

THE NATURE ELEMENT IN GOETHE'S WORKS

1765 - 1788

by

ISABEL McCOY, B.A., 1928, University of Kansas

Submitted to the Department
of GERMAN and the Faculty
of the Graduate School of
the University of Kansas in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of MASTER OF ARTS

Approved by:

H. C. Phurnau.
Instructor in charge

H. C. Phurnau.
Head of Department

May 27, 1929.

THE NATURE ELEMENT IN GOETHE'S WORKS

1765 - 1788

Introduction.....	1
I Early Interest in Nature.....	4
II Nature in his Work	
At Leipzig.....	7
At Frankfurt and Strassburg.....	12
At Frankfurt and Wetzlar.....	22
III Faust Part I.....	25
IV Götz von Berlichingen.....	32
V Werther.....	39
VI Clavigo and Stella.....	52
VII Egmont.....	57
VIII Poetry.....	64
IX Iphigenie.....	77
X Tasso.....	83
XI The Italian Journey.....	89
Conclusion.....	106

INTRODUCTION

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is Germany's greatest lyric poet. Since Goethe was a lyric poet, one expects to find the nature element prominent in his works. Knowing that Goethe does feel the influence of the natural world around him, I have taken as my subject for investigation the nature element in his works. Do the productions of the youthful Goethe at Leipzig show an interest in nature? Is there any difference in the youthful poet's treatment of nature and the treatment of the mature Goethe who writes in Italy?

Since I propose to trace the nature element through his works from 1765 to 1788, I have arranged my material chronologically. I have read as an aid to the study, the autobiography, diaries, and letters of Goethe.

I might say with regard to the selection of my time limit that the period seems to me a significant one in the life of the poet.

The year 1765 marks the beginning of Goethe's student days at Leipzig. The year 1788 marks the return of the poet from Italy. This period is that of the growth of the immature sixteen-year old student into the mature man of thirty-nine. These are the best years of a man's life, we are told. For us, there is a still greater significance in the last date. Goethe, in Italy, reached the great turning point in his life. In its far-reaching effects upon his poetry this journey was the most important event in Goethe's career. In Italy, for the first time Goethe lived in full aesthetic freedom. His Hellenic nature which had been repressed by the duties of Weimar was liberated and asserted itself in its full strength when brought in contact with the beauty, freedom and naturalness of Italian life. Here he acquired classic serenity. The greatest stimulus came to him from the large world of original masterpieces of art. The principles

of art which he derived from the direct contemplation of great masterpieces he tried to apply to his own works. For in Italy he became convinced that Nature had intended him to be a poet. His renewed consciousness of strength as a poet gave him a sense of satisfaction in his poetical work in Italy which he had hardly known before.

CHAPTER I

Early Interest in Nature

Goethe as a small boy was interested in the gardens of Frankfurt. He and his sister, Cornelia, used to walk in the evening in their grandfather's gardens. Goethe often sat at an upstairs window at home from which he could look out over a great distance and watch the sunset or a storm rolling up. He could watch the neighbors working about their flowers and plants. In "Dichtung und Wahrheit" he says in the first book, "so erregte dies frühzeitig in mir ein Gefühl der Einsamkeit und einer daraus entspringenden Sehnsucht, das, dem von der Natur in mich gelegten Ernsten und Ahnungsvollen entsprechend, seinen Einfluss gar bald und in der Folge noch deutlicher zeigte."

Goethe tells in this same book how the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 disturbed him. Then, a lad of six years, he first realized the unchecked and impetuous will of Nature.

He was distressed and did not know where to find comfort. Soon after the earthquake, Goethe witnessed a sudden hail-storm accompanied by violent thunder which produced upon him an impression of a wrathful Deity. However, the beauty of the world drove these fearful manifestations from his mind and he came to think it would be well to approach directly into the presence of the great God of nature. He soon came to feel that the God who subsists in immediate union with nature, and recognizes and loves it as his own work is the one God who might be brought into close relationship with man, and would care for him as for the motion of the stars, the changes of seasons, and for the growth of animals and plants.

In „Dichtung und Wahrheit“ Goethe writes that there is no adoration more beautiful than that which springs up within us from communing directly with Nature.* He found his greatest

*Book 6; p.14; vol.2; Weimar Ed.

pleasure in poetic imitation of what he perceived in himself, in others and in nature.

In Goethe's early years the Bible appealed to him as book of law, as epic, as idyll, as hymn, or as love song. He delved into it and made its stories, teachings, symbols and language his for all time. He was especially fond of losing himself in the naivete and grandeur of the Pentateuch. Amid those Oriental scenes, peopled with a simple shepherd folk living close to nature his restless, roving spirit found peace and happiness. The boy Goethe was drawn to nature and simplicity directly and by the Bible long before Rousseau and Winckelmann influenced his intellectual life.

CHAPTER II

Nature in his Work

At Leipzig

For the three years 1765 to 1768 Goethe at Leipzig was under the influence of the French. His poems were written in the French anacreontic manner. The nature element in them is slight. His lyrics do describe real experiences although he masks them with the costumes of shepherds and shepherdesses. Since his poetry is in the light shallow vein of the French, his letters are of interest in determining whether nature held interest for him.

In a letter written on the twentieth of October, 1765, Goethe writes to Johann Jacob Riese:

„.....Ich lebe hier wie--wie--ich weiss
selbst nicht recht wie--Doch so ohngefähr
So wie ein Vogel, der auf einem Ast
Im schönsten Wald, sich, Freiheit athmend wiegt.
Der ungestört die sanfte Luft geniesst.
Mit seinen Fittichen von Baum zu Baum

Von Busch zu Busch sich singend hinzuschwingen."

On the twenty-eighth of April, 1766 he writes again to Riese: „Bester Riese, diese Einsamkeit hat so eine gewisse Traurigkeit in meine Seele geprägt.

Es ist mein einziges Vergnügen,
Wenn ich entfernt von jedermann,
Am Bache, bei den Büschen liegen,
An meine Lieben denken kann.

So vergnügt ich aber auch da bin, so fühle ich dennoch allen Mangel des gesellschaftlichen Lebens. Ich seufze nach meinen Freunden und meinem Mädchen, und wenn ich fühle, dass ich vergebens seufze.

Da wird mein Herz von Jammer voll,
Mein Aug wird trüber,
Der Bach rauscht jetzt im Sturm vorüber,
Der mir vorher so sanft erscholl.
Kein Vogel singt in den Gebüschchen,
Der grüne Baum verdorrt
Der Zephir, der mich zu erfrischen

Sonst wehte, stürmt und wird zum Nord,
 Und trägt entrissne Blüten fort.
 Voll zittern flieh ich dann den Ort.
 Ich flieh und such in öden Mauern
 Einsames Trauern."

How like Werther was Goethe at this time! In several letters to his sister, Cornelia, the poet is moody. Goethe at this time is a Naturfühler. Goethe often wrote to his sister in French or English. This was for him a way of practicing these languages. In a letter of May 11, 1766, to Cornelia he writes:

"Hah thou believest it not! Many time I become a melancholical one. I know not whence it comes. Then I look on every man with a starring-owl like countenance. Then I go in woods, to streams, I look on the pyed daisies on the blue violets, I hear the nightingales, the larks, the rocks and daws, the cuckow; And then a darkness comes down my soul; a darkness as thiek as fogs in October."

In another letter to Cornelia written on the twelfth of October, 1767, he quotes Rousseau: "Plus que les moeurs se raffinent, plus les hommes se depravent." Nature was to Goethe the important thing. Social restrictions did not please him. He wanted man to be near to nature and one with it. He was imbued with the doctrine and ideals of Rousseau. This influence is very noticeable some years later in "Werther's Leiden."

While at Leipzig, Goethe wrote some "Lieder" and the poems of the "Annettebuch". In the latter there are a few poems which have a pastoral setting. Here are enamored shepherds and shepherdesses in pastoral scenes of a conventional and shallow style. During this period Goethe also wrote the two plays, "Die Laune des Verliebten" and "Die Mitschuldigen." The first of these plays has a pastoral setting and a few conventional references to nature but the influence of the French is still predominant.

From the last of the Leipzig period there is one poem „Die schöne Nacht" which begins to show the influence of nature. The theme of the poem is the departure of a man from a cottage which is endeared to him. He goes through the dark forest and the moon breaks through the trees. The air is scented with the odor of the birches. He is happy in the cool of the summer night and wishes that he might spend such a night with his beloved.

Nun verlass' ich diese Hütte,
 Meiner Liebsten Aufenthalt,
 Wandle mit verhülltem Schritte
 Durch den öden finstern Wald:
 Luna bricht durch Busch und Eichen,
 Zephir meldet ihren Lauf,
 Und die Birken streun mit Neigen
 Ihr den süssten Weihrauch auf.

At Frankfurt and Strassburg

When Goethe returned to Frankfurt from Leipzig in August 1768, he was in very poor health. Repeated attacks of sickness, which even endangered his life, forced him to lead a contemplative existence and deepened his feeling. The influence of Oeser, with whom he had studied design, increased during this period in spite of the separation. He realized that he had learned a great deal through his sickness. It was at this time that he said that the person who has gone through many books is likely to look down on the simple book of nature.* He said that nothing is true but what is simple.

Grace is for Goethe in this period at Frankfurt the first requirement in art. He is strongly influenced by Oeser's ideal of „Edle Einfalt und stille Grösse“ which Winckelmann had found the quintessence of Greek

*Briefe, December 30, 1768

art.

At this time Goethe was influenced by Susanna Katharina von Klettenberg, a friend of his mother. Under this influence he becomes interested in pietism and religious mysticism. Studies in Neoplatonic writers of the period of Humanism, alchemistic and chemical experiments, which he undertook with Fraulein von Klettenberg, led him to a mystic conception of nature. God and nature are not yet united, but God is an ever working power in nature and the foundation for the pantheistic conviction of the older Goethe is laid.

„Was wär ein Gott, der nur von aussen stiesse,
Im Kreis das all am Finger laufen liesse!
Ihm ziemt's, die Welt von innen zu bewegen,
Natur in sich, sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dass, was in ihm lebt und webt und ist,
Nie seine Kraft, nie seinen Geist vermisst.“*

Goethe at Frankfurt has developed an intuitive
*Gott und Welt, Proemion (Jubilaumsausg. II, 239)

feeling for the mysteries of nature and the universe.

Now, Goethe recovered from his illness, left Frankfurt and went to Strassburg in 1770. In September Goethe met Herder who was in the splendor of his most productive years. Herder placed, instead of reason, the power of feeling before the young poet. He taught him that poetry lives in the soul of the humble, who in their songs show that they are aware of the beauty of the world. He taught Goethe that art which lives in the folksongs is real living art and that poetry must be the greater, the nearer the poet is to nature. He encouraged the young poet to collect folksongs. Goethe did collect them from the people with whom he came in contact. The lovely gem "Heidenröslein" in its beautiful symbolism and simplicity is a folksong worked over by Goethe.

Herder, too, taught Goethe to be national in his outlook, to be German. He showed him

that Shakespeare was the great ideal to follow while French literature was decadent. He pointed out for him the way to Ossian from which Goethe gained a fervor of feeling and a love for the folk song. As the poet read and worked with these authors and especially the folk song, his own songs took on a wonderful harmony, simplicity and freshness. He acquired in his poems a plastic objectivity which makes his Strassburg poetry far superior to his earlier productions. He never composed more spontaneous songs than "Das Mähdied" and "Das Heidenröslein." He never put fuller feeling into any poem than into "Willkommen und Abschied."

