

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Report

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Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given Emily Schulte final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts . We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

June 9 1910

Carl Schuler  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report  
of  
Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee  
of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying  
thesis submitted by Emily Schulte  
for the degree of Master of Arts

They approve it as a thesis meeting the require-  
ments of the Graduate School of the University of  
Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts.

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"Romantic" Motivation in the Dramas of  
Heinrich von Kleist

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the  
University of Minnesota

by

Emily Schulte

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of

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1.

### Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Kleist's use of "romantic" motivations in his dramas and to attempt to formulate some general conclusions as to Kleist's general method in their application.

The plan of this paper naturally falls into two divisions; (1) an analysis of the motivation in each play and (2) general conclusions as to Kleist's method of work.

It must be admitted, however, that Kleist's motivation is not all "romantic", for at times he uses a natural motivation and at times a mixed type. Since it is neither the purpose of this paper to cover motivations that are in the border-zone, neither clearly "romantic" nor "naturalistic", nor to discuss "romantic" and "naturalistic" motivation in Kleist, either by way of contrast or to determine which he uses most, our discussion will be limited solely to the author's use of "romantic" motivation.

There is a necessary limitation, for a survey of the whole field of Kleist's motivation would be a possibility only in a paper more than twice the length of this one and, moreover, a task of a more ambitious nature than a Masters' thesis.

The term "romantic" motivation, as used in this paper, denoted those temperamental and subjective forces of the characters, which induce them to act. In one sense, Kleist's characters are not imaginative or fantastic types and yet all of them are more or less unreal. Since it is not the intention to explain motivations that are "real", the stress will be laid upon those motivations that are exceptional because of mood or feeling.

Each character, like the prince of Homburg, takes orders "from the heart" and bases his hopes upon his "Gefühl":

"Denn etwas giebt's, das über alles Wähnen<sup>1.</sup>  
Und Wissen hoch erhaben -- das Gefühl."

The exclusive rule of temperament determines the characters' conduct towards life. Their motives and standards of conduct are to be interpreted as motives of feeling and instinct or intuition rather than reason or conscious action. Their actions are the outcome of the dictates of their "innerste Gefühl", which manifests itself in the characters' absolute surrender to their impulses, the rule of which they follow blindly.

Between what we call "romantic" and what we call "realistic" or "naturalistic" motivation, there is plainly a neutral zone, for human motives are often, indeed most often, the result of both mood and mind. But we may venture to describe the characteristic difference as consisting generally in the subjectivity, or attention to internal detail by "romantic" motivation and in the objectivity or attention to external detail by "realistic" motivation. "Romantic" motivation deals with the purely temperamental, while "realistic" motivation deals with the moral or intellectual. "Romantic" natures consist predominantly<sup>of</sup> single inner motives, while "realistic" natures are conceived as consisting of varied and generally harmonious motives. Passion is the ruling force of the "romantic" nature. A law other than the character's own unfettered desire or will is not recognized. The "realistic" character acts from a combination of variable motives and at all times is subject to external restraint. "Romantic" conduct, unlike "realistic" conduct, is not the result of some definite purpose or some premeditated design. It is rather

1. Die Familie Schroffenstein, Kleist's sämtliche Werke, D.N.L., Teil 143.

the result of a spontaneity of feeling, which in its turn produces an instinctive reaction. The manner in which Penthesilea and Achilles are attracted to one another is sudden and irresistible, and supplies us with an example of that psychology which recognizes in instinct the highest law of life. In the conflict between feeling and reason which follows, Penthesilea's instinct plays the greater role and assures a victory for the natural feelings of her heart. "Romantic" conduct is based in general upon intuitive feeling, desire or similar emotions of a more or less spontaneous character. "Realistic" conduct is the result usually of the power of the intellect. "Realistic" acts may result also from feeling or impulse, but there is always present either a conscious or an unconscious analysis on the part of the character involved.

In order to place his reader in a receptive mood for his "romantic" motivation, Kleist envelops his dramas with an "atmosphere." The devices by which Kleist produces this "romantic" environment are the use of the supernatural, and the superordinary ancient times and other romantic elements as somnambulism, symbolism, passionate patriotism and so on. In order to make clear how these romantic elements give "atmosphere", it will be necessary at times to give some space to their discussion. In Das Käthchen von Heilbrunn and the comedy Amphitryon, Kleist makes use of the superordinary. On the same night, the Count and Käthchen appear to each other in a dream. At the moment when Käthchen sees the Count in her dream, he is in reality lying dangerously ill of a fever. In his dream the Count experiences the feeling of entering Käthchen's room. In the same play, Käthchen is miraculously saved from death in the burning castle by the appearance of a cherub, who is recognized as the same cherub which appeared in the visions of both the Count and Käthchen.

4.

Kleist has given to Amphitryon a decidedly supernatural atmosphere and to the figure of Jupiter a mystic tinge. Jupiter proclaims his personality by means of the thunder and lightning at his command. After he makes his announcement to Alkmene, he disappears into the clouds.

Kleist has a strong predilection for ancient settings and a love of the past. He places Penthesilea not only in a mythical country but also in a distant one. The time is that of the ancient Greeks and of the famous hero, Achilles. Die Hermannsschlacht although enacted on Roman soil is distinctly German and as in Penthesilea, the scenes reach back into the dim past. Das Käthchen von Heilbronn is, as the author says, "ein grosses, historisches Ritterschauspiel". The colorful life of the age of chivalry pervades the whole, and from amidst this medieval setting emerges the charming figure of Käthchen. Der Prinz von Homburg also depicts times which have long since passed. Unlike the other plays, however, the action takes place in Kleist's fatherland.

In Das Käthchen von Heilbronn, during the dream of the Count in which he experiences the feeling of entering Käthchen's room, the vision approaches somnambulism. In the latter part of the play, it is somnambulism on the part of Käthchen which plays a significant part in the denouement, for in this state of mind Käthchen reveals to the Count that she is the daughter of the emperor.

In Der Prinz von Homburg, somnambulism also plays a part. The Prince had retired to his own quarters, but with the opening of the play we see him in a castle-garden, sitting under a tree, half-awake, half-asleep, twining a laurel-wreath. A strange somnambulist trait has led him from the camp to the castle-garden, where he betrays his burning ambition, the winning of fame and of Natalie.

The opening of each play is a fantastic foreshadowing of the future or of the end of the play. The Prince's vision of the laurel wreath is symbolical of the end of the play, wherein the Prince is really crowned as victor.

In Die Familie Schroffenstein the romantic incident of the witch-woman in the forest and the preparation of the mystic brew from the little finger of the dead Peter adds color to the piece, and, moreover, is the romantic means Kleist uses to reveal and to disentangle the circumstances surrounding the death of Peter.

The choice of "motivations" arises from Kleist's own personality. Because he is essentially a being of moods, his character creations are also children of moods. The motives which spontaneously determined the mind and will of Kleist in the crucial points of his development are likewise the decisive motives of his principal characters. In his boyhood he was characterized by "an uncontrollable, firey spirit, yet the frankest and most industrious fellow in the world". As he grew to manhood, this firey spirit instead of becoming modified, became more exaggerated and he frequently suffered from overpowering outbursts of emotion.

Very little was known of his inner life until the correspondence with Wilhelmine was brought to light. In one of his first letters to her, we learn of his resignation as second lieutenant, which took place much against the wishes of his commanding officer. This resignation is the first instance recorded of the explosive spontaneity and willfulness, which distinguished all the important steps of his career.

The problem which Kleist develops in the Prinz vom Homburg is parallel with the problem which he faced at this time of his life. It was the problem of "self" in conflict with the demands of society. Like the Prince he chafed under objective restraint



in the form of military discipline. He had come to the conclusion that the military life would not satisfy the highest demands of his nature, and without further thought and without any apparent hesitation, he withdrew from it. Like the Prince, Kleist was subject to conflict of feeling. As Prince Friedrich in the first half of the play, proclaims the sovereignty of the "ego", so Kleist asserted the absolute supremacy of the "ego" and left the military service, because it hindered him in the attainment of his ideal of human perfection.

The Prince's desire for fame is like Kleist's own desire for fame and his immensity of ambition, which is revealed in his words to a friend: "Ich werde ihm (Goethe) den Kranz von der Stirne reiszen".

In his first letter to Wilhelmine, he discusses his aims at length. In spite of his revulsion to a conventional career, he feels that he should aim to prepare himself for one. But here again, we find the supremacy of the "ego" asserting itself. He writes that law and diplomacy are uncongenial, the former because it ignores "the rights of the heart", the latter because it pursues self-interest to the injury of righteousness. This, like Prince Friedrich and Penthesilea, he (Kleist) emphasizes in the "rights of the heart" the spontaneous inclination of his own nature.

