

M. Wootton

A Critical study of Kleist's Tales

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF KLEIST'S TALES,
with special reference to their importance in
the development of the German "Novelle."

A B S T R A C T

This thesis is divided into five sections. In the introduction the development of the short story before Kleist is outlined and two chief forms are distinguished, one emphasising incident, the other character.

The diverse sources of Kleist's tales are considered in the second chapter. In "Michael Kohlhaas" a chronicle is developed into a tale with the fundamental theme of a search for justice. "Die Marquise von O...." presents the theme of a moral story, transformed by the author's individual treatment of the chief characters. "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" was suggested by contemporary events, and the theme of "Das Bettelweib von Locarno" was familiar in Kleist's day. "Der Findling" was influenced by Moliere's "Le Tartuffe," and "Der Zweikampf" by episodes from Froissart and Cervantes. "Das Erdbeben in Chili" and "Die Heilige Cäcilie" are examples of original invention.

In the third chapter the nature of the themes is discussed, and an attempt is made to interpret their tragic content. Tragic conflict in the individual is found to consist either in confusion of feeling or in disharmony with his surroundings. A fundamental problem of justice is shown to underlie three of the tales: "Michael Kohlhaas,"

"Das Erdbeben in Chili," and "Der Zweikampf."

The fourth chapter deals with methods of artistic expression. The underlying idea is shown to be reflected in the external action. Characteristics of Kleist's narrative style are discussed with reference to epic and dramatic methods and economy in diction.

In conclusion an attempt is made to estimate Kleist's achievement, particularly his fusion, by portrayal of a close relationship between character and circumstance, of the two former types of tale. Illustrations from subsequent writers are given, which reveal how the form thus created persists with modifications in German literature, and show the influence of Kleist upon the themes of German Novellen."

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INTRODUCTION.

The telling of stories seems to be a natural mode of expression of the human personality. As far back as literature can be traced, tales are found. Today among primitive African tribes which have no written records, the narration of stories is regarded as the greatest social accomplishment. This form of literature may be styled sublimated gossip, that is, gossip raised to the level of art.

The most ancient and most widely spread type of narrative is apparently the folk-tale, which is a symbolic representation of some universal truth, seen through the primitive mind. In opposition to the folk-tale, which in general embodies an irrational view of life, stands the anecdote, which sketches a particular incident or characteristic in a natural order of things. In either case there appears to be a limited stock of themes. The same folk-tale emerges at different periods in lands thousands of miles apart, and without any apparent cultural connection. The subjects of the *Gesta Romanorum* were not novel in their day, they occur moreover again and again in subsequent literature, especially in the

Middle Ages. Such a common store of subject matter, of anecdote as well as of folk-tale is one of the common possessions of the human race.

The constant reappearance of the same theme in a different garb shows that the attraction of a tale lies not so much in its substance as in the manner in which it is presented. The history of Griselda told by Boccaccio is transformed when it is reproduced by Chaucer. Thus it is the personality of the narrator which counts and which commends a story to the hearers. A tale will be witty, amusing, instructive, or tragic according to the mood of him who relates it. But whether he is aware of it or not, the narrator must have some motive in telling his tale; hence every story to some extent reflects the personality of its author.

The tale was primarily intended to be said or sung to a company of people, with the purpose of entertainment. The mediaeval "Schwank," with its strange coincidences and merry tricks, and its wholesome sprinkling of humour springs from a childlike delight in the varied turns and chances of life. Its sole object is to amuse the audience. The 'exemplum,' on the contrary, has a didactic tendency. For characters it often has vices or

virtues personified. Like the parable, it is intended to illustrate some moral truth and to edify the hearers.

These two principal types of mediaeval narrative attain later an artistic form: the anecdote in the Decameron of Boccaccio, the exemplum in the *Novelas Ejemplares* of Cervantes. The Decameron, which was published in Italy in the mid-14th Century, is a cycle of stories in a framework, somewhat after the manner of the *Pantschatantra* or the *Arabian nights*. A number of aristocratic ladies and gentlemen escape from the plague-ridden Florence and agree to seek enjoyment in telling tales. Thus the Decameron has a clearly defined social background, both narrator and listeners being represented. Each story is in some way coloured by the narrator's personality, since each is a contribution to illustrate some topic of conversation. The subject-matter consists of curious incidents from the life of contemporary society. Every one of these incidents is distinguished by some striking or unusual quality. The action in each case, traced in a clear outline and is summed up in a sentence or two prefixed to the narrative. Sometimes the central incident is set off by some concrete image, such

as the lover's heart in the 1st tale of the 4th day.⁽¹⁾

The tales vary widely in theme and size; some are farcical, others tragic; some are mere anecdotes, others narratives of greater magnitude. But, even when the theme is tragic or unpleasant, the tone of narration is sprightly and conversational, conforming to the manners of the company. The emotional content is shallow, no profound treatment being applied to any subject. A moral is indeed appended to some of the stories,⁽²⁾ but this is merely an observation of worldly wisdom expressing the opinion of the audience. The tone of the Decameron is amoral, the dominant force in the tales is chance, and life is portrayed for its own sake.

In contrast to the tales of Boccaccio, which became the model of the Classic form of "Novella", there appeared in Spain two and a half centuries later the 'Novelas Ejemplares' of Cervantes. The author justifies this title

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- (1) Boccaccio, Decameron, ed: cit: I, p.XIII, 1st Novell, 4th day: "Tancrede, Prince of Salern, caused the amorous friend of his daughter to be slaine and sent her his heart in a cup of Gold; which afterward she steeped in an impoysoned water, and then drinking it, so dyed."
- (2) cf. Boccaccio, Decameron [English Translation, Oxford, 1935, II, p.XI] Novell, 8th Day: "Wherein is declared, how easily a plaine man may bee made a foole, when he dealeth with craft companions".

in his prologue to the first edition: "I have bestowed on them the name of 'Exemplary', and if thou dost look well to it, there is not one of them from which thou couldst not derive a profitable example ... One thing I shall adventure me to say: that if by any chance it come to pass that the reading of these novels could tempt anyone, who should peruse them, to any evil desire or thought, rather should I cut off the hand wherewith I wrote them, than bring them out in public." These 'Novelas', then, are related with a definitely moral purpose. Whereas in the Decameron the incident itself is of paramount importance, in these tales emphasis is laid on the ethical significance of the events described. In the Decameron the ruling factor is chance; in the 'Novelas Ejemplares' the springs of action lie chiefly in character. The jealousy of a husband, for instance, is the motive force in 'El Celoso Extremeño'. The framework technique is discarded and the author obtrudes his own opinions in the narrative. In this respect Cervantes may be regarded as the forerunner of the later Romantics, who cultivated the discursive type of 'Novelle'. He neglects the concise form of the Classical 'Novella', and introduces moral reflections

(1) "The Complete Works of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra" Glasgow, 1902, Vol: VII, p.6.

and comments. But in return the emotional content is deepened. One striking incident is however in most cases preserved as the germ of the narrative. Although family relationships and the fortunes of lovers provide the substance for most of the 'Novelas', a few of the stories are based on a different kind of material. 'El Coloquio de los Perros' is a series of sketches from the lives of artisans. The scene of 'Riconete y Cortadillo' is laid in a den of thieves. As the social element is abandoned, the characters are no longer drawn exclusively from the upper classes. At the same time the range of subjects is extended.

After the rise of the "Novella" in Spain and Italy, Germany still for some centuries possessed no literary form of brief narrative. The nearest approach to this type is to be found in the stories inserted into novels, such as "Der Deutsche Hans" and Schmelzer's "Prüfungen" in Schnabel's "Insel Felsenburg,"⁽¹⁾ and "Der Stolze Melcher" in Grimmelshausen's "Simplicissimus."⁽²⁾

With the introduction of the Moral Weekly into

(1) J.G.Schnabel: "Wunderliche Fata einiger Seefahrer, absonderlich Alberti Julii... ausgefertigt von Gisandern." Nordhausen, 1731-1743.

(2) H.J.C. von Grimmelshausen, "Der Abenteuerliche Simplicissimus," Monpelgart, MDCLXIX.

Germany at the beginning of the 18th century, two new forms of narrative came into being, the character sketch and the cautionary tale. Cycles of anecdotes appeared in English Periodicals illustrating the characteristic qualities of some individual. That kind of character was sketched which is known as a type. Such are Ned Softly of the Tatler and Will Honeycomb of the Spectator. After this pattern the character of Bonifaz Schleicher was created by Wieland for the "Teutscher Merkur" of 1781. In "Die Reise nach dem Deister", by Peter Sturz, a story in which nothing happens except that a decision is made by a family to go out for the day, presents, we find, the type of managing woman in the wife who dominates her husband.

The cautionary tale was adopted in Germany much earlier than the character sketch. In the "Hamburger Patriot" of 1724 the story is told of a young man named Philander who was driven to murder by the weakness of extravagance. This type of narrative, which has a strongly moralising tone, may be regarded as the forerunner of the "Moralische Erzählung."

This form was no more indigenous in Germany than the character-sketch. The source of inspiration was in

this case France. Between the years 1766 and 1791 the tales of Marmontel, Voltaire, Arnaud, Mme. de Gomez, Imbert and Florian appeared in German translations. Immediately there sprung up in Germany a host of imitations. A.G. Meissner writes in the preface to the 1792 edition of his "Skizzen":⁽¹⁾ "Als ich 1778 die erste Vorrede zum ersten Bändgen dieser Skizzen schrieb, kont ich noch dreist und mit Wahrheit in ihr behaupten: dass Teutschland im Fache der prosaischen Erzählung sehr wenig eigentümliche Versuche besizze. Seitdem hat sich diess gewaltig verändert. Wer alle in diesen 13 Jahren unter den mannichfaltigsten Titteln gedruckte teutsche Erzählungen zu sammeln gedachte, der dürfte leicht, auch mit Ausschluss der blossen Uebersetzungen, auf dritthalb hundert Bände zusammen bringen. It is as well that noone undertook this monumental task. For these compositions were but pale copies of the French tales, possessing none of the redeeming features of their originals. The reflective note of the French stories sinks to a tone of sentimental moralising in many of the German tales. The whimsical narrative style which characterises most of the French writers degenerates into flatulent verbosity in a larger proportion of the German

(1) A.G. Meissner, "Skizzen" Leipzig 1792. Preface.

narrators. In 1782 the "Moralische Erzählungen im Geschmack Marmontels" began to appear. These stories, by Sophie von la Roche, of exemplary peasant maids and virtuous lovers, are neither convincing nor attractive. The stock figures of the «conte moral», the reformed hussy, the faithful lover, the noble parent, and the devoted servant, are only automatic dolls when fashioned by such writers as F. Thilo. The "Gemälde aus dem häuslichen Leben in Erzählungen", by G. Starke, offer an example of family relationships treated in a sentimental manner. The inevitable reward of virtue and punishment of vice which is constantly to be found in Starke's fiction a recurrent theme in the "Moralische Erzählung". The dominant features of this type are clearly delineated by Wieland, who puts the following speech into the mouth of one of the narrators in his "Hexameron von Rosenhain...":

"Alle empfindsame Familiengeschichten, und alle sogenannte moralische Erzählungen, worin lauter Menschen aus der Unschuldswelt, lauter Ideale von Güte, Edelmuth, Selbstverleugnung, und gränzenloser Wohltätigkeit aufgeführt werden, sollen ein für allemal ausgeschlossen sein."⁽¹⁾

Many of the so-called scenes from every-day life, which appeared in the last quarter of the 18th century, do however

(1) C.M. Wieland, "Werke", Leipzig, 1839, Vol. XIX, p.153.

possess some semblance of truth. Increasing importance was attached to the verisimilitude of a story, as is shown by such subtitles as "Wahre Geschichte" or "eine Wahre Anekdote."

Although most of this literature cannot be granted more than third-rate distinction, a few authors breathe life into this type of story. The heroines of "Die Landmädchen," by Friedrich Rochlitz, are of real flesh and blood and possess a charm and vivacity which endear them to us from the very beginning. The criticism of Meissner is in some measure justified: "Freilich gewähren viele von ihnen [teutsche Erzählungen] statt der Unterhaltung, die sie versprechen, Langweil; doch dies von allen zu sagen, wäre Unverstand oder Neid; denn unter ihren Verfassern befinden sich auch manche von Deutschlands vorzüglichsten Schriftstellern; Männer [Wer kennt die Namen eines Anton Wall, Musäus, Müller (zu Itzehoe), Jünger, Kozebue, u.a.m. nicht? Diejenigen ungerechnet, die wie Sturz, Möser, Kretschmann, Schiller, Klockenbring und Halem ihren vermischten Sammlungen manche einzelne schätzbare Erzählung einverleiben], die in der Erfindung Neuheit, in der Anordnung Kenntnis, und im Vortrag Anmuth und Stärke der Sprache bewährten." We may smile now at the association of

(1) A.G.Meissner, "Skizzen", Leipzig, 1792, Vorrede.

Schiller's name with such a nonentity as Klockenbring
 and we may find the good qualities of these narrators
 grossly exaggerated, but Meissner's observation that the
 tale was beginning to be adopted by authors of some merit,
 is true to fact. Meissner himself may be cited as a writer
 not without talent. The 36 Volumes of his works contain a
 most diverse assortment of tales: fables, translations,
 moral stories, dialogues, anecdotes, episodes from the
 lives of historical personages, and criminal stories. Many
 of the anecdotes, such as 'Französischer Justizmord' deal
 with trifling matters which have startling consequences.
 A common feature of these narratives is an emphasis upon
 strange behaviour rather than extraordinary events. The
 criminal stories are a variation in the type of the moral
 tale. The moral idea which underlies these sketches is
 that criminals are seldom so wicked as they appear. Many
 of the stories illustrate how a man not evil by disposition
 may be driven into crime by circumstance, a conception
 which is implied in such titles as: Unkeusche, Mörderin,
 Mordbrennerin und doch bloss ein unglückliches Mädchen;
 Blutschänder, Feueranleger, und Mörder zugleich, den
 Gesetzen nach, und Doch ein Jüngling von edler Seele. Der
 Schieferdecker, the source of Otto Ludwig's narrative,
 Zwischen Himmel und Erde tells how a father killed his son

in self-preservation. Everyone of these cases shows how a man's deeds are misconstrued from his actions; and the narrative is liberally interspersed with the author's comments. In *Die Räuberschenke*, a framework tale, the captain of a robber band turns out to be the friend of the narrator, to whom he relates how a brother defrauded him of his inheritance and forced him into this way of life. From this tale Schiller probably drew inspiration for his *Verbrecher aus Verlorener Ehre*, a study of the psychological development of a criminal. At first misled by a desire for honour, Wolf der Sonnenwirt then loses his self-respect and throws all moral scruples to the winds, but finally reveals his better self for a brief moment. This history of moral degradation is overladen with the author's moralising comments, and cannot be counted as one of Schiller's great works.

The tendency towards psychological motivation occurs even in contemporary reproductions of folk-tales. The intrinsic value of this primitive form was not perceived by such writers as Musäus; who wherever possible rationalised the themes and decorated them with descriptions of local colour or even topical allusions. Above all, they

left nothing to the reader's imagination and sprinkled their narrative with explanatory and critical remarks on the behaviour of the hero. Wieland, in fact, likens the elaboration of these compositions out of the plain folk-tale to the fashioning of a statue out of a shapeless mass!⁽¹⁾ Bolte und Polivka, in their notes on the fairy-tales collected by the Grimm brothers make the following observation: "Musäus suchte seine Stoffe psychologisch zu vertiefen und malerisch auszuschnürceln."⁽²⁾ a criticism true of this type in general, which has been termed "Märchen-novelle." The moral conception embodied in the 18th century stories is sometimes deeper than the mere expression of the triumph of virtue and the downfall of vice. Two of the tales by A. Lafontaine⁽³⁾ illustrate the idea that gratitude is not love, for the mind speaks a different language from the heart. One of these, "Die Harfe," a tale within a tale, tells how a young woman who intends to marry a man because he has saved her life,

(1) J. Musäus "Deutsche Volksmärchen" Göttingen, 1787, "Vorrede" by C.M. Wieland.

(2) J. Bolte und Polivka, "Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Gebrüder Grimm," Leipzig, 1913, IV, p.284.

(3) "Die Harfe," and "Er liebte sie mehr wie sein Leben," both included in "Gewalt der Liebe in Erzählungen," Berlin, 1797.

hears a fisherman sing a ballad in which the heroine in a similar position to herself, finds that she does not love the man she has married and so throws herself into the sea in despair. The young woman takes this moral to heart, breaks off the engagement with her rescuer, and marries the man she does love. In this tale events are obviously designed to demonstrate a moral precept, and thus leave an impression of artificiality.

The type of the moral tale reaches its highest pitch of excellence in Goethe. At the same time it is transformed. For Goethe has quite a different vision of the moral tale from that of most 18th century narrators. He voices his opinion through the clergyman in his "Unterhaltungen Deutscher Ausgewanderter": "Nur diejenige Erzählung verdient moralisch genannt zu werden, die uns zeigt, dass der Mensch in sich eine Kraft habe, aus Überzeugung eines Bessern selbst gegen seine Neigung zu handeln keine moralische Geschichte kann etwas anderes lehren." Hence we see how the meaning of "moralisch" is altered by Goethe. "Der Prokurator" and "Ferdinand und Ottilie," two moral tales related by the clergyman in the "Unterhaltungen Deutscher Ausgewanderter" conform strictly to Goethe's definition

(1) Goethe, "Werke" Stuttgart, [N.D.], VI, p 469.

of this type. Of the former the Baroness remarks:
 „Wirklich verdient die Erzählung vor vielen andern
 den Ehrentitel einer moralischen Erzählung.“⁽¹⁾ In „Der
 Prokurator“ a young wife falls in love with a young doctor
 of law while her husband is absent on a sea-voyage. She
 sends for the young man and declares her love. He
 consents to gratify her desire when he has fulfilled the
 vow he has made to abstain from comfort for a year.
 She agrees to share the burden of the vow in order to
 lessen the time. She finds, however, that after three
 weeks of most rigorous living she wants to remain true
 to her husband and thanks the Prokurator because, as she
 says: „Sie haben mich mir selbst erhalten.“⁽²⁾ The value of
 this tale lies wholly in its ethical significance.
 „Ferdinand und Ottilie“ has a similar theme. Here a young
 man steals money from his father's desk in order to buy
 presents for the woman he loves. When the latter goes
 away, his conscience pricks him and he repents of his
 dishonesty. „Endlich ermannte er sich“⁽³⁾ we are told, and
 the young man vindicates his honour by restoring the
 stolen money. The old clergyman explains in introduction,
 that this story, although a common „Familiengemälde, ...
 durch eine genaue Darstellung dessen, was in den Gemüthern
 vorging, neu und interessant werden dürfte.“⁽⁴⁾ „Ferdinand und

(1) Goethe, *op. cit.*: VI, p. 468

(2) *ibid.*: VI, p. 467.

(3) *ibid.*: VI, p. 479.

(4) *ibid.*: VI, p. 471.

Ottillie" is first and foremost a study of the hero's moral development, in the course of which a particular ethical problem is presented. The narrative is heavily charged with the author's comments and reflections. The "Novelle", which Goethe intended as a pattern for the short tale, is an allegory representing the victory of love over force. The external and the internal action are linked at intervals by pictures designed to produce an effect in our minds, such as the scene of the child with the lion at the end; in which the central idea is at the same time given lyric expression. We feel that in the "Novelle" Goethe was straining this form to its utmost bounds.

Although the framework technique of the "Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewandeter" is clearly modelled on Boccaccio's Decameron, Goethe's cycle of tales has little else in common with the Italian ones. Besides the two moral stories already mentioned, the German collection contains risky anecdotes from the Marschall von Bassompierre, and two ghost-tales which neither convince nor interest us. Ferdinand's discovery of the secret spring in his father's desk may perhaps be likened to the striking feature in Boccaccio's tales, but so much stress is laid upon the ethical significance that

this fact appears trifling.

The type of story dominant in the 18th century bears a closer resemblance to the 'Novelas Ejemplares' by Cervantes than to the Decameron of Boccaccio. Narrators of this period were not so much concerned with events for their own sake, as with the moral which could be drawn from them.

In eighteenth Century Germany we look in vain for a form of narrative similar to the Classical 'Novella'. The term 'Novelle' is indeed used by Wieland as early as 1772, who gives this explanation of it: 'Novellen werden vorzüglich eine Art von Erzählung genannt, welche sich von den grossen Romanen durch die Simplizität des Plans und den kleinen Umfang der Fabel unterscheiden;' thus showing no true understanding of its nature. Although Wieland uses Boccaccio's framework technique in his 'Hexameron von Rosenhain', which appeared in 1805, and names one of the tales 'Novelle ohne Titel', the types in this collection differ little from the moral story and the 'Novellenmärchen'. The statement, however, which the author puts into the mouth of one of his narrators: 'Bei einer Novelle werde vorausgesetzt, dass sie sich in unserer wirklichen Welt begeben habe, wo alles natürlich und begreiflich zugeht, und die Begebenheiten zwar nicht alltäglich sind, aber sich

(1) C. M. Wieland. "Werke" Leipzig, 1772, I, p. 22.

doch, unter denselben Umständen, alle Tage allent halben zutragen könnten,"⁽¹⁾ forms the basis of later criticism.

The narrative literature of the 18th century in Germany then shows little which can be compared with Italian 'Novella.' The nearest approach to it is perhaps the anecdote. This form did not however rise to any literary merit, most of the examples being mere hackwork. The "Straussfedern," which appeared at the end of the century, are a collection of anecdotes, mostly adaptations from foreign authors, by Tieck, Musäus, and others. Arousing interest in nothing but the curious nature of some incident, they seem light and trivial in the extreme.

To judge from the productions of the 18th century, it would appear that the Classical 'Novella,' founded by Boccaccio, with its high degree of objectivity, is alien to the genius of the German people. The compact form, in which every feature is concentrated upon a single striking occurrence, is lacking until the appearance of Heinrich von Kleist's "Erzählungen" in 1810. For Kleist transforms the Classical 'Novella' into a living type in German literature. A remarkable incident is at the core of every tale by

⁽¹⁾ C.M. Wieland, "Werke," Leipzig, 1839, Vol. XIX, p. 256.

Kleist. This incident is at the same time however an event of great moment, not on account of its strangeness, but because of the world order of which it is a symptom. It is significant that the title Kleist first suggested for his tales was *Moralische Erzählungen*,¹¹⁾ perhaps an acknowledgement of some indebtedness to Cervantes, with whose works he was acquainted.¹²⁾ Indeed, in every one of his tales some kind of moral problem is presented. Thus we see that in Kleist two ways meet; the story with a moral purpose fuses with the tale of a striking incident; and thus a fresh type is created, one in which some of the finest narratives in German literature have been produced.

11) cf. Kleists Werke ed: cit: V, ...
 An Reimer, August 1810. "es würde mir lieb sein, wenn der Druck so wohl ins Auge fiel, als es sich ohne weiteren Kostenaufwand tun lässt, und schlage etwa den Persiles [of Cervantes] vor."

CHAPTER II.

THE SOURCES OF THE TALES.

The object of research into sources is to reveal the artist at work, fashioning his material.

In the case of Heinrich von Kleist's „Erzählungen“ this investigation can only be pursued with caution. For trustworthy evidence as to the actual sources of his tales is scanty. The „Erzählungen“ are hardly mentioned in his letters; never in reference to their sources.⁽¹⁾ The reports of friends, as far as they are preserved, give very slight information on the tales. Little is known of the books which the author read; it is even uncertain when he actually composed his „Erzählungen.“ At best, facts can be related to one another and the highest degree of probability deduced. When no decisive facts can be discovered, resemblances can be observed to other works and possible sources indicated.

Definite evidence is extant for the origin of „Michael Kohlhaas.“ Ludwig Tieck, who was in personal contact

(1) Otto Reuter, in his „Heinrich von Kleist's Ideenmagazin, sein Tagebuch, und Geschichte seiner Seele,“ Kleistgesellschaft, Berlin, 1925, seeks to show that other biographical writings existed. These writings, which might have thrown light on the sources of the „Erzählungen,“ have either been lost or destroyed.

(1)
 with Ernst von Pfuel, wrote in his 1826 edition of Kleist's works : „ Genesen ging er (Kleist) nach Potsdam, wo er wieder im Finanz departement arbeitete. Er fand seinen Freund, mit welchem er sich schnell versöhnte, und mit verjüngter Lust wandte er sich zu seinen poetischen Versuchen. In einem Gespräche, in welchem er seinen Freund aufforderte, auch eine Tragödie zu dichten, erzählte ihm dieser die Geschichte vom Kohlhaas, dessen Name noch heut' zu Tage eine Brücke bei Potsdam trägt, und der auch vom Volke nicht ganz vergessen ist. Diesen Gegenstand ergriff Kleist, und er fing an, jene Novelle zu schreiben, die in seinen Erzählungen abgedruckt ist. (2)
 Eduard von Bülow quoted this statement in his „Heinrich von Kleist's Leben und Briefe“, transporting the scene from Potsdam to Königsberg, and stating the friend to have been Pfuel. (3) This evidence for the awakening of Kleist's interest

(1) For a biography of Ernst Heinrich Adolf von Pfuel see W. Loewe, „Erinnerungen an den General Ernst von Pfuel“, Deutsche Rundschau, Berlin, February, 1888, p.p.202 ff: S.Rahmer, „Heinrich von Kleist als Mensch und Dichter“, Berlin, 1909, p.4, and W.Herzog, „Heinrich von Kleist“, München, 1911, Notes p.643.

(2) L.Tieck, „Heinrich von Kleist's gesammelte Schriften“, Vorrede, p. XIV, Berlin, 1826.

(3) Eduard von Bülow, „Heinrich von Kleist's Leben und Briefe“, Berlin, 1848, p.43.

in Kohlhaas may be credited, since both Ludwig Tieck and Eduard von Bülow were personally acquainted with Ernst von Pfuel, from whom they must have learned it.

That Kleist used historical material in the composition of his "Michael Kohlhaas" is evident from the wealth of detail, most of which corresponds with recorded facts. In the Königsberg Schlossbibliothek Kleist had access to "Diplomatische und curieuse Nachlese der Historie von Ober-sachsen," by Christian Schöttgen and George Ch. Kreysig, which contained a "Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen."⁽¹⁾ In this Peter Hafftig alludes in footnotes to Nicolaus Leuthinger's "Scriptorum de rebus Marchiae Brandenburgensis."⁽²⁾ This volume was in the Wallenrodsche Bibliothek, Königsberg, in 1806, when Kleist was in that city.⁽³⁾ The conjecture

(1) Christian Schöttgen und George Ch. Kreysig; "Diplomatische und curieuse Nachlese der Historie von Ober-sachsen und angrenzenden Ländern, zu einiger Erläuterung derselben." Dresden und Leipzig, 1731, Part III, Chapter V: "Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen, einem Befehder derer Chur-Sächsische Lande, aus Petri Hafftitii geschriebener Märckischen Chronic."

(2) Nicolaus Leuthinger: "Scriptorum de rebus Marchiae Brandenburgensis maxime celebrium Nicolai Leuthingeri de Marchia et rebus Brandenburgicis commentarii huiusque desideratissimi ac opuscula reliqua adhuc rarissima nec non Zachariae Gardae successiones familiarum atque res gestae illustrissimorum praesidium marchiae Brandenburgensis ab anno DCCCXXVII ad annum MDLXXXII" Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1729.

