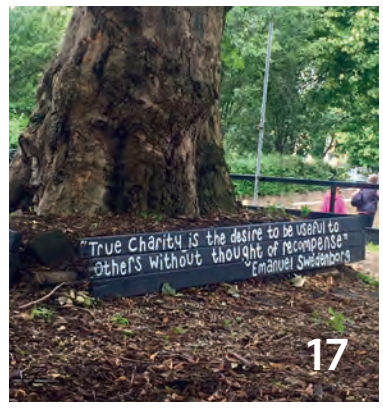
0.02

SWEDENBORG REVIEW

SWEDENBORG REVIEW

SPRING 2020

Front and back cover:
Peter Cartwright,
watercolours.
From left: *Untitled* (1966);
Untitled (1966)



17


19


10

PHOTOS © SWEDENBORG ARCHIVE, ANONYMOUS BOSCH, AVERY CURRAN

The Moveable Lusthus

A preview extract from an upcoming book on Swedenborg's famous summerhouse. The writer Iain Sinclair reflects on the shifting traces of Swedenborg's visionary legacy

IAIN SINCLAIR

When I was invited to consider Swedenborg's summerhouse in Stockholm, the relocated original along with the duplicates, I chose to begin by going back to the parts of London where the questing philosopher in black was known to have lived, where he worked and died. It was a question, perhaps, of picking one thread of the golden string and winding it into a ball. Voyages from Sweden to England, especially the prophet's first, were troublesome. But Swedenborg always returned on favourable winds, mast creaking and straining, sails taut, puffed onwards by entities hidden in companionable clouds.

In the true summerhouse, at the western end of Swedenborg's garden on Hornsgatan, up against land belonging to Ropemaker Nyman, the bewigged seer retired from public life and his former duties as Assessor Extraordinary of the Board of Mines. He engaged with the illustrious dead, almost like a fashionable dentist, and his waiting room was always full. You can feel William Blake's visitors muscling out of the shadows in the Hercules Road cottage, cocksure cohabitants, never guests or prevaricators. You can smell the hellfire, camphor, scorched hair and sealing wax, the hot animal reek of purgatory's ages. But Swedenborg's study partners are more like clients. He is an astral solicitor, judicious, quill in hand, amending, adjusting his powdered wig, taking instruction. A dullish troop with not much to impart from the other side. As Sebald wrote in *Austerlitz*: 'We who are still alive are unreal in the eyes of the dead, that only occasionally, in certain lights and atmospheric conditions, do we appear in their field of vision'.[1]

The Hornsgatan summerhouse, the wooden chalet with the shutters and conservatory turret like another miniature house set above the first, a coop for roosting spirits, was an acceptable spirit trap. Here they came, in procession, a royal garden party of saints, philosophers, aristocrats, politicians, pastors and Old Testament prophets: Aaron and Abraham, Joseph Addison (editor of *The Spectator*), Anna (Empress of Russia), St Anthony of Padua, Aristotle, Cain (fratricide), Queen Christina (pre-Garbo), Esau (the hirsute), St Francis Xavier, George II (Hanoverian King of England), St Ignatius, John Lewis (Swedenborg's London printer), Martin Luther, Moses, Isaac Newton, St Paul, William Penn, Alexander Pope, Samson, Sir Hans Sloane. And Ulrika Eleonora who gave her name to the Swedish Church in Princes Square, off Ratcliffe Highway, where the natural scientist and theologian was buried, decapitated, exhumed and eventually returned by gunboat to Uppsala.

This is where I found myself, on dank November afternoons or May mornings alive with blossom and the petrol-perfumed optimism of the frantic city, mornings when disembodied voices could be heard, faintly, unaccompanied, hymning angelic ascensions from the tower of St George-in-the-East.

The original lusthus in Skansen following a visit by the author in 2019.

Before Stockholm I made the rounds of London addresses touched by Swedenborg, what was left of them. I had in mind something of the notion Juan Gómez Bárcena proposed in his novel *The Sky Over Lima*:

'I have said that a person's manner of looking at a city reflects that person's soul, but it is no less true that a house holds the spirit of the people who inhabit it'.[2]

The lusthus, I hoped, would operate as a portrait, emerging from a dish of sluggish developing fluid, when I visited the removed original in Skansen park and the replica in whatever was left of the mystic's garden on Hornsgatan. For some time, on random travels, in unfamiliar one-night rooms of transit, I photographed empty chairs. Which were never truly empty. And light fittings, hanging bowls filled with a soup of unexplained illumination, a quantum of otherness.

Coming down the twisting, enclosed steps from Rosebery Avenue onto Warner Street and Cold Bath Fields supports the conceit of emerging among a set of houses, old and new, tilted alleys, cobbles, mould cultures on granite, figures at a distance mumbling into their devices (or tapping the dead), all arranged to conspire with a vision of the city authored by Arthur Machen (lodged on Gray's Inn Road) and Peter Ackroyd (lunching with Moorcock in a favoured Italian restaurant on Clerkenwell Green in his days as literary editor of *The Spectator*). Time, they reckon, eddies and flows, swirls in tight vortices. The sentimental notion of acquiring a clearer understanding of past events and personalities by walking to the right map reference is momentarily justified. Swedenborg seems to have been most comfortable when he lodged close to the now-buried Fleet River.

The mythologized inn of the April 1745 visitation has gone. And the hunger with it. That young man's feverish compulsion to step ashore, make contact, engage, devour library dust and test the boundaries of the known. Swedenborg in motion. Swedenborg shifting from rented room to rented room, Cold Bath Fields to the Swedish enclave in Wapping. In later days, in Wellclose Square, dressed in black velvet, old-fashioned coat unbrushed, the prophet rose early and walked the Thames reaches at first light. He lunched modestly, a dry biscuit and a sip of wine, and retired early to his dream life, sustaining a skein of earthly existence on regular infusions of coffee.

This man starved for the truth of experience. He ate alone and with a voracious appetite. There was a 'blurring' in his vision. 'I saw the floor covered with the nastiest crawling animals, like snakes, frogs, and creatures of that kind . . . After a while the prevailing darkness was quickly dispelled, and I saw a man sitting in the corner of the room . . . I was quite frightened when he spoke and said, 'Don't eat so much'. Again it grew dark before my eyes, but just as quickly became clear'.[3] Surely the strangest and most mundane of instructions? But the figure reappeared at his bedside, to confirm the message. Feed on the revealed menu of the Bible. And chew every bite many times before swallowing.

The atmosphere and defining smells changed with the centuries, Swedenborg's lodgings became a woodyard. A dim passage of heated glue pots and Swedish resin. And then the cut planks vanished too. I came up against, on my last walk before leaving for Stockholm, an unreadable frontage of private flats: a neutral screen that could have been anywhere in Europe.

Circling the site of the chophouse manifestation, I watched through ornamental ironwork as seated hoodies did their own staring at screens with the wrong sort of light. Their chairs slid across the floor as they solicited advice from other initiates. All with their backs to the street. I photographed a circular sticker with the head of the mad, imprisoned poet Ezra Pound, eyes tight shut: *The Vortex Londinium*. As if this small, secret enclave was being disputed by a number of competing sects, none of them capable of acknowledging any rivals.

Light thickens and I am swept along on a subterranean stream, following links, real or imagined, between obelisks, church towers, charity barracks, poverty pits, hospital museums, rag trade sweatshops and wedding-display windows: back to the wilderness garden between Ratcliffe Highway and Cable Street. Behind tall flats hiding St George-in-the-East from the ground where Ulrika Eleonora stood (from 1728 to 1911) is a rite of passage to Swedenborg Gardens, a destination proudly advertised on a strip of white-painted tin: *east end HOMES*.

Replica Iusthus on the site of Swedenborg's former house on Hornsgatan, Stockholm.

The stake through the heart of John Williams has flowered and withered and flowered again. The thing crushed in the pit is a fetal lump kicking against rubble, choking in clay. I am struck by a phrase highlighted by Michael Taussig in *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. 'It is the presence of their absence, their presence in their absence'. [4] That is the paradox I pursue.

In the past I focused on the chipped grey font, the only trace of the Swedish Church, and I imagined the body of the church as being, somehow, behind it. Which was quite wrong. The granite plinth, its bowl and its stem, defied time. It looked like a strategically grooved naval weapon. It was imprinted with an image of the church, ready to be swept away on a kind of raft. There was no water. The dry bowl, into which supplicants could dip a finger, was filled with a shingle of corroded coins.

Standing here now, looking east, I see that the proportions of the church are represented by a raised and fenced garden. A London plane tree, of character, mottled and peeling, yellow in this light, marks the ground where Swedenborg was interred. His legend is commemorated in white paint on a black border: *Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a Swedish theologian + Polymath, lodged nearby in Wellclose Sq. He was buried here*. Dry leaves, crisped and curling, like the burnt pages of a parchment diary, pile up behind the black frame.

All my earlier fictions were of Swedenborg coming ashore under sentence of death and exploring this ground, settling himself in the shade of a particular tree. 'What he discovered survives to this day, secreted beyond the fallout of development: a wild orchard', I wrote. 'A thatch of white blossom, a tangle of broken boughs—thorns, couch grass, berries. Between Cable Street and the Highway, to the south of Wellclose Square: a green tunnel. Apple, whitebeam, sycamore, plane tree, black poplar. A grove sequestered from the open ground in which is buried the rubble of the Swedish Church, Ulrika Eleonora . . . Swedenborg lay on coarse grass, resting his back against a tree. Dappled sunlight. Shadowplay on the vellum of his outstretched hands. His soul resolved into discrete points of motion. It was of one substance with the sun. He was diffused, estranged from himself. No longer did he converse with the dead. He died and became one of them. He remembered what was not yet known'.

Wrong. False. The prophet never paused, sat, settled in mediation. I did. I tried to tap elements of the legend that best suited my sprawling tale. None of it happened. The journal of fellow immigrant Sven Bredberg of Uppsala reveals that Swedenborg, impatient with the potential limbo of quarantine restrictions and hot for converse with Isaac Newton, came ashore at the mouth of the Thames Estuary. He procured a horse and rode, hard, sixteen miles to Gravesend, where he found a boat willing to carry him, without interference, to London. He was not, back then, proficient in the English language. The natural scientist spoke an educated churchman's Latin. Landfall must have occurred somewhere around Sheerness.

And then I thought: what had Swedenborg already eaten, so voraciously, in the chophouse of vision? What had he drunk when he heard that voice from the man in the shadows, the shamanic projection conjured out of the streets of London? Where precisely was the heat of his pursuit located? The psychotropic seizure in the dimly lit, smoky interior of the inn was a benign stroke, a sudden fire in the brain. Eidetic faults at the periphery of sight challenging 'the enigma of the soul and the poverty of language'. [5]

The reported vision—'the floor covered with the nastiest crawling animals, like snakes, frogs and creatures of that kind'—echoed Taussig's account of his first hallucinatory voyage after gagging down a specially prepared infusion of *yagé* in the Putumayo foothills, where the eastern slopes of the Andes blend with the rainforest of the Upper Amazon basin in Colombia. This outsider, an academic anthropologist, an American, kept notes during the long night. 'I am the disembodied face-presence calmly peering in and watching this other and unimportant me. I watch my other self, safely now. But then this second me, this objective and detached observer, succumbs too, and I have to dissociate into a third and then a fourth as the relation between my-selves breaks, creating an almost infinite series of fluttering mirrors of watching selves and feeling others. Self-hate and paranoia is stimulated by horrible animals—pigs with queer snouts, slithering snakes gliding across one another, rodents with fish-fin wings'. [6]

Travelling in a strange city, a wilderness of the civilized, Swedenborg looks for mentors, teachers, established men

NOTES

[1] W G Sebald, *Austerlitz*, tr. Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 2001), p.261.

[2] Juan Gómez Bárcena, *The Sky Over Lima: A Novel* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), p. 105.

[3] Quoted in Lars Bergquist, *Swedenborg's Secret* (London: Swedenborg Society, 2005), p. 190.

[4] Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[5] Bergquist, *Swedenborg's Secret*, p. 152.

of knowledge: Newton, Halley, Flamsteed. And then, in the period when he lodged with Erik Bergström at the King's Arms in Wellclose Square, dialogue with a Sephardic rabbi, Chayim Samuel Jacob Falk. By reputation, Falk was an alchemist, Freemason, pawnbroker and banker. A Jewish archetype remembered by fearful xenophobes. He practised the rigours of sex magic, respiratory techniques for prolonged congress and orgasmic trance and is said to have been visited by Casanova and the occultist Cagliostro. Falk kept lists of the cabbalistic names of angels. There was a deer's head nailed to his wall to ward off the Lord of the Flies. Both of these celebrated aliens, seekers and scholars, were buried in the ground of the territory: Falk at Alderney Road and Swedenborg beside the Highway.

'Things which are not fixed and stationary…There is not any thing natural there, but all is spiritual'.[7] Swedenborg's visions were not events imposed upon him by some outside agency. They were the agency that he had always, from the beginning, solicited with his eyes wide open.

Trying to navigate Södermalm, where Swedenborg had his house and garden on Hornsgatan, it did feel as if our familiar angels had left us in Wapping. They couldn't cross water. The people on the streets were not without souls, but they moved on their own trajectories, at a comfortable pace, less preoccupied with digital addictions than Londoners, absorbed in the white haze of a stoically endured winter melancholy. In keeping their balance on broad slithery pavements. Although my senses were sharpened by the approach to the garden, noticing references to the celebrated mystic everywhere, I was also disorientated, unsure of my connection with the small hills and the harbour we had left behind.

Swedenborgsgatan: a blue and white sign beside the Mariatorget Metro station, entrance to the shallow underworld. Swedenborg Park with the bust of the theologian by Gustav Nordahl. Mary Magdalen Church, damaged by fire and later restored. There were frequent fires in this area, on the southern edge of the city. One of which, the most severe, Swedenborg saw in a vision, while dining in Göteborg in 1759.

Part of this confusion stemmed from letting my mind drift unchallenged back to London, but also forward to a proposed excursion, in the footsteps of my great-grandfather, Arthur Sinclair, to Peru and the Upper Amazon. Which is why, along with Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary*, Lars Bergquist's biography and a curious novel, *Two Guests for Swedenborg* by March Cost, I was reading Michael Taussig. Taussig has a phrase about 'temporal connection fixed in a moral topography'. He writes about necessary exchanges between spirits and medium (or shaman), between healer and patient, between patient (making solicitation) and reader. Which is myself. Which is now you. We are trying to evaluate 'the gift of the past to the present'. And to launch, after WB Yeats and his talk of the living assisting 'the imagination of the dead', a futile attempt to return our present to a projected past.

A convinced Swedenborg advocate, Yeats came to Stockholm in 1923 to receive his Nobel Prize. 'Much reading to be done', he said. 'Coleridge thought Swedenborg both man and woman.' When it was known that he was in the running for the prize, Yeats combed the Dublin bookshops for some background information on the culture that was honouring him. 'I question booksellers in vain for some history of Sweden… There is nothing but *The Life of Swedenborg*, which contains photographs of Swedenborg's garden and garden-house.'

March Cost, whose novel I bought because the cover illustration showed Swedenborg, quill in hand, sheets of *Spiritual Diary* spread in front of him, posed in front of the pale orange doors of the lusthus, understands the essential quest: confusion, epiphany, enlightenment, despair. 'At that instant the invisible became a tangible possibility.' Before it faded to black and the world was overlaid once more with its ordinary fumes and fury.

She walked, the conflicted, questing woman of Cost's novel. She persuaded a less spiritually attuned partner to accompany her on a tour of London locations associated with Swedenborg. 'Great Bath Street, Cold Bath Square, Cold Bath Fields—vanished environs were summoned by her for his reluctant attention. Forgotten wells, extinct springs—all were of vital importance because they had been, or had not been closely connected with Swedenborg…Was this enthusiasm a mania?'

Just as we are about to abandon our search for the entrance to Swedenborg's garden, we spot our guide waiting, as arranged, in an obvious doorway we had failed to notice. She moved quickly, ahead of us, with no unnecessary conversation. Barriers swung open, doors sealed behind us and the building once again become an anonymous part of an ordinary street.

Tour guide at the original lusthus in Skansen.

1743, the date at which Swedenborg is supposed to have purchased the property at nos. 41-43 Hornsgatan, is not established with any certainty, but the prophet is known to have been living there in 1747. In illustrations I tracked down, the main dwelling looked like a small Swedish farmhouse, shaped against the weather. The replica summerhouse to which we are now being led by our guide, in her long black coat and woolly hat, is not in the 'right' part of the garden. The whole atmosphere—perhaps it's the season, benches frosted and trees bare—is subdued, slightly oppressive. We are conscious of being overlooked. This is not a green oasis, hidden from the street, cloistered around a plashing fountain, but something more utilitarian, with balconied apartments on all sides. Swedenborg's paradise garden is no longer an evergreen Eden, but an exercise yard, a rectangle for approved and supervised recreation.

By the time, stepping with care, we reach the summerhouse, our party has grown to five. The tourists, myself and my wife, primed to pitch the right questions to our guide, and conscious of the hospitality on offer, are accompanied—where had they emerged from?—by a Russian-Jewish pastor, schooled in the USA, and a young, slim woman, originally from Moscow, now lodging in another Swedenborgian ➢

NOTES

[6] Taussig, p.1 41.

[7] Swedenborg, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, p. 321.

property; a communal house with many books, she said. She is also in black, boots and coat, and she wears a pair of large circular earmuffs, also black, like devices to block our polite babble or to receive translations of the chanting of angels.

The status of this chalet, where Swedenborg recorded his *Spiritual Diary*, his congress with the celebrated dead, is insecure. After the mystic's death in London in March 1772, it was said that superstitious locals, cowmen and small traders tore the main house and other satellite structures apart, leaving only the summerhouse. Which was where Swedenborg received visitors, earthly and invisible: clergymen, young disciples, dignitaries and society matrons.

The lusthus, ignored and unprotected, squatted by indigent strangers, survived in its aura of stoic indifference and fear of the power of the late theologian whose deeds were part of the myth of the city. Here were the only 'authentic' splinters worth preserving in the ruin of the garden. By the time of the 1888 bicentennial celebration of Swedenborg's birth a new house had been built.

In 1896 the decision was taken to transport the summerhouse to the pleasure island of Djurgården as part of a centre for Swedish culture, a colony of restored farmhouses, shops

The second replica lusthus on the site of the Swedish New Church, Stockholm.

and pens for rare breeds of ancestral animals. I pictured the summerhouse, broken apart and reassembled after the fashion of Herzog's Amazonia steamer in *Fitzcarraldo*, being floated on a sturdy raft from Slussen to Skansen, its new lodging place. It would duplicate the image of Ulrika Eleonora embossed on the baptismal font alongside Swedenborg's tree beside Ratcliffe Highway. The reality was less inspired: a cart, strong horses and a jolting ride through Stockholm to the quiet suburb.

The summerhouse was originally a traditional yellow colour with vertical bands in steely blue. The dominant colour of the replica is pale toffee, like that fondly remembered sweet desert 'Instant Whip', an edible emetic. (Perhaps I'm thinking, in the Swedenborgian context, of another addictive favourite: 'Angel Delight'.) The door and the window frames are a dark liverish pink. The colour scheme is philosophical; a realized concept rather than a Germanic forest hut built to snare loose orphans. Hard against the wall and the colour-coded apartment block, the lusthus is shuttered for winter. Our guides fumble with keys.

The opening of the shutters, to let in daylight, is a ceremony, almost a buffalo dance, undertaken by the wild- haired Russian pastor. No samovars in the modest interior. No palpable presence. And no palpable absence either. This is a wooden Xerox, a useful hut for summer meetings and celebrations, especially on 19 June, a significant Swedenborgian anniversary. I photograph a model of the lusthus, which allows me to get a better sense of how the roof extension works, suggesting a series of houses, one piled on top of another, smaller and smaller, to heaven. A reproduction of the Schonberg portrait of Swedenborg, the one on the cover of March Cost's novel, is also worth recording. A reproduction within a reproduction. From outside, looking in, wrapped figures moving and gesturing, tangled in reflections of naked branches, drift and swim, faces distorted by flaws in the glass.

The paradise garden of the mystic has to be conjured now from the stacked grid of empty rear-window balconies. The narrow rectangular space is wholly overlooked, where once privacy was husbanded and contemplation achieved. The way strangers came through was so nicely stage-managed. The plants were chosen and the trees set in alignment. The lusthus was balanced by its wings, the library on one side and the tool shed on the other. It was guarded by twin poplars. The plants, many imported from Holland, 'represented and symbolized spiritual realities', wrote Olle Hjern in his essay on 'Swedenborg in Stockholm'. From Dutch seedsmen, the natural scientist bought mulberry and dogwood shipped from America. On his travels, and during later visits to London, Swedenborg collected what he needed to dress the garden as an evolving declaration of purpose.

Sometimes, at night in his house, he would cry out in pain: 'Lord, help me! Oh Lord, my God, forsake me not!' Rushing to his bedside, the gardener's wife would find Swedenborg calmed by the outburst, eyes burning like a hungry wolf. But when exterior problems and challenges intruded, he would go outside to the oasis of the garden, dropping to his knees to pray. In this setting above all others, the theory of correspondences was confirmed: 'In external appearance, the spiritual world is quite similar to the natural world . . . There appear there also, paradises, gardens, groves and woods, in which are trees and shrubs of every kind with fruits and seeds . . . Man is there, an angel and a spirit . . . There is not anything natural there, but all is spiritual.'

