

tionably universally true or unquestionably universally convenient. Even the notion of a spectrum on which we each have our particular place between these two poles is being replaced by the image of a multi-dimensional landscape where self-defining gender identity is not constant or consistent, and is configured on the basis of different and changing factors. The concepts of fluidity, orientation and dysphoria have now expanded to a wonderful if also slightly bewildering choice of identifying labels (so far 57+ options on Facebook!), conveniently abbreviated as LGBT+. In an unexpected way this proliferation attests to a kind of individual refusal to conform to already existing categories and the wish to independently describe identity.

The panorama of our unfinished human evolution, that is part of spiritual science, offers a paradigm that helps to make sense of all this. Are gender dysphoria and gender fluidity, non-heterosexual orientations, and non-binary identity early signs of an evolutionary shift? These queer phenomena (queer, like black, has been positively reclaimed with pride) in some cases indicate that there are individuals already now experiencing intimations of a future condition. We are now between an original androgyny and a future meta-sexual creativity connected with speech and the larynx, when sexual reproduction as we now know it will no longer be part of our evolution, and when sexuality and gender will have a different significance. The relationship between sexual procreation and the creative word is central to this.

The honing of our speech, the scope we have in language to overcome selfishness, the striving not only to mean what we say but also to say what we mean, the art of creative speech given by Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner are all opportunities that we already now have to practise the creative Logos potential. This striving of my everyday self to be true to my higher self and even also to my true self in how I speak is an aspect of the quest for congruence between who I am and how I behave. It is a Grail vision in which the distinction between form and content will be overcome. In the myriad of the apparent gender chaos around us there glimmers and even shines in some biographies the essence of this same noble striving.

Can we imagine that these cosmic archetypes of masculine and feminine are waiting to be transformed in our striving to become human? All this pain, pleasure, guilt, anguish, pride, shame, joy, doubt, and longing (all experienced by 'normal' heterosexual, cis¹ individuals as well) are unavoidable aspects of the struggle to glimpse, discover and maybe eventually achieve our true identity and human potential. Then the earthly realities of female and male and the cosmic realities of feminine and masculine will have served their tasks and be transformed. If this is so, then our own 'little' experiences of gender dysphoria and gender fluidity become something that is not so little at all.

Can we suspend the inclination to judge how people live with the social and personal realities of gender and

sexuality? Can we first just observe with the wish to understand these phenomena in the context of spiritual science, even when confronted with what might seem to be nothing more than the pursuit of sexual gratification?

Regrettably, in our anyway obsessively sexualised culture and additionally aggressive politically-correct sexual politics, free expression is not always possible. This whole field has been arrogated by mainstream academia, medical practice and fashionable social attitudes based on ideologies and fear. The politicised and dogmatic attitudes are as intimidating and stifling as the reactionary dogma of traditional 'heteronormativity', a term itself laden with attitude. The polarising effect of this, particularly in education and on young children, is harmful. How can we prepare children for an unprejudiced understanding of our diverse human and social realities without burdening them with age-inappropriate material?

This is of particular concern when young children exhibit symptoms of what is understood to be gender dysphoria. If their parents rely on the advice of doctors who might be in thrall to the current gender-political ideology, an irreversible course of pubertal hormone blockers might be prescribed before the true nature of the symptoms have a chance to show themselves. I am well aware that these assertions do not conform to what is politically correct.

This whole field presents awakening challenges, to observe impartially, to listen open-mindedly, to recognise clearly, to understand without prejudice, to be able to describe accurately and courageously without fear of being dissed, and to realise that it is arrogant to presume to approve, disapprove, censure, or endorse.

