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T.E. NOTES

A T.E. Lawrence Newsletter

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ISSN 1054-514X

Volume V, No. 6

June 1994

John E. Mack
The Psychiatrist and Biographer
Addresses Human Encounters with Aliens
by Missy Daniel

The above is the title of this excellent interview (which appeared in *Publishers' Weekly* for April 18, 1994). It is two full pages long and features a photo of Dr. Mack. The discussion is mainly about *Abduction: Human Encounter with Aliens*, which is next on my list of books to read. The book itself is treated elsewhere in this issue of *TE Notes*. I want to quote, for those of you who may not have access to this *Publishers' Weekly*, the portion of the interview which deals with Dr. Mack's input concerning his book *The Prince of Our Disorder* and his remarks about the writing of that opus:

Seated in his modest office in the Cambridge Hospital, where he has been affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry for over 25 years, he defends himself against those who have said that the man who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1977 for his biography of T.E. Lawrence (*The Prince of Our Disorder*, Little, Brown 1976) has succumbed to the lure of sensationalism and big money with *Abduction: Human Encounter with Aliens*, published this month by Scribner's (Non-fiction Forecasts, Feb. 7). His advance of \$250,000 appears to have been proof positive that the publishers were of the same opinion as John i.e. that "this book touches some kind of nerve."

I saw the one-hour interview on the Oprah Winfrey show, on which Mack appeared with several abductees and a nay-sayer. It was great. Another night he appeared on the CNBC Show, *Equal Time*,

with Mary Matalin. That's only a half hour show, so was not as substantive as the former. I didn't know until too late that he also appeared on the Larry King show.*

As for the TE portion of the interview, it commences with Mack's mention of Erik Erickson, and from here on I quote:

Erik Erickson's work is all about psychosocial identity confusion. In much of my life's work Erik was my mentor. I consulted him about my Lawrence book, about what heroism was, what a sense of the ideal was. Lawrence was very introspective. He said he wrote *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* 'to show the unlovely backside of a commander's mind,' instead of self-justifying self-promotion. He was the absolute epitome of someone who was confused about his identity. He was illegitimate; he had all kinds of sexual confusion, and he had confusion about what he was really enacting when he was whipping up the Arab revolt against the Turks. On one hand it was heroic: he was trying to create freedom and autonomy for the Arabs. But what was the relationship of that to his own inner sense of not knowing who he was? That theme runs through the book. It is the theme of the stranger, the person who is marginal in a culture and thereby can be open to possibilities that someone who must fulfill some slot in the corporate hierarchy may never get to ask about.

Missy Daniel, the author, gives us a word picture of Mack:

* Since Mary wrote this, John Mack also appeared on NBC's Dateline on May 24, 1994 (jar).

Mack himself does not fit an outsider's profile. Now 64, he was born in New York City, came to Harvard Medical School after graduating from Oberlin in 1951 and has remained in the Boston area ever since. He is tall and lean, and punctuates his earnest discourse by occasionally donning the pair of half-glasses hanging on a cord around his neck, his dark, penetrating eyes peering over the rims. He speaks slowly, deliberately, carefully, even a little warily. He seems to want very much to be believed, to be taken seriously.

In neither of the TV interviews, nor in this one, is Mack's connection mentioned with the TV movie, *The Intruders*, which starred Richard Crenna and dealt with this subject. It was also truly chilling, and John Mack was named in the titles as a consultant. It was illustrative of what the people who appeared with him on the Oprah Winfrey show detailed as their experiences, and, to take Daniel's quote and extend it, they all seem to want to be believed, to be taken seriously, and I found myself enthralled by the sincerity of each of them. They really didn't want what had happened to them to have happened and certainly did not appear to be trying to capitalize on any aspect of their often most unpleasant abductions.

Mary McDonnell

Thanks to Gary Crowds of CINEASTE (magazine) for sending us a photocopy of the Publishers Weekly article. (dmd)

**Cosmic Speculations on Cosmic Themes:
Reflections on John E. Mack's
Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens
by Janet Riesman**

After seeing Mary's article, I was inspired to read John Mack's book. It is so riveting and thought-provoking that I soon found myself making unexpected connections between Mack's evidence and Lawrence's writings. The following is a rambling series of observations inspired by a great read.

In the *Publishers' Weekly* interview, which Mary cites, Mack explains how and why he became interested in the abduction phenomenon:

I have always had this curiosity: who are we in the deepest and fullest sense? Is there some core of ourselves connected at

some cosmic level, some core identity that is more mysterious and that mystically connects us?

These questions arose from Mack's reflections on his work with abductees, thirteen of whom he discusses in depth in his book.

Mack insists that the abductees' reports of their experiences are sincere, need to be taken seriously, and may open the door to a new understanding of reality and of the cosmos. He believes we are blinded by outmoded scientific assumptions which are grounded in the "Newtonian/Cartesian or materialist/dualist scientific paradigm," and that we only accept as real "what can be perceived by the physical senses." (p.3) and that abductees have first hand knowledge of alternative realities, that is, they experience the collapse of matter into light and energy, a possibility predicted by Einstein's famous formula, $E=mc^2$. Abductees are also aware of a universal consciousness that makes it appear as if all intelligence is connected, that life on earth is not the only form of existence, and that we have some cosmic "home" beyond our ken.

This open-minded attitude toward the abduction phenomenon is not one with which Mack began. Like many others, he had always been skeptical about UFO sightings and reports of alien abductions. But in January 1990 he met Budd Hopkins, who had worked with abductees, and who wrote *The Intruders* and *Missing Time*. Gradually the evidence became too overwhelming and the people he met too sincere and balanced for him to write off abductions as the latest form of hokiness. After doing extensive regressions under hypnosis with 79 abductees, he was deeply convinced of the reality of their experience.