In his letter to Wilhelmine on September 1800, he makes "Gefühl" the standard of his judgment. "Altogether, it seems to me the ceremonies suffocate sentiment. They occupy the reasoning powers (Verstand) but the heart remains dead". In the Prinz von Homburg, the Prince is at first convinced that the Elector is only displaying necessary military rigor. When the Prince is asked on what he bases his security, he replies: "Auf mein Gefühl vor ihm"<sup>1</sup>. Later in the same play, when the Elector sends his message to

1. Prinz Friedrich von Homburg, Oxford German Series; Act III, Scene 1, p.79

Homburg, he (Elector) says he would not be justified in opposing himself to the opinion of such a warrior, that he has in his "innermost being" the highest regard for Homburg's "feeling". Concerning the message, Homburg replies to Natalie, that he cannot find it in his "heart" to regard the verdict as unjust. Also, according to Colonel Kattwitz's method of reasoning, the highest law is not the written law but himself in whose heart the law must take effect. The ruler must not follow the regulations, but he is to follow his own feelings. According to Kattwitz, the Elector would be wrong in placing objective law above spontaneous feeling. According to the Elector himself, he is right in setting aside the objective law as soon as the Prince in the freedom of his "inner feeling" has sanctioned or glorified the law.

In Kleist's other works as well, "inner feeling" is his highest law. "Conscience" in his characters works through "feeling" and in surrendering to their "feelings", they believe they are obeying the highest law of nature. Käthchen gives herself up wholly to the promptings of her "Gefühl" and Penthesilea is also depicted as following the impulses of her heart.

Kleist now enters upon the crucial stage of his development. In a letter to his sister, Ulrike in the year 1800, he is unhappy in Berlin, because no one understands him. He is now chiefly concerned with his "innermost being". Unless a decided objective diversion is forced upon him, he is on the brink of a catastrophe. In the tragedy of Penthesilea, one of the speeches of the Amazon queen, when she is on the point of giving up everything, may well be cited to explain Kleist's state of mind at this time:

"Das Aeusserste, das Menschenkräfte leisten  
Hab' ich getan, Unmögliches versucht,  
Mein Alles hab' ich an den Wurf gesetzt;

Der Würfel, der entscheidet, liegt, er liegt;  
 Begreifen muss ich's - und dass ich verlor!"<sup>1</sup>

The tragedy of Penthesilea and that of Kleist lay in their inability to compromise. It is plain that Kleist has endowed Penthesilea with his own temperament. She cares for nothing, will take nothing, "Alles oder nichts", but Achilles, just as Kleist, refused to aim at anything, to be content with anything, but the highest place of honor. Her wild haste to conquer her lover corresponds to his desire to attain fame with a single aim. Penthesilea says:

"Den Ida will ich auf den Ossa wälzen  
 Und auf die Spitze ruhig bloß mich stellen"<sup>2</sup>

and to the objection of her companion that,

"Das ist das Werk der Giganten!"<sup>3</sup>

she replies in words which Kleist himself could have used for himself<sup>4</sup>

"Nun ja, nun ja: worin denn weich ich ihnen?"

Like Kleist, she can live only when she is striving after what her soul desires. She says what her author might have said:

" - - - - rasend wär' ich,  
 Das müßt ihr selbst gestehen, wenn ich im ganzen  
 Gebiet der Möglichkeit mich nicht versuchte"<sup>5</sup>

She hates Achilles as fervently as Kleist in his darkest hours must have hated the destiny which forbade him winning the highest fame. Penthesilea slays Achilles in a state of wilfulness and in an access of desperation just as Kleist destroys his beloved work, Robert Guiscard. We are better able to understand, how it was that Pfuel, Kleist's friend, found him weeping after writing the description of Penthesilea's death. Kleist wrote of the play to a friend: "It is

1. Penthesilea; Universal Bibliothek; neunter Auftritt, p.45
2. Penthesilea; Universal Bibliothek; neunter Auftritt, p.47
3. Penthesilea; Universal Bibliothek; neunter Auftritt, p.47
4. Penthesilea; Universal Bibliothek; neunter Auftritt, p.47
5. Penthesilea; Universal Bibliothek; neunter Auftritt, p.47

true; you have divined it with the grace of a seer; my innermost self is in it, my soul in its glory and anguish." In Penthesilea's death, the author must have experienced a feeling of self-pity, for as Penthesilea's soul was his soul, he realized that like her, he would be driven to seek death voluntarily.

The situation in which Kleist now (1807) finds himself, is analogous to the one in which he places the Prince of Homburg, and like the Prince, undergoes some time later a sudden but complete change of mood and feeling. From the impetuous headstrong youth, blindly devoted to the cultivation of his own "ego", without respect for the duties of a citizen and a soldier, he develops into the enthusiastic patriot, who senses deeply the humiliation of Germany by the French, after the battle of Jena. In the love of his fatherland, he loses sight of "self" and devotes his best efforts to the regeneration of his country by allying himself with a group of patriotic writers, who so incited the nation that it rose as a unit to throw off the foreign yoke. Kleist's chief contribution to this literature was the drama Die Hermannsschlacht. He possessed the same great desire and ideal which the figure of his creation, Hermann, possessed. Intense love of country and a fervent desire to accomplish the liberation of their beloved fatherland fired both Kleist and Hermann. The full-blooded hatred which Hermann felt for the Romans was the same kind of hatred which Kleist felt for the French. The deeds of treachery and acts of violence directed by Hermann against the Romans were atrocities which Kleist would have perpetrated against the French.

In yet another letter to Wilhelmine, his cry is for "Freiheit". He is determined to forget "the whole wretched sophistication" which is the cause of his "inner confusion". We encounter here the "innere Verwirrung" which throughout his dramas, where it appears as "Gefühls-Verwirrung"<sup>1</sup> in the characters, is a result of their

1. See page

tragic actions. This confusion ensues when a character permits any deliberate purpose to interfere with his spontaneous impulse.

"Freedom, a home and a wife" he now<sup>(1801)</sup> desires above all. He is filled with the desire to seek with his bride a quiet retreat in Switzerland. He hopes by solitary communion with nature to patch together the fragments of a broken life. But his plan met with opposition and the refusal of his fiancée, Wilhelmine.

Kleist had desired to be loved by Wilhelmine, as Käthchen loved the Count. The unswerving fidelity and love with which Kleist had endowed Käthchen, was his ideal of love in a woman. To represent such a loving woman as Käthchen gave him intense satisfaction; for that which he failed to find in Wilhelmine, he created in his heroine.

In one of Kleist's last letters to Wilhelmine, he speaks of a great desire and that was "to do something good". For Kleist as well as for his characters, the most immediate and imperious desires are the sole law of the being.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his whole life, Kleist fostered desires and ambitions but never attained the gratification of either. He despaired of the sufficiency of his powers and came to the conclusion that he possessed only a "half talent".

As Robert Guiscard has encountered overwhelming misfortunes on the path of victory, so Kleist felt that he had failed in his literary pursuits. Guiscard who stands erect and unflinching when a mortal pestilence is weighing upon him is none other than Kleist himself. Guiscard is the exemplification of Kleist's whole unhappy life.

The characters of Kleist are in a sense, Kleist himself. In them he found the reflection of his own nature. Their triumphs and trials are his triumphs and trials. As they struggled against

1. See Page 2.

the odds of life, so Kleist struggled. For the majority of his characters, their struggles culminated in a spiritual triumph which was denied to their author. For Kleist, broken in spirit and body put an end to his existence by committing suicide on the shore of Lake Wansee November 21, 1811.

### Chapter 1.

We are now ready to take up the plays in order; to show in the larger aspects the nature and working out of the motivations which Kleist employs. One naturally begins with the author's first play. This in many ways is typical of his method of motivating and yet shows some variations. Later, as the author grew in power of expression, we must expect to perceive an intensity of feeling together with a higher appreciation of dramatic power.

In the very beginning of the drama, Die Familie Schrockenstein, the author arouses feeling within the heart of his reader. The direct action of the play proceeds at once and the motive for the action is elucidated by the feelings of the principal characters of the piece.

Years before the beginning of the action of the drama, the last two remaining branches of a powerful and noble family had provided by solemn agreement that, in case either house remained without a direct descendant, its property was to accrue to the other. This agreement causes certain members of both houses suspect that the other house is bent upon their destruction, thus forming the motives of suspicion and anger. This family compact is not "romantic" in itself but is "romantic" in its use as a "fate"-motif and in its effect upon the feeling of the characters.<sup>1</sup> While the compact is fatal in its implications, it is not such a fate as we commonly understand by the word. It is simply the beginning of that "fatal train" of coincidents that leads to the tragic ending. ("Fate" as used in this and in other plays by Kleist will be taken up later in a separate chapter.)

