



Diana Lunkwitz (Herausgeber)
Jayabalan Murthy (Herausgeber)
UNITY, THEOSOPHY, AND INTERRELIGIOSITY
From Chicago 1893 to Chicago 1933

SRWIT

Vol 1

STUDIEN IN RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT UND INTERKULTURELLER THEOLOGIE
STUDIES IN RELIGION AND INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY

**UNITY, THEOSOPHY, AND
INTERRELIGIOSITY**

From Chicago 1893 to Chicago 1933

Diana K. Lunkwitz



Edited by Diana Lunkwitz & Jayabalan Murthy



Cuvillier Verlag Göttingen
Internationaler wissenschaftlicher Fachverlag

<https://cuvillier.de/de/shop/publications/9032>

Copyright:

Cuvillier Verlag, Inhaberin Annette Jentzsch-Cuvillier, Nonnenstieg 8, 37075 Göttingen,
Germany

Telefon: +49 (0)551 54724-0, E-Mail: info@cuvillier.de, Website: <https://cuvillier.de>

INTRODUCTION

Historical context

“All Kinds of Theosophy will be Represented at the Parliament of Religions: Buddhists and the Like. (*The Washington Post*)”¹ Analyzing *Theosophy* as part of the conceptualization of religion presents a significant approach for re-reading the *World’s Parliament of Religions* in Chicago in 1893. The Theosophical Society and the worldviews represented by it decisively shaped the concept of religion at this Congress of Religions and in the following interreligious movement corresponding to congresses that targeted to exhibit religion.

Theosophy had its first transcontinental and public performance as religion at the *World’s Columbian Exposition*. The exhibition of *the world* is depicted, for instance, on the award for professor Julius Kühn (1825–1910) and the *Landeswirtschaftliches Institut der Universitaet Halle, Germany* (see Illustration 1). Here *Columbia* leans with her right arm on a slain bison² and – in the role of a white, Greek, instructing mother—points in the direction of three stereotypes of a Native American boy, a European boy, and an African boy. In the lower half of the image, *Columbus* holds the imperial orb in his hand and steers a pirogue, rowed by the four continents, represented as female stereotypes.

Mark Twain’s (1835–1910) und Charles Dudley Warner’s (1829–1900) satirical novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873) was haptically located on the neoclassical facades of the *White City*. No visible slums existed here. Visiting the exposition was for enjoyment purposes. In contrast, the social reforms and social criticisms of the *Progressive Era* (1890s to 1920s) were also perceptible in the lectures on the *Social Question* and *Conditions* in the congresses organized by the *Department of Religion*.

In a specific US legal framework, the American Section of the Theosophical Society recognized an opportunity very early on to present its *theosophy* to the world at the Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Charles Carroll Bonney (1831–1903), former judge of the Supreme Court and the president of all the *World’s Congresses* in Chicago had formulated the general scope of the congress: “*To unite all Religion against all Irreligion; to make the Golden Rule the basis of this union.*”

¹ *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1893, p. 10 (no author).

² The extensive hunting of bison in areas considered “the frontier” for the spread of “civilization” was a well-known strategy for the indirect murder of local communities. See William Knighton, *Struggles for Life*, Third Edition (London, Edinburgh 1888), p. 250; Stewart L. Udall, *The Quiet Crisis. Introduction by John F. Kennedy* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco 1963), p. 65.

Kenten Druyvesteyn referred to Emanuel Swedenborg's *Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Providence* to explain why Bonney did not predefine "irreligion" by which "he probably meant the lack of religion."³ The aim to unite also signified a reference point in the historiography of the United States. The *Declaration of Independence* (1776), the *Constitution of the United States* (1789) and the *Emancipation Proclamation* (1862/1863) are reference texts intending to achieve *unity*. They served as a way to break free from Europe and construct *the American*, but their equality, proclaimed and imagined on the basis of natural law and creation theology, referred solely to the American, conceived as free-born, white, and male.

