

Glimpses

Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada

No. 73 Fall 2014



Mystery Dramas at Threefold

Story on Page 33

Letter from the General Secretary

- by Arie van Ameringen

Dear Friends,

Virginia Sease visited Montreal in July. She worked with the members of the School for Spiritual Science for a full day and on the following evening gave a public lecture on Skythianos, one of the great initiates and leaders of mankind. Eric Philip-Oxford's article in this issue, based on the extensive notes taken by Louis Casgrain during the lecture, will allow readers to get an idea of the content of this talk in which Virginia shared her research on this little-known initiate. Her visit was made possible thanks to a generous donation by the Sophia Branch in Montreal. Members and friends from Quebec as well as several participants from other parts of Canada and New York were present. Our sincerest thanks to Virginia, who kindly agreed to carve out a moment from her extremely busy schedule to make the trip to Canada.

Conference on the Americas

From the 22nd to the 27th of July, a conference on the mission of the Americas in the 21st century was held in São Paulo, Brazil. The event was organized by the Anthroposophical Society in Brazil (Sociedade Antroposofica no Brasil). My wife and I were the only participants from North America. The conference content was divided into four categories under the main theme of "How the soul-spiritual dimension is living in the various peoples of the Americas":

1. What is the mission of the Americas in our time with respect to spiritual research?
2. In what way can one's cultural heritage carry an element for future evolution?
3. What are the archetypes common to the mythologies of all the various populations?
4. How do people interact with the place in which they live?

Many of the speakers pointed out the contribution of the indigenous

cultures and their richness and wisdom (a more detailed article on this conference will appear at a later date).

The Anthroposophical Society in Brazil

It was thanks to the generosity of the Anthroposophical Society in Brazil that we were able to attend the conference and meet members and initiatives in São Paulo. This vast country, contrasting in so many ways with our own, is quite striking in the lushness of its vegetation, the density of the population in its large cities, and its quite obvious social disparities (slavery was abolished quite late, at the end of the 19th century). We were able to appreciate the warmth and hospitality of the people as well as noticing the great respect Brazilians have for the elderly among them – interaction among generations happens quite naturally.

The Anthroposophical Society is very active and receives numerous donations. When we visited Society headquarters, the treasurer, Alfredo Rheinganz, explained that courses and conferences also provide substantial income and even help fund a book publishing enterprise.

Sergei Prokofieff

At the time when many of us were on holiday, we learned the sad news that Sergei Prokofieff had crossed the threshold after a long illness. He had come to Canada in 2009 and had taken part in the Whitehorse conference. Many of those who met him will recall his great warmth and his tireless activity as an anthroposophical researcher. His work will ever remain a source of inspiration for deepening our relation to anthroposophy and for inspiring us to take on initiatives.

In Hatley, Quebec, some twenty persons gathered to give readings in his memory and share experiences of meeting him, either personally or through his writings – and to speak of how he touched our hearts. Peter Selg has written a brief but gripping biography of Sergei which has just appeared in latest issue of Anthroposophy World Wide.

Ongoing work on “The Encounter with Evil “

In Cowansville, in the Eastern Townships, we are committed to continuing the work begun last spring on the theme of the Antichrist by holding a study day with conversation and artistic activities followed, two weeks later, by a session on the Foundation Stone in North Hatley. For this work we will take as our starting point Sergei Prokofieff's short book entitled “The Encounter with Evil.* This work describes the four streams of evil in our time and how spiritual science, and in particular the Foundation Stone can help us to bring order into our world. He specifically mentions three qualities that we must develop in order to be able to experience the etheric Christ: spiritualization of our intellect, expansion of our consciousness so as to open our souls up to imagination, and the ability to withstand the experience of “powerlessness” with respect to our own personal aspirations in order to achieve the resurrection of our souls. This book can inspire us to work intensively with the Foundation Stone.

I would like to close with the verse Rudolf Steiner gave on September 13th, 1914. This meditation was recited during the Conference on the Americas, but it also directly addresses the challenges of our time described by Sergei Prokofieff.

*You, spirit of my space on earth!
Reveal the light of your antiquity
To the soul imbued with Christ,
That striving it can find you
In the chorus of the spheres of peace,
Resounding with the praise and the power
Of the human sense devoted to Christ.*

*The Encounter with Evil, S. O. Prokofieff, Temple Lodge

Skythianos Past, Present and Future

Report on Virginia Sease's lecture in Montréal on 14 July 2014

- by Eric Philips-Oxford, based on notes taken by Louis Casgrain



As we experience the threat of potential war and the chaos surrounding us on a daily basis, we are prompted to ask the question: "Is there a plan in all this?" Although it would be hubris to claim to be able to give a full answer to this question, we can at least attempt to understand the exceptional destinies of beings who are true leaders of humanity. The fact that there are certain individuals who develop more quickly than others is in truth part of a greater plan, since these individuals are called upon to become teachers for mankind.

Rudolf Steiner spoke very little about Skythianos, and what he did say seems quite mysterious. Skythianos is one of the most important teachers of humanity and connects the remote past with the present and the future of mankind. Rudolf Steiner pointed to a great council which took place in supersensible world during the 4th century A.D. This council was called by Manes – or Mani (not to be confused with Manu, who is another being). Manes gathered 3 other leading individualities around himself: Buddha (who, after having risen to Buddhahood from the condition of Bodhisattva, was still in the sphere of the Earth), the individuality called Master Jesus (who is also the Zarathustra entity), and Skythianos (who was and remains the most hidden of these great individualities).

The purpose of this council was to ensure that the mystery wisdom connected with Atlantis would continue to thrive and to influence the development of humanity. During this council held in the supersensible world it was decided that a new spiritual impulse would

be implanted into human evolution 4 or 5 centuries later, during the Middle Ages. This would be the Rosicrucian impulse, and together with Christian Rosenkreuz, these 4 other entities will always be present to guide earthly man's evolution. The fundamental task of these great leaders of mankind was and remains the preservation of the wisdom of the Atlantean epoch. (c.f. lecture of August 31, 1909).

Skythianos worked from the far western region of Europe, and his impulse was gradually to spread through Europe all the way into what would later become Russia. Indeed, there were two great streams of humanity that originated out of Atlantis, and both started from the far western region of Europe (Ireland). The first of these was the southern mystery stream, whose leader was Manu. This stream made its way across Europe to Asia and became the ancient Indian culture. The second was the northern stream, led (or inspired) by Skythianos. It also moved eastward into Europe and as it spread generated several secondary mystery streams, such as the Nordic mysteries and the central European mysteries.

Skythianos' first task was to establish the Hibernian mysteries for the purpose of preserving the ancient wisdom of Atlantean times. It was his goal to ensure that the close connection of human beings with the hierarchies which had existed on Atlantis not be lost. In time, other mystery centres were founded with the same mission, for example in northern and central Europe. As human beings became more and more immersed in physical reality, Skythianos lifted this centre into the etheric world, from which its influence streamed down into the Hibernian mysteries, thus establishing what we know as the Celtic mysteries.

The Atlantean peoples had had a high degree of clairvoyance and had enjoyed a direct perception of their connection with spirit beings. However, that clairvoyance could not develop beyond a certain point due to the increasing materialisation of conditions on earth. The faculty of clairvoyance was forced to withdraw into the most secret of the Western mystery schools. It is a characteristic of Skythianos that he remains concealed to the greatest degree from ordinary human consciousness.

Skythianos had the task of entering deeply into the mystery of the human body. It was actually only in the Middle Ages that the name “Skythianos” began to be used to refer to this great being, though it would seem that the name had originated even earlier. According to Rudolf Steiner, he who truly knows European mystery culture must raise his gaze upwards towards the being of Skythianos. This great teacher preserves the secret wisdom of Atlantis and the secret of the human body “from eternity to eternity” – meaning from before Old Saturn to beyond Vulcan.

