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Heinrich Von Kleist

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**"Sie haben mich immer in der Zurückgezogenheit
meiner Lebensart für isoliert von der Welt
gehalten; und doch ist vielleicht niemand
inniger damit verbunden als ich."**

HEINRICH VON KLEIST.

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CHAPTER ONE :- Introduction.

It is the aim of this thesis to offer an interpretation of Heinrich von Kleist's dramas and dramatic ideas in the light of the then contemporary Romantic theory. That Kleist was indebted to the Romantics for the subject of "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" is indisputable but only part of the full picture: to state as Ayrault does that the only Romantic element in Kleist's works is aesthetic Catholicism, is likewise a gross understatement. (1) The reason why so many critics fail to see the connection between Kleist's dramatic achievements and endeavours and that of his Romantic contemporaries is not that they misunderstand Kleist but because they approach Romanticism from the wrong point of view. As will be discussed later, early Romantic theory barely corresponded to later Romantic practice and at times even contradicted it: and it is the contention here that Kleist held views common to the theory, but had very little in common with the practice. Others tried to realise the ambitious theories of the Schlegel brothers and Novalis, but their creative talent was insufficient to the task, probably because of the vagueness of those very ideals. Kleist alone was able to demonstrate in dramatic form many ideals of early Romanticism but mostly at a time when they were no longer in vogue; time and time again he appears belated and misplaced in the development of his age, and the vast fortuitousness of life which he summed up in his phrase "die gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt" (2) is nowhere more tragically illustrated than in his own career. Yet Kleist was also amenable to later Romantic ideas, particularly in connection with Romantic science, but, as will be seen, they tend to form superficial adornments to the deeper significance of the plays.

(1) R. Ayrault "Heinrich von Kleist" p.225.

(2) (Kleist, Werke ed Schmidt, 1905, Leipzig und Wien, 5 vols.
(Vol. III p. 274, 294 (Michael Kohlhaas)
(Vol. II p. 294 (Das Käthchen von Heilbronn)

The whole of Kleist's thought from the time of his collapse over Fichte's philosophy in 1801 until his suicide in 1811 is marked by a closer and closer approach to Romantic theory. This approach was not gradual but rather erratic. A more un-Romantic work for example than "Der zerbrochene Krug" would be hard to imagine and this was completed in 1806. Kleist's experiences and friendships in Dresden in 1809 however proved to be the turning point and from then on he developed a marked Romantic outlook culminating in a suicide which he regarded as a great adventure, very much in the spirit of Novalis.

Before going deeper into the exact nature of Kleist's approach to Romanticism, it is necessary to consider his attitude to the philosophy of Fichte, an attitude which forms the mainspring of most of his dramas. Fichte's effect on Kleist was in general no different from his effect on the Romantic era as a whole. Like his age Kleist progressed from a profound rationalism to a realisation of the irrational side of life, that "Nachtseite" which Romanticism so assiduously cultivated. Yet this change was not complete. It left Kleist with a duality of rationalism and irrationalism which was both typical of his age and is one of the most perplexing problems of his dramas. The early Romantics of the Jena phase were the immediate heirs of both Sturm and Drang and Classicism. Herder had evoked the spirit of irrationalism and Kant had taught the supremacy of reason. It fell to the Schlegels and Novalis to unite these contradictions. "Gefühl ist alles, Name ist Schall und Rauch" was not a creed in which they believed; neither did they despise "Vernunft und Wissenschaft, der Menschen allerhöchste Kraft". Art and philosophy were considered inseparable, exemplified in the poet-philosopher Schelling, who attracted Goethe no less than the Romantics. Novalis said "Die Trennung von Poet und Denker ist nur scheinbar und zum Nachteil beider. Es ist ein Zeichen einer Krankheit und einer krankhaften Konstitution" (3), while in the Athenäum (4), we

(3) Novalis, Schriften ed Minor, (4 Vols.) 1923 Jena Vol. 11 p.301.

(4) Athenäum ed. Meyer and Jessen, Munich, 1924, Vol. 111, 1, p.85.

find "Philosophie und Poesie, die höchsten Kräfte des Menschen, die selbst zu Athen jede für sich in der höchsten Blüte doch nur einzeln wirkten, greifen nun ineinander, um sich in ewiger Wechselwirkung gegenseitig zu beleben und zu bilden". This is a reflection of the same problem of the head versus the heart which is found in Schiller. Schlegel was convinced of the sanctity of "der Verstand" while admitting the irrational aspect of life. In his dramas Kleist time and time again debates the value of thinking and feeling, the conscious and the unconscious; it is the problem which confronts Käthchen and Vom Strahl, and it occurs in the conflict between Prinz Friedrich, the impulsive headstrong soldier, and the symbolisation of the relentless, rational state.

Kleist's reading of the Kant-Fichte philosophy led him to the conviction that "der Verstand" was no longer his reliable compass through life. (5) Just as he became aware that man has no proof of objective reality and is dependent on the interpretation given by his eyes, so Jupiter is able to seduce Alkmene. So far, Kleist was one with the Romantics: Tieck's William Lovell declares for example, in words remarkably similar to those to be found in Kleist's letters, "Wir können nicht die wahre Gestalt der Dinge erkennen" (Lov. I, p. 314). (ed. cit.) For "alles, was ich ausser mir wahrzunehmen glaube", may "nur in mir selber existieren". The spirit of Kleist's simile of the green spectacles (An Ulrike, 25th Nov. 1800) occurs in "Lovell" as "meine äusseren Sinne modifizieren die Erscheinungen" (p. 320). But Kleist could not take the next step with the Romantics as they gleaned from Fichte the conception of the world as a projection of the imagination - an imagination which channelled itself into certain stylised forms, for example, Wackenroder's mediaevalism. He could not agree with William

- (5) An Wilhelmine von Senge, 28th March, 1801 :-
"Der Irrtum liegt nicht im Herzen, er liegt im Verstande,
und nur der Verstand kann ihn heben."

Lovell that "die Wesen sind, weil wir sie dachten" (Lov. I, p. 322) and "Die Tugend ist nur, weil wir sie gedacht" (p. 323). Instead Kleist tried to find a way to overcome the pessimistic theory of perception: in this respect Jupiter's aim is defeated for Alkmene remains faithful to her "Gefühl" for her real husband, Amphitryon. In other words, the God is able to conquer her body, but not Alkmene's mind.

There is here a direct contrast with Schiller's characters; they are motivated by a moral conviction, a "moralischer Geist", Kleist's by the heart. Among the Romantics Karoline typifies this devotion to the heart most clearly; her association with Schlegel was in the face of very strong social opposition, but she did not allow this to deter her. The Romantics trusted the "Gefühl" much further than the intellect, Karoline devoting herself to pleasure, Novalis to pain. Hermann symbolises "Rache ohne Mass", an infinite longing for freedom and revenge, and a similar point appears in "Penthesilea". But Kleist differs from his Romantic contemporaries in one important aspect. Some stubborn remnant of his earlier rational "Weltanschauung" prompts him to realise that the "Gefühl" may not nevertheless be infallible, and "Gefühlsverwirrung", the confusion when the instinct may not be trusted, is a basis of Kleistian tragedy. (6) On the other hand it is equally important to note that when Kleist came into daily intercourse with the Romantics and entered into an exchange of ideas in Dresden in 1809, the prevalent Romantic optimism revived his earlier confidence; the most significant play of this period is "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" in which defiant reliance on the "Gefühl" finally brings the heroine to salvation.

Kleist emerged from his encounter with Kant's philosophy with his artistic talent fired. This talent was as yet crude and unrefined. It is one of the great misfortunes of Kleist's life and German literature that Kleist did not somehow approach the Schlegels ^{with} and his ideas, who would undoubtedly have welcomed him and given him encouragement and

(6) c.f. Goethe's Diary, 13th July, 1807 (Concerning "Amphitryon")
"..... der gegenwärtige Kleist geht bei den Hauptpersonen auf Verwirrung des Gefühls hinaus."

confidence. Indeed, if we can attach significance to Zschokke's comments in his "Selbstschau" (1842), Kleist showed considerable interest in the early Romantic leaders during the formative years of his literary career. Speaking of his meeting with Kleist and Ludwig Wieland in Berne during the winter of 1801-2, Zschokke says (I. Revolutionsjahre, p. 22) :- "Beide (Kleist und Wieland) gewahrten in mir einen Hyperboräer, der von der neuesten poetischen Schule nichts wusste. Goethe hiess ihr Abgott; nach ihm standen Tieck und Schlegel am höchsten, von denen ich bisher kaum mehr als den Namen kannte. Sie machten mir's zur Todsünde, als ich ehrlich bekannte, dass ich Goethes Kunstgewandheit und Talentgrösse mit Bewunderung anstaunen, aber Schillern mehr denn bewundern, dass ich ihn lieben müsse, weil sein Sang, naturwahr, aus der Tiefe des deutschen Gemüts, begeisternd ans Herz der Hörer, nicht nur der ans kunstrichternde Ohr schlage." As will be noted, there are considerable Romantic traits in Kleist's first two plays, both of which were in his mind at this time.

But, as it was, Kleist was left to fight a lone battle in the creation of the "Gesamtk^Uinstwerk", that paramount goal of the early Romantics, which he started in "Robert Guiskard" and resumed in "Homburg". There is, incidentally, nothing to prove conclusively that Kleist ever gave up the ideal of "Guiskard", the trail of which seems to disappear in the second volume of Meyer-Benfey's "Das Drama Heinrich von Kleists" (7). But in fact Kleist seems to have been sadly belated in his contacts with the Romantics. It was his ironical destiny to come into personal contact not with the original thinkers,

(7) H. Meyer-Benfey "Das Drama H. von Kleists". (See bibliography).

but with the lesser and later representatives of the movement. He had practically nothing at all to do with Ludwig Tieck, who, in the public eye at any rate, (although Friedrich Schlegel had none too high an opinion of his ability (8)), was the foremost author of the School. It must however be admitted that the two would have had little in common had they met on closer terms, for Kleist was essentially a dramatist, Tieck a writer of Märchen, and, in any case, the majority of Tieck's works belong spiritually to later Romanticism. It is typical that he should have evinced interest in "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn", particularly in its fairy-tale aspect. (9) Dresden was one of the earliest meeting-places of Romanticism, and the scene of important changes in Kleist's life. But the Romanticism which Kleist found there in 1809 was of a diluted and popularised nature. Novalis was already dead. Schlegel and Schelling had ceased to be of any importance to the movement. So Kleist received his first direct association with Romanticism through Schubert, the half-scientist, and Adam Müller who seems to have been of doubtful literary ability. "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" is ample evidence of Kleist's new-found interests, particularly in somnambulism, and it is generally accepted that this can be attributed to Schubert's influence. (Chap. 7.) Kleist expressed a high opinion of Müller in his letters, so that it seems likely that Müller was able to influence his thought; it may be that the proselytising bent of the recent convert affected Kleist's religious thought in surroundings where, some six years earlier, he had his first artistic and emotional experience of Catholicism. Perhaps the conservative patriotic and reactionary

(8) ("Doch nur ein ... roher Mensch, der ein ... seltenes Talent hat" (Letter of Nov. 1797)
("(ein junger Mann) der auf dem Dache der dramatischen Kunst herumspaziert" (Letter of Nov. 1801)

(9) Bülow reports (H. v Kleists Leben und Briefe, p.48-9) that Tieck caused a certain scene to be omitted from the final draft of "Käthchen" "die das ganze Stück gewissermassen in das Gebiet des Märchens oder Zaubers hinüberspielte".

awoke Kleist's patriotic fervour and hatred of Bonaparte. Since the Phöbus, on which Kleist worked with Müller, is sprinkled with passages and remarks praising Novalis and the Schlegels it is more than likely that Kleist came into contact with their ideas and was influenced by them. Whatever Müller's contribution was, however, Kleist's dramas from this period show more marked Romantic tendencies. "Phöbus" no longer interests him, and Kleist turns to national patriotism. The subjects of his plays are now all taken from the Germanic past, as they had not been previously - "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg", "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn", and "Die Hermannschlacht". (10) He acquired an interest in the mysterious and the occult which constitute henceforth an element in all his dramas. "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" shows clearly the effect of Dresden Romanticism on Kleist; it restores a miraculous Middle Age and in its poetic adaptation of Romantic science it has many of those qualities which are common in the works of the later Romantics, particularly Tieck.

Nevertheless the contact between Kleist and the more important authors was purely in a common patriotic feeling and was barely literary. The only letter which Kleist ever wrote to a significant Romantic was one to Schlegel in 1809, and that on an official matter concerning the "Germania". It is conceivable that the two met, but neither recorded the fact. The patriotic interest links Kleist with the later Romantics in Berlin. Critics have pointed out the similarity between "Die Hermannschlacht" and Arnim's "Die Vertreibung der Spanier aus Wesel", a similarity which extends even to the dramatic method. Certainly during his last two years in Berlin Kleist was in agreement with the political and cultural views of his Romantic acquaintances and evinced a desire to

(10) Kleist also recast his original "Die Familie Ghonorez" into a German setting as "Die Familie Schroffenstein".

come into closer contact with them, particularly Fouqué. He felt their enthusiasm for the rulers of Prussia, in particular Queen Louise - one critic has named him "Die Fackel Preussens". (11) His periodical, the "Berliner Abendblätter" was the official organ of the "Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft", a patriotic society, and he saw a good deal of Arnim and Brentano who were his neighbours. Kleist's veneration of Prussia is symbolised most clearly in "Der Prinz von Homburg", originally dedicated to the Prussian queen.