(3) This information was supplied by the kindness of Dr. Carl Diesch, Director of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Königsberg.

that Kleist used the chronicles of Hafftz and Leuthinger is strengthened by the investigations of Kurt Gassen, who, in a stylistic analysis of the tales and their variant versions, reaches the conclusion that the Phöbus fragment was written in Königsberg. (1)

A comparison between Peter Hafftz' Hans Kohlhase and Kleist's Michael Kohlhaas reveals striking similarities. In both narratives Kohlhaas' horses are seized, a nobleman insults the horsedealer, and allows the horses to be overworked. This wrong produces similar effects. Kohlhaas refuses to take back the horses. He appeals for justice. Denied a hearing, he takes up arms, and with a band of lawless followers he plunders and ravages in Saxony. The action of the authorities is the same in each case. The Elector of Saxony summons Kohlhaas to a consultation, which is fruitless. As the plundering in Saxony continues, the Elector takes military measures against Kohlhaas, which the latter evades. Brandenburg takes the part of Kohlhaas, and grants him a safe conduct. Luther intervenes with remonstrances against the behaviour of Kohlhaas. The fate of the horsedealer is similar in the two histories: Georg Nagelschmidt's malicious advice to continue hostilities because the amnesty has not been observed, leads to the downfall of Kohlhaas. Condemned to death in a Saxon court,

(1) Kurt Gassen, "Chronologie der Novellen Heinrich von Kleists," Weimar, 1920, p.117.

(1)
he is executed on the Monday in Holy week.

The chief characters in Hans Kohlhasen reappear in Michael Kohlhaas. The horsedealer himself, his wife, the arrogant nobleman, Georg Nagelschmidt, Dr. Martin Luther, and the two Electors, of Brandenburg and of Saxony, are characters common to both histories.

In the face of these resemblances, and of the fact that Peter Hafftiz' chronicle was accessible in Königsberg, there seems little doubt that Kleist referred to the Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen in the composition of his Michael Kohlhaas.

Turning to the scanty account of Nicolaus Leuthinger in his Scriptorum de rebus Marchiae Brandenburgensis one finds points of similarity to Michael Kohlhaas which occur in no other chronicle. The greater part is devoted to a vivid and detailed description of the conflagration of Wittenberg. It is possible that in Kleist's words defining Kohlhaas' situation: "er lagerte sich unter dem Dache einer alten verfallenen ziegelscheune, in der Einsamkeit eines finstern Waldes" there is an echo of

(1) Montag nach Palmaram. Kleists Werke. Leipzig und Wien, 1905. III. p.

(2) Kleists Werke. Leipzig und Wien, 1905. III. p. 172.

Leuthinger's expressions : „silvis densissimis perhorridus
 and in tectorum tegulis, in quibus latenter inhaerens
 reptitabat." The terror which the citizens betray in face
 of the merciless free-booter, and the savage conduct of
 Kohlhaas himself, are portrayed alike by Kleist and by
 Leuthinger. The final words of the Latin chronicle:
 „cuius tamen mox indicii lati Principem, cum quaedam plenius
 cognovisset, poenituit, vivumque potius se quam mortuum
 Colhasium malle dixit" strike the same note as is dominant
 in „Michael Kohlhaas."

Peter Hafftiz refers not only to Leuthinger's
 chronicle but also to a „Stambuch und kurze Erzählung"
 by Balthasar Menz. This history contains facts which recur in
 „Michael Kohlhaas."⁽¹⁾ Here, as in Kleist's tale, an appeal is
 made to the Emperor at Vienna, and the sentence passed on
 Kohlhaas is commuted from death by being broken on the wheel
 to execution by the sword. This chronicle was not however
 accessible to Kleist in Königsberg.⁽²⁾ If he consulted it during
 the composition of his tale, it must have been after he left

(1) M. Balthasar Menz : „Stambuch und kurze Erzählung Vom Ursprung
 und Heerkomen der Chur-und Fürstlichen Heuser / Sachsen /
 Brandenburg / Anhalt und Lawenburg / sampt etlichen derselben
 Bildnüssen wie sie im Schloss zu Wittenberg zu finden."
 Wittenberg 1598.

(2) This information was supplied by the kindness of Dr. Carl
 Diesch, Director of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek,
 Königsberg.

East Prussia.

Nor is this impossible, for those features which are common to the chronicle and the modern tale are contained in the final part of "Michael Kohlhaas."

The minor chronicles of Menz and Leuthinger add very little to the "Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen." The "Destinata Lusatica" contain an article on Hans Kohlhasen, which, with the exception of several letters dealing with the case, is a repetition of Peter Hafftiz' chronicle.⁽¹⁾ There is no evidence that Kleist used this document.

The episode of the gipsy and the capsule, which is introduced at the end of Michael Kohlhaas, does not appear in any of these ancient chronicles. Peter Hafftiz does indeed mention one Hans Grassmuss, "der auch ein ausbündiger Schwartzkünstler gewesen," but there is no material here for the singular story of the capsule.⁽²⁾

A suggestion for this episode may perhaps be contained in that section of Achim von Arnim's "Wintergarten" which is entitled "Amtsbericht des Generals Grafen von Schaffgotsch."⁽³⁾

(1) "Destinata Literaria et Fragmenta Lusatica : Lübben (Spreewald), 1738, Part XII, Section 3. "Verdienste des Markgraftums Nieder-Lausitz gegen Wittenberg durch schleunig ertheilte Rechtshülfe."

(2) Schottgen und Kreysig, "Diplomatische Nachlese," Dresden und Leipzig, 1731, Part III, Chapter V.

(3) Achim von Arnim, "Der Wintergarten," Berlin, 1809, "Zweyter Winterabend," p.54.

Here Arnim relates how a preacher, Herr Johann Andreas Dühm, foretells, by astronomical calculations, that "ein kaltes Eisen" will cause the death of General Graf von Schaffgotsch. This prophecy reaches the ears of the General, who sends for Dühm, and asks him to forecast the death of a lamb which is taken out of the flock. The lamb, says Dühm, will be killed by a wolf. The General immediately orders the lamb to be slain for the table. The carcass is put on a spit and a tame wolf is set to guard it. The wolf, who is generally a reliable guardian of his charge, on this occasion devours the lamb. The General shows no concern at this significant fulfilment of the preacher's second prediction, but rather esteems it a privilege to die for his country. His death ensues, in fulfilment of the prophecy, by the sword; not, however, on the battlefield, but on the scaffold. There is an unmistakable likeness between this anecdote and the prophecy pronounced by the gipsy woman to the two Electors at Jüterbock, and confirmed by the token of the royal stag's escape.⁽¹⁾ The probability of Kleist's indebtedness to Arnim is suggested by several circumstances. Arnim's "Wintergarten" was

(1) H. Arnim, "Anecdote von Kleist's Tod durch den Wolf"; Berlin und Potsdam 1841, p. 111.

(1) "Kleist's Werke." Leipzig und Wien. 1905. III. p. 234.

"Kleist's Werke," III. p. 234.

"Kleist's Werke," III. p. 234.

published in 1809; the final form of "Michael Kohlhaas" did not appear until 1810; Kleist and Arnim were companions in the "Christlich-Deutsche Tischgesellschaft" of 1809.⁽¹⁾ Thus it is not impossible that the end of Kleist's tale shows the influence of Arnim. The sign that the royal stag should escape from its cage forms only part of the capsule story, for which no source is known.

A revolutionary theory has been propounded by S. Rahmer, in his book, "Heinrich von Kleist als Mensch und Dichter."⁽²⁾ He argues against the statement, based on Tieck's authority, that it was Ernst von Pfuel who turned Kleist's attention to the story of Kohlhaas. On the grounds of further evidence he denies that the chronicles of Hafftiz, Leuthinger and Menz played any part in the composition of "Michael Kohlhaas." This further evidence he draws from an article by Hermann Wedding in the review "Oberschlesien" for 1903, entitled "Jugenderinnerungen aus Oberschlesien," which records oral and written traditions of the Wedding family.⁽³⁾ The ancestors of the Weddings lived in a northern quarter of Berlin, on the site of the present Sebastian-

(1) R. Steig: "Heinrich von Kleist's Berliner Kämpfe": Berlin und Stuttgart, 1901, I, (2), p. 21. f.

(2) S. Rahmer, "Heinrich von Kleist als Mensch und Dichter": Berlin 1909, Pt. "II, Chap. 2.

(3) "Oberschlesien," I, XI, February, 1903.

kirche, the former Galgenplatz. One member of the family was present at the death of Kohlhase, who is reported to have been executed by the sword. This Wedding took both the sons of Kohlhase into his keeping, brought them up, and sent them away to earn their own living. One of them founded a family in Mecklenburg, the last survivors of which died at the beginning of the 19th Century. The other went to Bohemia, where he changed his name to Koulhaasz. All these facts are peculiar to the Wedding family chronicle and do not occur in the other ancient chronicles. It is significant that they all appear in Kleist's tale. The execution of Michael Kohlhaas by the sword and the survival of two sons are common features which could hardly be accidental; nor could the reference to Mecklenburg and the allusion, made in the last words of Kleist's tale, to descendants flourishing in the 18th Century.⁽¹⁾ Rahmer surmises that Kleist became acquainted with these family traditions through conversation with Johann Friedrich Wedding.

(1) Kleists Werke, Leipzig und Wien, 1905, III, p. 248: "Vom Kohlhaas aber haben noch im vergangenen Jahrhundert, im Mecklenburgischen, einige frohe und rüstige Nachkommen gelebt."

grandfather of Hermann Wedding. For Kleist and J.F. Wedding were engaged in affairs of state together in Berlin. There is no proof, however, that a conversation ever took place; and the theory of Rahmer, pending conclusive evidence in its favour, cannot be accepted as more than an ingenious conjecture.

E.T.A. Hoffmann, in his *Serapionsbrüdern* pays⁽¹⁾ tribute to Kleist's treatment of the source of his *Michael Kohlhaas*. Lothar and Theodor are discussing the use which poets make of well-known material. Lothar exclaims: "Als ob es darauf ankommen könnte, dass der Dichter den Keim, den er irgendwo fand, in sein Inneres aufnahm, als ob die Gestaltung des Stoffs nicht eben den wahren Dichter bewahren müsse." Theodor replies: "Wie ein Stoff bearbeitet oder vielmehr lebendig gestaltet werden kann, hat niemand herrlicher bewiesen als Heinrich Kleist in seiner vortrefflichen klassisch gediegenen Erzählung von dem Rosshändler Kohlhaas."

(1) E.T.A. Hoffmann: "Werke." Leipzig, (N.D.), VIII, p.23.

Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas" is a completely different type of composition from its principal source, the chronicle of Peter Hafftiz. The latter is a collection of spicy news; "Michael Kohlhaas", on the other hand, is a tragic narrative on a large scale. In the "Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen" there is a succession of anecdotes, only connected by the chief character, whereas in Kleist's tale there is a fateful sequence of cause and effect. Although the chief feature common to the chronicle and the short story is the person of the hero, Kohlhaas is a transformed character in Kleist's tale. Instead of being an unprincipled freebooter he becomes a would-be reformer, actuated by high principles and burning with the desire for justice. By means of careful selection and motivation Kleist recreates Hans Kohlhasen with a change of name. In doing this, he raises the petty rebel to heroic stature.

The greater part of the other characters in Kleist's tale have their origin in the chronicle of Hans Kohlhasen. The figure of Kohlhaas' wife is more fully drawn by Kleist.

Her death and apparition as the gipsy are an innovation. About the figure of Kohlhaas are grouped also his children, Sternbald, Herse, and the "Amtmann." The nobleman's party and the two court parties are expanded even more than is the Kohlhaas group. The "Junker" becomes the centre of a large family circle, and about the two Electors numerous courtiers and councillors are assembled.

By no means all the events of Peter Hafftiz' chronicle are used in "Michael Kohlhaas." Some of them, such as the trick with the corpses at Jüterbock, and many details of petty robberies, disappear in the modern version; others, such as the interview with Luther and the seizure of the horses, are so altered and expanded that they are quite unlike the original. Much fresh detail and many fresh events are introduced. The proclamations of Kohlhaas, the ill-treatment of Herse, the appeal of Lisbeth, the fire at the Tronkenburg, are features peculiar to Kleist's tale; so also are the search for the "Junker" at Erlabrunn, the scene in the market-place at Dresden, the transportation of Kohlhaas to Berlin, and finally the whole story of the capsule.

A comparison between the chronicle of Peter Hafftiz and Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas" shows that much of the later work is independent of the earlier history. It is evident that every fresh feature serves some purpose, and that this

purpose is in its turn subordinate to the main theme, the indefatigable search for justice. Whereas the "Junker" ceases to play a part after the first paragraph of Peter Hafftiz' chronicle, in "Michael Kohlhaas" he is never wholly forgotten. The fire at the Tronkenburg, the visit to the convent at Erlabrunn, the proclamations of Kohlhaas, and the capsule episode, all exist for the sake of this character. Side by side with the interest in the "Junker" runs the interest in the horses. In the "Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen" the horses are lost to sight after the initial seizure of them at the Tronkenburg: in "Michael Kohlhaas" they appear again and again in unexpected places. But whether the author is describing a conflagration, a battle, or a conference, the person of Michael Kohlhaas always dominates the action. Especially in the first half of the tale, Michael Kohlhaas is the most active character, his every action is carefully motivated, and the scenes through which he passes are vividly portrayed. And for the better presentation of the cause of Kohlhaas, the "Junker" is brought into the foreground, and the court parties are given a more important rôle in the action.

The fundamental difference, however, between the chronicle of Peter Hafftiz and "Michael Kohlhaas" lies not in the introduction of fresh characters and events, nor even in the altered conception of Kohlhaas, but in the attitude of the

author to his material. For with the dominance of an idea and the subordination of every fact to that idea the Kohlhaas material is treated from a point of view peculiar to Kleist himself.

Nevertheless the author's attitude to his subject appears inconsistent. Sometimes he supports his hero in his search for justice, sometimes he condemns him. It seems, in fact, impossible that the cruel and purposeless outrages of the middle part of the story should be committed by the same man who refused to take offence at the insolence of the "Schlossvogt" and "lächelte über den Witz des dürren Junkers." (1)

Heinrich Meyer-Benfey has pointed out an inconsistency between the words of Luther: "Und muss ich dir sagen, Gottvergessener, dass der Landes herr auch deinen Namen nicht kennt" and the fact that the petition of Lisbeth had been answered by a "landesherrliche Resolution." From this discrepancy, and from several textual inconsistencies, such as the appearance of a Graf Kallheim in both Saxony and Brandenburg, Meyer-Benfey deduces that the composition of "Michael Kohlhaas" was not a continuous process, but that there were two versions of the tale.

(1) "Kleist's Werke," Leipzig und Wien, 1905, p. 146.

(2) "Kleist's Werke," ed. cit. III. p. 180.

one which justified the hero, and one which condemned him.⁽¹⁾
 The critic believes that Kleist, in fusing the two versions, did not maintain a consistent attitude towards his hero. There is however, no reason why Michael Kohlhaas, under the stress of circumstances, should not alter his conduct, without inconsistency. Indeed, the opening words of the tale, "einer der rechtschaffensten zugleich und entsetzlichsten Menschen seiner Zeit," lead one to expect Kohlhaas to behave in different ways, which might be difficult to reconcile.

An incongruity in the portrayal of the two Electors is indeed undeniable. The Elector of Saxony, of whom Michael Kohlhaas says at the beginning : "Der Herr, weiss ich, selbst ist gerecht,"⁽²⁾ proves true to this reputation in the conference with his councillors on the policy to be adopted towards the plunderer. Then suddenly he changes into a faint-hearted wretch, who swoons at the slightest provocation, and who, moreover, becomes the personal enemy of Michael Kohlhaas. The Elector of Brandenburg, on the other hand, who

(1) From the Luther interview onward, Kleist appears to approve of Kohlhaas' behaviour. In the Luther interview and in the account of Kohlhaas' excesses, Meyer-Benfey would see the survival of a previous version which condemned Kohlhaas. (cf. Heinrich Meyer-Benfey: Die Innere Geschichte des Michael Kohlhaas" C.2. (Euphorion" XV, 1908) C 2, p. 136

(2) "Kleist's Werke," Leipzig und Wien, 1908, p. 162.

in the beginning did nothing to help Kohlhaas, is transformed at the end into his champion. Some change of plan may indeed be perceived from a comparison between the Phöbus version of 1808⁽¹⁾ and the final form of 1810. In the Phöbus fragment the whole action takes place in Brandenburg and only one Elector is concerned. In the later version the Elector of Saxony plays a leading part and the action moves from one state to the other. This may be explained by the fact that Phöbus appeared in Dresden; Kleist was therefore compelled to conceal his hatred of the Saxon court, which was doing servile homage to Napoleon. Thus he had to wait until 1810, when he was in Berlin, before he could vent his wrath against the prince who had risen to greatness at the expense of his beloved Prussia. It is this political bias which accounts for the glorification of Brandenburg and disparagement of Saxony, and the consequent inconsistency in "Michael Kohlhaas."⁽²⁾

The capsule episode, which has been shown to have an

(1) Phöbus, "Journal für die Kunst," ed: H. von Kleist und A. Müller, Dresden, 1808, contained a fragment of "Michael Kohlhaas" Stüchtes Stück IV, pp.20-34.

(2) This political bias is pointed out by A. Wilbrandt in his introduction to Kleist's works, Berlin, 1878 (?) p. LII. cf. also Otto Brahm, "Heinrich von Kleist," Book V, pp.308-9; H. Meyer-Benfey, "Die Innere Geschichte des Michael Kohlhaas," (Euphorion XV, 1908) A 2(d) pp.108 f.

origin independent of the rest of "Michael Kohlhaas,"⁽¹⁾ is not essential to the main theme, for it diverts the interest from the search for justice. This undue emphasis on the downfall of the Elector of Saxony may also be attributed to Kleist's political feelings during the Berlin period.

The composition of "Michael Kohlhaas" falls into three parts. The basic idea is a moral problem, presented in the mind of an individual.⁽²⁾ The mental conflict of Michael Kohlhaas dominates the story until the last words of Lisbeth, his wife, which are re-echoed at the intervention of Luther. At this point Kohlhaas makes a decision by refusing to listen to the voice of conscience, speaking through his wife and by nursing his grievance against Wenzel von Tronka. Here Kurt Gassen, by a comparative study of the language in Kleist's "Erzählungen," has shown that this first part of "Michael Kohlhaas" dates from the author's earlier period.⁽³⁾ The second part in the composition of

(1) cf. H. Meyer-Benfey, "Die Innere Geschichte des Michael Kohlhaas," Euphorion XV, 1908, A 1, p. 104.

(2) Meyer-Benfey, in his "Innere Geschichte des Michael Kohlhaas," Euphorion XV, 1908, C2, puts forward the theory that, of the two supposed versions of "Michael Kohlhaas," one treated a moral, the other a social problem.

(3) Kurt Gassen, "Chronologie der Novellen Heinrich von Kleists," Weimar: 1920, p. 104.

"Michael Kohlhaas" develops the theme of the condemnation of Kohlhaas. In the middle part of the present story he is called "Wütherich," "Räuber," "rasender Mordbrenner." He acts blindly and desperately, following his perverted impulse. Now the reader's sympathy shifts from Michael Kohlhaas to those whom he is grossly illtreating. The conflict between individual and State turns the psychological problem into a social one. In the final stage the interest in the State outweighs the interest in Kohlhaas. He becomes the passive victim of the whims of sovereigns. The episode of the capsule branches away from the main current of the narrative into the backwater of political controversy. Not until the last page is the main theme resumed. These three stages of development may be defined as the psychological, the social, and the political.

Many critics have contended, on the grounds of this complexity of treatment, that "Michael Kohlhaas" is a heterogeneous composition. A survey of the completed tale does not however give the impression that it is a collection of ill-assorted fragments, but rather, with the exception of the capsule episode, that it forms an organic whole. The action of "Michael Kohlhaas" is like that of a mighty Catharine wheel; from a tiny centre in the heart of Kohlhaas it whirls in an ever-widening circle until it touches the destinies of kings and princes.

DIE MARQUISE VON O....

No other tale of Kleist has evoked so many suggestions as to a possible source as Die Marquise von O... This fact is due to the total absence of any definite evidence. The only possible intimation as to the origin of this story is an article written by Kleist for the Berliner Abendblätter of Jan. 3rd, 1811, entitled Sonderbare Geschichte, die sich, zu meiner Zeit, in Italien zutrug. A story by Tieck which was included in the Strausffedern bears a resemblance to this "Sonderbare Geschichte" in the Abendblätter. Kleist's anecdote of a young Italian noblewoman, who was assaulted by a French count, and who, after taking part in a mock marriage ceremony, at which no bridegroom appeared, was happily united to her former betrayer, might be the germ of Die Marquise von O.... It is not impossible that these events, like those described in Kleist's tale, were vom Norden nach dem Süden verlegt. The "wahre Begebenheit," which is mentioned in the sub-title to the tale, might have come to Kleist's ears before 1808, and thus have furnished him with the substance for both accounts. So the newspaper article and the tale might be different descriptions of the same event.

(1) Strausffedern. Berlin: 1796. No. XIII. printed in the...
 (2) cf. Phöbus, Feb. 1808, Heft II, p. 48: - "Die Marquise von O... von Heinrich von Kleist (nach einer wahren Begebenheit, deren Schauplatz vom Norden nach dem Süden verlegt worden.)"
 (3) ...

There is no proof, however, that the short story and the anecdote in the "Abendblätter" had a common origin. Thus the search for a source to Kleist's tale apart from the "Sonderbare Geschichte" is justified. Of the numerous stories which have been put forward, many bear a striking resemblance to "Die Marquise von O..." Of these, "De la Fuerza de la Sangre," one of Cervantes' "Novelas Ejemplares," and an incident related by Heinrich Voss in a letter to Goethe do not show so much likeness to "Die Marquise von O...." as some others which have been suggested as sources. For in both of these stories the woman is aware of a union having taken place and the theme is therefore essentially different. In all other suggested sources the heroine knows nothing of the circumstances of violation. "L'amant confident de lui-mesme," one of the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles" of Mme. de Gomez, which was mentioned by E. von Bülow in his "Heinrich von Kleist's Leben und Briefe" of 1848, was the first story whose resemblance to "Die Marquise von O...." was remarked. As in Kleist's tale, both parties are of noble birth, an act of kindness accompanies the evil deed, the young man repents, and there is real love. The parents of the victim, moreover, express

(1) Heinrich Voss an Goethe, Jan 31st, 1807, printed in the "Goethe-Jahrbuch" No. 96, pp.60 f; cited by R.M. Werner in his article on the sources of "Die Marquise von O...." "Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturgeschichte," 1890, pp.483-500.

(2) Eduard v. Bülow, "Heinrich von Kleists Leben und Briefe," Berlin, 1848, pp.43,44.

mistrust and indignation, a scene occurs with the doctor, the evildoer makes a final confession, and the end is a happy marriage. The most important point of similarity with Kleist's tale is the psychological insight into the minds of the young woman and her mother. The anecdote appended by Montaigne to his essay «De l'Ivrognerie»⁽¹⁾ offers points of contact with „Die Marquise von O...” which «l'amant confident de lui-mesme» does not possess. These are the widowhood of the heroine and the announcement that she would marry the father of the child-to-be. An article in a French medical journal by a doctor named Pitaval,⁽²⁾ which recounts a similar incident, has much in common with «l'amant confident de lui-mesme». It includes in addition the young woman's banishment, and describes the courtship between the couple. Tieck's „William Lovell” contains a betrayal scene, in which the circumstances are almost identical with those in „Die Marquise von O...” For the young „hero,” after rescuing a lady from a fire, violates her while she is still in a swoon. Besides these anecdotes, attention

(1) «Oeuvres de Montaigne,» ed: A.Thibaudet, 1933. Book I, Chap: II, p.324.

(2) The article by Pitaval was printed in Eros, oder Wörterbuch, über die Physiologie. Berlin; 1823: pp.322 ff; also quoted by R.M.Werner, art: cit: Vjs. f.Lg. 1890, p.484.

Quoted by J. F. Fichte in his article, Die Fallangeseichte einiger Frauen Heinrich von Kleists, Zeitschrift für die Kunde des germanischen Alterthums III, 1815, pp.180, 181.

has been drawn to „Die Gerettete Unschuld,⁽¹⁾ which appeared in the Berlin „Archiv der Zeit und des Geschmacks“ of 1798.⁽²⁾ This story is like the report of Pitaval. August Lafontaine's „Moralische Erzählung, „Verbrechen und Strafe“ also contains details which correspond closely to some in „Die Marquise von O...“⁽³⁾ This incident could also have been „Vom Norden nach dem Süden verlegt;“ it takes place in a „Dorf von O...“ in wartime; and the "hero" is likewise erroneously reported to have died with a confession on his lips. Of all these narratives, that which bears the greatest resemblance to Kleist's tale is „L'amant confident de lui-mesme,» by Mme. de Gomez.

Something of all the above stories can be seen in Kleist's tale: in fact, the chain of incidents in „Die Marquise von O...“ could be pieced together from a collection of similar narratives. But here again, as in the case of „Michael Kohlhaas,“ the author deals with his subject matter in an individual manner. Out of a risky anecdote he creates a psychological study. This he achieves by shifting

(1) Die Gerettete Unschuld: Berlin Archiv der Zeit und des „Geschmacks,“ Berlin 1798, „IV Jg. I. p365.

(2) Quoted by K. Bode, „Zur Quelle der Maria von O. Ludwig:“ „Euphorion“ XVI, p. 167.

(3) Quoted by H. Davidts in his article „Zur Quellengeschichte einiger Motive Heinrich von Kleists,“ „Euphorion“ XIX, 1912, pp. 350, 351.

the emphasis from the extraordinary nature of the event to the person of his heroine and her spiritual reactions. Throughout the tale the author focusses the reader's sympathy upon "die Marquise" herself. That is why the tale frequently verges upon the tragic. The heroine is transformed into a woman with a grandeur and dignity of character which are foreign to the heroines of similar stories. All that these others can do in their misfortune is to weep and protest their innocence. They are the passive victims of a cruel fate. Under the pressure of adversity, "die Marquise," on the other hand, rises to heroic stature. Now she is spurred to action. "Mit dem ganzen Stolz der Unschuld gerüstet" she retires with her children, and takes the daring step of announcing in a public journal her intention to marry the father of her future child. In the "Marquise von O..." Kleist has added several characters and incidents which do not appear in any of the suggested sources. For instance, the introduction of the heroine's children indicates her maturity; her treatment of Graf F... at the end, which renders a double marriage necessary, is prompted by her wounded sense of honour. The persons of father and brother are placed beside the mother to complete the family circle, which provides a favourable setting for the radiant figure of "die Marquise." The scenes with her family, the conversations with her mother, her banishment by her parents, and

the subsequent reconciliation scenes, reveal in turn the charm of her personality, her fortitude, and her genuine loving-kindness, her power to forgive without a tinge of resentment.

