

PARCELSUS AS A THEME IN GERMAN AND EUROPEAN LITERATURE

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by

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TO

DR. K. -W. MAURER

IN GRATITUDE

Wie jede Blüte welkt und jede Jugend  
Dem Alter weicht, blüht jede Lebensstufe,  
Blüht jede Weisheit und jede Tugend  
Zu ihrer Zeit und darf nicht ewig dauern.  
Es muss das Herz bei jedem Lebensrufe  
Bereit zum Abschied sein und Neubeginn,  
Um sich in Tapferkeit und ohne Trauern  
In neue andere Bindungen zu geben.

- Hesse

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to develop an interpretation of Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer's novel trilogy Paracelsus by examining the literary perspectives of the Paracelsus theme in representative works from Germany, France, and England. The central concern is that the literary representations of the theme are compound symbols of organic human growth or Bildung, and that these works give expression to the mysteriously magnetic quality of a human destiny conceived as both symbol and myth.

Due to the great number of literary works in which this theme has been handled it has been necessary to follow selective rather than comprehensive principles. The scope of this study is thus limited by the principle that a judicious selection of literary works serves to demonstrate the significance of the theme without disturbing the thematic pattern. This principle is based on the understanding that 'Paracelsus' and 'Faustus' represent essentially interchangeable themes and that the works so selected represent the theme in a crucial way. The study proceeds from historical considerations to those of legend, myth, and literature.

The design of the study consists in developing the eventual interpretation of Kolbenheyer's work in four stages: a representation of the historical figure

of Paracelsus and an examination of his myth; a study of the perspectives of the Faust theme as handled by Christopher Marlowe, Goethe, and Paul Valéry; a study of the perspective in Robert Browning's treatment of the Paracelsus theme; a study of the perspective of Arthur Schnitzler. In method and approach the study is concerned with literary and comparative considerations which must take precedence over the claims of either history, psychology, or philosophy. It asks as much "how" a work is as "what" it is, and has therefore given preference to active rather than passive forms of definition.

While it has to be acknowledged that Kolbenheyer's work is biographical, the thesis endeavours to show that it is also the culmination of the literary interpretations of the theme which have preceded it, and that it takes its rightful place within the thematic pattern so that each work complements the other. The key to this culmination is seen to lie in the convergence of the principles of Entwicklung and Bildung. The interpretation moreover represents a defense of Kolbenheyer against criticism which is informed and activated by political bias.

In conclusion it is suggested that the Paracelsus trilogy represents a genuine response to the timeless personal challenge of the theme, and that its contribution to the literary tradition is its expression of an extraordinary assurance in man's ever-widening and thus enduring identity.



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## PREFACE

The theme of Paracelsus in European literature first suggested itself as a topic for study in a seminar on the nature and meaning of the term Bildung in the German Bildungsroman, for which the central novel under consideration was Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer's Paracelsus. The Bildungsroman, a major art form within the genre of the novel, has a long and memorable tradition which can be traced to the Middle Ages. It represents an outstanding achievement of German literature and a major contribution to World literature, concerned as it is with the expression of man's struggle to find himself and his place in the universe.

The early period of this tradition begins with Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival, and lays stress upon the principle of Entwicklung, that is, a continuing development and growth in the course of which the disparate forces inherent in the fabric of the human personality should be resolved. The religious orientation at this stage is markedly Christian. In the eighteenth century, however, the art form gains new impetus and takes on perspectives hitherto unknown. Goethe's novel Wilhelm Meister has become its unsurpassed model and prototype. Emphasis is now placed upon Bildung as a principle, that is, the organic formation and transformation of man in relation to himself, to society,

and to humanity as whole. Within its extended scope, which takes us from Goethe's novel to such contemporary works as Thomas Mann's Der Zauberberg and Hermann Hesse's Glasperlenspiel, Kolbenheyer's work is distinguished by giving expression to the response of the whole man who commits himself totally to this maturing and redemptive process. Paracelsus thus stands out in sharp relief from the despairing milieu of the novel of extreme situations. Kolbenheyer's novel owes its vigour to the way an engrossing and timeless theme has been treated, and not less so to the courageous acceptance of its challenge to our own age.

