

Khippam Vayama- Strive earnestly

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS THEMES IN THE
LIFE OF FL WOODWARD.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

***Khippam Vayama- Strive earnestly*¹**
Cultural and Religious Themes in the Life of FL Woodward.

FL Woodward, born in Norfolk in 1871, was inspired by the late nineteenth century fascination with Buddhism, mediated by the influential Theosophical Society, to volunteer himself for service in the Society's Buddhist educational mission to Ceylon. Woodward formed Mahinda College, Galle, into the premier Buddhist institution in southern Ceylon with considerable influence on the Buddhist Revival and the nationalist movement. Woodward's promotion, through the school, of 'Protestant Buddhism' with its emphasis on laicisation and access to the Buddhist Canon, to which he personally contributed, helped establish the shape of twentieth century Sinhala Buddhism. His strong promotion of national culture, and particularly use of the vernacular, also contributed to the religio-linguistic shape of twentieth century Sinhala nationalism, though not necessarily in a form with which Woodward would have approved.

While Sinhala Buddhism and nationalism readily absorbed those aspects that furthered its aims, it decidedly rejected Theosophical accretions and moderation which ultimately compromised Woodward's continued presence. He retired to Tasmania to devote the last thirty three years of his life (1919-1952) to editing and translating the Pali Buddhist Canon and providing a Concordance, a work of considerable, if obscure, scholarly importance.

FL Woodward has the prismatic qualities of a subaltern life that sheds light on social and religious transformations of the late nineteenth century within an imperial paradigm, and illuminates the parallel aspects of personal and cultural formation. Consequently, this is not a definitive biography but a study that appropriates Woodward's endeavours to examine a number of disparate historic and cultural themes, that would not be considered in this particular configuration but for the fact that Woodward lived them.

Woodward's presence in both Ceylon and Tasmania presents as an odd tale of eccentric existence on the periphery, but far from being atypical, Woodward exhibits identifiable nineteenth century themes, albeit themes that inhabit the margins and decentred aspects of his times:

¹ *Khippam Vayama pandito bhava* (Strive earnestly, become wise)- from the *Dhammapada*; also chosen by Woodward as the motto for Mahinda College, Galle, Ceylon.

-the exploration of alternative religiosity- Buddhism and Theosophy- with its subsequent impact on culture and politics, was a significant sub theme of nineteenth century endeavour.

-the contribution to education in Ceylon, while unusual for its Buddhist inflection was within the context of nineteenth century imperial endeavour, an obverse emulation of missionary activity.

-retirement to Tasmania, far from a departure to the periphery, was part of a pattern of Anglo-Indian settlement that shaped the demography of Tasmania until the middle of the twentieth century.

-the attraction to editing and translating Buddhist scriptures and commentaries, to which Woodward's contribution was considerable, represents an extension of nineteenth century fascination with philology and textual criticism.

Woodward's attraction to Buddhism and Theosophy, an alternate religiosity that appears eccentric, demonstrates a perennial religious questing which, Winnicott shows, resides within the centre of cultural formation. Said's examination of the interface with the *Other* on the cultural plane is aligned with Winnicott's psycho-analytic examination of the relationship of *Self* to *Other* at the personal level to offer a means of exploring the imperial experience, and in particular, the personal interest in religious ideology emanating from the *Other*.

Woodward's experience brings together the religious encounters of the nineteenth century with the present *fin de siècle*, illuminating the fascination with alternate religions, cults and niche beliefs by the middle class and educated, and the persistent contrast of the rational and irrational. Woodward's life and ideas while apparently eccentric, are, in fact, within the ordinary impulses of his time, though what the character of Woodward reveals, is that within apparently peculiar faith, resides a voice able to transcend the content of belief to touch the lives of others with thought and meaning.

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Glossary.

Attha-Sil: the eight precepts taken by an *Upasaka* (lay devotee)
Ayurveda: indigenous medicine

bhikkhu: monk or priest
Burgher: of mixed race
dagaba: dome-shaped reliquary
dana: charity, alms-giving
deva: a god
Dharma or Dhamma: Buddhist doctrine and belief.
Durava: toddy-tappers caste
Goyigama: cultivator caste
Jataka: stories of the Buddha's former lives
Kalpa: a vast period of time; aeon; part of an ongoing cycle of progress and decline
Kachcheri: headquarters of district administration
Karava: fisher caste
Mahayana: the Buddhism of Tibet, China & Japan
Mawatha: road
Metteyya Buddha: The Future Buddha; also *Maitreya*
Moor: common term applied to Muslims in Ceylon
Mudaliyar: honorary 'native' title
Muhandiram: assistant to Mudaliyar; honorary 'native' title
Nikaya: Buddhist sect
pañña: wisdom
pansil: The five basic precepts of Buddhism
pansala: temple schools
Parittas: Buddhist chants of protection and well being.
pirivena: monastic colleges
poya days: days aligned with the moon's phases; religious holidays
puthujjana: the ordinary ignorant person
Salagama: cinnamon peeler caste
samsara: the cycle of birth, death and rebirth
sangha: order of Buddhist monks
Sasana: Buddhist dispensation
savaka: (literally, 'one who has heard'); a person who has entered the Buddhist Path
sila: morality
Tamil: Hindus; mainly in the north
Thera: lit. 'Elder'; a senior monk
Theravada: the Buddhism of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand
Upasaka: lay devotee
upasampada: higher ordination
Vesak: full moon day in May marking the Buddha's birth, enlightenment & death
vihara: Buddhist temple

Abbreviations

BTS: Buddhist Theosophical Society
OSE: Order of the Star in the East.
PTS: Pali Text Society
TS: Theosophical Society; an abbreviation used and favoured by the Society itself
SPR: Society for Psychic Research.
FOSL: Faculty of Oriental Studies Library, Cambridge University
SLNA: Sri Lankan National Archives

Terminology

The term *Sinhala*, is the preferred term today to apply to both the language and the ethnic Buddhists of Sri Lanka.

The earlier use of *Sinhalese* to describe language and ethnicity is retained in any quotation.

The terms *Sri Lanka* or *Sri Lankan* are used only in a modern context. In general the term of the period, *Ceylon* is used to describe the country.

The term *Ceylonese* is used to refer to any indigenous person then living in Ceylon irrespective of ethnic origin.

Unfortunately, because of the limitations of available fonts, most diacritical marks in Pali have been omitted. This may, rightly, offend Pali and Buddhist scholars and I apologise in advance.

PREFACE

[Eccentricity] may even...be the Ordinary carried to a high degree of pictorial perfection.²

Over fifteen years ago, in a previous occupational endeavour, I met a visiting Sri Lankan monk who told me the story of the revered ex-Principal of Mahinda College, FL Woodward, who had retired to an apple orchard in Tasmania to translate Buddhist scriptures. The story struck me as amusing, odd, and particularly Tasmanian. Where else would such a tale be washed up on a shore; a translator of Buddhist scriptures, in an apple orchard, among people at that time, struggling to be more English than the English? The story remained with me, nagging at my interest, till the opportunity arose to explore it further.

Woodward was a difficult task as he left little evidence behind. He has taken me to Sri Lanka, among people of generosity and kindness, to work and wander archives, schools, and museums, and to visit towns where he lived and worked. The people I met in Sri Lanka altered my perspective, taught me to see in their way and tempered my arrogance. Their efforts have not been entirely successful, though, since no matter how I attempt it otherwise, the view of Woodward that emerges is still unmistakably Western, as he was himself.

He has also taken me to England, to his birthplace at Saham Toney and to Kessingland, both still unmistakably rural, where he lived as a child. I have walked the now abandoned rail link with Watton, along the shores of the mere, through the churches and houses he knew, and along the Norfolk coastline where the fishing boats were once hauled up the shores. The journey through his childhood and youth took me through the archives of the Christ's Hospital, The Guildhall, London, through Somerset House and then to Stamford, Cambridge and Sidney Sussex College. In Cambridge the archives of the Faculty of Oriental Studies proved an unexpected mine of letters hidden among material from the Pali Text Society and the papers of IB Horner, and that helped inordinately to flesh out Woodward's skeletal remains.

What has emerged from walking in the footprints of my quarry, as Manning Clark advised, is a story more complex than a simple tale of eccentricity. It has been a journey through gathering respect for a man of indisputable qualities that deny the judgement of some of his more outlandish beliefs. On examination, many of those beliefs and ideas participate in a definite pattern of nineteenth century inquiry and flirtation with the irrational, and this has obliged me to look more closely at the nature of religious and belief formation, and the seminal work of

² Sitwell, Edith. *English Eccentrics* (London: Penguin, 1972) p16.

Donald Winnicott. This has denied this work the title of biography. Instead, I have taken the life of FL Woodward to exemplify his time and place, to bring together themes and places that that would not considered together except for the fact of his living.

As a result, I have divided the thesis into two most unequal parts, an exploratory Prolegomena, followed by a detailed examination of the life and work of FL Woodward. This examination relates his life to the historical context and issues adumbrated in the Prolegomena.

The Prolegomena examines the historical context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the cultural values and beliefs that shaped the period. The pervasive interest in occult exploration that occurred in the face of scientific Positivism focuses attention on the nature of 'irrational' belief, the way subjectivity pervades thinking, and the cultural and psychological boundaries of accepted thought that were challenged during this time. An analysis of this fertile borderland leads to the work of Winnicott, whose examination of the borderland of 'transitional experience' lends explanation to the mechanisms of belief formation and throws light on the exploration of alternative 'niche belief'³ in both the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries. Such theoretical constructs as those advanced by Winnicott partake of their own explanation⁴ and can never be definitive; they are neither true nor false, only useful, which is the criterion by which they may be judged.

The attraction to occult and religious alternatives, like Buddhism, in the late nineteenth century invites examination of the Theosophical Society for its considerable influence. It dabbled in occult ideas, like astral travel, reincarnation and 'channelling' past 'lives', which continue to attract attention, and was one of the first groups to look seriously at Buddhism in the West. Significantly, it was dominated by the educated and middle class, a characteristic that has marked modern exploration of niche belief. Less analysed, has been the occasional cultist aspects of the Theosophical Society, with its adventism, chosen initiates, and cult narrative which are perennial aspects of niche belief formation. In his adherence to the Theosophical Society, FL Woodward was not only guided in his beliefs and his historically significant work in Ceylon, by the Society, he also represented that educated middle class constituency that was attracted to its many 'progressive' causes.

³ I have coined the neutral term 'niche belief' to avoid the pejorative inference and implied madness of 'cult', or the schismatic inference of 'sect'. The emergence of so many 'niche belief' systems today is too widespread for such dismissal.

⁴ Winnicott's insights are generated, by his own definition, from 'transitional experience'. Thus his explanation emanates from that which he hopes to explain, which is a logical closed loop. The usefulness of his theory, however, is not diminished by this impediment; it simply joins a long queue of other constructs with similar impediments. It also suggests such constructs are 'biographical' and, like dogs of thought, return to their owners for confirmation.

The nineteenth century flirtation with unreason in the period after 1880, which has so much in common with, and has fuelled so much of, late twentieth century New Age enthusiasm, is, when analysed in terms of Winnicott's concepts, as much a part of the perennial questing and creativity of human endeavour, as are science, politics, history or other elements of social construction. The fact that some of the products of this endeavour have generated ideas and beliefs that sometimes disturb and perplex is only to suggest the process in itself does not always discriminate. After all,

Dreams are like dragon's teeth. Sometimes they spring up flowers. Sometimes armed men.⁵

The second part of the thesis looks more closely at the life of FL Woodward. His early life in England is viewed in the context of the religious challenge of the time, the reaction to Positivism, and the growth of alternative belief. On a personal level, his adolescent 'distress' is examined as a 'creative illness' that appears as a 'reaction formation' leading to beliefs obverse to origins. His interest in Buddhism and Theosophy was not particularly unusual for the period, though for Woodward, it was a 'conversion' that released a creative flare that was consumed in his important educational work in Ceylon. His promotion of a laicised Buddhism with a nationalist inflection, in the South, the traditional cauldron of Lankan activism, had a significant effect on elite formation and the values carried into Independence.

Woodward's journey to Tasmania followed the familiar path of colonial retirement, though his choice of occupation, translating Buddhist scripture, was unusual. His work in this area contributed significantly to scholarship but was important, also, in making works of the canon available to a public both in the West and in Sri Lanka. His life in Tasmania attracted attention, not for his work, but for his undeniable benevolence, his unusual grace and goodwill, and his humour. Returning to the Winnicott's analysis, however, rescues Woodward from dismissal as benign eccentric. His beliefs, when examined, reveal a rich intensity that transcends the content, to present an enactment of considerable compassion, saintly disposition, and the demeanour of a natural mystic.

⁵ West, M. *Summer of the Red Wolf* (London: Mandarin, 1994) p184.

*Khippam Vayama- Strive earnestly*⁶
CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS THEMES IN THE
LIFE OF FL WOODWARD.

INTRODUCTION

The story of Frank Lee Woodward is a Tasmanian tale yet entirely *Other*. From the moment of invasion and dispossession, the story of Tasmania has been of other landscapes, other places, other people; landed lives and alien thought settling uncomfortably within an unfamiliar landscape. The lives lived within its coastal outline, along the veins of its estuaries and among the fragmented hills and valleys of its dissected landscape, were often lives earnestly constructed elsewhere, dreams to be founded in a place only imagined. But Tasmania is a landscape steadfast to its own design, a place of great melancholy and sadness, animated by silent light, green and golden, sifted through leaves. It has shaped dreams to itself, fulfilled some in ways unexpected and denied many, leaving the residue of their stories.

Tasmania, like many peripheral places and antipodean corners of the world, has acquired its share of oddities, like adventurer, convict and one time self proclaimed ‘King of Iceland’ Jorgen Jorgenson⁷ or Ikey Solomon, arch thief, receiver and model for Dicken’s character of Fagin. Even the Establishment attracted its colourful characters, like the Lt. Governor, Col. Thomas Davey,⁸ whose disregard for convention was notorious, or the roistering parson and first colonial chaplain, Rev. Robert Knopwood. Tasmania also acquired many content to live in

⁶ *Khippam Vayama pandito bhava* (Strive earnestly, become wise)- from the *Dhammapada*; also chosen by Woodward as the motto for Mahinda College, Galle, Ceylon.

⁷ While in Iceland he imprisoned the governor and proclaimed himself sovereign. After an eleven week reign he was arrested by the British and gaoled. See Robinson, JM. *Historical Brevities of Tasmania* (Hobart: Tourist Bureau, 1937) p45-47.

⁸Smith, C. *Tales of Old Tasmania* (Melbourne: Rigby, 1978) p13. Variousy, ‘Mad’ or ‘Drunken’ Davey was made Lt. Governor in 1813 and was recalled in 1817.

obscurity, recluses that gravitate to the margins, eschewing the metropolitan centres and intellectual hives of neoteric activity. Relevance and recognition were not for them factors in pursuit of their intellectual or other obsessions. The story of Frank Lee Woodward appears at first sight to lend itself to such a characterisation; another tale of eccentricity and non-conformity.

A young man of 32, Woodward left England in 1903, at the height of Empire, to become Principal of Mahinda College, a Buddhist high school in Galle, Ceylon⁹. After sixteen years at the helm of school he built into one making a significant contribution to Sri Lankan social, commercial and political life, Woodward retired to Tasmania, to an apple orchard on the Tamar River, to spend the remainder of his life editing and translating the scriptures of the Southern Buddhist (Theravadin) Canon. It was an odd merger of location and occupation, but he was a man of simplicity and purpose, charm and compassion, who maintained an aura of grace that affected many with whom he had contact.

His story, though, begs immediate questions. What moved the man to an interest in Buddhism at a time when Christian missionaries abounded and every proper English child, at some time, dreamed of going forth with the Word to succour suffering Hottentots? Even granted his interest in Buddhism, what possessed him to live in such anonymous remoteness in Tasmania to engage in such extraordinary exertions, of interest, it seemed, only to a small coterie of academics?

⁹I have maintained language and descriptions of the time and have only altered usage when appropriate.

The story of Woodward's life seems an unusual conjunction of time, place, and purpose, and his endeavours to have been a task of Casaubon¹⁰ proportions and apparent futility. One could retire from a superficial overview of the man with such a representation - an amiable, eccentric non-conformist who did much to add 'colour' to his district - and in this way dismiss both the life and the endeavour. Yet rarely is any life irrelevant, for it is never that easy to escape the ties of one's time. No matter where anyone stands in relation to the cultural remainder, everyone in some sense voices their historical time and place for ".....every actor...in the human drama, whether principal performer or simple spear carrier, is prompted to read assigned parts."¹¹

By decentring historical discourse from essentialist summation and generalisation, voices of particularity emerge to give human form to discourse. They have stories to tell which endear their times and lives. They rarely exist as carriers of change and have minimal impact on events that might be termed historical. However,

The aspirations of an age usually tells us more about its inner life than do its surviving achievements. Relatively few people contribute in any individual way to those products of civilisation that are lastingly apparent to succeeding generations. Art, architecture, literature, government, even commercial prominence are achievements of a small minority in any population. The ideals and ambitions that animate that minority, however, may be much more widely shared.¹²

It is often within the stories that surround people's lives, stories that form part of personal mythology, that tell of their inner and outer lives, of *Self* and *Other*. They are numinous, revelatory.

¹⁰I refer to the character in *Middlemarch* not the historical personage parodied by Eliot.

¹¹Gay, P. *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud Volume II. The Tender Passion* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) p4.

¹²Clausen, C. "How to Join the Middle Classes, with the help of Dr Smiles and Mrs Beeton." *American Scholar* Summer 1993 p1.

...[S]ince everyone belongs to a class with certain predictable styles of thought and conduct.....the portraits the psychoanalytically informed historian may draw of individuals can throw welcome new light on their class and their time.¹³

While, on the face of it, Woodward appears as some amiable eccentricity, pursuing arcane studies of minor Victorian and Edwardian relevance in the peaceful remoteness of Tasmania, further examination discloses patterns that place him within a wider field of behaviour and endeavour. Woodward's choice of Tasmania as a place of abode, becomes less remarkable in the light of the now largely forgotten path of Anglo-Indian settlement, investment and retirement. His interest in Buddhism, far from being an obscure attraction, formed an important sub theme of nineteenth century intellectual exploration, often mediated by the eccentric endeavours of the Theosophical Society. The reach of this organisation went considerably beyond the bounds of its membership and its influence persists to this day in a continuing interest in a "New Age" religiosity that can "embrace 50 mutually exclusive and contradictory beliefs without suffering neuronal meltdown."¹⁴

Exploration of Woodward's interests and endeavours always seems to begin in non-conformity and end in uncovering a pattern conforming in some way to the themes and sub-themes of his times - not necessarily within the cultural mainstream, more an aspect of *demi-monde* existence, but nevertheless participating in the wider cultural values and ideas of the period. His decision, for instance, to take up the role of Principal in a Buddhist school in Ceylon seems contrary to the imperialist impulse, yet on closer examination, it still forms an essential outcome of nineteenth century orientalist endeavour and imperialist 'service'. Even

¹³Gay *The Tender Passion*. p4.

¹⁴*The Australian Weekend Review*, June 22-23, 1996, article by Adams, P "So gullible, you wouldn't believe it" p2.

Woodward's bachelorhood shares in a significant social phenomena of the time, reflecting an aspect of late nineteenth century masculinity. Woodward no-where escapes his times. Nor should he.

Woodward's consuming interest in religious exploration, which upon examination reflects too, the preoccupation of the period, poses particular problems for the historian. Examination of Buddhism and other eastern faiths as part of a social movement of the time grants an historical relevance, although historians baulk at any examination of the religious impulse itself, perceiving it within the realm of psychopathology and peculiarity. Yet the persistence with which humankind participates in religious exploration draws it within the sphere of human motivation, which is the engine of history. Seeing Woodward's religious interest as simply participating in some odd social movement avoids any imperative to examine the impulse and its connection to human motivation and intellection; and it allows one to dismiss the content, and heap it in among other eccentric elements of belief and behaviour.

'Eccentricity' has an endearing charm but it is a normative characterisation which harbours a diminution of the endeavour rather than elevating it into consideration. Woodward lends himself to such ease of dismissal as a charming eccentric and amiable recluse requiring no further attention, however not only does he participate in the wider social and intellectual impulses of his age, that in themselves deserve examination, he both transcends and reflects his times.

Woodward's endeavours form a structure for consideration of a number of disparate elements of late nineteenth and early twentieth century values, beliefs, vocation and patterns of living. His life provides a

framework that draws these aspects into particular constellation, though beyond that there is nonetheless a particular numinosity that attaches to the man, for as Storr acutely observes “There is a charisma of goodness, as well as a charisma of power.”¹⁵ And Woodward exhibited a charisma of goodness.

He may have been attracted to ideas and beliefs that have to a large extent passed out of consideration, Theosophy and its Ascended Masters, Baconianism and its ‘Elizabethan conspiracy’, yet he also obviously transcended the content of his belief, genuinely to affect people’s lives - his ideas assumed an in-dwelling that renders the detailed content irrelevant, but the effect, immeasurable. His value lies in his living that privileged many and persists into the present. And it is that aspect of religious exploration that is significant in order to arrive at Woodward’s ‘importance’.

It may be the fear of every life to arrive at the portals of death and reflect that the passions of one’s existence are as disposable as dandruff, that the effort was of immense futility and disinterest to a new generation. Woodward would find such an observation incomprehensible. His life was an invitation to live one’s convictions with both passion and compassion. He accepted the notion of ‘reversible merit’,¹⁶ that the accumulated virtue of lives lived with devotion and compassion, added immeasurably to the worth of the world.

He believed in well-lived lives, “for I think that to do what one likes to do is the human aim of life, and if you are not doing what you like you have missed the profit of this birth.”¹⁷ A well-lived life, however, in

¹⁵ Storr, *A Feet of Clay: a study of gurus* (London: HarperCollins, 1997) p24.

¹⁶ Woodward, FL. *The Buddhist Doctrine of Reversible Merit* (Colombo, 1911)

¹⁷ Letter FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, cited in

Woodward's estimation, was a life committed in some sense to the service of others, ideas unfashionable in a sceptical age, yet they are values worth revisiting for their archaeological content that reveal our past to our present selves, and possibly point some path worth travelling.

While Woodward's life was principally interior rather than within events, yet it was lived with an intensity of affirmation. He required no remembrance or elevation, and would be amused at the difficulty in piecing together his life. His greatest claim is that he lived, that he turned within himself the thoughts of his times and possibly touched some few who were enriched by his living.

for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.¹⁸

Gunewardene, DHP. *F.L. Woodward: Out of his life and thought* (Colombo: private publication, Wesley Press, No date, but probably late 1960s) p60. This short work of 80 pages, reads more like hagiography than biography and contains many errors, however it is historically important and contains a large number of Woodward's letters to his students which is of inestimable value since most are now lost. I am also grateful to Mrs Pandita Gunewardene, widow of DH Pandita Gunewardene, for her assistance.

¹⁸Eliot, G. *Middlemarch* (NY: Signet Classic, New American Library, 1964) p811.

PROLEGOMENA

Positivism, Irrationality, and Belief Formation:
The Nineteenth Century Conjunction with the Present.

Uroboros.¹⁹

“The common end of all *narrative*.....is....to make those events, which in real or imagined History move in a *strait* Line, assume in our Understanding a *circular* motion- the snake with its Tail in its Mouth.” -Coleridge, Letter to Joseph Cottle 1815.

There has always been a particular attraction to the *fin de siècle*, a mix of impatience with the undeniable passing of an era and anticipation - or dread - of the one to come. There is of course no particular significance in the closing of a century since the beginning and end are no more than arbitrary reckonings, and what is ending is merely a convention of time. Yet people think in blocks of time as they do in blocks of space, in order to ‘picture’ themselves in relation to something else, to grant perspective. As the *fin de siècle* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries move into conjunction, like some planetary alignment, it tempts auguries of comparison and significance, even though the dissimilarities are probably as considerable as the similarities.

Looking back from the end of the nineteenth century, one pauses at the close of a century of awesome change. The birth of industrialism, deemed, without exaggeration, as a Revolution, was the gift of the eighteenth century *fin de siècle*, a transformation that severed the new century from the past, unleashing unimaginable forces of social and economic difference on to the nineteenth century. Industrialism altered the nature of nineteenth century European and, ultimately, international society in a manner even more substantial than anything in the twentieth century, for, despite the litany of monumental and catastrophic events

¹⁹ The mythical symbol of the snake or dragon with its tail in its mouth.

the present era has endured, it remains, in the main, a continuation of the nineteenth century industrial impulse.

At the threshold of the new millennium, however, humanity seems poised at the foreseeable end of industrialism, at the close of two centuries of unique transformation. As history is observed through a rear vision mirror, the shape of this much touted new era of information will be defined and decided by others, though many of the 'signs' and portents are already beginning to appear, suggesting alteration to entrenched trends.²⁰ Thus it would appear that the rich seam of Adventism, millenarianism and New Age enthusiasm that gathers at any time of critical transformation, particularly at the *fin de siècle*, has been generously endowed with 'evidence' of the 'Coming' times.

The ideas, beliefs and energies of Woodward's endeavours were formed at the cusp of the *fin de siècle*, cast by the social preoccupations of the previous 25 years, and formed in the hope of the future coming times. It is impossible to comprehend and assess Woodward without understanding the assumptions of his historical context, and since his was a life of spiritual endeavour, without understanding the source of such inspiration of the spirit. Such consideration, far from simply an historical narrative, becomes a human narrative that reveals a continual questing that pervades, too, the present *fin de siècle*, to the hopes of some and annoyance of others. The seeds of Woodward's era continue to sprout in our own, even if the yield is not to everyone's taste.

²⁰If the new science of 'chaos theory', particularly Lorenz's 'strange attractors' and the abrupt alteration to hitherto stable patterns, has any relevance or analogy in social and economic modelling these changes may be more suggestive than idle speculation. The application of scientific models to social 'science', however, has had a chequered history- they remain analogous, not necessarily descriptive. See Ruelle, D. *Chance and Chaos* (London: Penguin, 1993)

The awesome change and rapid transformation endured over the period of nineteenth century industrialisation, endowed the Victorian age of Woodward's youth, with a particular anxiety, and whether the observers of the period were "partisans of the new or its troubled critics, people characterised their century as a century of upheaval"²¹, an attribute that those of the late twentieth century imagine, in their narcissism, to be theirs alone. The unreasonable assault, constancy and perplexity of change was no less for those of the late nineteenth century. The principal difference was ideological, for while the nineteenth century clung, even in dark moments, to a naïve and optimistic view of Progress and the inevitability of Improvement, the late twentieth century has lost even that solace.

The roots of belief in meliorating Progress and evolutionary change were in the Enlightenment, though there are Hermetic antecedents and an ancient Greek pedigree. Assumptions of Progress and Improvement form part of a collection of ideas that echoed through the nineteenth century, altering and assuming fresh shape and resonance. The Darwinian theme of Evolution expounded in the *Origin of Species*, for instance, was no more than a codification of what "many had obscurely felt".²² It also demonstrates "how much science is a part of the 'climate of opinion' of its day,"²³ and how often it harbours assumptions without empirical foundation.

Darwin's theory though, shaped much of late nineteenth century science and society, confirming an existing view of Progress and Improvement, of nature (and society) inexorably impelled through an inevitable

²¹Gay *Cultivation of Hatred* p425.

²²Himmelfarb, G. *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution* (London: 1959) p377.

²³Stromberg, R. *European Intellectual History Since 1798* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968) p97.

unfolding of events and change. It is not surprising, therefore, that Progress in its Darwinian manifestation was soon taken from its descriptive scientific context and applied by Spencerian apologists to ‘prove’ a collection of social prescriptions. Nor is it surprising that the themes of Evolution should take up residence in ‘progressive’ peripheral religious inventions like Theosophy that conjured evolving ‘root races’ moving towards a spiritually perfected humanity.

Darwinianism was seen as marking a symbolic turning point in the consolidation of scientific Positivism. Even the declining forces of literalist religion and piety offered little refuge or respite from the forces of science and the subsequent Secularist fall-out. Darwin’s secular significance, though, outshone his science. Darwinianism rejected anthropocentrism more emphatically than had the Copernican heliocentric cosmos, though more recent science has subjected humanity to even further indignity²⁴ by defining evolution as no more than “random motion away from simple beginnings,” rather than an impulse “towards inherently advantageous complexity”.²⁵ At least Darwin allowed, within evolutionary change, the comforting possibility of Improvement.

With Darwin, rational scientism was seen to occupy the intellectual centre, though the degree to which it colonised the periphery is arguable. Certainly scientism was a public relations success in that it became the predominant language of explanation in the late Victorian period, though it takes time for ideas to transcend language and colonise thinking. The adoption of a language of rational scientism did not necessarily displace

²⁴Flannery, T. “Defective Solutions- Good, better, best. Three words that epitomise Western civilisations belief in a constant movement towards perfection.” *The Australian’s Review of Books* Vol.1, Issue 3 November 1996. p26.

²⁵Gould, SJ. *Life’s Grandeur: The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996) cited in Flannery p26.

underlying adherence to contrary modes of thought, and sometimes it was appropriated for less than secular purposes.

Colonel Olcott, the indefatigable organiser of the Theosophical Society, illustrates the way the dispassionate language of science could be adopted for occult ends. Seeking an explanation for his curative powers, for the sensational faith healings he performed during his 1882 visit to Ceylon, he rejected “divine influence” as “charlatanism”,²⁶ preferring a rational, “strictly physiological explanation”²⁷ of ‘nerve auras’ passing between himself and the patient whose ‘mesmeric fluid’ was in ‘sympathy’ with his, much as electricity was conducted. He admitted his thesis was conjecture but believed that proceeding upon this “hypothesis would be to bring psychopathy within the domain of positive science,”²⁸ which he believed would no doubt confirm his thesis in time.

The Occult, Science, and Psychology.

However reasoned and soberly couched, from the present perspective, Olcott’s explanation is naïve and his optimism misplaced, although, within the later nineteenth century milieu, it was not all that outrageous. The optimism, that science would confirm the intuited beliefs of Progressive people, was held by many more conventional scientific minds than Olcott’s. It is also easy to forget that what today appears as conventional science has sometimes quasi occult origins, that even Darwin’s evolutionary theory embodied Hermetic assumptions, which gave familiar form, if not demonstrable evidence, to the mind of his time.

²⁶Olcott, HS. *Old Diary Leaves- Second Series 1878-1883* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House 1974) p407.

²⁷Prothero, S. *The White Buddhist- The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) p108.

²⁸Olcott, HS. *Old Diary Leaves- Second Series 1878-1883* p407. Also cited in Prothero p108. The ‘explanation’ owes much to the highly occult ideas of Mesmer, which stripped of their occultism, added much to the understanding of hypnotism.

Through the Renaissance, “Hermeticism....had been a reputable....part of the intellectual universe”²⁹ and though discredited and displaced by Cartesian and Newtonian mechanism during the seventeenth century, it enjoyed a resurgence, in altered form, in the decades after the 1780s, in Coleridge and the *Naturphilosophie* of Shelling. Significantly, this revival coincided with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution with its concomitant social dislocation. Again, as with the spirit of revival at the end of the nineteenth century, it was in reaction to what were seen as philosophies of a dismal and mechanistic science. The esoteric ideas of this revival, of a universe as “a plenum of opposed yet mutually attractive quasi-sexual forces”, fed back into scientific thought “some of the most productive hypotheses of nineteenth century and modern physics,”³⁰ such as Michael Faraday’s concepts of polarity and lines of force in electricity, as well as modern field-theory.

The counterpoint of Hermetic ideas and sober science has been more productive than is ever likely to be admitted. Hermetic and occult ideas are the obverse of science, a daemon self, and as such, often the necessary and fertile imagination, and seed of science. That is discernible, for example, in the pioneering psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jung which are accepted today as rational conventions of thought, except in behavioural and cognitive psychology. Psychoanalysis, however, “was actually born in a climate of occultism, retained its gnostic affinities”³¹ and has not altogether surrendered those affiliations.

²⁹Abrams, MH. *Natural Supernaturalism: tradition and revolution in Romantic literature*. (New York: Norton & Company, 1971) p170

³⁰Abrams *Natural Supernaturalism* p171.

³¹Crews, F. “The Consolation of Theosophy II” *The New York Review of Books* 3 October 1996 p39.

Freud engaged in what today would be regarded as highly suspect science. He used potent drugs, with less than judicious discrimination, and hypnosis to unearth ‘repressed’ memories, a dubious methodology.³² Freud exhibited, according to his biographer Ernest Jones, “an exquisite oscillation between scepticism and credulity”³³ when it came to matters occult. He accepted telepathy,³⁴ the occult significance of dreams,³⁵ clairvoyance, numerology, and he avoided particular ticket, telephone and room numbers. While this is peripheral to the substantial theory built on Freud’s work, it is nonetheless a flirtation of mind that cannot be ignored, particularly as Freud saw himself firmly within the Positivist tradition, and saw no place for nebulous ‘mysticism’.

I restrict myself to the observation of phenomena and I refrain from any application of metaphysical or philosophical considerations.³⁶

Freud’s problem was his theories were predicated on controversial premises concerning the nature of mind, particularly the concept of an ‘unconscious’, a matter of conjecture to this day. The psychoanalytic pioneers risked credibility in scientific circles and knew it, which accounts for the odd way Freud was translated into English. Strachey, Freud’s English editor, deliberately rendered Freud’s conventional idiomatic German into Latinisms; thus “das ich”, the I, is rendered as “the Ego”, “das es”, the It, as “the Id” and so on. Freud, who was fluent to the point of conducting analysis in English, never questioned it; no doubt he felt it did his ‘cause’ no harm. All of this unnecessarily

³² See- Crews, F. “The Revenge of the Repressed” *The New York Review of Books* 17 November 1994 pp 54-60. This methodology has been revived more recently, producing bizarre legal cases of sexual assault based on ‘recovered memory’.

³³Jones, E. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (NY: Basic Books, 1957) Vol. III, p381. Also cited, Crews “The Consolation of Theosophy II” p41.

³⁴Strachey, J [ed] *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1957) [hereafter “SE”] Vol.18, p219. *Dreams and Telepathy* 1922.

³⁵Strachey SE Freud Vol. 19, p138. *The Occult Significance of Dreams* 1925.

³⁶Freud, S., *Psychology and Religion* (London: Hogarth Press, International Psycho-Analytical Library, 1951) p2

obscurantism seemed intended to wrap his theories in scientific respectability, not unlike Olcott's appropriation of scientist language, and not unlike the private languages of some modern fields of academic endeavour.

Jung, Freud's early protégé, delved even more into complex occult and Hermetic belief. He was influenced by the Theosophist GRS Mead,³⁷ Blavatsky's one time secretary, and saw, like Mead, his scholarly exploration as a path to spiritual understanding and wisdom. Crews, an acerbic critic of psychoanalysis, makes the observation that Jung's concepts of 'collective unconscious' and 'archetype' presuppose some Lamarckian transmission, or how else could one "tap into the memory bank of the entire species."³⁸ Without any such means, Crews contends, he is entitled to dismiss Jung's useful means of understanding as "occult constructs".

Certainly Jung entered some strange paths. After 1913 he cultivated a trance technique he called 'active imagination' and entered a visionary state wherein he communed with the figure of a wise old man, Philemon, who acted as his spiritual guide. These were not simple conjurings, for Philemon and other visionary figures "insist upon their reality";³⁹ they were "things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce

³⁷Noll, R. *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.) p69.

³⁸Crews "The Consolation of Theosophy II" p42. The Lamarckian view that acquired characteristics can be inherited - which was discounted by Darwin - may prove to have some validity. The Australian biologist Ted Steel, in his *Somatic Selection and Adaptive Evolution- On the Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics*, proposed that the so-called "Weissman's barrier" can be breached, and genetic information can pass from somatic to germ cells and thus to the next generation. It may remain a rare occurrence and Darwinian natural selection is far from overthrown, but a view such as this may lay some genetic foundation for a 'collective unconscious' or experiential 'memory' within the species capable of transmission across generational divides. See "Come the Evolution" *The Australian* (Weekend Review) 4-5 May 1996, p5.

³⁹Noll *The Jung Cult* p210. Despite the insistence on reality, the name is oddly generic. "Philemon" simply implies a 'friend' or 'guiding personage', though the figure is borrowed from Faust. Also see Jung *Memories Dreams and Reflections* (New York: Fontana, 1971)

themselves, and have their own life”,⁴⁰ an observation that presages the later work of Donald Winnicott on the enhanced reality of ‘transitional experience’.

Crews rejects Jung’s spiritual and intellectual ‘guide’ as not unlike “the ascended ‘masters’...engaged by Blavatsky,”⁴¹ an overdrawn comparison. Nevertheless, these were extraordinarily dangerous experimentations, tarrying at the edge of commonsense, and, Jung acknowledges, not unlike “the stuff of psychosis.... found in the insane”.⁴² Jung, though, leaves a cogent account of what Ellenberger would describe as a “creative illness”,⁴³ and what Jung himself called his *nekyia* or “night sea journey”.⁴⁴ The experience undeniably influenced his theoretical ideas and cannot be readily dismissed, for Jung appreciated, more than Blavatsky, where such material appropriately resided. When considering his ‘fantasies’ he questioned their source and nature and concluded they were within the special realm of *imagination*.

“What am I really doing? Certainly this has nothing to do with science. But then what is it?” Whereupon a voice within me said, “It is art.”⁴⁵

In the pioneering endeavours of Freud, Jung and the early psychoanalysts, there is certainly much that is open to question, and much that accords more with the occult than with scientific dispassion.

⁴⁰Jung, C. *Memories Dreams and Reflections* (Fontana) p207.

⁴¹Crews “The Consolation of Theosophy II” p43. Crews is being somewhat literalist for Jung does ascribe to Philemon a special kind of reality distinguishable from ‘ordinary’ reality. He is able to say of Philemon “At times he seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality.” *Memories Dreams and Reflections* (Fontana) p 208.

⁴²Jung, C. *Memories Dreams and Reflections* (New York: Vintage 1966) p188.

⁴³ Ellenberger, H *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970)

⁴⁴Jung borrows the term from Leo Frobenius *Das Zeitalter des Sonnengottes* (Berlin, 1904) and uses it frequently in his *Symbols of Transformation* (New York: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series, 1976)

⁴⁵Jung *Memories etc* (Fontana) p 210. And while ‘art’ is subjective it is nonetheless conducted as a rational discourse with an ‘audience’ that mediates the work.

One must accept Crews' judgement that "Jung, Freud, and Blavatsky were all closer to one another than any of them was to Darwin or Pavlov."⁴⁶ However, this is not to say the resulting psychoanalytic construction was a useless, or even dangerous, occult edifice, otherwise it would have wreaked havoc on their patients. Instead, Crews caustically comments, its renders their clients "only more cheerful, self trusting, and tedious at parties."⁴⁷

Crews' dismissive attempt to link Jung and Blavatsky in occult comparison actually offers potential insight into their late nineteenth century world. While the Theosophical Society claimed to be without fixed dogmas, it nonetheless adopted Blavatsky's beliefs gathered from Egyptian, Tibetan and other sources. Of central importance, were the Mahatmas⁴⁸ of the "Great White Brotherhood",⁴⁹ the 'ascended masters' to which Crews referred. These teachers or *gurus*, living on a spiritual plane in the Himalayas, were able to communicate directly with followers and acolytes via cryptic written messages.⁵⁰

This latter aspect was to lead the organisation into controversy when an investigation by the British Society for Psychic Research (SPR), led by Australian, Richard Hodgson - a friend of Alfred Deakin - claimed that much of the phenomena surrounding the materialisation of letters from the Mahatmas was fraudulent, a claim still much disputed today.⁵¹ The SPR was a society of eminent figures, including Ruskin, Lewis Carroll,

⁴⁶Crews "The Consolation of Theosophy II" p43.

⁴⁷Crews "The Consolation of Theosophy II" p44.

⁴⁸The common use of this term among the Theosophists led to its application by Annie Besant, then President of the TS and founding member of the Indian Congress movement, to the activist 'Mahatma' Gandhi.

⁴⁹'White' in this sense implied 'purity' not skin colour.

⁵⁰I have seen one of these missives (thanks to that tireless researcher of all things Theosophical, John Cooper). Strangely, the note is written in Victorian copperplate handwriting in purple indelible pencil (common in the period), thus, it would seem, maintaining a certain 'cultural relevance'.

⁵¹ See, Harrison, V. *HP Blavatsky and the SPR: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885* (Pasadena, California: Theosophical University Press, 1997)

William James, Balfour, Freud, Jung and Henri Bergson, who were interested in the scientific investigation of psychic phenomena, though to appreciate what that meant, requires the SPR be placed in context.

The ambivalent faith and awe of new discoveries in the later nineteenth century, “made the world of science open and receptive to new hypotheses”,⁵² and the largely untouched field of mental events saw the pioneering work of Freud coexist in relative harmony with the exploration of psychic and occult phenomena, a fact Crews tends to see as sinister rather than within an historical context. The use of the term ‘psychology’ at that time, for instance, was “appropriated by the most disparate groups”⁵³ including occult, spiritualist and esoteric investigators. Far from the margins that they inhabit today, these views, for a time, held a ‘respectable’ position in the arena of scientific exploration, which is where the SPR enters the picture.

The founders of the society were so impeccably acceptable, so very Cambridge and well born, that they carried their position with them, even into a seance.⁵⁴

The intellectual experimentation, encompassing reach and eclecticism of scholarship in the late nineteenth century makes the exploration of psychology, Theosophy, Buddhism or psychic phenomena appear prosaic, rather than peculiar, and makes the world that Woodward inhabited less eccentric than it might appear at first. While he may be seen as having communed uncomfortably with the ‘irrational’, his mode of thought is historically unremarkable. Paradoxically, as the surface certainty of science increased, underlying uncertainty compounded, not least because as knowledge increased it extended the areas “where the

⁵²Hynes, S. *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968) p137.

⁵³Hynes *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* p138

⁵⁴Hynes *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* p141

human mind could see doubt”.⁵⁵ Doubt seeds the search once more for certainty, if not in the realm of unfettered scientism and dour rationality, then in the realm of irrationality.

Rational and Irrational.

The terms ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ demand some caution given their manifold meaning and normative intent. To assume that religion, for instance, resides entirely in the realm of the irrational is to deny that “[r]eligiously or magically motivated behaviour is relatively rational behaviour”.⁵⁶ Even Olcott’s explanation for his healing powers, may be quite properly regarded as rational. In this use of the terms, the distinction is simply between logically ordered discourse and that which is not, irrespective of the truth of the premises.

However, the terms ‘irrational’ and ‘rational’ serve a more complex purpose and may be as much cultural as descriptive. The application of the terms to the broad distinction between subjective knowledge and that which is empirically derived is a cultural preference derived from a Positivist social ascendancy, yet human beings rely substantially on introspective and subjective assessments of an external world. People use ordinary, commonsense, and subjective words like ‘love’, ‘loathe’, ‘feel’, ‘fear’, to explain and interrogate both the personal and external environment.⁵⁷ Without it, everyday interaction with the world would not be possible, yet there remains a materialist suspicion, even hostility, not only to “consciousness and introspection but to inwardness and the inner life as well.”⁵⁸ There is, within the depths of materialism, a “terror

⁵⁵Chadwick, O. *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p187.

⁵⁶Weber, M. *The Sociology of Religion* Introduction by Talcot Parsons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) p1.

⁵⁷Pataki, T. “Psychoanalysis, Psychiatry, Philosophy.” *Quadrant* April 1996. p57.

⁵⁸Pataki p62.

of consciousness” that derives from “the essentially terrifying feature of subjectivity”.⁵⁹

This materialist hostility and rejection appears not simply methodological, but psychological. The highly subjectivist analysis of consciousness proposed by someone like Jung invites a terrifying introspection and subjectivity which is intolerable. The solution is to draw a sufficiently narrow ring around the problem to exclude the inconvenience of subjectivity. A materialist or physicalist conception of the cosmos that reduces mental concepts to physical ones and confines reality to empirical content solves the threat of subjectivity and the terror of consciousness by defining it out of consideration. There is, of course, sufficient subjective nonsense and ‘irrationality’, occult and otherwise, to give credence to such a position.

Despite materialist and Positivist apprehensions, subjective knowledge does not necessarily equate to superstition and ‘irrationality’. It is, however, sufficiently difficult to evaluate, to present problems of persuasion. As Jung intuits, it is much like art, and while there is ‘good’ art and ‘bad’, there is no consistent means of determination, though there are nevertheless ‘good enough’ tools of discrimination and evaluation, otherwise the ‘occult’ accusation Crews levels at psychoanalysis would have overwhelmed its efficacy long ago. Whatever the indeterminacy of subjective knowledge, human consciousness relies as much on subjectivity, imagination and intuition as it does on rational faculties and objective knowledge. Without such knowledge, as Winnicott⁶⁰ astutely observes, there would be no art, no literature, in fact, no culture.

⁵⁹Searle, J. *The Rediscovery of Mind* cited in Pataki p62.

⁶⁰Winnicott, D. *Playing and Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1971)

Weber, a sociologist with an insistence on ‘objective’ scholarship, nonetheless recognised the subjective nature of human behaviour and observed “that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun”. These subjective ‘webs of significance’ are essentially cultural, from which the anthropologist Clifford Geertz takes *culture*

to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.⁶¹

‘Significance’ and ‘meaning’ are powerfully subjective, value laden terms. Even ‘interpretation’, while hopefully conducted, as Weber certainly thought possible, as a reasoned and orderly deliberation, is predicated on subjective cultural assumptions that draw on intuition and imagination, on sources that partake of the ‘irrational’.

If culture determines ‘meaning’, then it also determines language like ‘rational’, ‘irrational’, ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’. Cultural acceptance or rejection⁶² becomes the overarching arbiter of what is ‘rational’ and, chameleon like, the terms often ape one another. Ideas of acceptance or orthodoxy may masquerade as rational, yet be assumed by another generation to be quite the contrary. A flat earth evidenced by rational, commonsense pre-Copernicans became to another generation an absurd naïveté. The scene can shift such that one moment’s extreme irrationality, fundamentalism or apocalyptic vision is another moment’s quiescent foundation of ‘sound’ values and cultural commonsense. As Storr suggests, an idiosyncratic belief system shared by a few adherents

⁶¹Geertz, C. “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture” in *The Interpretation of Cultures- Selected Essays* (London: Fontana, 1993) p5.

⁶²Webb, J. *The Flight from Reason- Volume 1 of The Age of the Irrational* (London: Macdonald, 1971) Webb identifies a clear cultural definition of rational/irrational and uses irrational and the term ‘occult’ to apply to culturally rejected knowledge

would be regarded as ‘irrational’, even delusional, but “[b]elief systems which may be just as irrational but which are shared by millions are called world religions”.⁶³ Beliefs have a way of assuming meaning or madness depending on advocacy, time, and place, as the debate over modern economic ‘rationalist’ orthodoxy attests.⁶⁴

The apparent re-emergence of New Age and occult thinking in the present *fin de siècle* appears to many commentators like Phillip Adams⁶⁵ and Carl Sagan,⁶⁶ as a retreat from reason and a resurgence of superstition. As Adams expresses it, “pseudo-science and gimcrack religiosity of the New Age are hotter stocks than IBM or Microsoft.”⁶⁷ He is more troubled than his optimistic antecedent William Lecky,⁶⁸ who in 1865 heralded the demise of superstition, yet it is nonetheless a view that locates Adams and Sagan within the same Positivist and materialist lineage. While their concern that society may be experiencing a renewed descent into the ‘irrational’ is not without foundation, it may be no more than acknowledgment that Progress towards some secular and rational ideal has always been over optimistic, that the assumed triumph of scientism has ignored the persistence of the ‘irrational’ in personal and cultural formation.

The descent into unreason in late twentieth century society has led to a proliferation of niche beliefs that place rational orthodoxy in doubt, a

⁶³ Storr, *A Feet of Clay: a study of gurus* (London: HarperCollins, 1996) p203.

⁶⁴ See Ralston Saul, *J. Voltaire's Bastards- The Dictatorship of Reason in the West* (Toronto: Penguin, 1993). Ralston Saul argues cogently that far from ‘rational’, modern ‘rationalist’ economics is prescriptive and ideological.

⁶⁵ Adams, P “So Gullible, You Wouldn’t Believe It” *Weekend Australian* Weekend Review June 22-23 1996, p2.

⁶⁶ Sagan, C. *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* (New York: Random House, 1996)

⁶⁷ *The Australian, Weekend Review*. “Adams, P. “Science burns, while fiddlers are heroes.” June 29-30, 1996. p2.

⁶⁸ Lecky, WEH. *History of the Rise of Rationalism and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (London: 1870) First published 1865.

process Robert Hughes has described in forbidding fashion.⁶⁹ Hughes quotes from the prescient and apocalyptic vision of Auden's *For the Time Being*, where Herod reflects on the grisly task of massacring the Innocents and wrestles with his conscience. He knows however, if the Child is allowed free then,

Reason will be replaced with Revelation. Instead of Rational Law.... Knowledge will degenerate into a riot of subjective visions.....⁷⁰

In Herod's vision of a descent into unreason, the new cosmogonies will impose on society "epics written in private languages" echoing a distortion of values that ranks the "daubs of children" along with those of acknowledged merit. It is a society where philosophers and statesmen are ridiculed and replaced in societal estimation by a "New Aristocracy... of hermits, bums and permanent invalids", the "heroes and heroines of the New Age".

As Hughes points out, what Auden's Herod 'saw' was America of the twentieth century *fin the siècle*, "right down to the dire phrase 'New Age'". It is a society "obsessed with therapies and filled with a distrust of formal politics, sceptical of authority and prey to superstition."⁷¹ It is a society of purgatorial post-modernism which has become both prescriptive and descriptive of its world, a way of viewing that accords equal validity to various clamouring voices and beliefs, where accepted orthodoxies are overturned. The postmodernist plethora of niche belief

⁶⁹Hughes, R. "The Fraying of America- When a nation's diversity breaks into factions, demagogues rush in, false issues cloud debate, and everybody has a grievance." *Time Magazine* Feb.3, 1992. pp82-87. While I cannot speak with certainty, Auden would have grown up with the ubiquitous presence of Theosophy and, being drawn to psychoanalytic theory initially and Left politics in the 30s, would have felt its peripheral influence and observed the potential of its mode of thought. The Christmas oratorio *For the Time Being* was written in 1944, at a time of social tumult and Auden's personal move towards Christianity. If Auden was writing about the 'future', he was no doubt writing with more than an eye on the present with all the elements that have 'matured' in our times.

⁷⁰Hughes p 82.

⁷¹Hughes p82.

systems jostling for attention marks the end of hierarchy. In a parody of democratic enthusiasm, structures have flattened and been accorded equal authority. In this world everyone receives a merit certificate and a chicken stamp for behaviour.

It seems extreme, however, to place the blame for such societal turbulence on the intrusion of ‘irrationality’ into mainstream thinking, on a symptomatic movement of ideas and values, usually reserved for the margins, into the realm of orthodoxy. The tension between ‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’ has always fuelled the engine of change, creativity and societal re-evaluation. It may be more appropriate to see the upsurge and interest in unorthodox views and the spread of niche belief as a *symptom* of societal alteration, not necessarily as a cause. The end shape of this alteration cannot be foretold, despite the surge in fascination for prognostication, because *symptoms* do not shape conclusions. The characteristic of this societal alteration is not so much the clash of ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’, but the challenge, change and displacement of known *boundaries*.

Boundaries and Borderlands.

The nineteenth century was an era defining boundaries. Within Europe, the surge of nationalism saw the dissolution of old, and the establishment of new boundaries, and from within their newly delimited confines the nations spilled over into the realm of the *Other* to set new boundaries and spheres of imperial interest. What was defined was not just new boundaries but a new sense of selfhood, national and personal, a formation that required distinction from the *Other*. National, ethnic or communal identity “is contingent and relational”, defined by social and territorial boundaries distinguishing “the collective self and its implicit

negation, the other”.⁷² People usually decide who they are, by reference to who and what they are *not*, rather than by objective criteria like language, culture or race.

The sense of Britishness, for instance, was not a function of a shared geography, rather they “defined themselves.....in conscious opposition to the Other beyond their shores.”⁷³ To that extent ‘Britain’ was an artificial construction based on shared externality, first focused on a Catholic and powerful France, and later on the collective concerns of empire.⁷⁴ This pattern of defining national identity was an important imperial export which altered colonial identity formation. The nascent nationalism inspired among subjugated people, such as colonial Ceylon, was really an imperial emulation as artificial, and often more so, than the artificiality of Britain itself.

The period of national formation and imperial expansion which saw the redefinition of geographic boundaries, was echoed culturally in the examination of accepted boundaries of belief and value. It was discernible in the music, drama and art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century where the boundaries of acceptance were radically challenged: definitions of light and colour were defied by the Impressionists, reality by Surrealists, meaning by the Dada-ists. In politics the accepted boundaries of participation and articulation came under siege and ultimately altered to uncomfortably accommodate

⁷²Colley, L. “Britishness and Otherness: an argument.” *Journal of British Studies* Vol.31. October 1992, p 311. These comments are based on the work of Peter Sahlin *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain* (Berkeley, 1989) pp270-271.

⁷³Colley p 316. Colley makes the observation that the defeat of French interests in Canada provided the American colonists with an impetus to shift the focus of threat and opposition to *Other* on to the colonial authority. Thus the end of French threat in Canada was crucial to the formation of national identity and the emergence of colonial opposition.

⁷⁴Colley p322, citing Bayly, CA. *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989) p3, notes that by 1815 one in five of Britain’s male population was in uniform, such was the focus of threat.

proletarian, feminist and middle class aspiration. In the realm of belief and religion, the boundaries of orthodoxy similarly experienced challenge and alteration, and the emergence of niche beliefs like the Theosophical Society in the late nineteenth century was a part of that wider cultural formation and interrogation of boundaries.

The nineteenth century challenge to accepted cultural boundaries has spawned a social plurality in the late twentieth century that has left personal boundaries ill defined. This has offered a unique invitation to personal freedom and liberation, which if one attends to the liturgy of popular culture, would appear to have been embraced with ideological enthusiasm. However, while the lack of defined boundaries is potentially liberating, it is also as Fromm⁷⁵ has argued, an area suffused with anxiety, frequently provoking an ‘escape from freedom’ towards an authoritarian unfreedom, in essence, towards certainties and structural boundaries, despite popular rhetoric to the contrary.

To Fromm, German Nazism was a fearfully typical ‘escape from freedom’, but the exploration of alternate religiosity frequently may fulfil the same function of personal surrender, absorption in the *Other* and its imposed boundaries. The various modern religious fundamentalisms tend to be overtly inclined to authoritarianism and much New Age enthusiasm, like the Rajneesh of the 1970s and 80s, engaged in the contradictions of libertarian rhetoric and authoritarian enactment.

Boundaries remain contested borderlands between the *Self* and *Other*, ‘frontiers’ of potential chaos and disorder as well as areas rich in creativity, which is why the perennial images of ‘the American West’

⁷⁵Fromm, E. *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon, 1966)

have retained their potency, why the ‘frontier’ remains the Hollywood archetype of the struggle between chaos and order. The ‘frontier’ was also an area of great promise, creativity and renewal, as communitarian movements from the settlement of America attest, attracted as they were to some new arena of opportunity to begin again. The frontier, the borderland, was the place where boundaries literal, metaphorical and psychological, were questioned, giving rise to both positive potential and potential chaos.

Given over one hundred years of the mantra of ‘freedom’ applied to everything from art to politics, and clothing to tampons, it is hardly surprising that there is little respect offered to boundaries of behaviour and thought. The corporatisation of libertarianism and the idolatry of individualism by the extreme Right, particularly in America, have parodied freedom, which Fromm rightly identifies as, not ‘freedom from’ boundaries, but as ‘freedom to’ enact within boundaries. As Hughes alludes, values have been overturned and reversed; despite the rhetoric of personal freedom, it is difficult “to find another period of such absolute conformism in the history of western civilisation”.⁷⁶ Where the boundaries are confused, anxiety moves in, and the solutions of unreason and unfreedom, both political and religious, follow.

The rich contradictions of borderlands and boundaries, with their chthonian emotions, their abundance of creativity and potential chaos, freedom and tyranny, merit closer examination. Analysis of this arena may lend some understanding to the motivations of a person like FL Woodward, and the cultural currents that surrounded him, a means of deciphering the powerful sub-themes of occult ‘irrationality’ in both the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries. In this, the work of the

⁷⁶ Saul, John Ralston *Voltaire's Bastards* p497.

British psychoanalyst, Donald Winnicott, offers the most constructive contribution and insight.

Winnicott: *Self and Other*.

The emergence of *Self* and *Other*, according to Winnicott, is sourced in infantile splitting wherein the child begins to perceive the world (originally essentialised about mouth and breast, need and greed) not as an extension of itself as a *subjective object* or *archaic self-selfobject*,⁷⁷ but as separate and divisible, as a *not-me phenomenon*⁷⁸. This perception of separation induces a recognition of a distinction between *Self* and *Other* and with it a sense of isolation that induces fearful rage and attempts to re-incorporate the *Other*. These are seminal psychic experiences which colour the manner in which individuals organise connection with the world. In the borderland between *Self* and *Other* there is, as Winnicott described it, an arena of ‘transitional experience’ wherein arises the potential not only for personal but for cultural resolution. Nevertheless, the polarities of separation and incorporation form one of the dynamics of personal and culture tension, an experience that Said described culturally and Winnicott psychologically.

Said’s *Orientalist* paradigm⁷⁹ of an impulse towards imperialist incorporation, reflects culturally, *Self/Other* psychological impulses, but then psychically significant images and metaphors tend to ‘lift into life’ and manifest through analogous motifs on a conscious level. For instance, in a grotesque caricature, the carriers of much of the imperial

⁷⁷Winnicott, D., “Ego Integration in Child Development” in *The Maturation Processes and Facilitating Environment* (London: Hogarth Press, 1965) pp. 56-63. *Subjective Object* is Winnicott’s term and is equivalent to Kohut’s *archaic self-selfobject*. See Ornstein, P. (ed) *The Search for the Self, Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950-1978* (New York: International University Press, 1978). Winnicott, who was a paediatrician before he became a psychoanalyst, brought a unique perspective to his analysis of mother-child relations. While he never became identified as a school of analytical thought, his ideas have contributed to the theory of Object Relations and to Kohut’s Self psychology (though Kohut makes no acknowledgment).

⁷⁸Winnicott, D. “Creativity and Its Origins” in *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971)

⁷⁹Said E. *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)

European ‘dark’ side of the psyche were people who were themselves black, but then psychological motifs are often expressed in puns and parody that mock both subject and object.

The emergence of *Self* and *Other* is not a singular psychic event but a pattern of emerging and evolving realisation from an original state of infantile inflation of deific omnipotence where, “[t]he child experiences himself quite literally as the centre of the universe.”⁸⁰ The imperialist impulse is an embodiment of such intention and is thus essentially infantile and regressive, full of manipulative intent and incorporation. When France recommenced nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll in 1995, Australia and New Zealand protested that, if the process was safe, it ought properly be conducted on metropolitan French soil, but as the French Minister expressed it, “I say Mururoa is France. There is no way to see it a different way.”⁸¹ The incorporation allows of no distinction.

As the imperialist impulse originates within the dynamics of *Self/Other* relating, so too do religious and cultural impulses. Freud accepted art as a form of sublimation,⁸² but his contempt for religion is palpable; it is dismissed as illusion,⁸³ and consigned to a pejorative, Mephistophelian realm of unreality and delusion. Winnicott⁸⁴, on the other hand, embraces the term, describing the rich intermediate region between *Self* and *Other* as a field of *illusion*, yet he does not use the term in a derogatory way, as Freud frequently does.

⁸⁰Edinger, E.F *Ego and Archetype* (Baltimore: Penguin 1974) p12.

⁸¹Higgins, E. “Why France Won’t Quite Pacific” *Weekend Australian* September 23-24, 1995. p.12.

⁸²Freud, S. *Civilization and its Discontents* Standard Edition (London: Hogarth, 1953.)

⁸³Freud, S. *The Future of an Illusion* Standard Edition (London: Hogarth, 1957)

⁸⁴Winnicott, D *Playing and Reality*

If Freud wished to rule out illusion and to destroy it, Winnicott wished to foster it and to increase man's capacity for creatively experiencing it.⁸⁵

For Winnicott, *illusion* is a “necessary force in human psychic development”⁸⁶ contributing to involvement in the world of experience. However, Winnicott's use of the term *illusion* is a curious one. To most, it implies some kind of diminished reality and yet Winnicott implies a positive and enhanced reality. Unravelling the force of Winnicott's use of *illusion* opens religion and culture to an interpretation that glimpses the transpersonal possibility of human endeavour, that nourishes mental and spiritual health and allows humankind to act, create and envision beyond its biological constraints.

Winnicott's use of the term lies in its origin - *illusion* derives from the Latin “illudere”, “in-play”, and the essence of object⁸⁷ relations is the play and inter-reaction that imparts meaning and connection. This is the area of culture and creativity for “civilisation arises and unfolds in and as play”.⁸⁸ Huizinga adds sociological detail to Winnicott's psychological insights to demonstrate that play invades most human activity. Whatever the cultural endeavour, whether art, religion or sport, a ‘play-ground’ is defined with “spatial separation from ordinary life”,⁸⁹ and the activity enacted within those boundaries defined by rules and rituals. This elevates ‘play’ into *supra* ordinary experience, which is intense, absorbing and ritualistically ordered to promote social grouping. These

⁸⁵Meissner, WW. *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) p 177. Meissner is one of those unusual persons who as a Jesuit and psychoanalyst straddles two usually incompatible worlds.

⁸⁶Meissner p164.

⁸⁷“object” used here is inclusive of all relational elements external to the *Self* that are either animate or inanimate, human or otherwise.

⁸⁸Huizinga, J. *Homo Ludens* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1949) from the Forward and also p46. Huizinga wrote this highly original book in 1944 and it remains an insightful work.

⁸⁹Huizinga p19

qualities of play hold good whether it is war or law, sport or religion, poetry or philosophy, politics or historical research. The intention of play, of human performance, is “a *stepping out* of common reality into a higher order.”⁹⁰ The field of *illusion* in Winnicott is the ‘play-ground’ of interaction that occupies the intermediate space between *Self* and *Other*. Winnicott’s use of the term *illusion* emphasises not only the etymological origins, but the extraordinary transpersonal aspects, the “*stepping out* of common reality into a higher order” that characterises the intermediate area of ‘transitional experience’.

‘Transitional objects’.

Winnicott, known for his aphoristic asides, stated that there was “no such thing as a child”⁹¹, meaning the infant is defined initially by the undifferentiated connection with the mother, but it cannot persist in such omnipotence and the reality of frustrated needs intrudes on its magical world. The shift towards reality inevitably brings to the child frustration but,

[f]rustration can teach the child to perceive, adapt to, and test reality, but only out of this sense of unique fulfilment flowing from the conjunction of magical wish and attuned response, can he learn to love reality.⁹²

The child begins to pacify itself by sucking on fingers or other objects like soft toys or a blanket, and this represents an initial step, a transition, in separating from the maternal matrix and sensing objects as *Other*, as “*not-me*” possessions. These ‘transitional objects’,⁹³ which inhabit the intermediate space between *Self* and *Other*, emerge from interaction and ‘play’, creating command and connection that extends the child securely

⁹⁰Huizinga p13

⁹¹Fuller, P., *Henry Moore- an interpretation* (London: Methuen, 1993) p69 citing Winnicott. Fuller has been a significant advocate of Winnicott’s concepts and their application to art appreciation.

⁹²Meissner p167

⁹³Winnicott, D. *Playing and Reality* p5

into the world. They become intensely personal, subject to both affection and aggression, and with a vitality of their own that makes them resonant and numinous.

Over time, ‘transitional objects’ lose their particularity and “become diffused”⁹⁴ over the intermediate area, between *Self* and *Other*, where *illusion* is a precondition for the adequate appreciation of reality. In adult life the element of *illusion* “remains the basis for playing, creativity, and the appreciation of culture”⁹⁵, inherent in art or religion.

[T]he personal meaning of the interpersonal relationship, or object relationship, throughout life, *always* depends to some extent on illusion, and the workable illusion derives from one’s experience of the responsiveness of an environment that has been optimal to the development of a stable and vital self.⁹⁶

The numinous aspect of ‘transitional objects’, formed from an *illusion* which shapes the appreciation of reality in later life, makes Jung’s Philemon - which “insists on its reality” - less peculiar than Crews would wish. Winnicott makes religious exploration meaningful, and adds it in among all aspects of intellectual and cultural endeavour, not something *sui generis*.

If *illusion*, though, is defined by its etymological origins in ‘play’, then the application of this analysis to the understanding of Victorian religious exploration is apt indeed, for no period of history seems to had such an obsession with the notion of play.

⁹⁴Meissner p166

⁹⁵Bacal, H. & Newman, K. *Theories of Object relations- Bridges to Self Psychology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) p196.

⁹⁶Bacal p196

‘Of course you needn’t work, Fitzmilksoppe,’ *Punch* portrayed one headmaster saying to a prospective pupil, ‘but play you must and shall.’⁹⁷

The importance of *shared illusion*

Huizinga described ‘play’ as a conditional aspect of human society and Winnicott, as a corollary, similarly asserts that in adult life, shared illusory experience, is the “natural root of grouping among human beings”.⁹⁸ Games and ‘play’ forge alliances and ‘teams’ which are invariably held together by shared beliefs and attitudes, so the illusory experience extends not only to the formation of community but also to modes of belief. Belief derived from *shared illusion* grants entry to community and a sense of connection and normality. Human beings are inescapably social animals and all the intellectual prowess and illusion of individuality cannot avoid that, for after all, ‘individualism’, far from being individual, is nothing more than a *shared illusion* of post-Enlightenment western society.

The significance of *shared illusion* and belief is best illustrated by contrast. Since ‘reality’ is sourced in *illusion*, acceptance, for instance, of demonic encounters in a tribal culture may be very sane, but not in common western society. Such beliefs may form part of the shared illusory experience in the former, but not of the latter society where such belief may be seen as a sign of ‘madness’. These *shared illusions* are Geertz’s cultural ‘webs of significance’ that impart meaning and purpose. The emergence in the late nineteenth century of a number of groups of niche belief, like Theosophy, with sufficient shared adherence to attract respect, means they cannot to be dismissed simply as “mad”, or

⁹⁷Wood, *A Nineteenth Century Britain 1815-1914* (London: Longmans, 1969) p 257-258

⁹⁸Winnicott *Playing and Reality* p3

cultist, though that is not to say elements of madness and cultism may not have been manifested.

What may constitute ‘madness’ or cultism emerges when a person “puts too powerful a claim on the credulity of others, forcing them to acknowledge a sharing of illusion that is not their own”.⁹⁹ The more the group invests in a charismatic leader with the task of defining belief, and the more it shelters within narrow boundaries, the easier it is to impose a dysfunctional *shared illusion* and the more it will tend to descend into madness.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, traditional societies, subject to the imposition of missionary zeal or simply the onslaught of western culture (which harbours its own set of rich transitional symbols from its own *shared illusion*), can find the devaluation of traditional transitional objects and symbols so profound that they become socially debilitated and prone to the diseases of anomie, alcoholism and decline of social cohesion.

This is where, in Ceylon, the efforts of the Theosophical Society and its ‘servers’, like Woodward, were important. While their ideology was fundamentally formed elsewhere,¹⁰¹ it resonated with the indigenous symbols of Buddhist *shared illusion* being revitalised. By integrating Buddhism with the tools of western education, they instigated a diffusion and energetic reaffirmation of cultural symbols and identity that did much to repair the damage of imperial and missionary activity.

⁹⁹Winnicott *Playing and Reality* p3

¹⁰⁰ Thus groups like the ‘Jim Jones Cult’ in Guyana that poisoned hundreds in apocalyptic annihilation, deliberately isolated itself physically from its American roots to sustain belief.

¹⁰¹ Obeyesekere argues that Olcott’s Buddhism was fundamentally formed by the interface with Sinhala Buddhism in Ceylon, whereas I would suggest that the key elements of Protestant origin and western orientalist preconceptions of what Buddhism ‘ought’ to be were much more formative than any Ceylonese influence. He basically came ‘ready armed’. See:

Obeyesekere, G ‘The Two Faces of Colonel Olcott: Buddhism and Euro-rationality in the Late Nineteenth Century’ in Everding, U *Buddhism and Christianity: Interaction East and West* (Colombo: Goethe Institute, 1994) pp32-71.

Transitional Experience.

The intermediate realm between *Self* and *Other* is not static, not a state of 'being', but, as Winnicott declares, a state of '*experience*', of adaptation and re-examination of external reality. Transitional experience emanating from the intermediate or transitional environment of *illusion* retains a magical quality that engenders connection and meaning - "It is through illusion ...that the human spirit is nourished."¹⁰² Like interactive play, 'transitional experience' is creative and often realised in "religious and artistic pursuits",¹⁰³ which confirms why Jung, questioning his disturbing experiences, immediately apprehended it as like art.

Winnicott was intrigued by psychoanalyst Marion Milner's encounter with 'immediately perceived reality', of being 'struck' or 'seized' by perceptual illumination. She observed two jugs on a table and with a fluid ease, perceived, not the practical objects, but the way the *edges* of the objects vividly interacted with each other in space, what painters mean "by the *play* of edges",¹⁰⁴ which again is the creative intensity of boundaries and borderlands. This experience is frequent in artistic pursuit and has similarities with the religious experience, for the "creative faculty of a people as in the child....springs from this state of being seized."¹⁰⁵

Writers, composers and painters frequently "describe how new ideas 'come to' them as solutions to artistic problems, often after long periods of playing around with different possibilities."¹⁰⁶ Science too, far from

¹⁰²Meissner p 177

¹⁰³Fuller, P., *Images of God- the consolations of lost illusions* (London: Hogarth Press, 1985) p79. Fuller offers a more detailed examination of Winnicott and his application to art in his *Art and Psychoanalysis*.

¹⁰⁴Fuller *Images of God* p 243.

¹⁰⁵Huizinga p16 quoting from Leo Frobenius

¹⁰⁶ Storr *Feet of Clay*...p71.

the myth of laborious induction, is littered with stories of creative ‘seizures’ that have solved intractable problems. For example, in 1865 Friedrich August von Kekule, Professor of Chemistry in Ghent, was dozing in front of the fire when he had a vision of chains of atoms coiling themselves into snakes eating their own tails, a vision which led to his discovery of the ring structure of organic chemistry. The intuitional illumination of the transitional world often leap-frogs the logic of the literal world. It harbours a curious power, conviction and certainty, a creative energy engendering a magical quality that assists the individual to transcend common obstacles, whether creative or physical, in everyday life.

Winnicott’s concept of ‘transitional experience’ derived from the field of *illusion* and creative interaction of the *Self* and *Other* brings together the disparate origins of cultural formation, from crass capitalism to sublime art, from inspired faith to practical science, from law to war. It is the foundation of a reality that endows our energies with meaning and our efforts with purpose. It also places ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ within the same bounds of human discourse, as counterpoints in creativity. Within that understanding, it is difficult to pejoratively dismiss religion or unusual beliefs as beyond consideration, to simply categorise them as ‘irrational’ or perceive them as outside the realm of historical discourse. Winnicott’s concepts allow us some tools of understanding to take into an examination of some of the occult and other sub-themes of the late nineteenth century.

The Nineteenth Century and Unreason.

In the 1880s Europe experienced,

one of those movements of the mind that history perceives but cannot easily analyse or define. It has something to do with a

reviving sense that the world holds mystery...More a breath of spirit than a reasoning of intellect.¹⁰⁷

It was a movement that led people like WB Yeats, poet and incorrigible mystic, to consider himself,

a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance - the revolt of the soul against the intellect - now beginning in the world.¹⁰⁸

Far from novel, this new 'beginning' represents one of the recurring polarities of western culture; the contrast of reason and inspiration, classic and romantic, the tension between Apollonian and Dionysian impulses.¹⁰⁹ The manifestation of this reviving intellection of the 1880s, founded on intuition and imagination was naturally, diffuse. It is, however, discernible in the art of the Impressionists, in the philosophy of Nietzsche and Bergson, in the poetry of the French Symbolists and that of Yeats, in the work of Huysmans and the rich literary reaction to Zola's naturalism, and in the music of Bruckner and Wagner.

For those at the vanguard of this tilt at the known boundaries of convention and consciousness, it was experienced as 'progressive', even revolutionary, though from another perspective, it was also an intellectual reaction to the sterility, cold clarity and arrogance of Positivist certainty. However it is characterised, it has undoubtedly endowed and ennobled us with intellectual property of enormous value. The period after 1880 may have experienced "a breath of spirit", but it

¹⁰⁷Chadwick *Secularization ...*p239.

¹⁰⁸Murphy, W. *Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and His Relatives* (Syracuse University Press, 1995) p389. Yeats was profoundly influenced by Blavatsky's Theosophical Society which he joined in 1887 (though not for long), and was later led into involvement with the Order of the Golden Dawn which also attracted such sinister 'magicians' as Alistair Crowley.

¹⁰⁹Brown, N.O. *Life Against Death- the psychoanalytic meaning of history* (London: Sphere Books, 1968) pp146-162.

Nietzsche, F *The Birth of Tragedy; and the genealogy of morals* [trans: F Goffing] (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1956)

may also be seen as a period that “witnessed an outburst of the most extravagant irrationalism”,¹¹⁰ the roots of which were discernible from the late 1840s.

By the mid nineteenth century, the growing anxiety over societal change, along with developing intellectual and artistic trends, produced “a widespread flight from reason”,¹¹¹ the most interesting facet of which was the revival of the occult. There seems a general consensus among historians that this ‘revival’ began in 1848 with the disembodied noises and rappings of the Fox¹¹² household, in the heart of New York state’s ‘burned-over district’.¹¹³ Responsibility for the subsequent spread of ‘Spiritualism’ and mediumship cannot be entirely ascribed to the Fox family, rather to the receptivity of the times. After all Spiritualism was hardly new. From John Dee’s Elizabethan necromancy to the Shakers with their mediumistic trances, glossolalia and ‘Indian’ spirit guides, the clichés of Spiritualism tread a well worn path to the ‘other side’.

While the Fox girls were found to be a fraud, this does not disqualify membership of the paranormal, rather it adds persecutory piquancy. The rabble rousing persecution the Fox girls attracted did not harm their cause. The fortunes of nineteenth century movements like Primitive Methodism, Anglo-Catholicism, Secularism and the Free-Thinkers can be gauged by the attention of the mob. They “advanced swiftly during

¹¹⁰Webb, J. *The Flight from Reason- Volume 1 of The Age of the Irrational* p234.

¹¹¹Webb pxiii.

¹¹²See Brandon, R. *The Spiritualists- The passion for the Occult in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1983) Also Webb p1-5.

¹¹³Cross, W. *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950)

See also Ryan, M. *Cradle of the Middle Class- the family in Oneida Country, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

The region produced no lesser beings than Mary Baker Eddy [Christian Science] and Joseph Smith [Mormons, c.1830], as well as movements like Mother Anne Lee’s Shakers, William Miller’s Adventists [1831] and John Humphrey Noyes’ Oneida Community [1848].

the age of rabbling” and declined, “more or less, with the end of mob attack.”¹¹⁴

The Spiritualist phenomena grew, penetrating the walls of royalty and respectable society, and persisted well beyond the Edwardian period. It spawned sizeable sub-themes, not least of which was the Theosophical Society founded by Blavatsky and Olcott who, significantly, met while ‘investigating’ another outbreak of phenomena in 1874, again in the ‘burned-over district’. Olcott¹¹⁵ had been sent by a New York tabloid to investigate the sensational apparitions at the Eddy homestead in Vermont. Blavatsky’s presence was less accountable, though her participation in some of the occurrences suggests possible collusion.¹¹⁶ Whatever the truth, the conjunction of the able publicist and organiser, Olcott, with the ‘mysterious’ and intelligent Blavatsky was to be fortuitous, leading to the formation of the Theosophical Society, a significant vehicle in the formulation of a systematic occult doctrine, more sophisticated than simple Spiritualism.¹¹⁷

While there is considerable disagreement over the socio-economic appearance of past patterns of religious enthusiasm,¹¹⁸ Spiritualism, and earlier religious revivalism, seemed to take root among the poor and those suffering social dislocation, whereas Theosophy was largely the

¹¹⁴Chadwick p92. And it remains true- if you want a book to sell, get it banned.

¹¹⁵Murphet, H. *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light- Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott* (Wheaton Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House. Quest Books, 1988) p24ff. Murphet’s is little more than hagiography but nevertheless gives an adequate outline of the foundation of Theosophical Society.

Prothero, S. *The White Buddhist* p40. Prothero is an independent and scrupulous researcher whose assessment of Olcott is respectful if measured.

¹¹⁶Webb in *The Flight from Reason*, suggests, without the offer of evidence, that the phenomena of Eddy Farm were later proved, surprisingly no doubt, to be faked.

¹¹⁷Prothero 38ff. Prothero shows how Olcott and Blavatsky attempted a controversial shift of Spiritualism from a simple manifestation of ‘spirits’ of the dead, to emanations from occult messengers from the ‘other side’.

¹¹⁸ See, Cohn, N. *The Pursuit of the Millennium- revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London: Paladin, 1970)

Cohn, N. *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994)

preserve of the rising educated and middle class, a group no less socially dislocated.¹¹⁹ This middle class attraction was not without precedent. In the 1840s ‘burned-over district’ around Rochester, there were European Utopian Socialists of a similar background, secular communitarians with ideas modelled on Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. These communities were usually short lived and, while they were highly idealistic, they were founded not on traditional religious fervour but on secular thought, often though, with occult tendencies.¹²⁰ The people involved in these experiments were generally not “credulous country people but rather urbanites, and religious liberals”,¹²¹ educated and middle class, in the main, though the attraction to these ideas and those like Spiritualism “cut a surprisingly long and wide swath across lines of region, class, ethnicity, and gender”.¹²²

An explanation for the repeated occurrence of “socialists and occultists running in harness”¹²³ lies in the same ‘questing’ impulse, the same Utopian and often millenarian aspects of belief, the same reforming zeal. People like Annie Besant,¹²⁴ President of the Theosophical Society on the death of Olcott in 1907, epitomise this complex interleaving. A remarkable woman, she began as the wife of a conventional parson, left

¹¹⁹Ryan, M *Cradle of the Middle Class- the family in Oneida County, New York 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) Ryan’s meticulous study demonstrates the altered configuration of middle class society over the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The rise of the middle class was at the cost of its previous social position and thus was essentially a profound social dislocation with all the anxiety that such involves.

¹²⁰Owen in later age became a convinced Spiritualist, confounding his Secularist supporters. Fourier’s metaphysical belief in the law of Attraction or Association, of cosmic bonds that hold the universe in harmony, has a counterpart in occult theory. His communitarian views derived from an attempt to harmonise with these forces by forming ‘phalansteries’ (communities) of not more than 1800 people.

¹²¹Fitzgerald, F *Cities on a Hill- a journey through contemporary American cultures* (London: Picador, 1986) p395.

¹²²Prothero, S. *The White Buddhist* p21.

See also Owen, A. *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spritualism in Late Victorian England* (Phildelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). Owen suggests a wide spread social interest in Spiritualism while recognising the majority were upper working and middle class.

¹²³Webb p222.

¹²⁴See Nethercot, A. *The First Five Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961)

him to become a Free-Thinker and Radical, progressed through feminism, fighting for birth control and the rights of women workers, thence to Fabianism and finally to Blavatsky's Theosophists. The contradictions are only apparent - the consistency is with 'questing' and belief on the margin. What is notable about those like Besant is their middle class origin. "Lawyers, doctors, and journalists were all represented among the founders [of the Theosophical Society] and this sort of educated, professional person would remain...the main constituency of the society".¹²⁵

It is the participation of the middle class and educated in ideas on the social margin - what Webb terms the "Progressive Underground" - that projects the Theosophical Society and its many acolytes, like FL Woodward, into significance, and establishes a connection with the *fin de siècle* of the twentieth century and recent New Age excursions, like the Rajneesh movement, for example, of the 1970s and 80s. The Rajneesh were the quintessential social science experiment. In narcissistic absorption, they studied themselves, identifying participants as overwhelmingly educated, middle class and young.¹²⁶ What is equally significant is that many emanated from the "caring professions" of social work, psychology, and counselling; 11% had postgraduate degrees in psychology or psychiatry.¹²⁷

This latter aspect is disproportionate to anything observable in mainstream society and begs some explanation. Participants in this and other movements are 'questing', seeking both explanation and

¹²⁵Prothero p49.

¹²⁶ Fitzgerald, Frances. *Cities on a Hill- a journey through contemporary American cultures* (London: Picador Pan Books, 1986) p264. In the early 1980s, the average age was just over 30yrs, 80% were from middle or upper middle class backgrounds, 83% had attended university - two thirds had bachelors degrees and 12% had doctorates - and most were white and Protestant. There was also a significant Jewish component which is also discernible in other cults.

¹²⁷ Fitzgerald *Cities on the Hill* p 275. Another 11% had bachelors degrees in these fields.

purposeful existence, which is the initial attraction of counselling and ancillary studies. In a less secular era they may have been attracted to the ministry, or the many ‘progressive’ causes of Theosophy, which offered to people like Woodward, the opportunity to ‘serve’ in a context of certain and fervent belief. As Woodward observed, the cure for “deep discontent with life, is to do good”.¹²⁸

The problem with those who enter middle class occupations that do ‘good’ is, I believe, that they are often not so much “caring” as “interfering” professions, often ‘colonising’ the *Other* for ulterior ends. The concurrent nineteenth century expansion of middle class influence domestically, and imperial influence abroad, may be entirely coincidental, but both shared a tendency to appropriate the *Other*’s capacity for self determination,¹²⁹ a propensity for social engineering, however idealised. Similarly, it may be entirely coincidental that the social sciences, like anthropology, sociology and psychology, also emerged in the same period, and while undoubtedly they represented earnest attempts at descriptive science, about what ‘is’, they also tended to be prescriptive, prone to ideology, and what ‘ought’ to be.

Social sciences harbour contradictions in pursuit of understanding. The attempt to ‘understand’ naturally employs the tools of analysis, of ‘naming’, and such dissection has the effect of reducing the object

¹²⁸ Gunewardene *FL Woodward*.. p84.

¹²⁹ See McCalman, J. *Struggletown* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984) McCalman offers an insightful description of the imposition of middle class ‘correct’ child rearing habits on the working class of Richmond (Melbourne) in the early part of the twentieth century and which largely led to the abandonment of breast feeding and preference for ‘more hygienic’ bottle feeding. Such misinformed, but widespread, societal imposition, harboured other less obvious agendas such as an underlying prudery and Victorian attitudes concerning discipline and affection. The controlling aspects of bottle feeding were to be preferred to the undisciplined aspects of ‘demand feeding’ by the breast. Similar general adoption in Australia of circumcision for males- an almost universal practice until quite recently- has more to do with attitudes of Victorian prudery, ‘cleanliness’ and fears of masturbatory excess than to genuine medical concerns, though these agendas get buried in what simply becomes accepted practice.

observed to its prosaic parts and de-powering the thing named, depriving it of its curious resonance. This is intuitively recognised in Christian theology; when Christ [Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30] is confronted by the man 'possessed', He 'names' the demons, hastening their departure. In a sense, this has been the means of psychotherapy ever since; to 'name' the elements of psychopathology and deprive them of their sway upon the individual.

The contradiction for those often drawn to the field of psychology is that while they wish to 'name' the aspects of human behaviour, they tend also to be questing for something 'unnameable', something beyond the sum of the parts. The therapies that emerged in reaction to Freud's psycho-pathological model, and that coalesced around people such as Maslow, Fritz Perls, Alexander Lowen and Carl Rogers, were attempts to look to human 'potential', to move from the analytic to the experiential, to experience the 'unnameable'. It is not without significance that those attracted to the cult of Rajneesh in the 1970s and 80s had their roots in these streams of psychological exploration.

The mastery of Bhagwan Rajneesh, was his extraordinary narcissistic capacity to reflect back on adherents their own modes of thought, allowing these to become, not of their own 'named' understanding, but from outside, from some mysterious external 'other'. In this, Bhagwan Rajneesh resembles a Winnicottian 'transitional object' carrying the magic and mystery of the *Other* in order to make whole a *Self* denied mystery by its own analytic endeavours. It is difficult to live a satisfactory 'myth' if one has analysed and 'named' its purpose through anthropological or sociological endeavour; for personal mythology to become 'livable', it must assume some other unnameable guise.

The attraction of Rajneesh to the young, educated, middle class was in its ability to transcend formal learning and to conjure ineffable, unnameable mystery. Despite rhetoric about finding ‘potential’ within, a ‘useable’ myth emanates from without, is greater than the individual, and is unanalysable. To the narcissistic young attracted to Rajneesh, their new faith was an ultimate self absorption, returning to them, through their *guru*, affirmation of all they assumed was true, and despite the rhetoric of freedom, couching its enactment in an authoritarian and manipulative structural manifestation. It ultimately and sadly confirmed the confined form of their own potential rather than any higher self.

While the Rajneesh was decidedly cultist this was not readily apparent in its formation or even later manifestation. It takes time to become obvious as cults are contradictory and present plausible facets of themselves for scrutiny. The Theosophical Society similarly had a capacity to present genuinely benign, if eccentric, facets, while withholding others from view, usually under the guise of sacred secrecy. Nevertheless the Theosophical Society did shelter cultist tendencies which align it with modern cult occurrence, though this tendency is observable in most niche belief, at some time. Christianity initially resembled such a pattern - Adventist, paranoid, certain of its possession of truth, insistent on radical ‘born again’ transformation, and blessed with an extremely adverse public reception. Even Buddhism, which presently enjoys a positive press in the West,¹³⁰ “[i]n its day....suffered very much the same sort of reception that is now being

¹³⁰It is difficult to define this interest but an aspect resides in the rejection of any concept of ‘God’ Who has received an exceedingly poor press since the mid nineteenth century. One of the requirements of ‘questing’ souls today is a faith without the discomfort of ‘God’; this Buddhism supplies admirably.

endured by the new religious movements".¹³¹ That both Christianity and Buddhism appear today more innocuous, is due to their shift into established orthodoxy where some of their more radical doctrinal positions have been ejected, diminished or become so accepted as to appear benign, though there is always a tendency to return to those intense formative moments, as Christian and other fundamentalisms attest.

The inclination to cultism in the Theosophical Society is observable in one of its more unusual digressions, a sub-movement centred on belief in the advent a Coming World Teacher, a new Christ or Buddha. This was the invention of CW Leadbeater, a charismatic figure who held considerable influence under Besant's leadership, though he had been forced to resign from the Society in 1906 after accusations of sexual abuse of young boys.

In 1910, Leadbeater used his 'clairvoyant powers' to announce the 'discovery' of an 'exceptional' personage in the form of a young Indian boy, Krishnamurti, who was to be the Coming World Teacher.¹³² A new sub organisation of the Society was established, the Order of the Star in the East (OSE), which grew steadily world wide, despite setbacks, such as the controversy that erupted in Sydney when Krishnamurti visited in 1922.¹³³ The OSE attracted considerable attention particularly when it

¹³¹Masefield, P "The Muni and the Moonies" *Religion* (1985) Vol. 15 p 158. Masefield takes aim at the benign image of Buddhism to demonstrate from within its scriptural foundation that it exhibited many 'cultist' traits at its inception.

¹³² Given the earlier controversy it is surprising his interest in the young Krishnamurti did not arouse greater suspicion, though a later court case over custody of Krishnamurti again aired these accusations in that peculiarly euphemistic Victorian way.

¹³³Roe, J *Beyond Belief- Theosophy in Australia 1879-1939* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1986). This is a singularly valuable work and Roe offers an excellent overview of the controversy that split the Sydney TS, over accusations of sexual impropriety, again levelled at Leadbeater. The truth of these accusations is difficult to ascertain in the atmospheric prudery of the time, though it seems that Leadbeater engaged young boys in group masturbation in the vaulted basement of the Manor, practices excused as 'spiritual' exercises. See:-

constructed a Greek amphitheatre at Balmoral point¹³⁴ looking out through the Sydney Heads, whence, Sydney rumour had it, the new Messiah would walk on water to announce his 'return'.

