

EDUARD MÖRIKE'S IMAGERY OF THE MOMENT

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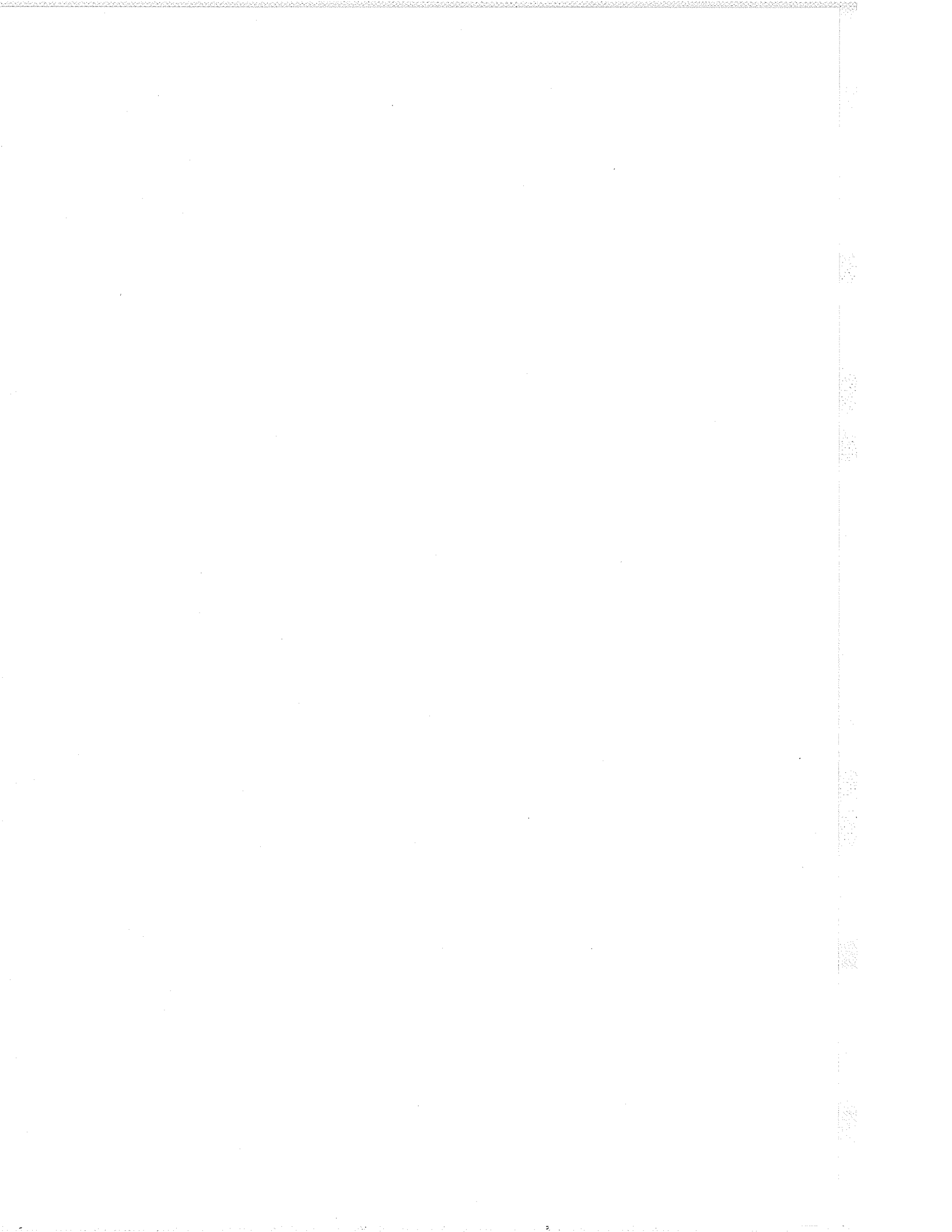


"Worte sind der Seele Bild--"

Goethe

Dedicated
to all who believe in
twentieth-century
miracles.

My sincere gratitude to
Dr. Victor Gerard Doerksen
who proved to be most adept in coping with all the "Blitz"
which this study entailed.



An Abstract

This thesis attempts to gain insight into Mörike's poetry through a study of this poet's use of imagery. By means of analytical examination and interpretation of several poems from each of Mörike's more intense creative periods, and by charting the frequency, place, and manner of his primary words, it was discovered that the trio of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" have an affinity for each other, that these symbol-components are of basic and elemental significance in Mörike's poetry and that, together, they form one composite unit in the poems throughout all the creative years of the poet's life. This unit is seen as one particular moment in time. The emphasis of the moment seems to remain constant but the manner of presentation changes. From this vantage-point a study was undertaken to determine the character of the change which occurs in the presentation of this 'moment' and also to show how the imagery builds up to the climactic 'moment!'.

It was found that the 'moment' in Mörike's early writings is comprised of a very dynamic, instantaneous and 'daemonic' imagery. It emphasises the immediacy of the experience while at the same time it

underscores the fact of this moment's fleetingness. Akin to the awareness of the inevitability of the passing of time is a tone of nostalgia, but this nostalgia bears within it a fresh and vibrant bouyancy which seems to be lost in the late poetry of this poet.

During Mörike's middle years of writing, in the mid-fourties, his imagery reveals an intensified preoccupation with the problem of time while, simultaneously, the form of his poems adopt a more 'classical' appearance. Also, at this time, an early predilection toward the 'golden mean' broadens its base of emphasis. Associated with this expansion is the emergence of an entirely new poetry in German literature—that of Dingdichtung. This Dingdichtung seeks to convey the spirit inherent in inanimate objects or in otherwise intangible and difficult to define or illusive entities, such as the eternal verities of honor, love and respect. The progressive nature of this Dingdichtung is seen to reside in its objectivity and emotional distance between poet and his object. This marks a distinct step in advance of earlier poetry, both as pertaining to this poet and to his predecessors and contemporaries.

The precision and brevity which is so characteristic of Mörike's Dingdichtung and of all the poetry of his middle years, makes room for a still broader base of relationships in the poet's later writings. Classical leanings are largely abandoned; the new art of Dingdichtung is bequethed to his successors; and the poet himself turns, primarily, to an outwardly more homely and less compressed form—as is apparent

in his letter-like epistles. Where the impact of time's 'moment' was objectified in the 'thing' in Mörike's 'classical' years of writing time's fleetingness achieves distance, in his late poems, in that the life-long veil of imagery becomes increasingly subtle and illusive. In this the erstwhile art of understatement which is coupled with a functional ability and skill of simultaneous writing on several layers of meaning, assumes a deeper and more penetrating 'daemonic' quality than was ever possible before.

Noteworthy also, is the finding that Mörike's method of writing and his stance toward life and poetry appears to have been one of synthesis rather than of analysis. This manner of outlook fosters the birth of the precise and pointed phrase and that freshness and aptness of imagery which forms the life of Mörike's poetry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Introduction	1
Towards a definition of "Imagery"	1
Terminology	12
Aim of thesis	15
A comparison in the use of Imagery.	16
II. Early components of Mörrike's Moment	41
III. Tempero-classical Poetry.	64
Evidence of development	64
Poems of 1837-1838.	68
Poems of 1845-1846.	93
IV. Reflections on Time	138
V. A Concluding Perspective.	184
Appendix.	195
Bibliography.	199
Index	203

I. Introduction

Towards a definition of "Imagery"

Every time man names a thing, he creates an image, a picture.

Thus Kluge's tracing of the High German word "Bild" to the word "Gleichnis" discovers the Old High German root to be bilidi, "erst 'Wesen, Gestaltetes', danach 'Abbild, Nachbildung' . . . ahd biliden ist einer Sache Gestalt und Wesen geben."¹ Similarly, Philip Wheelwright explains, an image, a sound, and finally a written word has come to "stand as surrogate for something else."²

Walter Zulauf, in an article entitled "Mörrikes Bildersprache," speaks of Mörrike's "Bildlichkeit" as being the poet's most original and outstanding characteristic. And he states further: "was aber schon seine ersten Freunde bewunderten und was seither als seine Hauptstärke immer anerkannt worden ist, das ist sein Bilderreichtum, seine 'grosse Kraft der Anschauung und Individualisierung'"³

¹Friedrich Kluge, Etymologisches Wörterbuch Der Deutschen Sprache, 19. Aufl. bearbeitet von Walther Mitzka (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1963), p. 76.

²Philip Wheelwright, Metaphor and Reality (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 17.

³Walter Zulauf, "Mörrikes Bildersprache", Rechenschaftsbericht des Schwäbischen Schillervereins 29-34 (1926): 39-62.

So too, Friedrich Theodor Vischer--close friend of Mörrike--in a commemorative speech at the poet's graveside, refers to the "gestaltenden Kraft seiner Sprache" and that he, Mörrike, "in diese unsere Welt eine zweite, eine Welt von holden und gewaltigen Wundern hineingestellt, . . . den Flor aus zartem Goldgespinst, den er um die kahle Deutlichkeit der Dinge windet."⁴ Therefore, in order to see Mörrike's "Bildhaftigkeit" in context and in order the better to understand his peculiar contribution to the world of imagery, it seems fitting to first look more closely at a basic definition of the image and of imagery, and at how other poets--forerunners and contemporaries of Mörrike--have created their imagery, and used it.

Aristotle speaks of metaphor in Greek terms of space ("Raum")⁵ which can be carried from place to place. We retain the idea of transference but insist on a similarity of two things when applying it to spiritual phenomena.⁶ The capacity to see similarity in the widely-differing or far-apart is, to Aristotle, the most significant endowment of the poet--the only one which cannot be learned but is purely a natural gift.⁷ And this is consistent with Aristotle's view of the aim of poetry as being imitation of Nature, the language

⁴Friedrich Theodor Vischer, "Gedenkfeier am Grabe Eduard Mörrikes," Ibid., pp. 21, 19-20.

⁵Hermann Pongs, Das Bild in der Dichtung I (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1965), p. 1.

⁶Ibid., p. 3.

⁷Ibid., p. 4.

of which is reverent, beautiful, elevated, sublime and God-inspired.⁸
 The important part of the metaphor, and of the "Meta" is the tension
 which is based, not on the intellect, but on the heart of the poet
 who can correlate the impossible in a miraculous way.⁹ Pongs shows
 how the German word "Bild" differs from that of the Greek word
 "metaphor":

Im Deutschen spricht man statt von Metaphern von "Bildern" der
 Sprache. Der Begriff des Bildes aber ist noch vieldeutiger als
 der der Metapher; das sprachliche "Bild" umspannt Abbilder
 von Gegenständen, Vorbilder, Sinnbilder, Denkbilder, Begriffs-
 bilder, Erinnerungsbilder, Traumbilder, Visionen, Gleichnisse,
 Allegorien, alle Arten einer Verbildlichung psychischen Inhalts.¹⁰

In the English language this type of "Bild" is spoken of as an
 image. Metaphor is a particular kind of image. "The image is the
 constant in all poetry, and the poem itself is an image."¹¹ C. Day-
 Lewis asserts that trends, diction, metrical fashion and "even
 elemental subject-matter may change almost out of recognition: but
 metaphor remains the life-principle of poetry, the poet's chief test
 and glory."¹²

The poetic image may be composed of a few words or of a phrase
 and express its content at face value. It may also reflect or suggest
 a thought or reality by implication, as in metaphor or apostrophe,

⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

⁹ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

¹¹ C. Day-Lewis, The Poetic Image (London: Jonathan Cape,
 1947), p. 17.

¹² Ibid.

and thereby convey various levels of meaning. A poem may be comprised of many related or contrasting images, or the image may itself be the theme and unifying link in a chain of images which together present the total picture or over-all image. Thus imagery is at the core of every poem, and a poem may consist of either one simple image or of a multiplicity of images.

Imagery is usually basically sensuous in that it appeals to at least one, or more, of the reader's senses. To the sighted person visual imagery seems to make the first, and frequently the strongest and most permanent, impact. This visual imagery gains momentum as it is emphasised and supported by an appeal to the other senses, and even by abstraction. Mörrike's poem "Er ists" aptly demonstrates the involvement of the various senses and increasingly underscores the sense of sight, culminating in the deeper sight, or insight, which is contained in the final word "vernommen":

Frühling lässt sein blaues Band
 Wieder flattern durch die Lüfte;
 Süsse, wohlbekannte Düfte
 Streifen ahnungsvoll das Land.
 Veilchen träumen schon,
 Wollen balde kommen.
 --Horch, von fern ein leiser Harfenton!
 Frühling, ja du bist's!
 Dich hab ich vernommen!¹³

Mörrike wrote this poem in 1829, at the age of twenty-five. It could perhaps be called romantic since the poet himself remains passive and

¹³ Eduard Mörrike: Sämtliche Werke, ed. Herbert G. Göpfert, 3. Aufl. (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1964), p. 29. Hereafter cited as Werke.

lets the power and beauty and wonder of nature react upon him--as he senses the stirring of the forces of nature in Spring.

We immediately sense the exultant feeling of creative power. This is Spring in process. The verbs chosen create the impression of ongoing movement; show a progress in action; give life to the image of Spring. Yet all the verbs are also somewhat illusive and thereby add to the secret magical quality of the season--"flattern --Streifen--träumen--vernommen." This process is intimately connected to the rhythm of the cosmos, of nature, and of its beauty.

All the senses are totally engaged in the making of this poem; and this impression is heightened by personification. The first two lines appeal to the visual sense. Spring lets its blue ribbon flutter in the fragrant breeze. Almost, we can hear the faint fluttering and flapping. This sets a carefree atmosphere for the little poem. Lines three and four add the scent of Spring to our awareness of its imminent approach: these are sweet perfumes, delicate but invigorating and exciting. It emphasises the visual awareness to the sighted person who finds it difficult to think of scent without recalling, simultaneously, the contours and colors of the object.

The word "ahnungsvoll," in line four, is the only one in the poem which can be called reflective in Schiller's terms.¹⁴ It indicates a sense of intuitive awareness in the poet. He cannot see the stirrings

¹⁴Friedrich Schiller, "Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung" in Schiller: Philosophische Werke, (Leipzig: Im Inselverlag, 1906), pp. 532-623.

of nature as yet, but he keenly senses the process of growth and development which is going on all around him in nature. Everything in the poem is a foreshadowing of the beauty which is to come.

The thought of Spring's beauty reminds the reader also of its fertility and this again deepens the initial impression of the sight of Spring. Nature was first seen from a distance, but now, (lines 5 and 6), at the thought of the delicate and fragile little violet, the poet takes us very close to the heart of nature itself—to good mother earth in whose bosom the violets are still dreaming of the pleasure they will bring. They will soon be near at hand.

The pause in line seven calls a special alert, and accents the importance of the moment. The first word after the pause—"Horch"—heightens this effect. This line then: "--Horch, von fern ein leiser Harfenton!" combines the cumulative sensual impression of the first six lines with the spiritual awareness which these impressions have evoked. The sound of the harp, i. e. the music of Spring, with its buzzing of bees and trilling of larks, is almost here. Everything is sensed, yet not felt and seen—except by the imagination.

"Vernommen" means perceived. Both mind and the senses are aware of the change which will soon be in evidence everywhere. Spring will come with its new fragrant strength, vigor and stimulation. It will create new beauty. We sense that the whole cosmos is involved, and the whole cosmos inspires the young Mörike. Pfeiffer emphasises the fluctuation of the metaphor in this poem—a fluctuation between the scene of the landscape with its premonitions of Spring and of the

still hidden, but indicated image of Spring.¹⁵

"Er ists" also demonstrates that the poet is concerned with the imperceptible world of the spirit which speaks to him through the perceptible world of matter. This is further exemplified by Mörke in poems as "Auf ein altes Bild," "Mein Fluss," "Josephine" and "Götterwink" where the poet attempts to compress the total complexity of a situation, mood, event or rapture into one single image of a moment. The sensitive reader, in permitting the image to affect him, may sense something of the awe-filled tone and intensity of the author's original experience, for it is true that only art can capture, hold and make experience, or time, timeless. And ". . . only art can stabilize the passing experience, the fleeting mood, into something both momentous and permanent."¹⁶

The poet's task involves the "animism" of the inanimate. C. Day-Lewis notes that poets are "concerned with the exploration of 'life, naked living', at its most intense, and with giving us the feel of it, Their task is to show the momentousness of life's most commonplace happenings" ¹⁷ There is ample evidence that Mörke animated the inanimate: a beech tree, the butterfly, the inscription on a clock as sentinel over a sick monk, an audacious cock on a

¹⁵Johannes Pfeiffer, Wege zur Dichtung, 5. Aufl. (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1960), p. 76.

¹⁶C. Day-Lewis, The Poet's Way of Knowledge (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1957), p. 11.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 30.

weathervane, day and night. Mörrike's work also shows that he presents life naked and in its highest moments of bliss and of despair--as in the "Peregrina" sequence.

Yet, in the poetry of intense personal experience, Mörrike, like many another author, has hidden behind his imagery. The underlying cause for doing so is fittingly stated by Sherwood Anderson: "A stroke of my pen saves me from realism . . . [and converts the experience to] a denizen of my own imaginative world" ¹⁸ And a stroke of Mörrike's pen drapes the illusive veil so that imagery which is the result of an emotional experience "gives to the expression of thought colour, vigour, intensity . . ." but not necessarily logical clarity. Thus imagery may either obscure or illumine. ¹⁹ It may also do both simultaneously, as is the case in Mörrike's "Das verlassene Mägdlein" and in "Peregrina V."

Imagery is relevant only in its own sphere or context. The associative value of the concrete object in relation to the abstract idea becomes pertinent only within a familiar realm of reference, as for example when "an Australian aboriginal will describe a book as a mussel, because it opens at the sides like the valves of a shell." ²⁰ A similar awareness of the kinship of ideas is inherent in our

¹⁸ Sherwood Anderson, A Writer's Conception of Realism (Olivet, Mich.: publ. by Olivet College, 1939), p. 19.

¹⁹ Stephen J. Brown, S. J., The World of Imagery (New York: Russel & Russell, 1966), p. 57.

²⁰ Ibid.

description of a ship as "ploughing" through the waves and leaving a "furrow" in its wake.²¹ Thus Killy believes that it is the aim of the poet to make the old and familiar new and strange in order to restore its lost and actual inner life or value to it.²² Mörke does this by placing well-known images or symbols in a new or contrasting situation. An instance of this might be the juxtaposition, in the poem "Denk es, o Seele," of the symbolic images "Tännlein grünet," "Ein Rosenstrauch," "welchem Garten?" "Grab," "Zwei schwarze Rösslein." Consequently it is apparent that the poet strengthens and reinforces the old image by placing it into a new context. Killy states that perhaps this is why Mörke revived the metaphor, after the Romantics had discarded, and even Goethe avoided, it.²³

Metaphors, as those above, stress similarity and ignore differences. They reveal in an instant what might otherwise require detailed enumeration of fact. Ezra Pound's definition of an image is pertinent here, for he interprets the image "not as pictorial representation but as 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time!', a 'unification of disparate ideas.'"²⁴ The efficacy of an image is therefore based on its intrinsic symbolic quality

²¹Ibid., p. 61.

²²Walther Killy, Wandlungen des Lyrischen Bildes, 5. Aufl. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), pp. 85-86.

²³Ibid., p. 86.

²⁴Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), p. 187.

rather than upon its ability to evoke a concrete physical visual image. Nonetheless, true art comprises both a visible awareness and an invisible one.

It is well to remember, therefore, that a study of imagery often leads to a greater understanding of the poem than does the first surface reading of it. Image-patterns or clusters may suggest a deeper meaning than is apparent on the surface, or they may suggest unconscious motivations of the writer; a particular use of image-patterns may also show changes in the author's interpretation of life.²⁵ This may be observed in Mörike's changing and deepening emphasis of the rose imagery.

Thus the apt use of both metaphor and imagery opens doors hitherto closed to the reader and helps him gain a new and clearer vision. And this permits Kayser to assert that poetic language is characterized by its "Bildhaftigkeit," and that, where this is so, there it is also true that the text of the poem becomes vitally alive for the reader.²⁶ Then too, the imagery can be understood in all its layers of meanings and relationships.

However, the most beautiful and most memorable imagery comes as a surprise. It arises from the poet's ability to see the unusual similarity, connect the unrelated, to draw meaning from the heart of

²⁵William Flint Thrall & Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, rev. & enl. by C. Hugh Holman, (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), pp. 233-34.

²⁶Wolfgang Kayser, Das Sprachliche Kunstwerk, 10. Aufl. (Bern & München: Francke Verlag, 1964), p. 119.

an experience, to evoke a new, precise and unexpected image-pattern. Mörike is an artist of this kind. His poetry is the more refreshing because it bears with it the impression of winter just passed. This characteristic is conveyed by the contrasting imagery of serene night and bubbling springs in "Um Mitternacht" (1827)²⁷; it is in the quick song of the wind with its urgent "Halt uns nicht auf" to the questioning child in "Lied vom Winde" (1827)²⁸; it may be seen in the much later "schillerndem Blau" of the surprise butterfly in "Im Weinberg" (1838)²⁹; and it is still present in the late "Bilder aus Bebenhausen" (1863)³⁰ in "Eulenspiegel's" teasing of a frustrated monk (3), in the admonition to the "Mädchen am Waschtrog" (9), and in the pointed ambiguity of the voice of the bell (7).

But we recognize also, in thinking of Mörike, that poetry is a transmutation of an experience, or even a condensation of many experiences--and an articulation of the unspeakable. Or, as Killy would express it: "Die Poesie . . . will zum Worte bringen, was Worte übersteigt."³¹ It was so for Mörike.

²⁷ Werke, p. 100.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 105.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 192.

³¹ Killy, p. 83.

Terminology

The imagery of a poem conveys the idea which is being presented. It is a word-picture. It is the figurative language of the poem. Imagery includes figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, antithesis, personification, apostrophe; it also includes symbolism. Imagery may appeal to one or more of the senses as well as to intellect and emotion. Optic impressions vivify imagery but are not indispensable to it.

Words or images alone do not create the complete image but rather the relationship in which the individual images stand to each other and how they interact with each other creates the greater image, i. e. the imagery of a poem. A Chinese poem of Tao Teh Ching expresses the meaning of imagery very well:

We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel;
 But it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the wheel depends.
 We turn clay to make a vessel;
 But it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the vessel depends.
 We pierce doors and windows to make a house;
 And it is on these spaces where there is nothing that the usefulness of the house depends.
 Therefore just as we take advantage of what is, we should³²
 recognize the usefulness of what is not.

None of the components--spokes, unformed clay, slaths of doors and windows--are in themselves more than primary images. Thirty spokes lying separately are of little consequence, however, aptly amalgamated

³²Philip Wheelwright, Metaphor and Reality (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 88-89.

around a central and common hub they may become both useful and decorative. So too, a pleasing and meaningful pattern of imagery is formed by the apt juxtaposition of, and the tension between, two or more imagistic elements.

A Delphic oracle states that "A person of intellectual sensitivity is plagued by the sense of a perpetual Something More beyond anything that is actually known or conceived."³³ When images have been successfully amalgamated, correlated and fused the reader gains a more profound insight into that 'Something More' than a visual image or words per se can communicate to him. The words become animated by the spirit which they represent. It is in this basic sense that the word 'imagery' is to be used here.

Imagery is only one of a number of interrelated components which comprise a poem. Closely related to a discussion of imagery is the internal rhythm of the poem, as is also symbolism.

In the introduction to his massive work, Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik, Johannes Klein asserts that "Der Rhythmus ist die grosse Kraft der deutschen Lyrik; . . ." ³⁴ Klein explains, however, that the rhythm he refers to is not that which is marked off in meters and beats. It is a spiritual entity. It is the product of the soul's assimilation and synthesis of experience, therefore the rhythmic principle is "der

³³Ibid., p. 172.

³⁴Johannes Klein, Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik, 2. Aufl. (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1960), p. 6.

Ton der Leidenschaft und des Erlebens" This rhythm shows the how of the passion and of the experience which the poet is dealing with. It is the quality which sets the pace of the inner life of a poem. This rhythm is heard in the tonal quality and choice of imagery in every poem. It announces the thinking and feeling of the poet and, possibly, of the times in which he lived. It reveals also, in part, the "infinite plasticity of imagery . . ." ³⁵ which can assume such a multiplicity of relationships.

Mörike did not seem overtly to seek to convey symbolic meaning. ³⁶ Yet, keeping in mind that rhythm is a primary phenomenon of nature--and of a poem; that a typical word of Mörike is "Geist-Gefühl-Organ"; and that the poet declared, in old age: "Es gibt mehr unsichtbares als Sichtbares in der Welt . . ." ³⁷ it seems that we are justified in studying the method of his writing with a view to determining what makes the invisible visible. And vice versa. Inevitably, this touches upon symbolism.

Symbolism, as defined by Cirlot in A Dictionary of Symbols, is ". . . a system of highly complex relations, one in which the dominant factor is always a polarity, linking the physical and metaphysical worlds." It may, therefore, be quite ambivalent for every symbol bears

³⁵ Stephen Ullman, Language and Style (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), p. 200.

³⁶ Marcella Burger, Die Gegenständlichkeit in Mörikes Lyrischem Verhalten (Diss. Heidelberg: Ruprechts-Carl-Universität, 1945), p. 10.

³⁷ Ibid.

the possibility of a range of meanings.³⁸ Another definition stresses that "An 'image' may be evoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently recurs" it becomes a symbol.³⁹ For the purpose of this study the 'symbol' will be referred to, primarily, in its broad sense as "an IMAGE which evokes an objective, concrete reality and has that reality suggest another level of meaning."⁴⁰ Or simply, as something which shows, or seems to transmit or suggest, an inner-outer relationship in the language of a poet.

Aim of thesis

Imagery here will be considered in Philip Wheelwright's terms of semantics⁴¹ rather than as grammatical or rhetorical Form. In terms of semantics imagery pertains to significance and meaning of text and content. Mörrike does not use imagery purely for decorative purposes but rather to enhance--clarify or veil--content. We are not concerned here with the development of imagery in any broad, historical sense, but only with its use in the nineteenth century and more specifically with the peculiar manner in which Mörrike creates and uses it.

³⁸J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1962), p. XVI.

³⁹Welleck, p. 189.

⁴⁰Thrall, p. 478.

⁴¹Peter Maurice Daly, Die Metaphorik in den "Sonetten" der Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg (Diss. Zürich: Juris-Verlag, 1964), p. 17.

It is the aim of this study, firstly, to recognize basic tendencies in Mörrike's use of imagery as these tendencies recur in the various periods of his writing, secondly, to recognize change or development wherever possible, and perhaps, thirdly, to draw attention to tendencies which point to the poet's development in imagery beyond the scope of some of his predecessors and contemporaries.

Marcella Burger has touched on the question of Mörrike's imagery,⁴² however a more extensive analysis of it seems justified since this promises to reveal nuances which contribute notably to an understanding of his poetry. Prominent among these nuances is the linking of mutually-exclusive adjectives and nouns ("holder Schrei, melodische Klage, wohl-lautende Wehmut, süßes Erschrecken, heilger Gram"); the adaptability of imagery to circumstance under discussion; and the range of elements which enter into the imagery; as well as the unique manner of intensification which attains climactic proportions.

This climactic effect, which is achieved in Mörrike's poetry by means of imagery, justifies the title and study of this thesis. It is the character of the imagery which contributes to this 'moment' of Mörrike which is to be examined here.

A comparison in the use of imagery

Werner Zemp poetically describes Mörrike in terms of a fairy-tale prince wrapped in dreams all his life, as "in der P u p p e der

⁴²Marcella Burger, Die Gegenständlichkeit in Mörrikes Lyrischem Verhalten (Diss. Heidelberg: Ruprechts-Carl-Universität, 1945.)

Falter."⁴³ And Pongs speaks of "das Bild als die Substanz der inneren Welt des Künstlers, . . ." ⁴⁴ noting that the concept of "Bild" has, through the centuries grasped and reflected the developmental and historical import of the times. Thus the eighty year-old Goethe was able to say: "Ich suchte mich vor diesem furchtbaren Wesen (dem inneren Dämon) zu retten, indem ich mich nach meiner Gewohnheit hinter ein Bild flüchtete."⁴⁵ The picture, or image, gives the poet distance from that which he is immediately and emotionally involved with or from that which constitutes a threat to his inner stability in the onrush of the world around him. The problem of escape appears to have been an even greater concern to Mörike than it was to Goethe, for the latter was always keenly involved in many problems of his day, which is a fact that cannot be claimed for Mörike.

And yet, Guardini speaks to the problem of all writers of all times when he states:

'die Welt' im eigentlichen Sinn ist ja nicht nur die Summe der objektiven Dinge und Geschehnisse, sondern das, was entsteht, wenn ein Mensch den Dingen begegnet und von den Geschehnissen berührt wird; wenn er erkennt, Stellung nimmt, Schicksal erfährt.⁴⁶

Therefore a study of the imagery in Mörike's poetry may gainfully be

⁴³ Werner Zemp, Mörike: Elemente und Anfänge (Frauenfeld und Leipzig: Huber & Co. Aktiengesellschaft, 1939), p. 51.

⁴⁴ Pongs, p. 16.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Romano Guardini, Sprache-Dichtung-Deutung (Würzburg: Im Werkbund-Verlag, 1957), p. 104.

prefaced by a cursory examination of trends in the use of imagery by several poets prior to, and contemporary with, Mörike.

The three poems to be touched upon briefly, are representative of three widely-differing historical styles in German literature. Poems of a similar theme--that of night--have been chosen in order to simplify and clarify the picture of the development under study in the following chapters and to be better able to assess Mörike's contribution to German literature, in respect to the use of imagery.

The poems to be discussed are: "Mondschein," written from the rationalistic viewpoint of the Aufklärung by Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680--1747); "Um Mitternacht" (1818), written by Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1747--1832), during his 'classic' period, at age sixty-nine; and "Nachts" (-1826), a poem of the 'romantic' poet, Joseph von Eichendorff (1788--1857). Mörike's "Um Mitternacht" (1827) is a logical choice with which to conclude this preliminary investigation.⁴⁷

The four poets in question share a basic triad of emphases in their poems. This triad determines their choice of words and their method of achieving a total image in the poem.

Briefly stated the triad may be seen as: firstly, the aspect of light as a corollary to the sense of sight--symbolizing inner stance of the poet; secondly, the (apparent) prevailing mood of the poet:

⁴⁷ Attention should be drawn to the thesis of James Friesen, Form & Meaning in Mörike's Poetry (Winnipeg, 1962), which deals in considerable detail with the comparative aspect (p. 70 ff), using all the poems involved in this discussion, except that of Brockes.

Does he inflict his mood upon his landscape? Or does he impute it to the landscape?; thirdly, the sense of touch in its relationship to reality: Does the presence or absence of the tactile sense in a poem of this nature contribute something important toward our understanding of the poet's grasp of reality? Definitive answers can not be arrived at, however a look from this vantage point may stimulate deeper insight into the nature of a poet's imagery.

A cursory investigation shows that, although the four poems all deal with the subject of night, each poet gives a somewhat different interpretation of the quality of the phenomenon observed and of its effect upon him. Supporting imagery or suggestive adjectives and figures of speech alter the impression of night from poem to poem in spite of similar basic images, such as moon, sky, darkness. To illustrate: we might ask what is the cause of the darkness--or light?

Brockes states that the night is not fully dark; he emphatically states, and repeats, that the shadows of day lingered over the night.⁴⁸ He stresses the words "Schein," "Widerschein," and "schien." Night and light appear to merge: "schien Nacht und Licht/ In einem sanften Grad vereint." This merging creates an "allgemeine rein und helle Dämmerung,/ Voll Kühlung, Still' und Lust;" (Italics mine). "Voll Kühlung, Still' und Lust" is a strange combination of attributes peculiar, in part, to nature and, in part, to man. Here they overlap and become attributes of "Dämmerung" (or twilight). The

⁴⁸Barthold Heinrich Brockes, "Mondschein" in German Poetry, ed. Robert M. Browning (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), pp. 43-45.

epithet, "rein und helle," seems to indicate the rhythm of the poem, and to dictate its tone.

Light and sight are almost one in this poem, they are so intimately linked:

Wie stutzt' ich, als mein Blick, . . .

 Den hellen Mond in vollem Licht
 An einem grünen Himmel fand. (14, 17-18)

Then, after seeing himself (not as reflection, but as if in reality) gliding on the smooth slippery surface of the lake, while the moon is mirrored on the green reflection of the shore and trees (as seen in the water), the poet notices the actual moon in the blue sky and, correlating the two moons, exclaims:

Der reine Glanz so schöner Lichter drang
 Bei der so süßen Abendstille
 Und kühlen Heiterkeit, mit einer rechten Fülle
 Von Anmut mir ins Herz, dass ich, halb ausser mir,
 Ob aller Kreaturen Zier
 Dem Schöpfer dies zu Ehren sang: (47-52)

In the ensuing prayer an analogy is drawn between the moon in the green sky and the promised nearness to the one in the eternal heaven.

These metaphors clearly indicate that Brockes, in this poem, celebrates the sense of sight. This idea is coupled with his ecstatic mood and accentuates it. Several of the many examples of this are:

Ich konnte mich nicht satt
 An diesem Erd- und Himmelsspiegel sehn. (15-16)

. . .: unglaublich rein und schön
 War westenwärts die lichte Heiterkeit
 Am Firmament im Wasser auch zu sehn. (20-22)

Ich hatte meine Lust, die Gleichheit dieser Schatten,
 Die sie, im Widerschein, mit ihrem Urbild hatten,
 Bewundernd anzusehn. (31-33. Italics mine.)

Just as all the images are doubly reflected in the water, so the poet's ecstasy is doubled in the joy of nature. Auditory involvement is alluded to by indirect mention of its absence: the speaker in the poem refers several times to "sanften Schritten." The surface of the water is "Unglaublich still und glatt." It is a time of "süssen Abendstille"; in this Brockes introduces the oxymoron as well as the sense of taste. Another oxymoron--"kühlen Heiterkeit"--combines external feeling, or tactile sense, with emotional feeling-tone. This underscores the aspect of celebration which is prominent in the poem.

