

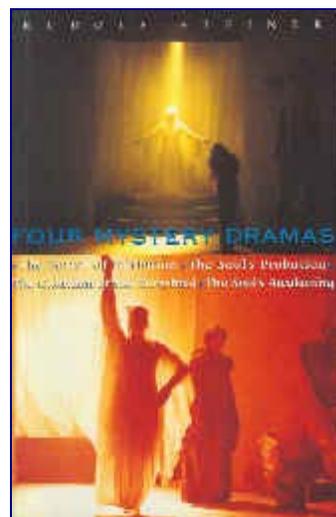
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A READER'S JOURNAL

The Soul's Probation Volume 2 of 4 Mystery Dramas, GA#14 by Rudolf Steiner

A Life Tableau in Dramatic Scenes
As Sequel to the Portal of Initiation
Translated by Ruth and Hans Pusch
Published by Anthroposophic Press in 1997
A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2006



As I begin my review of the second play in Steiner's four mystery dramas, it occurs to me that some may wonder what the intent of my reviews of these plays are. Consider my reviews as composed of Hansel-and-Gretel crumbs of truth and beauty that I find strewn along my reading path. Rather than picking them up and consuming them, I place them on a tray to entice you, dear Reader, to walk the same path and pick up your own crumbs of truth.

The use of the word "probation" in the title must be understood as the process of subjecting an individual to critical testing and examination. In this mystery play it is Capezius who undergoes a probation of his soul which reveals to him truths about Johannes, Maria, and others. This play opens several years after the time of the previous one, [The Portal of Initiation](#), and Capezius is in his study reading. Soon he interrupts his reading with an insight which comes to him about his life:

**[page 12] Capezius:
In my long life I have but spun
the images that move like shadow-drawings
within a dream of soul.
And all this merely mirrors, as delusion,
the world of nature and the spirit's action.
Out of this ghostly web of dreaming
I've tried to solve the cosmic riddle.
Down many a path I turned
my restless soul, impatiently.
But now I recognize
that, tricked, deluded, I myself,
I did not live within my soul,
when threads of thought
tried to expand themselves far out to cosmic reaches.**

And he comments on Johannes Thomasius who was led to comprehend how empty his life had been and why(1). Johannes had great treasures which he had blithely ignored.

[page 13] Capezius:

**I've understood: the greatest sin in life
is to ignore the treasures of the spirit.**

Clearly Capezius is undergoing a probation of his own soul, too. He reads on and comes upon words which are breath-taking and cause him great fright.

**[page 14] Capezius:
'Enter calmly into depths of soul
and let strong courage be your guide.
Cast off your former ways of thought
when you descend into yourself
to guide yourself toward selfhood.
As you extinguish self-engendered light,
the spirit's brightness will appear to you.'**

The spirits of Luna, Astrid, Other Philia, and Spirit Voice speak to Capezius as he grows faint and asks them, "Where is Capezius? Where am I myself?" As he broods alone, Benedictus enters the room and offers him advice which involves him "changing the sense of many words." To change the sense of words(2) is another way of saying "to change one's attitude." And a miracle is defined by A Course in Miracles as a "change of attitude." We use words as builders do concrete forms to create the foundation of a building. When they build the forms, however, the liquid concrete fills the form and takes the shape of the form and holds that shape indefinitely when the builder removes the form. Similarly we build our limitations by the meanings we pour into words (those forms we have made), and, once the meanings are set into words, it takes about as much force to change them as the dynamite builders use to blow apart the set concrete foundations of buildings when they wish to build a new building in place of the old.

**[page 18] Benedictus:
It is not hidden from me
that I find you in life's battle.
I knew already long ago
that we would meet some day like this.
Prepare to change the sense of many words,
that we can fully understand each other,
and do not marvel
if in my way of speaking
your suffering must change its name.**

Clearly this next passage gives us the theme of this play: a probation of the soul of Capezius and others by the spirit forces and powers of destiny. Capezius asks Benedictus how he may sustain himself.

