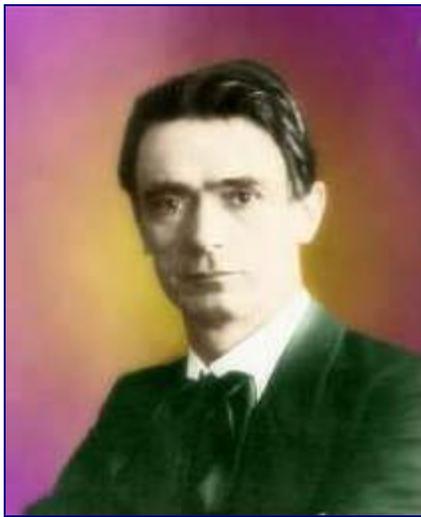


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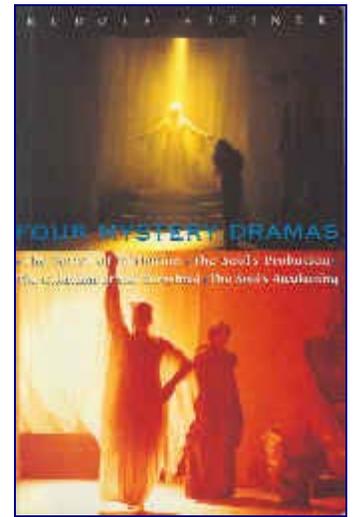


A READER'S JOURNAL

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

Soul and Spiritual Events in Dramatic Scenes
Translated by Ruth and Hans Pusch
Published by Anthroposophic Press in 1997
A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2006

Read all four [Mystery Dramas](#) in Order.



This fourth and final play of the four mystery dramas presents the culmination of the events foreshadowed in the earlier three plays, which should be read or reviewed before proceeding with the review of this play(1). The list of beings (humans, spirits, etc) includes most of those encountered already in the first three plays, but many of the humans are in spiritual form. The time of the events are about one year following the end of [The Guardian of the Threshold](#).

This is no easy series of plays to read or witness performed. The performance of the four plays in sequence takes over seven hours. The plays require study of a deep and serious nature. One can be said to be required to know all about Rudolf Steiner's works(2) before one can benefit from the insights he portrays for us in these intense dramatizations. He explains how tempted he was to explain these plays, but decided against it.

[page 11] In response to various questions, I considered adding a few supplementary remarks in explanation of this whole Soul Portrayal; but again, as on former occasions, I suppress the attempt. I am averse to adding material of this kind to a portrayal intended to speak for itself. Such abstractions do not play any part in the conception and elaboration of the portrayal. They would only have a disturbing effect. The spirit reality here depicted presents itself to the soul as convincingly as the objects of physical observation. It lies in the nature of such a portrayal that a sound spirit vision relates the images of spirit perception to beings and events quite differently than the perceptions of the physical world relate to the physical beings and events. On the other hand, it must be said that the manner in which spirit events present themselves to the inner perception contains implicitly the character, disposition and composition of such a portrayal.

Munich, August, 1913

R. Steiner

In spite of his protestations outlined above, some readers may still wonder why Steiner would take such a hands-off approach to his important work in these four mystery plays. I can only offer the flesh of this Sufi story to those readers. One day a Sufi master was sitting at a table with an importunate disciple who always wanted to know why his master had done something in a certain way. On the table close to the master was a bowl containing one ripe peach. The disciple asked, "Master, would you give me the peach?" The Master said, "Yes," and picked up the peach and proceeded to eat all the flesh from the peach. He then handed over to the pupil the peach's bare pit. For similar reasons

as Steiner offered above, the Master would not explain to his disciple why he ate the flesh from the peach. The flesh of the peach speaks for itself, just as Steiner's plays speak for themselves. To ask for an explanation of a play is to accept the peach's pit in place of the peach's flesh. Isadora Duncan told a pleading admirer, "If I could tell what my dance was about, I wouldn't have to perform it."

We Americans have all seen the high quality wooden objects manufactured by German firms. When I was buying toys for my children, I recall the German wooden toys especially — they looked solid and sturdy and heads above in quality to their domestic counterparts. In this next passage, the factory manager is told by his secretary the reason customers are taking their orders to competitors.

**[page 15] It's that we're lacking punctuality,
and that our merchandise cannot compete
with other firms in the same field,
is what they write; the same complaint
I hear now more and more in my trips.**

Hilary is the owner of the factory, and he has plans for adding soul to his products through the supervision of the workshops by the artist Thomasius. Hilary says that to have gained a view that labor can assume a noble form "if men of spirit put their stamp on it." And he has chosen Johannes Thomasius as the one to direct the workshops.

