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The Theme of Disappearance and Renewal in the Poetry of

Wilhelm Lehmann

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Brian Allan Newrick

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of time, Man has been preoccupied with the fleetingness of physical existence. Although concerned by the inevitability of the passing of materiality, he accepted it as a part of a permanent world order. However, as a result of the gradual disintegration of belief in a divinely based system, from the end of the Middle Ages until the present day, Man has become increasingly conscious of the transitoriness of material existence. Accompanying this disintegration, a growing feeling of isolation from the "whole" has arisen. This sense of alienation is shared and articulated by the German poet Wilhelm Lehmann. Lehmann comments upon the position of Man in his critical essay Kunst als Jubel der Materie:

Wir wurden aus dem Paradies der alten Einheit vertrieben. Diese Vertreibung bedeutet den Beginn des Dichtens, des Schreibens. Wir verloren das Ganze, wir wurden selbst Teil, um uns als Teil des Ganzen zu erinnern und uns seiner in der Sehnsucht zu vergewissern. Hesiodisch gesprochen: das Halbe ist mehr als das Ganze. Welches ist das Geschäft der Welt? Da zu sein. Welches ist das Geschäft der Dichtung? Der Welt bei diesem Vorhaben zu helfen. Dichtung ist nicht Flucht, sondern Vorhandenheit, sie ist Kraft, also Gegenwart. Daher Schall, Metrum, Rythmus, Reim innerhalb der Zeile so gut wie an ihrem Ende, Formwille, also Sprache innerhalb der Sprache als Tag innerhalb des Tages. Der Welt als der Welt innezuwerden, erfand sich die Natur die Sprache, die Dichtung. 1)

As a precondition for Man's reintegration into the "whole", physical existence must be re-endowed with the permanence it has lost through conceptualisation. This can be achieved, according to Lehmann, through poetry. He believes poetry to be "die Blutspenderin des verfallenden Lebens."<sup>2)</sup> Within the poem, the things of Nature, although having ceased to exist as physical entities, can live once more. The Poet, through his art, can rescue them from oblivion. Hans Dieter Schäfer, in his book Wilhelm Lehmann - Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk, states:

Das dichterische Wort hebt durch seine verwandelnde Kraft das Gewesene aus der Vergessenheit ins Gegenwärtige. 3)

As a result of the attainment of permanence by the thing, Man can also become part of this newly realised permanence:

Dichtung hält das Flüchtige, sie hält auch uns fest. 4)

In order to realise the thing's preservation within the framework of the poem, it must first of all be made to disappear. In Chapter I of my thesis, it is my intention to investigate the techniques employed by Lehmann to bring about this disappearance. The thing's subsequent inclusion into poetry is discussed in Chapter II. The idea of disappearance and renewal assumes a religious and supernatural significance in Lehmann's poetry. Chapter III deals with the reappearance of the thing after its passing as a circumstance brought about by external forces. This event is made possible through the priest-like mediation of the Poet.

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#### Footnotes

- 1) Wilhelm Lehmann: Sämtliche Werke in drei Bänden. Bd. III, Gütersloh, 1962. p.159. Henceforth referred to as SW III.
- 2) Ibid. p.374
- 3) Hans Dieter Schäfer: Wilhelm Lehmann - Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk, Bonn, 1969. p.233
- 4) SW III, p.227

## CHAPTER ONE: The Theme of Disappearance

The theme of disappearance is treated by Lehmann in several different ways. Disappearance can simply entail the physical vanishment of things. It can also refer to their physical disintegration, leading to a state of substancelessness and weightlessness. The Poet himself appears to be reduced to this state in several poems. The disengagement from external activity is a form of disappearance. This is usually characterised by sleep. The withdrawal from external activity is followed by the commencement of an "internal" activity, which is depicted in terms of natural procreation or in dreaming. The things are also represented as reducing into their genetic code, where they remain as the germ to a new existence.

### 1) The physical disappearance of the thing

In order that the existence of individual things can continue after their physical passing, acceptance by the Poet of transitoriness is necessary. In the poem Verzicht,<sup>1)</sup> the departure of the migratory birds and the death of the plants help bring about the fulfillment of this precondition on the part of the Poet. The poem is reproduced below in full:

Früh zog die Schwalbe dies Jahr,  
Früh naht das Duster,  
Hauch der Verwesung droht  
Unwilliger Nüster.

Hölzerne Lüster, stehn  
Engelwurzreste,  
Geisternde Schatten sie  
Mutloser Kräfte.

Starenschwarm spricht mir noch zu,  
Eh er zerstoben;  
Weisses Septemberlicht  
Führt ihn nach oben.

Lange hält sich der Strauss  
Abgeschnittener Stiele,  
Nur noch Erinnerung  
Der Lebensspiele.

Astern, Verbenen und Phlox,  
Die langsam sich lichten,  
Ich streue mich hin wie sie  
Zu leisem Verzichten.

In the first stanza, the swallow is described as migrating early. Its departure heralds the approach of winter. The disappearing bird also symbolises the despair felt by the Poet. The next line alludes to the arrival of the new season through the image of the oncoming gloom. The depiction of departure in the first line, followed by that of arrival in the second line has a balancing effect, evoking the unity of Nature and at the same time, promoting a unity within the poem. The breath of decay represents the death of the old season. However, it is shown as threatening "unwilling nostrils", indicating the Poet's refusal to accept the passing of autumn, and hence the harmony of existence itself. In the second stanza, the remains of the angelica are described as a lifeless chandelier. Through the image of the chandelier, a contrast is suggested between its former existence and its present state as a dead shell. The contrast is strengthened through its representation as a shadow. This compares with the light-giving function of the chandelier. The "haunting" of the shadow denotes, in the Poet's mind, the inevitability of transitoriness.

The flock of starlings is described, in the next stanza, as still speaking to the Poet. They have not yet rejected him. Then, however, it too, flies away, led into the heavens by the white light of September. It is as if the birds are commanded to depart by some all-powerful being. Here, the compelling aspect of the transitoriness of the individual things in Nature is suggested. Then, in the following stanza, there is the reference to the bunch of flower-stalks, which linger on, although separated from their flowers. The Poet is overcome, finally, at the sight of the plants, which he sees gradually becoming sparser. Whereupon, he too, is depicted, in metaphorical fashion, as strewing his petals upon the ground, as a gesture of acceptance.

The poem begins with the rejection by the Poet of the passing of things, and thus of the unity of Nature itself. Until the desired acceptance takes place, there can be no understanding of the permanence of the natural order, and Man must consequently experience complete exclusion from Nature's realm. The succession of images which emphasise the passing of the season, serve to impinge upon the Poet's consciousness an awareness of life's transitoriness. The climax is reached in the final stanza, where the dying plants appear in list fashion - "Aster, Verbena und Phlox". The despairing Poet must now accept the

passing of everything within the context of the Nature cycle, and he does so with a gesture which expresses his desire for oneness with the transient things.

The message of acceptance of existence, as it is, appears in Lehmann's theoretical writings. He believed that the things existed for their own sake, and thus should be accepted as such. This in fact was referred to in the quotation given in the introduction, viz. "Welches ist das Geschäft der Welt? Da zu sein." In his essay Der Planet, he expands upon this theme:

Uns ist, als brauchten die Dinge bloss da zu sein, um sich und uns ihres Sinnes zu vergewissern. (...) Nur zu sein brauchen die Dinge, nur zu geschehen die Taten... 2)

The idea of non-acceptance is to be found in Grasmücke.<sup>3)</sup> Here, it is the Poet's refusal to accept his own position which constitutes the central theme. As in Verzicht, images portraying things as disappearing are employed to bring about a new awareness. However, things are not depicted as vanishing completely in this poem. Instead, they are reduced to a state, whereby they appear to be barely perceptible:

Milchkanne glänzt und füllt den Krug.  
 Zu leben ist euch schon genug.  
 Blieb euch getreu der Sinn?  
 Der mir entging,  
 Mit Zwitschern fing  
 Grasmücke ihn sich ein,  
 Und vor mir flieht er hin.  
 Im heissen Blau der Mond ein Hauch,  
 Pustblume unten, monden auch.  
 Ich weiss nur, dass ich traurig bin.  
 Vogel, ich will dein Hörer sein. -  
 Mich schläfernte der Sommersang,  
 Der trällernd aus den Hecken sprang.  
 Ich wachte auf, zu Tode bang:  
 Der Mond, des Schwebens niemals satt,  
 War schon oranges Krokusblatt,  
 Grasmückenmann sang immer noch.  
 So hör ihn doch! So hör ihn doch!

The poem begins with a description of the simple objects, the milk-can and the jug. As if disembodied from any causal action of Man, they appear to fulfill their primary function on their own. This image is intended, by Lehmann, to emphasise the self-sufficiency of things. The Poet says in the third line, that the self-sufficiency of the milk-can

and the jug makes them part of the natural order. These things, unlike Man, are complete in themselves, possessing no desire to transcend their being. Consequently, the Poet feels excluded from the order of Nature. He will attempt to discover it in the phenomena of Nature, which, like the milk-can and the jug, appear complete in themselves.

First of all, the Poet looks to the song-bird, the hedge-sparrow, which is depicted as encapsulating the order. But the hedge-sparrow merely twitters, and the bird, and with it the meaning to existence, flee before him. He then looks to the moon above him to provide this order. But the moon in the hot day-sky appears simply as a breath. Even the plant at his feet is a "Pustblume". It assumes and mirrors the intangible and transitory aspect manifested by the moon.

In the centre of the poem, the Poet expresses despair at his isolation. This statement of the Poet's alienation, which usually occupies a central position in the poem, is frequently found in Lehmann's poetry. It is discussed at length by Jochen Jung in his book Mythos und Utopie.<sup>4)</sup> The Poet implores the bird to teach him the meaning which he lacks. Its song causes him to fall asleep. Here, Lehmann has coined the word "Sommersang" to depict the unity of the bird with the season and hence with the rest of Nature. Then, in the early evening, he suddenly awakens. The significance of what he now perceives is underscored by his fearful reaction - "zu Tode bang". The Poet sees the moon in the early evening-sky "des Schwebens niemals satt", suggesting that it has hovered there above him all of the time, although he had been unable to perceive it.

Previously, the immaterial state of the moon, reflected by the almost substanceless "Pustblume", evoked the transitory and intangible aspect of existence as was seen through the Poet's eyes. Now it appears as a new moon, indicative of the birth of a new existence, and also a new understanding on the part of the Poet. Like the objects of the first line, it is now complete in itself. It is described as an orange crocus-leaf. The crocus is the first plant to push up through the snow in the new year. Therefore, the whole natural cycle is brought in with these combined images. At the same time, the Poet hears the singing of the cock hedge-sparrow. Its song permeates the whole scene with its message to the Poet of acceptance of existence as it is, telling him that meaning can be found merely in being.

Thus the Poet finds the meaning to existence which he has been seeking. The poem ends with an exhortation to the reader to listen to the song of the hedge-sparrow and the message which it brings.

The acceptance of existence as it is, particularly with regard to its apparent transitoriness, is a necessary condition for its preservation. In both of the poems so far dealt with, this acceptance is finally exhibited on the part of an initially reluctant Poet. Verzicht deals with the disappearance of physical things in the context of the Nature cycle. In this poem, several images appear, one after the other, which depict things vanishing. A build-up of tension occurs, and at the end, when the Poet perceives the bare flower-stalks, he is overcome by emotion, and as a gesture of unity, he too, (figuratively that is), releases his petals. Things do not vanish entirely in Grasmücke, but are depicted as being reduced to a point whereby they are just perceptible. Once more, the theme of disappearance is used as a means of bringing about acceptance on the part of the Poet. The vanishing of the phenomena is also employed, in this case, to symbolise the Poet's exclusion from the natural order. Through the sudden reappearance, however, of the phenomena, i.e. moon, plant, and finally song-bird, the Poet is shocked into recognising that he must accept his own existence as it is.

Other poems by Lehmann in which the images of things disappearing appear as a means of bringing about acceptance are given in the final footnote below.<sup>5)</sup>

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#### Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.554
- 2) SW III, p.133
- 3) SW III, p.510
- 4) Jochen Jung, in his book Mythos und Utopie, Tübingen 1975, p.20, refers to "der notwendigen Vereinzelung des (...) Dichters". He continues: "Für den Dichter bedeutet das, dass er seine Einsamkeit nun weniger als Fluch denn auch als Segen empfindet, da erst sie ihn in die Lage versetzt, Korrespondenz mit seinem Gegenstand aufzunehmen".
- 5) Südliche Stunde, p.455; Schnelle Oktoberdämmerung, p.473; An einen Blumenstrauß, p.526; Der Bund, p.528.

2) The physical reduction of the Poet

The Poet must enjoy a close relationship with Nature in order that he can include the things of Nature into his poetry. The desired unity with the natural world is brought about, in Lehmann's poetry, through the depiction of the Poet attaining a state of substancelessness. No longer weighed down by his individuality, he merges with the phenomena of Nature, and thus he experiences once more the oneness with the "paradise" from whence Man was driven.

A poem whose theme is the physical reduction of the Poet is Signale,<sup>1)</sup> the first two stanzas of which appear below:

Seewärts hör ich Signale tuten:  
 Sie schießen die Torpedos ein.  
 Auf fernen Meeren, nah dem Ohre,  
 Gesprengter Leiber letztes Schreien.

Der Märzwind greift den Wandernden,  
 Ich gleite wie auf Flügelschuhn;  
 Dann bin ich selbst ihm aufgestiegen  
 Und kann auf seinem Rücken ruhn.

The poem is set in war-time. The Poet hears a battle being fought far out at sea; the boats signal as they release their torpedoes. He can also hear the last cries of those who are meeting their deaths. A rather horrifying image is presented with these cries being depicted as emanating from exploding bodies. The scene is made more intense and penetrating through the fact that the screams are "nah dem Ohre", yet they are uttered "Auf fernen Meeren".

In the second stanza, a scene of peace and tranquility is evoked. This picture contrasts sharply with the violence of the first stanza. In this stanza, the Poet assumes the disintegrated state of the "gesprengter Leiber" of the fourth line. In the fifth line, there is the use of the impersonal noun "den Wandernden". The Poet himself does not enter into the poem until the beginning of the following line. Within these three lines, a transition from "Gesprengter Leiber" to "den Wandernden" to "Ich" is depicted as having taken place. The Poet has now become without physical substance, and in this substanceless state, he is able to rest upon the back of the March-wind.

The reduction to a fragrance is the main theme of the poem An einen Freund, der sich das Leben nahm:<sup>2)</sup>

Willst du, der Erde satt, sie schon verlassen?  
 Ich sehe deine Hand die Klinke fassen.  
 Wähl diese Tür:  
 Der Sommertag hat Duft gebraut,  
 Wermut, Basilikum und Bohnenkraut.  
 Bist du es noch, dem Böses widerfuhr?  
 Nur heitre Stunde zeigt die Sonnenuhr.  
 An warmer Planke hängt der Pfirsich, Venusbrust,  
 Du bist begierdelose Lust.  
 Die Aprikose lächelt, Puttenwange,  
 Am Birnenfleisch fühlt die Ohrwurmzange.  
 Die Pflaume spaltet sich, gerecht dem Munde,  
 Die Sonnenuhr zeigt nur die heitre Stunde. —  
 Du gingest doch. Der Tod hat dich nicht ganz genommen,  
 Als Duft bist du der Welt zurückgenommen.

This poem is dedicated to a friend who has committed suicide. The Poet asks his dead friend if he has had enough of the physical earth to depart from it so soon. In the second line, he says that he sees his hand grasping the latch, indicating his imminent entrance into a new existence after his departure from the former one. In the following line, the Poet tells the friend: "Wähl diese Tür". This "door" is in fact the colon which follows the instruction. Discussion on this topic appears in the following chapter. Thus the Poet will provide the way to the new life. In the following lines of the poem, this new existence is depicted.

The summer-day is described as having brewed a fragrance from the scents released by the aromatic herbs, wormwood, basil, and beanwood, as if in celebration of his entrance into the new spiritual existence. Here, the sundial does not indicate the passage of time, but instead, it merely points to serenity and happiness. Timelessness is suggested through this image. The happy serenity is reflected in the suspension of the peach against the warm plank. There is no movement at all, nor is there hot or cold, only the sensation of warmth. The atmosphere is one of fulfillment. The peach is depicted as the breast of Venus, and yet the pleasure experienced through its being perceived in such a fashion is not a lustful pleasure. Instead, the friend is described as "begierdelose Lust". This description serves to emphasise his complete abstraction from all physical substance. The feeling of unity and peacefulness is extended with the picture of the smiling apricot, which is described as the cheek of a cherub, and with the picture of the earwig, whose pincers are exploring the flesh of the pear. This

paradise further entices with the image of the splitting plum, which is to be savoured by the mouth. The description of the ideal scene ends with the repetition of the seventh line. In the seventh line, the cheerful and serene hour was made indefinite through the lack of article. Now, it appears as a definite time - "die heitre Stunde". This "hour" can be enjoyed by the friend - he has not been completely removed by death. As a fragrance, he has returned to the world.

The shedding by the Poet himself of his material substance is depicted in several of Lehmann's poems. This state of substancelessness is characterised by weightlessness. As a substanceless being, the Poet then experiences acceptance by Nature, of whose realm he longs to become a part. This situation compares with the process described in the previous section, whereby the vanishing of physical things brings about acceptance of Nature on the part of the Poet.

In the poem Leiser Herbstwind,<sup>3)</sup> Lehmann brings about the physical reduction of the Poet, and simultaneously, he depicts him as entering into a death-like state:

Der Wegstaub pudert die Malven,  
Es kraust sich die Wolle am Lamm.  
Der Wind ist die Puderquaste,  
Der Wind der zärtliche Kamm.

Es summt in den leeren Linden  
Wie Bienengeisterschar,  
Die Stirn streift Spinnenfaden,  
Oder ist es mein eigenes Haar?

Ich bin schon halb vergangen,  
Das Auge wird mir dumm,  
Auf den wespengelben Stoppeln  
Geht ein Gestorbener um.

Der Wind nimmt mich auf den Rücken,  
Ich bin ihm nicht zu schwer;  
Hase und Maus und Amsel  
Fliehen vor mir nicht mehr.

Mit dem Winde staub ich die Malven  
Und krause die Wolle dem Lamm,  
Ich bin die Puderquaste,  
Ich bin der flüchtige Kamm.

The wind is depicted as a powder-puff, which powders the mallows with dust from the path, and as a tender comb, which curls the wool on the lamb. The dusty path leads to the realm of the dead. The Poet's entry into death is accompanied by humming, which is likened to the sound of

hosts of "bee-spirits". As he loses consciousness, he is no longer able to differentiate between his hair and the cobwebs. A merging effect has taken place between his power of sight and hearing - "Das Auge wird mir dumm". He enters into a twilight zone, as a phantom, haunting the stubble-fields. He becomes substanceless, and is gathered up by the wind. In this state, the other creatures now accept him. The Poet becomes the wind itself.