Goethe greets the spring of 1771 about a year after his arrival in Strassburg:

„Wie herrlich leuchtet
 Mir die Natur!
 Wie glänzt die Sonne!
 Wie lacht die Flur!

Es dringen Blüten
 Aus jedem Zweig
 Und tausend Stimmen
 Aus dem Gesträuch,

Und Freud' und Wonne
 Aus jeder Brust.
 O Erd', o Sonne!
 O Glück, o Lust!"

Excursions into the beautiful country on foot and on horseback have restored Goethe to good health. He has met a beautiful girl, truly German, simple and fresh like the beautiful country round about Sesenheim. He has met with his first real love and his powerful outburst of love in the next stanzas is quite different from the light songs to Käthchen. Friederike, the girl of Sesenheim, is everywhere a beautiful picture to him. In the next stanzas of the poem love and a genuine feeling for nature are wonderfully blended:

„O Lieb, o Liebe!
 So golden schön,
 Wie Morgenwolken
 Auf jenen Höhen!

Du segnest herrlich
 Das frische Feld,
 Im Blütendampfe
 Die volle Welt.

O Mädchen, Mädchen,
 Wie lieb' ich dich!
 Wie blinkt dein Auge!
 Wie liebst du mich!

So liebt die Lerche
 Gesang und Luft,
 Und Morgenblumen
 Den Himmelsduft,"

In „Willkommen und Abschied“ the man has
 an ominous anticipation of leaving his beloved.

Temporarily this mood is reflected in nature where he speaks of the oak, a towering giant, and the hundred eyes that look out of the darkness. Then he sees his loved one and the world around him becomes rosy. When he leaves her, the world of nature loses some of its beauty.

„Es schlug mein Herz, geschwind zu Pferde!
Es war getan, fast eh gedacht;
Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,
Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht;
Schon stand im Nebelkleid die Eiche,
Ein aufgetürmter Riese, da,
Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche
Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

Der Mond von einem Wolkenhügel
Sah kläglich aus dem Duft hervor;
Die Winde schwangen leise Flügel,
Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr;
Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer,
Doch frisch und fröhlich war mein Mut:

In meinen Adern, welches Feuer!
 In meinem Herzen, welche Glut!

Dich sah ich, und die milde Freude
 Floss von dem süßen Blick auf mich;
 Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite
 Und jeder Atemzug für dich.
 Ein rosenfarbnes Frühlingswetter
 Umgab das liebliche Gesicht, ----"

To me this poem is a very beautiful expression of the deep feeling that the young poet has learned to express. His familiarity and love of nature is prominent in the poem. His use of nature metaphors is striking.

Goethe at this time has reached the conclusion that God is known only through nature. He feels that if nature is an emanation from God, it is holy and all it contains and produces is likewise holy. There is in his letters and poems an ever growing and heartfelt love for nature. He writes while on an excursion: "Wie ich so

rechter Hand über die grüne Tiefe hinaussah,
 und der Fluss in der Dämmerung so graulich und
 still floss, und von linker Hand die schwere
 Finsternis des Buchenwaldes über mich herabhing,
 wie um die dunkeln Felsen durch's Gebüsch die
 leuchtenden Vögelchen still und geheimnisvoll
 zogen; da wurd's in meinem Herzen so still wie
 in der Gegend und die ganze Beschwerlichkeit
 des Tags war vergessen wie ein Traum, man
 braucht Anstrengung um ihn im Gedächtnis
 aufzusuchen."* This and the rest of the letter
 seem to show an approach to the Werther Stimmung.
 The conviction of Werther that he is one with
 nature, emanating from nature, and kindred with
 all its creations around him, arms him with
 power, depth and boldness of feeling. However,
 at the same time, when he considers the gigantic
 forces of the universe, he concludes that he
 has become estranged from nature through the
 artificialities of civilization and refinement.

*Briefe (June 12, 1770)

This is Goethe at Strassburg.

He writes in a letter of July 14, 1770,
„Geniessen Sie Ihrer Jugend und freuen Sie sich,
Schmetterlinge um Blumen fliegen zu sehen, es
gehe Ihnen das Herz und das Aug' dabei über;
und lassen Sie mir die freudenfeindliche
Erfahrungssucht, die Sommervögel tötet und
Blumen anatomiert, alten oder kalten Leuten.“

What a development Goethe has undergone
here in Strassburg! He has developed from
the young pedant of the Leipzig period who
criticized everything into the ardent young
nature lover who delights in nature, beauty
and simplicity.

At Frankfurt and Wetzlar

Now from Strassburg Goethe returns to Frankfurt in August, 1771. The mental and emotional experiences here begin to crystallize in the form of poetic creations. Goethe is much in the open air wandering about the country or tramping between Frankfurt and Darmstadt. He enjoys breasting a storm in sheer exuberance of physical energy. The „Wandrer's Sturmlied“, a poem of intense feeling and strange talk about pushing forward under the protecting care of Genius, is a reflection of these lonely buffetings with nature. The unrestrained power of nature throbs in the rhythm—Storm clouds and driving streams, wind-tossed forests stand forth in all of their natural glory as the wanderer confronts them. The creative poetic power of Goethe has shown itself in this rather unusual poem.

In the poem, „Der Wanderer,“ nature is the friend of man. Happiness and peace are

found in communion with her. The weary traveler comes upon a woman and her child some distance from her hut, which has been built of huge stones in a rough fashion. In the quiet of the ruined garden the wanderer finds refreshment and quiet. He finds contentment here in the narrow confines of the small home and its garden and fields and longs for the happiness of a narrowly bounded life, a life in which he might return in the evening to his home. As he leaves the ruined garden, he says:

„Leb' wohl! -
 O leite meinen Gang, Natur,
 Den Fremdlingsreisetritt,
 Den über Gräber
 Heiliger Vergangenheit
 Ich wandle!
 Leit' ihn zum Schutzort,
 Vom Nord gedeckt,
 Und dem Mittagsstrahl
 Ein Pappelwäldchen wehrt.

Und kehr' ich dann
Am Abend heim
Zur Hütte,
Vergoldet vom letzten Sonnenstrahl;
Lass mich empfangen solch ein Weib,
Den Knaben auf dem Arm!

Goethe has caught the tender longing of a man for a home and family in these last lines where he so beautifully speaks of the cottage made gold by the last beam of sunlight.

CHAPTER III

Faust----Part I

From a consideration of "Der Wanderer," we turn to a work of a different character. "Faust", upon which Goethe now begins to work, is with "Götz von Berlichingen" and "Werther" influenced by Herder's teachings and the nascent Storm and Stress movement. Faust is the drama of a genius who in despair of all human knowledge calls to the spirits of nature for help. He hopes with their aid to be able to penetrate the secrets of the universe. He wants to expand, to escape the narrow confines which the "Wanderer" desired. He wants to burst the bonds not only of society, but of the material world and of thought.

In "Nacht" Faust gives expression to his restlessness and desire to get away from his desk and musty manuscripts. This scene is rooted in Goethe's youthful disgust with academic learning and the fantastic feeling

for nature to which he had been led by his study of the alchemists and mystics, and by the influence of Herder.

* "O sähest du, voller Mondenschein,
 Zum letztenmal auf meine Pein,
 Den ich so manche Mitternacht
 An diesem Pult herangewacht:
 Dann, über Büchern und Papier,
 Trübsel'ger Freund, erschienst du mir!
 Ach! könnt' ich doch auf Berges-Höhn
 In deinem lieben Lichte gehn,
 Um Bergeshöhle mit Geistern schweben,
 Auf Wiesen in deinem Dämmer weben,
 Von allem Wissensqualm entladen,
 In deinem Thau gesund mich baden!

Weh! steck' ich in dem Kerker noch?
 Verfluchtes dumpfes Mauerloch,
 Wo selbst das liebe Himmelslicht
 Trüb durch gemahlte Scheiben bricht!"

*Line 386

Now Faust feels that he must get out into the land of magic. The magic on which Faust has set his hopes is the higher, the so-called 'natural' magic, which is to free him from the trammels of human nature. The apostrophe to the moon in the above quoted lines indicates the kind of magic and the superhuman longing of his nature. It reminds Faust of the futile studies in the past and suggests the higher possibilities of a spirit-life in nature. He decides to flee to the land of magic:

* „Flich! Auf! Hinaus in's weite Land!

Und diess geheimnisvolle Buch,
 Von Nostradamus eigner Hand,
 Ist dir es nicht Geleit genug?
 Erkennest dann der Sterne Lauf,
 Und wenn Natur dich unterweis't
 Dann geht die Seelenkraft dir auf,
 Wie spricht ein Geist zum andern Geist."

Faust's desire for knowledge is overpower-

*Line 418

ing and as the passage above indicates, he must try to fathom the mysteries of the universe. He can not be content to dream about them. He must act, must seek out the most hidden secrets of nature. He conquers his occasional moments of Weltschmerz and does not yield to the temporary thought of suicide. Werther, in contrast to Faust, sees nature only on the surface according to his mood at the instant. When he is happy, nature around him is happy. When he is gloomy, the world around him is destructive. He can not overcome his Weltschmerz. He is not able to bring himself to activity as Faust does and consequently goes to his ruin. Therefore, I think we may say that Faust's religion of nature is deeper than Werther's, for Werther is only interested in the external phenomena of nature in so far as they reflect his own moods.

Werther's second letter expresses Goethe's youthful sense of man's kinship with all living

things. This was a mere poetic sentiment-- a part of Goethe's youthful nature-worship. „Wenn das liebe Tal um mich dampft, und die hohe Sonne an der Oberfläche der undurchdringlichen Finsternis meines Waldes ruht, und nur einzelne Strahlen sich in das innere Heiligtum stehlen, ich dann im hohen Grase am fallenden Bache liege, und näher an der Erde tausend mannigfaltige Gräschen mir merkwürdig werden; wenn ich das Wimmeln der kleinen Welt zwischen Halmen, die unzähligen, unergründlichen Gestalten der Würmchen, der Mückchen näher an meinem Herzen fühle, und fühle die Gegenwart des Allmächtigen, der uns nach seinem Bilde schuf, das Wehen des Allliebenden, der uns in ewiger Wonne schwebend trägt und erhält;"

In the fine soliloquy at the beginning of the scene „Wald und Höhle" in Faust, Goethe writes as a pensive evolutionist and grateful lover of nature. This scene was probably written in Italy where Goethe's ideas of nature

and its relation to life and art had become more definite. The idea of evolution had taken a firm hold upon him. He has become scientific as contrasted with the sentimental nature-worship in Werther. Faust says:

„Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir alles,
 Warum ich bat. Du hast mir nicht umsonst
 Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet.
 Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich,
 Kraft, sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen. Nicht
 Kalt staunenden Besuch erlaubst du nur,
 Vergönnest mir in ihre tiefe Brust
 Wie in den Busen eines Freunds zu schauen.
 Du führst die Reihe der Lebendigen
 Vor mir vorbei, und lehrst mich meine Brüder
 Im stillen Busch, in Luft und Wasser kennen.
 Und wenn der Sturm im Walde braus't und knarrt,
 Die Riesenfichte stürzend Nachbaräste
 Und Nachbarstämme quetschend nieder streift,
 Und ihrem Fall dumpf hohl der Hügel donnert;
 Dann führst du mich zur sichern Höhle, zeigst

Mich dann mir selbst, und meiner eignen Brust
Geheime tiefe Wunder öffnen sich.

