

Communicative *prajñā*: Cultivating solidarity and establishing right human relations

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Abstract

This article introduces the modern esoteric worldview of Alice A Bailey, a comprehensive cosmology and epistemology inclusive of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, and explores its potential for providing new understandings of communication. After sketching an outline of the hierarchical structure of the macrocosm—from the mind of God to humanity—and of the microcosm—from the human spiritual Self to the physical body—the article utilizes this model to expand the concept of communication beyond the current Western rational framework. The article then explores implications the esoteric worldview may have for the future direction of critical theory and for the cultivation of *prajñā*, or compassionate wisdom, to help achieve the global solidarity necessary to confront the major crises facing humanity.

Keywords

Alice Bailey, critical theory, esotericism, Habermas, *prajñā*, public sphere, solidarity, soul

Introduction

There is no question that today humanity is facing a global crisis given the obvious facts of endless war, massive poverty and unemployment, corporatism, greed, corruption, and ecological devastation. In no small part, this crisis has been created by the ‘tyrannical image’ (Weaver in Dissanayake, 1987: 152) at the heart of Western culture, the aggrandizement of the self. To confront this crisis with any hope of success will require more than rational analysis, additional theory, and incremental policy proposals. It demands the united effort of millions of people around the globe drawing upon their innate resources of intelligence and love. Therefore, it requires the development and expression of *prajñā*,¹ or compassionate wisdom, which alone is capable of mobilizing such global solidarity.

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Communication/journalism studies have an important role to play in this development as the cultivation of wisdom draws upon an interior, or vertical communication with higher aspects of the self, and with higher Selves—those avatars, beings, saints, and sages recognized throughout the world that have achieved the higher wisdom. Equally important, the expression of wisdom in loving, intelligent action occurs only through a horizontal or exterior communication with others and the world.

In this issue, Shelton Gunaratne calls upon communication scholars to expand the horizons of the field, to ‘globalize’ communication/journalism studies. He holds in view the goal of integrating science and philosophy, and presumably religion as well, given his utilization of Buddhist phenomenology as a broad reflection of Eastern philosophies. Ruth Finnegan (2014) explodes the boundaries of traditional communication studies with an investigation of depths and textures of communication rarely considered. Her explorations range from the animal kingdom, through all the senses, to the ether, telepathy, death, and beyond. With such expansive thinking in mind, in this article I introduce a comprehensive and practical teaching virtually unknown in the academic world yet, I will argue, one that can contribute much to the integration of science, philosophy, and religion, the cultivation of global solidarity, and the establishment of right relationships within humanity, between humanity and the subhuman kingdoms, and between humanity and divine Being. These teachings are found in the writings of Alice A Bailey (1880–1949) who, it is claimed, received them telepathically from a Master of the Wisdom, the Tibetan teacher Djwhal Khul. They constitute a modern presentation of the Ageless Wisdom Tradition, a continuity of revelation that has unfolded since the birth of humanity and in accordance with human need (Bailey, 1951: 281). Bailey’s most important and comprehensive work is *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925), which she claims provides the psychological key to cosmic creation (Bailey, 1951: 236). ‘Esotericism’ is a term used by Bailey for the science of energy relationships that underlie the world of appearances (1954: 59–68). It is based on the interpenetration of light and substance and relates the world of phenomena to Life and Consciousness.

In the first section of this article I outline two hierarchical structures of esoteric communication: the first represents the macrocosm which ‘descends’ from the Absolute through celestial levels comprised of various gods and divine Entities, to humanity and the subhuman kingdoms (animal, vegetable, and mineral); the second represents the microcosm, the human individual, and extends from the spiritual aspect (the ‘monad’ in Bailey’s system) through the mediating principle, the soul, to the personality which is comprised of the lower mental, emotional, and physical bodies (*koshas*). In the second section I utilize these hierarchies to explore how Bailey’s esoteric worldview contributes to ‘globalizing’ understandings within communication studies. In the third section I offer a few critical reflections on Jürgen Habermas’ discourse theory and the role of the public sphere. I then suggest some possibilities that may contribute to the future direction of critical theory and its emancipatory goals.