The poem describes a progressive movement towards a state of death characterised by weightlessness, and at the same time, the Poet moves towards a unity with Nature. His complete integration into Nature is described through his assuming the function of the wind. The structure of the poem is cyclical, with the activity of the first stanza repeated in the last stanza. This technique promotes a unity and completeness within the poem, reflecting simultaneously the unity and completeness, and also the permanence of Nature.

Another of Lehmann's works which describes the entry of the Poet into a substanceless harmony with Nature is the major poem Geflügelte Frucht:<sup>4)</sup>

Kusshand des flüchtigen Jahrs,  
Ulmenblatt, abgeweht,  
Da schon zum zweiten Mal  
Das Heu in den Diemen steht.

Gegen die Gnade der Luft  
Abgewandt das Gedicht,  
Fiel in den Staub mir der Traum,  
Mit ihm fiel das Gedicht.

Fruchtlos floh Tag vor dem Tag:  
In dem Ächzen der Zeit  
Schlug mich die menschliche Tat  
Mit Unverständlichkeit.

Vergebens hat schöne Geduld  
Lange mir nachgestellt,  
Als ein missglückter Plan  
Entfiel ich der schnellen Welt.

In der Ruhe des Baums  
Wird selbst die Windsbraut stumm,  
Aber im Herzen geht  
Immer Verzweiflung um.

Da! Auf den trockenen Mund  
Haucht es als wohliger Kuss,  
Blauer tieft sich das Blau,  
Dass ich es sehen muss:

Goldene Fledermausschar,  
 Zum Schlafe zusammengedrängt,  
 Sind in die grüne Nacht  
 Ahornfrüchte gehängt.

Spannte den Bogen ein Gott  
 Der Flughaut, herrlich geschweift,  
 Der wilden Hornisse gleich  
 Von leisen Adern durchstreift?

Und entbrannt von der Lust  
 Ihres Zusammenseins,  
 Seh ich der Nüsse Rund  
 In grünem Kragenbund -  
 Alle Frucht eins.

Schwanger von jeder Saat,  
 Wallt über den Wiesen Rauch,  
 Ihm mischt der Wind mich zu,  
 Ich fliege auch.

Leichter als Wimpernhaar,  
 Wolle am Baldrian,  
 Geglückt bin ich der Welt,  
 Ihr zärtlichster Plan.

Ross ich und Reiter zugleich,  
 Kentaurengestalt,  
 Uns hebt vom Boden auf  
 Eine Seelengewalt -

Eingelassen ins Spiel  
 Und in den stillen Schwung,  
 Fühle ich kein Zuviel,  
 Keine Verminderung.

Schmelzen fühl ich das Selbst,  
 Weilen fühlt sich das All,  
 Mutter und Sohn vereint -  
 Welcher Zusammenhall!

Kehrt der Vereinzelung  
 Schweres Geschick?  
 In meinem Gebein verharret  
 Der selige Augenblick.

In the first stanza, the Poet is the recipient of a kiss, blown to him by the fleeting year. The kiss takes the form of an elm-leaf, blown to the ground by the wind. Through this image, and that of the stacked hay, is the transitoriness of physical existence evoked. The dream of kinship with Nature is offered in the shape of the leaf. However, the Poet turns his face away, indicating his alienation, and the dream is subsequently lost. The close link between dream and poem is alluded to here. This relationship is dealt with in the next chapter. The image of the fleetingness and fruitlessness of human endeavour is taken up

in the third stanza. The dream of union with Nature has proved infertile so far. Human activity makes him unable to grasp this unity, and thus he ignores the patience of Nature. Then the Poet "falls away" from the fast-moving world and enters into the stillness of the tree. It is here that the characteristic statement concerning the Poet's isolation appears. He refers to his despair, and at this point, the vacuum which he experiences as a result, is ready to be filled. With "Da!" at the beginning of stanza six, the marriage between wind and Poet is on the verge of being consummated, commencing with a breath of air, which is felt as a contented kiss upon the Poet's dry mouth. The intensity of this act is illustrated by the deepening blue, which the Poet perceives as he enters into the timeless infinity of Nature.

As he enters into union with Nature, the fruit of the maple, ancient symbols of fertility, are seen in the "green night" as a flock of bats, squeezed together in a sleeping position on a branch of the tree. This branch becomes a bow being stretched by a god. The fruit become like living beings; the membrane which constitutes their wings is interlaced with delicate veins, as are the wings of wild hornets. Their closeness causes the Poet to become inflamed with passion. The fruit have now become a single entity. Their natural function is symbolically realised, after their release, as the haze above the meadow becomes "pregnant" with the seeds. Through the action of the wind, a merging takes place between haze and Poet. As they both become one, he too, is impregnated with the winged seeds, and at the same time, he achieves a lightness which enables him to be carried off by the wind.

The marriage between Nature and Poet is represented by the union of rider and horse in the shape of a mythological centaur. In that form, Nature and Poet are still discernible as separate physical entities, although united in one body. However, the new power, brought about between the marriage of the Poet's "soul" and Nature, raises "them" off the ground. Suspended motionless, the Poet experiences total equanimity. The self is felt to melt into the Whole. He is now one with Nature.

At the end of the poem, the Poet asks if the heaviness of individuation is once more to be his fate. The blissful moment of union is, however, encapsulated in his body, in the form of the poem.

In order that the things of Nature can be reproduced in his poetry, the Poet must experience unity with them. This unity is accomplished through the Poet's reduction within the poem, to a state of substancelessness. In An einen Freund, der sich das Leben nahm, the Poet's dead friend is described as having been reduced to a scent. In Signale, the disintegration of the bodies at sea is translated into the person of the Poet on the shore, who then becomes weightless and is collected up by the wind. This state of substancelessness is also attained by him in Leiser Herbstwind and Geflügelte Frucht. Just as the vanishing of things in the previous section led to the Poet's acceptance of Nature, his own reduction here brings about his acceptance on the part of Nature.

Other examples in which the Poet is depicted as attaining a state of substancelessness appear in the final footnote.<sup>5)</sup>

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.522
- 2) SW III, p.593
- 3) SW III, p.458
- 4) SW III, p.474
- 5) Über die Stoppeln, p. 450; Untergehender Dichter, p. 446;  
Tag in Jütland, p.478; Starenschwarm im Baum, p.447;  
Der Schlafapfel, p.460; Noch nicht genug, p.604;  
Augustwolken, p.485.

3) Withdrawal into inactivity

Disappearance is sometimes depicted as a withdrawal into a state of inactivity. The disengagement from physical or external activity is characterised by the entrance into sleep. As external activity diminishes, a subsequent increase in internal activity occurs. This "inner" activity can refer to the process of procreation, on the part of Nature, or to dreaming, which can apply to either Nature or Poet.

A poem which portrays the withdrawal of Nature into sleep or "Ohnmacht" followed by procreative activity is Novemberohnmacht,<sup>1)</sup> which appears below:

Novemberfrost verdarb  
 Die kühne Gladiole;  
 Die Winteraster starb.  
 Im nassen Dunst glimmt weiss  
 Das Wassergrabenband.  
 Mein Fuss zerknirscht den Rand,  
 Als splittre er Phirole.  
 Greif ich mein Fleisch, ich greife Eis.

Der Tag versinkt. Auf Wiedersehn?  
 Nichts tönt mehr, nur ein Tropfenfall.  
 Gekrümmte Blätter wischen  
 Um mein Gesicht und mischen  
 Als Dufte sich zurück ins All,  
 Sie schwinden, sie entstehn.

Ohnmacht befällt das Kalte,  
 Mächtig wird sie im Schwachen:  
 Damit die Welt nicht alte,  
 Begegnen sich im Dämmergrau  
 Frostspannermann, Frostspannerfrau,  
 Die zeugesüchtig wachen,  
 Damit die Welt nicht alte,  
 Damit die Welt sich halte.

The destroying effect of winter is shown in the first stanza. The gladiolus and the winter-aster have died as a result of the frost of November. Referring to the frost as "Novemberfrost" serves to particularise it and make it concrete, thus emphasising its destructive role. However, the white glimmer at the edge of the ditch represents a glimmer of hope. The Poet breaks the ice at the edge of the water, and the locked in cold is suddenly released, as if it were some penetrating vapour which had been enclosed in glass phials. It enters his flesh, and he is described as becoming one with the ice - "Greif ich mein Fleisch, ich greife Eis".

The sinking of the day, which is referred to at the beginning of the second stanza, corresponds with the dying of the plants in the first stanza. The disappearance of the day becomes symbolic of the passing of the old season. With the question "Auf Wiedersehn?", the Poet asks for an assurance that he will see the day, and thus life as it was, once more. There is, however, no reply. Only the sound of dripping water can be heard. The image of the death of the past season is extended with the description of the crumbling leaves, rubbing against the face of the Poet. As they disintegrate, they exude their fragrances. The leaves are described as disappearing and then reappearing. Their disappearance parallels the passing of the previous existence. However, their reappearance is suggestive of the future rebirth of that existence, within the context of the natural renewal, and also as part of the poem. Its rebirth is dealt with in the following stanza.

In these two stanzas, a certain movement towards a state of physical reduction becomes apparent. A static situation is implied by the first three lines, in which the past tense is used. The change to the present tense in the fourth line has the effect of creating the impression of movement. The process of reduction begins, however, with the image of the Poet's foot breaking up the ice. After that, there is the picture of the crumbling leaves, which are reduced, finally, to the substancelessness of a fragrance. This reduction is reflected in the switch from the use of such harsh sounding words in the first stanza as "zerknirscht" and "splittre" to soft sounding words such as "wischen" and "mischen" in the second stanza. In fact, it is stated at the beginning of the second stanza - "Nichts tnt mehr, nur ein Tropfenfall". There is also a movement from light in the first stanza - "Im nassen Dunst glimmt weiss ..." to darkness in the next stanza - "Der Tag versinkt".

Out of the lifeless state of Nature, and catalysed by the reduction of the leaves to fragrances which vanish and then appear, arises the "Ohnmacht" in the final stanza. The first line begins with the word "Ohnmacht" in order to stress its significance. It appears without an article, suggesting something both definite and yet indefinite, something all-powerful and all-pervading. Its power is demonstrated through the image of it attacking the coldness. The paradox-

ical nature of the "Ohnmacht" is summed up by the second line - "Mächtig wird sie im Schwachen". It is as if the withdrawal of life has the effect of causing a vacuum within the realm of Nature, which can remain void for so long. The "Ohnmacht" appears as a regenerative force which stimulates the germ of the new season, having lain dormant within the impotence of the winter season. With the appearance of the "Ohnmacht", the vacuum can become filled. It infuses the winter-moths with the strength to copulate. In the poem, the whole renewal of Nature is encapsulated in their copulation. Within the word "Frostspanner" itself, the unity between the non-living and the living worlds is expressed - both worlds come together in this word. The permanence of Nature is expressed by the last two lines, in which the cyclical aspect of Nature is emphasised through the repetition - "Damit die Welt nicht alte, / Damit die Welt sich halte".

A similar effect to that which appears in Novemberohnmacht is brought about through the recurring image of the wind dropping off to sleep. In Klage ohne Trauer,<sup>2)</sup> the wind "falls asleep", and this act is followed by the poplar's releasing of its seed. In Die Hornisse,<sup>3)</sup> the wind is overcome by the narcotic effect of August - "In die Augustnarkose ist die Luft versunken". Several images suggesting fertility follow, e.g. "Aus dem Euter, stockt die Milch geronnen", and "Tomate glänzt wie Brust der Kybele". It is the sleeping of the world in Merlin<sup>4)</sup> which appears to bring about growth in the plants and the flourishing of the egg within the womb of the female cuckoo:

Die Welt schläft ein. Wie grüne Hand  
Streckt aus dem Graben sich  
Der Fieberklee, der Knöterich  
Aus Schotter und aus Sand.

Dem Kuckucksweibchen ist das Ei  
Im federleichten Schoss gediehn.

The dream is often portrayed as a consequence of the withdrawal into sleep in Lehmann's poetry. In Die Schläferin,<sup>5)</sup> the dream of the sleeping earth is depicted:

Weiden Schafe dort im Winde?  
Raucht des Schnees ergraute Rinde?  
Eis hält Weidenbusch umklammert,  
Wind stösst sich am Pfahl und jammert.

Als der Held die Schöne suchte,  
 Sah er durch das dunkle Mieder  
 Ihre Glieder strahlen, durch die Glieder  
 In den Knochen helles Mark.

Legt der Wind sich, abzukühlen  
 Seine Wunde, unterdessen  
 Höre ich die Erde wühlen,  
 Tief im Schläfe, traumbesessen:

Regt die Schläferin den Fuss,  
 Zuckt erstarrter Carabus,  
 Goldne Schnalle ihres Schuhs.  
 Regt die Schläferin die Hand,  
 Dass der Steinwall beben muss:  
 Moschusblatt hüpfte aus dem Sand,  
 In die Zweige fliegt der Traum,  
 Zager Weidenblütenflaum.

Wird die Überraschte zürnen?  
 Reisst Dianas Meute schon?  
 Flich die Grausame, die Zarte!  
 Bleibe! Ihr Geschöpf, ihr Sohn.

A scene depicting activity is presented at the beginning of the poem. This activity centres around the wind, whose movement becomes increasingly violent by the end of the first stanza. In the second stanza, there is a sudden switch to Greek legend. Here, the story about the observation by Actæon of the goddess Diana at her toilet is evoked. There is a return to the theme of Nature in the third stanza. Now the wind is described as abating in order to "cool its wounds". With the dropping of the wind, the Poet can hear the tossing about of a "dream-possessed" earth.

The dream manifests itself in the third stanza as "die Schläferin". The movement of the stiffened carabus-beetle indicates the stirring of her foot. The movement of her hand causes the stone rampart to quake. Then, as the wind begins to blow once more, the musk-leaf "hops" from the ground, and the dream can no longer sustain itself. It is described as flying into the branches, nothing but a faint-hearted ball of willow-fluff.

In the third stanza, the figure of Diana and Nature have become one during the break in the activity of the wind. The Poet becomes part of this dream as the mortal Actæon, and for a brief moment, he can view Nature in all of its radiant beauty. The Poet is able, thus, to become one with Nature on the level of the Greek legend within the dream. With the disappearance of the dream, this unity too vanishes.

The cessation of unity is represented by the ripping to pieces of the mortal by Diana's pack of hounds. However, from this union springs the poem to record the event. Its relationship to the union is alluded to in the final line - "Bleibe! Ihr Geschöpf, ihr Sohn."

Another poem which deals with the idea of the dream in a similar fashion is Leben vor der Sonnenwende,<sup>6)</sup> the third stanza of which is reproduced below:

Saft des Schöllkrauts quillt orangen,  
Heilsam kranken Fingers Schwäre.  
Aus dem Schlafe steigt der Traumgeist,  
Und Gewissheit füllt die Leere.

A striking similarity with the poem Novemberohnmacht presents itself here. In that poem, the "Ohnmacht" emerges from the impotence of the winter landscape, filling the vacuum caused by winter through its triggering the process of renewal. Here, out of the sleep state, arises the "dream-spirit", causing the vacuum of uncertainty to be filled with certainty.

The withdrawal of the Poet into a state of sleep and his subsequent entrance into the dream appear in several of Lehmann's poems. Through the dream, he is then able to attain the sought after unity with Nature. Jochen Jung refers to the dream as "der zentrale Ort der Begegnung"<sup>7)</sup> between Man and Nature in Lehmann's works. It was discussed in the previous section how the Poet, at the point of attaining union, becomes weightless and flies through the air. This sensation of weightlessness is also experienced by the Poet during the period in which he is dreaming. A poem in which the Poet's entry into the dream and his subsequent sensation of weightlessness is described is Über die Stoppeln:<sup>8)</sup>

Die Eiche spielt wie ein Dudelsack,  
Vom Sturm der jungen Stare geschwellt.  
Huflattich schlängelt den weissen Hals,  
Wenn Wind über seinen Rücken wellt.

Die Iris plattet die längliche Frucht  
Wie die Eidechse sparsamer Glut,  
Als grüne Hode schwankt sie und schwillt  
Von schlafendem Zeugungsmut.

Zwölf Rebhühner flogen, als Flüge der Lehm -  
Ich bin auf ihrem Nacken geritten.  
Die Stoppeln pfeifen, es pudert der Staub,  
Kamille duftet zerschnitten.

Ich wanderte in die Wesen aus,  
 Sie litten mich traumeslang.  
 Dann riegelten sie das Ängstliche Haus.  
 Wie Zikadenschaum  
 Vertrocknet der Traum -  
 Er dauert nur im Gesang.

The unity of Nature is suggested in the first stanza with the image of the "storm" of singing starlings in the oak-tree, and of the colts-foot, writhing in the wind. In the second stanza, the iris with its oblong fruit is portrayed. It is described as being in a state of "schlafendem Zeugungsmut". The suggestion is made that within the fruit lies latent the germ of a new existence, that is the seed of the plant and the dream, which is to be experienced by the Poet. In fact, the sleeping state of the fruit extends to the Poet, who, in the following stanza, enters into the dream.

In the state of dream, he becomes light, and is carried up by twelve partridges. As if to celebrate his new unity with Nature, the stubbles "whistle", the dust turns to powder, and the cut up carnations exude their fragrances. All of these images - stubble, dust, cut up flowers, suggest transitoriness, in this case, the transitoriness of the dream which the Poet experiences. The Poet attains substancelessness, and at the same time, experiences complete oneness with the birds, entering into their being. The merging with the birds in this poem is to be compared with the uniting of the Poet with the seeds in Geflügelte Frucht. However, this unity will last only for the duration of the dream itself. Like the foam covering the cikada larvae, the dream, too, must evaporate. The dream of unity will endure only in the poem - "Er dauert nur im Gesang".

To sum up, another means of effecting the disappearance of the things in the world of Nature is through the withdrawal into a state of inactivity. This state is characterised by sleeping. A consequence of the disengagement from external activity is the commencement of an inner activity. It is as if the physical withdrawal effects the creation of a vacuum, which in turn demands further activity. In the case of Novemberohnmacht, this activity refers to the descending upon the winter landscape of the "Ohnmacht", which catalyses the renewal. Further examples are given with Klage ohne Trauer, Die Hornisse, Merlin.

In the case of Die Schläferin, Leben vor der Sonnenwende, Über die Stoppeln, the inner activity refers to the arising of the dream. Through the dream, the Poet himself can achieve a state of momentary oneness with Nature, and at the same time, he experiences the characteristic sensation of weightlessness which accompanies the attainment of unity.

Other examples of poems in which the dream assumes a central role are included in the final footnote.<sup>9)</sup>

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.530
- 2) SW III, p.603
- 3) SW III, p.585
- 4) SW III, p.472
- 5) SW III, p.531
- 6) SW III, p.471
- 7) Mythos und Utopie, p.55
- 8) SW III, p.450
- 9) Traumleib der Wärme, p.433; Starenschwarm im Baum, p.447; Der Schlafapfel, p.460.

4) Reduction into the genetic code

The disappearance of the thing is sometimes brought about through the depicting of it reducing into its genetic code. Within the genetic code, the germ to the new existence lies dormant. Through his use of the seed as a symbol denoting perpetuation, Lehmann is able to bring about the translation of the transitoriness of the individual thing's physical existence into the permanence of the natural order.

