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## CHAPTER I

### THE BASIC CONCEPTS *NATUR* AND *FREIHEIT* 1837-1849

Preserved manuscripts, including letters, verses, diaries, dramatic and novelistic fragments, of the young Keller date back as far as 1832. The year 1837 has been chosen to begin this period, however, as in a letter of that year there is the first tangible expression of philosophic attitude, and the first use of *Natur* and *Freiheit* in philosophic context. The year 1849 has been selected to end the period because in that year Keller finally overcame his philosophical uncertainty.

The significance of these limiting dates, as well as the part of Keller's life contained by them, can best be shown by a brief resumé of the events of the period. It will be recalled that in 1834 Keller had become involved in a school-boy prank and though innocent was expelled from school. Left to his own devices, he soon felt the urge to become a landscape painter. Summer visits to his uncle's home in Glattfelden enabled him to become intimately acquainted with the scenic beauty of the Swiss countryside and stimulated his artistic desire further, to the extent that he began to take art lessons in Zürich. In April, 1840, he went to Munich to carry on his art studies but was forced by lack of funds to return home in November, 1842. This setback did not immediately stifle his ambition to be a landscape painter, but allowed his earlier interest in writing to reassert itself; he had never given up this second love entirely since even in Munich it had offered him respite from the difficulties of plastic representation. In 1843 his interest in literary art finally surpassed his ambition to be a painter, as a result of his entry into the political struggle in Zürich. Here, in 1839, the radical party had lost control of the cantonal government, after it had alienated the peasantry and more conservative liberal elements by attempting to bring the author of *Das Leben Jesu*, David Friedrich Strauss, to the University of Zürich. Its defeat, however, had merely induced the radical party to reorganize and to take up with renewed vigor the fight against the dominant clerical and political absolutism. It was at this time of intense political rivalry that Keller joined the radical party and turned the

poetic skill acquired from the description of nature moods and student days to the production of political poems that soon won wide-spread attention. He became the poet of the party and remained such until 1848 when, after the victory of the protestant liberals in the *Sonderbundskrieg*, the two-fold aim of the party was fully realized: the power of the federal government was strengthened and the danger of a reintroduction of the Jesuit Order was checked. In October, 1848, partly as a result of his political activities, Keller was sent at state expense to study at the University of Heidelberg, where contact with Ludwig Feuerbach, author of *Das Wesen des Christentums* brought about a crystallization of his views.

The sources for the discussion in this chapter are Keller's letters, diaries, a few incidental essays, and his poetry, all of them media for his basic opinions. The lyric poetry is the most profuse source, as 1843-1849 was Keller's chief period of lyric production.

#### A. *Natur*

The co-appearance of *Natur* and *Freiheit* in 1837 took place in a letter written by Keller to his friend Johann Müller. Most significant are the following passages, the first of which throws light on *Natur*, the second on the relationship of *Natur* and *Freiheit*:

. . . denn die Einsamkeit, verbunden mit dem ruhigen Anschauen der Natur, mit einem klaren, heitern Bewusstsein seines Glaubens über Schöpfung und Schöpfer, und verbunden mit einigen Widerwärtigkeiten von auszen, ist, ich behaupt' es, die einzige wahre Schule für einen Geist von edlen Anlagen . . . Ich fordre keinen scharfen umfassenden Geist, keine berechnende, weitausschauende, entschlossene Kraft von einer groszen Seele . . . Ich fordre von ihm das Talent sich in jedem Bach, an der kleinsten Quelle wie am gestirnten Himmel unterhalten zu können, nicht gerade um des Baches, der Quelle und des Himmels, sondern um des Gefühls der Unendlichkeit und der Grösze willen, das sich daran knüpft. (*Ermatinger* II, 4).

Ich mache einen groszen Unterschied zwischen dem, der die Natur nur um ihrer Formen, und dem der sie um ihrer innern Harmonie willen anbetet . . . Der Mensch, der der Natur und sich selbst angehört, bewahre in seiner Brust ein göttliches Gefühl von natürlichem Rechte, und auf der hellen hohen Stirn throne das hehre Bewusstsein der Freiheit! . . . Ich meine nicht die Freiheit des Pöbels, noch die politische, sondern jene Freiheit, die Gott selbst

eigen ist und die den, der sie erkennt, keine schlechte Tat begehen lässt; aber die Erkenntnis dieser Freiheit wird nur erworben durch ein reines denkendes Herz, das seine Bestimmung aufsucht in der Welten harmonischer Wechselbewegung. (*Ermatinger* II, pp. 5-6).

Before a discussion of these passages is undertaken, a word should be said as to the degree of sincerity with which Keller wrote the letter to Müller.

The letter belonged to a correspondence which was begun in 1835, when Keller was sixteen. It is an established fact that Müller's letters to Keller were in large part mere plagiarisms.<sup>1</sup> Those of Keller, on the other hand, while not entirely free from literary influences, were essentially the product of his own inner conviction. The last line of the letter under discussion reflects Keller's desire to express personal convictions:

Verzeih, dasz ich Dir ein wenig mein Herz geleert habe, ich paszte schon lange auf eine Gelegenheit.

The reference to his share of the entire correspondence, made by Keller in *Der Grüne Heinrich*, revealed that he had expressed his own philosophical convictions, despite the fact that his style had been unnecessarily lofty and had reflected literary influences:

Nicht ohne Selbstgefälligkeit und Absicht suchte ich meine Episteln so schön und schwungrich als immer möglich zu schreiben und es kostete mich viel Uebung und Nachdenken, meine unerfahrene Philosophie einigermaßen in Form und Zusammenhang zu bringen . . . Leichter wurde es mir, den ernsten Teil der Briefe in ein Gewand ausschweifender Phantasie zu hüllen und mit dem bei meinem Jean Paul gelernten Humor zu verbrämen.<sup>2</sup>

Frieda Jaeggi has nicely shown the proper relationship in the young Keller of literary influence and sincerity:

Er lauscht einer verwichenen Literaturperiode und nicht genug, dasz er die Bücher verschlingt, er erlebt sie, fühlt und leidet mit und macht seiner Begeisterung dadurch Luft, dasz er im gleichen "Stiefel" arbeitet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Die Episode beruht auf Wirklichkeit und die Schwindelbriefe sind noch vorhanden." *Ermatinger* I, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> XVII, 141. *Der Grüne Heinrich* II. When not otherwise specified, reference will be made to the original version of 1855.

<sup>3</sup> Frieda Jaeggi, *GK und Jean Paul*, p. 2.

Eminent Keller scholars generally have not hesitated to accept at face value statements from the letter of 1837.<sup>4</sup> It may thus be concluded that the letter, including the passages quoted above, reflected Keller's own views. Now let us turn to *Natur* as used in that letter.

In the first passage, *Natur* is the world of tangible reality. It includes not merely the material reality of the earth, but that of the entire universe; to nature belong not only streams and fountains, but also the sky with its stars. However, nature's tangible forms are significant only for the feelings of greatness and eternity they can awaken in a man clear in his own mind about God and creation.

In the second passage, nature is also tangible reality, but it is again clear that outer reality is of secondary importance:

. . . ich mache einen groszen Unterschied zwischen dem, der die Natur nur um ihrer Formen, und dem der sie um ihrer innern Harmonie willen anbetet . . .

Nature's real importance lay in her inner harmony which referred primarily to the cause and effect relationship, to the complex of natural laws ("in der Welten harmonischer Wechselbewegung") supposedly existing in nature. These natural laws were good and purposeful since a person who revered nature's inner harmony was filled with a feeling of natural justice and divine freedom which allowed him henceforth to do no wrong.

The two passages supplement each other. Together they reveal that the quiet contemplation of nature awakened in man feelings of the eternal and the divine. Contemplation of nature entailed not a veneration of her forms, however, but worship of the harmonious order of those forms, of the idea in nature, of natural law. Only contemplation of the great natural order could bring forth feelings of eternity, of grandeur, of justice and of freedom. The basic reality of nature was to be found in her order, in the complex of natural laws which revealed the ordering hand of God.

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<sup>4</sup> Ermatinger (I, 54) held the opinion: "Der Bildungstrieb des jugendlichen Autodidakten, dazu die redliche Wahrheit seines Wesens veranlassten Keller, mit ernsthaftem Eifer auf das Gefühl des Freundes einzugehen." Hans Dünnebier, (*Gottfried Keller und Ludwig Feuerbach*, 1913, pp. 3 and 30) used the passages given above to show Keller's attitude of the time. Ackerknecht in his biography *Gottfried Keller* (1937) quoted the entire passage from the letter of 1837 under the heading, "Erste Weltanschauliche Bekenntnisse."

