

# Glimpses

Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada

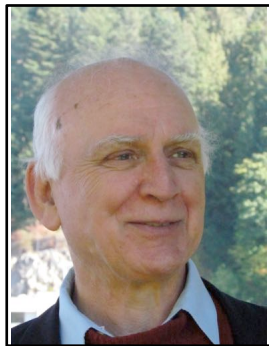
No. 77 Autumn 2015



## **Letter from the General Secretary**

Dear Friends,

Among the many events that took place during the summer season, the following were of special interest for the life of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada and for the General Anthroposophical Society as well



### **Bodo von Plato**

My wife and I had the great pleasure of travelling with Bodo von Plato from July 24<sup>th</sup> to August 9<sup>th</sup> as he visited Vancouver, Nelson, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. This tour gave us the opportunity to meet with friends and members in these centres as we explored together the main theme Bodo wished to share: Anthroposophy and its influence on our daily lives - how Anthroposophy can give us tools to meet the requirements of our everyday existence. (See Elisabeth Carmack's account of the Vancouver gathering.)

This session focussing on inner work helped to deepen our sense of this contemporary enigma through conversation and exercises. Thanks to Bodo's warmth and openness, he was able to create a space in which each participant could feel he or she was truly being heard.

### **Travels across Canada**

We were unfortunately not able to visit the Maritime Provinces on this journey, but our travels were nevertheless sufficient to give Bodo a true sense of the manifold cultural diversity of this country. Thanks to Philip Thatcher's explanations, he was able to enter into some of the secrets of the totems carved by West Coast First Nations. He was delighted by the magnificence of the Rockies and was particularly astonished to learn that bears could sometimes be seen in a town like Nelson! He got a first-hand look at the meteoric development of the city of Calgary, greatly appreciated the exhibition of paintings of the Group of Seven in the McMichael Museum, and acknowledged the pioneering spirit of a fledgling Waldorf school north of Montréal (L'École Imagine).

Our sincerest thanks go out to Bodo and to all those who helped in the planning of this pan-Canadian event : John Bach and Moniquie Walsh (Vancouver), Rudica and Trevor Janz as well as Ariel-Paul Saunders (Nelson), John and Margaret Glanzer (Calgary), Jeff Saunders, Mark McAlister and Grant Davis (Toronto), H       Dub  , Jean Balekian and Ren     Cossette (Montreal).

### **Gathering in Spring Valley**

The Collegium of the School of Spiritual Science in North America and the North American Class Holders met on August 20<sup>th</sup> to explore specific questions concerning the holding of Class Lessons. This gathering was held in the context of the spiritual research carried out by the General Anthroposophical Section. In small groups, we exchanged ideas concerning the tasks for which the School for Spiritual Science assumes responsibility. Virginia Sease shared her impressions on "The Esoteric Dimensions of the Michael School: challenges and possibilities." Another question we studied was the relationship of the School to the Society and possible ways of tightening the links between the two by organizing events and undertaking spiritual research together.

### **Vienna**

On our way to the Goetheanum, my wife and I spent several days in Vienna. Besides taking advantage of the opportunity to enjoy some much needed vacation time, we were there to seek out places where Rudolf Steiner had lived, worked and studied. This imperial city has preserved many of the facets of its glorious past, even down to the famous Viennese coffee savoured and served in great style. In these sumptuous surroundings imbued with history and tradition, it is not difficult to imagine Rudolf Steiner seated in one of these establishments, totally absorbed in an article he was writing or in earnest conversation with some illustrious contemporary. But in order for the picture to be complete, one would have to add a layer of thick smoke wafting through the caf  , something our modern sensibility could no longer tolerate.

During our daily strolls, we made a stop at the very station where Steiner

would disembark from the train upon returning from one of his many journeys or from visiting a relative or even when having travelled alongside Felix Foguski, the herb collector. The original structure no longer exists, having been replaced by a modern station. Upon arriving at the station, we were surprised to come across a crowd made up of many various peoples and ethnic groups—hundreds of exhausted and famished immigrants. Many were sleeping on cots, children were crying. Fortunately, volunteers were there to hand out food, blankets and toys. This makeshift camp looked like a place one would see in the aftermath of a battle, the desperate conditions of human beings having experienced suffering and fear and having crossed a major part of Hungary on foot. One of the volunteer was able to inform us as to the aid the Austrian government was offering to these people, chartering busses to go to meet them in order to lessen the suffering of their journey. Here, our attention was rudely shifted from the historical charm of this city to the urgent needs of the present time.

### **Michaelmas 2016: preparing the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christmas Conference.**

The meeting held in Dornach from September 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> had as its theme the three fundamental exercises set forth in the Foundation Stone Meditation: Practice Spirit-recalling; Practice Spirit-meditating; Practice Spirit-envisioning. Participants from various parts of the globe were present at this gathering, the aim of which was to exchange ideas and prepare elements of the programme for the upcoming 2016 Michaelmas celebration designed to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Christmas Conference.

What is our connection to the Christmas Conference? How do we live anthroposophy today? What is the role of the Goetheanum? How do we view the future of the General Anthroposophical Society? These were among the questions raised during the gathering.

In view of this event, the extended Executive Committee would like to hear your suggestions and your questions. It is hoped that preparatory work can be carried out by the members in the various groups and branches before the event is to take place.

## **The 2016 Ottawa Conference**

The programme for the artistic evenings is beginning to take shape. We are looking forward to performances by the Spring Valley eurythmy group. We shall also have the opportunity to enjoy the humour and creative poetry of Dawn Nilo. Many may remember her delightful antics during the Whitehorse conference in the Yukon.

The conference preparation group met in Ottawa during the Thanksgiving weekend. Jean Balekian, Dorothy LeBaron and Gary Burak are in the process of setting up a conference website which should be online by the end of the month. You will then be able to find all the information pertaining to the conference and registration information.

With my best wishes for Michaelmas,

Arie van Ameringen,  
General Secretary

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### **Letter from the Treasurer**

Dear Friends,

A very warm greeting to everyone!

There were a few events that occurred since the AGM that council would like to communicate.

We received a letter from the Canada Revenue Agency requesting that the Rudolf Steiner Foundation be dissolved unless we plan to make it active. As there is no such plan, Council decided to dissolve it. You can see the related correspondence on the members' web site, or ask Jef Saunders, our Administrator.

The review engagement with our accountant



went smoothly and the questions and responses, along with the final Financial Statements, can be found on the members' website. We have been successfully using e-transfers to pay requests for funds and this approach appears to be the way many members' prefer. We are also offering this method for donations and contributions. Simply fill out, scan and email the membership card, along with the answer to your security question, then send the e-transfer to Jef. If this method proves to be a preference for members, we might cancel the Canada Helps service next year, which has caused some issues of confusion. Requests for funding have increased for important work by members, and council is finding it challenging to meet all the requests, while still holding to the approved budget. Your extra donations towards the various funds provide for important activities of our Society and are greatly appreciated. Please consider an extra donation if possible even if you have made your planned contribution. If you have not made your contribution and donation for this year, please do so soon to help make it unnecessary for Jef and Council to make reminders. Please contact Jef if you need to make special arrangements and we thank you for your support.

Warm regards,

Douglas Wylie  
Treasurer

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## **Report: Worldwide Biography Conference 2015**

In June, 2015, four of us from Canada attended the 8th Worldwide Biography Conference. This was a rich gathering of 150 people from 28 countries. This year the conference was organized by a group of ten, mostly younger people. The quality of their preparation and carrying of the conference was inspiring, lively and at times included spontaneous changes. These biography conferences are largely experiential, with opportunities to choose a master class, to hear about research from each other, to meet in small groups and in a

larger plenum format, with some excellent keynote speakers. The theme of this year's conference was "Wounds and Wonders." It was particularly relevant to the theme that the location was near Dresden, Germany, a place where wounds run deep, but also new life, a rebuilding gesture is very strong. We all spent one day in Dresden visiting various sites and museums. We heard a deeply moving talk by Axel-Schmidt-Godelitz who lives locally and creates and facilitates biography talks between individuals living in East and West Germany. It gave a clear picture of how biography can bring us to a very human level with each other, where judgment is suspended, where forgiveness is possible, sometimes simply through sharing and listening to each other's story.