It is no easier, in this winter chill, to recall the original garden than the removed summerhouse. Preservation of the myth of the prophet's home required the laying out of a functional recreation zone, a children's play area with swings and sandpits. The most potent reminder of the lost lusthus is a version tailored for juveniles. Brightly painted wood and miniature furniture——as if the prophet had not decamped to his alternative reality, his parallel world, but shrunk. Giving up unrequired mass, to become——as Bergman did in his later days——a time traveller in his own history. ■

● IAIN SINCLAIR is a writer and filmmaker based in East London. He has published extensively, particularly on the subject of psychogeography. His works include *Lud Heat* (1975), *London Orbital* (2002), *Blake's London: The Topographical Sublime* (2012) and *Swimming to Heaven: the Lost Rivers of London* (2103). This preview extract is from: *Swedenborgs Lusthus,* ed. Stephen McNeilly with contributions by Iain Sinclair, Ken Worpole, Chloe Aridjis, Bridget Smith, Anonymous Bosch et al. (The Swedenborg Archive, 2020).

‘The Devil’s Party’: Blake and Swedenborg in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*

Amidst the publication of *The Secret Commonwealth* (2019) and a new HBO/BBC adaptation of Philip Pullman’s classic series starring Dafne Keen and James McAvoy, Avery Curran offers a new reading of *His Dark Materials*, involving its Blakean and Swedenborgian connections

AVERY CURRAN

Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy is one of the most significant works of fiction written for children in the last century. The story is, on one level, a riveting tale of a scrappy heroine navigating both burgeoning adolescence and an oppressive church hierarchy, pitched perfectly to children and teenagers. On another it is a retelling of *Paradise Lost*, drawing from Emily Dickinson, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, *Beowulf*, William Blake and innumerable other literary sources. Published in 1995-2000, it has in the past few years experienced a resurgence of interest. This can be attributed to the publication of the first two books in a sequel trilogy, *La Belle Sauvage* (2017) and *The Secret Commonwealth* (2019), and an HBO/BBC adaptation of the books that began airing on 3 November 2019. In its new limelight, aspects of the series are worth revisiting, including markedly Swedenborgian currents that have been understudied since its publication.

The most striking similarity was, for me, the potentially Swedenborgian reading of the alethiometer, through the system of correspondences. The alethiometer, the ‘*golden compass*’ of the US title of the first book, is an instrument that is capable of answering any question. It can be read by those who have studied for years its thirty-six symbols and their levels of meaning from the surface to the depths (for example, the hourglass can mean time on its surface, but its subsidiary meanings include death and change). However, the most immediately talented reader of the alethiometer is Lyra, a twelve-year-old girl, whose untrained eye and deep intuition for the meanings of these symbols and how they interact with each other allows her to read the instrument with striking ease.

Swedenborg’s idea of correspondences, similarly, is based on the idea that there are two levels of existence, the natural and the spiritual, and an object or idea in one plane has a corresponding value in the other. In his system, the lamb, for example, signifies (among other things) the good of the innocence of infancy. As with the alethiometer, these allocations are not random. The alethiometer’s symbol of the hourglass reminds us not only of time but its passage, the resulting effects of which include death and change. Similarly, Swedenborg indicates that the lamb also signifies ‘the Lord as to his divine humanity’, innocence in general, ‘those who are in the good of innocence and love to the Lord’ and more. All these meanings rely on cultural associations and Biblical references. Both the alethiometer and Swedenborg’s system of correspondences depend on first a literal meaning and then a forest of semiotic associations.

William Blake, *The Ancient of Days setting a Compass to the Earth*, frontispiece to copy K of *Europe a Prophecy*.

The distinction between the trained reader of the alethiometer and Lyra’s purity of understanding is further reflected in Swedenborg’s work. A *Dictionary of Correspondences* has been published, a massive work covering hundreds of thousands of Swedenborg’s words that would take an incredibly long time to read. In order to pick apart the layers of meaning in any given biblical passage, you would have to make constant reference to the dictionary, being aware that symbols’ meanings change subtly with context. However, to Swedenborg, it was also possible to have not intellectual but spiritual access to the correspondences between the natural and spiritual senses of things. This intuitive ability resembles Lyra’s; the reasons behind them may be different (Lyra’s results from her innocence as a child and dissipates once she reaches puberty) but the two paths to understanding resemble one another nonetheless. In fact, to Swedenborg, innocence corresponds to wisdom.

While attempting to explain these similarities in their entirety may be a futile project, one clear link between Pullman and Swedenborg is illuminating. Pullman’s views as expressed in *His Dark Materials* are perhaps comparable to William Blake’s. He appears deeply interested in religion, and at the same time is bitingly sceptical of how it has developed. This interest and yet sense of near-betrayal is also there in Blake’s works, in particular *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), in which he positions himself as a sort of anti-Swedenborg, criticizing Swedenborg’s work frequently. Pullman, the longtime president of the Blake Society, has repeatedly acknowledged his debt to Blake, in articles, epigraphs and verbal/visual allusions (one of the sources for the ‘golden compass’—another name for the alethiometer—is Blake’s drawing *Ancient of Days*). Like Blake, Pullman might reject Swedenborg, and yet, like Blake, to do so implies a relationship between the two. It is this Blakean connection that draws together the complex relationship that *His Dark Materials* has to Swedenborg’s ideas and renders it comprehensible. As Blake put it in *Milton*, ‘O Swedenborg! strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches!’ Intentional or not, hostile or not, Pullman’s series takes the ideas of this ‘Samson’ and reshapes them, as Lyra and Will begin to reshape the Kingdom of Heaven into the Republic of Heaven at the end of the series. ■

● AVERY CURRAN is undertaking an MA in Victorian Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. She has experience in publishing and gallery curation. Her research interests lie in late-nineteenth-century gender and cultural history, in particular the gendered aspect of spiritualist mediumship.

The Curious History of God and Coffee

Devin Zuber contemplates the relation between mysticism, religion and coffee. His book is *A Language of Things: Swedenborg and the Environmental Imagination* (University of Virginia Press, 2019) 266 pp.

DEVIN ZUBER

When 'coffee' and 'religion' are placed together in the same sentence, it might bring to mind that brackish watery brew of too many after-church coffee hours that still punctually occur, every Sunday, in parishes all over the United States. The first *verboten* taste of coffee I had as a young boy, growing up in suburban Maryland, was at my parents' church. We would sneak up to the coffee urns when we thought no one was looking, pour the scalding liquid into styrofoam cups already preloaded with enough sugar and powdered creamer to send a small child into a diabetic coma, and before one of the church ladies—usually an aunt or a scolding mother—could catch up with us, we'd swoop out to the playground or parking lot to quaff our stolen booty, usually burning our tongues from drinking too quickly from the fear of getting caught.

Little did I know then how this illicit pleasure of sneaking church coffee—terrible-tasting as it was—echoed part of the history of this bitter drink: its origin out of a swirl of violent theological debates, fierce bans and forbidden desires.

The roots of coffee are even more thoroughly entangled with humanity's appetite for the divine, with forms of visionary mysticism and with the interreligious flow of people and cultural practices in early modern Europe than I ever could have imagined as a child (even as I had been raised in a fairly exotic form of Protestantism that followed the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg).

A legend has persisted around the origins of coffee that traces the first human consumption back to a goatherd in Ethiopia. The young Kaldi, so the story goes, became curious about the effects of a little bush with red berries when he noticed how his goats would skip and jump around with great alacrity after eating the berries. Trying some himself, and feeling the surge of caffeine energize his body, Kaldi excitedly took the berries to a Sufi monk at a nearby monastery.

The monk, however, disapproved of this apparent kind of intoxicant and threw the berries into a fire. But a delicious aroma of roasted coffee beans promptly followed. When the curious monk dissolved these beans into hot water, *voila*, the world's first cup of joe was born.

As cute and charming as it is to imagine these Ethiopian goats getting high on coffee beans, this is most likely a fantasy concocted in the West, as the first references to Kaldi's story appear in seventeenth-century Latin texts from Rome. In earlier Islamic records, the practice of drinking coffee seems to have originated in Yemen. According to these older Muslim sources, the practice of drinking coffee left its regional confines in Yemen in the middle of the fifteenth century and became mainstreamed throughout the Islamic world, specifically as an aid for wakefulness in the mystical night-time devotions of various Sufi sects, the branch of Islam that pursued personal, ecstatic connections to the divine.

Sufis often pursued a form of communal worship at night, sometimes with trancelike dancing (of which the famous 'whirling dervish' is but one form) and unison-chanting of verses from the Qur'an (the *dhikr*). In these forms of worship that could go on into the early hours of the morning, coffee was communally consumed as a means for staying awake, distributed to the individual participants by the officiating sheikh. Thus, these first recorded quaffings of coffee were not for secular purposes of pleasure or individual taste, but a spiritual aid for a collective communing with God. The Arabic word for coffee, *qahwa*, implies the lessening of desire or appetite for something; the term was also applied to wine, as it was thought that wine would lessen the appetite for food. *Qahwa* as coffee, correspondingly, implied the reduced desire for sleep or rest; our modern word 'coffee' etymologically descends from this Arabic term.

Seen as a dangerous intoxicant by Islamic jurists, coffee became outlawed and banned in different cities (Istanbul, Cairo, Mecca) at various points throughout the sixteenth century. There were anti-coffee polemics, riots against coffee sellers in the streets of Mecca and outbreaks of violence in which coffee stock was burned and its purveyors beaten. The theological debates about coffee's legitimacy prompted the first attempts to historicize coffee drinking as a cultural practice; pro-coffee writers even claimed that King Solomon was the first person to use coffee, having been instructed by the angel Jibreel (Gabriel) on how to roast and properly brew it (so it was OK, according to Qur'anic tradition).

These sixteenth-century Muslim debates about coffee—the first Islamic prohibition, or fatwa, against coffee having occurred in 1511—distinctly anticipated how the English reception of coffee 150 years later would rile up the religious and cultural conservatives. The first coffee house in England opened in Oxford in 1650. Called 'The Angel', it was operated by a Jewish man named Jacob and quickly became a beloved haunt for Oxford scholars. Within a few years, hundreds of coffee houses had cropped up in metropolitan locations all over the country, especially in London. A new drinker of coffee noted in 1654 that the brew 'is somewhat hot and unpleasant but a good after relish [*sic*] and caused breaking of wind in abundance'.

Not all were pleased, however, and not only for coffee's purportedly gassy results. Coffee became caught up in a great tide of seventeenth-century Islamophobia that saw the new drink as dangerously un-British and anti-Christian. In John Tatham's brutal satire *Knavery in all Trades: or, The Coffee-house A Comedy* (1664), the play's protagonist is a greedy Turkish immigrant named Mahoone, who cons his English coffee-drinking customers, brewing their beverage in his filthy chamber pots (the text is filled with puns and wordplays equating coffee with faeces). A contemporary poem moralizes to its audience:

> For Men and Christians to turn Turks, and think
> T'excuse the Crime because 'tis in their drink,
> Is more than Magick, and does plainly tell
> Coffee's extraction has its heats from hell.

Samuel Pepys, the great seventeenth-century diarist and coffee drinker, saw Tatham's play and despised it, telling his diary it was 'the most ridiculous, insipid play that I ever saw in my life'.

A little later, coffee found a great exponent in visionary scientist-turned-mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, who abandoned his natural science in pursuit of a radical Christian theology based on things 'seen and heard' in heaven and hell; his body of visionary work became important for subsequent Romantics like the poet William Blake. Swedenborg cut his teeth, so to speak, in the vibrant coffee house culture of London in the early 1700s, and later accounts take note of his copious coffee drinking—'he drank in great abundance, both day and night, and with a great deal of sugar'. This coffee drinking was accompanied by an equally prodigious use of *snus*, or tobacco snuff, which so caked and layered Swedenborg's manuscripts that later archivists would marvel at how well it had preserved them. Fuelled by all this nicotine and caffeine, Swedenborg's modern form of mysticism must be seen as entheogenic—a spiritual experience facilitated by psychoactive substances—and his prolific flurry of writing while in these trance states produced the largest body of single-author manuscripts in the eighteenth century (over 42,000 folio pages, largely now housed at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm).

Coffee and tobacco have long accompanied each other as symbiotic pleasures, so it is no surprise to find them entangled with forms of esoteric spirituality like that of Swedenborg. His more modern analogue may be occultist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, who was infamous for both her chain-smoking (rumoured to be in excess of 200 cigarettes a day) and extensive coffee drinking, and an equally prolific pen that syncretized world religions into a New Age mishmash. In Jim Jarmusch's beautiful little 2003 film *Coffee and Cigarettes*, the mystical dimensions of the eponymous subjects are suggested by the repetition of a line from visionary scientist Nikola Tesla—'the Earth is a conductor of acoustical resonance'—as the characters in the different black-and-white vignettes speak over their coffee and cigarettes. More recently, Jarmusch has collaborated with Dutch musician Jozef van Wissem on two albums that include, among other things, extensive quotations from Swedenborg's religious writings. One wonders if coffee (and cigarettes) were essential for this joint production.

So, next time you sip (or smell) a cup of coffee, pause to consider this beverage's complex interreligious evolution that spirals out of the Sufis and into Jewish coffee shops, and on to the modern spiritualists and mystics, spanning the angel Jibreel to the angels of Swedenborg. We may have lost a sense for this (and all that tobacco smoke) in the secular interior of a contemporary Starbucks. But coffee remains embedded in global networks that circulate other forms of religious identities: note that many of our most popularly consumed beans are harvested from locations such as Sumatra and Yemen, where Islam remains the majority practised religion.

As the world undergoes its own ugly renascence of cultural tension, coffee should remind us how weird and premodern the drinking of this energizing drink was and still can be. Even for children in a suburban church parking lot, coffee tastes wonderfully of the larger world beyond. ■

● DEVIN ZUBER is Associate Professor of American Studies, Religion & Literature, Graduate Theological Union and author of *A Language Of Things* (2019).

D T Suzuki and Swedenborg

Stephen McNeilly comes across a rare historical document regarding the writer D T Suzuki while searching through the shelves of the Swedenborg Society collection

STEPHEN McNEILLY

Every so often, when looking for something in the archives at Swedenborg House, something unexpected pops up. Some time ago, whilst flicking through a folder marked 'Japanese translations', I caught sight of a reference to a talk given at the Swedenborg Society headquarters in Bloomsbury on Tuesday 11 June 1912. The occasion of the address was the Society's 102nd Annual General Meeting and amid items related to legacies, memberships, gifts, etc., a young Japanese scholar was invited to the front of the room to offer a report on recent translating work.

An unknown professor of literature at the time, the man was to become one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century and a key source of inspiration for writers and artists as diverse as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, Carl Jung, Erich Fromm and John Cage, amongst others. As the title of this article has already made clear, the name of this professor was Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966).

SUZUKI AND THE SWEDENBORG SOCIETY

Not much has been written of D T Suzuki's work for the Swedenborg Society between 1909 and 1914. And the reasons for this are not entirely clear. Not only did he write his now-famous monograph on Swedenborg entitled *Suedenborugu*—his first major study—but he also produced and saw through the press translations of four of Swedenborg's works into Japanese. In addition to this, and alongside Henry James, Sr and H G Wells, he served as one of several Vice Presidents at the Swedenborg Society's centenary celebrations in 1910 (the full-length photographic portrait shown here was commissioned to coincide with the celebrations) and he was also instrumental in setting up the very first Japanese Swedenborg Society in Tokyo. But there is more.

From letters, receipts and recorder minutes, it is now also clear that Suzuki was directly involved in decisions related to paper, binding and the printing; he was instrumental in strategies related to advertising and distribution; and it is noteworthy that the suggestion to write and publish *Suedenborugu* came from Suzuki himself. He clearly accepted the translation project as an opportunity to develop a shared cultural and intellectual sensibility between Eastern and Western religions, and it only came to a close because of the onset of the Great War and the terrible effects that followed.

Photograph of Suzuki taken in 1910 for the Society's centenary celebrations. The titles of the four works translated by Suzuki include: *Tengai to Jigoku* (*Heaven and Hell*), *Shin Eresaremu to Sono Kyosetsu* (*New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*), *Shinshi to Shin'ai* (*Divine Love and Wisdom*) and *Shinryo Ron* (*Divine Providence*).

SUZUKI AND WESTERN THOUGHT

Today it is broadly accepted that Suzuki's approach to Zen Buddhism was shaped by his reading of Western writers. Amongst these we include the work of William Blake, R W Emerson and Immanuel Kant. And there is of course his book on Meister Eckhart.

With the obvious exception of Meister Eckhart, all were influenced by Swedenborg and a thematic link can clearly be established stemming from the Swede. In 1924, Suzuki once more drew comparisons between Swedenborg and Zen Buddhism when noting the former's notion of heaven and the Buddhist concept of *Chugai Nippo* or 'other-power'. And this interest stayed with Suzuki throughout his life. In 1954, when in conversation with the scholars Henry Corbin and Mircea Eliade on the similarities he found between Mahayana Buddhism and the theology of Swedenborg, Suzuki is said to have replied: 'For you Westerners, it is Swedenborg who is your Buddha'.

TRANSLATING REPORT

Although brief, the report printed here is of special interest in that it simultaneously offers insight into a period of Suzuki's work that is not widely researched and it also confirms the positive impact Swedenborg had on Suzuki's early intellectual development. 'My next task', he notes, 'will be to purify my own will through this elevated understanding and thus to appreciate his [Swedenborg's] wonderful message spiritually'. He also celebrates Swedenborg for offering 'penetration and deep spiritual insight into the secrets of life' and he expresses gratitude for the opportunity to study Swedenborg with such thoroughness. This is high praise indeed.

Interestingly he also makes reference to a future reader—one of our own generation—in a library or bookshop, full of curiosity encountering a stray copy of Swedenborg on an 'upper shelf'. The reader becomes 'interested, and goes on reading. It grows upon him, he is captivated by it, but then one day a sudden illumination comes over his mind'. Such a person, he adds, will be no more or less what they used to be, but they will now be a spiritual person, with deeper perception. Such a reader, he adds, will be a Swedenborgian. ■

On translating Swedenborg

A reprinted address, given at the 102nd Annual General Meeting of the Swedenborg Society on Tuesday, June 11 1912, at 1 Bloomsbury Street

D T SUZUKI

My remarks will take the form of a general talk on Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* and will deal with its reception in Japan, and with the present outlook for the reception of Swedenborgian doctrines; together with some incidental remarks.

As to the difficulty I experienced in the Japanese translation of *Heaven and Hell*, I need not say much. For in the first place it does not interest you, and in the second place the difficulty I experienced with *Heaven and Hell* is perhaps not much when compared with the difficulty I am going through now with *Divine Providence*. Personally, however, the more difficulties I experience and finally overcome, the more satisfaction I seem to get from them, and at the same time more insight into the philosophy of Swedenborg, whose greatness in mind and heart grows ever upon me. His calmness, serenity, poise, and the clearness of his intellect, are all so charming, and draw my mind almost unconsciously into their splendours. Even his peculiar repetitious style of writing is so characteristic of him. It is so much like grey-haired, long bearded, kind-looking, patriarchal wise man teaching his children, who gather about him and wonderingly listen to what he says about the wonders of an unknown world. He has naturally to repeat over again and again lest his ignorant audience should miss his heavenly message—he has so much to say, and all so new to his listeners. In his style I perceive the kindly heart of the author, and in the matter of his writing I perceive his intellectual penetration and deep spiritual insight into the secrets of life.

Incidentally, I wish to mention that my Japanese translation of *Heaven and Hell* is somewhat imperfect. I can see it now more than ever. Man's work never seems to be finished. I have always a feeling after my work is done that it might have been done better, though I had applied myself at the time to the best of my ability. I wish to avail myself of an opportunity to revise the first Japanese translation of *Heaven and Hell* in the light I have gained lately through the study of other works of Swedenborg.

As to the reception of the book in Japan, it is yet too early to say anything definite about it. Especially because this kind of work requires time to mature itself. It must go deeply into the life of a people before it really begins to bear fruit. My attitude towards religious work is, do what you think right or true, and do not cease doing it, but do not look for any immediate result, or in fact for any result. Goodness and truth have their own germinating power, and do not necessarily require impetuous human urging to make them grow. Fifty or one hundred years from now, a stray copy of Swedenborg laid aside in the corner or on the upper shelf of a library may attract a curious man's attention. He takes it down, glances it over, and finding in it something out of man's usual walk, he is interested, and goes on reading. He ponders over what he has read. It grows upon him, he is captivated by it, but one day when a sudden illumination comes over his mind, he is no more himself than he used to be. He is a spiritual man, with deeper perception. He will be a Swedenborgian, with a living interest in *Heaven and Hell*. From his own mouth he will preach living divine truths.

His calmness, serenity, poise, and the clearness of his intellect, are all so charming, and draw my mind almost unconsciously into their splendours.

Even when this is not the case, the very presence of the book will lead it to be read by somebody, casually or not, it does not matter, and what he has read once, in whatever circumstances and with whatever degree of attention, is never lost on him, though he may think he has forgotten all about it. This is a well-established psychological fact. This being so, he will recall his past in his late life when a combination of affairs brings him back to a mental state which favours the growth of the germ once so carelessly taken in. This is something. Our work has had its reward.

A senior friend of mine who is the chief prosecuting attorney in the supreme Court of Japan is a religiously minded person—and he was one of the first who bought the Japanese copies of *Heaven and Hell*. When I met him later, he was enthusiastic about the book, and highly recommended it to the Japanese public, which is lately, I am sorry to say, losing faith in the world to come, or rather in a world which exists along with this one. He ascribed one of the reasons why crime seems to be growing rampant lately in Japan, to the lack of knowledge of a coming life. For this reason, he said, in these provinces in Japan where religious thought is sadly on the lowest stage of reception there are more horrible crimes committed than elsewhere. He has a group of friends who are all interested in similar matters to those described in *Heaven and Hell*, and they are all highly intellectual people, and occupying offices of responsibility in various departments of life.