Mack reports that abductees are at first unaware that at some point in the past they have been abducted. But recurrent nightmares, anxiety attacks, or vague memories of strange black outs lead them to seek psychological help. Many approach psychologists who at first assume they are victims of childhood sexual abuse, but who can find no evidence of it and no explanation for the disturbances the "patients" describe. Eventually—through word of mouth and often in desperation—these "patients" find their way to Mack.

He interviews them and places them under hypnotherapy. For most, full recovery of their abduction experience, buried in their sub-conscious, is terrifying and painful. It takes place over several sessions and can only be done with constant reassurance and comforting from Mack. From these regressions Mack has pieced together a general profile of the abduction phenomenon.

Frequently abductees awaken at night to find alien beings looking in the window or standing near their beds. They are floated out of their rooms through walls or windows and taken to space ships grounded nearby. Once in a ship, they are placed on an examining table. The aliens communicate with them by mental telepathy and use forms of mind control to get the abductee/victim to do as they wish.

The aliens probe the bodies of the humans with long metallic instruments. They appear to be gathering genetic samples: plasma, cells, bone marrow, eggs, and sperm for genetic experiments of their own. They open up and deeply probe human bodies without spilling blood. A major part of their experimentation has to do with collecting male sperm or female eggs. The abductees are convinced that the aliens are creating a new, hybrid race—combining alien wisdom and efficiency with human capacity for warm feeling and emotion.

Once they begin to reflect on their experiences and their terror subsides, abductees undergo profoundly spiritual life crises leading to altered careers more in tune with their new cosmic consciousness.

They begin to view the aliens as benevolent beings whose purposes are not sinister but designed to assist human beings and believe that the aliens want to help us avoid dangerous environmental and geopolitical situations that threaten continuance of life on earth as we know it.

Mack concludes that many of the alien-human encounters experiences do not take place in the "space/time dimensions" as we know them, but that:

Aliens break...through from another dimension, through a 'slit' or 'crack' in some sort of barrier, entering our world from 'beyond the veil'....Either we can persist in our notions of reality and deny that this experience is genuine or we can accept it and question the validity of our inherited views of reality. (pp404, 420)

Readers of Mack's latest work will have to judge for themselves.

Now I wish to turn my attention to Lawrence. No, I don't intend to argue that Lawrence believed in aliens. But I do believe TE had a surprising amount of sympathy with parapsychology and may have had experiences or thought thoughts beyond conventional notions of reality. Indeed it may be no coincidence that Mack finds both Lawrence and alien abductions compelling topics for research and writing. Moreover, Lawrence may have shared the openness which Mack recommends at the end of his book con-

cerning alternative forms of reality and a broad cosmic perspective.

The evidence in and of itself may seem slight, but taken together it provides food for thought and makes one wonder, if Lawrence were alive today, if he wouldn't become one of Mack's most broadminded and sympathetic supporters.

First, TE recognized the limitations of the Newtonian vision of reality. In a letter of December 8, 1928, he wrote William Rothenstein about Sherwood Anderson, D.H. Lawrence, and Wyndham Lewis. Concerning Lewis, TE said, "He would have to forget his time-spirit obsession" to be a more profound writer. "There will not be a new time-spirit till the implications of Einstein have entered the new generation with its mother's milk—say about 1960 or so. We are Newtonians yet." (Garnett, p 556). Some weeks later he took another stab at conventional linear reality. In a letter to Lionel Curtis, he wrote:

One of the ominous signs of the times is that the public can no longer read history. The historian is retired into a shell to study the whole truth; which means that he learns to attach insensate importance to documents. The documents are liars....All narrative is partis pris. (Garnett p. 559)

This insight was rare in the early twentieth century, but in recent years historians and novelists have exploded the idea that a narrative framework based on a conventionally linear notions of time has any legitimate reality. This attitude is not unlike that expressed by the abductees who recognize the collapse of normal time/space dimensions.

TE further pummeled the conventional sense of reality in a letter to Charlotte Shaw: "To do a day's work, as I do, is only possible by taking for granted that we exist—a white lie which discourages us from being abstract minded." He continued by criticizing orthodox religion for its misconceptions: "i. that we exist; ii. that man is the centre of his universe; and iii. that God is more or less analogous to man." (Brown, p. 317-318).

Though he never said anything about aliens, TE seemed to have minimal faith in human beings' sensitivity and intelligence. In 1926 he wrote Charlotte Shaw that when having tea in a shop, he befriended a cat with whom he then split a cream filled eclair. Because of the neatness with which the cat ate the cream filling and cleansed its face afterwards (in comparison to manners of the human patrons of the tea shop), TE concluded, "The cat was a very excellent animal. The human beings were gross, noisy, vulgar: they did the same things as the cat, but in a

clumsy, blatant way.” (Brown, p. 300) There’s just a hint here of TE’s attitude toward the human species which is more evident in a letter to Ernest Thurtle, the labor MP, of July 29, 1929:

I think the planet is in damnable condition which no change of party or social reform, will do more than palliate insignificantly. What is wanted is a new master species—birth control for us, to end the human race in 50 years—and then a clear field for some cleaner mammal, I suppose it must be a mammal? (Garnett, p. 669)

This remark vaguely foreshadows Mack’s evidence of alien genetic engineering. *The Mint* is a rich source for speculation about what TE knew of parapsychology. Early in the book, TE makes clear he is undertaking a frightening journey that he knows in the deepest recesses of his soul is necessary. Entrance into the ranks and undergoing the cruel discipline meted out to new recruits was principally a voyage of self-discovery. “Fear now told me that nothing of my present would survive this voyage into the unknown.” (p. 41) In a sense his undertaking parallels the abductees’ confrontation with their memories through regression, for the abductees know that their memories hold dark secrets which have the power to turn their world upside down.

