Notes

1. Language as Form in Goethe’s *Prometheus* and *Pandora*

2. Gräf, No. 3661.
3. Cf. Julius Richter, “Zur Deutung der Goetheschen Prometheus-Dichtung,” *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts*, 1928, pp. 64–104. Richter is certainly right in his view that a more mature conception of God underlay the plan of the fragment than that expressed in the ode. Still, it must be kept in mind that the fragment did not grow beyond the vital consciousness established in the ode.
4. Quoted here, as elsewhere in this essay, according to the “Weimarer Ausgabe,” Vols. XXXIX and L, Weimar, 1897 and 1900.
5. Gräf, No. 3664.
6. Friedrich Gundolf (*Goethe*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 579–602) treats *Pandora* in the main generically, as allegory and pageant; that in doing so he repeatedly makes valid observations, needs no mention. But in emphasizing in the language only the conceptual and decorative intention (the lyrical “interpolations” of course excepted), he seems to me to fail to recognize the really figurative function of the language as such.
7. What a monstrosity in this dramatic situation is even the ornamental epithet “gefloschtnes”!
8. This is also why Wilamowitz’ objection to the outcry of Epimelea (“Goethes Pandora,” *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, XIX, 1898, 1–21)—that no Greek would have done it thus and that here the “exaggeration of the imitator” becomes noticeable—completely misses the point. That Epimelea exactly fills a line of twelve syllables with monosyllabic cries, again leads away from all realistic participation in her fright by giving the latter an almost abnormal stylization. The line is really no cry of woe, either Greek or German, but its formal verbal symbol.
10. Robert Petsch’s essay, “Über die Kunstform von Goethes Pandora” (*Die Antike*, VI, 1930, 15–40) may serve as warning example for the errors to which an “empathetic” exegesis of the play necessarily must lead. It is doubtfull possible to show Goethe’s virtuosity in the way he knows how to adjust even such a strange language to changing characters and feelings. But the strangeness of the verbal corpus and its repeatedly interrupted course are basic for the interpretation of the whole. They offer not the least suggestion of a “Fichtean constructive mood,” however.

14. According to the stage direction, to be sure, water could be meant as common background of the Promethean as well as of the Epimethean world. But the symmetry of the suicidal elements—after all, the lovers plunge into the elements at opposite ends of the stage—makes it certain that water belongs essentially to the Epimethean side, from which alone, moreover, it is visible and approachable. Nevertheless we do not deny that a close relationship exists between Epimeleia and the uniting third element—"the forces": Eos speaks at the end in her metre and announces the Dionysian re-birth from water; even Epimeleia herself ranks water as one of the manifestations of the divine (V, 501). But on the human level this counter-element continues to obtain.


16. Thus I here diverge from Hankamer’s interpretation of these lines (*Spiel der Mächte*, p. 163f.). Hankamer emphasizes the contemplative human spirit, which "between cosmos and microcosmos ... playfully and knowledgeable brings about a relationship." However much this may apply to Goethe’s late style in general, the essential in this passage seems to me to lie in the fact that speech as such is not in a position to bring about this relationship.

2. "The voice of truth and of humanity": Goethe’s *Iphigenie*


2. Quoted here, as elsewhere in this essay, unless otherwise noted, according to the "Jubiläums-Ausgabe" (Berlin-Stuttgart, 1902), vol. 12.


4. James Boyd, "Four Prayers in Goethe’s *Iphigenie*," *German Studies*, Oxford, 1938, pp. 33–61, has the merit of having examined this utterance separately, but in my opinion reaches wrong conclusions, just as his later complete interpretation (*Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris*, Oxford, 1949), which finds expressed in Faust’s "feeling is all" also the central idea of our play, seems to me unsuccessful.

5. What she intended was of course a condition: "If you wish to save your image in my soul, then save me from the necessity of lying." But as almost always with Goethe, the decisive thing is not the "intention" but the word really spoken: the very fact that this prayer is not a conditional clause, not an explicit ultimatum, marks the as yet incomplete autonomy of the one praying, that is, incomplete because not yet become speech.

6. That this is not altogether conclusive, that Iphigenia in her first hymn still speaks with her own voice and weaves in a prayer, confirms this interpretation. Iphigenia’s mingling of languages is the exact opposite of Orestes’ con-
fusion of language. She is not yet autonomous and therefore does not yet have the sure feeling for language which forces her (in the later hymn) into blank verse, as soon as she speaks as an individual person and calls Pylades by name.