The same conception of nature was revealed in an essay written by Keller in the same year, entitled by Jacob Baechthold *Eine Nacht auf dem Uto*. Again nature is tangible reality:

. . . trunken schweifte das Auge über die weiten Auen und Hügel, über Wälder und Felder, Strom und See; welche heroische reine Natur, von keinem Machwerk gestört!<sup>5</sup>

Again the importance of nature was in her inner harmony:

Unverwandt starrte ich empor, entsetzt über diese Unendlichkeit, über diese Größe und diese ewige Harmonie der Systeme und fand, dass die Sternkunde die erhabenste der menschlichen Wissenschaften sei.<sup>6</sup>

Again the inner harmony revealed the ordering hand of God:

Sie (die Freigeister) glaubten die Geheimnisse der Natur ergründet zu haben und schrieben den Gang des Weltenlaufs, des Lebens allein den verschiedenen Kräften zu, die in derselben wirken. Die Thoren! sie zergliederten in ihren Mäuseköpfen das große Uhrwerk und leiteten die Verrichtungen der Natur vom ewigen Gange der Räder und Getriebe her, ohne zu bedenken, dass eine Hand nötig war, um das Ganze in Bewegung zu setzen.<sup>7</sup>

This essay also reflected a considered opinion, as the philosophical passage given above is logical and not purely emotional. The logical nature of the essay induced Ermatinger to term it "eine kühle Naturallegorie."<sup>8</sup>

The general applicability of this attitude toward nature for the young Keller of 1837 is shown by a passage from *Der Grüne Heinrich*, in which Keller endowed young Heinrich with an identical attitude:

Schon früh hatte er ohne theoretische Einpflanzung, unbewusst, die glückliche Gabe, das wahre Schöne von dem bloß Malerischen, was vielen ihr Leben lang in Sinne steckt, trennen zu können. Diese Gabe bestand in einem treuen Gedächtnis für Leben und Bedeutung der Dinge, in der Freude über ihre Gesundheit und volle Entwicklung, in einer Freude, welche den äuzern Formen-

<sup>5</sup> *Gottfried Kellers Leben, Seine Briefe und Tagebücher*, edited by Jakob Baechthold, I, 423.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 425.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.

<sup>8</sup> *Ermatinger I*, 103.

reichtum vergessen kann, der oft eigentlich mehr ein Barockes als Schönes ist.<sup>9</sup>

In this passage, nature is also possessed of "äuszern Formenreichtum," but her importance is "das wahre Schöne," "(das) Leben und Bedeutung der Dinge," "Gesundheit und volle Entwicklung,"—in a word, the inner harmony or divinely ordered state of nature.

*Natur* then, in Keller's *Weltanschauung* of 1837, was the universe of tangible forms. But her basic reality lay not in her form, but in her order which reflected the reality of God. Nature's importance—and one may say her philosophical reality—lay in her divine idea, in the harmonious order of her forms. (It may seem to some readers at this point that in the letter of 1837, God was a more fundamental concept than *Natur*. In a sense this is undoubtedly true. But psychologically considered it must be admitted that Keller experienced God in nature and that his religious experience was a part of his nature experience. As developed above, the awareness of God is implicit in the concept *Natur*.)

After 1837 Keller expressed his nature ideas and feelings most frequently in his poetry. The few poems written by Keller prior to his departure for Munich in 1840 were for the most part nature poems. Though student themes predominated in his poetry during his Munich years, he also wrote "In eines Armen Gärtchen" which told the tragic story of a broken love in terms of a butterfly and a rose. After the return home, his production of nature lyrics became profuse and remained so till the end of 1845.

<sup>9</sup> XVI, 44. *Der Grüne Heinrich* I. The present study accepts with one qualification the consensus of scholarly opinion that the work was a valid statement of Keller's views. *Der Grüne Heinrich* was written in the burning disappointment of unrequited love, and analysts of Keller's psychology agree that the work was a reflection of his powerful need for self-expression and inner release. Paul Foucar expressed the general attitude of scholars in the words: "Die Lebensauffassung des Dichters . . . als deren bewusste Ausprägung das Kunstwerk gelten muss." Cf. also E. Hauch, *Gottfried Keller as a Democratic Idealist*, 57; R. Huch, *Gottfried Keller*, p. 19; E. Neis, *Romantik und Realismus in den Prosawerken Gottfried Kellers*, pp. 27-33; H. Dünnebier, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-151.

The one qualification has to do with young Heinrich's conception of freewill. It will later be seen that this conception does not coincide completely with that of the young Keller. The explanation for this disagreement lies in the fact that though the novel was largely autobiographical in nature, it was also a *Tendenzroman* which sought to show the development of a young man from a subjective outlook to an objective *Weltanschauung*. It suited the author's purposes to distort the youth's early conception of freewill into an absolute freewill such as was held by the more extreme German Romanticists. Cf. H. Dünnebier, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

From then till 1849 ethical and patriotic sentiments generally accompanied nature moods in his poetry.

The number of these nature lyrics is larger than was formerly supposed. The recent publication of Keller's *Nachgelassene Gedichte* in the Fränkel edition, volumes XIII and XIV, has swelled considerably the relatively small number of lyrics found in the *Buch der Natur* of the *Gesammelte Gedichte* (1883).

Many of Keller's nature lyrics merely reflected his deep joy in nature, and only occasionally is there an explicit reference in word or picture to the teleologic element in nature to indicate that Keller's real interest was not so much in the "malerische" effect as in the appreciation of "das wahre Schöne" and in the understanding of the "Leben und Bedeutung der Dinge." An example such as the following is rare:

Saget mir ihr Sterne Gottes  
 Die ihr dort im Weltenraume  
 Wunderbare Wege wandelt,  
 Uranfänglich, ewiglich!  
 . . . .  
 Und die Sonnen, die ihr jubelnd,  
 Harmonienvoll umkreiset,  
 Werden sie euch auch verdunkelt  
 Und geschwärzt vom falschen Neid?  
 (XIII, 74 "Stunden," 1843)

More frequent are examples which by implication stress "Entwicklung" and "Leben":

Tausendfach wollen die Blumen entriegeln  
 Aus ihrer Brust den gefangenen Gott.  
 (XIV, 8, "Morgen," 1845)

Am offenen Fenster blühen dunkle Nelken  
 Vielleicht die letzte Nacht vor ihrem Welken . . . .  
 (XIV, 21, "Nachtfalter," 1844)

Das ist doch eine üppige Zeit,  
 Wo alles so schweigend blüht und glüht . . .  
 (XIV, 36, "Sommer," 1844)

Wie nun alles stirbt und endet  
 Und das letzte Rosenblatt  
 Müd sich an die Erde wendet  
 In die kühle Ruhestatt!  
 (XIII, 64, "Herbst," 1845)



Strahlende Unsterblichkeit  
Wandelt durch die Lüfte.  
(XIV, 30, "Unter Sternen," 1843)

Wie strahlet ihr im Morgenschein,  
Du rosig Kind, der Blütenbaum  
Und dieser Brunnen frisch und rein—  
Ein schönres Kleeblatt gibt es kaum.

Wie dreifach lieblich hat Natur  
In euch sich lächelnd offenbart!  
Aus deinem Aug' grüßt ihre Spur  
Des Wandrers stille Morgenfahrt.  
(I, 31, "Am Brunnen," before 1846)

Ich sinne, wo in weiter Welt  
Jetzt sterben mag ein Menschenkind?  
Und ob vielleicht den Einzug hält  
Ganz still ein lächelnd Heldenkind?  
(XIV, 28, "Nacht," 1844)

A number of Keller's nature lyrics deal solely with his profound religious experience. Though these seldom refer to the natural order directly, they illuminate Keller's conception of nature as purposeful by showing that he believed God to be in nature. Thus, in "Frühlingsanfang" God is apparent in the birth of Spring:

Gott schlägt den Tabernakel auf  
In allen jungen Wäldern,  
Der Weihrauch steigt zum Himmel auf  
Rings aus Gebirg und Feldern.  
(XIII, 58, 1844)

In the hush of night, especially, the poet found God in nature. In "Nacht V" he felt as if God were going to make himself known to him:

Doch wie nun auf dem Erdental  
Ein absolutes Schweigen ruht;  
Ich fühle mich so leicht zumal  
Und wie die Welt so still und gut.  
  
Der letzte leise Schmerz und Spott  
Verschwindet aus des Herzens Grund;  
Mir ist, als tät der alte Gott  
Mir endlich seinen Namen kund.  
(XIV. 29, 1844)

In "Unter Sternen" the poet feels a unity with God:

Mag die Sonne nun bislang  
 Andern Zonen scheinen:  
 Hier fühl ich Zusammenhang  
 Mit dem All und Einem!  
 (XIV, 30, 1843)

So strong was Keller's religious experience out in the open under the endless night-sky that he turned to nature, when tormented by doubt, to rediscover his God:

O ew'ge Nacht; o blaue klare Nacht,  
 Und doch so schwer und undurchdringlich dunkel!  
 . . . Ich werf mein blutend Herz in diesen Schlund,  
 Ins Meer der Nacht, und angle nach dem Gotte!  
 (XIII, 50, "Nachtlied," 1844)

The relation of Keller's religious experience in nature to his conception of nature as a harmonious order of laws is especially apparent from the poem "Abend," in which the religious doubts of the poet are appeased by the purposeful regularity in nature. At first the poet is in despair because the sun will not remain to console him, but soon the rising moon shows him the sublime purposefulness of all things and he becomes devoutly thankful:

. . .  
 Der du im Unsichtbaren schwebst,  
 Doch immer in mir widerklingend!  
 Der du die goldnen Brücken webst,  
 Von Welten sie zu Welten schwingend,  
 Du hast ein Liebesband gewoben  
 Mir um das Herz so alt und krank.  
 Du hast mich aus dem Staub erhoben—  
 Du groszer Weber, habe Dank.  
 (XIV, 15, 1844)

Keller's references to nature's order were for the most part indirect. On a few occasions, however, he wrote poems explicitly to revere that order. In 1838 a little poem, termed by Fränkel the first formulation of one of Keller's basic attitudes (XIII, 375), voiced an aversion for everything not normal and natural, i.e., not in accordance with natural law:

Misztraue allem Auszerordentlichen,  
 Denn ungesegnet lebt das Ungemeine,  
 Sich selbst zur Qual und Andern zur Verwirrung.  
 Das Ungemeine ist das Ungelungene,  
 Das nicht vermochte grosz genug zu denken,  
 So einfach still zu sein wie die Natur,  
 Und sich für gröszer achtend schlechter ward!