In this state of shock and misery, TE demonstrates his ability to perceive on several levels of reality. The language he uses is deeply similar to the language used by abductees and others who claim to have had “out-of-the-body-experiences”:

At ten fifteen, lights out; and upon their dying flash every sound ceased....My observing spirit slowly and deliberately hoisted itself from place to prowl across this...upper air, leisurely examining the forms stretched out so mummy-still on strait beds....How many souls gibbered that night in the roof-beams. Once more mine panicked, suddenly, and fled back to its coffin-body. Any cover was better than the bareness. (Chap. 4)

In 1986 the first segment of Shirley MacLaine’s spiritual autobiography, *Out on a Limb*, was published and made into a popular TV movie. That was when I first learned that those who claim to have had out-of-the-body experiences (or OOTBs) use the imagery of a cord—often a silver cord to describe the relation between physical and spiritual being. In the midst of an experience, a person sees his or her body

on earth and then sees a long silver cord ascending upwards to the location of her spirit or soul, inner or true being. The individuals have the sensation of flying and yet being connected to their earthly form by the cord. Should the cord snap (as some seem to hope when in the midst of this quasi-ecstatic experience), then presumably they would not be able to return to their earthly bodies.

Shortly after encountering this imagery, I read *The Mint* and was struck by the strange similarity of language in TE’s description of the almost transcendental qualities of speed on Boanerges, his Brough motorcycle:

Another bend: and I have the honour of one of England’s straightest and fastest roads. The burble of my exhaust unwound like a long cord behind me. Soon my speed snapped it, and I heard only the cry of the wind which my battering head split and fended aside. The cry rose with my speed to a shriek: while the air’s coldness streamed like two jets of iced water into my dissolving eyes. (Chap. 16)

Here is an image of TE connected to the earth only by a cord—in this case his exhaust. His speed through the air becomes so fast that he snaps the cord and presumably becomes disembodied. The only sensations he is now aware of occur to his head. It is the rush of his thinking part, his head or, in a sense, his soul through the oncoming frigid air—almost to the point of annihilation (his “dissolving eyes”)—that gives the episode its transcendent quality. He continues racing on and his “head” is “blown out with air” so that he no longer hears anything—“my ears had failed”—and he and Boa “seemed to whirl soundlessly between the sun-gilt stubble fields.” (Chap. 16)

Another very slight bit of evidence that TE may have sympathized with parapsychological phenomena is contained in a remark of his friend, Clare Sydney Smith. Mrs. Smith was in India in 1935 when she learned by telephone of TE’s accident and subsequent death on his motorcycle: “To me, it was as if a support had been ruthlessly cut away from under me. But I knew that he had only gone to another plane of consciousness, and that we should meet again some day.” This remark, said with strange conviction, strikes me as bizarre. Perhaps it only expresses her belief, but it also is not impossible that she said it in such a striking way because she and TE had discussed life after death and other forms of being and consciousness.

At the end of *The Mint*, TE makes clear that the experience of entering the RAF and enduring boot camp training had ego-destroying effects on all—somewhat parallel to the ego-destroying effects the abductees experience when in the control of aliens.

Service life...teaches a man to live largely on little. We belong to a big thing, which will exist for ever and ever in unnumbered generations....The habit of 'belonging to something or other' induces in us a sense of being one part of many things....As we gain attachment, do we strip our selves of personality. (Chap. 18)

So in the end he loses his personal, ego driven identity and blends into other beings. Lying in the summer grass, he writes:

We were too utterly content to speak, drugged with an absorption fathoms deeper than physical contentment. Just we lay there spread-eagled in a mesh of bodies, pillowed on one another and sighing in happy excess of relaxation. The sunlight poured from the sky and melted into our tissues....Our bones dissolved to become a part of this underlying indulgent earth, whose mysterious pulse throbbed in every tremor of our bodies. The scents of the thousand-acre drome mixed with the familiar oil-breadth of our hangar, nature with art...Such moments of absorption resolve the mail and plate of out personality back into the carbohydrate elements of being. (Chap. 18)

Many have been puzzled by TE's later years, by his withdrawal—however partial—from the polite, educated society in which he seemed entitled to move simply by virtue of his accomplishments and brilliance. The question has always been why. He often hinted, however indirectly, that he wasn't interested in philosophical debates but rather in the problem of conduct and right-living. That he wanted to close the books on discussion and work out the details of how to live on a day-to-day basis—in the work he did and in his attempt to relate to others as human beings. These aspirations fueled his irritation with Robert Graves in letters of May 5, 1929, and January 24, 1933:

You have been so drastic in your condemnation of ordinary people, of late, that I have been afraid to stay near you....You see, I know by the best of all proof (conti-

guity with ordinary men in barracks) how ordinary I am and because ordinariness is not wholly a flattering feeling, I have been led to look for my own likes in ordinary people: and from that I have grown to see the ordinariness in nearly everyone. But whereas that makes you rage and condemn, it makes me feel akin and friendly (Garnett, p. 658)

But for TE, it was only by readjusting his focus from the ambition to lead men to simply working alongside them on a common endeavor that he found the inner peace he sought. In a letter to Graves of February 4, 1935, he wrote:

Progress today is made not by the single genius but by the common effort. To me it is the multitude of rough transport drivers, filling all the roads of England every night, who make this the mechanical age. And it is the airmen, the mechanics, who are overcoming the air, not the Mollisons and Orlebars. The genius raids but the common people occupy and possess. Wherefore I stayed in the ranks and served to the best of my ability, much influencing my fellow airmen towards a pride in themselves and their articulate duty. I tried to make them see—with some success. (Garnett, p. 852)

Like the abductees, TE felt called to a higher purpose—away from artistry—to somehow deeply influencing ordinary people to see the larger creative purpose at work in the world process which is history unfolding. Once he saw life from this perspective, writing books like *Seven Pillars* and *The Mint* seemed seductions away from what ought to be his main calling in life—becoming part of the mainstream, on the cutting edge of history which for him involved the exploration of air power and doing the lowly tasks of airplane maintenance, the dronish work that made it all possible.

There is another bit of evidence of TE's purposes which is tantalizing as much as for what it reveals as well as does not reveal. In his correspondence with Lincoln Kirstein, TE discussed the merits of Georgii Gurdieff's system of thought.

Kirstein, who was a young intellectual in the 1930s and later became co-founder of the New York City Ballet, admired both TE and Gurdieff and saw similarities between them.

Gurdieff, born in Russia in the 1870s, journeyed to Tibet, India, and Arabia, and returned to Russia to start the Institute for the Harmonious Develop-

ment of Man. He developed an ethical philosophy that combined Buddhist and Islamic wisdom with Christian teaching. After World War I he moved his Institute to France. It flourished in the 1920s and attracted the likes of Kirstein, Katherine Mansfield and other prominent intellectuals. He developed a program of personal discipline and sought to expand his pupils' consciousness to be more in tune with the eternal and the cosmic.

Kirstein wanted to know Lawrence's opinion of Gurdieff and asked TE in December 1934. TE replied:

About Gurdieff, I...read some of his work in French a while ago: not this which you have sent me, but stuff as real. It was closer knit, too, as prose and argument. I liked it as I liked his *Herald of the Coming Good* but find myself a little to one side, facing perhaps the same questions, but from another angle. (Garnett, p. 797)

That remark—"a little to one side, facing the same questions, but from another angle"—is one of the few hard bits of evidence we have that TE was bent upon questions of moral and ethical conduct in the 1920s and 1930s. But what were the similarities TE saw and what were the questions?

He mocked orthodox Christian doctrine with its ceremonies and expectations. At church services in *The Mint*, he snickered at the priests and at the enormous gap between their sermons and their lack of understanding and love for the men to whom they preached. And he mocked the Apostles' Creed:

Hungry time has taken from me year by year more of the Creed's clauses till now only the first four words remain [i.e., I believe in God]. Then I say those defiantly, hoping that reason may be stung into new activity when it hears there's yet a part of me which escapes its rule. (Chap. 18)

If he could have argued himself out of believing in God, he would have, but he could not. It wasn't in his nature. But for TE, conduct not doctrine, deeds not words were most important:

If I strive to dwell upon a pure idea, my brain gets quickly mouldered, and wanders dreamily away down the broader problems of conduct. Conduct (doing) is really so much larger a subject than existence. (Brown, 317)

Gurdieff also preached universal principles of love and TE may have been sympathetic with that part of

his teaching—in other words not with Gurdieff's doctrines and methods, but with his aim. As Claire Sydney Smith wrote in *The Golden Reign*:

There is no doubt that TES, although he could not come to terms with the established religion or the Church, lived a deeply spiritual life based on the life and teachings of Christ....He himself considered that Christ had lived the most perfect life and he decided to model his on it. (p. 36)

Although TE was deeply theistic, he appears to have been dissatisfied with religious practice and felt it an insult to God. Evidence that this was so is to be found in TE's connection with Frederick Manning. Manning dedicated "Apologia Dei" in the second edition of *Scenes and Portraits* to TE. Its theme is striking: man has created God in his image—an example of the ultimate hubris of the human race. The essay is not agnostic; it simply poses the proposition that God exists, but not in a form we imagine or can conceive of—at least not so long as we are blinded by our own culturally bound assumptions, so long as our ego and our ideas block out receptivity to the unknown about the divine.

These themes—the hints of TE's concern with conduct and ethical questions, his skepticism concerning man's own religious constructs, and the hint of interest and the knowledge of Gurdieff—bring us back to Mack's point: the alien experience points the way—human beings need to transcend their worldly circumstances and concerns and consider life in a more cosmic perspective, a perspective that is likely to render them more in touch with the beauty and fragility of nature and the need for a loving approach to all forms of life. And as Mack himself suggests: human views of the universe and cosmology—indeed of God—need to be broadened and expanded.

Clouds Hill and the Water Supply by Jack Duckworth

Most visitors to Lawrence's cottage at Clouds Hill in Dorset are intrigued to find a large, modern-looking bath but no apparent means of supplying it with water. Readers of TE's letters will know, however, that he put a lot of work into connecting the cottage to the only available supply of water, from a spring on the other side of the track which ran between his and the Knowles' property.