In my judgment the outlook in Japan for Swedenborgian work is favourable. There are many indications pointing toward a religious revival in Japan. There was a time once when everything spiritual was hopefully trodden under foot and most contemptuously looked upon as having nothing to do with material welfare, political reformation, industrial prosperity, or, in short, with the development of the national life. This was when materialism was at its height, which came soon after the political revolution about 40 years ago. This revolution or reformation destroyed everything historical, priding itself in this very destruction. Old Japan was to go, and New Japan to be welcomed at any cost. But the fact is that we cannot live without history. We are all historical. We grow out of the historical back-ground. New Japan must be the continuous growth of Old Japan. And Old Japan was religious and spiritual, as you can see from the numerous temples, monasteries, and shrines still in existence. Swedenborg, too, must come and help New Japan to be placed once more upon the solid pedestal of spirituality.

In concluding this, I wish to express my gratitude for your having made it possible for me to peruse Swedenborg with thoroughness, which has opened to me so many beautiful, noble things belonging to the spirit. My next task will be to purify my own will through this elevated understanding and thus to appreciate his wonderful message spiritually. ■

● D T SUZUKI (1870-1966) was a Japanese academic, writer and translator. His work helped spread interest in Zen and Shin Buddhism across the world. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1963.

Suzuki and Swedenborg: *Tengai to Jigoku*

In the second in a series of catalogue notes exploring key items in the Swedenborg collection, Stephen McNeilly explores two handwritten manuscript notebooks by D T Suzuki containing his Japanese translation of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*

STEPHEN MCNEILLY

The manuscript pages of D T Suzuki's draft translation of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* (*Tengai To Jigoku*), shown here, were completed in February 1909, in rooms in Great Russell Street just opposite the British Museum and close to the Society's then-headquarters in Bloomsbury Street. Hand-sewn and bound in blue rice paper, the notebooks contain over 1,000 handwritten pages, with multiple markings and revisions.

We can see from minutes of meetings still held in the archives at Swedenborg House that contact with Suzuki was arranged by Mr Nogima of the Japanese Embassy during 1908. Suzuki was paid £200, at '8 shillings per [printed] page' with an additional £36 for train costs, from London to Tokyo, and '£50 for all the incidental expenses in connection with the trip'. Astonishingly, the first draft of the translation was completed in an intense period of just over twelve weeks. The work eventually emerged in print in 1910 with '200 copies bound in the ordinary way be forwarded to the Swedenborg Society, London'. The price of the work was to be set at one yen, and copies were sent free to public libraries and monasteries.

PROVENANCE

Insured for a sum of £250, the manuscript was sent to Japan during March 1910, where estimates were sought for a print run of no more than 2,000. Minutes from the Society's 'Overseas Translation Committee' note that the selection of paper and binding be left to the discretion of 'the publishers and Mr. Suzuki' and that the 'distribution and sale of the work be left to the publisher with the assistance of Mr. Suzuki'. The work was eventually published in paperback.

It is not known when the manuscript pages returned, but the most likely date is 1912, when Suzuki returned to London to continue translation work of Swedenborg's *Divine Providence* and *Divine Love and Wisdom*. It is the only manuscript still extant of Suzuki's translations of Swedenborg's works. Following the publication of the book, negotiations were soon begun 'with Mr. Suzuki with the view to the preparation by him of a life of Swedenborg in Japanese', with an English translation to be provided by Suzuki to the 'Committee at its expense'. With the exception of one page, which became the Foreword, the pages of this manuscript have unfortunately yet to be found.

For many years the manuscripts were held in the Society's archives without attribution. They were identified as being by the hand of Suzuki in 1994 when the Japanese files were opened for the first time since 1917. ■

● STEPHEN MCNEILLY is the Executive and Museum Director of the Swedenborg Society. He has curated numerous exhibitions at Swedenborg House and is series editor of the Swedenborg Archive Series and the Journal of the Swedenborg Society.

IMAGE © WILLSHAW HUGHES

Peter Cartwright: works on paper and wood

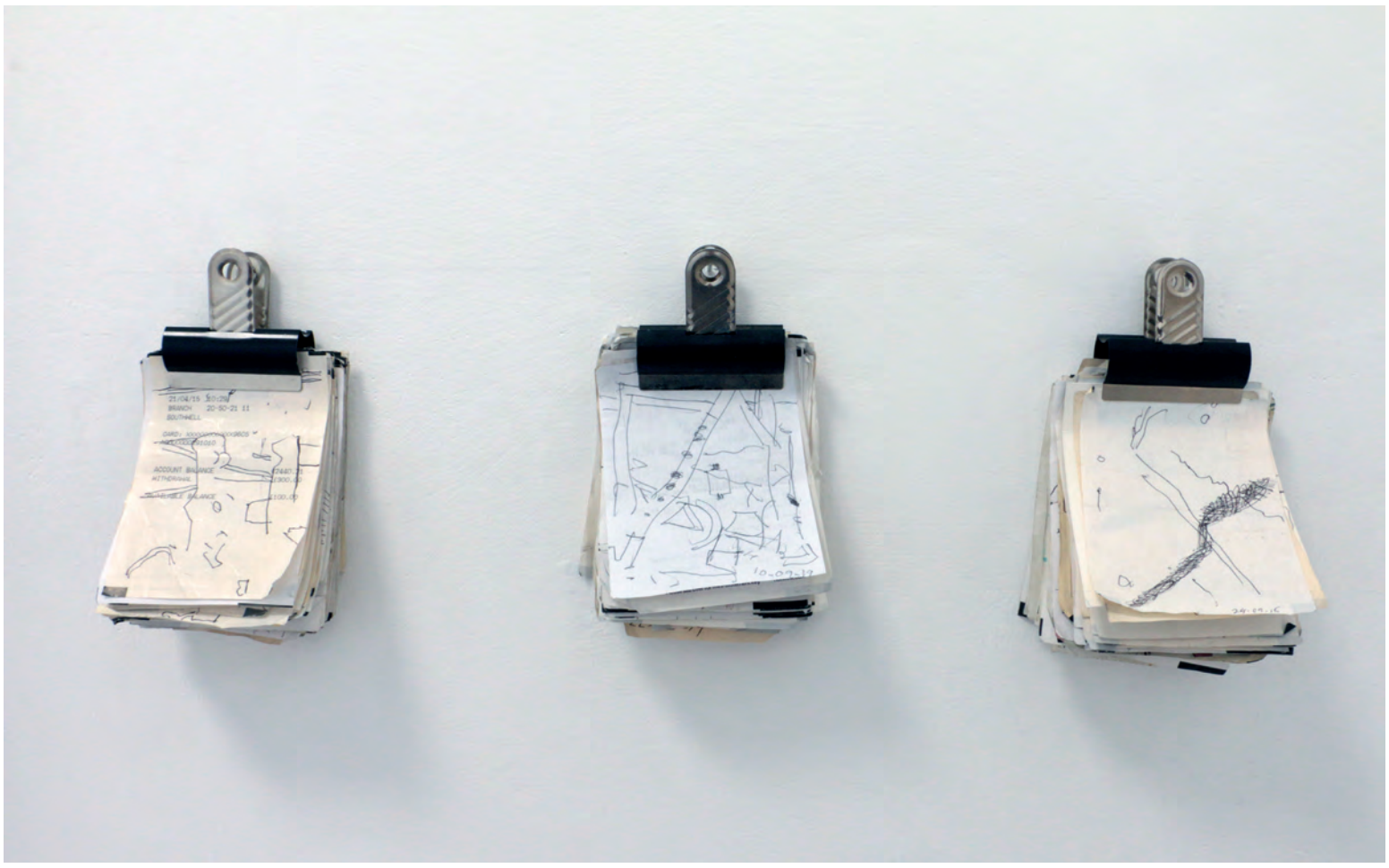
The artist and writer Paul O'Kane reviews a pop-up exhibition of Peter Cartwright's artwork, held at Swedenborg House on 10-12 September 2019 and curated by Stephen McNeilly

PAUL O'KANE

Swedenborg House is unlike any other house I know. I always feel, on entering it, that I should prepare for the unexpected, and this paradoxical sensation imbues every experience of passing through its unusually situated side-door with a unique strangeness. In September I visited Swedenborg House to see an exhibition of artworks by Peter Cartwright, but when I entered initially I could see no crowd, no drinks table, no sign of any event. However, a receptionist, who jumped up from her seat and introduced herself as 'Lolita', directed me upstairs with an enthusiastic sense of encouragement, accompanied by a beaming smile. As I followed her direction I confidently proclaimed, 'Ah yes, I know the room upstairs where such events might take place', but I was wrong; on the first landing I encountered an unusually tall young man with a large camera standing beside a table carefully laid out with two kinds of white wine, two kinds of red, two kinds of beer and two kinds of snacks. Samples of the various drinks were neatly lined up in rows in front of the bottles so that it was easy to choose which you wanted. I picked up a glass of red wine from those lined up in front of a bottle labelled 'Côtes du Rhône' but without really knowing what would distinguish it from the neighbouring Shiraz (or was it Merlot?). The wine tasted a little harsh, as it tends to do at private views, but after one or two sips it began to take the edge both off itself and off my own habitual sense of mild alienation and slightly intense subjectivity, thus making it easier for me to enter the exhibition and mingle with the small crowd there who were admiring the works of Peter Cartwright.

It is difficult to guess from how, where and when they might have sprung other than some . . . highly personalised, patient process

It may be worth mentioning that, having encountered, dealt with and passed by the drinks table which was set up slightly awkwardly on a narrow landing, visitors first had to enter an office that appeared to be in active use, and so we each experienced a brief glimpse of some busy desks, laden shelves and seated figures before turning into what appeared to be a whited-out gallery space made especially for the display of works of art. However, this turned out not to be the case. What I thought was a Swedenborg gallery space, previously hidden from my view during all the years I have been visiting the house, turned out to be a suite of three office spaces recently prepared for some new tenants. And so the exhibition of Cartwright's works within these spaces was in fact what we might call (and what the artist himself referred to as) a 'pop-up' show, i.e. it was hung here for just three days, taking advantage of a narrow window of opportunity between the drying of new white paint on the meticulously prepared spaces and the arrival of the new



PHOTOS © JACOB CARTWRIGHT

Collected drawings and notes (*c.* 2000 to the present).

Installation view, watercolours on paper. From right top to left: *Untitled* (1966); *Untitled* (1966); *Untitled* (1966); *Untitled* (1965); *Untitled* (1969).

tenants. When I asked if these tenants had any relevance to Swedenborg House or the mission of its director Stephen McNeilly, I was told no, and that in fact here and there in Swedenborg House a few offices like this have always been rented out to tenants in return for some welcome income that helps keep the house and its programme of projects thriving.

Perhaps I am taking this too far but at this point I couldn't help being reminded of Franz Kafka and the buildings, institutions, cities and other spaces he conjured in literary form, in which strange disturbances of territory and property, space and place habitually occur, and where his protagonists (to whom we reluctantly relate) never know what they are likely to encounter next, either in the room they currently occupy or when passing through the next door.

Once inside the whitened, top-lit, office-cum-gallery spaces I made a beeline for the art that I could see hanging in the room furthest from me, a space that also looked like the quietest room of three. Within a minute or so of entering and scrutinizing a grid of works on the wall I realized that one of the other two or three people occupying this small space was the artist himself. I overheard Peter Cartwright explaining to a curious visitor the purpose and value of a trio of bumper clips attached to a wall by the entrance to the room and gripping in their jaws little stashes of paper receipts, cash-machine printouts, etc., of the kind we often find stuffed in our pockets at the end of a day spent out and about in the metropolis. On closer inspection each of these scraps had been used as a kind of notepaper or, collectively, as a provisional sketchbook by the artist. As the artist explained

From left: *Untitled* (1966); *Untitled* (1965); *Untitled* (1969).

Following generations of artists who have pursued the grail of achieving idiosyncrasy or uniqueness in the realm of modern abstract painting . . . Cartwright had clearly risen to the occasion

their contents he and the visitor were also able to leaf through them, like a wall-mounted Rolodex documenting creative moments of inspiration in the everyday life of the artist.

Now fortified by my wine and thus able to speak with less fear of sounding foolish I asked Peter Cartwright about a certain wandering line that repeatedly appeared within a grid of small works on the wall in front of me. Reference to the show's floor plan revealed that these works were grouped together under the title: '*Passing* (2019), from a series of 23'. Peter Cartwright gave a slightly evasive reply, of the kind that artists often do, saying something like: 'Oh yes, that doesn't have any rational basis'. I hesitated before foisting my own interpretation onto these interesting marks and, by implication, onto the artist's practice and process, but I felt bound to

From top: *Untitled* (1969); *Untitled* (1966).

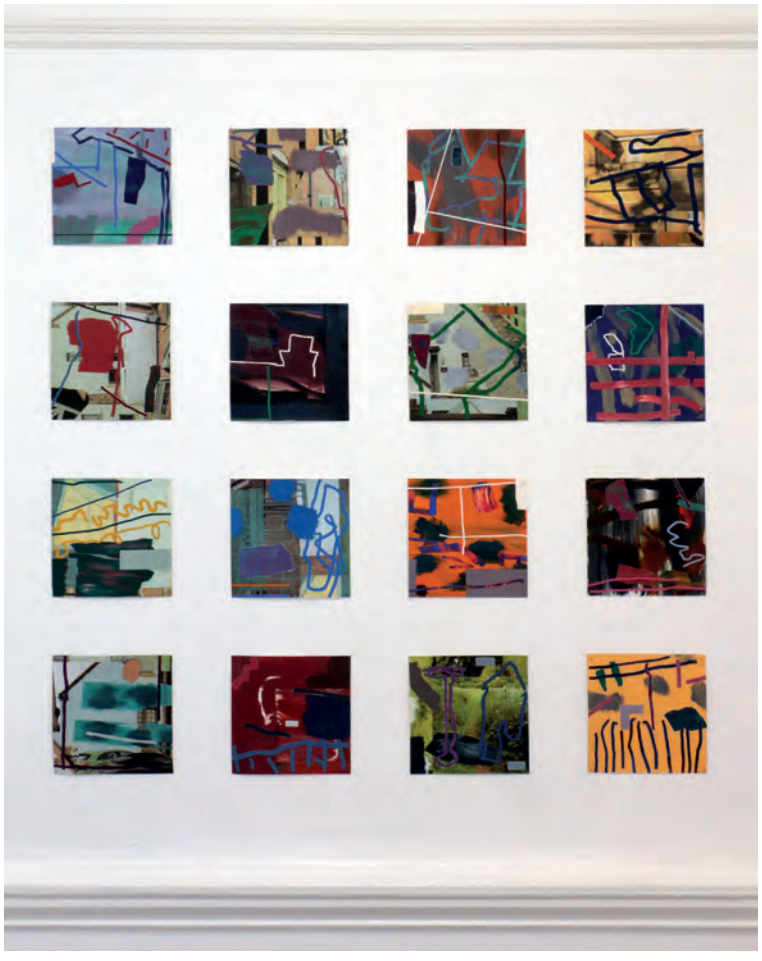
From top: *Untitled* (1965); *Untitled* (1965).

maintain the conversation and so forged ahead with my contribution. It may seem fundamental to an art writer's role, but I have always found this kind of personal view or subjective interpretation to be the least convincing and constructive contribution we can make to a work of art, to an artist's works, or to art itself. It is never really successful, it rarely sticks, and the artist rarely buys it. On the contrary, they rather tend to brush it off as quickly as possible, like something unsightly that has appeared on their shoulder in a public space. Even if the art writer's imposed interpretation does succeed in adhering to a work or a practice—ostensibly, and at best allowing others to see it anew, better or differently—this invariably turns out to be a mere mirage that rarely lasts long and soon evaporates, leaving the work, the artist and the rest of the world in much the same condition they all were in prior to the presumptuous venturing of our inevitably hubristic and ultimately unnecessary intervention.

As I moved into the larger, central space I used information accompanying the show to glean the important fact that the works I had just seen and discussed were current, or relatively recent while the rest of the show was made of works from the 1960s. This information made me look again at the artist himself and to try to assess his age. Later I spoke with him about this and he told me he had trained at the Royal College of Art in the same cohort as David Hockney. The early works of Peter Cartwright on display in the largest of the three rooms impressed me, but in a way that, once again, didn't seem to require any intrusive creative interpretation on my part. Suffice to say that they were abstract and untitled works on paper which sometimes looked to me like paintings made with water-based paint and at other times (mistakenly) like sophisticated etchings. Following several generations of artists worldwide who have pursued the grail of achieving idiosyncrasy or uniqueness in the realm of modern abstract painting, this may seem an almost impossibly difficult aspiration, but Cartwright had clearly risen to the occasion and done so early in his career. Like many an artist, he might then justifiably bewail the fact that he has had to wait too long to gain the degree of recognition that his relative 'juvenilia' might have deserved in their initial moment of creation. The confidence, consistency and conviction of Cartwright's highly personalized approach to abstract art reminded me momentarily of another octogenarian painter named Peter Joseph who shows at Lisson Gallery and whose works I have long admired. However, Cartwright's works are denser than Joseph's and might be said to deploy a less familiar, slightly more maverick approach to both colour and form, so that while looking at them it is difficult to guess from how, where and when they might have sprung other than some highly personalized, patient process, punctuated occasionally by precious and unequivocal 'Eureka!' moments, bouts of inspiration in which the hand, the mind, materials, tools and processes, along with the spirit and reason of the artist, are all momentarily reconfigured in an unprecedented form whose sense of conviction appears unequivocal and thus becomes strangely transmissible, enjoyable and valuable to eyes and judgments other than the artist's own.

Moving into the third room, yet another surprise awaited me. Here works on paper gave way

From left: *Blue Green over Red* (2005); *Pink over Blue* (2001); *Orange Incision* (2001-17); *Green over Indian Red* (2001).



Passing (2019), acrylic on paper, from a series of 23.

From top: *Untitled* (1966); *Untitled* (1966).

to relatively small yet chunky blocks of painted wood which had been strangely cut into and gouged through. The odd process evidenced here is almost as difficult to imagine as the objects are to describe in words, and yet this seemed to explain their immediate value and fascination for a viewer. Ultimately we were called upon to contemplate something that is unarguably like a painting, i.e. a square surface on which paint had been applied, sometimes in layers that betrayed underpainting or subtle chromatic fusions. However, the small scale and thickness of these colourful cubes might have also led us to believe that a larger painting, or even perhaps the entire concept and tradition of painting itself had somehow been shrunk and distilled so that all of its mass and density were intensified for the sake of some as yet unimaginable purpose (other than the most obvious, practical and prosaic purpose of thereby making paintings that are unusually convenient for transportation). In addition to this apparent miniaturisation of 'painting' and of paintings the viewer was also invited to investigate what I can only describe as a carved crack, whose wayward, wandering form was, to me, reminiscent of a certain wayward line that I had earlier witnessed and enquired about in the artist's most recent works. Now, however, we were irresistibly drawn to look beyond the surface of the paintings, not only at their four-square sides but into this linear fissure, and to there encounter, perhaps unsurprisingly, but nevertheless uniquely, the white wall of the gallery/office space beyond them onto which the series were carefully mounted (though, due to their particular form, quite how they were supported on the wall was not immediately obvious).

In the true spirit of a 'pop-up' event I thus enjoyed an initial, rapid, but wide-eyed encounter with the main elements of Peter Cartwright's show—the works, the space, the artist, the audience and the accompanying exhibition 'bumpf'. Eventually I found that I had circled back to the drinks table out on the landing where a different curatorial assistant was now playing host and chatting to visitors as they arrived. In a half-hearted attempt to offset a slight sense of inebriation I ate a handful of spicy snacks from a bowl, only to immediately replace my empty wine glass with a full one. On re-entering the gallery I found myself looking a little less at the works and more at the facial expressions, attire and body language of the people with whom I spent the rest of my visit chatting. These included the artist himself as well as Swedenborg House's director Stephen McNeilly. It turned out that the two have known each other for many years as Peter Cartwright had been Stephen McNeilly's tutor in his undergraduate years at Nottingham Trent University. It also transpired that Peter Cartwright had worked as Artist in Residence at Swedenborg House in 2013, a speculative event that culminated in a display of the artist's drawn and painted responses to the house on its various walls, halls, corridors, stairways and other spaces.

these colourful cubes might have led us to believe that a larger painting, or even perhaps the entire concept and tradition of painting itself had somehow been shrunk and distilled

After chatting for a further half an hour I began to feel the second glass of wine leading my own conversation and body language beyond mere comfort and confidence into a more dangerous realm wherein an excess of both might perhaps cause me to say or do something potentially regrettable, and so I simply and quickly said my goodbyes. I then made my way past the now-depleted and disheveled refreshments table, down the Swedenborg House stairs with their substantial bannisters and unique green tiles, through the reception area that also serves as a bookshop, and out onto the streets of Bloomsbury, by far my favourite part of London, if only because it is the least corrupted by blatant commerce and the most given over to matters of the mind. As I made my way home in a south-easterly direction, my heart and mind still warmed and assured by the mitigating effects of the Côtes du Rhône, I bid a mental farewell to Peter Cartwright's 'pop-up' exhibition, a relatively modest event, but one that had opened, in several new and surprising ways, my experience and knowledge, not only of art but also of Swedenborg House itself. ■

● PAUL O'KANE is an artist, writer and lecturer. He completed a Ph.D. in History at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2009. He now lectures in Critical Studies at Central St Martins and University of the Arts London. His art focuses on the mechanized image, and he is a founder member of the artists' book publishing imprint eeodo, with whom he published *Where Is That Light Now?* (2014).