**[page 22] Benedictus:
The answer to this riddle you'll be granted
if you can face with an awakened eye of the soul
the many wondrous things
which soon will come your way.
Ordained I see you now to a probation
by spirit forces and powers of destiny.**

Next comes Maria to plead for help from Benedictus. A voice in her soul has told her repeatedly that she must give up Johannes. She asks for his clarity to dispel this illusory voice, and is shocked by his revelation. Benedictus acknowledges she has long been attached to Johannes, and reminds her:

**[page 24] Benedictus:
Love should not forget**

that she is wisdom's sister.

He reminds her that even those to whom much has been revealed, there may be much lacking of maturity.

[page 25] Benedictus:

**The paths of higher wisdom are entangled; —
and only those will find their way aright
who walk in patience through the labyrinths.**

Maria protests that she needs more help:

[page 26] Maria:

**Yet when in times of highest bliss
delusion presses in upon the mind
in the deceptive mask of truth,
a darkness of the soul is difficult to ban.**

In Scene Three, Johannes stands at his easel and recalls these words of spirit when he first began the picture. This is an insight into how artists proceed with their work, inspired by the spiritual world and how the colors they combine represent their internal feelings brought out into the material world.

[page 34, 35] Spirit speaking to Johannes:

**'Begin to paint,' she said, 'in such a way
that you, with courage, venture
to show to earthly senses
what spiritually the soul alone beholds.
You will not fail to see
how forms, resembling thoughts,
can conquer matter,
and how the shades of color, akin to feelings,
enwarm the force of life.
Thus with your skill you also may
portray the higher realms.'**

...

**Johannes: How can the weaving life of spirit,
so far removed from earthly sense,
and to the seer's eyes alone unlocked,
reveal itself by means
belonging to the world of sense?**

And later on, Johannes is speaking to Maria about the difficulty artists have in speaking to others about the spiritual realities they perceive which lead to their works of art. I recall what Isadore Duncan said in response to a question about the meaning of a dance she performed, "If I could tell you what it meant, I wouldn't have to perform the dance." To communicate the meaning of an artwork would require one to be able to "speak spirit to spirit" as Johannes says below.

[page 38] Johannes:

**If I were to express in words to others
what I can bring to clear cognition
within the higher worlds,
then I could lift myself to spheres where spirit speaks to spirit.
An artist has to find that fire
which, radiating from his work, burns on in**

human hearts.

**And I can only pour into the picture
what streams as magic spirit-fervor into hearts,
if first my soul can drink
from *your* heart's depths the spirit revelation.**

Strader talks to Capezius and recalls his encounter with the seeress Theodora in the Portal of Initiation.

[page 42] Strader:

**Do you remember still the day
on which a seeress through the truth of what she
said made clear to me the error of my path?
I had no choice but to acknowledge then
that all our toil of thinking
can never find the fountainhead of life.**

Strader gave up his struggle of thinking and turned to "practical accomplishments." This shows how the gestation of spiritual insights proceed while we "put our mind in idle" with simple tasks.

[page 43] Strader:

**I made myself proficient in those things
which lead to practical accomplishments.
Today I supervise a shop
which manufactures screws,
and thanks to this activity
I can for many hours forget
how torturing my worthless struggle was.**

When Strader talks about the possibility "that perhaps my life on earth repeats itself," Capezius is surprised and delighted at the drastic change of attitude in his scientific friend.

[page 44] Capezius:

**You spoke — O did I hear you rightly? --
of repetition of your life on earth.
So have you then attained
that crucial truth upon those spiritual paths
which even now
you still esteem as dubious?**

Strader:

**So now you've found the third essential cause
that strengthened my resolve
to make a new start in my life.**

No matter how much counseling or advice from others one gets, one reaches the point eventually where one's life can only be understood out of itself. Recognizing that this life on Earth is not the only lifetime one spends, but one of a series, allows one to comprehend that the events which occur to one in this lifetime are planned ahead of time by one's own spirit in the time between death and a new birth, and we arrive newborn on the Earth with a banquet set before us which is new in the world and unique to us. It is our jigsaw puzzle to decipher the individual pieces of and to place each piece into its proper location, sooner or later. Other voices may help us decide a piece is in the wrong place, but no one else can decide for us the correct place, and we do not know it is the correct place until it has been in place for some time.