The rumours of marvellous happenings and a glorious Coming continued, but in 1929 Krishnamurti dramatically announced dissolution of the OSE, firmly declared he was no Messiah, and urged his followers to find their own path. It was a stand apparently breathtaking in its honesty and sincerity, turning his back on adulation, wealth and power, to become a simple peripatetic teacher. In effect he became a World Teacher, but not quite in the way intended, though the world of spiritual endeavour is rarely as it seems. More recently it has emerged that Krishnamurti dissolved the OSE, at least in part, as a way of quarantining the substantial assets of the organisation in his own hands, ably administered by Rajagopal, and despite the image of ascetic and celibate, sustained a long affair with Rajagopal's wife, amongst others.

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In creating the World Teacher mythology, after his initial 'discovery', Leadbeater wove an extraordinary serialised tale describing the past lives

Tillet, G *The Elder Brother- a biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1982.

An elderly member of the TS I interviewed at the Manor (the HQ of the Esoteric Section of the TS in Sydney), where Leadbeater held sway, described the many gatherings of the TS on the wide porch at the Manor and how Leadbeater would sit prominently on the porch always with several of his 'boys' gathered on either side of him.

¹³⁴See Roe, J. "Three Visions from Balmoral Beach" in Roe J. (ed) *Twentieth Century Sydney* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1980). The site is now occupied by a very prosaic block of flats, though the view remains suitably impressive.

¹³⁵Rajagopal Sloss, R. *Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991) Also Yglesias, H. *The Saviours* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). This intriguing novel is quite obviously a very veiled biographical piece about Krishnamurti and gives an interesting insight into his attachment to young women who formed a significant aspect of what he called the "process", a kind of hypnotic mediumistic spiritual faint - or maybe it was simply a wonderful way of entrenching their regard and affection. I doubt if it was as conscious as that, though there is no doubt he loved women and sought a rapport that aligned with his intense yearning for a mother image. Krishnamurti cannot be simply dismissed as a charlatan. His religious pastiche of Buddhist and Hindu theology adhered in an interesting way and he no doubt was a very able, even hypnotic speaker, though his writings (which are usually transcriptions) tend to meander.

of a code-named hero, Alcyone,¹³⁶ a thin disguise for the young Krishnamurti. These stories seem to have evaded close scrutiny by writers on the Theosophical Society, probably dismissed as being altogether too far fetched, but in fact, they are quite illuminating; the content reveals important values and the work overall presents as a modern cult narrative. In this, as in its decidedly middle class complexion, the Theosophical Society presages important aspects of modern niche belief.

The stories capture an atmosphere of ‘higher’ purpose and ‘noble’ striving, with an added edge of ‘heroic’ intent, set in the past eons of the various ‘root races’ that were part of the evolutionary view of human spiritual development to which the Society subscribed. They were ‘Boys Own’ adventures of heroism and noble deeds, for “In no other age were men so often told to take ‘the great ones of the earth’ as models for imitation”.¹³⁷

Each person within the Adyar inner circle was given a code name - Leadbeater was Sirius, for example, and Woodward was Lignus¹³⁸ - and each episode was greeted with earnest anticipation, as Leadbeater managed within each tale to promote and demote characters within a hierarchy. Each story had a small central cast and was concluded by a complex genealogy of relationships, and herein lay the clues as to whether one had been ‘promoted’ or not. Woodward never achieved a role of any significance in the *Lives of Alcyone*. He was the perennial ‘spear carrier’, one of the “Band of Servers” as Leadbeater and Besant

¹³⁶Besant, A & Leadbeater, C W *The Lives of Alcyone* Vol.1 & II (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical publishing House, 1924, facsimile reprinting by Health Research, California, 1985). Besant is always given credit before Leadbeater but the work was almost entirely the fabrication of Leadbeater.

¹³⁷Houghton p 305.

¹³⁸While some of the personages are known and identified many are not, and I am indebted to John Cooper for this information.

described them.¹³⁹ It is doubtful, though, that he cared. He was, as one who knew him well,¹⁴⁰ a perennial observer and comfortable with remaining on the periphery.

The *Lives*, despite the avowed racial tolerance of the TS, contain significant underlying racism. There is reference to ‘root races’, their ‘purity’ and the need to ‘strengthen’ them by experimental cross breeding, to ‘improve’ them by the noble example of Aryanism. It would seem a parody of later Nazism, except that the language of eugenics was common in the period,¹⁴¹ and enacted into law in some US states well before it became the language of Nazi Germany. This kind of thinking, though, leads naturally to an emphasis on a select few, the ‘evolved initiates’, not unlike the Elect of God in Christianity, and not unlike the cult tendency to grant adherents some unique place in the cosmos.

In the *Lives of Alcyone*, not only is Krishnamurti, in the guise of Alcyone, the continual hero, but throughout the eons of adventures he is accompanied by his guide and mentor ‘Sirius’, who is none other than the author and ‘medium’ of these tales, Charles Leadbeater, ‘discoverer’ of the new ‘World Teacher’ and otherwise ‘prophet’ of the piece. As in most cult mythology, the leader is usually in some prominent relationship to the Centre, if not the Centre, and there is often a ‘revealed’ text that binds the cast of adherents to its tale of heroism and unfolding purpose.

¹³⁹ Besant, A & Leadbeater CW *Man: Whence, How and Whither - a record of clairvoyant investigation* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1971 originally published 1913.) Originally published as “Rents in the Veil of Time”.

¹⁴⁰ Personal interview with Nigel Heyward who was given responsibility under Woodward’s estate for cataloguing his books.

¹⁴¹ Noll, R. *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Noll explores how occult ideas fuelled both ideologies of the Left and Right, including Nazism.

The *Lives* is a work of cult cohesion, and though not in the class of John Smith's *Book of Mormon*, it had the same unconscious purpose - to bind, define and direct adherents of the faith, as 'revealed' by a leader or prophet. Leadbeater's *Lives* fulfilled the role of a niche belief narrative, but in doing so, revealed much of the underlying values and anxieties of the times. A sample will suffice.

In one story, the "Vampire Goddess", dwells in a cave at the base of a 'needle of rock' which smelled foul, 'like a charnel house'. She was an eight foot Lemurian (one of the many 'root races' that preceded the present), a dark blue and luminous giantess, unclothed except for a necklace of gleaming stones, a sinister smile and an intoxicating musky smell. She is accompanied by misshapen goblins and demons and employs magnetic powers to lure young men to her cave as husbands to her enthrall. Once in her powers she drains them of life.

In the *Lives* gender could alter alarmingly, an indication of the sexual ambivalence and androgyny that prevailed, and in this story Alcyone is female. Eventually (s)he goes forth to rid the land of the Lemurian giantess, immune to the allure of the creature, whose magnetic powers only affect men, and draws 'her bow to the head of the arrow' and fires, killing the giantess. Immediately the demons are released to their true shape, as men. As one relates,

I was brought here under her awful spell and all that was unclean and animal within me was stirred into mad riot.... for a whole month I ministered to her monstrous lusts and it seemed to me one long mad whirl of pleasurein time she drew all life from meshe has kept herself alive ...feeding upon the life of men [who] were wan and shrunken and nerveless....now like deformed and stunted children, warped and gangrenous, rotting in death while still alive.¹⁴²

¹⁴²Leadbeater *Lives* p86.

After the demise of the giantess, the cave, the swamp and the forest are cleared and a road made through them.

Even a modest knowledge of psychoanalysis makes this tale decipherable. Misogyny prevails; it is women who take men by ‘magnetism’ and drain them of life by sexual demand. Women are fearsome, devouring creatures that represent all that is primitive and foul. Eliminating the ‘swamp’ paves over the place with ‘civilisation’. It says much about Victorian sexual repression and much more about Leadbeater’s own sexuality and his acknowledged distaste of women, though ambivalence towards women and sexuality is one of the themes of Victorianism. Women were seen as either delicate persons of goodness and sensitivity that deserved elevation to some worshipful pedestal or as creatures of carnal disgust, since no ‘nice’ woman would welcome sexuality beyond duty.

The *Lives* reveals not only Victorian values and aspirations, but reveals too, within the Theosophical Society’s ‘high minded’ middle class sobriety,¹⁴³ a tendency to cultism, linking it inescapably to the present decline of hierarchy and proliferation of ‘New Age’ niche belief. The fact that the *Lives* is still in print today, albeit in a cheap facsimile edition, is testimony to a continuing appeal that extends to other Leadbeater oddities,¹⁴⁴ including ‘clairvoyant’ chemistry. It is testimony,

Daniel, R. “Book Review [of Cohn’s “Cosmos Chaos and the World to Come”]” *Church History* 64(3) 1995 Sept. p452.

Craven, P. *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child Raising, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America* (New York: 1977) p12.

¹⁴³The story is told by the TS against itself, that on the road to Paradise there is a fork in the Path with one sign saying “To Paradise” and another saying “To a Theosophical Society Discussion on Paradise”. The joke seems more painfully accurate than anyone would willingly admit.

¹⁴⁴ Leadbeater, CW *The Astral Plane* (London: TPS, 1915) now issued by Vesanta Press, 1984.

Following on Leadbeater’s work on occult chemistry were a number of ‘serious’ attempt to reconcile with conventional science. See

Smith, EL, Slater, VW & Reilly G. *The Field of Occult Chemistry* Transaction of the Physical Science Research Group of the Theosophical Research Centre (London: TPH, 1934)

as well, to the persistent influence of Theosophy and its beliefs in ‘astral travel’, communication with the Masters, reincarnation, and ‘channelling’ of past ‘lives’, all part of its vocabulary plundered from occult archives and bequeathed to modern devotees of the occult and “New Age”.¹⁴⁵

This ‘modern’ familiar feel to things Theosophical extends to descriptions of life, in the 1920s, at the Manor, the main centre of Theosophical Society activity in Sydney at the time. One member of the TS from that era, told of going to services at St Alban’s,¹⁴⁶ and recalled the acute shock of locals seeing young people wearing casual free flowing cotton clothes and sandals on their feet. What is more, they lived together communally at the Manor where they received instruction and ‘spiritual’ training. It was much like the 1960s pre-visited. Sydney was a significant TS centre in the 1920s, with over 2000 members and its own radio station, one of the first licences to be issued.¹⁴⁷ In anticipation of the present, Leadbeater became an early ‘media evangelist’, and though recordings of his talks today sound wooden and stilted, his restrained oratorical English tones gave a vision of safe Victorian respectability to TS ideas.

The fervent interest in spiritualist and occult beliefs in the late nineteenth century and the commensurate rise in New Age philosophy, originating in the 1960s, that has blossomed into a significant social expression in the late twentieth century, bears comparison. Both present as periods of

¹⁴⁵ It was Leadbeater who applied the term ‘New Age’ to the advent of the World Teacher, though he was certainly not alone in the use of the term. An influential and ‘radical’ Edwardian magazine devoted to art and literature was titled “New Age”.

¹⁴⁶ St Alban’s, near Central Railway, was the main venue of the Liberal Catholic Church, another of Leadbeater’s ‘occult’ creations, which was neither catholic nor liberal. People would travel by ferry from Taylor’s Bay to the Quay and then by tram or train.

¹⁴⁷ The station was called Radio 2GB, after Giordano Bruno the martyred mystic of whom Besant was supposedly the re-incarnation. It broadcast from a still extant shed at the bottom of the garden in the grounds of the Manor.

significant transition, anxiety, and reaction to the juggernaut of technology and where technology, science and empirical explanation expand, ‘irrationality’, it seems, stalks their wake.

While some commentators observe this phenomena with alarm, in the history of human endeavour, the adherence to unusual beliefs has never been far from events. It may be as benign as Australian prime-minister, Alfred Deakin’s interest in spiritualism and Theosophy, “invoking a Higher part of himself to guide his judgement”;¹⁴⁸ as strange as the Canadian prime-minister and statesman, Mackenzie King, summoning his deceased mother to seances when considering matters of state; or as somewhat sad as Gladstone moving anonymously among the prostitutes of London to do “good works” and later flagellating himself for the impurity of his thoughts.¹⁴⁹

All those that move in events frequently bring with them values and transpersonal beliefs that colour decision making in ways that may surprise (or alarm) the average observer.

There can be no escaping the fact that in our nominally empirical, technology-driven age, the creativity and initiative of many significant achievers has been bound together with transparently absurd beliefs and practices.¹⁵⁰

The apparent presence of ‘transparently absurd beliefs and practices’ in many lives does not become obvious until they present formally in some organisational form, though this is rarely the limit to which such beliefs

¹⁴⁸Gabay, A. *The Mystic Life of Alfred Deakin* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p186

¹⁴⁹ Worse, unusual beliefs can inhabit pure scholarship. All the microfilmed parish and school records I have used in this research were produced by the Mormon Church, who make these valuable records available to the public and to researchers. They, on the other hand, use these records to quietly ‘convert’ all these past personages into the Mormon Church! Woodward would be delighted to have been made a Mormon and given a ‘rightful’ place in heaven. It’s a numbers game, here or in heaven, it seems.

¹⁵⁰Crews, F. “The Consolation of Theosophy” [Review of Washington, P. *Madam Blavatsky's Baboon: A History of the Mystics, Mediums, and Misfits Who Brought Spiritualism to America*] *The New York Review of Books* 19 September, 1996. p30.

extend. The Theosophical Society, for example, disproportionately influenced and participated in the cultural currents of the late nineteenth century, and while

[t]he majority would never belong to [such organisations], ...they served to show what was happening in a much more diffuse fashion in the society around them.¹⁵¹

The Theosophical Society had a remarkable sway, and the activities of those like Frank Lee Woodward who inhabited their ideas have a “prismatic quality”¹⁵², a means of refracting light to reveal constituent elements and hues of meaning.

A Prismatic Life.

Frank Lee Woodward lived the last thirty three years of his life on a small apple orchard on the banks of the Tamar River, near Launceston, Tasmania, absorbed in the task of editing and translating a considerable portion of the *Tipitaka*, the Southern Buddhist (Theravadin) Canon¹⁵³ and the *Atthakatha* (the canonical commentaries), as well as contributing significantly to the monumental task of providing a concordance. The *Tipitaka* is some eleven times the size of the Christian Bible¹⁵⁴ and

¹⁵¹Fitzgerald *Cities on the Hill* p19 Fitzgerald was referring to groups like the Rajneesh and Falwell’s Christian fundamentalists but her comments relate to any marginal organisation or philosophy.

¹⁵²Fitzgerald p19.

¹⁵³The *Tipitaka* (“Triple Basket”) is the canon of the Southern [Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma and Vietnam] or Theravada school of Buddhism. While it is held in common with the Mahayana or Northern school of Buddhism [China, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia], it has been expanded by additional Sanskrit commentaries. The Pali *Tipitaka*, based on a powerful oral tradition, was committed to writing in India between 500 BCE and the early Common Era. While the arrangement of the texts varies with particular schools, it is generally divided into three sections: the *Vinaya Pitaka* (“Basket of Discipline”) which relates to monastic regulation of the *Sangha* or community of monks; the *Sutta Pitaka* (“Basket of Discourse”), the sermons and ethical and doctrinal discourses of the Buddha; and the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (“Basket of special or further Doctrine”), accepted only by the Southern School, is a metaphysical elaboration of doctrinal material from the *Suttas*. The *Atthakatha* are a series of Commentaries on particular canonical writings in the *Tipitaka*. Woodward was responsible for translating (into English) and editing (Pali into Roman text) a substantial proportion of these texts.

¹⁵⁴Oliver, I. *Buddhism in Britain* (London: Rider & Co., 1979) p22. Oliver is quoting an observation by Narada Thera. It covers some 40 odd volumes of Pali Text Society editions.

Also Mascaró, J [trans.] *The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973) p9.

Woodward edited over 3000¹⁵⁵ pages of critical text, a substantial contribution, as well as providing translations to much of this.

His most important contribution, from the point of view of the general public, was his comprehensive anthology of Buddhist scriptures, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*¹⁵⁶ [1925], an influential text, which for many in the West was a first introduction to Buddhist scriptures and ideas. Miss IB Horner, a later President of the Pali Text Society was able to observe in a letter to Woodward in 1952 that “Your ‘Some Sayings’ [is] still in great demand.”¹⁵⁷ An example of this influence can be seen in Marie Byles, pioneering feminist, environmentalist, animal welfarist and the first practicing solicitor in New South Wales,¹⁵⁸ who was influenced to explore Buddhism after receiving a copy of Woodward’s *Some Sayings of the Buddha*.¹⁵⁹ She went on to write herself on Buddhism, *Footprints of Gautama the Buddha*, and acknowledged the assistance of Woodward, “one of the leading Pali scholars” who was “indefatigable in answering questions up to a few weeks of his death”.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ I am grateful to Dr Peter Masefield, a Pali scholar familiar with Woodward’s work, for this assessment.

¹⁵⁶ Woodward, FL. *Some Sayings of the Buddha- according to the Pali Canon* Introduction by Sir Francis Younghusband. (London: Oxford University Press, World Classic Series, #483. First published 1925 and reprinted 1939, 1942, 1945, 1949, 1951 and 1955.) It was also reprinted by Oxford University Press, with an introduction by the revered Buddhist scholar, Christmas Humphreys, in 1973.

¹⁵⁷ Letter from IB Horner to FL Woodward March 15, 1952. [Shield Heritage, Solicitors, Launceston: file of FL Woodward]

¹⁵⁸ A Miss A. Evans was admitted as a barrister in 1921 but never practised.

¹⁵⁹ Byles, M. *Many Lives in One* ML MSS 3833 box 12 (13) p.134. This is Byles unpublished autobiography, held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Byles represents the persistent profile of those drawn to such esotery. She represents the recurring theme of activism on many fronts, among Victorian and Edwardian ‘progressives’. It is not surprising she joined the Theosophical Society though fairly late in the piece [9 March, 1959- Certificate in box 12 (13) ML MSS 3833] when the TS was well beyond the peak of its influence.

¹⁶⁰ Byles, M. *Footprints of Gautama the Buddha- the story of the Buddha his disciples knew, describing portions of his ministerial life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 1986, originally published in 1957) p7. This is an interesting but very individual interpretation of Buddhism.

In his efforts, Woodward was an early pioneer, one of the small band of enthusiastic scholars and orientalist that gathered about the Pali Text Society, unfolding to both scholars and an interested public reliable English translations of Buddhist Pali texts. The Pali Text Society, founded in 1881, was the inspiration of TW Rhys Davids who “laid sure foundations for the early interpretation of Buddhism without theconfusion hitherto prevalent.”¹⁶¹ Rhys Davids envisioned an ambitious program of translation, based on the successful undertaking by Max Müller of the fifty one volume *Sacred Books of the East* series begun in 1875, and to which Rhys Davids was a contributor. Far from a neutral scholarly exercise, however, the “sure foundation” he established for the interpretation of Buddhism was profoundly textual, “defined, classified and interpreted through its own textuality”¹⁶² and in the selection of text, decidedly Theravadin.

This bias influenced the perception of Buddhism in the West as principally Theravadin well into the middle of the twentieth century, which coincidentally aligned with the kind of austere Protestantism which many were both escaping and rediscovering in obverse form. The emphasis was on texts, and on the accuracy, priority and authenticity of such texts, which has little to do with meaning. It was an attraction to pure philology, much akin to nineteenth century Latin and Greek scholarship, where the object of attention was an ‘extinct’ language that could be summed up and described without interference by current usage. Pali also was a literary language confined to texts which apparently offered similar attributes.

¹⁶¹*Dictionary of National Biography*, 1922-1930. Entry on TW Rhys Davids, written by Lord Robert Chalmers, Governor of Ceylon 1913-1916 and himself a contributor to the PTS.

¹⁶²Almond, P. *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p6.

These became essential sources for anyone studying Buddhism, comparative religion or the psychology of religion, and the program of translation, begun by scholars like Woodward, continues to this day. It was a pioneering contribution to the shape of western orientalist understanding, influential beyond the readership of such specialist scholarship.

In countries with a Buddhist tradition like Sri Lanka, these English translations of the Pali Text Society became a primary source of lay access to the Canon. Sinhala translations were late in appearing and when they did, were translated into classical not demotic Sinhala, which continued to restrict lay access. English was the language of the elite who were the principal leaders and advocates of the Buddhist Revival and the Nationalist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The growth of the English-medium Buddhist schools initiated by the Theosophical Society in Ceylon was critical to the promotion of the Buddhist and nationalist causes, and people like Woodward who built Mahinda College, Galle, into the leading Buddhist educational institution in the South were a much underestimated and important influence in the promotion of a laicised Buddhism - the so-called 'Protestant Buddhism' - and the formation of an English educated elite with a nationalist bias.

Woodward's contribution stands within the nineteenth century orientalist context, eddying among the currents of cultural formation, in both the west and in Ceylon. In his educational endeavours and in his pioneering work of translation, he laboured on the intellectual and geographic periphery, yet his efforts reached into surprisingly diverse aspects of nineteenth century culture. While Woodward's life in Ceylon reveals an unexpected cultural importance, he never sought or wanted renown.

What he sought was a life removed from events, an interior life that turned within him the thought and philosophy of Buddhist resolve, with more than a few Theosophic accretions. It is a difficult history to explore, since historical discourse thrives on mayhem and upheaval while the life of a solitary does not manage much of either. Yet his was a voice attuned to a time and a place, and what is revealed is not so much a ‘history-from-below’, but as I have begun to show, a ‘history-from-within’,¹⁶³ the exploration of an Interior as uncharted as the steps of any Livingston.

It is, by nature, a history of ideas, their origin and unfolding, that reveals within Woodward’s time and context impulses that arch over into the present, that illustrate a perennial questing for the ineffable, for the unnameable, but also for purpose and meaning. One can ask all the justifiable questions: Why did he become a Buddhist and Theosophist, with all its crank accretions? And why did he not tip over into its cult excesses? Why did he go to Ceylon? Why retire in Tasmania? Why take up Pali translation? But whatever the question, the answer always begins with the quest for understanding.

¹⁶³I am indebted to Janet McCalman for this thought and phrase, offered at a speech delivered at the Launceston Queen Victoria Museum 3 August 1996.

FRANK LEE WOODWARD-
A PRISMATIC LIFE.

ENGLAND

*Manual of a Mystic*¹⁶⁴

When Frank Lee Woodward's sister heard he had become a Buddhist she is reputed to have expostulated, "What a lot of rubbish this talk of Frank becoming a Buddhist; there ought to be a law to *make everyone* Church of England!"¹⁶⁵ The story illustrates a number of aspects of the man and his times. It tells of the rigid censoriousness of Victorianism, that teetered often on the edge of absurdity, and tells too of the wry humour of the man, one of his centrally redeeming attributes, who told the story against himself. Woodward's punning humour, his love of absurdity and the way he deflated self seriousness, is recognisably Victorian, but as Gay acutely observes, the task of humour is to control anxieties, to master threats, "increasing their distance and reducing their dimensions."¹⁶⁶ The Victorian age was one of significant anxiety and if humour somehow salved the day, then what it eased is revealed and, inevitably, revealing.

The story also tells of the extraordinary interest in Buddhism at that time, principally mediated by the Theosophical Society, which links the *fin de siècle* of the present century with that of the nineteenth, making Frank Lee Woodward, though a subaltern voice, one that amplifies his times and to an extent our own, a *Manual* of his times if not of mystics.

Early Life

Frank Lee Woodward was born in Saham Toney, Norfolk, England, on 13 April 1871, which is not without significance for his later life in Ceylon, as it is also the Sinhala New Year's Day. Woodward was the fifth child (and third son)¹⁶⁷ of an Anglican curate, the Rev. William

¹⁶⁴ *Manual of a Mystic* was one of the first translations completed by Woodward [1916]. It was a manuscript outlining, in cryptic and arcane language, practices intended spiritually to advance the acolyte, though it assumed the guidance of an experienced guru, since some of the practices were regarded as 'dangerous'.

¹⁶⁵ Heyward, N "A Buddhist Scholar" *Platypus* (University of Tasmania literary magazine) 1952, p21.

¹⁶⁶ Gay, P. *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*. Vol. III. *The Cultivation of Hatred* (London: Harper Collins, 1994) p410.

¹⁶⁷ Source: Saham Toney & Kessingland Parish Registers of baptism, marriage and burial. The parish registers indicate Woodward and seven of his siblings were born in Saham Toney, an eighth in Kessingland.

Woodward and Elizabeth Mary Ann (née Lee), who like most at that time set forth a quiverful of offspring, in their case eight in all. Beyond the few facts Woodward provided on his life, in the *Mahinda College Magazine*,¹⁶⁸ little is known of his origins, for as Gunewardene accurately observed, Woodward “was always modest in writing or speaking of himself, and on the rare occasion when he did so, he exercised considerable restraint.”¹⁶⁹

Woodward’s father, the Rev. William Woodward, whose own father was a hatter from what appears a modest lower middle class ‘trade’ background, seems to have married relatively well when he took Elizabeth Lee as his wife on 5 September 1861, at Edmonton parish Church, Middlesex. He was not without some means, having property returning £57pa, but she appears to have come from a more elevated middle class social position, with a modest private income of £20 pa¹⁷⁰ from her father, Goodale Lee, described on her marriage certificate as a “gentleman”,¹⁷¹ with all that such a Victorian description implies. Modest though his background was, the Rev. Woodward was proud he was “of Puritan stock”,¹⁷² born in Huntingdon, East Anglia, the birth place of Oliver Cromwell. He harboured an admiration for the Puritan Protector which was shared by FL Woodward, who refers to Cromwell as the “greatest of Englishmen”.¹⁷³

Clara Helen [DOB 16/5/1864]; Charles Bracebridge Hopkins [28/9/1865]; William Edward [25/8/1867]; Agnes Elizabeth [17/8/1869]; Frank Lee [13 April 1871]; Alice Lee [12/12/1872]; Arthur Reginald [12/12/1874]; & George Christie [18/12/1876] at Kessingland].

Note: Alice and Arthur were born on the same day, 12th December and George not far off, products, obviously of a spring flush. Also both Frank and Alice acquired the maiden name of their mother, a common Victorian habit.

All the entries are by Woodward’s father and show care to note both date of birth and Christening- mostly only the Christening were noted for other parish children. Woodward’s file [Shields Heritage, Launceston] contains a letter from George in Durban, South Africa [Feb 2, 1952] with ‘chat’ about family and their age- about Arthur, who was still working as a parson in Somerset- and says, “We all seem to hang on, you must be 81 or 82”.

I am indebted to Robin Brown, local historian at Saham Toney for this information and other general advice on the district.

168 *Mahinda College Magazine* April 1919 Autobiographical sketch by Woodward.

169 Gunewardene p5.

170 *Christ’s Hospital Records Guildhall London* Ms12,818A/145.

171 Marriage Certificate of Wm & Elizabeth Woodward. Guildhall London Ms12,818A/145.

172 Wijeratne, T, Dantanarayana, D. & Samara-Wickrama, P. [eds] *A century of Memories- an anthology celebrating the centenary of Mahinda College* (Sydney: private publication, 1995) p25. Because much of this is based on the memories of a later generation, it contains some inaccuracies about Woodward.

173 Gunewardene p5.

This Cromwellian connection has some additional significance as Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, the college which FL Woodward attended, was also Cromwell's, a grisly reminder of which is the interment of Cromwell's severed head near the present Chapel.¹⁷⁴ The only other significance of the obvious regard for Cromwell may have been theological, for the nineteenth century was a period of debate and tension between evangelical and High Church forces represented by the Oxford Movement.

That the Rev. Woodward assumed regard for Cromwell, with all the subtextual significance that such adherence would have implied in the public domain, possibly indicates an evangelical tendency with its attendant rigidities. Huntingdon whence the Rev. Woodward originated, had, according to mid century religious surveys, a strong concentration of Particular Baptist and Wesleyan Methodists,¹⁷⁵ which implies both a tendency towards non-conformity and literalist religious enthusiasm. Whether these elements influenced the Rev. Woodward and shaped his theology remains speculation, but if it did, his curacy at Saham Toney, which was under the auspices and 'gift' of Oxford's New College, may have presented some tension with a prevailing Tractarian and Puseyite influence. It may partly explain why he remained sixteen years at Saham Toney before he gained the substance and respectability of a 'living' of his own.

Parishes and their 'livings' existed under a system of patronage which required some political manoeuvring to secure, and the job of curate would have been paid out of the 'living' of the Rector who would have expected the curate to perform all the day to day tasks of the Parish. The

¹⁷⁴ Scott-Giles CW *Sidney Sussex College: A short history* (Cambridge: Pendragon press, 1975) p134.

¹⁷⁵ Best, G. *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75* (London: Fontana Harper-Collins, 1985) p201.

obvious difference in the splendour of the Rectory and the simplicity of the curate's cottage at Saham Toney indicates the difference in station accorded the respective offices.¹⁷⁶

According to *Crockford's Directories*, William Woodward¹⁷⁷ is recorded at St Bees, presumably a religious teaching establishment, in 1853, and he was made a Deacon in 1854 and a priest in 1855. He was curate of Dawley Magna in Shropshire (1854-1856) and at Morville, Shropshire (1856-1860) before moving to Saham Toney, Norfolk, where he was to reside for sixteen years (1860-1876). In 1876 he was made Rector in his own right at Kessingland, a coastal fishing village just south of Lowestoft in Suffolk, moving there when FL Woodward was four. In 1890 the Rev. Woodward moved as Rector to Catworth between Huntingdon and Thrapston, a much better 'living', and remained there until his death on 25 January 1912. He was buried along side his wife at Catworth,¹⁷⁸ leaving the not inconsiderable estate of £16537/6/9.¹⁷⁹

Woodward's life at Saham Toney was profoundly rural - even today it is hardly a thriving centre - and he remembered from the age of two a "pleasant home in the country", wandering about the large garden and nearby fields.¹⁸⁰ The village is in the middle of the Breckland district, a 'breck' being originally a piece of land that was temporarily cultivated then allowed to revert to heath when the soil was exhausted (until the efforts of Coke of Norfolk introduced crop rotation). This is not the ordered, lush landscape of Kent but a more subtle heath land, less kind to farmers, but abundant in wildlife like grebe and pochard, with grasses

¹⁷⁶ Both are now in private hands, and while the curate's cottage has been added to, it remains a modest flintwork cottage some distance from the Church. On the other hand the Rectory, next door to the church, is an imposing 17th century brick building.

¹⁷⁷ Source: *Crockford's Directory* of the Anglican Church in England.

¹⁷⁸ Shield Heritage: File of FL Woodward. Letter from Rosemary Welstead (niece) to FL Woodward, and daughter of his sister Alice, 18/1/52. She mentions visiting the grave of FL Woodward's parents at the Catworth church cemetery.

¹⁷⁹ Somerset House: Will of Rev. William Woodward.

¹⁸⁰ *Mahinda College Magazine*, April 1919. Also Gunewardene, p1.

like the thyme leaved ‘speedwell’ and spring vetch as well as wildflowers like ‘great mullein’, and the stunning ‘vipers bugloss’.

It was a landscape that appealed to Woodward and he loved the countryside, the historic buildings and the people and customs. As a young man he roamed the countryside becoming intimate with the unusual geography of the ‘broads’ near the coast with their Dutch windmills, and the heath, mere and pingos¹⁸¹ of the Breckland; even in later life, he retained books and maps on the region.¹⁸² The open heath lands of the inland were the sites of extensive rabbit warrens and the warreners in the smocks gathered at the back of the church - in appropriate class distinction - would have been familiar to the young Woodward. So denuded from overgrazing by sheep and rabbits had the countryside become by the early nineteenth century, that extensive pine forests were planted about the time of the Napoleonic wars and they remain a feature of the landscape today.

The church in Saham Toney where Woodward’s father preached and the house where he was born, are examples of flint ‘flushwork’, a common feature of building in Norfolk [see Illustrations]. The elaborate pattern of ‘diaper work’, flint embedded in mortar, creates an odd ‘ginger bread house’ effect and point to the historical significance of the region as the principal area (around Brandon) for the supply of military flint up until the 1850s when percussion weapons supplanted flintlock rifles. The flint knappers of Norfolk, who suffered the inevitable ‘knappers rot’ (a form of silicosis leading to pulmonary tuberculosis) produced vast amounts of flint (in 1806, some 365,000 gunflints a month)¹⁸³ but only 13% of the

¹⁸¹These are an extraordinary pattern of large ponds and swamp formed after the ice age - freezing of the soil formed uplifts which collapsed on thawing into a pock marked landscape that filled with water to form a network of ponds and shallow swamps.

¹⁸²Heyward “A Buddhist Scholar” p21.

¹⁸³Clarke, R. “The Flint-Knapping Industry in Brandon” *Antiquity* Vol.9, No.33, 1935.

mined flint became gunflints, 34% was used for building and the remainder was waste (and later used as rail ballast).

The structure of society was at that time still rigid and hierarchical, with the squire in Saham Hall perched on the pinnacle, surrounded by a layer of rich professional educated men, the rector, retired army and naval officers occupying the largest houses of the district like Whaite Hall, Broom Hall, Park Farm, and Saham Waite Farm. Beneath them would be yeomen farmers with a hundred acres or less, then beneath them, lower middle class shopkeepers. Below that were skilled workmen - blacksmiths, millers, thatchers, shoemakers, grooms and such like - with the lowest rung of the ladder occupied by agricultural labourers, (who accounted for 75% of the male population), and the (invariably female) domestic servants. There was a further sub-stratum of paupers - a term not as pejorative as implied in today's usage - and the elderly and impoverished who occupied the almshouses and village workhouses.¹⁸⁴

The curate's position in this social hierarchy was ambivalent, though not without considerable authority at this time when the Church was at a peak of social significance, though it slowly declined through the later nineteenth century. He would have occupied a social position somewhat below the Squire and the village Rector, though in a decidedly subservient position to the local gentry. He stood in for the Rector in his absence and it is clear from the church records at Saham Toney that at one stage, the Rev. Woodward took all the baptisms, weddings and funerals. The position of curate was that of a 'dog's body', which required balancing the interests of the squire, bishop and rector, all of whom profoundly influenced the eventual appointment to charge of a parish.

¹⁸⁴ Source: local historian Robin Brown, Woodcock Hall, Saham Toney.

There was also the problem of ‘competition’ because East Anglia was a significant site of non-conformity and Methodism. At one stage there were four Wesleyan chapels, the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in the village, the Saham Waite Methodist chapel, the Saham Hills Primitive Methodist chapel, and the United Free Methodist chapel, all of which would have substantially dented the potential Anglican congregation and influenced an evangelical style of religious worship.

The strong presence of non conformists forms a significant backdrop to Woodward’s early life. While today such groups are perceived as conservative, at that time they represented a radical assault on both social and religious orthodoxy. The Primitive Methodists or ‘Ranters’, were even viewed with apprehension among other non-conformists, and their chapels were frequently the organising venues for early trade union formation among agricultural workers.¹⁸⁵ The last quarter of the nineteenth century was, indisputably, “a period of agricultural crisis” and depression after several generations of plenty, and was marked by “numerous bankruptcies, lower rents and untenanted farms”.¹⁸⁶ The social upheaval, agitation and dislocation that this created was substantial - ‘chapel’ unionism thrived in an atmosphere of tension and discontent exacerbated by the introduction of machinery like reapers and binders¹⁸⁷ that hastened the decline of the huge rural labour force in the period after 1870.

While the young Woodward was probably barely aware of the changes taking place about him as he grew up, they were nonetheless significant

¹⁸⁵Howkins, A. *Poor Labouring Men: Rural Radicalism in Norfolk 1872-1923* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) p47.

¹⁸⁶ Perry, PJ *British Agriculture 1875-1914* (London: 1973) pxi-xii.

Many of the saccharin scenes of romantic Victorian rural painting - decaying mills and overgrown cottages - far from ‘romantic’, were evidence of the significant decline and decay of rural life, a point lost on the artists and their urban clients.

¹⁸⁷ Horse drawn rakes that mechanically both formed windrows and turned the hay - a task universally loathed among farm labourers - and reapers and binders which cut and bound oats, barley etc. for winnowing or chaffing, reduced the demand for harvest labour by a staggering amount. Photos from the era show teams of 30 or 40 manual labourers contrasted with a half dozen gathered about a reaper and binder.

and pervasive, and in a sense, absorbed through the skin. The economic constraints imposed by rural depression altered the social fabric. The squire was restrained from exercising his traditional role of social benefactor, with all the manipulative and social regulatory power that such duties of the squire entailed. Outsiders of urban wealth, without traditional family connections and social commitment, snapped up bargains on a depressed market and moved in, undermining and rearranging the local power structure.¹⁸⁸

All these social alterations took place against the declining influence of the established Church - the other 'arm', along with the squirearchy, of rural social order. Questions of theology, as well as questions concerning the social influence of the Church with its conspicuous wealth, led to a significant decline in its authority in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is not without significance that Huxley's term 'agnostic' dates its coinage from 1870,¹⁸⁹ a time of conscious questioning of religious adherence.

FL Woodward grew up in a critical period of social change that questioned traditional social order, and religious and social values. It also saw a decline in rural significance, and a shift from the Tory gentry, whom his father served, to the rising middle class whose values and influence probably more accurately represented the family's interests and origins. There was a world of uncertainty, transition and social alteration, the very factors that consistently recur in people who are attracted to the exploration of religious alternatives.

Saham Toney stood within the flow of these events and changes, and while somewhat removed from the centre, it was not without colour and

¹⁸⁸ This occurred even more substantially after the first World War.

¹⁸⁹ Briggs, *A Age of Improvement* (London: Longman, 1979) p488.

historical contribution. There is one odd connection with Tasmania in the person of Robert Knopwood¹⁹⁰ (1763-1838), the roistering rector and first chaplain of early Hobart, who originated from Threxton and who was appointed to the parish of Saham Toney and Watton which is only a short distance from Threxton. Somewhat further away is Thetford, the birthplace of Thomas Paine, who profoundly influenced nineteenth century political culture through publication of the *Rights Of Man*.

Thetford was also the home of Prince Duleep Singh, Maharaja of the Punjab. In 1848 the British annexed the Punjab and in 1849 the Maharaja resigned his sovereign rights and property (including the Koh-i-Noor diamond) to the Crown in exchange for a pension. He purchased Elveden, a few miles south of Thetford in 1863 and transformed it into extraordinary oriental splendour, with walls, pillars and arches of the central domed hall covered with intricate Indian ornamentation. It would have been impossible to have grown up in the area and not to have been aware of this mysterious eastern apparition of splendour, a piece of imperialism in the middle of Norfolk.

The currents and influences of Woodward's childhood present formative elements of character and personality. Born into the bosom of the Anglican Church, he was to see in his life, it questioned, criticised and slowly lose its authority, which was, after all, the authority of his family, of his father and his father's Father. In the religious context of Saham Toney, he lived also in the contrast and fervour of non-conformity, in the shadow of radical social and religious reconstruction. Whether conscious or otherwise these were to be the constituents of his own life,

¹⁹⁰ Stephens, G. *Knopwood: a biography* (Hobart: privately published, 1990)
Australian Dictionary of Biography vol 2 1788-1850 ed Douglas Pike (Melbourne: MUP, 1967) p 66-67.

where he made himself over in religious thought and outlook, away from his roots, but never far from their influence.

Woodward's memories of his childhood in Saham Toney, however, are of small things remembered, of Whalebelly's mill near his house whose sails turned with a rhythmic roar of air and creak of cogs. The neighbours had their flour ground by Whalebelly (with the inevitable name of Jonah) and each housewife baked the unrefined coarse flour into loaves. Old Norfolk dialect "still prevailed in our village",¹⁹¹ Woodward recalled, and pronunciation made understanding awkward. Woodward tells of his father when first appointed curate, attending the village school. The children were lined up and his father asked one little girl, "What is your name?"

"Mary Ann Waab...y."

"Speak up child."

"Mary Ann Waab...y."

"What *does* she say?"

Another little girl [obviously trying to articulate 'correctly' and not drop her 'h-es']: "Please, sir, she say 'Mary Hann Whalebelly' "¹⁹²

The tale says much of the shy embarrassment of essentially peasant children confronted with substantial figures of Church and authority, and the embarrassment of their parochial speech. Woodward grew up with the odd inflection and vocabulary of Norfolk dialect and remembered asking "Wade, the ancient gardener, who used to scythe the grass on our lawn",¹⁹³ for an explanation for a heap of broken snail shells on the path and received the reply, " 'Tsowt but a mavis a-knappin' a dodman" ('Tis nought but a thrush cracking a snail). These were the sort of figures that

191 Woodward, FL. "I remember Whalebelly's Mill, Dragon's blood and tales of the Wailing Wood" *East Anglian Magazine* Vol 11, Number 7, March 1952. p370. Norfolk dialect persisted but the last native speakers disappeared in the 1870s.

192 Woodward "I remember Whalebelly's Mill.....". p 369. I have modified this a little to make the nineteenth century humour more obvious.

193 Woodward "... Whalebelly's Mill....." p 370.

surrounded the childhood of middle class Victorian children - a cook, gardener and nurse or nanny. In one way they were odd formative influences. For middle class Victorian families, the principal formative personalities were decidedly working class, even if themselves, earnestly 'respectable'. They were links too, to peasant beliefs and superstition.

Woodward recalled his nurse Eleanor Hinds saying to him in later years, with affection, that he was an even child that "niver shruck [cried] nor wailed" but he also remembered her impressing on him tales (still today part of local folklore) of the "Wailing Wood" of Peddars Way that ran past the village, where the ghosts of two robbers who murdered innocent Babes in the Wood, were supposed to reside.¹⁹⁴ And other superstitions, like belief in witchcraft and the efficacy of spells, were always at hand.

Woodward recalled the row of almshouses (still extant) for old pauper women of the district, and his father ministering to them as part of his duties as curate. His father would tell a story of one old lady, a Maria Thurstan, complaining of a neighbour troubling her with bewitchment for, "No sooner do I put the kittle on the fire than there come - bang! And all the smook an' soot come down the chimbley. Now they do say that if yer can git some dragon's blood and spread it on the throsher (threshold) that'll cure 'em." His father, to humour her, attended the chemist in Watton who concocted a red coloured brew. He presented it to the old woman who accepted it gratefully and applied it assiduously with gratifying results.

It would be demanding too much of the evidence to suggest that Woodward's later acceptance of occult belief drew upon his childhood experience, nevertheless he grew up in a world that, despite its rationalist

¹⁹⁴Woodward "... Whalebelly's Mill....."p 371. The story probably derived from a mix of fact and the undeniable gift for storytellers - seagulls would nest in the Saham mere and their mournful cries were heard in the village requiring explanation.

certainty, accorded good humoured respect to the beliefs and superstitions of local people. Saham Toney was a place, like most sites of early childhood, of great intensity and power, if not occult, then certainly psychological.

One such figure of archetypal power in Woodward's early life was his godfather, an elderly parson, who Woodward frequently referred to as the link he had to the previous century, a way, in a sense, he was able to span three centuries and three eras; a figure, in other words, of monumental dimension. Born in 1789, just after the French Revolution, Woodward's godfather, the Rev. Bartholomew Edwards, Rector of Ashill village, two miles from Saham Toney, was an awesome figure of antiquity to the young Woodward. He would arrive at Woodward's house in an "ancient 'barouche' with coachman and footman, with arms folded, both in livery on the box, and Thomas, the butler, top-hatted in the 'rumble' or dickey",¹⁹⁵ which must have been an impressive entrance.

As a young boy his godfather, "who was a bit testy because I was not given his name", would teach him Latin and "box my ears with my Latin grammar" when hearing his lesson. It is significant, given his pedagogic upbringing, that Woodward went on to achieve well in Latin and received prizes both at school and university in the subject. His godfather was obviously a stern and awesome presence, that stamps a substantial figure of conforming authority on Woodward's world as a child. He remembered, as a child of four, sitting in the 'parson's pew', just inside the screen and near the lectern, and listening to the old man, then 85, reading the lesson from Job. He came to the bottom of the page, reading, "And Job answered and said.....", and then turned over several pages that had stuck together. Finding they made no sense - flipping pages back and forth without success - he exclaimed aloud in annoyance, "What does the fellow say!?" and slammed the book shut with a loud, "Here endeth the lesson!"¹⁹⁶

This curmudgeonly character, prone to impatience and irascibility, is echoed in his father. Woodward told the story of his father at a Christening asking, "Name this child" and the mother, of simple labouring stock, responding shyly, "Lucy, Sir".

His father, who was hard of hearing, was shocked at what he thought he heard and said loudly. "Lucifer! Lucifer! What sort of name is that for a child! 'John', I baptise thee."

¹⁹⁵Woodward. "I Remember Whalebelly's Mill....". p 369. Woodward in a letter to IB Horner, (FOSL) mentions his birth as 1788 though what matters is Woodward's repeated mention of him and the significance to him of his awesome old age.

¹⁹⁶Woodward "I Remember Whalebelly's Mill....." p370

“Please Sir,” replied the puzzled mother, “it’s a wench.”

“Well then, I baptise thee, ‘Mary’.”¹⁹⁷

The story illustrates the position of power occupied by the parson, who without thought, disregards the (mis-heard) wishes of the mother. It is Victorian patriarchy and arrogance rampant, heedless of the sensitivity and needs of others. Woodward’s memories are tempered by softer images; of travelling with his father in the slow moving train (the line now abandoned, but still able to be followed) and the train stopping so passengers and enginemen could gather nuts in the woods along the track. Or once when he lost his cap, blown from his head that had been thrust out the window of the carriage, his father instructing the guard to stop so they could amble back along the track to retrieve it.

Though he recalls his time in Kessingland (from 1876-1878) as a satisfying period in his young life and wrote of it later as a time when he “delighted in the sea” and spent his time “in drawing, painting and music”,¹⁹⁸ Woodward seems to dwell on his critically formative years at Saham Toney. Kessingland was a modest ‘living’, the parishioners being principally fishermen, working their boats along the grey and somewhat uninteresting, Norfolk coast line, and dragging them up the beaches against the tide that recedes, it seems, almost to Holland. Even today there is little to merit the village; the Church is less substantial than Saham Toney, the countryside is drab and the village small. It was not a prime ‘living’ like Lowestoft, the substantial port a few miles up the coast, and while the Rev. William was to send his son to the highly

197 This version of the story is told by Leila Brady, from her recollection of Woodward’s version, but Woodward gives a different version in an article in the *East Anglian Magazine*. It was obviously too good a story to remain unembellished. The *East Anglian Magazine* version has the mother offer the name “Io” (a local Norfolk version of John).

“ ‘What did she say?’ asked my father. ‘Please, sir, she say Hiho’. My father hastily: ‘My good woman, it’s the name of a heathen deity.....John I baptise thee. But then the mother spoke up: ‘Please, sir, its a wench.’ ” [p372]

Frankly I do not grasp the humour of this, and there are frequent examples of 19th C humour that simply elude me and many others as well!

198 *Mahinda College Magazine* April 1919.

regarded 'Bluecoat School', Christ's Hospital, then in heart of London, part of the reason rested on finance.

Schooling at Christ's Hospital.

The habit of the English in the nineteenth century, and to this day, of sending their children, at the tender age of eight, to a boarding school for ten or so years of disconnected upbringing and detached relating, remains one of the great cultural mysteries. This "spawn 'em and spurn 'em" approach was simply the norm and excited little comment, but finding a suitable depository did present real difficulties. Christ's Hospital, an ancient institution of repute that sported such alumni as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb and William Farrar (the inventor, in Australia, of rust free wheat) was, in fact, for the poor children of small business folk, stationmasters, ministers, ex-naval personnel and the 'genteel' poor.¹⁹⁹ The Petition for entry was to the "charity to Widows, Orphans and Families who stand in need of Relief [to be] Educated and Maintained among the other poor Children."²⁰⁰ It had been established as a refuge for the poor at the time of the Reformation and was originally granted a charter by Henry VIII and Edward VI.²⁰¹

Woodward was sponsored by The Hon. Rt. Rev. JT Pelham, Lord Bishop of Norwich, one of the Presenting Governors of Christ's Hospital, who had the right to sponsor a number of children each year.²⁰² He was, of course, the Rev. Woodward's superior, the person who had given him the 'living' of Kessingland, and a very useful connection, for there were no school fees at that time at Christ's Hospital. Woodward

¹⁹⁹ *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12818/18 Children's Register 1873-90. From an examination of the records, these are recurring occupations of the parents of children at the time. The designation as 'poor' though did not attract the deep shame it later acquired.

²⁰⁰ *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations.

²⁰¹ Pearce, EH *Annals of Christ's Hospital* (London: Menthuen, 1901)

²⁰² *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations.

was admitted on 15 March 1878 on the Petition of his father, Presented to the Governor's of Christ's Hospital.²⁰³ The Petition reveals much of the family's circumstances.

The estate of the Rev. Woodward, when he died in 1912, was a modest but not inconsiderable amount for the time, so it is difficult to tell whether he was writing his case, for the entry of his son in 1878, to fit the criteria requiring a plea of poverty, or whether his circumstances were genuinely more straitened at the time. The picture, though, that emerges from his Petition is almost Victorian-heroic: he had a "delicate wife" and eight children to support, as well as an aged and infirm relative and invalid sister. Out of a 'living' put down at £420pa, which "is yearly of less take owing to the sea making encroachment on the land",²⁰⁴ he had to pay the pension of the previous Rector of £140pa, as well as rates and taxes of about £107. This left an income of about £327 made up of his 'living' of £273 as well as this wife's income of £20pa and interest from property of £57, a modest income for a 'gentleman' of the time.²⁰⁵

While the Rev. Woodward's tale of penury seems to have secured his son's position, FL Woodward did not commence immediately because, on two occasions, ill health prevented his taking the school's entrance examination. His father wrote to the school with genuine concern that his son, and others in the family, had whooping cough. The illness was prolonged, and resulted in a secondary illness, hard cysts developing under FL Woodward's jaw, which required lancing and removal, leaving a permanent scar.²⁰⁶ A lengthy period of recuperation ensued and the Rev. Woodward wrote again that the boy was still under treatment but "does not cough now and goes out in the air and does his lessons at home as usual."²⁰⁷

This was obviously a continuing frailty because Woodward's father takes particular care to note on the school's health questionnaire, that, "If he takes cold, he suffers from a sort of croup which generally attacks him in the night",²⁰⁸ which sounds like a distressing childhood asthma. This attention to issues of health was no idle matter - perusing the archives of the school at that time presents a number of occasions when

203 *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations.

204 Certainly the coast is subject to erosion but why this would impact on the living is not clear.

205 *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations.

206 Gunewardene p3.

207 *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations.

208 *Christ's Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations.

children died at the school from various illnesses that, today, would not be necessarily life threatening.²⁰⁹

Until FL Woodward went to school he had been tutored at home mainly by his father and godfather. The pride the Rev. Woodward obviously felt for his son is readily discernible in his correspondence with the school and is unusually disclosing for the time. When queried as to whether his son had sufficient elementary education to pass the entrance examination, the Rev. Woodward is emphatic- “quite so- he is advanced for his age- especially in Latin”²¹⁰ The strong bond between Woodward and his father was no doubt intensified by continued early tutoring and strengthened too, by the ready accomplishment and fulfilment of expectations by the younger Woodward. The background of illness, the ever present spectre of mortality, no doubt also strengthened the bond between father and son.

This appears a formative relationship that seems in no way overshadowed by his mother, whose “delicate” condition seems to have confined her to the shadows of the family and a stereotypically Victorian role as a remote ‘saintly’ companion. The special nature of the relationship with Woodward’s father is also evidenced by the fact that he left FL Woodward his gold watch and chain in his Will - the only particular object left to any of his sons.²¹¹ While the watch today is ubiquitous, then, a fine gold fob watch was a valuable heirloom of some sentimental significance, and an indication of the high regard by the legator of the legatee.

While FL Woodward was admitted on 15 March 1878, because of ill health, he was not “clothed” until 17 September, 1879. This particularly archaic tradition remains to this day where the boys assume the distinctive garb of Christ’s Hospital, a long blue coat, yellow ‘kersey’ or smock and yellow stockings to the knee. Woodward’s scholastic success was immediate and he won the Latin and English prizes in his first term at school and continued a proficiency that led, in his fourth and fifth years, to further English and Latin prizes. In his “last year in school (1889) [he] won a School Exhibition, a gold medal and prize for Latin hexameter verse”.²¹²

Woodward though, did not show the same interest in sport in his early years, partly as a result of previous illness and partly, Woodward suggests, from “lack of proper nourishment” at the school.²¹³ His opinion seems well founded: breakfast consisted of bread and dripping,

209 Archives Christ’s Hospital, Horsham: Archivist David Young.

210 *Christ’s Hospital Records Guildhall London*: Ms 12,818A/145 Presentations. Note on questionnaire 15 September 1879-Rev. Woodward’s emphasis.

211 Somerset House: Will of the Rev. Wm Woodward.

212 Gunewardene p3.

213 Gunewardene p3.

and milk; lunch, a joint of meat, potatoes and a small piece of bread; and evening supper at 6pm consisted of bread and milk, or bread and cheese, and small beer,²¹⁴ hardly a recommendation for English cooking, or adequate nutrition. This was a not untypical Public School of the day: wards of 40-45 boys, a 'settle' (iron box) at the end of their bed for private possessions, and the whole overseen by Dames and Nurses, with a Beadle to enforce discipline, all recognisably Dickensian.

Games in the school at that time were organised by the boys themselves, and football, 'Hall-Play', was played on a gravel and asphalt pitch, making it hazardous indeed. Woodward discovered, however, at fourteen that he had some athletic ability and by his last years at Christ's Hospital he began to be mentioned in the school paper, *The Blue*, for his athletic contribution in Rugby and soccer - a somewhat heated issue in the school at the time as to which code to favour - and in cricket, rowing, chess and athletics.

He even began by 1888 to get some muted attention for his prowess in football where, obviously because of his size (about 5'10"-6'), he played front row forward in the First Fifteen (senior team)²¹⁵ and in April 1889 he received a football 'cap' for his efforts.²¹⁶ In athletics in the same year Woodward gained a 2nd in the High Jump; 3rd in the 440yd; 2nd in the class 1, 120yd Hurdle; 2nd in the Long Jump; 1st in throwing the cricket ball (67yd) - which was dismissed as "very poor" compared with the Public School record of over 106yd - and 1st in putting the weight (28'6") - which at least was described as "very fair but Woodward could probably have added another foot". He also appears in the Rowing Club's Class I "Fours" in the position of stroke and weighing in at 10st7^{lb}.²¹⁷

The Rev. Woodward's ambition for his son was considerable and assumed emulation of his own path through university and into the ministry and Holy Orders, a common Victorian paternal expectation. He met the first of these expectations by becoming a "Grecian" at the school, a term Gunewardene seems to mistake as the singular 'head boy',²¹⁸ whereas, in fact, the term referred to those senior boys in the school preparing for university entry. The position was nonetheless regarded with some awe within the school community as "quite a class apart; very superior persons indeed". They even assumed a special gait known as 'spadging'; "a longish stride with a drop of the whole body in the middle of the pace. The graciousness of their movements was much

214 Hamilton, H *The Christ's Hospital Book* (London: 1953) p205-6. Small beer was a low alcohol brew.

215 *The Blue* Vol. XVII No. 2 November 1888 p37 & No. 3 December 1888 p64.

216 *The Blue* Vol. XVII No. 6 April 1889 p132.

217 *The Blue* Vol. XVII No. 7 June 1889 p162-4.

218 Gunewardene p4.

enhanced by the voluminous swaying of their coats”,²¹⁹ which were longer than underclassmen.

The privileges of “Grecians” were substantial; they had their own study and a private ‘nook’ or HQ in the Head’s house, they ate together apart from underclassmen, and had better food and better beer. There was a particular esprit and code of behaviour that went with the office; they were looked upon “as a kind of god [but] they were never aggressive towards us, the lower fry”²²⁰, and did not engage in the bullying or ‘brassing’ of lower classmen.

In essence they were part of an elite ‘brotherhood’ with their distinctive badges of dress, gait and cant that held them together and separated them from other mere mortals - no different, in fact, from the present day symbols of southern Californian youth culture. The nature of egalitarian ‘brotherhoods’, however is their contrast with patriarchal hierarchy, separated from the power of the fathers who, as the myths of Uranus, Cronus and Zeus portend,²²¹ are as castrating in their demands as the mothers men prefer to blame, for the myth of the sons’ rebellion against the fathers is a “supra-historical archetype; eternally recurrent; a myth; an old, old story.”²²²

Despite the elevated and valorised position of Grecians in the school community, with all the allusion to classic antiquity, the years 1888-1889 were, for Woodward, a period of great mental “distress”.²²³ He was 18-19 years old at the time and was reading widely, questioning and engaging in intense reflection and discussion with his fellows. Inevitably, given the forces then at work, the issues would have involved questions of religion, ones that would have gone to the heart of the relationship with, and authority of, Woodward’s father. It was unquestionably a period of profound adolescent doubt and melancholy, an intense period which Woodward also recognised as generating, in that melancholic intensity, a painful pleasure as well as despair - “the essence and charm of that unquiet and delightful epoch [of adolescence] is ignorance of self as well as ignorance of life.”²²⁴

Undoubtedly sexual tension formed part of that despair, exaggerated by the then not uncommon ‘ignorance of life’, but it was principally subsumed and sublimated beneath an intense personal introspection and doubt of personal worth and purpose. It was obviously a period of substantial disjunction and disconnection from his milieu - some of the

219 Hamilton *The Christ’s Hospital Book* p 234.

220 Hamilton *The Christ’s Hospital Book* p 235.

221 Graves, R. *Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1981) pp11-14.

222 Brown, NO. *Loves Body* (New York: Vintage, 1966) p3.

223 Gunewardene p4.

224 Letter FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, cited in Gunewardene p4.

signs of classic depression - which left him in a meaningless and purposeless world, a “square peg in a round hole”, as he put it.

It would be dismissive, however to simply characterise this as ‘depression’, for it presents more as a melancholy than a melancholia. Further, the experience was tied to personal definition and necessary individuation - a separation from the demands of the father and the establishment of his own direction and vocation. Woodward clearly saw the experience in positive, even noble terms, echoing the grandiosity that often accompanies such experiences, and saw it as common among those who ‘think and reason’ - “it is just a token that one has evolved beyond the rank and file of humanity”.²²⁵ Being a narcissistic bi-polar experience it is one that exhibits opposite extremes, from profound worthlessness to the grandiosity of a ‘special’ favour bestowed on those who experience it.

It was clearly a defining experience in Woodward’s life that left him with a deep sympathy and empathy for young people entrapped by similar experiences. He saw it as a defining moment that established a personal ‘self’ capable of engaging the world profitably and with authenticity. But in order, as Brown says, “To make in ourselves a new consciousness” one must become conscious of symbolism, for,

Symbolism is the mind making connections...rather than distinctions (separations). Symbolism makes conscious interconnections and unions that are unconscious and repressed. Freud says, symbolism is on the track of a former identity, a lost unity: the lost continent Atlantis, underneath the sea of life in which we live enisled.²²⁶

While Woodward’s ‘dark night of the soul’, was principally about isolation, disconnection and distinction, the business of remaking consciousness and its symbolic forms may require a longer gestation, and takes more than, as Woodward suggests, the simple establishment of a new interest, vocation or enthusiasm. In many respects Woodward’s period of “distress” assumes the shape of what Ellenberger has described, appropriately, as a “creative illness”,²²⁷ an experience characterised by profound isolation, self absorption and distress, out of which arises a transforming certainty of a particular insight or truth. This certainty of belief tends to persist throughout the remainder of life as does the tendency to remain an isolate, which is certainly true of Woodward.

225 Letter FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, cited in Gunewardene p4.

226 Brown, NO. *Love’s Body* p82. The reference is to Freud’s “Interpretation of Dreams”

227 Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* p447-8.

‘Creative illness’ has characterised the development of a considerable number of recognised figures like Freud, Jung, Jesus and the Buddha,²²⁸ but as Storr points out, it has also afflicted some considerably less illustrious figures, including many modern day gurus and charismatic assemblers of sects, whose certainty borders on the bizarre. Then again there are those of that experience who are of simple goodness, who seek no disciples and who, “...by their fruits shall ye know them,”²²⁹ for “Genuine virtue is usually unobtrusive”.²³⁰

The occurrence of such transformational ‘creative illnesses’, where a “new insight strikes like a thunderbolt”, tends to be in the early thirties or forties, though sometimes “the revelatory answer comes gradually”.²³¹ Woodward’s experience was obviously much earlier, involving issues peculiar to adolescence, and certainly not precipitating psychosis or messianic tendencies. Nevertheless it is significant that Woodward eventually began his ‘vocation’ in Ceylon at the age of 32, at the age that seems to mark for many of that experience, the beginning of a ‘mission’. For Woodward, it would seem the journey from illness to certainty was somewhat lengthy and the period from late adolescence to his early thirties should be seen in him as a nurturing apprenticeship of thoughts and ideas that were later to take more concrete shape.

In this journey, it is interesting to note that the metaphor Brown suggests - exploring the tracks of a ‘former identity’ - became for Woodward, in his belief in rebirth and former lives, a very concrete version of that metaphor, emanating from his Theosophy and Buddhism, which, ironically, included belief in a literal Atlantis. This is frequently the manner in which deeply felt symbolism and metaphors are reified and assume concrete form in ‘real’ life, like a pun or play on words made literal and lived out.

Woodward’s educational and sporting achievements were modest, and well short of the ‘brilliant’ academic accomplishment often implied of Woodward among his old pupils from Ceylon. In the Speech Day of 1889,²³² Woodward plays no recognised part, yet this was the time when the elite of the Grecians delivered orations in Latin, Greek and English and were given the undivided attention of the whole school. In the Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board results of that year, Woodward only secured a pass and gained no distinction.²³³ This is no diminution of Woodward’s abilities; brilliant academic attainment does

228 Freud experienced profound depression out of which arose some of his most seminal work as did Jung, though his was almost a psychotic episode. For Jesus the Temptation in the desert, and for the Buddha, the realisation of illness, decay and death, preceded their mission in the world.

229 Mathew 7:20.

230 Storr, A. *Feet of Clay* pxii.

231 Storr *Feet of Clay* pxiv.

232 *The Blue* Vol. XVIII No. 1. 1889.

233 *The Blue* Vol. XVIII No. 2. November 1889, p15.

not necessarily imply imagination or an interesting character, in fact they are often counterindicated. Woodward emerges, however, as a person of intelligence who had to dedicate himself to the task of attainment and did not expect success without effort.

In sport in his final year, though, Woodward was increasingly mentioned in a hearty, congratulatory way, which indicates, not only greater participation, but acceptance and inclusion. At Hertford, on 19 November 1889, the Rugby First Fifteen played a staunch game and though “our forwards were considerably lighter...[they]..were seldom overpowered, thanks especially to the energetic play of Woodward.”²³⁴ And against Godolphin School at Herne Hill, on 23 November 1889, “our opponents kicked off and shortly afterwards Woodward made a good catch in front of goal from which the kick by Turner was successful.”²³⁵ Stirring stuff indeed.

Cambridge: Sidney Sussex College.

From Christ’s Hospital, Woodward tried first, unsuccessfully, to gain entry to Oxford, where an older brother was at Balliol. A year later, however, at nineteen, he gained a £40pa Foundation Scholarship to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, one of the smaller and lesser known colleges, which tided him financially from 1890 to 1892. In 1892 and 1893 he was awarded a £45pa Lovett Exhibition, intended for sons of graduate clergymen intending to take Holy Orders,²³⁶ which probably indicates Woodward’s intentions at this stage of his life.

Woodward took up residence at Sidney Sussex in October 1890, in rooms, according to tradition, next to those that once housed Cromwell,²³⁷ though it would seem, according to the College archivist,²³⁸ that if all the rooms that were supposed to have been inhabited by Cromwell were put together it would constitute a modest hotel. The College at that time was quite small, only 58 students in 1890,²³⁹ and was known as a ‘reading’ (academic) college as distinct from those of a sporting inclination.

It also had suffered a reputation in the previous decade as a college known for the eccentricities of some of its Fellows - inclined to pranks like serving dinner guests with a roast leg of donkey²⁴⁰ - but Woodward plunged into the camaraderie of College life, joining the rowing and Rugby with enthusiasm, despite the paucity of ‘men’ to swell the numbers. His rowing efforts were not blessed with much success,

²³⁴*The Blue* Vol. XVIII No. 3 December 1889, p64.

²³⁵*The Blue* Vol XVIII No. 3 December 1889, p 65.

²³⁶ Personal Correspondence with Nicholas Rogers, Archivist, Sidney Sussex College 17 July 1992.

²³⁷ Gunewardene p 5.

²³⁸ Conversation with Nicholas Rogers, Archivist, Sidney Sussex College May 1997.

²³⁹ Scott-Giles CW *Sidney Sussex College: a short history* (Cambridge: Pendragon Press, 1975) p112.

²⁴⁰ Scott-Giles CW *Sidney Sussex College* p103.

though he was obviously a key participant, even coaching the Sidney eights in 1891.²⁴¹ Given his weight, which ranged from 10½ to 11½ stone (65-75kg) during his stay at university, he assumed the number five or six position, where the strongest rowers are placed in the eights, and though the team improved over his time at Sidney he was never selected for the Oxford Cambridge race.²⁴²

In athletics too, Woodward was “doing wonders at weight-putting”²⁴³ (shot-put) and was made captain of the Sidney Rugby team in 1893.²⁴⁴ He also participated in the debating at College²⁴⁵ as well as maintaining a sound academic record, winning the first year Classics Prize in 1891²⁴⁶ and the College Prize for Latin Essay.²⁴⁷ His musical talents were also recruited for the post of Chapel Organist²⁴⁸ though this does not necessarily signify outstanding accomplishment as the chapel organ at that time was notoriously inadequate, and used mainly to accompany hymns. Woodward put this purpose to good use, however, and was known to appropriate Gilbert and Sullivan as his voluntary in chapel, parodying the tone of sacred music by playing themes from Gilbert and Sullivan at funereal pace,²⁴⁹ a classic inclination of organ humorists.

Woodward obviously retained affection for his time at university, and in later life even obtained an 4^{ft}x3^{ft} aerial photograph of Cambridge²⁵⁰ to dissect the changes that had occurred: “I can’t make out how they lodge and feed 6000 men at Oxford and Cambridge.”²⁵¹ The atmosphere was certainly more personal in his day and full of the usual undergraduate pranks. He recalled when Gladstone stayed with the Master of Selwyn, a number of students wrote to every barber in Cambridge, requesting they attend at 8:00am the next day to have the honour of shaving the Rt. Hon. W Gladstone: “At the appointed hour every hansom cab in Cambridge drove up, each containing a barber fully armed.”²⁵²

Woodward in later years followed the issue of women’s advancement at Cambridge with some fascination.

I congratulate you females on getting another Professor at Cambridge- Perhaps we will see a female Vice-Chancellor stalking down the streets- heralded by Girton and Newnham

241 *The Blue* Vol. XX No. 3 December 1891.

242 *Annals of the Sidney Sussex Boat Club 1890-1893*. Archives, Sidney Sussex College Cambridge.

243 *The Blue* Vol. XIX No. 2 p44.

244 *The Blue* Vol. XX No. 8 July 1892 p167.

245 *Sidney Sussex College Debating Society, Minute Book 1893*. Archives, Sidney Sussex College Cambridge.

246 *Cambridge University Calendar* 1891, p749.

247 Gunewardene p5.

248 Venn, JA. *Alumni Cantabrigienses* part II, vol. VI (Cambridge: 1954)

Also personal correspondence with Nicholas Rogers, Archivist, Sidney Sussex College 17 July 1992.

249 Heyward, N. *A Buddhist Scholar*- notes on the life of F.L. Woodward Esq. and extracts from a broadcast by the author over Tasmanian radio station 7ZR early in 1954. p4.

250 Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 7 September 1949. (FOSL). In a earlier letter (20 June 1949) it expanded to 4x5.

251 Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 20 January 1950. IB Horner Collection (FOSL)

252 Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 March 1944. (FOSL)

silver pokerites- Well, Oxford has no female professors! But London has [a female] Professor of German...Greek...Geography...History... Economics [2]... and Philosophy.... - Seven!!!²⁵³

He brought to his discussion with IB Horner, Pali Text Society President, an unusual historical perspective. He remembered that in the early days of Newnham, where Horner was later appointed, women could only visit men's rooms if "accompanied by some senior (?dragon) of the College." As for visits by men, even by the brother of a student, that was not permitted, for as Miss Clough, who Woodward described as "head ogress",²⁵⁴ observed, "The brother of one is not the brother of all."²⁵⁵ He remembered too, as a student, stopping to watch the "young things" scrabbling at hockey "in long skirts and viciously hitting each other over the shins. (such langwidge!)"

Despite the obvious enthusiasm for College life and academic accomplishment, when Woodward came to the finals of the Classic Tripos, he achieved only a lower second class honours degree.²⁵⁶ While in later years he facetiously remarked, "I thought that I might have got a First Class but was consoled by the thought that all really first class men take a second class",²⁵⁷ it was an arguable defence for a surprisingly poor result. He seems to have decided not to enter the ministry, despite his Lovett scholarship for those entering Holy Orders, but whether his result was intended to subvert his father's desire and intention for his future, remains speculation.

Constrained in his choice of career, teaching was probably one of the few options available, and certainly not one particularly valued at the time, though he claims he "always intended"²⁵⁸ entering the profession. While little evidence is available upon which to judge, his university results and career choice were not an auspicious beginning. Teaching at that time - and until recently - was often a refuge for the less than competent, as well as a range of misfits and those marking time, who had few other options. There were many, too, who were genuinely dedicated and motivated, but where Woodward fitted among all these possibilities is difficult to say. Given the experience of his 'distress' at Christ's Hospital, a certain amount of indecision about purpose and direction may

253 Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 12 March 1945 IB Horner Collection (FOSL). Woodward obviously keenly followed the issue and could name each of the female professors at London University.

254 Letter FI Woodward to IB Horner 5 October 1942 (FOSL).

255 Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 27 January 1949 (FOSL). I assume Miss Clough was an early warden of the College.

256 The hierarchy of results ranged from Firsts, Upper Seconds, Lower Seconds, Thirds and fail, so his result equated a bare pass.

257 Gunewardene p5.

258 Gunewardene p6.

well have characterised his endeavours at that time, and spurred his questing and questioning, which, to a degree, teaching afforded him an opportunity to pursue. It was, as he observed, a “means of learning” as well as a “means of service”.²⁵⁹

Teaching.

Woodward’s first teaching post was as an Assistant Master at Overdale School, Rugby, a preparatory school, though he taught there for only a few months before taking up the position of classics master at the Royal Grammar School, Worcester, where he remained from 1894-96.²⁶⁰ Worcester was obviously congenial and Woodward entered the spirit of the community. He rowed the City Boat, “to victory at many a regatta”²⁶¹, a somewhat greater success than at Sidney, and continued his interest in Rugby football, playing for Worcester and the Midlands Counties. Woodward maintained his fascination with rowing and even later in life he remained eager to offer his ‘expertise’ to the young, oblivious to the fact that techniques and equipment had vastly altered.²⁶² But while he dedicated himself to school and sport, it was in the vacation period that Woodward renewed himself, escaping to ramble the countryside or cycling “in all directions, sketching, studying architecture”.²⁶³

With the invention of the ‘safety’ cycle with pneumatic tyres and chain drives,²⁶⁴ it was a fashion in the 1890’s - before motor vehicles had criss-crossed the English countryside with macadamised ley lines - to cycle and tramp about the countryside recreating a lost and romantic rural England, which, if it ever existed, had been crushed by depression and the machinations of urban commerce. For Woodward, though, it was a recreation of childhood shades and colours, redolent odours and a comforting, encompassing isolation. It was a satisfaction with nature he retained all his life; whether in England, Ceylon or Tasmania; it was always to some rural interior that he retreated.

In 1897 Woodward left Worcester to teach at Crondall School, Farnham and then at Westgate-on-Sea in 1898, before taking up the position of Second Master (Vice-Principal) at Stamford School, Lincolnshire where he remained from 1898 to 1903.²⁶⁵ Stamford was an ancient school that had once been a significant centre of learning rivalling Oxford, but at the time of Woodward the school was quite small, five masters and never

259 Cited in Gunewardene p6

260 Venn *Alumni Cantabrigienses* p574. Gunewardene incorrectly suggests the school was Rugby Preparatory.

261 Mahinda College Magazine April 1919.

262 Interview with Nigel Heyward.

263 Mahinda College Magazine April 1919.

264 Briggs, A. *Victorian Things* (London: Penguin, 1988) p418-420.

265 Venn *Alumni Cantabrigiense* p574. Gunewardene p6. Gunewardene omits mention of Crondall and Westgate, neither of which seem to have been very large. Almost no recorded information is available on them, neither now being in existence.

more than sixty students,²⁶⁶ that offered an individually attuned tuition that would be envied today.

It was a methodology that inevitably forged close relationships between pupils and masters, an aspect Woodward certainly valued and cultivated in the educational programme he initiated in Ceylon. One of the friendships initiated at Stamford that became one of lifelong importance for Woodward was the connection with EM Hare who later not only resided as a tea planter in Ceylon but also joined Woodward in his interest in Pali, translating a number of works for the Pali Text Society and collaborating with him in compiling the Pali Concordance. He was a pupil of Woodward's, only ten when Woodward left for Ceylon in 1903, but it was to prove an enduring friendship and collaborative partnership. The nature of the teaching programme at Stamford, and the principalship (1884-1906) of the Rev. Dr DJJ Barnard, seemed to have influenced Woodward's educational style and later educational philosophy. Barnard was a "remote and stern figure" who, though strict, "was always kindly and helpful when approached."²⁶⁷ His words from Speech Day 1887 could well have been those of Woodward, when he suggested that students "came to the school not to be crammed...but to learn how to learn".²⁶⁸ Students were encouraged to work on their own, to cultivate self discipline and self reliance, an aspect recognisable in Woodward's own style.

Barnard also regarded Classics as an important vehicle of learning; Classics and mathematics, he remarked at the 1892 Speech Day, "*do* sharpen the intellect...*do* train the mind...*do* exercise the brain so that it may turn to any subject that it will, and they should not be assailed simply because they are of no actual use in counting house or office."²⁶⁹ Relevance, as Woodward later emphasised, was not as important as intellectual flexibility, which, he felt, Classics provided adequately. Barnard's influence is detectable in Woodward, and though his views were not unique at the time, they certainly represented, then, an odd mix of traditional and 'progressive', not unlike the manner in which Woodward was to present. While probably anathema to present day educationalists, these 'old fashioned' views retained a commitment to the mental discipline necessary for intellectual success.

Philosophic Preoccupation.

While developing his educational views in this period, Woodward also pursued a private exploration of philosophical values, a continuation of the questing and questioning that characterised his outlook and

266 Deed, BL. *A History of Stamford School* (Stamford: Private Publication, 1982) p66.

267 Deed *A History of Stamford School* p66.

268 Deed *A History of Stamford School* p62.

269 Deed *A History of Stamford School* p65.

behaviour from his time at Christ's Hospital. Central to his thoughts at that time were the works of the Stoics and particularly, the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius (CE 121-180). Again, this was part of fashionable reading at that time where every good publisher's catalogue provided an elegant series of miniature classics, and there were "very few of these in which the *Meditations* failed to make an appearance."²⁷⁰

While Zeno's Stoic philosophy advocated the creed of Materialism, Monism and Mutation,²⁷¹ in its Roman form, its emphasis was on the moral aspects of Zeno's teaching, which defined philosophy as 'striving after wisdom', and stressed rational, temperate behaviour, "just and virtuous dealings, self discipline, unflinching fortitude, and complete freedom from the storms of passion".²⁷² The aphorisms of the *Meditations* encapsulated these aspects and echoed the restrained, repressed preoccupation of Victorians with manliness and sound moral discipline.

This moral rectitude and self improvement through the acquisition of wisdom was a continuing feature of Woodward's thought. Even the eventual motto Woodward chose for Mahinda College, Galle, in Ceylon- "*Khippam Vayama, pandito bhava*" (Strive earnestly, become wise) though taken from the *Dhammapada*, owes as much to the *Meditations* as it does to Buddhist thought. Stoicism was very much a pantheist belief, with God immanent in all things, and its affection in the hearts of Victorians indicated the estrangement from traditional belief that was so much, too, a part of Woodward's struggle with faith.

Woodward's admiration of Marcus Aurelius was immense, in his later Theosophical beliefs even regarding him as a *Bodhisattva*.²⁷³ Marie Byles said of Woodward that he liked "to think of Marcus Aurelius as the third Buddhist Emperor".²⁷⁴ In his view, "Nothing is so grand in all literature as the great Stoic Emperor, faultless and lonely, in his great position." It is a characterisation wherein Woodward himself is detectable. He saw Stoicism as the faith "for those that suffer" and "when I was years in the dark, before I got out, I found my greatest comfort, in these deep thoughts" of the *Meditations*.²⁷⁵ The allusion to his continuing 'suffering' and 'distress' during this period is indicative

270 Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* [Introduction and translation by Maxwell Staniforth] (London: Penguin, 1964) p7.

271 The view that everything, including thought and time had material substance, that everything ultimately reduced to a single unifying principle (monism), and that everything was perpetually altering into something different (mutation).

272 Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* p10.

273 Bodhisattva: a compassionate and enlightened being; one who refuses entry into Nirvana in order to assist all sentient beings.[principally a Mahayana Buddhist emphasis]

274 Byles, M. "Marcus Aurelius and the Misunderstood Stoics" *Vedanta and the West* July-August 1951, p109. Mitchell Library- Marie Byles Collection ML-MSS 3833-10(13). The first Buddhist emperor was Asoka of India, the second, in Woodward's view, was Shotoku, who brought Buddhism to Japan.

275 Cited in Gunewardene p7.

of the fact that his angst was not swept away after the ‘distress’ of Christ’s Hospital, and that his questing continued.

A further amplification of this preoccupation is also able to be found in Woodward’s affection for Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, a work that remained his constant companion and which he knew by heart. He always made his pupils read the poem and regarded it as the “chief literary work of the century and the deepest philosophy”.²⁷⁶ While interest in Tennyson’s archetypical Victorian verse waned in the early twentieth century, a resurgence of attention has led to some ‘revisionist’ views particularly of *In Memoriam*. Written after the death of Tennyson’s dearest friend Hallam, attempts have been made to place a homoerotic construction on the work but as Kolb suggests bluntly, “The idea of anything approaching physical involvement is absurd”,²⁷⁷ a view Rosenberg supports.²⁷⁸ The work was definitely pre-Wildean, written at a time of accepted ‘romantic friendship’ and unselfconscious affection between men.²⁷⁹

In Memoriam is principally a poem of grief, religious doubt and despair that strikes at the heart of the Victorian crisis of faith. It was written when Charles Lyall’s *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) presaged the overthrow of anthropocentric views of nature, later confirmed by Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. An elegy of doubt and suffering loneliness, the poem struggles for resolution, faith and purpose, for hope and comfort. Interestingly, it also toys with the term ‘type’, in the sense both of the biological evolution of species, and, Christian typology, the popular Victorian theological view that Old Testament laws, events, and people divinely prefigured the appearance of Christ²⁸⁰ - a form of deciphering and decoding the Biblical subtext to reveal confirmation of Messianic arrival.

The poem confirms the spiritual anguish Woodward suffered in his youth and early manhood, and the issues of doubt and faith that characterised that angst. It also anticipates the Theosophical preoccupation with the presumed aeons of evolving ‘root races’²⁸¹ towards an idealised ‘type’, a reflection of the hierarchical arrangement of races based on assumed levels of ‘civilisation’ that prevailed in Victorian and imperial thinking. And it presages too, Woodward’s later

276 Cited in Gunewardene p78.

277 [Http://www.flinders.edu.au/topics/Morton/Victorians/Tennyson_InMem_discussion.htm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/topics/Morton/Victorians/Tennyson_InMem_discussion.htm)

278 Rosenberg J “Stopping for Death: Tennyson’s In Memoriam” *Victorian Poetry* Vol. 30 #3-4 Autumn Winter 1992.

279 See Hyam R *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.) The present day homoerotic preoccupation, which intrudes into any discussion of masculinity, requires constant clarification, unfortunately.

280 See Landow, G *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980)

281 See Besant, A. & Leadbeater, CW *The Lives of Alcyone* Vol. 1 & 2. (Adyar: TPH, 1924, reprinted Mokelumne Hill California: Health Research, 1985.) and

Besant, A. & Leadbeater, CW *Man: Whence, How and Whither* (Adyar: TPH, 1913, reprinted 1971)

fascination with Baconianism²⁸² and decoding textual ciphers and codes. Far from oddities, both racism by hierarchical superiority and biblical typology were aspects of conventional Victorian thinking, and theological typology, in particular, would have been more than familiar to Woodward.

While care should be taken in attributing the term 'racist' to nineteenth century behaviour, since it was largely unconscious and culturally assumed,²⁸³ it nonetheless pervaded Theosophical doctrine and particularly the theory of 'root races', despite the Society's universalism and avowed support of Indian and Ceylonese self determination. Leadbeater's *Lives of Alcyone* illustrates this tendency but his own behaviour said far more. During the Society's turmoil in Sydney, Leadbeater took refuge in the home of TS member Gustav K llestr m, a Swedish immigrant.²⁸⁴ Leadbeater once put his hand firmly on the shoulder of Gustav K llestr m, and said in all oratorical seriousness, "K llestr m, some day you may have the good fortune to be born in another life as an Englishman",²⁸⁵ which for the intensely Tory Leadbeater was the acme of races and an obvious compliment.

Woodward tended towards the Victorian values of austerity and restraint, which were reflected in his regard for Plato which he read and re-read in the original Greek. It was certainly from Plato that he derived his elitist attitudes, and confirmed his adherence to austerity and the denial of physical comfort and bodily indulgence "in order to give the ego an easier passage out", presumably, in order to rise to a higher 'plane' of existence. As he was to write to a Sinhala student many years later,

Those that suffer from loneliness and poverty are really the happiest [as] it means that the Higher Self has undertaken this sorrow as a course of training. There is always an emergence into light if you only endure.²⁸⁶

This Calvinist inclination, which became so over emphasised in Victorian attitudes that it became a focus of parody and ridicule, is easy to dismiss in an age obsessed with self indulgence, but in Woodward's

282 The belief Bacon wrote the plays of Shakespeare and others.

283 *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p1497. The term 'racialism' did not appear in general parlance until the 1907. The appearance of neologisms generally arise from the conscious need to satisfy the expression of a conceptual apprehension, so one can generally assume that when general consciousness of an issue reaches a 'critical mass' vocabulary will arise to satisfy the need to express it, much as Huxley's coinage of 'agnostic' arose to meet the perceived need for an intermediate term between deist and atheist.

284 Oscar K llestr m, Gustav's son and then a young boy, was implicated in the sexual scandal surrounding Leadbeater in the period 1916-1922. Gustav later was ordained in Leadbeater's Liberal Catholic Church, a Theosophical sub sect.

See Tillet G. *The Elder Brother: a biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater*. p198.

285 Personal interview with Norna K llestr m Morton, sister of Oscar and daughter of Gustav K llestr m, May 1997. The story obviously both amused and appalled the family for its arrogance and quite unconscious racial superiority, delivered without any thought of offence.

286 Letter cited in Gunewardene p8.

enactment it was never unctuous piety but always tempered with moderation and humour.

Plato also introduced Woodward to one other view which he recognised as familiar and immediately self evident, the ideas of rebirth and metempsychosis. This was a crucial apprehension that led Woodward naturally into Theosophy and thence Buddhism. Stamford was an active centre of Theosophy in the late 1890's and he eventually joined the Society in 1901,²⁸⁷ a decision that had a liberating effect on Woodward, one he described as the most important of his life, a 'Saul to Damascus' experience, that opened him to a sense of arrival at a 'truth'. He began to study the then orientalist inclinations of the Theosophical Society, Hinduism and Buddhism, and found "At last ...satisfaction in the teachings of the Buddha",²⁸⁸ though he never viewed it in anything other than a Theosophical manner, which differs significantly to orthodox Buddhism.

Woodward's attraction to the idea of previous births found confirmation and elaboration in Theosophy. He believed he had previously been associated with members of this inspired brotherhood in other lives, preparing "the world by brotherhood for the coming of Maitreya[sic]",²⁸⁹ (the Buddha-to-Come). The work of the TS, he saw, was to prepare for the coming of the Maitreya by fulfilling the task of reconciling religious and political differences. Woodward regarded it as "the greatest privilege in the world to be having a share in this work. Not for 2000 years can such a change occur again" (presumably because of the particularly fortuitous planetary alignment and time in the particular *kalpa* or aeon.) When Woodward wrote about the *Metteyya* he wrote with a feeling and conviction otherwise absent from his writings, almost with a passion. His construction of the world inspired by *Metteyya* was one based on "compassion for all" where people "seek the welfare of others, forgetting self."²⁹⁰

The new inspiration instilled in Woodward by his discovery of Theosophy led him to write to Col. Olcott, the then President of the Theosophical Society offering his services and "help in his great work."²⁹¹ Olcott had no hesitation in taking up Woodward's offer, such was the need, even desperation, for people of ability to assist in the many educational and other projects of the TS. He wrote offering Woodward

287 Theosophical Year Book 1938 p223. Gunewardene states, p9 that Woodward joined the TS in 1902. It is not an immense discrepancy but I would tend to favour the accuracy of a TS publication.

288 Cited in Gunewardene, p10.

289Cited in Gunewardene, p10. Woodward here uses the Sanskrit term, which is spelled variously, not the Pali term *Metteyya*, which use I will employ in preference for consistency.

290 Woodward, FL. "Metteya Bodhisattva- The Coming Buddha" *New Lanka* Vol. II, No. 2 January 1951, p37. (Woodward's spelling)

291 Vitharana Ms p16-17.

the principalship of Mahinda Buddhist College in Galle, Ceylon, and Woodward's response was immediate.

Would I come at once? It was March 7, 1903. I considered the matter and replied by return mail that I would come. So I threw up my post at Stamford at half-term and left home on July 6th and arrived at Galle on August 1st.²⁹²

A Pattern of Response.

In attempting to decipher Woodward's experience leading to his adoption of Theosophy and Buddhism, there is a dual context, cultural and personal. On the cultural level there was a reaction to nineteenth century Positivism and its erosion of religious certainty that unleashed a questing for alternative spiritual and mystical experience that was, as Chadwick has observed, quite particular to the period after 1880.²⁹³

On a personal level Woodward, the son of an adoring father inclined to invest his child with high expectations, struggled to define himself and release his own potentiality. This is in no way to suggest Woodward's father, though obviously powerful, was other than a genuinely good person. It is simply to suggest that the awesome power of the father presents problems of activating individual creative authenticity in the son. This process involved not only a reaction to the father but to the father's Father, a daunting task indeed. Woodward's period of melancholy and 'distress' in his last years at Christ's Hospital, with its affinity to 'creative illness' and arrival at apprehended certainty, seems to have persisted until his early thirties and his discovery of Theosophy and Buddhism that in turn defined a personal 'mission' and a burst of creative energy that was to have a significant effect on education and cultural formation in Ceylon.

A psychoanalytic interpretation, as proposed, is not a claim of 'truth' or definitive explanation, simply an attempt to provide a narrative that orders events in a manner that makes 'sense'. They remain tentative hypotheses which are inevitably incomplete, but such is true of any theory, scientific or otherwise, for as Henri Poincaré said bluntly, even scientific theories are "neither true nor false" but merely *useful*,²⁹⁴ by which I assume he meant they either order events into something comprehensible or not. And it remains a useful way of relating the personal to the cultural, of recognising that the personal is ultimately societal.

292 Cited in Gunewardene p11.

293 Chadwick, O *The Secularization of the European Mind* p239.

294 Cited in Hobsbawm, E *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage. 1989) p257.

There is in Woodward's doubt and reaction to his father's world, in the way he came to stand in distinct contrast to his origins and influences, an aspect much like a 'reaction formation',²⁹⁵ though there is no necessary inference of neurotic dysfunction. The central aspect of 'reaction formation', as defined by Anna Freud, is that the mechanism of reactive behaviour is essentially unconscious. It may be in combination with behaviour which is formed in conscious reaction to aspects of upbringing, parental authority or trauma, but the core of the behavioural formation is nevertheless unconscious. How it presents, however, is often as an obverse of the elements that precipitate the reaction, behaviour or belief where the individual continues to move to the same 'music' but the 'words' are both different and distinctive; a form of what Jung termed "enantiodramia" or passing over into the opposite.

