

STEFAN GEORGE, A POET OF CONFLICTS:

FROM HYMNEN TO ALGABAL

by

DENA LYNN ATKINSON

B.A., University of Victoria, 1977

M.L.S., University of Toronto, 1979

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

[REDACTED]

Dr. Rodney T. K. Symington

[REDACTED]

Dr. Michael L. Hadley

[REDACTED]

Dr. William Kinderman

[REDACTED]

Dr. Eike-Henner W. Kluge

[REDACTED]

Dr. Barrington F. Beardsmore
(External Examiner)

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University of Victoria

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Supervisor: Dr. Rodney T. K. Symington

ABSTRACT

A poet's concept of his calling is an important key to a thorough understanding of his literary works. The German lyric poet Stefan George was especially concerned with what he felt was his unique role. His ideal vision of himself leading an artistic empire of kindred spirits was finally fulfilled, in the latter half of his life, upon the establishment of the George-Kreis. In his twenties, however, he felt very keenly the discrepancy between reality and his lofty concept of the poet as a creator of beautiful works and a guardian of society's highest values.

This thesis identifies and discusses the conflicts associated with the young poet's search for personal truth as reflected in Hymnen (1890), Pilgerfahrten (1891) and Algabal (1892), the first collections of poems that George published and considered a trilogy. George's youthful literary quest, in its formative stages, is revealed by the persona of the poet who is a solitary dreamer in Hymnen, a troubled pilgrim in Pilgerfahrten and a world-weary emperor in Algabal. The development of George's concept of the poet, in relation to his conflicts, is traced from his initial self-affirmation in Hymnen to his doubts about his

ability to reach his goals in Pilgerfahrten and Algabal.

All of the poems in Hymnen, all but four in Pilgerfahrten and six representative poems in Algabal are discussed. The emphasis is on the first two collections because the conflicts raised in Hymnen and developed in Pilgerfahrten are repeated in Algabal. The poet reaches a nadir in Algabal which marks the end of a phase in George's life and work.

Certain recurrent motifs are examined which embody the clash between fantasy and reality, dedication to art and passion for life, renunciation and temptation, the poet and the public, and art and nature. These motifs include the garden of art, the palace or temple of poetry, the hermitage and the kingly robe of the poet. The would-be ruler of an artistic empire is seen on a difficult odyssey from his hermitage to the palace of poetry. He hopes that, in time, when his garden of art is in full bloom and his poetry becomes a temple-like haven, he will wear the poet's kingly robe in all its glory. For now, however, in this trilogy, the tension between this ideal and reality is unresolved.

Examiners:


Dr. Rodney T. K. Symington



Dr. Michael L. Hadley



Dr. William Kinderman



Dr. Eike-Henner ~~W~~ Kluge



Dr. Barrington F. Beardsmore
(External Examiner)

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STEFAN GEORGE, A POET OF CONFLICTS:

FROM HYMNEN TO ALGABAL

I. INTRODUCTION

je mehr einer Dichter ist, desto vollständiger ist er in seinem Werk zu finden.

Friedrich Gundolf¹

A poet's concept of his calling is an important key to a thorough understanding of his literary works. His calling is an exceptional one with certain demands that set him apart from other people. The German poet Stefan George was especially aware of the gulf between the masses and the poet. His concern with his role as an artist is a major aspect of his works throughout the forty-two years of his poetic career (1886-1928).²

George felt very keenly that reality was incompatible with his lofty concept of the poet. He strove to assert the eternal world of art. His life and art were guided by his conviction that the poet is not only a creator of beautiful works, but also a guardian of spiritual values in society. According to George, the poet has a duty to use his beautiful works to educate others by promoting

society's highest values.³

In George's early poetry, however, he is more concerned with the beauty of artistic expression than with educating others. The idea that art should have no utilitarian value is characteristic of the Art for Art's Sake movement in western Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The figure of the world-weary aesthete in George's early poetry appears in much of the literature of the fin-de-siècle; for example, in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's lyric drama Der Tor und der Tod (1893) and in Oscar Wilde's novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891). Young George was part of this trend toward literary aestheticism in western Europe.

Echoes of French Symbolism are also heard in George's early works which show the influence of the poet Stéphane Mallarmé, the leader of this movement, whom George knew and admired. Mallarmé's exalted concept of the poet appealed to him. George's Hymnen (1890) moved the Symbolist poet Albert Saint-Paul to declare that George was "le poète symboliste de l'Allemagne."⁴ At a time when the Naturalists dominated the literary scene, George and Rainer Maria Rilke were the outstanding proponents of Symbolism in German poetry. George's idealistic poetry was a protest against the harsh realism of Naturalism.

The contrast between reality and George's ideal vision of the poet he wished to become was the source of various

personal conflicts during his struggle to fulfill his dreams. His particularly introspective character caused him to analyze himself constantly and to evaluate his progress toward his ideal image of himself. His poetry of the period 1890-92 reveals the conflicts he experienced while developing his identity as an artist. The young poet tells the story of his search for personal truth in Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal, the first three collections of poems that he published.

George was in his early twenties when he wrote and published Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal between March 1890 and November 1892.⁵ Originally published separately, the trio nevertheless seemed to belong together, as Carl August Klein pointed out in 1892: "Die drei Bücher 'Hymnen', 'Pilgerfahrten' und 'Algabal' scheinen als eine Trilogie aufgefaßt."⁶ The poet himself grouped the three collections in one volume for the second edition. In 1895 he wrote:

Ich stehe wieder an einem wendepunkt und blicke auf ein ganzes leben zurück das wie ich fühle von einem ganz anderen abgelöst wird. ich möchte es mit der herausgabe meiner bücher schliessen. ich möchte Hymnen Pilgerfahrten und Algabal im ersten, Hirtengedichte Sagen und Sänge und Hängende Gärten im zweiten und die letzten gedichte als Annum animae oder Jahr der Seele im dritten vereinigen.⁷

The second edition of his works thus far was published in November 1898 and dated 1899.⁸ Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal were appropriately placed in one volume because

they collectively represent the restless inner life of the strong-willed poet in conflict with the world:

Durch [...] Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten, Algabal geht eine zuckende Unruhe, ein Sehnen und Suchen. Höchste, stolzeste Eigenwilligkeit, die dennoch in sich alles, aber kein Genügen findet, noch weniger freilich im Zusammentreffen mit der Außenwelt.⁹

Young George's search, recorded in Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal, became the central quest of his life and work: to realize his childhood dream of leadership by founding his artistic empire and to attract kindred spirits who would share his vision as well as ensure the continuing existence of his empire. Ernst Morwitz emphasizes George's single-mindedness: "George was always proud of [...] leading a wandering life with only one aim: the search for men to share his views and his form of being."¹⁰

The intensity with which George lived impressed his friends. His life was inseparable from his poetic mission. His personality was a combination of opposite characteristics which, by the latter half of his life, were in harmony, as Robert Boehringer observes:

man konnte die widersprechendsten Dinge von ihm aussagen: daß er hart war und doch zart, ganz Wille und doch fähig zum Verzicht, fein und grob, bäurisch und weltmännisch, demütig und stolz, aber alle Eigenschaften wirkten als ein Ganzes, ohne Spaltung.¹¹

Throughout his twenties George's inner duality was still unresolved. Dissatisfied with himself and the world, he was

at the edge of the abyss of despair. He was, in his own words, "un poète maudit" in the tradition of Baudelaire and Verlaine.¹² His Weltschmerz was partly self-imposed and partly a condition of his calling. He experienced events and impressions with such intensity that little energy was left to shield him from life's conflicts.

George's sole consolation was that he could transform his suffering into poetry. His life has been assimilated into his art: "Every line of his works reflects people and experiences that were important to him. In this sense his writing constitutes a complete diary".¹³ Friedrich Gundolf was one of several friends to perceive the unity of George's art and his life: "Sein Werk und sein Charakter sind eins."¹⁴ George himself used to say that one cannot take his work literally enough.¹⁵ In fact, he told a friend that "every poem he wrote was based on some experience."¹⁶ Behind the layers of symbols is the inner life of young George.

In view of the above comments on the unity of George's life and his art, some biographical highlights will help to reveal the man of conflicts behind the persona of his poems. The following biographical sketch shows his life-long concern with language and power and the evolution of his quest for his artistic empire of kindred spirits.

Stefan Anton George was born on July 12, 1868 in Büdesheim in Hessen, West Germany. In 1873 the family

moved to nearby Bingen, at the junction of the Rhine and Nahe rivers, where his father worked as a wine-merchant and town councilor. George apparently enjoyed a happy childhood and was grateful to his easygoing and supportive parents for allowing him, and his sister and brother, the freedom to go their own way.

George's preoccupation with language and power, including the power of language itself, was manifested very early: "Schon beim Kinde zeigt sich der eingeborene Trieb, Gefährten zu suchen, zugleich aber auch der Wunsch, Lenker solcher Gefährten zu sein."¹⁷ The boy in Bingen created a secret language and shared it with a few friends while he played their leader in an imaginary kingdom called Amhara.¹⁸ This linguistic experiment foreshadows his mission to revitalize the German language of poetry and to gather about him others who understood his elevated notions of poetic expression.

George jotted his first rhymes in the margins of his notebooks at the age of eight,¹⁹ but his serious literary efforts began in 1886 during his school years in Darmstadt (1882-1888). A selection of his youthful verses (1886-1889) was first published in 1901 as Die Fibel.²⁰ The only plays he ever wrote, Bothwell, Phraortes and Manuel, originated in his school years. His abilities in literature and leadership were demonstrated when he became the editor of an illustrated biweekly produced by and for students. Rosen und

Disteln made its debut in June 1887 and featured stories, essays, poems and humor, but not religious or political topics.

Immediately after George completed his schooling, travel and literary pursuits went hand in hand, establishing a pattern for a lifetime. Between May 1888 and October 1889, when he enrolled in the University of Berlin, he visited England, Switzerland, Italy, France and Spain. His flair for languages was an advantage in exploring trends in the contemporary literature of western Europe. Never married or employed, he was free to travel in search of his artistic empire.

As early as 1888 George and his friends planned a literary "Congress", to be held in Bingen, and a "mappe"²¹ of writings to serve as a forum for European poets. Whether the congress took place is not clear, but the important point is that, even at the age of nineteen, he was interested in bringing creative writers together.

George was pleased with his more cosmopolitan attitude, but was discontented with nineteenth-century Germany and looked toward France for inspiration: "das 19. Jahrhundert ist von Grund aus verdorben [...] In Deutschland wars damals [1889] nicht auszuhalten [...] In Frankreich fand ich Menschen, mit denen ich leben und die ich gern haben konnte."²²

George's stay in Paris, from May to late August 1889, was a decisive one for it brought him into contact with Stéphane Mallarmé, the leader of a circle of Symbolist poets who were to exert a significant influence on George's early poetry:²³ "Dort fand George, was er als Kind geahnt, als Knabe gesucht und in seinem 'Kongress' vorbereitet hatte: le maître et le cénacle."²⁴ George was introduced to Mallarmé by the Symbolist poet Albert Saint-Paul, a resident of the pension where George lived in Paris. Mallarmé welcomed George to his poetic gatherings on Tuesday evenings in the Rue de Rome. Although George excelled in French at school, he remained a silent and enthusiastic listener during these lively discussions of the new literary aesthetic. Mallarmé and his "culte de la beauté", greatly impressed George for he was among the elect who also had an exalted view of poetry and poets: "Il [George] avait comme nous, [les symbolistes] quant au rôle héroïque de la poésie et de ses défenseurs, cette conception hautaine et désintéressée".²⁵

Inspired by his visit with the Symbolists in Paris, George returned to Germany and composed Hymnen which was published in Berlin in October 1890. Inspiration alternated with loneliness because, in his native country, he did not yet have the sense of comradeship, in connection with a shared poetic mission, that he felt among his literary

confreres in Paris.

Pilgerfahrten was written under the strain of increasing loneliness. While it was being published in Vienna in December 1891, George met Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The seventeen year old Austrian poet seemed an excellent choice with whom to build his artistic empire for the improvement of the German language of poetry. When Hofmannsthal declined to play a leading role in his artistic schemes, George became dejected. Their conflict of interests appears to have contributed to the morose atmosphere of Algabal which George published in Paris in November 1892.²⁶ The important meeting and its repercussions are therefore covered in this thesis in the introduction to the chapter on Algabal.

The year 1892 was profitable for George despite its gloomy beginnings with Hofmannsthal. Encouraged by the example of Mallarmé, George had worked hard to form his own circle. His efforts were now rewarded:

als Algabal vollendet wird, [beginnt] Georges Einsamkeit sich zu lichten, zum erstenmal findet er Freunde die ihn begreifen, Mitstrebende die ihn fühlen und fördern, lebende Dichter die er menschlich ehren und von denen er künstlerisch lernen kann, eine geistige Luft die er atmen mag.²⁷

The plans he had made in 1888 for a literary Mappe of writings by several artists finally materialized as Blätter für die Kunst (1892-1919). George founded this journal with Carl August Klein, a university classmate, as editor. The

first of twelve volumes, privately published at irregular intervals in Berlin, was issued in October 1892.

George's views are set forth in the anonymous introductions of Blätter für die Kunst.²⁸ The first issue states his basic tenets. For example, his elitism is evident in the following: "Diese zeitschrift im verlag des herausgebers hat einen geschlossenen von den mitgliedern geladenen leserkreis."²⁹ The journal was not intended for the general public. Its purpose was to present literary works of art dissociated from political and social problems:

Der name dieser veröffentlichung sagt schon zum teil was sie soll: der kunst besonders der dichtung und dem schrifttum dienen, alles staatliche und gesellschaftliche ausscheidend. Sie will die GEISTIGE KUNST [...] eine kunst für die kunst.³⁰

George's aestheticism is opposed to the harsh realism of the Naturalists. He believes art should emphasize the positive aspects of life³¹ and is "gegen das derbe und niedre des zeitgenössischen schreibewesens".³² The Naturalists, on the other hand, stress the negative in order to effect social change: "Der 'naturalismus' hat nur verhässlicht wo man früher verschönte aber strenggenommen nie die wirklichkeit wiedergegeben."³³

By means of Blätter für die Kunst George reaffirmed his high literary standards. The contributors to his journal strengthened the framework of his artistic empire and left the gate open for others to enter. Much remained to be done

to consolidate his position in the artistic community.

The eventful year 1892--the conflict with Hofmannsthal and the hectic preparations for the publication of Algabal and Blätter für die Kunst--took its toll on George. Months of nervous exhaustion, which he calls "ein lästiges unwohlsein" [sic]³⁴ began in September 1892. In October he refers to his illness as "nervenschwäche [...] die mich zeitweis niederwirft und dann wieder den gewohnten gang gehen lässt".³⁵ The coincidence of this nervous illness with the publication of an advance edition of Algabal in September,³⁶ and the launching of his journal in October, ends a phase in George's life and art:

Nach dem Aufruhr der Seele in den Algabal-Gedichten ist jetzt die Atmosphäre beruhigt. Der Dichter, der im Herbst 1892 in Paris so schwer erkrankt war, [...] fand im Frühjahr 1893 in Bingen Genesung und sah die Umwelt mit den Augen eines langsam Gesundenden in neuer Form und Farbe.³⁷

George's more positive outlook upon his recovery is reflected in his next collection of poems which provides a change from the dark vision of Algabal: his new trilogy Die Bücher der Hirten- und Preisgedichte · der Sagen und Sänge und der hängenden Gärten (1895) marks a new phase in George's development.

George's subsequent collections of poems are as follows: Das Jahr der Seele (1897), Der Teppich des Lebens und die Lieder von Traum und Tod · mit einem Vorspiel (1899), Der

siebente Ring (1907), Der Stern des Bundes (1914) and Das neue Reich (1928).³⁸ The titles of the last two collections designate George's artistic empire of kindred spirits.

Over the years George traveled extensively in western Europe forming a network, with central nodes in Berlin, Munich and Heidelberg, of poets, artists, university professors and other intellectuals united by their reverence for George: "at the apex of his career [George] had written the finest collection of his poems, Der Siebente Ring, and had acquired bands of admirers in several of the large German towns. And so what came to be known as 'the George circle' was formed."³⁹

In the latter half of his life, among his numerous friends, George found a measure of harmony that he lacked in his twenties. His supremacy in German poetry was now assured and he looked proudly upon the "reich des Geistes"⁴⁰ that was his artistic empire and spiritual home:

Wie die deutschen Kaiser von pfalz zu pfalz zogen,
überall prüfend, richtend, ordnend, eingreifend,
belebend, anfeuernd, so zog er zeit seines lebens
landauf und landab, früher pilger und fahrender
sänger oder verbannter könig, später allgegenwärtige
seele und nie ermüdender herzschlag des Reiches.
[...] überall, wo er Dichter und Mitstreiter fand,
war er zu hause.⁴¹

After 1914 George remained in Germany except for vacations in the Swiss Alps.⁴² He was staying in Minusio, Switzerland, when, in late November 1933, his health suddenly

deteriorated and he was taken to a clinic in Muralto. There, in the company of several friends, he died on December 4, 1933 at the age of sixty-five.⁴³

The establishment of the George-Kreis was the fulfillment of George's childhood dream of leadership and his youthful striving toward his artistic empire of kindred spirits. However, at the time of the writing and publication of Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal (1890-92) his quest was still in its formative stages. This thesis therefore identifies and discusses the conflicts experienced by the persona of the poet in this trilogy of poems. The development of George's concept of the poet, in relation to his conflicts, is traced from his initial self-affirmation in Hymnen to his doubts about his ability to reach his goals in Pilgerfahrten and Algabal.

Each of the three chapters is a critical study of one collection of poems. All of the poems in Hymnen and selections from Pilgerfahrten and Algabal are examined. The emphasis is on Hymnen and Pilgerfahrten in which, Morwitz notes, the essential conflicts of the poet are raised: "'Hymnen' und 'Pilgerfahrten' enthalten in verhältnismässig wenigen Gedichten alle Elemente des neuen Stils und der geistigen Probleme, die den Dichter nicht nur damals, sondern zeit seines Lebens beschäftigten."⁴⁴ For this reason, and to avoid excessive repetition of conflicts already considered,

the chapter on Algabal focuses on six representative poems.

