

### 3: THE SCENES IN *DIE PFORTE DER EINWEIHUNG*

#### 3A: The Prelude

As we noted in Section 2B, the title of Stella's play, "*The Disinherited of Body and Soul*" is highly suggestive, because this play, as the intellectual nourishment of a person who rejects the esoteric wisdom Steiner is offering, is in effect an epithet intended to describe the condition of such people. The title can be seen as a direct description of the soul-state of modern humanity – that portion of humanity that has no interest in holistic spirituality, as seen by Steiner. Indeed this title is virtually Steiner's definition of the modern human predicament, hence of the soul-state of Estella herself and of the community in general. The condition of modern consciousness is characterized by Steiner as particularly materialistic, hence as embracing of scientific-technological goals – not a bad feature in itself – but to the exclusion of broader spiritual and religious values.<sup>223</sup>

Another negative feature Steiner sees in modern culture is the rejection of sources of spiritual renewal, including traditional religious heritages. Steiner maintained that humanity in earlier times possessed a vibrant, holistic consciousness, and retained a natural awareness of spiritual reality. Hence it was natural for earlier humanity to have an active religious cultic-life and also esoteric striving carried out systematically in Mystery centres. Therefore our new human condition is seen as 'materialistic', and urgently requires a spiritual renewal. Steiner explained in a lecture from 1913, four months prior to the performance of *Die Pforte* in that year, that, according to his spiritual research, people of the ancient Egyptian-Mesopotamian cultures felt a sense of unity with spiritual forces in the cosmos, but by the Greek epoch this had faded,

Thus, in the old Egyptian-Chaldean epoch, to human sentience, the soul and the cosmos were one. In the Greek era, the human soul and human body became one, but through the body, the human being was still

---

<sup>223</sup>Rudolf Steiner, "Die Änderung der Seelenverfassung der Menschheit seit dem 15. Jahrhundert", in: *Die neue Geistigkeit und das Christus-Erlebnis des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1970).

united with its view of the cosmos. But, the spirit-soul element [of the human being] has more and more been released, entirely released from that which it views as valid content of its worldview. Alone, closed off to itself is the human soul [now] ... What the human being is striving for, in our epoch, in contrast to the earlier Greek epoch is above all, to attain a scientific worldview which is disconnected from his soul-element ... In recent times the worldview is there for itself, separated from the soul experiences of the human being.

And nevertheless we have to say: in modern times, as the human soul hurled itself out of the objective worldview, where it longer finds anything of the soul in that which moves outside mechanically-objectively, because it has broken the connection with external cosmic existence, in this condition it wants to acquire for itself the capacity for knowledge, for the worldview, for its entire existence. Still for the Greek person it would have been unbelievable, if someone had said to him: Be daring, use your intellect!<sup>224</sup>

These words clarify the significance of the title of the play which Estella is seeing, which is in effect is, the modern condition of humanity, in Steiner's view. This perspective on history, in which humanity moves from a previously holistic-psychic state, in which

---

<sup>224</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Ergebnisse der Geistesforschung*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1960), 470-71, „So waren in der alten ägyptisch-chaldäischen Zeit für das Empfinden des Menschen Seele und Welt eins. In der griechischen Zeit waren Menschenseele und Menschenleib eins, aber durch den Menschenleib war der Mensch noch verbunden mit seinem Weltbilde. Nun hat sich das Geistig-Seelische immer mehr und mehr gelöst von dem, was es für den berechtigten Inhalt des Weltenbildes hält. Einsam, in sich geschlossen ist die Menschenseele. Was der Mensch gegenüber der früheren griechischen Epoche in unserer Epoche vor allen Dingen erstrebt, das ist, ein von seinem Seelischen unabhängiges naturwissenschaftliches Weltbild zu gewinnen. ... In der neueren (sic!) Zeit steht das Weltbild für sich da, abgetrennt von dem seelischen Erleben des Menschen. ... Und dennoch müssen wir sagen: In der neueren Zeit, als die Menschenseele sich aus dem objektiven Weltbilde herausgeworfen hat, wo sie sich nicht mehr seelisch in dem findet, was draußen mechanisch-objektiv verfließt, als sie den Zusammenhang mit dem äußeren Weltendasein unterbrochen hat, da will sie in sich doch die Kraft für die Erkenntnis, als Weltbild, für ihr ganzes Sein gewinnen. Dem Griechen noch wäre es unglaublich gewesen, wenn jemand ihm gesagt hätte: Erkühne dich, dich deiner Vernunft zu bedienen!“

the cosmos is the projection into matter of a spiritual reality, to one which is mechanical-materialistic, thus isolating the human being, which finds itself living in an alien environment, is a predominant feature of Steiner's anthroposophy.

Estella, as the disinterested materialistic humanist, declares quite abruptly what she thinks of the esoterically inspired ideas,

**Estella:** "It makes me shudder when I think, dear Sophia, that instead of being interested in living Art, you prefer something which seems to be nothing but outdated didactic, allegorical style, gazing at hollow abstractions, instead of living people, and admiring symbolic actions which are quite remote from everything in ordinary life which appeals to our compassion and our active concern."<sup>225</sup>

To Estella, the esoteric worldview is somehow artificial and remote from contemporary life issues. We are not informed here, as to the nature of Sophia's worldview, except it does take seriously esoteric-symbolic depictions of spiritual themes. Sophia attempts to convince Estella of the value of her worldview,

**Sophia:** "My dear Estella ... like so many people, the only kind of spirit you know about is the bearer of knowledge; you are only aware of the *intellectual* side of spirituality ... you believe that one can only form *ideas* about a human character; hence that it has to mould itself. You don't want to see how thought dives into the creative spirit, reaches to the primal source of all existence, and then proves to be itself the creative seed. As little as the forces of the seed have to *teach* the plant how to grow, but prove themselves to be the living reality within - so little do our ideas teach; they stream into us, enkindling and bestowing life ..."<sup>226</sup>

---

<sup>225</sup>*Pforte*, 17, „Und mir graut, wenn ich nun denken soll: Du meine liebe Sophie, ziehst diesem Interesse an lebensvoller Kunst etwas vor, was mir doch nichts anderes zu sein scheint als die abgetane lehrhaft-allegorische Art, welche puppenhafte Schemen statt lebendiger Menschen betrachtet und sinnbildliche Vorgänge bewundert, die fernstehen allem, was im Leben täglich an unser Mitleid, an unsere tätige Anteilnahme sich wendet.“

<sup>226</sup>*Pforte*, 18, „Meine liebe Estella...du kennst, wie so viele, von dem, was Geist genannt wird, nur das, was Träger des Wissens ist; du hast nur ein Bewußtsein von der Gedankenseite des Geistes. ... Du glaubst, man könne sich nur Gedanken über einen menschlichen Charakter machen:

The Prelude then, implies that the social milieu into which *Die Pforte* is being placed, is one of being 'disinherited of body and soul', and this amplifies the comments of Steiner considered earlier, that playwrights such as Maeterlinck can not expect to have their productions appreciated by more than a tiny portion of humanity. Scene One ushers the audience into a rarefied, unusual setting; a circle of people committed – in varying degree – to an esoteric-spiritual worldview.

### 3B: Scene One

Scene One opens onto an ante-room leading from a lecture hall, where people are discussing an anthroposophical lecture which has just finished. Maria is addressing her friend, Johannes. She is disturbed at his despondent state of mind, "...and now it is as if within you all your strength is extinguished, your joy in being creative as if dead, and the arm which, a few years ago was young and fresh, powerfully guiding the brush, is lamed."<sup>227</sup>

In Section 2B, we saw that Johannes is representative of the distressed Youth and was complaining of suffering from a despondent condition. In his lectures on the tale of *Das Märchen*, Steiner refers to the stage on the path to higher spirituality in which the person is too impatient, this is what the Youth (Johannes) portrays. It is the stage similar to that of the hasty acolyte in Schiller's *Das verschleierte Bild zu Saïs*, an impatience to unite with the spirit, "... if he yearns immaturely to take hold of the highest that can be

---

dieser aber müsse sich gleichsam von selbst formen. Du *willst* nicht einsehen, wie der Gedanke in den schaffenden Geist taucht, an des Daseins Urquell rührt und sich entpuppt als der schöpferische Keim selbst. So wenig die Samenkräfte die Pflanze erst lehren, wie sie wachsen soll, sondern sich als lebendig (sic!) Wesen in ihr erweisen, so lehren unsere Ideen nicht; sie ergießen sich, Leben entzündend, Leben spendend in unser Wesen."

<sup>227</sup> *Pforte*, 22, „Und nun ist wie erloschen in deinem Innern alle Kraft, wie tot ist deine Schaffensfreude, gelähmt fast scheint der Arm, der jugendfrisch vor Jahren den Pinsel kräftig führte.“

achieved in consciousness, then this knowledge is something which can kill, something which can confuse and lame the soul.”<sup>228</sup>

The attitude that the acolyte must refrain from too rapid a transformation of his or her current consciousness into one that enables perception of a divine reality, is an important topic in Steiner’s texts on spiritual development. As such it constitutes a primary theme throughout *Die Pforte*. It was also the theme of a writer whose works were known to, and recommended by Steiner, namely, the English esotericist, Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873). Lord Edward George Bulwer-Lytton wrote several esoteric works in Steiner’s lifetime, including a novel of initiation, *Zanoni*. This novel explores the impact on an acolyte of a premature encounter of the spiritual reality beyond the threshold between the physical and the spiritual worlds. His main character is called, Glyndon, and he is tempted to cross the threshold prematurely, in the absence of his Master. This results in a premature exposure to his own ‘lower self’.

Steiner commented only briefly on this English author, concluding that Bulwer-Lytton, through his “especial [psychological] constitution was indeed able to penetrate into certain mysteries,<sup>229</sup> and that “One who understands what is said in *Zanoni*, will read it with much profit.”<sup>230</sup> Bulwer-Lytton’s novels were deeply connected with esoteric-spiritual themes, and he was himself attracted to Rosicrucian literature, although the question of his membership of any contemporary so-called Rosicrucian order remains unresolved.<sup>231</sup> Steiner commented in 1906 that the various esoteric depictions in the novel *Zanoni* were especially important, and in 1922, he asked his secretary, Günther Wachsmuth to translate it

---

<sup>228</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Goethes geheime Offenbarung*, 223, „ ... wenn er unreif erfassen will das Höchste, was an Erkenntnis errungen werden kann, dann ist diese Erkenntnis etwas für ihn, was töten, was die Seele verwirren, lähmen kann.“

<sup>229</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Anthroposophie als Kosmosophie*, (Dornach: RSV, 1972), 17, „ ... durch seine besondere individuelle Konstitution fähig war, schon in gewisse Mysterien einzudringen.“

<sup>230</sup>Rudolf Steiner’s words are quoted – without any source – by Paul M. Allen in his preface to Bulwer-Lytton’s *Zanoni*, (Blauvelt: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1971), 4.

<sup>231</sup>Marie Roberts, *Gothic Immortals*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 156-168.

into German, and arranged for its publication that year.<sup>232</sup> The encounter by Johannes of his lower self is left for Scene Two.

It becomes clear that an additional reason for Johannes' despondency is a strange tension which he is now experiencing. Johannes complains that his despondency intensifies on each occasion that he is exposed to the spiritual teachings that form the central element of his spiritual life, not only to Maria. Furthermore, this phenomenon occurs not only when he is listening to a lecture, but also when people discuss associated themes, "first came our leader's words, and then the various comments of these people – now I feel shattered to the core."<sup>233</sup>

Further dialogue shows that Johannes has been too hastily striving, ignoring his true human condition. Johannes reports that his depressive state has become intensified through a very conscious realization of his guilt with regard to a shameful episode in his life. He had broken off a relationship with a young woman, in order to pursue his spiritual interests. In response to his neglect of her, this woman had taken her own life. Recently after hearing a lecture on spiritual matters, he suddenly becomes very aware of his guilt, "In me however, it [the lecture] woke the knowledge of the heaviest guilt. Through it I learnt how erroneously I have striven."<sup>234</sup> These words indicate an awakened power of conscience in Johannes, and this theme is taken up in the next scene. The way in which other passages in the drama present the role of the conscience will be explored in relation to Scene Two.

Further, it is also clear that there are still other causative elements to this condition. For Johannes also complains of a growing feeling of inner emptiness, which is triggered only partially by this feeling of remorse about the fate of his ex-partner; "... I started boldly along the path taught here. And it has turned me into a nothingness!"<sup>235</sup> Maria expresses understanding of this, but never-

---

<sup>232</sup>Hella Wieberger, ed. *Rudolf Steiner und die Tempellegende*, (Dornach: RSV, 1979), 352.

<sup>233</sup>*Pforte*, 51, „Erst unsres Führers Worte, dann dieser Menschen bunte Reden! Erschüttert bis ins Mark erschein ich mir.“

<sup>234</sup>*Pforte*, 54, „In mir jedoch erzeugte sie Bewusstsein schwerster Schuld. Ich kann durch sie erkennen, wie irrend ich gestrebt.“

<sup>235</sup>*Pforte*, 52, „Betrat ich kühn den Weg, der hier gewiesen ist. Er hat ein Nichts aus mir gemacht.“

theless in Scene One no explanation is forthcoming for this disturbing condition. This characteristic is a strong feature of *Die Pforte*; events and attitudinal dynamics are presented, and occasionally even a character, without any explanation. This situation necessitates that the interested member of the audience undertakes to research Steiner's indications about the particular topic, to find an explanation.

The dynamic expressed in Johannes' speech is an allusion to Steiner's perspective on the effect, on the soul of the turbulent initial phases of the pathway. The following extract from a lecture by Steiner on ancient Mysteries presents this,

Only when, in a certain respect, one has enthusiasm for the [esoteric] knowledge, when one regards knowledge as a life-question, does one feel what is said [*earlier in this lecture about the spiritual realities, as revealed by anthroposophy*] to be precisely the first great trial of the soul. This trial occurs if from such knowledge, one has to say something like the following: in this is resounding to us from remote Ages the great words of wisdom, "Know yourself!" Self-knowledge shines before us, as a lofty ideal, as the crux of all other true knowledge. That is, in so far as we have in any sense the wish to gain knowledge, we are attempting firstly to aspire to know our own selves, to know that what we are.<sup>236</sup>

With regard to Steiner's view of the processes which occur in the soul, that is, psychological dynamics, derives from his spiritual observation of what occurs in the soul-body. His view of these are an integral part of the majority of his anthroposophical elucidations.

---

<sup>236</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Weltenwunder, Seelenprüfungen und Geistesoffenbarungen*, (Dornach: RSV, 1977), 143, „Erst dann, wenn man in gewisser Weise enthusiastisch ist für die Erkenntnis, wenn man Erkenntnis als Lebensfrage betrachtet, dann fühlt man das, was gesagt werden soll, eben doch als erste große Seelenprüfung. Sie tritt dann ein, wenn man sich aus einer solchen Erkenntnis heraus etwa das Folgende sagen muß: Da tönt uns herüber aus uralten Zeiten das große Weisheitswort: „Erkenne dich selbst!“ Selbsterkenntnis als Angelpunkt aller anderen wahren Erkenntnis leuchtet uns als ein hohes Ideal vor, das heißt, wir versuchen anzustreben, indem wir überhaupt zu einer Erkenntnis kommen wollen, zuerst uns selbst zu erkennen, das zu erkennen, was wir sind.“

He rejected, for the most part, contemporary psychological theories developed by others, although he acknowledges some of their work as of value. Steiner's psychological conclusions cannot be examined here, it is characteristic that Steiner places psychological processes in a spiritual context, involving spiritual beings, and dynamics in the ether-body and soul-body.

Johannes has entered the first great trial, and this is because he has been assiduously reading and listening to lectures, with an earnest and enthusiastic approach. In effect Scene One is demonstrating that a modern acolyte is already facing a trial in attempting to really comprehend the radical perspective on spiritual questions that are expressed in Steiner's teachings. According to Steiner's viewpoint, the trial arises because of the effect of the privileged esoteric knowledge. It creates an awareness indeed of the divine, higher realities, and hence of the 'spiritual self' of the acolyte, but in so doing it also creates two feelings in response. Firstly, a sense of one's current unworthiness or lack of spirituality, and secondly a sense of having merely an illusory personality, illusory because it has not made any effort to merge with a truly great or spiritual core. The following Steiner verse indicates the seriousness with which he approaches the subject of attaining self-knowledge,

In seeking, know yourself,  
And shall you become  
ever more yourself.  
But if seeking should cease in you,  
You indeed still have yourself in Being,  
But Being removes from you  
The truth of your own being.<sup>237</sup>

Im Suchen erkenne dich,  
Und wesend wirst du dir.  
Entzieht das Suchen sich dir:  
Du hast dich zwar im Sein,  
Doch Sein entreißet dir  
Des eignen Wesens Wahrheit.

The implication here appears to be ascertainable by examining the use of the word 'self'. In line 1, the self is the current personality, but in line 3, it is probably the higher self. This is indicated by the following lines, which imply that the spiritual quest, if stopped, will bring about an inner distancing from the higher self, but does not, cannot, actually remove the current personality or

---

<sup>237</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Wahrspruchworte*, 170.

normal self. Johannes in this scene is positioned uncomfortably in the transition between the two selves, so to speak.

Another element of the plot in this scene concerns the Theodora episode, which announces the imminence of the Second Coming of Christ. This is a striking deviation from the parallelism with the Goethean tale; there is no parallel event in *Das Märchen* to the Theodora episode. It appears that Steiner has done this in response to his conviction as to the importance of this event, and its relevance to the plot of *Die Pforte*. Theodora proceeds to announce that the resurrected Jesus Christ is soon to appear to humanity,

I am impelled to speak. Before my spirit stands a form in shining light, and from him there come words. I feel myself in future times and human beings I can see who are not yet in life. They too behold the form, they too can hear the words ...<sup>238</sup>

This seeress in effect also proceeds to manifest that event for the characters gathered around her, by proclaiming its imminence, which to her is an immediate, actual reality, from within her visionary condition wherein she beholds Jesus.

The Theodora episode specifically introduces the imminence of a mystical Christian event, of central importance in Christian eschatology, the Second Coming of Christ. The inclusion of the Christian element could have been effected by Steiner without any reference to an imminent Second Coming. Hence this episode is expressive of a major element in Steiner's Christology. In fact, it was Steiner's view that this event was only a few decades away from occurring, and that only because of this fact, could such an enhanced spirituality occur for Johannes, as is portrayed in *Die Pforte*. Steiner's view of this theme will be examined in the Conclusion, in Section 4F

In this connection, it is relevant to note that Steiner does not directly present apologetics for Christianity in any other way in *Die Pforte*. For after Theodora has spoken, this theme is not taken up again by anyone, the response of the characters is limited to brief

---

<sup>238</sup>*Pforte*, 36, „Es drängt zu sprechen mich: Vor meinem Geiste steht ein Bild im Lichtesschein, und Worte tönen aus ihm; In Zukunftszeiten fühl' ich mich und Menschen kann ich schauen, die jetzt noch nicht im Leben sind. Sie schauen auch das Bild, sie hören auch die Worte ...“

discussions as to whether any psychic experience is inherently possible or reliable. Steiner saw the Second Coming in non-apocalyptic terms, it is to be a discrete spiritual experience, this subject is examined further in Section 4.