David James Burrell (1844–1926), the pastor of *Marble Collegiate Church* in New York, described *the American* using the *Old-New* dichotomy as well as mixed metaphors such as the "mingling of many bloods." In the reality of hierarchical Social Darwinism, this assimilation process aimed to bring "the oppressed of all nations" into alignment with the English or the Anglo-Saxons. The multitude is to be "uplifted" to the ideal and pure singularity of the (imagined) *white race*, with religion, as a juridical entity, placed alongside "equality," "the brotherhood of man," "the Fatherhood of God," and "freedom" to ensure the continuance of the Christian nation. Both the concept of "uplifting the race" and the segregation policies in the Southern states following the American Civil War (see the *Jim Crow Laws*) perpetuated the imperial narrative of a constructed American—male, white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. At the *Woman's Congress of Missions*, the unifying task of women's work and the Republic was also understood as the solution to the so-called race problem or "the negro problem,"⁴ starting with the *Home Mission*. So, in her mission appeal, Baptist Mary G. Burdette (1842–1907) called for patriotic education work to be conducted as: "Lift up the woman and you lift up the race. Save the home and you save the nation."⁵ Progressive thinking, as part of nation-building, was therefore embodied in the Home Mission, which aimed at a supposed social, moral, racial and gender uplift.

Fannie Barrier Williams (1855–1944) was the only black woman whose podium speeches survived. She called for an assimilation of the religion of the "white Christians."⁶ Her criticism of the aforementioned "golden rule" as a basis for religious unity stated:

³ *The World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: Programme of The World's Religious Congresses of 1893*, Preliminary Edition, n. p.; Kenten Druyvesteyn, "The World's Parliament of Religions," Ph.D. Dissertation (Chicago 1976), p. 19 cf. John P. Burris, *Exhibiting Religion. Colonialism and Spectacle at International Expositions 1851–1893* (Charlottesville, London 2001), p. 148.

⁴ Elwood M. Wherry (ed.), *Woman in Missions. Papers and Addresses presented at the Woman's Congress of Missions October 2–4, 1893* (New York 1894), p. 125.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁶ Walter R. Houghton (ed.), *Neely's History of The Parliament of Religions and Religious Congresses at the World's Columbian Exposition*. Compiled from Original Manuscripts and Stenographic Reports, Two Volumes (Chicago 1893), p. 636.