7. In my opinion the interpretation of Hans Wolff (Goethes Weg zur Humanität, Bern, 1951, pp. 211–27), which is diametrically opposed to what is attempted here in almost every regard, shows to what radically false interpretations the neglect of Goethe's language forms (languages) leads. Wolff observes of the "Song of the Fates" that it saves the image of the gods in Iphigenia's soul in "leading her back again to the god of anger and pre­destination, the god with whom man cannot argue and towards whom only mute submission is possible."

8. Ludwig Kahn's opinion that Iphigenia's decision is "made easy for her because she finds security in an impersonal, absolute system of morality" (Monatshefte, XXXIX [1947], 235) seems clearly contradicted by the text itself. The contrast between Goethe and Kleist is indeed great, but of an entirely different nature than such a Schillerian version of Goethe would indicate.

9. It is gratifying, though not necessary as a matter of method, that we can show that Goethe consciously worked this grouping—and the resultant "supplantation" of the word "sister"—into the last version of the play. The following chart, set up on the basis of J. Baechtold's synoptic edition (Goethe Iphigenie auf Tauris in vierfacher Gestalt, Freiburg, 1883), shows this (reference to lines according to the last version):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V.</th>
<th>A, B, C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>566</td>
<td>Schwester [sister]</td>
<td>Schwester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611</td>
<td>Diane [Diana]</td>
<td>Schwester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>722</td>
<td>Diane-Schwester</td>
<td>Schwester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>738</td>
<td>heiliges Bild [holy image]</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>840</td>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>Schwester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Iphigenia reveals herself as Orestes' sister]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A, B, C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1438</td>
<td>der Göttin Bild</td>
<td>der Göttin Bild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1563</td>
<td>der Göttin Bild</td>
<td>der Göttin Bild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1602</td>
<td>der Göttin Bild</td>
<td>heiliger Schatz [holy treasure]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Schwester</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1709</td>
<td>Schutzbild [guardian image]</td>
<td>Bild [image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Bild deiner Göttin [image of your goddess]</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929/31</td>
<td>Bild der Schwester [the sister's image]</td>
<td>Bild Dianens/Schwester [Diana's image/sister]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Through the two omissions (738; 160 5) the as yet unclear distinction in the first three versions is finally cleared up; in the last version of the confession (1929–31) the two words are no longer joined by the genitive case but placed side by side tautologically (see below).

10. From which would result that they really did not exist. Since creation is the essence of their being, they cannot deny their creature without denying themselves. Read aloud, in this line “true” and “are” would have to be spoken with equal emphasis, since “true” is to be understood adverbially as well as predicatively.

11. How anyone, like Korff (Geist der Goethezeit, vol. 2, Leipzig, 1927, p. 167f.), can conceive the Tartarus-idyl as a moment of “inner illumination”—of insight “that only love can overcome hate”—I do not understand. To be sure, death too solves the curse and heals all human frailties; but hardly in Goethe’s sense. And how does Korff explain the horror that this vision ends in:

Ihr scheint zu zaudern, euch wegzuwenden?
Was ist es? Leidet der Göttergleiche?
Weh mir! es haben die Übermäch’tgen
Der Heldenburst grausame Qualen
Mit ehrnen Ketten fest aufgeschmiedet?

[You seem to hesitate, turn away? What is it? Does the god-like one suffer? Woe is me! The All-powerful have attached with iron chains dreadful torments to his heroic breast.] (ll. 1305-09)

12. John N. Hritzu (“Reflections on stage directions... in Iphigenie...,” Monatshefte, XXXIX (1941), 17–23) shows how Goethe lets movements and acts of the characters be expressed in the text, rather than indicating them by means of stage directions. Characteristically, the stage directions suddenly pile up where the sword threatens to take over the word: in the scene of the meeting between Thaos and Orestes.

13. Professor Heinrich Henel has drawn my attention to a possible objection: since Orestes was not present at the confession he would hardly be in a position here to explain the new truth. The objection, it seems to me, loses validity if we understand—as Goethe repeatedly demands of us—the word once spoken as a really corporeal element of the world of the poetic work. What has once been said, stands so to speak on the stage, a tangible reality, which is plain at least to a sensitive human being (Orestes) even if he does not “hear” it physically. Just such an “Aha!”-reaction Goethe intended and had to avoid, since this would have given rise to the impression that the truth existed from the beginning and is only discovered, while it is conversely being created for the first time.