No further mention of Christ or of Biblical characters is made anywhere else in the drama. This episode is in effect a device which implies the subtle presence of Christ in the dynamics which are to unfold in *Die Pforte*. We noted earlier the feature in Steiner's worldview, that humanity is placed between two kinds of evil, the hosts of Lucifer and of Ahriman. These two beings are also portrayed in *Die Pforte* as exerting an influence on the characters in their experiences.

The instructions for Scene One direct that a statue of the evil being, Ahriman, is to be present on the stage, as part of the furnishings of the room. In addition, there is the brief speech by Helena, (noted in Section 2B), who is identified as a representative of Lucifer. Thus, the influence upon humanity of the two kinds of evil, and of the redeeming Being (Christ) is subtly indicated. These devices imply the actual efficacy of these beings, within the consciousness of the characters. But consequently, another triune group of characters is created, too, namely Lucifer, Ahriman and Christ; the efficacy of Christ against the other two beings is to be understood as a factor, albeit subtly in the events that follow.

As a consequence of this perspective, and to further illustrate the nature of this event to the audience, Theodora also experiences that a person in the host around the Saviour separates out and approaches, in order to inform her, as one human being to another, that she should spread word of a coming imminent event, through which a new higher consciousness shall be stimulated and nurtured.

You should announce to all, who wish to listen to you, that you are now beholding what people will soon experience ... for near is the future wherein the human being is to be gifted with the new seeing. What once the senses beheld at the time of Christ, will be seen by souls [in a form of vision], as soon as the time is fulfilled.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup>*Pforte*, 36, „Du sollst verkünden allen, die auf dich hören wollen, dass du geschaut, was Menschen noch erleben werden. Doch nahe ist die Zukunft, da mit dem neuen Sehen begabt soll sein der Erdenmensch.

Here Theodora attests to the concept that a form of spiritual perception is needed for a person to behold the Christian Saviour. Scene One ends with the dialogue between Johannes and Helena which we discussed in Section 2B; Johannes rejects her glib admonishing assurance that genuine spiritual development brings only happiness.

### 3C: Scene Two

As we saw in Section 2B, Scene One set the general context of the people and their attitudes, whilst Scene Two begins the actual theme of spiritual initiation, with Johannes in meditation and undergoing challenging experiences. In this scene, the dynamics afflicting Johannes in Scene One grow stronger. Steiner emphasizes in a lecture on *Die Pforte*, held a few months after its first performance, that in this scene, the Delphic expression, “Know yourself!” resounds from all sides of the stage, as if the entire environs of this spiritual realm is alive and thereby presents self-knowledge to Johannes,

The words ... of the Delphic oracle ... take on a new life for people [entering esoteric development], but first it is a life of alienation from oneself. Johannes, as someone who wants to know himself, is immersed in all external existence. He lives in air and water, in rocks and springs, but not in himself. All the words – which one can only have resounding from the outside – are actually words of the meditation ... Then the person who wants to know himself is immersed in the various other beings; in this way he learns to know the things into which he submerges himself.<sup>240</sup>

---

Was einst die Sinne schauen zu Christi Erdenzeit, es wird geschaut von Seelen werden, wenn bald die Zeit erfüllt wird sein. “

<sup>240</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Wege und Ziele des geistigen Menschen*, (Dornach: RSV, 1973), 106, „ ... die Worte ... des Delphinischen Orakels ... gewinnen ein neues Leben für den Menschen, aber zunächst ein Leben der Entfremdung von sich selbst. Johannes geht als Sich-selbst-Erkennender in allen äußeren Wesen unter. Er lebt in Luft und Wasser, in Felsen und Quellen, aber nicht in sich selber. All die Worte, die man nur von außen tönen lassen kann, sind eigentlich Worte der Meditation.

Johannes becomes stronger as he enters into meditation and then finds himself in a spiritual realm. During this experience, there resounds repeatedly from the environs, which have an elemental life of their own, the call to self-knowledge – “O Mensch, erkenne dich selbst” (O man, know yourself). This ancient maxim resounds from the environs to Johannes as the curtain opens, and throughout his soliloquy, and again as the curtain falls at the end of the scene.

Regarding this process of attaining to ‘self-knowledge’, Steiner maintained that the acolyte has to cross a kind of threshold, has to attain a decisive, specific state of consciousness, in order to become enlightened. This is not achieved without a struggle against one’s own ‘lower self’. In this context, he reminds his audience of the well known fact that in ancient times, there was a definite time of probation, in which various quite severe trials had to be withstood by the candidate. As Steiner emphasizes in his comments on the search for Isis at Sais, these trials were designed to help the acolyte achieve the integrity, the purification needed.<sup>241</sup>

However, in the modern era, the dynamics have changed, according to his *Knowledge of Higher Worlds, how is it attained*. Although this same higher integrity is needed, the preparatory testing must now occur within the person’s own struggle with their ethical challenges. The focus is on the integrity of the heart, and the capacity to think intuitively, or spiritually. But at some point the acolyte will nevertheless vividly perceive his or her own impure, lower impulses, and thus gain a real, unveiled knowledge of what qualities still need to be transformed in them.

The trial now commences in earnest for Johannes, as his conscience becomes ever more intense, and he now actually perceives, as a vision, the young woman whom he deserted. He senses her pain, he feels that he is alive within her disembodied soul, and thus within her suffering, “the one whom I deserted, the poor thing, I

---

... Dann taucht der Selbsterkennende unter in die verschiedenen anderen Wesen; dadurch lernt er die Dinge kennen, in die er untertaucht.“

<sup>241</sup>Mozart presented a similar view of initiation in his opera, *The Magic Flute*.

was actually her. I had to experience her suffering. Knowledge has given me the strength to pour myself into another self.”<sup>242</sup>

When Johannes expresses repugnance at his own callousness in deserting his partner, this is due to the efficacy of his conscience. The efficacy of this spiritual element of the human being serves as a counter balance to the solemn dynamic of encountering the lower self. Conscience has a prominent role in Steiner’s worldview, he regards it as having a sacred spiritual source. The conscience is here differentiated from inculcated moral-ethical values, received by the growing child from parents, church and so on, “ ... the human conscience, this valuable asset of the human soul, which calls out like a voice of God with regard to the good and the evil in each individual person ...”<sup>243</sup>

Hence when Johannes experiences these pangs of conscience he is in fact experiencing the results of a spiritually supportive and even transformative influence. In various lectures Steiner links the efficacy of the conscience in the human being to an influence proceeding from Christ.<sup>244</sup> This theme shall be explored further in Section 3F, where Johannes’ enhanced conscience is once again significant in the rhetoric.

In Scene Two Johannes undergoes a kind of Dark Night of the Soul, in which he now perceives his own lower self, alive and animated, with a frightening potential. There is the implication that his conscience has become so strong as to result in him no longer just sensing, but directly seeing (psychically) the unredeemed qualities in himself,

There from the dark abyss, what creature glares at me? I feel the bonds which hold me chained to you. Prometheus was not bound so firmly to

---

<sup>242</sup>Pforte, 54, „Kein Schuldgefühl verblieb in mir aus jenen Tagen, da ich zerriss ein Band, das Leben war der andern Seele ... bedeutsam sprach in jenem Saale vorhin der Führer nun, mir jedoch erzeugte sie Bewusstsein schwerster Schuld.“

<sup>243</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Der Christus-Impuls und die Entwicklung des Ich-Bewußtsein* (Dornach: VRSN, 1961), 121, „ ... das menschliche Gewissen, dieses teure Gut der Menschenseele, welches wie eine Gottesstimme ruft gegenüber dem Guten und gegenüber dem Bösen in jedem individuellen Menschen ...“

<sup>244</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Der Christus-Impuls und die Entwicklung des Ich-Bewußtseins*, lect. 6, (Dornach: RSV, 1982).

the rocks of Caucasus as I am bound to you. Who can you be, dreadful creature? O, I know you, it is myself.<sup>245</sup>

This dramatic theme, the encountering of this 'lower self', as it is called by Steiner, can be seen as a major cause of the despondent attitude developing in Johannes. This lower-self, the dawning of awareness of which is causing despondency in Johannes, is a term used to designate the immoral and antisocial feelings, thoughts and intentions in the human being. To Steiner, these three malignant tendencies are imbued with a certain elemental power that creates the tendency for them to be the predominant dynamic in the human being. Furthermore, this urge is intensified by forces external to the human soul, which derive from malignant spiritual beings. Steiner maintains that these negative elements need to be removed in order to allow a genuine and full spiritual transformation to occur, because a spiritualised person cannot retain such dynamics in themselves.

The spiritually questing soul will therefore become increasingly aware of a stumbling-block to spiritual development within itself, of which it was previously unaware. Part of this experience of encountering the tainted qualities, includes perceiving these influences of these two fallen beings; this theme will be noted further in regard to Scene Four. Scene Two ends with a dialogue between Maria and Johannes, the latter lamenting that he is not in the blessed state of Maria, but must continue intensely to wrestle with his own problems, with his feeling of inner hollowness. In this speech, Steiner uses alliteration, 'führen, Furcht, Finsternis', and also 'Wort, Weisheit, Wesen', (creating a difficult neologism, 'Wesenswort'), these are not preserved in the translation. He regards alliteration as an effective way to create the mood of experiencing visionary impressions, as exemplified in the Edda, where this is very common and which regards he as deriving from clairvoyant

---

<sup>245</sup>*Pforte*, 59, „Da, aus dem finstern Abgrund, welch Wesen glotzt mich an? Ich fühle Fesseln, die mich an dich gefesselt halten. So fest war nicht Prometheus geschmiedet an des Kaukasus Felsen, wie ich an dich geschmiedet bin. Wer bist du, schauervolles Wesen? O, ich erkenne dich. Ich bin es selbst.“

experiences.<sup>246</sup> In Johannes's speech alliteration serves to emphasize that he has just recently been plunged into a spirit realm,

Johannes: "In light, in darkness, you [Maria] will affirm yourself ... but every moment can deprive me of myself ... from fear they lead me into the darkness, and hunt me through the darkness with fear, these words imbued with wisdom: O Man, know yourself!"<sup>247</sup>

His friend, Maria, discusses the experience with him, and speaks to him of the illusory perspective that the normal self encounters,

I have often reminded myself of the lofty wisdom that, across all of our life is spread mere semblance and illusion, as long as our thinking grasps its surface only. And ever again it said, you must be clear that an illusion is shrouding you, though it may often seem the truth to you' ...<sup>248</sup>

Johannes replies in a despondent mood, still feeling his inner emptiness, "I would have to believe that the origin of being is nothingness, if I were to cherish the hope that from the nothingness in me a human being could ever develop."<sup>249</sup> As the curtain falls, the Delphic maxim once more resounds.

---

<sup>246</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Die Mission der neuen Geistesoffenbarung*, (Dornach: RSV, 1975), 213-215.

<sup>247</sup>*Pforte*, 63, „Du wirst in Licht und Finsternis dich selbst bewahren ... mir aber kann ein jeder Augenblick mich selber rauben. Mich führt aus Furcht in Finsternis und jagt durch Finsternis in Furcht der Weisheit Wesenswort: O Mensch, erkenne dich! “

<sup>248</sup>*Pforte*, 62, „Die hohe Weisheit, dass stets über alles Leben nur Schein und Trug sich breitet, wenn unser Denken seine Oberfläche bloss ergreift, ich habe sie recht oft mir vorgehalten. Und immer wieder sprach sie: Du musst erkennen, wie dich Wahn umfängt, so oft es dir auch Wahrheit dünkt ...“

<sup>249</sup>*Pforte*, 63, „Ich müßte glauben können, daß aus dem Nichts der Wesen Ursprung sei, wenn ich die Hoffnung hegen sollte, daß aus dem Nichts in mir ein Mensch je werden könnte.“

### 3D: Scene Three

Scene Three opens with a dialogue between Benedictus and Maria about a foster child of hers; it has become disaffected of Maria because of a fright it had when experiencing the clairvoyance of Theodora. As we noted in Section 2B, the child is a representation of the canary in Goethe's tale, which forms a minor sub-theme in *Das Märchen*. Steiner mentions the canary only briefly; he understands it to represent the ongoing awareness (or memory) of the physical world within the consciousness of the Higher Self. In Goethe's tale, the Youth's hawk, which Steiner regards as the incipient development of the higher faculties in the Youth, swoops down upon the court of the fair Lily, and harms her canary.<sup>250</sup> So, as read by Steiner, the harm caused to the canary by the hawk, represents stresses imposed upon the Higher Self, by the too eager yearnings of the normal self for a higher state; in effect, the condition of the young man expressed in Schiller's *Das verschleierte Bild zu Saïs*.

As we noted earlier (Sect. 2), the main focus of the speeches in this scene is Johannes' further experiences in which Johannes has to learn that a human being is not his or her body, and further, the essential element of the human being is a spiritual reality, which is not directly expressed in earthly human nature. Subsequently, Johannes witnesses an episode in which Maria leaves her body, and malignant powers speak through her lips. Benedictus soothes his distress by informing him that evil powers do seek to have access to human souls. He also explains to Johannes that the spiritual reality of Maria is a model of that higher human being to which he is to aspire, and that the soul of this spiritually awakened person "hovers in those spiritual heights where the human beings find the archetype of their own being, which has its origin within itself".<sup>251</sup> This is a reference to the realm of Ideas, and presents Steiner's view of the spiritual place from whence the human spirit derives.

Consistent with his understanding of the Platonic realm of Ideas, in connection with primeval 'depths' or 'foundations', Steiner uses

---

<sup>250</sup>HA, Bd. 6, 223.

<sup>251</sup>Pforte 72, „Es schwebet ihre Seele in die Geisteshöhen, wo Menschen ihres Wesens Urform finden, die in sich selbst sich gründet.“

the verb, 'steigen', which usually means 'to arise' or 'ascend'. However, in older German, this verb can also mean 'to descend', which correlates to his view of the realm. Steiner equates the 'realm of Ideas' with Devachan, which he asserted was neither above nor below, but transcendent of spatial qualities, in effect, all around us. In Section 1B3 we noted Steiner's perspective on the passage in *Faust Two*, where Faust is about to enter a transcendent realm, in which the 'uncreated' exists, in apposition to the physical realm, filled with the 'created'. But in addition, Steiner notes with approval Goethe's attitude, expressed through Mephistopheles, that to enter this archetypal realm, one can either ascend or descend. To Steiner the realm of Ideas is beyond spatial considerations.<sup>252</sup>

At the end of this scene, the realm of the Platonic idea is again the focus. This occurs in the speech of the Spirit-voice, which we examined in Section 2A, and noted in Section 2B.

His thoughts descend into the foundations of the primeval world – a realm of whose fullness, people, in thinking, are merely dreaming in shadows, of whose fullness, people, in seeing, are merely living in apparitions. What he thought as shadows, what he experiences as apparitions, now soars above the world of Forms.

This speech not only alludes to the illusory nature of normal consciousness, as compared with the goal of esoteric development, this speech also appears to allude to the Platonic myth of the Cave, which we discussed in Section 1B1. There we noted that Steiner, without denying the greater reality of the Idea realm, strongly disagrees with the implication that the gap between this true reality and the human condition is unbridgeable. He maintains that precisely through spiritual development, human consciousness can attain to this realm. Here in Scene Three the implication is that precisely this attainment is underway in Johannes.

---

<sup>252</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Über die astrale*, 94, ,, ... Mephisto: *Versinke denn! Ich könnt auch sagen: steige!* Also, nicht oben und nicht unten, sondern überall ist Devachan.“ (“... Mephisto; *so sink down now! I could also say, arise!* So, not above and not below, rather Devachan is around about us.”)

### 3E: Scene Four

We noted in Section 2B, that this scene has a pivotal role in the development of the plot, as it is the central scene in the first segment of the drama, a group of seven scenes. In *Die Pforte*, the first seven scenes form a unity, and are followed by the Interlude, before Scene Eight opens. In Steiner's cosmology, the flow of evolution occurs in seven phases, both vast periods and subdivisions thereof into smaller phases, each of these consists of seven units.

He maintains that during the large evolutionary cycles, in the fourth cycle, a new element enters into the dynamics and it is this which is the impetus to the dynamics of the preceding three becoming manifested in the last three cycles on a higher level. Through this process, a new factor enters into manifestation by the seventh phase.<sup>253</sup> The introduction of substantial new thematic material into Scene Four is a response to this principle of the evolutionary dynamic having its reflection in humanity. That these dynamics are interwoven into the structure of *Die Pforte* reflects Steiner's conclusion that the cosmic septenary process is echoed on a much smaller scale within each human life. The underlying perspective here is that the human being is a microcosm of the macrocosm.<sup>254</sup>

This scene opens with Johannes again in meditation, as in Scene Two; this time he does not encounter his own lower self, rather – as the element which introduces the next evolutionary 'leaven' for Johannes – he becomes aware of the presence of two beings, Lucifer and Ahriman. How Johannes responds to the 'trials' posed by these two beings is crucial to his quest for spirituality. We noted briefly in Section 2B, that to Steiner the unethical qualities in human consciousness are exacerbated by malignant beings, in fact, two hosts of such beings, each of which has a leader, these leaders are Lucifer and Ahriman. Steiner maintains that in the Bible the

---

<sup>253</sup>This concept is outlined in a fragmentary manuscript, *Entwurf zur Darstellung der geisteswissenschaftlichen Kosmologie* in: *Bewußtsein, Leben, Form*, (Dornach: RSV, 2001) and is then presented in detail in his *Geheimwissenschaft im Umriß*, for each of the four great aeons which have so far elapsed.

<sup>254</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Geheimwissenschaft*.

above two forms of evil are referred to, even if subtly. References to 'the Devil' are in effect, to Lucifer, whereas references to 'Satan' are to the much more evil being, Ahriman.

Whereas 'Lucifer' is a term known to the Christian religious tradition, as an alternative name for the Devil, the term, Ahriman, is less well known. It is a Persian term, the name for the primary evil being in Zarathustrian religious texts, in particular, the *Zend-Avesta*. The term, 'Ahriman', is a later variant of the original name for the primary evil being known to the Zoroastrian religion of the ancient Persians, Angra Mainyu. The nature of Angra Mainyu/Ahriman is elucidated in the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, he is principally a being who directly opposes the will of the true God, Ahura Mazdao. He is lord of a host of demons created by him "to destroy the world of the good principle", he is described as being "... full of death, the worst-lying of all Daevas ..." <sup>255</sup>

Scene Four commences with Lucifer directly on stage, revealing through his words his significance for human beings. Yet in his speech, he is not directly addressing Johannes; this technique seems to imply that any meditator who attains to such a consciousness as Johannes has attained, will have the same experience. Through Lucifer's soliloquy, Johannes becomes more aware of this entity's existence, and gains an understanding of the nature of the influences imparted by him.