The Romantics on the other hand evinced little interest in Kleist. In a notebook written during the winter following Kleist's death, Friedrich Schlegel lists the prominent literary figures of his age; he includes Schiller, for example, and even Schubert and Müller, but no mention is made of Kleist. No literary journal paid much attention to his works. It is consequently hardly surprising, as Walzel points out, (12) that Jakob Grimm considered the author of "Halle und Jerusalem" a superior dramatist to the author of "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn", since Müller, with whose contributions Kleist's works appeared side by side in "Phöbus", was unable to appreciate their worth. A year after Kleist's death Arnim denied that ^{Kleist} he had belonged to the Romantic school. "Wenige Dichter mögen sich eines gleichen Ernstes, einer ähnlichen Strenge in ihren Arbeiten rühmen wie der Verstorbenen. Statt ihm vorzuwerfen, dass er der neueren Schule angehangen, wozu wohl kein Mensch so wenig Veranlassung gegeben wie Kleist, hätte man eher bedauern müssen, dass er keine Schule anerkannt, d.h. nur in seltenen Fällen dem Hergebrachten und dem Urteile seiner Kunstgenossen nachgab"(13) What, however, Arnim the later Romantic novelist and publicist does not say, and indeed was not qualified to discern, was that Kleist, although formally and socially never a member of any school, had embodied

(11) J. Maas "Kleist - die Fackel Preussens". 1957.

(12) O. Walzel "Deutsche Romantik" Vol. 1 p. 90.

(13) Kleist Werke ed. cit. Vol. 1. p. 30.

dramatically certain intrinsic ideals of the early Romantics, ideals which had little appeal to the later Romantics, whose function seems to have been the dissemination and popularisation of the less momentous theories of the Schlegels.

It is essential now to draw some definition of early and later Romanticism. Having noted that practice differed greatly from theory, it is immaterial here to debate which of the two is true Romanticism. Heine, for example, declared that the originators of the movement alone had envisaged and created the true Romantic spirit (14). "Aber nie und nimmermehr ist das die wahre Romantik, was so viele dafür ausgeben; nämlich ein Gemengsel von spanischem Schmelz, schottischen Nebeln und italienischem Geklinge; Verworrene und verschwimmende Bilder, die gleichsam aus einer Zauberlaterne ausgegossen werden, und durch buntes Farbenspiel und frappente Beleuchtung seltsam das Gemüt erregen und ergötzen. Wahrlich die Bilder, wodurch diese romantischen Bilder erragt werden sollen, dürfen eben so klar und mit eben so bestimmten Umrissen gezeichnet sein wie die Bilder der plastischen Poesie". The fact that this was written in 1820 during the movement itself would contradict any argument that this division of the school is a purely arbitrary one, devised by literary historians, and by this definition Kleist's plays might indeed be called Romantic. The predilection for the occult and the irrational and "Naturschwärmerei" are characteristic of older and degenerate Romanticism. It has been pointed out (15) that the leaders of the first phase of Romanticism in Jena showed marked rationalist and intellectualist traits. Novalis was a philosopher of merit; Schlegel was a very effective as a writer of epigrams and at his worst in the ~~Sh~~hapsodic effusions of "Lucinde". Even "William Lovell" cannot be counted entirely as a late Romantic novel "(weil) mindestens in gleich starker Potenz in ihm Aufklärung und "Sturm und Drang" steckt". (c.f. Wüstling op.cit. p.179.) They were also only mildly interested

(14) Heine, "Die Romantik" 1820.

(15) R. Tynms "German Romantic Literature" p. 18.

in nature. The beauties of landscape scarcely figure in the works of the Schlegels of the earlier period and Novalis comments on them only when they suggest some striking cosmic law. Nature forms a completely colourless background to "Heinrich von Ofterdingen" for the progressive "poeticisation" of the hero. It was particularly Eichendorff and Brentano who developed this passion for nature itself. Romanticism then, does not mean the same thing when applied on the one hand to the Schlegel-Novalis group and on the other to the Tieck-Eichendorff-Brentano group. The whole spirit of the movement changed as it grew older. In its early years it was optimistic and progressive, looking forward to a new synthesis of art. "Wir erblickten den Frühling einer neuen geistigen Zeit, den wir mit jugendlicher Heftigkeit frohlockend begrüßten" (16) wrote Henrik Steffens of the early days in Jena. In this same visionary spirit, Kleist looked to a future stage to enact his plays. The words he addressed to Goethe concerning the performance of "Penthesilea" are characteristic of early Romanticism :- "So sehr ich auch sonst in jedem Sinne gern dem Augenblick angehörte, so muss ich doch in diesem Fall auf die Zukunft hinaussehen". It later became old, reactionary and decadent. Ricarda Huch's (17) biography of the movement is particularly prone to this false conception; her chapter on "Der romantische Charakter" might easily be a description of Tieck, but it would hardly fit Kleist or Friedrich Schlegel.

The dividing line between the two phases might well be drawn in 1802 (insofar as such a division is wise or possible), when Friedrich Schlegel left Jena. After that date he was in a period of transition until he finally retired into religious seclusion and quietism. Kleist's dramas then appeared years out of phase with the time. When Friedrich Schlegel was uttering his momentous Romantic theories, Kleist was a disillusioned army officer, or a secluded science student in a

(16) F. Martini "Geschichte der d. Literatur" 1952.
Stuttgart. (p. 304).

(17) R. Huch "Die Romantik" Vol. 1. (See bibliography).

provincial town with no ambition to become a poet - on the contrary, he wished to become a second Professor Wunsch. Who, indeed, would expect Schlegel in 1821 to greet "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg" as the exposition of his own youthful ideals? Kleist tackled the stylistic problem of "Robert Guiskard" after the original Romantics had abandoned it. His greatest period of literary production occurred against the dreary, uninspiring background of officialdom in Königsberg and degenerate Romanticism in Dresden, or later in a Berlin devoted to politics and the fight for freedom.

CHAPTER TWO :- Form and discipline in art.

It is a commonly held conception that Romanticism was hostile to form and restriction, preferring vague ramblings. This is often given as the reason why the Romantics produced no dramatist of merit, and the view may be substantiated by reference to the works of Tieck; dramatic depth and consistency for example is not evident in "Kaiser Octavianus". Yet the precursors of the movement were exacting in their demands for form and discipline in art. In "Heinrich von Ofterdingen" Klingsohr, the master, tells the aspiring poet Heinrich, "Ich kann Euch nicht genug anrühmen, Euren Verstand, Euren natürlichen Trieb zu wissen mit Fleiss und Mühe zu unterstützen. Nichts ist dem Dichter unentbehrlicher als Einsicht in die Natur jedes Geschäfts, Bekanntschaft mit den Mitteln, jeden Zweck zu erreichen, und Gegenwart des Geistes, nach Zeit und Umständen die schicklichsten zu wählen. Begeisterung ohne Verstand ist unnütz und gefährlich und so ist auch die kühle belebende Wärme eines dichterischen Gemüts gerade das Widerspiel von jener wilden Hitze eines kränklichen Herzens der junge Dichter kann nicht kühl, nicht besonnen genug sein Die Poesie will vorzüglich als strenge Kunst getrieben werden" (18). And later, "Der Stoff ist nicht der Zweck der Kunst, aber die Ausführung ist es" (19). Compare this with Kleist's statement about his "Robert Guiskard" (20) "Der Stoff ist mit den Leuten zu reden noch ungeheurer, doch in der Kunst kommt es überall auf Form an, und alles, was eine Gestalt hat, ist meine Sache".

Schlegel's "Gespräch über die Poesie" contains many ideas on form in art. "Die innere Vorstellung kann nur durch die Darstellung nach aussen sich selbst klarer und lebendig werden", "Ohne Absonderung findet keine Bildung statt, und Bildung ist das Wesen der Kunst" and further in the symposium we find "Das Wesentliche sind die bestimmten

(18) Novalis Werke ed. cit. Vol. 4 p. 166-168.

(19) Novalis Werke ed. cit. Vol. 4 p. 174.

(20) Letter of 14th February, 1808.

Zwecke, die Absonderung wodurch allein das Kunstwerk Umriss erhält und in sich selbst vollendet wird. Die Fantasie des Dichters soll sich nicht in eine chaotische Überhauptpoesie ergliessen, sondern jedes Werk soll der Form und der Gattung nach einen durchaus bestimmten Charakter haben". Kleist, too, was aware of the algebraic formula of art and states that he must improve his dramatic constructions, "Auch muss ich mich im Mechanischen verbessern, an Übung zunehmen und in kürzerer Zeit besseres liefern können" (21). Novalis stresses no less firmly that a work should be well designed and relevant to its aim, "Wenn man weiss, welche Klasse dieser verschiedenen Dar⁶stellungen der Dichter gewählt hat, so muss sich alles in seinem Werke aus diesem Begriff deduzieren und rechtfertigen lassen. Einheit muss jede Darstellung haben, wenn sie eine Darstellung, ein Ganzes sein will, und nicht etwa aus Prinzip im Grossen gestaltlos und nur im Einzelnen poetisch gestaltet sein will. Dann aber ist sie auch kein Kunstwerk, sondern nur ein Sack voll Kunstfragmente" (22). Novalis could well have been describing the dramas of Tieck when he wrote this !

Friedrich Schlegel had no business, it must be admitted, to attempt to write a novel, but the form of "Lucinde" is no less calculated than the form of "Heinrich von Ofterdingen"; the latter was deliberately planned as a mixture of novel and "Märchen" and illustrates its author's dictum, "Die Schreibart des Romans muss kein Kontinuum, es muss ein in jedem Perioden gegliederter Bau sein." (23) Whatever their shortcomings in literary production, the early Romantics, as we have seen, cherished very definite ideals of literary form. To Friedrich Schlegel the drama seemed the highest form of art (24); it is significant that Kleist chose to depict "der ganze Schmerz zugleich und Glanz meiner Seele" in a drama "Penthesilea" (25) and from the form

(21) Werke ed. cit. Vol. 5, p. 328.

(22) Novalis Werke ed. cit. Vol. 2, p. 306.

(23) Novalis Werke ed. cit. Vol. 2, p. 307, No. 409.

(24) Athenäum ed. cit. Vol. 1, 2, p. 33.

(25) Kleist Werke. Vol. 5 pp. 358, 380, 381.

of the plays it can be seen that he shared these views with the early Romantics. It is no coincidence that the poets of this period were masters of the sonnet, one of the most difficult poetic forms, and we know that A. W. Schlegel was able to offer advice on classical metres even to Goethe himself. Even the fragment, a favourite Romantic vehicle of expression, is an example of compact form and not of formlessness. It is a crystallised thought, complete in itself, used for the succinct expression of varied, fleeting, individual thoughts. "Ein Fragment" says Friedrich Schlegel "muss gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel." (Ath. I, 2, p. 54.) 'Aphorism' would be a more accurate translation.

The prime requisite of a dramatic talent such as Kleist's is the ability to create precise dramatic form. Only when Kleist came under the influence of later Romanticism did he produce a play of less rigid construction. "Käthchen" is inferior to the author's other plays in this respect. It consists of two groups of scenes centering loosely around the characters of Käthchen herself and Kunigunde. The link is provided by the character of Wetter vom Strahl. In the final act these groups are brought together by the improbable expedient of the interchanged letters. Kleist however was fully aware of the dramatic inferiority of this play and in one of his letters he singles out "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" as being written to the public taste and deplures it as such (26): and by "public taste" he undoubtedly meant later Romanticism.

- (26) Letter August 11th 1811 (K. Werke, Vol. 5, p.430)
"Das Urteil der Menschen hat mich bisher viel zu sehr beherrscht: besonders das Käthchen von Heilbronn ist voll Spuren davon".

CHAPTER THREE :- Individualism.

The one aspect of Kleist which has attracted the attention of most critics is his highly individualistic tendency; for Kleist did in fact adopt a distinctly pathological attitude to the problems that beset him. No Romantic felt as painfully as he, the implications of the theory of perception. Yet this trend was quite in keeping with the ideology of early Romanticism; in the "Athenäum" Schlegel praises the cult of the individual thus (27) "Sie (die Individualität) ist das Ursprüngliche und Ewige im Menschen" and "die Bildung und Entwicklung dieser Individualität als höchsten Beruf zu treiben wäre ein göttlicher Egotismus". (28) Accordingly Tieck's egoistical hero William Lovell can say :- "Ich selbst bin das einzige Gesetz in der ganzen Natur ..."

Throughout Kleist's dramas, with the possible exception of "Der zerbrochene Krug" and "Die Hermannschlacht", we can follow the development of his belief in a driving individual law - "das innerste Gefühl". Morality for Kleist results from the obedience, not to external and man-made precepts, but to an instinct in each mind. "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" represents a certain deviation from this outlook. The instinct is under religious providence, a puppet whose strings are controlled by the divine, to use Kleist's own metaphor from his essay on the marionette theatre.

This individualistic trend of early Romanticism is a legacy of the Aufklärung. Kant had insisted "Habe Mut, dich deines eignen Verstandes zu bedienen." Self-perfection of the individual through "Bildung" was the goal at which the Aufklärer and no less Kleist and Friederich Schlegel aimed, and the good of the individual was the key to contemporary social philosophy. During the first decade of the nineteenth century there occurs a distinct reversal of values in the Romantic view of the individual, a reversal which is paralleled in the development of Kleist's dramas. With few exceptions, Kleist's plays deal with single

(27) Athenäum Vol. 1, 2, p. 125.

(28) Athenäum Vol. 3, 1, p. 15.

predominant personalities and the problems of their natures. Käthchen follows her instinct blindly to happiness; Penthesilea recognises it, i.e. her love for Achille^s too late. Kohlhaas' sense of justice is offended and he determines to satisfy it himself. In other words, it is the individual who is the centre of interest and around whom the action revolves, and not society.

When, however, Kleist came into contact with later Romanticism, principally through the agency of Adam Müller, he began to approach agreement with the Romantic view of the state. Romanticism was no longer a self-centred, exclusively literary movement. The theoretical abstractions of the Schlegels and Novalis were succeeded as the order of the day by Fichte's "Reden an die deutsche Nation" (1807/8) and the political tracts of Arndt and Humboldt, urging a new sense of national honour and devotion to the Fatherland. The underlying theme of "Die Hermannschlacht" is selfless, passionate devotion to the state. Similarly Kleist's essay in "Germania", "Was gilt es in diesem Kriege" shows a belief in the "Volksstaat" and the "Kulturnation", both Romantic concepts. Again, in the "Katechismus der Deutschen" we find the idea of love for the fatherland for its own sake - the wheel has come full turn from eighteenth-century Rationalism.