This poem seeks to convey the effect of night--twilight--moonlight on the poet. But the effect breaks down due to the too frequent mention of shifting shadows. This, and the repetition of the words "Schein," "Widerschein," and "schien" seem to suggest that the poet is striving to penetrate these impediments of nature; that he is groping to make contact with reality. And he inflicts his own mood upon nature. While the terminology aims to be matter-of-factly objective, the poem is really a very subjective interpretation of nature by night. One is tempted to question which one--"Heiterkeit" or shadows--is, basically, the mood of the poet at this writing.

But finally the poet does make a slight gesture toward animating his images:

Und zwar der wahre Mond, . . .
 Hervortrat und am blauen Himmel stand. (40-41. Italics mine.)

The personification here differs from that of Goethe and Mürike for in Brockes the moon is an exception within the total picture described. Not night per se, with all its attributes, but only one of these

attributes--the moon--made one movement, as if animated by a spirit; then immediately stood still again, completely static. In the summarizing prayer the total image becomes a didactic and deistic "Himmelspiegel."

Brockes' poem overflows with infinite detail. But it remains static and, in the words of Pfeiffer, we see that "Die dichterische Anschauung neigt hier dazu, in lauter kleine Einzelbeobachtungen auseinanderzufallen, die am Faden der Reflexion aneinandergereiht werden."⁴⁹ And, although the poet is an accurate observer, his images remain static, his descriptions superficial. Only the eye is involved, not the romantic soul. He seems to stand away from his object --yet he states numerous times that he is in the very centre of this scene--and to describe it in a detached, uninvolved manner which is very different from that of the other three poets to be discussed here. Klein finds that this is because "Brockes Naturbilder sind nicht durch die Seele gegangen."⁵⁰ This assertion testifies to the new matter-of-fact tone which is representative of the new discernment and secularized religious expression as attributed to the involvement of reason, which characterized the Enlightenment. And this atmosphere of the Enlightenment imputes its characteristic rhythm to the writings of this poet.

⁴⁹Pfeiffer, p. 65.

⁵⁰Klein, p. 211.

The romantic night of Eichendorff also is silent.⁵¹ The light aspect is epitomized by a moon intermittently, slowly and secretly stealing out from behind a dark shroud of clouds, but the basic impression is that of the absence of light and of clarity: greyness and stillness predominate. The silent rhythm of the undulating moon is occasionally interspersed by notes of the song of the night. The poet exclaims ecstatically: "O wunderbarer Nachtgesang" The nightingale awakens periodically, but its song is only vaguely hinted at by reference to the ensuing atmosphere: "Dann wieder alles grau und stille." Sounds of rivers are heard in the distance.

Thus there is a merging of the intermittent enchanting song of the night, the occasional notes of a nightingale and the faint sounds of distant rivers. This creates a dream-like atmosphere. In nature "Schauern" denotes a sudden flurry of rain. But the word also carries the spiritual implications of shuddering for fear or horror,⁵² or of "Frösteln, ehrfürchtige Scheu, Grusen, Angst"⁵³ All these characteristics of "Schauern" seem to coalesce in Eichendorff's poem and to intensify the impact of this night upon the poet: "Wirrst die Gedanken mir;" Attributing these characteristics to the trees, in conjunction with the darkness of these tree, magnifies t h e

⁵¹Joseph von Eichendorff, Werke I, ed. Ansgar Hillach (München: Winkler-Verlag, n. d.), pp. 49-50.

⁵²Karl Wildhagen & Will Heraucourt, The New Wildhagen German Dictionary (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1965).

⁵³F. A. Brockhaus, ed., Der Sprach Brockhaus, 7. Aufl. (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1968).

romantic mood. This quality is absent in the poem of Brockes, where reason, not feeling, strives to be in control.

This romantic atmosphere expresses the feeling-tone of the poet as he declares that the song of the night, and the dreams, confuse his thoughts and increase the distance between himself and reality:

Wirrst die Gedanken mir,
Mein irres Singen hier
Ist wie ein Rufen nur aus Träumen. (10-12)

Eichendorff's method in this poem seems to be directed at stimulating the romantic mood and outlook. He imputes his personal mood to nature. The attempt "to make contact with the unattainable"⁵⁴ is symbolized by a reaching out into unreachable space--to the sky, to distant lands and streams, to shuddering trees, uncertain voices in dreams. These characteristics, and the shifting moon, the vague song, and the lack of clear visual and auditory impressions portray Eichendorff's romantic disposition. The aura of Eichendorff's Heimweh is really a romantic Fernweh which encompasses the totality of the world. It is not, as in Mörike's later lyric, a longing for a definite time or place in past or future.⁵⁵

Where the imagery of Brockes shows that he aims not to become emotionally involved, and that of Eichendorff refuses to let reason quash his emotions, Goethe's imagination links itself to his emotions

⁵⁴ James Friesen, Form and Meaning in Mörike's Poetry (M. A. Thesis: University of Manitoba, 1962), p. 75.

⁵⁵ Heinz Schlaffer, Lyrik im Realismus (Bonn: H. Bouvier & Co. Verlag, 1966), p. 22.

and create an ordered cyclical image of his life, over which the refrain "Um Mitternacht" suspends an aura of anticipatory fulfillment.⁵⁶ This was one of Goethe's favorite poems. He called it "Eine Art Lebensbild." And Klein calls it a song.⁵⁷ It might well be called the song of Goethe's life for it is a summary of his life, in lyric form, with poetic variations on his experience of reality. As in this poem, so in most of Goethe's poetry, the motifs are taken from reality and from personal experience. This can also be said of the poetry of Mörke. In both, the first-hand touch adds vitality, immediacy and spontaneity. The poems of Eichendorff and Brockes, although they also use the convention of the first person, really are not as immediate and spontaneous as those of Goethe and Mörke. In Goethe the first-hand touch creates a mood lacking in external or internal restraint which is in accord with his classical ideal of beauty, which is to him "die harmonische Darstellung edler Einfalt und stiller Grösse."⁵⁸ It stands in sharp contrast to the romantic free play of phantasy so evident in the poetry of Eichendorff.⁵⁹

Eichendorff believed that, for Goethe, nature was the total revelation and the poet only the mirror of this world soul.⁶⁰ If this

⁵⁶ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Um Mitternacht" in Goethe: Selected Poems, ed. Barker Fairley (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1965), p.201.

⁵⁷ Klein, p. 359.

⁵⁸ Henry M. Rosenwald, The Age of Romanticism III (New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1959), p. 11.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

statement is truly pertinent, then the direction of "Um Mitternacht" achieves symbolic dimensions in terms of Goethe's own definition: "Die Symbolik verwandelt die Erscheinung in Idee, die Idee in ein Bild, und so, dass die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam und unerreichbar bleibt und, selbst in allen Sprachen ausgesprochen, doch unaussprechlich bliebe."⁶¹ The beauty of Goethe's poem is enhanced by the fact that it both reveals and conceals.

In Goethe's poem; the night and light aspect does not create a visibly discernible twilight, either in the sense of Brockes or of Mörike. It attains, rather, to a cosmic dimension due to the coupling of personal experience with images spatially far removed from this experience: stars, aurora borealis (both clear and bright here), and quarrel in stellar space ("Gestirn und Nordschein Über mir im Streite") This emphasises the profundity and universality of the experience described and places it in the centre of the universal rhythm--both of time and of space.

And yet, this poem is free of the inordinate longing of the romantics. Pongs points out that in Goethe's "Um Mitternacht" all the poet's inner picture-creating powers are elevated to within that which is possible in man.⁶² The earlier idea of becoming (Werdendes) is now insight into the Being of the world and of himself and has become a

⁶⁰Pongs, p. 330.

⁶¹Killy, pp. 15-16.

⁶²Pongs, p. 15.

symbol of this.

In this poem the spiritual and physical dimension of an experience are presented simultaneously. Thus when Gray declares that "Goethe was one of the first in his generation to recognize that a landscape is a mood,"⁶³ we see that the landscape actually becomes synonymous with the mood. This thought may be traced through the three stanzas of "Um Mitternacht." In stanza one Goethe presents a simple situation: the little boy feels a kinship with the shining stars; in stanza two: the young man, and the situation, have become more complex--the brightness of the lights in the sky and the quarrelin space epitomize the attraction and rejection felt by the speaker toward his loved one (and perhaps toward his adult place in the world of men and of literature); and in stanza three the cycle is complete: the brightness of the moon attests to the surety and serenity attained in old age. The hesitant, fearful steps of stanza one are gone; so too, are the would-be vacillating ones of stanza two, which have become firm and decisive because of the force of the love-call from within. Past and future are now in harmonious relationship and link "willig, sinnig, schnelle . . ." in the speaker's memory. The phrase, "Um Mitternacht," bears the weight of the imagery in the poem. The swing of the pendulum seems to demand the progression that the poem deals with.

Each stanza deals with a greater expansion of space: from the

⁶³Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Poems of Goethe, ed. Ronald Gray (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1966), p. 29.

footpath leading to home and safety; to "des Lebens Weite"; to the direct path between full moon and the darkness of the poet's thoughts; yet each stanza is a complete image of a specific phase of life--the life of man, and of the poet. The intensification from stanza to stanza leads to a high vantage point, present and future are seen to combine and coalesce 'Um Mitternacht'. This is time seen from the vantage point of eternity."⁶⁴

Goethe's poem reveals a more realistic than romantic insight into the secret of being. He points directly to the universal emotions and he bares the scene to its essentials. Fairley adds: "This is the signature of the poet who sets down what he knows and stops there [B]ut the connection in Goethe's mind back and forth is never broken" ⁶⁵ He deals similarly with nature. The balance which pivots delicately on the moment "Um Mitternacht" seems to emanate from the character of a poet who, in the words of Charles Waldemar, has attained: "schöpferische Geisteskraft, Gedankenklarheit, Lebenserkenntnis und -weisheit."⁶⁶

The natural vividness of imagery seems to be an expression of the natural rhythm of the life of man, and of all the cosmic forces. And it seems to fuse them inseparably. This fusion of things tangible--

⁶⁴Friesen, pp. 81-82.

⁶⁵Fairley, pp. XXIII, XV-XVI.

⁶⁶Charles Waldemar, ed., Goethe: Das Schönste aus seinem Werk (München: Süd-West Verlags- und Vertriebs-GMBH, 1962), p. 9.

boy, youth, mature man, cemetery, parsonage--with things intangible and unreachable of cosmic space, extends the relative space of man and his world and gives it cosmic import. All things affect each other. As in Goethe's "Willkommen und Abschied"⁶⁷ the clip-clop of the horse's hooves is one with the heart-beat of the lover, so here, the change in nature is in unison with the progression: boy-youth-man.

Goethe's serene classical simplicity and his resilience of mind endorse the forcefulness of this poem and make perfection possible. One questions, with Klein,⁶⁸ whether Goethe's poem were possible without the accomplishment of his forerunner, Brockes, who had taken such a decisive step forward from the schematic Baroque presentation of nature to that of a physically alive and sensuous reality.

The method of Brockes is now liberated from its binding Baroque after-effects. The poet is not apparently attempting consciously to impress by showing the new freedom which was his. Brockes' was the freedom of the Enlightenment; Goethe's was the freedom of self. Goethe refused to be placed in chains--be they of feminine origin, of social pedantry, or of inherent mental quirks. Consequently his poetry most fittingly epitomizes the dictum of Archibald MacLeish, (made in favor of Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn"), which states: "A poem should not mean/ But be."⁶⁹ Goethe's poem is really a mere sketch. But it

⁶⁷Gray, p. 5.

⁶⁸Klein, p. 215.

⁶⁹Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without

speaks eloquently---simply because it "is."

The imagery in Mörrike's "Um Mitternacht"⁷⁰ is an example of another decisive step forward. This is particularly noteworthy since Mörrike was only twenty-three years old at the time of its writing. Friesen aptly refers to the "classical" and "controlled harmony" of this poem. He notes also that "This poem is not reflective, not intellectual Yet the all-important sensuous element never trails off into vagueness . . . even though links with the Verschwommenheit of romantic lyrics may be discerned." The polarity between "classic" and "romantic" tensions is inherent in the poem, but the tensions are so well balanced and so well resolved that one can ascribe this perfection only to "the lyric genius of the poet."⁷¹

The two "Um Mitternacht" poems stem from different time periods in the life of their authors: one was written by the 'late-Goethe', the other by the young Mörrike. Both are in control of their night, but in a different manner, i. e. both have the open, uncontrolled daemonic aspect of night, but in the poem the authors are in control of their artistic subject-matter. Goethe's control is apparent in the progressive nature of his imagery, from stanza to stanza, and in the

(Cont.) Footnotes," in Five Approaches of Literary Criticism, ed. Wilbur S. Scott (New York & London: The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 231.

⁷⁰ Werke, p. 100.

⁷¹ Friesen, p. 83.

conciliatory conclusion reached in line four of each stanza--ending in the summation, "Um Mitternacht:" Mörrike's poem, on the other hand, lacks the serene, time-proven overview of the sage. His distinctly youthful rhythm of the springs is a link with romantic lyrics, as noted by Friesen, as are also the "uralt alte Schlummerlied" and "des Himmels Bläue." But, although Mörrike uses romantic symbols, the dual rhythm of his "Um Mitternacht" suggests that the poet's dualism is polarized and controlled. Still, the possibility of uncontrolled effervescence is inherent in the nature of the springs.

Light is not specifically mentioned in Mörrike's poem; however, the eye of night is said to observe the balanced scales of time. Mother night is weary, but her eye is alert to the motions of the universe. Complex imagery spells out the musical rhythm of the cosmos: the "contrapuntal"⁷² metrical variation is beautifully caught up in the contrasting rhythm of night and of the springs, and is an organic complementary link between these two. This 'auditory color', cast by the contrasting rhythm of springs and mother night, infuses vitality and an exciting tempo into the poem. The changing rhythm to that of the constantly wakeful and alertly singing springs is not deeply disturbing but seems to add an unnamed question, namely: What of this day just past, and its significance? This too is involved in the balance of the scales and wants to detract from the atmosphere of complete peace and serenity as it is epitomized by mother night.

⁷²Friesen, p. 87.

The changing rhythm emphasises the fleetingness of this still moment. But during this one stroke of twelve, the poem exemplifies perfect harmony. Night here, inspite of potentially disturbing elements, is unmindful of the secrets of day that the springs are bubbling about.

This equilibrium is evident in both form and content of Mörike's "Um Mitternacht," as it is also in Goethe's poem. It creates an appearance of eternity in the poem. Balance in lines three and four of each stanza anchors down the meaning of the poem. In stanza one these lines depict ever-recurring night as observing time equally balanced between past and future, in the present moment. It is as if all time, from its beginning into eternity, is weighed before her. And in lines three and four of stanza two mother night prefers that which is last-
ing--"des Himmels Bläue"--to the fleeting hours which pass, though they are balanced now. These lines emphasise the animate quality of this night. In the first stanza night sees, observes with insight, and is aware of implications; in the second stanza night draws a mental comparison and, herself, weighs the moment of eternity--and makes her choice.

The very first word, "Gelassen," is the key to the poem and sets its tone of underlying ambivalence. "Gelassen" in the sense of the mystics, and so familiar to Mörike, involves a total resignation to the will of God; it means to seek only God's name and honor.⁷³

⁷³Jacob Grimm & Wilhelm Grimm, Deutsches Wörterbuch (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1878).

This Gelassenheit frequently assumed the form of total indifference and inactivity. Therefore Mörrike creates tension in his poem by juxtaposing the contrasting elements of a completely calm and uninvolved night, and a watchful and perceptive open eye. Thus, when night is dreaming, she is, at the same time, alert to past and future forces in her control, and which control her--the forces of time and of change:

Ihr Auge sieht die goldne Waage nun
Der Zeit in gleichen Schalen stille ruhn, . . .

And immediately, the moment is made startlingly alive by the line "Und kecker rauschen die Quellen hervor" The gushing action of the springs: "Sie singen der Mutter, der Nacht, ins Ohr . . ." characterizes the springs and juxtaposes a daemonic element to the static tranquillity of night. It also suggests the polar opposites of night and day with its dark and light overtones. This accentuates the tone of ambivalence in the poem. It also adds a note of enchantment or magic, which dynamizes the dual meaning of Gelassenheit still more. The repetition "Vom Tage/ Vom heute gewesenen Tage" serves a double--auditory and visual--function: to echo the song of the springs, and to emphasise day as a balance for night--which the poem deals with, primarily.

Stanza two continues this theme. Surprisingly, night recognizes the beauty of day and thinks this superior to her own. She notes the necessity of balance with her mate, for she speaks of "Der flücht'gen Stunden gleichgeschwung'nes Joch." Water, source and symbol of life

and of beauty, links the two stanzas into one complete unity:

Es singen die Wasser im Schlafe noch fort
 Vom Tage,
 Vom heute gewesenen Tage.

And so there is perfect balance between waking and dreaming.

This poem, like "Er ists," bears a sense of the daemonic in the central image--of sprouting violet, and in the song of the springs. The imagery in both poems creates an intimation of working and weaving of the forces of nature, which is a typical trait of Mörike's poetry. This highlights the poetic creative process as well and makes it appear effortless and intuitive.

Night, in Mörike's "Um Mitternacht," is personified as one complete poetic unit. We are made aware, in this, that personification is an especially adept mode of conveying emotion in depth, and that it is both connotative and denotative in scope.

Mörike's method is one of synthesis, rather than of analysis, as is Brockes'. This is true of nature poems such as "Um Mitternacht" where night herself has achieved the quality of the universal eye: seeing the balanced scales of time; of the universal ear: hearing the ancient slumbersong of the springs of the world. The perfection of the synthetic process is expressed in terms of synaesthesia:

Ihr klingt des Himmels Bläue süsßer noch
 Der flücht'gen Stunden gleichgeschwungnes Joch.

Mörike's love lyrics, where manifold incidents touching each other have been caught up into one organic and poetic unit, also show evidence of this method of synaesthesia. "Peregrina III" confirms this: the lover still suffers and is torn by indecisions and guilt,

but the poem has an undertow of resolution which indicates that all factors mentioned, ("Irrsal," "Betrug," banishment, undying love, "Zauberfaden," ambivalent thoughts of a future return), are irreducible parts of one composite and whole experience.

In Mörike's poem, "Um Mitternacht," the analytic fragmentation of Brockes is gone. So is the vague, indefinite mood-dominated atmosphere of Eichendorff. Mörike's "Um Mitternacht" is, in a sense, the reversal of that of Goethe. Where Goethe expands the physical and spiritual dimension to cosmic realms, Mörike brings the cosmic laws affecting night and day down to the realms of man. In the overall personification the cosmic order, and the eternal order of time, is given the spiritual and physical characteristics of man. It is possessed of man's animation: in the physical realm ("Gelassen stieg . . ."), in the spiritual ("Lehnt träumend . . ."), while spiritual and physical characteristics unite in the synthesizing process of "Ihr Auge sieht . . .": the inner eye assimilates the input of the outer eye, and produces the harmonious image so vividly portrayed as the moment "Um Mitternacht" when past and future time is sensitively balanced in the present moment. Thus the rhythm is dynamically arrested in mid-swing of time's pendulum.

The moment of "Um Mitternacht" and that of "Peregrina III"--- that of perfect balance---must inevitably fade into the past, yet Mörike has, remarkably, achieved an aura of a perfectly held moment in both instances. The physical moment passes, but the spiritual one lingers in the memory of the poet. This is, in part, a new achievement of

Mürke, that he can pin down, however illusive, time past and future in the present moment. This functional ability in the poet's method of composition is a developmental step beyond that of Goethe's "Um Mitternacht" wherein the time aspect is progressive--from child to young manhood to the maturity of a sage--rather than all-inclusive in one moment of time.

The themes of the poems discussed deal with the consciousness of the swiftness of passing time, symbolized by nature. Implicit in all is the desire to extend the brevity of the moment, to create permanence where there is flux. Each poet seems to add depth to the quality of the former night; we are aware of an enrichment of lyric expression, throughout these four stages of literary development, which is due, largely, to a refining process in the creation of 'live' imagery. The dynamic rhythm of night has finally itself entered into the later poems and given them new and enlivening fluidity and daemonic power. This leaves the reader with the feeling of having experienced an intensely vibrant and refreshing encounter, one which contains within it a mythical view to the future. Furthermore, and significantly so, it reveals the validity of Klein's declaration, namely that the internal rhythm of a poem--which is comprised of the spiritual entity and is the product of the soul's assimilation and synthesis of experience and of passion--provides a basic clue to an understanding of inherent meaning in all its layers and relationships.⁷⁴

⁷⁴Klein, p. 6. Also see footnote no. 34 of present chapter.

Paradoxically, Brockes' image of night disintegrates because of an overly-meticulous recording of every nuance that contributes to the author's I-myself feeling of this night; because of multifarious disparate elements ascribed to this night; and because the lyrical subject is unable to bridge the distance which separates it from the subject of the poem. Light, mood and reality are at variance with each other.

But Eichendorff's sensual relationship with nature finds the height of expression "[i]n dem verwischen der Grenzen zwischen kosmischem und seelischem Geschehen" ⁷⁵ Brockes' variance of tensions, as evidenced in light, mood and view of reality, are, in Eichendorff's "Nachts," dissolved, lacking all suggestions of borderlines or delimitations.

Pongs notes that Goethe's basic stance, throughout his development, remains "das Götterselbstgefühl, das sich die Umwelt anverwandelt, auch wo er die Welt schauend und ordnend durchdringt und ins Symbol hebt, sinngabend oder sinnfindend." ⁷⁶ So also, in his poem "Um Mitternacht," the poet evolves as the conquering Prometheus. Night and mood are subjected to the intensive torch-light of reality. The strictest delimitation of statement is observed. And yet one is impelled to agree with Killy who, upon correlating observed nature with feeling-tone of the observing poet, notes that, in Goethe, this process always results

⁷⁵ Pongs, p. 329.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 216.

in an attempt on the part of the poet to keep the idea in a state of suspended animation.⁷⁷ Thus, in Goethe's poem, memory of the past transcends the present moment. Simple, precise, and polarized imagery reveals a vigorous clarity of both sensory and emotional perception. It reveals, simultaneously, the new "note of refinement, reflectiveness, spirituality" of the poet's Weimar and post-classical years.⁷⁸

Mörike's imagery, like that of Goethe, is notable for its delimitation of description. In "Um Mitternacht" this is apparent despite the fact that these early nature poems contain unmistakable romantic elements.⁷⁹ The posture of night as dreaming, and the music of the springs lend a romantic touch; but Klein is also right in emphasising the classical character of this poem.⁸⁰ We sense that Mörike has had an in-depth experience with night, which transcends rationalistic thought, but he refrains from giving overt expression to his feelings. In Brockes the self-involvement is openly expressed, in Mörike it is veiled in imagery.⁸¹

⁷⁷Killy, p.20.

⁷⁸Fairley, p. XXI.

⁷⁹Victor Gerard Doerksen, Mörikes Elegien und Epigramme-- Eine Interpretation (Diss. Zürich, 1964), p. 20.

⁸⁰Klein, p. 541.

⁸¹One of Mörike's major contributions to German literature is his synthesis of styles past, present and future. The preceding classic and romantic styles are harmonized; the present, Realism, is sensitized and refined; and the anticipation of future Impressionism lends to his poetry an aspect of newness and surprise. See Klein, p. 534.

In "Um Mitternacht" night, mood and reality take the measure of each other. In later poems, as for example in the concluding lines of "An eine Äolsharfe" and "Schlafendes Jesuskind, time achieves statuesque immobility, as in Goethe's "Dauer im Wechsel" (1801-1803).⁸² Then, in Mörike, the moment becomes all-important and all time becomes static in it. The "form" of time is increasingly spiritualized. The kaleidoscopic image of transience is eclipsed in the moment and given permanence. The essence or spirit of this moment infuses these poems and gives them a superhuman aura. In the "Äolsharfe" poem this expresses itself as the moment is caught and held at the time of climax between the waxing and waning of human longing. In this one instant of time the soul of man is one in mood with nature. There is a mystical relationship between the two⁸³ which is enhanced by the musical element and rhythm of the poem. In "Die schöne Buche" the moment is of harmonious accord with nature also. The speaker is both observer and observed. The magic circle both includes and excludes him, but the self-conscious 'I' is silent. Only the spirit of the moment is given voice. In "Hermippus" the spirit of present time is immersed in that of the past, and extended into the future, while in "Schlafendes Jesuskind" the intangible 'being' of man-God receives a spiritual dimension which imputes to the physical image of the scene the aura of an invisible indescribable presence. In these poems, and in others, the

⁸²Gray, pp. 181-82.

⁸³Benno von Wiese, Eduard Mörike (Stuttgart: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag, 1950), p. 219.

spiritualizing element seems closely related to Mörrike's awareness of the daemonic⁸⁴ and to his mystical and mythical interests in life.

It is not my purpose here to try to establish the origin of this developmental step in the poetry of Mörrike--be it derived from a study of the classics and of Goethe, be it entirely of internal origin, or be it a combination of these, and possibly other factors. It is the purpose only to show that such a development does, in fact, exist, and that it may be gainfully illustrated by a close attention to the what and the how of this poet's imagery, particularly the imagery which concerns itself with the time element. Not the total time-spectrum of Mörrike is to be discussed however, but only that which is pertinent to his crucial 'moment'.

⁸⁴The "daemonic" element is central in the writings of Mörrike. It contains a mysterious and magical power and is closely related to the poet's view of fate, of Schicksal. (See von Wiese's chapter with this heading). It is a power beyond the control of him in whom it dwells. Webster equates the "daemonic" with genius. It is in this sense that the nouns "Daemon" and "Daemonie" and the adjective or adverb "daemonic" will be used here.

II. Early Components of Mörike's Moment

The emphasis on a specific moment in time and/ or in experience is of prime importance in the poetry of Eduard Mörike. The three key symbols which comprise the essence, and epitomize the significance of the 'moment' are those of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz." Frequently these elements form an undercurrent of converging lines of implication or expression in a poem, and their dramatic effect is not felt or intuited until the three suddenly meet, precipitating the climactic 'moment.' Mörike wrote to Luise Rau concerning the "blitz-artiges Einleuchten der Wirklichkeit" as of a moment "wo gleichsam ein rascher Blitz des innersten Bewusstseins uns das, was wir besitzen und sind, in seiner ganzen Gestalt sehn lässt--in der Überwältigenden Fülle seiner Wirklichkeit, während es dann scheint, als wäre man bisher nur wie in einem gewöhnlichen Traum gewesen." (4. 12. 1829).¹

Mörike's pivotal 'moment' of "Zwielicht" is not synonymous with twilight. It is comprised of an antithesis of white and black, light and dark, day and night, and often it is, simultaneously, bliss

¹Friedrich Seebass, ed., Eduard Mörike--Briefe (Tübingen: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag, n. d.), p. 158.

and despair, confidence and defeat, smiles and tears. "Zwielicht," even when not specifically mentioned, is really the medium which determines the mood of this poet most frequently. This characteristic has been studied by Doerksen, who summarizes the findings of several eminent Mörike scholars thus: "Das Zwielicht der Morgendämmerung ist die eigentliche Zeit unseres Dichters. In diesem Moment des Übergangs erinnert er Vergangenes und ahnt zugleich das Zukünftige. Die Natur wird als Traum geschaut, in dem Zeit und Raum, Innen und Aussen, ineinanderfliessen."² The decisive quality of the "moment" is determined by the daemonic and elemental power which thrusts it forward into the mind and pen of the poet. Invariably this power is akin to that which dominates and dictates every turning-point in Maler Nolten, as in the life of the author: Peregrina-Elisabeth, gypsy and "schlimme Zauberblume."³

The antithesis within the "moment" is born of both a basic duality in itself and polarization in the poet. This is nowhere more graphically illustrated than in poetry which expresses the poet's relationship to Peregrina, where desire and revulsion constantly interlock. The principle of duality and polarization is particularly apparent in the juxtaposition of antithetical nouns and adjectives whereby Mörike creates metaphors of great originality and beauty. The primary word and its modifier determine the quality of each other; they melt,

²Doerksen, pp. 19-20.

³See von Wiese, p. 188.

fuse (as in the process of glass crystallization)⁴ and merge as a new quantity which contains the inseparable entity of its original components, plus a vital infusion of the poet's personal synthesis of life. In this manner Mörike paints strikingly vivid images and poem-pictures. He shows us new relationships and thereby illuminates the old, revealing new facets in the old and intensifying the reality and impact of the concrete image in the metaphor.

This affinity of opposites for each other precipitates surprise kernels in all periods of Mörike's writing. By means of the following representative examples this tendency may be traced through Mörike's writings, as the dates of these quotations indicate:

die verbittert bis zur Betäubung süßen Zauberschalen. (1827)⁵

mir traf freudig ein Schauer das Herz, . . . (1829)⁶

von Trauermelodien trunken, . . . (1830)⁷

Mir aber in geheimer Brust erwacht
Ein peinlich Widerspiel von Fülle und Entbehrung . . . (1832)⁸

⁴Hoellerer cites an illustration from Jean Paul, stating that: "Jean Paul bringt in seiner 'Vorschule zur Aesthetik' das Beispiel der Glasszubereitung, wo aus Sand, Asche, Quarz ein Neues, Ganzes erstellt wird: durch Verschmelzung. Die Bestandteile schmelzen 'zu einem dichten, durchsichtigen Gusse'." Walter Hoellerer, Zwischen Klassik und Moderne (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1958), p. 13.

⁵Werke, "Besuch in Urach," p. 32, v. 55.

⁶Ibid., "Wald-Idylle", p. 104, v. 38.

⁷Ibid., "Karwoche," p. 95.

⁸Ibid., "Nachts," p. 306.

himmlischer Kälte balsamsüsse Luft. (1841)⁹

die Ferne drängt, . . . (1843)¹⁰

. . . lachend, und ein sanfter Geist
Des Ernstes doch ergossen um die ganze Form-- (1846)¹¹

Wie mit fremdendem Ernst, lächelnd halb, ein Daemon,
Nickst du mich an, Tod weissagend! (1863)¹²

The fusing quality in each antithetical juxtaposition of disparate experiences is the element of intensity. The poet, though hiding behind his veil, his mask, seems to be intensely involved personally. We become aware of this in looking at Mörike's method of building up to the climactic "moment":

An einem Wintermorgen, vor Sonnenaufgang (1825)

O fläumenleichte Zeit der dunkeln Frühe!
Welch neue Welt bewegest du in mir?
Was ists, dass ich auf einmal nun in dir
Von sanfter Wollust meines Daseins glühe?

Einem Kristall gleicht meine Seele nun,
Den noch kein falscher Strahl des Lichts getroffen;
Zu fluten scheint mein Geist, er scheint zu ruhn,
Dem Eindruck naher Wunderkräfte offen,
Die aus dem klaren Gürtel blauer Luft
Zuletzt ein Zauberwort vor meine Sinne ruft.

⁹ Ibid., "Auf eine Christblume," p. 120.

¹⁰ Ibid., "Früh im Wagen," p. 95.

¹¹ Ibid., "Auf eine Lampe," p. 85.

¹² Ibid., "Erinna an Sappho," p. 86.

Bei hellen Augen glaub ich doch zu schwanken;
 Ich schliesse sie, dass nicht der Traum entweiche.
 Seh ich hinab in lichte Feenreiche?
 Wer hat den bunten Schwarm von Bildern und Gedanken
 Zur Pforte meines Herzens hergeladen,
 Die glänzend sich in diesem Busen baden,
 Goldfarbgen Fischlein gleich im Gartenteiche?

Ich hörte bald der Hirtenflöten Klänge,
 Wie um die Krippe jener Wundernacht,
 Bald weinbekränzter Jugend Lustgesänge;
 Wer hat das friedenselige Gedränge
 In meine traurigen Wände hergebracht?

Und welch Gefühl entzückter Stärke,
 Indem mein Sinn sich frisch zur Ferne lenkt!
 Vom ersten Mark des heutgen Tags getränkt,
 Fühl ich mir Mut zu jedem frommen Werke.

Die Seele fliegt, soweit der Himmel reicht,
 Der Genius jauchzt in mir! Doch sage,
 Warum wird jetzt der Blick von Wehmut feucht?
 Ists ein verloren Glück, was mich erweicht?
 Ist es ein werdendes, was ich im Herzen trage?
 --Hinweg, mein Geist! hier gilt kein Stillestehn:
 Es ist ein Augenblick, und Alles wird verwehn!

Dort, sieh, am Horizon lüpfte sich der Vorhang schon!
 Es träumt der Tag, nun sei die Nacht entflohn;
 Die Purpurlippe, die geschlossen lag,
 Haucht, halbgeöffnet, süsse Atemzüge:
 Auf einmal blitzt das Aug, und, wie ein Gott, der Tag
 Beginnt im Sprung die königlichen Flüge!¹³

"An einem Wintermorgen . . ." is a direct presentation of a process in nature, and at a deeper and very intensely vibrant level, it depicts the concrete moment of poetic inspiration in all its immediacy and "daemonic" magic. Clearly, the poet is in complete harmony with himself and with nature--quiescent and receptive of the moment in present time. This is the characteristic stance of Mörike in the early

¹³Ibid., p. 9.

group of poems discussed in this chapter. And in these poems, too, we sense the poet's conscious awareness that he must maintain his balance. It seems apparent that his daemon is quick to upset the balance, in favor of either ecstasy or despair. This is apparent in "Wintermorgen." And in "Um Mitternacht" (1827)¹⁴ this precarious situation is symbolized in the image of the scales of time. In "Im Frühling"¹⁵ the balance is upset in favor of a totally romantic image wherein the poet becomes one with nature:

Die Wolke wird mein Flügel, . . .
 Der Sonnenblume gleich steht mein Gemüte offen,
 Sehrend,
 Sich dehnend . . .