In the chapter on Hymnen the poems are discussed in thematic groups, to highlight the areas of conflict the poet experiences, rather than in the order in which George arranged the poems for publication. He did not necessarily arrange his poems chronologically within a collection because "eine rein historische Anordnung ihm stets als ein zu billiges und abgebrauchtes Kunstmittel erscheint."⁴⁵ The selected poems in Pilgerfahrten, with one exception, are discussed in George's sequence because a pilgrimage implies a linear progression toward a goal. As George divides Algabal into three sections, "Im Unterreich", "Tage", and "Die Andenken", it is appropriate to treat the six selected poems in his order.

II. HYMNEN: SELF-AFFIRMATION

Er hat den griffel der sich sträubt zu führen (10)

When George began to write Hymnen during the Easter holidays in 1890 he was familiar with several languages and literatures, for he was studying this field at the University of Berlin and had spent two years traveling in western Europe. Between October 1889 and March 1891 he attended lectures on Shakespeare, French, philosophy, nineteenth-century German drama, literary and historical criticism, the history of art, and Italian.

The poems originated in the spring and summer of 1890, on the Rhine and in Berlin, Copenhagen, Bad Kreuznach and Paris, and were published in October 1890 in Berlin. They are dedicated to Carl August Klein, a university classmate who became his first literary advocate in Germany by serving as editor of George's Blätter für die Kunst (1892-1919). The dedications and inscriptions for Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal first appeared in the second edition (1899). The inscription of Hymnen offers George's song and poetic dream to the new man who is receptive to the musicality and imaginative possibilities of language:

Kurz eh es fröhling ward begann dies lied
 Bei weissen mauern und im uferried
 All unsres volkes neuen söhnen hold
 Spielt durch ein jahr der traum in blau und gold (8)

The Hymnen are songs in praise of life. It is characteristic of George to use liturgical language to evoke the poet's mystical relationship to the universe and the sacred nature of his calling. These "Lobgesänge", as Morwitz calls Hymnen, illustrate George's belief that the poet's highest task is to praise. He considers it unpoetic to dwell on the negative.¹ Boehringler quotes George: "Der dichter stellt alles dar, was zur menschlichen würde gehört. NUR verneinendes dichtet er nicht. Poetry is praise."² The ethereal and radiant vision of Hymnen, "der traum in blau und gold" (8), conveys the self-affirmation George felt in the summer of 1889 in the presence of Mallarmé and the Symbolist poets in Paris.

A. The Poet and his Art

Certain poems in Hymnen emphasize the young poet's affirmation of his art. The poems are examined, not in George's sequence, but in thematic groups which illustrate how he sees himself as a poet. The muse is featured as his inspiring and imaginary kindred spirit. In addition, the dreamer is seen lost in thought away from the crowds. Alone

with his poetic visions, he sometimes pictures himself a royal figure in the private kingdom of his artistic imagination. With the muse's blessing, he devotes his life to the consecrated task of writing poetry.

1. The Muse and her Initiate

"Weihe", the first poem in Hymnen, expresses the poet's dedication to create beautiful works. Only when he is so confirmed in his dedication that he rises above earthly cares does the muse initiate him into the realm of poetry. The title of the poem with its religious overtones conjures up the entry of a person into consecrated activity such as the priesthood. The achievement of poetic inspiration is a solemn, though ecstatic, event similar to the religious transport of a worshipper.

The poet withdraws from the tumult of everyday life to devote himself to his art. The serene riverside landscape reflects his inner tranquility which is conducive to poetic inspiration. "An starkem urduft · ohne denkerstörung" (9) he prepares for the moment of inspiration. Free from distractions, his inner eye is ready to behold the essence of things³ and to capture it in words. The rustling foliage and shifting mist evoke the heightened state of his perception. Singing elves herald new vistas open to him in a

world of fantasy. Gazing from the river to the stars, from earthly reality to a higher plane of existence, his comprehension of time and space changes. His imagination carries him beyond the tree branches, "der zweige zackenrahmen" (9), which seem to frame an art object, toward the constellations. His creativity transforms the world into a work of art, a shelter from chaos.⁴

The poet's vision is strengthened by the inspiring figure: "die herrin" (9) is the muse, as well as an ideal beloved, who initiates him into the art of poetry.⁵ Her eyes tell of dreams in store for the poet. Veiled in lunar radiance she descends to give him her blessing in the form of a kiss. This gesture is "die segnung" (9) for the one who is "rein und so geheiligt" (9). The poet draws her closer as if she were real. This motion hints at his dissatisfaction with the individuals of his imagination. For the moment, though, the appearance of the ethereal being does not stir any conflict within the poet who concentrates on summoning his visions. He makes the transition from outer to inner reality without turmoil. However, subsequent adjustments from one level of experience to another are not always so unencumbered.

In "Verwandlungen" the muse appears to the poet according to the state of his soul which is reflected in

different landscapes. The metamorphoses of the muse suggest the flexibility and power of language to convey the visions teeming within the poet.

On a path bathed in evening shadows she smiles, with soothing breath, in her golden chariot wafted down on pearl-gray wings by linden trees fluttering in the breeze. When a boat plies the waters, far from its destination, she smiles playfully, with caressing breath, in her silver chariot which is fanned through the sea spray. After sundown, the time of shipwrecked dreams, she drives a steel chariot through clouds of smoking lava. Smiling tempestuously, with searing breath, she rides in the wake of the storm-tossed boat.

The three vignettes of the muse symbolize the type of poetry produced during times of inner calm, liveliness or agitation. Sometimes the poet feels he is on firm ground, whereas on other occasions he compares himself to a vessel heading toward an unseen harbor during a storm.

In "Gespräch", which records only her part in the dialogue,⁶ the muse is a confidante for the troubled poet. He has evidently implored her to assume living human form, but the muse informs him that such a metamorphosis cannot occur. He must not allow his relationships with women to interfere with his writing. "Königlich" (20) he resists

their charms, for to pursue them would be incompatible with his commitment to art. He finds the women enticing, yet forbidding, and avoids them somewhat reluctantly. His ambivalence does not yet jeopardize his determination to write, but his prolonged solitude is beginning to take its toll.

To alleviate his loneliness the muse voices her wish to become a mortal so that she could offer him a "labetrunk aus hoher sfäre" [sic] (20). However, this gift of "Intuition"⁷ would not console the poet who remains alone with his disappointments and triumphs. As a "leichter wolke kind und lichter plane" (20) she can only share his joys and "duldung" (20) from a distance. Her "schattenkuss" (20), which inspired him in "Weihe", torments him here for it reminds him that a companion will never materialize from mere poetic inspiration. The muse, synonymous with an imaginary beloved, is his ideal companion for the present,⁸ but his dissatisfaction with this ethereal entity will soon lead to a crisis in Pilgerfahrten.

2. The Solitary Dreamer

"Im Park" addresses the problem of how to deal with the sensory world without surrendering to it and thus becoming lost to poetry. The artist triumphs over nature

by stylizing it, imposing an artificial order upon existence, just as man controls and arranges nature into parks. Through the power of language a stretch of lawn becomes a carpet covered with droplets of rubies and pearls from the jet of a fountain.

While others around him yield to the enchantment of the sensory world, the dreamer listens also to the sounds of spring, but keeps to the shade, the periphery of life. Alone in his arduous task, he looks inward and communicates with the spirits of his imagination. The ability to turn away from temptation, from "der töne lockung" (10), in an effort to maintain an artistic distance, is part of the challenge of writing: "Er hat den griffel der sich sträubt zu führen" (10). The artist must learn to reconcile the forces that pull him in two opposite directions: toward physical beauty, on the one hand, and toward the artistic expression of this beauty, on the other hand.

This vacillation between passion for life and dedication to art is an example of what Gundolf believes to be the conflict central to George's life and work: a "Grundspannung [...] zwischen Leidenschaft und Weihe--zwischen dem rückhaltlosen Drang ins Einzel-Schöne und dem steten Willen schöne Welt zu schaffen".⁹ Gundolf defines "Leidenschaft" in the sense of "tiefer Lebensglut und frommer Bindung",¹⁰ not merely reeling senses.

The poet is by nature particularly vulnerable to the lure of the sensory world, but he will protect his will to create art by striving for an equilibrium of passion and dedication. His aloofness from those who heed the call of spring links with his rejection of the women in "Gespräch" and stems from the artist's need to safeguard his devotion to his task.

"Ein Hingang" presents a contrast to "Im Park". The poet who rejoiced in the challenge of writing now succumbs to the strain. Here it is not the manifold beauty of the visible world that hinders his concentration, but rather his loss of confidence. The physical setting is the background for his inner journey. The trees lining the beach stand as if joining hands in farewell. A ray of sunlight seems to coax him to linger in life, or in his present way of life, but already he is looking "ins blaue grenzenlose" (16) beyond the morning-glory arbor which represents his familiar existence. The young "dulder" (16) continues to believe in his poetic ability: "An neues lied noch dämmert ihm ein glaube" (16). He scans the horizon as if to foretell the future: the clouds shaped like mountain peaks and the ships hint that the summit of his dreams is inaccessible and the 'cargo' the future will ferry to him is meagre.

The poet apparently concludes that "seiner wunsche

wunderlande" (16) is a wasteland. No longer able to bear the anguish of thwarted aspirations, he is about to take "das göttliche geschenk" (16) of death¹¹ without lamenting or thinking about his literary reputation. The negativity of "Ein Hingang" is an exception to the generally buoyant tone of Hymnen.

In the two "Bilder" the poet applauds the artist's power to triumph over nature. By honoring the achievements of the two painters he reinforces his faith in his own work. Whereas death almost claims the disheartened poet in "Ein Hingang", the first poem of "Bilder", entitled "Der Infant", depicts the artist's victory over death.

"Der Infant" was a very young prince¹² whose life was cut short by a fatal chill. While other stern portraits on the wall attest to the hardships of adulthood, the portrait of the prince retains the freshness of boyhood. It is so lifelike that the boy is described as its twin brother. In the work of art time seems to stand still. The painter, like the poet, can arrest the passage of time by capturing the moment, in this case a moment in childhood. The boy seems to live on in the painting, just as the painter and the poet live on through their masterpieces. To a certain degree, the artist can hold on to what is transitory and thus triumph over nature.

"Ein Angelico", the second poem in "Bilder", is a tribute to the sanctity of artistic creation. The idea of art as a triumph over nature, including death, is continued from "Der Infant". To construct a new reality the poet uses the written word and the painter applies substances extracted from nature, for example, wheat, slate and indigo, to his brush to carry out "die glorreich grosse tat" (21) of creating a work of art. In addition, the religious theme of the masterpiece underlines the connection between art and religion.

"Ein Angelico" describes Le Couronnement de la Vierge, a painting George saw in the Louvre, by Fra Angelico, an Italian painter and Dominican monk of the Renaissance.¹³ The example of this devout painter-monk serves to stress George's concept of the model artist as virtuous, reverent and dedicated. The poet tries to emulate the noble qualities embodied by Fra Angelico. The artist is a heroic figure insofar as he promotes heroic virtues in his art. Not until Der siebente Ring (1907) does the poet emerge as a heroic figure. The subjects of "Bilder", the Spanish prince and the Lord "im glanze reinen königtumes" (21), reflect George's interest in the royal bearing and the noble spirit. The identification of the poet with persons of exalted stature, including knights, artists and royalty, occurs frequently in George's poetry and suggests the nobility and sovereignty

he aspires to in his own artistic domain.

3. The Royal Figure

The royal personage in "Nachmittag" is the poet in "den palästen" (12) of his private kingdom of art. The southern city languishing in the scorching mid-day sun parallels his intense emotional state. Although it becomes intolerable for him to be constantly alone with his overheated imagination, he manages to use even the times of restlessness to fuel the will to write.

An ominous silence pervades the deserted streets now that the crowd has vanished from the vicinity of the palace, as though the feverish workings of the poet's imagination envelop him in a climate that others find too stifling. A long wall signifies the barrier between him and others. The courtyard enclosed by pillars with its rapidly evaporating fountain and wilting vegetation resembles his desiccated inner life. The musty aroma of fading flowers signals the stagnation of poetic inspiration.

To the poet, "dem Einsamen" (12), the sun brings "Gegenglut für zerstörende gluten" (12). The destructive blaze of his visions which fail to coalesce into a poem drives him out of his cool room. The inner sanctum of the poet's mind, which harbors fragile and precious visions, is

a chilly stronghold insulated from the warmth of life. Tired of "des gemaches duftender kühle" (12), where he is engrossed in mental abstractions, he needs the concrete sensation that the sunshine provides. After an unproductive session of writing he steps outside, not to absorb more impressions from the sensory world, as he did in "Im Park", but to lose himself in it.

His poetic vision is not as clear as the cloudless sky for he welcomes the forgetfulness that results from complete surrender to the sensory world. He grows faint in the sun, yields to "rettender schwäche" (12) and collapses against a pillar. In "Im Park" the conscientious writer is alert to the detrimental effect that self-abandonment to the sensory world can have, but in "Nachmittag" he gravitates toward it in order to shut out the myriad impressions that assail him.

The regal poet no longer falters in "Neuländische Liebesmahle I" in which a bond between him and his companions restores his poetic vision. It appears that the 'love feast' is a metaphor for an assembly of poets¹⁴ and alludes to the spiritual nourishment of the participants. George's explanation of the title expresses his belief that poets are the chosen few with a special perception of the world: "Liebesmahle [...] waren in erster zeit der aufblühenden jesuslehre

die versammlungen der auserwählten."¹⁵

The meeting pictured in "Neuländische Liebesmahle I" could be based on George's association with Mallarmé and his circle in Paris. A deep reverence for poetry united the poets in Mallarmé's home, "ce temple béni de la méditation."¹⁶ The joining of hands "Zu träumen einen melodienstrom" (13) symbolizes their spiritual rapport as melodious verses well within them.

The incense and candles, part of ecclesiastical ritual, reinforce the connection between poetry and religion already established in "Weihe" and "Ein Angelico". Just as a worshipper experiences the nearness of his god, the poet intensifies his own vision, inspired partly by burning candles and incense "wie in heiligem dom" (13). Piety and sensuousness, "frommer wunsch mit süsser gier" (13) are in balance at the love feast.

It appears that the poets' gathering excludes women. The poet strives toward what Gundolf terms "Maß", a balance of "Leidenschaft" and "Weihe"¹⁷ which the presence of women would disturb: "Kein zarter anhauch! nein in jenen chören / Wird jungfräulicher flaum den einklang stören" (13). Amid swirling incense fumes, each poet paints an image in words of his ideal companion¹⁸ or muse.

The celebrants in part I of "Neuländische Liebesmahle"

seem to be transposed in part II to more exotic surroundings. Clad in burnous and seated on mats of woven hair in a luxurious tent, they listen to ceremonious pronouncements which call forth the poet's childhood fantasy of kingship as he watches a servant bow before the ruler: "Mir dämmert wie in einem zauberbrunnen / Die frühe zeit wo ich noch könig war" (14). The ruler is perhaps Mallarmé, an oracular poet-king of an artistic empire such as young George wished to form. Morwitz emphasizes the importance of George's boyhood dream of being a king:

Die Umgebung ruft in dem Dichter die Erinnerung an seine eigene frühe Kindheit wach, in der er sich König in einem imaginären Reich dünkte - eine Rückerinnerung, die fast in jedem Werk des Dichters zutage tritt und eine bedeutsame Rolle spielt, weil sie die Grundlage für die Stellung des Dichters zu den Menschen seiner Zeit bildet.¹⁹

In "Rückblick" the poet surveys the literary territory he has conquered like a king taking stock of newly won lands. He lifts the curtain of his memory to reveal the landscape from which he has just returned:²⁰ "Noch einmal ahn ich hinterm vorhang [...] / Das ziel vor kurzer zeit treu meinem zepter" (19). The scepter of the poet-king is the magic wand of word-sorcery which transforms reality into a work of art. Time, distance and the poet's vision interact so that the landscape imprinted in his memory is "nun schon zauber-au" (19). He remembers how the sight of the ships added

color to his vision and strength to his faith in his art:
"O meer das mütterlich an meine lieder mir den glauben
mehrte" (19).

B. The Poet in Society

The poet strives to affirm his self-image not only through his art, but also in his relationships. In this section the poems are examined in thematic groups, rather than in George's sequence, focusing on his disillusionment in love as an outsider who observes the masses from afar. Occasionally he befriends someone who seems to understand him, or glimpses a sympathetic-looking passer-by. Still, he wonders whether he can enjoy friendships that others seem to find so readily, or whether his happiness tends to be limited to his artistic endeavors.

1. Love and Disillusionment

In "Einladung" the poet accompanies a girl on a walk away from the city at Easter. The poem presents two sets of antitheses: one is the temperament of the poet and his companion, and the other is the city as opposed to the country. The city and the country stand for the worlds of art and life respectively. The movement from one sphere

to the other is the change in state of mind. The poet is plagued by "rauhem getobe / Quätlendem irren" (10) which is both the noisy confusion of the city and the labyrinth of introspection, in the realm of art, which echoes with the muse's voice. Just as he must leave the city now and then, he sometimes welcomes a break from his writing, for, as the poem "Verwandlungen" shows, the muse does not always grant harmonious visions.

The "mauern und staub" (10) of the city represent the self-imposed barriers dividing the poet from others, as well as from his own goals, and the debris of experience that collects in his mind like dust. The outing, a break from being fenced in with his writing, will clear the mental debris so that the essence of his experiences can be converted into a work of art. He will return to the city, refreshed by the influx of new impressions and eager to write again.

The countryside on the morning of the religious occasion is luminous with the new growth of spring, but the poet is not quite in tune with the environment. His serious, contemplative temperament and slightly wintry reserve prevent him from abandoning himself fully either to the natural surroundings or to the warmth of friendship. In contrast, his unreflective and jovial companion delights in the landscape and indulgently bears his somber mood. It appears

that she can share his joys, but not his sorrows.

He follows her to a viewpoint on top of a hill, but the two of them see differently. His thoughts are focused inwardly, while hers are directed outwardly. She enjoys the situation for its own sake, whereas he broods over their relationship. Instead of enjoying the moment the poet analyzes it, conscious of how his expectations are never met. He is weighed down by the realization that she is not the one for him. He tends to think in terms of absolutes and is constantly disappointed when, inevitably, reality falls short of his ideals. A sense of resignation and compromise imbues the poem for his relationship with her is not the absolute love of his dreams:

Wenn auch neu nur von oben
 Einziger liebe lohe
 Endliche rettung mir däuchte
 Und dauernde leuchte (10).