(XIII, 9)

In July, 1843, Keller formulated a plan for a poem which was to eulogize the harmony of nature. All the flowers—anxious to see one another in their splendor, all at the same time—decide to bloom together in a certain Fall:

Dieser Herbst kommt, und in feenhafter Menge und Mannigfaltigkeit sprieszen die Blüten des ganzen Jahres auf einmal hervor. Grosze Pracht. Aber bald entbehrt diese Blume das, jene etwas anderes, und alle, bis auf die Herbstblumen, fühlen sich mitten in dem üppigen zaubrischen Leben unglücklich. (*Ermatinger* II, 110)

The divine, ordering hand had already placed the flowers where they were best suited.

In November, 1843, the most glowing praise for the harmony in nature was expressed in "Lebenslust":

Fischlein im Rheine,  
 Röslein im Garten,  
 Vögel im Haine  
 Vielerlei Arten,  
 Sternlein am Himmel,  
 Glänzend Gewimmel  
 Schwimmen und blühen,  
 Singen und glühen,  
 Und auf den Bergen der Quellen Schatz—  
 Jegliches ist an dem besten Platz!

(XIII, 79)

The revised form of "Lebenslust," which was included in the *Gesammelte Gedichte* as a separate poem, began as follows:

Wie doch ein jeglich Leben  
 Sein ganzes Sein erfüllt  
 Und all sein durstig Streben  
 Im vollen Becher stillt!

Die Rosen blühen im Garten  
 Wie spät der Lenz auch kommt;  
 Drum magst du still erwarten  
 Dein Stündlein, so dir frommt!

In dunkler Nacht die Sterne  
 Glühn erst am Himmelshaus,  
 Und sei sie noch so ferne,  
 Die Nacht bleibt dir nicht aus!  
 (XIII, 80)

There can be little doubt, then, that *Natur* was of basic importance to Keller's conception of reality, and that, despite his profound aesthetic and religious experiences in nature, *Natur* was not arbitrarily romantic but expressive of an outlook similar to Herderian pantheism.<sup>10</sup> Tangible nature was evolving according to eternal, universal, purposeful laws which reflected the hand of God.

Some aspects of *Natur*, however, still require clarification. For example, though the laws of nature were clearly dynamic, what was the essence of the totality of nature? How closely did Keller before 1849 come to identify God with nature? Was man a part of the natural order, as indicated in the letter of 1837? If so, what was his destiny on earth and what became of him after death?

Taking the problem of man first, it will be noted that the revised version of "Lebenslust" reaffirmed Keller's conviction that man, too, belonged in the natural order. This conviction had remained strong within him ever since 1837. Even in the dark days in Munich, Keller had cheered both his mother and himself with the repeated assurance that his "Schicksal so gut in Gottes Hand steht, als das jedes andern Menschen,<sup>11</sup> that he had "keine Ursache an der Vorsehung zu zweifeln."<sup>12</sup> He had sought consolation several times in the belief that it was the natural lot of an artist to undergo tribulations at first. Others had had "das gleiche Schicksal" and had succeeded; he would not be an exception to the rule.<sup>13</sup>

Keller's belief of the 1840's that man belonged to nature's order was till recently obscured, as many poems seemed to stress

<sup>10</sup> Keller's stress on feeling as the portal to the divine is, of course, not too far removed from the nature philosophy of the early German romanticists. His emphasis on the "feeling of eternity" reminds one of the "inner unity" of Novalis and the "universality" of Schleiermacher. However, Keller was an artist, like Goethe, who for all his idealism could not consider "Die Natur . . . mit ihren tausend Bildern und Schönheiten" as merely phenomenological. Though God was spirit and underlying reality, nature's forms were not a purely subjective interpretation of reality due to the nature of the human mind. The divine was revealed *in* the tangible world, in the purposeful and harmonious relationship of its forms. Thus Keller stood closer to Herder and Goethe than to the Romanticists.

<sup>11</sup> *Ermatinger* II, 69. Letter of August, 1841.

<sup>12</sup> *Ermatinger* II, p. 71. Letter of September, 1841.

<sup>13</sup> *Ermatinger* II, 79. Letter of November, 1841.

the absolute freewill of man with no mention of the need to obey natural law. Thus in the poem "Trübes Wetter" of 1844 the concluding lines read:

Ich aber, mein bewusstes Ich,  
 Beschau das Spiel in stiller Ruh,  
 Und meine Seele rüstet sich  
*Zum Kampfe mit dem Schicksal zu.*  
 (I, 68, *Gesammelte Gedichte*) (my italics)

Such defiance of destiny is directly opposed to the attitude of the nature devotee as manifested in the preceding poems. However, Jonas Fränkel, in his edition of Keller's *Nachgelassene Gedichte* (1936-1939), revealed that August Adolf Ludwig Follen had occasioned the change.<sup>14</sup> Fränkel showed that Follen had not hesitated to alter poems of two other writers, one of whom was August Wilhelm Schlegel, and that Follen adhered to a subjective idealism which would explain lines such as the above. Follen was Keller's patron and publisher, and the youthful poet had had no choice. He submitted, though not without inner bitterness, to alteration of his verse.<sup>15</sup> The *Nachgelassene Gedichte* contain the original version of the verse quoted above:

Ich aber schaue innerlich  
 Still lächelnd zu in guter Ruh,  
 Und meine Seele rüstet sich  
*Ergebend ihrem Schicksal zu.*  
 (my italics)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> XIV, xv-xxxii, especially xxiv.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that both of the living Keller biographers, Ermatinger and Ackerknecht, felt that Follen had done Keller a great service in editing his poetry, as they both were of the opinion that Keller was a romanticist in attitude till 1849. Neither scholar apparently realized that he was accepting Follen's *Weltanschauung* in place of Keller's. Thus Ackerknecht (*Gottfried Keller*, p. 109) had said: "Keller musz das Vertrauen dankbar empfunden haben, das ihm Follen durch seine Mitwirkung an der Ausfeilung erwies. Da zahlreiche Niederschriften mit dessen eigenhändigen Aenderungen und Einwendungen sowie Aufzeichnungen Kellers darüber erhalten sind, können wir uns heute noch davon überzeugen, wie gründlich er die Verse des jungen Dichters in bezug auf ihre technische Sauberkeit, aber auch auf ihre Bilderkraft durchgearbeitet habe. In einem Brief an Keller vom Frühjahr 1846 vergleicht er sich geradezu, auf Jean Pauls 'Titan' anspielend, mit einem Münzstock." Ermatinger (I, 135) noted that "Keller hat sich später sehr kühl über Follens und der anderen Freunde kritischen Rat geäuzert und ihnen vorgeworfen, dasz sie einen zu wenig feinen Masztab an sein Schaffen angelegt; lediglich die tendenziöspolitische Seite seiner Produktion habe ihm schnell Freund und Gönner verschafft." But Ermatinger remained convinced that "Follens Urteil und Hilfe (war) eine unschätzbare Förderung."

<sup>16</sup> XIV, 57. Fränkel recognized the significant difference between the two versions of this stanza: "Die ganze Schlussstrophe, die des Dichters Haltung ins Gegenteil kehrt, trägt deutlich Follensche Gepräge." (XIV, 322)

Here is the attitude toward nature which Keller had repeatedly expressed, an attitude justifying the use of the phrase, "still lächelnd . . . in guter Ruh," which would have been nonsensical in the previous version. A similar alteration, even more obvious to a person acquainted with Keller, which distorted meaning and stressed an absolute freewill was made in the poem "Erkenntnis." The altered lines read:

Tu frei und offen was du nicht willst lassen  
Doch wandle streng auf selbstbeschränkten Wegen.  
(I, 145, *Gesammelte Gedichte*, 184-)

The "wilst" quickly catches the eye as out of place in an oft used Keller phrase. Originally the poem had read, "Tu frei und offen was du nicht kannst lassen" (XVI, 53), which was a wholehearted reaffirmation of Keller's belief in man's adherence to nature.

Man's arrayal in the natural order is also indicated in the poem "Abgedroschenes" of 1844:

Eisern ans Schicksal der Menschheit gekettet,  
Hart in das Joch des Gesetzes gebettet,  
Jeder ein Hüter vom heiligen Schatz . . .<sup>17</sup>

A diary notation of 1843 reveals to what an extent Keller's general thinking was influenced by his belief that man belonged to the natural order:

Von Hoffmann zu verlangen, dasz er die Malerei aufgeben und alle seine Kräfte der Dichtkunst zuwenden solle, wäre eine Philisterei gewesen . . . Aber es ist ein frommer Wunsch, dasz er diesen Drang zur Bildnerei nicht gehabt. (*Ermatinger* II, 107)

An indirect indication that man belonged in the natural order is seen in a poem of 1844 in which nations are conceived in terms of organic life:

Wenn aus der Völker Schwellen und Versanden  
Ein Neues sich zum Ganzen einreicht . . .  
(XIV, 76, *Vaterländische Sonette*)

Man's destiny, Keller felt, was especially guided by the law of time. With the philosophic optimism of the preceding century,

<sup>17</sup> XIII, 101. The demand in the second stanza of this poem, "Aber der Geist soll fessellos schweben," may be taken to be a defense of a Kantian or romantic dualism. If so, it would indicate a momentary yielding to the pressing philosophic arguments of the romantic group surrounding Keller. *Geist* may also be translated as "intellect," however, and then the poem fits in perfectly with the thesis of intellectual freedom as here developed.

Keller believed that man was evolving, inevitably driven by natural law, to perfection. Already in Munich in 1841 he had felt the deep significance of the passage of time:

Die Zeit kommt her, die Zeit geht hin,  
Sie heilet alle Wunden . . .