The relationship between the historical Paracelsus and the legendary and myth-enshrouded Dr. Faustus provides the key to the present study. Interest in Paracelsus made it natural to see both figures within the context of a widening tradition. The Paracelsus-Faustus theme, which has proven inexhaustible, has not lost any of its relevance and meaning in our time in that the purpose and values of human existence are as much to the fore as ever. With its rich combination of fact and fiction, the source material never ceases to make its compelling appeal to the creative imagination.

The protean nature of the Paracelsus theme has

made it such a powerful symbol of man's striving for knowledge. The contact with a human being struggling towards a breaking through the limitations of his own self, society, and age remains at the root of its irresistible attraction and challenge. The various personal means by which authors have handled this theme compound the symbols of the Promethean flame of knowledge and the alchemic fire.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine the literary perspectives of the Paracelsus theme with due attention being given to representative works from Germany, France, and England. The origin of the theme demands that emphasis be placed upon German literature, yet the comparison with works from England and France serves to establish its universal appeal. The work under principal consideration is Kolbenheyer's Paracelsus, a German novel written in this century for contemporary readers, which both in language and theme takes one back to the century concerned.

It is central to this study that the literary renditions of the theme are essentially compound symbols of organic human growth or Bildung. The German word for symbol, Sinnbild (picture or image of meaning), suggests the timeless quality of the message which continually takes on new meanings commensurate with the understanding brought to bear upon it. The life-force of the works is their symbolic value, and as Paracelsus himself wrote:

"...the more accomplished an artist would be, the more necessary it is that he master the art of signs..."<sup>1</sup>.

The scope of this study will be limited by the principle that a judicious selection of literary works will serve to demonstrate the significance of the theme without any detrimental result. This principle is based on the understanding that 'Paracelsus' and 'Faustus'

represent essentially interchangeable themes, and that the works so selected represent the theme in a crucial way. The study shall proceed from historical considerations to those of legend, myth, and literature.

The treatment of the historical Paracelsus and his thought does not represent an attempt to suggest a rigid source from which the literary renditions of the theme have been derived. Rather it is intended to serve as a background against which the lines of artistic expression will be revealed. It is beyond the scope and purpose of this study to attempt a re-appraisal of all the biographical details and philosophic patterns which the figure of Paracelsus invites. Yet had such an evaluation been included, the result would most certainly have evaded the fundamental concern, namely, that of the mysteriously magnetic quality of a human destiny conceived as both symbol and myth.

The name of Faustus has long been identified with the name of Goethe, yet it is nonetheless important to note that his work represents a peak in the face of a wide-spread concern with the idea of man's insatiable search for the ultimate truth in life, his ventures into the occult, transcendental perception and his purported league with the devil. This latter charge is symbolic of man's breach with the mores and so-called absolute knowledge of his society -- or else with his own soul which

has become alienated. A review of the literature inspired by this concern will illustrate the point.

As early as 1599 a Swabian by the name of Georg Rudolf Widman recast the Faustbuch (Volksbuch) of 1587, to be followed in 1674 by a Nürnberg physician called Nikolaus Pfilzer. The English dramatist Christopher Marlowe based his drama The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus (1588?) upon the German Volksbuch which had reached England, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing had sketched a fragmentary scene entitled Faust und Sieben Geister in his seventeenth Literaturbrief of 16 February 1759. That the popularity of the Faustbuch was not confined to Germany is seen not only in this reference to Marlowe, but also in the fact that the Spies book of 1587, or one of its variants, was translated into English, French and Dutch before the end of the century. Only eleven years lapsed between the publication of the original folk-book and the last contemporary translation, for the Dutch translation of Karl Batten dates from 1592, and the French of Victor Palma Cayet from 1598. The earliest edition known in the English language is dated 1592.<sup>2</sup>

This interest continued unabated with Paul Weidmann's allegorical drama Johann Faust (1775) and Friedrich Muller's (Maler Muller') Situation aus Fausts Leben (1776)

and Fausts Leben 1. Teil (1778). Mention may also be made of the novel by Ferdinand Maximilian Klinger

entitled Fausts Leben, Taten und Höllenfahrt (1791).

At this point one may well agree with Eckermann that books have their fate even while they are in the process of being written:

"Die Bücher haben ihre Schicksale schon während sie entstehen." 3.