**[page 17] Thomasius, the artist, shall now direct
the workshops that I build here, near to us.
The products made by our machines will first
be formed artistically by his creative spirit
and so supply for daily human needs
the useful molded into noble beauty.
Thus craftsmanship will be combined with art
and daily life imbued with taste.
So I would add unto the dead sense-body —
for this is how I see our work today —
the *soul* that gives it its true meaning.**

The manager objects that Hilary's project still lacks a leader to carry it out. Hilary is astonished that his manager cannot perceive as he does that the inventor himself should lead the project. As I read these passages, I could not help but think of Joseph Newman with his Energy Machine. His intuition brought the machine into being, but he has been unable to lead any project to bring the machine into a useful and salable product in the marketplace, up until now. Perhaps like with Strader the forces Newman requires are still inaccessible to him personally. The carrier pigeon who arrives with a message from a long distance away cannot locate the addressee on the message — to do that requires another skill. Inventors are like couriers arriving with a message who must turn it over to others for the final stage of delivery. Tesla successfully turned over his invention of Alternating Current to George Westinghouse and we enjoy its boon today, but Tesla kept four other inventions to himself which have been lost to us forever perhaps.

**[page 18, 19] Manager (*showing his surprise*)
What? is Strader then the man?
Is it not clearly evident in him
how a man's mind is apt to blind itself
when lacking common sense for true reality?
He owes the mechanism he invented,
without a doubt, to intuition's light.
And if some day it can materialize,
then from it countless blessings will flow forth,
which Strader has believed were very near.
But it will long remain experimental
because the forces still are inaccessible**

which alone can bring it to reality.

Strader has a problem with the Manager's approach which would keep spiritual aims separated from labor in the workshops.

**[page 25] You would consider them appropriate
for times not occupied by daily work.
The goal, however, of that spirit stream
in which I see quite clearly life's direction
is this: to join what spirit in itself can do
to earthly labor in the world of sense.**

This next passage requires a bit of decoding. Read it first and make what meaning you can out of it. To me, it stands alone from the action in the play as a useful insight. Capezius is talking to Maria.

**[page 34] The power of spirit can waste itself in words
far more than when it works in outward action.
For words would have us grasp what we perceive,
yet concepts are opposed to powers of vision.**

Words embody previously formed maps of reality whereas previously unknown and unexpressed realities can flow directly from the spiritual world. A true artist⁽³⁾ takes in these direct realities and expresses them on a canvas or in a sculpture or a dance. Ersatz artists, whom we would more accurately call craft-artists, take their preformed concepts and render them into what they call artworks, but which are properly called crafts. The work of the craft-artists flow from what they perceive in the physical world, while the work of true artists flow from what they perceive from the spiritual world.

Capezius notices a change in Johannes and confronts him. If one experiences a bleed-through from a previous lifetime, it can happen during times of quiet musing and the conflation of the two lifetimes can lead one into error.

**[page 35] Capezius:
Johannes, tell me frankly, did you not
just now when you were lost in quiet musing,
experience outlived desires of yours
as if they were your present self?**

**[page 35] Johannes:
My spirit's own confusion, can it form
an active life within another soul?
And can his vision make my error strong,
that it can find the way to world-becoming?**

In his book *Running From Safety*, Richard Bach meets Dickie, the spirit of his youth some fifty years prior. Dickie has been kept locked up in a cell and insists on Richard keeping the promise he made with nine-year-old Dickie. Dickie makes it clear to Richard that he would prefer to torch him with a flame thrower rather than talk to him:

**You promised that in fifty years you'd write a book to take back, just for the boy you were,
everything you know, what to look out for, how to be happy, knowledge to save your life, things you
wish you'd known when you were him.**

In this next passage, the Spirit of Johannes' Youth warns Johannes of dire consequences if he does not fulfill his youthful promises.

[page 43] The life of your dreams nourishes my life.

**My breath drinks thirstily your youthful dreams.
I am alive as long as you refuse
to enter worlds which I can never find.
But should you lose me in yourself, I would
in pain do evil service to grim shadows —
Preserver of my being, — do not forsake
me.**

Lucifer speaks to the young spirit of Johannes, and the Youth shivers at the sound of the word "Lucifer" in the next passage. As Dickie was kept locked in a cell, so did this Youth lead a sad and spellbound life. The message seems clear both in Bach's "Running From Safety" and in this play that one cannot leave one's promises to oneself unkept except at one's own peril. The part of us to whom we made the promise lives as a spiritual being within us until we fulfill our promises.