Interview with Michelle Lindson about Swedenborg Gardens

Swedenborg Gardens is one of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' precious green spaces. Once called Princes Square, it marks the site where Swedenborg's body was interred after his death in 1772 before his remains were repatriated to Sweden in 1908. To find out about what is happening at Swedenborg Gardens today, we caught up with Michelle Lindson, who have been tasked with engaging the local community in the positive use of Swedenborg Gardens

PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHELLE LINDSON & AVERY CURRAN

IMAGE © MICHELLE LINDSON

Michelle, can you start by telling us a bit about your role with Tower Hamlets and how you got involved?

I am the Community Outreach Coordinator for Friends of Tower Hamlet Cemetery Park (FoTHCP) and I was appointed in July 2018 to deliver a community cohesion project funded by Tower Hamlets council. My background is in zoo biology and zoo education, teaching adults and children about conservation and biodiversity, but I wanted to move out of the world of 'exotic' animals to concentrate more on the wildlife that we have in the UK, which is often quite overlooked—a lot of people don't know what is on their doorsteps. And because I've done a lot of work in conservation, I know now how important community is in that—it's not a case of nature versus community, they are so interconnected, and I wanted to be a part of that.

And how did that lead to your involvement with Swedenborg Gardens?

Two parks outside of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park needed to be chosen as focuses for a grant application and Swedenborg Gardens was one of those. I don't think we knew a lot about Swedenborg Gardens before we started, except that it was a council-run park and, on the nature side, that there was a wildflower mound and a small woodland. Only on starting the work here did we realize that engaging the local community was going to be a lot harder than we thought. There is not a huge awareness of the park. There are people who might live five minutes away and they do not know of it—at best they might know that there is a green space; they certainly don't know the name of it, and most haven't visited it. We were a bit blind in understanding all the issues at the start. But very quickly we discovered a lot more about it, and it made it so

much more significant for the work that we are doing here.

What were your first impressions of Swedenborg Gardens?
I had only moved to London four months before taking the job with FoTHCP, and I had never visited Tower Hamlets. The first time I came to this park was just after my interview for the role, and I felt kind of sad. I was like, 'If I get this job, is this the park that I'm going to be doing a lot of my work in?' It just looked a bit dishevelled, a park that had been forgotten. But I got offered the role and I took it and, although my first bit of time here was a real struggle and it has taken a while for me to grow to love it, I am now fully in, all in with gusto! This park requires patience to understand it and to appreciate the things that are here. As I come so often, I see the seasonal changes, the bulbs that are ready to come out, the wildflower mound that we've been improving; and I see the changes in people. I'm lucky in that my job allows for me to learn all that, but for a visitor coming to the park for the first time, the park's historical and nature-based value is not obvious. Fortunately on the nature front, we're getting there, making big strides in the physical changes.

What kind of problems and what kind of potential have you seen in the area?
The very obvious problems are related to drug dealing and drug use, sometimes out in the open on the grass. There is also a lot of rough sleeping. In the work we're doing, I do not want it to simply be a case of 'You are not welcome here'. So, in forming the Swedenborg Gardens Partnership, we have involvement from the police and St Mungo's, the homelessness charity, who can talk to the rough sleepers and offer accommodation. On the drug use problem, more work needs to be done to see what organizations can lend support. Those are very obvious issues, but there is the aesthetics of the park as well. We can't underestimate how a park looks in how it will be used, especially if we want to attract people from further afield. The potential I saw initially was nature-based and through planting, but, as I have grown more comfortable in my role, links with the council team have been established resulting in changes I never thought I'd be involved in, to the benches and bins, putting up community boards, etc. Our outreach role allows for residents' involvement with what changes happen to the park and how they can engage their fellow members of the community.

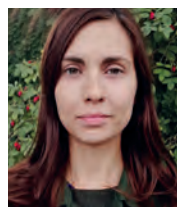
Can you tell us about some of the initiatives you have been running in Swedenborg Gardens as part of the 'Nature and Us' project?
At the moment I am in the middle of a six-session block of nature-based activities. Every fortnight I have been in Swedenborg Gardens, after the school run, 3.30 - 5.00 pm, delivering events like bulb-planting, birdwatching, events about trees, bark-rubbing, storytelling and games, which are all child-friendly and family-based activities, but we've also done guided nature walks that appeal to all ages. We do tree walks across the year, learning skills to identify species, which can look different during spring, summer, autumn and winter. We have also done courses about wildflowers—a six-week course for residents learning how to identify and care for them.

Is it important to make people aware of the history of Swedenborg Gardens and the reasons behind how it got its name? And can these past connections help benefit the future of the Gardens?
Going forward, I'd like to see how we can share the historical heritage of Swedenborg Gardens with the residents, perhaps through guided history-based walks. For local residents from other countries or those who are new to the area this might even give them a connection to the place and make it seem a bit more like a home. There are elements of places that we can all connect to in a new light. It's only recently that I myself have become aware of the links of the surrounding areas to Swedenborg and Swedenborg Gardens. A lot of people aren't aware of these links, they don't know anything about them. For people already interested in Swedenborg, they need to know that this is the place where he was buried, this is somewhere that he visited. Similarly with people connected to the Swedish Church. I feel there is the potential for people to come here and feel inspired and proud. I can see the historical heritage side being the real pull, opening the park to outside audiences.

And what is your vision for Swedenborg Gardens in the years ahead?
Hopefully, more people using it, so that there will be no more days of it seeming like a ghost town on a summer's day in the beautiful sunshine; hopefully a continued connection with partners in the area to help understand the community's needs. Maybe there will be more physical changes, with the playground equipment refreshed, an outdoors gym here, improved signage so that people know 'this is Swedenborg Gardens!', and so that people know the nature and heritage that is here. I'd like to see more activities being run, and I'd like to think that we and our working partners will still have a presence here and that other organizations such as the Swedenborg Society can run events here.

Swedenborg House is currently exploring ways of increasing community engagement. For readers wishing to learn more about volunteering with the various projects at Swedenborg Gardens visit the Society's website at www.swedenborg.org.uk or contact www.fothcp.org

● MICHELLE LINDSON has been the Community Outreach Coordinator at the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park since July 2018. Part of her role is leading the 'Nature and Us' Community Cohesion project, funded by Tower Hamlets council, which aims to get the community together through nature. Her background includes field research studying the spotted hyena and delivering conservation education in zoos.



PHOTOS © AVERY CURRAN

Swedenborgs Lusthus

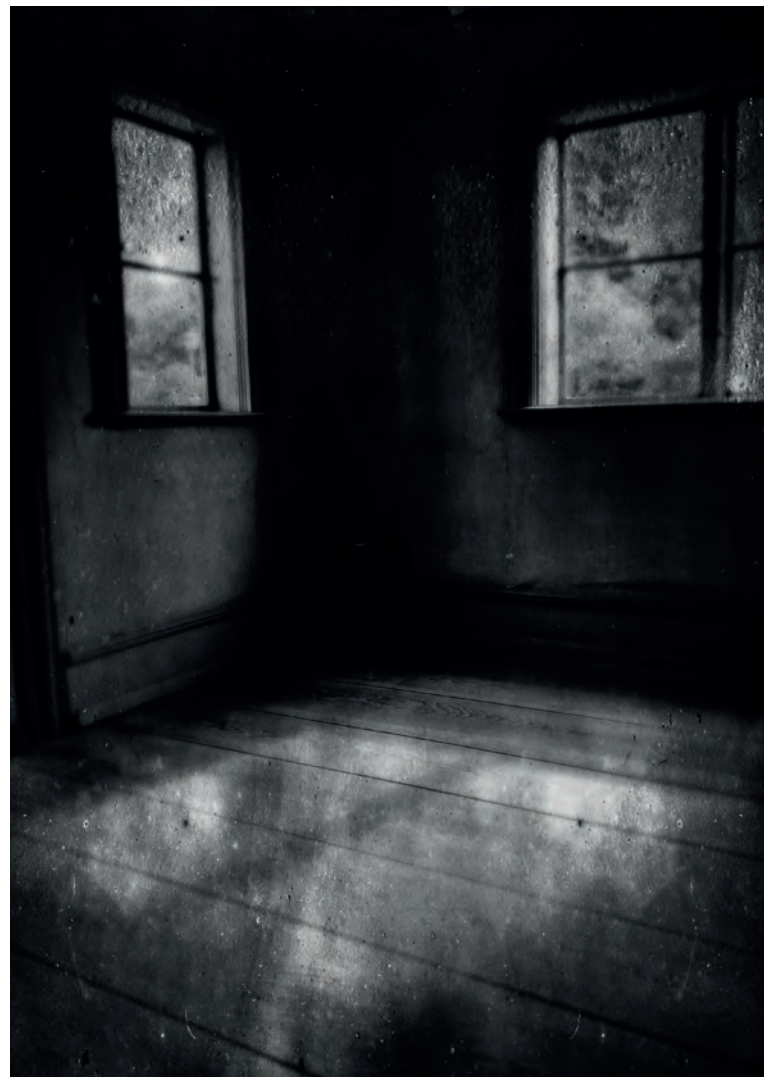
Samples of pinhole photographs from a soon-to-be-published book

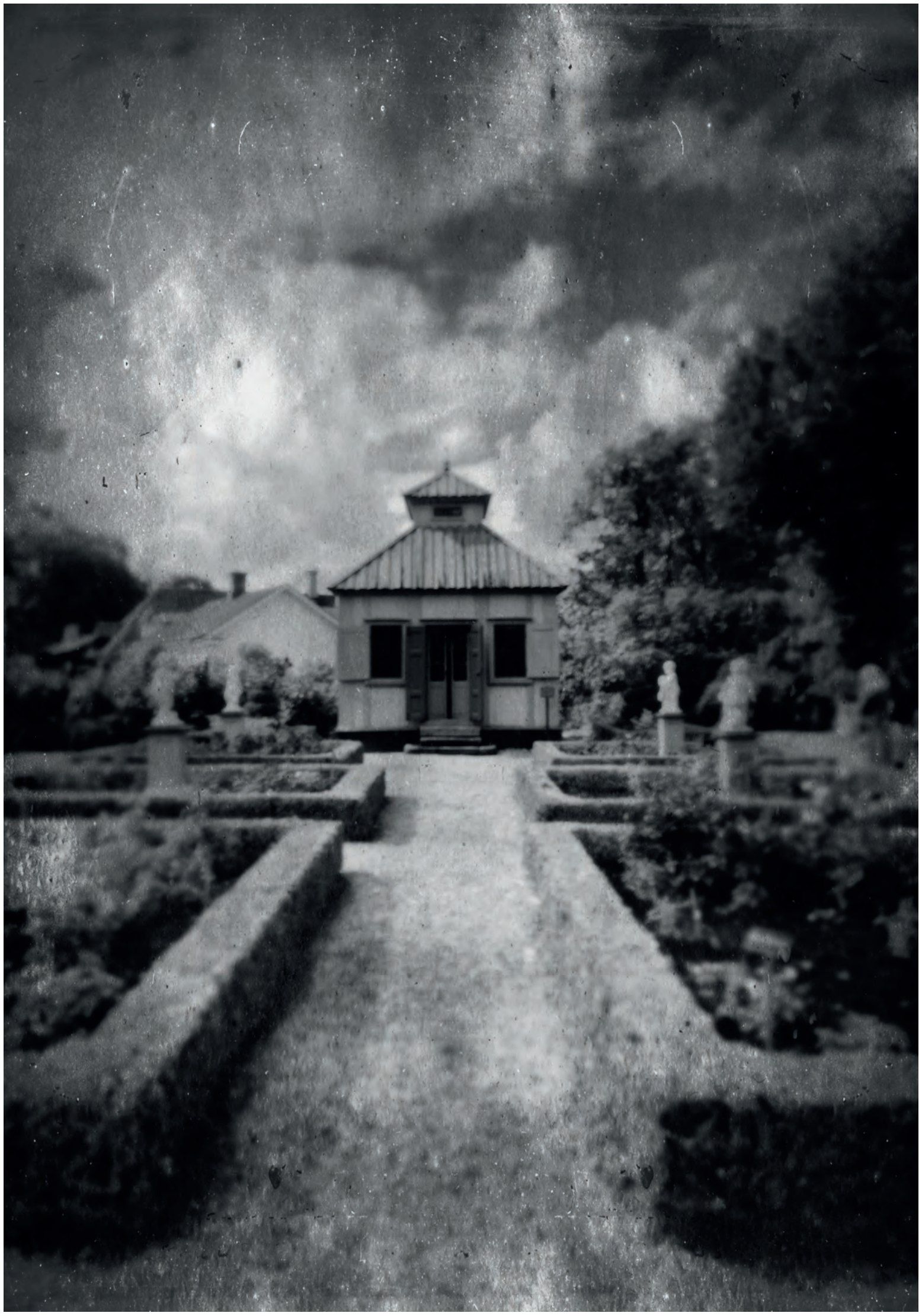
PHOTOS: ANONYMOUS BOSCH WORDS: WILLSHAW HUGHES

In 1750, on a plot of land in Hornsgatan, Sweden, Swedenborg built a summerhouse (or 'lusthus' in the Swedish). It was here that he wrote many of his late great visionary works and it was also here that he spoke of receiving visitors from the spirit world, including Martin Luther, Aristotle, Christian Wolff and Philipp Melanchthon. After his death in 1772 the lusthus was transported to Skansen, an open air museum in Stockholm (where it still rests today), and remains one of the few places still standing where Swedenborg is known to have worked.

The pinhole photographs reproduced here are part of a series of images to be included in a book-length study of the lusthus to be published by the Swedenborg Society in 2020. The volume is to include essays by Iain Sinclair (see preview extract at the beginning of this *Review*), Chloe Aridjis and Ken Worpole, with photographs by Bridget Smith. It is also the first in a new series of colour cased-bound books edited by the Society's Stephen McNeilly, exploring the cultural, artistic and historical impact of Swedenborg's influence. ■

● ANONYMOUS BOSCH has worked extensively with the filmmaker Andrew Kötting and the writer Iain Sinclair, and is known for his work on *Sea Fever* (2012), *By Our Selves* (2015) and *Aisling Sheòrais Mhicdhòmhnaill (George Macdonald's Dream)* (2015). His photographs also feature in *Several Clouds Colliding*, a book by Iain Sinclair and Brian Catling (2012).





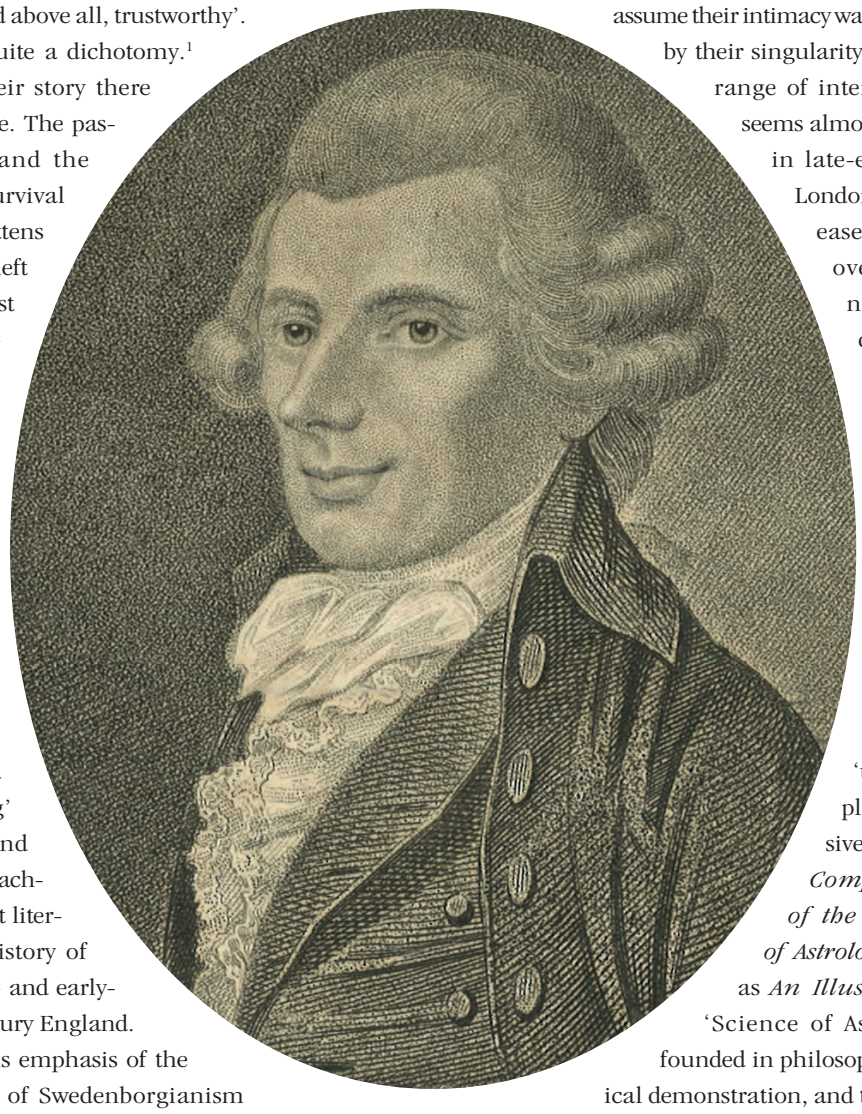
ESSAY

Dr Ebenezer Sibly and The Revd Manoah Sibly: Astrological 'Twins'

A reading for the Swedenborg Society by Susan Mitchell Sommers, adapted from Susan Mitchell Sommers, *The Siblys of London: A Family on the Esoteric Fringes of Georgian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

SUSAN MITCHELL SOMMERS

There is a strong temptation to hold up the lives of Manoah (1757-1840) and Ebenezer Sibly (1751-1799) for comparison—they make such plausible stock characters: the good brother and the reprobate. The bare evidence of their lives lends itself to this simplistic reading. Ebenezer got up to all sorts of mischief: in Ipswich alone he set up a sham Masonic lodge, stole a parliamentary election and was burned in effigy—while decades later Manoah was described by his eulogist as 'quiet, steady, tolerant, patient, and above all, trustworthy'. They present quite a dichotomy.[1] But leaving their story there does a disservice. The passage of time and the idiosyncratic survival of evidence flattens the impression left by even the most robust personalities, and that has certainly been the case with these two brothers. Curiosity demands a subtler examination of the brothers, and fortunately, we can find a richer 'reading' of the Siblys and their books by reaching out to recent literature on the history of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century England.



Because of his emphasis of the social contexts of Swedenborgianism in England during the brothers' lifetimes, Peter Lineham's important study of the seer's readers and receivers provides an unusually apt set of vignettes within which to consider Manoah and Ebenezer.[2] Lineham pays careful attention to the dreamers and visionaries, believers in astrology, magic, animal magnetism and spiritual healing, putative alchemists and fraternalists hoping for a 'mystical International' in contemporary London.[3] Along with the novelty of Swedenborg's visions, seekers also dabbled in traditional esotericism like the astrology promoted by the Siblys and their publications. Neither Ebenezer nor Manoah was single-minded, and accordingly, they each found a niche in several of the distinct subcultures Lineham presents. Moreover, while Ebenezer's life did demonstrate some little saving graces, Manoah's path was not as straight and narrow as his eulogist would have us believe. It behoves us to recall that until the watershed year of 1790 the siblings remained intimate, collaborating on projects and following related trajectories. Ebenezer and Manoah were close—but it would be a mistake to assume their intimacy was a necessity imposed by their singularity. The Sibly family's range of interests and activities seems almost bizarre today, but in late-eighteenth-century London they slipped with ease into the complex overlapping esoteric networks Lineham describes.

After their coordinated launch into bookselling in the late 1770s, the most noteworthy of the brothers' joint projects was publication of astrological works. Ebenezer Sibly argues astrology is a 'useful science', explaining in his massive work, *A New and Complete Illustration of the Celestial Science of Astrology* (hereafter cited as *An Illustration*), that the 'Science of Astrology is an art founded in philosophy and mathematical demonstration, and totally unconnected with any agency, but what proceeds from second causes under God and Nature'.[4] As Ebenezer compiled *An Illustration*, Manoah had astrological publications of his own underway, and there is evidence of close collaboration between the brothers, moving in both directions. Ebenezer lent Manoah plates and tables to include in his works, while Manoah provided Ebenezer with translations from Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* for his own. Their style and subject matter were so similar that press notices and reviews routinely confused the brothers, crediting 'Dr' Sibly

NOTES

[1] Carl Th. Odhner (ed.), *Annals of the New Church* (Bryn Athyn, PA: Academy of the New Church, 1904), vol. 1, p. 455.

[2] In this study, 'readers' are those who actively study Swedenborg's writings, while 'receivers' are converted to the theology contained therein. Peter Lineham, 'The English Swedenborgians 1770-1840: A Study in the Social Dimensions of Religious Sectarianism', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Sussex, 1978). See especially ch. 3 'Illumined Theosophists', pp. 135-208.

[3] Lineham, 'The English Swedenborgians', p. 176.

[4] Ebenezer Sibly, *A Complete Illustration of the Celestial Science of Astrology* (London: Green and Co., 1788), p. 1097.

[5] Manoah Sibly, *A Critical Essay on Jer. XXXIII.16* (London: George Keith, 1777), title page. The library of the Swedenborg Society in London has several bound manuscript examples of Sibly's unpublished translations of extracts from Swedenborg's texts.