He ran a pipe under the track with the help of Pat Knowles, but the problem was how to pump water from the erratic spring to the water tank in the

roof of the cottage. TE consulted a firm of hydraulic ram makers who produced a pump that was able to work with a pressure of only one gallon every 70 seconds. He wrote to Goslett, who supplied the bath, on 31st August 1933:

My ram was publicly opened yesterday by the oldest (and only) inhabitant of Clouds Hill, with picturesque ceremony. It is the smallest ram in the world. Less than three hours after the opening ceremony the pipe (100 yards long) had filled and water began to flow into the cottage cistern. A pint came through in just four minutes. The oldest (and only) inhabitant took off his R.A.F. cap and drank the pint. It tasted of galvanised iron and red lead. In case a pint in four minutes seems to you little for a bath, let me remind you that the ram works all the twenty-four hours. (*The Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, ed. David Garnett. Doubleday, Doran, 1939, pp. 775-6).

Readers who care to pursue the matter of what constitutes a "ram pump" will no doubt hurry to that useful compendium *Plumbing: A text-book to the practice of the art or craft of the plumber*; by William Paton Buchan published by Crosby Lockwood & Co. in 1876 where all is made clear in Chapter XXIV titled "The Hydraulic Ram". Thus inquiring readers can fully satisfy themselves as to the actual workings of this ingenious and totally "Lawrencian" machine.

Jack Duckworth

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Jack actually supplied us with photocopies of pages 182 through 186 of *Plumbing* which goes into much detail on the hydraulic ram and has several sketches and a table of statistics. If you are interested in receiving a copy of "The Hydraulic Ram" chapter, please send Jack a self-addressed stamped envelope and he'll send you a photocopy. No phone calls please. (dmd)

"Lawrence of Arabia" Dream Smashed!

Whilst visiting Northwich in Cheshire I met a man whose friend's father was a Captain of a Weaver River Steamer and who, at the age of fourteen, met "Mr. Shaw" whilst visiting Yarwood's boatyard.

I was told I would see a man who had defeated the Turkish Army of the Middle East all on his own. Having been brought up on the adventures of the Hollywood heroes of that day I expected to see a Victor McLaglen or Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and was terribly disappointed to see a person more in the style of Donald Meek who always portrayed the characters of small, nervous types.

David Balkham

London, England

More on the E.H.T. Robinson Controversy by Lawrence James

Neither Lawrence nor Mr. Tabachnick were ever in a position to know all the names of Army and Navy officers and other ranks detached for service with the Arab army or undertaking intelligence duties in the Middle East. Robinson did serve in the latter capacity and was recognized by his commander, Colonel Joyce, at Lawrence's funeral. Not long after, Robinson quarreled with A.W. Lawrence, who afterwards alleged he was an impostor. This unfounded charge (which owed something to a personal antipathy) gained some currency and was difficult to refute given the nature of Robinson's duties.

Their revelation would have caused trouble. Sir Compton Mackenzie was prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act in 1931 for his *Athenian Memories*, in which he named intelligence officers including Hogarth. As to Lawrence's *Seven Pillars* list of British servicemen present at Aqaba this is by no means complete; the most obvious omissions being medical staff, orderlies and RFC/RAF men. In the text he mentions various intelligence operatives with whom he worked or had contact, but again there are gaps.

For instance, he makes no mention of the late Sir Gerald Clauson, whose work as a breaker of Turkish codes was vital for Lawrence's operations. There is, therefore, no reason for Mr. Tabachnick to claim that Robinson was not attached to British intelligence in the Middle East, that he was present at Aqaba or that he worked alongside Lawrence. I hope that this may set the record right or at least ensure that Robinson's claims are not dismissed out of hand by those ill-qualified to judge them.

Lawrence James

St. Andrews, Scotland

E.H.T. Robinson: In Perspective

The errors and omissions of your edited version of the E.H.T. Robinson obituary call for correction as does the original obituary which prompted Hugh Leach's commentary (*TE Notes*, April 1994).

Robinson's demotion occurred in Egypt after a clash with a member of the Egyptian Labour Corps. His ship was not torpedoed on its way to Imbros nor, as the original obituary has it, from Imbros, but between Marseilles and Alexandria—an entirely separate voyage from the Imbros evacuation. The detail of his desert wanderings (ambiguous as to dates) which appeared in the original, but were omitted from your version, are at odds with Robinson's own recorded account.

The story of desert wanderings was clearly the claim of the obituarist, not E.H.T. Robinson, to whom it was attributed by Hugh Leach (*TE Notes*, April 1994) and the latter's dismissal of the details as given in the original obituary as preposterous was correct. However, Robinson did not claim to have written a 250-page story of his service with Lawrence, the extra fifty pages were obviously a slip by, rather than a fantasy of, Hugh Leach, one of the sanest of Arabian travelers.

Robinson's own account makes it clear that he was hit by shrapnel after his entry into Damascus. He recalls being picked up by tribesmen and fighting with them before his return to Damascus. His account of this period is coherent and though short on exact detail contains none of the exaggeration of his obituary.

In concluding that Robinson's potential as a source would have been regarded as valuable had "Lawrence historians" known he was alive, Hugh Leach appears to have overlooked the fact that Michael Yardley did interview Robinson. Yardley does not mention the c.1920 work claimed by Robinson, but states that after *Lawrence* (1935), Robinson "began to write a second biography for Jonathan Cape" which "was never printed." (It was actually set in type by Cape before that publisher decided not to proceed with publication. This writer has now arranged to read that manuscript which might, of course, present a different version of the desert wanderings.) Robinson did not go to ground, the biographers chose not to accept him as a source. Nor did he claim to have "played a central part" in the Hejaz campaign. Robinson claimed to have been an active participant, which he was, but nothing above his rank or duties, the former quite junior, the latter important. In Joyce's camp throughout until Damascus, he was obviously privy to events and played his

part in them. He does appear guilty of writing into his diary accounts of what he might have heard or later read about, i.e. the action at Tafas of which there is not lack of collateral except for Robinson's own presence.

