



LOGOS

Newsletter about the Swedenborg Foundation's Publications and Programs on the Spiritual Basis of Life

NCE Alumni Gift Angel Brigade

Program off to a Great Start

Greetings, Friends! A special interview with Dr. Raymond Moody is within. Mark your calendars for his guest lecture appearance on Friday evening, May 18, 2007, after the Annual Meeting.

FIVE WONDERFUL PHONE CALLS HAVE come into the Foundation since our summer LOGOS was published in response to the announcement of the Alumni NCE Gift Program. Five discreet, warm, and generous people have asked for their respective alma maters to be approached to receive the gift of a subscription to the NEW CENTURY EDITION OF THE WORKS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

To date, librarians have accepted gift subscriptions to Baldwin-Wallace College's Ritter Library in Berea, Ohio; to the University of Illinois Library at Champagne-Urbana; to the Trinity College Library at Hartford, Connecticut; and to the Penfield Library at SUNY in Oswego, New York. Decisions are pending at two other university libraries.

Now that we are approaching the end-of-year giving time, please think about joining this august group of "Angels," who are placing the pristine NEW CENTURY EDITION OF THE WORKS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG in places where it may have the maximum exposure over the longest period of time. The program is off to a good start, thanks to these "early adopters,"

these way-showers who have stepped up to the plate. Now that it is a successful working venture, please consider making this donation part of your charitable gifting during 2006's Christmas season. The earlier the better for tax reasons, because we have to gain the acceptance of the university collection librarians before we can receive your donation and that may take some time. So, if you wish your donation to be a 2006 tax event, please contact Deborah Forman as soon as possible and join the ranks of the NCE Alumni Gift Angel Brigade. ♦

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Swedenborg's Foresight, Moody's Insight

As a special Christmas gift to our readers, LOGOS is proud to present a brief interview with Dr. Raymond Moody, the founder of the field of near-death studies and author of several international bestsellers, including Life after Life: The Investigation of a Phenomenon—Survival of Bodily Death, (co-written with Dr. Elisabeth Kübler Ross), whose combined sales reached millions and have impacted powerfully the way humans understand death. Dr. Moody has graciously supplied an introduction to our recent co-publication with the Swedenborg Society in London of Life on Other Planets, which includes John Chadwick's translation of Swedenborg's De Telluribus.

LOGOS: *Most people instantly associate your name with your great contribution to contemporary understanding of such essential matters as life and death in founding the field of near-death studies. Your seminal work Life after Life brought to the attention of the reading public worldwide the extraordinary commonality and import of near-death experiences reported by people in widely varying circumstances and with no previous knowledge of the experience of others. This work has brought insight, solace, hope and confirmation of people's faith and belief in an afterlife. How did your work in this area bring Swedenborg to your attention?*

Dr. Moody: I became interested in near-death experiences in the autumn

of 1962, reading Plato's *Republic*. Plato recounted the story of Er, a warrior who was apparently killed on the battlefield, but who revived spontaneously at his funeral. In 1965, I learned that a professor at the University of Virginia, where I was then a third-year college student, had such an experience some years before. I took the opportunity to hear this fine man, Dr. George Ritchie, lecture about his experience. I was impressed by what he said, and began to study the phenomenon seriously after that. In April 1973, I presented my findings at the Medical College of Georgia. A professor at that lecture, Dr. Russel Moores, told me that the many experiences I had collected resembled the experiences that Swedenborg described, so I read some of his works in preparing my book *Life After Life*.

LOGOS: *Dr. Moody, you have had a very special and long-standing interest in this somewhat odd stepchild of a work by Swedenborg, entitled variously Life on Other Planets, Earths in the Universe, and Worlds in Space. By "stepchild," I mean the one work of his that has been less ardently embraced by Swedenborgians than any of his other publications. Your interest stemmed not so much from your vocational work on near-death experience but from another passionate avocation. Could you please explain the reason for your interest in Swedenborg's work, which narrates his encounter with the souls of beings who had lived before their death on other planets in our solar system?*