IMAGE © SWEDENBORG SOCIETY, ENRAVING OF EBENEZER SIBLY

with 'Revd Sibly's works. The close connection between their publications is also manifested in their piratical style of composition. Ebenezer was an unapologetic plagiarist, on a staggering scale. One of the most interesting aspects of Manoah's astrological publications is that although he made his early reputation as a self-described 'teacher of Greek, Hebrew, &c,' and read Swedenborg in Latin, he did not publish his own translations of these works.[5] Manoah's first astrological work was what he termed a 'second edition' of John Whalley's translation of Ptolemy's work the *Quadripartite*, originally published in 1701.[6] Borrowing a technique from Ebenezer, though in this instance giving full credit where it was due, Manoah's was a straightforward reproduction of Whalley's earlier publication, warts and all. Manoah, who worked with John Browne on this project, merely listed Browne and himself as editors.[7] Despite criticisms of errors in Whalley's edition, historian Patrick Curry argues his translation and publication of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* (also known as the *Quadripartite*), ensured those who wanted to pursue judicial astrology through the lean years of the early eighteenth century had the basic tools they required. The same can be said for Manoah's reissue eight decades later.

In 1790 Manoah published his last astrological work, the *Supplement to Placidus de Titus*. Like Ebenezer's works on astrology, it consists of elements gleaned from other sources. The supplement begins with a lengthy nativity of Oliver Cromwell, which he credits to John Partridge (1644-1714), another cobbler-turned-astrologer, whose death Jonathan Swift famously invented in 1708, forcing Partridge to protest he really was alive until his actual death several years later.[8] In *Theatric Revolution*, David Worrall argues that Manoah Sibly's status as a Nonconformist, coupled with his social and economic location on the fringe of respectability, inculcated in him 'an ideological wish to locate Cromwell as a heroic political ideal'.[9] While this may be broadly true of the sympathies of the Siblys and their ilk, it is most likely a misreading of Manoah Sibly's immediate motivation.[10] We have to be mindful of the twenty-nine Catholics featured in Manoah's previous work, *A Collection of Thirty Remarkable Nativities*. It appears likely that though Manoah and Ebenezer were known as astrologers, the complex calculations entailed in drawing up competent charts did not appeal to either. Martin Gansten particularly notes Ebenezer's inattention to mathematics, and his reliance on a defective planisphere, the combination of which results in significant errors in calculations. Their contemporaries in *The Conjuror's Magazine* were also unconvinced of their abilities. As the editor of *The Astrologer's Magazine* concluded:

'The compilation published by Mr. Sibly, called '*An Illustration of Astrology*', though, in many respects, faulty and erroneous, surpassed the expectations of those who are best acquainted with Mr. Sibly's talents and scanty means of information'.[12]

John Worsdale (1766-*c.* 1828), a younger contemporary, is even more scathing, terming Ebenezer a pirate who, 'in many cases. . . has given precepts for computing directions, which he has abandoned in his operations'.[13] Curiously, Worsdale himself pilfered text from Sibly's *An Illustration*, suggesting the pervasive nature of contemporary astrological borrowing.[14] We should also note the modest claims Manoah makes for his contributions on the title pages of his astrological publications, stating he 'carefully revised' them, and added some introductory notes. Thus, while Cromwell's nativity is surely indicative of something, it is difficult to say whether it is Manoah Sibly's admiration of the Lord Protector, knowledge of his market, or simply the brothers' fortuitous acquisition of his completed nativity. Given that Manoah so soon abandoned the field, publishing no astrological works after 1790, it would probably be a mistake to read his foray into astrological publications as substantially more than an attempt to meet popular demand. Undoubtedly the Sibly brothers were intrigued by astrology, but arguably more important was that they were diligent salesmen who read the market as readily as they did the stars.

Manoah Sibly's dabbling in astrological publishing was not profitable. However, even if his astrological works had been a rousing success, any enthusiasm for astrology soon met with condemnation from his confrères in the New Church. This is an important point, as it focuses attention on the changing complexion of London's Swedenborgian community in the decades after the seer's death in 1772. Many of Swedenborg's first London readers, like those who gathered around Jacob Duché in Lambeth, were cosmopolitan intellectuals with the leisure that comes with relative affluence. In contrast, Manoah and many of his congregants came from more modest backgrounds, with limited education and tenuous

NOTES

[6] Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Quadripartite*, tr. J Whalley (London: John Sprint, 1701).

[7] Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Quadripartite; Or, Four Books Concerning the Influences of the Stars Faithfully Rendered into English.* Second edition revised by M.S. and J.B., tr. J Whalley, ed. M[anoah] S[ibly] and J[ohn] B[rowne] (London: M Sibly, 1786).

[8] Patrick Curry, 'Partridge, John (1644–1715)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (Oxford: OUP, 2017), at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>, accessed 26 November 2019.

[9] David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution: Drama, Censorship, and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 143.

[10] Roger Howell Jr., 'Cromwell, the English Revolution and political symbolism in eighteenth century England', in Roger Howell and R C Richardson (eds.), *Images of Oliver Cromwell: essays for and by Roger Howell, Jr.* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1993), p. 70. Ebenezer Sibly includes a much more engaging, though less purely astrological sketch of Cromwell in *An Illustration*, pp. 859-62.

[11] Martin Gansten, 'Notes on Ebenezer Sibly's Horoscope of an Unknown Lady', MS (October 2016), p. 6.

[12] *The Astrologer's Magazine* (November 1793), p. 152.

[13] John Worsdale, *Celestial Philosophy, or Genethliacal Astronomy, containing the only true method of calculating nativities made plain and easy* (London: Longman & Co., 1828), p. v.

[14] Compare E Sibly, *An Illustration*, beginning p. 391, 'The art of calculating nativities made plain and easy' to Worsdale, *Celestial Philosophy*, 2nd edn. (Newark: Ridge, 1798), p. 104.

[15] Clarke Garrett, 'The Spiritual Odyssey of Jacob Duché', in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 119, no. 2 (16 April 1975), pp. 143-75.

➢

IMAGE © SWEDENBORG SOCIETY, ENRAVING OF MANOAH SIBLY

financial security.[15] Manoah and Ebenezer belonged, each in his own way, to what Clarke Garrett refers to as the 'lively artisan subculture of London, fascinated with occultism, spiritual phenomena, and the millennium'.[16] Manoah belonged, that is, until extracurricular esotericism became inconsistent with New Church theology and practice.

Before we leave Manoah's astrological experimentation entirely behind, we need to look at his involvement in a small but illuminating scandal that rocked London's astrological community. About the time Manoah's astrological works were being offered at deep discounts in James Lackington's catalogue, a spat about the provenance of those texts was brewing in *The Conjurer's Magazine*. The journal was published by William Locke (d. 1798) and at least initially edited by Henry Lemoine (1756-1812), a Clerkenwell and Spitalfields author and bookseller of Huguenot descent.[17] Lemoine began writing in the early 1770s, and in 1777 opened his own bookshop, selling patent medicines and works aimed at a popular market. In the 1790s he began to dabble in occult subjects, compiling *Visits from the World of Spirits; or, Interesting Anecdotes of the Dead*. [18] He also published a rival to Ebenezer's edition of Culpeper's *Herbal*, which Lemoine advertised in *The Astrologer's Magazine* in 1792 as a 'much enlarged and improved Edition'.[19]

Printed invitation to the funeral of Mrs Sibly, dated Nov 8 1829.

By the summer of 1793, the name of the journal became *The Astrologer's Magazine*, and probably came under a new editor.[20] *The Astrologer's Magazine* continued at least through January 1794 and Philip Graves reports finding stray issues through May of 1797.[21] It is apparent that at least from the time of the title change, the overall tone of the magazine became less directed toward entertainment, and more devoted to internecine squabbling. The attack on the Siblys was a precursor to a more general mêlée between rival astrologers, interspersed with articles on historic figures, international news and palmistry.[22] Changes in title and editorship notwithstanding, the tone taken toward the Siblys remains hostile. Graves brings our attention most notably to the August 1793 issue, which features a three-page exposé of Manoah Sibly's 'Pirated Translation of Placidus de Titus', which the anonymous author, 'J. B.', claims was not Sibly's, but one which Manoah fraudulently copied without J.B.'s knowledge or permission.[22] And indeed, the title page shows Sibly neither claims to have translated the work, nor gives attribution for the translation. J.B. was John Browne, an obscure figure with whom Manoah edited and published *Ptolemy's Quadripartite* in 1786. Browne admits he knew Manoah, who 'some years since, transiently saw the Latin copy in my hands', and surreptitiously arranged through a series of mutual acquaintances to borrow and copy an English version, which Browne paid to have translated.[24] Browne launches into a painstaking analysis of 'Sibly's' version of Placido de Titi's work. Interestingly, Browne points out that the tables Manoah included in his publication are 'so different from those in the original, as clearly evinces that Mr Sibly was never in possession of the Latin original'.[25] Those are precisely the tables Manoah borrowed from Ebenezer's *An Illustration*, bolstering Browne's claim he was the victim of what he terms a piracy. It was just as well that by then, Manoah was no longer in that line of business. ■

NOTES

[16] Clarke Garrett, 'Swedenborg and the Mystical Enlightenment in Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 45, no. 1 (1984), p. 74.

[17] Locke was bankrupt in 1793: 'Exeter Working Papers in Book Trade History: The London Book Trades, 1775-1800', at <http://bookhistory.blogspot.com/2007/01/berch-l.html>, accessed 26 November 2019.

[18] Henry Lemoine (ed.), *Visits from the World of Spirits*; or, *Interesting Anecdotes of the Dead, containing narratives of the appearances of many departed spirits* (London: Printed for the proprietor, 1791). For a more complete listing of the works of both Henry Lemoine and his wife, Anne Swires Lemoine, see Roy Bearden-White, 'How the Wind Sits; or, the History of Henry and Ann Lemoine, Chapbook Writers and Publishers of the Late Eighteenth Century', MA thesis (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 2007); R Bearden-White, 'A History of Guilty Pleasures: chapbooks and the Lemoines', in *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, vol. 103, no. 3 (August 2009), pp. 283-318.

[19] H Lemoine (ed.), *An Entire New and Complete Edition of Culpeper's Works, Enlarged, Corrected, and Improved* (London: Alex Hogg, 1802). *The Conjuror's Magazine* (March 1792), pp. 364, 368.

[20] R Bearden-White, 'How the Wind Sits', p. 39.

[21] Philip Graves, '*The Astrologer's Magazine* and the *Primum Mobile intrigue*' (2007), at <http://www.skyscript.co.uk/forums/>, accessed 26 November 2019.

[22] John Willner (ed.), *The Perfect Horoscope* (New York: Paraview Press, 2001), p. 48.

[23] *The Astrologer's Magazine* (August 1793), pp. 19-21.

[24] Ibid.; *Ptolemy, Ptolemy's Quadripartite*, ed. M Sibly and John Browne.

[25] *The Astrologer's Magazine* (August 1793), pp. 20-1.

● SUSAN SOMMERS is a Professor of History at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. She earned her Ph.D. at Washington University in St Louis. Dr Sommers' most recent book, *The Siblys of London: A Family on the Esoteric Fringes of Georgian England*, was published in 2018 by Oxford University Press.

Swedenborg Gardens

Swedenborg Gardens has changed name and shape many times over the years, but it has had a connection to the Swedenborg family since as far back as 1710

JAMES WILSON

FIG. 1. A photograph of the Swedenborg's remains being transported from the Swedish Church in East London to Uppsala Cathedral in 1908.

PHOTO © SWEDENBORG ARCHIVE

It was in 1710 that the Swedish community in London first established a congregation of the Swedish Lutheran Church, with its jurisdiction falling under the care of Emanuel Swedenborg's father, Bishop Jesper Swedberg, who was bishop of the province of Skara in northern Sweden, but who also had episcopal oversight of Swedish congregations first in America and then also in other foreign territories (including London).

Coincidentally, 1710 was also the year of Swedenborg's first trip to London—a journey that didn't begin well. First, the ship Swedenborg was sailing on almost ran aground upon a sand bank, then it was boarded by Danish pirates (who were pretending to be French), before later being shot at by an English guard ship (having been mistaken for the aforementioned pirates' vessel). Swedenborg's boat was finally made to observe quarantine for six weeks in the Thames estuary, reports of plague breaking out back in Sweden having by then already reached Britain. At this point an impatient Swedenborg was met by a yacht of his fellow countryman who persuaded him to disembark and ferried him ashore to Allhallows near Gravesend from where he made his way into London. The normal punishment for flouting quarantine regulations like this was to be hanged, but Swedenborg went unpunished, most likely due to the influential London connections of his father.

Swedenborg's father was a little less hurried in pulling strings to help the nascent Swedish congregation in London, who initially had to rent premises in an Anabaptist chapel on the Ratcliffe Highway before, eventually, in 1728, they had their own church built on land in the centre of Princes Square (the land which forms the eastern part of the present-day Swedenborg Gardens). The church was named after the reigning Swedish monarch of the time, Ulrika Eleonora, and was built under the supervision of the then-current pastor, Jacob Serenius (1700-76) in a similar pattern to Caius Cibber's Danish Church in Wellclose Square. Serenius was a man of considerable learning, who compiled the first Swedish-English dictionary, and Swedenborg seems to have respected him, presenting him, later in life, with copies of his works *Apocalypse Revealed* and *The True Christian Religion*.

Swedenborg made at least seven trips to London during his life, usually staying several months, sometimes even a year or two, primarily coming to see his books through the printing press, which he could not publish in Sweden due to censorship laws. During his London sojourns, Swedenborg sometimes attended worship at the Ulrika Eleonora Church, and his name is recorded numerous times as a donor in the church's accounts books.

In 1771 Swedenborg travelled to London to finish writing and to publish a work called the *Coronis*, which was to be ➢

an appendix volume to the large book of theology he had just had printed in Amsterdam, *Vera Christiana Religio* (*The True Christian Religion*). However, the manuscript was lost. At the end of the year he suffered a stroke and although he was to recover his health enough to continue writing, he passed away on 29 March 1772.

Swedenborg's body lay in state briefly at the premises of an undertaker named Robinson on the Ratcliffe Highway before his funeral took place on 5 April. He was then laid to rest in a 'triple coffin', the outer layers of oak and the inner one of soldered lead, and this was placed in the crypt of the Ulrika Eleonora Church in Princes Square. Here Swedenborg remained for 136 years . . . or at least most of him did (his skull was stolen in 1816 and ended up in the private collection of a phrenologist, and one of his ear bones is preserved in our own archive at the Swedenborg Society).

The Ulrika Eleonora Church's congregation decided to move to plusher surroundings, acquiring land on Harcourt Street, Marylebone in 1907, where a new church was built, opening in 1911. The decision to relocate brought up other questions—one of them being what to do with the coffins and remains of the dead stored in the crypt?

Swedenborg's body was repatriated with great pomp and ceremony in 1908, his coffin being put aboard a specially chartered train at Paddington and taken to Dartmouth where it was then carried on to a Swedish warship, the *Fylgia*, to be taken back to Sweden. Back in his homeland, Swedenborg was laid to rest in a stately sarcophagus within the cathedral at Uppsala, unveiled at a ceremony attended by he Swedish Royal family in November 1910. Uppsala was the town where Swedenborg grew up and went to university, and his mother and brother were also buried in the cathedral.

As far as I can work out the remains of the other bodies in the crypt of the Ulrika Eleonora Church were reinterred in the Swedish section of Brookwood Cemetery, including those of noted botanist, Daniel Solander, who sailed with Captain Cook on his first journey to Australia.

After the Swedish congregation relocated in 1911, the old church was left to fall into a dilapidated state before being demolished in 1921. In 1938 Princes Square was renamed Swedenborg Square after its former most illustrious inhabitant.

Between 1965-1972 the Square was completely levelled and remodelled and the St George's housing estate was built in its stead, in several stages, incorporating the small road and green space that is now called Swedenborg Gardens.

Many of the buildings and streets around the area are named after connections to Swedenborg:

—Brockmer House is named after John Paul Brockmer, Swedenborg's landlord when he lodged in 1744 in Salisbury Court off Fleet Street.
—Hindmarsh Close is named after Robert Hindmarsh (1759-1835), the founder of the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in 1787.
—Shearsmith House is named after Richard and Elizabeth Shearsmith, Swedenborg's landlords at Cold Bath Fields during his stay in London in 1769 and during his final residence in 1771-2.
—Hatton House is named after Hatton Gardens, where the first purpose-built Swedenborgian church building in London was constructed on Cross Street in 1797.
—Noble Court is named after Samuel Noble (1779-1853), an engraver, a Swedenborgian minister and founding member of our organization, the Swedenborg Society, for whom he was the first Secretary between 1810-14.

The land where the Swedish church stood is marked out, with a memorial font standing close to where the entrance would have been. This font was set in place in 1960 (it has subsequently been relocated a few metres to the west and to the south) and commemorates the 250th anniversary of the establishment of a Swedish congregation in London. ■

ESSAY

Cartography of the Brain

Dr David Lister examines the scientific and philosophical considerations behind his 2019 Summer Seminar series 'The Cartography of the Brain'

DAVID LISTER

Throughout history, brains have made maps as a way of internalizing the environment. Genesis and Exodus describe the map of the Holy Land, first as a garden, and then as the location for the wanderings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Animals scan the environment for friend, foe or prey, all three an expression of love for themselves, their families and in the long run their species. This to some extent is the point of view of Abraham, who, according to Swedenborg, represents the Lord's celestial kingdom, the land seen through the eyes of love.

The hormones of the brain work together to inform the animal or human of the friendliness or otherwise of the environment, just as the angels of heaven and hell experience and produce the *qualia* or states of those places. This process is thought not to exist in reptiles, but is so in mammals and birds, even in such primitive insectivores as hedgehogs (see John Eccles's excellent book, *How the Self Controls Its Brain*). I believe this is the reason that, according to Swedenborg, angels did not exist before the creation of man. They are a product of conscious correspondence. In this way the cartography of the brain corresponds to the emotional cartography of the surroundings of either this world or the eternal one.

As the brain forms maps of the environment, at the same time it alters its own structure to correspond with that map. One of Swedenborg's overarching themes explained in *Arcana Caelestia*, the main exposition of his ideas based on the biblical books Genesis and Exodus, is that of correspondence. Going south and east, for example, corresponds to an increase in divine love, and going north and west represents the opposite. Language is the most obvious feature of this correspondential property—words being correspondences for something unknown in terms of the known, a gigantic system of metaphors.

Recurring themes in Swedenborg's writings are those of truth and good. In his system of correspondences, good is the heart of truth, and truth is its covering or visible expression. Oxytocin, a hormone or chemical messenger, is produced by the posterior pituitary gland, under the influence of the hypothalamus. Oxytocin produces the good we see in our environment and creates a Garden of Eden out of the most unlikely circumstances. It helps to form the good *qualia* of our daily lives—*O quanta qualia sunt illa sabbatta*, as Abelard wrote in one of his hymns about life in heaven.

One of Swedenborg's most interesting Memorable Relations (otherwise known as inter-chapter material that Swedenborg included in his longer theological works) is recorded in §4050 of his *Arcana Caelestia* in which he is shown a vision of the infundibulum, first described by Vesalius in his book *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (*c.* 1550). In his vision Swedenborg saw spirits emerging from the infundibulum, which we now know to be the same thing as the hypothalamus. Spirits or angels in the heavens correspond to hormones in the brain, and the hypothalamus is the most important cerebral centre for hormone production, including oxytocin, the so-called elixir of love.

The hippocampus is where the brain indexes the contents of the cerebral cortex, where neurological networks seem to encode visual, auditory, haptic and other environmental experiences. The hippocampus also registers the geographical position of its owner and is, so to speak, the index of his or her position. London taxi drivers have a larger right hippocampus than the rest of us because they have 'The Knowledge', the name for the internal map of London which they must learn before being licensed taxi drivers.

The way the hippocampus registers geographical position was discovered in the rat by John O'Keefe and Edvard and May-Britt Moser who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2014. An electrode is introduced into a 'place cell' in the rat hippocampus so that the rat is free to run along part of its enclosure. When the rat reaches a certain position in its travels the relevant place cell bursts into activity, which can be recorded by the audible clicks from microphones attached to the electrode. The rat hippocampus records the rat's place. Its nose picks up, say, the smell of a cat, and so this place becomes dangerous and needs to be entered with caution, a kind of hell in human terms. Fear in both rats and humans is produced by the amygdala, an almond-shaped nucleus in the temporal lobe of the brain. A human place cell is associated with a plethora of hormones, which cloud our memories of places past and present, and to some extent the future.

These hormones are affected by a therapy called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). This gets rid of painful memories and is used for treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorders. I theorize that it modifies the synapses of certain hippocampal cells, specifically those connected with the amygdala. The word 'attention' describes the way the brain attends to something. Attention is marked by so-called theta waves, an electroencephalographic (EEG) pattern of waves at a frequency of 4-7 hertz, originating in the septum, a part of the brain attached to the hippocampus, due to the action of another hormone—or angel—called acetylcholine. When attention is not switched on the hippocampus is activated alone by gamma waves at a frequency of about 40 hertz. When theta and gamma wave coincide, a permanent memory trace is laid down and this indexes that particular memory configuration. In EMDR I speculate that the traumatic memory is no longer relevant in in the peaceful context of the therapist's office. The memory is updated so to speak, and after the travails of bondage in Egypt the Holy Land is reached.