A poem, the them of which is the reduction into the genetic code through the use of the seed image is Schnelle Oktoberdämmerung:<sup>1)</sup>

Eilig geht die Dämmerung mit mir den verglommenen Weg entlang.  
 Dompfaß knistert mit dem Schnabel, morgen glückt vielleicht Gesang.  
 Wie die Dämmerung sich sputet! Ruhig duftet Hopfenblüte,  
 Ohne Sorge trägt Resede ihre Saat in grüner Tüte.  
 Sei nicht ängstlich, du bist nicht allein. Über dir hörst du den  
 Wind die welken Weidenblätter brechen,  
 Unter dir im Erdendunkel mit sich selbst die Spitzmaus sprechen.

The passing of physical things is alluded to in the title. Twilight denotes the end of the day. It can also refer to the end of a lifetime, or of an era, for example "Götterdämmerung". In this case, it is linked with the month of October, at which time many of the living things in Nature appear to die. The adverb "schnelle" is used to underscore the fleetingness of twilight and of physical existence. It is also used to create the impression of movement, which is continued in the first line with the word "Eilig". Here, the Poet becomes part of this movement with the image of the twilight and the Poet travelling the same "dying" path.

In the second line, the future is evoked with the picture of the bullfinch. Just as the evening will turn into day, so there is the possibility that his crackling will become song.

The tempo accelerates with the increasing darkness in the following line. At the end of the sentence comes the climax, indicated by the presence of an exclamation mark. The movement comes to a sudden halt here, with the high-point followed by the word "Ruhig". The hops blossoms are described as exuding their fragrances. Hops is a tranquiliser, and the scene which is evoked is one of tranquility and timelessness. This scene is continued into the next line with "Ohne Sorge". Then, with the image of the seed-bearing mignonette, the fleetingness

of existence becomes translated into the permanence of the perpetua-  
tive principle or genetic code encapsulated in the seed.

The permanence suggested by the image of the seed is reflected  
in the form of the poem. It is evoked through the lack of movement  
which becomes apparent from the centre of the poem until its conclu-  
sion. In the final stanza, the linear movement, which was suggested  
at the beginning of the poem with the use of the verb "entlanggehen"  
is transformed into space with the use of the prepositions "über" and  
"unter". The central position of the seed image serves to endow the  
poem with a balance. Thus can it be said to mirror the completeness  
and unity of Nature.

Another poem which depicts a reduction into the principle of re-  
generation is Sommerrausch.<sup>2)</sup> In this case, the genetic code is housed  
within the grains of pollen which hover in the summer-air:

Ein goldner Staub der Pollenrauch:  
Wie leise schwebt die Zeugungsgier!  
Verschwenderischer Übermut,  
Brüllt sie als Donner aus dem Stier.

Ein Hauch begegnet einem Hauch:  
Es ist genug! Es ist geschehen.  
Die Narbe schwankt, die Narbe fällt,  
Vor Zeus muss Semele vergehen.

Der Gott entsinnt sich seiner Frucht:  
Da sie kein Ungestüm mehr drängt,  
Ein grünes Feuer, abgekühlt,  
Schwillt runde Beere, blattverhängt.

Der Sommer stürzt, die Sense blitzt;  
Duftschwaden, sinken Gras und Klee.  
Durch ihre Träume fährt der Gott,  
Verbrennt noch einmal Semele.

The image of pollen appears right at the beginning of the poem. There  
is, however, no mention of the plants which have released it. The pol-  
len grains have become abstracted from their source, and are represented  
as existing on their own. They form "smoke" and are described as a  
golden dust. These images serve to emphasise the near substanceless-  
ness of the pollen. In the second line, the substance of the grains  
disappears altogether. They become abstracted completely from their  
physical being, depicted as "die Zeugungsgier" or reproductive force.  
The power which they possess is emphasised, and also endowed with a  
sense of urgency, through the image of the bull, expelling them through

its nostrils as thunderous roaring.

In the second stanza, the fertilisation of the plants is described as the coming together of breath with breath. The creation and perpetuation of life is suggested through the use of the word "breath". After the fertilisation is complete, the stigma sways and falls. With this, the Poet evokes the legend of Zeus and Semele. The passing of the stigma becomes synonymous with the destruction of Semele by Zeus through the deception of the jealous Hera. Yet, just as Zeus saved the unborn son, Dionysus, so he bestows his protection upon the seed of the plant. Here, a link with the title of the poem can be established. Robert Graves, in his book The Greek Myths<sup>3)</sup> says: "One of his titles (Dionysus) was Dendrites, "tree-youth", and the Spring Festival, when the trees suddenly burst into leaf and the whole world is intoxicated with desire, celebrated his emancipation". The fertilising pollen ("die Zeugungsgier! / Verschwenderischer Übermut") in the first stanza symbolise this intoxication of the natural world. The protecting and vitalising force of the god is described as a green fire, which, when cooled down, actualises in the swelling, round berry, hanging from a leaf.

Just as the stigma must fall, so must the summer pass on. With the end of the season, grass and clover fall to the scythe, releasing swaths of fragrances. Just as the poem begins with substanceless "pollen-smoke", so it ends with the similar image of substanceless swaths of scents. Like the pollen, imbued with the life-principle, they too are infused with the vitalising force of the god Zeus - "Durch ihre Träume fährt der Gott". Here, the perpetuating inner activity of the dream, discussed in the previous section is evoked. Also, in this poem, as in Über die Stoppeln, a connection is established between the process of dreaming and that of procreation. Once more will Semele be consumed by lightening, yet once more will the seed regenerate and the natural cycle perpetuate itself.

Things are often reduced by Lehmann to the genetic code or regenerative concept. This reduction can be brought about through the use of the image of the seed or that of pollen grains. Within the seed and the pollen lies the germ to the new existence. Through these images, the transitoriness of physical existence becomes translated into the

permanence of the Nature-cycle. This translation takes place in Schnelle Oktoberdämmerung as the transitoriness of existence, characterised by the disappearance of the day, gives way to permanence represented by the seed of the mignonette. In the poem Sommerrausch, permanence is achieved through the image depicting the fertilising of the plants by the pollen grains. The reproductive process is extended to the whole of existence as a consequence of the evocation of the legend of Zeus and Semele.

Other poems which depict the reduction into the genetic code in a similar fashion to the two poems just dealt with appear as the final footnote.<sup>4)</sup>

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.473
- 2) SW III, p.566
- 3) Robert Graves: The Greek Myths, Volumes 1 & 2, Penguin Books, p.107.
- 4) Abschied, p.465; An eine Eichel, p.506; Der Baldgreis, p.503; Sehnsucht zu bleiben, p.670; Gentige, p.675; Abgeblühter Löwenzahn, p.551; Zu Zweien, p.637; Südliche Stunde, p.455; Ruhm des Daseins, p.624; Die Elster, p.452; Windiger Februar, p.453.

## CHAPTER TWO: The Inclusion of the Thing into the Poem

In this chapter, it is my intention to discuss the means by which Lehmann effects the inclusion of things into his poetry. In the previous chapter, the various techniques by which he brought about the disappearance of things were investigated. It was shown how, through their disappearance, the things were able to attain, in the Poet's eyes, meaning and permanence within the framework of the Nature cycle. It was also seen how the Poet himself, upon reduction to a state of substancelessness, could achieve a momentary unity within the realm of Nature.

Lehmann believes that, just as the phenomena can live again and again within the framework of Nature, so too can they live once more within his poetry. He expresses this opinion in his theoretical essay Der Planet:

Es kommt darauf an, das Gelebte, das Geträumte im Wort zu bewahren, wie man die Zikade so auffangen möchte, dass sie in der hohlen Hand weiter singe. 1)

Through the creative power of the word, the things can further perpetuate their existence:

Da unter den Händen des wirklichen Dichters das Wort Fleisch wird, kann auch das Wort wieder zeugen. 2)

### 1) The wish of the things for inclusion into the poem

As was stated in the introduction, it is the Poet's intention to recreate things within his art. Lehmann believes that because the phenomena do not possess an intellect, as individuals they must look to the Poet to provide them with the permanence which they require. Lehmann in fact states: "Das Dasein verlangt dem Dichter seine Gedichte ab".<sup>3)</sup> Existence demands of the Poet that he produce poetry in order to endow it with the permanence it has lost through human conceptualisation. A poignant image of the things supplicating the Poet in the face of impending transitoriness occurs in the poem Wohltat der Klage:<sup>4)</sup>

Iris stirbt, schwärmt Starenbrut.  
Walnuss spielt mit grünen Ballen.  
In die Wangen steigt das Blut  
Vor gewölbten Schattmorellen.

Mähmaschinenreiter reitet,  
Grüßerschwaden auszuspeien;  
Wiese sinkt in grauen Reihen,  
Auf das Antlitz hingebreit.

Schimmernd sprengt die Zeit vorbei,  
Hurtiger als Reiterei;  
Zarte Leiche Rosenblatt,  
Gelbe Iris sterbemat.

Wie sich alle Schatten längen  
Und die flüggen Stare klirren,  
Fühl ich Glück und Glanz der Tage  
Flehend an die Brust mir drängen:

"Ach! Vergänglich auf der Lauer,  
Lass uns nicht im Nichts verschwirren.  
Gib die Wohltat deiner Klage,  
Und dein Vers sei unsere Dauer."

The transitoriness of physical things is in evidence in the first four stanzas of the poem. In the first stanza, the iris is described as dying, and the starlings are swarming prior to their autumn migration. The walnut has dropped its fruit and the mature morellos have taken on a dark-red coloration. The meadows are depicted as falling to the lawn-mower in the next stanza. The allusion to "grass-swaths" being mown down stresses the enormity of the event. It also suggests the relentlessness of the passage of time. This relentless passing of time is taken up again in the third stanza with the image of time charging past as a brigade of cavalry. The image of cavalry charging serves to evoke visions of death and destruction. A direct reference to death is made in the second half of the third stanza with the "tender body" of the rose-leaf and the repeated image of the dead iris. It is as if it is the intention of Lehmann to remind the reader of the link between the passage of time and death.

In these first three stanzas, a certain progression can be detected, that is, from that which is living, to that which has died, i.e. from the mature morellos, to the mown grass which will soon die, to the "corpse" of the rose-petal, which joins the dying iris. A circle is thus described, which is closed when the image of the iris appears once more. With the completing of the circle, a "jump" into the abstract occurs, which is already prepared for by the representation of time at the beginning of the stanza. In the fourth stanza, the passing of things is summarised in abstract terms - "Wie sich alle Schatten

längen". Transitoriness is now represented in terms of growing shadows with the inevitability of death being equated with the approach of night. The abrupt chattering of the starlings evokes an ominous atmosphere. The image of lengthening shadows contrasts sharply with that of the "Glück und Glanz der Tage", which suggests the continuance of life. In the last stanza, the phenomena are personified. They express their wish to escape the oblivion which they would experience within the "Nichts", with their plea to the Poet to bestow upon them the immortality that his poetry can provide - "Und dein Vers sei unsere Dauer".

The wish for inclusion into poetry on the part of the things sometimes manifests itself, not in supplication as in Wohltat der Klage, but in an explicit desire for unity with the Poet. It was stated in the preceding chapter that a close relationship between Poet and Nature is necessary in order that the things can be recreated in the poem. The desire of Nature for this closeness is expressed in the poem Sonnenwende:<sup>5)</sup>

In zarte Schlinge fasst den Fuss,  
Den staubigen, das Zittergras.  
Mir deutet die Wasserprimel blass  
Von langen Tages langen Kuss.

Da schon die Rosenkrone fiel,  
Die Ulmennuss, der Ahornstiel,  
Nimmt sie ein Wind sich noch zum Spiel  
Auf ihren letzten Wegen.  
Mit Mottenleib und Fliegenrest  
Hält sie der Spinnenfaden fest.  
Die Hitze kocht den Spinnenstrick  
Im überhellen Mittagslicht  
So hell, dass mir das Auge bricht;  
Er schlingt sich auch um mein Genick,  
So will ich mich nicht regen.

Mein Haar, dem Wind ein Zeitvertreib,  
Mit Rosenkrone, Fliegenleib,  
Mit Ulmennuss und Ahornstiel  
Und mit dem Grashalm, schnell genäht,  
Vom Spinnenfaden eingenäht,  
Kann ich mich nicht mehr regen -  
Mit allem, was dem Staub verfiel  
Und dem die Schönheit nichts genützt,  
Von nichts als vom Gedicht geschützt  
Auf allen meinen Wegen.

In the first line, Nature extends physical contact to the Poet through the clasping of his foot by the tendril of the quaking-grass. This act is represented as a conscious and loving one on the part of Nature.

The initial contact brings about an awareness within the Poet of Nature's readiness, if not intention, to unite with him. The overwhelming aspect of Nature is emphasised by the image of the water-primrose, turned pale "Von langen Tages langem Kuss". The pace quickens in the second stanza. Here, the activity of the wind is anthropomorphised. As its playthings, rose-corolla, elm-nut, and the leaf-stalk of the maple are taken on their last journey. This journey ends abruptly when they are halted by a spider's web. Here, they are held fast, along with the body of a moth and the remains of a fly. In the heat, the thread, which secures these fragments of Nature, is transformed into a strong cord. Through this cord, the bright midday-light refracts into the eye of the Poet. The web has become endowed with a consciousness of its own. Around his neck the cord coils itself. The Poet's readiness and desire for union with Nature is expressed by "So will ich mich nicht regen".

The act of union takes place in the third stanza. The Poet's hair is the plaything of the wind. It forms a unity with the debris caught in the spider-web, including, now, a freshly-mown blade of grass. The force which carries this out is the wind. It playfully stitches the debris into the Poet's hair using the spider's thread. He is now completely overpowered. This is expressed by "Kann ich mich nicht mehr regen". Then, this moment of unity with Nature falls away, like the dead things in the web, to dust. The things, and the Poet's unity with them are, however, preserved in the poem.

Images depicting Nature making contact with the Poet occur in several of Lehmann's poems. In Geflügelte Frucht, it was seen how the fallen elm-leaf became the "Kusshand des flüchtigen Jahrs", and the soft breeze "haucht ... als wohliger Kuss". A list of poems in which similar images appear is to be found in the final footnote.<sup>6)</sup>

The things are depicted in Lehmann's poetry as looking to the Poet to provide them with the permanence which they are unable to attain as physical entities. In Wohltat der Klage, the passing phenomena appear to plead with the Poet to rescue them from oblivion. In Sonnenwende and in Geflügelte Frucht, the things are portrayed as making a physical contact with the Poet. Within both of these poems,

this contact leads to unity between Nature and Poet. As a result of this momentary unity, the things can live once more as part of the poem.

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.135
- 2) SW III, p.115
- 3) SW III, p.162
- 4) SW III, p.581
- 5) SW III, p.457
- 6) Grube mitten im Acker, p.504; An eine Eichel, p.506; Der Schlafapfel, p.460; An einen früheren Dichter, p.477; Orpheus, p.480; Gespräch mit der Luft, p.674; Die Eine, p.678; Dionysos, p.635.

2) The relationship between poem or song and Nature

In Lehmann's work, the suggestion is continually made that there exists an inherently close relationship between poetry or song and Nature. Jochen Jung in his Mythos und Utopie explains the connotation which Lehmann gives to the word "rhyme", which is found in his poem Der Reim:<sup>1)</sup>

Der Reim als sprachliches Ereignis bedeutet, nämlich ein ebenso augenwie ohrenfälliges, vor allem aber geistiges Korrelat zu der Verschwisterung der Dinge untereinander, ein Signum für den sie umgreifenden Sinn. 2)

Thus, within the song or poem, the harmony and meaning of existence is reflected. According to Lehmann, the various phenomena belong to the "great song" of Nature, as in the poem Abschied,<sup>3)</sup> where the gooseberries are seen as "Weiss gehdert, ... / Zeile im grossen Gesang". In Herbstgesang der Stare,<sup>4)</sup> the phenomena are depicted as the components of an orchestra:

Schnabel wird Flageolett;  
Oder fingert Wind die Blätter,  
Ist die Pappel sein Spinett?

The birds or insects sometimes appear as choirs, as, for example in Fassung:<sup>5)</sup>

Da der Chor der Mücken  
Siedend mich umraucht.

Through song, the phenomena of Nature are able to demonstrate their harmony. It was stated in the previous chapter, that through the word "Sommersang", Lehmann reflected the hedge-sparrow's unity with summer and hence with the rest of Nature in Grasmücke. Similarly in Daphne,<sup>6)</sup> the song of the hedge-sparrow is depicted as celebrating the natural renewal:

Ein menschenscheuer Elf, Grasmücke,  
Aus grünem Zelt in grünes Zelt.  
Indes die gleiche Strophe schallte,  
Froh der gewissen Wiederkehr,  
Wie viele Leben, die sich wagten,  
Wie viele Schüsse wurden schwer!

Just as the sounds of the phenomena will mirror the harmony of

Nature, so will the lack of song reflect any temporary loss of harmony that appears to occur. In Heile Welt,<sup>7)</sup> the unhappy state of the world is mirrored by the broken song of the hammer:

Erschrockene Ammer flog vorbei,  
 Als sähe sie Morgan le Fay -  
 Die Welt brach wie ihr Lied entzwei,  
 Sie sang nicht aus.

This situation is only temporary, however, and in the final stanza, the hammer's song, which is now unbroken, reflects a world which has been restored:

Die Ammer singt ihr Lied zu Ende,  
 Die Welt bleibt heil.

In Deutsche Zeit 1947,<sup>8)</sup> the loss of the poem and of the song is used to portray the devastation suffered by Man and Nature alike in Germany at the end of the War:

Blechdose rostet, Baumstumpf schreit.  
 Der Wind greint. Jammert ihn die Zeit?  
 Spitz das Gesicht, der Magen leer,  
 Den Krähen selbst kein Abfall mehr.

Verlangt nach Lust der dürre Leib,  
 Für Brot verkauft sich Mann und Weib.  
 Ich lache nicht, ich weine nichts,  
 Zu Ende geht das Weltgedicht.

Da seine Strophe sich verlor,  
 Die letzte, dem ertaubten Ohr,  
 Hat sich die Erde aufgemacht,  
 Aus Winterohnmacht spät erwacht.

Zwar schlug das Beil die Hügel kahl,  
 Versuch, versuch es noch einmal.  
 Sie mischt und siebt mit weiser Hand:  
 In Wangenglut entbrannt der Hang,  
 Zu Anemone wird der Sand.

Sie eilen, grämlichen Gesichts.  
 Es blüht vorbei. Es ist ein Nichts.  
 Missglückter Zauber? Er gelang.  
 Ich bin genährt. Ich hör Gesang.

The importance of the sounds of the various phenomena of Nature as an indicator to Nature's condition is apparent in the first two lines of the poem - "Baumstumpf schreit. / Der Wind greint. Jammert ihn die Zeit?" The enormity of the situation is expressed by the statement that even the crows can no longer find refuse to eat, in order to sustain themselves. The privation suffered by Man is alluded to in the

following stanza, with the words "Für Brot verkauft sich Mann und Weib". The pitiful state of the world is reflected in the termination of the "world-poem". The closeness of the world to poetry is expressed through Lehmann's coining of this word. In the third stanza, he says that the poem has lost its "strophe", to which the human ear remains deaf.

