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Plebeian Spiritualism: Some Ambiguities of England's Enlightenment, Reformation, and Urbanisation[1]

During the last quarter-century, the penny has fully dropped, both in academia and elsewhere, that there was more than one Enlightenment. This multiplicity was both quantitative and qualitative. In 1992, Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich entitled their pioneering anthology not merely *The Enlightenment*, but also *in National Context*, thus implying both unitariness and nuancing or even fragmentation.[2] More challenging are qualitative differentiations, most resoundingly by Margaret Jacob and more recently Jonathan Israel,[3] between a Radical and a Moderate Enlightenment.

But part of my argument is that, at the heart of any enlightenment, there wriggled an ancient worm of uncertainty about the nature of matter. This worm subsisted from the late 17th century into at least the early 20th. Thus, those of us who talk of 18th-, 19th- and perhaps much 20th-century »occult« activity as anti- or post-Enlightenment overlook the contradictoriness of what occurred during the decades around 1700, not least in England. The same worm saps short-termist chronologies, such as that implied in famous book-titles such as Darnton's, in which »the End of the Enlightenment« implicitly precedes even the French Revolution.[4] Despite conservative conspiracy-theorists from de Maistre on, any Enlightenment was far broader than a prelude to 1789-94, and lasted generations longer.

Like all allegedly intelligent animals, this article is trying to walk on two feet: not only to show that the so-called occult exploited a basic ambiguity of both the moderate and much of the later radical Enlightenments, but also to suggest that plebeian spiritualism, which was a key part of the English-speaking occult, was simultaneously not only occult but also as enlightenment as any other 19th- or 20th-century -ism. By plebeian, I mean working- or lower-middleclass. By spiritualism, I mean a movement whose adherents, beginning in upstate New York during 1848, believed they were conversing with the spirits of physically dead people. This belief has, of course, been uncontroversial in many cultures and has cropped up in perhaps most millenia. But, as embodied in a distinctive movement, it arrived in Northern England during the early 1850's and appealed mainly to radically-minded plebeians. In this appeal to the radical and poor, it may contrast with what develo-

ped in many Continental countries, though exceptions may abound in many directions as they certainly do in Britain. Britain, too, had its middle-class spiritualists, whose main difference from the plebeians was, that into the early 20th century, they saw spiritualism as completing Christianity whereas the plebeians saw spiritualism as replacing it. By occult, I mean any deliberate cultivation of phenomena which seem to or do defy ›normal‹ definitions of physical reality. But the original sense of occult as secret and secretive if not elitist, hardly applies to our plebeian spiritualists.

As one's home was the preferred place for seances, i. e. gatherings for contacting the spirits, the number of spiritualists is hard to estimate; but by around 1900, there may have been, very roughly, 15.000 adults among the plebeians, who as we shall see included the better-organised among the two categories. Identifiably active spiritualists among the middle class numbered almost certainly a few thousand, but this may be an underestimate.

Section two will examine some of the ways in which Sir Isaac Newton gave any Enlightenment after him an ambiguous foundation, though presumably the best possible at the time and long after. Section three will glance at some of the gender-aspects involved in spiritualism and much else. These two sections will allow Section four to return to our plebeian spiritualists with perhaps richer perspectives. Finally, Section five will briefly culminate with the geographical dimensions.

Introducing Spiritualism

This section allows us to savour plebeian and to an extent any other spiritualists in some of their core practices. Many of its examples have emerged far more randomly than in any sense ›scientifically‹. But this may be one of their strengths, not because the occult deals so often in coincidence, but because their very randomness suggests their possibly typical status.

As noted, plebeian spiritualists did not organise themselves much. Their most organised activities were for the spare-time education of themselves and their children. This harmonised with their ideology: for them, the next world or »Summerland« was, and this world ought to be, structured educationally. Of course the seance-circle, which we are only a few lines away from, was their most distinctive activity, and seldom needed much organising. But by 1900 most, i. e. over 200, of their »lyceums«, or Sunday-schools for children and adults, were connected with a British Spiritualist Lyceums Union (B.S.L.U.). This developed regional structures which must have reminded many activists of their pre-spiritualist membership of Nonconformist, i. e. non-Anglican Protestant, churches and Sunday-schools.

Let us now take, from 1911, a »less than thirty years old« clerical worker. We will soon see that Robert A. Owen had perhaps precisely not been named after the Welsh-born utopian socialist and self-made capitalist Robert Owen (1771-1858)

who, during the 1850's, had extended his own Enlightenment materialism into spiritualism. Our today otherwise forgotten Robert A. was, despite his youth, nationally prominent in the B.S.L.U. According to admittedly chatty biographies of him and his father, John Griffith Owen in that Union's monthly journal, *The Lyceum Banner*, young Owen had been seven years old (or, alternatively, nine) when first exposed to phenomena.

These had occurred on the initiative of J.G. The latter had progressed from page-boy to coalminer to Manchester Ship Canal-worker, in the process migrating from rural North Wales to Bootle in Liverpool. Here, by 1890 or 1891, he was secretary to a Welsh Wesleyan Methodist Church. By then, adherents of the various types of Methodism had outnumbered those of the official Anglican church for two or three generations. In both Wales and England, the Wesleyans usually formed the respectable extreme of the Methodist spectrum.

But J.G. now became interested in spiritualism. He decided to follow »a set of rules regarding the formation and conduct of circles« printed in every number of the plebeian spiritualist weekly *The Two Worlds*. He therefore »arranged with Mrs Owen for the use of the round kitchen table for my first sitting.« Note that, in working-class fashion, his »Mrs« was referred to by no other name, and that, in respectably Victorian fashion, anything to do with the kitchen was part of her sphere. Anyway, one Sunday morning, J.G., »Mrs«, Robert A. and his even younger sister Agnes Syrah Owen skipped the main Wesleyan service and sat round that table, presumably after drawing the curtains. »The children at first were highly amused, but eventually terribly bored at having to sit round (...), singing hymns occasionally and listening to their parents repeating the alphabet to the table, which tilted in response, with their hands laid upon it.« His father's (1914) version has the table, surely even more amusingly or boringly, »not« moving, at least for the first half-hour. Both versions, however, identify young Robert A. as, »while humming a tune familiar«, the one member of the circle who fell into

»a trance state, during which rapid movements of the right arm indicated a desire to write. Pencil and paper being provided, the usual crude attempts, owing to material conditions, was (sic!) succeeded by intelligent messages, signed by a Welsh relative who had passed on some time (or, alternatively, three years, L.B.) before.«
»Let it be noted at this juncture that the boy *could not understand the Welsh language.*«

In the other version of the event, he »had just an ABC acquaintance« with it; but the contents with which he now covered »four pages« were »matter quite beyond the intelligence of a lad« of his age. Here we have a typical opening shock to participants' normal paradigms, i. e. to the rules of their reality. However, no less basically enlightenment or, in a sense, scientific was J.G.'s instant reaction: knowing his son to be monoglot English, he »asked the writer questions in *Welsh*. The *responses were immediately written in the same language and answered satisfactorily.*« The meaning of the word »*answered*« is unclear: our Welsh »spirit« answered either the questions put or to the information on which J.G. and, for all we know,

his wife and daughter were basing those questions.

For generations, apparent paradigm-busting during occult activities has attracted explanation in terms of half-understood academic research: thus today, in my own non-spiritualist way, I might mumble something dignifiable as Freudo-Chomskian. Yet so what? The point here is not our particular explanation but rather that our participants apparently found much to explain, and gladly solved their problem by becoming spiritualists. As a result, Mr. Owen swiftly found himself expelled from the ranks of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism. Whether »Mrs« was punished similarly is unmentioned, but their two children continued for some unspecified time in their old Wesleyan Sunday-school till their father sent them walking three miles to the nearest lyceum, which they are said to have instantly and vastly preferred for its welcoming and free atmosphere.

