it literally to experience, the whole work is grasped and transcended, the reader changed through their own intense mental efforts, ponderings, reflections and openness, both because of, and simultaneously in spite of, the texts. This ability to see through Bailey’s work is what I consider to be ‘pure’ artistic gnosis. In my view, this is an example of soulful communication drawn forth in the reader’s effort to see through Bailey’s work. As such, her work may be viewed, less
as a map of metaphysical terrain and more as a mythic bridge between the visible and invisible, one of three traditional bridges cited by Hillman as ‘mathematics, music, and myths’ (1996:94). Bailey’s bridge, perceived in pure artistic gnosis, becomes a tool, not a metaphoric conveyer of absolute truth. As Hanegraaff (1992) states, ‘the metaphor does not say anything at all; it only does something for those who know how to make creative use of it’ [italics his] (1992:33). I found that Bailey’s work carries ontologically authentic potential that only manifests in relationship with a particular reader who responds to textually evocative meaning. This meaning fosters aesthetic (personally significant) and verisimilitudinous (resonant) responses through the integrity of the work. My third voice, using reflective reasoning, expresses this thus:

Illustrating my own practice of reflective reasoning and drawing from my reading of Bailey’s work, is my attempt to understand how the circle of the Self spirals (the motion of the soul) into the point at the centre (Unity) as consciousness expands, the expansion leading paradoxically to convergence. I found that the expanded awareness includes more and more elaborate metaphor sets or clusters of meaning that describe, in essence, the same single emanation of the One. Relative to position or location we see or are able to witness, describe, comprehend, a particular angle or vector of the Unity that has no particularity. A shift in position and a new set of meanings emerges. Each angle or vector is a trajectory leading in two directions (towards unity and diversity). Each vector is illusory, a veil in language. With increasing complexity through expansion, then more may be seen. The more expansions, the increasing density, compression, and the less there is, as all the components that comprise this density merge.

At this point, Rucker’s insight with regard to Kafka’s *The Castle* points beyond the texts, ‘to understand the essentially labyrinthine nature of ‘The Castle’ is somehow to be free of it’ (1997:164-5).

**9.4.2 Esoteric Veils**

The notion of veiled truth in esotericism, casts verisimilitude (personal resonance) as a torch through the labyrinth, in contrast to any aesthetic or personally significant responses made by a reader, and making ontological authenticity a challenge. A reader may find any part of any text personally significant for a variety of reasons. An occultistic gnostic may view aspects in an esoteric text as significant based on his/her
perception that these aspects support a sense of self-importance. Consequently, as an axiological tool, aesthetics is limited when the research task is an evaluation of transforming consciousness. However, just as integrity is a necessary prerequisite for the fostering of aesthetic responses leading to the potential for ontological authenticity, aesthetics is a precursor to verisimilitude. Without some personal significance being felt by a reader as they read the texts, there is no engagement. Without engagement there is no resonance. Engagement is like the opening of a door, through which echoes within the self can be heard or felt as responses to the texts. Verisimilitude becomes a way of personally evaluating the integrity of the work. It is here that the reader is confronted with esoteric veils.

Esoteric veils serve metaphysical, ideological and epistemological purposes, which makes escape from the labyrinth a little harder than may first appear. Veiled knowledge, or the alleged concealment of metaphysical truth behind language, is one of the hallmarks of esotericism. Esotericism creates veils as enigmatic expressions of the ineffable, in recognition of limitations of language (Versluis 2000 (a):30), to achieve an adequate representation of a metaphysical reality.

Metaphors may obscure as much as they reveal, through drawing one comparison or correspondence, another potential comparison may be ignored (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). In other words, metaphors may function ideologically. Esoteric metaphors direct the reader towards a particular perspective, carrying superior explanatory power of a transcendent metaphysical reality. As discussed above, esotericism carries an ideology of realism, and esoteric metaphors may serve this function alongside literal truth claims, hailing a reader into an acceptance of esotericism as a truthful depiction of reality. Veiling adds another aspect to this ideological function of esoteric metaphor. Veils are designed to obscure absolute truth and allure a reader through a dense layering of metaphor.

The notion of the veil also has an epistemological function colouring verisimilitude. Esoteric veils evoke not only mystery, they also suggest that esoteric knowing is contingent upon the ability to penetrate the veils to reach a point of transcendent understanding beyond. This ability relies upon the practice of observing any personal resonance or echoes within the self and reflecting upon the meaning arising from this
observation using and cultivating a discerning eye. This process of discernment is an act of refining powers of observation so that the reader sees whether a resonance comes from personality or from soul. Verisimilitude becomes part of the pathway towards artistic gnosis and esoteric veils provide the training ground. This is what Bailey means by the esoteric sense.

If we take the same esoteric veils and draw them to the self, rather than reaching beyond them, we may feel that we have deconstructed their meaning, understood their significance, when all we have done is attached them to our pre-existing framework of understanding. Furthermore, the notion of veils suggests that it takes a rather special kind of mind to engage with esotericism, part of an elite group who share this ability, again reinforcing an attachment to the self, rather than transcendence. Esotericism, laced with what von Stuckrad (2005) describes as an esoteric dialectic of concealment and revelation, may be regarded as secret superior knowledge, fostering a sense of elitism in an intellectual reader. Whilst von Stuckrad argues that ‘esotericists view the entire cosmos as a ‘theatre of mirrors’, an ensemble of hieroglyphs to be deciphered by adepts’ (2005:82), requiring both the deciphering intellect and the humility of a wise man or woman, this humility is overshadowed by the ideological and epistemological power found in esoteric veils. Consequently, this particular combination of epistemological (self-inflation) and ideological (elitism) functions of esoteric veils mitigates against the ontological shift from ‘I’ to ‘eye’.

### 9.4.3 Technical Language

Bailey’s use of technical language contrasts with other esoteric presentations that contain richly evocative, poetic and artistic depictions of the unknown. One example is found in the work of Jacob Böhme (Versluis 2000 (a) and (b)). Metaphoric expression is non-literal. Bailey’s use of metaphor is obscured through the more technical and instructional manner in which she describes her esoteric world. Bailey may have chosen to write in this way to appeal to a contemporary readership whose aesthetic sense of significance may have been shaped by an emerging scientific and technologically dominant culture.
However, technical language drawn from science (electricity, radiation, atoms), suggests a literal rather than metaphoric interpretation, limiting rather than enhancing the evocative power of metaphor and hence any heiroeidetic power the texts may contain. It appears that a reader faces an enormous challenge in seeking an expansion of awareness through a reading of Bailey’s work, countered, I argue, through a reader’s decision to bracket both her use of technical language, and style of writing as instruction, as representations carrying an ideologically persuasive power. In this manner these aspects of Bailey’s work become contestable rather than truth. Bailey’s metaphoric narrative may then be held sustained within the imagination of the reader. In light of this challenge it is remarkable that Bailey’s work carries heiroeidetic, or ontologically authentic power.

9.4.4 Metaphysics and Esotericism: The Word is Unknown

Esotericists assert that there exists a reality beyond language that cannot easily be reduced to language. For Versluis (2000 (a)) language separates us from, and objectifies, the world (2000 (a): 24). Language may be seen as the material content of the mind, providing discourse with the tools to create generality out of particularity, abstracting and introducing new meaning upon experience. As such, language may be regarded as the tool of the ego. However, one aspect of the heiroeidetic power of esoteric texts, described as the via positiva (Versluis 2000 (a)), is the use of language to stimulate awareness of the possibility of transcendence.