In "An einem Wintermorgen . . ." the exhilarating upswing of poetic genius:

Die Seele fliegt, soweit der Himmel reicht,
 Der Genius jauchzt in mir!

is immediately correlated with melancholy:

Doch sage,
 Warum wird jetzt der Blick von Wehmut feucht?
 Ist's ein verloren Glück, was mich erweicht?
 Ist es ein werdendes, was ich im Herzen trage?

This three-fold question emphasises the paradox of the situation. A sinking feeling undercuts the moment of highest bliss. The image in "erweicht" cancels the effect of the body-building stamina inherent in the image of fresh marrow of day in the poet's blood. In this poem

¹⁴Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 29.

the equation between "verloren Glück" and "ein werdendes" is actually verbalized. In later poems this duality in the poet enters by means of subtle suggestion, innuendo or implicit metaphor. In "Wintermorgen" the poet quickly reverts back to his former jubilant mood. He consciously invokes his own spirit and conquers his melancholy by a deft stroke of creative will-power:

--Hinweg, mein Geist! hier gilt kein Stillestehn:
Es ist ein Augenblick, und Alles wird verwehn!

And this is followed by the concluding positive and alert gesture in which the poet cries:

Auf einmal blitzt das Aug, und, wie ein Gott, der Tag
Beginnt im Sprung die königlichen Flüge!

Now the dream-element has been replaced by classical clarity; undulating emotions have gained equilibrium; and we see, even in this early poem, an intimation of the poet's later extended "equilibrium, permanence and mastery" which are distinguishing features of classical poetry.¹⁶

Farrell notes that one of the most characteristic expressions of Mörike is "plötzlich" or "auf einmal," which he frequently uses to indicate "innere Umschläge dieser Art oder die jähe Erschütterung der Seele anzudeuten. So tief ist dies Motiv mit seiner Erlebnisart verbunden, dass ihm auch Vorgänge in der Aussenwelt häufig als "plötzlich" erscheinen."¹⁷ Thus the moment in "Wintermorgen" seems to be an external representation of an internal condition. Outer and inner aspects

¹⁶R. B. Farrell, "Mörike's Classical Verse," in Publications of the English Goethe Society N. S., Vol. 25, (1956), p. 62.

complement each other, and, as Marcella Burger has so sensitively explained: the outer situation, the "Wintermorgen" remains merely "'flaum-enleicht' angedeutet, . . ., and yet it forms the frame of the inner process. "Das Innere schöpft seine Phantasie aus den augenblicklich einwirkenden oder nur geträumten Bereichen des 'Aussen'"18

But the illusive veil of impenetrable mystery suspended over the poem is created by the apt interweaving of the three main symbol-components of the "moment"--of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz"--with their chains of suggestive imagery, as "Wunderkräfte," "Zauberwort," "Feenreiche" and "Wundernacht." And the startling sharpness of "Blitz," rather than tearing the veil of imagery, adds a deeper dimension to its illusiveness. Nothing can be more transparent than the delicate and fragile crystal, but here its analogy to the poet's soul adds to the impenetrable mystery of the moment of poetic inspiration. This poem is an excellent example of a definition-in-practice of the vatic tradition of poetry. It links feelingly with the swans of Hölderlin and of Yeats.

Mörike's three primary symbolic elements have a co-ordinated function. The antithetical poles of dark and light jointly create the "Zwielicht" of "Wintermorgen." Here the poet is aware of the approach of day with its bright dizzying magic:

¹⁷R. B. Farrell, "Aufbauprinzipien in Mörikes Gedichten", ed. Albert Fuchs & Helmut Motekat, Festschrift Borschart, (1962), p. 391.

¹⁸Burger, p. 18.

Bei hellen Augen glaub ich doch zu schwanken;
 Ich schliesse sie, dass nicht der Traum entweiche.

Involuntarily he closes his eyes in order to retain the dream. This latter is a typically romantic gesture as in the poem "Nachtgesichte" (1827),¹⁹ where the poet depicts his dream-confrontation with Greece, the epitome of classic antiquity, and cries:

Ja dies ist wirklich! Du bist es, mein Hellas! drückt euch,
 ihr Hände,
 Fest auf die Augen! denn dies dürfen die meinen nicht sehn!

But Williams reminds us "that the sunrise and dawn which are the ostensible subject have been left far behind" when the talk of dream arises in "Wintermorgen."²⁰ "What we are concerned with is the poet's state of mind, and a very special and particular experience is being conveyed."²¹ Similar imagery describes the experience in "Gesang zu Zweien . . . ,"²² written two years earlier than "Wintermorgen," in 1825. Here, "Er" and "Sie" represent the polarities in the poet--dark and light, night and day.

Undefined "Wunderkräfte" open the poet's mind to the flood-tides of sensual impression in "Wintermorgen." The present moment and that of the past, together, form pictures as vivid and realistic as those of "Goldfarb'gen Fischlein . . . im Gartenteiche." Only now the poet speaks symbolically of the colorful and speedy darting about of his thoughts.

¹⁹ Werke, p. 293.

²⁰ W. D. Williams, "Day and Night Symbolism in some Poems of Mörike" in The Era of Goethe. Essays presented to James Boyd, (Oxford, 1959), p. 168.

²¹ Ibid.

As dreaming day awakens, the animated world of nature animates the inner world of the poet. Thus "Zwielicht" is just the opposite of twilight where borderlines are indistinct and visions blurred.

But the poet, in this early poem, is passively receptive to that which acts upon him. Every phase of memory and of nature inspires him. And everything reminds him of the transience of the moment in nature and in the life of man. This brings ecstasy and despair into close proximity of each other. And in the "Peregrina" cycle these emotions no longer follow consecutively but remain, simultaneously fused.

Mörike's "Zauberwort" in "Wintermorgen" evokes the manifold and colorful picture of winter. The shepherd's bugle-call--as at the night of Christ's nativity--, the implication of antique Dionysian dances and of bright faeryland merge wondrously. This is a rare and highly suggestive linking of three contrasting images or events. It imbues the poem with a delicately scintillating rhythm. The aura and symbolism in each of the three heightens the anticipation and surprise-impact of the total picture and becomes one with the mood of the poet in his early winter morning. This mood is almost that of hallowed ecstasy, such as is related to us concerning some of the Oriental religious sunrise ceremonies.

The images which depict the sense of "Zwielicht" in its preparation for the moment of "Zauber" and "Blitz" are antithetical and

²²Werke, p. 44.

oxymoron-like: One does not somehow associate "flaumenleicht" with "dunklen Frühe"; nor is "glühende Wollust" generally described as "sanft"; the poet both rests and is in transition; "helle Augen" signifies alert awakesness, here it means that day is dreaming-- day has caught a dream which it is fearful of losing. The three-fold faery-Christian-Dionysian picture which arises as one is called a "friedenselige Gedränge"--"friedenselig" would seem to denote a state of perfect rest and peace, whereas "Gedränge" denotes pushing, elbowing, crowding--anything but peace. Thus the poet, rejuvenated and fortified with courage by a drink from the very marrow of this day, aptly describes his dualistic self and the impressions which lead up to his capitulation to the magic quality of this pre-dawn winter morning.

Then, "Auf einmal blitzt das Aug . . ." (Italics mine) and all the precarious dualistic balancing climaxes in this one superb "moment" of equilibrium, the process of which Hoellerer has very accurately described as: "Der Augenblick erlöst aus dem Schwebezustand . . . das Erschrecken des lyrischen Moments."²³ Dualism becomes balanced polarization. The daemonic moment of "Blitz" includes the full moment from the "zweiichtig" "flaumenleichte Zeit der dunkeln Frühe" to the "Zauberwort" and the symbolic leap of day from its embryonic beginning. The "exultant feeling of creative power . . ." renders the sense of genius stirring as a phenomenon to the birth of day from the womb of night,

²³ Hoellerer, p. 355.

. . . ."24

Storz marvels at the "wahrhaftige Wunderwerk" of a twenty-one year-old as portrayed in "An einem Wintermorgen . . ." and "Besuch in Urach" and notes that this is new, except in the aged ("greisen") Goethe.²⁵ This unusual capacity in a poet so young--to create dynamic and pulsating imagery--supplies ample proof of the innate intuitive, dynamic and spontaneous creative vein which was Mörrike's birthright.

The flashing "moment," comprised of the qualities of "Zwielicht," magic and lightning is unique to Mörrike but resembles closely the "epiphany" of James Joyce, to the extent that both writers symbolize in their "moment" an instantaneous and momentous insight into past and future, and this insight marks the essence of the present moment. Thus, in Stephen Hero James Joyce "explains his conception of art as an 'epiphany', a sudden illumination, if not a divine revelation, a slight but definite insight into other lives, a fragmentary clue to the meaning of life as a whole."²⁶ In Mörrike this epiphany reaches its highest climactic intensity in poems as "An eine Äolsharfe" (1837), but it also seems to be more pertinent to "Besuch in Urach" (1827) than to the "Wintermorgen" poem.

²⁴Farrell, "Classical Verse", p.46.

²⁵Gerhard Storz, Eduard Mörrike (Suttgart: Ernst Klett, 1967), p. 86.

²⁶Harry Levin, ed., The Portable James Joyce (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), p. 8.

Besuch in Urach (excerpts)

Nur fast so wie im Traum ist mirs geschehen,
 Dass ich in dies geliebte Tal verirrt.
 Kein Wunder ist, was meine Augen sehen,
 Doch schwankt der Boden, Luft und Staude schwirrt,
 Aus tausend grünen Spiegeln scheint zu gehen
 Vergangne Zeit, die lächelnd mich verwirrt;
 Die Wahrheit selber wird hier zum Gedichte,
 Mein eigen Bild ein fremd und hold Gesichte!

.....
 Hier wird ein Strauch, ein jeder Halm zur Schlinge,
 Die mich in liebliche Betrachtung fängt;
 Kein Mäuerchen, kein Holz ist so geringe,
 Dass nicht mein Blick voll Wehmut an ihm hängt:
 Ein jedes spricht mir halbvergessne Dinge;
 Ich fühle, wie von Schmerz und Lust gedrängt
 Die Träne stockt, indes ich ohne Weile,
 Unschlüssig, satt und durstig, weiter eile.

Hinweg! und leite mich, du Schar von Quellen,
 Die ihr durchspielt der Matten grünes Gold!

.....

O hier ists, wo Natur den Schleier reisst!
 Sie bricht einmal ihr Übermenschlich Schweigen;
 Laut mit sich selber redend will ihr Geist,
 Sich selbst vernehmend, sich ihm selber zeigen.
 —Doch ach, sie bleibt, mehr als der Mensch, verwaist,
 Darf nicht aus ihrem eignen Rätsel steigen!
 Dir biet ich denn, begierge Wassersäule,
 Die nackte Brust, ach, ob sie dir sich teile!

Vergebens! und dein kühles Element
 Tropft an mir ab, im Grase zu versinken.
 Was ists, das deine Seele von mir trennt?
 Sie flieht, und möchte ich auch in dir ertrinken!

.....

Hinweg aus diesem Öppgen Schattengrund
 Voll grosser Pracht, die drückend mich erschüttert!

.....

Erinnrung reicht mit Lächeln die verbittert
 Bis zur Betäubung süssen Zauberschalen;
 So trink ich gierig die entzückten Qualen.

.....

Umsonst, dass ich die Arme nach dir strecke,
Den Boden, wo du gingst, mit Küssen decke!

Hier will ich denn laut schluchzend liegen bleiben,
Fühllos, und alles habe seinen Lauf!--
Mein Finger, matt, ins Gras beginnt zu schreiben:
Hin ist die Lust! hab alles seinen Lauf!
Da, plötzlich, hör ichs durch die Lüfte treiben,
Und ein entfernter Donner schreckt mich auf;
Elastisch angespannt mein ganzes Wesen
Ist von Gewitterluft wie neu genesen.

Sieh! wie die Wolken finstre Ballen schliessen
Um den ehrwürdigen Trotz der Burgruine!
Von weitem schon hört man den alten Riesen,
Stumm harret das Tal mit ungewisser Miene,
Der Kückuck nur ruft sein einförmig Grüssen
Versteckt aus unerforschter Wildnis Grüne,--
Jetzt kracht die Wölbung, und verhället lange,
Das wundervolle Schauspiel ist im Gange!

Ja nun, indes mit hoher Feuerhelle
Der Blitz die Stirn und Wange mir verklärt,
Ruf ich den lauten Segen in die grelle
Musik des Donners, die mein Wort bewährt:
O Tal! du meines Lebens andre Schwelle!
Du meiner tiefsten Kräfte stiller Herd!
Du meiner Liebe Wundernest! ich scheide,
Leb wohl!-- und sei dein Engel mein Geleite!²⁷

"Besuch in Urach" is seen from a different perspective than
"Wintermorgen." The poet and narrator has returned to a once-familiar
spot. Each stanza presents another image of the all-inclusive moment.
There is a fusion of the earlier "Innewerden einer Naturseele" and of a
new "Zurückstreben in vergangne Zeit."²⁸ The poet here has lost the
feeling of inner-outer relationship and is at real odds, as he also

²⁷ Werke, p. 32.

²⁸ Storz, p. 91.

is in "Mein Fluss,"²⁹ in trying to identify with nature. Imagery reveals that a significant change has taken place in the relationship between nature and poet. The nature imagery in "Wintermorgen" symbolizes that which links with man; but the nature imagery in "Besuch in Urach" symbolizes that which separates her from man. In "Mein Fluss" Urach's theme of exclusion and the desire to identify is carried to its extreme: the poet craves to immerse, even drown himself, in this dynamic medium of nature, which rushes so musically by in total oblivion to the needs of this creature--poet-man.

Both "Besuch in Urach" and "Mein Fluss" were written in 1827-- during the first of Mörike's most intense periods of poetic creativity, and ten years before the first of the three periods of writing in which his poetry most closely approximates that of the classical tradition.

In "Mein Fluss" sky and river react with each other as soul and body to become one unit. But the soul of the poet is unable to enter into this relationship with nature, as Zemp observes, for here, as in "Urach," the poet can scarcely read the language of the rocks, clouds and springs.³⁰ He cannot make contact with the soul of nature, which he so desires. However, in his attempt to do so

Mörike conjures up the many coloured garment of Nature . . . with a sensuous power unrivalled except by Goethe. While Eichendorff sees Nature as a green shimmering sea and floats through or above it like a disembodied spirit, Mörike, without losing his sense of the whole, perceives the smallest and most inconspicuous objects

²⁹Werke, p. 39.

³⁰Zemp, p. 117.

and absorbs them, so to speak, through every pore. As in Besuch in Urach, where, though driven onwards in his quest for the soul of Nature and almost overwhelmed by the luxuriant landscape, he nevertheless opens himself lovingly to the meanest flower that blows. His sensuousness extends to bodily sensations as the feeling of water in Mein Fluss . . . ³¹

In "Besuch in Urach," as in "Wintermorgen," Mörrike employs an especially selected group of main words, and these key words recur in every period of his creative activity, and in doing so they achieve specific familiarity and symbolic significance. In "Besuch in Urach" the same trilogy of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz," as in "Wintermorgen," may be observed to lead up to, and culminate in, the climactic "moment." And this is accompanied by the same reversals of mood. "Zwielicht" here is achieved by the dream element which is characterized by the statements: "Nur fast so wie im Traum ist mirs geschehen, . . . ;" "Dass ich in dieses Tal verirrt" and "Doch schwankt der Boden, . . . ," and by the fact that green blades and trees become confusing mirrors of past time. Stanza two notes that even at high noon "Schatten mischt mit balsamreicher Schwüle" and recalls the times the poet fled here "bei süß-schläferndem Gefühle." [*Italics mine.*]

Vehemently the poet cries in stanza seven "So trink ich gierig die entzückten Qualen," which are his "süßen Zauberschalen" of memory. But the fusing image of present and past causes a vacillating mood: joy of return to an intimately-known spot includes the "Wintermorgen" quality of "Blick voll Wehmut." The imagery again abounds in antithetical

³¹R. B. Farrell, "The Art of Eduard Mörrike", Australian Goethe Society Proceedings (1952-1953), pp. 22-23. Hereafter cited as "Art."

statements: shrubs and blades ensnare the poet in "liebliche Betrachtung"; the earlier sense of a forceful pressure of opposing emotions is seen in the coupling of "Schmerz und Lust"; and of "Entzücken" and "Qual" in "entzückten Qualen"; he is undecided, yet hurries on; he is both "satt und durstig."

In joyous anticipation the poet exclaims: "O hier ists, wo Natur den Schleier reisst!" only to end in its reversal:

---Doch ach, sie bleibt, mehr als der Mensch, verwaist,
Darf nicht aus ihrem eignen Rätsel steigen! (Stanza 5)

Man's brevity of life is accentuated by silhouetting it against images of timelessness, such as the ever-recurring thunder and lightning which are flashed into the world by the timeless "alten Riesen." Thus the poet's consciousness of the gorge which separates him from nature leads him to a deeper awareness of the basic difference between man and nature, and of nature's unalterability, as contrasted to man's brevity of life.

A two-fold "Hinweg" and "Vergebens" underscores the hopeless aspect of this happy event. Antithetically, too, the poet cries, as if in utmost existential agony:

Hier will ich denn laut schluchzend liegen bleiben,
Fühllos, und alles habe seinen Lauf! (Stanza 10)

"Fühllos" denotes a state without feeling, and the whole line states that the poet could not care less, whereas "laut schluchzend" suggests a great intensity of feeling and involvement. The sense of uninvolvement is emphasised by the repetition of the thought in "Hin ist die Lust! hab alles seinen Lauf!"

The first four verses of this stanza stand at opposite emotional and electrically charged poles from each other. It takes but the moment of pressing a button to achieve a flood of light under appropriate circumstances. So here, the entire reversal hinges on the one word "Donner," and the expostulation of "plötzlich" is the first spark of the instantaneous process:

Da plötzlich, hör ichs durch die Lüfte treiben,
 Und ein entfernter Donner schreckt mich auf;
 Elastisch angespannt mein ganzes Wesen
 Ist von Gewitterluft wie neu genesen. (Stanza 10)

The connecting imagery between "plötzlich" and "Blitz" (two stanzas later) reveals an intensification of the forces active in nature and, symbolically, in the poet's mind. It consists of an accumulative heaping of facts concerning the ongoing process. "Donner schreckt" and finally is heard as "grelle Musik" (stanza 12), and as accompaniment to the poet's shout of blessing. The paradox underlying "Wintermorgen" is the basis here also: the valley is listening silently and uncertainly emphasised also by terms as "schwanken," "schwirren," "verwirrt," "unschlüssig," "Schattengrund" and "Betäubung," while thunder crashes, the old giant (the elemental force) is heard in the distance, the hidden coccoo calls. This depicts the dynamics of the poetic process, the two sides of the poet represented in "Tag und Nacht."

Here the dynamic forceful forward thrust of inspirational activity is balanced by the quiet, waiting and receptive part of the poet which may appear, as so frequently and symbolically portrayed by Mörike in the image of dreaming, night, or darkness. It is in reality nothing of the kind. This dream quality symbolizes the very apex of the poetic

receptivity behind that flaming forehead:

Ja nun, indes mit hoher Feuerhelle
Der Blitz die Stirn und Wange mir verklärt, (Stanza 12)

The spindles of thought are shooting rapidly back and forth between memory of the past and of present impression, weaving a grand design as do the "silberne Spindeln" of "Gesang in der Nacht" (1825).³²

Williams tells us "all is flux--is the burden of Mörrike's poetry."³³ This creates "a state of suspense" which is so well epitomized in the "flux, shifting, drifting, hovering" of "Wintermorgen."³⁴ Therefore Mörrike's typical key words embody the spirit of antithesis and suggest that various paradoxical forces are interacting with, or counteracting each other. There always appears to be an intimation of the "Fülle und "Entbehrung" so strikingly exemplified in the poem "Nachts" (1832).³⁵ Rhythmic antithesis forms a particularly melodious syncopation in "Nachts," but imagery gives the cue to the melody.

The poet enters into the "moment" as if he were enveloped by a delicate luminescent film of time and space in its primeval essence of being. Sight and sound--inner~~ly~~ and outer--illuminate and transform the process and thereby highlight the aspect of movement in the poem. Killy draws attention to the original form of "Nachts" which was part of the exceedingly musical duet with "Gesang zu Zweien" In

³² Werke, p. 44.

³³ Williams, p. 165.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 167.

³⁵ Werke, p. 305.

Maler Nolten these two poems form a conversation between the King of Orplid and the magical Thereile who loves him.³⁶ This combination accentuates the basic contrast between night and day even more. The two sets of images--those of quiescent brooding and of underground "daemonic" primeval forceful activity are pitted against each other. The effect is one of ethereal harmony, rather than of disharmony.

This early poem of Mörike, written in the same year as "Wintermorgen," fittingly exemplifies Killy's findings concerning recurring images which achieve the quality of "Zeichen" with ever renewed life and impetus in Mörike's poetry. And these signs create a complete world by means of delimitation ("Beschränkung") of description.³⁷ But Killy does not differentiate, here, between the earlier and later poetry of Mörike, which, it seems, must be borne in mind for the delimitation of description increases noticeably during the poet's 'classical' periods of writing. (This will be dealt with in greater detail later). Killy accurately states, however, that Mörike uses a comparatively small number of frequently recurring signs or "lyrischen Urworte" to create the basic pictures of his poems. These key ("Kern") words are also the first "Elemente unserer Lebenswelt, der Wirklichkeit und dem Traum, der Gegenwart und ältester Erinnerung" They include "Licht, Sonne, Tag, Nacht, Mond, Stern, Traum, Morgen, Himmel, Gold, Grün,

³⁶ Killy, p. 87.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 79.

Blau, Quelle und Fluss, Jungfrau und Braut, Mutter und Schoss, Töne, Seele, Herz--"38

The first eight of these words deal with time and its effect upon man and the universe; "Himmel" conveys the image of time-present --of day and night--and of time-future; the three colors epitomize the beauty of nature in its all-dimensional time-aspect, with "Gold" in its manifold significance joining "Blau" with its tranquil in-depth implications, to form nature's most prolific verdancy; "Quelle und Fluss" depict the bubbling vibrancy, depth and clarity of the spirit of man, as well as his eternal timelessness; "Jungfrau, Braut, Mutter und Schoss" encompass life's basic time-transitions and imply time as evolving from primeval night to the maturity of day; "Töne, Seele, Herz" of man receive their coloring from the particular combinations of the foregoing characteristics and, consequently, are responsible for the tonal-coloring of the poem. We glean then, from this very brief sketch of the significance of Mörike's primary signs, an indication of the immense importance and precision connected with the choice of words, and of their far-reaching symbolic implications.

Mörike's key words become recurring motifs and form an associative chain which points to real and lasting values. This use of motifs and variations on a theme shows a modern tendency toward abstraction, but Killy pertinently observes, regarding the "Spiel mit Zeichen," that Mörike always maintains a borderline in his play with words.³⁹

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 82.

Mörike's abstractions, although based on universal experience, contain within themselves an illusive, but definite, impression of personal experience.

The three symbol-components of Mörike's "moment" in nature and/or time are "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz." The early poems discussed so far show an interweaving and inter-dependency of these components. Other images appear to be ancillary, and to contribute, to that of this "moment." The meeting of these three factors--of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz"--seems to precipitate a climax, an epiphany. Outer manifestations of the "moment" represent the poet's internal stand, consequently the outer situation frequently becomes the frame of an inner process.

Mörike tends to reveal an emotional curve in this early poetry, which he seems, consciously, to attempt to stabilize. Thus in "An einem Wintermorgen . . ." he starts on a high point, emotionally, swings low, and then achieves a balance at midpoint between jubilation and despair. In "Besuch in Urach" the reverse occurs; the poem begins on an emotionally low key, swings high, and balances between these two points. Neither of the two extremes of mood ever seem far away. And the cause of this seems to be related to the poet's keen awareness of the transience of time. But this awareness is draped by a veil of imagery. Antithetical imagery has the dual function of concealing biographical fact and of intensifying both values in an inherent or apparent paradox.

The poet, in these early poems, is passively receptive of that

which acts upon him, yet he reflects upon this state. He cannot be classified with the romantic poets although some romantic gestures are in evidence.

Key words or images, in Mörrike, become motifs and form associative chains which may be traced in his writings--with some variation --from early to late. These words or images are important contributing factors in the foundation and structural framework of the poems and lead up to the climactic "moment," as will be shown further in the following pages.

III. Tempero-classical Poetry

Evidence of Development

Classical traits are evident in Mörike's earliest writings, as has been shown in respect to the "Wintermorgen" poem (p. 44 ff). However, the poet's classical period may justly be described as spanning the years 1835 through 1846.

In relation to Mörike the term "classical" includes the overtones of the accepted definition of the word based on Greek and Roman antiquity and upon the associations which the term has acquired throughout the centuries: "objectivity in the choice and handling of the theme, simplicity of style, clarity, restraint, and formal structure."¹ But within this framework Mörike's "classical" verse shows a tendency to gravitate toward the golden mean: there is an ambiguity in both form and content which often makes the designation "classical" questionable. This tendency toward the golden mean seems to indicate a philosophy of life which was expressed earlier in the poem "Gebet" (1832), as follows:

Herr! schicke, was du willst,
Ein Liebes oder Leides;
Ich bin vergnügt, dass beides
Aus Deinen Händen quillt.

¹Thrall, p. 88.

Wollest mit Freuden
 Und wollest mit Leiden
 Mich nicht überschütten!
 Doch in der Mitten
 Liegt holdes Bescheiden.²

Chronologically, too, Mörike's "classical" period falls into the middle of his life-span.

Stylistically, Mörike's gravitation toward the golden mean may be seen in his avoidance of earlier expressions of extremes, as those which were evident in "Nachtgesichte" and in Maler Nolten. Conscious thought now enters where formerly poems, as for example "Im Frühling" (1827),³ were emotion-tinged, romantic or mood-dominated.

In "Im Frühling" the sensual impressions play on the poet's emotions. All the senses seem to be supersaturated by the atmosphere, the mood of Spring. The longing here is undefined and romantic, like Eichendorff's Fernweh: "Ich sehne mich, und weiss nicht recht nach was:" The antithetical poles of this longing are comprised of romantic elements: "Halb ist es Lust, halb ist es Klage;" This is not a "classical" longing for a return to a specific place or time as in the later "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben" (1845),⁴ or as in "Peregrina IV" (1827).⁵ Love, in "Im Frühling," seems to hold promise of being a tangible essence, if only it could be found. It is personified and addressed in apostrophe:

²Werke, p. 127.

³Ibid., p. 29.

⁴Ibid., p. 163.

⁵Ibid., p. 99.

Ach, sag mir, all-einzige Liebe,
Wo du bleibst, dass ich bei dir bliebe!

But then love is quickly correlated with an intangible essence, one whose effect may be seen, felt, experienced, but which can never be overtly confronted or induced to account for itself: "Doch du und die Lüfte, ihr habt kein Haus." The poet's heart is made responsible for the weaving of these effects of memory and, though only aged twenty-three, the poet speaks of "--Alte unnennbare Tage." This too, links with romantic merging of lines of thought and indefinable time elements.

In strong contrast to the romantic "Im Frühling" stand poems like "Gefunden" (1845),⁶ "Johann Kepler" (1837),⁷ and the first half of "Hermippus" (1860).⁸ Here 'thought' seems to be expressed more realistically and for its own sake. These poems relate ideas, actual or imputed occurrences, not undefinable feelings, emotions or moods. The poet does not enter the scene. He has become the observer, the relatively uninvolved narrator. Images are now explicit and time-recognized: Zeus--a mythological god, Johann Kepler--an authentic seventeenth-century astronomer, Hermippus--a Roman sage.

In "Gefunden" Zeus set out to establish a certain fact: to ascertain the centre of the earth. The statement of intention is explicitly verbalized in the first line; the method and procedure is succinctly presented in the following lines; and in line six the precise

⁶Ibid., p. 74.

⁷Ibid., p. 75.

⁸Ibid., p. 191.

result is stated. It is a poem of classical, almost mathematical, precision. The last two lines draw a sententious conclusion.

But this near approach to the classical ideal is atypical for Mörike, even in his "classical" period. Most of the poems of this period are thought or idea-oriented but few are, like the three just mentioned, entirely devoid of the author's presence. Even in "classical" poems as "Mit einem Anakreonskopf und einem Fläschchen Rosenöl" (1845),⁹ one seems to sense the poet and the clock behind the veil of the sententious concluding imagery:

Doch nur wo ein Liebender singt die Töne des Greisen,
Füllet Hallen und Saal wieder der herrliche Duft.

Time determines the result. This does not invalidate, for Mörike, Farrell's designation of the classical, which is mastery, equilibrium and permanence;¹⁰ Mörike significantly adds a new dimension to the former attributes. His poetry becomes tempero-classical: time alters and modifies the classical elements of his poems; time softens the contours by its veiled suggestion of past and future; time present stands between time past and time future almost as an personified embodiment.

Thus time achieves increasing significance in Mörike's writings. In the poet's "classical" period it enters persistently as a potent contributory factor in the creation of dynamic imagery. And in the "Dingdichtung" it prevents the images whose thingness is being described

⁹Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁰See p. 47.

--a lamp, a beech tree, three little apples on a twig--from becoming static, cold and lifeless. There is a sense of ongoing time which prevents it from becoming static.

Poems of 1837-1838

Key words gain momentum and intensity in Mörike's poetry as they focus on, and contribute to, the magic moment of climax. This becomes increasingly apparent throughout the poet's more creative periods. The increasing momentum in vocabulary and imagery is evident in the poetry after the hiatus in creativity during the years 1830 through 1835. In 1837--which is Mörike's second period of prolific output--we note a pointedness of imagery which is new to this poet's art. Similarly, we notice an increasing concern with time, an awareness of its effect.

Some key words of Mörike, as has been intimated earlier, deal more tangibly with the intangible qualities of character--of mood, feeling, sensitivity to indefinable influences of internal and external nature. Reversals of mood--as that of the "Wintermorgen" "Jauchzen" to "Wehmut" to widely-alert acceptance--are accompanied by a particular vocabulary of intensified antithesis which builds up to the climactic moment of "plötzlich," "aber," or "Da, mit einem Mal." "An eine Äolsharfe" (1837)¹¹ is an outstanding example of this.

¹¹Werke, p. 35.

This poem is prefaced by four lines from an Horatian ode which have been translated as follows:

Thou, friend, in endless anguish day by day
Mournest thy Mysteres snatched away,
Weeping, when Hesper rises on the night,
Weeping, when Phospor flees the sun's returning light.¹²

Mörike chose this classic expression of grief to speak for him for it coincides with his own keenly-felt loss of a favorite brother--August--who died at age seventeen. The untimeliness of this early death is graphically portrayed in the imagery of the "Äolsharfe," where the sweet but sorrowful lament becomes a metaphor for personal human emotion. The petals of the rose, like the deceased one, fall in early Spring, suddenly and unexpectedly.

This poem is an apostrophe to the wind-harp: "An," not "Auf". . . eine Äolsharfe." Herman Kurz calls it "eine musikalische Malerei."¹³ And Friesen draws attention to the harmony of classical and romantic ideals in this poem, and to the movement towards abstraction and the "Dingdichtung," to seeing the 'life' of things per se, things which within their bounds will reveal a complete and universal beauty.¹⁴ To these observations Farrell succinctly adds a deeper

¹²The Odes of Horace, Latin text with trans. by various hands chosen by H. E. Butler (London: C. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1929), p. 115.

¹³Herbert Thiele, quoting Herman Kurz in "An eine Äolsharfe: Zu dem Gedicht von Eduard Mörike", Wirkendes Wort, vol. 8, 1957, p. 11.

¹⁴Friesen, p. 183.

¹⁵Farrell, "Aufbauprinzipien", pp. 381-82.

interpretation of the meaning of this colorful net of imagery:

Die Äolsharfe, die in diesem Gedicht der reale Gegenstand ist, an dem sich das zarte Spiel der Seele entzündet, kann man ganz allgemein als Symbol der seelischen Haltung Mörikes ansehen, der allen Eindrücken weit offen ist und mit diesen mitgeht, wohin sie ihn auch tragen mögen.¹⁵

And Farrell, in talking of the individuality of Mörike's poetry, draws on the "Äolsharfe" as a typical example, stating that the highly picturesque images in this poem have nothing to do with the original instigation from which this picture evolved. "Die Winde, die aus der Ferne kommen, rufen in der Phantasie Erinnerungen wach . . ." which join with those of the "'frisch-grünendem Hügel' 'Frühlingsblütchen' das Säuseln der Harfe" to create a picture of synaesthetic experience.¹⁶

"An eine Äolsharfe" epitomizes the uniqueness of a crystallized transient moment. It fuses past experience and present impression and, in doing so, it creates a new image.

The adolescent rose of "Erinnerung" (1822)¹⁷ which is infused with nostalgic memory of a last meaningful moment with first-love

Klaerchen Neuffer:

Und ich bat dich um ein Röschen,
 Das du an der Brust getragen,
 Und mit schäuen Augen schnelle
 Reichtest du mirs hin im Gehen:
 Zitternd hob ichs an die Lippen,
 Küsst es brünstig zwei-und dreimal;
 . . .

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 381.

¹⁷ Werke, p. 10.

in the "Äolsharfe" becomes a fully mature symbol:

. . . --die volle Rose streut, geschüttelt,
all ihre Blätter vor meine Füße!

Only a master of both insight and of Sprachgefühl is able to simultaneously veil the secrecy of the emotional moment and to spell it out. The significance of Mörike's antithesis here achieves a new beauty in its penetration of artistic life.

The wind, elemental symbol of the spirit, plays in the harp and produces a "melodische Klage." But "Klage" also denotes dissonance, not only a sad melodic harmony. So, too, Wohl and Weh are both contained in "wohl lautender Wehmut." And so also, the wind causes both the cry of the harp and the falling of the petals--both an internal and an external shedding of emotion. It is a picture of daemonic beauty, yet of innocence. Two equally strategic factors balance and supplement each other: willingly and freely, the rose gifts ("streut") its petals to the wind, but, at the same time, the rose is also shaken by that very wind, to the extent where it is unable to withhold from posterity, from art, anything that is in its power to give.