In later years the Faustian character was also accepted in Germany by Christian Dietrich Grabbe (1829), Nikolaus Lenau (1836), Arthur Schnitzler in his one-act play Paracelsus (1897) and Thomas Mann in his novel Dr. Faustus (1947). Of these, the latter is noteworthy for its emphasis upon the inner sickness of man which prevents his transcendence, and indeed foredooms him to failure. Kolbenheyer's trilogy (1917-25) is the direct antithesis of this.

Another work, which is contemporary with that of Lenau, is Robert Browning's poem Paracelsus (1835), completed when the poet was just twenty-three years of age. Despite Browning's youth, one feels very conscious of the fact that he too has seen the challenge of the theme and has submitted himself to it. What is important to note with regard to the development of the theme beyond its originally German birth-place is that, as so often



happens, both the idea and the theme came to England via France. It was suggested to Browning by Count Amédée de Ripert-Monclar, a private agent in England between the Duchesse de Berri and her royalist friends in France.

The final work which has attracted the attention of this study is the French 'Comédie' Mon Faust (1944) by Paul Valéry. The title itself suggests the personal acceptance of and involvement in the theme which becomes heightened when it is realised that the work was directly influenced by sympathetic contact with the mind and works of Goethe, as well as by Valéry's concern with the present condition of man.

The recurrence of the theme up to the present day suggests that the myth of the magus is a necessary element of human expression; indeed the theme has a life of its own. Perhaps the most startling contemporary witness to this is Lawrence Durrell's recent poetic drama An Irish Faustus which had its premiere in Hamburg as recently as last fall (1963). Here once again the theme has turned back to its source.

It is impossible in this study to give an exhaustive account of available witnesses when one is reminded that Alexander Tille, in his study Die Faustsplitter in der Literatur des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts, has gathered

together some 450 items of Faust-literature, the details of which he published between 1898 and 1901. Almost ninety additional references have been discovered since Tille's collection was published. 4.

In an appendix to his study on the development of the Faust figure from the 16th century to 1946, Karl Theens has listed 94 musical, literary, and dramatic renditions in the German, English, Latin, French, Italian and Spanish languages. He has also mentioned important analogies in the works of Lord Byron, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, the Hungarian Emerich Medoch, the Czech Jaroslav Vrchlisky, and Thornton Wilder. Perhaps it is both revealing and noteworthy that Kolbenheyer's Paracelsus-Trilogie, carried out as it is on the grand scale, is not even mentioned.

Goethe's creation of Faust suggests the view that each re-creation is a mask for an author's confession. After all, it took Goethe over sixty years of personal experience and literary endeavour before he felt equal to completing his work. The analogy with the historical Paracelsus is here too close to pass unperceived for he wrote:

"If you are called to write a book, you will not fail to do so, even if it is delayed for sixty years or even longer." 5.

"Bistu beruft ein Buoch ze machen, es wird nit versäumbt werden, ..sulls sechzig und siebenzig Jahr anston und länger." 6.

And again:

"The right path does not consist in speculation, but leads deep into experience." 7.

It will be apparent from the preceding outline that the 'Faustian' or 'Paracelsian' theme is very much like a diamond diffusing light in all directions, and that its subtleties, by conscious design or not, might easily appear in literary works which do not claim affinity. Examples of this would be Bertolt Brecht's Leben des Galelei and Ibsen's Emperor and Galilean.

Due to the great number of literary works which have handled the Paracelsus-Faustus theme, and also to the great variety in style and form, it has been necessary to follow selective rather than comprehensive principles in this study. The utilization of a larger percentage of representative works to cast light upon Kolbenheyer's Paracelsus would only blur the aim and cloud the result.

The design of this study will be to develop the eventual interpretation of Kolbenheyer's novel trilogy in four stages:-

(1) A representation of the historical figure and an examination of his myth.

(2) A study of the perspectives of the Faust theme in the earlier mentioned works of Marlowe, Goethe

and Valéry.

(3) A study of the perspective in Browning's treatment of the theme.

(4) A study of the perspective of Schnitzler. This approach will permit the most fruitful interpretation of Kolbenheyer's work as the method will illustrate the varying mutations of the character Paracelsus-Faustus, and will moreover emphasize the validity of the theme beyond German literature.

Our procedure confronts us with two postulates:

(1) Each work of art establishes its own terms of reference to which the critic must submit.

(2) A genuine work of art constitutes an artistic whole.