Und steigt vor meinem Blick der reine Mond
Besänftigend herüber: schweben mir
Von Felsenwänden, aus dem feuchten Busch,
Der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten auf,
Und lindern der Betrachtung strenge Lust.

In the first few lines of the above passage,
Goethe uses the Earth-Spirit as a symbol of
nature, who gives to man all things that come
to him. He does not feel that it is necessary
for the giving spirit to have a definite form.

CHAPTER IV

Götz von Berlichingen

From a consideration of "Faust" the investigation turns naturally to "Götz von Berlichingen". Six weeks before he began his work on Götz, Goethe delivered an oration on Shakespeare "Zum Shakespeares Tag" in which he said: "Und ich rufe Natur! Natur! Nichts so Natur als Shakespeares Menschen..... Und was will sich unser Jahrhundert unterstehen, von Natur zu urteilen. Wo sollten wir sie her kennen, die wir von Jugend auf alles geschnürt und geziert an uns fühlen und an andern sehen...."

Goethe was greatly influenced by the English poet and Herder asserted quite spoiled by him. However, the young Goethe in 1773 rewrote his "Götz" in which he has portrayed all kinds of men in all social levels with a skill that is his own. His Storm and Stress mood found in the autobiography of Götz an extraordinarily congenial subject. A robber-knight in the eyes

of most men, Götze becomes in Goethe's hands a noble and heroic figure. He is thoroughly German in his passion for freedom and nationality. Goethe expresses through his principal character his own love of freedom and the world of nature. He has created such an atmosphere around his hero that the reader thinks of him in connection with the great and rugged things of nature. Götze is never a creature of the in-door life; never is he a student. Götze says, „Ich kannte alle Pfade, Weg' und Furten, eh ich wusste, wie Fluss, Dorf und Burg hiess.“ *

There are not many nature descriptions or passages with allusions to the natural world in the play but the character of Götze is essentially that of a nature lover. Götze became in Goethe's mind the champion of individual liberty against the tyranny of the privileged classes. But as this conception grew in the mind of the pupil of Herder and Rousseau, the contrast between the

*Act I; Scene 3

virtue of Götz, the child of nature, and the moral corruption of the false and artificial civilization became more striking and the character became idealized.

When the play opens, Götz is in conflict with the Bishop of Bamberg. He is lying in wait to capture Weislingen. With three of his men he has been lying in wait in a forest inn not far from Bamberg. He learns Weislingen's whereabouts and sets out to capture him. In telling of the capture to Götz's wife the messenger says:.....«Auf! und wir ritten in Haslacher Wald. Und da war's kurios: Wie wir so in die Nacht reiten, hütt' just ein Schäfer da, und fallen fünf Wölf in die Herd und packten weidlich an. Da lachte unser Herr und sagte: Glück zu, liebe Gesellen! Glück überall und uns auch! Und es freuet' uns all das gute Zeichen. Indem so kommt der Weislingen hergeritten mit vier Knechten.»

Act I; Scene 3

With such speeches Goethe gives to his play in various places a touch of the wild out-of-door life.

Götz brings Weislingen to his castle where they talk and Karl, the son of Götz joins them. He is not like his father. Instead of going out-of-doors and to the horses he stays in with his aunt. He has learned by rote all about his father's castle but does not know about the streams and hills surrounding it.*

Maria and Weislingen become engaged and Götz is very happy with them. He exhibits his love for nature in this speech: "...Hier fließt der Main, und allmählich hebt der Berg an, der mit
" Ackern und Weinbergen bekleidet, von Euerem Schloss gekrönt wird; dann biegt sich der Fluss schnell um die Ecke hinter dem Felsen Eures Schlosses hin. Die Fenster des grossen Saals gehen steil herab aufs Wasser, eine Aussicht viel Stunden weit."*

*Act I; Scene 3

*Act I; Scene 5

Weislingen breaks faith with Maria and Götz, and goes back to the polished social life of the court which is in strong contrast to the healthful, honest, out-of-door life with which Goethe has surrounded Götz.

Weislingen succeeds in getting the Emperor to send forces against Götz to outlaw him and put him under the imperial ban. Götz is so familiar with the wild country that he is always victorious in the open. He is forced, however, to retire to his castle and there is overcome by superior numbers.

Götz is forced to give up his life of activity. In the last part of the fourth act a fearful comet appears in the sky. To Georg it seems a sign of evil. The peasant's war is raging and Götz and Georg chafe under their ban of inactivity.

Finally Götz agrees to help the peasants, is imprisoned for breaking his pledge of inactivity and in spite of pardon has to die in the prison

garden. The last act is laid in field, in mountain, in valley. The Gypsy scene takes place at night in a dark forest. The last scene is in the prison garden. Thus Goethe gives to the last act a background of nature.

In Act V, Scene 13 when Götz is imprisoned and near death he says to his wife, Elizabeth, who shares with her husband love for freedom and nature:

„Götz.- Sieh, wie die Sonne draussen scheint!

Elizabeth.- Ein schöner Frühlingstag.

Götz.- Meine Liebe, wenn du den Wächter bereden könntest, mich in sein klein Gärtchen zu lassen auf eine halbe Stunde, dass ich der lieben Sonne genösse, des heitern Himmels und der reinen Luft!"

Then in the last scene when he has been taken out into the garden, he says: „Allmächtiger Gott! Wie wohl ist's einem unter Deinem

Himmel! Wie frei!- Die Bäume treiben Knospen, und alle Welt hofft. Lebt wohl...."

Thus Goethe ends the life of his hero in the

out-of-doors, in the sunshine of spring when the buds are coming and when hope is the sign of the season. A picturesque character who has loved and lived in the out-of-doors passes away under the freedom of the sky. Goethe's treatment of nature in the whole drama is picturesque as contrasted with the statuesque treatment in his later dramas, "Iphigenie" and "Tasso" which is a result of the Italian influence. In *Götz the Storm and Stress* manner of the poet is predominant.

CHAPTER V

Werther

From a study of "Götz" I turn to "Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers". The character of Werther is very different from that of Götz. Werther is a student. He reads Homer and Pindar. Werther is a reflection of Goethe as he was at Wetzlar. In that charming region in its witching dress of summer, Goethe used to take a volume of Homer or Pindar with him to some cozy nook. For Germany a new poetry of nature begins with this summer when Goethe lived close to nature. He grew so fond of sketching from nature that he was sometimes in doubt whether nature had intended him for a poet or a painter. In the landscapes at Wetzlar, in the common people and the children Goethe found a rich field for his poetic and artistic eye. He was happy and desired nothing more.

Then Goethe met Charlotte Buff with whom

he became very friendly and whom he loved. She was betrothed to Kestner and Goethe's love could not be rewarded. Goethe has used this experience in his „Werther“.

In the beginning of the novel, Werther revels in the beauty of the May landscape and feels through this beauty the love of God. He is happy in the sunny country and his mystic religion of love appears as nature worship. His letter of the tenth of May which was quoted in Chapter III expresses his feeling of kinship with all nature and his desire to be nearer to the presence of the great Creator who has created and creates in his own image.

Werther's letter of June 21, reflects his own happy mood and his desire to give himself up to one great and glorious emotional enjoyment:
 „Es ist wunderbar: wie ich hierher kam, und vom Hügel in das schöne Tal schaute, wie es mich rings umher anzog.- Dort das Wäldchen!- Ach könntest du dich in seine Schatten mischen!-

Dort die Spitze des Bergs!- Ach könntest du von da die weite Gegend überschauen!- Die in einander geketteten Hügel und vertraulichen Täler!- O könnte ich mich in ihnen verlieren!-- Ich eilte hin, und kehrte zurück, und hatte nicht gefunden was ich hoffte. O es ist mit der Ferne wie mit der Zukunft! Ein grosses dämmerndes Ganze ruht vor unserer Seele, unsere Empfindung schwimmt darin wie unser Auge, und wir sehnen uns, ach! unser ganzes Wesen hinzugeben, uns mit aller Wonne eines einzigen grossen herrlichen Gefühls ausfüllen zu lassen--"

Thus Werther finds in nature an expression of his mood. He thrills over the hills, the woods or the valleys. Nature and feeling are one with Werther in that Nature is an expression for him of his emotion. In the late autumn, and winter he finds the world of Nature colored by his ever increasing despair. This Parallelism is one of the chief characteristics of the novel.

In the summer Werther reads Homer but under the influence of his growing melancholy he turns to Ossian. His melancholy becomes even more acute. He transfers the despair consuming him to surrounding Nature. His soul is undermined by the consuming power of Nature which has formed nothing that has not destroyed its neighbor and itself.

In a review on Sulzer, Goethe writes:

„Was wir von Natur sehn, ist Kraft, die Kraft verschlingt, nichts gegenwärtig, alles vorübergehend, tausend Keime zertreten jeden Augenblick, tausend geboren, gross und bedeutend, mannigfaltig ins Unendliche; schön und hässlich, gut und böse, alles mit gleichem Rechte nebeneinander existierend. Und die Kunst ist gerade das Widerspiel, sie entspringt aus den Bemühungen des Individuums, sich gegen die zerstörende Kraft des Ganzen zu erhalten...“*

This was written in the same year as Werther

*Werke 37, 210

and expresses what Werther grows to feel, the destructive power of Nature.

Werther's letter of August 18, shows the change in him clearly. In eloquent language he begins his praise for Nature and appreciation of all the little things which belong in the world about him. Suddenly his mood changes and he feels and sees only the gloomy devouring side of the great force of Nature. Goethe shows plainly in this letter of Werther that he is intimate and interested in nature. He does not use passive description but lets the various objects appear before the mind of Werther active and moving. Nature is dynamic, no longer static. „Das volle warme Gefühl meines Herzens an der lebendigen Natur, das mich mit so vieler Wonne überströmte, das rings umher die Welt mir zu einem Paradiese schuf, wird mir jetzt zu einem unerträglichen Peiniger, zu einem quälenden Geist, der mich auf allen Wegen verfolgt. Wenn ich sonst vom Felsen über den

Fluss bis zu jenen Hügeln das fruchtbare Tal
überschaute, und alles um mich her keimen und
quellen sah; wenn ich jene Berge, vom Fusse
bis auf zum Gipfel, mit hohen dichten Bäumen
bekleidet, jene Täler in ihren mannigfaltigen
Krümmungen von den lieblichsten Wäldern beschattet
sah, und der sanfte Fluss zwischen den lispelnden
Röhren dahin gleitete und die lieben Wolken
abspiegelte, die der sanfte Abendwind am Himmel
herüber wiegte; wenn ich dann die Vögel um mich
den Wald beleben hörte, und die Millionen
Mückenschwärme im letzten roten Strahle der Sonne
mutig tanzten, und ihr letzter zuckender Bild
den summenden Käfer aus seinem Grase befreite,
und das Schwirren und Weben um mich her mich
auf den Boden aufmerksam machte, und das Moos,
das meinem harten Felsen seine Nahrung abzwingt,
und das Geniste, das den dürren Sandhügel hinunter
wächst, mir das innere glühende, heilige Leben der
Natur eröffnete: wie fasst ich das alles in
mein warmes Herz, fühlte mich in der überfliessenden

Fülle wie vergöttert, und die herrlichen Gestalten der unendlichen Welt bewegten sich allbelebend in meiner Seele. Ungeheure Berge umgaben mich, Abgründe lagen vor mir, und Wetterbäche stürzten herunter, die Flüsse strömten unter mir, und Wald und Gebirg erklang; und ich sah sie wirken und schaffen in einander in den Tiefen der Erde, alle die unergründlichen Kräfte; und nun über der Erde und unter dem Himmel wimmeln die Geschlechter der mannigfaltigen Geschöpfe. Alles, alles bevölkert mit tausendfachen Gestalten; und die Menschen dann sich in Häuslein zusammen sichern, und sich annisten, und herrschen in ihrem Sinne über die weite Welt! Armer Tor! der du alles so gering achtest, weil du so klein bist.- Vom unzugänglichen Gebirge über die Einöde, die kein Fuss betrat, bis ans Ende des unbekanntes Ozeans, weht der Geist des Ewigschaffenden, und freut sich jedes Staubes, der ihn vernimmt und lebt.- Ach damals, wie oft hab' ich mich mit Fittigen eines Kranichs, der über mich hinflog, zu dem Ufer des ungemessenen Meeres geseht,

aus dem schäumenden Becher des Unendlichen jene schwellende Lebenswonne zu trinken, und nur einen Augenblick, in der eingeschränkten Kraft meines Busens, einen Tropfen der Seligkeit des Wesens zu fühlen, das alles in sich und durch sich hervorbringt.