This poem illustrates Staiger's premise concerning "Stilbruch und Neubeginn" in which that critic explains the cyclical course of literature, as pertaining to ages, epochs and also to the writings of individual poets. An end stage of development is reached, after which a break is imperative--if writing is to continue--; a "hiatus," occurs, giving rise to a new kind of poetry.¹⁸ According to Staiger such a "hiatus," or break, is apparent in Mörike's poetry of the years

1830-1835 when the poet's prolific creativity of 1827 had dwindled down to little more than the two documents of self-doubt: "Verborgenheit" and "Gebet," and when Mörike felt deep-rooted concern as to the possibility of further creativity. Again, two poems indicate the new and very different phase of writing: "Auf das Grab von Schillers Mutter" (1835),¹⁹ which is the first of Mörike's poems in the elegiac mode,²⁰ and "An eine Lieblingsbuche meines Gartens" (1836).²¹ "An eine Äolsharfe" is representative of Mörike's new beginning in 1837. It is only one of the many precise and beautiful image-pictures sketched by the poet in that year, among which are such titles as "Lose Ware," "Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag," "Vicia faba minor," "Märchen vom sichern Mann" and the sententious epigram "Ideale Wahrheit" and the elegies to Johann Kepler, Theokrit and Tibullus.

But "Auf das Grab von Schillers Mutter" is not only a new creation in form; it also adds a new dimension to the symbol of the rose. The early loss of love ("Erinnerung") is now associated with loss of life, suggesting time after earthly life. The poem, written after the poet's visit to the grave to commemorate the memory of the mother of

¹⁸Emil Staiger, Stilwandel (Zürich & Freiburg: Atlantis Verlag), chapter I.

¹⁹Werke, p. 76.

²⁰Doerksen, p. 27.

²¹Werke, p. 76.

one whom he idolized, is free of earlier romantic characteristics. It is anchored down to a definite time and space. Pointing gestures in imagery emphasise specific details and reveal objective observation and recording.

The symbolic value of this rose is based upon Mörike's antithetical polarities: it draws water (its spiritual quality) from mysterious daemonic springs; and it obtains energy from the bright golden rays of the sun. Together, dark and light forces create this "Tausendblättrig" profusion of beauty, even as the poet does in his art.

A noteworthy factor of this new beginning in the poetry of Mörike is the delimitation: imagery is now related to specific time, object and place, and there is an obvious movement toward a conclusion. The summarizing sententious conclusion here:

Eines Unsterblichen Mutter liegt hier bestattet; es richten
Deutschlands Männer und Frauen eben den Marmor ihm auf.

is an early example of his sententious statements as found later, for instance in the conclusion of "Auf eine Lampe." But significantly, too, is the awareness that Mörike now combines immediacy with reflection, which is new.

Mörike's exultant affirmation of nature's generous accolade at the feet of the deserving, where man withheld acclaim: "Ja, beschäme sie nur, brich als ein Wunder hervor!" links with the ecstatic conclusion of "An eine Äolsharfe." Nature's inherent, miraculous quality of "Wunder" is a variant of the magic moment in its atmosphere of "Zauber" and "Blitz." This is emphasised in the elegy to Schillers

mother by a quick succession of four exclamatory sentences, each punctuated by an exclamation mark.

The "Äolsharfe" poem shows a similarly classical pointedness and delimitation of imagery as does the poem addressed to Schiller's mother. The wind-harp is leaning against a specific ivied wall of a specific terrace:

Angelehnt an die Efeuwand
Dieser alten Terasse, . . .

It is a secretive ("Geheimnisvoll") instrument. And the immediacy and fervency of

Fang an,
Fange wieder an
Deine melodische Klage!

accelerates throughout the poem, climaxing in the final sudden gust of wind with its accompanying antithetical result of "süßem Erschrecken" deep in the poet's soul and which coincides with the effect of the wind upon the rose.

An associative pattern of memories linking days and events shared with a brother forms the inner frame and points to the daemonic depth of this poem. The winds which play the song of this harp have come far --from the freshly-green mound. Grief is emphasised by the exclamation: "Ach!"--quick, brief, all-inclusive. Antithetical imagery is becoming more indirect than in early poems.

Wind, and storm in particular, is one of Mörike's important elements. Its effect upon the rose has undergone change since the Klaerchen Neuffer days of "Begegnung" (1827)²² with its humorous boy-girl theme. Basic words, even in this early poem, contain "Nachts"

and "Sturm" (each used twice), "scheint," "träumt," "Entzücken," "rauscht." Antithesis is in its beginning stages: "freudig und verlegen"; "von Anmut hingerissen." But the main progress in imagery is seen in the wind's influence upon the rose:

Wie Rosen, die der Wind zerblasen
So unet ihr Gesichtchen glüht.

"Zerblasen" denotes destruction, not graceful and mature floating down in response to a meeting with the master-element as in the "Äolsharfe." This is underscored by the elemental force inherent in the word "glühen."

In "An eine Äolsharfe" the absolute sovereignty of the romantic element in "Begegnung" has achieved a degree of control, order and vigorous intensity which immensely heightens the daemonic impact of the poem in its acceleration of imagery to its dynamic conclusion. Here, in the "Äolsharfe," the associative pattern related to "Frisch grünendem Hügel" implies a new death. But it also implies blooming life springing from death. Spring is suggested by "Frühlingsblüten" and as a consequence of the winds' abundant collection of fragrance of these spring blossoms the harp is now "Übersättigt mit Wohlgerüchen."

The harp is fully personified and addressed in the first stanza of the poem. In stanza two the poet seems to be musing and reflecting --weaving together effect of memory, wind, distant grave and spring-blossom-fragrance until he cries, as if involuntarily and antithetically: "Wie süß bedrängt ihr dies Herz!" This ends in another double joining

²²Werke, p. 17.

of dispartes: "wohllautender Wehmut," which simultaneously increases and dies:

Wachsend im Zug meiner Sehnsucht,
Und hinsterbend wieder.

Stanza three contains the height of poetic ambiguity and of suggestiveness. The Mörikean moment of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz"--a power against which he, the poet, is defenceless--is clearly implied in "Aber auf einmal," "Wie der Wind heftiger herstösst," "Ein holder Schrei der Harfe . . ." "Wiederholt . . ./ Meiner Seele plötzliche Regung"; "mir zu süssem Erschrecken," and then the Daemon shakes the rose-bush. It is the moment of epiphany. But it is also the moment of the illusive veil. The imagery suggested by the beauty of rose-petals spontaneously deposited at the poet's feet conveys a wealth of meaning--much more than is overtly expressed: the petals have fallen due to the blowing of the wind. All that the rose was waiting for was the perfect moment, the right timing for this meeting with the other of nature's elements which would produce this magic moment. Therefore the rose is now a dynamic agent, acting on its own behalf, but in conjunction with another of nature's primary elements.

This reaction of the poet to the rose gives evidence of progress in dealing with life's elemental conflicts as they are precipitated upon man. The erstwhile feeling of ineptitude, in the face of Urach's thunder, in the "Äolsharfe" shows an attempt to resolve the problem which the elements have brought. In "Besuch in Urach" the poet is very conscious of his inability to cope with nature. Then nature does what

he could not do. It establishes contact with him by reaching out to him in a sudden clap of thunder and conveying its message to the poet, though it does not reveal its deepest secret. But in the "Äolsharfe" the intangible message of nature becomes a tangible sign of change. The element breaks into human experience like a visible and human action. The wind here is symbolic of change. This metaphor is an extension from that of "Urach," and it correlates closely with the one of Peregrina.

The similarity with "Peregrina" is apparent in the latter's associative words such as "Scharlachtuch," "Schwarz gekleidet," "die Weymouthsfichte mit schwarzem Haar/ Den Spiegel des Teiches halb verhängt," "Rosen brannten," and with its sensuous close-upness of "langen Wimpern," "zuckten" and "glühen." In both "Peregrina" and the "Äolsharfe" the poet stands at an abyss. The moment of time is both "grausam" and spins out a life-long "Zauberfaden"; it is both "süß" and "erschreckend." In both, the moment is based on memory, on past time.

This, too, is part of the abyss of the artist, Nolten, who, at the labyrinth is described with similar imagery of "Gewitter" breaking in upon his life,²³ and of the gypsy Elisabeth who is constantly described in terms of wind imagery and who was, herself, the artist's wind of ecstasy and terror, his heaven and his abyss, his foil and background against which all the action of his life took place. It was she who caused the artist to see the inner depths of himself as in a mirror, and it was she who ruled the poet's inner, and outer, world all his life.

²³ Werke, Maler Nolten, p. 763.

Or is it carrying the analogy too far when we see the fusing image of Elisabeth-Agnes, of Maler Nolten, culminate in the polar opposites of "streut, geschüttelt!?"

Mörike's unique and unselfconscious, precipitous imagery makes "An eine Äolsharfe" a superb poem of art and life, of masks and reality. And it is extraordinarily contemporary to the twentieth century. Furthermore, it contains far too much of reality to equate with romanticism. It shows us something of the how of nineteenth century presentation of realism. And, undoubtedly, even the starkest realism contains some elements of romanticism, and vice versa. And this also applies to Mörike. And it is significant, as also Henel and Staiger agree, in their controversy concerning "Erlebnisdichtung und Symbolismus," that the romantic symbol springs from the unconscious, from the seat of "des Geheimnisses und des Wunders." Outer and inner is experienced in identical fashion. The thing becomes symbolic only when these two become one.²⁴

These two poems of the rose, "Auf das Grab von Schillers Mutter" and "An eine Äolsharfe," particularly the latter, are in tune with the ecstatic rhythm of the cosmos which is so audible in the music of the spheres in "Gesang zu Zweien in der Nacht" and in the perpetual ferment of "Nachts" with its "peinlich Widerspiel von Fülle und Entbehrung." There is an intimation of nature's incessant and harmonious underground activity (the German unterirdisch Wühlen expresses the idea more

²⁴ Heinrich Henel, "Erlebnisdichtung und Symbolismus", in DtvjS 32, 1958, pp. 71-98.

concretely) with its influence upon man, but which man is unable to influence. It alters man but remains, itself, unaltered. Before this force Mörike cries: "So beuge dich! denn hier ist kein Entweichen."²⁵

In this way the antithesis in the poet becomes representative of the antithesis in his poetry. Ecstasy and terror are almost inseparable. The moment of either of these two immediately bears in it an intimation of the other--as in the "Äolsharfe," Farrell's observation is apropos here: "Man cannot gaze on supreme beauty without a sense of terror."²⁶ And, for Mörike, the poet, the sense of beauty admixed with terror explodes into creativity; something is given birth; and for him it is true that: "Der Künstler schafft Leben."²⁷

The dynamic control and order over emotions and poetic idiom in the "Äolsharfe" gains momentum in Mörike's fully mature poetry as well. "Die schöne Buche"--written during one of the poet's sparse poetic periods, in 1842²⁸--is a poem representative of the new mature near-classic clarity and distinction noted in the "Äolsharfe." "Die schöne Buche," so it would seem, shows signs of planning and purposeful craftsmanship, but I must disagree with Storz in his assertion that:

Wird doch kaum jemand glauben wollen, ein Gedicht wie beispielsweise "An eine Äolsharfe" sei ebenso in einem einzigen Zug

²⁵ Werke, p. 305.

²⁶ Farrell, "Classical Verse", p. 47.

²⁷ Heinz Fischer, "Pomeranze, Orange, Apfelsine zur Verteilung der Begriffe in Mörikes Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag", WCMLL 2, 1970, pp. 58-62.

²⁸ Werke, p. 74.

niedergeschrieben worden wie die Ballade "Schön Rohtraut" oder das Rollenlied "Die Schwestern."²⁹

for it seems to me that this is precisely a poem that was written in one sweep during an inspired "moment." It is a precipitous poem in every respect. Both form and imagery attest to this. And would not Staiger, who teaches that one must first gain the feeling of a poem before analysis and interpretation can begin,³⁰ agree that "An eine "Äolsharfe" fairly exudes the authentic and unique, unrepeatable feel of the inspired moment? In fact, it is Staiger who asks: "Was hat der Mensch seiner eignen Kraft, was hat er dem Kairos, zu danken?"³¹ Mörike, I believe, would have to attribute his "Äolsharfe" to his Kairos, and not to his powers of intellect or organization.

In "Die schöne Buche" the poet has taken another decisive step toward classical perfection. The first half of the poem is an objective description of a beautiful and cherished spot in nature. The elegiac form gives ability of greater control than did the free verse of "An eine Äolsharfe," since its long lines allow for expanded statement. Every couplet seems to indicate precisioned planning and continuity. Storz comments on the poet's change in description which he ascribes to his "ruhige Aufmerksamkeit" which is not concentrated

²⁹Storz, p. 13.

³⁰Emil Staiger, Die Kunst der Interpretation (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1955); chapter I.

³¹Ibid., p. 23.

any longer "auf das Grenzenlose und Unfassbare von Natur schlechthin, sondern auf ein einzelnes, ganz bestimmtes Gebilde . . . die eine frei stehende Buche."³² There is a conscious division of this poem into two parts: the first part, (lines 1-14), is objective, epic, ordered and non-dynamic description, whereas the second part is subjective, dramatic and dynamic. "The epiphany of the god, that moment of süßes Erschrecken from which his being takes fire and his poetry is born,"³³ that moment so significant in the "Äolsharfe" poem seems to have been left far behind. But, suddenly, in the last line of the first part, Mörike's innocently dynamic word "ahnen" ("Lasset die Helling mich ahnen das offene Feld"), followed immediately by his highly important dash, alert the reader to an impending change: a reversal, or intensification, of mood.

"Plötzlich" the "Staunenden" is introduced to this secret place of magic by "ein freundlicher Geist, des Hains auflauschende Gottheit," The poet's "Entzücken" relates to the "süßes Erschrecken" of the "Äolsharfe." The moment is compounded of various elemental factors: it is high noon, the time of Pan; "Lautlos alles, es schwiegel selber der Vogel im Laub" as if in obeisance to the ascendance of the .. god of nature; the poet hesitates to step on the "zierlichen Teppich" of nature, but when he does, it receives his foot in a hushed and festive manner; the spot of the beech tree is described in terms of

³²Storz, p. 310.

³³Browning, German Poetry, p. 243.

the perfect circle: the tree casts a "beschatteten Kreis," and, conversely from familiar phrasing, the tree is framed in a dazzling circle of gold—a frame supplied by "die feurig strahlende Sonne." The poet stands motionless, reverently he breathes:

. . . daemonischer Stille
Unergründlicher Ruh lauschte mein innerer Sinn.

The lyrical, subjective 'I' of "An einem Wintermorgen . . .," "Erinnerung," "Nächtliche Fahrt," and other early poems, has, in "Die schöne Buche" become a comparatively uninvolved, impersonal poet. The lyrical moment now stands side by side with the objective moment. The 'daemonic' element is present, but differs from that of the early poems. The 'daemonic' moment here does not originate in the "Zwielicht" of night, but in the sun's fire of high noon: "Es war um die hohe Stunde des Mittags." This atmosphere is heightened by reference to "die feurig strahlende Sonne," and to "daemonische [r] Stille." And the poet climaxes this mood with the propulsive couplet:

Eingeschlossen mit dir in diesem sonnigen Zauber-
Gürtel, o Einsamkeit, fühlt ich und dachte nur dich!

There is a complete bifurcation: the two parts are entirely different in character. At the same time the poet is both, entirely part of the very heart of this scene, "Eingeschlossen" in the magic golden-ringed frame cast by the sun, and, (in part I), standing away from it as 'objective' observer. This uninvolvedness is very new in Mörike. The poet is now reflective, and this quality leads him to a similar insight, or gives him that instantaneous revelation, as did the trinity of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" in the moment of

the epiphany in the "Wintermorgen" poem, in "Besuch in Urach," "An eine Äolsharfe" and numerous other poems. And part of the objectivity is conveyed in contrast of shadow and brilliant sunlight, that is, "Zwielicht" is now surrounded by sunshine. Of this new situation Guardini tells us: the beech tree is a small world all its own--filled with "tiefem Leben und ordnende Kraft." The surrounding shields the secret of its beauty. This is symbolized by the word "Hain" which carries with it a deeper implication than does "Wald und Garten." The designation "Hain" has religious overtones. It indicates that the spot is a temple. Therefore the poet hesitates. He senses the secret. The "Schauer" and effect of Pan is upon him.³⁴ There is neither dream nor morbidity in this shadow and sunlight. Sunlight, although it is earlier balanced by darkness, is not, in Mörike, an enemy--as has already been shown.³⁵ In "Die schöne Buche" it forms the frame and finishing touch to the shadow and its origin.

Important also, is the new particularization of object, as noted in "An eine Äolsharfe." This is not only a tree, but a beech tree, and a specific beech tree. It is in a particular spot, not just one tree of many, anywhere in a forest. Doerksen effectively draws attention to this new element in Mörike's poetry of 1847-1842--the pointed naming, the clarity of vision and sound. Comparing "An einem Wintermorgen" (1825)

³⁴Romano Guardini, Gegenwart und Geheimnis (Würzburg: Im Werkbund-Verlag, 1957), pp. 17-19.

³⁵Doerksen, pp. 21-22.

and "Bei Tagesanbruch" (1837), he states:

. . . nun sieht der Dichter das Einzelne klar. Dasselbe gilt auch für die anderen Sinne, besonders das Gehör. Dort hörte er eine Hirtenflöte aus lang verschollener Zeit; hier werden die Vögel mit Namen genannt, ja von nun an werden in den Elegien und Epigrammen Namen häufig aufgezählt--von Freunden, Geschwistern, Vögeln, Bäumen--und mit dem Namen wird das Individuelle des Gegenstandes hervorgehoben. Vom Makrokosmos wendet sich der Dichter zum Mikrokosmos, voll Erstaunen und Entzücken, dass auch hier eine Vollkommenheit--wenn auch auf begrenztem Raum--aufzufinden ist.³⁶

And consequently the new imagery calls for a closer look at specific details and at how these details are linked and presented. Always, in Mörike's poetry, it seems important to see the new expression as one that is superimposed upon traditional or ancient ones. More accurately, it envelops, rather than superimposes, the traditional or ancient. The poet means, I believe, not to wipe out or cover the old images and values, but to illuminate them afresh. Always, he seems to wish us to read him with all our associative faculties brightly polished in order the better to grasp the new depth that is being added to the old.

We see this in "Die schöne Buche." It is not enough that we see the one specific beech tree in all its particularized quality as the symbol of silence and peace and isolation, with its dependency for nourishment and magic upon the daemonic elements of underground and sky. But behind this tree are all the trees of antiquity; the tree as centre of the ritual pagan dance; the tree as part of the Pan landscape where the god of nature and of shepherds blows his flute.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 22-23.

Significantly, too, this time of Pan and melody relates closely with the prominence of music and Daemonie in the writings of Mörrike which start with the gypsy motif and which achieves its ecstatically terrifying high-point in the "Don Juan" finale of the poet's novella "Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag" (1856), which, in turn, leads to the enigmatic poem "Denk es, o Seele . . ." with its picture of a young spruce sapling growing in the forest in preparation for the composer's grave--to serve as planks for his coffin, or to shade and adorn the place of his burial.³⁷

The pastor, Mörrike, might even, perhaps, recall the tree described by Isaiah:

He [man] cuts down cedars; or he chooses a holmtree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest; he plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. Then it becomes fuel for a man; he takes a part of it and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread, also he makes a god and worships it, he makes it a graven image and falls down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire; over the half of it he eats flesh, he roasts meat and is satisfied; also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol; and falls down to it and worships it; he prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for thou art my god!"³⁸

And finally all the trees culminate in the tree of Christ's cross, in the one portrayed as growing in the forest of "Auf ein altes Bild."

Mörrike imbues the locos of his tree with the vitally-alive quality of "Hain." This connects closely with the essence of mystery conveyed by a carefully chosen and profoundly symbolic vocabulary.

³⁷ Werke, p. 1081.

³⁸ Isaiah 44: 14-17, The Holy Bible, RSV (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1953).

An associative chain of words--which fits neatly into Killy's list of primary Mürikean words³⁹--links the various elements of this picture, and of the poem. Words⁴⁰ dealing with time and its effect upon man and the universe are: "jäh," "plötzlich," "beschatteten Kreis." "die feurig strahlende Sonne," "Hellung"; there is a linking of time present and eternal with in-depth color symbolism in "himmlischen Blau"; the blue of the sky is dynamized by the "goldenen Licht" of the sun, by the knowledge that Pan reigns, and by the utmost reverential silence--"auf-
lauschende Gottheit," "lautlos alles, es schwieg selber der Vogel im Laub," "leise," "Aber ich . . . rührte mich nicht," "daemonischer Stille,/ Unergründlicher Ruh lauschte mein innerer Sinn"--which creates an almost hallowed atmosphere.

To this, and to the perfection symbolized in "dies liebliche Rund," is added the word "kunstlos"--artlessly nature creates its most beautiful images, pictures.

A small number of additional words here supplement the picture of those presented by Killy: the poet had not found this enchanting spot quite on his own volition but he had been enticed ("gelockt") by messengers of the nature god (by flowers, birds, butterflies, so Guardini tells us, and not by the dark Daemon),⁴¹ to enter his secret domain ("Ganz verborgen im Wald"), which had been anticipated (geahnt) upon :

³⁹See also p. 60.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Guardini, Gegenwart, pp. 21, 20.

sight of the open area hidden ("versteckt") behind a cliff. No trodden path leads to this spot. The stately tree described stands almost like a bride with her bridesmaids: at the periphery of the golden circle around her the oak with its suggestive "dunklere[n] Fülle" stands silently. And the enormously suggestive imagery of "Jungfrau, Braut, Mutter und Schoss"⁴² is inherent in the attention paid to a nearby birch whose crown, ("jungfräuliches Haupt"), sways shyly in the golden frame:

Neben der dunkleren Fülle des Eichbaums wieget die Birke
Ihr jungfräuliches Haupt schüchtern im goldenen Licht.

Almost, one has the feeling that Mörike did not attribute all of these qualities to his one tree because it might have exploded the frame of his telling.

The word "welch Entzücken" conveys the quality of "Blitz." And the designation of the poet as "einsam," forms a circle with the last line of the poem where it becomes synonymous with "Einsamkeit." To which Storz adds a note, saying that the poet experiences the lonely isolation, which, in his very sharing of it with humanity, separates him from all others.⁴³ This fuses poet and situation into one image. The two become one.⁴⁴ Thus the final couplet of the poem emphasises the perfection described throughout the preceding fourteen couplets. It does this also by forming a larger circle through part one and two,

⁴²See footnote no. 39 of present chap.

⁴³Storz, p. 311.

⁴⁴See footnote no. 24.

with the words "umzirk't" and "umkränzt" in part one, and with the magic "sonnigen Zaubergürtel" in conclusion. The poet is one with the 'daemonic' circle. But here too, it is the quality of the "moment" that is revered and celebrated. The tree itself is now synonymous with the "Zwie-lichtig" shadow [*italics mine*] which it projects. "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" are all here--as before. But they are subtly veiled, and the more suggestive because of it. What is more, the tree feeds on the "Quelle und Fluss" highlighted by Killy. And "Töne, Seele, Herz"⁴⁵ rounds out the union of poet and magic circle in the final couplet.

Clearly, this imagery, in the context of "des Hain's auflauschende Gottheit," indicates a definite progression, a deepening of insight into the mysteries of time and of life's involvements. The one-time dreaming poet is now animated to a penetrating reflectiveness. Storz also finds that the romantic identification with nature, of some of the early poems, is now absent. The earlier fusion of world-beat with heart-beat has matured to a realistic appraisal. The poet listens to this daemonic silence and ponders significantly the existential problem, the overwhelming mystery of the fact of his own existence and that of the world. This is seen in the all-inclusive classic manner wherein neither awareness of image nor of poet, is important, but wherein the total force of the symbolic meaning is presented.⁴⁶

⁴⁵See p. 60

⁴⁶Storz, p. 311.

The aspect of time---temporal and eternal---so important in the writing of Mörike, and noted in "Die schöne Buche," fuses to a little six-verse picture in "Auf ein altes Bild" (1837)⁴⁷ where the poet's frequently termed anticipation, ("ahnung"), becomes veiled vision.

Auf ein altes Bild

In grüner Landschaft Sommerflor,
Bei kühlem Wasser, Schilf und Rohr,
Schau, wie das Knäblein Sündelos
Frei spielet auf der Jungfrau Schoss!
Und dort im Walde wonnesam,
Ach, grünet schon des Kreuzes Stamm!

The associative word chain is clearly marked in this poem. The links fit neatly into each other, and form a circle between beginning and end, and between end and beginning: "grüner," "Sommerflor," "kühlem Wasser," "der Jungfrau Schoss," "grünet." To these primary words of Mörike are added others which are significant to his poetry: "Landschaft," "Knäblein," "Frei spielet," "wonnensam," "Kreuzes Stamm" (the latter is frequently used in terms of trees). These secondary words are used extensively by Mörike, most frequently in terms of allusions as for example, the tree is specified in terms of an oak, beech and so on---each with its own distinct characteristics, but all linking in the one genus.

"Auf ein altes Bild," though animated by the Virgin Mary with the Christ-child playing on her lap, seems a still-life painting. Dynamic active verbs are missing. It is an idyllic scene. The two figures are surrounded by a green landscape: the madonna with child is sitting near water's edge; a forest forms the background of this

peaceful scene. But the final couplet relates that the ominous tree destined to be the instrument upon which Christ-man is to become Christ-God is marked---thirty-three years in advance of its mission. This is a similar apocalyptic vision to that expressed some nineteen years later in the poem "Denk es, o Seele . . . ," concerning the early death-to-come of Mozart.

"Auf ein altes Bild," like "Die schöne Buche," refers to a specific moment of time and of space. The first couplet deals with timeless nature---it shows one stage of the natural cycle in all its beauty. The second couplet deals with God made temporal---the "Knäblein Sündelos" is still unaware of his future mission---is still an innocent child. And the concluding couplet shows redemption from time: the greening tree, now part of nature, becomes part of God's plan for the future. Therefore the third image includes the former two. Thus the divine plan of salvation is artistically and simply, realistically, presented. Time becomes timeless and eternal.

Two exclamations heighten the feeling-tone of this poem and add a quick gasp of surprised breath to the otherwise slow and evenly-modulated tempo of the poem. These are "Schau" and "Ach." The former seems to be addressed to future mankind, for none can by-pass this cross, and the latter, too, has the function of calling a quick alert to the Christian paradox: to the tragedy of the saving cross.

⁴⁷Werke, p. 119.

Only the word "grünet," in the final line, shows a dynamic element of growth and development and points forward to a specific and unalterable purpose. There is no abstraction in this description. And, in effect, this still-life picture is very much alive. Killy attests to the fact that these poems, which appear so static on the surface, such as "Die schöne Buche," "Auf eine Lampe" and "Auf ein altes Bild" are in reality not in the least static--in spite of the poet's great striving for balance. "Selbst das stille Bild des "Knäblein Sündelos" steht in einer Bewegung: aus der Gegenwart und dem Vordergrund weist uns das 'dort' in den Grund des Gedichts und die Zukunft--

Und dort im Walde wonnesam,
Ach, grünet schon des Kreuzes Stamm!⁴⁸

Killy emphasises also the consecutive lines of this poem, which all point to the newly begun "Lebenslauf"; to the planned lightness of words and to the importance of sensual impressions.⁴⁹ Again the green and blue of nature is seen; the coolness of water is felt; and the veil of "Sommerflor" is slightly lifted, here and there, to reveal glimpses of the scene beyond. The "Schau" of the poem is in apposition to "schon"--the idyllic picture contains the cross. The significantly pointing gesture is two-fold then, it points to time--"schon"--, and it points to place--"dort."

⁴⁸Killy, p. 76.

⁴⁹Ibid.

Thus, in "Auf ein altes Bild" all the progressive points of Mörrike's development coalesce and the how of his method, at this stage, becomes clear. Deftly chosen imagery very succinctly encapsulates the eternal answer to man's quest--into the tiniest of spaces.

So too, the other poems of this period, which has been dealt with here, reveal a marked change. Imagery denotes a new anchoring down to a definite and particular time, object and space in each poem. There is also a new combination of immediacy and reflection, as well as a movement towards a conclusion. Imagery is no less antithetical than in the earlier period of writing but the antithesis is presented more indirectly than previously. Romantic elements are becoming controlled and ordered, in line with a more objective contemplation. This is particularly evident in "Die schöne Buche" where the poet has become a comparatively uninvolved observer. There is now an even greater striving for balance. These new images of Mörrike, however, are not static or lifeless. They revolve around a specific moment of time but are not dominated by that moment.

All these factors seem to denote a progress in the poet's dealing with life's conflicts. Still, he remains defenceless against the moment of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz," but now the epiphany is always veiled in imagery.

Poems of 1845-1846

In 1843 Mörike was able to retire from his pastoral duties at Cleversulzbach, upon his own request. In the Fall of 1844 he, with his sister Klaerchen, took up residence at Mergentheim in the home of a pensioned Bavarian Lieutenant-Colonel and his daughter Margarethe. The more settled life resulted in the poet's third period of more intensive writing during the years of 1845 and 1846. (The other two periods had been 1827-28 and 1837-38). Marked development is apparent toward a near-classical mastery and perfection in the poetry of these years. Imagery achieves new life as time pivots between past and future and as Mörike more objectively turns to "Dingdichtung." This, and the fact that future time is included at all, points to development in imagery. This development--in imagery and in outlook upon time--is to be studied in the following pages.

Attention has been drawn to the relationship which Mörike's writings bear to the plastic arts.⁵⁰ That there is a similarity in construction, between these two, is apparent, even in Mörike's early works. This is evident in the choice and building up of imagery in Maler Nolten, as well as in the early poetry. This may be seen in the framing nostalgia of the recurring "zum letztenmal" used twice

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Kurt Oppert, "Das Dinggedicht--Eine Kunstform bei Mörike, Meyer und Rilke", in DtvjS 4, 1926, pp. 747-83.

in each of the first and last stanzas in "Erinnerung"; it may be seen also in other framed poems, such as "In der Frühe"--framed by the poet's "Kammerfenster"--; and as "Der Feuerreiter"--also framed by a Fensterleing/--, and in "Um Mitternacht" where the scales of time are framed by the bubbling springs. And so too, the awareness of the falsity of a dream frames the stark reality of "Das verlassene Mägdlein." Furthermore, construction peculiar to the plastic arts is apparent in build-up of contextual blocks--alternating light and dark stanzas of the conversation between "Sie" and "Er"--in "Gesang zu Zweien . . ."; it is apparent in the seeming build-up of equal stanzaic blocks in the ballad of "Schön Rohtraut," and in the conscious use of the strict sonnet form in "Peregrina V."

This is the first time when this similarity with the plastic arts becomes apparent as an underlying feature of the imagery of a poem. Pongs refers to this feature when he states that "aus dem 'Bilden' entsteht das dichterische 'Bild'."⁵¹ No matter what the origin of the picture created in the poem, whether dream experience or reflection, the relationship of the part to the total imagery of the poem shows this increasing independence from former poetic practice and a development toward "Dingdichtung."⁵²

In "Dingdichtung" the poet attempts to extricate himself completely from that which he presents, and to let the object

⁵¹Pongs, p. 149.

⁵²See Oppert's article: "Das Dinggedicht". (Footnote no. 50).

presented speak for itself alone. In so doing the total picture, rather than its separate images, achieves symbolic value, as is the case in C. F. Meyer's "Zwei Segel." An abortive attempt to do this had been undertaken by Brockes who was unable to instill that peculiar combination of imagery into his poetry, which would give it symbolic import: "[Er] musste das Symbol gründlich verfehlen: seine Gleichnisse erscheinen konstruiert, Ding und Deutung fallen auseinander, wie im Epigramm. Erst das religiöse Erlebnis Rilkes vermochte Überall das Dinggedicht zu erfüllen."⁵³ But it was Mörike who first showed the how of this high art to Rilke.

The characteristic common to both the plastic arts and to "Dingdichtung" is described by Oppert as follows:

Der bildende Künstler steht seinem Gegenstand im Abstand gegenüber; nur so kann er ihn als Gesondertes, zur Umwelt Beziehungsloses und in sich Geschlossenes erfassen, als 'Insel', Überall abgelöst vom Kontinent des Ungewissen', und Zug um Zug gelassen nachbilden; in ruhig-objektiver Schau vereinfachend und klärend, das "Dauernde vom Vergänglichen Scheidend", nicht einmal eigentlich selbsttätig freischöpferisch (sogar Rodin lehnte für sich den Begriff der "Inspiration" ab), auch ohne die eigene Stimmung hineinzutragen, lässt er "Ding" in Aug und Seele wirken, bis es, von allem Zufälligen gereinigt, das Gesetz seiner Form ohne fremdes Zutun und wie von selber enthüllt.-- jenes "Wesen, das wir so sicher erfühlen und doch nie recht begreifen können."⁵⁴

The present moment of Mörike now seems to have lost its 'epiphany'-like character and urgency, yet it does, nonetheless, retain the quality of an inherent "Zwielicht" and magic. But this quality b e c o m e s

⁵³Oppert, p. 750.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 754.

increasingly illusive, increasingly veiled, and, consequently, increasingly subtle. This new feature may be taken as part of the refinement and rhythmic fluidity attributable to the stage of the "Epigone"--as part of the "Spätkunst," of "Vollendung," stage of which Staiger speaks.⁵⁵ And thus the poet justly fits into the "Wintermorgen" imagery of transition from night to day--"da noch der freche Tag verstummt"--, (although Mörike was unaware of being a pathfinder), and we perceive him, "blinzeln in den Tag, sein Geist von den Wundern der Nacht erschöpft--so steht er vor uns auf der Schwelle der Zeiten, am Ende der Romantik und am Anfang einer Epoche, deren Nüchternheit ihn verletzte" ⁵⁶

Classical characteristics noted in the 1837 poetry develop in the 1840's. It may justly be said of this period that: "Das unsichtbare Geistige, das nach der romantischen Naturauffassung hinter jedem Sichtbaren/steht, ist bei Mörike selbst sichtbar geworden;" ⁵⁷ The thingness, the near-animate quality, of the beech tree in "Die schöne Buche," is presented in this spiritualized manner. This quality is apparent also in "Auf ein altes Bild," where it is possible for the poet to achieve a spiritual depth far beyond the scope of the poem's six short lines. The sapling growing in the forest

⁵⁵Staiger, Stilwandel, chap. I

⁵⁶-----, Kunst, p. 26.

