

Theories of the Hollow Earth

Hollow Earth Theories over the years- an overview.

The following is a brief overview of Hollow Earth (HE) theories. It's something of a hobby of mine to find books and articles on HE. There are MANY books and articles (both fiction & non) on HE that I would like to get. If you know of any, let me know. Several of the ones I mention here I have not seen (but would like to get copies).

SF & Hollow Earth- there is a thread where it seems that Hollow Earth theories will influence SF stories and vice versa. Also, there are some SF Hollow Earth books that claim to be non-fiction. Because of this, I will mention some important ones.

Inverted Earth- there is another 'Hollow Earth' theory that I do not cover here: the idea that WE live on the interior of a Hollow Earth. This idea was put forth by a Cyrus Reed Teed as part of his Koreshanity religion and by German believers in this during WWII. I do not consider this idea as 'Hollow Earth' but as 'Inverted Earth' and cover this in another file.

Caves in the Earth- yet another HE variant idea is that of HUGE caves in the Earth containing whole civilizations. This, too, I don't consider HE, and so will not cover it.

Early Believers:

Edmund Halley in 1692 (Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society) puts forth idea of Earth being hollow with 2 hollow shells and a solid sphere nested inside. This was done to explain anomalous magnetic compass readings. Said atmosphere inside was luminous (and possibly inhabited) and escaping gas the cause of Aurora Borealis.

Leonard Euler got rid of multiple shells and had an interior sun - to provide light to advanced inner-earth civilization.

Sir John Leslie would place 2 suns in hollow earth- named Pluto & Proserpine.

These ideas (apparently Halley's) influenced Cotton Mather, who placed the ideas in ch 24 (on Magnetism) of his book Christian Philosopher.

Also, Leslie was inspiration for Verne's Voyage to the Center of the Earth.

Symmes

Major proponent for Hollow Earth was John Cleves Symmes who proposed an expedition to the polar opening in 1818. His idea was the Earth was hollow with 4 inner shells each open at the poles. An expedition was almost formed, thanks to efforts of one of his followers, James McBride, but was stopped by new president Andrew Jackson. Symmes died in 1829.

However, another follower, Jeremiah Reynolds was also giving lectures for an expedition. Eventually he would drop talk about a hollow Earth after the death of Symmes. He apparently went on an attempted

expedition himself, but am not sure what happened to him. (there is not even an image of him). Reynolds agitation DID result in an expedition being formed: The Great U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838-42. This expedition was also known as the Wilkes Expedition. Reynolds was left out because he had offended too many in his call for such a trip.

Symmes and/or Reynolds apparently had an influence on Edgar Allan Poe. 3 of Poe's stories ("MS. found in a bottle" Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym and "Hans Pfaal") were influenced by Symmes ideas of a Hollow Earth & polar holes, however Poe was never able to get his protagonists into the Earth. Poe's dying words were 'Reynolds' so one can only wonder. A recent SF novel by Rudy Rucker, Hollow Earth deals with a trip by Reynolds and Poe to the South Pole opening.

The book is written in the style of Arthur Pym and gives an interesting explanation of a hollow earth: instead of a interior sun (which wouldn't work because it would be too small), there is an Einstein- Rosen Bridge providing light and heat.

Another SF novel that is important at this time is Symzonia: A Voyage of Discovery by a 'Capt. Adam Seaborn' which appeared in 1823. This novel tells of a trip to the interior world where the author discovers a new land he names for Symmes and an advanced civilization. Unlike Symmes idea, there is only one interior shell. There is some debate as to who 'Seaborn' really is. Some think he was really Symmes, others disagree. One author thinks it was written as a satire of Symmes ideas, but he may have been confused with a similar titled book appearing in 1923 which WAS a satire of Symzonia.

Symmes himself never wrote a book of his ideas but others did. McBride wrote Symmes' Theory of Concentric Spheres in 1826. It appears that Reynolds has an article that was published as a separate booklet in 1827: Remarks of Symmes' Theory Which Appeared in the American Quarterly Review In 1868 a professor W.F. Lyons published The Hollow Globe, but didn't mention Symmes. Symmes's son Americus then published The Symmes' Theory of Concentric Spheres to set the record straight. [have not seen any of these and would like to obtain copies]

Reed & Gardner

With the various expeditions to the poles (and finding no holes) one would think that belief in a Hollow Earth would go away. Fat chance.

The next proponent for the Hollow Earth are William Reed who wrote Phantom of the Poles in 1906. His idea was that the Earth was hollow, but no interior shells or inner suns.

Then you had Marshall Gardner who wrote A Journey to the Earth's Interior in 1913 and then an expanded edition in 1920. He placed a interior sun in the hollow earth. He even built a working model of the hollow earth and patented it (#1096102). Gardner made no mention of Reed to my knowledge, but did take Symmes to task for his ideas.

Both these authors tried to explain the anomalous events in the polar regions with a Hollow Earth.

About this time Edgar Rice Burroughs published his first novel set in the Hollow Earth he called Pellucidar: At the Earth's Core (1922). He seemed to be influenced by the ideas of Gardner, but have no evidence of who was his inspiration.

Another SF novel that should be mentioned is Willis Emerson's The Smoky God (1908). The novel

claims to be the REAL adventures of one Olaf Jansen who traveled into the interior and found an advanced civilization, and then left it.

