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Helena Blavatsky's Anthropogenesis [30]

Abstract:

In accordance with Blavatsky's understanding of human creation on Earth, there were five civilizations/races. Terms "civilization" and "race" are used synonymously, and are of much broader meaning than our common meaning. Namely, Blavatsky used both terms to mark the whole human population on Earth in a certain period as different to all previous and following humans (races/civilizations). The basic idea is that living beings had not evolved to become to humankind, but instead, humankind was the first divine creation to be gifted with intelligence. The history of humankind's civilization was not one of continuous progress leading to us, contemporary humans as the peak of the progress. Previous civilizations went to ruins, retrogressing to degenerate civilizations four times prior to ours, the fifth one. Blavatsky saw the first ancient sin of humankind in evil, endless wars, destructions and in misused psychic energy gifted by the divine. Karmic punishment was the confiscation of this psychic energy. The yet-to-be-perfected fifth civilization was thus deprived of the most powerful of humankind's divine gifts, which had made humankind of the third and fourth civilizations god-like: it lost its connection to the universal information space. The main part of the article is dedicated to a detailed analysis of Blavatsky's understanding of the creation of humankind and the phases in its development. The author analysed not only the creation of the world and paradise/golden age, apocalypses, but also communication with upper civilizations and similarities with theory of evolution. Blavatsky's *Anthropogenesis* is a high- quality piece

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of literature, which also possesses the capacity to connect people of various beliefs.
Key words: Helena Blavatsky, anthropogenesis, five human races, ancient humankind sin, lost paradise, retrogression of humankind, diminishing of human powers, the third eye, loss of psychic energy.

Introduction - the basic elements of Helena Blavatsky's *Anthropogenesis*

In order to understand Helena Blavatsky's (1848-1891) *Anthropogenesis*, it is necessary to first familiarize oneself with the basics of her somewhat unique life story. Elena Petrovna Blavatsky came from a Russian aristocratic family, and was a granddaughter of a Grand Duchess and a descendant, through the House of Dolgorukov, of a Russian saint from the 12th century. She belonged to the, at that time, political, economic and intellectual elite of Russian society, which largely explains her very atypical and exclusive possibilities for research and influence. As an atypical phenomenon of the 19th century, for many reasons, and a bold, adventurous spirit, she attracted a great deal of attention from both her contemporaries and later generations. Blavatsky was a highly educated woman, a great thinker on a wide range of topics, and learned in various religious traditions. As such, she searched for sources away from the eyes of Western civilization, and believed that the true knowledge of the East was hidden beyond the reach of Western positivism and its paradigms. In her time, she was regarded as a lively eccentric but also a wonderful writer. Contemporary feminists regard her as a charismatic predecessor to modern feminism.

Her series of written works (*Isis Unveiled*, 1877, *The Secret Doctrine vols. I & II*, 1888, *The Voice of Silence*, 1889, *The Key to Theosophy*, 1889) laid the foundations of Theosophy. She founded, alongside Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, the Theosophical Society in 1875 in New York. Many elements of theosophy have been assimilated into the 'New Age' movement, which today has centres in over 60 countries around the world. Helena Blavatsky's teachings had an impact upon the creative opus of artists such as H. Hesse, William Butler Yeats, David

Herbert Lawrence, Jack London, Thomas Stearns Eliot, Jean Sibelius, Vassily Kandinsky, Aleksandr Skrjabin, Gustav Mahler, Paul Gauguin, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian. The two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* provide, across over 1,500 pages, a complex view of the creation of a cosmos and man, synthesizing science, religion and philosophy, as the subtitle explicitly indicates.