⁵⁷Heinz Schlaffer, Lyrik im Realismus, (Bonn: H. Bouvier & Co Verlag, 1966), p. 57.

in preparation for its mission thirty-three years hence is vitally linked to the Christ-child playing on his mother's lap. Here Mörke's imagery creates, in a sense, a mystical relationship between child and tree and, without stating it, Mörke underscores their growing to maturity together, and their sharing of a mission.

This spiritual quality gains prominence in the 1845-46 group of poems. "Göttliche Reminiszenz" (1845), is a still more symbolic presentation of this quality than is "Auf ein altes Bild." "Göttliche Reminiszenz," like "Auf ein altes Bild," is based on the plastic arts --on a painting seen by Mörke in the "Kloster der Kartäuser."⁵⁸ But this poem was written in response to an awakened memory of an object frequently seen, not while in direct confrontation with the picture. The sudden emergence from the depths of memory seems to have impressed Mörke like a revelation, as Guardini explains:

Nur erwacht es, dringt mit der Plötzlichkeit einer Vision vor und ergreift das Gefühl--ist aber doch nur Bild, ja Bild von Bild; So meint das Wort 'wunderbar' mehr, als nur dass der Maler etwas Schönes und Eindrucksvolles geschaffen habe; es meint⁵⁹ auch diesen Charakter des Sich-Zeigens, der Offenbarung.

This thought of the Revelation, gleaned from the image of the child at play is a progression from the suggestion of the cross which is indicated in "Auf ein altes Bild." It also implies more than does the imagery of the later poem. In "Schlafendes Jesuskind" (1862) where

⁵⁸ Guardini, Gegenwart, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

the Christ-child is spoken of in terms of the oxymoron: "noch in der Knospe dämmernd," the child, in play, had fallen asleep on a wooden cross, ("Holz der Schmerzen"), in the carpenter's shop. He is "die Herrlichkeit des Vaters." But beyond that, and the "noch," the poet makes no gesture concerning the child's future, and yet a manifold quantity of suggestion may lie in the lines:

O wer sehen könnte, welche Bilder
Hinter dieser Stirne, diesen schwarzen
Wimpern, sich in sanftem Wechsel malen!⁶⁰

Benno von Wiese, in speaking of Mörike's religious expression, states that this, too, is couched in poetic language, and that it carries an unmistakable relationship with Swabian Pietism.⁶¹ In each of these three poems the Christ is depicted as a child. Only in "Karwoche" (1830),⁶² we have the ominous imagery of: "Kreuzes Schatten," "dumpfen Glockenklänge," "Engel singen leise Grabgesänge," and the mother Mary

. . . von Trauermelodien trunken,
Und süß betäubt von schweren Weihrauchsdüften,

seeks, not her child, but her "Bräutigam," in a "Muttergotteshaus" where violets which formerly adorned the blond head of the child now shall wilt as part of the dark forces which the Christ has chosen to deal with on that day. But "Karwoche" stands in antithetical light for it is silhouetted against the beauty and harmony of Spring, as

⁶⁰Werke, p. 119.

⁶¹von Wiese, p. 131.

⁶²Werke, p. 95.

"Auf ein altes Bild" also contrasts summer landscape with the idea of the cross.

Von Wiese finds it characteristic of Mörike that he does not highlight God as the jealous or judging one, but as sweet and innocent child: "Es ist bezeichnend für Mörike, dass ihn gerade das göttliche Kind inspiriert. Hier allein vermochte er für sein eigenes Kindsein das ewige Gegenüber zu finden, nicht aber im eifernden oder richtenden Gott."⁶³ And "Göttliche Reminiszenz" is prefaced by the motto from John 1:3, which states: "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."⁶⁴ So Mörike based his poem on Christ as Logos, the word, the God as Creator. But here the Logos includes both Christ as creator and as child come to earth to begin his development towards the accomplishment of his mission. Therefore Mörike forms a circle between beginning and end purpose of Christ.

Göttliche Reminiszenz (1845)

Vorlängst sah ich ein wundersames Bild gemalt,
 Im Kloster der Kartäuser, das ich oft besucht.
 Heut, da ich im Gebirge droben einsam ging,
 Umstarrt von wild zerstreuter Felsentrümmersaat,
 Trat es mit frischen Farben vor die Seele mir.
 An jäher Steinkluft, deren dünn begraster Saum,
 Von zweien Palmen überschattet, magre Kost
 Den Ziegen beut, den steilauf weidenden am Hang,
 Sieht man den Knaben Jesus sitzend auf Gestein;
 Ein weisses Vlies als Polster ist ihm unterlegt.
 Nicht allzu kindlich deuchte mir das schöne Kind;
 Der heisse Sommer, sicherlich sein fünfter schon,

⁶³ von Wiese, p. 131.

⁶⁴ Bible.

Hat seine Glieder, welche bis zum Knie herab
 Das gelbe Rückchen decket mit dem Purpursaum,
 Hat die gesunden, zarten Wangen sanft gebräunt;
 Aus schwarzen Augen leuchtet stille Feuerkraft,
 Den Mund jedoch umfremdet unnennbarer Reiz.
 Ein alter Hirte, freundlich zu dem Kind gebeugt,
 Gab ihm soeben ein versteinert Meergewächs,
 Seltsam gestaltet, in die Hand zum Zeitvertreib.
 Der Knabe hat das Wunderding beschaut, und jetzt,
 Gleichsam betroffen, spannet sich der weite Blick,
 Entgegen dir, doch wirklich ohne Gegenstand,
 Durchdringend ewge Zeiten-Fernen, grenzenlos:
 Als wittre durch die Überwölkte Stirn ein Blitz
 Der Gottheit, ein Erinnern, das im gleichen Nu
 Erloschen sein wird; und das welterschaffende,
 Das Wort von Anfang, als ein spielend Erdenkind
 Mit Lächeln zeigts unwissend dir sein eigen Werk.⁶⁵

The poet stands in classical distance from his object in this poem. He seems to be aiming at pure description without interpretation. Greiner speaks of the daemonic background behind the "Welterschaffung" of this poem and believes "Göttliche Reminiszenz" to be the "Quintessenz von Mörike's Dichtung . . . in unnachahmlicher Weise."⁶⁶ And when Zulauf remarks on Mörike's great mastery, his "unübertreffliche Beherrschung des lyrischen Ausdrucks . . ." and states that Mörike's pictures "immer aber ihre Überzeugungskraft behalten, weil sie bei aller Gefühlsmäßigkeit doch stets anschaulich und wahr bleiben . . ."⁶⁷ then we are reminded of Farrell's three prime requisites of the "classical spirit in its most developed form," those of "equilibrium, permanence

⁶⁵ Werke, p. 164.

⁶⁶ Martin Greiner, Zwischen Biedermeier und Bourgeoisie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), p. 145.

⁶⁷ Zulauf, pp. 40-41.

and mastery."⁶⁸ And we realize that Mörike has come very close to this perfection in "Göttliche Reminiscenz."

The early antithetical imagery forms an important basis in this poem as well. The poet walked alone ("einsam"), yet the personification in the following line makes him seem the centre of attraction; he is "Umstarrt von wild zerstreuter Felsentrümmersaat." And then, in this poem the poet steps away, after the five introductory lines, and stands opposite to the picture--in his mind--trying to describe objectively. In the image of "Felsentrümmersaat" Mörike accurately evokes a picture of slim fringes of green seen in high rocky mountain ranges. This image is in keeping with that of the remainder of the background of this picture: "jähler Steinkluft" with its "dünn begraster Saum" and its sparse nourishment for the goats, the two lone palms, which are trees of the southern Orient, and their thin patches of shade.

The ninth line catches the reader by surprise, for this is an unusual setting in which to discover the Christ-child. It is immediately evident that someone cares for the child, for they have brought along a white fleece for protection against the cold and jaggedness of the rocks upon which he now sits. But Guardini adds a daemonic dimension to this still rock when he correlates it with the hard mountain from which Suckelborst of "Das Märchen vom sichern Mann" was born. Thus, Guardini states, the rocks and cliffs of this picture are of special

⁶⁸Farrell, "Classical Verse", p. 62.

⁶⁹Guardini, Gegenwart, p. 58.

significance: "Sie sind Symbole für den Bereich des Urhaft-Unerschöpflichen" from which "Göttliche Reminiszenz" takes its origin and its mood.⁶⁹ This mood is underscored by the heat of the summer and by the comment concerning the years attained by the child: "sicherlich sein fünfter schon." The latter specifies temporal time and contrasts with the second part of the poem where the child is depicted as one with the eternal order of time, in his relationship to the godhead.

Another unexpected remark is found in the eleventh line: "Nicht allzu kindlich dachte mir das schöne Kind." This could be an understatement of sarcasm, but reading the sincerity in the remainder of the poem, sarcasm is ruled out--but not the understatement. The whole poem seems to show a conscious straining at logical unadorned clarity. And this is successfully achieved, together with clear indication of time, place and identity of the child. The total picture has the lively ring and appeal of an extended metaphor.

It is a picture made animate. Or, as Pongs explains:

Die Metapher ist nichts, was das Ich, die Seele, den Charakter betrifft; sie ist der Weitblick, der Spürsinn im Auffinden von Analogien, dem Licht vergleichbar, das die Umwelt erhellt. . . . und jene Leistung der Metapher, das Beseelen des Unbeseelten wird gefasst nur als ein 'Vor-Augen-Stellen', als Veranschaulichung.⁷⁰

Here the inanimate painting achieves the life of its characters. The frame in which it is presented serves to distance observer from the observed and thereby to enhance the magical quality which the Christ-

⁷⁰Pongs, p. 4.

child casts over the scene. If nature was, for Mörike, a "Göttliches,"⁷¹ the godly quality here seems to have spilled over from the innocent, enigmatic child. Guardini pertinently declares: "Dieses Dasitzen hat etwas Geheimnisvolles." And he states that both the mythology of psychology and that of the dream are of importance in the interpretation here, for the figure of the child symbolizes the announcement of one who is to come—one who symbolizes the creating of a new beginning—and who has as antithesis the old shepherd ("Greis"), who symbolizes the end of life and "die Hoheit über ihm." Therefore, in the shepherd and child are portrayed the "Urbilder" of all time.⁷²

The quality of "verschmelzen" between poet and nature, noted in early poetry,⁷³ has changed. Nature, in partaking of the glory of the Christ-child, seems to adore with the poet. And the poet's adoration is apparently unintentional. He intends only to describe objectively. But subjective feeling and mood enters in the interpretative words like "das schöne Kind," "gelbe Röckchen" (denoting sunshine, godliness, happiness), "Pupursaum" (denoting royalty and majesty), "gesunden, zarten Wangen sanft gebräunt." [*Italics mine.*]

Interpretation of personality is intensified in the antithetical lines sixteen and seventeen:

⁷¹Doerksen, p. 36.

⁷²Guardini, Gegenwart, p. 59.

⁷³Doerksen, p. 34.

Aus schwarzen Augen leuchtet stille Feuerkraft,
Den Mund jedoch umfremdet unnennbarer Reiz. [Italics mine.]

The eyes reflect man's soul, his inner life. In "Feuerkraft" we are reminded of the power of fire which burns--silently--purifying without consuming, as gold is refined in the crucible of ore, or like Moses at the burning bush.⁷⁴ Then the verb "leuchtet," in its active role, equates with the quality of purification, that is, the eyes have this capacity. And Holthusen informs us that "Reiz" is, in Mörrike, "keine leere Phrase." It is for him "etwas Berückendes, geheimnisvoll Verfremdetes."⁷⁵ This duplicates the essence of estrangement and distancing in Mörrike's phrase "umfremdet unnennbarer Reiz." And the word "unnennbar" has accumulated the wisdom of experience since the poet's early romantic "alte unnennbare Tage" of "An einem Wintermorgen, vor Sonnenaufgang." The poet now knows that there are not only things which he cannot express, but also that there are things which he cannot know.

In "Göttliche Reminiszenz," (18-29), it is particularly noticeable how the poet's keen perceptual sense animates and invigorates all the senses of the Christ-child and the movements of the shepherd. Again, adjectives and adverbs assist in this and reveal Mörrike's new pointing gestures: "ein alter Hirte, freundlich . . . gebeugt." [Italics mine.] The expression on the face of the ~~face of the~~ child seems to show that he saw the petrefact--"aus Stein gewordenes Leben"⁷⁶--given to him to

⁷⁴Exodus, chap. 3, Bible.

⁷⁵Hans Egon Holthusen, "Eduard Mörrike", in Merkur 237, (Dec. 1967), pp. 1122-1140.

play with, as a "Wunderding." This characteristic of the child's vision causes him to penetrate vast distances of time and to gain insight into that which is from eternity to eternity. The image of the petrifact encompasses the Urgrund of being, of time and of creation. It is living vegetation or other organic impression turned to stone or preserved in rock, made timeless--an "versteinert Meergewächs." In a sense, the petrifact symbolizes Christ, the "root of Jesse"⁷⁷ who was born on earth as a human child and achieved permanent eternal status with the Godhead, on the cross. The poem pivots on this central image of the child and his petrifact. Simultaneously, in the child and in the immediate plaything time becomes timeless, both in past and in future.

The metaphor:

Als wittre durch die Überwölkte Stirn ein Blitz
Der Gottheit, ein Erinnern, das im gleichen Nu
Erloschen sein wird; . . .

bears in it the sudden epiphany of insight with its daemonic magic. Just for an instant the child appears to be aware of his identity, perhaps of his part in the creation of that which he holds in his hand and that which he sees "Durchdringend ewge Zeiten-Fernen, grenzenlos:" But the region beyond the sight of Everyman is immediately ("im gleichen Nu") wiped away. Yet "Das Kind, der Mensch gewordene Logos" had seen both in the sense of "Erkennen" and of Erinnern.⁷⁸ It

⁷⁶Guardini, Gegenwart, p. 61.

⁷⁷Isaiah 10:10, Eible: "In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples;"

is a rare poem in which Mörike seems to include future time, like a premonition, along with the known and recognized past time. In the next instant the child, smilingly, as children will, holds up its own creation to be admired.

Marcella Burger, in spite of the universalizing conclusion of "Göttliche Reminiszenz," calls both this poem and "Auf ein altes Bild" "Stimmungsbilder," for she finds, as Guardini seems to, that Mörike's religious poems are influenced by a "Zaubergürtel" of mood similar to that of "Die schöne Buche" where the concluding "Einsamkeit" is not a meditative process on the part of the poet but an "Sich-einstimmen des inneren Sinnes in die unergründliche daemonische Waldesstille."⁷⁹

Thus, in each of these three poems the present moment of time contains within it, in varying degree, the recollection of the past and the germ, or anticipation, of the future. In "Die schöne Buche" there is implicit inference of the years of time which it has taken nature to prepare this spot for the poet's present moment of appreciation. The poet is aware that this revelation of the beautiful is based on prior interweaving of harmonious powers. It is because of this prior co-ordinated activity in nature that he is enabled to experience this sudden, ("plötzlich"), and spontaneous reaction to the scene. He states "ich zauderte noch," [*italics mine*] which suggests

⁷⁸Guardini, Gegenwart, p. 63.

⁷⁹Burger, p. 51.

a hesitation of reverential awe before entering the scene. And then: "Jetzo gelehnt an den Stamm . . ." the poet allows the particulars of the scene to flow into his consciousness. The "Jetzo" has the ring of a momentary happening, but it includes the whole period of time spent leaning against this tree, and the entire time of contemplation.

In "Auf ein altes Bild" the emphasis of time seems to be on the word "schon." This indicates an imminent event which nature is preparing for. It points to the future meeting of two time-elements, firstly, to the time when this tree shall have grown to maturity in readiness for the woodsman's axe and for the hewing of it into a cross, and, secondly, to the time when the now playing Christ-child shall have reached maturity and be prepared to face his greatest and main mission on earth--death on a cross.

Time in "Göttliche Reminiszenz" includes all past and anticipates all future. There are no borderlines. Time is seen as spanning from eternity to eternity. It depicts, in a mysterious and enigmatic manner, the creator of time playing with his own creation. The seemingly static scene of the painter is enlivened by the observation of the poet: "Der Knabe hat das Wunderding beschaut, . . ." and in this beschauen, which occurs in present time, ". . . spannet sich der weite Blick,/ . . . doch wirklich ohne Gegenstand." The child is pre-occupied with his inner gaze, with that which occurred in "ewige Zeiten-Fernen"; "ein Blitz/ der Gottheit, ein Erinnern," flashes in upon him, and instantly disappears. He seems to have recognized his place in the divine Trinity, his part in the distant past of the world's

creation, and his part in the distant future of man's redemption. In a moment of present time the poet's imagination swings backward and forward in time and then settles on that moment of time which is actually captured on the canvas by the painter. Here the poet exploits the initial moment when he first saw this picture, and the impact which it had upon him. The 'moment' of Mörike's early poetry, with its "Zwielicht," and "Zauber" is not overtly presented now, but one senses an implicit and subtle suggestion of these characteristics in the poem. This underlying tone intensifies and dynamizes the 'moment' of "ein Blitz/der Gottheit," and, in its context of timelessness, it intensifies this effect as well.

Mörike's framing device in these three poems is an aid to the prevention of an uncontrollable daemonic explosion in the poems. The frame contains the tension and also prevents merging of poet and picture. In Mörike the frame acts as an epic device. It induces a direct confrontation of poet and picture and, in telling, the listener confronts the narrator as one who is outside of the frame of the narrative. Remarkably, too, Mörike's poems begin in medias res, rather than at the beginning of the story to be told. And frequently, as Storz relates, "erlangen Schlussverse eben dadurch merkwürdige starke Stimmungskraft, dass eine Impression angedeutet, sozusagen offen stehen bleibt . . ." ⁸⁰ as in the above poems.

⁸⁰ Storz, p. 28.

In "Göttliche Reminiszenz" Mörike's art reaches an apical point toward which he has been progressing from his earliest poetry. It is, as has been suggested a moment ago, the mastery of understatement.

It is true, as Farrell has remarked that Mörike's awareness always goes beyond the object, no matter how vivid the presentation.⁸¹

Two short poems: "Auf einem Kirchturm" (1845) and "Zitronenfalter im April" (1846), are further examples of the power of suggestive imagery concerning time.

Auf einem Kirchturm

Ein Glockentonmeer waltet
Zu Füßen uns und hallet
Weit über Stadt und Land.
So laut die Wellen schlagen,
Wir fühlen mit Behagen
Uns hoch zu Schiff getragen
Und blicken schwindelnd von dem Rand.⁸²

This poem is all metaphor. The ambiguity in ether-tone-waves over land, and waves loudly rocking a ship, polarizes in "Und blicken schwindelnd von dem Rand." Man, at the height of his creativity, is dizzied when he dares to look into that which is beyond the borders of his life, beyond present time.

Zitronenfalter im April

Grausame Frühlingssonne,
Du weckest mich vor der Zeit,
Dem nur in Maienwonne

⁸¹Farrell, "Classical Verse", p. 48.

⁸²Werke, p. 205.

Die zarte Kost gedeiht!
 Ist nicht ein liebes Mädchen hier,
 Das auf der Rosenlippe mir
 Ein Tröpfchen Honig beut,
 So muss ich jämmerlich vergehn
 Und wird der Mai mich nimmer sehn
 In meinem gelben Kleid.⁸³

Here too, time future balances on the threshold of time present: a little drop of honey from a tender hand would dispell the threat and fear of the uncertain future. We are acquainted with the black daemonic inherent in the word "grausam" from Mörike's "Peregrina" lament, where the poet groans in agonized self-accusation:

Und mit weinendem Blick, doch grausam,
 Hiess ich das schlanke,
 Zauberhafte Mädchen⁸⁴
 Ferne gehen von mir.

In fact this whole poem bears a parallel to that which is expressed at greater length, and more passionately in the "Peregrina" cycle.

The depth of duality in the "Zitronenfalter" poem seems apparent when we compare the above reading with the very justified one of von Wiese who lists this poem with a group of others which, so he states, should be included in every child's reader. Certainly "Das Kindliche und zugleich Poetische ist Mörike's Urelement," as the critic explains. And the following detail helps us to understand the poet: "Mörike . . . vermochte trotz verwickelter seelischer Anlagen, hoher Kultur und reichem Bildungswissen die Stufe des Kindseins mühelos und wie von selbst als Mensch und als Dichter zu verwirklichen." Many of his

⁸³ Werke, p. 205.

⁸⁴ Ibid., "Peregrina III", p. 99.

poems are totally naive, and this is one, states von Wiese, written as by a playing child, "das mit dem Zauber des Wortes begnadet ist . . ."⁸⁵ This, I feel, is one of the special delights of reading some of Mörike's poetry--that it meets the needs of the imagination of a child--as does Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels--and yet says even more on another level to the child-turned-adult. This feat of writing on several levels simultaneously is skilfully accomplished in Mörike.

Mörike's gentle humor and appreciation of little things, and his ability to make the latter appear significant, is apparent in the following poem:

Mit einem Anakreonskopf und einem Fläschchen Rosenöl (1845)

Als der Winter die Rosen geraubt, die Anakreons Scheitel
 Kränzten am fröhlichen Mahl, wo er die Saiten gerührt,
 Träufelt' ihr köstliches Öl in das Haar ihm Aphrogeneia,
 Und ein rosiger Hauch haftet an jeglichem Lied.
 Doch nur wo ein Liebender singt die Töne des Greisen,⁸⁶
 Füllet Hallen und Saal wieder der herrliche Duft.

Benno von Wiese has convincingly shown that the change in Mörike's development at this period was closely related to his involvement with the classics of which he translated numerous poems, and, in 1840, had included a number of these in his "Classische Blumenlese." But the benefit of this antique influence did not become apparent until Mörike turned from Romantic to Hellenistic poetry. And it was the

⁸⁵ von Wiese, p. 237.

⁸⁶ Werke, p. 82.

example of the latter which enabled the poet to turn to the "Dinggedicht."⁸⁷

The Anacreontics which Mörike translated include "eine Reihe von Darstellungen, die teils wirkliche oder gedachte Bildwerke zum Gegenstand haben, teils für sich selbst kleine Gemälde, doch ohne wahrhaft persönliches Motiv ausmachen." Mörike stresses the poetic treatment of the works of art-- of "wertvollen Gemälden, Statuen und Kunstdenkmälern, die Liebe zu den Kleinformen, zum Zierlichen und Verspielten, die Art der Darstellung, die an 'Porzellanmalerei' erinnert." But the soul of Mörike becomes a part of his new creation.⁸⁸

The imagery in "Mit einem Anakreonskopf . . ." is unmistakably Mörikan. The smallest details of life remind the poet of the passing of time--"Winter," "Rosen," "Saiten," "rosiger Hauch," "Lied," "Töne," "herrliche Duft." These are frequently used images of Mörike. Each bears within itself the essence of change and threat of disappearance. None is an image of permanence. And this is emphasised by the verb "geraubt" which personifies winter. The other verbs: "Kränzten," "gerührt," "Träufelt," "haftet," "singt," "Füllet" contrast with the robber-character of winter and carry a connotation of celebration-- together with the nouns. These are the main elements of which Mörike's song-poems are woven.

However, Mörike recognized that the Golden age could never

⁸⁷ von Wiese, p. 217.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 217-18.

return. One may agree with Kohlschmidt who ascribes this deepened awareness to the poet's recognition of reality, born of the losses of the heart. Therefore the recognition of the fleetingness of time is an act of self-recognition. But is it then also necessarily a sign of intensified subjectivity, as the critic claims?⁸⁹ In this poem, as is so characteristic of Mörike, this "herrliche Duft" of poesy is impossible--except there be love.

The present image of an "Anakreonskopf" and of an "Fläschchen Rosenöl" brings to mind associations of the past. Although winter has stolen the roses, their concentrated and more potent effect remains behind for the poet--in the oil, which is the compressed and distilled essence of the original petals. The oil carries with it the connotation of elemental harmony for the roses were nurtured by the elements of sun, wind and underground springs and nutriments; the roses were also dependent upon the sources of power inherent within themselves, for, in belonging to a certain genus, certain characteristics became part of their hereditary components. In a similar manner the beauty of ancient poetry becomes part of the natural birthright of an appreciative poet, but he can appropriate his right only by nurturing his own roots, which are anchored in ancient tradition, and by exercising his inherent gift to the greatest possible extent in the elements of his own personal environment and that of the time in which he lives. The seed lies dormant--in the

⁸⁹ Werner Kohlschmidt, Form und Wirklichkeit (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1955), p. 240.

ground and in the poet. Only the combination of a unique set of circumstances will initiate the process in nature which enables the distillation of the oil of roses. So, too, Mörike's creative process was not instigated at will but in response to precipitatory causes. Each of these processes is a miracle to Mörike--that in nature and that in the poet. To Mörike they were both derived from undying magical and powerful roots.⁹⁰

The interdependency of past and present in "Mit einem Anakreonskopf . . ." is conveyed in timeless images. And the syn-aesthetic merging of sense impressions in "rosiger Hauch," as well as the image of tones of song filling actual physical space, intensifies the vividness of imagery in this poem. Mörike seems to say that only he who appropriates in present time that which past time has bequeathed to him can create meaningfully for the future, for posterity.

The imagery of Mörike's closing couplets is significant for heaping in simple, beautiful fashion a multitude of expressed meaning and unexpressed suggestion. And, as elsewhere, so in the final lines, Mörike's great economy of words is remarkable. This precision and economy of words finds its height of expression in the ten-line poem "Auf eine Lampe" (1846), but it is also particularly noticeable in the six-line poems: "Ideale Wahrheit," "An eine Sängerin," "Auf einem Kirchturm," "Zitronenfalter im April," and in the six-line epigrams

⁹⁰Doerksen, pp. 43-44.

"Weihgeschenk," "Mit einem Anakreonskopf . . .," and in "Inscription auf eine Uhr mit den drei Horen."

All time seems to be encompassed in "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . ." (1846), yet, paradoxically, this is a "Dinggedicht."

Inscription auf eine Uhr mit den drei Horen

Am langsamsten von allen Göttern wandeln wir,
 Mit Blätterkronen schön geschmückte, schweigsame.
 Doch wer uns ehrt und wem wir selber günstig sind,
 Weil er die Anmut liebet und das heilige Mass,
 Vor dessen Augen schweben wir im leichten Tanz
 Und machen mannigfaltig ihm den langen Tag.⁹¹

The clock is an object which epitomizes time past, present and future. It measures time, but time cannot alter that measure.

Time is now dealt with only in the present, as also the entire poem never deviates from the present tense. Unlike "Auf ein altes Bild" and "Göttliche Reminiszenz," this poem is free of intimations concerning past or future. Similarly, it lacks the daemonic impetus of Mörike's early 'moment' of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz." Where in the early poems Mörike compressed a total event and its impact upon him--such as the winter morning sunrise scene--into one dynamic moment, he now explores the breadth and depth of present time and encapsulates it in one moment, and thereby gives it duration. This is similar to the way in which the 'moment' is given permanence in "Göttliche Reminiszenz." Antiquity has become part of present time in this antique clock. And, although a clock is in itself a symbol of the passing of

⁹¹ Werke, p. 85.

time, it has here become a symbol also of that which can be rendered permanent. The "Horen" have a semblance of timelessness, as does the antique clock.

Death does not enter into "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . . ," as it does "Hermippus," "Erinna an Sappho," "Denk es, o Seele," and "Besuch in der Kartause." In the latter poem the poet presents the disintegration of an old order of time, but in "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . ." the values of the order of classical antiquity: "Anmut" and "das heilige Mass," are given permanence. Here time does not fly by; it is a long day. One senses that the poet has not yet come to terms with time, as he does in a certain respect in "Besuch in der Kartause"⁹² and in the idyll "Bilder aus Bebenhausen." But the "Inscription" also lacks the dark foreboding of "Rückblick" and the nostalgia after former happiness of "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben." These "Horen," under the present congenial circumstances, will dance for the poet and help him to forget the ticking of the clock and the passing of time.

The three goddesses harmoniously personify past and present, as Taraba informs us. The object now speaks for itself and banishes the borderline between past and present. It no longer requires the praise of man.⁹³ Its steady rhythm is heard in the regular beat of

⁹²See p. 164

⁹³Wolfgang F. Taraba, Vergangenheit und Gegenwart bei Eduard Mörike (Diss. München: i. W., 1953), p. 137.

the poem. But it is strange to hear these "Horen" declare: "Am langsamsten von allen Göttern wandeln wir, . . ." for, to Mörike, time flew by; the moment was gone almost before it had arrived.

Beauty, according to these goddesses, is "Bewegung und Ruhe zugleich."⁹⁴ The prerequisite to true seeing, so they tell us, is man's honor and respect of the muses which is quite akin to that of the love in "Mit einem Anakreonskopf . . ." The goddesses dance gracefully, and give delight, only before those who respect and love art. "There is in the 'Inscription auf eine Uhr mit den drei Horen', itself an exemplification of the idea it expresses: that art has the power so to fill and exalt that it turns the day (or time) into a graceful dance."⁹⁵ This creates an imaginatively tangible and visible image of an element which is, in fact, entirely intangible and invisible.

And yet, is not time an element which controls all life in certain respects, both in nature and in man? It determines the seasons; it alters man's life and enables, or even forces, development. Because of this fact, the aspect of transience is inherent in all life and it is difficult or impossible to render life static and permanent, no matter how meaningful it may be. Mörike was exceedingly conscious of this. His desire to make the moment of meaning linger on is symbolized in the early rosebud of "Erinnerung" (1822),⁹⁶ in the music

⁹⁴ von Wiese, p. 223.

⁹⁵ Farrell, "Classical Verse", p. 57.

of the organ in "Josephine" (1827),⁹⁷ in the more permanent symbol, "Die schöne Buche" (1842),⁹⁸ in the garden gate of "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben" (1845),⁹⁹ and in the goddesses which live beyond time in the "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . . ," as well as in numerous other poetic symbols.

In "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben" ¹⁰⁰ the music produced by a garden gate becomes the symbol of time, while simultaneously, the gate itself stands outside of the realm of time--stands for permanence. The creaking of the rusty hinges is equated with music. Mörike here exploits the combination of object--the gate--and sound. The permanence of the aria sung by the gate is not inherent in itself, as is the permanence of the gate, but the aria is dependent upon something or someone that sets the gate in motion. As the quality of tone in the harp (v.2) is dependent upon the velocity of the wind, so the quality of tone in the aria is dependent upon the speed of movement of the gate: the slower motion produces a song which is "bestimmter, seelenvoller" (v.27). The function of the harp in a window of the old "Gartensaal" seems to be purely that of "Stimmungsrahmen,"¹⁰¹ And, in turn, the gate evokes the

⁹⁶ Werke, p. 10.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.40.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

memory of days long past, as does the wedding in the poem "Lang, lang ist's her!"¹⁰² In "Ach nur einmal noch . . ." the poet transports himself back to his garden at Cleversulzbach which he had left not long before. Here the imagery of unity between parting and the object (the gate) cancels out the sense of lostness and becomes something lasting because of its association with the gate which lasts beyond the time-span which the poet spent here. Time takes on a new dimension in that the gate receives the gift of reminiscence (in the future tense,) when the parting has actually taken place already. "[Hier] verschieben sich die Zeiträume auf fast magische Weise," states Taraba, quoting the lines:

Es kommt die Zeit, da werden wir auch ferne weg
Gezogen sein, den Garten lassend und das Haus.¹⁰³

Time is strangely in flux. Music, memory and time weave a pattern of imagery back and forth between past, present and future. The "Titus-aria" of the "Gattertürr is repeatable and contrasts with events in the life of the poet which are not repeatable. This pits permanence of things, of objects, against the impermanence and fleetingness of man's life. The gate--as image of permanence--remains, whereas the people who once lived here have gone.

Here again the framing device of the window creates distance.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹Burger, p. 74.

¹⁰²Werke, p. 196.

¹⁰³Taraba, p. 134.

Pointed imagery and associative chains are apparent: "jenes alt verblichnen Gartensaals," "Die Harfe"--a specific one--, "leise[n] Windhauch," "Lang ausgezogene Töne"--all these alternate sadly. They set the tune for this "Spätherbst-Blumen-Einsamkeit." Antithesis links "holde[n] Nachbarschaft" and the groaning of the flag on a grey "Zwinger-turm." And "wenn stürmischer oft die Wolken ziehen Überhin" prefigures the latter part of the poem.

The fact that the word "plötzlich" is framed by two dashes emphasises the dynamic character of this word. Suddenly, so it would seem, a beautiful memory awakened in the poet due to the song of the garden gate. Thus the gate has a greater value than mere utility. The early accent on the dream is still here, although in terms of a question. Repetition of the word "noch" seeks to prolong time, hold off its transient quality. As in "Der alte Turmhahn," so here, the emphasis is on "Ach nur einmal noch . . ." [*italics mine*] as the title and repetitions indicate. But there is humor in this nostalgia also.

Emphasis on the desired "noch" is brought sharply to terms in "Doch besser dünkt ja allen was vergangen ist." [*Italics mine.*] The rusty gate, like the rusty "Turmhahn," is personified as an old person and humorously called "Alte." The final contrasting image of "morsches Holz," which may be decorated with "hellem Ackerblumenkranz," adds a rejuvenating touch to the old gate and contrasts with the drab gray of the groaning weathervane. Therefore the closing image of the poem is

¹⁰⁴ See discussion concerning Mörike's framing device p. 152, pp. 93 ff. & p. 108.

not one of sentimentality but of a bright wreath of wild prairie flowers which creates a splash of fresh color and vigor, as late autumn flowers do in reality. The gate plays the tune to the path which memory leads, over the poet's "grünlackierten, goldgeblühten Pantalon" of the past to the anticipation of being commemorated by "ein treues Herz vom Dorf" in the future. Still, the song of the gate is a remarkably fitting epitaph to the poet's life.