Metaphysics may be interpreted as dealing with the unknown, and esoteric interpretations seek to put this sense of the ineffable into language. The unknown, for those who have experienced it, is a truth, a reality. When searching for words to express such experiences, or insights that appear to an individual as beyond language, words used to convey profundity seem insufficient. How many suggestive, allegorical, or metaphorical words are required to express a sense of the ineffable? As Versluis notes (2000), language used to describe the unknown is necessarily symbolic, metaphoric and paradoxical, alluding to something rather than directly describing, using what is already known to describe what is not.
In my view esotericism plays a language game with the unknown. If language functions as a tool to describe the world of things through correspondence, or the relationship between the word and the object, then the former is used in an attempt to convey something about the nature of that object. Esotericism takes language as that which in words corresponds to a reality beyond our normal experience of the world, a behind the scenes, hidden metaphysical world bubbling away just beyond the reach of our senses. Esotericism uses language as a symbolic tool in service of the unknown.

This language game through descriptive power brings into being another world. This world, however, is still a construction that alludes to some transcendent reality yet is itself an illusion in language, not only a metaphoric world, but a riddle, or a trick.

Can the unknown ever be directly known, if to know is to fix in language, and construct in thought? Is it possible that Bailey offers a path to a more direct way of knowing, the ‘way of the riddle’ perhaps, tied to a particular esoteric epistemology that may contribute to a reorientation in consciousness towards spiritual living? Or an artistic gnostic entry point to the via negativa, transcending all subject object divisions (Versluis 2000)? I return to this speculation below.

Here I suggest that we may regard Bailey’s cosmology as a construction of a complex riddle through which to show the relativity of all meaning, whether through experience of our physical senses, or the world of meaning in language, or thoughts and images in our minds. Perhaps it is consciousness itself that cannot be known as an object, it remains the ‘Unknown’ and the unknowable, lived, and life is experienced through it. We can conceive of awareness as a magnetic boundary, between what is inside it and what is outside of it, rather like a photograph frames a partial view. But it seems that we cannot know this boundary. According to Bailey, all we can and indeed must do, is to push this boundary outwards, make it grow.

9.5 Judging Bailey: Catalytic Authenticity

The above discussions have focused upon a tension between occultistic and artistic gnostic aesthetic responses, and in Bailey’s portrayal of literal and metaphoric knowledge with which a reader resonates, providing the ground for spiritual
emergence as ontological authenticity. I have argued that a chain of contingency exists in my axiology. Ontological authenticity relies upon aesthetic responses, which in turn require a verisimilitude response that depends upon the integrity of the work. The final evaluative criteria of catalytic authenticity is contingent upon ontological authenticity in the context of my thesis aim, since acting towards human betterment is contextually reliant upon having undergone a transformation of consciousness that involves a reorientation to the spiritual life. I now explore catalytic authenticity, evaluating the moral aspects of Bailey’s work.

The metaphoric and propositional metaphysical knowledge held within Bailey’s cosmology may be regarded as in service of Bailey’s foundational knowledge, especially regarding Bailey’s efforts to persuade the reader of the need to support the efforts of her spiritual hierarchy, an organization the reader is told to treat as fact. If we approach Bailey’s work from an occultistic gnostic position we may gravitate towards accepting this trajectory. An artistic gnostic may draw upon Bailey’s cosmology as metaphor and regard as symbolic all elements of Bailey’s presentation, her spiritual hierarchy, for example, becoming a metaphor of order, rather than a fact. Such a reader must disregard Bailey’s own assertions in order to adopt this approach. Furthermore, as Amelia’s testimony has revealed, it is not so easy to adopt a purely metaphoric approach to the texts, either in the treatment of the work as a form of knowledge, or in the use of the work to inform or construct metaphors through which to relate to reality. The reader becomes drawn towards an occultistic style of interpretation and application by the texts. Curiously, a metaphoric way of knowing also retains a literal quality, in the drawing forth of correspondences between metaphor and reality, a linear causality may still be embedded in the process.

If we regard Bailey’s cosmology as a coherent metaphoric depiction of the unknown and do no more with it, we have captured a way of knowing that may be applied to that which it describes, the unknown. The moment we seek to apply this conceptualization to that which is already known, to either ourselves, subjectively, or to extramental reality, we may slip into literal pathways, limiting catalytic authenticity within the frame of the personality of the reader.
In this section I focus upon two areas that I feel best display the catalytic authenticity of Bailey’s work in fostering a reorientation of humanity towards spiritual living. I explore some ethical aspects of her work, and then discuss the notion of paradox.

9.5.1 Metaphysics, Morals and an Esoteric Way of Knowing

Bailey promotes particular ethical principles to support her altruistic aspiration to provide a textual salvational basis for humanity. I draw upon James’ pragmatic insight that the worth a concept has may be found ‘either in the way of making us think, or in the way of making us act’ (in McDermott 1967:237), consequently any value a concept may contain is found in combination with perceptual reality (ibid). Bailey’s ethics pivot upon ‘choosing to let active consideration for others shape life more powerfully than self-concern’ (Prozesky 1999:1).

Bailey’s worldview may be considered an elaborate esoteric thoughtform constructed to mobilize the reader into action to ‘save’ humanity. For Bailey spirituality denotes an orientation, an aspiration to good, that affects our actions, making choice a moral issue at every turn. Bailey’s explicit motive is to foster the expression of love and wisdom. Spirituality becomes directional and teleological. In my view Bailey argues that we, as human personalities, perceive the world and ourselves through the conceptual lens of pairs of opposites, the most fundamental of which is the separation we perceive between ourselves and others. Such a way of knowing has consequences which Bailey argues may be summed up as separative. Perhaps adversarial and divisive are helpful descriptors. For Bailey the human conscious expression of love and wisdom exemplifies a soulful way of knowing, which in transcending the pairs of opposites and seeking the middle path between extremes, embodies inclusivity, unity and synthesis. Bailey argues that one way to achieve this way of knowing, and consequently, way of being in the world, is provided by the pursuit of esotericism as practice, construed by Bailey as one way of following a spiritual path. One part of this spiritual journey is the personal striving towards inclusivity and self-reflectively realizing when we slip into a way of knowing that relies upon pairs of opposites. Part of the process of shifting from a personality centred way of knowing to a soulful one is marked by a sense of being divided within the self, between these two. This is reminiscent of Jung’s questioning as to whether the little self drags the greater self.
down to his/her own level, or whether the greater self leads the little self into the greater life (1992 (a): 55).

The relationship between soul, inclusivity and intuition is explored in Bailey’s work, which she connects through her notion of love-wisdom. Love is the principle of inclusivity and involves coming from the heart, out of a sense of the relationship that we have collectively to each other and to our home on earth. To act in accordance with love, and to support loving activities, Bailey argues we need to act wisely, to learn from our experiences and in so doing, slowly foster a soulful way of knowing, which draws upon the intuition and links it to our knowledge of the world. Bailey emphasizes goodwill and right human relations as axiomatic moral principles that enhance our ability to perceive and act in a soulful way. In this way, Bailey’s love-wisdom may be considered to have a practical basis, her version of phronesis or practical wisdom, cultivated through a disciplined moral effort on the part of the seeker. Bailey’s work supports the efforts of writers like Tannen (1998) and Prozesky (1999), who argue that adversarial approaches to human relationships need to be replaced with ones based on a narrative of dialogue (Tannen 1998) or an ethic of inclusive well-being (Prozesky 1999). In the words of Hillman (1989), ‘by seeing differently, we do differently’ (1989:54), Bailey’s esotericism as a way of knowing becomes a root metaphor influencing other spheres of life.