Prothero, in his definitive study of Woodward's mentor, Col. Steel Olcott, provides a different analogy to establish a very similar concept. Borrowing from linguistics, he describes Olcott's Buddhism as a 'creolisation', where the 'lexicon', the outer form and 'vocabulary' of Olcott's new found faith, is Buddhist, but the inner form, the 'grammar' and 'syntax', are largely Protestant, and the 'accent' is decidedly Theosophical. He makes the observation that "individuals seem to be almost as insistent about clinging to the inherited grammatical form as they are comfortable with adopting new vocabularies".²⁹⁶ This vivid and useful analogy could equally apply to Woodward, and captures that aspect of 'reaction formation' wherein the individual seeks a new expression but retains, however deeply buried, the core source of the precipitating reaction - the way it carries simultaneously its old and new shape.

Olcott had origins too, in conforming Protestantism and found a creative freedom and liberality in the considerably greater heterodoxy of Theosophy. Commentators like Obeyesekere²⁹⁷ have difficulties with Prothero's analogy and its theoretical application in cultural studies generally. It may not always travel well - for example, when considering the Buddhism of Olcott's protégé Anagarika Dharmapala - but it remains a particularly useful analogy, in the sense Poincaré emphasises.

An interesting example of the kind of 'reaction formation' being proposed with respect to Woodward can be found in the figure of Henry Wallace, the unusual, radical vice-president to Roosevelt, and keen Theosophist. As Crews suggests, Wallace was "Freed by Theosophy

²⁹⁵See Anna Freud *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (London: Hogarth Press & the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1961, originally published 1939) This remains the definitive study of this area.

²⁹⁶ Prothero, S *The White Buddhist* p8&9.

²⁹⁷ Obeyesekere, G. Book Review of Prothero's "The White Buddhist" 1997 in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* Vol.4 1997, <http://jbe.la.psu.edu/4/4cont.html>. While generally complimentary, Obeyesekere is particularly unhappy with Prothero's construct, forgetting, it would seem, that it is an analogy not a theory

from the confining Presbyterian obsession with individual sin” and was thus able to act with both autonomy and authenticity, to unleash his “zest for good works without impediment”.²⁹⁸ Wallace’s biographers, White and Maze, suggest too, that paradoxically, without Theosophy, Wallace may not have emerged as such a practical activist: his esoteric beliefs liberated him from the paralysing constraints of his Presbyterian upbringing.²⁹⁹ The necessity, however, was that Wallace “surpass the non-conformist righteousness of his forebears ... by adopting a still more heterodox creed than theirs”³⁰⁰ Woodward’s father, too, harboured a religious non-conformity that possibly propelled FL Woodward towards the more heterodox creed of Theosophy. This non-conformity Woodward adopted with some relish, an aspect his later friend in Rowella, Tasmania, CB Brady, expressed with some frustration, when he suggested Woodward only seemed to believe in things no-one else believed.³⁰¹

Crews, with Wallace, suggests a ‘reaction formation’ that stands in contrast with origins, but is achieved by extending the heterodoxy of origin into an even more heterodox area able to be creatively inhabited. This analysis rests well with any consideration of Woodward or Olcott, and with Prothero’s ‘creolisation’ analogy. In considering Yeats, however, the ‘reaction formation’ presents as a distinct contrast: Crews suggests Yeats was drawn towards magic and Theosophy by the intense rationalism of his father who argued persuasively against organised religion. To this degree Yeats represents the widely sensed reaction to Positivism and scientific certainty experienced in the late nineteenth century. The importance of the occult and Theosophy to Yeats was in the establishment of “his autonomy, and Theosophy aims its lessons precisely at *self development*.”³⁰² It is this appeal to self development that also accounts for the appeal of Buddhism in the West, where in contradistinction to the soteriological emphasis of Christianity, Buddhism places the responsibility for salvation on the individual.

There is in this soteriological emphasis an aspect of the ‘twice born’, of being ‘born again’, made over into more authentic existence, over which concept Christianity does not hold a registered patent.³⁰³ James’ metaphor of the ‘twice born’ also finds a concrete representation within Woodward’s philosophic ideas in his strong attraction to the Platonic and Buddhist belief in rebirth and metempsychosis which to him was

298 Crews, F. “The Consolation of Theosophy” *The New York Review of Books* 19 September, 1996. p30. What is noteworthy, is that Crews is an implacable foe of psychoanalysis yet in effect employs the concept of ‘reaction formation’, unnamed and unacknowledged to develop his quite cogent thesis.

299 White, G. & Maze, J. *Henry A. Wallace: His Search for a New World Order* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

300 Crews, F. “The Consolation of Theosophy” p30.

301 Personal interview with Leila Brady, CB Brady’s daughter.

302 Crews “The Consolation of Theosophy” p30. my emphasis.

303 See James, W. *Varieties of Religious Experience- a study in human nature* (New York: Penguin, 1982)

immediately apprehended as familiar and inherently ‘right’. And so it should, for no feature of Christianity, particularly non-conformist and fundamentalist Christianity, is so soteriologically urgent as that one should be ‘born again’, another example of a ‘reaction formation’ where an obverse belief is substituted. This is further illustrated in Woodward’s attraction to belief in a *Metteyya Buddha*,³⁰⁴ the Buddha-to-Come. The similarity to evangelical Adventist beliefs of a Second Coming³⁰⁵ are obvious and demonstrate the manner that ‘reaction formation’ mirrors its origins.

For Crews, the examples of Wallace and Yeats, suggest to him a core explanation for how “otherwise discerning people have subscribed to such preposterous ideas”³⁰⁶ - why it is that occult ideas about lost continents, interplanetary visitors, angelic hosts superintending the universe, are “countenanced or actively embraced by well educated and otherwise discriminating people”.³⁰⁷ While some alarm is expressed at this tendency, the explanation often resides in ‘reaction formation’ and the character formation necessary for individuals to function adequately, creatively, and with autonomy, and is thus not always, or entirely, negative.

Crews has raised an important issue, for despite an unprecedented level of secular education, which nineteenth century thinkers believed would eradicate superstition and irrational belief, such belief continues to attract considerable attention from the middle class and educated to this day. It seems, as the level of education, and proportion of society educated, increases, so too does the attraction to ‘irrational’ belief, in fact “it could be said America is the most ambitious alternative society ever”.³⁰⁸ Publicly available education, one of the grandest experiments in social engineering, has been successful in spreading secularist thought. It has left, though, a void, and since nature abhors a vacuum, it has been filled by marginal and niche belief which enjoys unprecedented attraction among ‘educated and otherwise discriminating people’. The roots of this attraction lie in the nineteenth century and is illustrated in personalities like FL Woodward.

304 Woodward complained bitterly in a letter to IB Horner [Cambridge FOSL] about refusal by a Sri Lankan Buddhist publication *New Lanka* [see FN 127 above] to publish an article he had written on the *Metteyya Buddha*, putting it down to their Theravadin prejudice (against Mahayana ideas). In fact the article was later published

305 It is interesting that within Woodward’s papers held by Solicitors Shield Heritage is a pamphlet received just before his death from an English group promoting ‘signs’ of the Coming Christ. This may mean little more than he managed to get placed on the mailing list of yet another ‘fringe’ group, though his strong advocacy of these views probably encouraged his inclusion on such a list.

306 Crews “The Consolation of Theosophy” p27. He is referring to some of the more peculiar Theosophical beliefs advanced by Blavatsky such as her suggestion the “Lord of the World” had dropped to earth from Venus.

307 Crews “The Consolation of Theosophy” p29.

308 Washington P. *Madam Blavatsky’s Baboon: a history of the mystics, mediums and misfits who brought Spiritualism to America*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1995) p97.

Finding the Familiar:-

Buddhism and Theosophy in Victorian England.

The attraction of Buddhism and Theosophy in the nineteenth century appears founded on aspects of cultural and personal reaction: on the cultural level, there was reaction to the sterility of secularism that shifted interest into its opposite; on the personal level, the reaction presented as an antithesis, or as an exaggeration, of core elements of origin, with retention of familiar aspects of the precipitating events, behaviour or beliefs. The nineteenth century exploration of religious alternatives, thus assumes, in its quest, a search for the familiar.

Said's notion of *Orientalism* suggests a similar pattern of encounter. The shape of Western identity was formed, not just in contradistinction to the oriental *Other*, but also by way of similarity. Those from the West who first travelled to the orient "searched for the similar"³⁰⁹ as much as they did for contrasts. They saw in the cities, artefacts and customs they encountered, things that were 'like' or the 'same as' things they knew back home, and used this comparison to make intelligible what they found. This pattern remained whether the encounter was with artefacts or ideas like Buddhism; it begins with similarity, or rather, familiarity.

Historical Links.

Thomas Rhys Davids observed, "the sayings attributed to [Buddha] are strangely like those found in the New Testament",³¹⁰ and Paul Carus provided, also in the early period of Buddhist scholarship, a detailed list of parallels³¹¹ showing that the "resemblances between Christ and Buddha are exceedingly great".³¹² Finding such familiarity in things foreign induces a literalist inclination to speculate on historical connection or influence. At first, in *Orientalist* inflation, it was assumed Christianity influenced Buddhism through some Nestorian conduit. Later the suggestion was advanced, in the 1880s by Arthur Lillie and Ernest de Bunsen,³¹³ that the influence may have been the other way

³⁰⁹Pearson, MN. "Objects Ridiculous and August': Early Modern Perceptions of Asia" *Journal of Modern History* 68 (June 1996) p392.

³¹⁰Rhys Davids "What has Buddhism derived from Christianity" *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1923 pp43-4. It is interesting that this article originally written in 1877 assumes that if there was an influence, Buddhism must have borrowed from Christianity not the other way around.

³¹¹The parallels are many - here are some: both are royal lineage; both have auspicious births; both are proclaimed at birth as saviours by angels and sages; both excelled their teachers; both undergo temptation alone; both lead a life of poverty & wander homeless; both walk on water; St Peter by faith also walks on water as does a disciple of the Buddha; both feed a multitude with a small supply of food with an abundance remaining; both send out their disciples to spread the word; both forbid signs and miracles; both stand against the established religion; both use parables like the prodigal son, the widows mite, the fool who stores up worldly goods; both demand the love of one's enemies; both show compassion towards a woman sinner.

³¹²Carus, P. *Buddhism and Christianity* (Chicago: Open Court Publishers, 1897. [Fasc.edition University Microfilms International, 1981]) p187.

³¹³Lillie, A. *Buddha and Early Buddhism* (London: Truber & Co., 1883)

around.³¹⁴ Then again, as the orientalist Max Müller suggested, possibly the similarities derived from a common foundation “which underlies all religions”.³¹⁵

Though there was little historical European acknowledgment of Buddhism in the common era,³¹⁶ there were nonetheless vague versions that entered the European narrative. Woodward, for example, translated from Thomas Vaughan, who lived at the time of the English Civil War, an essay on *Life and Death* that contained *The Story of the Son of Abner*, an obvious rendering of the Buddha’s early life.³¹⁷ Similarly, in the eighth century, St John of Damascus circulated among Christians a version of the life of the Buddha as the story of Balaam and Josaphat, a story so popular in medieval Europe that in the fourteenth century Josaphat (a corruption of ‘bodhisat’) was canonised by the Catholic Church.³¹⁸

The historical connections of Europe and the East followed the usual invasion and trading routes, along which ideas move like any other commodity. Alexander the Great invaded India in the fourth century BCE, some two hundred years after the Buddha lived; as a pupil of Aristotle, he appreciated matters philosophical and brought with him a “train of *savants*”,³¹⁹ scholars and artists. While it would seem almost inevitable that Hindu and Buddhist ideas would have been considered within the Greek philosophic tradition, whether one accepts a direct link or not, “a student of Orphic and Pythagorean thought cannot fail to see ... the similarities between it and Indian religion.”³²⁰

Greek contact with Indian culture persisted and is evident in a number of areas. Aesop’s fables owe much to the influence of Buddhist *Jataka*

de Bunsen, E. *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians* (London: Longmans, 1880) see also Almond pp126-128.

³¹⁴See Radhakrishnan *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967- first published 1939) p 158ff. The parallels have given rise to works of dubious scholastic merit such as Gruber, E & Kersten, H. *The Original Jesus- The Buddhist Sources of Christianity* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1995).

³¹⁵Müller, M. “Christianity and Buddhism” *The New Review* (1891), p67-74. Cited in Almond p126. This assumption of ultimate underlying unity accorded with the many nineteenth century attempts to ‘show’ universal links in ideas, races, religions, even plants. Linnaeus was a seminal example of this European obsession with classifying all things in a universal and comprehensive way. See Pratt, ML. *Imperial Eyes- Travel writing and transculturation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992).

³¹⁶ The existence of Buddhism was recorded about 200CE by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata*, iii. 7), then largely disappeared from mention for about thirteen hundred years.

³¹⁷ Woodward, FL. “A Buddhist Legend in Europe” (Abner the Eastern King) *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol. III, No.2, 1928. Colombo: Bastian & Co.

Woodward, FL “The Story of the Son of Abner” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III No. 6 January 1919. Woodward’s interest in Vaughan was not without context; in the Theosophical pantheon, Vaughan was regarded as an important mystical antecedent of the Theosophical Society.

³¹⁸ Skilton, A. *A Concise History of Buddhism* (Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 1994) p199. This is based on an earlier assertion by Thomas Rhys Davids.

³¹⁹Rist, JM *Plotinus- the road to reality* (London: Cambridge University press, 1967) p5.

³²⁰Radhakrishnan, S. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* p143.

stories, and in the Pali texts, Milinda in *Milinda-panha* is identical to the Greek Menander, the name of a Bactrian Indo-Greek king (c.140-110 BCE)³²¹ who converted to Buddhism. Classic Greek culture is evident also in the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara (northern Pakistan and Afghanistan) which has continued to shape Buddhist art to this day. The Greek hair knot, for instance, passed into Indian art as a stylistic accretion, later interpreted by native iconographers as a protuberance of the skull, the *usnisa*³²².

Buddhist penetration of the West occurred most strongly during the third century BCE when the Buddhist Emperor of India, Asoka, issued edicts carved in stone³²³ establishing missions to take the *Dharma* to Greek territories in Syria and Egypt,³²⁴ about which Woodward wrote an monograph in 1952.³²⁵ The entry of Buddhist monastic practice and Buddhist philosophic ideas to the West, is evidenced in the *Mahavamsa* (the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka) which records, in the first century CE, a delegation of Buddhist monks from the Greek city of Alexandria³²⁶, attending the inauguration ceremony of the Ruvanvali-saya (Great Stupa) at the now ruined Anuradhapura in Ceylon.

The Chronicle attests to a relatively common-place traffic between the Middle East and south Asia, and the links were historically persistent. Leonard Woolf,³²⁷ one time Ceylon Government Agent, described graphically the annual pearl fishing season at Marichchukaddi, eighty miles from Jaffna, where some four thousand divers would gather from all over the Persian Gulf in their dhows for the pearl fishing, as they had for centuries. Ceylon was the ancient region of Ophir and Tarshish to the Hebrews from where Solomon imported peacocks (*tuki* in Hebrew, *tokei* in Tamil) and apes, (*kapi* in both Hebrew and Tamil).

³²¹Rahula, W. *Zen and the Taming of the Bull- towards a definition of Buddhist Thought* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1978.) p.25. The *Milinda-panha* (Questions of Milinda) is one of the important non canonical Pali commentaries on the *Tipitaka* and is a comprehensive exposition of Buddhist metaphysics, ethics and psychology based on a purported dialogue between a sceptical Milinda and the Buddhist elder, Nagasena, that has the feel of being founded on actual encounter. The *Milinda-panha* also mentions Alexandria as a place which Indians frequently visited.

³²²Schumann, HW. *Buddhism- an outline of its teachings and schools* (Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 1974) p53.

³²³Rock Edicts II, V & XIII, which are still extant.

³²⁴Nock, AD. *Conversion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) p45-47. Territories held by Antiochus I (or II?) of Syria (285-247 BCE), Antigonas Gonatas of Macedonia (276-246 BCE), Magas of Cyrene (300-258 BCE), Alexander of Epiris (272-258 BCE) and Ptolemy II of Egypt (285-257 BCE). Similar stone edicts of Asoka have been discovered in Afghanistan in both Greek and Aramaic.

³²⁵The work was published by the Adyar Library but not no copy is presently extant. [Letter November 1998, Theosophical Society Archivist, Adyar, Helen Jamieson.]

³²⁶“*Yona-nagara-Alasanda*”. *Yona-* a transcribing of ‘Iona’ is the Pali for ‘Greek’ but whether this was the city known today as Alexandria is debatable but not unlikely. The *Mahavamsa*, while an extraordinary chronicle, contains as much mythology as ‘history’.

³²⁷Woolf, L. *Growing. an autobiography of the years 1904 to 1911* (London: Hogarth, 1961) p88ff.

To the ancient Greeks and Romans, Ceylon was known as *Taprobane* (*Tambapanni* in the *Mahavamsa*) and was referred to as such by, Siculus, Ovid, Strabo, Pliny, and Ptolemy.³²⁸ The Greeks too, knew about Indian asceticism, in fact it was “a literary commonplace”.³²⁹ Strabo mentions an Indian embassy in Athens in 20 BCE and the self immolation of one of their aesthetes, quite a sensation,³³⁰ so Buddhism was undoubtedly recognised though it may have been confused with Brahmanic practice.³³¹

The historical links of East and West lean towards an inevitable exchange of influences that would naturally give rise to a sense of familiarity in the first imperial encounters with Buddhism. The Islamic ascendancy that had severed Europe from the East, meant the period quaintly described as that of European “discovery”, was in reality one of “re-discovery”, contributing to a shocked familiarity with things purportedly ‘new’. However, the ‘fact’ of such earlier encounters is not as significant as the *Orientalist* impulse to impose and appropriate from the *Other*, such that its perception of familiarity tends to confirm ‘facts’, rather than be derived from them.

The Philosophic Contribution to Familiarity.

If Buddhism had any influence on Western thought, it would be most detectable in Greek philosophy, and there are superficial similarities between Buddhism and the philosophy of the Neoplatonists like Plotinus (205-270 CE), indicating a possible legacy of earlier Greek contact. Plotinus acknowledges no direct eastern influence,³³² though “he wished to investigate the thought of the east - a perpetual longing of the Greeks”.³³³ Like Buddhism, Neoplatonism did not necessarily seek to displace other religious practices: it emphasised conduct and asceticism rather than worship, personal pursuit of salvation rather than reliance on a redeemer, and espoused views on metempsychosis such as those proposed by earlier Greek Philosophers like Plato and Pythagoras (who was reputed to have visited India).

³²⁸ Arunachalam, P. “Sketches of Ceylon History” *Ceylon National Review* #1 January 1906. p41.

³²⁹ Nock p47.

³³⁰ Radhakrishnan p157. Plutarch refers to the incident (*Vit.Alex.* 69) and suggests the ‘Tomb of the Indian’ was somewhat of a tourist attraction. St. Paul’s reference (1 Corinthians xiii. 3) “If I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.” may well be an allusion to this well known incident.

³³¹ Almond, P *The British Discovery of Buddhism* p15. Because early European encounters with Buddhism were via Hindu pundits who viewed Buddha as an avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, confusion was bound to occur and may have characterised much earlier understanding.

³³² Plotinus *The Enneads* (London: Penguin, 1991) p. lxxxvi. Plotinus had, according to Porphyry, joined the Emperor Gordian’s expedition against the Persians, principally to visit the Magi and the Brahmans, though he hastily departed in the wake of events surrounding the assassination of Gordian in 244. Plotinus proposed a view of ‘soul’, however which is decidedly un-Buddhist.

³³³ Rist p5.

It would probably be precious to suggest no oriental influences penetrated early Greek philosophy, and not to expect any legacy to flow through to its Neoplatonic elaboration and influence on later Christian theology,³³⁴ but whether Buddhist echoes in Christian and early Greek philosophy were of historical origin or simply the narcissistic reflection of a European voice - or both - is not as significant as the perception of similarity. This apparent similarity is important because it was through Greek philosophy that many English scholars came to an interest in eastern religion in the nineteenth century. It emerged from a fortuitous conjunction; an education system steeped in the study of Greek and Latin texts meeting an emerging knowledge of eastern theology (also via texts), in a milieu of profound secularisation and alienation from a traditional Christianity which had itself been substantially shaped by Greek philosophy.

The classic Greek and Latin education of the 19th century induced (for those that survived the experience) a fascination both with philosophy and philology, a taste for ideas other than the strictly Christian and a penchant for dissecting texts, a habit drilled in since childhood. The ideas unearthed from the mystery of oriental texts had a strange familiarity; eastern ideas of *karma*, rebirth and moral asceticism echoed Platonic metempsychosis and Stoic asceticism. But it was not only ideas of Greek origin that induced an odd familiarity; more contiguous motifs within Christianity contributed as well.

A Religion Made to Victorian Order.

In its Theravadin form,³³⁵ Buddhism had an austerity not unlike Protestantism without the inconvenience of a deity - Anglicanism without God - and this appeal aligned with secularising intellectual trends of the nineteenth century which nonetheless “retained the ethical fervour of the childhood belief [that had been] discarded”.³³⁶ Theravadin Buddhism fitted the preoccupations of the times. The Christian missionaries had characterised Christianity as theistic, Buddhism as atheistic; Christianity rested on faith, Buddhism on reason and enlightened ethics.³³⁷ Far from dissuading interest, these elements were Buddhism’s appeal, and though not entirely correct, this was how Europeans tended to interpret Theravada.

³³⁴ The early Church wrestled with ideas like pre-existence, which were not condemned and suppressed until the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553CE.

³³⁵ Public familiarity with Buddhism remained largely Theravadin in origin until publication of DT Suzuki’s first exposition of Zen Buddhism in 1927, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*.

³³⁶ Houghton, W. *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1970) p238.

³³⁷ Gombrich, R & Obeyesekere, G *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988) p221.

Woodward fits with the factors of nineteenth interest in Buddhism - like many of his contemporaries, he came to Buddhism via Platonic ideas, particularly those concerning metempsychosis, and the Stoic philosophy and austere morality of Marcus Aurelius. What was encountered also in Buddhism was the millenarian anticipation of a *Metteyya* Buddha, the Buddha-to-come, a familiar parallel to the evangelical anticipation of a Second Coming, which was exceedingly resonant.

While early Greek philosophy may have provided ideas that made Buddhism appear 'familiar', it also, consequently, established expectations of emphasis and meaning that imposed a eurocentric interpretation. It was certainly not a neutral encounter; familiarity and similarity were the foundations of a distortion which altered the narrative emphasis of Buddhism. In a world defined by European intent, elevation into existence relied on European recognition, which is essentially interpretative, shaping the object perceived, satisfying the resonances within the perceiving authority. This is what Said identifies as the 'violence' of *Orientalism*.

...that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, 'there' in discourse about it.³³⁸

Recognition of Buddhism as a 'serious' object for consideration required the *creation* of Buddhism³³⁹, as Almond emphasises, and this went through a number of phases in the nineteenth century. Initially it was an object 'out there', unfamiliar but in the *present*. Later it became a textual object preserved in European oriental libraries and lodged in the *past*, and this European possession of text engendered a view that they "alone knew what Buddhism was, is, and ought to be."³⁴⁰ It was an intellectual hubris that certainly did not escape even 'sympathetic' patrons like the Theosophical Society, and adherents like Olcott, Besant and Woodward.

From the imperialist point of view, the societies they absorbed were either 'primitive', or, if owning some pretensions of a cultural past, in 'decline'. After all, why else would they have 'allowed' themselves to be so easily dispossessed? This arrogance can be easily dismissed today but it was not without foundation - no 'myth' is moulded in a vacuum. After all, the subjugation of teeming millions by a small number of maritime marauders from an obscure island off the European coast, is an

³³⁸Said, E. *Orientalism* p 21-22.

³³⁹Almond p 12

³⁴⁰Almond p 13.

extraordinary act of self confidence and arrogance. While a deliberate exaggeration, this characterisation highlights the enormity of imperialism and the ease with which it extended a view of personal and cultural superiority.

So, if one begins with the premise that subject peoples are in ‘decline’ and further observes the obvious disparity between text and practice, then it is easy to arrive at a view that Buddhism has degenerated,³⁴¹ though, of course, it could just as easily indicate healthy cultural adaptation. Similarly, the accretions that adhered to Buddhist practice in the countries of adoption, such as Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist coexistence in Chinese temples, seemed to the early missionaries a certain sign of degeneracy and decline, since such syncretism was, officially, alien to Christianity. The perceptual premise of decline in subject cultures as well as possession of Buddhism as a textual object, allowed the West by the mid nineteenth century, to assume the Buddhism of their investigations was something of ‘purity’, as distinct from native practice. Though organisations like the Theosophical Society rendered significant service in re-interpreting and returning religious icons, they did so on the assumption that some original ‘purity’ of faith was being ‘restored’.

This same textuality of Buddhism in the West made it ripe for interest with the general public of the West. The middle and ‘respectable’ artisan classes, which were growing in number, as well as economic and social power, “had a voracious appetite for literature of all kinds.”³⁴² This meant Buddhism became one more item on the menu of learning and ‘self-improvement’.

The emerging middle classes had few of the structural traditions and connections necessary to provide a framework for defining appropriate moral and social values, behaviour and beliefs. The need was met by the presses that cranked out a blistering array of religious literature, political commentaries, fiction, criticism and a proliferation of periodicals to satisfy the insatiable demand for potted learning and to be ‘properly’ informed about what one ‘ought’ to know. This desire was born of a doubt and uncertainty, an anxiety that matched the uncertain status of the new class, and yet the field of exploration was broad and pluralistic - frequently without adequate discrimination - to match the boundless enthusiasm of their uncertain vision.

To strike a chord with such a public, the interpretation of Buddhism needed to reflect “an image not only of the Orient, but of the Victorian

³⁴¹Almond p25.

³⁴²Heyck, T, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982.) p28.

world also”.³⁴³ Victorian enthusiasm for something as apparently alien as Buddhism is difficult to comprehend unless measured against its accord with Victorian values, ideals and intellectual trends. A contemporary account highlights the elements of that appeal.

A few years ago magazines were full of [Buddhism]; and every young lady, who made any pretensions to be of the higher culture, was prepared to admire ‘such a beautiful religion and so like Christianity’....the daring reformer, who stood up alone against a dominant caste...; the isolated thinker, who struck out a whole system of philosophy and morals.....; his heroic career of self-sacrifice and life laid down for friends. ³⁴⁴

The encounter is again with motifs of similarity and familiarity, though the weight of interpretation is clearly Victorian. Even the sexist negation is typically Victorian; dismissing Buddhism as an enthusiasm of ‘young ladies’ reveals the misogynist and patronising prejudices of the time. Woodward found it hard to avoid such bias too, and enjoyed a typical *Punch* cartoon of the era where a young woman says to her friend, “You *must* come next week to Professor X’s lecture on Bud-ism”, to which the friend replies, “Oh! My dear. You know how I just love anything to do with flowers!”³⁴⁵

Buddhism’s social appeal was among those striving towards a ‘higher culture’, the purportedly intellectual, ‘progressive’ middle class, but the values they sought were distinctively Victorian. One particular Victorian absorption was discovering the ‘man’ behind the myth, a pursuit influenced by J Ernest Renan’s *Vie de Jesus* and David Friedrich Strauss’ *Leben Jesu*. These attempts to reduce Christian mythology to a ‘real’ Jesus produced, not surprisingly, a particularly Victorian Jesus of Stoic nobility and compassion. Such reconstruction also influenced the interpretation of Buddhism. Here was an heroic man of duty, decency and morality, standing against the forces of convention, an ‘historic’ figure featuring all the ‘manly’, ethical virtues of a Victorian gentleman. In the area of religious exploration, Buddhism, “a religion so different from Christianity and yet in some ways decidedly similar,”³⁴⁶ served as a refuge for those increasingly dissatisfied with the shape and oppression of Christian religiosity. It offered flexibility, a breadth of tolerance and the opportunity for neoteric experience - as well as the added assurance

³⁴³Almond p 6.

³⁴⁴*The Quarterly Review* 1890 p318 Cited in Almond p3. The author was Bishop Copleston, one time Bishop of Colombo.

³⁴⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner (FOSL.). Also

Woodward, FL “English As She is Spoke and Wrote” *New Lanka* Vol.1 No.4, July 1950.

³⁴⁶Almond p35

of thoroughly antagonising the religious establishment. To a person like Woodward born into the family of an Anglican clergyman, Buddhism was a distinct statement of severance from stifling origin. In terms of the psychological elements of 'reaction formation', it presented an opportunity to separate from the oppression of past; to a search for a new perspective without relinquishing the old; to seek new connections without severing those that reside at the core of memory.

The recurring elements of the 'familiar' in the European interface with Buddhism may have some basis in historical exchange but if one accepts that the resonances that induced attraction in the nineteenth century were derived from the area of cultural and religious formation, from within the *transitional* arena, then one would expect to encounter contrasts of alien and familiar. As with *transitional objects* that carry qualities both of 'otherness' and 'of-one's-selfness', such that they are able to sustain being alternately both objects of particular adoration and of rejection (even hatred), then resonant ideals and beliefs found and formed in the *transitional arena* will carry similar qualities. It is the sense of meaning and *connection* arising within *transitional space* that is the 'goal' of the encounter, thus any intellectual exploration will constantly seek, find or encounter elements that reinforce a sense of *connection*, which will inevitably assume the shape of the familiar.

The Masters' Voice - Theosophy and Buddhism.

The height of popular nineteenth century British interest in Buddhism can be dated to the publication in 1879 of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, a life of the Buddha rendered in eight books of poetic blank verse. It is difficult from the late twentieth century to appreciate the appeal of the florid style of Victorian verse with its long narrative intention and grandiose language. Nevertheless it was a period that esteemed poetry and poetic endeavour as a suitably manful enterprise and Arnold's book went through at least a hundred editions in England and America, attesting its enormous public appeal. While Arnold had an obvious and genuine fascination with Buddhism, his interest was mediated by the ubiquitous presence of the Theosophical Society, a presence that recurs frequently in the unfolding of Buddhist appeal in the West at that time.

The appearance of *Light of Asia* represented a culmination of about twenty years of growing public interest in Buddhism that began with

publications such as those by Spence Hardy and Victor Fausboll.³⁴⁷ Publication of *Light of Asia*, along with a number of other commentaries, spurred a heightened interest in Buddhism that persisted for a further twenty³⁴⁸ years, though it was *Light of Asia* that did more to popularise notions about Buddhism and engender public fascination with religious exotica³⁴⁹ than any other work. Arnold's poetic propagation of Buddhism was complimented by the more serious, scholarly works, such as those by Thomas Rhys Davids, secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and founder of the Pali Text Society in 1881, who published, as he described it, a "little manual"³⁵⁰ on Buddhism,³⁵¹ in 1877.

British interest in Buddhism spread with remarkable speed. In 1888 William Dawson (1857-1928) in Hobart, Tasmania, produced a volume published at his own expense on the subject of Buddhism, though it repeats many of the misconceptions of the time and shows the undoubted doctrinal influence of the Theosophical Society. He claims Buddhism as a system of monotheism which demonstrates not only gross misunderstanding but also the frequency with which commentators of

³⁴⁷Hardy, Spence R., *Eastern Monarchism* (London, 1850); *A Manual of Buddhism* (London, 1853). Hardy, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission in South Ceylon, borrowed considerably from Rev. JD Gogerly, who wrote in the 1830's and unlike Hardy was a Pali scholar. Most of these earlier efforts were attempts to come to grips with a religious adversary than to necessarily appreciate with dispassion. See also Bishop, A.S, (ed). *Ceylon Buddhism: being the collected writings of Daniel John Gogerly* (Colombo, 1908).

Fausboll, Victor. *Dhammapada* (Latin translation) Hauniae, 1855. The translation of the *Dhammapada* into Latin indicates the textual and antiquarian orientation of scholastic interest at the time- not an interest in a *living* philosophy of the present. Access was confined to those with a background in classics underlining the frequent entry of interest into Buddhism via that textual medium.

³⁴⁸Almond *The British Discovery of Buddhism* p3.

³⁴⁹This is not to minimise the efforts of scholars like Max Muller whose popularisation of Indian (Hindu) theology complimented the efforts of Arnold, Rhys Davids etc and prepared the ground for acceptance of Buddhism in Britain.

³⁵⁰Wickremeratne, L. Ananda, *The Genesis of an Orientalist: Thomas William Rhys Davids in Sri Lanka* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984) p145

³⁵¹Rhys Davids, TW., *Buddhism: Being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama the Buddha* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1877). This popular work was reprinted in 1882, 1887, 1894, 1899 & 1903.

the time earnestly sought parallels with Christian theology or Neoplatonism.

It does not teach that there is *a* God but simply that nothing is but God; that God is all, and all is God. To it, matter is not one substance and spirit another; matter is but the shadow of spirit, spirit manifested.³⁵²

This less than profound analysis and pantheistic confusion was not uncommon at that time, though it indicates the degree to which persons on the periphery assiduously followed the current intellectual preoccupations of the centre, often with an enthusiasm exceeding the jaded tastes of metropolitan sophistication. Communication and transport routes, the “information highways” of the time, appear slow and narrowly defined from the modern perspective, but they were laden with information in books and in the minds of people. As one receded from the established routes, though, there was a rapid shading away of news and information, in contrast to the few umbral information areas in the present global village. Tasmania, in the path of the Roaring Forties, sat squarely on the sailing trade route that linked England, South Africa, Ceylon, India and eastern Australia. It was a link that significantly influenced Tasmanian migration and demographic patterns as well as the flow and pattern of news and ideas.

For Henry Dawson remaining informed in the antipodes was not difficult, though in a sense he was a symptom of the process, an information vector. Born in Stockport near Manchester and educated in the middle class milieu of Manchester Grammar he emigrated to

³⁵²Dawson, WH *Buddha and Buddhism* (Hobart: Mercury Printers, 1888) [Tasmaniana Collection-Allport Museum, State Library, Hobart] p18

Tasmania with his brother George in 1884,³⁵³ only four years before the publication of his pamphlet. It is highly likely he brought his influences with him including his sympathy for Theosophy, though he was far from alone. Along with John Beattie³⁵⁴, an established colonial photographer, Henry Gill, parliamentarian and newspaper proprietor and Edward Ivey, well know political reformer, Dawson became a founding member in 1889 of the Theosophical Society in Hobart.³⁵⁵ Considering the Theosophical Society was only formed in New York in 1875 and Madame Blavatsky's influential tomes, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* were only published in 1877 and 1888 respectively, the appearance of a Theosophical Society branch in Hobart in 1889 was remarkably responsive.

The ubiquitous association of the Theosophical Society with interest in Buddhism in the late nineteenth century, is inescapable, though the Society holds an ambivalent position in the minds of serious researchers. It has been dismissed as peculiar, eccentric and even fraudulent because of its occasional cult aspects, however, it was influential in excess of its numerical strength in many fields. It managed to encompass people like the artists Kandinsky, Klee, and Mondrian; writers like HG Wells, Conan Doyle, WB Yeats, and George Russell; architects like Walter Burley Griffin; scientists like Stromberg and Sir William Crookes;

³⁵³Bowd, Kevin "The Masters are Close to an Isolated Lodge"- *The Theosophical Society in Tasmania 1889-1930* unpublished MA (qualifying) thesis University of Tasmania, Hobart 1993. p26ff.

³⁵⁴Beattie was invited in 1906 by another Tasmanian, the Rev John Goldie, a pioneering Wesleyan missionary on Rubiana & Munda in the Solomon Islands (where he is still revered today), to conduct a photographic mission. Tasmania was not just on the receiving end of the colonial experience but made its own contribution as well. See (on Goldie) Thomas, N. *Colonialism's Culture- Anthropology Travel and Government* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994) pp 112-113 & 127-132 and Beattie's diary held by Royal Society Archives University of Tasmania. Also Tassell, M. & Wood, D. *Tasmanian Photographer* (Melbourne, 1981).

³⁵⁵State Archives Non State Record Group NS 859/1 of Tasmania and Roe, J *Beyond Belief: Theosophy in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1986) p16

military historian, CEW Bean and Australian prime minister Alfred Deakin³⁵⁶ among many others.

Theosophy placed itself at the radical forefront of ‘modern’ thought and ideas and became synonymous with ‘progressive’ values. In the area of late nineteenth and early twentieth century biography, Theosophy frequently rates a footnote in the lives of many who saw themselves at the vanguard of radical thought. The frequency of that recurrent influence indicates that it merits elevation from the footnotes to deserved examination. For all its peculiarity and occasional madness, Theosophy needs to be rescued from what Edward Thompson called “the enormous condescension of posterity.”³⁵⁷

Theosophy arose concurrently with a number of other ‘progressive’ organisations and views in the 1880s, part of Chadwick’s “movements of mind”³⁵⁸ that passed over Europe at that time. There were Theosophists, Anti-Vivisectionists, Psychological Researchers, Spiritualists, Free Thinkers, Anarchists, Socialists and Suffragette Feminists. More an odd menage than melange of intellectual interests, the paths of many players within these currents cross and re-cross throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian period.

Edward Carpenter, an important figure in the Theosophical Society and a social commentator of the period who experienced many of these varied roles, expresses the pulse of the period succinctly.

The years from 1881 onward were certainly a new era.....the oncoming of a great new tide of human life over the Western World.....It was a fascinating and enthusiastic period.....The

³⁵⁶Gabay, A., *The Mystic Life of Alfred Deakin* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press 1992) p24. Deakin was only a formal member one year but he was strongly influenced by its doctrines and was in correspondence with Col. Olcott.

³⁵⁷Thompson, E. *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: 1963) p12

³⁵⁸Chadwick p239.

Socialist and Anarchist propaganda, the Feminist and Suffragist upheaval, the huge trade Union growth, the Theosophic movement, the new currents in the Theatrical, Musical and artistic world, the torrent even of change in the Religious world - all constituted so many streams and headwaters converging, as it were, to a great river.³⁵⁹

The Theosophical Society entered into many streams of thought and social activism and drew many people from these areas to an interest in Buddhism. Woodward was particularly dismissive of this gaggle that gathered around Buddhism in England, and not without justification: “They seem in England ...to have a whole coterie of ultra fanatics, ex-theosophists who cling to Blavatsky, and Ceylon *Bhikkhus* [monks].”³⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the Theosophical Society provided an organisational and intellectual structure for Buddhism in England, without which, it would have remained only an idea.

Theosophy claimed to be an eclectic spiritual movement emanating from a Neoplatonic tradition dating back to Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus.³⁶¹ FL Woodward’s extensive Greek and Latin library³⁶² contained many rare and valuable folios including, as one would expect, volumes of the work of Plotinus as well as Marcus Aurelius, Pythagoras and Plato. The European interest in Buddhism at the end of the nineteenth century was, in the hands of the Theosophical Society, often enmeshed with Greek mysticism, European esotericism, occult and spiritualism, gathered into a clutch of ideas that would have been unrecognisable to Buddhists anywhere else. Thus the ‘esoteric’

³⁵⁹Carpenter, E. *My Days and Dreams* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1916) p245.

³⁶⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 12 December 1934 (FOSL).

³⁶¹Blavatsky, HB. “What are the Theosophists?” *The Theosophist* (Bombay, India) October, 1879.

³⁶²Woodward left over 350 volumes to the University of Tasmania, many dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. He was a collector who regularly subscribed to antiquarian shops in London. (Information from list compiled by Nigel Heyward and held by solicitors, Shield Heritage, Launceston- used with permission.)

Buddhism that emerged from the Theosophical Society, particularly as defined by Sinnett,³⁶³ was quite unique - “Esoteric, it may have been. Buddhism, it certainly was not...”³⁶⁴

Almond is justifiably dismissive of TS³⁶⁵ interpretations of Buddhism but one cannot ignore the significant influence of the Society on the study of Buddhism in Britain, Australia and elsewhere. Christmas Humphreys, one of the most influential Buddhist writers in English, was able in 1968 at the end of his long life to say,

I am still unshaken in my view that the Theosophy of H.P. Blavatsky is an exposition of an Ancient Wisdom-Religion which antedates all known religions and that Buddhism is the noblest and least-defiled of the many branches of the undying parent tree.³⁶⁶

Thus while Humphreys was fervently committed to Buddhism, he remained a Blavatsky Theosophist. This seeming contradiction is observable in both Blavatsky and Olcott who, when visiting Ceylon in the 1880s, took *pansil* and assumed a commitment to Buddhism that they saw in no way contradicted their Theosophical adherence. The same is true of FL Woodward who moved to that side of the TS particularly attracted to Buddhism and, like Humphreys, who was to write an introduction to Woodward’s *Some Sayings of the Buddha*,³⁶⁷ he never shed his TS roots even when the Society itself had moved on. This dual, even multiple, adherence was characteristic of the interest in Eastern religion. It was an ability to hold disparate positions simultaneously, without relinquishing an original view point, and, more importantly,

³⁶³Sinnett, AP. *Esoteric Buddhism* (Houghton Mifflin, 1884)

³⁶⁴Almond *The British Discovery of Buddhism* [notes] p147

³⁶⁵ The Theosophical Society has always been fond of abbreviations and generally describes itself as the “TS”, a practice I will adopt in this work as well.

³⁶⁶Humphreys, C. *Sixty Years of Buddhism* (London: The Buddhist Society, 1968) p18

³⁶⁷Woodward, F.L. *Some Sayings of the Buddha* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) with an introduction by Christmas Humphreys

without abandoning a fundamental adherence to eurocentric Victorian views and values.

This Victorian eurocentrism was carried too, by the Theosophical Society, into its seminal contribution to the revival of Buddhism and Hinduism in Ceylon and India. The onslaught of western culture and missionary zeal had deeply eroded indigenous culture by the latter half of the nineteenth century but as the Buddhist scholar, Edward Conze noted, “the tide turned rather suddenly and unexpectedly” as Theosophists appeared among Hindus and Ceylonese to “proclaim their admiration for the ancient wisdom of the east”³⁶⁸.

Colonel Olcott³⁶⁹ in particular expended extraordinary missionary energy in reviving Buddhist culture in Ceylon, emulating Christian missionaries³⁷⁰ by establishing schools to foster western learning in a sympathetic Buddhist environment. In 1880 when he first visited Ceylon there were only a few Buddhist schools³⁷¹ but by 1900 there were two hundred, one of which was Mahinda College, Galle, where FL Woodward would take up the position of Principal in 1903.

³⁶⁸Conze, E. *Buddhism: its essence and development* (NY: Harper & Row, 1959) p211.

³⁶⁹Murphet, H. *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light- life of Col Henry S. Olcott* (Wheaton Ill: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 1972) This biography of Olcott reads as hagiography, though he was undoubtedly an unusual man. His own version of these pioneering years is recounted in Olcott, HS. *Old Diary Leaves* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1972) 6 volumes

³⁷⁰Obeyesekere, G. ‘Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon’ *Modern Ceylon Studies* Vol. 1 No. 1. 1970.

cf also, Phadnis, U. *Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1976) p68-74.

³⁷¹Malalgoda, K *Buddhism in Singhalese Society 1750-1900- a study in religious revival and change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) p235.

cf also, Murphet p140.

Murphet states there were only two though on what he bases this estimate is unclear. Malalgoda, a more reliable researcher, says there were a number, including four specifically registered as Buddhist schools and in receipt of government grants-in-aid which indicates satisfactory inculcation of recognised secular subjects. Also the low number of Buddhist schools does not take into account the large number of *pansala* schools (about 1,769 c.1885) and the more advanced *pirivenas* (monastic colleges) attached to monasteries that offered education to local communities. After 1880 a belated attempt was made to assist these to conform to the requirements of government-grants-in-aid with mixed results.

In India, Gandhi acknowledged that it was Theosophists who introduced him to the *Bhagavad-Gita* and assisted him in disabusing the “notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition”.³⁷² The impetus for Indian nationalism owes much to the Theosophists, to AO Hume, who founded the Indian National Congress in 1885, and to Annie Besant who was a fervent supporter of Indian religion and nationalism. These views and activities bordered on the seditious and led to the internment of Besant during the Great War, but it shows, too, the courage, determination, and contribution of the Theosophists.

In 1903, when Woodward offered his services to Olcott and received the offer to take up the reins of Mahinda College, he was taking up membership of one of the most significant Western contributions to the revival and valorisation of indigenous culture and belief, in opposition to imperial intent. These are accepted and commonplace values today, but they owe their origins to the tireless efforts of the Theosophical Society and its many acolytes like Woodward. Woodward’s contribution in Ceylon, however, went beyond the role of simple headmaster; he was to have an impact on religious and nationalist ideology, more significant than has hitherto been acknowledged in Ceylon or the West.

³⁷²Gandhi, M. *Gandhi’s Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948) p91. also
Fischer, L *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (NY: Harper, 1950) pp 131-132.

CEYLON.

'Not so much the Promised Land as the Land of Promises' FL Woodward³⁷³

Social & Economic Transition: Education, Nationalism & the Buddhist Revival.

Galle is a deep water, sheltered port in the south of Sri Lanka that has always had historical significance. The ancient town had been an important and extensive trading centre for centuries and may well be the town of Tarshish mentioned in the Christian Bible. And despite some treacherous hidden rocks in the harbour it remained the main port of Ceylon until the construction of a harbour and breakwater in Colombo in 1882. The hills about the port draw on the legend of Rama-Ravana for explanation; of how when Lakshaman lay wounded from a poisoned arrow fired from Ravana's bow, Rama sent Hanuman, the monkey general, to the Himalayas, to fetch a special plant as an antidote. In his haste he could not remember which plant, and so grabbed a slab of mountain which somewhere contained the plant and returned dropping it where it lies today, about the port of Galle. And on the hills today there are still medicinal herbs, including the rejuvenating *kalu-nika*.³⁷⁴

The Portuguese arrived in Galle in 1505, blown off course from the Maldives, and began a period of uninterrupted European colonisation of Ceylon. The Dutch eventually displaced the Portuguese and, in 1663, built a solid fort at Galle of over 36 ha., with substantial walls and fortifications on the site of the smaller Portuguese fort. With Dutch efficiency, they even designed a system of sewerage disposal where the mains were flushed each day by the tide. Further efficiencies included the breeding of musk rats in the sewers and the commercial harvesting of their valuable gland.

On the afternoon of 23 February 1796, Galle was ceded by the Dutch to the British in a solemn ceremony where the keys to the different gates of the Fort were handed on a silver tray to a relatively unknown officer of H.M Regiment of Foot, Lachlan Macquarie, later Governor of New South Wales and Tasmania, a man who took his instructions from the Governor of Madras, Lord Hobart whose name graces the capital of Tasmania.³⁷⁵ These colonial echoes, far from being particular, recur continually in imperial discourse. Trade routes and patronage closely linked the remarkably small cast of European colonial characters and intimately connect the early history of Tasmania, India and Ceylon up to the twentieth century; Woodward is simply one further example of the continual interconnection.

³⁷³ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 April 1949 (FOSL) Also 26 May 1948, 12 December 1934 to CA Rhys Davids, and many others.

³⁷⁴ Roberts, N. *Galle as Quiet as Asleep* (Colombo: Aitken Spence Printing, 1993). p2.

³⁷⁵ Roberts, N. *Galle as Quiet as Asleep* p 100.

With the shift of central port facilities to Colombo, Galle slipped into relative unimportance, an unsanitary and somewhat lawless backwater remote from power until connected by rail,³⁷⁶ which was completed to Galle, in 1894.³⁷⁷ This was the town at which Frank Lee Woodward arrived, in 1903, to take up the position of Principal of Mahinda College. It was the main Buddhist educational institution in the southern maritime Low Country, the heartland of the nationalist and Buddhist Revival, and Woodward was to remain there until 1919. Far from being a simple schoolmaster, he became a significant part of the educational focus of the Buddhist Revival, and Mahinda College became an elite, English-medium school that promoted the laicised Buddhism with a strong nationalist inflection, that Woodward fervently embraced. The six to seven thousand students that were to pass through his hands over the period, contributed disproportionately to leadership in Ceylon, and to the Buddhist and nationalist agenda.

Mahinda College was run by the Buddhist Theosophical Society³⁷⁸ (BTS) in close cooperation with local interests, particularly Thomas Amarasuriya, a successful local *Karava*³⁷⁹ businessman who provided the backbone of both managerial and financial support. Woodward was fired with an unusual intention: to build a premier institution, founded on Buddhist values and beliefs, that fulfilled Ceylonese national objectives, but at the time of his arrival, the school was struggling to survive. Woodward may have imagined he was entering a challenge that could be shaped without reference to prevailing cultural constraints but, far from an unformed province of endeavour, it was one defined by a very particular context.

³⁷⁶Roberts, M. "Elite Formation and Elites" in Roberts, M [Ed.] *Collective Identities Nationalisms and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1979), p163.

³⁷⁷*Diaries of the GA-SP*(Government Agent-Southern Province) (SLNA). Both the Diaries and the Ceylon Administrative Reports note the higher rates of crime in the Southern Province which, however, began to recede from about 1904 onwards. Nonetheless, the Diaries tell a conspicuous tale of frequent execution (hanging) which the GA had to witness and supervise, a task universally loathed by all incumbents.

The *Diaries* also, over the period 1903-1919, continue a litany of recurrent outbreaks of community illnesses- typhoid, cholera, malaria, plague, and typhus, as well as endemic elephantiasis known locally as 'Galle Leg'.

³⁷⁸Olcott originally formed two types of society - Buddhist Theosophical Societies, with an obvious Buddhist orientation, and traditional Theosophical Societies, "Lanka Theosophical Society" with a syncretic religious approach for "freethinkers and amateurs in Occult research" [Old Diary Leaves II p169]. The latter quickly withered while the former thrived, being quickly taken up by orthodox Buddhist adherents eager to appropriate whatever benefit might be gained by association with the European Theosophical Society. This is not to suggest calculated duplicity by local Buddhists, rather to underscore the confused message of the TS itself that gave the impression of orthodox adherence while otherwise espousing a more universalist creed.

³⁷⁹ Caste of Fishermen.

Nineteenth century Sinhala society and religion was caste³⁸⁰ bound, hierarchical, and dominated by the traditional aristocratic *Goyigama*, who were numerically the largest caste, “an inversion of the pyramidal structure”³⁸¹ of caste in India. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, there had been a gradual redefinition of social and economic stratification arising from the phenomenal economic gains of the non-*Goyigama* castes, particularly the *Karava*, who came to predominate in the southern maritime province³⁸² and were influential in the formative years of Mahinda College, recognising in its progress, the potential to advance communal interests.

The upward mobility of the non-*Goyigama*, which challenged traditional Sinhala³⁸³ cultural status and values, was remarkably akin to the nineteenth century upward social mobility of the British middle class. It displayed similar attributes that would have appeared familiar to Woodward: reformist and ‘progressive’, challenging established religious and secular authority and perceiving education as a means of social progress (which to many, implied advancing caste and communal interests).

The relationship Woodward formed with the community he came to serve was an intriguing interface of values and intention regarding religion, education, social outcome and national direction. It was a narrative of contrasting harmonies and dissonance, where interests sometimes aligned, though not always with the same intention, and sometimes diverged. Whatever his intentions, Woodward brought with him many inescapable Victorian and imperial values. The interaction of intention, the deep structure of personal origin, and the profound faith that inspired Woodward’s ‘mission’, shaped a fascinating discourse that had lasting effects on Sri Lankan education, culture and religion, though it was the slow dawning of insurmountable difference, along with his increasing interest in the solitary task of translation, that ultimately prompted Woodward to leave Ceylon in 1919.

Imperial Values and Colonial Response.

³⁸⁰While there is some debate about the role of caste in Sri Lanka, generally caste boundaries are not as rigid as those in India and are based on relationships of productivity. In Sri Lanka the high caste *Goyigama*, the Farmer or Cultivator caste, make up 60% of the populace with the balance of lesser status. See,

Gilbert, W “The Sinhalese Caste-System of Central and Southern Ceylon” *The Ceylon Historical Journal* Vol. II Nos. 3&4, pp295ff. A reprint of the *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* Vol. 35 Nos. 3&4 (March & April 1945.)

³⁸¹ Russell, J “Communal Politics under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947” *The Ceylon Historical Journal* Vol 26 (Dehiwala, Sri Lanka: Tisara Prakasakayo, 1982) p7

³⁸² Roberts, M. *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation: The Rise of the Karava Elite in Sri Lanka, 1500-1931*. (New Delhi: Navrang, 1995).

³⁸³ This work concentrates on Sinhala Buddhist culture, largely ignoring the significant Moor, Burgher, and Tamil cultures that coexist (often in tension) within Sri Lankan society.

When FL Woodward joined the Theosophical Society and wrote to Col. Steel Olcott, in Adyar, Madras, expressing a fervent desire to give “personal help in [Olcott’s] great work”,³⁸⁴ it was an offer of sacrifice and service, an archetypal nineteenth century gesture, which to a contemporary generation, appears inflated and grandiose. Yet, within the imperial context of the time, such hyperbole frequently animated construction of life and events. Stories abound of men (and it was generally men) inspired by faith or adventure who threw up their future to pursue some idealistic aim or ‘mission’ abroad, in an heroic step into the unknown.

Like pages taken from a ‘Boy’s Own’ adventure, young men of the nineteenth century were encouraged to seek expression in lives of renunciation and duty, of sacrifice to ideals higher than self. This was a world of imperial possibility, boundless potential and exotic opportunity and Woodward’s efforts to build Mahinda College into an institution of excellence takes on the appearance of something almost ‘heroic’, in the sense beloved of the nineteenth century. His efforts saved Mahinda College from probable slow dissolution and demise, and his remarkable exertions and imagination decisively advanced the school as one of Sri Lanka’s more prestigious public schools. In this sense it may well represent a typical imperial tale, even more so because Woodward was undoubtedly ‘odd’³⁸⁵ and may never have achieved the same advancement, or experienced the same creative opportunities, in the conformity of an established England. As with many young men of ambition, colonial experience offered opportunities and responsibilities either far in advance of their years or unlikely in their home environment. The results were often of remarkable success and, equally, of remarkable and sometimes spectacular failure. Woodward’s efforts fall firmly among the former.

The world Woodward entered was one of missionary zeal - in both the generic and specific sense - a world of people fired by the perceived opportunities to mould and create, where human life was frequently seen as a blank slate waiting to be inscribed with civilisation. It is difficult today to appreciate the optimistic embrace of change and ‘progress’ that went with these attitudes, and difficult to excuse the cultural insensitivity and inherent harm that often lay behind such hope, but it would be wrong, in reaction, to fall into an obverse or compensatory manifestation

³⁸⁴Gunewardene, *F.L. Woodward* p10.

³⁸⁵Dr Vitharana, [an ex-student and ex-teacher of Mahinda College, later professor of Sinhala in a number of Sri Lankan universities, and now, in retirement, Visiting Professor at Sri Jayewardenepura in Sinhala & Cultural Anthropology] is probably the most knowledgeable regarding Woodward in Sri Lanka. He is quick to acknowledge and recognise Woodward’s oddity: local perspective readily discerned the unusual aspects of the man that separated him clearly from other colonial imports. I am indebted to Dr Vitharana’s unusual understanding and insight.

of imperial intent and to characterise colonial peoples as simple victim, an occasional, if unintended, aspect of Said's *Orientalist* critique. Far from a 'blank slate', many cultures in colonial subjugation were neither in naïve states of natural stasis nor in disintegration. On the contrary, many revealed dynamic and opportunistic aspects that were alert to the possibilities of colonial intrusion. This was particularly true of Ceylon with its long experience of cultural absorption and colonial administration. This is not to deny the *Orientalist* critique and minimise the awesome impact of imperialism on the *Other*, rather to indicate there was appreciable cultural flexibility and capacity to alter external influences to serve communal interests in preference to, or even concurrently with, imperial objectives. There was, among the emerging new economic castes that formed the basis of Ceylonese social activism in the nineteenth century, a resolute capacity to respond "originally and creatively"³⁸⁶ to external western influences and, as Hobsbawm suggests, to read into the ideas, ideologies and programs they absorbed "not so much the ostensible text as their own subtext"³⁸⁷.

The Rise of the Non-Goyigama: Commerce and Tradition.

The procession of European cultures, Portuguese, Dutch and British, that had impacted on Ceylon for centuries, had left traditional Sinhala culture battered, often uncertain of its own value, but nevertheless resilient and alert to the opportunities of colonialism. The British colonial presence, in particular, provided economic possibilities through arrack³⁸⁸ monopolies, bridge tolls, plumbago (graphite) mining and plantation agriculture as well as in import/export trade.

Success in such enterprises, in turn, provided an urge to access power, influence and the necessary trappings of status. The emerging economic power of non-*Goyigama* castes such as the *Salagama*, *Durava* and *Karava* was cemented by philanthropy and the acquisition of 'native' and other colonial titles, though this was not simply vainglorious. The relationship was reciprocal; status obligates the individual to give, in the highly valued sense of Buddhist *dana*,³⁸⁹ to 'share merit', and to receive, in return, community esteem. But this reciprocal obligation was also a

³⁸⁶ Ames, M. "Westernization or Modernization: the Case of the Sinhalese Buddhism" *Social Compass* XX 1973/2 p140.

³⁸⁷ Hobsbawm, E. *The Age of Extremes- The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995.) p203.

³⁸⁸ Arrack is fermented nectar collected from the flowers of coconut palms and is of extreme potency. Colonial governments granted licences or 'rents' for the sale of arrack, a lucrative revenue earner for governments and renters alike.

³⁸⁹ "dana" or almsgiving, occupies a highly significant place in Buddhist culture with its emphasis on 'karma' and 'rebirth', in which actions performed in this life are causally related to one's future lives and well-being. In Christianity, where the emphasis is on salvation, actions are a manifestation of one's state of 'grace', not the principal architect of one's salvation.

means of advancing the interests of the caste group as a whole by powerful and mutually reinforcing networking.

The significance of non-*Goyigama*, particularly *Karava*, adoption of commerce along the western maritime provinces in the nineteenth century lies in the fact that such an economic emphasis contrasted markedly with traditional cultural valuation. The Kandyan culture, based on hierarchical caste, did not place a particular value on wealth. As Robert Knox in his seventeenth century classic study of Ceylon observed, “Riches are not here valued nor make any the more Honourable.....it is Birth and Parentage that inobleth.”³⁹⁰

The conversion to commerce by the maritime-based, non-*Goyigama*, castes, and the subsequent elevated valuation of such endeavour, created a cultural contrast which remains evident today, where one is still “struck by the ambivalence towards money-making”³⁹¹ in Sri Lanka. The aversion to commerce is firmly rooted in Buddhist values which sees the ‘householder’ pursuit of economic livelihood as necessary mainly for survival but not an end with any value beyond that. It is a pursuit firmly within the realm of *samsara*, the circle of birth, suffering and death, release from which the doctrine of the Buddha seeks to address.³⁹² One of the compensatory manifestations among the wealthy to assuage the guilt of such prosperity and its doctrinal disjunction was, and still is, to “try to validate their worldly success by elaborate merit-making rituals and religious philanthropy”.³⁹³

Here the Buddhist concept of *dana* presents a traditional compensatory mechanism for a westernised dilemma, for, in essence, the movement of the non-*Goyigama* castes into commerce at the beginning of the nineteenth century meant a substitution of western economic attainment for traditional values. It defines, in a significant manner, the commencement of cultural westernisation in Ceylon. It was a change made possible by the imposition and opportunities of colonial presence, and one that altered the rigid traditional definitions of status and power,

³⁹⁰Knox, R. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* (1681) reprinted in the *Ceylon Historical Journal* Vol 6, 1956-57, p 106.

³⁹¹ Fernando, T. “The Western-Educated Elite and Buddhism in British Ceylon- a neglected aspect of the Nationalist Movement.” *Contributions to Asian Studies* Vol IV 1973 p29.

³⁹² The foundation of Buddhism rests on the Four Noble Truths; the fundamental reality of Suffering [*dukkha*], its Cause or Arising [grasping and desire, including material acquisitiveness], its Ceasing [eschewing desire], and the Way that leads to its ceasing [the Eightfold Noble Path] The Eightfold Noble Path consists of 1.Right View 2. Right Renunciation 3. Right Speech, 4. Right Action 5. Right Livelihood, 6. Right Effort 7. Right Mindfulness and, 8. Right Concentration. These are divided into 3 *khandhas* or ‘groups’: *sila* (morality), numbers 3,4, & 5; *samadhi* (mental training leading to an equanimous mind), 6,7 & 8 and *pañña* (wisdom), 1 & 2.

³⁹³Fernando, T. “The Western-Educated Elite.” p29. It also lends some explanation for the traditional attraction of Sri Lankans to medicine and law, which allow for prestige without the necessity of overt engagement in commerce.

offering the non-*Goyigama* castes the possibility of upward mobility and a new form of social status - with the usual costs of such change.

The rise of the non-*Goyigama* somewhat alters the usual clichés of imperial social mayhem, for it is often easier to identify the erosion and destruction of traditional culture by the colonial presence than to identify opportunistic behaviour of particular groups that advance their own interests in the disruption of traditional social stratification generated by colonial intrusion. It is even more difficult when such opportunistic groups later become vociferous advocates of, obviously altered, 'traditional' values and standards, in much the same way as the upwardly mobile middle classes in the West often became guardians of conservative 'traditional' social values.

There is an understandable tendency for the beneficiaries of social change and transitional disruption to seek security in an imagined past of stability and certainty, to engage in what Hobsbawm and others have described as the "invention of tradition".³⁹⁴ But there is also an obvious irony in the narrative of an underclass that has finally found social inclusion, adopting an exaggerated adherence to traditions and values that once saw their exclusion, though, the discourse is usually edited subtly to reflect both the needs and new status of adherents.

It is thus not surprising that the non-*Goyigama* castes that availed themselves of the economic opportunities that arose under colonialism, provided important nationalist figures and became staunch advocates of the Buddhist Revival, which, while it may present as radical, harbours an inherent conservatism. This Janus-faced radical/conservative paradox inhabits most radical movements and was often evident in the nationalist and Buddhist Revival movements of twentieth century Ceylon which sought a redefinition of identity, of *Self* and *Other*.

The Rise of the Non-*Goyigama*: the Case of Amarasuriya.

The economic advancement of the non-*Goyigama* castes, and particularly the *Karava*, saw ready acceptance of Western style living, making the Sinhala upper middle class more westernised "than any other Asian group outside the Philippines." The adoption of Western habits both consolidated and erased aspects of caste; Western clothes masked the outwards signs of caste inferiority expressed in rigid customs of caste identifying clothing, and English-medium instruction and education propelled caste members into prestigious occupations and positions of influence and authority.

The alteration in the fortunes of the *Karava* caste in the southern province, for instance, had been substantial, with the "status and power

³⁹⁴ Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

of the *Karava* elite at the end of the nineteenth century... [standing in distinct]... contrast to their situation in the late Dutch and early British period”.³⁹⁵ They became a significant social and political force in the coastal Low Country and were influential beyond areas of their residential concentration.³⁹⁶

One of the significant identities among the upwardly mobile *Karava* had been Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya (1847-1907) from Galle, who had made his fortune from shipping, as an arrack renter and from plumbago (graphite) mining, as well as from plantations.³⁹⁷ For Amarasuriya, the arrival of Olcott and the Theosophical Society was a fortuitous occurrence that meshed with rising personal and community ambitions. In particular, the proposed introduction of English-medium education accorded with the desire to advance *Karava* community interests, part of the “prodigious efforts to bring ...caste ranking, social status and political influence into line with their economic weight”.³⁹⁸

Thomas Amarasuriya became the mainstay, financial and managerial, of Mahinda College, Galle, and he established with Woodward a relationship of great affection and regard as he had with Olcott who referred to him with affection, though somewhat patronisingly, as “Old Tom”.³⁹⁹ Thomas Amarasuriya, however, was not simply a benign figure of philanthropy but a person of considerable business and political acumen, and certainly not beyond some scheming.

It was rare for matters other than strictly governmental to be mentioned in the Government Agent’s Diary, unless of substantial community controversy, but Amarasuriya claims several mentions. Once (25 May 1905) he is mentioned for failing to honour a cheque after an auction of ‘waste’ land (uncultivated jungle). Amarasuriya claimed he had “made a mistake” in the purchase and attempted to renege. It seems, when bidding, he had raised the stake significantly and the other bidder, clearly bluffed, then left the room. He signed the papers but stopped the cheque because he “had only meant to raise the bid by 5 rupees”. It seems his enthusiasm to outbid his opponent had exceeded the value of the land and he attempted to withdraw.⁴⁰⁰ He was no innocent, however, but an experienced purchaser of land, whose estates extended to several thousand acres by this time.

³⁹⁵ Roberts, M *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation*..... p10.

³⁹⁶ Roberts, M. *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation*. p102.

³⁹⁷Confirmation of Amarasuriya’s *Karava* background comes from Roberts, M. *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation*. p.109 & p.220. The ‘suriya’ suffix (meaning ‘Sun’) is often indicative of *Karava* caste.

³⁹⁸ Roberts, M. *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation*. p133.

³⁹⁹Woodward, F.L. “Message sent by Mr Woodward in 1942” *Mahinda College Magazine* 1947 p8.

⁴⁰⁰ *Diaries of the Galle Kachcheri* (Government Agent-Southern Province) 25 May 1905 RG 43/13, (SLNA).

Amarasuriya also expanded his interests into politics and contested the number 4 ward of the Galle Municipal Council in 1905⁴⁰¹ but again came to the notice of the Government Agent after vigorous objections and controversy regarding his election. With shrewd opportunism, it seems, he acquired proxies from over half the listed voters, and the other candidates mysteriously withdrew.⁴⁰² He was a man capable of some colourful and astute ‘wheeling and dealing’, which did not always endear him, nevertheless he acquired considerable esteem and some obvious affection. In 1906 he was appointed to the Native Rank of Muhandiram (on the recommendation of the Government Agent, Mr Hellings) though the Hellings noted that Amarasuriya’s relations were vocally disappointed he had not been granted the higher title of Mudaliyar,⁴⁰³ an indication of just how significant these honorary titles were to individuals and to the advancement of community interests.

Thomas Amarasuriya vigorously pursued both his commercial and philanthropic interests and his particular interest in the English-medium education provided by Mahinda College was as much about its promotion of Buddhism as it was about the social and economic benefits to be derived from such an education. The BTS agenda offered an opportunity for all these elements to be advanced in concert. While the degree of rigidity within the succession of colonial authorities regarding religion varied, in general, conversion and adherence to Christian faith assisted entry into social standing; by 1880 it was “almost essential for those who wished to join the ruling elite”.⁴⁰⁴

There was thus no small measure of defiance in the determination of Amarasuriya and others to nominate a specifically Buddhist context for the westernised education they sought to harness to the advancement of their communal interests. The resurgence of Buddhist adherence took some courage as it did not necessarily align with the demands of pure self-interest. The temptation would have been to succumb to the centrifugal forces of social fissure and adopt, as many earlier had, a separate religious identity in Christian conversion, a move that would have severed them from the rigidity of traditional Sinhala social stratification. This had taken place earlier with the *Karava* and other

⁴⁰¹Roberts, M. *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation*. p220.

⁴⁰² *Diaries of the Galle Kachcheri* 15 November 1905 RG 43/13, (SLNA). The franchise, which was limited to landed and educated, made such manipulation possible.

⁴⁰³ *Diaries of the Galle Kachcheri* 9 November 1906 RG 43/14, (SLNA). Mudaliyar was originally a chief headman but by the mid-nineteenth century was only an honorary title. Muhandiram was an assistant to a Mudaliyar, though again, had, by the mid-nineteenth century, become an honorary title.

⁴⁰⁴ Gombrich & Obeyesekere *Buddhism Transformed* p 202. The holding of public office under the Dutch had required Christian adherence and while this requirement was not removed by the British until 1858, it remained a de facto qualification. See, Bayly, CA. *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman 1989) p212. Ames “The Impact of Western Education...” p31.

non-*Goyigama* becoming significant targets of Portuguese Catholic conversion, so Buddhist adherence was both a statement of communal or caste position, and alignment within the Sinhala community as a whole. Some elite non-*Goyigama* families did, in fact, manage an odd balance of outward Christian adherence and retained traditional practice⁴⁰⁵ but the fact that many chose to remain within the centripetal forces of social cohesion and Buddhist origin says much for their tenacity and accounts for their attraction to the efforts of the Theosophical Society. A Buddhist religious revival was well in train by the late nineteenth century, but there seems little doubt that the presence of the Theosophical Society and the hundreds of Buddhist Theosophical Society schools they formed over the years, became significant vehicles for the advancement of Buddhism and had a profound impact on the standing of Buddhist faith among the Sinhala people.

Economics and Religion in Tandem.

There is a tendency in the West to view Buddhism in Ceylon as a static entity, a view reinforced by the insistence by many Sinhala that Theravada is an uncontaminated and original Buddhism. In fact, Buddhism in Ceylon has historically encountered periods of decline and renewal, including a period of Mahayana influence, all of which have altered the shape and emphasis of Sinhala Buddhism. Such decline was sufficiently significant to require the renewal of the higher ordination, *upasampada*, and the lineage⁴⁰⁶ within the *sangha* (monastic order) from outside Ceylon on a number of historical occasions.⁴⁰⁷ While the Buddhist renewal of the nineteenth century, to which the Theosophical Society contributed, was built on changes occurring in the economic and social fabric, they were part of a continuum of historical renovation and renewal of Buddhism in Ceylon.

⁴⁰⁵ See Pieris, P.E *Notes on Some Sinhalese Families, Part IV: Ilangakon*. (Colombo: Times of Ceylon Company, ND.) This dual adherence is particularly odd to Christians whose faith officially eschews syncretism, however, in Sri Lanka, Buddhism has always coexisted with popular deities, some even borrowed from Hindu influence (though that is not acceptable to some Buddhists).

⁴⁰⁶Lineage- the concept of unbroken connection through many teachers and higher ordained monks, back to the Buddha, is an extremely important concept within Indian and Sri Lankan culture. It ensures an authenticity and authority of doctrine, handed down in 'unaltered' form through countless generations. This derives from the nature of oral culture that preserves through strict memorisation and repetition. The endless recurrence of initial stock phrases and numerical recurrence in Buddhist scriptures, attests to its oral origin. The continued reverence accorded Woodward today in Sri Lanka is similarly an aspect of this respect for lineage.

⁴⁰⁷ Ames, M. "The Impact of Western Education on Religion and Society in Ceylon" *Pacific Affairs* Vol. XL No. 1&2, Spring/Summer 1967 p23. Also:-

Geiger, W. *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1960) p198.

Higher ordination was renewed from outside Ceylon, four times from Burma in the eleventh, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; once from India in the thirteenth century; and from Siam in 1753.

What was significant about the many new monastic fraternities or *nikaya*, that proliferated from about 1802 onwards,⁴⁰⁸ was that caste rather than doctrine characterised their establishment. The central Siyam (Siam) Nikaya, aligned with the Kandyan kings, was a *Goyigama* preserve, monopolising religious power by largely restricting recruitment to the *Goyigama*. The attempt by the *Goyigama* establishment in Kandy to deny higher ordination in 1765 to non-*Goyigama* in the Low Country led to considerable resistance and eventually to higher ordination being taken directly in Burma or Siam which required the economic resources of entrepreneurial caste members with their rising economic status.⁴⁰⁹

The Buddhist Revival was, to some extent, “the religious expression of the improved economic and social status” of the non-*Goyigama* castes; temporal change sought reflection in the religious institutions, indeed, “the alliance between trade and religion was strong”,⁴¹⁰ a relationship not unknown in Christian Europe.⁴¹¹ This struggle by the non-*Goyigama* stamped a reformist tendency on their activities, and with it an emphasis on a lay involvement with historical antecedent. The expropriation of monastic lands by the Portuguese, necessitated that Low Country monks establish close connections with the laity quite different from the isolated Kandyan Kingdom with its undiminished monastic wealth. This difference in the evolution of monastic tradition formed a foundation for the close connection, in the nineteenth century, between the new fraternities of the Maritime Low Country provinces and their lay economic sponsors.

It is not surprising that the reformist zeal that saw the reconstruction of Buddhist institutions in the Maritime provinces to rival Kandyan hegemony sought further expression in nationalist political rivalry with colonial authority. It was the logical corollary of a reformist impulse and it is not surprising that the new *Nikaya*, or monastic fraternities, (and their lay supporters) “were among the vanguard regiments of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism ranged in opposition to the British government and Christian missions.”⁴¹² However, as Wickremeratne points out, the

⁴⁰⁸Ames “Westernization or Modernization” p159.

⁴⁰⁹The first group, a *Salagama* group from Welitara, went to Burma in 1799-1803. A *Salagama* group from Dadalla near Galle went 1807-09; a *Karava* group 1807-10; a *Durava* group 1807-13; a *Salagama* group ?-1811. Source: Roberts p136.

This movement led to the formation of a new Buddhist fraternity known now as the Amarapura Nikaya which is a loose federation of caste based groups. A further split occurred in 1862 when the priest Ambagahawatte broke away from the Amarapura to form the third significant group, the Ramanya Nikaya, originally based at Dodanduwa near Galle, and particularly dominated by the *Karava*.

⁴¹⁰Wickremeratne, L.A. *Religion, Nationalism, and Social Change in Ceylon, 1865-1885* (Colombo: Studies in Society and Culture, 1993.) p13.

⁴¹¹Tawney, R.H. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Mentor, 1954)

⁴¹²Roberts, M. *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation*. p138.

nationalist manifestations of the Buddhist Revival were “frankly more sectarian than national”,⁴¹³ focused more on caste stratification and antagonism to missionary activity than nationalist objectives.

The issues alluded to were not simply ‘historical’ and remote. Woodward was to write to the then President of the Pali Text Society, Caroline Rhys Davids in 1935 enclosing comments written to him by an obviously non-*Goyigama* ex-pupil about the Siam Sect *bhikkhus*, who only recruited from the *Goyigama*. He told Woodward the *bhikkhus*,

have deteriorated to an alarming extent. They now drive about in bullock-drawn carriages, deal in money, and even handle coins, from which, if I am right, they are prohibited. Why do they encourage caste distinctions in extending *upasampada* [higher ordination] only to those born in the Goigama [sic] community? Do the rest not fear *samsara*? Was not Upali, a barber?⁴¹⁴

The principal intention of the nineteenth century Buddhist Revival was to ‘restore’ Buddhism to some imagined pre-existing pristine ‘purity’, as Ames⁴¹⁵ describes it aptly, a “back to the Buddha movement”, with all the fundamentalist nuances such suggests. As with all efforts at re-inventing tradition, however, there is absolutely no suggestion of innovation though the ‘restoration’ is inevitably novel with “something old, something borrowed and something new.”⁴¹⁶ From seventeenth century European sects through to the present, such movements tend to stress laicisation, a ‘back to basics’ faith, and an individual scriptural interpretation that sometimes borders on spiritual hubris.

As Hobsbawm points out, recruitment is from those at the social margins and critical borderlands, those who stand “between the rich and powerful on one side [and] the masses of the traditional society on the other: i.e. among those...about to rise into the middle class.”⁴¹⁷ As has been described earlier, the attraction is not principally among the ignorant and unlearned, but among the educated and newly upwardly mobile, who seek psychological certainty in a life narrative otherwise fraught with change and alteration. Adherents of the Theosophical Society, like Woodward, tended to exhibit such characteristics, and in their interface

⁴¹³Wickremeratne, L.A. “Annie Besant, Theosophism, and Buddhist Nationalism in Sri Lanka” *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Sciences* n.s 6 #1 (Jan-June 1976) p63.

⁴¹⁴ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 16 January 1935 (FOSL). The alarm would be even greater today. Some complain about the Mahathera of the Siam Sect being given a Mercedes by the government! The issues remain. Upali was a principal disciple of the Buddha, from the lowly barber cast.

⁴¹⁵Ames *Westernization or Modernization* p161.

⁴¹⁶Ames *Westernization or Modernization* p162.

⁴¹⁷ Hobsbawm, E. *The Age of Revolution, Europe 1789-1848* (London: Cardinal, 1962.) p270. Hobsbawm is describing 17th century European sects, but application to the Buddhist Revival is apt.

with the Buddhist Revival, found the familiar, something not entirely *Other* but of the *Self* as well. In a sense they were more than qualified to articulate the well-springs of that Revival, which occasionally found expression in their acolytes, like Anagarika Dharmapala.

Myth & Self: the Case of Anagarika Dharmapala.

A central consequence of colonial intrusion, with its imposition of inferiority on subject cultures, is the dislocation of traditional *Self* valuation and identity. Prior to European occupation Sinhala ethnicity and Buddhism were synonymous identifiers, without distinguishing terms like 'Buddhist' to define an adherence separate from ethnicity. With the advent of Christian conversion the terms drifted and a *Self-conscious* necessity arose to define *Self* and ethno-cultural identity. Myth, as Obeyesekere emphasises, has always been a powerful determiner of Sinhala identity and the attempts to define or redefine identity in the aftermath of European colonisation became sourced within the pivotal mix of myth and history of the *Mahavamsa*, *Dipavamsa* and *Culavamsa*,⁴¹⁸ the Chronicles of Sri Lanka produced by monks (the educated elite of the time). Significantly they are written in Pali, which is a scriptural, not a living language, thus lending the Chronicles a timeless air of authority.

The significance of the Chronicles is that they constantly equate the destiny of the *Sasana* (the Buddhist dispensation) with that of the Sinhala people,⁴¹⁹ emphasising Lanka as the refuge of Buddhism in its purist form.⁴²⁰ The purpose of 'history' within the Chronicles is to link 'events' to a narrative occupied with the advancement and preservation of the Dharma, much as British history of the nineteenth century is a narrative unfolding of the 'destiny' of the British people - the historiography is really not so dissimilar. Obeyesekere describes the Chronicles as 'historical myth', to emphasise the melding of purpose, but whereas, for example, the Arthurian myth has ceased to define English

⁴¹⁸ The *Dipavamsa* was probably written in the 4th century and the *Mahavamsa* in the 5th century. The *Culavamsa* was probably composed in the 13th century with subsequent additions in the 14th and 18th centuries.

⁴¹⁹ Obeyesekere, G "The Vicissitudes of Sinhala-Buddhist Identity Through Time and Change" in Roberts, M [ed] *Collective Identities, Nationalisms and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1979). p280.

⁴²⁰ Roberts, Raheem & Colin-Thome *The People Inbetween: The Burghers and the Middle Class in the Transformations within Sri Lanka, 1790's-1960's* (Colombo: Saravodaya Book Publishing Services, 1989) p32. The *Mahavamsa* tells that on the Buddha's death (*Parinibbana*) he summoned Sakka, king of the gods and told him that Vijaya will come to Lanka and "In Lanka, Lord of Gods, will my religion be established, therefore carefully protect him with his followers and Lanka." (*Mahavamsa* Geiger trans. 1950. p55) This is the concept of *Dhammadipa* (lit. 'dharma island' or 'dharma light' - 'dipa' is ambiguous in this compound), the special destiny of Lanka that permeates the Chronicles.

identity, the myths of the Chronicles “remain part of the current beliefs of the Sinhalese people”.⁴²¹

This is important in placing Woodward in a specifically Sri Lankan, rather than Western, historical context, for part of the persistent reverence accorded Woodward to this day in Sri Lanka, lies not his person, but in his role. It is his contribution as a Buddhist educator, advancing the *dharma*, that establishes his significance, not the fact that he was a fine educator, or unusual person with any other message. In this sense the text is all; the sub-text is without interest. History is handmaiden to the destiny of the *Sasana*. And the legend surrounding Woodward’s exertions- the ‘stories’- is what matters, not the ‘facts’.⁴²²

The same applies to the figure of Anagarika Dharmapala, the important nationalist and Buddhist revivalist figure of the early twentieth century, who more than any other resorted to the Chronicles for source and definition of cultural identity. While he originated from Matara in the southern province, Dharmapala was raised by his *Goyigama* parents in Colombo where the elite was principally Protestant. Though he was from a traditional elite caste, he was nevertheless displaced by geographic translocation, a displacement exacerbated by the contrast of a mixed Catholic and Protestant education set against a traditional Buddhist religious home life dominated by an adoring Buddhist mother. The conflict and dislocation was resolved through the adoption of a particularly puritanical ‘Protestant’ Buddhism, powerfully influenced by Olcott, Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society, which nurtured his religious education and career until the inevitable break with his sponsors.

Dharmapala’s Buddhism relied on elements of reaction formation within his own early intolerant Christian education and drew heavily on Olcott’s elevation of lay involvement, which both emulated Protestant inclinations and indigenous historical antecedent. The laicism Olcott emphasised, while it echoed Low Country monastic evolution, was nevertheless innovative, and Dharmapala’s forceful lay advocacy advanced this emphasis within Sinhala Buddhism. He himself did not become a monk until late in life and he remained first and foremost the model of an activist layman, an *intermediate* personage between traditional householder and monk roles. His fervent renunciation was not often imitated but he was nevertheless the significant model of many lay advocates.

The Buddhism Dharmapala advocated was akin to the ‘creole’ Buddhism Prothero⁴²³ ascribes to Olcott, and which, given Olcott’s influence, is not

⁴²¹ Obeyesekere “The Vicissitudes of Sinhala-Buddhist Identity ...” p280.

⁴²²I am again indebted to Dr Vitharana for making this clear.

⁴²³ Prothero, S *The White Buddhist*

surprising. The ‘creolisation’ analogy doesn’t quite fit Dharmapala since the ‘deep structure’, the ‘grammar’ of his life narrative was obviously Buddhist not Protestant. It was, though, the ‘reaction formation’ to his childhood influence of a Protestant and Catholic education profoundly antagonistic to his Buddhist origin, that made Olcott’s ‘creole’ Buddhism extremely resonant.

Where Prothero’s analogy gains application, however, is in the inherited nineteenth century European chauvinism, racism and puritanical Victorian morality,⁴²⁴ that dominated the early life narrative of Dharmapala and his contemporaries. Extending Prothero’s analogy, Dharmapala borrowed the ‘grammar’ of nineteenth century European imperial intolerance and racial superiority while retaining a Buddhist, nationalist and anti-imperial ‘vocabulary’. In Dharmapala a nineteenth century imperial bigotry was cryogenically preserved into the late twentieth century by its permeation of Sinhala ideology.

Dharmapala attempted to recreate a national identity based on the fusion of Sinhala/Buddhist identities, drawing on the authority of the Chronicles, and the link between the destiny of the *Sasana* and the Sinhala people. But he also extended this ‘authority’ to countenance racial intolerance. He spoke disparagingly of other ethnicities, describing Tamils as *hādi demalu* (filthy Tamils) and counselling against ‘mixing’ (caste, colour or ethnicity). Even the term “Aryan”,⁴²⁵ which had shed its racial connotations in general parlance and had assumed a generic meaning of “noble” or exalted, he occasionally restored to its racial meaning.⁴²⁶

The responsibility for the formation and spread of ‘Protestant’ Buddhism in the nineteenth century is disputed by commentators. The prominence given to Olcott and the Theosophists by writers like Conze and Prothero is understandably disputed by Sinhala commentators like Malalgoda,⁴²⁷ who, correctly, points to a revival well under way before Olcott,

⁴²⁴ Traditional Sinhala marriage did not necessarily compel monogamy, as far as it is known, and was more relaxed about ‘divorce’ and remarriage but by the late nineteenth century the Victorian moral code stamped most colonial societies and strict monogamy was the norm, an aspect firmly imprinted on the Buddhist Revival. The attraction to Temperance as a cause also indicated the legacy of Victorian morality, again picked up from, reversed, and turned on Christian intrusion, another example of ‘reaction formation’. Victorian morality’s permeation of colonial culture is described elegantly in:-

Hyam, Ronald. *Empire and Sexuality*

⁴²⁵ “Aryan” is used extensively in Buddhist scripture eg ‘Aryan Eightfold Path’, where “Aryan” is generally rendered as ‘Noble’. Masefield, in *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), argues the original use of “Aryan” entailed a racial connotation that was lost in the geographical spread of Buddhism.

⁴²⁶ Obeyesekere, G. “Buddhism and Consciousness: an exploratory essay” *Daedalus* Summer 1991, p238.

⁴²⁷ Malalgoda *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society* p256ff.

spearheaded by proselytisers like Mohottivatte Gunananda at, and even before, the Panadure Debates.⁴²⁸

Buddhists were by no means dormant before the arrival of the Theosophists; in fact the Theosophists were enthusiastically welcomed and absorbed into the Buddhist movement precisely because the Buddhists were already active at the time of arrival.⁴²⁹

Obeyesekere⁴³⁰ sees Dharmapala as the person who successfully took Olcott's conception of Buddhism and formed it firmly into the definitive Buddhist narrative of the twentieth century, though his elaboration revealed "a dark underside of Buddhism without the mitigating humanism of the Buddhist conscience".⁴³¹ In Obeyesekere's view "Olcott ... might not have had as powerful an effect on Sinhala-Buddhist thought but for the fact that he had a Sinhala disciple [Dharmapala] to continue his work and popularize it."⁴³²

The truth probably lies in a combination of factors. Dharmapala's vociferousness certainly made him 'heard' but also made him an ideal figure for post-colonial elevation and manufacture into nationalist hero beyond his actual importance. After all, he spent most of the time, after 1915, away from Ceylon. For the same nationalist reasons, Olcott probably has attracted some levelling. The reality was that an indigenous revival in reaction to, and emulating Christian doctrine and methodology was certainly well under way before Olcott. It was Olcott who added 'spin' with his journalistic and organisational skills, as well as the novelty of his own white European adherence to Buddhism. It was Olcott who shaped and focused the Buddhist Revival, with such instruments as his Buddhist Catechism,⁴³³ that essentialised Buddhist

⁴²⁸ A series of debates between Christians and Buddhists had taken place in the 1860s, spearheaded by personalities like Mohottivatte, and culminating in the 1873 debate where over 10,000 attended. This last was significant in that it was perceived as a Buddhist 'win'. Mohottivatte was an unusual monk in that he eschewed the usual monkish persona of calm introversion and became an articulate and forceful advocate - again much in emulation of the Christian missionary style.

⁴²⁹ Malalgoda p256.

⁴³⁰ Obeyesekere "The Vicissitudes of Sinhala"

⁴³¹ Obeyesekere "Buddhism and Consciousness" p 238. Obeyesekere goes on to suggest that "Without that conscience and humanism, Buddhism must become a religion that has betrayed the heritage of its founder." - which is a dark assessment indeed of the legacy of Dharmapala who is seen as a national hero.

⁴³² Obeyesekere "Buddhism and Consciousness" p 226.

⁴³³ Olcott's Catechism, painstakingly assembled to satisfy all Buddhist sectarian opinion, was translated into 22 languages and went into over 40 editions. It was used extensively in schools and was extremely innovative for Buddhism, but nevertheless a 'straight steal' from Christian practice with an extremely laicised slant. In it he describes Buddhism as a faith "without rites, prayers, penances, priest or intercessory saints." - a very Protestant vision. [Olcott, H.S. *The Buddhist Catechism* (Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, n.d) p4.] The Buddhist flag, made up of *Nila* (blue), *Pita* (yellow) *Lohita* (red) *Odata* (white) *Manjesta* (orange) and *Prabhasvara* (a mix of the other five colours) remains a ubiquitous presence in temples and towns in Sri Lanka to this day.

doctrine for easy transmission, and the multi-coloured Buddhist flag that added symbolic focus.

Olcott's efforts, like Woodward's, would have been of absolutely no consequence without a fundamental indigenous receptivity, a fortuitous combination of time and place. It was Dharmapala who added the language of extremism Olcott or Woodward could never muster, the "violent anti-Christian, anti-missionary, anti-colonial polemic",⁴³⁴ the ideology necessary to torch the psychologically resonant "dark underside" that spoke the needs of people in transition, the village intelligentsia:

schoolteachers, monks, *ayurvedic* [traditional] physicians, various types of government officials, representatives of local bodies ('village committees'). They lived in the village but did not belong to the peasant class. They were educated in Sinhala schools, had high aspirations for themselves and their children, but were cut off from the sources of political and economic power.⁴³⁵

These were not only the people who in 1956 spearheaded the chauvinist shift in Sri Lankan politics⁴³⁶ with the election of the Bandaranaike government, they were also the people attracted to the elite schools taught by people like Woodward, and while Obeyesekere emphasises the proselytising worth of Anagarika Dharmapala, it was:

primarily through the ..[BTS]..schools that modern Buddhism (that is, the Western conception of Buddhism) diffused into the society and became the basic religious ideology of the educated Buddhist bourgeoisie.⁴³⁷

Olcott and Dharmapala undoubtedly shaped and furthered an existing Buddhist Revival, promoting a westernised 'Protestant' Buddhism but, "*Institutionally, this transfer was effected through the Buddhist schools.*"⁴³⁸ Without this additional and critically pervasive layer of formation and transfer, this laicised, 'Protestant' Buddhism may not have so effectively pervaded the educated elite and penetrated society and Sinhala culture to the extent it did. Additionally, when one talks of

There is some dispute over Olcott's 'authorship', though the idea and size and shape of final version seems to have been his. The designer seems to have been Carolis Gunerwardena (b 1854), a member of the BTS who was from Matara, in the south and a relation of Dharmapala.