EMDR alters the map of the cerebral cortex and the hippocampus indexing. This is illustrated by the change EMDR achieved in a patient of mine in the cortex and hippocampus of an army sniper in whose arms a little girl died some years earlier after being mortally burnt by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan, leaving him with PTSD. Under EMDR therapy the sniper 'saw' the little girl, who told him that she was fine. He, so to speak, crossed into the quantum world, which exists for us after death of the body, and met her. Swedenborg seems to have enjoyed this sort of experience for the last thirty years of his life.

The processes involved in EMDR seem related to the phenomena of near-death experiences. These are reports from people who have died in the ordinary sense of the word but experience a spiritual world similar to the one described by Swedenborg, only differing from his because his heaven was that of a seventeenth-century aristocrat. In my practice of EMDR therapy I have had a few patients who have experienced the other world to which we go after death.

Finally I would like to draw brief attention to the question of how a cartography of the brain relates closely to the idea of other worlds. I have mentioned the work of Sir John Eccles, who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology in 1963 for his work on synapses, the way one nerve communicates with another. He has shown that the axons belonging to the nerves in the thalamus, a kind of vast marshalling yard of nerve impulses arriving from many other parts of the brain, are relayed on to the cerebral cortex. Axons from the thalamus synapse with the dendrites of the pyramidal cells of the cerebral cortex at many thousands of synapses and an astronomically vast collection of impulses are dealt with there. Eccles calls a collection of dendrites a dendron, and they correspond to a psychon. A dendron belongs to the entropic world, subject to the second law of thermodynamics. The psychon is the corresponding quantum arrangement interlocking with the dendron, but belonging to a world where entropy does not exist, a place where God exists in all his mystery. 'Before Abraham was, I am', said Christ, and I do not think He was speaking purely metaphorically.

The seminars spanned a broad range of topics, and combined with the time spent in discussion with the participants, it is impossible to bring all that was mentioned to paper, but this article may serve to open a discussion into several rich and fascinating areas of study. ■

● DAVID LISTER is a retired surgeon and Chair of the Swedenborg Society and author of *The Feeling of what Happens/Smile or Die* (2012).

The Civil Service of Memories and Dreams: The Afterlives of Kore-eda and Swedenborg

James Wilson's essay on *After Life* (1998), directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda, offers a new perspective on the film, illuminated by Swedenborg's ideas

JAMES WILSON

The sharing of memories is intrinsic to the *oeuvre* of Hirokazu Kore-eda, be it in his documentaries (a genre born for the purpose), such as *Lessons From a Calf* (1991), about his old school; or *Without Memory* (1996), about a man with short-term memory loss resultant from medical malpractice; or in his feature films, such as *Nobody Knows* (2004), where a single mother tries to pass on memories to her children, and her children—after she abandons them—struggle as she in turn becomes a memory to them; or *Still Walking* (2008), about a day in the life of a family observing an annual memorial service for a dead relative. The regaling and perpetuating of memories is also the bedrock of Kore-eda's vision of life after death in his film *After Life* (1998).

Set in the dilapidated building and grounds of a nameless institution, the newly deceased are given three days to select one memory which will then be recreated and filmed by the institution's staff. After a screening the dead will move on to eternity with that memory.

Swedenborg says that a person's entire memory is taken

IMAGES © ENGINE MAN/TV MAN UNION

NOTES

[1] Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, tr. Doris H Harley (London: Swedenborg Society, 1989), §462[b], p. 338.

with them into the next world,[1] but he stresses that the contents of the memory cannot be accessed by that person, only by others:

'Souls in the other life seem, indeed, to themselves to have lost the memory of particulars, or the corporeal memory, in which merely material ideas inhere, because they are unable to excite anything from that memory, while yet the full faculty of perceiving and speaking remains as in the life [of the body]. But this is owing to the fact that the Lord has so ordained that the soul shall not be able to draw forth anything from that memory, as then it would excite the same things as it did in the former life, and would live in like manner, and so could not be perfected. Still that memory remains, not, however, as active, but as passive, and it can be excited by others [. . .]'.[2]

Nevertheless, there are parallels between Kore-eda's *After Life* and Swedenborg: it is, after all, the promptings and audience of the staff at the institution that help the dead remember. Meanwhile the whole process of elimination and selection of one treasured memory is reminiscent of Swedenborg's concept of vastation. In Swedenborg, after the death of the body, a soul will be stripped of its superficial layers and become what it really is, become what it really loves. In *After Life*, a soul becomes the memory it really loves—and judging by the gossip between two of the employees at both the start and the end of the film, about the not uncommon examples of men who spend days recounting their sexual conquests in great detail before finally plumping for memories of a holiday with their wife or of their daughter's wedding, respectively, it seems that the process is also often a moving away from (memories of) more superficial and corporeal bonds to (memories of) more significant and lasting bonds. At one point Kore-eda even updates Swedenborg, who writes that 'all things that he has done and all things that he has thought are inscribed on the whole man, and when they are called forth from the memory they appear as if read in a book'.[3] In *After Life*, the books become a collection of videotapes, one for each year of a person's life, that can be viewed to aid a person to choose a memory, and viewed by the staff members too. The methods and mediums are noteworthy. For Swedenborg, the writer—writing in his own book—books are a symbol of the perfect chronicle; for Kore-eda, the filmmaker—in a film—videos are.

During the course of *After Life*, as we watch the new ➢

NOTES

[2] Swedenborg, *The Spiritual Diary*, tr. George Bush and John H Smithson (London: Swedenborg Society, 2002), vol. II, §1662, pp. 33-4.

[3] Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, §463, p. 341; see also *The Spiritual Diary*, tr. W H Acton and A W Acton (London: Swedenborg Society, 2002), vol. I, §§796-7, pp. 250-1.

IMAGES © ENGINE MAN/TV MAN UNION

Swedenborg does sometimes describe some more intriguing, less mundane, occcupations assigned to spirits and angels

arrivals interviewed, neatly framed between windows, pot plants and pieces of furniture, we become intrigued by the stories that aren't being told, those of the interviewers, who we see always on the move around the institution, or at desks, masked by lamps and stationary supplies, the movement and office clutter suggesting they are harder to 'frame', harder to pin down. Indeed, we learn that these employees are people who couldn't or didn't want to choose a memory and have instead remained behind at the institution, a way station between death and eternity, where they help others choose, and work a routine week much like functionaries in a branch of the civil service. The bureaucracy of the afterlife—its regulations, how they are carried out, and how people are employed there—has fascinated cinema from films like *Here Comes Mr Jordan* (1941) and *A Matter of Life & Death* (1946) through to *Beetlejuice* (1988), *A Life Less Ordinary* (1997) and *The Box* (2009). It is something that Swedenborg hinted at throughout his writings too: 'everyone in heaven, who is in any function, performs his office in his society, as in the world' [4] and 'heaven has governments and therefore areas of responsibility and offices'. [5]

The offices in *After Life* are based in the atmospheric but run-down premises of what could be a former boarding house, hospital or nursing home. A building that could be both public and private sector, a building faded by use; in many ways, a building that stands for the intimacy, distance, safety, unreliability and limitations of memories themselves. We learn that the institution, nameless but with its own corporate logo of two interlocking circles (suggesting the interconnectivity of memories and lives), is one branch of many and that it has its own weekly departmental targets, rosters and staff meetings. It operates very similarly to an organization in the world, just in the way Swedenborg tells us heavenly offices operate.

However, Swedenborg does sometimes describe some more intriguing, less mundane, occupations assigned to spirits and angels in the next life. He tells us that dreams, seemingly both those of living humans and those of other spirits, are concocted by spirits:

'I have learned by much experience, how dreams are produced, and what spirits produce them. When in a state of wakefulness, and when another (was) in a state of sleep, or in sleep, I was then as it were a spirit in company with spirits: and thus it was granted to me to be present with those spirits who introduce dreams, and it was also granted me to introduce dreams; and that it was so I have learned from experience, inasmuch as another waked up, three or four times, after dreams were introduced by me, and I then related the things (of his dream) which he acknowledged. It was granted me to introduce such things as were delightful and pleasant. I was then instructed by living experience, who they were that introduced dreams and how. It occurred by means of representations, for the end that the sleeper might be delighted, and there are those whose office it is to watch over man, when he sleeps, that he may not be infested by evil spirits. They discharge this office in wakefulness with the greatest delight, so that they strive (*aemulentur*) which of them may be present; and because they are good spirits, they love those things which are most pleasant and delightful to those (asleep)'.

These are they who in the life of the body were delighted by similar things, so that they loved with all earnestness and love to make the life of others pleasant [. . .].' [6]

And that spirits even act parts in those dreams:

'This night I also observed that there were spirits who

NOTES

[4] Swedenborg, *Apocalypse Revealed*, tr. John Whitehead (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1997), vol. 2, §849, p. 324.

[5] Swedenborg, *Divine Providence*, tr. George Dole (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 2003), §217.4, p. 203.

[6] Swedenborg, *The Spiritual Diary*, vol. II, §§3181-2, pp. 476-7.

[7] Ibid., vol. I, §180, pp. 27-8.

[8] Or indeed plays—in Kore-eda's film *Hana* (2006), a slum community successfully stage a vengeance drama as though it were a real event, bringing the participants closer together, conferring reconciliation, and freeing the film's hero, the samurai Soza, from hereditary burdens and ties, to concentrate on building far more positive and life-affirming relationships.

[9] Interview with Kore-eda <http://www.grouchoreviews.com/interviews/307>, accessed 7 January 2020.

[10] Arata as Takashi Mochizuki, in *After Life*.

[11] Kei Tani as Kennosuke Nakamura, in *After Life*. The realization that the importance of one's life is in the way it affects others is similar to that attained by George Bailey in Frank Capra's film *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), a realization likewise achieved through the promptings of someone from the next world, in this case the angel, Clarence. Lunar imagery is important in Capra's film too, in George's famous words to Mary: 'What

represented dreams, and that this was their life whilst man is asleep; and that when many persons are dreamed of, each of those spirits took the role of one person. I manifestly discovered this when I awoke, for I then spoke for quite a time with those who acted the part of this or that person'.[7]

Words like 'produce', 'role' and 'acted' immediately bring us back to After Life, where, as the week goes on, the employees begin to move away from the box-filling, surveying, more bureaucratic side of their jobs, into the more creative part where, like Swedenborg's spirits, they produce and act in recreations of other people's memories. The institution becomes a small film studio or amateur dramatic company, the staff taking on the roles of producers, directors, cameramen, actors, location scouts and researchers. There is even a props department and soundtracks are composed and sound effects created. The staff and their subjects open up and bond more as they move towards the 'premiere' or 'opening night' on Saturday when the restaged memories are screened. Just as Swedenborg's spirits gain pleasure from creating and taking part in dreams, Kore-eda suggests there is a cathartic or redemptive quality to producing films.[8]

For as much as being a film about life after death, *After Life* is also a film about filmmaking and is, as such, quite autobiographical for Kore-eda:

'[A] documentary director goes out and interviews and does research and makes documentary programs. So you go into other people's lives. But I feel like I was making works that had other people's lives in them, but I had no life of my own. And the only thing that will be left of me will be these works that will actually show other people's lives rather than myself. So I took that in a rather negative way in my twenties, and I was concerned: 'Where is my life? Will my life end just by researching other people's lives?' And so as a documentary filmmaker, I sort of dropped into other people's lives just for a short while to find out what their lives are like in order to depict their lives, but then I started thinking that those other people who have been the subjects of the documentary have been affected in some way by having a documentary made of them. So something of me will remain in them as they live on. So I started to become more positive about my work. And I started enjoying making documentaries more. So I think that was the kind of feeling I had. The main character in *After Life* as well develops in that way, that he becomes more fulfilled in helping the other people choose their moments, et cetera'.[9]

Swedenborg's spirits gain pleasure from creating and taking part in dreams

The main character in *After Life*, and the one with whom Kore-eda has sympathies, is Takashi Mochizuki (played by Arata), one of the institution's employees. Mochizuki reaches an epiphany in the film that enables him to finally select a memory and move on: 'I searched desperately inside myself for any memory of happiness. Now, fifty years later, I've learned I was part of someone else's happiness. What a wonderful discovery'.[10] The answer was always there, it just had to be realized, or as one of the other characters puts it more poetically, 'The moon is fascinating, isn't it? Its shape never changes, yet it looks different, depending on the angle of the light'.[11]

Often in Kore-eda's films we see characters going up or down flights of steps, lingering in corridors, or silhouetted in doorways; places in between, places of transition. Places of indecision and hesitancy, maybe; sometimes overlooked passages of routine too; but also, like the worn but not worn-out institution in *After Life*, thresholds of recollection and realization. ■

● JAMES WILSON is the author of a novel, *Three Bridges* (2014), and two collections of prose poems, *All the Colours Fade* and *The Song Remains the Same* (both 2012). He has also translated two books by the French writer Guy de Maupassant, *To the Sun* and *The Foreign Soul & The Angelus* (both 2008).

do you want? You want the moon? Just say the word and I'll throw a lasso around it and pull it down. Hey. That's a pretty good idea. I'll give you the moon, Mary.' The influence of *It's a Wonderful Life* on Kore-eda's film is perhaps not quite so immediate to an English-speaking audience, where it has been titled *After Life*—a more literal translation of the original Japanese title, *Wandafuru raifu*, is 'wonderful life'.

Don Emanuel: Visionary Master

The writer Michael Hampton considers a stumbled-upon treasure, a copy of a Mexican comic book featuring Emanuel Swedenborg

MICHAEL HAMPTON

A lurid image of Emanuel Swedenborg on the cover of the Mexican comic book *Vidas Ilustres*[1] presents us with an almost clichéd physiognomy of high brow and aquiline nose, plus the standard garb of an Enlightenment man of letters: powdered wig, ruff, goose quill poised to scratch out a few rapt lines in Swedish[2] or Latin. It is a far cry from the unflattering oil painting unearthed in the basement of Swedenborg House, London WC1 that depicts Emanuel Swedenborg as a dwarfish savant. Cover up the Spanish wording and the figure could easily be mistaken for Casanova, Voltaire or de Sade. However, it is none other than Swedenborg himself faced with a slightly menacing, neo-classical figment of his own imagination. A dealer's image, lifted from the Books, Comics & Magazines section of eBay, the material is a vintage collectable that portrays Emanuel Swedenborg as a comic book hero, both entranced yet also torn from society by his visions. How tempting it would be to take this to the next step and generate an avatar, a Second Life Swedenborg.

The message is certainly loud and clear on the front cover of *Vidas Ilustres*, a title with just a hint of Vasari or Samuel Johnson's epic endeavours to record the singular, troubled lives of artists and poets. Swedenborg—or better still, Don Emanuel—is depicted as the 'visionary master' who in a nice sensationalist touch is characterised in the strapline as the subject for the very first time of 'graphic reportage', 'the history of a genius who spoke directly to angels and demons', almost as if the publication were about to reveal the details of a bewildering case of poltergeist activity at a suburban semi: the Swedenborgian uncanny. Having said that the comic does tell a potted version of Swedenborg's life story: a lively yarn stitched together through key episodes such as leaving his mother behind, arrival by ship in London, contacts with the astronomers John Flamsteed and Edmond Halley, plans to build a submarine, his work at the Swedish Board of Mines and the Christian mystic's strange death in Cold Bath Fields.

On the cover of *Vidas Ilustres*, a secretarial angel has materialized, which is apt since Swedenborg believed spirits were autonomous entities that preserved human form after death, troublesome spectres returning to his study at night, not mere products of mental concentration or ritual practice. This scenario implies his sanity is under attack, dependent on a heroic struggle between infernal and celestial powers, the psychic results of seizure or possession. This allies Swedenborg with his countryman August Strindberg, together with Aldous Huxley, Antonin Artaud and Timothy Leary, figures scoffed at by mainstream society who came back to tell of their forays and hazardous navigations in uncharted psychic territory, and more importantly to leave accounts of their experiences for the general reader.

In 1896, almost as a vaccine before starting work on his *From An Occult Diary*, Strindberg had immersed himself in Swedenborg's thought, particularly his theory of correspondences, which provided an interpretative framework during the period of absinthe-fuelled mental derangement that accompanied the hazardous alchemical experiments carried out by the playwright/painter in his room at the Hôtel Orfila, Paris. In *The Inferno-Painting* (1901-1903), or the later theatrical pictures, dreamlike apertures seem to offer a way out of human trials and tribulations. But it was in the so-called *Celestographs* (1894) (these unconsciously tapped into the methodological origins of photography, specifically Henry Fox Talbot's photogenic sun pictures) that Strindberg's visual practice achieved its most Swedenborgian timbre, works that were the direct result of leaving sensitized photographic plates outdoors: '...mottled patches and subtle swirls of blues, browns, greens and golds. In all likelihood they were formed from particles in the air and imperfections in the chemical process. Billowing and gaseous they certainly resemble the star-strewn heavens seen through clouds'.[3]

These pick-up plates illustrated Strindberg's theory of chance, raising the issue of artistic agency, complex chemical surfaces accreted by either Strindberg's precise or whimsical decision-making about exposure time. It was Swedish Fluxus-style durational performance *avant la lettre*!

WHAT JACQUES DERRIDA designates as the scene of writing (or oil-encrusted easel for that matter) is more than just another cluttered table, and actually a way station where the surf of language as *différance* emerges from the subject's trance, be it infected with metaphysical entities or otherwise.

In Michel Houllebecq's 2010 Goncourt Prize-winning novel *The Map and The Territory*, Houllebecq qua writer appears as a character in his own right, put under the unwelcome stress and strain of being visited at home in his squalid Irish bungalow by the artist Jed Martin. His celebrity portrait reveals how. 'In the painting, Houllebecq is standing in front of a desk covered with written or half-written pages. Behind him, at a distance of some five metres, the white wall is entirely papered with handwritten pages stuck to one another, without any interstices whatsoever'.[4]

Houllebecq's self-reflexive narrative, which quaintly depicts him still using a pen, continues: 'Captured at the moment of noticing a mistake on one of the pages on the desk in front of him, the author appears to be in a trance, possessed by a fury that some have not hesitated to describe as demonic; his hand holding the pen, treated with a certain blurring movement, throws itself on the page 'with the speed of a cobra stretching to strike its prey''.[5]

This echoes the front cover of *Vidas Ilustres*, as if the writerly life were one long case of hyperactivity in the prefrontal cortex, abnormal states to be stoically endured and articulated. It is only in the famous Swiss automaton of Pierre Jaquet-Droz, *The Writer* (1774), constructed of 6,000 parts and fully programmable, that the actual stresses and strains that beset any writer on a daily basis are quite absent, the mechanical marvel's cherubic face as it inks out a text not visited by the profession's worry lines of affliction and economic servitude.

IN HIS 2014 Swedenborg Birthday Lecture entitled 'The Logic and Credibility of After-Death Existences', Professor David Berman asserted that Swedenborg saw minds as immaterial compounds, and claimed empirical knowledge of their afterlife, or from disembodied experience in other words. How could this be? Berman went on to construct a scenario in which Swedenborg's abnormal brain states were said to correspond quite closely to lucid or remote viewing, and thus be highly singular, for the dead themselves had no knowledge of their condition, being adrift in a dream or Tibetan *bardo*. Recalling an obscure Oxford philosopher H H Price, responsible for a theory of mind in the next life as a type of image-dreaming, Berman stopped just short of calling Swedenborg, in this context, a *brujo*, though such a magical job description was hinted at.

Maybe the Post-it notes papering every square inch of wall in novelist Will Self's den are equivalent to messages from the beyond?

MICHAEL HAMPTON is a writer and critical theorist based in London. Especially interested in the dynamic play of art and literature, his *Unshelfmarked: Reconceiving the artists' book* was published by Uniformbooks in 2015. A new collection *Talking Statues and Other Defacements* will be launched by Ma Bibliothèque later in 2020.