Creation of people

Although there is no scientific evidence for Helena Blavatsky's anthropogenesis, her visions undoubtedly have artistic, literary, philosophical and non-doctrinal religious values. According to her, people were created millions of years ago and there have, thus far been five races or civilizations of people on earth.[31] Human races/civilizations have replaced each other, but at the same time the history of humankind on earth has been shaken by global catastrophes that have destroyed entire civilizations, changing climatic conditions and the Earth itself in every way imaginable. The Earth has survived two such global disasters: the first of these destroyed the Third Human Civilization (race) and the second that destroyed our predecessors, the Fourth Civilization. The human beings who survived those disasters were subjected to extremely harsh living conditions, because, under the influence of the disasters that changed the climatic conditions of the Earth, they lost their knowledge and technology, and gradually began to degenerate more and more, increasingly converging with the animal world. So, it was not the living world that progressively evolved to man, but man as a divine creation was the first form of life on Earth, before all other forms of lives (Mršević, 2013: 145).

The history of human civilization is not a continuation of progress that we, the present people, are at the peak of, but the previous human civilizations have deteriorated, leading to more imperfect human civilizations/races, of which there were four before our current

[31] The terms "civilizations" and "races" are used as synonyms and are far wider than ours. Namely, both concepts of Blavatsky used to denote the entire human population on Earth at a certain period, which, as a human species, differed significantly from previous and later human species (race / civilization).

– fifth - one. Blavatsky uses the term 'Firstborn' for the First Civilization, 'Then Born' for the Second Civilization, 'Double' (two-sexes, two-handed) for the Third, 'Lemurians' for the Late Third, 'Atlantis' for the Fourth and 'Aryans' for our Fifth Civilization. Descriptive terms used in this text are 'Spirits' for the first civilization, 'Angels' for the second, 'Sons of God' for the third, 'Giants' for the fourth and 'People of our time' for the fifth civilization.

The first civilization was created in the form of gaseous beings (Spirits) of 40-50 metres in height, like our images of ghost/spirits. They were created by God, by God's will, and they lived in the glowing darkness of the climatic conditions that prevailed on Earth in which no other forms of life were possible. The next race/civilization (Angels) were denser, winged creatures, 30-40 metres tall, like our angelic images. The third human race (the Sons of God) was, according to Blavatsky, the most similar to its godly creator and most closely resembled our representations of the Sons of God. They were about 20 metres tall, and felt a unity with the invisible god, the real cosmic origin from which they came and by which they were created. It was a golden age as indicated by all religions, when the gods walked around the earth and lived with the mortals. The time of being of the late third civilization was the most perfect and most developed race the Earth had witnessed. They were a race imbued with super-intelligence, fully harmonized with the climatic conditions on Earth, which was still considerably warmer than in modern times. They possessed, like the previous two human civilizations/races, the 'third eye' albeit more powerful than ever before. They were visionary, their minds were unlimited, and they instantly understood everything. For them, there were no distances or material obstacles. They were deeply involved in the secrets of nature and wisdom of origin.

The fourth race (Giants) were two-handed, with one face, a height of about 6-8 metres, and they had a dense body with a bone skeleton inside, and were most similar to our notion of giants. They lived on two large continents, one of which was where today the Atlantic Ocean lies and the other where the Pacific lied. However, the people of this civilization used their psychic energy too much, and in too unlimited and uncontrolled manner, which contributed to the disruption of the earth's axis, a global catastrophe, the end of this race and sudden climate change. The red sky became blue, climatic

conditions became much colder, the Earth's poles moved into today's positions, the chemical composition of the atmosphere, where previously dominated by oxygen changed to become nitrogen-dominated, cold winds began to blow, and snow began to fall. People became smaller, and their intellectual abilities increasingly impaired.

The sin of the fourth race (Giants) was the misuse of knowledge and new technologies. They were still connected in the universal information space, and from there they gained knowledge, but at the same time they were the last human civilization to have this divine gift made available to them. Their sin brought the hardest karma to the people of our civilization, and accordingly our race (civilization) was cut off from this universal information space, and people were forced to come to learn slowly and gradually, by their own efforts. The occasional devotees had the gift of connection with the knowledge of the higher mind, and they generally moved ahead in advance of our race. Representatives of the fifth race, our civilization, were at first at a higher level of consciousness than today, but this declined, and the children of the fourth race increasingly lost their use of the power of the third eye and the ability to manipulate psychic energy.