**[page 44] Till now he lacks compassion for your pain;
he lets you sink into the realm of shades
while lifting up himself to heights of
light.
And then he can forget that you, his child,
must lead a woeful, spellbound life.
But henceforth at your side you will have *me*
when you are chilled, as shadow, by his guilt.
I will exert the right, which Lucifer (*Youth quivers*)
holds for himself by law of ancient worlds,
to capture from Johannes' depths whatever
he leaves unguarded in his spirit flight.**

Johannes asks The Other Philia if this Youth is but an image mirrored through himself. The answer that comes is quite clear that the path Johannes must take was the same one Richard Bach had to take.

**[page 46, 47] The Other Philia:
Yet one that lives and keeps its hold on life
as long as you preserve within yourself
a lived-out life which you indeed can numb
but which, as yet, you cannot overthrow.
Johannes, your awakening will be delusion
until you liberate, yourself, the shadow being
on whom your guilt bestows a spellbound life.**

If you, dear Reader, have had the opinion that these mystery dramas written by Rudolf Steiner about ninety years ago have no meaning for anyone today, I offer as proof the waking dreaming experiences of Richard Bach described in his book published in 1994 only twelve years ago. The next passage sums it up for us:

**[page 46] The Other Philia:
And wakening dreaming
reveals to the souls
the enchanted weaving
of their own being.**

Felix Balde adds with a flourish this insight which helps us to understand why the inner sight of mystics rarely makes it into the external world.

**[page 54] Felix Balde:
The fragile being of the inner sight
you cannot take into the world of action,**

**for it will fade as vision when you cross
the border of this world's absorbing life.
In piety, revering spirit-sway,
with spirit sight reposing in the heart:
thus mystics should approach the world of deeds.**

Capezius responds with this amen: "And if they otherwise would enter it, effects of error it would show to them, but not the radiant being of true wisdom." (Page 55)

Strader dares to gaze into his abyss at the urging of Benedictus and Ahriman. He sees but "phantoms rush upon each other wildly .. Destruction reigns and generates fierce darkness. . . ." Maria comes to his help and urges Strader to build up his strength and illuminate his demons from the abyss.

**[page 57] Maria:
You can illumine them with your own light.
Where is your light? . . . You radiate fierce darkness.
Perceive your darkness, round about yourself . . .
you pour confusing darkness into light,
you feel it pouring forth through your *creating*,
yet you can never feel *what* you create.
Whereas you would forget creating's thirst,
unknown to you it dominates your being
because your cowardice holds back your light.
This light of yours you would enjoy, and yet,
yourself in it is what you will enjoy.
You seek yourself by seeking in forgetting:
dreaming you sink yourself into yourself.**

Strader needs a weapon for the battle of soul he is undergoing, and Maria explains to him the various kinds of swords of Felix and Capesius so that Strader may better design his own sword.

**[page 59] Maria:
While Felix tempers for himself the weapons
which shield him against danger, — one who walks
your paths of soul must use another kind.
The sword Capesius forges for himself
and bravely wields in battle with his foes
must change for Strader to a shadow-sword
were he to start with it that spirit war
which powers of destiny ordain for souls
who mightily must turn the spirit-being,
matured for deeds, to earth activity.
You cannot use their weapons for yourself,
but you must know them so that you can forge
our own from out soul-substance thoughtfully.**

Felix tells Felicia that he does not like her fairy beings because they are "mechanical, embodied dolls." This conjures up for me the latest fad in movie-making of recent decades known as Claymation, where clay dolls are animated and photographed a frame-at-a-time(4). It is the human equivalent of spirit entering into matter in Claymation and finding its way to many children and adults too.

**[page 61] Felicia:
I have not so presented them to you**

**for that — you — stand — too high!
But I was glad
when I was told of Strader's plan, and heard
Thomasius too intends to show how spirit
can enter into matter, sense-perceived.
I saw in spirit all my fairy princes,
my fire souls too, dance merrily on thousands
of puppet-stages, shaped with artistry.
And so, with inner happiness, I left them
to find their way to many, many children.**

The Manager confides in Romanus that he finds the spirit beings which Strader brings out in his words and being repellant. What if the power we feel we owe to others in our present life really stems from a power we wield that has been stored within us from a previous lifetime on Earth?