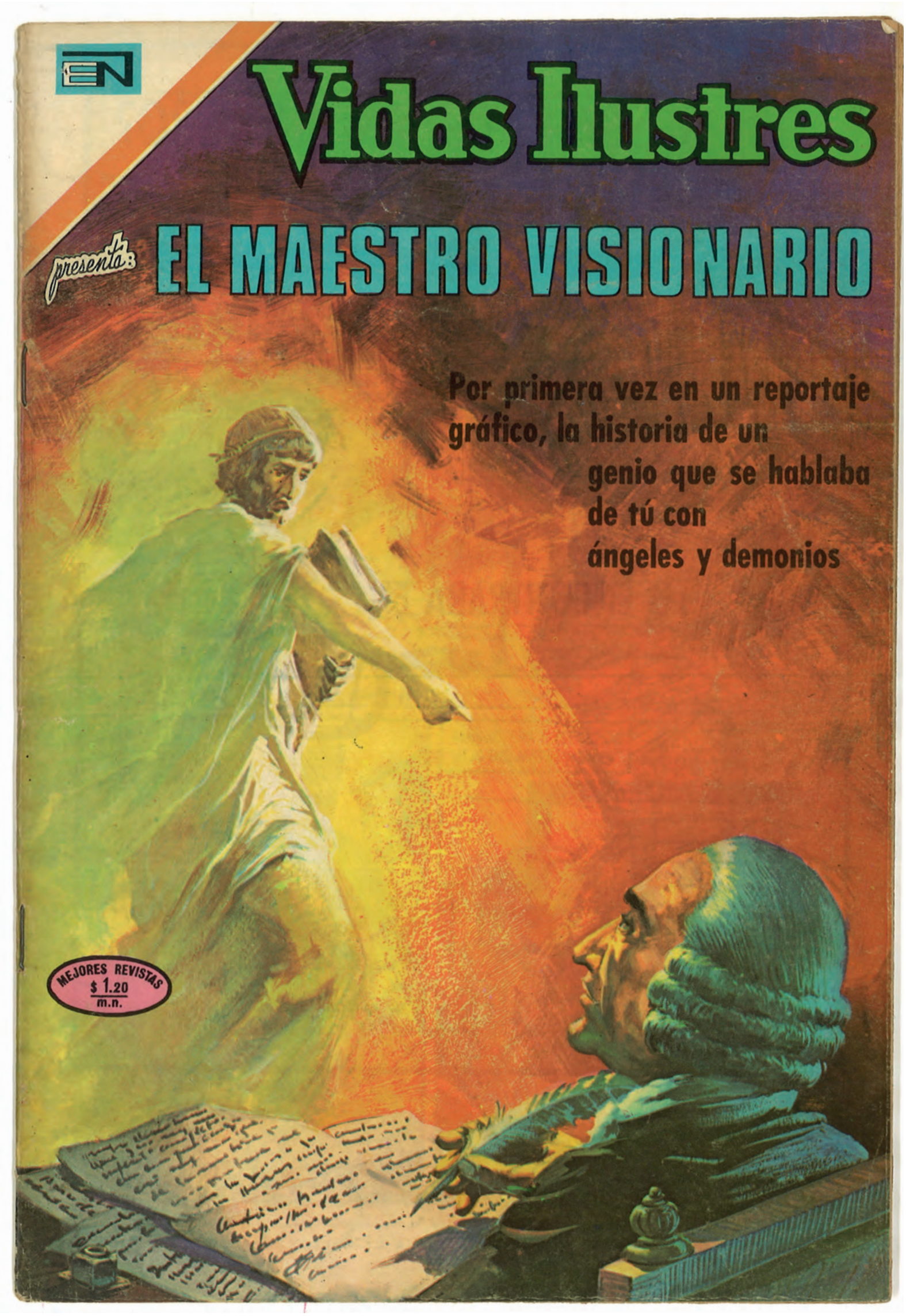
[1] Swedenborg occupies Number 266 in the extraordinary *Illustrious Lives* series published by the Mexican publishing house Novaro. These cheap publications were both educational and dramatic biographies of notable personages from history, ranging from Copernicus to Edward Jenner, Florence Nightingale to H P Lovecraft, Jack London to Rudolf Valentino, Chopin to Freud.

[2] His *Drőmbok*, 1743-4, variously translated as *Dream Diary* or *Journal of Dreams* was written in a crudely expressive Swedish.

[3] Olle Granath, *August Strindberg: Painter, Photographer, Writer* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), p. 115.

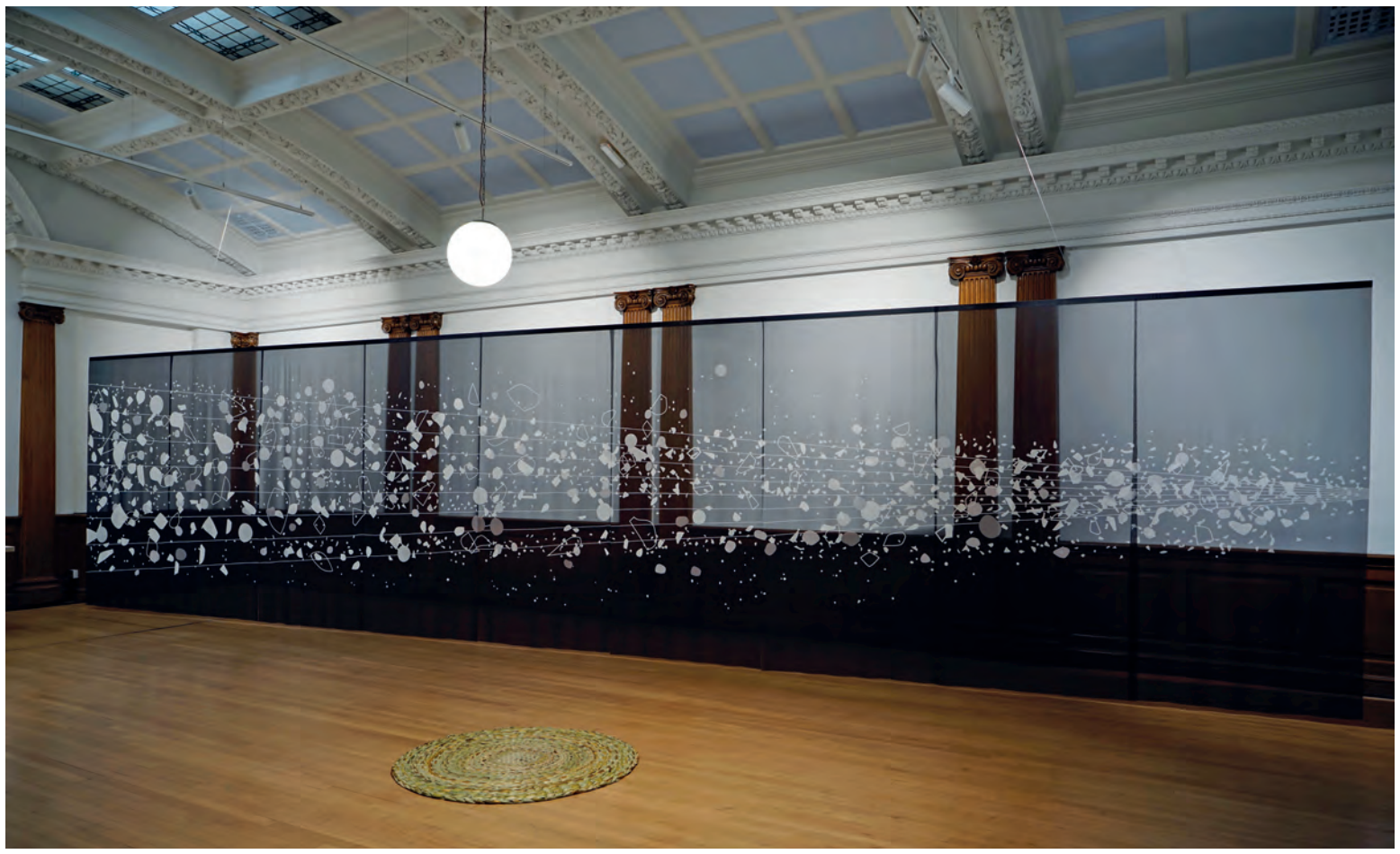
[4] Michel Houllebecq, *The Map and the Territory* (London: William Heinemann, 2011), p. 119.

[5] Ibid., pp. 119-120.



THINGS HEARD & SEEN

Welcome to 'Things Heard and Seen', a regular news, correspondence and preview section for the *Swedenborg Review*. The title of this section will be familiar to many readers as it is named after *Things Heard and Seen*, the thrice-yearly newsletter of the Swedenborg Society, created and edited by P L Johnson, that ran for forty-eight issues between Spring 2000 and 2017



Let Us Record The Atoms As They Fall

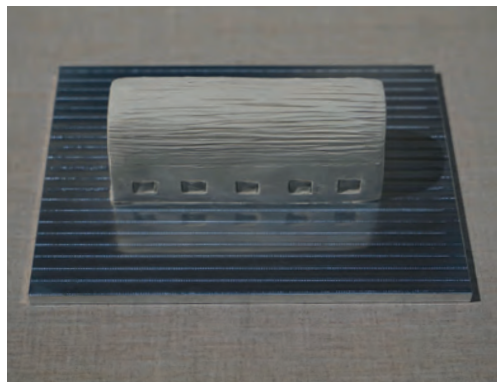
Bridget Smith's final exhibition as part of her Residency at Swedenborg House, *Let Us Record The Atoms As They Fall*, occupied the Hall from 17 October to 30 October 2019. In the weeks leading up to the opening, the building was full of discussions of wiring, rolls of paper, slim cardboard boxes containing glass slides and strange globular lights

AVERY CURRAN

For this exhibition, Bridget responded to Swedenborg's writings and drawings held in the archive from his scientific and visionary periods. As she put it, the exhibition reflected 'a suspended state between interior and exterior, the earthly and otherworldly'. This mood was apparent throughout the Hall, manifesting as a series of abstract and intriguing artworks. A massive mesh screen was stretched across the room, printed with shapes like the atoms of the exhibition title, transforming the scale of the space. Tiny white dwellings were arranged on a table, and a series of photographic plates using long-abandoned techniques lay below the exhibition-specific lights. These elements came together to form a thoughtful and sweeping show.

The exhibition opening took place on Thursday 17 October, the bookshop a warm, well-lit space on a chilly evening. Over 150 people attended; it was a bustling, cheerful crowd and the bar in the bookshop provided a sense of conviviality.

Bridget Smith's Residency has produced an enormous variety of exhibitions and works, including the 2016 exhibition she co-curated, *Now It Is Permitted: 20 Wayside Pulpits*. She is a London-based artist represented by Frith Street Gallery, and her work has been featured in public collections in Austria, Spain, Mexico, the USA and the UK (including the V&A and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art). We are very glad to have had her involved in the Swedenborg Residency, and look forward to seeing what she does next. ■



From top. Installation view: *Wavering Light* (2019), printed fabric and steel bar (2.5 x 11.2 m); circular handwoven rush mat, 2019 (121 cm diameter). *Dwelling* (2017), 2 plasticine models on alluminium (7H, 20W, 15D cm).

PHOTOS © BRIDGET SMITH

A Tribute to Patrick H Johnson 1931-2019

James Wilson reflects on the life and work of the former President of the Swedenborg Society, Pat Johnson, who passed away in August 2019

JAMES WILSON

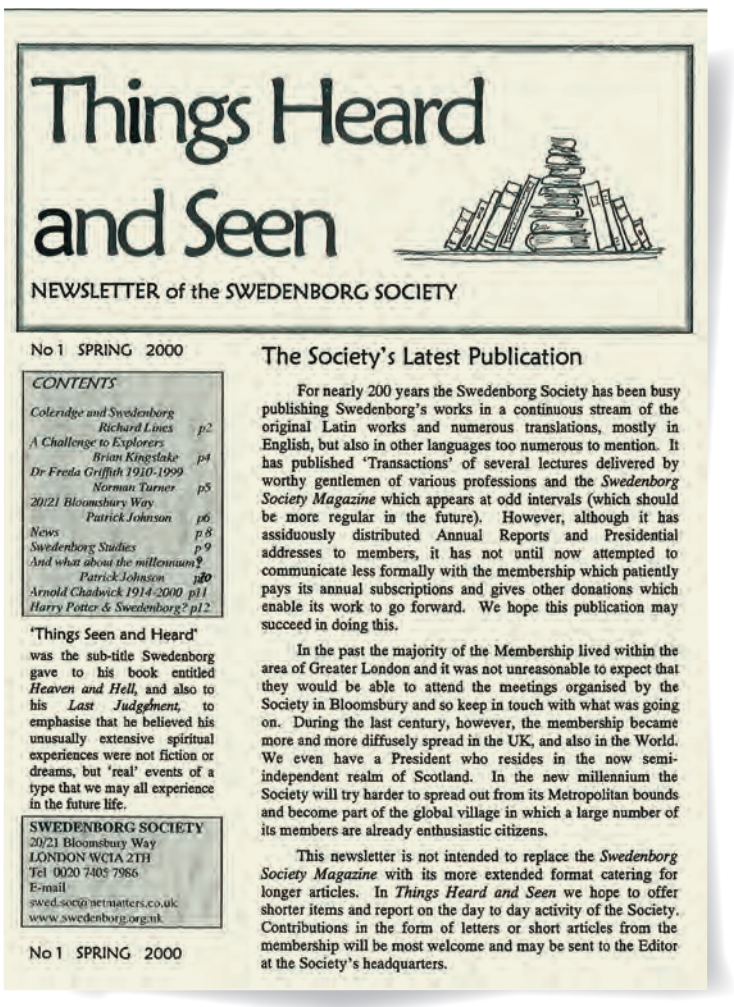
In August, the Swedenborg Society learned of the passing of Pat Johnson, a trustee of the Society, a former President and the editor of our newsletter *Things Heard and Seen*. Pat first became a member in 1949. He came from a proud and long-standing family connection to the Society, his father Philip H Johnson being a translator and editor of Swedenborg's texts.

Pat became a trustee in 1958, serving on our governing council continuously for sixty-one years, which may be a record. To verify that would take us hours, more likely days, of research, combing through our archives of Minutes and *Annual Reports*, but it is the kind of information that Pat himself would have been able to verify instantly. Pat was a great mine of information in general, with a special affection for the histories of the New Church and the Swedenborg Society.

Pat served as the President of the Swedenborg Society between 1979 and 1982. His presidential addresses were all printed in the Society's *Annual Reports*, complete with elaborate pullout illustrative charts that foreshadowed Pat's later work for the Society as editor of its newsletter *Things Heard and Seen*.

Pat and Hilda Johnson.
Opposite: front cover of the first issue of *Things Heard and Seen* (2000)

It is perhaps in this role that Pat is best remembered and loved at the Swedenborg Society. *Things Heard and Seen* was set up in 2000, with two or three issues being published each year until what turned out to be the forty-eighth and final number appearing in Spring 2017. Copies of *Things Heard and Seen* would be sent out to over a thousand subscribers around the world, as well as libraries and book rooms. In addition, hundreds more copies would be picked up by visitors to Swedenborg House, either in the bookshop or when attending events in the Hall.



Things Heard and Seen

NEWSLETTER of the SWEDENBORG SOCIETY

No 1 SPRING 2000

CONTENTS

'Things Seen and Heard'

was the sub-title Swedenborg gave to his book entitled *Heaven and Hell*, and also to his *Last Judgement*, to emphasise that he believed his unusually extensive spiritual experiences were not fiction or dreams, but 'real' events of a type that we may all experience in the future life.

SWEDENBORG SOCIETY
20/21 Bloomsbury Way
LONDON WC1A 2TH
Tel 0020 7405 7986
E-mail
swed.soc@netmatters.co.uk
www.swedenborg.org.uk

No 1 SPRING 2000

The Society's Latest Publication

For nearly 200 years the Swedenborg Society has been busy publishing Swedenborg's works in a continuous stream of the original Latin works and numerous translations, mostly in English, but also in other languages too numerous to mention. It has published 'Transactions' of several lectures delivered by worthy gentlemen of various professions and the *Swedenborg Society Magazine* which appears at odd intervals (which should be more regular in the future). However, although it has assiduously distributed Annual Reports and Presidential addresses to members, it has not until now attempted to communicate less formally with the membership which patiently pays its annual subscriptions and gives other donations which enable its work to go forward. We hope this publication may succeed in doing this.

In the past the majority of the Membership lived within the area of Greater London and it was not unreasonable to expect that they would be able to attend the meetings organised by the Society in Bloomsbury and so keep in touch with what was going on. During the last century, however, the membership became more and more diffusely spread in the UK, and also in the World. We even have a President who resides in the now semi-independent realm of Scotland. In the new millennium the Society will try harder to spread out from its Metropolitan bounds and become part of the global village in which a large number of its members are already enthusiastic citizens.

This newsletter is not intended to replace the *Swedenborg Society Magazine* with its more extended format catering for longer articles. In *Things Heard and Seen* we hope to offer shorter items and report on the day to day activity of the Society. Contributions in the form of letters or short articles from the membership will be most welcome and may be sent to the Editor at the Society's headquarters.

To call Pat the editor of *Things Heard and Seen* is perhaps a bit of a disservice. Pat didn't just garner and solicit contributions, he also wrote many articles himself (sometimes the most interesting pieces would be tidbits of Swedenborgian history Pat would throw in if he had half a column to fill!). Pat provided the unique charm of the newsletter with his hand-drawn illustrations and mastheads, and all of this material would be painstakingly cut and pasted by hand into a neat layout ready to be reproduced at the printer.

In addition to this great service, Pat wrote two books for the Swedenborg Society, both drawing on a number of talks he gave at Swedenborg Hall over the years. These books are: *The Five Ages: Swedenborg's View of Spiritual History* and *Carl Bernhard Wadström: In Search of the New Jerusalem*.

In January 2017 the Swedenborg Society formally took over the library and archive of the General Conference of the New Church. It is an understatement to say that without Pat's work cataloguing and documenting this collection, we would have been lost and overwhelmed. Pat will continue to guide us (and our many visiting researchers) whenever we go into the archive, as will the pamphlets and articles that Pat wrote on a diverse range of New Church history matters, many of which are now attracting increasing academic attention from scholars around the world.

With Pat's passing we lose a great fount of knowledge, but we can also be extremely grateful for all the useful information that he has carefully gathered, safeguarded and prepared for us so that we can make use of it for many years to come. On behalf of all our colleagues at the Swedenborg Society we thank Pat for the lifetime of service, affection and veneration that he gave to our organization. ■

Tube maps *c.* 1910

Alex Murray explores the 'accidental collection' of the Swedenborg Society archive

ALEX MURRAY

Having worked with the Swedenborg Society archive for nearly a decade, a subject that has formed a continuous thread for me—and one I often return to—is that of accidental collection. The accidental collection consists of those items that have been placed in the archive but don't appear on any of the shelf lists and that, at first glance anyway, bear no relation to the overall intention or 'narrative' of the archive as a whole. Such items lurk in the cracks between the objects that are intended to be on the shelf, operating as gateways to tangents that lead us away from the archive's main historical narrative. One such item in the Society's collection is a series of duplicate tube maps dated *c.* 1910.

These depict the tube map as it appears before Harry Beck's schematic underground map became the standard one in 1933. Previous to this depiction (which was first published in 1908 by the Underground Electric Railways Company of London) the only tube maps available were largely for either individual or, at best, a handful of underground lines. This is due to the fact that different underground lines used to be owned by various private companies who would, of course, only share information on the particular lines under their ownership. Interestingly, the map contains stations that are no longer used. The most local of these to the Swedenborg Society is British Museum station which used to sit on the corner of Barter Street directly behind Swedenborg House. The station most likely extends directly under the Society itself. British Museum station also has a brief mention in the 1972 London Underground-based slasher film *Death Line* in which the film's own fictitious Museum station (where lives the antagonist, the cannibalistic progeny of Victorian miners who were trapped in a cave-in whilst building the underground) is stated as being 'between Holborn and British Museum stations'. Seeing as this is a distance of only about 100 yards at best, it is almost certainly the one detail in the film that requires the biggest suspension of disbelief.

To return to the items at hand, their accidental inclusion in the Swedenborg Society's archive comes from a series of files which document the Society's centenary celebrations in 1910. The celebrations were a luxurious affair including such celebrity guests as Emanuel Swedenborg's descendant Elizabeth Swedenborg and grandfather of science-fiction literature H G Wells. The tube maps were likely secured to hand out to international guests and then accidentally grouped in with administrative papers and correspondence to be preserved in the Society archive. ■

● ALEX MURRAY is the librarian and archivist at the Swedenborg Society. His research interests have included spiritualism; James John Garth Wilkinson (1812-99); and Samuel Wilderspin (1791-1866). He is currently researching late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century social reform movements, with particular emphasis on Swedenborgian involvement.

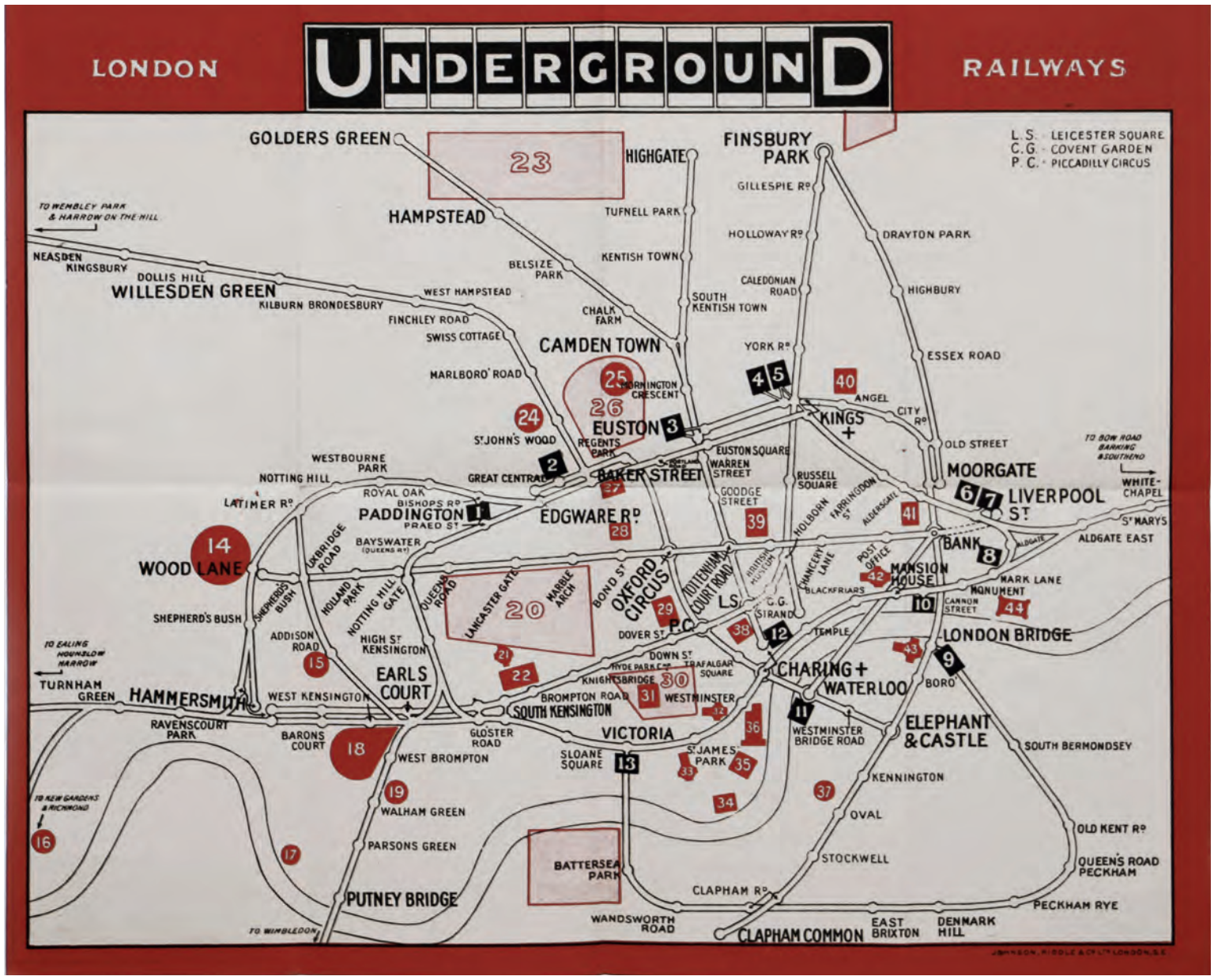


PHOTO © MAIA GAFFNEY-HYDE

Swedenborg and the Body: anatomy, alcohol & the soul

Vincent Roy-Di Piazza, John Lidwell-Durnin and David Dunér came together to discuss themes around 'Swedenborg and the Body: anatomy, alcohol and the soul' on 4 May 2019

AVERY CURRAN

On 4 May 2019, amidst alternating hail and bright sun, we welcomed three academics to Swedenborg House for a symposium on the theme of 'Swedenborg and the Body'. Vincent Roy-Di Piazza, the present recipient of the Swedenborg Society scholarship and a DPhil candidate at Oxford University, helped to bring together himself, Professor David Dunér of Lund University and Dr John Lidwell-Durnin, also from Oxford University, in service of an intellectually stimulating and convivial afternoon.