Dr. Moody: I became an amateur astronomer at the age of eight and have been passionately interested in that subject ever since. Like many other devotees of astronomy, I have always been intrigued by the possibility of life in outer space. Knowing this, my father gave me a copy of Swedenborg's work on other worlds when I was in about the fourth or fifth grade. I did not realize for a couple of years after I wrote *Life After Life* that this was the same Swedenborg who wrote the book I had read as a child.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the questions of life after death and of life in outer space were not as clearly separate in people's minds as they are now. When people began to grasp the vastness of the universe and how many stars there are, they began to wonder how this related to the biblical accounts that gave humankind a special place in the cosmos. Many scholars and lay people thought it likely that the other planets out there were inhabited by sentient beings. For example, an astronomer-theologian named Chalmers wrote many wildly popular books speculating that distant planets were the abode of our departed loved ones. Swedenborg's position was a lot bolder. He said that the spirits connected with a planet are inhabitants of that planet, and he gave them a spiritual nature. If and when extra-terrestrial intelligence is detected, scholars will scurry to see what Swedenborg said about this, and he will be regarded as a great pioneer. ♦

Helen Keller's Spiritual Life and Legacy

By Mary Lou Bertucci

The material below is excerpted from a pamphlet prepared for viewers of Shining Soul.

Helen Keller (1880–1968), one of the most influential people of the twentieth century, seems an enigma. How could a woman immured in silence and darkness have reached out to so many people and worked so selflessly for the good of others? One little-known motivation was Keller's abiding faith, beliefs that she incorporated into her public life.

Helen Keller was not taught religious concepts from her earliest years. But early on she showed signs that she felt a power outside of herself as a source of peace and succor, such as the healing quality of nature. As she began to emerge from her dark and silent world, her mind began to grasp concepts such as "love" and "kindness." Although Annie Sullivan was loath to teach Helen a formal catechism, Helen's aunt Eveline Keller took matters in hand when Helen was nine years old and began to teach the child about spiritual matters, yet the young girl found much of this new information confusing.

When Annie and Helen arrived in Boston in 1889, Helen was introduced to Bishop Phillips Brooks of Boston's Trinity Church. From the age of 10, Helen exchanged many letters with Bishop Brooks, asking him such penetrating questions as "Why does the great Father in heaven think it is best

for us to have very great sorrow and pain sometimes?" "What is spirit?" and "What is conscience?" The bishop assured Helen that "we come to know about the heavenly Father . . . from the power of love which is in our own hearts. Love is at the soul of everything." Through her keen intelligence and the guidance of teachers such as Bishop Phillips Brooks, Helen came to understand God's love and to instill compassion in her own life.

While Helen found Bishop Brooks' approach to religion to be congenial to her own magnanimous spirit, she felt that there were still many unanswered questions. In particular, she puzzled over stories in the Bible, which she felt did not reflect the loving nature of a heavenly father. How could a God of love banish Adam and Eve for one mistake or destroy the world in an apocalyptic nightmare?

In 1893, at the age of 13, Helen was introduced to John Hitz by Alexander Graham Bell. Hitz, a Swiss national and superintendent of Bell's Volta Bureau, was a follower of the teachings of the eighteenth-century Swedish theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. Hitz gave Helen a Braille copy of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*. As Helen read more of Swedenborg's works, she embraced his revelations and teachings as the basis for her future life. Later in life, she declared that she had been a Swedenborgian since the age of 16.

There are, in particular, three aspects of Swedenborg's revelations

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Foundation Publications Are Fruit-Bearing Seed in West Africa

By David Lindrooth

Emanuel Swedenborg had a special place in his heart for people living in Africa. When talking about people unfamiliar with Christianity, he writes: “Africans surpass all others in powers of inward judgment” (*True Christianity* §837).

So perhaps it is no small wonder that today we find ourselves flooded by an ever-increasing demand for Swedenborgian books from people in West Africa. Every day through both the internet and regular mail people are asking for copies of *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Providence*, *True Christianity*, and books by Swedenborgian authors, both in and out of print. The Swedenborg Foundation and General Church Outreach have been collaborating in sending as many books as we can to meet these needs.