Life-affirming renewal is a characteristic of nature as well as the "auferstehungsfeier" (10). Due to his fundamental ambivalence the poet's self-affirmation is only tentative. The girl's childlike cheerfulness temporarily alleviates his burdensome solitude causing "nagende plagen" (11) to vanish. Although the outing regenerates him to a point, the melancholy undertone of the poem, typical of the early collections, shows that he never forgets his essential isolation.

In "Nachthymne" the poet is under the spell of a woman who takes no notice of him. He sadly regards the pebbles on the ground that her dress skims as she walks because for him her touch is only a dream. He laments that the ancient gods were more merciful than she because at least they rewarded those who praised them. The example of a boy of antiquity, who gave his life in praise of the gods, parallels the poet's willingness to make a sacrifice for his beloved. Hymnen may be seen as a kind of offering in the service of art. The gods and the fervent crowd lauded "das reine opfer" (16) of the boy, just as George's colleagues greeted Hymnen favorably:²¹ "sang ich nicht zu dröhnenden fanfaren / Der freudenliebe sonnen-ode" (17). He ponders whether his own sacrifice would match the selflessness of the boy's.

A mere glance from the woman would cause him to close his "psalter" (17), i.e. his songs of praise:²² having sung her praises in his poetry, he would renounce his art and the happiness it affords. As in "Ein Hingang", he would even be ready to die without the recognition his further works would have earned. The blend of religion and poetry, piety and sensuality, recalls "Neuländische Liebesmahle I". As in "Neuländische Liebesmahle I", "frommer wunsch mit süsser gier" (13) are in balance. Despite the intrusion of passion, he persists in his sacred task. He incorporates his passion, of almost religious fervor, for the heedless woman into a

work of art. He resembles both a medieval Minnesänger courting an unattainable lady and the boy of antiquity "angeglüht von frommem feuer" (16). His invocation to the woman has the immediacy and solemnity of a prayer: "Geruhe du nur dass ein kurzer schimmer / Aus deiner wimper brechend mich versehre" (17). The stately tone belies his emotional agitation.

A sense of resignation and loss pervades the poem, but there is also the promise of a recovery of loss through the medium of art. The poet may not be free to express his love directly to the woman, but he can reveal it in writing. Although, in the resolution of the poem, death beckons to the would-be suitor, it does so only after he has extolled his beloved through art. "Nachthymne" is therefore a celebration of poetry as a vehicle for praising life.

In "Strand" a hoped-for transition in the poet's relationship with a woman from coolness to passion is expressed as a journey from northern to southern climes. The waves of the northern sea, the unstable element, evoke a relationship subject to the winds of fate and tides of uncertainty. The southern pond landscape represents a desired future state of their relationship which he anticipates from his vantage point on the shoreline of the present.

The poet says that they have masked their true feelings of passion for too long. Their outward composure is misleading. Likewise, the calmness of the sea is deceptive for imperceptible undercurrents can develop into crashing waves. Only gently swooping seagulls and the sky are reflected on the surface of the water.

The inanimate, monochrome coastal scene contrasts with the botanically prolific, colorful interior wetland. The vast and formless sea suggests the ill-defined limits of the personal relationship and the great distance to be covered in order to determine its outlines. The southern pond landscape is a sheltered and nurturing environment, suggesting the greater intimacy of the pair. The passage of the couple from the "wellauen" (17) in "dem fahlen norden" (17) to "weihern grün mit moor und blumenspuren" (17) symbolizes a bridal trip. The primeval landscape serves as an altar and swans are "unser brautgeleit" (17) in this paradise. The richly textured profusion of southern plants heightens the sensuousness of the poem. In the future the northern flora may be replaced by laurel, tea and aloe of warmer climes, symbolizing the closer relationship of the couple.

2. The Outsider

"Von einer Begegnung" deals with the poet's feeling of kinship with an unknown passer-by. It appears that the poet-ruler of "Nachmittag" is revitalized by the cool evening after the scorching day. When a woman suddenly passes by the pillars he is immediately attracted to her and shyly ventures to look upon her clear complexion and slender outline. Her beauty stirs tears of longing and he looks away without having made eye contact. "Nachthymne" also treats an encounter with a woman who is unaware of her admirer and the poems he dedicates to her. In both poems his admiring gaze is not returned.

In "Von einer Begegnung" he prays that the woman will cross his path again "Dass neue nicht die fernem formen stören" (13). Her image in his memory is fading as new impressions displace the old. Long nights are spent conjuring her image to fix it more securely in his mind: "Treu zug um zug dein bildnis zu beschwören" (13). If only he could see her again to refresh his memory, he could paint a more accurate portrait of her in words. She does not reappear and his tears obscure "was mühevoll ich male" (13).

The sight of the graceful woman wrests him away from his familiar course in life: "Die blicke mein so mich dem pfad enttrafften" (12). The terms "zaubertoll" (13) and

"beschwören" (13) suggest that the poet is a conjuror who is himself bewitched. At night, the time for reflection, he falls under her spell and is inspired to write, but passion and sorrow disrupt the artistic distance required. His vision of the encounter remains fragmented like an unfinished musical composition: "Es geht ... wie war dein haar und wie dein auge? / Es geht und stirbt in bebendem finale" (13).

The poet, as magician, painter and composer, is caught in the struggle between passion and dedication and between memory and time. Passion combines with time's weakening effect on his memory to impede his artistic creativity. The components of a poetic vision, such as the woman's features in "Von einer Begegnung", can come into focus only when inspiration is tempered with emotional objectivity.

In "Auf der Terrasse" the poet contemplates the view from a park. The river pours down from the hills like green paint from a jar. Nestled among the tangled trees are homes he imagines to be happy since no one with the poet's extreme sensitivity lives in them. In the park the statue of a goddess casts a shadow on a vase. This phenomenon serves as a sundial for the poet to mark the time of a chance encounter to come. He is about to fall under the spell of a woman as if she has stepped out from the design

on an ancient Greek vase. His reverie is suddenly interrupted when this woman rides past in a carriage. Sensing an affinity with her, he hastens toward her and a glimmer of reciprocal understanding unites the two the instant their eyes meet.

The incident spurs him to return to the same place, at the same time, on another day. He knows she is aware of his interest and hopes she may reappear. The poet, who is retiring and "zaubertoll" (13) in "Von einer Begegnung", now waits "in törichter ekstase" (19), emboldened to strengthen their fleeting mutual recognition. As if to trace the event in his memory, he looks for the tracks left by the carriage, but they have worn away. The image of the tracks links with the idea in "Von einer Begegnung" of the continuous displacement of old impressions by new ones in the mind like the obliteration of wheel marks by subsequent traffic.

To his surprise, she rides past again and her doleful eyes mirror his own sadness: "aus dem abendrote / Getauschter blicke las ich meine trauer" (19). The glances exchanged are compared to the rose haze of the evening. The sunset is an appropriate image for the brilliant moment which soon recedes into the darkness of the past. The image complements the opposition of light and dark in connection with the first meeting of the two people: "Ein blitz: für

uns ein zug von wunderstaben / Sogleich ergriffen durch
erhöhte gnade • / Dann aber ach in stete nacht begraben .."

(19). No words are spoken, but the eye contact and shared emotion form a brief bond. The discovery of a possible kindred spirit quiets his restlessness, if only temporarily.

"Hochsommer" evokes the indolence of elegant society at a park. Alone and silent, the poet is aware of the sounds that rise, fall and mingle in the atmosphere of laxity around him. He registers the hush that falls over the terraces as people congregate in the gardens. Gracious couples stroll arm in arm, in the shade of plane trees, conversing and greeting each other. Questions, as charming and devoid of lasting substance as perfume, hover in the air. Whispers crescendo and subside. The rhythmic splash of gondola oars punctuates the music, not of ponderous drums, but soothing violins. Children play and riders on horseback pass by at a leisurely pace. The poet observes, but does not participate in, the way of life that he summarizes as follows: "Weise schlaffheit • nur im bade / Wahre gnade" (18). His absence from the poem hints that he is not fully at home with the merriment which, for him, does not conceal the lack of true communication. No kindred spirit is to be found where communication remains at the level of superficiality displayed by the people in the park.

The poet has little in common with the carefree crowd. In the park others find the peace that eludes him everywhere. The frivolity of high society contrasts with his emphasis on the deed and his seriousness of purpose:

"Fröhliche galante leere / Feindlich trübem tatenmeere" (18).

Idleness is not portrayed favorably. The poet will not meet a kindred spirit among these "genussmenschen" for, as George wrote to a school friend, he himself is an idealist:

Die genussmenschen sind die anscheinend glücklichsten [...] und doch möchte man nicht mit ihnen tauschen - [...] reformen zum besten der menschheit, [...] alles gute was kam alles böse was abgeschafft ward - ist nicht durch genussmenschen bewirkt worden, sondern durch die, zu deren schlag wir uns bekennen!!²³

C. Pause for Reflection

The experiences, or imaginative visions, that inspired Hymnen are unified in the symbol of a garden in "Die Gärten schliessen", the last poem of the collection. The poet and the gardener alike artfully organize nature into a chosen pattern. The poet's garden of art now seems desolate in contrast to the park with its happy crowds in "Hochsommer". The lonely garden trails obscured by early dusk, and the ponds catching the rain, symbolize the poet's uncertain path enveloped in the darkness and cold of self-doubt.

"Glückliche Apolle und Dianen" (22), statues shrouded

in mist, are the artistic manifestations of the Apollos and Dianas of his imagination. Through a fog of despair he dimly sees his kindred spirits, as yet unknown. To the solitary dreamer, who watches the procession of couples walking in the park in "Hochsommer", the statues in "Die Gärten schliessen" seem happy for theirs is a lasting companionship. Exempt from the conflicts that beset mortals, they radiate a calm repose. The coexistence of the statues of Apollo and Diana suggests a balance of opposites the poet seeks in his own life: "It is between the sunlit world of Apollo, of light and clarity of perception, and that of Diana, the world of night and moonlight, of dream and fantasy, that the pilgrim's path now lies."²⁴ The statues also bear witness to the permanence of art as opposed to the transience of nature. The poet chisels poems of sculpted perfection which withstand the passage of time.

The change of seasons coincides with the end of a phase in the poet's life. When fall winds propel the crisp leaves toward the tombs, and the flowers exude a symphony of scent as they wilt drowsily down to the moss, the poet's thoughts turn to his future:

Heisse monde flohen aus der pforte.
 Ward dein hoffen deine habe?
 Baust du immer noch auf ihre worte
 Pilger mit der hand am stabe? (22)

The burning moons that seem to have sped through the garden

gate are the months of glowing poetic inspiration for Hymnen. The poet asks himself whether he has accomplished his goals and whether he relies too much on what other people say. According to Morwitz, a negative answer to these questions is implied.²⁵ The very last line of Hymnen marks the beginning of a new phase to be explored in Pilgerfahrten.

Hymnen is a celebration of the poet's calling. Inspired by the muse, his imaginary kindred spirit, he conjures up poetic visions and transforms them into songs in praise of life. The creative process affords the solitary dreamer a religious sense of awe regarding the universe, as well as a sense of power. Like a holy man or a king, he considers his role a special one and applies himself diligently to its challenges.

The poet rejoices in his ability to give form to his impressions. For example, his concept of poetry is symbolized as a garden or park and as a palace or temple. These images are fundamental ones in George's works. His art is an orderly world, like a garden, in which he plants the germ of an idea and watches it grow in his mind's eye. Remembering his childhood fantasy of leadership, he sees himself as a royal figure with the power of language and dream at his command. The devoted poet seems a worshipper who reveres the sacred nature of art. His imaginary garden,

palace and temple express the beauty, grandeur and sanctity of his calling. His art is a refuge that ensures a protective distance between him and the disappointing world.

The poet accepts that dedication to art calls for a certain distance from everyday life, but at the same time suspects he is missing out on life. He longs for companionship despite his essential aloneness. To him solitude is both a burden and a boon. While providing the tranquility necessary for his creative goals, solitude unsettles him because he needs someone to ease his loneliness. However, suitable candidates are few and far between.

As an outsider the poet tends to be ambivalent toward himself and other people and they, in turn, prove to be sources of disillusionment and not the kindred spirits he needs. Certain relationships in Hymnen are sustained more by his dream of the way things could be than by the way they are, and others are a matter of unrequited love. Even his feeling of kinship with individuals passing by is disappointing. With an air of detached amusement he observes the easygoing sociability of the insouciant crowd, but neither wishes to join them nor to emulate them. The ascetic artist's most loyal ally remains his muse.

Neither the muse nor a kindred mortal can elevate the poet yet to a higher plane of existence. The major obstacle is his conflict between passion for life and dedication to

art, or, to repeat Gundolf's succinct formula, between "Leidenschaft und Weihe".²⁶ Nevertheless, buoyed by his conviction of his ability to write, the poet is able to keep his doubts in check and the dominant tone of Hymnen is one of praise, optimism and self-affirmation.

III. PILGERFAHRTEN: SELF-DOUBTS

Der wandrer wankt im guten wege (37)

George apparently started to write Pilgerfahrten while Hymnen was in press, in October 1890, in Berlin where he was beginning another semester of university studies. The poems were written in Berlin, Munich, Verona, Venice and Vienna and all but one¹ were published in December 1891 in Vienna.

The title of the collection refers to George's lifelong pilgrimage to find his true path to poetry and the kindred spirits to follow it with him. With its religious connotations Pilgerfahrten aptly characterizes the inner journey of the poet-pilgrim toward the ideals he holds sacred.

The inscription (1899) of Pilgerfahrten reveals both the nature of the pilgrimage undertaken by the persona of the poet and the main impetus for George's travels throughout western Europe in search of like-minded literary colleagues. In an attempt to regain his waning self-affirmation the poet embarks on a search for someone who will understand him:

Also brach ich auf
Und ein fremdling ward ich

Und ich suchte einen
 Der mit mir trauerte
 Und keiner war (26)

George's statement in the preface to the first issue (1892) of Blätter für die Kunst links with the inscription by underlining his determination to attract like-minded literary colleagues: "wenn wir diese blätter verbreiten so geschieht es um zerstreute noch unbekannte ähnlichgesinnte zu entdecken und anzuwerben."²

With this purpose in mind George introduced himself to the Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, one December evening in 1891, in the Café Griensteidl in Vienna. George was in town studying Romanticism between late October 1891 and January 1892. George was impressed by the work of the gifted seventeen year old, six years his junior, and saw in him a potential literary partner and friend with whom he could set a new standard for German poetry: "In dem jungen, klugen, anmutigen und begeisterungsfähigen Wiener glaubte er den Dichter, den Gefährten im geistigen Streit und den Freund gefunden zu haben, den zu suchen er aufgebrochen war zu seinen Fahrten."³ George told Hofmannsthal "dass ich [Hofmannsthal] unter den wenigen in Europa sei (und hier in Oesterreich der Einzige) mit denen er Verbindung zu suchen habe; es handle sich um die Vereinigung derer, welche ahnten, was das Dichterische sei."⁴

The alliance with Hofmannsthal did not provide the

literary collaboration and companionship to the extent George wished, but he was moved to commemorate the idyllic days of their first meeting: Pilgerfahrten is dedicated (1899) to Hofmannsthal "im gedenken an die tage schöner begeisterung" (26). Although the poems originated before they met,⁵ and the first edition was at the press during their meeting, Pilgerfahrten expresses the intensity of the lonely poet's search for individuals such as Hofmannsthal.

This frustrating search involved a great deal of sorrow, as George admitted to Klein at the time of the composition of Pilgerfahrten: "Sie redeten von meinem 'leid' das Sie längst geahnt aber was mehr als geahnt? so soll es sein. denn was hilft es sein leiden in matten sätzen zu äussern und breit zu treten?"⁶ The poems themselves speak for George and his sorrow.

A. The Search for Kindred Spirits

Pilgerfahrten was written "zu einer Zeit, in der der Dichter einen Ausweg aus seiner Einsamkeit kaum noch für möglich hielt und sich einem Einsiedler gleich in sich selbst zurückzog."⁷ The collection opens at a point when the reclusive poet breaks out of his passive and monastic existence in quest of the experiences which may fulfill his dream. In Hymnen, when a congenial person happens to

cross his path, he merely reacts to the chance event. The inscription of Pilgerfahrten shows that he now actively seeks the individual who best corresponds to his dream.

In "Siedlergang", the first poem, as winter merges into spring, the poet-hermit feels the chill of his self-imposed isolation and, like a blossom unfolding in the spring, seeks the warmth of human contact. The icy winds of winter barred him from the trails, just as his coolness toward people made the routes of communication impassable. He addresses his room: "Du klause manche stunden sei gemieden" (27). The writer's room, as confining and monotonous as a mine shaft, signifies toil with scant rewards. In "Nachmittag" (H) the poet flees from his cool room to extinguish the inferno of his visions in the heat outside. His overwrought nerves need the forgetfulness his torpor brings. In "Siedlergang", however, the peaceful room induces a disagreeable lassitude.

To rejuvenate his dulled senses he emerges into the landscape which sparkles with remnants of snow. His frosty reserve has melted somewhat with the snow and, unaware of disappointment to come, he joins the dance of the women in the familiar valley. The poet, who rather reluctantly spurned the women in "Gespräch" (H), is again repelled and attracted by women: "Ich hasse sie und brenne sie zu

greifen" (27). This time his ambivalence is greater and temptation is stronger. Like a spark on tinder the dancers ignite his passion, but he cannot find suitable partners in the "Tal des Lebens"⁸ because they are inferior to his ideal.

The poem presents two opposing worlds: the valley with its boisterous dance, symbol of everyday life, and the hermitage full of parchments, the artist's life. The poet-hermit shuns the valley of life, yet he is drawn to it by the vague possibility that a kindred spirit might await him there. His thoughts dwell in higher regions, among the dream figures of his art. In the midst of the revelry his mind wanders to a hilltop where he envisions "lichtgestalten" (27) on a staircase to the higher realm of poetic fantasy. Their noble bearing contrasts with the reckless abandon of the dancers far below in the valley of the commonplace.