The Hall was filled with archival material selected by Alex Murray that connected to 'Swedenborg and the Body'. The glass cases held a tiny velvet-lined box containing one of Swedenborg's ear bones, and an enormous eighteenth-century copy of Albinus' classic anatomical work *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani*, open to a plate depicting a human skeleton posing elegantly in front of that most unexpected of animals in this context, a hulking rhinoceros. These items provided an excellent backdrop to the three talks, illuminating the philosophical, religious and intellectual context of Swedenborg's thought.

It's always fascinating to see the different directions people go in when thinking and writing about Swedenborg, and this academic symposium was no different. Under this broad heading the topics touched upon ranged from Swedenborg's relationship to Cartesianism, to the mystery of the missing pages of Swedenborg's travel diary, to the 1854 temperance novel *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There*. Each of the speakers' topics touched on a different aspect of Swedenborg's life and work, contributing to a wide-ranging discussion, yet all three informed each other.

After Stephen McNeilly had explained the objects at the back of the Hall and introduced the speakers, the afternoon began in earnest. Vincent's talk, '"Demonstretur animae immortalitas": the evolution of Swedenborg's theories on soul-body interaction', alighted on a central philosophical aspect of Swedenborg's thought both before and after his turn to theology. He discussed how Swedenborg differed to Descartes on these questions, and suggested that the conclusion Swedenborg came to lay the foundations for his theory of correspondences.

David picked up on strands of this talk, speaking on 'Swedenborg's Lost Dreams: The Mind-Body Problem and the Italian Journey 1738–1739'. He explored the time Swedenborg spent in Italy studying anatomy and how this informed his understanding of the relationship between mind and body. David also discussed Swedenborg's disparaging comments about various Italian libraries—and the mysterious pages of his diary from that period that have been lost to us.

Finally, John spoke on 'Spirit, Madness and the Body: Swedenborgianism and the Temperance Movement in Early Nineteenth-Century America'. His talk focused on how members of the American temperance movement in the early nineteenth century responded to Swedenborg's ideas, and how, in return, Swedenborgians approached temperance. He introduced the audience to the aforementioned temperance novel *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There* by the popular writer Timothy Shay Arthur, and discussed the debates around Swedenborg's eating and drinking habits.

All three of the talks represented the best of current scholarship on Swedenborg, and we were very lucky to have these academics together in one room! The afternoon concluded with a vibrant Q&A and drinks downstairs in the Gardiner Room. We're grateful to the speakers, everyone who attended, and the volunteers and staff who made the afternoon possible. ■

Swedenborg Doctoral Scholarship

● We are very happy to announce the Swedenborg Doctoral Scholarship, which commenced in 2018. It is a tuition-funded three-year postgraduate DPhil/Ph.D. scholarship for outstanding candidates whose research topic explores the study of Swedenborg within the Humanities and Social Sciences. We encourage applications from candidates who are able to draw connections between Swedenborgian ideas and areas of studies including the following: History of Ideas, Philosophy, Literature, Visual Arts, History of Science, Eighteenth-century Studies, Nineteenth-century social reform movements, Film Studies and History of Art.

The aim of the SDS is to support outstanding research at universities within the United Kingdom and North America for the academic study of Emanuel Swedenborg and his intellectual/cultural impact. Beneficiaries are selected by an independent academic review board. Applications are welcome all year round.

The scholarship encourages the development of a network of past and present SD Scholars who will, via social media and other means, share ideas and research. As part of our support for this network, the Society will host an annual conference or seminar during which past and present students, plus key academics and others with an interest in this field, will be asked to give a presentation of their research.

Our current SD scholar is Vincent Roy-Di Piazza. Vincent is a DPhil student in History of Science and Medicine & Economic and Social History at Linacre College, University of Oxford. Vincent previously graduated from the École Normale Supérieure in history and philosophy of science, the École Pratique des Hautes Études in religious studies and the Sorbonne in Nordic studies. A Humanities Research Council-funded student, Vincent is also the current Gilbert Ryle scholar in Philosophy of Science at Oxford and the first doctoral scholar of the Swedenborg Society.

We are very glad to have Vincent on board, and very much enjoyed his contribution to the May 2019 Swedenborg Symposium on Swedenborg's understanding of the soul and the body. We welcome any other prospective candidates to get in touch! ■

Our Late Familiars

IAIN SINCLAIR & IAN WILKINSON

● On 2 April 2020 Swedenborg House will collaborate with Goldmark on an event launching *Our Late Familiars*, an unforgettable and unsettling book with photographs by Ian Wilkinson and writing by Iain Sinclair. *Our Late Familiars* includes sixty-seven colour photographs by the artist Ian Wilkinson, taken in the catacombs of Palermo. To the haunting images of the catacomb dead he has added bird skeletons, creating ambiguous, curious tableaux. Iain Sinclair's accompanying text takes in both the decaying majesty of Palermo and the destination of the dead. Goldmark is an art and ceramics gallery, film producer, book publisher, printmaker and scholarship hub.

Join us for the launch, which will include a short film, talks from Iain Sinclair and Mike Goldmark and a drinks reception. More information about the launch will be announced soon on our website. ■

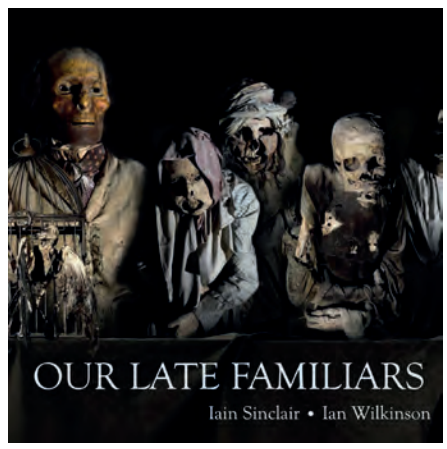


PHOTO © IAN WILKINSON

Friends of Swedenborg House

● Over the summer we launched our new Friend of Swedenborg House programme. This is a great way to support the work we do here, and the best way to stay up to date on our busy programme of events, our publication schedule and more.

When you become a Friend, for just £5 you'll receive a free gift of a sketchbook or notebook and a subscription to the *Swedenborg Review*, where you'll find a variety of articles, ranging from an interview with David McKee, the creator of Mr Benn, to an essay about the Swedenborgian ideas at the heart of the 1990 film *Jacob's Ladder*.

Here is a full list of the benefits you will receive as a Friend of Swedenborg House:

- 20% discount on books
- Free gift of a sketchbook or notebook
- Free subscription to the *Swedenborg Review*
- Priority booking and free access to all events
- Advance notice on all events and publications
- Free entry to the museum
- Free Friend of Swedenborg House card

If you wish to become a Friend of Swedenborg House, feel free to email avery@swedenborg.org.uk for more information, or visit https://www.swedenborg.org.uk/be-a-friend/ ■

Internship Review

ALEX ROWE

● My discovery of Swedenborg House and the resulting internship came to fruition on a sunny but cold winters day last year. By chance, I stumbled into the warmth of the bookshop, and I soon found myself eagerly enquiring as to whether the Swedenborg Society had any positions or work available. Despite having never heard of Emanuel Swedenborg, my enthusiasm and interest in literature and science coupled with my curiosity as to what went on within this interesting, Grade II listed building soon took hold and shortly after I found myself applying for an internship within the Society. Fast forward to the present day and I am currently nearing the end of my three-month contract, which has seen me work on a variety of interesting projects, from writing book reviews for publications to proofreading various essays and documents.

The office in which these projects have been undertaken during my internship has a calm and welcoming atmosphere, which mirrors the attitudes of the staff that work within it and I have found the work to be engaging and believe myself to have learnt a lot about the Swedenborg Society and Emanuel Swedenborg. Despite now having been a part of activities, events and publications with the Swedenborg Society for nearly a year as part of my internship, I still feel that Emanuel Swedenborg has many secrets and quirks that I am yet to discover and I have learned to expect the unexpected. Whether I am typing up an essay or whether I am proofreading a manuscript, preparing it for publication, I know that one thing is for certain; my chance entrance into the bookshop has led to far more then I could ever have expected. ■

IMAGE (FILM SYILL) © JOSH APPIGNANESI

Residency Announcement

Chloe Aridjis begins her participation in the Swedenborg Residency 2019-2020

AVERY CURRAN

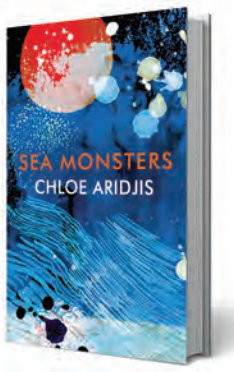
We are delighted to announce that Chloe Aridjis has undertaken the Swedenborg Residency for 2019-20. Chloe is a London-based novelist and writer. Her most recent novel, *Sea Monsters*, was published in 2019 by Chatto & Windus, and was described by *The Guardian* as 'precise, strange, evocative and wise'. Her 2009 novel *Book of Clouds* was published in eight countries and was awarded the French Prix du Premier Roman Étranger. Her 2014 novel *Asunder* was described by *The Independent* as 'rapturous and enraptured reading'.

Chloe's work features enchanting fantastical themes, from the mysterious troupe of Ukrainian dwarves the protagonist of *Sea Monsters* follows to Zipolite, Mexico, to the miniature eggshell landscapes populated with moths in *Asunder*. These dreamlike worlds evoke some of the stranger, more surreal aspects of Swedenborg's work.

Chloe's first act as part of the Swedenborg Residency was to judge our annual Swedenborg Film Festival. Featuring new films of twenty minutes or under and co-curated by Gareth Evans (Whitechapel Gallery) and Nora Foster (Frieze), the Swedenborg Film Festival invites entries from the latest emerging and established talent of experimental and artist film. This year's theme was the Swedenborgian concept of 'Use and Purpose'.

The Swedenborg Residency programme was initiated in 2009. It aims to create a forum for researchers, writers and artists to access and engage with the Swedenborg Society's remarkable library, archive and building. The previous Artist in Residence was Bridget Smith, a London-based artist working in film and photography. Bridget has exhibited her work internationally featuring in public collections in Austria, Spain, Mexico, the USA and the UK (including the V&A and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art).

During her Residency at Swedenborg House, Chloe will be involved in a series of events and publications. The programme allows for a great variety of responses, and all the Residencies so far have resulted in diverse, exciting works. We are very much looking forward to working with Chloe and are eager to see how she responds to the programme. Further announcements are forthcoming! ■



Sea Monsters
By CHLOE ARIDJIS

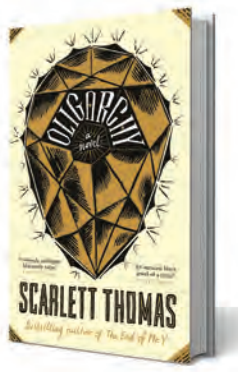
CHATTO & WINDUS, 2019
173 PP; £12.99
ISBN: 978-1-784-74193-8

Chloe Aridjis's most recent novel, *Sea Monsters*, is a contemplative, atmospheric narrative of a journey taken by seventeen-year-old Luisa in 1980s Mexico exploring themes of adolescence, loneliness and rites of passage. Luisa runs away from her home in Mexico City with her friend (or perhaps more than a friend) Tomas. Captivated by the idea of searching for a troupe of Ukrainian dwarves escaped from a Soviet circus, she and Tomas travel to Zipolite, along the 'beach of the dead'. Highly recommended, particularly for anyone who enjoyed Chloe's previous books, *Book of Clouds* and *Asunder*. ■

The Siblys Of London
By SUSAN SOMMERS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018
360 PP; £79.00
ISBN: 978-0-1906-8732-8

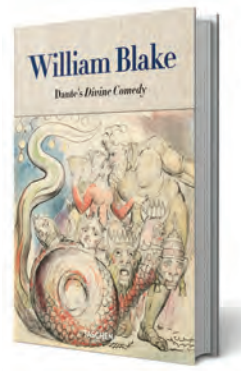
The Siblys of London is a thorough and engaging examination of two brothers, Ebenezer and Manoah Sibly, amidst the milieu of Georgian London. This book is an important contribution to the study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Swedenborgianism, as Manoah was pastor to a Swedenborgian church, but also touches on many intriguing subjects, including astrology, forgery, and quack medicine. Through Sommers' capable use of a variety of sources, from sermons to horoscopes, the tumultuous period is captured through the lives of these two remarkable men. ■



Oligarchy
By SCARLETT THOMAS

CANONGATE, 2019
224 PP; £14.99
ISBN: 978-1-7868-9779-4

In Scarlett Thomas's latest novel, *Oligarchy*, fifteen-year-old Natasha, plucked from poverty in Russia by her oligarch father, navigates the world of pressure and privilege at Princess Augusta's School. It is simultaneously a darkly comic dive into the lives of elite teenage girls at a boarding school, a murder mystery and an exploration of the impact of social media on body image. It manages to span all these categories with ease and humour. Scarlett gave an excellent talk at Swedenborg House about the role of diet in Swedenborg's writings and mysticism in general, imbuing the novel with a new light altogether. ■



Dante's *Divine Comedy*
By WILLIAM BLAKE

TASCHEN, 2017
464 PP; £30.00
ISBN: 978-3-8365-6863-0

William Blake's drawings for Dante's epic *Divine Comedy* have been reissued by Taschen, in a beautiful volume that would be equally at home in a library or on a coffee table. In the years just before his death, Blake produced 102 spectacular illustrations featuring strange beasts, abstract architecture and a storm of souls. In his characteristic style, he depicted hallucinatory versions of purgatory, heaven and hell. Blake's interest in Swedenborg is well-documented, and these illustrations (with accompanying extracts from the poem) are well worth a look for another depiction of the afterlife from the visionary poet and artist. ■

The Hand Book Of Hopes and Dreams
By SALLY KINDBERG

DESIGN FOR TODAY, 2019
20 PP; £5.00
ISBN: 978-1-912066-64-3

Sally Kindberg's *The Hand Book of Hopes and Dreams* is an unusual twist on a familiar concept: the fortune teller. Instead of the classic playground game, she has created a beautifully illustrated concertina-style leporello, in which the reader follows the adventures of a wide cast of characters, from the front half of a pantomime horse to an astronaut. *The Hand Book* is a limited edition published by Design for Today—pick up a copy in our bookshop. Sally runs our children's drawing workshops at Swedenborg House and her work is always a pleasure to experience. ■

Four Teachings
By EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

SWEDENBORG SOCIETY, 2019
634 PP; £39.95
ISBN: 978-0-85448-208-51

The dual-language edition of Swedenborg's *Four Teachings* is the latest publication from Swedenborg House. This handsome boxed set comprises four gold-embossed individual volumes in an elegant board slipcase, with both the Latin text and a brand new English translation from John Elliott. Elliott was made a member of the Royal Order of the Polar Star by the King of Sweden in 1999 in recognition of his translation of Swedenborg's *Arcana Caelestia*. The *Four Teachings* are an essential addition to the library of anyone interested in Swedenborg's theology. ■

The Major Works
By JOHN MILTON

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008
965 PP; £13.99
ISBN: 978-0-19-953918-5

John Milton's *The Major Works* is an authoritative collection of poetry and prose that provides an insight into the upheaval of the seventeenth century. Orgel and Goldberg's introduction places Milton as a radical, explaining his role as a catalyst for change amidst the turmoil of the English Revolution. Milton's influence includes William Blake, whose *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* was influenced heavily by both *Paradise Lost* and Swedenborg. Milton and Swedenborg broke with the traditional interpretations of the Bible, and their readings were considered heretical in their time. ■

Imaginal Landscapes
By WILLIAM ROWLANDSON

SWEDENBORG SOCIETY, 2015
78 PP; £12.95
ISBN: 978-0-85448-183-5

In *Imaginal Landscapes*, William Rowlandson cites Borges as saying 'asleep in my dreams, I see or converse with the dead'. *Imaginal Landscapes* not only explores similarities between Borges and Swedenborg, it raises the question as to whether Borges himself was more than a scholar. Was he, like Swedenborg, a mystic? As Rowlandson delves into comparisons between Swedenborg's and Borges's works it becomes increasingly obvious that he is not simply finding similarities between these two great literary figures; he is challenging the very criteria used to classify them. ■

SWEDENBORG REVIEW

EDITOR: Stephen McNeilly
CONTENT EDITOR: James Wilson
ART EDITOR: Jonathan Sellers
COPY EDITOR: Avery Curran

THE SWEDENBORG REVIEW is a biannual periodical from Swedenborg House featuring articles and reviews on contemporary events and books plus other cultural and literary activities.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG
Described by Jorge Luis Borges as 'the most extraordinary man in recorded history' Swedenborg is today acknowledged as one of the most important writers of the eighteenth century and a pioneering figure in the history of Western thought. He was a key influence on William Blake, Honoré de Balzac, W B Yeats, S T Coleridge, Fyodor Dostoevsky and many others, and his theory of correspondences is rightly understood as one of the defining influences on Romantic and Symbolist thought. His work has also shaped the reception of Zen Buddhism in the West and more recently, through Czeslaw Milosz, Italo Calvino and A S Byatt, we see his name re-emerge in relation to 'pyschogeography', 'historical realism' and 'magical realism'. For more biographical details visit www.swedenborg.org.uk

SWEDENBORG HOUSE is home to a wide range of cultural, artistic, educational and intellectual activities. Based in Bloomsbury, London, it boasts a bookshop, a museum, an exhibition and lecture programme, reading rooms, a unique historical archive and library with a rare collection of artefacts, and Swedenborg Hall: a stunning neoclassical lecture theatre. To keep up to date with the latest news regarding our events and publications, visit our website and join our mailing list. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Wordpress.

For information on submitting work to the *Review* contact the email address adjacent.

CONTRIBUTORS
ANONYMOUS BOSCH is a photographer and artist.
JACOB CARTWRIGHT is an artist and filmmaker.
AVERY CURRAN is Publishing Assistant and Events Co-ordinator for the Swedenborg Society.
MAIA GAFFNEY-HYDE is the Publishing and Press Assistant for the Swedenborg Society.
MICHAEL HAMPTON is a poet, book artist and critic whose work has appeared in *Art Monthly*, *Frieze* and *The White Review*.
WILLSHAW HUGHES is a freelance writer and photographer.
DAVID LISTER is a retired surgeon and Chair of the Swedenborg Society.
MICHELLE LANDSON is the Community Outreach Coordinator at the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park.
STEPHEN MCNEILLY is the Executive and Museum Director of the Swedenborg Society.
ALEX MURRAY is the Librarian/Archivist at the Swedenborg Society.
PAUL O'KANE is an artist and writer, and a Lecturer in Fine Art.
IAN SINCLAIR is a writer, broadcaster and filmmaker.
SUSAN SOMMERS is Professor of History at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.
DT SUZUKI was a renowned writer on Zen Buddhism and international ecumenical activitist.
JAMES WILSON is a novelist and writer, and also an Editor for the Swedenborg Society.
ALEX ROWE is a science fiction writer.

ADVERTISING: info@swedenborg.org.uk
ENQUIRIES: info@swedenborg.org.uk
LETTERS: info@swedenborg.org.uk

ISSN: 2632-9360
ISSUE: no. 2
PRICE: £1.95

FREE: to Members and Friends
UK POSTAGE: £2.80
EUROPE POSTAGE: £4.00
REST OF THE WORLD POSTAGE: £5.00

PUBLISHED BY: The Swedenborg Society
PRINTED BY: Rapidity, Citybridge House, 235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD

SWEDENBORG REVIEW
Swedenborg House
20-21 Bloomsbury Way,
London WC1A 2TH
UNITED KINGDOM
+44 (020) 74057986
www.swedenborg.org.uk

Charity registration number: 209172
Company registration number: 00209822

ISSN 2632-9360
9 772632 936002