⁴³⁴Obeyesekere "Buddhism and Consciousness" p 238.

⁴³⁵ Obeyesekere "The Vicissitudes of Sinhala-Buddhist Identity.." p303.

⁴³⁶ Obeyesekere "The Vicissitudes of Sinhala-Buddhist Identity " p308.

⁴³⁷Obeyesekere "Buddhism and Consciousness" p 233.

⁴³⁸Obeyesekere "Buddhism and Consciousness" p 239. My emphasis.

‘Buddhist schools’ at this time, one is really talking about the Buddhist Theosophical Society schools like Mahinda College and people like FL Woodward.

Dharmapala clearly recognised the schools as primary nodes of influence and visited many, including Mahinda College, as he did, in October 1906,⁴³⁹ when he came to speak to students at Woodward’s invitation. Dharmapala became the radical face of the Buddhist Revival, a role enhanced after 1915 when he was effectively exiled from Ceylon and became more potent as a martyred exile than local agitator. But however strident Dharmapala became, the Buddhism Revival was considerably more complex than the articulation of one man’s views and the symbol of his defiance. Dissemination of the values of the Revival, as Obeyesekere suggests, relied critically on the BTS Buddhist schools.

Woodward, Education and the BTS Influence.

On the surface at least, Woodward’s motivation contrasted dramatically with the usual imperial intent. Far from attempting to convert the ‘natives’, Woodward’s purpose seemed directed at reinforcing indigenous religious values and valorising the Buddhist faith to give it strength to withstand the onslaught of Christian proselytising. While there were many traditional *pansala* (temple) schools, several important *pirivenas* (monastic ‘colleges’) and, at the turn of the century, even a number of western style schools managed by wealthy lay Buddhists,⁴⁴⁰ the fact nevertheless remains that the Buddhist Theosophical Society (BTS) was the *sole* ‘Buddhist’ organisation attempting to compete with the missionaries in the *specific* provision of elite, Westernised, English-medium schools. Herein lies the significance of the BTS schools like Mahinda College and of Woodward in particular, for the influence of such schools and their headmasters was often *disproportionate* to their apparent reach and size.

The significance of the BTS contribution, and that of people like Woodward, extended well beyond the realm of the school yard, because, as Hobsbawm points out, the history of Third World transformation in the twentieth century “is the history of elite minorities, and sometimes relatively minute ones”⁴⁴¹ with disproportionate influence on the shape of national agendas. The BTS, in their schools, shaped that rising elite with a unique blend of western values, English language and a reconstructed laicised Buddhism, which in turn made the influence of the schools on national and social transformation considerably greater than the apparent magnitude of their efforts.

⁴³⁹ *Diaries of the Government Agent Galle Kachcheri* RG43/14, 17 October 1906. (SLNA).

⁴⁴⁰ Ames, “The Impact of Western Education.....” p31. By 1896 some 27 schools were sponsored by philanthropic lay Buddhists while the BTS had 63 registered under its name.

⁴⁴¹ Hobsbawm *Age of Extremes* p202.

While its purpose was ostensibly to stem the tide of missionary zeal, the Theosophical Society was clearly in the business of social construction, building a 'Buddhist' and civic agenda that both opposed and emulated the Christian 'civilising' mission. While 'radical' for the time, the TS agenda harboured inevitable cultural assumptions. People like Woodward were unavoidably English and Victorian, motivated by values and beliefs emanating from the same context of imperialism and Victorian morality as animated their missionary counterparts, values that included an acceptance of 'progress' and an assumption that European, and more particularly, English culture stood at the summit of 'civilisation'.

They were almost inescapable values, so 'self evident', in fact, they were accepted too, "as a simple matter of fact"⁴⁴² even by most early Sinhala writers. What is remarkable about Woodward, Olcott, and other TS acolytes, was the degree that they diverged from the hegemony of imperial opinion to assert the validity of indigenous culture and belief, a position of assumed orthodoxy today, but one requiring some imagination and courage at what was then the height of imperial influence.

Other cultural encumbrances carried by Woodward, (and, Prothero suggests, by Olcott), were values derived from evangelical and Protestant origins, values that laid emphasis on the individual experience of faith and scripture, and the ascendancy of the laity in the propagation of religion. These aspects slipped between the interstices to indelibly define their Buddhism, appropriately described by Obeyesekere as 'Protestant Buddhism'. These facets were reflected in Woodward's approach, in his affirmation of a laicised 'Protestant Buddhism' and his commitment to education as a vehicle of social and national elevation.

It is significant that education was the principal instrument of the BTS in Ceylon and a logical one given their reformist inclinations. Their first educational venture saw the opening of nine Buddhist Sunday schools in Colombo in 1880,⁴⁴³ an effort emulating the public education movement in Britain which led to the Education Act and compulsory elementary education. The emergence of mass education in the late nineteenth century was not seen simply as a benign good within accepted social policy but as a vehicle of social transformation focused on the establishment of national coherence, consciousness and advancement, another element in defining the then evolving nation state.

The belief in education's potential for social engineering was appropriated by both radical and conservative forces. In continental

⁴⁴²Gooneratne, M.Y. "English Literature in Ceylon 1815-1878" (Dehiwala, Ceylon: Tissa Prakasakayo, 1968) issued as Vol.14 of the *Ceylon Historical Journal*. p88.

⁴⁴³ Ames "Westernization or Modernization" p159.

Europe expanding secular education was often linked with socialist and anti-clerical ideology and was regarded with justifiable suspicion by conservative clericalists. Missionaries and colonial administrators, on the other hand, saw education as a potentially conforming instrument they hoped to harness for their own ends, to subdue and Christianise the populace.

The Theosophical Society assumed a ‘progressive’ position that acknowledged the transformational potential of education. Paradoxically, given the impact by BTS schools on elite formation, the ideology of their efforts was generally couched in democratic terminology. ‘Progress’ was not to be confined to the few, but a careful reading of the subtext reveals middle class aspiration does not necessarily include the seething masses. Woodward, who remained an unrepentant elitist,⁴⁴⁴ encapsulates this paradox in an article written in the *Journal of the Ceylon University Association*, the official publication of an organisation whose membership included many early Ceylonese⁴⁴⁵ nationalist leaders like Woodward’s friend, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam,⁴⁴⁶ and which was instituted to agitate for the establishment of a local university.

Woodward saw higher education as an “activity that must prevail among the majority of the population” and not be “confined merely to the upper classes”. Along with this apparent democratic intent, education “must be connected with and derive its vigour from the people of the country”⁴⁴⁷ and in this manner fulfil nationalist objectives. Woodward’s intention was plain, “My object is to train patriots for Ceylon”.⁴⁴⁸ It was an intention with social and political overtones, a transformational intention which exceeded the role of simple educator, an aspect that marked much Theosophical Society effort, and the BTS schools in particular.

The transformational potential of the BTS schools established by Olcott will always remain conjectural, though, if the Jesuit boast that given the boy at seven they can show you the man, has any validity, then the potency of such schools cannot be underestimated. Prothero, understandably, sees Olcott’s educational efforts in Ceylon as

⁴⁴⁴ See, Woodward, FL. “The True Aristocracy” *National Monthly of Ceylon* February-March 1913.

⁴⁴⁵ Ceylonese is used here to include all ethnicities, not just Sinhala..

⁴⁴⁶ Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam was an important nationalist and Tamil leader and co-founder with another of Woodward’s friends, Sir James Peiris, of the Ceylon National Congress in 1919. Like many of the early moderate nationalists, he was committed to democratic ideals and inter-communal tolerance and harmony. They were close friends and Woodward would often stay at “Waga”, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam’s country home. He wrote a foreword to Woodward’s translation of the *Dhammapada* and was sometimes invited to address the students of Mahinda College. While he was sympathetic to Theosophy, like many at that time, he was never formally associated with the TS.

⁴⁴⁷ Woodward, FL. “Some University Ideals” *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* 2 (7) Nov. 1909.

⁴⁴⁸ Roberts, N. *Galle. As Quiet as Asleep* p153.

“remarkably successful.”⁴⁴⁹ Others, like Wickremeratne, are sceptical, and see the regard granted to Olcott and the Theosophical Society as an “exaggerated reaction” simply indicating the “ascendancy which Olcott had established over the minds of ...Buddhist leaders”.⁴⁵⁰ Whatever the case, BTS schools became a principal means of disseminating a valorised Buddhist message throughout society by way of an inculcated, influential elite, and their efforts cannot be underestimated in an imperial system antagonistic to race and indigenous religion.

By 1905, the Buddhist Theosophical Society had 14 government funded ‘grant-in-aid’ English-medium schools and 141 ‘grant-in-aid’ vernacular schools, compared with a total of 127 Christian denomination English-medium schools and 666 Christian vernacular schools.⁴⁵¹ The BTS effort appears modest in comparison with the Christian juggernaut but there is some discrepancy among authors⁴⁵² as to just how significant the BTS commitment was, though it is generally agreed about 7% to 8% of government registered and aided schools around 1900 were Buddhist, depending on which figures are used. Confining the assessment, however, to government ‘grant-in-aid’ schools, which had to attain certain standards to achieve funding and were as a result fairly stable, the BTS accounts for about 11% of English-medium schools and over 21% of vernacular schools by 1905. This was very nearly the entire non-Christian educational effort attracting government funding, with the exception of a small number of Hindu and Moor schools, and makes the BTS effort more significant than it first appears.

A somewhat different picture emerges when taking into account all ‘registered’ schools. By 1908, according to figures in the Report of the General Manager of Buddhist Schools, the BTS with 183 schools accounted for 11% of registered schools and 14% of all pupils, though if account is taken of registered ‘private’ schools - some 206 - which were

⁴⁴⁹ Prothero, S. *The White Buddhist* p173.

⁴⁵⁰ Wickremeratne, L.A. *Religion, Nationalism, and Social Change in Ceylon* p6. This seems a odd piece of obverse imperial thinking, assuming, in effect, that Buddhist leaders were insufficiently astute not to be overawed by the Olcott charisma, which sells them short indeed.

⁴⁵¹ *Ceylon Administrative Reports* 1905 Vol.II, Pt.iv, pA42.

<u>Grant-in-Aid English Schools</u>	<u>Grant-in-Aid Vernacular Schools.</u>
BTS	141
Wesleyan	350
RC	44
CofE	272
American Christian	0
Mohammedan	4

⁴⁵² See: Jayaweera “Religious Organisations and the State in Ceylonese education” *Comparative Education Review*, 12 (June, 1968) Table 1, p.163 and Table 2 p.168.

Sumathial, KHM “History of Education in Ceylon 1796-1965” (Dehiwala, Ceylon: Tisara Prakasakayo, 1968) pp.36-37, Volume 13 of *Ceylon Historical Journal*.

Ames, M. “Westernization or Modernization Table 2 p.167. [Ames’ estimates are based on the above two authors]

primarily in fact, Buddhist, then the percentage of generically Buddhist schools would be considerably elevated.⁴⁵³

However one weighs the statistics, the area of 'grant-in-aid' is the most significant because standards, stability and finance were more assured. In the area of vernacular 'grant -in-aid' education, the BTS penetration was significant, and even in the area of English-medium education its contribution was impressive, particularly as these were the core institutions of elite formation, which is what really matters in respect of authority, influence and affect. The importance of English-medium schools such as Mahinda College can be judged by the fact that until well after Independence, "education at an English-medium school was the sole point of entry to the ruling elite."⁴⁵⁴

The small band of Europeans like Olcott and Woodward who were prepared to publicly promote Buddhism and to build educational institutions to further its dissemination, contributed immeasurably to the resurgence and shape of Buddhism in Ceylon. The particular 'Protestant',⁴⁵⁵ proselytising, puritanical edge of the late nineteenth century Buddhist Revival, which made it look remarkably like Victorian high morality, was formed partly in reaction to, and partly in emulation of, Christian forms and methods. Certainly Olcott had no hesitation in consciously employing the tactics of the Christians - schools and the printing press -⁴⁵⁶ against them, and the kind of Buddhism that evolved and was promoted in BTS schools like Mahinda College, was not strictly an orthodox or "traditional Buddhism but the spirit of a new rational and reformed Buddhism"⁴⁵⁷ which spread through society to become, as Obeyesekere emphasises, "the basic religious ideology of the educated Buddhist bourgeoisie"⁴⁵⁸.

Laicisation and Scriptural Access.

FL Woodward, in particular, through his involvement in the translation of Pali scriptures, made an especially important contribution to the reconstruction and spread of the Buddhist Revival. While there is a

⁴⁵³"Buddhist Schools in Ceylon: Report of the General Manager of Buddhist Schools for the Year 1908, Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society". *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* February 1909, p131-133. Total Registered Schools: 1680 (No. of pupils 171235). Total BTS schools: 183 (No. of pupils 23975). Of these only 18 BTS schools were English-Medium schools.

⁴⁵⁴ Gombrich & Obeyesekere *Buddhism Transformed* p208.

⁴⁵⁵ Malalgoda *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society* p191ff. The influence of Protestant missionary activity on the response and shape of Buddhism is discussed at length, though the term "Protestant Buddhism" was coined by Obeyesekere.

⁴⁵⁶ The first to employ the press, the Lankopakara Press of Galle in 1862, was the leading anti-Christian polemicist of the 1860's and 1870's, Mohottivatte Gunananda, who with delicious irony, bought an old Wesleyan Mission press to print anti-Christian tracts. See Malalgoda *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society* p188 and 191ff and Ames, M. "Westernization or Modernization.

⁴⁵⁷ Bond, G *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response*. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992) p50.

⁴⁵⁸ Obeyesekere, G. "Buddhism and Consciousness" p292.

significant presence of Pali words in Sinhala, the languages are remote, and for the laity (and even many monks) Pali was largely unintelligible. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century very few Pali texts, printed in Pali or translated into Sinhala, were publicly available. Even when Sinhala translations of Pali texts began to appear, they tended to be written, not the demotic Sinhala of the ordinary person, but in classical high Sinhala, which, as Woodward suggested, was “almost equivalent to the average Englishman’s reading Chaucer with ease.”⁴⁵⁹

Texts were preserved, as they are to this day, in monasteries, hand inscribed on *ola* (palm) leaf manuscripts, in appearance much like compressed venetian blinds. General public access was principally possible only through the editions and translations of the Pali Text Society, to which Woodward significantly contributed, and these became, for the educated Sinhala laity, “the main path of access to the Canon”.⁴⁶⁰

Woodward provided English translations for his pupils, particularly of the *Dhammapada*, a collection of Buddhist aphorisms (not dissimilar to those expressed by Woodward’s favoured hero, Marcus Aurelius), and also facilitated access to scriptures by formally introducing Pali into the curriculum. On Woodward’s insistence, Pali was eventually included, by the Dept. of Public Instruction, on the Cambridge Entrance Exams, which had a ‘subversive’ significance Woodward obviously perceived, as he wrote to CA Rhys Davids,

I am glad that Ceylon Pali Candidates for exams are learning our up-to-date ‘Buddhism’ - The bhikkhus will be frantic!⁴⁶¹

Similarly, Mrs Musaeus Higgins of Musaeus College, Colombo, another BTS school, this time for girls, also produced an English translation of the popular *Jataka*,⁴⁶² for which Woodward wrote a generous foreword, and she created plays and stories based on historic and religious themes that were performed in BTS schools.⁴⁶³

Woodward promoted a laicised Buddhism in his school, not only through the example of his own abstemious behaviour, but also through the teaching of Buddhism and Pali, and the provision of English translations of Pali texts to his students and to the public (through English journals

⁴⁵⁹ FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 January 1950. (FOSL)

⁴⁶⁰ Gombrich, R & Obeyesekere, G *Buddhism Transformed* p 210. Gombrich’s opinion is probably not entirely unbiased - at the time of writing (1997) he was President of the Pali Text Society.

⁴⁶¹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 23 October 1933. (FOSL)

⁴⁶² Higgins, M.M, *Jatakamala* (Colombo: Lake House Bookshop, ND but originally about 1914) The *Jataka* is a series of stories purportedly about the Buddha’s previous births.

⁴⁶³ Musaeus-Higgins, M. *Stories from the History of Ceylon* (Parts I & II) (Colombo: Lake House, 1999) It is noteworthy that these works remain in demand and in print.

and papers). It is a particularly odd aspect of nineteenth and early twentieth century Ceylonese history, that lay access to Christian scripture was through tracts in Sinhala, while lay access to Buddhist scriptures was principally through English translations, which adds considerable significance to the promotion of Buddhism through the English-medium BTS schools.

Laicisation of Buddhism in the nineteenth century, arising both from historical aspects of Low Country Buddhism and the emulation of Protestantism, was a key shift in Buddhism from a virtuoso to mass religion. This new attitude, and access by the laity to the scriptures, diminished reliance on local monks and their interpretation of scripture, furthering lay command of their own faith. The quality of learning among *bhikkhus* varied significantly, from the impressive to the abysmal, and the renewal of Buddhism among the laity in turn affected a re-examination of doctrine within the *sangha*.

Woodward always maintained good relations with the local *bhikkhus* and the monasteries, and valued Buddhist scholars like the Venerable Buddhadatta but, privately, he believed that *bhikkhus*, “except for one or two, are useless duds”⁴⁶⁴ and looked forward, in his particular vision of Buddhism, to their demise.

....monks nowadays are ‘crustaceous’ and when the Bodhisattva appears (as is hoped in not so many years from what I hear)- monks will vanish. Already you see X’ian parsons wearing the last remnant of sanctity (dog-collar) which is curiously paralleled in Anagata-Vamsa- which says in times to come monks will wear just a little scrap of yellow cloth, not the robes.⁴⁶⁵

This attitude exhibits a religious view in considerable contrast to the emphases of traditional Theravadin Buddhism and echoes Olcott’s view that indigenous Buddhism was often ‘debased’,⁴⁶⁶ and Besant’s view that Ceylonese Buddhists had sometimes ‘perverted’⁴⁶⁷ the true teachings of the Buddha. Despite its support of Buddhism, the Theosophical Society harboured an imperial arrogance that it knew best what Buddhism ‘really’ was. So like others in the Theosophical Society, Woodward was

⁴⁶⁴ Woodward to IB Horner 3 May 1951, *IB Horner Collection- box 14*.(FOSL) Woodward’s emphasis.

⁴⁶⁵ Woodward to IB Horner 20 January 1950. *IB Horner Collection- box 14* (FOSL). Woodward’s emphasis. This antagonism towards monks was, I found, noticeable among activist Buddhist laity even today, though expressed *sotto voce*. The reference here to the *Bodhisattva* is to the belief in a future Metteyya Buddha. Woodward’s expectation of these events- “from what I hear”- has a millenarian feel and indicates a firmly held view within his circle. The *Anagata-Vamsa* is a text that talks of the future of Buddhism and foreshadows a decline and degeneration in the priesthood.

⁴⁶⁶ Olcott *Old Diary Leaves* Vol.II. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1975) p316.

⁴⁶⁷ Wickremeratne, L.A. “Annie Besant, Theosophism...” p67.

not a simply an advocate of religious revival but a patron of a quite different approach, one emphasising, for the laity, an individual path in contrast to the prevailing orthodox reliance on the guidance of the *sangha*.

While to the average Christian this view seems unremarkable, Woodward's view contrasted significantly with the prevailing Buddhism based as a monastic priority.⁴⁶⁸ Generally, it was held, 'householders', or the laity generally, could not hope to become an *arahant*, an 'enlightened saint', but must wait for the opportunity of another life-time to devote themselves to the cultivation of Path, almost certainly within the community of monks (which then and now presents an ambivalent attitude towards women). The *sangha* was seen as the principal vehicle and means of seeking *Nibbana*, a corner stone of Theravadin Buddhism as expressed in the *triratna* (the Triple Gem) wherein the adherent commits to taking 'refuge' in the Buddha, Dharma (doctrine) and Sangha (community of believers but more specifically, the monastic orders).

An emphasis on the laity thus represented a quite significant inflection on the prevailing form of Buddhism. It was reinforced by the extensive educational endeavours of BTS, the provision, by Woodward, of scriptural translations for students in BTS schools, and the inculcation, generally, by lay instruction.

Mahinda College- Acceptance of Western Educational Ideology.

The BTS schools, with their proselytising Buddhist intent, were originally formed in hope and enthusiasm but with little prospect of success. The Galle Theosophical Buddhist School was founded on 15 September 1880 in the wake of the first visit to Ceylon of Col. Olcott and Madam Blavatsky, a visit of great local curiosity and historical interest. After all, a pair of Europeans not only expressing support of Buddhism⁴⁶⁹ but prepared to take *pansil* (the 5 main precepts of Buddhism), was a statement not only of support but adherence, a gesture not lost on local people. The school, formed as a result of the enthusiasm whipped up by Olcott, opened with five hundred pupils but closed before the year was out, the enthusiasm dissipated and the much promised funds failing to materialise. This was the pattern of much of

⁴⁶⁸ There is nothing preventing a householder becoming an arahant, but according to the Canon they must become a monk immediately. This does not prevent a householder achieving any of the earlier stages of enlightenment: 1. Stream Winner, 2. Once Returner, 3. Non-returner, 4. Arahant.

⁴⁶⁹This marked the particularly Buddhist phase of the Theosophical Society, which remained until Olcott's death in 1907. Thereafter under Besant, the Society took a more Hindu tack with digressions into a World Messiah movement and Liberal Catholicism (a kind of occult Christianity) under Leadbeater (though the only thing 'catholic' about the TS was its universal appropriation of religious ideas).

the early efforts⁴⁷⁰ that surrounded Olcott's frequent forays into Ceylon - much promise but little fulfilment.

The school was opened again some ten years later in the early 1890s, but again it struggled to survive in an atmosphere of community indifference to the perceived value of an 'English' education. Unlike the radical ethos of social transformation associated with education in the west at the time, in Ceylon, education was generally seen as an extension of religious instruction and the preserve of the monasteries whose numerous associated *pansala* and *pirivena* 'schools'⁴⁷¹ had been the backbone of local instruction.

Sinhala education was intended to develop Buddhist moral and spiritual abilities; 'knowledge' was valued but 'wisdom' (*pañña*) based on intuition rather than reason, was the true goal of learning. Education was thus valued more for its Buddhist spiritual content and less for its practical utility: "crafts and trades were consequently less valued and frequently not taught within a strictly Buddhist monastic context."⁴⁷² This is not to suggest Buddhist education was inferior, in fact the literacy rate of Ceylon at the time the British first invaded in the eighteenth century was higher than in Britain itself.⁴⁷³ Apart from a successful mass education, Ceylon had also achieved real eminence as a centre for higher Buddhist learning, though it was elitist and primarily reserved for those with monastic intentions. It was based on the traditional authoritarian model, where a master apprenticed a select number of pupils.⁴⁷⁴

Embracing 'English' education entailed embracing a different definition of 'education' with a different methodology and ideological intention. Dr Bowles Daly, the founding Principal of Mahinda College, illustrates this contrast in his comments on *pansala* schools, which he described, with imperial arrogance, as unsatisfactory and wanting in every way, in organisation, materials, finances, discipline and "slovenly methods of teaching".⁴⁷⁵ Any advance in social penetration and acceptance of 'English' education, thus required adoption of potent Western values and the ideology of Western education.

Two preconditions were essential for the success of an English-medium school; a receptive community, and personalities prepared to foster such

⁴⁷⁰See Wickremeratne, L.A. *Religion, Nationalism and Social Change in Ceylon, 1865-1885*

⁴⁷¹Monastic schools were numerous though the quality in western terms (ie their ability to impart basic numeracy and literacy) was, with some exceptions, questionable.

⁴⁷²Ames, M. "The Impact of Western Education on Religion and Society in Ceylon" p 25.

⁴⁷³See Russell, J *Communal Politics under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947* pxiv.
Bechert, H *Religion and Development in Asian Societies* (Colombo: 1974) p4.

⁴⁷⁴See, Mookerji, J.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)* (London: Macmillan, 1951.)

Rahula, W. *History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo: Gunersena, 1956.)

⁴⁷⁵Daly, J Bowles. *The Buddhist* 3 (28) July 1891. p220. [*The Buddhist* was a Theosophical journal in Ceylon which Woodward edited from 1908-1912]

an experiment. The rising economic success of the non-*Goyigama* in the nineteenth century, which entailed adoption of western capitalist motives, provided the first precondition. Personalities like Thomas Amarasuriya, a close friend of Olcott,⁴⁷⁶ who recognised the benefits to communal advancement of a Buddhist English-medium education, and were prepared to back it with management and money, provided the second.

Despite the story of Woodward's invitation to take up the reins of Mahinda College having the heady feel of a colonial adventure, it was in fact an invitation couched in desperation. The College, which was re-established in 1891 under the stewardship of Dr Bowles Daly LLD, continued to stumble. Bowles Daly remained only briefly as did a succession of mainly 'native' principals, and the school continued with declining enrolments and disquiet among supporters, until the arrival of Woodward. Given the background of flagging support and imminent collapse, the success of Woodward over his sixteen years as Principal can only be seen as an extraordinary tribute to his energies and ability. More than that, it was a tribute to his ability to convey successfully to the local community the advantages of a western style English-medium education, revealing it in terms pertinent to Buddhist and Sinhala national interests. Nevertheless, while Woodward's efforts to build and sustain Mahinda College were remarkable, without an alignment with indigenous self-interest, he would never have succeeded.

⁴⁷⁶ On Olcott's death his ashes were interred in a memorial set in a grove of king coconut palms planted by Muhandiram Thomas Amarasuriya at the TS headquarters in Madras where they evidently still remain today.

WOODWARD & MAHINDA COLLEGE.

To know how good men live their lives
Can set us free.....⁴⁷⁷

Woodward arrived by boat at the ancient Galle dock in the early morning of the first of August 1903, the same day his predecessor and founder of the school, Bowles Daly had begun his work in 1892.⁴⁷⁸ He stepped ashore on the jetty which was decorated for the occasion, a tall man (for the time) of about six feet, lean, weighing not much more than the 11st9^{lb} (74kg) he weighed at university⁴⁷⁹. He had soft, sensitive features and hair parted in the middle in the Theosophical fashion.⁴⁸⁰

He stepped forward to be greeted by representatives of the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society - Gate Mudaliyar E.R Gunaratna, Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya, Muhandiram F.A Wickramasinghe - and the acting Principal, Sagaris de Silva and staff.⁴⁸¹ These were personages of importance, with elevated 'native' titles and social prestige in the Southern Provinces: Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya, prominent *Karava* planter, school benefactor and financial manager, who had formed his wealth as an arrack renter⁴⁸²; E.R Gunaratna, Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate, a westernised *Goyigama* Anglophile, who was nevertheless an early supporter of the Buddhist Revival and nationalist aspiration, as well as a Pali scholar who edited various texts for the Pali Text Society⁴⁸³; and, Muhandiram F.A Wickramasinghe, another prominent philanthropist who was later

⁴⁷⁷ From the *Commentary on Samyutta Nikaya*, I, 16.) cited in Woodward, FL *Buddhist Stories- translated from the Pali* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925) p136.

⁴⁷⁸ Gunewardene (p13) suggests the date was 1891; Vitharana Ms, untitled (Colombo, undated) suggests 1892. The *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV #5 of June 1923, p52, mentions the school was opened on March 1st 1892 at 4:30pm which suggests Bowles Daly may have arrived on 1st August 1891 and opened the school in March 1892, thus explaining the discrepancy. I am immensely grateful for Dr Vitharana's help and access to his material.

⁴⁷⁹ "Annals of the Sidney Sussex Boat Club" (1870-1891) Sidney Sussex College Archives, Cambridge.

⁴⁸⁰ One of Leadbeater's advocated fashions, parting the hair in the middle was supposed to expose the crown *chakra* for spiritual benefit.

⁴⁸¹ Vitharana Ms p18.

⁴⁸² Roberts, M. "Elite Formation and Elites", p171.

⁴⁸³ He produced for the Pali Text Society, editions of the *Dhatukatha* with Commentary, 1892, the *Pajjamadhu*, 1887, the *Tela-kataha-gatha*, 1884, and the *Vimanavatthu*, 1886. Roberts, M. *Exploring Confrontation- Sri Lanka: Politics, Culture and History* (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994) p166 and footnote p179, suggests that Gunaratna was a *Goyigama* of the Obeysekere-Bandaranaika clan and that he was Christian, "not Buddhist". The diaries of ER Gunaratne, edited by PE Peiris *Notes on Some Sinhalese Families* (Colombo: Times of Ceylon, ND) p8 indicates an early "fervent" adherence to Christianity, but his later involvement with the BTS and his association with the PTS, seems to mark a shift in affiliation. The way many notable families moved between the social and religious interstices may well have given the impression of Christian affiliation. Certainly the Bandaranaikes generally adhered to Anglicanism until a shift to Buddhism in accord with nationalist aspiration became opportune.

responsible for establishing science laboratories at Mahinda, an innovation at a time when science was still an educational poor relation. Woodward returned the formal greetings but refused the carriage drawn up for him, a declaration intended to stand him among those he meant to serve and to distance him from imperial practice. It was a conscious, deliberate gesture, and quite significant at a time and place that observed closely the minutiae of colonial status. By associating with ‘natives’, albeit ‘natives’ of substance and status, Woodward telegraphed a statement clearly understood by all, for “those ...who did not seem to be ‘anti-native’, were certainly not quite ‘Europeans’ of the purest water.”⁴⁸⁴ Woodward ignored the nuances of superiority and strode instead, with the accompanying party, the short distance from the jetty to the massive fort gates that today still display the arms of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). They entered the gates, walked past the shaded park outside the administrative *Kachcheri*⁴⁸⁵ and down Pedlar Street, the narrow lane leading to the Mahinda school house.⁴⁸⁶

Mahinda was a name encompassing intentions grander than the modest quarters of the school, for it was the Buddhist Emperor Asoka’s son, Mahinda, who is reputed to have first introduced Buddhism to Ceylon, ‘bringing the precious gift of *dharma* to Lanka’.⁴⁸⁷ In contrast, the school that bears his name, at that early stage, stood cheek by jowl with arrack shops and brothels, at the junction of Pedlar and Church Street, two of the busiest of the many narrow lanes of the Fort. It was a dark and cramped building, with no yard or compound, though with an open balcony on the lower floor. There may be an irony in the choice of name Bowles Daly attributed to the school, since in a way these early Theosophists saw themselves as introducing ‘Buddhism’ again to Ceylon, purified of the ‘degeneracy’ Olcott and the TS perceived as having entered the religion. And in a sense they were, if not ‘reintroducing’, then ‘recasting’ as has been alluded to previously, since their influence profoundly shaped the form of Buddhism that has prevailed in twentieth century Sri Lanka, a role in which Woodward

⁴⁸⁴Ludowyk, E.F.C. *Those Long Afternoons- childhood in colonial Ceylon*. (Colombo: Lake House, 1989). p14. Ludowyk was a distinguished scholar of Burgher (mixed race) descent, very much a people between cultures and very conscious of the pejorative use of the term ‘native’ which was often applied more viciously among indigenous peoples themselves to define nuances of status, behaviour, dress or cultural practice. The adoption of the pejorative use of ‘native’ illustrates the importance of language in defining superior/inferior, and the way colonial peoples unconsciously absorb the destructive sub-text of valuation.

⁴⁸⁵ *Kachcheri* is a term for an administrative headquarters introduced from South India when Ceylon was under the British Madras Presidency.

⁴⁸⁶ The schoolhouse is now a noisy printery and prior to that was a branch of the Bank of Ceylon. It is difficult to imagine a school located in such cramped, dark, airless conditions.

⁴⁸⁷This is an oft repeated sentiment encompassing elements of a central myth of Lanka as guardian of the Buddha *dharma* (after the collapse of Buddhism in India) and preserver of its original ‘purity’.

played no small part. For the modern day acolytes that pilgrimage each year to Sri Lanka in search of an 'original' Buddhism there may be something vaguely familiar in the encounter; of a profound Protestant western influence that has preceded them.

When Woodward arrived at the school that first morning a few monks attended the gathering to greet his arrival by chanting customary parts of the *sutras* and afterwards tying short lengths of *pirit nula* (charmed thread) on the wrist of Woodward and the others.⁴⁸⁸ Woodward spoke to the assembled guests and students offering them a reminder of their obligations and responsibilities and having established the tenor of his reign as Principal, he set about the business of schoolmaster, not with book work and planning but with a cricket match.

It was still only 8:30am, before the heat of the day, and he again walked with some of the others back through the old gate, past the jetty to the race track outside the Fort with its arched pavilion and white painted posts and rails. There in the middle were the coir cricket mats and the stumps and bails prepared for the annual Mahinda v Dharmaraja match, Dharmaraja being another of Olcott's Buddhist schools, this one established in Kandy several years before Mahinda. Thus in the fashion of Victorian obsession with games, Woodward began his career in Ceylon umpiring a cricket match, "a unique incident in the annals of any school anywhere!"⁴⁸⁹

The repetition and emphasis of this tale of Woodward's arrival in the stories about him in oral discourse indicates its significance, probably because of the undeniable stamp of energy and commitment, but also because of the odd incongruence and non-conformity he exhibited. After all, the position of principal was prestigious and eschewing the carriage drawn up for him and descending to the role of umpire may have compromised the dignity of the office. That had been part of the problem with the school to that date. There had been a tendency to appoint persons to the position of principal on the basis of caste and social status rather than on ability, and the school had suffered from frequent changes of generally poor leadership.

Bowles Daly had left after one year at the school, discouraged by the poor response of local people. Bowles Daly was originally a journalist who had been a lead writer on the English "Daily Telegraph". Like many Theosophists he also had a political side and, as a fervent Irishman, was attached to Parnell's nationalist movement. He was an outspoken, irascible man and as a journalist was feared for his outbursts of journalistic temper. It was inevitable, given the lethargy of interest in

⁴⁸⁸ Vitharana Ms p18.

⁴⁸⁹ de Sila, D. "Woodward of Mahinda- the Englishman who was a great educationalist" *Evening Observer* (Sri Lanka) 27 May 1982, p7.

founding the school, that he would return to the brighter lights of the colonial English press and a “local society [that] dreaded his criticism.”⁴⁹⁰

Bowles Daly was replaced by one Lovegrove who also remained less than a year and then by OA Jayasekere who acted as Principal, as he was to do on a number of occasions, from 1895-1896. Mudaliyar N Balasubramania then took over from 1897-98, before Gordon Douglas assumed the principalship on 28 September 1898. His tenure, too, was short-lived, for he left shortly after to ‘take up the robes’ (became a monk) in Burma, where he died shortly thereafter. He was replaced by acting principal OA Jayasekera on 1 December 1898, before the principalship was assumed by M. J. Fernando on 1 June 1900. His tenure was similarly short-lived and he was replaced by OA Jayasekera once again on 10 May 1901, before one McDougal took over in 1902, but he too, did not remain for long.⁴⁹¹

The college, by the time Woodward arrived in 1903, was “deteriorating and attendance going down”.⁴⁹² The contrast of Woodward’s success with his predecessors was an aspect that was to present problems for Woodward later when resentment among relatives of previously unsuccessful principals criticised his approach and methods.⁴⁹³ When he commenced, the school had five teachers and 89 students, with an average attendance of about 60. When Olcott visited the school on 5 September 1904 - a little over twelve months later - the enrolment had risen to nearly 250.⁴⁹⁴ When Woodward left in 1919 there were over 400 students in regular attendance. It was a substantial effort in building and consolidation that began modestly, with primary grades on the ground floor and secondary grades above, in a cramped and airless building. Woodward’s opinion of his surroundings was made clear in unequivocal Victorian terms. The Fort was “a den of wickedness”, unsuitable in all respects, “especially studying at a street corner with an arrack shop near

⁴⁹⁰ de Silva, W.A. “A Cycle of National Progress.” Diamond Jubilee 1880-1940 issue of the *Buddhist* Colombo: Buddhist Theosophical Society, 1940 [no pagination]

⁴⁹¹ *MCOBA NEWS: The News Letter of the Mahinda College Old Boys Association* Vol 1 No. 2 August 1996 & Vol. 1 No. 3 December 1996. Also Gunewardene p14. Also “Mahinda College Centenary” *Daily News* of Sri Lanka Thursday 19 March 1992, p20-21. Also *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV #5 June 1923, p52. There is some discrepancy with respect to the dates but I have cross referenced them as accurately as possible.

⁴⁹² Gunewardene, p14.

⁴⁹³ Dr Vitharana, personal conversation. There is a substantial oral tradition surrounding Woodward which has been gathered by those attached to the “Woodwardian tradition” like Dr Vitharana. He believes strongly that Woodward may have reflected adversely on the failure of other principals by his success, and generated powerful critics among these family connections who saw the position as a status acquisition. Woodward’s odd non-conformity would no doubt have exacerbated such resentment.

⁴⁹⁴ Vitharana Ms p19.

and houses of ill-fame next-door, and that tea-kiosk a place of gathering of evil-doers!”⁴⁹⁵

As with many of Woodward’s comments, it is difficult, in his last remark, to separate wry humour from opinion; he could use Victorian pomposity and high morality in a self-mocking manner. There can be no doubt, though, that he was serious about the unsuitability of the Fort as a place for a school - Galle in 1902 was described as the “most insanitary of Municipal Towns”.⁴⁹⁶ He sought, from the beginning, an opportunity to realise his vision of a unique institution built in suitable pastoral surroundings.

The Woodward that emerges from this initial contact with his new environment appears as a typical English Victorian schoolmaster and paterfamilias, a persona he adopted but also perceived as faintly absurd and would parody when given the opportunity. His vice-principal, FG Pearce, who later became a senior education official in Ceylon, describes Woodward as an “aristocrat...by temperament”⁴⁹⁷ with a “natural dignity”⁴⁹⁸. Nevertheless he could,

in polite society, come out suddenly with the most terrifying things,- but put so quaintly and with such obvious goodwill and good humour that they only caused merriment.⁴⁹⁹

Pearce described one evening at a party, when the company was about to disperse, Woodward suddenly standing up and saying loudly in oratorical tones, “Let the oldest lady present lead the way!”, a gesture violating all the rules and manners of polite colonial society. There was a stunned silence, and then “amid laughter someone took up the challenge as a joke.”⁵⁰⁰

There was about Woodward an engaging, unusual manner as well as a gentle calm and kindness, despite an outward uncompromising austerity, which may well have been as much a shyness and reserve. He had an undoubted capacity to engage children and hold their awe, as one child’s remembrance attests. In those early days, when the school was located in the Fort, Woodward lived in Rampart Street within the walls of the Fort in a large house, and at about 8:30am each morning he would walk up Pedlar Street to Mahinda College, past a five year old child who sat every morning on the steps of his house. He had a “very vivid memory”

⁴⁹⁵ Vitharana Ms p19. Gunewardene p15.

⁴⁹⁶ Roberts *Galle as Quiet as Asleep* p199.

⁴⁹⁷ Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol IV #2 April 1920. p6.

⁴⁹⁸ Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum ...”p7.

⁴⁹⁹ Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum.....”p7.

⁵⁰⁰ Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum.....”p7

of Woodward dressed all in white - white shoes, white socks, white suit and a white panama hat:

The only colour was supplied by the black bow tie he wore and the black ribbon on his panama- the picture of serenity. As he passed he always gave me an affectionate smile, raised his hat and bade me good morning, while I shot up instinctively to return his salutation.⁵⁰¹

It is a remembrance of great ordinariness though it contains immense respect and consideration for a small child, and it is interesting that the writer, reflecting later on this early scene, realised “more than ever that [Woodward] was a saint.”⁵⁰² This is a strange comment which the content of the memory does not disclose, yet it is an instinctive apprehension of something indefinably special about Woodward.

The same writer recalled, as an older boy of about ten, climbing with friends up the steep hill where the new Mahinda College was now located some 2½ miles (4km) from the Fort, and encountering Woodward on the verandah of the principal’s quarters talking with the young Henry Woodward Amarasuriya. Woodward noticed the children and climbed down the stairs to find the purpose of their presence. They confessed their curiosity about construction on the site and Woodward took time to explain what was planned and to show them around. In the Olcott Hall, the large airy main school building,

we gazed with wonder at the floor where old plates had been broken up and worked into concrete to form the school crest. He paused to give us a dissertation on the school’s motto and design. This was the school principal yet so genuinely humble. When we left after thanking him we were greatly impressed by the character of this high-souled man.⁵⁰³

The symbolism of the school crest and motto worked into a tessellated pattern at the entrance of the Olcott Hall, that the young visitors found so intriguing, was primarily Theosophical. The school colours of black and gold, represented in the intersecting triangles that formed the six pointed star of the crest, were to Woodward a marriage of western and eastern

⁵⁰¹Feadasba “Woodward: Mahinda’s Architect” newspaper article 13/8/67 (SLNA Packet 14148 *Times of Ceylon Biography*.)

⁵⁰²Feadasba “Woodward....”.

⁵⁰³Feadasba “Woodward....”. The tessellated crest remains today in good order though much faded, at the entrance to Olcott Hall, having been stepped on by thousands of students over the years.

learning: black the colour of western academic robes; yellow the colour of eastern monastic robes.⁵⁰⁴

The star design - commonly known as 'the Star of David' because of its Jewish association - is derived from hermetic and kabbalistic traditions inflected with Theosophical interpretation, and is, in fact, a central motif in the logo of the Theosophical Society itself. The intersecting triangles that form the star, Woodward suggested, represent the joining of Spirit Δ and Matter ∇ , the "manifestation of a Universe - Spirit and Matter are eternal...This universe is a spark, the resistance of matter to spirit" but it is a spark that is the foundation of perfected flow of action and reaction. The crest represented therefore "the Symbol of perfected action",⁵⁰⁵ in more prosaic terms, a life of practical endeavour infused with spiritual motivation, very much the preoccupation of the nineteenth century thinking person (and probably the underlying, nagging desire of many through time).

The school motto, which Woodward substituted for an earlier Latin motto devised by Bowles Daly, has a much simpler derivation, a verse from the *Dhammapada* in Pali, *Khippam Vayama, Pandito Bhava* - "Strive earnestly and be wise". The motto is as much pure Victorian as it is pure Pali and is yet another example of how western Buddhists like Woodward, applying the analogy of Prothero, adopted the 'vocabulary' of indigenous culture while retaining the 'grammar' of their Victorian values and inclinations. And it is also very much a statement about Woodward himself, a man who strove earnestly and desired esoteric wisdom like thirst.

Educational Philosophy and Values.

What emerges about Woodward, over and over again, is a man able to invite children into a relationship of respect and equality while inspiring their interest in knowledge and understanding. He was, as an ex-pupil and later Principal of the school described, never "in the least patronising, or on the other hand flattering, [and] he made one feel at ease at once with him".⁵⁰⁶ This encompassing approach to pupils, and commitment to teaching owes as much to his Victorian origins as it does to his Buddhist and Theosophical values. As has been suggested, the influence of Barnard and the Stamford experience is discernible, but it is nevertheless an influence emanating from within the evolution of the nineteenth century Public School.

⁵⁰⁴Vitharana MS p23.

⁵⁰⁵Vitharana MS p24; Gunewardene p38. The explanation is an abbreviated form of a much more convoluted explanation redolent with Theosophic symbolism. The above represents an adequate summation.

⁵⁰⁶Transcript of a Radio Broadcast by Mr E.A Wijesooriya, Principal at the time, 20/6/1952.

Woodward was inclined to be both progressive and cautious, which seems at odds with the overwhelming conservatism of the English Public School. However, despite the reputation of the English Public School as a refuge for elite, conservative values, innovation in English education dates from the reforms of Arnold, from 1828-1842, at Rugby, the archetypical model of Public School education. The example of Rugby was emulated elsewhere during this era of 'great headmasters' and the Public School model, which, for Woodward was historically relatively recent, could be regarded as 'modern' and even somewhat experimental. Woodward though, was no apologist for the Public School system and once wrote, when describing the regimented boarding-school type education of ancient Sparta to his students - an interesting comparison - that "here were found all the defects of the English public school,"⁵⁰⁷ which implies volumes.

Arnold's reforms were significantly social, providing the foundation for expanded inclusion of the growing middle class, and education of 'gentlemen', a new species designed for dedicated service to the Empire: the BTS Buddhist schools in Ceylon tracked an odd parallel, inspired with similar class and national interest intentions. Arnold's reforms, too, were as much structural as educational, and while he brought respect to the role of educationalist and dedication to the task of shaping minds, his structural innovations, like the prefect system, for example, were more about control of the unruly and the "rugged chaos"⁵⁰⁸ that previously existed in the Public Schools, than idealist notions of a school community. Schools were still instruments of torture for many and Woodward was not interested in the barbarities of punishment and control, but in moulding minds and actions by example and exhortation to reach for ideals higher than self, though he was nonetheless autocratic and not averse to the use of the sharp end of his tongue. Woodward, however, placed great insistence,

upon the importance of greater concentration in, and sympathy between, teacher and pupil alike, drawing attention to the lack of that thoroughness which was peculiar to the old schooling, and which is now out of fashion...⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷Woodward,FL "An Outline of Greek Education" *The Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No. & December 1926, p2

⁵⁰⁸ Kitson Clark G. *The Making of Victorian England* (London: Methuen, 1970) p 268.

There is a wealth of fascinating literature on nineteenth century education and the Public School:

See, Honey, JR. *Tom Brown's Universe* (London: 1977)

Bamford, TW. *The Rise of the Public Schools* (London: Nelson, 1967)

Mack, EC. *Public Schools and British Opinion* (London: 1941)

⁵⁰⁹ Woodward, FL "Some Educational Aims and Methods" *Ceylon National Review* #3 January 1907, p261.

This emphasis on the pupil/teacher relationship marked a central theme of his educational philosophy which he was inclined to describe as a ‘yogic’ educational method, in the true sense of ‘yoga’, meaning ‘union or ‘harmony’, rather than contortionist practices. Recognising the inattention of children, the role was to join and direct the self to an object, strengthening and developing the faculties towards an “expansion of consciousness”. Despite this New Age vocabulary, the sub-text was nonetheless conservative; he believed that the “old thoroughness, however one sided...has given way to the superficial excursions of to-day..... [and]an age of wild experiments has set in.”⁵¹⁰

He had seen, as an educationalist, a move from few books and resources, and reliance on personal initiative and concentrated learning, to a period of annotated text-books, ‘helps to learning’ and wishy-washy ‘selections’. The same barrenness is to be observed in the present-day craze for ‘handy reprints’, ‘hundred best authors’, ‘hundred best painters’, and the like, books sold by the yard in tasteful bindings and ‘suitable for presents’. We are losing our powers of concentration and ‘one-pointedness’.⁵¹¹

If Woodward viewed the problem as difficult in 1907, he would probably despair today. The late nineteenth century explosion in middle class reading and learning which spawned the cult of potted erudition has given way to an even more superficial educational milieu that insists on what Woodward, quoting James in *Talks on Psychology*, called “soft pedagogics”, an ease and enjoyment for the pupils at what he would see as the cost of learning. Woodward assumed the now unfashionable point of view that a plethora of new ‘relevant’ subjects crowding the curricula, turn out “barren machine-made products with no idea of concentrating [their] energies for five minutes,.... or getting below the surface of any object of study!”⁵¹²

This issue of concentration was essential, for ‘one pointedness’ of mind is “the indispensable preliminary to knowledge, wisdom, bliss,mind having been duly formed, caught, broken in and dropped, forever, we are free.” This very Buddhist point of view which observes that the inability to concentrate makes people “bewildered and sorrow-stricken by the ‘wandering lunatic mind’,” is important philosophically and is essential to Woodward’s view of education.

Try to hold a child’s attention on a point and you will find the feat impossible, unless you continually keep bringing it back to

⁵¹⁰Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p260.

⁵¹¹ Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p260.

⁵¹² Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p261.

contemplate the point leading up to it again and again with pleasing, interesting kindred subjects; hammering away all round the centre and incessantly returning to that centre is the secret of teaching. The child forgets itself and its surroundings and is absorbed by the interest aroused.

It follows that the teacher must also be ‘one-pointed’, of wide-reaching interests, sympathetic, and compelling attention. No mere book-learned pedant or casual place-filler can do this work.⁵¹³

Woodward was frequently described as a person of the ‘*guru* tradition’, a term used generally to describe a ‘teacher’ but which derives from the Sanskrit word meaning ‘heavy’, implying a weighty, serious engagement. Woodward would find little difficulty embracing such an implied use as he placed particular emphasis on the role of teacher. His mode of his expression, often couched in hierarchical Theosophical terms, sounds odd to the conventional ear, but he believed there were three “planes”⁵¹⁴ of teachers whom he described in the following way:

1. The ordinary practical man who looks at the loaves.
2. The one who teaches as above but also teaches and really cares for his pupils as brothers.
3. The other two together with the knowledge that some pupils are bound karmically to him. One who teaches not for this one life but for the whole Kalpa.⁵¹⁵

By ‘loaves’ he is applying a short hand to a way of seeing pupils as malleable ‘dough’ to be shaped, moulded and ‘baked’; the instructional mode of teaching. Woodward then advances a ‘modern’ educational view by seeing pupils as participants in a caring, respectful educational milieu, but then goes further to suggest a more intense ‘karmic’

⁵¹³ Woodward, FL. “Some Educational Aims and Methods” p262.

⁵¹⁴The concept of ‘planes’ appears in most religious discourse but particularly in Greek and Indian thought, and is much in evidence in Buddhism. It was borrowed and heavily emphasised in Theosophy which was attracted by the resemblance to rigid nineteenth century hierarchical preoccupation. Theosophy proposed 7 planes, each composed of a progressively finer matter and energy unable to be perceived by the usual senses. Only by the development of *siddhis* [spiritual powers] through activation of the *chakras* [the ‘power points’ of the body- crown, forehead, throat, heart and genital area] could these planes be perceived. This TS melange of yogic belief is set out in:- Besant, A *The Seven Principles of Man* (Adyar, Madras: TPS, 1931).

Besant, A *A Study of Consciousness* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1980).

Leadbeater, CW *Man Visible and Invisible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest, 1980.)

Leadbeater, CW *The Astral Plane* (Madras: Vasanta Press, 1984.)

⁵¹⁵ Gunewardene p17. “Kalpa” is a term derived from Indian concepts of immense time cycles (Kalpas) of progress and subsequent decline followed by renewal.

connection with some pupils that endures through the cyclical aeons of time (Kalpas) and rebirths, which adds a timeless purposiveness and otherworldly significance to the role of educator, and a sense of being a part of some unfolding plan, which indeed he believed.

These, then, form the central aspects of Woodward's approach to education. Firstly, a sympathetic/empathetic teacher with a capacity to intuitively understand the needs of his pupils. In this Woodward even suggested the use of astrology as an aid to understanding the student's needs. Secondly, to seek, as an aim, not the acquisition of information, but the ability to concentrate, which, in his view, was the path to any further learning, (essentially, self-actuated learning).

This makes the subject of study basically unimportant - any area of scrutiny will do - which explains Woodward, wedded to his own classics education, being quite happy to teach Latin in Ceylon, a milieu culturally remote from the subject's Western origins. Relevance is a secondary consideration; concentration and mastery are central to the acquisition of *samadhi*, 'concentration', one of the three *khandas* of the Eightfold Noble Path.⁵¹⁶ While it appears a conservative approach, it identifies aspects brushed to one side in most modern educational theory, which sees 'relevance', no matter how much it seems to elude both student and educationalist, as central, and the imposition of concentration as tedious and destructive.

But while Woodward emphasised the necessity for concentration in one's studies, his view of leisure is complementary to his view of educational attainment. As an unrepentant conservative unimpressed by the gadgetry of the modern world, he sees the mechanisation that has created leisure, and the entertainments and diversions that have surged in its wake, as, paradoxically, producing not rest, but restlessness of mind, summed in a verse from the Dhammapada:-

The fugitive, flickering mind,
Hard to guard and hard to bind.
They who subdue their mind
Leave all the fetters of Mara behind.⁵¹⁷

For Woodward, real leisure is simply to be able to stop thinking altogether, "just to sit, to muse", which, paradoxically, requires effort, since it is something most today find impossible without turning to activity. While it is a Buddhist view to see work and leisure as complements to the business of life, the mastery of mind, it is also very

⁵¹⁶ *pañña* (wisdom), *sila* (morality), *samadhi* (concentration)

⁵¹⁷ Vanapala [Woodward] "The Use of Leisure" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol VI. No.6 July 1937, p187. Mara is the Buddhist personification of Evil.

Victorian to see leisure as something requiring work and effort, though such a characterisation does not deny merit in such a view.

As a schoolmaster he was stern, yet sensitive, to the needs and interests of his pupils. Despite his authoritative mien, “he disciplined not by corporal punishment but by example”.⁵¹⁸ In this Woodward followed the liberal values - unusual and radical for that time - espoused by the Theosophical Society, which influenced educational experimenters like Steiner and Montessori. Schools sprang up wherever the TS took root, for example, in the Castlecrag area of Sydney, where Burley Griffin, the architect of Canberra, and his wife resided, and in even in Devonport, Tasmania. Corporal punishment, then a legendary aspect of the schooling Woodward would have experienced at Christ’s Hospital, was something foreign to his nature, as well as contrary to his personal philosophy which he took from the *Dhammapada*:-

All beings fear the rod; all love their life;
Regard them as thyself; strike not nor slay.⁵¹⁹

Woodward,

never caned the boys, but.....it was never positively known whether he had abandoned caning for evermore! Everyone knew, too, that his bark was worse, much worse, than his bite, yet no-one cared to get a “blowing up” from the Principal: it was literally a process of being blown up, - brief but devastating.⁵²⁰

The opposition to corporal punishment in the school was stated explicitly by Woodward’s successor F. Gordon Pearce, who resigned in 1948 as Assistant Permanent Secretary of Education in Ceylon to spend his retirement, firstly in the Krishnamurti inspired Rishi Valley School and later in the “Blue Mountains” experimental communal rural school in Ootacamund, India.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸Weerasinghe, G.D. “A road in memory of F.L. Woodward” *Times of Ceylon* 20/3/70. Elliot Road, where the school was located was renamed ‘Woodward Mawatha’ or ‘road’ in 1970.

⁵¹⁹ Woodward, F.L. “Translation of the Dhammapada” Chapters 9 & 10. *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol.1 No.1 1920 Colombo: Bastian & Co. p20.

⁵²⁰Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p8.

⁵²¹ Pearce, who became principal from 1921-23, was a man of great sensitivity and described his reasons for leaving administration to return to schooling in the following manner:

“There are two periods of life when one can afford to take risks- at the beginning before one has accumulated responsibilities, and towards the end when one has fulfilled them.

Youth and old age are the right times of life for adventure, and I think some kinds of madness are better for humanity than too much sanity.”

“Mahinda College Centenary” *Daily News* of Sri Lanka Thursday 19 March 1992 p20.

We believe that violence, such as caning, and compulsion by fear.....is not only unnecessary but does not make the child any better.⁵²²

While educational theory can express laudable intention, its enactment is more indicative of substance, and in Woodward's hands his theories assumed some odd manifestations. As a teacher Woodward concentrated his energies on the upper forms of Mahinda which he took for most subjects, except mathematics and Sinhala. He taught in the room below his study and quarters on Mahinda Hill and furnished it with desks and chairs "of the most artistic design"⁵²³ and hung the walls with fine paintings and maps. He had a small library off the main room containing carefully selected tomes and through the windows one could observe the surrounding hills and, close by, the flower gardens about the building.

Books were a primary love and the collection he left to the rare books section of the University of Tasmania Library contain many fine volumes of great antiquity and value. Obviously the same consideration was not shown by students to whom he loaned books, and he wrote a fable in the *Mahinda College Magazine* of an anthropomorphised book of Bacon's *Essays*⁵²⁴ subject to the indignities of careless borrowers. The story is an obviously pained and probably futile attempt to encourage pupil consideration but it is almost as interesting for the obvious love of books it reveals and the vignettes it provides of his own schooling at Christ's Hospital.

In his Latin classes, Woodward drew on his undoubted oratorical skills to build images of the grandiloquent Cicero, and to surround his discourse with tales that hooked the imagination of his pupils. As exams approached he invited his pupils to consult the *sortes virgilianae* on his desk, a large antiquated leather-bound volume of Virgil's *Works*, which the examination candidate would open at random, and, placing his finger blindly on a line of verse, offer an interpretation. The 'Pontifex Maximus', ie Woodward, would then foretell his success or otherwise at the forthcoming exam.

⁵²² Pearce, F.G. "Hopes and Achievements. The Present and Future of a Buddhist School" *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol.2 No.1 1923. Colombo: Bastian & Co., 1923. p32. Pearce died in Bombay, 13 August 1961. Pearce, like Woodward, remained true to the educational ideals that had moved him as a younger man and gladly welcomed the opportunity of early retirement to return to the educational 'coal face' and the enactment of those early ideals.

⁵²³ Anon. "Old Boy", "My Last Year at Mahinda College" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No. 4 July 1922, p4.

⁵²⁴"Booklover" [Woodward] "A Library Adventure. (Containing the Tragic History of Mr Bacon's Essays)" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. II No. 3 April 1915, p 4ff.

He built around his classes a mixture of fun and fear, for failure to be adequately prepared could lead to a thunderous order to leave the room, only to be greeted at the end of the class by a smiling Woodward coaxing the reluctant pupil to attend more to his work. It was a means of ‘wrong-footing’ pupils leaving them always in a state of uncertainty, a manipulative means of control, but one that nonetheless tethered them to his expectations and direction. Yet with Woodward, the benign always exceeded the unkind. Whenever he received presents of fruit and such like - which was usual at the beginning of a new Term - he would share them among the Seniors at ‘tiffin hour’ or use them for concealed attacks on students.

Oranges and plantains [small sweet bananas] sometimes came down from upstairs on the heads of passers-by, who were nevertheless far from resenting the unseen enemy’s methods of attack or the kind of missiles he used.⁵²⁵

While Woodward’s method’s were a strange mix of orthodox and the unusual, what obviously made it work, rather than simply remaining ‘theory’, was the dimension of Woodward’s own personality, character and undoubted dedication, for in the end, as Woodward himself recognised, the art of teaching resides in the individual and his personality, not in the science of its application. In this, the continued dedication to his students, even after they left the school, and his personal intensity, were notable aspects of his style and interest. It is this intensity that stands out about Woodward and explains the manner in which he not only perceived, but sought, pupils with whom he felt “bound karmically”.

While he maintained an active correspondence with his ex-pupils, very little remains extant. Gunewardene derived most of the material for his monograph, *FL Woodward : Out of his Life and Thought*, from letters written to his uncle, Janananda Pandita Gunewardene who became Proctor of the Ceylon Supreme Court, but these letters seem to have largely disappeared.⁵²⁶ Some letters from Woodward to Janananda Pandita Gunewardene do exist in the hands of Dr Vitharana of Colombo and these show the kind of interest and affection Woodward retained for favoured ex-students.

⁵²⁵ Anon. “Old Boy”, “My Last Year at Mahinda College”, p7.

⁵²⁶ Neither the Sri Lankan Archives which hold Gunewardene’s papers, nor his wife and family, have any knowledge of the whereabouts of the letters he used. The manner in which the letters in Vitharana’s Collection are numbered by another hand, and the fact that there are many gaps in the sequence, suggest that the Vitharana Collection might in fact be the ‘out-takes’ from the sequence of letters used by Gunewardene in his short work on Woodward.

Janananda Gunewardene had attended Mahinda and had passed the Cambridge Junior Local Exam but had failed to gain a certificate in the Senior Exam. Woodward had assisted him, first in offering an assistant master's position at Mahinda,⁵²⁷ which he left after experiencing difficulty, and later, in attaining a position as assistant master at St Anthony's school, Kandy. Gunewardene seems to have been somewhat restless and uncertain of his vocation, which tested Woodward's patience on occasions, yet he nevertheless wrote to his friend Halling,⁵²⁸ (who was later to offer Woodward his home at 'Chartley' at Rowella, Tasmania when he retired in 1919) to see if he could assist Gunewardene with a post as correspondence clerk in Colombo. He also wrote to his friend, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam,⁵²⁹ the well known nationalist figure, similarly seeking help in finding a suitable post for Gunewardene in the Ceylon Civil Service.

Through the period 1909 to 1913 Woodward assisted him also with money,⁵³⁰ though he often emphasised he genuinely had little to spare.⁵³¹ He also helped with books and tutoring,⁵³² in order to help him to sit for the London Matriculation Exam, which Gunewardene passed in 1913⁵³³ and which later took him into the law.⁵³⁴ Woodward's letters to him are usually addressed to him by his nickname 'Epa' but he showed due respect to the desire of the young man to assume a more mature form of address, as he grew older, and wrote to him, "As you wish it, we will throw EPA overboard as it is a 'prohibitive' name and Janananda is positive."⁵³⁵ The affirmative charm of Woodward's assent to the change, which avoids any uncomfortable explanation, is typical of his sympathetic manner. Thereafter his letters invariably address his pupil as 'My dear Janananda' and are usually signed 'Yours affectionately,

⁵²⁷Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 9 October 1909. Vitharana Collection.

⁵²⁸Letter from FL Woodward to Halling 20 January, year unspecified. Vitharana Collection.

⁵²⁹ Letter from FL Woodward to Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam 4 February, 1912. Vitharana Collection.

⁵³⁰Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 10 January, 1914. Vitharana Collection. "I send a cheque for Rs15/- [about £1/8/1½ in British pounds at the time- a reasonable sum] and hope you will be able get what you want. Let me know if it is not enough."

⁵³¹ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 15 March, 1914. Vitharana Collection. "Did you get any reply from your brother? If he will not help you I can give you something, perhaps in April. Just now I have no money at all."

⁵³²Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 12 January, 1910. Vitharana Collection. "...History...is your weak point. If you ever have time you send me written work from time to time. I shall be engaged next Saturday - but the following Saturday if you come to Galle, bring your new history book. I should like to see it - also the French Reader and English Course." Woodward also frequently corrected his Latin.

⁵³³Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 27 January 1914. Vitharana Collection.

⁵³⁴At this time university qualifications could only be obtained through the University of London or through an Indian university. Even the University College of Ceylon, established in the early 1920's remained under the auspices of the University of London.

⁵³⁵Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 2 (?) June, 1912. Vitharana Collection.

F.L. Woodward', a very paternal, familial form of address in contrast to the usual form of greeting to his friend which would be simply, 'Dear Halling'.

The letters to Gunewardene show a regard for him as a "painstaking student" of "excellent character"⁵³⁶ as well as an almost fretful concern for his frequently occurring ill-health - "Get Horlick's Malted Milk and take it twice daily....I have tried it myself and like it....Your chest is evidently weak and you must take care not to catch a fresh cold."⁵³⁷ However, while generally encouraging, Woodward did not hesitate to reprove him appropriately, in this case, for deserting his teaching post at Mahinda, an action that must have caused him considerable annoyance, though he keeps it in proportion, recognising the immaturity of his ex-pupil.

You do not explain your reasons for leaving. You might have let me know before, instead of keeping me waiting and putting it off. It causes great inconvenience and this vacillation is a very weak spot in your character. If your relatives are to blame in dissuading you from the course you undertook, they must suffer the bad karma which will result to them. I have nothing to say to people who hinder a good work except that they are blinding [?] their own progress. I shall always be glad to hear from you as to your plans and future prospects.

Your sincere friend

FL Woodward.⁵³⁸

He was to write to him some time later when Gunewardene thought of applying for a teaching position in Kandy. Woodward carefully weighed the pro's and con's in lists on either side of the page and then added:

Why did you leave Mahinda College- if you still intend to take up teaching! I understood you found the work uncongenial.

On the whole I think (even supposing you are offered the post) you would repent of it. There is no harm in you applying for further particulars from the head and if he is desirous of trying you...I can write a certificate - tho you must remember I have just written to the D.P.I [Dept of Public Instruction] saying you were not successful as a teacher (as you wished me to say) So I cannot turn around and praise you as being successful. Do you see!⁵³⁹

⁵³⁶Letter of reference by FL Woodward for JP Gunewardene, 9 October 1909. Vitharana Collection.

⁵³⁷Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 10 January, 1914. Vitharana Collection.

⁵³⁸ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 5 June, 1909. Vitharana Collection. Some words are difficult to decipher. It is interesting to observe the way Woodward obviously deflects his annoyance on to the family he regards as influential in the decision.

⁵³⁹ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 20 [?] October, 1909. Vitharana Collection.

But Woodward did write a skilfully evasive letter of recommendation [October 1909] which secured him the job at St Anthony's.

His attitude towards pupils is spelled out in a letter of advice to Gunewardene about teaching, suggesting that it is "the duty of a teacher" to be "an intimate friend" and not to be too outspoken when "reproving any pupil", though the more wilful the student "the greater the plainness", which he goes on to illustrate with the response of Master M. (one of the Theosophical 'Masters') who would "often roundly rebuke" Olcott and Blavatsky who were both "wilful" personalities who "made mistakes". He does not, however, advise "a habit of outspokenness without care", because it "will make you enemies". Rather he suggests "Speak the pleasant truth...it oils the wheels and achieves the influence or object you are aiming at".⁵⁴⁰ It is very much the approach Woodward himself adopted and this approach and intense connection with his students is further amplified by another comment of Woodward's:

One of my favourite pupils...has just died. I have felt his suffering all the week and am now relieved and he [too]. His ruler is Venus (mine also). Venus now in the 12th house (for me) [and] affects all those also who are dear to me.⁵⁴¹

The recurrence of allusions to Theosophical doctrine and belief occurs frequently and unselfconsciously in his letters and it is clear he made no attempt to disguise his adherence. He also frequently displays his fascination with astrology, an attitude which would not appear out of place in Sri Lanka even today where astrology is respected and where no marriage or important decision would be undertaken without consulting an astrologer.

The attitude and educational philosophy Woodward brought to Mahinda would have been unusual in any context, even one of the present day, though he would no doubt find a place in some New Age niche. How much more unusual it must have appeared, to either eastern *or* western sensibilities, in the imperial context of Ceylon in the early twentieth century? That he has come down to the present as a man of unusual disposition and outlook is not surprising; what is of particular note, however, is that he obviously transcended the particularities of personality and outlook to assume an indefinable distinction greater than the sum of his many parts.

Building a New Mahinda College.

⁵⁴⁰ Letter from FL Woodward to JP Gunewardene, 13 December, [year unstated]. Vitharana Collection. The emphasis is that of Woodward. This letter is difficult to decipher as parts have faded badly.

⁵⁴¹ Gunewardene. p37.

Woodward toiled from 1903 in the cramped quarters of the Fort, even conducting classes in nearby houses,⁵⁴² but in 1907 two events altered the fortunes of the school and, in an odd way, provided opportunities as well. The first event was the death of Col. Olcott, who became ill not long after a visit to Galle and Mahinda College in May 1906, and died, at 75, on 17 February 1907, shortly after his return to India. Olcott holds a special place in the minds of Sinhala people; his statue stands today on Olcott Mawatha (Road), prominently outside the Colombo Fort Central Railway as a memorial to his efforts in the Buddhist Revival and, at one time, Olcott Day was celebrated as a public holiday.

Olcott was Woodward's mentor whom he revered and followed, and his death deeply affected Woodward, for in the many incarnations of the Theosophical Society, the Olcott "Buddhist Phase" of the Society was the one with which Woodward was most attuned⁵⁴³ and the one to which he adhered to the end of his life. As Croucher accurately suggests, Woodward was a "Theosophist of the old school" which was "already at this time [1903] something of an anachronism",⁵⁴⁴ an accusation Woodward would probably have no difficulty accepting. If one were searching for the legacy of Olcott in Ceylon, it would be most discernible in the work of Woodward, for few pursued the aims and goals of Olcott more assiduously than Woodward.

The second event of significance was the death of Muhandiram Thomas de Silva Amarasuriya Mahendrapala,⁵⁴⁵ (1847-1907) three months after the death of Olcott, on 14 May. Amarasuriya had been the financial and organisational mainstay of the school, keeping it afloat when it threatened to sink, but more than that he was to Woodward, "as a father"⁵⁴⁶ and special friend. The death of Thomas Amarasuriya saw his son Henry (1872-1916) assume the reins of school manager, a role in Sri Lanka seen as more significant, responsible and prestigious than in the West because of its notable philanthropic and social profile. Henry

⁵⁴² Vitharana Ms p19.

⁵⁴³ The TS had a number of fashionable philosophical phases in which particular enthusiasms held prominent, but not necessarily exclusive, sway. The early Blavatsky/Olcott 'Spiritualist' phase, the Olcott 'Buddhist' phase, the Besant 'Hindu' phase and the Leadbeater 'Liberal Catholic' phase, the last of which was confined largely to Sydney. This, of course, ignores the schisms that involved Judge, Tingley and the American 'church' with its many permutations, or the phase of Blavatsky's European 'exile' from Adyar between the Coulomb controversy and her death.

⁵⁴⁴ Croucher, P. *A History of Buddhism in Australia 1848-1988* Sydney: UNSW Press, 1989. p21. It would certainly appear from all Woodward's extant writing that his notion of Theosophy became fixed at that time and altered little over the remainder of his life.

⁵⁴⁵ "Mahendrapala" is a respectful community sobriquet granted to Amarasuriya meaning "Guardian of Mahinda".

⁵⁴⁶ Woodward, FL. "The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP" *The Buddhist* [a Theosophical magazine organ in Ceylon which Woodward edited for a period] Saturday, 7 October 1916, p2. Copies of the *Buddhist* seem only to exist in the British Library which has misplaced them, and some in the YMBA Colombo.

Amarasuriya was as committed, if not more so, than his father to the progress of the school and was an enthusiastic admirer of Woodward, naming his son Henry Woodward Amarasuriya (1904-1981) in public acknowledgment of that admiration. Woodward, who first met Henry on the day he arrived on the Galle dock in 1903, had taken an instant liking to the “genial giant”⁵⁴⁷ and frequently holidayed on the family’s Citrus Estate near Galle.⁵⁴⁸

Henry assumed not only his father’s philanthropic inclinations - each Wednesday the poor of Galle would gather on the green outside the Amarasuriya home in Unavatuna, east of Galle, and receive a few rupees, sufficient to provide bare necessities for a week.⁵⁴⁹ He obviously inherited his father’s entrepreneurial inclinations as well which did not always endear him to a small community prone to envy. Woodward offers a somewhat candid assessment of Henry which is nonetheless tinged with great affection:

In character he was solid, imperious and hasty of temperament; a shrewd business-man, simple minded and open-handed; he forgot no slight or injury, but preferred to remember a good turn, was easily pleased, yet easily offended; loyal to his friends, no lover of windy talk, did not meddle in politics, but loved the seclusion of country-life and when duties of business called him to Colombo returned as one escaping from a ‘loka’ of tortured souls to the freedom of country life.....

In speech he was slow and deliberate, dearly loved a joke, and his hearty laugh would make....windows rattle. In many ways he was like a big boy, loved music and ancient customs.....Yet he would have his own way.....He liked to do things on a large scale, would have a big house, the best of factories, the latest improvements, the best motor car, wished for public recognition and missed high honours owing to these troublous times of late [ie the 1915 Riots].⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁷Woodward, FL “The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP” p2.

⁵⁴⁸Most of the 4000 plus acres of land owned by the Amarasuriya family was confiscated during the land resettlement programmes of the Socialist Government in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Few of the family remain in Galle; most, in fact, have settled in Australia.

⁵⁴⁹Vitharana, V “Henry Woodward Amarasuriya” in Wijeratne, Dantanarayana & Samara-Wickrama [Ed] *A Century of Memories: an anthology celebrating the centenary of Mahinda College*. (Carlingford, NSW: Private Publication, 1995), p53. The large family home was later donated by Henry Woodward Amarasuriya to the state as a Women’s Teaching College.

⁵⁵⁰Woodward, FL “The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP” *The Buddhist* 7 October 1916. Though not an official obituary, this article was written after the death of Henry Amarasuriya. A ‘loka’ is a ‘world’ (including our own) usually on another plane, which may be heavenly, purgatorial or hellish, depending on one’s previous life.

Woodward's regard for him was supported by the Southern Province Government Agent (GA), Lushington,⁵⁵¹ who, in recommending Henry Amarasuriya for the title of Muhandiram, which Woodward supported too,⁵⁵² described how, in 1908, Henry had built a village school at Poddala at his own expense and that he managed "6 or 7 schools" run by the BTS as well as contributing to a large number of charitable works, though "all that he does for the good of others is done without ostentation".⁵⁵³

This is not to say his reputation was not occasionally assailed. In 1910 the purported rape of a girl, who was little more than twelve and who was supposedly infected with gonorrhoea as a result, was rumoured to involve the "prominent native planter"⁵⁵⁴ Henry Amarasuriya who "the Vederah [native doctor] has been treating...for weeks past".⁵⁵⁵ Because the Government Agent suspected suppression of evidence, the matter was taken before the Police Magistrate and the girl was examined by the Medical Officer.⁵⁵⁶ Not only was she found not to have gonorrhoea, but she also admitted the person responsible had been a servant and that the act had been consensual. The full facts can never be assured, of course, though there can be no doubt persons of reputation could be subject to scurrilous allegation in such a small community, as the events of 1915 were to prove.

The Riots of 1915, the "troublous times of late" to which Woodward referred, were substantially inter-communal, arising out of tensions between Sinhala and Moors. They were interpreted as conspiratorial, however, by the police and military who were caught up in the jingoistic and paranoid context of war and who, as a consequence, grossly overreacted. Rioting took place in Galle and Henry Amarasuriya took a creditable lead in defending the Moors and dissuading his Sinhala

⁵⁵¹The position of Government Agent was, at that time, extremely powerful and answerable only to the Governor. The autobiographical works of Leonard Woolf, who was at one time Assistant Government Agent, Southern Province, gives a vivid picture of power and life style of Government Agent in the period 1905-1912, at the time Woodward lived in Galle.

⁵⁵²RG 65/254. SLNA. Letter FL Woodward to the Governor of Ceylon, 31 October, 1909. Woodward wrote a number of letters to the Governor supporting Amarasuriya's case for appointment as Justice of the Peace and Unofficial Police Magistrate.

⁵⁵³RG 65/254 (Classified Secret and Confidential- mainly because they contained material pertaining to the 1915 Riots) 15 September 1909 SLNA. The title was not granted at that stage.

⁵⁵⁴RG 43/18 SLNA. 6 February 1910.

⁵⁵⁵RG 43/20 SLNA. 8 February 1910. Henry Amarasuriya was, in fact, being treated by the *vederah* or *vederal* for the manifestations of diabetes, not gonorrhoea. He was to die young at 45 on 25 September 1916 from septicemia, the result of his diabetes. His son Henry Woodward Amarasuriya also exhibited symptoms of diabetes and became blind in his late old age. It is a condition relatively common due to a high starch diet and, probably, genetic propensity.

⁵⁵⁶RG 43/20 SLNA. 12 February 1910.

compatriots.⁵⁵⁷ He was, however, summarily arrested and subjected to what the Attorney-General Anton Bertram described in unequivocal terms as a “humiliating and, I believe, prolonged incarceration”⁵⁵⁸ and the “victim of a false charge” of inflaming rather than attempting to quell the Riots. He dismissed the charges against Amarasuriya without further trial.

The Government Agent, Hellings, wrote to the Executive Council⁵⁵⁹ strenuously defending Henry Amarasuriya, a courageous stand in the heightened circumstances of the time, which had seen 34 civilians summarily executed under the edicts of martial law. According to Hellings, Henry Amarasuriya was a person of unimpeachable integrity and honour, and states that the only slurs on his name, Hellings had been aware of, were rumours Amarasuriya had been behind an anonymous attempt to bribe a former GA, and some accusations of land encroachment (a common, if illegal practice) which had forced additional payments to the government; beyond these there was nothing.

⁵⁶⁰

Henry Amarasuriya was undoubtedly a colourful personality and a man of much determination, but his significance, for Woodward, lies in his “unceasing support”, both moral and financial, “when hardly a single other Buddhist lent a hand in our work”⁵⁶¹ and Woodward’s vision of a new school. The Board of the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society, who sponsored Mahinda, was made up of men of social standing, planters and businessmen in the main, who were not by nature disposed to sympathise with the visions of a non-conformist like Woodward. In this situation Henry Amarasuriya was pivotal. He was a staunch ally of

⁵⁵⁷Vitharana Ms p62. During the Riots the Mahinda College Boy Scouts formed a first aid unit and also guarded the China Garden mosque. Their HQ was Henry Amarasuriya's office in Talbot Town which hardly suggests the actions of a man attempting to foment trouble.

⁵⁵⁸Executive Council Paper 246/1916 SLNA. Amarasuriya had, in fact, attempted to convince crowds to disperse in the Galle Fort and had defended the Moors against Sinhala extremists, an action GA Hellings very much appreciated, though it led to threats against Henry’s life. Hellings sanctioned Amarasuriya carrying a sword for protection, which led to his arrest by plain clothes police after a car chase, and accusations he had contributed to, rather than restrained, the Riots - after all why was he armed and why had he attempted to evade the police? The extraordinarily view of the Brig. General in the Executive Council Paper was that, rather than arrest him, “it would have been even better if [the police] had shot at the car.”....! Bertram’s comments barely conceal his contempt for the extreme action of the police and military volunteers (mainly white planters) during the Riots. The actions of the police, military and volunteers [see CO 520 PRO dispatch, Chalmers to Bonar Law] led to protracted controversy, even in England and in the Commons. The extreme response of the authorities was largely a manifestation of war time paranoia and jingoism that exaggerated the threat and drew conspiratorial inferences that were simply not there.

⁵⁵⁹ RG65/256 Confidential/Secret files inquiring into Henry Amarasuriya after the 1915 Riots. SLNA. The recommendation had been that H. Amarasuriya be stripped of his position as Justice of the Peace, but Helling defended Henry.

⁵⁶⁰ RG65/256 SLNA. A report by Hellings giving his version of events during the 1915 Riots in Galle, written on 21 March 1916.

⁵⁶¹Woodward, FL “The Late Henry Amarasuriya JP”

Woodward and gave him unswerving support, even though he could not stem the undercurrent of carping complaint and criticism that was later to see Pearce⁵⁶² (Principal 1921-23) leave the principalship of Mahinda in a state of considerable distress, and another principal, Mr PR Gunasekera (Principal 1926-1932), who later became High Commissioner to Australia, sue the Board for wrongful dismissal.⁵⁶³

The death of Thomas Amarasuriya, in 1907, brought his son Henry, with his energy and enthusiasm, to the helm. The death of Olcott provided a suitable focus, a memorial to the revered reformer, that was to form the cynosure of the new school. With suitable encouragement from Woodward and Henry Amarasuriya, it was decided by the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society to seek funds for an assembly hall for the school, to be named after Olcott, and this in turn, most importantly, placed in train moves to find a suitable location for a new school.

Two sites were suggested: one offered by Mudaliyar Wijekularatna of Galvadugoda, near the Galle railway station, a flat marshy area,⁵⁶⁴ and another offered by Mrs D.F. de Silva of 'Nandana' in the Elliot Road (now Woodward Mawatha). Both these donors were of the *Navandanno* or caste of jewellers and goldsmiths which indicates the diversity of caste groups prepared to support the cause of English-medium education, though it also indicates intra-caste rivalry as well.⁵⁶⁵ The Elliot Rd site, near the village of Minuwangoda, was a jungle-covered site called *Devatagahawatta*, located on a ridge with views that extended to the foothills of the Rakvana Range in the east and towards Sri Pada, or Adams Peak, to the north. The area was neglected, however, and had become the haunt of jackals, leopards and cattle thieves who used the area as a clandestine slaughter-house.⁵⁶⁶ Woodward had always been disposed towards a pastoral setting, so the choice was easy. Woodward wrote later:

It is good to be more intimate with nature. It has always been my own aim and now that I am established in the country in a beautiful spot, I have my desire. *Vivere secundum naturam* as the

⁵⁶²Gurugé, Ananda WP. *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism: Sri Lankan Support to Pioneering Western Orientalists* (Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1984.) pp448-453. Letters from Pearce to the Ven. Seelakkandha 7 August 1923. Letters from the SLNA.

⁵⁶³*Ceylon Daily News* Friday 10 May 1935.

⁵⁶⁴The area is extremely unsuitable. Elliot, who was an early local government surveyor, (and who gave his name to Elliot Road, later changed to Woodward Mawatha), constructed a canal through the area but it is so flat that it does not effectively drain, and today remains an open drain of unbelievable Stygian colour and odour.

⁵⁶⁵Notes from Dr Vitharana.

⁵⁶⁶Anon. 'Opium' "Gamagewatta at Minuwangoda" *Mahinda College Magazine* October 1920 Vol IV #3, p23. 'Opium' was the nickname of Albert Withanachchi's father. Note also the different spelling of the village.

Romans put it, is really an attempt to translate *Dhammena Jitam*, life according to Dhamma,- Natural law- God - Happiness.⁵⁶⁷

The choice of site, however, far from a simple selection, was fraught with jealousy and intrigue in a way only village life can produce and which deeply disrupted the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society at the time. The two villages vied for selection and the bitter dispute was only settled by the intervention of village women who were less than enthused by the dubious nature of the contest in which their husbands were engaged. The land was purchased by Mrs DF de Silva and offered free to the Galle BTS, which settled the matter for the moment, though when construction began it was realised that the purchase only occupied the western slope (with a boundary running along the ridge) and further land had to be purchased at considerable expense to the Galle BTS in order to secure the whole site.⁵⁶⁸

On 15 January 1908,⁵⁶⁹ less than a year after Olcott died, the foundation stone of the Olcott Hall was laid. This had been preceded, about a month before, by the turning of the first sod, but before the ceremony Woodward and two members of the Building Committee had gone to the nearby Malwatta Temple at Dangedara. There, for the first time, Woodward took *pansil* from Seelakkandha Thero, high priest of the Ramana Sect, and formally became a Buddhist.⁵⁷⁰ At the later laying of the foundation stone Woodward formally received the deeds of the land from the ladies of Minuwangoda after the men of the village had poured water from an ornate silver vessel over his hands.

Woodward had raised an amount of nearly Rs10,000/-⁵⁷¹ towards the building fund in which the contribution of Henry Amarasuriya cannot be underestimated: he dedicated Rs1500/- towards the building of Olcott Hall, Rs3500/- towards a set of classrooms (named after his father, Thomas) and a further Rs2000/- towards another block.⁵⁷² Woodward contributed personally an additional amount of about Rs8000/-,⁵⁷³ and, after his father's death on 25 January 1912,⁵⁷⁴ a further amount from his

⁵⁶⁷quoted in Gunewardene p24.

⁵⁶⁸“Gamagewatta at Minuwangoda” *Mahinda College Magazine* October 1920 Vol IV #3, p24.

⁵⁶⁹Gunewardene p19. The *Daily News* of Ceylon 27/5/1955 “Englishman who spent his patrimony on Buddhist school” suggests 1907 though Gunewardene and Vitharana agree on 1908.

⁵⁷⁰“Gamagewatta at Minuwangoda” p24.

⁵⁷¹Gunewardene p19.

⁵⁷²RG65/254 (Confidential and Classified files) SLNA. GA Lushington report 15 September 1909. Details of his philanthropy were included in a recommendation of ‘native title’.

⁵⁷³Gunewardene p 22. Various figures are touted as to Woodward's financial contribution.

⁵⁷⁴Will of Rev. William Woodward, Somerset House. Woodward's father left a considerable estate of £16,537/6/9 of which Woodward' share (after probate) was some £2000 [about R20,000/- at the time]

patrimony, but he would disguise his contributions under the pseudonymous, “F.L. Vanapala” (‘protector/guardian of wood/forest’ - a rough Sinhala version of his name). He genuinely disliked publicity and had “a good-natured contempt for those who sought it”⁵⁷⁵- only thrice during his time in Ceylon did he ever enter public controversy by writing to the papers, and only then to defend people for whom he had high regard.⁵⁷⁶

The extent of Woodward’s total financial contribution is difficult to assess with various figures touted, from around Rs20,000/-⁵⁷⁷ to Rs25,000/-⁵⁷⁸ and suggesting this was the entirety of his patrimony,⁵⁷⁹ which considering the terms of his father’s Will is probably reasonably accurate.⁵⁸⁰ This would have been a quite substantial sum given that the Government’s annual Grant-in-Aid to the school was only in the order of Rs2500/-.⁵⁸¹ There can be no doubt that Woodward expended, relative to modern times, a staggering amount of his own money and potential salary from the school, on its construction; it is doubtful whether even Woodward knew how much. Nevertheless he was sufficiently prudent to retain adequate funds to purchase in 1926, a half share of “Bhatkawa”, in Tasmania, with his friend Frei,⁵⁸² and a modest annuity in 1936 for £AUS1000.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁵Transcript of Radio Broadcast by the then Principal E.A Wijesooriya on 20/6/1952.

⁵⁷⁶Pearce, F.G “Si Monumentum” p2. The people in question were Olcott, Besant and one Parsons of the Ceylon Civil Service, of whom nothing is known.

⁵⁷⁷Jayawickrama, M.S. “Remembering a great teacher” 28/5/81 Newspaper article, paper unknown. PKT4579 SLNA.

⁵⁷⁸de Silva, A.B. Dionysis “Woodward - the great Buddhist educationalist” *Ceylon Daily News* 27/5/69. In another newspaper article, “Woodward of Mahinda”, [PKT 14148 SLNA] de Silva suggests R25000/- was the whole of Woodward’s patrimony.

⁵⁷⁹Croucher p21.

⁵⁸⁰The difficulty in accurately assessing Woodward’s inheritance is that, while the provisions of his father’s Will are known those of his mother are not. She died several years before her husband, who was later buried along side her in Catworth. I made a strenuous search of Somerset House files but could find no record of her Will and the benefit to Woodward, though it is known he received money from her estate at her demise. Because it is possible his mother had benefit from her own family whose means were more substantial than his father’s, additional sums may have come to him. Whatever the case, there is no doubt Woodward spent the vast bulk of his inheritance on construction of the school.

⁵⁸¹*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912. p230. Evidence by Woodward before a Committee investigating education. Total revenue for the school was in the order of Rs12000/- pa, Rs9000/- from fees and Rs2500/- from grant.

⁵⁸²Frei, a fellow Theosophist, who worked for the old Volkart firm in Ceylon, [see *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 5&6 June 1936] later became a private secretary to Leadbeater (one of many) at the Manor in Sydney, grandiosely described as the occult centre of the southern hemisphere. While mainly involved, like Woodward’s friend Halling, in commerce, he was Chairman of the Board of Musaeus College- a girls school founded by Woodward’s fellow Theosophist Mrs Marie Musaeus Higgins in Rosemead Place, Cinnamon Gardens, in Colombo. Frei died while still occupying that position in the 1940’s.

See de Siva GC “Message” in *Centenary of Musaeus College 1893-1993* (Colombo: Musaeus College,1993.)

⁵⁸³Shield Heritage Woodward file- AMP annuity on file.

The school was, however, undoubtedly a project of such singular importance to Woodward, a 'mission' in fact, that he was prepared to impart his entire energies and whatever funds he could expend. It became, between 1908 and 1912, when the school was relocated to its present location, a consuming passion, physically, emotionally and financially.

Woodward's preoccupation with the building of the school is illustrated by an incident where a letter was brought to him while he was with other staff. He opened the letter, read it with care and then, when asked about the contents, replied that the letter was to inform him of his mother's demise and his share of the estate. After the usual expressions of condolence from others, Woodward brightly pointed out he would now have the means to complete another building project.⁵⁸⁴ His composure may seem to have bordered on indifference, but he was a person who, in the Victorian manner, did not divulge his feelings and who would anyway have expressed his grief in private. It also may well have been displacement behaviour to deflect his feelings. He was a person who did not dwell on negatives, but looked to where the future lay.

Mahinda College, as FG Pearce observed, was in "the most literal and material sense.....his monument".⁵⁸⁵ He was the architect of buildings that were deliberately planned as "graceful and airy", attuned to the climate and way of life. And he was principal contractor and supervisor of works. As Pearce again observed, "I have seen him trowel in hand, at work with the masons, clambering up the scaffolding, making measurements and superintending operations."⁵⁸⁶ It was a passionate endeavour that produced a collection of buildings that even today, though often crowded out by less thoughtful additions, are of great charm and coherence.