**[page 64] Romanus:
And one day I reflected: what if you
owe not to yourself but to him the power
which let you grow to full maturity?
This feeling soon was followed by a second:
what if, for all that makes me of some use
in life and work and service for mankind,
I am indebted to some past earth life?**

In the cosmic midnight the human soul has expanded to the orbit of Old Saturn, its fullest expansion, and will soon feel the pull towards Earth and a new incarnation in human flesh. During this time, the soul catches fleeting glimpses of its future lifetime, and while these visions fade immediately like lightning flashes and are soon forgotten, they are written as karmic threads into the soul. The soul in its next incarnation will discover these threads weaving themselves into karmic knots. In my review of Steiner's book [Three Lectures on the Mystery Dramas](#), I wrote a ten stanza poem on the four Mystery Dramas. Here is the text from Stanza II: Spinning knots from out of threads/Forming lives from living circles/Weaving one life where it leads/To where this karma lives in us. The threads of our karma life are formed during the cosmic midnight of our soul. You, Good Reader, in all aspects of your life today, are in the middle of the weaving process of karmic threads which were formed during your soul's cosmic midnight. Your very reading of these words with comprehension, uncovering insights for perhaps the first time, is part of a lightning glimpse of wisdom your soul received in the darkness of its midnight hour.

**[page 91] The Guardian:
Perceive and know your cosmic midnight
hour.
I hold you in the spell of ripened light,
which Saturn shines on you until through power
of this light your sheaths, illumining yourselves,
can live in stronger wakefulness their colors.**

**[page 91] Maria's Soul:
The cosmic midnight hour in souls'
awakening? — — —
It was within the moon-time that the sun spoke
the solemn word of destiny: those human souls
who at the cosmic midnight hour are wakeful
see lightnings dazzlingly illumine
in such swift flashes things that *have to be*
that spirit visions die on recognition,**

**and dying shape themselves to scripts of fate
forever actively engraved in souls.
Such souls hear thunder-words reverberating
in heavy rumbling through the cosmic grounds,
that threaten soul-illusion as they roll.**

At the end of Johannes' cosmic midnight, the Spirit of his Youth appears and begs him not to imprison him again by forgetting who he is. When we each lose our youthful aspirations in our adult life-considerations, we relegate the Spirit of Our Youth to imprisonment in a dark cell "among the shades." What youthful dreams did you have which you have neglected? What specifically can you do in your own life right now or as soon as possible to fulfill those youthful aims? What are you waiting for to start? Richard Bach waited fifty years. How long will you wait? Do it right away, Kid![\(5\)](#)

**[page 95] Spirit of Johannes' Youth:
My breath will pour into your youthful aims
illuminating strength when worlds begin to tempt
whereto I joyfully can be your guide.
But should you lose me in yourself, I must
fall victim to the shades, bereft of being.
O blossom of my life . . . do not forsake me.**

The dictum over Apollo's Temple in Greece said, "Know Thyself." We cannot know ourselves until we recognize that what we are taught in school to call the world is an illusion. What we call the world is but the garments covering reality and we err greatly if we confusion the clothing of a person with the person. Our schools are so powerful in their teaching methods that we often see things which aren't and act as if they were real. This process of everyday hallucination by the masses is amply illustrated in the story of "The King's New Clothes." It took a child, someone who has not been "carefully taught" to see the reality that the King had no clothes on. Since we are taught to take the clothes of the world for the world itself, if we are asked what happens if we remove the clothes (i.e. we die), then we must in conformation with our schooling say, "We cease to exist." Those who err in such dramatic fashion, and one may presume that the majority of many cultures do so, are those who need most the advice of the creed of Apollo. Know Thyself is know yourself as a full human being of body, soul, and spirit who lives in a spirit world between death and a new birth and lives through lifetimes on Earth perfecting oneself as a spiritual being[\(6\)](#).

The Temple Warden guards entrance to the Temple against those who do not know themselves as full human beings. In his words, it may be helpful to some to translate "semblance" as "garment".

**[page 103] Temple Warden (Felix):
From out that web of unreality
which thou in error's darkness namest world,
the mystic has conducted thee to us.
From being and from naught the world was made
which to a semblance wove itself for thee.
Semblance is good when from reality beheld;
but thou didst dream it in the life of semblance;
and semblance known by semblance fades away.
O semblance of a semblance, learn now to know thyself.**

Capezius as the Hierophant signals the sweeping away of the garments of semblance to reveal the reality of the spiritual world.