In the sympathetic presentation of Graf F. an attempt is made to provide the heroine with a lover who is worthy of her. Again and again the figure of the seducer is thrown into relief. Introduced to the reader by a deed of valour, he is soon lost to sight, and the report of his death testifies at once to his guilt and to his bitter remorse. When he suddenly reappears, pressing upon „die Marquise“ his proposal of marriage and relating the allegory of a swan whom he had besmirched and who, by diving under, had risen from the waves without blemish, his every word and gesture is proof not only of his shame, but also of his anxious concern for his beloved Julietta. On his return, his defiance of „die Marquise's“ family and his tenacious pursuit of the dishonoured lady reveal true moral courage. These noble qualities, which are portrayed through actions and behaviour, bring fresh matter into the common theme, at the same time raising the hero above the level of the seducers in similar stories.

DAS ERDBEBEN IN CHILI.

The source of "Das Erdbeben in Chili," or "Jeronimo und Josephe," as it was first named, is obscure. For the plot no parallel can be found. The comparison between the massacre in the last scene of Goethe's drama "Clavigo" and the end of Kleist's tale is superficial, for the motives which prompt the actions are totally different. Some likeness to the basic idea of "Das Erdbeben in Chili" has indeed been remarked by Hermann Davidts in the "Erzählung" by August Lafontaine, "Das Opfer," in which a priestess and her lover profane the temple of Diana: as a result, the land is visited with earthquake, storms, and drought.⁽¹⁾ There is, however, little, either in the action or in the characters which is reminiscent of Kleist's tale.

For the background of the tale, the Chilean earthquake, certain possible sources may be quoted. "Das Erdbeben in Chili," which appeared first in the "Stuttgarter Morgenblatt" of September, 1807,⁽²⁾ was probably conceived during Kleist's stay in Königsberg. Here were published Kant's "Abhandlungen über das Lissaboner Erdbeben von 1755" which contains the

(1) H. Davidts; "Zur Quellengeschichte einiger Motive H. v. Kleists;" "Euphorion" XIX, pp. 350 f.

(2) cf. K. Gassen; "Die Chronologie der Novellen H. v. Kleists" Weimar 1920, p. 54.

following paragraph:⁽¹⁾ „Ich fange nunmehr von der Geschichte des letzten Erdbebens selber an. Ich verstehe unter derselben keine Geschichte der Unglücksfälle, die die Menschen dadurch erlitten haben, kein Verzeichnis der verheerten Städte, und unter ihrem Schutt begrabenen Einwohner. Alles, was die Einbildungskraft sich schreckliches vorstellen kann, muss man zusammen nehmen, um das Entsetzen sich einigermaßen vorzubilden, darin sich die Menschen befinden müssen, wenn die Erde unter ihren Füßen bewegt wird, wenn alles um sie her einstürzt, wenn ein in seinem Grunde bewegtes Wasser das Unglück durch Überströmungen vollkommen macht, wenn die Furcht des Todes, die Verzweiflung wegen des völligen Verlusts aller Güter, endlich den Anblick anderer Elenden den standhaftesten Mut niederschlagen. Eine solche Erzählung würde rührend sein, sie würde, weil sie eine Wirkung auf das Herz hat, vielleicht auch eine auf die Besserung derselben haben können. Allein ich überlasse diese Geschichte geschickteren Händen. Ich beschreibe hier nur die Arbeit der Natur, die merkwürdigen natürlichen Umstände, die die schreckliche Begebenheit begleitet haben, und die Ursachen derselben.“ He closes with the observation : „der Anblick

(1) I. Kant, „Abhandlungen über das Lissaboner Erdbeben von 1755.“ Königsberg 1756. Quoted by E. Schmidt, „H. v. Kleists gesammelte Werke.“ Leipzig und Wien, 1905. III, p. 437.

so vieler Elenden, als die letztere Katastrophe unter unsern Mitbürgern gemacht hat, soll die Menschenliebe rege machen, und uns einen Teil des Unglücks empfinden lassen, welches sie mit solcher Härte betroffen hat."

This work of Kant was probably available to Kleist in Königsberg; on reading it, he may have taken up the challenge of the great philosopher. Under this stimulus, perhaps, there sprang into being „Jeronimo und Josephe, eine Scene aus dem Erdbeben zu Chili vom Jahre 1647."

Kleist must have used other material than this for his description of the catastrophe. For every detail of the earthquake described in the tale has been found to be correct.⁽¹⁾ In 1650 Santiago and La Concepcion were the only South American towns with convents; and Santiago was in fact the residence of a Viceroy and an Archbishop. It is also true that one „Ordenskirche" was spared, while the Cathedral was destroyed. This exactitude can hardly be due to an accident of poetic invention. H. Davidts justly concludes that Kleist referred to other reports of this particular earthquake.⁽²⁾ A. Perrey's account⁽³⁾ may have provided

(1) v. H. Davidts: „Die Novellistische Kunst Heinrichs von Kleist," Berlin, 1913, pp. 13, 14.

(2) H. Davidts, „Die Novellistische Kunst Heinrichs von Kleist," Berlin, 1913, p. 13 mentions C. E. Wunsch, „Cosmologische Unterhaltungen für die Jugend," Leipzig, 1778-80, II, 103, as one of these reports.

(3) A. Perrey: „Documents Relatifs aux tremblements de terre au Chili," Lyon et Paris, 1854, p. 237 ff. Quoted by E. Schmidt, ed. cit. III, p. 436.

him with the facts pertaining to the destruction of the Cathedral, prisons and convents, to inundations, and to the season of the year when the earthquake took place. Although much may be surmised, neither the source of information used for the plot nor that used for the background is known.

Considering the uncertainty of these conjectures the conclusion of Erich Schmidt that no actual source can be indicated must be accepted. It is, at all events, reasonable to regard "Das Erdbeben in Chili" as a worthy response to the challenge of Kant. The extraordinary sequence of events which composes the theme of this tale is typical of the author's view of life and may well be his own invention.

DIE VERLOBUNG IN St. DOMINGO.

The question as to the source of „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo“ has long been a vexed subject of controversy. This fact is largely due to the difficulty of ascertaining when the tale was composed. In his stylistic analysis of this work Kurt Gassen observes a predominance of the expression „auf Weise,“ and a frequent omission of the auxiliary verb;⁽¹⁾ both these features he finds to be peculiar to Kleist's later compositions. Yet this tale, which uncompromisingly takes the side of the French, could hardly have been conceived after the invasion of Napoleon had kindled bitter hatred in the heart of the Prussian poet for this „Wütherich, dieser glückgekrönte Abendtheurer,“ as he calls him in his letters.⁽²⁾ Judging from the subject matter, one must conclude that „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo“ was conceived before 1806,⁽³⁾ although the actual writing-down may be ascribed to a later date.

The revolution of Haiti was a subject of topical interest

(1) K. Gassen : „Chronologie der Novellen Heinrich von Kleists“ : Weimar, 1920, p.77.

(2) „Kleist's Werke“ : Leipzig und Wien, 1905: Vol.V, letter 83, p.324.

(3) This conclusion renders impossible the suggestion of O. Hahne, „Euphorion“ XXIII, 1921, p.239, that Kleist drew on J.F.E. Albrecht's novel, „Scenen der Liebe aus Amerika's heissen Zonen“ for much of the material of „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo.“

at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁽¹⁾ It is probable, as is so often the case with a common topic of conversation, that all kinds of anecdotes were passed from mouth to mouth concerning the horrors and wonders of the revolution. Two contemporary histories have been quoted as likely to have furnished Kleist with material for "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo." These are M. Rainsford's "The Black Empire of Haiti" which was translated into German and published in Hamburg in 1806;⁽²⁾ and Dubroca's "Geschichte der Empörung auf St. Domingo," translated for Minerva in 1805.⁽³⁾ M. Rainsford, in his detailed account of the revolution, takes up the attitude that the French deserved all the ill-treatment they received from the blacks. This opinion was in complete harmony with Kleist's hatred for the French in 1806, and could therefore hardly have failed to find expression in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo." That this is not the case indicates that Kleist could hardly have used Rainsford's account, in spite of some points of similarity between the English history and Kleist's narrative.⁽⁴⁾ Dubroca's tone of indignation against the

cf. R. Steig, H. v. Kleist's Berliner Kämpfe, Berlin u. Stuttgart, 1901, p. 552.

cf. Kleist's Werke ed: cit: III, p. 437.

cf. H. Davidts, op: cit: p. 27.

cf. E. Schmidt; Kleist's Werke, ed: cit: p. 437.

bloody vengeance wreaked by the blacks upon innocent white men is much nearer to the attitude expressed in „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo.“ Here, too, are points of resemblance in the subject matter. The following sentence: „Man erinnert sich, dass die französische Regierung dem General Leclerc nach St. Domingo die beyden Kinder Toussaint L'Ouverture's mitgegeben hatte, um einem [sic] Versuch zu machen, ihn durch einen Angriff auf sein Herz zu seinen Pflichten zurück zu bringen“⁽¹⁾ recalls how the Swiss family „von der Ried,“ took as hostages Nanky and Seppy, the beloved sons of Congo Hoango, in order to gain power over the formidable negro. Dubroca's observations on the women's part in the revolution: „Ueberhaupt nahmen die Negerinnen und Mulattinnen einen sehr thätigen und unmittelbaren Antheil an den Verbrechen und Gräueln aller Art, welche die Unfälle dieser Colonie so scheusslich gemacht haben. Immer und überall sahe man sie bey den grässlichsten Scenen; und vielleicht kamen durch ihre Hände mehr Weisse um, als durch die Hände der Schwarzen; ja man schreibt ihnen ausgedachte Barbareyen und Grausamkeiten zu, die empörender sind, als die, die man den wilden Soldaten dieser

(1) cf. H. Davidts, Die Novellistische Kunst Heinrichs von Kleist, Berlin 1913, p. 27, footnote 7. „Es würde die deutsche Übersetzung in der Archenholzischen Minerva, Hamburg, 1805, [II, p. 106] benutzt.“

Armee vorwirft,⁽¹⁾ have a counterpart in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo."

The historical records could at most have provided Kleist with some suggestions for his setting, and here and there a particular incident. The origin of the main theme remains as obscure as ever. The suggestion that it is the echo of an experience with a Swiss maiden named Mädeli on the Aarinsel is a possible one,⁽²⁾ but it can in no way be proved. Nor can the influence of Goethe's "Bajadere" be traced with any certainty.⁽³⁾ The theory that Kleist conceived his tale in two separate stages, first inventing the plot, then adding the background, is a mere conjecture.⁽⁴⁾ For the discrepancies on which this theory is based, do nothing to prove a twofold conception. The variation of Von der Ried's Christian name from Gustav to August and the repetition of Babekan's report concerning the Swiss may be due⁽⁵⁾

(1) Archenholz, "Minerva," Hamburg, 1805, II, p.121.

(2) cf. H.Davidts: "Die Novellistische Kunst Heinrichs von Kleist," Berlin: 1913, p.30. This suggestion is borne out by the likeness between the names Toni and Mädeli, and the use of Swiss-sounding names such as von der Ried, Strömli, Seppy, and Villeneuve.

(3) cf. (ed: cit.) (Kleist's Werke) III, Leipzig: 1908, p.437.

(4) cf. H.Davidts: op: cit: p.31.

(5) "Kleist's Werke." Leipzig und Wien: 1905. p.345 ll.32.
to p.350 ll.22.

as much to oversight on the part of the author as to the unsuccessful fusion of two versions. Nevertheless it is quite probable that plot and setting had different origins: and that some event within the poet's experience found expression for the first time, when set against the exotic background of the revolution which was of such topical interest.

A parallel to the love-scene in the bedroom has been found in Richardson's "Clarissa Harlowe."⁽¹⁾ In the fiftieth letter Clarissa relates how Lovelace, with evil intention, penetrates into her bedroom. One or two small points correspond exactly in the two accounts. Gustav's words to Toni, "dass er bei ihrer Mutter am Morgen des nächsten Tages anhalten wolle": repeat the vow of Lovelace to Clarissa: "that the next morning's sun should witness our espousals."

"Die Verlobung in St. Domingo contains many episodes, for which no source can be traced: as, for example, the anecdote of the slave-girl with yellow fever and the deliverance of Gustav by Mariane Congreve. In the white family's journey to rescue its imprisoned kinsman,

(1) cf. E. Wolff: "Die Zeit": Wien, 9.I.1904, No. 484. pp.17-19.

however, a resemblance has been remarked to "Die Bürgschaft."⁽¹⁾
These secondary features, some of which are invented,
others drawn from elsewhere, are well motivated in the
action of "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" and throw light
upon the main theme of love and betrayal.

(1) cf. A. Fries. "Stilistische und vergleichende Forschungen,
zu Heinrich von Kleist: mit Proben angewandter Ästhetik."
"Berliner Beiträge zur germanischen und romanischen Philologie,"
No. 30, 1893.

DER FINDLING.

This story of the ungrateful protégé who seeks to dishonour his benefactress and then to appropriate his patron's fortune, immediately recalls to mind «Le Tartufe» of Molière.⁽¹⁾ For here again kindness is unrepaid, a vile attack is made upon the mistress of the house, and the generosity of the benefactor is abused. In addition to these similarities, the fact that the chief feminine character in both stories bears the name Elvire almost certainly proves Kleist's knowledge of «Le Tartuffe.»

A newspaper article by Kleist, headed „Der Neuere [glücklichere] Werther“ reports an event which has a slight bearing on the subject of „Der Findling.“⁽²⁾ Here a young „Kaufmannsdiener,“ burning with passion for his master's young wife, lies down in her bed when she has gone out with her husband. On hearing the couple return, the young man is overcome with shame and shoots himself. Instead of killing himself, however, he accidentally kills his master. A year afterwards the two young people are happily married. The anecdote is told in a light, comic, vein. It is scarcely necessary to point out how unlike in tone

(1) The resemblance is noted by E. Schmidt, „Kleists Werke,“ ed: cit: III, p.439.

(2) „Berliner Abendblätter,“ Jan. 1st, 1811.

are the two narratives.⁽¹⁾ „Der Findling,” moreover, shows certain stylistic features, such as the rare omission of the auxiliary verb, which are peculiar to Kleist's early writings.⁽²⁾ It was therefore probably composed years before the newspaper article appeared.⁽³⁾ „Der Liederliche,” on the other hand, a moral tale by C.L. Haken of a ne'er-do-well who ruins the life of a good woman, shows similarity to Der Findling.⁽⁴⁾

Besides the resemblance of the main theme to „Le Tartuffe,” parallels have been found for several details in the narrative. Davidts calls attention to a memoir from the life of William Congreve,⁽⁵⁾ a name, moreover, which occurs

(1) cf. K.Gassen, „Die Chronologie der Novellen Heinrich von Kleists,” Weimar, 1920, p.114.

(2) R.Steig [„Berliner Kämpfe,” Berlin und Stuttgart, 1901, p.546] ascribes the authorship of this article to Kleist, because it contains certain expressions, such as „seines Lebens müde” and „am Schlagfluss sterben,” which are characteristic of Kleist's style.

(3) R.Steig, [„Berliner Kämpfe,” Berlin und Stuttgart, 1901], draws attention to an incident reported in the „Nürnberger Correspondent” of Jan. 19th, 1811, which happened in December, 1810. He suggests that the anecdotes of the „Berliner Abendblätter” and of the „Nürnberger Correspondent” were based on the same incident.

(4) J. C. L. Haken, „Der Liederliche,” in „Die Graue Moppe,” I, Ch: V, Berlin 1790.

(5) cf. H.Davidts, „Die Nov: Kunst Hs. v. Kleist,” Berlin 1913, p.27: „Es wird von der Gönnerin Congreves erzählt

in „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo.“ The patroness of Congreve, Anna Duchess of Marlborough, in bitter sorrow at the death of her beloved poet, had a wax image fashioned which bore the features of the dead man, could nod its head, and was dressed in the same manner as was Congreve, when last he was seen. A similar incident occurs also in a legend of Protesilaus, in which Laodamia, stricken with grief at the death of her husband, Protesilaus, makes a wax model of him.⁽¹⁾ One morning a servant espies her in the act of embracing and kissing the image. Thinking her mistress has a lover, the maid tells Acastus, father of Laodamia. The latter breaking into the room, discovers the truth. Similarly a counterpart for the trick of the anagram, Colino-Nicolo, which calls to mind Kleist's love of juggling with letters, is seen in *Amphitryon*, and in the incognito KLING STEDT which Kleist assumed on his journey to Würzburg in the winter of 1800/1801.⁽²⁾ This anagram is no doubt an invention of the author.

Whether the inspiration for „Der Findling“ came from «Le Tartuffe» or whether it came from some trivial anecdote, the author has so treated the material that his tale is a new creation. No other than Kleist could have conceived such

(1) cf. Kleists Werke ed.: cit.: III, p.439.

(2) cf. H.Davidts, op.: cit.: p. 31.

an ending: and the tragic dimensions which the tale thereby attains are characteristic of Kleist himself.

DER ZWEIKAMPF.

An article by Kleist, entitled "Geschichte eines merkwürdigen Zweikampfs" was published in the "Berliner Abendblätter" of Feb. 20th and 21st, 1811. This article reappeared in "Hormayr's angesehenes Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst," as "Ein Merkwürdiger Zweikampf."⁽¹⁾ It is the account of a duel fought at Paris between John of Carogne and Jacques le Gris, both of the household of Earl Peter of Alanson. The story tells how John of Carogne goes away from home, leaving his wife behind him. Peter of Alanson visits her with evil intent, and induces her to dismiss her escort and show him the dungeons. Here he takes advantage of her helplessness to assault her. Immediately afterwards he rides back and arrives in time for his lord's levée. When John of Carogne returns home, his wife confesses to him what has happened. In his anger John appeals to the overlord, accusing Jacques le Gris of dishonouring his wife. His complaint being ignored, John appeals to the court in Paris. Jacques pleads an alibi, but John insists on trial by combat. The result of the fight which ensues is that John mortally wounds his opponent, Jacques le Gris, also receiving a wound himself.

(1) Hormayr's angesehenes Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst, Wien, Nos. 36 and 37, Mar: 25th and 27th, 1811.

Finally Jacques is hanged and John rewarded. Kleist concludes the article with the words : „Froissart erzählt diese Geschichte, und sie ist Tatsache.“ The same story had been reported by C. Baechler, in the „Hamburger Gemeinnützige Unterhaltungsblätter“ of April, 1810, under the title „Hildegarde von Carouge und Jacob der Graue.“ From a close comparison of the three versions, R. Steig has shown that Kleist used Baechler and Froissart side by side, at the same time treating the story in his own way. ⁽¹⁾

How little of this tale from Froissart has been included in „Der Zweikampf“ is apparent at the first glance. Whereas the crime of Jacob der Graue in Froissart is adultery, Jakob der Rotbart in Kleist's tale pleads guilty to the crime of adultery because it furnishes him with an alibi against the charge of fratricide. Only the cause of the duel is common ground; for both John of Carogne and Friedrich von Trota fight to redeem the honour of the lady.

A story which approaches much nearer to Der Zweikampf has been discovered by Hermann Schneider in M. de Cervantes' novel, 'Los Trabajos de Persiles y de Sigismunda.'

(1) R. Steig : „Berliner Kämpfe“, Berlin und Stuttgart; 1901, Chapter VIII, pp. 542 f.

(2) H. Schneider: „Neue Studien zu Heinrich von Kleist.“ Berlin, 1915. p. p. 117 ff.

The hermit Renato in this novel unfolds the story of his life. "Born in France of noble parents," he says,⁽¹⁾ "I fell in love with Eusebia, lady-in-waiting to the Queen of France. Although my eyes often spoke of love, no word of love passed between us. A jealous rival, Libsomiro, informed the king that we were living in an impure relationship, and declared himself willing to defend the statement in single combat. A duel was arranged in a German free city, because the Roman Catholic religion would permit no duels. In the course of the fight, I fell to the ground, and lay at the mercy of my opponent. I was quite incapable of understanding this mysterious issue of Divine Judgment. Although laden with sins, I was innocent of the one of which I was accused. Only the judges prevented my death. Stricken with sorrow, I fled to a hermit's cell. Eusebia, moved with pity, followed me to a desert island, where we lived together as brother and sister. One day a ship came in sight and my brother arrived with the news that the truth was discovered. Libsomiro had died, confessing that his accusation was false.

(1) Summary of 'Los Trabajos de Persiles y de Sigismunda,' by M. de Cervantes, Chapter , from the German translation by H. Schneider, op.cit. pp.121-123.

having been prompted by malice and jealousy. The king had sent my brother with the royal promise of reward and recompense for Eusebia and myself." Thus ends the story of Renato, which has many features in common with "Der Zweikampf." For here, too, as in Kleist's tale, the purpose of the trial by combat is to prove a lady's chastity. Her lover, who has neither declared his love nor been favoured by her, is the champion of her cause. The slanderer is the rival of the lover in the lady's favour. The combat takes place in a German free city. Momentary clumsiness causes the downfall of the righteous man, the slanderer being hailed as victor and the lady's guilt appearing irrefutable. The injustice of this supposed Divine Judgment is evident, and the hero is as convinced of his beloved's innocence after as before the conflict. The thought occurs to him that God is punishing him for his own sins. Divine Judgment operates in a similar manner in the two tales. The villain confesses his guilt, and dies before justice can overtake him. Restored to honour, the two lovers are happily united.

The essential likeness between the two stories is strong enough to justify the theory that one had an influence in the composition of the other. In a letter to Reimer in August, 1810, Kleist, referring to Michael Kohlhaas, wrote:

„es würde mir lieb sein, wenn der Druck so wohl ins Auge fiel, als es sich ohne weiteren Kostenaufwand tun lässt, und schlage etwa den 'Persiles' vor." This 'Persiles' was a translation of Cervantes' novel by Franz Theremin, which had been published by Reimer in 1807. Without doubt a copy came into the hands of Kleist. It is reasonable to suppose that this last tale of Kleist's second series bears traces of the influence of Cervantes' story.

The interest of „Der Zweikampf“ is two-fold. In the first part of the tale it centres in the fratricide; in the latter part in the vindication of the lady. A Fratricide occurs neither in Froissart nor in Cervantes. Kurt Gassen has found that the style of the first part of „Der Zweikampf“ is characteristic of an earlier period in Kleist's writing than the style of the latter part.⁽¹⁾ The duel might therefore have been added afterwards to continue and complete the fratricide plot. The accusation of an innocent lady for the purpose of pleading an alibi would, in this case, furnish a link between the two actions, and the introduction of the maid as a Dea ex machina would, - somewhat awkwardly, one must admit - justify the issue of the mortal combat, for it would provide Jakob der Rotbart with genuine

(1) K. Gassen, op: cit: p.96.

grounds for his alibi. In this respect Kleist altered the plot of Cervantes. The author of "Michael Kohlhaas" was not content with the triumph of a slanderer who was conscious of being in the wrong. In order that the immediate issue of the duel may be justified, the villain must have a clear conscience; he must believe himself innocent of the crime for which he has been challenged. Divine Judgment must not be proved false.

This fusion of two themes, fratricide and duel is not wholly successful, for it fails to produce a harmonious whole. From the moment when Jakob der Rotbart advances his alibi, the interest moves from the fratricide to the duel, the former being, as it were, ignored, until the end, when it is abruptly resumed.

Notwithstanding this conflict of interest, "Der Zweikampf" embodies a profound conception of fate which is absent from the accounts of Froissard and Cervantes. And Kleist has breathed into his characters a life completely lacking in the figures of the history and the adventure story.

DAS BETTELWEIB VON LOCARNO AND DIE HEILIGE CÄCILIE.

No source is known for these stories, which stand apart from the rest of Kleist's tales. The following note in the archives of the Pfuel-family:-

„Das Bettelweib von Locarno verdankt seinen Ursprung einem Abenteuer, einer Art Spukgeschichte, die dem Bruder von Ernst [Friedrich], in Gielsdorf bei dem alten Onkel, dem Ritterschafts direktor von Pfuel, passirt war“⁽¹⁾ points to an experience for which no direct evidence can be found. In 1810-11, at the time of the publication of „Das Bettelweib von Locarno,“ Kleist was much in company with Friedrich von Pfuel, who was a member of the Christlich Deutsche Tischgesellschaft in Berlin.⁽²⁾ But there is no information as to the nature of the „Abenterer,“ from which „Das Bettelweib“ is here stated to have taken its origin.

Several parallels to this story have been found. An incident from „Die Gräfin Dolores,“ by Arnim,⁽³⁾ „Geistererscheinung,“ an anecdote printed in the „Berliner Abendblätter“ of March, 1811, and „Die Alte Bettelfrau,“ a fragmentary

(1) Quoted by S.Rahmer, op:cit: II, Chap.III, p.253.

(2) cf. R.Steig. op:cit: I, p.23, and S.Rahmer, op:cit: I; p.40.

(3) L.A.v.Arnim, „Armut, Reichtum, Schuld, und Busse der Gräfin Dolores.“ Berlin, 1810. Bk.II, Chap.VII.

„Märchen“ introduced by J.H. Jung Stilling into his „Jünglingsjahre“ of 1778,⁽¹⁾ have all been quoted as possible sources of „Das Bettelweib von Locarno.“ „Geistererscheinung,“ however, is essentially different from Kleist's story, both in content and in tone. And the description of the fire in Kleist's anecdote is too scanty to be likened to the incident of a fire in Arnim's novel, „Die Gräfin Dolores.“ But a considerable likeness to „Das Bettelweib von Locarno“ is to be seen in the fragmentary „Märchen“ told by Jung-Stilling. Here an old beggarwoman, appears and asks for shelter, and suffers an injury. Both stories contain a fire. The brothers Grimm included this „Märchen“ in their collection, adding in 1822 the footnote:- „siehe das Bettelweib von Locarno in Heinrich Kleist's Erzählungen,⁽²⁾ and citing Jung-Stilling's „Jünglingsjahre“ as their source.⁽³⁾ „Die Alte Bettelfrau,“ as this legend was called in the Grimm collection, breaks off unfinished. At the end of „Das Bettelweib von Locarno,“ the description of the fire, and the portrayal of the Marquis' mental reactions, are features

(1) J.H. Jung-Stilling. „Jünglingsjahre,“ Berlin und Leipzig. 1778. Pp: 100 ff.

(2) cf. R.Steig. op: cit: VIII, p.523.

(3) R.Steig. ibid: p.523.

foreign to the fairy-story.⁽¹⁾ It seems probable, therefore, that this ending was supplied by Kleist, who thereby gave an individual interpretation to the old folk-tale. There is nothing to prove, however, that Kleist used this legend. There is, on the other hand, little doubt that he knew the works of Jung-Stilling; for Arnim, who was in the circle of Kleist's Berlin friends, had drawn attention to Jung-Stilling's autobiography in the „Wintergarten.“ That Arnim himself had treated the same subject in a ballad appended to his review of Jung's „Theorie der Geister-Kunde“⁽³⁾ seems to show that this theme was familiar to the Berlin circle of friends. It is reasonable to suppose that Das Bettelweib von Locarno, especially in its notion of retribution for evil, contains something of Jung Stilling's legend.

cf. R.Steig, op:cit: VIII, p.525.

cf. R.Steig, ibid: VIII, p.524.

cf. R.Steig, ibid: VIII, p.524.

The legend of "Die Heilige Cäcilie" has not called forth so much as a suggestion as to its source. As far as can be discovered, there is no legend of this nature extant concerning the Saint; it must therefore be accepted as an invention of the author himself.