14. In another sense Orestes is right, however: in the one already mentioned, that in God word and object, thought and act of creation are the same. Human beings “interpret” the word of God and have to err in doing so; God however “intended you,” that is, created Iphigenia, who now has the responsibility of transforming error into truth.

16. And thereby in confuting the judgment of Heinrich Meyer, who does not recognize just this corporeal density of imagery and therefore criticizes in the play very improperly an “excess of form, [a] lack of vitality, [a] pure spiritualization which found no human symbols but at best humanistic ones” (Goethe, Hamburg, 1949, p. 228).

3. The Consistency of Goethe’s *Tasso*


4. *Die natürliche Tochter: Goethe’s Iphigenie in Aulis?*

3. For this interpretation of *Iphigenie,* on which some further statements are also based, compare the author’s “Die Stimme der Wahrheit und der Menschlichkeit: Goethes *Iphigenie,*” translated in this volume.
4. Staiger, who feels fully the psychological inconsistency of this scene, explains it differently: “But Goethe does not remain too long with what is empty of meaning. If his people are caught in the fate of their time, he speaks over their heads, in his own name from their mouth, what a superior spirit has need of expressing” (Goethe, II, 379).
7. Compare the excellent linguistic analysis of Verena Banninger (*Goethes Natürliche Tochter,* Zürich, 1957, p. 93f.), which shows how in this work, entirely other than in the other works, verse and word “become absolute,” are disengaged from the organic structure of the sentence and play an independent “role.” I just cannot regard this without doubt correctly understood stylistic tendency as the solely determining one; it seems to me to become that only in *Pandora.*
9. Compare K. May’s introduction to the Artemis-edition (VI, 1199). His assumption that the King’s signature is to be found on a forged document finds no support in the text, indeed seems to me to be clearly refuted by it, especially by V, 5.
11. If I may interpret V. Bänninger’s presentation of “appearance” as the central happening of the play in such a way that it culminates as form and becomes presence in the dressing-scene, yet I cannot go all the way with this fruitful insight. For we are at no moment unaware that this is an arbitrary, forbidden-premature and thus in the end a “mis”-appearance. True appearance and pure presence would have been Eugenie’s admission to the royal circle; but this is thwarted.

12. A significant dramatic motif may be indicated here: that of fruitless speaking. Revealingly, it appears in its sharpest earlier form in Goethe’s other tragedy, Egmont, that likewise can be interpreted as an interment of a dramatic form recognized as inadequate: the “discussion” between Egmont and Alba is empty sound, as we and Alba know from the beginning. And the great dialogue between Iphigenia and Thoas (V, 3) threatens to remain only a time-winning excuse behind which on both sides the “wary ambush” can be prepared; but at the last moment the battle of words turns into a true dialogue. In Tasso, the danger of fruitless speech is considerably intensified, but there is still the possibility of accommodation. In Die natürliche Tochter, as in Egmont, this possibility was eliminated at the outset. (For the Egmont-Alba-scene, compare Paul Böckmann, “Goethe: Egmont,” in: Das deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart, I, 155f.)


14. This opinion is based on an as yet unpublished investigation by Professor Wolfgang Fleischhauer, who kindly made it available to me, which traces the antecedent history of this oxymoron so important for Goethe by way of the title of Gozzi’s drama.

7. Kleist’s Hermannsschlacht: The Lock and the Key


2. No manuscript of the play is extant. Semdbner, in his invaluable edition of Kleist’s works and letters (revised, Hanser, München 1961, 2 vols. herein-after cited as SW), surmises that Tieck may have chosen the motto, slightly changing it from Kleist’s distich “Die tiefste Erniedrigung” (SW I, 944). But this is mere surmise. Tieck did not supply mottos for any of the other plays; nor is it clear why he should have changed the distich (which reads: “... Das Lied, zum Ruhm dir, zu singen...”).

3. There is, however, what I consider strong internal evidence. Hally’s father is “Teuthold, ein Waffenschmied”—and the archetypal “Waffenschmied” in Germanic mythology is Wieland. The name Teuthold may well express Kleist’s gratitude for Wieland’s generous encouragement of his “German” muse. Except for two short excerpts, Wieland’s fragment remained unpublished until the end of the 19th century, when the sole extant manuscript of it was found among Bodmer’s literary remains. But Kleist may well have seen another copy (now lost) during the months he spent as a guest in Ossmanstedt; or else he may have been told something of the epic’s argument.