Andrew Wolpert has held lectures and seminars on this theme in Australia, Japan, Italy and Germany, and is organising a seminar at Rudolf Steiner House in London on 7th September. He will be very glad to hear from anyone who has comments and who wishes to engage further on these topics.
E: andrewjwolpert@gmail.com

1. Cisgender (or simply cis) is a term for people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth. The ed.

Rudolf Steiner's Library

CRISPIAN VILLENEUVE

That Rudolf Steiner was a spiritual researcher did not preclude him from also using earthly books, a good number of which indeed he owned himself. A whole library of them is preserved today in the Rudolf Steiner Archive at Dornach, which has just published a complete catalogue: *Rudolf Steiners Bibliothek*, a thick volume of over 1,200 pages. Since the price runs into three figures, it's unlikely to become a bestseller, but nonetheless the present readership may be interested especially in its Britain-related contents.

As explained by the assiduous compiler, Martina Ma-



Rudolf Steiner's library in the Rudolf Steiner Archive, Haus Duldeck, Dornach, photo: Ivana Suppan

ria Sam, in course of a careful and perceptive introduction, this library is strictly speaking that of both Rudolf and Marie Steiner, whose books up to 1925 are also included. They probably combined their respective pre-existent collections when beginning to work together in Berlin soon after the start of the twentieth century. Also, the library is no longer complete, for when in November 1923 Marie Steiner travelled to Berlin at her husband's bidding in order to dissolve the arrangements of their long-existent dwelling there, she only took from their Berlin library "what one wanted to retain for the future". And twelve years later in 1935 the rest was confiscated by the Gestapo, who had it carted away in thirty-three boxes which were never seen again.

Yet what did arrive in Dornach was substantial enough, for when supplemented by further acquisitions made both already during previous Dornach years and in the last part of Rudolf Steiner's life, it now consists of over 9000 books and over 3000 journals. Every single item is meticulously detailed in the catalogue, wherever appropriate with additional information.

There is a copy of Ralph Tate's extensively illustrated *Rudimentary Treatise on Geology* (1872), with some pages disfigured by blobs of ink. Poldi Steiner preserved one item left behind in the Austrian family home: J.H. Collins's *A First Book of Mineralogy* (1876), with marginal notes by her brother. A. Schlessing's *Neues Handbuch der Englischen Conversationssprache* (1879) has marginal notes and other markings in Rudolf Steiner's hand. Another interesting early item is Zimmerman's *Henry More und die vierte Dimension des Raumes* (1881). There's an English-German-and-German-English dictionary from 1832, part of one from 1892, and one from 1909-10.

As for English literature, *Beowulf* is present, in an 1867 German edition and an 1859 German translation. Shakespeare is well represented, both in English and German nineteenth- or twentieth-century editions, in his complete works as also in separate plays. There are four copies of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, in successively expanded editions from 1896 to 1921, as well as a 1921 copy of *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*. Works by Milton, Byron and Scott are nearly all in English nineteenth-century editions. Also

in English are works by Keats, Shelley, Carlyle, Rossetti and Edwin Arnold, mostly in nineteenth-century editions which according to bookseller's inserted notices were for sale in St. Petersburg, thus bought by Marie von Sivers. Indeed in March 1891 – the month of her twenty-fourth birthday – she also received "with MH's love" *The Poetical Works* of the then still living Lord Tennyson.

Writings by famous British philosophers and scientists are almost all in German. And how striking to find also German translations of Ruskin's *The Crown of Wild Olive* and *Lectures on Art*, both from 1901.

Regarding Rudolf Steiner's visits to London, the British Museum's illustrated *Guide to Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities* (1900) speaks for itself. Most astoundingly, Thomas Aquinas's greatest work, the *Summa Theologica*, is only present in an antiquarian tome of 1364 pages published in Paris in 1639 which subsequently made its way to Parker's bookshop in Oxford. Might Steiner himself have acquired this on his first visit there in 1903, or his second one in 1922? An 1895 edition of Sweet's *Icelandic Primer* from just over the road at Blackwell's bears in front the name "M. Steiner", so she purchased that in 1922. The same name is found in Sweet's 1897 *First Steps in Anglo-Saxon*, which indeed even carries markings, presumably by its owner. And here especially may be noted the copy of Albert the Great's *De Misterio Misse* published as early as 1473, with a bookseller's note inside stating in English: "Great Rarity [...] the first book printed at Ulm". Roger Bacon's *Opus Maius* also features, in John Henry Bridges's three-volume edition of 1900 published by Williams and Norgate, who until 1904 had an Oxford office-with-bookshop also located in the Broad.

