UNC STUDIES IN THE GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES 35

Kleist in France

Frank C. Richardson

Kleist in France

UNC | COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

From 1949 to 2004, UNC Press and the UNC Department of Germanic & Slavic Languages and Literatures published the UNC Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures series. Monographs, anthologies, and critical editions in the series covered an array of topics including medieval and modern literature, theater, linguistics, philology, onomastics, and the history of ideas. Through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, books in the series have been reissued in new paperback and open access digital editions. For a complete list of books visit www.uncpress.org.

Kleist in France

FRANK C. RICHARDSON

UNC Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures
Number 35

Suggested citation: Richardson, Frank C. *Kleist in France*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5149/9781469658230_Richardson

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Richardson, Frank C.
Title: Kleist in France / by Frank C. Richardson.
Other titles: University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures ; no. 35.
Description: Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, [1962] Series: University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures. | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 62064205 | ISBN 978-0-8078-8035-7 (pbk: alk. paper) | ISBN 978-1-4696-5823-0 (ebook)
Subjects: Kleist, Heinrich von, 1777-1811. | Comparative literature — German and French. | Comparative literature — French and German.
Classification: LCC PD25 .N6 NO. 35 | DCC 832/ .6

"Nachruhm! Was ist das für ein
seltsames Ding, das man erst geniessen
kann, wenn man nicht mehr ist?"

Kleist, *Werke*, V, 250

PREFACE

In the literature of every country there are writers who have the reputation, particularly among their most fervent admirers, of being unexportable. Because they so bear the peculiar stamp of their own culture, because the subtleties of their language defy translation, because the responses they seek to elicit in the reader depend to such a marked degree on special historical and cultural associations, or even at the mystic level, on experiences grounded in a racial past, or simply because such writers exemplify a kind of parochialism that renders their writing either uninteresting or offensive to the outsider, they and their works are said to be beyond the understanding and appreciation of even the better educated readers of a different country or culture. Such has often been the claim, and with many of the same reasons put forth to justify it, for the works of Heinrich von Kleist.

The unqualified success of Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* among the French, a people famous neither for its low dramatic standards nor for its particular affinity for German writers, as well as the subsequent history of the favorable reception of the remainder of Kleist's work in France, should, it would seem, bring a final end to claims made by critics and scholars, especially in America and Britain, that Kleist cannot be exported, that his genius can be appreciated only in his own culture or, at best, only by the foreign scholar steeped in the study of German literature. As this study will make clear, when good translations are placed in the hands of bold, imaginative directors, Kleist's drama stands on its own. It is long since time to exhume Kleist from undergraduate German courses and to place him on the stage where the full force of his dramatic talents, the complete timeliness of his tragic view of life can be revealed to modern audiences. The French have done this. It is to be hoped that we in English-speaking countries will follow their lead.

The first version of this study, covering the years 1807-1958, was presented in 1960 to the Horace Rackham School of Graduate Studies of the University of Michigan as a doctoral dissertation under the title "The Reception of Heinrich von Kleist in France." The present study is a reworking and bringing up to date of that material based

on a study of all books, monographs, and articles published in France on Kleist, reviews and translations of his works appearing in French newspapers and journals, and, as well, where they could be found, judgements of Kleist's work by major French writers.

The present study has aimed at completeness. With the best intentions, the best bibliographical aids, and as well, the use of excellent libraries, and librarians, the attempt to track down every mention of Kleist in France over a period of 150 years is certain to remain never completely successful. It is my hope that the inevitable article or review omitted in the present study will be brought to my attention by the reader.

I wish to express my gratitude and my debt to Professors Henry W. Nordmeyer, Otto Graf, R. J. Niess, and C. L. Pott of the University of Michigan for the suggestions, criticisms, continuous help and support that have made this study possible, to Professor F. E. Coenen of the University of North Carolina for his considerate attention and excellent editorial advice, and to the Executive Board of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan, for the grant of funds for the publication of this study. I wish also to acknowledge my debt to the library of the University of Michigan, with special thanks to Anthos Hungerford, to the libraries of the University of California and Stanford University, to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and to the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Roger Ayrault's survey of Kleist criticism, *La Légende de Henri de Kleist* (Paris, 1934), was published as a comprehensive study of all worthwhile Kleist criticism appearing between 1821 and 1931. The important qualitative reservation placed by Ayrault on his study resulted in his excluding from consideration the contributions of all but two French critics, Roger Bonafous and I. Rouge. Though his study is an admirable survey of a century of Kleist criticism, especially in so far as it illustrated the changing views in regard to Kleist and his works formulated over these years, neither its claim to completeness, nor its overlooking, and therein its implicit judgment of French Kleist criticism can go unchallenged.

Aside from questions of completeness and fairness, however, the fate alone of Kleist's works in France in the quarter century since Ayrault's study, in particular the surprising growth and independence of Kleist criticism among Ayrault's own countrymen, make a survey and a re-evaluation of French Kleist criticism necessary and timely.

Ayrault's essay aimed essentially at the dispelling of 'legends,' and the substitution in their place of a real, lasting, coherent interpretation of Kleist and his work, an interpretation then given by Ayrault in his subsequent, exhaustive study *Heinrich von Kleist* (Paris, 1934).

The aim of the present study, in contrast to Ayrault's, could rather be described as the recording of legends, if such is the term properly applied to the changing interpretations given by critics of different generations to the works of the same author. In this light, the work of Ayrault, with its real, lasting, coherent interpretation, will be recorded as one more addition to the Kleist legend.

Though the following study does not claim to exemplify the strict impassivity of the scientific recorder of opinions – such an attitude being, in regard to views on Kleist, impossible to maintain – it does attempt to present widely divergent, even mutually exclusive opinions in such a way as to give an overall view of the climate of Kleist criticism in France over a given period. It does not, despite severe temptations, dwell on the extent to which a particular critic or even a generation of critics, according to my own critical bias,

misunderstood and distorted the heart of Kleist's work. When such personal critical bias is impossible to withhold, however, I have for the most part relegated it to the unassuming position of a footnote, or simply limited myself to reminding the reader of the existence of other, perhaps better founded interpretations.

Since this study, unlike the usual history of the critical reception of an author, deals only with the fate of a writer in a foreign country, it might be well, by way of introduction to the study proper, to consider briefly some of the principal factors influencing the success of a writer's work beyond the linguistic and cultural area of its origin.

A first such factor, implicit in the very expression foreign writer, lies in the availability and quality of the translations of his works. Kleist, at least in the last quarter century, has been fortunate in this respect. All but two of his major works have been translated. His first play, *Die Schroffenstein*, has not, to my knowledge, appeared in French while *Amphitryon* has only been translated in part. With these exceptions, however, all of his plays and Novellen, and certain of his essays, have been translated, in several instances by noted contemporary poets and playwrights (e.g., Adamov and Gracq). These translations are listed by date of publication in the index.

The question of the quality of the translations posed a difficult problem. As one whose native language is neither French nor German, I felt it somewhat presumptuous to pass judgment on the specific merits of a French translation of a German work. Except in a few instances, then, I have limited myself to the reporting of the judgments of French critics, where available, or have simply reported significant alterations made by the translator in the complete text.

A second element influencing a writer's reception abroad is the much debated factor of his supposed exportability. In the case of Kleist, the argument against such exportability, constantly strengthened over the years by critics and scholars, has, I would hope, been dealt a death blow by the spectacular success of his work in France. A country has a right to its own writers only in a sense that a family has a right to its own skeletons. It is one of the purposes of the present study to show that the works of Kleist have not only been received by the French but have, as well, been understood and independently, and brilliantly interpreted by them.

A third factor influencing the fate of a writer's work in another country may be found in the changing political and cultural relations existing between the countries concerned, in this instance, those between France and Germany. As the study will reveal, this has not been a significant factor affecting Kleist's reception by the French. Kleist's work did not benefit from what might be termed the two great waves of German influence in France, namely the vogue of

German literature among the romantics, and the germanophilia of Taine, Renan, and the realists. With a few minor exceptions, the political roles played by Germany and France vis-à-vis one another in 1871, in 1914, and in 1940 had no adverse effect on Kleist's critics. Kleist was, in fact, one of the first German authors (along with Schiller and Büchner) to be played in the still sensitive years after World War II, attesting both to Kleist's lack of a specifically German stamp as well as to the respect the French hold for good theater regardless of its national origins.

The remaining two factors, closely linked, far more subtle and fascinating to assess, bring the student of comparative literature to the real heart of his discipline and, as well, into the realm of the history of ideas. The success of a writer abroad is linked inescapably to his usefulness, the extent to which he is, in a sense, needed in another country – a use or need determined, in turn, by the extent to which his work fits into the artistic and intellectual currents coming to fore in a country at a given time.

Even the most cursory glance at the history of literature shows that a literary movement, as well as an age, finds the writers it needs, or, rather, perhaps more perversely, finds in the works of a writer what it needs to illustrate its own theories and concepts. In the beginning stages of any movement, in times of crisis, in times of cries of a need for change or rebirth or revitalization, the search for models in other countries, other literatures, other ages, becomes of prime importance.

The extent, then, to which the works of Kleist have fitted into the changing artistic and intellectual currents in France, the extent, as well, to which the interpretations given his work have then been influenced by these same currents, forms a proper and vital part of any study of the reception of his works. It is this concept that forms the basis in this study for the division of Kleist's reception in France into distinct stages.

A final factor in the success of a writer in another country that ought in honesty to be added here, though it is neither assessable nor usually even admissible in studies in the history of literature, is the simple factor of chance. The thought that Heine's failure to persuade Dumas to produce Kleist's *Käthchen* in Paris in 1834 was due, in the last analysis, either to one of Heine's bouts of sickness, or to the fact that Dumas read the play after an unusually poor dinner; the equally disturbing thought that a prior movie contract might have prevented Gerard Philipe from taking the lead role in the 1951 Vilar production of Kleist's *Prinz* – to mention only two important events in the history of Kleist's reception in France – causes the literary historian who reconstructs the past on the theory that overriding ideas ultimately shaped the events he has analysed,

to view his entire work with a certain measure of humility. It is, then, with this last thought somewhere in the back of the mind that I would ask the reader to approach the following study.

F. C. RICHARDSON
Flint College
University of Michigan

December, 1961

PART ONE

THE FIRST STAGE, 1807-1869

CHAPTER I

KLEIST AND THE FRENCH

To the French reader of 1811 who considered himself well informed on the subject of German literature the name von Kleist would certainly have brought to mind the figure of Ewald von Kleist, the Prussian officer, author of the fragmentary poem *Der Frühling*, who died a hero on the battlefield of the Seven Years' War. The existence of a distant nephew of the famous soldier-poet, a nephew who also enjoyed some small literary renown in German-speaking lands would have been unknown to him. Yet the name von Kleist, this time Heinrich, was soon to make itself known to this French reader, and to make itself known in a sudden and spectacular manner, by an event that took place in November, 1811, on the Wannsee near Berlin.

Though France knew virtually nothing of Heinrich von Kleist on the eve of this event, the reverse was not true. Possessing a thorough knowledge of the language, Kleist had read widely in French literature, especially in Rousseau and in the dramatists of the seventeenth century. In addition, as a student of mathematics and physics, he was well aware of the contributions made by French scientists and scholars in the field of the Natural Sciences. Whatever reputation he later earned in his efforts to kindle opposition to Napoleonic France, Kleist's admiration for the achievements of the French in the arts and sciences can not be questioned. Kleist's contact with French culture can only be viewed, then, as happy. His personal contacts with France and the French, however, were little short of disastrous.

Kleist first came to Paris in the summer of 1801, his stated purpose being to spend at least one full year in this 'Schule der Mond' in order to further his scientific studies. Provided with letters of introduction to influential Germans residing in Paris, among them Wilhelm von Humboldt, Kleist quickly gained access to the circles of noted French scholars and scientists working in the natural sciences. He attended as well some of their lectures, though, in view of subsequent events, probably more out of a sense of duty than out of real enthusiasm.[1]

Kleist's first impression of Paris and the Parisians was almost wholly negative. Arriving just as the Bastille Day celebrations were beginning, the fervent admirer of Rousseau was shocked and repulsed

by the immoral, unrestrained nature of the festivities. What he witnessed struck him as a complete desecration of the ideals behind the revolution. "Rousseau ist immer das vierte Wort der Franzosen," he wrote in a letter of July 18th, "und wie würde er sich schämen, wenn man ihm sagte, dass dies sein Werk sei."[2]

In fairness both to Kleist and to Paris, however, one ought to remember that Kleist's trip to Paris, more a flight than a trip with a positive goal, was made during a period of intense searching for a purpose in life, a period of torment and indecision that soon saw Kleist reject completely the useless study of the sciences, the ostensible purpose of his trip to Paris, in order to devote himself to writing, a period aggravated, as well, by guilt feelings in regard to his fiancée, with whom he finally broke off all relations some months later. Kleist's mood of inner discontent is reflected in his immediate condemnation of what he calls in the letter of July 18th, "das stolze, ungezügelte, ungeheure Paris."

His negative views on France and the French were even more pronounced a month later. In a letter of August 16th he dwells at length on the absolute artificiality of this "matte, fade, stinkende Stadt," the coldness of its people, its inhumanity, its frantic pleasures, the exclusive stress of its inhabitants on superficial brilliance at the expense of depth and content, on wit rather than on seriousness, on the sensual rather than on the spiritual.[3] Kleist left Paris in November, some four months after his arrival, headed for Switzerland, with the idea in mind of becoming a simple farmer.

Kleist's second visit to Paris, the full details of which are still clouded in mystery, was made in even unhappier circumstances during October of 1803. In despair of ever completing his tragedy *Robert Guiscard* and after a severe quarrel with his close friend and travelling companion, Ernst von Pfuel, he burned all of his work and left to seek death as a participant in the planned invasion of England by the French. While Pfuel and other companions were searching the Paris morgues for his body, Kleist was intercepted in his planned adventure, returned to Paris, and then to Mainz, where he suffered a complete nervous and physical collapse.

Kleist's final visit to French soil, if it can be so termed, took place in 1807 while serving an eight month term as a prisoner-of-war, first at Fort-de-Joux, later at Châlons-sur-Marne.

Kleist's direct contact with France and the French can not be described as happy. While in Paris he made no attempt to take part in the literary activities of the capital nor, apparently, did he attempt to meet any of the leading writers or critics of the day. Thus his visits to France did not result in any contacts that might have made his name known then or later in French literary circles.

The news, then, reported by the Paris newspaper, *Le Moniteur*, of

the extraordinary murder and suicide, or double suicide, of the German poet Heinrich von Kleist and Henriette Vogel on the Wannsee near Berlin was the first report that even moderately well-informed French readers received concerning the existence of another von Kleist.

The special nature of this first contact with French opinion is important. To a striking degree it seems to have set the direction French critical and popular opinion was to take and to maintain toward Kleist and his works even until the present day. The French first became aware of Kleist, the individual, the tormented author of a murder and of a suicide. Later, but in this same context of abnormality, they came to learn something of this strange figure, came to regard him as an author of violent tales and tragedies as well as of violent acts. Despite the fluctuating popularity of the psychoanalytical approach to literature – before or after the word – there seem to have been very few genuine attempts on the part of French critics to study Kleist's work in any other manner than by way of his personality. This has been the case despite the fact that of the world's major writers, Kleist remains one of those about whose intimate life the least is known. The real legend of Kleist began for the French with the news of his spectacular suicide in 1811. From this date he will always be judged in varying degrees as unbalanced, and his work interpreted as that of a sick person.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST NOTICES

Though Kleist's name achieved some notoriety in 1811, his work prior to this time had not gone completely unrecorded by the official literary organs. Though it can not be said that any serious attention was directed to his literary efforts, the publication of *Amphitryon* in 1807 and the production of his *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* in Vienna in 1810 were reported in the French press.[1]

The sarcastic tone of the report on *Amphitryon* appearing in the *Journal de Paris* can be understood in the light of the violent controversy aroused that same year by the publication of A. W. Schlegel's *Comparaison entre la Phèdre de Racine et celle d'Euripide.* This essay, written in French and published in Paris, was interpreted not only as an attack against Racine's *Phèdre* but an attack as well against the entire French classic theatre. Claiming Racine's version to be inferior morally, poetically, and technically to that of Euripides, it created on its publication in Paris 'un succès de scandale' and resulted in one of the first real skirmishes between French classicism and German romanticism.[2] Kleist's translation of a Molière classic at this time, recalling, moreover, Schiller's translation of Racine's *Phèdre* a few years earlier, was certain to be attacked. The *Journal*, for one, had had enough of German "meddling" in the French classic theatre. Its notice was as follows:

> Un poète allemand, nommé M. de Kleist, a fait imprimer à Dresde un *Amphytrion* [!] qu'il veut bien donner comme une imitation de la pièce de Molière, qui porte le même nom. Un journaliste du même pays, moins modeste ou plus hardi que l'imitateur, croit que cette pièce est aussi supérieure à celle de Molière, que la nation allemande est supérieure à la nation française dans tous les genres dramatiques. Voilà qui est clair et net. On savoit déjà que la *Phèdre* de Racine n'étoit qu'une misérable production en comparaison d'une *Phèdre* allemande, qui parut à Berlin, il y a deux ans. On sait encore, à n'en pouvoir douter, que Schiller a montré plus de talent à lui tout seul que Molière, Regnard, Corneille, Racine et Voltaire. On sait, enfin, que le théâtre français n'est ni aimé, ni estimé en

> Europe; et qu'on joue sur tous les théâtres du monde les chefs-d'œuvre de Brandes, d'Unzer, de Bertuch, de Lessing, de Grossmans, d'Engel, et de M. Kleist. Cela est connu et doit pour toujours fermer la bouche aux amateurs, partisans ou enthousiastes de la littérature française.[3]

The following brief notice of the performance of Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* in Vienna appeared in the Paris newspaper *Le Moniteur universel* on May 2, 1810. The article was datelined Vienna, April 17. "Depuis deux mois on y a représenté beaucoup de nouvelles pièces, dont quelques-unes cependant, telles que Catherine de Heilbronn par Kleist; Rochus-Pombernikel, la Famille Pombernikel, etc., sont au-dessous de toute critique, quoiqu'elles attirent chaque fois un nombre immense de spectateurs."[4] The *Moniteur* had reprinted this information from another Paris daily, the *Courrier de l'Europe*, which had essentially the same article on April 30.

Neither of these brief reports indicates a direct acquaintance with or even a genuine interest in the work mentioned. It was not until the publication of Kleist's collected works in Germany in 1826 that such direct contact would be revealed.

Meanwhile the report of Kleist's suicide reached the official Paris news organs in December of 1811. The *Journal de Paris* reported his death on December 9 in a brief notice datelined Berlin, November 29.[5] A considerably longer report appeared in the same newspaper on December 18 and was copied by *Le Moniteur* (December 18), the *Gazette de France* (December 19) and the *London Times* (December 28).[6] This notice reported in some detail the events of the double suicide, very sharply criticized Peguilhen, the friend and testator of Kleist, for publishing a defense of an act of such madness, and in general deplored the fact that the censors allowed a report to be published in which suicide and murder were represented as sublime acts.

The *Journal de Paris*, evidently following its own suggestion that a veil of silence be drawn over the whole regrettable affair, refused to publish a letter of protest from a French acquaintance of Henriette Vogel which defended Vogel and censured Kleist severely.[7]

Kleist's death brought him his first widespread notice in France. It brought about as well his first 'influence.'

Little more than a month after the report of Kleist's suicide, Mme de Staël was at work on her *Réflexions sur le suicide*. "Je commence à m'accoutumer à ne pas vivre, c'est un état tout comme un autre," she wrote to Benjamin Constant in January 1812, "J'écris à propos de l'incroyable suicide de Berlin des réflexions contre le suicide."[8]

This short work, published in Stockholm in 1813 as *Réflexions sur le suicide*, appeared in France in 1820 in the third volume of Staël's

Oeuvres complètes along with the earlier *De l'Influence des passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations*. In the earlier work Staël had included an apology for suicide. She uses the *Réflexions* to recant.

In this essay of scarcely seventy pages, Mme de Staël devotes in Part Three some seven pages to what she terms a recent event in Berlin, illustrating the peculiar exaltation to which the Germans are susceptible.[9] A note on the same page gives a brief account of the double suicide of a "M. de K★★★ et madame de V★★★," Kleist being identified simply as a commendable poet and officer.

As interesting as the genesis of this work may be,[10] it would deserve no more than the briefest mention if, in her reflections on this 'demented act,' Mme de Staël did not expose more far-reaching judgments on Kleist and his work than an abstract consideration of the implications of his suicide would call for.

There does not seem to be any evidence that Mme de Staël knew Kleist personally or even that she had any first-hand knowledge of his works, though the latter was certainly possible.[11] There can be little doubt, however, that she knew of him as a writer and, as well, as the editor along with Adam Müller of the Journal *Phöbus*, to which she contributed in June of 1808. She did not, as is often pointed out, mention him in her book *De l'Allemagne*, a work which, ironically, Kleist himself in his review of it had said presented "jedes Talent vom ersten Range, ... alles Gute und Vortreffliche, das in der Anlage der Nation vorhanden sein mag."[12]

From her comments in the *Réflexions* it is apparent that Mme de Staël had some notion of the general nature of Kleist's writings, at least enough to hold an opinion of him as a writer, the severity of which stands out clearly in the following comments. "Cet homme... n'a-t-il pas l'air d'un auteur sans génie qui veut produire avec une catastrophe véritable les effets auxquels il ne peut atteindre en poésie?"[13] She then continues with an explanation of true genius, apparently in contrast to Kleist's genius. This true genius, she writes, is not marked by oddness or strangeness but by an ability to experience more deeply and with greater energy what the great mass of people experience. The true genius does not lose contact with the community of experiences all men share. Such is not the case, however, with those whose minds are overexcited, whose imaginations are overworked. Such writers, in their zeal to attract public attention, go so far as to claim that they have discovered new regions of the human heart. They even imagine that what is revolting to most men is higher and nobler than those sentiments we find moving and captivating. Such is the vanity, Staël reminds, of all those who would lead us away from the normal and the human (354).

Though Staël does not expressly say so, it is difficult to interpret

these remarks as anything but comments on – if not Kleist's work itself – then on a kind of literature which she must have felt Kleist's work represented.

Again in the following remark Staël seems to forecast the adverse criticism that was later to meet *Käthchen, Schroffenstein, Kohlhaas,* and *Penthesilea.* Speaking of true genius, she writes that it will create works of art the effect of which will be to bring out in the reader the best that is hidden in his heart. "Les belles âmes, par leurs écrits ou par leurs actions, dispersent quelquefois les cendres qui couvroient le feu sacré. Mais créer pour ainsi dire un nouveau monde dans lequel la vertu fasse abandonner ses devoirs; la religion, se révolter contre l'autorité divine; l'amour, immoler ce qu'on aime: c'est le triste résultat de quelques sentimens sans harmonie, de quelques facultés sans force et d'un besoin de célébrité auquel les dons de la nature ne se prêtoient pas" (354).

Thus the charges, often repeated by later French critics in regard to Kleist or to his works, for example, that he purposely sought abnormal themes in order to shock, that he strayed outside the human, that he himself was lacking harmony, that his works were the expression of this lack of harmony, that he relied too heavily on bizarre effects, that he tried to pass off essentially revolting emotions or drives as in some way representing unexplored, deeper, and truer parts of the human heart – these charges are already made either directly or by implication in Staël's *Réflexions.*

If it is true that in her book on Germany Mme de Staël selected for praise principally those works which she felt could serve as inspiration for a new French literature, it is not surprising that she came, as is always claimed, to 'overlook' Kleist.

Yet Kleist, or figures like Kleist, represented an even greater danger to Mme de Staël. It was not enough that he violated her essentially eighteenth-century rationalistic outlook on life and art, he represented as well, by his extremes, a threat to her much cherished defense of 'enthousiasme' in literature. Kleist's excesses, both personal and literary, could serve as strong proof for the enemies of greater freedom and lyricism in literature that 'enthousiasme' meant the abdication of reason. "Et quel avantage de tels égaremens ne donnent-ils pas à ceux qui considèrent l'enthousiasme comme un mal? ... Le véritable enthousiasme doit faire partie de la raison, parce qu'il est la chaleur qui la développe.... Quand on dit que la raison est inconciliable avec l'enthousiasme, c'est parce qu'on met le calcul à la place de la raison, et la folie à la place de l'enthousiasme" (352). Mme de Staël was the champion of 'enthousiasme.' She may well have judged Kleist to be the champion of a brand of 'folie.'

The severe tone of Staël's condemnation of Kleist's suicide is tempered somewhat in her final remarks. Here she explains, as

though in apology, that she would not have devoted so much attention to this act of madness which, if all the details and personal circumstances were known, *might* be excused, if it were not that the act had found certain apologists in Germany (355).

Broadening her remarks on Kleist, she speaks of Germans in general. They are, she says, gifted with the most excellent qualities. They are, however, too 'book-formed,' a factor she finds inimical to masculine resoluteness (355). And again, perhaps with the figure of Kleist more specifically in mind, she warns that when energy has no proper outlet, it can inspire the most extravagant acts (356). Yet Germans have better things to do than to commit suicide. By devoting their energies to freeing their own country, they can help free all of enslaved Europe. This is not the time for sick sentimentality and literary suicides (256). For those who know of Kleist's fruitless struggles to "do something" for his country, such words constitute an ironic reproach, less ironic, however, than the earlier, more pointed accusation: "Et cet homme qui voulait mourir, n'avait-il pas de patrie? Ne pouvoit-il pas combattre pour elle? N'existait-il aucune entreprise noble et périlleuse dans laquelle il pût offrir un grand exemple!" (351). Such remarks seem almost in parody of those made by Kleist himself in his letters.

For Mme de Staël the double suicide represented sentimental affectation as well as philosophical vanity (352). She had little sympathy for Kleist's act. She could have had no more sympathy for his works. The two participants were to her two people who knew no misfortune other than that of existing (351). That this 'malheur d'exister' could be reason for suicide was inadmissible. That it might be the basic attitude permeating a work of art, or that out of the anguish it created, works of art might have their origin, was equally inadmissible. For Mme de Staël, Kleist was a false talent. For those in succeeding generations who shared her standards, Kleist and his works would continue to be judged as aberrations.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST REVIEWS, 1826-1828

It was through the efforts of Ludwig Tieck that Kleist's *Gesammelte Schriften* appeared in Berlin in 1826. It was, appropriately enough, also by way of Tieck that the Paris *Revue Encyclopédique* came to deal with Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* in October of the same year. In a review of Tieck's *Dramaturgische Blätter* (Breslau, 1826), Depping[1] comments that Tieck, though considered to be one of the first poets and one of the best critics in Germany, makes in his two-volume work what amount to banal complaints about the German theatre. Complaints concerning the decadence of the theatre and dramatic art, the deterioration of public taste, the scarcity of good actors, began with the theatre and will last as long as the theatre.[2] The real value of Tieck's work lies, he feels, in the analyses to be found in it of plays that are for the most part completely unknown in France. He then cites *Le Prince de Hombourg ou la bataille de Fehrbellin* by Kleist as an example of the plays to be found there. He gives the following résumé: "A play in which a general, in defiance of orders, wages battle, is condemned to death for disobedience, begs for mercy and, in order to assure his pardon, basely renounces the hand of the Elector's niece" (132). The résumé seems at best to betray hasty and careless reporting. It is not surprising that Depping then concludes rather ironically that this strange play met with Tieck's complete approval (132).

It was not until 1828 that Kleist's *Gesammelte Schriften* received critical reviews in the Paris journals. The first such review appeared in *Le Catholique*, a virtually German journal directed since 1826 by the Baron d'Eckstein. The May issue presents the first article "Oeuvres de Henri de Kleist" in a promised series that will introduce this German author to the French.[3]

Eckstein sees Kleist as uniting pride and impetuosity. Like Lenz and Müller he belongs to no school, is a follower of no one.

Eckstein feels that Kleist can be compared to Otway, though he is far better, more natural, more sensitive than the English writer, and less likely, too, to stoop to crudeness and impudence. There is also in Kleist some of the boldness, the vigor, the near frenzied genius of the English poet Nathaniel Lee who died at Bedlam.

After a brief biography, Eckstein sums up his views on Kleist's life. No writer ever plunged more deeply into despair. No man was ever more torn between unsurmountable shyness and inflexible pride (253).

In what Kleist wrote, as in his life, the reviewer finds evidence of a lack of inner harmony (255). There are the most shocking dissonances in his works. Everywhere there are traces of a deep and profound rift, a disorder of the mind and soul that finds its violent reflection in his art. Yet, lest the reader misunderstand: "Rien d'avorté, rien d'*embryonique* dans ses œuvres; elles vivent d'un souffle inspirateur, naïf autant qu'élevé" (255).

In Kleist's works Eckstein sees an excess both of strength and of weakness, an incomprehensible mixture of Satan and the angel. Never, it seems, has there been in a single human being a similar combining of mental sickness with such moral, spiritual, and physical vigour (256).

Kleist, like Goethe, sees the true and retraces it. But suddenly this true vision is interrupted by certain uncontrolled flights of imagination which lead him into Werner-like excesses. Here, however, Eckstein hastens to make clear that Kleist ranks far above the author of the fate-tragedy *Der 24. Februar*.

In the remainder of his article, Eckstein directs his attention to a study of Kleist's first play *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, commenting on various scenes as he translates them or, more often, as he gives them in résumé form.

Schroffenstein seems at first sight, he says, to be an imitation of *Romeo and Juliet*. The characters, the development, the love scenes, the treatment of the theme, however, differ completely. Eckstein has unreserved praise for the characterization, especially for the character of Sylvester, the ideal of the just man.

Agnes is a creation comparable to the best female characters of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Goethe. The love of Agnes and Ottokar, in its tenderness and innocence constitutes a beautiful idyl in an otherwise somber landscape (299).

Jean is condemned, however, as an abortive creation. He recalls the Weisslingens and Brackenburgs of Goethe and, as such, serves as a reminder that Kleist was not totally unaffected by what Eckstein calls the sickness of the times (301).

In the light of later criticism, which will always contrast and often oppose Goethe and Kleist, it is interesting to note that Eckstein compares the two with respect to common strengths and weaknesses.

Continuing his analysis, Eckstein says that the first part of the play is like a criminal trial where the two sides fight out the pro and con. What is deeply moral and truly tragic in the author's creation, however, is its revelation that the more severely man condemns his

fellow man, the more he is likely to be in error. At the very moment he is most certain of having ascertained the truth, a truth actually based on passion and self-interest, he is furthest from truth (302).

Eckstein comments on the unusual style that makes translation difficult, the repetition that soon fatigues the reader. Though this same kind of repetition is sometimes found in Lessing, Eckstein feels that it is carried too far in Kleist. He quotes Tieck in his judgment of the last part of the play as extravagant, unreal, uninteresting, and repugnant (304).

The controversial scene in the cave in which Agnes and Ottokar exchange clothes is praised as having unusual poetic beauty and, as well, as being in no way offensive to taste or modesty (305-306). After this praise, however, Eckstein finds himself obliged to condemn the scene on dramatic and artistic grounds (306).

With his analysis of *Schroffenstein* Eckstein completes the first article devoted to Kleist's works. The promised continuation in the next issue did not, unfortunately, appear. Eckstein's review, unlike previous notices regarding Kleist and his works, indicates a first-hand knowledge of the work analyzed as well as a sincere attempt to present the work to the French. The overall tone of the review is friendly enough, though at the same time Eckstein does not hesitate to point out clear deficiencies. The greatest faults in Kleist's works are due not so much to technical deficiencies or even to lack of artistic talent or genius, but rather to faults, dissonances, disharmonies, tensions, and imbalances in his own personality or psyche which naturally find their reflection in his work. This explanation of what cannot be accepted in Kleist's work will be the standard one used by those friendly to Kleist or to the new German literature. Those who are unfriendly will take a less generous attitude.

Into this latter category will fall the anonymous reviewer of Kleist's *Gesammelte Schriften*, whose two articles appeared in the Paris *Le Globe* September 6 and September 20, 1828.[4] The Paris journal *Le Globe*, founded in 1824, was in 1828, with regard to German literature, largely Staëlian, that is, reserved but cosmopolitan and liberal. It would draw the line this side of Kleist and the new Romantic school.

The reviewer begins in the first article with a description of the contemporary German literary school – presumably the Romantic – a school which he says has no common esthetic or intellectual principle at its base producing a literature filled with incomplete thoughts and half formed sensations (667). Goethe, he feels, has depicted in the character of Faust the story of the poets of the time. They are continually trying to go beyond the real, rejecting life, knowing neither how to enjoy it nor how to depict it (667).

Heinrich von Kleist belongs, in the judgment of the writer, completely to this school. "Le vague et l'incertitude dominent dans ses

ouvrages remplis de beautés supérieures, mais où les matériaux les plus précieux ont été arrangés par la main d'un fou" (667).

The reviewer is disturbed as well by the dissonances to be found in Kleist's works, the lack of balance, the constant, feeverish fluctuation between the silly and the sublime (667).

After a brief biographical sketch, the review turns to Kleist's individual works. *Schroffenstein* is said to possess unusual beauty. Despite, however, the degree to which the details of the work may be pleasing or moving, "La pièce... n'a point d'ensemble... La pensée ne s'y traduit point en sensations, elle se subtilise et s'évapore; presque tout est analysé, non senti; et les passions n'arrivent pas à cette force de vérité, elles ne se mûrissent pas à ce degré de vie et de puissance d'où l'action doit jaillir" (668).

After a résumé of the plot of the play, he turns again to criticism. In reference to the love scenes the reviewer is especially severe, calling them childish, mannered, and silly (668). Evidently as a reproach, he accuses Kleist of writing as though he were composing music. "Ses jeunes amants ne parlent pas, ils gazouillent" (668).

He calls the controversial scene in the cave unreal, but admits that it was a deft attempt to combine terror and sensuality (667). He then ends this first article with a brief mention of *Amphitryon*, passing it off as something written simply to distract Kleist from his usual somber thoughts (669).

The article offers interesting comparison to that written by Eckstein a few months earlier. Both indicate a direct knowledge of the work reviewed. The approach to the work in the second article, however, is entirely different. Here the interest is not simply to present Kleist, as Eckstein had done, but to present Kleist as an example of a school of writing of which the reviewer in his opening remarks makes quite clear he does not approve. Though *Le Globe*, especially in the person of E. Lerminier, was favorable to Germany and its literature, its literary gods in the twenties were, in the best Staëlian tradition, Goethe and Schiller. Later (1831) it was to turn Saint-Simonian in orientation. It had little patience with a literary school that seemed ideologically to respect neither cosmopolitanism nor liberalism and which, esthetically, seemed to scorn clarity, logic, and even reality. The feeling of *parti pris* in regard to Kleist and his work is evident throughout the review.

In the second article, appearing two weeks later, the reviewer turns his attention principally to *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*. After repeating Tieck's high regard for the play, he expresses his own dissent: "Mais, avec son cadre romanesque, elle est si complètement en dehors du goût français, qu'il est presque impossible d'en donner l'analyse sérieuse. Pour nous, la pièce entière est une mystification trop longue, semée de scènes pathétiques qui n'émeuvent plus lors-

qu'on se rappelle qu'elles n'ont point de base, de discours véhéments, polémique forte et brillante, mais sans but. C'est un étrange renversement de la vie telle que nous la connaissons; les rêveries y sont sur le premier plan, et devant les songes la réalité s'évanouit" (669).

He again reproaches Kleist for treating his characters like musical instruments. This time the charge is that he is simply trying to show how many sounds from high to low he can get out of them (700). He feels the change in the Prince is too great to be convincing. Even in the wrinkles of the old man, he explains, one should be able to recognize the features of the baby. Yet who would possibly recognize the Prince of Act IV as the same Prince seen in Act III? (700)

The move of the elector to place the decision of life and death in the hands of the Prince himself, the reviewer describes, without explanation, as "un raffinement germanique" (700). The Prince, he says, decides to obey in order to set an example for future generals who might be tempted to disobey the high command. After a résumé of the action of the play, the reviewer then concludes that such is at least the general outline of this strange work, conceived, it would seem, halfway between waking and sleeping (700).

The article turns again in its final paragraphs to Kleist's personality, illustrating by means of quotes from letters of 1811 his essentially sick nature. Kleist's case, the reviewer feels, is an unfortunate one. His ideas were for the most part good. He lacked, however, the proper balance between sensitivity and control. This final judgment, though tempered, is perhaps for this reason even more damning. Sensitivity is obviously not enough to make an artist. The artist must have the power to shape this ability to feel deeply into a work of art that does not violate the bounds of reason or reality. For the reviewer, and for those *Globe* readers who could not go further to verify the reviewer's judgments, Kleist would remain just another example of the well-meaning 'artiste manqué.'

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST TRANSLATIONS AND STUDIES, 1829-1869

In the preface to a translation of Michael Beer's tragedy *Struensee* appearing in the *Revue française* of January, 1829, the anonymous contributor uses the occasion to take the sacrosanct Theâtre-Français rather severely to task. The theatre needs, he feels, a complete overhauling in order to put an end to boring, outdated performances. There is urgent need to revitalize the theatre with plays that represent present ways of living, thinking, and feeling. He urges the French to look around them, feeling they ought to see what other countries are doing in the theatre. They ought above all to take a look at the German theatre where "many bold, imaginative experiments have been made in recent years."[1]

Though the German theatre suffered greatly, he explains, from the death of Schiller as well as from Goethe's turning away from the theatre thereafter, the stages are not empty. Werner, Müllner, Houwald, Kleist, Grillparzer, Raupach, Immermann, Uhland, and Michael Beer have been successful in their own countries. Their works would be of real interest to the French if, as in the case of Schiller, they were to find a worthy translator (124).

As for Kleist's theatre, it would have to wait some fifty-five years before finding that worthy translator. His Novellen, however, were to appear in French translation or adaptation as early as 1829. It is interesting to note that in the criticism or notices regarding Kleist's works there is no mention prior to 1829 of his having written Novellen. Yet the Novellen will be the first works of Kleist to be read by the French in their own language. Until late in the century they were to remain the only works of Kleist available to those unable to read the original texts.

The *Revue de Paris* published in 1829 *La Nonne de San Iago* 'de Henri de Kleist.'[2] The translator of this shortened version of Kleist's *Erdbeben in Chili* is not named. The version is, however, identical with one appearing in 1833 in Loève-Veimar's *Le Népenthès*.[3] In its second appearance it is more correctly identified as "d'après Henri de Kleist." A brief note by the adaptor identifies Kleist simply as one of Germany's good writers (57). His biography is reduced to the statement that he committed suicide with the woman he loved and

from whom he feared to be separated.[4] Of his works he writes that several tragedies, *Penthesilea, Käthchen von Heilbronn*[!], and *Die Familie Schroffenstein* are justly famous but that "it is his story of the tyranny of medieval lords, *Michael Kohlhaas*, that truly justifies his fame" (57). With *La Nonne de San Iago* Kleist is presented to the French as a writer of Novellen. Even though much of the power of the original is lost in the Loève-Veimar adaptation, it afforded many French readers with their first direct contact with Kleist's work.

A considerably more important and ambitious undertaking was the three-volume *Michel Kohlhaas, le marchand de chevaux et autres contes d'Henri de Kleist* published by A. I. and J. Cherbuliez in Paris in 1830. The collection included all but one of Kleist's Novellen (*Das Bettelweib von Locarno*) in translation. It is preceded by a *Notice sur la vie et les écrits d'Henri de Kleist* written by the co-translators.

The introduction admits its borrowings from Tieck's preface to the 1826 edition of Kleist's *Gesammelte Schriften*. It could have admitted as well its debt to Staël's *De l'Allemagne*. The views expressed in the opening general remarks on German literature are a clear reflection of several of her most important ideas.

German literature is marked by what Cherbuliez calls "la sentimentalité... cet état d'être intérieur qui semble être la vie de l'âme, et qui influe si fortement sur leur existence et leurs écrits."[9] German writers do not write just to write. Each one is an enthusiast who must express the mass of ideas and feelings that crowd into his mind and heart (VI). This, Cherbuliez continues, is the true mark of all German works. This tendency toward idealism makes the biography of such men the story of their soul and not of their acts (VII). Kleist must be included in this category.

He then repeats large sections of Tieck's preface, finally judging *Prinz* to be Kleist's best and most perfect work (XXXIV-XXXV). He depicts the fervent interest Kleist took in the moral and patriotic reawakening of his country as well as the great despair he felt at the frustration of all his efforts. Yet, Cherbuliez feels, his suicide was without passion and without despair. Kleist had become indifferent to life, to country, and to himself (XXXVIII). Bound by an oath extracted from him by Vogel, he stabbed [!] her and then killed himself, acts which Cherbuliez sees as products of a sick mind (XXXIX).

Cherbuliez devotes the last pages of his *Notice* to a brief review of Kleist's major dramas.

Schroffenstein, unlike the usual first work of an author, does not, he feels, depend on vague lyricism and sporadic fervor to carry it through. The emotions in it are admirably developed and linked closely to events. The love of Agnes and Ottokar is presented in a new and original manner. The characters are true and well delineated (XLIII).

Like Tieck, however, he severely criticizes the fourth act as being confusing, and, at times, even completely unintelligible (XLIV). In the midst of the continual battle of feelings and impressions Kleist was apparently unable to follow a single idea to the end. Cherbuliez then repeats the already often heard critique that Kleist's personal defects turn up in the majority of his works (XLIV), and then a variation on the charge of willful departure from the normal: "A côté de son amour et de sa connaissance de la vérité et de la nature, on reconnaît un puissant désir de les dépasser toutes deux, et de placer un idéal vide, une sorte de néant au-dessus encore" (XLV).

Cherbuliez dismisses Kleist's translation of *Amphitryon* as an exercise (XLVI), or as a distraction meant to lift his spirits (XXXI). *Der zerbrochene Krug*, though judged to be far superior to *Amphitryon*, receives only slighting comment as a charming little play, a pleasure to read but quite impossible to analyze (XLVI). He then passes over *Penthesilea* and *Guiscard* to conclude with a brief discussion of *Prinz* – the play he considers to be the most perfect expression of Kleist's genius. It is, he judges, a skillful and dramatic treatment of the important question of the nature and limits of obedience. The character of the Elector, a masterful creation, would have been enough to assure any dramatist's reputation (XLIX).

For more than fifty years this collection of Novellen constituted the only works of Kleist available to those French who were unable to read Kleist in German. It was republished two years later in Paris as the three-volume *Soirées allemandes. Contes de Henri de Kleist.*

Without translations, then, the French would have to depend for the most part for their knowledge of Kleist on the professional germanists, the authors of histories of literature, and the increasingly active group of enthusiasts who set out to make German literature known to the French. In this last group, however, there were few who concerned themselves with Kleist. As has been pointed out above, the most important work of the early nineteenth century in this respect, Mme de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, fails to mention Kleist. Nor did the French hear of Kleist in the controversial *Cours de littérature dramatique* of A.W. Schelgel published in Paris in 1814. Later surveys of German literature, such as Loève-Veimar's in 1826, passed over Kleist as well. Even critics and well-known 'Deutschlandkenner' such as Gérard de Nerval, whom one might expect to know better, seemed content to limit their explorations to the German literary world outlined in Staël's work.[6]

Though the *Manuel de l'histoire de la littérature nationale allemande*, a translation of Auguste Koberstein's work by X. Marmier in 1834, had mentioned Kleist briefly in the last chapter as one of the German writers who deserves a high place among the writers after 1795, Marmier, in a preface to the work which purported to be a résumé of

German literature since 1812,[7] does not mention Kleist. In the same preface he does, however, speak briefly of Uhland, Raupach, Grillparzer, Koerner, Müllner, Werner, Grabbe, Immermann, Holtei (who receives special praise), and above all Tieck. Another important source of information concerning German literature, E. Lerminier's *Au-delà du Rhin*, published in Paris in 1835, also fails to mention Kleist.

A curious chapter in this account of what did not happen to make Kleist better known in France concerns the efforts of Heinrich Heine to persuade Alexandre Dumas to have Kleist's *Käthchen* produced in Paris in 1834.

In the *Telegraph für Deutschland* of 1838 there appears, in an article by Alexander Weill, "Ein Besuch bei Alexandre Dumas," the following statement by Dumas:

> Heine kam vor drei Jahren zu mir und brachte mir eine Übersetzung von Kleist's *Käthchen von Heilbronn*. Ich las sie durch, bewunderte das deutsche einfach-poetische Mädchen, sagte ihm aber, dass das Stück durchaus nicht geeignet sei für eine französische Bühne. Wenn Käthchen von einem Tritt, den man ihr gegeben, spricht, lachte das ganze Publikum. Ebenso wenn Ferdinand sagen würde: 'La limonade est fade comme ton âme!' Als ich abreiste, besuchte ich Heine, um ihm Lebewohl zu sagen und fragte ihn, ob ich noch sein Käthchen aufführen lassen sollte. Aber Heine kennt jetzt Frankreich und lachte darob.[8]

In a letter (May 7, 1834) to Pierre Martinien Bocage, an actor at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint Martin, Heine acknowledges the return of the manuscript of Kleist's play – in the translation of which he had apparently collaborated[9] – describes his futile dealings with Dumas and, after implying his dissatisfaction with the latter's efforts, writes that he is going to let the entire matter drop. The play would presumably fare better after its appearance in print (63).

The reason for Dumas' reluctance to bring the play to the Paris stage is apparent in his interview with Weill. The play was not appropriate in his eyes for the French stage, apparently meaning for French taste. His final implication that Heine later came to agree with this judgment is not supported by fact. In any event, the publication of the translation in question did not occur.

Though Heine seems to have had every intention of treating Kleist,[10] he did not mention him in the many articles concerning Germany and German literature which he wrote for French journals. In the preface to the second French edition of *Lutetia* (1857) he does, however, recognize this omission, stating that Kleist, along with

Immerman and Grabbe – all of whom he excludes from the Romantic school – are three poets of great genius who should be regarded as indisputably the most distinguished poets of Germany during the Goethe period. They are, he states, giants in comparison with the writers of the Romantic school.[11]

As mentioned earlier, Xavier Marmier had failed in 1834 to include Kleist in his brief résumé of German literature since 1812. Three years later this same Marmier published in the *Nouvelle revue germanique* a twenty-page study of Kleist and his works.[12]

The first half of Marmier's essay is devoted to a brief biography in which, quoting from Tieck, he stresses Kleist's lack of harmony and his intense suffering. He describes as exceptional the fact that Kleist, though one of the great inwardly tormented of all time, was not apathetic to the political events of his day.

The second ten pages of the study are devoted to a review of Kleist's works. Marmier is generally severe on *Schroffenstein* – too much fatalism, too bloody, the ending 'completely unsuccessful' (109). He has, however, only praise for the love plot – "...amour vague, mystérieux, rêveur, et déjà frappé d'une sorte de fatalisme qu'il pressent, mais peint avec des couleurs d'une finesse admirable, et s'élevant avec tant de grâce et de frâicheur au milieu des scènes affreuses à travers lesquelles il prend naissance!" (110).

Marmier dismisses *Penthesilea* as the work of a beginner. With the exception of the final scenes, the play represents little real progress over *Schroffenstein*. In *Käthchen*, however, he finds Kleist at his best (110). Excepting only the figure of Kunigunde, he expresses unreserved praise for this work filled with the beauty and mystery of the Middle Ages, this gentle song of love, whose charm, beyond analysis, can be felt only by reading the text in its entirety (113).

Prinz Friedrich von Homburg is, he feels, another remarkable work, whose principal theme is again somnambulism (114). The scene in which the Prince shows his fear of death is judged to be quite plausible. It is the hero becoming a man again (114). He disagrees, however, with those who place *Prinz* on the same level with *Käthchen*. The clear superiority of the latter play rests on its unusual poetic qualities (115). There is more imagination in it. "On ne réfléchit pas, mais on se laisse entraîner" (115). In *Prinz* we return to the world of the positive. We want to analyze, to look for the dramatic interest, which, Marmier feels, rests far too much on the death sentence. One can not help feeling that the condemnation is only a vain formality (115).

Die Hermannsschlacht, though lacking many of the faults of the first two dramas, lacks also, he says, "ce vague mystérieux" that makes the figures of Käthchen and the Prince so appealing. It comes closer to what is generally called a tragedy. The characters

are well conceived and well drawn. The play recalls somewhat Schiller's *Die Verschwörung des Fiesko zu Genua.* Marmier can not forgive, however, the horrifying scene in which Hermann's wife gives Ventidius to a bear. He finds Klopstock's *Hermann* more lyric, but Kleist's better in the depicting of character and in dramatic construction.

Marmier passes over *Amphitryon* and *Der zerbrochene Krug.* The former is a cold, pale imitation of Molière and the latter "a nice play, though perhaps a little long" (116). After brief mention of Kleist's poetry, Marmier turns to the Novellen. Kleist is, he says, no less distinguished as a novelist and story-teller than as a writer of tragedies. He then considers the separate Novellen, giving them, for the most part, favorable reviews. He reserves unusual praise and condemnation, however, for two of them, *Der Findling,* which he scores as an atrocious tale that tramples under foot every natural, human feeling (117), and *Kohlhaas,* which must be placed, he feels, above all the rest. It can not be put down once begun. It represents perfect observation of the life of the period. The character of Kohlhaas is incredibly well drawn. The Novelle is, in his judgment, one of the best ever written (118).

Marmier's review represents the end of the first hesitant stage of Kleist's reception in France. A survey of the criticism during this first period is not very heartening. Though French interest in German literature, growing since the late eighteenth century, reached a peak in the years 1830 to 1835 in the form of numerous studies, articles, and translations appearing in all the leading journals, very little attention, as we have seen, seems to have been directed toward Kleist.

It has often been maintained that the French could hardly be expected to appreciate a German dramatic genius whom the Germans themselves did not recognize as such until late in the nineteenth century. Such a contention is, however, to beg the question, for it assumes that Kleist's works were ill-appreciated on both sides of the Rhine for the same reasons. Such is clearly not the case.

The simple example of Kleist's *Prinz* illustrates the point. While his drama was rejected by many Germans because they could not tolerate the sight of a Prussian officer who lost himself in dreams and, even more shocking, who demonstrated an abject fear of death, such was certainly not the case among French critics. Marmier, for example, found the latter scene an excellent illustration of the fact that the Prince was, after all, a human being. In the forties and fifties, the *Prinz* was praised in the 'Germany' of Friedrich Wilhelm IV largely due to the impressive figure of the Elector. For the French, increasingly disturbed by the growing nationalism in the lands across the Rhine, this same figure led to criticism of the play.

Thus Kleist's failure to penetrate into France any more than he did rests, in the last analysis, not on his failure in Germany, but on his ambivalent relationship to the principal intellectual and artistic movement in France of the twenties and thirties, that is, on his relationship to French Romanticism and, as well, on the extent to which he could be put to use by the pro-German group within this movement.

Due to the very originality of Kleist's drama, it could be discovered only by the French Romantics, that is, by those who felt, as did the critic of the *Revue française*, that French literature, especially French drama, needed overhauling, needed revitalizing. Such critics urged the French to look to other countries, to England and to Germany, in order to see what they were doing and, whenever possible, to learn from them. Such was certainly the attitude of the Staël wing of French Romanticism, the attitude of those grouped around *Le Globe*.

Yet Kleist was clearly unwelcome in this group. The original negative impetus occasioned by the severe condemnation of Kleist's suicide by the French press and by Staël herself in her *Réflexions* can be seen carried over into the review by *Le Globe* of Kleist's *Gesammelte Schriften* in 1828. Kleist was associated with the 'German' idea of crippling, suicidal pessimism, with the spirit of *Werther* which Staël herself wanted to see replaced by the more truly German spirit of *Faust*, not a figure of despair, but one of Promethean enthusiasm for new experiences, for new and bold ideas. The xenophobic critics of the twenties and thirties had a fitting enough example in Gérard de Nerval of what happens as a result of prolonged dabbling in German irrationalism. Pro-German Staëlians were scarcely apt to import another disoriented talent to be used against them. Their Germany was, and remained, the Germany of Weimar. Kleist, on the other hand, was lumped with the Second Romantic school which they rejected as being inimical to their liberal cosmopolitanism, as being too irrational, as scorning not only clarity and logic, but even reality.[13]

The rejection of Kleist by an important segment of the Romantic group is, however, only an aspect of what amounted to a far more significant rejection, the rejection, that is, of German Romanticism itself. The fact that Staël could present Goethe as the symbol of the Romantic school and, far more important, that her followers and continuators could continue to accept him as such, is clear proof that they did not understand, nor did they want to understand, the true nature of the completely revolutionary movement that occurred in Germany in the early nineteenth century, a movement which, unfortunately for the literary comparatist, bears the same name as that which graces the works of Hugo and Lamartine.

The general lack of knowledge on the part of French Romantics concerning what their contemporaries were doing across the Rhine is, of course, well known. In 1830, outside of Schiller, Goethe, Kotzebue, and Lessing, only Werner's *Der 24. Februar* and *Luther*, Müllner's *Der 29. Februar*, and Grillparzer's *Sappho* and *Ahnfrau* were known and imitated.[14] These authors represented the essential of what the French Romantics knew of German theater and, with the addition of Hoffmann, largely what they knew of German literature. Even at mid-century, it was thought that all Germany still lived on Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and even Klopstock.[15]

Yet there were exceptions to this general lack of knowledge. Eckstein, Cherbuliez, and Marmier, as we have seen, revealed a direct knowledge of contemporary German literature, Kleist's included. Their attitude illustrates even more clearly the ambivalent position of Kleist's works in regard to the French Romantic movement.

The first of the three, Eckstein, is attracted to Kleist's works by their pessimism, by the vivid, living characters they present, and by the extent to which they depict, as well as spring from, true emotions, in short, by the same qualities that attracted him, and many other French critics in the twenties, to the works of Shakespeare. Though Eckstein may well have been encouraged to present Kleist's *Schroffenstein* on the basis of the final triumph of Shakespeare on the Paris stage in 1827 and 1828, he had to admit that there was still much in Kleist that simply could not be accepted and, following Tieck's example, severely condemned the violence and extravagance of the last act. Cherbuliez, too, was attracted by the Shakespearean elements in *Schroffenstein*. Though greatly influenced by Staël, he broke with her followers enough to praise both *Schroffenstein* and, repeating Tieck, Kleist's *Prinz*. Yet he too will react negatively to the strain of violence that runs throughout Kleist's work, attributing it, as usual, to imbalances deep within Kleist himself. Both critics were thus almost equally attracted and repulsed by Kleist's work.

Between Cherbuliez and Marmier came the production of Hugo's *Hernani* (1830) and, in the years immediately following, the triumph of French Romanticism. The value of German drama as a battering-ram for a new literature in France thus ended. The only reason for importing German works now became either the degree to which they were compatible with French Romantic drama, or the degree to which they expressed the kind of lyricism prized by the Romantics. To judge by the terms of Dumas' rejection of *Käthchen* – the most 'romantic' (in the French sense) of Kleist's works – there was little hope that Kleist's drama could be well received by the followers of Dumas and Hugo. As to Kleist's lyricism, it is not difficult to see

that it would be strangely out of place in a collection such as Nerval's (1830) of Klopstock, Goethe, Schiller, and Bürger.

Marmier, somewhat later, in his rejection of the 'naturalistic' violence of *Schroffenstein* and in his great praise of the 'vague mystérieux' of *Käthchen*, reflects, in contrast to the dramatist Dumas, not only the less demanding taste of the critic of Romantic lyricism, but, with his thorough knowledge of contemporary events across the Rhine, the great popularity of *Käthchen* in Biedermeier Germany, in a Germany, that is, more interested in the dream-world of happy endings than in the tragic world of fatalism.

The beginnings of a genuine attempt in France to study and to understand Kleist's entire production will, with one major exception, have to wait another fifty years. This exception came in the important study by Saint-René Taillandier appearing in the *Revue des deux mondes* in 1859.[16] Taillandier's study comes on the heels of the publication in Germany by Julian Schmidt of Kleist's complete works and is the first French reaction to what was, in the fifties, through the biographical and critical studies of Bülow, Treitschke, and Julian Schmidt, the birth of German Kleist scholarship.

Taillandier's study is significant in several respects. It appeared in one of the most important journals of the day. It was written by a well-known critic of German literature, and, unlike its predecessors, it reflected not only a direct knowledge of the works studied, but a knowledge as well of the latest developments in German Kleist criticism.

Taillandier begins his article with an account of the double suicide in 1811, adding that the explanation for it, or more broadly speaking, the figure of Kleist himself, seems to the literary historian to be an enigma impossible to resolve. He then presents the explanation of a recent German critic, Theodor Mundt, who sees Kleist as 'un Werther politique.' The love that led to Kleist's despair and death was his love for Germany – a Germany conquered by Napoleon and debased by internal division. Kleist wanted to lift Germany up again. Frustrated at every turn, condemned to inaction, he died, as much a victim of his impotence as of a bullet. After this brief presentation of Mundt's thesis, Taillandier comments that in order to test its truth we must examine Kleist's life, thought, and works.

