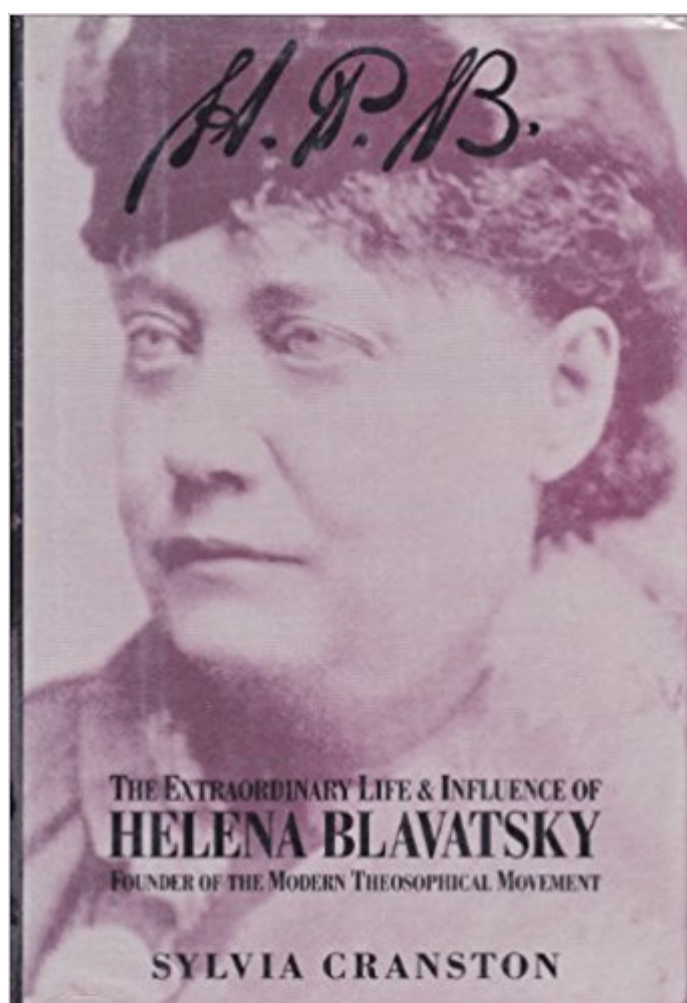


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# H.P.B. The Extraordinary Life & Influence Of Helena Blavatsky Founder Of The Modern Theosophical Movement



## Synopsis

A biography of the woman who first brought Eastern philosophy and religion to the Western world describes Blavatsky's role as cofounder of the Theosophical Society and discusses her book, *The Secret Doctrine*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This overstuffed, sometimes absorbing biography aims to rehabilitate Russian-born Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), whose studies in religion, philosophy and psychic power were overshadowed in 1885 by her "exposure" as a fraud. Cranston (coauthor of *Reincarnation in World Thought*) has gathered an enormous amount of research on Blavatsky's upbringing, background and travels, unskeptically accepting claims of her subject's psychic powers. She also traces the growth of the Theosophical Society, which Blavatsky helped found in 1875 and which not only flourished in the West but also, according to Cranston, spurred the revival of Hinduism and Buddhism in the East. She describes how Blavatsky's writings fueled the anti-vivisection movement, seemed to predict certain scientific discoveries and presaged the revival of beliefs in both reincarnation and the New Age. Though Cranston does not assess Theosophy today, she notes its influence on various writers, artists and composers, including Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Kandinsky, Gauguin and Sibelius. Photos not seen by PW. \$50,000 ad/promo. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Cranston, author of *Reincarnation* (Crown, 1984), takes the reader through the earthly life of