"Ach nur einmal noch im Leben" aims at objectivity and balance between past and future. It sets the tone for Mürike's late poems. Time is here anchored to and dependent upon space, upon a cherished spot of memory. But quickly and realistically the poet recalls: "Vorbei ist nun das alles und kehrt nimmer so!" The transience of time is prominent and the inevitability of its all-consuming power is implicit in the poem and in its changing tense. The poem is ambivalent in character regarding time: it shows an impelling desire to hold the past constant in the present, and simultaneously it shows a resigned recognition of the inevitable. The musical rhythm of the garden gate, more than the ticking of the clock in the "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . . ," spells the passing of time, spells inevitable transience.

The gate itself is a symbol which stands beyond time. The repeatable aspect of the aria is a mechanical ability and the 'higher purpose' and potential of the gate is due to its endowment with the gift of music. The narrative of this poem is based on the three motifs, those of time, music and memory. Each adds significance to the other

two, and to the total image. But memory, too, has a 'higher purpose', one which differs from that of the garden gate, for memory defeats time and lives on.

When Maync declares that Mörike, the lyric poet, stands before us "von vorneherein als ein Fertiger . . . und hat eine entschiedene Entwicklung nicht weiter durchgemacht"¹⁰⁵ we need only turn to a "Dinggedicht" such as "Auf eine Lampe" to cast a shadow of doubt on the statement.

Auf eine Lampe (1846)

Noch unverrückt, o schöne Lampe, schmückest du,
 An leichten Ketten zierlich aufgehoben hier,
 Die Decke des nun fast vergessnen Lustgemachs.
 Auf deiner weissen Marmorschale, deren Rand
 Der Efeukranz von goldengrünem Erz umflieht,
 Schlingt fröhlich eine Kinderschar den Ringelreihn.
 Wie reizend alles! lachend und ein sanfter Geist
 Des Ernstes doch ergossen um die ganze Form --
 Ein Kunstgebild der echten Art. Wer achtet sein?
 Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst.¹⁰⁶

Günther, though not naming Mörike specifically as an absolute poet, describes the work of the latter, saying ". . . er [the absolute poet] kann eine 'neue Atmosphäre' um die Worte schaffen, indem er 'Innenraum' um sie wirft, sie in Stille bettet. . . . Darum liebt der absolute Dichter die 'lyrische Summe', das gedrängte Wort. Die Anspielung

¹⁰⁵ Harry Maync, Eduard Mörike: Sein Leben und Dichten (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1927), p. 20. Also see Storz, p. 328.

¹⁰⁶ Werke, p. 85.

erhält so ganz besondere Bedeutung."¹⁰⁷ This new effect is attributed to "ein neues Lebensgefühl" and to a "Bedürfnis nach tieferem Erfassen des Seins."¹⁰⁸ This seems to be the case of Mörike. Certainly the symbolic implications of time, space and personal stance to art and beauty seem vastly to transcend the boundaries of these ten lines.

And so Mörike's "Dingdichtung" may be seen as a renewed attempt --as Maler Nolten had been--to come to terms with life, and to cope with it. The 1827 desire for union and communion with nature, in order to be able to fathom its secret--as in "Besuch in Urach" and in "Mein Fluss"--has been re-focused. In 1845-1846 Mörike speaks as one who, by means of meticulous and quietly unobtrusive observation and concentration has gleaned a notable insight into the essence of both objects of nature--as in "Die schöne Buche"--, and of art--as in "Auf eine Lampe":

Aber ich stand und rührte mich nicht; daemonischer Stille,
Unergründlicher Ruh lauschte mein innerer Sinn.¹⁰⁹

Or, as in "An eine Sängerin" (1852) the poet exclaims:

. ja entzückt steht selbst der Philister,¹¹⁰
Fühlt, in des Schönen Gestalt, ewige Mächte sich nah.

The poet now realizes that it is enough to feel the spirit inherent in nature, in music, in objects of art without the necessity of understanding every nuance of that which he observes.

¹⁰⁷Werner Günther, "Über die Absolute Poesie" in Grimm, p. 39.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰⁹Werke, p. 74.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 84.

The thingness, or the quality which determines the being and the individual characteristics of the object, has made itself known to the poet during the process of observation and concentration. But Mörike never professes to have attained to full secret. Therefore he concludes "Auf eine Lampe" with "Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst" rather than with the bold but ambiguous equation of Keats: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."¹¹¹

But the basic metaphor concerning art and beauty, in "Auf eine Lampe" is very similar to that of Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn."¹¹² The history of the lamp is told by implication only. The personification in Mörike's poem, no less than in that of Keats, attributes life to the piece of art. Not merely the images portrayed on these works of art, but much more the fact that they have themselves been part of the life of man, instills in the urn and lamp the dynamic quality of character. "The urn is still young, for all its antiquity, and time which destroys so much has 'fostered' it."¹¹³ But in Mörike's poem the poet is aware that the lamp must, as its surroundings appear to be doing eventually fall victim to the decaying force of time. This is, apparently, what haunts Mörike--as time does throughout all his life--. Therefore he begins the poem with the highly significant and

¹¹¹John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in The Odes of Keats, & their earliest Known Manuscripts, ed., Robert Gittings (London: Kent State University Press, 1970), p. 23.

¹¹²See Doerksen, p. 44.

¹¹³Cleanth Brooks in Scott, p. 235.

ominous "Noch unverrückt." [*Italics mine*.] This immediately emphasises the time element. "Noch" stands between past and future, but suggests a rapidly passing phase. Mörike is aware of the old order of gracious living which is rapidly deteriorating. He belongs to this order, as does this artistic lamp. To him present beauty is a reminder of the past--the elegance of the lamp speaks of an entire set of passing values. The present, the now, is circumscribed and limited by the frame of that which separates it from past and future. Knowledge of transience precipitates the frame of time. Marcella Burger informs us that: "Die Beschaulichsten Gedichte Mörikes haben noch ein solch begrenzendes und beunruhigendes Zeitmoment in sich: . . ." ¹¹⁴ If "beunruhigendes" includes a sense of unsettling--a stimulation to deeper, more penetrating insight into the being of things--then one must agree with this finding.

This unsettling experience is also conveyed by the image of a "fast vergessnen Lustgemachs" which, along with the image of the lamp and the artwork on its marble surface, tells of a time in society and in history which is making room for new emphases. This verifies Staiger's finding that Mörike knows present beauty, but only as a remainder from the past. This fact is also evident in the "Kreis von 'daemonischer Stille'" in which "Die schöne Buche" stands, the grave of Schiller's mother, in the "Lieblingsbuche" of the poet's garden with Mörike's carving of Höltz's name, in the summer landscape and

¹¹⁴Burger, p. 67.

monastery of Bebenhausen, but most of all in the "Lustgemach, in dem die schöne Lampe hängt."¹¹⁵

The aspect of unsettling could also include what Guardini names as a characteristic feature of Mörike's "Dichtung" in "Die schöne Buche" and in "Auf eine Lampe," stating: "In einem hell Gegenwärtigen öffnet sich auf einmal eine Tiefe, aus der etwas Geheimnisvolles, ja ein Schauer des Unheimlichen heraufweht."¹¹⁶ And in the latter poem this is seen as a "klare Gestalt und geheimnisvolle Fremdheit [welche] sich in wundersamer Weise verbinden"¹¹⁷ So too, Mörike as Epigone and/ or pathfinder, in this--perhaps his most perfect --"Dinggedicht" is making possible a new literary and art form.

Description related to this lamp--"schöne," "schmückest," "zierlich"--add up to comprise the designation "reizend" which, to Mörike, carried no mean or frivolous implications but the purest sense of inherent grace, as in "Göttliche Reminiszenz."¹¹⁸

Significantly, the wreath of ivy completely encircles this lamp, is artistically braided around it. And the "goldgrüne[m] Erz" accentuates the whiteness of the marble and also combines two of Mörike's most significant colors. The ivy, so Guardini tells us, originates in the dionysian world: "so dringt ein Hauch aus jenem . . . e r e i c h

¹¹⁵Staiger, Kunst, p. 27.

¹¹⁶Guardini, p. 25.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Holthusen. See footnote no. 75.

Überschäumender Lebensgewalt herein."¹¹⁹ The beauty of the laughing children in animated dance contrasts and balances with the image of "sanften Ernst" of the over-all impression. But here the dionysian world has undergone a very noteworthy change. It is an image of "Lebensfreude," rather than of passion. Mänaden und Satyrn, deren Leidenschaft das Mass des feinen Gebildes sprengen und Mörikes eigener Weisheit widersprechen würde . . . sind zur Kinderschar gemildert, das Toben der dionysisch Verzückten zu einem 'Ringelreihn'; der orgiastische Taumel zur 'Fröhlichkeit',"¹²⁰ But is this really, as Guardini claims, like all things of antiquity, a translation of an image into something "ruhigeres, ja bürgerliches Mass"?¹²¹

The images of tension and balance in the poem correlates with the poet's internal poetic antitheses: "noch unverrückt"/ "fast vergessnen Lustgemachs"; "lachend/ . . . sanfter Ernst." This complements and enhances the musical rhythm of the poem out of all proportion to its regular, classical, iambic trimeters.

Mörike, in his search for balance and stability in a finite world has in his "Dingdichtung" turned to that which is comparatively stable--a beech tree, as symbol of ever-recurring nature, of recurring seasons, of something which thrives on reversals of light and darkness,

¹¹⁹Guardini, p. 27.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid.

which stands itself silent and apart from man's frenetic rush against time, fulfilling itself and the aesthetic needs of the few who stray to its magic circle; a lamp, which, though an inanimate object, epitomizes a period of time--the Rococo--when man was less time-conscious, when culture and gracious living were of greater importance than technological achievement. And Mörike sees "das Göttliche selbst" in contemplation of plant, animal and inanimate objects.¹²²

In his definition of "Dingdichtung" Schier states that: "all Dinggedichte must strive toward the complete elimination of all interpretation. The aim is to describe the object with such precision, excluding all metaphor and all personal intrusion, that word and thing will be one, and the object will reveal Being itself."¹²³ One must concur with the critic when he notes that in Mörike's "Auf eine Lampe" "this ideal is realized most fully: . . ."¹²⁴ And Oppert also finds that this poem meets the requirements of Dingdichtung in that "Deuten- des und gedeutetes eines sind, im Vergleich zur starren Vergleichung und Allegorie."¹²⁵ And also in that it contains Impressionism.¹²⁶ These points permit an inclusion of depth in the poem, which reaches

¹²²Werner von Nordheim, "Die Dichtung Eduard Mörikes", in Euphorion 50, 1956, pp. 71-85.

¹²³Rudolf D. Schier, "Mörike's View of Poetic Language", in Modern Language Quarterly 23, 1967, pp. 45-59.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Oppert, p. 774.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 781.

beyond phraseology. This gives to the poem "Symbolgestaltung, die den Dingen geistige Mitte verleiht und sie 'mit jenem Äussersten von Sein' erfüllt."¹²⁷ Thus it is apparent that Mörike attempted to capture the spiritual essence inherent in the object and to hold it in such a manner as to render it timeless. Therefore the utility of the object is not of consequence anymore, only its beauty or aesthetic appeal. Both the spiritual essence and aesthetic appeal are conveyed in this lamp, more particularly, in the frolicking children upon its round circumference. The impression of the plastic art which enhances this image also serves as a distancing device, as does the indirect title: Auf, not An "eine Lampe." Oppert tells us: "Mörike sah die Dinge mit der Ehrfurcht und Liebe des Idyllikers;"¹²⁸ This, too, is apparent in the poem. He treats the lamp reverently, almost with awe, with respect. This adds a peculiar charm and grace to the otherwise sententious closing couplet. And when the poet says: "Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst" he distances the lamp still farther from personal involvement, as though he had already stepped out of the "Lustgemach" and left the lamp to his successors, but most of all to its own world of the past.

This turning to the antique affords Mörike a degree of the stability which he needs. It supplies, for his dualistic personality, an "Ergänzung zu seiner 'Nachtseite'" which is the "'Tagseite'". So

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 768.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 759.

liebte er die Antike, die ihm zu einer Zuflucht, ja zur Rettung vor den daemonischen Mächten seines Innern wurde, deren Klarheit und Wahrheit . . . ihm eben zeitweise Überwindung der dunklen Seiten seines Wesens gewährte."¹²⁹ And so, too, art, in the poem "Auf eine Lampe" stops, for a time, the awareness of the threat of the existential problems of life, from being felt. Thus, Mörike "klammert sich an den Glauben--an die Existenz des Schönen, das unabhängig vom menschlichen Verhalten dem Schönen gegenüber in sich selbst wirkt."¹³⁰

The dash, ending the eighth line, leads to a summary sentence of "Auf eine Lampe" and of art:

Ein Kunstgebild der echten Art. Wer achtet sein:
Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst.

"Wer achtet sein?" Mörike is nostalgic about the change in man's quality of life, which is apparent in their disregard of this object of aesthetic excellence. Both the lamp and the poem are works of art in their own right. Each casts its own aura of light. Each is symbolic in its own sphere. The erstwhile controversy between Staiger and Heidegger regarding the meaning of the word "scheint"¹³¹ no longer seems relevant. Today the poem is the more modern because of this ambiguity.

Guardini says that the lamp is dependent upon man whom it serves. When man is gone the "selig in ihr selbst" disappears and

¹²⁹ Moriz Enzinger, Mörikes Gedicht "Auf eine Lampe" (Baden bei Wien: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1965), p. 21.

¹³⁰ Irmgard Weithase, "Mörike's 'Auf eine Lampe'", DtvjS 41, 1967, pp. 62-79.

becomes an "unheimlich Drohendes."¹³² One might be inclined to find the reverse of this situation. Art, unlike Everyman, seems to be independent of adulation and recognition. It seems to be fulfilled-- "selig" in itself, in its own perfection. If it is "Ein Kunstgebild der echten Art" [*italics mine,*] then it is content to stand unsung, is it not?

Beauty is beauty, even without a beholder. Or, as Staiger has cautiously explained to Heidegger:

Das Kunstgebilde wird kaum mehr beachtet. 'Aber (auch ich habe dieses Wort keineswegs überhört!) was kann ihm das anhaben? Es scheint in sich selber selig zu sein und unser gar nicht zu bedürfen. Es scheint! Vermutlich ist es so. Ganz sicher wissen wir das nicht.¹³³

And this would seem true of "Die schöne Buche" also, which does not seem dependent for beauty or Daemonie upon its relationship to man. The "Schrecken des Pan" is not always sensed by man--that is, when he is insensitive to the spirit of nature--but it is there nonetheless.¹³⁴ Does not man's stance toward the object, his experience with it and his knowledge pertaining to it, his psychological orientation, and the spirit of the times in which he lives determine his interpretation of that which he observes? But these facts do not alter the quality inherent in the object itself.

¹³¹As recorded by Staiger in Kunst.

¹³²Guardini, p.31.

¹³³Staiger, Kunst, p. 48.

¹³⁴Cf. Guardini, p. 33.

In this fashion Mörike captures the dynamic beauty and daemonic power of nature's waterfall in a poem:

Am Rheinfall (1846)

Halte dein Herz, o Wanderer, fest in gewaltigen Händen!
 Mir entstürzt vor Lust zitternd das meinige fast,
 Rastlos donnernde Massen auf donnernde Massen geworfen,
 Ohr und Auge wohin retten sie sich im Tumult?
 Wahrlich, den eigenen Wutschrei hörte nicht der Gigant hier,
 Läg er, vom Himmel gestürzt, unten am Felsen gekrümmt!
 Rosse der Götter, im Schwung, eins über dem Rücken des andern,
 Stürmen herunter und streun silberne Mähnen umher;
 Herrliche Leiber, unzählbare, folgen sich, nimmer dieselben,
 Ewig dieselbigen--wer wartet das Ende wohl aus?
 Angst umzieht dir den Busen mit eins, und, wie du es denkst,
 Über das Haupt stürzt dir krachend das Himmelsgewölb! 135

Mörike was acutely conscious of the relationship between nature's rhythmic elemental power and that of music at its most daemonic intense moment:

"Wie ballen sich ihm beide Fäuste vor Entzücken", wenn in eine seiner hypochondrischen Launen hinein plötzlich ein Gewitter kracht und es ihm zumute wird, als ob der Götterliebbling Mozart beschwörend hinter ihn träte, oder wenn er, vom sicheren Standpunkt aus, die niederstürzenden Wogen des Rheinfalls betrachtet: "da sah er Leben in höchster Steigerung wogen und wallen, ohne dass es jedoch ins Formlose auseinanderfloss, und so wurde es ihm zum Symbol des Geistes selber, der, eben wenn er am arregtesten brodelte sich am schmiegsamsten in die künstlerische Form goss".136

Thus "Am Rheinfall" appears to symbolize another instance of poetic creation. The "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" of Mörike's early "Wintermorgen" has been replaced by a more subtle image of one of nature's most intense moods. The vitality, immediacy and

¹³⁵ Werke, p. 106.

¹³⁶ Seebass, p. XXIII.

spontaneity of this poem seem to indicate an intuitive insight into this rhythm of nature, and a oneness with it. Here the elements appear to reflect human nature at its most daemonic level. The romantic "Nachtgesichte" motion of covering the eyes in face of daemonic elements has vanished. Instead, the poet cries:

Halte dein Herz, o Wanderer, fest in gewaltigen Händen!
Mir entstürzte vor Lust zitternd das meinige fast.

"Am Rheinfall" is a total metaphor. The powerful surging of the waterfall conveys a dynamic image, but the water is never mentioned directly. In the first four lines the poet is overwhelmed by the impact of the scene; then he distances himself from the scene by relating it to the "Gigant"; and in the concluding distich he depicts the full force of the scene upon the poet.

The threatening effect of the waterfall is perceived by the senses:

Rastlos donnernde Massen auf donnernde Massen geworfen,
Ohr und Auge wohin retten sie sich im Tumult?

The force of nature threatens to draw man into its power. But the poet is not victim of nature now; he has masterly control of his emotions; every word and image serves to heighten the suggestiveness of the total metaphor. The chaotic element is held in proscribed bounds until it crashes down at the poet's feet in the concluding line. There is intensification from distich to distich: first, the chaotic element is described in indefinite terms of heaped-up "donnernde Massen," and then it achieves the force of "Rosse der Götter." This gives poetic harness to these countless numbers as they storm

down the cliffs with their "Herrliche Leiber." The sunlight reflects the cataracting masses and gives them the semblance of silver manes. The rhythm of the poem becomes the rhythm of galloping horses.

If this rhythm indicates the speed of passing time, then the assertion: "nimmer dieselben, / Ewig dieselbigen" seems to indicate that time is without end. This impression is underscored by the question which follows: "---wer wartet das Ende wohl aus?" The effect of timelessness is emphasised by the pause which precedes the question and induces the onlooker, or reader, to take a stand to this problem of time: Is it really unending? Is temporal time then to be equated with eternal time, as the poet seems to suggest?

This dual impression of the speed of passing time, and of time's endlessness, achieves a total image in the poem. Like the melody of the garden gate in "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben," so here the water which cataracts down the river is always the same, yet never the same. This is the hub of Mörike's time symbolism. Each day brings new quantities of water, new insights, although on the surface no change is apparent.

The rapidity of passing time is clear, as is also the fact that it cannot be retained, is never the same or repeatable. The recognition of this fact causes the poet to look inward and to find the startling conclusion that:

Angst umzieht dir den Busen mit eins, und, wie du es denkst,
Über das Haupt stürzt dir krachend das Himmelsgewölb!

In this the poet becomes aware of his relationship to time and in time. Man's dependence upon eternal powers causes the momentary panic, not

man as confronting nature. And "wie du es denkest"--in the very moment of this recognition the poet feels the collapse of his world. But that which the poet does not reveal in actual words becomes clear to us: "indem das Ungeheuerliche in Mass und Form gezwungen wird, wird es bewältigt."¹³⁷

The classical form with its distichs lends order, control and mastery to this poem and indicates that this fear is a sudden and passing one. The poet is not dominated by it as in the early "Nachtgesichte!" It reveals a spontaneous time-consciousness, a recognition of the inevitable, and a bowing to it--to the powers in control. There seems to be a note of triumph in this recognition. The poet no longer falls victim to the force of water as does the king's son of "Die schlimme Greth und der Königssohn," nor does the hypnotic power of water's music have the effect of drawing him away from reality and into its magic circle, as happens in "Die schöne Lau."

New modes of expression lead to Mörike's "Dingdichtung" and show relationship with the plastic arts. These poems are remarkable for their power of suggestive understatement. Included in this development is the increasing importance of intangible qualities of inner character--such as "Anmut," "Reiz," "Ernst"--which contribute notably to the total impact of the image, and which become attributes

¹³⁷H. J. Steigerthal, "Eduard Mörike: 'Am Rheinfall'", in Wirkendes Wort 7, 1956-1957, p. 176.

of that image. The urgency and epiphany-like character of the decisive moment is gone, however "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" are still present, but in an increasingly illusive, veiled and subtle form.

As has been illustrated in this chapter, time remains a key emphasis in the years 1845-1846: in "Göttliche Reminiszenz" eternal time has achieved present moment; in "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . ." an antique symbol of time has become of value in the present; in "Mit einem Anakreonskopf . . .," too, the ancient receives contemporary recognition; in "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben" the poet attempts to reconcile himself with the past and to face the present realistically; in "Auf eine Lampe" a reminder from the past receives present tribute; while in "Am Rheinfall" time achieves eternal emphasis in its dynamic moment. In all of these poems we sense a striving toward coming to terms with time. The desire for balance in time seems to constitute an outlook on life which is centered upon the golden mean. Earlier extremes are avoided. Merging of time elements has disappeared. Time factors affect each other but do not slide into each other as previously. Each of the three time quotients are now present, although the future is only tentative and the present has gained in importance so that it now stands side by side with the past which was predominant earlier. There is now a heightened perceptual sense which tentatively includes time future with time past and present as in the "ewige Zeiten-Fernen" of "Göttliche Reminiszenz"; in "Ach nur einmal noch . . ." reverberates in the five key-notes of the garden gate, and

in "Auf eine Lampe" culminates in the final assertion of lasting veracity: "Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst."

Distinction of the various time aspects is achieved where Mörike pits the permanence of objects against the impermanence of man's life. The poet's search for balance and stability induces reflection on comparatively stable objects and on their inherent spiritual character. An understanding of the time-concept similar to that of "Die schöne Buche" (1842) is evident in these somewhat later poems --the poet seems to attempt to exclude his fear-in-depth and to cling to that which contains at least some degree of stability in a world of transience.

Three characteristics shared by the poems of this period are particularly congruent with the classical tradition: a sense of fulfillment in the poet and in his art; a delimitation of time and space; and a sententious conclusion. In these respects the poetry of this period is distinct from both earlier and later writings of Mörike.

IV. Reflections on Time

In poetry Mörrike can hold time comparatively timeless--as he has done in his "Dingdichtung." Inanimate objects are endowed with life and held in that pose. There lies the difference, so it would seem, between the "Dingdichtung" of Mörrike and of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, Rilke and Benn--his successors. Mörrike's "Dingdichtung" includes the whole range of inanimate art objects as well as those of nature; his "Dingdichtung" gives life to frozen action--to a lamp, to the image of children frolicking on its body, but also to growth in the forest, to a beech tree--whereas in Rilke and others live action--a panther in a cage--becomes frozen energy. The reality of Mörrike's metaphor is as true to its terms as is that of Keats in his "Urn." The paradox of "Dingdichtung" is inherent in his poem: "Action goes on though the actors are motionless The poet is obviously stressing the fresh unwearied charm of the scene itself which can defy time and is deathless. But, . . . the beauty portrayed is deathless because it is lifeless."¹ For Mörrike, however,

¹Cleanth Brooks, in Scott, p. 236.

the image of the children entailed also the awareness of the passing phase. Mörike moves toward Impressionism and most fully attains to this art in his poem "Auf eine Lampe." But with Mörike's "Dingdichtung" his duality and polarization is still present, although in altered form from that in his earlier poetry.

Mörike has achieved distance; he observes; records more 'objectively' than previously, but this imputes an undertone which, as in "Die schöne Buche," irreducibly, spiritually, puts the poet in the very centre of the magic circle from which he stands apart. So identification, though unexpressed, may be heard in words of interpretation: Noch, schöne, du, zierlich, fast vergessnen, fröhlich, reizend, lachend, sanfter Geist/ des Ernstes, ergossen, echten Art, selig. "Auf eine Lampe" contains the delimitation of the "Hier und Jetzt" which is a part of Impressionism, according to Schlaffer, and which becomes a threat of disintegration² but this is focussed against a background of permanence. The roots of this life and of these times had not yet been entirely torn from their nourishing source, as became apparent in later "Dingdichtung," and more so in much of the poetry of today. Thus Zulauf adds:

Mörike konnte selber nicht wissen, dass er, während er nur sein ureigenstes, subjektivstes Empfinden auszusprechen glaubte, einer allgemeinen Entwicklung vorgriff und eine künstlerische Auffassung verkündete, die sich erst in unserer Zeit, und zwar vorzüglich in der bildenden Kunst, zu fast allgemeiner Gültigkeit durchgedrungen hat.³

In his "Dingdichtung" Mörike stands opposite to that which he

²Schlaffer, p. 44.

observes. But, having developed this new art to a certain point of perfection, he abandons it, allowing others to build on his structure, while he himself, after 1846, turns to new forms and new expressions. Now Mörike seems to be neither so distant, nor so intensely one, with the things described. One may say, as some have done, that Mörike's literary powers were declining or regressing. Or one may say, more accurately it seems, that Mörike, in his attachment to Margarethe von Speeth to whom he was engaged for six years prior to his marriage in 1851⁴ had found a degree of that stability, warmth and response which he had so painfully sought all his life. Consequently, some of the earlier outpourings were, no doubt, compensated for in daily contact.

And so we cannot justly point to the last thirty years of the poet's life and state that his creative powers had forsaken him. Mörike did not write for writing's sake alone. In this connection Storz notes the fact that Mörike waited for the propitious moment. This is seen as commendable wisdom rather than as lethargic escape. Storz speculates that perhaps "das endlose Spiel mit Gelegenheitsversen und Almanach Aufmerksamkeiten" may merely have been fillers for the periods of pause in creativity.⁵ And so, to be sure, Mörike

³Zulauf, p. 49.

⁴von Wiese, p. 297.

⁵Storz, p. 357.

wrote less profusely in these years than he had, particularly in his most prolific years--those of 1827, 1837 and 1845-1846--but the quality of his writing is equal to that of earlier periods, in some instances even surpassing this.

The imagery, although perhaps less vigorous and sometimes less pointed than that of the "Dingdichtung," shows an added depth of refinement and sensitivity. It is no less succinctly expressed than before. These qualities of depth, refinement, sensitivity and precision characterize particularly the poems "Denk es, o Seele" and "Erinna an Sappho," and invigorate their latent beauty. And so too in the epistolary poems "Häusliche Szene," "Hermippus," "Besuch in der Kartause," "Bilder aus Bebenhausen" and "Lang, lang ists her" the imagery is precise and appeals to the imagination, even though the style and form allow for greater expansion of thought.

One might ask, in respect to some of these late poems and many prior to Mörike's "Dingdichtung," whether they may be classified as Erlebnisdichtung. And if so, on what grounds? Henel's definition of Erlebnisdichtung validly, so it seems, applies the term to that writing which is written in the first person and which bears convincing marks of authenticity of personal experience. This does not, however, presuppose that the experience was one of actual life. It may have been only vividly experienced in the imagination, and vividly told. Conversely, true experience not written in the first person and not convincingly told, is not to be taken as Erlebnisdichtung.⁶

⁶Heinrich Henel, Erlebnisdichtung & Symbolismus, Dvjs. 32 (1958). pp. 71-98.

But Mörike, like Goethe, claimed that his writing sprang from personal experience, yet was presented in altered form. In a letter to D. F. Strauss, 12. February 1838, he wrote: "Was ich nicht aus mir selbst und etwa aus dem Leben nehmen kann, hat keinen Reiz für mich, und ich kann garnichts damit anfangen."⁷ Or to Luise Rau, in the summer of 1830: "Wenige, aber starke Eindrücke von aussen,--ihre Verarbeitung muss im ruhigen, bescheidenen Winkel geschehen; auf dem ruhigen Hintergrund sich ihr Kolorit erhöhen, und die Hauptsache muss doch aus der Tiefe des eigenen Wesens kommen;"⁸

But the imagery used by both Mörike and Goethe transposes, transmutes and extends actual experience and exploits insights gained in bliss and despair. And the word herrlich which occurs frequently in both, and especially in Mörike's "Dingdichtung," "may be taken as a description of life uplifted by the powers . . . [of] art, beauty, grace and love"⁹ which dominated their lives. Mörike's experience and emotion is always veiled by imagery. Only occasionally he lifts a corner of the veil lightly, thereby increasing the tension and the intensification of the scene. In Mörike may be seen what Greiner calls a return to "Goethescher Klarheit aus romantischer Traumtiefe" and an awareness of underlying power.¹⁰

⁷Seebass, p. 442.

⁸Ibid., p. 237. Also see Maync p. 325.

⁹Farrell, "Classical Verse", p. 57.

¹⁰Greiner, p. 159.

Maync refers to Mörike's "grosse Kunst des Nur Andeutens, aber nicht Aussprechens . . ." and to his "Einfachheit und kurze Behandlung der Hauptgedanken [welche] zeigen mir den Meister" ¹¹ This perfection of the one who is master of his material, and of his emotions, is felt in the poem "Im Park" (1846). ¹² Brevity of life is its theme. Yet the poet draws from the phenomenon of Spring that which is comprised of beauty, grace and wonder and instills these into his poem.

Im Park

Sieh, der Kastanie kindliches Laub hängt noch wie der feuchte
 Flügel des Papillons, wenn er die Hülle verliess;
 Aber in laulicher Nacht der kürzeste Regen entfaltet
 Leise die Fächer und deckt schnelle den luftigen Gang.
 --Du magst eilen, o himmlischer Frühling, oder verweilen,
 Immer dem trunkenen Sinn fliehst du, ein Wunder, vorbei.

The charm of this epigram, as it is in numerous other instances, is, in part, due to the interweaving of sensual impressions, which creates a subtly alluring synaesthesia:

Der Eindruck herrscht vor, dass das Ich alles mit offenen Sinnen, manchmal auf synaesthetische Art, ja durch die Poren der Haut in sich aufnimmt. Der Stil wirkt so, als ob die sinnlichen Qualitäten der Gegenstände ihm bis in die Fingerspitzen hinein bewusst seien. ¹³

Visual, tactile and auditory impacts compound each other. Feeling-tone of each couplet is more intense than the preceding one, ending

¹¹ Maync, pp. 331 & 363.

¹² Werke, p. 81.

¹³ Farrell, "Aufbauprinzipien", p. 391.

in the defiant yet spell-bound:

—Du magst eilen, o himmlischer Frühling, oder verweilen,
Immer dem trunkenen Sinn fliehst du, ein Wunder, vorbei.

Farrell finds a closer affinity between Mörike and the Greek Anthology than between Mörike and Goethe. "Common to all [in the Greek Anthology] is a subtlety of perception, which however, in Mörike, is often heightened and directed towards the fugitive and unique moment. . . . Thus the fleeting wonder of Spring is momentarily caught in the poem 'Im Park'."¹⁴

This 'moment' has internalized its quality of epiphany. The effect of this internalization climaxes in the "trunkenen Sinn" of the final line. All the imagery is strictly pertinent, builds up to, and becomes one in this instant. The poem starts in a sensually present situation—"Kastanie, Laub, Papillon, Hülle." It expands in space to include "Nacht, Regen, Fächer, Gang." And it ends in a spiritual entity of "Frühling, Sinn, Wunder."¹⁵ Antithesis is evident in the "leis" (carefully, quietly) unfolding of leaves and rapidity—"schnelle"—of response to the quick spring rain. There is also antithesis in the final couplet between the active and passive verbs of "eilen" and "verweilen." Pointed logic in the sequence of verbs underscores the creative process of Spring—and of the poem: "hängt—verliess—entfaltet—deckt."

¹⁴Farrell, "Classical Verse", p. 60.

¹⁵Franz Loesel, "Zu Mörikes Gedicht: 'Im Park'", Wirkendes Wort 12, 1962, pp. 155-61.

The simile comparing a profusion of unopened chestnut leaves to damp wings of butterflies newly-escaped from their pupae, intensifies the emphasis of the personifying infant character of "kindlich" which is attributed to the leaves. The butterfly, in its infant character, is symbol of Spring and "Sendbote eines höheren geistigen Prinzips," as it is also in "Im Weinberg" (1838) and in "Zitronenfalter im April" (1846), whereas in "Christblume II" the butterfly achieves the deepened dimension of the "Blumenkeim" and becomes a connecting link between plant and animal life, thus pointing to the supernatural relationship of these two.¹⁶ Leaves, butterflies and Spring itself require the 'daemonic' elements of underground and sky for their effective emergence.

In this emergence the mystical and sacred secret which binds man and nature gains tangible relationship. The life and spirit-giving capacity of the "Christblume" is anchored in supernatural realms of underground springs and in the winds, the rain and sun of the sky. Von Wiese links the "Christblume" with Die Mutter Nacht and with "Die schöne Buche," stating that these are "nicht spielerische Eingebungen der Phantasie, sondern Gestalten des Seins, die der Dichter nur schauend und lauschend wahrnimmt."¹⁷ This adds a 'daemonic' dimension not apparent on the surface of the words. It includes the very secret of the spirit of life itself. And it suggests a depth of spiritual and

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ von Wiese, p. 80.

sensuous involvement which is always veiled in mystery in the writings of Mörike. The depth of the imagery in the poems "Auf eine Christblume" and "Die schöne Buche" stands behind that of the mystical unfolding process in the poem "Im Park." We sense a profound power here, in the magic of nature, which is both illusive and captivating, and which links with that of the "Blumenkeim" of "Christblume II."