Then, out of the impotent state of winter, the earth awakens and begins to recover. With the portrayal of renewal here, a similar process presents itself to that in Novemberohnmacht. The use of the word "aufmachen" suggests an abrupt movement, a bursting forth of life, not unlike the sudden filling of the emptiness which is depicted in the poem Novemberohnmacht. The process of renewal is shown through personification in the fourth stanza:

Sie mischt und siebt mit weiser Hand:  
In Wangenglut entbrennt der Hang,  
Zu Anemone wird der Sand.

In the final stanza, the attempt at renewal is described as having been successful. Here, the notion of the "Nichts" as a force promoting rejuvenation is evoked. This topic is discussed in the following chapter. Coinciding with the successful recovery by Nature, comes the song. From the song, the Poet is able to derive succour for himself - "Ich bin genährt. / Ich hör Gesang". This can be compared with the picture of the Poet receiving the message calling for self-acceptance from the hedge-sparrow in Grasmücke.

The harmony and meaning of existence is reflected in the sounds emanating from Nature. The Poet uses the song or poem as an indicator of this harmony, as in Grasmücke, where the hedge-sparrow's "Sommer-sang" mirrors the harmony of its existence with the rest of Nature. In Daphne, the hedge-sparrow's song celebrates the natural renewal. The unhappy state of Nature is also reflected in the song or poem, as in Heile Welt, where the song of the hammer appears broken at the start of the poem. Its unbroken song at the end reflects a world made whole again. In Deutsche Zeit 1947, the despoliation of the land is reflected in the termination of the "Weltgedicht". However, this situation is subsequently reversed with the commencement of the spring renewal, and at the same time, the Poet hears the reappearance of song.

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Footnotes

1)

Der Reim

Nicht fähig mehr, die ungereimte Welt zu tragen -  
 Er stört euch nur, ich weiss es - muss der Reim verzagen.  
 Doch kann ich es nicht anders sagen,  
 Als dass zu Füssen mir  
 Die Fördewelle freudig schluchzt,  
 Der Kuckuck ihr,  
 Oboenmund, Antwort geguchzt.

SW III, p.6882) Jochen Jung: Mythos und Utopie, p.873) SW III, p.4654) SW III, p.5725) SW III, p.4316) SW III, p.5787) SW III, p.5408) SW III, p.579

3) The poem as the seed to a new existence

The idea of the seed encapsulating the permanence of Nature was suggested in the previous chapter, where the reduction to the plant, and hence existence itself, to the genetic code or regenerative concept was discussed. In Lehmann's poetry, the seed is often made synonymous with the poem itself. In his essay Gedicht als Tatsache, Lehmann says: "In Gedichten erneut sich der Daseinsgrund", <sup>1)</sup> and in Kunst des Gedichtes, he states: "Ein gelungenes Gedicht ist ein Stück Dasein, dessen sich Sprache bemächtigt hat". <sup>2)</sup> However, just as the seed encapsulates existence, so too, according to Lehmann, does the poem.

A poem in which the intrinsic relationship between seed and poem is illustrated in Dunkelnde Buchenblätter. <sup>3)</sup> In this poem, the Poet bestows upon the writing of poetry the propagating function of the seed:

Da sie bezaubert zaubernd hingen,  
 Hat sie der Südwind schnelle verführt,  
 Von ihrer Schönheit angerührt.  
 Als sie in seinem Arm vergingen,  
 Erscholl ein leises Wehgeschrei:  
 Ist unsre Jugend schon vorbei?

Huflattich stiebt im Windestanz,  
 Zerrissen liegt ein Jungfernkranz.  
 Wie dunkel jetzt die Blätter hangen!  
 Sie führen durch das erste Bangen.  
 Gelassen hebt die Anemone  
 Die vielgespitzte Früchtekrone.  
 Vergängnis schreckt? Lass dich vernichten.  
 Die Söhne werden weiter dichten.

The poem begins with the image of the suspended beech-leaves, "enchanted" by the wind from the south. The use of the words "bezaubert zaubernd" endows the scene with a magical quality. They serve to emphasise the apparent attraction that the wind and leaves have for each other. They also serve to underscore the inexorableness of the passing of the leaves through the action of the wind. Their imminent passing is depicted as being lamented by the leaves themselves - "Ist unsre Jugend schon vorbei?"

The image of union between wind and leaves extends into the second stanza. Here, the colt'sfoot appears as a shredded bridal-wreath, indicative of the intensity of their "marriage". The passing of the leaves, and the violence with which it is brought about, are evoked

once more in the next two lines. It is in these lines that the climax occurs. The tension which has been building up dissipates, however, in the following line with the word "Gelassen". The effect which is seen here can be compared with that accompanying the appearance of the word "Ruhig" in the poem Schnelle Oktoberdämmerung. The frenetic and destructive "marriage" between the wind and leaves translates into the tranquility of the fruit-bearing anemone, its fruit portrayed as a consequence of the union.

Thus, transitoriness transforms here into permanence. With the destruction of the physical things, the seeds remain in the form of poetry, to further perpetuate their being - "Die Söhne werden weiter dichten".

Similarly, in Südliche Stunde,<sup>4)</sup> it is the image of the fruit which is equated with poetry. This poem appears below:

Käfer fielen mir ins Haar,  
Wasser lief und Fliege blitzte,  
Als mich schon der Abschied ritzte  
Und das Weinen nahe war.

Klingt es auf den Glasbergstufen  
Von des Zauberpferdes Hufen?  
Wiedehopf und Kuckuck rufen!  
Stösst der Knabe in sein Horn,  
Wächst aus Steinen Wein und Korn.

Mispel blühte; Mispel rundet  
Sich vor meinem Blick nicht mehr.  
Sehnsuchtsvoll bin ich verwundet,  
Glaube keine Wiederkehr,

Welke hin mit der Kamille,  
Die ein mühseliger Wille  
Von geknicktem Stengel hebt,  
Dass sie zehenspitzig schwebt -

Doch als hätte Leib an Leibe  
Zärtlich schenkend sich gebreitet,  
Mich die südlich jühe Stunde  
Narbengleich zu Frucht erweitert,  
Wuchs ich auf zu ihrer Bleibe,  
Und sie springt aus meinem Munde:

Immer wieder fallen Käfer  
Auch in das ergraute Haar,  
Immer wieder hört der Schläfer  
Wiedehopf und Kuckuck rufen  
Und des Knaben Wunderhorn  
Alles ist, was einmal war.  
Auf dem Pferd mit goldnen Hufen  
Reite ich die Glasbergstufen -  
Kuckuck und sein Küster rufen!  
Und das Lied beginnt von vorn.

An atmosphere of finality is suggested in the first stanza with the events - the beetles dropping into the Poet's hair, the water running its course, the fly glistening - being depicted in the past tense. The Poet is described as being on the verge of weeping as the time of departure draws nearer. This "departure" is ambiguous, as it refers both to the Poet's own departure from the South, and also to the departure of many of the living things of Nature as the winter season approaches. The calling of the hoopoe and of the cuckoo in the second stanza evoke Brentano's collection of folk-songs, Des Knaben Wunderhorn. The Poet sees in these songs the perpetuation of the fullness of Nature through the image of the horn of plenty. The notion, which was discussed in the previous section, that is, of the song coinciding with renewal, is evoked here. Disillusion, however, replaces this phantasy in the following stanza as the theme of departure presents itself once more. The Poet's despondency is now such that he no longer believes in the possibility of a return - "Glaube keine Wiederkehr". The ambiguity is continued here, with the "return" referring once more to the Poet's return to the South and the natural return.

At the height of disillusionment, the Poet feels himself wither like the dying chamomile. This metaphor is continued into the fifth stanza. With the passing of the plant, the fruit is released into the air in order to perpetuate its existence. Just as the flower forms its fruit, so too can the fruit of the Poet's own experience be formed. The Poet's "fruit" manifests itself as words, which "spring" from his mouth. These words appear as the sixth stanza, which echoes the beginning of the poem. However, unlike the action in the first stanza, the events are now described in the present tense. As a result, there is no longer an atmosphere of finality, but instead, one of continuity. In fact, continuity suggests itself with the word "Immer", which appears at the beginning of the first line. The repetition of this word in the third line underscores the repetitive and enduring aspect of this activity. The beetles fall "Auch in das ergraute Haar", implying that the passage of time, in human terms, does not matter, since the experience is essentially the same - "Alles ist, was einmal war". What is important is the cycle of Nature, which is evoked through the image of the seed and simulated by the cyclical quality of the poem itself.

This cyclical and hence enduring nature of the poem is expressed by the last stanza - "Und das Lied beginnt von vorn".

The Poet himself is depicted as having become part of this permanence by the end of the poem. Here, he appears, no longer as an outsider, excluded from the bounteousness of Nature. Now, he appears as part of the folk-song, and becomes the youth who rides the horse up the glass mountain and who possesses the "Wunderhorn".

The image depicting the Poet's words appearing like seeds occurs in Gespräch mit der Luft.<sup>5)</sup> Here, the emergence of his words is equated with the growth of an acorn. In this poem, the wind is described as speaking with the Poet. The first four lines appear below:

Luft streichelt gütig mein Gesicht.  
Sie spricht zu mir. Hör, was sie spricht:  
„Knapp springe dir das Wort vom Mund,  
Wie Michel wächst aus Bechergrund“.

Another example in which the close relationship between the image of the seed and the formation of poetry is illustrated is Früher Herbst,<sup>6)</sup> the last stanza of which is reproduced here:

Wie die Bocksbarthsamen fliegen -  
Schweres auch, gewesen.  
Setz dich auf die Gartentreppe,  
Es als Vers zu lesen.

Here, the notion of transformation from that which is heavy, i.e. the things which are physical and hence transitory, to that which is light, i.e. the seed of the plant and the words of the poem. Both of these latter images suggest perpetuation. The topic of transformation from heavy to light with the subsequent translation into poetry is dealt with in the following section.

In Lehmann's works, an inherent relationship exists between the seed and the poem. In Dunkelnde Buchenblätter, the image of the fruit is used to effect the transformation of transitoriness, characterised by the falling beech-leaves, into permanence. The seeds are depicted as remaining in the form of poetry. In Südliche Stunde, it is the Poet who is depicted as producing the seeds, which appear to emanate from his mouth. These seeds serve to make up the poem, which perpetuates within it the natural renewal and the Poet's return to the South

as part of the realm of Nature. A similar image occurs in Gespräch mit der Luft. In Früher Herbst, the seed of the plant at the moment of propagation translates into the words of the Poet. These words can be read as his poetry.

Other poems which portray the close relationship between the poem itself and the seed appear in the final footnote.<sup>7)</sup>

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.148
- 2) SW III, p.410
- 3) SW III, p.538
- 4) SW III, p.455
- 5) SW III, p.674
- 6) SW III, p.519
- 7) Ulmennüsse, p.561; Abgebluhter Löwenzahn, p.551; Zu Zweien, p.637; Denkmal, p.644; Kunstgriff, p.653; An eine Eichel, p.506.

4) Disappearance as a prerequisite for the things' inclusion

It was stated in the introduction, that in order for the thing to be part of Lehmann's poetry, it must first of all be made to disappear from physical reality. This paradox is expressed in the second stanza of Lehmann's poem Eroberter Tag:<sup>1)</sup>

Doch mein Haus ist das Vorüber,  
Nur das Flüchtige bleibt treu;  
Dass es immer mir gehöre,  
Feier ich es immer neu.

In each poem, this dialectic between loss and gain is apparent. As a result of the Poet's intervention, the things which have been lost, can be won back to reside within the poem. This recovery of the thing is realised in the poem Nicht ganz vorbei:<sup>2)</sup>

Läutet Schiff zu Abfahrt?  
War's Fasanenschrei?  
Klang es in den Lüften,  
Klang es schon vorbei.

Wärmend angefasste,  
Wurde Lattichblüte  
Für Mirandas Wange  
Weisse Puderquaste.

Ist die Welt geordnet,  
Klug das Holz geschichtet,  
Kann mir nichts gehören,  
Eh ich es gedichtet.

Was der Anfang fragte,  
Klang, nicht ganz vorbei.  
Läutet Schiff zu Abfahrt,  
War's Fasanenschrei?

The Poet asks in the first stanza if the sound which he perceives is the departure signal of a ship or the cry of a pheasant. The sound, however, dissipates into the air and is lost.

In the second stanza, the Poet enters the world of Shakespeare. Here, he is depicted as offering the flowers of the coltfoot as a powder-puff for the cheek of Miranda, the heroine in The Tempest. The Poet has thus become part of this tale, transformed into the figure of the shipwrecked Ferdinand, who yearns to marry the beautiful Miranda, but is prevented from doing so by her father, the magician Prospero, who is guardian of the enchanted island, where everything remains the same. Under the spell of Prospero, he is made to do menial work. In

the third stanza, reference is made to Ferdinand's task of stacking wood. The layers of logs, however, become the ordered world of the Poet, which will belong to him after it becomes part of the poetry. In the play, the scene in which the stacking of the logs is depicted, signals the coming together of the hero and heroine and the impending acceptance of Ferdinand by Prospero.

Prospero's acceptance of Ferdinand indicates Nature's acceptance of the Poet. Hence, the sounds mentioned at the beginning of the poem can now belong to his poetry. They are described as being "nicht ganz vorbei". The ambivalence expressed in the first stanza still applies, that is, there is still doubt as to whether the sound is that of a ship or of a pheasant, demonstrating the faithfulness of the record.

The notion of the poem as a haven for things after their departure from physical reality is also expressed in Perdita,<sup>3)</sup> in which Shakespeare's immortal works are evoked once more. Here, the creatures are portrayed as being unworried by transitoriness, because they reside in Shakespeare's poetry:

Die Wesen wandeln  
Mit ihrem Schritte.  
Die Vergänglichkeit  
Bekümmert sie nicht,  
Denn ihr Zuhause  
Ist Shakespeares Gedicht.

In Sonnenwende, it was seen how the Poet's experience of momentary union with Nature and Nature's "dead" - "Rosenkrone", "Fliegenleib", "Ulmennuss", "Ahornstiel", "Grashalm, schnell gemäht", are given protection by the poem:

Mit allem, was dem Staub verfiel  
Und dem die Schönheit nichts genützt,  
Von nichts als vom Gedicht beschützt  
Auf allen meinen Wegen.

And in Das goldne Vlies,<sup>4)</sup> will everything, after it has disappeared, be recaptured in the Poet's verse:

Alles schwand, kaum aufgetaucht -  
Deinen Stift hab ich gebraucht,  
Eh Vergessen sie verstieß,  
Troll, Lavendel, goldnes Vlies.

The things will also become an integral part of the poem after their physical reduction. This achievement is depicted in the second stanza of Haus der Düfte,<sup>5)</sup> which appears below:

Nach des ersten Grases Schnitte  
 Duldet Wiese meine Tritte.  
 Vers wie Rosenduft vergangen,  
 Wär gestillt das Grundverlangen?  
 Da sich Gras und Klee verhauchen,  
 Sterbedüfte einzufangen.

The fields are depicted as tolerating the footsteps of the Poet, as if awaiting expectantly the inclusion of the mown grass into his poetry. The affinity of the scent of the rose with poetry is expressed in the third line. The cut grass and clover also exude their fragrances. The "Sterbedüfte" are then captured by the Poet to become part of his verse. The poem is thus the "house" of the title, in which the fragrances can "reside".

The poem Abgeblühter Löwenzahn<sup>6)</sup> combines the inclusion into poetry of the thing after its physical reduction, with the notion of the seed and the poem as one entity:

Verwandle dich und werde leicht,  
 Zerfasere zu Samenhaar!  
 Gemindert schwebt, ein dünnes Korn,  
 Was gestern Strahlenball noch war.  
 Verwandlungsträchtig, warst du kaum,  
 Und saugst dich frisch im Leben fest,  
 Das dich und mich, treulooser Staub,  
 An keiner Stelle weilen lässt.  
 Begleite Vers die Flüchtigkeit,  
 Gebiete er, gebiete zart.  
 Sei, wie von meinem Finger du,  
 Das Schwindende von ihm bewahrt.  
 Ein zweites Dasein überwächst  
 Das erste, das geopfert liegt.  
 Verweh es denn wie Löwenzahn,  
 Damit es traumgekräftigt fliegt.

The Poet is depicted as commanding the globe of the mature dandelion to separate into its constituent fibres and thus assume lightness. In the third line, this metamorphosis is described as having taken place. The previous day, the flower existed as a ball of rays, now it appears as a cluster of fine grains. Its near substanceless state is expressed by the words "Gemindert schwebt". The dandelion is described as having

reluctantly released its hold upon life, in the first two lines of the next stanza. Both dandelion and Poet have one thing in common, that is their transience, indicated by the words "treuloser Staub, / An keiner Stelle weilen lässt".

In the third and fourth stanzas, the process of inclusion of the dandelion into poetry is described. The closeness of the poem to the plant is suggested with the description of the verse accompanying its fleetingness. The potency of the poem is given with the commands - "Gebiete er, gebiete zart". A merging between poem and plant appears to occur at this point. This has been prepared for by the merging effect caused by the repetition of the word "gebiete", and at the same time, by the softness implied by the tenderness of the command. The Poet enters the poem once more. Just as his finger protects the physical substance of the plant, so too will its essence be preserved by the poem. This essence is the "second existence", described in the fourth stanza, for which the old existence, i.e. the physical substance now lies sacrificed. The poem, whose dissemination appears as the drifting away of the seeds of the dandelion, contains the germ to the plant's new existence. Both plant and poem have thus become one, existing in the ethereal state of dream.

When the things have been reduced to a state of sleep, the consequent dream can become part of the poem. This is suggested in the last two lines of Abgeblühter Löwenzahn:

Verweh es denn wie Löwenzahn,  
Damit es traumgekräftigt fliegt.

In such a dream-state, the thing becomes endowed with renewed power. A similar effect is realised in Leben vor der Sonnenwende,<sup>7)</sup> the final two stanzas of which appear below:

In der Blätter grünes Nachten  
Eingegrabenem Gesicht.  
Dem Entschlafnen, dem Erwachten,  
Wuchs das Leben erst zum Leben:  
Nahe Ferne, ferne Nähe. Im Entschweben  
Rief ich euch in das Gedicht.

In the first line, a blurring effect is evoked by the image of the face, buried in the leaves, and by the words "grünes Nachten", which

suggest the enveloping of the Poet by the colour green. The use of the word "Blätter" is ambiguous here. They may be the leaves belonging to the trees, or they may refer to the printed pages containing the poems. The effect of things merging is continued with the juxtaposition of the opposites - "Dem Entschlafnen, dem Erwachten". A merging between the perception by the Poet of physical reality accompanying his state of wakefulness and that which he perceives during sleep occurs. The new life, that is, the dream as experienced by the Poet, and the existence which the things assume as part of the poem, is described in the last two lines. Hans Dieter Schäfer under the chapter heading Sprache und Magie,<sup>8)</sup> refers to the use of the lyrical device of the anapher which occurs here, i.e. "Nahe Ferne, ferne Nähe", the effect of which is to endow the final stanza with a magical, dream-like quality. The boundaries between dream and wakefulness, and hence between phantasy and reality dissolve completely, and everything is then "called" by the Poet into his poem.