There being no other Robinson listed by Lawrence other than the T.R. Robinson of the R.A.S.C. detachment in the *Seven Pillars* appendix, Hugh Leach is oddly dismissive of the possibility that the T.R. and E.H.T. might be one and the same. Lawrence lists S.C. Rolls as S.E. and Lowe with the initial E. (Rolls calls the latter Tommy, but Robinson's account identifies him by rank, Corporal, and surname.) Robinson's third name, Tyler, might be the basis for T.R., but, also, in *The Times* notice of Robinson's death he is named "Edward Tyler Robinson (Ted/Rob/Robbie) sole survivor of T.E. Lawrence's Hejaz Campaign 1918-19"—more T's and X's. Is it not conceivable that Lawrence was as inconsistent with personal names as with place names and Arabic transliteration? But surely the stronger argument is Robinson's own statement that he was a Corporal in the R.A.S.C. detached to the Hejaz Mission with the duties of clerk typist. In identifying him as a wireless operator, Hugh Leach's conclusion was logical but incorrect.

But the origin of the desert wanderings story and Robinson's identity and role in the campaign, if any, are questions more of interest than importance. Rather than clarifying these points Mr. Graham Chainey (in the further clipping sent you by Hugh Leach) widens the debate and so touches on the more important question of how Robinson's two books on Lawrence should be regarded. The obituary did not pass over "some of the more contentious aspects of his [Robinson's] connection with T.E. Lawrence" as Mr. Chainey claimed in quoting from Tabachnik, but those of the Robinson—A.W. Lawrence connection which had such unfortunate consequences.

Evaluation of Robinson's first book, almost sixty years ago, still stands. *Lawrence*, the Oxford University Press publication, "was written for youth, to give them a straightforward, simple account of the exploits of a wonderful Englishman, who himself was the spirit of youth and adventure." A.W. Lawrence, in his introductory note to that book, wrote "The author of this book was himself an eye-witness of many of the scenes described. I have read the proofs of the book, and find no errors of fact, while the general picture seems to me as accurate as could be reasonably expected in a book of its purpose." Robinson's account of the Dera'a incident followed the 1935 publication of *Seven Pillars*, but seems less directly attributable to that source than the account

in Charles Edmonds' *T.E. Lawrence*, published in November of that year.

A.W. Lawrence's note suggests that he was satisfied with Robinson's claim to have served within sight and sound of his brother. The book is wholly in keeping with his qualified commendation and Robinson's stated objective. (Although a dramatised account; it is closer to reality than David Lean's film.)

The book was reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1935 together with *T.E. Lawrence* by Charles Edmonds and *Lawrence of Arabia* by R.H. Kiernan. The reviewer wrote:

Even so the last [*Seven Pillars of Wisdom*] offered more chances than restrictions to a writer who might have an inclination toward sensationalism and was not scrupulous about his means. The authors of these three books under review have eschewed such a temptation.....

On Robinson's book, he concludes:

Although it generally keeps to the facts, it has a curious tendency to confuse their sequence: such errors would not be so easy to overlook if the book were regarded as more than a biographical sketch for boys.

The second book, *Lawrence the Rebel*, is an interesting, straightforward account which few biographers of Lawrence have listed or referred to and there does not appear to be any contemporary review to draw on. Philip O'Brien's comment that it "has experienced some neglect" is more sober and balanced than Yardley's claim that the book "which could and should have proved a best seller, vanished without trace."

Mr. Chainey quotes Stephen Tabachnik on the point that a check by the Ministry of Defence (for Robinson) has so far [i.e. 1988] proven inconclusive," but this only suggests that the search has not been pursued. Mr. Chainey's claim that Robinson's book contains "valuable (if unverifiable) information about the campaign" also suggests that Mr. Chainey is unfamiliar with official records and other writings.

Stephen Tabachnik's comments on *Lawrence the Rebel* in *Images of Lawrence* are oddly inconsistent: Robinson's sources are "vague or unnamed" and "his reluctance to name sources renders his story speculative" yet Robinson's "many verifiable and original details of the campaign" could "easily

have been contradicted by others who were there." Why would they have wished to have done so? Tabachnik's point—that they did not—lends some credence to Robinson's account. Also, the sources named in the latter's list of acknowledgments (and elsewhere in the text) are well known. In general his quotations are generally both traceable and accurate (and it should be borne in mind that, through A.W. Lawrence, he had access to T.E. Lawrence's copy of the *Arab Bulletin*).

"THAUR"

Name and address supplied on request (dmd)

Isabelle Eberhardt
by Malcolm Allen

Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904), a Russian born in Switzerland who married an Algerian colonial soldier and became a French citizen, lived nomadically for the last four years or so of her life in North Africa, where she became a Muslim and outraged other conventional European decencies by dressing as a man, drinking and smoking *kif* [*hashish* (dmd)] heavily, and taking lovers (but she also did a little intelligence work on the side for the French General Lyautey, who was trying to pacify Morocco at the time). She died in a flash flood at Ain Sefra, in western Algeria.

Seen in the earlier years of the century as a romantic free spirit, she has more recently been depicted as a politically naive victim of her addictions and depressive tendencies. The interested will find further information in Cecily Mackworth's biography *The Destiny of Isabelle Eberhardt* (1951) and in Annette Kobak's *Isabelle: The Life of Isabelle Eberhardt* (1989). Only recently published by Owen (London) is Sharon Bangert's translation of a work based on a 1904 journal, *In the Shadow of Islam*, described by the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer as "a highly personal, quirky collection of vignettes of desert life, carefully and evocatively rendered, divided into headed sections each comprising at most a few pages" (24 December, 1993, p.23).