The "Blumenkeim" has a dual possibility. The magic of Spring can transform it into either a delicate butterfly or into a most beautiful flower.¹⁸ In a letter to Wilhelm Hartlaub, October 29, 1841, Mörike described the botanical facts of the "Christblume" and concluded the description in personified terms: "So reizend fremd sah sie mich an, sehnsuchterregend!"¹⁹ This personification adds a tangible quality to the mysterious character of the pupa. And, like nature in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," so the "Blumenkeim" here causes us to "see into the life of things."²⁰ Nature teaches truths which man cannot learn elsewhere. And the dual character of this pupa teaches that there is no absolute truth--life is composed of both the mysterious and of the overt. Mörike mediates between these two poles in this poem and creates one aesthetic and symbolic entity of them.

¹⁸ Storz, p. 353.

¹⁹ _____, p. 349.

²⁰ William Wordsworth, The Prelude---with a Selection from the Shorter Poems, the Sonnets, The Recluse, and The Excursion, ed., Carlos Baker (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), p.97.

The "Christblume" belongs to the dark, lunar realms of night and to the cold time of winter. Thus Storz queries whether this image may not have been related, in the poet's terms, to the "tödliche Nachtwelt . . . aus der vor langer Zeit einmal Peregrina und ihr mystisches Verlöbniß mit dem Knaben Theobald Nolten gekommen waren."²¹ But the flower points away from itself, to the ultimate in aesthetic Beauty, and the imagery which accompanies it hides the mysteries of "Peregrina." However the imagery of "Christblume II," as well as that of "Peregrina," is inherent in that of the poem "Im Park." The three poems share a mystical "Wunder."

All the images of transience--infant phase of unfolding leaves, newly-hatched butterflies, Spring night, dash of rain, and Spring itself--underscore the rapid passing of time, and point to the phase-like character of all life. Everything, and every phase, lasts only for a season and has its own pattern and counterpart, so Mörike seems to say. But all the points are related--each has his day, then passes on to the next. This poem is similar to Yeats' question in "Among School Children" concerning the inevitable cycle of life:

O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?²²

Man is marked to die, so the poem tells us, but art remains, though it never lived.

²¹Storz, p. 354.

²²William Butler Yeats, "Among School Children", Modern Poetry ed., Maynard Mack et al (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965), p. 89.

"Im Park" reveals the emergence of a broader pattern of relationships in the poetry of Mörrike. It shows evidence of a movement away from the early instinctive 'daemonic' 'moment' of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" toward a greater insight and more inclusive overview. This poem has a chain of interlinking relationships which greatly transcends the basically sensuous level of early poems, as for example "Er ists." But, even here, there is no evidence of analysis, speculation or philosophizing.

The opening word "Sieh" alerts the reader to the miracle of Spring. It depicts Mörrike's urgency to communicate this wonder. But "noch;" in the same line, accents the balance of time, and its impermanence. This moment is present "noch"---but for how long? The total effect of this poem, with its airy gracefulness, makes "Im Park" one of the most aesthetically pleasing of all Mörrike's poems.

Loesel notes the romantic tendency to see Spring as a breaking up of power, and states that Mörrike here, unlike in earlier poems, keeps the destructive element at bay: Man does not get lost. There is a reversal of situation: In "Mein Fluss" nature withdraws from man. Now man also withdraws from nature and stands apart and opposite, while night has become a time of growth and unfolding. Loesel speaks
23
of a static and inert "Gegenüberstehen" of landscape and "Ich." One might be inclined to question this assertion, for the park, in its spiritual quality (as described above) is neither static nor inert but

²³Loesel, p. 159.

correlates with man on a deeply mysterious level. Therefore the standing opposite of park and man does not preclude their standing on the same plane.

Other late poems of Mörike which are to be discussed in the following pages continue to reveal the poet's changing emphasis upon time. These are "Schönes Gemüt," "Rückblick," "Hermippus," "Besuch in der Kartause," "Bilder aus Bebenhausen," "Erinna an Sappho," and "Denk es, o Seele."

If "Im Park" constitutes the poet's trying to come to terms with time, then "Schönes Gemüt" (1861)²⁴ depicts the result of this life-long struggle. Vischer most fittingly underscores the tone and essence of this poem in his "Gedenkfeier" speech, at the graveside service of Mörike, in which he speaks of the "gestaltende [n] Kraft seiner Sprache," and that he, Mörike, "in diese unsere Welt eine zweite, eine Welt von holden und gewaltigen Wundern hineingestellt" ²⁵ This is not unlike the view of T. S. Eliot who sees the aim of every great poet, such as Dante and Shakespeare, as being "to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and

²⁴ Werke, p. 330.

²⁵ Friedrich Theodor Vischer, "Gedenkfeier am Grabe Eduard Mörikes", Neunundzanzigster & Dreissigster Rechenschaftsbericht, Schwäbischer Schillerverein (Marbach & Stuttgart, 1926), pp. 21, 19.

strong, something universal and impersonal."²⁶

The major emphases of Mörike's life are contained in "Schönes Gemüt": "Herrliches," (which becomes the more prominent commencing with the poet's "Dingdichtung," and which describes the trilogy which follows): nature, art and "Schönes Gemüt."

As the "Äolsharfe" was acted upon by a sudden gust of wind, so the storms of life had acted upon Mörike. But also, as the "Äolsharfe," so the poet gave freely, voluntarily, all the beauty that was in his power to give. And it was seen to be true that "life plays whatever tune it will on the unresisting soul, which reflects with absolute purity the nature of the object."²⁷ It was probably Mörike's greatest goal in life to instill the characteristics of nobility and beauty, which form epithets to "Kunst" and "Gemüt" in this poem, into all his poems. A verification of this may be heard in the poet's death-bed query of his sister Klaerchen concerning his poetry: "Nicht wahr, es steht nichts Frivoles drin?"²⁸

The secret hidden in the imagery of this poem is as deep and 'daemonic' as the dunkle [n] Quell, der geheimnisvoll in den Abgrund/Schauert und rauscht," of which the poet speaks. It has gained meaning and depth with each passing phase of time and of life, from the early "unnennbare Tage" of the "Wintermorgen" poem to the maturity of

²⁶T. S. Eliot, Selected Prose, ed., John Hayward (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 53.

²⁷Farrell, "Art", p. 24.

²⁸Maync, p. 417.

a fifty-eight year-old.

Mörike's "predilection for the golden mean between excess of joy and sorrow, . . . that he had to practice if he wanted to preserve that tranquillity of mind which enabled him to remain attuned to the lastingly beautiful things in nature and art"²⁹ finds practical expression in the poem "Rückblick" (1853).

Bei jeder Wendung deiner Lebensbahn,
 Auch wenn sie glückverheissend sich erweitert
 Und du verlierst, um Grössres zu gewinnen:
 --Betroffen stehst du plötzlich still, den Blick
 Gedankenvoll auf das Vergangne heftend;
 Die Wehmut lehnt an deine Schulter sich
 Und wiederholt in deine Seele dir,
 Wie lieblich alles war, und dass es nun
 Damit vorbei auf immer sei, auf immer!

Ja, liebes Kind, und dir sei unverhohlen:
 Was vor dir liegt von künftgem Jugendglück,
 Die Spanne misst es einer Mädchenhand.
 Doch also ward des Lebens Ordnung uns
 Gesetzt von Gott; den schreckt sie nimmermehr,
 Der einmal recht/in seinem Geist gefasst,
 Was unser Dasein soll. Du freue dich
 Gehabter Freude; andre Freuden folgen,
 Den Ernst begleitend; dieser aber sei
 Der Kern und sei die Mitte deines Glücks!³⁰

In this poem the poet attempts to establish a balance between dark and light poles but he is unsuccessful in doing so for the dark pole overshadows the light, which fact gives the poem an aura of brooding

²⁹ Hermann Boeschstein, German Literature of the Nineteenth Century (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), p. 49.

³⁰ Werke, p. 327.

premonition. The most remarkable feature of this poem of dualistic polarization between reminiscence and fear is that it is addressed to a young person, upon the occasion of a confirmation ceremony. One senses a nostalgia---the same that Williams sensed in the early "Winter-morgen . . ." "as if something has eluded him . . ." ³¹ and one must agree with Farrell who refers to a "tone audible in his [Mörike's] work," and to a "passivity of soul which accepts fate rather than defying it or making demands of it." ³²

Then Mörike delves into the past, while the present only seems to form a frame for that which he re-lives in memory:

Das Gegenwärtig-Reale bildet gleichsam einen Rahmen, den das labile Gefühl sprengt. Die weiteren Abschnitte des Gedichts bestehen aus einem Abschweifen vom begrenzten Gegenstand und vom voll erlebten gegenwärtigen Augenblick, das sich in verschiedenen Formen vollziehen kann. Das Gefühl geht über den unmittelbaren Anlass hinaus und wühlt das ganze Selbst auf, versetzt tiefste Schichten in Schwingung, aber so, dass das bewusste Ich nicht immer die Bedeutung der inneren Vorgänge voll erfasst. ³³

Along with "Denk es, o Seele," the poem "Rückblick" seems to suggest the beginning of Mörike's late expressions of death, of "Erinna an Sappho" and of "Lang, lang ists her."

Vocabulary and tonal-mood of "Rückblick," written eight years before "Schönes Gemüt," lack the calm serenity and acquiescence of the latter. The poem bears a definite air of disturbed equilibrium and

³¹Williams, p. 169.

³²Farrell, "Art", p. 24.

³³-----, "Aufbauprinzipien", p. 391.

unresolved tensions. "Schönes Gemüt" is free of Mörike's word linkings which epitomize the poet's ambivalence and inner tensions. Words are significant and significantly used in their pure form: "Herrliches--Natur--Grosses--edle Kunst--schönes Gemüt--Tiefen des Lebens--Leides--heiteren Blick--Welt--dunkelen Quell--geheimnisvoll--Abgrund--hold lächelt die Rose." In "Rückblick" "Glück" occurs three times, twice in word combinations of "glückverheissend" and "Jugendglück." Important nouns "Lebensbahn--Grösseres--Blick--Wehmut--Seele--Kind--Mädchenhand--Lebens Ordnung--Gott--Geist--Freude--Freuden--Ernst" all seem unstable, for the entire poem pivots on the dubious word "Wendung" with its "Turmhahn" weathervane implications. Verbs deepen this implication: "erweitert, the antithetical "verlierst/ gewinnen" in the same verse, and "lehnt . . . sich." The immediate stability of the words "Kern" and "Mitte" is undermined by their central position in this unstable situation.

Then too, Mörike's 'dash' (Gedankenstrich) comes unusually early in "Rückblick"--at the beginning of line four--which lends an unsettling atmosphere to the poem--as it does also in "Mein Fluss,"³⁴ "Nachtgesichte,"³⁵ "Erzengel Michaels Feder,"³⁶ "Trost,"³⁷ "Neue Liebe,"³⁸ "Ach nur einmal noch . . ."³⁹ This contrasts noticeably with the 'dash'

³⁴ Werke, p. 39.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 293

³⁶ Ibid., p. 183.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 101.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

which precedes the summary in "Wintermorgen . . ." and which prefaces the two final summarizing verses in "Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag"⁴⁰ and in "Auf einer Wanderung"⁴¹ where it has a distinctly stabilizing effect.

This contrasting use of the 'dash' points to its meaning in the writings of Mürike. Frequently it emphasises the gist of the poem in conclusion, as in "Er ists,"⁴² "Im Frühling,"⁴³ "Gesang zu zweien . . .,"⁴⁴ and "Waldplage"⁴⁵; it indicates transition from objective description to subjective awareness in "Die schöne Buche,"⁴⁶ "Auf eine Lampe,"⁴⁷ "Peregrina III,"⁴⁸ "Wald-Idylle"⁴⁹; it denotes a sententious epigrammatic point in "Ideale Wahrheit"⁵⁰; it punctuates a despondent closing sigh--"o ging er wieder," in "Das verlassene Mägdlein"⁵¹; it prefaces a decisive imperative finale in each of the two sections of "Lied vom Winde"⁵² and of the grateful one in Datura

³⁹ Ibid., p. 163.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴² Ibid., p. 29.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 171.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 85.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 99.

Suaveolens."⁵³

In other poems the 'dash' shows a turning point of far-reaching consequence--as in "Fröh im Wagen"⁵⁴ and in "Peregrina V."⁵⁵ It pacifies ruffled emotions in the "Schweig stille, mein Herz!" which ends each of the four stanzas of the ballad "Schön Rohtraut."⁵⁶ Therefore here the use of the 'dash' is somewhat more closely related to that of "Rückblick" and "Mein Fluss." The weighty effect in these poems contrasts with the 'dash' before the light-hearted teasing points in "Elfenlied"⁵⁷ and the summarizing humorous one in "Lose Ware."⁵⁸

The 'dash' is frequently a symbol of a conclusion arrived at by means of prior analysis of a situation, as in "Im Park,"⁵⁹ "Peregrina I,"⁶⁰ "Schönes Gemüt."⁶¹ But the symbolic image of Mörike's 'dash' achieves even greater impetus in the four staccato, exclamatory

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁵² Ibid., p. 49.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 100.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

interjecting dashes of "Erinna . . ." ⁶² and in the "Äolsharfe" ⁶³ where it precipitates the climax. The climactic quality of the 'dash', however, finds its most dynamic and unique application when it replaces the word and essence of "plötzlich" and/ or "Blitz." It then becomes, itself, an enigmatic and 'daemonic' image. Here the substitute value of the primary symbol vastly intensifies the inherent essence of that which it stands for. This factor finds its most 'daemonic' expression in poems such as "Götterwink" ⁶⁴ and "Am Rheinfall." ⁶⁵

It is in poems such as these that we realize the inadequacy of the word 'dash', for its German equivalent, Gedankenstrich, imputes a much deeper symbolic meaning to this poetic sign. Mörike, in seeking for means of 'daemonic' expression, has, himself, imbued the 'dash' with an aura of the 'daemonic'. The frequency and location of this sign indicates a particular value, as does that of the German Gedankenstrich which Mörike exploits very consciously and carefully. And the word 'dash' is not, when one is considering the poetry of Mörike, a meaningful equivalent for the Gedankenstrich. But here the technical piece of writing equipment, the 'pause for thought', (which is t h e

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 97.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 330.

⁶²Ibid., p. 85.

⁶³Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 82.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 106.

literal translation of the German word), has achieved the imagistic and symbolic quotient of the Gedankenstrich. In "Götterwink,"⁶⁶ for example, the Gedankenstrich covers the memory of shared intimacy with a loved one, the agony and rivalry of knowing her adored by others, and the intensely impatient desire and longing for a return to former bliss. All the young man's pent-up passion finds expression in this Gedankenstrich. Symbollically, this 'dash' includes the emotions contained in the poet's swelling "Verlassen und Sehnsucht" of "Peregrina III": "So zieht es, zieht mich schmachend ihr nach!"⁶⁷ and that suggested by the lines in "Josephine":

O dieser Ton---ich fühlt es nur zu bald,
Schlich sich ins Herz und macht' es tief erkranken:
Ich stehe wie ein Träumer in Gedanken,68

In "Am Rheinfall" the thundering inescapable Daemonie of life overwhelms the poet:

Halte dein Herz, o Wanderer, fest in gewaltigen Händen!
Mir entstürzte vor Lust das meinige fast.
Rastlos donnernde Massen auf donnernde Massen geworfen,
Ohr und Auge wohin retten sie sich im Tumult?
Wahrlich, den eigenen Wutschrei hörte nicht der Gigant hier,
Läg er, vom Himmel gestürzt, unten am Felsen gekrümmt!
Rosse der Götter, im Schwung, eins über dem Rücken des andern,
Stürmen herunter und streun silberne Mähnen umher;
Herrliche Leiber, unzählbare, folgen sich, nimmer dieselben,
Ewig dieselbigen---wer wartet das Ende wohl aus?
Angst umzieht dir den Busen mit eins, und, wie du es denkest,
Über das Haupt stürzt dir krachend das Himmelsgewölb!⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 99.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 106.

Here the Gedankenstrich is the gorge which stands between life's most exalting fulfillment and life's most disastrous eclipse of that which might have been. It is the fear of this gorge which looms up like a phantom in the end of the following paragraph which is an excerpt from a letter of the poet, written to Luise Rau, "Cwen, den 18. Februar, Abends." And, because his fiancee often shared her love-letters with her family, Mörike marked this one (and others) "Für dich allein":

Die Liebe ist gleich unersättlich im Austeilen und Hinnehmen immer neuer Schwüre, und so wird es uns stets ein glückliches Bedürfnis bleiben, das alte "Wie lieb ich Dich!", welches Dein letzter Brief, doppelt unterstrichen, wiederholt, wechselseitig zu hören und hören zu lassen. . . . Diese süsse Wiederholung, worin man sich selber nie ein Genüge tut, gleicht fast einem lieblichen Spiele Ist das ein Spiel, so ist es ein solches, wie die Engel es treiben, und wir schämen uns seiner nicht. Glaubst Du, es könnte eine Zeit kommen, wo wir dessen satt werden? Ich kanns nicht denken; mich schauert, wenn ichs denke!⁷⁰

Here the last two sentences actually verbalize that which Mörike finds inexpressible and unbearably painful, and which is frequently contained in his Gedankenstrich or veiled in symbolic and suggestive imagery. It is noteworthy, therefore, that, after the feared rupture in the relationship with Luise Rau had really taken place, Mörike no longer speaks of it thus openly, but lets the Gedankenstrich represent his acute and poignant heartache.

And in "Schönes Gemüt" the dark cataract of the "Rheinfall"

⁷⁰Seebass, p. 190.

has become a luminescent veil which covers the bliss and despair intimated in the "Peregrina" cycle with its life-long enigmatic "Zauberfaden"; it covers also the numerous other disappointments and storms which had rocked the poet's life almost from his cradle on; it bridges the gap across the dark abyss and points mutely to the vision of the rose with all its 'daemonic' implications which outweigh the vision of the dark abyss. Indeed, the Gedankenstrich points to the rose as being rooted in the

. . . dunkelen Quell, der geheimnisvöllin dem Abgrund
Schauert und rauscht,

Therefore the Gedankenstrich causes us to see the proximity and interrelationship of light and dark 'daemonic' elements in Mörike and in his works. It is of these elements that his antithetical imagery is born. Thus, the Gedankenstrich contains much more "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" than these words could ever spell out in themselves.

So, too, Mörike's modifiers are meticulously well-chosen. Thus, when the poet declares "Betroffen stehst du plötzlich still, . . ." ⁷¹ he seems to deposit a world of doubt in the adverb "Betroffen." This feeling is compounded because of the preceding 'dash.' Finality of past beauty is accented by repetition of:

Wie lieblich alles war, und dass es nun
Damit vorbei auf immer sei, auf immer!

as it is also by the repetitious effect of the internal rhyme in

⁷¹ Werke, "Rückblick", p. 327.

"vorbei . . . sei."

A present situation, as that of the confirmation which occasions the writing of "Rückblick," in Mörike, brings sadness--the memory of the past, premonitions of future sorrow and of the passing, or end of, time. Dualism is almost always apparent. Like his King Orplid, so Mörike--Farrell tells us--"blickt sehnsüchtig zurück nach der Vergangenheit oder vorwärts nach der Zukunft," ⁷² Enzinger notes the necessity of Mörike's masks with which he disguises his duality and adds: "Er leidet an der Vergänglichkeit und lebt vom Vergangenen, von der Rückerinnerung," ⁷³ whereas von Wiese draws together these threads of relationships, stating succinctly: "Kunst wird zu dem phantasievollen Versuch, das zu ersetzen und zu ergänzen, was uns die Wirklichkeit versagt. Sie gestaltet immer aus dem Element der Sehnsucht heraus." ⁷⁴ The creation of art therefore has, or should have, a stabilizing influence upon the poet--as it seems to have had on Mörike.

Still, Mörike was unable to escape the existential problem. Consequently the reversals of mood, the interweaving of distant past and near future, creates a dolorous elegiac tone in "Rückblick." The pendulum of time--as in "Inscription auf eine Uhr mit den drei

⁷²Farrell, "Aufbauprinzipien", p. 392.

⁷³Enzinger, pp. 28, 27.

⁷⁴von Wiese, p. 174.

Horen"⁷⁵—seems to swing beyond the span and movement of life. The recall by cause and effect, of a forty-nine year-old, has no relationship with anything that the addressed child could possibly know. Recognition of what life is all about is the stated prerequisite to fearlessness in life. Even so, the joys of youth are only equal to the measure of a young girl's hand. Basing advice on experience, the poet suggests that "Ernst . . . aber sei/ Der Kern und sei die Mitte deines Glücks!"

The marked contrast and development apparent between "An Hermann" (1837) and "Hermippus" (1860) has been noted.⁷⁶ The poet's confusion is characterized in the earlier poem by a profusion of question and exclamation marks. Considerable information may be gleaned from this unsettled state. In "An Hermann," as in the early "Nachtgesichte" (1827), there is a spontaneous outpouring of unassimilated raw-material. This is just the opposite to the later use of refined understatement where facts are subtly and enigmatically presented. "Hermippus," in contrast to these early poems, proceeds calmly and logically for the greatest part. The terror of the early poems is replaced by an unperturbed demeanor, even at the sight of death in the latter. This distance in "Hermippus" may well be due to the fact that the poem deals with historical data, rather than

⁷⁵Werke, p. 85.

⁷⁶See Doerksen, pp. 75-78.

a personal experience.

"Hermippus" suggests an interesting comparison with Mörike who was at this time of writing lecturer at the "Königlich Katharinenstift," a girl's school at Stuttgart⁷⁷ and of whom Friedrich Hebbel, who had visited him, wrote to his wife on 9, November 1860:

Mörike, schreibt er, sei 'auch eingeschlafen, teils weil in seinem Talent der Keim zu einer fruchtaren Fortentwicklung ohnehin nicht liegt, teils weil er sich in den elendsten, mitleidwürdigsten Verhältnissen herumquält, er kann aber noch wieder geweckt werden und ist dann, wie sich's auch diesmal zeigte, frisch und lebendig'.⁷⁸

The moment of death of this little known figure, Hermippus, causes no dissension or panic but rather a mood of harmony and balanced equilibrium. It instigates beauty in poetry. So von Wiese has written: "Das Schöne ist die Möglichkeit, in den Widersprüchen unseres Menschenlebens einen Zustand des reinen Einklanges, ein ruhendes Gleichgewicht wiederherzustellen."⁷⁹ Thus "Hermippus" does, in a sense, epitomize a coming to terms with life, death and time. But, as has been pointed out,⁸⁰ this poem is not altogether typical, even of the poet's later years.

The imagery of this poem shows the shift from life to death. A marked contrast between age and youth is apparent in the f i r s t

⁷⁷ von Wiese, p. 297.

⁷⁸ Maync, p. 470.

⁷⁹ von Wiese, p. 215.

⁸⁰ Doerksen, p. 78.

eighteen lines: "Hermippus--römischer Weise--Hundertundfünfzehn Jahre
 --der treffliche Greis--welkende Brust" contrasts with "Weiblicher
 Jugend--Anhauch/ kindlicher Lippen--Hauch wie Frühlingsatem/ Herz-
 erfrischend." The peaceful scene of studious girls clustered around
 the aged sage, reading "pergamentene[n] Rollen" or "still mit dem
 Griffel bemüht," while the youngest sits on his lap, achieves a change
 with the first of three dashes, in line nineteen. This 'dash' contains
 no shock of recognition in the face of death as does that of "Erinna
 an Sappho" (1863).⁸¹ In death the wise one sits as before. It seems
 that the term "Geweiheten der Götter" immediately upon death links this
 man with those ancients who wrote the "pergamentenen Rollen," the
 "Goldene Sprüche" and "liebliche Rhythmen," and it links him with the
 classical Homer. Death here accentuates contrast between images of
 permanence--the ancient script, "Goldene Sprüchlein . . .und liebliche
 Rhythmen der Dichter" and Homer--and the freshness but quickly wilting
 hyacinths and violets whose life-span may be equated with the beauty
 of the girls at this school.

In "Hermippus" the first 'dash' represents the transition
 from life to death. But death in this poem is not a frightening spectre.
 Dark imagery is absent here. The poet is not involved. He speaks of
 Hermippus as already belonging to antiquity. The two following dashes
 also are devoid of any startling effect. The first of these turns
 the poem in the direction of Karl Wolff, the person addressed in the

⁸¹ Werke, p. 85.

poem, the second relates future life and wisdom of this friend with Hermippus and with antiquity. The reference to Karl Wolff as "Lykos." and the play on this Greek word, which means 'wolf,' almost seems to impute more strength and vigor to the image of the one addressed than to Hermippus, the actual subject of the poem.

Opening and closing images of this poem overlap and form a circle. In both, an aged educator drinks in the "Fülle des Lebens" by inhaling the breath of youth. Wisdom is seen as part of time's process and belongs to the aged as they relate to antiquity. Thus the theme of the epistle accepts the irremediable passing of time, Death is seen as part of a natural time-span and as part of the life-process. The revived legend achieves new life where it touches the life-expectancy of a friend of the poet.

"Besuch in der Kartause,"⁸² written in the same year as "Hermippus," in 1861, shows both a humorous and serious approach to the problem of time and of death. Mörike has re-visited a well-known monastery after fourteen years of absence. He remembers the old religious order, with its specific views regarding life and death, which had previously existed here, and he is aware of the changes which have taken place. The monastery is now in control of secular powers; it houses shops, a brewery, and a dining room which serves unpalatable, watered-down food and beverages which the narrator contrasts with his

⁸²Ibid., p. 174.

former fare in the same hall, as follows:

Bei dünnem Weissbier und versalznem Pökelfleisch
 Sass ich im Gasthaus der gewesnen Prälatur,
 Im gleichen Sälchen, wo ich jenes erstemal
 Mit andern Fremden mich am ausgesuchten Tisch
 Des Priors freute köstlicher Gastfreundschaft.
 Ein grosser Aal ward aufgetragen, Laberdan,
 Und Artischocken aus dem Treibhaus (28-34)

The theme of time is wrapped up in the idiosyncrasy of a priest who could not bear to look at the clock, which not only represented the passing of time, but which carried the threatening inscription: "Una ex illis ultima," that is, "One of these is the last." Therefore, because this solemn warning frightened the priest, he hid the clock. In the poem the clock is the connecting link between the two orders, old and new. The physician who attended to the needs of the priest has related the final episode of the clock to the poet, to the narrator.

The priest had left the monastery when the religious establishment was dissolved, and had gone into the world but could bear this life for a scant year only. He had returned to the now secularized spot of his former monastery, wishing once more to establish a feeling of 'belonging' after his uncomfortable and displaced feeling in the world. Formerly, he had been part of a definite and organic system which had clearly defined answers to the questions of life and death, even to the order of burial, for the poet finds the prior in an appropriate place in the cemetery:

Er schläft nun auch
 In seiner Ecke dort im Chor.

In the world the priest had become conscious of the threat of time, and so, after having the additional message of time delivered to him in the form of a slight 'stroke', he wrapped the clock, addressed it to his friend and host, the inn-keeper, and hid it. The clock is found some time after the owner's death.

Movement of the poem, between yesterday and tomorrow, diminishes the threat of time and suggests the author's reconciliation with it. Here, the passing of that which was so important to the poet—"das Herrliche!"—is accepted with a sigh. It is now seen as part of the inevitable change which time brings:

Fand ich die ganze Herrlichkeit dahin. Sei's drum!
Ein jedes Ding währt seine Zeit.⁸³

And yet the inevitable passage of time touches life everywhere, as the host's "Raritätenkästchen" shows in miniature: it contains "Geweihtes und Profanes"; a rusty icon side by side with Andromeda of Greek anthology, zoological Gemmae side by side with old coins.

Imagery weaves back and forth between recollection and visual fact. The narrator commences in the distant past:

Als Junggesell, du weisst ja, lag ich lang einmal
In jenem luftigen Dörflein an der Kindelsteig
Gesundheitshalber müßig auf der Bärenhaut.

After this, unexpectedly, we are told of the grave in the cemetery, then the poet tells of his recent return to this one-time monastery, reminisces upon the past again, quite suddenly discovers the o l d

⁸³Ibid.

clock and thereupon reverts to the present tense. Time continues to alternate in this fashion. This tends to give an impression of alternation between acceleration and retardation of the temporal aspect under discussion, as if the poet were attempting to draw in the reigns of time to prevent the latter from galloping away. The image of the rapidity of passing time is also conveyed in a statement concerning the clock: "Das Pendelchen nur in allzu peinlicher Eile schwang."

The clock almost seems to be made responsible for the passing of its former owners. As the priest stated that his clock was "kaputt," so man seems to be out of order, helpless and broken, before this thing, this tyrant, which measures his life-span and ticks it away, second by second. The fact that the ailing priest regained his rose-like appearance after his frightening "Schläglein" contrasts with the image of "Ein weisser Stein" in the nearby cemetery. This juxtapositioning of blooming life to a symbol of death accentuates the finality of the stroke of time and indicates that the poem's serene good humor is based on aware knowledge of the fortune which life brings--both good and bad. Consequently, a consciousness of the proximity of life to death infiltrates the entire poem, except the opening and concluding lines. This awareness of impending death is akin to that of "Denk es, o Seele" and of "Erinna an Sappho." The poet has read the message of time, and he has accepted the knowledge of the inevitable, but he wishes to postpone the climactic moment as far into the future as possible. The erstwhile 'moment' of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" is now infused with reality. The early dream, and the magic, is gone.

This is contemplation upon fact. Time is no longer dependent upon love or respect as in "Mit einem Anakreonskopf . . ." or in "Inscription auf eine Uhr mit den drei Horen." Time, in the step of death, will command an end to life. The symbolism of this clock is unmistakable.

The poet attempts to decrease the force of time in the latter part of this poem by relating the final facts in diminutives: "Schläglein," "Uhrchen," "Sprüchelchen." This acts as a brake and a buffer against the harshness of reality. Similarly, the humor of the poem seeks to mitigate somewhat the basically dark message and to keep this message in a perspective that the poet is able to cope with. Does Mörike wish to say that death, too, has become part of the 'order' of life, as the story of this priest seems to show? Or is this another instance of his tongue-in-cheek understatement? Or of irony? I would tend to see all of these factors in the poem. Mörike does not seem to have resolved the question of time in this poem. The death of the "Pater Schaffner" leaves the question open to debate. Therefore, one may ask: Is Mörike afraid of the depth of insight to be gained, and consequently does not follow his commentary on time to its final conclusion?

In the "Bilder aus Bebenhausen,"⁸⁴ (1853), nature and art complement each other. Art imitates nature and has been built from the products of nature, has sprung from it. Together they--art and nature--depict the passing of the times. Strolling in the forest, the poet found

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 192.

Jetzo . . . / . . . längst füllt sich die Schale nicht mehr.
 Aber du zeigst mir tröstlich im Garten ein blühendes Leben,
 Das dein wonniger Strahl locket aus Moder und Schutt.

New life is born of time's ruins while simultaneously old graves
 bring past lives to mind (4). In "Gang zwischen den Schlafzellen" (6)
 the poet continues to describe the artistic imitation of nature, but
 adds with melancholy:

Alles mit Sinn und Geschmack, zur Bewunderung! aber auch alles
 Fast in Trümmern, und nur seufzend verliess ich den Ort.

"Am Kirnberg" (8), reveals a picture, a painting, of life as it once
 had been:

. . . : ehdem fasste das Becken den See,
 Welcher die Schwelle noch netzte des Phörtleins dort in der Mauer,
 Wo am eisernen Ring spielte der wartende Kahn.

The past tense of the verbs "ehdem fasste," "spielte," and later of
 "lachte," underscore vanished beauty in nature which has fallen because
 of the effects of time. Nothing remains now of the Cistercians either.
 What is left of the past--the picture--gives the poet the impression
 of a "Schattenspiel"; the inert piece of art gains the life of the
 past in present tense and circumstance:

. . . so hell von Farben, so kindlich,
 Lachte die Landschaft mich gleich und die Gruppe mich an.

Thus the "Bilder aus Bebenhausen" depict the cyclical course of time.
 Past and present alternate in these pictures of life. The drawing-
 board has remained empty; but the poet's imagination is filled with
 the memory of actual and fictitious scenes ("Verzicht, 11). The
 poem gives the impression of kaleidoscopic moments of experience in
 this spot so well known to the poet.

There is evidence of development in this poem which has taken place since the early "Nachtgesichte,"⁸⁵ Imagery here paints a total picture of time and place, but there is a reversal of process from the poet's first period of writing. He does not now become engrossed in memory itself, so Schlaffer informs us, but the past has come to clarify the present. Therefore, not the past is important, but that part of it which is still relevant to the present and gives it meaning.⁸⁶ Here the actual frame of monastery, and its setting in the valley, form the artistic and imagistic frame of the live pictures. But, "Wie in dem Gedicht 'Auf eine Lampe' ist das Schöne hier ein Gewachsenes und Unverrückbares, das obwohl es ein Werk menschlicher Kunst ist, nicht dem Menschen gehört, sondern dem Sein."⁸⁷

Emphasis throughout this poem is on the necessity of the "fühlende [n] Geist[es]," as expressed in the opening picture. "Eulenspiegel" (3) and a bell as "Stimme aus dem Glockenturm" (7), as well as the "Mädchen am Waschtrog" (9), bring humor to the scene. And a painting in the monastery becomes interchangeable with shadowplay.

The imagery seems to be less 'daemonic', less a product of an inner situation or of disintegration, as for example, in the poet's "Nachtgesichte," yet it is vital and precisely chosen:

⁸⁵Doerksen, p. 92.

⁸⁶Schlaffer, p. 53.