The foundations of the Olcott Hall, a building 120 feet by 40 feet, at that time the largest hall of its kind on the island, were laid at 2:14pm (such exactitude is important astrologically) on 15 of January 1908 with monks from several temples in the neighbourhood lighting candles at the four corners of the proposed building and chanting the *parittas*.⁵⁸⁷ Before the end of the year, foundations were laid for two more buildings and classrooms (July & October). Thereafter began a period of immensely productive activity by Woodward, then in his late thirties. Each day after school he would walk the 4km to the new school building site or travel by single bull hackney (cart), driven by his loyal servant Babun, to

⁵⁸⁴ Personal conversation with Albert Withanachchi who visited Woodward's home in Tasmania in 1967.

⁵⁸⁵ Pearce, F.G "Si Monumntum....." p2.

⁵⁸⁶ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p2.

⁵⁸⁷ Vitharana Ms p 22. *Parittas* are Buddhist chants of protection and well being.

superintend construction, and toil among the workers, guiding their efforts.

It took four years for construction of the school to be sufficient for occupation, and it was a period fraught with considerable difficulties. Local enthusiasm waxed and waned and funds frequently ran low, with Woodward often paying “masons and labourers out of his own purse”.⁵⁸⁸ It was not always easy for people to envisage the scope and size of Woodward’s intention, and that inability sometimes spilled over into scepticism and even ridicule. “I know I am not understood in my aims here by many”,⁵⁸⁹ he wrote in 1909, “That they should scoff at work that is the noblest possible and that I regard myself as unsurpassable is to me a mark of ignorance”.⁵⁹⁰

This last sentence contains the essence of Woodward’s difficulty, an envy and resentment that interpreted Woodward’s confident, single-minded purpose and energy as a sign of arrogant superiority, a resentment easily and understandably roused in the racially sensitive colonial context. The Galle BTS was dominated by cautious, business interests who saw themselves as managing the school’s direction. Tension was inevitable as, far from being a ‘servant’ of the Galle BTS, Woodward was leading it along a path fraught with potential difficulty and financial hazard.

He was not a man of false modesty and could appear, even in humour, to be supremely confident. There were a number of Woodward’s contemporaries who were known for their contribution to education and who held prestigious positions in what remain, today, the elite schools of Sri Lanka; Frazer of Trinity, Hartley of Royal, Mrs Higgins of Musaeus and Stone of St Thomas’. Woodward’s summation of these reputations was to wryly suggest, in reference to himself and the last named, that, as in the children’s game, “All things bow down to wood and stone!”⁵⁹¹ This was a clever piece of punning, but it could have been easily misconstrued as arrogance and generated the kind of resentment that, on occasions, Woodward could inspire.

Determination and Conflict.

There can be no doubt that Woodward had strong, unbending views on many issues in contrast to his otherwise equitable demeanour. On the teaching of Sinhala, Woodward was adamant, even though he himself found it “difficult to acquire” and claimed “I do not think I could pass 4th standard myself”⁵⁹² (though others, like his friend PD Ratnatunga,

⁵⁸⁸ Gunewardene p20.

⁵⁸⁹ Letter of FL Woodward, 20 June 1909. Cited in Gunewardene p 20.

⁵⁹⁰ Letter of FL Woodward, 8 June 1909. Cited in Gunewardene p20.

⁵⁹¹ Witanachchi, A. “Ashes are Good for Roses” in *A Century of Memories* p64.

⁵⁹² *Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912,p 227.

disagreed with his judgement).⁵⁹³ His views on use of the vernacular were sufficiently forthright to have invitations to the opening of the Olcott hall in 1912 printed in Sinhala, some 44 years before Sinhala became the state language of Sri Lanka.⁵⁹⁴ He believed boys without knowledge of the vernacular “despised everything connected with their people”⁵⁹⁵ and seemed “angular” and to “lack something. They are unreal and seem to belong to neither one people nor the other.”⁵⁹⁶ This was an astute, feelingful judgement of imperial impact largely ignored by colonial administrators who saw no danger in devaluation of vernacular and cultural heritage in the acquisition of ‘civilisation’.

Nevertheless, other aspects of his response emulated the administrators he criticised. His was a nationalist position, radical at the time, uncompromising and even autocratic - “I make them do Sinhalese whether their parents like it or not.”⁵⁹⁷ When questioned about this attitude before a Legislative Council investigative committee on education, Woodward stated unequivocally, “I never see parents and never pay attention to their wishes on this matter [teaching Sinhala]. I do not think they are capable of expressing an opinion on it.”⁵⁹⁸ This is an extraordinary mix of cultural and national affirmation and patronising, imperialistic ‘I-know-best’, and it is easy to see how he could be seen as arrogant and unbending by local people.

Pearce observed this conservative aspect of Woodward, who could be “downright autocratic” and “no believer in democracy and its methods”.⁵⁹⁹ As Woodward phrased it, “I am not going to have every vulgar little tinker dictating to *me!*” It was a conservatism (or possibly indifference) that extended even to his dress sense on formal occasions, where he continued to wear his hair rather long (in contrast to the fashion of the period) and “favoured an unusual kind of collar and tie”,⁶⁰⁰ the high starched collars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In decision making, his attitude could be very disconcerting and resistant to the innovation his young deputy espoused. He was, as Pearce shrewdly observed, “liberal in thought [but] conservative in action.....slow to perform, and slow to change”.⁶⁰¹ Woodward was

⁵⁹³Ratnatunga, P.D. “Frank Lee Woodward” *The Buddhist* Vol XXIII, No.3 July 1952. (Colombo: YMBA) p50. Ratnatunga, one of Woodward’s long standing friends and correspondents, claims Woodward’s knowledge of Sinhala was greater than his disclaimer.

⁵⁹⁴Vitharana, V *Message of Woodward* (Colombo: Mahinda College OBA, 1977.) p8 & 9.

⁵⁹⁵*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p227.

⁵⁹⁶*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p225.

⁵⁹⁷*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p226.

⁵⁹⁸*Ceylon Sessional Papers* XX 1912, p226.

⁵⁹⁹Pearce, F “Si Monumentum.....” p7.

⁶⁰⁰Pearce, F “Si Monumentum” p7.

⁶⁰¹Pearce, F “Si Monumentum.....” p7.

dismissive of suggested change, subjecting any proposal to a “wet-blanketting, which was generally fatal”, but if those proposing it were persistent, he would reconsider and, once convinced, would back any proposal with all his influence, and with due acknowledgment to the proponent.

Woodward’s stubborn determination and indifference to the opinion of others was both a source of considerable strength and great vulnerability. He envisaged Mahinda as an institution of substance, status and reputation, and consequently paid his staff better than most civil servants, then a highly desirable, secure form of employment dominated by European expatriates and thus much sought by locals. To pay his staff better than the civil service seemed to many of the business minds that dominated the BTS Board as a form of arrogant profligacy, of common schoolmasters getting above their station. Woodward, however, assumed altogether different values. “For myself,” he wrote, “I am indifferent. I mean that I do not work myself for a salary, but that my staff may be better paid”,⁶⁰² for he believed teaching to be a profession of utmost importance that needed no defence.

The foundations for potential discord were readily apparent and came to a head late in 1910 in an incident which would only have assumed currency in a critical and unsympathetic atmosphere. A person associated with the school (and probably the Board) had been responsible for spreading rumours about Woodward which eventually compelled his intervention.

This person had long been under my eyes. He began well when I came and I thought him really interested in the school. He was very useful in many ways and I never dreamed of corruption till I was forced to focus my attention on the developments of late months. Things reached such a pitch that I had to take a certain step. The cloud burst last Saturday and, on Monday, I addressed the whole upper school and masters and told them everything, and I was so crushed that I myself have actually asked my superiors to give up the work which I undertook nearly eight years ago. The bitter part of all this is...that I am the one accused as the cause of it all, and that I am openly pointed as a monster of corruption...I have known this for years but I have never said a word and have borne it patiently. You could not believe the things I have had to undergo for long, long years...All this suffering is a great probation for me and a necessary step on the path. Marcus [Aurelius], whose work I send you, says ‘It is a royal thing to do

⁶⁰² Letter of FL Woodward, 8 June 1909. Cited in Gunewardene p20.

good and be abused for it'. It is a common insensitive person who does not suffer.⁶⁰³

Woodward's letter is laden with genuine anguish and humiliation, though couched in 'suffering borne patiently', a very Victorian and Calvinist Stoicism. More than anything, however, it reveals Woodward's immense vulnerability and sensitivity, despite his brash and determined exterior, or more likely, because of it. Unfortunately, the substance of the allegation and the nature of his 'certain step' is unclear; neither Gunewardene nor any other commentator seeks to illuminate the incident, and oral tradition is silent except to suggest accusations of financial impropriety.

The fact that Woodward states that he had been 'openly pointed as a monster of corruption', (which was often code in those times for sexual impropriety), suggests a possible explanation, which would also explain the failure to give any detail. Conversely, given Victorian hyperbole, 'corruption' may have just as easily implied financial impropriety.

The nature of Woodward's belief in a 'karmic' connection with some students suggests a highly erotised affinity, but there is no reason why this may not have manifested in an intensely sublimated commitment to teaching and his students. Woodward was raised in an English public school milieu, which not only gained notoriety for sodomy and flagellation, but also nurtured intense and innocent friendships. These same-sex, "romantic friendships" were a normal and natural part of maturation, in those pre-Wildean days, and in no way necessitated sexual enactment. In a late twentieth century western culture inordinately sexually self conscious, such 'friendship' would immediately be seized on as evidence of sexual proclivity - just one more way our 'knowledge' has deprived us of the innocence of human interaction.

Woodward would have found such intensity of connection and interest a natural inclination devoid of ulterior motive, though it would undoubtedly have given rise to accusations of favouritism. Such sublimated behaviour may be the source of profound creativity and sensitivity, and not the foil for some 'latency' that threatens intrusion, a view given currency by blurring the distinction between 'sublimation' and 'repression'. 'Sublimation' and its negative psychological equivalence with 'repression', implying a wholly unhealthy mode of living, denies 'sublimation' a perfectly respectable origin from the word

⁶⁰³ Letter of FL Woodward, date unknown, but probably late 1910. Cited in Gunewardene p20. By 'superiors' Woodward did not mean the BTS Board, but those in Adyar like Besant, or even the 'unseen Masters', whose 'messages' were relayed through Besant and Leadbeater.

‘sublime’, which suggests, in fact, a remarkably creative and inspirational channelling of energies.

The intense concentration on the construction of the new school and fostering the future direction of favoured pupils, certainly suggests such a direction of interest, rather than some kind of paedophilic prurience. The Theosophical Society, like many other ‘occult’ sects, seemed, for some reason, to attract an unusual number of homosexual men and women, and people fascinated with androgyny. The activities of some like Wedgewood and Leadbeater (who founded the BTS Ananda College in Colombo) were notorious.⁶⁰⁴ However there is no evidence to associate Woodward with these interests.

Woodward never married, may have tended to be misogynistic, and may have preferred the company of other men, but he was also a product of a time (c.1870-1900) when, demographically and historically, a greater number of men never married or married very late, and when men accepted the notion of ‘romantic friendship’ in youth and close relationships with other men in adulthood, unselfconsciously. Even Woodward’s friends, reminiscing about their mutual past, seemed to assume his heterosexual inclination. “Think of confessing to A.B. [Annie Besant],” one friend wrote, “that one had a petite-affaire with one of C.W.L’s houris. That could have happened!”⁶⁰⁵

Woodward’s mainly male world was not particularly unusual at the time. He even may well have been a ‘Brahmachariya’ or natural celibate, a respected mode of life in India and Sri Lanka, which certainly does not earn the suspicion it does in the West. Moreover, Woodward lived for some 33 years in Rowella, Tasmania, a very small community, and there was never any suggestion of homosexual behaviour, though others in the district were certainly subject to rumours of that kind. Though he certainly focused attention on students whose worth inspired his interest, Woodward seems very unlikely to have ever allowed such attention to spill into a sexual sphere.

One plausible explanation for the attacks on Woodward would have been financial.⁶⁰⁶ Woodward was consumed by construction of the school

⁶⁰⁴ See Tillet, G. *The Elder Brother*. Leadbeater was dismissed from the TS in 1906 for sexual impropriety with young boys, but later reinstated by Besant. ‘Bishop’ Wedgewood was homosexual, notoriously promiscuous and died insane from tertiary syphilis.

⁶⁰⁵ FW Robinson to FL Woodward 8 March 1952. Shield Heritage File. Obviously, not all TS activity was spiritual. Robinson was writing about leaving the Esoteric Section of the TS, in 1931, after it banned smoking and required confession of extra marital affairs to the Outer Head, at the time, Annie Besant. CWL (Leadbeater), not only had a coterie of young boys, but also had, particularly about Krishnamurti, a collection of young women, the *gopis* or *houris* [the beautiful virgins provided in Paradise for all good Muslims]. These innocents obviously provided temptation for many of the Adyar circle.

⁶⁰⁶ Personal conversation with Dr Vitharana, who has the impression from old boys of the Woodward era that the matter was based on suggestions of careless accounting.

and, in pursuit of his vision, was not a person who gave much importance to accurate bookkeeping, a 'sin' unlikely to endear him to the business people who commanded the BTS Board. He never prepared statements of accounts and simply spent what was required. He was so naturally honest that any misappropriation would have been unthinkable. However, his inclination to apply whatever funding, whether his own or from trust funds, to the school, without thought of accountability, left him open to innuendo and rumour. The atmosphere of scepticism, envy and resentment of his single-minded confidence and success would have been sufficient to give the matter credence, something that would have hurt Woodward deeply, because any impropriety was utterly alien to him. The importance of support from friends and staunch allies, like Henry Amarasuriya and ER Gunaratna on the BTS Board, would have been of crucial importance to Woodward and their demise (Gunaratna in 1914 & Amarasuriya in 1916) may have hastened his departure from Ceylon.

To understand the ferocity of the atmosphere one has only to compare the difficulties faced by Woodward's successor but one, FG Pearce, again a man of charm and dedication, albeit with a hint of naïveté. Pearce assumed the Principalship in 1921, two years after Woodward had left Ceylon, but departed the school after much emotion and acrimony for reasons spelled out in correspondence with the Ven. Seelakkandha,⁶⁰⁷ one of the leaders of the *Sangha* with whom Woodward also corresponded. Woodward's correspondence with Ven. Seelakkandha was relatively constrained, but Pearce opened his heart and divulged much about attitudes. He wrote on 7 August 1923, after he had left Ceylon, advising of his resignation and stating that,

I know many evil things are now being said about me, and that I am accused not only of teaching 'heresies', but also of having favourites, of wasting College funds, and all sorts of bad things.⁶⁰⁸

All these accusations have a familiar ring and undoubtedly were similar to those aimed at Woodward. Rather than a single or main accusation, Woodward was probably subjected to a constellation of complaints covering issues like teaching unorthodox beliefs, having favourites, and 'wasting' funds.

Many of the problems Pearce had seem to stem from a clear lack of understanding of the crucial differences between Theosophy and

⁶⁰⁷ Sri Lankan National Archives. All Seelakkandha's correspondence (much of it in Pali), and that of other prominent Buddhist *Theras* [Elders] is held within an extensive collection of the SLNA.

⁶⁰⁸ Gurugé, A.W.P. *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism: Sri Lankan support to pioneering Western Orientalists* (Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1984) p451. Letter of FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA.

Buddhism, a distinction Woodward also seems to have failed to make (or rather, assumed his own syncretic version was more authentic). Pearce had originally left Mahinda in 1918⁶⁰⁹ to take up work with the Theosophical Society organising the scouting movement in India but, after Woodward left, the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society “repeatedly begged and besought”⁶¹⁰ the TS President, Annie Besant to allow Pearce to return as Principal.

When he returned to Galle, he formed a TS Lodge and a branch of the Order of the Star in the East (OSE), that met within the school⁶¹¹ and which was perceived by many in the Galle BTS, “who are very orthodox”, as teaching ‘heresy’. Pearce protested: “I did not teach anything except the purely orthodox doctrines of Buddhism, any more than Mr Woodward did”⁶¹² and could not understand the perceived threat. After all “It was Theosophy which helped me to understand the greatness of Buddhism....and I try to help others in the same way if they desire such help”. There was no conflict in his mind, as he had no “wish to convert anyone”⁶¹³ a very strongly held view of the TS, which could never understand why their idea that all faiths were facets of the ‘Truth’ was not appreciated by those who saw theirs as exclusive repositories of the ‘Way’.⁶¹⁴

Part of the problem lay in the fact that, though Theosophical in name, Buddhist Theosophical Societies were orthodox Buddhist organisations that had attached themselves to the organisational capacities of the TS and its reformist, perceived anti-Christian agenda. Like the Buddhist nationalist leader, Anagarika Dharmapala, they tended to view the doctrines of Theosophy with suspicion, and not without justification. The Galle BTS ordered Pearce to discontinue meetings of the TS and OSE and added further provocation by reappointing a teacher that Pearce had dismissed. His position was clearly untenable and Pearce felt compelled to resign, events that were eerily repeated for Pearce in later life.⁶¹⁵ Woodward had never been as naïve as to form TS structures in

⁶⁰⁹ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III, No. 4 February 1918, p36.

⁶¹⁰ Gurugé p449. Letter of FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA

⁶¹¹ No student was ever obliged to attend, and meetings were held after hours.

⁶¹² Gurugé p450. Letter from FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA. And that was probably exactly the problem.

⁶¹³ Gurugé p453. Letter from FG Pearce to Ven. Seelakkandha. SLNA

⁶¹⁴ In fact, early Christian/Buddhist encounters were received amicably by Buddhists, who generally accepted other ‘ways’. It was the strident insistence by Christians of being ‘right’ which soured the relationship and nurtured an understandably resentful Buddhist reaction, which was enunciated in equally uncompromising terms during the Buddhist Revival.

⁶¹⁵ When Pearce optimistically resigned his senior position in the Ceylon educational bureaucracy, he took up the role of Principal at the Krishnamurti run Rishi Valley School in India, only to be continually undermined by Krishnamurti, who appointed people of his own choice over Pearce’s head. Pearce again had no choice but to resign which caused “a lot of misery and upset in the school”. Pearce then started the Blue Mountain School in Ootacamund (where Olcott was inclined to retreat for

the school, though there can be little doubt that Woodward experienced the same doctrinal clash with orthodoxy as Pearce.

The inclination of the Galle BTS School Board to impose its opinion and dictate school policy can also be observed in the fate of another Principal, Mr PR Gunasekera (Principal 1926-1932). Gunasekera was dismissed by the BTS Board, accused of incompetence and dereliction of duty, though the matter seemed to have more to do with his differences with the Board⁶¹⁶ and the fact that he had, somewhat unwisely, stood against a member of the Board in a local municipal election. He also, again somewhat unwisely (and, frankly, improperly), used the school magazine⁶¹⁷ to defend his action. Gunasekera sued the Board for wrongful dismissal by way of breach of contract and eventually won his action. Because he considered the matter one of principle, however, he donated his win to charity, a noble gesture but one also intended to really rub the nose of his opponents in his success.⁶¹⁸ He later became High Commissioner to Australia, so his career did not suffer, but the incident demonstrates the ferocity with which the Board ‘punished’ those with whom they felt a difference. An interesting aspect of Gunasekera’s dismissal was a frantic request, once more, for Woodward to return to Mahinda as Principal, a request he rejected without hesitation; “Of course, I have no intention of living in the tropics again.”⁶¹⁹

In the light of these incidents, it should not come as any surprise that Woodward encountered opposition and difficulty in his plans to construct a new school, nor that the level of vehemence should have been so substantial. Despite his charm and engaging manner, he had undoubted self-confidence and determination. He regarded his efforts as directed towards a ‘noble cause’ and he accepted no contradiction. This confident determination could appear as ‘autocratic’, as Pearce suggests⁶²⁰ and, no doubt, arrogant to some, particularly when he would

the summer). His wife though suggested that Krishnamurti had “broken her husband’s heart by manoeuvring [Pearce] out of the Rishi Valley School and he had not lived long afterwards”. Pearce, who lost his job at Mahinda, in part, for activities regarding Krishnamurti, was ironically, to fall foul of the man himself years later. Pearce, the kind and gentle idealist, was outdone by the charismatic and manipulative Krishnamurti. See:-

Sloss, RR *Lives in the Shadow of J Krishnamurti* (London: Bloomington, 1991) p265-266.

⁶¹⁶It would seem these differences were primarily with Henry Woodward Amarasuriya, though the issue tends to be avoided in conversation, probably because HWA was a significant national figure and benefactor of the school, as was his father and his father before him.

⁶¹⁷ *Mahinda College Magazine* December 1929, p62. The article is signed *Civis Ceylonicus* but it is no doubt the work of Gunasekera. It is a very vigorous and provocative defence of teachers to (rightly) participate in politics. The accusation was that his political participation brought the name of the school into the political arena. In using the school magazine for his defence, he did exactly that of which he was accused.

⁶¹⁸ *Ceylon Daily News* Friday 10 May 1935. And also from the grand-daughter of Gunasekera.

⁶¹⁹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 15 June 1932 (FOSL)

⁶²⁰ Pearce “Si Monumentum.....” p7.

not bow to the demands of ‘lesser’ minds in such matters as remaining orthodox and keeping adequate accounting records.

The School Moves to New Premises.

By 1912, sufficient of the school was completed to allow it to move from the Fort to Mahinda Hill, though there was still a need for more classrooms to house the 300 students then on the roll. On 1 August 1912,⁶²¹ nine years from the day Woodward had begun at the school, and twenty-one years from the day the school commenced, the Director of Public Instruction, John Harwood, opened the new buildings and presided over the school prize-giving.

Harwood, who was appointed in the same year Woodward arrived⁶²², had observed the growing quality of education at Mahinda, and had even gone out of his way to point out and praise Woodward’s efforts in the Legislative Council educational committee, noting the high standard, particularly of English, in the school.⁶²³ While the occasion of an opening invariably lends itself to hyperbole, there is obvious sincerity in the oblique references to Woodward in Harwood’s speech, which recognise Woodward’s intentions and commitment:

During the last nine years ... it dawned on me [Mahinda] was in [the] charge of one who carried on the work with a view to educate. ... Some work for honour and glory, or for the furtherance of some special cause or possibly for private profit, but here the guiding principle was to regulate things with a view to educational effect on the minds of those spending their time within its walls.⁶²⁴

During the following twelve months, further buildings were erected on the site, mainly with the generosity of Henry Amarasuriya and Gate Mudaliyar ER Gunaratna, and the school was strengthened by the appointment of Frank Gordon Pearce, a young energetic Theosophist, as Deputy Principal, on 25 October 1913.⁶²⁵ Small details were not overlooked in the building program and, significant for its simple charm, was a water-fountain surmounted by a miniature *dagaba* (pagoda) erected in memory of Olcott, near the Olcott Hall.⁶²⁶

⁶²¹ Vitharana Ms 23.

⁶²² *Ceylon Administrative Reports* 1903.

⁶²³ Ceylon Sessional Papers XX 1911-1912, p226. In a public review of education, wherein Woodward gave evidence, Harwood made the comment, “I think I ought to say that Mr Strickland [School Inspector] did show me the English composition in your standards as being the best specimens of English that he had come across in that year’s work.”

⁶²⁴ Cited in Gunewardene p23. Vitharana Ms p23.

⁶²⁵ Vitharana Ms p25.

⁶²⁶ Vitharana Ms 23. Gunewardene p24. The *dagaba* was built with a legacy from a member of staff who had died, DC Ponnampereuma.

While the Olcott Hall remained the centre piece of the school, Woodward constructed his two-storey quarters, library and room for senior classes on an imposing pinnacle that allowed him to observe both the entire campus in a sweep of his eye and, in the distance, the sacred peak of Sri Pada (Adams Peak). Far from creating for himself an escape from the rigours of school, he placed himself at the apex where he could continue to observe his pupils at work or play from his second-storey balcony. One student, writing years later, remembered “how thrilled he was by that wonderful vista from the upper storey” when he came to enrol and first met “that genial Englishman.....- tall, ascetic looking, yet kindly, and with a humorous twinkle in his eye”.⁶²⁷

Woodward could view from the balcony, between corridors of classrooms, the Olcott Hall where the students gathered each morning with their teachers to await his arrival in absolute, pin-drop silence. Then, with considerable deference to good timing, he would descend, cloaked in academic robes, the rhythmic sound of his footfall gathering volume as he made his way along the cobbled corridor between the classrooms, from the Principal’s quarters to the Hall.⁶²⁸ The effect was solemn, austere and monumental, with more than a touch of Victorian theatricality, and undoubtedly intended by Woodward to be that way. On his arrival the students would recite the *tisarana* (Three Refuges) and observe *pāncasila* (The Five Precepts). The day concluded with another formal assembly and recitation of stanzas from the *Cattamanavakavimana*⁶²⁹ as well as the (British) National Anthem.

Observing from the present, one might find humour in the Victorian grandiosity Woodward lent to aspects of school ritual, but he obviously recognised a fact, frequently overlooked in the present age of studied casualness, that a sense of occasion and ritual builds significance into human activity beyond the simple sum of individuals present. To a degree, that intention was an aspect of the English public school culture out of which Woodward had originated, but his was not a simple emulation. He obviously had insight into the process and recognised both its absurdities and utility. If that were not the case, his manner would have remained locked within a pompous persona of unutterable dullness, or that of a charming Mr Chips. Instead, Woodward maintained an ability to shift appropriately and naturally between

⁶²⁷Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”, newspaper article 29/6/68, paper unknown, SLNA Times Biography PKT 4579.

⁶²⁸Vitharana, V. *The Message of Woodward* p12. This ceremony, which Vitharana had observed as a student, was a practice continued by Woodward’s successors as Principal up to the 1940’s and 50’s as part of the “Woodwardian Tradition” of the school.

⁶²⁹Vitharana Ms p24.

personae, a Buddhistic understanding of the impermanence of functional ‘selves’.

As indicated earlier, Woodward had a facility for inviting children into a relationship of equality while remaining respectful of the boundaries between adult and child. He maintained an immense sense of fun and mischief, a grasp of the absurd that dispelled for the moment the aristocratic dignity he exuded on formal occasions. A student of the period recalled sitting in class one day when the principal’s face appeared smiling over the classroom half wall.⁶³⁰ “Where’s RABADAA!!” (the toddy-bellied boy), he asked, loudly exaggerating the rolled tones of the syllables. The students all joined in the laughter at such an unexpected intrusion and “I observed that a ...stockily built boy with a big round bellywas blushing like a nervous bride!”⁶³¹ And each day thereafter, when Woodward passed the class he would peep over the wall like some mischievous gnome and make the same joke about “Where’s RABADAA!!”

The humour is childish, relying on repetition of an essentially nonsense phrase, and tinged with a little Victorian and youthful cruelty, yet the person remembers the incident as “kindly humour”. As with other incidents involving Woodward, the potential for hurt or humiliation is avoided by the overwhelming kindness he exuded, though the risk remained and, in the hands of another, could have resulted in considerable anguish. Leanage, who relates the incident, thought he discerned the reason for the particular attention the pupil received from Woodward.

The boy was reserved, enigmatic and socially awkward, but had an unusual mathematical mind, with an ability to glance at a problem on the blackboard and “write the answer straight away at the bottom, then proceed to work it out”, with never an error. Woodward’s humour and attention was a way of acknowledging the boy’s difference and unusual qualities, while inviting his inclusion in the group.⁶³² It was an odd means, which today would be frowned on, yet it showed a wise understanding of children, recognising that a simple request to include the boy would have been futile. Making him an object of the Principal’s interest, while dismissing the child’s difference in humour, made him an object of interest to others, facilitating his inclusion.

⁶³⁰Classrooms were built with a half wall, with the remaining area open to the roof, allowing air to circulate. Eaves were wide so as to afford protection from monsoonal downpours.

⁶³¹Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”. The protruding belly may well have been a result of malarial infection of the spleen.

⁶³²The future of the boy was sadly restricted by the opportunities of colonial society and he ended working for the railways, despite obvious academic potential.

In one way, this particular boy was favoured no more than other students, for Woodward had nicknames for most of his students, usually characters from Shakespeare, or puns, in Sinhala or English, on attributions and personal features, and like all nicknames there is just a touch of cruelty mixed with the fun, such as one untidy, scruffy student known as ‘Caliban’⁶³³ and another, for reasons that perplexed the recipient, known as ‘Opium’.⁶³⁴ The element of cruelty in Woodward seemed always to have been well hidden or overshadowed by his warmth, since the use of nicknames can also be a form of affection, familial interest and care, and his students certainly loved and revered him. It may also be true that the ubiquity of English schoolyard nicknames tended to make both recipient and those who initiated such appellations insensitive to the underlying cruelty. There is after all, a long history of their use - even Elizabeth I was renowned for the none too subtle nicknames she imposed on her courtiers.

There is something of the schoolyard rowdy that continues to come out in Woodward’s behaviour, which no doubt facilitated his regard among students. One student, who later became a teacher at the school, recalled his student admission, a scene illustrating Woodward’s whimsical oddity. He was taken with his brother to Woodward’s office and upstairs quarters. “He received us very nicely, made us stand before him and placed two pieces of pomegranate on our heads”, no doubt to confine any movement and fidgeting. After their interview, they descended the stairs from his quarters, where upon Woodward “threw the pieces of pomegranate at us”⁶³⁵ which they caught and enjoyed. It was a disarming gesture intended to deflect the children’s nervousness, while focusing their attention on his presence, and rewarding them with a kindness at its conclusion. Nevertheless, there is an aspect of Woodward that intended to shock or confuse the normal responses of others and which enjoyed ‘tom-foolery’.⁶³⁶

Woodward’s ability to invite children into a relationship of equality was matched by a similar ability with adults. While appropriately respectful of others, whether children or adults, he never resorted to the usual

⁶³³ Weerasigne, GD “Woodward of Mahinda: great educationalist & Pali scholar” newspaper article, paper unknown, 23/5/68 PKT4579 SLNA.

⁶³⁴ *Century of Memories* Witanachchi p63ff. Despite protestations that Woodward was never unkind, this nickname troubles me because the explanation I recall from school days was that someone called ‘Opium’ was known as that because they were ‘a slow acting dope’, which is hardly kind.

⁶³⁵ Extract from the Diary of Mr B Amendra admitted to Mahinda College 13 October 1913. Extract courtesy of Deshabandu Albert Edirisinghe, Colombo, who was taught by Mr Amendra in 1926.

⁶³⁶ Personal interview: Nigel Heyward [25 April 1995] Heyward grew up with Woodward as a close neighbour and friend and his view is that Woodward enjoyed ‘wrong footing’ people by unexpected and exaggerated behaviour.

human defences of social discomfort, awe, deference, or patronising behaviour. Unlike most natural solitaries, he had a social ease and, adapted himself to whatever society he was in. There was not an atom of pride, nor of mock modesty, in him: he would neither patronise the humble [n]or make much of the great.⁶³⁷

Pearce recounts an occasion one Saturday, when Woodward was sitting on his balcony, reading and smoking a cigar, and relaxing in more or less native dress - "rather less usually" - consisting of a "white sarong, a shirt, and a white cloth tied over his head like a bandage"⁶³⁸, not unlike the casual attire that caused such comment when he moved to Tasmania. However casual though, so "much depended on what one could wear, on what one did wear, and what one defiantly presumed to wear,"⁶³⁹ and wearing native dress was a statement in itself, self-consciously adopted by Sinhala nationalists as a way of admonishing the abandonment of national culture and the adoption of western attire, an aspiration with which Woodward agreed. There was a knock at the downstairs door and a servant tip-toed up to the balcony, apologised for the disturbing him and informed Woodward that there were 'policemen' down stairs, but that he had told them 'the master' was resting.

Woodward made no attempt to hurry, but got up slowly and, dressed as he was, wandered downstairs to find out what the 'policemen' wanted. When he opened the door, there, at the foot of the stairs, was the Rt. Hon. Brigadier-General of Ceylon in uniform and braid, along with the Assistant Director of Education, though he showed no obvious surprise and "was soon chatting easily and affably, showing them around the college".⁶⁴⁰

What the visitors thought of Woodward's nonchalance and dress statement (or lack of it) is unknown, but, as Pearce points out, there was probably nothing adverse or uncomplimentary, "for his very manner and presence disarmed adverse criticism" and his "natural dignity.....stopped the mouths of those who might be inclined to laugh at him as a crank".⁶⁴¹ Pearce's judgment is, I believe, accurate, for even in Tasmania, years

⁶³⁷ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p6.

⁶³⁸ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p6.

⁶³⁹ Ludowyk *Those Long Afternoons* p16.

⁶⁴⁰ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p6. Since Pearce arrived in the school after 1913, it is possible that the unusual combination of the Brig-Gen and the Ass.Dir. of Education may have had something to do with the 1915 Riots and Woodward's correspondence with the Governor, Lord Chalmers, a fellow Pali scholar, regarding Henry Amarasuriya. Woodward had written 26 May 1915 and November [date indecipherable] 1915 defending Amarasuriya, and recommending his consideration for Gate Mudaliyarship, the highest of the native titles.

See RG/257 SLNA.

⁶⁴¹ Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p7.

later, no one amongst the many I have spoken to, ever regarded him with anything but respect though his odd eccentricity was readily acknowledged. In the light of this tale, it becomes possible to understand the ease with which Woodward would have invited the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies⁶⁴² to his home for tea and discussion on a number of occasions in Tasmania.

Making of a Myth.

With his characteristic avoidance of publicity, Woodward tended to remain in the background of events. Even within the Theosophical Society, Woodward did not seek the limelight. His annual report to the TS was brief and understated, while those of Mrs Musaeus Higgins of Musaeus College, were expansive and somewhat self-congratulatory.⁶⁴³

Despite his avoidance of attention, he nevertheless attracted interest, though he was often misunderstood. A student, who had permission to enter the library early, would observe Woodward every morning from the window of the library, pacing a stretch of about 120 feet [30m] behind the Olcott Hall, to the west of the Principal's quarters, with his favoured piece of cloth tied around his head for protection from the elements. Woodward would immerse himself in concentrated 'walking meditation' on a *sakman* [walking] *maluwa* [path],⁶⁴⁴ for a full hour, rain or shine, a practice he continued when he lived in Tasmania, carefully pacing the long verandah at the front of his house.⁶⁴⁵ This obviously impressed students brought up in a culture that respected spiritual practice, and they would speculate on what he meditated, which obviously had to be profound. They had "heard the story that he had practised for a long time the meditation known as 'remembering the past' and had succeeded in awakening memories of past lives"⁶⁴⁶

This particular meditation is described by the student as involving concentrated recollection back, day by day, week by week, to childhood, and to the moment of birth, whereupon memory enters the silence of the "before becoming consciousness", leading one day to the revelation of past lives, which "Mr Woodward is said to have followed.... with success." He then goes on to suggest that a "coconut property in the interior belonging to the College⁶⁴⁷ had been named by Mr Woodward

⁶⁴² Heyward, N Transcript of radio broadcast 7NT Tasmania 1952.

⁶⁴³ Theosophical Society Annual Reports 1903-1919 Adyar: Theosophical Publishing. Anyone who would accept an eponymously named school has some difficulty with grandiosity.

⁶⁴⁴ I am grateful to Dr Vitharana for an explanation of *sakman maluwa*.

⁶⁴⁵ Heyward, personal conversation.

⁶⁴⁶ Leanage, SW "Woodward and Mahinda".

⁶⁴⁷ A coconut property was donated to the school in the latter part of Woodward's principalship, the income of which was intended for the Principal's use. It was to become a matter of great dispute when the government nationalised schools in the 1960s. Woodward also had a tea estate, which he owned in his own right, and which he named "Lignus", which the writer obviously confuses with the former property.

‘Lignus Estate’”, after a “Greek Senator of old in whose person Mr Woodward had spent one of his previous lives”.⁶⁴⁸

The story is remarkable indeed, but the explanation is far more prosaic. ‘Lignus’, far from being Greek, is, of course, Latin for ‘wood’ and was Woodward’s ‘code’ name⁶⁴⁹ in the *Lives of Alcyone*, the chronicle compiled by CW Leadbeater from his ‘astral’ studies of the past lives of Krishnamurti and other TS insiders. The *Lives* was an important talking-point during this period⁶⁵⁰ among TS acolytes, particularly those close to the Adyar inner circle who provided the *dramatis personæ* of these extraordinary tales of Boy’s Own derring-do. It was inevitable that a garbled version would make the rounds.

Thus the tales from the *Lives* blended wonderfully with the sight of Woodward engaged in meditative practice to produce the basis of myth, a prospect Woodward found both amusing and horrifying. Woodward was aware of the high regard he was accorded among his students, again not unexpected in a culture that revered great teachers or *gurus*, and was aware, too, of the potential to exaggerate his qualities - beyond his own cultivated exaggeration. He was genuinely modest, or rather, was sufficiently aware of his own foibles and failings to find what he regarded as ‘oriental exaggeration’ a considerable embarrassment, and he took pains to avoid such excesses. He expressed this point of view in a letter to the Ven. Seelakkandha⁶⁵¹ commenting on a eulogy written by the *Thera* on the death of Edward VII, where Woodward had corrected the English.

The work is characteristically oriental, as you say, notably in the wonderful comparisons between the royal person and the planets and gods, whom he is supposed to surpass. To us Western people, of course, such high praise is not usual- and knowing the human character of the late Duke, we do not accept it as truth but as ‘oriental compliment’.⁶⁵²

As is typical of Woodward, he couldn’t avoid a wry, if oblique, reference to the obvious disparity between Seelakkandha’s ‘oriental’ hyperbole and the baser rutting habits of the late King.

⁶⁴⁸ Leanage, SW “Woodward and Mahinda”. Ordinary ‘walking meditation’ is, contrary to this description, remarkably simple in content, if difficult in practice. Most Theravadin meditation techniques, like the Buddha’s claim to an ‘open palm’ teaching (ie no ‘hidden’ teachings), are readily accessible. Mahayana techniques, on the other hand, tend to be more esoteric and emphasise visualisation.

⁶⁴⁹ I am grateful to John Cooper for this information.

⁶⁵⁰ The TS at this time was entering a period of heightened public acceptance and membership. It was also the period of Krishnamurti and the Coming World Teacher, a millenarian movement in many respects with extremely heightened expectation.

⁶⁵¹ FL Woodward to Ven. Seelakkandha 21 January 1911 SLNA.

⁶⁵² Gurugé *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism* quoted on p44.

On Woodward's death, he required that his ashes be scattered, so that no portion was retained as a potential 'saintly' relic by his past students.⁶⁵³ He once wrote that there "were enough arahant [saints] relics in Ceylon alone to stock a Harrod's store" though he conceded - as would most Buddhists - that "any object, if worshipped long with reverence will exude sacred effluvia". And he added for self-effacing good measure, "One of my old sandals, lost in a boggy place on my old tea-estate in Ceylon, is so worshipped!!"⁶⁵⁴ The irony is that, even in Tasmania, where reverence for relics is unknown, nearly every person who knew Woodward retained some remembrance of him, however trivial. In effect these were 'relics' that unconsciously recognised the 'special' character of the man and sought continued contact with that source.⁶⁵⁵

Woodward as Educational Administrator.

Successful ventures are rarely the product of simple accident, but rely on the fortuities of time and place, as well as more pragmatic forces like money and energy. Woodward's success and importance rests substantially on time and circumstance: the emerging significance of education in Ceylon's nation building and a parallel religious revival in need of effective attributes of renewal. His impact, however, would have been far less without his pragmatic qualities: his obvious energy, determination and preparedness to expend his own resources. He certainly saved the school from almost certain collapse and substantially advanced its size and influence, aspects of which are attributable to Woodward's often unusual administrative style.

Woodward was no simple idealist, but a person who wisely refused to expend energy on tedious and vexatious aspects of education, of which there are legion. He would not accept undesirable students turned out of other schools, those students simply interested in sport, those who had more money than character, or those who simply wished to cram for exams or government appointments.⁶⁵⁶ If a student presented a difficulty in the school, he had no hesitation in getting rid of him - "and there was no relenting afterwards."⁶⁵⁷ This obvious selectivity, which Woodward would not alter, whatever the financial inducement, guaranteed the success and cohesion of the school community, ensuring all "would

⁶⁵³ Buddha relics are a feature of religious practice and each *dagaba* or *stupa* is also a reliquiae with some portion of the Buddha's ashes or bone fragments eg the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy is the repository of one of the Buddha's eye teeth which, according to those who have seen it, is unusually large. Like portions of the 'True Cross', relics have multiplied, this being seen as testimony to their sacred origin.

⁶⁵⁴FL Woodward to IB Horner 7 September 1949. (FOSL)

⁶⁵⁵Even the people who currently own "Bhatkawa", though neither are Buddhists, reserve a niche in the hallway for a Buddhist shrine in acknowledgment of Woodward's previous occupancy.

⁶⁵⁶Pearce "Si Monumentum ..." p 5.

⁶⁵⁷Pearce "Si Monumentum..." p8

suitably fit into the school”.⁶⁵⁸ Some today may question the ‘easy’ solution of simply ridding oneself of the problems, but Woodward had little time for such sentiment. He focused on a coherent school culture and spirit of commitment; the rest - scholastic achievement - would follow naturally.

Woodward reinforced this coherence by generally recruiting teachers from past pupils of the school⁶⁵⁹ which, of course, tended to heavily emphasise the values and outlook of the school and locked in place what became known as the “Woodwardian Tradition”, a kind of school *mantra*, a formula of values and approach that provided the school with a blueprint that would secure it through future adversity. One significant example of Woodward’s policy was the appointment, in 1932, of Mr Edgar Wijesooriya as Principal. He was an ex-student of Woodward’s (1915-18) and remained Principal until April 1962 when schools were nationalised.⁶⁶⁰ Wijesooriya was a consolidator, rather than innovator, a product of a deliberately conservative policy that secured self-replication and Woodward’s stamp on the school long after his departure. The policy, though, was not Woodward’s own innovation, having been borrowed from the practice of his old school, Christ’s Hospital, which similarly recruited from among old boys.⁶⁶¹ The result, however, reinforced the uniformity of Mahinda’s product: similar values, ideas and beliefs with the stamp of a Buddhist nationalist outlook.

Part of that spirit Woodward engendered in his pupils emanated from his attitude towards scholarship and examinations, where the influence of Barnard and Stamford can be seen. His ideas on learning were a mix of opinionated passion and rigid convention, though obviously never boring. He believed a broad classical education gave a flexible cultured mind and training that enabled one to overcome difficulties in later life, and more than anything, “Love learning for its own sake was his motto”.⁶⁶² He believed, too, that ‘great’ literature “cannot be judged for a century yet.” and that Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, a poem he had learned by heart, was the “chief literary work of the century and the deepest philosophy” and a poem that contained “almost everything”. He loved Keats, “the most luscious of poets”, particularly his *St Agnes Eve*, a poem that “depends much in the gorgeous words, the quaint ideas, the use of colouring and the ‘ages-long-ago’ sort of feeling.” He loved

⁶⁵⁸de Silva, AB Dionysius “Woodward- great Buddhist educationalist” 1969 SLNA Pkt. 14148.

⁶⁵⁹Anon. [probably Gordon Pearce] “A Story of Determination. Mahinda College, Galle. 1892-1921” *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol 1, No.2 Colombo: WE Bastian & Co. 1921, p31.

⁶⁶⁰Wijeratne, Dantanarayana, Samara-Wickrama [ed] *Centuries of Memories*, p55ff.

⁶⁶¹I am indebted to the archivist of Christ’s Hospital for this information. I have also no doubt it was the policy of great many other Public Schools in Britain and probably Sri Lanka.

⁶⁶²Anon. “My last Year at Mahinda College” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No. 4 July 1922, p5.

Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley, but, a Stoic to the last, he disdainfully dismissed Gray's *Elegy*... as indicating, "Gray was suffering from ennui",⁶⁶³ an obviously inexcusable indulgence.⁶⁶⁴

This passion for learning exceeded any interest in honours though honours and scholarship success were and remain the private elite schools' hallmark of reputation. Woodward loathed the nineteenth century regard for exam results and the resultant 'cramming', which many schools in England excelled in providing and he made it clear to students and parents alike that

If you want your boy educated not crammed - you can send him here. If he passes the examinations, well and good but he will not be crammed for them. If you don't like that then don't come here.⁶⁶⁵

Nothing could have been more clear or more blunt, and as a result, as Pearce points out, the school moved without the feverish pace that schools often exhibit before exams. Instead there was always an orderly steady pace of work and atmosphere of congenial learning.

The effect of this approach was a flexible mind capable of breadth and reflection. Paradoxically, while producing a pupil of uniformity within the "Woodwardian Tradition", the school also emphasised the kind of mind required for considered thinking, much like the odd paradoxical product of the English Public School system. Rather than English clones and little 'brown sahibs', the school created an apt product for nation-building; independent minds with strong cultural, religious and national goals. And while the school rarely headed the honour lists for examinations, the achievements of ex-students were impressive. In 1904 Mahinda College only advanced 3 candidates for the Cambridge Local Examination, compared with its rival, Richmond College, in Galle with 13, and the prestigious Royal College, Colombo, with 20. By 1910, however, Mahinda had 14 candidates, Richmond 15 and Royal 19, a considerable advance on previous efforts, and an indication that, while 'cramming' was *outré*, scholarship nevertheless prevailed.⁶⁶⁶

Whatever the merits of Woodward's methodology, he attracted the interest and regard of educational administrators, like Harwood, who respected his efforts, if not his philosophy. That regard was sufficient to see him appointed to the powerful and prestigious Board of Education in

⁶⁶³ Gunewardene *FL Woodward*...p78.

⁶⁶⁴Dahanayake, W. "Woodward of Mahinda" (a review of Gunewardene's book on Woodward) newspaper unknown 11/2/73. SLNA Pkt LB/4579. Dahanayaka, a somewhat irascible and unpredictable personality, was one time prime-minister.

⁶⁶⁵Pearce "Si Monumentum..."p5.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ceylon Administrative Reports 1904 & 1910*.

1917,⁶⁶⁷ by the Governor, a crowning social and political recognition of himself, the College and, more particularly, the cause of Buddhist education.

Progress and Karma.

There is, from a present perspective, a naïveté in Woodward's underlying belief in Progress, an unconscious nineteenth century social assumption that only began to be doubted, and ultimately supplanted by disillusion and cynicism, in the late 20th century. The roots of nineteenth century faith in Progress reach back to the Greeks and their belief in recurring cycles like the Eastern concept of *kalpas*. Woodward's mix of theosophical, Greek and oriental belief, poses, the not unfamiliar view, that such cycles are not "squirrel's-cage-ic",⁶⁶⁸ but more akin to a spiral.

Thus his view does not mandate constant 'improvement' but envisions a *Kali Yuga*, or Dark cycle, and periods "when no Buddha is on earth". Throughout such cycles, however, the force that moves human lives and rebirth is the karma which "is his own and no other's",⁶⁶⁹ and with which one alone must struggle. Despite such fluctuations, Woodward assumed progression towards fulfilment of some ultimate 'scheme' for humanity, a belief echoing Christian concepts of God's 'plan' and purpose. Assured by such beliefs, he assumed a phlegmatic, philosophic view of his own and others' efforts, while never letting go his belief in the ultimate maturing of all endeavour.

Pearce, Woodward's loyal deputy, would spend many an evening after dinner, or on Sunday, on the high verandah of the Principal's residence, overlooking the school, the tree tops and the distant verdant hills, discussing with Woodward the earnest intention of their efforts. Like teachers from time immemorial, Pearce questioned the value of his efforts and confessed his doubts. Woodward, however, placed great emphasis on readiness, on the appropriate receptivity of people, in much the same way Buddhism makes a distinction between the *savaka* (literally, 'one who has heard') and the ordinary, unreceptive *puthujjana*. As Woodward expressed it to Pearce, "If the Lord Buddha Himself told them, it would not convince them until they are ready for it."⁶⁷⁰ And he

⁶⁶⁷ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III, No. 4 February 1918, p17.

⁶⁶⁸ Vanapala [FL Woodward] "There is Nothing New Under the Sun" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No.6 April 1924, p8.

⁶⁶⁹ Vanapala "There is Nothing New Under the Sun" p8.

⁶⁷⁰ Pearce "Si Monumentum..." p10. A distinction is made in Buddhism between the one ready to receive insight, the *savaka*, and the *puthujjana*, the ordinary, ignorant person. Woodward frequently makes this distinction in describing others, though the person of the *puthujjana* may not necessarily be unintelligent, simply unable to receive the necessary insight. Even the Buddha, in many of the stories, would intuitively sense someone in the audience ready to hear, and would address them almost to the exclusion of others. eg The story of Suppabuddha, the leper, an interesting and important story,

would pour his lofty, theatrical scorn on the younger man's doubts in feigned indignation,

What a ridiculous ass you are!Colonel [Olcott] asked me to do this job and so of course I do it. Besides the results will appear some day, they are bound to. It doesn't matter whether we see them or not.⁶⁷¹

Far from a glib dismissal or naive act of faith, Woodward's attitude was a firmly felt Buddhist view, an intensity of conviction that manifested as a simple, somewhat paradoxical equanimity and calm. It was the conviction of a *savaka*, a man who had absorbed his faith and belief beyond the need to convince others and lived it with a balanced humour. His attitude to outcomes, given his acceptance of karma, presented as an "indifference as to results, once he had done his best." In accord with the essential tenets of Buddhism, he displayed an indifference to desire, eschewed ambition and recognition, and craved nothing for himself beyond the space and opportunity to exercise his interests and skills. And if unwanted, he would simply go elsewhere. He was, as Pearce concluded, "balanced in both joy and sorrow, full of devotion and a keen sense of duty, yet never carried to excess in either feeling or action."⁶⁷²

While Pearce can hardly be described as unbiased, he was a man of some ability and judgement (as his later success in colonial administration demonstrated), and his views of Woodward are not without grounding in experience and observation. For him to describe Woodward as "one of the greatest educationalists, and certainly the greatest Buddhist educationalists of modern Ceylon",⁶⁷³ deserves some attention, mainly because he made his comments, recognising that Woodward sought no recognition and had achieved this aim of obscurity admirably. Pearce was anxious to elevate recognition of Woodward's efforts, which in his mind were considerably underrated and unrecognised because of the way Woodward usually exercised his influence, quietly and unassumingly behind the scenes, unfazed if others claimed recognition for his efforts.

because leprosy excluded people from membership of the *sangha*, thus implying that receptivity did not require one be a monk.

⁶⁷¹Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p10.

⁶⁷²Pearce "Si Monumentum....." p9.

⁶⁷³Pearce "Si Monumnetum...." p3.

National Significance.

The Creation of a University.

Woodward's commitment to scholarship led him naturally into involvement with the establishment of a university for Ceylon which he saw as essential for national advancement. The Ceylon University Association was formed to advocate the establishment of a university and by 1903 the 'university question' began to appear as an issue in the *Ceylon Administrative Reports*, with a proposal to establish a relationship with London University, a course eventually realised in 1921 with the creation of a university college.

The establishment of a university was very much an aspect of the early nationalist agenda and involved local identities, men of nationalist moderation like Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam MLC (President of the Ceylon University Association), Sir James Pieris MLC, (Vice President CUA) - both later founders of the Ceylon National Congress - Dr Marcus Fernando, Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy, and other prominent Tamil, Burgher and Buddhist identities, Woodward among them. "Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and I started the idea,"⁶⁷⁴ Woodward declared but, as was his nature, he tended to work behind the scenes, letting others assume public prominence, though his efforts did not go entirely unnoticed. Sir Ivor Jennings, the respected former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, "once paid a well deserving [sic] compliment to Woodward, placing him foremost in the struggle for the establishment of a University."⁶⁷⁵

For Woodward, a university was a vision and ideal, "to combine the best of East and West, of ancient and modern" based on a foundation of Sanskrit, Arabic and Pali, mixed with a "proportion of Greek and Latin" overlaid with Sinhala and Tamil, and "using as a binding mortar, the almost universal English tongue".⁶⁷⁶ He envisaged a broad education and decried narrow specialisation and accumulation of facts.

Our ideal University product must be...a man of culture, he will not be the product of a "mere group of departmental schools or of a polytechnic institute". It is a dreadful thing to have to study in order to score marks and please examiners....⁶⁷⁷

In keeping with his age, Woodward saw the product of his idealised university as principally men, though as his keen observation of the

⁶⁷⁴ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 3 November 1945. (FOSL)

⁶⁷⁵ de Silva AB Dionysius "Woodward- great Buddhist educationalist" 1969 newspaper unknown, SLNA Pkt.14148.

⁶⁷⁶ Woodward, FL. "Some University Ideals" *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* Vol.2 No.7 November, 1909, p155.

⁶⁷⁷ Woodward, FL. "Some University Ideals", p156.

progress of women in Cambridge attests,⁶⁷⁸ he was sympathetic in that bemused kind of way men present when wrestling with their misogyny. While it goes without saying Mahinda College was intended as a boys school, (though girls were later admitted after Woodward's time), the education of girls was certainly part of the Theosophical Society agenda. The Society had always been a site of forceful female personalities like Blavatsky and Besant, and of women drawn to the Society's emancipist inclinations, women like Marie Byles. Even one of the Theosophical Society's many arcane subsidiary organisations, Co-Masonry, was open to female membership, which its secular Masonic equivalent never managed.

TS Schools for girls were opened, like Musaeus College in Colombo under the formidable Mrs Marie Musaeus Higgins, with whom Woodward had a close friendship. Nevertheless, while the TS advocated education for women, it retained, to our sensibilities, oddly conventional views about the place of women. Woodward, who in many respects was a closet misogynist - and what confirmed bachelor isn't? - trod a wary path through the thicket of feminism. He attempted to steer a course,

between the two extreme views, of those who would have women the toy, plaything and meek slave of man; and those who see in the emancipated, sometimes be-trousered, harsh-voiced imitation the outward sign and token of a new freedom.⁶⁷⁹

No sensitive New Age male, Woodward nevertheless struggled with his patriarchal inclinations to affirm the need and right of women to equality of opportunity in education, and objected strongly to any diluted, dumbed-down, alternative to the rigours demanded of male education. Despite a valiant attempt at 'progressive' views, Woodward remained trapped by traditional stereotypes: "Woman has wit, man humour; man is mental and progressive, woman intuitive, orthodox and conservative".⁶⁸⁰ In the final analysis Woodward believed,

we shall all agree that in training up our girls to become noble wives and mothers, we are in very truth making the bodies which are, in turn, to give us birth in future ages, mothers of men indeed.⁶⁸¹

While the sentimentality of this view may have little appeal in the present, except among the incorrigibly unrepentant, Woodward was

⁶⁷⁸ Correspondence with IB Horner, (FOSL) *passim*.

⁶⁷⁹ Woodward, FL. "Girls, Wives and Mothers" *Ceylon National Review* January 1906, p16.

⁶⁸⁰ Woodward "Girls, Wives and Mothers" p15

⁶⁸¹ Woodward "Girls, Wives and Mothers" p19

expressing a view in the 1906 *Ceylon National Review*, the journal of the liberal Ceylon Social Reform Society, that probably appeared progressive. Progressive or not, Woodward's vision of a university was principally as a male domain, with women relegated to the vital role of incubator.

And while Woodward was continually absorbed by idealised visions of possibility for his university, there was always a practical aspect to Woodward's interest. He railed against "*the smallness and meanness of the salary or reward*",⁶⁸² which discouraged quality educators, and he advocated adequate tenure and proper pension provisions for teachers and lecturers: "*we want the profession of the teacher acknowledged as responsible, worthily paid, thought worthy of a competence [pension] in declining years, no less than that of public pensioned servants.*"⁶⁸³ His views were 'radical' for the time (and would be in the present) and generated considerable controversy, though the negative responses sound familiar to modern ears:

We are....more and more taxing the nation for the purpose of supporting part of it. No one should make poverty a crime; but there is no reason why we should make it a merit.....We should always be on our guard against a scheme which tends to lessen our responsibility as citizens.⁶⁸⁴

However idealistic and occasionally quaint Woodward's vision of a university was, it was a cause close to his heart. A university was a sign of sober maturity and national competence. It was a sign of national arrival. What disturbed Woodward were the impediments to such symbols of national progress, principally, caste and inter-communal rivalry. They were a constant and disturbing feature of College politics, and were likely to be even more of a hindrance to the establishment of a university. Woodward continually emphasised the issue of tolerance, cooperation, and communal cohesion as a precondition for national advancement, and drew one of his cartoons on one side of his blackboard to reinforce his message [see Illustrations]. The cartoon shows two characters - one, a 'tiller of the soil' (*Goyigama*), the other, a 'toiler of the deep' (*Karava*) - facing one another in conversation, with the question underneath, "Are we fit for a University".

What is extraordinary is that the blackboard cartoon is preserved, under perspex, to this day. What is even more extraordinary is the continued

⁶⁸² Woodward, FL. "Some University Ideals", p154. Woodward's emphasis.

⁶⁸³ Woodward, FL "Pensions for Teachers" *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* Vol.1 No.3 April 1907, p225. Woodward's emphasis.

⁶⁸⁴ Letter from HG Rawlinson, Royal College *Journal of the Ceylon University Association* Oct 1907, p348.

failure to apprehend the message: in Sinhala culture, preserving the 'relic' tends to be more important than preserving the message. The cartoon was originally drawn in 1916 which means Woodward himself initially preserved the drawing in an attempt to stress the senseless damage of continued inter-communal rivalry. "Are we fit?" remains a pertinent message today in Sri Lanka, for it implores a social and attitudinal alteration, a social maturity few societies have attained or sustained. Few listened then, and few do today. Unfortunately the drawing was preserved because Woodward preserved it, not because of the relevance of the message, but the message nonetheless remains.

The Elevation of Sinhala.

Pearce astutely perceived a national significance in Woodward's endeavours, beyond simply his regional effort to build Mahinda College to prominence in the South of Ceylon, and this was observable in his contribution to national identity and to the promotion of Buddhism. Woodward's efforts to elevate the importance of Sinhala, Pali, and the teaching of Ceylon history and culture, were also innovatory, and Mahinda College was probably the first to introduce Sinhala in an English medium school⁶⁸⁵ and in this was "one of the pioneers, if not the pioneer, in teaching Sinhalese...".⁶⁸⁶ It was also one of the first English-medium schools to introduce Pali, so that students could "verify the teachings at first hand for themselves".⁶⁸⁷

The eventual acceptance of Sinhala and Pali on the Cambridge Local exams - the 'O' and 'A' level equivalent of the day - was largely due to Woodward's effort and influence. The significance can only be appreciated when it is recognised that for many of the Sinhala elite (and certainly among the Burgher or mixed race group), English was the first language of the home, and Sinhala was regarded as an inferior 'street' language.⁶⁸⁸ Woodward's advocacy of Sinhala, "at a time when a fight had to be put up"⁶⁸⁹, and his strong preference for the use of Sinhala names⁶⁹⁰ (instead of anglicised names) for children was, for the times, radical indeed and within a general reformist agenda.

Religio-linguistic nationalism was central to Woodward's thinking, though it was always contained within an overall spirit of tolerance and

⁶⁸⁵Roberts, N. *Galle: As Quiet as Asleep* p153.

⁶⁸⁶ Pearce, FG, "Hopes and Achievements. The present and future of a Buddhist school." *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Vol II, No 1, 1923, p33.

⁶⁸⁷ Pearce, FG, "Hopes and Achievements....." p34.

⁶⁸⁸ Sinhala, like modern Greek, has a demotic and literary version, which have taken time to reconcile. Woodward himself recognised that the everyday Sinhala of the time was limited in application but capable of evolving into an effective means of communication at all levels, which it has over time.

⁶⁸⁹(Anon.) "Woodward of Mahinda" *Mahinda College Magazine* 1953 pii.

⁶⁹⁰ This was a sore point among reformists, particularly in the maritime Low Country where the practice was common. See Wickremeratne *Religion, Nationalism and Social Change* p19.

inclusion. Later manifestations, like the radical *Bhasa Peramuna* (Language Front) that forced the 1956 Bandaranaike government to implement Sinhala as the sole official language of Sri Lanka, would have saddened him. He would have been even further disappointed to see his beloved concept of a national university torn apart and devalued by politics and the language issue, more particularly because the attempt to erode the privilege of English-speaking Sri Lankans only led to an exodus of Tamil and Burgher talent sorely needed by the nation.⁶⁹¹

Woodward perceived clearly the link between the decline of national language and the devaluation of national culture, and more importantly, of Buddhism, since so much of Sinhala is steeped in Buddhist thought and analogy, much as English is redolent with biblical phrases and metaphors. He found children without knowledge of the vernacular “wanting in something” and despising “everything connected with their people”,⁶⁹² as he told the Legislative Council investigating committee into education. While there were some on the committee who obviously saw grave nationalistic dangers, Woodward stood his ground and saw only positives in the national and cultural affirmation of teaching Sinhala. For Woodward, a Sinhala student “who did not know his mother tongue was a disgrace to his nation”⁶⁹³

His advocacy of Sinhala was principally aimed at the middle class who disparaged use of the vernacular and who studied English to the neglect of their own tongue.

The study of English has become a sort of fetish in Ceylon. English is no doubt necessary....without English could we in Ceylon keep in touch with the great world currents...But is that any reason for boycotting the mother-tongue in schools and for allowing our youth to grow up so ignorant of it ...?⁶⁹⁴

These people he saw rightly as an influential elite whose neglect of the mother tongue endangered the nation by severing links with a “common religion and common culture”. Woodward emphasised, “*a people without a language of its own is only half a nation*” for, like Tacitus, he saw “the language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered is ever

⁶⁹¹See, Tilakasiri, J *Religion, Language and Politics in the Development of Higher Education in Sri Lanka (1940-1990)* Inaugural OH Wijesekere Memorial Lecture, Colombo 21st September 1990.

⁶⁹² *Ceylon Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council XX 1911- 1912* Volume 1, p227.

⁶⁹³Jayawickrama, MS “Remembering a great teacher” 28/5/69 ? paper unknown, SLNA Pkt. LB/4579.

⁶⁹⁴ Woodward, FL “The Advantages of a Knowledge of the Mother-Tongue” Address To Ceylon Social Reform Society, cited in Russell *Communal Politics*... ..p272.

the language of the slave.”⁶⁹⁵ The school was seen as a centre for oriental culture and unashamedly wanted their “boys to be nationalists, patriots, who will be ready not only to talk but to *act* for their country’s welfare.”⁶⁹⁶

Woodward’s nationalist inclinations were advanced in the face of a real and alarming decline in cultural consciousness under a subtle but constant colonial erosion. To him the elevation of the national language was pivotal to any reversal of fortune. However, far from simply an aspect of nationalism, Woodward saw language as part of the global need for infinite variety rather than homogeneity, a rather prescient and contemporary view.

We are often told that the day of small nations is over, and that they must merge in the great peoples.....; that the time has long gone by when a people...can preserve its individuality in the grinding mill of the great world-process; that there is no need for such to last any longer. I regard this belief as a great mistake.⁶⁹⁷

Woodward was not caught in some chauvinistic rejection of English, which he saw as an international *lingua franca*. He had a clear understanding of the links between language, culture, and religion, and the affirmation of self, community and nation.

He brought this *national* perception and outlook into his educational approach in Mahinda College, insisting on the learning of Sinhala and certainly not prohibiting its use in the school grounds, as many schools mandated and punished. He built Mahinda, “in spite of every obstacle, opposition and discouragement, [into] *the* pillar of Buddhist education and hence Buddhism itself - in the South”.⁶⁹⁸ This comment of Pearce’s is not simple hyperbole. The southern part of Sri Lanka is culturally distinct⁶⁹⁹ (even the curry is hotter) and made a disproportionately greater

⁶⁹⁵ Woodward, FL. “The Nation and the Mother-Tongue” *Ceylon National Review*- the organ of the *Ceylon Social Reform Society* Vol. III No.8 February-June 1909, pp2 & 3. Woodward’s emphasis. Woodward wrote a similar article in the same journal in July 1906.

It is interesting to note that Dr CWW Kannangara, who became Minister for Education in 1931 and a significant educational pioneer, had obviously absorbed Woodward’s arguments sufficiently that later commentators attribute the aforementioned quotations to Kannangara,

eg Weeraratne, WG, *Buddhist Re-awakening in the 19th & 20th Centuries- Some Prominent Personages*. (Colombo: Malalasekere Institute of Buddhist Education and Culture, 1992.) p12. Weeraratne does, however, acknowledge the importance and stature of Woodward (p8) and includes him among his ‘prominent personages’. As with many such examples, Weeraratne was, of course, an Old Boy of Mahinda College.

⁶⁹⁶ Pearce, FG, “Hopes and Achievements.....” p34.

⁶⁹⁷ Woodward, FL. “The Nation and the Mother-Tongue” p1.

⁶⁹⁸ Pearce “Si Monumentum..” p3.

⁶⁹⁹This distinction has most recently manifested in the rise of the Marxist JVP, which generated a bloody uprising in the South in the 1980s leading to economic and social decline in the south in addition to horror stories of extra-judicial killings and disappearances.

contribution to the nationalist movement and Buddhist Revival. The influence of Mahinda College in that formation cannot be underestimated since, as Pearce rightly suggests, it was the pillar of Buddhist education in the South, which considerably exaggerated its influence on the Buddhist Revival and on the nationalist movement to which it was inextricably connected. The teaching of Sinhala (and Pali) were integral aspects of this engendered national outlook.

The Elevation of Buddhism.

As has been suggested, Woodward's significant contribution to the Buddhist Revival was principally through the College and its impact on national elite formation with a substantial Buddhist inflection. The College was a significant vehicle, the sole Buddhist instrument in the South, for diffusion of the particularly laicised Buddhism which, as Obeyesekere has suggested, became the pronounced ideology of the educated Buddhist bourgeoisie. This influence makes Woodward's contribution to national formation extraordinarily important, and while he was one of many contributors, he provided, through the College, a continuing foundation for dissemination of the new Buddhist ideology.

Woodward's influence, though, was oblique, rather than directed at the barricades, for he was anything but a fervent religious proselytiser. He avoided moralising and preaching and "... was never one to push his views down other people's throats [though if] asked.....he expressed himself... uncompromisingly."⁷⁰⁰ There was no doubt his assumption of responsibility for Buddhist education in the senior classes was very deliberate, which is why it probably unnerved the BTS Board. He set his undeniable stamp upon the views and understanding of Buddhism by his pupils, promoting his highly laicised view of Buddhism, distinct from its origins, and emphasising personal access to the scriptures through the English translations he principally provided for his pupils.

Many of these translated stories were later printed in the *Mahinda College Magazine* which Woodward founded, and which was later printed in purple ink because Woodward himself always wrote in purple ink.⁷⁰¹ Woodward, like many at that time with a 'message', was inclined to seek multiple re-publication in different journals and then to collect them into 'tracts' for additional distribution, even collecting and consolidating them still further into book form, thus ensuring a surprising level of public penetration.

His translations were frequently published in the *Ceylon Daily News* Vesak editions, the Colombo based TS journal, the *Buddhist*, the British

⁷⁰⁰Pearce "Si Monumentum..." p9.

⁷⁰¹ This is a link to Woodward's Theosophic roots where purple was regarded with spiritual significance. It also demonstrates the almost slavish regard often granted to Woodward's views and habits.

Buddhist Review, the *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon*, the *Young Citizen* and the *Adyar Bulletin*, (the latter being TS journals) and probably elsewhere in journals that have long since ceased. I have come across Woodward's translations, as far as I can ascertain, in every Buddhist publication in English then available in Ceylon, so the dissemination of his work was widespread, well known, respected and obviously much sought after among the educated elite which, as has been suggested elsewhere, disproportionately controlled the nationalist agenda.

Some of these translations were later collected by Woodward and published, in 1925, when Woodward was Librarian at the Adyar Oriental Library,⁷⁰² as a single edition, simply called *Buddhist Stories*. In the preface, Woodward gives some indication of his intentions. Firstly, these are stories, not simply scriptural translations, like his *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, published in the same year. They were taken mainly from the *Commentary* on the *Dhammapada*, and used to illustrate the moral verses of the *Dhammapada* itself (which Woodward also translated⁷⁰³ and used in his teaching). He also took tales from other canonical books of the *Tipitaka*, and from the rich store of the *Jataka* or Birth Stories. Secondly, as Woodward himself emphasises, "I have made a choice of the best *short* stories in Buddhist literature",⁷⁰⁴ since many Buddhist stories and parables tend to be long, digressive and involved. This is clearly the educator at work, providing accessible, moral tales that will not tax the interest of a pupil, but which disseminate the Buddhist message in clear unequivocal story-form with missionary intent.

The sheer volume of Buddhist scripture, parables and commentaries, necessitated selection, and while constraints like length were obvious, there were nonetheless highly personal aspects of selection that inevitably intruded and which were in a sense, biographical. It seems, on reflection, ironic indeed that he titled the first story of his collection "Solitude and Service", a parable personal in its evocation. And there is something of Victorian morality that pervades titles such as "Honour Old Age", "Inattention", "Haste to do Good", "The Weapon of Goodwill", "Guard your Thoughts", "Excess of Zeal", and so on. It is true also that the selection of stories emphasised those stories which were culturally familiar, like "The Hare in the Moon" (a motif observable in nearly every Sri Lankan temple), "Kisa Gotami and the Mustard Seed", or the

⁷⁰² The Library, located within the Theosophical Society Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, is a respected institution with a fine oriental manuscript collection begun by Olcott.

⁷⁰³ Woodward, FL *The Buddha's Path of Virtue- a translation of the Dhammapada* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1921.)

⁷⁰⁴ Woodward FL *Buddhist Stories -translated from the Pali* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1925), pv. Woodward's emphasis.

“Blind Men and the Elephant”, a story equally familiar to those in the West.

Whatever use there was of culturally familiar tales, however, there was nonetheless an emphasis on stories that illustrated firmly held views about duty, service towards others, moderation, modesty and moral rectitude - all emphasised nineteenth century Protestant values, observable in their influence on the Buddhism of the Buddhist Revival. It was a Buddhism tied profoundly to individual duty and moral enactment, couched in recognisable and valorised indigenous cultural, linguistic and religious terminology.

Woodward’s influence extended beyond his translations and Buddhist teaching into areas of concrete enactment, where his example provided pupils with a positive model of behaviour. He would attend the Buddhist temple with his pupils⁷⁰⁵ on religious occasions, like *Vesak* and *poya* days, and take *Attha-Sil*⁷⁰⁶. Here was individual lay participation and commitment encouraged in a way that lowered the barriers between lay and priestly domains. It was also stunning affirmation of indigenous religious observance having an Englishman follow Buddhist rituals generally regarded by British expatriates as incomprehensible, primitive and pagan practice, a point not lost on his pupils and the surrounding local community at the time.

In his *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon and Other Papers*,⁷⁰⁷ Woodward gives a graphic picture of a “Buddhist Sabbath in Ceylon”, rising at dawn to don the simple garb - a vest and two white clothes, upper and lower - of an *Upasaka*, or lay devotee, and walking bare-foot in procession with others in the chill morning air to the temple. He describes the women also dressed in white, bearing flat baskets of flowers, fragrant *namal*, *aralia* (frangipanni), white jasmine and blood red hibiscus, to place in the temple standing within its sandy courtyard, its *dagaba* (pagoda) tapering skyward and the sprawling, sacred bo-tree sheltering the “subdued yet joyous crowd”. While his description is a detailed depiction of a Buddhist ritual event, his commentary occasionally

⁷⁰⁵de Silva, AB Dionysius “Woodward- great Buddhist educationalist” 27/5/69 paper unknown, SLNA Pkt. 14148.

⁷⁰⁶*Vesak* or *Wesak*: is the full moon day in May which marks the day of the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and death. *Vesak* was not a holiday until Olcott influenced British authorities to proclaim it.

Poya: are days linked to phases of the moon (new, quarter and full). Likewise these were not holidays at the time.

Attha-Sil: is taking eight of the 10 priestly vows - to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual conduct, lying, drugs and liquor, food after mid-day, entertainment, bodily adornment and high beds ie sleep on the floor. Though this makes nine, the last two are usually combined.

⁷⁰⁷Woodward, FL. *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon and Other Papers* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1914). Woodward dedicated the book “To Sirius A Lover of Ceylon”. Sirius was the code name of CW Leadbeater in the *Lives of Alcyone*.... I am grateful to the Manor in Sydney for a copy of this rare book.

intrudes to correct the impressions of English readers and critics of Buddhism.

Glancing over the faces, one finds no trace of that pessimistic resignation which the ignorant attribute to the followers of the Buddha.⁷⁰⁸

Woodward describes the rituals of taking Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (The Triple Gem- *triratna*) under the guidance of the *Thera* (Elder) of the monastery and the commitment to *Attha-Sil*. What follows, at nightfall, is a sermon on the merit to be acquired from the day's devotions. Occasionally a layman "puts a question on some knotty point" and the monk replies by quoting the Buddha's words. "There is no speculation. The canon is final. It is enough. You must not venture to add your *ditthi* (view)...."

While, as Woodward points out, this intense conservatism has preserved the Pali texts, he again ventures his own opinion regarding the need for re-evaluation, using the words of his friend Caroline Rhys Davids, then president of the Pali Text Society, to suggest that if the *Metteyya Buddha* [the Buddha to Come] was to arrive, doubtless he would "recast" the Dharma as a "gospel and a philosophy built out of the knowledge and the needs of today."⁷⁰⁹ This, again, advances views he emphasised to his pupils - the need for a fresh examination of the *Dharma*, as well as allusion to his firm belief in a *Metteyya Buddha* who would re-invigorate the Dharma.

The evening sermon presents a scene of tranquil beauty,

The ancient trees, hung with coloured lamps, the soft outline of the dome thrown against the velvet blackness of the star-spangled sky, the wreathing incense-smoke, the flickering candles, the hushed silence of the pauses in the monk's address, and, now and again, a quick patter of bo-leaves overhead as the breeze arises and dies away again, the white-robed crowd covering the sandy court; while on the ear falls the ceaseless trill of crickets from all sides- all makes for an impression of peace and beauty that will never fade from memory.⁷¹⁰

But it was merely a prelude to the evening *bana*, or preaching of the Dharma, an all-night recitation of the *suttas* in a number of shifts, till morning, a ritual of considerable endurance.

⁷⁰⁸Woodward *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon* p4. Woodward's comment is a pointed riposte to the generally held colonial view of Buddhism as nihilistic and depressingly fatalistic.

⁷⁰⁹Woodward FL *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon* p8, quoting C. Rhys Davids *Buddhism* (London: Home University Library), p247.

⁷¹⁰Woodward *Pictures*.... p10&11.

While Woodward restricts his description to the ceremony at hand, there was more significance to these events than Woodward reveals. The gap between lay and priestly domains was distinct at the time and it was unusual for the Sinhala, English-educated classes, let alone an Englishmen, to observe *Attha-Sil*. At *Vesak*, in 1909, however, a number of prominent Buddhist professional men and government officials in Galle, 24 in all, including Woodward, set the example of lay involvement to others by observing *Attha-Sil*. This was an important statement to the community, reviving practices that had long fallen into disuse, an action in keeping with the aims of the Buddhist Revival, and an encouragement still evident in the activities of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) to this day.⁷¹¹

It seems Woodward conducted himself with “an enthusiasm rare even in a born Buddhist”⁷¹² (the unfortunate sign of a convert) and after the midday repast Woodward gave a long sermon on the nature of *dana* and the merit acquired by Mr and Mrs Jayasundere who had made all the arrangements and provided the meals. As was his inclination, he could not resist some fun and observed he was the same age as a 93 year old member of the party, only reversed!

The observance of *Attha-Sil* was repeated in most years thereafter and Woodward was always a participant,⁷¹³ contributing significantly to the revival of lay participation. Woodward also brought the temple to the school and initiated ceremonies where pupils would offer *dana* or alms to the monks in the Olcott Hall. He, too, would participate, washing and wiping “the monks’ feet as they came into the hall single-file for the almsgiving” and later helping serve the meal to the monks “with great humility”.⁷¹⁴

Beyond this ritualistic participation, Woodward made little outward show of his religious adherence. His was an emphasis on inward dwelling of faith manifested in action and treatment of others - an austere Victorian and Puritan approach to faith. It was similar to the kind of manifest faith of Victorian figures like Woodward’s acquaintance and Governor of Ceylon (1913-1916), Lord Chalmers. Chalmers was a fellow Pali translator for the PTS, though Woodward was sometimes critical of his work - “I find many textual errors in Chalmers’ [translation].His work is superficial as a translation - and

⁷¹¹See Bond *The Buddhist Revival*

⁷¹²Ratnatunga, PD. “Frank Lee Woodward” *The Buddhist* Vol. XXIII No.3 July 1952, Colombo: YMBA, p50.

⁷¹³ Ratnatunga, PD. “Frank Lee Woodward” p50.

⁷¹⁴Peiris, W “Architect of Mahinda” *Radio Times*- Weekly magazine of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation Vol. 23 No. 12, 26 March-2 April 1971, p2. Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka differs from that of Thailand where the traditional early morning line of monks go to the households for *dana*. In Sri Lanka, this is not the practice generally, and householders usually supply the monks at the temple.

he omits a good deal.”⁷¹⁵ Nevertheless, he respected Chalmers and they met again when Woodward visited England in 1925. He described “old Chalmers” as “Certainly an old Roman in his last birth. In many ways resembling old Fitzgerald [author of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*] whom I remember as a boy when I lived on the east coast among the fishermen”.⁷¹⁶ He was disappointed later, though, when Chalmers, after his remarriage in 1933, ceased to be interested in Pali translation- “Well, this comes of marrying a widder at 80 years of age!!”⁷¹⁷

Chalmers’ austere ‘Roman’ demeanour and caustic manner, however, provided an exterior reserve that deflected attention from his extensive private charity. As a young man in Treasury, he worked quietly in his own time, unrecognised, among the missions in Whitechapel, much as later he acted as anonymous financial benefactor to the education of many young men at Cambridge when he was Master of Peterhouse.⁷¹⁸ This was an expression of *piety*, a much maligned manifestation of faith which, with the nineteenth century growth of individualism, often assumed the shape of pompous, obsequious self-advertisement. Nevertheless, in its authentic form, piety sought simply to serve, and valued anonymity.

It was this characteristic Protestant piety and Puritan non-conformity (rather than conventional Anglicanism or Catholicism) that shaped the Buddhism of the Revival, which in turn influenced the nationalist movement. While not Woodward’s invented ‘tradition’, it was he who most advanced this shape of Buddhism in the South and influenced others more widely through his educational views, his English translation of scriptures, and the products of the school. Woodward was a key ‘toiler in the vineyard’ that provided a depth and penetration of these social and religious influences.

This shaping of traditions, values and beliefs is a subtle and controversial aspect of cultural formation, particularly in respect of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, that holds firmly to the view of itself as ‘original’, authentic and resistant to innovation and accretion. However, as Hobsbawm and others have demonstrated, shaping and re-inventing ‘traditions’ is a cultural dynamic intended to facilitate, or resist, change, or even both simultaneously. What such ‘inventions’ or modifications of ‘tradition’ provide is “the sanction of precedent, social continuity and natural law”,⁷¹⁹ the cloak and authority of enduring antiquity to what are, in fact,

⁷¹⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 16 December 1946. (FOSL).

⁷¹⁶ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 12 March 1945. (FOSL). Fitzgerald spent much of his latter years in Kessingland on the bleak Norfolk coast where Woodward’s father had been parish priest. Woodward undoubtedly knew Fitzgerald, as the village then, and still, remains extremely small.

⁷¹⁷ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 1 December 1948. (FOSL).

⁷¹⁸ Matherson, “Lord Chalmers (1858-1938)” *Proceedings of the British Academy* Vol.25 1939, p326.

⁷¹⁹Hobsbawm, E “The Invention of Tradition” p2.

novel attributes or emphases. Like the duck, re-shaped or invented 'tradition' is serene unaltered calm on the surface, while, beneath, the feet paddle furiously to counter the current.

The use of the term 'Buddhist Revival' in colonial Ceylon is itself a clue: the text indicates resurrection of ancient but neglected practices or ideas; the sub-text points to a process of innovation and invention in order to address needs unknown in the past, neoteric construction requiring the security and sanction of antiquity. Certainly, in colonial Ceylon, Buddhist culture was subject to extraordinary erosion by Christianity and western culture generally. The tenacity with which Sinhala Buddhist culture resisted is tribute to its inherent creative ability to re-invent its traditions in the face of such assault. It was a religious and cultural challenge the Sinhala had endured historically before, through waves of Hindu influence and challenges by Mahayana doctrine to its Theravadin tradition.

As one would expect, the re-invention of Theravadin Buddhist 'tradition', its 'Protestant-isation', in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, involved adoption of motifs, methods, ideas and emphases of the western culture and religion that posed the threat. Again, the absorption of Hindu and Mahayana elements in Sinhala Buddhism, so complete they are not even remarkable,⁷²⁰ are testimony to that fact historically, so it should not be surprising to see the absorption of 'Protestant' elements in the Buddhist Revival, amplified as they were by 'sympathetic' supporters like Olcott, Woodward and other Theosophical Society personages. In some senses these powerful personalities were the 'Trojan horse' that lead many of these influences into the midst of Sinhala Buddhism and facilitated their absorption.

The influence of the Theosophical Society and its advocates has been extremely pervasive and persistent, an example of which is the leading contemporary Buddhist figure of the 1970s and 80s, both in Sri Lanka and abroad, the Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya. He joined the *Sangha* in 1914 and became acquainted with the German monk Nyanatiloka, (also a friend of Woodward), who told him of the English monk Allan Bennett (Macgregor), better known as Ananda Metteyya, and adopted the Sanskrit form of the name. Bennett was an early English Buddhist monk and, like many, was influenced by the TS and remained close to Annie Besant, though he rejected TS theology.⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ To western sensibilities, the inclusion of Hindu deities and Mahayana features in Theravadin Buddhist temples, comes as a shock. The absorption of these elements is so complete as to be unremarkable, though they represent to the western mind a significant modification of 'original' doctrine.

⁷²¹ There are many contemporary references to Bennett (as he was generally known) that offer a quaint English understanding of Buddhism at the time.

The Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya taught Pali at the BTS Ananda College, Colombo, about 1924 and came under the influence of Dharmapala, then a vehement critic of the Theosophical Society, who urged him to write against the TS. Instead, Balangoda's delving into Theosophy seemed to have left lasting influences on his view of Buddhism, including mystical motifs, visions, and ideas of a particularly TS hue.⁷²² He became, in turn, an influential Buddhist teacher, becoming, in 1958, professor of Buddhism at Vidyodaya Pirivena, now a recognised university and centre for Buddhist studies.⁷²³ So the TS influence continues, echoing through many sources and personalities into the present, till origins blur and recede from view. After all, the TS itself borrowed Hindu and Buddhist motifs, re-interpreted them and provided their own particular European and Protestant inflection before re-introducing them into the Eastern context; they were ideas and motifs well churned throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, down to the present.

The way in which these TS influences have persisted accentuates the importance of individuals like Woodward. His efforts promoting language, national culture and religion at Mahinda, though, cannot be appreciated without understanding of the decline of culture in the nineteenth century. Woodward's friend, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, himself a Hindu Tamil, (and nephew of Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy) described how, when he met Blavatsky and Olcott in 1880, he was a Police Magistrate in Kalutara and "Buddhism in Ceylon was...at a very low ebb indeed.....abandoned.....especially among the English-educated classes." More poignantly, he saw Buddhists ashamed to acknowledge their religion, and in "the Courts I was sometimes saddened to see in the witness-box Buddhists pretending to be Christians, and taking their oath on the Bible."⁷²⁴

So pronounced was this decline in a Buddhist "voice" and advocacy that even in 1914 there was not a single Buddhist representative in the

See *Morning Post*, *Leeds Mercury*, *Yorkshire Post* 24/4/1908 for accounts of his return to England as a monk.

As the mythology of Bennett magnified, Dr. Paul Brunton (who in fact never obtained a doctorate) wrote a hagiographic piece "Pioneer of Western Buddhism" in the *Ceylon Daily News Vesak Number* May 1941. Brunton, again a much TS influenced figure, was himself not shy of a little self mythology, and though well known for a number of popular books like *A Search in Secret India* and *The Secret Path* published in 1935, he was a somewhat sad figure of the western 'guru brigade'.

See Masson, JM *My Father's Guru- a journey through Spirituality and Disillusion* (Reading Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1993.)

⁷²²See Gombrich & Obeyesekere *Buddhism Transformed* p300 for an account of Balangoda's mystical visions and TS experiences.

⁷²³ For a closer examination of the theology of Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya, See Gombrich & Obeyesekere *Buddhism Transformed* p299ff.

⁷²⁴Arunachalam, Sir P. "Prize Day Speech, July 30 1914" *The Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. II, No.2, December 1914, p1. Reprinted from the *Ceylon Morning Leader*.

Legislative Council, despite the overwhelming Buddhist majority of the population. This decline of Buddhism under colonial domination, that Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam identified, was sufficient, in the 18th century, to see the institution of *Upasampada* (higher ordination) die out and have to be re-introduced from Thailand (Siam), a moment which marked the beginning of a Buddhist revival.⁷²⁵

The remarks of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam indicate the breadth of liberal ethnic tolerance he shared with Woodward. A man of immense sensitivity, he was a significant figure in the first wave of nationalist agitation for constitutional reform up to about 1922: “Indeed in the years between 1917 to 1921 the leadership in agitation for constitutional reform was in Arunachalam’s hands, as was the movement for the formation of the Ceylon National Congress,”⁷²⁶ which was founded in 1919 and which met in Olcott Hall at Mahinda College in 1926. The legacy of this cautious constitutionalist, who died in 1922, became eroded by more political men who assumed the agenda of reform, assuming a militancy that Woodward, with his odd elitism, would have probably found disquieting.

While he may have been a moderate nationalist, Arunachalam earned the resentment of the colonial establishment, which viewed even his moderation with suspicion. Ultimately he was to receive a knighthood but his career was dogged by rejection and racism. Governor Blake (1903-1907) rejected Arunachalam for the post of Auditor-General and for a position on the High Court, where a European, in his mind, would have more ‘appropriate’ legal experience.⁷²⁷ He was rejected, too, by the resistant and conservative Governor McCallum (1907-1913) as “unfitted for a ‘revenue appointment’”.⁷²⁸ Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam was not a unique case, merely an example of the continual racism that pervaded the civil service and the suspicion earned by those, like himself and Woodward, who advocated moderate nationalism in Ceylon. It took little to be viewed as ‘undesirable’ or ‘radical’, which adds considerable significance to the moderate nationalism advocated by Woodward.

Advocating nationalism.

The Theosophical Society was intimately involved in the establishment of the Indian Congress Party and Besant, in particular, was extremely active in the Indian nationalist movement. This nationalist tone of the Theosophical Society, however, would be considered cautious today, and was so regarded by nationalists at the time. Besant articulated a view of Ceylonese nationalism on her first visit to Ceylon, on her assumption of

⁷²⁵ Weeraratne *Buddhist Re-awakening in the 19th & 20th Centuries* p4.

⁷²⁶ de Silva *A History of Sri Lanka* ,p386.

⁷²⁷ CO337/21/11436.

⁷²⁸ CO337/21/38053.

the Presidency of the Society, after the death of Olcott in 1907. In an address to the Ceylon Social Reform Society she identified the factors inhibiting Ceylonese nationalism as residing in “a deep sense of inferiority, an exaggerated regard for the West and the absence of pride of country.”⁷²⁹ She expressed a nascent internationalism when she suggested:

You should take what is valuable in English civilization....but remain Sinhalese through it all.....do not debase but only enrich, not nationalise but only increase the circle of your national thought.⁷³⁰

Woodward too, adhered to this ‘nationalism with a high moral tone’, and was a foundation member of the Ceylon Social Reform Society which Besant addressed. While organisations like the Ceylon Social Reform Society were important agencies for the propagation of TS ideas, once again, Woodward’s principal instrument of influence on the formation of a national consciousness was Mahinda College. Nationalism was embedded in the school’s history and nurtured by Woodward. It was fostered by visits to the school by nationalist advocates like Anagarika Dharmapala, Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, Col. Olcott, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, and focused by events like conventions of the Ceylon National Congress held at the Olcott Hall in the school. It is not surprising, then, that Mahinda was also the place where the Sri Lankan National Anthem, *Namo Namu Matha*, was written by its music teacher Ananda Samarakoon and first sung by students of the school in November, 1940.⁷³¹

The perceived nationalist influence of BTS schools can be judged by a secret report on the Buddhist schools commissioned at the time of the communal riots of 1915. The report by H.L Dowbiggin, the Inspector

⁷²⁹ Wickremeratne “Annie Besant, Theosophism and Buddhist Nationalism” p66. Wickremeratne suggests this address was the only time Besant spoke to a non-Buddhist or non-Theosophical organisation on her tour. This is strictly true but the Social Reform Society was obviously highly influenced by Theosophical Society personalities. Woodward was editor of their magazine *The Ceylon National Review* and Mrs Musaeus Higgins (of the TS run Musaeus College) and Mr Peter de Abrew, manager of Musaeus, were strongly featured in the group though it was presided over by the later influential and noted art historian Dr A.K Coomaraswamy. According to Woodward, though, he became a Theosophist in 1907. [Durai Raja Sinham (ed) *Homage to Ananda K Coomaraswamy A Garland of Tributes* (Buckinghamshire: University Microfilms, ND) p156]. See *Ceylon National Review* July 1906 p1.