Additionally, the »gift of clairvoyance and clairaudience were (sic!) gradually developed in the lad.« This was no more unusual than the fact that »soon« his father's own clairvoyant and mediumistic »faculties were awakened« or that, at a time unspecified, Agnes also became a very good clairvoyant: competition between family members via their newly discovered »faculties« seems to have been quite common. But the way in which young Robert's gifts were, to a growing »circle«, first »made manifest« was described as »somewhat unique«:

»Bottles of medicine appeared to him to be covering the kitchen walls, most of the labels being indistinct, but as was often the case at that time, any member of the family suffering from a slight illness, a bottle or more would stand out prominently with the name of the medicine appearing in bold type. The latter was invariably obtained from a neighbouring chemist and gave relief to the sufferer.«

Even more convincingly, the sole apparent exception turned out to confirm the rule:

»On one occasion a peculiar name of a medicine was spelt out, and Mr Owen, Senior, who persistently sifted anything of an evidential character, tried to obtain some at innumerable chemists without success, the answer (...) invariably being ›Never heard of it‹. Some months afterwards upon enquiring at a wholesale druggists in (Liverpool, L.B.; ...) it was discovered, through the means of a catalogue, that it was an Indian medicine rarely used in (Britain, L.B.).«

Healing with »spirit« help via various avenues was certainly frequent. Our young Robert was thought so rare, merely for his particular abilities as, let's call him, a trance-apothecary. Subsequently also »discovered« was that his »prescriptions« were »directed« by the spirit of a late »friend of members of our circle«, one Dr Baldwin. There is no point wading through Baldwins in the Welsh and English sections of any 1870's or 1880's annual edition of the *Medical Directory*. Our particular Baldwin is interesting, not for any officially recognised medical qualifications or lack of them, but rather for his status as »friend«: spiritualism allowed family and friends to bridge the Great Divide, i. e. physical death.

Physically, Robert himself seems, like so many mediums and healers, to have been sickly, not least as a child. Certainly, he himself was often in need of medical

help, earthly or other. »Although so young he suffered from rheumatic fever three times. On the last occasion« the normal doctor »pronounced his condition practically hopeless.« However, Robert was now to experience his own spiritual healing. This came not, as for all we know more frequently, via a physically living »spiritual healer« but, for him, much more directly.

»In his own words: ›I was tossing about in bed, racked with pain and very feverish, dozing every few minutes, when suddenly, whilst in an exhausted state, with eyes closed, I became conscious of a cold breeze blowing about me, and as though a weight was placed on the foot of my bed. I opened my eyes, and saw quite objectively the form of a big man dressed in black. I was so startled that I covered my head with the bed clothes, and lay trembling, until I thought it might be a spirit friend, and instantly my confidence returned. I thereupon uncovered my head and looked up into the eyes and kind face of a man who was bending and making magnetic passes with his hands over me from head to foot, which caused a soothing influence, and I fell into a deep slumber, from which I awakened feeling quite well and free from pain. In an incredibly short space of time I was walking in the sunshine recuperating.‹«

For our anonymous writer in the *Lyceum Banner*, the moral of all these phenomena was twofold:

»a consistent, logical, and convincing chain of evidence through the instrumentality of (Robert, L.B.; ...) was the means of proving to the Owen family the continuity of life, the persistence of individual consciousness after so-called death, and the possibility of communion between the denizens of the Two Worlds.«[5]

I call this spiritualist moral twofold for emphasising both that everything was empirically reasonable and that this proved what normal religion could merely base on faith alone. Indeed, for »Owen, Senior« as for so many first-generation spiritualists, their experience was taken as refuting hell-fire Christianity, thus freeing them from their deepest conscious fears. Psychologically, but less avowably, fears might be powerful too among some of those who had made the same journey from hell-fire-fears to spiritualism, but via an interim period in the loudly atheist »secularist« movement. »Communion«, denoting something deeper and in a sense more religious than mere »communication«, countered any possibility that messages from loved ones might be some devilish plot to pull you down into everlasting torment.

Enlightenment – Newton

Thereby, we can see spiritualism as, for spiritualists, completing Enlightenment. The material and spiritual worlds were linked in empirically provable ways, and intellectual honesty would be even more important in the next world than, unfortunately, in this one so far.

But any linkage between the two was precisely inadmissable to the version of the material world propagated in any Enlightenment. The key precondition for any rule of Reason, however defined, was to banish the spiritual, whether Holy or sata-

nic, from any materially causative role. It still is. Not that this necessarily banished the Divine from being the ultimate Cause: the »argument from Design«. But it did mean dumping all practices and beliefs, from Hermetic alchemy to witchcraft, which left doors open to anarchic interpenetration between matter and spirit. This included, not merely the shockingly ambiguous clarities of Thomas Hobbes, but also the less learned heresies of more or less autodidact, i.e. self-taught, and politically radical groups such as the Diggers.

The Diggers had frightened almost everyone less radical than themselves. This had been less for their achievements: the very few communities they had managed to set up during 1649/50, all in South-East England, had been dispersed by force. It was more to do with their radicalism than with their strategy. They were totally against private property of any kind. In today's terms, their strategy would be described as one of non-violent direct action: taking over the uncultivated »commons and wastes« and tilling them collectively, using the latest techniques. They hoped, and their opponents feared, that this example would spread like wildfire: by avoiding armed action at any cost, they positioned themselves, not as rebels but as constructors, as restorers of pre-1066 »freedom«, in a country that had wasted under the »Norman yoke« for nearly six centuries and was now sick from seven years of civil war. In the event, their example did spread, but hardly like wildfire. Here, one dampener was the large number of economically marginal people who depended for survival on those uncultivated areas: for berries, for stormwood, for grazing an animal or two. These people would at least have needed more time to be persuaded than the authorities allowed. Nonetheless, as at least a rumour, Digger agitation was feared whenever those with land or other major property to lose looked like disagreeing with each other too loudly, as in the crises of 1658-1660 preceding the Restoration of the monarchy or during the »Glorious Revolution« of 1688/89.

Gerard Winstanley, the bankrupt merchant from Lancashire who was the Diggers' first and chief ideologue, used to be seen as no more than an early technological communist: annually in his utopia, every village commune was to elect a »postmaster« whose key role would be to exchange news of inventions with his, or perhaps for Winstanley sometimes her, colleagues everywhere. But, as David Mulder has recently emphasised, Winstanley's materialism was of its time: hermetic. In other words, with one of the most powerful mythical characters of the Renaissance the ancient Egyptian priest Hermes Trismegistus, he saw no separation between the physical and spiritual worlds. The reason why he wanted a federation of communistic communes was precisely that this would trigger a synergy in which nature, human nature and the cosmos would regenerate each other. For him, this in today's words explosive spread of ecological technology was or would herald the Second Coming of Christ.[6] God was not outside the universe but inseparable from, if not identical with it: we nowadays call the last position pantheism. The Diggers would therefore help God return to Himself. Of course, »hermetic«, including alchemical, researchers had long been secretive: hence today's use of the word to mean »tightly

closed«. But, for Winstanley, a by-product of his utopia would be that hermetic researches would be democratised via his »postmasters«.

It would thus be anachronistic to imagine Winstanley and his ilk ever separating material and spiritual more than alchemists did. Had they done so, they would have been progenitors of »the« single, unitary Enlightenment, and anything more moderate would have been a mere diversion from that. But their refusal, or inability, to make such separations is precisely what leaves us clutching no more than our imaginations. This also underlines claims such as that of Margaret Jacob that »Newtonianism« which, by the mid-18th century, functioned internationally as the fundament of Enlightenment had, not originated as, but swiftly become a programme designed to combat not only absolutists but also to stuff the genie of popular »enthusiasm«, i.e. here not least extremism and other paradigm-scorning, back into the bottle from which Royalists and Parliamentarians had so unforgettably allowed it to escape during the 1640's and 1650's.