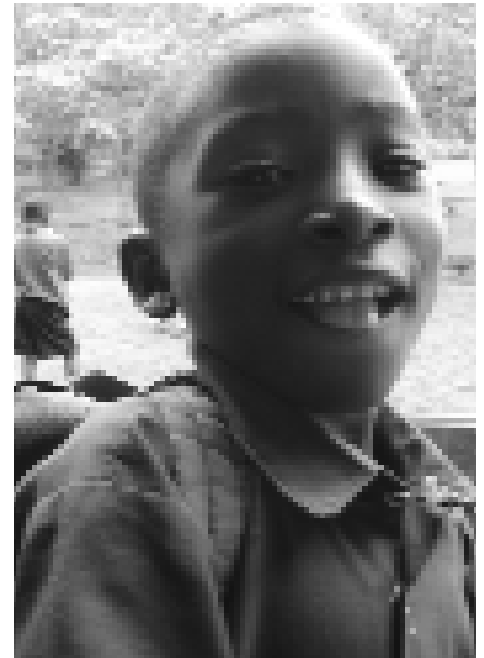
In June 2006, I visited Ghana to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the New Church in Accra. This provided the opportunity to see some of the ways people have been benefiting from our joint program’s

shipments of books. The setting is hard to describe. While it is startling for a Westerner like me to experience the hardships of a third-world country struggling with poverty, it is also equally startling to see the vibrant spiritual community thriving despite that poverty.

In many ways, this spiritual community is richer than what we generally experience in North America. The spiritual dimension of the African culture articulates itself at every opportunity. In Accra, taxi cabs, buses, and shops are all decorated with exclamations of “Jehovah Saves” and “God is my strength.” At the end of one particularly long and hot bus trip, I was moved when all the passengers bowed their heads in a prayer of thanks for their safe transit. The prayers of thankfulness are certainly in order as the roads are treacherous and the buses dilapidated.

With God’s presence acknowledged openly in every facet of public life, it is not surprising that New Church books have become so popular in Ghana. One Ghanaian reader put it simply, saying, “Swedenborg’s theology is so obviously the truth that one is compelled to read it.”

While there is variety of opinion in Ghana as to what the books are, I witnessed the truth of the statement about the people’s drive to read the books. While visiting homes even in the



Student in the Asakraka
New Church School

rural areas of Ghana, I observed that many of these books are not only gratefully received by the people who requested them, but they are passed around from person to person until they are literally read to pieces. Swedenborg Foundation publications have cultivated a readership that has germinated into young branches of the New Church throughout West Africa.

West Africa is a heartwarming place to visit. The people are unique in their enthusiasm for Swedenborg’s life-changing teachings. It is a deep pleasure to assist these people in their efforts to establish the church in their culture. ♦

*Rev. David Lindrooth is director of
General Church Outreach*



Tema New Church School sign

Continued from page 3

that guided Helen Keller throughout her life. The first was Swedenborg's symbolic interpretation of biblical stories. It was through Swedenborg's work *Arcana Coelestia* that she first encountered the idea that the Bible itself is a story of "the spiritual life of humanity" written in "a universal language." To Helen, Swedenborg's symbolic interpretation was "the truest and noblest conception of God possible."

Secondly, Helen found that Swedenborg's teachings embraced all people, whether Christian or not, because he emphasized living a good life, performing good works, and faithfully adhering to the tenets of whatever religion one followed.

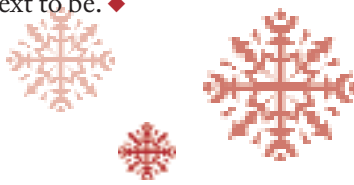
Finally, Swedenborg's emphasis on the need to perform good works, to be a useful member of one's society, and to contribute to the greater good had a profound influence on the life of Helen Keller.

As Helen grew to maturity, she became actively involved in social work, particularly championing the causes of the lower classes in their fight for social equality, fair wages, and improved working conditions. She also worked for women's rights and was an ardent pacifist during World War I.

Of course, of special interest was her fight for working rights for the blind; she strongly believed that vocational education could help raise many blind people from poverty and provide a sense of self-worth and independence. From 1924 until her death in 1968, she served the American Foundation for the Blind as a counselor on national and international relations. She visited countries on every continent to address governments, churches, charitable institutions, and universities to stress

the need for acceptance of the handicapped into everyday life and to press for education for handicapped children.