Two esoteric hierarchies

The details of Bailey's life are contained in her autobiography (Bailey, 1951). In 1919, Alice was contacted clairaudiently by a being who requested that she help him write some books for the general public. After some initial hesitation she agreed. Over the next 30 years she transmitted 18 books and wrote five on her own. Descriptions of the telepathic process used are contained in her autobiography (1951: 163–169, 259–261) and detailed teachings on telepathy are provided in a separate book (Bailey, 1950b). All of the books are published under her name and the true author was only identified as 'a Tibetan disciple.' However, in 1943 an editing error revealed him to be Djwhal Khul, a Master of the Wisdom who has transcended the limitations of the human kingdom yet remains to serve and teach humanity in a role similar to that of a *bodhisattva* in the Buddhist tradition. Bailey's books have been translated into many languages, are known worldwide, and have never gone out of print. They have been made available for free on the website of Lucis Trust.²

The macrocosmic hierarchy

In essence, this section provides an abbreviated description of the diagram portraying 'Solar and Planetary Hierarchies' presented in *Initiation: Human and Solar* (Bailey, 1922: 48). A corresponding description and interpretive key to Bailey's entire system is found in the 'Introductory Postulates' of *Cosmic Fire* (1925: 3–7). This hierarchical structure reflects Eastern teachings as well as Western systems, such as the *Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius, which has been extremely influential on Christian thought. The diagram portrays various grades of divine Beings within our solar and planetary systems connected by lines of *communication*. To begin from the top of the diagram, the solar Logos is depicted as expressing through a Trinity, referred to as: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma; and similar formulations. It should be noted that 'Logos' could be defined as 'Word' or 'Verbum' and associated with 'Vāch,' the divine voice of the Vedas, which sings the universe into existence. Therefore, as noted by Gunaratne (this issue), communication is present from the beginning.

Descending a level, this Trinity is then shown as manifesting through seven planetary Logoi, the Seven Spirits before the Throne described in the Book of Revelation, also expressing as the seven Rays, a concept which can be traced back to the earliest Hindu scriptures of the *Rig-Veda*.³ The seven Rays are introduced in detail in Bailey's two volumes, *Esoteric Psychology* (1936, 1942). The first three major rays are termed *Aspects of Divinity* and are known as:

Ray I—Will or Power

Ray II—Love–Wisdom

Ray III—Active Intelligence

And the four minor rays are termed *Attributes of Divinity* and are known as:

Ray IV—Harmony, Beauty, Art, or Harmony through Conflict

Ray V—Concrete Knowledge or Science

Ray VI—Devotion or Idealism

Ray VII—Ceremonial Order or Magic.

The planetary Logos of our Earth scheme is identified by Bailey as the Lord of the World, ‘the One in whom we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:28), and as Narayana in the Hindu tradition (Bailey, 1927: 87). The planetary Logos, as an evolving divine Entity, has a Plan and a Purpose embodied by ‘agents of distribution or impression’ (Bailey, 1950b: 45, 182–197). The divine communication process of reception and distribution throughout the entire macrocosmic hierarchy is exceedingly abstruse and is introduced by Bailey as ‘the Science of Impression,’ a science ‘as yet without a vocabulary’ (1950b: 41–51).

Descending another level in the diagram, the Plan and Purpose of God is in turn transmitted to the spiritual Hierarchy of the planet, the ‘Kingdom of God’ (Mt 6:33). Here are found the Masters of the Wisdom, liberated Beings Who yet remain with humanity to teach and guide. They are divided into seven major divisions according to the qualities of the seven rays and they preside over groups of disciples and initiates actively working in both their Ashrams on subjective levels of the mental plane and in the world of daily living. Finally, humanity is represented in the lower portion of the diagram as ‘probationers, disciples, and initiates.’