This root metaphor may be summarized through Bailey’s depiction of motive. Bailey explores the concept of motive, or will, through her depiction of motion and the three fires, discussed in Chapter Four. Motion associated with the personality may be considered in terms of ‘I’ driven actions, (e)motive or (e)motional, the frictional fire of rotational spin. The motion associated with the soul is considered spiral cyclic, solar fire, the ‘eye’ motional movement that expands, attracts, and through attraction fosters a radiating release of energy contained within that attracted to it.

So the ethical aspect of Bailey’s work contains two strands, one that speaks more to the personality, relying upon a Kantian style imperative, and the other to the soul, involving an inclusive ethical principle of love in action. This formulation is commensurate with Cheetham’s observation that ‘the dual face of every being explains the necessity for two kinds of theology: affirmative (kataphatic) and
negative \((\text{apophatic})\) \cite{his} \citeyear[69]{2002}. Bailey’s Kantian style ethics is based negatively upon what it is that we ought not to do, that it is our duty to turn away from actions derived from selfish motives. Like Kant, Bailey asserts this principle of duty as a universal rule for moral conduct. Bailey appropriates Kant’s categorical imperative of duty or practical reason, and places it within her own framework to function as a motivational device to steer the reader away from selfish motives. Bailey’s ethical drive is the fostering of a ‘responsible self’ \cite{neibuhr:63}, who is both self-knowledgeable and able to make free choices on the basis of the guidance she offers. Bailey tries to foster the middle way between extremes, or as Prozesky states, where ‘a healthy concern for one’s own interest is matched by and where necessary exceeded by concern for the interests of others’ \citeyear[7]{1999}.

It might be said that Bailey imbues esoteric ideas with her own Christian sensibilities, seeking to shift esotericism away from its associations with exclusive elitism and towards the inclusion of the whole of humanity. Bailey may have infused esotericism with elements of Christianity and Buddhism not simply to create a new world religion, but in the hope that a love of God, of the Good, and of one’s neighbour, will lead to a transformation of humanity, and an inauguration of a new age. To facilitate this process, Bailey develops her inclusive ethic through her axiomatic notions of goodwill and right human relations, both contingent upon the development of an expanded awareness. The deontological or duty bound \textit{ought} (not), becomes a more diffuse and generalized \textit{should}, born of necessity. In this way, Bailey’s evangelical zeal apparent in her argument that Christ will reappear on Earth as the head of a spiritual hierarchy, may be viewed as carrying motivational power through a fostering of a sense of urgency in the reader. Perhaps, in sympathy with Bailey’s writing and in a shared passion for her cause, a reader of her work may forgive her controversial statements as indicative of the spirit of the times (World Wars I and II).

At the centre of Bailey’s inclusive ethic is not humanity (anthropocentrism), or nature (bio-centrism), rather it is consciousness itself. Centralizing consciousness as the normative principle upon which evolution proceeds, paradoxically does not consequently inflate the importance of humanity as a whole or in our individual parts. Placing consciousness at the centre of evolution, as the illuminator, knower, or perceiver, allows consciousness to expand. The soul uses consciousness to include or
embrace the other, motivated by its own need to expand. Put crudely, consciousness cannot focus in upon itself without sucking itself back in or contracting. This is found in the symbol of the spiral contained within the circle, spiraling outwards to the periphery in order to reach the point at the centre.

As discussed above, one possible effect of Bailey’s work upon the individual may be the decentralizing of the personality ‘I’ and the expansion of her ‘eye’, developed through an appreciation of the value of looking at a thing from multiple perspectives. This stands in contrast to looking at things from a single point of view, perhaps defended adversarially, forming a position from which to attack other competing points of view, and so creating an either/or situation which inflates the importance of the selfish ‘I’, and narrows the field of vision. In my heuristic study, Amelia noticed that as she developed this faculty, her own ordinary self operating in the everyday world began to struggle and squirm. Her emotions became more intense, her physical body wrought with muscle spasms and her concrete mind became confused and stressed. Her sense of her self as divided grew, and all the defects of her personality became magnified, reflective of a human struggle for perfection. Amelia confronted her own tendency to adherence, and her own pride and desire for status especially regarding how she should view her mystical experience and what this may imply in the light of Bailey’s initiatory stage model of the spiritual path. This suggests that Bailey’s work is effective in providing a goal to aspire to and a recognition of one’s personal obstacles to its attainment. Bailey’s work seemed to intensify Amelia’s moral conflict, fostering the kind of indwelling or interiorization needed to foster the reorientation or alchemical transformation advocated by Bailey.

This reveals a relationship between ontological and catalytic authenticity. As personal constructs enlarge, so the motivation to act in accordance with a new view is fostered. My third voice expresses this in the following way:

I ponder upon what motivates us to expand our awareness and move from the ‘I’ to the ‘eye’, or to become less selfish or personality driven, and more embracing of others. Paradoxically if I accept as the result of reading Bailey’s work, the perceiving ‘eye’ that embraces both this and that, then ‘I’ must also face the fuzzy boundary, or the lack of definite resolution of a problem as a consequence of the acceptance of my own potentially contradictory motivations, features likely to make my personality anxious and insecure.
Another way to describe the effectiveness of Bailey’s work in fulfilling its own intentions, concerns the notion of interconnectedness in her metaphoric cosmology fostered in the mind of the reader through the manner in which she presents it. Wisdom, as moral responsibility, is based in Bailey’s work upon the rational discernment of those thoughts and actions that embody and value the notion of interconnectedness. ‘Once the inter-relatedness of all things is understood…the power of rational thought comes into play by showing why selfishness, especially the kind that is willing to harm others, cannot in the end deliver what we want most – the richest and most durable of satisfactions’ (Prozesky 1999:12).

The notion of interconnectedness of all of life is not unique to Bailey. However, Bailey does offer the reader a unique experience of it. In taking the reader out of his/her ordinary world and into a strange metaphysical reality, the reader suspends his/her way of knowing as he/she becomes increasingly lost in trying to comprehend the complex labyrinth of meaning Bailey has constructed. It is this suspension of the known, including the reader’s own point of view that allows the metaphoric constructions of this other reality to emerge in the reader’s imagination. The practice of suspending our own perceptions of the world and struggling to imaginatively create the interconnections of each metaphor set, including layer upon layer of complexity may, I suggest, foster a principle of inclusivity in the reader’s mind. This takes the reader much further than they might have been able to achieve were they to remain within their own way of knowing, viewing other ways of knowing from their own standpoint alone. Bailey’s work may offer a unique liberation. Paradoxically, this liberation from an ought-not-to, and into an inclusive moral life, also means detaching from the system of thought Bailey presents. If not, then the reader adheres to it, concretizes, the meaning becomes static, fixed, immutable, other models rejected, or compared to Bailey’s model as the adopted way of knowing, and the reader remains locked inside the ought-not-to personality, grasping out towards the inclusive moral life as an ideal.

So the relationship between text and reader presents a potential obstacle to the achievement of inclusive ethics. If a reader should wish to fulfill Bailey’s aspirations and journey towards a soulful way of knowing that involves the moral principle of
inclusivity, then again paradoxically, we must pass beyond Bailey’s own work. Bailey’s esoteric knowledge stands in the way of esoteric knowing!