A far stronger candidate than Winstanley for radical progenitor of Enlightenment is Baruch Spinoza. Surely to no other lens grinder would an officially employed intellectual such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz have journeyed to Amsterdam in order to meet. Superficially this ascetic Jew would have been memorable enough as a pioneer of modern Biblical scholarship, refuting miracles as historically-contexted delusions. But he was even more important, and here relevant, for formulating pantheism with a provocative elegance, climaxing in his unforgettable phrase »God or Nature«: »or« being synonymous with our »i.e.«. Such thoughts may have speeded his violent expulsion from Amsterdam's Sephardi community, but the scandal of his courageous rigour boosted Spinoza's challenge to intellectuals and censors generations after his death in 1677.

Jonathan Israel has recently been summarised as belittling the »High Enlightenment« as »only a reactionary attempt to buy off the forceful dissidence of the authentic Radical Enlightenment that«, having »originated« with our heroic lens grinder, »preceded« the »High«.[7] But not only can authors not be blamed for their reviewers' reductionist conspiratorialisms like »buy off«; more importantly, there is no need to be frightened by arguments that the »Radical« Enlightenment began earlier than the »High«. Centrally, the latter has always been able to claim one basis which the former never could: what we would call a physics (Newton's) and not merely a metaphysics (Spinoza's). The very observational and conceptual sophistication of Spinoza's belittling of physical experimentation[8] excluded him from that outwardly triumphant grounding in physics which was destined to make Newton seem reassuring to many otherwise more or less divergent minds for so long.

More broadly still, Israel discerns »a case for arguing that the most crucial developments were over by the middle of the 18th century.«[9] Quite possibly. Thus he sees his »crucial« period of 1650-1750 as having possessed »a high degree of continuity« in Britain particularly. But he is also surely correct in seeing »the pantheistic strain« in »the religious and social radicalism of the English Revolution« as

»far removed from Spinoza's.«[10] As his courageous near-encyclopaedism seems innocent of any acquaintance with Mulder's exposition of Winstanley's Hermetic dimensions, we can perhaps conclude that even he is more correct than he realises: he seems not to appreciate how much of at least the Winstanleyan genie was re-bottled.

The cork was Newtonian. This adds poignancy to the unanswerable question, what would have happened had Newton never lived? We are left merely fantasising as to how, when and sometimes almost whether Winstanley would have undergone such re-bottling. Presumably, the late and Right Honourably aristocratic Robert Boyle who, we now know, remained more explicitly alchemical than his younger friend Newton,[11] could hardly have been Winstanley's chief re-bottler. Nor could Spinoza. On the contrary, his own reverberative equation of God with Nature might sometimes, in our counterfactually non-Newtonian 18th century, have been misunderstood in more or less Winstanleyan ways. Thus Newton remains indispensable, or someone very like him, whatever that might mean.

True, we will see that the Newtonian cork was of strange matter. But, had it not been in place, Hermetic and other interpenetrations between spirit and matter would presumably have continued far longer than they actually did. How much more can be glimpsed from an admittedly very different place and time: the far freer, because more pluralistic, autodidact, anarchic and geographically spacious, world of early- and mid-19th-century inland North America. Here, John L. Brooke portrays early (i.e. 1820-1844) Mormonism as, intellectually, a rampage of inventiveness and improvisation, but often with materials amounting to more than »connotations and fragments« of 17th-century Hermeticism.[12]

Thus, we simply cannot know whether, without Newtonianism, England's rulers would have recovered sufficient intellectual self-confidence to outstare equivalent ideological spasms during the 18th century. We know merely that their own 1688/89 Revolution had underlined the warning from one of their number, the Marquess of Halifax, that the »liberty of the late times« – i. e. of the 1640's and 1650's — had given »men so much light, and diffused it so universally among the people, that they are not now to be dealt with as they might have been in an age of less inquiry.«[13] Such worries had powerfully strengthened that Revolution's moderation, except as ever in the colonial island of Ireland.

Luckily, Israel has far more than might-have-beens as a basis for arguing that deists and other Enlighteners often used Newton plus Locke as a smokescreen for their own Spinozan agendas.[14] But Newton's indispensability also relativises Israel's speculation that »the social and religious ideas of the Levellers and Diggers (...) conceivably, even constituted the ideological driving force of the entire European (Enlightenment, L.B.) phenomenon, especially its political and social radicalism«.[15] This is all most exciting. But you still need a vehicle for injecting any »driving force« into. Both the design and the build of the Enlightenment vehicle were – or, in some Continental countries, increasingly became – more or less Newtonian. Israel

appears to have briefly driven off in a metaphor: often an irresistible diversion but, here, an unnecessary one, unless we wish to argue absurdly that Newton never anywhere made a huge difference.

However, the greater the indispensability of Sir Isaac, the more it aggravates our next question: how »Newtonian« was he himself? In London recently, thoughtful officials have affixed to Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's stonily calculating »Newton« in the forecourt of the new British Library a solemn warning: »For Your Safety Do Not Climb«. This is more apt than they may know: Sir Eduardo's sculpture is based on a drawing by a plebeian pantheistic radical comparable to Winstanley, though less to Spinoza. By portraying Newton as prophet of frigid Reason, William Blake strengthened what, till our time, remained the conventional perspective on him. He drew him with loathing and would have cackled subversively to learn that the statue is sponsored by Britain's three top football-pools firms. Recent scholarship, however, has increasingly emphasised how far more interesting and slippery Newton was. Even Voltaire, his most optimistic let alone most strategic supporter, accused him of placing Newtonian truths »in an Abyss« of near-incomprehensibility.[16]

Not only did Newton remain passionately interested in alchemy until his death in 1727, but he also continued his alchemical experiments long after completing his key work, the *Principia*, in 1687. He aimed, in the late Betty J.T. Dobbs's words, »to find evidence of spiritual activity as broad as might be.« Nor was he merely attempting to prove a negative. He also continued to worry about the core principles of his public doctrine. Sooner or later his worries were published, contributing for generations to this doctrine's instability: was gravity an innate property of bodies? If not, how did it act? Was the whole Universal mechanism stable, or did continuity, along with matter's passivity and thus the key separation between matter and spirit, have to be Willed by its Almighty Designer from moment to moment? Was space the »Sensorium« of God? Newton also wavered on the existence of a superfine »Aetherial Medium«. The latter, though, turned out merely to symbolise some of the problems it pretended to explain. The very difficulty of words like »Sensorium« and »Aetherial« was widely understood as underlining their utter profundity.

Now, Newton's system may well, till Einstein's, have been the best on offer. So, no-one can be blamed for embracing it. From the early 1690's, the self-styled »Latitudinarian« Anglicans did so for grounding their support for the 1688 moderate »Revolution«. Newton had been a known opponent of James II's pro-Catholic meddling, and had therefore been elected from Cambridge University to the »Convention-Parliament« to help legislate that Revolution. He actively approved of Latitudinarian use of him.[17] Via this, as much as via his system's truth-content, he did much to supercede alchemical principles such as those to which he, or part of him, still clung. Not that he himself was schizophrenic. On the contrary, he is argued to have seen his alchemy, alongside his secret opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity and what we can only call his Newtonianism, as due ultimately to reveal themselves

as one tremendous super-system.

My central claim is that his narrower »Newtonian« system bequeathed to subsequent generations new uncertainties which helped keep the Enlightenment more contradictory and therefore inclusive than any straightforwardly Voltairian »écrasez l'infâme«. Newton's official doctrine triggered heterodoxies inevitably narrower than his own never remotely completed synthesis. These heterodoxies ranged from post-Christian, e.g. deist, pantheistic or other positions highly compatible with what would later be called the Enlightenment,[18] to reworkings of altogether older anxieties.

The latter had continued, not yet more than superficially reworked, even while Newton was still active. From 1706 to 1710, the deeply un-«Newtonian« antics of a tiny group of religious visionaries, the so-called French Prophets, caused consternation: the 1666 Great Fire of London was to be repeated, with the difference that it would this time not start in some humble Pudding Lane but would rain down from on High, perhaps »quickly, in a few Days. And ye here present shall see it, or feel it, one of the two.« When the »few Days« became far longer, cataclysms tended to become repeatable threats. Less repeatable were promises to raise the dead, starting with one of the wealthiest of the Prophets' supporters. Nonetheless, when on 25th May 1708 Dr. Thomas Emes remained stubbornly in his grave in Bunhill Fields where he had rested for some months, the Prophets quickly developed an excuse: the threat of mob violence from the allegedly 20,000 spectators.