In the following ten pages (606-616) Taillandier deals with Kleist's life and thought, repeating to an extent what he has gleaned from the works of German critics and biographers. He points out the decisive effect of Kant on Kleist but, at the same time, cautions that even before Kant, Kleist was a victim of melancholia. He interprets Kleist's striving after an ideal which he could not define as the first signs of insanity. In this anguished dreamer, tormented by a philosophy he misunderstood, Taillandier sees only paralysis and despair

(608). He quotes extensively from Kleist's letters and, while reporting Wieland's enthusiasm for *Guiscard*, reports as well Goethe's statement that Kleist's works filled him with 'Schauder und Abscheu' (616), a statement destined to play a role in the Kleist criticism of later years.

The following twenty pages are devoted to a study of Kleist's works. The change of climate since the highwater mark of Romanticism twenty years previous is quite apparent throughout.

Schroffenstein, he writes, is a violent, uneven, bizarre drama comparing very unfavorably to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (619). It has no logic. Chance dominates everything and chance can not, Taillandier feels, be tragic. Yet, as bizarre as this work is, it reveals the hand of a poet. He praises the characterization, the amorous idyl in the midst of horrible struggles and especially the original language – neither that of Goethe nor of Schiller – supple, sober, sonorous, admirably suited for drama (620).

The originality of Kleist's language becomes, he feels, even more apparent in *Der zerbrochene Krug*, which he praises as excellent comedy (620). He mentions, without stressing the fact as later critics will do, Goethe's mishandling of the play in Weimar in 1808 (621).

Taillandier admits quite frankly that he does not understand what Kleist was attempting to do in *Amphitryon*. The subject matter should have been treated lightly, whereas Kleist tried to lift it to a symbolic level, almost to the level of a religious poem (621). What is the significance of Jupiter's love for Alcmene? Why does Kleist see in the fable the struggle of heaven against earth? Why does Alcmene in the last act choose the 'wrong' Amphitryon? Taillandier finds himself lost in such profound symbols (621). One would do better to study the symbols in *Penthesilea*. They, he feels, are clear.

He then relates the story of *Penthesilea*. Agreeing with the German critic, Julian Schmidt, that Penthesilea's speech, in its mixture of charm and savagery, is perhaps not the language of Greece, he adds that nevertheless our imagination is transported by it to the heart of Hellenic life (622). Taillandier sees the play as Kleist's answer to Kantian austerity, his declaration of the rights of passion (623).

Referring to the *Marquise von O*, which he judges an admirable psychological study, Taillandier notes Kleist's penchant for the abnormal, for mysterious and monstrous exceptions. Such monstrous situations seem so natural to Kleist that he recounts them unemotionally, with a clearness of style, a calmness of heart more sinister even than the events themselves (623).

Kleist's masterpiece in psychological and dramatic narration, however, is *Kohlhaas*, which he calls "un Goetz populaire" (625). After recounting the story, translating as he does so several passages

from the work, he sums up his judgment of the Novelle as a skillful combination of imagination, philosophy, and history. Kleist's Kohlhaas, unlike Schiller's Karl Moor, is one of the noblest figures in German literature (630).

Though finding despair in nearly all of Kleist's works, Taillandier comments that in the Novellen this despair takes on an added dimension. He attributes this to Kleist's reaction to his imprisonment and to the subjugation of Germany by the armies of Napoleon (632).

Turning to *Käthchen*, Taillandier says that thanks to the poetic quality of the language of the play, the whole is kept from being ridiculous. The play is reminiscent here and there of the mystical dramas of Calderon (634). But despite its good moments one must admit that it is filled with unintelligible scenes. The critic of 1859 is not willing, like his predecessor of 1837, simply to "let himself be carried away." Quite in keeping with the procedures of his predecessors, however, Taillandier will interpret what he cannot accept in Kleist as being the result of the author's sickness. "On voit combien son mal était profond et s'aggravait de jour en jour. La poésie aurait dû guérir sa maladie morale, et c'était sa maladie au contraire qui corrompait les inspirations de sa poésie. *Catherine de Heilbronn* à coup sûr est l'œuvre d'un génie à part; c'est aussi l'œuvre d'une intelligence sur laquelle flotte déjà le voile noir de la folie" (635).

In the following pages Taillandier begins to amass the incidents which indicate Kleist's growing instability. *Die Hermannsschlacht* is passed over as a timely call to arms against Napoleon, filled with anachronisms, bizarre effects, and hate-filled, grotesque violence (635). Kleist's efforts to stave off insanity by devoting himself to a noble cause were in vain.

At this point, says Taillandier, Kleist created one of his most interesting works, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*. Though he states that the play is the result of Kleist's preoccupation at the time with the question of the military conscience, he seems in his résumé and in the comments following it, unlike Cherbuliez earlier, to overlook completely the personal tragedy and see in the ending the triumph of abstract justice. Military law condemns the Prince, he says, but justice is stronger than the law and the sentence of the judges. The Prince is exonerated (637).

He praises the drama as beautiful, moving, and heroic, but, reflecting Friedrich Hebbel's earlier criticism, reserves one important regret: if the play's message is the triumph of justice, why did the poet have to weaken its impact by putting in those sleepwalking scenes? (637).

Speaking of Kleist's Novellen again, Taillandier sums up his judgment of their author: "Lorsqu'on lit ces nouvelles où l'originalité

de l'invention est relevée encore par un art consommé, par un style net, rapide, dramatique, presque inconnu jusque-là chez nos voisins, on ne peut s'empêcher de conclure, avec les principaux chefs de la critique moderne, que Henri de Kleist doit être placé parmi les premiers artistes de l'Allemagne" (638).

Returning in his last pages to the question he posed at the beginning of the article – Was Kleist "un Werther politique?" – Taillandier answers with a firm no (638). The causes of Kleist's despair and suicide were much deeper and of longer standing than that. Too many German critics, he feels, have seen Kleist as a devoted son of Germany driven to suicide by despair over his country. Latest critical work has, however, reestablished the truth on this point: "On se gardera bien de voir dans cette victime d'une philosophie sceptique la victime généreuse du patriotisme outragé" (639).

Taillandier ends his article with an interesting plea in regard to Kleist and Franco-German relations. Aware of the reactivation in Germany of anti-French, "spirit of 1813" propaganda, Taillandier says that he wanted to investigate an author of that period and to compare the judgments on him over the last twenty years. He is happy to report that Kleist is being judged by the most recent critics with true impartiality. The attempt to connect Kleist with the German anti-French movement of 1813 must, however, continue to be resisted. He ends his article with a plea not to raise old antagonisms between France and Germany. Behind the present wave of aggressive nationalism he detects Austrian machinations. He warns the Germans of this, ending with the following recommendation: "Soyez justes et restez Allemands" (640).

It is interesting to note that this same study appeared in Taillandier's *Drames et romans de la vie littéraire* published in Paris in 1871. In that year, however, the article appeared without the plea on the last page.

Despite Taillandier's unusual knowledge of the latest German Kleist scholarship and the interesting nature of his attempt to refute those who would annex Kleist into the camp of the 'Franzosenfresser,' the overall bias of his study was such as to encourage among later French critics a tendency ultimately inimical to a fair appraisal of Kleist's works. In his well-meant efforts to prove that Kleist's despair and suicide were not, as Mundt maintained, intimately connected with Germany's disastrous political fortunes, Taillandier, reflecting too closely the views of Treitschke (1858) and Julian Schmidt, overemphasizes the idea that Kleist was insane or nearly so and that his works were the direct expression of such a sickness. Until such time as sickness or its expression in literature became a desirable quality, that is, until the twentieth century, Taillandier's article could not be said to have served Kleist well.

Yet even in the twentieth century when interest in the sick and the abnormal would draw the attention of some to Kleist and his work, it can be questioned whether such an attitude brought better understanding of Kleist's work than that held by Taillandier and his predecessors. By its confusion of two essentially separate value systems it would often vitiate even the best-meant efforts to arrive at an appraisal of Kleist's work. As will be seen later, it will not be until rather recent times that a few critics will attempt to judge Kleist's work simply as the expression or not of a literary genius, leaving the interesting but essentially anti-literary by-ways of pathology and the psychology of the abnormal to those whose domain it rightly and usefully is.

In this first stage of Kleist's reception in France, however, such was not the approach. Taillandier's study, reflecting a shift in values away from the Romantic, tells, perhaps like most literary criticism, a good deal about the critic and his times but rather little about Kleist and his art. A further development in the reception of Kleist in France would not come until more translations were available, or until a generation of readers, benefiting from the new stress on modern languages in the French educational system after 1860, might judge Kleist's work for itself in original texts.

PART TWO

THE SECOND STAGE, 1870-1935

CHAPTER V

KLEIST AND THE REALISTS, 1870-1900

After the events of 1870-1871, one would have expected to find a serious interruption in French-German relations, an interruption of sufficient length to allow the many hatreds aroused by the war to die down before cultural relations between the two countries could begin again. Such does not seem to have been the case in France in the seventies.

Even after their defeat at the hands of a newly unified Germany, the French retained in much of their thinking a separation between the Germany of philosophy, science, and literature and the Germany of the Prussian war machine, this despite the warnings earlier in the century by Heine, Börne, and Quinet that such a separation was both false and potentially dangerous to France.[1]

As late as 1870, on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities, Ernest Renan and Hippolyte Taine, the intellectual leaders and guides of the age, were engaged in raising a subscription for a monument to Hegel. They had early declared Germany to be their intellectual homeland, Taine even learning German, it is said, in order that he might read Hegel in the original.[2] During the period just prior to the war, Germany was hailed constantly in the *Revue des deux mondes*, in the *Revue germanique*, the *Revue de l'instruction publique*, the *Revue critique*, and other journals.

After the war, the study of Germany and things German continued almost as though nothing had happened. The idea even arose that if Germany had won the war, it was because it deserved to win. The next step, obviously, was to study Germany to see how and why it was superior. This is, in fact, the advice Renan gives in his *Réforme intellectuelle et morale* of 1871, a work in which he places special emphasis on the need for a reorganization of the educational system in France. This reorganization, along the lines of German models, took place in the 1870's. The study of German in the schools was greatly increased. In addition, in German style, compulsory military service was instituted. The popularity of certain aspects of German culture was never higher. It is interesting to note, however, that German literature did not play a significant role in this period of what

more chauvinistic critics, echoing their predecessors of the 1830's, called an era of 'Germanomanie.'

If Taine and Renan looked to Germany as their intellectual homeland, they looked to the Germany of philosophers and scientists and not to the Germany of writers. With the exception of lyric poetry, especially as represented by Heine, Taine, in 1873, condemns all German writers for, as he says, not knowing how to write.[3]

Perhaps what Taine meant was that German writers were not German scientists or even, very often, Hegelian philosophers. As the spokesman of 'scientisme,' of a kind of positivistic realism, Taine rejected the formlessness he found among German, especially Romantic, writers. He rejected any idea of free will in artistic creation. Rejecting the religion of intangibles, he put in its stead a religion of the 'petits faits.' He, and the period 1870-90, represent the triumph of 'scientisme' and of the so-called scientific approach to literature. Taine's criteria will, to a large extent, be the criteria of the entire period, both in France and, as positivism, also in Germany. It is not surprising, then, that in his criticisms of Kleist there can be found a hint as to the manner in which Kleist will be received in France in the seventies and eighties.

In a letter to Georg Brandes in July, 1873, Taine, commenting on the latter's lavish praise of Kleist in his recently published volume on German Romanticism, takes the occasion to express his disagreement with the Danish critic. "J'ai lu Heinrich von Kleist et je vous trouve bien indulgent. Quand on fait des maniaques comme Catherine et le prince de Hombourg, il faut les faire parler en style de maniaque, ce que le seul Shakespeare a su faire. *Michel Kohlhaas* est bien, sauf la seconde partie: mais là, comme dans la Marquise, ce que nous appelons le style, c'est-à-dire le talent du détail et des effets, manque tout à fait; un écrivain de troisième ordre racontait à peu près de cette façon au XVIII^e^ siècle" (249).

Taine had read *Kohlhaas* and *Die Marquise* three years earlier. The opinions expressed above to Brandes were essentially those recorded after this first contact. "Lu hier: *Michel Kohlhaas* et *la marquise d'O* de Kleist, deux chefs-d'œuvres de narration en prose, à ce qu'ils disent; c'est de deuxième ou troisième ordre."[4] Then continuing with a generalization presumably of German writers as exemplified by Kleist, he writes: "Ils ignorent absolument l'art de composer, de faire une phrase vivante; le discours indirect foisonne, on écrivait à peu près ainsi aux environs de Florian" (367).

Along with Kleist's two works, Taine condemns as well Schiller's work on the Thirty Years' War and Goethe's novels. Writers such as Mérimée, Stendhal, Balzac, and Sand surpass them by far (367). Taine explains this by saying that the French writer writes for a cultured, blasé, demanding public, whereas the German writer, or

so he implies, writes either for himself or for a public whose only real concern is eating half-cooked meat and boiled potatoes (367).

Aside from the hyperbole in the closing remark, the judgments expressed by Taine seem to prefigure fairly accurately the mood, if not the specific bias, of much of the Kleist criticism that followed in this period. The principal reproach to be made by critics will be formlessness, lack of balance and restraint, and, above all, the use of the supernatural. The only works to enjoy any real degree of success will be *Kohlhaas* and *Krug*, works which are, of all Kleist's productions, as Maxime Gaucher expressed it in his article on Kleist, the least 'pantelantes.'[5]

Gaucher's article was written on the occasion of the translation of *Michael Kohlhaas* by August Dietrich in 1880, the first translation of a prose work of Kleist's in fifty years.[6] Gaucher, using as a starting point a résumé of Dietrich's preface to the translation, links Kleist with the German Romantics but shows how he differed from them in his materialism and in his extreme pessimism. After a short biography, which ends with an explanation of Kleist's suicide as the result more of frustration at not being recognized as a writer than of political or amorous despair, Gaucher turns to Kleist's works, finding in them, he says, a clear reflection of Kleist's own life, the same mixture of strength and weakness, of grandeur and childishness, of sickness and health (236).

Gaucher sees all of Kleist's dramas and Novellen as treating essentially the same situation: A forceful and energetic figure is driven, either by the malice of his fellow men or by the workings of cruel fate, into a terrible situation (236). The problem, Gaucher continues, now becomes how to get out. Kleist's hero thinks he has found the way out. He concentrates all the strength of his intelligence and of his will into a superhuman effort only to discover that he has made a mistake. His effort has misfired. The hero finds himself swept away by the storm he himself unleashed (236).

Gaucher admits that this is a tragic theme. He questions, however, whether it tells us anything meaningful about human nature. Rather than virile action and healthy strength, Kleist's work shows us, he feels, brutal energy, disordered violence, frenzy, and anguish (236). Thus Gaucher can understand Goethe's condemnation of Kleist. Although Kleist's characters are real and unforgettable, the impression made by them is disturbing, even painful (236).

Gaucher accuses Kleist of enjoying the convulsions of his characters, of relying too much on animal magnetism, sleep-walking, and madness as the basis of his action (236). The by now often-heard criticism that Kleist pushes all emotions to extremes is repeated, but in a form that reveals its pre-Freudian origin. In Kleist's characters, he feels, passion ceases to be "un trouble de l'âme, elle devient un

désordre du corps. Ce n'est plus de la psychologie, mais de la pathologie" (236).

Pursuing this same point, Gaucher makes of it the basis of far more serious criticism. In Kleist's heroines, he charges, joy becomes frenzy, pain becomes wild fury, love becomes nymphomania. Thus the elements indispensable to tragedy – freedom and responsibility disappear entirely. Also, since all passions explode with the same savagery, they soon lose their own character. They soon come to resemble one another.

Gaucher concludes his article with a judgment of *Kohlhaas* and *Krug* as Kleist's two finest works, the least violent, the least "pantelantes" (236). He does, however, express his hesitations in regard to Dietrich's suggestion that *Kohlhaas* be given to young people as a model of the man who fights to death for his rights. Both Kohlhaas and Dietrich, he feels, go a little too far (237).

Gaucher's article, in its overall positivistic orientation, is in keeping not only with the line of criticism set by Taine, but, as well, with the general trend of Kleist criticism in Germany. There public interest in Kleist had grown steadily since the fifties, spurred by the highly successful performances first of *Käthchen* (though in adaptations), then of *Krug*, then, in the seventies, aided by the patriotic fervor of the times, of *Prinz* and even of *Die Hermannsschlacht*. With the successful productions at the ducal theatre in Meiningen, and especially during the many tours made by the ducal troupe throughout Germany, Kleist's dramas were presented in their original texts for the first time to a large public.[7] The publication of Kleist's works by Julian Schmidt in 1859, republished often in subsequent years, played an equally important role in the general growth of interest in Kleist in the period.

Critical attitudes toward Kleist were largely still in the line of Treitschke and Julian Schmidt, that is, placing great stress on the "demonic," on the pathological elements in Kleist's works. Essentially rationalistic in nature, they, like Gaucher, reflected Schmidt's judgment that neurotics and somnambulists had no place on the stage. The important study of Adolf Wilbrandt (1863), though breaking with the literary prejudices of Tieck and Goethe, nevertheless, ended up, in its stress on the pathological, largely negative toward Kleist.

It is in this basically positivistic period that critical attention in Germany will center on *Kohlhaas*, and, above all, on Kleist's only comedy, *Der zerbrochene Krug*. Valuable studies on the latter work appeared in 1876 (Karl Siegen), 1879 (Siegen, Semler), and above all in Theophil Zolling's *Kleist in der Schweiz* in 1882.

In view of the unusual amount of interest shown by German critics in *Krug*, it is not surprising to discover in 1884 the first French

translation of *Krug*, actually the first complete translation of a Kleist drama to appear in France.[8]

Published in a deluxe format, containing thirty-four reproductions of the original Adolf Menzel illustrations, the prose translation was the work of Alfred de Lostalot, who declares in the Preface that his sole ambition in translating the play was to avoid the unpleasant epithet of 'traditore' (7). The Preface itself gives a brief sketch of Kleist's life, or rather, for the most part, the last day of Kleist's life (taken from Taillandier) and repeats Taillandier's claim that Kleist's fate should not be linked too closely with political events in Germany. He sums up Kleist as "une énigme indéchiffrable, un mélancolique... un lypé-maniaque, dont la courte existence se passa à disputer une raison supérieure aux étreintes de la folie qui finit par avoir le dessus" (6).

Krug, however, is said to be the exception to the general melancholy and pessimism of Kleist's work (6). He then goes on to repeat Taillandier's favorable judgment of *Krug* and to explain the genesis of the work, revealing therein his knowledge of Theophil Zolling's most recent findings on the subject. Lostalot's closing remarks praise Kleist for his ability to reproduce reality faithfully and for the gracefulness of the play's dialogue. A final two pages are taken up with a discussion of Menzel's illustrations.

Dietrich's 1880 translation of *Kohlhaas*, like Lostalot's translation of *Krug*, signalled something more than simply the interest an obscure Germanist might take in making a personal favorite more accessible to French readers. The comic realism of the play, the story in the Novelle of a good man led to evil and disaster by his uncompromising search for justice, these clearly had an appeal to the readers of the eighties. *Kohlhaas* especially, in its violent realism, its objectivity, and its overall pessimism, found favor with a public that brought Maupassant and Zola to the peak of their popularity.

Following Dietrich's translation in 1880, new translations of *Kohlhaas* appeared in 1887, 1888, and 1889, with new editions of these appearing throughout the following decade.[9] In addition, the Novelle was made more accessible to those French not afraid to attack it in the original. French editions of the German text, with notes, explanations, and commentaries, appeared in 1886, 1887, and 1888.

The translation of *Kohlhaas* by L. Koch in 1887 is an interesting example of the pains to which one scholar went to make the text more accessible to French readers. In the 449-page volume, Koch presents first the German text with a juxtalinear, literal translation, then the 'correct' translation preceded by the German text. The same year Koch published the German text alone, with the addition, however, of a sixteen-page preface and many explanatory notes.

In his preface, Koch gives a rather routine sketch of Kleist's life

and works. He calls *Penthesilea* Kleist's most original work and describes Kleist's genius as essentially dramatic, a fact he sees clearly revealed in the Novellen.[10] He regrets, however, that Kleist so often deals with situations and details that are scabrous (x). Koch attributes the appearance of the occult in Kleist to the influence of the Romantics. He sees its use, however, as completely in keeping with the imagination of a visionary such as Kleist, one who is naturally inclined to connect events in our lives to mysterious, occult forces (x).

The rather cool tone of Koch's critique is evident even in this short preface. This same tone of very reserved approval is again observed in the preface to an edition of the German text of *Kohlhaas* prepared by I. Befeyte and J. Peyrègne.[11] The latter begins his preface to the edition with praise enough. Kleist's works were unsuccessful in their time, he says, because their powerful realism found little favor with a public accustomed to the sentimental rhetoric of Schiller and the descriptive coloring of Calderon. Kleist is, in his imaginative powers, superior at times both to Schiller and to Goethe. Peyrègne praises in Kleist's works the detailed reproduction of objects, figures, and events as well as the rapid pace of the action. He feels, however, that Kleist lacked a real knowledge of practical life. Too often in the place of the real world, Kleist places the reversed world of his imagination. His most serious weakness lies in plot invention and development and in the economy of action (v).

Peyrègne has mixed praise for *Krug*. Despite its overall appeal, it is guilty of too much dialectic, too much talk (v). *Schroffenstein*, though good in part, especially in the love scenes, is ruined by the exaggerated role played in it by fate. *Penthesilea*, too, is praised in spots – beautiful in its details – but finally judged as failing in its overall effect (v). Peyrègne is severest on *Amphitryon*, claiming that in his ill-advised attempt to rework the Molière play, Kleist completely ruined it (xi). He has unreserved praise only for *Die Marquise von O* (xi). *Käthchen* is called an imitation of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* and condemned, presumably, for containing scenes that Goethe himself would not have written (xi). He scores as well the pointless intervention in it of the supernatural and the mysterious.

The Abbé Peyrègne completes his critique of Kleist's works with a few brief remarks on *Prinz*, which he describes as a patriotic drama in which Kleist apparently wanted to glorify the revolt of Major Schill (xiii).[12] For Peyrègne the Prince is a kind of sleep-walking Hamlet in Prussian uniform who knows no more how to obey than how to command (xiii). He ends his preface with a brief account of Kleist's suicide.

Throughout the preface of Peyrègne, as well as in the criticisms of Gaucher and Koch, one can feel the same essential bias originally observed in the remarks of Taine, a bias which can generally be

described as that of the realists or of the proponents of 'scientisme.' The reserved, if not at times hostile, tone of the criticism is especially surprising in the case of Koch and Peyrègne. It seems strange that men who held such mixed feelings in regard to Kleist's work would be chosen to, or would agree to, write a preface to one of his works.

Prefaces, however, because of their necessary brevity, can be said to encourage broad and often superficial judgments. With the possible exception of Lostalot, none of the critics cited here reveal much more than the briefest acquaintance with the works they undertake to discuss. Such is not the case with August Ehrhard. In his Sorbonne thesis on the comedies of Molière in Germany, this future student of German Romanticism devotes serious attention to Kleist's *Amphitryon*.[13]

Ehrhard's study is significant in that it is the first serious critical attention given to this work which has often been, as we have seen, passed over by critics as simply a translation of Molière, or as a trifling exercise indulged in by Kleist to raise his spirits. Though Ehrhard is not able to break completely with past ways of thinking, that is, is not able to realize that Kleist's *Amphitryon* is another play and must be judged as such, he nevertheless investigates it as a complete reworking of Molière's play. It will not be until Giraudoux makes it apparent that there have been at least thirty-eight versions of the same story, only one of which was Molière's, that Kleist's play will even begin to be regarded by the French as something more than an unoriginal imitation.

Ehrhard begins his discussion with the observation that, considering the aversion of the German Romantics for Molière, it is surprising to find one of them interested in Molière at all. Ehrhard thus reveals his first and basic view of Kleist. The German author of *Amphitryon* was first and foremost, he feels, a Romantic – a Romantic by his mysticism, by his adherence to Schelling's pantheism, by his idealism, and by his *Weltschmerz* which led him to suicide (420). It will be as a Romantic that Kleist transforms Molière. He will cut out some of the realistic details and purify the subject itself. Molière's creation is simple, limpid, and direct. Kleist will change this by enveloping the entire subject in cloudy mysticism, by inserting into it an exposé of the doctrine of pantheism (420).

In Molière, says Ehrhard, Amphitryon and Jupiter are two different individuals. In Kleist's thought they are the same person (421). Kleist's Jupiter is the god of the pantheists, the unique, universal being, the force that moves the world, the substance of which men and things are only the infinitely varied manifestation.

Jupiter does not have the affair with Alcmene, as in Molière, because of a human-like caprice, but because he wants to break down the distance between God and man. He chose Alcmene as a repre-

sentative of that humanity with which he wanted to unite. Their embraces thus mark the symbolic end of that dualism that has arisen between the creator and his creation – the symbolic reestablishment of primordial unity (422).

Jupiter is jealous of Amphitryon, but his jealousy, like his love, is idealized. Jupiter dislikes Alcmene's idolizing of Amphitryon because, Ehrhard says, it leaves no room for religious feeling. Alcmene has no other god than Amphitryon. Amphitryon is an idol whose prestige has caused the altar of the true god to be deserted (423).

Kleist resembles Molière somewhat, Ehrhard feels, in the presentation of Alcmene. For both, she is the type of the faithful wife. Her virtue is not extreme or exaggerated. She loves her husband and is thus naturally faithful to him. There is no prudery or affectation. The only reward she wants for loving is to be loved in return. But Kleist adds to the figure of Alcmene another trait, that of a piety that tends to mysticism. The news of the substitution of Jupiter for Amphitryon surprises her more than it fills her with shame (424).

At this point, says Ehrhard, Kleist comes close to confusing his myth with that of the Christian Incarnation (425). While pointing out how closely Alcmene's words and reactions resemble those of the Virgin, Ehrhard does not dwell on the point as other critics, reflecting Adam Müller's first "Christian" interpretation of the play, will do.

In this same respect, Ehrhard touches on the complicated problem of the difference in the reactions of Molière's Amphitryon and Kleist's. Molière has Amphitryon bow his head and submit. Kleist's Amphitryon is apparently delighted at the great honor the god has done him. It is he who asks that a son issue from this union (425).[14]

Ehrhard devotes the remainder of his discussion to an evaluation of the changes Kleist made and, in general, to an evaluation of Kleist as a representative of the Romantic school. It is naturally here that his real critical bias will become apparent. It will be seen, too, that he does not contradict the criticisms of earlier commentators.

Though Kleist was, Ehrhard feels, one of the Romantics best equipped to succeed in the theatre, the changes he made in *Amphitryon* were far from what we ask for in a dramatic work. "Nous voulons voir, sur la scène, des personnages qui soient des hommes; nous voulons que leur conduite soit en rapport avec leur caractère, que leur rôle se soutienne avec logique. A cet égard, Kleist ne nous satisfait pas" (427).

Give Molière, says Ehrhard, the one premise that Jupiter is able to take human form and from there on the god of Molière is a man of our kind, his passion and his language are human, whereas, Ehrhard claims, like so many other critics, Kleist seriously identifies

Jupiter with all of creation (427). For one who finds Molière's premise neither easier nor more difficult to grant than Kleist's, such a criticism would be meaningless if its real basis were not made clear in Ehrhard's following remarks. Kleist's Jupiter, he says, stands for all of creation, yet Kleist must give him a human physiognomy and this he has not done sufficiently well. The fault, however, does not lie solely with Kleist. Though, in Ehrhard's view, it is always dangerous for a playwright to try to represent a philosophical concept through a dramatic character, there are certain concepts that are, by their very nature, virtually unrepresentable. The god of the pantheists falls into just this category. A greater artist than Kleist could easily have failed in the same attempt (427).

Ehrhard's next statement, coming as it does on the eve of Maeterlinck's entry into the theatre, is especially interesting. "Le symbolisme est un ennemi mortel du drame," he writes, "il faut opter entre l'un et l'autre; c'est ce que Kleist n'a pas osé faire" (427).

Returning then to more specific criticisms of Kleist's play, Ehrhard says that Kleist neglects the problem of the reconciliation of Alcmene with Jupiter, who has betrayed her. Instead of giving vent to her anger and disgust on learning of Jupiter's betrayal, Alcmene throws herself at the god's feet and asks for an explanation of the mystery. Kleist does not make compatible two contradictory feelings in Alcmene, joy on learning that she has been favored by the god and the feeling of fidelity she has for her husband. As for Alcmene's steadfast refusal to believe that Jupiter is not Amphitryon, Ehrhard says it is illogical (429). Her choice of the 'wrong' Amphitryon in the last act is also condemned as unjustifiable (429).

Ehrhard sees the same illogic in Amphitryon's pious acceptance of what Jupiter has done to him. He feels such piety is scarcely to be expected in a soldier (429).

In comparison to the Molière comedy, Kleist's drama is judged to be less true, less well conceived and, as well, less amusing. Molière's Jupiter is a comic character. In Kleist's drama, he regains his Olympian seriousness. Instead of a pleasant caprice, it is a grandiose idea that brings him to Amphitryon's palace. A frivolous love-affair becomes divine love (430).

Alcmene's role also veers toward the tragic. Her terror, her tears, her religious exaltation, her fainting at the end of the play introduce a too serious note in this amusing affair (430). The situation of a faithful wife who discovers that she has given herself unknowingly to another man can, evidently in Ehrhard's view, only be an amusing subject. Ehrhard cannot forgive Kleist for changing what he insists is an obviously comic situation into a tragic one. He also cannot understand how Kleist could have come to treat so lightly an obviously serious subject like a husband's being made a 'cocu.'

Kleist's Amphitryon is actually happy to have been rendered such. "Devotion is certainly a very respectable sentiment," Ehrhard writes, perhaps not quite seriously, "but when carried to such extremes, it can better be called stupidity" (430).

Ehrhard, then, much like his predecessors, judges Kleist's *Amphitryon* largely from the point of view of the Molière play. He does not see, or rather, refuses to see the tragic potential in the situation of Alcmene. Like his predecessors, he treats the play as a reworking of Molière's play, rather than as a new treatment of a theme after all older than Molière.

In the superficiality of his analysis, Ehrhard, not a superficial critic, betrays his basic annoyance with a writer who has made an entertaining social comedy into a deeply symbolic, tragic drama. His criticisms touch on, but make no attempt to clear up, nearly all of the controversial problems that the play admittedly presents, problems that were, at least in many cases, to be cleared up by later critics who were willing to approach the work with the seriousness it deserves.

Though Ehrhard's annoyance with Kleist is, to a certain extent, understandable, especially since Kleist may well have been at fault in following the Molière version so closely, above all in the earlier scenes, his prejudice cannot be passed off as lightly as that of his predecessors. These simply assumed that since one, or even two, great masters of comedy had treated the situation as comic, the situation could, or rather should only be treated as comic. They then refused to give Kleist's version serious critical attention.

The basis of Ehrhard's rejection, though in part the same, rests, however, on more serious ground critically. His approach to Kleist's play is throughout that of a positivist or at least a realist. As an anti-romantic, he rejects any attempts at symbolism in the drama. He rejects all metaphysical overtones. To a positivistic critic, the entire concept of the *Verwirrung des Gefühls* is untenable. He sees Kleist's play as an example of the weakness of the dramatic system of the Romantics (430). If Kleist's other plays have any value, it is because Kleist broke with the theories of his masters, because in practice he rejected what he accepted in theory.

In his final statements, Ehrhard reveals clearly the critical standards of the realists. "Ce qui plaît dans son *Amphitryon*, ce sont les parties où son génie, rappelé par Molière des régions vagues d'un idéalisme transcendant, retourne dans le monde réel; ce sont les peintures vraies auxquelles il revient après s'être laissé égarer par son lyrisme; c'est la netteté de son style, lorsque sa pensée ne se dissout pas en mystiques symphonies" (430).

It is apparent, then, that Ehrhard considers Kleist's play to have exceeded the bounds of the real. Yet it is a curious critical blind spot

that allows him to be content with Molière's transposition of Greeks and their God into seventeenth-century French courtiers – certainly a violation of the real – while objecting to Kleist's presentation of a Greek god who acts like an Olympian and Greeks who react to this god as Greeks might be expected to act. An examination of this blind spot reveals, however, its real nature. It is that of the realist. It is, in its narrow, literal interpretation of the real, approaching that of the naturalist.

The renewal of interest in Kleist that began with Dietrich's translation of *Kohlhaas* in 1880 finds its culmination in the Sorbonne thesis of Raymond Bonafous, *Henri de Kleist, sa vie et ses œuvres*, published in Paris in 1894. In this extensive work of more than four hundred pages, Bonafous treats, in the first part, Kleist's life, basing his work largely on the biographical research of Wilbrandt and Otto Brahm. In Part Two, comprising more than half of the book, Bonafous directs his attention in the first ten chapters to analyses of each of Kleist's works. In the last chapter he attempts to describe the principal traits of Kleist's art as well as to assess the place Kleist occupies in the literary movement of his time.

In general, Bonafous' procedure will be the following for each work analyzed: a few general remarks about the dates of composition, a detailed résumé of the action, a discussion of sources, an analysis and discussion of the theme or themes, his own criticisms or reservations, followed then by a final judgment of the particular work. With the exception of the *Prinz* and *Krug*, these last criticisms will largely be adverse. In the final judgment, however, there will be a statement that the work is 'nevertheless' good.

Bonafous sees *Schroffenstein* as a retarded and, for the most part, regrettable product of *Sturm und Drang*. Though he does not deny the obvious influence of Shakespeare, he sees the play as completely Kleist's own work. He sees in its somberness and in its fatalism a direct result of Kleist's reaction to Kant's philosophy of the unknowable.

He points out, in defense of Kleist's originality, the use, even in this first play, of a technique to bring about tragedy which will be repeated again and again in later plays. This technique is "la méprise, le malentendu." Its use, however, is criticized as often distressing, even contrary to reason (192).

Bonafous sees the play as depending too much on shock effects (194). The use of such devices as the child's finger and the sorceress can be attributed, he feels, to the influence of Shakespeare, a Shakespeare, however, misunderstood and clumsily imitated (194).

Though claiming that the play has real merits – which, however, he does not enumerate – Bonafous' last judgments of the work are almost without exception severe. *Schroffenstein* is called a melo-

dramatic *Schicksalstragödie*, ill-motivated and lacking restraint. The comedy at the end is completely out of place (197).

As though relieved to have *Schroffenstein* out of the way, Bonafous turns his attention in Chapter Two to a work Kleist never pushed beyond a fragment, his play *Robert Guiscard*. Bonafous fsele that Kleist's goal in this play was to present a hero whose will increased when faced with opposition and obstacles, to set this hero against countless difficulties, to have him triumph despite the ceaseless battle he had to wage against nature, then, finally, to show such a hero defeated by this very nature (208).

On the following pages Bonafous discusses *Guiscard*, or more exactly, the Guiscard theme, by which the Sorbonne candidate seems to be as fascinated as was Kleist himself. The reader must constantly remind himself, while reading Bonafous, that Kleist did not, after all, write the play. Eventually, however, Bonafous does admit this himself, with the puzzling explanation that Kleist did not complete the drama because, as an essentially modern genius, he felt ill at ease in the 'cadre antique' (217).

Chapter Three is devoted to an attack on *Penthesilea* – an attack, however, that has at times its unintentional humor. Early in the chapter, Bonafous comments that the production of the play would offer some difficulty. In order to depict, for example, Scene Twenty, one would need enough space to move chariots and elephants around, enough money to buy such animals, and enough patience to train dogs to howl on cue (219, note 2).

Commenting on Penthesilea's dying in the final scene by the sheer strength of her will, Bonafous notes dryly: "A remarquer la manière étrange dont elle se forge un poignard moral" (224, note 2).

In reference to Penthesilea's explanation of why she joined the dog pack when it attacked Achilles, that is, explaining it as the result of the confusion of 'Küsse' and 'Bisse,'[15] Bonafous writes: "Cette singulière erreur de prononciation, qui est tout simplement du mauvais goût, et sur laquelle Penthésilée insiste d'une façon repoussante, n'est possible qu'en allemand" (224, note 1).

Apparently unable to see Penthesilea's act as anything but literal cannibalism, Bonafous scores it as an incredible example of savagery and bestiality (234). How could Kleist, he asks, put such a character on stage? A writer ordinarily places on stage people who are responsible for their actions. Penthesilea is not, and this, he feels, was precisely what attracted Kleist to her. She represents the primeval state of nature, where man operates according to instinct and passion (235).

Then, repeating the contention of the Kleist biographer, Otto Brahm (1884), Bonafous interprets the play as a confession of Kleist's struggle with Goethe – the unvanquished Achilles of literature (235).

This is one of the earliest presentations of a theme that was soon to attract and to hold great interest among French critics, namely the nature and significance of the claimed rivalry between Goethe and Kleist.

Continuing, however, with his discussion of *Penthesilea*, Bonafous complains that the heroine is not believable. By trying to reproduce nature in all its violence, Kleist has deformed it. Penthesilea is not the highest expression of nature, as Kleist believed, but rather, the epitome of the unnatural. This explains the horror she inspires in us (236).

Bonafous criticizes the play's structure and stageworthiness as well as its content, stating emphatically that it cannot be staged,[16] and that with only two real characters and a great deal of repetitious action, it would be monotonous (237-238).

Despite these criticisms, Bonafous is able to end his chapter with favorable generalizations about the play. Its admitted excesses are very often only a good quality taken too far. Its language is energetic, colorful, Shakespearian.

> En somme, à quelque point de vue qu'on considère cette pièce qu'on ne peut jouer, qu'on y voie une idylle sanglante ou une sauvage épopée, c'est une œuvre de poète (239).

Turning to *Käthchen* in the following chapter, Bonafous points out that the same reasons that account for the play's popularity also account for the adverse reception it has had among so many critics. The mixture in it of romanticism, action, mysticism, and supernaturalism, all treated in the Shakespearean style, was designed specifically by Kleist to appeal to German sentimentality and reverie (267).

Bonafous sees the play as containing essentially three elements or themes: the boundless devotion of Käthchen, Christian mysticism, and the presentation of a historical tableau. He dismisses the last element as secondary (259). Since moreover the Count vom Strahl is won over to Käthchen as much by the fact that she fulfills the prophecy in his dream as by her intense devotion, Bonafous contends that the only real element in the play remains its Christian mysticism (265). Yet, if this is true, he thinks Kleist should have given it, once introduced into the action, the largest place. He objects to its being confused with so many foreign elements (265).

Though the play has many defects, Bonafous does not feel they should be dwelt on as much as certain German critics have done. The two principal characters are, after all, admirably drawn. The play was designed to have, and does have, very real popular appeal.

After judging *Die Hermannsschlacht*, in Chapter Five, as essentially

"une pièce de circonstance" (294), not, however, without qualities of good tragedy, Bonafous turns, in the next chapter, to Kleist's last and, in his opinion, best play, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*.

Bonafous sees the play as the counterpart of *Die Hermannsschlacht*, just as *Käthchen* is the counterpart of *Penthesilea*. Hermann derives his strength from his hatred of the foreigner, from the cause he is fighting for. Discipline, however, is another source of strength. Hatred can sometimes be enough to free peoples, but a nation must be able to count on something more certain than the hazards of battle. Real security can only be based on a respect for law and discipline. Thus Bonafous describes the train of thought that led Kleist from the championing of daring individualism in *Hermannsschlacht* to the championing of obedience to supra-individual principles in *Prinz*.

The play depicts, says Bonafous, the development of the Prince from a man guided only by his heart to a man guided by reason and a belief in, and allegiance to, something higher than himself (309). Though not suddenly an enemy of the heart, Kleist realizes, says Bonafous, that the heart is blind. It must recognize the authority of reason. It must be put in its proper place, below reason.

To the provocative question whether the Elector would actually have gone through with the execution, Bonafous answers yes, but only as a last resort. The Elector wanted only to prove that obedience to principle is more important than a reliance on mood or chance. Once this idea is accepted by the Prince, there is no point in executing him. What the Elector wants is not so much the punishment of a disobedient Homburg, but a recognition of what law is and must be (311).

Bonafous sees Homburg as a man of great feeling and imagination 3(13), a sick man (314). Being overimaginative, oversensitive, in certain respects, even, like a woman, it is quite natural for him to panic when he discovers that he is going to die. As long as he is dominated by imagination, rather than reason, he is as weak as he is guilty. But, says Bonafous, "Les faiblesses des grands cœurs doivent être passagères. Aussi Kleist n'a-t-il abaissé Hombourg que pour le mieux relever.... Il deviendra fort et sera un bon serviteur, du jour où la raison aura repris ses droits" (315).

Bonafous praises the play's form as well as its content. He sees the work as clear proof that Kleist had reached full artistic maturity. Despite this praise, however, Bonafous ends the chapter with a few personal reservations. He does not see the purpose of the two sleepwalking or dream scenes that begin and end the play.

Why, he asks, repeating Hebbel's criticism, should the Prince be afflicted by somnambulism at all? (317). It would have been far better, too, to have had the Prince consciously defy his orders. The

argument would have been the same. Moreover, if the Prince had not been conceived of as sick, there would have been no real need for the *Todesfurchtszene*, a scene which, though in keeping with his nature, nevertheless runs the risk of debasing the character (317). The Prussian officers who took offense at the scene would have had nothing to complain about and the argument of the play would have been sustained more clearly (317). Bonafous attributes Kleist's failure to do this to the influence of the Romantic school (317).

In the next four chapters, Bonafous treats Kleist's comedies and Novellen. He has generally unreserved praise for *Der zerbrochene Krug*, judging it, however, to be an excellent farce rather than a true comedy (333). Critics (*e.g.*, Otto Brahm) are mistaken, too, to see in it a criticism of society or of the judicial system. It was meant to be pure comedy and nothing else (333). Agreeing with the judgment of Clemens Brentano, Bonafous notes that at times the characters seem to go out of their way not to understand one another. This is often too forced. Bonafous, however, dismisses this criticism as very minor. One of the play's principal appeals is its rapid movement, a movement that does not slacken for a single moment (334). Kleist's real art is said, then, to consist precisely in letting the truth out only little by little so that interest and suspense are always high.[17]

Bonafous condemns the two most popular German stage versions of the play, F. L. Schmidt's (1820) and Karl Siegen's (1876), for imprudent and, especially in the version of Schmidt, extremely damaging cuts (337-338). He feels that if the work were played as it should be, the original version would not be too much for an audience to take in one uninterrupted sitting.

In Chapter Eight, Bonafous turns his attention to *Amphitryon*, calling it a free, an original translation of the Molière (348). Kleist's play is not a complete recasting of the Molière comedy. There is 'only' the addition of a new element, namely the problem as seen from Alcmene's point of view. After an act-by-act comparison of the Kleist and Molière plays, Bonafous concludes: "À Molière, Kleist doit l'idée première de sa pièce, sa marche générale, et les motifs comiques qu'elle renferme. A lui-même, il doit la partie touchante et sérieuse, le développement donné au caractère et au rôle d'Alcmène, la couleur mystique du tout" (359).

Bonafous sees Kleist's desire to change the play at all as a result of his eminently logical mind (361). Feeling that a play is not really over until the fate of all the principal characters is settled, Kleist must have found Molière's temporary solution unsatisfactory. He thus sought in his own version to find, from the point of view of theater, a final solution (362). Thus, Kleist's originality, says Bonafous, lies in his treatment of Alcmene's suffering and torment (363).

Commenting on the supposed mystic theme in the work, Bonafous says that Adam Müller went too far in claiming this to be Kleist's goal (365). Kleist could not, after all, avoid the obvious similarity of themes. If anything, Bonafous finds the portrayal of Jupiter to be more pantheistic than Christian (365).

Bonafous' major criticism is, as he admits, that of virtually every critic who has discussed the work, namely the disturbing mixture in it of tragic and comic. Actually, he says, the play is not a comedy at all. It retains throughout a tragic and somber character. The drama fails to make a unified impact on the spectator. This is especially perceptible at the end of the play where there is no transition from the joking of Merkur and Sosias to the anguished final sigh of Alcmene (365-366).

Chapters Nine and Ten are devoted to the presentation and analysis of the Novellen. Bonafous studies the Novellen in chronological order, "which is, at the same time, the order of decreasing perfection" (371).

Beginning with *Die Marquise von O*, Kleist's first and nearly finest Novelle, Bonafous compares its theme to that of *Amphitryon*. Both works revolve around the inner torment that arises as the result of an inexplicable mystery (377). He praises it for its absolute objectivity, its excellent depiction of character, and its perfect handling of action.

Bonafous judges Kleist's second work in this genre, *Das Erdbeben in Chili*, to be his finest, not only for its conciseness and its external merits but, as well, for the moral meaning it contains (380). He sees a philosophical idea in it, namely that God, even when He manifests His power by cataclysms, is still more merciful and just than humanity with its social prejudices and its religious fanaticism (380). Thus Bonafous manages to find in the tale, despite its admitted blackness, a ray of hope in the awareness it intimates of a divine justice.

After an analysis of the Novelle's structure – it is, he states, one of Kleist's most masterfully constructed works – Bonafous concludes that it represents, by its faultless composition, its nuances, its energy, and its conciseness, Kleist's greatest achievement in this genre (383).

The only exception which Bonafous feels might be made to this last judgment could be in regard to Kleist's third Novelle, *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*. Considering it to be one of Kleist's best, he defends it against the criticism of Brahm (387), judging its ending, especially singled out for attack by Brahm, to be perfectly handled and perfectly motivated. The principal interest of the tale lies in the depicting of the character of Toni, or rather, the depicting of the changes that take place in Toni's soul in the course of the action. In this last respect the Novelle is found to hold a decided advantage over *Erdbeben*. He takes justifiably sharp issue with the destructive changes made in the Novelle for the play version by Theodor Körner in 1812.

Chapter Ten is devoted to Kleist's last, and in Bonafous' opinion, most inferior Novellen. Though judging the first half of *Kohlhaas* to be superb, he sees the entire story as spoiled by such things as the witch, the swallowed paper, the diplomatic comings and goings, and the opposition of the two ruling houses – all treated in the second half of the story. He attributes this mishandling to Kleist's misguided respect for the historical sources of the story, to Kleist's hatred for the Saxons, and to the influence of Romanticism (395).

Despite its many supposed weaknesses, *Kohlhaas* is nevertheless judged superior to the remaining Novellen discussed in the chapter. *Das Bettelweib* is passed over as simply a ghost story (398). *Der Findling*, translated as *L'Enfant trouvé* by Catulle Mendès the year of the publication of Bonafous' thesis,[18] is criticized for being too gloomy (399) and for giving too great a role to chance (400). *Die heilige Cäcilie*, though powerful in spots, is judged as artificial. In its pro-Catholic leaning, it illustrates again, he feels, Kleist's growing affinity with the Romantic school. The last Novelle mentioned by Bonafous, *Der Zweikampf*, is judged a complete failure (402).

Thus, in Bonafous' opinion, the last Novellen are clearly inferior to the earlier ones, not, however, in manner of writing, which is still gripping, but in their general tone. Pessimism becomes much too great. There is far too much reliance on startling effects (403). Human free will gives way to powerful, mysterious forces moving in the background (403).

Nevertheless the Novellen are found to possess, on the whole, many merits. They are gripping, fast moving, and objective. People and actions are described with great accuracy. Their style is always sober. Kleist excells especially at depicting an act by a single gesture, a person by a single word, a sentiment by a single line (403). He then concludes his presentation of Kleist's works with brief mention of *Über das Marionettentheater*, a work which presents, he says, some paradoxical, but interesting notions (404).

Chapter Eleven is devoted, Bonafous says, to a consideration of the principal traits of the author, to the salient characteristics of his work, and to an attempt to determine the place he occupies in the literary movement of his time (405).

Bonafous sees Kleist as a person whose basic instability, aggravated by overwhelming ambition, lack of money, and frustrated patriotism, led him to commit actions that bordered on the insane. As time passed, Bonafous sees Kleist as indeed actually coming ever closer to this end. Kleist's world is one of chaos and injustice, where genius is unable to gain recognition. Free will is illusory. God is a mysterious and terrible power, while men are the powerless playthings of chance. Life is evil and must be rejected. Thus, Bonafous

maintains, the idea of suicide came as a logical conclusion to Kleist's train of thought (401).

Bonafous thus makes the same error that will consistently vitiate so much Kleist criticism on both sides of the Rhine, that is, he attempts to find in the nature of Kleist's final catastrophe the elements of his philosophy of life. By thus regarding Kleist's life and work from the end backward, he not only exaggerates Kleist's fatalism, making of him a kind of Müllner, but completely overlooks the fact that the year and a half prior to Kleist's suicide was filled with positive and fruitful activity – a fact that was soon to be greatly stressed in Germany in the critical and biographical studies of Hugo Gaudig and especially Reinhold Steig.

Judging Kleist's suicide, however, to be the logical outcome of his view of life, Bonafous says that he is not surprised that the works of such a man should be somber. Despite the humor in *Krug* and in *Amphitryon*, the overall tone of Kleist's work is such as to leave a sad and even lugubrious impression (411). Yet, this was not enough for Kleist, says Bonafous. He needed horror, violent emotions, hate, religious fanaticism, and love that leads to madness. Kleist seems to have had a penchant for scenes of horror that provoke physical revulsion. Bonafous attributes this to a desire to break out of trodden paths, to shock by means of the extraordinary and the strange (411).

But, Bonafous warns, such a path is dangerous. From the strange to the occult is only a step. Kleist's interest in all forms of the supernatural, even somnambulism, often has a deleterious effect on his works. In *Käthchen*, for example, somnambulism and divine intervention seriously weaken the theme (412). In *Prinz*, somnambulism changes what should have been a conscious breach of discipline into a mistake due to inattention. Much of this, Bonafous judges to be due, first to the influence of Shakespeare, later to that of the Romantics. This excuses the defect, he says, but does not erase it (413). Fortunately Kleist was also able to conceive subjects in which the springs of action were human, where reason, will, and freedom play a role.

Repeatedly Bonafous objects to the intervention of supernatural forces and to the use of somnambulism in Kleist's works, insisting that the characters in his plays are real enough not to need to be moved by extra-sensory influences. Speaking of these characters, Bonafous says that the heroes are, for the most part, modeled after their creator, the heroines after dream images, and the minor characters after his observations (414).

As for Kleist's language, Bonafous sees real progress in the later works, where earlier mistakes, frequent bad taste, and certain violences in metaphor, are corrected. The language in his later works is precise, energetic, and always colorful (417).

In the last pages of his study, Boanfous attempts to arrive at an evaluation of Kleist's position in relation to his contemporaries, and at a final judgment of the place he holds in the history of literature.

For the most part, Kleist escaped the generally bad influence exercised on many *Stürmer und Dränger* by Shakespeare. Despite his love of the strange, he succeeded in staying on the solid ground of the real, succeeded in placing in every character something of himself, his dreams or his memories (418). Kleist failed, however, in his attempt to follow Goethe on Hellenic ground. Unlike Goethe, who could encompass all, Kleist could not go beyond his own inner nature (419), in short could not achieve the calm which Bonafous considers to be the essence of the Greek spirit. This accounts for the failure of *Robert Guiscard* and his turning away from Greek themes after *Penthesilea* (419).

Bonafous stresses the great influence of the Romantics on Kleist's work. To this influence he attributes the fatalism and the use of the occult in the plays and in the Novellen beginning with *Käthchen*. It is from the date of this play, he says, that Kleist can be counted in the Romantic school (420). Thereafter divine intervention, somnambulism. witches, mysticism, and Catholicism clutter his works. Judged as a Romantic, Kleist holds a place of honor due, in large part, to his greater concern for form (421). Both as a dramatist and as a writer of Novellen, Kleist far surpassed his contemporaries in the Romantic school.

Contemporary Germany, says Bonafous, as if trying to make up for the disdain it formerly accorded to one of its most talented Romantics, has now taken Kleist from virtual obscurity and placed him on a pedestal. This is a position far more just than that given to him in earlier years. Yet, it is not his final place.

Kleist needed, says Bonafous, to have lived in another age, to have had a life less blighted with misfortune. Lacking this, however, he should have been strong enough to dominate himself, his works, and the world about him. A great genius must remain above his creations. This was not true of Kleist and his work. "Kleist ne fait qu'un avec ses œuvres, où il a mis tous ses sentiments et même ses rêves, qu'il a pénétrées de sa mélancolie ou de son pessimisme. C'est pour cela qu'elles sont si vivantes; mais c'est pour cela aussi qu'elles sont troublées comme lui" (421).

Kleist's work, like his life, lacked calm and serenity. With his last play, *Prinz*, he glimpsed the promised land, but was not able to enter it. Bonafous ends his book with a final judgment on Kleist's rank as a writer. "Doué de qualitées supérieures, il a rêvé de conquérir la première place. Cette première place, il ne l'a obtenue que parmi les génies de second ordre" (422).

If the goal of Bonafous' work was, as he stated at the conclusion of

his preface, simply to acquaint the French with the life and works of Kleist, then the work can be said to fulfill reasonably well its aim. Through the study, Bonafous seems to have tried honestly to explain and to point out both good and bad elements in each work. With the exception of his criticism of *Penthesilea* and the later *Novellen*, where rationalistic bias is most evident, he has, it seems, tried to refrain from concrete judgments. It is perhaps precisely this quality of pretended objectivity that creates, in the end, the most dissatisfaction.

The constant use of such expressions as 'despite its faults,' 'whether we like it or not,' 'it is nevertheless the work of a poet,' 'leaving aside its many faults,' 'overlooking its crude mixture of,' when coupled with such vague statements as 'a work of merit,' 'a work of inspiration,' 'a work showing originality,' 'the work of a poet,' 'a work possessing great qualities,' add up finally to a judgment of Kleist all the more difficult to combat as it seems to have been arrived at by critically fair and impartial means, namely the judgment that Kleist was a good, but second rate writer.

A close look at Bonafous' impartiality shows it to be of an interesting kind. A glance at works approved and works disapproved, along with the reasons for acceptance or rejection, is in itself revealing. Approved: *Das Erdbeben, Die Verlobung, Die Marquise von O, Prinz,* and *Krug*. Disapproved: *Schroffenstein, Penthesilea, Amphitryon, Käthchen, Kohlhaas* (second part), and the remaining Novellen. The early Novellen are praised for their logical construction, objectivity, and psychological realism, *Krug* for realistic comedy, and *Prinz* for its logical construction and its lesson that the heart must submit to reason. The later Novellen are condemned for exaggerated fatalism and the use of the supernatural, *Penthesilea* for violating the bounds of the real, *Amphitryon* for its illogic and its mixture of comic and tragic, *Käthchen* for its conscious appeal to sentimental reverie and for its use of divine intervention, *Kohlhaas* for its use of the supernatural, and *Schroffenstein* for its melodrama and lack of restraint.

The bias of the realist, of the rationalist is evident throughout. In every instance, Bonafous will judge the influence of Romaticism on Kleist to have been bad. Motivation of characters and events must lie in the real world and not in extra-sensory forces, or in any concept of malevolent fate. Construction must be 'logical,' effects 'unified,' language 'reasonable,' and characters 'responsible.'

Bonafous' study represents the honest work of an academic critic brought up in an age of scientific realism. Using only the general criteria of the period, Bonafous, with scholarly method, attempts to present as impartially as possible the life and work of a German author. The author happened to be Kleist. One cannot help but feel that the object of Bonafous' study remains essentially a matter of

indifference to him. As Ayrault will say some forty years later of Bonafous' work: "En fait Bonafous s'efforce vainement, dans ses quatre cents pages, d'entrer en un rapport vraiment intime avec le génie du poète qu'il se propose d'évoquer."[19]

This criticism, made in reference to Bonafous' work, seems to apply equally well to the entire period just presented. Kleist could no longer be ignored by critics of German literature, yet, despite the tempting realism in *Krug*, in *Kohlhaas*, in *Erdbeben*, and in *Die Marquise*, he could not be accepted either. In short, he could not be understood, a 'rapport' could not be achieved. As we have seen earlier, the Romantics tried to use Kleist's romaticism while rejecting his violent realism. The realists now attempt to use his realism while rejecting his romanticism. Both camps will reject his use of the abnormal. Both will leave *Penthesilea* for another generation to discover.

It is perhaps in this rejection of *Penthesilea* that the lack of understanding of nearly a century of critics is most clearly revealed. It cannot be maintained that Kleist can be understood independent of this admittedly difficult work. Yet the implication here is not that this work alone offers the key to Kleist and his works. It is simply that Kleist must be studied as the creator of *Penthesilea* and *Prinz*, and *Kohlhaas*, and *Käthchen*. Any work, like Bonafous', or Koch's, or Gaucher's, or Peyrègne's, or the criticism that preceded it, which sets out to accept one creation of Kleist's, while rejecting another, will, despite what it may do to reaffirm or destroy the prevailing critical norms, falsify Kleist and his work. Any such approach will fail to achieve the 'rapport' essential to an understanding of an artist's work. Such a 'rapport' was not achieved by the French critics of Kleist in the nineteenth century.

In all fairness to French critics, it must be pointed out, however, that a real understanding of Kleist, a real coming to grips with his works, was not largely achieved by German critics at this time either. Despite the proliferation of good studies of Kleist and his works in the eighties, there was, with the possible exception of Otto Brahm (1884), little attempt to arrive at an overall view of Kleist's work, no suggestion, that is, that any two given works must have been written by the same man.