Creation of the world

In all the evolutionary stages analysed by Blavatsky, man is always a soul that always has a body (in fact, many different bodies), which is his only instrument in different worlds, or different forms of matter. This is, in short, the basis of the theosophical understanding of the creation of man in the discipline embodied by Elena Blavatsky. Theosophy (θεοσοφία theosophia, 'divine wisdom') is a mystical esoteric doctrine that seeks to link philosophical research and themes with mystical endeavours in relation to the understanding of God. Essentially, it is a pantheistic-spiritual movement based on Hinduism and Buddhism (Opća i Nacionalna enciklopedija, 2007).

Theosophists believe that all is God and that God is all. Therefore, God is "a universal life, an endless consciousness of the source of all that exists." The existence of the 'Trinity' of power in God is recognized, but with the fourth, female aspect, the Divine Mother, unclearly connected with Virgin Mary, representing wisdom ('Sofia'), (Yang,

2008). The most important connection between the Helena Blavatsky's *Anthropogenesis* and Christianity is her very clear, firm view that man is a divine creation, the result of divine power, being with divine origin. Therefore, the divine power is the Lord of the World, no matter how later narratives differ as to what happened after God created man and what happened with him. For example, in the regular prayers of Orthodox Christians, God is always designated as the creator of man and everything else.

Strikingly, the creation of the world in the Old Testament contains several key elements that coincide with Blavatsky's *Anthropogenesis*: human life that arises from the glowing darkness of God's will, the creation happened in phases, transfigurations of the Earth in climatic, biochemical, morphological and biological senses, the appearance of man as a reasonable being, as God's creation, created to rule the created world.

And this is the case not only in Orthodox Christianity; God created man in all monotheistic religions, as well as most pagan and animist beliefs. If we assume that from all religions and beliefs at least one is true, it means that God indisputably created man, so that the very concept of man as the creation of God belongs to the domain of those indisputable, fierce religious thoughts that no monotheistic religion confronts with the idea of the creation of man by the embodiment of the spirit of other religions. It is also the first point at which the anthropogenesis of Helena Blavatsky agrees with the religious view of man as a divine creation. The Quran also talks about the creation of the first man and woman in several places in different chapters, revealing to us that we are created from one substance or person (*nafsin wahidah*). "Oh people, we created you as one man and one woman". After the material form, the man also received his other half - the soul that God bestowed upon him as a part of himself. Therefore, we are part of the divine creation, grace and love, for which the life of man is the world's most magnificent masterpiece of God (Spahić Šiljak, 2005: 218).

Paradise / Golden Age

In Blavatsky's view of anthropogenesis there are also other elements that are present in all contemporary world religions; for example, the Christian belief that the first man used to live in paradise, or

Hindu belief in a former 'golden age'. This is the story of the man's first sin, that is, the guilt that led to the divine punishment in the form of "expulsion from heaven" or "end of the Golden Age", i.e. compulsory human existence in highly unfavourable conditions of life and the necessity of investing considerable efforts into merely sustaining it. Everywhere there is a recollection of the cataclysmic destruction of the world, a flood or fire that deluged or burned everything, as a result of human behaviour and a deserved punishment.

The anthropogenesis of Helena Blavatsky also includes the belief that man was once more perfect than today. In the Old Testament, for example, in many places man's life was several hundred years long, the primordial man before his expulsion from paradise was immortal, with Adam's body created in God's own image, with perfect health and immortality (Genesis, 1:26-27). Memories of the golden age, the 'paradise lost' in the eschatological myths from the past sustained into the future, and came to symbolize the hope and the belief that the state of chaos would eventually be overthrown. In the works of many Renaissance artists, but also later poets, philosophers and thinkers, the idea of the heavenly kingdom on earth is incorporated into the idea of historical development. This process was continued especially during the French Revolution, when myths about the golden age were commonly revived, serving as the basis for the Enlightenment, and, more precisely, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's criticism of the then-world. The quest for a lost paradise, for the paradigmatic, the founding events of the golden age of mythic creation, have become an integral part of all national mythologies that have developed at different paces, largely depending on historical situations (Đorđević, 2005: 250).