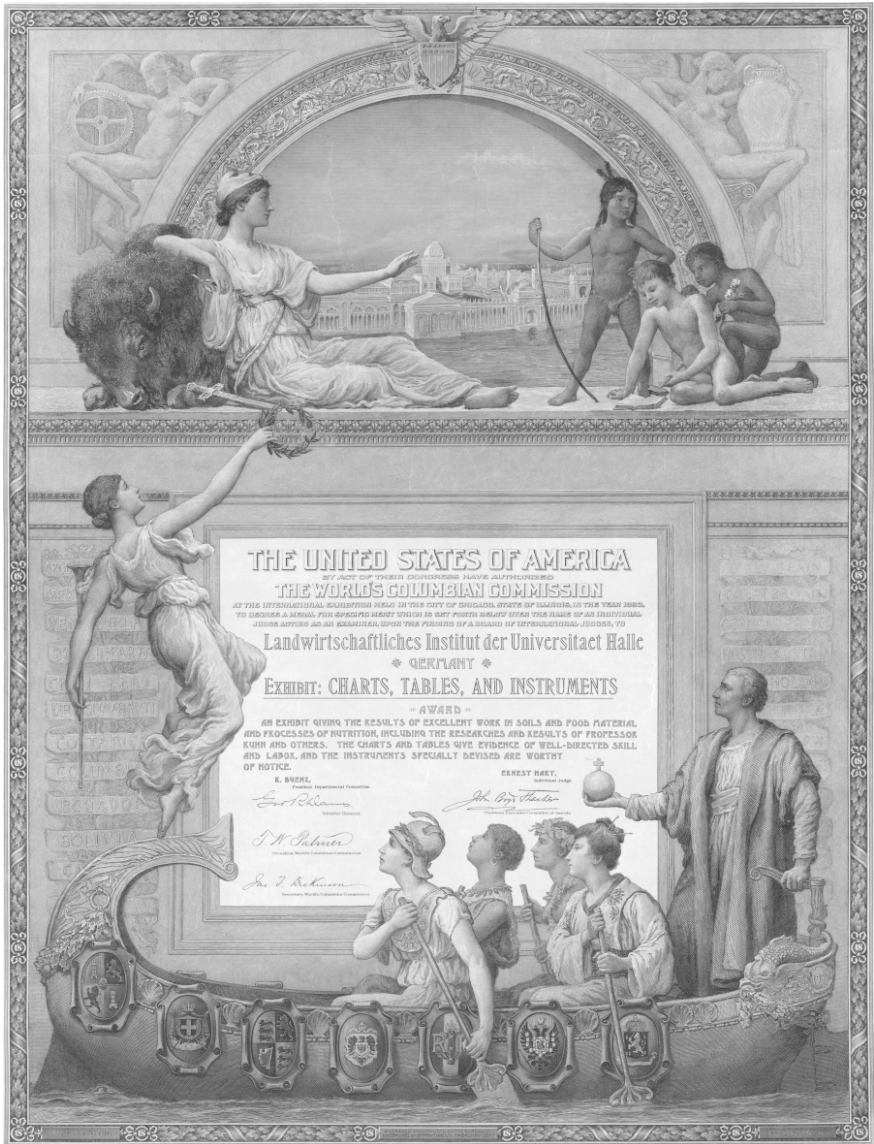


Illustration 1 "Kühn-Urkunde"

Source: Universitätsarchiv Halle-Wittenberg (UAHW), Rep. 54, Nr. 171.

The golden rule of fellowship taught in the Christian Bible becomes in practice the iron rule of race hatred. Can religion help the American people to be consistent and to live up to all they profess and believe in their government and religion? What we need is such a reinforcement of the gentle power of religion that all souls of whatever color shall be included within the blessed circle of its influence.⁷

In the two volumes by Chairman John Henry Barrows (1847–1902), all passages of Williams that defile *Christian*, *civilized* and *America* are edited, censored, or deleted. In the lecture given by Benjamin W. Arnett (1838–1906), bishop of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church*, Barrows also deleted any comments on *Christianity* in the co-text of *slavery*. Nevertheless, in Arnett’s texts the power constellation remained with the intent of “whitening” all black people. *America* was Arnett’s appropriated entity of his imperialist interest “to colonize Africa with ‘Christian Negroes from America.’” Consequently, according to D. Keith Naylor, Arnett was one of the “many black nationalists.”⁸ *Africa* therefore was not positioned under “religion,” but instead under “ethnic,” as John P. Burris has demonstrated.⁹ Classifying Prince Momulu Massaquoi (1869/1870–1938), who later became the Consul General for Liberia in the German Empire, as a “native African prince” had an ethnic point of reference. Vivekānanda and Massaquoi, for instance, countered the classification of *ethnic* under *idolatry*.¹⁰ In the US branches of the Theosophical Society, whose members were predominately white positioned men and women, politically and socially constructed ideologies and concepts of “race” were legitimized, continued and reinterpreted.

Alongside African-Americans, Jews and Sabbatians, Richard Hughes Seager counts the Roman Catholic Church to the four subgroups of the “Gilded Age” that were granted access to the “Columbian myth of America” und presented by the Congress of Religions.¹¹ The unifying, constitutionally patriotic element of the republic, the civil religion, was exhibited in Chicago as a crucial stage in the historiography of religions in the United States of America—a construct based on immigration and imperialist conquest. “Jews” and “Catholics” had joined the “civil religion” with “Protestants” and “secular humanists” since independence. However, it was not until the immigration of persecuted Polish Jews from the settlement areas of the Russian Tsarist Empire starting in

⁷ Barrows II (ed.), p. 1115.

⁸ D. Keith Naylor, “The Black Presence at the World’s Parliament” in: *Religion*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July 1996), p. 255.

⁹ Burris, *Exhibiting Religion*, p. 112. On the *Congress on Africa* see esp. pp. 144–141.

¹⁰ Regarding Massaquoi see John Henry Barrows (ed.), *The World’s Parliament of Religions. An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World’s First Parliament of Religions*, Vol. I (Chicago 1893), p. 172; Paul Carus, *The Dawn of a New Era. The Religion of Science Library, September 1899*, No. 39 (Chicago 1899), p. 13.

¹¹ Richard H. Seager, *The World’s Parliament of Religions. The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893* (Bloomington, Indianapolis 2009 [1995]), pp. 18–23.