In the poem Die Bastei,<sup>9)</sup> the things are described as being saved as they sleep. At the same time, the storm of transitoriness rages all around them:

Die Wolken graukobalt,  
Schnee wächst schon in den Schössen,  
Den Steinen selbst wird kalt.  
Ein schnelles Dunkel fällt:  
Die Ahornblätter flüssen,  
Zitronengelbe Nachen,  
Auf fahlen Regenschalen  
Die letzten Lichter aus der Welt,  
Die Gräser zittern alt.

Der Wind geißelt mit Riemen.  
Nach allen Himmeln frei,  
Türmt gegen seine Wut  
Steinwall und Dorn Bastei.  
Die Baumhaut schwellen Striemen,  
Mir ist, sie spritze Blut.

Doch dahin ist geflohn  
Ein zartes Ingesinde:  
Der Wurzelgrund birgt Schlange  
Mit mondenweisser Wange,  
Holzbock und Gallenfliege  
Der graue Pelz der Rinde.  
Als summe er zur Wiege,  
Schallt ihnen da des Windes Drohn.

In ihren Schlaf gerettet,  
Hör ich auf ihre Weise

Das Laute seufzerleise:  
 Sanft hat in Dichtermund  
 Das Grauen sich gebettet;  
 Er tut es als ein Märchen kund.

The onset of winter is portrayed in the first stanza. A presentiment of the colder period yet to come is provided with the image of snow growing in the wombs of the clouds. Even the stones have been penetrated by the extreme cold. The appearance of winter is accompanied by the sudden falling of darkness. This image is employed to emphasise the significance to the things of Nature of the change of season. Their awareness of their impending passing is encapsulated in the stanza's last lines - "Die Gräser zittern alt". With the description of the rain-puddles as "Die letzten Lichter aus der Welt", an atmosphere of finality is suggested.

The fury of the winter's storm manifests itself in the second stanza. Here, the destructive power of the wind can be seen. However, the creatures have found sanctuary within the bark and amongst the roots of the tree, which stands firm against the onslaught of the storm. Within this "bastion", a different reality reigns, i.e. that of the dream, as the rocking effect of the wind upon the tree causes the creatures within to fall asleep. It is during this sleep that they are saved, it is stated in the last stanza. However, there is now no longer any reference to the tree, which was previously described as bestowing its protection upon the things. Instead, the storm's fury has abated "in Dichtermund". In other words, it is the poem which has become the bastion, the protector of the "sleeping" creatures.

Lehmann's poetry springs from the paradox that the recovery of the things within poetry predisposes in the first place their disappearance from physical reality. This is illustrated in Nicht ganz vorbei, where the disappearing sounds of the ship (or pheasant), reappear as part of his poem. In Haus der Düfte, the fragrances of the mown field "reside" within the "house" which is the poem, having been captured by the Poet. Abgeblühter Löwenzahn describes the reduction of the plant to the near substancelessness of its seed. In the dream-like existence which it assumes in this state, the dandelion and poem become one. In Leben vor der Sonnenwende, everything dissolves into the dream, and is subsequently "called" by the Poet into his poem.

The notion of the poem as a bastion for the things of Nature after they pass on is evoked in Die Bastei. Here, they are represented as sleeping, and in the accompanying dream-state, they are rescued by the Poet.

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.584
- 2) SW III, p.673
- 3) SW III, p.684
- 4) SW III, p.695
- 5) SW III, p.668
- 6) SW III, p.551
- 7) SW III, p.471
- 8) Hans Dieter Schäfer: Wilhelm Lehmann - Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk, "Sprache und Magie", pp.207-8.
- 9) SW III, p.567

5) The "door" to the poem

The point of translation of the thing into the poem is often indicated by Lehmann through the use of the colon. The colon represents in Lehmann's works, the "door" through which the thing appears to pass in order to become part of the poem. This was seen in An einen Freund, der sich das Leben nahm, which was treated in the previous chapter. Here, the Poet's command to the dead friend was "Wähl diese Tür:". At this, the friend returns to the earth as a fragrance, and subsequently enters the poem on the level of the idea.

Often the phenomena of Nature appear in the poem in the form of a quotation, which is always preceded by a colon. This was seen in the poem Wohltat der Klage, where the phenomena are made to articulate their fear of oblivion:

Fühl ich Glück und Glanz der Tage  
 Flehend an die Brust mir drängen:  
 „Ach! Vergänglich auf der Lauer,  
 Lass uns nicht im Nichts verschwirren.  
 Gib die Wohltat deiner Klage,  
 Und dein Vers sei unsre Dauer.“

There are numerous other instances of the quotation being used to this effect, as for example, in Stimme des Eichbaums:<sup>1)</sup>

Spricht das Holz, des Lauschers inne:  
 „Jason wurde ich zum Maste,  
 Bist in seinem Schiff zu Gaste" -

And in Insel Führ:<sup>2)</sup>

Einbein, der Austernfischer, steht am Siel:  
 „Lust und Wasser und Salz ist, was ich hab.“

Thus, through the quotation, the Poet can make the things articulate, and hence, they can become part of the poem on the level of the word.

As was stated previously, entrance into the world of the dream facilitates, for the creatures, their subsequent entry into the poem. The colon serves to indicate, in this case, the withdrawal into the dream. In Die Schläferin, the colon represents the point at which the dream-image of the "sleeping" earth manifests itself:

Hör ich die Erde wühlen,  
 Tief im Schläfe, traumbesessen:

Regt die Schläferin den Fuss,  
Zuckt erstarrter Carabus,  
Goldne Schnalle ihres Schuhs.

The colon, in this case, is also employed to depict the point of departure of the image:

Regt die Schläferin die Hand,  
Dass der Steinwall beben muss:  
Moschusblatt hüpfte aus dem Sand,  
In die Zweige fliegt der Traum,  
Zager Weidenblütenflaum.

And in Tür ins Nichts,<sup>3)</sup> after the colon, the creatures are depicted as entering into the dream existence:

So seufze, Seufzer, mühsam gestaut,  
Werde in glücklichen Weinen laut:  
Die Wesen ziehen den Traumleib an,  
Marder und Schmätzer, Fuchs und Fasan.

The colon can also represent the point at which the natural perpetuation of a thing is depicted as taking place. In Novemberohnmacht, the colon serves as a hinge-point between the "attacking" of the coldness by the "Ohnmacht" and the subsequent renewal, which is encapsulated in the copulation of the two winter-moths:

Ohnmacht befällt das Kalte,  
Mächtig wird sie im Schwachen:  
Damit die Welt nicht alte,  
Begegnen sich im Dämmergrau  
Frostspannermann, Frostspannerfrau.

The healing of the man-made scars upon the face of Nature takes place after the appearance of the colon in Deutsche Zeit 1947:

Sie mischt und siebt mit weiser Hand:  
In Wangenglut entbrennt der Hang,  
Zu Anemone wird der Sand.

And the colon signals the perpetuative effect which is evoked with the laying of the magpie's egg in Die Elster:<sup>4)</sup>

Keine Verzweiflung spricht des Planeten  
Süssestes Fabelwesen entzwei:  
Die langgeschwänzte Elster flattert  
Und legt ihr leises, grünendes Ei.

The perpetuating effect of the poem is often indicated by the

colon. For example, it points to the words which spring fruit-like from the Poet's mouth in Südliche Stunde:

Wuchs ich auf zu ihrer Bleibe,  
Und sie springt aus meinem Munde:  
Immer wieder fallen Käfer  
Auch in das ergraute Haar.

And similarly in Die Bastei, where the things find sanctuary within the Poet:

In ihren Schlaf gerettet,  
Hör ich auf ihre Weise  
Das Laute seufzerleise:  
Sanft hat in Dichtermund  
Das Grauen sich gebettet.

The colon is used by Lehmann to indicate the "door" to his poem. It is at this point where the things appear to enter into the poem on the level of the quotation or the dream. It also indicates the point where the things are depicted as perpetuating their existence, within the context of renewal within Nature, and at the same time, within the framework of the poem.

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.489
- 2) SW III, p.690
- 3) SW III, p.482
- 4) SW III, p.452

6) The Poet joins the things after their disappearance

It was stated in the introduction how the Poet longs to become part of the realm of Nature, the "paradise" from which he has been excluded. Lehmann believes, that through poetry, this wish can be realised - "Diese Vertreibung bedeutet den Beginn des Dichtens". As if as a sequel to the second stanza of Eroberter Tag, which illustrates the paradox inherent in Lehmann's poetry between losing and gaining, the sixth stanza of that poem states:

Das Vorüber eure Wohnung,  
Meine Wohnung ist es auch.

In order that the Poet can become one with Nature, he must first of all become part of the poem. Then, on the level of the word, he can join the things of Nature, which have been included by him into his poetry.

A poem which portrays the Poet's own striving for inclusion into the poem, or the "second strophe", is Brozeliand.<sup>1)</sup> In this poem, Lehmann employs an old theme, whereby the person becomes released from banishment through his finding the missing strophe or word:<sup>2)</sup>

Brozeliand, Brozeliand!  
Ein verschollenes Gedicht -  
Weiss ich seine erste Strophe  
Und die Zweite nicht?

Will mit seiner grünen Spur  
Der erstarrte Weg sich tauschen?  
Sehnsucht seinen Flötenton  
Meinem Ohr herüberlauschen?

Denn ich bin in anderm Land,  
Arme Seele staubt -  
Habe ich, Brozeliand,  
Jemals dir geglaubt?

Gelben Spütters Wiederkehr  
Nachts in meinem Garten,  
Der Gesang in seinem Mund  
Braucht nicht mehr zu warten.

Dass die Augen übergehn,  
Öffnet er den Schnabel -  
Hat Merlin nicht angerührt  
Mit der alten Fabel?

Nimmt Merlin mich bei der Hand,  
Bin ich in Brozeliand -  
Ich Verbannter, nicht verbannt,  
Der die zweite Strophe fand.

Brozeliand, the magic forest of Merlin and Viviane, symbol to Lehmann of oneness with Nature, equated with a hidden poem. So far, the Poet has discovered its first stanza, but the second one yet eludes him. His inability to grasp the poem in its entirety represents the Poet's exclusion from the realm of Nature. A parallel is drawn between the Poet's search for the poem's second strophe and his longing for the arrival of spring. In the second stanza, he projects his wish for the arrival of the new season onto the frozen path, which he depicts as wanting to become green. He asks if the longing of the hidden poem to be discovered by the Poet will manifest itself in his ear as the sound of the flute.

In these two stanzas, the close relationship between poem and Nature is brought out - the poem is depicted as wanting to be heard, Nature is depicted as longing for continuity, that is, for the transition from winter to spring to take place. Both appear to be suffering a sense of loss. The Poet, too, in the winter landscape is "in andern Land". The arrival of spring and the hoped for manifestation of the magic forest have become synonymous. In the third stanza, he expresses his despair at ever being able to enter into the forest and at the same time of witnessing the new season. He becomes despondent as the notion of transitoriness overcomes him - "arme Seele staubt", doubting in fact that he ever believed otherwise - "Habe ich, Brozeliand / Jemals dir geglaubt?"

Then, in the fourth stanza, the deepening sense of loss is suddenly checked with the manifestation of spring in the arrival of the migratory bird, the yellow warbler. With the word "Wiederkehr", the whole cycle, and hence the permanence, of Nature is evoked. The song of the bird resembles the sound of the flute from the forest of Brozeliand. According to Hans Dieter Schäfer, the voice of the yellow warbler, like no other, embodies that of Merlin.<sup>3)</sup> In the fifth stanza, the bird's song causes the Poet to ask if he has not in fact been touched by Merlin and the old myth of Brozeliand. At the end of the poem, the Poet is depicted as being led by the hand into Brozeliand by Merlin. The second strophe has been supplied by the warbler. Spring has arrived, and continuity is assured. The Poet is no longer an exile - "Ich Verbannter, nicht verbannt, / Der die zweite Strophe fand".

The Poet's relationship with Nature is a "two-way" process.

Through the inclusion of the things into his poetry, they can find the permanence which they seek. As a part of his poetry, the Poet can join them and thus become part of Nature. This process is described in the poem Gültige Zeit,<sup>4)</sup> the first part of which appears below:

Mut des Abschieds, kühle Brände,  
Helianthus, Purpurwicke,  
Ihrem Dichter zuzulächeln  
Letzten Glückes Augenblicke.

In das liebe Laubgehänge  
Kann die Hand vertraulich fassen,  
Auf das feste Fleisch der späten  
Früchte sich der Mund verlassen.

Tag, den schon das Ende kühlt,  
Sei im Nachgefühl gefühlt,  
Dass ich ihn noch einmal lebe  
Und was er mir gab, ihm gebe.

The passing of physical things is alluded to at the beginning of the poem. The plants are portrayed as courageously awaiting their departure. The helianthus and the purple-vetch "smile" at "their" Poet, as if anticipating their impending inception into his poetry. The intimate relationship experienced between Poet and Nature continues into the next stanza with the words "das liebe Laubgehänge", and the description of the hand, trustingly grasping the fruit. The image of the picking of the fruit suggests the process whereby the Poet takes the things into his poetry. The image of the fruit itself evokes the notion of the perpetuation of things. In the final stanza, the passing of the plants has become extended to the passing of the day and thus evokes the transitoriness of things generally. Here, he enjoins the day to become part of his poem - "Sei im Nachgefühl gefühlt", the "Nachgefühl" referring to the Poet's verse. The repetition of "gefühl" has the effect almost like a magical incantation, as if the Poet is conjuring up the things within his poetry, c.f. the use of the anapher in Leben vor der Sonnenwende. Within the poem can the things live once more, and at the same time can they be experienced by the Poet -

Dass ich ihn noch einmal lebe  
Und was er mir gab, ihm gebe.

In the first chapter, the poems Geflügelte Frucht and Leiser Herbstwind dealt with the Poet's disappearance into a state of substancelessness, characterised by the sensation, on his part, of light-

ness, and leading into momentary union with Nature. The poem Schwer und leicht,<sup>5)</sup> also deals with this theme. In this poem, the idea of lightness on the part of both Poet and things, their inclusion into poetry, and oneness with Nature are all interwoven:

Schwermut war Zehr  
Dem Qualgemunkel.  
Ein Sterenpfiff  
Rief durch das Dunkel.

Grau drückte Eis  
Die Schattenfalte.  
Merlin verschlief  
In Baumesspalte.

Wind wiegelt Schar  
Der Blätter auf,  
Sie fliegen als  
Ein Vogelhauf.

Schwermutgesicht  
Fand seinen Reim.  
Flügel, federleicht,  
Trügen es heim.

The notion of heaviness is suggested at the beginning of the poem with the word "Schwermut", i.e. "heavy mind". This word serves to emphasize that the heavy state is within the mind of the Poet. It also serves to indicate his separation from the realm of Nature. The individuation of the Poet is reflected in the image of the lone starling, calling in the darkness. His feeling of melancholy intensifies in the second stanza, with the description of the ice pressing down upon the "layers" of shadows. This oppressive sensation, however, is suddenly checked by the image of the sleeping Merlin. The downwards movement which was described in the first two stanzas is reversed in the third stanza. Now, the direction is sky-ward with the portraying of the weightless leaves, flying through the air, assisted by the wind. The leaves are likened to a flock of birds, flying as "ein Vogelhauf". They have become bird-like, and yet they retain their own identity, this being demonstrated by the word "hauf". Like the Poet, they too were "heavy", as they dropped to the ground from the tree.

A recurring image in Lehmann's works is that of flocks of birds, the unity and lightness of which represent, to him, the sought-after goal of oneness with Nature. In the first stanza, the image of the lone starling reflects the isolation of the Poet. In the third stanza,

the bird-image is used to portray the unity experienced by the leaves. This is brought about first of all through their depiction as a "flock", and then as a "heap of birds". Their unity with the rest of Nature is enhanced by the image of the wind, gently cradling them. This sensation of lightness extends to the Poet in the final stanza. His "heavy mind" becomes light and it is "carried home", along with the "feather-light" wings which are the flying leaves, into the rhyme of the poem.

In Später Rausch,<sup>6)</sup> both Poet and thing are depicted as being reduced, and in this state, they become one. The wasp becomes "lightened" through death, and the Poet is also made light, but through his intoxication with the fullness of Nature:

Schwarzer Blitz, Holunderbeere,  
Einst war sie ein weisser Stern.  
Dolde kippt mit süsser Schwere,  
Hand und Schnabel pflücken gern.

Schwankt, als ob sie vor ihm bange,  
Die Platanenfrüchteschnur,  
Klopft die Eichel meine Wange,  
Streift sie Windesatem nur.

Wespe hat sich Taumelflugs  
Morschem Apfel eingewühlt.  
Muss sie sterben, langes Zuges  
Sei die Welt als Rausch gefühlt.

Gegen niemand zu wehren,  
Blieb ihr Stachel ungebraucht.  
Aus dem seligen Verzehren  
Wird sie leicht ins Nichts getaucht.

Welt, mit Früchten übersegnet,  
Gleich der Wespe, abschiedspät,  
Bin ich ihr im Rausch begegnet,  
Ehe sie mir untergeht.

The notion of transition is introduced at the beginning of the poem with the reference to the former state of the elder-berry, which has now reached maturity. The whole of existence is brought in with the allusion to the elder-berry having once existed as a "white star". The third line evokes the fullness of Nature through the image of the umbelliferous clusters of berries, weighed down by their maturity. The Poet is depicted as partaking of Nature's fullness in the fourth line. Already he has attained a physical closeness to the things of Nature. This is demonstrated through the image of Poet and bird, greedily plucking the ripe berries. This image of hand and beak plucking

the berries points to the Poet's impending union with Nature.

The idea of transition is extended into the second stanza. The transitoriness of things is alluded to with the image of the fruit of the plane-tree, swaying in the breeze, as if frightened by the prospect of its forthcoming passing. At the same time, however, a new existence is hinted at through the seed-image. The portraying of the fruit, lovingly caressing the cheek of the Poet, serves to provide the assurance, that it is an existence which will include him as well.

Death is brought into the poem with the picture of the dying wasp, burrowing into the decaying apple. Its giddy flight evokes the theme of intoxication which was suggested in the title. The wasp will soon die after its "long draught" from the decaying fruit. Prior to its death, it experiences the world as an intoxication. During its state of intoxication, the wasp's sting remains unused, indicating its feeling of supreme contentment. It then dies, and with its death, it enters into the "Nichts". As a consequence of its passing, it has become light. The word "leicht" serves as a contrast to its opposite "Schwere", which referred to the maturity of the berries in the first stanza, and suggests the taking place of a release from the heaviness of autumn. The sensation of ecstatic contentment on the part of the wasp is expressed by the words "aus dem seligen Verzehren".

Like the wasp, the Poet wishes to experience the world as an intoxication. In the final stanza, the simile occurs, whereby the Poet is described as becoming like the wasp. Here, just as the wasp has become intoxicated by its drink from the apple, the Poet becomes inebriated with the fullness of Nature - "Welt, mit Früchten übersegnet". Within this state of poetic intoxication, the Poet and wasp experience union -

Bin ich ihr im Rausch begegnet,  
Ehe sie mir untergeht.