The presence of Christine Gruwez as a keynote presenter brought another unique and powerful experience for all of us. She had presented at a similar conference 10 years ago, when she characterized our times as "turbulent." If times were turbulent 10 years ago, what would we call them now? Every second in the world there are events that leave us speechless, and feeling powerless. She proceeded then to develop this picture of powerlessness as a wound; humanity is wounded. We are wounded. To be human is to be wounded. Without a wound, I am not human. What a powerful statement and challenge! In our work with her we were then invited to share in small groups our deepest wound, how we understand how a wound happens, and how we heal a wound? Healing for her is not the same as curing a wound though. Christine has developed a Manichean path of practice that offers us deep insights, profound experiences, and at this conference left us with a sense of hope for the future. The challenge is to "keep this wound open" enough so that it becomes an organ of perception in our biography.

Gabriele Edelstein, Dorothy LeBaron, Regine Kurek, Jef Saunders

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### **Bodo von Plato: Collaborating to Awaken Inner Culture**

by Robert McKay

As part of his on-going work as a member of the Executive Council of

the General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach, Bodo von Plato made a cross-Canada tour this summer seeking colleagues who want to collaborate in awakening inner culture. Accompanied by our Canadian Society's General Secretary, Arie van Ameringen, Bodo met with colleagues in Vancouver, Nelson, Calgary, Toronto, Thornhill and Montreal, giving lectures, leading workshops and providing Class Lessons.

Deeply grounded in Rudolf Steiner's indications regarding meditative work, Bodo's fundamental gesture in awakening inner culture is liberating, energizing, and collaborative. His approach helps free us from dogmatic, overly simplistic, or self-limiting conceptions of the path of knowledge that can block us from finding authentic starting points for soul exploration. As he explains...

The courage to develop one's own way based on the multitude of Rudolf Steiner's indications has not yet overcome the idea that there is a defined path of schooling that must be travelled according to certain guidelines. This is a place where we can help one another.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, we need to study Rudolf Steiner's indications carefully, deeply, and repeatedly, but we must also take our experience seriously in finding effective starting points for the cultivation of inner culture. Interestingly, taking our own experiences seriously is greatly facilitated through honest conversation, through meeting others and hearing their experiences. As Bodo notes, his own meditative practice is "determined to a very substantial degree by conversations with others and the stimulus they provide."<sup>2</sup> Bodo brings a decidedly collaborative dimension to the foundational task of cultivating a rich inner life. As Steiner explains: A person who darts from one impression of the outer world to another, who constantly seeks distraction, cannot find the way to higher knowledge. The student must not blunt himself to the outer world, but while lending himself to its impressions, he should be directed by his rich inner life.<sup>3</sup> But how does one develop a rich inner life? Bodo is a genius at opening pathways for cultivating inner culture. His talks and workshops are full of intriguing and accessible suggestions for soul



exploration. For example, in his public talk in Toronto on Thursday, July 30, he provided a cornucopia of suggestions for bringing life back into consciousness.

A) Pay attention to transitions. What were you like before you fell in love? As you were falling love? After you were sure you were in love?

B) Take seriously that you are free to direct your attention as you wish. What do you encounter when you try to wield this freedom?

C) Take seriously that you are free to set your own values. What do you value most? Is this really your choice or the legacy of what you were given? D) Pay attention to velocity. What is moving quickly in you? What moves more slowly? How does this differ over time? Even as he was speaking, one found oneself trying out these new avenues of self-exploration. Bodo's workshop on meditation in Thornhill on Saturday, August 1, was highly participatory with most of the time taken up by exercises and sharing. At one point, as each individual in turn was responding to a deep question, Bodo stopped the process and asked the participants to sense into the moment. Half of the people in the room had spoken. The other half were waiting to speak. What could we be aware of at this moment? Again and again, Bodo shows how to pull what is in the background of awareness into the foreground, or explore the everyday from a new vantage point. In so doing he provides warm encouragement, as if to say: "Yes, we are all the craftsmen of the inner culture we crave. Look! Some of the tools we need are already in our hands! "

Notes: 1. See "Meditation is a Matter of Civilization" by Lydia Fechner ([www.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/meditationssite/Meditation\\_is\\_a\\_Matter\\_of\\_Civilization.pdf](http://www.goetheanum.org/fileadmin/meditationssite/Meditation_is_a_Matter_of_Civilization.pdf))

2. Ibid

3. Chapter 1, Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment

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## **Meeting the Other, The Portal of Initiation & the Freedom Mystery Conference**

by Timothy Nadelle

“I had to sink myself in all the people who in their words revealed themselves just now.” Johannes Thomasius, Scene 2, The Portal of Initiation, by Rudolf Steiner.

“Tearing the Self out of oneself and entering into another is part and parcel of self-knowledge.” Rudolf Steiner on the Portal of Initiation, September 17, 1910.

In August, Bodo von Plato visited Toronto and led a full day workshop on the subject of Concentration, Contemplation and Meditation at Hesperus. Bodo asked us to share our individual “tabernacles”, those sacred moments in our lives through which we experience the spirit. I was struck by the number of people who in various ways experienced these holy moments in the “meeting of the other”. It was clear from what they said that these encounters were moments of intense, actively listening.

In contemplating this, Steiner’s words at the end of chapter one of the Philosophy of Freedom resonated: “The way to the heart is through the head. Whenever it is not merely the expression of bare sexual instinct, it depends on the mental picture we form of the loved one. And the more idealistic these mental pictures are, just so much the more blessed is our love. Here too, thought is the father of feeling. It is said that love makes us blind to the failings of the loved one. But this can be expressed the other way round, namely, that it is just for the good qualities that love opens the eyes. Many pass by those good qualities without noticing them. One, however, perceives them and just because he does, love awakens in his soul. What else has he done but made a mental picture of what hundreds have failed to see? Love is not theirs because they lack the mental picture.”

I have a friend, Francois, who does work in a fascinating field called “cognitive ergonomics”. In contradistinction to expert systems, which emulate the decision-making ability of a human expert (in effect attempting to replace the human being), cognitive ergonomics strives to provide a person with the tools and information he or she needs to

make better decisions. Cognitive ergonomics puts the human being in the centre of the work process, recognizing the importance of human intuition, creativity and decision-making. I have had the good fortune to work with Francois on occasion. Francois will typically video-tape a person at work in her own environment and ask her to think aloud, explaining what she is doing as she performs her tasks. I believe there are deep mysteries involved in this process of making will activity conscious through the spoken word. And it's intriguing to witness the pleasure people feel through, as my friend says "sharing their experiences" with someone who listens very carefully.

In a lecture given September 17, 1910, Steiner said concerning the Portal of Initiation, "This Mystery Drama exists now as a picture of human evolution in the development of a single person... Everything in the drama is presented, therefore, in a completely individual way. Through this, the truth portrayed by the particular figures brings out as clearly as possible the development of the soul of a human being. At the beginning, Johannes Thomasius is shown in the physical world, but certain soul-happenings are hinted at that provide a basis for such development, particularly an experience at a somewhat earlier time when he deserted a girl who had been lovingly devoted to him. Such things do take place, but this individual happening has a different effect on a man who has resolved to undertake his own development."

In witnessing the Portal of Initiation audience members enter, therefore, into the experience of a person on a path of spiritual development who is confronted – as we all must be – by his own failings. Perhaps this is why people love theatre and even movies so much. Recognizing that the experience cannot run as deep as the performance of a Mystery Drama, the best of them nevertheless afford us an opportunity to imaginatively exercise that faculty of entering into the soul experience of another person.