"Prinz Friedrich von Homburg" reflects this development. In spite of his failure to carry out orders, Prinz Friedrich believes in the rectitude and sanctity of the individual and his own right to personal happiness - an outlook typical of Rousseau and his admirer, the young Kleist. He is sure the Elector will pardon him; (29)

Prinz "Der Kurfürst hat getan, was Pflicht erheischte,
Und nun wird er dem Herzen auch gehorchen

His conviction is shattered when he hears that the Elector is prepared to sacrifice him. But he conquers himself and willingly subordinates himself to the demands of the state; so Prinz Friedrich, the erstwhile individualist, comes to a higher realisation of his duty towards the state and society, just as the Romantics sought and found in Fichte's

later philosophy their ideal social state. Thus in his later years, Kleist was able to overcome his repugnance of the theory of perception: To the intellect the ideas of God and immorality might be unprovable; but they are the basic facts of the existence of the will. Kleist came to agree more with Kant's "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft" which postulated obedience to the dictates of conscience or duty as the norm of conduct. This is the point where eighteenth century individualism passed over into nineteenth century collectivism. Rousseau had seen society as a collection of free and equal individuals; Kant saw all men united by the law of duty - a teaching which contributed to the regeneration of Prussia. It was from this point of view that Kleist and the Romantics approached patriotism.

An unmistakable Romantic feature of Kleist's plays is their concern with the play on nerves and the collapse of character. The central figures are faced with emotional impasses in situations which bring out the unexpected and discordant aspects of their personalities. These passions are not the standard sentiments of the Classical authors - for example, love, hate, and jealousy. They are irrational, subconscious, pathological forces from the dark recesses of the mind which form a sort of sub-personality. When this latter finally breaks through we find the sadistically horrible impulses of Penthesilea or the ignoble, almost cringing Prinz Friedrich. Hermann likewise typifies "Rache ohne Mass" an all-powerful longing for revenge and liberty. So obsessed is he with the idea of driving out the Roman occupying forces that he sinks to the crudest depths of depravity. Nothing could be more perverted than the use he makes of Hally's mutilated body (30) and he is delighted to hear how Thusnelda wreaks vengeance on Ventidius. (31). Thusnelda herself faces a problem not unlike that of Penthesilea; the deceit which she discovers Ventidius to have played on her causes her to yield to the sub-human instincts in her character. Similarly, Kohlhaas so loses his sense of proportion in the face of injustice that he sees

(30) "Die Hermannschlacht" Act 4, Sc. 6.

(31) "Die Hermannschlacht" Act 5, Sc. 23.

himself as a type of avenging angel, and becomes progressively obsessed by the instincts of revenge which finally lead to his downfall. For Kleist the source of these ideas was probably G. H. Schubert, the popular Romantic half-scientist. The sole evidence for supposing this is a reminiscence from Schubert himself, made several years later, that Kleist had attended certain lectures of his in Dresden. (32) However, the source of the ideas is largely immaterial: suffice it to say that Schubert debated in his lectures "Die längst anerkannte Verwandtschaft der Mordlust und der Wollust (Fleischeslust)"., (33) a theme which forms part of the characterisation of Penthesilea and Thusnelda, and is quite in keeping with Kleist's theme of the sub-personality.

A widely held opinion is that Kleist was one of the first modern realists and consequently totally un-Romantic. It would be nearer the truth to say that he was a realist and a Romantic. Schiller's drama "Wallenstein" (which Kleist particularly admired) is a realistic drama, but one could hardly claim that the author's first aim was realism. The whole trend of Kleist's plays is idealistic and his idealism contains a certain element of Romanticism: ~~(Kleist's)~~ ^{Kleist's} realism serves only to emphasise the philosophical problems which ~~(Kleist)~~ he debates. Even in his least Romantic, and very realistic work, "Der zerbrochene Krug", we never lose sight of Kleist's metaphysical questionings about the value of trust and personal confidence in human affairs. None of the early Romantic theorists demanded the rejection of realism; only the later Romantics living in a sort of fantastic reactionary dream world achieved this rejection in literature. Also, Kleist's realism is in many cases not the reproduction of the world seen through the physical eye. His characters are rather the personification of his mind: they are, in Nadler's words, (p. 219) "..... seine Geschöpfe, Ergebnisse seines Grübelns. Er trafes einfach

(32) Since almost 20 years elapsed between Schubert's lectures and the publication of his memoirs, his memory might well be faulty.

(33) G. H. Schubert "Symbolik des Traumes" p. 125. Not however actually printed before 1814.

von innen heraus, genau so wie die Natur es macht". Penthesilea, to quote the supreme example is glowingly personal, saturated with Kleist's emotions. She is a mystery and a dream coming out of a shadowy land on the border between myth and reality - and yet highly dramatic.

Closely bound up with the question of individualism is the stress on originality. The fact that Kleist in general made little attempt to imitate what few Romantic plays already existed is not a sufficiently strong reason for classifying him as un-Romantic. He was certainly in literary agreement with Friedrich Schlegel in this matter. "Der eigentliche Wert, ja, die Tugend des Menschen, ist seine Originalität" wrote the latter in the "Gespräch über die Poesie". And Kleist in a letter (34) claims, "Denn die Aufgabe, Himmel und Erde, ist ja nicht ein anderer, sondern ihr selbst zu sein, euch selbst, euer eigenes und Innerstes durch Umriss und Farben zur Anschauung zu bringen". This is true of all Kleist's plays - they are in the highest degree subjective. As he said of his "Penthesilea", "Mein innerstes Wesen liegt darin". And, again, he stresses to Fouqué (35) "Die Erscheinung, die am meisten bei der Betrachtung eines Kunstwerks rührt, ist, dünkt mich, nicht das Werk selbst, sondern die Eigentümlichkeit des Geistes, der es hervorbrachte, und der sich in unbewusster Freiheit und Lieblichkeit darin entfaltet".

(34) Letter - An Marie, June 1807.

(35) Letter - April, 25th 1811.

CHAPTER FOUR :- Kleist, Christianity and Death.

Kleist's approach to Romanticism is most marked in his attitude towards aesthetic catholicism, namely that religion which is most closely connected, in its churches' architecture for example, with the world of art. This has been admirably brought out by Ayrault (36), in his chapter "Le Romantique" so it will be necessary here to sketch in only the broad outlines. Kleist's early life was characterised by a profound rationalism, his outlook was decidedly "Niesseitig" - "Ich schränke mich daher mit meiner Tätigkeit ganz für dieses Erdenleben ein" (37) he wrote. Kleist agreed completely with the Faustian gospel, "Nach drüben ist die Aussicht uns verrant Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um". (38) But after his collapse over Fichte, Kleist gained an impression of the irrational and tragic, of the insignificance and helplessness of man in face of the infinite. His mind is opened in consequence not only to Romanticism but to Christianity and almost at once passages like the following appear in his letters; "Nirgends fand ich mich aber tiefer in meinem Innersten gerührt, als in der katholischen Kirche, wo die grösste erhabenste Musik noch zu den anderen Künsten tritt, das Herz gewaltsam zu bewegen. Ach, Wilhelmine, unser Gottesdienst ist keiner. Er spricht nur zu dem kalten Verstande, aber zu allen Sinnen ein katholisches Fest. Mitten vor dem Altar, an seinen un^eersten Stufen, kniete jedesmal, ganz isoliert von den anderen, ein gemeiner Mensch, das Haupt auf die höheren Stufen gebückt, betend mit Inbrunst. Ihn quälte kein Zweifel, er glaubt Ich hatte eine unbeschreibliche Sehnsucht, mich neben ihn niederzuwerfen, und zu weinen. Ach, nur ein Tropfen Vergessenheit, und mit Wollust würde ich katholisch werden." (39)

- (36) R. Ayrault, op. cit. p. 205 ff.
(37) Kleist Werke Vol. 5, p. 131.
(38) Goethe "Faust" (2) ll. 1142 - 5.
(39) An Wilhelmine, 21st May, 1801.

That Kleist was particularly impressed by these experiences is evident from his frequent references to them. In very much the same way, a few years previously, Friedrich Schlegel had experienced the attraction of Catholicism in the same city, Dresden. It is significant, however, that both approached it from the aesthetic point of view, in the spirit of Wackenroder. (40) Reference to the scene before the altar is found in "Die Familie Schroffenstein" (41). "Warum denn so in Tränen? So erhitzt? Hat dich die Mutter Gottes so begeistert vor der Du knietest?" Johann's reply, "Gnädiger Herr - als ich vorbeiging an dem Bilde, riss es mich gewaltsam zu sich nieder" echoes a sentiment also expressed in the essay on the Dresden Madonna by A. W. Schlegel and Karoline. Later we find, "Möge die Ähnliche der Mutter Gottes auch Maria heißen" There is a further reference in "Amphitryon" (42) Alkmene:- "Verglüht ein Tag, dass ich an seinem Altar niedersänke? Warf ich das Antlitz tief inbrünstig vor ihm nieder." Even towards the end of Kleist's life we find the scene again in "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg" (43)

Prinz:- "Ich war in der Kapelle

Man lautete, da wir vorüberzogen,
Zur Andacht eben ein: da trieb's mich an,
Am Altar auch mich betend hinzuwerfen."

What probably impressed Kleist at this initial stage was not the religious Catholic element, but the evidence of faith and a positive philosophy of life - a philosophy which he had lacked since his encounter with Fichte. His statement "Ach, nur ein Tropfen Vergessenheit" (see above) has been much debated. It would seem to signify that for Kleist, entry into blind unquestioning faith did not provide a satisfactory solution to his metaphysical doubts. His intellect needed to

- (40) Kleist and Wackenroder are attracted more by the music and artistry of Catholicism. Kleist was doubtless inspired inter alia by the Barock architecture of Southern Germany which he found on his journey to Würzburg.
- (41) "Die Familie Schroffenstein" Act 1, Sc.1.
- (42) "Amphitryon" Act. 2 Sc. 5.
- (43) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 2. Sc.1.

work out its own answers in a more practical philosophical basis. In any case, this personal rejection of the Catholic religion does not sever Kleist from the Romantic movement; Tieck, Arnim and Hoffmann were never converted, and Friedrich Schlegel produced his best work before he retired into religious seclusion. Like Wackenroder, Kleist could approach the sphere of art through Catholicism and remain impressed by it though a devout protestant.

As he recovered from his philosophical catastrophe, Kleist seemed to resign himself to a recognition of the frailty of man and this world, which is quite in the spirit of Christianity. Time and time again the note of "Die gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt" appears in the plays: as "der Wunderbau der Welt" in "Käthchen", and in "Penthesilea" as :-

"Es ist die Welt noch, die gebrechliche,
Auf die nur fern die Götter niederschauen" (ll. 2854-2855)

"Ach, wie gebrechlich ist der Mensch, ihr Götter !" (l. 3037) says the Amazonian priestess, echoing a sentiment also expressed in many of Kleist's Novellen. Kluckhohn ("Deutsche Romantik" p. 252) sees it also in the comedy of the age. "In allem frohen und heiteren Scherz klinget ein Ton der Wehmut mit, der Wehmut über die Gebrochenheit oder Zerbrechlichkeit der Welt, ein Sehnen aus dieser unvollkommenen Welt heraus zu reinerem Sein, aus dem Bedingten zum Unbedingten hin."

There is ample evidence in "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" of Kleist's renewed concern with Catholicism during his middle period in Dresden. Dramatic motivation is provided by divine intervention and the use of miracles. Critics have tended to put much significance however on the author's utterance that the play was written more to the public taste. This is hardly so in the case of the Catholic elements in it, for two reasons. Firstly, there is a Christian religious basis to the philosophy on which "Käthchen" is constructed, (Chapter on "Über das Marionettentheater") and secondly, Kleist was working at the time in close collaboration with Adam Müller, the militant convert to Catholicism, who can hardly have failed to exert some influence, however little,

on Kleist. Again, Kleist was rather later a member of the "Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft", a Berlin society of no great importance, but which had nevertheless a Catholic foundation. The end of "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg" also invites a Catholic interpretation. The Prince's attitude immediately before his expected execution is one of faith in a life to come. His final monologue speaks of "Unsterblichkeit", a word with a religious connotation, and the image "Es wachsen Flügel mir an beiden Schultern" may be of similar Catholic origin.

There has been considerable speculation about the effect that the partnership with Müller may have had on Kleist's religious views. Certain similarities can certainly be drawn between his thought and the later Kleist's. In a series of lectures on dramatic art given in Dresden in 1806 the former speaks of a new type of ideal tragedy which is to come. ("Über die dramatische Kunst"). This drama was of course to be of very considerable religious significance and as such was to surpass Greek tragedy. According to Müller, Greek Tragedy contains many examples of contempt of death, but not of true conquest of death. In the new type of tragedy, if we can call it tragedy, death itself was to be overcome. The argument is supported aptly enough by quotations from the works, and reference to the life of Novalis himself. Friedrich Schlegel noted that the principle difference between ancient and modern art was the introduction of Christianity. August Wilhelm Schlegel developed the idea in his lectures "Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur" (delivered 1801-2, again consistent with Kleist's having heard about them) where he stated "In der christlichen Ansicht hat sich alles umgekehrt: die Anschauung des Unendlichen hat das Endliche vernichtet; das Leben ist zur Schattenwelt und zur Nacht geworden, und erst jenseits geht der ewige Tag des wesentlichen Daseins auf". (44) Kluckhohn (45), sees "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg" as the realisation of Müller's theories,

(44) Werke, ed. E. Böcking, Vol. 5. p. 43.