In order that the Poet can attain the sought after unity with the things of Nature, he must, himself, become part of the poem, where he is then able to join the things which have already been included. In Brozeliand, it was described how the Poet sought release from his banishment from Nature through his search for the second strophe. Gültige Zeit, Schwer und leicht, and Später Rausch all portray the

Poet's entry into his poem, at the same time, attaining his ideal of oneness with the things within.

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.494
- 2) Hans Dieter Schäfer says in his book Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk: "Das Finden eines Namens oder einer zweiten Strophe ist ein alter Topos für die Erlösung aus einem Bann", p.170. This theme is also present in such fairy-tales as Rumpelstilzchen, Thousand and One Nights.
- 3) Ibid. p.170
- 4) SW III, p.622
- 5) SW III, p.516
- 6) SW III, p.564

### CHAPTER THREE: The Renewal of Things as a religious Concept

The first chapter of my thesis dealt with the vanishing of the individual thing from physical reality. This disappearance of the thing is used by Lehmann to illustrate the principle of continuous creation, which is fundamental to the nature of the Universe. Although the things may die, at the same time, they leave behind their seed through which they can continue their existence as part of the Nature cycle.

After their disappearance as individual physical entities, the things can then be included into the poem. As a part of poetry, they will live on within the imagination of the reader. The inclusion of the things into the permanence of poetry was dealt with in chapter two.

In this chapter, I propose to discuss how the return of the things after their vanishing is endowed, by Lehmann, with a supernatural or religious significance. Through the presence of external supernatural forces and figures from ancient legend within the world of Nature, regeneration is brought about. After their passing, the things withdraw into the spirit-world of the "Nichts", where they become endowed with the potential for renewed existence. The religious significance extends to the role of the Poet, who often appears as an intermediary between the transitory material existence, shared by the individual things of Nature, and the immortality of the poem. Priestlike, he offers them salvation in the form of inclusion into his poetry.

#### 1) The supernatural Nature of the regenerative Forces

Lehmann believed the world of Nature to be a manifestation of the divine - "Die Natur verberge Gott".<sup>1)</sup> His collection of poems which was published in 1942 was given, at the suggestion of Oskar Loerke, the title Der grüne Gott. In many of his poems, Lehmann creates various apparently external supernatural forces which he depicts as effecting the regeneration of things.

One such regenerative force is the stillness. This image appears in several of Lehmann's poems, but in none quite so vividly as Auf den abgeernteten Feldern:

## 1

Im Staub der Hecke hängt  
Kornhalm der Erntefuhren,  
Aus Stoppelfeldern drängt  
Gauchheil die Menschenspuren.

Ein weisses Glänzen zieht  
Durch mühelose Zeit,  
Vollendetes entflieht  
In seine Einsamkeit.

Die Zeit der Menschen schwand,  
Da sie nicht mehr verstehn.  
Im Laube seh ich kramen  
Den Wind, die Eschensamen  
Vorsichtig heben seine Hand  
Die grünen Troddeln drehn.

Ein Schweigen wie am Anfang,  
Bevor die Wesen waren.  
Ob es der Ruf der Elster brach?  
Wie schwimmend eingefahren,  
Tönt sie der Sprache Vorklang,  
Du glaubst, dass ein Druiden  
Weissagungstäbchen schüttelt.

Die Stille, aufgerüttelt,  
Horcht tiefer tief den Lauten nach  
Und sinnt sie sich zum Liede.

## 2

Die auf den geräumten Feldern haust,  
Der schweissenden Mühe nicht mehr zum Raube,  
Die Stille, die in den Bäumen saust,  
Im zufriedenen Laube,

Sie kocht vor sich hin in den Zitterpappeln,  
Es quirlt ein silberner Wrasen,  
Und wie die graugrünen Blätter zappeln,  
Sind sie die steigenden, fallenden Blasen.

Die Felder entflohen dem sterblichen Zwang.  
Die Stille naht ihnen mit leichtestem Leib:  
Sie umschlingen sich in Liebesdrang  
Wie Schmetterlingsmann und Schmetterlingsweib.

Eh sie der schälende Pflug wieder stört,  
Kamille, Storchschnabel und Immortelle  
Blühen die Stunde, die ihnen gehört,  
Knäuel, Mäuseohr, Pimpinelle.

Ich sitze hin auf steinigem Sessel,  
Die Füße ruhn, die Hände ruhn.  
Wer knüpft an den langen Bärten der Nessel?  
Ich sehe niemand. Es ist kein Tun.

Streift eine Hand, und rührt eine Lende?  
So schuf die Gottheit der Weltenfrühe  
Das Mädchen, den Marder, das Eisen, die Schlehe -  
Atemziehen macht grössere Mühe -

Wie am Zeiteanfang, am Zeiteude:  
 Alles geschieht, als ob nichts geschehe.

The passing of life is evoked at the beginning of the poem with the image of the corn-stalks, hanging in the dust of the hedge. With the conclusion of the autumn-harvest, the corn-fields have been reduced to stubble. Yet out of this scene of desolation arises the hope of a new existence through the presence of the weeds, whose growth covers over the traces of human activity. Implicit in their name - "Gauchheil" or "common self-heal" - is the suggestion of renewal. The upward movement of the growing weeds contrasts with the static situation described in the first two lines and serves to reinforce the notion of future regeneration.

The scene described in the second stanza serves to contrast further with the destruction evoked in the first stanza. A white glow appears, and then quickly vanishes. The passing of the white glow parallels the disappearance of everything which autumn has brought to perfection. This is referred to as the vanishing of time for men at the beginning of the third stanza. The troubled, transitory existence of physical things contrasts with the "mühelese Zeit" of the white glow.

The linear movement suggested by these two images is brought to a sudden halt with the personification of the wind, rummaging in the ash-tree. A counter-movement, that is a cyclical movement is effected with the turning of the seeds by the action of the wind. This circular motion, and the image of the seeds, serve to evoke the promise of new life in the context of the Nature cycle.

At the beginning of the fourth stanza, a silence is described as reigning. This all-pervading silence is the one which existed at the beginning of time. The sensation of indefiniteness is created here through the absence of a verb - "Ein Schweigen wie am Anfang". A similar situation is evoked here to that which was present in the poem Novemberohnmacht. In this poem, it was seen how the withdrawal from activity was such, that a vacuum appeared to be created. This "vacuum" became filled suddenly with the return of life in the final stanza. Here, we have a situation, where there is a return to the realm of things before their realisation, represented by the silence. The sensation of indefiniteness reaches a climax in the third line with the

posing of the question - "Ob es der Ruf der Elster brach?" The cry of the magpie is given substance - "wie schwimmend eingefahren", contrasting with the nothingness which was depicted before. Its cry is described as the prelude to forthcoming speech - "Tönt sie der Sprache Vorklang", which manifests itself in the "song" of the second section of the poem. The mystical connotation of this action is evoked through the association of the magpie with an ancient Druid, shaking his prophesying staff.

The stillness is described in the final stanza as being conjured up by the call of the magpie. Harkening deeper and deeper to the bird's sounds, it transforms itself into the song. This song appears as the second section of the poem.

The stillness becomes visible in the silence of the break which exists between the two parts of the poem. This effect is maintained in the first two lines of the "song" through the absence of a direct reference to the stillness. The song begins with the word "die". Lehmann very cleverly uses this word, on the one hand, to refer to the stillness evoked by the cry of the magpie, and on the other hand, to anticipate the stillness, which does not appear until the third line. This initial exclusion of any mention of the stillness provides the commencement of the song with enormous evocative power.

The stillness is described here as dwelling upon the cleared fields and bringing contentment to the trees. It brings about a rhythmical rising and falling motion in the leaves of the poplars. With this allusion to the working of bellows, a rapid build-up of energy is suggested. As the stillness approaches the fields, they flee from their temporality. Like the two opposing, but complementary poles of a magnet, they are drawn to one another. The rhythm which was suggested in the previous stanza reaches a climax as fields and stillness "passionately" combine "Wie Schmetterlingsmann und Schmetterlingsweib". This image of the butterflies can be compared with that of the winter-moths in Novemberohnmacht, the copulation of which served to encapsulate the renewal of Nature. The weeds which appear in the following stanza - "Kamille, Storchschnabel und Immortelle ... Knauel, Mäuseohr, Pimpfelle" are depicted as resulting from the consummation of their passion.

The Poet enters into the poem in the tenth stanza and becomes part of the peacefulness generated by the stillness - "Die Füße ruhn,

die Hände ruhn". The world has returned to a state like that which existed at the time of creation. Just as with the biblical creation, when earthly life began, it is now depicted as commencing once more. It is as if Lehmann has condensed the entire history of the world into the yearly cycle of the earth. The repetitive aspect of the creation in terms of the Nature cycle and the timelessness of existence are summed up in the final stanza -

Wie am Zeitanfang, am Zeitenende:  
Alles geschieht, als ob nichts geschehe.

The image of the stillness appears in several other poems, although not as the central theme as in Auf den abgeernteten Feldern. It is depicted as bringing about the recreation, during the dream, of the old man's collapsed house in Der alte Gutsherr auf seinem verfallenen Besitz.<sup>3)</sup> In Stare,<sup>4)</sup> the stillness communicates to the Poet its love in the form of the happy chattering of the finches:

Die Stille dichtet in das verlassene Ohr, den betrübten Blick  
Das liebende Geschwätz, das Brausen der Fittiche, den Schwung  
ihrer Fahnen.

The Poet responds with exaltation of the stillness in response to the fruitfulness surrounding him in Oreaden:<sup>5)</sup>

Heile Stille! Leicht in Leichten.

The similarity between the image of the stillness in Auf den abgeernteten Feldern and the "Ohnmacht" in Novemberohnmacht has already been alluded to. With the withdrawal of existence, a vacuum appears to be produced within Nature which suddenly becomes filled through the regeneration of life, this regeneration being effected by the intervention of such forces. Another power which possesses the same function as the stillness and the "Ohnmacht" is that of "Verschwendung". The catalysing effect of this entity serves as the central theme of the poem Verschwendung:<sup>6)</sup>

Ein karger Leichtsinn, zwitschert Hünflingsschwarm,  
Als Pfeif' ein Junge auf zerbrochnem Kamm.  
Wie hebt der Schwarm sich mühelos vom Grund!  
Die Erde bleibt zurück, vor Kälte klamm.

Verschwendung streift sie jäh:  
Die Büsche beben,  
Die nackten Glieder schüttelt ein Entzücken,  
Sie schneit sie ein mit Schlehenschnee,  
Sie lässt die Welt in Kuckucksterzen schweben,  
Sie spricht als Star vom Giebelrücken.

An atmosphere of lightness of mood is introduced at the beginning of the poem with the description of the twittering linnets as "ein karger Leichtsinn". This sensation extends to the physical notion of lightness as the birds effortlessly lift themselves up from the ground. The desolate, "heavy" state of the earth is emphasised by the depiction of the ground remaining behind, numb with cold.

Once more, as in Auf den abgeernteten Feldern, the notion of an imbalance is created, in this case through the separation of the birds and the cold ground, i.e. the separation of light and heavy. Just as the presence of the stillness was prepared for through the image of the dying fields and the all-pervading silence, the appearance of "Verschwendung" is anticipated as a result of the movement towards a state of lightness. The feeling of tenderness displayed by the "Verschwendung", and the raptures of delight which the "naked" bushes produce, echo the passionate love-embrace of the stillness with the stubble-fields.

The presence of "Verschwendung" brings about the natural renewal, which is encapsulated in the "snowing" of the sloe-tree. The image of snow is used to depict the unity of the tree with the winter season and hence with the rest of Nature. This regeneration is celebrated by the "Verschwendung" itself in the hovering of the cuckoo and the singing of the starling.

Another poem in which the supernatural element within Nature is depicted as bringing about the generation of things is Genüge.<sup>7)</sup> In this poem, the catalysing force remains anonymous, simply being referred to as the "generating powers". The first twelve lines of this poem appear below:

Zwar glühen noch die Essen  
 Der Kapuzinerkressen -  
 Doch süchtig, auszuruhn  
 Von langem Sommertun.  
  
 Die zeugenden Gewalten,  
 Da sie den Schritt verhalten,  
 Wird Feuer der Verschwendung  
 Zu Kühle der Vollendung.  
  
 Wie sich die Früchte bilden,  
 Geriefte, glatte, runde,  
 Als folgten sie dem milden  
 Zuspruch aus Geistermunde!

In the first stanza, the "chimneys" of the nasturtiums are described

as burning. As a result of this image, the presence of an energy force is suggested. A sacred element inherent in Nature may be hinted at here with the name "Kapuzinerkressen". The plants are personified as longing for respite from the "long" activity of summer.

There is a sudden switch in the following stanza from the physical and particular aspects of Nature, characterised by the nasturtium plants, to the indefinite, non-physical presence, characterised by "die zeugenden Gewalten". This notion of creating forces evokes the image of supernatural beings or gods, who suddenly pause in order to carry out their function of creation. The idea of fire, which was evoked through the image of glowing chimneys in the preceding stanza, extends to the power of "Verschwendung", which ignites the spark of creation. The image of an energy-releasing fire brings to mind the bellows-effect of the poplars in Auf den abgeernteten Feldern, which resolves itself in the natural renewal. Here, the fire realises itself in the "coolness of fulfillment". This fulfillment actualises as the formation and ripening of the fruit which appears in the third stanza. The perfect nature of the creation is emphasised by the words "Geriefte, glatte, runde". The fruit grow as if in accordance with the "soft" encouragement uttered by the mouths of spirits.

A poem in which the generating force is depicted as assuming a definite form is Der Heilige:<sup>8)</sup>

Sein Bart ist lang wie Webervogelnest.  
 Er schweigt, da er das All sich selber zeugen lässt.  
 Im Fallen knarren selbst die Bucheneckern,  
 Er schweigt, wenn Menschen sprechen, Elstern schäckern.  
 Der Hederich, der wie Schwefel brennt, ist ihm vertraut,  
 Und eigene Stimme jedes Wesens laut.  
 Die Starenschwärme nähn die Bäume wie mit Stichen an die Erde.  
 Er steigt auf ihren Rücken wie zu Pferde.  
 Wo seine Finger deuten, glüht die Fliederbeere anselschwarz  
 Und fließt aus Kiefernzapfen honiggleiches Harz.  
 Er streckt sich auf dem warmen Aschenrest des Dreschmaschinenfeuers  
 Er ist an jedem Ort zu Haus. (aus,  
 Und starb er, sprengen Blätterhände  
 Und Brust der Steine, Mund der Kerfe seines Sarges Wände.  
 Der heiligen Form des toten Kopfes wächst der Kürbis, die Melone zu,  
 Die aufmerksame Ruhe seines Hirns füllt alle Ruh.  
 So grau wie seine Haare waren, fliegen jetzt die Heringsmöwen,  
 Sein Schweigen auszurufen, brüllen jetzt die Löwen.

Aus der erfrischten Mitte zackt sich lieber jetzt das Hirschgeweih,  
Krümmt lieber ihren Sporn die Akelei

Und fistelt auf den Stoppelröhren Wind und platzen alle Samen  
Und hören Geschöpfe ihre Namen

Und zeugen Männer und gebären Weiber  
Und kreisen die Planetenleiber.

Der Heilige describes the presence within Nature of a holy being. The perfect, all-embracing aspect of this being is illustrated by the statement - "da er das All sich selber zeugen lässt". His complete oneness with the world of Nature is evoked in every stanza, for example "Er ist an jedem Ort zu Haus". As a result of his presence, the elder-berries grow "amselschwarz" and the pine-cones release a honey-like resin. His death provides nourishment for new life - "sprengen Blätterhände". This image also expresses his organic oneness with Nature. An all-pervading silence extends from his own silent state, broken finally by the roaring of the lions, as if in celebration of his peacefulness, and to indicate the significance of his death to existence. The penetrating sound of the lions appears to signal the onset of reproductive activity within Nature. The penetrating aspect of the command to procreate is suggested through the image of the creatures perceiving their names being called. This sudden, all-pervasive generating force becomes endowed with a cosmic and at the same time, spiritual significance through the resulting revolution of the heavenly bodies.

In his poetry, Lehmann creates supernatural forces, which he depicts as bringing about the regeneration of things in the context of the natural cycle. In the poem Auf den abgeernteten Feldern, this force is the stillness, which manifests itself at the passing of the fields. The nature of the stillness is not unlike that of the "Ohnmacht", which was treated in the discussion about Novemberohnmacht, in the first chapter. Both forces effect natural renewal when activity within Nature is at its lowest. A similar concept, although not developed to the same extent, is that of "Verschwendung", appearing as the theme of the poem of the same name. In Genüge, it is the anonymous "zeugende Gewalten" which cause the fruit of the nasturtiums to develop and ripen. The "generating force" is given form and personified in Der Heilige. As a result of his death, procreative activity throughout Nature is precipitated.

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Footnotes

- 1) Bewegliche Ordnung, SW III, p.140
- 2) SW III, p.512
- 3) SW III, p.444
- 4) SW III, p.486
- 5) SW III, p.610
- 6) SW III, p.548
- 7) SW III, p.675
- 8) SW III, p.437

## 2) The mythological figures as regenerative forces

The realm of Nature, as depicted by Lehmann in his poetry, is inhabited by figures from Roman and Greek mythology, and from Arthurian legend. Jochen Jung comments on the mythological content in Lehmann's works:

Naturgeschehen und Mythos ... gehen mit der Empfindung des Dichters zusammen zu einer sinnvollen Einheit. ... Aus der Natur, die als Immergleiche verstanden wird, tritt der Mythos als ihr Ausdruck: Auch er verkörpert seinem Wesen nach das Immergleiche. 1)

Thus, the mythological figures in Lehmann's poetry, are not depicted as mere visitors to the realm of Nature, but appear as an integral part of it. Like the supernatural forces discussed in the previous section, they often serve to nourish the creatures of Nature and to precipitate their renewal.

A poem in which this theme is illustrated in an exceedingly vivid manner is Göttin der Fruchtbarkeit:<sup>2)</sup>

Da Juliglut die goldnen Lippen auf die Wege legt,  
Dass sich die Milch im Lattichstengel regt,  
Der Odermennig schneller seine Früchte reift,  
Flugs sie mir an die Kleider streift -  
Seh ich es wellen durch das Meer der Gräser,  
Diana ist es der Epheser:

Wenn weiss ihr Angesicht im Grunde schwimmt,  
Zerbricht der hohle Weg in einen Duft von Zimt.  
Der Glanz beglänzt der vielen Brüste Runde,  
Die Erde hängt ihr an mit jedem Munde.  
Ich höre die versunknen Wesen saugen,  
Ich seh den Staub verwandeln sich in Pfauenaugen.

In the first line, Nature is personified with the image of the heat from July, which is the month of fruition, laying its golden lips upon the path. The intensity of the heat and of the scene which follows is evoked through the opening word - "Da". The warmth causes the milk in the stalks of the coltsfoot to rise, and the fruit of the odermennig to quickly ripen.