Curiously, Bailey’s work functions in support of its own motives when its conceptual metaphors are not applied as a theoretical lens to interpret extramental reality, since this act involves an attachment to the concepts themselves, potentially excluding other ways to view the world (dogmatic adherence) and may lead to the belief in Bailey’s work as literal truth and an absolute authority. The perceptual reality that Bailey’s conceptual metaphors point towards is not extramental reality, rather it is the ineffable.

However, one notion which I consider basically moral, is Bailey’s goodwill which provides a bridge between selfish personality motives and an inclusive ethic of right human relations. Goodwill is a form of love or eunoia, a practical version of altruistic love. In his survey of altruistic love, Sorokin (1950) similarly observed the practices of good neighbourliness as a version of altruism, itself finding expression in the lives of Saints. It is eunoia that develops both/and transcendence of a dualistic either/or. This is the love aspect of the love-wisdom that informs Bailey’s inclusive ethic. Whilst much of Bailey’s work pertaining to her metaphysical explanation of extramental reality is problematic epistemologically, her claims unsubstantiable in any provable sense, (her spiritual hierarchy, or her seven Rays hypothesis), Bailey’s clear moral directive, her ‘how to’ act in accordance with soulfulness is expressed like a clarion call. This emphatic insistence that loving action and expansions of consciousness are inextricably linked becomes a catalytic metaphor for human betterment that may inspire any reader, whether they tend in an occultistic or artistic gnostic direction.

Catalytic authenticity in Bailey’s work has become the ability of the reader to act in love and wisdom. However, the path to attainment through the texts is not smooth.

9.5.2 Paradox as an Inclusive Esoteric Way of Knowing

I now turn to my final point of discussion regarding the value that may be drawn from Bailey’s work. I return to the notions of artistic gnosis and esotericism as metaphor
knowledge. Instead of drawing metaphor into the realm of rational thought as I proposed above when I argued that metaphoric knowledge and a metaphoric way of knowing are supportive of the practice of reflective reasoning, I now take the notion of artistic gnosis beyond the limitations circumscribed by rational thought, and direct this way of knowing towards its entry into a non-rational episteme, one that supports intuitive knowing and the notion of inclusivity. In my view the point of entry to this episteme is paradox.

Metaphor generally allows for additional meanings and alternative explanations, granting readers some freedom to add their own voice, articulating their response to the evocative word, phrase or symbol. From this perspective meaning is therefore not fixed and can be negotiated. Paradox, in contrast, reveals limitations inherent in language and meaning, as articulators of a transcendent reality. According to Hanegraaff (1992) the logic of paradox pertains to, or is able to convey meaning from within this ‘higher realm’. ‘Higher knowledge’ implies a ‘higher logic’ which is the exact opposite of normal logic’ (1992:21). Hanegraaff relates paradoxality to artistic gnosis, recognizing that:

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\text{The core of ‘artistic gnosis’ can thus be described as the awareness that the relation between God and man is a mystery which cannot be rationally understood, combined with the attempt to give radical expression to this conviction by purposely describing this relation in paradoxical terms (1992:22).}
\]

Paradoxality emerges from the argument by analogy and its associative technique of correspondence. For example, the esoteric correspondence between microcosmic woman/man and macrocosmic God, from which analogous relations are rationally drawn presents a paradox that Hanegraaff notes results in an ‘infinite circular regression’ (1992:22). If we seek knowledge of God based on an argument by analogy, arguing that as humans we correspond in likeness to God, then access to knowledge of God can be gained through an examination of ourselves. If we come from God as part of God’s creation, and God may also be found in us, and we also adopt a non-reductionist style of reasoning (whereby the divine becomes human or the human is inflated to emulate the divine), then I concur with Hanegraaff that we
are left with the possibility of realizing that both the human and the divine are creations of each other that reflect back upon each other.

I suggest that both/and circularity becomes part of the inclusive morality in Bailey’s work. Indeed, Bailey’s own attempt to apply her metaphysical system of thought to extramental reality which I presented in the previous chapter displays a form of circular reasoning that exemplifies the esoteric way of knowing. Whilst rationally this style of reasoning in her work can be discredited, and her literal truth claims found to be epistemologically unsound, when viewed from the perspective of paradox the same claims and line of reasoning gain credibility. Her work straddles the Platonic world of foundational truth and the relativism and pragmatism of philosophical responses to the Platonic/Kantian rigidity and separation of reality and appearance. Bailey’s knowledge may be treated as a paradoxical way of knowing, in which pairs of opposites such as the ‘I’ and the ‘eye’, tied to my treatment of her work in terms of adherence and openness, rational and ineffable, form the basis of paradoxical contradiction, or a transcendent way to view the integrity of Bailey’s work. For the artistic gnostic, according to Hanegraaff (1992), any definite statement must be complemented by its opposite, for it to carry aesthetic significance. If something is, then, simultaneously, it is not. In concordance with Bailey’s argument, I propose that this insight from an artistic gnostic way of knowing highlights the limitations inherent in occultistic gnosis, which is tied to the rational thinking of the personality, and as such, is the creator of divisions, or pairs of opposites. In contrast (if such a term is permissible in the current context) acceptance of paradox helps to accept both/and scenarios, fostering a union of apparent, if illusory pairs of opposites and suggesting an inclusive way of knowing, congruent perhaps with the perceptive eye of consciousness as soul.

In this way it may be possible to accept Bailey’s style of metaphysics, her reliance upon authority and absolutes, on foundational truths, rigid structures and fixed categories, and at the same time Bailey’s fluid processes, in a constantly changing and evolving cosmic system in which point of view determines language, metaphor used, so that the apparent irreconcilability becomes not a case of Bailey undermining her own argument, but rather, suggestive of the paradoxical quality of ‘higher truth’. In this way Bailey offers a double training that may have a profound impact on the
reader who chooses to approach the texts in the unknowing openness of Hanegraaff’s artistic gnostic disposition, acknowledging the role of reflective reasoning discussed above, enabling a reader to think and act wisely upon any enlarged awareness. Reflective reasoning provides an epistemic cognitive opportunity for the contemplation of an experientially informed comprehension of paradox. Here the power of Bailey’s texts to enlarge personal constructs (ontological authenticity), through paradox, leads directly to catalytic authenticity, as the reader feels compelled to act in accordance with a new view of the world.

Amelia touched upon paradox when she wrestled with the notion of the soul in Bailey’s work, entering into an infinite regression of awareness of awareness. A second example can be found in Amelia’s mystical experiences where she found that her direct experience of something mysterious and transcendent also confronted her with her own self, both as personality and as soul (the inner or Higher Self). In this thesis I have attempted to face and explore this ambiguity, questioning how I might interpret the experience itself, how it has impacted upon my life and indeed what it may mean for my self, my life, the life of humanity and the ineffable mystery of God. For Hanegraaff such a grappling denotes the ideal form of artistic gnosis in which ‘the paradoxicality of ‘experience’ is fully and consciously explored and exploited’ (1992:23). I see this as an expansion of personal constructs to include paradox.