Bruder, nur die Erinnerung jener Stunden macht mir wohl. Selbst diese Anstrengung, jene unsäglichen Gefühle zurückzurufen, wieder auszusprechen, hebt meine Seele über sich selbst, und lässt mich dann das Bange des Zustands doppelt empfinden, der mich jetzt umgibt.

Es hat sich vor meiner Seele wie ein Vorhang weggezogen, und der Schauplatz des unendlichen Lebens verwandelt sich vor mir in den Abgrund des ewig offenen Grabs. Kannst du sagen: Das ist! da alles vorüber geht? da alles mit der Wetter= schnelle vorüber rollt, so selten die ganze Kraft seines Daseins ausdauert, ach! in den Strom fortgerissen, untergetaucht und an Felsen zer= schmettert wird? Da ist kein Augenblick, der

nicht dich verzehrte und die Deinigen um dich her, kein Augenblick, da du nicht ein Zerstörer bist, sein musst; der harmloseste Spaziergang kostet tausend armen Würmchen das Leben, es zerrüttet ein Fusstritt die mühseligen Gebäude der Ameisen und stampft eine kleine Welt in ein schmachliches Grab. Ha! nicht die grosse seltene Not der Welt, diese Fluten, die eure Dörfer wegspülen, diese Erdbeben, die eure Städte verschlingen, rühren mich; mir untergräbt das Herz die verzehrende Kraft, die in dem All der Natur verborgen liegt; die nichts gebildet hat, das nicht seinen Nachbar, nicht sich selbst zerstörte. Und so taumle ich beängstigt! Himmel und Erde und ihre webenden Kräfte um mich her! Ich sehe nichts, als ein ewig verschlingendes, ewig wiederkäuendes Ungeheuer."

Werther is essentially pantheistic. He knows that God is immanent in the universe and that is why Werther's love of Nature bears a religious character. When he feels his world

falling around him, he despairs of Nature and of God. His religious feeling is not definite. It is the plaything of his moods. His only consolation is in Nature, which, too, fails him when he sees in it the cruelty that his melancholy attributes to it.

The letters of Goethe from the first part of his journey to Switzerland may well be considered here just after „Werther“. They are decidedly Wertherian in tone with regard to nature. By some students of Goethe these letters are thought to be the evidence of an earlier trip to Switzerland than ^{the} one of 1779. By others they are considered a possible addition to „Werther“ since the first discovery of them was in connection with Werther's papers.

In the third letter Goethe writes: „Pfui, wie sieht so ein Menschenwerk und so ein schlechtes nothgedrungenes Menschenwerk, so ein schwarzes Städtchen, so ein Schindel- und Steinhaufen, mitten in der Grossen herrlichen Natur aus!“ In the next

letter he writes: „So wie mich sonst die Wolken schon reizten mit ihnen fort in fremde Länder zu ziehen, wenn sie hoch über meinem Haupte wegzogen, so steh' ich jetzt oft in Gefahr, dass sie mich von einer Felsenspitze mitnehmen, wenn sie an mir vorbeiziehen. Welche Begierde fühl' ich, mich in den unendlichen Luftraum zu stürzen, über den schauerlichen Abgründen zu schweben und mich auf einen unzugänglichen Felsen niederzulassen. Mit welchem Verlangen hol' ich tiefer und tiefer Athem, wenn der Adler in dunkler blauer Tiefe, unter mir, über Felsen und Wäldern schwebt, und in Gesellschaft eines Weibchens um den Gipfel, dem er seinen Horst und seine Jungen anvertrauet hat, grosse Kreise in sanfter Eintracht zieht. Soll ich denn nur immer die Höhe erkriechen, am höchsten Felsen wie am niedrigsten Boden kleben, und wenn ich mühselig mein Ziel erreicht habe, mich ängstlich anklammern, vor der Rückkehr

schaudern und vor dem Falle zittern?" Werther seems to speak in these lines. The dissatisfaction with man's weakness expressed in this letter and the part about the eagle that soars over rocks and forests, remind one of the well-known passage in Faust I, (lines 1090-1099):

„Ach! zu des Geistes Flügeln wird so leicht
Kein körperlicher Flügel sich gesellen.
Doch ist es jedem eingeboren,
Dass sein Gefühl hinauf und vorwärts dringt,
Wenn über uns im blauen Raum verloren,
Ihr schmetternd Lied die Lerche singt;
Wenn über schroffen Fichtenhöhen
Der Adler ausgebreitet schwebt,
Und über Flächen, über Seen,
Der Kranich nach der Heimath strebt.

In another letter he speaks of the discovery of a nature which exists by an eternal voiceless necessity, which has no wants, no feelings and is divine. In the thirteenth letter of the series he writes: „Ich gestehe dir, darauf beruht

bisher meine Liebe zur Natur, meine Liebhaberei zur Kunst, dass ich jene so schön, so schön, so glänzend und so entzückend sah, dass mich das Nachstreben des Künstlers, das unvollkommene Nachstreben, fast wie ein vollkommenes Vorbild hinriss."

As a contrast to these letters of this first part of the Switzerland trip and to Werther itself, I should point briefly to those of the second part. In these the scientist, Goethe, speaks. His lengthy descriptions of rock ledges, of lakes, and river beds are a result of his geological studies. His descriptions of the sky and the colors in the mountains are as exact as those of a scientist would be. The element of subjectivity, of sentimentality is lacking in this part of the letters. The nature element is most prominent but it is the nature that a careful scientific observer and not the ordinary "Naturfühler" finds.

Chapter VI

Clavigo and Stella

Just after the composition of "Werther" Goethe wrote "Clavigo", one of the less important of his literary works. In this drama Goethe has almost ignored nature. There are no descriptions of out-of-door places; the action takes place within a dwelling or in the street just in front of the house. This lack of the nature element in "Clavigo" may be explained, I think, in two ways. The presentation of the incidents is exceedingly dramatic and the action is very rapid. There are no long monologues nor discussions into which the element of nature would come. The subject matter of the play was the absorbing thing to Goethe and it does not lend itself to the employment of the nature element.

Briefly the play is the avenging of the wrong done Marie by Clavigo. Clavigo has made himself very dear to Marie, has won her consent and that of her sister and brother-in-law to a marriage, which shall be performed when he has

secured a suitable position. Clavigo is successful in attaining a worthy position but he does not come back to Marie. Marie is wasting away in her unhappiness over his desertion. Her brother, Beaumarchais, comes to make Clavigo pay for the cruel way he has treated her. However, Clavigo wins Marie a second time and promises to marry her. When Clavigo leaves her again, her grief kills her. On the night of her funeral Clavigo is accidentally passing and learns whose funeral it is. He then realizes that he has killed a fair flower. The night becomes dark and full of menacing spirits. Even the stars which have so often looked down on his happiness are to him a source of sorrow and he wishes them to hide themselves.

Beaumarchais stabs Clavigo at the side of the coffin and then in despair raves about having wished to strew Marie's bridal bed with roses.

Thus in Clavigo, few references to nature

are to be found and those that do occur are not significant. Limitation of time, restriction of the place of action, and the type of subject matter have practically eliminated the world of nature around the characters.

Still more concentrated in action than "Clavigo" is the drama of Stella which was written almost a year later. The story is that of a fickle husband who tires of his wife, a plain, practical person, and leaves her with a child to support. He goes away with a beautiful young girl, Stella, whom he shortly afterwards deserts for a soldier's life. Cecilia, the first wife, is not at all sentimental and is willing to do without him after he reappears. She is willing to give him up to Stella. In her character there is little opportunity to employ the nature motif. However, Stella is quite different. She is young and somewhat sentimental and almost overcome with grief. She has tried to comfort

herself. She says in Act II, Scene 1:
 „Doch keine Wohltat in diesem Vorschlag!
 Fühlen Sie, welche Wohltat Sie mir thun
 wenn sie bleiben! o ich darf nicht allein
 sein! Liebe, ich hab' alles getan, ich hab'
 mir Federvieh und Reh' und Hunde angeschafft;
 und lehre kleine Mädchen stricken und knüpfen,
 nur um nicht allein zu sein, nur um was ausser
 mir zu sehen das lebt und zunimmt. Und dann
 doch, wenn mir's glückt, wenn eine gute Gottheit
 mir an einem heitern Frühlingsmorgen den Schmerz
 von der Seele weggehoben zu haben scheint;
 wenn ich ruhig erwache, und die liebe Sonne auf
 meinen blühenden Bäumen leuchtet, und ich mich
 thätig, munter fühle zu den Geschäften des Tages:
 dann ist mir's wohl, dann treib' ich eine
 Zeitlang herum, verrichte und ordne, und führe
 meine Leute an, und in der Freiheit meines Herzens
 dank' ich laut auf zum Himmel für die glücklichen
 Stunden.“

Here is the expression of a sentimental,

grief-stricken woman. Now when the worthless man returns, in her rose arbor we find her happiness expressed: „Du blühst schön, schöner als sonst, liebe, liebe Stätte der gehofften ewigen Ruhe - Aber du lockst mich nicht mehr-- Und nun! - Sonne des Himmels, du scheinst herein - Es ist so licht, so offen um mich her, und ich freue mich dess! -- Hier soll er mich finden, hier an meinem Rosenaltar unter meinen Rosenzweigen. Diese Knöspchen will ich ihm brechen --" *

The play was for Goethe a way of ridding himself of worry over the desertion of Friederike and the coming farewell from Lili of which he already had a premonition. The sentimental characters, the sentimental nature expression do not represent the real Goethe. They do, however, fit into his plot.