Further in that lecture, Steiner went on to say, "There is one deep truth necessary for him who wants to undergo development: self-knowledge cannot be achieved by brooding within oneself but only

through diving in the being of others... When at first Johannes sinks more deeply into himself and then plunges in self-knowledge into another person, into the one to whom he has brought bitter pain, we see this as an example of the experience of oneself within another, a descent into self-knowledge.”

It’s also stirring to perceive how deeply Johannes is affected by entering into the biographical experiences recounted by the various people to whom he listens in scene one.

In the same lecture, Steiner said, “For Johannes Thomasius... what other people have lived through becomes a part of him. One of them, Capesius, describes some of his experiences; we can observe that they are rooted in real life. But Thomasius takes in more. He is listening. His listening is singular... It is really as if Thomasius’ ordinary Self were not present. Another deeper force appears, as though Thomasius were creeping into the soul of Capesius and were taking part in what is happening from there... Tearing the Self out of oneself and entering into another is part and parcel of self-knowledge.”

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There is also a kind of mystery-of-the-other in the process of acting, an attempt to remove oneself and allow the character to come to life in one’s soul. Several of the actors in the upcoming performance of the first third of the Portal of Initiation have shared their experiences of working their ways into their roles:

Graham Jackson on Capesius:

Playing the part of Capesius, the aging history professor, has been relatively easy for me, as I pretty well just have to be myself, and in these scenes, he has not yet entered into the inner trials he suffers later. He is however interested in what everyone else is going through—just as I would be—and thus it has been interesting to contemplate again and again their inner struggles. Although I have seen all four dramas more than once, in German and English, one is never finished learning from them about our inner natures, and what we ourselves

may still have to face.

#### Heidi Vukovich on Helena:

At first, Helena seemed a straightforward character, displaying qualities of a 'new age spiritual consumerism'. She speaks with fervor and conviction to an inner longing of what we would like to hear: how spiritual striving will bring health, joy and happiness, it raises life to ecstasy and bliss, and it is our fault alone if we should feel any different and less than that.

So what after all, is her temptation, are her tricks, as she is inspired by Lucifer?

She is sympathetic to the suffering of Johannes, and she is impressively self motivated and self assured. But she has no empathy! She blames Johannes for his ills, she is ignorant of the laws of human development.

Helena confuses the feelings by rationally addressing what 'seems' so well deserved and just feels so good and self-righteous, that spiritual striving should bring bliss at all cost. To know this as a temptation is one thing, but to become conscious on a feeling level was the gift of taking on the role of Helena.

#### Les Black on Strader

Stepping into the world of The Mystery Dramas has been stimulating, always, but also full of surprises for someone who has little exposure to them. When I was asked to play the role of Capesius in Scene 1 of The Soul's Probation (several years ago), I at least found myself playing someone my age and with a somewhat similar professional background. Facing Strader is quite another matter.

We, in this production, have been graced with intensives of support from 'notables' in the world of these dramas, as they are now performed internationally, so the 'who' of Strader has been fleshed out for me, not only in the time of the performance you will see in October, but also, a glimpse or two of him has been mentioned from previous incarnations.

I have taken an interest in speaking with acquaintances who are scientists, to try to 'move' a little into such a frame of mind as is Strader's.

### Tim Nadelle on Johannes

Johannes has been an enthusiastic idealist for years, striving to embody in his paintings what his dear friend and mentor, Maria, perceives in spirit. He believed that he was doing important work and that his art, grounded in spiritual knowledge, would engender a healing force for the future. However, by the time the Portal commences, he has lost his enthusiasm, his creative energy, his artistic sensibility. He is filled with doubt.

What moves and challenges me about Johannes is his courage and tenacity. Even when he feels he has lost everything, he struggles to face and to understand what is happening to him. He sees the consequences of his self-absorption in the death of a woman who once loved him. He recognizes the most unsavory qualities in his own character. But he never turns away or rejects what he sees in himself, no matter how painful or frightening his self-awareness. His devotion to perceiving the truth holds.

Please do join us for one (or both!) of the two performances of the first third of the Portal of Initiation which will be taking place in Thornhill, Ontario towards the end of October 2015.

The first performance will take place over the course of the Freedom Mystery Conference from Friday 23 October to Sunday 25 October, which is devoted to exploring the path of knowledge implicit in the Philosophy of Freedom. Christian Community Priest Daniel Hafner will accompany us on this quest. Visit [www.philosophyfreedom.ca](http://www.philosophyfreedom.ca) for more information or to register. (Please order meals no later than October 5.)

A week later, Saturday 31 October, Daniel will deliver an introductory

lecture commencing 1:00pm. Then, from 2:00pm to 5:30pm, the second performance will take place. This event will also take place at the Christian Community Church, 901 Rutherford Road, Thornhill, Ontario. Tickets will be available at door.

Hope to see you!

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**Spiritual Strivings of Youth Section of the School for Spiritual Science Report, August 2015, by Ariel-Paul Saunders.**

I am excited to share the current surge of new activity in the youth section. There are more people, resources, inspiration and programming than I have seen in my four years of work with this section!

We are in the midst of our second crowd funding campaign of the year. The goal is to raise \$3500 to send four representatives to a four-day leadership gathering in Dornach in September. The fundraising is going well and we appreciate all of the support that is pouring in!

Please take a minute to have a look at our fundraising page and consider donating, even \$1, and sharing it with someone else you know. This is the web address: <http://igg.me/at/youthsection>.

We are also in full swing planning our fall conference in connection with the AGM of the American Anthroposophical Society, in St. Louis. For this event we are looking closely at the question of race as a catalyst for moral development, and working with a few key texts including the book: *Witnessing Whiteness* by Shelly Tochluk and *The Spiritual Foundations of Morality Lectures* by Rudolf Steiner.

Behind the scenes we are working on building up a consistent newsletter with an engaged readership and a website to help people connect and stay connected. We are also involved in supporting other youth section initiatives including: The Future Conference, a

conference for Waldorf high school students on the West Coast; Free Columbia, an art and social activism training in Philmont, NY; and the Heartbeet conference series on the future of the Camphill movement.

One of the key ideas that we are working with is the importance of collaboration. From what I have heard, all of the people currently active in youth section work right now really recognize the value of intergenerational work. In that light, I have been interested in reframing the work of the youth section to include people of all ages who are interested in the spiritual questions of young people. After all, some of the greatest contributions to youth section work have come through people who were no longer considered youth themselves. I think that we are ready to let go of the idea that participation in the work of the youth section should be restricted to a certain age group.

There is a lot to look forward to with the emergence of a cohesive carrying group to support and recognize youth section initiatives in the years to come!

Some of the key people working with the section are: Nathaniel Williams and Seth Jordan in Philmont, NY. Abigail Dancey, Virginia Hermann and Megan Durney in Spring Valley, NY, Daniel Evaeus, Matthew Temple and Frank Agrama in LA. Leslie Loy in Sacramento, CA, Sara McMullen-Laird from Ann Arbor, MI.

If you would like to connect with our work there are many ways to do so! You can support our crowd funding campaign for the September initiative gathering in Dornach by going to this website <http://igg.me/at/youthsection>. You can also sign up for our newsletter by e-mailing me, like our facebook page (North American Youth Section), and consider joining us at our AGM conference this October in St. Louis. Please feel free to contact me: [aripaulster@gmail.com](mailto:aripaulster@gmail.com) with any questions, to get involved, or offer your support.

With sincere gratitude,



Ariel-Paul Saunders

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## **The Freedom Mystery Conference**

Join us for a conference exploring the path of knowledge implicit in the Philosophy of Freedom, from Friday 23 October to Sunday 25 October, 2015 at the Christian Community Church in Thornhill, Ontario. Don't worry if you have found the book challenging to read - or if you have not read it at all! We have worked hard to make this conference widely accessible and of real value to people who are not Philosophy of Freedom enthusiasts. This conference is sponsored by the Anthroposophical Society in Canada, the Toronto Branch and the Thornhill Branch. It is also made possible by a donation from Vidar Foundation.