The microcosmic hierarchy

Bailey depicts the three aspects of a human being—spirit, soul, and personality—as structured within seven interpenetrating planes of consciousness (1922: xiv). From the spirit aspect (the monad), emanates its *upādhi*, or vehicle of expression, the soul, and the soul in turn expresses through its *upādhi*, the personality, composed of the physical, emotional, and mental bodies (Barborka, 1980: 196–197). During numerous periods of incarnated experience these vehicles are developed and integrated while the soul remains relatively unknown, yet active within its own domain on the higher mental plane, in a body of light, the causal body. Bailey equates this body with the *ānandamaya-kosha* of Hinduism and with the ‘building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’ (2 Cor 5:1). She explicates its creation, function, and eventual destruction (at the fourth initiation) in *Cosmic Fire* (1925: 504–549; 807–887), noting that the section concerning its creation is ‘one of the most vitally practical parts’ of *Cosmic Fire* (1925: 807). Many Buddhists would reject these ideas with reference to the *anātman*, or no-soul doctrine but it should be pointed out that: the Buddha did not explicitly deny the existence of the self (Diener, Ehrhard, Fischer-Schreiber, et al., 1994: s.v. ‘Anātman’); this doctrine is exceedingly complex (Conze, 1959: 168–171); and Bailey does not maintain that the soul is an eternal existent.⁴

In the following comments, I make some observations regarding development within these planes that will have application in the following two sections. First, each plane is composed of seven subplanes. The highest four subplanes on the physical plane constitute etheric matter (Bailey, 1925: 910–936). Modern investigations into the nature of etheric matter are evident in physics research on plasma (the fourth state of matter) and ‘dark matter.’ Etheric matter has important implications for healing, the process of morphogenesis within developmental biology, and the mind/body relation in philosophy. The lowest four subplanes of the mental plane constitute the lower, rational mind, often disparaged as ‘instrumental reason’ or other terms; the higher mental subplanes embody the higher abstract mind and the causal body. Second, Bailey explains how divine Ideas are contacted by highly developed individuals on the plane of intuition (the buddhic plane ‘above’ the mental plane), then clothed in matter of the higher subplanes of the mental plane via the higher mind as Ideals, and finally concretized on the lower mental plane as ‘thoughtforms’ to be transmitted to the wider public (Bailey, 1950a: 24, 34; 1950b: 189; 1955: 170, 280–281). Third, once the individual achieves control on the lower mental plane, it is necessary to reintegrate the physical and emotional aspects and thereby become an *integrated personality* adequate for soul expression. Fourth, the fusion of the integrated personality with the soul occurs after completing the construction of the ‘thread of light’ (*antahkarana*), which connects the lower mind and the soul (Bailey, 1954: 143–149).⁵ The intelligent thinking of all humanity is constructing the *group antahkarana*, which will illuminate the mental plane and unite Hierarchy and humanity (Bailey, 1944: 38). This idea may be seen reflected in Habermas’ concept of the ‘rationalization of the lifeworld’ (1984, 1987). Finally, human existence within the three lower planes necessarily creates distortions at each level, which Bailey explicates in detail (1950a). She states that *maya* obtains on the physical plane; *glamour* on the emotional plane; and *illusion* on the mental plane, and that the overcoming of these distortions requires the energies of the next higher plane. That is, the right use of mind is necessary to dissipate glamour on emotional levels and the light of the soul is necessary to dispel illusions on the mental plane. It should be noted that, according to Bailey, the majority of humanity is yet focused primarily on the emotional plane.

Esoteric communication studies

In this section, I endeavor to demonstrate informally that Bailey’s esoteric philosophy incorporates all four dimensions proposed by Waisbord and Mellado (2014) for ‘globalizing’ communication studies through the expansion of: the subject of study; the body of evidence; analytical frameworks; and academic cultures. To accomplish this, I first address three widely shared concerns in discussions on the ‘de-Westernization’ of communication studies (Dissanayake, 1988; Kincaid, 1987; Wang, 2011)—universalism, scientism, and individualism—and I then

present a few thoughts on the theory and practice of an esoteric communication model.