The effect of the heat extends to the Poet in the fourth line with the image of its brushing against his clothing. The significance of this action is suggested by the word "Flugs", which is to be compared with the use of the word "Da" at the beginning of the poem. Here,

a blurring effect takes place, with the image of the shimmering heat and the sea-like motion of the grasses. Out of this merging of outlines arises the figure of Diana of the Ephesians, her many breasts glowing in the sunlight. With the brightness of her countenance penetrating the ground, the channelled way "dissolves" into a perfume of cinnamon, as if to celebrate the presence of the earth-goddess. To her many breasts, the creatures of the earth cling in order to receive sustenance. The Poet is able to hear the beings as they suckle greedily at her breasts. The magnificence of this scene is enhanced by the description of the dust transforming into peacock-butterflies.

Another poem which evokes the mythological deities as renewal-effecting forces is Göttersuche.<sup>3)</sup> Here, the regeneration of things comes about in the context of the legends depicting the sustaining of the infant Zeus by the she-goat Amalthea and the death of Adonis through the intrigues of Aphrodite:

Die Ammer spielte sommers hier Gitarre.  
 Frost rief der Erde zu: Erstarre!  
 Eisgraue Wege, hückerig von Treckerstriemen,  
 Särge die Mieten, Mal aus Stroh ein Diemen.  
 Der Wind geht um. Er sucht die Hohen, Alten.  
 Er weiss: sie walteten, sie walten.  
 Er sucht, was sie bezeugt.  
 Im Schlamm des Weges fror und blieb  
 Der Winkel, den der Fuss der Ziege schrieb.  
 Amalthea hat Zeus gesäugt.  
 Er fingert alte Honigwabe,  
 Sie tropfte Zeus die zweite Labe.  
 Gebückten Leibes Wintereiche.  
 Zeigt ihm die Wunde in der Weiche,  
 Die ihr die Hand des Gottes schlug.  
 Sein Fuss scharrt unter Hecken, zwischen Steinen.  
 Adonis starb. Er horcht. Er hört ein Weinen.  
 Genug, genug!  
 Der Wind steht still. So ruhn die Lüfte. Aphrodites  
 Tränen rinnen.  
 Der Anemone helfen sie die Wurzelfäden spinnen.

The life-filled activity which used to take place in summer is evoked in the first line with the image of the hammer, joyfully playing its guitar. This contrasts with the life-destroying effect of winter, which is emphasised through the depiction of the frost, suddenly and abruptly commanding the earth to freeze over. The third and fourth lines describe the subsequent desolation. An atmosphere of death becomes appar-

ent with the picture of the coffins of straw. The wind is personified in the fifth line. As if in response to the death-like aspect of Nature, it changes direction. It goes heaven-ward in search of the controlling forces - the "Alten". This notion of certain powers determining the events of Nature was introduced in the second line with the personification of the frost, whose sudden command effects the onset of winter.

In lines eight and nine, there is a return to the frozen earth below with the impression of the goat's hoof, "written" into the frozen mud. Through this concentration upon the foot-print in the icy ground, Greek mythology is evoked. Once more, the goat-nymph Amalthea suckles the fugitive Zeus. The nurturing of the young Zeus points to the future recovery of the Earth from its present lifeless state.

In the seventeenth line, the figure of Adonis is introduced. Like that of Zeus, his presence in the poem was prepared for by the image of the goat's hoof-print. Adonis was ruled over by the love-goddess Aphrodite, whose emblem was the goat. A contrast is established between the immortality of Zeus and the mortality of Adonis. Adonis was also considered as the spirit of annual vegetation.<sup>4)</sup> Hence, an analogy to the realm of Nature can be formed. The lifelessness of the natural world is seen in mythological terms as the death of Adonis. In the same line, weeping is described as being perceived by Zeus. This represents the weeping of the grief-stricken Aphrodite. The compassionate Zeus replies with the words "Genug, genug!" At this, the familiar dropping of the wind takes place, indicative of an impending creative event. During the lull, the anemones, which have sprung up from the blood of the dead Adonis, are given nourishment by the tears of Aphrodite.

Thus, through the retelling of this legend, the impending and inevitable renewal of Nature is evoked. Just as the mortal Adonis must die and subsequently be resurrected through the intercession of the god Zeus in the form of the anemones, so too will Nature arise out of its death-like state with the onset of the new season.

Several other poems present similar themes to that given in Göttin der Fruchtbarkeit and Güttersuche, that is, the depiction of mythological deities as succour-giving and renewal-effecting agents within the

realm of Nature. The poem Sommerrausch has already been discussed in the previous chapter, where Zeus is depicted as returning to Earth to save his son Dionysos, who appears in the form of falling fruit. In Geflügelte Frucht, the flight of the winged maple-seeds was described as being brought about through the action of a god, who draws back the branch as if it were a bow. A poem which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter is Ruhe, in which the goddess Diana appears from the spirit-world of the "Nichts" in order to revitalise the wilting plants.

Lehmann also draws upon Celtic or Arthurian legend in order to depict the onset of natural renewal. The figure which he uses to precipitate regeneration is that of the magician Merlin. Merlin's fertilising presence is depicted in Pause des Windes,<sup>5)</sup> the last two stanzas of which appear below:

Wer besprach den Tobenden? Er liess sich gleiten,  
 In die neuen Zeiten brachen alte Zeiten:  
 Melin kehrte, Viviane zu beschlafen.  
 Wind hielt still, als sie sich trafen.  
 Dreimal wohnt Merlin ihr bei,  
 Dreimal scholl ein leichter Liebesschrei,  
 Dessen Donner die Geschöpfe fasste,  
 Dass der Lerchensporn vor Schreck erblasste -.  
 Distelgrau verwandelt ist Merlin entschwunden,  
 Dreimal um die Hüfte seinen Bart gewunden.

Da der Wind bezaubert schweigt,  
 Selbst mit zeugender Gebärde vorgeneigt,  
 Müssen wir den Augenblick benutzen:  
 Siebenpunkt die Flügel putzen,  
 Imker seine Bienen ammen,  
 Schwertknauf des Rhabarbers flammen,  
 Mergelgrund den Sand erweichen,  
 Hechtepaar im Graben laichen -  
 Spalten sich das schwere Innen  
 Zu merlinischem Besinnen.

In the midst of the raging storm, the figure of Merlin "glides" out of the legend and into the world of Nature. He comes to copulate with his lover Viviane. At the same time that the procreative act takes place, the wind stands still, viz. Gottersuche, where the air "rests" as the tears of Aphrodite fall, nourishing the anemones. The penetrating cry of Merlin and Viviane appears as thunder to the creatures. The power of their procreative activity is reflected in this image of thunder, and it is further emphasised by the image of the wind, itself possess-

ing a fertilising function, bowing down before them. Just as in Der Heilige, when the roaring of the lion serves as a signal to Nature to suddenly burst into procreative activity, here, following the "Liebeschrei", the bee-keeper is depicted as caring for the young bees, the stem of the rhubarb becomes inflamed, the pikes spawn in the river-bed. The heaviness which existed before is now transformed, dissipating "Zu merlinischem Besinnen".

The figure of Merlin appears in several other poems. Lehmann depicted him as the embodiment of the spirit of Nature. Hans Dieter Schäfer describes Lehmann's treatment of Merlin in his poetry:

Für ihn ist der Zauberer (Merlin) ein Eingeweihter, der,  
in die Natur zurückverwandelt, die Natur versteht. Er  
wohnt in den Wesen, und aus ihnen heraus schallt seine  
Stimme und lockt das lyrische Ich in seinen Zauberkreis. 6)

In the poem Merlin,<sup>7)</sup> Lehmann refers to Merlin who appears as the male cuckoo as "Herr der Welt". Its cry awakens the world out of its sleepy state - "Sie lacht als seine Braut". In Brozeliand it was seen how the return of spring was simultaneous with the appearance of Merlin in the guise of the yellow warbler.

The function of the mythical figures in Lehmann's poetry is to provide nourishment to the things of Nature and to precipitate natural renewal. In Göttin der Fruchtbarkeit, Diana of the Ephesians appears in order to suckle the creatures at her many breasts. The legend of Adonis, in which his death and subsequent rebirth as an anemone through the intervention of the god Zeus, is used in Göttersuche to encapsulate and bring about the natural renewal. Zeus is depicted as returning to Earth in Sommerrausch in order to effect the salvation of Semele in the form of the vegetation god Dionysus. Once more, the natural renewal becomes encapsulated in the legend. In Pause des Windes, the procreative force is the magician Merlin. His copulation with Viviane effects the onset of procreation in the world of Nature.

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#### Footnotes

- 1) Jochen Jung: Mythos und Utopie, p.65
- 2) SW III, p.577
- 3) SW III, p.617
- 4) Robert Graves: The Greek Myths Vol.1, p.72
- 5) SW III, p.483
- 6) Hans Dieter Schäfer: Wilhelm Lehmann - Studien ..., p.168
- 7) SW III, p.472

3) The "Nichts"

A notion which is connected with the theme of disappearance and renewal is that of the void or the "Nichts". In Lehmann's poetry, the "Nichts" represents a kind of spirit-world, to which the things withdraw after their passing. There, the things are endowed with the power of regeneration. The function of the "Nichts" can be compared, in this respect, to that of the "Ohnmacht" and the "Stille".

A poem in which the "Nichts" appears as a receptacle for the things after their passing is Fallende Blütenblätter.<sup>1)</sup> Here, the "Nichts" is depicted as receiving the seeds of the dandelion after their dispersal by the wind:

Liess der Blick sich gern verirren,  
Sehnsuchts offen blauer Weite,  
Will ihn grüne Nähe kirren  
Zwischen Busch und Wälderbreite.

Grüne Federn, grüne Dächer  
In der Neige vor dem Winde,  
Esche schlägt mit grünem Fächer,  
Ahornblatt und Harz der Linde.

Grünes Tanzen, grünes Winken,  
Zum Ade ein Händereichen -  
Löwenzahn darf vor dem Sinken  
Einer Weltenkugel gleichen.

Leises Leben, leises Sterben.  
Ehe sich die Früchte wagen,  
Weisse Kronen, seid ihr Scherben,  
Still ins Nichts zurückgetragen.

Eh sie meine Wange rührten,  
Gondelfahrt auf grünen Wogen,  
Hat die Luft die schnell Entführten  
Liebesdurstig eingesogen.

The effect of movement is created in the first stanza with the contrasting images of near and far and of the colours blue and green. The movement becomes more agitated with the use of the anapher in the first line of the second stanza - "Grüne Federn, grüne Dächer". Here, the action of the wind upon the trees is depicted. This rapid motion, combined with the emphasis upon the colour green, brings about the effect of a merging of outlines. The state of agitation reaches a climax in the centre of the poem with "Grünes Tanzen, grünes Winken". Then out of all this agitated movement arises a contrasting tranquility, embodied in the dandelion, calmly awaiting its impending passing. The peaceful

atmosphere is emphasised by the repetition in the first line of the next stanza - "Leises Leben, leises Sterben". Here, the boundary between life and death becomes blurred. The sphere of the dandelion now disintegrates, and with their dispersal, its seeds are "taken back" into the "Nichts".

The function of the "Nichts" as a regenerating force is implied here through the use of the word "zurückgetragen", giving rise to the notion that they originally ensued from there. The image which suggests itself is that of Mother Nature, lovingly receiving back the dispersed seeds into the sanctuary of her womb. Yet within the seeds lies the germ to a new existence, and with the arrival of the new season, they will be released and the dandelion will live once more.

Thus, the suggestion is made that the "Nichts" refers to a kind of "twilight" state, to which the things withdraw temporarily. In the poem Ruhe,<sup>2)</sup> a slightly different treatment of this theme is given. In this case, it is the goddess Diana, who is depicted as returning from the "Nichts" in order to revitalise the dying plants:

Labkraut blüht und Mädesüß  
Über grauen Nesselbüschen.  
Aus den Brüsten einer Göttin  
Schäumten sie als weiße Quellen,  
Die Verdorrten zu erfrischen.

Hingerissen von der hellen,  
Glühend ausgestreckten Luft,  
Hängt das Mädesüß erschlaft,  
Liebeskrank, nur noch ein Duft.

Schlanken Rücken seh ich blinken,  
Helena zu Paris sinken.  
Durch die Gerste Windesstreife,  
Grannen wehn wie Rosseschweife.  
Feld vor Troja, Griechen ziehn -

Die kein Schicksal mehr beschwert,  
Aus dem Nichts sind sie gekehrt.  
Mädesüß und Labkraut blühen,  
Von der Göttin Brust genährt.

The white, frothy flowers of the meadow-sweet and the bed-straw are likened to milk, gushing from the breasts of a goddess. With this image, the creation of new life is evoked. The effervescing "milk" is described as white springs, serving to refresh the things which have dried up. With the word "erfrischen", the renewal of things is suggested. This is extended to existence as such through the general term "Die

Verdorrt". The image of flowing springs brings to mind the continuity of existence.

In the second stanza, the meadow-sweet is depicted as being charmed by the air, which "stretches out" to meet it. The meadow-sweet then becomes limp at these "advances" of the warm summer-air, which is personified as "Liebeskrank, nur noch ein Duft". Ancient Greek legend is evoked in the following stanza with the personification of plant and air as Helen and Paris. The barley-field becomes the Field of Troy. The two legendary figures, no longer weighed down by fate, have returned from the world of the "Nichts". This "return" manifests itself in the blooming once more of the meadow-sweet and the bed-straw - "Von der Göttin Brust genährt".

In this poem, the revitalising function of the "Nichts" is illustrated through the return of the goddess Helen from that realm in order to give sustenance to the plants. A similar situation, without the presence of mythological figures, however, was discussed in the previous chapter, with respect to the poem Deutsche Zeit 1947. Here, the "Nichts" was depicted as effecting the healing of the scarred landscape which resulted from the ravages of war.

The recreative function of the "Nichts" is not, however, restricted to the regeneration of things within Nature. In the poem Sommerliches Nichts,<sup>3)</sup> the "Nichts" is depicted as bringing about the materialisation of a scene which the Poet experiences in the dream:

Im Sande das Zeichen des Ammernfusses,  
Im Ohr der Nachhall des Bauerngrusses  
In das versunkene Träumergesicht.  
O Wunde, die der Dornbusch sticht!  
Nicht länger dauert,  
Vom Nichts belauert,  
Als Löwenzahnkugel zum Falle bereit,  
Nicht länger trug mich die wandernde Zeit.

Das Nichts erfüllt sich mit Geisterkraft,  
Es zündet die Lichter am Löwenzahnschaft,  
Erneuert verwunderten Bauerngruss,  
Setzt in den Sand den Ammernfuss.  
Der Rosendorn hat mich wieder getroffen:  
So bleibt die Wunde herrlich offen.

The idea of things penetrating is expressed in the first four lines of the poem with the image of the hammer's foot-print in the sand, the echo of the peasant's greeting in the ear of the Poet, the immersed

aspect of his "Träumergesicht", and the thorn entering into the wound. These passing things, however, are anticipated, just as it lies in wait for the mature dandelion, by the "Nichts". With the image of the dream-like dandelion-sphere, the Poet lapses into a state of sleep and timelessness.

In the Poet's dream, the "Nichts" becomes active, endowed with the "strength of the spirits". At the "igniting" of the "lights" on the dandelion's shaft, the events of the first stanza come to life once more.

The "Nichts" also appears as a place, where the union of the Poet with the thing after its passing can take place. This was seen in Später Rausch, which was dealt with in the preceding chapter, where the inebriated wasp enters into the "Nichts" after its death. It is there, that the Poet, intoxicated with the fullness of life, and the wasp become one. As a result of their union, the wasp can be made to live once more as part of the poem.

A poem in which the Poet is represented as actually entering into the realm of the "Nichts" is Tür ins Nichts.<sup>4)</sup> Here, he is able to join the things after their passing, and thus they can be endowed with a new existence within the framework of the poem:

In halber Angel nur, Gattertür,  
Wie aus der Ohnmacht gerafft;  
Schöllkraut, eilig verwelkendes, salbt  
Den Fuss ihr mit gelbem Saft.

Zur Brut im hohlen Pfosten huscht  
Der Fliegenschläpper, Geist eines Wichts.  
Triolen streut sein kümmernder Sang.  
Er schweigt. Die Tür führt ins Nichts.

Wer trägt nach steiniger Üde Begehrt?  
Die Gattertür klafft. Schon bin ich im Nichts.  
Die Welt verliert ihren Schmerzensleib,  
Er ruht im Arm des Gedichts.

Da wächst die Schwermut als Holderbusch,  
Mit tausend Blättern wird ihr leicht,  
Die Blätter tanzen, die Wurzel saugt,  
Das Grundwasser hat sie erreicht.

So seufze, Seufzer, mühsam gestaut,  
Werde in glücklichem Weinen laut:  
Die Wesen ziehen den Traumleib an,  
Marder und Schmähter, Fuchs und Fasan,  
Sie haben mit mir das Leben getan.

Leiser als Fliegenschläpperschlag  
 Raunt das Gewesene. Klage, so klag!  
 Wie wir im steigenden Seufzer schweben,  
 Nähert sich wieder gelebtes Leben:  
 Es fährt das Schiff der vergeblichen Fahrt,  
 Verzweiflung bleibt als ein Ruhm bewahrt -  
 Schön wie ein Held im Sarkophag,  
 Wie Kugel im Springbrunn aufgebahrt.

The image of the half-open door at the beginning of the poem gives the impression of an invitation being extended to the Poet to enter. The anointing of his foot by the dying celandine indicates the religious nature of his impending entrance through the door. With the death of the plant, the passing of physical things is alluded to. However, the image of the nest of young birds in the door-jamb points to a new existence, which lies on the other side of the door. The spiritual aspect of this new existence is alluded to with the description of the adult fly-catcher, hurrying to its brood, as "Geist eines Wichts". As if in lamentation of the Poet's passing from the realm of materiality, the bird utters a mournful song. Then it is silent. Its silence parallels the lack of substance associated with entry into the "Nichts", to which realm the door leads.

The invitation to pass through the door is repeated with the image of the door yawning wide. The Poet enters into the "Nichts". In this realm of the spirit, the world loses its material substance, its "Schmerzensleib", which rests in the "arm" of the poem. These two lines refer to the writing of poetry, to the translation of the thing from the physical world into the non-physical realm of the poem. This process is given concrete form with the description of the sorrowful materiality of things growing in the shape of a lilac-tree. As the tree becomes lightened through the action of the wind amongst its leaves, all physical substance dissipates.

With the shedding of their material substance, the sighing of the creatures, which has been "dammed up", suddenly finds its release in joyful crying. It is at this point, signified by the presence of the colon after the word "laut", that the creatures enter into a dream-state - "Die Wesen ziehen den Traumleib an". This contrasts with the losing by the creatures of the "Schmerzensleib". Here, they have assumed a new existence as part of the poem. At the same time, the Poet becomes one with the now substanceless beings - "Sie haben mit mir das

Leben getan". The spirit-like fly-catcher is evoked once more at the beginning of the final stanza. The softness of its wing-beats is used to emphasise the ethereal quality of the voices of the creatures which once existed. Then, as the Poet and "Gewesene" hover, accompanied by increased sighing, the physical reality returns once more. The exit from substancelessness and unity with the creatures is denoted by the use of the colon after the word "Leben". What remains of this experience with the things after their passing is the poem, which "bleibt als ein Ruhm bewahrt".