Earlier the poet preferred the ideal figures of his imagination and scoffed at inadequate reality: "Ist alle schöne so gering?" (27) Now he is restless to locate an embodiment of his dream among his contemporaries. As it seems improbable that reality will ever coincide with his dream, a lesser degree of beauty is sufficient to move him. Certain traits of passers-by, a pale face, a fine brow, or a bejeweled arm, kindle the passion within him that for so long has been subordinated to his dedication to art.

The poet in "Im Park" (H) manages to attend to his

writing, despite his fascination with the sensory world, but in "Siedlergang" the senses have full sway. The bright red color of the dresses in the "tanz der roten frauen" (28) in "Siedlergang" suggests the passion that the dancers represent, whereas the luminescent quality of the dignified figures on the hilltop is the light of reason that governs the will. The poet's participation in the dance, while envisioning noble figures on a hill, indicates that, although he has drifted into the valley of life, his thoughts are on higher ground.

The question is posed whether the poet would be able to return to the "leben seiner treuen pergamente" (28) if he were to take part in the rite of spring again: in what frame of mind would he resume his writing after surrendering to influences that distract him from his art? Another overwhelming confrontation between the spirit and the senses would harm his concentration on writing because his ambivalent feelings would be reawakened. At least in his quiet hermitage he can resort to dreams that almost compensate for his lack of fulfillment. Art remains a constant in his life, a point of reference to which he can always return, even when temptation disturbs him. The balance between temptation and renunciation, and between "experience and expression",⁹ symbolized by the dance in the valley and the hermit's parchments, is a delicate one. As yet, there

is no solution to the lack of balance in the poet's life.

In "Lauschest du des feuers gesange", as in "Gespräch" (H) and "Siedlergang", and throughout Pilgerfahrten, he fluctuates between women and art, between temptation and the renunciation of his dependence on earthly rewards that is a desirable attribute of the artist: "durch das ganze Buch [ist] der Ton jener sinnlichen Unruhe gehalten, die zwischen Begierde und Entsagung ermattet. Das im 'Siedlergang' präludierende Motiv beherrscht die ganze Abfolge."¹⁰

In front of a hearth fire the poet reclines against the woman sitting beside him. Images of fire expressing the forces of temptation also occur in "Nachmittag" (H), "Verwandlungen" (H) and "Siedlergang": the "zerstörende gluten" (12) of sensuous visions in "Nachmittag" (H) seem to be inflamed by the sultry breath of the muse in her fiery chariot in "Verwandlungen" (H). The "roten frauen" (28) who bring the hermit's passion "zum schwülen" (27) in "Siedlergang" are linked in "Lauschest du des feuers gesange" with the woman who arouses the "kühne flammende röte (29) in his face. The fire in the grate parallels the controlled smoldering of his passion for her.

He feels he cannot linger near her because to surrender to his feelings would jeopardize the solitude necessary for his art. His happiness to be near her is partially eclipsed

by his need to maintain the integrity of his artistic self: "Ich bin in dem himmel ein sklav dem harm" (29). His ambivalence is distressing for both of them. She has in common with the ideal friend of the inscription an ability to empathize with the poet. While listening to the music of the flames she is aware of another kind of "feuers gesange" (29), his feelings for her, and she smooths his hair "in mitleid" (29). He admires her composure from which he draws strength to remain steadfastly the ascetic artist: "oft noch in fahre / Verharr ich vor deinem erhabnen stolz" (29).

Looking to the woman for solace, he compares himself to the devout who regard a madonna of ebony with dread because "frommer wunsch mit süsser gier" ("Neuländische Liebesmahle I" H 13) clash in the soul. The allusion to religious practice and the simultaneity of piety and sensuousness recall "Neuländische Liebesmahle I" in which the absence of women fosters artistic contemplation. There the will to create art persists unhindered in a favorable setting, but in Pilgerfahrten it is put to the test: "die Kunst [ist] eine Art Religion, der Künstler so etwas wie ein Heiliger geworden. Die Prüfungen des verkannten Dichters werden erzählt, als ob es sich um die Versuchung einer frommen Seele handele."¹¹ In "Lauschest du des feuers gesange" renunciation of influences which endanger his devotion to his art, enables the poet to continue his

pilgrimage.

"Lass deine tränen um ein weib" is the poet's outcry against his false notions about his relationship with a woman. It is unrealistic, and therefore false, for him to expect every woman he meets to resemble the lovely sylphs, i.e. "lichtgestalten" (27), in "Siedlergang". Impatient to meet an embodiment of his dream, he is prone to despair when reality falls short of his expectations. He tells himself to wait and see and let events take their course. The muse would probably sanction this advice of his inner voice. Restraint is the key.

The transformation of nature in the spring is used, in a way similar to the luxuriant southern landscape in "Strand" (H), to evoke a new beginning for the pair: he watches for signs of a warmer relationship with the woman, just as the melting snow and the flowers nodding in the mild breeze are signs of spring. While nature unveils its full glory in June, she may not make the transition to a summer-like passion. He should not become despondent if his future seems frozen within a hermit's enclosure, i.e. a narrow existence, because a spring-like renewal within himself will remove the barriers as it once did in "Siedlergang". Rather than try to hasten the growth of their affection, he should tend it as he would a garden, finding joy in the

changes from one season to another.

The poem advocates a moderate path between total renunciation in "Im Park" (H) and surrender to temptation in "Siedlergang". He is to be cautious not to forget his ideal in favor of the likes of the "roten frauen" (28). In this context his resignation is seen as a positive attitude.

Again in "Die jugend (so bedäucht es dich)" the feelings of the poet and a woman are not attuned to each other. In "Lauschest du des feuers gesange" he is impatient for an ardent love he cannot have. Now, however, he rebuffs a woman who encourages "ein heisses band" (30). The flame-motif is continued in the terms "entfachen" (30) and "glut" (30). His association with a cheerful woman, of the type depicted in "Einladung" (H), has negative implications. His cool and calm demeanor masks his agitation. He marvels at his attraction to her childlike laughter and empty words which, nevertheless, do not allay his fears. Earlier he enjoyed a happy companionship and overlooked its shortcomings. Now his dissatisfaction with himself and others has increased and, as in "Lauschest du des feuers gesange", a pleasant meeting is tinged with sadness.

He suffers from his aloofness and yet he fears the consequences of close involvement with people. Regardless of her delicate touch and dainty step, he will not follow

his present companion into the ranks of the lovers depicted in "Im Park" (H). As she objects to the role of "schwester" (30), he chooses to make a complete break from her. More conscious than ever of his commitment to art, he recoils from anything that does not enhance this primary commitment. Only by renouncing her can he maintain the distance from everyday life which helps him to create effective poetry: "(Glaube mir ich litt) / [...] / Erst der verschmähten ward mein volles lob" (30).

A variation on this theme is sounded in "Nachthymne" (H) in which his beloved is unaware of his literary effusions about her. He imagines that her acknowledgment of his love would mean the end of his writing, and possibly of his life, for poetry is, after all, the very core of his being. The central idea is the same in both poems: the poet praises a woman in his work as long as he is able to keep a certain distance from her.

In "In alte lande laden bogenhallen" the poet turns to his writing in order to surmount a negative experience. When life beckons to the hermit in "Siedlergang" he is unsure whether he can face his parchments again, but now that harsh reality has overwhelmed him, his writing is a shelter from crises.

A vision of the sunlit south, the traditional source

of poetic inspiration for the northerner,¹² where "getragne strofen" (30) resound along the arched corridors of a Greek temple-like building, alludes to George's own poetry: "Die Flucht in einen imaginären Süden [...] bedeutete ein Ruhefinden durch das Werk".¹³ The temple of poetry bathed in sunlight represents the "Monumentalität"¹⁴ and clarity of George's solemn poems which are called "sonnen-ode[n]" in "Nachthymne" (H 17).

The poet's retreat into his inner life takes place here after a setback in his poetic vocation or in love.¹⁵ He has escaped from "feuchter drachen krallen" (30) signifying Germany, the cold, wet north, or "nördlich verschleierte Begierde".¹⁶ George was dissatisfied with Germany, particularly its literature which was dominated by the Naturalists, and may have felt as though a dragon's claws held him in a land where the kind of poetry he sought did not exist.

It is possible that the poet seeks refuge in his work from temptation which has seized him in its talons. In a fairy tale a nick from the thorn of a rose may provide entry into a dream world.¹⁷ Similarly, a beautiful, but menacing, woman, a flawless tea rose in the poem, stirs his imagination. At the edge of a garden in the north he is scratched by a thorn. That is, as he crosses the threshold from his orderly garden of art, pictured in "Die Gärten schliessen" (H), into the chaos of life, by means of a love affair, he

is hurt by the liaison. "Mächtige mildelose" (31) denotes two facets of the woman: her beauty commands attention, but she is pitiless and does not weep. She is a beautiful, but sinister, rose without a patch of white or drop of dew to mar its yellow petals.

The poet is not ready for a sophisticated woman and looks for someone who will reflect the innocence of the less ostentatious violets and who, unlike the woman in "Die Jugend (so bedäucht es dich)", will be his 'sister'. Perhaps the woman symbolized by the rose drove the poet away, like the one in "Die Jugend", by proposing "ein heisses band" (30). The fragrance of the few violets that he finds in greenhouses revives him, but he still keeps his rose-scented scarf to remind himself of her.

According to Claude David, as the poet's ideal in poetry and in love is not yet attainable, he turns to what is at hand: keeping in mind the perfection of the tea rose, the poet is preoccupied with the lowly violets which, in Morwitz's view, embody the simplicity sought for in artistic expression and in companions.¹⁸

Both "Gesichte" continue the theme of resignation and the poet's acceptance of reality as a pale reflection of his ideal. Each poem presents a woman who tries to instill passion and fulfillment into her life by seeking the affection

of a man who turns out to be unworthy. A Venetian noblewoman forgets her unhappy marriage by seeing a frivolous suitor and the other young woman languishes over a man who is oblivious to her. These two examples of loneliness and unfulfilled dreams have certain implications for the artist's situation.

In "Gesichte I" emptiness and boredom thrive behind the facade of wealth and privilege in the case of a Venetian woman married to an old nobleman. They appear to have arrived by gondola for a cultural or social event that she only half-heartedly attends. She indolently lets her gown brush the ground and grudgingly holds onto her husband's arm. She is unmoved by soothing words. At festive gatherings she is indifferent to all but the angels depicted on the ceiling. The angels are for her what the "lichtgestalten" (27) are for the hermit in "Siedlergang"--symbols of a spiritual realm that calls to her. Like the artist, she finds happiness not among the busy throng, but in art and the religious awe it can inspire.

At times the senses ignore the dictates of the spirit. By having an affair with "einem ruhmeslosen fant" (31) the noblewoman falls into a trap comparable to the one set by the "roten frauen" (28) who beguile the hermit in "Siedlergang". The woman loses sight of her ideal, looks away from the angels, as it were, and avails herself of companionship

which, though readily available, is against her better judgment. The woman and the dandy thus represent the artist and everyday life. The predicament of the woman, who risks her well-being and reputation, echoes the poet's plight if he does not keep a certain distance from everyday life. By catering to the lower reading tastes of the public he would damage his concept of himself as a poet, if not his literary reputation. The consequences of lowering one's expectations in love, exemplified by the woman and the undeserving dandy, illuminate the artist's temptation to drift toward the life of the masses, thereby lowering his standards in art.

Temptation claims the woman in "Gesichte I", but merely threatens the woman in "Gesichte II". The latter imagines a romance with a man who passes by frequently, but does not know of her interest. Although she is aware of her folly, she persists in dreaming at the gate about meeting him again at the red tower. "Ich darf so lange nicht am tore lehn" (31), she chides herself. The repetition of this opening verse in the identical last stanza of the poem suggests that she will follow her conscience.

While "Gesichte I" exhales a sigh of ennui, "Gesichte II" is filled with longing. The plaintive strains of a distant flute seem to lament this intangible love. A faun laughing in the laurels is a reminder of the forces of

self-abandonment in the soul. To relent to these forces would mean to deny her ideals and her family: "Ich leugne was ich selber mir verheissen .. / Auch wir besitzen einen alten ruhm" (32). She also fears becoming a widow while still young, as her beloved is much older. Similarly, the poet has a duty to himself, and to the brotherhood of poets, to maintain his ideals, otherwise he may be more isolated and jaded than ever.

B. The True Path to Poetry

The title of this section derives from three poems-- "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", "Ihr alten bilder schlummert mit den toten" and "Dass er auf fernem felsenspfade"--which express his longing for "treuen gespielen" (34), "wahren auen" (34, 36) and the "guten wege" (37). His true path in life is the one that leads to his ideal companions and artistic empire.

After his preoccupation, in part A, with individuals, who only deflect him from his path, the poet-pilgrim proceeds alone. The example of the women in "Gesichte", one capricious and the other resolute, has led him to choose the course taken by the latter: he places the need to be true to himself above impulsiveness. Now that he is less inclined to allow his emotions to outdo his reason, for the time being,

art takes precedence over locating a kindred spirit. Nevertheless, it is difficult for him to bear the burden of remaining entirely alone with his beloved art which does not seem to be the anchor in his life that it was in Hymnen. The search for personal truth is a treacherous path with many a false trail branching off.

1. The Weary Pilgrim

The world beyond the hermitage that he left in "Siedlergang" is inhospitable to the lonely wanderer. The following title paints a bleak picture of his sojourn in the valley of life: "Die märkte sind öder und saiten und singende schweigen". In this poem he reflects upon the contacts he has made. Churches, palaces and dance halls are among the places where he has hoped to meet the elusive "sie" (33) of his dreams. The dance of the women in red in "Siedlergang" is only one of many events to crush his hopes: "Wie hab ich heiss gespäht / [...] / Und tränen ausgesät / Da sie mir stets entfloh!" (33). The public squares are bustling and humming with music, but to him alone they seem more desolate than they would if she were at his side. The city, that for a long time held much promise for him, now seems empty.

The restless tone is subdued by his resolve to continue

his pilgrimage without looking back: "Ich muss aus der stätte wo keinerlei gnaden mir warden / Durch wüsten weiterfliehn" (33). In the wilderness of life the bristly weeds and slippery succulents underfoot are symbols of temptation like the dragon claws and rose thorn in "In alte lande laden bogenhallen". Although he cannot escape the past, he can put it into perspective by accepting hardships and temptation as challenges, not as defeat. Paradoxically, flight, in this instance, does not mean defeat, but rather an effort to look forward to a more promising future. It is a flight from despair, not from life.

Each obstacle he removes brings him closer to a new insight. At the crest of a hill stands a thuja tree in an isolated thicket. This rare patch of greenery symbolizes the oasis in his soul that art provides the poet. The outer world, the towns and fields below, seems a colossal work of art and his inner world no longer seems barren without a kindred spirit. A Promised Land lies ahead where "weisses manna" (34) falls and "manches neue ziel" (34) will provide spiritual nourishment.

The most important insight the poet gains during his pilgrimage thus far is given in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut". The title reiterates George's faith in his ultimate dream: to be true to himself by seeking the style

of art and the kind of companions that will form the foundations of his artistic empire. His dream is the springboard to the goals revealed in the wilderness. One of these goals is to have as his true allies the daughters of his dream. These longed-for companions, the "lichtgestalten" (27) of "Siedlergang", have not been seen beyond the scope of his mind's eye, though he wishes they would materialize:

Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut
 Dass seine t chter zu treuen gespielen
 Mehr denn der irdischen eine gefielen:
 Lange hab ich ihnen zugeschaut (34).

The last stanza of the poem contains a very important key to George's works. He ponders whether his writing up to now has a central core which will make possible the realization of his dream:

L g im vergn gen an fasslichen t nen
 Die mir seit monden im munde dr hnen
 Zu neuer erscheinung ein keim?
 Kehr ich nun zu wahren auen heim? (34)

Morwitz infers a positive answer to the poet's question "ob sein Streben nach dem neuen Stil im Dichten nicht auch noch einen anderen Zweck, n mlich den der Keimbildung zur Umsetzung des Erdichteten in das Lebendige haben k nne".¹⁹

The pilgrim's great revelation is that art cradles the germ of a new reality from which his "wahren auen" (34) will sprout. His true niche in life is the domain he ruled over in his childhood dreams with his playmates as his followers. The dream companions are the forerunners of their human

counterparts, just as the imaginary empire precedes the actual George-Kreis. His task is to transpose this dream, the core of his art, into reality.

2. The Crisis

The poet feels assured that his Promised Land exists, but he is impatient because it is still far away. The title "Schweige die klage", is a kind of signpost to spur the traveler onward. Earlier a different catch phrase, "Lass deine tränen um ein weib", also the title of a poem, urged him to leave negative thoughts behind. His present advice to himself would be an appropriate motto for Pilgerfahrten: "Suche und trage / Und über das leid / Siege das lied!" (34) His poetry enables him to bear, and even overcome, sorrow which is an integral part of his chosen calling. However, he does not always give it a chance.

In "Schweige die klage" another year of perseverance and travels ends in delusion so crippling that he temporarily abandons his search. He buries his wanderer's cloak and staff and prepares to embark on a supposedly happier journey. With grim sarcasm he sees himself revelling in an offshoot from his true path--probably one which leads to Algabal's enchanted, but sinister, domain.²⁰

Da schuf er ein grab
 Für mantel und stab .

 Nun rüst ich zur fahrt
 Von fröhlicher art (35).

The mere prospect of wallowing in temptation is enough to cause a whirlpool of emotions to flood the dam of his consciousness. Profound sadness checks any impulse to begin this new and perilous journey because its rewards would be false. The thought that it might harm his poetry is more than he can bear. He almost renounced his poetry altogether, for love of a possible kindred spirit in "Nachhymne" (H), and fears he is about to do the same now. At the very tree where he has buried his pilgrim's attire he might shatter his poet's lyre:

Dann brach der damm
 Verhaltenen quellen .

 Ich soll auch am stamm
 Meine leier zerschellen (35).

He is liable to become once again the young "dulder" (16) of "Ein Hingang" (H) whose faith in his poetry was not secure enough to keep him from losing faith in life itself.