During the 4th post-atlantean epoch, Skythianos’ extraordinary capacities and his power to observe everything that was happening everywhere on earth allowed him to view the Mystery of Golgotha as it was taking place. He could follow these events and inspire his pupils to be aware of what was going on in Palestine. He drew special attention to the 3 years during which the great Sun Spirit lived in the body of Jesus – from the baptism by John to the Crucifixion and beyond. The three essential elements he imparted to his pupils dealt with: Good Friday and the subsequent deposition of the body from the cross; Holy Saturday and Christ’s descent into the underworld to release the souls living there in “dull consciousness”; and Easter Sunday and the Resurrection. Prior to the Holy Saturday event, individuals were of course reincarnated but had lost the ability to travel consciously through the planetary spheres during the time between death and a new birth. This is why the Greeks said that it was better to be a beggar in this world than a king in the underworld. Their fear of death was more a fear of losing consciousness than it was a fear of the pain of death.

Many painters of the Italian Renaissance have depicted this descent of Christ into hell, showing how Christ breaks down the doors of hell and causes a myriad of little demons to scurry for cover in crevices and caves while Christ leads Abraham, Jacob, Moses and others out of the netherworld.

When the Resurrection took place on Easter Sunday, Christ, in the Resurrection Body, was at first an etheric entity, as is shown by the

fact that Mary Magdalen did not recognize him but initially took him to be the gardener. Skythianos could perceive all these events and impart them to his pupils. By the 4th and 5th centuries, these pupils had become the individualities we know as the Celtic monks of the Irish tradition. Columba, Gallus, Alcuin and others spread the stream of Celtic Christianity throughout Europe. They had had an experience of Christ at the time of the Golgotha event and were aware of what had happened there. Sergei Prokofieff has investigated this matter in his book entitled “The Spiritual Sources of Eastern Europe and the Future Mysteries of the Holy Grail.”

During an earlier incarnation, two special pupils had been initiated by Skythianos into the mysteries of 1.) The human being, and 2.) The human body. The first of these two initiations involved the mysteries of the flesh and the blood, and the individuality thus initiated later became Joseph of Arimathea. The second pupil, initiated into the mysteries of the flesh, was Nicodemus. According to mystery knowledge, both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were present at the deposition from the cross. Joseph of Arimathea actually entered the grave that received the body of Christ.

Another tradition is based on the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (which was eventually not included in the canon of books of the New Testament). According to the Gospel of Nicodemus, on the day before the Resurrection, Joseph of Arimathea was captured and thrown into an underground prison. On Easter Sunday, Christ appeared to him and offered him a chalice – symbolizing the mystery of the blood. Owing to his high degree of spiritual development, Joseph of Arimathea was able to perceive the chalice (i.e. the human heart) while in his prison cell, and this actually brought about a transformation of his own blood. He was then given the following task: upon his release from prison he was to found a community of Guardians of the Grail. These mysteries of the Grail (mysteries of the flesh and the blood) thus traveled from Hibernia (Ireland) to Central Europe and finally to Eastern Europe. Each of the places where individual Celtic monks established residency became a centre for this mystery Grail stream.

Rudolf Steiner mentions how the mystery stream of Skythianos working through these monks reached Russia and how a Grail mood was established there. In this way the Slavic peoples took in the impulse carried by Skythianos and Joseph of Arimathea, and this created within them a predisposition towards an inner Grail consciousness. They held their souls open to receive the Christ impulse.

Six or seven centuries before the Mystery of Golgotha, there existed a culture on the steppes north of the Black Sea which included the Sarmatian and Scythian tribes. These were nomadic peoples who lived according to a matriarchal social structure. They also had some connection with the early Greek colonies, as reported by the Greek historian Herodotus. The Celts also later made their way into this same region.

Herodotus recounts in detail some of the Scythian mythology, such as the story of Heracles. This great hero goes in search of mares he has lost. As he travels to find these lost horses, he comes to a range of mountains east of the Dnieper River. There he meets with a female creature called the Mixoparthenos, whose form is that of a woman with two serpents for legs, the heads of which curve back upwards. She is forced to hold these serpents in her hands to keep her balance. (This mythological figure can be found engraved in thousands of places in that part of the world: in gold, silver, and bronze; on coins, plates, swords and other weapons, etc. At the time, this was a living imagination, a symbol of balance.) Heracles is forced to mate with this creature in order to regain possession of his lost mares. From this union three children are born, the youngest of whom is named Scythos. Scythos is the only one strong enough to bend Heracles' bow, and subsequently becomes king and the progenitor of the Scythian people.

The Scythians thrived on the north shore of the Black Sea, and acted as link between the cultures of Europe and that of the Caucasus. A mystery centre was established there led by Scythos, who received into himself the being of Skythianos. Although the two remained distinct entities, we can say that Scythos was inspired by the being of

Skythianos, and that the two were thus interconnected. In a lecture given on November 9, 1914, Rudolf Steiner states that the culture of the Eastern Slavic peoples evolved under the guidance of one of the great initiates of the West.

According to the "U" shaped diagram often used by Werner Glas to illustrate the sequence of the seven cultural epochs of the post-atlantean era, we see how there is a correlation between the 3rd and 5th epochs, between the 2nd and 6th epochs, and between the 1st and 7th epochs. We also see from this diagram how the 4th epoch stands alone:



Rudolf Steiner at one time did call the 7th cultural epoch the "American" cultural epoch, but did so only once, so we do not feel justified in using that terminology here.

We shall once again point out the fact that the 4th period had to stand alone. What is to develop in our 5th post-atlantean cultural epoch is logical thinking, which is then to begin to evolve into a higher state of consciousness. In order for this logical thinking to appear in human evolution in our 5th epoch, a seed had to be planted during the 3rd period, the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, the period of the development of the sentient soul. And a means had to be found to transform it into the consciousness soul.

During the 3rd post-atlantean period a remarkable musical element flowed into human evolution. Rudolf Steiner describes this music as having developed thanks to the working of Skythianos, who in this way influenced the leaders of the European peoples. This music, half

singing, half recitative, was accompanied by pipe-like instruments. The last remnants of this lived on in the Greek and Celtic bards. And indeed, it was this particular music which prepared the human soul for the development of the logical thinking of our 5th period.

The myth of Apollo and Orpheus harks back to this strange kind of musical experience. All consciousness comes from the sphere of light, as do music and song. The Orpheus myth speaks of this Skythianos-inspired experience belonging to the 3rd period (2907 BC -747 BC) in a way that could be understood by the people of the 4th post-atlantean period: Orpheus, whose singing and harp playing charms even the Gods, travels to the underworld to retrieve his loved one, Eurydice, who had been bitten at the heel by a serpent. The hound of hell lets him pass, and he sings with such pathos that the gods of the underworld allow him to lead Eurydice back to earth – provided, however, that he not look back at her. On his way back to the upper world, Orpheus, not hearing anything behind him, is afraid he has been tricked and turns around. He returns once again to the netherworld and plays so movingly that even the stones weep.

Why was Orpheus not to look back? It is because the forces implanted in mankind during the 3rd period by Skythianos had to remain dormant during the 4th period until they could re-emerge, transformed, in the 5th epoch. It was then that the Rosicrucian impulse would have to develop.

During all these developments, Manes, Buddha, Zarathustra/Master Jesus and Skythianos were present. Although he indicated that there was an interweaving of the activity of Master Jesus and that of Skythianos, Rudolf Steiner always refrained from revealing many details concerning the being of Skythianos – discretion is indeed the very characteristic of this great being.