(45) P. Kluckhohn "Die deutsche Romantik" p. 259.

a perfectly adequate argument. The catastrophe, which in conventional tragedy means the death of the hero is merely a passing phase in "Der Prinz von Homburg". The Prince as we see him in Act 5, Scene 10 has overcome his love of life and fear of death and seems to be looking back on this world from beyond death. Here Kleist obviously envisaged tragedy as a purifying process, in contrast to Schiller who would have let the Prince die. This is a thought which also occurs in one of Novalis' aphorisms ("Blütenstaub - Paralipomena") "Der Tod ist eine Selbstbesiegung - die, wie alle Selbstüberwindung, eine neue leichtere Existenz verschafft". We are to assume that the Prince returns to this world a changed character more in tune with the idealised principles personified in the Elector and Natalie. The same critic holds the view that the Christian Romantic concepts of life and death make conventional tragedy impossible. Consequently the tragedies of the Middle Ages and German Romanticism are properly martyr-dramas, or dramas of divine grace. There are certainly grounds for so classifying "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" and "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg", with their benignant intercessions and their conciliatory, untragic tendencies. Schlegel too, saw in the plays of Calderon "die Überwindung der Tragik durch Verklärung des inneren Menschen, oder göttliche Gnade", an idea which Adam Müller claimed to see presented in "Egmont". Insofar as Homburg's destiny is "Selbstüberwindung", it is quite in the spirit of Schlegel's definition. Another critic (46) has drawn parallels between Kleist's thought and that of Cervantes, an author towards whom interest had been attracted by Schlegel, more particularly however in connection with Kleist's "moralische Erzählungen" or Novellen. It may well be that Kleist read and was influenced by the Spanish author, and perhaps the original Spanish setting of his first play was a concession to popular Romantic taste.

One can trace through Kleist's philosophy and dramas a longing for the release of death, a "Todessehnsucht" very similar to that of Novalis. or even the young Friedrich Schlegel. Death for the Romantics meant the ultimate satisfaction of their craving for the infinite, a mystical

(46) H. Schneider "Kleist und Cervantes". (Studien zu H.v.K.)
See Bibliography.

restoration to the original unity of life. The state of mind in which we see Prinz Friedrich at the end of the play is remarkably like that of Kleist himself, shortly before his suicide. In a letter he wrote :- "Ich bin zufrieden und heiter mit der ganzen Welt versöhnt." (47) Prinz Friedrich, longing for the release of death, asks (48) "Schlug meiner Leiden letzte Stunde ?" For Kleist and the Romantics, death is no bitter ending. "Mir ist so wohl, wie bei dem Eintritt in ein andres Leben", (49) says Sylvester Schroffenstein, and Penthesilea longs for death when she is happiest, "Ich bin so selig, Schwester ! Ganz reif zum Tode, O Diana, fühl ich mich". (50)

Just as the life after death, in which he could be re-united with his beloved Sophie, was a reality to Novalis, so Kleist saw the after life as a simple continuation of this one. "Es ist", he wrote in a letter (Werke. 5. p. 327) "als ob wir aus einem Zimmer in das andere gehen." Despite the damning appearances in this life, Eve in "Der zerbrochene Krug" expects her lover to await the explanation in another :- (51)

Eve :- "Es wird sich alles ihr zum Ruhme lösen,
Und ist es im Leben nicht, so ist es jenseits,
Und wenn wir auferstehen ist auch ein Tag."

One might see in this a distant reflection of the love-mysticism to be found in Werner, whose lovers, frequently frustrated in this life, desert it voluntarily to be united beyond death. This is the fate of Warmio and Malgona. On the other hand Kleist could not use this conception, like Werner, as a solution to a dramatic problem: an important difference between the two authors is shown by their treatments

- (47) Kleist Werke, Vol. 5, p. 440.
- (48) "Prinz von Homburg" Act. 5, Sc. 2.
- (49) "Die Familie Schroffenstein", ll. 864-5.
- (50) "Penthesilea" ll. 2864-5.
- (51) "Der zerbrochene Krug". ll. 1172-4.

of the same theme in "Penthesilea" and "Wanda". Kleist's play is without the mystic other-worldly outcome of the latter.

Although Kant had convinced Kleist that he could never hope to take into another world what he had learned from this, Kleist never gave up his idea of migration to another planet or star. Similarly Novalis proclaimed :- "Der Tod versetzt ihn (den Geist des Menschen) in der grossen Assoziation irgendwo anders hin er wird irgendwo anders erweckt". (52) "Warst du schon einmal gestorben ?" asks the pilgrim in "Heinrich von Ofterdingen", "Wie könnt' ich denn leben ?" is the reply. And in 'Das Käthchen von Heilbronn' we find in the report of Wetter vom Strahl's trance "Die Welt nannte er ein Grab, und meinte, er würde nun (indem er sterbe) erst geboren werden". (53)

As an extension of this idea Nadler (54) discusses the mystic connection between birth, death and resurrection in Romanticism and sees its culmination in Zacharias Werner. We may see it also reflected in Kleist's plays. The tragedy of Alkmene coincides with the beginning of new life, the festival of roses in "Penthesilea" is set on a battlefield and the creative and destructive elements of love strangely intermingle in the latter work.

Penthesilea :- "So war es ein Versehen. Küsse, Bisse, ~~das~~
Das reimt sich, und wer recht von Herzen liebt,
Kann schon das eine für das andre greifen." (55)

(52) Novalis Werke, Vol. 3, p. 96.

(53) "Käthchen", Act. 2, Sc. 9.

(54) J. Nadler "Die Berliner Romantik", p. 57.

(55) "Penthesilea" ll. 2981. c.f. also K. 4, p.21, No. 18.
"Lasset sein mutiges Herz gewähren. Aus der Verwesung
Reiche locket er gern Blumen der Schönheit hervor."

CHAPTER FIVE :- The Romantic Synthesis.

The key word to the philosophy of the Romantic era is synthesis. The triadic rhythm of thesis and antithesis resulting in a higher unity can be found in the works of both Classical and Romantic authors; it is the prevailing form of reasoning in Kleist's essay "Über das Marionnettentheater" just as in Schiller's "Über naive and sentimentalische Dichtung" the highest ideal is seen in the fusion of the naive (in the German sense) and the sentimental.

The early Romantic writers sought to carry this striving for synthesis into every field of life. In particular, all the various branches of art were to be fused into a single art form: "Plastik Musik und Poesie verhalten sich wie Epos Lyra und Drama. Es sind unzertrennliche Elemente, die in jedem freien Kunstwesen zusammen geeinigt sind." (56) Similarly Friedrich Schlegel speaks of 'Symposie' and 'Symphilosoph^{ie}' and claims the 'Gesamtkunstwerk', embracing all aspects of life and art, as the paramount goal of Romanticism. For him also, the final synthesis was to be the fusion of Classical and Romantic art, the Synthesis of opposite poles. "Die höchste Aufgabe aller Dichtkunst die Harmonie des Klassischen und des Romantischen," (57) we find in the "Gespräch über die Poesie". Long before this Romantic artistic union had been symbolised in the marriage of Faust and Helena, both Novalis and Schlegel revered in Goethe himself the incorporation of their literary ideal, and the Schlegel brothers attempted to create the new art form in their dramas "Ion" and "Alarkos". In the prologue to "Wallenstein" Schiller sees the future path of German literature as lying midway between Shakespeare and antiquity, a path which Kleist followed with considerable success.

(56) Fragmente, No. 228. (Novalis)

(57) "Gespräch über die Poesie". F. Schlegel.
Prosaische Jugendschriften, ed. Minor 1906 Vienna
(Vol. 2. p. 381).

The Classicists saw in beauty the synthesis which reconciled the poles of mankind. The 'schöne Seele' represented the Classical view of the ideal harmony of the intellect and the instinct. The Romantics, however, approached this concept of synthesis from a different point of view. It was their avowed intention to tear down all barriers, to explore the depths of humanity and art, and to restore in Schlegel's term, 'das ursprüngliche Chaos'. The obvious consequence of this dogma were the horror-tales of, for example, Tieck and the general late-Romantic predilection for the gruesome and the macabre. Kleist, too, was not afraid to delve into human psychology, and, like the Romantics, was not deterred by public taste from depicting in his plays the dark elements that he found there. As he said in a letter about "Penthesilea" :- "So wie es hier steht, wird man vielleicht die Prämissen, als möglich, zugeben müssen, und nachher nicht erschrecken, wenn die Folgerung gezogen wird". (58)

It is perfectly evident from the attempts that were made that the purely Romantic school possessed no dramatist capable of producing the ideal synthesis. Strich (59), describes Schlegel's "Alarkos" as "eine völlig unorganische und willkürliche Vermischung von antikem Schicksal und christlicher Vorsehung, von antikem Rhythmus und romantischem Reim". In many cases also, this striving deteriorated to the collection together in art of many varied picturesque elements and literary styles, of which Tieck's "Grossdramen" are probably the supreme examples. "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" is a typical example of this, insofar as it contains frequent changes of scene and interchanges of poetry and prose. It is noticeable however that in those of Kleist's plays in which he is not concerned to portray his problems of philosophy and metaphysics, there are considerable traits which show his interest in this 'romantische Verschmelzungstrieb'. It is almost as if Kleist were

(58) Letter - 24th January, 1808.

(59) F. Strich "Klassik und Romantik" p. 382.

a dual artistic personality. When he wrote his plays from a purely creative urge, or from some external stimulus, he bore in mind this principle, (Guiskard, Krug and Homburg). He abandoned it however to a large extent in those dramas where the stimulus came from inside (Patriotism, pessimism, general spiritual doubts).

Kleist's first attempt at a synthesis is his "Robert Guiskard" where the models are Shakespeare and Sophocles. Wieland heard the author read part of it and commented (60) "Wenn die Geister des Aeschylus, Sophokles und Shakespeares sich vereinigten, eine Tragödie zu schaffen, sie würde das sein, was Kleists 'Tod Guiskards des Normannen', sofern das Ganze demjenigen entspräche, was er mich damals hören liess", and went on to praise it highly. The elements of the older poets on which Kleist draws are those most popular among his contemporaries - namely that Shakespearean characters are the authors of their own destruction, by their single weaknesses whereas Classical tragedy shows man in conflict with fate or destiny. That these two elements are to a great extent contradictory would be evident to a dramatist of Kleist's calibre and doubtless contributed to his destruction of the original manuscript. It is, incidentally, strange that the Romantics did not generally acclaim "Guiskard" and "Schroffenstein", for the Shakespearean elements in them are quite significant, as indeed they are in Kleist's other plays. (Tieck and Schlegel had aroused Romantic interest in Shakespeare by their translations of 1796 and 1797 respectively.) The similarity to 'Oedipus' is also most marked; in both plays the downfall of the hero is the plague, and the crowd and the army have resembling roles. Just as in 'Der zerbrochene Krug', Kleist begins the dramatic action just before the climax and then gives an exposition of the antecedent events. The classical model for "Der zerbrochene Krug" was "Oedipus Rex" to which Kleist refers in the Vorrede to the play. In both plays the judge is the guilty party

(60) Letter - 10th April, 1804.

although in Sophocles work he is ignorant of this fact. (61)
Kleist again makes use of Sophocles analytical technique insofar as the whole action of the play is a gradual revelation of what has gone before. A similarity also exists to "Measure for Measure" where Angelo is as big a rascal as those whom he tries. Nevertheless the truly Shakespearean element is the character of Adam himself, who dominates the action very much as Guiskard does. Here, Falstaff was the model; both have the characteristic bombast coupled with a sly cunning.

Whatever Kleist's prime intention was when he created "Amphitryon", there can be no doubt that critics, both contemporary with the author and modern, have seen much that is Romantic in the play. Goethe saw in it "..... nichts Geringeres als eine Deutung der Fabel ins Christliche, in die Überschattung der Maria vom heiligen Geist", (62) and unlike less able contemporary critics, he was able to understand Kleist's underlying theme in the work. As one theme of the play Kleist attempted in "Amphitryon" to bring together in the Romantic sense both Christian and pagan mythology. The Gods of Greek Mythology are the actors in a symbolisation of the immaculate conception, an interpretation which is well supported by the use of Biblical diction throughout the play. The character of Jupiter himself also combines features of the Gods of antiquity with features of the Christian God. Some critics have rejected this view of the drama but there is no record or indication that Kleist ever contradicted Adam Müller's views on the play, and he had plenty of opportunities to do so in his literary magazines. Müller wrote, for example, (63) "Der Amphitryon handelt ja wohl ebensogut von der unbefleckten Empfängnis der Heiligen Jungfrau, als von dem Geheimnis

- (61) c.f. Gordon "Die ^dDramatische Handlung in "Oedipus" und "Der zerbrochene Krug". Also F. Braig "H. v. Kleist" p. 167 f.f.
- (62) Biedermann, Goethes Gespräche, Vol. 1. p. 503.
- (63) Letter - 1809. An Gents.

der Liebe überhaupt, und so ist er gerade aus der hohen schönen Zeit entsprungen, in der sich endlich die Einheit alles Glaubens, aller Liebe und die grosse innere Gemeinschaft aller Religionen aufgetan".

(64) A further consideration of Kleist's religious views at this time (see Chapter 4) lends weight to the argument. It may have been this aspect and the conciliatory ending which led Kleist to speak of the play as a 'Lustspiel' for according to any other interpretation Alkmene's fate must appear as stark tragedy. Far from seeing any connection with the religious undercurrent in Romanticism, Kayka, (op.Cit.) sees "Amphitryon" as Kleist's deliberate and anti-romantic answer to A. W. Schlegel's "Ion". "Dort war das Euripideische Stück wohl technisch verbessert aber das Modern-Sentimentale noch verstärkt, und der Rest antiken Geistes vollends hinausgetrieben worden, mit dem die affektierte Griechheit des äussern Gewandes böse kontrastierte." I think this thesis is an exaggeration. Kleist certainly improved on certain poorer features of "Ion" - Kayka comments for example on the "Gemütsarmut und Gefühlsrauheit" of the latter. But Kleist was attracted to the material by its dramatic situation and suitability in the characterisation and the reactions of the characters, for the expression of his theories. The inclusion of the religious element was probably a purely incidental concession to popular Romanticism. One might also see in "Amphitryon" and 'Krug' an attempt by Kleist to fuse tragedy and comedy. The attempt is more successful in the latter work: here the comedy arises principally from the character of the judge and his attempts to avoid detection, the tragic situation from the plight of the lovers. The two elements are closely interwoven. In "Amphitryon" the comedy takes the form of a parallel sub-action to the main drama, almost in the Shakespearean fashion of comic relief.