If we remain mindful of these postulates, the besetting danger of critics -- and not only German -- lessens, by which the philosopher becomes engaged in warfare with the artist within him. All too often the struggle brings with it the triumph of the philosopher over the artist. The creative artist will not become a victim of this dangerous trap and the responsible literary critic will never cease to be on his guard in the face of this basic conflict.

It is not to be denied that such disciplines as psychology and philosophy, philology and history are useful implements to an understanding of a work, but what is

said is that these at best only offer a one-sided exegesis. When Goethe spoke to Eckermann on 18 September 1823 he pertinently stated that reality should be the basis which provides the themes and the crux of the subject which is to be expressed, but that it is the task of the poet (Dichter) to form these into a finely wrought and living whole.

"Die Wirklichkeit soll die Motive hergeben, die auszusprechende Punkte, den eigentlichen Kern; aber ein schönes belebtes Ganzes daraus zu bilden, ist Sache des Dichters." 8.

In Goethe's sense the word "whole" (ganz) becomes a critical yard-stick which is charged with meaning. It implies that all component parts must stand in a meaningful relationship to one another.

The exact opposite of this wholesome approach can be seen in a critical method as used by Franz Koch who, in his defense of Kolbenheyer, has examined the author as poet (Dichter) and thinker. Drawing heavily upon Kolbenheyer's Philosophie der Bauhütte he attempts to explain the man and his works in such terms as "biological aesthetics", "philosophic naturalism", "natural and biological ethos", "naturalistic ethics", "inhaltsslogisches Denken", and the "logical conscience". This throws little or no light upon Kolbenheyer's literary and artistic achievement. In this context it is again

revealing to turn to one of Goethe's conversations with Eckermann wherein he exclaims at those Germans who make life so difficult by the depths of the thoughts and ideas which they seek everywhere and superimpose wherever they can. Goethe's challenge leaves us with the injunction to submit courageously to the impressions (Eindrücke) of art and to permit ourselves to be delighted and elevated.<sup>9</sup> Here again one must take words back to first meanings with Goethe, for the "impressions" of art are those indelible marks which impress themselves upon us and bind a relationship.

Yet another unhelpful approach is exemplified in Henry Pachter's biography of Paracelsus which often decries the idolators of Paracelsus who continue to raise the historical figure to an expansive human symbol. What such a critic fails to realize is precisely that a historical "truth" may be artistically valid without necessarily adhering to historical "fact". What is important for the artist is the inevitability of a human situation. This re-creation of the inescapability of a historical theme is seen in the works chosen for discussion, in Kolbenheyer's work no less than, for example, in Schiller's Maria Stuart. Thus the tradition is well established and need only be recognized.

Although not a man of letters, Paracelsus grasped

the implications of the creative process when he wrote:

"When a man undertakes to create something, he establishes a new heaven, as it were, and from it the work he desires to create flows into him". 10.

In method and approach this study is therefore both literary and comparative, a study which asks as much "how" a work is as "what" it is. This means that preference has been given to an active rather than to a passive form of definition.

CHAPTER ONE  
SOURCES OF THE STUDY

Human history is marked by the phenomenon of a break-through whereby men of genius and insight rise above the current of their contemporaries to point the way toward new eras. Perhaps more than any other epoch this is true of the apocalyptic age of Paracelsus which boasts the names of Luther, Machiavelli, Ignatius Loyola, Columbus, Magellan, Michaelangelo, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and Copernicus. It was a time when new discoveries and concepts clashed vigorously with the more accepted and venerated ones, and when the known world, suddenly and startlingly opening up new perspectives, was called upon to re-examine its beliefs.

Philippus Aureolus Bombastus Theophrastus ab Hohenheim called Paracelsus, who was to challenge the medical supremacy of Avicenna and Hippocrates and arouse the indignation of the humanists, was born on 1 November 1493 on St. Philip's Day in Einsiedeln/Schweiz. The son of a country doctor and a bondswoman of the Benedictine Abbey in Einsiedeln, his recognition of an emphasis upon the chemical and biological basis of living organisms was to pave the way for a new type of medicine. His conviction that man was a microcosm in the universal macrocosm was to guide his steps through an inner revelation of the significance of human existence.



Paracelsus was impatient of experience, and hence it was to be his mission to fight cloistered learning and the spread of petrified untested theories. That we recognize him at all in these terms is due more to the autobiographical and confessional parts of his books than it is to his teachings. <sup>1</sup>.