Man's first sin

The man's 'fall', or expulsion from Paradise, is a central myth in Judeo-Christian mythology (Đorđević, 2005: 239). According to Blavatsky's anthropogenesis, man's first sin is clearly seen in man's evil, war-like destructions and misuse of psychic energy with which he was imbued by the divine creator. The consequence was a karmic punishment in the form of confiscation of those very powerful divine gifts that made people similar to their godly creators, which led to the

development of imperfect fifth human race. She does not seek the causes of this human evil, but instead limits her descriptions to the actions and the resulting devastating consequences. There is the coinciding between the conflict, and the development of a full sex-based differentiation of people and the beginning of sexual reproduction. Namely, while the Spirits and Angels reproduced asexually, and the Sons of God, as they were hermaphrodites, through autogamy, humankind lived in peace. When, however, the Sons of God gradually became completely sex-differentiated, and the Giants ceased being hermaphroditic (today termed 'intersex') (Mršević, 2017: 10) and became completely sex-differentiated beings, whose intercourse led to the birth of new human individuals, greater conflicts arose between people. This is what ultimately led to the destruction of the entire then-existing world and the disappearance of its civilization. People of the fifth generation were expelled from the paradise in which the previous civilizations had lived, condemned to pay for their sins, suffering, as a penalty, a loss of psychic energy and deprivation of their closeness with their godly creators through the Universal Communication Field.

Spirits and angels as the first rational inhabitants of the Earth

Blavatsky depicts spirits and angels in much the same way as all monotheistic religions do. However, in her theory they are a successive rather than a simultaneous occurrence. Also, her notion of anthropogenesis can be in accordance with the hypothesis of panspermia,[32] the hypothesis of exogenesis[33] and a view of the Earth as a form of 'zoo'.[34] According to the hypothesis of panspermia, life is transmitted

[32] According to this hypothesis, life is dispersed through cosmos, which spreads random life to new planets where it develops in accordance with given climate possibilities, obtaining various, unpredictable forms.

[33] According to this hypothesis, the origin of life on Earth is cosmic, i.e. it was brought deliberately by people of alien civilizations with the intention of spreading human civilization in cosmic dimensions.

[34] According to this hypothesis, divine creatures of humans on earth, after the creation of man, continue to observe the development, falls, and rises, changes and relationships among humans, the way animals of the animal world are observed in the zoos. They intervene occasionally, not only

to spores as seeds of life throughout the universe. The idea of the panspermia is ancient and originates from the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras in the fifth century BC. In the literal translation from Greek, panspermia means 'all seeds'. The hypothesis was partly developed by physicists and chemists of the 19th century; Kelvin, von Helmholtz and Berzelius, and was introduced to modern science in 1908 by the Swedish physicist Svante Arrhenius. The hypothesis of exogenesis contains the idea that life on earth came from somewhere else (for instance, the pseudo-scientific explanation of von Däniken that the first civilizations on Earth were brought here by ancient aliens). The involvement of former people in the so-called the universal information field fits into the idea of Earth as a zoo,[35] proposed by John Ball in 1973, by which high-tech advanced aliens sowed life on our planet, and observe what is happening, occasionally intervening through connections with prophets, devotees, scientists, and people with exceptional and rare talents that bring new knowledge to humankind, allowing it to advance (Bubnjević, 2013, 1155).

Theory of Evolution

Although at first glance Blavatsky's anthropogenesis conflicts with the Theory of Evolution regarding the creation of man, there are touch points with Darwin's theory, as it contains, as an essential element, constant modification of life forms due to adaptation to the climatic conditions on Earth. The difference is that, unlike Darwin, who considers contemporary man as an evolutionary climax, her vision of change goes in the opposite direction, in accordance to which our civilization is the result of a decline and regress from higher forms of life and consciousness, via the third and fourth civilizations to our contemporary one; the lowest form. Otherwise, the idea of more perfect predecessors to today's civilization fits into the theory of Russian ophthalmologist Ernst Muldashev (Muldašev,

when unreasonable people are questioning their own survival, but also in periods of stagnation, sending their members, devotees, to bring humanity into a new cycle of progress.