1881 that Jewish citizens obtained a broader social relevance.¹² For Judaism, being placed at the top of the program of the individual congresses meant further acceptance and the possibility of self-inscription into *nation-Christianity*. Moreover, in line with the *Eleventh U.S. Census of 1890*, Henry K. Carroll placed Catholics at the top of the “five leading denominational families,” followed by the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and Lutherans.¹³

In addition to European-Atlantic migration, whose relevance in the 1890s is particularly reflected in the proceedings of the *Denominational Congresses* (at the *Jewish Congresses*: migration from Russia), Pung Kwang Yu (1844–?), for instance, addressed the tense situation with China from the plenary stage. As the First Secretary of the *Chinese Legation at Washington* he urged Europe and the US to display mutual respect.¹⁴ The enactment of the *Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882* prevented immigration from China until 1943. In 1892 the law was strengthened by the *Geary Act*. Migrants from China were blamed for the economic crisis. According to *The New York Times*, Viceroy Li Hung Chang (1823–1901) had threatened to sever friendly ties with US citizens in China if the restrictions continued beyond the term of the next *United States Congress*.¹⁵

The supremacy of the English language in terms of pronunciation, translations, and representations as a guarantor of a “civilized status” is also evident in Yu’s text. Translations of his texts by Yung Kwai (1861–1943) were read by various people. Barrows euphemistically initiated the hegemonic claim of English as world language in *textus* and *lingua*.¹⁶ According to the leading Presbyterian missionary in Ottoman-Syrian Beirut Henry Harris Jessup (1832–1910) the “Religious Mission of the English-Speaking Nations” was to eliminate “diversity [of religion]” and “differences [of race].” Jessup is said to have been the first to publicly refer to the nascent Bahá’í religion, due to the missive of Mirza Husain-‘Ali Nuri (*Bahā’ullāh*) that is assumed to be the possible first encounter¹⁷ Jessup’s mapping of anglophone nations created the United States and Great Britain as geographically, geopolitically, and climatically superior. Their advantages would virtually predestine them to colonize others, dominate the world, and solve global problems.¹⁸

¹² Michael Hochgeschwender, “Religionsgeographie der USA: Pluralität zwischen Konfrontation und Kooperation” in: Werner Gamerith, Ulrike Gerhard (eds.), *Kulturgeographie der USA* (Berlin 2017), pp. 28, 29.

¹³ Barrows II (ed.), pp. 1164, 1163.

¹⁴ Barrows I (ed.), p. 424.

¹⁵ Cf. “China’s Threat to Retaliate. An Alleged Message from Viceroy Li to President Cleveland” in: *The New York Times* (August 23, 1893), p. 5 (no author).

¹⁶ Barrows II (ed.), p. 1569.

¹⁷ Houghton (ed.), p. 641; Barrows II (ed.), p. 1126; [Editors], “Persecution and Protection: Documents about Bahá’is, 1867, 1897, and 1902: An 1867 Petition from Bahá’is in Shushtar, Iran, to the U. S. Congress” in: *World Order*, Series 2, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring 2006), p. 32.

¹⁸ Barrows II (ed.), pp. 1122, 1123.

The translators Noguchi Zenshirō (1864–?; “interpreter for Buddhist bishops”¹⁹) and Hirai Kinzō (1859–1916), both members of the Theosophical Society, illustrated the authority embodied in the translated writings.²⁰ According to the second object of the Theosophical Society to foster the study of “Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences”²¹, Noguchi promoted bilateral language learning. Moreover, the unwavering assertion that his society was “unsectarian”²² is evident. Both Hirai and Noguchi had previously organized the travels of the society’s president, Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907), through Japan.²³ Their presentations corresponded to Olcott’s instruction for the Theosophical Congress that:

nothing shall be said or done by any Delegate or Committee of the Society to identify it, as a body, with any special form of religion, creed, sect, or any religious or ethical teacher or leader; our duty being to affirm and defend its perfect corporate neutrality in these matters.²⁴

Even though both translators became part of the unifying civilization project, Hirai and Noguchi also strategically used the provinciality of the conquerors in their translocal translation process in order to propagate their own interests. After the congress, they broke away from the Theosophical Society, as did other Buddhist delegates (for example, Dharmapāla), whereas Olcott referred to Noguchi and Hirai as “representative Japanese converts” to the “Unitarian Movement” in Japan. Furthermore, Nagarkar equated *Unitarianism* in England and the United States of America with *Brahmo-Samaj*.²⁵