Skythianos works at present by creating a pathway towards Christian Rosenkreuz, the being who is the leader of humanity from 1413 to 3573. In the present age of Michael, Christian Rosenkreuz is our earthly helper while Michael is our spiritual helper. Christian Rosenkreuz' task is to bring human beings to the realization that they

are responsible for their own spiritual development and for the transformation of the earth.

The development of the consciousness of the individual human being is to go through two fundamental steps: 1) study; 2) the development of the higher levels of consciousness (Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition). But the development of the earth is to be accomplished through such practices as biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical medicine, three-folding of the social order, etc.

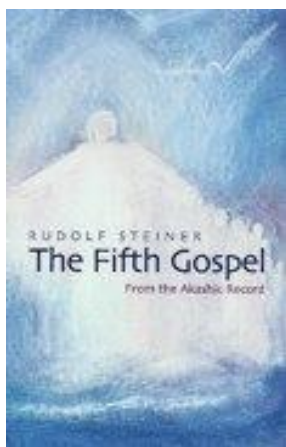
There is a collaborative working between Skythianos and Christian Rosenkreuz. Skythianos is the guardian of the mysteries of the physical body, and the great challenge of mankind lies precisely in the mystery of the human physical body. Just because modern science can do something with the physical body does not mean that it should do so. At some future point, the etheric forces will have to penetrate into the physical body to such a degree that they will begin to transform it, and then the physical body will possess different faculties and possibilities. One step in this direction can be seen in the art of eurythmy.

In the 6th epoch, Skythianos will replace Christian Rosenkreuz as the leader of humanity. He will then carry as his fundamental impulse the mystery of the Word. It is essential that we establish the "I" consciousness during our 5th period – for in the 6th epoch human beings will be incapable of saying words injurious to other human beings or to beings of other kingdoms of nature, such as animals. Skythianos is connected with the power of recitation and the music of the word.

A Glimpse At What Is Contained In THE FIFTH GOSPEL

- by Judith King

For about seven or eight years, Classholders of the School of Spiritual



Science from across Canada, Canada's General Secretary and members of the ASC Council have met together for a day each year, usually in Toronto, with the intention of being mutually supportive in their anthroposophical work. Usually there are one or two Classholder friends from the US present.

A theme is identified for this meeting, prepared beforehand. In September 2013 the theme for January 2014 was chosen, introduced by the following words:

Dear friends, when we meet this January, we shall be nine years away from the 100th year celebration of the Christmas Conference. How can we prepare our souls for this centenary anniversary? How can we, as the Anthroposophical Society in Canada, take part in this celebration? In 1913, having laid the physical Foundation Stone for the first Goetheanum, Rudolf Steiner went on to give his lectures on the 5th Gospel. The act of laying the stone in the earth with its important document and the revelations contained in the subsequent cycle of lectures open the path to what eventually comes into being during the Christmas Conference. Deepening our understanding of these events can guide us as we look ahead to the preparatory work of the coming years.

Individuals were approached to prepare presentations for the January 2014 meeting. I was asked if I would present on the Fifth Gospel. I did this and now offer it in article-form for the newsletter.

The question of preparing our souls for the centenary celebration of the Christmas Conference in 2023/24 offers a possibility for anthroposophists to work together as colleagues for the Society and for Earth and human evolution. Over the next nine years, we can become more and more conscious of the impulse of the physical Foundation Stone laying in 1913 where Rudolf Steiner first introduced revelations of the Fifth Gospel, leading to the Christmas Conference

in 1923/24, when he laid the Foundation Stone Meditation in the hearts of all present. A mutually supportive Will and our consciousness of it can give extra strength to our individual will.

Using as resource the thirteen lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in Oslo, Berlin and Cologne between 1 October 1913 and 10 February 1914 (published as a book by RS Press 1995 *The Fifth Gospel – from the Akashic Record*) and a section from *The Christmas Foundation: Beginning of a New Cosmic Age* by Rudolf Grosse*, and other supporting material, I immersed myself in the subject. A significant portion of my research and contemplation took place over the twelve Holy Nights of Christmas 2013/14. The scope of the Fifth Gospel is huge. Awe developed within me for what Steiner has brought for humanity in what he called “a kind of Fifth Gospel”, also ‘The Gospel of Knowledge of the Spirit’ and the ‘anthroposophical Gospel’. I feel great gratitude for practical guidance which emerges from it. I offer here a glimpse of what is contained in this ‘Gospel of the Knowledge of the Spirit’.

Steiner stated his intention for bringing his research into the facts of the Fifth Gospel to the attention of his listeners at the laying of the physical Foundation Stone for the first Goetheanum in 1913 and in the subsequent lectures. His words, condensed from the concluding words of the second lecture given at Cologne (18 December 1913):

These facts are presented as a kind of Fifth Gospel. It has been my intention to help you find the right feeling and inner attitude to the Mystery of Golgotha by telling you these stories from the Fifth Gospel...It was absolutely essential that knowledge of such facts should be brought into Earth evolution at the present time. These things are communicated from an inner sense of obligation, so long as human souls are prepared to receive them. It is extremely difficult to speak of them. Our studies of these facts have gradually shown what must come alive in our souls so that we may truly have a part in the ongoing evolution of humanity. The meaning and purpose of human evolution on Earth is that human souls should become more and more conscious of their mission.

The Christ has come. His impulse has been a real influence. It will become more and more necessary for people to understand the Christ, who entered into the bodies of Jesus of Nazareth and through them into the Earth's aura and therefore the living evolution of humanity.

Here is a brief overview of time and space in the life of Jesus of Nazareth included in the lectures, which I give as backdrop, before bringing focus to particular aspects:

We are given pictures of Jesus of Nazareth's life from his twelfth year when the 'Zarathustra ego' has transferred to the soul being of the Nathan Jesus. He is engaged in his father's carpentry trade until his sixteenth or seventeenth year. It is a painful realization for Jesus when he discovers that it is no longer possible for the Jewish teachers who follow the ancient tradition of the Old Testament to hear the voice of revelation from the divine spirit which was accessible to them in the past. From about age sixteen to twenty-three Jesus travels, gaining knowledge and wisdom through his meetings with humanity. In his twenty-fourth year he receives the revelation of the ancient macrocosmic prayer of the Mysteries at a pagan altar. He recognizes that the pagan religion has fallen into decay. When he returns home he forms a relationship with members of the Essene community in Nazareth. He recognizes that Lucifer and Ahriman are forced to flee from the gates of the Essene communities and asks himself: Where do they go? We see him in his thirtieth year disclosing to his mother in a significant conversation what lives in his soul as a result of all he has experienced since his twelfth year. The 'Zarathustra ego' departs from him with the powerful words he speaks to his mother. He is drawn to seek John the Baptist at the Jordan River. On the way there he has three significant encounters. At the River Jordan the baptism by John and the descent of the Holy Spirit occur. The Christ Spirit enters the physical, etheric and astral sheaths of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus feels drawn into solitude for a confrontation with Lucifer and Ahriman. He undergoes the three temptations. Through temptation by Ahriman a way is laid for Jesus' betrayal by Judas to his death. At Jesus' death the Christ Spirit becomes one with the Earth and its evolution. The Apostles experience an outpouring of all-prevailing

cosmic love at Pentecost which comes from the Christ Spirit. It is from that point in time that the Christ impulse starts to spread.

Steiner gives a helpful description of his method of research into the scenes and stories he portrays. He brings stages of this method at some length to the attention of his listeners at the second Cologne lecture in the passages which follow:

I would like you to have some idea of 'occult research', as we may call it, which makes it possible to penetrate to facts like those we considered yesterday. The first thing to be said is that such research consists in reading the Akashic Record ...It has to be realized that essentially the universe contains nothing but states of consciousness. I have shown in my book The Threshold of the Spiritual World ('The Road to Self-Knowledge and the Threshold of the Spiritual World. GA 16 & 17, London: RS Press 1975) how vision gradually rises above the level where objects and material processes are seen all around you...Finally you come to a region where you only find entities in various states of consciousness...