Opinions were varied in the Romantic school as to how the ultimate synthesis of Classical and Romantic was to be achieved. In general Classical form was not to be abandoned, but extended to include some

(64) c.f. also the fate of Käthchen's mother (Act. 5 Scene 2) and "Die Marquise von O "

suggestion of Romantic 'Jenseitigkeit'. Novalis tried to define it thus : "Indem ich dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Sinn gebe, so romantisiere ich es". (65) Schlegel also noted "Gebildet ist ein Werk wenn es überall scharf begrenzt, innerhalb der Grenzen aber grenzenlos und unerschöpflich ist, wenn es sich selbst ganz treu, überall gleich, und doch über sich selbst erhaben ist". (66) It is this kind of effect which is achieved in "Prinz von Homburg". There is firm dramatic structure coupled with those elements of the infinite demanded by Romanticism; the beginning and end of the play takes place in a sort of dream atmosphere, which builds, as it were, a frame around the action. Just as Käthchen dreams of part of what is to happen, Homburg dreams of the glove which is to bring him to Natalie. The Kurfürst's choice of words is significant when he sums up the atmosphere of that first scene : "Fürwahr ! Ein Märchen glaubt' ich's !" (67)

The fusion is not however restricted to the form. There is much of the Romantic dreamer in the Prince of the first scene, and later when he refuses to grapple with the intricacies of the battle plan. He dreams of the mysterious noble lady, with whom he yearns to be united, and in the dream she leaves him a token of her favour. Yet this same figure is a Colonel of cavalry, a responsible leader of men. When he pleads for his life and when he leads the charge which is the cause of his downfall, he is the impulsive Romantic egotist.

Prinz : Auf Ordn' hast du sie noch vom Herzen nicht empfangen ? (68)

His egotism does not desert him when in distress;

- (65) Novalis Werke, Vol. 3, p. 146.
(66) Fragmente, No. 296. (Ath. I, 2, p. 81.)
(67) "Prinz von Homburg" Act. 1, Sc. 1.
(68) "Prinz von Homburg" Act. 2, Sc. 1.

Prinz : Rette mich ! Nur ich allein auf Gottes weiter Erde
bin hilflos, ein Verlassener, und kann nichts. (69)

But it is a noble Homburg of Classical stature who confirms the
Elector's sentence :

Prinz : Ich will ihm, der so würdig vor mir steht,
Nicht ein Ünwürdiger gegenüberstehen. (70)

and conversely it is with a decidedly Romantic outlook that Homburg
finally awaits death. (See Chapter 4.) The attitude shown by Homburg
in the "fear of death" scene is quite that of heroes of antiquity. It
is pagan and stoical; but his final monologue of Act V, Scene 10 shows
that he is eager to leave this world and is hopeful of the next. In
the interval the Prince has achieved in the Christian-Romantic sense the
conquest of death and the pardon seems a gratuitous gift since he has
already turned his back on life.

In his essay 'Über die Philosophie-an Dorothea' Schlegel sets
down views which bear comparison with Kleist's personal letters to
Ulrike and Wilhelmine. It is man's position to be active in the
world and to rise to a higher level of development, socially and
mentally. Woman on the other hand is the housekeeper, whose prime
function is motherhood and whose chief virtue should be religiosity.
Man's sphere of existence is then ever-increasing, woman's is bound
more narrowly. But for Friedrich Schlegel woman is metaphysically
the superior being. In that same essay we find 'Ist aber die männ-
liche Gestalt reicher, selbstständiger künstlicher und erhabener, so
möchte ich die weibliche Gestalt menschlicher finden.' The early
Romantics revered in woman the fusion of 'Göttlichkeit' and 'Tierheit',
and in the 'Katechismus der Vernunft für edle Frauen' Schlegel demands
not only 'sanfte Männlichkeit' but also 'selbstständige Weiblichkeit'.
The feeble woman of the age of Sentimentalism was as abhorrent to him
as the Adelheid type - the 'Machtweib' of the "Sturm und Drang".
That Kleist agreed with the metaphysical superiority of woman is shown
by the fact that she is the central figure in the two most significant

(69) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 3, Sc. 4.

(70) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 4, Sc. 4.

plays after 'Homburg', 'Käthchen' and 'Penthesilea' and his feminine creations grew ever nearer to the Romantic conception of ideal womanhood. The sweet passive innocence of Gertrude, Eustache, Eva and Käthchen on the one hand, and the wild fury of Penthesilea and Thusnelda on the other finally gave way in the character of Natalie to a combination of sweet femininity and spiritual independence. As a woman in love she pleads with the elector for the Prince's life.

Natalie : Das Kriegsgesetz, das weiss ich wohl, soll herrschen,
Jedoch die lieblichen Gefühle auch. (71)

and yet she can be capable and resourceful, as when she summons her regiment to the palace. She is a meek woman,

Natalie : Schau her, ein Weib bin ich und schaudere
Dem Wurm zurück, der meiner Ferse naht. (72)

yet she finds the moral courage to support the Prince in his misfortune and sees his decision nobly,

Natalie : Und der im Leben tausendmal gesiegt,
Er wird auch noch im Tod zu siegen wissen. (73)

This is in itself a typically Romantic concept. Love is seen as an ennobling virtue, something which gives man strength particularly in the face of danger.

Such is the nature of the synthesis of Classical and Romantic in 'Homburg' that it is no mistake that we find the laurel of Classicism growing alongside the 'blaue Blume' of Romanticism in the palace garden at Fehrbellin. The symbol of Romantic yearning appears (as the 'Nachtviole') as Homburg is resigned to death and preparing for the great voyage of discovery into infinity.

The thinly veiled political allegory of 'Die Hermannsschlacht' greatly appealed to the Romantic Spirit, although the literary tendencies displayed in the play drew little recognition from the school.

(71) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 4, Sc. 1.

(72) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 4, Sc. 1.

(73) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 3, Sc. 4.

As in 'Guiskard' the form of the work is predominantly Classical, while the characterisation contains much that is Romantic. Both heroes show traits of the Romantic 'Übermensch', the former in a desire for omnipotence in the conquest of Byzantium, the latter in an infinite longing for revenge. Hermann is the Romantic warrior-hero of old, a nature remarkably akin to Macbeth: the similarity extends also to the dramatic method. But the ambition of Macbeth, just as of Guiskard and Wallenstein, is purely personal: the character of the Cheruskerfürst shows that Kleist has turned from pre-occupation with the individual to Romantic cosmopolitanism, for there is symbolised the whole yearning for freedom of the German nation. Since the theme is a self-evident political situation, there is really no need for a parallel to the witches of 'Macbeth', yet the sinister 'Alraune' who appears to Varus is very like them with their occult, enigmatic utterances. A less evident similarity may be drawn between Varus and Richard III; both connive and intrigue their way towards power and both lose it when it is almost in their grasp. We see them both despairing on the battlefield where they lose all. The line "Fänd' ich ein Pferd nur, das mich rettete" in particular has an obvious parallel in Shakespeare's play.

An important aspect of the Romantic synthesising process is the interest in the connection between words and music. In his comedy 'Die verkehrte Welt', Tieck argues that it should be possible to think in musical sounds and to make music in words and thought. This is quite in keeping with Romantic aesthetics. The word is a limiting entity; the sound however is unlimiting and infinite, and consequently a far more expressive vehicle for thought. Such an idea occurs in a letter by Kleist: "Wie kann ich es möglich machen, in einem Briefe, etwas so zartes als ein Gedanke ist, auszuprägen? Ja, wenn man Träne schreiben könnte!" and later, "Selbst das einzige (Mittel zur Mitteilung) das wir besitzen, die Sprache, taugt nicht dazu, sie kann die Seele nicht malen, und was sie uns gibt sind nur zerrissene Bruchstücke".(74)

So Kleist turned to music, not like Tieck who gave his work a superficial melodiousness, but as the source of all the arts. From his study of music Kleist hoped to throw new light on his literary and poetic attempts. "Ich glaube, dass im Generalbass die wichtigsten Aufschlüsse über die Dichtkunst erhalten sind," he wrote. (75). A similar idea can be found in Jean Paul (76), "Wenn die transzendente (Aesthetik) bloss eine mathematische Klanglehre ist, welche die Töne der poetischen Leier in Zahlverhältnisse auflöst, so ist die Gemeinere nach Aristoteles eine Harmonistik (Generalbass), welche wenigstens negativ tonsetzen lehrt." In the same letter (see 75) Kleist admits the close relationship of music and poetry. "So habe ich von meiner frühesten Jugend an alles Allgemeine, was ich über die Dichtkunst gedacht habe, auf Töne bezogen." One of Novalis' "Fragmente" arrives at the same conclusion: "Die kombinatorische Analysis führt auf das Zahlenphantasieren - und lehrt die Zahlenkompositionskunst - den mathematischen Generalbass (Pythagoras, Leibniz). Die Sprache ist ein musikalisches Ideeninstrument. Eine Fuge kann auch poetisch behandelt werden. Der Generalbass enthält die musikalische Algeber und Analysis." and a later one: "Musik. Die Musik hat viel Ähnlichkeit mit der Algeber." Many critics have noted the inner musical quality in Kleist's plays. Servaes (77) compares 'Penthesilea' with Beethoven's technique of composing a symphony: Julius Petersen (78) interprets the same play as a sonata and sees in it and 'Homburg' an anticipation of Richard Wagner's 'Leitmotiv' technique. The critics agree, broadly speaking, that Kleist begins his plays with a prelude stating the principal themes of the play, or 'Leitmotive'. This is then developed, emphasised, repeated and broken by dissonances; the

- (75) An ? August 1811.
(76) "Die Vorschule der Aesthetik" 1804.
(77) F. Servaes "H. v. Kleist" p. 50.
(78) Jahrbuch der Kleistgesellschaft 1921.

climax passes and we arrive at the finale. Though Tieck was its most prolific exponent, the idea of using music in drama for example, can be traced back to Schlegel's desire to fuse all branches of art. It is probably significant, although here again one may only assume the influence on Kleist, that Adam Müller saw the Romantic "Gesamtkunstwerk" as the fusion of music and plasticity in art ("Von der Idee der Schönheit"). The imagery and characterisation of 'Penthesilea' coupled with the musical content, would help to fit the play to this definition.

Schelling, the Romantic poet-philosopher, saw the close relationship between tragedy and comedy and described the latter as the transposition of the roles of "Notwendigkeit" (or the law, or the established course of humanity) and "Freiheit" (or the will of the individual) in the former. (79) Tragedy depicts the clash of the will with the law, comedy arises "wo ein allgemeiner Gegensatz der Freiheit und der Notwendigkeit ist, aber so, dass diese (die Notwendigkeit) in das Subjekt, jene (die Freiheit) ins Objekt fällt". Accordingly the village judge, Adam, instead of conflicting with the law by his nocturnal visit to Eva, apparently has the law on his side, and the comedy arises from his attempts to conceal the truth through the exertion of his "Willkür". Schelling continues, however, "so wie die Freiheit und Besonderheit auf der einen Seite die Notwendigkeit und Allgemeinheit lügt, so nimmt auf der anderen Seite die Notwendigkeit den Schein der Freiheit an, und vernichtet unter dem angenommenen Äusseren der Gesetzlosigkeit, im Grunde aber nach einer notwendigen Ordnung, die praetendierte Gest^ezmässigkeit". During the trial in Kleist's play, the truth gradually reveals itself, apparently through the lies and excuses of Adam, but in fact "nach einer notwendigen Ordnung". This latter is perhaps symbolised in the character of Licht (the name itself is significant) who by his questions and comments causes bits of the truth to be revealed, and who, as far as we can judge, quite soon divines

(79) Schelling - "Von dem Wesen der Komödie", 1803.

the whole truth.

The similarity between Kleist's "Krug" and Schelling's theories is obvious; but there is no real evidence to show that he gleaned the ideas from Schelling. Certainly both were conceived at about the same time and since Kleist was a member of a literary circle in Bern at the time, his attention may well have been drawn to Schelling. On the other hand Kayka (80) believes that Jean Paul was Kleist's source for a similar conception of comedy. "Kleist verdankt dem fränkischen Dichter viel Einzelerkenntnisse, so vor allem die des Komischen, das hier zum erstenmal mit aller Schärfe und grossem Tiefsinn untersucht wird. Vieles was gewiss schon dunkel in ihm lag wird ihm hier erst klar geworden sein; und so finden Sätze wie dieser "das Komische wohnt wie das Erhabene nie im Objekte sondern im Subjekte" in Kleist's Komödien eine reiche Bestätigung; verehren wir doch in ihm den grössten und fast einzigen Meister der Charakter u komödie". In this case Kleist's friend Rühle, an admirer of Jean Paul, may have been the agent. Again, in Schelling's theory, namely the reversal of roles of "Freiheit" and "Notwendigkeit" in tragedy, Kleist may suddenly have seen the solution in comedy of the Oedipus problem which beset him in the creation of "Guiskard". In both cases we preside over unsuccessful attempts to prevent the disclosure of a guilty secret. But in passing from "Guiskard" to "Krug" Kleist shifted the emphasis from the dramatic situation to the comedy of character. The peculiarly Romantic element in Schelling's theory is the concept of tragedy and comedy growing from the same root. Any true exposition of this must contain a fusion of the two; tragedy must lie just below the surface of the comedy and vice versa. Obvious examples of this are 'Krug' and 'Amphitryon'.

To sum up. Kleist's plays give us a combination of plasticity of form with Romantic colour and content. Heine wrote of Kleist :- "Er ist ganz Romantiker, will nur das Romantische geben, und gibt dieses durch lauter plastische Gestalten, so dass er wieder äusserlich ganz

Plastiker ist". In this Kleist obviously agreed with Friedrich Schlegel, who, as early as February 27th, 1794, wrote to his brother : "Das Problem unsrer Poesie scheint mir die Vereinigung des Wesentlich - Modernen mit dem Wesentlich - Antiken". By "Wesentlich - Modern" Schlegel undoubtedly meant the modern spirit of Romanticism, the same spirit which Adam Müller took to be missing from "Penthesilea" when he described the play as "allzu Antik". In general, Kleist suffused a Romantic content into a classical form. The "Penthesilea" legend has been described, for example, as the most Romantic legend of antiquity and Kleist's play as a Romanticization of the ancient world. Even in such an occasional production as "Der zerbrochene Krug" Kleist seems pre-occupied with the problem of adapting ancient to modern dramatic techniques (c.f. Wolf von Gordon op. cit. see bibliography). In a review, Zsohokke said of Kleist "Er kommt mir wie ein werdender Shakespeare vor, der sich in den tragischen Formen des Sophokles bewegen möchte". Kleist achieves the Schlegelian poetic conciliation most successfully in the substance of his last play: neither the Elector, "die starre Antike" nor the Romantic prince, "ein deutsches Herz" (ll. 784-787) proves victorious - the outcome is a sort of interpenetration of the two.