**[page 107, 108] The Hierophant (Capezius):
Fulfilled is what our ritual ordains.**

**The soul has now forgotten what it was.
Opposing elements have swept away
the web of semblance, spun on error's loom,
which still in elemental strife lives on.
The soul its inner core alone has rescued.
It must now read what lives within this core
as cosmic Word that speaks out of the flame.**

Maria is the Neophyte and she has been undergoing the Temple Sleep during the Egypto-Chaldean period (Third Cultural Epoch). She is called to awake in a similar way that each of us felt the call to enter our human body on Earth prior to this lifetime.

**[page 109] The Neophyte (Maria):
Within my spirit-soul existence rose the wish
that gravity of earth would plunge me down
into my sheath where I might feel
and hold the sense of joy in warmth of life.
Thus, gladly diving down into my sheath, —
I heeded your stern summons to awake.**

Maria returns to a study in Hilary's house, alone in contemplation, as if she has just returned from the Third Cultural Epoch and her initiation as a Neophyte. She is already beginning to be intoxicated by the garments of the senses she has donned and needs all the help from her "I" (Ego) to keep from losing the insights she has gained.

**[page 113] Maria:
Abide you too, O moment, you that could
create for me this spirit happening
as strength of self. Prepare and arm my soul
that you may not pass from me like a dream. — — —
Within the light that lights the cosmic midnight
which Astrid now creates out of my dullness,
my Ego joins that Self that for its service
created me within the universe.
But how, O moment, do I hold you fast
in order not to lose *you* when my senses
feel once again earth-clarity around me?
For mighty is their strength; and if they deaden
this spirit vision, dead it will remain
when the Self again in spirit finds itself.**

Steiner wrote these plays in the period from 1910 through 1913 when airplane flights were new to the world, and yet in this next passage, it is as if he had piloted an airplane because he was aware that winged creatures and machines can gain the heights after sudden falls. We do not wish to fall, but we can take heart knowing that we can rise even higher after each fall.

**[page 114] Luna:
The Guardian's warning followed thus my words:
as image of yourself in ancient times,
and know that in the flight to spirit heights
your wings gain strength as well by sudden falls.
The wish to fall should never tempt the soul,
but from each fall it must draw forth more
wisdom.'**

When the Guardian moves away from Maria, she resolves with the help of her spirit guides, Astrid and Luna, to raise herself to fullest awakening and knowing of herself as a full human being in body, soul, and spirit.

[page 117] Maria:

**There moves as star of soul the solemn Guardian,
in glowing light, unto my soul horizon . . .
his shining spreads forth calmness through great spaces . . .
solemnity shines forth from him . . . his sternness
pours strength into my being's deepest core.
I will submerge myself in peacefulness. — —
I can divine that through it I will guide
myself to fullest spirit wakening.
I hold you fast, my messengers of soul,
forever fast, alive as radiant stars. — —
I call on you, O Astrid, when my thoughts
tend to withdraw from clarity of soul. —
And may my word find you, O Luna, when,
in soul depths, power of will is fast asleep.**

When the Other Philia tells Johannes "I am in you; I'm part of your own soul. I am myself the power of love in you," Johannes protests, "You are alive for me — but where?" Johannes in this next passage repeats the answer he receives and it becomes a mantra for the entire set of four mystery dramas.

[page 120] Johannes:

**The enchanted weaving
of my own being.
O enchanted weaving of my own being,
search out the meaning of that picture, which
my vision, without feeling, formed for me.**

The vision is that of Maria who gives this promise to him, "My holy, solemn vow rays forth new strength to hold for what you have gained." Lucifer claims Johannes for his own that he "obey my will." But Benedictus intercedes to remind us of the power of Maria's vow to free Johannes from Lucifer's will and that the fighting of Lucifer serves the gods. [Note: Benedictus finishes Lucifer's assertion, "I meant to fight" by putting words in Lucifer's mouth thus: "And (by) fighting (to) serve the gods."] This should remind us that fighting is not bad in itself, but serves the will of God when one strives for freedom from the coercive will of others.

[page 122] Benedictus:

**Maria's holy, solemn vow creates
within this soul redeeming rays of light.
He will admire you but not succumb to you.**

[page 123] Lucifer:

I mean to fight.

[page 123] Benedictus:

And fighting serve the gods.