[page 46] Strader:

Also my later life with all its crumbled hopes

**appeared to me so shaped
that it could only through itself be understood.**

It is devastating at first for a materialist scientist like Strader to recognize his helplessness in the face of the weaving of his threads of karma by the invisible spiritual powers which pull those threads through the warp and woof of his life.

**[page 47] Strader:
... with apathy I must succumb to power
that spin my threads of destiny
and will not show themselves to me.**

Capezius visits Felix and Felicia Balde in their home and asks Felix why he receives people into their secluded home. Felix explains how spirit guidance led him for a long time to keep silent and now demands that he speak to those who come, even if they do not seem to understand him. Felix's words reveal why I write reviews of such esoteric books and plays as those of Rudolf Steiner. They can be of service even to those who do not understand them.

**[page 51] Felix:
A knowing, which in such a way
reveals itself from spirit worlds,
can be of service also
to men who do not understand it.**

Felicia tells Capezius a story of a boy living in the forest alone with his parents and how he communed with the spirits of the forest. When Capezius rises to leave after this wondrous story, he thanks Felicia and says to himself as he walks away:

**[page 57] Capezius:
The story was so simple that she told.
And yet it stirs in me the powers of thought
that bear me into unknown worlds . . .
In this fair solitude I will indulge
in dreaming.
This has so often
endowed my soul with thoughts
that proved far better
than many fruits of endless brooding.**

The four scenes from six to nine take place in the early fourteenth century. Simon the Jew enters from the wood alone. This next passage speaks of how we acquire meaning. In Matherne's Rules #6, I aver that "All Meanings Are True (AMAT)." Only those who have had the experience to allow them to understand how we acquire meaning will grasp the truth of AMAT. Others will reveal their lack by quibbling with the words or disputing them. Those who do are driven by some meaning of meaning which is likely dictionary- or teacher-based. They have no idea that this is only one way of holding meanings, and everyone can have their own way of holding meanings. Therefore each meaning one holds is true to the one who holds it. This makes arguments over meaning a waste of time, except as they reveal the meanings held by the ones in debate over meanings.

**[67] Simon:
I'm persecuted by the people.
And yet one thought pursues me often
that brings this truth before my soul:
that meaning lies in all that we experience.**

The time in which Simon speaks is about a hundred years before Francis Bacon began his inquiry into the laws of Nature which set the foundation for the materialistic scientific achievements and industrial revolution which was to follow into our time. Even a century removed, Simon the Jew saw humankind reaching toward making sense of the sensory world.

[page 67, 68] Simon:

**There must reveal themselves to man
such laws of Nature as 'til now were strange to man.
He will soon conquer for himself the world of sense
and out of it will liberate the forces
that he will make subservient to himself.**

In Scene Seven, the Knights of the Mystic Brotherhood are gathered and we are allowed to eavesdrop on their conversation. The Grand Master is speaking about the many castles of their brotherhood which have been destroyed and theirs is likely doomed, too.

[page 73] Grand Master:

**Our enemies are spying out the means
by which they can take hold of our possessions.
These we've surely not acquired for profit,
but as a means to gather round us people
into whose souls we can implant seeds for the future.
These seeds will ripen in their souls
when out of spirit realms they find their way
into a later life on earth.**

When one plans for the future, the results of that future will come about possibly in one's future lives as well as this one. Unless one understands this rightly, events in which large groups of people are killed such as the 9/11 bombings do not make any sense. Much of the existential despair that people feel today is due to the lack of understanding of the reality of karma and its working out over serial lifetimes on Earth. The First Master has yet to understand this reality.