Though the Tieck-Goethe, 'pathological' line of Kleist criticism was still in evidence in the early studies of Erich Schmidt (1883, 1886), it was for the most part rejected in critical works after Brahm. Yet, even here, Kleist was all too often judged piece-meal, or blindly praised, as in Brahm and Emil Mauerhof (1887), more in a sense of *parti pris* against Goethe and Schiller, than in a true appreciation of the original nature of Kleist's genius. Just as in France, the work that revealed Kleist at his most personal, intimate level, *Penthesilea*, suffered most. The failure to find in Kleist's works the reflection of

a single genius, made it impossible either to understand the nature of that genius or the nature of its creations.

It is perhaps with this in mind, this need to find an underlying, unifying element, to find the thread that unites such apparently radically different creations, that German and French critics in the twentieth century will turn to the one factor they all possess in common, namely their author, Kleist himself. It is with this explanation, or perhaps only as a reflection of the growing popularity of psychoanalytical criticism, that critics, after a hundred years of Kleist study, will once again concentrate on the enigmatic figure of Kleist himself. As though taking their cue from Bonafous' last statement – "Kleist ne fait qu'un avec ses œuvres" – they will assume that once Kleist the man is understood, an understanding of Kleist the author and of Kleist's work will be reduced to a matter of tracing reflections.

CHAPTER VI

CRITICAL 'REGRESSION,' 1900-1919

Unfortunately for the literary historian, literary trends, critical attitudes, seldom respond immediately, as they might conveniently do, to major chronological, or even, very often, major historical events. Thus Kleist criticism, as it turns into the twentieth century, cannot be said to reveal any immediate, radical break with the criticism of the previous decade. On the whole, Kleist's realism will continue to be praised, his romanticism and extravagance will continue to be censured, much as they were in the preceding period of realism and naturalism.

Yet in the period between the turn of the century and the great war of 1914-1918, a shift in the nature of French Kleist criticism is readily apparent. The shift is, in a sense, a 'regression,' back, that is, to the earlier preoccupation of critics and popularizers with the figure of Kleist himself. Like many forms of regression, however, it is, while being a return to earlier, more primitive practices, at the same time a return accompanied by the use of much more sophisticated materials and tools. The materials were, in this instance, to be found in the greatly increased fund of knowledge concerning Kleist's life – a fund, however, not nearly rich enough to justify the use it was put to – while the tools were often found in the new discoveries being made in the field of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic criticism.

While Kleist criticism does not reflect any immediate or great reaction to a change of centuries, it shows even less reaction to the changing state of Franco-German literary relations in the period 1890-1914. The fortune of Kleist in France does not seem to have been greatly affected by the vogue of German Romanticism that reached its peak with the victory of the symbolists in the nineties.[1]

It was equally unaffected by the violent reaction against Romanticism, especially German Romanticism, that set in among French critics, e.g., Louis Reynaud, Ernest Seillière, Pierre Lasserre, shortly thereafter, this despite the fact that Kleist was always classed by French critics as a thorough Romantic. It seems, too, largely to have escaped the effects of the hostile, increasingly anti-German attitude of nationalistic critics, who, in the period 1900-1914, linked Romanti-

cism directly with German *Kaisertum*, Pan-Germanism, and, strangely enough, Lutheran Protestantism.[2]

Just as Kleist was later to be one of the first German authors produced in France in the still sensitive years following the Second World War, so he was one of the few German authors to be produced successfully in Paris in this period of growing hostility between the two nations. When his being German, and thus an enemy, becomes a consideration, the attempt will be, as will be seen later, to show his real affinity to France and to explain away his famed hatred for the French.

Yet such considerations will remain, for the most part, secondary. The real interest of those critics who treat Kleist in this period will largely be directed toward the man himself, toward an attempt to find in the man a key to the works and in the works a key to the man, a direction on the whole unfortunately encouraged by the marking, in 1911, of the one hundredth anniversary of Kleist's suicide.

French compilers of histories of literature had, in general, given only the briefest attention to Kleist and his works. It is with some surprise, then, that one finds Adolphe Bossert devoting in his *Histoire de la littérature allemande* some seventeen pages of his chapter on the Romantic drama to the works of this one author.[3] Except in the case of Grillparzer, this is the largest notice given to a single writer in the entire section treating Romanticism, revealing, it would seem, the enthusiasm of a personal discovery. Bossert begins his critique by saying that though Kleist had more poetic sense than to be taken in by the mechanism of the fate drama, he is, nevertheless, linked to the Romantics by his personality, by his taste for the strange and the occult, and by his striving to achieve a new art form. His great misfortune, however, lay in the fact that he was never certain of the goal he was after (673).

Seemingly echoing Bonafous' earlier judgment, Bossert writes that Kleist's last Novellen betray real fatigue. Except, however, for a brief footnote to the effect that Kleist, along with Tieck, was the creator of the German Novelle (686), Bossert passes over Kleist's work in this genre in order to devote his attention exclusively to the dramas.

Bossert condemns *Schroffenstein* as an unfortunate attempt to renew an old subject by complicating it with bizarre incidents. The last part is judged a childish fiction. The style of the whole is criticized as uneven, forced, incoherent, and often obscure, while the imagery is dismissed as extravagant (675).

For *Penthesilea*, Bossert has, for the first time in French Kleist criticism, ample, though scarcely unqualified, praise.[4] Despite the strangeness of its world, he finds only praise for its composition (676). Bossert finds Penthesilea a strange mixture of grace and fury. Then,

after a relatively lengthy and enthusiastic description of several scenes, he concludes: "Malgré l'outrance des sentiments, malgré le clinquant des métaphores, la tragédie de *Penthésilée* est la création la plus puissante et la plus originale de Kleist; c'est un chef-d'œuvre dans le genre monstrueux" (679). Though, to be sure, this last statement is rather equivocal praise, it nevertheless indicates an interesting change in the attitude of a French critic toward a work which heretofore had been met principally with shock and indignation.

Passing on to *Käthchen*, Bossert praises the first act while dismissing the rest as a chivalric adventure in the taste of *Sturm und Drang* with an added dash of Romantic occultism (680). The play hovers constantly, he says, between drama and opera. Its popularity is due exclusively to the spectacle it presents.

Die Hermannsschlacht is judged initially as a political play (680), and finally as one long anachronism (682), though Bossert does point to Hermann as typical of Kleist's heroes in that he has a single passion which he carries to the point of madness (680).

Bossert finds *Prinz* to be of fresher inspiration, as well as of more logical conception, this despite the eccentricity of the main character (683). He sees the essential theme, the conflict between military discipline and personal initiative, just as Hebbel had, as somewhat blurred, however, by the introduction of what he refers to as foreign elements, namely somnambulism (683). Like Bonafous, he objects to the first and last scenes (684).

In reference to *Krug*, Bossert virtually quotes Bonafous, judging Kleist's comedy to be a simple but ingenious farce, a thoroughly funny comedy (684). He follows Bonafous as well in his judgment of *Amphitryon* as an unhappy fusion of comedy and mysticism (685).

In his final pages devoted to Kleist, Bossert discusses Kleist and his dramas in a more general sense. Kleist possessed, he says, to a high degree *some* of the qualities that make a great dramatist (685). When he introduces some supernatural agent at the end of his dramas, for example, it is strictly because he wants to, for the plays, in Bossert's opinion, have no need for such devices. In his two plays relying most on the occult, *Käthchen* and *Prinz*, the occult serves only as useless ornamentation (686). Kleist's characters are clearly presented. Beside the mystical poet there stands, in Bossert's view, the true realist (686). His language is expressive, slowly ridding itself of extravagant metaphors. What then is wrong with Kleist? "C'est de savoir proportionner les événements et les personnages à la juste mesure qui convient à la scène; c'est de se renfermer dans les limites de la nature et de l'humanité, qui sont en même temps les limites de l'art et les conditions du beau" (686).

He then concludes his treatment of Kleist with a reference to

Goethe's judgment of the author, with which, it must be assumed, he apparently agrees (686).

Though Bossert's study of Kleist cannot be said to differ greatly in essentials from Bonafous', or, in fact, from the principal criticisms of the previous twenty years, it is, as has been mentioned, significant in at least two respects. First, by devoting such a relatively large amount of space to Kleist in a work covering the entire history of German literature, Bossert, knowingly or not, implied a judgment as to Kleist's importance. Secondly, in his attitude toward *Penthesilea*, reserved as it may be, he shows a marked departure from previous criticism of the same play.

It is precisely on these two points that Eduard de Morsier will answer Bossert in an article appearing later in the same year in the *Bibliothèque universelle et revue suisse.*[5] The very violence of the answer indicates that Kleist, or at least Kleist in so far as he represented Romanticism, had become a subject worthy of controversy.

Morsier begins by saying that though the fate drama is part and parcel of Romanticism, it does not represent true romantic drama. Such true Romantic drama, in all its incoherence, its passion, and its beauty, is best represented by the dramas of Kleist (535). After this categorical definition, Morsier launches the attack. "Mais, comme chez beaucoup de romantiques, la personnalité d'Henri de Kleist vaut mieux que son œuvre. Celle-ci, – à part quelques nouvelles, les premières en date du genre [Bonafous?], – ne consiste au fond qu'en une suite d'essais dramatiques: comédies, drames ou tragédies, que leur imperfection, leur décousu, leur manque de proportion... empêchèrent toujours de réussir à la scène ou même d'y arriver" (535).

To support his last statement, Morsier points to the failure of *Krug* before it was arranged for the stage by Ludwig Schmidt, to the success of Kleist's finest Romantic play, *Käthchen*, only in a version of Holbein, and to the failure of *Hermannsschlacht* until it too was arranged in 1875 (536).

Even in Kleist's best drama, *Prinz*, which is at the same time, Morsier adds, Kleist's best and most subjective work, romantic lyricism invades and spoils the dramatic action. Morsier feels that the seventeen pages Bossert devotes to Kleist are out of proportion to the place he holds in the history of German theater (536).

He cannot understand the useless and superfluous attention given by Bossert to ultra-Romantic works like *Schroffenstein* and *Penthesilea*. Why give, he asks, detailed analyses of such works, especially *Penthesilea*? "A quoi bon analyser ce 'chef-d'œuvre dans le genre monstrueux?'" (537).

Morsier then states frankly what so many critics earlier had only illustrated by the nature of their criticisms. "Je sais bien que le poète chez Kleist, bien qu'ultra-romantique, valait mieux... que son

œuvre" (537). Kleist's life was certainly that of an unbalanced person, perhaps, as Max Nordau says, that of a "degenerate."[6] Then, continuing in a more personal attack on Kleist, he reminds his readers that this hysterical degenerate did not even have the courage to die alone but dragged with him a poor, sick woman. Yet Kleist has remained, he grumbles, a haloed figure in the German literary world (537).

One can sense in Kleist, he continues, aside from the madness, a power of realization reminiscent of Shakespeare. It is for this reason, Morsier adds, that members of *das jüngste Deutschland*, e.g., Hermann Bahr, are at present promoting Kleist. But, he says, Bahr and those like him are using Kleist simply as "bouclier au 'condottiere' de lettres," in order to attack all those they detest, beginning with Schiller. Thus, Kleist has, in Morsier's opinion, been inflated out of all proportion, depicted as an unrecognized genius, in order to diminish the stature of the truly great (538). He takes especial exception to ranking Kleist above Grillparzer. But then, he reminds, pushing himself far out on the critical limb, there were those in France who claimed Dumas *fils* to be only a dwarf compared to Gérard de Nerval (579).

In his concluding remarks on Kleist, Morsier again claims he represents the summit of Romantic drama. Yet Romantic drama was not drama at all, but, rather, poems that attempted unsuccessfully to be dramatic (539). Romantic dramas are not stageable. Their authors were floating in imagination and fantasy, so-called playwrights who never set foot on a real stage, whereas the real dramatic poet of the time, the true son of Schiller, was Grillparzer. The remainder of the article is given over to unreserved praise for the creator of *Sappho*, *Ottokar*, and above all, *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (539).

If Kleist could attract in this period unreasonable opponents, he could, as well, attract unreasonable admirers. Into this latter category must fall Edmond Fazy. His article appearing in the *Mercure de France*, October, 1903, indicates that at least some French critics were guilty of the accusations of cultism made by Morsier.[7]

The article was occasioned by a "pilgrimage" made by Fazy to the grave of Kleist, the greatest artist, Fazy writes, that Prussia ever produced. When Kleist died in 1811, he had already equalled Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and the masters of the prose tale (566). He follows this general praise with a quick review of Kleist's major works.

Schroffenstein – "Roméo et Juliette en Allemagne, parmi les *burgs*, les sorcières, les fiançailles au clair de la lune, et la chevalerie," – is not surpassed by Shakespeare or the Italians in candor or in gentleness (567).

Though, in Fazy's opinion, the *Amphitryon* "of Plautus and

Molière" was changed by Kleist into a strangely mystical drama, *Krug* is judged by him to be one of the best verse comedies in European literature. Could Goethe, Fazy asks in disbelief, really have scorned Kleist's genius? (567).

He praises the 'extraordinary' *Penthesilea*, whose ending is reminiscent of Kyd, Lodge, Webster or Cyril Tourneur. In it, Eros triumphs over hatred (567). Speaking of the "fête de roses" promised Achilles by Penthesilea, Fazy comments: "Ces flots de sang mi-divin répandus sur cette chair si blanche ne forment-ils pas de roses, en effet, toute une fête de roses?" (567).

Of *Kohlhaas* he writes that neither Mérimée nor Maupassant has ever written anything more sober, more concise, more moving (567). There is not an excess word. The least details appear with the greatest possible intensity. He predicts for the figure of Kohlhaas the literary immortality of Singleton, of Matteo Falcone, of Père Milon. He praises *Käthchen*, *Die Hermannsschlacht* and the Novellen (568). The *Prinz* is also praised for its depiction of how a Kantian sense of duty finally overcomes individual egotism. For the first time Kleist's essay *Über das Marionettentheater* is praised, here claimed by Fazy to be worthy of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam or even of Edgar Poe in its implacable logic and in the precision of its style. And finally, Fazy makes another first in his mention of Kleist's poem *Das letzte Lied*, following it then with a final judgment of Kleist's genius:

> Le Dernier Lied, où s'épanche et se résume en 48 vers tout le génie désespéré de Kleist! Auprès d'un tel créateur, un Novalis et un Tieck s'évanouissent comme des ombres exsangues. Seuls, Hoelderlin... Grabbe... restent debout à côté de lui, fraternellement. Au culte de la réalité, de la vérité, Kleist unit celui de la beauté harmonieuse, de la fiction et du mystère. Les pieds solidement plantés en pleine terre, Kleist – d'ailleurs Kantiste – prête l'oreille à des musiques lointaines, et cherche des yeux là-haut cet Eden de fleurs inconnues qu'on nomme l'idéal (578).

After this judgment, Fazy devotes the remainder of the article to a very moving description of his pilgrimage to Kleist's grave in mid-winter. He then tells of the suicide, repeating the story of the supposed oath extracted from Kleist by Henriette Vogel. In his closing remarks, he criticizes the faithless editors, such as Tieck, Julian Schmidt, Hermann Kurz, and others, who have betrayed Kleist by tampering with his works. He points to the edition of E. Grisebach in 1883 as the first to respect Kleist's texts. It is shameful, he comments, that there is still no complete, definitive edition.[8]

He then concludes with the judgment that, less unfortunate,

Kleist would have been the Shakespeare of Germany (570) and ends finally by saying that before leaving the Wannsee, he placed a flower on Kleist's grave as a gesture "en dévotieux hommage à tout ce que j'aime" (570).

Though Fazy's article may well be censured for a certain lack of critical acumen, it cannot be doubted that it is the sincere testament of a fervent and knowledgeable Kleist admirer. It is good journalism and, appearing as it did in the well-known and widely read *Mercure*, it was doubtless good propaganda.

If there were Frenchmen who would travel to Berlin to see Kleist's grave, there must certainly be Frenchmen in Paris who would travel to the theater to see one of Kleist's most entertaining and least controversial plays. Such, at least, might have been the train of thought of the directors of the Théâtre Victor Hugo when they decided to introduce Kleist's *Der zerbrochene Krug* to Paris theatre-goers on February 20, 1904.

The adaptation used in this production was the work of J. Gravier and H. Vernot. The French text appeared later in the same year in *La Nouvelle revue.*[9] It is a considerably shortened version of the original, the total length being reduced by approximately one-half. The most important changes were made in the following scenes: Scene Three, Adam's prophetic dream, cut; Scene Seven, Frau Marthe's description of the genealogy of the pitcher was cut; Scene Ten, between Walter and Adam over wine, cut; Scene Eleven, Frau Brigitte's speech, greatly cut; Scenes Ten, Eleven, and Twelve were reduced to one short scene to end the play.

Cuts in the text were not, however, the only alterations made. In the French version, the ending is also slightly altered. Instead of Walter sending Licht after Adam to prevent the latter from "doing himself harm," Walter, in the revised version, places Licht, as though a victor, in the judge's seat.[10] While this is taking place, Ruprecht and Eve kiss, and to Frau Marthe's question about her broken pitcher, Walter, in an uncalled-for exaggeration of the symbolism of the pitcher, answers, pointing to the two lovers, "Elle n'a jamais été cassée, Dame Marthe." On this line the curtain falls.

As might be expected in a translation, and especially in this Kleist play, most of the humor depending on a play on words had to be sacrificed. An instance of a pale attempt to retain this important element in Kleist's comedy occurs in Scene Nine of the Gravier-Vernot version. In the corresponding scene (Scene Six) in the original text, Frau Marthe had just greeted Ruprecht's father with a hearty invective. Veit replies: "Sei sie nur ruhig, / Frau Marthe! Es wird sich alles hier entscheiden." To which Marthe answers: "O ja. Entscheiden. Seht doch, den Klugschwätzer. / Den Krug mir, den zerbrochenen, entscheiden. / Wer wird mir den geschiednen Krug

entscheiden? Hier wird entschieden werden, dass geschieden / Der Krug mir bleiben soll. Für so'n Schiedsurteil / Geb ich noch die geschiednen Scherben nicht" (Scene 6, 417-422).

In the French adaptation, the same scene reads as follows: To Ruprecht's[11] statement, "Ne criez donc pas si fort! On trouvera bien celui qui l'a cassée et vous vous arrangerez avec lui!" Dame Marthe replies, "M'arranger? le beau merle! Va-t-on par hasard me l'arranger ma belle cruche cassée? Merci de l'arrangeur qui prétend tout arranger sans arranger ce qu'il dérangea" (152). It was, at least, an honest attempt.

As a whole, the role of Adam is made far less comic than in the original. Many of his evasion speeches are shortened, others are dropped completely. Eve's role is reduced virtually to that of a bystander. Even Frau Marthe's role is cut. Licht is made to seem much more like a man scheming after Adam's job than he was. The ending is much too abrupt, while the statement by Walter that if the records are in reasonable order there is no tragedy done – a statement important for our final judgment of Adam as not a vicious scoundrel, simply a scoundrel – is left out. Also cut is the amusing description of Adam flying over hill and dale to escape, a final comic touch added to the figure of the fallen Adam. The altered ending also replaces the psychologically accurate and superbly stage-wise lines of Kleist with the rather silly, factitious closing lines of a French farce.

This truncated version of Kleist's comedy played for some six weeks at the Théâtre Victor Hugo (Feb. 20 - March 31). It was reviewed favorably by Émile Faguet in the *Journal des débats* several days after its opening.

> Avec *les Pantins* (G. Grillet) le théâtre Victor Hugo a donné une traduction de *la Cruche cassée* du très grand poète dramatique Henri de Kleist, ce contemporain de Goethe que la plupart des lettrés allemands (si ce n'est tous) mettent très nettement au-dessus de Goethe et de Schiller comme poète dramatique. [!] *La Cruche cassée* est en effet extrêmement intéressante et très dramatique et d'une finesse psychologique qui est peu commune. Il faut remercier M. Bour de l'avoir fait connaître en France, "aux chandelles" du moins, ce qui est la seule manière de connaître une pièce et de pouvoir en juger. Il est incontestable que *la Cruche cassée* est un petit chef-d'œuvre.[12]

Thus nearly a hundred years after its creation, twenty years after its translation into French, Kleist's play is finally presented to the French "aux chandelles." Despite Faguet's favorable review and the long run of the play at the Victor Hugo, however, the play was not

mentioned in the other leading journals of the period. It was not produced again in the following season. Though Kleist was repeatedly presented to the French as a dramatist, it was to his Novellen, and especially to *Michael Kohlhaas*, that principal attention would continue to be directed.

In his study of the development of the novel in Germany, Léon Pineau devotes a section of his chapter on the Romantic novel to this most discussed of Kleist's Novellen.[13] Pineau regards *Kohlhaas* as one of the few, and best, examples of Romantic works in which, he says, beside the fantastic, the occult, and the imagined, there exists a bit of real life (59).

He gives a résumé of the story, separating the historic and fictional elements, and finally praises the whole for its excellent psychological observation and, above all, for its theme –that of a man led by injustice to commit, despite himself, even greater injustice. The intensity with which this timeless theme was felt by Kleist is clearly evident throughout the Novelle. This, plus its basic truth, has kept the work alive for more than a century (61).

Yet the work has survived, says Pineau, *despite* the regrettable elements of Romanticism in it (61).

Thus Pineau is consistent with the majority of the critics of the period in praising Kleist in one voice while condemning him in another. In like manner, Arthur Chuquet, in his *Littérature allemande*, published in Paris the following year, will praise Kleist as the best of the Romantics, praise which in this period seems to have meant that he was the best of the Romantics because he was least like the Romantics. "Henri de Kleist est le plus grand des romantiques et il les dépasse tous par ce qu'il a de puissant, de saisissant, d'entrâinant, par l'originale beauté de la forme, par l'art de disposer un ensemble."[14]

Though praising the Novellen in general for their sober, objective, intense style, and *Kohlhaas* in particular for its presentation of a tragic hero, he criticizes this same Novelle for its excessively long sentences, for its being over-loaded with incidents, and for its degenerating in the end into a witch's tale (344). *Krug* is praised as one of the best German comedies, *Schroffenstein*, however, condemned as a confusing play based on improbable misunderstandings (345). He does not like *Käthchen* and though admitting that *Die Hermannsschlacht* has some remarkable scenes, he finds that its characters are too forced (346). He expresses this same ambivalence toward *Prinz*, finding the figure of the Elector to have been perfectly drawn, yet feeling that the famous *Todesfurchtszene* ought to have been softened somewhat and the use of the fantastic as well as somnambulism completely avoided (347).

He sees in Kleist's suicide the final triumph of dream over reality, and in Kleist's work the constant reflection of a somber, melancholy

spirit. His only comedy, *Krug*, was composed on a bet, says Chuquet, not out of gaiety (347). In all of his works, he depicts suffering and misfortune. Though Kleist often has recourse to the extraordinary, to the occult, and to the supernatural, though his style is at times hard and incorrect, though, in short, he had many traits of the Romantics, Chuquet feels his works are real and will live, for they present to us truly unforgettable characters (347).

From the necessarily sketchy review of Kleist's work in Chuquet's history, we turn next to the very detailed study of two of Kleist's Novellen appearing in Paul Bastier's *La Nouvelle individualiste en Allemagne*, published in Paris in 1910. The sub-heading of the book, *Essai de technique psychologique* indicates the approach Bastier will take in his analyses of the two Novellen, *Die Marquise von O* and *Das Erdbeben in Chili*.

He begins with a few general remarks on Kleist's Novelle technique, saying that the practice of the Novelle writer of illustrating character principally by action and events is followed more rigorously by Kleist than by any other writer (79). His Novellen are, in Bastier's view, so filled with action and life that they seem almost to be overcrowded (80). Bastier then gives a seven-page résumé of *Die Marquise von O*, following this with a discussion and analysis of the Novelle and its characters as such, postponing his remarks on Kleist's relation to the work until the latter part of the book.

The actual event of the Novelle, that is, the rape of the Marquise, is not, he says, so incredible. "Ce qui apparaît innouï, c'est que la personnalité, le moi de la marquise ayant subi une interruption de quelques minutes, elle soit désormais forcée d'agir comme si, pendant ces courts instants, elle avait *voulu* être coupable" (79). Though innocent, she experiences herself the feeling of having been defiled. Having been so brutally mistreated, she had every right to revolt, yet she feels she must be resigned (87).

Her actions, however, are not guided solely by revolt and submission. Love plays its role. After discovering who committed the rape, the Marquise is principally angry that, "on a disposé d'elle. Elle, qui croyait se donner librement, qui par la pensée se donnait déjà, elle voit que depuis longtemps elle n'était plus libre. Et quel est le misérable qui fit d'elle une chose, sa chose; quel est celui qui a acheté son âme? C'est celui à qui elle voulait la donner" (88).

Turning then to a discussion of the technique of the story, Bastier says that in very few Novellen are the unity and continuity of action so rigorous. The idea of the event taking place in wartime gives to it the necessary distance, otherwise it would offend more than it does, or, at least, has done in the past. On this point Bastier criticizes severely those who object to the story as scabrous. Such critics are, he says, hypocrites. As for local color, he points out that

time and locale play little part in the story. The reader is not affected by the Italian setting. The story has its roots in other, deeper, places.

Bastier then turns to the second Novelle, Kleist's *Erdbeben in Chili*. After giving a brief résumé of the story, he comments that ironically it is ill-fortune (in the form of the earthquake) that saves the two lovers, at least for a moment, while it is good fortune (i.e., some people escaping from the cataclysm) that brings about their death. He sees the two lovers as "victims of their instincts (love)" who die "victims of mob instinct" (91). No lesson of humaneness was drawn from the disaster. The horror of the earthquake is followed almost immediately by the horror of human fanaticism (91).

Bastier insists that the many hypnotic elements in the story should not be overlooked either. In spite of the advice of others, he points out, in spite even of their own presentiments, the lovers go to the Mass where they are to meet their death (92).

Pointing out again how well Kleist unites form and content, Bastier says that the rapidity of the action seems to justify, to explain, the violence of the action (92).

Unlike *Die Marquise*, locale plays an important role in *Das Erdbeben*. Kleist does not present an ordinary American style lynching, but rather a lynching with all the overtones of a lapidation, a combination of the fanaticism of the Spanish Inquisition and Indian barbarism (92-93).

In the latter chapters of his work, Bastier points to the subjective or autobiographical material that often, despite the rigorously objective appearance of the narratives, enters into or colors Kleist's Novellen. Specifically, he mentions the Italian father of the Marquise as being an authentic North-German officer. He points, as well, to the depiction of the love of the tutor for the daughter of his employer as being another clear reflection of a situation in Kleist's own life.

Yet, as Bastier says, the real subjectivity of the Novellen is of a more subtle kind. It is more a coloring or a mood cast over the whole. Kleist's personal anxieties – his concern for his country, his constant thoughts of death, of suicide, his fears of madness – all combined to give the Novellen their unique, subjective coloring (285).

Bastier even sees the important role given to a child in the two stories as a clear reflection of Kleist's own deeply felt desire for children (286).

Ending his commentary on the two Novellen with more general remarks as to their nature and meaning, Bastier praises *Erdbeben* for its ending which, unlike the final scenes of most individualistic Novellen, he finds to be both tragic and dramatic (308). Throughout

Kleist's Novellen, Bastier sees the portrayal of the brutal opposition of the ideal and the real. This opposition, however, is not in Kleist's Novellen, as in many of Theodor Storm's, that of the individual against the collectivity. In *Erdbeben*, for example, the action of the lovers is necessary and right. The action of the crowd is also necessary and right, and the two actions, with no causal connection between them, add up to disaster.

He ends his remarks on the two Novellen with an interesting schematization of the motifs in *Erdbeben*, showing the intricate richness of this seemingly simple story. The Novelle is a masterpiece of construction and balance.

Kleist's rank as a writer of Novellen is, after Bastier's detailed study, indisputably fixed. Yet Bastier's analysis, valuable as it is, would have for the most part for an audience only the professional Germanists, the students and teachers of German literature, who, surely by this time, were already aware of, if not agreed upon, Kleist's qualities as a writer. Efforts to make Kleist better known among the larger literate public fell, as in all times, to the critics writing in the popular literary journals. Two such writers, Henri Albert, responsible for the section of the *Mercure de France* devoted to German literature, and Téodor de Wyzewa, critic, apostle of the Symbolists and often contributor to the *Mercure* and the *Revue des deux mondes*, devoted articles in November and December of 1911 to Kleist and his works.[15]

Albert's article, the earlier of the two, was written à propos of the publication in Germany of a new edition of Otto Brahm's biography of Kleist. It seems ironic, then, that in this brief article occasioned by a biography of Kleist, Albert should make two major errors in regard to Kleist's life, the first when he writes that Kleist ended his life by throwing himself into the Wannsee along with Henriette Vogel (182), and the second in regard to a supposed meeting between Goethe and Kleist in Weimar where the former received Kleist 'favorably' ("lui fait bon accueil"). Yet Albert's only real concern, seemingly, was to afford his readers brief acquaintance with this problematic literary figure, Kleist, "one of the most interesting figures in German literature" (181). If one is not content, says Albert, simply to class Kleist with the patriotic poets – Arndt, Koerner, Schenkendorf – as some do, then one will discover in him a complex and contradictory being, driven by his feverish imagination, by the misuse of his many gifts, into that kind of extremism that finally brought him to suicide (182).

Albert, not for the first time, compares Kleist to a mountain torrent stopped up for a time by rocks until it builds up so much pressure that it explodes again down into the valley. Though, as a rule, such natures produce only incoherent works, Albert finds

magnificent passages in *Penthesilea*, adding that in *Kohlhaas*, Kleist paints in strong, bold colors the image of his own rebellious nature (182).

After a brief sketch of Kleist's life stressing his inability to find success in any endeavor, Albert sums up his life by saying that it was marked for a violent end. He regrets, he concludes, that Kleist could not have lived a few years longer, so that he might have had the satisfaction of giving his life in the battle against the French (183).

Wyzewa's article, considerably more ambitious in scope and in intent than Albert's, appeared in the *Revue des deux mondes* a few weeks later, written, as the title indicates, à propos of the hundredth anniversary of Kleist's death. The first part of the article deals, naturally, with Kleist's violent end, the reasons for his suicide, his loneliness during that last summer, his love for his cousin, and his meeting with Henriette Vogel. In regard to Mme Vogel, Wyzewa states that for some time prior to the suicide she was Kleist's mistress, basing this assertion on a supposed letter from her which he does not, however, identify. He quotes extensively and quite dramatically from a private conversation between Kleist and Mme Vogel in which the latter extracted the promise from Kleist to kill her, though he does not indicate how the contents of this private conversation became known. He does not believe, however, that the question of love entered here at all. Kleist, he says, was never able to play a serious role. He loved only himself, or, rather, he loved only the dreams that constantly filled his mind. He dismisses Kleist's "love letters" to Henriette Vogel as "des 'billets doux' de collégien en vacances" (923). The cause of the suicide must, he feels, be sought elsewhere.

Many, Wyzewa says, see the cause in the ten years of incessant and heartbreaking failures that preceded the suicide, that is, in Kleist's total inability to make himself understood, even to earn a living. But Wyzewa is not satisfied with this explanation. For a man such as Kleist, he writes, the completion of a novel or a play would always have been enough to make him forget the sufferings of a world he had always scorned (923). Wyzewa has another explanation. Kleist, he explains, was simply carried away by the thrill of such a rash, bold, unusual, in short "romantic" adventure. In this single act, Kleist could surpass the boldest acts of any of his heroes or heroines (923). Ironically this is almost the same explanation given by Mme de Staël nearly a century before. Wyzewa, however, interprets the act as proof of Kleist's bold and explosive nature, not, as in Staël's view, as the pathetic attempt of a would-be artist to attract attention.

Turning for a moment to one of Kleist's works, *Prinz*, Wyzewa

says that it is the one that reveals to us most clearly the original, unique conception of life that Kleist possessed. He gives a brief résumé of its action, judging the *Todesfurchtszene* to be unequalled in either modern or ancient drama (923), and the scene, which he translates, in which Nathalie brings to the Prince a note from the Elector that could mean pardon, a scene of incomparable dramatic force (925). This scene, as well as many others in Kleist's plays, shows, says Wyzewa, Kleist's passionate attachment to life and, at the same time, his absolute scorn for death. Such people are capable, he says, of sacrificing their life, their greatest treasure, for the slightest whim of their imagination. Kleist's characters alone are enough to explain his suicide (925).

Continuing this train of thought, Wyzewa says that after reading Kleist's letters one wonders how he managed to reach the age of thirty-four – so little was he able to touch solid ground, so completely was he occupied in chasing dreams – whether a dramatic triumph, a political exploit, the conquest of a glory disproportionate to his abilities, or a love such as none exists for humans (927). "Jamais peut-être, en aucun temps, il n'y a eu d'homme aussi exclusivement 'cérébral', concentrant à tel point toutes les énergies de son être dans l'unique vie de sa pensée, sauf d'ailleurs à vivre cette vie toute 'abstraite' avec autant de passion effrénée qu'en peuvent apporter les plus exaltés des poètes à ressentir ou à épancher les plus brûlantes émotions de leur cœur" (928).

Thus it is only natural, Wyzewa says, that Kleist's plays reflect the abnormal intellectualism of their author (929). Despite the solid construction of the verse, the plays are extraordinarily lacking in poetry (927).

Despite these criticisms of a devoted symbolist, Wyzewa states that nevertheless no one could seriously contest the judgment of Kleist's plays as outstanding in inventiveness and dramatic force, as comprising the most "real" as well as the most tragic theater in German literature (929).

What some scenes may lack in poetic beauty, what they may suffer because of their lack of abandon, they gain in the vigor of their characters, in the novelty and originality of the situations and in their clarity (929).

He praises the irresistible charm, the gentleness and purity of Käthchen, comparing her to the most touching heroines of Goethe and Wagner. Though finding many of the same qualities in the Novellen that are to be found in the plays, Wyzewa predicts that they will never enjoy the same popularity. Though constructed and told with all the skill of a Mérimée, they are too intellectualized, too unfeeling (930). Kleist's special gifts, Wyzewa concludes, were best put to use in the theatre. Germany is thus justified, in considering Kleist to be the most original of its dramatists.

The general approach of both Albert's and Wyzewa's articles, marking as they do the one hundredth anniversary or Kleist's suicide, would naturally lean toward the personal of biographical. Yet a closer examination of the Kleist criticism or the period just prior to 1911 reveals that, with the exception of the scholarly study of Bastier, the trend had been steadily away from analyses of Kleist's works and increasingly toward discussion, even debate, on the figure of Kleist himself, of discussions of Kleist and then, as though only to illustrate some facet of this enigmatic figure, brief mention of certain of his works.

Two interesting articles illustrating, and, to a degree, summing up this kind of criticism appeared in Paris periodicals in August and September of 1912, both the work of René Lauret. Lauret makes little pretense of writing purely literary criticism. In both articles he is content to examine some aspect of Kleist himself. Both articles have, at least as their implicit goal, a better understanding of Kleist the man.

The earlier of the two articles appeared in *Les Marches de l'Est* in August, 1912.[16] It is in many respects a strange piece of criticism, reflecting both the Germanophobia of the period and Lauret's particular brand of psychoanalytic criticism.

As regards the first point, Lauret apparently wanted to demonstrate that though Kleist was a German author, even a German famous for his hatred of the French, he could nevertheless serve as a fit subject of study, this because, as Lauret hopes to show, Kleist's hatred for the French was not real at all. It was, in fact, merely another manifestation of Kleist's pathological nature. And it is this pathological nature that Lauret wants most of all to understand and to explain to his readers.

The avowed purpose of this first article is simply to investigate Kleist's relationship, attitude, and feelings toward France and the French. Lauret states at the beginning of the article that though Kleist is the strangest and perhaps the best gifted of the German Romantics (705), it is not his purpose to undertake a literary study of his work, however real its value may be. He wants merely to look at Kleist's much-touted hatred of the French.

Referring often to Kleist's letters from Paris, Lauret tells first of Kleist's dislike of the French capital and of his shock and disgust at the life he witnessed there. This, however, Lauret dismisses as the typical reaction of a German to Paris, as true in 1912 as in 1801 (709). Kleist's attempt to join in Napoleon's invasion of England is dismissed as an act of insanity with no political overtones. Kleist's dislike of the French, incurred during his stay in Paris, was soon strengthened, however, as a result of his imprisonment in Fort-de-Joux. But, Lauret points out, even as a playwright, Kleist found

reason to dislike the French. On the stages of Germany, he often complained, only translations of French plays had any real chance of being produced. Young German writers had little hope of seeing their plays realized.

Lauret gives credence to the story that Kleist intended at one time to make an attempt on Napoleon's life. He then continues his indictment with a brief review of Kleist's most notorious anti-French works, written, for the most part, after the outbreak of war between Austria and France. At this time, says Lauret, Kleist put his pen completely in the service of France's enemies (715). When this war came to nothing, when all efforts to oppose the French were completely frustrated, Kleist had, says Lauret, one of three choices, to die of poverty, to fight for his enemies, or to commit suicide. Kleist chose the last. It was the logical end, says Lauret, to a life such as his.

Lauret feels that Kleist's works surpassed all those of his generation in impetuous strength, in striking imagery, in the presentation of characters who are both extremely vigorous and, at the same time, naively tender (716). But, warns Lauret, Kleist was possessed of a demon, to which, to be sure, he owed his most inspired works, but to which he, too, in the end, was a slave (716). It is, finally, in Kleist's violent nature that Lauret finds the key to his hatred for the French.

This hate was, he explains, the expression of Kleist's morbid nature, the result of exasperated pride. Thus Kleist should not be confused with the real patriotic German poets who defended Germany with pen and sword. Kleist's hatred, unlike theirs, was a result of *amour propre*. The same tyrannic pride that made Kleist hate Goethe's glory, also made him envious of the dominator of Europe. Kleist was nothing. Napoleon's grandeur, says Lauret, wounded poor Kleist's pride (717). Kleist soon came to attribute to Napoleon and to the French all the misfortunes he owed to his own instability. He wanted to avenge his own weakness on the man whose will was the strongest (717).

Thus Kleist can only inspire pity. His antipathy for the French was not that of certain "Teutons frustes et bornés" (717). Lauret even wonders if it was profound at all, for though Kleist's work is clearly Germanic in character, it reveals many affinities with the French spirit. There can be found in his work, for instance, a certain liberality often lacking in the work of his contemporaries. Lauret notes in this respect the scandal Kleist's works caused in Germany. Kleist also borrowed much from French literature, using themes as well as simply translating. In particular, Lauret points to the essay *Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden*, nearly all of whose examples are drawn from French writings. Perhaps, in

other circumstances, he then concludes, Kleist would have been a great friend of the French. It is certain at least that France and especially French literature held a great attraction for him.

Lauret then ends with this conjecture: "Verrons-nous en lui un de ces ennemis irréconciliables auxquels on rend haine pour haine? – Plutôt, semble-t-il, un de ces amoureux passionés qui ne consentent jamais à l'indifférence, et trahissent quand ils ne peuvent plus aimer" (719).

The abruptness of this ending, the failure to present any real evidence to support its implication, the failure even to discuss at any length its possibility, when coupled with the over-all lack of pointedness of the article, make this work of Lauret of questionable value. The article does, however, illustrate, as pointed out earlier, first, that it was written in a period when Franco-German relations were under considerable strain and, second, that Lauret's approach to Kleist is essentially that of the psychoanalyst and not that of the literary critic.

This latter aspect of Lauret's way of thinking is strikingly illustrated in a second article devoted to Kleist which appeared in the *Mercure de France* several weeks later.[17]

In his opening remarks, Lauret places Kleist squarely among the German Romantic, patriotic poets. His *Prinz* glorifies Prussian discipline, while his *Käthchen* is filled with a kind of mysticism very close to that of Wagner. Kleist was, he says, a Romantic in the truest sense of the word (501). He was, as well, sick. With this brief declaration, Lauret plunges into the theme of his article, Kleist's abnormal eroticism.

In addition to *Prinz, Käthchen,* and *Die Hermannsschlacht,* Lauret states, Kleist also wrote several other works that are essentially scabrous. As a Frenchman, however, Lauret is quick to point out that these stories are not treated "à la gauloise," which would simply indicate the mind of a libertine (501). Kleist has, for example, taken the *Amphitryon* "of Plautus and Molière" and treated it with a disconcerting seriousness that betrays a curiosity for the disturbed and the abnormal (501). If one examines Kleist's works in the light of certain events in Kleist's life, one cane voke an amazing picture of his violent, contradictory, even morbid passions (501). It is this examination that Lauret wants to undertake, an examination of what Lauret terms Kleist's eroticism (501).

The first point to be discussed is Kleist's reputed homosexuality. Lauret admits that there is only one so-called proof of this, but he judges it to be conclusive. He then quotes Kleist's well known letter to his friend Pfuel (the 'proof' of which he spoke) after which he concludes that Kleist was at least a latent homosexual. Lauret sees this as a primary indication of an essentially morbid sexual make-up (501-502).

He then points to Kleist's tyrannical relations with women, to his concept of woman as an instrument or object that one puts to his own use, and to his uncomprising demand for complete surrender on the part of the woman (505).

Though the figure of Käthchen is certainly charming, even the character's most ardent admirers would find this mystical creature somewhat fragile if they knew that she was simply the expression of one of Kleist's dreams. Käthchen was the portrait of the ideal woman Kleist needed to force to his own will. The play becomes, then, simply a compensation for something denied Kleist in real life (505).

If Lauret sees in the figure of Käthchen only wish-fulfillment, he sees somewhat darker traits revealed in the figure of Graf Wetter vom Strahl. He finds in the latter's treatment of Käthchen something very near sadism (506) and quotes, apparently in approval, Goethe's condemnation of Kleist's world. This same sadism appears, says Lauret, in other Kleist works, especially in *Penthesilea* (506).

Lauret points out that the Amazons, as depicted in *Penthesilea*, are not masculine women who have reversed roles, who have gone out to conquer effeminate young men with whom they can play the agressor, but women who first conquer, then submit to really masculine figures. In their relations with the opposite sex they make a clear separation between war and peace, between the lover and the adversary. Penthesilea's tragic guilt is that she cannot make this separation. Her eroticism goes hand in hand with her hatred, with her intense desire to dominate (507). She alternates constantly between a desire to be master and a desire to be slave, until finally, in the last act, she plunges into sadistic frenzy (508).

Lauret sees this drama as the most valuable psychological revelation we have of its author. Penthesilea is Kleist. To the criticism that she is not a real character, Kleist could well have replied, "To create her, I simply depicted myself." (509).

Lauret sees *Penthesilea* as being, like *Käthchen*, another example of compensation on Kleist's part, in this instance, compensation for sadistic desires, for "voluptés sauvages" prohibited by civilized mores (509).

Lauret sees yet another side of Kleist's erotic nature revealed in what he terms his strange analyses of feminine chastity. Kleist treats this theme by selecting eccentric examples which, Lauret claims, betray an unhealthy curiosity (509).

Lauret finds it curious – rather ironically, it would seem – that Kleist should take the subject of *Amphitryon*, always treated before him as good for comedy, and turn it into a psychological case-study. To dwell on what the feelings of the woman might be in such a case is, says Lauret, significant of something wrong with Kleist (509).

Here again, as earlier in regard to *Penthesilea*, Lauret quotes Goethe to the effect that any normal man would not dwell on such thoughts (510).

Kleist's aim in the play, Lauret maintains, was to prove that an experience such as Alcmene's in no way violates chastity and that a husband ought to consider his wife as pure after such an experience as before (510). But, Lauret asks, dwelling it seems abnormally on the reactions of the man in such a case, suppose the 'offender' had not been Jupiter, but the man next door, what would Amphitryon's reaction have been then?

Kleist, however, dwells only on the anxiety that overwhelms her at the thought of what is, after all, an involuntary and essentially innocent act (510). Lauret points out to all the critics who have missed this point that there is no question in the play of Alcmene's moral guilt. The entire fuss is thus on the point of 'pudeur.' (511).

Lauret sees this same theme – "cette pudeur de la femme violée," treated in *Die Marquise von O* thus making it essentially a variant of *Amphitryon* (512). In a note (p. 513) Lauret praises the Novelle as amusing, urging, as well, that it be made known to the French public through a translation.[18]

Lauret sees Kleist's unusual interest in feminine chastity as revealing an unhealthy eroticism (513). He sees this concept of chastity, or rather the demand for such in a woman, as being consistent with the generally impossible demands Kleist placed on his women.

One can sense throughout his works a strong personal anxiety concerning the question of love. Love is constantly linked in his characters to an unhealthy pride – thus giving it its excessive, often eccentric, stamp (513).

Käthchen is not, Lauret writes, the creation of a mystic, but of a man whose tyrannical pride led him to demand the absolute surrender of a soul. Penthesilea is not a Phèdre devoured by the fire of love, but rather a prideful, domineering woman in whom the desire to conquer struggles with the desire to love. The Marquise and Alcmene show that chastity, so flattering for the man, should be strong enough to survive all tests (514).

Kleist's eroticism, Lauret observes, "reproduit dans l'ordre sentimental et passionnel l'impression que nous donne, dans un autre ordre, le spectacle des invertis" (515). The reader is, he says, constantly surprised by the insidious twistings, the deformations given by pride and egoism to love and to the concept of the ideal woman (514). Lauret sees something abnormal and morbid in this.

What Kleist shows us, i.e., the battle of the sexes, the desire for modesty in a woman, are normal, but Kleist consistently pushes these normal feelings, normal conflicts, normal anxieties to the point

where they become incredible eccentricities or even madness. There is an element of pride and arrogance in them that was particularly offensive to the bourgeois of Kleist's time (514).

But, Lauret reminds, this does not bother us today. Unlike critics of an earlier period who saw in Kleist's abnormal characters and themes only an attempt willfully to distort, to deform, the real, Lauret, in an age that was becoming accustomed to learn about the normal through study of the abnormal, sees Kleist as a valuable source of information about our own natures. His exaggerations may well throw new light on the fundamental nature of love. In this sense Kleist may be called a guide, perhaps even a precursor (515).

Lauret's article reflects not only the general European interest in psychoanalytic criticism but, more directly, the controversy that raged throughout the first decade of the century among German Kleist scholars (and non-scholars) over Kleist's 'normality.' The debate, set off by Isidor Sadger's study (1897) of Kleist's alleged sexual abnormality and Max Morris' theory (1899) concerning Kleist's trip to Würzburg – i.e., to cure his alleged impotence – finally attracted the attention of people outside the realm of literature and literary criticism, e.g., Sigismund Rahmer, a doctor, who published his medical opinion, refuting Sadger and Morris, in *Das Kleist-Problem* in 1903. Sadger, however, whose views on Kleist's homosexuality and onanism are repeated by Lauret, republished his unproven theories, somewhat enlarged to include a completely sexual interpretation of all of Kleist's works, in 1910.

The debate over Kleist's 'normality' provides not only an interesting example of the extent to which even reputable critics can get lost in the side-streets of literary criticism, but explains as well one of the reasons for the reevaluation in the first decade of the century, of Kleist's *Penthesilea*. It is this work, Kleist's most subjective, which affords the best opportunity to examine the relationship between the artist and his work. It is this work which, more important for its future in Germany and France, reveals clearly Kleist's awareness that man is subject to subconscious urges, to powerful forces far beyond his understanding and even, tragically often, his control.

Lauret's article is the last major treatment of Kleist before the outbreak of hostilities marking the beginning of World War I. Auguste Dupouy, in his work of 1913, *France et Allemagne*, classes Kleist among the best of the Romantics,[19] but, except to point out his super-patriotism as revealed in *Die Hermannsschalcht* (61), makes no other mention of his works.

In a series of articles devoted to German 'admirers' and German 'haters' of France, appearing in *La Minerve française* in 1919, René

Lote places Kleist, because of his *Hermannsschlacht*, in the group with Fichte and Schleiermacher who more or less openly served the nationalistic, anti-French propaganda campaign.[20] In its approach and its bias, it belongs to prewar Kleist criticism.

Unlike the war of 1870-1871, the events of 1914-1918 brought a more serious interruption in French-German literary relations. Reflecting this lengthy break, it will not be until 1920 and after, in the work of Charles Andler and I. Rouge that French scholars and critics once again turn their attention to the controversial figure and creations of Heinrich von Kleist.

CHAPTER VII

A TURN TO THE POSITIVE, 1920-1924

Charles Andler came to Kleist by way of Nietzsche. In the first volume of his exhaustive study of the German philosopher, written in 1914, at the peak of Nietzsche's popularity in France, the Sorbonne historian and professor deals with Nietzsche's precursors, those men in whose minds Nietzsche's philosophical system in a sense already existed before being transmitted to the philosopher by a process Andler describes as intellectual transfusion.[1] One of the foremost of these precursors was Heinrich von Kleist.

More than a simple question of affinity or indirect influence, Andler sees Nietzsche's work as a total absorbing and extending of Kleist's work. The two writers resemble each other in every way – in feeling, in thought, even to the similarity of their fates (83).

Andler bases his opinions on Kleist not only on a study of the latest writings of German Kleist scholars, e.g., Ottokar Fischer and especially Wilhelm Herzog, but on a study of Kleist's literary creations and, above all, on Kleist's own letters, from which Andler quotes often and at length.

Nietzsche agreed with Kleist, writes Andler, in considering one of the poet's greatest gifts to be that of taking an interest in *everything*, as Nietzsche terms it, "le don de s'étonner." Like Kleist, Nietzsche suffered from society because one could not be completely true in it. Like Kleist, Nietzsche refused to play a role, to hide behind a mask. Like Kleist, too, Nietzsche felt he had a mission, one that broke the bonds between him and the world, one that made him different from all other men, one that finally placed him behind an impenetrable wall (85).

Andler quotes Kleist's letter of October 10, 1801, in which he states that he would not be judged by the world's standards or values, as a clear expression of Nietzsche's belief that a great mind, once aware of itself, will reject traditional standards and proceed to a "transvaluation of all values." (86).

Much like Kleist, says Andler, Nietzsche felt at times the need for a disciple, the need for a friend or sister, from whom he might demand complete obedience as proof of the value both of himself and of his mission. The tragedy of both their personal, emotional lives

was this often repeated, always fruitless search for a friend faithful to the point of blind servitude (86).

Nietzsche could only have felt admiration for Kleist's determination to create his own life, to give his behavior consistency and unity, to concentrate heart, mind, and will on realizing his own private destiny (87).

The most important lesson, however, that Nietzsche drew from Kleist bore on the artist's need for absolute freedom. While developing this thought, Andler refers to Kleist's *Prinz*, revealing a new interpretation of the play which he will explain in more detail some pages later. Kleist, he says, scorned a public function. He was unable to bow uncritically to the demands of the state, to be the blind instrument of its unknown designs. His *Prinz* arose out of this realization of the clash between grandeur and military servitude(87).

Returning to a direct comparison of the two men, Andler points out the similarity of their preoccupations, quoting from Kleist's letter of March 22, 1801, in which the latter declared 'Bildung' the only goal worth striving for, and truth the only wealth worth possessing (88). Both Kleist and Nietzsche shared a dislike for the utilitarian state uninterested in the things of the mind. Andler sees all of these ideas appearing in Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* (88).

For Kleist, as later for Nietzsche, the ultimate value of knowledge was a constant source of troubled questioning. If knowledge did not lead to ultimate truth, or to the real beyond the apparent, what good was it? Andler finds a possible answer to this question in Kleist's letter of October 10, 1801. If knowledge is to have any worth at all, it will be good only in so far as it leads us to act (89). Of all the lessons Nietzsche learned from Kleist, none was to have a more lasting effect (90).

Nietzsche, like Kleist, was not unaffected by Rousseau's condemnation of the intelligence. Yet, as Andler points out, Kleist's influence led much further than Rousseau's. Not only did Kleist reduce the absolute value of knowledge to its use in promoting action but went even further, so far as to incriminate not simply knowledge but thought itself (90). Nietzsche, says Andler, was well acquainted with Kleist's essay *Von der Überlegung* and with its claim that thought paralyzes our ability to act, renders our acts unsure and awkward (90).[2]

Andler sees Kleist's solution to the problem of how to regain the unity of self lost by man "once he partook of the tree of knowledge," the solution that is offered in the essay *Über das Marionettentheater*, as having been a decisive factor in pushing Nietzsche finally into pragmatism (90-91).

In their initial stages, the two poets differed. Kleist first believed

in Truth, finally came to despair of finding it and began to envy the artist who for lack of the True consoles himself with the Beautiful. Nietzsche believed first in the aesthetic illusion and then sought desperately to attain truth through a purified intellect. Once these stages were passed, however, both would preach the cult of life (91).

Though Kleist identifies this cult with the cult of nature, he admits that we do not know nature's plans. All that is known is a small fragment of natural existence, that is, our life on earth. We must accept this life with all its flux. We must draw every ounce of content from its passing minutes (92). Andler then follows with several quotes from Kleist's letters, all pointing up again the necessity of living each moment of life as a value in itself. Life is what Kleist commands us to love – as though in obedience to a natural law (92). And here, writes Andler, lies Nietzsche, even to the style, here Nietzsche's "mystère de la vie 'irréfutable'" which we must live while blessing it for being hard (92).

In these brief comments, Andler makes a clean break with previous French interpreters of Kleist who repeatedly tried to build the poet's suicide into an expression of his philosophy of life, who saw his death as the logical goal of the morbid 'Todsucher,' who viewed the Prince's desperate holding on to life as an act inspired by unnatural cowardice or, at best, by natural fear, but never as an act, as Andler would now interpret it, of tremendous affirmation.

This one-man attempt to change the almost universally held view of Kleist as a pathological death-seeker follows, interestingly, a similar, though much stronger movement among certain German critics of roughly the same period. The somewhat earlier efforts of Hugo Gaudig in Germany to stress the healthier elements in Kleist, followed by attempts to present Kleist as a classicist "pure and simple" (Heinrich Meyer-Benfey and others), along with attempts to rehabilitate the last year of Kleist's life (Reinhold Steig), even to disprove on medical grounds charges of a neuropathological nature (Sigismund Rahmer) – all representing a real break with the Goethe-anchored condemnation of Kleist and his art as essentially sick – find their echo in Andler's view of Kleist as a pre-Nietzschean, as essentially one of the race of "yea-sayers."

Quoting at length from Kleist's letter of September 16, 1800 (e.g., "Ich schränke mich daher mit meiner Thätigkeit ganz für dieses Erdenleben ein"), Andler comments that never had Nietzsche's precept, "Bleibt der Erde treu!" been formulated more clearly by an idealist poet (93). Also in Kleist (in the same letter) Andler finds Nietzsche's recommendation to girls to protect their hearts with the thought that they were born to be mothers, as well as the idea that the highest value we can draw from our existence on earth lies in our sacred duty to form a more noble race, one capable of one day

surpassing us (94). Nietzschean also is Kleist's dictum that every artist, every individual, achieve self-realization. The example of the very great should not humble or discourage us, but on the contrary, encourage us to realize in turn a life which will reflect our own originality.

With Nietzsche's judgment that Kleist was the guarantee of the possible renascence of tragedy in Germany, Andler turns to look at Kleist's drama. *Guiscard*, he reports, must surely have pleased Nietzsche greatly for its hero is one who creates a people as well as a moral system (95). Though in Guiscard's past there are many lies and violent deeds, he has committed the crimes the strong must commit, aware that the morality of the great cannot be the same as the morality of the mediocre, that to the strong-willed go certain prerogatives necessarily denied to the weak (95).

Yet despite the appeal of the figure of Guiscard, it was to *Prinz*, says Andler, that Nietzsche's clearest preference fell (95). In his explanation of this preference Andler presents his clearly Nietzschean interpretation of the Kleist drama.

The implicit lesson of the drama is that a system of pure morality, discipline, and justice can be debilitating for the elite. Law wastes and destroys the more noble qualities of the soul. It is not moral law, but the free and heroic act that best expresses individual morality. Having already agreed to die if he must in order to complete his undertaking successfully, it is only natural for the Prince to agree to die under law if the law condemns him for his action. The Kleistian hero, says Andler, like the hero of Corneille, exists by the pure quality of his soul. All of his efforts are bent on asserting this soul, such efforts already including and assuming the sacrifice of his life. Thus that disobedience which leads him to pay with his life for the breaking of a rule is, in reality, obedience to a higher law, the law that demands that he realize fully his personal destiny (95).

In the light of the criticism immediately preceding it, Andler's interpretation is significant in that it breaks with the psychoanalytic school of critics, that is, it seeks to explain the Prince neither by way of Kleist, nor Kleist by way of the Prince. His interpretation takes us out of the realm of biography, clinical observation and analysis and returns us to the realm of ideas, of values, of the individual's attempt to find meaning.

French critics had attempted to interpret *Prinz* almost solely as representing the triumph of the State over the individual, or of order over anarchy, or of reason over feeling. German critics had for the most part advanced the same ideas, though from the much-maligned Julian Schmidt of the nineteenth century to Julius Hart in the twentieth century there had been those critics who had seen in

the figure of the Prince the 'Vorkämpfer' for the intuitive-instinctive faculties, for the amoral and illogical forces in man.