A performance of the first third of Rudolf Steiner's first mystery drama, "The Portal of Initiation" will be interwoven into the conference. Christian Community Priest Daniel Hafner will accompany us on this quest, delivering lectures and introducing each scene of the Portal. For more information, have a look at the article in this issue by Robert McKay entitled The Freedom Mystery Conference as a Destiny Event. You may also want to visit [www.philosophyfreedom.ca](http://www.philosophyfreedom.ca). To register (and order meals), download the Freedom Flyer. Registration (without meals) will also be available at the door.

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## **The Freedom Mystery Conference as a Destiny Event**

by Robert McKay

In a conversation with Rudolf Steiner that took place in April 1922 in The Hague, Walter Johannes Stein asked Rudolf Steiner, "What will

remain of your work in thousands of years? Rudolf Steiner replied: “Nothing but The Philosophy of Freedom,” and then added: “But everything is contained in it. If someone realizes the act of freedom described there, he finds the whole content of Anthroposophy”.<sup>1</sup>

This is a fascinating statement and open to various interpretations. Will humanity lose the great treasure that is anthroposophy over the next thousand years? I doubt it. I suspect that Steiner was addressing what of his work will be an enduring contribution. I imagine that in a thousand years, there will be many initiates working on the earth and that their collective creativity will, as is the case in all true arenas of knowledge, have incorporated and surpassed what a pioneer, like Steiner, achieved in his day. If this picture is correct, why would The Philosophy of Freedom still be relevant in a thousand years? Why is it a book for the future?

I suspect the answer has to do with the fact that the book is an essential tool and that its design cannot be improved upon. It will be as useful to seekers working in a thousand years as it is now. What is the core function of this essential tool? What can happen when a person sets to work with The Philosophy of Freedom? Steiner spoke about this frequently. Consider for example the following quote from the lecture given to the workers at the Goetheanum on June 28, 1923:

It is not the contents of this book that are so important, although obviously at that time one wished to tell the world what was said in it, but the most important thing is that independent thinking appeared in this book for the first time. No-one can possibly understand this book who does not think independently. From the beginning, page by page, a reader must become accustomed to using his etheric body if he would think these thoughts at all. Hence this book is a means of education - a very important means - and must be taken up as such.<sup>2</sup>

As other quotes from Steiner make clear, all of anthroposophy is grounded in this capacity for independent thinking, this “act of

freedom". These indications make it clear that only by developing the power of such independent thinking, can the soul become strong enough to open to spiritual experiences in a wholesome way. In addition, only through such thinking can a bridge be formed that is strong enough to bring the great richness of spiritual experiences back over into the day-to-day, as required for the renewal of our civilization.

What does this mean using our etheric body in independent thinking? How does that experience differ from thinking that does not use our etheric? How can we experience this difference? If these questions interest you, come to the Freedom Mystery Conference to be held in Thornhill from October 23 to 25.

At the heart of this conference is the immensely creative work of Timothy Nadelle. Out of a deep encounter over many years with The Philosophy of Freedom, Tim has developed – in fact is developing – an experiential and social way of working with the content of this book that lead one directly into this new thinking. For this development process to continue, Tim needs colleagues to receive and work with what he has achieved in an open and honest way. As a member of the organizing team, I have seen first hand what Tim is bringing and it is extraordinary. Rather than a didactic approach, Tim brings an opportunity that conference participants can pick up and work with creatively. Whether you have made a deep study of The Philosophy of Freedom or are new to this terrain, you will be guided into experiences that will become personally meaningful and open up new pathways for fresh exploration.

To the best of my knowledge there has never been a conference like this one. It truly is breaking new ground. In addition to what will be an energizing encounter with the core of The Philosophy of Freedom, interwoven into the conference, TQuest Productions of Toronto will perform the first third of the Portal of Initiation. Accompanying us on this journey, Christian Community Priest Daniel Hafner will open and close the conference with lectures which are intended to awaken a spiritual dialogue between these two facets of anthroposophy. For those of you who know Daniel, he brings sparking insight and humour

to his talks, and can often evoke a special mood through his lively presentations.

A guiding imagination for the conference is that participants will find in the Portal of Initiation a path to freedom and in The Philosophy of Freedom a point of entry into the experience of the mystery drama which is at the foundation of every individual's life. Learning to think independently is after all the first step in taking your own destiny in hand. I hope you will join us at this special event. For many, I believe it will be a destiny event. For more information or to register, please see [www.philosophyfreedom.ca](http://www.philosophyfreedom.ca)

Notes:

1. As quoted in May Human Beings Hear It! by Sergei O. Prokofieff – see page 460
2. “The Development of Independent Thinking” a lecture given to the Workers at the Goetheanum on 28 June, 1923(GA 350)

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### **Stand-Alone Performance of the First Third of the Portal of Initiation**

On Saturday 31 October, Christian Community Priest Daniel Hafner will deliver an introductory lecture on the Portal of Initiation. Then, TQuest Productions of Toronto will perform the first third of the Portal of Initiation. 17 of us have been working for over a year now to cultivate the imagination which is reflected in this drama. I hope you will join us!

The event will take place at the Christian Community Church at 901 Rutherford Road, Thornhill, Ontario. Tickets will be available at the door. Registration will commence at 12:30 noon. Daniel's lecture will commence at 1:00pm. The play begins at 2:00pm and will finish by 5:30pm. Price is \$25. For more information, download the Portal Flyer. (This event is entirely independent of the Freedom Mystery Conference.)

This performance is sponsored by the Anthroposophical Society in

Canada, the Toronto Branch and the Thornhill Group. It is also made possible by a donation from Vidar Foundation.

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## **The Delicate Balance of Gaia: Conference/Workshop Report 6-10th August, 2015**

Oakdene Centre, Bear River, Nova Scotia

Duncan and Maggie Keppie, Jennifer Greene and Jonathan Swan

This unique conference brought water and rocks together as subjects of Goethean observation of the processes common to water and the earth as a step towards a deepening understanding of the “Living Water and Earth or Gaia”. The stage was set by presentation of a beautiful puppet production of Goethe’s The Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily by a group of South Shore Waldorf parents under the direction of Monike Wildemann. Goethe regarded the Fairy Tale as his way of presenting his most profound observations of nature in the transformation of the soul. The Fairy Tale is set in a landscape divided by a river that depicts the boundary between two lands: the land of our normal ‘daytime’ consciousness and the land of the super-sensible, which is not accessible to our normal sense perception. By the end of the Fairy Tale, there is a permanent bridge spanning this river, joining these two Lands together. In this context, we “read the water and rocks” using experiments, and excursions around Bear River. Workshop themes centred around the ring vortex and archetypes. Successive days followed a rhythmic pattern of welcoming the day with water- and earth- related songs led by Maggie Keppie, followed by a morning field trip, an afternoon experiment, a shared dinner on the banks of Bear River, an evening lecture, ending with a dance depicting the water/earth movements with Maggie and a Scottish slow air on the piano accordion played by Duncan Keppie. These activities

were supplemented by molding clay from a sphere to a ring, an exercise that Rudolf Steiner used in embryology, and drawing vortex patterns on paper. Our last day together involved a walk to view the patterns in the river and in the rocks along its' banks followed by a meal in the park and concluding offerings.

Following the workshop, some of us visited Blue Beach to see the Carboniferous sedimentary rocks deposited by estuarine currents, rain drop imprints, and fossil plants and animals. On the return trip Jennifer and Jonathan stopped at Joggins UNESCO site to see the fossil trees.