He speaks about the significance of the beings of the Third Hierarchy in our thinking, so we are conscious of it in our search for higher vision:

Initially thoughts exist in our conscious mind, but not only there. Angels also have that thought...the whole of our thought world is a thought of the Angels ...To achieve higher vision the mode of thinking we use in relation to the physical world and to existence on Earth will not help us. For higher vision you need not only to think, but also to be thought, and to know that you are being thought...You must feel the conscious awareness of the Angels welling and actively moving within you. This will give you insight into the progressive impulses of evolution, for instance the truth about the Christ impulse...The Angels are able to think those impulses; we human beings are able to think and characterize them if our attitude to our thoughts is one where we give them over to the Angels, letting them think in us. When this becomes true individual human experience, you inwardly enter into the thoughts of the general Christ truths, let us say, or other thoughts concerning the wise guidance of Earth evolution.

Steiner continues: *Anything relating to individual periods of Earth evolution is thought by the Archangels. Your thoughts are taken to a particular period by an Archangel.*

And with reference to the Spirits of Personality, the Archai: *Anything connected with entering into the soul of an individual experience can only be investigated when the words: 'The soul offers itself to be food to the Archai' or 'You are consumed to serve the Archai as spiritual food' acquire real meaning to you. ...Human beings are to the Archai what grains of wheat are to you as human beings. We have to know this from living experience and not as mere theory, relating to the Archai the way a grain of wheat would if it were ground to a pulp by our teeth and then passed through our gullet and stomach in the knowledge: I am human food. So we must know: I am Archai food, I am digested by the Archai; this is their life, which I live in them. The analogy is perfectly true, for your soul has to be ground to a pulp and you must feel this. Higher investigation is not possible without inner pain and suffering.*

In conclusion he says: *Then we share in the conscious awareness of the Archai, just as we share in the conscious awareness of the Archangels, knowing that the Archangels are taking our souls into a particular age, and we share in the conscious awareness of the Angels when we know that our thoughts are thought by the Angels.*

Steiner gives us vivid imaginations like the grain of wheat being ground to a pulp by our teeth to help us penetrate deep truths revealed in the Fifth Gospel. Here is another: Someone with true, reverent occult feeling approaches the Mystery of Golgotha like someone walking stealthily around a building that is all closed up, having only a faint idea of what goes on inside. There is a window at one point, and through the window it is possible to witness a small part of what goes on inside. *The Mystery of Golgotha is such a window on the world of the spirit; this picture can help us to see that this event was an affair of the Gods. The Gods opened a window in the heavens, and for a while dealt with their affairs in the sight of human eyes"*

The following are scenes narrated from the period of Jesus of Nazareth's travels between his sixteenth and twenty-fourth year. They give us an imagination of the circumstances surrounding his becoming aware of the ancient prayer, the 'Macrocosmic Lord's Prayer', and show what lived in his soul leading up to the Mystery of Golgotha.

At the beginning of this period, at age sixteen or seventeen, Jesus had already come to realizations that were painful for him. He learned clairvoyantly that the Bath Kol, an ancient voice of inspiration in Judaic tradition, was no longer able to connect with the greater source of Jewish inspiration, Yahweh. This meant that the Jewish sages of Old Testament tradition could no longer receive through the Bath Kol the revelations of the Divine that had been possible in the past. Human consciousness had evolved and it was no longer possible under the circumstances of the time. This knowledge was painful to Jesus, and saddened him.

Carrying this knowledge in his soul, Jesus travelled widely inside and outside of Palestine. There was a widespread cult at that time in the Near East and Southern Europe, which was predominantly a cult of Mithras. Ancient pagan rites were practiced with customs and celebrations of Mithraic and Attic cults mixed in. Jesus came to know people who followed this pagan cult and he attended services. Through his clairvoyance he could see demonic spirits were attracted by the rites. Some of the images used were in fact images of evil demonic powers, worshipped in ignorance. He could see evil powers enter into the faithful. It was a bitter experience to the young man that the glory of the old pagan rites had fallen into decay in this way.

In Steiner's graphic words: *In his twenty-fourth year Jesus of Nazareth came to a pagan place of worship where offerings were made to a particular god. But the people all around were sad and afflicted with all kinds of terrible diseases that affected their souls and also their bodies. The priests had long since deserted the place. Jesus hears the people lamenting that their priests had abandoned them, that the blessings of offering no longer came down upon them, and they had become leprous and sick. It pained him deeply to see their suffering*

and oppression and an infinite love for these people arose in his heart. The people who were there must have noticed something of this love; it must have made a deep impression on them as they lamented their abandonment by the priests and, they felt, by their gods. And immediately something arising in their hearts made them say in recognition of the infinite love they saw in his face: 'You are the new priest who has been sent to us'. They pushed him towards the altar. They demanded that he should perform the offering service so that the blessings of their god might be theirs again.

At the pagan altar Jesus of Nazareth fell down as if dead. His soul was raised to realms of spirit, *as if to realms of Sun-existence*. From there it heard the transformed voice of inspiration of the Bath Kol sounding the words of the all-powerful prayer from ancient sacred teaching, which had been forgotten. Rudolf Steiner called this the 'primeval macrocosmic Prayer' in his address at the laying of the Foundation Stone for the first Goetheanum. From the lecture in Cologne 17 December 1913 Steiner says ...*Jesus of Nazareth felt the prayer contained, in highly concentrated form, the secret of human evolution and embodiment in earthly incarnations and reveals the laws according to which the human being incarnated from the macrocosm into a microcosm.* Steiner adds for himself that since the words of this prayer became known to him, he found them extraordinarily significant for meditation. In his words: *The power of these words over the soul is quite extraordinary and you perceive this power all the more the longer you contemplate them. If you then try to look at them in detail and understand them, you find that they do indeed hold the secret of man and the destiny of humanity in a nutshell, and how their reversal gave rise to the microcosmic Our Father which the Christ gave to his disciples.*

In his twenty-fourth year Jesus returned home to Nazareth. He formed a relationship to the local community of the Essene Order and was able to participate in a lively exchange of ideas with members. Through their 'pure' way of living they kept the influence of Lucifer and Ahriman away from their communities in order to receive the blessings of divine guidance. He learned a great deal from them of traditional Hebrew secret knowledge. By his twenty-seventh year

Jesus had learned almost everything they had to offer. He also experienced important clairvoyant impressions relating to his connection with that community. At home he pondered on the powers he had been given, and on the significant experiences which had arisen in his soul regarding the Essenes and how they lived. He met and often talked to John the Baptist here, who was a lay brother of the Essenes at this time.

In his thirtieth year Jesus of Nazareth has a significant conversation with his (step)mother, in which he unburdens his soul to her of the experiences he has undergone since his twelfth year. He tells her of the three experiences which gave him knowledge bringing pain and sadness to his soul (first, of those involved in Judaic tradition no longer being able to access divine revelation from the Bath Kol; secondly, his experience of the decay of pagan religion; and thirdly, in connection with his experience of the Essene community). In words from the Fifth Gospel Jesus describes to his mother an experience he had at the gate of the Essene community: *'Once I left the Essenes after an important, personal conversation, and when I reached the main gate I saw Lucifer and Ahriman running away. Since then, dear mother, I know that the Essenes protect themselves from them with their life-style and secret doctrine, and Lucifer and Ahriman have to flee from their gates. But by sending Lucifer and Ahriman away the Essenes are making them go to other people. They gain blessedness by saving themselves from Lucifer and Ahriman.'* Having lived among the Essenes Jesus knew that there was a way of reaching the heights where we unite with the divine and spiritual, but it could only be done by individuals and at the cost of others. He knew now that the connection with the world of the divine and the spirit could not be established in the traditional Hebrew, the pagan or the Essene way.