Just as the alchemists insisted upon the organic nature of plant-like growth as the essence of creation, so it may be said that Paracelsus continued to grow through maturity to death. Yet despite the significance of this analogy, it would be in error to suggest that his development proceeded unchecked and without the turning-points brought on by conditions of crisis. His life was marked by trial and error, disillusioned groping, and success followed by set-back. The analogy, then, is valid not as it applies to the turmoil of the individual amidst the external conditions of his existence, but rather to the development of the inner man. This dichotomy is the first indication of the principle of polarity which so pervades Paracelsus' alchemy -- and indeed alchemy at large.

Polarity, the contrasting pairs of opposites, finds expression throughout his works, and is a powerful agency in the attainment of harmony; it explains the multitudinous discrepancies in his life. A glance at some of his writings

will illustrate this most clearly:

"Die Generation aller natürlichen Dingen ist zweierlei: Als Eine, die von Natur geschieht, ohn alle Kunst, die Ander geschieht durch Kunst, nämlich durch Alchymiam." 2.

(De generatione rerum naturalium)

"Denn zweifach ist der Leib: Firmamentisch und erdisch." 3.

(Volumen Paramirum)

"Also wisset, dass der Mensch auf zwei Teil gestellt ist: der ein Teil ist von den Elementen, das ist Fleisch und Blut worden, der ander Teil seind die Sinn und Gedanken, welche aus dem Gestirn zogen sind. ....

"Also ist der Mensch gesetzt in zween Leib, das ist, in den sichtbaren und unsichtbaren, das ist in den elementischen und himmlischen." 4.

(Philosophia Sagax)

"Der Mensch hat zwo Art an ihm, die limbisch, und die seelisch...." 5.

(Liber artis praesagore)

In his writings on the preparation of remedies Paracelsus wrote that "We have experience, but it is not complete;...." 6. hence the gaining of complete experience and knowledge became his aim and mission. His fulfilment meant nothing less than the resolution of the polar forces which converged within him. Several documents, and his works too, attest to his travels; some witnesses suggest his path led him as far as the Orient, whereas others restrict him to Western and

Eastern Europe. It is significant, however, that his wanderings were constant and lasted for years. His formal studies took him to the Universities of Tübingen; Montpellier, where Arab medicine was taught; Seville under Moroccan and Moorish influences; Ferrara, Salamanca; and the Sorbonne, the seat of orthodoxy. It is said that when in England he utterly ignored Oxford and Cambridge, for not one of all these schools of higher learning satisfied his quest.

After some years of wandering as a scholar, of months and years of study, disputation, and first-hand experience with the life forces about him, he acquired his civic rights (Bürgerrecht) in Strassburg and settled down as a surgeon. Yet for him the search for truth remained unending, and together with his often unwelcome presence among men who were either practising or proclaiming the old patent theories, it caused him to move ever onward. To single out just one instance: in 1525 the aldermen of Ingolstadt implored him to leave the city after the miraculous cure of a paralyzed girl, for popular rumor had taken root that he was really the infamous Dr. Faustus who had bartered his soul with the devil for strange occult powers. His contemporaries, either through conviction or professional jealousy, held him for a wonder-healer and sorcerer, but the conflict

which is now seen to center upon Paracelsus is whether he might be a mediaeval Magus or modern scientist. The answer to this lies in the understanding that he was a Renaissance man.

The revolt of Paracelsus in this age of violent transition was precisely that he did not wish to explain and propound the Ancients. Rather did he wish to train doctors who through his knowledge could cure the whole man on the basis of experience and labour. Certainly his often crude tongue, which compared well with the vernacular of Luther's outcries, made him signally impressive amidst the humanists. His call was that he did not wish to educate fluent doctors, but rather physicians who could cure. He strove to make an end to the hypocrisy and exclusiveness of the learned and to prepare the way for the well-being of all.

His messianic spirit determined his methods, and in the face of overwhelming opposition he is seen as a figure scintillating with brash extroversion, invective, and at the same time, a remarkable humility. He could be just as dogmatic and obstinate as his adversaries. It was his own admission that he was not at all subtly spun, but again he countered this confession with the assertion that it was not the custom of his native land to accomplish anything by spinning silk. 7.