The conflict between his dedication to the true path to poetry and his temptation by the false path is more serious than before. Fortunately the muse intervenes in "Lass der trauer kleid und miene", urging him to stop mourning.²¹ Having buried his pilgrim's attire, he has come to a stand-

still at the crossroads where the muse tries to avert him from the route, mentioned in "Schweige die klage", that represents surrender to temptation. Her disheartened initiate has become cynical toward her because she can never be the ideal companion incarnate no matter how earnestly both wish it were so. All she can do is stand by him, as promised in "Gespräch" (H), and ensure that he continues to believe in her. She helps him to see, through his tears, that life is passing him by. His special calling excludes him from the affability other people enjoy, in "Im Park" (H) and "Hochsommer" (H), but not from happiness itself.

At present his garden of art lies fallow, as in "Die Gärten schliessen" (H), but it will bloom again, as he told himself in "Lass deine tränen um ein weib". Only when the inner storm abates can the seeds of his dream develop into the "wahren auen" (34) envisioned in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut". In time he will harvest his experiences and visions, symbolized by roses in bud and unripe grain, but first he must conquer the winter in his heart. To accomplish this he must start writing again.

The muse exhorts him to salvage the lyre he discarded and to sing of the past: "Sei verjährteter fahrten singer / Dass der klangdraht uns nicht rostet!" (36) The pronoun "uns" is a reminder of her steadfast allegiance. Writing about his past journeys may be beneficial. If the grim

present discourages him from seeking new experiences, he may at least find his bearings by transforming past ones into art.

In "Ihr alten bilder schlummert mit den toten" the poet has reached an impasse. He cannot yet act upon the muse's instructions. As long as he lacks the strength to poeticize his boyhood visions, the "wahren auen" (36), a phrase used here as well as in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", will be inaccessible to him. These early idealistic dreams, the core of a new reality to come, will remain dormant in his memory until his poetry calls them to life. He casts them aside for now, along with his wanderer's gear, and delights in a sensuous dream:

Ihr alten bilder [...]

Euch zu erwecken mangelt mir die macht .

Die wahren auen wurden mir verboten .

Nun kost ich an verderbnisvoller pracht (36).

His would-be bride is a sprite in a gown woven from willow flakes. When she strides down to the lake the whoosh of herons breaks the eerie steel-blue stillness. The lovely sprite vanishes behind lianas which, with their pretty blooms, but gnarled vines, evoke the potential of beautiful dreams to ensnare the poet. The beauty of the imaginary woman and landscape is a facade masking danger. He calls this dream corrupt because it is a flight toward Algabal's self-indulgent world. Instead of motivating the

poet to seek a real companion, the dream is an end in itself.

3. The Tentative Recovery

In "Neuer Ausfahrtsegen" another dream prevents the poet from resuming his pilgrimage. His hope has plummeted, since the time of "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", such that he thinks of his pilgrimage as something of the past: "Als noch verheissung mich ins ferne schickte" (36). Before the crisis in "Schweige die klage", when he still wore his pilgrim's cloak, he searched far and wide, without success, for the bride he saw in a dream. Gradually his yearning ceased and renunciation meant peace of mind until the bride reappeared in his present dream. He fears her reappearance is not a good sign:

Da langsam heisse gier nach ihr erstickte .
 Ich in entsagung frieden fast gewann .
 Sprich ob es gute fügung heissen kann
 Wenn nochmal mir dein auge nieder nickte .. (37)

The sprite in the previous poem and the dream bride reawaken feelings that compromise his ultimate goals. Renunciation of these feelings would best serve his art, as in "Die jugend (so bedäucht es dich)" when he could more easily praise a woman in his poetry only after renouncing her. However, he is no longer strong enough to forego temptations. He knows they are luring him into a false jour-

ney, the "fahrt / Von fröhlicher art" (35) in "Schweige die klage", and he struggles against it.

He prays for success in his endeavors in an imaginary church signifying the temple of poetry. By reciting his poetry, or "sang" (37), he reasserts his devotion to his art and expiates his feelings for the dream bride. Nevertheless, his questions indicate that his fascination with her makes him incapable of retrieving his pilgrim's cloak and hat: "Wo find ich wieder meinen pilgermantel? / Wo find ich wieder meinen pilgerhut?" (37)

The poet's blessing for new endeavors would preferably take him to the placid scene described in the first stanza of "Dass er auf fernem felsenpfade". In order to steel himself against the storm, i.e. menacing influences, and find his spiritual home, he needs a quiet interval in the mountains. There in the sunshine he would replenish his energies by listening to the leaves and stream.

The sunny, rocky elevation functions symbolically like the hill in "Siedlergang", where noble dream figures shimmer on a staircase, and the summit in "Die märkte sind öder" which offers the poet an invigorating view. His spirits are roused by climbing a hill in "Einladung" (H) and by gazing at the clouds in "Ein Hingang" (H). Finally, "selige gefilde" (9), among the stars in "Weihe" (H), and the

"wahren auen" (34, 36) in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut" and "Ihr alten bilder schlummert mit den toten", are part of the complex of ideas associated with his goals. In each case, the geographic elevations and celestial vistas suggest that his goals are above and beyond everyday life. The ascent to regions bathed in light, i.e. to achieve the clarity of poetic vision that will make real his ideal, is the purpose of his pilgrimage.

The mountain trail seems off limits to the poet who, in "Neuer Ausfahrtsegen", regrets the deliberate loss of his pilgrim's cloak and hat. How will he ever reach the desired spiritual heights without them? Lacking a sense of direction, he may again blunder into temptation. In "Dass er auf fernem felsenpfade" he remembers how such a lapse occurred when he was still a "wandrer" (37).

One night he became sidetracked onto a dark marsh, the antithesis of the desired sunny highland, when a single lily in the marsh piqued his curiosity. The geographic opposites reflect the polarity of temptation and renunciation. The marshy lowland here and the valley in "Siedlergang", where dancers dressed in red lurk, symbolize the depths of passion. The lily here and the tea rose in "In alte lande laden bogenhallen" are connected: the poet was led astray by a beautiful, but deceitful, young person who seemed as pure and innocuous as a lily,²² and by a selfish, rose-like woman. He needed

a guiding light for his dark world, but the angelic looks of the radiant person were his undoing.

The lily diverted him from his lofty course: "Der wandrer wankt im guten wege" (37). The bewitched wanderer could barely discern his way through the flickering nocturnal shadows as he stumbled away from the rustling reeds of the marsh. He could flee from the lily, but not from the memory of temptation that continues to hold him back from new quests.

C. Visions of the Poet's Empire

The idea of the poet as a royal figure, most emphatically expressed in Algabal, can be traced back to "Nachmittag", "Neuländische Liebesmahle II" and "Rückblick" in Hymnen. The motifs of the palace of poetry, used in "Nachmittag" (H), and the garden of art, in "Im Park" (H) and "Die Gärten schliessen" (H), continue to delineate the poet's exclusive realm. The motif of the garment indicates his quest: although he is weary of his pilgrim's cloak and fruitless travels, his life is a pilgrimage toward his ideal artistic empire where he and a young cohort will wear the kingly robes of the poet.

1. The Ideal Artistic Empire

In "Verjäherte Fahrten II" the seeker after personal truth finally tunes his lyre and becomes a "verjährter fahrten singer" (36) as the muse suggests in "Lass der trauer, kleid und miene". His memory of an actual visit to a palace²³ combines with his childhood fantasy of leadership, and his youthful concept of the poet and his artistic empire, to create a visionary picture of his ideal future. The actual palace and island-garden enthrall the poet as examples of the splendor of a bygone era when the promoters of culture were the prince, priest and count. As a guardian of culture himself, he wishes to promote art by reigning over a circle of artists and intellectuals.

His dominion is symbolized here, and in "Nachmittag" (H), by the deserted palace and garden withering in the heat. The wilting ornamentals and the mist that rolls in from the river, coloring everything gray, evoke the feverish state of his soul. At the end of his pilgrimage his garden of art is in decline as it was in "Die Gärten schliessen" (H).

The atmosphere is fraught with tension as the poet walks up a path beside the yew hedge, looking for a sign of life. The appellation "der Fremde" (39) designates him as a visitor at this historic site and a stranger in his vision of his future artistic empire: he is not completely

at home in the palace of poetry because, without companions, he is a king without a kingdom. His palace and garden of art will be empty, apart from himself, until one special comrade becomes the first of many to join him in establishing his empire. Meanwhile, this static scene of fairy-tale unreality lies "im zauberschlaf" (39) awaiting someone to break the spell:

Jedoch der Fremde bangt erwartungsvoller .
 Er geht den pfad am taxushag hinan ..
 Kein schein von einem blauen sammetkoller
 Von einem kinderschuh aus saffian?" (39)

The child in blue velvet represents the historical prince as well as the poet's longed-for companion, a fellow guardian of culture.²⁴ The poet's thoughts shift from this imperial scene to his future with a princely companion who will help him to realize, in the field of art, his boyhood dream of leadership.

The motifs of the garden of art and the noble dream figure recur in "Beträufelt an baum und zaun." The poet's orderly world is in disarray. Autumnal winds, shriveled roses, the crackling arbor and the sunset announce the loss of hope that sustained him at the beginning of his pilgrimage in spring. Perhaps a princely companion would soothe his soul which is as brittle as a garden in autumn: "Beträufelt an baum und zaun / Ein balsam das sprocke holz?" (40) This

question heightens the aura of expectation continuing from "Verjäherte Fahrten II" and parallels the beginning of the second stanza: "Wer naht sich dem namenlosen / Der fern von der menge sich härrmt? / In mattblauen kleidern ein kind .." (40) The lonely poet is a stranger to himself and others--"ein fremdling" (26) in the inscription of Pilgerfahrten and "der Fremde" (39) in "Verjäherte Fahrten II"--as though he were nameless. His sense of identity would improve if a special young person entered his garden of art.

The poet visualizes his "Traumgefährten",²⁵ here and in "Verjäherte Fahrten II", as a young figure in blue, a vital presence amid the dull hues of autumnal decay in the garden. "Wie märchenhafte geschwister / Verzückt und mit zagendem gang" (40), the poet and the boy in blue walk together beside a hedge toward an unseen goal. At the end of the hedge in "Verjäherte Fahrten II" stands the palace of poetry which is the unspecified ideal destination here as well. However, given George's placement of "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" as the second to last poem before Algabal, the poet and his dream companion appear to end up, not in an ideal kingdom, but in Algabal's realm, the false artistic empire.²⁶

2. The False Artistic Empire

"Mahnung"²⁷ portrays the type of artistic leader the

poet could become if he forfeited his ideals for the sake of popularity. The victor in battle, whose people hail him to the throne in the land he has conquered, parallels the artist who basks in public approval amid the rubble of his artistic integrity: "Du folgst der horde die dich tosend lud / Zum thron [...] / Inmitten trümmersee und flammensud" (32). By catering to the tastes of the undiscerning public, the artist turns away from the iridescent realm of high art, the clear wellspring of the imagination, which glimmers like a pure well in the south: "Dein wille rasend wie der gischt am fels / Erfreut sich am verheererischen nord / Und spottet klarer luft und klaren quells" (32).

The ruler in "Mahnung", unlike George, prefers the north to the south.²⁸ The opposition of north and south reflects the contrast between the literary trends of the late nineteenth century and George's artistic philosophy. In northern Europe the popular Naturalists dwelled on the sordid aspects of reality, with a view to social reform, whereas George championed a more spiritual art, free from political and social concerns. Like southern lands, including ancient Greece, George's art is permeated with sunlit beauty and clarity. The south, his true spiritual domain, is associated with his affirmation of his art. The north, on the other hand, represents temptations that jeopardize his art.

The ruler revels in the temptations of power and his

reign is one of corruption and wild abandon. The poet, however, questions and rejects the conduct of the tyrant and warns himself against the temptations of loneliness. He must not allow his sorrow to drive him to cater to the uncouth masses. To be worthy of the poet's kingly robe he must neither exchange refinement for hedonism nor surrender to sorrow:

War so denn wirklich dein erstritten land?
 O überhöre jenen lockungschrei
 Und sag nicht dass dein leid dein fñhrer sei
 Und wechsel nicht ein würdiges gewand (33).

D. The Poet's Fragmented World

In "Die Spange" the poet-artisan wishes to fashion a plain and sturdy clasp of iron, but cannot unearth the right metal. Instead, the clasp will be of gold and gems and shaped like an umbel. Iron symbolizes reality, whereas gold is the stuff of fantasy. The poet has not had the kind of experiences that would solidify, like molten iron, in the desired mold of his art. His life and art do not yet project the cool, unaffected beauty of a smooth, shiny strip of iron.²⁹

The major experience of forming a bond of friendship as lasting as an iron clasp³⁰ has yet to occur, as the inscription of Pilgerfahrten shows: "Und ich suchte einen /

Der mit mir trauerte / Und keiner war" (26). The individuals encountered on his pilgrimage, which compares with a mining expedition, lack the suitable qualities: "Doch war im schacht auf allen gleisen / So kein metall zum gusse reif" (40).

Like a prospector who cannot find the proper lode, the poet makes do with the material he has: as his reality is inadequate, he depends on fantasy to hold his fragmented world together like a golden clasp. This final poem in Pilgerfahrten is itself a clasp joining his pilgrimage with its terminus, the dream-like realm of Algabal, in the following collection. "Wie eine grosse fremde dolde" (40) the bejeweled umbelliferous clasp symbolizes the gem-like opulence of Algabal.

Pilgerfahrten recounts the poet's search to confirm his notions of personal truth which means perfecting his art and establishing a friendship with a kindred spirit. The self-affirmation he gains through writing is now overshadowed by his acute awareness of his isolation. His will to remain true to his ideals in both art and life is continually being tested. The problem of temptation and renunciation is the main conflict which affects his view of himself as a poet.

Although he tries to maintain a fundamental trust in his ideals, he sometimes doubts his ability to resist life's

temptations symbolized, for example, by the raucous valley women in red dresses. In contrast, ethereal figures, the so-called daughters of his dream, as well as a princely boy in blue, await him on a higher plane of existence. He is often tempted to settle for a less than ideal companion but, with few exceptions, renunciation proves the stronger force. Experience has taught him that temptation can masquerade as love and that renunciation best serves his ideals in both love and art.

The poet relies on his art to ease the letdown of his relationships. His idealistic visions, transformed into poetry, form the nucleus of what he hopes will be his future reality. However, when after extensive writing and travels, he feels no closer to his true artistic domain and companions, a crisis erupts. Mounting self-doubts culminate in his temporarily ending the search and almost giving up on his poetry as illustrated by the garment-motif: he discards his pilgrim's cloak and staff, but not his mourning clothes. Inertia sets in. He is too exhausted either to begin new quests or, as the muse advises, to write about former ones. Sensuous dreams replace idealistic visions. Though obstacles block his way, he is tenacious in his pursuit of personal truth. He does not discard the lyre and kingly robe of poetry, but instead sings his own song in an imaginary temple.

The way to the poet's Promised Land originates in his past. Looking into the future he sees an extension of his childhood dream of leadership. Nevertheless, these visions of an ideal artistic empire are disturbing: the palace of poetry is vacant and the garden of art is unkempt and is disintegrating in the chilly air of his isolation. As he wavers at the intersection of what he considers his true path and the false ones, he warns himself not to forget his goals. Throughout his pilgrimage he questions, advises and admonishes himself in an effort to stay on his chosen path.

IV. ALGABAL: FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD

Wie zeug ich dich aber im heiligtume
 Dunkle grosse schwarze blume? (47)

Algabal was written during a very unsettling time for George. The book reflects the loneliness and despair of his twenty-third year (1891-92) which led to prolonged nervous exhaustion beginning in September 1892.¹ That month an advance edition of ten copies preceded the first edition which was published in Paris in November 1892. The personal crisis stemmed from his failure to organize a substantial circle of like-minded writers by traveling throughout western Europe. George's loneliness escalated into utter despair when someone he believed to be a new-found kindred spirit rebuffed him. This person was the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

George had been extremely lonely in Vienna before he met the seventeen year old Hofmannsthal there in December 1891.² During his unhappy stay, between late March and early July 1891, he had written four of the most wistful poems in Pilgerfahrten.³ After further travels he returned to Vienna late in October to study Romanticism and to

supervise the publication of Pilgerfahrten in December.⁴

When George introduced himself to Hofmannsthal, one evening in mid-December in the Café Griensteidl, the immediate affinity between the two set in motion a series of enthusiastic conversations about poetry and a spate of letters to each other until George left Vienna one month later.⁵

The meeting had great significance for both men. Each one felt he was no longer working in isolation toward the renewal of German literature. Although they were united in this common goal, their approaches differed: Hofmannsthal enjoyed their mutual confirmation of artistic goals, but he was neither looking for an artistic leader nor for adherents to his own views. In contrast, George, the natural leader, thought he had discovered someone who would understand and facilitate his own poetic mission, as a promising new talent for his small circle of poets, and who would provide the close companionship he had sought for so long.⁶ In a few weeks this basic difference between George and Hofmannsthal was to come between them dramatically, leaving George even lonelier than before.

One of the most introspective and moving letters ever written by George is a compelling document of the personal conflicts that set the stage for the gloomy scenario of Algabal. On January 9, 1892 George gave a long letter to Hofmannsthal in the Café Griensteidl and later received it

back as requested. In it George confesses that a recurrent problem explored in his books is his ongoing, but fruitless, search for a noble person who would boost his creative energies and hopes, and protect him from the abyss of despair. Although he refers to Hofmannsthal as his 'twin', he senses that the relationship is doomed. The crisis he felt was imminent actually did occur after Algabal was published.⁷ George seems to expect a cool reaction to his frankness because he soon regrets being so candid and asks Hofmannsthal to either return or destroy the letter. As the letter is so important, excerpts from it are given below:

Schon lange im leben sehnte ich mich nach jenem wesen von einer verachtenden durchdringenden und überfeinen verstandeskraft die alles verzeiht begreift würdigt und die mit mir über die dinge und die erscheinungen hinflöge · und sonderbar dies wesen sollte trotzdem etwas von einem nebelüberzug haben und unter einem zwang des gewissen romantischen aufputzes von adel und ehre stehen [...]

Jenes wesen hätte mir neue triebe und hoffnungen gegeben (denn was ich nach Halgabal [sic] noch schreiben soll ist mir unfasslich) und mich im weg aufgehalten der schnurgrad zum nichts führt. [...]

Diesen übermenschen habe ich rastlos gesucht niemals gefunden grad so wie jenes Andre unentdeckbare im all ..