1. See Page 3.

When Rupert of the house of Rassitz, finds his little son, Peter dead, he causes an oath of vengeance to be taken against the house of Warwand. This vow taken on the Holy Host excites at once in the hearers, the type of feeling that actuates the characters. The audience, in consequence, accepts the mood of the scene without analysis, just as the characters in the scene act also on the basis of pure emotionalism. It is this vow which motivates the acts which follow and culminate in the awful catastrophe.

When Rupert finds the body of his son, there is no doubt in his mind as to the person directly responsible for the crime. In Rupert's discovery of the body, there is nothing "romantic". That which is "romantic" is the excess of feeling which follows and the unreasonableness of the conclusions.

From this foregoing situation, develops the action of the play. All the incidents which follow are accidental in nature, but under the circumstances they combine to form a "chain of fate". None of the events are pre-ordained, even the compact and vow are not "fate" in that sense. The "fate" is in the mind of Kleist, and is worked out by him in a series of events, which he, as the author, preordained. The whole sequence of events is "romantic" rather than "realistic". It is true that every incident is "real" in the sense that there is a certain logic in the conclusion reached. These conclusions are "romantic", however, because they are not based upon analysis; they are based only upon what the characters "feel" they want to believe.<sup>1</sup>

Rupert's next act is to send a herald to Warwand, announcing his war of revenge upon Sylvester. The herald is attacked by the maddened crowd, and while Sylvester is in a swoon from the shock of the awful accusation, Rupert's herald is stoned to death.

1. See Page 2.



Rupert learns of the stoning of his herald, and wayfarers also bring a false report that his son, Johann has been murdered by the house of Warwand. He becomes so incensed and incited to further revenge that when his people attack Sylvester's herald, he allows him to suffer the fate of his own herald.

The Sylvester action is later in opening and is motivated less directly by the family compact. The murder of Jeronimus forms the initial impulse of Sylvester's revenge. The deed so arouses him, that he gathers his forces in order to crush Rassitz.

Thus, blinded by passion and hatred, both branches of the family of Schroffenstein forfeit the ability of judging occurrences by a higher and more just standard than that of family interests.

It is the irony of circumstance,<sup>1</sup> that Johann and Ottokar, Rupert's sons, should love Agnes, the daughter of Sylvester. Ottokar is wholly ignorant of Agnes' identity and she of his. Both have found and loved each other without the knowledge of the identity of the one they love.

It is perceived that the various events are "accidents". The characters are in a sense the football of these "accidents". These "accidents" draw the characters into an entangling web and are "romantic" in that they lend themselves to the "chain of fate".

The knowledge, which Ottokar gains from the witch-woman in the forest, forms a part of the dissolvent motivation of the action. He hastens to inform his father, that Peter was not slain, but drowned. But he deterred from giving this information, for Rupert who has heard of the existing love between Ottokar and Agnes, causes his son to be placed in a prison-hospital.

Fear for the safety of Agnes, actuates Ottokar to jump from his prison window and to go to Agnes where they had agreed to meet secretly in a hollow in the wood.

1. See Page

Up to the present time, Ottokar and Agnes have been hardly more than figures in the action surrounded by a rapidly moving chain of events. Now they are pressed into the foreground and it is they who quickly bring about the end and catastrophe of the drama.

In the hollow in the wood, the clandestine meeting- place of the two lovers, Ottokar in order to insure Agnes' security and to protect her from his father's wrath exchanges garments with her. When Rupert comes upon them, he, mistaking his son for Agnes, plunges a dagger through him. Sylvester approaching and finding Agnes in Ottokar's mantle kneeling beside the dead body, quickly arrives at the conclusion that Ottokar has killed his daughter. Thus Sylvester, owing to the awful accident of mistaken identity, gives the sword thrust of death to his own daughter.

While in Die Familie Schroffenstein, the "romantic" element is in the chain of accidents and their effect upon the emotions, Penthesilea is a play in which the motivation is in character and its "romantic" nature is determined by an entirely different source of emotionalism.

The ancient legend concerning the Amazons, a nation of female warriors, is in itself romance and in that sense "romantic". Kleist knows very well how to choose from this source the most significant motives, in order that the means and end to his purpose may be gained.

The action of the play is based upon the struggle in Penthesilea's mind between two conflicting motives; as queen of the Amazons, she must conquer her husband, as a woman she wants to be conquered by the love of Achilles.

The motivation of the action of this drama is dependent upon the character of Penthesilea herself and upon her desire for Achilles. From this longing to possess Achilles, evolve the titanic desires, ambition, passion, love and revenge of this superhuman character, which serve to bring about the solution and the catastrophe of the action

The "romantic" motivation follows from a "realistic" motive. Upon the young Amazonian queen, is placed the task of seeking a husband, which she proceeds to do according to the custom of her country. But when for the first time she looks upon the young hero she is filled by an intense longing and love for him. Out of this element of romance - love at first sight - the action of the piece is set in motion. This sudden love of Penthesilea for Achilles, which breaks forth in the midst of mortal combat, disrupts the arrangement of the queen, for instead of capturing a husband, she is seeking a lover. According to the law of the Amazons, the queen

must seek and vanquish her husband upon the field of battle, and Penthesilea's love for Achilles is in direct opposition to the holy ordinance.

It is in vain that her companion, Prothœe begs her to give up the battle and return home. Prothœe judging from the actions of the queen, quickly divines the true state of affairs and realizes that it will be impossible for Penthesilea to abide by the holy law of the race of Amazons. Here the "romantic" motivation lies in the fact that Penthesilea's feelings are not due to logical causes backed by reasons, but to the promptings of her passionate heart. She rushes madly into battle a second time, impelled by a vehement determination to possess Achilles and to see him in submission at her feet.

She is wounded by the sword of Achilles and her companions rescue her with difficulty from the hands of the Greeks. She is in reality the prisoner of Achilles, but the faithful Prothœe begs Achilles, that when the queen recovers consciousness, it shall appear that he is a prisoner of Penthesilea. Achilles, seized by love for the beautiful queen, compassionately agrees to play the role of her prisoner. For a brief space of time, Penthesilea rejoices in her victory and in Achilles' love.

The climax of the situation is reached when the Amazons are assembled to repulse the pursuing Greeks. It is at this moment that Penthesilea discovers the deception. Achilles says:

"Zwar durch die Macht der Liebe bin ich dein,  
 Und ewig diese Banden trag' ich fort;  
 Doch durch der Waffen Glück gehörst du mir;  
 Bist mir zu Füßen, Treffliche, gesunken,  
 Als wir im Kampf uns trafen, nicht ich dir." <sup>1</sup>

1. Penthesilea: Universal Bibliothek; fünfzehnter Auftritt, p.75.

The discovery of the deception motivates the ensuing actions of Penthesilea. (An analysis of Penthesilea's change of mood, resulting from this discovery is given in chapter IX.)

Achilles' love for the queen moves him to ask for a new battle in which he intends to allow Penthesilea to overcome him. That she may not defeat his design he sends to her a carefully worded message:

"Mich sendet dir Achilleus, Königin,  
 Der schilfumkränzten Nereide Sohn,  
 Und lässt durch meinen Mund dir kündigen:  
 Weil dich Gelüst' treibt, als Gefangenen ihn  
 Nach deinen Heimatsfeuren abzuführen,  
 Ihn aber auch hinwiederum Gelüst,  
 Nach seinen heimatlichen Fluren dich:  
 So fordert er zu Kampf, auf Tod und Leben,  
 Noch einmal dich ins Feld hinaus, auf dasz  
 Das Schwert, des Schicksals ehrne Zung' entscheide,  
 In der gerechten Götter Angesicht,  
 Wer würdig sei, du oder er, von beiden,  
 Den Staub nach ihrem heiligen Beschluss,  
 Zu seines Gegners Fäszten aufzulecken."<sup>1</sup>

Penthesilea regards this request with the utmost scorn. Harassed by the thought, that instead of vanquishing the beloved hero, she was overcome by him, a burning shame takes possession of her. Incited by the feeling that she must destroy, what she cannot fully and without reserve make hers, the overwhelming love turns into the most passionate hatred.

Her wild desire for vengeance springs forth from pure feeling. Her violent anger destroys her reasoning power and she becomes an

1. Penthesilea, Universal Bibliothek; zwanzigster Auftritt. page 79

irrational being. Blinded and rendered unconscious by her mad passion, she does not see that Achilles coming towards her is unarmed and defenseless. Her wild fury urges her to rush upon him. She strikes him to the ground and sets her pack of hounds upon the fallen man, who tear him to pieces, while she herself buries her teeth in the flesh of Achilles.