Remarkably, too, there are original copies of Robert Fludd's posthumous *Philosophia Moysaica* published at Gouda in 1638, of its English translation *Mosaical Philosophy* published in London in 1659 (previously owned by "Fab. Philipps"), and of his *Fasciculus Geomanticus* published at Verona in 1687. One may reflect that Rudolf Steiner discussed Fludd in a Berlin lecture on the 30th of May 1904, just a fortnight after returning from his third visit to London.

There's a 1901 *New Testament* in the Authorised Version

"showing Our Lord's Words in Red", with an inscription dated September 1905. Besides German translations of the *Kalevala* there's also the 1907 one of W.F. Kirby into English. Kipling's *Just So Stories*, brought out in 1902 in Germany in a "Collection of British Authors", belonged to the Dornach Anthroposophical Library and was evidently never returned, so perhaps the Steiners enjoyed these stories so much that they couldn't part from the book. *Puck of Pook's Hill* also appears in this series, in a 1906 edition which did belong to the Steiners. Other items include *A Selection of Collected Folk-Songs* (1908) arranged by Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams, *Zoëga's Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (1910), Fiona Macleod's *Poems and Dramas* (1919) with marginal notes and markings by Rudolf Steiner, and *Poems of William Blake* (1920) edited by Yeats.

Further illustrated publications from the British Museum are *The Babylonian Story of the Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh* (1920), *The Babylonian Legends of the Creation and the Fight between Bel and the Dragon* (1921), and *The Book of the Dead* (1922). A six-part series of selections in German from works by Newman also dates from 1922. Presumably the 78-page *How to learn Welsh* (1900) and an 1875 copy of the Testament Newydd were acquired in 1923 at Penmaen-

mawr. And in those days R.D. Blackmore's popular romantic novel *Lorna Doone* (11th impression, 1923) with its vivid evocations of Devon would have served as background reading for participants in the 1924 Summer School at Torquay.

On subsequently returning to London, Rudolf Steiner visited the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. Its publication *Palestine: Pavilion Handbook and Tourist Guide* (1924) must surely raise the question: was it there that the never-to-be-fulfilled plan first formed in Steiner's mind of travelling with Ita Wegman to Palestine?

And there are still other intriguing questions. Was A.A. Milne's collection of children's poems *When We Were Very Young*, first published in November 1924, perhaps sent to Steiner in Dornach by someone who had attended three months previously in London his very last educational lectures? And was Blanche Wilder's illustrated retelling of *Stories of King Arthur* (1925) also sent to the departing Rudolf Steiner by someone who had listened in England during the previous summer to his expositions about the Arthurian stream?

Crispian Villeneuve lives in a Camphill Community in Northern Ireland. E: crispianvilleneuve@gmail.com

MEMBERS' FORUM | REPORTS

Seeds of Strength

The Society Summer Conference 2019 at Emerson College

WILLIAM BISHOP

After the theme of artificial intelligence in last year's conference it was deemed necessary this year to focus on inner development to strengthen the inner life in order to support the 'I'. Indeed, we may not be able to do anything about the roll out of anti-etheric technology, but it is possible to balance this by our own spiritual development.

An artistic centrepiece to the conference was given by Michael Chase with an evening interactive mask drama, where masked participants drawn from the audience represented the seven stages of a life which extended beyond the threshold in its kamaloka journey through the planetary spheres of the hierarchies to the midnight hour in the Saturn sphere. Everyone could identify with this journey on which we are all embarked, and drama, like dream, can surprise with sudden illumination. This also applied to the drama presentations on another evening, where Richard Ramsbotham performed his own one-person enactment of the life and work, including his encounters with Rudolf Steiner, of the Russian symbolist poet, Andrej Belyj (1880-1934). During a lecture Belyj experienced the heavens opening above Steiner who drew down its inspi-

ration. And Patrick Dixon's realistic enactment of the fearsome demons in Milton's 'Paradise Lost', delivered on the same evening, gave an impression of what humanity is up against, and yet hope is provided by Christ-imbued beings such as Steiner, and by connecting with the Christ impulse.