[page 73] First Master of Ceremony:

**Our Order must endure whatever dark design
our destiny has yet in store.
This, one can understand.
But that in perishing, our whole community
must sweep with it
so many brothers' individual lives,
seems an injustice in the light of cosmic laws.
My lips will not complain,
for manfully our brothers died;
but still my soul desires to understand
the sacrifice required of a man
united with a group
when powers of destiny have doomed
that group to its destruction.**

The Grand Master gives a wise reply in which he first describes the sufferings of those in his Order who have karmic debt to resolve via their sufferings, and then describes those who with no karmic debt to resolve, still suffer and benefit spiritually from their suffering.

[page 73, 74] Grand Maser:

The individual's separate life

**is linked most wisely with the cosmic plan.
Among our brothers one proves often able
to serve our Order with his spirit forces
although his life is not unblemished.
His erring course of heart and mind will find
atonement through the sufferings
he has to bear in service to the whole.
On him who bears no guilt from his own deeds
yet has to walk the thorny path
marked out by karma for our Order,
pain will bestow new strength
to raise himself to higher life.**

When asked by the First Preceptor how they are to understand the likelihood that their enemies will rob them of their lands and souls and their own people will succumb to the hate seeded in them by their enemies, the Grand Master explains that his leader yet speaks to him from the spirit world to which he had earlier ascended. Their enemies may win this battle and wipe them from the face of the Earth, but the spirit they have instilled in others will return to finish the job and fulfill their goals.

**[page 75, 76] Grand Maser:
What we have planted in their souls
indeed may for the present die.
But those who breathed our spirit light
will come again, and then
bestow upon the world what we intended in our work. —
Thus to my spirit from realms of death
our mighty leader often speaks,
when I descend in hours of silence
into my inner depths,
and forces awaken,
to hold me in the spirit land.
I feel the presence of our leader then
and hear his words
as often I have heard them
in earthly life.
He does not speak of our work's ending,
but of fulfilment of our goals
in later days on earth.**

At this point, it should have become clear to the audience of this play that the Grand Master and the rest of his Knights of the Mystical Brotherhood are spirits which have later reincarnated in Johannes, Maria, Benedictus, Felicia, Strader, and others in the time of the play's setting to continue their work in a new era, an era in which the science whose seeds were planted in the fourteenth century have come to flourish in the nascent nineteenth century of Steiner's and the play's time.

The Second Preceptor is not satisfied, however, and when a Monk comes to claim the land upon which the Knights' castle rests for the church, he is met with this description of how the castle came about. His description of how the rich treasures, probably gold or silver, travel to distant lands leads me to suspect the Knights were Templars, who were the earliest known bankers, who sent precious metals to distant lands so that travelers to those lands could travel without fear of losing their money. Instead they would deposit their money with the Templars at the castle, and upon arriving in a distant land, claim the amount they had deposited from a Templar there. This undoubtedly furthered human progress the way banks continue to do today.

**[page 77] Second Preceptor:
This piece of ground was undeveloped soil
when it was purchased by our Order.
It was unknown to you
that under it rich treasures lay concealed.
We've won them by and for the work of men.
Today these treasures travel to far-distant places
to further human progress.**

Simon confesses to a tendency to believe in the Christ, but to being held back by his own nature from doing so.

**[page 91] Simon:
I feel persuaded by your teaching
that speaks about a Spirit Being
descended from the kingdom of the sun
and in a human form appearing to the senses
in order to be understood by human hearts.**

This Spirit Being will appear to human beings on Earth frequently beginning in 1933 as Steiner announced elsewhere, but even in the fourteenth century among initiates and Knights of the Mystical Brotherhood, it was already known of that event to come, which can rightly be called the second coming of Christ in glory as spoken about in the Bible. "In glory" was a phrase used to describe spirits appearing only in the etheric plane or their etheric body as Christ has done many times since 1933 to human beings on Earth. Those who wait for Jesus to re-appear in the flesh will have their hopes dashed by eternity. His appearance as Christ Jesus in human form was a one-time event in the history of the Earth. Anyone who claims otherwise does so in ignorance of the facts of the evolution of humanity and the cosmos within which we live.