### Experiments

The first water experiment, “The Drop and Drop-Fall”, showed how out of the unity of a single drop of water, the drop metamorphosed, as it hit the water surface. Surface waves radiated out from the centre to be reflected off the glass walls back to the centre – the analogy was

drawn with tsunami waves and led to an awareness of the rapidity of the movement and their speed. Beneath the surface, a spectra of vortices around the descending coloured ring vortex were observed. These phenomena event gave us a way of discovering the “art of placing a series of questions to Nature”, such that a step by step detail of water’s intrinsic nature could be seen.

The second water experiment involved small scale fluid dynamics in the formation of a “rising ring vortex”. Once again, we could see what happens when water meets a surface within or at the water-air intersurface. So “surfaces” as boundaries, as opposed to layers, create a place of generative activity.

These ring vortices are comparable to mantle plumes within the earth

and to rising granite intrusions.

(after J. Tarney lecture)

The third water experiment created a “train of vortices” by drawing a spatula through a tray of coloured water. The vortices alternated on either side of the trace of the spatula, and may be comparable to mushroom-shaped fold interference patterns in rocks.

The fourth water experiment we worked with a “water trickle” that showed the vortices produced in the inner bends of the river.

(After Schmeeckle, 2014)

The trickle experiment gave insights into the deposition of sedimentary rocks from river systems.

### Field Trips

The first field trip visited the Annapolis Tidal Power Plant where the enormous power of the water flow through restricted channels, which ran the turbines. The surface flow patterns of the rising water included ring vortices, and despite the enormous pressures that they generated, were cohesive in form. The comparison were subsequently made between man-made flow and flow forms generated out of water itself.

The second field trip took us to the Triassic and Jurassic rocks, 225 – 190 million years old, formed in a desert similar to the present-day Afar region. These rocks were formed in a rift valley (Bay of Fundy) during breakup of the supercontinent, Pangea. The rift was invaded by plateau basalt lavas erupted above a mantle plume, produced by a ring vortex, located off Florida. The presence of quartz, feldspar and mica was observed in the Triassic sedimentary rocks, whereas pyroxene and felspar were seen in the basalts.

The third field trip was along the southern margin of the Annapolis Basin where ca. 500 million year old, folded greywackes and slates intruded by basalt sill were to be seen. Again quartz, feldspar and mica were encountered in the greywackes, whereas amphibole and feldspar occur in the basalt. The field trip ended at an outcrop of granite and porphyry containing quartz, feldspar and mica.

Discussion ensued about whether “granite” is an archetype, and how it relates to the sedimentary rocks observed on previous field trips.

Goethe definition of an archetype includes both: (1) something, variants of which are common to all rocks, AND appeared first - “food for further thoughts”.

For the final field trip we walked onto the Bear River bridge to observe the currents, vortices, wave patterns and interweaving wave movements as the tide changed from high to low tide. A short further walk took us to conglomerate deposited on a 440 million year old shoreline.

## Lectures

### (1) Goethean Scientific Methods by Jonathan Swan

Jonathan began with some anecdotes that shed light on the reverence with which Goethe approached Science and Nature. One of the moments described from Goethe's life, was when he was seven years old making an offering to God using a magnifying glass to catch the first rays of the morning to ignite incense on an altar of natural objects. A key event in Goethe's life occurred in his 19th year when he fell deathly ill and had to return home to Frankfurt Germany. At that time, Goethe came very close to a Rosicrucian Stream and underwent a lofty and remarkable initiation from an unnamed personality. This initiation flashed forth in his soul in the poem "The Mysteries" and in his "Fairy tale of the Green Snake and the Lily" (Reported by Dankmar Bosse's and Rudolf Steiner's research into Goethe's initiation). On an excursion in the Harz Mountains to examine a granite contact, his friend Von Trebra urged Goethe to be careful not to break his neck as he rushed over large, slippery boulders to "arrive at the great honor" of beholding the outcrop. Through repeated observation Goethe arrived at his ideas on the Metamorphosis of Granite.

To set the stage for the Gaia workshop, the remainder of the lecture focused on a discussion of Goethe's Scientific Method, which is illustrated in the following quotes by Goethe:

"I had to continue on in my old way, which required me to observe



natural phenomena in a certain sequence of development through which I become aware of transitions as I accompany them backwards and forwards. Then through this I arrive totally alone to a living overview out of which a concept forms and in an ascending line I thus encounter the Idea." (Goethe Leopoldina Ausgabe, "Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft").

"If I look at the created object, inquire into its creation, and follow this process back as far as I can, I will find a series of steps. Since these are not actually seen together before me, I must visualize them in my memory so that they form a certain ideal whole. At first I will tend to think in terms of steps, but nature leaves no gaps, and thus, in the end, I will have to see this progression of uninterrupted activity as a whole. I can do so by dissolving the particular without destroying the impression [...]. If we imagine the outcome of these attempts, we will see that empirical observation finally ceases, inner beholding of what develops begins, and, at last, the idea can be brought to expression" (Goethe. "Studies for a Physiology of Plants").

The lecture ended with a reading of Goethe's poem "The Song of the Spirits over the Waters" (1779).

## (2) The Intrinsic Nature of Water by Jennifer Greene

The Gaia workshop explored the intrinsic qualities of water, as best as our inner capacities could bring forth. Jennifer indicated that in order to study water, to come to know it on its own terms, one needs to become more fully human, to awaken inner capacities that are not unlike the very nature of water itself: to become inwardly mobile, open, flexible, selfless and true to purpose, to task. To work in this way is to develop exact observation skills of something that is not static, but rather, is evermoving, everchanging. Our starting point was that water has "a story to tell" about its nature, which is exhibited through the phenomena it shows and how it behaves. In the Goethean sense of "reading the Book of Nature", our task was to discover, through careful and exact observation and a systematic series of inquiries, the qualities in water's intrinsic nature that deem it as an "element for

life". The principles of water's intrinsic nature include form, rhythm and movement as gestures. Jennifer illustrated her talk with a number of movie clips showing the drop, the drop fall, the train of vortices, and metamorphosis in the rising ring vortex. When water moves it generates organic movement forms that are integrated, flexible and organized. Water teaches us to be flexible, to be open, to be inclusive and share, to serve all who come into our midst, selflessly, to keep moving, and to remain in the cycle. Understanding the intrinsic nature of water allows us to change the social paradigm from considering it as a commodity to a service orientation to secure a future for "good" water.

"We look a long time before we can see...the question is not what we look at, but how you look and what you see" (Henry David Thoreau).

### (3) The Body, Soul and Spirit of the Earth & Archetypes in Geology by Duncan Keppie

Duncan started by asking the audience if the Earth was alive: most affirmed that it is alive. This raises another question as to how it is alive: as defined by Lovelock (1979) "...a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet;" or the whole earth? This question was answered by examining up-to-date scientific knowledge in the light of spiritual science, and showing that the whole earth is a living being consisting of a body, soul and spirit corresponding to lithosphere, asthenosphere and core. A route into spiritual science was illustrated by thinking in 2D, 3D and 4D, where the fourth dimension involves time.

Duncan then moved on to the topic of archetypes in geology starting with Goethe's definition of an archetype or archetypal phenomenon as both: (1) a hidden relationship between parts that explains how one form can transform (metamorphose) into another form whilst being part of an underlying archetypal form, AND (2) first or primal appearance, i.e. sequences of forms moving through time are the field

marks of an archetype. The field trips demonstrated that silicates such as quartz, feldspar, mica, pyroxene and amphibole and variants thereof are common to most rocks and appear in a complete range of ages of rocks. Vortices and ring vortices as processes in geology were illustrated, suggesting that they are archetypal processes.

