

Secret Wisdom of the West Coast

Esoteric and Occult practice in British Columbia



Exhibit Guide

Rare Books and Special Collections

University of British Columbia

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Welcome to the exhibit ***Secret Wisdom of the West Coast: Esoteric and Occult practice in British Columbia!***

The historical and sociological study of Western Esotericism is a growing field, as is shown by the emergence of academic programs, conferences and journals focussed on the subject all over the Western world. Study in this field looks at topics such as magic, alchemy, astrology, Rosicrucianism, Kabbalah, Freemasonry, Theosophy, Spiritualism, New Age, and Neopaganism. These topics, and the people that studied and practiced them, have been and are very influential in history, even though in the past they have been rarely studied. There are many works in the UBC Library collection that are related to these topics, and yet: almost no-one knows about them.

This exhibit guide will give a description and explanation of the works on display, as well as a brief introduction to Western Esotericism.

What is Western Esotericism?

As we can read on the website of the Center for History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam:

the modern term Western Esotericism is used as a general label for a great variety of religious currents and trends in Western culture – from Antiquity generally, and from the Renaissance to the present more in particular – characterized by their belief that true knowledge of God, the world, and man can only be attained by means of personal spiritual experience or inner enlightenment.

<http://amsterdamhermetica.nl>

This knowledge of God was traditionally referred to by the Greek word *Gnosis*, and is said to go beyond rationality and normal discursive language. Often, Western esoteric currents have not remained limited to the domains of religion and philosophy, but have frequently overlapped with those of the visual arts, music, and literature, where imaginal, symbolic and mythical forms of expression are used to express this direct knowledge of God.

A theme that frequently features in esoteric thought is the so called *prisca theologia*, ‘ancient theology’ or ‘wisdom’. Many esoteric traditions claim to offer wisdom going back to a distant past, or the origins of human civilization, such as ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Judea, Persia, and ‘the East’. An example of this are the ‘secret’ Jewish teachings of the Kabbalah, which claims to present the full meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures concealed beneath the words of the text.

Esoteric ideas and movements form an essential part of our understanding of the history of science. These ideas often formed a fundamental, but often under recorded, part of the history of natural science and were formative in the scientific revolution of the 17th century. In more recent years, esoteric movements have positioned themselves in opposition to or competition

with mainstream science, often claiming to represent a superior, deeper, or more ancient source of wisdom. With the separation of church and state in modern Western democracies esotericism has led to a large number of fraternities and organizations exploring these alternative ideas. These esoteric ideas have become diffuse and pervasive, contributing to a culture of alternative spirituality.

In contemporary times Western Esoteric movements are often portrayed as a distinct counter culture, often opposed to both Christianity and Modernity. Scholars of esotericism instead ask us to see Western Esotericism for what it really is: a neglected dimension of western culture which was once part of Christian culture and now flourishes in the context of secular society.

Core Works of Western Esotericism

There are several books that have been very influential to esoteric and magical thought, some that are centuries old but still being referred to by modern practitioners.

1) A collection of fundamental hermetic texts known as the **Corpus Hermeticum** was rediscovered in the second half of the 15th century, and translated into Latin by the Neoplatonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino. This resulted in a widespread revival known as **Renaissance Hermetism**, which has had a tremendous cultural influence from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. The Hermetic philosophy was seen as an expression of *prisca theologia*. It was attributed to the mythic figure of Hermes Trismegistus, the ‘Thrice-Great Hermes’, a Hellenistic fusion of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth.

This edition is the first English translation of the work, by John Everard, 1650. It reflects the state of scholarship at the time, and is no longer considered reliable. This copy contains many handwritten notes from a previous reader, reflecting thoughts and opinions about the text.

Astrology, Magic, and Alchemy (the so-called “Occult Sciences”) largely belong to the early history of science, which was not yet strictly separated from religion. In many ways they have provided theoretical frameworks for the development of western esoteric worldviews.

2) **Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim** (1486–1535) was the author of the most comprehensive and most widely known book on magic and all occult arts, *De occulta philosophia libri tres / Three Books of Occult Philosophy*. This work was written from 1509 to 1510, which means that he would have been 23 years old at the time. He gathered esoteric and occult knowledge from a variety of older sources and collected it in these three books, which circulated widely in manuscript form and were eventually printed in 1533.

The pages on display show the magical alphabet of *Honorius of Thebes* (left page), designed to preserve the “secrets of the Gods, and names of spirits from the use and reading of profane men”; and the Celestial Script (right page), which is found “placed and figured amongst the Stars, no otherwise then the other Astrologers produce images of signs from the lineaments of Stars.”