Semantics such as *civilization*, *mission*, *transform* and *convert* represented the imperialist constellations of power and the existing concept of expanding space. Frederick Jackson Turner’s (1861–1932) lecture “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” delivered at the *World’s Historical Congress* on July 12, 1893, vividly expressed the ambivalent process of conquering (“settlement”) the construction of an American frontier as the first site of *over-settlement* (“Americanization”) with the intent “to transform the

¹⁹ Ibid., 1597 cf. Stephen Kemper, *Rescued from the Nation. Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World* (Chicago, London 2015), p. 149.

²⁰ See Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West. Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill, London 2003), p. 179; Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Lotus Sūtra. A Biography* (Princeton, Oxford 2016), p. 181; Richard M. Jaffe, *Seeking Śākyamuni. South Asia in the Formation of Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Chicago, London 2019), p. 70.

²¹ *The Theosophical Congress, Held by The Theosophical Society at the Parliament of Religions, World’s Fair of 1893, at Chicago, Ill., September 15, 16, 17. Report of Proceedings and Documents* (New York 1893), p. 194.

²² Ibid., pp. 96–106 (William Quan Judge).

²³ Judith Snodgrass, “Japan’s Contribution to Modern Global Buddhism: The World’s Parliament of Religions Revisited” in: *The Eastern Buddhist. New Series*, Vol. 43, No. 1/2 (2012), p. 86.

²⁴ *The Theosophical Congress*, p. 13.

²⁵ James Mark Shields, *Against Harmony. Progressive and Radical Buddhism in Modern Japan* (New York 2017), p. 52; [Henry Steel Olcott], “The Unitarian Movement in Japan” in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. XXII, No. 4 (January 1901), p. 247; C. M. Stevans (ed.), *The World’s Congress of Religions. Being a Complete and Concise History of the Most Inspiring Convocation of Civilization* (Chicago 1894), pp. 200, 201.

wilderness.”²⁶ An ideologically produced *space of cultural difference, savagery and civilization* cannot be firmly located (*displacement*) in the space in between. Their meanings were “negotiated” in the *space of liminality*, in which time and space are constantly reproduced.²⁷ While Turner and the *Eleventh U. S. Census of 1890* no longer considered the frontier relevant because the United States would now encompass the East and West, the narrative continued at the congresses of the *Department of Religion*, especially as “frontier work” under *Home Mission*. Thus, at the *World’s Congress of Missions*, the frontier was both shrinking and being retained in order to position the *Home Mission*.²⁸ Missionary work on the frontier aimed at the eradication of the frontier and “the production of the nation as narration”²⁹ (Homi K. Bhabha). Thus, negotiations at a dynamic and non-localizable apparent frontier or western border were aimed at inventing and localizing something named *American*. The construction of the nation is based on a narrative of imagined and seized frontiers. Although we know of their presence at the World’s Columbian Exposition, groups conceptualized on the imagined frontier, such as “Mormons, Indians, Negroes”—to be transformed in terms of the concepts of nation and religion (through *education*)—were not assigned a place on the stages of the congress under the motto “all religion” as an ideological, legally legitimized creation.

For further transreligious and transnational congresses, argumentation strategies were established in Chicago with the guiding figures of *Akbar* and *Asoka*. While *Akbar* was given the function of uniting the religions, *Asoka* then entered historiographies on interreligious (Ulrich Dehn, 2019) and interfaith dialogue (Marcus Braybrooke, 1992) as the “Buddhist emperor of India”³⁰. Ulrich Dehn points out that Akbar had already declared *tauhīd-i ilāhī* to be a multi-confessional state religion in 1582 and presented himself like a Sufi master over a religious order.³¹ According to James Freeman Clarke (1810–1888), the third *Oecumenical Council*, initiated by Asoka, had been convened to combat heretics. Afterwards, missionaries were sent to various countries.³² In addition to Dharmapāla (1864–1933), who used the figure of *Asoka* to describe his higher ethics,³³ Vivekānanda (1863–1902) displayed a surpassing of *Akbar* to explain his universal religion (with *Lord Buddha*):

²⁶ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” in: *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington 1894), p. 201.