Perhaps I may now identify the occultistic gnosis that so plagued Amelia, as an adequate way of describing the way of knowing that pertains to her ‘lower self’ or personality. I may then suggest that Amelia’s (and myself throughout this thesis, rather surprisingly) portrayal of artistic gnosis as a way of knowing as pertaining to her ‘higher self’ or soul. The tension that existed between these two ways of knowing can now be regarded as the battle of the divided self. The lower self views the division as a duality, the ‘higher self’ recognized but not yet fully integrated. Rather the higher is held over there in relation to the lower. For artistic gnosis no such duality really exists. The higher includes the lesser in one unified whole.

The metaphoric way of knowing which I aligned with artistic gnosis is transcended through awareness of paradox, itself also a form of artistic gnosis. Even this rarified way of perceiving the world may also be transcended, so that awareness includes
paradoxicality within an even more embracing way of perceiving that relies upon *eidetic intuition* or direct knowing. Epistemology must ask what kind of knowledge emerges from direct knowing. This question remains speculative, marking an endpoint in this thesis journey along the *via positive* (Versluis 2000 (a)). An epistemological exploration of the way of knowing and type of knowledge along the *via negativa* marks the beginning of another journey, a catalytic opportunity.

### 9.6 Reflecting Upon the Research Framework Using a Constructivist Axiology

The remaining axiological task is the evaluation of my research design, involving the use of four criteria for judgment: the integrity of my research design; the vitality of the thesis; a reflexive critique of myself as researcher; and the utility of my inquiry as a scholarly contribution.

#### 9.6.1 Integrity

In my view my research design has been coherently constructed as suitable within a constructivist research paradigm and within the field of esotericism. To evaluate this thesis in terms of integrity I reflexively draw upon the evaluative criteria used in the above discussion. If the ontology, epistemology and methodology carried through this thesis have integrity, then the axiology will reveal this, as the research criteria have been generated out of the research paradigm itself.

The crafting of a thesis summary is generally considered the most challenging aspect of the work. My own reflections upon the research data generated the above reflections and analysis. I discovered a serendipitous match between my emergent reflections and my chosen axiology, which led to a later realization that a chain of contingency existed between the criteria that mirrored my journey made through critical reflections upon how well Bailey’s work fulfils her intention to transform the consciousness of the reader. Since integrity concerns pragmatic fitness, it appears sound to claim my research design has an integrity resulting in a smooth passage through the current chapter.
However, as I noted above, integrity alone does not answer my inquiry, nor does it contribute to the utility, vitality or reflexivity of this work, other than providing an essential ground.

9.6.2 Vitality

The vitality of my research ought to be directed towards how well the research design enables the research question to be answered. If this research has any power at all, it is the power to answer this question.

My research approach adopted a phenomenological style of inquiry. Through my hermeneutic treatments, I have found that Bailey’s literal truth claims and her application of esotericism to address world affairs tended towards occultistic gnosis and adherence in a reader. Broadly it appears that an occultistic gnostic way of knowing seems to draw the conceptual contents of Bailey’s work to the egoic self, tending towards a literal, factual treatment of these concepts. One of the consequences I have discussed is that of adherence, whereby a reader attaches conceptual contents to themselves, or even the whole work, as a foundational truth or truths. Occultistic gnosis renders esoteric metaphors literal and fixed, supporting an epistemology incapable of penetrating beyond itself.

I found that Bailey’s cosmology tended more towards metaphoric, referential knowledge of an ineffable metaphysical realm that stretched the mind of the reader beyond reason, in what may be termed ‘metaphoric releasement’, an artistic gnosis that draws the reader out of themselves and into an esoteric landscape evoking meaning without attachment. At this point we reach the limits of hermeneutics and turn to heuristics to explore the nature of, and ways of accessing, esoteric perception. The combination of the mediatory or heiroeidetic power of the texts and the researcher’s personal experience of them seemed to evoke a transformation of consciousness. I appear to myself oriented beyond artistic gnosis, communicated in language through paradox and enigma (Versluis 2000 (a):30) and towards direct (unmediated) intuitive knowing. I tentatively conclude that Bailey has been successful fulfilling her intention in this particular case, as I shall depict below.
However I cannot claim that this achievement was the simple result of reading the texts. I can claim that a spiritual reorientation was achieved through the complex interaction between the texts and; my own predisposition and openness; the heuristic method that stimulated a full immersion in the experience; the reflective reasoning required of a phenomenological inquiry in both its hermeneutic and heuristic aspects; and finally the constructivist research design that explored approaching Bailey’s work as both a type of knowledge and as a way of knowing. Therefore the vitality of my research design is apparent, not only in its ability to answer the question posed, but in its facilitation of the process of transformation itself. This convergence might be deemed counter-intuitive, rendering an adequate evaluation of my research question impossible due to the inseparability of the research process from textual influences upon the researcher. However, in my view this apparent loss empowers this thesis. The research design provided the methods I required to explore Bailey’s work and allow a personal transformation to occur. Another research approach may not have provided this opportunity. Further, it was the interaction between myself and the texts that allowed this change to occur, the same research design applied to a plumbing manual would clearly not have the same result.

9.6.3 Utility

My first recommendation for further study is the application of the heuristic research method when approaching esoteric texts. This introspective style has provided many insights throughout the research journey and provided the space for my own growth in my direct involvement with Bailey’s work. Clearly stated by scholars of esotericism presented in the current work, is the recognition that esotericism demands a personal, experiential research approach to at least augment the empirical-historical methods already used. In my view, heuristics provides this opportunity. If a number of similar studies were conducted, a unique database of semi-autobiographical research material could be generated and utilized in a variety of ways, contributing to human understanding of experiences of spirituality, and supporting existing testimony of mystics, saints and philosopher’s such as Simone Weil (Evans and Kourie 2003).

Secondly, my constructivist research paradigm supported by various insights arising from existing research into western esotericism has provided me with an engaging
approach to Bailey’s work. This paradigm might be applied to other esoteric works. Whilst constrained by its own ontology and epistemology which tend to question the existence of, and ability to know, transcendent reality, paradoxically constructivism allows the application of research methods that draw the researcher into a more intimate mode of inquiry. At such close range, epistemological questions seem to become charged with personal significance, resulting, through processes of insight and reflection, in a more intimate understanding of esoteric texts. This obviates the positivist tendency to position oneself a higher authority, objectively analyzing esotericism as an object of inquiry separate from the self as knowing subject.

I also note that many areas of Bailey’s work remain under-explored in this thesis. A psychological study of Bailey’s developmental stage model and her Seven Rays may complement existing models found within the field. Feminism offers the possibility of studying the issues of gender (exemplified in Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy) found in Bailey’s work, whilst also offering a critique of western esotericism. Ethnographic and qualitative research focusing upon Bailey adherents within her organizations would add important knowledge regarding how her work affects her readership. Religious Studies may probe more deeply the various religious influences within the Bailey texts (such as goodwill or right human relations). The field of esotericism may choose from the range of metaphor sets presented in Chapter Four in a discourse analysis. Finally, an academic biography of Bailey might provide a valuable contribution to the existing academic discourse on the theosophical current of western esotericism.

9.7 Concluding Through Reflexivity: A Third Voice

I end this evaluation with a discussion of the last of my constructivist criteria for judgment: reflexivity; concomitantly concluding this chapter. Reflexivity as a criteria for judgment involves critical reflection upon my self as researcher. Within the context of the current work, I have chosen to reflect upon my own reflections of the research journey as they have affected me personally. I also present my reflections as a third voice, which represents the immediate outcomes of my own involvement with the verisimilitude, ontological authenticity and aesthetic judgments I have made of Baileys’ work and my relationship with it. Reflexivity requires that I critically reflect
upon my third voice too, stopping at this point to avoid an infinite regress, yet remaining aware that life continues, reflexivity has no end.