(4) Effects of Fracking on Earth, Water and Man by Duncan Keppie  
Duncan illustrated this topic using the Windsor-Kennetcook Basin as a reference example showing that: (i) the size of the resource was grossly over-estimated due to the complex and many faults and fractures in the rocks that may have allowed the hydrocarbons to escape over the past 350 million years – over estimating the resource is a tactic used to solicit financing for exploration and drilling; (ii) the presence of faults and fractures provides channelways for contamination of ground and surface water, especially when fracking sets off small earthquakes resulting in opening up the faults and fractures; (iii) an exponential increase in small earthquakes has been documented in places subjected to fracking and reinjection of fracking fluids, e.g. Oklahoma; (iv) 60% of hydrocarbon wells are shown to leak after 15-29 years; (v) shale gas exploration is coincident with the best soils in Nova Scotia; (vi) hydrocarbon reserves will be exhausted by the end of the century; (vii) by 2100 temperatures are forecast to increase above those recorded over the last 7 million years, and carbon dioxide levels will show a tenfold increase since 1900 causing extinctions and food supply disruptions.

The Council of Canadian Academies has produced a comprehensive report on the effects of fracking: The Report on the Environmental Effects of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada, a peer-reviewed paper located at:

[www.scienceadvice.ca/uploads/.../shale%20gas/shalegas\\_fullreporten.pdf](http://www.scienceadvice.ca/uploads/.../shale%20gas/shalegas_fullreporten.pdf)

The Quebec provincial government has banned fracking based on an extensive report on the shale gas resource in Quebec: <http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca/sections/rapports/publications/bape307.pdf>

What sort of world do we want to leave our grand children? Other

source of clean, renewable energy need to be investigated, such as deep geothermal energy and artificial photosynthesis.

There were twelve participants at the Gaia workshop together with 4 leaders and seven pupeteers. The evening lectures were attended by several local people. We are grateful to Shirley and Klaus Langpohl for providing accommodation in their cottage for the leaders and several other participants, and their help in facilitating local logistics. We thank Marcella Edwards for taking photographs of the workshop.

Several Bear River residents also helped in publicity and logistics -we are grateful for such local support. The Gaia workshop was sponsored by the Anthroposophical Society in Canada, the Nova Scotia Group of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada and the Natural Science Section of North America. For their foresight we offer our deep gratitude. It is hoped that his conference will be the first of others as we seek to understand the delicate balance of Gaia.

This Gaia workshop provided many lines of inquiry for further research: (i) is a ring vortex an archetypal process in water, rocks and many other places? and (ii) What is an archetype in geology? These topics will be pursued in ongoing research.

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## **Visit of Joan Sleight to the Toronto Area 30 September - 3 October, 2015**

Some background:

In 2014, the Thornhill Group hosted a number of events relating to social art. (See: [Resilience and Renewal Through Social Sculpture](#)) The “social sculpture” workshop with Deborah Ravetz was a big highlight. Here is a comment from one of the participants:

“As long as we as individuals do not look at our own "hidden, ignored and denied" issues, we will not move forward as a community. If we stay stuck in our old ways and don't dare to jump, we will not change anything. Only if we make ourselves vulnerable will we make progress. To face our own vulnerability is incredibly difficult for us, it requires such courage and strong will and not everyone is able to do take the important first step”.

We studied the biographies of many individuals who emerged from shattering catastrophes, bringing powerful new impulses into the world. We asked, What is hidden, ignored and denied in ourselves today? How can we help each other to break new ground and reveal our destiny?

Joan takes it a step further:

During her visit to the Toronto area, Joan gave talks and led seminars at Hesperus, the Toronto Waldorf School and the Waldorf Academy. Empathy was the theme running through all these events. She described how empathy is a process of deepening and challenging relationships. We can only arrive at a real experience of another person when we understand and appreciate their differences. We need to become selfless in order to experience the other's self, and in so doing, we become conscious of our own self. This, indeed, is social art!



Joan's way of working is experiential and very engaging. Participants are guided through actual social experiences, and then responses are

shared in open conversation. Anthroposophical concepts are only introduced towards the end, to help people digest their experiences. For many people, this was their first anthroposophical event, and Joan's approach was very appropriate.

The Goetheanum as catalyst:

Joan is a relatively new member of the Executive Council at the Goetheanum, and is very interested in learning more about what is living in the Society - particularly in North America. Seeing her in action, a new image arose in mind: Goetheanum as catalyst. She brings many inspiring resources into the discussion at hand, while leaving us entirely free to figure out what needs to be done. Here are some examples of helpful interactions: meeting with leaders and residents of Camphill Communities Ontario, and helping us see our work in an international context, participating in a research seminar at York University, and helping us understand how gathering data is not an end in itself, participating effectively in networking opportunities in a range of public settings (e.g. Centre for Social Innovation, Beit Zatoun, Village Market...)

Joan, you have re-kindled flames. Come back soon!

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## **Unlocking the hidden mystery of the self and the other in our time!**

by Elizabeth Carmack

Friday evening 24 July 2015, I was at the Rudolf Steiner Centre in Vancouver, Canada. I had come to listen to Bodo von Plato lecture on "Philosophy, Anthroposophy and Everyday Life." The following morning we were asked to give a free interpretation of what the lecture had meant to us. My original quotation captured the essence of the process of inner transformation presented in the lecture and although originally formulated as a stream of consciousness statement, for the sake of grammatical accuracy and intellectual clarity it now takes a more complex form on the page. Asked to present my

summary statement for purposes of publication I decided to write a detailed interpretation of Bodo von Plato's lecture. My text captures my understanding of the lecture, which remains faithful to interpreting the value of these ideas for our time.

“Unlocking the hidden mystery of the self relies on the other. How does the secret self become known? What makes the individual unique? Often we develop a sense of our separate existence through experiencing how different we are from others. Feeling isolated, being ostracized, failing to belong or overwhelmed by inconsistencies within our own nature, we begin to forge the unique terms of our existence. In a moment of eclipse the secret self evolves through vulnerability to awaken to the necessity of community. In a social context we find common ground. Unexpected arguments can lead to catastrophe, but also develop clarity. Expectations of fairness perceive extreme injustice in the world, but also recognize good fortune in life. Although my sense of truth can be compromised by the world and others, as my inner reality diverges from anything known to me or anyone else, I experience my individuality as the very essence of my being.” Elizabeth Carmack

The core of the individual as a unique emerging identity is constantly evolving. Ironically, sense of self often develops on account of sense of difference in relation to other/s. (Possibly add reference to Plato's sense of sameness and sense of difference!) Although we rarely if ever provide inner space or possess sufficient imagination for the differences in others to come to light, we feel compromised, if we are not given enough inner space for the expression of our own voice and values. Such double standards need to be clearly understood and consciously worked with so as to cultivate community based on freedom rather than subtle forms of psychological coercion and socio-ethical uniformity. Inclusion of the voice and values of the individual depends on active listening from others. Active listening leads to recognizing and cultivating difference. For example, rather than disapprove of an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviour – see them as a manifestation of the individual's unique identity.

Ironically the nihilistic conditions of modern day society are ideal terms for unlocking the secret self. For the individual living in conflict with the world and society, a sense of being different from others can be heightened. Such a dynamic interplay between the self and the world confirms that individual terms are being forged. Although difference catalyses conflict, which many judge on the surface as negative and destructive, conflict can cultivate individual terms, because disagreement can ultimately be positive and constructive. Disagreement can be seen from at least two points of view. Affirmation occurs for the individual expounding his/her truth, potentially opening the doors of perception in the other. For many people present day life appears to compromise our existence and alienate us from our values. However, for those who survive the negation of the sacred in our time, which many of us fear will cause our spiritual extinction, seven inner developments can lead to affirmation of the self. 1. Inner Isolation, 2. Social Prejudice; 3. Inconsistencies and Contradictions; 4. Personal Vulnerability; 5. Articulating Differences; 6. Sense of Fairness and 7. Diverging Truths.