By now, these originally poor and French prophets included a few tens of English ones, like the still late Doctor not all of them remotely poor. Their »prophesyings« took place in an ecstatic state which, for them, issued from the Holy Spirit. Such ambitious claims enraged other refugee Huguenots (French protestants), let alone native English. No less disgraceful to those in both communities who liked to emphasise »Reasonable« responses to all problems, was that such prophecy overlapped with what appeared, as with so much issuing from abnormal states within any belief-system anywhere, to be sheer nonsense: pathetic, degrading or, perhaps worst of all, banal. For all »reasonable« persons, such were the depths to which all »Enthusiasm«, i. e. here suspension of reason, might lead.

Many upholders of the post-1689 status quo saw some aspects of the »Prophets«' behaviour as reminiscent of the chaos of radical sects during the 1640's and 1650's. Even resurrecting was not unprecedented. At least two early Quakers had attempted this. One, James Naylor, had allegedly succeeded though, for contemporaries and historians alike, his notoriety was to peak on Palm Sunday of 1656 when he rode into Bristol on a donkey with some female followers scattering palm-leaves. Nor was prophecy of imminent cataclysm unique to the French Prophets. With, by now, a very small minority of Quakers it had not gone entirely out of fashion, even after 1700.

For these and other antics, some »Newtonians« offered explanations which, in retrospect, foreshadow some of those later offered for and sometimes by Mesmer-

ists from later in the century and, from the mid-19th, by spiritualists. Among the range of more or less rationalist explanations (e.g., »madness«), a particularly fine »effluvium« or (in the original spelling) »subtile« fluid was said to be the medium for this handful of traumatised refugee prophets to influence some all too »sensitive« Londoners, and even to gather some imitators. As Hillel Schwartz quotes one Newtonian contemporary: »Everything in Nature is in constant Motion, and perpetually emitting Effluviums (sic! ...) which (...) strike other Bodies. (...) And the poisonous and melancholic Vapours streaming from an enthusiast, cause Distraction and Raving.«[19] In later generations, mesmerists and spiritualists would adopt this explanation, while inverting its negative nouns and adjectives.

»Subtile« effluvia were perhaps the chief problem of physics and chemistry into the 19th century. Firstly, Newton seemed to legitimise a belief that matter was flimsy, consequently penetrable if not simply mysterious. »Bodies«, as anyone could read in the first edition of his *Optics*, »are more rare and porous than is commonly believed.«[20] Potentially at least, the logic of phrases such as »more (...) than (...) believed« is always self-escalatory.

Secondly, by the end of the 18th century »the number of fundamental fluids had become an embarrassment.«[21] In this context, laypersons might feel themselves as empowered as specialists to add to the confusion by positing further fluids. Given the uncertainty at the heart of Newtonian matter, such fluids, most spectacularly electricity, might be argued to be so fine as to be imponderable and perhaps all the more powerful for their imponderability: had not Sir Isaac himself concluded that »the smallest particles of Matter may cohere by the strongest Attractions«?[22] True, the smaller the size, the less researchable. But unresearchable processes might still be argued to be having observable effects, whether electrical, mesmeric or even homoeopathic. Specialists might be overwhelmingly[23] agreed that ultimates were unattainable, but some non-specialists were likely to see this agreement as a loss of nerve in face of the key question: how consistent was matter's materiality? After all, Sir Isaac had argued that the matter in the cosmos was so fine that we might logically concentrate all of it into a lump as small as a tennis-ball.

Thus what I call the problematic of imponderables was a licence to proliferate forces which often remained even more mysterious than the phenomena they had been invented to explain. Such licence was available to anyone. It could thus open the door not merely to avowedly democratic approaches to anything defined as knowledge, but also to all manner of conceptual slides: from subtlety to power, from force to the immaterial, from overlap to identity, from undisprovable to proved, from unknowables to the Unknown. Further, imponderables were unstable between extreme idealism and what, in the eyes of orthodox Christians, would have seemed scandalous materialisms, e.g. »spirit« as merely superfine matter.

None of these incoherences belittle Newton's achievement. In his non-alchemical aspects, he did more than anyone to shift nearly all discussions into post-alchemical modes, thereby making his own alchemy almost as secretive as his Arian

theology. True, some historians speak of an early- or mid-18th-century »shipwreck« of occult traditions on the scornful rocks of rationalism.[24] But the trouble with shipwrecks is that they are unambiguous, most brutally among the wrecked. The metaphor is therefore ill-chosen, as developments in fields such as astrology exemplify.[25] Even Newton's impact can be overdone. No less misguided, though, is to speak of »the occult« as »post-Enlightenment«.

Superficially, spiritualism might rather seem to belong before Enlightenment, not least in continuing the alchemical interest in receiving aid from spirits. Fundamentally, though, spiritualists differed from alchemists in aiming, not to command and harness spirits via a technology of ritual and formula, but rather to converse and cooperate with them, usually by passing temporarily into a »spiritual« state oneself. This was particularly so in »spiritual healing«.[26] Overall, one, perhaps the, key spiritualist word was, not »power«, but »harmony«. What word could be more Enlightening?

Spiritualists did, obviously, infringe Enlightenment separations between things spiritual and material, conventionally understood. But they did this as »sensitives«, which was one synonym of theirs for »mediums«, vibrating in the no-man's-land between the *Two Worlds,* which was the title of one of their longest-lived journals. Alchemists' contact with spirits was apparently rare, even frightening; spiritualists' was frequent and, so far as I know, never freighted with anything like cosmic omen. When behaviour and utterance under »spirit influence« were now and then disruptive, they were calmly explained away: medium or spirit was tired or in playful mood. Correspondingly, a medium was not some powerfully esoteric *magus* à la Cornelius Aggrippa or John Dee or sometimes in his private Trinity-College-Cambridge laboratory Professor Newton too but, rather, one's fallible, homely ›Newtonian‹ equal, perhaps neighbour or close relation. Correspondingly, we have seen that a spirit would often be neighbourly too, or familial or familiar.

»At the close (of the tea-party after one spiritualist's funeral, L.B.), an affecting scene was enacted, namely, the control of the medium by our dear friend whose body we had so recently laid low. He spoke in the old familiar tones, addressing the members of his own family circle, adjuring them not to weep for him; he was perfectly happy and had no desire to come back. The meeting was concluded by singing.«

Perhaps no more than a minority of spiritualists »returned« so soon after physical death, even with just a little bit of enactment: a cynical joke at the expense of the writer's perhaps naive choice of words. But, whenever they did, the message was usually no less reassuring to family and friends: apparently, no one felt even slightly hurt that the departed seemed to miss them less than vice versa, perhaps because this brief »return« underlined again that the separation would end within a twinkling of eternity.[27]

Here too, early Mormonism with, as we have seen Brookes arguing, its Hermetic and thus pre-Enlightenment roots provides a 19th-century contrast with its younger contemporary, spiritualism. Indeed, for a time it went even further than

Aggrippa or Dee:

»clearly inspired by the experience of magic, (...) Mormon high priests would in effect be *magi*, controlling and delimiting the power of (...) God (...). The next step, an even more fundamental departure (during and after 1843, L.B.), would be to join that limited God in divinity.«[28]

More than two centuries earlier, Edward Kelly had allegedly »conjured« a spirit for Dr. John Dee on the margins of the court of Emperor Rudolf in Prague. This was some time after his ears had been »cropped« in the pillory of his native Preston, Lancashire, for forgery. But perhaps not even he would have avowed such vaulting ambitions as those of the early Mormons, even to himself and all the less in public.