If his teachings and attitude were not sufficient to shock the professional conscience and vested interests of the scholars and physicians of his time, his rejection of Latin as the language of instruction was the touchstone. By speaking in German he broke down the wall between layman and expert, and thereby incurred the criticism of his attempting to popularize higher learning. To this objection Paracelsus could only counter that it was precisely the layman-practitioners, the many barber-surgeons, whom he wished to see receive the benefits of his research. These were the people whose practice was an amorphous mixture of superstition, guess-work, and often uncanny insight into the use of herbs, and who moreover traditionally performed the many tasks of curing and operating which the learned surgeons considered to be below their own dignity.

Paracelsus' new learning demanded new vocabulary, and hence the curious mixture of his native Swiss dialect and germanised Latin which characterizes his writings;

"Ich schreibe teutsch", he wrote, "also gibts die experientz...so ein neu ding entspringt, sollt es nit einen neuen namen haben?" 8.

The significance of his language lies in the fact that it is the vehicle of his discoveries, and also that it is in itself an innovation and a creation of new terms of

reference. Luther, in his translation of the Bible, and Paracelsus in his writings on philosophy and medicine, both share the same linguistic creative power, though it is the difference in their style which reflects their character. For,

"...whereas Luther's was clear and persuasive, Paracelsus' style betrays his searching, groping, often tense and emphatic, rather than logical, thinking." 9.

The extent of his quest, which has been compared to that of darkness striving for light <sup>10</sup>. can be seen by the vast amount of his writings. In a lampoon purportedly written by some of his students and based upon his programme of lectures at the University of Basle, it is claimed that he wrote some

"...230 books on philosophy, 40 on medicine, 12 on government, 7 on mathematics and astrology, and 66 about secret and magic arts." <sup>11</sup>.

This allegation does seem to be an exaggeration as far as his volume of production is concerned, however the claims do indicate the startling effect which Paracelsus had upon some of his contemporaries. Although some of his works still remain to be edited, the standard collection is that of Karl Sudhof and W. Mathiessen (1922-33) in 15 volumes. The first fourteen deal with Paracelsus' medical, scientific and philosophic works, and the fifteenth with his theological writings. His

writings in these different disciplines often overlap and indulge in repetitions with renewed insistence, all of which indicates a lack of logic and attests to his concept of the essential unity or organic nature of man and his universe.

Despite the number of volumes attributed to Paracelsus, he decries any tendency to try to understand life through letters. Books themselves are for him the essence of all empty shadows and mere meaningless babble, whereas the book of life is the source of fruitfulness, genuine divine illumination and human love.<sup>12</sup> Thus the true books of which Paracelsus so often speaks are those elements in the universe which are perceived by active experience and interpreted intuitively with the full use of man's senses -- in short, they are the tension between microcosm and macrocosm. This sense of experience, understood as dynamic interaction with the forces of life, is the very trait which establishes the motivation for the Faust monologues in the literary renditions of the theme, wherein Faust rejects learning and yearns to "know". It is ironic that Goethe places the crucial words on the lips of Mephistophiles:

"Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,  
Und grün des Lebens goldener Baum."<sup>13</sup>

It is a tenet of Paracelsus that the world has

been created to be known and used. Hence he can utter in his De vita longa the creed which gives substance to his life:

"The striving for wisdom is the second paradise of man." 14.

In as much as the alchemy of Paracelsus is based upon the foundation of a Christian belief in revealed religion, the power of the man is seen as that of a free-spirit (Freigeist) in the midst of a highly stratified society -- socially, intellectually, and spiritually. His actions along the path of life often proclaim his non-conformity, such as when, for example, he defiantly burned Avicenna's Canon in a public square. This path of life is to be seen as a dissonance ending in harmony between a conscious and intuitive feeling for life and his teachings. These are the conditions which differentiate him radically from his aristotelian and galenian opponents. 15. In the midst of this all-pervasive and active harmony Paracelsus was convinced of the ultimate truth of his principles, and was moved to write that:

"God has given to each man the light that was his due; so that he need not go astray." 16.

This is re-iterated in Goethe's Faust scene Prolog im Himmel:

"Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunklen Drange  
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst." 17.