⁸⁷von Wiese, p. 225.

Spielend ahmst du den schlanken Kristall und die rankende Pflanze.
 (1)
 Zauberisch, wenn du wie heut, herbstliche Sonne, gegläntzt. (2)

The contrasting imagery in the "Eulenspiegel" scene is noteworthy:

Einem entrüstetem Mönch, der ganz umsonst sich ereifert;
 Immer nur lachet der Schalk, weis't ihm die Eule und lacht. (3)

Or in the "Sommer-Refektorium"---

Denn vielstrahlig umher aus dem Büschel verlaufen die Rippen
 Oben und knüpfen, geschweift, jenes unendliche Netz,
 Dessen Felder phantastisch mit grünenden Ranken der Maler
 Leicht ausfüllet; da lebt was nur im Walde sich nährt: (5)

Wucherndes Muster (6)

Bis querüber ein mächtiger Damm sich wirft wie mit grünem
 Sammet gedeckt: . . . (8)

The synaesthesia of "Nachmittags" is exceedingly vibrant, as also
 experienced by the observing poet:

Drei Uhr schlägt es im Kloster. Wie klar durch die schwülige Stille
 Gleitet herüber zum Waldrande mit Beben der Schall,
 Wo er lieblich zerfließt, in der Biene Gesumm sich mischend,
 Der mich Ruhenden hier unter den Tannen umgibt. (10)

And again there is harmonious synaesthesia in the final poem, "Verzicht":

. , wer malt mir dies süsse,
 Schimmernde Blau, und wer rundum das warme Gebirge.-- (11)

This image sums up the tangible, intangible beauty of the pictures
 presented.

In the "Bilder aus Bebenhausen" the poet deals very consciously
 with nature and with art. The two are portrayed as separate but re-
 lated entities. Art can imitate nature, but the two cannot merge into
 one. Even in the presentation of carved pillars the distinction remains
 clear.

While Mörike presents the problem of past and present in this poem, he emphasises the thought that "life goes on, triumphant over time's inevitable changes, and the past still lives" ⁸⁸ The harmonious and tranquil tone of this cycle of poems contrasts markedly with that of "Erinna an Sappho," written in the same year and also dealing with time. In "Erinna . . ." the imminence of death creates an initial shock to the young poet dealt with, whereas in the "Bilder aus Bebenhausen" Mörike presents a "picture of life which can be enjoyed despite the nearness of death." ⁸⁹ But it is difficult to agree with the finding that:

Mörike has found his solution to the problem of time with which he so long concerned himself. The magic moment can now be taken into the future: that which is beautiful knows no temporal bounds. The poet's conquest of time is complete. ⁹⁰

It seems more accurate to say that Mörike was reconciled to the fact of fleeting time, to a certain degree, but also that he never fully ceased to long for the ability to hold the moment constant.

In "Erinna an Sappho" (1863) ⁹¹ the poet seeks to extend the moment of present happiness as far into the future as possible. Each of the four Gedankenstriche is a sign of intensified involvement and insight,

⁸⁸Friesen, p. 203.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 194.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 208.

⁹¹Werke, p. 85.

and each helps to circumscribe the element of time in the poem and to make it more dominant. The first 'dash' is an interjection, a reminder that not only all people must die, but that this one, specifically, must do so; the second shows a startled response of one who is used to the knowledge of death and oblivious to it as the fisherman who has lived near the sea all his life is oblivious to the murmur of the waves: Erinna has felt the shock which the thought of imminent death brings. The third 'dash' is associated with this shock, and with it the poem's emphasis turns from outer to inner description. And the fourth 'dash', along with the following lines:

 --Ha, da mit eins durchzuckt' es mich
 Wie Wetterschein! Wie wenn schwarzgefiedert ein tödlicher Pfeil
 Streifte die Schläfe vorbei, . . . (23-25)

contains the unnamed elements of Mörike's early 'daemonic' 'moment'-- "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" may be sensed as an undertone although they are not spelled out. This imagery and climactic effect is similar to that of "An eine Äolsharfe" where the inner climax is expressed in terms of wind-imagery: "Wie der Wind heftiger herstösst,"

But "Erinna an Sappho" is not an inner response to an outer situation as were the early poems "An einem Wintermorgen, . . .," "Er ists," and others. If anything, the situation is reversed. An inner process is given outward representation and rendered tangible. Here the Gedankenstrich forms a bridge between mental and visual process as the story unfolds. It is located at the four most strategic points of narration. This is evidence of development since Mörike's early poems where the Gedankenstrich is primarily a signal of a turn in events or

of a resolution:

--Hinweg, mein Geist! hier gilt kein Stillestehn:
Es ist ein Augenblick, und Alles wird verwehn.⁹²

or an appeal to listen to nature's message:

--Horch, von fern ein leiser Harfenton!
Frühling, ja du bists!⁹³

In "Erinna an Sappho" each Gedankenstrich represents a deeper insight into the problem of death. It is not so much, as formerly, a response to an emotional situation connected to nature or to love but rather to show in concrete images the steps of an inner attempt at coming to terms with the reality of death. The premonition of death is an inner experience of great immediacy.

Mörike intensifies the impact of the message of the mirror by linking it to both the lightning speed of "Wetterschein" and of a black and deadly arrow. Death surrounds man from the moment of birth, but here the young poet, Erinna, suddenly becomes aware of death as she sees her own image in the mirror. The duality inherent in time is symbolized in both images: they epitomize the speed of passing time and are messengers of death. This is underscored by the statement that the deadly arrow is "schwarzgefiedert." It has come from Hades. This, like the black horses of "Denk es, o Seele," points to death in the midst of present life. But much of the imagery is a l s o

⁹² Werke, p. 10.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 29. Also see discussion dealing with Mörike's Gedankenstrich p. 153 &ff.

reminiscent of the early "Peregrina" cycle where the mirror of pond and of eyes figures prominently, where the black wedding-dress and scarlet shawl as well as the gold in the betrothed one's eyes symbolize a dualistic inner character, and where the image:

Wo die Weymouthsfichte mit schwarzem Haar
Den Spiegel des Teiches halb verhängt⁹⁴

prefigures the pregnant words of Erinna:

Als ich am Putztisch jetzo die Flechten löste,
Dann mit nardeduftendem Kamm vor der Stirn den Haar-
Schleier teilte,--seltsam betraf mich im Spiegel Blick in Blick.

Here the progress in outlook upon time is clear. Erinna accepts the fate which awaits her; in her "Peregrina" becomes reconciled. But still, the enigmatic character of "Peregrina" hovers over the poem.

This is Mörike's late stance toward death. Erinna does not fight death; the tears well up at thought of parting from her friend, but she accepts the inevitable, asking only that this moment be postponed as far into the future as possible. It is as if she had experienced death already and is recalling it in her memory. She has the hope that the goddess can prolong life, but knows that this is not, in fact, possible.

In "Erinna an Sappho," as in "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben," Mörike confronts time in the realization that he cannot vanquish it. He now accepts its passing with a moderate degree of equanimity. In "Ach nur einmal noch . . ." he longs for a return of former time,

⁹⁴ Werke, "Peregrina II", p. 98.

however, whereas in "Erinna an Sappho" he acquiesces and merely hopes to prolong the present moment. This differs, too, from the earlier momentary glimpse of death in "Auf ein altes Bild" and in "Göttliche Reminiszenz" where the tree and cross symbolize not only death, but life thereafter. In all these poems Mörike exploits the moment of the recognition of death. In Erinna's poem the theme of death is all-pervasive. The young poet states:

Und das eigene Todesgeschick erwog ich;
 Trockenem Augs noch erst,
 Bis ich dein, o Sappho, dachte,
 Und der Freundinnen all,
 Und anmutiger Musenkunst,
 Gleich da quollen die Tränen mir.

Contemplation of death, in itself, brought no tears, but the realization that this means parting from her favorite friend, from other friends, and from art, does bring tears.

The fear which confronts Erinna in the mirror is associated with the fact that the spirit which now looks out from these eyes, will soon be gone from them. It is this spirit in her eyes which startles her:

Wie mit fremdendem Ernst, lächelnd halb, ein Dämon,
 Nickst du mich an, Tod weissagend!

This reveals to her the "nachtschaurige Kluft" of death. It is a dizzying and threatening abyss.

The mirror image of self is an enigmatic symbol. It contains both that which is known of the self, and that which is strange or unknown. It is part of a secret process. The mirror is "der Raum des Werdens."⁹⁵ Here the memory of the past arises; and here anticipation

of the future may gain shape. And the fear which faces Erinna here is due to her insight into her own being and the certainty of what the future holds. But this fear is controlled and shows a mature acceptance and mastery over this threatening situation. Here, as in "Denk es, o Seele," the fear no longer threatens to become destructive as in earlier poems. Though the tone of "Peregrina" infuses this poem, the ambiguity of the "Peregrina" mirror is absent now. Transience is a certainty, a known and accepted fact. Nor is there a change of perspective here as there is in "Lang, lang ists her," except for the change to acceptance, from the initial startled reaction of surprise.

Mörike himself does not enter this poem as he does in his earlier years, except that he introduces Erinna. He maintains an 'objective' distance which is congruent with the 'classical' expression of the poem. Death has become a general rule for all life, even for the young and full of promise.

Time is now not dependent upon inner characteristics or stance of man, such as respect or love in the poems "Inscription auf eine Uhr mit den drei Horen" (1846) and "Mit einem Anakreonskopf und einem Fläschchen Rosenöl" (1845). And the nostalgic longing for the past in "Lang, lang ists her" (1866), "Rückblick" (1854), and "Ach nur einmal noch im Leben" (1845) has been converted to include the future. These three poems also carry the sense of dark, mysterious foreboding,

⁹⁵Guardini, p. 40.

but not the tone of acceptance found in "Erinna an Sappho." The message of the clock in "Besuch in der Kartause" (1861) is probably the closest of all Mörike's poems, in underlying tone, to "Erinna an Sappho." Here, too, there is inner reflection and deeper contemplation, but the humorous conclusion may perhaps signify an unpreparedness to accept the unmistakable message of the clock. "Erinna . . ." shows progress in this respect.

Music is, logically, the main and most frequent recurring motif of Mörike's novella "Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag." The effect that music had upon him has been variously described by the poet, but invariably in terms of 'daemonic' ecstasy which ended in the depths of despair. In a letter to his friend, Wilhelm Waiblinger, Mörike described his reaction to music as follows:

Wirklich tut die Musik eine unbeschreibliche Wirkung auf mich --oft ists wie eine Krankheit, aber nur periodisch. Ich sage Dir, eine bewegliche, nicht gerade traurige Musik, oft eine fröhliche, kann mir manchmal mein Innerstes lösen. Da versink ich in die wehmütigsten Phantasien, wo ich die ganze Welt küssend voll Liebe umfassen möchte, wo mir das Kleinliche und Schlimme in seiner ganzen Nichtigkeit und wo mir alles in einem andern, verklärten Lichte erscheint. Wenn die Musik dann abbricht, möchte ich in meiner Empfindung von einer hohen Mauer herabstürzen, möchte ich sterben;⁹⁶

It is not surprising, therefore, that Mörike should write a poem such as "Denk es, o Seele, (1851),⁹⁷ upon recalling the memory of a performance, on August 15, 1824, of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" which he

⁹⁶Seebass, February, 1822, p. 14.

⁹⁷Werke, p. 96.

had attended with his favorite brother, August, who died several days later.⁹⁸

Denk es, o Seele

Ein Tännlein grünet wo,
 Wer weiss, im Walde,
 Ein Rosenstrauch, wer sagt,
 In welchem Garten?
 Sie sind erlesen schon,
 Denk es, o Seele,
 Auf deinem Grab zu wurzeln
 Und zu wachsen.

Zwei schwarze Rösslein weiden
 Auf der Wiese,
 Sie kehren heim zur Stadt
 In muntern Sprüngen.
 Sie werden schrittweis gehn
 Mit deiner Leiche;
 Vielleicht, vielleicht noch eh
 An ihren Hufen
 Das Eisen los wird,
 Das ich blitzen sehe!

The surprising aspect of "Denk es, o Seele," is its simplicity as compared to the complexity of the opera and of the poet's emotional involvement in reaction to it. But the 'daemonic' element is felt as a powerful undercurrent in the poem. Thus Zemp is justified in stating that "Denke es, . . ." is almost like an oracle.⁹⁹ And the poem exerts an unexplainable, somewhat hypnotic, or magical, fascination—von Wiese terms this an "unheimliche Kraft."¹⁰⁰ Zemp tells us that Mörike had just completed the writing of the Mozart novella when Theodor Storm

⁹⁸Seebass, Letter to Johannes Mährten, March, 1825, p. 39.

⁹⁹Zemp, p. 47.

¹⁰⁰von Wiese, p. 132.

visited him. The poet read the novella to his friend in daytime, but created the desired atmosphere by darkening the room and lighting the lamp.¹⁰¹

A sense of Ahnung, or premonition, a word frequently used by Mörike, permeates this poem. Consequently it involves the future rather than the past. Mörike's fondness of color imagery is apparent here also, and these colors--green of the spruce tree and the color of the rose-buds--spell hope and life. But the color of the horses, though they will return to town "In muntern Sprüngen" initially, is a sombre black--symbolizing death. There is intensification from image to image. The pictures of "Tännlein" and "Rosenstrauch" at some indefinite spot and distance really pose no threat. However, the unexpected and pointed addition of

Sie sind erlesen schon,

 Auf deinem Grab zu wurzeln

has a definitely startling effect and catches the reader unprepared.

It is this which evokes the deeper 'daemonic' implications. And von Wiese reminds us of the close and secret relationship of beauty, magic and death.¹⁰² All the association related to the rose and tree--their underground source and stretching skyward comes to mind, as does also the fact that the Mozart novella is based upon a time and event when the composer was threatened by extinction because he was

¹⁰¹Zemp, p. 48.

¹⁰²von Wiese, p. 129.

already "showing symptoms of the illness to which he will succumb."¹⁰³
 And inherent in the image of root and branches of rose and tree is the
 symbol of man.¹⁰⁴ And also the symbol of the ongoing life--that death
 is not the end--that it is part of life.

Feeling is objectified in the image of the grazing black horses
 in the meadow. The image of death in the poem is not a threatening
 one, as had been in the poet's youth. Death now seems to be almost
 co-existent with life. Here we see the in-depth involvement of Mörike
 with death. There is no lament, only "ein ergriffenes Erstaunen über
 den innigen Zusammenhang von Tod und Leben und Leben und Tod"¹⁰⁵

The deepening effect of symbolic significance is seen in con-
 trast of horses' behaviour from "muntern Sprüngen" to

Sie werden schrittweis gehn
 Mit deiner Leiche;

This effect is intensified by the ponderance and doubt placed upon
 the time aspect, and by the repetition of the word "Vielleicht." And
 the final image with its "blitzen sehe" brings the future very near.
 But this is an elegiac ending to the novella, rather than a tragic
 one.¹⁰⁶

This image of the "Blitz" seems to suggest spontaneous and

¹⁰³ Hermann Boeschstein, p.50.

¹⁰⁴ Guèardini, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰⁵ Taraba, p. 163.

profound insight into a state of being hitherto unknown. It contains the earlier emphasis of "Zwielicht" and "Zauber." And it veils something as well. Holthusen sees in it a "Schock der Innewerdung dessen, was 'wir besitzen und sind'."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ R. B. Farrell, Mörike: Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag (London, Edward Arnold Ltd., 1960), p. 48.

¹⁰⁷ Holthusen, p. 1139.

V. A Concluding Perspective

Basic to Mörike's writing is his awareness of the 'daemonic', of an elemental power which infuses the universe with magic. To capture this magic and to encapsulate it in one 'moment' of time seems to have been his aim. Emphasis on one specific moment was always important to this poet; even in his private correspondence he meticulously stipulates time, place, circumstance and mood. So, too, poems in all periods are vignettes of circumscribed areas which contain the poet's present happiness or cherished memories of the past. Everything centers on a moment of experience or of reflection. And reflection is experience to Mörike. But the character of Mörike's decisive 'moment' undergoes change in his poetry, as has been shown in the preceding pages.

In his early poetry, Mörike's 'moment' is comprised of the interacting elements of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz" which almost invariably come hand in hand. These three elements stimulate and intensify the effect of each other and of the total image of the poem. The 'moment' is generally comprised of antithetical factors--dark and light elements polarize and intensify the impact of their

dualistic symbolism, as is the case in the "Peregrina" cycle. Here the antithesis and interaction of juxtaposed ambivalent positive and negative forces--innocence and guilt, love and aversion, joy and fear, magic and terror, ecstasy and torment--form a typical example of Mörike's early 'moment' as described in chapter two.

Two aspects are of primary importance in considering this 'daemonic moment' of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz": the effect of distance from experience upon the poet, and the effect of the Gedankenstrich in the poem. Mörike wrote the "Peregrina" sequence some time after the original experience which serves as a basis for the poems. It is evident that distance to Mörike, unlike Wordsworth to whom "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings . . . recollected in tranquillity . . .,"¹ has the effect of optic magnifying lenses. It shows experience to be more brilliantly illuminated than at the time of the original event. The poem "Erinnerung" (1822)² was also written some time after the encounter described. The antithesis in this poem is again typical of Mörike's early poetry: the streets were "sonnenhell," yet "regnerisch"; on the wide sun-flooded street their shared umbrella gave the young couple a feeling of secluded magic, "Wie in einem Feenstübchen"; tongues were dumb,

¹William Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" in The Prelude, Selected Poems and Sonnets, ed., Carlos Baker (New York: Hall-Rinehart and Winston, 1954), p. 25.

²Werke, p. 10.

hearts pounded wildly. Five dashes accent strategic points in the poem. This contrasts with poems during both the 'classical' and late periods, where there is seldom more than one Gedankenstrich and where it is of climactic significance.

The 'dashes' of this early poem are more "pauses for thought" than indications of deep-seated inner turmoil as is the first dash of the poem "Götterwink" (1845)³: "--Also sprach ich und schwellte mir so Verlangen und Sehnsucht"; or of the second and climactic one in this poem:

Welche Wonne, noch heut, mein, des Verwegenen, harrt
 Im verschlossenen Gemach. Wie schlägt mein Busen! --
Erschütternd
 Ist der Dämonien Ruf, auch der den Sieg dir verspricht.

In this last example the Gedankenstrich is an attribute to the understatement presented and it accentuates the powerful undercurrent in these lines. They contain something of the spirit of "Peregrina III" --Mörike's masterpiece of antithetical understatement. In the "Götterwink" dash we sense the magic of the "Peregrina" "Zauberfaden" which was to accompany the poet all his life. Significantly, in "Götterwink," the future is captured by the present tense of narration; and the pastness fades away. This is quite a distinct development from the early poems which deal only with love as a past entity. In this later poem inordinate or romantic longing is absent, despite its setting and theme. This is not only evident in imagery, but in the manner of the pause

³Werke, p. 82.

which seems to draw the speaker up short, in order to assess himself within his situation, and to find an honest appraisal. This objective, onlooker approach is new and stands in marked contrast to Mörike's early poems.

Mörike's awareness of the 'daemonic'--the propensity of this 'moment' for elation and for the abyss--in man, becomes increasingly apparent in the 'classical' periods. This alters the character of the dynamic 'moment'. It would appear that the poet sought to overcome the threatening impact of the daemonic--especially in love--by concentrating more particularly on objects of comparative permanence, as a result of which we now have his Dinggedichte.⁴ In the Dingdichtung Mörike's Gedankenstrich attempts to capture and suggest the inner spirit of the object described, to evoke, as it were, the 'daemonic' element imminent in the thing. Here, not the process of 'becoming' is described, nor the circumstance of an event, as noted of Mörike's early poetry, but the finished product of art or nature is presented as it is seen in a specific moment of time, in a specific place and as it suggests specific characteristics of itself or of a time-period. In these 'classical' poems time is balanced in the Gedankenstrich and given recognition: the past is made permanent in the present moment which shows a marked development from earlier poetry.

Chronologically, within Mörike's span of writing, the Gedankenstrich is increasingly momentous in its effect, a l t h o u g h the

⁴See chap. IV.

characteristic use of it does not undergo drastic alterations basically. It is most dynamically efficacious in its precipitation of climax, perhaps particularly so in the late period where it stands as surrogate for multifarious unexpressed suggestions and where it serves as substitute for Mörike's early key symbols of the 'moment'--those of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz." Mörike's decisive 'moment' is always camouflaged by a veil, a mask, of imagery. This is as true of the early period with its "Wintermorgen" poem as it is of the much later "Im Park." The Gedankenstrich is an integral part of both the veil's obscurity and its illusiveness.

That Mörike's early imagery is more active than during the 'classical' years may be witnessed by comparing the imagery of the poems of these periods as presented in chapters II and III. "An einem Wintermorgen . . ." (1825), for instance abounds in verve and enthusiastic ebullience while "Inscription auf eine Uhr . . ." (1846) has a more sedate and even-paced rhythm and a more moderate tone. The 'classical' poems are extraordinarily noteworthy for their brevity and precision which instill a controlled beauty and balanced harmony into the 'daemon-ic moment' portrayed. In the late years poetry is frequently neither as effervescent and active as in the early, nor as sedate and even-paced as in the 'classical,' but it has now gained vastly in depth, refinement and power of suggestive understatement.

Associated with this deeper penetration is Mörike's linking of mutually exclusive nouns and adjectives. This paradox is a prominent feature of all Mörike's writings but the word-combinations gain

in subtlety, yet pointedness, after the late 'thirties. Mörike is from the first particularly adroit in his choice and adaptation of imagery and he skilfully combines a remarkable range of elements in his poetry. Almost always the purpose is to present the unique intensification which attains to the climactic proportions of his 'moment'.

Progression is equally apparent in the increasing use of the apostrophe. The early poem "Er ist" (1829) is a description of the coming of Spring and ends in only two lines of direct address to Spring itself, as has been shown in chapter I. The titles of this period also name content, frequently using the indefinite article rather than specifically addressing themselves to the entity described: "Der Feuerreiter," "Die Elemente," "Tag und Nacht," "Septembermorgen." During the 'classical' period numerous titles give recognition to the object by the prefix of the word "Auf": "Auf eine Christblume," "Auf eine Lampe," "Auf dem Tod eines Vogels." This is a distancing device--as is also the frame which occurs frequently in this period--and eminently aptly in the 'objective' Dingdichtung. Later, a number of poems are addressed directly to the object or person concerned: "An eine Lieblingsbuche," "An Hermann," "An eine Sängerin." This is an intimizing step and one away from the distance of content-naming or of specific pointing gestures of titles with the indefinite articles "der, die, das."

Similarly, cosmic metaphors of the early poet progress to conscious comparison of explicit and circumscribed entities which portray their inner meaning symbolically. An intensification of

symbolic meaning is evident also in a comparison of objects which achieve added symbolic dimensions throughout Mörike's writing years. This progress may be followed in a study of the rose symbolism, for example, in the poems, "Erinnerung" (1822), "Auf das Grab von Schiller's Mutter" (1853), "An eine Äolsharfe" (1837), and "Denk es, o Seele" (1851). The symbolic value is increasingly intensified while, at the same time, it assumes more levels of meaning.

Mörike's early imagery shows him to be in harmony with nature, quiescent and receptive of the 'moment'. There is a conscious awareness that he must maintain his balance between the dualistic poles of mood which are part of his psychological and emotional endowment. His poems reflect this situation of paradox. Antithesis, oxymoron and understatement increasingly underscore the paradox during his writing years. After the 'hiatus' in creativity of 1830-35, during the 'classical' period, equilibrium and delimitation of imagery is achieved. Antithetical imagery becomes increasingly indirect and subtle. The 'daemonic' 'moment' is intensified in its effect due to a new order and control and due to the fact that immediacy and reflection now support each other. Art gains prominence in the poet's 'classical' period, in conjunction with his Dinodichtung. One of the poet's last poems, "Bilder aus Bebenhausen" (1863), reveals his late stance concerning both nature and art. Imagery successfully fuses the two (as has been shown in the preceding chapter), imputing a new and vital interrelationship to them both, and this poem, notably, as does "Erinna an Sappho"

⁵Doerksen, p. 91.

(1863), disproves the critics' allegations concerning the poet's late ineptitude or lack of productivity.

In the 'classical', or middle, period of his writing, Mörike accents man's brevity of life, casting it against a backdrop of images of permanence. He now occasionally includes future time. It is the period of his Dingdichtung where a total image achieves symbolic meaning. Also the earlier framing device is perfected, which facilitates distance between poet and object and contains the tension within proscribed limits. His poetry becomes increasingly tempero-'classical', i. e. time dominated yet classical in form and style. The epiphany-like urgency is internalized in the 'moment' while there is, at the same time, a change from the early morning epiphany to that of high noon, and there is, furthermore, a perfection in the mastery of understatement. Aesthetic appeal and beauty predominate in this period. Sententious conclusions are new. There is a recognition of time's transience. The poet of the late years views everything from the perspective of time--he accepts its passing, albeit reluctantly--and a notable development in his outlook and insight into the mysteries of life and death is apparent in poems such as "Erinna an Sappho" and "Denk es, o Seele," as has been shown in chapter IV. The 'daemonic moment' is felt in the subtle undercurrent of the late poems; it is not now spelled out in terms of the early elements of "Zwielicht," "Zauber" and "Blitz." This change is accompanied by a marked diminution or modification of dark imagery, but this does not

disappear entirely.

Historically Mörike spans an important period in German literature. He was born in 1804, the year before Friedrich Schiller's death, and he died in 1875, the year that Thomas Mann was born. Thus he was a contemporary of the late, classical Goethe (1749-1832), of the 'romantic' Eichendorff (1788-1857), of the realist Gottfried Keller (1819-1890) and of the symbolist Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-1898). The foregoing discussion of Mörike's imagery reveals that he did not lean on any of these great masters of German lyric but that his style and imagery, his manner of thought and expression is distinctly personal and his own. The sometime noted similarities with Goethe seem to be points of identification arrived at independently of overt influence.

Mörike deals with the specific and individual entity, not with the general as do the romantics. Eichendorff's lure of the nocturnal landscape, of the Zaubernacht with its blurred and confusing images contrasts sharply with Mörike's flashing 'moment' of "Zauber" and "Blitz" which eclipses the "Zwielicht" of early morning or concentrates on Pan's hour of high noon. Eichendorff's indefinite Fernweh and his Unendlichkeitsgefühl is also subjective, but very different from Mörike's Wäh, or Wehmut, which is concentrated on specific persons, places and points of time in retrospect--particularly in the late period. The former is attuned to distant, multitudinous and disconcerting forest-echoes while the latter leans closely upon one

specific and individual tree, listening for its single, hopefully unambiguous, message. In this way we note the basic difference between the poetry of Eichendorff and of Mörike. Furthermore, Eichendorff's Grundmotiv of Erschauern has external derivation in the vastness of time and space; Mörike's 'daemonic moment' is primarily due to internal stance and is a reaction to something of minute dimensions. Also, Eichendorff articulates the longing of his soul and of the dangers which pertain to that longing; Mörike never does. Instead, he quickly, deftly, drapes the illusive veil over the magic 'moment' and lends his own peculiar "Zwielicht" to it. Thus Mörike's Sehnsucht is centered on known and experienced points of reference. And, whereas examples of realism are not missing in Mörike's poetry, his poems lack the deep concern with the problems of his day which is at the core of the poignant and grotesque contemporary scenes of Keller.

Mörike charted the course for German symbolism by imputing symbolic significance to objects of nature (a butterfly, the rose, a beech tree), to inanimate objects (a lamp, a wind-harp, several paintings), to intangible emotions (to love, to reverence--of time, of antique verities), and most of all by imputing dynamic and 'daemonic' significance to time itself, thereby making it master over all his writings. Time, in Mörike's writings, achieves a symbolic value which includes and emphasises a multitude of other objects which become symbolic in their own right. In this Mörike differs from the German symbolists who had one object or animal stand for an all-inclusive symbol whereas Mörike interweaves objects of symbolic value and then

permits the over-all image to signify the greater and underlying thought-content.

In a complex century, Mörike strove to retain his literary and emotional balance. He found his own style of writing which, although frequently (notably in the later years) mimetic of antique poetry, is distinct from any other of the nineteenth century. His Dingdichtung of the 'forties, the embryo of the German symbolist literature, anticipates the absolute expressions of twentieth century poets.

Thus Mörike eludes categorization. He does not fit into any literary niche--neither into the classical, nor into Spätromantic, Biedermeier, nor into the impressionistic or realistic. In his lyrics all of these elements or tendencies of nineteenth century German poetry are reconciled, but none is overwhelmingly predominant.

APPENDIX

Mondschein

Der Abend kam, sobald der güldne Glanz
Des Sonnenlichts nicht mehr zu sehen war,
Mit seiner sanften Schatten Schar
gemach, gemacht heran;
Doch war der Schein nicht ganz
Vergangen und dahin, der Schatten auch noch nicht
Ganz ausgedehnt und schwarz, vielmehr schien Nacht und Licht
In einem sanften Grad vereint. Hieraus entsprang
Ein allgemeine rein und helle Dämmerung,
Voll Kühlung, Still' und Lust; als ich, von ungefähr,
An eines Grabens klarer Flut,
Auf welcher teils des Himmels heitrer Schein
Und teils ein Widerschein von hohen Bäumen ruht,
Mit sanften Schritten hin und her
Vergnügt spazieren ging. Ich konnte mich nicht satt
An diesem Erd- und Himmelsspiegel sehn,
Unglaublich eben, still und glatt
War die kristallengleiche Fläche,
Der Abendröte Rest schien fast in grössrer Schwäche
Am Himmel als auf ihr: unglaublich rein und schön
War westenwärts die lichte Heiterkeit
Am Firmament, im Wasser auch zu sehn.
Zur Seiten kam ein Widerschein
Von einem lieblichen Gebüsch, von Binsen und von Rohr
Mir in natürlicher Vollkommenheit,
Als wär es alles doppelt, vor.
Absonderlich nahm ein fast wahrer Schein
Von dicken Wipfeln hoher Linden,
Die an dem fetten Strand sich da gepflanzt finden,
Mit einem dunklen Schmuck das klare Wasser ein.
Ich hatte meine Lust, die Gleichheit dieser Schatten,
Die sie, im Widerschein, mit ihrem Urbild hatten,
Bewundernd anzusehn. Allein,
Wie stutzt ich, als mein Blick, bei meinem sanften Schritte,
Auf dieser glatten Bahn gemächlich vor sich glitte,
Und ich, ohn Überwärts zu sehn,

Den hellen Mond in vollem Licht
An einem grünen Himmel fand.
Noch mehr, mir fiel zugleich noch einer ins Gesicht,
Und zwar der wahre Mond, der eben Übers Haupt
Der Bäume, die so dicht belaubt,
Hervortrat und am blauen Himmel stand.
Unglaublich ist, wie sehr mich dieser Anblick rührte.
Und unbeschreiblich ist die Lust,
Die ich darob in meiner Brust
Und meinem ganzen Wesen spürte.
Der reine Glanz so schöner Lichter drang
Bei der so süßen Abendstille
Und kühlen Heiterkeit, mit einer rechten Fülle
Von Anmut mir ins Herz, dass ich, halb ausser mir,
Ob' aller Kreaturen Zier
Dem Schöpfer dies zu Ehren sang:
Ach! lass die durch Dein Werk erfüllte Seele
Dir Herr so angenehm, als wie die durch den Schein
Des Monds erfüllte Flut nur angenehm ist, sein!
Lass mich oft ihren Schmuck am grünen Himmel schauen,
Bis ich dereinsten dort im Blauen
Dem wahren Licht so nah wie hier dem flücht'gen Schein,
Auch Deine Wunderwerk' zu sehn mag fähig sein!
Ach, lass zu diesem Zweck mir oft die Flut der Erden
So, wie es jetzt geschieht, zum Himmelsspiegel werden!

--Brockes

Nachts

Ich wandre durch die stille Nacht,
Da schleicht der Mond so heimlich sacht
Oft aus der dunklen Wolkenhülle,
Und hin und her im Tal
Erwacht die Nachtigall,
Dann wieder alles grau und stille.

O wunderbarer Nachtgesang:
Von fern im Land der Ströme Gang,
Leis Schauern in den dunklen Bäumen--
Wirrst die Gedanken mir;
Mein irres Singen hier
Ist wie ein Rufen nur aus Träumen.

--Eichendorff

Um Mitternacht

Um Mitternacht ging ich, nicht eben gerne,
Klein, kleiner Knabe, jenen Kirchhof hin
Zu Vaters Haus, des Pfarrers, Stern am Sterne
Sie leuchteten doch alle gar zu schön;
Um Mitternacht.

Wenn ich dann ferner in des Lebens Weite
Zur Liebsten musste, musste weil sie zog,
Gestirn und Mondschein über mir im Streite,
Ich gehend, kommend Seligkeiten sog;
Um Mitternacht.

Bis dann zuletzt des vollen Mondes Helle
So klar und deutlich mir ins Finstere drang
Auch der Gedanke willig, sinnig, schnelle
Sich ums Vergangne wie ums Künftige schlang;
Um Mitternacht.

--Goethe

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INDEX

Poems dealt with in chronological order

Date		Page
1825	An einem Wintermorgen, vor Sonnenaufgang	44
1827	Um Mitternacht	30
	Besuch in Urach	53
1829	Er ists	4
1837	An eine Äolsharfe	69
1842	Die schöne Buche	80
1845	Göttliche Reminiszenz	97
	Mit einem Anakreons kopf . . .	111
	Ach nur einmal noch im Leben	118
1846	Auf einem Kirchturm	109
	Zitronenfalter im April	109
	Inschrift auf eine Uhr . . .	115
	Auf eine Lampe	122
	Am Rheinfall	132
1847	Im Park	143
1851	Denk es, o Seele	179
1853	Rückblick	151
1860	Hermippus	161
1861	Schönes Gemüt	149
	Besuch in der Kartause	164
1863	Bilder aus Bebenhausen	168
	Erinna an Sapho	173