CHAPTER SIX :- "Über das Marionnettentheater".

Kleist's remarkable essay is significant here firstly because it provides evidence of the change to a more optimistic Romantic outlook during the period in Dresden, and secondly as it provides a key to his subsequent dramas, particularly "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn". Like Novalis, Rousseau and the early F. Schlegel, Kleist believed in an original state of innocence and naive harmony, from which man fell or which he sacrificed in the progress of civilisation. This primaeval state was marked by a total lack of consciousness and culture. "Instinkt" said Novalis, "ist das Genie im Paradiese, vor der Periode der Selbstabsonderung (Selbsterkenntnis)". (81)

The acquisition or the possession of consciousness, in other words, intellect or culture, is the barrier preventing the return to the ideal state, which, for the Romantics, was the goal towards which Humanity should always strive. For Kleist, only the puppet may achieve the ideal state of grace, because it lacks "Bewusstsein". "Ich sagte, dass ich gar wohl wüsste, welche Unordnungen in der natürlichen Grazie des Menschen das Bewusstsein anrichtet." and "Wir sehen, dass in dem Masse, als, in der organischen Welt, die Reflexion dunkler und schwächer wird, die Grazie darin immer strahlender und herrschender hervortritt." (Marionnett-theater), we find in the essay. Käthchen is a puppet with no will or 'Bewusstsein' and consequently does not and may not obstruct the will of the puppeteer. On the other hand, Wetter vom Strahl acts according to his personal will and obstructs the divine power. It is also quite within Romantic philosophy that Kleist should have abandoned his earlier quest for truth in favour of beauty, for beauty is henceforth his avowed aim. It shows at least that his doubts have come to rest. Stahl (The dramas of Heinrich von Kleist) indicates that for Kleist the very faculty which impedes the attainment of grace, the intellect, is the faculty which Schiller saw as the means to achieve it. Here is a definite break with German Classicism.

(81) Novalis, Fragmente.

For Kleist and the early Romantics, paradise was to be regained by progress, by going forward. In "Heinrich von Ofterdingen" the question is posed : "Wo gehen wir hin ?" "Immer nach Hause" is the reply. "Das Paradies ist verriegelt und der Cherub hinter uns; wir müssen die Reise um die Welt machen, und sehen, ob es vielleicht von hinten irgendwo wieder offen ist," says the author of the essay, and even in such an early work as "Die Familie Schroffenstein" the following dialogue appears :- (82)

Sylvius : Weh! Weh! Im Wald die Blindheit und ihr Hüter
Der Wahnsinn! Führe mich heim, Knabe, heim!

Johann : Ins Glück ? Es geht nicht, Alter; 's ist
inwendig verriegelt. Komm, wir müssen vorwärts.

Likewise, even in such an essay as Novalis' "Die Christenheit oder Europa", often quoted as a document of Romantic reactionary mediaevalism, the optimistic note appears; "Fortschreitende, immer mehr sich vergrößernde Evolutionen sind der Stoff der Geschichte. Was jetzt die Vollendung nicht erreicht, wird sie bei einem künftigen Versuch erreichen, oder bei einem abermaligen; vergänglich ist nichts was die Geschichte ergriff; aus unzähligen Verwandlungen geht es in immer reiferen Gestalten erneuert wieder hervor." It was a tired and disillusioned Romanticism which renounced this idea of progress towards the perfect state, and preferred to see it in a return to the Middle Ages in church and state.

It is possible to see throughout Kleist's plays the development of his views on the fall of man with its Christian-Romantic implications. 'Der zerbrochene Krug' may be interpreted as an allegory of the rejection from the Garden of Eden (or Paradise), a religious allegory which should have appealed to the Romantics. The names Adam and Eva are significant. Adam usurps the role of God by trying to play the role of fate in the love of Ruprecht and Eva; in other words, he exerts his will and goes his own way. In language very like Kleist's in the essay on the Marionettes Novalis 336th fragment (ed. cit. vol. 2) reads :

(82) "Die Familie Schroffenstein" Act 5, Sc. 1.

"Wie der Mensch Gott werden wollte, sündigte er." But like the jug Adam's intentions are doomed to destruction when real fate intervenes, ostensibly God, and he is driven out of Huisum. Licht comments on the relationship to the original Adam :

"Ihr stammt von einem lockern Altvater,
Der so beim Anbeginn der Dinge fiel
Und Wegen seines Falls berühmt geworden." (83)

Similarly, the original 'Scythen' tribe in 'Penthesilea' can be taken to represent the Romantic 'Urvolk im Paradiese'. They are robbed of their innocence and freedom and the "göttliche Ordnung" is destroyed: later, as the Amazons, devoted to the War-god Mars, they created their own Gods, because they were no longer able to see or to understand the real God. Witkop (84) recognises this same state of man as a theme of "Die Familie Schroffenstein" "Wir sind hinaus verwiesen aus dem Paradiese der Unschuld, unser Erkenntnishunger ward uns zur Sünde gerechnet, wir sind verdammt zur Blindheit und Dunkelheit. Hilflos und weglos irren wir im Schmutz der Endlichen."

Jeronimus : Aus diesem Wirrwarr finde sich ein Pfaffe.
Ich kann es nicht.

Sylvester : Ich bin dir wohl ein Rätsel ? Nicht wahr ?
Nun, tröste dich. Gott ist es mir. (85)

This point is made even more clearly in the earlier version of the play, "Die Familie Ghonorez".

Rodrigo : O ! ihr Brüder
Verstossene des Schicksals, Hand in Hand
Hinaus ins Elend aus dem Paradiese,
Aus dem des Cherubs Flammenschwert uns treibt."

Only in his final drama does Kleist show the way to paradise re-gained. From the original unconscious state symbolised in the opening scenes, the Prince is rejected into this world, through the play we witness his gradual rebirth until "der endlich beschränkte Eigenwille

(83) "Der zerbrochene Krug" Act 1, Sc. 1.

(84) P. Witkop. "H. v. Kleist" P. 56.

(85) "Die Familie Schroffenstein" Act 2, Sc. 3.

des Menschen geht im unendlichen ewigen Willen des Schöpfers auf".

(86) So both ends of the "ringförmige Welt" of which Kleist speaks in the essay finally meet.

Although man was rejected from Paradise virtually for ever, Kleist believed that salvation was attainable through the goodness and trust of woman. Catastrophe is averted by the sweet innocence of Käthchen and Eve. Braig noted (87) "In der Stimme der Liebe spricht Gottes Stimme, wenn sie rein und unschuldig ist. Durch die irdische Liebe kann so die Vorsehung wirken - ein Gedanke, der hier (im "Krug") erst angedeutet ist; sich zum Leitgedanken in Kleists Dichtung entwickelt bis er im "Käthchen" zur tragenden Idee der Dichtung wird". In Kleist's last drama it is through the love and inspiration of Natalie that the Prince is reborn. This divine surveillance of love was noted by the Romantic, Carus (88) "Einer jeden hohen menschlichen Natur wird in dem Versinken und völligen Aufgehen in einer anderen Seele am deutlichsten sich erschliessen das Verständnis des Allgemeinen und alles Göttlichen eine solche Liebe sei die erste Erlösung aus dem Einzelsein und der erste Schritt zur Wiederkehr in das All", and it is a theme of the puppet essay.

This conception of the Fall of Man and the loss of Paradise is a unifying theme in Kleist's plays, although it would be an exaggeration to claim as Braig does that the plays are built around it. The idea was common property of the Classical-Romantic age, and undoubtedly appealed to the Romantics by virtue of its Catholic-religious implications. Its exposition as Witkop sees it (see above) in Kleist's first play would coincide with Kleist's first experience of Catholicism in Dresden in 1801, approximately six or twelve months before the conception of "Die Familie Schroffenstein".

(86) c.f. Braig op.cit. (Chapter "Über das Marionnettentheater")

(87) F. Braig op. cit. p. 176.

(88) C. G. Carus - "Psyche" p. 296.

(c.f. Kluckhohn "Ideengut." pp.73)

CHAPTER SEVEN :- The Irrational.

Kleist's insistence on the 'Gefühl' as the sole reliable guide through life is in two respects \neq Romantic. In the first place it takes the form of an intuition, an instinct. As such for Carus it is the link between the conscious and the unconscious minds, 'Die wunderbare Mitteilung des Unbewussten an das Bewusste nennen wir Gefühl' ("Psyche") and for Novalis, "mit Instinkt hat der Mensch angefangen, mit Instinkt soll der Mensch endigen". (Note also Chapter 6). As Fricke (89) has shown, confidence in 'das Gefühl' or the effects of its being 'Verwirrt' is a central theme of Kleist's work. Käthchen follows it to happiness, while the refusal to follow it on the part of von Strahl nearly brings about tragedy. Kleist however diverges from Romanticism in one aspect; to follow this instinct does not always mean happiness. Though Käthchen and Eichendorff's "Taugenichts" follow their inner promptings, the path of the former is in no way the 'dolce far niente' of the latter.

Furthermore, Kleist conceived 'das Gefühl' as the way through his philosophical doubts. In his earlier years, instead of obeying the Kantian imperative 'Erfülle deine Pflicht', in a wordly, material sense, he preferred to place responsibility for ultimate happiness on a totally irrational entity, and showed thereby a typically Romantic escapism. Admittedly he was unable to see with the later Romantics the solution of his problems in a misty mediaeval paradise, a psychological invention. But he like them, shelved his problems by accepting the creed of the impotence of man before fate and reliance on inner promptings. This latter is mostly clearly depicted in the play which marks the final dissolution of Kleist's philosophical doubts, "Das Kathchen von Heilbronn".

'Die Familie Schroffenstein' is an early example of the influence of fate in the Romantic sense on human affairs. Dramatically it is not a fate-drama of the type produced by Werner or Houwald: there are

(89) G. Fricke "Gefühl und Schicksal bei H. v. Kleist".
(See Bibliography)

no curses, dreams or spiritual manifestations and such typical dramatic devices. Instead Kleist endeavours to produce a feeling of inevitability, hinting that the characters are in the grip of external forces. The first to notice this is Sylvester, (90)

Sylvester : Es ist ein trüber Tag
Mit Wind und Regen, viel Bewegung draussen,
Es zieht ein unsichtbarer Geist gewaltig
Nach einer Richtung alles fort, den Staub
Die Wolken und die Wellen.

The fate of the characters of this play is their inability to perceive the truth of the situations in which they find themselves, and to interpret the actions of others. The theme is, in fact, that of human fallibility. Tieck comments on this metaphysical helplessness of man in "Blaubart", "Das Leben von uns allen ist wohl nur ein albernes Puppenspiel" and the idea forms a step in the development of his novel "William Lovell". In the horror and confusion of the closing scenes of "Schroffenstein" it is only the demented Johann and the blind Sylvius who are able to perceive the truth, and illustrate the deeper significance of the play. The Romantic conception of madness illuminating a way to the deeper nature of things occurs also in "William Lovell". Balder scorns the doctors for believing that his sick hallucinations are the results of fever "Die Narren ! weil ihre Sinnen erblindet und betäubt sind, so halten sie den für töricht, der mehr sieht als sie - O ! Ich höre recht gut das leise schauerliche Rauschen von den Flügeln meines Schutzgeistes (I, p. 334)" and in his tale about Wildberg he openly advocates madness as the highest means of perception (II, P. 269 ff.)

The same spiritual malaise of "Schroffenstein", typical of early Romanticism and to a large extent resulting for Kleist and the Romantics from the philosophical destruction of an earlier positive "Weltanschauung", is no less a theme of "Amphitryon". The tragedy of Alkmene is her inability to distinguish her true husband. This is not an error on her part but an unavoidable, genuine, human weakness before the God.

(90) "Die Familie Schroffenstein" Act 4, Scene 2.

In his first play Kleist shows fallibility as the cause of a physical catastrophe, in "Amphitryon" he indicates mental destruction. Like Faust, himself much of a Romantic, Kleist saw at this stage "dass wir nichts wissen können".

Strich (91) sees in 'Guiskard' the elements of the fate tragedy and therein its weakness. The parallel is drawn between the Duke and "Wallenstein". At the point where their intentions seem about to bear fruit, both suffer reversals. Guiskard is struck down by a totally unexpected and irrational entity - the plague. In Schiller's drama this reversal of fortunes, namely the capture of Sestin, is something which Wallenstein might have foreseen, and Schiller keeps events well within the bounds of the expected and usual. In this respect 'Guiskard' is certainly a fatedrama. But this being so, it is only fair to indicate that Kleist was not primarily aiming in this play to produce a fate-drama. His intention was to write a drama of Shakespearean characterisation, where some flaw of the hero's character causes his downfall: Kleist's attempt is spoiled by the introduction of the irrational element.