In 1843, when he joined the fight against the Jesuits, it was his faith in inevitable progress that enabled him to defy his opponents:

Die Zeit ist Gott! Und wenn ihr seine Zeichen  
Nicht achten wollet in verstockten Herzen,  
Wenn ihr der klaren Ueberzeugung nicht wollt weichen,  
So grabt ihr in der eigenen Brust nach bitterm Schmerzen,  
. . .  
Wer frevelnd sich dem Rad der Zeit entgegenstemmt,  
Der liegt zerquetscht, zermalmt von der Riesenwucht.  
Vergeblich, dasz ihr seine ehrnen Speichen hemmt!  
Es rollet über euch dahin in rascher Flut.  
(XIII, 182)

The inevitable march of time was the basis of the nature experience contained in "Morgenlied" written a month later:

Auch durch Gewitterstunden die Zeit entflieht  
Mit aller Not und Klage dahin sie zieht!  
(XIII, 40)

A *Zeitgedicht* of 1844 again revealed optimistic faith in the future based on the idea of inevitable progress:

Wenn der kalte Winter nicht wäre  
Könnte uns nicht der Lenz beglücken!  
Wenn es keine Tyrannen gäbe  
Hätten wir keine Republiken!  
  
Alles musz keimen, reifen hienieden,  
Und die Zeit, die Zeit ist der Bauer,  
Der der Zukunft heiligen Samen  
Lockt aus dem dunklen Acker der Trauer.  
. . . Endlich wird doch Vollendung werden,  
Einzig Ziel von Sterben und Leben.  
(XIII, 226)

Other poems of 1844 develop the same theme and show how deeply rooted these convictions were in Keller's outlook:

Und magst du immer schlafen gehen,  
 Die Sonne wird nicht stille stehen,  
 Die Zeit wird nicht erfrieren!  
 Und wann er schläft, der faule Rat,  
 So steht sie auf, die frische Tat,  
 Und wird den Reigen führen!  
 (XIII, 276)

Geduld ihr Hoffnungslosen,  
 Die ihr glaubt zu erliegen!  
 Die Zeit, die Zeit bringt Rosen,  
 Sie wird auch für uns siegen.  
 (XIII, 236)

In 1846 Keller was still proclaiming the same message:

Unermüdlich schafft die Zeit  
 Und wer sich mit ihr entzweit,  
 Heimlich und am Tage,  
 Tut es sich zur Plage!  
 (XIII, 307)

A notation in his diary of 1848 read as follows:

Und ebenso still, grosz und sicher leuchtet das  
 Gestirn unseres Schicksals und unserer Tage über  
 der tosenden Verwirrung.  
 (*Ermatinger* II, 168)

A benign reason was inexorably guiding the destiny of man through the confusion of the times. Till 1848, then, man also was a part of the great natural order.

A concrete answer to the question of what Keller's views were on immortality and the relation of God to nature is somewhat more difficult to give because Keller's conception of immortality changed through the early forties and because his vehement defense of God and immortality during the years 1846-1848 was by no means the certain expression of his own convictions. Keller had defended the liberal, religious point of view against the atheist-philosopher Arnold Ruge in 1846 and then later against the Feuerbach disciple Wilhelm Marr, but it is quite possible that he was merely repaying a debt to his benefactor, Follen. Dünneber realized this possibility although he then rejected it:



Die Frage, ob Kellers Haltung im Ichelkampf von seinen Dankesgefühlen für Follen geboten sei, darf man getrost mit dem Hinweis auf seine selbständige religiöse Ueberzeugung verneinen, doch würde er ohne die Freunde Follen und Schulz schwerlich sich an den Streitigkeiten beteiligt haben (*op. cit.* p. 42).

It is undeniable, however, that Follen, as Ruge wrote to his friend Prutz in January 1846, put pressure on Keller to get him to support his own diatribe, *An die gottlosen Nichts-Wüteriche*:

Wenn Follen es dahin bringt, dasz ihm einer eine populäre Philippika gegen die Philosophie und gegen mich speziell fabrizierte (er sucht den Gottfried Keller, einen guten, unbefangenen Kerl dazu zu bringen, wahrscheinlich ohne Erfolg) so wäre ich die längste Zeit hier Abt gewesen. (*Ermatinger* I, 160.)

Undeniable also, that immortality as represented in Keller's philippic, "Auch an die Ichel" (1846), would imply a retrogression in his thought:

Was aber ward und wird aus den Millionen  
Die unversöhnt, bleich, siech von hinnen schwinden?  
Wie pitoyabel euer Lichtlein glimmt!

This proof of immortality, that millions die without reaching perfection, would imply that human spirits retain their identity after death to continue a monad-like development toward perfection. Even Dünnebier, with his emphasis on the change wrought by Feuerbach, admitted that by 1845 or earlier, Keller had no longer believed in personal immortality:

Beide Gedichte stammen aus dem Jahre 1845, die Keime zu diesem Pantheismus mögen aber in einer früheren Schicht liegen, denn an eine Fortdauer des Menschen als Person hat der junge Keller, nachdem ihn einmal religiöse Dinge ernsthaft bewegten, kaum je geglaubt, obwohl er . . . den Unsterblichkeitsglauben noch 1848 mit Leidenschaft verteidigt. (*op. cit.*, p. 30)

Furthermore, the oft-cited philosophic agreement between Follen and Keller may be opened to question in the light of Keller's reaction to Follen's revision of his poems.<sup>18</sup> The religious ideas in Keller's polemic writings of 1846-1848 are thus unreliable sign-posts. If they do reveal a sincere belief in God and immortality, there still is the question whether Keller conceived of them as stated and whether he felt as sure of himself on the subject as the writings would indicate. Fortunately, Keller's writ-

<sup>18</sup> Cf. pp. 24 and 53 in this study.

ings prior to 1846, though few, are more helpful and here one finds facts to indicate that long before 1849, indeed as early as 1845, God and nature had drawn very close together in Keller's outlook in the *Ruhe* common to both, and that personal immortality had been surrendered in favor of the more consistent pantheistic belief that death implied a return to the great eternal *Ruhe* which was god-nature.<sup>19</sup>

To begin with, Keller had a deep, innate preference for quiet moods. His *Traumbuch* and diary reveal this predilection:

Nun stellte sie eine Nelke nach der andern bedächtig in das schlanke, glänzende Glas, ich sah ihr zu und empfand jenes Behagen und Wohlgefühl, welches immer in einen kömmt, wenn jemand vor unsern Augen eine leichte Arbeit still, ruhig, und zierlich vollbringt. (*Ermatinger*, II, 160. *Traumbuch*, 1847)

Aber nicht bloß in Tagen der Mutlosigkeit—nein, auch in Tagen der festlichen, rauschenden Freude will ich stille Momente verweilen und ausruhen im traulichen Schmollwinkel meines Tagebuches. (*Ermatinger*, II, 104. *Tagebuch*, 1843)

Wenn ich auch nichts Lesenswertes mehr in dem Aufgeschriebenen finde, so wird mich doch beim Anblick der jeweiligen Daten eine dunkle, süße Erinnerung befallen eines still genossenen, schuldlosen Glückes. (*Ermatinger* II, 161. *Tagebuch*, 1848)

His love for quiet and seclusion manifested itself in a liking for the quiet moods in nature. The letter of 1837 had called for "ein ruhiges Anschauen der Natur" with the obvious implication that a turbulent state of mind could not appreciate the peaceful wonder of nature. The essay of 1837, *Eine Nacht auf dem Uto*, contained a description of a sunset which had ended with the enraptured exclamation, "welch heilige Stille!" The little poem of 1838, "Beim Entwurf einer kleinen Landschaft," was the first of numerous lyrics dealing with quiet nature moods:

Die Abendröte malet  
 Schon See und Flur und Hain:  
 Das ew'ge Lichtlein strahlet  
 Still vom Kapellelein.  
 Es strahlt so sanft,  
 Es strahlt so mild,  
 Als wärs der ew'gen Treue Bild  
 Als wärs das Bild der Liebe.  
 (XIII, 3)

<sup>19</sup> Hans Dünnebier believed that Keller's ideas on *Ruhe* were borrowed from Ludwig Feuerbach in 1849 (*op. cit.*, p. 74).

The peace of dawn, the silent glory of the sunset, the deep rest of night, the quiet of a winter morning, the noon-day hush in summer: these were the moments in nature which Keller preferred and which he depicted over and over again.

Keller's aesthetic experience in the quiet of nature was apparently so great that he objectivized his experience and considered nature's real essence to be peace and quiet, or *Ruhe*. The philosophic poem of 1838, "Misztraue Allem Auszerordentlichen," considered nature to be essentially at rest: "so einfach still zu sein wie die Natur." Young Heinrich substantiated this view of nature as essentially "still":

Sie (die Landschaftsmalerei) besteht nicht darin, dasz man merkwürdige und berühmte Orte aufsucht und nachahmt, sondern darin, dasz man die stille Herrlichkeit und Schönheit der Natur betrachtet und abzubilden sucht . . . (XVII, 46)

Heinrich also associated "Gottes freie Natur" with scenes representing nature at rest:

In den Städten, in den Häusern der Vornehmen, da hängen schöne, glänzende Gemälde, welche meistens stille, grüne Wildnisse vorstellen, so reizend und trefflich gemalt, als sähe man in Gottes freie Natur. (XVII, 46)

The poems of the *Nachtzyklus* already have shown that Keller's aesthetic experience in the peace of nature at night became an intense religious experience. Then he felt close to God and at peace with the world:

Doch wie nun auf dem Erdental  
Ein absolutes Schweigen ruht:  
Ich fühle mich so leicht zumal  
Und wie die Welt so still und gut.  
(XIV, 29)

Hier fühl ich Zusammenhang  
Mit dem All und Einen!  
(XIV, 30)

Just as he had objectivized his general aesthetic experience in nature, he now lent objective validity to his profound religious experience in nature. A poem of 1844 began, "Gott ist ein groszes stilles Haus." The fifteen-year-old Heinrich (after having read Goethe, to be sure) came to the conclusion:

Nur die Ruhe in der Bewegung hält die Welt und macht den Mann;  
die Welt ist innerlich ruhig und still, und so musz es auch der Mann

sein, der sie verstehen und als ein wirkender Teil von ihr sie widerspiegeln will. Ruhe zieht das Leben an, Unruhe verscheucht es; Gott hält sich mäuschen still, darum bewegt sich die Welt um ihn. (XVIII, 6)

God was "mäuschen still." It will also be noticed that though God is still viewed as an entity, there is almost an identification of the inner peace of the world with God, since in the last line the world is moving about God, and before that, it was said that the world was inwardly at rest. Thus, the sparse references available indicate that Keller associated both nature and God with *Ruhe* before 1849.