⁷³⁰ Besant, *A Buddhist Popular Lectures Delivered in Ceylon in 1907* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1908) p54. Cited in Wickremeratne, *Annie Besant* p66.

⁷³¹ Souvenir Programme- Musical Evening to commemorate the Memory of Ananda Samarakoon, 1998. Brief articles on the life and work of Samarakoon by Dr Vitharana & old student Kalyana de Silva.

General of Police, written at a time of heightened anxiety and paranoia, presents a lurid picture of blame.

In the course of inquires into the cause of the recent disturbances one point is very clearly established, viz: that the whole responsibility for them rests with persons who have written and preached in such a manner as to foster contempt for authority and to stir up feelings of ill-will between classes. Prominent among them have been persons connected with Buddhist and Theosophical Societies.⁷³²

Dowbiggin's singled out the BTS Buddhist schools for particular attention. He saw them as an "unwholesome influence" which did not "appear to encourage affection towards the British Empire". Further, he believed, "politics of a vicious type" was preached in BTS schools and even found its way into school magazines.

In fact, to our present sensibilities, a very mild form of nationalism was encouraged in the schools along with an odd regard for Empire - the Union Jack flew at each school and 'God Save the King' was sung each day. Woodward himself exhibited these contradictions for he never lost pride in things English and was even reported to have been greatly downhearted when Kitchener was lost at sea during the First World War. The nationalism espoused, by Woodward and other Theosophists, was really a self-determination, or dominion status, under the wing of empire, an odd kind of early internationalism.

While Anagarika Dharmapala is given the honour of being regarded as Sri Lanka's proto-nationalist, his roots are firmly within the soil of Theosophical influence. Even his chosen name 'Anagarika' (homeless), while a classic epithet for a monk, was used by him to "denote an interstitial role.... to stand between layman and monk",⁷³³ domains traditionally distinct, but which the TS-influenced Protestant Buddhism strove to break down with its laicised emphasis. Dharmapala's more strident, extreme nationalism severed the links with the Theosophical Society and, though Woodward approved Dharmapala's visits to Mahinda, he regarded him as a "whole-hogger",⁷³⁴ and inclined to "suffer

⁷³² LT.Col. Stevenson Collection. Dowbiggin, HL. I.G.P "Report on Buddhist Schools", confidential report to the Governor, Lord Chalmers, sent in response to dispatch 520 of the CO Nov 1915.

Stevenson's collection contains all of Chalmers' papers from his period as Governor. Stevenson is Chalmers' grandson.

⁷³³ Gombrich, R & Obeyesekere, G *Buddhism Transformed- religious change in Sri Lanka*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988) p205.

⁷³⁴ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 18 February 1946. (FOSL).

from *Mana* (swelled head)⁷³⁵ as a result of worship by “fanatics” in the West.

The local Government Agent, Lushington, kept an eye on Dharmapala’s activities, though he distinguished him clearly from the actions of the local Theosophical Society in a manner Dowbiggin failed to do. He noted in his diary, in October 1906, the presence of Dharmapala in Galle, “stirring dissent among missionary converts”,⁷³⁶ particularly at the Catholic Mission, though he noted with relief, a year or so later, that the Buddhist resurgence had died down.⁷³⁷ Another year later, however, Dharmapala was back again “stirring up trouble”, though Lushington, whose role involved the provision of basic government intelligence, was able to observe that,

The Buddhists here lean towards the Theosophical teaching and do not go with the Maha Bodhi Society [Dharmapala’s organisational base] which is much more inclined to be anti-English and anti-Christian.⁷³⁸

This observation, however, did not mean the Theosophical Society was regarded as part of accepted European society. Despite the fact that the school, then within the Fort, was no more than a short block from the *Kachcheri*, Lushington obviously had little contact with Woodward, calling him ‘W Woodward’ when he wrote, 26 October 1907 that he had, a queer request made to me by W. Woodward- Headmaster of Mahinda College- viz. that I preside at a meeting of welcome to Mrs Besant, who, though she succeeds to Col. Olcott, is not a Buddhist but a Hindu!

I declined as politely as I could [for] I have no sympathy with Mrs Besant or her works. ⁷³⁹

Thus the Theosophical Society remained outside the *laager* of polite European society, yet not so distant that the distinction between it and Dharmapala’s Maha Bodhi Society was not appreciated.

While the TS, because of its perceived political moderation,⁷⁴⁰ was seen as having lost a great deal of its influence by the beginning of the

⁷³⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 April 1949. (FOSL).

⁷³⁶*Diary of the Government Agent Southern Province* 17 October 1906. RG 43/14. SLNA

⁷³⁷*Diary GA-SP* 25 March 1908, SLNA RG 43/16.

⁷³⁸*Diary GA-SP* 17 September 1909 SLNA RG 43/17. There is an odd error in Lushington’s Diary where he refers, obviously to Dharmapala, as the “Irish Priest”. Whether this is an unintended error or simply a part of the rumoured confusion of Dharmapala’s origins, I cannot comment. The Maha Bodhi Society continues to the present.

⁷³⁹*Diary GA-SP* 26 October 1907 SLNA RG43/15. The TS, like cult groups today, use publicly recognised figures to add credibility to their public position, appropriating the recognition of others for their cause.

twentieth century, this does not accord sufficient weight to the manner in which it influenced individuals and permeated organisations. Despite the ‘crusades’ of Olcott and later, Besant, the Theosophical Society tended not to assume a central role. It chose, instead, to influence from the periphery, through its institutions and various ‘public interest’ and educational organisations. Like the Fabian Society’s relationship with British Labour, the TS discussed and promoted the ideas while others fired the shots.

The first truly grass-roots national action to emerge was the temperance movement of 1904 which, not surprisingly, given its activist tradition, arose in the South. This movement encapsulated the growing impact of the Buddhist Revival with its Protestant inflection; it was moralistic, puritanical, and labelled European Christianity as degenerate, an interesting retro-projection of exactly the characteristics assumed by the Christians towards indigenous culture and religion.

Most religions, except Christianity, had prohibitions on alcohol, a fact, along with the notorious overindulgence of some Europeans, which gave an anti-Christian bias to the campaign. Ironically, the methods and outlook of the Christian temperance movement were emulated in this movement, “prompted by a conscious reaction against cultural westernisation, which was identified with alcohol, meat-eating and Christianity”.⁷⁴¹

The movement arose and dissipated fairly quickly. Temperance societies (*amadyapana samagam*) formed swiftly about April/May 1904 near Galle and spread rapidly. By August, their influence had spread from Colombo to Tangalla and even to Jaffna. By year’s end most were moribund. Leadership was provided initially by local interests, but rapidly attracted prominent community leaders like DB Jayatilaka, Principal of the BTS Ananda College in Colombo, DSS Wickremeratne, secretary of the BTS and SNW Hulugalle MLC. Olcott came from India, in September 1904, to support the temperance movement and spoke, while in Galle, on the property of Muhandiram Thomas Amarasuriya, principal contributor to Mahinda College, who was also an arrack renter.

Rogers⁷⁴² feels that Amarasuriya manipulated Olcott (in order to undermine the temperance cause) into placing Woodward, as Principal of Mahinda College, in charge of temperance societies in the southern province. It is difficult to imagine Woodward allowing himself to be used in this way, though the obvious financial control Amarasuriya

⁷⁴⁰ de Silva *History of Sri Lanka*, p378.

⁷⁴¹ Rogers, JD *Cultural Nationalism and Social Reform: The 1904 Temperance Movement in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Studies in Society and Culture, 1994), p13.

⁷⁴²Rogers, *Cultural Nationalism and Social Reform* p16.

wielded over Mahinda lends some credibility to the assertion. More likely Amarasuriya simply saw an opportunity to maintain a weather eye on the movement. Woodward's views on alcohol were akin to his views on eating meat - it was best not to indulge for reasons of health and "psychic effects".⁷⁴³ Like Olcott, his mentor, Woodward abhorred the social impact of alcohol and took the cause seriously - as he did most things - and was no pawn of Amarasuriya.

Jayasekera⁷⁴⁴ claims the 1904 temperance movement was initiated and led by the poor as a reaction to social decline under colonialism, but Rogers shows it was the rising middle class elite that moved quickly to assume control. What is most interesting, is the mimetic manner in which the temperance movement emulated its Christian counterpart and turned it to its own shape and use, much as the Buddhist Revival modelled itself. As a result, the temperance movement cannot be separated from other nationalist and religious movements of the time, a fact reinforced by frequent occurrence of the same names and the ubiquitous presence of the TS.

The 1904 temperance campaign was Woodward's first involvement in a national action and it undoubtedly appealed to him, as he was unable to perceive any national political action outside the context of its cultural and moral dimensions. By 1905, a further vehicle for the many broad national and cultural issues he advocated, arose in the form of the Ceylon Social Reform Society, one of the early 'nationalist' organisations, however moderate it may appear to modern sensibilities. The aim of the Society was, however, much broader than any political agenda and was founded to,

foster the growth of an enlightened public opinion among Ceylonese, re-awaken in them a sense of the value of their own traditions and national culture- language, literature, art, music and dress- and to promote amongst them that unity and mutual respect which alone can enable them to act together and exert influence of a political character, and assist each other in preserving these invaluable elements of national individuality which are now neglected and in danger of final loss.⁷⁴⁵

Woodward wrote extensively for the Society's influential journal, *The Ceylon National Review* and even edited it for a period. This was no revolutionary group, not even radically democratic, rather, it was

⁷⁴³ Gunewardene *FL Woodward* p86.

⁷⁴⁴ Jayasekera, PVJ. "Temperance and Nationalism in Sri Lanka" *Kalyani*, Vols. 3-4, 1984-5, pp289-298.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ceylon National Review* July 1906, p1. Lead editorial.

dominated by ‘constitutionalists’ who viewed with caution political reform that moved beyond the capacity of the nation to absorb change.⁷⁴⁶ It was a group, though, staunchly tolerant and communally aware, and elected an executive accordingly.

Vice-Presidents included Legislative Councillors SNW Hulugalle (who had previously been associated with the temperance movement), Sir James Pieris (later co-founder with Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam of the Ceylon National Congress), Abdul Rahiman, a leading Moor MLC, and Woodward’s friend, Gate Mudaliyar ER Gunaratna, who was on the Board of Mahinda College and who collaborated with Woodward on translations for the Pali Text Society.

In keeping with its broader cultural agenda, it was presided over by the oriental art historian Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy,⁷⁴⁷ son of the respected Tamil leader, Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy, who hailed from the same family clan as the Tamil nationalist figures Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and his more conservative brother Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan.

While not a TS organisation, its formation and membership has TS fingerprints all over it. The personalities behind the Society were people like Mrs Musaeus Higgins, Principal of the BTS Musaeus College, Peter de Abrew, manager of Musaeus College and prominent Colombo businessman, and, of course, Woodward himself.⁷⁴⁸ While their organisational contribution is acknowledged, they remain ‘servers’ on the periphery, promoting leadership by indigenous personalities. Again, Woodward’s influence tended to be diffuse and to present through the people he influenced.

Woodward became firm friends with AK Coomaraswamy, and often stayed with him and his first wife. Together they founded⁷⁴⁹ the Social Reform Society’s *Ceylon National Review*, and edited it along with the Colombo-based intellectual figure and prominent pioneer writer, WA de Silva, also previously associated with the temperance movement. It was an enduring relationship, and Woodward continued to regard Coomaraswamy as “a being of great artistic genius”,⁷⁵⁰ an opinion generally shared in the academic field, though he was, of course, not

⁷⁴⁶See “Reform of the Legislative Council” *Ceylon National Review* Vol.II, No. 4 July 1907.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ceylon National Review* July 1906 p1. Note the careful balance of Christian (Pieris), Moor (Rahiman), Buddhist (Gunaratna) and Tamil (Coomaraswamy), interests. Most of these either were fairly sympathetic to the Theosophical Society or were members.

⁷⁴⁸ These TS connections and organisational foundations are made explicit in the outline of the formation of the CSRS in the *Ceylon National Review* July 1906, p1.

⁷⁴⁹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 10 November 1942. (FOSL box 14.) “He and I started the *Ceylon National Review* (now defunct) about 1907 in Ceylon.” Actually it was started in 1906.

⁷⁵⁰ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 12 December 1947. (FOSL box 14). See also: Woodward, FL. “The Genius” in Durai Raja Singham [ed] *Homage to Ananda K Coomaraswamy: A Garland of Tributes* pp 154-156.

without his critics. Correspondence between Woodward and Coomaraswamy continued until Coomaraswamy's death in 1947; the usual small post cards and cryptic notes Coomaraswamy was in the habit of sending people.

AK Coomaraswamy was a polymath who made his mark initially in geology, before branching into oriental art, religion and archaeology. He was a larger-than-life figure who even died a notable death, deliberately choosing to walk out into the garden of his Boston home, to die lying on the grass, a Hindu death close to the soil. He was a man of great depth and sensitivity whom Woodward remembered fondly, relating how at one time, about 1905, when he was staying with Coomaraswamy near Kandy, Coomaraswamy received a gift of two enormous 'art' vases from a local dealer. Coomaraswamy was appalled at a gift of such horrid kitsch, but was unable to refuse without offence. After much discussion, Woodward took "them down the garden and accidentally dropped them, [raising] a cry of lamentation. We buried them by night."⁷⁵¹ It was a Woodward solution, albeit couched in much amusement, and Coomaraswamy was relieved of responsibility for their disposal.

This unlikely pair were hardly the stuff of revolution, and nor were they. They were men of idealism whose views on national advancement encompassed, as the *Ceylon National Review* reveals, ideas of all persuasions, from basket weaving to coin collecting, and occasionally politics. It was, after all, the *Social Reform Society*, and these were people unable to see the nation outside of a moral, cultural and aesthetic setting. One of the ideas Woodward used the CNR to promote was the matter of cremation, not necessarily a cause one would wish to die for, but one nevertheless strongly held by Woodward, who wrote numerous articles, and later issued a tract on the matter,⁷⁵² a particularly nineteenth century mode of discourse, with its antecedents reaching back into the Enlightenment, to Tom Paine and others who fanned the flames of dissent with their pamphlets. By the mid twentieth century this had become the mode of cranks and obsessional oddities, unable to access the mainstream press, though Woodward's use owes more to earlier antecedents.

Woodward's support of cremation was part of championing national culture but, as with so many issues of this kind, it harboured a TS agenda, another example of where agendas conveniently aligned. Woodward, like many other Theosophical personalities, collected through conviction or simply association, a number of other peripheral causes that held the attention. Vegetarianism was not unexpected given

⁷⁵¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 1 November 1947.(FOSL box 14)

⁷⁵² Gunewardene p81.

the TS connection, and similarly vehement opinions regarding animal welfare were also in the TS catalogue of causes, though they were also views that dwelt well with local Buddhist opinion.

A story is told of Woodward taking a hackney, a cart drawn by one of the minuscule Sri Lankan bullocks, from the Fort to Mahinda Hill, the school construction site. Along the way, the bullock earned the driver's ire and he began to beat the animal. After offering a scathing rebuke to the driver, Woodward descended the cart and continued on foot. Whether or not his views were assumed by association with the TS, they were nonetheless held by Woodward with conviction and some passion. Similarly Woodward adopted strong convictions regarding cremation, very much a TS cause. Though a common place idea today, cremation in the mid nineteenth century was a novelty in the West, and it was through the efforts of Olcott and the TS in the USA that the issue was turned into a *cause celebre*, eventually leading to its general acceptance. The death in 1876 of a TS member, Baron de Palm, (who turned out to be a fraud), provided the catalyst, for his dying wish was to be cremated - the first to take place in America. Olcott played the issue with his usual feel for publicity, and the controversy and public outrage became intense. Eventually, the cremation took place on 6 December 1876, but without the expected publicity. In a macabre twist, the Brooklyn Theatre burned down the same day, incinerating 200 people alive and, as Olcott dryly observed, "The greater cremation weakened the public interest in the lesser one".⁷⁵³

Woodward, following his mentor, Olcott, promoted the cause in Ceylon where Christian missionary activity had seen some shift in attitude away from traditional cremation to burial among most cultural and religious groups, and obviously among Christian converts. Burial among Christians and Muslims, as Woodward observed,⁷⁵⁴ derived from religious beliefs concerning the Last Trump, the literal Resurrection from the grave and the Judgement of the Dead. Woodward suggests it had never been, apart from some exceptions among the nobility of the Kandyan Kingdom, a feature of Sinhala culture till the time of the missionaries. His arguments in favour of cremation are largely based on sanitary concerns, precious land use and the threat of disease contagion, with some allusion to the nineteenth century obsessional fear of burial alive, the horror of which Edgar Allan Poe captured eloquently in his short stories.

⁷⁵³Murphet, H. *Yankee Beacon of Buddhist Light- Life of Col. Henry S. Olcott* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, 1988) p75.

⁷⁵⁴Woodward, FL "Cremation" *Ceylon National Review* July 1907 Vol. II No. 4. Organ of the *Ceylon Social Reform Society*. Edited by AK Coomaraswamy, FL Woodward & WA de Silva. Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd. p 67.

Beyond these arguments, Woodward, quoting Olcott, poses the core of the issue in the form of a test the matter must pass - is cremation “a really scientific method”.⁷⁵⁵ This seemed always to be Olcott’s concern though it is a question that echoes through many nineteenth century preoccupations - is it rational, scientific, and most importantly, progressive? These terms became almost synonymous. Despite a preoccupation with things occult, with matters of considerable emotional and psychological intensity, issues of concern among the TS were frequently couched in the language of scientific rationality and ‘progressive’ thought. Cremation was thus, another of those issues that had to pass this ultimate test in order to properly exercise the mind of any ‘thinking’ person.

The *Ceylon National Review* did attempt to address political reform but in a manner that today would be regarded as particularly cautious and conservative. Woodward’s attempt to define a political manifesto, *The True Aristocracy*, takes on many aspects of a headmaster’s moral imposition, and owes more to Plato’s *Republic* - which Karl Popper⁷⁵⁶ has characterised as the foundation of modern despotism - than any more recent political philosophy.

Woodward’s position is clear:

‘government by the best’ is the only real and ideal method of ordering the world, not the rule of the absolute monarch, nor yet that of the many-headed multitude which we wrongly call democracy.⁷⁵⁷

The ‘higher democracy’ Woodward sees as rule of the ‘best’, the true aristocrats. This elitist, oligarchic view obviously regards the equality of humankind as “the greatest fallacy ever entertained”.⁷⁵⁸ It is a view harking back to a ‘Golden Age’, which Woodward saw as literal and “not a mere utopian dream”, and from which humankind has degenerated into an infantile irresponsibility.

His remedy for “our social ills” involves firstly, a ‘doctrine of brotherhood’, wherein the those more ‘evolved’ teach the younger; secondly, a ‘doctrine of evolution’, wherein progress of one life through many forms is recognised (reincarnation); and thirdly, a ‘doctrine of Karma, wherein we reap what we sow. Grasping these doctrines would induce beings to uplift rather than crush, to display self-control, and give

⁷⁵⁵Woodward “Cremation” *CNR*, p70.

⁷⁵⁶Popper, K. *The Open Society and Its Enemies Vol II: Plato*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966)

⁷⁵⁷ Woodward, FL “The True Aristocracy” *National Monthly of Ceylon* February-March 1913, p44.

⁷⁵⁸ Woodward “The True Aristocracy” p44.

rise to a “social conscience which scarcely yet exists...”⁷⁵⁹ The point of his schema is to render mistaken a ‘one man, one vote’ view. Rather, he proposes, a ‘graded vote’ of villages voting for village representatives, who then vote for representatives at a higher level, ultimately leading to an educated and ‘wise’ council.

However it may be couched in ‘New Age’ vocabulary, it remains (as Woodward acknowledges) Plato’s *Republic* with all its totalitarian inference. It is one of the paradoxes of the TS that it encompassed values of the extreme Left and Right, wherein its influence can be traced through the occult creations of the Third Reich as well as the radical experiments of the Bauhaus. Woodward, similarly embraces these contradictions of liberality and conservatism. Woodward’s occasional but emphatic, “I’m not going to have every vulgar little tinker dictating to *me!*”,⁷⁶⁰ is probably a more explicit encapsulation of his Tory political philosophy than anything. What redeems Woodward, always, from stodgy conservatism, is his lively imagination, his genuine concern and tolerance of others, and his inability to take himself or anything else, too seriously. Nothing was safe from humour, even his firmly held views on vegetarianism⁷⁶¹.

All sins are transformed into Enlightenment- Holy! Holy! Holy!
But I love a couple of kippers [for] my breakfast.⁷⁶²

Woodward’s commitment to national values, however, was deeply felt, all-embracing, and driven by the familiar Victorian values of Duty and Service.

...Nationalism is a *Life*. It is a life of service for the nation. That means a life of doing Duty.....If you would be a true nationalist then, you must ask yourself what is your Duty to others.⁷⁶³

Woodward assumed seriously these sentiments of nationalism and exercised them through the school and his many ancillary activities. This is not nationalism as we have come to know it, with its highly political agendas, but a nationalism that moves on a broad social front. In this, Woodward’s contribution was definite and persuasive, even if largely exercised from the periphery, allowing the others to assume centre stage.

⁷⁵⁹ Woodward “The True Aristocracy” p45.

⁷⁶⁰ Pearce “Si Monumentum...” p7.

⁷⁶¹ Woodward, FL “Review of Henry Salt ‘The Logic of Vegetarianism’ ” *Ceylon National Review* July 1906 p247.

⁷⁶²Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 14 August 1947. (FOSL.)

⁷⁶³ ‘Labor Omnia Vincit’ [probably Woodward] “Playing with Fire” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. III, No. 4 August 1915, p10.

Woodward's legacy - 'The Old Boy Network'.

Woodward's basic reliance on the Public School model for education at Mahinda College produced an important by-product of significance in determining the national importance of Woodward and Mahinda College. One aspect of spread of the public school model, both in England and elsewhere, was the emergence of 'Old Boy' associations (OBAs) in the period 1870-1890,⁷⁶⁴ which became effective instruments of influence and upward mobility among the burgeoning middle class.

Woodward, educated within that 'tradition', established a Mahinda Old Boys Association in 1911⁷⁶⁵ and remained chairman of it during his tenure as principal. It still exists today and remains a powerful influence on, and resource for, the school. In many ways the OBA structure remains stronger in Sri Lanka today than it does generally in the west, another example of where "traditions" borrowed from the centre, where they have often long since declined in importance or passed out of use, tend to persist in the periphery. OBAs, alumni associations and 'Alte Herren' were originally a powerful

means of establishing common patterns of behaviour and values, but also a set of interlinked networks....a strong web of intergenerational stability and continuity.⁷⁶⁶

In a country like colonial Ceylon, these networks were as important as they were in England, providing influence, connections and intergenerational mentoring, the all important 'leg up' in politics, business or the bureaucracy. Put less euphemistically, the "strong web of intergenerational stability and continuity" could become blatant favouritism and nepotistic advancement of the 'old school tie', what Hobsbawm bluntly describes as a "potential mafia...for mutual aid"⁷⁶⁷ beyond local or regional kin. While this pejorative characterisation is often the view today in the West, it is easy to forget that these networks helped overcome the resistance of prior networks of interest, and that mentoring, of whatever kind, is an essential aspect of advancement despite the exaggerated emphasis and mythical aspects of ability based promotion.⁷⁶⁸ In Ceylon's case this network of OBA influence was

⁷⁶⁴Hobsbawm, E "Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914" in Hobsbawm, E & Ranger, T. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p295.

⁷⁶⁵"Old Boys' Day Celebrations" *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol III, No. 3 September 1917, p 26.

The OBA was formed on the 9 October 1910, but the first committee meeting took place on 30 January 1911. MCOBA News Vol.1 No.3 December 1996.

⁷⁶⁶Hobsbawm, E "Mass Producing Traditions..." p293.

⁷⁶⁷ Hobsbawm, E *Age of Empire* (New York: Vintage Random House, 1989) p179

⁷⁶⁸ This is not to suggest that ability is not a principal consideration, only that networked contacts are very often more compelling considerations. Women, for instance, have frequently suffered in promotion through lack of mentors and networks.

overlaid with the values of emerging nationalism and those of the Buddhist Revival. The country's elite was then, and remains today, surprisingly small and wields power disproportionately to the remainder of society. The networking roots of this elite frequently involved the various OBAs, so once again, the influence of the school reached well beyond the school gates, magnifying its influence and ideology. The BTS schools were founded in an atmosphere hostile to their formation, hampered by deliberately obstructionist government regulation, lack of finance, and lack of communal enthusiasm. Despite that, they fulfilled the important function of breaking the Christian monopoly, no mean achievement, but more importantly "they built up an enviable tradition and record of service."

Their alumni made their influence felt ...in politics and education, helping to quicken the pace of political agitation, generating more enlightened attitudes in social and economic issues, and engendering a pride in Buddhism, the Sinhalese language and the cultural heritage associated with these.⁷⁶⁹

While Mahinda College has produced significant personalities in politics, religion, academic achievement, cricket and social contribution, the lists one could provide would be little different than that which could be provided by any long established Public School. There are figures of Mahinda like Dr SA Wickramasinghe, one of "the most outstanding leftist leaders of Sri Lanka",⁷⁷⁰ whose career spanned half a century and profoundly influenced the Labour union and nationalist movements. Wickramasinghe, like many early Nationalists, was influenced by Gandhi and joined him in one of the famous 'salt marches'.⁷⁷¹

There was also Henry Woodward Amarasuriya (1904-1981), Woodward's name-sake, who became a significant figure in the first DS Senanayake UNP (United National Party) government as Trade Minister. Amarasuriya, an astute businessman and owner of the huge Citrus Estate of 2166⁷⁷² acres near Galle, skilfully secured better tea prices by taking sales out of the control of Mincing Lane. He also took the cinnamon trade out of foreign control and devised financial schemes to capitalise export trade ventures and to 'Ceylonise' business.⁷⁷³

Amarasuriya was not only named after Woodward but was also taught by him. When his father, Henry, died, Woodward wrote to the Ven.

⁷⁶⁹ de Silva, KM, *A History of Sri Lanka* p347.

⁷⁷⁰ Vitharana Ms p83.

⁷⁷¹ Jayawardene, K "Origins of the Left Movement in Sri Lanka" *Modern Ceylon Studies* Vol. 3 No. 2 1973.

⁷⁷² Roberts, N *Galle: As Quiet As Asleep* p242.

⁷⁷³ Fernando, L. "Amarasuriya as Trade Minister" *Ceylon Daily News* 5/5/81. Pkt 8027 SLNA.

Seelakkhanda, the Nayaka Thera of the Kalyanavamsa Nikaya, and leading early figure in the Buddhist Revival, expressing his sorrow and suggesting, “Of course, I shall take charge of his young children in particular, as I regard myself as a member of his family, and am bound to care for the orphans he left behind, to the best of my ability.”⁷⁷⁴ Woodward may have been well intentioned but somewhat presumptuous, as the family was a clan with financial and dynastic concerns that would have rebuffed his interference, despite his previous standing and obvious affection in the eyes of Henry. Once the patriarch was dead, other patriarchal elements, in this case, Henry’s relative Tantulus (‘Tatty’) Amarasuriya, quickly assumed a determining role including the management of the school. Little is said about this time (1916-1919) except that Tantulus had ‘pressing’ business considerations that limited his time for the school, which may be code for indifference or even antagonism. Woodward obviously did not enjoy the same support from him and this may have been a contributing factor to his eventually leaving Ceylon, though that remains supposition.

Henry Woodward Amarasuriya inherited from his father over 2500 acres of cultivated tea, rubber and coconut around Galle and 1500 acres of uncultivated land at Deniyaya. He, like his father, was a major philanthropist and supported not only Mahinda College but 37 other Buddhist schools. Later in life he even gave the large family home at Unawatuna to the government as a Women’s Teachers College. He joined the Ceylon National Congress in 1923 and won the seat of Udama at 26 in the first election under the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931. He was a founding member of the UNP in 1946 and was Commerce & Trade Minister in the first Independence cabinet of 1948.⁷⁷⁵ Despite his obvious imagination and administrative abilities, Amarasuriya was a poor orator and lacked a political ‘killer instinct’. Vilified by his political opponents as an exploitative capitalist, he lost office in the 1956.

The Amarasuriya family was steeped in philanthropy and in the habit of *dana*, charity. Each week, the poor of the Galle district would gather in front of the family home and be given a little money, enough for a poor person to live on.⁷⁷⁶ While one could ascribe political motives, Amarasuriya genuinely regarded it as a sincere duty. It was though, of course, almost feudal, and easily twisted by envy and resentment into opposition, particularly among the beneficiaries of his largesse.

⁷⁷⁴ Letter FL Woodward to Ven Seelakkhanda 3 October 1916, SLNA. Cited in Gurugé, *From the Fountains of Buddhism* p446.

⁷⁷⁵ File RG 25.79/1 SLNA.

⁷⁷⁶ Personal conversation with Dr V Vitharana.

Despite the bitterness of politics, there was considerable gratitude for his contributions and assistance over the years. To mark his 75th birthday the Mahinda College OBA organised a *pirit* ceremony in his honour at the local *vihara* (temple). Afterwards, Amarasuriya, despite his blindness and infirmity, invited everyone (about fifty people) to his home where a family celebration was to be held. People mingled and ate, and as the evening lengthened, Amarasuriya ensconced himself on an elevated platform with a pile of Rs5/- notes on one side of him and Rs10/- on the other. Most were a little puzzled by this but, as each came to leave, pressing their palms together in traditional salutation, Henry Woodward Amarasuriya gave each his blessing and a Rs5/- and Rs10/- note (about 75¢) from the pile on either side of him, even to one Old Boy who was himself a millionaire.⁷⁷⁷ It had been a very long time since even the poor could survive on Rs5/- a week but the value was immaterial, the habit and gesture were ingrained.

This habit of *dana*, philanthropy and lay religious exercise, while culturally commonplace, is nevertheless a notable feature of many Old Boys of the College, a significant example of which is the deeply respected Albert Edirisighe, whose optometry shops are ubiquitous in Colombo. Edirisighe is President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, a Buddhist ‘missionary’ organisation that supports Buddhist activity worldwide.⁷⁷⁸ Again, the feature is an intense lay adherence, fervent Sinhala nationalism, and commitment to Buddhist practice in daily life, aspects Woodward espoused and encouraged.⁷⁷⁹

Probably the most outstanding example of the “Woodward Tradition” is the founder of the Sarvodaya movement, Dr AT Ariyaratne, a winner of the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize. Sarvodaya, ‘welfare or awakening for all’⁷⁸⁰ is a concept of community and village development that Ariyaratne, inspired by Gandhi, blended with a lay Buddhist commitment, drawn from Dharmapala and Woodward, to produce a development program with a profound Buddhist inflection. The form of Buddhism is one Woodward would recognise with approval: a laicised enacted faith largely removed from involvement with the *Sangha*; a commitment to duty and service, and a firm commitment to understanding and tolerance- unfortunately *not* a notable feature of

⁷⁷⁷Personal conversation with Dr V Vitharana. The story is told with much amusement but also extreme affection.

⁷⁷⁸Bond, GD *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992) p119.

⁷⁷⁹I am indebted to the help of Albert Edirisighe and his family.

⁷⁸⁰Gandhi translated the Sanskrit as “welfare for all” (*sarva*=all; *udaya*=rising). Ariyaratne favours “awakening for all”, though the philological basis, as Gombrich points out [*Buddhism Transformed* p245], is doubtful.

Dharmapala⁷⁸¹ - that deliberately ignores caste and ethnic barriers, and avoids proselytising.⁷⁸² While Ariyaratne publicly nominates as figures of inspiration Gandhi and Dharmapala, he takes for granted - and reveres - the acknowledged private influence of Woodward and the 'Woodwardian Tradition' of Mahinda College.⁷⁸³

Sarvodaya began as a voluntary project of Colombo students working in a low caste *Rodiya* village in remote Sri Lanka and has developed into a multi-faceted program of orphanages, assistance to children with hearing and other disabilities, village maternity and pre-school programs, village water programs, vocational training for youth, and the list goes on. If Woodward were to wish for any memorial, it would be in the satisfaction he would undoubtedly feel in the success of the Sarvodaya. Woodward believed the only way to solve the "deep discontent with life, is to do good", for the "surest way to progress is to serve the world."⁷⁸⁴ And while Gombrich and Obeyesekere suggest that much,

of what has been written on Sarvodaya is by good-hearted but naïve Western intellectuals who see the movement in terms of their own utopian fantasies of a benevolent social order,⁷⁸⁵

that is precisely the reason it would so appeal to a person like Woodward. That it strives after ideals that often founder on the shoals of human nature would be the challenge, not the reason for avoiding its possibilities. For Woodward, who believed fervently in the coming *Metteyya* Buddha, there was a clear view of those "Who shall behold Him".

Those who give gifts, keep the precepts, observe the Sabbaths, do their duties, plant trees and dig gardens for the people, build bridges, clear the roads and dig wells; those who further the

⁷⁸¹ While other commentators have illustrated examples of Dharmapala's intolerance, racism, bigotry and anti-Semitism, the files on him in the SLNA also provide many examples. He had a tendency to vacillate between defiance of colonial administration, and, fear and hurt; "I am misunderstood", he states in one letter to the administration. He seemed a man genuinely scared of administrative retribution (a not unreasonable concern as they gaoled the printer of one of his articles for obscenity) and, even though he was prevented from returning to Ceylon for a time, there seemed little enthusiasm to return when he could - he liked western adoration and continued to fear administrative reprisals. RG65/255 (security and confidential files) SLNA.

⁷⁸²For a critical view of Sarvodaya, see,

Kantowsky, D *Sarvodaya: the Other Development*. (Delhi: Vikas, 1980)

For Ariyaratna's own distillation of viewpoint, see

AT Ariyaratna *In Search of Development* (Colombo, Moratuwa: Sarvodaya Press, 1981.)

For other works on Sarvodaya, see:

Macy, J. *Dharma and Development: Religion as a Resource in the Sarvodaya Self-Help Movement*. (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press 1983.)

Bond, GD *The Buddhist Revival in Ceylon* p241ff.

⁷⁸³Personal conversations with Dr Ariyaratne, Moratuwa May 1997 and May 1998.

⁷⁸⁴Gunewardene *FL Woodward*.. p84.

⁷⁸⁵Gombrich, R & Obeyesekere, G *Buddhism Transformed : Religious change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), p243.

Buddha-dhamma, who honour parents and elders; in short, those who definitely seek the welfare of others, forgetting self, shall hear the Dhamma of Metteya and attain their goal.⁷⁸⁶

These are the goals and orientation of Sarvodaya, whatever other criticism may be levelled at the organisation.

Sarvodaya has had a profound influence on other organisations and governments desirous of turning it to their own purpose. UNP President Premadasa,⁷⁸⁷ who was later assassinated, took great pains to inveigle Ariyaratne's support and collusion, such was the stature of the movement, but this political involvement was rejected, much to Premadasa's annoyance. The significance of this action, and the intensity of Sri Lankan politics, can be seen in the fact that attempts were later made to assassinate Ariyaratne, including one by a police official who came to Ariyaratne's home, but recoiled from the intention once he confronted his victim.⁷⁸⁸

Gombrich and Obeyesekere view Sarvodaya critically as "both naïve and unrealistic, with little hope of success once the massive support from aid donors is withdrawn".⁷⁸⁹ There is no doubt the organisation is heavily dependent on aid, but it is heavily dependent also on the extensive grassroots networks of trained people that have been created and which profoundly compound the effect of the movement at village level. This is the permanent legacy of Sarvodaya, foreign aid or no foreign aid. Whether the organisation is "naïve and unrealistic" is impossible to objectify, though, while intended as critical, it is a comment that would cheer a person like Woodward immensely. He had no objection to dream castles in the air so long as some attention was paid to establishing foundations underneath.

Gombrich and Obeyesekere are also critical of the bourgeois nature of the Sarvodaya, dominated in its management, the *Sangamaya*, by an educated urban middle class, frequently originating from the South, around Galle and Matara, "precisely the area that produced practically allwho were active in the early stages of the Buddhist resurgence and the Sinhalese nationalist movement."⁷⁹⁰ This is undeniable and points to the significance and prevailing influence of Woodward and the Mahinda College experience, the sole "pillar" of Buddhist education in the South.

⁷⁸⁶ Woodward, FL. "Metteya Bodhisattva- The Coming Buddha" *New Lanka* Vol. II No. 2 January 1951, p37. This is a canonical quotation, and, though not Woodward's words, they are his sentiments. I have adhered to Woodward's spellings.

⁷⁸⁷Premadasa was given Woodward's beautifully carved and heavy ebony chair, another of the 'relics' retained of Woodward. It has since been returned to the property of the school.

⁷⁸⁸Personal conversation with Dr Ariyaratne.

⁷⁸⁹Gombrich and Obeyesekere p 245.

⁷⁹⁰Kantowsky, D *Sarvodaya* p187. Also cited in Gombrich and Obeyesekere p 247.

It has been an important centre of training for the middle class upwardly mobile Buddhist enthusiast, bearing in mind middle class upward mobility was no less an aspect of Woodward's Victorian baggage. More than anything else, however, many of these are probably Old Boys of the school. While many of the *Sangamaya* are now probably Colombo based, nearly all would have been from more modest Southern origins. What is significant is the characteristic middle class upward mobility, the aspect which so commonly accompanies the puritan, zealous, reformist inclination, sometimes manifesting as fundamentalism, in whatever culture.

As in Europe, the upwardly mobile middle class brought in their wake an enthusiasm for social engineering, uplifting others who do not necessarily wish to be uplifted. It is an aspect so ingrained in modern western culture as to be commonplace, and thus an unseen assumption, both among enthusiasts and critics alike. The middle class is the "interfering class" in whatever culture, and in whatever mode, it "knows best", even when criticising others for interfering. To criticise Sarvodaya for emulating some of the more irritating habits of its western counterparts is simply to draw attention to some unavoidable baggage that can only be contained by mindfulness, never eliminated.

What Gombrich and Obeyesekere particularly note is the inclination in Ariyaratne to 'invent tradition', in the sense to which Hobsbawm alludes, and reinterpret traditional cultural and philosophical views, probably unconsciously, to serve his own purpose. But, as Hobsbawm has indicated, this type of process became particularly prevalent in late nineteenth century England at the moment of greatest middle class expansion in political and social influence, and where the (perceived) pace of change inclined people to seek assurance and justification from the past for their future direction. That a similar constellation of elements are observable within the cultural basis of Sarvodaya is hardly surprising, though what particularly concerns Gombrich and Obeyesekere are the more overt examples.

The "invented tradition" of the activist and involved monk in Sarvodaya is quite contrary, in their view, to the Theravada tradition of the *arahant*, the aloof, detached, contemplative, and is more akin to the Mahayana *Bodhisattva* (compassionate) ideal.⁷⁹¹ This is a valid observation, that confirms one of the more subtle aspects of Woodward's influence and that of the Theosophical Society personalities whose views he shared.

⁷⁹¹Gombrich and Obeyesekere p 254. The image of the Theravada monk is one of detachment from worldly ties and the strife of human interaction and there are very strict injunctions about such involvement by Theravada monks. Gombrich is right to suggest the Sarvodaya and Mahayanist model would disturb many villagers as contrary to tradition, but what will be interesting is to see whether this newly defined tradition will assume acceptance for, as Hobsbawm has stated, a tradition is only the gap in memory of one generation (ie 10-20yrs), a relatively rapid transformation of perception.

Woodward, while respectful of many individual monks and scholars (like Rev. Buddhadatta, Malalasekera and Woodward's friend, Mudaliyar Ratnatunga), did not hold the *Sangha* in high regard. He strongly objected to their conservative orthodoxy and heavy hand on any aspect of scripture - "Really, they object to our translations and all Caroline [Rhys Davids's] work as heretical. Well - Let them go to *avici*[Hell]."⁷⁹² No matter how otherwise circumspect Woodward was, he reveals here a passionate objection to orthodoxy and the heavy hand of the *Sangha*.

This anti-clericalism pervaded his educational approach, not openly, but in his strong lay advocacy and the way he strongly urged his students to take the faith into their own hands. His was always an urge to laicisation and one's own interpretation, which is the epitome of Protestant biblicism and the return to the "original" scriptures, an aspect that pervades religious reformism. Woodward was a reformist not bound by orthodox restraints, a sentiment that Dr Ariyaratne would no doubt recognise, while nevertheless drawing on early scriptural reference for justification. Woodward felt no such restraint. He made it clear, for instance, that he regarded the later *Abhidhamma*, and later canonical *Commentaries* of Buddhaghosa as "mostly tripe".⁷⁹³ The *Abhidhamma* he thought, produced "a Scotch type of Buddhism- 'sound in doctrine' [but it] gives me the intellectual belly-ache."⁷⁹⁴ Woodward's was an activist, not contemplative, Buddhism.

Woodward was attracted to the *Bodhisattva* ideal, and the coming of *Metteyya*, the Buddha of love and compassion,⁷⁹⁵ very Mahayanist emphases, though not exclusively. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, in his preface to Woodward's translation of the *Dhammapada*, describes Woodward as a Mahayanist⁷⁹⁶ and Woodward accepts this characterisation in his letters to IB Horner, though Woodward is chronically difficult to tie down as he probably would be comfortable only in his own categories. He certainly found the Mahayana-leaning *Middle Way*, the journal of the British Buddhist Society, "Mostly wind. This Mahayana gassing does not appeal to me."⁷⁹⁷ His definition of himself as a Mahayanist obviously hinged on an emphasis on *Metteyya*

⁷⁹²Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 15 July 1950 (FOSL) *avici*- one of the Buddhist hells.

⁷⁹³Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 7 September 1949. Also 20 June 1949. (FOSL.)

⁷⁹⁴Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 24 March 1948. (FOSL.)

⁷⁹⁵Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 3 May 1951. Also 15 July 1950 (FOSL.)

⁷⁹⁶ Woodward, FL. *The Buddha's Path of Virtue: A translation of the Dhammapada* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1921) from the *Forward* by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam pxix

⁷⁹⁷Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 24 March 1948. (FOSL.) This is an odd comment by Woodward as the *Middle Way*s, as Woodward called them, belonged to a Buddhist organisation strongly influenced by Christmas Humphries and the Theosophical Society.

Buddha and the *Bodhisattva* ideal, hardly the extent of Mahayana doctrine.

His doctrinal description of himself as Mahayanist seemed more to depend on that fact he had nowhere else to retreat, once he rejected Theravadin orthodoxy and made clear his lack of enthusiasm for *bhikkhus* and the *Sangha*,....

the time has passed for monks to come to the west bearing robes and surrounded by supporters, and shut up in a cocoon of prejudices- Mustn't do this! or that! I am holy!! The West has had enough of monkery. They (the bhikkhus) imagine that if the Bodhisattva appeared, he would come as a monk!⁷⁹⁸

His was an activist vision of service, duty and work, a Buddhism of involvement, not contemplation. This is not to say he abhorred the detached model since that is precisely what he himself became in later life, but he saw the mass of monks, apart from the scholars he admired, more as freeloaders than contributing to the benefit of others. This was a particularly Victorian vision where “the devil makes work for idle hands” and required a full schedule of involvement. It was also the TS version of Buddhism which so influenced Dharmapala. Thus within the acknowledged foundations of Sarvodaya, its shape becomes coherent: the influences were the activist model of Gandhi, which is also the ‘Mahayana’, or, really, ‘Protestant’, Buddhism of Woodward and the TS, blended with the activist layman model of Dharmapala.

The influences that have moulded the various periods of the Buddhist Revival in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are obviously many and varied, and as much garbled as coherent. What is clear in the work of most commentators is the critical role played by the South in the nationalist and Buddhist movements, and in such organisations as Sarvodaya. While there are historical influences reaching into the early nineteenth century and before, the shape of that movement, in the early twentieth century, owes a considerable debt to the influence of FL Woodward and Mahinda College, for while Woodward was just one of many who followed Olcott’s mission to Ceylon, he was “perhaps the greatest of them all”.⁷⁹⁹

Even though he joked about it, Woodward was clearly aware of his role in this historical formation and wrote in 1949, after a visit by two Sinhala Buddhist teachers on exchange in Australia, “They tell me of [a] great religious Revival (B.) in Ceylon. My statue may be unveiled later

⁷⁹⁸Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 April 1949 (FOSL.)

⁷⁹⁹ Woodward, FL. *The Buddha's Path of Virtue: A translation of the Dhammapada* (Adyar, Madras: TPH, 1921) from the *Forward* by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam pxix.

on.”⁸⁰⁰ If he had lived to see the effects of that revival his response might have been more sober, though he would have been greatly buoyed by the experience of Sarvodaya.

⁸⁰⁰Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 26 March 1949. (FOSL.)

Leaving Ceylon.

The rain it raineth every day
Upon the just and unjust fellers
But more upon the just, because
the unjust pinch the just's umbrellas!⁸⁰¹

The basis of Woodward's regard among his students and the local community, however misunderstood on occasions, was not difficult to understand. His extraordinary efforts to build the school and his financial contribution are obvious. Endearing, too, was his gentle, inviting personality, and sense of mischief and fun. He was also responsible for aspects of the school agenda, which had profound national implications. The importance of his advocacy of Sinhala and Buddhist culture, language, and belief is easy to pass over unless one comprehends the extent to which language, religion, dress and other cultural attributes were dismissed as remnants of an 'inferior and primitive' past, and subject to denigration and ridicule by those embracing 'civilised' Western values.

Even in modern Sri Lanka, that has passed through a substantial and strident anti-colonial nationalism, there remains a residue of cultural self-consciousness, expressed either as defensiveness or embarrassed apology, for cultural attributes and values that require no apology. For Woodward to argue, at that time, for the retention of national culture represented a significant authoritative endorsement. The cumulative effect of his educational style, his valorisation of culture, language and religion - particularly his introduction of scriptural translations into the school and his advocacy of lay involvement in religious and national affairs - was to have a profound effect on the shape of the religious and nationalist movements that emerged after he left Ceylon. While ex-students and Old Boys speak with fond sentiment of the "Woodwardian

⁸⁰¹ FL Woodward to IB Horner 11 January 1947 (FOSL)

Tradition”, it was they who were the vectors of Woodward’s values and approach, which they carried into the heart of national involvement in the years following his departure.

Woodward always retained reservations about the future of Ceylon - “Are we fit.....?”, as the cartoon retained on the blackboard still states. He would no doubt despair at the cultural and religious chauvinism that has corrupted the nationalism he espoused, yet he, too, contributed to its creation. Ceylon was a ‘country of cultures’ before it was ever a ‘nation’ or, as Russell expresses it, “less of a ‘nation’ in the European sense than a confederation of communities”,⁸⁰² where the attributes of the various cohabiting cultures had generally been to its overall economic and social advantage. The nationalist movement, based on the European ideology of the nation-state and its exaggerated valuation of cultural and geographic homogeneity and distinction, distorted the cultural plurality that had been Ceylon’s natural strength for centuries and it formalised tensions that had hitherto existed in uneasy stasis.

Consequences, whatever the intention, are difficult to predict, though what emerged was never the nationalism Woodward intended. But, as he said in a letter 30 July 1919, when left for Tasmania, “I have done what I wished to do and I go away leaving the seeds in the manure. They may sprout or die. It is all the same to me”⁸⁰³ This apparent indifference, or detachment, says much about Woodward’s attitude, but does not, I suspect, disclose all. The analogy of ‘manure’ recalls Woodward’s description of Ceylon as a ‘dunghill’ in need of true patriots to renew it; the description seems both scatological and descriptive of potential fertility, and that seems to encompass

⁸⁰² Russell *Communal Politics under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947* ..pxiv.

⁸⁰³Vitharana, V. *The Message of Woodward* p7.

Woodward's ambivalence. There was both affection and disappointment in his experience of Ceylon.

In unearthing information about Woodward in Ceylon, old students of the Mahinda sought explanation a number of times, in discussion, for why Woodward left.⁸⁰⁴ There was obviously a view within oral tradition that Woodward's departure was hastened by disappointment. Certain factors can be ascertained: he did find the climate debilitating - "I found 17 years quite enough"⁸⁰⁵ - and preferred the cooler Tasmanian climate; and he did feel, to some extent, his work was done, and it was simply time to move on to another task, another interest.

Causation in human affairs, however, is rarely simple or singular. It is clear Woodward felt deeply the frustration of raising funds for Mahinda's building programme: "I doubt much if you'll get any cash from Ceylon- the Land of Promises if not the Promised Land",⁸⁰⁶...and "I know all too well what large sums are promised...but never come to anything".⁸⁰⁷ It is likely, though, that undermining criticism proved a more potent factor in his departure. While his experience of crisis in 1910 gives some indication of underlying community criticism, Woodward had built the school and had forged a formidable reputation, which made him difficult to oppose, whereas a person like Pearce was relatively without established power, and reaction to him seems to give a clue to Woodward's problems.

In 1917, Pearce wrote an article in the *Buddhist* on "The Beliefs of an Unbeliever",⁸⁰⁸ a wonderfully apt Victorian title, and received scathing

⁸⁰⁴ Conversations with Dr Wimaladharmā, Albert Withanachchi, Albert Edirisinghe and others.

⁸⁰⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 26 May 1948. (FOSL)

⁸⁰⁶ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 26 May 1948 (FOSL)

⁸⁰⁷ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 12 June 1945. (FOSL)

⁸⁰⁸ Pearce, G "The Beliefs of an Unbeliever", *The Buddhist* 11 August 1917.

criticism and demands by readers in Tangalla (further south east of Galle) that the editor publish no further parts of the article or add “an editorial note...expressing the Buddhist view”, and suggesting the writer use a TS journal for his opinions.⁸⁰⁹ The criticism was savage, an extremely orthodox and anti-TS position that perceived Pearce’s views not simply as heretical but as deeply dangerous.

There can be no doubt the correspondents knew Pearce’s position at the time as Vice-Principal of Mahinda and thus their attack attached to the school, since many students attended from Tangalla. It was almost certainly an attack on Woodward by proxy. When Pearce later took up the position of principal in 1922, the same factors emerged to undermine his position and force his resignation, and there seems little doubt that Woodward was subject to the same constant undermining criticism, though he was protected by his reputation.

At some stage, Woodward simply decided he had had enough. It was a decision that would have hurt, as such criticism expressed, covertly, a profound ingratitude for his tireless efforts and, while he placed no particular store in such opinions, it nonetheless established a question in his mind as to why he should bother to persist. There was not the same zeal that had moved him in 1903, nor the same support and protection from the Board after the death of Gunaratna and Henry Amarasuriya. Little is said of the management of Tantulus Amarasuriya, other than his preoccupation with business matters, but it seems clear he did not offer Woodward the support he had previously enjoyed.

⁸⁰⁹ N.A.W & D.P.D.R. Letter to the Editor, *The Buddhist* 18 August p5. Further critical letters appeared on 1 September 1917, pp6-8. Pearce replied on 13 October 1917, denying he was suggesting an equivalence between the *Metteyya* Buddha and the figure of Krishnamurti.

The irony in this persistent and corrosive conflict between the TS and orthodox Buddhists was that, in many ways, Woodward in his establishment of the school, his advocacy of national issues like language and religion, and his provision of accessible translations of the scriptures, probably did more than his critics to further the cause of the Buddhist Revival. The degree of antagonism, however, should not be surprising, since the effect of the TS on the shape of orthodoxy was not insignificant. Any re-invention of tradition assumes an unaltered 'revival' of a traditional belief. Any suggestion of neoteric elements is fiercely denied and resisted, and since the TS was the primary source of the suggested novelty, it was an inevitable focus of resentment and opposition. The TS was made to carry the projections of the reformed orthodoxy, which came to resent the TS, in some circles, even more than the dreaded Christians. Ironically, Woodward, and later Pearce, despite their valorisation of Buddhism, became subject to orthodoxy's ferocity, the strength of which is clearly visible in the peak of its influence in the mid 1950s.

The legacy Woodward retained of his Ceylon experience is diffuse, though themes tend to recur in correspondence over the years. His letters to Caroline Rhys Davids (1907-1942) and IB Horner (1942-52), though there are huge gaps and despite being mainly about the business of translation, tend often to descend into the informal and to reveal personal preoccupations, usually in the repetitions, which our children inform us, become more pronounced as we age.

Woodward's repetitions are fairly obvious: his Tory inclinations, deep suspicion of labour unions, and antipathy to Catholicism stand out, but the elements that sum his Ceylon experience lie in his oft repeated antagonism to Buddhist orthodoxy, his dislike (with some exceptions) of

bhikkhus (monks) and ‘monkery’,⁸¹⁰ and his view that the Ceylonese were unreliable and fractious, inclined to unproductive rivalry. This latter aspect is more than apparent in the preserved blackboard cartoon, but he generally reserved his criticism. In letters, though, he expressed his views with some force, something he would never have done publicly, which, of course, makes his letters all the more revealing.

In one incident in his correspondence with IB Horner, a suggestion had obviously been made for the Pali Text Society to turn over its functions to a committee in Ceylon. Woodward was adamant, “No! I would strongly object to such a move. They (in Ceylon) will say ‘Give us the control of the PTS and we will pay up!’ But it would be only promise.”⁸¹¹ He stated bluntly that the work of translation would be hampered by poor scholarship and disputes over orthodoxy, and that however glowing the promises it would ultimately amount to little. It had to remain, in his opinion, in the hands of European scholars, indifferent to the issue of orthodoxy. While not discounting the validity of his argument, his opinions are nonetheless scathing of the Ceylonese and reveal an underlying, disappointment with his Ceylon experience, which reads almost as a deep hurt.

Whatever weight one puts on particular factors, there was obviously in Woodward’s mind a distance developing in his commitment to the school and the community that indicated a time to depart. The connection with his tea estate at Akmeemana, near Galle, as a place to retire had altered with the death of Henry Amarasuriya and, in any event, it posed the difficulties of a tropical climate which Woodward found

⁸¹⁰ The conjunction of anti-Catholicism and anti-‘monkery’ in Buddhism, may, again, be a continuing aspect of his evangelical Anglican background. It is interesting to note [Shield Heritage file], that one of Woodward’s sisters became a Catholic, indicating a more conventional reaction formation to the same evangelical Anglicanism that affected Woodward.

⁸¹¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 15 July 1950. (FOSL).

increasingly enervating. He had also always retained the idea he was ‘karmically bound’ to his pupils from ‘past lives’, but, by 1919, Woodward no longer took individual scholars and so “it appears that those for whom my Karma brought me here have ceased coming into existence here.”⁸¹² This was probably a quaint way of saying that the previously felt strong sense of purpose had diminished and that his life was growing in a different direction, altering towards other interests, for which he sought space to concentrate.

At 48 Woodward was obviously aware then, of entering into another and quite distinct phase of his life, and that may have required, in his mind, the emphasis of geography. In any case, most colonial officials did not retire ‘on the job’, but sought either to return to England or to settle in more temperate climes. Both Woodward’s parents were dead, he had applied much of his patrimony to building the school and had never drawn a salary as Principal (only basic expenses of Rs150/-), so there was potential for only a very limited living in England. It was necessary for him to look elsewhere and Tasmania, it seems, provided the solution.

Woodward had always acknowledged the presence of “sons of the soil who could carry on the work”,⁸¹³ and always viewed it as his educational purpose to prepare local people to manage their own affairs. By remaining in Ceylon he may have hindered his successor from managing in his own way. Ironically, he was not succeeded by a Sinhala principal, but by an Indian, Kalidas Nag, and then by F Gordon Pearce, though even well before he left, a European principal, Dr Collison,⁸¹⁴ was contemplated.

⁸¹²Letter from Woodward to a past pupil 30 July 1919. Gunewardene p33.

⁸¹³Gunewardene p 34

⁸¹⁴ *The Buddhist* 28 June 1919, p4.

At what point in time Woodward decided to leave Ceylon is unclear, though by June 1919 *The Buddhist* is discussing his departure and likely replacement, which means arrangements had been in train for some months. His decision appears abrupt but that may be an impression created by the lack of documentation or by the fact that Woodward had long contemplated his departure, but only announced it publicly when arrangements were in place. Gunewardene's only reflection is to suggest that once "Woodward had decided to leave...no amount of persuasion or pleading from the public or his pupils could keep him back",⁸¹⁵ which, again, probably indicates lengthy consideration of the matter. His correspondence with Ven. Seelakkhanda, in 1916, suggested a continuing commitment to young Henry Woodward and the Amarasuriya family, which, obviously in the intervening period, has altered, probably because the clan patriarchy made his involvement unnecessary and possibly, unwelcome. The end of the War, too, with its sense of a new beginning, possibly had some effect, as would the renewed availability of shipping transport. Whatever the reasons, he was obviously firm in his resolve.

His last days at the school were filled with functions. On Friday, 26 September 1919, the whole school assembled at 3:30pm in the Olcott Hall. The students were addressed by the Vice-Principal and by a senior pupil, Rufus Amarasuriya, who extolled the qualities of Woodward who had left the legacy of a finely appointed school with a reputation for learning. There were no presentations or gifts, as Woodward would accept none.

In reply, Woodward thanked the boys and masters and, in a wry back-hander, suggested that while the staff were not perfect they were as good

⁸¹⁵ Gunewardene p50.

as any principal could ever wish them to be, and he was particularly pleased so many were past pupils of the school. His view was that the school did not rest on the qualities of any one person, but on the combined “will and enthusiasm” of everyone. He urged students to “act as Buddhists” in whatever aspect of life they engaged, not to harm others, and to act as “honest upright men”, for it was not what one did but the manner in which one did it that mattered.⁸¹⁶

The Old Boys too held a function on 29 September 1919, in which Woodward was garlanded and presented with a gold pendant set round with nine gems (*navaratna*), with the school crest and motto on one side and his name, the date and “presented by the Old Boys Association 29/9/1919”, on the other. Again it was emphasised how Woodward “had raised the College to its present position, both in the matter of buildings and educational superiority”, and he responded by urging the Old Boys to work for the welfare of the College, for its future, as Woodward clearly realised, “rested to a large extent” on them.⁸¹⁷

There were other receptions and ‘at home’ functions too. The YMBA (Young Men’s Buddhist Association) - another of Olcott’s creations - feted him, and the Galle Buddhist Theosophical Society held a large function and presented him with an *ola* (palm) leaf “Address”. Over 200 Buddhist monks of the Galle area assembled, too, at the College, to bid him farewell, the first time so many had assembled to farewell a layman.⁸¹⁸ It was an extraordinary recognition by the *Sangha* and Buddhist establishment of Woodward’s significant contribution to the promotion of the Buddhist cause, though he made it clear, in response, he did not intend taking up the robes. The monks chanted *pirit*, then

⁸¹⁶ MCOBA News. Vol 1 No.1 1996, p2. (Reprinted from the *Mahinda College Magazine* of 1920)

⁸¹⁷ MCOBA News Vol.1 No.1 1996 p3. Also Vitharana Ms p28-29 and Gunewardene p50.

⁸¹⁸ *The Buddhist* Saturday 4 October 1919, Colombo. p1&3.

presented him with Buddha Relics,⁸¹⁹ the first ever to be taken to Tasmania, and presented him also with an *ola* leaf parchment inscribed with Pali verses in praise of his contribution to the Buddhist *Sasana*.⁸²⁰

On 30 September, Woodward left by the evening train for Colombo, the College scouts forming a guard of honour for him at the station. The platform was crowded with students past and present, members of the Theosophical Society and other friends. As the train pulled away, the assembled crowd cheered and waved him goodbye.⁸²¹ Several students and teachers accompanied him as far as Hikkaduwa, while two remained to keep him company up to Colombo. He stayed in the Galle Face Hotel for a week seeing, and saying farewell, to old friends before sailing on the *Plassey* on 7 October for Melbourne and Tasmania. Flags were kept flying from the school, so Woodward could see them as he was passing, and students feverishly sent wireless telegraph messages to the ship wishing him ‘bon voyage’. Unfortunately the ship was late in leaving and the ship’s radio did not pass on messages to passengers, so Woodward slipped quietly past Galle in the dark and silence of evening. He had taken his departure as appropriate and without significance, being simply one of the signs of inevitable change, a conscious realisation of *anicca*, the Buddhist tenet of ‘impermanence’.

Farewells and regrets of absence etc., have always been meaningless to me and it would be the same also in the case of parting by death.⁸²²

He was a man who attracted great affection and admiration, particularly from those who had an understanding of his character and the magnitude of his accomplishments, as this editorial in the *Buddhist* attests.

⁸¹⁹ These would have been small pieces of bone fragment. They were kept for a time at the Theosophical Society in Launceston and, on Woodward’s death, were returned to Ceylon, but when the casket was opened, there was no evidence of the Relics.

⁸²⁰ *The Buddhist* 4 Oct 1919 p3. Gunewardene p51. Vitharana Ms p28-29.

⁸²¹ *The Buddhist* 4 Oct 1919 p3

⁸²² Gunewardene p33.

The present position of Mahinda College is his reward. It is an institution which he has raised to what it is and may it ever remain faithful to the ideals of the gentle mellow scholar who has given for it so much of the best years of his life.....He wielded power none the less surely because he never sought to do it of purpose. He did his work because he thought it was right and was content to pursue it without thought of what may appeal to others..... The many hundreds of youths who have passed through his hands and who hold places of trust and responsibility in the country testify to the success which has crowned his effort.

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Woodward was not a man of much sentimentality, though he seemed to inspire it in others, as this ode of admiration by F. Gordon Pearce attests. He attracted immense regard, admiration and affection, difficult to appreciate unless one accepts the special qualities he obviously had to engage and encompass others.

To F.L.W

Too seldom think we, gladly working here
 In spacious halls upon this fair hill-crest,
 By what devotion are these buildings blest,
 By whose self-sacrifice wrought year by year .
 We do not think of those dark days and drear
 Which greeted him who came at duty's hest
 Leaving all things that men proclaim life's best.
 To work afar, without complaint or fear.
 "Without complaint"! We turn away our gaze
 From this far spot to where he lonely toiled
 Ten years, unswerving, without need of praise,
 Undaunted tho' by disappointment foiled.
 O Best of friends and teachers! But for thee
 Where would these walls, this happy concourse be?

F.G.P 824

Journeying.

⁸²³ *The Buddhist* 4 Oct 1919, p2 Editorial. Given the occasional odd English usage the editorialist was probably Sinhala, reflecting a Sinhala point of view. He clearly knew Woodward well but it remains remarkably sober for Sinhala commentary, which, at the time, tended to spill into hyperbole. It strikes me as particularly genuine sentiment.

⁸²⁴ *The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* Colombo, Bastain & Co. Vol.1, No.2, 1921, p31.

This particular piece was reprinted from the *Mahinda College Magazine*, Vol. IV No.2 April 1920. It is included as an illustration of the regard that Woodward attracted, not for literary merit. There are several other examples of this type of grandiose poesy, but one example will suffice. See also *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV No.7 December 1926, p6 "To Vanapala" - a piece of doggerel where each line begins with a letter that spells out "FL Woodward" down the page.

The *SS Plassey* which was returning some 1500 war servicemen to Australia, left Colombo on 7 October 1919 with Woodward on board. A gathering of his ex-students farewelled him from the Colombo dock but as he passed Galle, the darkness of evening denied him the frantic efforts of students sending flag semaphore and wireless messages. He described his journey to his pupils in an article published in the school magazine:⁸²⁵ scenes of a soldier thrown overboard by his disgruntled companions for stealing; albatross circling the ship, their huge wing span making their journey effortless; gathering in the smoking room with passengers, army officers and nurses, before a fire necessitated by the cold that descended after they had crossed the equator and steamed south; afternoon cricket on the upper deck netted around for the purpose, but unable to contain the raucous bellowing of the players; and, concerts and ‘sing-songs’ about the piano or “P an’ O’s”, as Woodward suggested, unable to avoid the excruciating pun.

Woodward spent most of his time reading, playing chess and observing the soldiers on the crowded lower deck, cooking, washing up, playing cards. After about eleven days the boat arrived at Fremantle, WA, an “uninteresting small sea-port”, where the boat was assailed by mothers, wives and girl friends straining for a glimpse of their loved ones before disembarkation. The boat sailed on to Adelaide, where disembarkation was refused because of the world influenza epidemic, and then to Melbourne where Woodward finally came ashore. He was met by officious customs and health inspectors who eyed suspiciously his boxes of books, which “alone weighed one ton”. In Melbourne Woodward met

⁸²⁵ Woodward, FL. “My Voyage to Tasmania” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV No.2, 20 April 1920, p 11ff.

up with Jinarajadasa,⁸²⁶ an important Sinhala figure in the TS who was on a speaking tour of Australia, and who would meet up again with Woodward when he travelled to Tasmania.

After a week in Melbourne, Woodward, on 30 October, 1919, boarded the ferry, *Loongana* for the seventeen hour journey across Bass Strait to Launceston. He awoke early the next morning as the boat was entering the Tamar estuary and began a “most beautiful journey of forty miles up this grand river, between high wooded hills.” On the west side were orchards and grasslands, on the east, forests of giant blue gums. After about two hours following the river’s meanders he arrived at Launceston, “a little city about the same size as Galle and Kandy together.” He was met at the old King’s wharf by the managing agent of orchard where he was to live, and taken to his hotel. He stayed a week in Launceston, “a clean, well-built town...well supplied with electric tram-ways, lights, telephones, motor cars....a fine park and water services....most beautifully situated on the river surrounded by high hills.”

He eventually took the river-boat, that daily plied the many wharves of the estuary, downstream some 27 miles (43km) to the West Bay wharf, (which no longer exists). Here there were about a half dozen orchards along the river and inland for about a mile (1.6km), serviced by “a post office and one shop and a school of seven little boys”. There was a telephone and a daily mail service, but no electric power and only one other house in the village, that was known variously as West Bay or

⁸²⁶ Jinarajadasa was ‘discovered’ by Leadbeater when in Colombo and principal of Ananda College. He tried to secretly stow the boy aboard ship bound for England but his family raised the alarm and only agreed to his departure after CWL agreed to his return. He departed for England where he received an Oxbridge education and became a leading light of the TS. He later became, after Leadbeater’s death, Outer Head (OH) of the (ES) Esoteric Section of the TS, and President of the TS after the death of Arundale in 1945.

Rowella, the name being as vaguely established as the township.⁸²⁷ “Chartley”, where Woodward was to stay, was about 1.5km from the West Bay wharf and “reached by a rough path through the forest” (now cleared). It was surrounded by “a few grass fields [and] twenty acres of apple and pear trees”.⁸²⁸

He relished the novelty of manual labour in his new home, “working in the garden and orchard with my mamotty [hoe]” and walking each day a few kilometres to collect milk, bread, eggs, butter, and his constant stream of mail. He enjoyed, too, the solitude, and “might be a forest dweller [a recluse-monk]”⁸²⁹ except for the fine bungalow he inhabited, surrounded by his books which he gradually placed in order for the time when the weather became cooler and outside tasks less pressing, and he could turn once again to his studies.

What Woodward intended when he came to Tasmania is difficult to surmise. His intention to turn to translation seems to have been formed but whether he intended to settle permanently is unknown. A ton of books appears fairly lasting but it was also known through F. Gordon Pearce’s father, who stayed with Woodward at “Chartley”, in 1920, that he intended to visit Ceylon “in about two years”,⁸³⁰ so his sojourn to Tasmania was obviously a planned period of rest and recreation before further travel and possible return to Tasmania permanently. Whatever his intentions however, the question remains, why Tasmania? From the horizon of the late twentieth century, it seems an odd choice for a man, compelled by learning, to deliberately choose the obscurity of such a location to pursue his endeavour.

⁸²⁷ There are considerably more houses today, but the shop and post office have long since disappeared (destroyed by fire). What were orchards are now cleared or planted to vineyards.

⁸²⁸ Woodward “My Voyage to Tasmania” pp11ff.

⁸²⁹ Woodward “My Voyage to Tasmania” pp11ff.

⁸³⁰ “College Notes” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.IV No.2, April 1920, p25.

The Tamar Valley.

The temptation is to see Woodward's choice of living in Tasmania, as that of a nineteenth century man eschewing surface society for the contemplation of solitary scholarship on the periphery, an explanation in accord with the grandiosity and values of the period. To an extent, the characterisation has some truth. Woodward was earnestly taken with his task of scholarship and desired a suitable location devoid of distraction in order to pursue it. He was an editor and translator whose needs were confined to his manuscripts and philological references in the laborious task of transposing language.

That seems to be how Woodward saw it, though his reliance on his own resources and a slow boat of constant mail left him under-resourced by modern standards of scholarship, which accounts for the more than occasional errors and unsatisfactory renderings⁸³¹ of some of his translations. It also illustrates the inflated confidence of the inspired imperial amateur - which is what Woodward was in reality - though the nineteenth century was the era of such inspired amateurism, to which modern scholarship owes much, and owes much blame.

Woodward was obviously careless of such concerns as were many of his contemporaries, though the choice of Tasmania remains a curious one. "Lignus", his eponymously titled tea plantation in Ceylon, was an obvious place of retirement, but being located at Akmeemana, a beautiful area in the Galle hinterland, it was still fraught with the heat of

⁸³¹ EM Hare to FL Woodward 21 November, 1951[Shield Heritage Woodward File]. Woodward's correspondence held by his solicitors contain a number of letters from IB Horner of the Pali Text Society concerning aspects of translation which also allude to the many cost cutting measures that may account for the difficulties with maintaining standards; even reprints were not corrected, though errors, sometimes glaring ones, were known to the editors. As EM Hare wrote to Woodward, "As to commas, Alice [nickname for IB Horner] says they cost ninepence each- hardly credible- and to insert now in parts printed, more each!"

the Low Country that had begun to pall with Woodward. It was also located near the “Citrus Group” estate of Henry Amarasuriya, and his death in 1916 was “an unbearable loss to the Buddhist people of Galle”⁸³² and a great personal blow to Woodward, closing an aspect of Woodward’s connection with Ceylon.

The choice of Tasmania lies in the colonial experience and the network of connections that brought to Tasmania a steady stream of colonial retirees, primarily from India and Ceylon. The immediate explanation for Woodward’s choice lies in his friendship with Carl Christian Halling who owned “Chartley”. Halling was originally with the Ceylon Trading Company in Colombo, and was a member of the TS, though probably not of significance in the organisation as he fails a mention in the Theosophical Year Books, a kind of TS “Who’s Who”, issued in the late 1930s and 40s. Halling supported Mahinda College, and in 1913 presented the school with a Union Jack⁸³³ and later in 1915, sponsored an English Literature prize for an essay demonstrating particular knowledge of Ruskin, as well as a twenty five shilling (25/-) English Essay prize on the subject, “Why Animal Food Should be Avoided,” a mix of ‘progressive’ interests, Theosophy, vegetarianism, and Ruskin radicalism garnished with Imperial pride.⁸³⁴

By 1915 Halling had moved to the Pacific Trading Co. in Singapore, and had purchased “Chartley” in Tasmania, a property of about 113 acres, at Rowella.⁸³⁵ Woodward thought the property was about 170 acres⁸³⁶ and Gunewardene⁸³⁷ repeats the misconception. The original property,

⁸³²Roberts, N. *Galle- as quiet as asleep* p 314.

⁸³³ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.1 No. 4 April 1913 p17.

⁸³⁴ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. II No.4 August 1915, p29.

⁸³⁵Source: Mortgage and other deeds in possession of Dr Robin Smith, present owner of Chartley.

⁸³⁶ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol. IV No.2 April 1920 p 11ff.

⁸³⁷Gunewardene. *FL Woodward* p 59.

however, was 63 acres and Halling bought an additional 50 acres in 1925. He obviously had reasonable means as “Chartley” cost £2500 for the original 63 acres (which was larger than the usual Tamar orcharding block), though only twenty acres were planted to pome fruit,⁸³⁸ the rest remaining uncleared. The offer to Woodward may not have been quite as altruistic as it appears; having Woodward ‘on the spot’ to monitor the management of his investment, would have given Halling assurance and intelligence of problems or progress.

Halling seems a fairly typical tale of the colonial absentee investor on the Tamar. “Chartley” was subdivided from the Point Rapid estate in 1907, early in the Tamar orcharding boom, by the Gunn family, (then merchants in Launceston and related to the Gunns who established orcharding at “Strathlyn” closer to Launceston) and sold for £362. It was sold to Halling in 1915 for £2500, a substantial mark up, even for boom conditions, indicating buyer exploitation. The purchase was effected on his behalf by Weedon & Co., a firm of agents who managed many orcharding estates owned by absentee investors. Woodward indicates in a letter in November 1919⁸³⁹ that Halling was in New York, which was why he was living alone at “Chartley”, though Halling seems never to have really settled in Rowella. Local people do not recall him and, in 1925, he gives his address as Hornsby,⁸⁴⁰ then outer Sydney. He sold “Chartley” in 1931, during the Depression, for just £600, an appalling loss (since it also had a mortgage of £3000) and so Halling

⁸³⁸Orchards in the North averaged about 20 acres whereas those in the South, which were established earlier, were about 14 acres, nevertheless, 90% of Tasmanian pome orchards were less than 21 acres. See Goodhand, *WE Pome Fruit Orchard in Tasmania- Its Evolution and Present Geographic Basis* (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Tasmania, May 1961) p125

⁸³⁹ Cited in Gunewardene p59.

⁸⁴⁰ Source: Mortgage and other deeds to “Chartley” courtesy of Dr Robin Smith. Hornsby was then an outer suburb of bush and sandstone, picturesque but more country than city.

forms one of the many stories of hope and loss by absentee colonial investors that occurred at that time.⁸⁴¹

Tasmania had been the destination of colonial retirees from the earliest settlement of the colony and there were a number of early accounts and observations of Tasmania,⁸⁴² that circulated throughout the Empire and which encouraged settlement. The advantages of Tasmania were considerable and, far from being the ‘end of the earth’ it presents geographically, it was an important port of call on the sea route from Europe. This was particularly true during the time of sail up to the 1880s, where the pattern of trade winds made Tasmania a natural destination. Tasmania was an attractive destination for those on leave from imperial service, particularly from India and Ceylon, and stories are told of local farmers ‘parking’ horses upon the ‘long acres’ to tempt passing purchasers of mounts. News and information from, and about, India and Ceylon, although obviously Eurocentric, was a significant staple of reported news in Australia, and the reverse was also true. The relative silence in the present Australian news services of events on the Indian sub continent, is in distinct contrast with their familiarity to colonial readers.

Tasmania had a number of pleasing aspects that encouraged settlement by the Anglo-Indian civil and military services. It was Anglo-celtic in

⁸⁴¹Source: Mortgage and other deeds to “Chartley”

⁸⁴²Henderson, J. *Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (Calcutta: 1832); Curr, E *An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land, principally designed for the use of emigrants* (London:1824) [Facsimile Edition: Hobart, Platypus Publications, 1967]. Evans, G. *A Geographical, Historical, and Topographical Description of van Diemen's Land, with important hints to emigrants etc.* (London: 1822) [Facsimile Edition: Adelaide, Griffin Press, 1967.]; Betts, T *An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land* (Calcutta: 1830); Princep, A. *The Journal of a Voyage to Van Diemen's Land* (London: 1833); Anon. *A Visit to Tasmania by an Anglo-Indian 1875* (Murree, Printed at N.W.F Press, 1877) [Ferguson item no.6017, Mitchell Library, Sydney]; Braddon, E “Letters to India from North-West Tasmania”, published in *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 1878 [THRA-P&P Vol. 27 #4, 1980 pp119-218]

race and culture, and “all very English”,⁸⁴³ being relatively unencumbered by the ‘inconvenient’ presence of indigenes. Braddon in his *Letters*.... makes the colonial racist assumptions clear in his preference of Tasmania over New Zealand which, he pointed out, “has the Maori, who is a nuisance neither useful or [sic] picturesque.”⁸⁴⁴ As part of its litany of English attributes, Tasmania also had “*The* most salubrious climate in the world”,⁸⁴⁵ similar, though more mild, than England and not as extreme as Canada - “the air of Tasmania was to that of England as cream to skimmed milk.”⁸⁴⁶ Lastly and most importantly, land and the cost of living were relatively cheap, in fact, under the various Tasmanian immigration schemes throughout the nineteenth century, land was made available for selection or at nominal cost.

Edward Braddon, Premier of Tasmania 1894-1899, and one of the best known Anglo-Indians to settle in Tasmania, sums up the Tasmanian case in his *Letters*... which undoubtedly contributed to the migration of numerous “other retired officers from the Indian Services”, like the Eastons,⁸⁴⁷ who also settled on Tasmania’s North West coast.

⁸⁴³Braddon, E “Letters to India from North-West Tasmania”, published in *The Statesman and Friend of India*, 1878. For discussion and reproduction of Braddon’s *Letters*... see Bennett, S “A Home in the Colonies- Edward Braddon’s Letters to India from North-West Tasmania” *Tasmanian Historical Research Association-Papers & Proceedings* Vol. 27 #4, 1980 p127. Braddon’s description refers specifically to Launceston which “might well be taken for some country town at home, that had not quite lost its primitive character.”

⁸⁴⁴Braddon THRA p123.

⁸⁴⁵Stilwell, G. “The Castra Scheme” in Winter, G [ed] *Tasmanian Insights- essays in honour of Geoffrey Thomas Stilwell* (Hobart: State Library of Tasmania, 1992) p19. From a letter from Col MM Shaw to W Boyer 7 July 1869 regarding Anglo Indian settlement at Castra. (Royal Society Archives, University of Tasmania). While Australians are fond of characterising the Tasmanian climate as sub-arctic, it is well to note the changes in climatic ‘habit’. At one time, in the early part of the 20th century, it was fashionable to retreat to Tasmania to avoid the ‘excessive’ heat of Melbourne summers.

⁸⁴⁶Braddon THRA p127.

⁸⁴⁷see Mercer “From Raj to Rustic” THRA Vol. 25 #3 1978 pp71ff. George Easton Sn was one time Under-Secretary-of-State for the Province of Bengal. His improvident investment in a failed bank undoubtedly contributed to the decision to emigrate to Tasmania.

The expenses of living in England, and the increasing difficulty of finding an opening for one's children there, has been turning the eyes of "old Indians" to the Colonies, for many years.....⁸⁴⁸

In a sense, Tasmania was the 'poor man's England', and remained so to the conclusion of Empire in India and Ceylon. For the colonial retiree it had much to offer; pensions of 300 to 400 pounds per year could be made to go further "without descending in the social scale",⁸⁴⁹ and even made to be the basis of compounding wealth through judicious investment. Further, the England of their hoped retirement was not only expensive, it was "the England of their boyhood",⁸⁵⁰ and had ceased to be recognisable. As Col. Crawford, instigator of the Castra scheme, observed, most retirees preferred a land where "cotton and sugar *do not grow*; where white ants *do not swarm*."⁸⁵¹ Canada was eliminated on the grounds of climate and, in his view, proximity to the USA which made annexation, peaceful or otherwise, a possibility, and which, of course, would mean it would cease to be 'British', a most important consideration. That left New Zealand or Tasmania, choosing the latter as 'more civilised', for the racial reasons alluded to by Braddon.

It is easy to forget, in a post colonial world, that the British of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century imperial period saw the world naturally as theirs. No child of middle class Anglo-celtic extraction in Britain or the 'colonies' grew up without an atlas and an extreme consciousness that 'the pink bits' were British. And there were a lot of

⁸⁴⁸Braddon THRA p121. Braddon, according to Bennett, was probably influenced, like many others, by Crawford's proselytising efforts at Castra. Braddon was elected to parliament several months after the publication of the last of his *Letters...* and rose to be Tasmanian Agent General in England, Premier, a delegate to the Australian Constitutional Convention, and later a member of the Commonwealth parliament. He was knighted in 1891 and made Privy Councillor in 1897. He died at Leith in 1904 aged seventy four.

⁸⁴⁹Stilwell p14 quoting Col Crawford.

⁸⁵⁰Stilwell p19.

⁸⁵¹Stilwell p14.

‘pink bits’. At the height of empire Britain controlled over 25% of the earth’s land mass and a similar percentage of the world’s population, an extraordinary presence. In a period of colonisation and settlement, it was easy to see the world as the oyster of the British, with wide choices as to where, and how, to live - race, climate and means being the principal determiners. The ubiquitous sobriquet “Home”, used by the British and colonials alike up until the 1950s to describe Britain, indicates not only a nostalgic umbilical connection but a sense that ‘Britain’ had an extended geography.⁸⁵²

Settling in retirement in one of the British outposts seemed, then, a normal consideration, though many factors influenced the enthusiasm with which this was embraced. One such factor, influencing the extent and pattern of migration, emerged after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The cessation of the Honourable East India Company meant an end to the patronage of ‘friends’ at the Court of Directors and the beginning of a system of selection on ‘merit’, by competitive examination, that was to pervade and become a feature of the British civil and military service.⁸⁵³

This is not to say the British system of ‘selection on merit’, much touted as a significant virtue of later imperial administration, was particularly comprehensive. Education, being the instrument of *entrée*, meant selection was narrowly confined to products of the Public School system, an institution much defined by the middle class values and ideals of

⁸⁵²A poignant aspect of this yearning for home is evidenced in the tombstones on the Isle of the Dead at the convict settlement of Port Arthur; “each headstone faces north, towards the Mother Country..” Montgomery, B. “Technology revives dead heritage.” *The Australian* 27-28 April, 1996, p8.

⁸⁵³It is easy to forget how historically late this shift from nepotism to supposed selection on merit really was. It is most starkly realised by noting that many senior commanders of British forces in the First World War entered the military when it was still influenced by those whose commissions were purchased (till 1871) - which might explain some of the more dubious aspects of tactics. The civil service did not use competitive selection till after 1870.

Arnold and the model of Rugby.⁸⁵⁴ The system produced a remarkably focused and uniform product, that blended the contradictions of conformity and eccentric individuality, dedicated and disciplined to the ideals of service, duty and self (and other) improvement - which probably explains its general effectiveness, a fact only now grudgingly acknowledged as we recede from the colonial experience.

Among those old officers left behind by the new meritocracy in India, however, was “much discontent and disappointment”,⁸⁵⁵ and this provided fertile ground for recruitment from India and Ceylon. Evidence of the Anglo-Indian (and Anglo-Ceylonese) presence in Tasmania continually recurs in place and property names - a suburb of Hobart called ‘Howrah’, a property near Falmouth called ‘Simla’, a mountain road called “Elephant Pass” - and while many schemes for Anglo-Indian migration were proposed, few flourished, despite migration being an early and continuing obsession of successive Tasmanian governments.

Probably the best known was the Castra scheme proposed by Col. Andrew Crawford in his *Letter to the Officers of H.M Indian Services, Civil and Military*.⁸⁵⁶ Castra (Latin for ‘camp’ or defended encampment) was an uncleared area of 32000 acres near but not connected by road to Ulverstone (north-west Tasmania). With government approval and the promise of a road, Crawford promoted his scheme among Anglo-Indians with enthusiasm. The subsequent story of frustration and

⁸⁵⁴Bamford *Rise of the Public School*

Honey JR de S *Tom Browns Universe - the development of the public school in the nineteenth century* (London: 1977)

⁸⁵⁵Stilwell p13.

⁸⁵⁶Stilwell p13. Crawford’s original house remains a tumbled down decaying ruin in the middle of a paddock with wonderful surrounding views. Locals however see little historical value in the house and have little urge for preservation.

disappointment, is a familiar one,⁸⁵⁷ but it did lead to the eventual settlement of a number of Anglo-Indian families - “Of the forty one original purchasers at Castra, twenty were living in Tasmania in 1880”,⁸⁵⁸ and a number were to come later.

There were numerous other attempts to encourage settlement. The Immigration League of Tasmania,⁸⁵⁹ one of a number of private promoters of settlement, retained an Agent in India who actively recruited on the subcontinent on behalf of the League, advertising regularly in journals like the *Indian Planters Gazette* (Calcutta). His annual report to the Hobart Branch, in 1908, enquires to immigrate indicates the kind of interest kindled by these efforts: eight Government officers of “superior services”; twenty three from subordinates; fifty five from time expired soldiers; and sixteen civilians. Though it hardly constitutes a wave of migration, it indicates the profile of interest and the direction of recruitment.⁸⁶⁰

Retirees were targeted not only for settlement but also for investment ‘opportunities’ that had the potential to lead to retirement on income bearing properties. After all, most colonial retirees were not aged but relatively active people in their middle to late middle age seeking a ‘constructive’ retirement. This was not an outlook confined to the colonies but also infected local professional business people. It became fashionable around Hobart to invest in a young orchard for retirement,

⁸⁵⁷Crawford’s scheme set a price of land over and above government purchase that allowed for clearing, fencing and the development of infrastructure. It assumed a commonality of purpose that is somewhat utopian and the inevitable disappointment and frustration of participants, soured the proposal. This was not aided by the failure of the government to construct the promised access road which profoundly hampered advancement of the scheme. Visiting the area today makes the extreme difficulties obvious - while the soils are excellent, access is through very steep and treacherous terrain that would have been a road builder’s nightmare at the time.

⁸⁵⁸Stilwell p23.

⁸⁵⁹It was a branch of the Immigration League of Australia but was, curiously, amalgamated with the Tourist Bureau in 1907 AOT (CSD 22/129/88) 7EdwardVII No.2.

⁸⁶⁰Launceston *Examiner* 2 September 1908.

that is, one bought on establishment, and by the time one retired, in five or so years, one could literally enjoy the fruits of one's investment. The effect was such that land prices in the south of Tasmania rose steeply after 1900 with a full bearing orchard worth £100-250 per acre, at that time, compared with £90-150 in 1960.⁸⁶¹

In northern Tasmania, at the turn of the century, this interest also centred on pome fruit orcharding, an 'ideal' investment opportunity for the more modest retiree, since it required no vast initial investment and could be managed in conjunction with other properties. As an advertisement [see Illustrations], in 1914, for the orcharding agents Sadleir & Knight states, orcharding offered "very satisfactory profits for a small capital outlay, while the life is an exceptionally attractive one."⁸⁶²

The establishment of orcharding on the Tamar began in the 1890s and was slow at first. Even in 1901 there were, with a few exceptions, "no orchards worthy of the name"⁸⁶³, being hampered by the ubiquitous codlin moth, which first appeared in Launceston in 1855,⁸⁶⁴ but more particularly by root blight (armalaria) which was harboured in newly cleared soils and their previous eucalypt inhabitants. The use of blight resistant Northern Spy root stock allowed the grafting of desired varieties and pome fruit orcharding boomed in the period 1904-1919 with vast tracts being cleared, particularly on the west Tamar, on behalf

⁸⁶¹Goodhand p51.

⁸⁶²"Launceston and the Tamar Valley" *The Fruit World of Australasia* 30 June 1914. p10

⁸⁶³*The Agricultural Gazette of Tasmania* December 1901 p133.

⁸⁶⁴Osbourne J "Fruit Culture in Tasmania" *The Agricultural Gazette of Tasmania* February 1911 p66. It spread to the rest of the state by 1875 and Tasmania has the dubious distinction of having introduced it to New Zealand. Its spread was aided by the many neglected 'backyard' orchards that were the backbone of orcharding at that time in the North.

of Anglo-Indian⁸⁶⁵ and South African investors, as well as those from Ceylon, Britain, the Malay States, Siam and mainland Australia.