Essentially the phenomenological approach involves the stripping away of veils to reveal the essence of a thing. This involves the use of Husserl’s *eidetic intuition*, which I believe can be developed through a heuristic and hermeneutic engagement with esotericism. The hermeneutic circle requires and develops eidetic intuition to perceive the whole, understood in terms of its parts and its parts understood in terms of the whole. In this sense, the hermeneutic circle fosters eidetic intuition. To gain knowledge of the whole we need to develop eidetic intuition as a way of knowing. The heiroeidetic power of esoteric texts, and the *via positiva* of artistic gnosis, lead through paradox to the *via negativa*, as a journey towards a transcendence of all subject-object divisions along the path to Unity (Versluis 2000 (a):21). The *via negativa*, in my view, is a journey that begins with eidetic intuition.

Using *eidetic intuition* to search for the essence of Bailey’s work is one way to construe the research journey. In treating Bailey’s cosmology as metaphoric knowledge, adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological method, provided an opportunity to explore what Bailey’s work is all about. I found that much of her work is derivative material, and that as a theory of everything her cosmology works well. Theories of everything attempt to explain the whole of existence in a single frame or formula. For Bailey this frame is transforming consciousness so that a spiritual way of living may be fostered in the reader.

Treating Bailey’s work as literal knowledge concerned why a transformation of consciousness involving this reorientation is so important to Bailey. This why became a moral imperative, providing motivational power to her work, along with a range of difficulties regarding her truth claims.

Treating Bailey’s work as a way of accessing higher knowledge through an esoteric way of knowing showed how Bailey might achieve her goal of transforming consciousness. Here we move into the realm of subjectivity, exploring Bailey’s concepts and methods (including her notion of esoteric sense), her psychological model of the human constitution and her developmental model of spiritual progress.
The movement from *how* back to *why* involves the risk of adherence to literal truth through occultistic gnosis. The movement from *how* to *what* allows an artistic gnostic penetration of esoteric content to reveal its essence. The heart of Bailey’s work is transforming consciousness. This is *what* her cosmology is *about as* knowledge and her means of accessing this knowledge becomes a transformational *how*. So a trajectory through this research has allowed for, an examination and evaluation of, if and how Bailey’s work fulfils her intention to reorient humanity.

This reorientation is a particular kind of transformation, involving the transcending of the divided self. I still think that this is not the essence of Bailey’s work. This essence concerns that which is revealed by the texts to the reader through a process of transformation of consciousness. This is accessed within the current work using reflexivity.

In my view the essence of Bailey’s work is consciousness, which I metaphorically describe as ‘blinding light’. The notion of light permeates the whole of Bailey’s work. Cosmic fire is light, the Rays are the seven colours of light, and her reference to illumination and the light of the soul, both refer to light. For Bailey, light, or consciousness, has a qualitative aspect, as essential as consciousness/light itself in her work. This is love-wisdom, the dominating principle of our solar system, expressing, for Bailey, humanity’s highest aspirations.

Why is the light blinding? We can sense the idea that light blinds through the esoteric use of veils. If we look directly into the sun we are blinded, and can only view the light of the sun through its reflection. Paradoxically the content of esotericism serves its own purpose of directing the consciousness (light) of a reader towards the light (of consciousness) it veils. To experience this light directly esotericism as knowledge along the *via negativa* is discarded. Even direct knowing only catches a glimpse of reality, a partial view of the ineffable from where we find ourselves located.

The research journey I have made into Bailey’s esoteric world has had a profound impact upon my own understanding of the nature of esotericism, as well as impacting
deeply upon my own sense of self and how I view the world I live in. As Amelia, my personal conclusion may be summarized in the following statement:

*I have felt that I have been gestating a seed that is hidden from my own view, a seed that seems to require of me my own respectful orientation towards it, my attention continually drawn to the process of germination I have experienced. This germination of a seed is a point of entry into a spiritual life. My understanding is that my orientation to the spiritual life reflects a collective human search for meaning and for dignity in an age of uncertainty, rapid change and threats to survival.*

I step beyond the voice of the scholar and of Amelia and base the following upon my own reflective reasoning emerging from the research which has led to my speculation upon my own awareness, one of the fruits (James 1902) of my heuristic journey. It may be that at this point I ‘stop making sense’, in an effort to transcend my own constructedness as a conscious embodied entity and achieve what for constructivists may be the impossible: to directly know.

I feel that my heuristic journey through Bailey’s esoteric world has brought me to a door of perception, and now feel I must walk through it alone. The new life beyond this door appears to involve the embodiment of spiritual values expressed in relationship to others, in wise and loving actions. To do this I realize I must hold my own opinion lightly. Through this door appears a more transcendent reality that may be expressed perceptively as a way of being rather than rationally, as a source of knowledge of higher truth. The reality beyond this door has been recognized and described by Aldous Huxley who observed, through this door ‘the miracle, moment by moment, of naked existence’ (1959:17).

This reality could be thought of as standing at the centre and the periphery of the one circle and able to see the whole it contains from this unified vantage point. Imagine the point at the centre as the place where consciousness touches life, where the meaning of life and life itself seem to fold together. Here there is no in-between, no separation, no language, only the awareness of pure energy, of life or spirit. We see the heart at the centre becoming earth at the periphery, or the merging of consciousness and life. So the door of perception expresses a simple notion of orientation towards the little miracles that we all are as active, conscious particulars conducting ourselves amidst the vast mysterious panoply of Life.

An orientation towards and beyond this door of perception involves the cultivation of Husserl’s eidetic intuition as a recognition of consciousness meeting life, or arriving at the Lifeworld (as the pre-scientific world). For Husserl, to touch the essence of the lifeworld we
need eidetic intuition. Since esotericism is a direct idealization of the lifeworld, represented in all its interconnectedness through correspondence and analogy, penetrating such correspondences, symbolically depicted alphanumerically in esoteric texts that affirm these connections, takes the reader upon a journey back to the lifeworld. Versluis identifies this as the via positiva, or path of affirmation.

The journey towards and beyond the door might now be thought of as a via negativa, or path of negation of all subject-object divisions, in order to directly know. Versluis identifies this path as the journey beyond the heiroeidetic or initiatory power of esoteric writing. It may be that this is an impossible path. Yet this is where I find myself.

The above passages indicate that I have reached a high water mark (James 1902) of awareness and if we can claim that expansions of consciousness occur, then the above passages provide testimonial evidence of one kind of expansion. I continue to be impressed by an emergent enfolded circularity found within my own reflective thinking, fostered by the research design I adopted, all points spiralling back to the centre of my work. These reflections reveal how I have let go of any attachment to Bailey’s work as knowledge, whilst retaining the insights I have gained through adopting, cultivating and refining artistic gnosis. I now see that a particular esoteric way of knowing is (through enfolded circularity) a reorientation towards a spiritual life, but that this is not an immediate occurrence upon encountering esoteric thought. Rather it is a hard fought for and won orientation, once the reader finds themselves released from the dizzy disorientation of the labyrinth of esoteric thought. It is impossible for me to step outside myself, a fact that limits reflexivity as a judging criteria and risks indulgence.