Lucifer adapts the Delphic temple maxim by declaring, "O man, know yourself, O man, feel me", and then proceeds to declare that the human being on the earth has wrestled its way out of the clutches of divine beings. He explains to the audience that humanity has been seeking to find their own real self, and here on the Earth succeeded in gaining freedom, which occurred as they fled from existence in spiritual realms. He then goes further to declare that we thereby encountered him – and this is our reward and indeed our destiny. Lucifer seeks to convince humanity that their sense of selfhood and its mental and emotional freedom (independence from godly injunctions) derives from him;

You have wrenched yourself away from spirit guidance, and you have fled into free earthly realms. You've sought your own being in Earth's

---

<sup>255</sup>*The Zend-Avesta, part 2, The Sirozahs, Yasts und Nyayis*; trans. James Darmesteter, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1884, repr. 1981), 45, 227.

confusion; to find yourself proved your reward, and proved your fate.  
You found me.<sup>256</sup>

The nuance of an independent or rebellious spirit being, whose influence in humankind is to stimulate a similar dislike of the correct, selfless, ethical attitude is clearly present in this speech. In this scene, Lucifer declares that he gave to humanity an independence of volition, whereas the other deities (that is, hierarchies who serve God) sought only to ensure that humanity followed their will, but then Lucifer proceeds to condemn the true divinities, and claims to have given to humanity its real individual will, "Spirits wanted to cast a veil over the sense. I tore the veil apart. Spirits desired in you to follow only their own will. I gave you your own will."<sup>257</sup>

The esoteric implication here is that the normal self, or the lower self of the human being, is to some extent, a manifestation of 'Luciferic' qualities. In this connection, an intriguing passage in Isaiah (14:12) has relevance; it castigates a malignant being for becoming a fallen being. He is reprimanded for wanting to excel over his associates, and make himself "like the most High". Isaiah refers to him as the morning star. Although in modern translations this being is considered to be an oppressor of Israel, traditionally this passage is understood to refer to Lucifer, and also identifies him as the star of the twilight or Venus.<sup>258</sup> Hence Lucifer is associated with an attractive radiance, which is not however, the true solar light. Steiner describes Lucifer as a source of egotistic, self-centred yearnings, and in terms of consciousness dynamics, this may be represented metaphorically as an attractive, but false light.

These speeches of Lucifer enable the audience to clarify retrospectively the significance of Helena's speech in Scene One.

---

<sup>256</sup>*Pforte*, 76, „Du hast dich entrungen der Geistesführung und bist geflohn in freie Erdenreiche. Du suchtest eignes Wesen in Erdenwirrnis; dich selbst zu finden, es ward dir Lohn, es ward dein Los. Du fandest mich.“

<sup>257</sup>*Pforte*, 76, „Es wollten Geister dir Schleier vor die Sinne legen. Ich riss entzwei die Schleier. Es wollten Geister in dir nur ihrem Willen folgen. Ich gab dir Eigenwollen.“

<sup>258</sup>More recent translations (such as the NIV) tend not to support the age-old interpretation that this passage refers to Lucifer, as exemplified in the Vulgate, and in the King James version, but the allusion to Lucifer in Helena has reference to this ancient tradition.

Her protestations to Johannes that spiritual development brings only blissful experiences are intended to be 'Luciferic'; this is alluded to through Steiner's choice for her name, "Helena". The term Helena derives from ancient Greek and implies a brightly shining light.<sup>259</sup> So, she is a radiant light, but perhaps not the true (solar) light; this has allusions to the name, 'Lucifer', which means 'light-bringer', yet obviously this can not mean the true light, where light is a metaphor for consciousness or perhaps influences affecting humanity. So, Helena likewise appears to suggest an ethically dubious, even if possibly quite attractive, light, and as such it alludes to the term, 'Lucifer', which originally meant the 'Light-bearer'.

Then Ahriman speaks, again adapting the Delphic maxim, but in the opposite direction to Lucifer, "O man, know me. O man, feel yourself". This speech thereby implies that the human being in encountering Ahriman, will sense his own true reality. Ahriman then proceeds to speak about the human reality,

You have fled from spiritual darkness. You have found the light of Earth. So suck the power of truth from my solidity. I harden secure ground. Spirits wanted to rip you away from the senses' beauty. I bring about this beauty in dense light. I lead you into true being. Spirits wanted to tear you away from the senses' beauty. I make effective this beauty in solid light. I lead you into true being.<sup>260</sup>

There are various key implications here in the rhetoric for the audience. In this speech Ahriman accentuates the ontological integrity of the state of human consciousness that derives from life in physical reality; in comparison with it, existence in higher realms is existence in "spiritual darkness". In Steiner's anthroposophy the consciousness state of the human being in the physical world, is one in which awareness of the spiritual realm (the Idea realm) is usually minimal, we are on this side of the river, looking across to the

---

<sup>259</sup>*The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names*, ed. E.G. Withycombe, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 2<sup>nd</sup> edit, 141.

<sup>260</sup>*Pforte*, 77, „Du bist entflohen aus Geistesfinsternis. Du hast gefunden der Erde Licht. So sauge Kraft der Wahrheit aus meiner Festigkeit. Ich härte sichern Boden. Es wollten Geister der Sinne Schönheit dir entreißen. Ich wirke diese Schönheit in dichtem Licht. Ich führe dich in wahre Wesenheit. “

realm of Lily. Hence the consciousness state that accretes from coming into life in physical reality is the antithesis of the 'right' state, or the state which spiritual development bestows. Hence in Steiner's terms, Ahriman's speech is especially untruthful. He identifies Ahriman as the being who is 'the father of lies'. The following extract from a lecture of Steiner's expresses his perspective on this,

In this world of the senses and of the deductive mind, in normal consciousness, we perceive in sturdy density, material objects and material processes, which fill the space around us. When on the one hand, through our senses and the deductive mind, we have for our experiencing, the coarse material things and processes of the material world, then there are present on the other hand, the unreal thoughts and unreal sensations, about which in every age, philosophising people have argued as to how these are related to reality.<sup>261</sup>

The lesson here is that to Steiner 'true being' is not found – in normal consciousness – on the Earth, and that the 'power of truth' cannot be found in the sphere of dense material substance (except by transcending this and accessing the realm of the Idea). Further, in the expression, "you have found the light of Earth", an additional false attitude, in Steiner's terms, can be seen. This phrase can be viewed as affirming that the "un-enlightened" state of the earthly ego is a condition which is 'illuminated'. As such, it stands in stark opposition to Steiner's viewpoint that only when spirituality is attained, thereby transcending normal Earth consciousness, does the person enter into an 'enlightened' condition.

---

<sup>261</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Was wollte das Goetheanum und was soll die Anthroposophie?*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1961), 115, „In dieser Welt der Sinne und des kombinierenden Verstandes im gewöhnlichen Bewußtsein nehmen wir in derber Dichtigkeit die stofflichen Dinge and stofflichen Vorgänge wahr, welche den Raum erfüllen ... Wenn wir auf der einen Seite stehen, haben für unser Erleben durch die Sinne und durch den kombinierenden Verstand die derb stofflichen Dinge und Vorgänge der Außenwelt, dann stehen auf der anderen Seite die unwirklichen Gedanken, die unwirklichen Empfindungen, über die zu allen Zeiten philosophierende Menschen gestritten haben, wie sie sich zu der Wirklichkeit verhalten.“

He maintains that this is literally so, because this wisdom possesses a potent radiance. Steiner strongly emphasizes this concept, describing the supernal radiance inherent in spiritual wisdom, which he terms, 'cosmic thoughts' and how this illumines the soul of the developed person. By inference, therefore, the non-initiated, sense-bound consciousness is dark, so to speak,

... the experience of the spiritual world consists precisely in this, that one knows oneself to be living within it. One knows that oneself is living within the weaving of [cosmic] thoughts. It is precisely when this frame of mind commences, that one knows oneself to be consciously within the weaving of thoughts, that this passes over into knowing oneself to be in radiantly shining light. For thoughts proceeds from the light. The thought weaves in light.<sup>262</sup>

Here the rhetoric, with its reference to 'light' and to 'weaving' could appear to be entirely metaphorical, but the points we discussed in Section 2A are relevant here, to the effect that these are not intended to be metaphorical.<sup>263</sup>

The complex question of how a perception in a supra-sensible context can be related to the validity or otherwise of perception, and how this in turn can be understood in terms of metaphorical tendencies in language, cannot be examined in this study. We can note that to Steiner it is axiomatic that perceptions in supra-sensible realms are inherently valid, provided that the rigorous inner preparation is carried out before hand. His use of the participle, 'weaving' appears to be metaphorical, that is, he regards thought as

---

<sup>262</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Menschenschicksale und Völkerschicksale*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1981), 178, „ ... darin besteht gerade das Erleben in der geistigen Welt, daß man sich darinnen lebendig weiß. Man weiß sich lebendig im Weben der Gedanken. Gerade wenn dieser Zustand anfängt, daß man sich bewußt im Weben der Gedanken darinnen weiß, dann geht das unmittelbar über in ein Sich-Wissen im hellstrahlenden Licht. Denn der Gedanke ist aus dem Licht. Der Gedanke webt im Licht.“

<sup>263</sup>Steiner, *Spirituelle Seelenlehre*, 348, „So unterscheidet der Okkultist das strahlende Selbstleuchten des Geistes von dem eigentümlichen Glimmern des Lichtes, welches zurückgestrahlt wird von der Welt der Gestalten, als seelische Flamme. Seele heißt, zurückstrahlendes Geisteslicht, Geist heißt, ausstrahlendes schöpferisches Licht.“

actively permeating the milieu of the spiritual realm, which is light-filled.

Hence to Steiner, 'weaving' describes an experienced, that is, spiritually perceived, process of permeation, even though he may have adopted the term from Goethean texts, where 'weaving' is specifically metaphorical, as in *Faust Part One, Faust's Study* 1922-1927; here the 'fabric of thought' is 'like a weaver's masterpiece'. Indeed Goethe specifically refers to using a metaphorical approach because of the difficulty of uniting the Idea with experience (perception), "The intelligence cannot think of as unified, what sense experience presents to it as separate ... therefore we justly take refuge for some satisfaction into the sphere of poesy ..."<sup>264</sup> Nevertheless, despite these Goethean origins, Steiner's usage is understood by him to be primarily non-metaphorical.

The significance for human beings of these two beings in Steiner's worldview is twofold, one is an influence which results in specific, and traditional identifiable unethical activity, the other is a more subtle, and often unrecognized, generic unethical tendency. The influence of these two beings as represented in their speeches here is of the subtle, generic nature, rather than what one could refer to as more traditionally unethical nature. The influence of 'Lucifer' is seen as manifesting in two ways. Its more traditionally unethical form is as egocentric desires, as well as un-grounded, immature attitudes, from which many immature misdeeds originate, as well as crimes of passion. In a more general sense, it manifests as an inherent part of every person's soul, it is identified as one which does not intend to cause evil, but rather, results in self-centred inflamed yearnings and immature ideals. With regard to the influence of Satan or "Ahriman" Steiner sees the more traditionally unethical aspect, as activities where 'hardening of the heart' are carried out, that is, in actions which lead to cold, callous premeditated actions or crimes.

Whereas the overall nature of the Ahrimanic influence, as an inherent part of every person's soul, causes thinking to become what Steiner sees as spirit-denying intellectuality. An example of

---

<sup>264</sup>HA, Bd. 13, *Bedenken und Ergebung*", 30, „Der Verstand kann nicht vereinigt denken, was die Sinnlichkeit ihm gesondert überlieferte. Deshalb wir uns billig zu einer Befriedigung in die Sphäre der Dichtkunst flüchten ...“

this to Steiner was the emerging atheistic scientific thinking. In today's world, an extension of that would be the re-defining of the human being's essential nature, such as allows a gradual movement towards seeing the ideal human state as that of the android human being.

That these two beings appear to Johannes in this scene indicates that any person who is seeking to develop a heightened spirituality must encounter the influences of these two ranks of fallen beings, active within one's lower self. They are not considered by Steiner as metaphors which allow a placing of polar opposite ethical dynamics before the acolyte. He considers them to be realities, as actual beings, perceived by the enhanced consciousness faculties, and who manifest in opposite fields of activity. In line with his conviction that perception of the sense world or of the spiritual realms is inherently valid (under healthy circumstances) Lucifer and Ahriman are specific beings, with a historically traceable field of influence.

After these two fallen spirits have spoken, they remain on stage, and two friends of Johannes, Strader and Capesius appear. They are accompanied by another being called, the 'Spirit of the Elements'. We noted in Section 2B that these two men are individuals, not allegorical characters, but that Strader has a tendency towards 'ahrimanic' thinking, and Capesius has a tendency towards 'luciferic' attitudes. Since Ahriman and Lucifer remain onstage, the speeches of these two men will embody and attempt to typify the influence of these fallen spirits in fully human terms.

The unawareness of esoteric-spiritual realities prevailing in Capesius and Strader is indicated already in the deep bewilderment shown by them towards 'Spirit of the Elements'. The Ferryman is understood by Steiner to represent a spiritual being who incorporates 'incarnating' souls into the earthly world. He explains that indeed he is normally quite unknown to mortals, "Mich schaut die Menschenseele, erst wenn zu Ende ist der Dienst, den ich ihr leiste (the human soul beholds me only when services which I render to him are at their end)." In the first draft of *Die Pforte* the 'Spirit of the Elements' (the Goethean Ferryman) was designated by Steiner as "Macrocosmos".<sup>265</sup>

---

<sup>265</sup>*Entwürfe, Fragmente*, 12.

As such, this being is a regent over hosts of nature spirits whose task as 'Nature's craftsmen' is to work at fashioning the forms of corporeal bodies (of plants, animals and humans), and maintaining the life-energies which sustain earthly existence. This activity fashions the interconnecting link between the cosmos and humanity, a concept reflected in the stage directions for this scene. Every speech by the two men arouses intense anger amongst these beings, who remain unseen off stage, but after every speech by either of the two men a vehement display of lightning and thunder is required.

The two perplexed men, Capesius and Strader, whose intellectuality and haughty attitudes are so vehemently rejected by the nature of the elemental realm, are told by the Spirit of the Elements, in a slightly unusual, archaic syntax, "If you defeat me not, with your stunted weapons of thought, nothing are you more than a fleeting imaginary figment of your own delusion."<sup>266</sup> The phrase, 'a fleeting imaginary figment of your own delusion' here is a strong allusion to Steiner's concept of the everyday self as illusory, in a sense, in contrast to the truly real, higher self.

The admonitions of the Spirit of the Elements offer a potent stimulus to this developmental process, and would normally only be perceptible to the person who is achieving higher consciousness, "Myself the human soul beholds, only when to an end has come the service, which I do for it. And yet through all the cycles of time it obeys my powers."<sup>267</sup>

Thus in *Die Pforte* it is Johannes who indicates some comprehension of the words of The Spirit of the Elements, as he leaves his meditative state, the two men have not understood the dynamics in the spiritual realm at all. These two characters are representative of the Will-o-the Wisps, and the experiences they have with the Spirit of the Elements are representative of the episode in *Das Märchen*, where the Will-o'-the-Wisps treat the Ferryman with contempt. Similarly, to Capesius and Strader, as representatives of

---

<sup>266</sup>*Pforte*, 81, „Bezwingst du mich mit deinen stumpfen Denkerwaffen nicht, bist mehr du nicht als flüchtig Truggebild des eignen Wahnes nur. “

<sup>267</sup>*Pforte*, 79, „Mich schaut die Menschenseele, erst wenn zu Ende ist der Dienst, den ich ihr leiste. Doch folgt sie meinen Mächten durch alle Zeitenläufe. “

the everyday, non-illuminated self-awareness, his words are meaningless, and eventually he vanishes from their perception, as it becomes clear that they will not respond to his advice.

The Wisps were astonished to be told by the Ferryman that they must render a service to the Ferryman, if they wanted to achieve the goal of finding the Fair Lily. The Ferryman then extracts a promise from the Will-o'-the-Wisps that the Old Woman is to pay their debt, by bringing him 'three fruits of the Earth'. Then he leaves them to their further journeying, it is clear that they cannot comprehend his admonitions.

In *Die Pfortè*, the Ferryman – as the Spirit of the Elements – does not demand the three specific tributes of the Goethean tale, but rather, he makes it clear that some form of compensation is required, "The world is ordered so, that work undertaken demands a service in return. I have given you your self, you owe me due reward."<sup>268</sup> To the two men, unable to understand the dynamics involved, the concept is totally foreign; they point to their intellectual powers as something which justifies their existence, and hence should satisfy the Ferryman. As representative of the abstract, non-holistic view of life, their attitudes are antagonistic to the spiritual realms. Similarly, the gold pieces of the Will-o'-the-Wisps are most unwelcome to the Ferryman, indeed, he says the gold pieces would enrage the river should they fall into it. In *Die Pforte* this episode is paralleled by the anger aroused in the elemental sphere, which manifests as thunder and lightning.

This scene has a challenging feature to it, in that the two men declare their noblest aspirations and ideals, only to have them vehemently rejected. Strader says, "I have stood amidst the storms of life for many years. People believe what I entrust to them from my deepest sense of truth." Then Capesius declares that "I will create out of my soul the spiritual counterpart of things. And when nature, to ideals transfigured, arises in human deeds, then is nature sufficiently rewarded in being truly mirrored."<sup>269</sup>

---

<sup>268</sup>*Pforte*, 82, „Es ist die Welt geordnet so, Daß Leistung stets verlangt die Gegenleistung. Ich habe euch das Selbst gegeben; Ihr schuldet mir den Lohn.“

<sup>269</sup>*Pforte*, 80, 82, Strader: „Ich habe viele Jahre lang im Lebenssturm gestanden. Man glaubt mir, was aus tiefsten (sic!) Wahrheitssinn ich Menschen anvertraut.“

After both of these speeches, the elements break out in angry thunder and lightning – the living elemental realm rejects their words. This is a puzzling episode, as their sentiments appear to be quite ethical, however, its didactic purpose is indicated in the next speech by Capesius. The Spirit of the Elements points out to Capesius and Strader just how antagonized the elemental forces are by their words, “You could behold how little your bold words are worth within my realm. For they unfetter storms and rouse the elements in wrath to rage against all order.”<sup>270</sup> To this Capesius responds, unconcerned, saying that for humans the creative activity itself is reward enough, “The bird’s song pouring from its throat is in itself enough. And likewise it is reward for man when he, creating, finds bliss in his activity.”<sup>271</sup>

The first sentence in the above passage is in fact a quote from Goethe, a verse sung by an old man in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Whereas we would normally think of such a sentiment as truly poetic, to Steiner it is a passage in Goethe’s writings where he finds an antithetical perspective to his own. It is placed in Capesius’ speech, to represent an abstract, theoretical attitude, directly opposed to the spiritual view which Steiner sought to communicate. The Goethean verse which Capesius is quoting is, “I sing, like the bird which dwells in the branches. The song which pours from the throat, is a reward, which richly rewards ...”<sup>272</sup> Thirteen years after the composition of *Die Pforte*, Steiner comments on this concept in a lecture on spiritual ecology, concerning the inner dynamics of the season of summer.