Andler, however, breaks implicitly with all of these critics, breaks, that is, with any view of the drama as simply a conflict between two independently existing entities, between opposing value systems, one of which must win out. By seeing the real drama, the struggle and the solution, as taking place solely within the soul of the Prince, by placing, that is, the drama completely within the subjective, Andler is already previewing the so-called existentialist criticism that was to begin a decade later. By seeing the Prince's *choice* to die for a higher cause not simply as the surrender of the individual to the supra-individual, the surrender of one value system for another, but rather by seeing it as the greatest affirmation of the right of the individual, and thus the supremacy of the individual, the subjective, Andler became the first of the French critics to see Kleist in the light of what has come to be his most modern interpretation.

Andler points out that Kleist's two greatest ambitions – to unite with another soul and to plunge into a glorious work – are realized by the Prince. Such, however, was not the fate of Penthesilea and Käthchen, both of whom Andler sees as tortured by these same ambitions. He sees Penthesilea as a warning given by Kleist that heroism itself can be a fatal flaw. Penthesilea will not be dominated. She cannot be second in anything. She must reach the heights of happiness *and* victory. The heroic element in the soul is thus shown to be essentially the will to dominate. The strength of this will can be great enough to destroy the soul it occupies. Nietzsche was never to forget this lesson (97).

In later years, says Andler, Nietzsche came to be suspicious of the line of heroines from Kleist's Penthesilea to the heroines of Wagner. From this point on, one can no longer speak of a Kleistian influence. But, Andler adds, Nietzsche unfortunately never saw or read the Kleist revealed in the *Gebet des Zoroaster*, the Kleist, that is, "qui sait que l'homme est garrotté par d'invisibles puissances et qu'il traverse, chargé de chaînes et dans un étrange somnambulisme, le néant et la misère de sa vie" (98).

Using the message he sees outlined in this short prayer, Andler concludes, making a final effort to secure his presentation of Kleist as one of Nietzsche's most significant precursors.

> Nous vivons, dira-t-il, dans une réalité intangible et fuyante, qui nous ouvre ses profondeurs pendant de rares minutes d'extase. Il nous faut nous habituer à ce mystère et faire confiance aux dieux invisibles qui y règnent et dont l'action, peut-être elle aussi, est liée à des limites. Dans ce monde fragile et obscur, il n'y a pourtant pas lieu de se soumettre et

de se taire. Il nous faut vivre notre vie morale, c'est-à dire notre part d'héroïsme, dès cette terre, certains que notre effort pourra transformer à la longue la vie terrestre elle-même. Mais cette philosophie qui parle par toutes les nouvelles et tous les drames de Kleist n'annonce-t-elle pas à sa façon la "transvaluation de toutes les valeurs?" (98).

Andler's work, written in 1914, was not published until six years later. Though the peak of Nietzsche's vogue in France had by this time passed, there remained a large and appreciative audience for Andler's study. Thus, thanks to his new interpretation of Kleist, there would be for the first time in France a group of readers for whom the name Kleist connoted something more than a sick, morbid, death-seeker, in whose works there might be found a positive message, a message with a future.

Andler wrote of Kleist from a direct reading knowledge of his works. How many of his countrymen might have been capable of doing the same is not possible to estimate. Yet even for those who were obliged to rely completely on French translations, the situation was by no means as bad as it had once been. Many versions of *Michael Kohlhaas*, in French and in simplified or heavily annotated German, were of course available. Since Lostalot's 1884 deluxe edition of *La Cruche cassée*, there had appeared, as already mentioned, the adaptation presented at the Victor Hugo in 1904. Another translation of this same comedy, this time the work of R. Bastien, was published in Paris in 1911. *Das Käthchen* found its first French translator in René Jaudon, whose *La Petite Catherine de Heilbron, ou l'épreuve du feu*, appeared in Paris in 1905. This same Jaudon scored another first in 1920 with his prose translation of *Prinz*.

To judge by the translations, then, Kleist would seem to be becoming more at home on French soil. Andler's treatment of Kleist had been enthusiastically favorable. Even the *bête noire* of the critics, *Amphitryon*, a work the French for the most part have never really forgiven Kleist for, came in for not too unkind criticism during the Molière tercentenary in 1922. Jean-Jacques Bertrand, for example, in his work on Schlegel's Molière criticism, is at least willing to call Kleist's play a complete reworking of the Molière play and not necessarily a travesty.[3]

Kleist's comedy is for him, however, too crude (205). He sees Jupiter's visit as assuming symbolic, Christian significance (205). Yet he specifically excepts Kleist from his general condemnation of the German Romantics as writers lacking all sense of the dramatic (237).

In keeping with this steadily growing interest in Kleist, and immensely important in giving it impetus as well as direction in the

twenties and thirties, came the works of the Sorbonne professor, I. Rouge. His first major effort in Kleist criticism, *Heinrich von Kleist, notice et traductions*, in 1922, met a triple need, providing in one compact work translations, sound interpretations, and a presentation aimed at the widest cultivated audience. In Rouge, too, one senses really for the first time in French Kleist criticism an appreciation of Kleist's drama from what might be called dramatic standards as opposed to, or at least different from, purely literary standards.

The essence of Rouge's views on Kleist is to be found in the thirty-eight-page preface. Following this, he presents a prose translation of the final scene from *Penthesilea*, translations or résumés of some twenty scenes from *Käthchen*, translations, again in prose, of sixteen scenes from *Prinz* – with no explanation for his omitting Act III with its controversial 'Todesfurchtszene' – and a complete translation of the Novelle, *Der Findling*.

In the introduction, Rouge states that though Kleist belonged to no school, the main traits of his work are related to the principal traits of the Romantics. Unlike them, however, he possesses an almost "Mediterranean" sense of form, a discipline and a power of realization due partly, Rouge adds, to his Prussian officer background. With this faculty he was able to give life and body to the usually diffuse inspirations of German Romanticism.[4]

Rouge undertakes a chronological review of Kleist's life and works. He stresses the early influence on Kleist of French culture and French literature through Kleist's tutor, Catel. Here he sees another important source of Kleist's sense of form. Turning to the works themselves, Rouge professes to see in *Schroffenstein* the marks of a truly dramatic talent. Here he does not find the shadowy figures of the Romantic theater, but real people (10). In the play Kleist reveals his early concern over the all-powerful nature of the passions and, as well, an interest in subconscious states.

After brief treatment of *Guiscard* and Kleist's essay concerning the interaction of speech and thought, Rouge turns to *Amphitryon*. Here the French critic feels compelled, like most of his predecessors, to defend Molière rather than attempt a serious analysis of the Kleist work. His criticism is essentially that heard often enough before. Jupiter is at times a man who acts like a god and at other times a god who acts like a man. Either he is a god, Rouge complains, or he is a lecher. He cannot be both. "Prosterner cette femme en pénitente aux pieds de ce faune sentimental après l'amour... cet amalgame de paganisme et de christianisme n'éclaircit aucun mythe, et ce contresens psychologique est en même temps une faute de goût" (14).

To the old claim by German critics that Kleist has deepened a subject treated "French and frivolous" by Molière, Rouge admits that Kleist has indeed brought out the more disturbing elements in

the Greek myth (14). But since Kleist fails to clarify the myth either by way of convincing symbols or through analysis, it would have been far better to have left the subject as Molière treated it. (14)

Though, to be sure, Kleist enriched the Molière comedy with true poetic beauty, Rouge does not think that such embellishment has either the psychological value or the philosophical import imputed to it by what he calls "une critique trop complaisante," a rather acid reaction on Rouge's part to the new interest in and enthusiasm for *Amphitryon* among contemporary German critics.

Turning to *Penthesilea*, Rouge would seem at first glance to be going along with much previous negative criticism of this play as well as of Kleist in general. In theme as well as in its use of symbolism *Penthesilea*, like *Amphitryon* and *Käthchen*, is felt to lack clarity and unity. Only in *Prinz*, Rouge adds, did Kleist really succeed in incorporating an idea into the characters and the action of his drama (22). But, says Rouge, though Kleist was unable successfully to incorporate ideas into his plays, he could and did incorporate passions, for example, in *Penthesilea* the "demonic," the all consuming passion. Rouge sees Kleist as having gone back to the origins of all theater to recreate in modern drama the "mal sacré" of the ancient Greek Mysteries (22).

Rouge finds the form of *Penthesilea* to be as spectacularly original as the inspiration. The convulsions of syntax, the boldness of the vocabulary, the hyperbolic images, are all in perfect keeping with the extreme emotions the playwright has placed on stage. It is, in his opinion, one of the most architectonic plays in modern theatre. Though questionable from the point of view of its psychology and its philosophy, he does not hesitate to judge it a masterpiece of the plastic and musical arts (22).

Admitting the lack of coherence in the drama, Rouge reminds that Kleist was not trying to create a psychological tragedy, but a new concept of theater in which the inner feelings of the character are revealed not through analytic expression but through what Rouge terms the music of language, through body movements and gestures, in short, a concept of theater closer to what we now call opera (23).

For Rouge, *Penthesilea* represents the triumph of Kleist's "puissance démiurgique" as well as of his artistic instinct (23).

Passing on to *Käthchen*, Rouge says that it shows far less originality than *Penthesilea* and is linked much more closely to German Romanticism. Technically less perfect than *Penthesilea*, it is, nevertheless, full of strength and dramatic vigor. The figure of Käthchen deserves our praise, but, he cautions, there is no justification for ranking her, as some overzealous critics would, alongside Gretchen (25).

Die Hermannsschlacht is judged by Rouge to be, along with

Penthesilea, the most direct expression of Kleist himself (26). Penthesilea represents Kleist at his most personal, individual level. *Die Hermannsschlacht*, Rouge adds, represents Kleist's deepest felt patriotism. Through its hero speak the people of a defeated and humiliated Germany. It is thus the expression of a personal and of a collective spirit.

Although Rouge calls the drama a thesis play, he claims its tragic interest far outweighs its mere timeliness. Though presenting the story of the invaders versus the invaded, Kleist does not blacken one side at the expense of the other. Kleist did not, says Rouge, idealize the Germans as did Arndt, Fichte, and others. Kleist's hero is not bothered by scruples. All means are good that will lead to the defeat of the invaders. The Kleistian hero has absolute faith in the rightness of his own feelings. He feels no need to defend or justify them (28).

Hermann is driven, says Rouge, by a hatred that takes on the violence of an elemental passion, yet, unlike the Amazon Queen, whose passion was personal, his is unselfish. Even though it means the sacrifice of earthly happiness, ambition, and even life itself, his efforts are directed toward the acquisition of freedom for his people. The perfect harmony in this true leader between instinct and thought, between a demonic passion and the acceptance of duty, confers on the drama, says Rouge, a somber grandeur (29). Throughout his analysis of this admitted thesis play, Rouge stresses the timeless significance of the work, leaving unstressed, actually unmentioned, the often repeated specifically anti-French aim of the play.

Turning to Kleist's Novellen, Rouge has the usual mixed praise for *Kohlhaas*. The whole is moving and colorful. The main character is disturbing and gripping, but the political machinations, the occultism of the second and third parts seriously weakens the solution of the ethical problem posed in the very realistic first part. It is the only work of Kleist's, Rouge feels, that betrays its overlong, on and off period of composition (35).

Rouge praises the other Novellen for their realism and, above all, for their objectivity. Their stress on events rather than on mood, the lack of long descriptions of countryside, of customs, of feelings, gives to Kleist's work a kind of concentrated reality rare in any period of German literature and especially rare in the age of Romanticism. Kleist's style is spare, nervous. Looking over Kleist's work in the Novellen, Rouge feels it fully justifies his being accorded the same rank in German literature of the nineteenth century that Mérimée occupies in French literature.

The last work to be treated by Rouge is *Prinz*, a play he judges to be the highest expression of Kleist's poetic and dramatic gifts. In it, says Rouge, Kleist corrects all of his previous faults. It is a better conceived play, one which finds all of Kleist's originality adapted to a subject of broad human interest. For the first time, Rouge writes,

Kleist unites an exceptional character and situation with a general problem, that of the relationship between individual feeling and the discipline of society (31). He finds the use of pathological elements given less stress in *Prinz* than in any other Kleist work. When pathological states are presented, they are used only to enhance the play's pathos or poetry. Rouge finds the work almost as personal as *Penthesilea*. The basic conflict in the play is one that tormented Kleist as much as it did the Prince. It is a conflict that lies in man and in the makeup of societies. And here, Rouge adds, Kleist is certainly on the side of the Prince. The spontaneous, heroic act is more fruitful than calculated, externally imposed morality (33). Yet the Prince realizes his error and submits.

Rouge would seem at first to be in substantial agreement with previous criticism that sees the resolution of the conflict of two opposing value systems in the passive submission of the Prince to a higher law. He does not, in fact, rule out such an interpretation. At first he presents the more or less accepted interpretation. Man has yielded his individuality to the majesty of the law, therefore law can be humanized without compromising its sovereignty (33). Or, rather, he adds, as though it were not a far different concept, the individual has recognized that the highest expression of the self is the surrender of the self to law. Law then becomes not a power external to man, hostile to his full development, but, rather, the highest expression of his inner self (33). It would seem that Rouge is here toying with the idea so clearly stated a few years earlier by Andler. He does not, however, at this point, explore the thought further. The reconciliation between heart and reason, between the individual and society, is, he says, complete. The drama is the perfect combination of classic truth, realism, and Romantic poetry (33).

Thus, says Rouge, Kleist, in his combination of realism and Romanticism, reached at age thirty-four about the same stage and level of development that Goethe and Schiller had attained at the same age, the Goethe, that is, of *Egmont*, the Schiller of *Don Carlos* (34). In looking over the whole of Kleist's work, Rouge sees a definite development or evolution, from the early work where, in chaos, man is led by blind instinct or by myopic intelligence from scorn to disillusion to catastrophe, to the last works where a world is at least glimpsed in which instinct and intellect, the individual and the collective, can be reconciled (36).

In this observation lies perhaps Rouge's most original and valuable contribution to Kleist criticism both in France and in Germany. He saw in 1920 what major German critics such as Muschg, Braig, and Gundolf did not see even in later years, that is, that Kleist's work shows a progression, groping and hesitant, but none the less perceptible, toward a solution of the problems that tormented him.

Rouge's view can be seen as one of the first fruits of the new concept of Kleist as a healthy writer, a view made possible after the notion that Kleist was a helplessly sick neurotic whose life was a constant downward going into despair and death had been dispelled, in short, a view made possible only when critics stopped looking at Kleist and his works as they had from the very beginning, that is, from the catastrophic end *back*.

As important and as valuable as Rouge's view was, it is unfortunate that he did not stress it more. Having once expressed it, he seems anxious to forget the whole question of Kleist's philosophic outlook and hurry on to state wherein he feels Kleist's real importance lies. For, to him, it is not on the content or on the consistency of his philosophical outlook that Kleist and his work will stand or fall. His greatest achievement, says Rouge, lay in his ability to incarnate in his characters certain human feelings pushed to the degree where they cause the suffering and the grandeur of man, feelings of love, of hate, of ambition, of a sense of justice, of patriotism. His genius lay in his ability to take these feelings, give to them the strength of elemental passions, a touch of the demoniacal, and to place them in beings who were both living and moving (36).

On the basis of the work of Andler and of Rouge, as well as on the increased interest already noted in making more of Kleist's works available in translation to French readers, it is clear that Kleist had already achieved among critics in the France of the 1920's a stature he did not enjoy in any other non-German country, or for that matter, a stature which he does not have outside of Europe even today. This interest in Kleist was to continue growing and, as will be seen in the following chapter, to reach its first climax in the thirties. Yet even though Kleist had progressed from the treatment given him in the *Larousse-Grand Dictionnaire* of 1873, "German poet, noted for the strange temper of his life, his tragic end, and the excessive, unhealthy character of his writings," to the relatively enthusiastic treatment in *La Grande Encyclopédie* of 1925, "the most inspired of the German Romantics," nevertheless his reception among French critics was not always completely free, as it never would be, of the original coloring given to it by the events that first brought Kleist's name to the French in the early nineteenth century.

Kleist's suicide, the events leading up to it, his character, and his psychology would continue to fascinate many critics far more than his works. Add to these the attempt to link Kleist's character with the history of Germany since 1871 – with something conceived of as the German character – and you have the substance of a short article by Gérard Bauer, appearing in *La Revue rhénane* in March, 1923, an article combining in the brief space of two pages the principal characteristics of more than one hundred years of bad Kleist criticism. Before turning to the important years 1930 to 1940, years

in which Kleist criticism reached its full maturity in France, it seems worthwhile to be reminded that as regards Kleist all was not sound scholarly or even sound literary criticism.

Bauer's article is all the more surprising since it claims to have as its inspiration the publication of I. Rouge discussed above. Bauer begins with a description of Kleist as a strange mind whose originality and talent cannot be denied.[5] After summing up Kleist's dominant characteristic as a constant desire for death, he states that Kleist summed up in his person and in his works all the madness, the disorder, in short, the sickness of his age (413). This sickness, says Bauer, was Romanticism, joined in Kleist to a strange 'disequilibrium.'

Bauer does not hesitate to praise *Penthesilea* as Kleist's masterpiece. "C'est l'œuvre où s'accordent, dans un chant étonnant, l'imagination poétique et le délire d'une foi qui monte: c'est comme l'Hyperion d'un Keats, le Centaure d'un Guérin" (414). He sees the Amazon Queen as a prefiguration of Wilde's Salomé and Hofmannsthal's Electra, and sees as well the influence of Kleist's Penthesilea on the Wedekind of *Frühlings Erwachen*. Bauer finally praises all of the Novellen for their true and often bitter details (414), and recommends, in an excellent illustration of the nature of his critical bias, perhaps Kleist's most somber Novelle, *Der Findling*, translated by Rouge, as being typical.

Bauer ends his brief article with a lament over the death of this true poet, "who suffered from a peculiar sickness," concluding with a statement that he will remain a representative of a kind of extremism, a great talent who lacked completely a sense of proportion and restraint. Bauer sees in this figure something of that same madness that led Germany to its recent dark fate (414).

Despite its brevity and its appearance in a relatively obscure periodical, Bauer's article is significant, especially when viewed alongside the solid analyses of an Andler or a Rouge, in that it illustrates once again Kleist's unfortunate susceptibility to being adopted into various literary movements, each of which claims suddenly to have discovered this unknown, unappreciated writer of genius. In this instance, though Bauer does not expressly state it, Kleist is linked to the neo-romantics, to the expressionists, whose movement reached noisy maturity in the Germany of the twenties.

It is this linking that will bear the most critical fruit in France in the decade to follow, this despite the efforts to combat it by solid scholarly critics such as Rouge and later the Sorbonne's Roger Ayrault. The legend of Kleist begun in 1811 was not to die easily. The two pages by a superficial critic appearing in a provincial periodical serve as a far more accurate guide to the reception of Kleist in France than the much longer, more serious, and far more penetrating studies of informed and capable Kleist scholars writing in established journals.

CHAPTER VIII

CRITICAL CULMINATION, 1925-1935

It cannot be claimed that the linking of Kleist with twentieth-century neo-romanticism was achieved in France without considerable help from critical currents across the Rhine. Almost the sole concern of German Kleist scholarship in the near decade following the war centered on Kleist's relationship to Romanticism. The earlier efforts of Hugo Gaudig and Heinrich Meyer-Benfey to present Kleist as 'positive,' as a classicist, were virtually swept away by a flood of writing from such formidable critics as Nadler, Strich, Unger Witkop, Gundolf, and Stefan Zweig. It will be the works of the latter, with their stress on Kleist's absolute rootlessness, his aloneness, his dionysianism, and the nature and significance of his conflict with Goethe, that will find their clearest reflection in French criticism of the thirties.

Yet this is not to say that French criticism was in this period simply a derivative product. With an already large and now steadily growing body of French criticism at their disposal and, above all, with the sudden rash of good translations of even Kleist's lesser works that appeared in the thirties, French critics could feel free, really for the first time, to strike out on their own, could, that is, cease thinking of Kleist as specifically German, unexportable, understandable only by Germans, and come to think of him as common critical property, fair game for any acute French reader's interpretation. As will be seen, French critics of this period will not hesitate to criticize their German counterparts for what they consider to be incorrect interpretations. It is in this period as well that the works of Roger Ayrault will make the first major French contribution to European Kleist scholarship.

The *Revue germanique* reports in 1932 a renewal in France of interest in Kleist.[1] The critic in the *Revue*, with his knowledge of the past history of Kleist criticism in France, could speak of a renewal. For many others, however, the renewal was more in the nature of a discovery. Yet whatever its nature, the signs of an increase in interest were unmistakeable. The long period of growth, begun more than a hundred years before, reaches its culmination in the decade of the thirties. From this period dates the true annexation of Kleist

by the French, an annexation whose real fruits will not, however, become apparent until the generation that imbibed Kleist in the thirties begins in its turn to create some years later. Then, once again, critics oblivious to the long, slow infiltration of Kleist into France will speak of a new and startling discovery of a heretofore unknown German writer.

The raw material for any discovery, however, must be the works themselves, and in the case of a writer who attempts to cross linguistic boundaries, in the availability of good translations. These were not lacking in the thirties. The lone translation of *Prinz*, by René Jaudon in 1920, increased to three in 1930 and to five by 1934. Nineteen thirty-one brought the first translation of *Die Hermannsschlacht*; 1936, the essay *Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden*; the following year, the very important essay *Über das Marionettentheater*; and in 1938 appeared the first two translations of *Penthesilea*. *Michael Kohlhaas* continued to appear in new editions throughout the period. Thus, of Kleist's dramas, only two still remained untranslated – his first, *Schroffenstein*, and, of course, his unforgivable *Amphitryon*.[2]

It is in regard to this much disputed drama, and by way of the production in 1929 of Jean Giraudoux's *Amphitryon 38*, that Jean Tarvel, the Berlin drama critic for the Paris journal *Comoedia*, contributes an article on Kleist in March, 1930.[3]

Tarvel begins with an admission that he has no idea what rank Kleist's *Amphitryon* holds among the thirty-seven versions preceding the Giraudoux play, but that it is surely one of the most curious as well as the most unforgettable. The drama forms a part of the classic repertory of German theater and has, for Germans at least, completely supplanted the version of Molière, not surprising, Tarvel adds, since Kleist at least began his play simply as a translation of the Molière comedy.

With Kleist's tragic and tormented view of life, however, he could not see in the legend simply the story of a galant or amusing adventure. Alcmene struck Kleist, Tarvel maintains, rather as the unfortunate victim of a cruel god, while Amphitryon seemed to him to be a husband who in no way deserved the fate meeted out to him. Both characters are seen as suffering from a situation they cannot understand.

Alcmene is changed by Kleist into the model of conjugal fidelity whose constancy and strength finally defeat even Jupiter, a Jupiter, incidentally, also much altered from the traditional figure of a cruder Don Juan bent on pleasure at any cost. Kleist, influenced perhaps by contemporary ideas, envelops his Jupiter in a cloud of pantheistic notions. Tarvel, reflecting traditional French criticism of the play, feels that this change involved Kleist in many difficulties, psycho-

logical and philosophical contradictions, that forced him in the end to leave the character of Jupiter somewhat diffuse and uncertain. This pantheistic concept of Jupiter does in fact, in Tarvel's view, threaten the very basis of the tragedy. An omnipotent god, after all, could, with a single gesture, set aright any wrong he may have done.

Kleist constructed the entire tragedy on what Goethe accurately described as "die Verwirrung des Gefühls." Tarvel then mentions Goethe's severe condemnation of the play.

The essential change made in the Molière play lies, however, in the figure of Alcmene, and here, Tarvel feels, the plays of Kleist and Giraudoux are oddly similar. Kleist's heroine possesses a charm, a modesty, a nobility of feeling that makes her closely akin to the Alcmene of Giraudoux. He then points out several similar passages or situations in the two plays but, in doing so, insists on the clear superiority of Giraudoux. Giraudoux succeeded, Tarvel comments, where Kleist failed. By making the character of Alcmene and the theme of conjugal fidelity the center of his play, Giraudoux wisely avoided the whole question of the "confusion des sentiments." By constantly alternating emotion and irony, Giraudoux gives to his play a unity of tone completely destroyed in the Kleist play by the brutal contrast between the comedy of Sosie and the drama of Amphitryon.

Giraudoux keeps Alcmene ignorant of the truth of what has really occured. Her anxieties are directed not to an ineluctable past, but to the future. The god pursues her, even threatens her, but that is much less serious for a woman like Alcmene than to know that he has really possessed her. "Ainsi le tragique reposant sur un élément trouble est évité: il y en a tout au plus une perspective, une ombre, qui souligne l'amour absolu d'Alcmène. Giraudoux tourne ingénieusement l'écueil où Kleist a sombré."

Other textual comparisons can be made, says Tarvel, but though interesting, they are pointless. Once having mentioned the oddly similar changes made by the two authors, Tarvel hastens to dispose of the need to delve further into the matter. Basically, he comments, there are no two temperaments more dissimilar than Giraudoux's and Kleist's – "that German totally lacking in irony." One can only praise Giraudoux, Tarvel feels, for having returned to the realm of comedy a theme Kleist tried to 'deviate' into tragedy.

Though Kleist was thus seemingly at fault in his attempted tragic treatment of the Amphitryon legend, Tarvel apparently feels that he is a writer worth getting to know more about. Such is the implication of the second half of the article, devoted to a report on a recently published biography of Kleist by Karl Federn.

Tarvel begins with a description of Kleist's status in contemporary Germany, where his dramas are ranked along with those of Schiller.

His Novelle, *Kohlhaas*, is translated and known the world over. His *Marquise von O* is unquestionably a second masterpiece in this same genre. Recounting then much of Kleist's biography, Tarvel comments that Kleist's fate can not be blamed simply on bad luck or even on the lack of understanding of his contemporaries. Kleist's biography reveals a basic maladjustment to life that stemmed from his very nature. Apparently following Federn's version of the facts, he then traces Kleist's life through to its final tragic end when, rebuffed on all sides, poor, and in despair, he committed suicide.

As a brief pre-cursor of the issue it was to become a few years later, Tarvel brings his article to a close with mention of the one bright moment of hope in Kleist's life, his activities on the journal *Phoebus*, a moment of hope, however, soon brought to a cruel end by Goethe's condemnation of Kleist's literary efforts. From then on Kleist was finished. Deserted and a failure, Kleist faded away before he even had a real chance to make his mark. Tarvel's final remark is that we know far too little about the character of this enigmatic poet. He suggests that we turn to his works for more information.

The real interest of Tarvel's article, aside from its directing the attention of French readers to the personality and the works of Kleist, lies in its comparison of the recently highly successful play of Giraudoux with its Kleist predecessor. Though the comparison seems natural enough, in view of Giraudoux's well-known acquaintance with German literature as well as his frank numbering of the play as the thirty-eighth version of the Greek legend, Tarvel's article is the only one appearing at the time even to mention the Kleist predecessor. That this failure is not due solely to ignorance of the existence of the Kleist play seems borne out by the reluctance even up to the present day to compare the two plays, let alone mention the possibility of Kleistian influence. Only much later, when Kleist has gained in France the reputation of a first class writer, will critics begin to investigate more closely the similarities between the two dramas.

Tarvel's article is important, too, in the stress it places on Goethe's purported condemnation of Kleist and its subsequent effect on his career. More will be made of this later. In general, however, it is the work of an informed journalist rather than a study by a serious Kleist critic. As the report of a French drama critic in Germany, it illustrates clearly the importance currently given in that country to Kleist's drama and especially the renewed interest being directed to his *Amphitryon*.

Though Tarvel's article illustrates fairly conclusively the direct influence of German Kleist criticism, other French critics of Kleist were becoming in the thirties less and less willing to follow their German counterparts. This growing independence of French Kleist

criticism can be seen earliest and most clearly in the series of reviews by I. Rouge appearing in the *Revue germanique*. The promise of a "sane and sensible" approach to Kleist, already prefigured in his *Notice* of 1922, is borne out in these discussions of major German works on Kleist. The first of these, his review of Gerhard Fricke's immensely important analysis of Kleist, is fairly indicative of his refusal to surrender Kleist to any new and radical interpretation. Fricke's book, *Gefühl und Schicksal bei Heinrich von Kleist*, appeared in Berlin in 1929. Rouge's review appeared the following year.[4]

After an extensive outline of Fricke's thesis, in general, an existentialist interpretation of Kleist's work, Rouge states his reservations. Despite the brilliance of the interpretation, Rouge is suspicious of any attempt to reduce all of Kleist's work to a single principle. Such oversimplification forces a bit what can be fitted into the system and tends to overlook what cannot (220-21).

Rouge objects specifically to Fricke's claim that Kleist showed his superiority by rejecting Kant's idealism in favor of his own "individual realism." Such a superiority could only be claimed if Kleist had really understood Kant and had found him philosophically wanting. This, however, was not the case. Rouge is consistent with his criticism of ten years earlier when he objects once again to Kleist's being treated as a thinker. Critics expect, he says facetiously, the greatest poetic genius of all time and, as well, one of the wisest of philosophers (222).

Rouge sees Kleist's great reliance on "Gefühl" as the only guide to truth as being, in large part, due to the influence of Schiller. It was simply an idea in the air at the times, not, in any sense, Kleist's original contribution. He asks, too, if even Kleist's own characters show that feeling is the way to truth. He disagrees with Fricke's notion that Alcmene's choice of the wrong Amphitryon is the *proof* of her real loyalty to her husband. "Telle est en effet la situation paradoxale à laquelle conduit l'ambiguïté de la fable païenne que Kleist dénature pour la christianiser" (222). He does not see that Alcmene's 'Gefühl' helped her any, that is, it did not warn her that she was being duped by Jupiter.

In response to the claim that the theme of *Penthesilea* is the conflict between passion and duty,[5] Rouge reminds the critics that Penthesilea did not make the selection but believed Achilles to be predestined to be hers, this by word of her mother who, in turn, had spoken probably at the instigation of the gods. Thus, he asks, where is the supposed conflict? (222). He objects as well to the constant glossing over by critics of the excesses in *Penthesilea* and again makes his point that the tragedy in the play results from a misunderstanding and not from an intellectual one.

Just as in *Schroffenstein*, 'Gefühl' is deceived or deceives. Both

tragedies show clearly that "Gefühl" can lead to error and catastrophe. Who, then, can distinguish between true feeling and false feeling? Of what value is all this philosophy of 'Gefühl' such as we find it in Kleist's characters? (224).

In his refusal to answer these last questions, Rouge, over-eager to stress the positive in Kleist, overlooks the precise tragic import of Kleist's work and, as well, the essence of Fricke's interpretation. His refusal to see Kleist as a tragic poet is borne out again in his next remarks. He criticizes Fricke for not seeing that *Prinz* represents a reconciliation of the individual and the law. He objects finally to the constant and rigorous opposition critics try to set up between Kleist's realism and the idealism of the classicists and the Romantics. Such an opposition is not true in Kleist's case, nor is it true, he asserts, that idealists such as Fichte and Novalis were as blind to real man as Fricke and others would maintain. In summing up, Rouge praises Fricke for the constructive vigor of his criticism but objects to the over-schematization that results from it. He concludes, somewhat ironically, with the reservation that his remarks are but those of "un simple 'philologue' devant certains ouvrages de la critique d'aujourd'hui, de la critique géniale, promotrice de la 'science de l'esprit', créatrice de 'mythes'" (225).

Rouges' dislike for any extra-literary interpretations of Kleist's works is again revealed in his brief review of Rüdiger Dorr's *H. von Kleist's Amphitryon*.[6] Here he objects to the view held by Dorr, as well as by the majority of German critics of the period, that the error of which Alcmene is the victim is of a tragic nature. Rouge reminds his German counterparts that the whole mistake is a result of the miraculous power of Jupiter. How could the human senses, heart or reason, be reasonably expected to see through such supernatural events? Rouge admits that this shows, to be sure, the insufficiency of heart and reason, but asks, "Que prouve contre la faculté normale de connaître leur mise en défaut par un phénomène surnaturel?" (381).

Clearly Rouge is objecting here to the attempts of German critics to extract a message from *Amphitryon*, that is, a message quite apart from the significance of the events to the characters in the play. His critical acumen is too keen to allow him to overlook the obvious fact that whatever the cause of Alcmene's error might be, it has nevertheless tragic implications for her personally. He is, presumably, objecting to the lesson that is supposed to be drawn from the error. This seems clearer in his following facetious objection to what he calls "la grandissante église kleistienne," undoubtedly a reference to the interpretation of *Amphitryon* by Dorr, Braig, and others in religious and metaphysical terms. Rouge concludes with a statement of his conviction that if Kleist had intended us to take

the drama as seriously as some German critics have, if, for example, he had meant Jupiter to be the symbol of the Absolute revealed briefly to mankind, he would have made Jupiter less an Olympian looking for fun and company and Alcmene less "'frémissante' dans ses attitudes de femme 'révélée'" (381).

Nearly twenty years after his first study of Kleist, Rouge will still be pleading for a more rational, more classic interpretation of Kleist's work, will still be insisting that Kleist is first and foremost a creator of intensely living, dramatic personnages and only a poor runner-up as a peddler of ideas. In 1938 he turns to a study of Kleist's *Penthesilea*, not, he says, to examine it from the point of view of its obvious psychological interest, but to ask the question whether there is a philosophical concept behind the work.[7] Specifically, since in *Penthesilea* there appears a clash of cultures, Rouge asks where the play fits, or if it fits at all, in the series beginning with *Götz von Berlichingen*, extending through *Die Räuber*, *Wilhelm Tell*, and *Libussa*, and ending in *Herodes und Mariamne* and *Gyges und sein Ring*. It is in the light of the latter two Hebbel plays, where personal conflicts represent larger cultural conflicts looming in the background, that he examines Kleist's play and finds it completely opposed in conception and in execution.

The entire idea of a play dominated by an ideology conflicts with Kleist's realism, a realism whose first concern was to place on stage real characters with real passions so that the idea of the drama will devolve from their actions and never dominate them (116). Rouge sees no broad cultural generalizations in *Penthesilea*, nor any taking of sides, presenting one culture as better than the other. In no way does Kleist imply that the Amazon creed is inferior to the Greek. On the contrary, he surrounds the High Priestess with dignity and nobility and, in addition to showing both sides of the heroine, also shows Achilles as both a gentleman and a brute (118). Kleist will retain throughout the work an interest in the personal tragedy of Penthesilea, her conflict with Achilles, making no attempt to heighten interest by combining this theme with the broader theme of cultural conflict as he would do later in *Die Hermannsschlacht* (118).

Yet, Rouge adds, the tragedy of *Penthesilea* does arise out of the fact that she is an Amazon and thus subject to the laws and traditions of her people. It thus would seem to be the conflict between her love as a woman and her duty as an Amazon. This conflict should have been imposed on her with rigorous necessity. It is here that Rouge finds what he feels to be a very serious fault, one he had pointed out in his earlier article, i.e., the fact that it was not actually Penthesilea who made the unlawful choice, but Penthesilea's mother.

Evidently interpreting Penthesilea's violent emotional and physical reaction on first seeing Achilles to be due principally to the

realization that her mother's prediction had been verified and not, as it would seem to most, a spontaneous burst of desire quite of her own making, Rouge seizes on this supposed mistake as a good example of Kleist's lack of consistency and coherence, of the lack of what he terms a sufficient mastery of self and subject matter, the effects of which can be seen in his thoughts, his life, and his works. More emotional than reflective, Kleist should be admired not as a logical thinker, but as the inspired creator of impassioned souls (120).

Once having thus disposed of any idea of a philosophical concept in the play, Rouge then sets out to examine the nature of this consuming passion that leads Penthesilea to disaster. His conclusion will be that her passion is not an expression of Kleist's own violent passion, sexual or otherwise, but rather a transposition of his frustrated ambitions for literary fame (121).

Rouge finds in the feelings of Penthesilea and Achilles an inextricable mixing of love and ambition. Especially in scenes 3, 5, 8, and 9, he feels that her words betray the real anger of frustrated love (123). Yet deceived love alone is not enough to account for her final act, if this were not compounded by the hatred resulting from frustrated ambition. "C'est ainsi que tantôt le conflit, tantôt l'accord de ces deux passions les portent mutuellement jusqu'au paroxysme qui finit par les faire sombrer ensemble dans un abîme de rage démente. Là est le ressort de la tragédie, le propulseur de la catastrophe, beaucoup plus que dans une lutte entre passion et devoir" (126).

To be sure, Penthesilea's duty to conquer Achilles before she can submit to him has something to do with disturbing her outlook, but, Rouge comments, this duty only reinforces her natural ambition, an ambition already pushed to the point of sadism and self-destruction. It is this demonic passion the heroine will expiate (127).

Rouge turns in the last part of his article to an examination of the possible meaning of the play. He says first that the play expresses Kleist's belief that existence is essentially incomprehensible, an idea that haunted him after the Kant crisis. This theme is illustrated again and again in Penthesilea, who is no more comprehensible to herself than she is to others (128). While *Schroffenstein* had illustrated the idea of a fate *external* to us as individual actors, *Penthesilea* illustrates the exact opposite. Here fate, as in no other Kleist tragedy, lies ultimately in the nature of the heroine herself (128). As the High Priestess says, "Son destin, c'est son cœur fou."

Penthesilea's fate implies, says Rouge, a law – a law more associated with ancient wisdom than with Christian asceticism – the law that condemns hybris (129). As Penthesilea will say herself, Rouge writes, "Maudit le cœur qui ne sait pas se modérer!" She commits suicide because life is no longer possible for a human

being who has sunk to such depths of animalism. Her suicide is the final and necessary abasement, not a transfiguration.

Thus Rouge finds in Penthesilea a classical condemnation of excess, in this instance, excess of passion. Responsibility seems somehow to be attributed to the imperfection of the world, yet Rouge finds no explanation, no suggestion of how to correct or attenuate its effects. He sees in Kleist's play no metaphysical intuition, nor any moral doctrine as in the plays of Goethe, Schiller, Grillparzer, and Hebbel mentioned at the beginning of the article. In comparison to these, Kleist's work is inferior in intellectual content. In the powerful depiction, however, of the all-consuming passion, excepting *Faust* and *Prometheus*, Kleist is superior. He is, in Rouge's judgment, equal to the very greatest.

"Le drame de Kleist est une de ces œuvres volcaniquement jaillies de l'expérience la plus intime d'un homme, et qui s'impose avec la force d'un témoignage humain spontané, direct, irréfragable. Cet homme n'a pas besoin d'être un penseur, il suffit qu'il soit sensible, et sincère, et poète comme l'est Kleist, pour que la donnée de son expérience s'organise en une œuvre dont l'intérêt particulier se rehausse d'une signification générale" (132).

If the problems posed by the characters are confusing, or if the action is confusing, it is because, in Rouge's view, the author's thoughts are confused. But, he adds, the simple truth that excess in all things is a fault is given new strength and tragic scope in Kleist's drama. It is done without visible didactic intent, the truth arising out of the characters and the situations themselves. "Cette œuvre n'est pas d'un artiste qui domine le cosmos organisé dans son esprit; elle est celle d'un poète dominé par le chaos des forces qui assaillent sa sensibilité" (132).

Rouge's concluding remark, referring as it does to the Goethe-Kleist controversy then raging among French critics, attempts to show that there is no real need to feel obliged to choose between one or the other. They were quite simply two different kinds of genius. Unlike Rouge, however, the majority of Kleist critics in the thirties felt required to make their position on this question known, that is, felt it necessary to declare themselves either for Kleist or for Goethe. Though the controversy was hardly a new one at this time – the studies of Gundolf and Witkop in 1922 had already made much of the supposed conflict – it was given sudden and almost violent prominence by the publication in Paris in 1931 of the first inclusive French biography of Kleist, the work of Emilie and Georges Romieu, *La Vie de Henri de Kleist.* Published as it was by the influential *Nouvelle revue française* and the Gallimard press, it was in itself proof of Kleist's arrival in French letters.

Though one might wish in some respects that it had been the

work of more scholarly grounded, less biased writers, it must be admitted that the picture it presented of the tormented, solitary, unappreciated, and actually persecuted poet could hardly be better suited to arouse sympathetic interest among French readers. Almost novel-like in style, based on various French and German sources, it depicts Kleist as the victim of what amounts to a near-conspiracy, a malevolent crusade to destroy him as a person and as a possible literary influence. The responsibility, directly and indirectly, for the conspiracy is laid in no uncertain terms at the feet of the reigning literary figure of Kleist's life, Goethe.[8]

Goethe, as the director, is accused of the willful sabotage of Kleist's comedy in Weimar, thus bringing about its failure at the important court theatre. Goethe's action is said to be in part the result of jealousy toward a dangerous young rival, and in part due to Kleist's position as a protégé of the poet Wieland. The refusal by Iffland to stage Kleist's *Käthchen* in Berlin is also attributed to Goethe's direct influence (171). The biography ends with the lament of Kleist's sister, Ulrike, who is claimed to have accused herself, along with Goethe, of having killed Kleist.

The view that Goethe considered Kleist a dangerous rival is of course a fanciful one. Though, in fairness to Goethe, the overly-partisan biographers ought to have considered that his condemnation of Kleist might have had its roots not in jealousy or in sheer malevolence but in an honest inability to appreciate what Kleist was aiming at, their point, namely that Goethe's refusal to help Kleist was damaging, both during and after his lifetime, is, of course, well taken. It will have its day among French critics from this time forward, as will, in one form or another, much of the content of the Romieu work.

One of the first to quote extensively from Romieu's biography was Henri Bidou, in an article appearing in the Paris newspaper *Le Temps*, November 2, 1932. The occasion for Bidou's article, datelined Berlin, October, 1932, is a report on a performance directed by Max Reinhardt of *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. After quoting at length from the Romieu biography, stressing Kleist's unsuccessful loves, his sickness, his suffering rejection, his desire to die, his long search for a companion in death, Bidou states that he found himself immediately attracted to Kleist. Then, in an echo of Stefan Zweig's *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon*, he links him firmly to Hölderlin and Nietzsche. German Romanticism has produced no one so singular.

Coming, then, to *Prinz*, he says that he was curious to see brought back to the stage this creation of one of the purest Romantics. He was understandably surprised, then, to discover a work of pure classicism (3). Perhaps, he writes, the day will come when people

will realize that the difference between a classical and a romantic drama is quite superficial. Thus Bidou is willing to break down the difference between classic and romantic rather than admit the obvious other inference, namely that Kleist is possibly not one of the purest Romantics.

Following a brief résumé of the action of the play, Bidou presents his view of the work as presenting a moving paean to obedience, patriotism, and heroism (3). Though admitting the possibility that the production coincides with certain contemporary nationalistic ideas, he judges as beyond any question the strength and grandeur of the work.

Concerning the outcome of the conflict between the Prince and the Elector, Bidou's interpretation of the play runs along rather simple patriotic lines. The principle of what is best for the nation condemns the rebellious Prince, saves the obedient Prince (3).

Bidou closes his article with the Prince's last monologue ("Nun, o Unsterblichkeit, bist du ganz mein!") in which he sees Kleist expressing that same mood of apotheosis in which he finally ended his own life.

Some six months later, Bidou deals with Kleist again, this time on the occasion of a "romantic pilgrimage" to Kleist's grave on the Wannsee.[9] The article is in many respects reminiscent of another describing a similar pilgrimage made thirty years previous by Edmond Fazy. Bidou, however, unlike his predecessor, does not see the article as a good opportunity to sell a favorite author to the French. Bidou admits that of all the great German poets, Kleist is probably the least known in France. Despite the regrettability of this supposed state of affairs, Bidou's stated interest here is not to talk of the poet's works but of the poet himself. Compared to his previous article, Bidou then gives a more detailed picture of Kleist's intellectual and emotional life, again relying on the Romieu book, though now toning down somewhat his earlier stress on the idea of Kleist's death search. He ends, as Fazy had done before him, with a description of the grave as he viewed it in its peaceful setting.

Scarce suspecting the number of French critics who have regretted that Kleist was unknown in France, Bidou comments in this respect, "A défaut de son œuvre, sa vie au moins peut retenir l'attention et la pitié" (3). Thus Bidou continues in the tradition of those who find the figure of Kleist, his life and his sufferings, potentially as interesting, or perhaps even more interesting than Kleist's works themselves. The legend built around the personality of Kleist for more than a century was not to die with Bidou.

It is not surprising, then, to note the title which the Sorbonne's Roger Ayrault chose for his important critical survey of Kleist

criticism, published in Paris in 1934, *La Légende de Heinrich von Kleist.* The work, a companion piece to his much larger study of Kleist published in the same year, purports to present as complete a review as possible of all works dealing with Kleist in the period 1821 to 1931, "dans la mesure cependant où ils avaient quelque valeur."[10] This very important reservation to his claim of completeness results, among other things, in his excluding from treatment or consideration all French criticism except that of Bonafous and Rouge. It explains as well his failure to include much work done in periodicals in both France and Germany, especially, as a German critic correctly pointed out, in periodicals after 1900.[11] Despite the fact that his claim to have treated all worth-while critical studies of Kleist can not go unchallenged, Ayrault's survey was a much needed contribution to Kleist scholarship. Its value as a research tool for the student of Kleist is unquestionable.

The work, however, is of no small value in its own right. It serves in many respects as a preface to the exhaustive study of Kleist published by Ayrault in the same year. It serves as a preface, or rather, as a justification of the need for a study of Kleist which Ayrault then provides in his larger work. The very word 'legend,' in the title of the survey, though not explained explicitly, evidently implies the need of a study that will present the real Kleist. In the conclusion of the survey, after reviewing the various and ever-changing images of Kleist presented by critics over a hundred years, Ayrault complains that all critics up to now have made the mistake of compartmentalizing Kleist. What we must have, he states, once and for all, is a truly complete image of the poet (118). The presentation of this complete image was, of course, not long in appearing.

To return a moment, however, to Ayrault's survey, it presents two points which need commentary. The first deals with the stress it places on the deadly effect of Goethe's condemnation of Kleist, both during and after his life, and the second, concerns the various works which Ayrault chooses to set up for special commendation.

On the first point, Ayrault is very clear. Not only does he maintain that all of nineteenth-century Kleist criticism suffered under Goethe's destructive judgment, but claims as well that Goethe knew that his condemnation would seal Kleist's fate then and for years to come (10).

It was not until the advent of naturalism, at the turn of the century, with the resultant popularity of the Goethe-rejected *Penthesilea,* that Goethe's *literary* comdemnation of Kleist was finally largely swept aside. Goethe's medical condemnation, however, that is, his view of Kleist as sick, Ayrault claims, remained in general acceptance or, at least, was not often refuted. This condemnation, too, Ayrault imputes to literary motives (33). Though Ayrault does not, as an informed scholar, impute malevolence to

Goethe's actions, as E. and G. Romieu had done, his work did little to combat a notion too easily seized upon by those over-zealous admirers of Kleist who refused to place ultimate blame for Kleist's failure in the age, or even in the man himself, but demanded an 'Olympian' as scape-goat.

Ayrault's greatest praise will, in general, be directed to those studies in which an attempt is made to present an overall view of Kleist's work, or to those that show an intimate connection between Kleist the man and Kleist the poet, the unity of man and work. As one of the first of these, he commends Otto Brahm's biography, published in 1884 (26). From the date of this work, he says, critics will attempt to arrive at a comprehensive view of Kleist's works and to do so by going from Kleist's life to his works.

Ayrault has special commendation also for Julius Hart's *Das Kleist-Buch*, published in 1912. Though he criticizes the often extravagant interpretations of Hart, he claims the work deserves great praise in that it saw a unifying theme in Kleist's works where predecessors had seen only confusion or, at best, rich variety. Especially in contrast to the work of Meyer-Benfey, Hart shows that all of Kleist's works must necessarily have been written by the same man.

Consistent with his later attempts to divorce Kleist from any extreme nationalistic interpretation, Ayrault criticizes the Kleist-Gesellschaft, founded in Berlin in 1920, for its supposed intention of turning Kleist to national ends.

In his conclusion, Ayrault presents the three images of Kleist that have appeared in the 120 years since Kleist's death. The first, under Goethe's shadow, the period in which three of his plays, *Krug*, *Schroffenstein*, and *Prinz*, and his Novelle, *Michael Kohlhaas*, were seen as acceptable, if one could overlook the author – the period of the image of a German, a Prussian Kleist; the second, under the spell of naturalism, in which Kleist was seen as one who dared to go all the way in depicting a character, Kleist the realist, the psychologist, the creator of *Penthesilea*; and third, following the war of 1914, when defeated Germans saw in Kleist, as in Hölderlin and Nietzsche, the tragic symbol of their own destiny, the image of Kleist as the tragic figure, the 'traqué,' the sufferer. With the triumph of expressionism and the 'spontaneous cry,' Kleist, the artist-psychologist, gives way to Kleist, the prophet, the man who drew from the depths of his own personal tragedy a collective message, a moral law. Kleist, the author of *Penthesilea*, becomes Kleist, the author of *Amphitryon* (117). Thus Ayrault sees the changing facets of the Kleist legend. Implicit in his presentation is that no one of these images shows the real, the whole Kleist. It will be his goal to meet this need, to present a truly complete image of the poet (118).

This ambitious undertaking appeared as a six-hundred page study, *Heinrich von Kleist,* published in Paris in 1934. The work of a fervent Kleist admirer, densely written, at times obscure, at times tedious, repetitious, and even contradictory, often startling and provocative, filled with brilliant insights into Kleist's work and personality, solidly grounded in scholarship and based on a thorough and living familiarity with Kleist's work, the book marks the culmination of Kleist scholarship in France. Its important and original contribution to an understanding of Kleist and his works is incontestable. Because of its length and the richness of material it presents, it would not be feasible to present here in any great detail a summary of its content. Mention can be made, however, of its purpose, its method, its organization, and, as well, some of the more significant ideas and insights that earn for it the title of an original contribution to Kleist research.

In the twelve-page introduction to the work, Ayrault states as his goal, "à présenter sous forme de synthèse, une vie, une personnalité, un ensemble poétique, un art littéraire: la totalité des aspects sous lesquels se manifeste tour à tour l'un des très beaux génies du dix-neuvième siècle, l'un des mieux faits pour atteindre à la gloire universelle qu'il a lui-même nommée 'le plus grand des biens de la terre'."[12]

His method will be, he states, that of a detailed psychological investigation, a task demanding permanent contact with Kleist's works themselves, his letters and other documents, and not with the commentaries that have been made on them. Due to the special nature and complexity of Kleist's genius, the usual format for the critical study of an author is impossible, that is, the investigation, one by one, of an author's works, interspersed with details of his life and activities. Any work of Kleist's, Ayrault maintains, studied by itself and independent of the others will not reveal all of its secrets. The best commentary on a given work of Kleist's can be found in one of his other creations and it is only by means of an intensive study of the works and the letters that a true picture of Kleist can be arrived at. Ayrault insists on the absolute identity of the man and his creations.

Thus, after a rather conventional biography, Ayrault turns, in Chapter Two, to the presentation of Kleist's portrait – arrived at by means of a detailed study of the letters as well as of the works. In the following two chapters, comprising Part Two of the book, Ayrault shows how Kleist, under the influence of Rousseau, acquired a faith in the importance of feeling, how he came to consider as the source of human tragedy the confusion that overtakes feeling when it gives way to reason or when it must face what Ayrault calls "l'ordonnance viciée du monde," then, finally, how Kleist came to feel that such

confusion could be resolved into a final harmony. These chapters attempt to extract from Kleist's works their ideology, to retrace the evolution of Kleist's thought over the last ten years of his life. The final four chapters, comprising Part Three of the work, deal with Kleist's art, i.e., his sources, his dramatic and novelistic technique, and his style.

In the first section, which deals with Kleist's biography, Ayrault has occasion to comment on the Goethe-Kleist controversy, clarifying somewhat the opinions expressed in the *Légende*. Goethe, he maintains, had to reject Kleist, but only because he had to reject what Kleist's work represented. Having avoided the most violent aspects of the human tragedy in his own works, Goethe could not but view with real apprehension the treatment of these same themes in Kleist's work (81). Ayrault thus agrees with Nietzsche that what Goethe rejected in Kleist was his sense of the tragic, the incurable side of nature.

Ayrault's attempt to keep Kleist out of the hands of the extreme nationalists is evident in his discussion of the nature and evolution of Kleist's patriotic feelings. The intellectual cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century had, Ayrault claims, completely stripped Kleist of any narrow national sentiment. His first two dramas, in marked contrast to the first efforts of Goethe and Schiller, illustrate this clearly. It took Napoleon to bring Kleist to an acute awareness of his 'Germanism.' Through his hatred for the French emperor, he felt for the first time part of a group, of a national community. "Pour célébrer cette 'communauté', dont seule la force de son ennemi l'a conduit à éprouver l'existence, Kleist ne craindra pas d'en donner une image si absolument idéalisée, si disproportionnée avec la réalité immédiate, que les rudesses de Goethe semblent, auprès d'elle, une expression nécessaire de la sagesse" (142).

Ayrault sees *Die Hermannsschlacht* as the expression of this spurious brand of patriotism, inspired that is, not by love for Germany, but by hatred for the invader (201). As for the expression of Kleist's true patriotism, Ayrault turns to *Prinz*, the perfect 'national' play, illustrating the complete fusion of Kleist, the Prussian, and Kleist, the poet, the play which can be called patriotic in the best sense of the word (146-147).

Ayrault objects on several occasions to the claim that Kleist was a naturalist or a realist. Such claims could not be further from the truth. Ayrault maintains that Kleist never proceeded from objective reality to the creation of a character. He began always from an 'inner vision' and then struggled to make this vision into something real (242). Kleist's heroes exist for him long before he finds a milieu for them. This milieu is then shaped according to their personality. The many anachronisms in Kleist's works are seen as proof of his disregard for exact depiction of locale (244).

Even the claim of psychological realism, in the ordinary sense, is rejected by Ayrault. Kleist was completely out of real touch with human beings. His image of people is the one he composed himself in his loneliness and apartness. When, Ayrault says, Kleist at times puts his finger on truly human traits, his predilection will be for extreme states of the mind or heart (166). Even the so-called natural world plays a very small role in Kleist's work. This does not harm the plays but does, in Ayrault's view, lessen the effectiveness of the Novellen (167).

In addition to a lack of feeling for nature, Kleist is also said to be without any real sense of comedy. Ayrault gives as the best, or worst example of this, Kleist's *Der Schrecken im Bade*. Even in his one comedy, *Krug*, Kleist chose an inherently somber theme. The picture on which the play is based should have inspired a "tearful" treatment. Since the theme is not comic, Kleist was forced to make it so by resorting to artificial devices, almost all verbal in nature, the only kind of humor he was capable of. The results were not the happiest. Kleist's comedy is too thought-out, too calculated, too artificial. It is, says Ayrault, the accidental application of Kleist's genius to an inferior form (172).

In the section discussing Kleist's individualism, Ayrault describes Kleist's correspondence as anticipating the substance of all of his later writings (198). The unifying theme of that correspondence is its penetrating psychology of the tragedy of the solitary individualist. It is, Ayrault finds, this same tragedy of individualism that finds expression throughout Kleist's works. The Jupiter of *Amphitryon* was not meant to be the Christian or the pagan God, but rather, the highest possible magnification of his tragic sense of aloneness (201). Ayrault sees Kleist's intense individualism as accounting for his mastery of the psychology of hate and for his frequent treatment of the conflict between the individual and the state, a conflict finally resolved in *Prinz* (204).

In Chapter Four, Part Two, Ayrault discusses the nature of Kleist's Romanticism. Kleist was not a Romantic for the simple reason that he had relations with the Romantics, or because some of the details in his work correspond to details in the works of the Romantics. From 1801, however, the date, Ayrault finds, of the sudden revelation of an esthetic Catholicism, until 1810, with the publication of his Novelle *Die heilige Cäcilie*, Kleist was a Romantic to the extent that his works were filled with Catholicism, but to that extent only (218). Kleist's Catholicism, however, was that of artistic predilection rather than absolute conviction (219). At least until the aforementioned *Die heilige Cäcilie, Käthchen* is seen as the best example of this kind of Catholicism. The entire work is dominated by a miracle. Critics are mistaken, Ayrault insists, in trying to make

Käthchen into a pathological figure. Such critics purposely play down the mystic origin of her revelation.

Critics are also wrong in seeing the use of the gypsy, in *Kohlhaas* and in *Das Bettelweib*, as proof of Kleist's affinity with the Romantics. Kleist makes use of the occult in these works simply as an artist who wants to evoke a fantastic scene. The true role of the gypsy is simply to indicate the existence of mystery (223). As for the use of somnambulism in *Prinz*, Ayrault sees it not, as is often claimed, as proof that the Prince is abnormal, a dreamer who is destined to be the victim of a grossly real world, but simply as a means of stressing the Prince's individualism. In this manner, Kleist is able to isolate his hero, to draw him out of the outer world, and into the inner world of his most secret desires (224).