**[page 93] Second Master of the Ceremony:
From what our masters have revealed we know
how, through the light of spirit, future men
will see the lofty Being of the Sun
Who lived but once within an earthly body (3).**

When I studied with Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970s they used a lot of stories to make their points. These stories we all came to call "metaphors" because they contained deep truths that were often not explicit or obvious to the listeners. My studies of several week-long training seminars given by Milton Erickson, MD, the master of metaphor, also infused me with an appreciation for metaphors. Some of the best age-old metaphors come down to us from the itinerant Eastern mystics known as Sufis and testimony for their power can be found in how so many of their metaphors have made it into the vernacular form of metaphor we call a joke. The treasures contained in a metaphor are best hidden and not explained. The Sufi story which describes this process is this: a Sufi master was seated a table with one of his importunate young initiates. The young man asked him, "Master, would you pass me that peach," pointing to the bowl in which remained only one peach. The Master picked up the peach, ate all the flesh from the ripe peach, and handed it to his student. That is the metaphor. What does it refer to? If I tell you, you will not likely receive as much benefit from it as if I simply let you eat the flesh directly from the peach instead of me.

When Joseph Kean speaks in the beginning of Scene Nine, he is talking about metaphors.

**[page 96] Joseph Kean:
These stories are true treasures for the soul.
What they can give the spirit stays unchanged**

**even beyond our death, and will bear fruit
in later lives on earth.
We marvel at their hidden truth
and out of marveling, our souls
form knowledge, which we need in life.**

With that as preface let us listen to the metaphor of Good and Evil from Dame Kean, otherwise known as the Story of the Tree and the Axe. Here it is, flesh still intact, enjoy!

**[page 97] Dame Kean:
Once upon a time there lived a man
who pondered much about the world.
His brain was tortured most of all
by his desire to know the origin of evil;
but he could give himself on this no answer.
'The whole world comes from God', so argued he,
'and God can only have the good within Himself.
Then how do evil men come from the good?'
Time and again he pondered, all in vain.
The answer could not be discovered.
One day it came to pass, this gloomy thinker
upon his way beheld a tree,
which was in conversation with an axe.
And mark! the axe was saying to the tree:
'What is impossible for you to do, that I can do.
I can fell you; but not you me.'
The tree then gave this answer to the haughty axe:
'A year ago a man cut out the wood
from which he made your handle
out of my body, with another axe.'**

Later when Thomas tells Celia how he was led to her, he describes a feeling which does not lie. That feeling is what I have called a time wave from the future — the process we all have of [remembering the future](#). Since the process involves only feeling and not thinking, those invaluable feelings are blithely ignored by the majority of humankind, up until now.

**[page 103] Thomas:
Dream and prophetic feeling did not lie;
it was my longing leading me to you.**

Capezius in Scene Ten is back from the fourteenth century and endures his soul's probation. He awakens from a dream which brought him images of his previous incarnation. He was filled with terror and lost, but something amazing happens:

**[page 108] Capezius:
I felt myself expanded to the universe,
bereft of my own being. . .
But no, it was not I who felt this way,
it was another being, sprung from me.
I could see men and deeds of men develop
from cosmic thoughts advancing throughout space,
and pressing to reveal themselves as beings.
Then they unfolded one whole world of life
before my eyes, in pictures, tangible.**

**They took from my soul-fabric
the power to create existence out of thought.
The more this world condensed itself before me,
the less I could sustain the feeling of myself.
And from the world of pictures words resounded
that thought themselves, and stormed upon me;
from life's deficiencies they fashioned beings
and gave them strength from deeds of goodness.
Out of the wide-flung space they sounded warningly:
'O man, know thou thyself within thy world.'
A being whom I saw confronting me
showed me my soul to be his own.
And then these cosmic words continued:
'As long as in the circle of your life
you cannot feel this being closely interwoven,
you are a dream that only dreams itself.'**

But Capezius is feeling this being sprung from himself, and becomes the dreamer instead of the dream, in essence knowing himself with his world for the first time — a knowing that will open for him visions of himself and his friends in the Brotherhood of Knights in the fourteenth century during his previous incarnation. He also sees his friends' spirits in their roles during that earlier time.