---

Capesius: Ich will aus meiner Seele schaffen der Dinge geistig Ebenbild. Und wenn Natur, zu Idealen verklärt, ersteht in Menschenwerken, ist sie belohnt genug durch ihre echte Spiegelung.“

<sup>270</sup>*Pforte*, 82, „Ihr könntet sehen, wie wenig eure kühnen Worte in meinem Reiche gelten. Den Sturm entfesseln sie, und Elemente rufen sie zu aller Ordnung Gegnern auf.“

<sup>271</sup>*Pforte*, 83, „Es ist des Vogels Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt, sich selbst genug. Und so ist Lohn dem Menschen auch, wenn schaffend er im Wirken Seligkeit erlebt“.

<sup>272</sup>*HA*, Bd. 7, 130, „Ich singe, wie der Vogel singt, der in den Zweigen wohnt. Das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt, ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnet ...“

It is quite striking to find this Goethe quote inserted here, in a Steiner text which itself is inspired by Goethe's greatness, as an example of a luciferic-ahrimanic attitude. But in fact, it is the case that in this scene, it is not only this Goethean verse which is rejected by the spirits, but also those fine idealistic words of the two men, quoted above. The reason such beautiful poetry is so strongly rejected is embedded in the esoteric aspects of Steiner's anthroposophical worldview. Steiner rejects the passage about the birds' song emphatically, even though it is a Goethean passage, saying,

The bird would never say, 'The song which pours from its throat is a reward, which richly rewards'. And just as little would the students of the ancient Mysteries have said it. For when in a certain season the larks, the nightingales sing, then what is formed in this activity pushes out into the cosmos, not through the air, but through the etheric element, up to a specific boundary. Then it vibrates back to the Earth, and then the animal world receives this which has vibrated back. But now it has united itself with the being-ness of the divine-spiritual element of the cosmos ... The larks send their song out into the world. Then the divine-spiritual element, which participates in the forming, in the overall moulding, of the animal kingdom, again streams back to the Earth on the waves of that which flows back from the out-flowing songs of the larks and nightingales.<sup>273</sup>

---

<sup>273</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Der Jahreskreislauf als Atmungsvorgang der Erde und die vier großen Festezeiten*, (Dornach: RSV, 1980), 61-62, „Der Vogel selber würde es nämlich niemals sagen: „Das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt, ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnt.“ Und ebensowenig hätten es die alten Mysterienschüler gesagt. Denn wenn in einer bestimmten Jahreszeit die Lerchen, die Nachtigallen singen, dann dringt das, was da gestaltet wird, nicht durch die Luft, aber durch das ätherische Element in den Kosmos hinaus, vibriert im Kosmos hinaus bis zu einer gewissen Grenze; dann vibriert es zurück auf die Erde, und dann empfängt die Tierwelt dieses, was da zurück-vibriert, nur hat sich dann mit ihm das Wesen des Göttlichen-Geistigen des Kosmos verbunden ... Die Lerchen senden ihre Stimme hinaus in die Welt, und das Göttlich-Geistige, das an der Formung, an der ganzen Gestaltung des Tierischen teilnimmt, das strömt auf die Erde wiederum herein auf den Wellen dessen, was zurückströmt von den hinausströmenden Liedern der Lerchen und Nachtigallen.“

It appears from this passage that to Steiner, his research into the spiritual aspect of the birds and their behaviour, reveals that in Goethe's image here is a projection of human attitudes onto the bird life. The birds are in Steiner's worldview, placed in a vital interaction with the elemental realm. In a very similar manner, when the two men speak of their ideals, they are rejected because in effect, their wisdom and ethics are only illusory; they may say the right thing, but their inner being is not at all able to fully embody it. As the list of characters makes clear, Capesius has a hidden luciferic quality, as his emotional life is not spiritualized, whilst Strader's intellectual life contains a hidden ahrimanic quality.

When the two men offer their rationalistic intellectuality, and when this is rejected, Capesius and Strader, like the Will-o'-the-Wisps, ignore the demand for compensation. The Spirit of the Elements sternly declares that this is not right, and that Felicia Balde must pay the debt. This woman is the parallel to the Old Woman, the wife of the Man with the Lamp, in Goethe's tale, where she is the foil to the actions of the two Will-o'-the-Wisps, their deeds directly affect her.

Steiner sees her as the memory of all that has been learnt and experienced in life, from which wisdom could possibly arise. In addition, she represents the memory of edifying religious principles. As Felicia Balde in *Die Pforte*, she represents core elements of the soul-life, specifically of Johannes. In the Goethean tale, three fruits of the Earth are demanded from the Will-o'-the-Wisps, whereas in *Die Pforte*, Felicia has to tell a fairy tale to the living milieu of the elemental realm.

This omission in *Die Pforte* of the triune element in Goethe's tale is significant, as normally Steiner seeks to emphasize this triune factor. However, this triune element is represented in *Die Pforte* in another way. The three women, Philia, Luna and Astrid are deeply involved in assisting the struggle of Johannes to attain to spiritual development. They have to make a specific effort, under the guidance of Maria, to help Johannes. The three hand-maidens to the fair Lily, and the three women, Philia, Astrid and Luna, represent the triune elements in the soul-life. These three are required to bring influences of a spiritual nature to bear upon the soul of Johannes, so that he may become fully spiritualized. The demands placed upon these three will be discussed later. Steiner sees the soul or con-

sciousness as consisting of three specific elements, thinking, emotion and will. This is described in detail in his *Theosophie*, and is elaborated in many of his lectures.

In the Goethean tale, the Ferryman demands that his fare be paid not with pieces of gold which the Will-o'-the-Wisps so easily shake from themselves, but with *the fruits of the Earth*, namely, three cabbages, three artichokes and three large onions. The obvious interpretation of this demand is that the human being must offer the results of its earthly life to those powers which have given it life upon the Earth.

In his commentaries on the Goethean tale, Steiner points out that these three vegetables are in fact angiocarpous plants, that is, their edible portion is not part of the calyx. The calyx is in effect enveloped in several layers. Furthermore, one of these plants (the onion) is a root vegetable, another (the artichoke) is a flower vegetable, whilst the third (the cabbage) is a leaf vegetable. To Steiner this unusual stipulation by the Ferryman in the Goethe's tale corresponds very closely to his view of the human being, and of the goals of spiritual development.

In his *Theosophie*, the three faculties which require to be spiritualized, namely thinking, emotion and will, are viewed by Steiner as three sheaths or integuments surrounding the self, or ego. Hence the three angiocarpous vegetables stipulated by the Ferryman are thus a simile for the three consciousness strands around the ego of the human being. Furthermore, there is a correlation in Steiner's works of parts of the plant to aspects of human consciousness. Namely the roots have a symbiotic association with the thinking capacity, whereas leaves of the plant with the heart and lungs, and the flower with human volition. Steiner concludes that the dense mineral nature of the brain's composition stands in a symbiotic relationship with the root system of plant. Consequently any root vegetable has an association with the brain and with thinking. The onion, the root vegetable of the three plants stipulated by the Ferryman, is symbolic of the thinking capacity of the human being.

Whereas the leaves, which constitute the breathing organ of the plant, and which demonstrate a rhythmical quality in their form and in the pattern of emergence from the branch of the plant, have a similar connection to the lung and heart system in the human being.

Consequently, the leafy vegetables become a symbol of the emotive life of the human being, since he views the emotions as interconnected with the heart and lungs. Finally, the flower of a vegetable is an integral part of its reproductive system, and this is an expression of the volition of the plant organism, namely the impulse to survival through propagation.<sup>274</sup> Therefore to Steiner the artichoke, as an edible vegetable flower, represents the will capacities of the human being.

Hence in Steiner's interpretation, the Ferryman, as the representative of the powers responsible for giving human beings access to life on Earth, as a conscious personality endowed with life-energies, is demanding compensation for providing this function. The compensation required is the spiritualizing of humanity's triune faculties of consciousness, thinking, emotion and will.

In Goethe's tale, the Will-o'-the-Wisps leave the Ferryman behind and set off to find the Fair Lily, and soon encounter the Green Snake, who eagerly devours the gold which the Will-o'-the-Wisps dispense so freely. When she eats it, it causes her to become radiant. This radiance in turn allows her to see for the first time the four mysterious kings, deep in a hidden cavern. While she is there, a dialogue ensues between her and the kings. This is paralleled in two stages in *Die Pforte*; firstly in Scene Four of *Die Pforte*, in that Capesius and Strader, after their conversation with the Spirit of the Elements, encounter the Other Maria, who represents the Green Snake. Later, in Scene Five of *Die Pforte*, four hierophants who work in the Mysteries commence a discussion which parallels that of the four kings. This dialogue concerns the spiritualizing of the triune soul, enabling the triune spirit to become efficacious in Johannes.

In addition, there are other parallels between Goethe's *Märchen* and this scene in *Die Pforte*. After the discussion with the Spirit of the Elements, the two men are left briefly on their own, alienated from their environment. It is in this state that they encounter the Other Maria, who appears, "as if the rock itself had given birth to her", in like manner, the Green Snake dwells in the clefts amidst the rocks. Capesius and Strader, like the Green Snake, are also bewil-

---

<sup>274</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Meditative Betrachtungen und Anleitungen zur Vertiefung der Heilkunst*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1967), 75-87.

dered by her, asking themselves, “ ... welch sonderbares Wesen! ...aus welchem Weltengrund erstehen solche Wesen? (What a strange being! ... from what cosmic foundation do such beings come into being?)”

The name for this representative of the Green Snake in Steiner’s drama, the ‘Other Maria’ is, as with the names of all the other characters, indicative of the dynamic she portrays. The dynamic which Johannes’ close friend Maria embodies, is that of a soul which has developed spirituality, which is permeated by its empowered spiritual potential, hence the person has attained to wisdom, loving compassion and higher faculties. The Other Maria is in effect those qualities, but not yet individualized, not yet empowered, as she herself says, “You see in me only the humbler sister of that high being who dwells in that realm from which you have just come.”<sup>275</sup>

The Other Maria’s introduction of herself to the two men presents more clearly Steiner’s understanding of those qualities which the Green Snake represents, and which as we noted earlier, he defined as ‘a love for wisdom, and the ability to selflessly engage in life’. The Other Maria describes herself,

I wrestle my way through rocky depths, and seek to clothe the rocks’ own will in human words; I can detect the scent of earthly being-ness and I want to think the Earth’s own thoughts in human heads. I sip pure living-air and transform powers of air into human feeling.<sup>276</sup>

The force of this speech is to ontologically equate the Other Maria with the Earth itself, since ‘the will of the rocks’ appears to designate the intention behind the creation of the physical Earth. So the Other Maria seeks to have consciousness of the Earth living in human consciousness. The reason for this can be more readily grasped by Steiner’s elucidation of the meaning of the Green

---

<sup>275</sup>*Pforte*, 86, „Ihr seht in mir die niedere Schwester nur des hohen Geisteswesens, das jenes Reich bewohnt, aus dem ihr eben kommt.“

<sup>276</sup>*Pforte*, 85, „Ich ringe mich durch Felsengründe und will der Felsen eignen Willen in Menschenworte kleiden; ich wittre Erdenwesenheit und will der Erde eignes Denken im Menschenkopfe denken. Ich schlürfe reine Lebenslüfte und bilde Luftgewalten in Menschenfühlen um“.

Snake. In the twelve lectures on the Goethean tale, Steiner refers to the Green Snake five times. Steiner sees this character as a deeply spiritual element residing within every human being, but more as a latent potential than an actuality. He says,

The human soul-life encompasses a force by which is borne the development of the soul through to the state of the free personality. This force has its task on the way to this state. Once this is achieved, it loses its significance. It brings the soul into relation with the experiences of life. That which life and science manifest, it transforms into inner wisdom of life. It makes the soul ever more ripe for the spiritual goal towards which one is longing. Once this is achieved, it loses its significance as it represents the relationship of the human being to the external world. There this power has to undergo self-sacrifice, then in the transformed human being it has to continue to exist, within the other aspects of the soul-life, as a permeating ferment, without its own individual existence.<sup>277</sup>

Steiner saw Goethe's achievement of creating *Das Märchen* as an exceptionally insightful stroke of genius. In five of his twelve lectures on this tale, Steiner quotes a Goethe aphorism which is closely allied to the character of the Green Snake, namely, "And so long as you don't have it, this dying and becoming, you are but a dreary guest upon the dark earth"<sup>278</sup> A clearer understanding of Steiner's view of the Green Snake is afforded in another of his

---

<sup>277</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Goethes geheime Offenbarung*, 16, „Im Umfange des menschlichen Seelenlebens gibt es eine Kraft, von welcher die Entwicklung der Seele getragen wird zu dem Zustande der freien Persönlichkeit. Diese Kraft hat ihre Aufgabe auf dem *Wege* zu diesem Zustand. Wäre dieser erreicht, so verlöre sie ihre Bedeutung. Sie bringt die Menschenseele mit den Lebenserfahrungen in Zusammenhang. Sie verwandelt, was Wissenschaft und Leben offenbaren, in innere Lebensweisheit. Sie macht die Seele immer reifer für das ersehnte Geistesziel. An diesem verliert sie ihre Bedeutung, denn sie stellt das Verhältnis des Menschen zur Außenwelt her ... Da muß diese Kraft sich aufopfern ... sie muß als das übrige Seelenleben durchsetzendes Ferment ohne Eigenleben im verwandelten Menschen weiter leben.“

<sup>278</sup>HA, Bd. 2, 19, *West-östlicher Divan, Buch des Sängers*, „Und so lang du das nicht hast, diese Stirb und Werde, bis du nur ein trüber Gast auf der dunklen Erde.“ Steiner also quotes this in lectures on the Apocalypse of St. John.

commentaries on the Goethean tale, "The snake has always been the symbol of the self which does not remain in itself, but rather can selflessly take up into itself the divine; can sacrifice itself; humbly, selflessly, it gathers earthly wisdom, in that it crawls around in 'the chasms of the Earth' ..."<sup>279</sup>

Since the Other Maria is representative of the Green Snake, when she declares in the above speech that she "seeks to clothe the rocks' own will in human words" then it may also be the case that she endeavours to distil human understanding from the experiences of earthly life. She is the antithesis of the disdainful, proud intellectuality which is strewn all around, just as the two Will-o'-the-Wisps cast off their gold. This interpretation of the above speech by the Other Maria is strongly affirmed by his preliminary draft version of her speech, later discarded. In this she declares, "I am the rocks' own voice ... and I ponder the thoughts of the Earth ... and I form myself from its existence."<sup>280</sup> This draft version indicates that the 'will of the rocks' is the purpose of life within physical existence.

In Johannes this forming of oneself from earthly life, towards wisdom, is his challenge, so he has to examine his personality and life experiences in such a way that he grows wiser and thus nearer to the realm of the Idea. This perspective of engaging more meaningfully with life experiences, and thereby attaining to wisdom, is also inherent in the Other Maria's statement to Capesius and Strader that if she absorbs their words (intellectual attitudes) and then allows them to resound from her, then these bring her insights into life, "The way you speak is incomprehensible to me, but if I first allow your words to resound from my being, they spread out over all things which fill my environment and interpret their riddles."<sup>281</sup>

---

<sup>279</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Goethes geheime Offenbarung*, 96, „Die Schlange ist immer das Symbol gewesen für das Selbst, das nicht in sich bleibt, sondern in Selbstlosigkeit das Göttliche in sich aufnehmen kann, sich hinopfern kann; das demütig, selbstlos Erdenweisheit sammelt, indem es in den „Klüften der Erde“ umherkriecht ...“

<sup>280</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Entwürfe*, 108, „... und bin der Felsen eigene Stimme ... und sinne der Erde eignen Sinn ... und bilde mich aus ihrem Sein.“

<sup>281</sup>*Pforte*, 86, „So wie ihr selber spricht, ist unverstündlich meinem Ohr. Doch lasse ich erst eure Worte aus meinem Wesen anders tönen, ver-

The Other Maria's words here, that understanding of life speaks to her, once she lets the words of the two men resonate from within her, alludes strongly to the episode in Goethe's tale, where the Green Snake becomes luminous and can thereby see and understand her environment better, after eating the gold of the Will-o'-the-Wisps.

Steiner continues his elucidation in the lecture quoted above, concluding significantly that the capacity of the Green Snake to become radiant (after consuming the gold) is a metaphor of the capacity in the human being, to become the higher Self. From the above considerations, it emerges that this process happens only as the human being actually does absorb life experience, through humility and the commitment to the quest for spirituality. The action of the Green Snake, in building a bridge across the river, is the quintessence of this process.

Capesius and Strader ask for her advice as to how they can find a way to the source of wisdom, but find her answer unsatisfactory. Like the Will-o'-the-Wisps, Capesius and Strader feel themselves alien to her reality, Strader rejects her advice, "Das ist kein Weg für uns. Es heißt in unsrer Sprache Schwärmerei. (That is not a path for us. It is called 'fantasy' in our language.)" This dynamic affirms a primary theme in this scene, that normal everyday consciousness is incapable of finding a way to incorporate spiritual reality. Scene Four ends with Johannes expressing understanding of the preceding activity, which has been revealed to him in his meditating.

### 3F: Scene Five

Again, Johannes is in meditation, experiencing the content of the scene. The setting for this scene is a subterranean temple in which the hierophants of the Mysteries meet to carry out their spiritual work, and discuss their concerns with Felix Balde. In Goethe's tale, a parallel episode occurs, when the Green Snake decides, since she has now become luminous, to descend into a cavern wherein she

---

breiten sie sich über alle Dinge, die meinen Umkreis füllen, und deuten ihre Rätsel."

had previously detected several statues – but only by the sense of touch. She can now see that these statues depict four kings, who presently become animated and dialogue with her; during this process the Old Man with the Lamp appears and facilitates the conversation.

Steiner sees the dialogue of the four kings as illustrative of the triune human spirit; we noted above (Section 2B) that to Steiner the human spirit is separate from the ‘soul’. This triune spiritual element consists of the archetypal Idea from which thinking, emotion and will – as soul qualities – derive. In his teachings on personal development, Steiner emphasizes that the acolyte is to refine their emotive responses, overcoming tendencies towards instinctive, base desires and yearnings. To Steiner, the spiritualizing of the emotive responses, resulting in a person in whom personal desires are overcome, enables selfless dedication to greater purposes of life to be achieved. Secondly, the thinking life has to overcome what Steiner refers to as ‘materialistic’ or ‘abstract’ thinking, which rejects spiritual realities. These attitudes will regard thinking as derived from the body (brain) processes, and hence such spiritual concepts as pre-existence and repeated earth-lives as quite unfounded. In effect, to Steiner the spiritualizing of thinking – when undertaken in conjunction with the refinement of the emotive life – results in wisdom, a gradual attainment of understanding of deep spiritual truths.