5. I am assuming—with the majority of critics—that "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" was written, or at least drafted in considerable detail, before the composition of Die Hermannsschlacht. On thematic grounds, the story clearly belongs in the vicinity of Penthesilea, even though there is no mention of it prior to its first publication (1811) in Der Freimüthige.


7. It is worth noting how rigorously Kleist denies himself the easy effects of the family metaphor. When Hermann sends his sons off to Marbod, there is not a sign of inner struggle, not a word about fatherly feelings; if two dogs were at stake, the business could not be transacted more matter-of-factly. With the sole exception of the Hally episode—and even it Kleist strips of its inherent pathos—there is no family scene in the entire play: no wives bidding their husbands a tender farewell, no fathers blessing or exhorting their sons, no children swearing vengeance for the suffering of their parents. The word "Brüder" is hardly ever used in the play; but the overblown form "Bruderherz" is used twice by Fust in the revolting scene alluded to above (ll. 2527 and 2533).

8. Schiller acknowledged the debt by working Müller's name into the text of the play:

   ein glaubenswerter Mann,
   Johannes Müller bracht' es [news of Albrecht's death]
   von Schaffhausen

   [a reliable man, Johannes Müller, brought it (news of Albrecht's death) from Schaffhausen].

9. How much the experience was in his mind when he wrote Die Hermannsschlacht is evident from the many place names ending in -kon—Ipikon, Helakon, Thuiskon, Herthakon—which give the play's locale an oddly Swiss imprint.

10. Kleist's hymn of hatred, "Germania an ihre Kinder," must similarly be considered a reply to Schiller's "An die Freude," the metrical pattern of which it takes over.


12. I am aware that as late as December, 1807, Kleist mentions J. v. Müller among those from whom he and Adam Müller hoped to obtain contributions to Phobus. It has been argued—especially by Hans M. Wolff (H. v. Kleist als politischer Dichter, Univ. of California Publications in Modern Philology, vol. 27, no. 6, 1947) and more recently by Richard Samuel ("Kleist's Hermannsschlacht und der Freiherr vom Stein," Jahrbuch der dt. Schillergesellschaft, 1961, 64–101)—that Kleist was happily apolitical until well into 1808. As prime evidence for this view the fact is adduced that Kleist hoped to obtain the German publication rights of the Code Napoléon and other French government releases. But in the letter to Ulrike in which
Kleist mentions these hopes, he adds an emphatic cautionary note: “Du wirst nicht voreilig sein, politische Folgerungen aus diesem Schritt zu ziehen über dessen eigentliche Bedeutung ich mich nicht weiter auslassen kann. [You will not be hasty in drawing political conclusions from this move, about the real meaning of which I cannot express myself further.]” That Kleist never was apolitical where Napoleon and the French were concerned, is clear from his letters of 1801/02; by the end of 1805 he was even more passionate (cf. SW II, 760 f.). His friends and associates in Dresden were mostly of the anti-French faction; they all testify to his strong political sentiments, and none of them as much as hints at a sudden shift toward political engagement. On the contrary, we hear of his being a contact man for the Lützows, who were then—with Schill, Graf Götzen and others—preparing a popular uprising against the French (cf. Sembdner, Kleists Lebensspuren, Bremen 1957, 220 ff.). In sum, everything speaks against Wolff’s and Samuel’s surmise—except the facade of Phöbus. But if we suspect Kleist of hoping to use Phöbus as a cover and to win French financial support for it even while he was secretly plotting against Napoleon, we suspect him precisely of what he has his hero Hermann do. In fact, is not the quadriga that is so oddly called attention to in the play—

THUISKOMAR: Schau, die Quadriga, die August dir schenkte!  
SELGAR: Die Pferd aus Rom?  
HERMANN (zerstreut): Aus Rom, beim Jupiter!  
Ein Zug, wie der Pelid ihn nicht geführt!