**[page 109] Capezius:
Amidst a Spirit Brotherhood
I could perceive myself and others, too,
but as a picture of those times long past
that wrests itself from memory's deep wells.
I can see the miner, Thomas, as my son,
and then my thought must link him to the soul
shown otherwise to me within Thomasius.
The woman whom I know as seeress now
appears as my own child before my eyes.
Maria who befriends Thomasius
reveals herself clothed as a monk
who fights our Spirit Brotherhood.
And Strader bears the mien of Simon the Jew.
In Joseph Kean and in his wife
I see the souls of Felix and Felicia.**

In Scene Eleven, Maria confronts both Ahriman and Lucifer and we eavesdrop on snippets of her reply to them. In her reply to Ahriman we hear echoes of the story of the Tree and the Axe. If Ahriman is the axe, he furthers the production of trees by clearing the way for more trees as he cuts down trees. And the trees can be used to make more axes.

**[page 114] Maria:
The lofty powers of destiny have wisely
appointed you to be their adversary.
You further everything you wish to hinder.**

...

**[page 114] Maria:
If at this moment I forge rightly
the word of truth into that sword,**

you will be forced to leave this place.

What is the truth-forged sword of Maria? She explains that it the sword forged in the spirit realm in which the souls of human beings create "knowledge out of powers of reasoning and transform it into spirit wisdom." This can be understood as the "Philosopher's Stone" which can take the base metals of human reasoning and by spiritual alchemy transform them into the gold of spiritual wisdom.

Maria takes a stand against Ahriman, recognizes his limitation in this matter, and causes him to withdraw, after she reveals that this is a turning point in human evolution.

[page 115] Maria:

**There will be many men at such a time
reborn as men in their succeeding life
and many women reappear as women.
The interval is also shorter then
than usually between two earthly lives.
To understand such turning points of time,
you lack sound insight.
Therefore their coming into being
you cannot unmistakably survey.**

In Scene Twelve, Lucifer makes an appearance and speaks of a ripeness of will. This is the essential aspect which competent psychotherapists seek in a new client and, if it is not there, direct all their efforts towards creating it: "a ripeness of will." Lacking that, the chances of success in therapy are minimal — the therapist devolves into a paid companion.

[page 116] Lucifer:

**Whatever in a man leads to success
depends upon the ripeness of his will.**

Maria then proceeds to pinpoint Lucifer's limitations, but these are limitations that human beings are not subject to, and thereupon lies the hope for humankind.

[page 126] Maria to Lucifer:

**In human beings there are springs of love
to which your power cannot penetrate.
They are unsealed when faults of former lives,
which man has brought upon himself unconsciously,
are seen with spirit eyes in later lives on earth,
and by free will of sacrifice
are then transformed to deeds
which fructify true human progress.**

Benedictus has the final words in this play and voices once more the refrain of "karma spinning the threads of world becoming."

[page 127] Benedictus:

**There formed itself in earlier days on earth
a knot from threads
that karma spins in world becoming.
In it three human lives are interwoven.
There shines forth on this knot of destiny
the lofty spirit light within the temple.**

Inside the Sun Temple with him is Maria, who has pinned Lucifer's limitations and dispatched him as an

agent of the Earth and humanity's progress. Benedictus tells her that Johannes will find her again once he finds his own selfhood. Apparently Johannes is still "a dream which dreams itself."

[page 127, 128] Benedictus:

**To you, Maria, I must address myself,
for you alone of these three souls are present
in this hour and at this holy place.
May in your Self this light now heal
and turn into the good
those forces which once firmly bound
your threads of life with all the others
in a knot of destiny.
In former days the father could not find
the heart of his own son; but now
the spirit seeker will accompany
your friend upon his path into the spirit land.
Yours is the duty to maintain
Johannes' soul within the light.
When once you held him fast in bondage
he could but blindly follow you.
You gave him back his liberty
when he still clung to you, infatuated.
You'll find him once again when he succeeds
in conquering his selfhood for himself.
If your soul can be loyal to the light
which spirit powers bestow on you,
Johannes' soul will thirst for you in realms
where still the Lord of all Desire holds sway.
And through the love which keeps it bound to you,
his soul will find the path into the light.
For he who knowingly beheld
the heights of spirit from his depths of soul
can pass through light and darkness livingly.
From cosmic reaches he has breathed
the air which quickens life to all eternity,
and living raises every human life
from depths of soul to lofty regions of the Sun.**