Ian Trousdell was unable to attend and so at short notice Marjatta gave the first evening talk in his place, and Patrick Dixon stepped in and offered an inner path workshop in lieu of Ian's, related to nature and including nature walks. What follows now is intended to convey a passing flavour of the nourishing conference talks.

Marjatta's Opening

Marjatta opened the conference in the afternoon by referring to the different development phases of the Anthroposophical Society and how institutions, such as those connected to education and medicine, have been under attack through mainstream and modern scientific attitudes. New and hopeful signs are now arising where professionals in the mainstream are starting to approach anthroposophical professionals for deeper perspectives and collaboration, recognising the practical results produced by Rudolf Steiner's insights in many areas including mental health. So this next phase indicates a turning around where the questions come from "the outside" towards Anthroposophy.

In the evening she spoke about 'Crossing Boundaries - The Adventures of Rudolf Steiner's Inner Path' and ad-

ressed three different thresholds across into the spiritual world: through meditation, through going to sleep in the evening and waking up in the morning, and in human encounter where one goes to sleep in oneself and wakes up in the other.

Marah Evans: Humanity Crossing the Threshold - Perspectives on 'Mental Health', Resilience and Social Change

Marah Evans provided perspectives on mental health and resilience in an age of great change, and spoke of our dual consciousness today: both here and across the threshold, and how the 'I' needs strengthening to span these two worlds. She brought the picture of our position today (in the consciousness soul age) of the cupola painting in the first Goetheanum representing the 5th epoch and our time, where Faust contemplates the human skull, and above hovers a child. This image indicates the birth of child-like qualities of imaginative consciousness arising out of reflective witness-consciousness alongside an awareness of dead thinking.

The modern mysteries appear to us through life itself becoming a Michaelic path of will and initiation. Parsifal stands as an example of this modern path of the will, where learning from making mistakes and experiencing vulnerability leads to inner freedom, to a deeper empathy and intuition to ask the right question at the right time. Vulnerability and authenticity here can be seen as a new inner strength. A full development of the soul strengthens the 'I' so that an inner sun can shine out in generosity. Modern life challenges the individual to learn to face many fears and to bear with states of 'not-knowing'. These can pres-

ent modern threshold experiences. On an everyday level, learning to endure states of 'not-knowing' with calm and curiosity can lead to true openness of mind and towards a new heart-thinking.

Unresolved states of shock, trauma or dissociation and the chaos of modern sense experience today can lead to a bewildering disconnection of thinking, feeling and willing. Many contemporary psychotherapeutic thinkers also, through relational work, neuroscience and trauma work, are beginning to understand threshold states from one point of view. Steiner, of course, already referred to the 'threefold brain' in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* and elsewhere when he referred to the threshold and the lesser guardian. Finally, faithfulness through meditation and 'being with' helps the other; ultimately we meet our 'I' through others, where the Christ is found.

Jeremy Naydler: Liberating Thought, Releasing the Light

The enlightenment brought by Jeremy Naydler came with the idea that light harbours thought, and that these two are identical but seen from different sides. After going in some depth into the aberrations of light in electricity and the developments these have taken in the age of modern electronic communication devices, he turned to the 'unfallen' forces of light that we can bring to life in our own lives as a counter-force. Plato and other ancient philosophers realized that thought is luminous, and for Rudolf Steiner all physical substance on earth may be viewed as condensed light. Light is therefore a bridge to the spiritual through the etheric, bearing within it formative forces. Cosmic thinking is made manifest outside us and the light