Das aber raten Sie aus meinen büchern
Die grosse seelische krise drohte

Und endlich! wie? ja? ein hoffen - ein ahnen - ein zucken - ein schwanken - o mein zwillingsbruder -

[...] In unsren jahren ist die bedeutsame grosse geistige allianz bereits unmöglich [...] und ich schmähe mich dass ich redete [...] und deshalb

will ich dass Sie mir das blatt zurückgeben oder es sofort vernichten [...] Sie sind der einzige der von mir solche bekenntnisse vernahm.⁸

To these outpourings Hofmannsthal promptly sent a thoughtful and diplomatic reply which indicates that he could not reciprocate George's feelings.⁹ Within the next few days a serious misunderstanding abruptly ended "die tage schöner begeisterung" (26)¹⁰. Evidently George was hurt when Hofmannsthal misunderstood and insulted his friendliness. George wanted to bridge the rift and explain "meine achtung und meine zuneigung (die Sie so schmäählich auslegten)".¹¹ Hofmannsthal was evasive because, as he apologized, the conflict had been upsetting for him.¹² The teenager's father apparently wrote a letter to George¹³ in order to clarify the situation and George responded with a terse statement of what young Hofmannsthal meant to him:

für mich bleibt er immer die erste person auf deutscher seite die ohne mir vorher näher gestanden zu haben mein schaffen verstanden und gewürdigt - und das zu einer zeit wo ich auf meinem einsamen felsen zu zittern anfang [...] Das konnte denn kein wunder sein dass ich mich dieser person ans herz warf [...] und habe dabei durchaus nichts anrühiges gefunden.¹⁴

About one month after he first met Hofmannsthal George moved to Munich.¹⁵ In May 1892 he stopped briefly in Vienna and Hofmannsthal agreed to contribute some of his writings to George's proposed journal, Blätter für die Kunst.¹⁶ The two continued to have a high regard for each

other and corresponded back and forth until the spring of 1906 when they drifted apart.¹⁷ Over the years they saw each other only sporadically. Despite the reconciliation with Hofmannsthal, George never got over their initial conflict.¹⁸

Morwitz writes that George's disappointment with Hofmannsthal may have been a contributing factor in the development of Algabal as the poet's imaginary companion and alter-ego.¹⁹ George told Morwitz that his Algabal is very loosely based on accounts of the life of the Roman emperor Heliogabalus by the ancient historians Dio Cassius, Herodian and Lampridius.²⁰

Elagabalus, or Heliogabalus, was the name of Varius Avitus while he ruled in Rome between 218 and 222 A.D. He was born in 204 A.D. in Emesa, now Homs, Syria, to Julia Soaemias whose family were high priests of the sun god Elagabalus. Avitus became emperor because of rumors circulated by his mother and maternal grandmother: knowing that the army was eager to overthrow the present ruler in Rome, Macrinus (217-218 A.D.), the two women claimed that Avitus was the illegitimate son of Caracalla (211-217 A.D.) and was therefore the heir to the throne. There was a division of loyalties in Macrinus' troops and an ensuing battle in June 218 resulted in the death of Macrinus and the proclamation of Avitus as emperor. Avitus, the chief

boy-priest of the sun god at Emesa, then took the name of his god, Elagabalus, as his imperial title.

Elagabalus entered Rome in July 219 and it was not long before his behavior turned the Romans against him. The emperor carried on the priestly duties of his boyhood and imposed the exclusive worship of his god upon the Romans. They also objected to his lascivious ways and effeminate appearance, as well as his preference for wearing clothing from his native Syria. The grandmother of the childless youth persuaded him to regain the support of the people by adopting, as his son, his cousin Bassianus who was only four years younger. However, when Elagabalus learned that the people favored the mild-mannered and capable Bassianus, he retaliated by appointing totally incompetent and undeserving men to prominent positions. His murderous plots against Bassianus failed when the soldiers protected Bassianus and killed the eighteen year old Elagabalus and his mother in March 222. Bassianus was then hailed as the emperor Alexander Severus.

Algabal, dedicated (1899) to Albert Saint-Paul, a literary confrere of George in Paris, is inscribed to the memory of Ludwig II. In the inscription (1899) George addresses King Ludwig II of Bavaria (1845-1886)²¹ as the brother of Algabal:

Als meine jugend mein leben hob in solch ein licht

Kam sie erstaunend deinem nah und liebte dich.
 Nun ruft ein heil dir übers grab hinaus Algabal
 Dein jüngerer bruder o verhöhneter dulderkönig (44).

Algabal appears to be a combination of Ludwig II, the refined and pensive enthusiast for music and the theater, and Elagabalus, the hedonist.²² The two eccentric monarchs were very different from each other, but both were infamous for their extravagance, unstable dispositions and sporadic attention to affairs of state. Although Ludwig II, the reclusive patron of the arts, and George, the lonely artist, never met, they were "Schmerzbrüder"²³ united in sorrow and set apart from the masses. Like Ludwig II, the poet seeks refuge in artistic fantasy from the loneliness of his exceptional role. The poet's artistic visions, or 'castles in the air', parallel the magnificent castles of Ludwig II. The King's castles are symbols of his flight from reality which ended in his mental illness and tragic death. The poet's flight from reality in Algabal threatens to have the same result.

George continues to explore in Algabal the same problems as in Hymnen and Pilgerfahrten. Therefore, in order to avoid excessive repetition, only six of the twenty-two poems in Algabal have been selected for discussion. Five of the poems discussed are representative of recurrent motifs in George's work which embody certain conflicts the poet experiences. The five poems, with their central motifs in

parentheses, are as follows: "Ihr hallen prahlend in reichem gewande" (palace-motif) and "Mein garten bedarf nicht luft und nicht wärme" (garden) in the section "Im Unterreich"; "So sprach ich nur in meinen schwersten tagen" (garment) in "Tage"; "Grosse tage wo im geist ich nur der herr der welten hiess" (temple) and "Ob denn der wolken-deuter mich belüge" (hermitage) in "Die Andenken". "Vogelschau", the last poem in Algabal, functions as a link between this collection and the following one. The motifs, which embrace the conflicts between fantasy and reality, the poet and the public, art and nature, all express the theme of Weltflucht, the unifying principle of Algabal.

A. "Im Unterreich"

1. The Palace of Poetry

"Ihr hallen prahlend in reichem gewande", the first poem in Algabal, introduces the section "Im Unterreich" which describes Algabal's residence.²⁴ Beneath his palace an artificial landscape is a fantastic haven for its designer, the emperor. Grottoes, the answer to his fancy for undersea caves, gleam in the electric lights. Some of the grottoes are a blaze of whiteness and others are resplendent with jewels embedded in their walls. Waterfalls splashing over

the crags are cascades of garnets and rubies and small boats float on emerald pools.

Algabal's wonderland under his palace is a variation of the palace-motif, used in "Nachmittag" (H) and "Verjäherte Fahrten II" (P). This motif underlines the poet's exalted notion of his calling and his regal aloofness from the masses. The subterranean retreat is a striking symbol of the theme of Weltflucht. The poet's visions cushion him from reality, just as the emperor's lair insulates him from the outer world.

The poet, with his masterful command of language, is "meister" (45) of the visions arising "in strahlendem rausche" (45) in his inner sanctuary. Here he enjoys complete autonomy. His omnipotent will governs his art by giving form to his thoughts and experiences. Just as Algabal presides over his realm with undisputed authority, the poet controls his imaginary artistic empire. His poems, like the emperor's man-made landscape, represent the triumph of art over nature. The poet applies the principle of form, one of nature's laws, to create an anti-world independent of nature:

Der schöpfung wo er nur geweckt und verwaltet
 Erhabene neuheit ihn manchmal erfreut .
 Wo ausser dem seinen kein wille schaltet
 Und wo er dem licht und dem wetter gebeut (45).

2. The Garden of Art

The section "Im Unterreich" ends with "Mein garten bedarf nicht luft und nicht wärme" in which the motif of the garden suggests the relationship of the poet and his art to nature. Algabal's grottoes are not his only triumph over nature. He also designed an artificial garden which displays model birds and trees made of coal with lava-like formations in place of fruit. Sunshine and wind are absent and the gray light in a cavern gives no sign whether it is dawn or dusk. The scent of almond oils hovers incongruously over the flower beds. The greatest incongruity of all is that this silent and stagnant microcosm is called a garden.

Nature is ever-changing, but nothing actually grows or decays in the garden of art. The volcanic colors of black²⁵ and gray symbolize the nullity of art: the poet's volcanic artistic energy creates works that are beautiful but, in the final analysis, lifeless like anything in the wake of lava flow. The feverish intensity of the poet's visions cannot reconstruct life itself. The desiccated gardens in "Nachmittag" (H), "Verjäherte Fahrten II" (P) and "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" (P) are reminders that artistic visions are, after all, not viable. While "Ihr hallen prahlend in reichem gewande" is a harmonious tableau of the poet and his creations, "Mein garten bedarf nicht

luft und nicht wärme" is discordant because it emphasizes that art, despite its beauty, is not life. In all of these poems with the garden-motif, including "Im Park" (H), nature is stylized into an art object.²⁶

The black flower the emperor wishes to produce is the ultimate symbol of what Gundolf calls "Kunst als Wider-Natur";²⁷ "Wie zeug ich dich aber im heiligtume / [...] / Dunkle grosse schwarze blume?" (47)

The emperor who ponders the puzzle of growing a black flower is the poet who wonders whether his will to create art can surpass the creative forces of nature. The phrase "schwarze blume" (47) is in itself a contradiction. The black flower links with the jeweled umbel in "Die Spange" (P) as symbols of his art's remoteness from life. Algabal reveals that art's apparent triumph over nature is a dubious one. In contrast, in "Der Infant" (H) the painting of the late child prince is a victory over death. Now, however, in Algabal the poet questions his views. He realizes that the garden of art is artificial, no matter how beautiful it may be. The blackness of Algabal's 'garden' hints at the negative thoughts of the poet as he withdraws further into his dreams.

B. "Tage"

The Poet's Kingly Robe

The poet cannot stay indefinitely within his dream-filled garden of art, but must confront reality. The section "Tage" presents a more dynamic characterization of Algabal than "Im Unterreich". Whether he is shown in relation to other people or alone in contemplation, the spotlight on his imperial role illuminates the poet's position.

"So sprach ich nur in meinen schwersten tagen" uses the motif of the poet's kingly robe²⁸ to elucidate his ambivalence toward the public which is part of the conflict between his idealistic fantasy and ugly reality. The garment-motif also surfaces in "Schweige die klage" (P) and "Neuer Ausfahrtsegen" (P) as the pilgrim's cloak symbolizing his search for personal truth. In "So sprach ich nur in meinen schwersten tagen" those who wear the robe of the emperor or the poet are conscious that their special destiny isolates them from the masses.²⁹ At times Algabal resents his subjects because, while he falters under the burden of leadership, they have no special destiny. A tyrannical reign would be his revenge against fate for his difficult life:³⁰

"Ich will dass man im volke stirbt und stöhnt / [...] / Es ist ein groll der für mich selber dröhnt. / [...] / Ich tue

was das leben mit mir tut" (52).

Fate has condemned the poet to a lonely life in pursuit of dreams that defy fulfillment. Like the emperor, he has a grudge against the public. He despises the masses because they do not aspire to his spiritual heights, and yet he envies their comradeship and their ability to cope with reality. As in "Siedlergang" (P), he is simultaneously repelled and attracted by them. His loneliness pushes him toward the masses, although in "Mahnung" (P) his conscience told him: "Und wechsel nicht ein würdiges gewand" (33).

When the emperor mingles in disguise among the populace his animosity fades and the mirror image of his face reflects an almost feminine softness.³¹ Similarly, the poet puts away his kingly robe and dons the garb of the masses, so to speak, by circulating among them and temporarily forgetting his higher goals. When he returns to his room his solitude does not worry him because he realizes he can join the masses, whenever he pleases, while still owning his kingly robe: "Wenn ich in ihrer tracht und mich vergessend / Geheim in ihrem leeren lärm gepasst / - Ich fürchte - hab ich nie sie tief gehasst" (52).

C. "Die Andenken"

1. The Temple of Poetry

In the section "Die Andenken" Algabal looks back on his life before his imperial task became burdensome. In "Grosse tage wo im geist ich nur der herr der welten hiess", the first poem, the temple-motif highlights the poet's sacred calling and his belief in poetic fantasy as a refuge from reality. The temple-motif serves a similar purpose in "Neuländische Liebesmahle I" (H) and "Neuer Ausfahrtsegen" (P).

In "Grosse tage wo im geist ich nur der herr der welten hiess" Algabal remembers how happy he was before he left his native temples to become emperor in a foreign land.³² He was in his glory as a boy-priest who dreamed about ruling the world and assisting in the schemes of the gods whose offspring were his subjects. Whenever he needed a change from his weightier thoughts he simply rambled through the woods. Emperor Algabal cannot so readily escape the oppressive reality of his leadership, although he longs to be again a boy content to worship his god and merely fancy himself an emperor.

Like Algabal, the poet is vexed by the contrast between his boyhood dreams of leadership and his actual situation

and he longs for his younger self. Earlier the poet conjured up "die frühe zeit wo ich noch könig war" ("Neuländische Liebesmahle II" H 14) by imagining his sovereignty in the field of art. He felt a religious sense of awe in the creative process and his desk was an altar where his writings were offerings in the service of art. Alone and exultant with his sacred parchments, he made plans to establish his own artistic empire. Unfortunately, as soon as he acted upon his plans by leaving his temple-like retreat, his faith in himself diminished because the fulfillment of his dreams seemed far away: "Arger tag wo in der heimat meine tempel ich verliess!" (55).

2. The Hermitage

"Ob denn der wolken-deuter mich belüge", the last poem in "Die Andenken", is a supreme example of the theme of Weltflucht. The poet's unresolved conflicts converge in the image of the hermit's room, the "schwülen kerkers" (58), which also appears in "Siedlergang" (P).

Algabal tries to forget that the soothsayers have predicted his early death.³³ Surrounded by intoxicating potions, he feels as if he were imprisoned by his disturbing knowledge. He fears he will never have the chance to marry.³⁴ The marble statue of a woman, like the black

flower in "Mein garten bedarf nicht luft und nicht wärme", symbolizes his dissatisfaction with his artificial world of poetry. Alone in his cell he broods:

Dass niemals dieser knospe keusche lippe
Vom windgeführten seim der freundin nippe .

Dass sie im schwall der salben und gewürze
Des schwülen kerkers weile sich verkürze .

.

Und flehend bis sie welke stehen bleibe
Vor einer säule sprödem marmorleibe (58).

The world-weary poet faces the possibility of death as an irrevocable flight from reality and his conflicts. His yearning to forget himself in "Nachmittag" (H) has taken a more pessimistic turn.³⁵ He now wonders whether he will end up spending his life trying to forget that he may never know the love of a kindred spirit. Until he can summon the strength to control his conflicts they will hold him captive in the hermitage that is his life.

D. Renewal

In "Vogelschau", the last poem in Algabal, the poet's thoughts soar beyond his hermitage-like retreat. He stands back and surveys the poems he has written as if they were birds in flight. He charts his future poetic outlook just as an ancient emperor might have looked for personal portents

in the flight of birds. The grouping of the four stanzas suggests that each represents a particular collection of George's poems. The first three stanzas, in the past tense, correspond to Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal respectively, and the last stanza, in the present tense, points toward the future collection Die Bücher der Hirten- und Preisgedichte der Sagen und Sänge und der hängenden Gärten (1895).³⁶

In the first stanza an optimistic mood predominates. The swallows gliding in the hot, bright sky seem to announce the beginning career of the poet of Hymnen. Their white feathers connect with the poet's reverence for his art which he strives to keep untainted from worldly matters. The world is warm and bright with promise for him. The breeze whisking through the serene, spring-like scene suggests the freshness of his visions. Of the collections Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal, such optimism is most emphatic in Hymnen.

A sense of wonder pervades the second stanza. The poet's yearning for distant horizons and his varied experiences in Pilgerfahrten are evoked by jays, parakeets and colibris hopping through the exotic woodland. The pilgrim marvels over the kaleidoscopic multiplicity of his visions that flit like colorful birds through the dense woods of experience. The extraordinary scene represents a stepping away from reality toward the exotic beauty of Algabal.

In the third stanza the poet's enchantment is tinged with anxiety. His flight from reality becomes nightmarish in Algabal. The menacing ravens and daws, flapping their wings in the enchanted forest where adders lurk, symbolize his self-doubts which are magnified in Algabal. The form of his poetry has the beauty of an enchanted forest, but the content is sometimes as sinister as adders or large, black birds.

In the fourth stanza the poet foresees a renewal of the optimism he knew at the time of Hymnen. The white swallows reappear, but the air is no longer hot and bright as it was in the first stanza. The winds of poetic inspiration disperse the feverish visions of Algabal and the air becomes cold and clear signifying the poet's renewed outlook.

The symbolic figure of Algabal, a composite of George, the Roman emperor-priest Elagabalus and the Bavarian King Ludwig II, underlines the poet's desired leadership in art. Through Algabal the poet temporarily resides in an artistic empire that is false because it is founded on illusion and self-doubt rather than idealistic dreams. As he has met no kindred spirits with whom to build his true artistic empire, on foundations of faith in art and each other, he sinks deeper into doubt.

The poet flees from the world, but not from his doubts,

into fantasy. By exercising his autonomy in artistic matters he hopes to foil fate which beleaguers him with the loneliness of an enigmatic calling. Sometimes his creative powers surmount his fate and he rejoices in his poems as he would admire an exquisite imitation grotto. At other times his art seems an artificial garden, a questionable triumph over nature. His awareness of the limitations of art, epitomized by the imaginary black flower, accounts for the dark vision of Algabal.

Neither artistic creations nor the masses are a substitute for kindred spirits. The lonely poet tries to forget himself by walking among the crowds, as though he belonged with them. However, he feels he is in disguise, in their company, because he has left the kingly robe of his vocation behind in the palace of poetry. His art provides only a semblance of well-being.

World-weariness engulfs the poet. His world of dreams is more a hermitage than either a palace or a temple in which he used to declare his faith in his art. He mourns the transitoriness of youth, beauty and happiness and ponders death. The thought of his unfulfilled dreams eventually pulls him away from the abyss of despair.