[thuiskomar: Look, the quadriga that Augustus made you a present of!  
selgar: The horses from Rome?  
hermann (distracted): From Rome, by Jove, a team such as Achilles himself did not drive!]  
(II. 120–22)

is not this the very quadriga which adorned the cover of Phöbus? If so, Kleist was only hoping to steal from the French what the French had stolen in the first place. A patriotic legend current in 1808 went as follows:

Schill hatte bei Kolberg vier außergewöhnlich schöne Pferde abgefangen, die für Napoleon bestimmt waren. Dieser bot ihm für jedes Pferd 1000 Taler, überschrieb den betreffenden Brief aber: “An den Rauberhauptmann von Schill.” Schill antwortete: “Herr Bruder! ... Gegen die angebotenen 1000 Taler kann ich sie Ihnen nicht zurückgeben. Wollen Sie aber die vier Pferde, die Sie von dem Brandenburger Tor in Berlin weggestohlen haben, wieder dort aufstellen lassen, so stehen Ihnen die von mir in Beschlag genommenen zu Diensten.”

[Schill had intercepted near Kolberg four extraordinarily beautiful horses that were destined for Napoleon. The latter offered him 1000 thaler for each horse, but addressed the letter concerning the matter: “To Robber Captain von Schill.” Schill answered: “Dear Sir My Brother! ... I cannot give them back to you for the proffered 1000 thaler. But if you are willing to have put back on the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin the four horses you stole from it, those I seized are at your disposal.”] (Cf. G. Vorwerk-Semler, Ferdinand von Schill, Braunschweig, 1941, p. 24)


16. Not to mention its chances of survival, at least as a "Kultursprache." The time lay not far back when German had seemed in real danger of being submerged; under Napoleon the danger was hardly less acute than it had been in the days of Louis XIV. Johannes von Müller's much noted decision to give his address on Frederick in French may well have seemed symptomatic; it certainly was symptomatic for him. On January 28, 1805, he had written his publisher:

Wenn Sie noch nicht angefangen haben, zu drucken, so tun Sie mir doch den Gefallen ... deutsche Lettern zu nehmen .... Es ist doch gar infam, dass wir uns unserer Schrift zu schämen hätten. Ich bin von denen, welche die Deutschen nicht möchten zu Franzosen werden lassen. Ich will die Schmach der Deutschheit tragen. ... Wer mich lesen will, lerne deutsch.

[If you have not yet begun to print, then please do me the favor ... of using German type .... It is really infamous that we should have to be ashamed of German characters. I belong to those who would not like to have the Germans become Frenchmen. I wish to bear the disgrace of being German .... If one wishes to read me, let him learn German.]

By November 8, 1806, he wrote his brother:

"Das habe ich mir vorgenommen, künftig meine Bücher in beiden Sprachen zu schreiben.

[I have resolved to write my books henceforth in both languages."


17. Septimius is the prototype of the high German officers at the Nuremberg trials—as Varus is their prototype at or before the outbreak of World War II:

**VARUS:** Wieso? Meinst du vielleicht, die Absicht sei, Cheruska Als ein erobertes Gebiet—?

**VENT.:** Quintilius,

Die Absicht, dünkt mich, lässt sich fast erraten.

**VARUS:** Seis! Was bekümmerst mich? Es ist nicht meines Amtes Den Willen meines Kaisers zu erspähn. Er sagt ihn, wenn er ihn vollführt will wissen. (ll. 1266–75)

**VARUS:** In what way? Do you mean perhaps, the intention may be, Cheruska as a conquered territory—?

**VENT.:** Quintilius, the intention can almost be guessed, it seems to me.

**VARUS:** So be it! Why should it bother me? It is not my function to detect the will of my emperor. He will state it, if he wants to be sure it will be carried out.

Since we can hardly avoid thinking uneasily of the Nazi era as we read Kleist's play, it is doubly important that we perceive the play's true moral
structure and not bury its careful and subtle distinctions under such crude and blanket terms as "Nationalhass."

18. If, by the way, this passage offends us as a barbaric conglomerate of prosy argumentation and wildly mixed metaphors, that is precisely the offense Kleist means to give. No "Latier" would speak like this, nor would the most humble of Schiller's Swiss. The style is of a piece with such lines as: "Danach wird weder Hund noch Katze krähen [no dog or cat will care a straw about it]."


20. The "Universalmonarchie" he envisages was anathema to men like Adam Müller, Gentz, and Friedrich Schlegel. To them it meant loss of national identity, cosmopolitanism, inorganic uniformity. Their idea of political order beyond the national level was one of "Gleichgewicht" (on which Gentz had written a treatise), somehow competitive but somehow also suffused with a common (read Catholic-Christian) "Geist," which would keep it from lapsing into international chaos.

21. It also fixes, I believe, the moment in Kleist's planning when he rejected the idea of "abstracting" the family subplot from the shining surface of Wilhelm Tell.