At the end of the long conversation with his mother we see the great effect of Jesus' words. She is transformed. The Zarathustra ego departs from Jesus with the words addressed to his mother, the infinitely open ego of the Nathan Jesus (without earth-life experience) comes again to his soul which prepares him for the Baptism. He is drawn to seek John the Baptist at the Jordan. On his way there he has three significant encounters. These encounters are connected to

the earlier experiences which filled Jesus' soul with knowledge and pain, and in a way respond to them. (For example, to two Essenes he meets on his way: *Vain is your endeavour, for your hearts are empty; you have only filled them with the spirit who deceptively covers pride and arrogance with a cloak of humility*). At the baptism by John the Christ Spirit descends from the Heavens and enters the physical, etheric and astral sheaths of Jesus of Nazareth. He is drawn to seek solitude for a confrontation with Lucifer and Ahriman, knowing them to be the spiritual entities humanity have to contend with on Earth. The three temptations take place: one by Lucifer, one by Lucifer and Ahriman combined, and one by Ahriman alone, this last being the one that the Christ Being is unable to fully repudiate. From the Gospel *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made into bread*. Jesus answers *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God*. Ahriman knows the Christ Spirit needs Earth experience as a human being to be able to fully respond to the offered temptation and take away its power. In the words of the Fifth Gospel as reported by Steiner: *Ahriman's reply was: 'You may be right. But the fact that you are right and the extent to which you are right cannot prevent my having a certain hold on you. You only know how the spirit acts that descends from the heights. You have not yet been in the human world. Down there you find people who truly need to turn stones into bread. They cannot possibly live by the spirit alone*. This unresolved aspect leaves a way open for the Lord of Death, Ahriman, to use his influence for the betrayal of Jesus and thus to his death on the Cross.

The Fifth Gospel continues: *Ahriman's question had to remain unanswered so that it would become the ideal for Christ Jesus to pour himself into Earth evolution and gradually and slowly influence the whole future evolution of the Earth. This could not just be done at the level of the soul. The whole of future Earth evolution had to be filled with the Christ spirit! Ahriman had the power to impose on the Christ the necessity to truly connect himself with Earth evolution. He therefore entered into Judas later on, and in him had the means of truly bringing about the death of Christ. Through death the Christ essence then entered into the Earth essence. Judas' deed was the question put by Ahriman that could not be fully answered. ('They*

cannot live by the spirit alone.') *The luciferic temptation could be overcome inwardly, in the soul. Every human soul has to do this inwardly. Ahriman's nature is such that he will be overcome as human evolution progresses if human beings let the Christ essence enter into them more and more, identifying themselves with it.*

*

This leads us to contemplate our relationship to the living Christ today.

*

Sources:

The Fifth Gospel – from the Akashic Record. Thirteen lectures by Rudolf Steiner given in Oslo, Berlin and Cologne between 1 October 1913 and 10 February 1914. Published by Rudolf Steiner Press 1995. Section from *The Christmas Foundation: Beginning of a New Cosmic Age* by Rudolf Grosse; section *Laying the Foundation Stone of the First Goetheanum* Published in the original German by the School of Spiritual Science, Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, for the members of the General Anthroposophical Society.

Invitation to readers: Please share your thoughts and comments. ajudithmarg@ns.sympatico.ca

Special Event ~

Life, Nature & Cultivation of Anthroposophy

A retreat is scheduled for September 19-21, 2014 at the Rudolf Steiner House in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and further retreats are being planned. . Visit anthroposophy.org for details.

Conversation About Soloviev's

"Antichrist" on April 26, 2014

- by Claude Gendron

On April 26th of this year, 12 people gathered at the lovely Cowansville residence (Eastern Townships, Quebec) recently acquired by our hosts Marie-Claire and Willem Joubert, local anthroposophists graced with remarkable kindness and generosity. The reason for this gathering was to take part in a day of reflection, sharing and conversation on the theme of Vladimir Soloviev's Antechrist, for which the chapter from Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov entitled The Grand Inquisitor was also suggested preparatory reading.

The Dostoyevsky text depicts a cardinal who has taken on the role of grand inquisitor. This individual positions himself as an adversary of Christ, Who has reappeared incognito in XVIth century Spain. When Christ performs the feat of bringing a child back to life, the grand inquisitor's armed guards seize Him and throw Him into prison. The Grand Inquisitor, who has recognized Christ's true identity, goes to Him at night in order to declare that it is the institution of the Church that will bring happiness to mankind. He claims that Christ has failed in his mission – that the freedom and love He proclaims, spread by the sword and creating discord among men, are not viable options for humanity, because human beings exhibit child-like behaviour and therefore need to be led by the hand like children. During the inquisitor's lengthy indictment, in which many aspects of present-day cultural prejudices are made evident, Christ remains silent. The deeds He performed and the words He spoke at "the turning point of time" are in themselves an absolute refutation of the accuser's distortion of His true message. And yet in spite of the inquisitor's condemnation, Christ continues to gaze upon him with love and compassion. Soloviev's text depicts an extraordinary individual who has as his assistant the most powerful magician of the time. The individual in question is a narcissist of overweening pride and arrogance, and

considers himself to be Christ's direct successor. He sees himself as the true freer of mankind, born to bring happiness to human beings. He orders his magician to strike down anyone who opposes his views, including the latest pope of the Catholic Church, who refuses to become one of his followers. But in the end Christ returns, with an army made up of all those who had been sacrificed, in order to extricate mankind from the Antichrist's power. This then, in highly condensed form, is the story told by Soloviev.

Our gathering began with singing led by Arie van Ameringen, and when this activity had sufficiently warmed our hearts, we were all invited to share our reflections regarding the prepared reading material. To sum up very briefly the gist of our conversation: we felt that the texts were directly applicable to our current social condition and at the same time prophetic for the future of mankind.

Present-day man is caught in the web of his own cultural habits and stereotypes, and as such constantly suffers from a general feeling of dissatisfaction as these values are challenged and called into question on a daily basis. As long as the human being does not realise that his body, his science, his culture and his language belong only to the earth and will never satisfy the needs of his soul and spirit, he will seek the fleeting happiness afforded by the smoke and mirrors of material things and let himself be seduced by the infinite number of illusory forms these material things assume.

As a means of salvation for the human soul, art is a precious asset, and Jean Balekian made this significantly clear as he led us through a living experience of the beings depicted in the Sculpture of the Representative of Man, the statue in which Christ is the central figure. By struggling to raise ourselves to the level of the Spirit-Self, we can reach the etheric Christ and sense how, even in the sculpted wood of the Statue, He secures the balance between the Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers within us and in the world by repelling them while at the same time holding them in their legitimate places. As far as the Asuras are concerned, those Spirits of Personality also called the Spirits of Egoism, they exacerbate and provoke a sort of perversion of the soul by exalting, among other things, sexuality. And Sorat, the

Sun Demon also known in the Apocalypse as the Two-Horned Beast, though he does not appear in the Statue, feeds on our lack of understanding and our confusion regarding these retarded Spirit beings that man will be called upon to redeem at some future time. The Foundation Stone Meditation can be perceived in the three-fold structure of the Group. Our life is a path of development, an inner workshop and sanctuary in which each one carves, modestly, his own personal representation of the Statue using the forces of his own heart. Thanks to the model of the Group sculpted by Rudolf Steiner and Edith Maryon, each one of us can remain awake by perseveringly carving away the wood shavings of our own weaknesses as we create our own "sculpture".