"Die Heilige Cäcilie oder Gewalt der Musik" appeared in two versions : the earlier in the "Berliner Abendblätter" of November, 1810; the later in the second series of the "Erzählungen" dating from June, 1811. These two forms show marked differences. The book version is more than double the size of the newspaper publication. While the first two paragraphs of each, in spite of some variation of expression, are essentially the same, the last paragraph of the "Abendblätter" version is expanded into ten pages of narrative in the later form. A comparison of the two shows in the earlier version a swift narration of facts after a lapse of years, in the later a gradual revelation of the facts from a different viewpoint. This change of viewpoint gives the key to the differences between the earlier and the later form of the tale. The newspaper article is related for the sake of the miracle wrought by Saint Cecilia: the opening words of the second half :-
 "Aber der Triumph der Religion war, wie sich nach einigen

Tagen ergab, noch weit grösser" - strike the note which is dominant in the composition. The book version is related from the standpoint of the mother, whose only desire is to know what has become of her sons. The lapse of several years before the revelation of the truth causes a veil of mystery to gather round the fate of the three young men. The graphic and more detailed description of the movements of the three young men focusses the interest on the miracle of their conversion. In the earlier concept the emphasis is laid upon Saint Cecilia and her miraculous appearance; in the later form on the conversion of the three brothers.⁽¹⁾ Whereas the "Abendblätter" version closes with a confirmation of the miracle of St. Cecilia, the book version ends with the death of the sons. Thus the main theme of "Die Heilige Cäcilie" gives place to that of "Gewalt der Musik." A distinct change has taken place here in the author's attitude towards his subject-matter. It is not surprising that the article which was written "als Taufangebinde für Cäcilie M."⁽²⁾ should

III

(1) Kurt Gassen op: cit: p.84, argues that there were three versions of this tale. The main theme of the first was the conversion by the "Gewalt der Musik." In the second, the "Abendblätter" version, the conversion was subordinate to the miracle of St. Cecilia. In the book-form both the conversion and the Cecilia miracle were treated; and the former theme dominated over the latter.

(2) cf. R.Steig, op: cit: p.531.

have undergone a transformation when it was remodelled as a literary composition. The occasion of the baptism of Adam Muller's infant daughter, in dedication to whom the story was written, demanded that Saint Cecilia should be the chief figure in the story. It is significant that the author, after renewed reflection on his theme, transferred the emphasis from the Cecilia miracle to the psychological development of the three brothers; from the supernatural to the human.

From this consideration of the sources for Kleist's tales we may deduce that the author, far from slavishly reproducing his material, used only the bare scaffolding offered by his source, building around it an edifice which bears the hall-mark of the artist.

CHAPTER III.

THE THEMES OF THE TALES.

A. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE TALES.

As has been shown, the sources from which Kleist drew the subject-matter of his tales are very varied:- a biography from a Reformation chronicle, a novel of Cervantes, an extract from Froissart, or possibly a drama by Molière. Or, on occasion he drew inspiration from a type of moral story common in the eighteenth century. Thus many forms of literature in many countries provide the subjects for his tales.

The themes are as diverse as the sources from which he draws them. The life-history of a man who becomes an outlaw because he cannot obtain justice, forms a strong contrast to the fortunes of a lady who conceives a child without knowing when or how. The rescue of a condemned couple by an earthquake and the subsequent lynching of them by fanatics is a theme which has little in common with the murder through misunderstanding of a Mestizo girl by her lover, a white man whom she has saved from the blacks. A murder, as the result of which a lady's honour is at stake, is a subject scarcely comparable with that of a villain plotting to dishonour his benefactress. In fact, the diversity of these themes might suggest the fertility of an

Edgar-Wallace.

The settings of the tales are also very varied. As their titles suggest, "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" and "Das Erdbeben in Chili" are set in the tropics, the former at the time of the negro rebellion against French rule, the latter in the middle of the seventeenth century. The scene of "Die Marquise von O..." and "Der Findling" is laid in North Italy. The central event in "Der Findling" is the mediaeval custom of trial by combat. Kleist seems by preference to remove the scene of his tales as far away from the everyday life as possible. But if the nature of the themes be considered, the reason for this tendency becomes clear, for the more remote the scene of action, the less difficult is it for us to believe the account of strange events which happen there.

In spite of all diversity in setting and subject-matter, numerous resemblances may be discerned in the substance of the tales. The figure of the innocent woman whose honour is at stake, so strikingly portrayed in "Die Marquise von O..." reappears in "Der Findling" and "Der Zweikampf." Again, the violation theme, which is the main subject of "Die Marquise von O..." recurs in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo," "Der Zweikampf" and in "Der Findling." The banishment of

Littegarde from her home is in every respect similar to that of Die Marquise von O... The life-long devotion of an individual to the memory of his rescuer who died to save him is a feature common to Gustav in Die Verlobung in St. Domingo and Elvire in Der Findling. The apparition of Lisbeth to haunt her adversary has just the same purpose as that of Das Bettelweib von Locarno.

Another salient feature of similarity is that disasters seldom come singly in the tales. The main one is often precluded by another, complementary to it; as in Das Erdbeben in Chili, the final scene of which is the fatal consequence of the earthquake, and in Der Findling, of which the opening scene forestalls the final disaster. Sometimes the main disaster heralds a subsequent one; thus the violation of the Marquise von O... is the cause of her fury against Graf F.: in the same way the outrage at the Tronkenburg forms the first link in a chain of events which terminates in the execution of Kohlhaas.

The theme of every tale by Kleist is at once arresting and harrowing : a disaster either moral or physical forms in each case the central incident. Here are none of the romances, so dear to the eighteenth century, of faithful lovers happily united after many tribulations.

Life in its wildest and most extravagant aspects is here represented. Kleist chooses for his tales exceptional, even abnormal events and characters. The subject of "Die Marquise von O..." does not lie within the bounds of normal experience. So diabolical does Nicolo become that he seems hardly to belong to this world. The case of Michael Kohlhaas is one among a thousand; the abnormal consequences of the interplay between an extraordinary character and unusual circumstances transform the theme of the virtuous outlaw, which had been popularised through the heroes of the "Ritterroman." The extraordinary element in these tales issues from the commonplace. The young people in "Das Erdbeben in Chili" commit an offence common in real life, but it results in a succession of events which only Kleist could imagine. Trifling things have momentous effects. Characters with small peculiarities are placed in a world which so acts upon them that they overstep the normal bounds of conduct and bring disaster upon themselves and others. Murder, violation, and lynching are the frequent results. These themes of horror call to mind the terror story and the thriller rather than the artistic short tale. By turns gruesome, questionable, sensational and repulsive, they are such as poets seldom choose. Although some of the

events lie almost beyond the bounds of possibility and good taste, it is in no case the extraordinary nature of the occurrence in itself which forms the chief interest in the tale, but rather the significance of that occurrence. This interpretation of events is the poet's original contribution: it is based on his individual conception of the world.

B. THE TRAGIC CONFLICTS IN THE TALES.

The poet's peculiar treatment of his themes results in the tragic content of the tales. Kleist brings to bear upon his subject-matter a view of life essentially pessimistic. The letters written while the tales were being composed reveal a mind which has given up hope of finding truth or happiness in this world. Although judgment is rarely passed upon events, the tales are far from being amoral. They are fraught with a moral significance closely allied to their tragic import. The author does not paint his good characters a uniform white⁽¹⁾ nor his bad characters a uniform black,⁽²⁾ yet he enlists our fullest sympathy for the good and arouses indignation against the bad. He does not follow the example of the writers of the moral story in the eighteenth century who depict the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice. The triumph of evil and the defeat of good contributes much to the tragic effect.

Tragedy springs from disharmony between an individual and his surroundings. The cause of conflict lies sometimes in

(1) Even Die Marquise von O..., in refusing to marry Graf F: after promising to do so, reveals a vein of egoism.

(2) Nicolo does not appear wicked at the beginning of "Der Findling." We are even strangely fascinated by his personality.

the one, sometimes in the other. Kleist presents an order of things, in which men and women who live in the light of conscience usually meet with disaster. The ideal comes to grief in a fallen world. Both the institutions of human society and the malice of single individuals bring suffering to the main characters. The case of Kohlhaas shows discrepancy between the idea of justice and a corrupt world. The sense of justice is personified in Michael Kohlhaas. The first paragraph of the tale indicates that the whole action will turn upon this characteristic. "Die Welt würde sein Andenken haben segnen müssen, wenn er in einer Tugend nicht ausgeschweift hätte. Das Rechtgefühl machte ihn aber zum Räuber und Mörder."⁽¹⁾ Hugo Gaudig divides the plot into the following three parts⁽²⁾: 1) Kohlhaas seeks justice ; 2) Kohlhaas awaits justice ; 3) Kohlhaas finds justice. In the opening events at the Tronkenburg the author shows how a flagrant injustice is inflicted upon the horsedealer by a nobleman, Wenzel von Tronka. Kohlhaas' sense of justice here appears impersonal. At the insults of the castellan it enables him to stifle his anger and reconsider the circumstances. "Dem Rosshändler schlug das Herz gegen

(1) "Kleists Werke," Leipzig und Wien. 1905, Band III, p.141.

(2) Hugo Gaudig: "Wegweiser durch die klassischen Schuldramen." Gera und Leipzig, 1899. p.196.

den Wams. Es drängte ihn, diesen nichtswürdigen Diekwanst in den Kot zu werfen, und den Fuss auf sein kupfernes Antlitz zu setzen. Doch sein Rechtgefühl, das einer Goldwage glich, wankte noch; er war, vor der Schranke seiner eigenen Brust, noch nicht gewiss, ob eine Schuld nicht seinen Gegner drücke ...⁽¹⁾ He is ever ready to find fault with himself before condemning others. The impartiality with which he cross-examines his servant, who has been grievously maltreated in his master's cause, is almost exasperating. Even when he has suffered untold injury from the underlings of his sovereign he admits :
 "Der Herr selbst, weiss ich, ist gerecht"⁽²⁾ and he attributes the dismissal of his case to a misunderstanding. At length, convinced that his cause is just, and mindful of his wife's suggestion: "dass es ein Werk Gottes wäre, Unordnungen gleich diesen, Einhaltung zu tun,"⁽³⁾ Kohlhaas decides to make his case a test-case, in order to expose the injustice of Wenzel von Tronka. That this is no instance of petty spite is shown from his meditation on the way to Dresden, in which he ponders whether to accept this injustice

(1) Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III, p.147.

(2) ibid: III, p.162.

(3) ibid: III, p.154.

(4) ibid: III, p.149.

as being the way of the world, or to pursue his aim from a sense of responsibility for the safety of his future fellow citizens. The persistent and scrupulously lawful course which Michael Kohlhaas now pursues in order to obtain his rights is obstructed at every turn. At the Saxon court and again at the court of Brandenburg his petition is prevented from reaching the ears of the Elector by the corrupt practices of the von Tronka family. Each time he is defeated Kohlhaas grows more steadfast in his purpose. To fight against injustice becomes for him a vocation to which he dedicates his whole life, and even his wife and family. Kleist thus traces the argument in the mind of his hero: „Es könne Zwecke geben, in Vergleich mit welchen, seinem Hauswesen, als ein ordentlicher Vater, vorzustehen, nichtswürdig sei." This devotion to the cause of justice is not only for the sake of others: it is also for his own sake. „Lieber ein Hund sein, wenn ich von Füßen getreten werden soll, als ein Mensch;"⁽²⁾ he cries, deeply injured in his self-esteem. The state which ignores his petitions is refusing him the right of every free citizen. He feels that his very existence is at stake and implores his wife : „Wenn du

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit:III, p.160.

(2) ibid: III, p.162.

(3) ~~ibid: III, p.167~~

fühlst, dass mir, falls ich mein Gewerbe forttreiben soll. Recht werden muss, so gönne mir auch die Freiheit, es mir zu verschaffen.⁽¹⁾ But even the attempts of Lisbeth to obtain a hearing from the Elector are frustrated by an underling, who, in the belief that he is doing his duty, stabs her to the ground. To his dying wife's plea, Vergib deinen Feinden⁽²⁾ Kohlhaas answers: „So möge mir Gott nie vergeben wie ich dem Junker vergebe.“⁽³⁾ He cannot forgive the nobleman without proving false to his convictions. Finally he is spurred to action, as Piachi, in „Der Findling“, is spurred, by the death of his wife. Seeing that there is no longer any hope of obtaining justice through the ~~State~~ judicial system of the State, Kohlhaas takes the law into his own hands, places himself outside the pale of the civil laws, and commits deeds which are far from just. This reversal is anticipated in the first paragraph of the tale.⁽⁴⁾ His sense of justice is now transformed into a desire for revenge. Kleist, who substituted for the name Hans that of Michael, now likens his hero to the „Engel des Gerichts.“⁽⁵⁾ Kohlhaas

(1) Kleists Werke " ed: cit: III, p.163.

(2) ibid: p.165.

(3) ibid: p.165.

(4) ibid: p.141.

(5) ibid: P.167.

regards himself as charged with a divine mission, and calls upon all Christians to join his cause. He issues proclamations, naming himself „einen Reichs-und Weltfreien, Gott allein unterworfenen Herrn,"⁽¹⁾ and his residence the „Sitz unserer provisorischen Weltregierung". This arrogance is a symptom of his passion for revenge, which approaches madness. Another symptom is his unscrupulous cruelty. He is now as ruthless as he was formerly peace-loving. Luther, however, raises sudden doubt in the mind of Kohlhaas, when he condemns the behaviour of the horsedealer. The rebel lays down his arms and goes to his spiritual superior in the manner of a penitent. Luther interprets the case in two ways: from the Christian and from the legal point of view. From either standpoint Kohlhaas is in the wrong: from the Christian standpoint because he ought to forgive his enemies, from the legal, because he is opposing a sovereign who knows nothing of his grievance. Although Luther shows no true understanding of the case, Kohlhaas accepts the legal argument, and awaits Luther's intervention with the Elector. The horse-dealer now becomes as modest as he was formerly overweening. He lays down his arms, and thus returns into the social community. Henceforth he

(1) „Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III. p.178.

does nothing more in his own cause, although his resentment against the aristocrat Wenzel von Tronka continues to smoulder. His indignation against the State is concentrated into hatred for the person of the Elector of Saxony: he prefers to forfeit his freedom rather than renounce his cherished revenge. At Luther's request the State grants Kohlhaas a provisional amnesty and endeavours to judge his case. On one point the ministers of the Electoral Prince are unanimous, all agreeing that „Die Ordnung des Staates in Beziehung auf diesen Mann verrückt sei.“⁽¹⁾ Yet the methods of dealing with the case are as varied as the turn of mind of those who suggest them. One and all recognise that all the wrong committed by Michael Kohlhaas has been directly caused by injustice done to him, coupled with the failure of the State to meet his needs. Thus they show more discernment than Luther. The devastation he has caused in Saxony is for the present overlooked and steps are taken to make good the wrong done to Kohlhaas in the first place. The honest endeavour of the State to do justice by Kohlhaas ends in failure, for now, as before, the party of the aristocrats obstructs the course of justice. The amnesty granted to Kohlhaas is

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: p.189.

violated and the unfortunate man is tossed to and fro like a shuttlecock between the petty powers of Saxony and Brandenburg. Finally sentence is passed upon him. Complete satisfaction is offered him for the original injury; as a penalty for his misdeeds against society however, he is condemned to death. The Elector of Saxony suffers heavily, a scapegoat for the shortcomings of the State. But whereas the judgment on Kohlhaas is legally correct, it is ethically unjust. For the aristocrat, who has been the primary cause of Kohlhaas' crimes, receives a punishment in no way comparable with that of Kohlhaas. With the sentence of death hanging over him, Michael Kohlhaas attains his final aim in life. No surer proof could be found for his devotion to the cause of justice than his behaviour in the closing scene: „Kohlhaas, während er das ... Conclusum überlas, setzte die ... Kinder neben sich auf den Boden nieder, und da er auch einen Artikel darin fand, in welchem der Junker Wenzel zu zweijähriger Gefängnisstrafe verurteilt ward; so liess er sich, aus der Ferne, ganz überwältigt von Gefühlen, mit kreuzweis auf der Brust gelegten Händen, vor dem Kurfürsten nieder.“⁽¹⁾

The case of Michael Kohlhaas indicates the conviction in the mind of the author that the ideal of perfect justice is a chimera. Far from giving a caricature of state legis-

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.247.

lation, this tale presents the picture of a well-meaning body of ministers who do their best to deal out justice, but whose efforts are frustrated by interested parties. It is the incapacity of the State to deal fairly with the individual case which is here emphasized. Yet no doctrine is explicit in "Michael Kohlhaas;" it is first and foremost the history of a man fighting for the cause of justice against odds that are too great for him.

The tragic situation in "Das Erdbeben in Chili" is similar to that in "Michael Kohlhaas." Here also is a crime caused by the cruelty of others. When the State is prevented from punishing the guilty persons, the mob takes revenge upon them. The theory of Rousseau concerning man's virtue in the state of nature and his subsequent corruption in society is strikingly illustrated in "Das Erdbeben in Chili."⁽¹⁾ The notion conveyed in the following sentence: "Und in der Tat schien mitten in diesen grässlichen Augenblicken, in welchen alle irdischen

(1) That Kleist was much attached to Rousseau several years before the appearance of this tale may be deduced from his recommendation of the French author to Wilhelmine von Zenge: "Gewinne Deinen Rousseau so lieb, wie es Dir immer möglich ist, auf diesen Nebenbuhler werde ich nie zürnen." [Kleist's Werke" ed: cit: V, p.218. Letter 40, [an Wilhelmine von Zenge], April 1801]. "Rousseau ist mir der liebste, durch den ich Dich bilden lassen mag." (ibid: p.227. Letter 43, [an Wilhelmine von Zenge), June, 1801).

Güter der Menschen zu ... grunde gingen und die ganze Natur verschüttet zu werden drohte, der menschliche Geist selbst wie eine schöne Blume, aufzugehn: "(1) is strongly reminiscent of Rousseau. In contrast to this glorification of man in an uncivilised state, Kleist shows the cruelty of that code of morals which prevails in civilised society. The author speaks with bitter feeling of the „Strenge des klosterlichen Gesetzes“ and of the „geschärfte Prozess“ directed against the young couple, the sole cause of whose offence has been the inhuman laws of society.

A deeply religious idea underlies this tale. The Saviour who refused to condemn the adulteress here sends an earthquake to save a guilty couple from the merciless judgment of men. Their fellow-citizens however, take the first opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon the rescued ones: an outrage solely due to religious fanaticism. The cry of the crowd in the temple : „steinigt sie, steinigt sie“ (3) is in the actual terms of the law of Moses. In this tale, which presents a parable, in the Biblical sense, on the hardness of men's hearts, a vivid contrast is drawn between the justice of man and the justice of God.

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.296.

(2) ibid: p.296.

(3) ibid: p.309.

„Der Zweikampf“ is in this respect the counterpart of „Das Erdbeben in Chili.“ Here again the spiritual blindness of men causes injustice. The duel, which men misinterpret as a divine sentence of condemnation upon Friedrich and Littegarde, forms a parallel to the earthquake, which is likewise misconstrued. In the matter of Littegarde's honour people and judges expect that God will speak directly through human institutions, through the medium which they have appointed. „Was kümmern mich diese willkürlichen Gesetze der Menschen?“⁽¹⁾ exclaims Friedrich von Trota, the only one who sees beyond outward appearances and who thus comes near to the truth.

The plot of „Der Zweikampf“ shows the justice of man in opposite to the justice of God. Graf Jakob der Rotbart is accused of murdering his brother, two pieces of evidence being brought against him: that on the night of the murder he was absent from his castle, and that the arrow which pierced his brother had proved to be his. Of these charges, Graf Jakob ignores the latter, and in answer to the former he pleads an alibi, declaring that on the night of the murder he was with Littegarde von Auerstein, a noblewoman of unstained reputation. On the

(1) „Kleists Werke“ op. cit.: III, p.413.

grounds of this confession, the court exonerates him. Herr Friedrich von Trota, the lover of Frau Littegarde, now challenges him to a duel, the outcome of which is to prove or disprove the truth of the charge. The ordeal results in the downfall of Littegarde's champion and her condemnation. Friedrich, however, who appears to be mortally wounded, recovers, whilst Graf Jakob ultimately dies of a scratch on the wrist. Thus as if by a miracle the fortunes of the two parties are reversed. At this juncture Littegarde's maid confesses that she impersonated her mistress on the night of the murder and enticed Graf Jakob to sleep with her. Thus the honour of Littegarde is vindicated. And finally Graf Jakob, in fear of approaching death, pleads guilty to the charge of fratricide. The part of the action which deals with the murder is a bitter satire on the judicial system which accepts the confession of another crime as the proof of the count's innocence and shows itself incapable either of administering justice or of discovering the truth. The divine judgment is finally revealed by means of a seeming miracle. Thus by the intervention of Heaven the Gordian knot is cut, in which the affairs of men were entangled.

"Michael Kohlhaas," Das Erdbeben in Chili" and

"Der Zweikampf" are thus similar in that each presents an individual, or a couple, oppressed by a group of their fellow-men on little or no provocation. Adverse circumstance has a large share in the suffering of Kleist's characters. Even those nearest and dearest to Die Marquise von O... distrust her and suspect her of the worst. Littegarde is abandoned by her family in her distress. Toni is led into crime by a mother who curses her when she refuses any longer to help to murder innocent people. Yet she still bears the stains of past sin and appearances speak against her. Conversely, the unfriendly attitude of the white men towards the blacks prejudices Gustav against Toni and blinds his eyes to her loyalty. He too is tainted with the guilt of his race. Untoward circumstance turns what would otherwise have been the sacred love between Jeronimo and Josephe into the sinful relationship which receives so merciless a punishment. In "Michael Kohlhaas" each circumstance^{is} imbued with the logic of fate. From the beginning the horsedealer's mission seems destined to failure. All the attempts of Kohlhaas, first peaceable, then violent, and the repeated negotiations of the State to secure justice end in defeat. It is as if a frail barque were endeavouring to make headway against a rushing torrent, so powerful do the forces appear which

are in league against Kohlhaas.

All kinds of disasters, the greatest which can befall men and women, form the substance of the tales. When the author comments upon these disasters, he ascribes them to fate. In the case of *Die Marquise von O...* he speaks of "the Tiefe in welche das Schicksal sie herabgestürzt hatte."⁽¹⁾ This conception of fate, as a hostile power, working for man's destruction, is also expressed in Kleist's essay: "Den sicheren Weg des Glücks zu finden." Here the author points to a means, "den Menschen unter der Last niederdrückender Schicksale vor der Verzweiflung zu sichern."⁽²⁾ Fate operates in various ways in the tales. It is a blind and inexplicable chance that leads Congo Hoango home on the very night of Gustav's rescue, or that conspires against Toni so that she cannot warn her lover of his peril, but is forced to deceive him into suspecting her. In "Der Findling" this fate seems deliberately to take the side of Nicolo, helping him to accomplish his purpose. A series of accidents deceives the villain into believing that Elvire is in love with him; Piachi happens to go away; Elvire is deluded by Nicolo's disguise; in fact, every chance

(1) "Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III, p.274.

(2) "Kleists Werke" ed: cit: IV, p.62.

occurrence favours the evil design of Nicolo. An extraordinary accident causes Graf Jakob to accuse an innocent woman and thus to set in motion the whole action of "Der Zweikampf". In "Michael Kohlhaas" fate is far from capricious; here it works with a relentless logic. The avalanche set rolling on the Tronkenburg persists in its course, gathering speed as it goes, until it finally crushes Kohlhaas, the Junker and the sovereign prince. All efforts to check it are vain. The intervention of Luther proves as fruitless as the council of ministers. The latter half of "Michael Kohlhaas" gives the impression that the passion within the horse-dealer has liberated forces over which it has no control. We feel that events could not have happened otherwise; that their fateful sequence was inevitable. The same logical ordering of occurrences is present in "Das Erdbeben in Chili," in which the mob, deprived of its prey by the intervention of Heaven, clamours for its victims until it finally captures and destroys them. Fate acts here as a force which steers all events towards an appointed end from which there is no escape. Josephe, recognising her fate, cries: "Gehn Sie, Don Fernando, retten Sie Ihre beiden Kinder, und überlassen Sie uns unserm Schicksale!"⁽¹⁾ As soon as Nicolo succeeds in

(1) "Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III. p.310.

his purpose we are told : „Aber die Nemesis, die dem Frevel auf dem Fuss folgt, wollte, dass Piachi, den der Elende noch auf mehrere Tage entfernt glaubte, unvermutet, in eben dieser Stunde, in seine Wohnung zurückkehren musste.“⁽¹⁾ A similar retribution overtakes the three brothers in „Die Heilige Cäcilie“ and the marquis in „Das Bettelweib von Locarno“, although here it is not so richly deserved as in „Der Findling.“ Thus fate in the tales not only operates as a malicious power, the working of which sometimes appears logical, sometimes capricious, but it also takes the form of moral retribution.

The severity of misfortune is intensified by its unrelatedness to the characters it befalls. Die Marquise von O... and Littegarde are guilty of no fault which could provoke such adversity. The cause of Elvire's downfall lies in her devotion to the memory of one who saved her life. Calamity descends upon these women when they least expect and are least prepared for it. A glimpse is offered us of Marquise's peaceful life, dedicated to the care of her parents and her children. Upon this calm there suddenly breaks the terror of war and subsequently the urgent proposals of marriage from Graf F. Littegarde

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: III p.373.

lives in seclusion with her family until the charge made by Graf Jakob banishes all peace from her life, killing her father and exposing her to public disgrace. That Elvire, die Marquise von O... and Littegarde are all the victims of a cruel delusion makes their misfortune all the more poignant. So too, the fault of Jeronimo and Josephe is as nothing compared with the calamity which overtakes them. Like Toni, this couple is dragged down by circumstance. These persons do not deserve their unhappy lot: it seems to come upon them irrespective of their characters. Yet we do not experience irritation that such things should be. On the contrary, these tragic characters arouse our fullest sympathy, for we are compelled to feel that it could not have happened otherwise. But against the logic of fate and the force of circumstance Kleist's men and women are not puppets. As they fall into adversity they reveal sides of their personality which might not otherwise be disclosed. Kohlhaas' abnormal sense of justice would probably never have been revealed, had it not met with exceptional conditions. Under the stress of circumstance, Die Marquise von O... and Toni are transformed in character. The former realises her true self and the latter is roused to moral consciousness by her awakening love for Gustav, and rises finally to

heroic stature. Not every character of Kleist overcomes fate: Jeronimo and Josephe, Littegarde, Toni and Gustav sink beneath it. But whether it leads to defeat or victory, the struggle is equally fierce.

The clash between character and circumstance gives rise to tragic conflict in the individual. Tragic conflict is of two kinds in the tales: a character maybe at variance with those around him; or he may be at war with himself. In the case of the external conflict, sometimes it is another individual who injures the chief character or couple, sometimes a section or the whole of society, acting as one man. In "Michael Kohlhaas" the von Tronka family is arrayed against the horsedealer and the State fails in its duty as arbitrator. But the conflict in this tale lies perhaps not so much between one individual and others as between one soul and Fate, the impersonal force at work behind the existing order of things. It is significant that Kleist chose the form of the "Novelle" for a theme which had been suggested to him by Pfuel as a fitting subject for a drama. Perhaps he avoided his own form of literature because this theme offers no conflict between personalities, - an essential to tragic drama; and he preferred the "Novelle", the form which best portrays a character in the grip of circumstance.