Materialists are easily tricked by Ahriman because they take for reality the random happenings of the physical world which they seek to describe through their empty equations of science and mathematics. Strader fell for it, unable as he was to see through the actions of the physical world of nature into the spiritual realities beneath them. Ahriman explains:

**[page 129] Ahriman:
Still, Strader may not yet look through the maze
of spirit that appears to men as Nature.
He'll not perceive in it my spirit baggage,
supposing rather that he sees blind weavings
of energy and matter there where I,
denying spirit, spiritually create.**

Theodora's soul is the ultimate helpmate for Strader, however, and rebuts the hubris of Ahriman thus:

**[page 132] The Soul of Theodora:
However much you force yourself on Strader,
I shall stay at his side, for he has found me
upon bright paths of soul, and is united
with me, wherever he must lead his life,
in spirit land or in the earthly realm.**

**[page 132] Ahriman:
If she, indeed, will not forsake him now,
as long as he is dwelling still on earth,
the battle will be lost for me. But there
is hope that he can finally forget her.**

If you're afraid of *X*, you attract *X* to yourself because of the power you possess to attract those things which you hold in your imagination. You cannot fight *X* to get rid of it because fighting it only makes it stronger within your own mind. It amazes me that yet in the twenty-first century, so many people are unaware of this spiritual truth. Steiner has Romanus speak this truth about failure (*X* = failure). It only takes one short sentence to pronounce the truth, but it will take some people many lifetimes to arrive at its meaning and application in their lives.

**[page 134] Romanus:
Success comes if you're not afraid of failure.
We have to understand the occult view
in its true meaning for our special case.
It shows us clearly how to think of Strader.
He certainly will prove victorious
in battles that lay open spirit portals'
undaunted, he will stride to pass the threshold
where stands the Guardian of the spirit land.**

Strader shortly thereafter and the Manager, alone, says the words of occult wisdom we read in several places in the book, "That will come which has to come about." It is not words of predestined reality, but simply a statement of the reality that karma will weave in each person's life.

**[page 143] Manager (*alone*):
Died . . . Strader . . . Is this reality?
Am I affected by the spirit sleep of which
I've heard so much? . . . The power of destiny
that guides the threads of life shows a stern face.
O little soul of mine, what mighty power
has no laid hold upon your thread of fate
and given it a part within this knot?
Yes, that will come which has to come about.
Why is it that these words have never left**

**my mind since Strader spoke them long ago
to Hilary and to myself? As if
they reached him from another world, they
sounded . . . spoken
by one transported into spirit regions . . .
What has to come about? . . . I feel,
the spirit world laid hands upon me then.
Within these words . . . there sounds its language
. . . sternly
it sounds . . . How do I learn to comprehend it?**

The difference between a scientist and an explorer is that often the scientist attempts to form images of a place before they visit it, but an explorer always waits until an actual visit before describing the place. Strader, while a scientist, worked as an explorer, which is the way any true mystic works. To me it is clear that this is the way that Rudolf Steiner worked.

**[page 144] Secretary (talking of the deceased Dr. Strader):
He worked
as any mystic should, — as men must do
who wish to see the beauty of a view
from highest mountain peaks. And yet they wait
till they have reached the heights, and do not try
to form in mind the picture in advance.**

In response to the Secretary words, "For him, the spirit wisdom was the source of what he thought . . ." the Nurse who was with Strader when he died, explains:

**[page 145] Nurse:
— — Because it was his nature to give himself
and love unswervingly with all his soul
what life could offer as its sum and substance.
His last thoughts, too, were still about his work,
to which he was devoted with the deepest love.
As men depart from beings whom they love,
the soul of Strader took its leave of all
the earthly work to which his love belonged.**

The spiritual wisdom of Strader hastens Ahriman away, Benedictus tells us in the closing scene, because Ahriman will no longer be able "to conceal his nature from those devoted to spiritual work." He closes this fourth and final play of Steiner's Mystery Dramas thusly:

**[page 149] Benedictus:
But you, O soul of Strader, sun-imbued,
who through the strengthening of your spirit
powers
have driven Error's Envoy into flight,
you shall as spirit-star shine on your friends.
Your light shall in the future penetrate
into Maria's and Johannes' lives.
Through you they will be able to prepare
themselves with greater strength for spirit deeds,
and by revealing inner light will prove
endowed with power of thought, at such times,
too**

**when, over full-awakened spirit sight,
the fierce, dark Ahriman, suppressing wisdom,
attempts to spread Chaos' gloomy night.**

Curtain

What is left for me to say without my presuming to eat away the flesh from the peach which Rudolf Steiner has passed across the table to us?