It would seem that just about the time Keller came to conceive of God in pantheistic terms as *Ruhe* in nature, he also surrendered his belief in personal immortality. The manner in which immortality is viewed strongly colors one's conception of death, and conversely a new conception of death almost inevitably implies a change in one's view of the after-life. Such a new conception of death was revealed in "Wetternacht" (1845).<sup>20</sup> The poem begins with a description of a cold and stormy night; the poet is seized by the tremendous sadness in nature:

Es weint das tiefverhüllte Land.  
 In meinem Herzen tönt die Klage wieder.  
 Und es ergreift mich, wirft zum Staub mich nieder,  
 Und meine Tränen rinnen in den Sand.  
 (XIV, 25-27)

In this mood of humility, the poet's pride is broken, and he sees for the first time into the deepest recesses of nature:

O reiner Schmerz, der in den Höhen gewittert,  
 Du heil'ges Weh, das durch die Tiefen zittert,  
 Ihr schloszt auch mir die Augen auf!  
 Ihr habt zu mir das Zauberwort gesprochen,  
 Und meinen Hochmut wie ein Rohr gebrochen,  
 Und ungehemmt strömt meiner Tränen Lauf.  
 Du süßes Leid hast ganz mich überwunden!  
 Welch dunkle Lust, die ich noch nie empfunden,  
 Ist glühend in mir angefacht!  
 Wie reich bist Mutter Erde! du zu nennen:  
 Ich glaubte deine Herrlichkeit zu kennen,  
 Nun erst schau ich in deinen tiefsten Schacht.

<sup>20</sup> *Wetternacht* has generally been ignored by Keller critics, though Hans Corrodi noted that it reflected sincere inner experience and had been unjustifiedly overlooked. (*Gottfried Keller's Weltanschauung, Zeitwende*, Dec., 1932). A similar attitude is to be found in "Abendlied an die Natur" (1845).

Out of the shaft comes death, "ein junger, schlanker Knabe," whom the poet welcomes:

Willkommen Tod! dir will ich mich vertrauen.  
 Lasz mich in deine treuen Augen schauen  
 Zum ersten Male fest und klar.

For the first time the poet has realized the true nature of death, and he returns to life filled with a new "Todesdemut":

Der Welt mit Weltsinn nun entgegen gehen  
 Will ich, doch innen blüht mir ungesehen  
 Der Todesdemut still verborgner Glanz.

To understand the full significance of the poem one must analyze the key to its meaning, namely, the poet's pride. Only when his pride is finally broken by the intense sadness in nature, does he see, for the first time, into nature's greatest mystery. Now, there was only one thing which Keller might at this time have regarded as pride in the presence of nature, a belief in personal immortality which defied the laws of nature; for only as long as the human soul was considered apart from nature, could death not be understood in terms of nature. Keller had long concerned himself with the problem of death and immortality and the two were constantly related in his mind. After the death of Henriette Keller in 1838 he had pondered the matter more deeply than ever. A month before writing "Wetternacht," he had conceived of death in semi-pantheistic terms, man returning to the vast sea of life. Speaking of a dead child, he says:

Zu der du wiederkehrst, grüsz mir die Quelle  
 Des Lebens Born, doch besser; grüsz mir das Meer,  
 Das eine Meer des Lebens, dessen Welle  
 Hoch flutet um die dunkle Klippe her,  
 Darauf er sitzt, der traurige Geselle,  
 Der Tod—verlassen, einsam, tränenschwer,  
 Wenn ihm die frohen Seelen, kaum gefangen,  
 Mit lautem Jubel wieder auf die See gegangen.  
 (XIV, 278)

"Bei einer Kindesleiche" did not really surrender the conventional notion of immortality, however. The child, though it went out on the sea of life, did not become merged with the sea, but retained its identity. Furthermore, the souls who *escaped* death still viewed him as an unpleasant fellow whom they were glad to be

rid of. In "Wetternacht," on the other hand, the profound nature experience apparently made the poet realize that he, body and soul, belonged to nature, and that the stubborn retention of his superiority in asserting personal immortality was foolish pride. For now death was revealed to him as something entirely new: one of *nature's* mysteries and kind and good. To be sure, the goodness of death in itself might be a eulogy to personal immortality like that voiced in "Auch an die Ichel," but the emphasis on death as *nature's* secret cannot mean other than that death meant a return to "Mutter Erde." And since God was becoming identified with nature in Keller's pantheistic outlook,<sup>21</sup> any interpretation that death was a portal to God would mean the same thing as a return to nature. In view of the fact, furthermore, that Keller thought of nature as essentially "still" (so still zu sein wie die Natur), death would appear to mean a return to rest in nature and immortality would seem to approximate deep, dreamless sleep.<sup>22</sup> The logical development of such an interpretation of death as a return to rest in nature is seen in "Der Alte Bettler" (1848):

O gute Scholle meiner Heimaterde,  
 Wie kriech ich gern in deinen warmen Schosz,  
 Mir ahnet schon, wie sanft ich ruhen werde,  
 Vom Kaun des Brotes und allem Irrsal los.  
 (XVI, 106)

To sum up our discussion of *Natur* during Keller's early period, then, it has been shown that *Natur* represented the world of tangible objects and the divinely purposeful laws by which they were governed. God and nature were both associated with the idea of *Ruhe* and so with each other. Man was considered an integral part of nature, subservient to all her laws, for whom, after 1845, death meant a peaceful, impersonalized return to rest in God-nature. *Natur* implied a cosmos which was a dynamic monism, and a philosophy similar to the pantheism of Herder.

<sup>21</sup> Dünnebieber agreed that by 1844 Keller had a pantheistic conception of God. Speaking of the poem, "Gott ist ein groszes, stilles Haus," he said: "Mit der pantheistischen Gottesauffassung, wie sie sich klar in den angeführten Strophen ausspricht, gehört Keller sowieso in seiner (Schleiermachers) Nähe. (*Op. cit.*, p. 23.)

<sup>22</sup> Dünnebieber agreed that Keller's immortality was not personal, though he felt Feuerbach gave Keller his conception of reality as *Ruhe*. (Cf. p. 28 above.)

B. *Freiheit*

*Natur*, as used in the second passage from the letter of 1837, could awaken a divine freedom in man. What was this freedom, which was neither license (des Pöbels) nor political freedom, and which required that one consciously seek to fit oneself into the natural order?

As *Freiheit* "permitted of no evil conduct," it is apparent that the concept referred to is abstruse; obviously, if one's pattern of conduct is prescribed in advance, there is no practical freedom present. Such concepts of limited or hypothetical freedom are common enough in philosophy and are particularly evident in the thinking of the German philosophers. Leibniz, for example, conceived of freewill in his pre-established harmony by viewing a free act as one which was in accordance with man's inner nature; although God in his infinite wisdom had predetermined the act by creating a particular type of individual, the latter acted freely in carrying out the act according to his inner need.<sup>23</sup> Kant justified a freewill which did not violate the law of cause and effect in nature, by postulating a dualistic universe.<sup>24</sup>

The definition of *Freiheit* given by Keller in the second passage permits at first glance of a number of possible interpretations, and since the concept is of crucial importance to our study, we shall consider each interpretation in turn. First, it will be well to presume with Hans Dünnebier that *Freiheit* meant absolute freewill, which in a monistic world is equivalent to freedom of action.

Dünnebier referred to the young Keller's conception of *Freiheit* as an "unumschränkte Geist der Freiheit."<sup>25</sup> Such a view appears plausible enough at the outset since in the second passage of the letter man was endowed with God's freedom (" . . . die Gott selbst eigen ist"), and any doubt as to whether Keller meant God's freedom in a literal sense would seem dispelled by the fact that he imbued the young Grüne Heinrich with a somewhat similar view some thirteen years later:<sup>26</sup>

Ebenso betrachte ich die Welt der Geister als eine Republik, die nur Gott als Protektor über sich habe, dessen Majestät in voll-

<sup>23</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*.

<sup>24</sup> Immanuel Kant: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

<sup>25</sup> Dünnebier: *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. fn. 9.

kommener Freiheit das Gesetz heilig hielte, das er gegeben, und diese Freiheit sei auch unsere Freiheit und unsere Freiheit die Seinige. (XVII, 206)

In Heinrich's mind the freedom of God was absolute and man's freedom should be the same. Man should obey the divine law, apparently not through compulsion but rather from a sense of moral obligation, patently on the grounds that natural law reflected the will of the Great Creator to whom man had reason to be so profoundly grateful and whom he knew to be so infinitely wise and good. A feeling of such moral obligation is apparent in Heinrich's statement:

Die moralische Wichtigkeit dieses Unabhängigkeitssinnes schein mir sehr grosz und gröszter zu sein, als wir es uns vielleicht denken können. (XVII, 206)

Thus, if one is ready to identify young Heinrich's conception of *Freiheit* with that of the young Keller, it might appear that *Freiheit* as used in the second passage referred to an absolute freewill.