Newton's own ›pre-Newtonian‹ aspects in theology and alchemy sometimes impacted elsewhere in his life. The episode of the French Prophets had come uncomfortably close to his private and perhaps esoteric sphere. It did so, additionally, via what we can call the Fatio factor: the Genevan-born mathematician Nicolas Fatio de Duillier, for years and till recently Newton's closest-ever companion, was sentenced to public humiliation on the scaffold alongside merely two other sympathisers of these Prophets. The way the Prophets were explained provides also a bridge between Newton's generation and those of mid-19th-century spiritualism.

Gender Fears

This bridge carries us into my second dimension after Enlightenment: gender-fears. Like many and sometimes most spiritualist mediums from the mid-19th century, some of the French Prophets were female. This mobilised old assumptions that women were weaker or at least, in the newly-modish Lockean jargon, more »impressionable« than men. Women's weakness, in this sense, had long been taken to excuse their subordination to men and, during the witching era, their greater openness to Satan. Now, their impressionability was seen as making them more credulous. For the Latitudinarian intellectual Joseph Addison, the mind was »she« when succumbing to enthusiasm: an opposite of such degradation was »strong steady masculine piety«.[29]

Self-evidently, the 18th century was far from the first or last to be saturated with essentialist metaphors linking femininity to flimsiness. Indeed, the ultra-flimsy matter of Newton, himself neurotically misogynist, was distinctive in its passivity, not in its penetrability. Winstanley, for example, had deployed and partially evolved a range of male/female antitheses: whether the quintessentially Hermetic one between sulphur and mercury, or between the clergy and the minds of the people, or between inflation and wage-labourers or, least originally, between Norman oppressors and Saxon English. Obviously he saw himself as offering a synthesis of liberations to the feminine.[30] But the 18th century and in some senses the 19th often saw widespread fears that religious enthusiasm i.e., here, mass intellectual effemi-

nacy, might, as in Winstanley's time, trigger political and social disorder and even threaten the existing power-structure.

There was much for such fears to feed on. Briefly, let us instance this dimension chronologically. True, the French Prophets had been short-lived, and more of a problem for the sometimes tumultuous antipathy they aroused than for any support they attracted. But, from the 1740's, Methodism was seen as reviving their enthusiasm and irrationalism. This was surely the ground beneath fears that it was politically radical, however sincerely nearly all Methodists from the Wesleys down might protest their loyalism. Indeed, into the 19th century, some versions of Methodism, particularly the »Primitive Methodists«, did indirectly or even directly strengthen political radicalism. And part of the »Prims«' early identity was their openness to women preaching, itself reminiscent of many sects of the 1650's.[31]

Far more spectacularly, the 1780 Gordon Riots terrorised Europe's largest city for a week. The rioters freed prisoners, burnt prisons along with the houses of some magistrates and of the Lord Chief Justice, attacked many other properties, starting with catholic churches and climaxing twice with the Bank of England. Overall, more died than during all the Parisian riots of the French Revolution put together. The very respectability of the ultra-Protestant group who triggered the riots was widely seen as again underlining the subtle explosiveness of any religious independence, once fused with wider discontents. Indeed, long after Dickens's 1841 novel of the riots, *Barnaby Rudge*, the Gordon episode continued to be taken as showing the insatiably ›feminine‹ unpredictability of »the mob«.

No less importantly, during the 18th century sexuality is said to have more and more frequently narrowed towards an obsession with penetration: it underwent, we might jargonise, a reproductivist essentialisation. Following Henry Abelove and Tom Laqueur, Tim Hitchcock[32] gives further examples of this narrowing, drawing particularly on the diaries of the autodidact John Cannon, of how this narrowing was more than a mere matter of discourse. The same narrowing surely reinforced associations of femininity with passivity – so much so that, well before 1800, what we simplistically call »Victorian« arguments were already widely available that only unrespectable women had any sexual pleasure at all. Further, passivity – like »impressionability« – was easily identifiable with weakness. Weakness strengthened arguments that women should not work for money outside the home or engage in politics as more than ancillaries. It thus confirmed, among much else, a artisan culture which could vary politically from loyalist to revolutionary but which, in matters of gender, was male-dominated. Sometimes, notably into the early 19th century, this dominance was uproarious and even pornographic; sometimes (as during the tensely moderate decades from the mid-1840's) it was chivalrous. This helps considerably to explain the failure of sexual radicals such as the Owenite socialists to attract a stable working class following.[33]

Spiritualism, which happened to arrive in Britain near the start of those moderate decades, flourished among plebeians as one of a range of movements reinforcing that moderation: we have already met another of these, the secularist. Politically and religiously, plebeian spiritualism was resoundingly Enlightenment, combining both a democratic-empiricist scorn of all existing religions and an optimistic world-view in which, though the immense majority of persons were cheated of a decent educational environment here on earth, none could ever escape true education in the »Summerland«. This land formed a pyramidal upwards stairway on which our spirits alighted at the moral level we had reached on earth. Thereby, these spiritualists claimed not only to still the terrors of Methodists' and many others' hellfire but also to go beyond the tragic negativism of militant atheists. As trade-unionists and political activists or their wives, they continued to fight for justice here on earth, believing this fight to be not only good for the soul but also an ethical duty. Politically, they therefore tended, into the 1880's and 1890's, to be on the left within the Liberal Party, subsequently to be to its left.

All forms of spiritualism hinged on mediums, relatively few of them with more than local reputations. It thus democratised enthusiasm by decentralising and domesticating it, making it less prophetic or unpredictable to adherents, and less ›threatening‹ to society at large. Adherents were not confronted with sudden prophetic revelations to explain away or proclaim — such as those, not only from the French Prophets but also, two and three generations later, from a plethora of prophets, some female, during the decades around 1800[34]. A non-adherent might be amused at spiritualist behavior or, theologically, disgusted at even middleclass spiritualism with, as we have seen, its claim to complete Christianity, not replace it. But there was no risk whatever that either behaviour or theology would ever revive the Gordon, or any other, Riots.

This was also partly because spiritualism strengthened domestication in four senses: firstly, enthusiasm became ›safe‹, because so many individuals might develop mediumistic abilities that nobody was likely to emerge as a charismatic leader; secondly, because these abilities remained local by usually being placed at the service of family-members, neighbours and friends; thirdly, because any exceptionally ›impressive‹ medium was far likelier to become a travelling performer than a prophet (to, as it were, enter the theatre rather than the pulpit); fourthly and most important, because the same abilities presupposed qualities such as passivity and »sensitivity« which had long been thought to be quintessentially female and thus, to that extent at least, suited to home.

True, spiritualism was not original in empowering ›feminine‹ powerlessness: some mid-17th-century sects had viewed passivity as peculiarly powerful.[35], and we have already noted some of their circum-1800 successors. But, to paraphrase the *Magnificat*, spiritualism bypassed the mighty while systematically exalting the »sensitive« and »passive«[36].

Mention of the *Magnificat*, i. e. Mary's Song of Praise, may underline a further dimension of spiritualism. The 16th-century expunging of what may be called popular Catholicism had been relatively patchy and lengthy in parts of Northern England, and particularly in Lancashire. We have noted that Lancashire and West Yorkshire were, from the mid-1850's or after a rough century of in-migration and unparalleled industrialisation, to be the most receptive areas when spiritualism arrived from the U.S.A.