Many things found in Agrippa's work are still being used today, such as these magical alphabets. His work also contains one of the earliest examples and explanations of the magical formula ABRACADABRA.

3) Theophrastus Phillippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim, generally known as **Paracelsus** (1493-1541) was an alchemist, physician, botanist, and astrologer.

He was convinced that only through a harmonic and balanced interrelation between man (microcosm) and nature (macrocosm) health could be obtained: "Man is a microcosm, or a little world, because he is an extract from all the stars and planets of the whole firmament, from the earth and the elements; and so he is their quintessence." For him, it was clear that only through an understanding of the principles of the universe could the body be understood.

He developed a highly original philosophy of nature with strong alchemical elements, resulting in a tradition of mystically-oriented medicine and chemistry that became important to the scientific revolution as well as to a variety of new religious movements.

For example, **paracelsianism** is of central importance to the Rosicrucian Manifestoes that appeared in the early 17th century. The manifestoes are at the origin of the esoteric tradition of **Rosicrucianism**, which has produced many offshoots from the 18th to the 20th century.

These pages from an edition of his collected works show his portrait, with the inscriptions:

"Let him not belong to another who can belong to himself" and "Each perfect gift is from God, each flawed gift is from the Devil"

On the left page is a poem about Paracelsus, with his family crest underneath.

4) Ebenezer Sibly (1751 – c.1799) was an English physician, astrologer, and writer on the occult; and a key figure in the revival of astrology and natural magic after its apparently terminal decline during the Enlightenment. His works straddle and unite what are often thought to be the two irreconcilable worlds of ancient magic and modern science: hermetic magic and occultism, with its focus on the sympathetic and antipathetic connections between macrocosm and microcosm, and contemporary Enlightenment demonstrations of progress, both in human affairs and in knowledge. He combined scientific methods of his day with the self-help manuals of astrology that had become popular with the growing middle class. These semi-erudite middle-class urban readers became a new audience for popular esoteric works.

Sibly is famous for publishing a natal horoscope of the United States of America in 1787, which is still cited. He published the *New and Complete Illustrations of the Celestial Science of Astrology* in 1784, and by 1812 there had been twelve editions.

The illustration on the left page shows an overview chart of astrological symbolism and meaning: *A table exhibiting at one view the Natures, Dignities, Triplicities & Affections of the Signs and Planets*. On the right page is shown the beginning of an explanation of planetary influences, starting with the farthest used planet Saturn.

5) The Constitutions of the Free-Masons was a constitution written for the Premier Grand Lodge of England, to standardize the rituals and practices of Freemasonry among lodges of London and Westminster operating under that Grand Lodge. They were based on old Masonic manuscripts, also called *Gothic Constitutions*, and on the *General Regulations* which had been compiled first by George Payne in 1720.

James Anderson was a Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster. He was commissioned in September 1721 by the Grand Lodge to write a history of the Free-Masons; Anderson's name does not appear on the title page, but his authorship is declared in an appendix.

On display is the title page of a 1923 facsimile of the work, previously owned by Francis J. Burd (mentioned below) who donated many books to the library of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon in Vancouver.

6) Frederick Hockley (1809-1885) is often cited as the leading British occultist of the generation that preceded the founding of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (1888) and is often cited by later occultists as the grandfather to their practice. He was an active member of the Societie Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA), a collector of occult books, and an avid practitioner of Crystal gazing. His contemporaries Kenneth Mackenzie and George Irwin record an extensive correspondence with him on a variety of esoteric subjects, which is stored in the London Freemasonic Grand Lodge Library. His occult manuscripts have been extensively reprinted in recent years and demonstrate his place of importance in the history of Western Esotericism. The primary source for information on Hockley and his contemporaries is Hamil and Gilberts *The Rosicrucian Seer*, revised and reprinted in 2009 by Teitan Press.

On display are two pages, which show planetary sigils for use in invocations of planetary spirits, plus recipes for use in the ritual.

Left page: **Phul** (Moon). *Roots of Helibore, powder of a loadstone and a little Suplher made into paste with the blood of a black cat.*

Right page: **Bethor** (Jupiter). *Cloves, powder of Agate, blend all into a powder, make thereof a spark with foxs blood, the brains of a magpie.*

Theosophy in British Columbia

In 1875 Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), and William Quan Judge (1851-1896) co-founded The Theosophical Society. They combined Eastern religious traditions with Western esoteric teachings to create a synthesis Blavatsky called the *Perennial Religion*. She developed this in *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), her major works and exposition of Theosophy. The Theosophical society was a major contributor to the transmission of Buddhist philosophy to the Western world. Theosophy is an active philosophical school today and the original organization, after splits and realignments, has several successors.