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reviewer is not the first person to yoke together the names of Isabelle Eberhardt and TEL. Rana Kabbani's edition of the former's diary [*The Passionate Nomad* (1987)] contains the following extraordinary sentence:

Like Flaubert, who was finally able to shake off the moral restrictions of Rouen when he engaged Cairene prostitutes; like André Gide or T.E. Lawrence, who only

managed to come out of their respective closets when they solicited the services of Arab boys....Isabelle Eberhardt's North African voyage was a sexual trip in the contemporary sense of the word. (p. vi)

The above is in response to the question I posed after the "TE Sighting" on page 9 of the April TE Notes issue. Thank you Malcolm for answering the question. (dmd)

Isabelle Eberhardt - Continued by Shea Johnson

A postcard from Shea Johnson contains some more information. It reads...

Re: Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904). She was the illegitimate daughter of Mme. Nathalie Charlotte Dorothée de Moerder, née Eberhardt (scion of an aristocratic Prussian family in Moscow) and Alexander Nikolaevitch Trophimowsky, tutor to her three legitimate children.

Isabelle was a rebel who sought identity in the Sahara among the Arabs, dressed as a boy, claimed her father was a Muslim Turk, made several dangerous journeys across desert North Africa. She eventually married Slimène Ehnni, a young Arab spahi (cavalry) sergeant, and died in Ain Sefra, Algeria in a flash flood.

Despite her early death she wrote prolifically in the attempt to rationalise and share the mysticism and magnificence of that Sahara.

Annette Kobak wrote a comprehensive biography, *Life of Isabelle Eberhardt*, which was published in a Penguin edition in 1990 for £6.99.

Shea Johnson
Oxford, England

More on Isabelle Eberhardt

Isabelle Eberhardt was in no way "the female equivalent of Lawrence of Arabia" (*T.E. Notes*, April 1994). No doubt the producers of the play *New Anatomies* made the comparison to attract attention.

Those who are familiar with North African history at the turn of the century will know of Isabelle Eberhardt, a Russian wanderer who spent the last seven years of her short life mainly in Algeria. After

* French form of Suliman which is Arabic for Solomon.

her death her journals were published by a French journalist and editor who had befriended her, the first being *Dans l'ombre Chaude d'Islam* in 1905. There were other manuscripts published later.

But Isabelle might be known to the *Notes'* subscribers through Lesley Blanch's *The Wilder Shores of Love*; two biographies of comparatively recent years, by Cecily Mackworth and Annette Kobak; and *The Passionate Nomad: The Diary of Isabelle Eberhardt* (published in London about six years ago—an incomplete version of her journals with an introduction which is little more than an expanded version of Stuart Eisen's fax.)

"THAUR"

Anonymous contribution; name and address supplied. (dmd)

The Clouds Hill Bookplate Mystery Revisited by Janet Riesman

Two readers of *TE Notes* have sent us additional information about Lawrence's Clouds Hill Library and its dispersal (See the original article in *TE Notes*, Vol. V, No. 2). Normally we would credit the contributions of our readers, but since we are dealing with the sensitive issue of what is in people's private collections, we will simply express our thanks to those who wrote us and say we respect your wish for privacy.

From these communications, I learned that I was mistaken. Not *all* of the Clouds Hill Library Books were sold in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s by A.W. Lawrence through J. Wilson of Bumpus' Bookshop in London. AWL retained a good portion of TE's books, and did not put them up for sale until 1985 when they were offered to the public through Archie Miles, formerly an antiquarian bookseller near Pateley Bridge, Harrogate, North Yorkshire. Apparently AWL sold them at the time he was in the process of moving to the south of England from his home in Bouthwaite, Upper Nidderdale in the Yorkshire Dales.

None of these books contain a Clouds Hill bookplate, although many of them did have TE's initials on the front end papers—usually written TES, but in several cases TEL, sometimes diagonally in the top corner.

Among the books in TE's library that AWL held back from sale in the thirties, forties and fifties and did not sell until 1985 are: P. De Comines, *The History of Comines* (London, 1897); Joseph Conrad, *The Arrow of Gold* (New York, 1919); Lord Dunsany, *The Travel Tales of Mr. Joseph Jorkens* (London, 1931); Golden Legend, *The Golden Legend*, 3 vols. (Ham-

mersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1892); W.H. Hudson, *Idle Days in Patagonia* (London, 1933) and *The Naturalist in La Plata* (London, 1923); John de Mandeville's *Travels* (London, 1990); Herman Melville's *White Jacket* (London, 1927) and *Redburn* (London, 1922); George Meredith's *Selected Poems* (London, 1897); Kuno Meyer's *Ancient Irish Poetry* (London, 1913); and *The Original Poems of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey*, inscribed "M. to L., 25.12.29."

Who the "M" is is a mystery and the present owner wonders if any of our readers can identify this "M" who presumably inscribed the Howard poems to TE.

One correspondent confirms the story of the fake book plates with a story of his own. He writes:

It was some five or six years ago that I was shown, by a reputable London dealer, a number of books reputed to be "from the library of T.E. Lawrence." These did not look at all right to me; the bookplates did not match others that I had seen that were from authenticated books from Clouds Hill and the "TE" initials looked very suspect. I voiced these concerns, which were initially rejected, and suggested that they make further investigations. Some weeks later I was telephoned to be told that the books had been withdrawn from sale.