*Act IV

CHAPTER VII

Egmont

From the two plays "Clavigo" and "Stella" the investigation turns to a play of a much greater interest, and a far greater play. "Egmont" was begun in 1775. Goethe for this play selected a historical character at a great turning point in history. Briefly Goethe sketches the situation in the Netherlands under Spanish rule. He introduces Egmont who is beloved by all for his kindness, and his great free spirit. It is due to Egmont's leniency that the image-breaking occurred in his territory. This forms the first step towards his ruin. Orange and Egmont meet and Orange warns Egmont at Brussels, not to appear when the Duke of Alba summons him. Egmont can see no danger and is unwilling to anticipate harm that is not justified. Alba summons both of the men but Egmont alone appears. He speaks out frankly and wisely as his great soul dictates

and is imprisoned and executed.

In this type of drama many of the scenes are street scenes in which throngs of people pass by. Peasants and soldiers are always to be seen. Troops patrol the streets. After the arrival of the Duke of Alba, the people no longer dare go forth so openly but must stay within doors. Where does the nature element enter such a play?

First of all, in Klärchen's character the element of nature is found. She is a true child of nature who blindly follows Egmont with passionate hero worship. Her love for him sweeps away all ties of convention. She is quite in keeping with the feeling that artificial restraints and conventions must destroy the real feeling for Nature and its true expression. She is generous and reckless when it comes to a supreme sacrifice for Egmont. She goes out in face of danger to stir up his friends only to find that she alone is impulsive enough to

risk all for him. She says in Act V at the beginning: "Tretet näher, dass wir sachte reden, bis wir einig sind und stärker. Wir dürfen nicht einen Augenblick versäumen! Die freche Tyrannei, die es wagt, ihn zu fesseln, zuckt schon den Dolch, ihn zu ermorden. O Freunde! mit jedem Schritt der Dämmerung werd' ich ängstlicher. Ich fürchte diese Nacht."

The night has become a terror to her because of the fear she has for Egnont. Later the dawn in all of its loveliness becomes to her a hateful thing to be avoided because it will reveal Egnont's place of execution. She leaves this life which has been so glorious in order to escape the dawn and to be ready to meet Egnont in the other world.

In the character of Egnont there is a great deal of this nature element. Egnont has always been a great rider. He has been free to go out into the world on his horse and even after Alba arrives continues to enjoy his life in the open.

Egmont in Act II scene 2 in speaking with his secretary asks whether the sun shines on him today that he may think and worry over yesterday. If he fall or a storm blast precipitate him into the abyss, he says, - so be it. He has always cast his lot with his fellows and no more than he fears the thunderclap does he feel the fear of the Spanish. He speaks often of steering the ship clear of the rocks in a storm and feels that he, too, will be able to stay clear of danger.

In the fourth act when the Duke of Alba asks Egmont if he would dare so to speak to the king, Egmont says: „Leicht kann der Hirt eine ganze Heerde Schafe vor sich hintreiben, der Stier zieht seinen Pflug ohne Widerstand; aber dem edeln Pferde, das du reiten willst, musst du seine Gedanken ablernen, du musst nichts Unkluges, nichts unklug von ihm verlangen. Darum wünscht der Bürger, seine alte Verfassung zu behalten, von seinen Laudsleuten regiert

zu sein, weil er weiss, wie er geführt wird, weil er von ihnen Uneigennutz, Theilnehmung an seinem Schicksal hoffen kann."

How aptly has Goethe drawn his comparison! He shows quite clearly that observation of nature has interested him.

Just as Egmont and Götz are both historical figures, so are they both lovers of nature and freedom. Both are imprisoned; both yearn for the sky and the world of nature. Neither is like Werther a reader of books who goes out into nature with a book or for relaxation. Each lives in the world of nature. Egmont in his prison room speaks forth all his yearning for his horse and the out-of-door world and his disgust for the rooms and confines of the princes. What a powerful speech it is:

„Alter Freund! immer getreuer Schlaf, flihest du mich auch wie die übrigen Freunde? Wie willig senkstest du dich auf mein freies Haupt herunter, und kühltest, wie ein schöner Myrtenkranz

der Liebe, meine Schläfe! Mitten unter Waffen,
auf der Woge des Lebens, ruht' ich leicht athmend,
wie ein aufquellender Knabe, in deinen Armen.
Wenn Stürme durch Zweige und Blätter saus'ten,
Ast und Wipfel sich knirrend bewegten, blieb
innerst doch der Kern des Herzens ungeregt.
Was schüttelt dich nun? was erschüttert den
festen treuen Sinn? Ich fühl's, es ist der
Klang der Mordaxt die an meiner Wurzel nascht.
Noch steh' ich aufrecht, und ein innerer Schauer
durchfährt mich. Ja, sie überwindet, die
verrätherische Gewalt; sie untergräbt den
festen hohen Stamm, und eh' die Rinde dorrt,
stürzt krachend und zerschmetternd deine Krone.

.....
Unleidlich ward mir's schon auf meinem gepolsterten
Stuhle, wenn in stattlicher Versammlung die Fürsten,
was leicht zu entscheiden war, mit wiederkehrenden
Gesprächen überlegten, und zwischen düstern
Wänden eines Saals die Balken der Decke mich
erdrückten. Da eilt' ich fort, sobald es

möglich war, und rasch auf's Pferd mit tiefem
Athemzuge. Und frisch hinaus, da wo wir
hingehören! in's Feld, wo aus der Erde dampfend
jede nächste Wohlthat der Natur, und durch die
Himmel wehend alle Segen der Gestirne uns unwittern;
wo wir, dem erdgeborenen Riesen gleich, von der
Berührung unsrer Mutter kräftiger uns in die
Höhe reißen; wo wir die Menschheit ganz, und
menschliche Begier in allen Adern fühlen; wo
das Verlangen vorzudringen, zu besiegen, zu
erhaschen, seine Faust zu brauchen, zu besitzen,
zu erobern, durch die Seele des jungen Jägers
glüht; wo der Soldat sein angeborenes Recht auf alle
Welt mit raschem Schritt sich anmasst, und in
fürchterlicher Freiheit wie ein Hagelwetter
durch Wiese, Feld und Wald verderbend streicht,
und keine Gränzen kennt, die Menschenhand gezogen.

CHAPTER VIII

Poetry

Now at this point in the discussion, there are no dramas of pre-Italian form to be considered. Egmont, although finished after the return of Goethe from Italy, was a result of his last Frankfurt period. The next dramas of importance, "Iphigenie" and "Tasso" are classic. Before taking up a study of these products of Italy, I shall briefly survey the poetry written during Goethe's last Frankfurt period and during his years in Weimar prior to the journey to Italy.

During the year 1773 Goethe was very much interested in Rousseau and intensely absorbed in the beauty of nature. In this year two very fine nature poems were written, "Mahomets Gesang" and "Ganymed". In "Mahomet" Goethe compares the different stages of a great fruitful life of a "superman" from its beginning unto its end with the course and growth of a large river

from its spring in the mountains to its union with the ocean. The vision of the beauty and charm of the mountain stream and the river is wonderful. The river begins very small and clear, winds its way among bushes, dances with its fresh power down over rocks and sends up mists to heaven. As it continues on down through the plains it grows and continues steadfastly towards its goal the ocean. His fellows call out to him to take them, too. Just so with a great man's life. He begins small, grows, sets a goal and moves on ever toward it. He may follow the line "Bruder, nimm die Brüder mit", in which case he leads the fullest, most worthy life. However, in the poem the beauty ^{of} the natural scenery is more forceful to me than any philosophical reflection.

„Seht den Felsenquell,
 Freudehell,
 Wie ein Sternenblick;
 Über Wolken

Nährten seine Jugend
Gute Geister
Zwischen Klippen im Gebüsch.

Jünglingfrisch
Tanzt er aus der Wolke
Auf die Marmorfelsen nieder,
Jauchzet wieder
Nach dem Himmel.

Durch die Gipfelgänge
Jagt er bunten Kiesel nach,
Und mit frühem Führertritt
Reisst er seine Bruderquellen
Mit sich fort."

In "Ganymed" Goethe has intensified this visual spell so that he imagines himself borne up to the "all-loving" father. The beauty of spring casts such a spell over the speaker that he expects to be carried upwards on clouds of

love. There is a relation between "Werther" and this poem. There is the same absorption in the loveliness of the earth and in the exalted feeling toward the natural world.

„Wie im Morgenglanze
 Du rings mich anglühst,
 Frühling, Geliebter!
 Mit tausendfacher Liebeswonne
 Sich an mein Herz drängt
 Deiner ewigen Wärme
 Heilig Gefühl,
 Unendliche Schöne!

Dass ich dich fassen möcht
 In diesen Arm!

Ach an deinem Busen
 Lieg ich schmachte,
 Und deine Blumen, dein Gras
 Drängen sich an mein Herz.
 Du kühlst den brennenden

Durst meines Busens,
Lieblicher Morgenwind!
Ruft drein die Nachtigall
Liebend nach mir aus dem Nebelthal.
Ich komm, ich komme!
Wohin? Ach, wohin?

Hinauf! Hinauf strebts.
Es schweben die Wolken
Abwärts, die Wolken
Neigen sich der sehnenden Liebe.
Mir! Mir!
In eurem Schosse
Aufwärts!
Umfangend umfängen!
Aufwärts an deinen Busen,
Allliebender Vater!

In „Prometheus “ written in the same year
that „Werther“ was composed, the superman is the
ruler of the universe. There is no longer the
worshipping wonder at the beauties of the earth.

He commands on the earth and does not recognize the restrictions of moral or natural law. The first part of the poem shows the very forceful language of the nature poet:

„Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus,
 Mit Wolkendunst,
 Und übe, dem Knaben gleich,
 Der Disteln köpft,
 An Eichen dich und Bergeshöhn;
 Musst mir meine Erde
 Doch lassen stehn,
 Und meine Hütte, die du nicht gebaut,
 Und meinen Herd,
 Um dessen Glut
 Du mich beneidest.“

In 1775 Goethe wrote „Herbstgefühl“ in which he likens love to the life giving sun. He follows the growth of plants from their beginning to their maturity and he feels that the sun's power to ripen is no greater than the power of love. Then he compares love and the

autumn of the year. This poem was written after the separation from Lili.

Now before the poet's eye arises a dream of past love and life. A golden vision of mountains and bright clouds comes before his inner eye. It disappears and nature is glorious, unconcerned and productive as it has been before. This Goethe expressed in „Auf dem See“. From the world he drinks fresh nourishment. Nature is kind and good and clasps him to her breast.

Just as in the case of „Herbstgefühl“ and „Auf dem See“ all of Goethe's love songs are placed in a setting of nature. The emotion of affection is closely united to the external sensations of nature. In his love poems of this period there is a freshness and impetuous movement which he finds expressed in the world about him.

One of the first poems written at Weimar under the first spell of his love for Frau von

Stein was „Rastlose Liebe.“ Its theme is the restless urge to go on that love imparts to the lover. There is no peace nor rest. There is a feverish impulse to action.

„Dem Schnee, dem Regen,
Dem Wind entgegen,
In Dampf der Klüfte,
Durch Nebeldüfte,
Immer zu! Immer zu!
Ohne Rast und Ruh“

.....

Wie soll ich fliehen?
Wälderwärts ziehen?
Alles vergebens!
Krone des Lebens
Glück ohne Ruh,
Liebe bist du!

„An die Entfernte“ is a song of longing for the loved one who is far away. In his loneliness the man gives to the physical environ-

ment of his loved one a morning freshness and beauty. Anxiously he peers through bush and forest and out over the fields. The poem is a plea for her return that his search may not be in vain.