Alexander Maitland Stephen

Alexander Maitland Stephen (1882-1942) was born in Ontario, but moved to British Columbia in his teens. After the First World War, he settled in Vancouver, where he took an active part in social and labour movements. He was first vice-president of the Child Welfare Association of B.C. and successfully launched the B.C. branch of the League Against War and Fascism. His writing and political activities occupied him until his death in July 1942. In the later 1920s he was associate editor of a weekly newspaper, "The Western Tribune". Stephen was also president of the Vancouver Poetry Society and president of the Julian (Vancouver) Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

7 & 8) Among his most significant works are: *The Rosary of Pan*, 1923, and *Land of Singing Waters*, 1927. Shown here are author signed copies of *The Rosary of Pan*, and the poem *Reincarnation, Land of Singing Waters*. The poem is a good example of how Theosophical (in this case Buddhist-inspired) thought worked through in Stephen's writing. A handwritten note in the margin states: *A.M.'s philosophy*. Similar notes are found throughout the book.

Freemasonry in British Columbia

The 18th-century phenomenon of Freemasonry created an important context for the development of new esoteric currents. As described by the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Freemasonry is:

A fraternity designed to teach morality and ethics, and train good men to make themselves of service to themselves, their families and their communities. Freemasonry is not a religion, but it teaches its members to be active in their chosen faith. Freemasonry subscribes to no partisan politics, but it teaches its members to be active in civic concerns.

<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/overview.html>

Even though many variants of Freemasonry are not seen as esoteric by most Masons, many aspects of Masonic ritual came to be adopted by later esoteric currents. Especially in the nineteenth century many Masonic writers and ritualists were also involved in Theosophy and many occultists were part of Masonic organizations. Freemasonry is the most well known 'esoteric' organization in the world, regardless of whether that classification is true.

Freemasonry arrived in British Columbia in 1860. On March 19th, 1859, a warrant was granted by the Earl of Zetland, Grand Master of England, authorizing the formation of a lodge at Victoria, Vancouver's Island. The warrant took some time to reach the petitioners, and it was not until the 20th August, 1860, that the lodge was constituted as Victoria Lodge, No. 1085 E.C. (later No. 783). Some months later, Union Lodge No. 1201 E.C. (later No. 899), in New Westminster, was organized. In 1871, *The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia* came into existence, a Grand Lodge independent from other countries.

9) On display are a couple fascinating Masonic artefacts. Here we have a Lodge Charter for the town of Trail, BC. from 1900. A Lodge is a certain number of Freemasons who assemble to work, and they have authority to do so from a charter or warrant that usually comes from a Grand lodge.

10) Shown is a Grand Steward collar jewel, from British Columbia and Vancouver's Island. This jewel probably dates from 1891, since it still mentions Vancouver's Island. This would mean that Vancouver Island was not part of Canada yet.

11) On display is a Commemorative trowel, reading:

Presented to M.W. Brother F.J. Burd Grandmaster of Masons –B.C. On the occasion of laying the cornerstone of Freemasons Hall New Westminster. October 6th, 1911.

Francis J. Burd (1870- 1962) was a founder of Canadian Press in 1917, and was named president of the Vancouver *Province* in 1933.

12) A Past Master jewel, from Dogwood Lodge, no. 192. in Langley, B.C. Past Masters usually wear jewels signifying their having held the rank of Worshipful Master of their lodge.

The many symbols used in Masonic artefacts have often been taken from stonemasons' tools and endowed with certain meanings. For example, the square "teaches to regulate our lives and actions by the Masonic rule and line, and so to correct and harmonize our conduct as to render us acceptable to the Divine Being, from Whom all goodness emanates..." whereas the compasses "remind us of the Divine Being's unerring and impartial justice..."

Rosicrucianism in British Columbia

Rosicrucianism is an esoteric secret society, said to have been founded in late medieval Germany by Christian Rosenkreuz. It holds a doctrine claiming to build on esoteric truths of the ancient past, which, concealed from the average man, provide insight into nature, the physical universe and the spiritual realm. Between 1607 and 1616, two anonymous manifestos were published, first in Germany and later throughout Europe. These were *Fama Fraternitatis RC* (The Fame of the Brotherhood of RC) and *Confessio Fraternitatis* (The Confession of the Brotherhood of RC). Rosicrucianism is symbolized by the Rosy Cross.