Thirdly Steiner maintains that the volitional life needs to be refined, this results in releasing the will-forces from self-centred aims and personal ambitions, and aligning the volition to the greater good of the community. Hence in Steiner’s model, the golden king is an image of the potential for wisdom, the silver king of compassion and purity of heart, whereas the brass king represents the attainment of selflessness in the will, thus allowing the intuitive cognitive faculty inhering therein to be accessed. In Goethe’s tale, the dialogue between the Green Snake and the Gold King proceeds as follows,

Gold King: “Where do you come from?”

Green Snake: “From the crevices where the gold dwells.”

Gold King: “What is more glorious than gold?”

Green Snake: “Light.”

Gold King: "What is more animating than light?"

Green Snake: "Conversation."

In terms of Steiner's model, the above dialogue has the following interpretation. The gold king represents the spiritualized intellectual capacity, which results in wisdom, as distinct from cleverness. The Green Snake has begun to be radiant with a golden light, and therefore has now some wisdom, and consequently a communion between the personality and its spiritual potential can commence. The acolyte is now aware that he or she is in a realm or state of darkness, but, vitally, it is in this earthly realm that the impetus to wisdom can be found.

Similarly, the Green Snake is also aware that the wisdom does not have its locus in the earthly sphere; it is really within the spiritual light. The third question, "What is more animating than light?" has also been rendered simply as "What is more refreshing than light?"<sup>282</sup> But in terms of Steiner's interpretative model, the term 'animating' (or 'quickenings' in older English) is more appropriate. This is because in his commentary on this tale, he argues that the 'conversation' referred to here is that which occurs between divine beings in realms of light.<sup>283</sup> The model is then internally consistent, as the communion of the creator beings generates and sustains the light, which in turn becomes wisdom in human beings.

At this point in the Goethean tale, the Old Man with the Lamp appears and facilitates the dialogue on behalf of the snake. Steiner maintains that he represents a wise person who gives guidance to the questing acolyte, and is represented in *Die Pforte* by Felix Balde. A very important episode now unfolds, when the Green Snake announces that she knows the "manifest secret"; it becomes clear later that this means that she has realized her need to undertake an act of self-sacrifice. As we noted earlier, in Steiner's model, it is precisely this dynamic of selflessly absorbing the higher

---

<sup>282</sup> „Was ist erquicklicher als Licht? fragte jener. "Das Gespräch," antwortete sie." *The Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*, transl. Thomas Carlyle, (New York: Steiner Books, 1979), 16, "What is more refreshing than light"? inquired the king. "Speech," answered she. Goethe *HA*, Bd. 6, 215.

<sup>283</sup>Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 1905; unpublished, archive manuscript.

spiritual qualities, by letting go of egocentric tendencies, that makes the spiritualizing process possible.

In parallel to this, in *Die Pforte*, four hierophants are gathered to discuss the spiritual progress of Johannes, and Benedictus makes it clear that Johannes has undergone the painful trials which are inevitable if the initiation is to be successful, "He has passed through the trials of suffering and in bitter pain of soul, he has prepared the ground for consecration, which shall grant him knowledge."<sup>284</sup>

Then the hierophant of love, Theodosius the equivalent to the Silver King, declares that, "Let warmth flow into his heart. He shall realize how he draws near to the Spirit of the Cosmos through sacrificing the illusion of his self-bound life ... this love will give him the power to feel himself as spirit ..."<sup>285</sup> Then Romanus, described in the list of characters as 'the spirit of initiative', declares that, in the name of cosmic Will, the power which Johannes now has, through the efficacy of the preceding hierophants, shall indeed serve to ensure that he can transcend space and time and enter into the spheres of the divine-spiritual creator gods. After this speech Retardus speaks, he is obviously a representative of the negative powers (Lucifer and Ahriman) who seek to hinder such a spiritual development.

He declares that there has been no sign given by the Earth that such a consecration is needed, and therefore he may continue his appointed task of preventing this happening, "I am holding back therefore your spiritual light in this temple, so that it does not cause harm instead of healing through unprepared souls encountering it."<sup>286</sup> However the others insist that his attitude is wrong, and that

---

<sup>284</sup>*Pforte*, 89, „Er ist geschritten durch die Leidensproben und hat in bitterer Seelennot den Grund gelegt zur Weihe, die ihm Erkenntnis geben soll.“ Again here are similarities to Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*.

<sup>285</sup>*Pforte*, 90, „Es fließe Wärme in sein Herz. Er soll begreifen, wie er dem Weltengeist sich naht durch Opferung des Wahnes seiner Eigenheit ... Die Liebe wird die Kraft ihm geben, sich selbst als Geist zu fühlen.“

<sup>286</sup>*Pforte*, 92, „Ich halte euer Geisteslicht deshalb zurück in diesem Tempel, auf dass nicht Schaden statt Heil es bringe, wenn es die Seelen unreif trifft.“

Johannes can indeed take a further step on the quest for the spirit. Retardus is the equivalent of the Mixed King in Goethe's tale, who objects to the declaration from the Old Man with the Lamp that his power over the Youth will soon be lost.

The dynamic expressed in these speeches concerning Retardus illustrates Steiner's view, noted earlier, that the evil powers – Lucifer and Ahriman – have a certain cosmic justification. Steiner defines the mixed king (Retardus) as, "The capacity of thought, which is still clouded by the sense impressions, the fire of the soul which is not unfolded in love, but lives in desires and instinctive urges, and the chaotic will of the human being ..."<sup>287</sup>

The scene ends as Johannes emerges from his meditation and confirms the events in this scene.

### 3G: Scene Six

Scene Six is a brief scene which concerns the debt to the Spirit of the Elements that Felicia Balde has had to take up on behalf of Capesius and Strader. This had been introduced as a demand on Felicia in Scene Four; we have noted above in connection with Scene Five that the debt in its fuller implication concerns the triune consciousness dynamics (or 'soul') of the human being. These need to be transformed into the spiritual equivalent. However, in terms of parallelism to the Goethean tale, Felicia is that character whom, as the representative of The Old Woman, has to carry out some form of remuneration.

Further, just as in Goethe's tale, the repayment of the debt by the Old Woman is unexpectedly impaired by the malignant Giant, so too in *Die Pforte* Gairman (Teuton), unexpectedly impairs, in terms of social etiquette, Felicia's act, by mocking it. As the representation of the Giant, he represents unwholesome psychic tendencies and generally atavistic tendencies. This scene ends with Johannes noting that Gairman "was that man who said that spirit

---

<sup>287</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Ursprung*, 98, „Die Denkkraft die noch von den Sinesindrücken getrübt ist, das Feuer der Seele, die nicht Liebe entfaltet, sondern in Begierden und im Trüben lebt, der ungeordnete Wille des Menschen...“

light had entered as if of its own decision into his brain.”<sup>288</sup> The didactic direction of the rhetoric here is clear, this sentence expresses succinctly Steiner’s view of spiritualism, and other atavistic psychic powers, namely that they are not the product of conscious effort by the human self, and hence are an ‘unfree’ condition.<sup>289</sup>

If spiritual insights occur spontaneously, and not as the result of strenuous inner development, then in Steiner’s system of spiritual development, this is an unwholesome atavism. Secondly, such insights are only cognized when they are registered by the brain, hence they are by Steiner’s definition, not transcendent, since they are not perceived directly in the life-force organism.

### 3H: Scene Seven

Scene Seven commences with a speech by Maria calling upon Philia, Astrid and Luna to contribute to the task which she has undertaken. It is in this scene that these three have to undertake their work to spiritualize Johannes’ soul; so in terms of *Das Märchen*, they must bring forth the three fruits of the Earth. Their task is to quicken Johannes’ consciousness, so that he does really attain to spiritual enlightenment. The following episode involves the ether energies that we noted earlier, in connection with Goethe’s Proteus. Steiner describes the realm of the ethers as being composed of four distinct kinds of energies.<sup>290</sup> These four distinct modes of ether energy are referred to here, without any elucidatory comments.

In this scene, Maria affirms that the three soul forces have so often been her helpers, and are needed again now to help her effect changes in these ethers, and that these in turn may influence the soul of Johannes,

Be this for me in this hour too, in which I may make the cosmic-ether resound within itself. It shall resound harmoniously, and resounding,

---

<sup>288</sup> *Pforte*, 104, „Dies war der Mann, der von sich sagte, das Geisteslicht sei wie von selber in sein Gehirn gedrungen.“

<sup>289</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Goethes geheime Offenbarung*, 113.

<sup>290</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Das Evangelium Lukas*, lect. 7, (Dornach: RSV, 1985).

permeate a soul with knowledge ... Johannes, in his striving, shall be raised through our creativity to true existence.<sup>291</sup>

Maria requires that Astrid carries out an action for her, these actions are to assist in the development of higher, spiritual consciousness. As we saw in Section 2A, Astrid is to “create the power of darkness in the flowing light, so that it may shine in colours, and member tonal being-ness so that cosmic substance, weaving, may live, resonating.” At first, this appears to be entirely metaphorical, a poetic dialogue between the self and an aspect of the soul. But instead, Steiner is intending to communicate that the soul’s own intelligence is able to exert an efficacy in the realm of the ethers, or subtle life-forces.<sup>292</sup>

One such action is to bring about the emergence of colour from light, by exerting an influence upon what Steiner refers to as the ‘light-ether’, one of the four ethers. It is from this ether that light-phenomena arise. He regards colour as emerging from the light in response to subtle influences, that is, an etheric force.<sup>293</sup> Secondly, he views sound as emerging from a specific ether energy-field also, which he designates as the tone-ether.<sup>294</sup> Hence Astrid is to exert an efficacy upon this specific energy-field to bring about the desired ‘membering’, or integrating, of cosmic ether into this ether, so it may live within it, and bring forth ethereal sounds.

The implication here appears to be when higher consciousness unfolds, the person sees spiritual visions or inwardly hears subtle spiritual truths resonating, but for this to occur, the ether energies have to be prepared in advance for these phenomena to occur. In these words, Steiner is expressing an important element in his view of consciousness, namely the soul (hence its three strands, thinking, emotion and will) can exert an influence upon the realm of the

---

<sup>291</sup>*Pforte*, 106, „Seid mir es auch in dieser Stunde, dass ich den Welten-äther in sich erbeben lasse. Er soll harmonisch klingen und klingend eine Seele durchdringen mit Erkenntnis ... Johannes der Strebende, er soll durch unser Schaffen zum wahren Sein erhoben werden.“

<sup>292</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Die Geheimnisse der Biblischen Schöpfungsgeschichte*, (Dornach: RSV, 1976).

<sup>293</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Welche Bedeutung hat die okkulte Entwicklung des Menschen für seine Hüllen*, (Dornach: RSV, 1986).

<sup>294</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Das Lukas Evangelium*, (Dornach: RSV, 1985).

ethers. Furthermore, these in turn, can have an influence upon the individual's ether-body.<sup>295</sup> Accordingly, in this scene, Maria requests Philia to "breathe in the light's lucid nature from far-extending space", and Astrid to "engender the power of darkness in the flowing light, that colours may glow". Through these processes, Maria says that she will be able "to entrust feeling of the spiritual to seeking human senses". Maria then asks Luna representing the third element, volition, to "unite the copy of your own individual being to the gifts of her sisters, so that certainty of knowledge may be granted to the soul-seeker."

When further dialogue between these three soul-forces and Maria concerning the details of their working together, is over, Maria declares herself satisfied that the special intention of this focussed activity will enable Johannes' consciousness to properly function in the realm of archetypal realities, and that this event is about to happen; "With you, my sisters, united for this noble work, I shall succeed in what I yearn to do. The call of the severely tested man penetrates into our realm of light."<sup>296</sup> This entire section of Scene Seven represents the episode in Goethe's tale, where the three handmaidens are called in to actively assist in the process of helping the Youth with his difficulties in uniting with the fair Lily.

Johannes then appears and confirms to Maria, that he has indeed attained to the exalted state wherein his consciousness functions in the archetypal realm, "I felt myself released from fetters of sense. My gaze was freed from those limits imposed upon it by the present ... and clarifying light of discernment shone forth in my new world."<sup>297</sup> Soon after this the seeress Theodora appears, and makes another revelation. She speaks of seeing Johannes and Maria, as different individuals, in a past life. This episode forms the second

---

<sup>295</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Lukas Evangelium*, Lect. 7.

<sup>296</sup>*Pforte*, 107, „Du meine Philia, so sauge des Lichtes klares Wesen aus Raumes-weiten ... und auch du, Astrid, erzeuge Dunkelkraft im fließend Licht, daß es in Farben scheine ... So kann ich Geistesfühlen vertrauen suchendem Menschensinn. ... Und du, o starke Luna, vereine mit der Schwestern Gaben das Abbild deiner Eigenheit, daß Wissens Sicherheit dem Seelensucher werde.“

<sup>297</sup>*Pforte*, 111, „Ich fühlte mich entronnen den Sinnesfesseln. Befreit ward mein Blick von jenen Schranken, die ihm die Gegenwart umschließen, und klärend Urteilslicht erstrahlte in meiner neuen Welt.“

main theme in Scene Seven, namely, that of repeated lives on Earth. Theodora proceeds to describe the reason for the feeling of attachment which Johannes feels for Maria. Maria at that time was a missionary, who sought to convert the tribes in the forests of central Europe from their worship of the gods of the Edda, to Christianity.

Johannes, she reveals, was at that earlier time a woman, in medieval Europe, and had encountered Maria – who was at that time a man. Johannes then formed a romantic attachment to this person, “The woman standing there before him falls at his feet. She feels herself transformed. A soul is praying to the human-god; a heart is given in love to the messenger of God.”<sup>298</sup> Maria then urges Johannes to become fully conscious of this past dynamic. It is this encroachment of personal affection upon impersonal spiritual-religious issues which has created the problem in Johannes in this life, as he deals with the stress of Maria not reciprocating his yearnings.

Here Steiner adds a new element to Goethe’s tale of the Green Snake, which emphasizes the concept of reincarnation, and the attendant concept of karma. The concept of reincarnation is very closely connected with the concept of a formative interlinking between lifetimes or karma, as the preceding life will have an influence upon the succeeding lifetime. In the Europe in Steiner’s context, the concept of repeated incarnations was part of Theosophical beliefs, and was inextricably intertwined with that of ‘karma’, which teaches that a person’s abilities, and major experiences, are the outcome of his or her previous life on the Earth. This Society’s teachings are not nihilistic or fatalistic, it places emphasis upon the individual’s need to evolve ever further as a result of these life experiences, rather than seeking to escape from the Earth into Nirvana.<sup>299</sup>

---

<sup>298</sup> *Pforte*, 114, „Das Weib, das vor dem Manne steht, es fällt zu dessen Füßen; verwandelt fühlt es sich. Es betet eine Seele zu dem Menschen-gotte; es liebt ein Herz den Gottesboten.“

<sup>299</sup> Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, “Karma”, (London: Theosophical Publishing Co, 1892), 161-162, “Karma, the law of Ethical Causation ... when Buddhism teaches that .... the moral kernel alone survives death and continues in transmigration, it simply means

The Theosophical Society was a major vessel for the popularisation of this concept in Europe and elsewhere. Steiner, as the General Secretary of its German branch, held views on the general definition of karma which were generally compatible with this Society. This view of karma advocated an active striving with the negative qualities in the soul-life, inherited from a past life, in order to move further ahead in one's spiritual status. Steiner's approach is to maintain that acceptance of karma is conducive to a positive attitude to life,

Karma is a law without which life is not comprehensible to human beings. The law of karma is not simply a theoretical law or something which simply comforts our desire for knowledge. No, at every step it is something which gives energy to actions and confidence in our life, and which makes all that which is not comprehensible, comprehensible.<sup>300</sup>

It is a great, mighty thought to also know that nothing is futile that one does, that everything has its efficacy on into the future. Thus this law does not have a depressive effect, rather it fills us with the most beautiful hope."<sup>301</sup>

However, on one major point, he was at odds with his Society. He integrated his esoteric viewpoint on Christianity into the concept of karma. As we have seen above, the past lives of Maria and Johannes were linked in medieval Europe, but the milieu in which their lives unfolded, and the link between them was forged,

---

that ... only that which is immortal in its very nature and divine in essence, namely the ego, can exist forever."

<sup>300</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Vor dem Tore der Theosophie*, (Dornach: RSV, 1978), „Karma ... ist ein Gesetz, das dem Menschen das Leben eigentlich erst verständlich macht. Das Karma-gesetz ist nicht bloß ein theoretisches Gesetz oder etwas, was bloß unsere Wißbegierde befriedigt. Nein, auf Schritt und Tritt ist es für das Leben etwas, was Kraft zum Handeln und Sicherheit gibt, was alles Unverständliche verständlich macht.“

<sup>301</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Die Theosophie des Rosenkreuzers*, (Dornach: RSV, 1979), 78, „Es ist ein großer, gewaltiger Gedanke, zu wissen, daß, was man auch tut, nichts vergeblich ist, daß alles seine Wirkung, in die Zukunft hinein hat. So wirkt das Gesetz nicht bedrückend, sondern es erfüllt uns mit schönster Hoffnung.“

was one in which Christianity plays a major role. One of the characters was a Christian teacher.

Scene Seven concludes with powerful affirmative words from the spiritual teacher, Benedictus, who confirms that Johannes has now attained, at least in a preliminary form, the ability to function within the realm of spirit, (the Platonic realm of Ideas). His success is due to his ability to now work in soul-unison, with Maria,

... Destiny has united you, to unfold together the forces which are to serve good creative activity. And as you walk on the soul's path, Wisdom itself will teach you that the highest things can be achieved when souls...unite to work in faithfulness for the well-being of the world.<sup>302</sup>

This scene overall proceeds in close parallel with the episode in Goethe's tale, where the beginning of the redemption of the Youth occurs. Through the intervention of the Old Man with the Lamp, with the help of the Hawk (represented by Theodora in *Die Pforte*), who summons him to help, the Prince is being prepared for his rebirth out of the coma into which he fell, after prematurely touching the Fair Lily. The three handmaidens of the Lily rally to help her, and they set off to enter the temple, wherein the Prince shall be restored to full consciousness, and in fact, he shall attain to union with the Lily. Similarly in Scene Seven, the three friends of Maria, Philia, Astrid and Luna specifically assist her, Theodora provides the illuminating the revelation of the past lives, and directly thereafter, Benedictus appears to counsel Johannes.