The irrational elements in the plays increase towards the end of Kleist's life. The mysterious figure of Ursula in his first play is perhaps prophetic of the hags and witches which people his later tales. The deserted forest and meteorological paraphernalia are employed likewise for an eerie effect at the end of "Die Hermannsschlacht"; they furnish an appropriate setting for the sinister "Alraune" whose sombre note is heard repeatedly throughout the play like an ominous motif in a Wagnerian music-drama. (ll. 743, 797, 800, 804, 829, 831, 1468-70, 2227.) Kleist also makes much use of dreams, prophesies, dark forests and generally Romantic milieus in "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn". By comparison with the other plays, these traits undoubtedly spoil the latter work, by making the dramatic motivation unconvincing and spoiling

the construction. Kleist's thought was obviously coloured at this time by his association with Tieck and his interest in popular science. He agreed that, for example, the unconscious dream state afforded the most immediate approach to the truth of nature. For Novalis, body and soul are united only in sleep; "Im Schläfe ist Körper und Seele chemisch verbunden" and "Wachen ist ein geteilter polarischer Zustand, Im Wachen ist die Seele punktiert, lokalisiert", (92) an idea which is likewise contained in the essay on the marionettes. In the unconscious state (in the Romantic sense) Käthchen achieves the goal which consciously she may obtain only after much difficulty and unhappiness. Similarly Prince Friedrich appears in the first act in this dream-like condition and after the mock execution exclaims to Kottwitz, 'Ist es ein Traum?' and receives the answer 'Ein Traum, was sonst?' (93)

If we accept then that the use of 'das Gefühl' in the Kleistian sense is the expression of an irrational power in the lives of men, one can discern a development through the plays which is paralleled by the increasing religiosity of the Romantic movement. The "evil influence" in "Schroffenstein" is notably undefined. After Fichte's ideas had destroyed his narrow Rationalism, Kleist's aim was to portray the hopelessness of man's condition in the face of destiny and to show his inability to understand correctly the motives of others and distinguish the true from the false. In short, Kleist had not decided on the source of the external influence on man. Then in 'Amphitryon', taking Adam Müller's interpretation, there is the suggestion that the power is divine. From this point onwards the intervention is more obviously from God: He acts according to Braig essentially through the female characters, notably Eva and Käthchen. Adam indicates (94) that more is at stake than earthly justice in the action of "Krug". As he says to Eva :- "Denk, dass du hier vor Gottes Richtstuhl bist". And in 'Käthchen' the often expressed faith in God's directing power is quite

(92) Novalis Werke Vol. 2, p. 216.

(93) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 5, Scene 2.

(94) "Der zerbrochene Krug" l. 1104.

in the spirit of Romanticism and the Middle Ages. One is reminded of the Taugenicht's assertion :

Den lieben Gott lass' ich nur walten
Hat auch mein' Sach' aufs Best' bestellt.

when the Emperor says "Was Gott fügt, heisst es soll der Mensch nicht scheiden". (95)

As the Romantics saw in the lack of 'Bewusstsein' a return to the natural state, so they also believed in the regenerative effects of nature. Each return to her, as it were, gave fresh power and energy. "Die alte Mythe von Anthäus, dem Sohne der Erde, welcher durch jede Berührung mit der Mutter neue Kräfte gewann, wiederholt sich hinsichtlich des Unbewussten in jedem Menschen" we find in Carus (Psyche). Furthermore Schubert writes ("Ahndungen") "Bei den Lebendigen der Erde ist die Ruhe der Nacht wahrhaft ein Zurückkehren in den Schoss der Mutter, eine neue Geburt". This conception was probably in Kleist's mind when in his last play he symbolises the destruction of the Prince's old character and his death in a faint, supposedly followed by the re-birth of the new prince. (96) The same detachment of the unconscious spirit drawing fresh energy, this time not from nature but from God, is to be found in a reference by Sylvester in "Die Familie Schroffenstein" (Act 2, Sc. 2).

Sylvester : Was mich freut
Ist, dass der Geist doch mehr ist, als ich glaubte.
Denn flieht er gleich auf einen Augenblick,
An seinen Urquell geht er nur, zu Gott,
Und mit Heroenkraft kehrt er zurück.

The reversal of values which appeared with Romanticism in Germany is most marked in the attitude towards love and marriage. Love according to Baader helps man and woman "sich aus seiner Halbheit zum ganzen Menschenbilde innerlich zu ergänzen". Through the medium of love, one became a better person,

'Die Welt ist blind, nur die Liebenden sehen,
Weil uns die Augen erst in der Liebe aufgehen. (97)

- (95) "Käthchen" Act 5, Sc. 2.
(96) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 5, Sc. 10.
(97) Arnim "Die Pöpstin Johanna" (c.f. Kluckhohn "Ideengut" p.71)

The poetic representation of this idea is contained in 'Homburg' where Natalie, by her love, helps the Prince to regain his self respect and a sense of more altruistic values. In this there is a noticeable change in Kleist's ideology. In most of his other plays Kleist uses love as the centre of the problem; without love there would be no problem. Eva would not need to conceal the name of her visitor, the Amazon Queen would not offend the Gods, and there would be no 'Romeo and Juliet' element in 'Die Familie Schrockenstein'. Without love there could be no tragedy of Alkmene. But in 'Homburg' quite in the Romantic spirit, love is the means to the solution, rather than the core of the problem. The Romantic veneration and idealisation of love (Friedrich Schlegel described it as "erhaben") is clearly depicted in Kleist's last play.

It is also typically Romantic that Kleist should tend to idealise and create largely exaggerated female characters. For him and Novalis, woman was the superior metaphysical being, yet both must have been aware of the unreality of their literary women. In real life Sophie seems to have been a rather simple, plain child; the letters Kleist wrote to Ulrike and Wilhelmine are prosaic and homely. Yet what a transfigured being is Käthchen ! How sweet and simple is Eva ! What a lofty noble figure is Penthesilea !

In an often quoted letter Kleist compares the characters of Käthchen and Penthesilea with the plus and minus signs of algebra; (98) they are opposite poles of the same nature, the same nature seen under different conditions, as it were. Penthesilea is positive and active, Käthchen is passive, a negative character, masochistic and self-denying. In a very similar vein, Ritter, the scientist, claimed to have established in human psychology that "neben dem willkürlichen Bewusstsein ein Bewusstsein des Unwillkürlichen, ein passives Bewusstsein, neben dem Bewusstsein aus Herrschen ein Bewusstsein aus Dienen, Folgen, Geleitetwerden (besteht)". This similarity is again consistent with Kleist's having heard lectures on, and busied himself with Romantic science, (99) in the field of human psychology.

(98) Letter - an Collin 8th December, 1808.

(99) c.f. P. Kluckhohn, "Ideengut" p. 38.

In this connection a certain amount of attention has also been drawn in the past to Kleist's sexual problems. This has been given as the reason for his mysterious visit to Würzburg and Stahl (op. cit.) sees quite rightly that much of Kleist's imagery in the plays is sexual in origin. Certainly the desire for a wife and family occurs frequently in his letters and women play a very large part in the plays. Steig (100) claims that Kleist shot himself because, having found the one person in his life with whom he could be happy, his officer's code forbade him to marry Henriette, a divorcee. This may have played some part in their joint suicide, but is on the whole, an exaggeration, for Kleist's view of domestic bliss was earthly in the extreme and suicide served only to make a bad situation completely hopeless. Nevertheless there is a case to be made that Kleist's sexual incontinence expressed itself in forms of cruelty to his characters, just as it did in the case of Zacharias Werner. After taking orders as a Catholic Priest, Werner's enforced celibacy was probably the cause of, for example, the detailed descriptions of horrible cruelties in "Die Mutter der Makkabäer". Kleist's dramatic sense was too keen to depict such detail, but we still hear of the gruesome revenge of Thusnelda and Penthesilea. As the opposite pole, there is the masochism of Käthchen and the sadism of her whipping by Strahl. Many critics have also commented on Kleist's cruel delaying technique which he employs in many of the plays. The revelation to Alkmene of her seduction is agonisingly slow. Vom Strahl keeps back the identity of the girl he is to marry for as long as possible, and the Elector insists of carrying out a mock execution on Homburg. Another typical example is Hermann's cruel teasing of Thusnelda by describing her fate if she fell into the hands of the Romans. Only in one instance (in "Homburg" see above) does this cruelty not occur between man and woman and is not connected with the love theme. This neuro-psychological projection of personality into the dramas of Kleist and Werner is typically Romantic and may be traced further in the dramas and works of Tieck, and E. T. A. Hoffmann.

(100) R. Steig "H. v. Kleist's Berliner Kämpfe" (see bibliography)

It has been suggested that Kleist's theme of pre-destined love, which finds its most obvious expression in "Käthchen", can be traced back not to Schubert, but to the elder Wieland. Parallels of thought on the subject between the two authors are indeed manifold and Kleist is reputed to have expressed a renewed interest in Wieland during his middle period in Dresden - about the time of the completion of "Kathchen". Albeit, in "Homburg", "Penthesilea" and "Käthchen" there are very similar developments: supernatural prophecies precede the meetings of the lovers. In "Homburg" and "Kathchen" these take the form of dreams, in "Penthesilea" Ortrere's death-bed utterance. After these, the lovers are invariably united. Similar conceptions were, however, also held by Werner: in his "Martin Luther" he shows a belief in the divine ordinance of love, the way in which two "Halbwesen" find each other and are united; his avowed aim was to depict "Die Vergöttlichung der Menschheit durch die Liebe". It is in this particular play by Werner, I believe, that we may seek the origin of much of "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn". Indeed as Werner's play was published in 1807 in Berlin after having been produced a year earlier on the stage in that city, it is more than likely that Kleist knew it.

Admittedly, the emphasis in the two plays differs. The mystic idea in "Martin Luther" is more prominent than in "Käthchen", indeed, Kleist may have intended "Käthchen" partly as a protest against Werner's religious allegories and his bringing together in 'Luther' of mysticism and theological questions. But obvious similarities may not be ignored. In both plays, a central figure is called "Käthe" and "Käthchen" and both have a divine mission: Käthchen to free vom Strahl from the limitations of the "Verstand" and Katharina to help heal the dis-unity in Luther's mind.

Katharina's first encounter with Luther is a decisive moment in her life. She starts and covers her face with her hands crying "Mein Urbild" (the word itself gives some indication of the pre-ordained nature of the meeting). In this, one is reminded of Käthchen's reaction to her meeting with von Strahl, of Penthesilea's

sudden experience of love on meeting Achille, and no less of Heinrich's meeting with Mathilde in "Heinrich von Ofterdingen".

"Mich dünkt" sagte Mathilde, "ich kannte dich seit unendlichen Zeiten". "Ja, Mathilde, wir sind ewig weil wir uns lieben" (Novalis). Penthesilea's exclamation is distinctly reminiscent of this :

Penthesilea : Mein ewiger Gedanke, wenn ich wachte,
Mein ewiger Traum warst du ! (1, 218-8)

The meeting has a lasting effect on these female characters. We hear from Theobald of the change in Käthchen and Katharina is "so ganz verändert" (1. 1596). Both follow the new spirit within them blindly and without reflection. They are tortured by any attempt to discover their motives ("Luther")

Therese : "Sie quälen Dich, die rauhen Männer" (1. 439)
and

Käthchen: "Du quälst mich grausam, dass ich weinen möchte !"

Kathchen and Katharina feel drawn by instinct to their loved ones, an instinct which is all-powerful. "Zum Grafen Wetter vom Strahl" answers Käthchen and disappears; "Zu ihm" cries the other and hurries from the stage ! Käthchen and Katharina both feel compelled to remain with their loved ones - Käthchen follows in humble subservience, "geführt am Strahl seines Angesichts", while Katharina, dressed as a pilgrim, remains close to Luther "den Blick unverwandt auf Luther gerichtet" (1. 2784). Strahl demands of Käthchen why she persists, and she appears to be "zerstreut" by the question. When Luther asks, Katharina is "verwirrt": "Herr ! wir kamen - vergass ich selber doch den Namen" (1. 2866). When Käthchen believes herself finally separated from her lover, she is ready to enter a convent. Similarly, Katharina, believing Luther dead, declares "Kehr ich zu meines Klosters Stille !" (1. 2958). It is not without significance that both heroines turn to God in distress. Love and religion belong together - for Werner with the accent on religion, for Kleist with the accent on love. It has also been suggested that Kleist was depicting this same idea in

"Amphitryon": Jupiter assumes the features of Amphitryon and, in praying to the God, Alkmene continually confuses God and her husband. In very similar fashion Werner's Katharina and Tieck's Genoveva have dream visions: the features of the latter's lover Golo, mingle with those of the Redeemer, while Katharina describes her vision, "Jesus war's nicht ganz, und Luther auch nicht - und ein Heiland doch". Kluckhohn, draws a further parallel with Alkmene's love and that of Malgona in Werner's drama "Kreuz an der Ostsee" which appeared in the early months of 1806. Malgona declares that she loves her lover "Glühender noch als Christus", but when questioned by Warmio: "Du liebst den holden Götterknaben Jesus doch mehr als mich?", she declares "Ich liebe Ihn in Dir".

On the other hand 'Käthchen' may be a purely original creation. This being so, Röbbeling (op. cit.) lists the basic ideas in the work which have most frequently evoked comparisons with contemporary science, and in particular with the discoveries of G. H. Schubert. These are :-

1. Two people who are quite unknown to one another may nevertheless be united in spirit long before they finally meet.
2. The human spirit can have an existence totally independent of the body.
3. A benevolent spirit may appear in the form of a guardian angel.

We are given every indication in the play that the love of Käthchen for vom Strahl is ordained by a higher power, so we can reject out of hand the suggestion sometimes made that Strahl exerts a sort of hypnotic influence over her, and that he is a 'Magnetiseur', in Schubert's sense. Now Röbbeling makes the point that while the above ideas are certainly to be found in the works of Schubert, they may also be attributed to Kleist's reading of Wieland, particularly the 'Jugendschriften'. For brevity I refer for textual similarities to Röbbeling. It is known that Kleist came into contact with Wieland, and it is said that Kleist carried around on his person a letter from the elder man urging him to complete 'Guiskard' "und wenn der ganze Kaukasus und Atlas auf

Sie drückte". Furthermore, Kayka (op. cit.) notes that Kleist must have been aware of the spiritual union of separated lovers well before he came into contact with Schubert, "denn aus welchem anderen Grunde sollte er sonst wünschen, dass Wilhelmine zu gleicher Zeit an ihn, wie er an sie denken sollte?" (Kleist v. 5. p. 99.) It is equally significant that Schubert was indebted to Wieland, and we may assume that part of Kleist's interest in Schubert was based on a common appreciation of the elder poet's ideas. This interest in Wieland helps us to place Kleist in his correct literary generation, namely among the forerunners and originators of the Romantic movement; for it was on the ideas of the Schlegels and Wieland, and no less of Herder, that the later Romantics built. At a time of deep spiritual depression immediately after the writing of 'Penthesilea', Kleist must have been comforted to find himself in limited literary agreement through this interest in Wieland, with a member of a large school. Braig, (op. cit.) incidentally, is of the opinion that the true source of "Käthchen" is to be found in a 'Märchen' by Wieland "Die Entzauberung".