Then she awakens, dazed and stupified as from a dream. When she is finally aroused from her stupor, her terrible crime dawns upon her -- it is she who has murdered Achilles, the object of her love. In this act of Penthesilea, is shown clearly the "romantic" as contrasted with the "realistic". It is unusual and a rarity for the object of our affections to fall a victim to our wrath. Yet, all the love of which the Amazon queen was capable, was centered upon Achilles. Notwithstanding, he is the one to receive in the greatest degree, the vent of her wild paroxysm of insanity. She has been relentlessly impelled to kill the man she loves, for the queen of the Amazons may not know love.

As a reaction to the realization of her wicked deed, a calm resignation takes place. The solution of the catastrophe is brought about by a supreme effort on the part of Penthesilea. "Realistically", the end would have had to come about by an act of violence on the part of the queen, but "romantically" this is unnecessary, for Penthesilea is capable by the super-human control of her will and by no outside aid to join her lover in death. Penthesilea's death is consistent with her life. Her love was the very essence of her being. She had loved so intensely and sincerely that when the object of her love was destroyed, there was nothing left to live for.

Throughout the entire action, Penthesilea has been urged forward, first by a "realistic" motive and then by a "romantic" one. "Realistically", there raged within her soul, a desire which she could not renounce and for which there could be no compromise.

"Romantically", her passion drove her to an extreme state of sane, and because of the ardency of her character which knew no concession, the "romantic" motive is the one that wins in the end.

### Chapter III.

Kleist writes of Das Käthchen von Heilbronn to Henriette Hen-el Schütz: "Ich bin neugierig, was Sie zu dem Käthchen von Heilbronn sagen werde, denn das ist die Kehrseite der Penthesilea, ihr anderer Pol, ein Wesen, das ebenso mächtig ist durch gänzliche Hingebung, als jene durch Handeln."

The motivation in Penthesilea lay in the character of the Amazon queen. In Das Käthchen von Heilbronn, much more is made of the situation in order to bring about the motivation. Kleist selects a plot which he colors with the extraordinary, the supernatural and the mystic.

The dream element is the basis for the entire motivation of both Käthchen's and the Count vom Strahl's actions. The cherub which appears to Käthchen upon Sylvester night and points out to her the noble knight, also appears upon the same night to the Count vom Strahl. He is lying ill of a fever and the cherub reveals to him the girl he shall marry, in the person of the Emperor's daughter.

The fact that Käthchen believes she must belong to the man whom she has seen on her dream accounts for her strange behavior some time later when the Count vom Strahl appears in the work-shop of Käthchen's father. She falls upon her knees at his feet and cries out: "Mein hoher Herr" ! As the Count is leaving, Käthchen springs from a window thirty feet above the ground and in so doing breaks both of her legs.

From the moment Käthchen looks upon the Count, she follows her feeling blindly. It is this absolute feeling which forces her to jump from this high window in order to follow the Count. Love as



an impelling force takes as irresistible possession of her soul. It appears as a form of "fate" as a force from within, from which Käthchen can find no escape. She is carried along by a power extraneous to her. Owing to this mysterious power, she follows Count vom Strahl with unalterable tenderness in spite of his neglect and scorn and bears with the greatest of patience his most humiliating treatment of her.

If Käthchen's conduct were not motivated from a "romantic" basis, her boundless devotion would appear contemptible. Upon "romantic" grounds, however, it is expressed as something exquisitely simple and beautiful, for with the absolute trust of a child, she follows instinctively and with unquestioning and with unfaltering obedience, the promptings of an inner voice.

Count vom Strahl is influenced solely by the words of the Cherub, who said he would marry the Emperor's daughter. He becomes betrothed to the Countess Kunigunde von Thurneck, because he believes her to be the Emperor's daughter and his marriage with her will fulfill the prophecy of the cherub.

The initial impulse in the love of the Count vom Strahl for Käthchen undergoes the Feuerprobe because she can find no escape from the voice within, which urges her to carry her devotion to the Count to the extreme. She enters the flaming castle to save the portrait of the Count and is herself saved by a miracle -- the cherub of her vision appears and rescues her as the burning castle collapses. The Count recognizes the angel-like gentleness of Käthchen, and what is more significant, he feels that he loves her.

In Käthchen's somnambulistic speech beneath the elderberry bush, she discloses to Count vom Strahl that she is in reality the daughter of the emperor. She also confesses her love for the Count.

And thus the sleeping girl discloses to him that she is the bride he seeks.

The Count takes K athchen for his bride because he loves her and the loveliness of her nature impels his love. He was ever searching for the emperor's daughter and struggled against his love for K athchen, but this struggle was only part of a predestined plan and foredoomed to defeat.

#### Chapter IV.

"Wir bedürft<sup>n</sup> also einer durchaus nicht träumerischen, sondern wachen, energischen und besonders einer patriotischen Poesie"

A. W. Schlegel to Fouque (1806)

Die Hermannsschlacht is the first of Kleist's patriotic pieces. As Die Familie Schroffenstein is a tragedy of revenge so this is a drama of hate.

"Ich will die hohnische Dämonenbrut nicht lieben !

Soland sie in Germanien trotz,

Ist Hasz mein Amt und meine Tugend Rache !"

Hermann, having served as a hostage to the Romans, returns to his own land with well formulated plans for the freeing of his country. One of his first acts is to lull the Romans into a sense of security which he succeeds in doing by posing as their friend and as an enemy to the Germans. Then he invited his wife, Thusnelda to encourage the attentions of the Roman legate, Ventidius.

These acts are followed by breeding hatred into the hearts of his own people against the Romans by opening his own territory to the pillations of the hostile army. Then he incites the Roman soldiery to atrocities against his people.

These acts of Hermann, which all the world sees and believes, are "realistic" in that they are coldly logical. The acts which follow are secret, they are known by no one but himself and Marbod. They are "romantic" because they are called forth by an excess of feeling and are effective because they arouse feeling.

Hermann sends a messenger to Marbod, offering his alliance together with a plan of battle against Varus. He also makes the

agreement that if a victory is won; he (Hermann) will submit to Marbod. To prove that he does not mean treachery, he sends his two little sons together with a dagger as hostages to Marbod.

Extending throughout the entire action of the drama, is the significant Thusnelda - Ventidius episode. Pretending to love her Ventidius has asked for a lock of Thusnelda's golden hair. Later Thusnelda learns that this request was not prompted by sentiment but by base vanity. She implores her husband to abandon Ventidius to her vengeance. She promises to meet the Roman legate in the park. There instead of receiving her embraces, he receives the embraces of a wild bear placed there by Thusnelda. The wild animal falls upon the youth and tears his flesh to pieces. Over powered by the realization of her act, Thusnelda falls unconscious to the ground. Hermann returning home from his victory over Varus, rejoices over his wife's revenge: "Das ist geschehen -- lasz sein."

The basis for the action of Hermann is "realistic" but the manner in which he carries out his plans is "romantic". He is fired by the ideal of liberating his people from the oppressive yoke of the enemy. This ideal is in itself a normal and good impulse. Owing to the intensification of his desire to realize his ideal, this normal and good impulse becomes a passion, and Hermann becomes through this single passion a mono-maniac. He becomes proof against the motives of honor, chivalry, policy, humanity and every other mitigating or balancing motive. Under ordinary circumstances, the role of duplicity which Hermann is forced to play, would be extremely obnoxious to him, but for the purpose in which he is engaged, his individuality merges into a larger object for which "self" is forgotten. He becomes only one of a mass of individuals who must accomplish an allotted task.

Hermann's conduct is the result of the rule of his sole passion. The dominance of this exclusive impulse causes him to pose as

the friend of the Romans, whereas in reality, he is the most pitiless foe they can have. The unconditional, passionate devotion to his ideal takes such a violent hold upon him, that he is ready to sacrifice everyone without hesitation or the least evidence of human feeling. This is the reason he is able to incite the Roman soldiery to atrocities against his own people and also to permit them to devastate the land of the Germans. Hermann is satisfied as to the loyalty of his wife and consequently permits the "Liebeständelie" between Thusnelda and Ventidius as a means to further his own end.

The voluntary act of sending his children as hostages and his readiness to yield in self-denial to the primacy of Marbod, are acts which are animated by a noble patriotic impulse. All his other acts although having their origin in a noble purpose are motivated solely by a demoniac passion.

The motivation of the catastrophe in the Thusnelda-Ventidius action is exaggerated. Two reasons, the slight to her own feelings and the feeling that she has injured the personality of her noble husband and the resultant desire to become worthy of him again cause her to indulge in the fierce Penthesilea-like vengeance. In this deed, Thusnelda finds release from the intensity of extreme feeling.