The above words of Benedictus parallel in Goethe's tale, the words of the Old Man, "We have come together at an auspicious hour; let each one perform his task, let each one do his duty, and a common happiness will dissolve within itself the grief of individuals, just as a common misfortune consumes individual joys."<sup>303</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup>*Pforte*, 119, „Es hat das Schicksal euch verbunden, vereint die Kräfte zu entfalten, die gutem Schaffen dienen müssen. Und wandelnd auf dem Seelenpfade, wird euch die Weisheit selber lehren, daß Höchstes kann geleistet werden, wenn Seelen ... in Treue sich zum Weltenheile binden.“

<sup>303</sup>Goethe, *HA*, Bd. 6, 231, „Wir sind zur glücklichen Stunde beisammen, jeder verrichte sein Amt, jeder tue seine Pflicht, und ein allgemeines

So the seventh scene – the final in the seven phases of evolutionary development – affirms that Johannes is on the verge of achieving the goal of his quest.

### 3I: The Interlude

In Section 3F, we noted that Steiner maintains that evolution proceeds within a process of seven vast evolutionary ‘aeons’, and each of these contain seven smaller phases or ‘cycles’. Additionally, in Steiner’s cosmology, each one of these seven great periods of evolution, and also each of the seven smaller phases, are followed by an interlude, a time of consolidation of what has been achieved before. Steiner designates this time of introverted non-manifestation in which the past achievements are consolidated, as a ‘time of rest’ (Ruhepause)<sup>304</sup> or by a theosophical term drawn from Sanskrit, and introduced into the Theosophical Society’s terminology by Blavatsky, namely, a ‘pralaya’.

After Scene Seven, the interlude, the introspective cosmic pause, a ‘pralaya’ period occurs, in which the past events are assimilated and gradually give rise to a new potential. Estella is enthusiastic about the exoteric drama, “*The disinherited of Body and Soul*”, and the play-within-the-play is brought further to expression. The drama, which Estella has seen, has a plot that closely follows that of Johannes, up to a point. It follows the life of a young, idealistic artist, who ignores the pleading of his girl friend, because he has an infatuation with another woman, who was a patroness to him. When he hears the news of the death of this young woman, he is not particularly moved. As he finally realizes that his patroness will never enter into a relationship with him, he lives on as a broken, disillusioned man.

Sophie recounts the plot of the theosophical-anthroposophical play, which is in fact that of *Die Pforte* itself. Since in *Die Pforte* by contrast, Johannes has been able to overcome his conscience-

---

Glück wird die einzelnen Schmerzen in sich auflösen, wie ein allgemeines Unglück einzelne Freuden verzehrt.“

<sup>304</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Geheimwissenschaft*.

stricken state through the influence of his esoteric knowledge, the plot of Stella's play reflects the tragic implications of human endeavour, occurring outside an esoteric-spiritual social milieu. This extension of the technique of 'a play-within-the-play', demonstrates that the difficult life circumstances of Johannes are alleviated through the possibility of an encounter with the spiritual, through the existence of anthroposophy. This fact reinforces the message that the esoteric life brings a welcome, indeed, essential, further element into human life. For in *Die Pforte*, the artist, Johannes, instead of stopping at a tragic event, is shown in later scenes as progressing on with the task of redeeming his actions by ennobling his personality.

Gradually as the difference in the two dramas become apparent, the two women argue about the virtue of art. In particular, Estella believes that art should follow precisely the fullness of human life, in the humanistic sense, she declares that art can only reach to its heights if it remains faithful to the whole of life. As we know from the Prelude, Estella's outlook is humanist in a general sense, so she is in effect excluding the efficacy of a spiritual element in human life. Sophie argues that this is precisely not the full validity of art, and uses as an example the art of painting, saying that the painter needs to instil in the artwork an element which transcends the given sensory appearance. The implication is that likewise, a drama should portray the spiritual context encompassing human interaction, and not take the humanist view. She argues, "To look at an imperfect rendering of the reality accessible to the senses must cause discomfort, whereas the imperfect portrayal of that which is hidden behind external observation can be a revelation."<sup>305</sup>

In these remarks of Sophie, and in the Interlude overall, two major and distinctive elements of Steiner's view of art – including dramatic art – is communicated. One is the underlying inference of the importance of art for his students; this inference becomes quite tangible in the next scene, where Johannes' painting becomes the topic of discussion. Secondly, there is the concept that it is inherent

---

<sup>305</sup>*Pforte*, 124, „Das Gewährwerden einer unvollkommenen Wiedergabe der sinnenfälligen Wirklichkeit muss Unbehagen hervorrufen, während die unvollkommenste Darstellung dessen, was sich hinter der äußeren Beobachtung verbirgt, eine Offenbarung sein kann.“

in artistic activity to reach beyond the sensory, and art is only fully successful when it achieves this.

There is an additional element in this dialogue, in so far as Sophia has been referring to paintings during her discussion to press home her point. Estella objects to her statement that ‘An imperfect rendering of the reality accessible to the senses must cause discomfort’, by saying that no (naturalist) artist would seek to merely duplicate a nature scene, but always try to instil an additional element to it. Stella has not perceived that Sophie’s argument, whilst using paintings as illustrative, is equally applicable to drama. Sophie, in replying, does not try to enlighten her as to this applicability to drama. Instead, Sophie, in her response to Estella’s objection speaks as if the referent of her response is restricted to paintings, saying, “This is just the weakness of many works of art – that the creative activity through itself leads beyond nature, and the artist does not know the appearance of that which the senses do not observe.”<sup>306</sup>

### 3J: Scene Eight

The stage directions specify that the setting for this scene is the same as that of Scene One; the initial locus is repeated. This provides confirmation that the Interlude marks the division between the first seven scenes, which constitute a completed evolutionary cycle in cosmological perspective developed by Steiner – played out in miniature in human life – and the rest of the drama. A cycle has been completed and now the actors on ‘the stage of life’ step out again, now one cycle higher in their achievements – or at least Johannes has developed further. The characters in this scene are Johannes, Maria, Capesius and Strader, and the focus is on the now revived skills and enthusiasm of Johannes as an artist. Importantly,

---

<sup>306</sup>*Pforte*, 125, „Darin liegt gerade die Unvollkommenheit vieler Kunstwerke, daß die schöpferische Betätigung durch sich selber über die Natur hinausführt, und daß der Künstler nicht weiß, wie das aussieht, was nicht in die sinnliche Beobachtung fällt.“

the audience is informed by Capesius that some three years have elapsed between Scene Seven and Scene Eight,

This picture is truly a wonder to me, and yet a greater wonder to me is its creator. I can't compare the transformation which has occurred in you with anything, which men like me have until now considered possible ... I first saw you three years ago, when I was privileged to come in contact with the group, in which you raised yourself to such heights ... you were a deeply troubled man at that time.<sup>307</sup>

So, accordingly, in Scene Eight, Johannes has completed an important microcosmic cycle of development, and in his time of non-appearance or being secluded from the audience, he has assimilated the lessons from his experiences in the earlier scenes, and consequently has moved a step forward, and appears once more on the stage. This dynamic is directly paralleled in Steiner's cosmology, which maintains that the great evolutionary epochs are separated by times of rest, in which the primeval, developing human beings are further consolidated, ready to take the next step. For example, with regard to the result of the first of these aeons (which he designates as the Saturn aeon), he writes that "as a result of the Saturn development it is shown that the germinal human being had developed itself up to certain level ... Thus the germinal human being rests in the womb of the cosmos ... the germinal human being emerges from its hidden, secluded condition and begins through its own ability to develop itself, from the forces which had been placed into it in Saturn."<sup>308</sup>

---

<sup>307</sup> *Pforte*, 126, „Dies Bild ist mir ein Wunder wahrlich. Und ein noch größ' res ist mir sein Schöpfer. Die Wandlung, die in euch geschehn, es kann ihr nichts verglichen werden, was Menschen meiner Art bisher für möglich hielten ... Ich sah zuerst euch für drei Jahren. Ich durfte damals jenen Kreis betreten, in welchem ihr zu eurer Höhe euch erhabet. Ein sorgvoller Mensch wart ihr zu jener Zeit.“

<sup>308</sup> *Geheimwissenschaft*, 170,173, „Als Ergebnis der Saturnentwicklung erscheint, daß sich der Menschenkeim bis zu einer gewisse Stufe herangebildet hat. So ruht der Menschenkeim zu neuem Erwachen im Schoß der Welt ... Der Menschenkeim tritt aus seiner Verborgenheit hervor und beginnt aus eigenem Vermögen heraus durch die Kräfte, die ihm auf dem Saturn eingepft worden sind, sich zu entwickeln.“

This same dynamic is to be found in theosophical cosmology. It is presented in an ancient poetic text published by Blavatsky in her *Secret Doctrine*, referred to as the stanzas of *The Dyzan*, which were viewed positively by Steiner.<sup>309</sup> The following few phrases from this text, which starts with the most recent pralaya, indicate its nature,

... Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration. Universal mind was not, for there were no 'Ah-hi' [hierarchies] to contain it. The seven ways to bliss were not ... the seven sublime lords and the seven truths had ceased to be, and the universe, the son of necessity was immersed in paranispanna [complete absorption into non-manifested being], to be out-breathed by that which is and yet is not ... the seven sons were not yet born from the web of light ...<sup>310</sup>

This dynamic, of Johannes being on the verge of a new personal development, was inferred at the end of Scene Seven in the words of blessing by Benedictus, as we noted above. Now a new phase begins for Johannes, and, significantly, in another departure from the Goethean tale, it is in his artwork that Johannes' newly attained spiritual enlightenment is manifested to others. So the Interlude between these two scenes constitutes an incubating 'pralaya'.

The subject of the conversation between Estella and Sophie in the Interlude was in fact, the significance of art. It was Sophie's attitude that in artistic activity, one can give to the world what has not yet been set before the senses. It is where the powers of creation have left the world of matter unfinished that man can apply his creative striving. That this theme in the Interlude is dealt with in this way fulfils the parallelism between human and spiritual development in the cosmic evolutionary process. In the 'time of rest', the consolidation of the essential evolutionary ferment occurs, so that it can re-emerge and take a step further. Likewise, in that Estella and Sophie are discussing art, the artistic element is being brooded (in Johannes), and consequently emerges on a higher level.

---

<sup>309</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Ursprungsimpuls der Geisteswissenschaft*, (Dornach: RSV, 1989), 52.

<sup>310</sup>H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, (Los Angeles, The Theosophy Company, 1925), 27-28.

Johannes has just completed a portrait of Capesius, who finds the image very stimulating, and affirms that his newfound ability derives from his higher spiritual consciousness,

I often hear you say that you owe your power in art solely to the gift of consciously perceiving in other worlds, and that you can put nothing in your art which you have not first beheld in spirit. I see in your works, how the spirit efficaciously manifests itself.<sup>311</sup>

In a dialogue which then ensues between Capesius and Strader the precise sense of this 'spiritual inspiration' is given further definition, clarifying Steiner's teaching here. Strader objects that he has always understood that in every artist the spirit livingly expresses itself. To this, Capesius answers,

I have never doubted that spirit shows itself as efficacious in the human being; but the person is usually unconscious of the spirit's being; he creates from the spirit, but does not understand it. Thomasius however creates within the world of sense, that which he can consciously observe.<sup>312</sup>

In Scene One, there is a departure from the dynamics in the Goethean tale, by the insertion of Theodora's visionary experience, from which she announces the imminent Second Coming. As we noted earlier, this departure reflects the significance of this event in Steiner's worldview. In the above dialogue about Johannes' painting, there is another instance of a major departure from the dynamics of Goethe's tale. The motivation for this derives from the significance which Steiner places on art as such.

As we noted earlier, when the international Theosophical Society, decided to hold its conference in Munich in 1907, Steiner as General Secretary, was responsible for planning it. Steiner incor-

---

<sup>311</sup>*Pforte*, 128, „Ich höre oft euch wiederholen, daß ihr die Künstlerschaft allein der Gabe dankt, bewußt in andren Welten zu empfinden, daß ihr nichts in eure Werke legen könnt, was ihr nicht erst im Geiste erschaut. Ich seh' an euren Werken, wie der Geist sich wirksam offenbart.“

<sup>312</sup>*Pforte*, 128, „Ich habe nie bezweifelt, daß Geist im Menschen wirksam sich erzeigt; doch bleibt ihm sonst des Geistes Wesen unbewußt. Er schafft aus einem Geiste, doch er versteht ihn nicht. Thomasius jedoch erschafft im Sinnensein was er bewußt im Geiste schauen kann.“

porated an extensive program of artistic events, and consequently wrote a text for the program sheet, explaining the significance of art, from his point of view. Part of this program text reads,

Yet, it would nevertheless be desirable, if even in only a humble way, if it could be shown for once how the theosophical worldview is in a condition to quicken the artistic life. The important thing with all of these conferences will be, to bring to expression the fact that Theosophy does not have to remain only a sum of theoretical viewpoints, but is able to experience the transformation of itself into something clearly perceptible to the senses, and which speaks to the feelings. In these ways, it should have a fructifying influence on the rest of the culture.<sup>313</sup>

In addition to this, Steiner placed great value on art because he saw it as an experience which, involving as it does, the sensory organs, has direct influence upon the ether-body. As we have noted, the ether-body is regarded by him as the bearer of sense stimuli. This in turn has a direct relevance to his attitude that spiritual development should not be limited to consciousness, defined only as the three strands of thinking, emotion and will. The spiritualizing of the ether-body or life-forces is also important to him. According to Steiner, when the triune soul is spiritualized, attaining to compassionate wisdom, this is not yet the end of the quest for spirituality. Although spirituality is the quintessence of what is generally regarded as the definition of high ethical development, Steiner includes a second element.<sup>314</sup> He sees this as represented by the Silver King in Goethe's tale, and by Theodosius in *Die Porte*.

This second element, attainable fully only after the first has been developed, derives from the spiritualizing of the life-force orga-

---

<sup>313</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Der Münchner Kongress Pfingsten 1907*, (Dornach: RSV, 1977), *Das Kongreß-Programm*, 25, „Doch wäre es immerhin wünschenswert, daß, wenn auch nur in bescheidenem Rahmen, einmal gezeigt werden könnte, wie die theosophische Weltauffassung das Künstlerische zu beleben imstande ist. Das Maßgebende bei allen diesen Veranstaltungen wird sein, zum Ausdruck zu bringen, daß die Theosophie nicht nur eine Summe von theoretischen Anschauungen bleiben muß, sondern die Umwandlung in das Sinnlich-Anschauliche und stimmungsgemäß Wahrnehmbare erfahren kann. Auf diesem Wege muß sie ja befruchtend auf die übrige Kultur wirken.“

<sup>314</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophie, Das geistige Wesen des Menschen*.

nism, or ether-body. Whereas he refers to the spiritualized soul-body as “Spirit-Self”, he refers to the spiritualized ether-body as “Life-Spirit”. Once this faculty is developed, then compassion is endowed with an additional capability, its inherently passive nature attains to a capacity for potent activity, wherein healing powers and ‘miraculous’ capabilities emerge. He describes this second element of the triune human spirit as a transformed ether-body, which is the power behind procreation, cell-regeneration, and also sensory and spiritual perception, “If you think of the usual creative power in the customary sense-life, united to love, but not a receiving love, but to an utterly giving love; this is Buddhi [Life-Spirit].”<sup>315</sup>

In essence, Steiner is conveying his conclusion here that this (second) aspect of the human spirit enables a spiritualized soul, who has achieved active selfless compassion, and artistic sensitivity, to become empowered in their creative intentions with the full potential of the ether-body. This bestows a remarkable creative power upon the person, because they can now access the creative force implicit in the ethers. We noted this element of Steiner’s philosophy in Section 1B2 in connection with Goethe’s “idea” of a primal plant; this idea being to Steiner a reality in the realm of Ideas. We also considered there the Goethean ‘Proteus’. To Steiner this refers to the ether-forces which are the invisible forces responsible for the metamorphosis of plants.

The term ‘Buddhi’ is a Theosophical word which he equated with his own term, ‘life-spirit’. The life-spirit as a part of the extended Steiner view of the human spirit, also needs to be developed by Johannes. In various lectures, Steiner explained to his audiences that it is precisely artistic creativity that encourages the development of the life-spirit,

But we can raise ourselves to another condition of consciousness than simply that which reproduces the experiences of our intelligence ... There are certain conditions of a creative activity, where the human spirit becomes a creator, and can create something new, something

---

<sup>315</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Die Welträsel und die Anthroposophie*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1966), 289, „Wenn Sie die gewöhnliche produktive Kraft im gewöhnlichen sinnlichen Leben vorstellen, gepaart mit Liebe, aber nicht als empfangende Liebe, sondern als eine ganze und gar gebende Liebe: das ist Buddhi.“

never seen before. Such an instance is that of the soul-condition of the sculptor in the moment of conception, where he sees before his spirit in a sudden flash, the form of a statue, the like of which he has never seen before, but which he creates. Of such kind is also the soul-condition of a poet, whom in one draft, in one creative vision of his spirit, conceives a work.<sup>316</sup>

To experience through a higher faculty, if only for a moment, the essence of a new work of art is for Steiner a specific form of higher consciousness, wherein access to 'thought-forms', existent in Devachan, is attained. In *Die Pforte*, this creative power which results in an artwork, is shown as efficacious for participants, not just the artist, Johannes, himself. As the characters are discussing the portrait of Capesius, Strader, who is a technician, and the least inclined to spiritual development, becomes quite agitated,

And these forms, which seem to be the colours' work, they speak about the weaving of the spirit; they speak of much which they themselves are not. Where can that be, of which they speak? It cannot be upon the canvas, for here are pigments, devoid of spirit. Then in Capesius? But why can I not see it in him? ... This canvas – I would like to break it through, to find what I am seeking ..."<sup>317</sup>

This incident becomes a decisive one for Strader, who is consequently impelled into an inner turmoil, it has the effect of

---

<sup>316</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Kosmogonie*, (Dornach: RSV, 1970), 91, „Aber wir können uns zu einer anderen Bewußtseinsstufe erheben als diejenige ist, die nur die Verstandeserfahrungen reproduziert. Es gibt gewisse Zustände einer schöpferischen Aktivität, wo der menschliche Geist zum Schöpfer wird und Neues, noch niemals Gesehenes schaffen kann. Solcherart ist zum Beispiel der Seelenzustand des Bildhauers im Moment der Konzeption, wo er blitzartig vor seinem Geist die Form einer Statue sieht, deren Vorbild er niemals gesehen hat, sondern die er erschafft. Solcherart ist auch der Seelenzustand des Dichters, der in einem Entwurf, in einer schöpferischen Vision seines Geistes ein Werk konzipiert.“

<sup>317</sup>*Pforte*, 130, „Und diese Formen, die als der Farbe Werk erscheinen, sie sprechen von dem Geistesweben, von vielem sprechen sie, was sie nicht selber sind. Wo ist, wovon sie sprechen? Nicht auf der Leinwand kann es sein; denn da sind geistentblöbte Farben. So ist es in Capesius? Warum kann ich es nicht an ihm erschauen? ... Die Leinwand, ich möchte sie durchstoßen, zu finden, was ich suchen soll.“

accelerating his interest in esoteric enlightenment, a theme explored in Steiner's second Drama, *Die Prüfung der Seele*, (*The Testing of the Soul*). The underlying esoteric development process involved here, in which the life-spirit is seen as one of three aspects of the true self, is expressed by Maria, "In order to find oneself one has first to unfold the power which can penetrate into one's own being. The wise maxim says so truly, 'Develop yourself, to be able to behold your self.'"<sup>318</sup>

A further element in the structure of *Die Pforte* which reflects the cosmological worldview of Steiner is to be noted here. The first seven scenes are substantially larger than Scenes Eight to Eleven; in total they occupy some one hundred pages, averaging fourteen pages per scene. The remaining scenes occupy only twenty-five pages, averaging only six pages each. In Steiner's worldview, the septenary phases are distinctly manifested in human life, every seven years a new element of the soul-life becomes efficacious. However, after the seventh phase, at age sixty-three, this process fades away, there are no further manifestations of these seven year phases of life, as the past consists only of seven phases, not a higher number. The remaining years build upon the preceding, without any especial septenary dynamic at work.