THOUGHTS ON THE SEAL

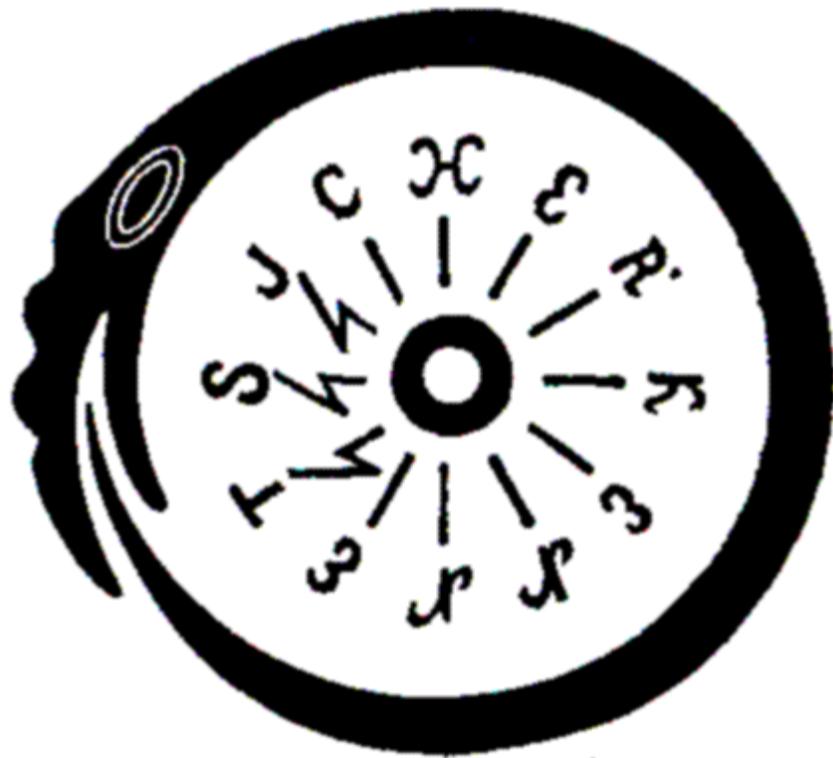
When the eye rests for the first time on the design as a whole, it is most intrigued and impressed by the picture of the snake, forming the outer circle, as it were, in a protecting gesture. It brings to mind the situation in Goethe's Tale of 'The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily' when the green snake formed a wide circle around the lifeless body of the Youth, and, 'seizing the end of her tail between her teeth, she lay quite still'.

But the picture, as it presents itself here, wants to tell us much more. Is it not puzzling that the mouth of the snake is open and that the tail does not touch it? It 'breathes' a mystery which unravels gradually when one tries to forget for a moment the complete design, and begins with the so unobtrusive ring in the centre. One can identify oneself with it by feeling the smallness and within-oneself-secluded day-reality of Self. The person one is in this present incarnation has his own limited horizon; he lives in a world which he is shaping into his own world of soul. It is a decisive step when one tries to reach out to what is around and about one, what goes beyond this ring-existence.

In the drawing, this step is made by the twelve lines of radii in the direction towards the periphery. Three of them, on the left side, show a zig-zag form, reminding one of the dynamics of lightning. With this twelve-fold direction one is already aware of a world outside oneself; one may call it a world oriented to the cosmos. >

What one next meets in the design is a complete surprise. Letters, forming words, are displayed in a circle. One may remember that the spirit-researcher speaks of illumining guidelines which can be seen and read in the 'astral light' of the cosmos. Something similar is expressed here.

Where the zig-zag lines have attracted our attention, we begin to read: ICH ERKENNET S . . . up to here the circle is complete. We grasp the meaning(7), and read on by adding the next three letters which overlap: ICH. 'ICH ERKENNET SICH.' In English, a not quite satisfying equivalent would



be SELF KNOWS ITS (ELF). It can be taken as a cosmic script, expressing the task of man's repeated lives on earth: that the I recognizes itself.

It is worth the effort to dwell on this mantric line with the awareness of its cognitive character. It speaks to one's mind as a challenge to thinking. Then one is prepared to appreciate the next step in the drawing: the thought transforms itself into a picture. Now one has arrived at the image of the snake, forming a circle by turning its tail towards itself. Moreover, the three zig-zag lines point in the direction of the letters T S I and from there to the tail, approaching the open mouth, and the opened, watchful eye of the snake. The mystery that 'breathes' there is the awakening of the higher self in man. It becomes aware of the task to let live and weave and breathe in itself the Spirit in the Paulinean sense of the word. The ancient symbol of the snake that 'seizes the end of her tail between her teeth' is a pre-Christian one. With the design for [The Souls Awakening](#), something is brought into the picture which is deeply connected with Theodora's prophetic 'vision in the First Scene of [The Portal of Initiation](#)': 'Not I, but Christ lives in my life and being.