### Chapter V.

Der Prinz von Hamburg has a different patriotic motif from Die Hermannsschlacht, which was a direction of hatred against the French. Der Prinz von Hamburg is an attempt to instil courage and patriotism by directing attention to the grandeur of Prussia at the time of the Great Elector.

The action of the piece begins with a dream of the principal character of the play, Prince Friedrich. His dream is concerned with Natalie, his beloved, who has presented him with a laurel wreath adorned with the Elector's golden chain. The Elector with Natalie coming upon the sleeping prince decides to teach him a lesson. He snatches the laurel-wreath from the Prince's hand, winds his golden chain around it and hands it to Natalie. The Prince in reaching for the wreath takes one of the princess' gloves with it. When he awakens he finds this glove within his hand.

For us, this event reveals the condition which gives rise to the action. Kleist allows the Prince to be the subject of somnambulism in order to carry out successfully the romantic motives for the behavior of the Prince. In a somnambulist state, he has dreamed of victory and sees the laurel-wreath placed upon his brow. The discovery of Natalie's glove in his hand upon awaking, and the jests of his friends, serve only to lend reality to his dream and put his thoughts into such confusion, that he is no longer able to distinguish between the actual facts and the figment of his own overwrought imagination.

Since we now realize the existing state of mind of the Prince, it is not difficult to understand the succeeding action of this vis-

ionary officer whose entire course of action is the result of his emotions which render him irresponsible.

It is clearly the emotion love which is the underlying motive for the action of the Prince which follow. Here Kleist spares no effort to sufficiently motivate the Prince's guilty act. He does not really hear the orders of the general at the meeting, because at the critical moment, he was lost in a trance-like dream of his lady-love, although apparently awake and attentive. At the distribution of orders for the battle, he is more interested in the search for Natalie's glove than in the instructions of his superior officers.

Although, the orders are again repeated to him upon the battle field, he becomes forgetful of his duty because he is carried away by the vision of the ideals which fill his heart, the laurel-wreath of fame; the favor of his lord, the Elector; and the love of the Princess Natalie.

Love which has hitherto determined his choice of action now determines his will to rush impetuously into battle, heedless of all else except to win the wreath of Natalie and thus it is love which brings about his crime of military disobedience.

The action of the Prince thus far, up to his military triumph, has resulted from his love for Natalie. Upon this love is based the motive for his dream vision in the castle-garden. But progressing from this point, the motivation is found within the character of the Prince himself.

The death sentence of the Elector is the means through which the young Prince is awakened from his dream of love into a reality. We cannot believe that he must die in the bloom of youth, in the pride of victory, won indeed by an error, but nevertheless won by him. When at length he is convinced of the inflexible determination of the Elector, he shrinks and trembles. Here Kleist makes his hero go to

the extreme of passionate emotion. The same man who with recess bravery had plunged into the thick of battle loses all self-respect and self-control at the thought of the grave.

Having arrived at the climax of the play, we come face to face with a most unconventional hero whose present predicament is in every sense unusual. With glory and fame within his grasp, he finds himself disgraced, his life a complete failure and no apparent chance of redeeming himself. When he beholds his grave open for him, the sudden certainty of his horrible death completely unmans him. His object terror of death is "realistic" but his aversion to death is truly "romantic", for we must not lose sight of the fact that he would have faced death bravely, if it had come to him in the conventional form of a soldier's death upon the battle-field.

Kleist now undertakes to portray for us the conflict between legalism and emotionalism. Because the Prince believes that the Elector is going to sacrifice him for reasons of state, he believes himself to be lost. Since his character is founded upon impulse and passion, it is easily shaken and much more easily destroyed, leaving only the primary instinct of self-preservation, which is a "realistic" instinct. That his actions should be subject to rigid military discipline is at first incomprehensible to the Prince. The "romantic" lies in the higher emotionalism which comes from this conflict, an emotionalism which results in an unselfish cause, love for country, which is the noblest motive of all.

The Elector's letter is the instrument of the prince's regeneration, for it summons him to decide his own fate. The impart of the pardon is: "If a wrong has been done you, you will need only to say so and your sword will be returned."<sup>1</sup> Since these words make

1. Prinz Friedrich von Homburg, Oxford German Series; Act IV.

Scene V., page 109.



the Prince the master of his own destiny, he regains his moral equilibrium and has a clear vision of his duty to himself and to the state. Heretofore, his actions have been guided and ruled by the most selfish of motives, but now in his realization of a higher and nobler purpose, he completely forgets "self", for he admits that he is in the wrong and refuses to write the decisive word.

This splendid heroism and high sense of honor which prompt him to reject the pardon and declare: "Ich will das heilige Gesetz des Krieges, das ich verletzt' im Angesicht des Heeres, durch einen freien Tod verherrlichen"<sup>1</sup> is arrived at through a mixture of "romantic" and "realistic" motivation. The Prince "romantically" accepts his death sentence because of a super-emotionalism motivated by love of country. "Realistically", he accepts his fate as just and necessary to the general good because through the working of conscious impulses, he comes to the realization that he must be subject to objective restraint and cannot oppose the military law. When he reaches his decision, he has succeeded in fulfilling the will of the veteran chief and is now worthy of pardon.

## Chapter VI.

Amphityron is relatively unimportant for the purpose of this paper since it is not entirely original but an adaptation. However, that which appealed to Kleist was its "romantic" flavor, to which he made original additions.

Kleist used as a romantic basis for this play, Moliere's comedy by the same name. The play is thoroughly romantic from its source to the very end. Moliere received the inspiration for the plot from the Greek myths and from this frequently used material, he conceived the idea of forming a merry comedy.

The father of the gods, Jupiter, is given two motives for his assuming the identity of the Theban general, Amphitryon. The mortal in the god longs for human love, and because Jupiter wishes to enjoy the love of Alkmene, he takes on the form of Amphitryon, her husband. Jupiter is given further motive for his act by the fact that he desires to teach Alkmene a lesson, because in her great love for her husband, she has been neglecting her duties towards the gods.

For the reason that, "der Olymp ist öde ohne Liebe," Jupiter descends to earth, but by his mortal desire, he so complicates the affairs of man that the comedy comes very near being a tragedy. Alkmene is completely deceived into believing Jupiter is her husband. When the real Amphityron only an hour or two after the false one has left her, appears and emphatically protests that he has not been there previously, Alkmene finds herself in a most peculiar situation. Her trust and confidence have been rudely shaken, and she feels that since she does not know who is the right man, she must act as if Neither one were. Alkmene knows Amphityron is not capable of deceit.

yet she is led to mistrust her "innerste Gefühl".

An air of deep mystery surrounds all. Amphityron finds his position as a loving husband usurped by whom he knows not. Furthermore, his very thoughts and plans are stolen out of his head and he begins to doubt his own identity. To complicate matters and deepen the mystery, Mercury has assumed the identity of Sasias, Amphityron's servant. Since neither his wife nor his trusted servant believe in him Amphityron is beside himself and in a "Verwirrung".

In the action of the drama, Kleist has succeeded in combining the sublime with the ridiculous, and in this manner has given the atmosphere of the piece an element of the super-ordinary and to the person of Jupiter a mystic tinge. When affairs to the eyes of men appear to be hopelessly entangled and just at the moment when everything and everyone is in a most confused state of mind, Jupiter proclaims himself as such by means of the thunder and lightning at his command. After he announces to Alkmene: "Dir wird ein Sohn geboren werden, dessen Name Herkules", he disappears into the clouds.

Love as the correct motive in this romantic plot succeeds in bringing about the happy ending of the comedy. The emotion of love is the only motive for the entire action. In the first place it is love which determines the actions of Jupiter and thus starts the entangling of events. Again, it is love which causes the conflict in in both Alkmene's and Amphityron's minds.

## Chapter VII.

Der Zerbrochene Krug, like Amphitryon, is unimportant for the purpose of this paper, and is the least romantic of any of Kleist's plays.

In this Lustspiel, the element of comedy emanates both from the characters and from the situation. The situation is responsible for the comical actions of the figures of the piece which serve to bring about the desired effect - a comedy. The grounds for the action of this play are concerned with a most inconsequential and realistic cause, -- a broken vase belonging to Frau Marthe. This mere incident of a broken vase serves to disturb the peace of a village and threatens the happiness of two lovers, Eve and Ruprecht. That such a trivial incident should so disrupt affairs is certainly "romantic" in contrast to "realistic".

The trial reveals the fact that Eve has two lovers, one of whom is no other than the village judge himself and the other one whom we know, Ruprecht.

From the beginning, it is quite evident that Adam himself is the culprit in the case at trial. The comic effects of this arch rascal to squirm out of the inevitable discovery which only serve to make his guilt the more certain.