Universalism, scientism, and individualism

Universal/particular. With respect to the fundamental debate on the roles of universalism and particularism, the Tibetan states the esoteric position clearly:

I would remind you that the esotericist always argues from universals to particulars. This I shall always do, and thus offset the detailed point of view, the distorted foreground and the myopic vision of the student. (Bailey, 1954: 112–113)

Bailey's universalism, however, cannot be identified as modern Western (although it is open to criticisms related to Eurocentric biases) because it derives its origin primarily from ancient, Eastern, and religious ontological and epistemological categories.

Scientism. Concerns with scientism can be viewed esoterically as understanding the proper role of the fifth ray of 'Concrete Knowledge or Science.' Bailey values science very highly, foresees the integration of science, philosophy, and religion, asserts that esotericism itself is a science, and suggests that today science may be more important as a means of revelation than religion (1925: 637–639; 1950a: 187–188; 1955: 220–221; 1957: 56–58). She provides several explanations as to why this particular energy currently has such strong influence, which I have noted elsewhere (Borsos, 2012: 221n17). According to Bailey (1936: 320), the human mental body is governed usually by either the first, fourth, or fifth rays, although the latter (the ray of Concrete Knowledge or Science) has become hegemonic in the modern Western imaginary. I suggest that it is the distinction between the mental qualities of the fourth and fifth rays that has been noted by scholars who see them as characteristic of Eastern and Western thinking respectively. This is seen most clearly by comparing the contrasts offered by Chen (2011: 160), Nisbett (2003), and Yoshikawa (2008: 152) with those compiled by Robbins (1988: 215–216, 361–378) between fourth and fifth ray qualities, contrasts such as aesthetic/intuitive/holistic versus rational/analytical/separative.⁶

Self. I suggested above that the 'tyrannical image' or guiding ethos of the aggrandizing self lies at the heart of our world crisis. Therefore, it is imperative to interrogate models of the self, Other, and their relations, and to provide alternatives that emphasize unity and the group good. Seyla Benhabib provides just such a constructive critique with her inclusion of the norms of 'solidarity, friendship, love, and care' in contemporary discussions of ethics (1992: 148–178). Bailey offers a detailed understanding of the lower individual self, or personality, and its gradual development (1936, 1942). According to Bailey, the development of an independent, though ultimately illusory, personality is a necessary stage, but one superseded

increasingly today by the development of group consciousness. She claims that new forms of group work are being stimulated by the work of the spiritual Hierarchy of the planet working through the New Group of World Servers, a group organized by the Hierarchy on subjective levels, drawn from the initiates, disciples, and aspirants identified at the lower levels of the macrocosmic hierarchy outlined above (Bailey, 1934: 398–433). These servers are consciously or unconsciously inspired from higher levels of the macroscopic hierarchy and communicate this understanding through thoughts and actions in the world, especially in their role of educating public opinion. This transition from self-interest to group endeavor suggests that the group good is the guiding image of the new age, an ethos to be manifested through communicative prajñā.

Theory and practice

First, I provide one further theoretical idea regarding the devic kingdom. In a footnote to the diagram of Solar and Planetary Hierarchies, Bailey indicates that the vast scheme portrayed only represents *human* evolution and that a diagram of the *deva* (angelic) evolution would be different. Bailey (1922: 150–162; 1925: 550–1026) offers extensive teachings on the devas or ‘shining ones,’ the ‘great builders’ of form who are responsive to sound and the magical force of speech. In a section on the *occult significance of speech*, Bailey (1925: 981) writes, ‘Speech is one of the keys which opens the doors of communication between men and subtler beings.’ Brown and Nash (2006) provide an excellent introduction and historical perspective on the devic kingdom. Nagel (1997) focuses on consciousness within the plant kingdom, devas, and ‘nature spirits,’ while including a valuable reference list for research. Bailey (1922: 128–130, 173–189; 1925: 472–473) notes the extreme dangers of premature contact with the devic kingdom and the highly evolved status and esoteric training required of those who will cooperate intelligently with the devas. In many places, however, Bailey (1936: 123–128) presents a more matter-of-fact approach to the devic kingdom and states that teachings from the devic kingdom are imminent and that many doctors are already receiving such teaching.