The stunning accomplishments of modern technical science, such as great hydroelectric dams and dizzyingly tall office towers, conceal beneath their ingenious structural aspects the cold, angular intelligence of Ahrimanic beings. Indeed, the human skull is where these beings set up their headquarters. On the other hand, we find the feverish overexcitement of nationalistic pride which, when taken to the extreme, morphs into terrorism and fanaticism. Here Luciferic forces project their blinding glare, tempting all followers of fundamentalist movements into the "black hole" of a never-ending ascending vortex. Thus, the ego is taken prisoner and the Spirit-Self is tossed violently back and forth between the heights and the depths, like a beast of prey being ripped to shreds.

Jean Balekian guided our gaze in such a way as to bring us to perceive in Christ's gesture (both repelling the Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers and time holding them in their places) a coming together and harmonious balancing in the region of the human heart. Jean called on us to contemplate the love, compassion and moral forces expressed in this central figure of Christ. We then moved on to a drawing exercise which helped to give outward expression to our experience of the interpenetrating forces of light and dark; indeed, the balance between these two elements is a feature of all universal works of art.

After lunch, Andrée Lanthier's "visible speech" allowed us to refocus

and re-unify as a group. A final drawing exercise, in which we illustrated our comprehension and our feelings regarding the Statue, revealed the underlying unity of the sculpture in spite of the multiplicity of its forms. Arie then proceeded to speak of the seven major forms in which Ahrimanic beings manifest in matter, after which Marie-Claire Joubert brought the day's activities to a close by reciting the last panel of the Foundation Stone Meditation.

A final request was expressed by Andrée Lanthier: that this day's work not become lost in some sort of "cosmic vacuum". She wondered if it would not be possible to foresee more of these gatherings, to determine time, place, schedule, and theme. Those who feel moved to continue this impulse should contact Arie, who agrees to follow up on this request.



Vladimir Soloviev

Meeting And Conversations On The Theme Of The Antichrist

- by Renée Cossette

A dozen anthroposophists came together in the Eastern Townships on April 26th in order to participate in a free exchange of ideas after having read two suggested texts on the theme of the Antichrist. (Soloviev's Antichrist and the chapter entitled The Grand Inquisitor from Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov.)

The figure of the Antichrist

Strong ties link Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900) and Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) although they were born some thirty years apart. Russia is the carrier of the spiritual consciousness that is destined to incarnate in human society, and the Antichrist is the counter-image of this consciousness. The Russian Sophia represents the human being who becomes spiritualized through his own inner development.

In the texts of the two above-mentioned authors, the Antichrist is always the inquisitor, the individual who wants to bring happiness to mankind while at the same time limiting freedom. Might we not say that the current idea of offering an unconditional minimum salary to every person is an aspiration of this very type? Another thing these texts show is that the individual who takes on the role of the Antichrist is a mere mortal (and not a god), because he flees and "dies" when unmasked by human consciousness.

Is it we ourselves who create the Antichrist through our mode of thinking? Is it we who summon him? Does the Antichrist play an important role in human evolution?

The inquisitor wields his strength by giving commands and spouting dogma. In our current world situation this dogmatization is to be found, for example, in:

- ♦ The church
- ♦ Clichés and stereotypes
- ♦ Advertising
- ♦ Language: definitions, affected sincerity, etc.

In 1914, Morgenstern said that spirituality is expressed primarily through language. Those who speak several languages understand how each tongue has its own spirit, its own inherent "genius".

The most insidious aspect, the one for which language is so often the vehicle, is the question of evil. Evil takes on a form which often appears to express the good. In Goethe's Faust the following question is put to Mephistopheles: who are you? He answers: a part of that force which always seeks evil and always creates good. What actually occurs is that the good is caused to deviate from its goal. Thus, it is easy for us to fall from good into evil. Arts and meditation can help us maintain a state of balance between Lucifer and Ahriman. The battle between good and evil is also being waged on a cosmic scale.

To be Christ-filled

The role of the Antichrist is to keep us from reaching the spiritual, but to be Christ-imbued means to take responsibility for one's freedom as a human being with all the difficulties this entails. The "I" of each one of us belongs to Christ. Man is destined to become the 10th hierarchy, and as such will be called upon to redeem the beings we know as Lucifer and Ahriman. If we simply eliminate them, we fall into a state of bliss which is not free. Ahriman and Lucifer shoot bullets at us, but there is a safe place within us, a little "cubic space" where freedom exists. We must find the answer to the question of evil on the spiritual level as we dive into worldly life and attempt to avoid its pitfalls. Just by the very fact that we have lived in the 20th century means that we are all weak and ailing. But how can we transform evil into good?

- ♦ by practicing forgiveness
- ♦ by engaging in activities which bring the soul into balance (cf. arts, meditation, etc.)
- ♦ by seeking to find the balance between Lucifer and Ahriman (cf. the Representative of Man)

It is said that Christ bears the sword. Is not the sword a symbol for consciousness? Christ does not bring division among men, but rather the consciousness of division. In the West, Christ has been imposed upon men by use of the sword (we only have to think of the Templars.) The word Occident (West) comes from the Old French word "occire" which means to slay. Christ has brought us freedom and the inner battle for freedom. Rudolf Steiner said that when Christ died, the entire spiritual world experienced distress. But each time we say: Christ in me we send light into the spiritual world. Christ descended from the Devachan, became manifest in the Logos, and incarnated in matter where He became Man. As human beings we now possess three potential qualities in our Heart Lotus: compassion, love and moral strength.

The coming incarnation of Ahriman

The Gods needed Ahriman, and his incarnation in a material body is expected within the next 100 years. We now live in a time which denies the existence of the spirit, and we identify our self very strongly with our physical body. Hubert Reeves ended a lecture by stating: 400,000 atoms are speaking to you. Fortunately, there are writers such as Christian Bobin who claims that he writes in order to save the soul which at the present time is disappearing. We cannot be aware of the reality we live in if we are unable to experience the consequences of the absence of the spirit in the present time.

Ahriman has now taken over from Lucifer. Sorat will appear at a later time and will be the Antichrist, but he has already begun preparing his coming. We can detect signs of his activity in the following seven elements given by Schroeder in an article where he refers to Rudolf Steiner:

- ♦ Abstract thinking and the mechanical conception of the universe
- ♦ Anything pertaining to the spiritual is confined to libraries
- ♦ Excessive belief in the reality of abstract numbers (statistics) which allow opinion to be manipulated
- ♦ Acting for no reason (finding no meaning in what one is doing)
- ♦ Disharmony within human communities
- ♦ Mechanistic interpretation of the Gospels
- ♦ Schools devoted to divinatory arts (spiritualism, hallucination)

Network Updates

WOLFVILLE NOVA SCOTIA

Come and celebrate the Michaelmas Festival with the NS Group of the Anthroposophical Society of Canada September 28th, 2014, at the Keppie's, 2367 Ridge Road, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. 10AM – 3:30PM

RSVP to Maggie and Duncan:
keppie@eastlink.ca or
[902-542-5320](tel:902-542-5320).

Illustration:
Michael as Lord of the Harvest
by David Newblatt



THORNHILL ON

Members of the Thornhill Group are coordinating a range of festival activities over Michaelmas. For program details, as well as a report on the recent visit of Christian Hitsch, click on *Thornhill* at the top of the members website, and download our current Network Update.

Membership Update

Lloyd Genio Pelech



Vancouver, Nov. 6, 1926 –
Aug. 14, 2014

- by Michael Roboz and John
Bach

Lloyd Genio Pelech, a long-
time member of the
Anthroposophical Society in
Canada crossed the
Threshold in Vancouver, on
Aug 14th, 2014 at the age of
88. Lloyd had been battling

cancer and the effects of a stroke suffered in 2011. He will be remembered for his great warmth of heart and radiating positive energy, which brought a sense a calmness and joy to all that had the pleasure of meeting this truly kind soul. Lloyd was a steadfast member of the Society, and attended the Wednesday Vidar Study for many decades, and was also a devoted member of the congregation of the Christian Community. He also served on the board of the Rudolf Steiner Centre for many years.