They were... men of varied professional and business origins, ranging from India Army Officers to English business men.....university professors, civil servants, clergymen and school teachers.⁸⁶⁶

These were urban business people, in the main, part of a speculative boom that was to be the principle characteristic and essential backbone of pome orcharding in northern Tasmania. The companies and syndicates - mainly Launceston real estate firms - that bought up and subdivided large properties in the Mersey and Tamar areas sent agents overseas, particularly to India, to solicit investment, and the government participated with printed literature sent there as well. It was an aggressive program that had counterparts in other parts of the world, similar projects attempting to attract interest from a similar coterie of colonial investors and retirees. Pome orcharding schemes with absentee management were promoted in Nelson, New Zealand (1911-1916), and in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, and the U.S. Pacific states (1905-1915)⁸⁶⁷

During the first World War, contrary to the optimism of Sadleir & Knight's advertisement, [see Illustrations] many of these areas became "neglected and finally abandoned"⁸⁶⁸ because of the shortage of labour and the cessation of overseas shipments. Despite these factors, by 1919, the Tamar had the state's largest plantings of pears (because of climatic

⁸⁶⁵The term Anglo-Indian is used in two senses: to describe the English who lived or were born in India; and also to describe those of mixed English and Indian ancestry. In this paper the meaning is restricted to the former usage.

⁸⁶⁶Goodhand p55.

⁸⁶⁷Goodhand p49-51.

⁸⁶⁸Wivell, TD. "History of the Fruit Industry on The West Tamar" in *You and Your Council*, a pamphlet published in the 1960s for the Beaconsfield Council as a promotional feature p17.

advantage) and was second only to the Huon in apples.⁸⁶⁹ The importance of orcharding, and the overseas speculation that fuelled it in the north, cannot be underestimated. In 1907, the PMG (Post Master General's Department) - then a central and important government enterprise - signed contracts with the Orient line for the transport of mail to the UK and Europe. The conditions were that Orient provide 6 fast mail steamers (with cool store facilities) to service Hobart, from February to May each year, from 1910 on, and transport the fruit crop to the Continent. The fact that a national contract had such a specific regional clause, indicates the size and national economic importance of the Tasmanian pome fruit industry.⁸⁷⁰

The "Absentee System", whereby investors entrusted the management of their holdings, was then, as it is today, principally a profitable opportunity for scheme promoters and managing agents, rather than investors. The involvement of real estate firms in both the subdivision and subsequent clearing, development, and absentee management was "really the basis of a scandal", the "biggest scandal ever suffered by the fruit industry in Tasmania".⁸⁷¹ In 1916, one company managed nine estates on the West Tamar for absentee owners, covering 2000 acres, "while in all some £500,000 was invested"⁸⁷² in the Tamar and on the Mersey by foreign investors. The boom created by promoters and propagandists like the Victorian horticulturalist Nobelius, whose property of "Freshwater", at Legana, was one of the first and largest

⁸⁶⁹Goodhand p52.

⁸⁷⁰This is why fruit was collected from the many jetties servicing the Tamar orchards and taken upstream to King's Wharf Launceston for transhipment by rail (which at that time ran right to the wharf) to Hobart. In 1922 direct shipments to England began from Inspection Head (Beauty Point) and by 1926 eight ships called annually. The construction by Henry Jones & Co. of the Beauty Point cool store in 1932 made direct overseas shipments from the north an established feature of the industry. [See Partridge *History of the Apple and Pear Industry in the Tamar Valley*]

⁸⁷¹Partridge, *A Major Study- A History of the Apple and Pear Industry in the Tamar Valley* (State Library-Northern Local History Collection; no publisher, no pagination, Nov. 1976)

⁸⁷²Goodhand p53.

concerns of the time, saw inevitable disasters like the subdivision at Kelso which was simply unsuited to orcharding, being poorly drained, with an underlying hard pan, and with soils that “would hardly support a dandelion.”⁸⁷³ Of the 35 blocks at Kelso, 25 were sold to Anglo-Indians who “invested their life savings”. None achieved commercial production, despite government supervision and assistance.

Many came and saw their purchases and left immediately without even taking possession. Others tried to make their holdings pay, but lacking experience, failed.⁸⁷⁴

Nevertheless, many Anglo-Indians did retire to orcharding in the Tamar including a McNaught, who was given “credit for a lot of the settlement rapidly taking place on the Tamar”, and who “influenced the first serious attempts to make the Tamar district more widely known amongst the retired civil servants of India.”⁸⁷⁵ McNaught settled in the Rowella area and commissioned Alexander North⁸⁷⁶ to build him a house overlooking Ruffin’s Bay, an arm of the Tamar and peaceful crook of water that reverts to wide flats at low tide. The house was made of concrete, North’s favourite material, with a detached kitchen at the rear, a common feature at the time when the risk of a kitchen fire engulfing the entire house was averted by this architectural device - a practical approach, though not particularly helpful to the cook (usually women, of course).

⁸⁷³McIntyre, L *Rowella-Kayena (West Bay-Richmond Hill) from 1805*. (Launceston: Rowella Book Committee, 1978.) p63.

⁸⁷⁴Goodhand p57.

⁸⁷⁵*The Fruit World* p36. What these efforts entailed is not recorded.

⁸⁷⁶Hodgkinson, D. “The Men behind our buildings.” *The Examiner* - Northern Scene 15 December 1982, p38. Alexander North (1859-1945) was responsible for a number of significant buildings in Launceston: Holy Trinity, St Aiden’s, St Oswald’s, the modern parts of St John’s, including its remarkable dome and the modern extensions of the Church of the Apostles. He also designed the remarkable Italianate AMP building next to the old Post Office and the Chapel of Trinity College, Melbourne University with its fascinating interior. He redesigned Waterton Hall for his friend CB Brady as well as designing McNaught’s home, “Bhatkawa”, just across the field from Waterton.

McNaught called the house “Bhatkawa”⁸⁷⁷, which has been variously translated as “I am satisfied” or “I’m replete” in the sense of having sufficient to eat - a kind of “Dunroamin” in Indian dialect. McNaught, it would seem, became discouraged with farming and departed towards the end of the First World War, and the house was rented until its purchase by Woodward, in partnership with his friend Henri Frei, in 1926.

McNaught was certainly not the sole Anglo-Indian in the immediate Rowella area. There was also the unusually named Bearpark who lived along the road leading to Waterton Hall and ran a successful orchard. He was unusual in that he was probably a Eurasian Anglo-Indian and he had a daughter whose education he funded in India.⁸⁷⁸ The nearby property on the Westwood subdivision was also owned by a colonial officer, Sir John Fraser (1864-1941), who entered the Ceylon Civil Service in 1887 and rose to the important office of Government Agent (1914-1923) in the Western Province (which included Colombo), and also became a Member of the Legislative Council.⁸⁷⁹ In the enclosed world of colonial society, Fraser and Woodward undoubtedly knew of one another.

The orcharding boom on the Tamar, in the period up to 1919, was highly speculative and part of an extensive and well publicised international marketing exercise aimed at attracting investment from professionals and retirees. It undoubtedly attracted Halling, McNaught, Fraser and

⁸⁷⁷McIntyre, L. *Rowella-Kayena* p 30-31. McIntyre is the daughter of CB Brady of Waterton Hall. ‘Bhatkawa’ has been extensively renovated in recent times - the ‘lean-to’ kitchen has been removed and replaced by an attached ‘country kitchen’, and an additional wing has been added to the southern end to complement the original structure. A small Buddhist shrine in the hall reminds visitors of the presence of Woodward.

⁸⁷⁸Information from Freda Williams, who with her husband, Laurie, ran the Rowella store. It has previously been owned and operated by Mrs Williams’ adoptive parents, the Harris’s. Mrs Williams met Mr Bearpark’s Eurasian daughter when she came to Rowella and describes her with some affection.

⁸⁷⁹*Who’s Who* 1941. Fraser also build the elegant “Villa Florenza” in Denison Rd Launceston.

numerous others, and brought Woodward in its wake. His friendship with Halling and the offer of accommodation, in exchange for keeping an eye on Halling's investment, must have been an attractive opportunity for a man of his modest means, for even Woodward's purchase of a permanent home at "Bhatkawa", required the financial assistance of his friend, Frei.

Woodward was influenced and affected by the same currents of opinion and information that circulated in the colonies regarding the potentiality of Tasmania and the Tamar for the retiree and, as a result, his decision to settle on the Tamar is less remarkable than it may at first appear. Far from settling beyond the reach of his colonial past, Woodward followed an established pattern of retirement that illustrates an important aspect of, and contribution to, Tasmanian demography and pattern of migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

His life on the Tamar also corresponded to the rise and decline of the orcharding industry along the river and the hive of boating activity that serviced it. The river was an essential aspect of orcharding's location, being one of the only efficient, cheap means of bulk carriage, other than rail, before the advent of road transport - "the coastal or estuarine site was therefore a near necessity".⁸⁸⁰ Apple and pear orchards characterised the life and industry of the Tamar through to the 1960s. The industry's demise coincided with the end of empire and the move by Britain into the European Community and away from its colonial heritage. The end of the British market⁸⁸¹ proved the end of orcharding

⁸⁸⁰Goodhand p213.

⁸⁸¹While British entry to the European Community was a central factor in the demise of Tasmanian orcharding it was not the sole reason. In 1960 the UK absorbed 50% of Tasmania's apples and 80% of its pears, but increased local UK plantings and improved storage, extending the market season, as well as inappropriate varieties and increased competition from other southern hemisphere suppliers like South Africa, New Zealand, Chile and Argentina also hastened its demise. See Goodhand p172.

and ended, too, a colourful period of river activity; of boat captains with unique skills in handling the huge tidal⁸⁸² currents, and who plied the numerous wharves that dotted the river, their vessels mounting the tides that heaved-to against the banks.

Rowella- Copied Class and English Ease.

The world Frank Lee Woodward, and other Anglo-Indian or Anglo-Ceylonese, entered when he came to live in Rowella was an unusual example of rural class division, quite unlike country communities elsewhere in Tasmania. There was the usual division between those of property and those who laboured for their living but the nature and permutations of these arrangements made it distinctive. It was unlike the Midlands squirearchies⁸⁸³ with their ‘established’ and substantial wool growing estates that sprawled across the central grasslands⁸⁸⁴ of Tasmania, emulating rural England; and it was also unlike the world of the “cocky”⁸⁸⁵ selectors of Tasmania’s north east and north west with their characteristic small, family based, mixed farming ‘selections’.

The Tamar region assumed a quite different class appearance for, while it had originally been characterised by large estates based on earlier land grants, it had been substantially subdivided during the orcharding boom,

⁸⁸²Source: Port of Launceston Authority. Below the Batman Bridge (where Rowella is located), the average fluctuation is 2.3m and occasionally exceeding 3m. Above the Batman Bridge, closer to Launceston, the fluctuation is greater, averaging 2.8m and occasionally exceeding 4m. Because of the length of the river there is 1hr35min tidal delay between Low Head and Launceston.

⁸⁸³The Midlands estates which dominated colonial Tasmanian politics, clustered their workers about them in an almost feudal relationship. Many retired into cottages on the estates after a life time of service having probably married another of the servants on the estate. The structure was still recognisable well into the latter 20th century, long after it had died out in England.

⁸⁸⁴These open savanna type grasslands were the fields of traditional Aboriginal hunting that were kept ‘open’ by annual Aboriginal fires. It was ideal grazing country and was quickly assumed in land grants to the early settlers. Unfortunately it not only displaced traditional hunting but severed the path of seasonal migration back and forth to the east coast, destroying traditional land use and patterns of living.

⁸⁸⁵The term “cocky” has a variety of explanations, from origins in lower class cant to explanations based on arrogant demeanour. Whatever the origin, its application was to the struggling ‘selector’ on barely sustainable farms, that is, to people who had ‘selected’ virgin land made available by the government for purchase by pioneering settlers.

between 1904 and 1919. The population that principally followed in its wake was not the 'old moneyed' Midlands squirearchy but middle class, often urban based, professionals for whom agriculture was a lifestyle, as well as an income generating choice, and where professional managers carried the burden of planning and decision making, quite different to the small owner managed enterprises that "had painstakingly planted orchards in the south."⁸⁸⁶ They came from all parts of the British Empire, the Mainland, and elsewhere in Tasmania, and from every imaginable business and profession. The Richmond Hill and West Bay (Rowella) area in particular was quite distinctive.

Here retired people, Anglo-Indians, Englishmen and native born Tasmanians are all to be found within a short radius, and the circle at one time included a manager, an accountant, an architect, a doctor, an ex-naval commander who fought at Jutland, and the 'squire'.⁸⁸⁷

These were not people necessarily of rural origin and that constitutes a substantial cultural and experiential difference. These were the 'lifestylers' of their time, seeking rural solace with an income and, in some ways, presenting a disquieting resemblance to the middle class urban escapees of the late twentieth century. As a result of this influx at that time, the Tamar community assumed a pronounced middle class outlook, not normally found in traditional rural communities, and this was exhibited, for example, in the unusual educational accomplishments of the area. A small school was established, in 1917, in a grain shed opposite the Rowella store, until a school house was hauled by bullock team from Beaconsfield, in 1922. In the period before its closure in

⁸⁸⁶Goodhand p49-51.

⁸⁸⁷Horner, AG. *Tasmanian Journey* (Hobart: Cat & Fiddle Press, 1974) p79. This is a most unusual book of travelling remembrances originally written in 1936 and published after Horner's death. While in this description, no names are mentioned, the 'squire' is Brady, who was often termed such, (affectionately or facetiously, depending on the person), the 'architect' was North, the 'doctor', Dr Shone (also an orchardist) and the 'ex-naval commander' was Commander Foot.

1965, the Rowella-Richmond Hill school produced, per capita, more junior scholarships and state bursary winners than any other school in the state, as well as a Rhodes Scholar.⁸⁸⁸

This middle class bias can be seen in settlers like Brady (a businessman), Dr Shone (a doctor), Heyward (an engineer), and North (an architect), who were ‘professionals’ with roots in Melbourne and elsewhere, and it can be seen similarly among the Anglo-Indian civil servants and military retirees who often invested site unseen. In common with these was another middle class, and affluent, group who resided in Launceston and who had weekend and holiday homes along the river. They may not have been active in the community but they influenced the ‘tone’, particularly when they chose to retire permanently on the river, joining other outside and colonial retirees, who, like Woodward, took little part in the business of orcharding but simply chose to live on their pensions and absorb the simple pleasure of river life. This added an urbane element to the district, an injection of people whose experience was fundamentally formed elsewhere and in other endeavours, brought together by the river, both in its aesthetic and practical guise.

The Tamar was an organising focus of life, an essential instrument of bulk conveyance, and an aesthetically unique estuary, that drew people to live along its banks. It is a long meandering river, some 65 km from the confluence of the North and South Esk rivers at Launceston to the sea. At low tide it subsides into extensive mudflats and at high tide brims the edge of its banks. Where Frank Woodward eventually chose to live, at “Bhatkawa” overlooking Ruffins Bay, the river is caught by the jutting jaw of Longreach like a hushed lake and only when the river

⁸⁸⁸McIntyre, L. *Rowella-Kayena* p 94. The Rhodes Scholar was Oliver Heyward, later Anglican Bishop of Bendigo, now retired.

tide turns and powers itself to the sea, does it become obvious that it is a river; the rapid slump of tide appears as though some Archimedes has arisen from his bath to announce the eureka of the day.

The remarkable beauty of the river may have attracted the middle class retirees and investors, but there were others that shared the practical presence of the river, active professional farmers and orchardists, like Claude Clark, Woodward's next door neighbour at "Bhatkawa", originally from the orcharding districts of the south. They were joined by another layer of propertied involvement, which emerged after the First World War, when Soldier Settlers were assisted into ownership of small (often uneconomic) orchards. Here the brunt of the labour was carried personally, or by family members, and the lives of these farmers resembled those of the north east and north west "cockies", from where some had originated.⁸⁸⁹ Beyond the owner-orchardists were those without property, a class of permanent orchard labourers and managers, assisted by a large force of itinerant workers which, at harvest,⁸⁹⁰ transformed the district into a hive of activity.

Thus, far from descending into a rural wilderness of Appalachian ignorance, Woodward, in fact, moved into relatively familiar surroundings, elements of which, echoed his own rural origins. Here his

⁸⁸⁹Loone, AW. *Tasmania's North-East- a comprehensive history of North-Eastern Tasmania and its people* (Launceston: Regal Press, reprinted 1981, originally published 1928) p151. Loone mentions a number like CH Hookway from one of the pioneering 'cocky' families of Scottsdale who settled into orcharding on the Tamar.

⁸⁹⁰Fifty percent of the labour force were seasonal itinerants and students- and 50% of those came from outside Tasmania, often of immigrant origin, who followed the mainland fruit and other seasonal harvests. [See Goodhand p138-139] Itinerant labour was a significant feature of Tasmanian society in the early to middle 20th century and whole families followed the fruit picking, the hop harvest and the small fruit. It presented a vexing and persistent problem for educating the young whose economic value exceeded that of any future 'investment' from education. Another, less disruptive yet significant itinerant labour force was centred in the Longford area, near Launceston, where the men would leave their families each year, with their push bikes, to follow the mainland shearing as far away as Queensland. It was from this group that many of the 'cocky' selectors made the transition into property.

learning and background were respected, even craved, by those of the middle class starved for intellectual stimulation. Despite his odd calling, which would have begged misunderstanding- and sometimes did- Woodward entered a quite conducive milieu.

There were aspects that, in some respects, emulated facets of British society, almost to the point of parody. Australians at that time, though not necessarily consciously, resided within an uneasy ambivalence, perceiving themselves both as Australian and as exiled from 'Home', rather than simply held within their own hearth. Despite the fact that, by 1901, eighty two percent⁸⁹¹ of Australians were native born (eighty six percent by 1939), most (ninety seven percent in 1939⁸⁹²) claimed British origin.

They were Australian Britons, whose country was Australia and the British Empire. This double loyalty is, indeed, an unusual phenomenon; and it is so because empires are not usually as enlightened as the British Empire.⁸⁹³

The dual loyalty,⁸⁹⁴ inspired, as Hirst suggests, by the doubtful 'enlightenment' of the British Empire, was not altogether comfortable. Far from a simple product of benign imperial beneficence, contained within it was an unresolved conflict of identity, a contradictory sense of

⁸⁹¹Clark, M. *A Short History of Australia* (New York: Mentor, 1969) p164

⁸⁹²Bolton, G. *The Oxford History of Australia- Vol. 5 The Middle Way 1942-1988* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993) p3.

⁸⁹³Hirst, J. "Who Tugged the Forelock" *The Australian* 9 December 1995, p25. Hirst's thesis is that despite late 20th century 'republican' revisionism, Australians in the first half of the 20th century, with some notable exceptions, held to their Australian identity, as well as their sense of belonging the wider entity of Empire, without a sense of contradiction. Whether this was attributable to the 'enlightened' aspects of the British Empire, or not, is more than arguable, though British cultural, linguistic and ethnic homogeneity was obviously the principal reason for such a strong dual identity.

⁸⁹⁴An example of this ambivalence is revealed in the *Examiner* 30 October, 1919, p4. It dealt with the parliamentary controversy over the proposed Ephinora cooperative scheme to settle 35 English ex-servicemen on land at Whitefoord Hills in Tasmania. The member for Wilmot, Mr Blyth, revealed an underlying anti-British resentment and argued that native born ex-servicemen were being "robbed of their birthright"(p4). The Minister for Lands, Mr Hean, in his reply "produced the instructions of Parliament that men who had fought for the Empire should be treated alike". The *Examiner* editorialised that locals had continually advocated increased immigration, yet when it was manifested in a concrete proposal, it was opposed.

nascent national pride and colonial inferiority, which has taken till the end of the twentieth century to reconcile in Australia. It was not unlike the ambivalence that seized the early Sinhala elite of Ceylon, and which persists to a diminishing degree to this day. It combines a grudging respect for the British legacy with a seething anger at imposed colonial inferiority, together with an uncertainty regarding national culture. This manifests either as exaggerated and defiant pride, or self-conscious apology; a people, that is, who still remain a little uncomfortable in their cultural skin.

The British character of Australia, which similarly left a difficulty in defining identity without the strident use of a megaphone, was then undoubted and largely unquestioned. The landscape though, contradicted the claim and nagged the early English settlers, who experienced “a great tension....between the sense of finally coming home and reaching a place of the deepest exile”.⁸⁹⁵ Exiled from familiarity, they craved names of English order, names to tame the coarse and unaccustomed landscape of straggling eucalypts and black wattle, names that imposed the first contradictions of identity and place.

⁸⁹⁵Boyce, J “Journeying Home- a new look at the British invasion of Van Diemen’s Land: 1803-1823” *Island*, (Sandy Bay, Tasmania) #66, Autumn 1996, p42. [Article based on an unpublished history honours thesis University of Tasmania, 1994] The characterisation of early English settlement as one suffering a profound isolation [See Morgan, S. *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania: Creating an Antipodean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)] is persuasively questioned by Boyce. He argues early Vandemonian settlers to 1820 rapidly established a symbiotic survivalist culture mediated by white association with indigenous women. It was, in his view, the later land grant settlers who introduced the sense of exile and isolation. The argument is echoed and emphasised in work by Hyam *Empire and Sexuality* who argues early imperial relations with indigenous cultures were generally symbiotic and sympathetic, if undeniably invasive. It was the development and dominance of repressive Victorian morality after c.1830 (and the increasing presence of European women) that destroyed the early sympathetic relations, establishing a rift with indigenous culture, and a commensurate increase in the sense of profound isolation and exile from metropolitan culture - perceived now as the only ‘valid’ culture. Thus the shift from sympathetic symbiosis to a sense of alienation and exile, was part of a more general imperial experience.

There were names of rivers and towns like Tamar⁸⁹⁶ and Esk, Launceston and Devonport; and, in a perverse concession to Southern Hemisphere inversion, the counties of Tasmania and their towns were named in the reverse order to England, so those in the north appeared in the south, and southern counties, in the north. Occasionally, though, the ‘system’ made peculiar deviations and located Devonport, for instance, on the Mersey, in a parody of place, and of memory of a home in the mind alone.

Exiled and immigrant communities⁸⁹⁷ adhere to the familiarity of names, customs, and language, and impose them on their surroundings without recognising the absurdity of contrast and comparison. They become, in some respects, frozen in time, clinging to, and even embellishing, customs and habits that have altered, or even disappeared, in the metropolitan centre of origin. This is encountered in the configuration of community in colonial Tasmania, in the symbols of ‘breeding’ and respectability, of ‘position’ and status, and was, to a degree, exaggerated by the presence of Anglo-Indian elements who had already endured the cultural ossification of several decades of colonial India, and brought with them ‘English practices’ that were already vastly out of date. Even the local people commented on the peculiar, and frequently rigid, social practice of the Anglo-Indian settlers.⁸⁹⁸

It is not surprising that a person like Woodward, the product of sixteen years in Ceylon, found himself ‘at home’ in his new surrounding, and saw the emulation of English ‘customs’ and ‘keeping up a certain

⁸⁹⁶The Tamar was named by Col Paterson commander of the settlement at Port Dalrymple (at the mouth of the Tamar) in honour of Governor King who was born in Launceston [England] on the Tamar.

⁸⁹⁷The same disparity can be found among 20th century immigrant communities. Greeks and Italians who migrated before World War II, find not only the post war migrants ‘different’, but the ‘Greece’ or ‘Italy’ of their remembrance, unrecognisable and often disturbing on their return.

⁸⁹⁸Stilwell p26 *passim*. Also see “A Home in the Colonies: Edward Braddon’s letters to India from NW Tasmania, 1878.” Ed. S. Bennett THRA-P&P Vol.27#4, 1980. pp119-218

standard', as comfortable and familiar, even if he himself had no particular aspiration in that regard. While Woodward returned briefly to England in 1923, he would no doubt have found Tasmanian society more 'familiar' than the post war Britain he would have encountered on his return - a Britain altered beyond recognition and vastly different to his Victorian origins.

The by-gone 'Englishness' echoed in the social habits and stratification of the Rowella community, that he would have found familiar, was, however, detained from social inflexibility by the comparatively small size of the community, the necessities of social intercourse, and the persistent and perverse egalitarianism that characterised Australian behaviour. This latter aspect is in no way better illustrated than by the response to the presence of Robert Menzies,⁸⁹⁹ [Prime Minister - 1939 to 1941; 1949 to 1966], who often, in the years as Opposition Leader (1942-49), spent time as the guest of Gordon Rolph, owner of the *Examiner* newspaper, at his holiday home "Como", on Cherry Point, near Rowella. "Sir Robert claimed he made many momentous decisions in the quiet of his daily walks round the district"⁹⁰⁰ and was treated and greeted in an entirely matter of fact manner by the labourers in the orchards and packing sheds, in a way that belied his importance - with courtesy in the main, but with little deference and occasional, but not unkind, 'cheek'. And he reciprocated by an ease of interaction that contrasted his renowned "contempt and disdain"⁹⁰¹ for 'lesser beings'.

⁸⁹⁹This was a time of reconstruction for Menzies and restoration of conservative forces, by creation of the new 'Liberal Party'. In many respects Rowella-Kayena was where the new Party had its gestation, furthered by the not inconsiderable financial backing and influence of Rolph. The historical links are possibly even more peculiar. According to local rumour, the Russian diplomats, the Petrovs, were initially housed at "Como", when they defected in 1954.

⁹⁰⁰McIntyre *Rowella-Kayena* p48.

⁹⁰¹Manning Clark *Short History of Australia* p235.

Woodward, too, met Menzies, in their mutual ramblings, and invited him to afternoon tea, at precisely the 3:00pm ‘tiffin time’ of colonial habit and convention.⁹⁰² The subjects of conversation are not known, though Woodward’s conservative, anti-labour views⁹⁰³ would have established a common political purpose between the two. His Tory conservatism was emphatic - he disliked the “rascally Lang” though admired the gentle Lyons, “a really fine man”,⁹⁰⁴ ironically the person Menzies climbed over to power. Despite Woodward’s unusual avocation, he was known as a scholar and ‘Cambridge man’, and that would have entered him among the socially acceptable and made him prized for his intellectual capacity. Menzies’ presence illustrates the middle class stamp on community and, from the understanding that exists of Menzies,⁹⁰⁵ illustrates also, the middle class ambivalence of Australian identity. Menzies “believed passionately that the British had created the highest civilization”⁹⁰⁶ and his life and outlook was a continual example of quiet aspiration for “English” acceptance and the contained conflict of Australian inferiority compared to things British.

Woodward reflected within himself many of the displaced elements and ambivalence of his new neighbours. While he adhered strongly to his

⁹⁰²Heyward, N. *A Buddhist Scholar*- notes on the life of F.L.Woodward Esq. and extracts from a broadcast by the author over Tasmanian radio station 7ZR early in 1954.

⁹⁰³Woodward’s letters to Miss IB Horner of the Pali Text Society contain many complaints about delays caused through Australian waterfront disputes- “Owing to the Labourites here, who can earn (?) £15 a week and more, for unloading ships etc, and who ‘go easy’- ships lie here in ports for a long time costing £1000 a day.” FL Woodward to IB Horner 3 May 1951 (FOSL)

Letters to Woodward in the early 50’s also contained frequent references to a Communist threat in Ceylon which would have dove-tailed with the perceived Cold War threat and would have explained his anti-Left position aside from a natural Tory inclination. [Letter from P.D (?) Ratnatunga 24 May 1952, just days before Woodward’s death, and thus probably never read. Also letter from D Gurusingha, from Mahinda College 3 April 1952. [Source: Shield Heritage, Solicitors, Launceston. FL Woodward file]

⁹⁰⁴ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 15 June 1932 (FOSL). Lang was Labor Premier of NSW, dismissed by Governor Game. Lyons was ex-Labor Premier of Tasmania, who changed political sides to become conservative Prime Minister, in Canberra.

⁹⁰⁵See Brett, J. *Robert Menzies’ Forgotten People* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1992)

⁹⁰⁶ Clark *Short History*... p235.

British heritage, he nonetheless was displaced to its margins and periphery by his ideas, values and religious persuasion, and would probably never have felt entirely comfortable 'at home' in England. Nearly everyone with whom he now had any association came from somewhere else; for no-one was it a place of origin.

Woodward Returns to England and Ceylon

While Woodward was drawn to Tasmania by opportunity, colonial custom, and a conducive social milieu, it seems, from the few clues extant, that he was probably trialing his new home, a not unusual or unreasonable approach, minding it for Halling, but intending to return to Adyar and England before settling permanently. He is described as Hon. Librarian & Director of the Oriental Library, Adyar, the Theosophical Headquarters in India, from about 1922-1925⁹⁰⁷ where he also lectured at the Brahma Vidya Ashrama⁹⁰⁸ in the Greek Stoic philosophy of Zeno and the drama of Aeschylus,⁹⁰⁹ and his position as Director gives some clues as to his interest and intention. From the establishment of the TS in India, Olcott had collected an impressive collection of oriental manuscripts, including many Sinhala, Siamese and Burmese manuscripts, of much value to any intending scholar and translator. Access to these would have been of immense value to Woodward, but whether he contemplated a more extended stay is difficult to say, though some of the currents and events within the TS, at that time, may give some indication.

Woodward arrived in Ceylon in June 1922 on his way to Adyar and visited Mahinda College on 9 June to lay a foundation stone for a shrine room. He was to visit the college on two other occasions, once on his way to England in December, 1923, and again on his way back in March, 1924.⁹¹⁰ His visit to England was brief indeed, given that boat travel would have made his stay not longer than about eight weeks at

⁹⁰⁷ Venn JA *Alumni Cantabrigienses* 1954, p574. The *Christ's Hospital Exhibitioners 1566-1923*, p122, states Woodward was Hon. Librarian from 1923 on, though the *Theosophical Year Book 1938* agrees with 1922-25.

⁹⁰⁸ *Theosophical Year Book 1938* p223.

⁹⁰⁹ *Theosophy in Australia* April 1923, p735. Ashram Lectures by FL Woodward.

⁹¹⁰ Gunewardene p61.

most. Though he makes no mention of it, family no doubt figured in his itinerary, but the emphasis, for Woodward, was on visits to friends at Cambridge and to Mrs Rhys Davids of the Pali Text Society. His focus was academic, on the business of translation. He suggested Mrs Rhys Davids wanted him to remain in England to preside over the PTS and to guide and direct its programme,⁹¹¹ but he declined the offer, indicating a firm intention to return to Adyar, in the first place, and thence Tasmania, as the tropical climate of India and Ceylon had become, for Woodward, a real consideration.

Access to manuscripts in Adyar, particularly Sinhalese manuscripts of texts and commentaries, helped him to edit, for the PTS, the translation by AD Jayasundera of the second volume of the Anguttara Nikaya (*Book of Numerical Sayings*) in 1925⁹¹². It also contributed to his highly successful, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, prepared and edited during his stay in Adyar and first published in 1925. *Some Sayings...* is a highly condensed, ordered and sequential unfolding of the *Tipitaka*, in a particularly western narrative form, the *Tipitaka* itself being repetitious and, to western sensibilities, somewhat disordered, except for the basic three divisions. It was an attempt by Woodward to produce an accessible version of the Canon, not an exposition of Buddhism, as he leaves out, for example the Great Renunciation⁹¹³ which is actually not part of the Pali *Tipitaka*.

It is noteworthy that Woodward acknowledges, both the encouragement and obvious financial support of his friend, Peter de Abrew, in

⁹¹¹ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 5 October 1942 (FOSL. Box 14 IB Horner Collection). Also 1 December 1948.

⁹¹² Gunewardene p63.

⁹¹³ The story of the Buddha's renunciation of family to set forth as a Wayfarer is based on the story of the young noble Yasa (Vinaya, i.7) and expanded in *Lalita Vistara* and the late *Commentary of the Jataka Tales*. See: Woodward, FL *Some Sayings of the Buddha* (Oxford: OUP, 1955) World Classics #483, p1.

Colombo.⁹¹⁴ Peter de Abrew was a prominent businessman, philanthropist, member of the BTS and advocate of the Buddhist Revival. He was Manager⁹¹⁵ of Musaeus College (where Woodward's friend Henri Frei was a Member of the Board) and was also a significant patron of the Ceylon Social Reform Society, so while *Some Sayings*.... may have eventually had considerable success in the West as a way of making Buddhist scriptures accessible to Europeans, it served a similar, significant purpose in Ceylon for the English speaking Sinhala elite.

Woodward's efforts in Adyar may have been primarily directed at translation but they took place against an extraordinary background of events taking place within the TS itself, none of which are alluded to in any of Woodward's extant correspondence, a frustration indeed, since his opinion and "recollections of the TS of long ago and its 'worthies' of *the old guard*", would have been fascinating and undoubtedly "droll".⁹¹⁶ Woodward's time in Adyar coincided with a series of tensions, 'power plays' within the organisation, and odd accompanying events.

Annie Besant, President of the TS since Olcott's death, was by this time well into her seventies, beginning to lose some of her undoubted capacities, and coming under the influence of George Arundale⁹¹⁷ and, to a lesser extent, James Wedgwood⁹¹⁸ who were deeply involved in the new TS incarnation, the Liberal Catholic Church. Based in Huizen, Holland, one of the sites of Order of the Star of the East (OSE) activities associated with Krishnamurti and the World Teacher movement,

⁹¹⁴ Woodward *Some Sayings*pxxi.

⁹¹⁵ Again it needs to be emphasised this position is extremely prestigious in Sri Lanka. Peter de Abrew held a position akin to that of Amarasuriya at Mahinda College.

⁹¹⁶ *Theosophy in Tasmania* Vol.1 No.2 1951p4. These comments were made regarding an intended visit to Woodward in Rowella by TS members from Hobart. He was obviously recognised as a font of information regarding the early period of the TS at Adyar.

⁹¹⁷ He became President of the TS on the death of Besant.

⁹¹⁸ Wedgewood, according to Tillet, was an incorrigible and promiscuous homosexual and drug user, who kept a supply of cocaine secreted in his Bishop's crosier.

Arundale was beginning to assume occult authority, 'bringing through' messages from the TS Masters of the Great White Brotherhood, and distributing Initiations⁹¹⁹ like confetti. Part of his new authoritative knowledge was to suggest a visit to one of the TS Masters, the Master the Count, on the 'physical plane', at his supposed castle, somewhere in Hungary. This extraordinary plan, whipped all and sundry into excitement and elation since it would 'prove' the existence of the Masters. It involved Besant, Arundale, Wedgwood, and a number of other acolytes, including the Australian, Oscar Kollerstrom,⁹²⁰ in a bizarre train journey across Europe, beginning 16 August 1925 to, surprisingly, no result except much embarrassment.⁹²¹ Leadbeater, naturally, was much annoyed and denied the Initiations which Arundale had 'channelled', and a tussle for authority ensued.

The incident marked a decided, and increasingly extreme, re-orientation of the TS from its Olcott Buddhist phase towards the Liberal Catholic and adventist OSE phase initiated by Leadbeater, and to a lesser extent Wedgwood, from about 1916 onwards. Meanwhile the Krishnamurti movement, under the OSE banner, which delivered an infectious mix of peace, pacifism, vegetarianism and spirituality, was attracting an extraordinary interest among the post-War young, a membership of over forty thousand and rivalling anything the youth culture of the 1960s had to offer. Thousands of young people from all over Europe would walk,

⁹¹⁹ The TS being very hierarchical, envisaged stages of occult advancement, Initiations, granted on the astral plane by the Masters. These were generally announced by Leadbeater who used the undoubted power of his 'privileged' knowledge to great effect and advancement of his own self interest.

⁹²⁰ In *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, Mary Lutyens, describes Kollerstrom as Dutch whereas he was Australian of Swedish descent.

⁹²¹ See Lutyens, M *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* (London: John Murray, 1975) pp210ff.

Nethercot, AH *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963)

Tillet, G *The Elder Brother: a biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater*

The story is far more strange than can be condensed herein.

bicycle, or go by train to Ommen, Holland, a kind of Woodstock of the 1920s, for Star Conventions.

In a mounting atmosphere of anticipation, the TS Convention of 1925 at Adyar was seen as particularly auspicious, marking, as it did, fifty years of Theosophy. The popularity of the Star (OSE) organisation and of Krishnamurti, generated considerable anticipation of some manifestation by the ‘vehicle’ (Krishnamurti) of the Maitreya (*Metteyya*) or Christ. Held in December 1925, Woodward was no doubt among the more than 3000 from around the world who attended the four day meeting, but the results were disappointing and uneventful, except for the constant unseasonable rain and cold, and the quiet, behind the scenes attempts to patch differences between Krishna and the Arundale/Wedgwood factions.⁹²²

On 28 December 1925, however, the day after the TS Convention, the Star Congress began, and Krishnamurti spoke at the first meeting under a Banyan tree, at 8am. Towards the end of his speech, his voice noticeably altered and shifted into the first person, speaking of how “I come for those who want sympathy, who want happiness, who are longing to be released....”⁹²³ It was an electric moment for those who had waited for this overt manifestation of a new Teacher. News spread among the faithful and a sense of impending ‘arrival’ pervaded, though there was an equal amount of general scepticism, not least of which, among the Leadbeater and Arundale/Wedgwood factions. Despite this wondrous happening, the groups that had gathered at Adyar began to disperse towards the end of January 1926, Woodward among them.

⁹²² Lutyens M. p223.

⁹²³ Lutyens M. p224. Those who have heard him speak, attest to Krishnamurti’s undoubted charisma and quiet power of speech, the ability all charismatic figures have of being able to make each in an audience feel he is speaking to them alone. This is contextual however, and thus can never be captured in transcription to the page.

What Woodward made of all these events and ‘manifestations’ is difficult to say. He believed powerfully in the *Metteyya* Buddha, but whether he imagined Krishnamurti was the ‘vehicle’ for such an appearance, is impossible to say. Those who knew him say he kept photos of Besant and Krishnamurti in his house,⁹²⁴ and there is no doubt he continued a belief in the advent of the *Metteyya*, even after Krishnamurti had disbanded the OSE, in 1929, at, appropriately, Ommen. “I maintain that Truth is a pathless land,” he was to say at that momentous meeting, “and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect.....I do not want followers. The moment you follow someone you cease to follow the Truth.”⁹²⁵

For many, like Lady Emily Lutyens,⁹²⁶ who had devoted herself to Krishnamurti at the expense of her husband and family, it was a devastating blow. The followers of the Star had been prepared to sacrifice all and work unceasingly for the Coming, now they were no longer needed and their cause had evaporated. Like many victims of sects and causes, they were left abandoned, disillusioned and purposeless, a scenario played out over and over ever since, and probably from long before. Leaders of the TS, like Leadbeater, Wedgwood and Arundale, put their own explanation and ‘spin’ on events to extricate themselves from the embarrassment of Krishnamurti’s defection. Besant remained loyal but confused.

⁹²⁴ Interview with Nigel Heywood.

⁹²⁵ Lutyens, M. p272. This extraordinary statement of apparent denial, ironically, did in fact lead Krishnamurti to become a peripatetic world teacher. His selfless denial, however, is somewhat undermined by more recent revelations. For an interesting and revealing view of the charismatic Krishnamurti, see

Sloss, RR. *Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991) and

Yglesias, H *The Saviours* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.) This novel only vaguely disguises Krishnamurti.

⁹²⁶ See Lutyens, Lady Emily, *Candles in the Sun* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957) and Lutyens, M. *Krishnamurti: the Years of Awakening*. p279. Krishnamurti gave Lady Emily considerable, unreasonable grief over publication of *Candles* and delayed its publication for a number of years.

Woodward expressed no view, on the record, of his feelings. Part of him was a Theosophist of the old school, one of the 'Band of Servers' who avoided the politics of the TS and simply saw these events as a passing difficulty like so many other difficulties along 'The Path'. For him the process was essential, the arrival, inconsequential.⁹²⁷ Woodward probably looked more with sorrow than hurt on the departure of Krishnamurti, a view echoed in a letter to Woodward from a TS friend at the Manor many years later.

Krishnaji seems to have been doing his usual amount of upsetting! Whatever it is, he gives people furiously to think! [sic] I suppose a period of pulling down & -maybe- rebuilding is a strenuous time, but almost no one that I have seen going through that experience is at all happy!⁹²⁸

Whatever his view on Krishnamurti, Woodward was a person of varied interests and personal resources, undeterred by the machinations of others; he was prepared to sacrifice his energies but not himself.

He returned to Tasmania determined to settle permanently and to further his work of translation. In partnership with his friend Henri Frei, Woodward purchased "Bhatkawa",⁹²⁹ which had been built originally in 1911. Little is known of Frei (1882-1940?) who was a Swiss Theosophist employed in Ceylon by Volkart,⁹³⁰ a venerable firm of

⁹²⁷ For a fascinating examination of such a construct, see Caputo, JD. *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)

⁹²⁸ Letter to FL Woodward from "Flora" 13 April 1952, Shield Heritage Woodward File. This letter is written with some affection to "My dear Francisco", with "love from Florence, alias 'Flora'" on Woodward's birthday, which indicates an obviously close association, but whether she represents the 'Susannah' EM Hare was to suspect Woodward 'kept dark' is impossible to say. The alias "Flora" may well be a code name from the *Lives...* period of the TS, in which case she represents a very old and long acquaintance.

⁹²⁹ Gunewardene [p59] states Woodward purchased "Chartley" with Frei, from Halling, which is a confusion. "Chartley", which Woodward rented when he first came to Tasmania, is on the other side of Point Rapid from "Bhatkawa".

⁹³⁰ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 4&5 June 1936. This report of a visit to Woodward in Tasmania suggests a number of erroneous details. The author suggested Woodward (1936) was the "president of the Cricket, Football, Badminton and other Clubs of this little village", which is news to those who lived there and can never remember Woodward joining any community association. He also suggests 'Bhatkawa' had "12 rooms"- there were about 6- which is a considerable exaggeration.

exporters and importers. Like Woodward, and his friend and fellow translator, EM Hare, Frei never married, though he was a most 'eligible' man, softly spoken, cultured, reserved and handsome with "a goodness about him".⁹³¹

Frei was General Secretary of the Ceylon TS from 1926-27, Asst. General Secretary in Australia (1927-1929) and Private Secretary to Leadbeater in Sydney from 1929 till Leadbeater's death in 1934.⁹³² He later returned to Adyar and held a number of positions on the TS General Council and Headquarters Executive Committee until 1937, then retired to Madampe, Ceylon where he was Chairman of the Board of Musaeus College in Colombo. Frei died while still occupying that position in the 1940s. Whether he intended to retire in Tasmania is uncertain, though doubtful. He is known to have visited a number of times in the late 20s and early 30s, for periods of up to several months,⁹³³ joining Woodward on his daily 'round' of several miles, but always finding the last haul up the road from Waterton dam to the house quite strenuous. Woodward would delight in pointing out to his friend EM Hare, the point on the path where 'Old Frei' would begin to "puff and blow"!⁹³⁴

Frei's TS career gives some indication of his attitudes and opinions, which he probably shared with Woodward. The fact that he became a secretary to Leadbeater clearly aligned him with that faction, the Liberal Catholic Church group, and the control of the TS in Australia, which emanated from the Manor (the centre of ES - Esoteric Section - activity). It also clearly distanced him from the schism initiated by Krishnamurti in

⁹³¹ Source: personal interview with Norma Kollerstrom Morton who was sister to the Oscar Kollerstrom who joined Arundale and Besant in pursuit of the Master the Count.

⁹³² *Theosophical Society Year Book* 1938, p180.

⁹³³ *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 4&5 June 1936, p74.

⁹³⁴ Letter EM Hare to FL Woodward 14 May 1952, Shield Heritage Woodward File. This letter was written a week before Woodward died and was never read by him. Hare was reminding Woodward of fond reminiscences.

the dissolution of the OSE and resignation from the TS, in 1929. His return to positions at Adyar, after Leadbeater's death and the assumption of the TS Presidency by George Arundale, again, aligns Frei with the conventional, official TS line - another loyal member of Theosophy's "Band of Servers".

It is sometimes difficult for people to imagine that those close to the leadership of a hierarchy can be anything but 'in the know'. The truth is often quite the contrary; sometimes proximity is the greatest barrier to knowledge and understanding, and not simply because of denial. It is quite conceivable that Frei, and Woodward, because of their simple trust and belief, were largely unaware of the more extreme undercurrents of the Theosophical Society and the fragile personae of their hierarchical heroes. People often ignore clues others find obvious, or allow trust to over-ride suspicion, and it must be borne in mind that much of our information on the Theosophical Society and Krishnamurti, has been only available recently and represents the wisdom of hindsight. The TS has, not unreasonably, felt deeply hurt by these revelations, particularly when they are exaggerated or simply wrong. What is easy to forget, is that the Theosophical Society, like any organisation, has always had within its ranks, people of great talent, good intent, and genuine spiritual inclination, along with the lunatic and bizarre, though the latter make much more interesting reading.

People like Woodward and Frei represent the former category, people of worth and endeavour, kindness and sincerity; people without manipulative intent or personal hubris, in whose company we can safely rest. Frei went on to continue his work promoting the cause of Theosophy, while Woodward returned to Tasmania and the task of translation. While "Bhatkawa" was purchased in both names, it is

doubtful Frei ever intended retirement in Tasmania; it seemed more like the gesture of a friend, an ‘investment’ in an occasional holiday home, since both men were extremely private, and Frei had no occupation or interest to engage him in Tasmania, as had Woodward. Woodward returned to Tasmania, in 1926, and he never left again, remaining in his “ashrama” among his translations and manuscripts.

The Trek to Tasmania

Over the years, ex-pupils and friends like Hare and Frei, made the journey to “Bhatkawa”. Even after his death, they came; Mr Albert Witanachchi,⁹³⁵ when a parliamentary officer in Ceylon, visited the house in 1967, with the then local member of parliament, Mr Gil Duthie, MHR.⁹³⁶ Woodward described his life at “Bhatkawa” succinctly, “I am here just a *thalagoya* and never leave the radius of my *ashrama*”⁹³⁷ Even so, he was regarded as a local curiosity, prompting one little girl to innocently repeat the community joke - “Mr Woodward, people say you are the 8th Wonder of the World”.⁹³⁸ It was a good humoured tilt at Woodward’s peculiarity, which intended no slight and indicated, despite his reclusive life, he nonetheless attracted curiosity, though not adverse or critical attention. He always gave as good as he got and was quick to poke fun at anyone, himself included. When one ex-student announced he intended to visit, he wrote back,

after all these years ..you are probably *bald-headed and grey* (but I am not). I will look out for you at the station and you will recognise me by being *hatless*. (Australians consider the hat as part of the body, and even *sleep* with it on, I believe).⁹³⁹

Here his clowning humour is obvious, but sometimes it clearly misses. The same visitor, when he suggested he would hire a car and drive to Rowella, was dissuaded by Woodward, who offered, instead, to meet him in Launceston (as he could get a free ride, in and out, with the

⁹³⁵ Personal interview with Albert Witanachchi, Colombo, May 1997.

⁹³⁶ Witanachchi, A “Ashes are Good for Roses” in Wijeratne et.al. *Centuries of Memories*.p63ff. I interviewed Mr Duthie before his death but unfortunately age had dimmed his memory. Also Gunewardene p73-76, reprints an article by Witanachchi.

⁹³⁷ *Mahinda College Magazine* 1952. This was Woodward’s last message to the school, which was about to celebrate its Jubilee. A *thalagoya* is a harmless lizard and an *ashrama* is a religious retreat.

⁹³⁸ M.S.G “Mr FL Woodward” *Mahinda College Magazine* Vol.VI Nos. 4&5 June 1936, p75. The author was obviously not aware this was a facetious remark repeated innocently. At a time when all children were brought up on the ‘7 Wonders of the World’, the temptation, in jest, to call someone the 8th was often overwhelming!

⁹³⁹ M.S.G “Mr FL Woodward” p74. Woodward’s emphasis.

postman and local storekeeper, Mr Harris). His intention was obviously to save his visitor unnecessary expense, but it was expressed in a droll way that seemed to completely elude the recipient. He wrote that his visitor should not drive down because,

- (a) It would cost you £5 for the day.
- (b) Your chauffeur would never find this place....
- (c) I should have to feed him.⁹⁴⁰

Instead of clowning, however, this was seen as an indication of his dire poverty. As Albert Witanachchi aptly expresses it,

Addressing a meeting...Mark Twain said; “Shakespeare is dead, Milton is dead...and I too am feeling far from well.” There was a dead silence! Years later when his fame had spread...he repeated the same joke...[and] There was loud applause. Response to humour is unpredictable. I am aware I am on tricky ground when I write on Woodward’s wit and humour.⁹⁴¹

This was always a difficulty with Woodward whose straight faced drollery was almost constant, though frequently missed or misunderstood.

A story is told of a young Salvation Army woman, who once burst in on Woodward and declared, “Mr Woodward I have brought you God’s message.” Woodward gravely replied, “If you have any message for Him, my dear, you couldn’t do better than give it to me to deliver, for the chances are I shall be seeing Him before you.” The woman’s response was puzzlement and uncertainty as to what was intended, though Woodward, behind a very straight face, was immensely delighted with the result, and obviously regaled anyone who would listen with the story.

EM Hare and Woodward.

⁹⁴⁰ M.S.G “Mr FL Woodward” p74.

⁹⁴¹ Witanachchi, A. “Ashes are good for roses” in Wijeratne, Dantananayana, & Samara-Wickrama (ed) *Centuries of Memories* p63.

A similar vein of humour and banter ran through Woodward's relationship with his fellow translator EM Hare, another visitor to "Bhatkawa"⁹⁴². Hare would constantly produce doggerel, including a version of "Alice in Blunderland",⁹⁴³ satirising personalities in the world of Pali scholarship at the time with 'in-joke' humour I suspect was probably libellous. All the Pali scholars and PTS personalities had none too subtle nicknames in their correspondence, though Woodward, while similarly inclined to banter and nonsense, would sometimes respond in charming self parody.

The Master writes: "My simple intellect does not soar beyond the spirit of the verse:-

I put my hat upon my head & walked into the strand,
And there I saw another man, whose hat was in his hand."⁹⁴⁴

Hare always addressed Woodward as 'The Master', a sign of humoured mock deference that harboured a genuine respect all the same, while Woodward, with his habit of nick-names, always called Hare, 'Eustace', because, as he explained to IB Horner,⁹⁴⁵ Caroline Rhys Davids (PTS President) in her dotage once confused EM Hare's initial names (Edward Miles) with the more famous 'Eustace Miles', who was evidently the inventor of that stygian health spread, 'Marmite'. This, for Woodward, was altogether too amusing to let go, and the sobriquet stuck thereafter.

Edward Miles Hare (generally known as Miles) was born 4 March 1893 in Leicester of a large family of nine brothers and two sisters. He was

⁹⁴² In Gunewardene, p73 & 74, quoting Witanachchi, he describes "Fry" and "FM Hart" as visitors. These were obviously Frei and EM Hare.

⁹⁴³ FOSL records. 'Alice' was their mutual nick-name for IB Horner; the Scandinavian translator Helmer-Smith was 'The Helmsman' and so they go on, though, like all nick-names, not necessarily complimentary.

⁹⁴⁴ Letter EM Hare to C. Rhys Davids 24 November 1940, IB Horner Collection (FOSL).

⁹⁴⁵ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 5 October, 1942.(FOSL)

educated at Stamford, as were all his brothers,⁹⁴⁶ which was where he met Woodward, then a teacher at Stamford. At eighteen (c.1912) he went to Ceylon to work for the Galaha Tea Estate in the Kandyan high country but returned in 1914 to serve in the Leicester Regiment and was wounded in action. After the Great War he return to Ceylon, eventually becoming Manager of the Galaha Estate⁹⁴⁷ before he retired in about 1948,⁹⁴⁸ after 37½ years in Ceylon.⁹⁴⁹

He was not a member of the TS though his acquaintance with Woodward undoubtedly spurred his interest in Pali translation. He was responsible for a PTS translation of the *Woven Cadences* (1947) and volumes III & IV (1934 & 1935) of the *Book of Gradual Sayings*, but more particularly for much of the editing of the *Pali Concordance* begun by Woodward. While they were friends they seemed continually to spar and Woodward could be critical of Hare's work as a translator,

There are several howlers in his vol.[*Gradual Sayings*] Which I have gently shown him. Some he admits, others explains away.⁹⁵⁰

And it was not simply the mistakes that raised his criticism, it was Hare's approach and style generally

Eustace does go wide of the mark sometimes in his efforts to be strikingly literal,⁹⁵¹

a difficulty, one might add, for all pioneering translators trying to render appropriately.

⁹⁴⁶ *The Stamfordian, Summer Term 1938*. EM Hare and his nine brothers, who attended Stamford between 1887-1910 donated a clock to the Cricket pavilion. Actually it was probably Woodward's friendship with EM Hare's older brother, Charles, a fellow theosophist, that created the connection in Ceylon with Woodward.

⁹⁴⁷ Hand written outline of the career of EM Hare written by his sister at the request of the solicitor of his estate. Box 13 IB Horner Collection (FOSL). The sister was unsure of the date of his retirement.

⁹⁴⁸ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 20 February 1949. (FOSL). Hare mentions his retirement at the end of the previous year. Oliver in *Buddhism in Britain* says, incorrectly, 1950.

⁹⁴⁹ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 9 June 1949. (FOSL)

⁹⁵⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 12 December 1934. (FOSL)

⁹⁵¹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 16 January 1935. (FOSL)

It was an odd friendship between the two confirmed bachelors, partly good humoured banter, though occasionally resistant as when Woodward ‘suggested’ insistently that Hare retire and take up the task of the Concordance; “of course he hopes for me to edit his Concordance work!”⁹⁵² Woodward hinted and coaxed Hare into work on the Concordance, obviously recognising he was unlikely ever to finish it himself, so Hare’s previous comment was undoubtedly justified. In return Hare would tease and needle his friend over his odd ideas.

I used to anger him with laughter at his waywardness - Theosophy, astrology, Bacon-cypher & such ‘rarities’. (I wonder whether Ananda ever roused the Buddha - I hope so - yes! when the latter ‘asked’ A[nanda] to beg him to live for a Kalpa![aeon] - if properly read there are some good human stories in the books!)⁹⁵³

There is, in this statement, an acknowledgment of Woodward’s special status and regard in Hare’s mind - placing himself as an Ananda to Woodward’s Buddha - reverential, but keenly aware of Woodward’s human frailty, and unable to deny himself some disrespectful teasing. The ‘Woodward’ Hare saw was a person of undeniable special, even saintly, qualities, but nevertheless profoundly human. Despite their friendship, Woodward remained enigmatic and impenetrable, prompting Hare’s mischievous speculation after Woodward’s death- “I never heard of The Master’s Susannah [sic] (no doubt he kept it dark!).”⁹⁵⁴

Regardless of Hare’s prurient conjecture, Woodward was a proud and independent man. Even after having been ill in hospital he would not

⁹⁵² Letter EM Hare to IB Horner, 15 June 1945. (FOSL). Hare’s emphasis.

⁹⁵³ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 26 December 1952. (FOSL) after Woodward’s death. Ananda was the Buddha’s closest disciple. A ‘Kalpa’ is an enormous historical cycle, roughly translated as ‘aeon’.

⁹⁵⁴ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 26 December 1952. (FOSL). The allusion is to ‘Susanna and the Elders’, which I assume implies some secret mistress in Woodward’s closet. Whether the earlier mentioned letter to “Dear Francisco” would satisfy Hare’s suspicion is impossible to say.

accept a neighbour's offer to look after him⁹⁵⁵ in her home, nor accept charity from anyone even when his finances were strained. As Hare put it in his waggish way, "he sounds a bit hard up, but is 'very proud'- as to receiving 'gifts of charity'- he thinks maybe: 'Only monks do that, & then not gold & silver!' Well!"⁹⁵⁶

Hare visited Woodward several times, once in 1931 and again ten years later in 1941⁹⁵⁷ when he went to Tasmania to recover from a stomach and heart ailment, thus repeating the colonial pattern of Tasmania as a destination for rest and recreation. When he arrived in 1941, however, Woodward himself was in hospital recovering from an operation for a hernia - "an immense druidic monolith"⁹⁵⁸- that had given him considerable discomfort over several years, following a previous operation in 1938. This is not surprising as Woodward was inclined to display his undoubted physical strength by lifting alone large stay posts,⁹⁵⁹ to the astonishment of neighbours. No wonder he had a hernia. Hare's stay with Woodward was rewarding however: he finished typing up his manuscript of the *Woven Cadences*, leaving a copy with Woodward in case the war literally sank his manuscript on the way to England; and he obviously enjoyed the peace of Tasmania that was in such contrast to events in Europe.

I have had an awfully good holiday here - done much digging, firewood chopping and laundry work - herein lies *ussada*: thoughts of 'prominence'!

⁹⁵⁵ Personal interview Leila Brady (McIntyre). Also Gunewardene p75.

⁹⁵⁶ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 25 July 1948. (FOSL). The allusion is to the fact the while monks may receive *dana* they were prohibited from handling gold and silver, an injunction not particularly adhered to today in many Theravadin countries. Woodward did accept Hare's payment of his hospital expenses, but it is Woodward who admits this [Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 25 June 1941 (FOSL)] not Hare, who obviously respected Woodward's pride.

⁹⁵⁷ Letter EM Hare to Caroline Rhys Davids 28 March 1941 box 14 IB Horner Collection (FOSL)

⁹⁵⁸ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 25 June 1941. (FOSL)

⁹⁵⁹ Stay posts for a conventional fence would be 6-7 feet long, anywhere from 10-18inches in diameter, and made of unseasoned hardwood which is extremely heavy. Source: interview with Leila Brady.

‘The Master’ I am glad to say is simply A.1 in health and is out all day chopping and trimming his trees.⁹⁶⁰

There was between the two men a respect for distance and space, which they both valued. Woodward described Hare as

a curious mixture - fond of detailed intensive work, believing nothing that is beyond his nose - disbelieving anything unusual, occult or unrevealed - independent and tends to the hermetic life - but not a real hermit like myself! Must have his club and dress suit.⁹⁶¹

Though undoubtedly holding each other in much esteem, they were humoured by one another’s foibles and never resiled from mutual, if gentle, chiding. It was a relationship tempered by a quiet rivalry and an almost sibling contest of wills, never more evident than in their efforts to produce a Pali Concordance.

Concordance.

The then President of the Pali Text Society, Caroline Rhys Davids, in 1933, asked Hare, after his earlier efforts with the *Gradual Sayings*, to consider editing the work Woodward was commencing on a Pali Concordance.⁹⁶² Hare was humbled and flattered by Rhys Davids’ offer, considering he had no tertiary education, being a graduate only of the nineteenth century amateur tradition. It was, however, if the truth is told, an offer largely couched in hope and just a little desperation. It was an extraordinarily thankless and laborious lexicographic task, which, as Woodward suggested, was not unlike the effort required by Murray to compile the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Caroline Rhys Davids, however, had a somewhat more casual view, describing it to Woodward as something “any intelligent child could do” - after all it was only a

⁹⁶⁰ Letter EM Hare to Caroline Rhys Davids 2 June 1941. IB Horner Collection (FOSL).

⁹⁶¹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 17 November 1937.(FOSL)

⁹⁶² Letter EM Hare to C. Rhys Davids 6 December 1933. IB Horner Collection (FOSL)

collection of words! Woodward would often repeat this remarkable observation in his letters to others with the addition, “I should like to see this child!”⁹⁶³

Though the task was considerable, Woodward nevertheless wanted a comprehensive work - “The Master writes in great form - will have no mean concordance- it must be a work of wonder & delight of *devas* and mankind!”⁹⁶⁴ In Woodward’s view, “if we make a start our successors will continue.”⁹⁶⁵ Hare, more cautious, recognised that it would mean a lifetime, if not many lifetimes work, and sought something more modest, though “we don’t want to discourage FLW & so I should let him have his way - he is now over 70!”⁹⁶⁶ - meaning, no doubt, that he was not going to live much longer, after which they could do what they preferred.

Woodward was dismissive of Hare’s emphasis on economy, caused, he caustically commented, by Hare “having been a tea-man so long”.⁹⁶⁷ Woodward always saw things in the broad, well beyond his own efforts, and would not relinquish the ambition of his work. It was a tussle of intentions argued subtly through their correspondence with both Rhys Davids and Horner, though a compromise on method and inclusion was eventually arrived at.⁹⁶⁸

It was a task they all recognised as essential scholarship but not necessarily valued by scholars who took such resources for granted.

⁹⁶³ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 1 December 1948, (FOSL)

⁹⁶⁴ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 12 September 1945 (FOSL). *Devas* are ‘angels’ or ‘gods’.

⁹⁶⁵ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 27 November 1943. (FOSL)

⁹⁶⁶ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 27 November 1943. (FOSL)

⁹⁶⁷ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner, 20 January 1950. (FOSL). There was, according to Woodward, a similar economy of style in Hare’s translations, that left in them unfulfilling to the reader.

⁹⁶⁸ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 14 October 1943 (FOSL). By this time a compromise was emerging though it was still an issue of what to include and exclude even after the Concordance passed into the hands of Warder and others.

Hare's acerbic view was "that scholars are like accountants- its not the latter who do the business!"⁹⁶⁹ However, while lexicographic tasks are rarely rewarded and rarely acknowledged, a Pali Concordance is invaluable not only to the Pali scholar studying the Buddhist Canon for doctrinal and philosophic purposes, it is also valuable for linguistic research (philology), for the establishment of chronology, and also for historical research, "especially social and economic history, for which the Pali provides exceptionally rich and reliable documentation."⁹⁷⁰

Work on a Concordance began early in the century with 'slips' collected by the American Buddhist scholar Lanman, and later by Edmund Hardy in Switzerland, (with whom Woodward corresponded and established a 'password' for communication from the 'hereafter'). The project languished until Caroline Rhys Davids revived the idea and urged it on to Woodward, who was one of the few dedicated and reliable workers in the field.⁹⁷¹ It was a responsibility of inordinate complexity, requiring an encyclopaedic knowledge of the texts and language, as well as a "passionate patience"⁹⁷² and dedication, qualities Woodward had in admirable abundance.

The tedium of the task is difficult to appreciate, though any glance at the work of Johnson or Murray⁹⁷³ would be enough to dissuade even the most dedicated enthusiast. During World War II, Woodward informed IB Horner that he had over a hundredweight (50kg) of 'slips' to be sent

⁹⁶⁹ Letter EM Hare to IB Horner 27 November 1943. (FOSL).

⁹⁷⁰ Woodward, FL & Hare, EM and others *Pali Tipitkam Concordance* Vol. III, Part I (London: PTS, 1963) Introduction by AK Warder, piv.

⁹⁷¹ Woodward, FL and others *Pali Tipitkam Concordance* Vol. I: A-O, (London: PTS, 1956) Preface by EM Hare, piii.

⁹⁷² This the description TW Rhys Davids, founder of the PTS, applied to Childers, compiler of the first Pali dictionary in the 1870's, in the British Dictionary of National Biography. Cited by Cone, M "Lexicography, Pali & Pali Lexicography" *Journal of the Pali Text Society* Vol. XXII, 1996 p14-15.

⁹⁷³ Murray, KME *Caught in the Web of Words: James Murray and the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)

to England after the war for editing, an indication of the extraordinary effort he applied to the task. It raised mirth between Horner and Hare though, as to how Woodward was going to manage the cost of postage.

Woodward began the work only,

after he had read all the books of the *Tipitaka* twenty times. With the exception of the *Anguttara Nikaya*, *Sutta Nipata* and *Nidessa*, Woodward worked on all 28 books [of the *Tipitika*] for the Concordance.⁹⁷⁴

It was a daunting undertaking and certainly not the path to wealth and fame. It was though, characteristic of Woodward that he should adopt so undervalued an undertaking, spending the last fifteen years of his life⁹⁷⁵ concurring words of the *Tipitika*. Only the first volume, or fascicle, was published before he died in 1952. After his death EM Hare continued the task as Woodward had intended, and when Hare died in 1958,⁹⁷⁶ the work continued under the guidance of AK and NR Warder.

Still the Concordance remains incomplete, victim of the small world of available Pali scholars and the march of technology. Today with the transfer of the *Tipitaka* on to CD-ROM, with its capacity to interrogate and cross-reference vast numbers of texts, the purpose of a concordance recedes in importance, the boxes of interminable ‘slips’ laboriously collected, remaining unedited in the archives of Cambridge. Therein lies an irony Woodward would have appreciated; that such effort could evaporate in importance in a twinkling of technology. *SABBAM ANICCAM*, everything is impermanent.

⁹⁷⁴ Ratnatunga, PD Mudaliyar “Frank Lee Woodward” *The Buddhist* July 1952 Colombo: YMBA p51.

⁹⁷⁵ Heywood *A Buddhist Scholar*. p22.

⁹⁷⁶ Oliver *Buddhism in Britain*, claims Hare died in 1955 whereas, according to his Will [Somerset House] he died 26 October 1958 at Henry Gawin Hospital, Alton, Hampshire, leaving an estate of £23577/10/5, a £1000 to go to the PTS for publication of the Concordance, and with a codicil, of course, that he be cremated.

The Task of Translation.

The former British Home Office Minister Lord Elton got proceedings off to a jolly start in the plenary session with a reference to the philosopher Schleiermacher, who said that every language has a particular mode of thought which could not be repeated the same way in any other language.

“Schleiermacher almost certainly wrote his work in German,” Lord Elton said. “If so, what we have purports to be a translation of a statement that no statement can be translated. It follows, does it not, that if this statement is true, it was not made by Schleiermacher - and conversely, if it was made by Schleiermacher, then this is not what he said.”

As the American Journalist HL Mencken once said: “There is no record in history of a happy philosopher.”⁹⁷⁷

The expression, *traduttore, traditore*, to translate is to traduce, sums up eloquently the dilemma of translation and translator - the process can represent everything from sweet seduction to violation. In the case of the band of nineteenth century European philologists and language enthusiasts, the approach had much in keeping with the imperial process, an appropriation rather than a mutual rendering, and irrespective of the mindfulness of the translator they were prey to that arrogance. Woodward, similarly, could not escape the inclination to view his renderings as definitive. He was, though, a pioneer in a period of pioneers.

His work has rarely been superseded and remains seminal, principally because few have stepped forward with the same enthusiasm (or madness) for such labour and tedium, despite the quantum growth of universities. It was a rare madness that possessed such pioneers, no better illustrated than by Henry Coleridge, first editor of the OED, (before Murray), who died, in 1861, at 31, from consumption. When told the dire prognosis of his illness, “he is reported to have exclaimed, ‘I must begin Sanskrit tomorrow’!”⁹⁷⁸ A man obviously not inclined to waste time.

⁹⁷⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald* 25/8/88 Report on the World Congress of Philosophy, Brighton UK. I am grateful to Dr Peter Masefield for drawing my attention to this quotation.

⁹⁷⁸ Cone, M. “The IB Horner Lecture 1995: Lexicography, Pali and Pali Lexicography” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* Vol. XXII, 1996. p3.

Pali remains one of the more obscure of the nineteenth century philological enthusiasms and few in the west have any knowledge of it, apart from recognising it as the language of the Theravadin Canon. There has been considerable debate about the origins of Pali: KR Norman, the distinguished Pali scholar and former President of the Pali Text Society, observed that Pali “must.... be assumed to be an artificial literary language”, a form of “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit”,⁹⁷⁹ and represents a derivation from other Prakrit. Despite views to the contrary, including Woodward’s, it was unlikely to have been the language of the Buddha and unlikely to have been the earliest rendering of the canon and cannot be regarded as *the* primary source. It is, though, the language of the Theravadin Canon, and the Theravadin tradition insists on its precedence, dating itself to the Buddha or at least to the Third Council in the third century BCE. However, as Edward Conze, the Buddhist scholar, observed,

If the canon of one school [Theravadin] has reached us intact, and in its entirety, this is not due to its greater antiquity or intrinsic merit, but to the accidents of historical transmission.⁹⁸⁰

Controversy with respect to the origin and composition of Pali is not entirely resolved but that is not the task of the present work to ponder,⁹⁸¹ rather to consider early pioneers like Woodward. The task of producing editions (Pali transcribed into Roman script) and translations into English of canonical texts was an extraordinary interest and task, academically obscure, and primarily relevant to Indologists, anthropologists, philologists, and scholars of comparative religion. Like

⁹⁷⁹ Norman KR *Collected Papers* Vol.III (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1992) p37.

⁹⁸⁰ Conze, E *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies* 1967 p4. Cited in Norman Vol.III p40.

⁹⁸¹ For reference to these issues, see:

Norman KR *Collected Papers* Vol.s I, II, III, IV (Oxford: Pali Text Society 1991-94)

Banerji SC *An Introduction to Pali Literature* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1964)

Law BC *A History of Pali Literature* Vol I & II (Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishing House)

Geiger, W *Pali Literature and Language* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1956)

those who pore over Biblical texts, the task is exacting and time consuming, but whereas Biblical scholars may have anything up to five thousand versions to compare in relation to any meaning, word usage, sentence construction or phraseology, Pali scholars, at that time, were unlikely to have more than a handful to compare, sometimes only two or three, and even only one as in the case of the PTS edition of *Buddhavamsa-atthakatha*.

These are matters of grave concern to Pali scholars,⁹⁸² as many of the early editions and translations are so redolent with error as to render them misleading. Editors were often amateurs, like Woodward, inclined to select text, structure and meanings arbitrarily, on the basis of what appealed personally, a kind of ‘intuitive’ translation as Norman has described it, an invitation to arrogance that did not escape Woodward. The correspondence of Hare, Woodward, Horner and Caroline Rhys Davids is full of conjecture regarding meaning and context. Woodward in concurring, established hundreds of words that did not even appear in the then available dictionaries.

Potentially arrogant or not, intuition, a ‘sixth sense’, was then and remains, vital in translation, but it arises from a compound of “intelligence, sensitivity, [and] knowledge”,⁹⁸³ elements that did not always temper the efforts of early pioneers. In one case, Caroline Rhys Davids arbitrarily ordered the omission of all hyphens in compounded words (but forgot to close the consequent gaps) because her late husband did not like hyphens.⁹⁸⁴ This was truly a pioneer period of endeavour

⁹⁸² I am indebted to Dr Primoz Pecenko of the Faculty of Asian Studies, South & West Asia Centre, Australian National University and to Dr Peter Masefield, Visiting Scholar, Sydney University, both reputable Pali scholars, for a number of fascinating conversations and correspondence on the matter of Pali translation.

⁹⁸³ Newmark, *P A Textbook of Translation* (NY: Prentice Hall, 1995) p4.

⁹⁸⁴ Norman KR *Collected Papers* Vol. IV (Oxford: PTS,1993) p82.

remarkable more for the quality of what was produced than the annoying errors that crept in through printing errors, punctuation, rendition or the vagaries of text.

For the Christian scholar finding out exactly or originally what was said or written is extremely important, predicated on an assumption that what is original is necessarily somehow more authentic. The task is thus to laboriously trace each manuscript in terms of its antiquity and the mistakes of copyists. Indigenous Buddhist scholars in the East sometimes find this approach somewhat puzzling. There have been Buddhist councils from the beginning where the task has been to agree on what the texts should read, to ‘rid them of copyists errors’, and that having been determined, there remains nothing to dispute - the text is the text. Since the *dharma* is immutable, the task is only to ‘tidy’ the errors, not examine doctrinal evolution through the texts.

This ‘cleansing’ last took place in Burma at the convened fifth council (1868-71) and the complete *Tipitaka* was inscribed on 729 stone slabs around the Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay.⁹⁸⁵ They were re-inked and copied for the sixth council in Rangoon in 1954-56 to mark the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha’s birth. Debating the merits of particular manuscripts is likely to be greeted with a puzzled response and reference to the inscribed stones. What is there to discuss? This marks the substantial attitudinal difference in the European and Eastern approach and preoccupation. This difference is significant and places a substantial distance between the work of the Pali Text Society and its contributors like Woodward - who adhere to the European textual approach - and the scholars of the temples in Theravadin cultures.

⁹⁸⁵ Norman KR “Pali Literature” in Gonda, J *A History of Indian Literature* Vol. VII, Fasc.2, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983) p12-13.

The issue of texts underscores some problems for the Pali copyist and the considerable opportunity for error in transcribing Pali. Not only are there significant similarities in some of the Pali symbols, leading to some absurd misunderstandings, but also copying on to *ola* (palm) leaf parchments is accomplished by a stylus which only scores or etches the parchment, leaving it difficult to read until it is rendered legible by rubbing ink into the scored text. The chances of repeated or omitted text- the bane of every copyist - is thus much greater than where ink is applied directly on to paper.

From the point of view of editors and translators, the quality of the manuscript is paramount and transcribing errors, particularly when using a limited number of comparable texts, can distort any final product. Further difficulties arise where European translators come up against cultural metaphors and analogies - and there are far more in Pali than in English. They frequently misconstrued or found them difficult to render into English or simply found it difficult to decide whether to render accurately or for sense and meaning.

For the pioneer editor and translator there were substantial difficulties, not least of which, for Woodward, was his choice of living in Tasmania, at considerable distance from scholastic centres and access to texts. Nevertheless, while his work is not without criticism, Woodward's output was prodigious and of high quality given all the limitations alluded to. IB Horner described Woodward as "one of the most meticulous, erudite and productive scholars".⁹⁸⁶ Margaret Cone, Pali lexicographer, presently working at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge, on a new Pali-English Dictionary for the PTS, regards

⁹⁸⁶ Woodward FL *Paramattha-Dipani Theragatha-Atthakatha: The commentary of Dhammapalacariya* Vol. II Introduction by IB Horner (London: Luzac, 1952, reprinted 1958) pviii.

Woodward as an accurate translator, and, though he sometimes misunderstood a passage, or its point, he was better than many of his contemporaries. Cone points out that his greatest weaknesses appear in his attempts to translate verse. Rendering verse into verse compounds the translator's difficulties, and Woodward, like his contemporaries, was inclined to use irritating English archaisms. His rendering, too, of important 'technical terms' was often not good, though this may be partly a result of adhering to some of Caroline Rhys Davids firmly held views.⁹⁸⁷

Others, like the Prof Gombrich of Oxford, the present President of the Pali Text Society, regard Woodward as "Not very eminent [as a translator] I'm afraid", though better than EM Hare.

The volumes he translated for the Pali Text Society are not badly done, but his translations cannot be described as definitive, and will need to be redone in due course.⁹⁸⁸

Dr Peter Masefield, translator of the *Udana Commentary*, a work edited by Woodward, is even more scathing, accusing him of nonsensical punctuation, wrong identification of sources, imposition of his own readings and producing a text so "riddled with errors, misprints and misunderstandings, that it is often tantamount to being useless."⁹⁸⁹ While Masefield's comments no doubt have validity, Woodward himself recognised the problem in a letter to CA Rhys Davids, in 1934.

the text of Udana is very poor (and meanly executed too)...There are many errors and sentences omitted etc wrong diacritics. So it

⁹⁸⁷ Personal conversation, May 1997, and correspondence February, 1999.

⁹⁸⁸ Personal correspondence 12 April 1995.

⁹⁸⁹ Masefield, P. *The Udana Commentary* Vol. I (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994) pxii.

would be a pity to photograph it [for re-publication]. It should be renewed when necessary.⁹⁹⁰

As Cone observes, Woodward's editions, while not perfect, would have been difficult to be otherwise at the time he made them, and certainly not the worst the PTS published.⁹⁹¹

In personal conversation, Masefield, readily acknowledges Woodward's historical and pioneering significance, particularly his prodigious output, but there is a sense, in Masefield's mind, that Woodward was working with great speed to cover as much as possible, without adequate attention to detail, a criticism that seems plausible given Woodward's output. That Woodward was inclined to believe he 'knew best' when it came to a rendering is also plausible, having, as he had, imperialist genes and a personally autocratic style. None of this detracts from his pioneering accomplishment that still leaves his work as a primary source for those in the field. What Dr Johnson said of the lexicographer, could similarly be said of editors and translators of texts. They were, he suggested, the

slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths of learning and Genius, who press forward to conquest and glory without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been granted to very few.⁹⁹²

Woodward's Translations.

Woodward's work can be classified into a number of categories. In the first category is his work compiling the Pali Concordance, which has been discussed previously. In the second category are his more

⁹⁹⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 21 February 1934. (FOSL)

⁹⁹¹ Personal correspondence, February 1999.

⁹⁹² Cone, M "Lexicography, Pali, and Pali Lexicography" p1, citing the preface of Dr Johnson's dictionary.

accessible and popular translations such as his *Buddhist Stories*, which were printed individually, often repeatedly, in many English journals in Ceylon. Collected in book form, they were distributed widely in Buddhist schools as basic texts in religious studies. Similarly, his work *The Buddha's Path of Virtue: A Translation of the Dhammapada* (1921), again frequently printed in individual parts, achieved a considerable audience and had a significant influence on generations of pupils for whom it often meant the first introduction to the texts of their own faith. There was also Woodward's popular *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, which as Woodward remarked, sold like 'hot muffins', and which Christmas Humphries described, in 1972, as "the finest anthology of the Pali Canon ever produced"⁹⁹³ for its size, and a work that "has lived in the pockets of thousands of English Buddhists from that day [when first published in 1925] to this."⁹⁹⁴

Those achievements in themselves were remarkable, however, in a third category of work are Woodward's editions of Pali texts transliterated into Roman script, and translations of Pali texts into English.

<i>Manual of a Mystic</i> (Yogavacara's Manual)	1916
<i>The Book of Kindred Sayings</i> (Samyutta-Nikaya) Vol. III	1924
<i>Udana Commentary</i>	1926
<i>Book of Kindred Sayings</i> (Samyutta-Nikaya) Vol. IV	1927
<i>Sarathappakasini</i> Vol.I	1929
<i>Book of Kindred Sayings</i> (Samyutta-Nikaya) VolV	
1930	
<i>Sarathappakasini</i> Vol.II	1932
<i>Book of Gradual Sayings</i> (Anuguttara-Nikaya) Vol. I	1932
<i>Book of Gradual Sayings</i> (Anuguttara-Nikaya) Vol. II	1933
<i>Minor Anthologies: Vol.II Udana: Verses of Uplift and</i>	
<i>Itivittaka: As it was said.</i>	1935
<i>Book of Gradual Sayings</i> (Anuguttara-Nikaya) Vol. V	1936

⁹⁹³ Woodward, FL *Some Sayings of the Buddha -according to the Pali Canon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) Introduction by Christmas Humphries pxi.

⁹⁹⁴ Woodward *Some Sayings...* Humphries Introduction, pxx.

<i>Sarathhappakasini</i> Vol.III	1937
<i>Theragata Commentary</i> Vol.I	1940
<i>Theragata Commentary</i> Vol.II	1952
<i>Theragata Commentary</i> Vol.III	1959 ⁹⁹⁵

In addition, Woodward edited and rendered into English blank verse Mudaliyar ER Gunaratna's translation of the first volume of Anguttara Nikaya (*Book of Numerical Sayings*) in 1916, and had edited the translation by AD Jayasundera of the second volume of the Anguttara Nikaya (*Book of Numerical Sayings*) in 1925. However one values Woodward's contribution to scholarship, it was unquestionably prodigious, and the world of Buddhist scholarship would be significantly the poorer without it.

⁹⁹⁵ Source: *Pali Text Society: List of Issues 1994-95*.
 Oliver, I *Buddhism in Britain* (London: Rider, 1979) p42.

A Constellation of Lives

“And I also know,” said Candide, “that we must cultivate our garden.”-Voltaire

From the record of Woodward’s Buddhist translations and work on the Pali Concordance, most of Woodward’s output occurred while he was resident in Tasmania, though his obsessional preoccupation was almost entirely devoid of any significance for his neighbours in the Rowella region. There was all apples and aspiration, a world of commerce and class where the distinctions of social position were indicated by education, property and means, but also by religious adherence, a factor which obviously had little relevance to Woodward.

The social divisions in such a small community were not entirely rigid, though they were seen to be emphasised by a particular church attendance. Elements of class perception distinguished those adhering to the more fundamental faith of Chapel Methodism (and our Presbyterianism of the Auld Kirk⁹⁹⁶ at nearby Sidmouth), and those adhering to the Anglican Establishment - for despite the non-establishment of religion in Australia, Anglicanism approximated (or rather, attempted to appropriate) its place in English society.

It was a community, then, with some social pretension, and the distinctions of class that approximated religious affiliation were further emphasised by the location of Anglican worship in the home of CB Brady, owner of Waterton Hall, unofficial ‘squire’ of the district, and Woodward’s closest acquaintance in the district. Brady had worked for

⁹⁹⁶The Auld Kirk has had a chequered history. It burned in 1900 but was partially restored in 1913. Its use though, declined in the 1920s and it once again became overgrown. It was re-opened and re-dedicated again in 1933. Thus it has remained somewhat peripheral to the central division between non-conformist and conformist, Methodism and Anglicanism. [See Wivel, J. *Sidmouth- West Tamar, Northern Tasmania- Its Origin and Development* (Launceston: Foot & Playstead, 1955)]

Atlas Insurance,⁹⁹⁷ Launceston, and was in an orcharding partnership with the influential Launceston architect, Alexander North until after World War I (when Brady went into partnership with Heyward, an engineer in his previous profession).

When Alexander North accepted the task of remodelling Waterton, which Brady purchased in 1909, he transformed a simple two story bluestone Georgian style home into Edwardian elegance with more than a hint of Tudor, though, in part, the stylistic arches, verandahs and other accretions were to buttress walls in danger of collapse. It was a worthy site for a home of elegance, an elevated position overlooking the Tamar with a small private shingle beach and boat shed. The new home the Brady family moved into in December 1913 also included a chapel that was to be the centre of Anglican worship in the district until Waterton was sold to the Catholic Church in 1949.⁹⁹⁸

The addition of a chapel may have been influenced by the tastes of North, who made a significant contribution to church architecture in Launceston,⁹⁹⁹ and by Brady's undoubted love of ritual and church music.¹⁰⁰⁰ The inclusion of a chapel in the house to serve the district may appear, then, to be an altruistic gesture by Brady, but there can be little doubt it also corresponded with Brady's social pretensions. He intuitively understood the alignment of class and religious affiliation and

⁹⁹⁷Atlas was later managed by Smithies [See Branagan, JG. *A Great Tasmanian. Frederick Smithies OBE: explorer, mountaineer, photographer.* (Launceston: Regal Press, ND)] who was later to find Brady's body when he died under unusual circumstances in his rooms in Launceston. Brady would have liked to see himself as 'squire' and the term was often applied to him both in jest and with resentment.

⁹⁹⁸McIntyre p98. A more extensive description of the home and chapel is included in this work. Leila McIntyre was a daughter of CB Brady and she has been, in personal interviews, an invaluable source of information. Waterton Hall has since passed once more into private hands, repeating a pattern of retirees from elsewhere.

⁹⁹⁹See Miley, C. *Beautiful & Useful- The arts and crafts movement of Tasmania* (Launceston: Queen Victoria Museum, 1987) p 54.

¹⁰⁰⁰He was a trained singer with a high tenor voice who had been closely associated with church music in Melbourne.

placed its symbols within his own possession and Waterton Hall at the centre of community focus.

It is hardly surprising that Charles Bothwell Brady (1873-1949) was regarded with mixed feeling in the district, often resented for his assumption of authority as well as his lack of tact and respect for the space of others. He was tall for the times (5'10"-5'11"), vain and rarely without a hat, a fortunate sartorial requirement of the time since it covered his balding pate. He was also, by all accounts an atrocious driver, being both short sighted and impatient, an unfortunate combination, leaving a trail of stories of near misses and vehicular side swipes.¹⁰⁰¹ He was a Mason, a necessary social *entrée* of the time, and served for a period, during the Depression, as Warden [Mayor] of the local Beaconsfield Municipality. He was also active in the politics of orcharding being at the forefront of efforts to establish cooperative packing and distribution facilities on the Tamar.¹⁰⁰²

Brady presents a complex and contradictory picture. He served as an ordinary soldier in the artillery during the First World War, which he turned into some reversed snobbery by vocally claiming to be the only ordinary serviceman, not an officer, to appear on the Honour Roll of the Great War in the exclusive Launceston Northern Club.¹⁰⁰³ On his return from war he was delayed in Melbourne by the influenza epidemic sweeping the world and when he returned to Waterton he was met with

¹⁰⁰¹According to Leila Brady, his carelessness was a function of having learned to drive late in life, in about 1928. Before that he drove a pony and jinker which had the fortunate habit of attending to the road if the driver's attention was elsewhere, a habit cars did not possess.

¹⁰⁰²*The Examiner* newspaper, Launceston, November 1919. The names of those mentioned in meetings at that time (when Woodward first arrived in Tasmania) held to discuss the issues of cooperation, reads like a 'who's who' of Launceston commerce- Perrin, Shone, Gunn. Brady, though, held a central position in these deliberations.

¹⁰⁰³In 1996 the Club finally went into liquidation.

the death, from influenza, days earlier, of his beloved and only son, Basil. The effect on the family and its dynamics, was profound.

Brady's wife¹⁰⁰⁴ never overcame her grief and near her own death, years later, remarked, in an expression of Victorian grief, that she was once again to be reunited with her son. She was, as one would expect living with a volatile personality like Brady, a quiet, immensely competent person who ordered the household with an accomplished ease, even when for weeks the family - accompanied by friends, like the Melbourne opera star, Madam Gregor-Wood - would spend time on their motor yacht cruising the Bass Strait and Furneaux group of islands.

It was with the Brady family that Woodward had one of his closest connections in the Rowella district. Each Saturday afternoon he would walk from his home to Waterton across the fields and the Waterton dam. He would spend the afternoon playing the lovely Mason and Hamlin organ near the chapel, his appreciation of organ music obviously deriving from his church background and his days as chapel organist at Sidney Sussex College.¹⁰⁰⁵ He would play all afternoon, a loving amount of Bach, then join the family for a meal.

Woodward's "cheery and boisterous"¹⁰⁰⁶ nature and delight in play followed Woodward into most areas, including the Saturday evening meal with the Bradys. Being a vegetarian, Woodward would ask veiled questions that 'assumed' no meat formed part of the meal and all participated in this whimsical charade, for while Woodward was

¹⁰⁰⁴Brady's wife, Elvina, who was sister to Brady's partner Heyward, illustrates aspects of the religious and class distinctions. She was the daughter of a Methodist minister but remained quiescent in matters of religion in the face of Brady's determination. She dabbled, however, at one time with the marginal views of the British Israelites. Nevertheless, she was a highly intelligent woman who was quick with languages- she took up Italian during World War II in order to facilitate communication with Italian POW's.

¹⁰⁰⁵Venn, JA. *Alumni Cantabrigienses*)

¹⁰⁰⁶Croucher, P *A History of Buddhism in Australia 1848-1988* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1989) p22.

vegetarian he was not rigid and accepted the Buddhist injunction to consume what was offered. Food forms a significant part of the many stories that accompany Woodward's life in Rowella. The sharing of food in rural communities, who seem to retain some race memory of famines past, is used as a means of cementing connection as well as a symbol of care and nurture, and the surrounding families with which Woodward was associated would frequently offer him gifts of food and he would often reciprocate.

For years after Woodward came to reside in Rowella, he would receive from his friend EM Hare, tea, at harvest, in lead sealed tin canisters.¹⁰⁰⁷ He was inordinately fond of tea and enjoyed presenting gifts of it to his neighbours. The story is told of his gift of tea to Mrs Day North, daughter-in-law Alexander North. When asked her opinion of the tea, she told Woodward that she much enjoyed it as "it blended very nicely with the Robur."¹⁰⁰⁸ Woodward was horrified by such desecration but nevertheless enjoyed retelling the tale.

In return, his neighbours would offer him 'treats'. One of the Clark children remembers as a child in short pants taking Woodward Kentish Cherry pies¹⁰⁰⁹ from his mother, and approaching the house with

¹⁰⁰⁷ Woodward's estate near Galle was a low country estate producing lower grade teas for blending. EM Hare, however, manager of the Galaha Tea Estate Co., near Kandy sent him only quality highland tea, to which Woodward refers in a letter to IB Horner 12 March 1945 IB Horner Collection, Box 14 (FOSL)

¹⁰⁰⁸Personal interview with Leila McIntyre. Robur was, and still is, a very ordinary tea, which she obviously blended with Woodward's tea to 'spin it out'. That the story gained some currency at Mrs Day North's expense is not surprising. She was a past matron of the Beaconsfield Hospital and was always the first to offer help to those in distress or illness but she was also curious about the affairs of others, and somewhat of a gossip. One of her means of observation was to feed her 'chooks', who must have been the most obese fowls in the district. Her husband Eric, who like his father, Alexander was prone to eccentricities, was known to work late into the evening by lantern in the orchards. Local theory was that he did so to avoid his wife's incessant opinion. His father, Alexander, who was in an orcharding partnership with CB Brady of "Waterton" once proposed to Brady the importation of camels so the efficacious dung could be placed around the fruit trees.