In closing this review, I'd like to dedicate this poem I wrote, inspired by this play, to all the Johannes's out there in the world who have yet to meet their Maria. Keep dreaming and keep walking, perhaps one night or one day, you'll find out for yourself the meaning of love at first embrace.

A Dream That Dreams Itself

In a dream one night
You may walk along a line of books —
Each book contains a dream
Described by the title on its spine.

The hallway is a lovely sight
And if you give the titles careful looks
You might find this one on the shelf:
"A Dream That Dreams Itself."

If you open it, you'll therein read,
"Until you truly know yourself
Within your world, you'll be indeed
A dream that dreams itself."

The next play in sequence is [The Guardian of the Threshold](#).

~^~^~^~^~ **ADDENDUM** ~^~^~^~^~



[page 3, 4] **THOUGHTS ON THE SEAL for THE SOUL'S PROBATION**

The pentagram in the center reminds us of the figure of a man standing in space: his legs placed firmly on the ground; his arms stretched out to the right and left; his head aiming skyward. This picture represents man in harmonious balance between heaven and earth, and in full control of his body.

Moving to the periphery, we find repeated patterns of outspread wings, influenced, as it were, by forces coming from the circumference, directed toward the center. The middle part of the seal shows forms which respond to them by opening themselves like a blossom or chalice. The two forms, without touching each other, come close together like in- and out-going spirals. The designs I around the periphery and those in the middle can be seen as a five I times repeated double-form. Recognized as such, an astonishing relationship to the pentagram in the center becomes evident.

One can make the experiment of cutting out a thin-lined copy of the pentagram and

of laying it, with its 'feet' toward the center, over one of the double-forms. It is now obvious that the straight lines and angles appear exactly metamorphosed into curves and wings. The free space between the in- and out-going spirals falls directly there where the points of the two arms end. A mere description cannot give the picture as it presents itself in such an experiment, but one can also try to set one's imagination in motion and let the mind achieve the transformation of one form into the other.

We know that the law of metamorphosis is fundamental to an understanding of reincarnation. The changes from one life to another are only explainable if one can apply this law to the physical, psychic and mental differences. Nothing remains the same, but undergoes a vital 'sea-change'. This form-design helps to make our mind flexible enough to follow the process of metamorphosis, based on the pentagram, representing the human figure.

It is this central form which plays an important part in the experience of transformation, because it remains the solid basis from which one starts out and to which one returns. And the return is necessary, in order to keep a balance. The swinging, winging, curving, spiraling forms can tempt us to lose ourselves in them.

If we apply the dynamics of the seal to the play itself, the essence of the dramatic action becomes evident. 'The Soul's Probation' deals with a retrospect into the former incarnation in medieval times, consciously experienced by Maria, Johannes and Capesius — with different results, however. Capesius is so intrigued by the periphery and its cosmic dimensions that he cannot find his way back into his present body (his pentagram). Johannes lives on, unable to discard or erase the past for the sake of strength in the present. This conflict throws him into the arms of Lucifer. Maria alone remains soundly united with her pentagram, clearly aware of the law of metamorphosis. By virtue of her integrity, her 'star' nature, she defeats Ahriman.

Thus the seal can offer exercises in the metamorphoses of forms, and at the same time prepare a deeper understanding of the central dramatic events of the play itself.

Written by **Hans Pusch**

----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1. This happens in Mystery Drama I, [The Portal of Initiation](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)



Footnote 2. Readers of this play may find as I did the need to change or expand their sense of the word "probation" to come to terms with this play.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)



Footnote 3. He warns those present not to expect the Being of the Sun to appear to them, "But do not think that after your first soul probation this premonition will appear to you." (Page 93)

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)



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