UFO nuts

Ideas of Hollow Earths was dormant until the New Agers/UFOers grabbed onto it along with ideas of lost worlds in giant caverns. A book appeared in 1969 by a Dr Raymond Bernard: The Hollow Earth. The book rehashes Reed & Gardner's ideas and totally ignores Symmes. He also tosses in his own ideas: UFOs come from the interior, the Ring Nebula is proof of hollow worlds, etc. An article by Martin Gardner revealed that 'Bernard' was not a doctor, nor his real name.

Ray Palmer of Fate magazine and the Shaver Mystery also got involved when he published a photo which claimed to show the north pole opening. As has been shown, the photo was really a composite photo and the 'hole' was but a shadow. Palmer's publishing house has kept in print various hollow earth books, both fiction & non-fiction.

Hollow Earth Society

There is (or was) a Hollow Earth Society. They want to send an expedition to the poles to prove the Hollow Earth. Frankly, with so many civilian trips to the poles one would think the holes would be found.

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- Gardner, Martin. "Flat and Hollow." In Fads and Fallacies In the Name of Science New York: Dover Publications, 1957, 16-27. Good starting point. Unfortunately, does not discuss current followers.
- Moore, Patrick. Can You Speak Venusian? A Guide to the Independent Thinkers New York: W.W. Norton Co, 1972. A sort of British version of Fads & Fallacies. has a chapter on Flat Earthers (British), another on Hollow & inverted earthers (including Germans), and one on an alternate universe that is in a class by itself.
- Sladek, John. The New Apocrypha New York: Stein and Day, 1973. Another British version of Fads&Fallacies, but much longer and some what more humorous. Very good book, wish someone would bring it back in print (Prometheus??) Touches on Flat, Hollow, and Inverted and Nazi interest.
- Time-Life Books. "An Interior World." In Mystic Places NY: Time-Life Books, 1987, 138-154. Good article on hollow & inverted, also mentioning nazi interest, Ray Palmer, etc.
- Webb, James. "Cosmology (Occult)." In Encyclopedia of the Unexplained Richard Cavendish, ed. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1974, 66-69. Overview of all three plus 'world ice theory' & nazi's interest in inverted earth.

Works discussing Hollow Earth theories:

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This is a brief overview of `Inverted Earth' theories over the years.

What IS the `Inverted Earth' Theory? This is my own term for the idea that the Earth is a inverted hollow sphere with US on the inside. Many people call this `Hollow Earth' but as I feel it is totally different from regular HE theories and more like Flat Earth ideas of a enclosed finite universe that I prefer to think of it separately with this term.

Koresh- Cyrus Reed Teed

The first person to come up with the idea was Cyrus Reed Teed of New York state. Teed was a doctor of eclectic medicine (useless herbal remedies) and into alchemy, when in 1870 he had a great revelation. His revelation was that the universe was composed of cells, of which the largest was the earth itself. Thus the earth is really a concave sphere.

From this he formed his own religion, which he called 'Koreshanity', from Koresh, his new name. The principals of this religion were: cosmogony (concave earth), alchemy (chemistry is false!), theology, messianic law, reincarnation, immortality, celibacy, communisim, church & state, and a few others. His major book was Cellular Cosmogony which showed their 'proofs' of a concave world. Copies were sent to libraries around the world.

Koresh first established a commune in Chicago in 1888 called Beth-Ophra. His followers later formed a short-lived commune in San Francisco and there were apparently churches scattered throught the US. Eventually they would move to Estero Florida to establish their 'New Jersalem'. The golden era of the Koreshan Unity (as it was known) was 1903-07. They built extensively, having a bakery, publishing house, and others industries. Koresh would die in 1906, and the community went into a slow decline, caused partially by the fact that ALL members must be celibate (that's how you become immortal), and thus had to attract 'new blood' to keep the community going. There were some who left the commune, and the group would slowly dwindle.

A new member who did join in 1940 was Hedwig Michel, who was the last living member when she died in 1981. The Koreshan grounds now form a state park and there are historical festivals there.

As far as I know, Koreshanity is dead. However, in 1971, some group in Miami Florida calling itself the Koreshan Foundation published a book entitled: Koreshanity: The New Age Religion. I have no idea who these people were or what their connection (if any) with the Koreshan Unity.

There have been no books written on the Koreshan Unity, which is too bad, as they are an interesting group. There have been a small handful of master theses written, of which I have copies of some, but that is it.

Inverted Earth in Germany

Independently of the Koreshans, a group in Germany was formed that also believed in an Inverted Earth. The founder was a man named Peter Bender. He called his idea Hohlwelthehre or 'Hollow Earth Doctrine'. He later came across Koresh's book Cellular Cosmogony. Hedwig Michel was introduced to Koreshanity thru this. When the Nazi's came to power, one of his followers, Karl Neupert carried on. His book Geokosmos is a sort of text book of the cult.

The idea of the Hohlwelthehre was accepted in some segments of the Nazi heirarchy. Naval leaders who believed it tried to spy on the British fleet via pointing their cameras up. Also, the rocket scientists tried to launch rockets against England via the same method.

The belief in an Inverted Earth still continues in Germany and in other contries. A recent article by Martin Gardner in the Skeptical Inquirer (reprinted in his On the Wild Side book) mentions some of these.

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Works discussing flat, hollow, inverted earths:

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