¹⁰⁰⁹Personal interview- John Clark, son of Claude Clark who was a neighbour and who purchased "Bhatkawa" after Woodward's death in accordance with specific instructions in Woodward's will.

trepidation. By that time Woodward was quite old and his home in need of repair, the gutters laden with the pine needles from the Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) that were frequently grown as shelter in the early period when orchards were first established. By then the trees were huge and overshadowed the house, darkening the path and adding a touch of terror to his approach; pines seem to gather a sigh and whisper, retaining the voices of conversations past, even when no wind stirs.

He remembers knocking at the door and waiting interminably for the progression of echoed footfall on the bare boards to arrive at the door. Woodward would take the gift and offer his response, “Ah! Your mother will wear golden slippers in Heaven. Or wherever. Wait here.” He would wait while Woodward retreated with the pie and returned with a large jar of boiled sweets which he would proffer to the boy with the stern injunction, “Just one!”. The boy’s escape thereafter was as rapid as good manners would allow. Woodward enjoyed children, but there was also an element of Victorian cruelty that perceived the child’s discomfort and was even bemused by it. Nevertheless, his stern exterior generally did not deter the fondness of children for him. He would frequently offer sweets to children at the Rowella store, particularly chocolate coated nuts which he termed ‘rabbits eggs’, knowing full well this euphemism for their resemblance to the rabbit’s ubiquitous pebbled excrement would appeal to the scatological nature of children.

Woodward’s fondness for children extended into the homes of his friends to include their children. It is they, who were once children, who are now the carriers of these stories and whose affection for Woodward allows him to reach into the present. Even the shock of some tales

The Kentish Cherry is a curious delicacy requiring a mature palate as the cherries cook to a quite tart taste.

illustrates a particular regard. One of the Heyward children tells of walking, as a small boy, beside Woodward on his way from the shop and obviously babbling on so much Woodward, in exasperation, hit him (though obviously not hard) with the fish he had just purchased. When he return home to announce, “Mummy, Mummy, Mr Woody hit me with a fish!” he was greeted with immense mirth but little sympathy. It was unquestionably recognised Woodward would never have been malicious and acted only to stem the ceaseless flow of child chatter.¹⁰¹⁰ He was viewed by the local people, after all, as a “mystic and a saintly man- with a twinkle in his eye.”¹⁰¹¹

There is though, in Woodward, as previously observed, just a touch of Victorian cruelty, a Hans Christian Anderson delight in things likely to scare children, unremarkable in his time and only noticeable from the present perspective. As Gay suggests “the portrait of the respectable nineteenth century bourgeois as a stranger to coarseness and addicted to squeamishness takes surfaces for essences.”¹⁰¹² In a delightful piece of doggerel¹⁰¹³ he wrote for another of the Heyward children - accompanied by an original Woodward cartoon - he describes a scene of mice ascending and descending the hair of the little girl, a thought, no doubt, intended to induce a childish mixture of revulsion and delight. [see Illustrations]

What is noticeable about the diagram, other than the poem and illustration, is firstly, that it is written on Mahinda College stationary, of which he must have had a stack, and secondly, that he signed himself M.O.B. Woodward often signed himself this way among those who

¹⁰¹⁰Personal interview- Nigel Heyward. I am sure Woodward would agree this tale deserves a place in his story.

¹⁰¹¹ McIntyre *Rowella-Kayena* ...p30.

¹⁰¹² Gay *Cultivation of Hatred* p417.

¹⁰¹³Source: Evelyn Heyward.

knew him and knew the story that went with it. Favourite stories - and 'family jokes' - have a way of being far more revealing than anyone ever intends, and essential to deciphering any individual or family dynamics. That Woodward shared this story, even with the youngest children, elevates it to the position of a significant personal leitmotif.

Woodward would frequently tell the story of a retailer, a member of the nineteenth century 'shopocracy', who, having achieved his goal of economic excess, attempted to turn his new found status into membership of the Cowes Yacht Club. His name was advanced for consideration and the 'old money', of course, promptly black-balled the upstart. At the next regatta though, he turned up in an enormous vessel with a pennant flying from the mast inscribed "M.O.B.Y.C". His presence caused some consternation as yachting etiquette demanded reciprocal fraternal hospitality. However, when he was queried by a more than agitated Commodore of Cowes about the pennant and the august yachting fraternity it proclaimed, he revealed, with casual defiance, that the pennant stood for, "My Own Bloody Yacht Club".

It is an odd story, both a statement of defiance and humoured disdain for the absurdity of class snobbery that denies appropriate acknowledgment and value. It is a social statement too, reflecting the rise of the middle class and resistance to its progress in the late nineteenth century which was as relevant to the aspiring middle class of Rowella (and Ceylon) as it would have been in England. That a story like this was greeted with humour and retold repeatedly indicates its resonance within such a community.

However, while there is a middle class contempt of 'establishment', such contempt also harbours an envy and concurrent desire to imitate - a mix

of resentment and emulation, much like the Australian response to things British. So the story, while it is an statement of valuation denied, is also a statement of class aspiration, the sort of aspiration felt by people like Brady and others, anxious for ‘appropriate’ community recognition and acknowledgment.

Like most humour, a story like “My Own Bloody Yacht Club”, particularly when constantly repeated and alluded to, is bound to have a significant personal dimension as well, though the sources of the elements of the story, ‘valuation denied’ and defiance, may be multiple and fragmentary.

As a defiant statement of ‘valuation denied’, it may well have reflected aspects of the disappointment experienced by Woodward’s father, for instance, in not having achieved the ecclesiastic goals to which he aspired. Advancement was then a matter of means or influence, not necessarily ability. The length of his father’s curacy in Saham Toney, enduring the brunt of parish duties without suitable acknowledgment or advancement, would have given rise to an understandable frustration. Even his father’s inclined non-conformity and pride in his “Puritan stock”,¹⁰¹⁴ (which may also have hindered promotion) is in itself a statement of defiance, an attitude Woodward certainly, if quietly, assumed in his own life.

There is too, in Woodward’s refusal to follow his father’s ecclesiastic aspiration to enter ‘Holy Orders’, an undeniable defiance, though one that obviously cost Woodward personally, for he had to ‘fail’ his father as he ‘failed’ his university finals. Despite Woodward’s accomplishments, he presents as a person of considerable sensitivity. To

¹⁰¹⁴Wijeratne, Dantanarayana, Samara-Wickrama, *A century of Memories* p25. and also Gunewardene *FL Woodward* p5.

‘fail’, or to be subject to the adverse judgement of others, seemed to pain him inordinately. His university results, his rejection of his father’s aspiration, his despair, and the manner in which he seemed to ‘drift’ after graduation, all carried an undoubted and emphatic judgement in his early life, particularly in the censorious Victorian world of his upbringing. In such a world of driven behaviour, one’s efforts are never quite ‘good enough’, and the deliberate choice of geographic obscurity, Ceylon or Tasmania, offers respite from scrutiny and comparison. There is no judgement or pressing competition on the periphery.

Woodward chose too, another ‘periphery’; he chose ‘Work’ - and in Victorian parlance the word should always be capitalised - in the area of Pali scholarship that was rejected and undervalued by others, in the same way as he assumed beliefs rejected by others, ‘occult’ beliefs, which Webb accurately describes as ‘rejected knowledge’. These are aspects of marginality, a certain individualistic non-conformity, and however concealed, more than a hint of grandiosity, as the ‘M.O.B’ tale also tells. The loner and individualist of the nineteenth century, as Ralston Saul suggests, often went or was sent to the corners of the empire, for

There he could give almost free reign to his individual liberty by engaging in a concretely existential life.¹⁰¹⁵

A niche could possibly be found where what would otherwise be dysfunctionality or displacement - the round peg in a square hole syndrome - could be made functional, creative and contributory.

However, all psychological motifs are complex and contradictory in origin and nature. While Woodward’s “My Own Bloody Yacht Club” tale may harbour part or all the elements previously alluded to, the story also has the capacity to rise above base origin to also become an

¹⁰¹⁵ Saul, John Ralston *Voltaire’s Bastards* p470.

optimistic statement of bold intention, a clear encouragement to those about him to live their lives as they choose, with courage and determination, to achieve their own goals and not those of others, to follow their own inclinations and dreams. Much as Woodward himself had obviously endeavoured, in his assertion of Buddhist and Theosophical beliefs, and in his determination to build Mahinda College into a school of the first rank.

The story has carried through the generations and at least one of the Brady children (Leila Brady) tells of how the story animated her own family. Leila Brady was forged in a powerful mould of connection with her own father and her association with Woodward became an unusual contrast and refuge. Even granted Woodward's acknowledged regard for children, the connection with Leila Brady went beyond the obvious link to the Brady family and to her father, CB Brady in particular.

Woodward would meet an afternoon each week for tea and conversation with Brady, and to exchange information; Woodward would swap his English papers for Brady's "Bulletin". They were men of contrast; the abrasive Brady and the phlegmatic Woodward, the public person and the private person; one conventional and the other unconventional, yet like many dyadic connections, it was the contrast that sealed the friendship. Brady would frequently express his good humoured, though real, exasperation with Woodward, who seemed to him to "believe in things no one else would dare believe". Despite Brady's considerable conventionality, he appreciated the intellectual accomplishments of Woodward and his compassionate and accepting nature - a recognition and appreciation of complimentary opposites. Woodward knew Brady's abrasive nature and yet saw beyond the public persona, recognising Brady's turmoil and accepting his vulnerability.

The unusual regard the two men had for one another is depicted by Horner in his *Tasmanian Journey* when “his best friend” took him to meet Woodward and their meeting was played out in Masonic farce. They knocked three times and were answered from within.

‘Who is there?’

‘Two who stand in Outer Darkness. Who is there?’

‘The Prince of Jerusalem.’

‘Open your gates that we may enter.’

‘By my grace you may enter, strangers who stand in Outer Darkness.’

At this the door was opened and the Prince materialised into a grey haired gentleman, clean shaven, very tanned and clad in flannel overalls.¹⁰¹⁶

Horner goes on to describe how the men did not “embark on their usual theological discussion” over the inevitable tea, but drifted from topic to topic covering religion, history and literature. Woodward showed him the palm leaf editions he was transcribing into Roman script and Horner browsed through Woodward’s extensive library of rare works, which now reside in the University of Tasmania Library. He observed the framed ‘Memorial of Christ’s Hospital’ over the mantle piece, with photos of Woodward’s old school and portraits of its most famous sons.

Looking about the large, light room with its well stocked shelves and out through the high windows across the river I envied him the quiet and scholarly contentment of his life.¹⁰¹⁷

Woodward remained, by choice and inclination, on the periphery, as he obviously had in the pantheon of TS personalities collected in

¹⁰¹⁶Horner, AG. *Tasmanian Journey* (Hobart: Cat & Fiddle Press, 1974) p79-81. Horner mentions no names but the persons depicted are clearly Brady and Woodward. Brady though a Mason, according to his daughter Leila Brady, found the ritual childish and was not active. Woodward was a Co-Mason, one of the many sub groups of the TS- his silver trowel was left in his will to his Ceylonese friend and namesake, Henry Woodward Amarasuriya.

¹⁰¹⁷Horner p 81.

Leadbeater's¹⁰¹⁸ *Lives of Alcyone*. Woodward was a perennial observer and quiet, if occasionally mischievous, commentator. He would, for instance, obliquely indicate, to another local friend, sensible to the feelings of all, that "His nibs [Brady] will be delivering the sermon this week." He knew full well the friend, who found Brady's overbearing pomposity obnoxious, would avoid the service at all costs.¹⁰¹⁹ It was done though, without disloyalty or denigration, even if accompanied by his mischievous humour.

His relationship with Leila Brady, however, was very different and manifested in inordinate sensitivity. As a young girl she was tall and willowy, though competent and athletic; she would have played national competition hockey had she not suffered a shattered cheek bone and facial paralysis, an injury resulting from a rising ball. She refers to her relationship with Woodward with feeling, but also reticence. In particular, she describes her experience, as a young girl, of experiencing intense, recurring 'waking' or lucid dreams where she was in the presence of Woodward who frequently worked on his translations into the early hours.

She would experience herself with him, beside him, though apart from the intensity of the experience, it was remarkable in no other way. There were no deep or significant conversations or events, just simple but intense accompaniment- "I would just fetch and carry, fetch and carry." She found the intensity of these experiences extremely disturbing and oppressive, creating a discomfort that bordered on despair. As a child entering adolescence there may be an explanation in the profound

¹⁰¹⁸ Woodward, 'code' named 'Lignus', never achieves even a minor role in the *Lives* and only appears in the genealogical endnotes. He is always depicted on the periphery.

¹⁰¹⁹It was not so much the content of the sermon which was read from a set lay reader, but the overbearing presence of Brady.

psychic intensity of children in this period, particularly young girls, where the occurrence of poltergeist phenomena, for instance, sometimes accompanies such a period of transition, but deciphering the experience remains difficult.

What is significant is that Leila Brady is not particularly familiar or interested in the paranormal, in ‘phenomena’ like ‘astral travel’, which is how the experience presents, and which was one of the many Theosophical beliefs of Woodward. There is mention in a letter to Woodward from Charles Hare (brother of EM Hare) of an “AP” [astral plane] experience Woodward had mentioned in a letter to him in 1946. Woodward had described an “AP” experience with “AB” [Annie Besant, who had been dead over ten years at the time] when she “had her hand on your shoulder”. Hare mentions the experience of an ES [Esoteric Section] acolyte of his acquaintance who described to him a similar, very intense experience with Besant in life, where she placed her hand on the acolyte’s shoulder, an “occult attitude of hers”. Hare compares the parallel motifs to “imply that your many AP experiences must be genuine.”¹⁰²⁰ The letter indicates Woodward had numerous “AP” experiences and regarded them as significant.

As an accepted phenomena, ‘astral travel’ was unremarkable in the TS code of practice, particularly as elaborated by Charles Leadbeater, whose ‘communication’ with the Mahatmas was based on ‘astral travel’. That Woodward experienced ‘astral’ encounters is probable, though any explanation is more appropriately psychological than ‘occult’. What is interesting about these experiences is that the content is invariably prosaic. It is the intensity and the ‘connectedness’ which is important,

¹⁰²⁰Letter CA Hare to FL Woodward 2 March 1952. [Shield Heritage file]. The ES, Esoteric Section, is the ‘secret’ inner circle of the TS where ‘occult’ experience was cultivated.

and which provides similarities with ‘mystical’ religious experience and ‘union’.

Woodward would have recognised Leila Brady’s experience as some form of, to him, unremarkable ‘astral travel’ and that in itself is notable. Leila Brady’s intense adolescent psychic perturbation was manifested in a way that was familiar to Woodward, even if she never discussed it with him. In a sense she chose motifs recognisable to Woodward, emphasising the empathetic nature of the relationship. People enter the ‘language’ of those with whom empathetic communication is significant in much the same way, for instance, those entering Jungian therapy will dream in Jungian symbolism. And this probably goes some way to explaining Woodward’s own experiences, employing experiential motifs of connection and relating from within the TS repertoire.

The connection with Woodward was for Leila Brady, as a child, extremely important and undoubtedly intense; it has remained so throughout her life. The content of that early experience was unremarkable, but it contained significant elements of simple service, companionship, and approval. Woodward’s apparent ‘matter of fact’ acceptance of her company in these ‘dreams’ bestowed a blessing on her presence and existence, which was probably absent from her relationship with her father. Yet she experienced it, significantly, with her father’s friend. Brady’s experience is complex and undoubtedly erotised, nevertheless it acknowledges the important personal affirmation Woodward gave her.

It was characteristic of Woodward that his connections with people were often intense, observable even in his correspondence, and particularly so in his letters to Caroline Rhys Davids, a correspondence that spanned the

period from 1907, according to Woodward, to her death in 1942. Caroline Rhys Davids (1858-1942) was the wife of pioneering orientalist Thomas Rhys Davids, the founder of the Pali Text Society. She was an unusual woman, graduating MA and D Lit from the University College London at a time when the impediments to the education of women were substantial. She married Thomas Rhys Davids when she was 36 and he was 52, in 1894, and sustained a happy marriage that respected each others academic accomplishments and individualistic aspirations. They had two daughters and a son, a startlingly accomplished young man who joined the air force in the Great War and became an inevitable casualty of the conflict.¹⁰²¹

The death of her son Arthur was a turning point in Caroline Rhys Davids' life, and, like many wives and mothers of the victims of war, she turned to spiritualistic practices, which certainly compromised her Buddhism and generated a considerable degree of understandable suspicion among the Buddhist clergy. Her letters to the authorities pleading for information regarding her son make poignant reading and she began attending seances and practiced automatic writing.¹⁰²² She wrote to the Ven. AP Buddhadatta Thera, also a friend of Woodward's, on the death of her son, describing her new found experiences.

After 7-8 months, he has come back to me by his *iddhi* [miraculous power] as a *devaputta* [god, lit. son of a god] and is now always with me, writing to me by my pen. Other greater older *devas* [gods] are with him and have promised to inspire me when I write.¹⁰²³

¹⁰²¹ Oliver, I *Buddhism in Britain* p35-37.

¹⁰²² Revell, A. *A Brief Glory- The Life of Arthur Rhys Davids DSO, MC and Bar.* (London: Wm Kimber, 1984) p206.

¹⁰²³ Gurugé *From the Living Fountains of Buddhism* p 253.

Woodward was also distressed by her loss which he read about in the *Buddhist*, and took the unusual step of not only writing to her but composing a poem in the Victorian mode.

I know that all words are useless and that I know nothing of the feelings....Speculation on the Kamma [Karma] of it is useless but I am sure the energy and goodness thus suddenly arrested must bound forward with great results in a quick rebirth with added powers.¹⁰²⁴

It was a sadness couched in unconvincing optimism, the discomfort buried in mawkish verse.

Belli Dura Facies

The bright sun glowing
The fair breeze blowing
The blue smoke flying
The flashing waters flowing;
 And the tree-tops bowing
 Their fans to the breeze:
Green crests of the seas
Which our great ships are ploughing:-
 All the fair face of nature,
 Insensate, unknowing.
But down over yonder
The roar and the thunder
The brave men lying,
The groans of the dying;
 The stout limbs reft asunder.
And far a way in the island home
The women are sighing
For those who will never come-
For those they will never see more:
Ah! The tears and the broken hearts
For those they will never see more.¹⁰²⁵

¹⁰²⁴ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 10 June 1918. (FOSL)

¹⁰²⁵ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 10 June 1918. (FOSL). Woodward obviously felt the poem special and had it published much later in the *Mahinda College Magazine*.

Caroline Rhys Davids was unconvinced. The last line of the poem was dramatically underlined by her, with two large question marks along side. She would see her son again.

The correspondence thereafter with Woodward dwelt frequently on the occult and reveals many of Woodward's views and beliefs. He took seriously her interest in spiritualism, the 'messages' from 'the other side' and travel on the astral plane.

I travel consciously always.... I generally go to India or Ceylon, but sometimes to England (where my parents...seem to have a sort of family resthouse where we children often meet in sleep). I also find that sometimes I go to sleep in the next world and have a second life (on a still more interior plane so it seems) in a very radiant world."¹⁰²⁶

Woodward placed great importance on "the vision in sleep!"¹⁰²⁷ but he never really got "out till 3am".¹⁰²⁸ Occasionally these sleep experiences involved Rhys Davids.

some months ago I was with you in a sort of Museum like building where you were hard at work- and earlier this month again I took over Mr Hare to your wigwam and spent some time. I wonder how much of it you remember? I particularly remember the large picture gallery- oil paintings of people (in gilt frames) full size - but some frames were empty. I gathered these were of people connected with you but that the empty frames meant that they had again taken birth here.¹⁰²⁹

Caroline Rhys Davids, along with her valued academic works, produced some less memorable books on the occult, like *More About the Hereafter*. Woodward obviously tried hard to reconcile the differing attributes of the occult Rhys Davids described and those asserted by his

¹⁰²⁶ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 15 June 1932. (FOSL)

¹⁰²⁷ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 1 April 1932. (FOSL)

¹⁰²⁸ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 5 July 1940. (FOSL)

¹⁰²⁹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 15 June 1932. (FOSL)

Theosophical beliefs. Oddly, it seems, the past lives of Plato ‘channelled’ by Rhys Davids in her book, differed from what Woodward had been told by Annie Besant years before. In Besant’s version Woodward, in a number of incarnations, had been a relative of Plato’s, however, he wrote to Rhys Davids, with charming naïveté, that the “lives in your Plato don’t seem to agree with this.”¹⁰³⁰

In another work *What is your Will* Rhys Davids again asserts views that did not agree with Woodward’s Theosophy. “What you say as to the *world* No.2 (probation or purgatory -mild) or waiting room - is partly familiar to me as I go there regularly in sleep”, he states, and goes on to accept her concept of ‘guardians’, believing that,

the ordinary man’s doppelganger is his guardian - or may be his mother if ‘dead’. In the high degree of Masonry (to which I belong) one is given a deva guardian ...but I am not conscious of hearing or seeing him or her.”¹⁰³¹

He goes on, however, to comment on other attributes of this ‘world No.2’ - ‘tribunals’ and ‘watchers’ - with which he was certainly not familiar. He excuses this by helpfully suggesting it was possibly peculiar to the British Isles, and asserting his usual solution to dilemmas by simply affirming his own direction. “Where do I come in not being resident of the Brit. Isles. But I make my own clothes!”¹⁰³²

Woodward continues an almost naïve acceptance and interest in Rhys Davids’ occult experiments and predictions. In 1938¹⁰³³ she offers him the prediction that war would be avoided, which greatly assured and

¹⁰³⁰ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 5 July 1940. (FOSL). These purported incarnations are recorded in *The Lives of Alcyone* but not in *Man: Whence How and Whither*, as far as I can ascertain.

¹⁰³¹ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 7 September 1937. (FOSL). Woodward is disarmingly frank about what he has and has not personally experienced.

¹⁰³² Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 7 September 1937. (FOSL).

¹⁰³³ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 8 October 1938. (FOSL).

relieved Woodward, but when war eventuated nevertheless, she informed Woodward of some extraordinary predictions. The war would be over quickly and, moreover, Hitler was, in fact, already dead, his absence disguised by the use of substitutes or ‘dummies’. This was, for Woodward, “comfortable news about Hitler, which is no doubt reliable from what you say and will, I hope, have been supported by other sources- from those in touch with the next world”.¹⁰³⁴ He obviously harbours a grain of doubt and requires a second opinion.

His faith in matters occult was generally boundless, extending into daily life. He loved working in his garden and wrote about the golden chrysanthemums that bloomed out of season for him, and the violets, wallflowers and snow drops - “each stalk having 8 blooms”. He attributed this profusion to his careful attendance to the soil, copious liquid food in the form of kitchen soap suds and scraps, and “to the devas which live in my forest all round.”

Last March a snapshot of me at work in the garden developed a large deva standing watching- It was about 10 feet high. They don’t like my cats which kill the rabbits and furry things- also birds.¹⁰³⁵

It appears quite an unusual menagerie inhabited Woodward’s space, including a comparatively prosaic congregation of semi feral cats, that he fed daily for years, till, mysteriously they disappeared some time before he died. As Woodward expressed it in the Victorian cliché, “God’s finger touched them as they slept”, reckoning after 30 odd years, that he had done enough for the beasts of the fields, and he was left with one old tom, one eyed and three legged, who happily ate the rations of the rest. He maintained a great fondness for animals and, like his human friends,

¹⁰³⁴ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 12 September 1940. (FOSL)

¹⁰³⁵ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 9 September 1935. (FOSL)

they were endowed with nicknames.¹⁰³⁶ As in the story he wrote of his time in Ceylon, he described the animals of his surroundings in affectionate detail and affirmed continually, his belief in *dhammena jivitum*, living according to Nature.¹⁰³⁷

The intensity and affection of Woodward for his surroundings extended to include most things living that either grew silently about him or wandered into his domain, children included. While he was never a passionate proselytiser, he often sought, obliquely, to influence, in conversation and the discussion, the values young people of the area took into the world. The tenor of his influence is discernible in the books he gave as presents and which display Woodward's interests and taste, attuned to each recipient.

To Leila Brady, the serious, intelligent and sensitive young girl, he gave *Karma and Other Stories*, a volume by Lafcadio Hearn, a famous western orientalist who resided in Japan (a person not unlike Woodward himself). The book contains both short stories, pageants of serious Victorian morality and upright living, and prophetic pronouncements on the future position of Asia in the world by the end of the twentieth century. It is a potpourri of intellectual exploration that obviously took the intellect of the young girl seriously at a time when such was not fashionable. To another young neighbour, an intensely serious and uncertain young man, living in the shadow of his able older brother, he gave a copy of *1066 and All That*, annotated with Woodward's own humorous embellishments - a gift of humour and absurdity to heal self seriousness.

¹⁰³⁶ Galappatthy, S. "Woodward Lover of Nature" *Ceylon Daily News* 27/5/85.

¹⁰³⁷ Woodward FL "At the Foot of a Tree" in *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon and other papers* (Adyar, Madras: TPH,1914) p45f.

Most people who have had any connection with Woodward allude to the uniqueness of the experience. Mr Justice Butler,¹⁰³⁸ recently of the Family Court, recalls, as a young man, carrying a gun past Woodward's property on his way to shoot rabbits. Woodward stopped and questioned the young man, politely, kindly, about why he went shooting and what pleasure killing gave him. He listened attentively to the boy's explanation and response. There was no censoriousness in his approach, though the lad was in no doubt that Woodward wished him to understand and accept that killing animals, even if for food, was unacceptable. His approach is very like the form of discourse frequently conducted by the Buddha in the scriptures edited and translated by Woodward - a 'Socratic' presentation of issues before the boy for his attention and consideration, not an attempt to preach or convert overtly. Despite the apparent casualness of the encounter, the young man was awed and impressed by the experience and it is significant that Butler still retains in trust a small alabaster Buddha figure left from Woodward's estate and retained by his father whose legal firm handled Woodward's affairs.¹⁰³⁹

The intensity of these encounters was repeated elsewhere in Woodward's connection with community and underlines this important aspect of Woodward's character. Woodward established a friendship with the Harris family, owners of the Rowella store, that went beyond the usual commercial arrangement. They would get him his special requirements

¹⁰³⁸The Butler family is another of the extensive Tasmanian 'families', in this case one with long association with the law- Justice Butler's father was with the law firm that handled Woodward's affairs (before he was called to the bench). Another, Hobart based part of the family were related to CEW Bean, the Australian war historian, whose brother was a friend of Woodward's and a fellow Theosophist. The Butler family was one of the many 'influential' Launceston families that would holiday on the Tamar, in the Rowella area.

¹⁰³⁹The matter of the figurine is an interesting one. It had remained in the solicitor's strong room after Woodward's death and was removed only when there was no claimant. Nevertheless, Butler has a profound sense of a self imposed trust with regard to the alabaster Buddha, that it should eventually go to a person or institution of whom Woodward would have approved.

of herrings in tomato sauce, tinned kippers¹⁰⁴⁰ and pipe tobacco (until he gave up)¹⁰⁴¹ and he had a special friendship with Freda Harris, the adopted daughter of the owners. Her remembrance is of the constant banter, pranks and practical jokes on the occasion, every second day, when he came for provisions. He would always tease her in some way, by ordering something odd or something inconvenient, kept on the top shelf where it had to be knocked down with a stick.¹⁰⁴²

Again there are stories of sharing food and the jokes at the expense of Woodward's general adherence to vegetarianism - "There's no butter in these biscuits, Mary?" or when she made him soup, "There's no bones in this soup, of course?" In return he would bring her mushrooms he had gathered in a 'Weeties' box on his daily walks, and instruct her in his stern humour to "put them in the pot and fry them as they are". Again, there is something special and warm in the relationship with generous, good natured girl who served behind the counter.

Woodward could be very clear in imposing his view when he felt occasion demanded and he always insisted on calling Freda Harris,¹⁰⁴³ 'Mary'. When asked why, he was emphatic that she should have been called 'Mary'. His insistence is odd and obviously more than the kind of idle whimsy that led him to give nick-names to most of his pupils. Whether the name derived from Woodward's belief in past lives and

¹⁰⁴⁰Woodward conveniently did not see fish as 'meat', which was fortunate for he had an inordinate fondness for smoked kippers, which friends of the Brady's would bring him from Melbourne especially.

¹⁰⁴¹Gunewardene p75. Gunewardene paints a picture of poverty but Woodward's means were not so meagre. He was certainly frugal and careless of things he regarded as unimportant. He didn't really give up tobacco he just refused to buy Australian tobacco because it was poor quality and expensive and he could see no "sense in smoking inferior brands". His friend Robinson in Durban, SA, however, would send him "1/2lb of the Boer tobacco which most of us here think is the best." [Letter of PW Robinson to FL Woodward 8 March 1952. Shield Heritage- Woodward file]

¹⁰⁴² Personal interview with Freda Williams. I am grateful for the extensive information and reminiscences provided by Freda Williams.

¹⁰⁴³Personal interview with Freda Williams.

connections is unclear, but he clearly viewed her as having a significant, alternate identity, which he regarded as a more ‘true’ self. This may have been a psychological echo of the displacement the young child had experienced in the unhappy circumstances that led to her adoption by the Harrises or may have been simply Woodward’s ‘clairvoyant’ view of her true self. Whatever the explanation he undoubtedly retained an intense connection with the young woman.

She remembers a time when Woodward came to collect his mail and reached over the counter to take her hand, an unusual action for him.

How are you Mary?” he asked, and then added, “I hope you don’t think you’ll be having a girl. But the next one will be.

She was greatly surprised at the comment, since she had only had confirmation of her pregnancy that morning. It was certainly not common knowledge, and in those times, not something that was discussed. She was equally surprised at the time the child was born, to hear from her mother that Woodward had come into the shop and asked, “And how’s Mary and the new son?” when her mother was not even aware herself that the child had been just born.

It seems apparent Woodward was a “sensitive”, able to attune himself to others, to their concerns, needs and aspirations. It was an unusual and exceptional ‘gift’ which accorded with his interest in the paranormal. He had a strong interest in astrology¹⁰⁴⁴ and would cast his own, as well as the horoscopes of the neighbours and their children, including the children whose coming he had foreseen.¹⁰⁴⁵

¹⁰⁴⁴Astrology, though not a particularly ‘approved’ Buddhist practice, was popular in Ceylon. Woodward’s interest, however, seems to have more to do with TS influences than the local popular practices.

¹⁰⁴⁵Freda Williams has carefully retained these horoscopes of her children - securely at the bank - even though she is not particularly attracted to astrology, and is wary of prognostication. Like most

These experiences certainly intrigued the Harrises about Woodward and, though they always regarded him with great respect, they also saw him as an amiable eccentric, an observation confirmed by his odd dress. Woodward would dress in flannels, his braces pulled over them, and a pyjama jacket over that, if it was cold, a far cry from the immaculate white suits of his Ceylon days. He would wear “pudding cloth”¹⁰⁴⁶ on his head, tied like a turban, with the corners hanging down his back or even a paper bag¹⁰⁴⁷ on his head for protection in inclement weather. He was even known to sew pillow cases together to make a set of billowing ‘Bombay Bloomers’ in the warmer weather. And sweaters were recycled by being worn backwards if they wore at the front.

The explanation for Woodward’s eccentric behaviour has been attributed to his increasing poverty, though it probably has more to do with his careless disinclination. Woodward is painted by Gunewardene¹⁰⁴⁸ as living a “spartan life” on a “meagre income” but in reality his style of life was largely his choice, based on acceptance of *alpecchata*, the doctrine of minimal wants, not something imposed by poverty. Woodward had purchased for £1084/19/1, an AMP¹⁰⁴⁹ annuity of £100 pa in 1936, presumably from the sale of his Ceylon estate. Though inflation after World War II took a toll on the worth of his income of about £1/15/8 pw, this compares favourably with a labourer’s wage of about £5pw at the time (though a farm labourer’s wage was much less).

who have had close contact with Woodward, and who have retained mementos, she has retained this as a remembrance.

¹⁰⁴⁶an unbleached thin calico used to tie up Christmas puddings among other things.

¹⁰⁴⁷Gunewardene [p75] and repeated in Croucher, has Woodward “often clad in pyjamas, a paper bag for a shirt and a white turban.” His sartorial attire was certainly unusual but the paper bag was just a quick way to cover his head in the rain and was not used as a ‘shirt’. [Source: Freda Williams, Leila McIntyre and Nigel Heyward.]

¹⁰⁴⁸Gunewardene p75.

¹⁰⁴⁹Source: Shield Heritage, Launceston Solicitors- Woodward’s legal file. Woodward lived 16 years after the purchase so he won the better of the arrangement! Croucher suggests Woodward was poorer, receiving a mere £70pa [p22] which may enhance the story but unfortunately belies the facts.

In other words he had an income equivalent to an Australian aged pension today¹⁰⁵⁰ and while his means were modest, it was sufficient to meet his needs. It still allowed him to use an E.S & A [English, Scottish & Australian Bank] cheque account, for example, at a time when a cheque account was seen as a sign of means.¹⁰⁵¹

He was careful of his financial circumstances, apologising once to Caroline Rhys Davids for being unable to contribute further to the cost of a PTS publication, “as I have only 5/- a day henceforth - having a small annuity to live on”. This he recognised would restrict him and would certainly exclude any further travel, but as he added, “Anyway I hate travelling and I don’t even leave this place more than once a year.”¹⁰⁵²

He was certainly frugal, abstemious, and indifferent to his dress and appearance, but he was far from being simply a distracted eccentric. He knew full well the effect on others of his dress, even if he was totally unconcerned. In a letter in 1949, commenting on changes in fashion, he wrote, “Well, here I go about the roads in pyjamas during the hot weather, and never put on clothes beyond a flannel shirt and bags (with patched seat).”¹⁰⁵³ This is hardly unselfconscious eccentricity and illustrates simple disregard for conformity.

There is an edge of defiance in Woodward’s apparently eccentric behaviour, that comes through, for example, the tale of ‘M.O.B.’, but humour is never far away. He undoubtedly enjoyed the effect of his inflated behaviour, though the attitudes that drove it were also in keeping

¹⁰⁵⁰ Australian Aged Pensions are struck at 25% of Average Weekly Earnings.

¹⁰⁵¹His cheque book remains in his legal file.

¹⁰⁵² Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids 11 July 1937. (FOSL)

¹⁰⁵³Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 27 January 1949.(FOSL) Emphasis is Woodward’s.

with the TS tendency towards non-conformity in dress, food and other matters. The deeper source, as has been suggested, may lie in ‘reaction formation’ to conforming origins. The important character of ‘reaction formation’ is the mirroring of origin; the conforming constraint and un-freedom of the behaviour of origin continues to trap the individual within the conforming boundaries and un-freedom of the reaction.

The resolution resides in the interstices, the intervening space between the origin and the reaction. Transcending the entrapment of conformity and reaction is the ‘trick’, and one that is difficult to achieve, though Woodward, and people like Wallace and Olcott, who have already been mentioned, seem to have achieved that transcendence. If he had not, Woodward would remain merely an interesting and harmless eccentric non-conformist.

DECIPHERING.

Baconianism.

Certainly Woodward does present in many ways as an eccentric non-conformist adhering to a clutch of values that Brady saw as things no one else believed, Buddhism, Baconianism, Theosophy, astrology, and astral travel, though, of course, “one man’s eccentricity is another man’s acceptable variation.”¹⁰⁵⁴ Eccentricity does not necessarily imply madness or neurosis, though it can often be confused with psychological dysfunction. The genuinely disturbed are frequently unaware of their ‘difference’, or in paranoid delusion, see others as carrying the ‘difference’. The neurotic, on the other hand, tends to perceive ‘difference’ as an indication of inferiority and worthlessness, as an obstacle to acceptance. Far from being unaware of their ‘difference’, “eccentrics know they’re different and glory in it,” often to the considerable frustration of others. An eccentric has a tendency to know “he is right and, far from wanting to change his ways, is likely to wish to convert everyone else to his way of thinking.”¹⁰⁵⁵

Woodward undoubtedly enjoyed a little eccentric exhibitionism and was convinced of his beliefs, but far from self centred conviction and a desire to convert, Woodward was extremely mindful and intensely sensitive to others. It was a natural and unselfconscious empathy and compassion that his robust Victorian exterior and strong convictions would seem, on occasions, to contradict. It is this empathy for others that distinguishes him from the usual self-centredness of eccentricity. Despite this important difference, Woodward offered, in his beliefs and convictions,

¹⁰⁵⁴Weeks, D & James, *J Eccentrics* (London: Weidefeld & Nicholson, 1995) p8.

¹⁰⁵⁵Weeks & James p8-9. Because psychology emphasises dysfunction and psychopathology, eccentricity has virtually escaped detection and examination. Weeks and James offer an introductory glimpse into the nature of eccentricity.

abundant evidence of what one could reasonably characterise as eccentric, in the sense of odd and unusual.

Probably one of the most curious of Woodward's emphatic convictions was Baconianism, the belief that the works of Shakespeare were in fact those of Francis Bacon.¹⁰⁵⁶ Baconianism was quite a fashionable belief in the late nineteenth century, peaked in interest about 1910-20, and then became an increasingly marginal belief through to about 1950.¹⁰⁵⁷ As with many of Woodward's convictions, it formed at a particular stage of his life and altered little thereafter. This is true of many people and oddly, because we expect the contrary, particularly true of people of intellectual ability and intensity.

The expression of Baconian views ranged from a simple belief that Shakespeare, being a low bred actor, could not have possibly produced works of such profound erudition, (which encapsulates all the class snobbery of the time),¹⁰⁵⁸ through to arcane and occult beliefs of Rosicrucian involvement and secret ciphers contained within the works themselves. This latter view was originally elaborated by Dr Orville W. Owen in 1894 and later by a Mrs Elizabeth Gallup.¹⁰⁵⁹

It is difficult today to appreciate the enthusiasm or the controversy that surrounded these beliefs at the time, nor the seriousness with which they

¹⁰⁵⁶ The controversy really took shape with the publication by Spedding in 1857 of the *Life and Works of Bacon*, followed in 1883 with a work by the appropriately named, Mrs Henry Potts on Bacon's *Promus* and in 1890, her *Francis Bacon and His Secret Society*. The cipher theory was originally generated by Ignatius Donnelly in 1887 in his *The Great Cryptogram, Francis Bacon's Cipher in the So-called Shakespeare Plays*.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The Bacon Society produced quite a robust magazine from the late nineteenth century until about 1948-9 when it ceased. A simple roneoed *Baconiana Letter* appeared 1951-52 when it again ceased. (Reference: British Library)

¹⁰⁵⁸ See, Antonio *Bacon V Shakespeare* (London.: Bacon Society, ND, prob. 1920's)
Ellis, W *The Shakespeare Myth and the Stratford Hoax* (London.: Bacon Society, 1937.)
Eagle, RC *Shakespeare and the 'Essay of Love'* (London.: Bacon Society, ND)

¹⁰⁵⁹ Gallup, EW *The Bi-literal Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon* (London.: Gay & Hancock, 1911)
Owen, OW *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (London: Gay & Bird, 1894)

were treated in intellectual circles, but the range of those drawn in some way to the view included, John Bright (the Liberal politician), Disraeli, Emerson, Whitman, Mark Twain and Oliver Wendell Holmes.¹⁰⁶⁰ Even the colonies did not escape. Sir John Alexander Cockburn, Premier of South Australia (1889-1890) and later Agent General for the state in London was President of the Baconian Society at his death.¹⁰⁶¹ The gentry too, did not escape inclusion, thought one should always be wary of eccentricity among the ‘better’ classes of Englishmen. In 1937 the *Baconiana* named as Vice-Presidents of the Baconian Society, Lady Sydenham of Combe and the Dowager, Lady Boyle, all of aristocratic inconsequence.

It was, of course, not simply an intellectual pursuit but a passionate conviction. Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, one time member of parliament and Lord Mayor of London, had printed at his own expense, his work, *Bacon is Shakespeare*¹⁰⁶² (which Woodward says contains a Roman type cipher¹⁰⁶³) and had it placed in every library in the world, according to his obituary.¹⁰⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that Durning-Lawrence was a self made man of commerce from modest origins, the archetypal upwardly mobile middle class aspirant of the nineteenth century, as was Mr Frank Woodward, (a namesake but not a relation of FL Woodward) who was a significant leading light of the Baconian Society, and a successful lace maker from Nottingham.¹⁰⁶⁵

¹⁰⁶⁰ *The Bacon Shakespeare Controversy* Leaflet #3 (London.: Bacon Society ND.)

¹⁰⁶¹ *The Baconiana* Vol.XX #75 February 1929, p81.

¹⁰⁶² Durning-Lawrence, E *Bacon is Shakespeare* (London: Gay & Hancock, 1910)

¹⁰⁶³ Woodward, FL. *Francis Bacon and the Cipher Story* (Madras: TPH, 1932) p5. I am indebted to John Cooper for the gift of a copy of this work.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Baconiana* 1914, p180.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Baconiana* 1937. He died at nearly eighty in 1937.

FL Woodward was attracted to the more elaborate, conspiratorial version of the controversy and, again the proselytising pamphleteer, produced his own work, *Francis Bacon and the Cipher Story*, a reprint of articles he had written earlier in the *Theosophist*¹⁰⁶⁶ and the *Mahinda College Magazine*. Although he readily owned to his opinions in the classroom, as with much of Woodward's intellectual oddities, he did not seem to allow them to overwhelm the appraisal of Shakespeare's plays or the tasks of teaching.

In this, as with other issues, Woodward was not a particularly original or imaginative thinker, more a collector of marginal views, drawn to advocacy than originality. Woodward's version of the controversy, in common with Gallup and Owen, suggested that Bacon not only was responsible for Shakespeare but also for works by Spencer, Marlowe, Green, Peele, Burton and others, including some of Ben Johnson's work, a prodigious output. The nub of the matter was that Bacon was actually the unacknowledged son of Elizabeth I, denied forever his rightful place as son and heir to the throne and forced to resort to secret encoded messages (ciphers) within the works of Shakespeare and others in order to expose this grave injustice without, of course, exposing himself to the possibility of retribution and death.

The lack of historical knowledge of Shakespeare's life, Bacon's use of ciphers and codes in his diplomatic roles, his dabbling in the occult as well as his acknowledged intellectual abilities, lend some credence to the theory, but conspiracy always adds more appeal than any facts can manage. It would appear an interest in Woodward without foundation beyond the fact of its general marginality, except for an important

¹⁰⁶⁶*The Theosophist* August, September and November, 1917. Organ of the *Theosophical Society*, Adyar Madras.

Theosophical connection; the TS belief in theosophical progenitors in the form of occult secret societies, including the Rosicrucians, as well as a belief that Bacon was now one of the Masters of the Great White Brotherhood. These facts at least make intelligible, Woodward's fervent belief. And it was fervent.

Did you read lately (in England) of the discovery at S.Alban's of the genealogical coats of arms of the Kings and Queens of England -an illuminated parchment. Attached to Q.Elizabeth's arms are those of Bacon (her elder son)! Of course we Baconians knew this long ago. The Bacon MSS are sure to turn up soon (in charge of the Rosicrucians of old).¹⁰⁶⁷

The idea that Bacon produced a prodigious number of accomplished works in the name of Shakespeare and others, principally as a vehicle for secret ciphers revealing his true maternity and bitterly bewailing his deprivation of the throne, seems extraordinary, even banal, in the face of the sublime works that masked these messages. That the idea attracted such significant attention, obliges some explanation and examination of the revealing psychological motifs. What looms large is the motif of a punishing mother, a 'witch'¹⁰⁶⁸ with a castrating urge towards an unacknowledged son, all of which is secret and contrary to the public persona, and as such may reveal something of Victorian/Edwardian motherhood and its impact on masculinity.

Most Victorian children of the gentry or middle class were raised by servants and nannies, who frequently assumed the primary role of mothering while Mother arrived like some ethereal being at the nursery at nightfall, for obligatory prayers and a goodnight kiss. The remote Victorian mother who left the mothering to servants, (and who wouldn't with eight or more children) easily became an overwhelming picture of

¹⁰⁶⁷ Letter FL Woodward to IB Horner 30 January 1950. (FOSL)

¹⁰⁶⁸ Woodward frequently referred to Elizabeth I as a 'witch', with some vehemence.

saintly ‘goodness’, an image enforced with male collusion that insisted on portraying women with porcelain fragility and sensitivity, to be worshipped on a pedestal. As Roper and Tosh suggest, the contradictory distortions of femininity, of the ‘angel-mother’ and ‘child-wife’, coexisted in male expectation, “and both stood in the way of true companionship”,¹⁰⁶⁹ and adequate gender resolution. However, yet another contradiction must be added, for despite the goodly image of vulnerable sensitivity, women were also portrayed as manipulative and powerful, able to win by ‘womanly wiles’, and thus were potently threatening.¹⁰⁷⁰

Woodward says little about his mother except to describe her as an adored ‘saint’ which is stereotypically Victorian. The difficulty, however, with such apparently benign caricatures is that, being caricatures, they are misshapen and unreal, and are held by the male unconscious as simultaneously alluring and threatening - the classic *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Thus the ‘secret’ or obverse side of the mother is in fact less than benign, even castrating, but this can never be acknowledged about one so obviously ‘good’.

This contradiction is apparent in the significant correlation between the benign ‘saintly’ mother and sons that entered, for example, the celibacy of the Catholic priesthood, or sacrificial careers like teaching, the ministry and social work. Libidinal inclination was strongly repressed,

¹⁰⁶⁹ Roper, M & Tosh, J *Manful Assertions: masculinities since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991) p56. On the nature of nineteenth century morality and sexuality, see also:

Gay, P *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud. Volume II The Tender Passion* (Oxford: OUP, 1986) An excellent work in all three volumes.

Comfort, A *The Anxiety Makers* (London: Nelson, 1967) A well researched work on the pattern of nineteenth century sexual anxiety.

Probably the most famous ‘wife-child’ projection was Ruskin who was purportedly revolted on his wedding night to discover his new wife had pubic hair. The relationship was never consummated and divorce was allowed on those grounds.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Gay, P *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud. Volume III The Cultivation of Hatred* (London: HarperCollins, 1994) pp289ff, chapter 4 “The Powerful, Weaker Sex.”

denied or even sublimated to a point of personal asexuality, which moves some way towards explaining the confirmed bachelorhood of Woodward and many of his generation. The corollary of this, of course, is a fairly pronounced misogyny which Woodward, in keeping with his time, frequently revealed.

Viewed this way, Woodward's Baconianism becomes a metaphor of an unconscious, unsettling ambivalence towards femininity projected into, and 'neutralised', by his Baconian beliefs. This is not to suggest his mother was some disguised dragon - she may well have been as nice as he believed. It is simply suggested that these common Victorian contradictions surrounding femininity, wherein all colluded, required a resolution which Baconianism may well have provided, as it obviously did for quite a number of other Victorians and Edwardians.

This 'lifting into life' of internal metaphors, is not an unusual psychological phenomenon, commonplace, but nonetheless significant.

That an emotionally entrenched metaphor assumes a 'recognisable' form merely demonstrates the authority of an internal symbolic world: that it occasionally spills over into the conscious world should not be surprising.¹⁰⁷¹

Like dreams that may play jokes on meaning - a play on words or images - personal metaphors similarly create unsettling jokes and parodies that live out unconscious symbols. There is in Woodward's Baconianism, an echo of Leadbeater's "Vampire Goddess" in the *Lives of Alcyone*, alluded to earlier, wherein the Victorian terror of devouring or castrating femininity intrudes into narrative, revealing the symbolic force of attitudes that seemed to govern so much of Victorian masculinity.

¹⁰⁷¹ Powell, M "The Whitlam Government: Barnard and Whitlam: A Significant Historical Dyad" *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 43 No. 2 1997. p191.

One can, however, approach Woodward's Baconianism from another direction, though, again, as a 'lived out' metaphor. In this view, the central motif of the metaphor is the cipher, the coded message that provides the 'real' meaning and unravels the 'truth'. No doubt Woodward was familiar with the nineteenth century fascination with Biblical typology and familiar too, with attempts at deciphering biblical texts, like *Revelations*, for portents and adventist possibility, so the preoccupation was hardly novel, and has produced examples¹⁰⁷² down to this day. Woodward was a person who quested with a sincere dedicated endeavour to establish values and decipher meaning beyond the ordinary, so once more the unconscious metaphor is 'lifted into life' assuming a concrete form.

The metaphor can be further extended to include his intense attention to Pali translation. Whatever the conscious attraction to translation, it involves an attempt, once more, to decipher, to establish the key to a language or text, and reveal the underlying meaning. And so the metaphor continues to unfold in other aspects of his endeavours, demonstrating the persistence of this motif and the intensity of his preoccupation.

While one may see Woodward's beliefs as odd, even occasionally pointless, they nevertheless reside within what Winnicott's realm of *shared illusion*, with sufficient common adherence not to be dismissed as the deluded belief or the behaviour of only a few. Baconianism was a significantly shared belief of its time, though somewhat marginal. At worst it was eccentric but never simply 'mad', since shared illusory experience grants 'normality' to its adherents. Winnicott's concept is a

¹⁰⁷² Usually these are in some way apocalyptic such as the recent example of Michael Drosnin "The Bible Code" (see review, *Launceston Examiner* 4 July 1997).

constructive way of viewing belief systems, that avoids the pejorative assumption of dysfunction that is applied to the acceptance of unusual views. Woodward, despite his hermit existence, never narrowed the ‘playing field’ of his interaction. He kept up a prodigious output of mail both to fellow adherents and sceptics alike, as well as keeping the intellectual company of others in the district, a healthy mix of challenge and assurance.

Winnicott’s concept of ‘transitional experience’ derived from the constant commerce between *Self* and *Other*, gives rise to creative experiences of all types, from ‘brilliant’ ideas for franchising underwear, right through to religious illumination. This implies the content is not as instructive as the enactment. The content can be banal or bizarre, though ‘real’ to the adherent, so it is ultimately “...by their fruits shall ye know them.”¹⁰⁷³ The creativity Woodward enjoyed in his life was immense, from the task of making Mahinda into an aesthetically satisfying school of educational significance, to his devotion to Pali translation and evaluation of Buddhist ideas. Despite Theosophical accretions, which he generally managed to keep to one side, his knowledge of textually based Buddhism, the orientalist’s ‘playground’, was immense, though he rarely elaborated in print, preferring the minutiae of deciphering text and context to commentary.

This is not to say he did not have strong opinions about aspects of the *Tipitaka*; he regarded the *Abhidhamma*,¹⁰⁷⁴ and particularly the *Abhidhamma Atthakatha* (Commentaries) by Buddhaghosa, for example, as “mostly tripe!”, a hardly complimentary view. Woodward’s

¹⁰⁷³ Mathew 7:20.

¹⁰⁷⁴ The third “basket”, or part, of the Canon dealing with Buddhist metaphysics and is particularly popular in Burma and to a lesser extent, Sri Lanka. As with most of the *Tipitaka* there is a vast body of Commentary (*Atthakatha*) on the actual canon, the most renowned being by Buddhaghosa and Dharmapala (not to be confused with the later nationalist figure)

absorption in translation and concordance was an area of great creative concentration, as were his lesser interests of translating poetry into Latin verse or trawling his impressive classical library for ‘evidence’ of ciphers and esoteric clues. While not necessarily imaginative or original, it was nonetheless highly creative, contributing to a personal resolution that was evident in his life, extending beyond, and more importantly, transcending the actual content or belief.

The active and concentrated engagement in transitional experience creates ‘outbursts’ of meaning, what Winnicott described as ‘immediately perceived reality’, of being ‘struck’ or ‘seized’ by perceptual illumination. This is frequent in artistic pursuits and has many similarities with the religious experience of being ‘seized on’ or enraptured. For this reason, it is not difficult to understand many artists’ attraction to Zen Buddhism which posits the concept of *satori* or a sudden and essential illumination, that ‘solves’ dilemmas of meaning.

The intuitional illumination of the transitional world often leap-frogs the logic of the literal world and embodies a magical power, conviction and certainty. There is a temptation to see such experience as benign and blissful without appreciating the inherent tension that exists within such encounters. *Illusion* exists as a state of tension between the infant’s simultaneous identification and separation from the environment the mother provides. In art or religion, the tension is between the “two poles of aesthetic experience, that of the beautiful, which is separate from us and that of the sublime, which engulfs us”.¹⁰⁷⁵ This tension between the lure of separation and that of sublime absorption, lies at the heart of what, in religion, is the mystic’s dilemma.

¹⁰⁷⁵Fuller, P. *Henry Moore- an interpretation* (London: Methuen, 1993) p47

The Dilemma of Mysticism.

Transitional experience transforms individuals and objects by symbolic introjection, granting them numinosity. While this field of *illusion* has the capacity to enrich ordinary experience, it is still different in intensity to the expressions of religious ecstasy and enthusiasm, what Maslow termed 'peak' experience, which frequently express a sense of unity and absorption in totality. "Unity- Oneness- this quality is stressed again and again by the great mystics",¹⁰⁷⁶ which would imply a less than healthy regression to infantile incorporation, inflation and loss of reality, a move from *illusion* to delusion. This is the difference between being 'seized' by the ineffable and engulfed by the sublime, which obviously may occur and is why Freud and others viewed intense religious experience as pathological. Expressions of transpersonal experience, however, may be more complex than the language implies.

Commentators in the west like Knox, Maslow and Laski,¹⁰⁷⁷ who frequently begin by focusing on peak or ecstatic experience, quickly show that defining and separating such experience from more generalised transpersonal experience is difficult. Maslow,¹⁰⁷⁸ as does Laski, reports that 'peak experiences' are almost universal, distinguishable by their intensity, but of essentially the same origin. There seems little to distinguish them from encounters emanating from transitional experience except for the emphasis on unity and absorption.

¹⁰⁷⁶Bridges, H. *American Mysticism- from William James to Zen* (New York: Harper and Row) p3.

¹⁰⁷⁷Knox, R.A. *Enthusiasm- a chapter in the history of religion with special reference to the xvii and xviii centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), Maslow, A. *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences* and Laski, M. *Ecstasy- a study of some secular and religious experiences* (New York: Greenwood, 1968), Huxley, A. *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (New York: Harper, 1963). Knox offers a valuable historical overview and description of Christian mystical 'enthusiasm' and the many manifestations of ecstatic experience. Maslow's account shows its origins in the naïveté of the 1960s and confusion with drug experiences, as does Huxley's, while Laski offers an idiosyncratic analysis that grants interesting insights.

¹⁰⁷⁸Maslow p22

Ecstatic experience has always held a particular place in Christian tradition, from St Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*¹⁰⁷⁹ through the Protestant enthusiasms of the Shakers, Methodists and Quakers and the glossolalia of both ancient and modern Pentecostals. These altered states of consciousness and ecstatic experience indicate a merging of the *Self* and *Other* rather than an exercise in transitional experience and a new means of integration. While ecstatic merging and absorption figure in the language of mystic experience there are those that approach the unitary aspects with caution.

Teilhard de Chardin clearly wants to distinguish authentic mystical experience from that of merging. His principal distinction is that the sense of 'union' in personal experience, differentiates, rather than absorbs; that there is 'union with alterity'.

We can only lose ourselves in God by prolonging the most individual characteristics of beings far beyond themselves: this is the fundamental rule by which we can always distinguish the true mystic from his counterfeits.¹⁰⁸⁰

Teilhard intuitively concedes the essential relationship of 'transitional experience' and 'reality', that mystical union, far from implying "some idea of diminution", is used to "mean the strengthening....of the reality.....contained in the most powerful interconnections...of the physical and human world."¹⁰⁸¹

Another Catholic theologian, William Johnson, is also anxious to emphasise that the mystic sense of union does not imply merging, by differentiating absorption from what he describes as 'indwelling'¹⁰⁸².

¹⁰⁷⁹Teresa of Avila, St. *Interior Castle* [trans. E.Allison Peers] (New York: Doubleday, 1964)

¹⁰⁸⁰Teilhard de Chardin *Le Milieu Divin* (London: Collins, 1968) p118. Teilhard's italics and emphasis.

¹⁰⁸¹Teilhard de Chardin p 58.

¹⁰⁸²Johnson, W. *Silent Music* (Glasgow: William Collins & Sons/Fontana, 1974) p 147.

The language is paradoxical, as religious language frequently is, but the intention is to differentiate merging/absorption from what they see as authentic mystical experience, a distinction in keeping with the analysis of transitional experience. Nevertheless, there has always been a fascination in all cultures with ecstatic [(Gk) ekstasis- 'standing out'] experience that offers oceanic absorption.

There are certainly many similar expressions within eastern theology with the same reference to marks of strange wonders, powers and miracles, what is termed *siddhis*, as one finds in western culture. What is different is the way such aspects are dismissed as unimportant.

Though [supernormal powers] are within the disciple's reach, he should not commit the mistake of regarding them as desirable; if they arise spontaneously, he should look on them with indifference, even disgust.¹⁰⁸³

This is an odd view from the usual Christian perspective which regards the miracles of Christ as the supreme demonstration of His divinity, and miracles and 'strange wonders' in the world, as a demonstration of His continued intervention in human affairs. In the Buddhist view, they are little more than 'party tricks', though, of course, the laymen love them. Even the ecstatic 'union' with the divine is not seen as of particular importance, but an unintended aspect of the meditative process rather than an end in itself.

...in Zen [Buddhism],.... physical ecstasy is virtually unknown. If anything like this does rear its ugly head, it is promptly crushed..... the whole of Zen training is calculated to counteract anything like ecstasy.¹⁰⁸⁴

¹⁰⁸³Sangharakshita *A Survey of Buddhism- its doctrines and methods throughout the ages* (London: Tharpa Publications, 1987) p191. See also Johnson, *Silent Music* p97

¹⁰⁸⁴Johnson, W. *Silent Music* p73. Johnson, like the Catholic theologian Thomas Merton, was deeply influenced by Buddhist and particularly Zen philosophy and shows a rare understanding.

What then, if not an ecstatic ‘union with all’, is the end of most Buddhist contemplation?¹⁰⁸⁵ Philosophy is endless but aphorisms are mercifully brief and often encapsulate an essence. In Zen, spiritual ‘progress’ is sometimes expressed as having three perceptual stages: in the first, the trees are trees, the rivers, rivers and the mountains, mountains; in the second stage, the trees are rivers, the rivers are mountains and the mountains are trees; in the final stage of enlightenment, the trees are trees, the rivers are rivers and the mountains are mountains.

While the second stage implies union and merging, the emphasis is clearly on the third that transcends union to seize the ‘is-ness’ or, ‘suchness’ of objects in the world, that enhanced ‘reality’ Winnicott alludes to as the product of *Illusion*. In this way the ‘absorption-in-all’ is transcended and the context of ordinary human interaction is affirmed rather than denied. The ‘suchness’ of objects implies an enhanced perception, such that they retain their uniqueness, yet are linked and connected (as distinct from merged), imbued with meaning and purpose.

There is a similarity to what James¹⁰⁸⁶ described as ‘conversion’, a process that can be either gradual or sudden, where the individual moves from a feeling of division, inferiority and unhappiness to a feeling of being unified, consciously right, superior and happy. Sante de Sanctis has described this as “remaking the field of consciousness” to alter the “self’s attitude to the world”.¹⁰⁸⁷ This has a particular resonance in the case of Woodward, whose early ‘distress’ and subsequent ‘creative illness’ has the hallmarks of an experience of ‘conversion’, in his case, quite literally, to a belief in Theosophy. All these descriptions have as

¹⁰⁸⁵ It would be wrong to suggest all Buddhist intention avoids ecstatic experience and absorption.

¹⁰⁸⁶ James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: a Study in Human Nature; being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (London: 1952) p 186.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Sante de Sanctis *Religious Conversion* (London: 1927) p 66 Quoted in Laski.

their intention the reordering of the *Self's* relationship to the world and with reality, very typical expressions of transitional experience.

The contrary to such a relationship is the figure, both in literature and life, of the *outsider*, whose world is “not rational, not orderly”, where what he sees - and he sees “too deep and too much” - is “essentially chaos”.¹⁰⁸⁸ The *outsider* is the figure of existential angst - Meursault in Camus’ *L’Etranger*, Harry Haller in Hesse’s *Steppenwolf*, Krebs in Hemingway’s *Soldier’s Home*, Des Esseintes in Huysmans’ *À Rebours*, Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* - all exist in a state of disconnection, unable to love because they are unable to evoke intimacy; unable to tolerate the company of others, they choose isolation and live in the shadow of madness or in a meaningless fugue of etiolated senses.

Though there appear to be superficial similarities, Woodward is no *outsider*. He was no doubt an isolate, but he sustained intense human connections and elicited immense affection. Far from being a ‘meaninglessness fugue’, his life was connected and meaningful, richly inhabited, even by *devas*, and sustained by intense human contact, even when he slept. For all the information one has about Woodward’s life in Rowella, there is little in the way of the ‘events’ that power an historian’s narrative; there are incidents, anecdotes, much play and humour but little else, and yet one is left with a sense of an immensely lived life, even a touch of excitement. That he was seen by some as ‘a bit of a mystic’ in that double-edged way Australian humour mixes admiration with ridicule, is probably more accurate than intended.

Woodward was, I believe, a true mystic, and while that may be a concept difficult to define, Winnicott’s analysis points the direction and aspects

¹⁰⁸⁸Wilson, C. *The Outsider* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1956) p 15.

of Buddhist experience fills in the detail. Woodward's creative engagement and endeavours, even the beliefs he held, sustained an intense and joyous engagement with the world of enhanced reality, which is a truer sign of the mystic, than the absorbed ecstatic. However, there are further attributes of the mystic that require amplification.

The Mysticism of Woodward.

The implied engagement and 'play' of transitional experience excite an expectation of the world, teaching how it is to be perceived. All perception, visual or intellectual, is learned. As Constable observed, "The art of seeing nature is a thing as much acquired as the art of reading Egyptian hieroglyphs."¹⁰⁸⁹ *Illusion* is learning to see and learning to see is learning what to expect.

.....when the first shock [of Impressionism] had worn off, people learned to read them. And having learned this language they went into the fields and woods....and found to their delight that the visible world could after all be seen in terms of these bright patches and dabs of paint....art had taught them to see.¹⁰⁹⁰

The world Woodward had learned to perceive was richly mysterious, full of many layered meaning and connections that he had learned to decipher over a lifetime, a perception that spilled into the literal world of sight, where what he saw was full of interest, colour, and content. Even his beliefs, though marginal, were sufficiently shared and affirmed to deny dismissal as 'mad' or simply eccentric. Even those who were sceptical, were stayed in their opinion by the qualities of the man that, as Pearce suggested, stopped them characterising him as a crank. Whatever his beliefs or their origin, it produced in him a resolution that flowed over into his relations with others, endowing each with a sense, in knowing him, of singular and special blessing.

¹⁰⁸⁹Gombrich, EH. *Art and Illusion* (London: Phaidon, 1968) p. 12.

¹⁰⁹⁰Gombrich *Art and Illusion* p. 275.

The invitation to engage in the arena of transitional experience is an invitation to live creatively, to make living an art; “it is the old familiar aesthetic experience; art giving order and logic to chaos”.¹⁰⁹¹ The nature of this creative interaction with the world of objects, that Winnicott adumbrated, is expressed by Daisetz Suzuki, the Buddhist scholar, in a way that may have sprung from a text on object relations, from a Kohut or Winnicott - “The flower, however, is unconscious of itself. It is I who awaken it from the unconscious.”¹⁰⁹²

While ecstatic enthusiasm moves the transitional experience towards a life denying absorption, the emphasis on ‘in the world’ enactment in much of Buddhist mysticism steers it from this danger. The comment by Paul Eluard, the French poet, that there *is* another world but it is this one, could have been a Buddhist aphorism. While Johnson claims that ‘in the world’ enactment is also the outgrowth of western Christian mysticism, it has tended to be diverted by signs and wonders, by enthusiasm and ecstatic absorption, though this is not to deny many have successfully taken their mystical experience into the world.

The ‘in the world’ aspect of some Buddhist mysticism is most amply illustrated in the well known Buddhist ‘Ox herding’ pictures¹⁰⁹³ which depict a man in search of an ox, an allegory for disciplining the mind and achieving enlightenment. The succession of drawings show him finding footprints, then the ox itself, then capturing, taming and riding the ox. The culminating eighth picture is the empty circle, where no-thing remains, nothingness, void, in Sanskrit, *sunyata*- “*Whip, rope, person*

¹⁰⁹¹Wilson *The Outsider* p. 23.

¹⁰⁹²Suzuki, DT., Fromm, E., & De Martino, R. *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (London: Souverir Press, 1974) p. 12.

¹⁰⁹³Reps, P. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1957) pp. 135ff.

and bull- all merge in No-thing".¹⁰⁹⁴ This concept of enlightenment is an odd one to the western mind being apparently nihilistic, yet, as in most religious expressions of any significance, it presents as a paradox, wherein void is filled with content, where the nothing is all, which echoes the mystic anthem of either east or west, of unity and oneness. It is a

state of consciousness beyond subject and object in which it is impossible to make a statement or a judgement about anything. This isundifferentiated or non-discriminating consciousness....¹⁰⁹⁵

The unresolved nature of the characteristic 'peak' or ecstatic experience with its oceanic flavour, possibly explains the emergence in twelfth century China of two additional drawings. [see Illustrations]

The first depicts 'Reaching the Source' of perception, of detachment, of seeing things as they are.

The water is emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creating and that which is destroying.¹⁰⁹⁶

The second depicts the now 'enlightened' old man 'In the World', returning to the market place to "save all sentient beings."¹⁰⁹⁷ This is the essential quality of compassion. However oceanic or ecstatic the experience, it is of little use if it cannot be lived out and enacted within the literal world, and enacted with compassion.

I go to the market place with my wine bottle and return with my staff. I visit the wine shop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened.¹⁰⁹⁸

¹⁰⁹⁴Reps *Zen Flesh*...p145.

¹⁰⁹⁵Johnson, *Silent Music* p81. Some care needs to be applied to the term *Sunyata* as it has many interpretations in the various Mahayana schools, some quite contradictory.

¹⁰⁹⁶Reps *Zen Flesh*... p146.

¹⁰⁹⁷Johnson p81. This is the "Bodhisattva vow" of Mahayana Buddhism that places the choice on those that seek enlightenment to forego entry into a nivanic state in order to assist others.

¹⁰⁹⁸Reps *Zen Flesh*... p147.

The nature of this enactment ‘in the world’ has a number of notable features. It is not simply a descent from the mountain of peak experience and ecstatic merging (where the trees are rivers, the rivers mountains etc.) to the way things were. In enactment within the world, the return to the market place, objects resume their proportion but with significant differences. The ‘is-ness’ of things is intense; the water is not just green, it is emerald and the mountains are not just blue, they are indigo. As well there remains a sense of intense connection; each thing, each person ‘becomes enlightened’ - as Suzuki says, “It is I who awaken it from the unconscious” - endowing the world with numinosity, and a luminous affirmation. And while it is difficult to define, there is always a hint of humour, a feature of religious experience that emanates from the transitional environment. Seriousness is almost invariably a sign of nominalist religion with all the dangers that flow from its literalist tendencies.

Some days I will say yes, and then odd days
It seems that things say yes to me.
And stranger still, there are those times
When I become a yes.¹⁰⁹⁹

The *ordinariness* of the world is endowed with an epiphany of perception granting meaning and purpose, though that does not necessarily impact on the casual observer. The old man in the market place, like Woodward, is indistinguishable from anyone else; his enlightenment does not make him glow in the dark. The element of *ordinariness* is paradoxically, extra-ordinary, in that it has meaning and connection. This is the particular contribution of some aspects of Buddhism to amplifying transitional experience. It is not the peak or

¹⁰⁹⁹ Hart, Kevin, “The Calm” from *New and Selected Poems* (Sydney: Angus & Robinson/Harper Collins, 1995)

oceanic experience that marks the most important feature of transitional experience, but the experience of resolution that transcends the oceanic and makes the ordinary world of sense experience and reality, extraordinary.

The great lessons from the mystics.....[are] that the sacred is *in* the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbours, friends and family, in one's back yard.....¹¹⁰⁰

The nature of this extraordinary ordinariness is difficult to draw, though it is discernible in a person like Woodward walking each day to collect his mail or to buy his milk and eggs, passing each person in conversation, engaging in humour, that leaves each somehow more buoyed. The corollary of ordinariness is unselfconscious simplicity, a quality one finds in Woodward and a characteristic, generally, of the mystic. He listened with an open heart to the frequently odd ideas of Caroline Rhys Davids, as he generally did with others, listening to what they had to say without judgement, though that did not prevent him being scathing in private. He approached others with simple acceptance, with simplicity, a quality much derided today. However, "real simplicity, so far from being foolish, is almost sublime". The nature of true simplicity is "an uprightness of soul which prevents self consciousness". In such a person,

the soul is not overwhelmed by externals, so as to be unable to reflect, nor yet given up to the refinements which self-consciousness induces. That soul which looks where it is going without losing time arguing over every step, or looking back perpetually, possesses true simplicity. Such simplicity is indeed a

¹¹⁰⁰Maslow p x. (Preface). I am loath to use Maslow as an authority but in this instance his description is apt.

great treasure. How shall we attain it? I would give all I possess
for it.¹¹⁰¹

Simplicity is a quality like poetic language, a lyricism which is the
attribute of all things emanating from transitional experience.

And again my inmost life rushes louder,
as if it moved now between steeper banks.
Objects become ever more related to me,
and all pictures ever more perused.

I feel myself more trusting in the nameless:
with my senses, as with birds, I reach
into the windy heavens from the oak,
and into the small ponds' broken off day
my feeling sinks, as if it stood on fishes.¹¹⁰²

In our societal rush for stars and startling personalities, we ignore the
simple resonance of goodly lived lives, the *ordinariness* and
inconspicuous living. Woodward inhabited a bountiful ordinariness,
lived in the world. He prided himself on being a natural hermit but he
never contemplated 'taking the robes' or even becoming a 'forest
dweller', a reclusive monk. Despite his reclusive nature he extended
himself to people, in the only way a person can - one at a time, inspiring
each in some way, to assume their own living.

While his beliefs present as odd, they participated in an identifiable
pattern of nineteenth century religious and intellectual exploration, albeit
marginal, and were sufficiently shared to refute being dismissed as
absurd. More than that, his beliefs proved no barrier to both his
interaction and confirmation of others, and may well have freed and

¹¹⁰¹ Fenelon, 17th century Archbishop of Cambrai, cited in Huxley, A *The Perennial Philosophy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980) p130-131. Also cited in Symington, J&N. *The Clinical Thinking of Wilfred Bion* (London: Routledge, 1996) p23.

¹¹⁰²Rilke, R M. *The Book of Images* [trans. Edward Snow] (NY: North Point Press, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1995) p91. From the poem entitled "Progress".

enhanced that potential, as Crews has suggested, to be, as he was, a natural mystic.

A Life Resolved

Woodward's world was always a search for understanding, meaning, and compassion wherein his Theosophy and Buddhism were central. He led a dedicated 'spiritual' life, albeit in a fairly secular context. The fact that, consistently, people who knew him, saw and sensed a figure of considerable strength and benign beneficence, even 'saintliness', shows that the content of his belief was not nearly as significant as the manner in which it manifested in life, in interaction with others.

To characterise Woodward simply as a harmless eccentric would be to diminish and dismiss the man, for in all his dealings with others there was an undeniable way in which he seemed to positively endow the lives of others. He seemed to transcend the complex origins of his outlook and behaviour, to touch lives, to create epiphanies of experience, unobtrusive yet definite and positive. That aspect endowed his life with a freedom of enactment that would not be possible if his behaviour and beliefs were simply the product of 'reaction formation' and eccentric non-conformity. Like the well known Buddhist analogy of the lotus flower - the origin may be in the unseen mud but it transforms on the surface into something truly astonishing.

There are certain personalities who excite "a creative response in the social environment",¹¹⁰³ who have an indefinable yet positive 'presence'. In his autobiography, Graham Greene describes his meeting with the art critic Herbert Read, "the most gentle man I have ever known", as an "important event in my life". Greene describes Read as a man

¹¹⁰³Symington, N. *Narcissism: a New Theory* (London: Karnac Books, 1993) p31.

who could come into a room full of people and you wouldn't notice his coming- you noticed only that the whole atmosphere of a discussion had quietly altered, that even the relations of one guest to another had changed. No one any longer would be talking for effect, and when you looked round for an explanation there he was- complete honesty born of complete experience had entered the room and unobtrusively taken a chair.¹¹⁰⁴

Woodward similarly assumed an 'unobtrusiveness', a tendency to migrate to the periphery both literally and metaphorically, but then "Genuine virtue is unobtrusive".¹¹⁰⁵ He was also a man of intensity who assumed a place of natural affection in people's hearts, and like Read, was intensely and simply honest, which was not always the quality desired by others. When he was Principal of Mahinda he would always umpire the cricket match and on one such occasion, an important Mahinda College and Richmond College match, the "majority of our First Eleven secretly wished that our Principal (Mr Woodward) should not arrive ...before the two teams had chosen their umpires". However, as usual, he was one of the first to arrive "dressed in immaculate white". The reason for this reluctance was not from lack of regard "but because he was so upright, that he was loath to give a decision against the opposing team, if he was in the slightest doubt".¹¹⁰⁶ This intensely upright behaviour pervaded the entire school, part of the "Woodwardian Tradition", encapsulating both Buddhist and British Victorian values of service, duty, tolerance and scrupulous ethical integrity, an influence that persisted decades after he left, inspiring students to approach the highest ideals and standards. While such may appear quaint to modern ears, the

¹¹⁰⁴Greene, G. *Ways of Escape* (London: Bodley Head, 1980) p39 I am indebted to Dr. Neville Symington for drawing my attention to this particular reference which appears in Symington's *Narcissism: a New Theory* p34. Given the obvious 'spirituality' of Read (for want of an alternative expression), it is not surprising he played a significant part in editing the complete works of Carl Jung.

¹¹⁰⁵Storr *Feet of Clay...* p226.

¹¹⁰⁶Wijeratne et al "The Event of the Year" by A Jayasinghe. reprinted from the *Mahinda Magazine* 1944, p160.

values were nevertheless worthy, durable and functional (and possibly deserve revisiting).

Woodward's non-conformity of behaviour, belief and dress undoubtedly created some mirth in the Rowella district, but what is interesting is the unreserved affection he engendered in everyone I spoke to who knew him. And almost all have some 'relic', some memento or other which they have retained, a way of sustaining connection with someone recognisably special. He was a person of sensitivity and intensity but never without humour which is usually a fair sign of sanity.

Once, when Woodward was on one of his daily rambles to gather his milk and a few groceries, he passed Claude Clark, his neighbour, heavily pruning an apple tree in preparation for the insertion of scions or varietal grafts on the tree. Woodward questioned Clark about what he was doing and Clark's response was to explain patiently the normal, accepted practice of grafting. Woodward, however, protested that what he was attempting was "unnatural". He was obviously and genuinely upset by the procedure and they parted with the atmosphere strained. About a week later, however Clark was working once more in that part of the orchard and, coming upon the tree that was the subject of disputation, found, tied neatly to the new grafts, tiny artificial red apples.¹¹⁰⁷

This odd piece of humour is interesting for what it reveals. There was no doubt as to Woodward's firmly held views, nor to the genuineness of his distress and probable annoyance. After all he fully accepted a belief in tree *devas*,¹¹⁰⁸ and their spirit that inhabited the limbs and bark. Nevertheless he turned the anger and distress within himself into whimsy, dismissing it with humour. He similarly had an encounter with

¹¹⁰⁷Source: John Clark, Claude Clark's son.

¹¹⁰⁸ See Woodward *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon*.

Brady, when Brady killed a snake that had taken up abode with a mate near the Waterton dam where Woodward would frequently walk. Woodward was aware and accepting of the presence of the snakes, as he related in his *Pictures of Buddhist Ceylon*, and regarded them as having as much right as he to be there - "they were my friends". His distress at the demise of one was, again, very genuine and he remonstrated severely with Brady, "You should not have done it!" There was stony silence between the two men for a time, an uncomfortable tension, then Woodward looked at his friend and inquired, "and which one was it, Horace or Percival?" Again he took the seriousness of his own values and subjected them to absurdity and humour. His convictions were never allowed to overwhelm his compassion for people.

His reverence for nature was heartfelt and genuine, as well as another common aspect of his Theosophy. The TS was at the forefront of pioneering efforts in animal welfare - another 'progressive' cause - and Dr Bean, Woodward's friend, fellow Theosophist, and brother of the Australian war historian CEW Bean, was an active correspondent with the Tasmanian newspapers regarding cruelty to animals and needlessly cruel means of trapping.¹¹⁰⁹ Woodward similarly assumed a determined view of animal welfare. At the southern end his house, and since cleared, there was an acreage of trees, mainly black wattle and peppermint gums. This he called his "forest", wherein dwelled his *devas*, and each day he would usually spend some time raking the leaves, bark and twigs, ordering the disorder of Australian bush.

¹¹⁰⁹*Theosophy in Tasmania* Vol.I #2. Edited by Dr J Bean, "Vasanta", Sandy Bay. [State Library-Crowther Collection] p2. This volume not only extensively and affectionately refers to Woodward and a proposed visit to him, but also exhorts members to "confront our consciences with those twin Major Challenges of 'Universal Brotherhood and the Rights of Animals' "

It was towards the end of his life, that a fire threatened the “forest” and Woodward remained up most of the night attempting to save the possums and other native animals escaping the flames. It was probably the effects of these exertions which caused the minor stroke that led to his hospitalisation where he suffered the further stroke which took his life on 27 May, 1952. He was cremated¹¹¹⁰ according to the wishes contained in the codicil to his Will,¹¹¹¹ and his ashes scattered, hopefully on a rose bed, for as he once told his neighbour, Mrs Clark, “Ashes are good for roses. When I am cremated strew my ashes over your roses”.¹¹¹²

He lived within an order and purpose from which he rarely deviated and which removed from his consideration the usual vexations that divert attention. Far from the entrapment most would sense, within the confines of his routine he was freed to concentrate on what he regarded as essential - his work and translations. He had no need or regard for technology, and lived without radio or lighting beyond his kerosene lamps.

The fact is motor cars and radio have ruined leisure, thought and reading silently and I suppose all serious literature...¹¹¹³

A unrepentant anti-modernist, he saw technology as infinitely diverting and contrary to the leisure of living with the quiet musing of one’s own company. Far from self centred, it provided a foundation for dealing with others, while many today find their own company intolerable, yet act with considerable self-centredness.

¹¹¹⁰It is incorrectly suggested in the Australian Dictionary of Biography that he was buried at Carr Villa, Launceston, whereas anything other than cremation was probably unthinkable. The wish to be cremated, in a codicil to Woodward’s Will, [Shield Heritage] is confirmed by the Carr Villa Crematoria Records.

¹¹¹¹ Shield Heritage, Launceston- Woodward file.

¹¹¹² Gunewardene, article by Witanachchi, p75.

¹¹¹³ Letter FL Woodward to CA Rhys Davids, 7 September 1937. (FOSL)

His methodical life and quiet routine is nowhere better illustrated than his habit, while on his daily walks, of collecting odd stones along the road, placing them in his basket among his provisions. His “creed was to perform a manual task each day”¹¹¹⁴ and on his return he would place his stones and pieces of rubble between the Monterey Pines near his house, till over the thirty three years he lived in Rowella, shard upon shard, he built up a series of rubble walls between the trees, “three feet high and running down his drive”.¹¹¹⁵

When he died and the property passed to the Clarks and the aged (and dangerous) pines were cut down, the rubble between the claws of their roots was spread upon the surface of the road leading to the house. What was painstakingly built up was scattered in a blink of time. *Anicca* - impermanence, change and alteration - one of the central concepts of Buddhism with which Woodward had wrestled, were lived out in his death. What do the efforts of anyone mean if those that come after cannot tread upon them and make with them their own path?

¹¹¹⁴Horner p81

¹¹¹⁵Horner p81.

Uroboros

The secularisation of the late nineteenth century that occurred amidst social upheaval and an emerging, anxious, middle class led to a proliferation of niche belief wherein the Theosophical Society stands as a prototype. While it assumed many of the perennial aspects of religious formation and enthusiasm - Adventism, certainty of truth and cult narratives - it was distinguished by a middle class and intellectual hue that has assumed an even more pronounced attribution in late twentieth century niche belief. Those earlier adherents attracted to the Theosophical Society sought flight from drab scientism and analytic summation and the young today similarly look from their learning to 'quest' for what is unanalysable and unnameable. The goal of this quest is often for some idealised Eden, where the lamb shall lie down with the lion - without anxiety.

Eden is a locus of paradisiacal connection, a state of inflation and omnipotence wherein the *Self* and *Other* are not distinguishable - a state of Nature where humankind is without memory and without *Self* consciousness. It is essentially infantile, a state wherein the maternal *selfobject* is experienced as contiguous with the *Self*, and expulsion from Paradise, with its attendant loneliness, sadness and discontent, is the natural outgrowth of human maturation¹¹¹⁶. The residue is a powerful discontent and longing for re-connection with the *Other* for, as Kohut has pointed out, "human beings do not normally 'separate' from their needed objects",¹¹¹⁷ and not without anguish.

Central to the story of Eden is a crime, a fundamental violation of such magnitude, it separates humankind from God forever, cast from Paradise. This crime of such enormity reads as a very odd transgression. The crime was to *know*, to distinguish (separate) right and wrong. This is the faculty of critical reasoning that requires separation from what is

¹¹¹⁶While the earlier object relations theorists like Winnicott, Fairbairn and Guntrip inclined towards views of maturation as stages in personal development (echoing nineteenth century values of progress and evolution), the Self Psychology of Kohut avoids normative judgements of this kind.

¹¹¹⁷Bacal, H. & Newman, K. *Theories of Object Relations- Bridges to Self Psychology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) p 141. Howard Bacal is a Canadian Self Psychologist who trained under Winnicott.

observed. It is a faculty, too, that separates humankind from other animals, that allows humanity to analyse, to envision, to plan. The consequences are immediate - the first realisation is of 'nakedness', of *Self* consciousness, the ability of people to see themselves separate from the surrounding milieu, to 'stand beside' themselves, to reflect. And with that comes shame, guilt and remorse. The second consequence is alienation, cast from the harmony of Eden, separated from Nature, and humankind has attempted to re-incorporate and/or re-conquer Nature ever since. Critical reasoning comes at a price, though there is no knowledge without cost, no understanding without loss. That is the human condition, why since Eden, we toil in sorrow.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.¹¹¹⁸

What has emerged out of secular rationalism in the twentieth century *fin de siècle*, is a postmodernist narrative that condemns its perspective to an intellectual *ennui* and nihilistic despair remarkably reflective of the cultural anomie and alienation within which it is embedded, and which both confirms and parodies its own thesis. A reality "at once multiple...and without foundation"¹¹¹⁹ says as much about the perception of the perceiver as about the world perceived. Thus theory, to a degree, becomes biographical¹¹²⁰, articulating the theoretician as much as the idea. No theory gains hold of the imagination of its times except that it articulates the biographical concerns of its adherents. Our ideas, as Bagehot observed, arise from our "experiencing nature". The work of

¹¹¹⁸ *Ecclesiastes 1: 17 & 18*. King James version.

¹¹¹⁹ Tarnas, R. *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991) p401.

¹¹²⁰ Pedder, J., "Some Biographical Contributions to Analytic Theories" *Free Association* Vol. 10 (London: 1987). Pedder provides insightful discussion of the biographical contribution to individual theory.

Adam Smith, for instance, cannot be grasped “without having some notion of what manner of man he was”,¹¹²¹ nor can Freud’s theory of Oedipal antagonism be appreciated without understanding the personal turmoil that arose on the death of his father.

The cultural valorisation of secular rationalism, which has been so much a feature of Western biography, has been entrenched over the past 100 years by mass, secular education and its attendant rationalist ideology, an awesome experiment in social engineering. The dominant rational mode has been met on many historical occasions by reaction and flight towards unreason, Woodward being just one example. However, the degree to which rationalist ideology pervades present culture, as a result of mass educational engineering, makes it ripe for reaction, much like ‘reaction formation’ on a personal level. Once such ‘reaction formation’ reaches critical mass it presents culturally in an expansion of niche belief that partakes of the irrational, some helpful, most not.

Much ‘reaction formation’ leaves people within the confines of the reaction, though there are many examples, as discussed, where questing souls transcend simple ‘reaction formation’ to form resonant solutions and, again, Woodward presents as such a person. Solutions are multiple and endlessly variable - there are no formulas - though Woodward does exhibit clues about the nature of resolution. He indicates this in his response to Caroline Rhys Davids’ occult constructs when he suggests, “I make my own clothes”,¹¹²² or when he tells with relish the story of “My Own Bloody Yacht Club”. There is a healthy and feisty perversity that rescues him from being simply another ‘follower’.

Another aspect of Woodward’s resolution resided within his endeavour, for while he was not a particularly original mind, he nevertheless lived his life creatively and with imagination which was sourced within the resonant area of ‘transitional experience’ that exists in creative tension between the absorption and separation. The continuing creative commerce within the *transitional arena*, the site of *Illusion*, presents the possibility of a ‘reality’ one can comfortably inhabit, and for ‘reality’ to be ‘real’ implies it makes ‘sense’, that is, it has meaningful connection and coherence.

¹¹²¹Bagehot, W. “Adam Smith as a Person” in *Collected Works of Walter Bagehot* St John-Stevás (ed) cited in

Gay, P. *The Bourgeois Experience- Victoria to Freud* Vol. II *The Tender Passion* (NY: Oxford University Press 1986) p42.

¹¹²² Letter FL Woodward to C Rhys Davids 7 September 1937 (FOSL)

The life of FL Woodward, lived as it was within the historical currents of his times, assumes a recognisable pattern of endeavour that precludes dismissal as eccentric or particularly out of the ordinary. Woodward came from an educated, middle class background, and despite his acceptance of Buddhism, it was a Buddhism directed by the signposts of his own Victorian psyche and Victorian values of duty, service, and personal exertion.

Whatever the values that led him to assume the reins of Mahinda College, Ceylon, and the “mission” of Buddhist education in the South, he made the educational outreach of the school serve the needs of the people he sought to assist beyond any other agenda he may have held. From a Western historical perspective he made a significant contribution to the dissemination a Buddhist ideology that became central to Sinhala nationalism and the Buddhist Revival. Through the school, he contributed disproportionately to an elite formation that carried this ideology into the heart of Sinhala cultural activism. From a Sinhala Buddhist perspective, the achievement of the man was beyond deeds, though these are acknowledged and admired. In the Sinhala context, he is measured by his promotion of the *Dharma*, by his goodness and service to others, which generated much merit. Thus in Sri Lanka Woodward is, and will continue to be, regarded as ‘historically’ significant.

In the West what makes people ‘historically’ significant is rarely seen in their lived ‘goodness’, or the ‘merit’ of the life, but in the deeds of the person. In this, a life of patiently translating texts is less than eventful and unlikely to attract the mayhem that is the garnish of Western history. To a degree, though, history is always read with an eye on the lives lived, seeking clues to ‘worth’, which is usually defined by alignment with cultural values, whether Western or Sinhala. For Woodward the ideals of duty and service were the measure of worth, values today seen as somewhat quaint, yet they were values that set parameters beyond the *Self*, that encompassed others and saw value in societies constructed for the ideals of community. Today community is seen merely as the platform to launch personal ambition, not something to which is owed obligation or commitment. The simple Buddhist truth that discontent is not solved, but caused, through craving and pursuit of self gratification is a self evident absurdity in the face of such determined narcissism.

It is easy when dealing with individuals of accomplishment and recognition to sense the significance of their lives. Their flaws are forgiven or dismissed by historical regard. With Woodward the flaws mingle with the saintly and significant, sense with nonsense, yet he lived a life of quiet contribution and eminent sanity. Whatever the particulars

of his beliefs, he transcended the content and organisational adherence to live with affirmation and resonance, to touch the numinous, and endow others with a glimpse of that possibility and experience. However one seeks to define or analyse Woodward, he escapes his historical confines to be far more than any summation.

He left an unusual legacy of unqualified goodness and contribution.

Where he had impact of historical significance, it was simply an unintended by-product of his efforts, not anything imagined or desired, for like Eliot's character in *Middlemarch*,

the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive, for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.

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