The forces opposed to Friedrich and Littegarde appear on the other hand more human. For they are faced with a hostile world which readily believes and supports Graf Jakob. Toni takes the part of Gustav against her family, by whom she also is rejected. Jeronimo and Josephe are hunted down by the mob which is thirsting for their blood; and even though Don Fernando identifies himself with them, he cannot save them from their enemies. The isolated position of most of the tragic characters in the tales augments their suffering. Like the prophets of old, Michael Kohlhaas is alienated from the rest of the community on account of the mission to which he pledges himself. After the death of his wife he lives and dies without a single soul in whom he can confide. The lot of Littegarde and Die Marquise von O... is similar. Both are ostracized by those to whom they would naturally turn for sympathy and consolation. They are both branded with infamy, and expelled from their family. Die Marquise von O... is tormented not only by those around her but also by Graf F. For the lover whom she is inclined to marry reveals himself as her betrayer. Toni is in the same plight. She breaks away from her family for Gustav's sake, and then risks her life to save him. The bond of confidence between the lovers

snaps at the crucial moment and their downfall is inevitable. Thus Toni also stands alone, forsaken and suspected by all.

Internal conflict, termed by Kleist „Verwirrung des Gefühls“ is as common in his tales as in his dramas.⁽¹⁾ Michael Kohlhaas, Die Marquise von O..., Toni, Gustav, and Littegarde all evince this confusion. But before the internal conflicts of these characters are examined, the meaning attached by Kleist to the term Gefühl must be understood.

Kleist suggests one sovereign remedy against the vicissitudes^{of} fortune: „Folg deinem Gefühl.“⁽²⁾ This advice springs from his belief in the infallibility of human sentiment. When circumstances baffle and bewilder, feeling is the only sure guiding star. When this fails, a man is in a deplorable state. Reverence for the sanctity of human personality colours Kleist's portrayal of character. The author's conception of sentiment is sometimes expressed directly in the tales, more often still in the dramas: as in „Das Käthchen von Heilbronn,“ when Freiburg exclaims: „Der Mensch wirft alles, was er sein nennt, in eine Pfütze, aber kein Gefühl.“⁽²⁾ „Türme das

(1) cf. for instance „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: V, p.328.

(2) „Kleists Werke“, ed: cit: II, p.220.

Gefühl, das in deiner Brust lebt, wie einen Felsen empor," Friedrich implores his Littegarde in "Der Zweikampf," "halte dich daran und wanke nicht, und wenn Erd' und Himmel unter dir und über dir zugrunde gingen !"⁽¹⁾

The mental life of Kleist's characters is governed by emotion rather than by reason. If a man doubts the infallibility of his feeling, he has nothing else to sustain him: he is spiritually and mentally shattered. Thus Littegarde sinks beneath her tragic fate. Accused of adultery, she is dejected, but firmly believes that her lover will vindicate her honour. When implored to prevent the combat which is to prove her innocence, she answers : "Kommt die Bersorgnis, dass Gott sich, in dieser entscheidenden Stunde, gegen die Unschuld meiner Brust erklären werde, aus dem Herzen Eures edlen Sohnes ?"⁽²⁾ The defeat of her lover deals her a fatal blow, from which she does not recover. She had trusted in the ordeal as being the means by which God would reveal the truth. Now that her lover's defeat has apparently proved her guilty, she comes to doubt her own innocence. "Schuldig, überwiesen, überworf, in zeitlichkeit und Ewigkeit verdammt und verurteilt !" she cries, "Geh, meine Sinne reissen und meine Kraft bricht !"⁽³⁾ As feeling

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: III, p.419.

(2) ibid: III, p.409.

(3) ibid: III, p.416.

has betrayed her, nothing else can uphold her: she feels that her existence in Eternity is obliterated. Unable to see beyond the incriminating circumstances, she has not enough strength of mind to follow the advice of Friedrich and rely solely upon her own feelings. Instead she sinks into despair, from which she can find no relief. Littegarde is a tragic character. The final solution of „Der Zweikampf“ leaves her untouched. She remains in our minds as we last see her, a figure dejected and distraught, „mit halb offener Brust und entfesselten Haaren.“⁽¹⁾

Die Marquise von O..., who finds herself in a situation similar to that of Littegarde, triumphs finally „durch die Kraft ihres schuldfreien Bewusstseins.“⁽²⁾ Her misfortune is the worst which could befall her refined and sensitive nature. „Das Entsetzliche, mich vernichtende,“⁽³⁾ she calls it, and she fears she will go mad. Yet when her family casts her out in disgrace, her state of mind changes. Confusion of feeling gives place to mental serenity. Reason comes to the aid of sentiment and balance is restored. This balance enables her to reconcile herself to her lot. „Ihr Verstand, stark genug, in ihrer sonderbaren Lage nicht zu reissen, gab sich ganz unter der grossen.“

(1) „Kleist's Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.425.

(2) ibid: p.274.

(3) ibid: p.270.

heiligen, und unerklärlichen Einrichtung der Welt gefangen.^{"(1)} Instead of resigning herself to her fate, she turns it to the best account. But later, when her lover declares himself as her betrayer, she evinces a confusion of feeling which borders upon insanity. The author thus describes her state of mind: „und schlug, mit einem Blick funkelnd, wie ein Wetterstrahl, auf ihn ein, indessen Blässe des Todes ihr Antlitz überflog ... „Gehn Sie ! Gehn Sie ! Gehn Sie !“ rief sie, indem sie aufstand; „auf einen Lasterhaften war ich gefasst, aber auf keinen Teufel !“ ... öffnete, indem sie ihm dabei, gleich einem Pestvergifteten, auswich, die Tür des Zimmers und sagte: ruft den Obristen.“^{"(2)} The key to this behaviour, extraordinary in one usually composed, is given in the last sentence : „er würde ihr damals nicht wie ein Teufel erschienen sein, wenn er ihr nicht, bei seiner ersten Erscheinung, wie ein Engel vorgekommen wäre.“^{"(3)} The discovery that one whom she has idolised has dealt so treacherously with her injures her deepest feelings and drives her into a frenzy. Whereas in her banishment she had excluded all thought of self and had been concerned only for the stigma which would rest upon her child, she now refuses to marry the count (as she promised) and protests, when reminded

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: III, p.274.

(2) ibid: p.291.

(3) ibid: p.294.

of her condition, „dass sie, in diesem Falle, mehr an sich, als ihr Kind, denken müsse.“⁽³⁾ Like Michael Kohlhaas, die Marquise von O... feels that her inmost being is assailed. But, as before, reason comes to the aid of sentiment and she regains her poise. As Graf F... shows in many ways the sincerity of his contrition, Die Marquise forgives him „um der gebrechlichen Einrichtung der Welt willen.“⁽¹⁾ Thus a compromise is achieved.

Some confusion of feeling is perceptible also in Toni. A conflict of loyalties takes place within her. When the Swiss officer whom she has deceived tells her of a Negro girl who betrayed a white man, and asks her „ob sie wohl einer solchen Tat fähig wäre?“ „Nein,“ sagte Toni, „indem sie verwirrt vor sich niedersah.“⁽²⁾ As the Swiss officer wins her affections, her moral consciousness is aroused to the wrong she has been doing in conspiring against the white men, and she decides openly to take the part of Gustav. Once again she appears torn between loyalty to her family and loyalty to her lover, when Herr Strömli comes to rescue her with Gustav. „... Herr Strömli ... nahm ... Toni, die, von mancherlei Gefühlen bestürmt, sich nicht enthalten konnte, zu weinen, bei der Hand, und führte

(1) „Kleist's Werke“ ed: cit: III. p.294.

(2) ibid: III. p.325.

(3) ibid: III. p.292.

sie, unter den Flüchen Babekans und des alten Hoango, aus dem Schlafzimmer fort."⁽¹⁾ This conflict of loyalties lends grandeur to the character of Toni; at the same time it is the cause of her tragic fate. For Gustav cannot believe that she has cast off her old ties. Finding that he has been mistaken, he falls into a state of mind similar to that of Die Marquise when she discovers that her betrayer is Graf F... In his frenzy he kills himself.

Michael Kohlhaas, too, now and again shows signs of confusion of feeling. Until he is convinced that he is in the right he is uncertain what steps to take. The news that his horses are still being maltreated relieves his mind: „und mitten durch den Schmerz, die Welt in einer so ungeheuren Unordnung zu erblicken, zuckte die innerliche Zufriedenheit empor, seine eigene Brust nunmehr in Ordnung zu sehen."⁽²⁾ When Luther accuses him dealing unjustly, he is profoundly disturbed. The author conveys to us the emotions of Kohlhaas in the following terms : „Aber wer beschreibt, was in seiner

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.349.

(2) ibid: p.159.

Seele vorging, als er das Blatt, dessen Inhalt ihn der Ungerechtigkeit zieh, daran erblickte: unterzeichnet von dem teuersten und verehrungswürdigsten Namen, den er kannte, von dem Namen Martin Luthers ! Eine dunkle Röte stieg in sein Antlitz empor, er durchlas es, indem er den Helm abnahm, zweimal von Anfang bis zu Ende; wandte sich, mit ungewissen Blicken, mitten unter die Knechte zurück als ob er etwas sagen wollte, und sagte nichts; löste das Blatt von der Wand los, durchlas es noch einmal,... und verschwand."⁽¹⁾ From this point onwards he persists in his search for justice for one reason only: "Kohlhaas will der Welt zeigen, dass er in keinem ungerechten Handel umgekommen ist."⁽²⁾ As the prospect of obtaining justice grows more and more remote, Kohlhaas gives up hope. "Die Dickfütterung der Rappen hatte seine, von Gram sehr gebeugte Seele aufgegeben."⁽³⁾

Whereas die Marquise von O... and Littegarde are the wictims of adversity, Michael Kohlhaas and Gustav von der Ried take an active part in provoking the circumstances which overwhelm them. They are both self-

(1) Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III, p.181.

(2) ibid: p.184.

(3) ibid: p.218.

assertive, exercising a controlling influence on their surroundings. Die Marquise and Littegarde are free from tragic guilt; Michael Kohlhaas and Gustav are in some degree the authors of their fate.

The fatal defect, in which the tragic guilt of Kohlhaas lies, is described by Kleist as the excess of one virtue.⁽¹⁾ The horsedealer's craving for justice makes him regardless of expediency and all other considerations. Gustav, on the contrary, is ruined through lack of self-control. His is an unbalanced personality; hot-blooded and impetuous, he acts blindly on impulse. The lament of Penthesilea: "Verflucht das Herz, das sich nicht mässgen kann,"⁽²⁾ applies directly to Gustav. He never listens to the voice of reason, for he is dominated by feeling. At first, his inclination for the Mestizo girl induces him to follow her in spite of his doubts as to her intentions. The tragic story of Mariane Congreve is an apt illustration of the quality which is characteristic of Gustav. "Gott weiss," he laments,⁽³⁾ "wie ich die Unbesonnenheit so weit treiben konnte, mie

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.141, "wenn er in einer Tugend nicht ausgeschweift hätte."

(2) ibid: II, p.52.

eines Abends an einem öffentlichen Ort Äusserungen über das eben errichtete furchtbare Revolutionstribunal zu erlauben." (1) This "Unbesonnenheit" augurs ill for the future. The next deed to which it drives him is the seduction of Toni. Afterwards he regrets this act and declares : "dass nur, ^{im} ~~ein~~ Taumel wunderbar verwirrter Sinne, eine Mischung von Begierde und Angst, die sie ihm eingeflösst, ihn zu einer solchen Tat habe verführen können." (2) Yet the same inability to compromise which distinguishes Kohlhaas induces Gustav to follow up this deed by a promise to make Toni his wife, although there is no true bond of love between them. The final catastrophe is due to the rash action of Gustav, who without waiting for an explanation, judges merely by appearances, and kills his deliverer. This deed shows a similar consistency as the betrothal. Toni must die for betraying him, just as she must become his wife after giving herself up to him. His suicide, which is inkeeping with his character, is an appropriate solution.

The same lack of balance between feeling and reason brings Jeronimo and Josephe to their tragic end. In giving

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.329.

(2) ibid: III, p.331.

way to their passion they offend against public morality, and so excite the multitude to fury against them. The Marchese in „Das Bettelweib von Locarno“ is characterised by a similar lack of consideration. This fault leads him also to an unhappy end. „Schwer verirrt“⁽¹⁾ is the description of the three brothers in „Die Heilige Cäcilie.“ The guiding star, feeling, does indeed lead men astray, yet it is all they have to follow.

Niccolo, although he is destroyed by his own fault, is not a tragic character. He is too vile to excite any sympathy; we rather rejoice at his well-deserved punishment. The tragic element in „Der Findling“ consists in the destruction which he brings upon the lives of others. The destructive passion in Niccolo lacks restraint as much as the passion of Michael Kohlhaas or of the mob in „Das Erdbeben in Chili.“ This passion, which Kleist describes as the union of „Beschämung, Wollust und Rache“⁽²⁾, although differing from the simple ones in other tales in that it is a compound of three emotions, is no less powerful than the others. Everything in the man's nature subordinates

(1) Kleists Werke, op: cit: III, p.389.

(2) ibid: III, p.372.

itself gradually to this dominant feeling: he misconstrues the slightest event in the light of his distorted vision and finally the man's whole personality is nothing more than a burning desire to ruin Elvire. The demoniac power of evil which is embodied in Nicolo not only brings suffering and desolation to those whom it touches, but also generates further evil. Piachi, the devoted husband and benevolent guardian, is roused to a passion for revenge which borders on madness. Unappeased by murder, he burns to pursue his adversary in Hell, even though he risk eternal damnation thereby. Elvire is a passive character who arouses little interest. The tragic figures in "Der Findling" are Piachi and Elvire. These are overshadowed however by Nicolo and we are not allowed enough insight into their emotions to be moved by their suffering. Instead of feeling sorrow at the tragic fate of these characters, we are filled with despair that such things should happen in this world.

Although the view of life expressed in Kleist's tales is essentially pessimistic, a ray of hope breaks through at the close of most of the tales. After the massacre in "Das Erdbeben in Chili" the author concludes :

Don Fernando und Donna Elvire nahmen hierauf den kleinen Fremdling zum Pflegesohn an; und wenn Don Fernando Philippen mit Juan verglich, so war es ihm fast, als müsst er sich freuen." The cause of the whole tumult, the child of Jesophe and Jeronimo, survives in spite of all attempts to murder it. "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" ends in the successful escape of Herr Strömli and his family. Thus, although a man perish in his conflict with fate and the world, his death is not in vain. Some note of optimism sounds at the conclusion of every tale. Even the revenge of Piachi affords grim satisfaction. And the three brothers who are smitten with religious mania as a punishment for iconoclasm take a delight in their asceticism. Two of the tales even have the traditional happy ending. "Die Marquise von O..." is reconciled to Graf F... As soon as she recognises the gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt, nothing separates her from her penitent lover. Whereas the fortunate turn of events at the end of Die Marquise von O... arises from a natural development, the problem of "Der zweikampf" is solved by supernatural means. The divine intervention, which was expected to occur in the ordeal, finally reveals the guilty person but in the most natural manner.

„Michael Kohlhaas“, although it ends with the death of the hero, is no tragedy. For at his execution the horsedealer gains his end. At the last Kohlhaas triumphs. In the clear-cut expression of Wilhelm Schäfer :
 „Kohlhaas.... hatte den Trotz mit dem Schwert des Henkers bezahlt, und war noch dem Henker zum Trotz Sieger geblieben über Junker und Fürsten.“⁽¹⁾ Whether the endings present the downfall or the victory of the chief characters, they are in every case fully satisfying, since they are the inevitable outcome of the conflicts in the tales.

Disasters of themselves mean nothing in the tales: only the impact of events upon the minds and hearts of the characters is significant. Calamities such as war and earthquake do not in themselves cause the suffering of Kleist's tragic characters. The material hardships which these men and women bear are trivial in comparison with the anguish occasioned by despair, spiritual isolation in an antagonistic world, distrust at the hands of those whom they love most,

⁽¹⁾ Wilhelm Schäfer, „Die Dreizehn Bücher der Deutschen Seele.“ München, 1934, „Büch der Erhebung,“ „Kleist“, p.280.

disgrace in the eyes of an unfeeling public,
and the bitter scorn and malice of their fellow-men.
Murder, lynching, rape and suicide are not the darts
which wound Kleist's characters; but rather misunder-
standing, suspicion, treachery and hatred. These
arrows pierce the soul.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FORM OF THE TALES.

A. STRUCTURE.

The form of Kleist's tales reveals their author as a master of narrative art. Hebbel commends him as a writer of short tales, because he always depicts the spirit by means of the form.⁽¹⁾ Construction, narrative style, portrayal of character and diction alike show this characteristic. „Michael Kohlhaas“ and „Die Marquise von O...“ both begin with an intimation of the idea which underlies the tale. The opening calls to our minds the brief argument prefixed by Boccaccio to his stories.⁽²⁾ In the introduction to „Michael Kohlhaas“ the word „Recht“ occurs

(1) F. Hebbel's Briefwechsel, ed: F. Bamberg, Berlin, 1890. I. p. 54:
 „Er [Kleist] zeichnet immer das Innere durch das Aussere
 „zugleich, Eins durch das Andere, und diess ist das allein
 Rechte.“

(2) Boccaccio, Decameron [English Translation] Oxford, 1935. Vol. II.
 „Novell II, The Eighth Day. A lusty youthfull Priest of
 Varlungo, fell in love with a pretty woman, named Monna
 Belcolore. To compasse his amorous desire, hee left his
 cloake (as a pledge of further payment) with her. By a subtile
 sleight afterward, he made meanes to borrow a mortar of her,
 which when hee sent home againe in the presence of her husband,
 he demaunded to have his Cloake sent him, as having left it in
 pawne for the Morter. To pacifie her husband, offended that
 shee did not lend the Priest the Morter without a pawne: she
 sent him backe his cloake againe, albeit greatly against her
 will.“

three times, in the following compounds: „rechtschaffen," „Gerechtigkeit," and „Rechtgefühl."⁽¹⁾ The repeated use of this word in connection with Michael Kohlhaas indicates that the theme of this tale will be bound up with the hero's conception of justice. The initial paragraph of „Die Marquise von O....," which contains a newspaper announcement made by a lady of excellent reputation calling upon the father of her future child to declare himself, points to the idea of the triumph of innocence, which underlies the tale. So too, the picture of the young man about to hang himself, with which „Das Erdbeben in Chili" opens, foreshadows the tragic ending of the tale. And the anecdote of the ungrateful negro who kills his master to gain his possessions anticipates the atmosphere of hatred and betrayal which prevails in „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo." The incident of the sick foundling who supplants Piachi's own son gives us a premonition of the coming conflict in the house of Piachi.

Sometimes the underlying idea is represented by a symbol. This device calls to our minds the siskin in the elderberry bush in „Das Käthchen von Heilbronn" and the laurel wreath in „Der Prinz von Homburg." The horses which appear at

(1) „Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III, p.141.

intervals throughout Michael Kohlhaas " point to the main theme, the search for justice. When their master is losing his cause, they are described as, die jämmerlichen Tiere, die alle Augenblicke sterben zu wollen schienen; " (1) when their master finally wins his cause they appear as the beiden, von Wohlsein glänzenden, die Erde mit ihren Hufen stampfenden Rappen. (2) The image of a swan stained with mud, which dives into a lake and emerges in all its natural purity, is symbolic of the fate of ^{the} Marquise von O... Of the two rings in "Der Zweikampf," one is the emblem of Littegarde's innocence, the other that of Graf Jakob's guilt. The episode of the negro girl's betrayal of her master and that of Mariane Congreve's sacrifice for her lover foreshadow the conflict in Die Verlobung in St. Domingo, for the one, illustrates Gustav's delusion, the other what really happened. This kind of symbolism corresponds to Boccaccio's use of the falcon in his tale of the faithful lover. (3)

(1) Kleist's Werke, ed: cit: III, p.198.

(2) ibid: III, p.246.

(3) The argument of this tale, the 9th of the fifth day, is as follows: [Boccaccio, Decameron, ed: cit:] p.306. "Frederigo, of the Alberighi family, loved a Gentlewoman, and was not requited with love againe. By bountifull expences, and overliberall invitations, he wasted and consumed all his lands and goods, having nothing left him, but a Hawke or Falcon. His unkinde mistress happeneth to come visite him, and he, not having any other foode for her dinner, made a dainty dish of his Faulcone for her to feede on. Being conquered by this exceeding kinde courtesie, she changed her former hatred towards him, accepting him as her Husband in marriage, and made him a main of wealthy possessions."

But it is not only in these ways that Kleist stresses the underlying idea of the tales. It is reflected also in the external action. The action rises to a climax in the event of chief importance. And at the same moment the opposing forces in the tales meet in conflict. The chief event may be placed at the very beginning of the tale, as in "Michael Kohlhaas," "Die Heilige Cäcilie," and "Die Marquise von O....," or it may occur halfway through the narrative, as in "Das Erdbeben in Chili," "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" and "Der Zweikampf," each one of which is named after its central event. Only in "Der Findling" does the main occurrence occupy a final position.

The most important occurrence in "Michael Kohlhaas" is the outrage at the Tronkenburg, for on this occasion the horse-dealer comes decisively into collision with the party of the aristocrats. The seizure of the horses produces a long series of incidents, from amongst which some, such as the death of Lisbeth and the scene in the market-place at Dresden, stand out as climaxes. Every stage in the action subsequent to the initial event marks a development in the conflict begun at the Tronkenburg. Until the intervention of Luther the conflict rages between Kohlhaas and the State, expressing itself by means of an oscillating movement in the narrative.

The action of Kohlhaas is repeatedly checked by the counteraction of the State. In the storming of the Tronkenburg the action led by Kohlhaas reaches its climax; upon this the interview with Luther follows as a secondary climax, putting an end to Kohlhaas' revolt against the State. Now the State and Kohlhaas are reconciled, and the State takes the case into its own hands. The party of the aristocrats henceforth leads the counter-action. The oscillating movement continues until finally on every side each individual obtains his deserts. The aristocrats are punished, Kohlhaas is condemned for rebellion against the State, the Elector of Saxony must atone for the negligence of his ministers, and the horse-dealer recovers his horses. Thus in the conclusion all conflicts are resolved.

The initial incident in "Die Marquise von O..." is likewise of supreme importance in the action. As in "Michael Kohlhaas" the outrage at the Tronkenburg, so here the deed of Graf F. sets the whole action in motion. Moreover a turning-point divides both tales into two parts. But whereas at the intervention of Luther the direction of the action is transferred from Michael Kohlhaas to the State, with the banishment of the Marquise von O... the leading part passes from Graf F... to the heroine. This

turning-point has a similar significance in each tale; both Michael Kohlhaas and the Marquise von O... are changed in consequence, the former repenting of his deeds of aggression, the latter attaining to a full realisation of herself. Whereas the Marquise von O... has hitherto endured misfortune with meekness, she now defies it and takes her fate into her own hands, arming herself with the consciousness of her innocence.

The structure of "Die Heilige Cäcilie" resembles that of "Die Marquise von O...". The main occurrence, the miracle of St. Cecilia, is placed at the beginning and the remainder of the narrative deals with its consequences. Here, however, the main occurrence and the consequences form two separate centres of interest. The miracle of St. Cecilia and the fate of the three brothers are two different themes. The story begins with the miracle and reverts to it at the end, while the intervening part deals with the fortunes of the brothers. The disastrous ending of "Das Bettelweib von Locarno" is, on the contrary, the direct outcome of the chief incident, the injury to the beggarwoman, with which this story also begins. Thus the construction is peculiarly suited to express the idea underlying the tale, the idea of retribution.

The event of chief importance in "Das Erdbeben in

Chili" on the contrary, occupies a central position. In the earthquake the judgment of God, which the cruelty of man has evoked, is revealed. When the evil purpose of man is frustrated, perfect concord prevails. But the source of conflict is not removed. Once the social order is re-established, evil reasserts itself, and the disaster averted by the earthquake ensues with tenfold severity. "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" shows a similar construction. Here too the conflicting forces are seemingly reconciled in the central event, but break forth again in all their fury at the close. At the beginning the conflict between the negroes and the white men is represented in the betrayal of Gustav by Toni. In the betrothal, which is the event of chief importance, the hostile parties are united, for henceforth Toni takes the side of her lover and plans his escape. But the conflict is not settled, for Gustav fails to trust Toni at the crucial moment, thus causing the final disaster. Both in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" and in "Das Erdbeben in Chili" the earlier part of the tale is a preparation for the central event and the later part discloses its consequences.

"Der Zweikampf," of which the main event also occurs in the middle of the narrative, differs however from the two

former tales in that it has a double theme. The two different elements, the murder of the Duke and the accusation of Littegarde, are skilfully welded together in the incident of the duel, which concerns both. Thus the central event in this tale serves the same purpose as the miracle in "Die Heilige Cäcilie." The construction of "Der Zweikampf" shows further similarity with that of Die Heilige Cacilie for one part of the theme, - the fratricide is the subject of the first and last sections, while the intervening section deals with the other part, the accusation of Littegarde.

The position of the chief occurrence at the end of the tale, which is most common in the stories of the eighteenth Century occurs only once in Kleist's tales: in "Der Findling." Here everything leads up to the violation of Elvire, and all the passions which seek an outlet while the action proceeds suddenly vent themselves at the close.

The principal event is most frequently situated at the beginning - a feature characteristic of Kleist. This method of construction, by which the greater part of the narrative is devoted to the consequences of the event, reveals the author's interest in the significance of that event in the lives of his characters. For Kleist

is not primarily concerned with the extraordinary nature of the events but rather with their impact upon individuals, their influence upon those whom they befall.

B. NARRATIVE STYLE.

The tales of Kleist are in keeping with Lessing's definition of epic art, for their action is continuous. The author presents his theme in a succession of incidents, - the proper method of poetry as opposed to the juxtaposition in space of the visual arts.⁽¹⁾ The action of the tales is rarely interrupted by descriptions of scenes or states of mind. The account of the earthquake in *Das Erdbeben in Chili* might indeed be compared with Homer's representation of the sword of Achilles cited by Lessing in his *Laokoon*.⁽²⁾

"Hier stürzte noch ein Haus zusammen, und jagte ihn, die Trümmer weit umherschleudernd, in eine Nebenstrasse, hier leckte die Flamme schon, in Dampfwolken blitzend, aus allen Giebeln, und trieb ihn schreckenvoll in eine andere; hier wälzte sich, aus seinem Gestade gehoben, der Mapochofluss an ihn heran, und riss ihn brüllend in eine dritte."⁽³⁾ Here is a series of moving pictures, connected by the central figure, Jeronimo. The storming of the citadel in *Die Marquise von O...* and the attack on the Tronkenburg in *Michael Kohlhaas* are also examples of events described

(1) Lessing, *Laokoon*, Chap. XVI.

(2) *ibid*: Chap. XVIII.

(3) *Kleist's Werke*, ed: cit: III, p.297.

through the actions of the characters. „Bald kletterte er, den Schlauch in der Hand, mitten unter brennenden Giebeln umher, und regierte den Wetterstrahl; bald steckte er, die Naturen der Asiaten mit Schauern erfüllend, in den Arsenalen und wälzte Pulverfasser und Bomben heraus.“⁽¹⁾

When a narrative centres in one figure, the action is straightforward. It is a simple account of what happens to the chief character. Every one of Kleist's tales shows some use of this method of narration. Often a leading part is taken by two characters in succession. The earlier part of „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo“ centres in Gustav, the later part in Toni. In „Das Erdbeben in Chili“ the fortunes of two people are traced in converging lines. Although „Die Marquise von O...“ is named after the heroine, the latter only becomes the leading character in the second half of the tale. Until he sets off for Naples, Graf F... dominates the action with his persistent courtship. The greater part of „Die Marquise von O...“ is related from the point of view of the Marquise's family. „Man überlegte anfangs, ob man sich auf die Güter des Kommandanten begeben sollte:“⁽²⁾ „Man hielt die Verlobung schon für so gut, wie abgemacht:“⁽³⁾ „Die Familie

(1) Kleists Werke, ed.: cit.: III, p.252.