On the other hand the case in favour of Werner's Romantic dramas as an influence on Kleist is perhaps strengthened when we consider the similarities between his "Söhne des Thals" and Kleist's "Homburg". Common features are however restricted to certain unmistakable incidents. On being reminded of the sanctity of the broken law, Robert d'Oredin tears off the cloak of the Leader of the Order, just as Homburg seizes the sword of the first Officer (Act 2, Sc. 2) Molay demands Robert's sword and has him marched away under guard, saying

"Sie (die Gottheit) straft des Menschen frevelhafte Kühnheit,
Ihr gleich zu sein und wirft ihn in sein Nichts."

Similarly the Kurfürst declares,

"Ins Nichts mit Dir zurück, Herr Prinz von Homburg".

In a scene not unlike the final scene in 'Homburg', Philipp of Anjou walks in the garden of the Temple, where the 'Nachtviole duftet'.

Molay comments "Wir träumen alle ...", and as the "Nachtviole lieblich duftet" in the garden at Fehrbellin, so the Prince awakes from his dream. (c.f. F. Braig; P. Kluckhohn, "Auffassung der Liebe see bibl.)

That Kleist must have paid a certain amount of attention to Werner is more than likely when we consider that the latter had the patronage of Iffland, a man of great influence in the contemporary theatre, who claimed that Schiller had entrusted Werner to him as his (Schiller's) dramatic successor, and presented most of Werner's plays. In view of the similarity between "Luther" and "Käthchen" Kleist, I believe, would be greatly offended by Iffland's rejection of his play (1810) and would naturally take it as a personal slight; hence his uncharacteristically spiteful, personal jibe at Iffland (10th August, 1810). Furthermore it is important not to exaggerate Kleist's dramatic isolation. His ability made him unique at the time, but as he testified of himself (preface) he was not unconcerned with life around him.

CHAPTER EIGHT :- Kleists's attitude to Romanticism.

Having shown the similarities between Kleist's ideas expressed in his plays and those of his Romantic contemporaries, it is now necessary to show his attitude towards the school, insofar as he commented directly on it, and to consider to what extent the plays might be named Romantic. Kleist's sole significant utterances on the Romantic Group concerned "Käthchen" (ein Schauspiel) das mehr in die romantische Gattung schlägt, als die übrigen". (Amphitryon, Penthesilea, Guiskard) (101) and later in another letter to Cotta (102) "Ich würde, wenn es (das erste Taschenbuch mit dem 'Käthchen') Glück macht, jährlich eins von der romantischen Gattung liefern können". From this we can judge what Kleist understood by 'Romantic'; he can mean only a loose dramatic treatment of a mediaeval fairy-tale theme, for there is little which is specifically Romantic (in the Tieckian sense) in the play: "(Die poetische Stimmung) schwimmt nicht in Dämmerung, und löst sich nicht in Dunst auf" (103). Like most of Kleist's dramatic creations, the characterisation is well-defined and individualistic, and the elements of Romantic science are not surrounded by Tieck's aura of mysticism. Furthermore, despite the intrusion of supernatural powers, Kleist endeavours to give psychological depth to the dramatic motivation. Kayka comments (104) - "Ganz einzig ist das Werk, weil sein Dichter uns nicht, wie irgend ein Romantiker, in eine mondbeglänzte Zaubernacht eintüllt, sondern als ein rotwangiges Erdenkind tritt uns das Märchen an einem hellen Sommertage entgegen. Diese junge Dichtung hat Mittagsglanz, Waldduft, unverwelkliche Frische und Unbefangenheit des Gemüts, einen reinen poetischen Hauch, wie wir ihn sonst nur in der noch weiteren Atmosphäre des 'Götz von Berlichingen' atmen können." Much the same may be said of "Die Hermannsschlacht"

- (101) Letter - 7th June, 1808.
(102) Letter - 12th January, 1810.
(103) E. Kayka op. cit. p. 146.
(104) E. Kayka op. cit. p. 104.

where, with the possible exception of the scene in which "die Alraune" appears, there is no attempt to produce a 'romantische Stimmung'. Also, the "Märchen" background to "Käthchen" has much more in common with the common "Volksmärchen" than with the Romantic "Kunstmärchen". It has all the artlessness and down-to-earth characteristics of the Grimm tales (although these did not appear until 1812) and is spoiled by the inclusion of Romantic scientific theories: there is the ideal combination of earthy and spiritual, realistic and fantastic, and none of the sheer abstractions of, for example, Klingsohr's tedious "Märchen" in "Heinrich von Ofterdingen". Some motifs, the "Vehmgericht", tempests, duels and abduction, Kleist borrowed from the fairy tales in the Gothic style which flourished in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century. Others he obtained from the popular "Märchen" theme of the "echte und falsche Braut". Like the "Volksmärchen" the tale is told in a simple matter-of-fact way. The supernatural power which compels Käthchen to follow vom Strahl she accepts without question. She is sure that he loves her: "Verliebt ja wie ein Käfer bist du à mir !" she says. Neither is the "Märchen" of Käthchen used as a vehicle for philosophical or aesthetic didacticism, whereas Novalis' "Märchen", in Tyrrn's words, (op. cit. p. 157) are "almost smothered beneath the dead-weight of symbolism, the meaning of which is not clear".

Kleist was also dramatically far less capricious than his Romantic contemporaries. This is shown particularly by the total lack of Romantic irony in his works. Although he too was aware of the vast gulf between his poetic conception and its final execution ("Die Wahrheit ist, dass ich das, was ich mir vorstelle, schön finde, nicht das, was ich leiste"), (105) he did not indulge like the lesser Romantics in the playful destruction of literary illusions in his plays. The personage of Kleist disappears completely into his plays as he himself testified of 'Penthesilea', and there is none of the conscious literary egotism of a Tieck.

(105) Letter - An Rühle, 31st August, 1806.

Although Kleist was a realist by intent, he had undoubted poetic qualities. These latter did not, however, extend to lyricism for the lyric passages of his plays are few, serving in practise to divorce him from Romanticism. Two notable exceptions are Prinz Friedrich's monologue (106) and the description of Käthchen. In the dramas Kleist gives a poetic colouring to his realism, whereas the Romantics developed this colouring for its own sake and presented it as a depiction of the world; Kleist depicts real people, the Romantics, their flimsy shadows. For the Romantics everything was music, for Kleist a picture, an image. R. Huch comments on the Romantics (107). "Ihre Bücher gleichen zumeist reizenden Arabesken, denen nichts fehlt als der feste Kern, den sie umranken sollten. Zierat, Dekoration, was als krönender Schmuck aus dem Stamm herauswächst, ist selbständig geworden und schwankt als ein befremdendes Wunder durch die Luft."

Despite his temporary divergence at the time of writing "Käthchen", Kleist never showed in his dramas any conclusive proof that he was changing his views on form in art. Despite the early Romantic stress on the value of form (see chapter 2), one would expect that as a Romantic, Kleist would develop his views on form along the same lines as his fellows. But this is not the case for Kleist's last play is classical in structure. Obviously then, Kleist's views on art form were his own, and it is purely fortuitous that they concurred with early theories of the Schlegels. "Den Romantikern fehlte die unbewusste Kraft, die mit instinktiver Sicherheit die Form bildet. Sie waren zu wenig Griechen." (108) says R. Huch. Instead of losing himself in a sea of self-contemplation and introspection, Kleist never lost sight of the objective world in the writing of his plays - it was this characteristic which caused him so much pain when he met Fichte's philosophy.

(106) "Prinz von Homburg" Act 5, Sc. 5.

(107) R. Huch "Blütezeit der Romantik" p. 354.

(108) R. Huch op. cit. p. 317.

The internal dichotomy of the Romantic movement has been noted in an earlier chapter; it is essential now to investigate what the Romantics understood by the name. Since one axiom of their contemporary philosophy interpreted the world in a state of "werden" rather than "sein" it is likely that their aims were never realised and the practice may be misleading. Few contemporary definitions are unambiguous. Tieck however says (109) "Ich weiss zwischen poetisch und romantisch keinen Unterschied zu machen". If by 'poetisch' Tieck means poetic subjectivity, then we may denote Kleist's dramas as Romantic. He goes on to say "Höchstens wollte ich damit (der Romantik) andeuten, dass hier das Wunderbare in der Poesie mehr hervorgehoben werden sollte es wurde dann im ^katholizierenden Sinne angewendet". Here again we may quote the similarity in both cases to Kleist's later plays. For the young Friedrich Schlegel, the word was used to denote the cultural history of a nation, for example, Shakespeare and Cervantes were 'Romantisch', so that Kleist in his use of material from German history is Romantic. G. H. Merkel, although an opponent of Romanticism, defined it as "..... die Mittelstufe zwischen der vollen Wirklichkeit und der fabelhaften Dichtung, es ist die Wirklichkeit, poetisch behandelt, zum freien Kunstspiele des Geistes gemacht" (c.f. Nadler op. cit. p. 103). This corresponds largely to Kleist's technique in "Penthesilea" and "Homburg" and to a lesser extent in "Käthchen". How strange it is, too, that the Schlegel who wrote the following extract did not appreciate Kleist more ! "Wir bedürfen also einer durchaus nicht träumerischen sondern wachen unmittelbaren energischen und besonders einer patriotischen Poesie. Vielleicht sollte solange die Fortdauer des deutschen Namens bedroht wird, die Poesie ganz der Beredsamkeit wirken." (110) But on the other hand, definitions such as Schlegel's "Die romantische Poesie ist progressive Universalpoesie alle getrennte Gattungen der Poesie wieder zu vereinigen .." are vague in the extreme, as are many of Novalis' definitions. The Romantic insistence on giving free reign to the creative urge of each

(109) F. Schultz - "Klassik und Romantik" p. 356.

(110) Letter - An Fouqué, 1806.

author can lead almost anywhere in literature. Consequently the most we may achieve in trying to classify Kleist's plays is to draw attention to those ideas which are to be found in them and in the works of authors forming one or other of the so called Romantic groups, and then decide how significant a role they play in Kleist's dramas. The contacts of thought have already been brought out: but time and time again there are indications of Kleist's original genius. The depths of his philosophy, the earnestness of his writings in contrast to the frequent superficiality of the Romantics, the passion with which he felt his problems and poured them into the dramas, all are more important considerations than the Romantic elements. He was certainly amenable to certain Romantic ideas after consideration, but he used them essentially as ornaments and stylistic features in his works. This is to a very great extent a question of emphasis: those elements in Kleist's dramas which we have designated as "Romantic" do not constitute his principal contribution to the history of German literature and the development of the nation's thought.

CHAPTER NINE :- Conclusion.

The Romantic traits in the dramas increase in number towards the end of Kleist's life and reach their peak in "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" and "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg". It is significant, too, that during this period Kleist's metaphysical doubts and questionings have come to rest. The most one can say in the absence of direct proof is that in Romanticism Kleist discovered a solution to his problems, or at least confirmation of his own solution. Certainly he returned to the creed of a benevolent deity and was probably strengthened in his views on the reliability of "das Gefühl" by G. H. Schubert's assertion "Wir finden selten, dass der natürliche Trieb Täuschungen oder Missgriffen ausgesetzt sei, wohl aber ist dieses in gewisser Hinsicht der Wille".

This supposition begs the obvious question: would Kleist, had he lived, have drawn closer to the Romantic school? It is highly unlikely. For the school produced no dramatist of equal merit to Kleist and there was no one whom he could approach with his problems. On the other hand, Goethe rejected him. Again, the Romantics themselves as we have seen did not claim Kleist as one of themselves and there seems little prospect that they would have done so after 1811. In other aspects of his work he might have approached Romanticism. There is some talk in his last letters of writing a novel, a favourite romantic practice. Furthermore he joined them enthusiastically in the fight for freedom against Napoleon. But even in his Novellen Kleist's dramatic ability is evident and is their prime characteristic: as a dramatist Kleist was destined to be a "grosser Einsamer".

A significant point is that Kleist accepts Romantic ideas with caution. His attitude to them is one of questioning and he interprets them freely. He saw far greater implications, both tragic and conciliatory in the role of 'das Gefühl' than the Romantics, and in 'die Hermannsschlacht' he debases the idealistic Romantic yearning for freedom, so that the end justifies the means; the unethical standards

of the play are its worst feature. Similarly Romanticism posed the problem which Kleist attempted to solve in 'Guiskard' but Kleist took little notice of other Romantic attempts at the same ideal when he wrote his fragment.

To a large extent the connotations 'Classical' and 'Romantic' are misleading in their application to German literature. Unlike the trend in French literary history, Romanticism was not a revolt against the dictates of Classicism, for the Romantics were well aware in the early stages of the manifold achievements of Classicism. Goethe was the popular idol of early Romanticism (111) particularly of the Schlegels and Novalis, and Goethe himself did not disdain Romantic thought and science (despite his utterance) (112) as is shown, to take a random example, by "Die Wahlverwandschaften". In general, then, no separate definitions of Classical and Romantic are reliable and accurate: Korff's definition of the whole era as "die Goethezeit" seems to me to be preferable. Kleist was essentially a product of his age, combining both Classical and Romantic traits with a rugged individualism which prevented him from joining formally any school. He could admire both Goethe and Adam Müller. In a few short years he could pass from "Guiskard" to "Käthchen" with their staggering contrasts of form and content. Unlike the Romantics, Kleist as a writer seems to care little for 'Bildung' although as a man he sought it avidly in his early years.

In view of this, then, no attempt has been made here to offer either a delineation of Kleist's character, or a final definition of Romanticism, merely to draw connections between a highly complex individual and an equally involved literary movement.

(111) "Goethe der wahre Statthalter des poetischen Geistes auf Erden" - Novalis, Blütenstaub (Paralipomena).

(112) "Klassisch ist das Gesunde, Romantisch das Kranke."

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