There is still another riddle left to be solved in the fact that the three zig-zag lines, the letters T S I and the tail and face of the serpent are placed at the left side of the circular drawing. There is a certain orientation evident, which could be connected with the four main directions in which the altars of the Sun Temple as initiation center are oriented, the Eastern altar in the zenith, the others clockwise, so that the Northern altar stands at the left side. The design for the fourth play emphasizes this Northern aspect. It has to do with the encounter of the forces of evil, in our time predominantly the ahrimanic forces. It makes sense that the three letters T S I in their sequence are part of the mantric line, described above. Read backwards, I S T, they express as 'IS' a state of mere existence(8) without the I's activity, the ahrimanic aim in earth evolution.

The most decisive moment in the struggle with Ahriman is the time between lives when the souls of men prepare themselves in the spirit world for the shaping of a new earthly body, during the so-called cosmic midnight(9). It is portrayed in Scenes Five and Six of this fourth play. One can assume then that the North must play a vital part. Looking at the composition of the design with its emphasis on the dynamics of the left side, the words of the Guardian of the Threshold toward the end of Scene Six verify the significance of the North:

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'So shall the lightning melt now into naught,
having shone dazzlingly on *what must be*
when wakeful souls live through the Cosmic North.
Thunder shall lose its rumbling, rolling tone
of warning at the cosmic midnight hour.'

After having gone through the process of developing the design step by step, from the center to the periphery, the eye looks again at that tiny ring, expressing the limits of our Self. Now it grows to something stronger, a condensed mirror-image of the circumference, not shrunk to a point, but a spheric microcosmic, living image of its macrocosmic origin.

----- Footnotes -----

Footnote 1. A sequential list of links to all four Mystery Dramas can be found here:
<http://www.doyletics.com/arj/fourmyst.htm>

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

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**Footnote 2.** At the minimum a study of Steiner's [An Outline of Occult Science](#) (aka Esoteric Science) is

required.

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

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Footnote 3. See my essay [Art is the Process of Destruction](#) for what I posit constitutes a "true artist" : <http://www.doyletics.com/artpofd.htm>.

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

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**Footnote 4.** The 1994 film [Faust](#) used Claymation for many of its scenes intermixed with live actors and life-sized dummies.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

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Footnote 5. DIRAK! is [Matherne's Rule No. 7](#). Use the word "DIRAK" with an exclamation point and say it aloud if you must to call your attention to what you can do at this very moment to start some project in motion at the *very moment you are thinking of it*. Take action in the now because your lifetime is a series of nows and the moment *now* is the most important of all the nows. Every action happens in the now. DIRAK!

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)

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**Footnote 6.** It is amazing how most religions get this only halfway right. They claim that we should strive to perfect our selves on Earth to live properly in Heaven, while the full truth is that we also strive to perfect ourselves in Heaven in order to live properly on Earth in the next lifetime.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 6.](#)

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Footnote 7. RJM: In German *erkennet* is a form of the verb *erkennen* which can mean to know, to recognize, or identify or a bit of each together. *Ich* is equivalent to "I" and *Sich* to "Self" in English. Thus, it could be interpreted as saying in English that our "I" begins intimately to know, recognize, identify, and grasp its real Self., something which, rightly understood, can only happen over many incarnations.

Hans Pusch Note: In the design, the 'J' represents the curved form of 'I'.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 7.](#)

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**Footnote 8.** RJM: The German word *ist* has the equivalent word *is* in English. Ahriman's wish is for us to remain alive solely in the realm of the Earth without progressing upward into the spiritual realms as is our rightful and intended destiny as full human beings or *anthropos*.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 8.](#)

**Footnote 9.** RJM: To understand the cosmic midnight's relationship to Saturn in the play, one must grasp how human beings began in the Saturn stage of cosmic evolution and shrunk down to Earth. After death we expand spiritually outward as far as the spiritual orbit of the Saturn stage before taking the return trip to Earth in a new incarnation. Thus, Saturn represents, like midnight does to day-time, the *darkest time* — when one is furthest from life on Earth. In this way a human being recapitulates cosmic evolution during the time between physical death and a new birth. For details on this a careful reading of Steiner's [An Outline of Occult Science](#) (aka Esoteric Science) is recommended.

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