But let us investigate this interpretation further and see how it stands up in the light of the other definitive characteristics of *Freiheit*. It will be remembered, for example, that the possession of *Freiheit* permitted of no evil deed. How can this moral compulsion be explained where there is only moral obligation?

From a philosophical point of view this apparent paradox does not present too difficult a problem. In the letter of 1837, Keller had voiced his belief that man's natural inclination was essentially moral: "Der Mensch soll nicht tugendhaft sondern nur natürlich sein, und die Tugend wird von selbst kommen." Once free, man in his goodness would apparently not want to do wrong. Man would be somewhat like the deistic God referred to by Heinrich, who obeyed his own laws voluntarily. The conventional deistic argument which explains God's obedience to his own laws goes as follows: God, though absolute, had to obey the laws he had created as they were the complete expression of his will; God, though completely free, was unable to violate the law since his every act was bound to conform to the law which was the expression of his will. All this simply means that God acted freely but in accordance with his nature and it follows that man, too, might be assumed to be absolutely free and yet restricted in similar fashion by the goodness of his nature.



A real weakness in this interpretation of *Freiheit*, however, is that it does not show why man in his inherent goodness did not always act morally *even before* he was aware of his freedom. Since recognition of freewill was of key-importance, it would appear that some recognitional freedom was prerequisite to moral action.

The basic weakness of the interpretation is its inability to explain why man felt "a mighty sensation of freedom" only after he realized that he belonged to nature where everything was completely regulated and unfree. By stretching the imagination, one might reason in terms of Herder's evolutionary philosophy that only a consciousness of one's relation to nature could make one aware that man was the end-product of nature, the favorite of God, and endowed with God's own attributes of intellect and freedom. It would seem, however, that to seek one's destiny in the realm of natural law ("das seine Bestimmung aufsucht in der Welten harmonischer Wechselbewegung") would indicate far rather an adherence to natural law than a freedom from it. Thus, absolute freewill or freedom of action as the meaning of *Freiheit* leads to too many contradictions to warrant its unqualified acceptance.

Another interpretation of *Freiheit* is suggested if emphasis is removed from its divine nature and placed on the fact that only when a person belonged to nature and himself was he filled with a "divine sense of natural justice and a mighty sensation of freedom." Such a paradoxical view, in which an adherence to nature—nature is identified with "der Welten harmonischer Wechselbewegung"—awakens a mighty sense of freedom, may be understood as proceeding from the emotional experience of a person who has just substituted a deistic for a theologic *Weltanschauung*. As long as he believes in a personal God who watches over his every move, he has no freedom. But when he realizes that he is subject to the immutable laws of nature and is thus free from intervention by a personal God, he becomes filled with a sensation of freedom. His God changes from a despot to Heinrich's republican "protector," and his world from a benevolent despotism to a republic in which he is free within the frame-work of natural law. But now just what does this mean? One cannot assume the logical corollary that violation of the law involved punishment as in a republic, since

a belief that man did good to avoid punishment was far too utilitarian for the idealistic young Keller. Even in later years Keller derided utilitarian ethical systems.<sup>27</sup> If one is to assume, however, that man obeyed the law merely because in his inherent goodness he so desired, the whole discussion is reduced to a variation of the first interpretation of *Freiheit* as freedom of action. On the other hand, the assumption that man had to obey the law with no choice whatever would apparently rule out all freedom and would lead to the absurd conclusion that the young Keller was a full-fledged determinist. Only one possibility is left: man was free not to violate the law, but to choose which law he wanted to obey. Here, in the choice between two inviolable courses of action, there is no longer any real freedom of action but rather a recognitional freedom of a nature now to be discussed.

The most feasible explanation of *Freiheit* is, then, that it referred to the recognitional freedom to discern right from wrong, not unlike the moral freedom of the German Idealists (although with no implication of a dualistic world, as Keller definitely said that to acquire freedom man had to belong to nature and had to seek his destiny in the world of cause and effect). Such a restricted freedom allows, first of all, for the most logical explanation of why man had to belong to nature. His adherence to nature made him realize that he was subservient to natural law, and that he, like the other creatures in nature, had a prescribed course to follow. Since the latter obeyed the law by heeding their innate urge, man had only to do likewise. And since the natural law was the expression of God's will, acts based on inner necessity were moral. The validity of this line of reasoning is confirmed by the identification of "virtuous" and "natural" in the sentence already quoted from the letter of 1837: "Der Mensch soll nicht tugendhaft sondern nur natürlich sein, und die Tugend wird von selbst kommen."

This interpretation also affords an adequate explanation of why the knowledge of *Freiheit* could only be acquired by "der

<sup>27</sup> Keller often voiced disapproval of the Christian ethic for the utilitarianism implicit in the doctrine "der Glaube macht selig" and felt that such *Glaube* was far removed from the true faith and from a true understanding of the Providence which "geht gleich einem Stern im Himmel . . ." (XVII, 204). In a letter of 1856 Keller stated explicitly what had been implicit in many of his anti-ecclesiastical remarks before 1849: "Es gibt gewiss keine ärgere Utilitätstheorie als das Christentum predigt" (*Ermatinger*, II, 424).

Mensch, der der Natur *und sich selbst angehört*"<sup>28</sup> and by "ein reines, denkendes Herz, das seine Bestimmung aufsucht in der Welten harmonischer Wechselbewegung." Only a person who realized his adherence to nature, only a sincere thinker who sought his place in the natural order would be able to shake himself free of conventional preconceptions sufficiently to understand the true nature of man. Not until then could he know that moral action meant natural and necessary action.

The "mighty sensation of freedom" experienced by a man who is aware of his adherence to nature can be adequately explained as a realization of *moral* freedom. Such a man knew that he could be himself in the fullest sense of the word and still be moral. Obedience to God's law did not require an abnegation of self. There was no conflict between the laws governing man and the deep inner drive of one's nature.

The fact that *Freiheit* "did not let him who acquired it do an evil deed" follows simply enough. Until man became fully enlightened, he was liable to misinterpret his inner need and do evil. Only when he understood himself could he always interpret his inner urge correctly. There is here no hint of free *action* since free man had also to heed his inner need, but was able to do so in such a way that necessary, moral action resulted.<sup>29</sup>

As for the identification of man's freedom with God's freedom,<sup>30</sup> it can be explained in terms of the deistic interpretation given above wherein God's action was restricted to moral action because of the necessary identity of God's will and natural law. Man's freedom is similar to God's in that man's also involves an identity of individual will and natural law. God in his great wisdom fitted man along with the other creatures of the world into the great natural order so that man's inner urge was a direct expression of divine omnipotence and natural law. Both man and God, acting in complete freedom, i.e., in strict accord with their true, inner desire, obeyed the law.

What now is the precise nature of this recognitional freedom? Clearly, it contains two elements: 1) the intellectual clarity which enabled man to perceive his true nature and his relation to natural law; 2) the moral discernment to interpret one's in-

<sup>28</sup> My italics.

<sup>29</sup> Keller in his later life would never admit to a principle of evil. Wickedness was always due to ignorance and misunderstanding. Cf. p. 95 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. fn. 9.

ner urge correctly. *Freiheit* may thus be defined as moral freedom based on enlightenment. It is close in meaning, though with Keller's peculiar implications, to the German term *Geistesfreiheit* and, for the sake of fluency, will occasionally be translated as "intellectual freedom."

In the years that followed, Keller became so intensely interested in the means to moral freedom, namely enlightenment, that often he seemed to refer solely to that aspect of *Freiheit*. However, the fact that he always associated happiness and justice with the idea of universal *Freiheit* reveals that moral freedom was always implicitly present in the concept as well.

So much attention has been given to the letter of 1837 because it contained the ideas which were to form the basis of his mature *Weltanschauung*, ideas which have been attributed by many outstanding Keller scholars to the influence of Feuerbach.<sup>31</sup> Now, to show the logical development of *Freiheit* throughout Keller's early period and to diminish further the philosophical importance of Feuerbach for Keller, let us consider that concept in Keller's writings from 1837 to 1849.

It is not probable that Keller was fully conscious of all the implications, nor reasoned as minutely as we have done above, in the development of his idea of *Freiheit*, since he was not trained in or particularly adapted to speculative thinking. In fact, it is more than likely, as we shall see later, that he borrowed the concept from another writer. The important thing for our purposes is, however, that unconsciously or otherwise, the concept of *Freiheit* as developed above was in his mind. This fact is apparent from a diary passage of 1838 in which he shows the same deep interest in "intellectual independence":

Ein Mann ohne Tagebuch . . . ist was ein Weib ohne Spiegel. Dieses hört auf ein Weib zu sein, wenn es nicht mehr zu gefallen strebt und seine Anmut vernachlässigt; es wird seiner Bestimmung dem Manne gegenüber untreu. Jener hört auf ein Mann zu sein, wenn er sich selbst nicht mehr beobachtet, und Erholung und Nahrung auszer sich sucht. Er verliert seine Haltung, seine Festigkeit, seinen Charakter, und wenn er seine geistige Selbständigkeit dahin gibt, so wird er ein Tropf. Diese Selbständigkeit kann aber nur bewahrt werden durch stetes Nachdenken über sich selbst. (*Ermatinger* II, 101)

<sup>31</sup> Cf. the discussion of Ermatinger and Dünnebier, app., pp. 144-147.