As regard practice, meditation is a familiar example of extending one’s communication capacities within the microcosmic hierarchy. Regarding relationships between the Hierarchy and disciples, the flow of communication is not necessarily one-way as often depicted in portrayals of the *guru-chela* (teacher–student) relationship. The Masters of the Wisdom are not omniscient and are yet subject to illusion (Bailey, 1960: 600). When necessary, they rely upon information communicated to them by students (Bailey, 1955: 279).

Bailey states that the Hierarchy has initiated new experiments in practical group work with the intention of engendering a major impact on human development. Part of this Hierarchical work is based on the organization of ten ‘seed groups,’ seven of which are easily recognizable in modern academia. Groups three through nine include healers; educators; political organizers; theologians; scientists;

psychologists; and economists. What is important for the purposes of this article is the Tibetan's statement:

[These groups] are an experiment in *founding or starting focal points of energy* in the human family through which certain energies can flow into the entire [human] race. They are an experiment in *inaugurating certain new techniques in work and in modes of communication*. I would point out that in these last three words are summed up the whole story. (Bailey, 1944: 35; italics in the original)

He is here expressing the vital role of communication as it underlies work in virtually every field of human understanding. To appreciate the depths of this statement one must consider that much of the work he goes on to describe involves work on the higher mental and intuitional planes and subsequent communication with the general public.

Telepathic communicators constitute the first seed group. They are especially receptive to impression from the Hierarchy as they focus on the reception and direction of *thought currents* (Bailey, 1944: 35–36). These might be understood as ‘psychic “gift-waves”—as the Tibetan occultists call them’ (*byin-rlabs*, early translation)—inherent capacities of the soul that ‘*must* be developed’ by disciples (Bailey, 1944: 49, 81). Joseph (2005) situates ideas regarding esoteric communication within the academic realm by demonstrating how Aristotle and Aquinas developed related ideas investigating topics such as ‘How the Angels Speak to One Another.’ It should be noted that the Roman Catholic Church recognizes the category of ‘interior locution’ in the examples of Saint Teresa of Avila and Mother Teresa, although more ambiguously with respect to the received writings of Maria Valtorta (1897–1961).

The second seed group comprises the ‘Trained Observers’ whose work is to ‘see clearly through all events’ via the power of intuition and ‘pure reason’ achieved on the buddhic plane and to thereby dispel world glamour and illusion on emotional and mental levels by the ‘pouring in of light’ and illumination (Bailey, 1944: 36; Dissanayake, 1987: 160). This work is extremely important as ‘the divine circulatory flow’ of communication is interrupted at the level of humanity (Bailey, 1950b: 47). I suggest that the tradition of critical theory anticipates this more expansive work of the Trained Observers in its endeavor to provide ‘a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge [that is, pure reason or *prajñā*] inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation,’ and capable of eliminating ‘ideological illusion’ (Geuss, 1981: 2–3).

Globalizing critical theory

In this section I would like to apply some of the ‘esoteric communication’ concepts developed above to the discourse theory developed by Habermas, and to suggest some possibilities for ‘globalizing’ critical theory. Habermas’ early empirical work on the public sphere (1989) and theoretical work on communicative action (1984,

1987) have figured prominently in the development of communication studies, although they are deeply embedded in the Western academic tradition (Gunaratne, 2006). His more recent religious and postsecular ‘turns’ (Habermas, 2008, 2010) demonstrate a ‘globalization’ of his thinking but they retain major limitations. In the following I address two major weaknesses in Habermas’ theory that I believe can be strengthened by adopting expanded horizons of understanding. These limitations concern the nature of subjectivity and reflection. I suggest that the restrictive linguistic forms of Eurocentric, academic thought in which Habermas endeavors to *embody* his *thinking* are not adequate to express the Ideas he has contacted.⁷ What is therefore required of a responsive critical theory in the future is an expanded, globalized worldview and conceptual language.