The mystery is solved by the discovery of Adam's wig which has been left accidentally hanging upon a bush in Frau Marthe's yard. With this discovery, the situation is cleared and the motive for the broken vase is forthcoming in the revelation of the fact that Adam had made an attempt against the honor of Eve and in his flight had rushed against the vase causing it to fall and be broken.

It has already been mentioned that the action of the piece is dependant upon the most inconsequential and homeliest of motives yet so absurd as to make it appear extraordinary, hence "romantic". Since we are concerned with a comedy, fun of course is the primary motif. From the efforts of the scoundrel, Adam, to transfer his guilt from first one person and then another and thus to clear himself, arises the humor of the situation. The more earnestly he endeavors to convict someone of the deed, the closer he draws the skein of guilt about himself, until finally, finding himself in a precarious situation and in order to escape the consequences, he makes use of a sudden departure.

## Chapter VIII.

"Fate" in Kleist's Dramas.

It may be well before proceeding farther, to explain how Kleist makes use of the "fate" motif in his dramas.

"Fate" may have two aspects in accordance with the type of drama in which it operates. In that class of dramas in which the chief matter of interest is in the external action or story as in the plays of Werner, Müllner, Houwald and Grillparzer -- "fate" is the collective name for something that is external, something that comes into existence, operates and brings on the catastrophe without the victim's fault, knowledge or consent, like a decree of God, a curse and the like.

The psychological drama, on the other hand, the type of play which Kleist prefers, embraces all the internal psychological forces, that is all the forces guiding and controlling the minds of men. Now, external fate always appears in the guise of extraneous violence opposing and thwarting the wills and purpose of men, whereas psychological fate, being a very part of the will, is the innermost essence of personality.

"Fate" as portrayed in Z. Werner's Der vierundzwanzigste Februar contains the idea of some dark impending destiny, which has long been predetermined, long announced imperfectly and secretly dreaded. In the accomplishment of this type of "fate", (i.e., destiny or predestination) the chief persons are under a "Fluch" which is the demoniac power dominating the course of events. Grillparzer's Die Ahnfrau is the exemplification of a "fate" under which the chief persons of the drama suffer miseries, for which their own personal

offences have not been sufficient to furnish any due causes. "Fate" as used in these plays is something implied in external events and circumstances. A predominating darkness of Destiny hangs distinctly and visibly over everything.

"Fate" as used in this latter sense cannot be applied to the dramas of Kleist -- not even to Die Familie Schroffenstein, which has more of a fatalistic tinge than any of his other pieces. In this play there is nothing preordained. The extinction of the race of Schroffenstein is not foreseen destruction to be contended against and to be averted. The characters, unlike those of Die Ahnfrau, are not ruled by fate and do not maintain a desperate meekness and a terrible resignation in the conflict with it.

The fundamental idea in Die Familie Schroffenstein is a settled disposition of distrust between the two houses which grows until it becomes an obsession with a satantic intent, drawing the venom of murderous hatred, from every happening no matter how harmless and endowing every action of the supposed enemy, no matter how guiltless, with an evil design. The obsession of hatred and distrust prepared a state of mind for the Schroffensteiner which makes it easy for them to draw rash conclusions; in their madness they are always ready to believe the worst.

The finding of the two men of Sylvester's service by the body of the dead child is a mere accident. The confusion of one on the dying men consists only of one word: "Sylvester". The disastrous cause of events which follow is due to the mistake made in the false construction put upon the tortured man's confession. The train of tragic events which succeed this confession is of a circumstantial nature and its effect resembles "fate". There is absolutely no supernatural or outside design; if there is any, it exists only in the mind of the author,

What is mistaken by uncritical critics for the "irony of fate" in this play, is in reality the "irony of circumstance." That Ottokar and Agnes should love each other without knowing each other's identity is only an accidental happening and no predetermined "fate". There is no predestined "fate", whatever, connected with it. The murder of Agnes and Ottokar by their own fathers is a tragic accident which could have been averted, whereas if "fate" had had a hand in it inadvertency could neither have been true nor possible. The dreadful catastrophe may be accounted for by the rash conclusions and lack of self-control of Rupert and Sylvester who interpret their impulse of hatred as "Rechtsgefühl", thus justifying and confirming their course of action.

In Penthesilea, the idea of "fate" if used at all may be said to be an inner psychological power. The passion which Penthesilea has conceived for Achilles is in a sense inevitable, and the ever-mastering and unfulfilled desires of this passion in the "fate" of both Achilles and Penthesilea. It is not an external fate, but the essence of their natures. It is the romantic psychological fate. According to the high priestess, who does not understand the queen, Penthesilea's self-recovery is:

"Unmöglich,

Da nichts von aussen sie, kein Schicksal, hält,  
Nichts als ihr thöricht Herz --" <sup>1.</sup>

and Prothée, Penthesilea's devoted friend, who understands the queen answers,

"Das ist ihr Schicksal !" <sup>2.</sup>

Also in Das Käthchen von Heilbronn, external fate is not the type used. The dreams of Käthchen and the Count are not sent by a

1. Penthesilea, Universal Bibliothek; Neunter Auftritt.

2. Penthesilea, Universal Bibliothek; Neunter Auftritt.



supernatural power but by Kleist. These dreams are merely placed in the play by the author for the express purpose of romantic atmosphere and a kind of foreshadowing of the glorious ending. The vision is not the motivating cause of Käthchen's love for the Count. Käthchen was not predestined to love the Count, nor the Count predestined to marry Käthchen because of the dream.

"Fate" in this play appears disguised as "love". It is a force from within from which there is no ultimate escape for the heroine. Neither cruelty nor insult can shake Käthchen in her child-like devotion. The Count, who knows that he is in no way to blame, tries every method of alienating her. Coming upon her in the stables, he thrusts her aside with his foot and more than once he threatens her with his dog-whip. Käthchen is impelled by the promptings of an inner voice and with unquestioning and unfaltering obedience to this inner voice, she follows the Count and loves him instinctively and as if under the hypnotic influence and spell of a superior personality.

If Kleist's characters contain any "fate", it is the innermost essence of their personalities and not an extraneous force. For them "Personality is Fate".

## Chapter IX.

Kleist's General Choice and Use of Motivations.

An analysis of the "romantic motivation" in the dramas of Kleist, reveals certain definite types and methods of application which he employs to secure his desired results and by means of which he succeeds in enlisting the sympathy of his audience.

Broadly speaking, Kleist effects the attainment of his end through first, motivation of character, secondly, through situation, third, through episode and finally, through the combination of character and situation.

The characters themselves are the ultimate centers of the motivation and the final object of the dramatic interest. The use of a main character as a center from whose subjectivity feeling emanates, allows the spectator an opportunity for a passionate participation in the dramatic action and of an intense self-identification with the dramatic characters.

One of the most important points which an analysis brings out, is the concentration of interest upon the main bearer or bearer of the action. The action invariable finds its source in the main personality or personalities and culminates in its effect upon them. As a result of this marked concentration upon the hero, the "Gefühl" of the character is portrayed through his actions and speech. The motive for his various and highly significant deeds is revealed by the personality of the hero himself.

In Die Hermannsschlacht, Hermann is the embodiment of a patriotism of such an absolute quality that it acts as the driving force impelling him to do the things he does.

Our leading source of interest for K<sup>ä</sup>thchen consists in the dramatic concentration upon the emotions of the heroine -- her persevering, intense, pure and inexhaustible love for the chivalrous hero of the piece.

Penthesilea has conceived quite as fatal a love for Achilles as K<sup>ä</sup>thchen has for the Count vom Strahl, and our interest is concerned here, also, in the different ways in which this love shows itself. For the heroines, to see and to love is one and the same thing, but, in the manifestation of this love, we find the difference. K<sup>ä</sup>thchen's love for the Count is of the quiescent type, while Penthesilea's love for Achilles may be termed aggressive. For both heroines, love is identical with life itself; it is the essence of their beings. For K<sup>ä</sup>thchen, it is to follow the beloved to the ends of the earth; to be more devoted to him than his dog; to go through fire and water for him. For Penthesilea, love is a vitality. With the end of her passion, life itself must cease.

Kleist centers the attention upon the Prince by his delineation of the mental process by which the Prince again becomes himself. Because of an obstinate pursuit of ambition, the Prince faces death. But not until he is on the very threshold of death, does he have a clear vision of the rights and demands of the state. When he does recognize this duty to the state, he experiences a thorough moral regeneration, and the conviction of his guilt becomes so strong, that he cannot deny it, even to save his life.