### 3K: Scene Nine

In this brief scene Johannes has a soliloquy, speaking of his success in attaining to higher consciousness. He ascribes this to the efficacy of the Delphic maxim, "Know yourself". Throughout this entire scene, this maxim resounds repeatedly, as if uttered by the environment itself. The stage directions specify that it is the same setting as in Scene Two, when the environment likewise resonated the maxim. This is another instance of the cycle of seven phases being completed. Obviously in this scene, it is now incumbent upon the playwright to clearly present the fruits of the meditative path to

---

<sup>318</sup>*Pforte*, 132, „Man muss, um sich zu finden, die Kraft entfalten erst, die in das eigene Wesen dringen kann. In Wahrheit sagt das Weisheitwort; entwickle dich, um dich zu schauen.

initiation, which so intensely admonishes the acolyte to achieve self-knowledge. The quest for this has brought painful tribulations to Johannes.

Consequently, Johannes' words here are of considerable significance. He declares that for three years "I have sought for the power of soul, that has wings of courage, which gives the truth to these words, through which the human being, who frees himself, conquers – and conquering himself, can find freedom."<sup>319</sup> In this remark of Johannes we again see clear allusions to Steiner's interpretation of Goethe's attitude to spirituality. In the poem, *Die Geheimnisse*, considered earlier with regard to the Rosicrucian movement, a work often quoted by Steiner, Goethe writes, "Von der Gewalt, die alle Wesen bindet, befreit der Mensch sich, der sich überwindet (From the power which binds all being, that person frees himself, who overcomes himself.)"<sup>320</sup> There is also a maxim to this effect, in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, namely, "Alles, was unsern Geist befreit, ohne uns die Herrschaft über uns selbst zu geben, ist verderblich (Everything which frees our spirit, without giving us the mastery over ourselves, is pernicious.)"<sup>321</sup>

In equating spirituality with freedom, this speech is directly expressive of a primary concept in Steiner's pre-anthroposophical, epistemological writings, especially *Die Philosophie der Freiheit*. In this text, which we considered in Section 1A2, freedom is that state wherein true ethics arises when it is perceived within one's inner being, deriving from the human spirit, and not drawn from any external source. Steiner's comments on the Delphic maxim, given in his opening address at an international college course on anthroposophy in 1921, reveal how significant these words of Johannes are to his anthroposophy,

But to me it appears that today even such an apparently rock-solid magic word, can only have a continued existence, in our times of great changes, if it, taking up the energies of our times, itself undergoes a transformation. And so it seems to me that the primeval Delphic word

---

<sup>319</sup> *Pforte*, 135, „Ich habe sie drei Jahre lang gesucht, die mutbeschwingte Seelenkraft, die Wahrheit gibt dem Worte, durch das der Mensch, sich selbst befreiend, siegen und sich besiegend, Freiheit finden kann.“

<sup>320</sup> *HA*, Bd.2, op. cit.

<sup>321</sup> *HA*, Bd. 12, 520, Maxim 1119.

today must resound to people in this way; "Human being, know yourself and become a free being!" ... Why did Greek wisdom inscribe on the temple at Delphi the significant word: Know thyself? There shone towards this Greek culture, from primeval times, which historically has its beginnings in the mists of time, a primordial and venerated wisdom and knowledge. The origins of this knowledge goes back to the dimness of pre-historical times ...

The Greek stood as if at the shores of the past, taking in the treasures of wisdom of the past, with all its contents. We – and I believe that every unprejudiced person can feel this – stand at another shore. We are standing on the shore of an uncertain future, but a future, which humanity, in regards to the spirit, must create by itself. And we feel that we need a maxim, in order to contemplate, with full power of our humanity, what can exert an influence over into the uncertain future as a creative reality from our inner being. On the shore of the past the Greeks created the maxim; Know your self! – on the shore of an uncertain future, we must create the maxim; Become a free being !"<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>322</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Die befruchtende Wirkung der Anthroposophie auf die Fachwissenschaften*, (Dornach: RSV, 1977), 10, „Mir scheint aber, daß selbst ein solches, wie es schien, felsenfest in der Menschheitsentwicklung drinnenstehendes Zauberwort heute, in unseren Zeiten der großen Verwandlungen, nur mehr Bestand haben kann, wenn es, aufnehmend die Kräfte unserer Zeit, selbst eine Art Verwandlung durchmacht. Und so scheint mir, daß das uralte Delphwort heute also zu den Menschen klingen müsse: Mensch erkenne dich selbst und werde ein freies Wesen! ... Warum schrieb griechische Weisheit auf den Tempel zu Delphi das bedeutungsvolle Wort: Erkenne dich selbst? Zu diesem Griechentum leuchtete herauf, aus uralten, historisch ihrem Anfange nach unbestimmbaren Zeiten, eine uralte geheiligte Weisheit und Wissenschaft. Die Ursprünge dieser Wissenschaft gehen in das Dunkel der vorgeschichtlichen Zeiten zurück .... Der Grieche stand wie am Ufer der Vergangenheit, hereinnehmend mit ihrem vollen Inhalt der Vergangeheit Weisheitsschätze. Wir – und ich glaube, jeder Unbefangene kann das fühlen – stehen an einem anderen Ufer. Wir stehen an dem Ufer einer unbestimmten Zukunft, aber einer Zukunft, welche die Menschheit in geistiger Beziehung selbst schaffen muß. Und wir fühlen, wir brauchen ein neues Wahrwort, um uns mit voller menschlicher Kraft zu besinnen auf das, was aus unserem Innern als Schaffendes hinüberwirken kann in die unbestimmte Zukunft. Am Ufer der Vergangeheit richtete der Grieche das Wahrwort auf: Erkenne dich selbst! – am Ufer einer unbestimmten Zukunft müssen wir das Wahrwort aufrichten: Werde ein freies Wesen!“

Johannes continues, praising the effectiveness of the words in this maxim, in securing his newly attained spiritual consciousness. This speech contains some further instances of the neologisms to which Steiner has recourse when he attempts to describe suprasensible processes. Such texts present a challenge to the translator, in the task of rendering them in English. In Steiner's view the various verse metres had important supplementary contributions to make to a spoken text, indeed these quite substantially supported the meaning of the text. To Steiner, the iambic metre is important in *Die Pforte* because it was the correct metre for texts which spoke of the spiritual, "If one wants to lead directly over to the spiritual ... if one wants to lead from the physical into the spiritual, then one has to form the text in a soothing language style, in fact the iambic style ..."<sup>323</sup>

Johannes has attained to some spiritual enlightenment, and he describes with delight, the feeling of how a spiritual influence is being seen and heard in a subtle sense, from the words of the old Delphic maxim, "Know yourself!" The German text and the relevant passage in the Pusch version is,

|   |   |
|---|---|
| I feel them sounding in my soul,          | Ich fühle – wie es tönt<br>in meiner Seele, |
| rousing themselves to give me strength.   | Sich regend kraftver-<br>leihend.           |
| There lives in me the light,              | Es lebt in mir das<br>Licht,                |
| there speaks around me brightness,        | Es spricht um mich die<br>Helligkeit,       |
| there germinates in me the light of soul, | Es keimt in mir das<br>Seelenlicht,         |
| there works in me world-radiance:         | Es schafft in mir die<br>Weltenhelle:       |

---

<sup>323</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Sprachgestaltung und dramatische Kunst*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1969), 353, „Will man direkt zum Spirituellen hinüberleiten ... will man vom Physischen ins Geistige hineinführen, dann muß man in einer sanftgestalteten Sprache gerade aber jambisch gestalten.“

This translation reveals another difficulty in assessing Steiner texts in English, namely the tendency in English anthroposophical literature towards a stultifying adherence to qualities of the German, in this case its prosody and word order. Steiner used the iambic metre in poetic passages in *Die Pforte*, and a translator may attempt to retain the metrical characteristics of the original, as in Pusch version above. But in published Steiner texts, this can be done at the expense of the clarity of understanding. The experiences which Johannes is undergoing, as he responds to the Delphic maxim, are not so clearly communicated in this rendering.

In our consideration of Scene Five (Section 3G) we noted that this passage in *Die Pforte* is intended to parallel an episode in the Goethean tale where the Green Snake has become more radiant, and enters the subterranean space where the three kings are to be found. As a result of her increased luminosity, she can not only clearly see the statues, but also hear speech from the kings. A conversation ensues, wherein the Golden King asks the Green Snake, "What is grander than gold?" She replies, "Light." The king then asks, "What is more quickening than light"? To which she replies, "Conversation". We also noted that in his commentary on this tale, Steiner maintains that the 'conversation' referred to here is that which occurs between divine beings in realms of light.

We need to note that firstly, that in terms of Steiner's model, in so far as Johannes is attaining to such an experience, it is because the Green Snake is now efficacious within him; his increased selflessness and readiness to sacrifice his egocentric attitudes, has opened up the higher faculties. Secondly, Johannes is now having some form of perception of spiritually audible realities, which are within the light. This is a separate, distinct form of spiritual experience and is an allusion to the second stage of higher consciousness, in Steiner's model of spiritual development. Experiences at this higher stage are accompanied by, or rather permeated by, a symphonic sea of celestial sounds. He gives a description of this stage in a public lecture in 1904,

... then a moment arrives which comes all at once for each person who has brought their soul to tranquillity and calmness. This is the moment when within their own soul begins to speak, where their own inner being begins to perceive the great eternal truths. Then suddenly the world around is radiant with colours, which he has not seen before.

Something becomes audible for the meditant, which he has never before heard resounding. The new light and the new splendour come to him from spiritland.<sup>324</sup>

On another occasion when describing the higher stages of spiritual consciousness Steiner compared the harmony which prevails in the movements of celestial bodies, and in the human pulse, to the inner tranquillity which this second stage brings about. He then contrasted these to the chaotic soul state of human beings generally, characterizing this soul state with imagery drawn from Goethe's fairy tale, "Make the attempt sometime to contemplate the regularity of your pulse and your breath, and compare this with the irregularity of the thinking, feeling and will. It's like being lead astray by Will-o'-the-Wisps."<sup>325</sup> Johannes has now far outstripped the uncertainty and ego-centricity of Capesius and Strader. This scene in *Die Pforte* has affinity to the episode in *Das Märchen* where the Snake encompasses the Youth, who is unconscious, by encircling him, and taking her tail into her mouth, forming the symbol prominent in Gnosticism.

In Section 1B4, we noted that Mommsen assimilates this episode into the overall role of the Green Snake, making her into a symbol of friendship, based on a text in a letter written by Goethe. In Steiner's model, this Gnostic image refers to a significant event in spiritual development; the attainment of a spiritual state of being, wherein the ether-body is imbued with divine influences. He calls

---

<sup>324</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Ursprung und Ziel des Menschen*, (Dornach: RSV, 1981), 197, „... dann kommt ein Moment, der für jeden einmal eintritt, der in seiner Seele Ruhe und Stille hat zur Entwicklung kommen lassen. Das ist der Moment, wo die eigene Seele zu sprechen beginnt, wo das eigene Innere die großen ewigen Wahrheiten zu schauen beginnt. Dann ist plötzlich die Welt um ihn herum erleuchtet von Farben, die er vorher nicht gesehen hat. Es wird für ihn etwas hörbar, was er früher niemals hat ertönen hören. Dieses neue Licht und dieser Glanz leuchtet ihm aus dem Geisterlande.“

<sup>325</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Die Welträtsel und die Anthroposophie*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1966), 240, „Versuchen Sie einmal, an Ihrem Geiste vorbeizuziehen zu lassen das Regelmäßige Ihres Pulses und Ihres Atems, und vergleichen Sie es mit der Unregelmäßigkeit des Denkens, Fühlens und Wollens. Es ist ein Irrlichtelieren.“

this state the life-spirit condition.<sup>326</sup> He maintains that this state confers a consciousness of the eternal realms, echoing the accepted meaning of the Gnostic symbol as one which infers eternal consciousness. It also confers a form of spiritual hearing, not only a seeing into the realm of the Idea.

In view of these conclusions of Steiner, a rendering of the above words of Johannes, concerning the power of the Delphic maxim which gives a clearer indication as to the intention of this speech would be,

I feel – how it resounds in my soul:  
stirring, it is bestowing strength.  
Light lives in me,  
the radiance all around me is speaking,  
soul light is germinating in me,  
cosmic radiance is creating in me.

In the above rendering the iambic metre used in the original has not been retained, but the meaning emerges more clearly. The locus of the dialogue is a spiritual one, as the episode is taking place on a higher level of consciousness. Johannes can now experience this realm through the capacity of the Green Snake to be a bridging faculty across the River, that is, the barrier to the realm of the Idea.

We noted earlier (Section 2) that this scene ends with an allusion to the Platonic realm of Ideas, in that Johannes declares that his consciousness has now attained to the spiritual origins of thinking. But there are two further significant themes in the final part of this scene, expressive of Steiner's view of spiritual attainment. Firstly, Johannes declares that with his enhanced consciousness, he now perceives a lofty spirit being, in higher radiant realms, and the ability to elevate himself up to this being, "From radiant heights a being illumines me, I feel wings to raise myself to it ... I want to become like it in future times. The spirit in me shall free itself through you, lofty goal. I want to follow you."<sup>327</sup> Secondly, it is

---

<sup>326</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Goethes geheime Offenbarung*, 304.

<sup>327</sup>*Pforte*, 137, „Aus lichten Höhen leuchtet mir ein Wesen, Ich fühle Schwingen, zu ihm mich zu erheben ... Ich will ihm gleich in Zukunftszeiten werden. Der Geist in mir wird sich befrei'n durch dich, erhabnes Ziel. Ich will dir folgen.“

immediately after this episode that Maria comes on stage, and explains that “My soul lead me here. I could see your star. It shines in its full power.”<sup>328</sup> Johannes affirms that he can feel the power of the ‘star’ in himself.

The first theme, that of the ‘being’ whom Johannes perceives, and to whom in reverence he exclaims that he will become similar in future times, is considered tentatively by the two translators of published versions of *Die Pforte*, to be a reference to Jesus Christ. Consequently, one translator capitalizes ‘being’; the other capitalizes both ‘being’ and ‘him’ without any footnotes or further commentary.<sup>329</sup> However it is quite possible that the ‘being’ whom Johannes perceives, and the ‘star’ seen by Maria, both refer to the same entity, namely the higher self or spirit of Johannes. It is my conclusion that this star-like entity which Johannes sees, is not a reference to Christ, but to what Steiner views as the spirit of a human being. This ‘spirit’ is also referred to by Steiner, following theosophical terminology, as the eternal ‘causal body’. This does not contradict the matter we have noted earlier, namely that it is a central tenet of anthroposophy that Christ has an intimate link to the human spirit.

To examine this text further, it is necessary to bear in mind that the experience which Johannes is having, is attainable to both the initiated and to those who have died. For it is axiomatic in Steiner’s worldview that the processes which occur after death, when the soul is released from the body, form a direct parallel which those which the person encounters who is undergoing high spiritual development. The initiated person in meditation, anticipates the future, extra-corporeal state of him or herself, so to speak,

When the human being inwardly experiences the spirit-soul element in this way – when he is body-free and yet still retains a life, and has

---

<sup>328</sup>*Pforte*, 138, „Mich trieb meiner Seele hierher. Ich konnte deinen Stern erschauen. Er strahlt in voller Kraft.“

<sup>329</sup>*The Portal of Initiation*, trans. Hans Pusch, (Toronto: Steiner Book Centre, 1973), 139-140, “From light-filled heights a Being shines on me, and wings I feel that lift me up to Him ...” and *The Portal of Initiation*, trans. Adam Bittleston, (Englewood: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1961), 177, “Out of clear heights there shines on me a Being, and wings I feel to raise myself to Him ...”

reached the condition of having his own corporeality as an object outside of himself, as if it were any other external object, then he will come to an understanding as to why spiritual researchers of all ages have closely juxtaposed two experiences: the experience of so-called *initiation* and the experience of death. (Emphasis in the original)<sup>330</sup>

In his lectures on life after death, Steiner describes the state of the disembodied soul. The bulk of this material dates from 1904 to 1918. The point relevant to the above speech of Johannes is the account Steiner gives of how the recently disembodied soul experiences its own spirit. In early lectures on life after death to Theosophists, he describes how, shortly after death, during a short period of sleep, “... the causal body forms itself. It asserts itself as [an organism formed of] rays of light, which radiate out from the normal flame-like forms, passing into blue and indigo colours.”<sup>331</sup>

When speaking of this radiant star eight years later, he refers to “this radiant cosmic wisdom ... it gleams and shines on us, as if a fiery star.” Steiner then comments that this star-radiance, referring to it as the fruit of our life, describing how it moves away from the disembodied soul, receding into the distance, so that one “has the feeling of oneself having remained behind at an earlier point of time ... we must move on towards it”, to be able to merge with it some time in the future.<sup>332</sup> It also becomes clear that in these two

---

<sup>330</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Geisteswissenschaft als Lebensgut*, (Dornach: VRSN, 1959), 120, „Wenn der Mensch auf diese Weise im Geistig-Seelischen innerlich erlebt, wenn er leibfrei noch ein Leben hat und dazu gekommen ist, sein eigenes Leibliches als ein Objekt wie einen äußeren Gegenstand außer sich zu haben, dann wird er gewahr, was es bei den Geisterforschern zu allen Zeiten bedeutet hat, daß sie zwei Erlebnisse nahe aneinandergerückt haben: das Erlebnis der sogenannten *Initiation* und das Erlebnis des Todes.“

<sup>331</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Kosmogonie*, (Dornach: RSV, 1979), 154, „... kurzer Schlafzustand, während dem sich der Kausalkörper herausbildet. Dieser selbst macht sich geltend als Strahlen, die aus den übrigen flammenartigen Gebilden herausstrahlen nach der blauen und Indigofarbe hin.“

<sup>332</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Inneres Wesen des Menschen und Leben zwischen Tod und neuer Geburt*, (Dornach: RSV, 1978), 146-147, „Diese erstrahlende kosmische Weisheit ... das glimmt und glitzert uns entgegen wie von einem feurigen Stern ... man hat das Bewußtsein, man ist an

speeches of Johannes and Maria, the shining star is another example of an ‘apparent’ metaphor in Steiner’s texts (in this case, for the human spirit). Since Steiner regards the human spirit as perceptible to higher clairvoyant faculties, this passage in this speech of Johannes, conveys Steiner’s view that the human spirit is perceived as having this appearance, either after death or when experienced in the course of spiritual development.