Thus, the "Nichts" appears in Lehmann's poetry as a positive thing, bringing about the renewal of phenomena. Lehmann's treatment of the "Nichts" is discussed in detail by Donald Scrase in his thesis The Dialectic in W. Lehmann's Imagery.<sup>5)</sup> In his discussion, Scrase, however, portrays the "Nichts" as a negative force. It is a power which oppresses, and one which is opposed to the process of growth. In the case of Deutsche Zeit 1947, he says - "the short period of blossom is soon over and gives way to 'ein Nichts', which, however, is only apparent".<sup>6)</sup> This statement suggests that, what is described in the poem, and what Lehmann in fact feels, are two different things. Yet Scrase does come nearer to Lehmann's intention, I believe, when later on he says - "The continuity of existence in itself and through art is dependent to a large extent not so much on the positive factors of growth but on the 'Nichts'".<sup>7)</sup> Scrase is correct here in stressing the importance of the "Nichts". Then, his lack of comprehension manifests itself in the same sentence, when he refers to the "Nichts" as the "Ebb and flow of natural forces".

Lehmann himself refers to the "Nichts" in his theoretical writings. In Dichtung als Dasein, he talks about "das selige Nichts".<sup>8)</sup> And in Bewegliche Ordnung, referring to natural renewal and at the same time to the creation of works of art, he says - "Schon wandert das Nichts wieder dem Etwas zu".<sup>9)</sup>

The presence of the "Nichts" in Lehmann's works can be easily misinterpreted, however, as a negative concept. At first glance, the plea of the things, i.e. "der Glück und Glanz der Tage", to the Poet in Wohltat der Klage - "Lass uns nicht im Nichts verschwirren" - does in fact suggest this. Yet, the emphasis here is not on the word "Nichts", but on the word "verschwirren". The "Nichts" serves as a receptacle

from which the things can be rescued by the Poet. "Im Nichts verschwirren" refers to their remaining in this state of oblivion without the intercession of the Poet.

An important notion which is found in Lehmann's poetry is that of the "Nichts". The "Nichts" is the state into which the phenomena withdraw after their passing. In Fallende Blütenblätter, it was seen how the dying plant translates into its seeds. In their dormant state, the seeds become part of the "Nichts". In Ruhe, the mythical figures, Helen and Paris, emerge from the "Nichts" to bring about the revitalising of the dessicated plants. The attempt by Nature to heal over the scarred landscape is successful through the intervention of the "Nichts" in Deutsche Zeit 1947. The "Nichts" brings about the materialisation of a dream-experience in Sommerliches Nichts. In Tür ins Nichts, the Poet is depicted as entering into the spirit-world in order to join the things after they have passed on. From there, they can be endowed with a new existence within the realm of the poem.

Other poems which deal with the "Nichts" appear in the final footnote.<sup>10)</sup>

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#### Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.560
- 2) SW III, p.541
- 3) SW III, p.463
- 4) SW III, p.482
- 5) David A. Scrase: The Dialectic in W. Lehmann's Nature Imagery. Diss. Masch., Indiana University, 1972.
- 6) Ibid. p.79
- 7) Ibid. p.85
- 8) SW III, p.258
- 9) SW III, p.113
- 10) Ruhm des Daseins, p.624; Epaphos, p.625; Überschwemmter Grund, p.508; Traumleib der Wärme, p.433; Die Elster, p.452; Trost der Blätter, p.515.

4) The Poet as priest

In Lehmann's poetry, the function of the Poet is often depicted as being that of intermediary between the transitory material existence of the things and the permanence which they can experience as part of the poem. Through the Poet's intercession, the "salvation" of the things of Nature is assured, and they can live on within the new existence provided by the poem.

As has been stated before, for the things to be included into the poem, the Poet must enjoy a close relationship with the phenomena of Nature. The poem Der Bund,<sup>1)</sup> describes the linking of the things of Nature with the Poet through the image of a covenant being sealed between them:

Setzt der Sommer seinen Fuss  
In das Schiff, das ihn entführt,  
Zuckt die Luft wie Wange, die  
Unsichtbare Geißel rührt.

Abgebrochne Laute murmeln  
Aus dem Vogelalphabet,  
Junger Wiesenpieper, Hänfling,  
Über Stoppeln hergeweht,  
Geigenstrich und Pizzicato,  
Wird wie zweite Saat gesät.

In den grünen Mantel reisst  
Wind und legt die Früchte bloss;  
Quitte unter grauem Flausch  
Fürchtet nicht für ihren Schoss.

Ob den Rainfarn Regenhieb  
Selbst zu Rute krümmen mag?  
Doch er richtet sich und hellt  
Als ein Leuchter meinen Tag.

Um Gewitterlache sitzt  
Fühlerrege Weisslingsbrut;  
Bleiche Schatten saugen sie  
Dasein aus der Himmelsflut.

Hat es die Vernichtung eilig,  
Seid mir, Erdezeichen, heilig,  
Heilig jedes, und so kann es  
Immer segnen unsern Bund:  
Blut der Beere des Johannes  
Keltere ich in den Mund.

At the beginning of the poem, the summer season is portrayed as being carried off by a departing vessel. This personification of summer as a passenger on board a ship indicates the subordination of things to a higher power, that is to the unchanging laws of Nature. The painful

aspect of the passing of things, as experienced by the Poet, is alluded to through the depiction of the air, wincing like cheeks, which are lashed by invisible whips. The imagery of this first stanza evokes a great sense of loss and a forboding of things to come.

The apparent loss of continuity caused by the departure of summer is reflected in the broken off and "Pizzicato" sounds uttered by the young meadow-pipit and the linnet. These sounds are referred to as constituting the alphabet of the birds. This image points to the inclusion of the things onto the printed page as part of the poem. The sounds are scattered over the stubbles by the wind. Their dispersal is likened to the second sowing of seeds. Thus, the continuation of existence is hinted at, within the context of the Nature cycle and within the poem.

The activity of the wind is taken up again in the third stanza. Here, its destroying effect is given emphasis with the denuding of the trees of their leaves. Yet the quince, protected from the cold by its furry covering, has no fear for her "womb". Through this image depicting the confidence of the things in the natural order, the renewal is assured.

The Poet poses a rhetorical question at the beginning of the fourth stanza. He asks if the ridge-fern will indeed remain bent like a rod as a result of the heavy rain. It, however, rights itself to function as a lantern, which serves to illuminate the Poet's day. It is at this point that the Poet resolves his sense of loss, coming to terms with the passage of things, understanding it as part of the natural order.

Thus, the change in the season, and hence the weather, appears as a necessary and accepted part of natural existence. This is illustrated in the fifth stanza with the image of the newly-hatched cabbage-butterflies, sucking their existence out of the flood from the sky.

The threat of destruction has dissipated. In the last stanza, the covenant between Poet and the things of Nature is sealed. This is effected through the symbolic act of the Poet, crushing the red-currants in his mouth. The covenant represents the promise on the part of Nature of the continuance of existence within the natural order; on the part of the Poet, the existence of things will endure with the writing of his poetry. This is suggested through the image evoking

the christian sacrament of the holy communion. Just as the partaking of communion represents the transubstantiation of the body and blood, so the ritual-like savouring of the "blood" of the red-currant by the Poet represents his transformation of the physical substance of things into the words which form his poetry.

In Der Bund, the sacred aspect of the Poet's function as intermediary between the material existence of the things and their existence on the printed page is illustrated through the image of the holy covenant. Elsewhere, the sacred nature of the Poet's presence is depicted. In Tür ins Nichts, it was seen how the release of the sap over the Poet's foot by the dying celandine was interpreted as an act of anointment:

Schöllkraut, eilig verwelkendes, salbt  
Den Fuss ihr mit gelbem Saft.

Similarly, the Poet's foot is purified by the incoming tide in Arion:<sup>2)</sup>

Weiss wie Blüte des Holunders  
Hat die Flut ihn schon verklärt.

And in Späte Glut auf armem Land,<sup>3)</sup> the Poet's loins are washed by the rain and fanned by the wind:

Die Lenden, die vom Regen hohl gewaschen sind,  
Fächelt ein abessinisch heisser Wind.

In the poem Das Trankopfer,<sup>4)</sup> the ancient ritual of the priest administering the sacrifice is evoked. Here, the Poet is depicted as partaking of the libation in order that Odysseus can experience a renewed existence:

Bin ich abschiedbereit,  
Schatten, schatteninmitten,  
Kommt verschollene Zeit  
Wieder geschritten.

Aus der Grube, die gräbt  
Odysseus, will es winken,  
Leben, einmal gelebt.  
Eile zu trinken!

„Glaube die Wiederkehr“,  
Lächelt kühner Ulisses:  
Traubenblau dünt das Meer,  
Salzig gewisses.

In Geröll greift der Zeh,  
Da Schafe, Ziegen steigen.  
König Admet wie je  
So heute eigen.

Zühen Macchiadorn  
Fasst ihre heikle Zunge,  
An Kürbis schnitzt und Horn  
Hütender Junge.

Über der Insel steht Ruch,  
Dattel, Orange, Mandel.  
Versuch, Inbrunst, versuch  
In Vers den Wandel.

Ehe die Stimme bricht,  
Runde sich mein Gedicht,  
Dass es, erinnertes Glück,  
Noch die Schatten entzück',  
Schnell, denn ich sinke -  
Odysseus spricht: „Trinke!“

A merging effect is brought about between the present and the past with the image of the Poet entering into the "middle" of the shadow. A contrast is created here through the stated readiness of the Poet to depart from the world of physical reality and the approach of time which once existed. The notion that this is an experience which repeats itself is given by the words "Wieder geschritten". Odysseus is depicted as emerging from the legend. Here, the connection between the libation and the resurrection of the past is established with the instruction "Eile zu trinken!"

The notion of return is extended in the third stanza with the reassurance uttered by Odysseus to the Poet to have faith in its impending realisation. This applies to the return of Odysseus himself and the accompanying legend, and also the natural renewal, suggested by the timelessness and certainty encapsulated in the image of the rolling, dune-like sea, "Salzig gewisses". The idea of immortality is evoked through the reference to King Admetus, who, according to legend, was granted reprieve from death by the god Apollo.

An atmosphere of abundance is evoked in the sixth stanza. Here, the intense ardour of the Poet is applied to bring about the transformation of the past into the permanent presence of the poem. Then, before the human voice can break the concentration, the Poet completes his poem. At the same time, Odysseus is depicted as commanding the Poet to administer the libation. Odysseus' continued existence is now assured within the framework of the poem. -

The priest's function of giving consolation to the dying is evoked in the poem Trost der Blätter.<sup>5)</sup> In this case, the Poet is depicted as giving, through his poetry, comfort to the departing things:

Finde ich dich, bin ich erst allein,  
Willst du immer mein Erretter sein?  
Zauberer, in Grün gekleidet,  
Vogelhirt, der seine Ammern weidet,  
Mit dem Blättermund, der kühl an meinen drängt,  
Still der Nachricht, die das Herz versengt,  
Durch ein weissgeglühtes Sieb die Seele presst,  
Nichts dem Nichts mehr übrig lässt -.  
Bald hat ihrer sich der Zauberer bemeistert,  
Dass sie als ein grüner Flügel geistert.  
Fern mir selber treibe ich so fort,  
Uns behält der gleiche Erdenort.  
Die ihr rüchelt, die ihr schreit,  
Grüner Zauberer steht euch bereit.  
Lass das tränenschwere Auge übergehn:  
Leichte Blätter, werden wir uns wiedersehn.

An ambiguous situation is suggested by the title of the poem through the double meaning that can be attached to the word "Blätter". Thus, the title can refer to the comfort extended by the leaves, which are part of the natural world, or to the consolation given to the things of Nature by the printed pages containing the poems. This ambiguity extends into the poem itself. In the first stanza, the notion of salvation is introduced with the word "Erretter". Here, the "saviour" can refer to Nature, which will offer the Poet the unity with things which he has lost, or it can apply to the Poet himself, who will save the things by including them in his poetry. This notion of salvation extends into the third stanza with the image of the protecting shepherd evoked by the word "Vogelhirt".

Physical contact is made between Nature and Poet in the third stanza in the form of a passionate kiss. Nature's mouth appears as a cluster of leaves. The word "meinen" refers to the Poet's own "Blättermund", indicating his function of incorporating the things onto the printed page. The fourth stanza describes the process of disassociation of the physical substance from the "soul" - "Durch ein weissgeglühtes Sieb die Seele presst". This applies to the stripping away of the things' material substance, that is the act of their disappearing from physical reality, and the Poet's own entrance into a state of substance-

lessness. The dash at the end of the stanza appears as the hinge-point, indicating the stage where body and soul separate - "Nichts dem Nichts mehr übrig lässt -."

The Poet has now become the magician who has effected the transformation. The result of the transformation is encapsulated in the image of the green wing. The wing describes the lightness attained by the Poet and the things, and the colour green refers to the Poet's incorporation into the green paradise of Nature. The complete unity of the Poet with the things is given in the sixth stanza - "Uns behält der gleiche Erdenort". The assurance that this unity will endure is given in the following stanza - "Grüner Zauberer steht euch bereit".

In the final stanza, the contrasting images of heavy and light appear. The sensation of heaviness applies to the things, who once more fear for their transitoriness, and to the Poet, who once more feels excluded from them. Then, in the final line, the assurance is given, that they, as part of the printed page - "leichte Blätter" - will meet again.

This theme of the things being saved from oblivion by the Poet has been discussed before. In the poems which have been dealt with previously, his priest-like function was not treated explicitly. However, for example, in Wohltat der Klage, it was seen how the creatures, at the end of their earthly existence, supplicate the Poet, in order that they can continue to exist, through his mediation, on the printed page. In Die Bastei, the creatures are delivered from death in the storm of transitoriness by the Poet. While they "sleep", they remain protected "Sanft im Dichtermund".

The Poet appears in Lehmann's poetry, as the priest-like intermediary, serving as the things' link between the transitory material existence and the permanence of the poem. Through his mediation, the things of Nature can continue to exist upon the printed page. In Der Bund, the promise of the Poet to this effect is given by his sacramental act of crushing the red-currants in his mouth. In Das Trankopfer, the Poet is depicted as administering the libation. Through the drink-offering, the continued existence of the figure from Greek legend, Odysseus, is assured. The priest's function of giving consolation to the dying is evoked in Trost der Blätter. In this poem, the

departing things are comforted with the reassurance that they will meet with the Poet, and hence achieve the permanence they desire, on the printed page which contains the poem.

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Footnotes

- 1) SW III, p.528
- 2) SW III, p.497
- 3) SW III, p.451
- 4) SW III, p.651
- 5) SW III, p.515

### CONCLUSION

Through his poetry, Lehmann attempts to re-endow physical existence with the permanence which it has lost as a consequence of human conceptualisation. In order that the things attain permanence, he believes that they must first of all be made to disappear from physical reality - "Nur das Flüchtige bleibt treu". Thus, the central feature of his poetry involves the depicting of the process of disappearance and renewal.

The first chapter of my thesis dealt with the different techniques employed by Lehmann to depict the disappearance of things within his poetry. This "disappearance" can refer to the departure of the things in the natural world, or it can apply to the Poet's own physical disappearance.

Disappearance of things is sometimes represented as a withdrawal into a state of inactivity characterised by their entrance into sleep. The effect is that of a vacuum being created which demands to be filled. This filling of the emptiness manifests itself in the form of a single act of procreation which serves to encapsulate the entire natural renewal.

The disappearance of the thing is sometimes brought about through the depicting of it reducing into its genetic code. Within the genetic code or regenerative concept, the germ to the new existence lies dormant. Through his use of the seed as a symbol denoting perpetuation, Lehmann is able to bring about the translation of the transitoriness of the individual things' physical existence into the permanence of the natural order.

In order that the existence of the individual things can continue within the mind (and poetry) of the Poet after their physical passing, a close relationship between Poet and Nature must exist. One precondition for this close relationship is that the Poet accepts the passing of the things within the context of the Nature cycle. Through the physical disappearance of the things, acceptance of their existence as part of the permanence of the natural order on the Poet's part is shown as taking place.

Just as the vanishing of things leads to the Poet's acceptance of Nature, his own disappearance serves to bring about his acceptance on the part of Nature. The Poet's disappearance is depicted as being effected through his attaining a state of substancelessness. No longer weighed down by his individuality, he merges with the phenomena of Nature.

The second chapter treated the inclusion of the things into poetry. Lehmann believes that, just as the phenomena can live again and again within the framework of the natural order, so too can they continue to exist within the realm of his poetry.

Lehmann thus appears to present the poem as a second existence. In order to effect this, he attempts to demonstrate the inherently close relationship which exists between poem and Nature. Through the poem (and song), he is able to reflect the harmony, or temporary loss of it, prevailing within the world of Nature at the time. The close relationship is also demonstrated through his equating of the poem with the seed. Just as the seed possesses a perpetuating function, so too does the poem. Within each lies the potentiality for a renewed existence.

After their disappearance from physical reality, the things can then be included in the poem. Lehmann presents us with several images depicting this process of incorporation into poetry. After the thing's reduction to the seed, it reappears in the form of the words which constitute the poem. As a result of their physical reduction to the state of a fragrance, the phenomena will enter the poem as words. During the dream-existence experienced by the sleeping things, a merging between dream and poem takes place and the things subsequently become a part of the existence offered by the poem. Through the quotation, the things are able to articulate themselves and are thus able to enter into the poem on the level of speech.

The point of entry of the things into the poem is indicated, in many cases, by the use of the grammatical device, the colon. This appears as the "door" to the poem, through which the phenomena gain entry.

Entry by the Poet into the permanence of the natural order becomes synonymous with his entrance into the poem itself. As part of his own poetry, he is then able to join the things on the level of the word.

The third chapter discussed the return of the things in a religious context. Through the intervention of the various "supernatural" forces, the renewal of the things within Nature is brought about.

Lehmann creates various forces which serve as catalysts to natural regeneration. These forces include the "Stille", the "Ohnmacht" and "Verschwendung". They appear when activity in the world of Nature is at its lowest. Through their appearance, procreative activity throughout Nature is precipitated.

The figures from Greek and Roman mythology and from Arthurian legend are depicted by Lehmann as inhabiting the world of Nature. Their function is to bring about renewal through providing nourishment to the things of Nature and to precipitate regeneration.

A notion which is connected with the theme of disappearance and renewal is that of the "Nichts". The "Nichts" represents the state to which the things withdraw after their passing. There, they are endowed with the potential for regeneration. This regeneration takes the form of natural renewal and at the same time the entry into a renewed existence within the poem.

The resuscitation of the things by the Poet within his poetry is endowed with a religious significance by Lehmann. The Poet is often depicted as a priest, whose function is that of intermediary between the transitory, material existence and the non-material permanence of the poem. As a result of the Poet's intercession, the "salvation" of the things is assured through their continued existence upon the printed page.

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