(2) ibid., III. p.254.

(3) ibid.: III. p.267.

dachte nun darauf " (1) every comment upon the situation is made by the family. The author's reason for telling his story from this angle is evident when the nature of the subject is considered. "Der Findling," which is also called after the chief character, is related from the angle of vision of Nicolo. Everything is reported as happening just as he sees it, coloured by his fevered imagination.

The somewhat complicated action of "Michael Kohlhaas" has also the one focus-point, the person of the horse-dealer, in whom the central idea is incorporated. The intervention of Luther not only marks a turning-point in the action of the tale, but also in the manner of narration. Between the outrage at the Tronkenburg and the interview with Luther, incidents follow close on one another, without a single pause for reflection. At the same time each paves the way for the next, every one being brought about by the set purpose of the horsedealer. When Kohlhaas lays down his arms, however, and the State takes control of the action, the case assumes a wider significance. Whereas hitherto the stream of the narrative has run swiftly, making for one point only, it now grows sluggish, broadens, and seems at times to lose sight of its goal. Conversations are recorded, in which many different opinions about

(1) "Kleist's Werke" ed: cit: III.p.254.

Kohlhaas are expressed. At every turn retarding elements slacken the speed of the narrative. The horses cannot be found; the machinations of Nagelschmidt cause fresh difficulty; the capsule episode obscures the chief interest. The main current of the narrative thus branches into numerous ramifications, all of which, however, are united in the momentous closing scene. These ramifications, although some divert the interest and some retard the action, do strengthen the significance of Kohlhaas' case. The seizure of the horses is, as Hebbel observes, „das erste Glied einer Kette, die sich bis zum deutschen Kaiser hinaufwindet und eine Welt erdrückt, indem sie dieselbe umschlingt.“⁽¹⁾

Transition from one incident to another in Kleist's tales is not in general accompanied by any interruption in the narrative. An incident is usually the natural outcome of the preceding one. Although distinctly separate from one another, incidents are usually linked by a common character. Episodes are rare in the tales. Even the life-history of Elvire, which has no apparent connection with the main theme of „Der Findling“, is linked with it at the end, when Elvire's devotion to her rescuer makes her fall a victim to the deception of Nicolo who impersonates him.

(1) F. Hebbel, „Sämtliche Werke“, Berlin, 1904, IX, p.59.

Retrospective narration is not so rare in the tales, and is found especially in "Der Zweikampf." Sometimes the author breaks the thread of his narrative in order to acquaint us of something which has happened at a previous point in the action. Such explanations are those introduced by: "Nun muss man wissen,"⁽¹⁾ and "Man muss nämlich wissen."⁽²⁾ But more often these communications are woven into the thread of the narrative. Kleist does this by putting them into the mouths of his characters.

Gustav tells of his rescue by Mariane Congreve and Xaviera reveals the secret of the image in Elvire's bedroom. On the other hand, Kleist's practice of beginning a tale by relating an event which happens half-way through the narrative is no abuse of the prerogatives of the epic-writer. On the contrary, whenever he does this, it is with great effect. Sometimes there is a quick alternation between two scenes of action. This is skilfully achieved in "Die Marquise von O..." When the family receives the news of Graf F...'s death we do not only hear of what has happened to the Russian officer, but also of the attitude of the family towards him. Towards the end of the tale the scenes in the house of the Colonel are described as well as

(1) "Kleist's Werke," ed: cit: III, p.398.

(2) ibid: III, p.421.

the experiences of the Marquise in her country-house, the action being linked together by the character of Graf F... At times, however, the author is bound to interrupt his narrative to depict simultaneous events. Deviations are introduced by such expressions as :
 „Inzwischen,^{“(1)} or „Es traf sich aber ...^{“(2)} They do not, however, irritate us, as we have no difficulty in tracing the various threads of the action, connected, as they always are, with the main theme.

On occasion, a somewhat artificial method is used to bring about a development in the narrative. An intercepted letter plays its part in „Michael Kohlhaas,“ causing the arrest of the horsedealer on the ground of carrying on negotiations with Nagelelschmidt, in „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo,“ where it enables Toni to warn the white family of their danger, in „Der Findling,“ where it causes Nicolo to suspect his fostermother of contriving against him, thus setting his heart on fire with a desire for vengeance, and in „Der Zweikampf,“ where it gives rise to the misunderstanding in the mind of Graf Jakob which

(1) „Kleists Werke,“ ed: cit: III, pp. 195, 215, 238, 243, 279, 316, 349, 369.

(2) ibid: III, pp. 219, 221, 315.

results in the false accusation of Littegarde. Misunderstanding, upon which the action turns at the close of „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo,“ is also an important factor in the plot of „Der Findling.“ The impersonation practised by Nicolo brings to our minds the trick of Littegarde's maid. A miracle, which intervenes in time to avert calamity, gives a violent turn to the action in „Das Erdbeben in Chili,“ „Der Zweikampf,“ and in „Die Heilige Cäcilie.“ The use of such devices points to some lack of invention in the author. In this connection an observation of Kleist may be quoted : „Erfindung ist es überall, was ein Werk der Kunst ausmacht.“⁽¹⁾ The poet later expresses this idea in a different way: „Die Erscheinung, die am meisten bei der Betrachtung eines Kunstwerks rührt, ist, dünkt mich, nicht das Werk selbst, sondern die Eigentümlichkeit des Geistes, der es hervorbrachte, und der sich in unbewusster Freiheit und Lieblichkeit darin entfaltet.“⁽²⁾ This may be aptly applied to Kleist's tales, since their value lies not in the ingenuity displayed in the fabrication of plot, but rather in the originality of mind shown in the author's treatment of his subject-matter.

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: V, p.342, letter 93, an Marie v. Kleist [?] - June, 1807.

(2) ibid: p.418, letter 171.

The use of these devices does not lessen the appeal made by the tales to our imagination; nor do the liberties taken by the author with time and space detract from our sense of the reality of what happens. We can follow the narrative of "Der Findling," which stretches over a generation, as well as that of "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo," which is confined to a night and a day. We can visualise the events in "Michael Kohlhaas" which take place now in one town, now in another, now in a market-place, and now in the Elector's residence with as much ease as the incidents in "Das Bettelweib von Locarno," which are staged in the interior of one castle. With consummate skill the author sustains the illusion in all conditions. Details of time and place are never recorded for their own sake, but always in order to represent the events more convincingly. The scenes in which characters and incidents are laid serve only to render them more actual. So accurately are the travels of Kohlhaas marked out that it is possible to follow them on a map. Although the details of time and place are recorded with all the care of a realist, they are never given prominence in the narrative; they are only noted in passing, as in the following sentence: "Sie unterdrückte die Angst, die alle diese lügenhaften Anstalten in ihr erweekten; und unter dem Vorwand, dem Fremden ein

Frühstück zu bereiten, stürzte sie eilig in das untere Wohnzimmer herab."⁽¹⁾ Although strictly localised, the occurrences in the tales would still have the same appeal if removed from the scene in which they are set.⁽²⁾ We feel that the events in "Die Marquise von O..." might happen at any time. Cases such as that of Michael Kohlhaas, although common enough in Germany at the period when "Faustrecht" had just been abolished, might occur anywhere. For as long as human nature remains the same, similar conditions are liable to exist, and such a personality as Michael Kohlhaas is independent of time and place. The genius who, in the words of Wilhelm Schäfer, "das Schattenbild einer Chronik in ewige Gegenwart stellte"⁽³⁾ knew how to endow with universal significance the unique occurrences which he chose as

(2) Exceptions to this statement are to be found in "Die Heilige Cäcilie" and "Der Zweikampf". In the former the miracle of St. Cecilia would be hard to conceive without its background. So, too, the mediaeval custom of trial by combat is an essential part of the theme of "Der Zweikampf".

(3) Wilhelm Schäfer, "Die Dreizehn Bücher der Deutschen Seele: München 1934, "Buch der Erhebung," Kleist, p.280.

(1) "Kleist's Werke," ed: cit: III, p. 337.

themes for his tales. While portraying events in the immediate present, he gives them the air of things eternal.

This living reality of the events in the tales is largely due to Kleist's dramatic methods of portraying them. He does not describe; he represents. He makes us see the events which he narrates because he conceals his personality behind his creation. Instead of interrupting his narrative from time to time to address the reader, he all but ignores him. Whereas most narrators in the eighteenth century make frequent comments upon the events which they relate, Kleist merely states facts, and leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions. Sometimes this matter-of-fact style is unsuited to the nature of the subject. We are somewhat taken aback when we read of Elvire's death, the murder of Nicolo by Piachi, and the arrest and condemnation of Piachi, all in the same short paragraph, without a breathing-space between any of these alarming events. But although the tone of Kleist's narration is impersonal, there are times when we can discern a definite expression of opinion. Some such remark as "diese neue Schreckenstat" suddenly betrays the presence of the author. However much Kleist appears to efface himself in his narrative, there is seldom any doubt

(1) Kleist's Werke, ed: cit: III.p.352.

where his sympathies lie. Such phrases as "fanatische [n] Mordknecht,"⁽¹⁾ "des höllische [n] Bösewicht [s]"⁽²⁾, "des Ärmste[n]"⁽³⁾, "diese treffliche Dame,"⁽⁴⁾ "ihre schöne Seele"⁽⁵⁾ express condemnation, pity, or admiration in the author. That Kleist's attitude to Michael Kohlhaas changes in the middle of the tale is revealed chiefly by the adjectives which he uses in speaking of his hero. At first the horsedealer is "rechtschaffen," yet at the same time "entsetzlich";⁽⁶⁾ when he first takes up arms he is "Der Engel des Gerichts"⁽⁷⁾, later the author speaks of "[den] entsetzliche[n] Wüterich"⁽⁸⁾ and "[des] rasende[n] Mordbrenner [s]"⁽⁹⁾.

(1) "Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III, p.310.

(2) ibid: III, p.374.

(3) ibid: III, p.352.

(4) ibid: III, p.311.

(5) ibid: III, p.351.

(6) ibid: III, p.141.

(7) ibid: III, p.167.

(8) ibid: III, p.173.

(9) ibid: III, p.178.

but when he surrenders to the State, „[den] arme[n]
Kohlhaas⁽¹⁾ and [des] ehrliche[n] Kohlhaas.“⁽²⁾

A note of irony sounds in some of the tales. „Die Heilige Cäcilie,“ which was in all probability an original invention, does not seem to be taken quite seriously. The speech of the abbess, declaring the authenticity of the miracle, and ending with the words: „von dem Papst habe ich soeben ein Breve erhalten, wodurch er dies bestätigt,“⁽³⁾ and the extravagant simile, with which the singing of the three brothers is described: „So mögen sich Leoparden und Wölfe anhören lassen, wenn sie, zur eisigen Winterzeit, das Firmament anbrüllen“⁽⁴⁾ makes us wonder whether Kleist was not satirising a mediaeval legend. The irony in „Das Erdbeben in Chili“ is in a different vein. Here the very event which is sent to save the lovers is interpreted by their fellows as a punishment which they bring upon the town. And the gratitude of Jeronimo and Josephe for their deliverance is the very

(1) „Kleists Werke,“ ed: cit: III, p.219.

(2) ibid: III, p.197.

(3) ibid: III, p.390.

(4) ibid: III, p.385.

cause of their downfall. With bitter irony Kleist speaks of the Pharisaic morals of St. Iago with reference to the judgment on Josephe; „Alles, was geschehen könnte, war dass der Feuertod, zu dem sie verurteilt wurde, zur grossen Entrüstung der Matronen und Jungfrauen von St. Iago, durch einen Machtspruch des Vicekönigs, in eine Enthauptung verwandelt ward. Man vermietete in den Strassen, durch welche der Hinrichtungszug gehen sollte, die Fenster, man trug die Dächer der Häuser ab, und die frommen Töchter der Stadt luden ihre Freundinnen ein, um dem Schauspiele, das der göttlichen Rache gegeben wurde, an ihrer schwesterlichen Seite beizuwohnen.“⁽¹⁾ This irony reaches its highest point when Kleist refers to the mob which is thirsting for the blood of the young people as „die ganze im Tempel Jesu versammelte Christenheit!“⁽²⁾ The conclusion of „Michael Kohlhaas“ reveals a touch of bitter irony. The horses, to regain which Kohlhaas has committed deeds punishable with death, are restored to him through no effort on his part. So too, the remark at the end of „Die Marquise von O...:“ „Eine ganze Reihe von jungen Russen“

(1) „Kleist's Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.296.

(2) ibid: III, p.309.

folgte jetzt noch dem ersten:⁽¹⁾ is strangely incongruous with the tone in which the rest of the story is narrated. The author seems here to refer ironically to the suffering which is the emotional content of his tale.

In „Der Zweikampf“ Kleist does not enter wholeheartedly into his mediaeval world, with its implicit faith in trial by combat as a means of ascertaining divine judgment. The immediate issue of the duel obviously does not expose the guilty person. Nor is the manner in which the truth is ultimately disclosed in keeping with the mediaeval atmosphere of the tale.

Although Kleist does not openly take the reader into his confidence, as is the custom of Jean Paul and most of the poets of the Romantic school, he does so in a more subtle manner. By means of a careful arrangement of incidents he discloses facts of which his characters are ignorant. The newspaper announcement with which he opens his „Marquise von O....“ and the rescue of the Marquise by Graf F... acquaint us from the very beginning with the circumstances which the heroine and her family are so anxious to discover. Similarly, he reveals to us the motives of Toni's behaviour, which Babekan and Conge Hoango

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.294.

cannot understand, and which Gustav misconstrues with fatal consequences.

As a narrator Kleist appears to avoid the device of holding attention by keeping the reader in suspense as to the outcome of his tale. Instead of this he uses methods of reversal and anticipation. By means of the former he surprises the reader; by means of the latter he warns him of what is going to happen.

Reversal in the tales is more than a literary device; it is essential to the themes, since they deal with the unexpected, the extraordinary, founded on the commonplace. Some kind of reversal takes place in every tale. Again and again Michael Kohlhaas is within an ace of obtaining justice, but some petty hindrance baulks him. The action of "Das Erdbeben in Chili" may be divided into three parts. A scene of disaster begins and ends the tale, the middle section is a lyrical interlude. Thus a strong contrast is drawn between destruction and peace, hatred and love. Reversals in fortune are also frequent in the tales. "Dieser plötzliche Sturz, von der Höhe eines heitern und fast ungetrübten Glücks, in die Tiefe eines unabsehbaren und gänzlich hilflosen Elends, war mehr als das arme Weib

ertragen konnte."⁽¹⁾ Thus the fall of Littegarde, which resembles that of Elvire and the Marquise, is described. In "Der Zweikampf" fortune fluctuates between Graf Jakob and his opponents. Changes in the relations between the chief characters are also common. Toni and Gustav in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" begin by suspecting each other; then they are joined by a bond of confidence, which is finally broken by the renewed distrust of Gustav. The variation in the Marquise's attitude to Graf F... is shown in the following antithesis : "Er würde ihr damals nicht wie ein Teufel erschienen sein, wenn er ihr nicht, bei seiner ersten Erscheinung, wie ein Engel vorgekommen wäre."⁽²⁾ The most striking reversal in the tales is perhaps the change in the mentality of the three brothers in "Die Heilige Cäcilie."

Kleist often prepares the reader for untoward events. While hinting at what is to come he emphasises rather how things come to pass than what actually happens. Hence the author changes the Phöbus version of "Michael Kohlhaas" : "und

(1) "Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III, p.401.

(2) ibid: III, p.294.

versuchte alle mögliche, die Pferde an sie los zu werden⁽¹⁾ into „Kohlhaas liess es aus einer dunkeln Vorahnung, an nichts fehlen, die Pferde an sie los zu werden“⁽²⁾ in the final version. Lisbeth does not conceal her fears that Michael Kohlhaas will not win his cause. The misgivings of Donna Elisabeth warn us of coming disaster in „Das Erdbeben in Chili.“ The curse of Babekan : Die Rache Gottes würde sie, noch ehe sie ihrer Schandtat froh geworden, ereilen⁽³⁾ and Toni's premonition expressed in the words : „ sie frohlockte bei dem Gedanken, in dieser zu seiner Rettung angeordneten Unternehmung zu sterben “⁽⁴⁾ are fulfilled at the close of Die Verlobung in St. Domingo. Frau Helené's anxiety for her son augurs ill for the result of the duel. A future event is not only predicted by some character, but also by the author, in direct comment. The outrage of Nicolo on Elvire is thus foretold :
 „Beschämung, Wollust, und Rache vereinigten sich jätzt, um

(1) „Phöbus“, „Journal für die Kunst“, Dresden: 1808, „sechstes Stück“, IV, p.22.

(2) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.144.

(3) ibid: III, p.348.

(4) ibid: III, p.344.

die abscheulichste Tat, die je verübt worden ist, auszubrüten."⁽¹⁾

Although both epic and dramatic methods can be distinguished in the narrative style of Kleist, the poet seems by preference to use a dramatic style of presentation. The author recedes behind his narrative, and lets events and characters speak for themselves. The structure of most of the tales is composed of a succession of scenes. Even in the straightforward narrative of "Michael Kohlhaas" Kleist frequently pauses at a crucial situation and presents it dramatically. The outrage at the Tronkenburg, the cross-examination of Herse, the death of Lisbeth, the attack on the Tronkenburg, and the interview with Luther all stand out as separate scenes. The conversation in these scenes serves to interpret the underlying idea. The scene of Lisbeth's death reaches its climax in the words :
 "So möge mir Gott nie vergeben, wie ich dem Junker vergebe." Single words, which are tossed from mouth to mouth, emphasise the meaning. The word "verstossen" is used four times in the scene with Luther. Sometimes a whole sentence is repeated with a similar effect. The

(1) "Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III. p.372.

question: „Wo der Junker Wenzel von Tronka sei ?“ is put by Michael Kohlhaas three times, twice at the assault of the Tronkenburg, and again at the convent of Erlabrunn. On each occasion it forms the climax of the sentence. The first half of „Die Marquise von O...“ is a series of scenes, each of which presents some fresh development in the conflict between the characters. The wooing is a kind of recurrent theme when Graf F... appears, and the word „vermählen“ which recurs again and again, is the key note in the young officer's speech. Most of these scenes at the same time reveal some fresh aspect of the fundamental idea. They might therefore be termed key situations. Some, however, are little more than episodic. The visit of the doctor and the midwife to the Marquise do little more than bring home to us her position in relation to the world. The lengthy conversations between Gustav, Toni, and Babekan at the beginning of „Die Verlobung in St. Domingo“ serve to expose the situation.

Sometimes the poet expresses in dialogue what he cannot reveal through direct narration. In the prison scene between Friedrich and Littegarde all the pathos of the situation is conveyed to us. The anguish of Littegarde,

which is pent up in the plea to her lover : "Hinweg"⁽¹⁾
 finally bursts forth in the desperate cry : "Lass mich mit
 meinem Jammer und meiner Verzweiflung allein."⁽²⁾ A crisis,
 either in the action or in the mental life of a character,
 is often marked by direct speech. Since the greater part
 of the conversation scenes is reported in indirect speech,
 the incursion of direct speech is sudden and striking :
 the steady flow of the narrative here takes a sudden leap.
 The transition from indirect to direct speech at Graf F... 's
 dismissal of his adjutant brings out the full force of his
 "Fahr zu !" ⁽³⁾ This technique produces an effect of light and
 shade; the fragments of direct speech stand out as high
 lights. "Der Burgvogt ... kam, und fragte nach dem Pass=
 schein. - Kohlhaas fragte : "Der Passschein ?" Er sagte,
 ein wenig betreten, dass er, soviel er wisse, keinen
 habe; dass man ihm aber nur beschreiben möchte, was dies
 für ein Ding des Herrn sei; so werde er vielleicht
 zufälliger Weise damit versehen sein. Der Schlossvogt...
 versetzte, dass, ohne einen landesherrlichen Erlaubnis schein,
 kein Rosskamm mit Pferden über die Grenze gelassen

(1) "Kleist's Werke" ed: cit: III, p.415.

(2) ibid: III, p.416.

(3) ibid: III, p.261.

„⁽¹⁾
würde. Here the object of conversation is stressed by Kohlhaas' own words : „Der Passschein ?“ This device not only stresses the idea; it also serves to throw light upon the character. Whereas in indirect speech the substance of the conversation is all-important, in direct speech the characteristic form of speech matters most. In some scenes the words of the chief character only are directly reported. At the arrest of Graf Jakob der Rotbart only the count speaks : „Brüder, seht ! welch eine schändliche Anklage, auf den Mord meines Bruders, wider mich zusammengeschiedet worden ist !“ ... Die Freunde fluchten über diese hämische und niederträchtige Arglistigkeit, ... und schon waren sie im Begriff, gegen den Abgeordneten beleidigend zu werden : als der Graf, der die Papiere noch einmal überlesen hatte, ... ausrief: „ruhig, meine Freunde!“⁽²⁾

Almost any number of characters may take part in these scenes, some of which are dialogues, some conversations between several people, others crowd scenes. There are no long speeches, conversation consisting chiefly of brief statement and repartee. Dialogue in the tales always represents some kind of conflict. For instance,

(1) „Kleist's Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.142.

(2) ibid: III, p.395.

Kohlhaas' plans for selling his house arouse consternation in Lisbeth. The opinion which she expresses on her husband's behaviour shows no understanding of his motives, and Kohlhaas remonstrates with her in vain. But the outcome of this dialogue, as of most similar scenes in the tales, marks an advance in the action, for Lisbeth determines to plead her husband's cause herself. No words pass directly between the Marquise and Graf F... until their meeting in the garden. Here the Marquise throws up a barrier between herself and her lover, which Graf F... finds impossible to scale. Between Jeronimo and Josephe, who live in perfect concord, no dialogue in direct speech is recorded. The principal conversation between several people is that between Toni, Babekan and Gustav at the beginning of "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo." The situation of these people shut up together in a house spying upon one another could hardly be otherwise represented than by conversation, in which each tries to gain information about the others. The council of the ministers in "Michael Kohlhaas" has one object of discussion, the case of Kohlhaas. It has therefore more unity than the scene in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo."

The close of Das „Erdbeben in Chili“ shows Kleist's masterly treatment of a crowd scene. Here a group of people defend themselves against an antagonistic mob. The two parties speak alternately, Meister Pedrillo being spokesman for the one, Don Fernando for the other. Brief exclamations express the tenseness of the situation. Direct speech is skilfully woven into the narrative, marking a crisis in the action. Individual voices which represent the general opinion, are picked out of the crowd. The following sentence vividly illustrates mass psychology: „Hierauf: „Er ist der Vater !“ schrie eine Stimme; und: er ist Jeronimo Rugera !“ eine andere; und: „sie sind die gotteslästerlichen Menschen !“ eine dritte; und: „steinigt sie ! steinigt sie !“ die ganze im Tempel Jesu versammelte Christenheit !“⁽¹⁾ As a stone cast into a pond produces circles which become wider and wider until they reach the shore, so here a remark thrown out by one person is passed from mouth to mouth until the whole congregation simultaneously makes the same decision. Thus the crescendo: „Er ist der Vater:“ „Er ist Jeronimo Rugera:“ „Sie sind die gotteslästerlichen Menschen!“ culminates in „steinigt sie ! steinigt sie !“ die ganze im Tempel Jesu versammelte Christenheit !“

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.309.

The background to such scenes is usually sketched in connection with the movements of the characters.

„Er trat durch eine Pforte, die er offen fand, in den Garten, durchstrich die Gänge desselben, und wollte die hintere Rampe hinauf steigen, als er, in einer Laube, die zur Seite lag, die Marquise ... an einem kleinen Tischchen emsig arbeiten sah.“⁽¹⁾ By such indications as the following the author locates his narrative: „Er kehrte, da die Nacht einbrach, in einem Wirtshause auf der Landstrasse ein.“⁽²⁾ „Gegen Mittag begab sich Kohlhaas, von seinen drei Landsknechten begleitet, unter dem Gefolge einer unabsehbaren Menge, zu dem Grosskanzler des Tribunals.“ These illustrations show how Kleist links description of background with his narrative. In doing this, he gives clear broad outlines, with no detail.

„Eben ging, diesem Schlusse gemäss, die Mittagssonne des Margarethentages über die Türme der Stadt Basel; und eine unermessliche Menscheumenge, für welche man Bänke und Gerüste zusammengezimmert hatte, war auf dem Schlossplatz versammelt, ... als Herr Friedrich und Graf Jakob, zur Ausfechtung ihrer Sache, in die

(1) „Kleist's Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.279.

(2) ibid: III, p.172.

(3) ibid: III, p. 194.

Schranken traten.⁽¹⁾

Kleist's methods of representation, which are on the whole dramatic rather than epic, make us visualise the events which he relates as happening before our eyes. With great skill in the art of narrative he conjures up living pictures which imprint themselves indelibly upon our memories.

(1) 'Kleists Werke' ed: cit: III, p.407.

C. PORTRAYAL OF CHARACTER.

Kleist's dramatic sense is as perceptible in his character-drawing as in his narrative style. With the instinct of the playwright he sees characters above all in conflict. In "Michael Kohlhaas" the characters are grouped together in a triangular formation. The nobleman instigates the action, Kohlhaas carries it on, becoming passive in his turn as it passes to the State. A similar grouping is found in "Der Findling." The theme of this tale is the conflict between Nicolo, Elvire and Piachi. The initial stage in their relationship is created by Piachi, who takes the plague-stricken foundling into his care. In later years Nicolo plots against Elvire, Piachi's wife, who, ignorant of Nicolo's purpose, plays a passive part until the end, when she falls a victim to his trick of deception. Now Piachi again takes an active part by wreaking vengeance on Nicolo, and thus in some measure completes the action which he had begun.

A triangular grouping occurs also in "Die Marquise von O...." where the Marquise, Graf F..., and the von G... family react upon each other. The family, however, has little to do with the spiritual relationship between the

Marquise and Graf F...., but plays an active part in bringing the couple together, arranging both the engagement and the marriage. The characters of the Marquise and Graf F... develop separately in contrary directions. The Marquise is saved from insanity by the re-awakening of her self-respect, and Graf F... ultimately wins her through mortification and self-abasement. A similar contrary development is perceptible in the characters of Gustav and Toni in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo." Toni, on the one hand, rises from being the decoy for white men into being the noble character who risks her life for her lover, while Gustav, who at first appears unselfish and courageous, courting danger for the sake of his family, degenerates into the seducer, and ultimate murderer of Toni. At first hostile, they draw nearer to one another until they are united in the betrothal scene, but are parted again at the end. Since the lines of their fortunes intersect, their relationship might be described as chiastic.⁽¹⁾ If the beggarwoman in "Das Bettelweib von Locarno" may be regarded as a character, it might be said that her fate crosses the fate of the Marchese as the path of Toni crosses that of Gustav. At first abused by the aristocrat, she later wreaks

(1) For the suggestion underlying this analysis of the relationship between the characters in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" I am indebted to Dr. J. Klein (University of Marburg)

vengeance on him until his downfall is accomplished.