A superficial reading of this passage might lead one to believe that Keller had subordinated moral integrity to intellectual clarity as *Charakter* is relinquished more readily than *Geistige Selbständigkeit*. A closer study, however, shows that *Charakter* is used here rather loosely as a middle stage between outer mannerliness (*Haltung*) and inner moral discernment, and that the entire passage is primarily concerned with the preservation of moral integrity. Keller was thinking in terms of the moral degeneration undergone by a person who constantly wants to be entertained and is unwilling to do any serious thinking about his relation to life. Such a person, he felt, deteriorated first outwardly, losing his *Haltung*, and then inwardly, the decay spreading to include *Festigkeit* and *Charakter*. Finally, if no preventive steps were taken, the person lost his *geistige Selbständigkeit*. Why was the latter loss so vital? Because *geistige Selbständigkeit*, inasmuch as it could be safe-guarded by diligent self-observation,<sup>32</sup> referred to the intellectual clarity which enabled one to perceive his own true nature and thus, in the light of what has already been shown regarding enlightenment, referred by implication to moral freedom. Certainly, the moral aspect of *geistige Selbständigkeit* is apparent from the fact that *geistige Selbständigkeit*, *Festigkeit* and *Charakter* were all safe-guarded by introspection (“ . . . wenn er sich nicht mehr beobachtet . . . verliert er seine Festigkeit, seinen Charakter . . . diese Selbständigkeit kann aber nur bewahrt werden durch stetes Nachdenken über sich selbst”). The significance of knowing oneself was that it enabled man to act according to his inner nature, to be himself, to be moral, and to avoid what Keller hated and derided in later life more than anything else, to be “eine Abirrung von sich selbst.” Thus, “intellectual independence” contains both the elements of enlightenment and moral freedom and is comparable to the concept of intellectual freedom.

The importance placed by Keller on enlightenment as the means to moral freedom presupposes a fervent striving toward truth, so that it is not surprising to find the toast in a student

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<sup>32</sup> This intense, early interest on Keller's part in self-observation should be kept in mind in view of the general belief, voiced by Dünnebiel and other scholars, that Keller had derived his conception of *Selbsterkenntnis* from Ludwig Feuerbach. Even the terminology was not new to Keller; poems later in the chapter will show this use of *Erkenntnis*. As will be shown to have been the case in most instances, Keller merely adopted with enthusiasm those elements of Feuerbach's philosophy which concurred with his own.

poem written while he was in Munich dedicated to "die freie Wahrheit":

Dir, O Wahrheit soll es gelten!  
Freie Wahrheit streng und hart!  
(XIII, 14)

And, when the issue of the reintroduction of the Jesuit order into Switzerland arose in 1843, it was the same veneration of intellectual clarity that made Keller a bitter opponent of the plan. True, he had never been unduly sympathetic with religion as a whole, but he had never broken completely with orthodox Christianity, which had remained despite everything "eine so schöne, zarte Sache."<sup>33</sup> The Jesuits, however, stood, in Keller's eyes, for repressive dogma,<sup>34</sup> and he declared that he would rather "keinen Glauben herrschend wissen, als den schwarzen, keuchenden, ertötenden Glaubenszwang." Whereupon he issued a declaration of war:

Ich werfe mich dem Kampfe für völlige Unabhängigkeit und Freiheit des Geistes und der religiösen Ansichten in die Arme. (*Ermatinger* II, 114, 1843)

Three days later he repeated his declaration as a poet:

Der Dichter aber musz ein positives Element, eine Religion haben. Gerade aber, weil er Dichter ist, so sollen seine religiösen Bedürfnisse frei von aller Form und allem Zwang sein, und er musz für diese Freiheit kämpfen. (*Ermatinger* II, 117)

<sup>33</sup> *Ermatinger* II, 115.

<sup>34</sup> Keller directed his most powerful attacks against the Jesuits. A few lines from one of his anti-Jesuit poems, "Jesuitenlied," will give an idea of his feeling:

Huh! wie das krabbelt, kneipt und kriecht!  
Und wie's so infernalisches riecht!  
Jetzt fahre hin, du gute Ruh!  
Geh, Grete, mach das Fenster zu!  
Sie kommen, die Jesuiten!  
  
Von Kreuz und Fahne angeführt.  
*Den Giftsack hinten aufgeschnürt.*  
*Der Fanatismus als Profosz,*  
*Die Dummheit folgt als Betteltrosz:*  
Sie kommen, die Jesuiten!  
  
O Schweizerland, du schöne Braut,  
Du bist dem Teufel angetraut! . . .  
Sie kommen, die Jesuiten!  
(XIV, 207, 1843) (my italics)

The Jesuit issue crystallized Keller's attitude and stirred him to action. From August, 1843, on, till the fight against Jesuits and aristocrats was won, Keller directed more than 150 fiery poems against these adversaries of freedom.<sup>35</sup> As it has not been generally realized that Keller's interest in *Freiheit* went deeper than political or religious freedom, it is well at this point to show the relative importance of these concepts for him.

Keller, like most Swiss, came early to believe in the right of political self-determination, and this belief was strengthened in him by his experiences in Munich, then the capital of a monarchy, and by his political affiliations in Zürich; the opinion he voiced in "Die Feier der deutschen Unabhängigkeit seit 843" (1843) was deep-seated:

Was schieret uns ein freies Land  
Wenn die drin wohnen Knechte sind?  
(XIII, 188)

But political freedom alone he deemed insufficient. The theme of an essay of 1841, *Vermischte Gedanken über die Schweiz*, had been the need for intellectual clarity to preserve political freedom.<sup>36</sup> The more basic interest in enlightenment is also clear from several of the *Vaterländische Gedichte*:

Ja, du bist frei, mein Volk, von Eisenketten  
Und von des Vorrechts unerhörter Schande,  
Kein Adel schmiegt dich in schnöde Bande  
Und fröhlich magst du dich im Wohlstand betten.

Doch dies kann nicht dich vor der Knechtschaft retten  
Der schwarzen, die im weissen Schafsgewande . . .  
Wenn du nicht kühnlich magst den Geist entbinden  
Von allem Schwulst und tödtender Umhüllung . . .  
(XIV, 77, 1843)

Weisst du warum du büsen  
Mein Vaterland und leiden muszt?  
Du hast der Freiheit Gaben  
Verkannt und unnütz angewandt!  
Du hast dein Schwert geschwungen  
Weh! für des Fleisches Freiheit nur!  
Der Geist, der blieb gezwungen  
Und öde seine Spur! (XIII, 269, 1844)

<sup>35</sup> Keller's political poetry of the years 1843-1849 in its entirety is only available in the Fränkel edition, Volumes XIII and XIV (*Nachgelassene Gedichte*). Fränkel published the lyrics in their *original* form, not as printed in the *Gesammelte Gedichte* which contained the poems as revised by Follen. Included in this edition are also copious notes.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. p. 133 in this study.

Practically all of Keller's "political" poems show this emphasis on freedom of the intellect rather than on personal liberty. In the political poem *Aufruf*, freedom was to guide its followers through the pitfalls that beset the mind:

Die Freiheit unser Grundton ist,  
Den wollen wir fest halten!  
Er leite uns zu jeder Frist  
Durch Irrtum, Falschheit, Trug und List  
Und finstre Wut der Alten!  
(XIII, 171)

A *Zeitgedicht* of 1843 offered double praise for the enlightened individual who fought in defense of ideals:

Heil dem, der ehrlich sagen kann:  
"Auch ich hab mitgestritten!"  
Und zweifach Heil dem freien Mann,  
Der für das Wort gelitten!  
(XIII, 173)

Another *Zeitgedicht* of 1843 identified freedom with light, an obvious symbolism:

Sollen wir für Licht und Freiheit rechten,  
Lassz allein, O Herr, den Kampf uns fechten!  
Wollen gründlich wir uns einst befreien  
Musz die Ehr erleuchten unsre Reihen.  
(XIII, 178)

The last two lines of the poem "Von Kindern" show Keller's interest in freedom as an *element of attitude*:

Mich kränken minder diese Herrschertriebe  
Als solchen Knechtsinns zeitiges Vollenden;  
(XV-1, 47)

A poem of 1844 revealed that *Freiheit* was a very general human ideal for which people everywhere had fought:

Es ist auf Erden keine Statt  
Es ist kein Dorf, des stille Hut  
Nicht einen alten Kirchhof hat  
Drin ein Märtyr der Freiheit ruht.  
(XIV, 52)

Freedom from prejudice, misconception, and dogma, then, was more important to Keller than political freedom. To demonstrate now that *Freiheit* went deeper than *religiöse Gedankenfreiheit* is somewhat more difficult since freedom from dogma is after all enlightenment in reverse, and Keller often failed to make clear



that full enlightenment implied moral freedom as well. One can of course refer to the fact that Keller's interest in enlightenment was active long before the outbreak of the politico-religious controversy in Switzerland and that this interest had always been for the sake of the related moral discernment. In the poems themselves, however, there is only one clue to indicate that *Freiheit* implied the positive freedom to act morally. This clue is the universal happiness, peace, justice, or other moral state, often associated with *Freiheit*, which could only be obtained under conditions of moral freedom. In a sonnet of 1846 *Freiheit* is associated with the millennium:

Und wenn auch einst die Freiheit ist errungen,  
Die Menschheit hoch wie eine Rose blüht,  
Auch nicht vom kleinsten Dorne mehr umschlungen . . .  
(XIV, 89)

In "Pfungstfest" (1843) "certain recognition" was to bring a "beautiful cloudless day" to mankind:

Befreiung sollte einst dem Erdensohn  
Der heilige Geist von seinen Fesseln bringen . . .  
O Herr! O Herr! wann sendest du den Tag,  
Der alle Völker wird mit Feuer taufen?  
Den unbewölkten, morgenklaren Tag,  
Durch den wir uns die Geistesfreiheit kaufen?  
Wann wird die dumpfe Glaubensangst sich wenden  
In freudigheitres, festes, sicheres Erkennen?  
(XIII, 314-315)

The "Geistesfreiheit" referred to in "Pfungstfest" is, to be sure, religious freedom—not mere freedom from dogma, however, but the intellectual and religious clarity which enabled one to perceive the true nature of God. Such positive religious freedom may be presumed to be identical with full enlightenment and to presuppose an understanding of the nature of the world as well. Certainly, the "beautiful, cloudless day" reveals that the Utopian state subsequent to universal enlightenment would then exist.