The **Ancient and Mystical Order Rosæ Crucis**, or **A.M.O.R.C.** is a worldwide Rosicrucian organization, was founded in 1915 in New York by Harvey Spencer Lewis, an author, occultist and mystic. A.M.O.R.C. claims to be an authentic Western mystery school, the modern manifestation of an ancient Order, keeping the teachings of the ancient Rose-Croix Order. Its teachings draw upon ideas of major philosophers, such as Pythagoras, as well as traditional healing techniques, intuition and psychic consciousness, alchemy, breathing techniques, meditation, Egyptian symbolism, occult practices, karma and reincarnation.

13) While A.M.O.R.C. is currently only available to British Columbians by correspondence courses, there used to be a Rosicrucian temple in Vancouver, located at 23rd Ave. and Willow Str. This photo shows the temple with its members in front, commemorating the opening of the temple in 1952.

14) This Rosicrucian handbook shows symbolism used in A.M.O.R.C. teachings, such as Kabbalistic, Jewish, and occult diagrams and sigils, as well as Tarot symbolism.

15) This A.M.O.R.C. bookmark is an example of methods used for advertising the order's work and publications, and attracting new members.

Modern Occultism: Charles Stansfeld Jones and Malcolm Lowry

Occultism came into its own during the 19th century, producing a great number of new religious movements and trends. Among the more important are Spiritualism, the Theosophical Society and its many offshoots, and a plethora of movements focused on the practice of Occultist Magic. In British Columbia, there is a fascinating connection between a major player in the occultist tradition, Charles Stansfeld Jones (1886-1950), or Frater Achad, and the author Malcolm Lowry (1909-1957).

Aleister Crowley

To understand the importance of Frater Achad, it is necessary to first know a little bit about one of the most notorious occultists of our time: Aleister Crowley (1875-1947). There are very few magical currents whose rituals are not in some way based on or related to Crowley's work, and he was a prolific writer and publisher. Crowley, also known as Frater Perdurabo and The Great Beast 666, was an English occultist, mystic, ceremonial magician, poet and mountaineer, who was responsible for founding the religion of Thelema. Crowley is widely thought of as the most influential occultist of all time.

16) Displayed is one of Aleister Crowley's publications, *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King*, based on manuscripts from the British Museum, with additions by Crowley. Goetia refers to a practice which includes the invocation of angels or the evocation of demons. In his introduction, Crowley argues that the work of demonic evocation is merely a form of psychological self-exploration. It has since become a relatively well-known book of magic.

As a young man Crowley became an influential member of the esoteric Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. While staying in Egypt in 1904, he "received" a text known as *The Book of the Law* from what he believed was a divine source, and around which he would come to develop his new philosophy of Thelema. He would go on to found his own occult society, the A·A· (the Argenteum Astrum or the Silver Star) and eventually became a leader of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.). These orders contain several hierarchical levels, grades, through which the aspirant progresses.

17) *Liber AL vel Legis*, or *The Book of the Law* is the central sacred text of Thelema. Through the reception of this book, Crowley proclaimed the arrival of a new stage in the spiritual evolution of humanity, to be known as the *Æon of Horus*.

Charles Stansfeld Jones – Frater Achad

Crowley visited Vancouver several times, and although he never met Lowry, he did meet with Frater Achad. Charles Stansfeld Jones was an initiate of both the A.:A.: and the Ordo Templi Orientis. Jones 'claimed' a high grade in the A.:A.: early on (Magister Templi) and for this he was noticed by his superior, Crowley. Crowley saw Jones as his 'magical child' and as such he welcomed him into the high ranks of the O.T.O. and declared him his 'beloved son'. He gave Jones the authority to establish an O.T.O. lodge in Canada, which was the first organization of its kind in North America. He founded British Columbia Lodge #1. Jones did not live in British Columbia his entire life; he also lived in the USA. Later in life, Jones left the OTO but he called himself 'Past Grand Master for the United States of America' for the rest of his life. The O.T.O. is currently the largest esoteric order in the Western world, with lodges in many countries.

18) *Q.B.L.*, or *The Bride's Reception*, is the first of Achad's major kabbalistic works. It shows the nature and use of the Tree of Life and its correspondences as the basis of all occult science. The page displayed describes the connection between different spheres, Sephiroth, in the Tree of Life. The image shows the complete plan of the tree including the colours associated with each sphere.