### 3L: Scene Ten

As we noted earlier (Section 2), in this scene Johannes, despite his success in Scene Nine, makes a major misinterpretation of an entity in the spirit realm. In his first triumphant experience of higher consciousness, he mistakes Benedictus for an evil being. Shortly before Johannes is subject to this error, he is addressed by the character Theodosius, an allegorical character representing love. His statements are especially enticing to Johannes, offering subtle praise. He tells Johannes that “In your self you can experience all worlds. Live from me, as cosmic power of love; a being who is illumined by me feels his own powers of existence enhanced when he offers himself for other beings’ happiness.”<sup>333</sup>

Clearly there was nothing sinister in the words of Theodosius, and Johannes is delighted to accept his urging, “Before my soul’s eye you appear, bringer of happiness to worlds! Creative pleasure surges through my spirit’s power when I see you as the fruit of self-experience ... I will reveal your being in my deeds, through you they shall be a healing force.”<sup>334</sup> As Johannes’ response indicates, they are subtly appealing to an egotistical trait in him – and this is

---

einem früheren Zeitpunkt verblieben, die Lebensfrucht zieht schnell fort, ... und wir müssen ihr nachziehen ... “

<sup>333</sup>*Pforte*, 139, „In dir erleben kannst du alle Welten. So lebe mich als Weltenliebesmacht. Ein Wesen, das von mir durchleuchtet ist, fühlt eigne Daseinskraft erhöht, ergibt es sich beglückend andren Wesen.“

<sup>334</sup>*Pforte*, 139, „So trittst du, Weltbeglucker, vor mein Seelenaug! Es treibt mir Schaffenslust durch meine Geisteskraft, erblick’ ich dich als Frucht des Selbsterlebens! ... Ich will dein Wesen in meinen Taten offenbaren ...“

precisely the element which Lucifer represents to Steiner, as we have noted in Section 4F. Hence Theodosius here is representing a 'luciferically' influenced form of love, which is in effect, self-love.

Since Johannes is still subject to subtle ego-centric tendencies – finding delight and unwarranted self-affirmation in the words of Theodosius – the admonishing words of Benedictus fail to correct his inner attitude, and hence Theodosius reappears and in his speech subtly replaces Benedictus as the spiritual source for Johannes' quest, by appealing to Johannes' conceit,

You will free yourself from illusion, once you fill yourself with my forces. Benedictus was able to accompany you to me, but now you wisdom must lead you on. If you experience only what he has placed in you, then you can not experience yourself. In freedom strive towards the light-filled heights ...<sup>335</sup>

The role of Theodosius as Lucifer is strongly indicated here, as this speech closely parallels Steiner's view of the role of Lucifer in the Biblical Fall of Man. To Steiner, the story of the serpent in Genesis was an allegory for the fact that ancient humanity, who was not yet endowed with a sense of personal ego-hood, became subject to the influence of Lucifer and his hosts.<sup>336</sup> In connection with Scene Four, the dynamics associated with Lucifer were discussed. In particular that he inaugurates the sense of self, by diverting the human soul from the normal influences of deity.

That is, Lucifer obtains his goal of distancing humanity from God, by slandering the intentions and nature of deity, assuring Eve that it is not the case that humanity shall suffer rather, "You surely shall not die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."<sup>337</sup> In the same way, and with the same implication, Theo-

---

<sup>335</sup>*Pforte*, 142, „Du wirst vom Wahne dich befreien, wenn du mit meinen Kräften dich erfüllst. Es konnte Benedictus dich zu mir begleiten, doch muss dich jetzt die eigne Weisheit führen. Erlebst du nur, was er in dich gelegt, so kannst du nicht dich selbst erleben.“

<sup>336</sup>To Steiner, the story of the Serpent in Genesis was an allegory of the influence of Lucifer and his hosts upon ancient humanity.

<sup>337</sup>*The Holy Bible*, Genesis, 3:4. NIV Study Bible, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995).

dosius directly slanders Benedictus – Johannes’ guide in the quest, and hence the primary representative of the divine worlds – by telling Johannes “If you experience only what he has placed in you, then you cannot experience yourself.”

So, at this stage of spiritual development, which is quite advanced in comparison with goals such as those which one could expect Estella to espouse, Johannes is still exposed to error. Indeed Johannes’ error is a result of the recapitulation of the dynamics underlying primal error, the Fall, but now at the dawn of self-consciousness in supra-physical existence, rather than at the dawn of self-consciousness in physical, post-Paradisiacal existence for the human race. *Die Pforte’s* subtle dramatic context consists in discovering such subtle dynamics as this. The ethical blindness in Johannes is then exposed as an even deeper error perception a few minutes later. He invokes the manifestation of his inner (selfless) love-nature, and declares that he can now feel it approaching manifestation. To his dismay, instead of a sanctified spiritual reality emerging, both Lucifer and Ahriman emerge, from inside his soul as it were. Lucifer speaks, repeating in this speech the first half of his speech from Scene Four,

You have wrenched yourself away from spirit guidance, and you have fled into free earthly realms. You’ve sought your own being in Earth’s confusion; to find yourself proved your reward, and proved your fate. You found me.

But now in this scene Lucifer proceeds to more subtly retain the attractiveness of his dynamics in the acolyte, “Maintain your self in spirit daring. You will find alien being in the wide regions of the heights. It will confine you to human fate.”<sup>338</sup> Then Ahriman speaks, and like Lucifer, he repeats the first part of his earlier speech, “You have fled from spiritual darkness. You have found the light of Earth. So suck the power of truth from my solidity. I harden secure ground.” Ahriman then proceeds, as did Lucifer, to maintain his power over the soul which is intent on finding its way into the spiritual, by cautioning against the higher realities. Ahriman cautions that ascent into the divine spiritual realms could lead to the

---

<sup>338</sup>*Pforte*, 143, „Bewahr dich selbst im Geisteswagnis. Du findest fremdes Wesen im weiten Höhenreich; es wird dich bannen an Menschenlos.“

disempowering of the acolyte, "You could lose it (the solid ground). In your vacillating you disperse the power of your being. You can squander the power of spirits in radiance of the heights."<sup>339</sup>

Johannes is distraught about this second appearance of these two powers, from within his own soul depths. The scene ends with a chorus of spirit voices. Earlier, at the end of Scene Three, this chorus had earlier spoken these words,

His thoughts are ascending into the foundations of the primeval world – a world of whose fullness people, in thinking, are merely dreaming in shadows, of whose fullness people, in seeing, are merely living in apparitions. What he thought as shadows, what he experiences as apparitions, now soars above the World of Forms.

But now, the chorus repeat the initial part of their earlier words, to which is added a new section, this expresses the current dynamic,

Your thoughts are ascending into the foundations of the primeval world – what has impelled you in soul illusion, what has held you in error, this appeared to you in spirit light. A light through whose fullness, people when beholding, in truth are thinking! A light of whose fullness, people, when striving, in love are living.<sup>340</sup>

Similarly to the initial chorus presented in Scene Three, the last section of this second chorus is especially obscure. The audience could scarcely be expected to discern a meaning here, without extensive prior study of the text. As we have earlier noted (Section 3F) regarding higher states of consciousness, these occur as the meditant enters into a realm that illumines his consciousness. Hence his mind is permeated by radiant light, and what is perceived is also formed from such spiritual light. We have also noted that Steiner

---

<sup>339</sup>*Pforte*, 144, „Du kannst ihn auch verlieren. In deinem Schwanken zerstreust du die Kraft des Seins. Du kannst vergeuden im Höhenlicht die Geisterkraft.“

<sup>340</sup>*Pforte*, 144, „Es steigen deine Gedanken in Urweltgründe; was in Seelenwahn dich getrieben, was in Irrtum dich erhalten, erscheint dir im Geisteslicht, durch dessen Fülle die Menschen schauend in Wahrheit denken! Durch dessen Fülle die Menschen strebend in Liebe leben.“

describes this higher perceiving as ‘thinking’. This term is not restricted to logical thought processes.

The implication of this is that the higher illumined condition of Johannes is the same radiant condition in which ‘spiritual’ thinking occurs, spiritual thinking which brings truths to the human mind. However the chorus also extends this implication of the illumined condition into one which has an association with human volition, ‘A light of whose fullness, people, when striving, in love are living.’ In other words, the effect of attaining to these higher consciousness states is that the volitional aspect of the soul is rendered more spiritual; love arises in the sense of selfless compassion.

The chorus lets its cryptic words resound, and the curtain falls. Johannes has attained to higher faculties indeed, but he has also failed to pass the test of the temptation of Lucifer. It becomes clear that the attainment of esoteric spiritual faculties does not bestow an immediate, perfect enlightenment; there are still other stages of inner development that Johannes has to reach.

It is also important to note the last speech of Johannes, which provides a précis of the implications of the scene; “Oh, what was this; out of me Lucifer and following him, Ahriman! Am I experiencing only a new illusion, because I strongly desire the truth?”<sup>341</sup> In this speech we see a primary didactic device often used by Steiner in the drama, namely moving the inner events, which had been externalized on the stage, back into the inner self of his personae dramatis – in this way, he transfers these inner events into the mind of the spectator.

### 3M: Scene Eleven

Scene Eleven is the last scene in the drama, the setting is a Mystery Temple dedicated to the Sun, and which is described as being “situated on the surface of the Earth”. This curious description allows the scene to correspond with the latter part of Goethe’s tale,

---

<sup>341</sup>*Pforte*, 144, „O was war dies; aus mir der Lucifer und folgend ihm auch Ahriman! Erlebe ich nur neuen Wahn, da ich mir Wahrheit heiss erfleht?“

*Das Märchen*, wherein a previously subterranean temple – where the Green Snake encountered the kings – has risen up from subterranean depths, and comes to rest on the surface of the Earth. In this temple the Youth unites with the fair Lily, a dynamic found in classical fairy tales. Now, Johannes is seen to have succeeded in attaining to his higher spiritual state, and thus he has an ongoing comradeship with Maria affirmed, by Benedictus. He declares that, “Johannes’ and Maria’s souls have exterminated the darkness of error. They have opened the spiritual eye.” Retardus laments that Johannes and Maria have wrestled themselves free of his influence, but he declares that the triumph of Johannes and Maria is in fact linked to the failure of Capesius and Strader to resist spiritualizing,

You two have brought severe distress to me. The task which I have given you, you have badly mismanaged ... Capesius ... I guided your activity to circles where you met Johannes and Maria. You should have driven out their inclination towards spiritual vision through the power which your words might have upon them ... I opened for you, Strader, the path to scientific certainty. Your strength of thought should have destroyed the magic power of spiritual vision ... My destiny is closely linked to what you do.<sup>342</sup>

This speech reflects a similar dynamic in *Das Märchen*, where the Will-o’-the-Wisps are called upon to help the Youth to achieve entry to the temple. The Youth and other characters are on their way to the final great ritual wherein the Youth and the fair Lily are united. They find the doors to the temple bolted. The Will-o’-the-Wisps are asked to devour the metal bolts which were keeping the doors to the temple locked with their flames; this they do, and the procession can enter the sacred precincts. There the Mixed King interacts sullenly with the two Wisps, trying to avoid their influence.

---

<sup>342</sup>*Pforte*, 146, „Ihr habt mir bittere Not gebracht, das Amt, das euch von mir gegeben war, ihr habt es schlecht verwaltet ... Capesius ... ich lenkte deine Wirksamkeit in Kreise in denen du Johannes und Maria trafest. Du hättest ihre Neigung für das Geisterschauen verdrängen sollen durch die Kraft, die deine Worte hätten wirken sollen ... Dir, Strader, öffnet’ ich den Weg in sich’re Wissensbahnen. Du solltest durch das strenge Denken die Zauberkraft der Geistesschau zerstören ... Es ist mein Schicksal euren Taten eng verbunden.“

Then Johannes and Maria commence a dialogue – representing the interaction between the Youth and the fair Lily in *Das Märchen*'s final stages. Maria confirms Johannes' achievements, and thereby provides a quintessential definition of the aim of Steiner's Rosicrucian initiation path, "... you have won knowledge through me; to spiritual knowledge you shall add the soul's true being, when you can find your own soul, as you found mine."<sup>343</sup> Shortly after this, she re-affirms this seeing of the higher self, but then points out the next step; the actual experiencing of the spirit, the attainment to the realm of the Platonic Idea, "Johannes, through my self, you have beheld your self in the spirit; you will experience your being as spirit, when cosmic light can behold itself in you."<sup>344</sup>

We have seen that the goal to Steiner is in effect conscious awareness of the realities to be found in the realm of the Platonic Idea. This includes the beholding of one's spirit, a stage which was portrayed in Scene Nine, where Johannes and Maria both see Johannes' higher self. However, there is also as a further stage of attainment, a union with one's spirit. In the last episodes of *Das Märchen*, the Youth awakens from the traumatic state induced by his too vehement urge for the Lily; he can gaze at her and begin to approach her. Finally, he reaches the summit of the stairway and can embrace her. Similarly in *Die Pforte*, Maria tells Johannes in the above speech that he is to seek an experiential encounter with the spirit.

In these words of Maria's, Steiner's view of the Mysteries – expressed in his *Das Christentum als mystische Tatsache (Christianity as mystical fact)* – is clearly reflected,

The mystics (in the Mysteries) did not want to attain a mere *conviction* of the eternal nature of the kernel of human nature. From the viewpoint of the Mysteries such a conviction would have been devoid of any value. For according to this viewpoint the Eternal is not even livingly existent in the non-mystic. If such a person spoke of the Eternal, they

---

<sup>343</sup>*Pforte*, 149, „Johannes, du erwarbest dir im Geisterreich Erkenntnis jetzt durch mich; du fügst zur Geist-Erkenntnis Seelensein, wenn du die eigene Seele findest, wie du die meine hast gefunden.“

<sup>344</sup>*Pforte*, 151, „Johannes, du hast dich nun selber im Geist an meinem Selbst geschaut; du wirst als Geist dein Sein erleben, wenn Weltenlicht in dir sich schauen kann.“

spoke about a nothing. It was rather this Eternal itself, which the mystics sought. They had to firstly awaken it in themselves, and then they could speak about it.<sup>345</sup>

At the end of Scene Eleven, this theme of actually experiencing the spiritual is given further focus when Benedictus declares, "Capesius feels the light and shall gain the power to establish in his soul that which Felicia must bring about in him." Then Strader speaks despairingly of his chances of developing spirituality, "It seems that I alone am lost, I cannot banish doubt itself, and I surely shall never find again the path that leads to the temple."<sup>346</sup> To his despairing remarks, Theodora then makes a response, which brings the drama to its end. Her words are also a prophecy, announcing that she sees a spectral form arising from Strader's heart, from which words are emanating,

And I hear this human image speaking. The words sound like this, 'I have now conquered for myself the power to reach the light.' My friend, trust yourself! For you yourself shall speak these words, when your time has been fulfilled.<sup>347</sup>

It is clear that Capesius and Strader have not remained as they were at the beginning of the drama; they too have undergone a

---

<sup>345</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *Das Christentum als mystische Tatsache und die Mysterien des Altertums*, (Dornach: RSV, 1976), Tb, 24, „Nicht die bloße Überzeugung von der Ewigkeit des Lebenskerns wollen die Mysten gewinnen. Nach der Auffassung der Mysterien wäre eine solche Überzeugung ohne allen Wert. Denn nach einer solchen Auffassung ist in dem Nicht-Mysten das Ewige gar nicht lebendig vorhanden. Spräche er von einem Ewigen, so spräche er von einem Nichts. Es ist vielmehr dieses Ewige selbst, was die Mysten suchen. Sie müssen in sich das Ewige erst erwecken; dann können sie davon sprechen.“

<sup>346</sup>*Pforte*, 152, (Benedictus): "Er fühlt das Licht und wird die Kraft gewinnen in eigner Seele zu ergründen, was ihm Felicia bis jetzt erzeugen muss. (Strader): "Verloren schein ich allein. Ich kann die Zweifel selbst nicht bannen, und wiederfinden werde ich doch sicher nicht den Weg, der zu dem Tempel führt."

<sup>347</sup>*Pforte*, 152, "Sie klingen so: 'Ich habe mir errungen die Kraft, zum Licht zu kommen'. Mein Freund, vertraue dir! Du wirst die Worte selber sprechen, wenn deine Zeit erfüllt wird sein."

developmental process. Consequently, these speeches presage the possibility of eventual success for Strader and Capesius in the future, and thus open the way for the next drama, *Die Prüfung der Seele*, to take up the destinies of these two men.

There is also another rhetorical element here to be noted, namely that from Strader's viewpoint, this scene is the beginning of his journey towards spiritual development. He is in a similar state of despondency to that of Johannes in Scene One. In Scene One, Theodora inaugurated the new spiritual phase for Johannes by her visionary powers, and now at the end of the drama – which is the beginning of the spiritual journey for Strader – in making this prophetic declaration of a success for Strader in the future, Theodora is again acting as the initializing catalyst for a new evolutionary cycle – this time for Strader. Theodora provided the catalyst by which Johannes progressed towards the spirit through her dramatic vision of the imminent reappearance of Jesus in Scene One. Now in Scene Eleven she has a vision of the future, spiritualized Strader, and thereby heralds the potential for Strader to succeed.

In addition, this indication of an intrinsically new beginning at the concluding moments of *Die Pforte*, allows a further development of the theme of reincarnation, which is a major departure from the Goethean tale. Just as *Die Pforte* includes an elucidation of a karmic basis to the personal relationship between Johannes and Maria, the next drama may now explore the karmic background to Capesius and Strader (and others). This is in fact what Steiner does in his second drama, *Die Prüfung der Seele (The Soul's Probation)*, which is described as a “Szenisches Lebensbild als Nachspiel zur *Pforte der Einweihung* (A life-tableau in dramatic scenes as a sequel to *The Portal of Initiation*).

Furthermore, Scene Ten had portrayed the failure of Johannes to meet the test of subtly egoistic spiritual aspirations, and since this problem is not overcome in scene eleven, it opens the opportunity for Steiner to continue the spiritual quest of Johannes in future dramas.