A poem of 1847 described an enlightened nation ("in der Freiheitsminne"), which recognized its nature, as "beautiful" and "victorious":

Wie eine Braut am Hochzeitstage,  
So ist ein Volk, das sich erkennt . . .  
Wie schön sie sei, und fühlt es ganz:  
So stehet in der Freiheitsminne  
Ein Volk mit seinem Siegeskranz.  
(IIi, 68)

The deeply philosophical nature of the *Freiheit* which had become Keller's ideal is perhaps best revealed in the poem "Der Grüne Baum," which though included under the *Kampfsongette* is not a eulogy of political freedom, but a condensed personal history of the development of *Freiheit* in Keller's attitude.

Ein brausend Gären und ein wildes Wogen,  
 Ein zagend Raten und ein hilflos Irren,  
 Ein *geistig* Banges schweres Kettenklirren—  
 Sind mir die rauhen Tage hingezogen!

Und stündlich neue Träume mich umflogen:  
 Das war ein Leuchten, Blühen, Klingen, Schwirren,  
 Das war ein stet Entwickeln und Verwirren,  
 Und alles hat am Ende mir gelogen!

(However, all of that was past for him now  
 and out of the cemetery of his youthful  
 erring, a tree has grown.)

Der grüne Baum, er ist die gute Sache,  
 Zu der ich nun vor aller Welt geschworen,  
 Die teure Freiheit, die ich mir erkoren  
 Und zum Symbole meines Schildes mache.

(XIII, 149-150) (my italics)

Throughout his youth he had constantly sought for clarity, had constantly been deceived, and finally after much heart-ache, had come to realize that *Freiheit* was of supreme importance. *Freiheit* as used here was more than political freedom or freedom from dogma. It was the result of a long search for a standard of human values and was a deeply philosophical concept. Thus, *Freiheit* would seem to refer to intellectual freedom, as that was the only philosophical freedom with which Keller was constantly concerned; and that such is actually the case will now be shown by considering the personal experiences referred to in the poem.

Keller was a very unhappy young man for a good part of the period 1837-1849. In 1838, he was undecided as to the choice of a profession. In the spring of that year occurred the death of Henriette Keller, whom he much admired. Ackerknecht summarized the youth's state of mind by heading the page discussing the events of that year: *Selbstquälerei*. The Munich years were filled with poverty and failure. With the return to Zürich came the bitter realization that he had caused his mother much suffering. In 1846 he fell in love again, deeply, probably with

Marie Melos, and though little of his feeling ever came to light and no proposal ensued, he nevertheless suffered another painful wound.

This continued misfortune gave an inclination to melancholy ample opportunity to come to expression—an inclination which was just as deeply rooted in Keller's personality as his indomitable optimism regarding the future. Whereas at first he had always envisaged *Glück* as success and happiness in the conventional sense, his melancholic brooding now occasionally led him to give up such dreams. At times he now sought refuge in philosophic resignation. Melancholy revealed to him the futility of life—though she then robbed him of even this consolation:

. . .  
 Die mir der Wahrheit Spiegel hält,  
 Den düster blitzenden, empor,  
 Dasz der Erkenntnis Träne schwellt,  
 Und bricht aus zagem Aug hervor.  
 . . . Es hängt mein Herz an eitler Lust  
 Und an der Torheit dieser Welt:  
 Oft mehr als eines Weibes Brust,  
 Ist es von Auszenwerk umstellt!  
 Und selbst den Trost, *dasz ich aus eignem Streben,*  
*Dasz Alles nichtig ist, erkannt,*  
 Nimmst Du und hast mein stolz Erheben  
 Zu Boden alsobald gewandt . . .  
 (XVi, 93) (my italics)

After a while, however, the pendulum would swing back again, and his optimistic faith in the goodness and purposefulness of nature would reassert itself. Though he might brood and be unhappy, he could not alter the basic attitude which his nature experiences had given him. In the darkest of his Munich days he had ultimately imbued his tribulations with purposefulness and consoled himself that they were essential to the sound foundation which gave rise to the "Glück der späteren Tage." Likewise, in the middle 1840's, after he had experienced moods of depression, his optimism would reassert itself, and he came to view misfortune as good and purposeful. Misfortune shook one free of romantic illusions:

Der Unglück ist der Wirbelwind  
 Der peitscht uns bis wir schäumen  
 Und bis wir wach geschlagen sind  
 Von unsern Wasserträumen.  
 (XIV, 238) 1845

Und aus dem Unglück nur entspringt das "Glück,  
Der Irrtum erst macht unser Leben ganz.

(XIII, 93) 1843

So grosz ist keines Unglücks Macht  
Ein Blümlein hängt in seiner Kette.

(XIV, 14) 1844

Keller finally came to the conclusion that the real happiness in life was neither wealth nor success, but the acquisition of intellectual freedom. He expressed this idea neatly in a little formula found in his *Nachlass*:

Wert + Unglück = Bewusstsein = Glück (II 2, p. 223).

Misfortune brings to an essentially worthy person a consciousness which is in itself true happiness.

A different kind of personal experience which also tended to emphasize the importance of intellectual freedom was revealed in the poem "Wetternacht" discussed above. The fears and worries associated with the great mystery of death were dispelled by true understanding. Death was a friend, a part of nature's order. Armed with this new knowledge about himself the poet returned to the tasks of life with a greater peace of mind.

In his public life and in his most personal experiences, Keller remained constantly concerned with intellectual freedom. He became more and more convinced that prejudice, preconception, and misunderstanding were the root of all evil, and became increasingly certain that enlightenment was the sole panacea for man's ills. And with his optimistic faith in inevitable progress, his conviction became ever greater that the goal of mankind was precisely intellectual freedom. The eventual realization of *Freiheit* was assured in the purposefulness of the law of time:

Frühlingszeit und Freiheitslust  
Und die Uhr in deiner Brust  
Sind nicht zu verdrehen.

(XIII, 306)

Und zischend hat des Todes Fluch  
Gelöscht der Freiheit Feuerspuren.  
Gelöscht? O nein! sie schlummert wohl.  
Die Zeit, die sie einst wecken soll,  
Schleicht fort auf der Geschichte Uhren.

(XIII, 67)

Ein Tannenbaum im Schwarzwald steht,  
 Der wächst schon manches Jahr; . . .  
 Doch alles was auf Erden ist  
 Musz haben seine Zeit;  
 Der Tannenbaum zu seiner Frist  
 Zum Fällen ist bereit!  
 O Maienlust, o Freiheitsbaum,  
 So jugendlich und grün,  
 Wie wirst du alter Menschentraum  
 Dann ewig, ewig blühn.

(XIV, 218)

Nature had preordained that one day in the future, man would possess the "one, true, and pure freedom":

Die Freiheit, einzig, rein, und wahr,  
 Im Anfang schon beschlossen,  
 Sie stellt sich endlich prangend dar,  
 Von Siegesglanz umflossen.

(XIII, 175)

The final Utopia was to be a period of universal peace and enlightenment:

Das ist das Lied vom Völkerfrieden  
 Und von dem letzten Menschenglück,  
 Von goldner Zeit, die einst hienieden  
 Mit Glanz und Reinheit kehrt zurück;

Wo einig alle Völker beten  
 Zum einen König, Gott und Hirt . . .

(1844: XIV, 34)

Und wenn auch einst die Freiheit ist errungen,  
 Die Menschheit hoch wie eine Rose blüht  
 Auch nicht vom kleinsten Dorne mehr umschlungen . . .

(XIV, 89)

That the final *Freiheit* was not intellectual clarity but was intellectual freedom with its implied moral responsibility is again apparent from the complete absence of evil, here expressed as "Völkerfrieden."

The greatest sin imaginable was skepticism regarding man's perfectibility:

Nur eine Schmach wirts fürder geben,  
 Nur eine Sünde auf der Welt:  
 Das ist das eitle Widerstreben,  
 Das es für Traum und Wahnsinn hält.

(XIV, 34)

The poem "Die Gröszte Sünde" revealed that "das gröszte Laster" was

. . . die nüchterne Schmach, versauert und verteufelt,  
 Die an Vervollkommnung der Menschheit stätig zweifelt  
 Und die allein die Ursach war bis zu dieser Frist,  
 Dasz jener Lebensbaum noch nicht entsprossen ist.  
 (XIII, 235)

### C. Conclusion

It has been shown that the concepts *Natur* and *Freiheit* were actively present in Keller's thought till 1849 and formed the basis of his optimistic *Weltanschauung*. *Natur* was seen to refer to the tangible forms in nature, but even more to the order of those forms, to the complex of natural laws which in its essence was at rest and closely related to the conception of God, but which in its parts, as individual laws, was purposefully in motion. Man was subject to the laws of nature to the extent that death itself meant a return to nature.

*Freiheit* referred primarily to intellectual freedom, which was moral freedom based on enlightenment. It was a recognitional freedom which enabled man to understand himself and thus to be himself. It did not imply freedom of action, as man was considered subject to the law of nature. *Freiheit* was the goal of humanity, and its ultimate attainment was assured by the purposeful progress inherent in the passage of time. Keller's early *Weltanschauung* in brief, then, was a deeply religious apprehension of the universe as good and purposeful, and embodied the conviction that man's destiny was to strive through enlightenment and moral freedom to re-enter the purposeful harmony of nature.