Historians of the English Reformation disagree as to whether the cult of that most powerfully powerless person ever, Mary, had been going strong till or even after the 1530's Henrician reformation. But her cult's revivability is suggested by some actions of catholic Northern English rebels during the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace. That this revivability was feared, is suggested by the nocturnal timing of much protestant iconoclasm and by the tardiness of a particularly grievous act of desecration: that of the Lady Chapel in Ely Cathedral during the 1640's Civil Wars when tact was at a discount. Chronologically in between, there was the cult — apparently popular as much as courtly — of the inevitably mortal Elizabeth as the »unique« »Virgin Queen«: »second«, for one devotee, »only to the Virgin herself«.[37] Whereas the indisputably non-virginal Mary II and Queen Anne seem to have had no cult around them, Elizabeth's accession-day continued being celebrated among English Protestants into the 18th century. Of course, such Anglican traditions pale into insignificance before the mightily intimate interventions which Klaus Schreiner shows were ascribed to Mary as Mother of God in or beyond one or other centre of Catholic fervour on the Continent.[38]

Now, I have already remarked that spiritualism democratised and domesticated enthusiasm. Obviously spiritualists did not worship their mediums or even, when these were in a non-mediumistic frame of mind, necessarily respect them more than non-mediums. I am claiming merely that, where mediums were female, their mediumship gave them a more stably central role in transactions with the »next world« than any female figure, apart precisely from some female prophets during the generation around 1800, had enjoyed since the Reformation had suppressed the figure of Mary. I would also like to note that the doctrine of the »Communion of Saints« which, before the Reformation, had been so vibrant around fraternities and the Mary-cult, is said to have become, around the 18th century, »virtually a forgotten article of the Creed as far as Anglican theology was concerned.«[39] This Communion's return as spiritualism was, for many, overwhelming not only emotionally but intellectually too.

Still, we must doubt whether many experienced this as a return. Under Catholicism, such Communion had been for the Purgatorial good of the dead and had been dominated directly or, in the fraternities, indirectly, by the exclusively male priesthood. By contrast, spiritualist contactings were for the good of the physically living and could take place via anyone, women at least as often as men, who possessed powers of mediumship. What could be a more empiricist fulfilment of

the Protestant emphasis on the »priesthood of all believers«?

Relatedly, Lancashire harboured more than one type of religious deviation from the Anglican norm. If Kelly had had to part with much of his ears in the county town of Lancaster, the borough of Preston was soon nurturing not only Winstanley but also Lawrence Clarkson: three Hermetic heretics. Clarkson was also to become a Ranter, roughly the 17th-century equivalent of a hippy, before joining the always thin ranks of the Muggletonians whose leader, Lodowick Muggleton, claimed to be one of the Two Witnesses of the Last Days, as prophesied in the Book of Revelation.[40] In 1837, the Preston area was also to be »the first Mormon beachhead in the Old World« with more than a thousand converts.[41]

But individuals can hardly tell us anything reliable about so large, varied and varying an area as Lancashire where Catholic »recusancy« was far from the sole religious deviation. Wales, an of course even more variegated area which Cromwellians had during their decade of rule in the 1650's sweepingly lumped with Lancashire as among the »dark corners of the land« for its frequency of Catholic survivals, was notably Methodist a century later and long after. Possibly, one of the few common denominators between both areas and both non-Anglican deviations was a certain distance from metropolitan cultures, with language or, in Northern England, dialects[42] counteracting the cultural effects of 18th- and 19th-century improvements in transport. But Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment strivings could cross-fertilise anywhere, including in places apparently the most out-of-the-way.[43]

Spiritualist Geographies

Thus we are already discussing geographies, and indeed Northern England, the area most important for plebeian spiritualism from the start during the 1850's into the interwar years when the plebeian and respectable currents blurred together. The reasons for this interwar blurring or vague merging are way beyond the scope of this paper, but are partly to do with suburbanisation, partly associated with the boost to interest in spiritualism delivered by the First World War and by the post-war flu fatalities and partly a matter of growing theological flexibility: avowedly Christian and post-Christian versions of spiritualism became less antagonistic to each other.

Lancashire and the West of Yorkshire, till 1973 archaically called the »West Riding«, were always the key areas of plebeian spiritualism. In geographical and social structure the West Riding was anyway the most Lancastrian part of the county: large industrial cities interspersed often by wild moorland dotted with industrialised small towns such as Keighley, spiritualism's pioneer stronghold, as well as villages and outlying industrial »townships«. Such intricate zoning interacted with intricate property-prices: favourable to self-activity. Unlike a simple seance-circle which, unless it grew too famously spectacular, could fit into someone's

house or room, any lyceum was sooner or later dependent on having a meeting-place. For working-class people, such an enterprise was obviously easiest within walking-distance. In one direction or another, property-prices were likely to be relatively affordable within a walkable radius. Admittedly, though, we have seen the young Robert A. Owen walking three miles to his first lyceum with his even younger sister Agnes toddling along beside him.

In plebeian spiritualist geography, London was still way behind Northern England in any ratio of activists to total population as late as 1911. In July of that year it boasted a mere eight lyceums, of which that in Kingston-upon-Thames lay anyway far outside the area of the then London County Council. By contrast, Bradford alone had seven and neighbouring Leeds five. There were also single ones at »Littletown, near Liversedge«, »Daisy Hill (...) near Bolton« and »Crompton (...) near Oldham.« By contrast, Brighton was one of the few Southern English towns with even one, which was no more than the numbers in, say, Burwood in New South Wales, Fordsburg and Johannesburg in the Transvaal and one or two Canadian cities.[44]

A closer look at the location of London's other seven lyceums shows most of them to be in relatively outlying areas either overwhelmingly working-class, as Plaistow and Manor Park-East Ham, or mainly working-class with middle-class enclaves: Battersea, Brixton, Tottenham, Woolwich-with-Plumstead. The least peripheral was Fulham whose class pyramid was less steep than that of the others'. True, plebeian spiritualist journals and journalists tended to base themselves in the capital while travelling all over the country. But this was mainly a matter of publicity and railway-communications. London's unequalled visibility helped give disproportionate prominence to middle-class spiritualists.

As cross-Channel tourism was way beyond plebeian pockets, middle-class spiritualists had nearly all the contacts with their Continental counterparts who were anyway, to put it mildly, less rationalist than the British plebeians. But we have seen that the latter had more contact, with emigrants. They also rightly viewed the U.S.A. as the pioneer land, not only very obviously of spiritualism, but also of the lyceums. Some leading British lyceumists were in very frequent contact with Andrew Jackson Davis, the mainly autodidact seer who had given American, and indirectly British plebeian, spiritualisms much of their founding vision. He had sketched out lyceum curricula and rituals, based on his visions of equivalent institutions in the Summerland.

London was also home to one or two tiny spiritualist-influenced groups such as the Theosophists. The latter did best for as long as they could keep hold of one individual, Annie Besant, whose flair for publicity was never to leave her throughout all her ideological reincarnations.[45] But this very flair highlights how easily non-spiritualist observers could retain a distorted picture as long as they confined themselves to London. Precisely because the capital was indeed »the metropolis« in so many fields of public activity, Central London's middle-class spiritualists remained

peripheral, in part precisely because, as Central Londoners, they imagined themselves to be automatically at the centre. Repeatedly, they seem to have known little and cared less about the spiritualism of the North. There is a logical possibility that I have reciprocated their indifference too much; but to me they do indeed seem, typically of »Home Counties« snobberies in general, to have viewed their »provincial« fellow-spiritualists through the wrong end of a telescope.

Conclusion

Thus it was as a spiritualist that one plebeian could rejoice during 1903 that »Enlightenment brings self-reliance and a desire to question authority.«[46] This was surely a classic nutshelling of centuries of autodidact independence.

Admittedly, even in Britain, no kind of Enlightenment could always reach everywhere: witchcraft-beliefs sometimes persisted among more or less illiterate landless agricultural labourers,[47] though probably less than among peasants in many regions of, say, Germany or France. Nonetheless, Porter's recent tour-de-force[48] has highlighted the earliness and near-ubiquity of England's un-Radical Enlightenment. By contrast, however early the start of Jacob's or Israel's Radical Enlightenment and however international its spread, ubiquity was hardly permitted to it.