Though Ayrault insists again and again (e.g., pp. 225, 228), that Kleist's real Romanticism lay only in his 'esthetic' Catholicism, he adds that toward the end of his life Kleist was "hanté par certaines dispositions sentimentales, ou certaines représentations, purement catholiques" (228). Kleist seemed, says Ayrault, to be headed at the end of his life toward a legitimate conversion to Catholicism (228).[13]

In the chapter dealing with Kleist's dionysianism, Ayrault expresses his view that the figures of Hermann and Penthesilea are the most direct embodiments of Kleist himself, Hermann being the embodiment of Kleist's hatred, and Penthesilea, the embodiment of Kleist's ambition (252).

In Part Two of the work, by far the most interesting and revealing, Ayrault depicts Kleist's evolution. The chapter headings themselves indicate the central experiences around which Ayrault builds his thesis: 'Kleist et le rationalisme éclairé'; 'Kleist et Kant'; 'Kleist et Rousseau'; 'Le conflit du sentiment et de la raison'; 'Le tragique du sentiment dans le monde 'vicié''; 'Harmonie.'

After brief treatment of Kleist's early years, years dominated by intellectual efforts made always with a moral goal in mind, the years of the famous 'plan of life,' Ayrault turns to the crucial Kant crisis. Pretending to avoid one point of contention from the beginning, Ayrault states that it is not important whether Kleist really understood Kant correctly or not (though Ayrault adds that he did not, and could not) or, for that matter, if indeed Kleist actually read Kant (and not, as Ayrault suspects, some book aimed at popularizing Kantian philosophy or even a work simply inspired by Kantian thought [273]). The important thing is the effect of the contact. Rather than an indication of the destructiveness of Kantian thought, Kleist's despair during the Kant crisis is a far more telling indication of the degree to which he placed absolute faith in the concept of an infinitely perfectible world. Only one who had considered human

truths to be eternal values, says Ayrault, could find in Kant the negation of all truth (275).

The Kant experience shaped Kleist's entire vision of the world, or rather, as Ayrault maintains, it confirmed it. It was the philosophical proof for what he felt instinctively to be true. It will be this view of the world that shapes his entire artistic production. Regardless of the material used, or the form in which it is expressed, Kleist's entire work can be seen as variations on a single theme: "L'aveuglement de l'homme qui, entre l'être profond qu'il ne voit point mais qu'il pressent parfois, et l'apparence, qui s'impose à lui mais dont il doit se garder, ne sait pas éviter le doute et sombre dans l'erreur" (281).

In light of this and largely in agreement with German critics of the twenties and thirties – though not always for the same reasons – Ayrault sees as Kleist's key work, *Amphitryon*: "Toute la vanité et tout le danger de l'apparence y sont enclos. A part lui-même, un homme n'a pas de témoin de son identité profonde: ni ses compagnons d'armes, ni son épouse" (283-284). Like his French predecessors, Ayrault sees Alcmene's choice of the wrong Amphitryon as proof of the vanity of appearances. He sees in *Käthchen* yet another treatment of this theme of the conflict between 'Sein' and 'Schein,' a conflict which, as he will explain in detail in the last chapter, finds a qualified solution in *Prinz* (286).

Ayrault sees Rousseau's influence as paralleling in importance the Kantian revelation. From now on, he says, Rousseau's dictum, to follow your innermost feeling, will guide the Kleistian hero caught in the conflict between being and appearance (301). After Kant, Kleist turned to Rousseau for an answer. Since the search for truth is blocked everywhere by the error that appearance leads us into, our personal feeling becomes the only judge and the best guide for our actions (303).

From the Kant experience Kleist gained the awareness of the inability to arrive at truth through reason. From Rousseau he learned the necessity of reliance on one's innermost feeling. Starting from these two precepts, which lay at the base of Kleist's view of life and which find expression from one end of Kleist's work to the other, Ayrault then traces what he calls the three stages through which this single outlook will pass. A discussion of these three stages comprises the final three chapters of Part Two.

Schroffenstein and *Guiscard* are seen to represent the first stage of Kleist's view of the world. Both express the tragic conflict of reason and feeling. *Schroffenstein* depicts three kinds of people, those who follow only reason, those who follow only feeling, and those "in whom feeling must avoid the snares of reason" (304). It is this third group that must suffer the most. Tragedy comes with

doubt, with the anguish that overcomes the soul when its acting purely on the dictates of the heart is disturbed by warnings or doubts that come from the reasoning faculties.

After the first two dramas came the second stage in Kleist's evolution. Out of Kleist's double conviction that, one, the world is profoundly 'corrupted' ('vicié'), and that, two, feeling is man's most precious gift, he found the basis for his later works. Though still concerned with the conflict of feeling and reason, Kleist is now too strongly entrenched in feeling to be much affected. His real concern will now be with the threat posed by a universe that will not accept his absolute (329). After his own failure to attain absolute knowledge or the absolute in art (Kant, *Guiscard*), Kleist gave up trying to adapt to the laws of the world and bases the tragedy of his heroes on his own tragedy, the confrontation of the individual, guided by feeling, and the universe, "profondément vicié," in which he seeks to satisfy his highest aspirations (329).[14]

Ayrault excepts, however, from this interpretation the character Wetter vom Strahl (in *Käthchen*) and Alcmene. The former is never tragic and the latter's despair is not, Ayrault claims, as profound as it seems (337). Though admitting, consistent with his interpretation mentioned above, that her innermost feeling is completely deceived, he insists, as Rouge had before him, that a god abused Alcmene, and only a god could have. "Dans la mesure où elle succombe à l'artifice du Dieu, Alkmène atteste qu'elle est soustraite à toutes les séductions terrestres, que 'sur le marché du Monde', aucun homme ne parviendra à troubler son sentiment" (338).

In Kleist's three Novellen, *Kohlhaas*, *Der Zweikampf*, and especially in *Die Marquise von O*, Ayrault sees this same theme treated. For the Marquise, for Littegarde, and for Kohlhaas, the world is a great, profoundly "vitiated" force, one which imposes its presence on them suddenly, bringing about their tragedy. The absolute purity of these figures seems to be in defiance of the order of the world and for this defiance they must suffer (340).

Comparing Kohlhaas' reaction to that of the Marquise, Ayrault points out that the former's shows that his basic feeling is deeply penetrated with reason, i.e., he refuses to accept the unreasonable and turns to action, while the latter, acting from pure feeling, surrenders to her fate. Kohlhaas' action, his revolt, will be completely useless. He does not change the order of the world. In a new interpretation of this much discussed work, Ayrault claims that Kohlhaas' real grandeur lies in his gradual acceptance of a necessity so quickly acknowledged by the Marquise, that of renouncing, of retreating or falling back on to one's own innermost feelings (343). Only then will Kohlhaas realize the advantages of separation from the world. Though given a chance to be free again and to regain his

place, he refuses with a statement of his scorn for the world.

Ayrault sees these three Novellen as revealing a kind of tragic optimism. The world is not bad enough to destroy the noblest impulses of the human heart, but it does torture the heart, and the virtuous heart more than any other (348).

In contrast to this tragic optimism, Ayrault describes *Das Erdbeben in Chili*, *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, and *Penthesilea* as representing a return to the pessimism of Kleist's first creations. Yet though we find once again in these works the concept of the inescapable tragedy of human life, there is now an important difference. In *Schroffenstein*, the tragedy resulted from a series of errors into which one was led by reason, whereas feeling would have led one away. The heroes of these later works are brought to tragedy precisely by following their inner feeling, their 'Gefühl.' Feeling is thus no longer a sure guide. It must now operate in a world so bad that even it can lead to disaster. In *Schroffenstein*, reason was under attack. In these three works, the world itself is condemned (348).

Ayrault sees in *Erdbeben* an illustration of the tragic impossibility of a search for God in a world so deeply corrupted, and in Penthesilea's end the clearest possible presentation of the underlying conflict between feeling and the world (357-358).

In the chapter entitled 'Harmonie,' Ayrault presents the next and last stage of Kleist's development. Using Kleist's essay, *Von der Überlegung*, as a base, Ayrault discusses the final attitude of Kleist toward the respective roles played by reason and feeling. In the essay, Kleist had maintained that reflection must *follow* action if it is to carry out its proper function. If reflection comes before or during action, it is crippling. Following action, however, it can be used to its true purpose, that is, to see what was wrong or deficient in the procedure used and to make the necessary modifications with an eye to the future (365).

Though remaining true to his conviction that only through spontaneous reaction from the heart can truth ever be attained, Kleist sees man as forced to act in an evil world and, as a result, to find that his procedures or actions are often faulty. Here reason plays its role, as a helper, to strengthen feeling, to make it more effective. Thus feeling need not lead always and inevitably to tragedy, as in *Penthesilea*. Ayrault sees the clash of Penthesilea and the High Priestess taken up again in the conflict between the Prince and the Elector. This time Kleist brings them to complete agreement (366).

Ayrault judges Kleist's essay *Über das Marionettentheater* to be of greatest importance in this discussion of the relationship between feeling, thought, and action. It is an essay on the human condition, that is, on man's desire to be more than a puppet, on his inability

to be a god (367). But, if there must be a choice, says Ayrault, between 'man-puppet' and 'man-God,' Kleist will choose the latter. Transposed to the moral plane, the grace of the man-puppet is seen as representing the harmony of a being who, just as a puppet obeys only the laws of weight and gravity, will obey only the one command of inner feeling or conviction. The grace of the man-God, on the other hand, is the grace to be found in the one in whom reason and feeling are both absolute and in accord.

If one knows how to be either a man-puppet or a man-God, he will escape the tragedy of Sylvester Schroffenstein as well as that of Penthesilea. Yet, Ayrault reminds, a puppet cannot be imagined without a puppeteer, without the action the puppeteer exerts on the puppet. The man-puppet thus cannot exist in a world where the gods are not present. The man-puppet, in order to exist, must recreate the intimate link between man and God and thus abolish "le vice profond du monde." But as for the man-God, his infinite feeling and infinite reason cannot fail to bring with them heaven on earth and create for himself a total universe where absolute desires, instead of striking against infrangible limits, will pass from the every-day world in which they are born to a higher world where they can be accomplished.

Ayrault sees Käthchen as a man-puppet, the Prince and the Elector as man-Gods. Just as Käthchen's world is filled with signs of Divine Presence, the world of the Prince and the Elector has no place for God (374).

Ayrault points out the different use of dreams in *Käthchen*, *Penthesilea*, and *Prinz*. In the first it is a sign of divine intervention in the world. In *Penthesilea* it is to reveal the secret workings of the heroine's heart. In the third, however, in *Prinz*, there *are* no real dreams. The Prince, Ayrault points out, has seen real things as they happen. Only their beauty makes them unreal. In *Käthchen*, dream and reality seem at first irreconcilable. In *Prinz*, dream is at first only reality transfigured by the mind. In *Käthchen*, only divine intervention can unite dream and reality. In *Prinz*, human will suffices (379).

To the 'vitiated' world of *Penthesilea* and *Kohlhaas*, *Käthchen* opposes another universe whose unity could only be achieved by the sudden appearance of God, while *Prinz* presents a world where man can satisfy his desire for the absolute without the intervention of God (380).

In the Prince's reconciliation of dream and reality, Ayrault sees, as well, a resolution of the conflict between feeling and reason, a conflict that had lain at the heart of Kleist's first drama, *Schroffenstein*. Thus, from the first work to the last, Ayrault, like Rouge, sees a clear evolution, in this instance an evolution that enabled

Kleist in this final drama to present in the figures of the Prince and the Elector, a reconciliation of the forces – feeling and reason – once thought to be totally opposed, a reconciliation, however, in which neither faculty loses its value. The Prince comes to recognize the value of reflection, of reason. The Elector recognizes in turn the legitimacy of feeling. "Les deux extrémités du monde circulaire, la raison et le sentiment, viennent d'aboutir à une égale abnégation, et de s'y confondre... Êtres de raison et de sentiment tout ensemble, ils ont atteint à la 'conscience infinie' du Dieu" (386).

In the section dealing with Kleist's concept of man, Ayrault stresses again and again the absolute connection between Kleist and the products of his creative activity. The conflicts suffered by his characters are his own conflicts. The characters themselves are simply transpositions of his own ego (387). In addition, Kleist is said to have used art to compensate for what he could not have in life, to find expression in literary activity for those segments of his self that could not find expression in the real world of actions (387).

In this section, Ayrault has two important contributions to make; the first in his interpretation of *Prinz* and the second in his comments on *Amphitryon*. In reference to the former play, Ayrault, somewhat as Andler had done before him, stresses the positive nature of the drama and of the character of the Prince. Doubtless in a conscious attempt to correct the view held by virtually all French critics, Ayrault insists that the Prince is a man of action and not a dreamer (398, 399, 400). What, then, of his somnambulism? Ayrault answers that in making his hero a somnambulist, Kleist brings him closer to Nature (400). At the beginning of the play, the Prince is a simple child of Nature, either all action or all dreams, unaware of the reality between the two extremes. But this is only the beginning of the drama. He will soon come to discover reality, measure its tragic content, ponder it, conquer it (400).

The break-through to the awareness of reality comes as a result of the confrontation with the one irrefutable reality, death. After passing through this moment, the Prince is able to recognize his mistake. But then, Ayrault comments, the ecstatic desire for life is replaced by an equally ecstatic desire for death. In a sense, the pendulum that began its arc at the start of the play and passed through the midpoint of reality toward the end of the play, is now in danger of swinging out again. But Kleist brings the pendulum to a stop and saves the Prince. "Parce qu'il [the Prince] a pu connaître la réalité simple, la comprendre et l'accepter, il a mérité qu'elle vînt à lui sous la forme du rêve. Car la réalité, en définitive, ne sera ni la mort ni l'extase qu'il y puise, mais la vision d'amour et de gloire qui, dans le parc du château de Fehrbellin, était déjà descendue vers lui" (403).

The Prince could well have become, like Kohlhaas, like Penthesilea, the victim of his extremist nature. He had to be made to see the reality between extremes. Yet this lesson had to be learned without depriving him of his finest gifts, his basic vitality, strength, and passion. This, Ayrault maintains, was done.

As mentioned earlier, Ayrault, reflecting a similar new stress by contemporary German critics and perhaps, too, not unaffected by Jean Giraudoux's "38th" treatment of the same theme, marks a real break with French Kleist interpreters in the importance he places on *Amphitryon*. Although not granting to it the status it had come to possess across the Rhine, he nevertheless sees the work as a profound, deeply moving, deeply revealing tragedy. In his discussion of the nature and fate of Kleist's heroines, he comments at length on the nature and significance of Alcmene's ordeal. Unlike Rouge, he sees her fate as essentially tragic.

In answer to Jupiter-Amphitryon's question whether the night just passed with him had not seemed shorter than the other's, Alcmene had responded with an all-revealing 'Ah!' At the end of the drama, her last word will be as well a simple 'Ah!' Between these two exclamations – the first trembling with happiness, the second filled with despair – Alcmene's whole story is enclosed (426). Again unlike Rouge, Ayrault sees her choice of the wrong Amphitryon as proof of her love for her husband. Even in cursing him, she reveals complete loyalty to the ideal image she had of him (429).

But once the mistake is made clear to her, though she does not stop loving Amphitryon, she will never be the same again. Amphitryon will no longer be her ideal. He is the imperfect man from whom she turned away before all of Thebes. Having lost faith in herself, having lost faith in her love for Amphitryon, Alcmene expresses the full weight of her tragedy in a single anguished 'Ah.' (429).

In the final section of his work, Ayrault turns to an analysis and discussion of Kleist's art, its sources, its technique, its style. As for influences, Ayrault discusses that of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* on *Krug* and on *Guiscard*, that of Shakespeare on *Schroffenstein*, that of Corneille, Racine, and Molière, and that of Goethe and Schiller.

On the question of Shakespeare's influence, Ayrault throws new light on what one would have thought to be a settled matter. Though the story of Kleist's first drama, he observes, has marked similarities with *Romeo and Juliet*, the theme is the exact opposite. Shakespeare's theme is that of tragic love. Kleist's is that of tragic hate. Ayrault finds the greatest influence on the theme of *Schroffenstein* to have been Shakespeare's *Lear*, with its pessimism, its theme of hate and suspicion, its idea that men are the puppets of fate.

Ayrault concurs with the comparisons often made between Kleist

and Corneille, ("They had the same view of man" [465].) but also stresses similarities with Racine, especially in the almost pathological description of the passion of love, e.g., Penthesilea-Phèdre (469). He sees the essentials of *Krug* (i.e., the figure of Adam) as having been drawn from Molière's *Tartuffe* and remarks once again that Kleist saw in Molière's *Amphitryon* the perfect illustration of the antithesis between reality and appearance (471).

Ayrault claims that Kleist's dramatic genius developed independent of any influence of Goethe (473). He qualifies this somewhat, however, to admit the possible influence of *Götz* on the form of *Käthchen*, as well as to point out the possibility that *Egmont* and *Tasso* might have suggested certain motifs for Kleist's *Prinz* (475). The real German influence, however, is said to be that of Schiller. Apart from *Amphitryon* and *Krug*, all of Kleist's works after *Schroffenstein* are found to be penetrated by Schiller's influence.

In his discussion of Kleist's dramatic technique, Ayrault again points out its evolution, starting from the failure of *Guiscard* and the subsequent necessity of finding a new dramatic technique, then tracing the development of this technique through to its most perfect expression in *Prinz*.

Kleist is not in his dramas, Ayrault insists, a psychologist, that is, he does not set out to show the innermost workings of a character but, rather, creates beings in whom he puts his own self, and these beings become, as a result, real (533). Kleist does not want to explain, but to evoke a character. In order to do this, he uses facts and events. The facts and events have, in Kleist's dramas, Ayrault insists, no value in themselves. They are used simply to evoke character.

His use of facts and events in the Novellen, however, is found to be exactly the opposite. Here they have all the importance. The characters seem to be lost in the events, in the details, all rigorously linked and leading inevitably to the final outcome. Ayrault sees this attachment to facts as depriving Kleist of one of the greatest resources of his dramas, namely extreme concentration in time (535). The Novellen are devoid of dialogue. In their effacement of the author, in the primacy in them of facts over character, in their extreme density, and in their narrative style, they represent, in Ayrault's view, the exact opposite of Kleist's dramas. Though he has certain criticisms, Ayrault does not hesitate to judge Kleist as one of literature's greatest story tellers (555).

Again in the discussion of Kleist's style, in the book's final chapter, Ayrault brings out repeatedly the radical differences between Kleist's dramas and Kleist's Novellen. As for the latter, they are completely lacking in the brilliant alternation of light and shadow so characteristic of the dramas (579). In a detailed study of Kleist's

style, making use of many examples drawn from the works themselves, Ayrault demonstrates his principal claim, that Kleist's works are the perfect illustration of Kleist's own theory of the relationship between thought and speech, thought and action, expressed both in *Von der Überlegung* and in the essay, *Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden*, that is, that thought develops with and as a result of speech. "Seul le jeu des forces instinctives de l'être lui paraît vraiment créateur; et, de même que l'exercice de la raison paralyse les mouvements du corps dans la mesure où il entend les diriger, de même l'idée toute faite oppose un obstacle à l'afflux naturel des mots, à l'acte que figure la parole" (557).

In his four-page conclusion, Ayrault, reflecting perhaps a little too much Gundolf, places greatest stress on Kleist's absolute originality and individuality. His tragic view of life is described as uniquely his own. All human themes give way to the central tragedy of existence: "La confusion irrémédiable dont le sentiment, seul guide de l'homme, est victime, soit sous les coups de la raison, soit en face du monde 'vicié'" (581).

This originality expressed itself as well, in Kleist's instance, in an absence both of masters and of followers, and in Kleist's almost complete independence from the principal literary movement of the day, Romanticism (583). It is, in fact, by virtue of his creative genius, that Ayrault distinguishes Kleist from the Romantics (534).

As though strengthened by these statements of Kleist's independence, Ayrault declares himself finally as totally opposed to any notion of Kleist as a manifestation in any narrow sense of specifically German genius. "L'âme allemande ne s'enrichit pas directement de ses créations; elle ne trouve une voie jusqu'à lui qu'en s'attachant, non à son œuvre, mais à son destin, et en le faisant entrer dans la ligne symbolique dont la folie de Hölderlin et la folie de Nietzsche fixent les points extrêmes. Kleist, à vrai dire, plus qu'aucun autre poète allemand, hormis Goethe, échappe au cadre étroit de la littérature de son pays" (584).

The more Kleist seems out of place among the German Romantics, the more he gains his true place among the great European Romantics from Rousseau to Wagner, a place, Ayrault points out, where Nietzsche, who understood him better than anyone, very clearly put him, beside Byron and Shelley, beside Leopardi, beside Berlioz and Delacroix. "Le drame poétique de Kleist, le drame musical de Wagner: les deux plus grandes créations de l'art allemand depuis Goethe, les deux seules que l'Allemagne puisse proposer à une admiration européenne" (585). The foregoing conclusion is, in less elegant terms, the declaration by an ardent French scholar of international squatter's rights. Despite one's feelings about the reasoning

behind such a declaration, it cannot be questioned that Ayrault, through his exhaustive study, earned at least the right to make it.

Out of the complexity and detail of Ayrault's discussions and analyses, there arise four or five points that can be considered as comprising the work's thesis or critical outlook. The first, the most evident, and the most important is, of course, Ayrault's absolute conviction that Kleist was one of the greatest figures of German, or for that matter, of any literature, the only one, he states in his introduction, who can be placed alongside Goethe. The second point is his insistence on the absolute identity of Kleist the man and Kleist the creative artist. In a work which announces from the very beginning that it will arrive at a portrait of Kleist solely by means of a thorough examination and analysis of Kleist's letters and works, such identity is, of course, a necessary and obvious presupposition.

Ayrault's stress on the idea, however, forces one in the last analysis to ask, in light of the extreme paucity of documents, of reliable commentaries by Kleist's contemporaries, what other Kleist one could know of, if not the one revealed to us in the letters and works? To make a virtue out of necessity, however, provides no serious grounds for critical dissent.

Of a more serious nature would be the entire question of the wisdom of placing such exclusive stress on the importance of the letters as documents in the interpretation of either Kleist's personality or of Kleist's works. Leaving aside the unanswerable question of the degree to which letters of a creative artist are themselves 'Dichtung,' or at best the conscious revelation of character, we are faced, in Kleist's case, with the added fact that the correspondence is woefully incomplete, large parts of it having been lost or even suppressed by family and friends, and of course there are long periods in Kleist's life of which we know nothing, of which not even his friends had any knowledge.

Yet, though Ayrault is very much interested in presenting a complete portrait of Kleist, it is evident that his main interest is in an analysis of the body of Kleist's works. His attempt to show a single personality behind the works is, in essence, an attempt to show that Kleist's works when viewed as a whole do present a coherent world outlook, an evident requisite to any claim that Kleist deserves ranking as a great literary genius.

As a third point, Ayrault will stress throughout his work Kleist's normality, attempting alongside Andler and Rouge, to combat the near unroutable French view of Kleist as being sick. The attempt to show that Kleist's work presents a coherent world view, the attempt to show its logical evolution, the great stress on the importance in Kleist of form, of Kleist as a conscious artist, of Kleist as independent of the Romantics, of the final resolution of conflict

in *Prinz*, all of these can be viewed as so many arguments in Ayrault's defense of the artist's normality.

The attempt to defend Kleist from charges of sickness leads inevitably to the Goethe-Kleist controversy and to Ayrault's fourth point, the indicting of Goethe for, at best, critical blindness and bad judgment in regard to Kleist, for, at worst, the responsibility for the near destruction of a creative genius in his own life-time and for the prejudicious slanting of generations of critics and readers thereafter.

Ayrault's fifth major point, the last in the work itself, is his attempt to disassociate Kleist from any claim that his was the manifestation of specifically German genius, that he represents in any way a narrow national outlook. Though this claim is completely consistent with Ayrault's interpretation of Kleist and doubtless would have been made regardless of the times, one is led to believe that his insistence on it here must have been due in part to his desire to prevent any association of Kleist with the political events of the thirties, and, as well, as a protest against the apparent championing of Kleist by ultra-nationalistic critics across the Rhine.

Critical reaction to Ayrault's work revolved almost exclusively around the last three points. Hippolyte Loiseau, writing in *Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes*, was the first to comment. Though having some doubts about the strict objectivity and impartiality of the review of Kleist criticism in Ayrault's *Légende*, he nevertheless judges the work "a masterful critical clearing house" ("un magistral débroussaillement").[15]

Then, turning to the principal work, Loiseau makes some passing objections to the method of the book, in particular to the presentation by Ayrault of parts of different works of Kleist each time they illustrate some aspect of the poet then under discussion. Though admitting the excellence of this for the Germanist, he points out quite rightly that it is confusing and repetitious for others. It fails, as well, to give the reader a whole view of any one Kleist work. *Schroffenstein*, *Amphitryon*, and *Kohlhaas* are found to suffer especially from this fragmentation. After a few remarks on the question of Ayrault's occasional lack of clarity – due, Loiseau suggests, to Ayrault's living too long with Kleist's thought – he passes on to his real objection, Ayrault's implicit indictment of Goethe. The charge that Goethe was guilty of a lack of critical judgment in not recognizing Kleist as a great artist, as well as the charge that Goethe is in the main responsible for posterity's image of Kleist as a sick artist, is, in Loiseau's mind, an exaggeration and an injustice (23). He will defer his counterattack, however, until a later moment.

Henri Lichtenberger, writing in the *Revue germanique*, was the only other French critic to comment at length on the Ayrault book.

Although he will also object to some extent to the specific indictment of Goethe, his real objection is with Ayrault's fundamental thesis, namely, that Kleist was completely normal and that Kleist ranks with the greatest of the European Romantics.

Lichtenberger agrees that Kleist was no decadent, not, at least, he hedges, physically. He wonders, however, if from the psychic point of view, he could really be considered completely normal. His principal argument is that Kleist's instability was not imposed on him by external circumstances, but was, on the contrary, internal. His abnormal, morbid anxieties would have manifested themselves sooner or later regardless of external events.[16]

In addition to instability, Lichtenberger notes another distinctive trait in Kleist, what he calls his dionysian exaltation. Like Faust in search of the Absolute, Kleist, for whom poetic creation was always an agonizing struggle, sought in every work the "All or Nothing" (231). This constant hypertension results in an excess which is typical of the man and of his art, an excess Lichtenberger feels Ayrault accepts far too uncritically. Lichtenberger, for his part, finds these excesses extremely annoying.

Summing up this point, Lichtenberger comments, "Au total, je ne puis pas ne pas voir en Kleist un type d'humanité nettement morbide et désaxé, dont je suis la destinée d'homme et de poète avec un sentiment où entre une bonne partie d'angoisse" (232).

In regard to Ayrault's high ranking of Kleist, Lichtenberger expresses his grave doubts that it can be justified. He feels, he says, as Goethe did, that there is something in Kleist's personality, in Kleist's work, that takes us a little too far from human norms (232).

On this question of Goethe's condemnation of Kleist, Lichtenberger comments at length, repeating in its essentials the explanation given by Nietzsche. Goethe had to fight constantly in himself against just such tendencies as he saw manifested in the young Kleist. He sensed in Kleist a threat to his own stability and, as well, in view of Kleist's very real talent, a threat to the kind of literature he wanted in Germany (230).

Thus, Lichtenberger maintains, it cannot be claimed that Goethe did not recognize Kleist's genius. He did. He felt it was pathological. He might even, he suggests, have felt that his disapproval would lead Kleist to discipline himself, to achieve some measure of control (230).

On the point of Kleist's Germanism, Lichtenberger has a final comment. He finds in Kleist's vacillating and explosive patriotism something strained, excessive, artificial, even morbid (229). He even feels a little sorry for Ayrault who, he says, is a little sorry down deep that Kleist wrote that *Hermannsschlacht* – a drama that upsets somewhat the harmony of the monument being erected to his glory

(229). Ayrault should have been more explicit in expressing his reservations about this work, particularly, Lichtenberger adds, since the exaltation of Germanism is precisely one of the causes of the present rise in popularity of Kleist's works (229).

Yet, he comments finally, he does not place much value in this supposed patriotic fervor of Kleist. He cannot believe that such fanatic, patriotic hatred represents an adequate expression of Kleist's essential nature, as some contemporary admirers would have it (229).

Loiseau had claimed in his review mentioned above that the indictment of Goethe implicit in Ayrault's Kleist book was both exaggerated and unfair. To support this judgment is the purpose of his three-part article, *Goethe et Kleist*, appearing in successive issues of *Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes* in 1935. In Part One of the article, Loiseau presents the documents in the case, that is, the correspondence between Goethe and Kleist, a report on the *Krug* fiasco, Kleist's epigrams directed at Goethe, and Goethe's remarks about Kleist and his works.[17] In Part Two, Loiseau begins a discussion of what conclusions can be drawn from the facts.

He rejects immediately any question of rivalry. Kleist was no one in 1802. He was very little more in 1808. In regard to *Penthesilea*, Loiseau asks if Goethe should be blamed for failing to appreciate a work that the best critics of the nineteenth century also failed to appreciate? Sensing that this does not really answer Ayrault's charge that the very reason the play was not accepted by later critics was a result of Goethe's rejection of it, Loiseau adds that the play, representing as it does the summit of dionysian and musical tragedy in Germany, was the polar opposite of the humane, artistic vision of a Goethe. One could not expect Goethe to accept it.[18]

After praising *Krug* at great length as the first and one of the finest comedies of character in Germany, the first realistic comedy drawn from popular life, Loiseau admits that Goethe as a director was perhaps clumsy in his handling of it. It cannot be claimed, however, that he acted out of maliciousness. If Goethe had not thought that the play had merit, if he had not wanted to help Kleist, he would not have gone to the trouble and expense of putting the play on (102).

In Part Three, Loiseau claims that Goethe did give *Amphitryon* serious attention, but, as a classicist who himself had tried to fuse ancient and modern in *Iphigenia*, he simply did not feel Kleist had achieved the task. Loiseau regrets that Goethe missed the dionysian elements of the play, that he did not see Jupiter as personifying the great mystery of divine solitude and melancholy as well as the tragedy of man's fate and the personal fate of Kleist.[19] Goethe rejected *Amphitryon*, Loiseau states, but he did not do so a priori.

Krug and *Amphitryon*, however, were enough to put Goethe on his

guard. Kleist's was obviously a talent, but one with disquieting and subversive tendencies, aligned, in Goethe's eyes, with Romanticism. In Kleist's work, Goethe saw only a perfect example of the excesses which made him condemn Romanticism as a whole. Kleist was to Goethe, Loiseau maintains, less an author than a trend, a trend which, if successful, would ruin all Goethe had hoped for in literature. To have encouraged him would have meant to renounce himself. Goethe saw Romanticism as sick and Kleist as a sick Romantic. None of Kleist's subsequent works – *Käthchen, Kohlhaas* – were to change his mind.

Then, turning more directly to Ayrault's specific charge, Loiseau suggests that Kleist himself was far more responsible for alienating his public and his friends than Goethe. Almost all who knew Kleist attest to his hypochondria, to the fact that he was almost impossible to get along with. Even if the privately expressed opinions of Goethe were bruited about, people would have learned nothing new.

Blame the critics, says Loiseau, if they took a quip or sally of Goethe's for a literal condemnation, but do not try to claim that Goethe did it in order to damn Kleist forever. Goethe had an ideal of life and of art. He defended it against all. Why, asks Loiseau, should he have made an exception for Kleist? (152).

Loiseau, in his first review of Ayrault's book, had commented that despite the good work of Bonafous and Rouge, efforts to make Kleist better known and understood among the great body of readers in France had not, for the most part, been very successful. Loiseau predicts for Ayrault's book just this final success. Such a prediction, however, clearly overlooked both the work's special faults and, even more important, the change in critical climate that took place in the thirties, in particular the coming to first full expression of the movement later labeled existentialist.

Ayrault's book can be seen as the culmination, the final working out of insights, the bringing to perfection of a critical approach, of critical methods evolved in Kleist criticism in the sixty years since the discovery of Kleist by the realists and naturalists. Like any work of culmination, however, it represents in many respects, an end-point. Illustrating as it does the ultimate in analytical, basically rationalistic, psychologically oriented, academic criticism, it had, by the time it made its appearance, already outlived if not its time, then at least much of its value as a seminal work.

Ayrault, explaining in his *Légende* why his survey of Kleist criticism ends in 1931, says that that year seems to mark a definite lull in the evolution of Kleist criticism. It is also the year, he adds, in which he began his large work on Kleist. Paul Kluckhohn, some years later, in his review of the *Légende,* (see above, p. 102, note 11)

while praising it as, along with Gerhard Fricke's, the best work on Kleist in nearly a quarter century, says that it is unfortunate that Ayrault failed to appreciate the value of the Fricke work. The appearance of these two Kleist works, Ayrault's and Fricke's, along with the failure of Ayrault as well as Rouge to see what Fricke was aiming at, can be seen as graphic illustration of the gulf that separates the second stage of Kleist criticism just completed from what will be the third.

Ayrault's work, handicapped from the start by its often confusing, tedious style, as well as by a method of presentation that placed impossible demands on the non-Germanist, had to fight, in addition, against two nearly irresistible currents. The weight of accumulated French critical opinion, persisting in its century-old impression of Kleist, was not to be over-thrown by one work, especially when there was no lack of reputable German critics to whom one could turn to contradict Ayrault's principal points.

Secondly, Ayrault's insistence on Kleist's evolution, on his final working out of a possible harmony between man and the world he lives in, as illustrated, for example, in the final scene of *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, ran directly counter to an increasingly widespread view of man as a being in total and irreconcilable conflict with the world outside him. Among those who saw man as a creature isolated, unsure of his own existence, in a perpetual state of doubt and anguish, both Kleist's personal tragedy and the tragic conflicts of his characters would have a very clear meaning. Any view of Kleist's works stressing harmony, the resolution of conflict, or compromise between the demands of the real world outside and those of the infinitely richer world within the individual soul, could scarcely hope for an enthusiastic reception. For the existentialists, as well as for the Freudians and the surrealists of the thirties, Ayrault's interpretations of Kleist would seem as outdated as they were incomplete.

Ayrault's work thus marks the end of the second stage of Kleist's reception in France, a stage which saw his final acceptance by at least a segment of the French as one of Germany's most important, though admittedly controversial, literary figures, a stage which saw the development of French Kleist criticism from sporadic, often sensationalist articles by enthusiastic Kleist discoverers to original studies thoroughly grounded in research carried out by noted university scholars. Kleist's works, having achieved the status of appropriate subject matter for doctoral dissertations, could go no further in this direction. The entry of Kleist into what may be viewed as the broad current of French intellectual thought, however, was yet to come. This will be the content of the third stage of Kleist's reception in France.

PART THREE

THE THIRD STAGE, 1935-1961

CHAPTER IX

KLEIST AND NEO-ROMANTICISM, 1935-1950

Scarcely a year after the publication of Ayrault's exhaustive study of Kleist, Jean Cassou published a small collection of essays entitled *Pour la poésie.* In one of these brief essays, the poet and critic deals with Kleist's life and works. One could hardly discover a better illustration of the critical breach existing between the second and third stages of Kleist's reception in France. Cassou, like the surrealists, whose influence made itself felt in all art forms in the thirties, undoubtedly came to Kleist by way of an interest in German Romanticism, an interest directed particularly at the use by German Romantics of dreams and dream states, at their explorations into the subconscious, and, above all, at what may be termed their war against concepts of the function and nature of language and reflection. Though, as will become apparent in the following pages, such writers are always careful to qualify the aptness of classifying Kleist as a Romantic, their interest in his work as well as their interpretation of its content will nevertheless be colored by the context in which they first came to know him.

Of interest, as well, in any attempt to follow the direction French critical opinion will take in regard to Kleist in this third stage of his reception in France, is the extent to which the basic ideas and tendencies of the surrealists, for example, André Breton's search for "la vie immédiate," are really part of a much broader climate of thought that found its most spectacular and disturbing expression in the philosophical movement launched in Germany at almost the same time by thinkers such as Heidegger and Jaspers, a movement soon to flourish in France by way of Sartre and the existentialists. It will not be surprising, then, to see the interest shown in Kleist by those affiliated with the surrealist movement carried on in the late forties and early fifties by critics deeply influenced by existentialist thought.

In 1935, however, in his *Pour la poésie,* Jean Cassou is principally interested in Kleist as a perfect illustration of his thesis that while poetry is a kind of compensation, it nevertheless exacts of the one it possesses a "terrible fate." Acquainted as he was with the works of Gundolf and Stefan Zweig, it is not surprising to find Cassou

stressing in this brief segment – in direct contradiction of Ayrault – Kleist's absolute isolation, his extreme dionysianism, his lonely agony, and, above all, his great yearning for death. It is in a state of complete rupture with the world that Kleist is said to have conceived "less frénésies somnambuliques et carnassières de ses personnages."[1]

Cassou stresses again Kleist's complete rejection of the so-called real world for the infinitely richer realm of the inner world. He sees his life as a long search for death, culminating in a kind of "Liebestod," a realization in the suicide pact of a love always refused him in real life. Forgetting, or perhaps simply unaware, that Henriette Vogel was afflicted with cancer, Cassou sees the double suicide as the act of two lovers carried out in a state of ecstasy, an act which he terms the most successful since the age of the Stoics (114).

In *Pour la poésie*, Cassou makes use of Kleist principally as an illustration of his thesis concerning the nature and demands of poetry. In his next treatment of Kleist, some two years later, Cassou turns more directly to a discussion of the poet himself. Cassou's essay appeared as part of a collection of texts and studies of German Romanticism originally published as a special number of the *Cahiers du Sud* under the direction of Albert Béguin, an early and frequent contributor to surrealist journals.

Though Cassou has not changed any of the basic notions he held of Kleist two years earlier, still seeing Kleist as one fundamentally unable to approach reality, he nevertheless stresses in this article Kleist's affinity to the contemporary literature of anguish as exemplified above all in Kafka. In the former article, reflecting the judgments of Stefan Zweig, Cassou had linked Kleist closely with Hölderlin and Nietzsche. He now sees Kleist in the line of writers extending from Luther, Pascal, and Kierkegaard to Dostoevski, Unamuno, and Kafka, writers for whom man is on trial with no opportunity for appeal.

Discussing first Kleist's rejection of the world, Cassou maintains that being profoundly aware of all that separated him from the rest, unable to find compensation in intellectual pursuits, unable, as well, to find a goal to which he could devote his energies, Kleist withdrew from the world and in his isolation created his own world from within. "Précurseur de l'école phénoménologique, il se choisira un sentiment, s'y installera, s'y enfermera, s'y exaltera.... Il poussera sa revendication inutile jusqu'à la frénésie orgiaque et l'extase. Il aimera son illusion et la développera jusqu'au terme."[2]

Yet Cassou finds always in Kleist, despite the depth of his retreat into the dream world, a clear recognition that the so-called real world is stronger. In this real world, one has only to bow one's head, like the Marquise von O, and submit to the great, sacred, and

inexplicable order of the universe (271). With Kafka's *Der Prozess* in mind, Cassou states that if life is seen as a trial, Kleist himself can be seen as furnishing every aid to the accusers, to the prosecution. Instead of fighting, "il court au supplice comme à une volupté suprême, celle de se déchirer soi-même et de s'anéantir" (273).

The story of *Kohlhaas*, like the story of Kafka's *Der Prozess*, is basically "absurd." "Jamais on n'y saisit le grief dans sa plénitude complète. Mais une étrange complaisance au grief pris en soi, hors de toute réalité" (273). Kohlhaas has been subject to an injustice. His appeals come to nothing. "Ils résonneront dans un vide abyssal... La colère de Michael Kohlhaas n'a d'issue qu'en elle-même, dans le paroxysme, la fureur, l'exaspération, le suicide. Et un suicide qui, s'égalant à l'univers, entraînera l'univers avec lui" (274).

Cassou stresses the basic absurdity, the pointlessness of Kohlhaas' protest, a protest not made in the name of some higher principle, as with Schiller's Karl Moore, "mais pour exacerbation d'un moi qui, ne pouvant sortir de lui, se multiplie, s'accroît, s'identifie à la totalité, lui communique sa lêpre et l'entraîne dans la même damnation" (274).

Thus Cassou finds in Kleist, first, the awareness of the absurdity of the human condition, the basic incomprehensibility of human existence, second, a realization that the world 'out there' to which man finds himself in total opposition, is stronger, and, third, as a result of these two conditions, the expression in violence of complete frustration, violent withdrawal, violent, purposeless destruction.

Nowhere does he find evidence of that harmony, that resolution of conflict between the inner and outer world, that both Ayrault and Rouge found expressed in *Prinz*. On this, Kleist's last play, Cassou has only a few, but in light of later French criticism, immensely important comments. In the play, Kleist touches on the last level of humiliation. His hero, born to create the most glorious acts, is able to bring into the world finally and with great effort nothing but a mistake (272). Even though the final outcome of the Prince's mistake is not fatal, Cassou is not at all certain that it is as sublime or as optimistic as it has been made out to be. "Il lui sera tout de même accordé une victoire. Mais bien étrange, et dont on ne saurait dire, en fin de compte, si elle est dérisoire ou sublime" (272). It is, in particular, in light of Alfred Schlagdenhauffen's interpretation of *Prinz* some years later that this rather enigmatic judgment takes on full significance.

In view of the great stress in Cassou's article on the nihilism, the destructive violence in Kleist's work, it is not surprising to find in his revision of the article in 1949 an attempt to show how Kleist's nihilism nevertheless was not the kind that fitted very conveniently into Nazi ideology. Admitting that he is surprised that the Nazis

did not exploit Kleist more than they did, he attributes this fact to the basic humanitarianism, to the protest against an unjust world, inherent in even Kleist's most violent works. There is, in Kleist's work, in the last analysis, too much humaneness (274). Though the hero of metaphysical despair and frenzy, Kleist remains, as well, its victim. His fate is an accusation by implication of the world he lived in. He would have liked to love the world but could not. This 'would have liked' made him, in Cassou's view, suspect to the Nazis.

Though made in the midst of despair and anguish, it is still a hymn of pardon, of love, and of compassion, that arises from his works. However wretched it may be, it is still life that is most important in *Prinz*. Even in *Penthesilea*, where Kleist seems to surrender in impotence and despair to nihilism and a frenzy of self-destruction, there remains a part of himself that continues to suffer and to protest. This suffering and this protest, Cassou feels, are enough to rescue Kleist's memory. His works and his life constitute, in the last analysis, a powerful protest against brutal and arbitrary authority (75).

Cassou's article appeared, as stated, in a collection of studies dealing with German Romanticism. Except for Cassou's linking of Kleist to Romanticism by way of his use of the dream – though even here, the connection is only an implicit one – the only other real consideration of Kleist is a statement of how he differed from the Romantics. This is the point Armel Guerne makes in his contribution to the collection of studies, entitled *Hic et Nunc*. In speaking of the latinized, gallicized language of the Romantics, he excepts Kleist, "the cold, the military, the truly German Kleist."[3] Guerne sees Kleist's suicide as proof of his separateness from the Romantics, something, he continues, like the suicide of a general after a defeat, demonstrating a pride that goes beyond death. Kleist is a true exception among the Romantic poets, the only one who remained in the end more German than Romantic (358).

Albert Béguin, in his influential book on Romanticism and the dream, published in 1937, is equally careful in his chapter on Kleist to show the extent to which Kleist differs from his contemporary Romantics: "C'est fermer les yeux à sa grandeur réelle et à la qualité de son âme comme de sa poésie que de vouloir l'inscrire dans les rangs du romantisme."[4] Béguin finds Kleist differing from the body of the Romantics on three principal points: in what might be called the process of creation, in the tragic message of his works, and in his use of dreams and dream states.

Sharing with Eichendorff and Hölderlin a concern for form unknown among the other Romantics, Kleist is nevertheless unique, in Béguin's view, even in comparison to these two masters, in that he combines in an absolutely unique fashion a consciousness of the

internal structure of his dramas with a complete lack of consciousness of what Béguin terms the workings of his own genius. In his view of Kleist as the combination of the conscious artisan and the unconscious poet, Béguin is in essential agreement with Ayrault's description of Kleist's creative process, i.e., the evoking of uncontrolled images followed by the struggle to give these images form.

At the moment of creation, says Béguin, Kleist, quite like his heroes, is in a state of 'second sight' (317). Unlike the Romantics, however, Kleist does not attribute to this evoking of uncontrolled images an analyzable value. There is no trace in him, as there is in Schlegel, Novalis, or Arnim, of the poet constantly aware of and examining the creative process in himself. Kleist, a greater poet in Béguin's view than any of the Romantics, never thought of asking what kind of poet he was (318).

Unlike the other Romantics, Kleist is seen as an innate genius, combining the absolute lucidity of the artist with "l'obscurité nécessaire au poète, emporté par l'exaltation dionysiaque, qui ne souffre aucune confrontation de ses mythes personnels avec un monde extérieur auquel il ne reconnaît plus aucune réalité" (318).

After an analysis of the essay, *Über das Marionettentheater*, which he judges to be in close accord with Romantic philosophy, Béguin points out that even here Kleist's stress on 'grâce' separates him from his contemporaries in that it imparts to his philosophy an esthetic orientation which, for example, Novalis' "magie" does not have. Novalis and his kind, seeking to bring the esthetic and the intellectual closer together again, consciously created their works as examples of this desired reconciliation. Kleist created without loading his work down with such metaphysical ambitions (319).

Béguin sees Kleist's drama as tragic in the best tradition of the great Greek tragedies, quite unlike almost any other modern drama, certainly unlike any other Romantic drama (319). Their tragedy consists in their depiction of the human condition, of the anguish of the awakened yet still imperfect consciousness (319). The tragedy of Kleist's characters lies precisely in the fact that they are neither puppets nor gods. "Et le génie du poète tragique se préoccupe uniquement de trouver les images et les éclairs déchirants qui font jaillir au regard, dans toute son ampleur irrémédiable, la tragédie d'être un homme" (319).

Turning, in the remainder of the chapter, to the aspect of Kleist's works touching specifically on the theme of the book, Béguin warns that Kleist's use of somnambulism and dream states should not be confused with the Schubert-inspired interest in pathological states to be found among the Romantics. Kleist's use of it artistically was very special.

In *Penthesilea*, dream states are seen as playing a psychological

role. Kleist depicts here with extreme precision the sliding back and forth between real and dream states, not, however, for the pure pleasure of observation, but in order to reveal levels of the human soul where instinct rules unchecked and to depict thereby a human being torn between conscious wishes and inadmissible desires (320).

The dream in *Prinz* is used to express deep desires that the Prince is unable to admit to others, which he himself does not know clearly. Kleist wanted to show the conflict between the Reason of the State and individual feeling, social discipline and the personal life, and chose this method to do it. The Prince obeys his dream, the most striking expression of one's personal life, and thus comes unknowingly into conflict with the orders of his sovereign. All of which Béguin sees as a new form of that tragedy of the human condition which places two equally necessary worlds in conflict (321). Like Cassou, Béguin does not see in the ending of the play a true reconciliation between these two worlds. At best, he feels, it is an exceptional case where a reconciliation was possible. For Kleist the human situation remains inherently tragic (321).

Only in *Käthchen* does Kleist come close to the use of dreams in the Romantic sense. But here, too, Kleist differs. Béguin repeats in essence Ayrault's view, adding that for the Romantics the prophetic truth of dreams rested on the natural concordance between the images that are born within us and the birth of natural events, while, for Kleist, Käthchen's dream is prophetic because God placed it in her soul as He will soon put the realization of it into her life. The solution of the conflict in *Käthchen* is valid for the heroine alone. The play as a whole expresses the tragedy of man's limited consciousness, the tragedy of the human condition (321).

The studies of Cassou and Béguin were the last to deal with Kleist before the outbreak of World War II. During the war years, new translations of Kleist's works continued to appear: in 1940 two translations of *Prinz*; two translations of *Kohlhaas* in 1942 and 1943; a translation of *Krug* by Ayrault in 1943; a translation of all of Kleist's Novellen in 1943; and, in 1947, the republication of the translation by Klee-Polyi and F. Marc of *Über das Marionettentheater*.

In the preface to his translation of *Michael Kohlhaas* (Paris, 1942), G. LaFlize connects Kleist rather closely with Romanticism and the "mal du siècle à la Léopardi." In his preface to the translation of Kleist's Novellen the following year, however, he elevates this spirit of resignation and fatalism into what he now terms mysticism, a mysticism which he sees as having grown steadily in Kleist over the years, culminating finally in that hymn to the supernatural powers of music, the Novelle *Die heilige Cäcilie*.[5]

With the exception of such prefaces to the new translations and

the many *Notices* appearing in the bilingual editions, no studies of Kleist appeared during the war years.

Though not a part, properly speaking, of the critical domain, at least until its publication in 1950, it is interesting to note André Gide's comments on his encounter with Kleist's *Penthesilea* in 1942. Though not his first acquaintance with Kleist – he had read *Kohlhaas* and *Die Marquise von O* in German as early as 1904 (cf. *Journal* for November, 1904) – this was his first reading of *Penthesilea*. His initial comments seem to indicate that he was attracted to the play largely as a linguistic exercise. His pleasure was therefore immediate. "Dégustant l'un après l'autre, lentement, chacun de ces vers splendides, avec ravissement et considérable profit. Jamais encore, me semble-t-il, autant que chez Kleist (non pas même chez Hölderlin), je n'avais goûté les possibilités poétiques de la syntaxe allemande, avec ses atermoiements, ses retours, ses retombements."[6]

Though his enthusiasm is still high three days later, another three days finds him in a change of heart, condemning scene 15 and agreeing with Goethe that Penthesilea's declarations would seem more at home in a Neapolitan farce (35). On the next day, judging the scenes following Scene 15 to be unspeakably bad, the author of *Les Nourritures terrestres* sums up his reaction with a terse "J'ai horreur du spasmodique" (36). In his final comments, dated October 18, Gide, after comparing Kleist to Nietzsche in that neither was able to bring his work to completion (36), states his belief that Kleist was the more tragic figure. He gives as well his curiously ambivalent evaluation of the work. "Toutes les tares de *Penthesilea*, toutes ses déficiences, sont l'effet de ce drame intime qu'elles révèlent éloquemment, et, plus parfaite, cette œuvre serait moins révélatrice, moins digne de nous émouvoir. Mais ce qui nous émeut, vers la fin, ce n'est plus la beauté de l'œuvre, c'est la faillite de l'auteur" (37).

Cassou and Béguin, though writing of Kleist along with the Romantics, had tried to show to what degree he differed from them. Paul van Tieghem, in his brief treatment of Kleist in a work on European Romanticism, links Kleist intimately to the movement, even listing him, oddly enough, along with Grillparzer as the two principal German Romantics.[7] Kleist is found to be Romantic by his choice of subject matter, his use of local color, his taste for the strange and the extravagant, and finally by his often overly emotive style (461).

Though linking Kleist at various points to the First Romantic school, notably to Tieck (142) and to the "Christian nationalists" (306), van Tieghem sees his violent, unrestrained depiction of passions as being more closely linked with the later Romantic dramatists of other European countries (143).

While van Tieghem's observations reveal in their superficial

comparisons at best a limited acquaintance with Kleist's works, another discussion devoted to Kleist, appearing in the same year, introduces a far more knowledgeable Kleist critic. Jean Jacques Anstett, writing in *Les Langues modernes*, in 1948, devotes an interesting article to a comparison of Kleist's *Amphitryon* and Giraudoux's *Amphitryon 38*

Though the very title of Giraudoux's play should have invited early comparison – the play was published in 1929 – critical comment at the time of its appearance made virtually no mention of its Kleist predecessor; much less the extent to which the changes Kleist made in the Plautus-Molière comedy were reflected in the Giraudoux version.[8] In view of what has been the persistent attitude of French critics in regard to the Kleist play, this is hardly surprising. As has been pointed out often enough, the play has been consistently regarded as a translation, a travesty, or an adaptation of the Molière play, and, except to show the extent to which the work reveals either the personality or the world outlook of its author, has not been treated as an independent piece of theater. It is refreshing, then, to find Anstett approaching the Kleist work with very little of the prejudice of former French critics.

The question the article purports to answer is simply whether there is any relation between the two plays. Anstett's first answer, made on the basis of a comparison of the external structure of the two plays, is no. The Kleist play comes much more directly from the Molière, in form, at least. Once this comparison is made, however, Anstett turns to the content of the two plays and here finds many very essential similarities.

The first, and strongest, is the similar displacement of the play's center. Both plays give the legend greater depth by changing a social scandal into an intimate, human drama, by moving the area of dramatic action out of the social arena into the confines of the individual heart. The dramas thus become explorations in depth of two characters, Alcmene and Jupiter.[9]

In both plays, Jupiter wants to be loved, but loved as a human, not as a god, the object of a cult. Anstett compares, in the Giraudoux play, Mercury's statement to Alcmene, "Ce n'est pas votre autel qu'il demande" (II, v), and Jupiter's admission "Un dieu aussi peut se plaire à être aimé pour lui-même," (I, v) with the statement of Kleist's Jupiter, "Er will geliebt sein, nicht ihr Wahn von ihm" (II, v). This tragedy of solitude to which only love can put an end becomes more complicated as the play progresses. The problem is finally reduced to this: to be loved for himself Jupiter must reveal who he is, but to reveal who he is may cause Alcmene to love him as a god or be repulsed by his immortality. Jupiter must keep the secret and at the same time reveal it. Jupiter's suffering is revealed

in Act II of the Kleist play. To a lesser tragic degree this same impatience with the mask is revealed in Act II of the Giraudoux work.

Though both playwrights are found to be similarly interested in Jupiter's loneliness, Anstett finds a fundamental difference in the way in which each dramatist conceives the figure of the god. For Kleist, Jupiter remains the supreme god whose irrefutable will is imposed on humanity though it must suffer. In Giraudoux, Jupiter encounters a humanity sure of itself. The resulting battle between them does not end in brutal victory for the god. Giraudoux's Jupiter is moved by the grandeur of man, a grandeur he had never even imagined. He agrees finally to negotiate and, in order not to break man, to keep his defiling of Alcmene a secret.

Despite their difference in the conception of Jupiter, however, Anstett finds the essential theme of the two plays to be the same, the confrontation of the divine and the human (19). Having been taken out of her accustomed world and through the events of one 'divine' night been initiated into another, higher existence, what will be Alcmene's reaction, her fate, when she falls back again among mortals as a marked woman?

In both plays, Alcmene rejects the distinction Jupiter would like her to make between the lover and the husband. Though Kleist's Alcmene is always more serious, more tragic, more tormented than Giraudoux's, the virtue of one is as unshakeable as that of the other. Did, however, Anstett asks, either playwright make his heroine an adulteress?

It is apparent that Kleist's Alcmene was moved deeply by the meeting with Jupiter, moved to the point that, once having been with him, she cannot recognize her real husband. In a final "Ach," Alcmene reveals her horrified awareness of this deep and involuntary change in her innermost being (19-20). Yet in this final sigh, Anstett sees other possibilities. Such a cry may well follow the anguished realization by Alcmene that she must henceforth live separated from that absolute perfection whose nearness in the form of Jupiter has marked her being for life (20).

Giradoux's Alcmene, however, has the strength and the will to abolish a past which would destroy her if she really came to realize it fully, a past which would cause her husband to suffer as well. She will begin again, will continue her confident existence as before.

Anstett explains the difference in reaction by pointing out that in Kleist's play Alcmene's experience is seen as proof not only that the real is hidden from us, but that its source lies with a deceiving, even evil power that constantly toys with us (20).

Kleist's scepticism following the Kant experience finds its direct expression in *Amphitryon*, made more acute, however, by his now

firm and despairing conviction of the unbridgeable gulf between appearance and reality (20).

Though Kleist has Merkur say, "Gedankenübel quälen nur die Narren" (I, v), Anstett points out that neither he nor his Alcmene follows this. It is rather followed by Giraudoux's heroine. When Jupiter asks if they want to know on what appearances their happiness is based, on what illusions their virtue rests, Alcmene gives him a firm "no." (III,v) It may well be an illusion, she admits, but knowing it will only bring suffering. As a human, she wants nothing of omniscience or immortality, "devenir immortel, c'est trahir, pour un humain" (II,II). She rejects the infinite for the infinitely human, the fruit of the tree of knowledge for the fruit of the tree of life (21).

In Kleist, however, the knowledge of how things really are is revealed, and Alcmene, like all humans, must pay the price for such knowledge (22).

Anstett, in his final interpretation of the play, ties it in with Kleist's essay, *Über das Marionettentheater*. Just as the grace of the puppet depends in a sense on its total surrender to the will of the puppeteer, so access to the divine, to the absolute, requires the total surrender of the conscious self (22). Anstett sees Alcmene caught in an alternative which he feels lies at the heart of all of Kleist's pessimism – either remain faithful to Amphitryon, but then remain in a universe void of perfection, which the gods do not want, which she cannot do anyway, or let herself be lifted toward the absolute of truth and beauty, but then renounce any longer being herself (22).

In his final comments, Anstett, bringing together two temperaments Tarvel had earlier claimed to be infinitely different, suggests that Giraudoux and Kleist, though in different ways, reveal the same indictment of our human condition, Giraudoux simply hiding the seriousness and profundity of his speculation in fantasy.