Kleist's methods of character-drawing betray the dramatist as clearly as does his grouping of characters. Instead of describing his men and women, the narrator portrays them in action and conversation. He sets them before our eyes and leaves us to form our own opinion of them. Dress and appearance are for the most part left to our imagination. We do not even know whether the Marquise or Littegarde is beautiful. Kleist is solely concerned with the personality of his characters, never with their outward appearance for its own sake. Although he tries to describe Toni, it is only to record the effect which her beauty produces upon Gustav. The description of Nicolo: "Er war von einer besondern, etwas starren Schönheit, seine schwarzen Haare hingen ihm, in schlichten Spitzen, von der Stirn herab, ein Gesicht beschattend, das ernst und klug, seine Mienen niemals veränderte:" arouses our curiosity as to what kind of mentality is concealed behind so remarkable an exterior. The only description of character that Kleist gives is that of Michael Kohlhaas.⁽²⁾ We learn little else of the horsedealer, however, than that he had an abnormal sense

(1) "Kleists Werke", ed: cit: III, p.360.

(2) ibid: III, p.141.

of justice. Instead of telling us what kind of man the hero is, Kleist warns us of the effects of his dominant characteristic. The description of Kohlhaas' mentality serves a purpose similar to that served by the sketch of Nicolo's appearance: both awaken interest in the hero's development.

Sometimes an impressionistic touch brings a character before the mind. We can well visualise Littegarde mit halb offener Brust und aufgelöstem Haar. ⁽¹⁾ The "kleinen, blitzenden Augen, von rötlichen Augenwimpern überschattet" ⁽²⁾ are a feature typical of the cunning, underhand nature of Jakob der Rotbart.

Kleist's choice of names particularly reveals his interest in every character as an individual. However insignificant a part he may play in a tale, every person has a name. Even such minor characters as Piachi's son (Paolo), Toni's half-brothers (Nanky and Seppy), every member of Don Fernando's family, and two of Kohlhaas' sons (Heinrich and Leopold) are given Christian names. Many of the names are suggestive of certain qualities. Meister Himboldt, Congo Hoango, Hinz and Kunz, with their disparaging associations, evoke some image of their owners. The only

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.425.

(2) ibid: III, p.397.

major character who has no Christian name is the Elector of Saxony, to whom Kleist grants no other description than the „Mann mit weissen und blauen Federbüschen“, which conveys an impression of weak effeminacy. Now and again the author enlists our sympathy for a character by means of some epithet, such as : eine wehmütige und rührende Erscheinung; „dieser göttliche Held, die unglückliche Josephe, seine [r] treue[n] treffliche[n] Elvire. And he produces the opposite reaction in us with such expressions as: „heuchelte die Alte, in Wendungen arglistiger und rabbulistischer Art, unedelmütiger und unwahrhaftigerweise.

But the principal means used by Kleist to depict character are those of the dramatist: the spoken word, deed, and gesture. No better indication could be given

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- (1) „Kleists Werke“, ed: cit: III, pp.236,237, 246, 248.
 (2) ibid: III, p.415.
 (3) ibid: III, p.311.
 (4) ibid: III, p.295.
 (5) ibid: III, p.361.
 (6) ibid: III, p.319.
 (7) ibid: III, p.209.
 (8) ibid: III, p.405.

of the arrogance of Kohlhaas than the proclamation in which he calls himself „einen Statthalter Michaels, des Erzengels, der gekommen sei, an allen, die in dieser Streitsache des Junkers Partei ergreifen würden, mit Feuer und Schwert, die Arglist, in welcher die ganze Welt versunken sei, zu bestrafen.“⁽¹⁾ In the interview with Herse, Michael Kohlhaas' sense of justice is perhaps more clearly represented than anywhere else for here he doggedly seeks to find fault with the servant who has defended his master's rights. And only in the scene with Luther is the true humility of Kohlhaas revealed. Thus the reaction of one character upon another ~~discloses~~ depths of personality which might otherwise have remained hidden. The „heftig, auf einen Punkt hintreibender Wille“⁽²⁾ of Graf F... is illustrated in the long scene in which he endeavours to impose his will upon the Marquise, in spite of the opposition of her whole family. A character's manner of speaking is made to reflect his personality. The simple, straightforward speech of Kohlhaas which never varies, no matter whom he is addressing, is a sure token of his singleness of purpose.

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: III, p.178.

(2) ibid: III, p.260.

The refined and affectionate nature of the Marquise von O... can be recognised from her manner of speaking to her family. Toni's sudden defiance of her mother :

„Beim Licht der Sonne, du hast sehr unrecht, mich an diese Greuelthaten zu erinnern ! Die Unmenschlichkeiten, an denen ihr mich teilzunehmen zwingt, empören längst mein innerstes Gefühl“⁽¹⁾ shows us a courage which we had little expected in her. The mental state of a character is also mirrored in his speech. When Frau von G... comes to tell her daughter who it is who has betrayed her, the Marquise can do no more than ejaculate: „wer hat sich,“
 „welcher er selbst hat sich gezeigt ?“ ... „Wer ist es ?“ her impatience culminating in the exclamations:
 „Wer ? wer ? wer ?“⁽²⁾ These monosyllables convey to us an impression of her agitation.

The simple narration of a man's deeds gives a clear picture of his character. The wickedness of Graf Jakob is at first not mentioned, but his conduct is made to appear suspicious. The assassination of a brother with whom he had lived at enmity, and whose Dukedom he had expected to inherit, subsequently, at the knowledge that

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.333.

(2) ibid: III, p.283.

the dowager was to act as Regent for her son, his scrupulous observance of duty to the dead Duke - all these facts are skilfully stated so that the reader may draw his own conclusion. Nicolo's stony-hearted indifference to the sufferings of others is vividly displayed in his behaviour on the journey to Rome : „Von Zeit zu Zeit holte er sich, mit stillen und geräuschlosen Bewegungen, eine Handvoll Nüsse aus der Tasche, die er bei sich trug, und während Piachi sich die Tränen vom Auge wischte, nahm er sie zwischen die Zähne und knackte sie auf.“⁽¹⁾ The cowardly egoism of Nicolo is perhaps nowhere more strikingly expressed than in his encounter with Elvire in the guise of a Spanish knight. Elvire faints : „Nicolo, von Schrecken bleich, wandte sich um und wollte der Unglücklichen beispringen; doch da das Geräusch, das sie gemacht hatte, notwendig den Alten herbeiziehen musste, so unterdrückte die Besorgnis, einen Verweis von ihm zu erhalten, alle andere Rücksichten; er riss ihr, mit verstörter Beeiferung, ein Bünd Schlüssel von der Hüfte, das sie bei sich trug, und einen gefunden, der passte, warf er Bünd [sic] den in den Saal zurück, und verschwand.“⁽²⁾ The only mention which is made of Wenzel von Tronka in

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.360.

(2) ibid: III, p.364.

the market-place scene is as follows: „Vergebens rief der Junker Wenzel, der sich aus dem Tumult rettete, den Rittern zu, seinem Vetter beizuspringen - an illustration of cowardice similar to that of Nicolo. Nothing is told us of Graf F... 's mortification; yet his every deed and word bears witness to his state of mind.

Unlike the "moral story" writers of the eighteenth century, Kleist shows some reluctance to describe the emotions of his people. His reverence for the human soul is seen in the words to Ulrike : „Selbst das einzige, das wir besitzen, die Sprache, taugt nicht dazu, sie kann die Seele nicht malen, und was sie uns gibt, sind nur zerrissene Bruchstücke.⁽²⁾ Only at intervals does he allow a glimpse into their hearts. With such expressions as : „finster und in sich gekehrt,⁽³⁾ „die Brust voll Schmerz und Jammer,⁽⁴⁾ „Kohlhaas schäumte vor Wut,⁽⁵⁾ „Kohlhaas, dem das Herz emporquoll,⁽⁶⁾ „dem Rosskamm dem das Herz schon von Ahndungen schwoll:⁽⁷⁾ Kleist sketches his hero's feelings in passing. Sometimes an indication of sentiment is implicit, in a

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: III, p.203.

(2) ibid: V, „An Ulrike, 5.II. 1801.

(3) ibid: III, p.181.

(4) ibid: III, p.169.

(5) ibid: III, p.159.

(6) ibid: III, p.151.

(7) ibid: III, p.146.

negative statement. „Kohlhaas, der mit keiner Miene was in seiner Seele vorging, zu erkennen gab ...“⁽¹⁾

Ein Entschluss, ... zu welchem vielleicht auch noch Gründe anderer Art mitwirkten, die wir jedem, der in seiner Brust Bescheid weiss, zu erraten überlassen wollen.⁽²⁾ Aber wer beschreibt, was in seiner Seele vorging ...⁽³⁾ On occasion the author projects himself into the mind of a character. Thus the exclamation: „Himmel! was erblickte er?“⁽⁴⁾ conveys to us the astonishment of Nicolo; the expressions: „die Scheinheilig⁽⁵⁾“, „diese Verstellung, diese scheinbare Gleichgültigkeit“⁽⁶⁾ are a reflection of Nicolo's thoughts. The phrases, „Und fand ihn hier, diesen Geliebten,⁽⁷⁾ Nach dieser unverhofft glücklichen Beseitigung der ersten Interessen“⁽⁸⁾ are coloured by the feelings of Josephe and the Duchess of Breisach respectively. When it is necessary to record psychological reactions more fully Kleist gives a careful and impartial analysis. This he connects with

(1) Kleists Werke ed: cit: III, p.200.

(2) ibid: III, p.210.

(3) ibid: III, p.181.

(4) ibid: III, p.367.

(5) ibid: III, p.367.

(6) ibid: III, p.367.

(7) ibid: III, p.301.

(8) ibid: III, p.393.

the action so that there is no pause in the narrative. With the observation : „Durch diese schöne Anstrengung mit sich selbst bekannt gemacht“⁽¹⁾ the author passes in a natural manner to the mental development of the Marquise von O... and thence to her consideration of her situation, which leads to the newspaper announcement. On these occasions it is as though Kleist suddenly throws open the door of a hidden chamber in which lies the secret of his character's behaviour. We are only allowed one glance, but the knowledge thus gained remains with us and our image of the character is fixed once for all. The prayer of Toni, which we are allowed to overhear, explains later actions, the motives of which we might not otherwise have understood. This method, which the author uses sparingly in the cases of Michael Kohlhaas, the Marquise von O... and Toni, is effective; these characters are the ones we know best in the tales.

Kleist's favourite method of portraying the humours and emotions of his characters is to record their gestures and facial expression. These may appear trivial in themselves, but they are full of significance in their relation to the

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.274.

persons to whom they belong . The only indication we have that the Marquise is in love with Graf F... is the observation : „und ihre Augen glanzten ^{“(1)} when she is asked if she is willing to marry him. Blushing and turning pale are frequently noted as signs of strong emotion. Der Graf antwortete, mit einer flüchtigen Blässe : ^{“(2)} „wobei der Graf über das ganze Gesicht rot ward; ^{“(3)} sie sah, über und über rot, ihre Mutter ^{“(4)} : „blutrot im Gesicht: ^{“(5)} „indem ihm das Blut ins Gesicht schoss.“ ^{“(6)} such phrases express a degree of embarrassment which would have been difficult otherwise to portray. Some gestures denote affection, such as „sie drückte ihn heftig an sich, und überdeckte mit heissen Küssen seine Brust : ^{“(7)} indem sie sich herzlich und innig an ihn drückte: ^{“(8)} others despair: „indem sie sich den Busen, wie eine Rasende, zerschlug : ^{“(9)} „Gustav rauft sich die Haare; ^{“(10)} and others

(1) „Kleists Werke“ ed: cit: III, p.264.

(2) ibid: III. p.276.

(3) ibid: III, p.253.

(4) ibid: III, p;256.

(5) ibid: III, p.263.

(6) ibid: III, p.279.

(7) ibid: III, p.163.

(8) ibid: III, p.329.

(9) ibid: III, p.416.

(10) ibid: III, p.351.

indifference: "in den Bart murrend: ⁽¹⁾ "der sich die Hosen in die Höhe zog." ⁽²⁾ Some of these remarks are reminiscent of the playwright's stage-directions: "Edle Herrn," und damit stützte er seine Hände auf das Geländer: ⁽³⁾ "indem er sich niederliess und seine Brille wieder aufsetzte: ⁽⁴⁾ "der Prinz, indem er den Stuhl, ohne sich zu setzen, in der Hand hielt: ⁽⁵⁾ "indem er aus Fenster trat: ⁽⁶⁾ "den Fuss auf einem Schemel gestützt: ⁽⁷⁾ griff in ein Gefäss mit Weihwasser, ⁽⁸⁾ all these expressions make us see the people as they live and move. The common duties of everyday life are often mentioned to lend reality to the characters: Elvire usually has needlework with her, Toni has the task of preparing meals, and the flayer of Döbbeln would not be nearly so real without his bucket of water. By all these means Kleist creates living men and women, and the words of Wilhelm Schäfer are true of every one

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.145.

(2) ibid: III, p.198.

(3) ibid: III, p.397.

(4) ibid: III, p.200.

(5) ibid: III, p.189.

(6) ibid: III, p.194.

(7) ibid: III, p.388.

(8) ibid: III, p.291.

of his characters : „ So waren die Dinge noch nie einem
Dichter über die Klinge gesprungen, als da der Junker
Heinrich von Kleist den Rosshändler Michael Kohlhaas
beschwor.“⁽¹⁾

(1) Wilhelm Schäfer, op: cit: p.280.

D. DICTION.

Of Kleist's manner of expression Wilhelm Schäfer strikingly remarks „Erzählungen hiess er die Schicksalsberichte, darin ein starkes Stück Leben in einer Kette von schmucklosen Worten eng aufgeschnürt war: als ob ein Wanderer, kurz nur zur Rast, von einem Erlebnis mit fliegendem Atem berichte.“⁽¹⁾ The „Novelle,” since it deals with one incident or one experience, is most effective when most compact. The tales of Kleist afford a vivid illustration of this statement. Every feature of his narrative style is subordinate to the action. Irrelevant details, digressions, and discussions are completely absent. The narratives of Kleist, pulsing as they are with action, possess an emotional intensity which is rarely achieved in the „Novelle.”

The strictest economy is observed in the diction as in the form of the tales. Sentences are much condensed and closely packed. „Er fiel auch, mit diesem kleinen Haufen, schon beim Einbruch der dritten Nacht, den Zollwärter und Torwächter, die im Gespräch unter dem Tor

(1) W. Schäfer, „Die Dreizehn Bücher der deutschen Seele,” „Buch der Erhebung.” München: 1934. Kleist, p.280.

standen, niederreitend, in die Burg, und während unter plötzlicher Aufprasselung aller Baracken im Schlossraum, die sie mit Feuer bewarfen, Herse, über die Wendeltreppe, in den Turm der Vogtei eilte, und den Schlossvogt und Verwalter, die, halb entkleidet, beim Spiel sassen, mit Hieben und Stichen überfiel, stürzte Kohlhaas zum Junker Wenzel ins Schloss. ⁽¹⁾

In this sentence, which is typical of Kleist's style throughout "Michael Kohlhaas," no less than six operations are described: the entry of Kohlhaas into the Tronkenburg, his revenge on the officials at the gate, the firing of the yard, Herse's arrival at the provost's apartments and his attack on the provost and the warden, and finally the entrance of Kohlhaas into the castle. Kohlhaas, the subject of the sentence, is kept in the foreground and is the centre of diverse kinds of activity. Although a great deal of action is compressed into the sentence, sufficient detail is inserted to give us a clear vision of the background. Indeed, accompanying circumstances are frequently sketched in the tales by means of sentences introduced by "eben," "kaum," "inzwischen" leading up to a subordinate clause opening with "als" upon which the

(1) "Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III, p.167.

stress lies: „eben schickten sich die Nonnen auf dem Altan der Orgel dazu an, ... als Schwester Antonia, ... von der Treppe her erschien.“⁽¹⁾ Attendant conditions are also described by clauses beginning with „nachdem“, „da“, or „indem.“ „Nein,“ lispelte das Mädchen, indem sie ihre grossen schwarzen Augen in lieblicher Verschämtheit zur Erde schlug.“⁽²⁾ It is as though the narrator, in his passionate desire to carry on the action, cannot stop to impart the necessary details. Instead of this, he mentions them incidentally in the course of the action. Sometimes, these details are inserted in a phrase in opposition to the subject, often containing a present participle such as „Sie umschlang den Jüngling, vielfache Knoten schürzend, an Händen und Füßen damit:“⁽³⁾ sometimes in a descriptive clause: „Kohlhaas, der durch diese Gefechte einige Leute eingebüsst hatte, steckte die Stadt ... von neuem in Brand.“⁽⁴⁾ These frequent interpolations and adverbial clauses check the breathless progress of the narrative, producing the effect of alternate advance and retardation.

The diction as a whole is also suited to the themes.

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.379.

(2) ibid: III, p.327.

(3) ibid: III, p.342.

(4) ibid: III, p.173.

Kleist, who selected narrative form for his *Kohlhaas* theme, adopted many of the features of chronicle style. His elaborately constructed periods, in which every fact is related with utmost precision to the whole, his impersonal tone of narration which withholds all but general comment, his sober manner of expression, avoiding all but the most common figures of speech, and his attention to detail, particularly where places or numbers are concerned - all these characteristics are to be found in Peter Hafftiz. At times he also imitates the language of Luther's day, and uses such archaic forms as "Reuter", "speisete", "Odem", "etlich", "Reisige", and "Jungherr."

In "Die Marquise von O...", on the other hand, the sentences are on the whole much shorter, some being almost jerky in composition: "er setzte sich auch nicht, und stand bloss, das Gesicht tief zur Erde gebeugt, und weinte."⁽¹⁾ "Sie hören," rief die Marquise; und wandte sich und wick ihm aus."⁽²⁾ This tale differs from the others, in that it contains a large proportion of direct speech, which is, moreover, but loosely connected with the stream of the narrative. "Ja," versetzte die Marquise, "gleichwohl

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.278.

(2) ibid: III, p.78.

bitte ich Sie, mir eine Hebamme rufen zu lassen, damit ich mich von dem, was ist, überzeuge, und, gleichviel alsdann, was es sei, beunruhige." "Eine Hebamme!" rief Frau von G... mit Entwürdigung. "Ein reines Bewusstsein, und eine Hebamme!" Und die Sprache ging ihr aus. "Eine Hebamme, meine teuerste Mutter," wiederholte die Marquise ...⁽¹⁾

In this parry and thrust of the dialogue, and the somewhat disjointed nature of the style, the agitation of the characters is effectively represented. Figures of speech are used here more generously than in "Michael Kohlhaas."

"Ihre Brust flog, ihr Antlitz loderte: eine Furie blickt nicht schrecklicher:⁽²⁾ "Der Marquise stürzte der Schmerz aus den Augen."⁽³⁾ "Die Marquise stand, wie vom Donner gerührt."⁽⁴⁾

"... und schlug mit einem Blick funkelnd, wie ein Wetterstrahl, auf ihn ein, indessen Blässe des Todes ihr Antlitz überflog."⁽⁵⁾ Thus Kleist applies natural phenomena to express the moods of his characters. Here also, especially in the reconciliation scene between the Marquise and her father,

(1) "Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III, p.269.

(2) ibid: III, p.291.

(3) ibid: III, p.273.

(4) ibid: III, p.268.

(5) ibid: III, p.291.

Kleist departs from his customary sobriety of style.

The contrast drawn in „Das Erdbeben in Chili“ is reflected in the style of this tale. The turmoil of the earthquake and of the lynching scene is represented by means of tightly packed sentences, shorter than those in „Michael Kohlhaas“, in which the action advances with breathless speed : „Zitternd, mit sträubenden Haaren, und Knien, die unter ihm brechen wollten, glitt Jeronimo, über den schiefgesenkten Fussboden hinweg, der Öffnung zu, die der Zusammenschlag beider Häuser in die vordere Wand des Gefängnisses eingerissen hatte.“⁽¹⁾ In contrast to the headlong rush of these passages comes the peaceful flow of those which describe the intervening scene of tranquillity. „Indessen war die schönste Nacht herabgestiegen, voll wundermilden Duftes, so silberglänzend und still, wie nur ein Dichter davon träumen mag.“⁽²⁾ Here the action is suspended, and the poet pauses to depict the beauty of nature and the bliss of the lovers. The lyrical strain of his language echoes the melody ringing in the hearts of Jeronimo and Josephe. A rhythmical symmetry even can be perceived here and there. Der Baumschatten zog/ mit seinen

(1) „Kleists Werke“, ed: cit: III, p.297.

(2) ibid: III, p.301.

verstreuten Lichtern,/ "über sie hinweg/, und der Mond
erblasste/ schon wieder vor der Morgenröte,/ ehe sie
einschliefen."⁽¹⁾

"Das Erdbeben in Chili" contains a succession of pictorial images and a larger proportion of graphic description than any other of the tales. The young man in the prison, the lovers under the pomegranate tree, and the inside of the Cathedral are all so depicted that they remain impressed as visual images upon our memories. The style too, is perhaps more figurative than in any of the other tales. With such expressions as : "Und in der Tat schien der menschliche Geist selbst, wie eine schöne Blume aufzueh'n," "Niemals schlug aus einem christlichen Dom eine solche Flamme der Inbrunst gen Himmel, wie heute aus dem Dominikanerdom zu St. Iago; und keine menschliche Brust gab wärmere Glut dazu her, als Jeronimos und Josephens!"⁽²⁾ Kleist surrounds his theme with a poetry comparable to that of his plays. On occasion, the narrator even delays the action to create a setting for the coming events : "Von allen Kronleuchtern strahlte es herab, die Pfeiler warfen, bei der einbrechenden Dämmerung, geheimnisvolle Schatten, die grosse, von gefärbtem Glas gearbeitete Rose in der Kirche ausserstem

(1) "Kleists Werke", ed: cit:

(2) ibid: III, p.304.

Hintergrunde glühte, wie die Abendsonne selbst, die sie erleuchtete, und Stille herrschte, da die Orgel jetzt schwieg, in der ganzen Versammlung, als hätte keiner einen Laut in der Brust." (1)

"Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" of which the narrative is just as tense as that of Michael Kohlhaas, also contains brief interludes in which the poet dwells upon the love of Toni and Gustav. Such descriptions as: "sie folgte ihm mit einer plötzlichen Bewegung, fiel ihm um den Hals, und mischte ihre Tränen mit den seinigen" which K. Günther compares with the style of the moral tale (2) sound somewhat sentimental, yet the picture of Toni at the bedside of her beloved: "Der Mond beschien sein blühendes Antlitz, und der Nachtwind, der durch die geöffneten Fenster eindrang, spielte mit dem Haar auf seiner Stirn. Sie neigte sich sanft über ihn, und rief ihn, seinen süßen Atem einsaugend, beim Namen ..." (3) lends a pathetic charm to the love of the two young people. In this tale, on the other hand, as throughout the "Erzählungen" Kleist does not in the least shrink from

(1) "Kleists Werke" ed: cit: III, p.307.

(2) ibid: III, p.330.

(3) K. Günther, "Euphorion", XVII, pp. 321-326.

(4) "Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III, p.340.

portraying the unpleasant. The description of the dead Gustav ... „des „Ärmsten Schädel war ganz zerschmettert, und hing, da er sich das pistol in den Mund gesetzt hatte, zum Teil an den Wänden umher“⁽¹⁾ brings to our minds that of little Juan, son of Don Fernando : „mit aus dem Hirne vorquellendem Mark.“⁽²⁾

No fresh qualities of style appear in the later tales. In „Der Zweikampf“ complex sentences alternate with animated dialogue. „Die Heilige Cäcilie“ contains many realistic touches, while „Der Findling“ in which direct speech is almost absent is narrated with the same sobriety of expression as „Michael Kohlhaas“, the disagreeable subject thus being kept at a suitable distance.

The opinion expressed by Kleist in his „Brief eines Dichters an seinen Sohn: „dem Dürstigen kommt es, als solchem, auf die Schale nicht an, sondern auf die Früchte die man ihm darin bringt“⁽³⁾ has led to the belief that Kleist paid little attention to form. Variant versions of his works show, on the contrary, what care he lavished upon it. Slight alterations in the order of words,

(1) „Kleists Werke“, ed: cit: III, p.352.

(2) ibid: III, p.311.

(3) ibid: IV, p.

such as : „des Wundartztes, den man herbeigerufen," into „des herbei gerufenen Wundartztes" ⁽¹⁾ and „glaub ich dir" into „ich glaub es dir;" ⁽²⁾ changes of expression such as „Portier" into „Türsteher" ⁽³⁾ and „Eine Verwirrung von Gefühlen ergriff ihn" into „Ein Wechsel von Gefühlen durchkreuzte ihn" ⁽⁴⁾ prove that Kleist took great pains in order that his meaning should be best expressed.

The poet appears to exercise the same restraint in his diction as in his mode of narration. So rigorous an economy is observed that an average sentence by Kleist contains the same amount of meaning ^{as} four sentences by most of his contemporaries. In those periods in which clauses and phrases are fitted into one another like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the meaning is somewhat difficult to discover. One such as : „Sie versicherte, dass ihr aus dem Munde eines Parthers oder Persers, den sie nie mit Augen gesehen, eine solche Behauptung nicht hätte unerwarteter kommen können, als aus dem Munde des Grafen Jakobs des Rotbarts, indem ihr derselbe, seines schlechten Rufs sowohl, als seiner äussern Bildung wegen immer in der tiefsten Seele verhasst gewesen sei, und die Artigkeiten, die er sich, bei

(1) Phöbus. 1808, Juni, IV, p. 32: „Kleists Werke", ed. cit. III, p. 165.

(2) do....., p. 28: do....., p. 154.

(3) do. --- Feb: I., p. 21: do....., p. 283.

(4) do....., p. 21: do....., p. 279.

den Festgelagen des vergangenen Sommers, zuweilen die Freiheit genommen ihr zu sagen, stets mit der grössten Kälte und Verachtung abgewiesen habe.^{„(1)“} needs to be construed like a sentence of Cicero. But by this means an atmosphere of tension is created which well accords with the nature of the subject. Often expression is condensed at the expense of euphony, and a jerky effect is produced. „Weder des Essens begehren sie, das ihnen, zur Bewirtung der Genossen, ihrem am Morgen gegebenen Befehl gemäss, die Magd bringt, noch späterhin, da die Nacht sinkt, des Lagers, das sie ihnen, weil sie müde scheinen, im Nebengemach aufgestapelt hat.“^{„(2)“} In the elaborate structure of these sentences the verb plays an important part, often containing a large proportion of the meaning. „Hier schrien Leute von brennenden Dächern herab, hier kämpften Menschen und Tiere mit den Wellen, hier war ein mutiger Retter bemüht, zu helfen, hier stand ein anderer, bleich wie der Tod, und streckte sprachlos zitternde Hände zum Himmel.“^{„(3)“} Although under-statement is common in this austere style, the poet does not scorn to

(1) Kleists Werke, ed: cit: III, p.103.

(2) ibid: III, p.385.