[35] Aliens have sown life on Earth, and since then they have been observing how it evolves, occasionally intervening to prevent the ruin and total end of life.

2013:26) who analysed the unusual eyes that decorate temples throughout Nepal and Tibet. He attempted to reconstruct the face and body shape of a hypothetical man in accordance with such eyes, with the form he interpreted being significantly different to that of modern man. From this, he interpreted that the being he had 'reconstructed' was that of an ancient civilization, from whom, in fact, a modern man developed. The man of this ancient civilization did not lead a purely terrestrial life, but rather an amphibian one. Elena Blavatsky's anthropogenesis relies on the theory of a 'Genetic Fund of Humanity' as termed by Muldashev. Essentially, this is the stock of life that could be 'activated' were there to be a global disaster and the destruction of life on the surface of the Earth, to renew life on our planet. Namely, in the caves of Tibet, the 'bodies' can still be found of people belonging to the hypothetical previous civilization, who, many centuries ago, entered a changed state of energy, the so-called 'state of deep samadhi', in which the body becomes immovable and as hard as a stone, completely stops the exchange of matter, and the soul – although 'free' – retains a connection with the body and can return to it when needed.

Apocalypse(s)

The over-arching theme of the apocalypse is an inevitable presence as a cultural, theological, social and philosophical topic within our 'fifth civilization' although it has not yet experienced the complete ruin of the world, i.e. its end, the destruction of our entire race. However, there are almost no thinkers from Edward Gibbon, through Oswald Spengler to contemporary researchers who do not see – in one way or another – the process of developing civilizations as a path from development to an ultimate end. Examples of the collapse of small components (compared with the failure of the entire population of the whole planet) that occurred during our civilization's time are, for example, the end of the Roman Empire, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the decline of Ancient Egypt, and the destruction societies like that of Easter Island or the Mayan culture. In every well-known prediction –civilization is said to eventually collapse. German classicist Theodor Mommsen divided the

development of civilization into the following components: emergence, growth, aging, collapse and decline. In his famous book *The Fall of the West* (1918), German philosopher Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) divides the history of civilization into four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter (Špengler, 2000). And Charles Darwin also considered disaster as a predictable end, as he based his Theory of Evolution on the idea that, due to a shortfall of resources, the natural population will struggle for survival. Thus, we could say that civilizations behave like species, in that they originate and die out (Bubnjević, 2011: 1095/6). Likewise, the Orthodox catechesis shares an awareness of this end of everything created: "The creation of the world means that it has the beginning, that is, it exists in time and space. The world, therefore, exists in time and space because it is created, and has a beginning. The existence of time and space, therefore, depends on the creation of the world. Since the creation of the world, his time and space has begun since. Time and space do not exist outside of the created world. God exists out of time and space because he is not created, eternal, has no beginning or end. Everything was born, what means, born from nothing, by the will of God. That is why everything has a beginning and an end by its nature; the world and each being in particular" (Midić, 2005).

Communication with higher civilizations

Considering the number of stars in our galaxy, there must be thousands of civilizations that could contact us, but none of which we have communicated with thus far. To the famous question of Enrico Fermi: "Where are they all?" which alludes to the incredible fact that these existing and highly developed civilizations did not come into contact with us (Bubnjević, 2011, 1095/6), Blavatsky's theory has an answer. According to her, "they" are in constant connection with humanity through the Universal Information Field: they have never left us, and have taught individuals in ways that have led them to progress, and, in the wake of global failures that people have brought upon themselves on previous occasions, they again raised reasonable, human life on Earth, although later people were increasingly held at bay from their divine gifts.