Towards his fortieth year Paracelsus arrived in St. Gallen, a move which marks a decided change in the man. At this point in his life the religious current within him took precedence over his scientific research with the result that he became to all intents and purposes a theologian with the same independence and at the same time "...demütige und stolze Einsamkeit..." 18. which had distinguished him as a man of research.

As he lay on his death-bed on 24 September 1541, Paracelsus, who throughout his life had cast aside institutions and spurned dogma, took the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. The symbolism of his stewardship in Christ was thus complete, and the seal placed upon the intensity of his principles. He died as he had tried to live, and as he had written:

"Durch die Arcana wird Gott gepriesen auff dass am letzten Urteil der Artzt in der Rechenschaft sprechen müg: Also hastu, Richter, mich gelehrt, und nit der Mensch. Dein Arbeit hab ich vollbracht, nit mein Arbeit, aus dir, nit aus mir." 19.

And in Goethe's Faust:

"Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,  
Den können wir erlösen." 20.

Paracelsus was not, however, the tactful, emotionally balanced prophet of absolute truth so often depicted by his admirers. It is more judicious to speak of him as an incensed egocentric, a self-opinionated and arrogant man in

revolt. Through his aptitude for graphic language he bitterly and dogmatically attacked his opponents, often becoming as guilty as they were of the very things he disdained. His contemporaries referred to him as the "Waldesel von Einsiedeln", "Goldkoch", "Landstreicher", "grobe Schweizerkuh", "Teufelsbündler"<sup>21.</sup> and gave him the obscene surname of "Cacophrastus".<sup>22.</sup> Invective was part of the struggle, and Paracelsus could match even the strongest of his opponents such as when he wrote against the institution of the Church by comparing Luther and the Pope to two whores wrangling over chastity.<sup>23.</sup> The famous passage from his preface to Paragranum displays his expansive ebullience and self-assurance to the full:

"Avicenna, Galen, Rasis, Montagnana, Mesue, and others, after me and not I after you! Ye of Paris, ye of Montpellier, ye of Swabia, ye of Meissen, ye of Cologne, ye of Vienna, and those who dwell on the Danube and the Rhine, ye islands on the sea, thou Italy, thou Dalmatia, thou Sarmatia, thou Athens, ye Greeks, ye Arabs, ye Israelites, after me, and not I after you! Even in the remotest corner there will be none of you on whom the dogs will not piss. But I shall be monarch and mine the monarchy, and I shall lead the monarchy; gird your loins!"<sup>24.</sup>  
 All the universities and all the old writers put together are less talented than my a..."<sup>25.</sup>

A counterbalance to these outbursts is that Paracelsus was a man in the state of constant "becoming". He was a man whose motivation was conditioned by the

organic processes alive in the universe, and as such could not mature before his time.

"Gott gibt vor der Zeit keine Frucht, es muss alles mit der Zeit gon." 26.

(Liber prologi in vitam beatam)

The identification of Paracelsus with Dr. Faustus is by no means arbitrary. The aura cast by these two individuals as revolutionary and non-conformist personalities has caused tradition to claim their mutual communion with demons, league with the devil, and practise of the black arts. This identification, however, is much closer than the popular imagination and oral tradition would suggest, for it is possible to point to writings wherein the historical names are related to one another by either deed or spirit. One Philip Begardi, for example, "Physikus" of the city of Worms, speaks in his Index sanitatis (Worms 1539) of a visionary, necromant and chiromant named Faustus whose fame was that of Theophrastus (Paracelsus.) 27. The relationship becomes even more poignant in a document discovered by the Benedictine Father Raymond Netzhammer during his research through archive material in Innsbrück. Among the historical data concerning Paracelsus he has described seeing a signature made by hand and noting "...das Haus, wo doctor Faust paraphrastes Celsus geboren." 28.

In his critical notes to Goethe's Faust material, Erich Trunz has cast light upon the vital relationship by pointing out that the idea of the surge and longing for self-realization and knowledge, which is apparent in the Faustbuch of 1587, is not the direct result of the editor Spies, but rather the visible sign of the spirit of his age. This will to knowledge, he goes on to say, is that of man who is learning to place new value on life in the here-and-now, a sense of value whose powerful and vigorous exponent in Germany at the time was Paracelsus. 29.