Though Anstett refrained from any direct concern with possible Kleistian influence on Giraudoux's play, his essay alone, if not a reading of the two plays in question, is certain to pose the question. As for the facts, it can be assumed with certainty that Giraudoux knew the Kleist play before writing his own version. The extent of his studies in German literature has been well documented.[10] While a student of Charles Andler at the École Normale, Giraudoux decided to specialize in German studies. He received his Diplôme d'études supérieures in German from the Sorbonne in 1906 following a program that placed great stress on the German Romantics, then began in the fall of 1906 his studies for the *agrégation* in German, which he did not finally abandon until 1911. According to Bidou's statement mentioned above (see page 101 note 9), he was enough interested in Kleist to have formulated the project of a 'pilgrimage' to his grave by the Wannsee.

It can, then, be safely assumed that he knew the Kleist play. In view of this, and of his choice of its theme for dramatic treatment, the similar shifting of the center of interest from Amphitryon to Alcmene, from external action to internal, the similar deepening of the play from social commentary to personal tragedy and the introduction of a Jupiter whose desire to be loved as a human is to be taken more seriously, there would seem to be little room for doubt that Giraudoux saw in the Kleist play a treatment of the Amphitryon story that struck sympathetic chords in his own creative imagination, and that the Kleist play must be given serious consideration in any discussion of the possible genesis of the Giraudoux work. As for the use of the term Kleistian influence in regard to the relationship between the two plays, one can always resort to the dictum of Joseph Texte, "Dans notre moderne Europe, qui dit antériorité, dit influence."

The tempo of translations of Kleist's works, slowed somewhat during the forties, quickens after 1950. In that year appeared a new translation of the ever popular *Michael Kohlhaas*, the preface of which, by Louis Aragon, discussed below, presents the first Marxist interpretation of a Kleist work. Three new translations of *Prinz* appeared in 1951, 1953, and 1954. A translation of *Penthesilea*, the work of the poet-novelist Julien Gracq, and an adaptation of *Krug* by the *avant-garde* dramatist Arthur Adamov appeared in print in 1954. Nineteen fifty-six brought the publication of a collection of four Kleist plays, *Théâtre de Kleist*, including *Käthchen*, *Prinz*, *Krug*, and *Penthesilea*, all in new translations, and 1958, a translation of the fragment *Robert Guiscard*, the work of Robert Valençay. Of all of Kleist's works – plays, Novellen, and major essays – only *Amphitryon* and *Die Schroffenstein* had, by the end of the fifties, yet to appear in translation.

In the preface to Laurence Lentin's translation of *Kohlhaas*, published in 1950, the poet-novelist, Marxist, 'ex'-surrealist, Louis Aragon explains his desire to make this work known in France by saying that the story not only has true contemporary social significance but, surprising as it would have seemed to Kleist himself, may serve as well, by showing the similarities between French and German patriotism, to bring about better understanding between the two peoples, so often turned against one another for the profit of others.[11]

Earlier in the preface, Aragon had said that Kleist's fame in France suffers or is unduly colored by his spectacular suicide and by his hatred for Napoleon. As to the suicide, Aragon does his part, in recounting Kleist's life and the events on the Wannsee, to remove all of the sensationalist aspects. To the second point, he comments only that the French can never tolerate a crime being called a crime when it is committed by a Frenchman. Though his account of

Kleist's life is not completely accurate – he refers, for example, to a supposed meeting between Goethe and Kleist in Weimar – its tone throughout is factual and largely without the usual fanciful anecdotes. He refers on occasion to Bonafous' work and is, naturally, as a Marxist, pleased with the French biographer's stress on the influence on Kleist of the political events in Europe of the early nineteenth century. Aragon sees Kleist as the mirror of his times, whose excesses can be understood if taken in historical and political context.

Though Aragon admits that Kohlhaas' actions are based on personal motivations, he nevertheless sees him and his conflict as prefigurations of the coming class struggle: "C'est déjà une société meilleure et plus juste qu'il commence à promettre aux hommes. Dans l'histoire de ce marchand de chevaux apparaissent les premières contradictions de la démocratie bourgeoise, avant même que la bourgeoisie ait triomphé.... Et, dans les mensonges avec lesquels les féodaux enveniment sans cesse la cause de Kohlhaas, en rendent à chaque pas la solution impossible, comment ne pas reconnaître les méthodes d'une classe traquée, qui a peur du jugement des masses?" (20).

Despite one's feelings concerning the validity of such an interpretation, Aragon's presentation, especially with its protest against the cult of Kleist's life and personality, as well as its recommendation to read his works instead – even with a Marxist prejudice – comes as a welcome relief. Aragon's praise of the work could certainly not harm Kleist's chances of gaining a wider popular audience, especially in view of French political leanings in the early fifties.

The treatment of Kleist by Nicolas Ségur in his literary history of the Romantic period fits more than Aragon's into the usual pattern of academic criticism. In his chapter devoted to German Romanticism, Ségur devotes the largest space to Kleist, whom he describes as the most original of the Romantics, one who, despite his faults and his eccentricities, stands far above other dramatists of the first half of the nineteenth century.[12] Passing over *Krug* with slight, but favorable, comment, and *Amphitryon* – "a strange comedy" – to which he gives largely a religious interpretation, Ségur turns to the three works, *Penthesilea*, *Käthchen*, and *Prinz*, in which he finds Kleist's genius best expressed.

Here his preference, as well as his detailed description, goes to *Penthesilea*. "Le fureur de sang, ces morsures démentes qui semblent se passer au delà du plan de la réalité laissent à la lecture une impression indescriptible" (50). Unusual in twentieth-century Kleist criticism is his praise of *Käthchen*, a play he describes as possessing bold poetic originality and undeniable charm, a masterful and moving drama (50).

Ségur sees the originality of *Prinz* in its wavering between the world of logic and the world of dreams (51). Judging it to be one of Kleist's most powerful and gripping dramas, he describes its theme as the conflict between heroism and love (51), an interpretation which would seem to explain his failure to see the tragic elements in *Amphitryon* as well as account for his unusual praise of *Käthchen*. He ends his chapter with a contrast between Goethe and Kleist, the Olympian and the Rebel, both of whom now hold honored places in the poetic crown of Germany (51).

Alfred Schlagdenhauffen, in a lengthy article appearing in *Études germaniques* at the end of 1951, discusses Kleist's Dresden period, attempting, he states, to explain how, in something akin to a psychological plunge, Kleist changed from the champion of individualism to the champion of patriotism.[13] Though at first glance seeming to be a radical change for Kleist, that is, from a poet in search of personal glory to one who glorifies the collectivity, it is Schlagdenhauffen's opinion that there is no question here of a 'volte-face.' In implicit disagreement with Ayrault's thesis, he insists that Kleist was at no time indifferent to the fate of his country. In Dresden, in an atmosphere charged by such radical nationalists as Gentz, Rühle, and Adam Müller, Kleist's inherent patriotism found the ambiance necessary for its development (291).

Schlagdenhauffen makes it clear, however, that Kleist's idea of the role the individual was to play in any national-cultural regeneration was quite different from that of, for example, Müller. For the latter, the new order would dawn the day the totalitarian state embraced all human occupations. "Pour Kleist, au contraire, le miracle du renouveau se produira par l'explosion de l'individualité supérieure qui saura imprimer à la collectivité la loi de son idéal" (299). Schlagdenhauffen thus sees Kleist's burst of patriotism in light of the problem that had haunted him since his quitting the army, a problem renewed every time he worked for the state, the whole problem of the conflict between the individual and the collectivity.

Schlagdenhauffen sees this conflict as one deeply embedded in Kleist's nature. He totally rejected the idea of the complete submission of the individual, yet at the same time he clearly recognized the demands of the collectivity. Even while fleeing society he carried with him its voice, like a deep and mortal wound (299).

Schlagdenhauffen finds this conflict at the heart of Kleist's *Penthesilea* (299). Though not, he adds in a note, contradicting Ayrault's remarkable interpretation of the play, Schlagdenhauffen, insisting that the work is 'polyvalente' and thus open to more than one correct interpretation, sees the Amazon Queen, like Kleist, as torn between individual impulse and duty to the laws and traditions

of the state. As a woman, she wants to be conquered. As an Amazon she wants to conquer. Unable to realize these opposing sides of her being, she succumbs to pathological rage and to final self destruction (300).

Kleist, Prussian through and through, but imbued with an ideal of individualism, may have found an outlet for his conflict in writing the final bloody sceness of *Penthesilea,* but what of a solution, a resolution to this antinomy? Schlagdenhauffen sees the solution in Penthesilea's own words, and, in so doing, makes a bridge between *Penthesilea* and *Die Hermannsschlacht.* "Il faut, dit-elle, répandre dans les airs les cendres de Tanaïs; abroger l'"ordre' qui pèse sur les sujets, transformer l'État; laisser au citoyen la possibilité de lui vouer ses forces par une activité librement consentie" (300).

Thus Kleist's decision to treat the story of Hermann was not based, as is usually claimed, on any desire to present the contemporary political situation in a transposed form. Schlagdenhauffen feels the allusions are much too transparent for this. Nor is the play simply the expression of his hatred for the French. Kleist made Hermann the incarnation of his ideal, not just the liberator, but more important, the man who could come to grips with reality, who could mold it rather than have it mold him, who could, in the last analysis, face the real and still act. It is Hermann who imposes his own individual law on reality and it is this kind of patriot who will regenerate Germany.

Schlagdenhauffen sees *Die Hermannsschlacht* as yet another treatment of the theme of the conflict between the individual and the state, a conflict whose full implications Kleist sensed acutely as one now obliged, in violation of his conscience, to obey a king who served the hated French. The play thus becomes a compensation for an action Kleist himself was unable to perform (301).

In 1808, Kleist rejects Goethe's world along with that of the Heidelberg Romantics and joins the nationalist movement of Arndt and Fichte, since it is not just a matter of abolishing foreign domination but of establishing the future orientation of Germany.

Schlagdenhauffen's article, in late 1951, ends the period just prior to Kleist's dramatic debut in France, the period in which it can be assumed that critics, apart from those who might have seen Kleist's works staged in various cities in Germany, were limited to impressions gained through a reading knowledge of the author's works. Emile Faguet had written nearly half a century earlier, on the occasion of the first and only production of a Kleist work in France, that, at last, Kleist's play would be judged in the only way a play can be judged, namely "aux chandelles." In 1904 the choice had fallen to a realistic comedy of a lecherous, but delightfully amusing village judge who was something less than he ought to be. In 1951 the

choice went to a romantic young Prince who, between the nothing of dreams and the nothing of death, had to discover alone what defines a man. In July of 1951, on the broad, sloping ramp in the courtyard of the Palace of the Popes in Avignon, the Prince of Homburg made his debut in France. Whatever the value of Kleist's work may have been as literature, it was now to be put to the end to which it had been created, namely to please, to excite, to disturb, to satisfy an audience.

CHAPTER X

'DISCOVERY,' 1951-1952

Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* was presented for the first time in France at the Festival d'Avignon in August, 1951. The play, in a translation by Jean Curtis, was given by the Compagnie du Théâtre National Populaire under the direction of Jean Vilar. In a rare combination of brilliant, imaginative direction, spectacular settings, faultless casting, and sensitive, talented acting, all serving an excellent translation, the Kleist drama met immediate and virtually unqualified critical acclaim. A few selections from the reviews of critics who witnessed the production illustrate the tenor of the reception.[1]

Morvan Lebesque writes in *Carrefour*, "Nous venons de vivre en Avignon les plus grandes heures du théâtre de notre vie.... Rien n'effacera le souvenir de la soirée du Prince de Hombourg.... Avec un sens étonnant du théâtre, von Kleist s'est emparé du personnage de Frédéric de Hombourg et en a fait une sorte de Cid allemand romantique." Jean de Rigault writes in *L'Observateur*, "Une révélation décisive: celle du chef-d'œuvre, inconnu en France [!], de Kleist: le Prince de Hombourg.... Jean Vilar a prouvé que Goethe s'était trompé,... un de ces fruits d'or que tous les amoureux du vrai, du grand théâtre ont recueilli d'une main reconnaissante." Gustave Joly, of *L'Aurore*, writes, "Magnifiques chants d'amour et d'honneur fidèle," and Roger Belluc, in *Revue de la Méditerranée*, comments, "Quel texte et quel mystère confondus dans cette nuit magique! Le romantisme allemand opérait en moi ses prodiges."[2]

Other reviews, devoted more to analysis, were equally enthusiastic in their approval. Marc Beigbeder comments in *La Revue théâtrale*, following his résumé of the plot of the play, "Le drame dépasse infiniment... l'intrigue psychologique ou morale, du fait que les personnages de Kleist sont des 'forces qui vont.' C'est une sorte de vision qui a fait s'élancer le jeune héros, une 'pulsion' plus exactement encore qu'une impulsion. Une pulsion qui lui portait ensemble l'amour et la gloire. Le ton de l'ouvrage, dans la traduction de Jean Curtis, est extrêmement beau, la construction souple, grandiose."[3]

Yves Florenne, reporting in the journal *Hommes et mondes*, judges

the Kleist play the most perfect performance at Avignon since Vilar began the festival in 1947.[4] Linking Kleist to *Sturm und Drang*, Florenne admits that he was insane, then qualifies the statement by adding "but with intervals of lucidity." The Prince is seen in this same light. His dreams are not simple reveries but pathological hallucinations. The character of the Prince is said to be, like the drama, "brumeux et flottant. A vrai dire, il n'existe guère: ce rêveur a moins d'épaisseur que ses rêves. Il n'importe: cette ombre blanche est bien faite pour émouvoir... toute baignée de poésie amoureuse – et d'une autre poésie plus inquiétante. Qu'il y a donc de séduction germanique, de cette séduction si tragiquement trompeuse, dans cet adolescent amoureux qui naît à l'empire une fleur aux doigts!" (602).

Christine de Rivoyre, writing in *Le Monde* in the following February, sums up critical reaction to the Avignon production by commenting that all those critics fortunate enough to see the play in Avignon outdid each other in their praise of this great dramatic work.[5]

What accounted for the unusually enthusiastic critical reception of a play, which, after all, had been known, read, analyzed, and discussed – and rarely with such excited fervor – for more than a century in France? The first and most obvious answer lies in the question itself, that is, the Kleist play, whatever its thought content, or its special literary value, is first and foremost theatre. As such, it comes into its own only on stage. This is certainly the basic explanation for Vilar's decision to produce it at all.

In Vilar, himself, lies the second explanation. Judged by many critics to be the most brilliant director in France, student and disciple of Charles Dullin, product of the Théâtre de Poche and the Vieux Colombier, an accomplished actor himself and creator of the Avignon festival, Villar, now director of the state-supported Théatre National Populaire (T.N.P.), became, after the death of Jouvet in 1951, the new hope for what many felt to be a much needed revitalization of French theatre. His choice of the Kleist play as well as his imaginative production of it constituted a clear answer to charges that the French stage had degenerated into the uninteresting presentation of dated repertory.

It was, then, a stroke of unusual good luck for the fortune of Kleist's *Prinz* in France that it should make its French stage debut under Vilar's aegis. Critics at the time were unusually interested in anything he produced. Despite the long history of Kleist's work in France, the author of the *Prinz* was regarded as a new playwright, and Vilar's production seen as the discovery of a long-overlooked dramatic talent.

As to the production of the *Prinz* itself, its first staging in the

courtyard of the Palace of the Popes in Avignon was nothing less than spectacular. Original, somber music by Maurice Jarre, a broad, bare, sloping stage open to the night, the brilliant use of spotlights and lighting effects, strikingly colorful, violently contrasting costumes, and even cannon firing from the crenelated walls of the old palace, added up to an overwhelming theatrical impression.

To this impression, as the final factor in the success of the production itself, must be added the figure of Gérard Philipe, one of the most sensitive, talented, and popular actors of French stage and screen.[6] As Morvan Lebesque writes in his review in *Carrefour*, "Gérard Philipe succeeded where no other actor of the last hundred years could have. The brilliance of his success was indescribable. Those who saw Gérard Philipe in Avignon would talk of it the rest of their lives."[7]

Yet it would certainly be committing a grave injustice to the genius of Kleist to attribute the greatest part of the play's success to the interest in Vilar or to the special merits of the production itself. Vilar also introduced Büchner's *Dantons Tod*, but with little of the acclaim that met Kleist's *Prinz*. Aside from the brilliance of the production, then, what other factors account for the success of the play, for the repeated success of the play throughout the coming seasons of its presentation by the T.N.P.?

One hint can perhaps be found in François Mauriac's remarks in *Le Figaro*. Mauriac praises Vilar for his courage in presenting so soon after the end of hostilities a play that treats the subject of war and the questions of conscience that wars inevitably bring about. It is a happy sign, he feels, that war and politics are again becoming fit subjects for art.[8] Mauriac sees the drama as treating a problem brought agonizingly close to the French in the recent past, the problem of individual conscience, of choice, of conflicting allegiances. Mauriac could easily have gone much farther in this direction. The story of a man whose friendly, understandable world of values is suddenly destroyed, who finds himself brutally and unaccountably faced with senseless annihilation, and who, struggling out of the depths of animal fear, fashions alone, for himself and for all men a value for which he is willing to die, and for which others can live, had too great a sense of contemporaneousness, paralleled too closely the recent experiences of Frenchmen in every walk of life, not to stir up unusual interest and enthusiasm.

There are, of course, other factors to account for the success of *Prinz*, many of which will become apparent in the remarks of the critics who saw this and other Kleist works in the years after 1951. This discovery of Kleist in 1951 was, as we know, no real discovery at all, but rather the logical outcome of a growth in interest that had continued in an ever accelerating pace since the late nineteenth

century, an interest given new impetus in the thirties by the surrealist-neo-romantic group, an interest only given its final push by the spectacular production of one of Kleist's works by a brilliant young director.

Vilar brought *Prinz* to Paris in February, 1952, in a staging as similar to that presented in Avignon as the facilities of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées would allow.[9] As to the success of the production, Marc Beigbeder reports in *La Revue théâtrale* another complete triumph for Vilar.[10]

Beigbeder admits that after seeing the performance at Avignon, he had expected nothing else. Robert Kemp, reporting in *Le Monde*, is no less enthusiastic about this "spectacle de majesté et de beauté.... Comme la pièce de Heinrich von Kleist... est puissante, généreuse, taillée dans une pièrre dure; voilà une réconfortante et excitante soirée."[11] Kemp sees the play as a good defense against charges that Vilar is partisan. It is, he reminds, the second German play (the first being Büchner's *Dantons Tod*) presented by this national theatre. In it, Kemp finds patriotism exalted, and, strangely enough for a work of Kleist's, discipline as well. The play is, as is often said, 'Cornélienne,' though Kemp insists that Corneille would never have used the dream scene, a use which he attributes to the influence of Mesmer, Cagliostro, and Swedenborg. Before we condenm such influence, however, Kemp reminds how much our contemporary plays are permeated with Freud and Kierkegaard.

Kemp sees the 'Todesfurchtszene' as made bearable only by the superb acting of Gérard Philipe and in a final comparison of Kleist and Corneille, especially the Corneille of *Cinna* and *Le Cid*, Kemp contrasts Corneille's splendid eloquence with Kleist's Spartan-like brevity. Kleist used words as though they were so many bullets, but, Kemp reminds, they are bullets that hit their target.

Gabriel Marcel, writing in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, is no less generous in his praise of *Prinz*, a work which he had read previously in German and which he judges to be one of the masterpieces of world theater.[12] Like Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, it offers an invaluable lesson to young playwrights. The role of the Prince is one of the greatest ever conceived for the theater. The play represents drama at its best. (10).

Referring to the first, strange scene of the play – of incredible lyric quality – Marcel then continues, "Toute l'œuvre est ainsi comme encadrée entre un songe qui devient realité et une réalité qui a la couleur du songe. Et cette composition contribue à conférer à cette tragédie un caractère sans analogue" (10).

Marcel sees the fourth act as one of the greatest moments in the history of the theater. When given the chance to decide for himself, the Prince becomes a rational being suddenly brought face to face

with eternal values. Marcel points out that it is one of the only tragedies, along with *Cinna*, that ends happily, and yet, in no sense, artificially.

Marcel treats the play in much greater detail in an article appearing in *Théâtre de France*, the theatre annual devoted to a review of the principal productions of the year in France. The pages devoted to the Kleist play include, along with Marcel's review, pictures from the stage production at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Marcel discusses the Paris production, first in relation to a performance of *Prinz* he had seen in Stuttgart – the latter being in his view not nearly as effective as Vilar's – and, secondly, as, along with Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, also given in Paris in the 1951-52 season, a near perfect example of what historical drama ought to be. Marcel sees the two plays as especially important "dans la conjoncture théâtrale présente" in that they illustrate the truth of the statement that historical drama must be poetic.[13] He is quick to point out that he is not talking here about historical drama "à la Hugo," which he judges to be, with few exceptions, exhausted and beyond hope of revival. It is in the light of the exhaustion of the Hugo tradition that Marcel sees the significance of the Kleist and Schiller plays.

After a discussion of Schiller's drama, Marcel turns to Kleist's *Prinz*, a work which, despite its essentially Prussian hardness, does possess exceptional poetic value (80). Though the essential problem of *Prinz* has been said to be the purifying of the spirit, the Prince's slowly emerging sense of right and truth, Marcel sees it a little differently. The key word in *Prinz* is not truth, but responsibility (81).

After a short résumé of the action of the play, in which he judges the 'Todesfurchtszene' to be unbelievably daring theater, Marcel points to the fourth act, as in his earlier review, as containing the decisive moment of the play. "Voici que par un mouvement véritablement sublime, le jeune prince, promu à la dignité suprême qui est celle de la conscience, se range à l'avis de ses juges, il accepte sa mort et du même coup on peut dire qu'il l'a déjà dépassée. Mais par là même il s'est situé sur le plan où la grâce pourra fondre sur lui et le sauver, sans, bien entendu, que celle-ci ait pu être en rien escomptée ou même prévue par lui" (81).

Marcel, personally rejecting any interpretation of the play as a glorification of Prussian discipline, though admitting that he is not at all certain if Kleist himself did not mean the play to be so interpreted, insists that, in any event, truly great works have an existence of their own which can surpass what the author's conscious intentions might have been. In this light, he feels justified in having drawn his own contemporary meaning from the play, a meaning whose highly spiritual nature can not fail to impress the twentieth century spectator (81).

The Vilar production of *Prinz*, presented in Paris for the first time in February, 1952, ran for some forty performances at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, alternating, fittingly enough, with its French 'cousin,' *Le Cid*. In the July issue of *Revue de Paris*, in a discussion of the 1951-52 season at the T.N.P., Thierry Maulnier judges Vilar's production of *Prinz* to have been unquestionably the best of the season.[14] A year later, in the same review, in answer to criticism in regard to Vilar's choice of plays at the T.N.P., Maulnier repeats his favorable judgment of *Prinz*, calling it the greatest success of the last fifteen months and, in addition, in answer to the question why Vilar doesn't present French Romantic drama, states that he personally prefers Kleist's *Prinz*, Vilar's production of which he calls the revelation of a masterpiece.[15]

Vilar repeated *Prinz* at the Avignon festival in the summer of 1952 (July 15-25) and made it again a part of the T.N.P. program during the 1954-55 season. In addition to performances in Paris and Avignon, the play was given on the road during the many regular tours of the T.N.P. 'en province' as well as in Switzerland and Germany, totaling, by the fall of 1955, well over one hundred performances.

The production of *Prinz* in the early fifties marks the most decisive event in the reception of Kleist in France since the first mention of his work nearly a century and a half before. Despite Vilar's stress on the poetic, romantic elements in the play, no single work of Kleist's, with the possible exception of *Krug*, could have been better suited to combat the concept of Kleist built up in the critical literature devoted to him and to his work since the early nineteenth century, the concept, that is, of the 'Todsucher,' the abnormal author of violence and despair. Despite the varying interpretations to which the Vilar production lent itself, depending, that is, on whether one stressed the implicit spiritual, idealistic message of the play, its presentation of a man in existential crisis, its comment on the misery and glory of the human condition, or simply stressed the overall poetic, dreamlike mood of the work, even the most prejudiced critic, after seeing the play, had to admit that Kleist must have written it during one of those moments of lucidity supposedly experienced within a lifetime of pathological despair. From this date, the perceptive French reader, in light of his having seen or heard of the Kleist play, ought to have serious doubts about much of the criticism written about Kleist in pre-Vilar France.

CHAPTER XI

INTERPRETATION, 1953-1961

The purported discovery of Kleist by French critics in 1951, whatever implicit slight it might have done the works of earlier French Kleist scholars, nevertheless had the advantage of making possible a fresh and stimulating reexamination of Kleist's work, a revitalization of critical interest much needed in view of the stagnation that had set in in Kleist scholarship, criticism, and productions in the Germany of the thirties and forties. French critics were free, in the fifties, in a way no average German critic could possibly be, to interpret Kleist in the light of contemporary thought and feeling.

One of the first of these interpretations, controversial, in sharp disagreement with earlier Kleist criticism and, as well, in disagreement with the interpretations given by many viewers of *Prinz*, can be found in the slim, hundred-page volume, *L'Univers existentiel de Kleist dans le Prince de Hombourg*, published in Paris in 1953, the work of Alfred Schlagdenhauffen.

The existentialist interpretation of Kleist's work was, of course, not new. As has already been pointed out, such was the basis of Fricke's path-setting work on Kleist in 1929. Fricke's interpretations were carried on and developed in subsequent German Kleist criticism, e.g., in the studies of Curt Hohoff (1934), Walter Linden (1935), and Jens Heimreich (1937), and, in America, in the critical studies of Henry W. Nordmeyer (1946-47). As will be seen, however, Schlagdenhauffen's interpretation, though existentialist, is very much his own.

He sees *Prinz*, much as his predecessors had, as a continuation of the Kleistian soliliquy on the problem of the individual versus the collective, freedom versus the law, of the dream versus the real. He differs sharply, however, in particular with Ayrault and Rouge, in his belief that Kleist's last play does not reflect a reconciliation of the antinomies that tormented Kleist. Such a conclusion as his is inescapable, he maintains, after attentive reading of the text. The drama exalts neither Prussianism nor a harmonious universe. Rather than an exception or departure from the earlier works, it forms an integral part of Kleist's anguish ridden existence. It is in no way in contradiction with his tragic end. It reveals to us, as did

Schroffenstein and *Penthesilea*, though now with a surer hand and more masculine reserve, a world composed of discordant elements, a world whose incoherence and absurdity are hidden in rare moments by the beneficent, by the deceiving veil of illusion and dream.[1]

In an interesting comparison of the twin first and last scenes, Schlagdenhauffen points out that the function of the opening scene is to present simultaneously the real world and the world of the Prince's aspirations. Here the meeting of the real and the yearned for, will be accomplished only as a result of caprice, of a trick played on the Prince by the Elector. Similarly, in the last scene, when the aspired for and the real do actually coincide, it will again be a matter essentially of caprice, or, in any event, of arbitrariness, that is, it will depend on the decision of the Elector to grant clemency. This purely chance reconciliation of the real and the aspired for reinforces, Schlagdenhauffen maintains, his argument that Kleist's world is one of caprice, one of fundamental absurdity.

From the "glove scene" (I, IV) on, the question of the play becomes, "Can the gap between the dream and the real be closed?" Because the Prince is led to believe that it will be, he does not see the traps the world of reality has laid for him. Thus the stage is set for the mistake and its consequences.

In Kottwitz's defense of the Prince's mistake, Schlagdenhauffen sees Kleist's viewpoint, Kleist's complaint against the mechanized state, clearly expressed (74). In so far as it expresses the insoluble contradictions in life, Kottwitz's defense is pure Kleist. Logic and reason are opposed to living reality, the individual to authority, freedom of action to the mechanization of all activities. As in all of Kleist's dramas, man clashes with his fate. The individual is in conflict with society which to exist must codify its laws, must see to it that they are obeyed (76).

Schlagdenhauffen, revealing his place in a younger critical generation that, unlike Ayrault's, sees life as essentially problematic, points out that Kleist shows both sides as having undeniable value and that, as the play progresses, it becomes more and more apparent that conciliation is impossible.

Schlagdenhauffen sees Hohenzollern's intercession in defense of the Prince as serving to establish the link of cause and effect between the Elector's joke and the Prince's guilt. Yet the Elector immediately points out that it was Hohenzollern who called him into the garden, making it consequently Hohenzollern's fault. Thus, the problem of responsibility as posed by Kleist remains insoluble. (81).

Schlagdenhauffen sees the Elector as virtually beaten when he finally calls on the Prince. Though he pretends to scorn the arguments of the Prince's defenders, his impotence is none the less visible. Here Schlagdenhauffen sees a double, essentially Kleistian irony. Only

the free man is truly capable of a great act. Against fate, law loses its rights (82).

Pointing to the scene in which the Prince states his decision to die for his error, Schlagdenhauffen cautions that there is here an idea other than that of punishment, of pure and simple expiation of guilt. The Prince does not say simply that he wants the law to be applied in all justice and in all its rigor. He makes, rather, of his death, an act of individual liberty. The Elector, himself unable to decide between liberty and law, gives the decision to the Prince.[2]

The Prince, by glorifying the law through a death freely consented to, places himself above the law and above judges. His death will be a triumph, a double victory, a victory, that is, for law and order, as well as a victory for personal liberty. "Ainsi dans la mort du Prince, Kleist réussit à concilier l'inconciliable; mais dans la mort seulement" (87). This last statement forms the crux of Schlagdenhauffen's final argument. If the Prince had died, it would have represented a solution to the problem, but since he was not allowed to die, this is felt to show the pessimism of the entire play. Why the Prince's freely arrived at choice to die is not just as good a solution to the problem as his actual freely consented to death is nowhere explained by Schlagdenhauffen.

In the conviction, then, that the death of the Prince represented a true solution of the problem of liberty versus law, Schlagdenhauffen feels that once the Prince has made this decision, he considers himself to be no longer among the living, having gained immortality the true way. Thus he is said to be no longer interested in what he aspired to in the first dream scene.

Schlagdenhauffen completely rejects the notion, put forth most consistently by such German Kleist critics as Paul Kluckhohn, Ernst Bertram, and Kurt Allert in the twenties and thirties, that the Prince finds himself in the last scene reintegrated into the community, into the 'Gemeinschaft' and that the play as a whole represents the solution to the problem that haunted all writers in the nineteenth century, the problem, that is, of the individual versus the 'Gemeinschaft.'

Schlagdenhauffen sees the ecstasy in the Prince's last monologue as clear proof that he had finished with the world of glory and personal ambition, and, in a freely accepted death, had realized a higher meaning. The smelling of the flower, the dialogue with Stranz, are said to show the Prince's recognition of the impossibility, for him, of life and love, the impossibility of all the joys of this earth now that he is detached.

In his discussion of the final scene, Schlagdenhauffen makes his most telling, certainly his most appealing justification for the interpretation of *Prinz* as a pessimistic play. He sees the final scene

as bitterly ironic, a scene in which Romantic ecstasy clashes outrageously with the martial realism of the Prince's fellow officers who have come, certain that this is the Prince's greatest hour, to welcome him back into their ranks. To interpret the scene to mean that the Prince, purified, disciplined, and pardoned, will now simply reassume his place in a normal life, is to underestimate Kleist as an author (96).

When the Prince is confronted with the surprise, he faints. The words and actions of those nearest him are said to show how little they know him. Nathalie says that it is a result of his joy. The Elector says he can be awakened, that is, brought back into the normal order of things, into reality, by the cannons and the playing of a hymn in his honor. The officers shout 'Vivat!' and the Prince? He has only a word and it will be his last? "Nein, sagt! Ist es ein Traum?" (V, 11, 1856) "Paroles lourdes d'incrédulité et d'amertume. Est-il possible, après tant d'épreuves, que l'amour et la gloire, objets de ses rêves *d'antan*, puissent lui échoir? Kottwitz, qui une fois encore va droit au fond du problème, répond comme un écho: Ein Traum, was sonst? (1857). Cette belle harmonie n'est réalisable que dans le mirage du rêve" (98).

For the Prince, all these things have no more truth, no value. Having chosen death, having lived it with such intensity, he is no longer capable of reintegration into the world (99).

Ayrault had noted, as we have seen, this same desire on the part of the Prince, "La même ivresse qui lui faisait tout désirer de la vie, lui fait tout espérer de la mort."[3] Where Ayrault, however, had seen the Prince's being brought back to reality as an illustration of Kleist's desire to show that harmony *is* possible, Schlagdenhauffen, a cataclysmic war and a philosophical revolution later, sees this same event as bitterly ironic, proof that harmony is not possible. Schlagdenhauffen insists that if Kleist had intended anything else, he would have made it evident by a gesture or a word. The Prince, however, has neither a word, nor a glance for the Elector or for Nathalie. It all happens too late.

Schlagdenhauffen paints the Prince as a modern 'outsider' in the best Kafka-Camus sense, lost in the midst of a society of solid institutions and rigorous laws to which he cannot adjust though he recognizes the necessity. Proclaimed a hero and condemned to death for the same act, stripped of his honor, the Prince seeks in death to glorify both the law and himself. Yet even this last path to immortality is blocked by a pardon. The split between society and the individual is total and permanent (101).

In his final summing up, Schlagdenhauffen places *Prinz*, as well as Kleist's work in general, firmly in the current of the contemporary literature of anguish. "Absurde cet univers où l'élan génial est méconnu, où l'action personnelle est incompatible avec la loi, où la

loi est tyrannique et la grâce arbitraire, où une plaisanterie engendre une faute et entraîne la mort de l'innocent, où le sentiment est trompeur et la pensée logique en contradiction avec le réel" (102).

Schlagdenhauffen sees *Prinz* as a clear expression of Kleist's deep anguish. "Sous les aspects de ce drame d'allure 'brandenbourgeoise,' Kleist se révèle comme le poète de l'univers disparate, comme le poète de tous les abîmes de sa vie intèrieure. L'issue du drame n'est pas sanglante, comme dans *Penthésilée*; elle est résignée, estompée: mais le tragique silencieux est pour le poète de tous le plus cruel, le plus mortel" (103).

Though unquestionably valid in its brilliant presentation of the problematic aspects of Kleist's world, Schlagdenhauffen's study, when it comes to specific interpretation of individual characters and events, suffers from a too close identification with one school of thought, the inevitable, though not necessarily unfruitful result of the adoption of a writer by a coterie. That Kleist, however, was not to become the exclusive property of the existentialist wing of French intellectual thought, or for that matter, the property of any exclusive intellectual coterie, is evidenced by his being subjected the following year to biographic treatment by André Maurois.

Maurois's study appeared in *Revue de Paris* in June, 1954.[4] Its purpose was again to make known beyond the realm of professional Germanists this German writer come recently to the attention of the French as a result of the productions of the T.N.P. Based on material in Ayrault, Bonafous, and Taillandier, Maurois's study scarcely presents a new picture of Kleist to the French. It does, however, place more than usual stress on Kleist's relationship, usually disastrous, with women.

Maurois sees *Penthesilea* as the expression of Kleist's violent misogyny (15). He has a more civilized Penthesilea tearing Achilles apart with her hands instead of her teeth, and calls the tragedy the anti-Kleist, the declaration of the rights of passion (16). Kleist is shown as the dionysian, always near, if not actually plunged into madness.

Reflecting Ayrault and the Romieu biography of Kleist, Maurois makes much of the Goethe-versus-Kleist theme, "Goethe hated him with a violence that is a form of praise" (3). Later, quoting Goethe's statement that he felt only 'Schauder und Abscheu' toward Kleist, Maurois does not mention that the statement was made fifteen years after Kleist's death, nor does he quote from Goethe's earlier comments – which flatly contradict the claim of hatred – nor even quote the latter, more sympathetic part of Goethe's 'Schauder und Abscheu' comment.

Käthchen is described as a poetic, morbid drama (18), beautiful even though at times difficult to understand (19). *Kohlhaas* is said to represent the Kleistian theme of the vain struggle of man against

fate and *Prinz* is called "sublime, with that strange madness mastered only by Shakespeare before him" (21).

Despite the overall reference-book depth of the article, Maurois's final judgment of Kleist is significant in that, like Schlagdenhauffen's, it attests to Kleist's meaning for the contemporary French reader. The article's closing comment combines a judgment of Kleist with a comparison of the relative significance in this age of Kleist and Goethe, a comparison in which Kleist comes off the implicit winner. "Son génie douloureux et son destin tragique le font frère de notre jeunesse. Le Prince de Hombourg est plus près d'elle que Götz von Berlichingen. Dans ce duel de génies, qui parut si longtemps inégal, Kleist en ce moment reprend quelque avantage" (24).

After the phenomenal success of Vilar's production of *Prinz*, it is only natural to expect other directors to look with keen interest at Kleist's total dramatic production with an eye to possible stage realization. Attention went almost immediately to *Penthesilea* and to *Krug*, the company of Barrault-Renaud exploring the possibilities of the first, the companies of Jean Dupuy in Paris and Roger Planchon in Lyon-Villeurbanne examining the second.

Though not the first to reach actual stage production, the efforts of Jean-Louis Barrault had their first result in print, namely the publication of a stage version of *Penthesilea* in 1954, the work of the poet-novelist-critic, Julien Gracq, in whom we see yet another link between Kleist and the surrealists. The translator tells of his reaction to the play and his interpretations of it in the preface to the published stage version and in the *Cahiers*, the publication of the Renaud-Barrault Company.

Gracq writes that when asked by Barrault to make a translation and stage version of the Kleist play, they both knew that the work had the reputation of being armchair theatre.[5] They knew, as well, that the tragedy demanded the limit not only of what the stage can do, but, as well, of what the feminine lead can do. Gracq's translation was done in prose, certain changes being made "for the sake of French diction," the adding of a half-dozen cues, and the cutting of a few descriptive passages, e.g., Scene 2, the pursuit of Achilles by Penthesilea, and Scene 15, the history of the Amazons.

Gracq tells of his initial negative impressions of the play, the first strange and unpleasant feeling of "dépaysement" on reading it. After rereading the play many times, he admits that this same feeling remains with him, a conviction that the characters are not talking to him, that is, have no wish to talk to him. Unlike the works of Shakespeare and Racine, in which, at a certain point, Gracq feels an 'opening up' of the characters, a "Look, we are like you," a communion on the human level, the plays of Kleist remain, in

Gracq's view, closed, a self-sufficient world of silent tension (11).

Unlike *Prinz* and, above all, unlike *Die Hermannsschlacht*, where Kleist is felt to be 'engagé,' that is, committed politically, Gracq, himself deeply influenced by surrealist thought, sees Kleist leaving all historicity aside in *Penthesilea*, as though surrendering to the figures that come from the depths of his imagination (13).

Like all truly symbolic works, Gracq insists, an exact meaning cannot be given to *Penthesilea*. It would be a waste of time to try to ascertain its message, "plutôt elle hausse jusqu'à signifier, elle recharge de pouvoir, de nostalgie et de profondeur tout ce qui s'aimante à son champs magnétique, tout ce qui vient se brûler au fond des ténèbres... de nos ténèbres" (13).

Yet he is willing, at the risk of gross over-simplification, to give three possible perspectives of the play. The first, he calls the "Germanic" message, the poeticizing of war, an atavistic memory of the epoch of the "Völkerwanderung," an evocation of the figure of the maiden warrior, a figure, Gracq adds, that France has realized historically but has always failed to realize in literature. Kleist is said to have taken the figure of the maiden warrior, a figure frozen and sterilized by French literature, and given it body and soul and fire. Penthesilea is seen as prefiguring the Wagner of *Siegfried* and *Parzifal*, as well as the "blond beast" of Nietzsche.

The second perspective in which the play can be viewed is as an expression of Kleist, the anti-Goethe – for this reason, Gracq states, hailed by Nietzsche and Wagner. Kleist is judged as perhaps the most remarkable representative of the second stage of Romanticism in Germany, a stage against which Goethe rebelled. Helen and Penthesilea stand at opposite poles. Kleist saw and realized in his Amazon Queen the oriental side of the Greeks, all that Nietzsche would later call the dionysian.

The third perspective, the one that makes the play especially meaningful to the contemporary reader, lies, Gracq feels, in its brilliant symbolization of the battle of the sexes. Gracq sees *Penthesilea* as pushing to its inevitable extremes the consequences of this war (17). This message is seen as so clear that it needs no commentary. But, Gracq adds, Kleist, preoccupied with saving the noble side of Penthesilea, was not able to avoid "une pudeur symbolique" – he had the pack of dogs help her kill Achilles.

Gracq's preface appeared later in the year in essentially the same form, in the *Cahiers de la compagnie M. Renaud, Jean-Louis Barrault*, as an essay entitled *Le Printemps de Mars*.[6] In this same issue of the *Cahiers* appears an "Adresse aux spectateurs français" by Albert-Marie Schmidt, entitled *Penthésilée et l'opinion allemande*. In the opening paragraph Schmidt explains that it is not his purpose to plead the case either of Kleist or of *Penthesilea*. Convinced, how-

ever, that theater history will be made the day a producer dares to present *Penthesilea* in Paris, he wants to remind the audience of the inexhaustible source of controversy this strange text has provided German critics for more than a century.[7]

Schmidt follows this opening paragraph with a short history of the reception of the work in Germany and a brief biographical sketch of Kleist's life. The short history of the reception of the work traces it from its first condemnation by Goethe, through the indifference of the fifties, to a period of renewed interest in Wagner's time, and finally to a period of real interest said to have occured after Nietzsche and the advent of existentialism.

The Gracq version of *Penthesilea* was to be given at the Théâtre Marigny in the fall of 1955. Barrault, however, for reasons unknown, though quite possibly due to casting problems, finally decided against it. A younger and admittedly more daring director, however, Claude Régy, produced another version of *Penthesilea* during the Festival de Paris in July of 1955. The translation was the work of Charles Floquet and Maurice Clavel and was performed July 20 to July 23 at the Théâtre Hébertot with the actress Sylvia Monfort playing the leading role.

In contrast to the fate of *Prinz, Penthesilea* aroused generally mixed critical reaction. H. Magnan, writing in *Le Monde,* was enthusiastic in his approval. After stating that the action of the play exceeds the usual limits of cruelty, coarseness, and sensuality, Magnan continues by saying that Kleist, "le merveilleux que l'on sait, fougueux, romantique, fou, promis au double suicide," was certain to be attracted by a legend that appealed both to his imagination and to his masochism.[8] In this terrifying and beautiful tragedy, as in *Prinz,* Kleist expressed the best of his genius.

Jean Nepveu-Degas, writing in *France observateur,* is generally approving, though unusually vague. He praises the play's lyricism as its principal appeal, pointing out how difficult it is to translate – which would seem to indicate knowledge of the play in German – then adds that he was equally interested in the extent to which the play reveals the personality of Kleist himself.[9] He calls the production a brilliant feat for Claude Régy and is equally generous in his praise of Sylvia Monfort's portrayal of Penthesilea. The black and white décor and the stage settings are also singled out for praise. As for the work itself, his principal reservations center on the play's static nature, the number of repetitions, and the reliance on theatrical effects to achieve motion. Nevertheless, he praises the work as a whole, and is especially pleased at the idea of presenting a great foreign work, unknown in France, except through reading.

Jean Bergeaud, in speaking of the production in his *Je choisis... mon théâtre,* says curtly, "un ennui pesant se dégage d'un texte

atteint d'obscurité et d'hémorragie verbale."[10] The critic of the *Théâtre de France* simply reports the production as having been given at the Hébertot, presents pictures of it, and congratulates the daring young director who showed such courage by staging what the critic oddly describes as this "difficult, youthful work of the Austrian poet." Pictures of the Régy production along with Gracq's translation of *Penthesilea* also appeared in the September issue of *Paris théâtre*.[12]

With *Prinz* again a regular part of the 1954-55 season of the T.N.P., with the production of *Penthesilea* at the Hébertot, and, finally, with the production of *Krug*, which actually preceded by several months that of *Penthesilea*, the choice of Kleist drama offered to the French in 1955 was probably as good as that offered in any given city in Germany. If one adds to this a broadcast by the Radio Diffusion Française of an adaptation by Paul Morand of *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, the choice was certainly as great.

The performance of *Krug* mentioned above took place at the Théâtre Grammont in Paris on March 21, 1955 under the direction of René Dupuy, who also played the role of Adam. It was repeated for five performances in April and twice again in May. It was the first performance of *Krug* in Paris since the very same date in 1904, though not the first in recent times in France. The previous year had seen a performance of *Krug* in Paris, in German, by an East Berlin troupe and, as well, its regular performance during the 1954-55 season at the Théâtre de la Comédie in Lyon-Villeurbanne. The latter production, under the direction of Roger Planchon, made use of an adaptation of the play by the dramatist Arthur Adamov. It appeared in print in *Théâtre populaire* in March, 1954.[13]

The production of *Krug* at the Théâtre Grammont, however, was based on a version created especially for the Dupuy company. Jean-Paul Faure, giving the production a favorable review in *Théâtre de France*, remarks that Kleist evidently wrote with 'two pens,' one of which composed the amazing politico-romantic adventure of the Prince of Homburg, while the other composed the farce presented at the Grammont. Despite the obvious comedy in the work, however, Faure nevertheless senses a note of a more serious nature underlying it, an often thinly veiled note of tragedy as well as a kind of sadism that Faure judges to be very German.[14] Calling the play a satire on the judiciary institutions of Holland, Faure finds that the idea of presenting a judge who is himself the guilty party gives the play a definite contemporary ring. Despite the serious overtones, however, the judge does not become a sinister figure, thanks largely to an interpretation of the role by Dupuy that invested the character with a certain debonaire charm. This, Faure states, was certainly Kleist's intention. The drama, despite its

tragic potential, was meant to be a joyous comedy of character (120). Faure has only praise both for the direction and the acting.

Thus, by the end of 1955, three of Kleist's most frequently read and discussed plays had reached the French stage. Leaving aside the respective merits of the plays themselves, as unwise as that may be, it is obvious that neither the production of *Penthesilea* nor the Paris production of *Krug* enjoyed any of the special conditions or factors that insured the success of *Prinz*. Had Barrault presented Gracq's version of *Penthesilea* during the regular season, the story of its reception would certainly have been different. Had the Adamov-Planchon production of *Krug* been presented in Paris, again, reception would not have been the same. Proof of the latter may be seen in the repeated success of Adamov's *Krug* in Lyon in 1954-55 and in Brussels in 1958.

The relative failure of Kleist's *Penthesilea* and *Krug* in Paris may well have been the result of a mistaken assessment of the unusual success of his *Prinz*. In Avignon and in Paris, Vilar proved only that given an excellent translation and imaginative production, Kleist's drama could stand very much on its own in France. Roger Planchon had proved the same in Lyon. Until these two requisites were met, however, Kleist's dramas would have to continue to be falsely judged as Jean Bergeaud judged them in his *Je choisis... mon théâtre*, that is, as being for the most part, unplayable.

The years 1954 and 1955, the peak years of Kleist's popularity in France, saw the appearance of several new and important contributions to French Kleist criticism. The first of these, not new in the sense of an original contribution, but new, rather, in its presentation of an interpretation of Kleist not heard in France since the nineteenth century, was Jacque Lemarchand's preface to a translation of *Prinz* in 1954.

The Preface begins with a review of the Goethe-Kleist conflict, in which Lemarchand repeats all the old Romieu charges, accusing Goethe of both jealousy and fear in his attitude toward Kleist, accusing him as well of having wilfully sabotaged the production of Kleist's *Krug* in Weimar. But, Lemarchand adds, time has been on Kleist's side. The rhetoric of Goethe's theater strikes the modern audience as ponderous and dated, while the disorder, the youthful spontaneity of Kleist's drama remains in harmony with a way of feeling that is universal and ageless.[15]

The reactionary nature of Lemarchand's criticism is clearly revealed in his interpretation of *Prinz* as an obvious apologia for the Prussian concept of blind obedience, for the total acceptance of death for King and country (11). He sees the play, in effect, as the growing up of a Prussian adolescent to accept the manly lesson of 'Kadavergehorsamkeit.'

Lemarchand finds the first romantic glimpse of the Prince almost painful, so painful that his sudden and brutal return to reality will come almost as a relief to us. From the moment of self-discovery on, he will be a completely real character (12).

Lemarchand terms the 'Todesfurchtszene' unique in the dramatic literature of the time. In its truth, its unexpectedness, and its dramatic impact, it can be compared only to the best Greek and Shakespearian tragedies (14).

The entire strategy of the Elector is said to be aimed at putting the Prince to the test, implying, evidently, that the Elector intended from the beginning to let the final decision rest in the hands of the Prince himself. In so doing, says Lemarchand, the Elector finally awakens in the Prince the proper concept of duty and responsibility. By making him free, he forces the Prince to discover the most important lesson – that with freedom comes responsibility (15).

The Prince finally recognizes the justice of the Elector's position. At this moment the 'youth' dies in the Prince and the man is born (15). It is then that the Elector can pardon, not out of pity, but in recognition of the Prince's new character, a character forged by the Prince himself, one which will enable him to carry out his obligations as a man, as a soldier (15).

Lemarchand sees the last scene as no artificially 'tacked on' happy ending, but the logical end to the antagonism between the Prince and the universe. The last scene is the same as the first, as though Kleist wanted to show that no youthful dream is impossible of realization when man consents, as he must, to a reconciliation of head and heart, a reconciliation between the individual and society (15).

Lemarchand's interpretation, refreshing as it may be in its neatness and simplicity, by reducing *Prinz* to the banal story of the 'growing up,' with its moments of pain and anxiety, of a young prince, strikes the contemporary reader as naively superficial. Such a view of *Prinz* simply overlooks too many of the problematic aspects both of the play and of Kleist's outlook on life to make it acceptable. His contention that the conclusion of the play in the reconciliation of opposing forces is the logical conclusion, implies, it would seem, a view of the world scarcely attributable either to Kleist or to the twentieth century.

In sharp contrast to Lemarchand's efforts is an essay by the well-known Sorbonne Germanist, Claude David, published in *Preuves* late in 1954. Combining the best qualities of sound scholarship and brilliant critical insight, David discusses Kleist's work from the point of view of its obsession with secrets and secretiveness. He attempts to explain the cause of this obsession, illustrates its use, and, most importantly, shows how well certain implications of this

theme fit into contemporary modes of thinking as expressed in the literature of France and Germany.

David, beginning his essay with a discussion of Kleist's *Krug*, insists on the absolute originality of the comedy.[16] In it Kleist has created a new genre. Its originality does not, however, lie in the story of the Judge who is himself judged, but rather in the movement of the play, an outwardly spiraling movement that in its steady forward motion constantly deepens and broadens the play's scope (37).

The setting of this courtroom takes on the colors of Hell, 'à la Breughel.' The story that unfolds in it is grotesque and ugly, banal and diabolical. Yet it is the devil himself who, at the end of the play, runs off over the countryside. "C'est au niveau de la farce que la profondeur apparaît dans la pièce de Kleist; le burlesque n'est pas un décor, ni un divertissement; il est le lieu même du sens; il est le sens même. Kleist a retrouvé la vraie comédie" (37).

David sees in the figure of Adam the representation of man himself, corrupt and pernicious man, in whom there lives an evil force. Adam hides his secret, but the masks fall one by one. Man is exposed. His ignominy and his hidden shame are revealed (37). Thus, at the end of the play, when evil is bested and good wins out, David finds no relief. As odious as the Judge is, we identify with his fate. "Le secret qu'on lui arrache est notre secret, et en lui, c'est nous mêmes que nous sentons bafoués" (38).

Michael Kohlhaas, like Adam, also has a secret. David finds in this Novelle the same use of crescendo to be found in *Krug*, though here the secret plays no real part in the development of the plot line. The Novelle itself expresses the idea that we are not masters over the consequences of our acts. Opposed to our plans stands the resistance of the world, making our apparent liberty derisive. The Novelle unfolds with rigorous realism, until, David adds, the sudden entrance of the supernatural, the gypsy who gives to Kohlhaas the secret of the fate of the House of Saxony. Kohlhaas wears the secret, written on a piece of paper, like an amulet. The Elector of Saxony would give a fortune for it. Kohlhaas could use it to bargain for his life. But, says David, the secret has no value for him. On the scaffold, in front of the Elector, he takes the paper, tears it up with his teeth and swallows it. It is a useless and absurd sacrifice, but it allows Kohlhaas to triumph over the Elector (37).

David sees *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, which he calls one of the most beautiful Novellen in the German language (38), as a tragedy of distrust and secretiveness. All the characters remain unknown to each other. Hatred is often of no avail, but love is fatal (39).

Schroffenstein, though not judged by David to be a masterpiece, is nevertheless important in that it contains all of Kleist's themes.

Its tragedy is essentially absurd. At the beginning, there is no tragic situation against which the characters are helpless. They are, rather, victims of themselves, victims of error and imagination. There would be no tragedy if for one moment they could talk to each other. But they cannot. They are alone, cut off (39).

David finds two 'secrets' in the play. The first, the false secret, i.e., the mystery of the death of the child Peter, would have been of no importance had it not been for the second 'secret,' which forbids communication, which corrupts feelings, which engenders hate, and which makes love impossible (39). In this obsession with secrets and secretiveness, in this tragedy born of mistrust and solitude, David sees Kleist clearly expressed. Kleist was a secretive man, a man, above all, who had a secret (40).

Kleist's 'secret,' David suggests, springs from the mysterious Würzburg trip.[17] David claims that Kleist believed himself sexually impotent. Whether the malady was organic or functional, real or imagined, it weighed on him as a shameful secret, nurturing in him a feeling of being enclosed within himself, not understood, isolated. Thus, Kleist, alone and not understood, felt himself spied upon, lived in mistrust, and projected this mistrust into others. David finds substantiation for this in Kleist's relations with all those he knew and loved. He always wanted confidence and esteem. He never felt he found either.

In defending the above statements, David makes frequent use of his thorough knowledge of Kleist's correspondence. Here, in reference to Kleist's famous 'Greek' letter to his friend Pfuel, David rejects all notion of any real homosexuality. The Saint-Omer episode is described as a grandiose attempt at self-justification by suicide, and Kleist's last love for Henriette Vogel is dismissed as another fiction (42).

In a curious and disturbing reversal, David more or less agrees with Goethe's condemnation of Kleist, but sees its rightness as the basis for Kleist's significance to contemporary readers. Goethe, recognizing clearly the relation between Kleist's work and Kleist's life, was repulsed. The modern reader reacts differently. "Gottfried Benn écrivait un jour que l'homme d'aujourd'hui choisit ses génies parmi les schizophrènes. Kleist compte au nombre de nos génies. Sa schizophrénie nous exprime. Il vécut, en marge de la démence, un drame auquel nous participons tous en quelque manière" (42).

David sees Kleist as having rediscovered the sense of tragedy, a sense lost to the eighteenth century, especially to Goethe. Kleist's works reveal, as David's following comments indicate, a tragic world of existential solitude. With the possible exception of *Prinz* and *Die Hermannsschlacht*, David sees in Kleist's plays no communication between characters. They live in imaginary, indifferent, abstract

space, where each is hopelessly isolated, where every effort to escape the prison of the self is thwarted, where love, often scarcely discernible from hate, destroys the very object of love, where love, pride, and hate are inextricably, disastrously intermingled (42).

David sees the contradictions of love and pride nowhere better, nor more dramatically described than in the tragedy of *Penthesilea*. He finds the work unique in that, unlike other tragedies that deal with love that is not shared or a love that is impossible, *Penthesilea* is perhaps the only tragedy of shared love (43). There is no real obstacle to their love but pride. In Kleist, as in Sartre, love entails the conquering of the loved one, the destruction of the love object by absorbing it. But the androgynous split is permanent, the two parts meet only to destroy, to repudiate one another. Penthesilea, like the heroines of Anouilh, is too proud, too lonely to accept happiness. Love is an all consuming flame that must not be dimmed, not even by fulfillment. The pursuit of Achilles is thus but a part of her continued search for death (43).

In this concept of love, David, the Rilke scholar, sees much that was later to be heard in the *Sonette an Orpheus* and the *Duineser Elegien*. For Kleist, as for Rilke, love, the secret ally of death, refuses completion. The lonely heart wants to escape its prison. It dreams of communication, of love. Yet, paradoxically, it is proud of its captivity, of its secret. In guilt, it fears the very love to which it aspires. Its pride takes satisfaction in the knowledge that it is incommunicable. Love thus becomes something that is feared and despised (44).

One might be tempted to place the mixture of love and hate described in *Penthesilea* at the level of desire and instinct, but, David maintains, there can be no tragedy of instinct. Instinct can be violent and destructive, but not tragic. Contradicting Gundolf's concept of Kleist's characters as 'pre-human,' David insists that they are completely lucid beings who seek by destroying themselves to destroy all of creation. Kleist's world is the world of savage resentment. This explains its violence, and, in David's view, explains, as well, the chauvinism of Kleist's last years, the scenes of horror in *Die Hermannsschlacht* (44).

David ends his article with a reaffirmation of his claim that Kleist, above all in *Penthesilea*, rediscovered the true dimensions of tragedy. "Lessing faisait de la pitié le ressort de la tragédie. Quand Penthésilée, son forfait accompli, reparaît sur la scène, chacun s'écarte d'elle avec horreur. Elle n'inspire pas la pitié, mais l'effroi. Elle a accumulé sur elle la colère des dieux. Elle est monstrueuse, sacrée. Kleist a redécouvert la dimension du tragique" (44).