Lloyd was an Art teacher in the public school system, but always found time to help others in the anthroposophical community. His masterful carpentry skills were put to use in building bookshelves for the various incarnations of the Rudolf Steiner centre here in Vancouver, as well helping others in home renovations in the community. These he did warmly and happily, always free of charge. Lloyd was a devoted husband and father, and gave loving care and assistance to his first wife Dawn, who suffered from the ravages of Multiple Sclerosis for many years. He is now re-united with Dawn, who passed away in 1988.

Lloyd was an avid and accomplished gardener with a beautiful home garden filled with a mix of flowers and vegetables. He was famous in the Vancouver community for his beefeater tomatoes, which he planted from seed, and would then give away to anyone who had room in their own gardens for this cultivated treasure. As well as being a long-time art teacher, Lloyd was also a skilful artist, creating beautiful spirit landscapes, filled with spiritual beings and Christian imagery. He created cards from photographs of this art that that he gave out to many in the Anthroposophical and Christian Communities in Vancouver. (See illustration.)

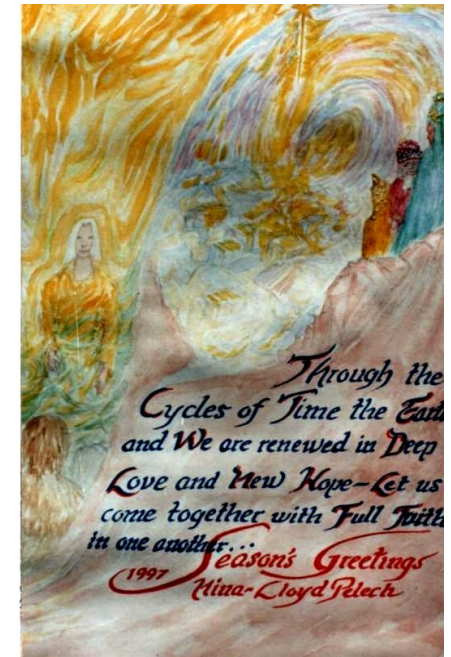
In the last few months of his life, Lloyd, even though his health was declining, always had a warm smile and cheerful demeanour to everyone who visited him, and to all of the care workers who helped him during this time.

Lloyd will be dearly missed, but his spirit will continue to work from the other side of the threshold inspiring and helping us, just as did when he was here with us in physical incarnation.

GUNDULA KIENTZLER-RÖHM (Vancouver) and **CLAUDIA MAURICE** (Montréal) have transferred their memberships to the Canadian Society.

REGINALD DOWN (Sacramento CA) and **LEED JACKSON** (Woodbridge ON) have renewed their memberships in the Society.

WELCOME!



MYSTERY THEATRE

- by Richard Chomko

This past August, some 300 people from all around the English-speaking world gathered in Spring Valley New York to watch Rudolf Steiner's mystery dramas presented in English.

The Canadian contingent included folks from BC, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Alberta and Ontario. There were ten people from Hesperus alone. Also represented were England, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia. I was impressed that twelve people had come all the way from Australia.

Of course there were a lot of good reasons to stay home and not go. The tick-borne Lyme disease, known to be prevalent in these parts, scary reports of police-state America, and then the cost. Tickets, meals plan and hotel came to about \$2,000 each for the 10 days.

Some people saved by staying with friends, or at Holder House, improvising meals from groceries bought at the co-op or receiving their ticket as a gift from a generous friend. Still, cost may been a factor in why so few young people were in the audience. We did hear, however, that locals got to see the dress rehearsals.

Of course the food was great, and organic, the conference was well organized, and as for the plays themselves, well you would have had to be there. In some respects the experience was like a school reunion. Like a high school reunion, one met friends from long ago who were now older and wiser. And like a Michael School reunion, practically every person there was deeply involved in anthroposophical work.

Preparing the Sixth Epoch

Lori Scotchko, a Eurythmy student from Thornhill, who's been studying in Spring Valley this year, and who played the role of usher

and bell ringer, told me that just about everybody in the Spring Valley anthroposophical community was involved in one way or another in putting on these mystery dramas.

Early on in the conference, the role of the audience in theatre generally, and in the mystery dramas in particular, was noted by presenters, as part of the community dimension of stage art. One had the feeling that this particular audience was able to enter deeply into communion with the actors and the plays although, unlike in Dornach, they did laugh at a number of lines that Rudolf Steiner probably never intended to be funny.

The lead roles of Johannes and Maria were capably performed by Glen Williamson and Laurie Portocarrero. Many of us know and appreciate Glen from the many one and two person presentations he's been involved with here in Toronto over the years. Laurie has sometimes been part of these shows and also leads a part-time theatre training in Spring Valley. Another professional actor, Matthew Dexter, came from England for the role of Capesius.

Many impressive Eurythmists and speech artists were also involved in the production. Seeing the results on stage it was hard to imagine how it could have worked had Lucifer, Ahriman and the three soul forces Philia, Astrid and Luna, just stood there and spoke their lines, rather than doing Eurythmy and having their lines spoken for them from the balcony by speech artists. Incidental music added to the experience and featured lyres, bells, gongs, and a small string ensemble.

It's hard to put into words the experience of seeing the mystery dramas performed. One has the feeling that one is being affected in ways that go beyond the scope of conventional theatre. So while the acting of many of the lead actors was brilliant and the acting of some of the amateur players was more limited, the cumulative artistic effect went far beyond the sum of its parts.

Of course with nine days of conference and only four dramas, even though each drama ran for the better part of a day, there was a lot of

other activity going on. Large and small group speech sessions, small group Eurythmy, conversation and free-space group meetings all provided a welcome counterpoint to the long hours spent sitting in a darkened theatre.

The free space discussion offered time slots for participants to come up with their own themes for presentation, discussion or conversation. I was pleasantly surprised that four people came out to the free space discussion I had proposed on Strader and the future of occult technology.

Understanding Steiner

Of course lectures on the dramas and the characters were also a big feature of the conference. When I saw Marke Levene's production of *The Soul's Awakening* back in the mid 90s when it toured North America, a lot of the significance of what went down on stage passed me by because I didn't have the kind of background understanding that these lectures helped provide.

Daniel Hafner, a Christian Community priest now based in Nuremberg, gave lectures introducing each of the four plays. I know Daniel from his time as a priest here in Toronto, and have come to appreciate his style of anthroposophical scholarship. In the week before the mystery dramas, Daniel also gave two lectures and a workshop in Toronto, which I made a point of attending.

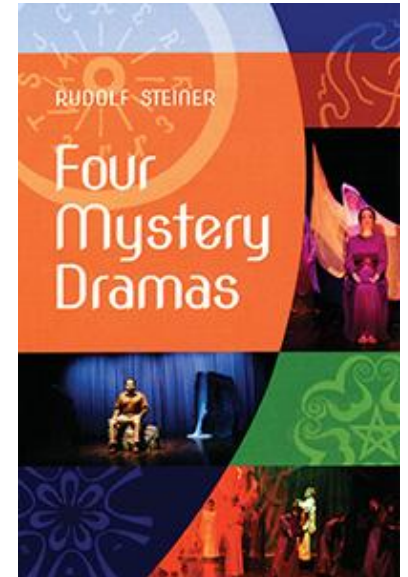
One thing Daniel explained is that Steiner based the leading characters in the mystery dramas on actual people he had known in person and or researched in the spirit. Capesius, for instance, was based on Karl Julius Schroer, one of Steiner's teachers, and the man who collected the Oberufer Christmas plays.