Blavatsky, known as "HPB" to her initiates. We follow her from her girlhood in Russia, where she communed with rocks, mold, and empty space; through her three-month virginal marriage to Nikifor Blavatsky; her world travels; her growing interest in spooks; and her founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875. Cranston suggests that Blavatsky should be credited with starting the New Age. Much space is devoted to her production of psychic phenomena for audiences of believers, such as making music from a bowl of water and hexing a card table so no one could lift it; little is said about her alleged unmasking by an investigator from the Society of Psychical Research in 1884. Although the book gives the appearance of being thoroughly researched (it offers over 70 pages of notes and bibliography), it is sadly lacking in balance, depth, or even interest.- Dave Summers, Holly Twp. Lib., Mich. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Naysayers will probably never change their minds, believers don't need to. So defending HPB is somewhat futile, if you are trying to convert anyone. It is helpful for skeptical people to take note of the many outstanding, respected people, many literary people, who were quite enamored by HPB, and knew in their hearts that she was telling a great truth about humanity's past present and future. I was amazed to read the excerpt from Vonnegut's article in McCall's magazine, wherein he extends, in his own fashion, a bit of qualified support for HPB. Certainly most people must recognize that the orthodox world, with many well-intended folks, some decidedly not well-intended in my estimation, has utterly failed to shed much light on the reality of our world, and life in general. Blavatsky is the opening of the door into the world of reality; ancient, timeless, attainable wisdom and attendant perfection with its proper use. Mankind's needs her insights more today than ever, and while she opened the door the Masters, further light has been given through the books of the Saint Germain Series. I recommend then to anyone wanting to have something that will take them to a place where expanded service to life is possible, where personal spiritual attainment is clearly laid out for anyone to try.

This book is for people who want to know about the life of Blavatsky and her impact on many thinkers and movements of the late nineteenth century and beyond. Cranston pulls from vast numbers of historical records to provide a picture of HPB's life and experience. Cranston has been praised by those far more credible than either myself or the shallow negative reviewer on 's site. Academics and experts who praise and/or draw their research from this book include: Brian Weiss, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. For those who are willing to read Cranston's fascinating, comprehensive and thought-provoking work will be well rewarded with new insights into

the past that continues to influence our times. Thank you Sylvia Cranston.

A marvellous book, a great biography from one of the greatest adepts from the 18th Century, I recommend the voice of silence from HP Blavatsky as well

This is without a doubt one of my most favorite books and I have always loved HPB, what a woman!

:D

She was never exposed as "fraud"...she was viciously attacked and smeared by the Christian establishment, that feared that her teaching and books would take hold on the masses the church's coffers would, thus suffer. Her life maybe controversial and somewhat mysterious but she was not some charlatan who read tea leaves and took people's money. She established an order that stands today, still, while the Church and Christianity suffer less and less in terms of membership and revenue. She never claimed that she personally was the key to people's salvation, she was only a vessel for the invisible Brotherhood. She has taught the masses of a transcendental god and the meaning of infinity. Without her we would have never found out (as early as then) about Buddhism, Hinduism, karma/reincarnation, meditation or comparative religions, etc.

As the title indicates, this book presents in very readable form the life of H. P. Blavatsky and her considerable influence on important 20th century figures from Einstein to Elvis (he read out passages from her books on stage). But it does something else that very few works on HPB have done before, and that is to present major themes in Blavatsky's thought and work, with ample quotes from her letters and writings. Even theosophical writers have tended to focus on Madam Blavatsky's colorful character, adventures, and occult manifestations, rather than bring to the fore the depth of her insights. Blavatsky has been unfairly dissed by writers who assume from the start that Masters (or Bodhisattvas) could never exist and 'occult' phenomena are all fraudulent, assumptions that run counter to thousands of years of Asian records and tradition. In that sense, the fact that Cranston is an unabashed believer probably adds to the value of the work. Where she falls short is in failing to mention Blavatsky's suicide attempt, contacts with the Russian secret service, and other more human, less saintly aspects, all verifiable by documentary evidence. Also, there were several mistakes in the initial edition, so it is better to get later editions if possible. All in all, for the reader who is interested in getting a sympathetic, intelligent account of Madam Blavatsky's

teachings, without having to wade through the 20 thick volumes she penned, this is the book.

English is my second language, but when I read this book, I read it without stopping. I have spent the past 25 years travelling around the world with my husband, and spent about the same time searching for the truth of life and universe. Based on my personal research and experience, I can not help but think Madame Blavatsky is not only an extraordinary person, she is also a person with special mission. Sylvia Cranston's book on Madame Blavatsky is, in my view, the most truthful and unprejudiced biography. I have spent four months since last December, trying to purchase a copy without success. Maybe, .com Bookstore can help me find one.

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