An upswing in his outlook occurs when he realizes he cannot flee any further, but must face himself and his conflicts. Into his feverish, black, hermetic world

filters the cool breeze of a renewal in his life and art. A panorama of light and color opens to him once he decides to use his clear poetic vision to continue working toward the fulfillment of his dreams.

V. CONCLUSION

George's youthful concept of his literary quest is revealed by the persona of the poet who is a solitary dreamer in Hymnen, a troubled pilgrim in Pilgerfahrten and a world-weary emperor in Algabal. In this trilogy his major conflict is the discrepancy between reality and his ideal vision of himself leading an artistic empire of kindred spirits. His primary commitment is to his art which he longs to share with like-minded individuals. He never doubts the importance of this personal truth, but sometimes wonders whether he has the strength to realize his dreams.

To the poet the balance between life and art is a precarious one that shifts from one collection to the other. He is caught in the paradox created by his ambivalent attitude toward everyday life: on the one hand, he values his solitude which enhances the creative process; on the other hand, he yearns for greater involvement in life as a means to find a kindred spirit. He constantly struggles to resist and renounce life's temptations which jeopardize his artistic mission. The main obstruction in his true path is the clash between his passion for life and his dedication to art.

Each collection outlines a different stage in his striving to meet the demands of the poet's calling. In Hymnen he is generally self-assured, while in Pilgerfahrten self-doubts are magnified so that in Algabal he flees from the world even further into his dreams. The five main motifs--the garden, the palace, the temple, the hermitage and the garment--which illustrate the basic conflict between the poet's life and art, appear in a different light in each collection, according to his outlook.

In Hymnen the young poet clarifies what personal truth means to him: to affirm himself through his art. His inspiring muse ushers him into the consecrated realm of poetry in which he initially feels free from the cares of everyday existence. It is as though he were a worshipper proclaiming his devotion to artistic creativity in the temple of poetry, or a king wielding the power of language and dream in the palace of poetry. His garden of art in full bloom represents the triumph of art over nature. The imaginary temple, palace and garden symbolize the haven, or protective distance, art provides between him and reality.

Now and then, however, his idyll in the realm of poetry is disrupted when life calls him down to earth. As much as he believes in his poetic achievements, he becomes disillusioned with his relationships. Writing is exhilarating, but he is essentially alone with the ethereal muse. Neither

she nor his imaginary companions in print can replace the warmth of an actual kindred spirit. His loneliness increases, although a few friendships and glimpses of congenial passers-by occasionally brighten his overcast horizon. His faith in himself declines and the garden of art seems barren because a practical consideration has intruded upon his fantasy world: without a kindred spirit how can he build an artistic empire?

In Pilgerfahrten, in addition to perfecting his art, the poet has a new priority: to seek a kindred spirit. Adopting the guise of a pilgrim, he reaches out to the world he once shunned. The would-be king of an artistic empire is, for now, a wanderer on a difficult odyssey from his hermitage to the palace of poetry where he belongs. His conflict between life and art intensifies as soon as he puts his parchments aside and circulates among other people. He regards the masses with mixed feelings. Their passion for life draws him nearer, and yet, for the sake of his art, he remains aloof. Whereas others seem content in social situations, the poet is analytical to the point of undermining whatever camaraderie life offers him.

After extensive, but futile, searching he wonders whether to continue on his true path until he finds an embodiment of his imaginary ideal companion, or to settle for a less enriching liaison. He fluctuates between

temptation and renunciation. While renunciation may be considered a flight from reality, temptation is a flight from his ideals. In despair he temporarily stops searching for the elusive ideal figure and discards his wanderer's cloak.

A crisis occurs when he is overwhelmed by an impulse to throw away his poet's lyre and kingly robe, i.e. to give up his beloved art. Fortunately, though, he prays for the strength to overcome his doubts. At times he succeeds in convincing himself that his dream-like poems contain the seeds of his future reality. Perhaps the poems will attract someone like the young prince whom he imagines in a deserted palace surrounded by a decaying garden. At the end of Pilgerfahrten the future seems to suggest the alleviation of his loneliness and a fresh start for his garden of art. Meanwhile, however, he wavers on his true path.

As a result of conflicts raised in Hymnen and developed in Pilgerfahrten, the poet reaches a nadir in Algabal. Having discarded his pilgrim's cloak after an unsuccessful venture into the world in Pilgerfahrten, the lonely poet retreats even further into the world of his imagination. He now sees himself as an emperor and his hermitage full of parchments has been transformed into the palace of poetry. Like an emperor ruling over his dominion, the poet controls his self-created realm of art.

Unfortunately his writing is not the sanctuary it was in Hymnen. Algabal's underground grottoes and man-made garden, in contrast to the verdant parks in Hymnen, symbolize the artificiality of art. The poet finds his art somewhat disquieting, despite its beauty, because his life does not yet exemplify his ideal which requires a balance between art and life. He questions the viability of an art that is as remote from reality as a black flower.

Sometimes, out of extreme loneliness, he exchanges his imperial mantle for the garment of the commoners. Although outwardly he seems one of the crowd, the poet is different, particularly in his distinctly analytical and symbolic way of perceiving the world and in his refined sense of beauty and language.

After the struggle against temptations in Pilgerfahrten the poet in Algabal fears he has abandoned the temple of poetry. Memories of his earlier hopes for artistic leadership sadden him so that he considers death a possible solution to his conflicts. He is acutely aware that his so-called palace is a mere 'castle in the air'. At this nadir in his life, this king without a kingdom must focus on his ideal visions that were so encouraging in Hymnen. In this way he can summon the strength to realize his dreams and later look back upon the period of Algabal as a temporary setback.

A downward progression in the poet's outlook can be traced from his usual self-assurance in Hymnen and his ambivalence and doubts in Pilgerfahrten to the morose depths of Algabal. The poems in the trilogy express the unresolved tension between the poet's ideals and his reality. Although he flees from the world, he cannot escape from himself. He is missing out on life, but his writing gives him a sense of recovery. The knowledge that the muse and poetry are constants in his life enables him to put his conflicts into perspective.

There are signs that the poet's movement away from reality will be reversed. Despite earlier gloom Algabal ends on a positive note suggesting the possibility of his turning toward the world with renewed optimism. The solitary dreamer's young life is a pilgrimage to transpose his idealistic visions of his artistic empire of kindred spirits into reality by means of his art. In the future his poetry may prove to be not only a source of self-affirmation for himself, but also an inspiration for others who may come forward as the kindred spirits of his dreams. In fact, George's poetry ultimately did attract a brotherhood of poets, artists and intellectuals who fulfilled his youthful vision of an artistic empire.

All die jugend floss dir wie ein tanz
Ein beraushtes spiel von horn und flöte?
'Herr so lockt ich deine sonnensöhne.
Menschlich glück verschwor ich um dein lied
Fügte mich der not des wandertumes
Forschte bis ich dich in ihnen fände ..
Tag und nacht hab ich nur dies getan
Seit ich eignen lebens mich entsinne:
Dich gesucht auf weg und steg.

Stefan George, Der Stern des Bundes (1914)

NOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

The edition of George's works used in this study is Stefan George, Werke, 4. Aufl., 2 Bde. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984). His poetry of the period 1890-1928 is included in Band 1. Throughout this thesis quotations from George's poems are given with the page number in parentheses. Capital H, P or A in parentheses following the title of a poem designates the collection Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten or Algabal.

¹ "An Valentin Sobotka," (Februar 1914), Gundolf Briefe, Hrsg. Lothar Helbing und Claus Victor Bock, Neue Folge, 2. Aufl. (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1965), S. 137. Gundolf had George in mind when he wrote this.

² George's first serious literary efforts began in 1886 when he was eighteen. Unless otherwise indicated, biographical information on George has been obtained from Robert Boehringer, Mein Bild von Stefan George, 2. ergänzte Aufl., 2 Bde. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1967), 1. Although this source is the most comprehensive, many other sources, listed in the bibliography of this thesis, have been consulted. After the age of sixty, when Das neue Reich (1928) was published, George no longer wrote poetry. Ernst Morwitz, "Stefan George," in Stefan George, Poems, trans. Carol North Valhope and Ernst Morwitz (London: Kegan Paul, 1944), p. 34.

³ George insists that even his early work is more than a paean to Beauty. Although his will to inspire a new humanity is dominant in Der siebente Ring (1907), this longing is already present in Algabal (1892). In 1911 George explained this will to power: "Manche meinen, in meinen ersten Büchern sei nur Künstlerisches enthalten, nicht der Wille zum neuen Menschlichen. Ganz falsch! Algabal ist ein revolutionäres Buch. [...] Algabal und der Siebente Ring - das ist dieselbe Substanz, nur auf eine geringere Fläche verbreitet." Ernst Robert Curtius, "Stefan George im Gespräch," in Kritische Essays zur europäischen

Literatur (Bern: A. Francke, 1950), S. 153.

⁴ Letter from Albert Saint-Paul to George, December 1890, in Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:217.

⁵ Hymnen was first published in October 1890, Pilgerfahrten in December 1891 and Algabal in November 1892. One hundred copies of each collection were privately published in Berlin, Vienna and Paris, respectively. Claude David, Stefan George: sein dichterisches Werk, Übers. Alexa Remmen und Karl Thiemer (München: Carl Hanser, 1967), S. 506. Bibliographic data on George's works has been obtained from Georg Peter Landmann, Stefan George und sein Kreis: eine Bibliographie, mit der Hilfe von Gunhild Günther ergänzte und nachgeführte 2. Aufl. (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell & Co., 1976).

⁶ Carl August Klein, "Über Stefan George: eine neue Kunst," in Die Sendung Stefan Georges: Erinnerungen (Berlin: Die Rabenpresse, 1935), S. 68. Klein's essay containing this statement originally appeared in Blätter für die Kunst 1. Folge, 2. Bd. (Dez. 1892).

⁷ "George an Ida [Coblenz] Auerbach," Bingen, anfang September 1895, Brief 47, Stefan George - Ida Coblenz Briefwechsel, Hrsg. Georg Peter Landmann und Elisabeth Höpker-Herberg (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983), S. 59.

⁸ The second edition of George's works (1899) was published in Berlin by Georg Bondi. The preface to the single volume of Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal states that George had given copies of the first edition to friends and patrons as a gift and was now making his poetry available to the public. Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten and Algabal were combined again in one volume in June 1928 in the Gesamt-Ausgabe der Werke. Endgültige Fassung, 15 Bde. (Berlin: Bondi, 1927-1934), 2.

⁹ Karl Wolfskehl, "Stefan George: zum Erscheinen der oeffentlichen Ausgabe seiner Werke," Pan 4, 4 (1898):232.

¹⁰ Morwitz, "Stefan George," p. 16. Morwitz (1887-1971) knew George for about twenty-five years and became the major interpreter and translator of his works into English. See also George's poem "All die jugend floss dir wie ein tanz" (356) quoted as the epilogue of this thesis.

¹¹ Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:10. Robert Boehringer

(1884-1974) met George in 1905 and became his biographer, heir and administrator of his estate. Michael Stettler, "Erinnerung an Robert Boehringer," Neue Beiträge zur George-Forschung 9 (1984):26. Boehringer's observations on George's contradictory qualities are similar to those of Victor Frank (Frank Mehnert) who met George in 1925 and became his closest companion during his last years. Michael Stettler, Hrsg. Erinnerung an Frank: ein Lebenszeugnis (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1968), S. 16, 28. Victor Frank writes: "sein wesen erschien als bändigung von entgegengesetztem [*sic*] von stärke und zärte, reichum und sehnen, unerbittlichkeit und milde heiterem ernst, liebender strenge, schlichter hoheit [...] als einklang von gegensätzlichem." Victor Frank, "Aufzeichnungen über Stefan George," in Michael Stettler, Hrsg. Erinnerung an Frank, S. 86.

¹² In 1892 Hugo von Hofmannsthal wrote to George: "Sie stehen gerne, wo Ihnen schwindelt, und lieben stolz den Abgrund den wenige sehen können". "Hofmannsthal an George," [Wien, 10. Jan. 1892], Brief 6, Briefwechsel zwischen George und Hofmannsthal, Hrsg. Robert Boehringer, 2. ergänzte Aufl. (München: Helmut Küpper, 1953), S. 14. Their correspondence is subsequently referred to as SG - HH. Ludwig Klages describes his meeting with George in 1893: "Er nannte sich Etienne George [...] und erwiderte mir später auf meine Frage, womit vornehmlich er sich befasse, er sei un poète maudit (frei nach Baudelaire und Verlaine [...])." Ludwig Klages, Hrsg., "Einführung des Herausgebers," in Alfred Schuler, Fragmente und Vorträge aus dem Nachlass (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1940), S. 35-36. The figure of the 'cursed poet', or world-weary aesthete, is a standard pose in European literature of the fin-de-siècle.

¹³ Morwitz, "Stefan George," S. 16.

¹⁴ Friedrich Gundolf, Stefan George in unserer Zeit, 3. Aufl. (Heidelberg: Weiss'sche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1918), S. 23. Gundolf (1880-1931), apparently George's most enthusiastic admirer since they met in 1899, wrote several scholarly books and articles on George. Edith Landmann also recognized that "Wesen, Leben und Lehre so völlig eins in ihm [George] waren". Edith Landmann, Gespräche mit Stefan George (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1963), S. 21.

¹⁵ Ernst Morwitz, Kommentar zu dem Werk Stefan Georges, 2. Aufl. (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1969), S. 30.

- 16 Cyril Scott, "Reminiscences of Stefan George," German Life & Letters 12 (1958-59):187.
- 17 Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:14.
- 18 An example of George's secret language can be seen in "Ursprünge" in Der siebente Ring (1907), S. 295.
- 19 Friedrich Wolters, Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890 (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1930), S. 9.
- 20 Morwitz, "Stefan George," S. 13.
- 21 George described these literary plans to Arthur Stahl, a school friend, in several letters during 1888. Excerpts are given in Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:28-30.
- 22 George's remarks to Curtius in 1911. Curtius, "Stefan George im Gespräch," S. 153.
- 23 Albert Saint-Paul, "Stefan George et le symbolisme français," Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande 13-14 (novembre-décembre 1928):397-405.
- 24 Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:31.
- 25 Albert Mockel, "Quelques souvenirs sur Stefan George," Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande 13-14 (novembre-décembre 1928):388-389.
- 26 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 43.
- 27 Friedrich Gundolf, George, 2. Aufl. (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1921), S. 94.
- 28 G. P. Landmann in Vorwort, Blätter für die Kunst, Einleitungen und Merksprüche der Blätter für die Kunst (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1964), S. 5.
- 29 Excerpt from Blätter für die Kunst, 1. Folge, 1. Bd. (1892) in Georg Peter Landmann, Stefan George und sein Kreis: eine Bibliographie, S. 16.
- 30 Blätter für die Kunst, Einleitungen, S. 7. Originally from 1. Folge, 1. Heft (1892).
- 31 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 7, 23.

- 32 Blätter für die Kunst, Einleitungen, S. 8. Originally from 1. Folge, 5. Heft (1893).
- 33 Ibid., S. 15. Originally from 3. Folge, 2. Heft (1896).
- 34 "An Hugo von Hofmannsthal," freitag, [30. sept. 1892], Bad Königstein i T., Brief 15, SG - HH, S. 41.
- 35 "George an Hofmannsthal," Bingen montag, [10. okt. 1892], Brief 17, SG - HH, S. 46.
- 36 Ten copies of an advance edition of Algabal were published in Paris in September 1892.
- 37 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 57.
- 38 In addition to his poetry George published prose sketches Tage und Taten (1903), translations into German of Shakespeare's sonnets (1909) and of Dante's Divina Commedia (1912) as well as translations of poems by Baudelaire (1901) and various contemporary poets in western Europe (1905). These are his most important writings. For a complete list of his works and bibliographic details see Georg Peter Landmann, Stefan George und sein Kreis: eine Bibliographie.
- 39 Cyril Scott, "Stefan George (Our Second Association)," in Bone of Contention: Life Story and Confessions (New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1969), p. 111.
- 40 Poem "Dies ist reich des Geistes" in Der Stern des Bundes (1914), S. 382.
- 41 Victor Frank, "Aufzeichnungen über Stefan George," S. 82.
- 42 Ernst Morwitz, "George, Stefan," in Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature, ed. Horatio Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), p. 307.
- 43 The Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, houses the Stefan George Archiv. This archive is administered by the Stefan George Stiftung which was founded in 1959 by Robert Boehringer. Wilhelm Hoffmann, "Das Stefan George Archiv," in Das Stefan-George-Seminar 1978 in Bingen am Rhein: eine Dokumentation, 7. - 9. Juli 1978, Hrsg. Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Stefan-George-Gedenkstätte im

Stefan-George-Gymnasium Bingen e.V. (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1979), S. 117, 119.

⁴⁴ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 42.

⁴⁵ Ibid., S. 13. Specific dates of origin of certain poems are given in Morwitz, Kommentar (1969) and in Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1.

II. HYMNEN: SELF-AFFIRMATION

¹ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 7, 23, 394, 483. George's awareness of the negative aspects of life is more noticeable in the collections preceding Der siebente Ring (1907). A probable contributing factor to his more positive outlook from Der siebente Ring on is his friendship with Maximilian Kronberger (1888-1904) whom he met in 1902 in Munich. This teenaged poet, who embodied "Das schöne Leben" (172) is idealized in the "Maximin" cycle in Der siebente Ring. Morwitz identifies Maximin in his Kommentar (1969), S. 268-269.

² Words attributed to George who is "der Meister" in Robert Boehringer, Ewiger Augenblick (Düsseldorf: Helmut Küpper, 1965), S. 38. In this book Boehringer assigns pseudonyms to members of George's circle who are identified in Jethro Bithell, "Stefan George - The Man," German Life & Letters 9 (1955-56):48. "Poetry is praise" is also quoted in Edith Landmann, Gespräche mit Stefan George, S. 164.

³ Morwitz mentions "eine Schau des inneren Auges" in his Kommentar (1969), S. 8. Gundolf terms the poet's ability to perceive "das Ursprüngliche", or the essence of things, "unmittelbare Schau des Seins". Gundolf, George, S. 62.

⁴ David, Stefan George, S. 39.

⁵ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 9.

⁶ Ibid., S. 20.

⁷ Ibid., S. 20. Morwitz's term for the "labetrunk" (20).