Atlantis

Of the people of the fourth civilization, or the Giants, those who immediately preceded our fifth one, were termed by Blavatsky the Atlanteans. There is evidence that the last remains of the fourth civilization still existed at the time of our fifth. As a more developed civilization, they made certain impacts upon our fifth one, before completely disappearing in accordance with the fate of all previous human civilizations, wiped out by a natural disaster: It is commonly argued that mysterious Atlantis existed on the Greek islands of Crete and Santorini (Thira), around four thousand years ago, its empire was governed by the Minoans, sophisticated artists, shipbuilders and seamen, who, long before history recognized it, travelled around the world. They disappeared in a cosmic accident, preceded by the appearance of two suns in the sky (Menzies, 2007). Many traces survive which show us the mercantile and maritime power of the Minoans (Vulićević, 2012: 19.02).

Closing remarks

At the time of the general degradation of the churches as institutions, and growing animosity towards organized churches, there is a growing phenomenon among people who believe in God that sociologists call 'belief without belonging'. The question arises as to whether Helena Blavatsky's anthropogenesis strengthens spirituality or diminishes it. A positive answer, that her theory gives a new wind to the core of spirituality, must be seen since the faith of today is increasingly moving from the public sphere to the private, from visible religion to the invisible, from the objective event to the subjective experience (Šušnjić, 2005: 174). A framework of acceptance is also given by atheism (especially discussions between the atheists and believers) and various theories with which theosophy does not conflict. It is perhaps because 'religion is everything' that the most prominent atheist of today, Richard Dawkins, Fellow at the University of Oxford, believes that religion is a betrayal of intellect, a betrayal of everything that is best in us and what makes us human.

But the creative divine power described by Blavatsky does not in any way conflict with the beliefs of those that see religion as a false surrogate which only seems to answer questions until you get into the deep nature of that answer. Blavatsky's theory does not promote any religion or god, standing rather somewhere 'in-between'. Thus, religion can mean nothing and be a devastating charlatan, according to Dawkins, who believes that atheism is a positive opinion of intelligent and educated people, while religion is the transformation of unspoken belief into undeniable truth through powerful institutions. But atheism neither diminishes the literary and philosophical value of Blavatsky's anthropogenesis nor denies it.

Religious persons, in their defence of religiosity, commonly state that religion has always built a community, relationships of compassion among people, and that respect for human life and equality is indissolubly connected with all organized religions (Šuvaković, 2013: 5). The capacity of Blavatsky's theory to bridge and connect cultures can be seen also as influential upon significant people. When, for example, Gandhi, as a young man, lived in London after reading *The Key to Theosophy* by Helena Blavatsky, said: "It encouraged me to read the books on Hinduism and free me from the misconceptions that the Christian missionaries imposed on me that Hinduism was brazen with superstition." And the future Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, joined the Theosophical Society at the age of thirteen, and during his political career always expressed admiration for the learning of this society.

Blavatsky's anthropogenesis is not criticized by any eternal dispute between religion and science, according to which science and religion are two different ways in which a person moves towards the truth about themselves and the world in which they live. Two different and not two hostile paths: two equally worthwhile efforts of the human spirit, so that religion is not a form of underdeveloped science (Šušnjić, 2005: 182-3). Blavatsky's anthropogenesis, has never been disputed as a typical example of a creation myth as is a sacred story that talks about events related to the action of divine or semi-divine beings in a time that is vague, but which is beyond the ordinary human experience (Đorđević, 2005: 232).

When it comes to Helena Blavatsky's anthropogenesis as a seductive fairy tale or myth, we can think as Ernst Cassirer (Cassirer,

2000) thought, that history does not determine the mythology of one nation, but in fact, vice-versa, mythology is often the fate of a nation, because it does not choose the mythical narrative which it has adopted out of necessity. In this case, we must ask ourselves, at the end, what practical lessons we can draw from Blavatsky's anthropogenesis, what kind of end can we expect for our civilization, and what we can change on this unthinkable path? Perhaps our world does not blindly plunge into perdition, into an inextricably retrograde process leading to another calamity, and perhaps the final chaos, as it would seem at first glance. Maybe there are elements of conviction that a liberated contemporary humankind can become an intelligent collaborator on the great plane of evolution (Leadbeater, 1983)?

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