"Desire", as the chief impulse on the part of the characters explains their feelings and motivates their acts and thus forms an important relation in the psychological motivation of the drama. In Die Familie Schroffenstein, certain members are actuated by a desire for mutual destruction. Desire is the ruling idea in Penthesilea. Here it is desire as an overpowering ambition which poss-

esses Achilles and Penthesilea as a madness to their undoing. Penthesilea can only live when she is striving after what her soul desires. She says, "I should go mad if I did not attempt all that is within the bounds of possibility." This overmastering and unfulfilled desire is the fate of both Achilles and Penthesilea..

The Prince of Homburg's military disobedience is due to his desire to win Natalie, which he pursues with a somnambulistic concentration. He can win her only by distinguishing himself in an extraordinary manner, -- by a great decisive victory. For this reason, the phrase "Fanfare blassen" makes such an impression upon him that he is possessed of only one idea -- to win his laurel-wreath of fame so that he may claim Natalie.

Desire on the part of Hermann to see his country freed, becomes his motivating power and makes him do things which are contrary to his very nature.

These desires intensified become passions and the motives of the character's conduct are limited to his soul passion. The rule of an exclusive passion actuates equally both Achilles and Penthesilea but reveals its greatest richness and intensity in Penthesilea. Her love conceived as a primary passion, absorbs in a single impulse every idea, every vital motive, every sense of reality and of value and every power of being so completely, that it is identical with life itself. In language of unsurpassed splendor, she identifies her passion for Achilles with an aspiration to a supreme goal of god-like bliss shining beyond the immensity and glory of the heavens.

Die Hermannsschlacht illustrates how an originally good impulse intensified becomes a passion which leads Hermann into crime.

The passion of love in Das Käthchen von Heilbronn takes such an irresistible possession of Käthchen's soul, that she gives herself up completely to it and is ruled by this one exclusive impulse.

The characters in Die Familie Schroffenstein are in the grip of such a demoniac passion, that they become obsessed with a mad and

deadly distrust. In this frame of mind, they place the wrong construction upon every act and every happening, however harmless, trivial or indifferent is converted into evil.

This brings us to the motive power of impulsiveness within the characters, which plays such a significant part in the determination of their action. The madness of the Schroffensteiner is founded upon violent impulse. Every act is determined by the rule of impulse over the dictates of reason.

When Kätchen sees the Count for the first time, she drops everything she is carrying and falls at his feet. Presently, from her window she sees him mounting his horse to ride away. In her haste to follow him, she jumps from her window thirty feet above the ground. Six weeks later, barely recovered from her fall, she rises from her bed, collects a small bundle of belongings, and deserts her home to seek the Count and to follow him in blind devotion from place to place.

In Act I, in the Prinz von Homburg, the motive power of impulse makes the hero conduct himself as if bereft of reason and, by yielding to his impulse, he is led to make the premature attack. Like the rest of the characters, the Prince follows blindly his impulses irrespective of moral or conventional consideration. His impulse leads him to the Electress, imploring her to intercede in his behalf. Impulse is back of his willingness to even renounce Natalie if only his life may be spared. This impulsiveness, which drives the characters, becomes, in some cases, almost a will, but, unlike will in the ordinary sense, it does not come into play at the call of a carefully considered reason, but rather at the demand of a sudden and often violent impulse. Such a sudden and violent impulse leads the Prince to make the unordered attack in battle, -- an unpardonable breach of discipline and, as a consequence of which, his death sentence follows.

As an outward symbol of this highly emotional impulsiveness, we recognize the tendency to frequent and violent fluctuations of mood. This abrupt change in temperament is more strongly marked in Penthesilea than in any of the other characters. She exhibits a passion in which tenderness is combined with murderous ferocity. In one place she orders her dogs to be loosed against Achilles,

"Hetzt alle Hund' auf ihn ! mit Feuerbranden

Die Elephanten peitschet auf ihn los !

Mit Sichelwagen schmettert auf ihn ein

Und mähet seine üpp'gen Glieder ab !"<sup>1.</sup>

and immediately afterwards her mood changes to the extreme opposite. She embraces Prothoe, whom but a little while before she had repulsed and abused with immoderate violence. Upon this follow a varied series of violent fluctuations succeeding each other in abrupt and rapid sequence. After avowing her love for Achilles, she again rebounds into savage fury and accuses in extreme terms the other Amazons because they are perparing for the "Festival of the Roses". She curses the spring with its roses. Suddenly, with another abrupt rebound, she calls upon the goddess of love. Next, she succumbs to a moment of extreme lanuor. Passing quickly beyond this mood, she arrives at utter dejection. Now, she gives way to a state of feeble despair, submitting to the ministrations of the faithful Prothoe. Once more, Penthesilea arouses herself to a flight of passion in her passionate desire to possess Achilles.

There follows then, in Scenes XIV. and XV. a prolonged love idyll between the two main characters which is marked by a great variety and richness of fluctuation of happy moods. The same abandon with which she surrendered before to the fierceness and desperation of her passion, Penthesilea, deceived by the story of the two conspirators, now gives herself up to the full happiness of jubilant

1. Penthesilea, Universal Bibliothek; Scene IX.

love. Abruptly her love turns into destructive madness. In an access of desperation, she slays Achilles, the object of her love.

Kleist portrays the unfolding of complex states of passion by the use of contrast. He produces an emotional effect in the characters by showing the realities as seen thru the mind of the characters and those seen thru his emotions. The storm which breaks over Kleist's characters is due to their emphasis upon the emotional realities as opposed to the rationalistic. As a consequence of this opposition, the beginning of an inner commotion is perceptible. In no one of the characters is this revealed so well as in the Prince. The Prince's life has hitherto been a happy dream from which his death sentence suddenly awakens him into a reality. In his pride of victory in battle won by an error but, nevertheless, won by him, his death sentence is incomprehensible to him. It is difficult for him to understand how his actions should be subject to military discipline. He can only believe that the Elector is sacrificing him for reasons of state. The prince is portrayed first in heart-rendering humiliation and deepest abasement, followed by the gradual subjugation of his pride, the result of which is the finding of his better self. Ridding the prince of his arbitrary individualism and making him bow to the authority of law, is the means to his forgetting "self" for a higher purpose and placing above all else the love and honor for his country.

This conflict between the subjective and objective realities leads to a confusion of emotions within the character. This confusion may be traced to the interference of the "understanding". The prince of Homburg exhibits a confusion of subjective and objective motives in the values of his actions. The prince, on receiving the Elector's message, finds in his heart that he cannot regard the verdict as unjust. The final resolution of the prince which follows

is no objective act, but a self-recovery, involving the re-awakening of the subjective motives of an honorable self-respect. The final glorification of the prince, however, does not come about until his conflicting feelings have become harmonized. His emotional confusion makes him sink to the lowest depths of despair, but after a severe struggle, he decides he cannot regard the verdict as unjust and himself insists upon his execution.

In no one of Kleist's dramas do we find his character subject to objective restraint except in the last half of the Prinz von Homburg. The personalities which Kleist portrays are always the extreme examples of a self-absorbed disregard of reality. Spontaneous feeling is placed above objective events and, at the most, objective events are merely the outward occasions for the release of the intensification of the character's desire. The Prince of Homburg is a young man of an intense and self-absorbed disposition. During no time in his entire life, has he ever been subject to objective restraint, but in the latter half of the play, Kleist opposes the motives of self-absorbed passion to those of objective order, by placing the Prince face to fact with the necessity of choosing between the subjective and objective and in placing the objective above the subjective, the prince redeems himself and is worthy of rehabilitation.

For Käthchen, her "innersten Gefühl" is the ruling power and despite the many external oppositions to the pursuit of his desires, her love remains unchanged and at last triumphant.

Penthesilea, subject to no modification or objective restraint, converts every near obstacle into an incentive to a greater exertion of emotion. There never stirs in Penthesilea the faintest sense of objective relationship to her environment. She avows her love for Achilles, but no external consideration, no ethical motive, influences her. She sets herself in opposition to the objective order of her



state, sanctioned by the divine and public law, and pays no heed to the objective ethical bearing of her desire.

## Chapter X.

## Kleist's Use of External Motivation --Situation.

For Kleist, situation is a subordinate factor; it serves only as a means to the end, elucidation of character, and for the purpose of dramatic effect. A predominating feature is the author's use of a naturalistic situation which produces feeling and in its effect, becomes romantic. We have an instance of this in Penthesilea, wherein armed forces of young Amazonian women, led by their queen Penthesilea, appear upon the planes of Troy, at the time of the Trojan war, to capture mates for themselves. Here in the midst of mortal combat, Penthesilea is seized by an uncontrollable passion for Achilles and equally inexplicably and irresistibly is Achilles attracted to Penthesilea.