Contrary to popular belief self realization from conflict is possible through inner dialogue with the self and social interaction with the world. The seven steps of self realization through conflict help transform suffering into wisdom. Contact between the inner life of the individual and the unknown terms of the world can be abrasive, but can be transformed into something fruitful. Sometimes in affirmation the secret self of the individual can emerge in harmony within community, but as often as not the voice and values of the free individual challenge social expectations. In fact, the spirit of freedom often refuses to conform to social norms in very much the same way as the voice of the political dissident challenges the lockhold and tyranny of autocracy. For the free individual to be able to bring to expression the unique terms of his/her existence in the world, personal differences should not only be tolerated, but cultivated and valued. Forging individual terms means a person's inner life often emerges through conflict. The nihilistic terms we face in the world create opportunities of self knowledge by challenging the inner sanctuary of the soul. Social interaction can often threaten the inner



voice and values of the individual. Although endorsement of difference from others can present us with sufficient freedom to explore our true inner nature, such affirmation from the outside does not always result in inner recognition of the individual's authentic self. Often simply recognizing how our personal limitations impede the inner make-up of another human being from emerging can unlock the hidden mystery of the secret self, acknowledging the unknown individual within. However, people still feel compelled to self-censor! Therefore, understanding how my expectations potentially impair a faithful expression of the other can help. Fear of rejection occurs because one has learnt that if one's true nature deviates too much from the social norm, one will be stigmatized. Rather than rouse social condemnation one denies one's inner being expression in an effort to save face. Such behaviour is far more common than one would like to admit. Although seen as an aberration by some, it simply reflects the narrow-mindedness of society and is a symptom of the widespread expectation for us to conform. If we sought contact with others with the heartfelt wish of discovering how different they are from us, honest self-disclosure could occur. Eliminating all forms of self-censorship manifest as self-protective lying will transform artificial exchange into sincere encounter.

### 1. Inner Isolation

Inner isolation, although a source of suffering, means we are able to experience our existence as separate from the world. Although often quite painful on account of being accompanied by a strong sense of not belonging, being alone presents us with the creative confrontation of how to exist within our own terms and develop an inner framework. Jung perceives an individual's sense of isolation as the first inkling of personal freedom, which can awaken us to the source of freedom at the heart of our existence. Jung's concept of individuation, ie the process of becoming an individual begins within the context of inner isolation.

### 2. Social Prejudice

Social prejudice that discriminates against the other for being unknown to a group with a distinct set of mores, results in rejection

and exclusion from an existing community, whereas isolation occurs on account of an existential crisis, in which our sense of difference arises from within our own being. Isolation separates us from the world on account of something inherent with our own nature, whereas social prejudice alienates through rejection from the outside. On account of noticeably diverging from cultivated social norms and expectations, an individual is ostracized for simply being different. In Camus's "The Outsider" the quality of the narrative voice intentionally arouses suspicion in the reader. The uncultured voice of the "narrative I" is an intentional aesthetic device resulting in discrimination. Prejudice in the reader results in creating the social exile known to us as the outsider. Camus effectively reveals how unacknowledged silent prejudice can result in making an individual into a social outcast.

### 3. Inconsistencies and Contradictions

Oddly enough in spiritual communities subtle forms of criticism occur far more frequently than is recognized. On account of assumptions, condescension and intolerance the spiritual integrity of the newcomer is often judged quite wrongly. The active spiritual effort of the new individual in the group is often destroyed by the negative value judgements of the collective, who in the absence of humility are unable to identify their misjudgements. Rather than acknowledge the inconsistencies within their judgements they find fault with the other, thereby undermining the birth of the spirit in the one actively seeking truth. Such transference means one projects one's failings onto others. Perceiving the flaw in the other is an unacknowledged spiritual violation of sorts. A more enlightened position would be to recognize the flaw in one's criticism and thought. Simply seeing the beauty of such inconsistencies in the other and allowing them to coexist will set a precedent that unique spiritual terms cannot falsify the self. Social pressures force us to conform to false notions of ideal behaviour, which can alienate us from our true nature. Liberating the mind from misconceptions of ideal behaviour as a prerogative to validating the self in society needs to be challenged. Free beings naturally self-determine and self-initiate their own terms and for another person to judge the spiritual value of such is presumptuous. Schiller explains how human contact naturally goes through four stages of transformation.

Human relationship starts with love and affirmation, then turns to criticism and rejection, matures with knowledge and recognition, but ultimately will fracture on account of witnessing the inconsistencies in oneself as contradictions in the other.

#### 4. Personal Vulnerability

Personal vulnerability always exists, but an individual becomes all the more exposed through consciously and actively opening up within any personal interaction. As the world has become more dependent on electronic communication, people's behaviour has become far more anti-social. Today confessions within the context of social media, in stark contrast to the past, often result in further fracture, alienation and criticism. Electronic communication creates the illusion of being together and being perceived, and as a result the consequences of any criticism are not experienced because of the electronic disconnect. Personal vulnerability is understood far less now than in the past resulting in the individual taking fewer risks. In the absence of empathy or compassion, coupled with a fear of being challenged and threatened, self-disclosure rarely occurs. Trusting another out of a state of inner vulnerability results in integration of oneself in the world. Through making yourself vulnerable you open yourself up to your own humanity, as well as to the humanity of the other.

#### 5. Articulating Differences

Should we stop arguing or not? Articulating differences can result in catastrophe, as well as clarity. Mental differences are underpinned by values, so the real difficulty arises when one or both individuals insist that their values are right and as a result insist that their convictions are right as well. Actively trying to understand the value of another approach or perspective can help eliminate conflict. However, evidence substantiated by examples can often result in creating objectivity within the argument, also providing common ground for further analysis even from completely incompatible perspectives. Argumentation does not need to lead to conflict, but can result in an informed position of greater clarity. Being presented with the inherent weaknesses of my own convictions should not result in my undoing. On the contrary, recognizing my weaknesses will ultimately make me

all the more credible. Through informed argument one can overcome blind beliefs.

## 6. Sense of Fairness

Can one expect to be treated fairly? Lack of fairness in the world can exacerbate sense of injustice. Simply accepting an asymmetry of justice means people are forced to interpret the terms they face beyond an ethical framework. Why one individual appears to be burdened by injustice and tragedy facing intolerable hardship, whereas another is blessed by goodwill and providence remains an unknown mystery, often explained by some as “karma”. What is more, how one faces circumstance can transform external adversity into inner strength. Similarly when blessed with success, humility can eliminate the natural tendency of conceit. Although many people never get beyond a sense of injustice or blessing, understanding the wisdom behind such realities can help. Furthermore, compassionate understanding for people faced with suffering and hardship may be the only relief they experience from their crisis. Ironically all too often good luck in life inspires envy or resentment in others. Celebrating the good fortune of another as though it were your own is rare, but can happen within the context of love.

## 7. Diverging Truths: Philosophy Seeks the Truth

What is the truth? Does universal truth still exist or not? Will deferring to the truth of another compromise my own terms of truth and sense of reality? Moving from truth as an absolute to seeking truth as a process not only eliminates conflict, but encourages the individual to remain faithful to his/her true nature and inner being. Different deeds are necessary to cultivate different individuals. Thinking is a real deed. Authenticity in life allows me to be faithful to myself!

To thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Shakespeare Hamlet I, iii

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## OBITUARIES

### Réal Choinière 1932 - 2015

For the members of “Vers les Sources” of the Eastern Townships as well as the community of Waterville, the recent passing away of Réal Choinière leaves a great void. We had all become very attached to our dear friend which had recently arrived in our region. Réal moved back to the Eastern Townships in 2008 in order to follow his grandchildren who would be attending the local Waldorf School that year. Réal would constantly talk about and promote the benefits of the Waldorf school, the exceptional work and devotion of the teachers as well as his gratitude for all the wonderful interactions with the community members. This is where Réal first made contact with the Anthroposophical community. Réal would regularly attend to the Anthroposophical society’s meetings and then became a member of “La 1re Classe” a few years before passing away. Réal first was introduced to Anthroposophy in 1999 at the age of 67. Right away, Réal felt a great deal of respect and love for Steiner’s work. When Réal first joined our meetings, we immediately noticed that he had a deep yearning, a hunger to know, he was a researcher for more knowledge of the higher world. He had a wealth of knowledge and of life experiences which allowed him to grasp and understand those he would interact with down to their innermost individuality. I recall the first time Réal came to one of our gatherings. He did not talk about his accomplishments he had had teaching and practicing psycho kinesiology or the numerous people he had helped as a therapist, rather he simply stated his gratitude to be here at the meeting amongst us. He was happy to have found a group of people with whom he could share his enthusiasm for Anthroposophy. At our meetings we would ask Réal to recite a verse from the Calendar of the soul. What a joy it was to hear Réal recite the verse which he had learned them all by heart. Until his very last moments,



Réal remained a loyal student to Steiner's teachings. He was and still is an inspiration to his friends. Unfortunately Réal is no longer amongst us. He left us at almost the age of 83, at the very end of his 12th seven-year cycle. In the comfort of his home, surrounded by his wife, his daughter, his son-in-law and his grandchildren, he prepared himself as well as those he loved around him for the end of his days on earth. It is with the warmth of our hearts that we wish him well and accompany him on his journey.

Dear Réal,

You have now left this earth, this world that you have learned to love with all your heart, with the strength of your deepest thoughts. You have left for a long voyage. You have left this earth while Jupiter and Venus are slightly holding hands in the constellation of Leo. Like the lioness effort that our terrestrial world must be deploy to unite the forces of love to the forces of knowledge which are cultivated in abundance, like the signature of an entire biography dedicated to influence the knowledge of Jupiter to the forces of Venus.

Francois Dostie, Waterville, Québec

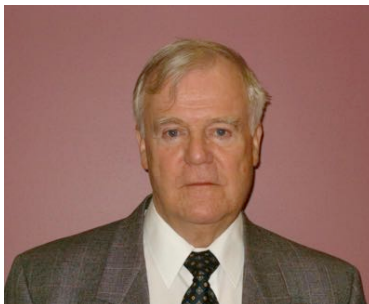
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**Guy (Géza) Agoston**

**January 25, 1933 – May 21, 2015**

By Claudette Leblanc

In one way, Géza was born into Anthroposophy, the science of the spirit inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner in Europe at the turn of the last century, through his deep connection to his mother, Olga, a lifelong Anthroposophist in Hungary. But it might be perhaps more accurate to say that Géza and his mother were so connected because they shared a common love for this new pathway opened up for the modern human being who not only recognizes that



there IS a spiritual world, but that it is possible for the human being to come to KNOW and understand it through schooled, conscious experience, as an extension to natural science. He was a devoted student on this path. On one trip back to Hungary with his son Thomas, Géza fondly showed him the old villa in which he lived with his family, where he and his mother would talk of important spiritual matters. He was an avid reader and researcher into the worlds on both sides of the threshold over the course of his whole life. After immigrating to Canada he started an Anthroposophical group in Calgary in the 1960's and then joined the group in Montreal when he moved there in 1967. Also of great importance to him was his lifelong work with the Natural Science Section of the Anthroposophical Society, which had him traveling the world and working with his dear friend Nick Thomas, who also crossed the threshold this year.

Géza was able to shine clearly in his spiritual life. It was for him the essential background to all else he strove for. He loved to read and study and learn, and everything in life interested him.

When he met Claudette Leblanc, the two had each recently separated, and they developed at first a nice friendship. They had a lot of fun, and could speak easily with one another. Through their friendship, love blossomed and the two joined their lives together in 1995, marrying in The Christian Community in 2003. One of the great blessings in both his and Claudette's life together is that they could share their interest and love for spiritual life together. When what matters most is shared by one's partner, then there is a certain depth of joy which can fill life. Even in the last weeks, when Géza was not feeling well enough to read himself, Claudette could read to him. Together they immersed themselves in descriptions of Christ's Ascension and the Pentecost—culminations of the Mystery of Golgotha and Christ's incarnation, which lead into a new future for humanity. The last book he picked up in this life—still sitting by his favorite chair, is a book of Rudolf Steiner's lectures entitled *From Jesus to Christ* which illuminate the resurrection.

Claudette has the sense that although neither of them had consciously recognized that the time had come, the pictures in these texts really helped him to be ready to cross over into the spiritual world.

Indeed, Géza was a man on a Christian path. He was born in the depth of winter in Epiphany time, when the star of Christmas shines out into the rest of the year like a beacon on the path through life—and he has now entered the spiritual world at the time of year when the being of Christ unites himself in a new way with the earth and humanity. The Ascension is often understood in a limited way as Christ’s leaving after the forty days he spent with the Disciples after Easter—that his ascent into the heavenly realms was a departure from us and the earth. Indeed, this is how many of us experience death in general—that we “go away” and are then “gone.” On the one hand it is true. To be incarnated is a special gift, and only we can take up the one “space” on earth that is ours. But also most of us do not fully and accurately witness death as a transformation from life as a personality in a body, living amongst our loved ones into a new kind of life that we call death: life released from the body, returning to a peripheral, spiritual all-presence; that, in reality, we are surrounded by our loved ones on the other side of perception all the time. They wait for us to reach out to them. These are the pictures that Géza worked with in his life, and they are helping him reorient himself now to his new experience.

If we long to remain in connection with him, we can come to know his presence now in a new way. The love that he gave so generously of in his long, rich lifetime of learning—that love remains in him, and he longs, as ever, to pour it out for all those who seek his loving guidance and help. He loved to teach and aid those who sought his help; he demanded the best of his children, and those sons and daughters who came to him out of life. That is one of the signatures of his presence which will continue to work on, growing ever stronger and clearer. We can see in the life of Géza Agoston, some of the first fruits of a life lived for the Spirit—and the gifts of a life of practicing and learning how to love. His sparkle on this side will be gravely missed.

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**Diana Silver Hassell**  
**May 26, 1937 - August 8, 2015**

Diane (Helen) - on Saturday, August 8, 2015 at the age of 78, after complications following a massive stroke on July 31. The background to the



stroke included neurological Lyme Disease and pericarditis. As a child, she had survived experimental radium treatments and later, several cancers. Pre-deceased by parents Al Goldblatt and Mary (nee Vogel). Survived by brother Barry Goldblatt; husband Dr. Christopher Hassell and previous husband Dr. Harvey Silver; sons Mike Silver and Dr. Seth Silver (Dr. Suzanne); step-mother to Anthony, Sébastien, Raphael and Emily Hassell; grandchildren Daniel and Jackie Silver, LX (Alexandra) and Jeremy Silver-Hahr; step-grandchildren Dylan, Hilton, Sophia, Yakko, Eliaz and Giovanna. Born in Toronto on May 26, 1937, she became a public school teacher, taught in Reform synagogues in Toronto and Buffalo, and became department head at Holy Blossom Temple. While in Buffalo 1962 - 1966, she was active in the civil rights movement. She returned to Toronto and earned a BA at University of Toronto, while teaching and raising a family. After a brush with cancer she dedicated her life to healing herself and others. She ran the macrobiotic East - West Centre in Toronto, where she taught healthy cooking, provided wellness counseling and fed hundreds of people. She married Christopher in 1981 and together they ran the medical and holistic wellness practice in Richmond Hill. Diane touched the lives of countless people, being a mother figure to many, a loyal and loving relative and friend to many more. She was an inspiration to all who knew her - being the one to whom they turned naturally for help and guidance. She was the end-of-life care giver to many. Her lifetime goal and achievement was to bring people together and to bring out the best in them. She lived her life promoting positive relationships and helping others, and by so doing, taught the lesson of how to live by the principle of unconditional love. A funeral service was held on Monday, August 10, 2015 at the Holy Blossom Temple. and achievement was to bring people together and to bring out the best in them. She lived her life promoting positive relationships and helping others, and by so doing, taught the lesson of how to live by the principle of unconditional love. A funeral service was held on Monday, August 10, 2015 at the Holy Blossom Temple.



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