In the ballad „Der Fischer“ Goethe has symbolized the mysterious power of attraction that the water holds for man. In a letter to Frau von Stein written January 19, 1778, Goethe expresses this same thought that the water has an attraction for man that is really dangerous. In this poem he uses a beautiful mermaid who charms the fisher and gradually pulls him down into the water to show the water's strange magnetic influence.

The spell cast by the moonlight which falls on the river and gives it a silvery splendor forms the basis for „An den Mond.“ The light of the moon gives to the world a vagueness of outline and a transitoriness that is missing in the day. The griefs and

sorrows of the lover are uttered in the third stanza when he realizes that as the stream so has his happiness, ^{passed} He has had great joys and now the pain of remembrance comes to him.

The last two lines of the first stanza seem to be quite significant.

Lösest endlich auch einmal

Meine Seele ganz;

In the charm of the moon there is power to cast away from the spirit its heavy chains. The soft tenderness that is shed about the man reacts upon his soul and frees it and gives to it a feeling of calmness.

These lines are significant when Goethe's first years at Weimar are considered. He was a stranger and some of the people resented his presence. Many felt that he had been given too much authority. He was left very much to himself. He, however, found companionship with nature and great happiness in his own garden. Undoubtedly, the moon was to him a great source of consolation

and happiness, and we are not surprised, therefore, that the moon motif occurs in the lyrics composed during this period. He wrote at Weimar:

„Ich geh' meinen alten Gang
 Meine liebe Wiese entlang,
 Tauche mich in die Sonne früh
 Bad' ab im Monde des Tages Müh.“ *

Another evening poem is the beautiful „Wandrer's Nachtlied II.“ It is a perfect expression of the lovely calm of evening. This poem was written on the wall of the ducal hunting-lodge on the Gickelhahn, the highest point on the range of wooded hills near Ilmenau, during the night of September 6-7, 1780.

Goethe wrote on this same night of September 6-7, to Frau von Stein: „Es ist ein ganz reiner Himmel, und ich gehe des Sonnenuntergangs mich zu freuen. Die Aussicht ist gross und einfach. Die Sonne

*Witkop, Page 261

ist unter. Jetzt ist die Gegend so rein und ruhig und so interessant als eine grosse schöne Seele, wenn sie sich am Wohlsten befindet. Wenn nicht noch hier und da einige Vapeurs von den Meilern aufstiegen, wär' die ganze Szene unbeweglich."

There is about the poem an exalted serenity, a sense of wide spaces, of a clear, beautiful evening atmosphere that envelops the sky, the mountains, and the woods. There is peace and quiet.

"Über allen Gipfeln

Ist Ruh,

In allen Wipfeln

Spürest du

Kaum einen Hauch;

Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.

Warte nur, balde

Ruhest du auch."

There are many more of Goethe's poems in which the nature element is prominent but these

are some of his best and also most significant. These will serve to show that his interest in nature was always present. Sometimes it was the mysterious charm of nature that impressed him; sometimes it was her calm and quieting influence; at other times it was her unkindness. Goethe was like Werther and for that matter the whole world, in that he represented nature according to his feeling for her at the time. This parallelism between his own moods and those of nature is always present in his poetical creations.

Chapter IX

Iphigenie

The next drama to be considered in this investigation is „Iphigenie auf Tauris“ which bears distinctly the marks of the Italian journey. Goethe took the play as a fragment with him to Italy. While there he recast it, cut out all suggestions of his own personality and versified the play. It belongs to the years 1786 and 1787.

In Italy Goethe came under the influence of the southern climate with its clear cut colors and its wonderful gardens. Here he saw the sea in its simplicity and grandeur. He learned to know distinct outlines and simple landscapes. Here he came under the influence of the originals of Greek art in all their great beauty, their „Edle Einfalt und stille Grösse.“

His Iphigenie is a woman of great simplicity and charm. She is thoroughly

German but has borrowed from the Greeks the garments and stateliness of the great statues. She is classic as indeed is the whole play. The Storm and Stress days of the poet are far away. Nature is treated in a statuesque manner. Plastic beauty is the keynote of the treatment of nature.

The setting for the play is the „Hain vor Dianens Tempel“. In the very first lines we have a most marvellously fine picture of nature.

„Heraus in eure Schatten, rege Wipfel
 Des alten heil'gen, dichtbelaubten Haines,
 Wie in der Göttin stilles Heiligtum,
 Tret' ich noch jetzt mit schauerndem Gefühl,
 Als wenn ich sie zum erstenmal beträte,
 Und es gewöhnt sich nicht mein Geist hierher.“

Again in line 538 she speaks:

Du hast Wolken, gnädige Retterin,
 Einzuhüllen unschuldig Verfolgte
 Und auf Winden dem ehrnen Geschick sie
 Aus den Armen über das Meer,

Über der Erde weiteste Strecken,
Und wohin es dir gut dünkt, zu tragen."

In Orestes speech when he fears that life is not long to be his and he speaks of this world and its light, he says in line 585,

„Lasst mich, ich komme bald zu euch hinab;
Das Licht des Tags soll euch nicht sehn, noch mich.
Der Erde schöner, grüner Teppich soll
Kein Tummelplatz für Larven sein. Dort unten
Such' ich euch auf: dort bindet alle dann
Ein gleich Geschick in ew'ge matte Nacht."

No passionate outburst about the great beauties of the world and then the darkness of nature's power as in „Werther" is found in „Iphigenie".

Orestes in line 667, speaks about the days when he and Pylades used to play together in the waves and plan what great things they would do when they were grown. The passage is interesting with its many references to nature, always written in the statuesque manner of the poet in Italy and not in the

picturesque manner of „Götze“.

Grosse Taten? Ja,

Ich weiss die Zeit, da wir sie vor uns sahn!
 Wenn wir zusammen oft dem Wilde nach
 Durch Berg' und Täler rannten und dereinst,
 An Brust und Faust den hohen Ahnherrn gleich,
 Mit Keul' und Schwert dem Ungeheuer so,
 Dem Räuber auf der Spur zu jagen hofften;
 Und dann wir abends an der weiten See
 Uns aneinander lehnend ruhig sassen,
 Die Wellen bis zu unsern Füssen spielten,
 Die Welt so weit, so offen vor uns lag;
 Da fuhr wohl einer manchmal nach dem Schwert,
 Und künft'ge Taten drangen wie die Sterne
 Rings um uns her unzählig aus der Nacht."

Orestes says in line 1341, after he has found Iphigenie and realizes with great joy that she is his sister:

„Lass mich zum erstenmal mit freiem Herzen
 In deinen Armen reine Freude haben!
 Ihr Götter, die mit flammender Gewalt

Ihr schwere Wolken aufzuzehren wandelt
 Und gnädig-ernst den lange erflchten Regen
 Mit Donnerstimmen und mit Windesbrausen
 In wilden Strömen auf die Erde schüttet;
 Doch bald der Menschen grausendes Erwarten
 In Segen auflöst und das bange Staunen
 In Freudeblick und lauten Dank verwandelt,
 Wenn in den Tropfen frischerquickter Blätter
 Die neue Sonne tausendfach sich spiegelt,
 Und Iris freundlich bunt mit leichter Hand
 Den grauen Flor der letzten Wolken trennt:
 O lasst mich auch in meiner Schwester Armen,
 An meines Freundes Brust, was ihr mir gönnt,
 Mit vollem Dank geniessen und behalten!

Goethe in Italy has learned to paint with words most effectively. His nature images in the passage just quoted are much more plastic than those of his Werther period.

In line 1506 Goethe has used nature to express Iphigenie's mood—not like Werther, not like Faust. There is a pervading calm

in her speech, a classic restraint even at a time of great emotional stress. Submission to natural and moral law has made Iphigenie very different from Goethe's earlier characters.

„Denn wie die Flut mit schnellen Strömen wachsend
Die Felsen überspült, die in dem Sand
An Ufer liegen: so bedeckte ganz
Ein Freudenstrom mein Innerstes.“

In line 1619 she says,

„Vernehm' ich dich, so wendet sich, o Teurer,
Wie sich die Blume nach der Sonne wendet,
Die Seele, von dem Strahle deiner Worte
Getroffen, sich dem süßen Troste nach.“

Again in line 1635 she asks,

„Verzeih! Wie leichte Wolke vor der Sonne,
So zieht mir vor der Seele leichte Sorge
Und Bangigkeit vorüber.“

Thus in „Iphigenie“ gentle expression, quiet figures are drawn from nature. In the play the poet's love and interest in nature are expressed as features in the finest sculpture.

Chapter X

Tasso

Now after „Iphigenie“ the next important work that claimed Goethe's attention was his „Tasso“. This was written in Italy and finished in Weimar in the years from 1787 to 1789. The first scene of Act I is a charming picture of rural custom. The princess and her friend are crowning the busts of the poets with garlands. The whole is pastoral in language and feeling. In „Tasso“ as in „Iphigenie“ we see the effect of the Italian journey. Due to the classic influence of Italy the nature descriptions in this play are statuesque as is the language of the whole drama.

„Eine südliche Ruinenscene in Abendstimmung malt uns „der Wanderer“, die Gärten in Italien die erste Strophe von Mignons berühmtem Liede und das schöne Fragment der Nausikaa, die Villa des Reichen im Frühling mit den Bildern der *
* Hehn: Goethe, Page 311

epischen Dichter die erste Scene des „Tasso“:

„..... schwankend wiegen
 Im Morgenwinde sich die jungen Zweige;
 Die Blumen von den Beeten schauen uns
 Mit ihren Kinderaugen freundlich an;
 Der Gärtner deckt getrost das Winterhaus
 Schon der Citronen und Orangen ab,
 Der blaue Himmel ruhet über uns
 Und an dem Horizonte löst der Schnee
 Der fernen Berge sich in leisen Duft.“

Leonore says of Tasso in the first scene:

„Sein Auge weilt auf dieser Erde kaum;
 Sein Ohr vernimmt den Einklang der Natur;“

In the first scene of Act II, Tasso speaks of a golden age where honor had not yet been invented to cross nature's law; that what pleases is permitted. Then follow some verses which describe the Golden Age as a paradise of unchecked voluptuousness.

„O welches Wort spricht meine Fürstin aus!
 Die goldne Zeit wohin ist sie geflohen?
 Nach der sich jedes Herz vergebens sehnt!
 Da auf der freien Erde Menschen sich
 Wie frohe Heerden im Genuss verbreiteten;
 Da ein uralter Baum auf bunter Wiese
 Dem Hirten und der Hirtin Schatten gab,
 Ein jungeres Gebüsch die zarten Zweige
 Um sehnsuchtsvolle Liebe traulich schlang;
 Wo klar und still auf immer reinem Sande
 Der weiche Fluss die Nymphe sanft umfing;
 Wo in dem Grase die gescheuchte Schlange
 Unschädlich sich verlor, der kühne Faun
 Vom tapfern Jungling bald bestraft entfloh;
 Wo jeder Vogel in der freien Luft,
 Und jedes Thier, durch Berg' und Thaler schweifend,
 Zum Menschen sprach: Erlaubt ist was gefällt.“

In a passage from the second scene of the fifth act Werther appears developed beyond himself into Tasso when he says:

„So ist das Leben mir kein Leben mehr.
 Verbiete du dem Seidenwurm zu spinnen,
 Wenn er sich schon dem Tode näher spinnt.
 Das köstliche Geweb' entwickelt er
 Aus seinem Innersten, und lässt nicht ab,
 Bis er in seinen Sarg sich eingeschlossen.
 O geb' ein guter Gott uns auch dereinst
 Das Schicksal des beneidenswerthen Wurms,
 Im neuen Sonnenthal die Flügel rasch
 Und freudig zu entfalten!"