Malcolm Lowry

Malcolm Lowry, born in England, was a long time B.C. resident. He lived in Dollarton (near Deep Cove, in the District of North Vancouver), in a squatters shack. He is Vancouver's most internationally venerated and critically studied writer, and his life and work have been the subject for many books and academic studies. His novel, *Under the Volcano* (1947), is one of the most famous books ever written mainly in British Columbia.

Lowry and Frater Achad, who lived in the same area, became good friends, and Achad taught him about the Kabbalah. Soon Lowry had become fascinated by magic and the occult, but a series of unfortunate events (e.g. his house burning down) convinced him that "his playing about with the occult in Stansfeld-Jones house had put him in bad repute with certain demonic forces; and that it was his destiny to be pursued by the element of fire". Regardless, they remained friends.

Malcolm Lowry's personal library contained several works by Frater Achad and Aleister Crowley, some of which are on display in this case, and Achad's teachings influenced Lowry's writing.

19) *The Anatomy of the Body of God*, Jones' third major kabbalistic text, following *Q.B.L.* and *The Egyptian Revival*. In this book, he discusses how the Tree of Life is a representation of the framework and interconnectedness of the universe, 'the body of God'. The image on the left is a representation of this, incorporating multiple Trees of Life and sphere's within spheres.

20) This work by Frater Achad is Rosicrucian in focus; of which methods, theories, and symbols are widely used in both the A·A· and O.T.O. The image on the left page shows the Rose Cross. This booklet explains the symbolism of the Rose Cross in the form of a lecture to an adept of the order. Symbols that are explained are the significance of the 22 Hebrew letters, 12 zodiacal signs, as well as alchemical and elemental symbolism. It also gives instructions for the ritual *Analysis of the Keyword*, mentioning the Rosicrucian Eucharist and methods for banishing elemental and planetary influences.

21) This typescript was found in I.N.R.I.. It is a typescript with handwritten edits by Achad, of his work *XXXI Hymns to the Star Goddess*, containing religious, mystical poems in prose. The eventual print run of the handmade volume, in two colours, was 220 copies.

22 & 23) One of the main underlying themes of *Under the Volcano* is the Kabbalah, where for example the character Firmun is a magician dabbling in mystical teachings. Like Lowry, he constantly battles with his internal demons that drive him to drink. *October Ferry to Gabriola* also contains occult and kabbalistic themes.

Neopaganism and New Age

Many esoteric currents fed into the Cultic Milieu of esoterically-interested consumers after World War II. The resulting culture of a highly commercialized pop-esotericism has become known as **New Age**. The central precepts of the New Age movement have been described as drawing on both Eastern and Western spiritual and metaphysical traditions and infusing them with influences from self-help and motivational psychology, holistic health, parapsychology, and consciousness research. The term New Age started to be used widely in the mid-1970s, and influenced the emergence of many small book- and gift-stores that defined themselves as New Age bookstores. The mass-media further popularized the term as a label for any alternative spiritual subculture that includes practices like meditation, channeling, crystal healing, astral projection, and environmentalism, among many other things. New Age is usually seen as a heterodox assembly of numerous different traditions and practices, and is therefore often difficult to define.

Neopaganism, or contemporary paganism, is often seen as part of the New Age phenomenon, although opinions differ widely about the appropriateness of this classification, especially among adherents of the many different religions that are part of this category. Often, a neopagan religion is influenced by, or claims to be derived from various pre-modern Earth based European beliefs. Neopaganism, however, is extremely diverse, and there is no set of beliefs, practices, or religious texts shared by all.

Wicca is the largest contemporary pagan religion, having originally developed in the United Kingdom and since spread across the world. The Wiccan religion revolves around the worship of a Horned God and a Goddess, diverse elements of various ancient mythologies, a belief in and practice of magic, and sometimes the belief in reincarnation and/or karma. Followers of Wicca are usually referred to as witches.

One of the most famous British Columbian witches was the writer and poet **Robin Skelton** (1925-1997). Originally from England, he became interested in the occult while in Canada and came to believe himself to have psychic powers of healing after various experiences; which he has documented in his autobiographical work, *The Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead* (1988). He was Professor of English Literature at the University of Victoria, where he played an important role in establishing the Library's Special Collections Division, loaning his collection of Irish first editions in 1965 and selling these editions to Special Collections in 1971. In 1973, he helped establish the Department of Creative Writing as a separate, independent department; he served as its Chairman until 1976.