Helen Keller believed that one's religion is a matter of life, that faith should be put into practice every day. Through her tireless efforts on behalf of the downtrodden, neglected, and abused, she attempted to make this world as just and loving as she knew the next to be. ♦



Updates on *Shining Soul*:

- Houston World Fest Remi Award - Gold, 2006
- The Telly Award - 2nd place, 2006
- US/International Film and Video Festival – Bronze, 2006
- CINE "Chris Awards" – Honorable Mention, 2006
- Since May 2006, 67 broadcasts on 44 PBS stations.
- Acquired by The World Ability Federation for their reference library.
- Screened at the International Independent Film and Video Festival screening in NYC in November.
- Selected by The Reel Life Disability Festival as one of nine films to be shown in October, in Dearborn, Michigan.
- *Shining Soul* has received 18 excellent reviews including a ★★★ "Recommended" from *Video Librarian*.

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Swedenborg's Theological Works: A Pa

by Stuart Shotwell, Managing Editor, NEW CENTURY EDITION

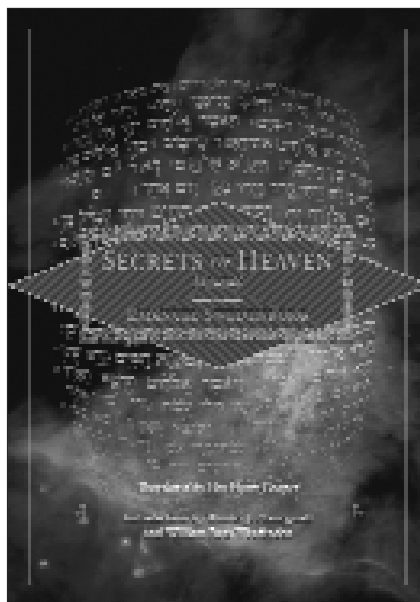
Swedenborg published the first volume of what is certainly his richest trove of spiritual treasures, *Arcana Coelestia*, or *Secrets of Heaven*, in September 1749. Around the beginning of November, a letter was sent to him, apparently from his London printer, advising him that the sales had been very poor. Though we do not have the letter itself, we have a note concerning it that appears in §4422 of his diary:

I received a letter to the effect that not more than four copies had been sold within two months. When this fact was made known to the angels, they were actually surprised; but they observed that it must be left to the providence of the Lord, which is such that it compels no one.

Undaunted, and doubtless consoling himself with the thought that the Lord's providence would unfold in its own good time, he continued work on *Secrets of Heaven* through an eighth volume, which was published in 1756.

Time confirmed his trust. It is not known how many copies of *Secrets of Heaven* were sold and how many were given away, but it seems that they all eventually found some kind of home and were put to use. Many of those that were sold in England became the seeds of the New Church movement there. Some crossed the ocean to the Americas. Some were offered to libraries; for example, the Bodleian Library at Oxford has a copy "sent by the author unknown." Some sets Swedenborg gave to various Swedish church officials—

for example, Bishop Charles Frederic Menander (1712–1786), Bishop Engelbert Halenius (1700–1767), and Pastor Olof Celsius (1716–1794). In 1766, Swedenborg scouted up copies at a bookseller's in London in order to complete a set for his friend Dr. Gabriel Beyer (1720–1779) and to forward another set through Beyer to Bishop Eric Lamberg (1719–1780).



By 1771 it seemed to be impossible for even the author to find a set. In that year Ludwig IX, the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt (1719–1790), contacted Swedenborg and asked about acquiring *Secrets of Heaven*. Unfortunately, Swedenborg had to beg off sending Ludwig a copy, saying:

It is no longer to be found; for all the copies, both those in England and those in Holland, have been sold. I know that some persons in Sweden have it. I will write to two of them and ask whether they are willing to sell it for a price.

One of those "persons in Sweden" was Bishop Lamberg, who had by then proven to be a bitter enemy to Swedenborg's teachings. It is indicative of Swedenborg's perfect assurance in his mission that he boldly wrote to a man who had denounced the new theology and asked him to send back *Secrets of Heaven* for the use of a potential believer. (It seems unlikely that the bishop complied.)