In the fourth scene of the same act, Tasso speaks of the gardens of the prince and the trees, of the citrons that must be shielded from the autumnal blasts. He will have flowers of the rarest hues. Tasso will work out his salvation in the world of nature instead of going to ruin as Werther did.

While Tasso is being dashed to pieces by his temperament, he clings desperately on and gives the reader the impression that he

will save himself. In his last speech he compares himself to storm-tossed waves. This speech is an excellent example of the statuesque style that Goethe has developed.

„O edler Mann! Du stehst fest und still,
 Ich scheine nur die sturmbewegte Welle.
 Allein bedenk' und überhebe nicht
 Dich deiner Kraft! die mächtige Natur,
 Die diesen Felsen gründete, hat auch
 Der Welle die Beweglichkeit gegeben.
 Sie sendet ihren Sturm, die Welle flieht
 Und schwankt und schwillt und beugt sich
 schäumend über.

In dieser Woge spiegelte so schön
 Die Sonne sich, es ruhten die Gestirne
 An dieser Brust, die zärtlich sich bewegte.
 Verschwunden ist der Glanz, entflohn die Ruhe.-
 Ich kenne mich in der Gefahr nicht mehr,
 Und schäme mich nicht mehr es zu bekennen.
 Zerbrochen ist das Steuer, und es kracht
 Das Schiff an allen Seiten. Berstend reisst

Der Boden unter meinen Füßen auf!
Ich fasse dich mit beiden Armen an!
So klammert sich der Schiffer endlich noch
Am Felsen fest, an dem er scheitern sollte."

Chapter XI

Italienische Reise

After considering the nature element in "Iphigenie" and "Tasso", I take up the volumes called the "Italienische Reise". This work was compiled from Goethe's letters to friends, especially Herder and Frau von Stein, his diaries and sketches made during his journey in Italy which lasted from September 1786 until the middle of April, 1788.

Goethe himself regarded his Italian experiences as the most important crisis in his life and literary career. Goethe was depressed by the political unrest which was in a few years to develop into the French Revolution and wearied by his official duties at Weimar. He felt that he needed quiet and relief from his work. He had for years longed to see Italy so on the fourth of September, 1786, he stole away from Carlsbad and started on a journey which was to last for two years. His

itinerary may be briefly given from Carlsbad to the Brenner, thence to Verona and Venice. From Venice he goes to Rome where he reaches the city of his greatest desires on the first of November. He leaves Rome and arrives in Naples on the twenty-second of February. From Naples he goes to Sicily whence he returns by way of Naples to Rome in June 1787.

Goethe's letters during this time show that he was wide-awake to ever^hthing around him. History does not interest him at all. The Italian people and their carefree life are a delight to him. Their ways and manners interest him. The great profusion of fruits which they offer him and the large number of different plants amaze him. The wonderful art treasures and museums hold his careful attention and study. The opera does not please him because the actors are poorly trained. An Italian tragedy has its good points but it impresses him as moving in a rough fashion as is

suitable to the taste of the people.

At Venice he hears the discussion of a law case at the ducal palace which seems to him to be good comedy. Here he sees the canals and dignified old art remains which are new to him. He rides in a gondola in the moonlight and hears the gondoliers sing, now near, now far. He finds the farther the singers are from each other and from himself, the more touching the strains of their song.

At Venice for the first time Goethe sees the sea. He says that it is a grand sight. However his expressions are very conventional and the sea calls forth no poetry. Goethe's poems are the work of a land poet who writes of rivers and lakes but is not inspired by the sea to write great songs. In this Goethe may be contrasted with Heine who is the poet of the North Sea and who wrote many sea songs.

The plants along the sea coast drew Goethe's attention more than the sea. He

examines and explains them carefully. Here I find a result of Goethe's scientific studies at Weimar. Very early in his stay at the court of Karl August Goethe became a keen student of natural history. His official supervision of the forests led him to botany, of the mines to mineralogy. Werther's somewhat abstract worship of Nature became for Goethe in this period a passionate effort to understand the growth of flowers on the earth.

In the lagoons Goethe sees a work of old nature. The fish around the sea and the sea animals are of great interest to him.

In art Goethe is greatly interested. Palladio temporarily has too much influence on the poet and his works gain too much praise. However, Goethe shakes off this impression made by Palladio's works and realizes that in Raphael the greatest achievements of a master are visible. Goethe studies under Tischbein and Hackert. He takes the artist

Knier with him to Sicily so that he may have some worth-while drawings of Italy to take back with him to Germany.

The great works of antiquity become for him in Italy a real influence. He sees the originals and is no longer forced to accept imitations. Amid all the rich art and rich nature of Italy, Goethe chooses the human figure as the noblest subject of study. The tapestries of Raphael are to Goethe a compensation for the loss of a scene of Nature which has not its match on this earth. He makes the significant statement that the works of the great masters are the highest works of Nature, produced by man in accordance with true and natural laws.¹

At Rome Goethe writes that the Italians are fine children of nature.²

1. Rome, September 6, 1787

2. November 24, 1786

As before so here in Rome the world of nature is the absorbing thing to Goethe. In at least two-thirds of his letters from Italy there are generous references to nature. He writes from Rome on the second of February, 1787:

„Von der Schönheit, im vollen Mondschein Rom zu durchgehen, hat man, ohne es gesehen zu haben, keinen Begriff. Alles Einzelne wird von den grossen Massen des Lichts und Schattens verschlungen, und nur die grössten, allgemeinsten Bilder stellen sich dem Auge dar. Seit drei Tagen haben wir die hellsten und herrlichsten Nächte wohl und vollständig genossen. Einen vorzüglich schönen Anblick gewährt das Coliseo. Es wird nachts zugeschlossen, ein Eremit wohnt darin an einem Kirchelchen, und Bettler nisten in den verfallenen Gewölben. Sie hatten auf flachem Boden ein Feuer angelegt, und eine stille Luft trieb den Rauch erst auf der Arena hin, dass der untere Teil der Ruinen bedeckt war und die ungeheuren Mauern oben

drüber finster herausragten. Wir standen am Gitter und sahen dem Phänomen zu; der Mond stand hoch und heiter. Nach und nach zog sich der Rauch durch die Wände, Lücken und Öffnungen; ihn beleuchtete der Mond wie einen Nebel. Der Anblick war köstlich. So muss man das Pantheon, das Kapitol beleuchtet sehen, den Vorhof der Peterskirche und andere grosse Strassen und Plätze. Und so haben Sonne und Mond, eben wie der Menscheng Geist, hier ein ganz anderes Geschäft als anderer Orten, hier, wo ihrem Blick ungeheure und doch gebildete Massen entgegenstehen."

Goethe visits Vesuvius three times. The third time Vesuvius is in eruption. Goethe writes on March 20, 1787: "Die Lava war schmal, vielleicht nicht breiter als 10 Fuss, allein die Art, wie sie eine sanfte, ziemlich ebene Fläche hinabfloss, war auffallend genug: denn indem sie während des Fortfliessens an den Seiten und an der Oberfläche verkühlt,

so bildet sich ein Kanal, der sich immer erhöht, weil das geschmolzene Material auch unterhalb des Feuerstroms erstarrt, welcher die auf der Oberfläche schwimmenden Schlacken rechts und links gleichförmig hinunterwirft, wodurch sich denn nach und nach ein Damm erhöht, auf welchem der Glutstrom ruhig fortfließt wie ein Mühlbach.

From Naples on the seventeenth of March in the same year, he writes: „Wenn ich Worte schreiben will, so stehen mir immer Bilder vor Augen, des fruchtbaren Landes, des freien Meeres, der duftigen Inseln, des rauchenden Berges, und mir fehlen die Organe, das alles darzustellen.“

„Hier zu Lande begreift man erst, wie es den Menschen einfallen konnte, das Feld zu bauen, hier, wo der Acker alles bringt, und wo man drei bis fünf Ernten des Jahres hoffen kann. In den besten Jahren will man auf demselben Acker dreimal Mais gebaut haben.“

When Goethe left Naples and went to Sicily, he suffered greatly with seasickness and was

therefore unable to appreciate the sea in its immensity and beauty.

From a letter written in Sicily on the fourth of April, 1787, I find a passage which plainly shows Goethe's interest in geology and his knowledge of it: „Noch wunderlicher erschien ich diesem Begleiter, als ich auf allen seichten Stellen, deren der Fluss gar viele trocken lässt, nach Steinchen suchte und die verschiedenen Arten derselben mit mir forttrug. Ich konnte ihm abermals nicht erklären, dass man sich von einer gebirgigen Gegend nicht schneller einen Begriff machen kann, als wenn man die Gesteinarten untersucht, die in den Bächen herabgeschoben werden, und dass hier auch die Aufgabe sei, durch Trümmer sich eine Vorstellung von jenen ewig klassischen Höhen des Erdaltertums zu verschaffen.

Auch war meine Ausbeute aus diesem Flusse reich genug; ich brachte beinahe vierzig Stück zusammen, welche sich freilich in wenige Rubriken unterordnen liessen. Das meiste war eine

Gebirgsart, die man bald für Jaspis oder Hornstein bald für Thonschiefer ansprechen konnte. Ich fand sie teils in abgerundeten, teils unförmigen Geschieben, teils rhombisch gestaltet, von vielerlei Farben. Ferner kamen viele Abänderungen des älteren Kalkes vor, nicht weniger Breccien, deren Bindemittel Kalk, die verbundenen Steine aber bald Jaspis, bald Kalk waren. Auch fehlte es nicht an Geschieben von Muschelkalk."

Throughout his letters, Goethe refers to the botanical gardens in every place to which he goes. The numbers and varieties of plants are perhaps of greater interest to him than anything else. From Padua on the twenty-seventh of September, 1786, he writes: „Der botanische Garten ist desto artiger und munterer. Es können viele Pflanzen auch den Winter im Lande bleiben, wenn sie an Mauern oder nicht weit davon gesetzt sind. Man überbaut alsdann das Ganze zu Ende des Oktobers und heizt die wenigen Monate. Es ist erfreuend und belehrend, unter einer Vegetation

umherzugehen, die uns fremd ist. Bei gewohnten Pflanzen, so wie bei anderen längst bekannten Gegenständen denken wir zuletzt gar nichts; und was ist Beschauen ohne Denken? Hier in dieser neu mir entgegentretenden Mannigfaltigkeit wird jener Gedanke immer lebendiger, dass man sich alle Pflanzengestalten vielleicht aus einer entwickeln könne. Hierdurch würde es allein möglich werden, Geschlechter und Arten wahrhaft zu bestimmen, welches, wie mich dünkt, bisher sehr willkürlich geschieht. Auf diesem Punkte bin ich in meiner botanischen Philosophie stecken geblieben, und ich sehe noch nicht, wie ich mich entwirren will. Die Tiefe und Breite dieses Geschäfts scheint mir völlig gleich."

Here for the first time Goethe mentions his idea that all plant forms may be derived from one plant and that on this basis they may be classified. He has, in the next letter, used the word, "Urpflanze", for the first time. This is very significant for it is through this

idea of the typical that he arrives at his theory of aesthetics.