There were also fascinating and informative talks by other lecturers on some of the main characters in the mystery dramas, such as Capesius, Maria and Strader.

Extracurricular Activities

We did skip one of Daniel's evening lectures to visit our sons in New

York city on Friday night. At Jonathan's apartment in Brooklyn, we met Jon's friend from Edinburgh who told us that the generation that came of age post-911 is called the Homeland generation and he talked about how Edinburgh was a place where the veil between the worlds was very thin. And how his girlfriend was taken aback at the sort of conversation that goes on at his family home. Seems his siblings are all philosophers or media theorists and they like to throw big words around. Of course he knew about Waldorf and what we had to say about the conference and the mystery dramas didn't seem at all strange to him.



Work Arising

Director Barbara Renold said more than once at the conference that she would consider it a failure if no future mystery drama work arises out of this conference. I'm sure she will be pleased to learn that Tim Nadelle felt inspired to start a group here in Toronto to work towards presenting at first some scenes and eventually in two or three years, the whole of the first Mystery Drama here on stage. First meeting for this group will be September 20th from 2-5 pm at Hesperus. Barbara will also be doing an online workshop, on the mystery dramas, starting this fall, and will be traveling to various centres to support the work.

Glen Williamson and Laurie Portocarrero will be touring with a two-person stage show titled *The Mystery Journey of Johannes and Maria* -- Highlights from Rudolf Steiner's *Four Mystery Dramas* beginning this fall. They'll be at Novalis Hall near Barrie on November 2nd at 2:30pm..

Marke Levene — who brought us *The Soul's Awakening* back in the 90s — announced plans to stage and tour a sequel to the four

mystery dramas that is now being written. Marke wants to form a new theatre company in a place yet to be determined to produce and tour not only the mystery drama sequel but also an orchestral Eurythmy performance and a classic Shakespeare drama. More on this project can be found at www.workingofthespirit.com.

As requested by the organizers, we made a point of staying for all the closing ceremonies, and so didn't get off til about 2:30 on Sunday afternoon. We were still hoping to make it home by midnight. But an hour wait at the border, and another hour and a half of construction delays on the QEW made for an arrival time more like 3 am. As they say, in Canada we have two seasons, winter, and road construction.

The next day I wasn't feeling so great and went down to see Dr. McAlister wondering if perhaps I had contracted Lyme disease. When I told him where I had been, Kenneth told how he himself had played the roles of Simon the Jew and Strader in one of Hans Pusch's early productions of the mystery dramas in Spring Valley back in the 70s.

Report from Giseller Weber

Two weeks ago I came back from the English performance of the four Mystery Dramas by Rudolf Steiner in Spring Valley, NY. It was a great experience. We had very good introductory lectures by Daniel Hafner on the in-between days and bio-dynamic food throughout our stay. I have two comments:

♦ We, the audience, felt included in the play to such an extent that we made the problems acted out on stage our own. I saw the four plays in Dornach four years ago. The performances were perfect. But they happened on the stage, and we were the audience. In Spring Valley we onlookers felt included, not so much by introductory scenes played in front of the curtain, but by the warm-hearted play of the professional actors and the lay actors alike. It must have had something to do with the direction of Barbara Renold.

♦ If you could not make it to the plays for any reason you missed something significant.

RESEARCH CORNER

The Philosophy of Freedom Treasure Quest

♦ A Conference in Epistemological Experimentation

- by Tim Nadelle

The Philosophy of Freedom is a treasure map. In general, we can work with the map in two ways. Firstly, we can study the map. We can read it, make notes, meet in study groups to discuss and deepen our understanding. This first approach to the work is a necessary and essential precursor to the second approach, which is to set out to find the treasure.

In the Preface to the revised edition of 1918 of the Philosophy of Freedom, Rudolf Steiner poses questions which can set our hearts and imaginations on fire. He points over the horizon, towards a land he has traveled where, for anyone who would take up the quest, there is treasure in abundance. He writes (Rita Stebbing translation):



Everything to be discussed in this book centers around two problems which are fundamental to human soul-life. One of these problems concerns the possibility of attaining such insight into human nature that knowledge of man can become the foundation of all human knowledge and experience of life. We often feel that our experiences and the results of scientific investigations are not self-supporting; further experiences or discoveries may shake our certitude. The other problem is: Has man any right to ascribe freedom to his will, or is freedom of will an illusion arising out of his inability to recognize the threads of necessity on which his will depends, just like a process in nature?

He goes on to describe the treasure, while at same time providing some initial practical advice for those who wish to take up the epistemological journey: [1]

The book will not give a ready-made, self-contained answer... but will point to a field of experience in which man's inner soul activity supplies a living answer to these questions at every moment that he needs one. Whoever once has discovered the region of soul where these questions unfold, will find that the very contemplation of this region gives him all that he needs for the solution of the two problems.

So at the outset it becomes clear the treasure is not a series of philosophical proofs we can learn. Neither can we find it merely by immersing ourselves in the content of the Philosophy of Freedom, no matter how deeply we study it. Cartography is a preparatory activity: it can only point out the way. If we wish to take up the knowledge quest, we need to find that field of experience in which our inner soul activity supplies living answers to these questions.

Happily, potential soul activities for exploration jump off virtually every page of the book. However, we need to engage our imaginations to discover them. In this, the Philosophy of Freedom diverges from Steiner's introductory anthroposophical works. In Theosophy, Occult Science, Knowledge of Higher Worlds – Steiner explicitly provides the soul activities, the exercises for us to follow. In the Philosophy of Freedom, those activities are implicit. Each individual finds them himself or herself.

For example, in chapter three of the Philosophy, Steiner characterizes the central, elementary soul activity which will set us firmly along the path, the observation of thinking:

For everyone... who has the ability to observe thinking – and with good will every normal man has this ability – this observation is the most important one he can possibly make. For he observes something of which he himself is the creator; he finds himself confronted, not by an apparently foreign object, but by his own activity. He knows how the thing he is observing comes into being.

He sees into its connections and relationships. A firm point has now been reached from which one can, with some hope of success, seek an explanation of all other phenomena of the world.

A natural starting point, therefore, will be to ask ourselves: How do we go about observing our own thinking? Chapter three (including its "Author's addition, 1918") is in fact, replete with practicable indications for how to go about doing so. Our way forward shall be first to understand these indications, then to commence the actual work of observing our own thinking.

Conference invitation

In October 2015, you are invited to join with colleagues to take up this quest at a weekend conference to be held in or near Toronto. Please visit www.philosophyfreedom.ca and leave your contact information if you would like to receive occasional updates about the conference agenda and venue.

Over the course of the year, we will be sharing several thought experiments on the conference website which you might choose to take up by way of preparation for the conference. (They may even be of interest if you have no intention of participating in the conference.) Please visit www.philosophyfreedom.ca if you wish to have a look at the first of these thought experiments.

The experiments are not destinations; they are possible points of entry along the path. You might choose to work with one for a while, modify it for your own needs or discard it altogether and create something more suited to your own unique direction. The experiments are intended only as creative provocations for subsequent individual work.

Hope to see you there!

[1] This and all subsequent quotes from the Philosophy of Freedom are taken from the Michael Wilson translation.

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Upcoming Events

OPENING CEREMONY - NEW GOETHEANUM STAGE.

26 September at 3pm. Details in Anthroposophy Worldwide # 5.

AGM, Anthroposophical Society in America.

10-12 October, Fair Oaks, California. www.anthroposophy.org

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANADA. Annual members meeting and annual Classholders Conference, 15-18 May, 2015, Thornhill, ON. Details TBA

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