This completes my evaluation of my research. In the final chapter I succinctly encapsulate the research.
CHAPTER TEN
CONCLUDING REMARKS

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored Alice A. Bailey’s texts as a depiction of esoteric knowledge about a metaphysical reality, concomitantly experiencing esoteric ways of knowing fostered through a subjective engagement with the texts. In this way I evaluated how well Bailey’s work fulfils her intention to transform consciousness, reorienting a reader towards spiritual living and human betterment. To conduct this inquiry, I adopted a constructivist research paradigm which emphasizes the interactive relationship between the researcher and the object of inquiry. I found this approach, incorporating hermeneutic and heuristic research methods, congruent with my thesis aims.

After briefly summarizing this thesis journey, I conclude with a return to a point raised in Chapter One concerning Bailey’s possible contribution to contemporary aspirations for the development of a new perspective that addresses human betterment and planetary survival.

10.2 A Synthesis of Research Findings in the light of Constructivism

A constructivist research paradigm emphasises the contextual contingency of knowledge and knowing (Engler 2004). In Chapters Two and Four I found Bailey’s work to be culturally contingent upon her esoteric and particularly theosophical predecessors. Cultural contingency informs Bailey’s ontology and epistemology, both found to be coherent with western esotericism. This may be expressed as Bailey’s use of a praxis of concordance, one feature of an esoteric epistemology identified by Faivre (1994).
Historical contingency was evident in Chapter Eight, much of Bailey’s writing is a response to the distress of world affairs through the periods of both World Wars. This larger context provided a justification which Bailey used to promote her esoteric views, such as her claim, based upon notions of mediation and transmission inherent in an esoteric epistemology (Faivre 1994), that Christ would reappear, as head of her spiritual hierarchy, to inaugurate a new, esoterically infused world religion, a metaphoric model (McFague 1982) for global governance. Historical contingency informs the urgency prevalent in Bailey’s writing concerning her axiology of goodwill and service in the fostering of her right human relations, further augmenting a powerful ideology in her work.

This combination of cultural and historical contingencies may have exacerbated a problem inherent in an esoteric epistemology that has emerged in the current work, which has centred upon the notion of Faivre’s (1994) experience of transmutation, or the heiroeidetic power (Versluis 2000 (a)) of esoteric texts to transform consciousness. This problem may be stated as a directional cleavage between notions of correspondence, imagination and living nature on the one hand, and notions of transmission and mediation on the other. The former tend to lead a reader towards a transformative experience, the latter, leading towards ego-inflation and adherence to the texts. I explain this problem in the following paragraphs.

10.2.1 Evaluating Bailey Through An Esoteric Epistemology

In my hermeneutic/dialectic approach to Bailey’s work in Chapter Eight, I found that Bailey’s ontological commitment to her own depictions of apparent metaphysical truths, applied to an interpretation of world affairs contributed heavily to tendencies of ego-inflation and adherence. Bailey adopted a simplistic method of reduction of events and circumstances to esoteric causes and a deterministic application of fixed correspondences to describe and explain the world. These methods were supported by an ideology of realism embedded in her work, with ideological consequences promoting ego inflation (through an attachment to her interpretations of revelation and transmission), separation (through her explanation presented as literal truth, rendering other explanations, not presented in her work, as inadequate or inferior), and elitism (through a sense of having accessed superior knowledge).
If a reader decides to adopt without question these ‘truths’, also employing Bailey’s deterministic and reductionist methods, rationalizing esoteric metaphors from an occultistic gnostic way of knowing (Hanegraaff 1992), then they may also, I argue, adhere to the texts. Since adherence to any position carries with it a sense of rightness that may immediately foster its polar counterpart, a sense that the formulations of others are somehow wrong, or incomplete, attachment in the form of textual adherence seems to obstruct a more spiritually inclusive view. So this trajectory that foregrounds notions of mediation (Bailey’s spiritual hierarchy) and transmission (Bailey’s argument of revelation) does not lead to an expansion of consciousness involving a reorientation towards spiritual living1.

So viewed in this way Bailey’s work contains a both/and paradox of striking proportions. First, Bailey forcefully argues in favour of a reorientation of humanity towards a spiritual life imbued with notions of unity, inclusivity and interconnectedness. In constructing a powerful argument explaining the importance of this change and how it might occur, she unwittingly exemplifies the kind of linear and deterministic reasoning she opposes. In her use of ideology to persuade her readers, she seems to promote elitism, divisions and a sense of self-importance anathema to her soulful consciousness. So the very texts that seek to turn a reader into a spiritual warrior carrying forth the task of establishing a kingdom of God on earth, serve more to inflate that reader’s ego.

In Chapters Five, Six and Seven I used a heuristic method to explore a central theme in Bailey’s work, experiencing her esoteric epistemology in which the inner expression of spiritual development, or the evolution of consciousness, was depicted as a series of expansions marking stages along a spiritual path. Bailey describes these expansions as initiations into entirely new ways of knowing, with new values, and a new sense of purpose or direction in life, thus offering her own view of the notion of transmutation. I also explored Bailey’s model of her seven Rays as psychological

1 Clearly any writer of metaphysical, spiritual or religious treatise must contend with the tension that exists between the need that the faithful have for spiritual direction, and the potential for this guidance to be treated as dogma, with its literal interpretations. This problem is exacerbated in esoteric texts, in which claims to higher truth, and pathways to access this truth are combined into formulations that are generally obscure and abstruse, challenging a reader’s ability to penetrate metaphor and symbol to gain access to the higher truth these texts are said to veil. Such a mysterious impenetrability carries an allure, drawing a reader into a labyrinth of esoteric content on a quest for absolute truth.
descriptors, and her description of dualisms thwarting a seeker’s progress along a spiritual path to unity.

I found this heuristic experience challenging. I noticed my own occultistic gnostic tendency to rationalize Bailey’s esoteric notions, especially when I applied them directly to myself. I continually resisted this tendency, struggling with the ego-inflation and elitism that her work fostered. I was further hampered by Bailey’s instructive style of writing which sought to transmit her esotericism, thus conveying a sense of superior wisdom, to be received by a reader. The notion of transmission seems to ideologically lock a reader into esotericism as truth, even when largely separated from the notion of mediation, or hierarchy of being.

I did find heiroeidetic potential in Bailey’s work through my heuristic process, when I approached it from an artistic gnostic position. Artistic gnosis, when developed, appears congruent with the soulful way of knowing that Bailey promotes, in which an individual becomes comfortable with both/and relationships, and values paradox, both of which, in my view, form a part of a new, global perspective. Paradoxically, in my view Bailey fulfills her own intention ‘accidentally on purpose’, the reader able to attain the kind of soulful orientation Bailey advocates, by drawing the texts in and letting them go, by allowing the texts to have their magnetic pull, and then releasing this pull and setting ourselves free from attachment. In my view consciousness expands by paying attention to consciousness as a process of knowing or perceiving, and not by paying attention to any knowledge about consciousness. Such knowledge may provide conceptual tools for understanding, facilitating processes of expansion, but such knowledge does not, of itself, lead to expansion. Thought (knowledge about), does not know, only a knower knows, in doing, reflection, imagination, and in experience. So studies of processes of knowing might be considered studies of consciousness unfolding.