David expressed his belief earlier that the modern reader finds in Kleist's alleged schizophrenia an expression both of himself and of

the universe he lives in. It is this concept of the underlying schizophrenia, the split nature of the world and of man as it finds expression in Kleist's work, that receives brilliant, though at times baffling, treatment in the small volume by Marthe Robert, *Heinrich von Kleist-Dramaturge*, published in Paris in 1955. The work is in many respects a summation, though unfortunately not always a happy fusion, of the principal currents of Kleist criticism in France since the late thirties. In Robert's stress on the idea of obsession, of truth to be found only in subconscious states, of isolation, of the impossiblity of communication, of a fundamental suspicion of words, of man "condemned" to existence, one can find an amalgamation of the principal themes of Freudian, surrealist, and existentialist criticism of the previous twenty years.

Robert's critical essay is preceded by a twenty-page sketch of Kleist's life and a ten-page presentation of Kleist's plays, the latter section made up largely of résumés of those plays not available at that time in French translation. Robert begins the essay proper with a description of Kleist's dramatic work as the private domain of misunderstanding: "Non seulement parce que le malentendu en est le principal ressort, mais parce que, manquant presque toujours son but avoué, elle répond avec une rigueur infaillible à des intentions d'un tout autre ordre, sur lesquelles Kleist ne s'est que peu, ou incomplètement expliqué."[18]

It is in explanation of the latter part of this statement that Robert discusses Kleist's obsession, contending that regardless of what Kleist tried to do, or thought he was doing, the result was always the same, that is, the presentation of the same themes, the same situations, the same motifs. Kleist was, in short, obsessed (39). Robert finds no sign of progress from one work to the next, no deepening of themes already clearly outlined in the very first work (43).

As to the cause of this obsession, Robert conjectures that it may be linked to what she calls Kleist's terrible sense of impotence – in love, in literature, in life, in body – a feeling that made it impossible for him to accomplish his goals (44). It may also have been linked to his realization of the unbridgeable distance between the demands of his innermost being and the ideals of his caste, a realization translated into a feeling of personal guilt (46).

Robert links the 'demon' that obsessed Kleist with that of the age he lived in: "Instable, aveugle quand il pense et lucide quand il souffre, plus affamé d'absolu que de savoir, plus avide de réconciliation que de changement et révolté par désespoir, le 'démon' de Kleist est bien l'esprit d'un temps qui s'est cru à la fois élu et condamné" (48). For this reason, Robert calls him the true tragic poet of Germany.

Having dealt at length with the possible grounds for Kleist's obsession, Robert finally turns to the nature of the obsession itself, an obsession with the idea of what Robert terms 'la Faute,' an idea very closely related to Ayrault's concept of 'le monde vicié' and the existentialist concept of guilt. 'La Faute' is not to be viewed in the light of any precise moral or social frame-work. It is linked, rather, to an absolutely general human condition (48). Robert feels that a claim could be made that Kleist wrote only one drama, that drama in which every human creature is involved simply because it exists (49).

In trying to understand Kleist's work, it is not important, Robert maintains, that a particular drama or tragedy resulted from some definite crime or error, as in *Prinz, Kohlhaas,* or *Penthesilea.* The decisive factor is the state of guilt in which each character finds himself imprisoned (49). In Kleist's universe, 'la Faute' is a state or condition whose existence is made evident by crime. But, though this state of guilt always reveals itself in a crime, a crime can take place beyond or outside the realm of any 'faute.' This, Robert maintains, is at least suggested by the apparent injustice of Kleist toward his heroes.

This injustice, Robert insists, is one of the keys to an understanding of Kleist's work. Hermann, she points out, is no less 'criminal'than Kohlhaas. Käthchen and Penthesilea are two sides of the same coin. Agnes (*Schroffenstein*) is killed, Alcmene is honored by the gods, Varus is murdered, the Prince is saved and made a hero. In one place infidelity is punished by death, in another place exalted, here crime punished, and there crime exalted to the level of a mission. Nowhere does Robert see punishment given according to the crime or the misdeed. Everywhere it escapes the categories of objective morality (50).

Thus Kleist's heroes are not tragic heroes in the usual sense, i.e., characters in whom two contradictory principles fight it out. They are characters who can only try, successfully or unsuccessfully, to escape the mire of their existence (50).

Thus Robert does not see in *Prinz* any tragic conflict. If the Prince is pardoned, it is not because he recognized the higher reality, as is often claimed, of a historic community, the Prussian state, but because, in his decision to die, he broke forever the complicated chain of events made up of his acts and their consequences (51). He becomes, through his decision to die, *one* again. If Penthesilea goes to her death, it is not because she sacrificed the state (i.e., the law of the Amazons) to her individual passion, but because, enmeshed to the end in the subjective, she suffered the fate of any fragmented existence (51). Thus Robert would explain the paradoxical hierarchy of punishments. Guilt depends not on whether an act is good or bad,

but on whether the person committing the act is aware of what Robert calls the fundamental law of existence (51).

As to the nature of this fundamental law, Robert sees it as inseparable from the state in which man finds himself after 'la Chute,' an event which took place once, but which continues to repeat itself. "The Fall" engenders man's condition and is a central theme in the works of Kleist (52).

'La Faute,' which can best be translated by the expression 'state of sin' (without its moral connotations), or, to use Ayrault's phrase, 'l'état vicié du monde,' came into being as a result of the 'Fall.' It is passed on and affects all, though, as Robert points out, it does not weigh equally on everyone. Though a part of the human condition, some seem able to escape it. Robert finds Kleist placing beside his guilty heroes, other heroes who seem to be *a priori* innocent. Whatever they do, they survive unscathed. Thus, while illustrating the reality of 'la Faute,' these same characters also show its limits.

The state before the Fall was a state of unity, unity of body and soul, truth and appearance, desire and action. This state of unity is presently not accessible to the judging or reasoning self, or as Robert might have said, using the language of Kierkegaard, not accessible to the "thinking" ego. Robert sees the puppet as the symbol for this lost paradise and, consequently, the essay, *Über das Marionettentheater*, as the work which contains the fundamental idea that gave birth to Kleist's dramas.

In these dramas, man is represented as having broken with Paradise. The only thing to do, says Robert, quoting the words of Kleist's essay, is to make our trip around the world, to see if there is not, somewhere behind Paradise, another entrance (54). Robert maintains that this is exactly what all of Kleist's characters who have made this definite break must do. In the search, some get lost completely. Others, because they are willing to 'lose themselves' are miraculously saved. The difference between the saved and the condemned is that the former renounce in advance any thought of personal gain (56).

Hermann is raised to the level of a hero because he undertakes the struggle with the sole desire of losing it and himself. Whatever he does, he will remain true. The acceptance, without reservation, of a fundamentally destructive loss – often the loss of life itself – is thus the decisive factor in determining the fate of the Kleistian hero (57).

Robert finds the clearest example of this in *Prinz*, whose hero is seen passing through the three stages of consciousness all men must pass through. The somnambulism scene represents the first state of innocence in which desire and action, present and future, are one, that is, the pure state before the Fall, a state, Robert adds parenthetically, from which Käthchen never departs. The Prince, how-

ever, does. He awakens brutally and tries to transport the purity of his dream into a reality that answers to other laws. This leads to confusion and misunderstanding, finally culminating in the death sentence.

This is the second stage, when consciousness finds itself caught in the chain of cause and effect events (58). From the dream state, the Prince has fallen into a world where that which is evident has become doubtful, where unity has given way to the disparity of appearances. This constitutes his only 'guilt' (59). Thus the famous 'Todesfurchtszene,' shocking to some, 'so human' to others, is actually perfectly logical. "Tombé de haut, il fallait que le Prince connût jusqu'au bout l'opacité de sa conscience prisonnière, il le fallait pour que, désirant et acceptant la mort, il entrât dans ce monde transparent de la fin où même le bandeau qui lui couvre les yeux ne l'empêche pas de voir" (57).

In part two of her essay, unquestionably the most original, though open, I think, to serious question as to overall relevance, if not actual critical soundness, Robert discusses what she calls the tragic heritage. Just as the Fall continues to occur, so too 'la Faute' continues to be transmitted (63). The individual conscience, the reasoning self, is, she maintains, so well 'defined' by 'l'heritage,' that, for Kleist, everything that is transmitted necessarily partakes of 'la Faute' (63). Every human drama is linked or tied up with an inheritance, an epidemic, or a hereditary factor. The transmission of 'la Faute' thus becomes the necessary and sufficient basis of any drama and is, says Robert, a constant motif in Kleist's work, appearing there either as cursed or as pure (71). Robert sees the inheritance as cursed in *Der Findling* and *Penthesilea*, as pure in *Kohlhaas*, *Prinz*, and *Krug*.

Since the Fall, says Robert, the plague has reigned (78). Fevers, sickness, wounds, infirmities, all are signs of the presence in the world of 'la Faute.' As long as the world is not cured, life will be propagated through a chain of cataclysms, some, being natural, lie beyond human will, others, historical, are brought on by men in blindness and impotence (79).

For Kleist, Robert maintains, any body that generates another propagates the sin ('la Faute'). For this reason, Kleist places birth at the center of his work. To conceive, to put into the world, is thus to be an accomplice of chaos, suffering, and error (80).

Some, however, manage to escape this inheritance, often because their birth in some way breaks natural laws. The illegitimate child in *Erdbeben*, the pregnant Alcmene and Marquise von O, Käthchen, who is really the daughter of the Emperor, the Bastard Johann in *Schroffenstein*, all of these outcasts from bourgeois or aristocratic society share the same mission, that of interrupting the course of

history (80). Nicolo, in *Der Findling*, differs because he demanded to be made a legal heir, thus recreating the 'inheritance.' The true bastard is filled with a mixture of innocence, unawareness, and mysterious knowledge. Robert sees the Prince as escaping the inheritance because he is initiated to death, that is, in a sense dies and is reborn as the son and disciple of the Elector.

In Part three of the essay, *Les États nocturnes de l'âme*, Robert discusses night and death as aspects of 'la Faute,' and, as well, the significance in Kleist's work of dream and unconscious states. In the latter discussion especially, Robert reflects the clear influence of Freudian and surrealist theory.

'Night,' as a representation of 'la Faute,' is seen as having two aspects. For those 'day people,' those whose being or existence is based on impotent reason and a divided heart – Adam, Kunigunde, Penthesilea – the 'night' is fatal. They will find in it their destruction. The 'night people,' however, seem to find their way around obstacles best when external shadows are darkest (90). It is as though they need 'night' to see clearly. In full light, they act as though they were blind.

Robert sees death as representing in Kleist's work the most perfect method of reconciliation with the world. But, just as the risk of death, if experienced intensely, can replace actual death, so the momentary death of the conscious, whether it occurs in the dream state, or in another unconscious state, can effect the same saving transformation: "En descendant au plus profond de lui-même, l'esprit accède à des régions qui, protégées de la lumière brouillée du jour, sont celles de la transparence et de la légèreté. Le rêveur et le somnambule, qui sont en communication directe avec le rêve de la nature, savent tout ce que l'homme éveillé cherche en vain à savoir" (97).

Reasoning man, 'split in two'[19] thus finds truth only when he is able to forget himself. This explains, in Robert's eyes, the importance and meaning given in Kleist's works to moments of absentness and loss of memory, a meaning opposite to that which Robert says current psychology lends them. Such so-called lapses are not faults or weaknesses, nor is unconsciousness a 'plunge into darkness.' Such movements of the mind, said to be away from reality, constitute, on the contrary, a return to the real (105).

While the absent man can be judged as being very near real knowledge, the somnambulist, who lives in two worlds simultaneously, enjoys a unity and hence a truth beyond even the memory of the conscious man (104). The ability to absent oneself can be given to any of Kleist's characters, Robert finds, depending on the stage of their inner adventure. The most disgraced can be saved if he is

allowed at some moment in the course of his action to pass over to the other side of the mirror (106).

What began in *Schroffenstein*, Robert maintains, as a fleeting moment of this absentness, became in later works the prerequisite to revelation (107). More and more, the contrast between the freedom, the grace, of the somnambulist and the heavy awkwardness of the awakened man came to expose the lie of appearances, to reverse the value judgments which men place on their thoughts and acts. More and more, somnambulism or the loss of consciousness came to represent a liberating experience. As Kleist's works took on greater depth and intensity, they demonstrated with ever increasing certainty the triumph of the unconscious (107).

In the essay's fourth section, *La Double entente*, Robert turns more to Kleist's creative process, and, in particular, to his use of words. Again, in the discussion of the unconscious nature of the creative process, and especially in the stress on Kleist's fundamental distrust of words and the significance of such distrust, the extent of Robert's affinity to surrealist thought can be clearly seen.

The claim, made earlier in the essay, that all Kleistian motifs go back to one and the same idea, does not mean that Kleist's inspiration was subservient to an intellect that ruled firmly over it. Kleist's work achieves the solidity and compactness of a system not as the result of the intellectual assurance of a man able to choose the most effective means of communication, but, Robert maintains, as a result of his constant uncertainty, his feeling of being overwhelmed by more than he could ever express, of living at an emotional pitch beyond the power of the rational mind to organize and shape (114).

Robert insists that Kleist, in writing his dramas, applies neither a previously elaborated concept of the world, nor an esthetic concept based on his own convictions. This alone, Robert adds, is enough to separate him from the German Romantics, for whom theory preceded creation. Then, in a return to an earlier idea, she states that Kleist obeys in his writing the rhythm of a completely personal obsession. Reflection plays a very secondary role in Kleist's creative process (115). When the opposite is true, that is, when reflection precedes creation, as in Kleist's didactic works, the results are, from the intellectual point of view, unbelievably poor (115).[20] Kleist's characters put no distance between desire and accomplishment, between suspicion and vengeance, perception and interpretation of facts. In like manner, Kleist experienced almost simultaneously idea and feeling (115). Robert links this concern with the simultaneity of feeling and expression to Kleist's desire to write for the theatre, a world in which feeling is said to be immediately translated into idea and visible movement.

Turning then to a discussion of language in Kleist, Robert says

that it, more than any other human possession, has been affected by man's loss of original unity. Thus, in Kleist, words are revealed as agents of corruption, as imperfect tools, and language as less a means of effective communication than an instrument to create discord. It is not surprising, says Robert, that human relations, based as they are on words, should thus be seriously impaired.

Agreeing with Brentano's charge that Kleist's dialogue often gives the impression that all the characters are deaf and more than a little stupid, Robert says that such an impression marks one of the greatest originalities of Kleist's dramatic style. Communication, which should be achieved spontaneously and surely, is rendered impossible by the very means of communication, by language itself, the product of reason and intellect (129). This gives to Kleist's most beautiful scenes their inimitable movement as well as their tortuous depth. Characters do not understand one another. All remain prisoners of their deceptive perceptions (121).

But then, Robert asks, how could they escape from such false and deceptive sensations when between the world of guilt and the world of grace, there is, properly speaking, no passage, but only a leap, or rather, an inner revolution which reverses the apparent meaning of things? The impossibility of passing from one world to the other is expressed quite naturally in the inability of the heroes to acquire the least bit of information or understanding of the facts by means of language. "Entre le Moi et le Toi, il n'y a pas de troisième personne qui puisse intervenir et éclairer les intéressés, il n'y a nulle part un *il* possédant sur le Toi et le Moi une connaissance communicable" (132).

Robert does not think that puns or lapses of speech are accidental in Kleist's works. They have, rather, a definite value in unmasking the great sickness (133). This sickness is the same one David spoke of earlier, a basic schizophrenia at every level of existence (134). No one escapes this schism. It is part of the human condition. All of man's efforts on this earth are said to consist in reaching out to grasp that other half of the self, that enemy brother whose intentions remain forever unknown (135).

In Kleist's world drama is seen as arising externally from the fact that individuals, enclosed within the limits of the self, find themselves at different levels of knowledge and perception. It arises internally from the fact that each man carries in himself an unknown, hidden brother towards whom he blindly gropes. The reconciliation with the external world will take place only after this internal division has been ended (135).

In the final section of the essay, *Une Dramaturgie de l'acte manqué*, Robert's discussion points up the apparent absurdity of Kleist's world, absurd, that is, if one tries to understand it in relation to any objective concept of truth or reality. Good and evil, truth and error,

are defined in subjective terms. Actions are "good" or "bad" according to whether they are the actions of the divided or the unified self, the knowing or the existential ego.

Since the Fall, that is, since the first 'acte manqué,' says Robert, every act carries in itself infinite possibilities for misunderstanding, the seeds of its own failure. The chain of cause and effect in which even the most insignificant act finds itself, is inaccessible to human understanding. To attempt to foresee the effects of one act, to want to see through the meaning of events, is not only absurd but dangerous. To do such would be to place oneself at the origin of an incalculable chain of actions, literally provoking catastrophe (136).

No act is good or bad in itself. Everything depends on the state of consciousness of the one who performs the act. Often the most outrageous act is found to restore order to the world, e.g., in *Käthchen* and in *Die Hermannsschlacht.* Perfect and pure, the 'innocents' are not split internally. Their acts, because they stem naturally from their complete harmony with themselves, are pure and faultless (137).

Kleist's drama is found to last just long enough to allow these innocents to reveal their own truth. Thus action in Kleist's works has no value corresponding to a common moral judgment, nor can it be judged on the basis of failure or partial success. All depends on the state of innocence of the doer (138).

In her final judgment, Robert, like David, credits Kleist with having rediscovered the true meaning of tragedy, of having brought tragedy back to its Greek origins (144).

Despite Robert's tendency at times to bog down in oversubtilization, her essay represents an interesting and valuable synthesis of the principal currents in Kleist criticism since the reintroduction of Kleist to the French by surrealist critics in the late thirties. After giving, in effect, the surrealist stamp of approval, Robert also places Kleist firmly in the existentialist camp, or, at least, maintains that Kleist's work makes sense, has a unity, only when regarded as illustrating one of the fundamental tenets of all branches of existentialist thought, namely the subjectivity of truth. Only in this light can the apparent injustice, the apparent absurdity of Kleist's world be understood. And, finally, in her stress on the truly tragic nature of Kleist's world, Robert is in line with critics who, rejecting Ayrault's concept of a Kleist working toward and finally achieving in *Prinz* a reconciliation of basic antinomies, insist that Kleist's work presents us with a true picture of the incurably schizophrenic nature of man and his world.

In a brief article in *La Table ronde,* in an issue devoted to Kierkegaard, Jean-Jacques Kim reaffirms Robert's presentation of Kleist as a truly tragic poet. In his article, a comparison of Kierkegaard

and Kleist, Kim reveals both his acquaintance and his basic agreement with the studies of David and Robert.

Opening his article with a general comparison of the two men – "Kierkegaard et Kleist appartiennent tous deux à cette catégorie d'hommes du XIX^e siècle, dépossédés soudain de la sécurité intérieure du chrétien traditionaliste et du cartésien,"[21] – Kim then places his comparisons on a more personal level. Both men, he maintains, had within them the seeds of despair, both were profoundly melancholy. Both suffered from an indefinable 'mal de vivre,' to which they tried to give a name in order to exorcise it. Both broke with their families and both tried to objectify their basic despair in order to free themselves of it.

Beyond this, Kim also finds a concern in their works with the same theme, that of guilt (82). Kim sees Kierkegaard's *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Tragedy*, part of his *Either-Or*, as the clearest expression of Kleist's own thoughts. It is, actually, a meditation on the theme of 'la faute' and 'le secret.' Kierkegaard maintains that guilt in ancient tragedy is always "guilt that is at the same time not guilt" (83). Tragedy results from the coexistence in the same man of guilt and innocence. All of Kierkegaard can be seen as an attempt to transcend this shattering of his own being between a fundamental sense of guilt and a fundamental sense of innocence. This is, as well, Kim insists, the basis of Kleist's tragedy.

Agreeing with Robert's statement of a coexistence in Kleist of infinite guilt and infinite innocence,[22] Kim sees this same idea translated into Kleist's characters, all of whom, e.g., the Prince, Penthesilea, Käthchen, Kohlhaas, are prisoners of a state of guilt from which they escape only by punishment, pardon, or death. The concept of existence as essentially tragic is shared by the Dane and the Prussian. The difference is that Kleist followed to the end a fundamentally destructive passion and accepted suicide, while Kierkegaard, through the leap of faith into the irrational of the religious life, saved himself. Both remain for Kim, however, the image of the truly tragic poet (83).

With Kleist as with Kierkegaard, one is faced, says Kim, with a man in whom the whole weight of tragic despair rests, for all we know, on real, concrete guilt, on a fact about whose existence or nature there will never be any certainty. The real nature of Kleist's torment is not known. Kim completely rejects, however, the oft repeated notion that it was merely due to frustrated literary ambitions (84).

Kim sees both men as examples of what he terms the Romantic man, all of whom had a secret, all of whom suffered from an unknown anguish. Their hermeticism is their reason for believing in themselves as well as for despairing in themselves. They write then to overcome

this despair (84). Kleist aspired to salvation in order to escape the world and his despair, but a salvation "in this world, i.e., by means of an ethic." Thus, says Kim, Kleist the tragic poet died as a result of too much reliance on himself, while Kierkegaard, by killing the tragic poet inside him, was saved as a Christian. Thus both writers, Kim adds in conclusion, were led to a certain kind of suicide.

The years 1954 and 1955 marked the high point of Kleist's popularity in France. With the production of his three plays, the broadcasting of a fourth, the continued publication of translations of his works, not by obscure Germanists, but by well-known, established writers (e.g., Gracq, Adamov, Paul Morand), with the spate of good reviews and penetrating critical analyses of his life and works in journals and newspapers, again by well-known writers and critics, Kleist's work can without exaggeration be said to have entered into the mainstream of French intellectual thought. Though the flow of critical works slowed after 1955, the reality of Kleist's presence on the French intellectual scene was graphically illustrated by the remarks of Thierry Maulnier in *Revue de Paris* in 1956.

In a discussion of *Chatterton,* Maulnier comments that the real affinity of the hero of Vigny's drama is not with the 'beaux ténébreux' of 1830, but with Kleist, Nerval, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud, and, more generally, with all those who have suffered from an inability to communicate with their fellow man, from a hostile universe, from the futility of life.[23] Later, in discussing the love of Kitty Bell and Chatterton, Maulnier compares it to that of Kleist and Henriette Vogel, to that "impassioned friendship that led Kleist to commit suicide with the woman he had educated not for life but for death" (148).

Despite the questionable nature of the latter comparison, one cannot but be struck by Maulnier's mention of Kleist at all, especially his mention of Kleist in a list that includes such figures as Nerval, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud. It attests, it seems, not only to Kleist's popularity, since Maulnier would presumably not choose Kleist for a comparison if such made sense only to a handful of Germanists, but, much more importantly, it is clear proof, if such still needs to be made, of the rank Kleist's genius had attained in France in the fifties. It is a comment on the times as well as on the change in Kleist's critical fortune in France that in 1956 a well-known critic should use, in connection with one of the prides of French dramatic literature, not only the same works, but the same incident that had served Mme de Staël as a frightening example of what genius was not.

By the late fifties, it is not only possible to speak of Kleist along with the greatest French writers, it is as well possible to treat seriously the idea of Kleistian influence on a major French writer,

on, for example, Jean Giraudoux. René Albérès offers a surprise, however, in his Giraudoux study appearing in 1957, in not treating the often mentioned though usually skirted question of Kleistian influence on *Amphitryon 38*, but in calling attention rather to the probability of the influence of Kleist's *Käthchen* on Giraudoux's *Ondine*.[24]

After stating that Giraudoux read *Käthchen* as part of his preparation for the *agrégation* (129), Albérès, later in his essay, details the elements in *Käthchen* that one may find repeated in *Ondine*, both in regard to similarities to be found in the two heroines as well as in incidents of plot (342). Similarities are pointed out, as well, in certain minor characters, for example, Theobald and Auguste, Kunegunde and Bertha, even vom Strahl and Hans.

Thus, Albérès feels, in any comparative study of the *Ondine* of Giraudoux and that of LaMotte-Fouqué, the possibility of Kleistian 'contamination' must be considered. While remaining faithful to the basic plot of *Undine*, Giraudoux comes much closer in the overall tone of his play to Kleist's *Käthchen* (342).

To conclude his brief argument concerning the probability of Kleistian influence, Albérès mentions Giraudoux's introduction in the third act of *Ondine* of a tribunal scene which, in its harshness, recalls clearly the 'Fehme' in the first act of *Käthchen*. The trial of Ondine, like that of Käthchen, is simply a trial of love, while to the theme of love in *Undine* is added the important question of Undine's attempt to acquire a human soul. In view of this similarity of situation between Käthchen and Ondine, Albérès concludes that "Giraudoux did not adapt LaMotte-Fouqué's story without thinking of Kleist." (342).

Ten years after Anstett's hesitant discussion of the possible influence of Kleist's *Amphitryon* on Giraudoux, Albérès is somewhat more definite in his statement of Kleistian contamination, though to be sure, still with reservations and in regard to a work already known to have a direct German predecessor.

The discussion of Kleist's possible influence on the work of Giraudoux will be picked up and investigated at greater length a few years later by Jacques Voisine, illustrating once again the continued interest shown by the French in Kleist the dramatist. Yet, as we have seen, Kleist first made his way into France as the writer of Novellen. It is interesting then to find J. J. Anstett, the French critic who first dealt at length with the Kleist-Giraudoux problem, returning critical attention, after ten years of almost exclusive interest in Kleist's dramas, to those terse, disturbing prose works. Anstett devotes a major article in *Études germaniques* in 1959 to Kleist's most ambitious Novelle, *Michael Kohlhaas*.[25]

Anstett begins his study with quotations from the first paragraph

of the Novelle in which Kleist refers to the hero, Kohlhaas, at one point as "einer der rechtschaffensten zugleich und entsetzlichsten Menschen seiner Zeit" and finally, at the end of the same paragraph, as a "Räuber und Mörder." Does Kleist mean to imply by these words of condemnation, Anstett asks, that the story he is about to relate demonstrates that a virtue carried to extremes results in tragedy? Is the Novelle meant to be the classic plea for the necessity of compromise and moderation in all things, simply, that is, an illustration of the maxim *in medio stat virtus*? This, Anstett points out, has been the generally accepted interpretation of the Novelle, critics claiming to see in *Kohlhaas*, as well as in *Prinz*, proof that the author of *Penthesilea* no longer ascribed to feeling alone the exclusive right to be man's guide, that he was, in effect, becoming more realistic (151).

Such critics have seen in Kleist, in the last years of his life, a radical rejection of his earlier uncompromising subjectivity in favor of a more sensible realism, a tendency away from Romanticism towards an ethical and psychological classicism in which law and right are no longer matters of individual feeling and the state is not at the mercy of anarchists, even those with legitimate grievances (151).

The figure of Kohlhaas, like that of the Prince, is seen by these same critics as representing in Kleist himself a changing from a completely tragic view of life to a view that admits the necessity as well as the possibility of a reconciliation between the real and the ideal. Anstett places himself squarely in the current of the most recent French Kleist criticism in his rejection of this interpretation, or of any interpretation that would weaken Kleist's essentially tragic concept of existence.

In support of his rejection of the idea of a Kleist finally coming to terms with the world, Anstett first questions whether the value judgments given in the first paragraph can be fairly claimed to represent Kleist's own opinion of the Novelle's hero. Is this not simply said in the guise of objectivity, just as the entire story is claimed to have been drawn from chronicles?

Or perhaps Kleist is simply reporting the opinions of the characters in the story itself. If this is true, and if this is said to represent Kleist's so-called conversion to the real world, should he not make it also apparent in the Novelle that he recognizes the world's capacity to judge fairly and hence is himself willing to adopt the decision of its tribunal? Should not the world be depicted as having the authority to pronounce judgment? Should it not indeed pronounce this judgment truly according to its just norms? (152). An examination of the story does not reveal any of these conditions.

If the world is represented in the story by the common people,

then it can be fairly said that even though they often disapproved of his acts of robbery and murder, they did not consider Kohlhaas a robber and a murderer. Though at times they demand his suppression, they are, once their selfish fears are under control, essentially on his side (152). If not, then how can one explain the pity and lament expressed at his execution? Was this only pity for one condemned? Or was it not, rather, their sorrow at the loss of a defender, a rebel against injustice? If the common people are seen as the final judges, it is apparent that they do not agree with the condemnation implied in the first paragraph.

What then is the judgment of the better educated, the opinion of those more aware of the necessity of law, order, and the state? After excluding those who would benefit from Kohlhaas' condemnation, Anstett turns to the figure of the Elector of Brandenburg. Since he has the death sentence carried out, he presumably approves of it, and yet, immediately after the execution, the Elector declared that the sons of Kohlhaas would be raised among his own pages. Anstett sees this as not simply a gesture of generosity and pity but, rather, as a recognition that the imperial decision lacked true fairness, that it was based on principles of political justice – the good of the state – rather than on any criteria of personal justice. On the latter ground, the Elector's feelings are quite clear. Kohlhaas is exonerated. The horses are returned and fattened. Tronka is punished.

Kohlhaas is condemned to death and executed. But where in the Novelle does Kleist answer the criticism of society clearly implied in the failure of Kohlhaas to gain justice through legal means? If both abstract justice as well as considerations of expediency, i.e., the safety of the state, are responsible for the final ambiguous solution, then surely, Anstett claims, the former comes off much worse than the latter. Tronka's punishment can not be said to be in proportion to his responsibility as the initial cause of the injustice.

The state, in the person of the Elector, is not portrayed in the Novelle as having the right to judge with truth or with charity (154).

Anstett then digresses to answer a possible objection. If Kohlhaas does not object to the solution, why should we? Pointing out first that though Kohlhaas does not object, there is also no statement in the Novelle that he approves of the solution, Anstett explains this apparent acceptance of the death sentence as a very human desire to cut short the final moments before death (154). But more important, he feels, is the fact that once Kohlhaas has seen his right triumph, once he has seen reestablished the kind of justice he wants in this world, there is no longer any reason for him to live. After this moment of glory, why live on in a world where such victories can only be momentary? (154).

Before he dies, however, Kohlhaas recalls the world of possible

injustice in the figure of the Elector of Saxony. This ruler has not been properly punished for his lack of attention to the state of justice in his realm and neither the Emperor nor the Elector of Brandenburg, supposed representatives of justice in this world, is going to punish him. Thus Kohlhaas himself will be the agent of punishment by swallowing the paper prophesying the fate of the Elector's dynasty, an act committed in part out of a sense of vengeance, but, above all, as the affirmation of a justice the world can only incompletely render. "C'est-à-dire que Michael Kohlhaas ne donne pas sa pleine adhésion à la sentence du monde et à son union des contraires et, du même coup, il est suggéré là qu'il ne faut pas trop vite se ranger aux sentences du monde puisque la justice en est défectueuse" (154).

As for the third group representing the world, namely Lisbeth, Luther, and the gypsy Elizabeth, a world superior to wordly considerations, a world of the absolute, a world ready to judge, does this world appear to disapprove of Kohlhaas?

Luther, Anstett points out, is at first hostile to Kohlhaas, but later, better informed of the situation, agrees to secure for Kohlhaas a safe conduct pass to Dresden to present his claims. Luther does at first refuse to give him confession and absolution, but only on the grounds that such is impossible until Kohlhaas forgives his enemies. Later Luther does send a minister into Kohlhaas' cell so that he is able to take communion. At the same time, he sends a letter to Kohlhaas, the contents of which are not revealed, presumably explaining his change of mind. Though other reasons may account for this change, Anstett sees in it understanding and indulgence on the one hand and, on the other, possible regret for his first hasty condemnation. Kohlhaas is not finally for Luther, says Anstett, a Kongo Hoango, nor does his very presence indicate pestilence and perdition as it did at the beginning of the Novelle (155).

Much the same may be said for Lisbeth who on her death bed begs Kohlhaas to forgive his enemies but later, as the gypsy Elizabeth, admits that in many respects Kohlhaas is right. She even warns him of the Elector's final attempt to get the prophesy from him, thus leading Kohlhaas to swallow the paper before he dies. Anstett sees in this final act Kohlhaas' preference of justice to life. By this action "he rectifies the imperfect justice of this world with the approval of the heavenly envoy" (155). Would this approbation have been given, Anstett asks, to a bandit and a murderer?

Thus, Anstett maintains, we must revise our judgment of the first paragraph as well as of the entire Novelle. Kleist did not intend the story to be a plea for the necessity of moderation in life. The first paragraph is seen as simply stating a fact, "The world has no place for virtue since not even the best of worlds, that of the Elector of Brandenburg, can attain true virtue." The opposition so often seen

in Kleist's work between the ideal and the real is not resolved in *Michael Kohlhaas*. Political events, as well as the theories of Adam Müller may have pushed Kleist in his last works to seek this reconciliation of opposites, but their tragic separation remains.

It is tragic, Anstett concludes, that the world so misses the irony of the first paragraph that it is able to see in it a defense of the rightness of its own judgments and norms. It is tragic that a man is led in this world to commit injustice because of his uncompromising love of justice. And, finally, it is tragic that Kleist, in his attempt to lessen to some degree the overwhelming pessimism of the Novelle's end, could hit upon nothing more optimistic than the rather pathetic vision of the hero's 'happy, healthy descendants' in a future Brandenburg.

Such a 'happy' final note is not, however, in Anstett's view, very convincing. Its vision of a future paradise, of a future time of harmony is artificial and tacked on. Kleist may have wanted to believe this but, Anstett reminds, this is in itself proof that he did not believe it. The very off-handedness of the ending is seen as reflecting with disturbing irony the tragic note struck in the very opening paragraph (156).

Anstett's essay on *Kohlhaas,* returning critical attention again to Kleist's prose works, was followed some months later by the publication in *Cahiers des saisons* of an essay by Thomas Mann written originally for the American edition of Kleist's Novellen.[26] The essay, combining a sketch of the principal events of Kleist's life with critical comments on his works as a whole and on each of the Novellen in particular, amounts to ecstatic, almost unreserved praise for the artist and for his works. The tone of praise is set in the first paragraph and does not diminish the length of the essay. Kleist is termed one of the greatest and boldest writers in German literature, an incomparable dramatist, an incomparable story-teller. Absolutely unique, escaping all tradition, all order, radical to the point of madness and hysteria in his choice of unusual subject matter, Kleist was a profoundly unhappy artist, an artist eventually destroyed by the impossible demands he imposed on himself (358).

Mann stresses throughout the essay the image of Kleist as a Dionysian, as a tortured, anguished artist, and his works as something akin to explosions of energy. "Le paroxysme – voilà toujours à quoi vise Kleist, ou plutôt au super-paroxysme" (368). Admitting the great place given in Kleist's works to the abnormal and the morbid, Mann nevertheless insists that the artist was not sick, that such seeming abnormality or morbidity is to be regarded in Kleist's work rather as "un paroxysme de la puissance vitale, un transport poétique jusqu'aux sphères supérieures" (364). In this respect, he points to the enviable vitality of an artist who was able

to produce, on the heels of the incredible *Penthesilea* in 1808, two plays and four Novellen in the space of one year. To further combat the notion of Kleist's life as a down-going into despair and death, Mann reminds his readers that Kleist wrote his greatest drama, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, just one year before his suicide.

Though he has only praise for all the Novellen, stressing the incomparable beauty and originality of their style, Mann singles out for special consideration and praise *Kohlhaas* and – no doubt a surprise to French critics – *Der Findling*, a Novelle which Mann ranks second among all of Kleist's prose works. He expresses seldom heard praise as well for *Die heilige Cäcilie* and *Der Zweikampf*. Of no surprise to French readers, however, is the large space given in the essay to Goethe's complete lack of sympathy for Kleist and for his work.

In general, coming from a writer of the stature of Thomas Mann, stressing as it does the timeliness, the Dionysian, anguished aspect of Kleist's prose works, the essay could only further enhance Kleist's reputation among the French, adding to his already solid renown as a great dramatist, the equally valued reputation of an incomparable prose stylist, the creator of tense, exciting, disturbing tales.

More than a century after Kleist's first appearance in France, the only one of his major works yet in any sense to be discovered remained his version of the Amphitryon legend. As has been seen, early critics dismissed the play as a distorted adaptation of the Molière comedy. Not until Ayrault's study in 1934 did the work begin to come into its own among French critics. Since that time it has received attention for the most part only within the context of its relationship to Giraudoux's *Amphitryon 38*, as, for example, in the 1948 study of J. J. Anstett previously examined (see pages 132ff). The frequency with which the drama is brought up in this same context, however, has increased sharply in the last ten years. Completely unable to appreciate the play, as it were, by way of Molière, perhaps the French will eventually come to realize the qualities of this disturbing, enigmatic tragedy by way of Giraudoux.

Pierre-Henri Simon, in his study of the theater published in 1959, reopens the Kleist-Giraudoux problem, calling attention once again, in his discussion of Giraudoux's *Amphitryon 38*, to the displacement of the play's center of interest from the figure of Amphitryon to that of Alcmene.[27] The model for this, he admits, can be found in Kleist's *Amphitryon*, which, Simon maintains, Giraudoux surely had read (78).

In the brief discussion of the Kleist play that follows, Simon describes Alcmene's great and demanding love as being directed less toward the real Amphitryon than toward an imagined, ideal Amphitryon. The Jupiter encounter is thus a decisive and tragic

experience for her. Once having experienced the absolute of love she will never be able to forget her adventure (78).

Giraudoux, Simon concludes, retained none of this Alcmene, that is, an Alcmene in search of the absolute, but he did retain the concept of an *Amphitryon* in which, beneath the surface comedy of adultery, there is revealed, if not a tragic world, then at least a world of deeper emotions. This change is effected in Giraudoux as in Kleist by making Alcmene the principal character (78).

Though no major critical studies of Kleist appeared in the following year, 1960, Kleist's works continued to come before the French public through several media. *La Cruche cassée,* presumably in the Adamov translation, formed a part of the repertory of the Centre dramatique de l'Est (Strasbourg) under the direction of Hubert Grignoux during the 1959-1960 season. An adaptation of *La Marquise d'O,* by Claude Barma, was given a television performance early in 1960. In June, 1960, Bernard Jenny directed the first French performance of *La Petite Catherine de Heilbronn* as part of the Concours des Jeunes Compagnies at the Théâtre de l'Alliance française.

Guy Dumur, in his review of the French *Käthchen,* takes the director and the company rather hard to task for the excess of ambition as well as the paucity of talent displayed in the production of what he terms this admirable Kleist drama.[28] He describes *Käthchen* as one of the most fantastic products of German Romanticism ever to come to life. It is, he mentions, just as Albérès had suggested somewhat earlier, the source of many of the scenes of Giraudoux's *Ondine,* a more direct source than the usually mentioned *Undine* of LaMotte-Fouqué.

Dumur then describes the difficult history of the Kleist play, maintaining that it demands both skill and daring in acting, staging, and directing. Of first importance, however, and here the production he describes seemed most lacking, the play needs to be translated by a poet. In this respect, Dumur expresses regret that Julien Gracq limited himself to the translation of Kleist's *Penthesilea.* Dumur's last objection is to the use of Wagner's music in the play. Despite the great composer's known liking of Kleist's dramas, Dumur judges the idea to have been completely ill-conceived (159).

The passing reference made by Dumur to Giraudoux's debt to Kleist in *Ondine,* along with Simon's earlier brief treatment of the relationship between *Amphitryon 38* and its Kleist predecessor, lead naturally to the study of Jacques Voisine, "Trois Amphitryons modernes," appearing in *Archives des lettres modernes* some months later.[29]

Voisine begins his study with the remark that Giraudoux's great interest in Germany and its literature has led critics to examine his

debt to Kleist's *Amphitryon*. Such an examination is natural, Voisine maintains, since it is obviously the Kleist play that renewed the old Amphitryon theme by bringing it back to its Greek origins, by giving, as it were, an "Alcmene" after so many "Amphitryons" (2).

In view of the obvious differences in the two plays, however, to speak of influence would be paradoxical. The "discreet" tragedy, the veiled irony of the Giraudoux play is, Voisine judges, something quite different from the wild anguish, the confused mysticism of the Kleist drama (2).

Considering these differences, then, it is not surprising, Voisine states, that once critics have stated the similar reorienting of the drama around Alcmene, with the resultant internalizing of the action, they then center their discussion on the many dissimilarities between the two plays. Such a procedure, Voisine claims, is, at best, insufficient, for it does not mention in which texts Giraudoux read Kleist's *Amphitryon*, nor, in view of the fact that a French reader unable to understand the German original could not in this manner appreciate Kleist's original treatment of the theme compared to Molière, does it do justice to the Kleist play (3).

Voisine's fifty-one page study is an attempt to correct both faults. First he will present, in French, the 'characteristic' scenes from Kleist's *Amphitryon*, and then he will show that though Giraudoux read the Kleist play in the original version, he drew the ideas for his "thirty-eighth" version of the legend principally from a reworking of the Kleist play by a minor, turn-of-the-century German dramatist, Wilhelm Henzen.

Stating a need for a translation of Kleist's *Amphitryon*, Voisine refers to the exclusion of this play from I. Rouge's selected translations appearing in 1922 and quotes the latter's severe judgment of the play (see above, pages 85-89), then adding, "more eclectic in matters of taste, the French reader of 1961 might reduce (though this is not certain) the severity of a judgment made shortly after World War I in regard to one of the leading defenders of Prussian nationalism" (4). Voisine's explanation of Rouge's rejection of the Kleist play on nationalistic grounds is on very weak ground, particularly in view of Rouge's clear efforts to counteract attempts to annex Kleist into the anti-French, Prussian camp.

Voisine maintains that Kleist began *Amphitryon* with the idea of a simple translation of the Molière comedy, but that, by additions, he significantly reduced its comic proportions and ended up finally almost completely eliminating the Molière stamp (4). The only scenes said to be effectively translated are those between Mercure and Sosie.

Kleist was first attracted to the play, Voisine states, by the element of the double character in its plot, a theme dear to the

German Romantics, and one exploited by Kleist in several of his Novellen. The use of the double character is said to be reinforced in *Amphitryon* by the painful awareness of an inner dualism in man himself, that between the senses and the spirit. This drama, begun as an adaptation of the Molière comedy, soon took on all the aspects of tragedy as the author began to put into it his own personal anguish, his obsession with death, his mystical concept of honor and love, a religious syncretism derivative of contemporary German science, and, finally, a philosophy of history permeated with Prussian nationalism (5).

In view of earlier criticism that Kleist had distorted the Greek original, it is interesting to note Voisine's praise of Kleist for having returned the play to its Greek origins, for having replaced the conventional Greeks of the French Classic theater with an authentic Greek heroine who is at the same time the incarnation of the virtues of the German wife (6).

Leaning heavily on earlier French critics of *Amphitryon*, however, Voisine sees the tragedy of the final scene in an Alcmene haunted from now on with a yearning for the divine (6), rather than in an Alcmene shattered by the realization that her innermost feeling, her faith in the "I that is we" has been deceived, has been proven unreliable and unreal.

Voisine then follows his introductory remarks with translations of Act II, Scenes 4, 5, and 6 and translations of the last two scenes of Act III, to my knowledge, the first such translations from *Amphitryon* to appear in French.

Voisine reopens his discussion of the play with the statement that the essence of Kleist's reinterpretation of the Amphitryon legend lies in his having Alcmene take seriously the distinction between lover and husband. A question formerly treated with knowing winks to the audience becomes in the Kleist drama a mystical debate charged with metaphysical anguish. A comedy of adultery becomes, says Voisine, an indictment of the split between the spirit and the senses, between the human and the divine – a split revealed not only in the heart and mind of the heroine but in the very structure of the play, in the alternations between the erotic theosophy of Jupiter and the gourmandise of Sosias (40).

Though comedy is certainly not absent in the scenes between Alcmene and Jupiter, the overwhelming mood of the drama is tragic, a mood that at times colors the role of Sosias, that permeates the role of Amphitryon – driven in the end to complete renunciation and to the pathetic admission that Jupiter is for his wife the "real" Amphitryon (40).

The tragedy of Alcmene proceeds from the same all too human

error, that of accepting the evidence of the senses over the certainty of inner feeling (41).

Voisine points to the scene involving the initials (II, IV) as especially revealing in this respect.

Amphitryon, too, instead of having faith in the love of his wife, gives in to physical evidence. The teachings of contemporary German idealism are here applied poetically, says Voisine, to the single supreme being, God, and to the single reality, love. One must adore directly from the depths of the heart and not according to sensory impressions. The victory of Alcmene promised by Jupiter at the end of Act Two, Scene Five, is a mocking victory. Voisine sees its tragic irony as reminiscent of the Greeks, and, as well, as prefiguring the ambiguous ending of *Amphitryon 38* (41).

Voisine points to the tragedy of Jupiter as well, a Jupiter who wants to be loved for himself. Here Kleist has depicted the loneliness of grandeur, a dissatisfaction which, transposed to the religious level, returns us to the central debate on idealism, now expressed as the opposition between idolatry and the most deeply felt worship (41).

This seems, says Voisine, about as far as possible from the Giraudoux play in which men are proclaimed to be moral victors over the gods whom they have no desire to join on Olympus, a play in which happy illusions are shown to be preferable to an inhuman reality.

Giraudoux's debt to Kleist is both complex and subtle. By bringing the dilemma into the soul of the heroine, Giraudoux, like Kleist, confers on the action a tragic intensity and dignity. In Giraudoux, as in Kleist, it is Alcmene who is called upon at the end to distinguish between the two Amphitryons. Voisine sees these similarities, however, as the exploiting of suggestions in the Kleist play rather than as borrowings. Giraudoux's ending, in which Alcmene asks Jupiter to let her remain ignorant of the truth and keep her illusions, may have been suggested by the fruitless prayer of Kleist's heroine (III, II) "Lass ewig in dem Irrtum mich" (42). Voisine goes on to point out other passages in the Giraudoux play that take on the character of a real parody of passages in the Kleist drama. He does not, however, go further into the subtleties and complexities of Giraudoux's debt to Kleist.

Voisine brings his study to a close with a comparison of the Giraudoux play to a reworking of the Kleist play by the German dramatist, Wilhelm Henzen (44). This adaptation is claimed by Voisine to have very likely been Giraudoux's first contact with the Kleist play. Though it purported simply to be a reworking of Kleist's *Amphitryon*, the Henzen version was an almost complete altering of the original, such as to make the drama represent the victory of conjugal love over the disruptive power of the gods. As such, Voisine considers it to be a possible strong influence on Giraudoux's

treatment of the legend. As a last influence, Voisine states that it is probably from the count of Amphitryon plays listed in Henzen's preface that Giraudoux settled on the number thirty-eight for his own version (51). Thus, Voisine feels, in any study of possible Kleistian influence on Giraudoux, the critic must take into account both the original Kleist drama as well as the adaptation of Henzen.

Voisine's essay, appearing in 1961, exactly a century and a half after Kleist's death, and dealing with the same play that brought Kleist his first critical mention in France in 1807, marks, at least for this study, the end of the third stage of Kleist's reception in France. During the some twenty-five years of this last stage, the position of Kleist's work changed from that of simply subject matter for academic research and debate to that of playing an active role in French intellectual life, in particular, in efforts to revitalize post-war French theater.

Within the broad currents of surrealist and existentialist thought, the dramas, Novellen, and essays of Kleist have achieved full recognition at every level of French intellectual activity. If Ayrault's thesis in 1934 marked, in a sense, the transplanting of Kleist across the Rhine, the quarter century since has witnessed his taking solid root.

And yet, solid as the status of Kleist is in France a century and a half after his death, is this no more than an interesting example of how yet another German writer finally succeeded in crossing the infrangible Rhine? Was Kleist's overwhelmingly favorable reception merely part of a post-war fad, literary 'snobisme,' the adoption by a côterie, the result largely of the brilliant use of his dramatic talents by a popular and imaginative director? The contemporary playwright, or rather, author of 'anti-pièces,' Eugène Ionesco, gives at least a possible answer to these questions in his controversial, hyperbolic article appearing in *Nouvelle revue française* in February, 1958.

In the article, which expresses in what can only be called outrageous fashion his complete dissatisfaction with modern theater, Ionesco states flatly that with the exception of Shakespeare, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and certain works of Kleist and Büchner, he finds himself unable to enjoy reading plays anymore.[30] The authors excepted are those whose plays possess what Ionesco terms extraordinary literary qualities.

After a one-by-one rejection in his usual telegraphic style of nearly all those authors generally considered to be the dramatic geniuses of France and the world, he states, during the course of his rejection of Molière, his own criterion. In it can be seen the basic idea found again and again in Kleist criticism of the fifties. Molière's works are, Ionesco maintains, dramatic but never tragic, "parfois douloureux, certes, dramatiques même, jamais tragiques; car pouvant

être résolus. On ne peut trouver de solution à l'insoutenable, et seul ce qui est insoutenable est vraiment théâtral." (252).

In the remarks that follow, in which he states what kind of theatre he wants, Ionesco seems almost to be paraphrasing the body of commentary written about Kleist in the previous twenty years. "Humour, oui, mais avec les moyens du burlesque. Un comique dur, sans finesse, excessif. Pas de comédies dramatiques, non plus. Mais revenir à l'insoutenable. Pousser tout au paroxysme, là où sont les sources du tragique. Faire un théâtre de violence: violemment comique, violemment dramatique. Éviter la psychologie ou plutôt lui donner une dimension métaphysique. Le théâtre est dans l'exagération extrême des sentiments, exagération qui disloque le réel. Dislocation aussi, désarticulation du langage" (259).

Ionesco concludes with a statement that we and the modern theatre need a real shock to get us out of the ordinary, the habitual, out of the mental torpor that hides from us what he terms the strangeness of the real. Without a completely new and purified "becoming aware" of existential reality there can be no theater. There can be no art. Ionesco calls for a complete "dislocation" of the real, a dislocation which must precede any attempt at reintegration (270). To play a significant role in this necessary 'dislocation,' Ionesco calls for a theatre in the tradition of Aeschylus, Calderon, Shakespeare, Chekhov, and Kleist.

Ionesco's call for a new theater includes the works of Kleist. Mme de Staël, in a similar call made more than a century earlier, had passed over these same works. Ionesco calls for a return 'au paroxysme, à l'insoutenable,' Mme de Staël had called for a return 'à l'enthousiasme,' the precious adjunct of reason. It is perhaps in the juxtaposition of these expressions 'enthousiasme-raison,' and 'paroxysme-l'insoutenable,' that the clearest clue can be found to the reception given Kleist's work in France during this third stage and, as well, a suggestion as to the possible role his works will play for a later generation of French readers.

As for the years since 1955, however, the lessened flow of critical studies indicates that a slackening period in the growth of interest in Kleist's work has set in. Taking a cue, however, from the history of criticism, and especially recalling Ayrault's survey which ended in 1931, a year that marked, he noted, 'un temps d'arrêt,' it is not unsafe, I think, to predict even without Ionesco, a fourth stage to come. Just as the period in the thirties, on the surface a 'temps d'arrêt,' turned out actually do be the birth years of a greater and radically new surge of interest in Kleist, so the late fifties may reveal to a future critic the seminal years of yet another stage in his continued reception in France.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Vilar production in 1951 of Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* was hailed by many French critics as the discovery both of a literary masterpiece and of a dramatic genius heretofore unknown in France. True as it may be that the enormous critical and popular success of the Vilar production brought to Kleist and to his works a renown never before enjoyed by them in France, it cannot be maintained that this was the discovery of a talent unknown in France, or even, in any real sense, a discovery at all, if by this term is meant the 'chance coming upon' of a talent for some reason previously overlooked by an indifferent world of critics and readers.

The rather spectacular entry of Kleist onto the French scene in the fifties rested on, was the logical climax of, nearly a century of solid critical comment and controversy, nearly a century of a slow growth of interest in this enigmatic and disturbing genius, as much of whose mystery lay ultimately in events that took place in France as in his own Germany. Yet the story of Kleist's reception in France goes back even further then this last near-century of uninterrupted growth of interest, back even to Kleist's own era, when attitudes shaped by his disastrous end determined not only his fate in France before 1850, but formed, as well, the framework within which his works would be viewed until the present day.

Thus, in the study of the changing attitudes toward Kleist's work in France, one notes first the broad stream of interest within which all generations of Kleist critics are, to a degree, united, and, secondly, within this broad stream, definite currents, critical currents which make up what have been termed, for the purposes of analysis, stages in Kleist's reception by the French.

As to the nature of the broad stream of interest in Kleist, there can be no dispute that it centers, even until the present time, on the personality, on the personal fate of the author himself. Despite what different critical generations will find in his work, they come, sooner or later, to reveal their fascination with Kleist, the man, with Kleist, the enigma, a fascination defined largely in terms of the spectacular events that attended his violent death.

Though almost always, in the last analysis, an impediment to

the proper appreciation of the works themselves, such an interest in the personality of Kleist has had different effects on the reception of his works. Throughout the nineteenth century, this effect was generally negative, the result being, among unfavorable critics, to explain their rejection of Kleist's work in terms of their rejection of the man himself. Here the supposed condemnation of Kleist by Goethe played its greatest role. Among favorable critics, the result was to explain away what seemed to them to be obvious faults in the works in terms of the supposed sickness of the author, then pointing out that these works could be appreciated in spite of their being the product of an abnormal mind.

With the advent of psychoanalytic criticism at the turn of the century, Kleist's personality became in a sense the bait for a study of the works themselves. And finally, when sickness came to be regarded, later in the twentieth century, as an adjunct of art, rather than as inimical to it, Kleist's supposed sickness, in so far as it found expression in his art, became the basis of his real significance.

Thus the first glimpse which the French had of Kleist, following the news of the double suicide, formed to a large extent the basis of the unity of critical approach to his works that has pertained through more than a century and a half of discussion and debate. Within this qualified unity, however, there have been definite stages, fairly well defined periods in which the body of Kleist criticism can be seen to follow a given pattern of approach. Such patterns are not, of course, independent of larger currents of thought that have their origin in the age itself. It is a commonplace to point out that each generation finds in a great author what it wants to find. The stages in the reception of Kleist's work could not then be expected to follow any radically different development. These stages have, as we have seen, been three in number.

The years 1807 to 1869 mark the first stage of Kleist's reception, a stage dominated above all else by the adverse effect on critical opinion of his spectacular suicide and, secondly, by the curious manner in which Kleist's work had to be treated by those critics associated with the presumably pro-German Romantic movement. In this latter respect, the importance of Mme de Staël cannot be overestimated. Her rejection of Kleist, not, as is usually claimed, her 'overlooking' of Kleist and his works, was one of the great factors in retarding the reception of Kleist in France. It was, after all, her *De l'Allemagne*, from which Kleist was excluded, that formed, for a long time to come, French opinion on contemporary German literature.

Yet this is not to say that she was not, in a sense, justified in her rejection of Kleist, or at least in her refusal to put him in her survey of German literature. Trying as she was to encourage a new kind

of literature in France, she was obliged to use only relatively safe models. Kleist's suicide, as well as his works, could serve as powerful weapons in the hands of those who claimed that her much-touted espousal of 'enthousiasme' in life and in literature would result in license, madness, and worse.

Even later Romantic critics who praised what they felt to be Kleist's Romanticism were hard put not to express their revulsion at his violent realism, revealing the extent to which French Romanticism, at least in comparison to the German variety, still retained its eighteenth-century heritage of rationalism. The much-made-of condemnation by Goethe served for the most part to reinforce inevitable aversions. The first hesitant stage of Kleist's reception, then, passed in the shadow of his violent end. The limited acceptance of his works came about for the most part only on the basis of their affinity to French Romanticism.

The second stage of Kleist's reception, from 1870 to 1935, though far more complicated than the first, and itself divisible into stages, shows nevertheless a unity in its essentially rationalistic approach to Kleist and to his works. It began, following Taine, by rejecting Kleist as a Romantic, and continued throughout, especially in its earlier stages, to be severest on those works which betrayed what it considered to be formlessness, lack of balance and restraint, and above all, any concern with the supernatural. Kleist criticism is in this period almost totally derivative of earlier German criticism and in the hands of minor Germanists. Only *Kohlhaas* and *Krug* met initially with any favor, both being praised for their admirable realism.

This critical period reached its culmination in Bonafous' thesis in 1894, in which Kleist's *Prinz* is interpreted as the curing of a Romantic. Throughout the period, critics, tempted by Kleist's realism, are nevertheless repulsed by his Romanticism, the exact reverse of the situation in the thirties. Like the Romantics, however, the realists too are disturbed by Kleist's violence and the stress in his works on the abnormal.

The period from the turn of the century until after World War I is marked by a radical shift away from Kleist's works toward an examination of the author himself, though, in general, condemnation of his Romantic traits and praise of his realism continued. The general popularity of psychoanalytic criticism, as well as the repercussions of the battle among German critics in regard to Kleist's normality, encouraged French critics to attempt to draw from Kleist's life the elements needed to explain his work. As in Germany, *Penthesilea* now receives attention and praise. In this period, as well, can be noted the increased appearance of Kleist criticism in more popular journals and treatment by literary critics without, as well as within, the academic world.

Following the war, and again reflecting a similar movement among German critics, there is a trend, as illustrated in the works of Andler and Rouge, to stress the positive elements in Kleist's works, an attempt to reject earlier efforts to build Kleist's suicide into an expression of his philosophy of life, and to stress instead the concept of Kleist as a 'Yea-sayer.'