Goethe writes from Palermo, April 17, 1787:

„Es ist ein wahres Unglück, wenn man von vielerlei Geistern verfolgt und versucht wird! Heute früh ging ich mit dem festen, ruhigen Vorsatz, meine dichterischen Träume fortzusetzen, nach dem öffentlichen Garten; allein eh' ich mich's versah, erhaschte mich ein anderes Gespenst, das mir schon diese Tage nachgeschlichen. Die vielen Pflanzen, die ich sonst nur in Kübeln und Töpfen, ja die grösste Zeit des Jahres nur hinter Glasfenstern zu sehen gewohnt war, stehen hier froh und frisch unter freiem Himmel, und indem sie ihre Bestimmung vollkommen erfüllen, werden sie uns deutlicher. Im Angesicht so vielerlei neuen und erneuten Gebildes fiel mir die alte Grille wieder ein, ob ich nicht unter dieser Schar die Urpflanze entdecken könnte. Eine solche muss es denn doch geben! Woran würde ich sonst erkennen, dass dieses oder jenes Gebilde eine

Pflanze sei, wenn sie nicht alle nach einem Muster gebildet wären?

Ich bemühte mich, zu untersuchen, worin denn die vielen abweichenden Gestalten von einander unterschieden seien. Und ich fand sie immer mehr ähnlich als verschieden, und wollte ich meine botanische Terminologie anbringen, so ging das wohl, aber es fruchtete nicht; es machte mich unruhig, ohne dass es mir weiter half. Gestört war mein guter poetischer Vorsatz, der Garten des Alcinous war verschwunden, ein Weltgarten hatte sich aufgethan. Warum sind wir Neueren doch so zerstreut, warum gereizt zu Forderungen, die wir nicht erreichen noch erfüllen können!

In the two above letters Goethe is puzzling over the type, the Urpflanze. This is the central conception upon which all of Goethe's later investigations of organic nature are based. Permeated with the instinct of evolution, he seeks in each individual specimen the elements

which attach it to the life of all other living things. He writes from Naples on the seventeenth of May, 1787: „Ferner muss ich dir vertrauen, dass ich dem Geheimnis der Pflanzenzeugung und Organisation ganz nahe bin, und dass es das Einfachste ist, was nur gedacht werden kann. Unter diesem Himmel kann man die schönsten Beobachtungen machen. Den Hauptpunkt, wo der Keim steckt, habe ich ganz klar und zweifellos gefunden; alles übrige seh' ich auch schon im ganzen, und nur noch einige Punkte müssen bestimmter werden. Die Urpflanze wird das wunderlichste Geschöpf von der Welt, um welches mich die Natur selbst beneiden soll. Mit diesem Modell und dem Schlüssel dazu kann man alsdann noch Pflanzen ins unendliche erfinden, die konsequent sein müssen, das heisst, die, wenn sie auch nicht existieren, doch existieren könnten, und nicht etwa malerische oder dichterische Schatten und Scheine sind, sondern eine innerliche Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit haben. Dasselbe Gesetz wird

sich auf alles übrige Lebendige anwenden lassen."

In this letter Goethe enthusiastically calls the "Urpflanze" the most wonderful creation in the world. He has come to his conclusion that the typical exists in everything else in the world as well as in the plant world. All creations exist because of an inner truth and by necessity. This theory he now applies to all art and, especially, to his own poetry.

In the narrative for July from the second residence in Rome I find the above letters of April 17, 1787, and May 17, 1787, repeated. From this it is quite clear that Goethe attached great importance to his discovery of the "Urpflanze". The type is, in Goethe's hands, a kind of intellectual nucleus about which the impressions of the individual plant world arrange themselves in his mind. From the concrete individual Goethe takes all the typical elements. Then after he does this he converts these elements back into the individual which he now sees clothed as it

were in its affinities, and closely interwoven with its kindred forms.

Now having arrived at his ideal of the typical, Goethe decided that the poet should reveal the typical in Nature and should not follow an abstract ideal of beauty. In this way Goethe finds the essence of style. If the poet in imitating Nature can range together the various characteristic shapes and then if he work on a level with the greatest efforts of man, he has achieved style. This Goethe expresses in his essay, "Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Stil".

In January 1788 Goethe wrote to Karl August shortly before his return that art has become a new language and is no longer a faint reflexion of nature.* During his second residence in Rome, he writes: "Das Schöne ist eine Manifestation geheimer Naturgesetze, die uns ohne dessen Erscheinung ewig verborgen

*January 25, 1788

geblieben."

In Italy Goethe became fully aware of the fact that Nature had not intended him for an artist but for a poet. He had trained his eyes to see and understand the organic life of nature. His sympathetic understanding of leaf and flower, and of the structure of the human body, opened to him a way of approaching art which was wholly unfamiliar to his contemporaries. In the characters of "Hermann and Dorothea", which was written several years after the return from Italy, the analogies of organic nature have taken hold of the poet's imagination and shared with those of art in controlling his eye and determining the quality of his touch. Plasticity, which appears in "Hermann and Dorothea", in "Iphigenie", in "Iphigenie" as in all of his later works is a result of the Italian journey.

CONCLUSION

In this investigation I have traced the nature element through Goethe's works from 1765 to 1788. I have found throughout this period an interest in nature which manifests itself according to the poet's mood. However, after the Italian journey there is a different note in the poet's work with regard to nature. He has arrived at a principle of art, the revelation of the typical, which has changed his poetic treatment of nature. There appears the plastic, statuesque nature which we find in his classical dramas written in Italy and in his works written after this period.

Italy has given Goethe a new knowledge of color and of definiteness in form. He wrote in a letter of November 24, 1787 that there is a brilliance and yet a harmony in the coloring of Nature in Italy which is lacking in the North. He said that in the North color is hard or dull, gay or monotonous.

Now in his poem „Amor als Landschaftsmaler“ he uses as his theme love's opening of the eyes to the splendor and beauty and color of the natural world. The poem was written in the intervals of a sketching tour amid the autumnal splendor of the woods of Frascati in November 1787. It is characterized by its clear bright coloring. The entire poem shows Goethe's instinct for the typical and is for this reason a good example of the art that belongs to the poet who receives new inspiration in Italy.

„Sass ich früh auf einer Felsenspitze,
Sah mit starren Augen in den Nebel;
Wie ein grau grundiertes Tuch, gespannt,
Deckt'er alles in die Breit' und Höhe.

Stellt' ein Knabe sich mir an die Seite,
Sagte: „Lieber Freund, wie magst du starrend
Auf das leere Tuch gelassen schauen?
Hast du denn zum Malen und zum Bilden
Alle Lust auf ewig wohl verloren?“

Sah ich an das Kind und dachte heimlich:

„Will das Bübchen doch den Meister machen!“

„Willst du immer trüb und müssig bleiben,“

Sprach der Knabe, „kann nichts Kluges werden;

Sieh, ich will dir gleich ein Bildchen malen;

Dich ein hübsches Bildchen malen lehren.“

Und er richtete den Zeigefinger,

Der so rötlich war wie eine Rose,

Nach dem weiten, ausgespannten Teppich,

Fing mit seinem Finger an zu zeichnen.

Oben malt' er eine schöne Sonne,

Die mir in die Augen mächtig glänzte,

Und den Saum der Wolken macht' er golden,

Liess die Strahlen durch die Wolken dringen;

Malte dann die zarten leichten Wipfel

Frisch erquickter Bäume, zog die Hügel,

Einen nach dem andern, frei dahinter;

Unten liess er's nicht an Wasser fehlen,

Zeichnete den Fluss so ganz natürlich,
Dass er schien im Sonnenstrahl zu glitzern,
Dass er schien am hohen Rand zu rauschen.

Ach, da standen Blumen an dem Flusse,
Und da waren Farben auf der Wiese,
Gold und Schmelz und Purpur und ein Grünes,
Alles wie Smaragd und wie Karfunkel!
Hell und rein lasiert' er drauf den Himmel
Und die blauen Berge fern und ferner,
Dass ich, ganz entzückt und neugeboren,
Bald den Maler, bald das Bild beschaute.

„Hab' ich doch“, so sagt' er, „dir bewiesen,
Dass ich dieses Handwerk gut verstehe;
Doch es ist das Schwerste noch zurücke.“

Zeichnete darnach mit spitzem Finger
Und mit grosser Sorgfalt an dem Wäldchen,
G'rad ans Ende, wo die Sonne kräftig
Von dem hellen Boden widerglänzte,

Zeichnete das allerliebste Mädchen,
Wohlgebildet, zierlich angekleidet,
Frische Wangen unter braunen Haaren,
Und die Wangen waren von der Farbe
Wie das Fingerchen, das sie gebildet.

„O du Knabe!“ rief ich, „welch ein Meister.
Hat in seine Schule dich genommen,
Dass du so geschwind und so natürlich
Alles klug beginnst und gut vollendest?“

Da ich noch so rede, sieh, da rühret
Sich ein Windchen und bewegt die Gipfel,
Kräuselt alle Wellen auf dem Flusse,
Füllt den Schleier des vollkommen Mädchens.
Und, was mich Erstaunten mehr erstaunte,
Fängt das Mädchen an, den Fuss zu rühren,
Geht zu kommen, nähert sich dem Orte,
Wo ich mit dem losen Lehrer sitze.

Da nun alles, alles sich bewegte,
Bäume, Fluss und Blumen und der Schleier
Und der zarte Fuss der Allerschönsten,
Glaubt ihr wohl, ich sei auf meinem Felsen
Wie ein Felsen still und fest geblieben?"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Weimar Edition of Goethe's Works, 1899

- 1 Faust, Part I and Part II
- 2 Götz von Berlichingen
- 3 Clavigo
- 4 Stella
- 5 Werther's Leiden
- 6 Egmont
- 7 Gedichte
- 8 Die Geschwister
- 9 Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre
- 10 Iphigenie auf Tauris
- 11 Torquato Tasso
- 12 Italienische Reise
- 13 Dichtung und Wahrheit
- 14 Briefe aus der Schweiz
- 15 Die Mitschuldigen
- 16 Die Laune des Verliebten
- 17 Mahomet
- 18 Prometheus
- 19 Briefe

Commentaries:

1. Victor Hehn: Gedanken über Goethe
Gebrüder Bornkraeger
Berlin 1906
2. Albert Bielschowsky: The Life of Goethe
G.P.Putnam's Sons 1905
New York and London
3. Richard M. Meyer: Goethe, Erster Band
Ernst Hofmann and Co.
Berlin 1905
4. Georg Witkowski: Goethe
E. A. Seemann
Leipzig 1912
5. Philipp Witkop: Die Neuere Deutsche Lyrik
Leipzig und Berlin 1910
6. C. H. Herford: Goethe
Dodge Publishing Co.
New York
7. C. H. Herford: Goethe's Italian Journey, in
Studies in European Literature
Oxford
At the Clarendon Press 1900
8. Calvin Thomas: Goethe
Henry Holt and Co.
New York 1917
9. Wm. Rose: From Goethe to Byron
E.P.Dutton and Co.
New York 1924
10. James Sime: Goethe
Walter Scott
London 1888

11. Camillo von Klenze: From Goethe to Hauptmann
Studies in a Changing Culture
Viking Press
New York
12. Oswald Spengler: Der Untergang des Abendlands
München 1920
13. H. Loiseau: L'evolution morale de Goethe
Paris 1911