I have argued, firstly, that the earliness of England's un-Radical Enlightenment had, not least via its key figure of Newton, a two-way causal relationship with its multivalence; and secondly, that at least parts of the so-called occult were, in effect, intrinsic enactments of some of that Enlightenment's problems. True, »occult (...) enactments« sound contradictory. Worse, one conventional dictionary definition of »occult« is »hidden from the knowledge or understanding of ordinary people«.[49] But my third argument has been that English-speaking spiritualists seldom saw their phenomena as »occult« in that dictionary sense — indeed, that plebeian spiritualists would have seen such definitions as patronising to »ordinary people«. There is a fourth argument which I have, at most, gesturally extended: that spiritualism related paradoxically to centuries-old genderings of religion and Reason.[50]

If what was and is called Newtonianism re-defined even what we call the Occult, what about post-Newtonianism? »The Occult«, Tom Laqueur has just[51] remarked, »is in the same place now as in the 19th Century.« If so, how do the surrounding ideological streets look, post-relativistically? My answer is: probably much grander and more complex than before. Cynics might add: more pretentious. The disruption of common sense associated with Einstein and with a seemingly endless succession of claims from physicists, astronomers and others have surely allowed licence to pick-and-mix one's beliefs even greater than during the reign of my old »problematic of imponderables«. »Parallel universes« are merely a recent offering. Additionally, some generations after the decline of what I have called »plebeian autodidact culture«[52], the rhythms of autodidacticism and of much else are

changing with the internet. Developments such as these will presumably both broaden enlightenment and dump us all more than ever on Matthew Arnold's for him frighteningly post-Christian »darkling plain (...) where ignorant armies clash by night.«[53] But the precise interaction of light and dark is anyone's guess. This is not least because all of us, however strongly we may commit ourselves to Enlightenment in the sense of critically pursuing secular truth wherever it may lead, spend much of our time in the uniform of various armies.

Notes

[1] Many thanks to Dr Jutta Schwarzkopf for some early feedback and to Dr Deborah Broderson and my two editors for much late feedback.

[2] Cf. R. Porter, and M. Teich, eds., The Enlightenment in National Context, Cambridge 1981; idem, ed., The Scientific Revolution in National Context, Cambridge 1992.

[3] Cf. Margaret Jacob, The Radical Enlightenment. Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans, London 1981; Jonathan I. Israel, Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750, Oxford 2001. Jacob's seminal publication is her The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720, Hassocks 1976. She has continued to extend and perhaps refine her argument, see, e.g., Margaret Jacob and J.R. Jacob, The Anglican Origins of Modern Science. The Metaphysical Foundations of the Whig Constitution, in: Isis 71 (1980); Margaret Jacob, The Cultural Meaning of the Scientific Revolution, Philadelphia 1988 and 1997; idem, Reflections on the Ideological Meaning of Western Science from Boyle and Newton to the Postmodernists, in: History of Science 33 (1995); idem, Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West, Oxford 1996. For one possible strawmanning of her allegedly conspiratorialist logic, see John Henry, The Scientific Revolution in England, in: Porter and Teich, Revolution, as note 2, 200. For greater balance, see Siep Stuurman, Pathways to the Enlightenment: from Paul Hazard to Jonathan Israel, in: History Workshop Journal 54 (autumn 2002), 227-235.

[4] Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France, Cambridge, Mass. 1968.

[5] Lyceum Banner 246 (July 1911), 97-99; and 283 (August 1914), 113 f. Each biography opens its respective number and begins with a photo-portrait; punctuation and emphasis as in original. For a little on »spiritual healing«, see, e.g. Logie Barrow, Anti-Establishment Healing: spiritualism in Britain, in: W. J. Sheils, ed., The Church and Healing. Papers read at the twentieth summer meeting and the twenty-first winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society (= Studies in Church History 19), Oxford 1982, 223-248.

[6] Cf. David Mulder's lonely in the sense of narrowly sourced, and therefore perhaps unjustly neglected, version of The Alchemy of Revolution. Gerrard Winstanley's Occultism and 17th-century English Communism, New York 1990, 208. »Synergy« is his apt word. With unnecessary sectarianism, Mulder sees himself as refuting much of Christopher Hill. Yet Hill himself can be viewed as vaguely foreshadowing much of Mulder, see his seminal The World Turned Upside Down, Harmondsworth 1973, 293 f.; and idem, The Religion of Gerrard Winstanley (= Past and Present Supplement), Oxford 1978 (reprinted in his Collected Essays, Brighton, 1986, vol. 2, 185-252), 12 f., and 18 f. John L. Brooke's persuasive treatment of Winstanleyan and many other Hermetic dimensions in The Refiner's Fire. The Making of Mormon Cosmology 1644-1844, Cambridge 1994, apparently owes nothing to Mulder.

[7] Jonathan Ree, The Brothers Koerbagh, in: London Review of Books 24.1.2002, 21.

[8] Cf. Israel, Enlightenment, as note 3, 242-256.

[9] Ibid., 6.

[10] Ibid., 518, 527, and 610.

[11] Cf. J.R. Jacob, Robert Boyle and the English Revolution. A Study in Social and Intellectual Change, New York 1977; Steven Shapin, Simon Schaffer, Leviathan and the Air Pump. Hobbes, Boyle and the experimental life, Princeton 1985, esp. 3-21, and 322-44; Lawrence Principe, The Aspiring Adept. Robert Boyle and his Alchemical Quest, Princeton 1998, esp. 3-13, 58-62, 214-222, and 310-317 (many thanks to P.M. Rattansi for alerting me to this volume – tragically, during the wake for that Amadeus-like Enlightener Roy Porter); Michael Hunter, Robert Boyle (1627-91). Scrupulosity and science, Woodbridge, Suffolk 2000.

[12] Brooke, Fire, as note 6, 31, see esp. 202-204, 260, and 274-277. »Traces of pre-Newtonian hermeticism« also outcrop as partial explanations for the reception of Joseph Priestley's ideas at the end of the 18th century, though far less for those ideas themselves, cf. Iain McCalman, New Jerusalems. Prophecy, Dissent and radical culture in England, 1786-1830 in: Knud Haakonssen, ed, Enlightenment and Religion. Rational Dissent in 18th-century Britain, Cambridge 1996, 327.

[13] Quoted, without further attribution, by Christopher Hill, Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution, London 1997 ([1]1980), 50.

[14] Ibid., 515-527, esp. 516.

[15] Ibid., 21.

[16] Richard Yeo, Encyclopaedic Visions. Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture, Cambridge 2001, 156.

[17] Into Newton's incoherences, the best entrance is surely Betty J.T. Dobbs, The Janus Face of Genius. The role of alchemy in Newton's thought, Cambridge 1991, quoted from 79; and idem, The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy. Or ›The Hunting of the Greene Lyon‹, Cambridge 1975; among the narrower entrances is my own, though on the here relevant aspects secondarily-derived, Logie Barrow, Independent Spirits. Spiritualism and English plebeians, 1850-1910, London 1986, 67-95, including footnotes on 294-302.

[18] Cf., e.g., John Redwood, Reason, Ridicule and Religion: the age of enlightenment in England 1660-1750, London 1976.

[19] Quoted from Hillel Schwartz, Knaves, Fools, Madmen and that Subtile (sic!) Effluvium, Gainesville, Florida 1978, 53 – an excellent brochure, despite its phrase »Low-Church (Latitudinarian)« on 3: not necessarily confused, given that High-Church Latitudinarians would be hard to imagine, but confusing. Henry, Revolution, as note 3, 193, has a similar phrase. John Trenchard (1709) quoted by Schwartz, 53. See also idem, The French Prophets. The History of a Millenarian Group in 18th-century England, Berkeley, CA 1980, esp. 52, 104, and 112-125.

[20] Quoted from A. Thackray, Atoms and Powers, Cambridge, Mass. 1970, 53.

[21] J.L. Heilbron, Electricity in the 17th and 18th Centuries. A Study in early modern Physics, Berkeley, Cal. 1979, 70, and 53.

[22] Isaac Newton, Optics, [4]1730, quoted from P.M. Heimann, Nature is a Perpetual Worker. Newton's Aether and 18th-century Natural Philosophy, in: Ambix, vol 14, 1979, 105-118.

[23] Cf. Heilbron, Electricity, as note 21, 73.

[24] Cf. Desiree Hirst, Hidden Riches. Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake, London 1964, esp. 292-294. Into 1986, I was prepared to entertain this metaphor, cf. Barrow, Spirits, as note 17, 301, footnote 117.