Subjectivity

Numerous criticisms (Borsos, 2012) of Habermas’ concept of subjectivity suggest that he has prematurely abandoned explorations of the dimensions and depths of subjectivity in making his linguistic turn with its emphasis on the role of *intersubjectivity*. As only one example, Dews (1995: 178) argues that this shift constitutes a ‘facile evasion’ that displaces the primary role of subjectivity and reveals that Habermas is still very much immersed in metaphysics. Future critical theorists can expand and globalize their research efforts by taking into consideration concepts of the self that include Eastern and religious perspectives and by freeing themselves from the materialistic assumption of a single life experience. They need also take seriously Dallmayr’s (1987) challenge to rethink the metaphysical tradition as Habermas’ repeated insistence that it has been devalued or outgrown remains in doubt, as evidenced, for example, by Groff’s (2013) extended argument that social and political philosophy are entwined within metaphysics and ontology. To understand the true nature of intersubjectivity, solidarity, and emancipation it will be imperative to expand upon Habermas’ understanding of the self.

Reflection

I have also summarized numerous criticisms of Habermas’ understanding of reflection (Borsos, 2012). Here I can only make some brief comments. Habermas discounts the value of self-reflection for ascertaining moral truths as ‘monological mock dialogue’ (1987: 95), which apparently diminishes all meditative traditions. In contrast, Tillemans (2008) observes that ‘internal reasoning processes,’ or *svārtha*, play an important role in Buddhist theories of argumentation. Contrary to Habermas’ claim that moral views must be ascertained by two or more individuals arguing on rational levels, Bailey asserts that they must be forged subjectively as the ‘individual consciousness of right’ through alignment with the soul (Bailey, 1934: 359). Finally, Habermas does not develop or incorporate an adequately

comprehensive model of reflection, mind, or cognition, and instead resigns himself from the challenge by noting:

It is hard to explain how sentence meanings and thoughts reflect events in the world and how they enter persons' minds. Formal semantics has slaved away in vain on these questions for decades. (1998: 13)

I suggest that future critical theorists will need to develop an expanded model for 'Reason' and include not only understandings from cognitive scientists but from Eastern meditative traditions as well.

From the esoteric perspective, the limitations of Habermas' understanding of reflection can be attributed to two factors. First, his discourse model is confined to the lower subplanes of the mental plane, the level of the concrete mind wherein two or more individuals exchange rational arguments. Second, he understands reason exclusively as it is reflected through the fifth ray of Concrete Knowledge or Science. Many of Habermas' debates, notably with Derrida and Lyotard, can be viewed esoterically as a conflict between this ray quality and that of the fourth ray of Harmony Through Conflict which expresses through dissension, paralogy, rhetoric, narrative, and an 'agonistic' view (McPhail, 1996: 113–129). Abizadeh (2007) argues that this philosophy/rhetoric binary renders Habermas' abstract, 'passionless,' discourse theory motivationally impotent.