The second stage of Kleist's reception – the rationalistic – reaches its culmination in the early thirties in the work of Rouge and in the brilliant and penetrating study of Ayrault. It marks the solid acceptance of Kleist as one of Germany's greatest literary geniuses. It marks, as well, especially in the works of Ayrault and Rouge, the growing independence of French Kleist criticism from movements across the Rhine. Though solidly acquainted with critical opinion in Germany, both writers feel free to depart sharply from it. For both critics, Kleist's work represents in its totality, not only a clear affirmation of life, but proof that the opposing forces of mind and heart can be reconciled. Neither denies the anguish present in Kleist's works but both see this anguish as possible of resolution.

It is principally in the rejection of this idea of the possibility of reconciliation in life, of the resolution of the schizophrenia at the heart of man and the universe, that critics of the third stage of Kleist's reception differ from those of the second. Strongly influenced by surrealist and existentialist thought, convinced of the essentially tragic nature of the human condition, critics of the third stage will reinterpret Kleist, finding in him and in his work a meaningful representation of existence as they feel it to be.

Though certainly recognizing its debt to Fricke and his followers, French Kleist criticism will continue to grow in independence in this period, an independence that will finally be realized, in so far as such is possible in the modern world, when, in the thirties and forties, German Kleist criticism turns more and more to attempts to show Kleist's political actuality.

Beginning with the interest of surrealist-affiliated writers in German Romanticism, a continuation of the same interest evinced earlier by the symbolists, critics such as Albert Béguin and Jean Cassou, though aware of Kleist's dissimilarities with the Romantics, will be drawn to Kleist by his use of dream states, his concern with the subconscious, and, in general, his revolt against the inhibiting effect of man's reasoning faculties.

Add to this, though not in any sense as an unrelated event, the coming to fore of a whole new literary movement, the literature of anguish as illustrated by the novels of Kafka and influenced by the philosophy derivative of Kierkegaard, the literary movement called existentialist, which saw in Kleist and in his anguished heroes the representation of isolated man, relying on self-created values, con-

demned to move about in an absurd universe, and the critical attitude toward Kleist in this third stage of his reception in France, the basis of his enormous critical success, is firmly set.

By 1951, the French stage was clearly ready for Kleist. It is to the credit of Vilar that he recognized this. The discovery that resulted may have been a surprise, but to anyone aware of the developments in Kleist criticism of the previous twenty years, a very well prepared surprise.

Yet the discovery of Kleist's theatre by the French may be seen as part of a greater discovery, the discovery Ionesco speaks of in his polemical article, the discovery of Adamov, of Vilar, and of Planchon, namely the need for the revitalization of French theatre, for a new concept that can, in Planchon's and Vilar's terms, bring the theatre back to the people, in Ionesco's and Adamov's terms, bring it back to theatre. One cannot forget in this respect the judgment of Gabriel Marcel, who saw Kleist's *Prinz* as especially important "dans la conjoncture théâtrale présente."[1]

In a recent article in *Les Lettres nouvelles*, Alain Rais comments that the ten-year period from Vilar's first Avignon festival in 1947 to the founding of the Théâtre de la Cité at Lyon-Villeurbaine by Roger Planchon, marks the evolution of a new event, "la rencontre du théâtre et de son public."[2] Overpriced seats and an uninteresting dated repertoire had driven the public, especially the working classes, from the theatres. Planchon, in Lyon, and Vilar, with the productions of the T.N.P., set out to reverse this trend. In the efforts of both men, the works of Kleist played and continue to play an important role.

Two of the foremost *avant-garde* playwrights in France, two of the severest critics of the French theatre, Eugène Ionesco and Arthur Adamov, recognize in Kleist their precursor.[3] If it is true, as Ionesco maintains, that "seul ce qui est insoutenable est vraiment théâtral," and if modern theatre has truly lost its sense of the tragic, a sense contemporary Kleist critics unanimously find with such agonizing clarity in Kleist's drama, then the works of this German author have yet to play their most important role in France. With this in mind, the fourth stage of Kleist's reception may well be said to have begun in the late fifties.

APPENDIX

French Translations of Heinrich von Kleist's Works

1829 *La Nonne de San Iago.* Tr. by Loève-Veimars in *Revue de Paris,* VIII (1829), 57-69.

1830 *Michel Kohlhaas, le marchand de chevaux, et autres contes d'Henri de Kleist.* Tr. by A. I. and J. Cherbuliez. Paris: Cherbuliez, 1830. 3 vols. Republished as *Contes de Henri de Kleist.* Paris: Cherbuliez, 1832.

1833 *La Paix du cœur.* Tr. by X. Marmier in *Nouvelle revue germanique,* XIV (1833), 39. Republished by Marmier in *Lettres sur l'Islande et poésies.* Paris: Dellaye, 1844.

1843 *La Paix d'en haut.* Tr. by F. Delacroix in *Fleurs d'Outre-Rhin, chants, ballades et légendes.* Paris: Charpentier et Saint-Jorre, 1843.

1862 *La Paix d'en haut.* Tr. by Abbé Fayet in *Les Beautés de la poésie ancienne et moderne.* Moulins: M. Place, 1862.

1880 *Michael Kohlhaas.* Tr. by A. Dietrich. Paris: Bibliothèque du Messager de Vienne, 1880.

1884 *La Cruche cassée, Comédie en un acte.* Tr. by Alfred de Lostalot. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1884.

1887 *Michel Kohlhaas.* Tr. by L. Koch. Paris: Hachette, 1887.

1888 *Michel Kohlhaas.* Tr. by I. Beffeyte and J. Peyrègne. Paris: Delalain frères, 1888.
Michael Kohlhaas. Tr. by Ida Becker. Paris: Hachette, 1888.

1894 *L'Enfant trouvé.* Tr. by Catulle Mendès in *Le Journal* (Paris), February 7, 1894.

1904 *La Cruche cassée.* Tr. by J. Gravier and H. Vernot in *La Nouvelle revue,* XXVII (March-April, 1904), 145-165.

1905 *La Petite Catherine de Heilbronn, ou l'épreuve du feu.* Tr. by René Jaudon. Paris: H. Jouve, 1905.

1911 *La Cruche cassée.* Tr. by R. Bastian in *Trois Comédies allemandes.* Paris: Flammarion, 1911.

1920 *Le Prince Frédéric de Hombourg.* Tr. by René Jaudon. Paris: H. Jouve, 1920.

1930 *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg.* Tr. by F. Fourrier. Paris: Masson, 1930.
Le Prince de Hombourg. Tr. by André Robert. Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1930. Republished 1951.

1931 *La Bataille d'Arminius.* Tr. by André Robert. Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1931.

1932 *Histoire de Michel Kohlhaas.* Adaptation by Lucien Roth. Saumur: L'École émancipée, 1932.

1933 *Le Prince de Hombourg.* Tr. by Georges Burghard. Paris: A. Hatier, 1933. Republished in 1940.

1936 *L'Élaboration de la pensée par le discours.* Tr. by Jacques Decour in *Mesures,* II (July 15, 1936), 165-174.

1937 *Essai sur les marionnettes.* Tr. by Flora Klee-Polyi and F. Marc. Paris: G.L.M., 1937. Republished in 1947.

1938 *Penthésilée.* Tr. by Roger Ayrault. Paris: F. Aubier, 1938.

1942 *Michel Kohlhaas, d'après une ancienne chronique.* Tr. by G. LaFlize. Paris: F. Aubier, 1942.

1943 *La Cruche cassée.* Tr. by Roger Ayrault. Paris: Aubier, 1943.
Le Marchand de chevaux, Michael Kohlhaas. [Tr. not named.] Paris: Hachette, 1943.
La Marquise d'O, suivie de six nouvelles. Tr. by G. LaFlize and M. L. Laurreau. Paris: F. Aubier, 1943.

1950 *Michael Kohlhaas.* Tr. by Laurence Lentin. Paris: Les éditeurs français réunis, 1950.
Le Prince de Hombourg. Stage version by Jean Curtis. ("Collection du Répertoire du T.N.P.") Paris: L'Arche, 1950. Reprinted in *Femina théâtre, Supplément du Nouveau Femina,* Paris, [no. vol.] (November, 1955). Republished in ("Répertoire pour un théâtre populaire") Paris: L'Arche, 1961.

1954 *Le Prince de Hombourg.* Tr. by André Weber in *Bibliothèque mondiale,* Paris, No. 26 (February 15, 1954), 17-96.
Penthésilée. Tr. by Julien Gracq. Paris: Corti, 1954. Reprinted in *Paris-théâtre,* No. 100 (September, 1955).
La Cruche cassée. Tr. by Arthur Adamov in *Théâtre populaire,* Paris, [no. vol.] (March-April, 1954).

1956 *Théâtre de Kleist.* Tr. by S. Geissler [*Prinz, Krug, Penthesilea*] and Paul Morand [*Käthchen*]. Paris: De Noël, 1956.

1957 *Robert Guiscard, duc des Normands.* Tr. by R. Valançay in *La Revue théâtrale,* Paris, No. 35 (1957) 19-35.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

[1] For details of Kleist's stay in Paris see Paul Hoffman, *Kleist in Paris* (Berlin, 1924).
[2] Heinrich von Kleist, *Werke*, Vol. V (Leipzig and Vienna, 1905), p. 238.
[3] Kleist, pp. 251-258.

CHAPTER II

[1] *Journal de Paris*, August 7, 1807; *Courrier de l'Europe*, April 30, 1810; *Le Moniteur*, May 2, 1810.
[2] E. Eggli and Paul Martino, *Le Débat romantique en France de 1813 à 1830* (Paris, 1933), I, 25.
[3] *Journal de Paris* (July-September, 1807), p. 1546.
[4] Reported in J. C. Blankenagel, "A Note on the Publication of Kleist's *Käthchen von Heilbronn*," *Modern Language Notes*, XLIV (December, 1929), 524-526.
[5] Reinhold Steig, *Heinrich von Kleist's Berliner Kämpfe* (Berlin, 1901), p. 668.
[6] See Helmut Sembdner, *Heinrich von Kleist's Lebensspuren* (Bremen, 1957), pp. 416-417.
[7] Sembdner, p. 418.
[8] *Lettres à un Ami – B. Constant et Mme de Staël à Claude Hochet*, ed. J. Mistler (Neuchatel, 1949), p. 202.
[9] Mme de Staël, *Réflexions sur le suicide*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. III (Paris, 1820), p. 349.
[10] Jean de Pange, *A-G. Schlegel et madame de Staël* (Paris, 1938), p. 346, says Staël learned the details of Kleist's suicide from her good friend Schlegel, at whose suggestion she wrote the essay. Steig, *H. von Kleist's Berliner Kämpfe*, p. 672, says, however, that she received the story from the publisher Hitzig.
[11] Steig, *Berliner Kämpfe*, p. 497, says that they met in Dresden, though he gives no evidence to confirm such a meeting.
[12] See H. Sembdner, *Die Berliner Abendblätter H. von Kleists, ihre Quellen und ihre Redaktion* (Berlin, 1939), p. 122.
[13] Staël, *Réflexions*, p. 353.

CHAPTER III

[1] See André Monchoux, *L'Allemagne devant les lettres françaises – 1814-1835* (diss. Toulouse, 1953), p. 194, who identifies the author of the article signed 'D.....g.'

[2] Depping, *Revue Encyclopédique*, XXXII (October, 1826), 131.
[3] Baron d'Eckstein, "Oeuvres de Henri de Kleist," *Le Catholique*, X (May, 1828), 249-314.
[4] *Le Globe*, VI (1828), 667-669; 669-701.

CHAPTER IV

[1] *Revue française*, VII (1829), 124.
[2] *Revue de Paris*, VIII (1829), 57-69.
[3] Loève-Veimars, *Le Népenthès* (Paris, 1833), II, 75-93.
[4] Of the various inaccuracies in regard to Kleist's suicide this one will have the most persistence among French critics and reviewers.
[5] Cherbuliez, *Notice*, V.
[6] See G. de Nerval, *Poésies allemandes* (Paris, 1830), p. 11, "...c'est son ouvrage [Staël's] sur l'Allemagne, qu'il faut lire et relire, pour se faire une idée juste du mérite des poésies allemandes; car il y a peu de chose à dire après elle et autrement qu'elle."
[7] Koberstein's work stopped with the year 1812.
[8] Cited by Friedrich Hirth in *Heinrich Heine-Briefe* (Mainz, 1951), V, 116.
[9] See Hirth, II, 63.
[10] See *Heinrich Heine's Memoirs, from His Works, Letters and Conversations*, ed. Gustav Karpeles, trans. Gilbert Cannon (New York, 1910), II, 8; and Hirth, *Heine-Briefe*, III, 376.
[11] Heine, *Memoirs*, II, 8.
[12] X. Marmier, "Henri de Kleist. Etudes biographiques," *Nouvelle revue germanique*, XIV (June, 1837), 92-119.
[13] See Fritz Strich, *Goethe and World Literature* (London, 1949), pp. 197-198, and Emma Gertrud Jaeck, *Madame de Staël and the Spread of German Literature* (New York, 1915), p. 55.
[14] See L. Reynaud, *L'Influence allemande en France au XVIII^e et au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1922), p. 206, and J. Texte, *Etudes de littérature européenne* (Paris, 1898), pp. 213-218.
[15] Texte, p. 205.
[16] Saint-René Taillandier, "Poètes modernes de l'Allemagne, Henri de Kleist. Sa Vie et ses œuvres," *Revue des deux mondes*, XXI (May-June, 1859), 604-640.

CHAPTER V

[1] See Louis P. Betz, *Heine in Frankreich* (Zürich, 1895), pp. 312-313.
[2] See L. Reynaud, *L'Influence allemande*, p. 180.
[3] H. Taine, *Sa Vie et sa correspondance* (Paris, 1905), III, 250.
[4] Taine, II, 367.
[5] Maxime Gaucher, 'Causerie littéraire,' *Revue politique et littéraire*, No. 10 (Sept. 4, 1880), p. 236.
[6] For translations of Kleist's poem *Der höhere Frieden*, see E. Duméril, *Lieds et ballades germaniques* (Paris, 1934), pp. 39, 60, 69, 109.
[7] See Hans Zigelski, *Heinrich von Kleist im Spiegel der Theaterkritik des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu den Aufführungen der Meininger* (diss., Erlangen, 1934), pp. 133-137.

[8] *La Crúche cassée, comédie en un acte, par Henri de Kleist,* trad. par Alfred de Lostalot, avec 34 illustrations gravées sur bois, d'apres les compositions originales de Adolphe Menzel (Paris, 1884).
[9] For a complete list of translations, see Appendix.
[10] *Michel Kohlhaas,* texte allemand... avec une notice littéraire... par L. Koch (Paris, 1887), p. VIII.
[11] *Michel Kohlhaas,* texte allemand... précédé d'une introduction biographique et littéraire par l'abbé I. Beffeyte et l'abbé J. Peyrègne (Paris, 1888).
[12] Ferdinand von Schill (1776-1809), a major in the Prussian army who led, in 1809, against the orders of the king of Prussia, an unsuccessful revolt against the forces of Napoleon. He was killed in battle, and his officers court-martialed.
[13] A. Ehrhard, *Les Comédies de Molière en Allemagne, le théâtre et la critique* (diss., Paris, 1888), pp. 420-431.
[14] Ehrhard is here in implicit agreement with the objections made by Goethe and other critics in regard to Amphitryon's 'unnatural' reaction. Later critics will realize that Amphitryon knows he has not really been cuckolded, that Alcmene was never in any real sense unfaithful to him.
[15] *Penthesilea,* XXIV, 2981-83. "So war es ein Versehen. Küsse, Bisse, / Das reimt sich, und wer recht von Herzen liebt / Kann schon das eine für das andre greifen."
[16] Bonafous may have had in mind the unsuccessful production of *Penthesilea* in Berlin in May, 1876. He was evidently unaware of the successful performances of the play in München, Köln, Nürnberg, Mannheim, and other German cities in 1892, 1893, and 1894. See Kurt Lowien, *Die Bühnengeschichte von Kleists Penthesilea* (diss. Kiel, 1922).
[17] Bonafous' comment is somewhat ambiguous. By "letting the truth out" he must mean letting it out to the other characters in the play since, of course, the audience knows the truth almost from the beginning. For it, the suspense will consist to an extent in wondering how long it will take for truth to come out or, rather, in how much longer the wily judge can avoid being caught.
[18] *L'Enfant trouvé,* tr. Catulle Mendès, *Le Journal,* Feb. 7, 1894. See Bonafous, p. 389.
[19] R. Ayrault, *La Légende de Henri de Kleist* (Paris, 1934), p. 29.

CHAPTER VI

[1] 'Symbolized' best, perhaps by Maeterlinck's discovery and translation of Novalis in 1895. See René Lang, *André Gide et la pensée allemande* (Paris, 1949), p. 22.
[2] For details see Fritz Neubert, "Der französische Kreuzzug gegen die Romantik im 20. Jahrhundert," *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1952), pp. 40-53, and the revealing 'Enquête' on the influence of German literature conducted by the editors of the *Mercure de France* in November, 1902.
[3] A. Bossert, *Histoire de la littérature allemande* (Paris, 1904), pp. 669-686.
[4] Reflecting perhaps the views of Franz Servaes in his *Kleist* (Berlin, 1902).
[5] E. de Morsier, "Le Théâtre allemand contemporain – à propos d'une récente histoire de la littérature allemande," *Bibliothèque universelle et revue suisse,* XXIII (1901), 528-543.
[6] Max Nordau (Südfeld), 1848-1923, Jewish-Hungarian author, philosopher, and doctor, lived in Paris from 1880, noted for his *Die conventionellen*

Lügen der Kulturmenschheit and especially his pseudo-philosophical *Entartung*, a study of decadence in art, literature, and society.

[7] Edmond Fazy, "Un Pèlerinage au tombeau du poète Henri de Kleist," *Mercure de France*, XLVIII (October-December, 1903), 566-570.

[8] The definitive edition, the work of Erich Schmidt, Georg Minde-Pouet, and Reinhold Steig, did not appear until 1905.

[9] *La Nouvelle revue*, XXVII (March-April, 1904), 145-165.

[10] The stage directions read: "Licht – (Il s'installe *précipitamment* sur le siège d'Adam)," *La Nouvelle revue*, 165.

[11] The character Veit Tümpel does not appear in the French adaptation. His lines are here given to Ruprecht.

[12] Émile Faguet, *Journal des débats*, (February 22, 1904), p. 2.

[13] Léon Pineau, *L'Évolution du roman en Allemagne au XIX*e *Siècle* (Paris, 1908), 59-61.

[14] Arthur Chuquet, *Littérature allemande* (Paris, 1909), p. 344.

[15] Henri Albert, "Lettres allemandes," *Mercure de France*, XCIV (November, 1911), 181; T. de Wyzewa, "A propos du centenaire de la mort d'Henri de Kleist," *Revue des deux mondes*, (December 15, 1911), 919-930.

[16] René Lauret, "Un romantique ennemi de la France, Henri de Kleist," *Les Marches de l'est*, No. 9 (August 25, 1912), 705-717.

[17] René Lauret, "Henri de Kleist, poète érotique," *Mercure de France*, XCIX (September, 1912), 501-516.

[18] The only translation available at the time was that of Cherbuliez (1830).

[19] Auguste Dupouy, *France et Allemagne, littératures comparées* (Paris, 1913), p. 276.

[20] René Lote, "La France vue par l'Allemagne," *La Minerve française* (September-October, 1919), p. 43.

CHAPTER VII

[1] Charles Andler, *Les Précurseurs de Nietzsche* (Paris, 1920), p. 16.

[2] This latter thought is expressed not in the little essay mentioned by Andler but rather in Kleist's larger and more significant essay *Über das Marionettentheater*.

[3] J-J. A. Bertrand, "Guillaume Schlegel critique de Molière," *Revue de littérature comparée*, No. 2 (April-June, 1922), 205.

[4] I. Rouge, *Heinrich von Kleist, notice et traductions* (Paris, 1922), p. 9.

[5] Gérard Bauer, "Henri de Kleist, poète du tourment et du suicide," *La Revue rhénane* III (March, 1923), 413.

CHAPTER VIII

[1] See *Revue germanique*, XXIII (April-June, 1932), 183.

[2] Neither of which has yet, to my knowledge, been completely translated.

[3] Jean Tarvel, "De l'*'Amphitryon'* de Kleist à celui de Giraudoux," *Comoedia*, (March 15, 1930).

[4] I. Rouge, "Quelques remarques sur la critique littéraire actuelle à propos d'un ouvrage sur Kleist," *Revue germanique*, XXI (July-October, 1930), 218-225.

[5] By "duty," Rouge is referring to the law of the Amazons forbidding selection of the man to be conquered in battle.

[6] See *Revue germanique*, XXIII (October-December, 1232), 380-381.
[7] I. Rouge, "Quelques aspects du génie de Kleist dans sa 'Penthésilée'," *Revue germanique*, XXIX (April-June, 1938), 113-132.
[8] Emilie and Georges Romieu, *La Vie de Henri de Kleist* (Paris, 1931), p. 67. Quoted in J. C. Blankenagel, "Goethe and Heinrich von Kleist. A Misrepresentation," *Modern Language Notes*, XLVIII (January, 1933), 18.
[9] Henri Bidou, "La Tombe de Kleist," *Le Temps*, April 19, 1933, p. 3. Bidou states that he knows Giraudoux has intended for some time to make this same 'pilgrimage,' May this account, Bidou adds, encourage him to make the effort.
[10] Roger Ayrault, *La Légende de Henri de Kleist* (Paris, 1934), p. 11.
[11] See Paul Kluckhohn, "Kleist-Forschung, 1926-1943," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XXI (Referatenheft, 1943), 80.
[12] Roger Ayrault, *Heinrich von Kleist* (Paris, 1934), 9.
[13] In view of Kleist's end, this thesis seems highly questionable. It may be true, as Kluckhohn (cf. p. 82) points out, that Ayrault was here misled by the one-sided writings of August Sauer.
[14] If we substitute for Ayrault's terms, 'vice profond,' 'vicié,' the terms 'l'absurdité', 'absurde,' we can foresee the kind of interpretation Kleist was to receive in the era of Sartre and Camus. Strangely, Ayrault did not see the existentialist interpretation of Kleist at all, e.g., in Fricke's study of 1929.
[15] See H. Loiseau in *Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes*, LII (January, 1935), 21.
[16] Henri Lichtenberger, "A propos d'un livre récent sur Heinrich von Kleist," *Revue germanique*, XXVI (July-September, 1935), 221.
[17] H. Loiseau, "Goethe et Kleist," *Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes*, LII (February, 1935), 65-74.
[18] H. Loiseau, *ibid.*, LII (March, 1935), 101.
[19] H. Loiseau, *ibid.*, LII (April, 1935), 146.

CHAPTER IX

[1] Jean Cassou, *Pour la poésie* (Paris, 1935), p. 112.
[2] Jean Cassou, "Kleist et le somnambulisme tragique," in *Le Romantisme allemand*, ed. Albert Béguin (Paris, 1949), p. 273. The collection was published originally as a special issue of *Les Cahiers du sud* in 1937.
[3] Armel Guerne, "Hic et Nunc," *Le Romantisme allemand*, ed. Albert Béguin (Paris, 1949), p. 357.
[4] Albert Béguin, *L'Ame romantique et le rêve*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1939), p. 317.
[5] *La Marquise d'O suivie de six nouvelles*, trans. by G. LaFlize and M. L. Laurreau (Paris, 1943), p. 8.
[6] André Gide, *Journal 1942-1949* (Paris, 1950), p. 32. The entry is for October 10, 1942.
[7] Paul van Tieghem, *Le Romantisme dans la littérature européenne* ("L'Evolution de l'humanité," No. 76, Paris, 1948), p. 461.
[8] For the only exception, see above, Tarvel, p. 92.
[9] J. J. Anstett, "J. Giraudoux et H. von Kleist. A propos d'Amphitryon 38," *Modern Languages*, XXXIII (December, 1951), 17. Reproduced from *Les Langues modernes*, XLII (1948), 385-393.
[10] See Laurent Le Sage, *Jean Giraudoux, Surrealism, and the German Romantic Ideal," Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, XXXVI, No. 3 (Urbana,

1952), 1-37. Le Sage expressly rejects any notion of Kleistian influence on Giraudoux. See pp. 35-36.

[11] *Michael Kohlhaas*, tr. L. Lentin (Paris, 1950), p. 22. Aragon's preface was later republished in his collection of critical essays *La Lumière de Stendhal* (Paris, 1954), pp. 199-214.

[12] Nicolas Ségur, "L'Epoque romantique," *Historie de la littérature européenne* (Paris, 1951), IV, 45.

[13] A. Schlagdenhauffen, "Kleist à Dresde," *Etudes germaniques*, VI, Nos. 3-4 (July-December, 1951), 291.

CHAPTER X

[1] Unless otherwise noted, the following quotations are reproduced from *Femina théâtre, Supplément du nouveau femina* (November, 1955), 40. The special issue is devoted to the Vilar production of *Prinz*. Future references to *Femina* are to this issue.

[2] *Revue de la Méditerranée*, XI (September-October, 1951), 592.

[3] *La Revue théâtrale*, VI (September, 1951), 89.

[4] Yves Florenne, "Dramaturgie d'Avignon," *Hommes et mondes*, VI (September, 1951), 604.

[5] *Le Monde*, February 21, 1952, 8.

[6] Philipe's sudden death in 1959 robbed France of its finest and most successful young actor.

[7] *Femina*, 40.

[8] *Loc. cit.*

[9] *Femina*, 2.

[10] *La Revue théâtrale*, VII (February, 1952), 84.

[11] *Le Monde*, February 24-25, 1952.

[12] *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, March 6, 1952, 10.

[13] Gabriel Marcel, "Tragédies romantiques," *Théâtre de France*, II (1952), 79.

[14] *Revue de Paris*, LIX (July-December, 1952), 138.

[15] *Revue de Paris*, LX (January, 1953), 146.

CHAPTER XI

[1] Alfred Schlagdenhauffen, *L'Univers existentiel de Kleist dans le Prince de Hombourg* ("Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de L'Université de Strasbourg," No. 18; Paris, 1953), p. 7.

[2] Schlagdenhauffen's meaning is not very clear here. If he is referring to *Prinz*, V. v., in which the Elector, after being unable to persuade the officers that his action is right, calls on the Prince to be the 'Sachwalter,' then the statement does not hold true. The Elector, with the Prince's letter in hand, knew at this time that the Prince *did* concur in his belief in the necessity of law and obedience. If, on the other hand, Schlagdenhauffen is referring to the *original* decision of the Elector who, on discovering that the Prince was going to his death unwillingly, placed the final decision in the hands of the Prince himself, then again he errs in not seeing that such action proved that the Elector himself believed only in law and obedience 'freely consented to.'

[3] Ayrault, 402.

[4] André Maurois, "Heinrich von Kleist," *Revue de Paris*, LXI (June, 1954), 3-24. The article was republished in his *Robert et Elizabeth Browning, portraits suivis de quelques autres* (Paris, 1955), 65-102.
[5] *Penthésilée*, trad. de Julien Gracq (Paris, 1954), p.17 .
[6] Julien Gracq, "Le Printemps de Mars," *Cahiers de la Compagnie M. Renaud, Jean-Louis Barrault*, II, No. 4 (1954), 81-89.
[7] *Cahiers*, 90.
[8] *Le Monde*, July 23, 1955.
[9] *France observateur*, VI (July 28, 1955), 27.
[10] Jean Bergeaud, *Je Choisis... mon théâtre: Encyclopédie du théâtre contemporain* (Paris, 1956), p. 360.
[11] *Théâtre de France*, V (1955), 111.
[12] *Paris Théâtre*, No. 100 (September, 1955), 23-58.
[13] *La Cruche cassée*, version française d'Arthur Adamov, *Théâtre populaire*, No. 6 (March-April, 1954).
[14] *Théâtre de France*, V (1955), 120.
[15] *Le Prince de Hombourg*, preface by Jacques Lemarchand, *Bibliothèque mondiale*, No. 26 (February, 1954), 10.
[16] Claude David, "Heinrich von Kleist et le secret," *Preuves*, IV (December 1954), 37.
[17] Kleist, accompanied by a friend, made a trip to Würzburg in August, 1800, remaining there until October. Neither the purpose of the trip, nor what Kleist did while there is known. During his stay, however, he was apparently under doctor's care. This, and certain enigmatic remarks in a letter to his fiancée support the idea of a "cure."
[18] Marthe Robert, *Heinrich von Kleist – Dramaturge*, ("Collection les grands dramaturges"; Paris, 1955), p. 37.
[19] What Robert means here by 'scindé' is probably the split between the self that is experiencing and the self aware that it is experiencing, the split between the 'thinking' ego and the 'existential' ego.
[20] Robert refers here in particular to Kleist's contributions to the *Abendblätter*, as well as to his letters to his fiancée, though, presumably, she would not mean to include such essays from the *Abendblätter* as *Über das Marionettentheater* and, above all, *Von der Überlegung* whose message, that reflection must follow action, not precede it, is precisely the point Robert is making here. The attempt, seen earlier in Gundolf and Ayrault, to combat the notion of Kleist the philosopher, as well as the attempt here to make Kleist a completely 'unconscious' artist can obviously be overdone.
[21] Jean-Jacques Kim, "Kierkegaard et Kleist, poètes tragiques," *La Table ronde*, No. 95 (November, 1955), 82.
[22] See Robert, p. 84.
[23] *Revue de Paris*, LXIII (May, 1956), 148.
[24] R. M. Albérès, *Esthétique et morale chez Jean Giraudoux* (Paris, 1957), p. 342.
[25] J. J. Anstett, "A propos de Michael Kohlhaas," *Etudes germaniques*, XIV (April-June, 1959), 150-156.
[26] Thomas Mann, "Kleist," tr. Louise Servicen, *Cahiers des saisons*, No. 18 (Fall, 1959), 358-372. The essay was published in English, tr. by F. Golffing, in Kleist. *The Marquise of O-- and other stories* (New York, 1960), pp. 5-23.
[27] P. H. Simon, *Théâtre et destin* (Paris, 1959), p. 78.
[28] Guy Dumur, "Concours des jeunes compagnies," *Théâtre populaire*, No. 39 (Fall, 1960), p. 158.
[29] Jacques Voisine, "Trois Amphitryons modernes," *Archives des lettres modernes*, No. 35 (January-February, 1961), 51 pp.
[30] Eugène Ionesco, "Expériences du théâtre," *Nouvelle revue française*, VI (February 1, 1958), 252.

[1] See Marcel, 79.
[2] Alain Rais, "Le Théâtre a retrouvé son public," *Les Lettres nouvelles*, March 6, 1958, 10.
[3] In addition to Ionesco's article, see the discussion by C. Lynes of Adamov in "Yale French Studies," No. 14 (1958), p. 156, and the survey of *avant-garde* playwrights in *Cahiers de la compagnie M. Renaud, Jean-Louis Barrault*, III (October, 1955), 118.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

German

Heine, Heinrich. *Aus seinem Leben und aus seiner Zeit.* Edited by Gustav Karpeles. Leipzig: A. Titze, 1899.

– *Heinrich Heine's Memoirs, from His Works, Letters, and Conversations.* Edited by Gustav Karpeles; translated by Gilbert Cannan. 2 vols. New York: John Lane, 1910.

– *Briefe.* Edited by Friedrich Hirth. 6 vols. Mainz: F. Kupferberg, 1951.

– *Lutèce. Letters sur la vie politique, artistique et sociale de la France.* Nouvelle édition. Paris: M. Lévy, 1872.

Kleist, Heinrich von. *Werke.* Edited by Erich Schmidt, Georg Minde-Pouet, and Reinhold Steig. 5 vols. Leipzig and Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1905 ff.

Sembdner, Helmut, ed. *Heinrich von Kleist's Lebensspuren: Dokumente und Berichte der Zeitgenossen.* ('Sammlung Dietrich,' No. 172.) Bremen: Schünemann, 1957.

French

Gide, André. *Journal, 1889-1939.* ("Bibliothèque de la Pléiade," No. 54.) Paris: Gallimard, 1949.

– *Journal, 1942-1949.* Paris: Gallimard, 1950.

Lettres à un ami – B. Constant et Mme de Staël à Claude Hochet. Edited by Jean Mistler. Neuchatel: À la Baconnière, 1949.

Nerval, Gérard de. *Poésies allemandes.* Paris: Bibliothèque Choisie, 1830.

Staël-Holstein, Anne Louise Germaine (Necker), Baronne de. *Oeuvres complètes.* Vol. III. Preface by Mme Necker de Saussure. Paris: Treutel et Würtz, 1820.

– *De l'Allemagne.* Nouvelle édition. Edited by La Comtesse Jean de Pange. 5 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1958.

Taine, Hippolyte. *Sa Vie et sa correspondance.* 2d ed. 4 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1905.

Secondary Sources

German

The following works are only those referred to in the text of this study and are not intended to form a comprehensive bibliography of German Kleist criticism.

Bertram, Ernst. *Heinrich von Kleist. Eine Rede.* Bonn: Cohen, 1925.
Betz, Louis Paul. *Heine in Frankreich.* Zurich: A. Müller, 1895.
– *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte der neureren Zeit.* Frankfurt-on-Main: Rütten und Loening, 1902.
Brahm, Otto. *Das Leben Heinrich von Kleists.* 2d ed. Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für Deutsche Literatur, 1885.
Braig, Friedrich. *Heinrich von Kleist.* Munich: Beck, 1925.
Dorr, Rüdiger. *Heinrich von Kleists Amphitryon. Deutung und Bühnenschicksal.* ("Forschungen zur Literatur- und Theaterwissenschaft," No. 7.) Oldenburg: Schulzesche Verlagsbuchhandlung Rudolf Schwartz, 1931.
Fricke, Gerhard. *Gefühl und Schicksal bei Heinrich von Kleist: Studien über den innern Vorgang im Leben und Schaffen des Dichters.* ("Neue Forschung: Arbeiten zur Geistesgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker," No. 3.) Berlin: Juncker und Dünnhaupt, 1929.
Gilow, Hermann. "Heinrich von Kleists Prinz von Homburg 1821-1921. Ein geschichtlich-kritischer Rückblick," *Jahrbuch der Kleist-Gesellschaft 1921*, 1 (1922), 22-50. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.
Gundolf, Friedrich. *Heinrich von Kleist.* Berlin: Bondi, 1922.
– "Henri de Kleist" (Preface to *Heinrich von Kleist.* Berlin: Bondi, 1922). Translated by A. Vialette, *Occident et cahiers Staëliens*, II (March 15, 1936), 252-71.
Hart, Julius. *Das Kleist Buch.* Berlin: Borngräber, 1912.
Hebbel, Friedrich. *Sämtliche Werke.* ("Historisch-kritische Ausgabe," Vol. XI.) Edited by Richard Maria Werner. Berlin: Behr 1904-5.
Heimreich, Jens. *Das Komische bei Heinrich von Kleist.* Berlin, 1937. Dissertation.
Herzog, Wilhelm. *Heinrich von Kleist: Sein Leben und sein Werk.* Munich: Beck, 1911.
Heynen, Walter. "Kleist und das Ausland," *Preussische Jahrbücher*, CCX (October-December, 1927), 210-18. Berlin: G. Stilke.
Hirth, F. *Heinrich Heine und seine französischen Freunde.* Mainz: F. Kupferberg, 1949.
Hoffmann, Paul. *Kleist in Paris.* Berlin: Wegweiser-Verlag, 1924.
Hohoff, Curt. *Komik und Humor bei Heinrich von Kleist: Ein Beitrag zur Klärung der geistigen Struktur eines Dichters.* ("Germanische Studien," No. 184.) Berlin: Ebering, 1937.
Hösle, Johann. "Französische literarische Zeitschriften der Jahrhundertwende," *Revue de littérature comparée*, XXX (October-December, 1956), 552-64.
Jacobi, Hansres. *Amphitryon in Frankreich und Deutschland.* ("Züricher Beiträge zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte," No. 2). Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1952.
– "Frankreich entdeckt Kleist," *Antares* (Baden-Baden), III (1955), 57-60.
Kieft, Pieter. *Heinrich Heine in westeuropäischer Beurteilung. Seine Kritiker in Frankreich, England und Holland.* Zutphen: W. J. Thieme, 1938.
Kluckhohn, Paul. "Das Kleistbild der Gegenwart: Bericht über die Kleist-Literatur der Jahre 1922-1925," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, IV (1926), 798-830.
– "Kleist-Forschung, 1926-1943," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XXI (1943), "Referatenheft," 45-87.
– *Die deutsche Romantik.* Bielefeld, Leipzig: Velhagen und Klasing, 1924.

Linden, Walter. *Heinrich von Kleist, der Dichter der völkischen Gemeinschaft.* Leipzig: Reclam, 1935.
Lukács, Georg. "Die Tragödie Heinrich von Kleists," *Deutsche Realisten des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.* Berlin: Aufbau, 1952.
Lütteken, A. *Die Dresdener Romantik und Heinrich von Kleist.* Münster, 1917. Dissertation.
Mann, Thomas. "Kleist" (Preface to *The Marquise of O – and other Stories.* New York: Criterion, 1960). Translated by Louise Servicen, *Cahiers des saisons,* No. 18 (Autumn, 1959), pp. 358-72.
Mauerhof, Emil. *Schiller und Heinrich von Kleist.* 2d. ed Zurich: K. Henckell, 1898.
Meissner, Fr. *Der Einfluss des deutschen Geistes auf die französische Literatur des XIX. Jahrhunderts bis 1870.* Leipzig: Gebhardt, 1893.
Meyer-Benfey, Heinrich. *Das Drama Heinrich von Kleists.* 2 vols. Göttingen: Hapke, 1911-13.
– *Kleists Leben und Werke, dem deutschen Volke dargestellt.* Göttingen: O. Hapke, 1911.
Minde-Pouet, Georg. "Kleist-Bibliographie," *Jahrbuch der Kleist-Gesellschaft.* Berlin: Weidmann; for 1914-21 in 1921 *Jb.*; for 1922 in 1922 *Jb.*; for 1923-24 in 1923-24 *Jb.*; for 1925-30 in 1929-30 *Jb.*; for 1931-37 in 1933-37 *Jb.*
Muschg, Walter. *Kleist.* Zurich: Seldwyla Verlag, 1923.
Neubert, Fritz. "Der französische Kreuzzug gegen die Romantik im 20. Jahrhundert," *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte.* Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1952. Pp. 40-53.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen III: Schopenhauer als Erzieher," *Werke.* Edited by Alfred Baeumler. Vol. 1, Part 2. Leipzig: Kröner, 1930.
Nordau, Max (Südfeld). *Die conventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit.* Leipzig: B. Elischer, 1889.
– *Entartung.* Berlin: C. Duncker, 1895.
Petersen, Julius. "Kleists dramatische Kunst," *Jahrbuch der Kleist-Gesellschaft,* 1921, I (1921), 1-21.
Rahmer, Sigismund. *Heinrich von Kleist als Mensch und Dichter, nach neuen Quellenforschungen.* Berlin: G. Reimer, 1909.
– *Das Kleist-Problem, auf Grund neuer Forschungen zur Charakteristik und Biographie Heinrich von Kleists.* Berlin: G. Reimer, 1903.
Sadger, Isidor. *Heinrich von Kleist. Eine pathographisch-psychologische Studie.* ("Grenzfragen des Nerven- und Seelenlebens," No. 70.) Wiesbaden: Bergmann, 1910.
Sauer, August. *Kleists Todeslitanei.* Prague: C. Bellmann, 1907.
Sembdner, Helmut. *Die Berliner Abendblätter Heinrich von Kleists, ihre Quellen und ihre Redaktion.* Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1939.
Servaes, Franz. *Kleist.* Leipzig, Berlin, Vienna: Seemann, 1902.
Steig, Reinhold. *Heinrich von Kleists Berliner Kämpfe.* Berlin, Stuttgart: W. Spemann, 1901.
Strich, Fritz. *Goethe und die Weltliteratur.* Bern: A. Francke, 1946.
– *Goethe and World Literature.* Translated by C.A.M. Sym. London: Routledge and Paul, 1949.
– *Deutsche Klassik und Romantik oder Vollendung und Unendlichkeit: Ein Vergleich.* Munich: Meyer und Jessen, 1922.
Süpfle, Th. *Geschichte des deutschen Kultureinflusses auf Frankreich.* 2 vols. Gotha: Thienemann, 1886-88.
Unger, Rudolf. *Herder, Novalis, Kleist: Studien über die Entwicklung des Todesproblems im Denken und Dichten von Sturm und Drang zur*

Romantik ("Deutsche Forschungen," No. 9.) Frankfurt-on Main: Diesterweg, 1922.
Wilbrandt, Adolf. *Heinrich von Kleist.* Nördlingen: Beck, 1863.
Witkop, Philipp. *Heinrich von Kleist.* Leipzig: Haessel Verlag, 1922.
Zigelski, Hans. *Heinrich von Kleist im Spiegel der Theater-Kritik des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu den Aufführungen der Meininger.* Dissertation: Erlangen, 1934. Berlin-Charlottenberg: Hoffmann, 1934.
Zolling, Theophil. *Heinrich von Kleist in der Schweiz.* Stuttgart: W. Spemann, 1882.
Zweig, Arnold. *Lessing, Kleist, Büchner: Drei Versuche.* Berlin: Spaeth, 1925.
Zweig, Stefan. "Heinrich von Kleist," in *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon.* Leipzig: Insel, 1929. Pp. 155-229.

French

Albérès, R. M. *Esthétique et morale chez Jean Giraudoux.* Paris: Nizet, 1957.
Albert, Henri. "Lettres allemandes," *Mercure de France,* XCIV (November, 1911), 181-83.
Andler, Charles. *Les Précurseurs de Nietzsche.* 3d ed. Paris: Éditions Bossard, 1920.
Anstett, J. J. "Jean Giraudoux et H. von Kleist. A propos d'Amphitryon 38," *Modern Languages* (London), XXXIII (December, 1951), 17-22.
– "À propos de Michael Kohlhaas," *Études germaniques,* XIV (April-June, 1959), 150-56.
Aragon, Louis. "Heinrich von Kleist," *La Lumière de Stendhal.* Paris: Denoël, 1954. Pp. 199-214.
Ayrault, Roger: *Heinrich von Kleist.* Paris: Nizet et Bastard, 1934.
– *La Légende de Heinrich von Kleist: Un poète devant la critique.* Paris: Nizet et Bastard, 1934.
Baldensperger, Fernand. *Orientations étrangères chez Honoré de Balzac.* Paris: Champion, 1927.
– *Goethe en France; étude de littérature comparée.* Paris: Hachette, 1904.
– *Bibliographie critique de Goethe en France.* Paris: Hachette, 1907.
Bastier, Paul. *La Nouvelle individualiste en Allemagne.* Paris: E. Larose, 1910.
Bauer, Gérard. "Henri de Kleist, poète du tourment et du suicide," *La Revue rhénane* (Mainz), III (March, 1923), 413-14.
Beaunier, André. "L'Influence allemande en France," *Revue des deux mondes,* 7th period, X (August 1, 1922), 697-708.
Béguin, Albert. "Voies lactées et météores," *L'Âme romantique et le rêve.* 3d ed. Paris: José Corti, 1939. Pp. 317-22.
Beigbeder, Marc. "Le Prince de Hombourg," *La Revue théâtrale* (Paris), VI (September, 1951), 89.
Belluc, Roger. "Le Prince de Hombourg," *Revue de la Méditerranée* (Paris-Algiers), XI (September-October, 1951), 592-93.
Bergeaud, Jean. *Je choisis... mon théâtre. Encyclopédie du théâtre contemporain.* Paris: Editions Odilis, 1956.
Bertrand, J.-J. A. "Guillaume Schlegel critique de Molière," *Revue de littérature comparée,* II (1922), 201-37.
Bianquis, Geneviève. *Nietzsche en France.* Paris: F. Alcan, 1929.
Bidou, Henri. "Le Prince de Hombourg," *Le Temps* (Paris), November 2, 1932, p. 3.
Bonafous, Raymond. *Henri de Kleist, sa vie et ses œuvres.* Paris: Hachette, 1894.

Bossert, A. *Histoire de la littérature allemande.* Paris: Hachette, 1901.
Caro, E. "Les deux Allemagnes, Madame de Staël et Henri Heine,," *Revue des deux mondes,* 2nd period; 5th series, XCVI (Nov. 1, 1871), 5-20.
Cassou, Jean. "Kleist et le somnambulisme tragique," in Albert Béguin (ed.), *Le Romantisme allemand.* Paris: Cahiers du Sud, 1949. Pp. 269-275.
– "Romantiques allemands, Vie et mort de Kleist." *Pour la poésie.* Paris: Corrêa, 1935. Pp. 110-114.
Chuquet, Arthur. *Littérature allemande.* Paris: A. Colin, 1909.
David, Claude. "Heinrich von Kleist et le secret," *Preuves* IV (Dec., 1954), 37-44.
Depping. "'Dramaturgische Blätter,' L. Tieck," *Revue encyclopédique* (Paris), XXXII (October, 1826), 131-132.
Duméril, Edm. *Le Lied allemand et ses traductions poétiques en France.* Paris: Champion, 1933.
Dumur, Guy. "Concours des jeunes compagnies," *Théâtre populaire,* No. 39 (Autumn, 1960), 158.
Dupouy, Auguste. *France et Allemagne: Littératures comparées.* Paris: Delaplane, 1913.
d'Eckstein, Ferdinand, Baron. "Oeuvres de Henri de Kleist." *Le Catholique* (Paris), X (May, 1828). 249-314.
Eggli, E. *Schiller et le romantisme français.* Paris: J. Gamber, 1927.
– and Martino, P. *Le Débat romantique en France de 1813 à 1830* ("Publications de la faculté des lettres d'Alger," 2d series, No. 6.) Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1933. Vol. I.
Ehrhard, A. *Les Comédies de Molière en Allemagne,* Paris: Lecène et Oudin, 1888.
"Enquêtes sur l'influence allemande," in *Mercure de France.* See J. Morland; A. Valette.
Faguet, Émile. "'La Cruche cassée' au Théâtre Victor Hugo," *Journal des débats,* Feb. 22, 1904, p. 2.
Falconnet, E. "De l'influence de la littérature allemande sur la littérature française," *Revue du Midi* (Toulouse), VI (1834), 29ff.
Faure, Jean-Paul. "La Cruche cassée," *Théâtre de France,* V (1955), 120. Paris: Les Publications de France.
Fazy, Edm. "Un Pèlerinage au tombeau du poète Henri de Kleist," *Mercure de France,* XLVIII (Oct.-Dec., 1903), 566-570.
Florenne, Yves. "Dramaturgie d'Avignon," *Hommes et mondes,* VI (Sept., 1951), 598-604.
Gaucher, Maxime. "Causerie littéraire," *La Revue politique et littéraire,* 2nd series, X (Sept., 1880), 235-237.
"'Gesammelte Schriften', Heinrich von Kleist," *Le Globe,* VI (Sept. 6, 20, 1828), 667-669; 699-701.
Gracq, Julien. "Le Printemps de Mars," *Cahiers de la compagnie M. Renaud; Jean-Louis Barrault,* No. 4 (1954), 81-89.
Guerne, Armel. "Hic et nunc," in Albert Béguin (ed.), *Le Romantisme allemand.* Paris: Cahiers du Sud. 1949. Pp. 349-66.
Henning, Ian Allan. *L'Allemagne de Mme de Staël et la polémique romantique. Première fortune de l'ouvrage en France et en Allemagne (1814-1830).* ("Bibliothèque de la revue de littérature comparée," No. 58.) Paris: H. Champion, 1929.
Hoog, Armand, "Le Romantisme et l'existence contemporaine," *Mercure de France,* CCCXVI (November, 1952), 436-48.
Ionesco, Eugène. "Expérience du théâtre," *Nouvelle nouvelle revue française,* No. 62 (February 1, 1958), 247-70.
Kemp, Robert. "Le Prince de Hombourg par le T.N.P., "*Le Monde,* February 24-25, 1952.

Kim, Jean-Jacques. "Kierkegaard et Kleist, poètes tragiques," *La Table ronde*, No. 95 (November, 1955), pp. 82-85. Paris: Plon.
Lang, Renée. *André Gide et la pensée allemande*. Paris: Egloff, 1949.
Lauret, René. "Henri de Kleist, poète érotique," *Mercure de France*, XCIX (September-October, 1912), 501-16.
– "Un Romantique ennemi de la France, Henri de Kleist," *Les Marches de l'Est*, IV (August, 1912), 705-17.
Lemarchand, Jacques. "Introduction à l'œuvre de Kleist," *Bibliothèque mondiale*, No. 26 (February 15, 1954), pp. 9-16. Paris: Éditions de la Bibliothèque mondiale.
Lichtenberger, Henri. "A propos d'un livre récent sur Heinrich von Kleist," *Revue germanique*, XXVI (July-September, 1935), 227-32.
Loève-Veimars, François Adolphe, Baron. *Le Népenthès*. Vol. II. Paris: Ladvocat, 1833.
Loiseau, H. "Goethe et Kleist," *Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes*, LII (February-April, 1935), 65-74, 97-130, 145-52.
– "'Heinrich von Kleist,' Roger Ayrault," *Revue de l'enseignement des langues vivantes*, LII (January, 1935), 20-24.
Lote, René. "La France vue par l'Allemagne," *La Minerve française*, II (Sept.-Oct., 1919), 34-57.
Magnan, H. "Penthésilée," *Le Monde*, July 23, 1955.
Marcel, Gabriel. "Le Prince de Hombourg," *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, March 6, 1952, p. 10.
– "Tragédies romantiques," *Théâtre de France*, II (1952), 78-81. Paris: Les Publications de France.
Marmier, X. "Henri de Kleist, études biographiques," *Nouvelle Revue germanique*, XIV (June, 1837), 99-119.
Maulnier, Thierry, "Dialogues des Carmélites," *Revue de Paris*, LIX (July, 1952), 137-141.
– "La 'crise' du T.N.P.," *Revue de Paris*, LX (Jan., 1953), 143-147.
– "Le Théâtre," *Revue de Paris*, LXIII (May, 1956), 146-150.
Maurois, André, "Heinrich von Kleist," in *Robert et Elizabeth Browning: Portraits suivis de quelques autres*. Paris: Grasset, 1955., 65-103.
Mélanges d'histoire littéraire générale et comparée offerts à Fernand Baldensperger. 2 vols. Paris: Champion, 1930.
Monchoux, André. *L'Allemagne devant les lettres françaises, de 1814 à 1835*. Toulouse: A. Colin, 1953.
Morland, Jacques. "Enquête sur l'influence allemande," *Mercure de France*, XLIV (Nov.-Dec., 1902), 289-382, 647-695; XLV (Jan., 1903), 89-137.
de Morsier, E. "Le Théâtre allemand contemporain – à propos d'une récente 'Histoire de la littérature allemande'," *Bibliothèque universelle et revue suisse* (Lausanne, Paris), XXIII (1901), 528-543.
Nepveu-Degas, Jean. "Penthésilée," *France observateur*, VI (July 28, 1955), 27.
de Pange, Jean, Comtesse. *Mme de Staël et la découverte de l'Allemagne*. Paris: Malfère, 1929.
– *Auguste-Guillaume Schlegel et Madame de Staël*. Paris: Albert, 1938.
"Penthésilée," *Théâtre de France*, V (1955), 111. Paris: Les Publications de France.
Pineau, Léon. "Le Roman romantique," *L'Évolution du roman en Allemagne au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Hachette, 1908. Chap. III.
Rais, Alain. "Le Théâtre a retrouvé son public," *Les Lettres nouvelles*, March 6, 1958, 10.
Reinach, J. "De l'Influence littéraire de l'Allemagne sur la France," *Revue politique et littéraire* (*Revue bleue*), 2d series, XIV (January-July, 1878), 1031-41.

Reynaud, Louis. *Le Romantisme. Ses origines anglo-germaniques*, Paris: A. Colin, 1926.
– *Histoire générale de l'influence française en Allemagne*. Paris: Hachette 1914.
– *L'Influence allemande en France au XVIII^e et au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Hachette, 1922.
de Rivoyre, Christine. "Le Théâtre national populaire aux Champs-Élysées," *Le Monde*, February 21, 1952, 8.
Robert, Marthe. *Heinrich von Kleist, Dramaturge*. ("Collection les grands dramaturges," No. 8.) Paris: L'Arche, 1955.
Romieu, Emilie, and Romieu, Georges. *La Vie de Henri de Kleist*. ("Vies des hommes illustres," No. 72.) 4th ed. Paris: Gallimard, 1931.
Rossel, Virgile. *Histoire des relations littéraires entre la France et l'Allemagne*. Paris: Fischbacher, 1897.
Rouge, I. *H. von Kleist: Notice et traductions*. ("Les cent chefs-d'œuvre étrangers," No. 65.) Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1922.
– "Quelques remarques sur la critique littéraire actuelle à propos d'un ouvrage sur Kleist," *Revue germanique*, XXI (July-August, 1930), 218-25.
– "'Heinrich von Kleists Amphitryon,' Rüdiger Dorr," *Revue germanique*, XXIII (October-December, 1932), 380-81.
– "Quelques aspects du génie de Kleist dans sa 'Penthésilée,'" *Revue germanique*, XXIX (April-June, 1938), 113-32.
Saint-René Taillandier, René Gaspard Ernest. "Le Théâtre en Allemagne," *Ecrivains et poètes modernes*. Paris: M. Lévy, 1861. Chap. IV.
– "Poètes modernes de l'Allemagne, Henri de Kleist – Sa vie et ses œuvres," *Revue des deux mondes*, 2d period, XXI (May-June, 1859), 604-40.
Schlagdenhauffen, Alfred. *L'Univers existentiel de Kleist dans Le Prince de Hombourg*. ("Publications de la faculté des lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg," 2d series, No. 18.) Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1953.
– "Kleist à Dresde," *Études germaniques*, VI (July-December, 1951), 291-302.
Schmidt, Albert-Marie. "Penthésilée et l'opinion allemande," *Cahiers de la compagnie M. Renaud: Jean-Louis Barrault*, No. 4 (1954), 90-99.
Ségur, Nicolas, "L'Époque romantique," in *Histoire de la littérature européenne*. Vol. IV. Neuchatel-Paris: Victor Attinger, 1951.
Simon, P. H. *Théâtre et destin*. Paris: A. Colin, 1959.
Tarvel, J. "De l'Amphitryon de Kleist à celui de Giraudoux," *Comoedia* (Paris), March 15, 1930.
Texte, J. "L'Influence allemande dans le romantisme français," *Études de littérature européenne*. Paris: A. Colin, 1898. 195-238.
Thibaudet, Albert. "Réflexions sur la littérature – Le Germanisme et la France," *Nouvelle revue française*, n.s., IX (September 1, 1922), 329-38.
Tronchon, H. *Romantisme et préromantisme*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930.
– *Ernest Renan et l'étranger*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1928.
Valette, Alfred. "Une Enquête france-allemande," *Mercure de France*, XIV (April, 1895), 1-65.
Van Tieghem, Paul. *L'ère romantique; le romantisme dans la littérature européenne*. ("L'Évolution de l'humanité, synthèse collective," No. 76.) Paris: A. Michel, 1948.
Vilar, Jean. *De la Tradition théâtrale*. Paris: L'Arche, 1955.
Voisine, Jacques, "Trois Amphitryons modernes," *Archives des lettres modernes*, No. 35 (January-February, 1961), 1-51.

de Wyzewa, Th. "A propos du centenaire de la mort d'Henri de Kleist," *Revue des deux mondes*, 6th period, VI (November-December, 1911), 919-30.

British and American

Blankenagel, John C. "Goethe and Heinrich von Kleist, A Misrepresentation," *Modern Language Notes*, XLVIII (January, 1933), 17-20.
An American protest against the Romieu biography of Kleist.

– "A Note on the Publication of Kleist's 'Käthchen von Heilbronn,'" *Modern Language Notes*, XLIV (December, 1929), 524-26.

Blennerhassett, Charlotte Julia (von Leyden), Lady. *Madame de Staël, Her Friends and Her Influence in Politics and Literature*. 3 vols. London: Chapmann and Hall, 1889.

Jaeck, Emma Gertrud. *Madame de Staël and the Spread of German Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1915.

Le Sage, Laurent. "Jean Giraudoux, Surrealism, and the German Romantic Ideal," *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, XXXVI, No. 3 (1952), 1-37.

– "Giraudoux's German Studies," *Modern Language Quarterly*, XII (1951), 353-59.

Lynes, Carlos, Jr. "Arthur Adamov and 'le sens littéral' in the Theater," *Yale French Studies*, No. 14 (Winter, 1954-55), 48-56.

Nordmeyer, Henry W. "Kleist's 'Amphitryon': Zur Deutung der Komödie," *Monatshefte*, XXXVIII (1946), 1-19, 165-76, 268-83, 349-59; XXXIX (1947), 89-125.

Scholl, John W. "Kleist at Boulogne-sur-mer," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, n.s., XXII (September, 1914), 359-87.

INDEX


9 780807 880357