(3) ibid: III, p.297.

use a strong expression on occasion. Littegarde, in her misery, cries to her lover : „Du bist mir ein Greuel,⁽¹⁾ and Frau Helena condemns her for „Schamlosigkeit und Frechheit.“⁽²⁾

Although we are not over-conscious of the artist at work in these tales, every feature of their style betrays the strictest observance of form. In Kleist the German short story first reaches a degree of artistry as high as the great Italian 'Novellæ.' Thus Kleist may be regarded as the champion of this form in Germany. Alike in concentration on the subject, economy of diction, and conciseness of form he set an example which was an inspiration to his successors.

(1) „Kleists Werke," ed: cit: III, p.415.

(2) ibid: III, p.412.

CONCLUSION.

The tales of Kleist, as has been seen, combine the moral story with the "Novelle" of Classic tradition. At the same time they mark a fresh development in the history of the short tale in Germany. For they possess a quality hitherto lacking in the brief narrative. The interest of these tales, like that of the drama, lies in the actions of a particular character in a certain situation, the interplay between character and circumstance. There has been much discussion whether character or Fate is the dominant power in Kleist's tales. Only one of them can be classed with certainty, "Der Findling." This tale is a character "Novelle" because the passion of Nicolo is the deciding factor in the development. In the others there are two forces at work, the power of Fate and the power of human wills and passions: sometimes one force determines the issue, sometimes the other. In the first part of "Michael Kohlhaas" the will of the hero is the motive force; after the interview with Luther, Fate takes the lead in the action, but both powers are reconciled in the ironical closing scene. So too, in "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" the forces of character and Fate are balanced. The

coincidence of the negro's return joins with Gustav's suspicion to produce the final catastrophe. "Die Marquise von O..." approaches the type of the character tale, for the tragic situation is here created by the deed of Graf F... Yet Fate also plays an important part in the development of the action, notably in the misfortunes of the Marquise. "Das Erdbeben in Chili" appears, on the other hand, to be a tale of Fate on account of its central incident. But the human factor in this tale is also strong. The final disaster is caused solely by the hatred of the mob. Hence we see that, whether the force of character or that of circumstance prevails in the end, the action of every tale is forwarded by the working together of the two forces.

An intimate relationship between character and circumstance can be traced throughout the subsequent history of the "Novelle." In Goethe's novel "Die Wahlverwandtschaften," which was originally intended for short story form, the slightest matters, such as the handwriting in which a document is copied, and the date on which a row of trees was planted, are charged with significance for the relations between the characters. It is the curious association of a man's disposition with the mishaps that befall him which

constitutes the main interest in „Meister Schnock,“ by Hebbel. So close is the connection between event and character in the tales of Hoffmann that it is difficult to distinguish between the illusions of the characters and the realities which the author wishes to present. In the tales of Storm men's characters are reflected in their fortunes. From the beginning we see that the timid and unenterprising hero of Angelika is destined to fail in his love-suit. Similarly in Binding's „Der Opfergang“ event and character are closely related. Some incidents, such as the swarming of the sea-gulls round Joie, are even symbolic of character.

In each of Kleist's tales one or more characters are presented in the grip of circumstance. The narrative centres in one particular event or situation. This feature, which has been noticed in the tales of Boccaccio, becomes an essential of the German *Novelle*.“ Tieck defines this new form of literature as „eine hervorragende Spitze, einen Brennpunkt,“⁽¹⁾ and Goethe says: „Was ist eine *Novelle* anders als eine sich ereignete, unerhörte Begebenheit?“⁽²⁾

(1) L. Tieck, „Sämmtliche Werke“, Berlin 1828, Vol. XI, p. LXXXVI

(2) Goethe to Eckermann, Jan. 29, 1827. „Goethes Gespräche“ Leipzig 1910, p. 335.

It was felt that the matter of the "Novelle," as of the anecdote should be very improbable, yet not impossible. It must be moreover both unique and striking. The tales of Kleist, which appeared seventeen years before Tieck's criticism and nineteen years before that of Goethe, answer exactly to this description. Each one possesses some "Brennpunkt," some remarkable incident upon which the whole action is focussed; as, for instance, the rescue of a condemned couple by means of an earthquake. The striking, or novel quality in Kleist's tales has been termed "the monstrous".⁽¹⁾ No word indeed, better conveys the horror and magnitude of his themes. In this respect Kleist is unique: never again has the "monstrous" featured in the "Novelle" as it does in his tales.

In subsequent "Novellen" this quality has varied as widely as their authors' attitude to life. The Romantics adopted the supernatural, using it in different ways to produce an effect of surprise. In the tales of Hoffmann the natural and the supernatural are coexistent: an ordinary person may at any moment turn into a ghost or a demon. It is with such sudden transformations that

(1) E.K.Bennett, "The German Novelle", Cambridge, 1934, p.47.

Hoffmann startles us. For Eichendorff, on the other hand, the supernatural is commonplace: the magical world in „Das Marmorbild“ causes us no surprise but when, at the close, we descend into stark reality, we experience a shock. To Realists like Keller every phase of life is curious or remarkable. The slightest incident, such as a chance encounter on a flight of stairs, serves as a „Brennpunkt“ for a „Novelle.“ The strangeness of an event, as has been remarked in the tales of Kleist, may be emphasized by means of irony. The poignancy of the situation in which a lady on a point of morality condemns her servant to a flogging from which he cannot recover is sharpened by the conventional phrase of address sent as a last message by the victim to his mistress „Er lass die Hand küssen“ in the story by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach which bears this title.

Besides this „Brennpunkt“, or unusual incident, Tieck also mentions an unexpected reversal as a characteristic of the „Novelle.“ „Diese Wendung der Geschichte, dieser Punkt, aus welchem sie [die Novelle] sich völlig unerwartet umkehrt, ... wird sich der Phantasie des Lesers um so fester einprägen, als die Sache, selbst im Wunderbaren, unter anderen Umständen wieder alltäglich sein könnte.“⁽¹⁾ Such

(1) L. Tieck, „Sämmtliche Werke“, Berlin, 1828, Vol. XI. p. LXXXVI.

a turning-point, which Tieck regards as the element of novelty in the "Novelle", has been proved by no means indispensable in practice. It has already been observed in some of Kleist's tales. The trend of the action in "Michael Kohlhaas" is diverted by the intervention of Luther, in "Die Marquise von O..." by the newspaper announcement. In these cases the turning-point, though related to the striking incident exists apart from it. "Der Zweikampf" is the only tale by Kleist in which the chief event at the same time marks a point where the narrative takes an unexpected turn. The only remarkable incident in Tieck's "Die Gemälde," namely, the discovery of the hidden pictures, is also the turning-point in the action. So too, at the decisive moment in Storm's "Späte Rosen," when Rudolf gazes on the picture of his wife in the prime of her beauty, the narrative takes a new course. But more frequently the turning-point is separate from the unusual element in a "Novelle." In Hauff's "Die Sängerin" it occurs at the arrest of the "Kommerzialrat," whereas the striking incident is the attempt on the life of the singer. The two may well be closely connected, as in "Die Freiherrn von Gemperlein" by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. The remarkable element in this tale lies in the hostility of two brothers who vie with each other

to obtain the favour of a young woman named Clara. An unexpected turn is introduced when Clara informs them that she is married ! Such a twist in the course of the narrative causes an irregular succession of events which belongs to the very nature of the *Novelle*.

Although, however, many "*Novellen*" have no turning-point, those tales do not deserve the name *Novelle* which lack that particular novel or striking element which Tieck defines as the "*Brennpunkt*." As every narrative must contain some action the striking feature in the "*Novelle*" frequently takes the form of an unusual or extraordinary event. But, whereas in Boccaccio the incident in itself is unique and remarkable, in Kleist and Goethe the interest is shifted from the event to its moral significance. The disasters in Kleist's tales do not concern us so deeply as the suffering and agonised doubting caused in the spirits of their victims. This transference of emphasis from the purely incidental to the ethical and spiritual becomes a peculiar property of the German "*Novelle*." Events are sometimes even pushed into the background. Grillparzer's "*Der Arme Spielmann*" for instance, which bears the name of the chief character, captures our interest solely by virtue of his personality.

Many of Storm's tales, as, for instance, "Immensee," are remarkable on account of their "Stimmung," the atmosphere and setting in which their scene is laid. "Veronika," on the other hand, traces the development of a particular conflict in a woman's heart. Some of the pieces in the "Wunderkind" collection by Thomas Mann, especially "Schwere Stunde," in which Schiller is represented in the throes of composition contain hardly any action. To sketch a mood or moment such as is done in "Schwere Stunde," appears to be a modern tendency. An examination into the nature of the "Novelle" reveals that its dominant feature is not so much the representation of a particular unique occurrence as an intense concentration upon a special subject, which may be an incident, situation, conflict, mood, or phase. This particular treatment may be likened to a flashlight illumination.

This requirement of concentration allows considerable freedom. In the duration of the action there is hardly any restriction. Even the action of Kleist's tale, "Der Findling," stretches over a period of about fifteen years. It is however throughout a preparation for the closing scene of horror. Although the narrative of "Peter Schlemihl" extends over a period of years, the tale

is nevertheless a „Novelle“ since it deals with the hero's search for his shadow. Raabe's story „Zum Wilden Mann,“ in spite of the lapse of a generation during its narration, is nevertheless a „Novelle;“ for the whole action turns on the one matter of a legacy. A „Novelle“ may abound with incident, but one remarkable event always constitutes the core of the action. „Michael Kohlhaas“ is a succession of significant occurrences from beginning to end, but the outrage at the Tronkenburg is of paramount importance. „Die Judenbuche“ by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff traces in outline a man's whole life-history; - only, however, from one aspect. The murder of the Jew is the point in which the whole narrative centres. Similarly Thomas Mann's „Toni Kröger“ presents the story of the hero, from boyhood to manhood: it is none the less a „Novelle,“ as it is focussed upon a single inner conflict. Unity of aspect is the first essential of the „Novelle.“

Within the bounds of a particular conflict or situation, the characters of the „Novelle“ may remain stationary, or they may show some development. Kleist's Marquise von O... undergoes an experience which tries her to the uttermost, and leaves her a different woman from before. Similarly, it would be impossible to maintain

that Toni at the end of "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" is the same as at the beginning. On the other hand, it is difficult to perceive any change in the characters of Jeronimo and Josephe. Although the chief characteristic of the "Novelle," concentration on a particular situation, by no means excludes development in character, the more frequent method of characterisation is the gradual disclosure of latent qualities in an individual. Meyer's character, Pescara, does not change in the least during the narrative; his fate is sealed before the tale begins. There is no sign of development in Keller's characters, except, perhaps, in Reinhardt of "Das Sinngedicht." On the other hand, the chief interest in Raabe's "Zum Wilden Mann" lies in the moral degradation of a man through a horrible experience.

Since the primary function of the "Novelle" is to present one or more individuals in a single situation, its characters appear one-sided. Little more is shown of Michael Kohlhaas than his sense of justice. Many of ^{Keller} ~~Storm~~'s characters, like those in "Das Sinngedicht" only pass before our eyes in a love-affair. But the characters of the "Novelle" are none the less real for this one-sidedness. Those of Kleist, as Wilkop observes, are

keine einmaligen Erscheinungen, wie jene der ursprünglichen Novelle, sondern wie die Gestalten des Dramas, ins Typische, Ewige, monumentalisiert.⁽¹⁾

It is the relationship between circumstance and character upon which the portrayal of the latter depends. If the situation in which the individuals are placed throws light upon an essential part of their nature, they will be living characters of some depth, like Michael Kohlhaas and the Marquise von O... If, however, as in the Italian Novellae, no such connection is shown, the people although they may appear living, they will yet seem superficial. Paul Ernst, in his "Weg zur Form" terms the matter of the former type "eine Schicksalsstunde," of the latter "ein minder bedeutendes Vorkommnis."⁽²⁾ In the former a chance occurrence is endowed with the inevitability of fate, and the experiences which the characters undergo affect their very souls. This treatment of character which, as has been mentioned, was first applied by Kleist in the German short tale, has become a distinguishing feature of the Novelle.⁽³⁾ In

(1) P. Witkop, "Heinrich von Kleist," Leipzig, 1922, p.180.

(2) P. Ernst, "Der Weg zur Form," München, 1928, p.59.

(3) cf. Meyers Konversationslexikon, Leipzig und Wien, 1897, definition of the Novelle: "Diejenige epische Dichtungsgattung, die eine 'einzelne' Begebenheit zur Darstellung bringt. Dabei fällt der Nachdruck auf die psychologische Eigenart des innern Vorgangs."

contrast to the incidental interest of the Italian tales, a psychological interest is on the whole dominant in the German type. "Der Tolle Invalide auf dem Fort Ratonneau" by Arnim, presents, amid the wildest happenings, the interplay between the characters of a dangerous madman and his courageous and devoted wife. The tales of Höffmann, although full of curious occurrences, attract us most by the strange personalities which figure in them. Towards the latter half of the nineteenth Century a type of story came into being which has been called the psychological "Novelle." This type is a fresh development in the treatment of character introduced by Kleist; yet it is perhaps foreshadowed by the character of Nicolo in "Der Findling." Doris Radebrecher, the heroine of Raabe's story, "Die Innerste" may indeed be termed the counterpart of Nicolo. There seems to dwell in her an elemental force of evil, akin to the river whose name she bears. By means of this demonic power she encompasses the downfall of all who stand in her path. Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach also presents in Edith, the heroine of "Das Schädliche" a character similar to Nicolo. Edith too has no moral sense, and is possessed by a destructive

spirit of evil which ruins the lives of all with whom she comes in contact. The curse is passed on from mother to daughter, so that in Lore the history of Edith repeats itself. These narratives differ from the chief tales of Kleist in that fate is here determined by character. Whereas Kleist presents every incident as part of some fateful scheme, existing outside the characters, the authors of psychological "Novellen" show events as the result of some human agency. "Die Judenbuche" by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff shows the pernicious influence of heredity in a man's life driving him onward down the path of moral degradation until he commits murder. This crime brings about his downfall. For Nemesis visits Friedrich Mergel, the chief character, in the shape of his own conscience and impels him to hang himself. A similar idea of retribution underlies this tale and "Das Bettelweib von Locarno." It is summed up in the Hebrew inscription on the beech-tree, translated at the end of the tale: "Wenn du dich diesem Orte nahest, so wird es dir ergehen, wie du mir getan hast." The conception of character found in the tales of Meyer resembles that in "Die Judenbuche." Here too fate is determined by human

factors. Like Friedrich Mergel, Stemma, the heroine of "Die Richterin" is tormented by conscience until she takes her own life and dies the same death as she prepared for her husband years before, thus completing the vicious circle which she had begun. So also Astorre, the unstable hero of "Die Hochzeit des Mönchs" is obliged to reap the fruits of the confusion he has sown in the lives of others. In this respect, but in no other, he may be compared with Michael Kohlhaas, who pays the penalty of death for the ruin he has caused in many Saxon homes. A comparison may more justly be drawn between Michael Kohlhaas and the hero of "Der Schimmelreiter" by Storm. Hauke Haien, like Kleist's horsedealer, differs from the characters of Meyer in that his fate is not decided solely by his character. Ambition is not the only factor in his downfall. Just as Michael Kohlhaas has to cope with an irresistible force of circumstance, Hauke Haien is faced with the ungovernable power of the sea. In "Der Schimmelreiter" Storm comes nearer to Kleist's conception of character in relation to fate than any other subsequent authors.

The brief examination of the part played by character in German "Novellen" shows that it is a far cry

from these tales to the original *Novellae* of Boccaccio, in which the whole interest is centred in a strange occurrence. The difference between the two types is chiefly due to a deepening of thought-content in the German form. Whereas in Italy the story serves as a means of entertainment, it becomes in Germany a medium of individual expression, so that Paul Ernst describes it as "Weltanschauungs_dichtung."⁽¹⁾ In this respect, too, Kleist may be regarded as a pioneer of the German *Novelle*. Goethe and Wieland preserve the technique of the tale within a tale and cultivate the narrative as a social form : Kleist completely breaks with this tradition and discards the conception of the story as a means of amusement. In the striking words of E.K. Bennett, "The Novellen of Kleist come like a voice out of the void and reecho into emptiness!"⁽²⁾ While ignoring his audience, Kleist imbues his tales with his own thoughts; he puts his own feelings into his characters and weaves his own problems into his themes. The disasters which form the chief incidents in his stories are symbolic of the strife which their author sees paramount in all life. The misfortunes which overtake

(1) P. Ernst, "Der Weg zur Form", München, 1928, p.62.

(2) E.K. Bennett, "The German Novelle", Cambridge, 1934, p.44.

innocent people, shattering the foundations of their faith in the justice of God, reveal in Kleist an agonised doubting as to the existence of any righteous principles in the Universe. The world order represented in the tales gives a clear picture of the author's mind; and illustrates his principal belief: "Das Leben selbst ist ein Kampf mit dem Schicksal."⁽¹⁾ Although Kleist maintains a high degree of objectivity, in his tales, he uses them as a vehicle for his own thought. Thus he puts into practice the theory of Friedrich Schlegel: "Ich behaupte, die Novelle ist sehr geeignet, eine subjective Stimmung und Ansicht, und zwar die tiefsten und eigentümlichsten, derselben indirect und gleichsam sinnbildlich darzustellen."⁽²⁾ Since the "Novelle" deals primarily with an extraordinary occurrence, it might appear that it could not be a faithful messenger of the author's ideas. It must, in fact, of necessity embody an irrational, even distorted view of life. For either an exceptional case is taken as the subject, or an every-day happening is seen through coloured spectacles. Although, however, the "Novelle" tends to emphasise the author's thoughts, it

(1) "Kleists Werke", ed: cit: V, "An Ulrike", Dec. 7. 1810.

(2) "Friedrich Schlegel, Prosaische Jugendschriften", Wien, 1882, II, p.411.

does not need to exaggerate them. When those thoughts as in Kleist, are of a striking nature, this form is the best possible medium for their expression. And when a poet cannot otherwise find words for his ideas, he chooses the "Novelle" in which to convey them indirectly. For the representation of events in a tale is symbolic of the narrator's outlook on life.

Thus, with the abandonment of the social tradition of the "Novelle," its capacity for profound ideas is enlarged. In varying degrees it comes to reflect the narrator's philosophy of life. The story of "Der Blonde Eckbert," by Tieck represents the Romantics' attitude to life. Here the mysterious powers of Nature are shown in league with the elemental, irrational forces in the human personality. C.F. Meyer, although he uses the framework technique with great ingenuity, uses it only as a screen to conceal self-expression. His intention is to keep at the furthest possible distance from himself the characters into whom he breathes so many of his unfulfilled aspirations.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, a member of the Austrian aristocracy, presents social problems such as the relationship between bondman and overlord, and sometimes, as in „Der Erstgeborene“ and „Die Unbesiegbare Macht“, the hidden depths of human love. In each of his tales Raabe depicts some aspect of the eternal conflict between creative energy and destructive force - a theme somewhat reminiscent of the idea underlying „Das Erdbeben in Chili.“ Keller, on the other hand, does not see the problems of life: he looks upon it with directness and finds it good. Thomas Mann reveals himself in his „Novellen“ as the artist at variance with life. Like Paul Ernst, he too regards civilisation as decadent. From these examples it can be seen that the „Novelle“ acquires the capacity for great profundity of thought.

That tragic themes could be used in „Novellen“ was shown by Boccaccio, but the first narrator to produce the emotional effect of tragedy is Kleist. The sufferings of Michael Kohlhaas, the Marquise, and Littegarde strike deep into our hearts, and we shudder at the sight of disasters overtaking innocent people. It is questionable whether any subsequent narrators have

approached so near to the spirit of great tragedy as Kleist. In "Anna" and "Die Kuh" Hebbel attempts to reproduce the tragic element in "Michael Kohlhaas" by presenting disastrous consequences arising from apparently insignificant circumstances. The events in these stories have not however the inevitability of those in Kleist's tale and the effect they produce comes dangerously near to absurdity. Much nearer to genuine tragedy are some of Paul Ernst's "Romantische Geschichten," notably "Der Strassenraub" in which a young man in desperate need of money robs and kills the very messenger sent by his father with the necessary funds. There is a sinister fatefulness in this coincidence. Czenczi, a young woman in Friedrich Halm's "Die Marzipanlise," who finds she has loved a criminal, is indeed a tragic character. In "Krambambuli," by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, the tragic fate of a faithful dog is represented with genuine pathos. We feel most deeply for Hauptmann's "Bahnwärter Thiel," who finally goes out of his mind in the anguish of grief at the death of his son. Stemma, the heroine of Meyer's "Die Richterin" may not capture our sympathies, but she does possess the grandeur of tragic figures. In Storm's "Der Schimmelreiter" the hero of which meets his doom in

the heroic endeavour to save from the sea the men who have deserted him, there rings the true note of tragedy. The other tales of Storm, however, are perhaps typical of "Novellen" with a tragic theme, in that they sound an elegiac rather than a tragic strain. We are not deeply moved by the unhappy love of Reinhart in "Immensee." We only see its springlike beauty which does not fade, and which lasts with Reinhart even to old age. So too the love of the young people in Keller's "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe," who enjoy one moment of bliss, then perish in each other's arms, appears no transient thing, and the wonder of it, not the misery, remains in our memories. The fate of Kasperl and Annerl in ~~Arnim's~~ ^{Brentano's} framework story appears pathetic rather than tragic; only at the end, when the poet arrives too late to arrest the execution of Annerl is the emotional effect of tragedy produced. Although examples may be found in the history of the "Novelle" of great tragic characters and genuine tragic effects, there is no author who harrows our feelings like Kleist.

Little evidence can be traced of direct influence exerted by Kleist upon the themes of later "Novellen." The subject of "Die Marquise von O..." is indeed used by

Hoffmann for „Das Gelübde“ and by Ludwig for his „Maria,” but a comparison between these stories and Kleist's tale proves of how little account is the bare substance of a composition. Hebbel, who acknowledges his indebtedness to Kleist in a letter to Elise Lensing : „Kleist ist, so weit man ein Muster haben kann, mein Muster,” takes the theme of „Das Bettelweib von Locarno,” the insult of a nobleman to an inferior with its disastrous consequences and expands it in his „Anna.” But such special cases of borrowing are insignificant in comparison with Kleist's influence upon the general trend of themes in „Novellen.”

In forsaking the social tradition of the „Novelle” Kleist does not only enrich its thought-content; he also widens the scope of its subject-matter. Subjects are no longer, as in Goethe, drawn from the upper classes of contemporary society: the „Novelle” finds a home in middle-class, even peasant and artisan circles. In choosing historical and foreign settings for his tales, Kleist sets a precedent which is eagerly followed by his successors with widely differing intentions. Whereas Kleist's purpose is to lend distance to the extraordinary events which he relates, and thus to make them more credible,

(1) F. Hebbel, „Briefwechsel,” Berlin, 1890. Hebbel an Elise Lensing, München, 12 Mai, 1837.

Raabe traces the destinies of individuals in historical perspective, and in doing so he renders them symbolical of some momentous phase in their country's story. Meyer, on the other hand, a timid man who shrinks from life, creates afresh great figures from history in whom to live the ideal life of his imagination.

The tales of Kleist, as has been pointed out, present characters in the grip of circumstance, seen from outside by the eye of a dramatist. The technique here used, is one rather of representation than description. This dramatic quality is preserved throughout the subsequent history of the Novelle." Some of Meyer's tales can indeed be divided into acts and scenes. Characters are portrayed by word, deed, and gesture; rather than by direct comments by the author. Hebbel's criticism of Kleist : "Er zeichnet immer das Innere durch das Aussere zugleich Eins durch das Andere"⁽¹⁾ might be made of most later authors of Novellen. Hebbel himself shows the feelings of his characters by their gestures. The following extract gives a vivid impression of Anna's mood when forbidden to go to a festival:
 " Sie setzte sich an die Arbeit, die sie in dumpfer

(1) F. Hebbel, "Briefwechsel", Berlin, 1890. "Hebbel an Elise Fensing", München, 12 Mai, 1837.

Emsigkeit begann, und wenn sie sich auch zuweilen in unbewusstes Hinbrüten versank, doch sogleich aus diesem, wie vor Schlangen und Tarentelstich schreckhaft auffahrend, mit verstärktem, ja unnatürlichem Eifer fortsetzte."⁽¹⁾ Meyer carries this device one step further, and often conceals the motives of his people's actions. Until more than half-way through the tale the mind of Pescara is inscrutable.

A more or less detached manner of narration is maintained throughout subsequent "Novellen," although seldom so rigidly as by Kleist. Amongst others, Keller attempts this by means of the framework technique, which helps to obscure the personality of the author. Dialogue is frequently employed, in order that the narrator shall not stand between his characters and the reader. Like Kleist, Heyse and Storm use it as a means of forwarding the action. Paul Ernst is perhaps the poet who comes nearest to Kleist's restraint in narration. The last paragraph of "Die Geliebte des Königs," one of his "Romantische Geschichten:" "Als Donna Anna die Nachricht von der Ermordung erhalten hatte, ging sie in ihr Zimmer.

(1) F. Hebbel, *Sämtliche Werke*, Berlin, 1913, VIII, p. 233.

holte einen Dolch vor und tötete sich; sie sass vor ihrem Schreibtisch, und ihr Kopf war auf die Platte gefallen."⁽¹⁾ is only equalled in terseness by Kleist's report of the murder of Nicolo.

Just as the characters are drawn as seen from outside, so the whole theme of the "Novelle" is represented by means of external features. In the manner of Kohlhaas' horses, the situation in later "Novellen" is frequently marked by some symbol. The goblet in "Die Richterin" is the emblem of that family honour which Stemma wishes to annul. The green leaf in "Ein Grünes Blatt" by Storm is a token of the natives' free possession of their land. So too, the lilac-blossom in Raabe's story, "Holunderblüte," has symbolical significance. Sometimes a word or phrase recurs as the symbol of an underlying idea. Thus the word "Ehre" in "Vom Braven Kasperl und Vom Schönen Annerl" and the maxim of St. Augustine, 'Tolle, lege' in "Des Reiches Krone" by Raabe are both full of significance for the theme.

That clarity of outline which in Kleist's tales is due to a skilful scheme of construction coupled with the

(1) P. Ernst, "Romantische Geschichten," München, 1930, p.123.

absence of irrelevant detail, becomes one of the distinguishing marks of good "Novellen." A similar effect is produced by other authors by various methods. Meyer pauses at intervals during the somewhat lengthy actions of his tales to represent the situation in a picture, such as that of Pescara playing chess, or the scene on the lake in "Der Schuss von der Kanzel." Storm, on the other hand, imprints his themes upon the memory by means of settings which arouse a certain feeling in us. Thus the wood in which Reinhart and Elisabeth gather strawberries on a summer's day gives the atmosphere of tranquillity which is a quality of their love. The deserted dike, with the waves dashing in fury against it, the howling of the wind and the scream of the sea-gulls provide a background for the events in "Der Schimmelreiter" which fixes them sharply in our minds.

Such economy of form as the tales of Kleist possess is rarely found in German "Novellen." Paul Ernst is the only rival of Kleist in compactness of form.⁽¹⁾ Some narrators, like Tieck, obscure the outline of their stories with discussions on topical or cultural subjects;

(1) cf. "Romantische Geschichten," München, 1930, "Die Stärkere."

others, like Keller, allow descriptions of local colour to impede the action of their tales. Meyer, for all the emotional intensity of his themes, shows some weakness in developing them. It is in fact, doubtful whether in the history of the „Novelle“ such profundity of thought has ever been combined with such severity of form as in the tales of Henrich von Kleist.