In my view Bailey’s work most effectively achieves its heiroeidetic potential through a particular combination of knowledge about consciousness, which, of itself, invites a perceptual experience through which consciousness might expand. I found this in Bailey’s cosmology, or metaphoric theory of everything, the content of Chapter Four of the current work. Here Bailey foregrounds notions of correspondence, imagination
and living nature. I argued in Chapter Nine that Bailey’s cosmology takes a reader into a ‘wilderness experience’, involving a suspension of ordinary ways of viewing and interpreting the world. Inside Bailey’s labyrinthine wilderness a reader is challenged by Bailey’s complex presentation to adopt multiple ways of viewing an imaginary metaphysical reality. The effects on a reader, I have argued, may be an expansion of consciousness, occurring through a cultivation of a reader’s own imagination, and through practicing correspondence to see how living nature is interconnected within Bailey’s cosmology. Thus through imaginatively experiencing the complexities of the interrelatedness of all of life, in a highly symbolic, abstract way, a reader’s consciousness may expand. Significantly this process of engagement does not draw esotericism to the self, since few of Bailey’s metaphor sets are related to the individual in a way that promotes self-analysis. So attachment to Bailey’s knowledge is less likely to be formed. This contrasts strongly with those parts of Bailey’s work explored heuristically.

However, I have found that the process of imaginative construction of Bailey’s world in the mind of the reader, as part of perceiving-in-the-experience, is itself a limiting veil. Depictions of the unknown, visioned as imaginative constructions within one’s own consciousness, may be metaphorically referential, pointing beyond the self and in two directions, the one towards human experience in world, and the other towards the ineffable. Such constructions may well carry explanatory and catalytic power. Yet these constructions involve a paradox of circularity (arguing from within), creating a subtle boundary or veil that cannot transcend its own imaginary existence.

Finally, what appears to motivate a reader towards the reorientation Bailey advocates, is their own disposition in combination with a particular way of engaging with the most abstract and purely esoteric Bailey texts. As Jung aptly points out, ‘man is an enigma to himself’ (1990:25) and through facing ‘the demands of rigorous self-examination and self-knowledge…he will have succeeded in deeming himself worthy of serious attention and sympathetic interest…he will have set his hand…to a declaration of his own human dignity’ (1990:49).
10.3 Bailey’s Contribution to a New Global Perspective

In my view it does not seem to matter whether Bailey’s words point to a reality that exists or to a constructed ‘as if’ fantasy. What matters are the consequences that may result from a reader treating esotericism ‘as if’ it is an indication of some truth beyond itself. If, as I have suggested, Bailey’s work carries heiroeidetic potential to transform consciousness so that an individual reorients their personal epistemology to embrace spiritual values charged with an esoteric perspective, and in turn this fosters catalytic authenticity, or a desire to contribute to human betterment and planetary survival, then it is here that Bailey’s work may contribute to the growth of a new spiritually informed perspective. This perspective will carry its own ontology, epistemology and axiology, supported by a range of spiritual views.

Following Bailey’s argument, humanity can be argued to be facing the challenge of embodiment of soul consciousness informing action based upon notions of unity and synthesis. As Chapter Four indicated, Bailey asserts that a reorientation in consciousness that embraces soulfulness, acts upon the basis of inclusion and a sense of interdependent interconnectedness. Bailey expresses this through her overarching metaphor, the second Ray of love-wisdom, expressing the quality of consciousness in manifestation, and depicting humanity’s highest aspiration. Bailey is far from alone in suggesting this general direction, although her ontological assumptions and her esoteric epistemology differ widely from writers informed by ecological, scientific or social perspectives. Houston (2000) adequately expresses a hope for the future that summarises the thrust of contemporary concerns arguing that such change needs to involve:

An integration of inner and outer dimensions of life in ways that infuse new depth into psychological and spiritual growth and new purpose and responsibility into social transformation (2000:12).

Through my reading of Bailey’s cosmology and my heuristic engagement with her work, I effectively stumbled upon a similar realization in my conceptualization of Houston’s integration of inner and outer dimensions of life, expressed through my
metaphor of the centre and periphery of a circle, as a space where consciousness meets life, described by my third voice in Chapter Nine. With this in mind it might be the case that whilst Bailey’s work carries heiroeidetic potential, her contribution to fostering a new world view might not emanate directly from her esoteric texts as knowledge of a transcendent reality, but rather as a consequence of the effects these texts have upon a reader. This may be the case whether we regard esotericism as providing access to a transcendent reality (von Stuckrad 2005) or whether we view esotericism as a form of mental training, or, indeed, a combination of both these views.

A reader may then become motivated to carry the notion of a new spiritual perspective forward, particularly in a contemporary context of: global extremes of wealth and poverty dividing humanity at every turn; war and global terrorism challenging a collective sense of peace and security; and an apparent ecological calamity of human making threatening all life on our planet. Perhaps never before in the history of humanity have our collective actions so threatened human and planetary survival. In the context of a ‘spiritual emergency’, prudence might open us to explore any body of doctrine that might assist in fostering change. Although, as this thesis clearly shows, prudence is also required in navigating through any doctrine or creed, to avoid the powerful tendencies of persuasive writing and literal interpretation that lead to adherence, the consequences of which serve to create yet further divisions.

This thesis has presented Bailey’s work for consideration as a ‘voice on the edge’ who advocates global change based upon spiritual values. Bailey’s organizations continue to function, her books continue to sell and her adherents continue to work hard for peace and goodwill. In the human quest for understanding an emerging sense of a one humanity, another source of knowledge providing a fresh point of view, seems worthy of interest. Bailey takes the meaning and purpose of life very seriously. I concur.
APPENDIX A
CHART ONE
A REPRESENTATION OF BAILEY’S NINE INITIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Plane (state of consciousness)</th>
<th>Ray</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Major Initiations: Ninth</td>
<td>First or Divine</td>
<td>First, Second and Third</td>
<td>The Refusal. The principle of liberated Being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>Second or Monadic</td>
<td>Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh</td>
<td>The Great Transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>Third or Atmic</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>The True Resurrection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>Fourth or Buddhic</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>The Decision. The master chooses one of the Seven Paths (of service).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Fifth or Mental</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>The Resurrection or Revelation. The energy of the soul is superceded by the energy of Spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>The Renunciation or Crucifixion. Confronting spirit and matter as the major pair of opposites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>The Transfiguration. Transference of consciousness from lower four to higher three subplanes of mental plane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Minor Initiations: Second</td>
<td>Sixth or emotional plane</td>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>The Baptism. Transference of consciousness from lower four to higher three subplanes of emotional plane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Seventh or physical plane</td>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>The Birth. Transference of consciousness from lower four to higher three subplanes of physical plane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information contained in this table has been derived from *The Rays and the Initiations* (Pp556-656), and *Initiation, Human and Solar* (Pp 179-180).

1 Bailey does not provide explanatory information concerning the highest three initiations (the ninth, eighth and seventh).
APPENDIX B

This chart is a summary of Chart III in
_A Treatise on Cosmic Fire_, page 117.
(These planes represent the cosmic physical plane in differentiation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Seven Planes of our Solar System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I DIVINE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Cosmic Etheric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II MONADIC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Cosmic Etheric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III SPIRITUAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Will (Spiritual permanent atom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Cosmic Etheric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spiritual, intuitional and mental permanent atoms Constitue Bailey’s spiritual triad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV INTUITIONAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitional permanent atom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Cosmic Etheric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V MENTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental permanent atom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmic Gaseous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Causal Body (soul)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Planes descend from here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI EMOTIONAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astral permanent atom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmic Liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII PHYSICAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Permanent Atom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Ether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmic Dense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Ether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Ether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Ether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaseous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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