Also in Der Prinz von Homburg, the prince receives a sentence of death, for a breach of military discipline. From this situation, evolve the crucial parts of the action, which are the processes of the Prince's self-recovery and the reason for his final glorification. Kleist here opposes the motives of self-absorbed passion to those of the objective order. The prince upon hearing his death-sentence, exhibits the most abject horror, loses all self-respect, thinks of nothing but safety and asks for nothing but mercy. The wretched man has lost all power of ethical judgment and, in his confused state of mind, there is a conflict of subjective and objective motives. The Elector's message is the instrument of his regeneration. The resolution of the prince, following the receipt of this message, that he cannot regard the verdict as unjust, is no objective act, but a self-recovery involving no more than the re-awakening of the subjective motives of an honorable self-respect, which, however, promptly leads to a characteristic excess of pride, which dictates the terms

of the passage, "Silence, it is my inexorable will --- death."<sup>1.</sup> The prince has become master of himself and proposes by an exclusively self-willed act to give sanction to the law.

In Die Familie Schreffenstein, the individuals of the Passitz household take an oath of vengeance against Sylvester and swear destruction to the house of Warwand. This binding and solemn oath is taken during communion, by the bier of the murdered child. The feeling which this oath arouses within the characters is the basis for their following actions and as a consequence of it, tragic occurrences ensue.

Hermann in Die Hermannsschlacht realizes that the time of action has arrived. If he is to be the deliverer of his country, now is the time to act. There is only one way possible to accomplish this deliverance of his fatherland and that is through relentless, pitiless action. In his attitude toward the Romans, Hermann is the realist. In promoting their acts of devastation to his country, thus breaking every principle and every faith, sacrificing everything and everyone, he is conducting himself realistically. In his attitude towards Marbod, he is the romanticist. For his love of country for the success of his self-allotted task, he is willing to sacrifice his two children by sending them to Marbod as hostages. His willingness to yield to the supremacy of Marbod is the result of his individuality merged into a larger object -- welfare of his country -- for which self is forgotten for the cause in which he is engaged.

From these realistic circumstances, disastrous and even tragic results often follow. They appear most commonly as mistaken identities, deeds of treachery and hypocrisy, false inferences and so on. An illustration of mistaken identities is to be found in the comedy, Amphityron in which Jupiter, assuming the personage of Amphityron,

1. Der Prinz von Homburg, Oxford German Series; Act V, Scene V Page

And Jupiter's servant Mercury, assuming the identity of Sosias, Amphityron's servant, so complicates affairs, that, from this complication, the comic element arises.

Hermann's hypocritical act of lulling the roman legate, Ventidius into a feeling of complete security by encouraging his frivolous attentions to his wife, Thusnelda, leads to the disastrous outcome of the Thusnelda - Ventidius episode. By acts of treachery, such as allowing the Romans to enter and devastate his country, Hermann succeeds in spreading a wave of wrath on the part of the Germans against the Romans, until it sweeps over and bears away the whole structure of roman despotism.

Die Familie Schroffenstein abounds in false inferences which are brought about by accident of situation. When Johannes is seen kneeling beside Agnes with a drawn sword, Jeronimus is led to believe that he was bent upon intent to murder Agnes. Owing to similar rash and hasty conclusions, the identities of Agnes and Ottokar are mistaken which result in each father murdering his child.

Still another device employed by Kleist as motivation and for heightening the effect, is the use of contrast. In Die Familie Schroffenstein, the love scene between Agnes and Ottokar in the grotto, the secret meeting place of the two lovers, allows the spectator a dramatic pause, from which, however, he is soon aroused by the scene of murder and horror which follows.

Following the first five battle scenes in Penthesilea, the delightful "Rose-scene" is introduced in which the priestesses of Diana and the maidens wind chains of roses with which to bind the captured husbands. Then we hear again the din of the battle-field, which is immediately followed by that scene, wherein Achilles and Penthesilea are together and she tells him about her home, her people and confesses her love for him. In bold contrast to this scene of

and calm, is the one which follows Penthesilea's knowledge of the deception which has been practised against her. She is seized by a wild fury, throws herself upon her horse, and dashes off. She bends her bow "till the ends kiss", takes aim and sends an arrow straight through Achilles' neck. He falls, struggles to rise again but in vain, for Death is almost upon him. Her great love has turned into uncontrollable hatred. In place of the embrace, she urges on her dogs to tear him to pieces and following their example, sets her teeth in his flesh and bites until the blood drips from her mouth and hands. With what vividness does the bite contrast with the kiss of enrapture, which Penthesilea but a short time before had bestowed upon Achilles !

The situations in which Hermann finds himself, that allow him to give free reign to treachery and hatred exhibits him in his worst character and are foils to the scenes with Thusnelda. In these scenes he is the loving husband, flattering, caressing and teasing his "Thüschen".

Prince Friederich von Homburg is introduced to the audience in the castle-garden at Fehrbellin. He is reclining under an oak-tree half-waking, half-sleeping, binding a wreath. His acts and attitudes are those of a genuine somnambulist. In sharp contrast to this passive visionary dreamer is the impetuous active man upon the battle-field. There it is intolerable for him to wait. Giving orders for the attack before he received word from the other divisions of the army, he advances with his squadrons at the very height of the combat, thereby deciding a victory.

Later in the piece, we behold this same prince, who in battle rushed into the face of death, suddenly plunged into a cowardly fear of death brought on by the sight of men digging his grave. This cowardly lack of courage stands forth in well-defined relief against

the heroic display of bravery upon the field of battle.

When the prince first receives his death sentence, he treats the affair very lightly. He believes that the Elector is only displaying the necessary rigor. That his actions should be subject to discipline in to the prince incomprehensible. But when the Elector places his fate in his own hands and he becomes master of his own destiny, he sees clearly his duty to himself and to his state. In spite of Natalie's advice, he admits that he alone was in the wrong and refuses to write the decisive word.

### Episode.

Another feature in Kleist's scheme of motivation is the use of the episode. It is characteristic of a dramatist to select a series of connected incidents which lead to the determining crisis in the action of the play. Kleist employs either a series of connected episodes or the use of a irrelevant episode or episodes as a means to heighten the emotional intensities of his characters, to express more distinctly the trend of their nature and to elucidate the situation.

For instance, Die Familie Schroffenstein, is a drama wherein each episode in a well connected sequence, contributes something definite to the main action, but at the same time, esposes the innate characteristics of the personages concerned with that action.

In Die Hermannsschlacht, we have an instance of the irrelevant incident in the Thusnelda-Ventidius episode. The theft of a lock of Thusnelda's golden hair by Ventidius, and Thusnelda's later discovery that the hair was sent to Queen Livia as a curiosity, furnishes a motive for the direction of her subsequent action. The legate's fate is sealed by Thusnelda's state of mind, for in her excess of indignation and destatation, she lures Ventidius to the park and there allows a wild bear to kill and devour him.

In Das Käthchen von Heilbronn, Käthchen's act of entering the flaming castle to save the Count's portrait, represents her as a child of impulse, the dictates of which she follows unseveringly. She undergoes the "Feuerprobe", because the ardency of her love for the Count, urges her to do so and thus prove her love. The significance of the entire incident, lies in the revelation to the Count, of the true character of Kuniginde who urges Käthchen to enter the burning castle, and in the arousal of love within the Count for Käthchen.

### Summary.

The foregoing study of Kleist's dramas shows that they most largely romantically motivated. An analysis reveals certain definite points.. (1) The basis for the author's use of "romantic" motivation lies in his own character. The subjectivity of the author appears in the emotionalism of his characters. (2) The "romantic" motivation is secured by a special mode of procedure . The author enlists the sympathy of his audience and attains his end through (a) psychological motivation (b) external motivation which includes motivation by means of situation, episode and the combination of character and situation.

An analysis of the psychological motivation reveals the following:

- (1) The main character of the drama is the centre of feeling.
- (2) The interest is concentrated upon the bearer or bearers of the action.
- (3) There is always present in the characters a desire.
- (4) The intensification of this desire becomes a passion.
- (5) The characters are also seen to possess a strongly determined will.
- (6) The motive power of impulsiveness proceeds from the Gefühl of the hero or heroine.
- (7) As the result of this highly emotional impulsiveness, we recognize frequent and violent fluctuations of mood.
- (8) By the use of contrast, complex states of passion are unfolded.
- (9) An emotional conflict follows from the contrast between objective and subjective realities.
- (10) The characters have no sense of objective relationship to their environment.



Kleist employs external motivation only as a means to the end. But it is to be noted that from a realistic situation, he develops a romantic one. Due to these realistic circumstances, a sequence of tragic results invariably follow in the form of mistaken identities, deeds of treachery and hypocrisy, false inferences and so on.

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| 6. <u>Das Käthchen von Heilbronn</u> | (1810) |
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