[25] See esp. the contributions from Schaffer, Hunter and Curry, respectively: Simon Schaffer, Newton's comets and the transformations of astrology, 219-243; Michael Hunter, Science and astrology in 17th century England, an unpublished polemic by John Flamsteed, 260-300; Patrick Curry, Saving astrology in Restoration England: »Whig« and »Tory« reforms, 245-259, in: Pat-

rick Curry, ed., Astrology, Science and Society. Historical Essays, Woodbridge, Suffolk 1987; Patrick Curry, Prophecy and Power. Astrology in Early Modern England, Cambridge 1989; relatedly, Maureen Perkins, Visions of the Future. Almanacs, Time and Cultural Change, Oxford 1996.

[26] Cf. Barrow, Spirits, as note 17, chapter 7; and, in/directly, contributions from Michael MacDonald, Henry D. Rack, John V. Pickstone, Bernard Aspinwall and Terence Ranger, respectively: Michael MacDonald, Religion, social change and psychological healing in England, 1600-1800; Henry D. Rack, Doctors, demons and early methodist healing; John V. Pickstone, Establishment and dissent in nineteenth-century medicine: an exploration of some correspondence and connections between religious and medical belief-systems in early industrial England; Bernard Aspinwall, Social catholicism and health: Dr and Mrs Thomas Low Nichols in Britain; Terence Ranger, Medical science and pentecost: The dilemma of anglicanism in Africa, in: Sheils, Church, as note 5, 101-125, 137-152, 165-189, 249-270, 333-365.

[27] Quoted from Two Worlds I (1887), 42; similarly see Medium and Daybreak (1874), 697, and (1881), 40; Lyceum Banner (1894), 184.

[28] Brooke, Fire, as note 6, 194.

[29] Schwartz, Knaves, as note 19, 62; idem, Prophets, as note 19, 110-112.

[30] Cf. Mulder, Alchemy, as note 6, 288 f.

[31] Cf., e.g., Schwartz, prophets, as note 19, 80. Here, the richest discussion remains Edward P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, London 1963, chapter 9. But see also Deborah Valenze, Prophetic Sons and Daughters. Female Preaching and Religion in Industrial England, Princeton 1985.

[32] Cf. Henry Abelove, Some Speculations on the History of »Sexual Intercourse« during the »Long Eighteenth Century« in England, in: A. Parker et al., eds., Nationalism and Sexualities, New York and London 1992, described as »a slightly revised version of (a 1989, L.B.; ...) article«; Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud, Cambridge, Mass. 1990; Tim Hitchcock, English Sexualities, 1700-1800, London 1997; for preliminary discovery of one counter-eddy which may yet turn out to have deeper implications, see Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, Somatic Affects. The Affective Revolution in 1790s Britain, in: Eighteenth Century Studies 34/4 (2001), 491-521; and Margaret Jacob, and Michael J. Sauter, Why Did Humphrey Davy and Associates Not Pursue the Pain-Alleviating Effects of Nitrous Oxide?, in: Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 57 (2002), 161-176.

[33] Cf. Anna Clark, Women's Silence. Men's Violence. Sexual assault in England 1770-1845, London 1987; idem, The Struggle for the Breeches. Gender and the making of the British working class, London 1995; Iain McCalman, Radical Underworld. Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840, Cambridge 1988; idem, Prophesying Revolution. »Mad Lord George«, Edmund Burke and Madame La Motte, in: Malcolm Chase et al., eds., Living and Learning: essays in honour of J.F.C. Harrison, Aldershot 1996; Jutta Schwarzkopf, Women in the Chartist Movement, London 1991; Barbara Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, London 1983.

[34] Cf. J.F.C. Harrison, The Second Coming. Popular millenarianism, 1780-1850, London 1979. Not that all spiritualists resisted temptations to prophesy: for one pretentious exception whose marginality confirms my anti- or non-prophetic hypothesis, see Barrow, Spirits, as note 17, chapter 3 throughout.

[35] Cf. Stevie Davies, Unbridled Spirits. Women of the English Revolution, 1640-1660, London 1998.

[36] See esp. Alex Owen, The Darkened Room. Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England, London 1989.

[37] Quoted from Christopher Haigh, English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors, Oxford 1993, 4, 35, 39, 68-71, 167, and 257 f.; J.J. Scarisbricke, The Reformation and

the English People, Oxford 1984, 19-25, 54-57, 60, 171-173; but see W.J. Sheils, Reformed Religion in England, in: idem et al., eds., A History of Religion in Britain, Oxford 1994, 154; Susan Brigden, New Worlds, Lost Worlds. The Rule of the Tudors, Harmondsworth 2000, 210. For Queen Elizabeth, the *locus classicus* is Frances Yates, Astraea. The imperial theme in the 16th century, London 1975, 66 f., and 78 f.; no less, though, Roy Strong, The Cult of Elizabeth. Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry, London 1977; also Helen Hackett, Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen, London 1995.

[38] Cf. Klaus Schreiner, Maria. Jungfrau, Mutter, Herrscherin, München 1994.

[39] B. Lautz, The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints in Anglican Theology, 1833-1963, Ottawa 1967, 181.

[40] Cf. Christopher Hill, Barry Reay, and William Lamont, The World of the Muggletonians, London, 1983; for the influence of 17th-century religio-political radicalism as far as Blake, see Edward P. Thompson, Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law, Cambridge, 1993.

[41] Brooke, Fire, as note 6, 46, 64, 111, and 238. On the latter page, though, Brooke confuses the geography by talking of »the English Midlands, especially Lancashire«: we must hope he is not categorising Scotland as Northern ›England‹.

[42] Cf. Martha Vicinus, The Industrial Muse. A Study of Nineteenth-Century British Working-Class Literature, London 1974; for 1840's perspectives on the often vicious linguistic chasm in Wales – felt as religious, cultural and all-encompassing – see Gwynneth Tyson-Roberts, The Language of the Blue Books. The Perfect Instrument of Empire, Llandybie 1998.

[43] Again, the most striking instances come from Wales. Here Gwyn A.Williams is the key source: see his no more than partially overlapping Welsh Indians. The Madoc Legend and the First Welsh Radicalism, in: History Workshop 1 (spring 1976), 136-154; idem, The Search for Beulah Land, London 1980; and idem, Madoc. The Making of a Myth, London 1980.

[44] Cf. Lyceum Banner 21/246 (July 1911), inside front cover. The position had changed very little by August 1914, cf. ibid. 24/283, inside front cover.

[45] Cf. D. W. Nethercott, The First Four Lives of Annie Besant, and The Last Five Lives of Annie Besant, London 1961.

[46] Reuben Webb quoted in: Lyceum Banner 13 (March 1903).

[47] See, e.g., James Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society. South Lindsey 1825-1875, Oxford 1976.

[48] Cf. Roy Porter, Enlightenment. Britain and the Creation of the Modern World, London 2000.

[49] Langenscheidt-Longman, Dictionary of Contemporary English, Berlin and Munich 1987, 715.

[50] For one pioneering grapple with these dimensions, see, e.g., Brian Easlea, Witchhunting, Magic and the New Philosophy. An introduction to debates on the scientific revolution, 1450-1750, Hassocks 1980; more grandly, idem, Science and Sexual Oppression. Patriarchy's confrontation with woman and nature, London 1981.

[51] During his closing remarks (19th April 2002) to the Conference from which the present volume has issued.

[52] Barrow, Spirits, as note 17, esp. chapters 5 and 6; idem, Some shifts in intellectual empowerment, 1790-1950, in: Labour History Review 53 (1988), 1; idem, An Imponderable Liberator: J.J.Garth Wilkinson, in: Roger Cooter, ed., Studies in the History of Alternative Medicine, London 1988, 89-117; idem, Why were medical heretics at their most confident around the 1840s? (The other side of mid-Victorian medicine), in: Roger French, et al., eds., British Medicine in an Age of Reform, London 1991.

[53] Matthew Arnold, Dover Beach, in: idem, New Poems, London 1867.