24) On display is an article out of the magazine *Western Living*, "The Witches of East Vic", where the journalist visits Robin Skelton in his home to participate in a ritual at Musemass; in honour of the Muse(s). The photograph on the left page shows Robin Skelton and his daughter Alison, both Wiccans.

Skelton became a practicing witch in the Wiccan tradition later in life, and wrote several works on witchcraft, including *Spellcraft* (1978), *The Magical Practice of Talismans* (1985), and *The Practice of Witchcraft Today* (1988).

25) *The Magical Practice of Talismans* explains and teaches the use and creation of talismans for magical workings. The illustration of the right page shows the *Alphabet of Honorius the Theban*. Note that this is the same as the image shown in item #2, by Agrippa. This is an excellent example of the survival (and appropriation) of esoteric knowledge and symbolism, in this case from 1531 to 1991!

26) *Spellcraft* explains the creation and use of verbal magic; spells. It is described as "a form of wishing or transmittal of intuitive messages, as old as language itself and as powerful as the deepest forces of the human psyche". As a poet, Robin was an expert in verbal magic and would often write spells and incantations for people who sought his help.

27) *The Practice of Witchcraft* is meant to be a practical introduction, answering the most common questions that arise when talking about witchcraft and explaining basic beliefs. It also discusses celebrations for the festivals of the year, as well as some spells & basic rituals.

28) An example of a neopagan event, with public rituals, celebrations, and performances, is the **Vancouver Pagan Pride Day**, which takes place on August 18th. In many places around the world, local coordinators host public Pagan Pride celebrations. Their goal is to foster pride in Pagan identity through education, activism, charity and community. This is the 2nd time that this event, which has been held in the Lower Mainland area for 16 years, has been held in Surrey. This is the 2nd year that VPPD has been organized by the Order of Scáthach, a modern order of Wiccan knights and a registered religious society in B.C., based in Surrey. The theme this year is: *Turn Your Face to the Sun*. The principle religions represented at this year's VPPD event are Wicca, Druidism, Ásatrú and the Ordo Templi Orientis. For more information please visit <http://vancouverpaganpride.wordpress.com/>

29) Common Ground is an independent Canadian owned publication. On their website, its publishers claim that it is Western Canada's biggest monthly magazine dedicated to health, wellness, ecology and personal growth. It is often considered a clear example of a New Age publication, showing advertising and columns dedicated to psychic arts and intuitive sciences, spiritual practices, and health, healing, and bodywork. Currently, on the *Common Ground* website there are categories such as activism, creativity, and ecology, but also Astrology, Spirit, and Health. A quote from their website shows a clear connection with esoteric worldviews, if not from the publishers, then at least from the contributors:

It's becoming increasingly clear that the universe isn't simply an assembly of separate particles, planets and entities in set, predictable relationships to one another. Instead, we're finding that all the pieces making up our physical world are dynamic, interrelated and able to affect and be affected by one another. It's impossible, even, to separate ourselves from the whole sufficiently to observe it without our very observations having an impact.

<http://commonground.ca/>

Common Ground hosts regular columns by David Suzuki and Eckhart Tolle, both often considered New Age authors and activists.

On display are the first issue: Winter 1982/83, and the current issue: July 2012.

30) Vancouver's best known New Age bookstore is **Banyen Books & Sounds**, on 4th Ave and Dunbar Str. On their website, they state that "since 1970, Banyen Books is one of North America's most complete bookstores specializing in conscious living, personal growth, and spiritual awareness". Their collection focuses on spiritual traditions, healing arts, and earth wisdom, among many other things. They also sell a wide selection of gifts, meditation and yoga supplies, musical instruments, crystals, statues, and incenses. As such, it is representative of New Age stores all over the world, and one that is thriving and popular.

On display is the most current issue of Banyen's review magazine, *Branches of Light*.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Trevor McKeown, librarian at the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon Library, for providing access to the Freemasonic library, for sharing his knowledge and stories of esotericism in British Columbia, and for lending all items related to Freemasonry in this exhibit.

Also many thanks to Troy Spreeuw, from the same Freemasonic lodge, for sharing his wealth of knowledge about local esoteric and occult practices, his library, and for lending the *Book of the Law* by Aleister Crowley.

Lastly, many thanks to the wonderful people at the Rare Books and Special Collections library at the University of British Columbia, for giving me the opportunity to put together this exhibit, to Alvan Bregman for his advice, and especially to Katherine Kalsbeek, for her unwavering support and lending a willing ear to my excited stories about the latest discovery made during this research.

Karen Meijer-Kline
Curator

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