Public sphere, public opinion, and solidarity

Habermas acknowledges that his concept of the public sphere is 'an abstract spatial structure' (2009: 155), a communication structure rooted in, and dependent on a rationalized lifeworld (1998: 358–359). Binding the concept of the public sphere to the lifeworld, however, creates serious problems as this latter concept has been highly criticized, described as 'metaphysical,' a 'non-place,' and a 'false substitute for a universal foundation' (Bohman, 1989: 382). I have earlier explored conceptual difficulties regarding the lifeworld from an esoteric perspective at some length (Borsos, 2012). Conceived in dimensional metaphors such 'world,' 'space,' and 'sphere,' the concepts of the public sphere and the lifeworld in which it is embedded raise ontological issues that must be addressed. Similarly, I suggest that the concept of the public sphere needs to be not only globalized or transnationalized, but transcendentalized in the sense of critically examining the preconditions for public *thinking*, and developing or applying comprehensive and illuminating theories of cognition. It should be noted in this regard that contemplative studies, based generally on Buddhist or Christian practices, are rapidly entering higher education.⁸ Further, the questioning of identity and the nature of the self needs to be reinvigorated with attention to the globalization of such inquiry and the integration of Eastern and religious perspectives. As Calhoun (2002: 149) notes, 'New ways of imagining identity, interests, and solidarity make new material forms of social relationship possible.' In light of these challenges I suggest that future

critical theorists will need to accept Dallmayr's challenge to rethink the metaphysical tradition with respect to ontology, epistemology, and identity.

Bailey writes extensively regarding the power of public opinion, presaging Habermas' account in several ways, from the locales of public opinion formation (1954: 124) to the force it will have on state policies (1947: 178), a force reflected in Habermas' 'rationalizing pressure' (Habermas, 2009: 143–144). She asserts that the work of the New Group of World Servers in educating public opinion is 'of far more potency and ultimate value than any legislation or emphasis upon authority' (1944: 31–32) and that the 'arousing of public opinion to world rights, to inclusive human interests and to international cooperation . . . is the true goal of all present spiritual endeavour' (1957: 219). This is the work of communicative prajñā, the critical work so necessary today.

Conclusion

Bailey's esoteric philosophy offers a model of communication based on Eastern philosophies and religious traditions, and is written in modern language and addresses today's concerns. It incorporates all four dimensions proposed by Waisbord and Mellado (2014) for 'globalizing' communication studies as it expands the ontological horizons of study to the subhuman and superhuman kingdoms; supports research evidence that 'demands a shift in the analytical mindset,' such as evidence regarding telepathy, reincarnation, and the etheric body; offers new theoretical perspectives such as the seven rays and the group *antahkarana*; and supports the establishment of multiple 'academic cultures' as well as networks of study, reflection, and action outside of academia.

Bailey provides a wealth of detailed esoteric information but as she was writing during two decades of horrific world devastation her teachings are also imbued with powerful normative rhetoric as she attempted to mobilize the forces of goodwill within humanity against the rising forces of evil. Although she was optimistic at the end of the Great War (1914–1945) that humanity would build a new world based on right human relations, materialistic forces have since taken new forms resulting in the global crises we face today and her teachings and exhortations are as relevant today as they were decades ago when she wrote:

Only one dominant concept can today save the world from a looming economic fight to the death, can prevent the uprising again of the materialistic systems of the past, can stop the re-emerging of the old ideas and concepts and can bring to an end the subtle control by the financial interests and the violent discontent of the masses. A belief in human unity must be endorsed. This unity must be grasped as something worth fighting and dying for . . . As long as there are extremes of riches and poverty men are falling short of their high destiny. (Bailey, 1947: 83)

The idea that we must be willing to sacrifice our lives in this time of world crisis is made clear by the recognition that today, journalists and others who are seeking

to reveal truth are being arrested, jailed, tortured, and murdered by ‘the materialistic system.’

Critical theory offers a possibility for destroying the glamour and illusions of ‘false consciousness’ based on the desire and greed of a separate self if it can expand its horizon of understanding and take advantage of communication pathways that invoke love and wisdom and thereby help create human unity and right human relations. As best he can, Habermas attempts to mobilize modern reason and the solidarity necessary to overcome the failure of practical reason in the face of a modernity ‘threatening to spin out of control.’ He laments, however, that practical reason does not have the strength to awaken secular subjects to ‘an awareness of the violations of solidarity throughout the world, an awareness of what is missing, of what cries out to heaven’ (Habermas, 2010: 18–19).