²⁷ See Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London, New York 2009 [1990]), pp. 299, 300.

²⁸ Elwood Morris Wherry (ed.), *Missions at Home and Abroad. Papers and Addresses presented at the World’s Congress of Missions, October 2–4, 1893* (New York 1895), p. 97.

²⁹ Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, p. 297.

³⁰ Barrows I (ed.), p. 1591.

³¹ Ulrich Dehn, *Geschichte des interreligiösen Dialogs* (Berlin 2019), p. 93.

³² James Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions. An Essay in Comparative Theology*, Thirtieth Edition (Boston, New York, Cambridge, Mass. 1893), pp. 140, 151.

³³ Barrows II (ed.), p. 873.

Asoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith. Akbar's, though more to the purpose, was only a parlor-meeting. It was reserved for America to call, to proclaim to all quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every religion.³⁴

Akbar was probably not co-textualized with Islam at the Congress of Religions because there were great reservations about Islam being categorized as "Oriental." For example, in his opening speech, Barrows staged himself in the role of Paul, the *apostle to those Gentiles*, when he preached about Jesus in the Parthenon Temple.³⁵ After the Chicago congress, Barrows went on a lecture tour to Japan and India (the *Haskell Barrows Lectures*), where he met with the president of the *Theosophical Society Adyar*, Henry Steel Olcott, in person for the first time.

The Congress of Religions in Chicago, including all of the *Department of Religion's* events and conferences, is only accessible via texts, interpreted from a present perspective. The *general scope* (*To unite...*), *10 objects*, and *21 themes* (see Appendix), which were formulated by the Swedenborgian jurist Bonney, as well as the *Common Prayer* had to ensure the unity—conceptualized and intended by the organizers. But in terms of the *politics of language* on the plenary stages, monolingualism cannot be assumed. The imperialist-dichotomous language ("West / Occident / civilized / white / America" vs. "East / Orient / uncivilized / non-white / India") was adopted and appropriated to serve the interests of the speakers. This chief characteristic of the contemporary language of the congress seemed apparently to no longer be enforceable in the Theosophical Society, although the later division of the society revealed that dichotomies had not been overcome here either.

On Chicago's stages, the society was exhibited and presented to the world public as a religion for the first time. Soon after Chicago, it became a key driving force for interreligious encounters at transnational congresses. Leading members in the Theosophical Society helped shape the debates on religion and the concept of religion. The society's motto "No Religion higher than Truth," which members wore on a pin in Chicago in 1893, provided a direct link to the main objective of the Congress of Religions for the many visitors and participants from various other denominations. The primary purpose of the Theosophical Society, to achieve "Universal Brotherhood,"³⁶ not

³⁴ Ibid., p. 977.

³⁵ Barrows I (ed.), p. 78.

³⁶ In April 1880, a statute confirmed by Kharsedji N. Seervai with "Universal Brotherhood of Humanity" provided a statutory basis for the Theosophical Society. The subheading refers to the adoption of the statute at the General Council in the palace of the Maharajah of Vizianagram in Benares on December 17, 1879. Kharsedji N. Seervai, "The Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood [Formed at New York, U. S. of America, October 30th, 1875]" in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. I, No. 7 (April 1880), p. 179. On *Universal Brotherhood* see J. Gordon Melton, "The Theosophical Communities and Their Ideal of Universal Brotherhood" in: Donald E. Pitzer (ed.), *America's Communal Utopias* (Chapel Hill 1997), p. 396; Joscelyn Godwin, "The Mahatma Letters" in: Tim Rudbø, Erik R. Sand (eds.), *Imagining the East. The Early Theosophical Society* (New York 2020), p. 136; Tim Rudbø, "The West Moves East: Blavatsky's 'Universal Brotherhood' in India" in: Ibid., pp. 273, 287.

only appeared to embrace *the general scope* of the Congress of Religions, but to surpass and perfect it.