He highly recommended an article by J.G. Wilson of Bumpus' Bookshop entitled "The Business of Bookselling," which first appeared in 1930 in the Bookseller's Association publications and is full of wise advice for booksellers and collectors alike.

Sounds like it might be worth looking for!

Reader Comments

I ought to stop wasting your time but the *Notes* never cease to call to mind happy occasions from the past. I purchased my copy of Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart* way back in the forties. Two or three years later I did my National Service at an airbase called Lyneham, which is miles from anywhere in the middle of Wiltshire. Swindon was our nearest metropolis.

When off duty in the summer I would go out to the Coate Water swimming and boating and on one occasion climbed up on the Ridge Way, an old prehistoric track running along the crest of the chalk hills and visited Liddington Camp; a prehistoric earthwork which was his "particular hill" mentioned in Janet's article on Williamson. Coate Water was

also the scene of Jefferies' boy's adventure *Bevis*, Britain's answer to *Huckleberry Finn* without all the dialect to wade through!!!

Norman Hurst

Surrey, England

Norman refers to an article about TE, Henry Williamson, and Richard Jefferies in TE Notes, Vol. V, No. 3. (jar)

Lawrence of South Dakota: A T.E. Sighting by Malcolm Allen

An interesting addendum to Robert Hawkins' piece (*TE Notes*, Vol. 5, No. 3) and the "movie" issue of September 1993, is an article by Ward Churchill entitled "Lawrence of South Dakota." First published in *Z Magazine* in May 1991 and reprinted between hard covers in Churchill's *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of the American Indians* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1992), pp. 243-247, the article is a fairly harsh criticism of *Dances With Wolves*. Set in the last century, Churchill sees the film as an evasion of our contemporary obligation to do something about "the real struggles of living native people...[and to] engage directly with concrete issues like expropriation of water rights and minerals, involuntary sterilization, and FBI repression of Indian activists." (p.246)

Dances with Wolves, writes Churchill, "follows the formula established by *Lawrence of Arabia*: Arabs and Arab culture handled in a superficially respectful manner, and framed by some of the most gorgeous landscape photography imaginable." (p. 245). He continues:

In order to understand the implications of this structural linkage between then two movies, it is important to remember that despite the hoopla attending *Lawrence's* calculated gestures to the Bedouins. the film proved to be of absolutely no benefit to the peoples of the Middle East (just think of the Palestinians and Lebanese). To the contrary, its major impact was to put a "tragic" but far more humane face upon the nature of Britain's imperial pretensions in the region, making colonization of the Arabs seem more acceptable—or at least more inevitable—than might otherwise have been the case. So too do we encounter this contrived sense of sad inevitability in the closing scenes of *Dances with Wolves*, as Lt. Dunbar and the female "captive" he has

"recovered" ride off into the proverbial sunset, leaving the Lakota "friends" to be slaughtered by and subordinated to the United States. Fate closes upon Indian and Arab alike, despite the best efforts of well-intentioned white men like the two good lieutenants. ("We're not *all* bad, y'know.") (p.245)

I recommend the entire article to anyone interested in TEL, the modern cinema, or popular Western representations of other cultures. Churchill is Associate Professor of Indian Studies and Communications at the University of Colorado, and the author or editor of more than half a dozen books on American Indian matters.

Malcolm Allen

Menasha, Wisconsin

A T.E. Sighting

Bonnie Schriefer of Baldwin, Maryland, wrote us to say that:

Bert Ogle, a pro golfer in the Hawaiian Open Golf Tournament, said that he felt like "Lawrence of Arabia" when he kept winding up in the sand bunkers! The announcer then proceeded to call him "Sir Lawrence."

Bookseller's Corner

If we can have an "Editor's Corner," I suppose we can have one of the above. I haven't, until now, advertised my book selling activities in *TE Notes*. Most readers have opted to be either subscribers and *not* book customers, or subscribers *and* book customers. I have respected subscribers of both kinds by not openly selling books in *TE Notes* and have not enclosed book lists with issues for those who have opted to be "subscribers only."

I have, however, a number of specially priced books to sell and, by mentioning them in this manner, you "subscribers only" won't be bothered with unwanted book lists accompanying your issues. You have the option of requesting the lists only if interested.

SPECIALLY PRICED BOOKS: I have a list of seventeen books quoted to me by a book scout in the U.K. Some have been in "Coming Attractions" for several months with no "takers," so I've decided to reduce the prices drastically. The books are in the U.K. and surface postage is included in the prices. If you're interested, request a "SPECIAL PRICE LIST."

BARGAIN PRICED BOOKS: I've lowered the prices on sixty-five books that have been on my shelves

for more than two years. Most are priced at less than \$10.00 (including postage). If you wish a listing of them, request a "BARGAIN BOOK LIST."

Denis McDonnell

A T.E. Quote

"There are fleas of all grades; and so I have felt the awkward feeling of having smaller creatures than myself admiring me." Garnett, ed., *Letters*, No. 465.

The T.E. Lawrence Society

Those of you who still haven't joined the T.E. Lawrence Society may write us at *TE Notes* for an application or write directly to Carol Macdonald, Membership Secretary, T.E. Lawrence Society, Flat 1UR, 14 Old Mill Rd., Kilmarnock, Scotland HA1 3AN.

The Society publishes both a newsletter, issued four times a year with short, informal articles and news of the Society's activities, and a journal that appears twice a year and contains scholarly articles about Lawrence and his world. A year's membership in the Society, which includes a subscription to all their publications, is £12.50 in the UK and £16.50 over seas. They also accept US dollar checks.

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Denis, Janet, and Mary