⁸ Following George's difficult relationship (1892-1896) with Ida Coblentz (1870-1942), a trend toward male companions is established. The poet's inspiring figure, or guardian spirit, is masculine after Das Jahr der Seele (1897); the angel in the "Vorspiel" of Der Teppich des Lebens (1899) is the poet's alter-ego; Maximin in Der siebente Ring (1907) is an ideal youth based on Maximilian Kronberger; and in Der Stern des Bundes (1914) a generalized heroic figure, a composite of exemplary traits in previous collections, inspires the poet and society to noble thoughts and deeds.

⁹ Gundolf, George, S. 55.

¹⁰ Ibid., S. 55.

¹¹ George stated that "das göttliche geschenk" in "Ein Hingang" is death. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 15. David, however, designates this phrase as the poet's calling which necessitates renunciation of happiness and companionship. David, Stefan George, S. 41. In the light of David's view, the title of the poem may refer to a departure from a former way of life.

¹² Morwitz explains that "Der Infant" is probably an imaginary portrait, inspired by George's visits to museums in Paris and Madrid in the summer of 1889, although George told him in 1923 he thought the poem describes a painting by Velázquez. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 20-21.

¹³ Albert Saint-Paul, "Stefan George et le symbolisme français," Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande 13-14 (novembre-décembre 1928):399-400.

¹⁴ David, Stefan George, S. 41.

¹⁵ "An Carl Rouge," [etwa 1. September 1890], in Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:39.

¹⁶ Albert Mockel, "Quelques souvenirs sur Stefan George," Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande 13-14 (novembre-décembre 1928):389.

¹⁷ Gundolf, George, S. 71-72.

¹⁸ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 13.

¹⁹ Ibid., S. 14.

²⁰ "Rückblick", written in Paris in the summer of 1890, records George's impressions of a visit in Copenhagen in July. He left Denmark victoriously for he wrote "Verwandlungen", "Ein Hingang", "Nachthymne" and "Strand" there. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 14-15, 18.

²¹ Morwitz equates the "sonnen-ode" (17) with Hymnen. Ibid., S. 16.

²² Ibid., S. 16.

²³ Letter from George to Arthur Stahl, August 1888, in

Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:29.

²⁴ Michael M. Metzger and Erika A. Metzger, Stefan George (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), p. 48.

²⁵ In the last stanza of "Die Gärten schliessen" the possessive adjective "ihre" may refer to other people, as Morwitz suggests in his Kommentar (1969), S. 23, or to the muse, as David proposes in Stefan George, S. 50. The poet may wonder whether he still heeds the muse's counsel given in "Gespräch".

²⁶ Gundolf, George, S. 55.

III. PILGERFAHRTEN: SELF-DOUBTS

¹ "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" first appeared in October 1892 in Blätter für die Kunst and was included, not in the first edition of Pilgerfahrten, but in the second edition (1899).

² Blätter für die Kunst, Einleitungen, S. 7. Originally from 1. Folge, 1. Heft (1892).

³ Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:42.

⁴ Letter from Hofmannsthal to Walther Brecht, Rodaun, 20. 1. 29, in Boehringer, Mein Bild, 1:227.

⁵ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 25 states that Pilgerfahrten was written before the first meeting of George and Hofmannsthal. However, "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" may have been written afterward. See note III. 25 in this thesis.

⁶ Letter from George to Klein, 17. 7. 1891, in Klein, Die Sendung Stefan Georges, S. 61.

⁷ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 25.

⁸ Ibid., S. 27.

⁹ Metzger, Stefan George, p. 53.

¹⁰ Ludwig Klages, Stefan George (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1902), S. 39.

¹¹ David, Stefan George, S. 66.

¹² In response to criticism that Blätter für die Kunst was "zu südlich zu wenig deutsch", George and his editor Klein defended their quest "in dem süden die vervollständigung zu suchen, [...] zu dem wir dichter pilgern um zu der tiefe das licht zu finden" in Blätter für die Kunst, Einleitungen, S. 17. Originally from 3. Folge, 2. Heft (1896).

¹³ Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 31.

¹⁴ Gundolf, George, S. 69.

¹⁵ David argues that the poem combines the two themes.

David, Stefan George, S. 59-60.

16 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 31.

17 Ibid., S. 31.

18 Ibid., S. 32. David, Stefan George, S. 59-60.

19 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 35. George's dream did not become reality until the time of Der siebente Ring (1907) and Der Stern des Bundes (1914). These collections were written under the impact of George's friendship with the teenaged poet Maximilian Kronberger whom he calls Maximin. Kronberger appears to be Der Stern des Bundes. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 342. George describes him to Gundolf as "mein leitstern". "George an Gundolf," München, 2. Januar 1904, Stefan George - Friedrich Gundolf Briefwechsel, Hrsg. Robert Boehringer mit Georg Peter Landmann, (München: Helmut Küpper, 1962), S. 143. To use the terms in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", George's imagined prototype of a companion and an artistic empire is the "keim" "Zu neuer erscheinung" (34) of Kronberger and the George-Kreis. The "Maximin-Erlebnis", a term used by Morwitz, is "geistig gewordenes Erleben". Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 339, 341. The idea that a spiritual vision can become life, featured in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", is validated in Der siebente Ring and Der Stern des Bundes. This important theme, prefigured before the Maximin-Erlebnis and constantly reiterated afterward, is best illustrated by two poems in Der Stern des Bundes, quoted in part below.

Maximin is the son of George's dreams in the last poem of the section "Eingang" in Der Stern des Bundes:

Wer ist dein Gott? All meines traums begehrt
 Der nächste meinem urbild · schön und hehr.

 Der sohn aus sternenzzeugung stellt ihn dar
 Den neue mitte aus dem geist gebar (354).

With Maximin (Kronberger) at the center of his circle, or "staat" (358), George is now at home in the "wahren auen" (34) pictured in "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut". In "Dass unfassbar geschehn in vorgeburten" in Der Stern des Bundes George rejoices: "Du [George] folg in jedem werk dem frühesten traum! / Aus einem staubkorn stelltest du den staat" (358).

20 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 36.

21 Ibid., S. 36.

22 Ibid., S. 39.

23 "Verjäherte Fahrten II" is based on George's visit to the palace at Aranjuez, Spain, in late summer 1889.

24 Morwitz and David concur that "Verjäherte Fahrten II" records George's daydream at the palace in Spain about the royalty of long ago. Both critics suggest that the young prince is a prototype of the poet's companion described in "Beträufelt an baum und zaun". Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 40-41. David, Stefan George, S. 63.

25 Morwitz terms the boy in blue in "Verjäherte Fahrten II" and "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" the "Traumgefährten". Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 41. As friendship is an important theme in George's poetry, Morwitz's imaginary boy in blue in "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" is more congruent with the inscription of Pilgerfahrten than Lachmann's identification of the figure with George's boyhood self. Eduard Lachmann, Die ersten Bücher Stefan Georges: eine Annäherung an das Werk (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1933), S. 40.

David speculates that the young figure in "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" could be Hugo von Hofmannsthal. David, Stefan George, S. 63-64. Morwitz, however, states that Pilgerfahrten was written before George met this teenaged poet. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 25. Nevertheless, the following supports David's opinion: as "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" was not included in the first edition of Pilgerfahrten, which was in press when George and Hofmannsthal first met in December 1891, the poem may have been written after their meeting. It was first published in October 1892 in Blätter für die Kunst and appeared in Pilgerfahrten in 1899. It is therefore possible that the "märchenhafte geschwister" (40) are George and Hofmannsthal who is "mein zwillingsbruder" in the letter "George an Hofmannsthal," [9. jan. 1892], Brief 7A, SG - HH, S. 13.

26 The fact that George's tenuous friendship with Hofmannsthal never blossomed into a literary partnership may explain why the pair in "Beträufelt an baum und zaun" has no definite destination. Morwitz's phrase for Algabal's realm is "das nicht echte Königreich des Dichters". Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 36.

27 George's sequence, "Mahnung", "Die märkte sind öder" and "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", serves as a pause for reflection after an unsuccessful search for kindred spirits. As "Mahnung" foreshadows the poet's descent into Algabal's world, it is useful to discuss it here, out of sequence.

28 George's aversion to the north is clear in Blätter für die Kunst: "Vom nordischen geist bleibt dem deutschen nicht viel zu lernen was er nicht schon besitzt [sic] ohne die verzerrungen. vom romanischen jedoch die klarheit weite sonnigkeit." Blätter für die Kunst, Einleitungen, S. 15. Originally from 3. Folge, 2. Heft (1896). His verse "Hellas ewig unsre liebe" (176) sums up his love for the south in "Ich bin freund und führer dir und ferge", Der Teppich des Lebens (1899), "Vorspiel".

29 The Metzgers base their discussion of "Die Spange" on the antithesis of "the everyday world of experience" or "the reality of life" (iron) and "the world of fantasy" (gold). Metzger, Stefan George, p. 59. For Gundolf, the poet's energies, still not focused or ready for perfection (the iron clasp), are at least partially channeled into his lavish dream world (the golden clasp). Gundolf, George, S. 77.

30 Morwitz sees in the clasp the symbol for Algabal and the poet's tentative friendship with the dream companion. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 42. Idem, Die Dichtung Stefan Georges (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1934), S. 34.

IV. ALGABAL: FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD

- 1 See notes I. 34 and I. 35 in this thesis.
- 2 Klein, Die Sendung Stefan Georges, S. 29.
- 3 "Mahnung", "Die märkte sind öder", "Mächtiger traum dem ich zugetraut", "Ihr alten bilder schlummert mit den toten".
- 4 "George an Hofmannsthal," [Wien], diensttag, [22. dez. 1891], Brief 2, SG - HH, S. 8, 238.
- 5 SG - HH, S. 7-17. See note IV. 15 in this thesis.
- 6 Klein, Die Sendung Stefan Georges, S. 30.
- 7 See notes I. 34 and I. 35 in this thesis.
- 8 "George an Hofmannsthal," [Wien, 9. jan. 1892], Brief 7A, SG - HH, S. 12-13.
- 9 "Hofmannsthal an George," [Wien, 10. Jan. 1892], Brief 6, SG - HH, S. 14.
- 10 George's dedication to Hofmannsthal (1899) in Pilgerfahrten.
- 11 "George an Hofmannsthal," [Wien, donnerstag auf freitag, 14. / 15. jan. 1892], Brief 10, SG - HH, S. 17.
- 12 "Hofmannsthal an George," [Wien, Donnerstag, 14. Jan. 1892], Brief 7, SG - HH, S. 16.
- 13 Boehringer mentions the letter dated 14. Januar from Dr. v. Hofmannsthal to George in SG - HH, S. 241.
- 14 "George an Dr H v Hofmannsthal," [Wien] IX Wasagasse 11 [16. jan. 1892], Brief 10A, SG - HH, S. 242.
- 15 According to Boehringer in SG - HH, S. 243, George moved to Munich in mid-January 1892.
- 16 Ibid., S. 246. On S. 232-233 Boehringer lists Hofmannsthal's selections which appeared in Blätter für die Kunst until 1904.

17 Ibid., S. 230.

18 Klein, Die Sendung Stefan Georges, S. 34-35.

19 Morwitz, Die Dichtung Stefan Georges, S. 35. Ibid., Kommentar (1969), S. 43.

20 Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 44. In this thesis the sources of information on Elagabalus are Cassius Dio Cocceianus, Dio's Roman History, with an English translation by Earnest Cary, 9 vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1954-55), 9 (1955):409-479; Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," in History of the Roman Empire from the Death of Marcus Aurelius to the Accession of Gordian III, trans. Edward C. Echols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 135-152; and Aelius Lampridius, "Antoninus Elagabalus," in The Scriptorum Historiae Augustae, with an English translation by David Magie, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-61), 2 (1960):105-177. Victor A. Oswald, Jr. gives parallels between Elagabalus and George's Algabal in "The Historical Content of Stefan George's Algabal," Germanic Review 23, 3 (October 1948): 193-205.

21 Information on Ludwig II in this thesis was obtained from Christopher McIntosh, The Swan King: Ludwig II of Bavaria (London: Allen Lane, 1982); Werner Richter, Ludwig II. König von Bayern, 6. Aufl. (München: F. Bruckmann, 1963); and Desmond Chapman-Huston, Bavarian Fantasy: The Story of Ludwig II, ed. Osyth Leeston (New York: Library Publishers, 1956).

22 Although the inscription appeared in 1899, George may have had Ludwig II in mind when planning Algabal. Gundolf, George, S. 80. Jethro Bithell writes that "Algabal is a spiritualized image of Ludwig II of Bavaria" in "Stefan George and his Circle," in Modern German Literature, 1880-1950, 3rd ed., rev. (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 128.

23 According to Morwitz, Ludwig II and George never met. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 44. "Schmerzbrüder" is a poem about loneliness in Der Teppich des Lebens (1899), S. 196.

24 Algabal's imperial hideaway reminds Morwitz of the mountain castles of King Ludwig II. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 45. George visited Schloss Linderhof in July 1891. H. -J. Seekamp, R. C. Ockenden und M. Keilson,

Stefan George / Leben und Werk: eine Zeittafel (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1972), S. 19; Wolters, Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst, S. 30. Naumann infers from the above evidence that these travels, which immediately preceded the writing of Algabal, left their mark in the cycle "Im Unterreich" and in George's inscription (1899) to Ludwig II. Naumann also relates the poem "Ihr hallen prahlend in reichem gewande" to the underground grotto at Linderhof where electric lights of different colors show off an artificial waterfall and lake with a small shell-shaped boat. Heinrich Naumann, "Stefan Georges 'Algabal': ein Hinweis zum Unterreich-Zyklus," Castrum Peregrini 134-135 (1978):122-124. The following poems in the cycle, "Der saal des gelben gleisses und der sonne" and "Daneben war der raum der blassen helle", depict two of Algabal's monochromatic rooms.

25 Elagabalus, the sun god, was represented by a huge conical black stone. Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," p. 139. The black flower the poet envisions "im heiligtume" (47) repeats the idea of the creative process as a form of worship.

26 Even death is stylized in three poems in Algabal: in "Wenn um der zinnen kupferglühe hauben" Algabal's servant kills himself because he inadvertently frightened away the doves the emperor was feeding; in "Ich will mir jener stunden lauf erzählen" Algabal poisons two sleeping young lovers in order to deprive their families of any chance to spoil their happiness; and in "Becher am boden" revellers at Algabal's banquet expire under a windfall of roses. Lampridius reports that such an event actually occurred in Elagabalus' banquet hall. Lampridius, "Antoninus Elagabalus," pp. 147, 149.

27 Gundolf, George, S. 85.

28 The garment-motif is featured in "Agathon knieend vor meinem pfühle". The purple robe honors the imperial status of Algabal and the physical beauty of Agathon. Like the poet they should live up to their distinguished birthright and surmount earthly cares: "Es ziemt nicht in irdischer klage zu wanken / Uns die das los für den purpur gebar" (53).

29 "O mutter meiner mutter und Erlauchte" expresses Algabal's efforts to overcome his destiny by acting "frei in den bedingten bahnen" (50).

30 Elagabalus was more eccentric than tyrannical. The immature teenager did not take his imperial office seriously. He openly scorned the people, but sometimes distributed gifts to them. Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," p. 148; Lampridius, "Antoninus Elagabalus," pp. 123, 145.

31 Elagabalus used to dress, groom himself and act in a feminine manner and occasionally appeared publicly in disguise. Cassius Dio Cocceianus, Dio's Roman History, 9: 463, 465; Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," p. 150; Lampridius, "Antoninus Elagabalus," pp. 151, 171.

32 Elagabalus excelled as a boy-priest in Syria. People flocked to his temple just to watch him dance in his silk robe to music as he performed his priestly rituals. Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," p. 140. "Gegen osten ragt der bau" and "Jahre und vermeinte schulden" evoke his exotic religious rites and his beauty which won the adulation of the people. Later, as a teenager, Elagabalus proved to be a most unsuitable emperor in Rome. The lost happiness of childhood is expressed again in "Fern ist mir das blumenalter".

33 Syrian priests prophesied the violent death of Elagabalus. Lampridius, "Antoninus Elagabalus," p. 171.

34 The reference to a non-existent girlfriend elaborates on George's longing for kindred spirits. George never married, whereas Elagabalus had several wives. Cassius Dio Cocceianus, Dio's Roman History, 9:457, 459; Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," pp. 146-147. Morwitz notes in his Kommentar (1969), S. 54, the allusion to the marriage of Elagabalus and a Vestal priestess in "Am markte sah ich erst die würdevolle". The marble statue in "Ob denn der wolken-deuter mich belüge" may be an allusion to the statue of Urania that Elagabalus obtained from Carthage in order to 'marry' this goddess of the moon to his sun god. Cassius Dio Cocceianus, Dio's Roman History, 9:461; Herodianus, "Macrinus, Elagabalus," p. 147. Other unhappy experiences of Elagabalus with women are expressed in "Fühl ich noch dies erste ungemach" and "Graue rosse muss ich schirren". In the former poem death beckons to Elagabalus upon his first disappointment in love; and in the latter poem he doubts the sincerity of the women he sees mourning the casualties of a battle.

35 The following poems also express the poet's

fascination with oblivion: in "Da auf dem seidenen lager" flute players lull Algabal to sleep with music evoking "die flucht aus den welten" (51); suspecting a forthcoming rebellion of his soldiers, in "Lärmen hör ich im schläfrigen frieden", Algabal considers taking his own life, but music fortifies his will to live in "Schall von oben!"

³⁶ Morwitz cautions against the equation of each stanza with only one collection of poems because such a schematic presentation was probably foreign to George. Morwitz, Kommentar (1969), S. 56. The fact that the different mood evoked by each stanza of "Vogelschau" is not exclusive to any one book of poems attests to the soundness of Morwitz's view.

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VITA

Surname: ATKINSON Given Names: DENA LYNN

Place of Birth: ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, Date of Birth: July 7, 1955

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, B.C. 1973 to 1977

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO 1977 to 1979

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, B.C. 1982 to 1985

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B.A. (Honors) 1977 University of Victoria, B.C.

M.L.S. 1979 University of Toronto

Honors and Awards:

J. Beattie MacLean Scholarship, 1975, 1976

Government of the Federal Republic of Germany Book Prize, 1975, 1976, 1977

University of Victoria Graduate Scholarship, 1982/83

University of Victoria Graduate Fellowship, 1983/84

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Author


DENA LYNN ATKINSON

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