Soon after his communication with the Landgrave, Swedenborg went to London, where he was destined to end his days on earth. On the last occasion when he received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it was performed privately for him by Arvid Ferelius (1725–1793), a Swedish minister resident in London. In gratitude for this service, which Swedenborg certainly knew to be his last such sacrament, he gave Ferelius a set of *Secrets of Heaven*. It is Ferelius who gives us our final sales report on the work: he wrote that at that time "only nine copies remained unsold"; these were to be sent to Holland, presumably to buyers or booksellers there. It is not impossible that one copy was intended for the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt.

Where did these last copies come from? We can only surmise that in his final days Swedenborg happened on a cache of unsold sets at some London bookseller's—and promptly sent them onwards into the world.



For today's publishers of Swedenborg, the lesson in this little history of the

st and Future Sales Report

sales of *Secrets of Heaven* is not far to seek. Swedenborg was not deterred by small initial sales. He waited for providence to act in its own time. Volume by volume, set by set, *Secrets of Heaven* went out into the world and did its work.

Swedenborg did not, however, assume that relying on providence meant that his own active effort to boost sales was not required. He refashioned his message into new “products”—including the vivid descriptions of *Heaven and Hell*, the serene discourse of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, the plain talk of *Divine Providence*, and the bold challenges to conventional belief in *True Christianity*.

The Swedenborg Foundation is, in a sense, following the same plan. Its core mission has been to continue the publication of *Secrets of Heaven* and the other theological works of Swedenborg, a purpose to which it has adhered confidently for over 150 years.

As was the case in the initial years of Swedenborg’s publishing, for much of the Foundation’s history the sales of Swedenborg’s works were slow. As recently as the 1990s, some titles sold only sixty copies a year. However, with the publication of the first five volumes of the NEW CENTURY EDITION series of Swedenborg’s works (NCE) starting in 2000, sales have increased dramatically. In these first years of the new century, over 20,000 hardcover and paperback NCE volumes have been sold, and the electronic versions (available at www.newcenturyedition.org) have been downloaded over 30,000 times. The Foundation antici-

pates steadily increasing sales as further NCE volumes are published—and more titles are indeed on the way. Next to appear will be the NCE flagship: the first volume of *Secrets of Heaven*.

Again following Swedenborg’s lead, the Foundation plans to offer the theological works in a variety of forms, like the very portable *Afterlife: A Guided Tour of Heaven and Its Wonders*, a recent publication based on the NCE version of *Heaven and Hell*. In the case of *Secrets of Heaven*, its ground-breaking first chapter will also appear as an independent, attention-getting pamphlet.

The angels noted that no one is compelled to look into Swedenborg’s writings. But as the long sales history of *Secrets of Heaven* shows, his writings are destined to find readers all the same. And that is something the angels would not be surprised to hear. ♦



In this passage from the beginning of \$4422 of Swedenborg’s diary of spiritual experiences, the author’s quiet confidence is striking: the new knowledge reaching the world “through him” is to be accepted only voluntarily. In particular, the heading of the section, which is Swedenborg’s own, points to the manner in which this acceptance will take place, rather than its end result. As is often the case in diary entries made solely for the writer’s personal use, the style is terse and elliptical.

How It Will Come about That Many People Will Accept What Is Being Written through Me

I received a letter to the effect that not more than four copies had been sold within two months. When this fact was made known to the angels, they were actually surprised; but they observed that it must be left to the providence of the Lord, which is such that it compels no one—which could have been the case, except that it is not fitting that any should read it before those who are in a state of faith.

This principle is known from the Lord’s coming into the world. He too could have compelled the faithless to believe him and his words, but he compels no one. Likewise in regard to the apostles who came after him. All the same, people were found who believed, because they were in a state of faith, and the apostles were in fact sent to [find] them.

Aaahhh, Vaishali!

The author generates a motivational and inspirational visit

Vaishali, radio host and author of *You Are What You Love*, floated into West Chester on her customary purple cloud for a whirlwind of appearances over the weekend of September 15–18. On Friday afternoon, before lunch, she was interviewed live on radio, after which she lunched with and then interviewed live for her own radio program Lisa Hyatt Cooper, heroic translator of the NEW CENTURY EDITION's fifteen volumes of *Secrets of Heaven*.