What is missing, I suggest, is compassionate wisdom and communicative *prajñā*.

Guest editor’s note: This article elicited two different reactions from its reviewers.

Reviewer 1 wrote, inter alia:

While the underlying values of harmony, etc. are attractive, Bailey’s syncretistic metaphysical scheme could use a generous application of Occam’s razor. The author’s unquestioning acceptance of Bailey’s claims that her books were telepathically transmitted, etc.—writing as if it were all simply true—offends my scholarly skepticism. Although the author argues that this approach satisfies their criteria for globalizing the field, I doubt that Waisbord and Mellado (2014) will be much pleased by it. However, I am in favor of publishing pieces I disagree with if they add something to the conversation. This piece certainly adds something, although the contribution is limited by the brief and underdeveloped quality of its comments on communication theory. Habermas is an easy target, perhaps, but how might this esoteric ‘critical theory’ (an odd term for a theory that requires us to believe without question in so many hypostatized entities) actually play out in future theory and scholarship? The critique of Habermas relies heavily on what appears to be a more elaborated version in ‘Author (2012),’ which hopefully will bear the weight. Bailey’s vague comments on public opinion are not particularly helpful. If there is time and space to do so, the author might be asked to elaborate the implications for a ‘critical’ communication theory more specifically.

Reviewer 2, on the other hand, wrote:

This was a fascinating article, . . . Thank you for sending it to me. I will save it for later study of the works cited.

Borsos' response to Reviewer 1 appears below:

Criticism 1 that Bailey's syncretistic metaphysical scheme could use a generous application of Occam's razor.

As specific examples are not included, I can only ask the reviewer what portions of *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* should be omitted? Similarly, assuming Habermas is unfamiliar with Bailey's work, I suggest his dismissive attitude toward 'syncretistic California new age philosophies' is premature and further assert that Bailey's writings are not 'syncretistic' but rather emphasize 'synthesis.'

Criticism 2 that I unquestionably accept Bailey's claims and thereby offend the reviewer's scholarly skepticism... and that I require the reader to believe without question in many hypostatized entities.

To address this objection I (can present) Bailey's numerous expressions that her writings should not be blindly accepted but should rather be considered as working hypotheses by the open-minded skeptic. I could also indicate the need for the skeptic to identify and question (his/her) own metaphysical assumptions, noting Cynthia Kaufman's point that the force of 'the better argument' and mainstream thinking in general are often based on 'dominant preconceptions.'

Criticism 3 that my comments on communication theory are brief and under-developed, thus limiting my contribution.

This is true and due in large part to the size limitations on the article. The main purpose of this article is to stimulate research within communication studies.

Criticism 4 questioning how this 'esoteric critical theory' might actually play out in future theory and scholarship? Moreover, that I should elaborate on the implications for a 'critical' communication theory if there is time and space to do so.

In this article there is no space to do so. However, it is my hope that some scholars across many diverse fields, like Reviewer 2, will find the implications 'fascinating' and go on to elaborate the ideas put forth by Bailey.

Notes

1. The word '*prajñā*' has various meanings in both Hinduism and Buddhism. I use it in a non-technical sense to describe a liberating knowledge and wisdom that expresses love and compassion in varying degrees.
2. www.lucitrust.org
3. 'The seven wise ones fashion seven paths. To one of these may the distressed mortal come' (Rig-Veda, 10: 5–6, quoted in Barborka, 1980: 161).
4. For a detailed analysis of the no-soul doctrine from Bailey's esoteric perspective see Hodgson (2014).
5. Malvin Artley (2015) provides an introduction to the *antahkarana*, including a Buddhist perspective.
6. Robbins' study of the seven rays (1988) is available free online. The relevant page numbers are 269–271; and 422–441.

7. See, *Through wrong embodiment of ideas* (Bailey, 1950a: 63–64) for a description of this advanced form of illusion.
8. See, for example, the website of The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education, <http://www.contemplativemind.org> (accessed 29 March 2015).

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