The aim of this book

This book aims to shed light on the entanglements of the conceptualization of unity, religion and interreligiosity on congress stages with the Theosophical Society. In Chicago, the term *interreligious* was not yet in use. Due to the use of denomination, partly synonymous with *religion*, it is advisable to discuss the use of the concept of *interdenominational* for interreligiosity. In any case, the respective stage was significant for the exhibition of *religion* and *interreligiosity*. Who invited representatives, determined the program, opened and concluded congresses, decided on the negotiations on the stages in an explicit but not exclusive way? So, there are two sides coming together in this book: On the one hand, the historical events and actors investigated are considered elements which create the current field of study and the debates in it on interreligiosity, transreligiosity, and transculturality. On the other hand, there remains an awareness of the inscribing of the present previous understanding and challenges of interreligiosity through the reading perspective that cannot be bypassed.

The same applies to world religion and world Christianity. Furthermore, though these word pairs were also not yet in use, Christianity was placed, negotiated and conceptualized in relation to constructions of *the world* in Chicago in 1893; nevertheless, constructed realities of Christianity were not simply equated with “(all) religion.” This is illustrated in particular by the following closer examination of the individual congresses.

Overall, the book addresses three key research questions: first, how was the uniting of “all religion” staged at the Congress of Religions in Chicago 1893? Second, what role did the Chicago congress play in the history of the Theosophical Society? And third, what role did *theosophy* play in these *interreligious* encounters located on congress stages? This study therefore pursues three main research focuses: to demonstrate the negotiations on the topics of *unity* and *(ir-)religion*, mainly on stages at the *denominational*, *interdenominational*, and *other congresses* in Chicago; to elaborate the interdependencies between theosophy, the theosophical societies and the concepts of *unity* and *(ir-)religion* as well as their relevance for the study of religion at that time; and to examine the role of *theosophy* and *esotericism* at interreligious congresses after Chicago 1893.

Approach

In this *re-reading*, a discourse-analytical approach is used to examine the semantic spaces around *religion*. Since the processual work by the reader as *interpreter* requires various movements in thinking, procuring material, and interpreting performed as part of the translation process (again into textual language), reference can be made to Thomas A. Tweed's concepts of *translocative* and *moving across*.³⁷ His approach partly breaks down previous typological localizations and classifications into concepts and figures. He points out the specific spatial-local back and forth movements ("moved back and forth across the Pacific" with regard to "Western occult traditions"). However, on the textual level, his imaginations of spatiality do not go beyond categorizations of *mixed* or "blended."³⁸

Due to the focus on dynamics in perspectivity and positioning, conceptualizations or generalizations in the texts cannot offer extensive options for approaching the diversely imagined realities of people. The *reading* strategy pays attention to the elements such as analytical topoi, recontextualization, referential strategies, argumentation strategies, narrative perspectives, constellations of figures, time structure, semantic spaces and transtextual references.³⁹

Here the *co-text analysis* forms the basis of the analysis. Co-text refers to the next, initially text-internal, context (the linguistic unit of a text: sentence sequence, paragraph, chapter, article). According to Ruth Wodak's approach, which employs Basil Bernstein's (1924–2000) *Critical Theory* and *Sociolinguistics*, and according to which ideologies, identity constructions, and "truths" compete in a society, a co-text analysis within a text examines argumentation strategies (especially topoi), personal attributions (categorizations, stereotypes, attributions of alterity), points of view, and argumentative focalizations. These insights from ideology-critical sociolinguistics can be productively applied to the *historical* text material.

The interconnectedness of linguistic and institution-forming and institution-determining discourse elements in South Asian religions was emphasized by Srinivas Aravamudan

³⁷ Thomas A. Tweed, "On Moving Across: Translocative Religion and the Interpreter's Position" in: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2002), pp. 253–277; see also Tweed, "Toward a Translocative History of Occult Buddhism: Flows and Confluences, 1881–1912" in: *History of Religions*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (May 2015), pp. 423–433.

³⁸ Tweed, "American Occultism and Japanese Buddhism: Albert J. Edmunds, D. T. Suzuki, and Translocative History" in: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2005), pp. 249, 251.

³⁹ See Adrian Blackledge, *Discourse and Power in a Multilingual World* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia 2005), pp. 10–24; Hanne Birk, Birgit Neumann, "Go-between: Postkoloniale Erzähltheorie" in: Ansgar Nünning, Vera Nünning (eds.), *Neue Ansätze in der Erzähltheorie* (Trier 2002), pp. 115–152, esp. pp. 130–145.