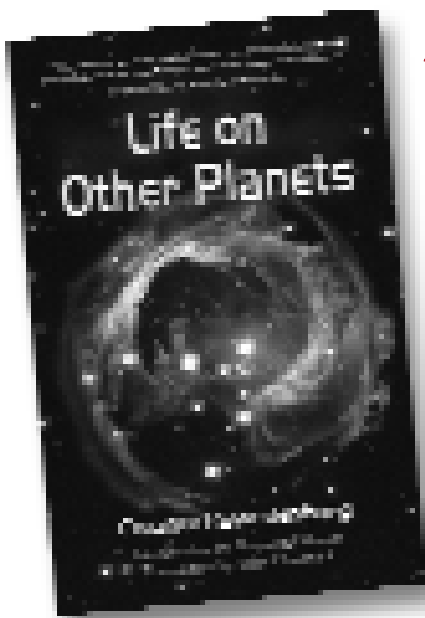
The Foundation's library was entirely filled—not one too many nor one too few—and the audience focused its

palpable excitement and attention on Vaishali as she recounted with humorous reflection the life-threatening medical ordeals her life's journey has entailed, and how Emanuel Swedenborg's writings about divine love and wisdom, about heaven and hell, had allowed her to survive, carry on, and triumph against all odds. These trials stripped her of illusions and replaced them with the unshakeable core awareness that she is governed by nobody and nothing but God's divine love and wisdom. This moving narration, coupled with her sincere and novel insights and understanding of Swedenborg's

writings, earned her hearty acceptance and appreciation from the audience. While signing books, she opened up a purple velvet coffer filled with sparkling rings in a variety of crown shapes and offered them in homage to the inner-queen in all of her female audience. This blinding bling brought childlike smiles to the faces and light to the eyes of each woman, whether in her eighties or her teens. Book sales after the lecture achieved a record high.

Vaishali's books and CD are now distributed by the Foundation. ♦

“THIS AMAZING WORK HAS ENTHRALLED ME. . . . [SWEDENBORG] FORESAW POSSIBILITIES THAT NOT EVEN TODAY'S EXPERTS HAVE IMAGINED OR ADDRESSED.” —Raymond Moody, from the Introduction



Is there life on other planets?

This intriguing question is still being debated in scientific circles, but Emanuel Swedenborg attested that he had actually spoken with spirits from other planets in the afterlife.

Originally published in 1758, *Life on Other Planets* details Swedenborg's conversations with angels unlike any other spirits he encountered in the afterlife. Spirits from Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Venus, and the moon discuss their lives on their home planets and

explain how their cultures and ethics differ from those of earthly life. Swedenborg also explains why the Lord chose Earth as the planet on which he would be born.

Life on Other Planets

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

John Chadwick, *translator*

Introduction by Raymond Moody

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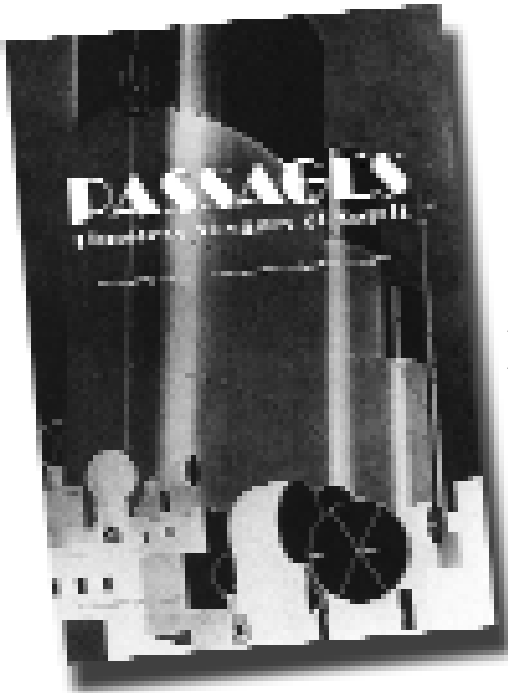
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