It is not proposed that Paracelsus was the sole model for the Faustus theme, for investigation has shown that there were several -- all of whom were contemporaries of Paracelsus. This latter contention is valid despite a suggestion in the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church to the effect that Simon Magus (Acts of the Apostles, 8, 9-24) was a possible predecessor of Faust, for Magus' actions must be seen solely in terms of moral considerations rather than as a reaction of the total man in his universe. It was the name of Paracelsus which held the future for the theme.

"Legend goes strange ways. It first grafted

Paracelsian traits upon the obscure necromancer Faustus; then, through the sensitive imagination of inspired poets, it re-discovered the sources of Paracelsian symbolism...." 30.

Having indicated that the literary renditions of the Paracelsus theme expand outward from a specific historical person, it is necessary to examine the conflicting claims of literary treatment and historical data. At a time when specialisation is recognized as fundamental to human progress there is a marked tendency among critics to consider history and literature as mutually exclusive disciplines. This hermetic approach to the understanding of man has led to broad general claims on both sides concerning their rightful spheres of influence. If, however, it is recognized that history is the record of human actions, the point of utmost friction is seen to be the question of adherence to the "truth" of the action. As this study is concerned with literary matters, the question of adherence may be termed "keeping faith with history".

Reclam's study of the literary figure of Paracelsus berates those works which are only based upon a single excerpt from the life of the protagonist. It is his contention that there is a lack of perception whenever a work treats separate episodes of history without complying with the demands of historical faith-

fulness. Although the term "history" often presents a semantic problem, Reclam's intention is clear when he states that the discrepancy between literature and history remains irreconcilable in Schnitzler's play whose only faith with history is its setting in Basel. In the same way he berates Arthur Müller for basing his play in Erfurt, when, he laments, it is not even certain if Paracelsus had ever been there! Contrasting Kölbenheyer with what he terms the pedestrian representation of the great amount of Paracelsus literature, Reclam acclaims Kolbenheyer's work as the first one which has explored the full range of biography from birth to death. He further extols this author's basis for his character as being a penetrating study of biographical materials and source works. What is of paramount importance for Reclam is his conviction that the author's work is commensurate with the level of present-day research. Parallel with this conviction runs the concession that Kolbenheyer remains within the frame-work of historical probability whenever he allows his imagination to fill in certain gaps in recorded history.

This concern with historical probability, of which Reclam is an extreme representative, appears to

stem in large measure from a misunderstanding of a concept expressed by Schiller in his inaugural lecture in Jena (Was Heisst und zu Welchem Ende Studiert man Universalgeschichte?) when he says that the whole moral world lies within the sphere of history. <sup>31</sup>. However, it must be recognized that for Schiller a marked incongruence is visible between the course of the world and the course of world history, <sup>32</sup>. and that the aggregate of pieces which form history is unified by the philosophic mind. This philosophic mind or spirit is the direct opposite of the Brotgelehrter,<sup>\*</sup> and seeks truth with a noble longing -- a noble impatience which cannot rest until all its concepts have been ordered into a harmonious whole. <sup>33</sup>. Within these terms there is neither room for exclusiveness nor for a narrow definition of history. Faithfulness to history, then, is most meaningful when understood as faithfulness to the totality of human experience.

On discussing the style of historical writers, the historian C.V. Wedgwood admits that:

"Exuberance of imagination, whether about words or phrases or the interpretation of the past, can betray the writer into exaggerations and errors when he is working within the strict limits of history.

<sup>\*</sup> Person whose sole aim in pursuing knowledge is material gain or financial reward.

On the other hand, the measured and restricted manner, the urbane, well-bred style...is not fitted to illuminate the darker or higher reaches of the human spirit or to give more than a brilliant surface account of their manifestations." 34.

She admits that failures of perception and scholarship can often be traced to literary technique, but at the same time is obliged to admit that history's debt to literature is most apparent where the imaginative apprehension of the past is concerned. 35.

The refusal to recognize or to admit that the imaginative apprehension of the past is a valid projection of the actions to which history attests permits a critic such as Pachter to claim that Kolbenheyer's novel is a "...monument of hero worship and Nazi falsifications...." 36. --and then to cease further investigation or evaluation.

That this type of one-sidedness is incompatible with the record of human development is implied by Arnim in the introduction to his own "Faust" work Die Kronenwächter. Although speaking in heightened and evocative language, he nonetheless asserts that at all times there has been a spirit at work which is much more than all that to which recorded history has given voice. While he does not mean his work to represent historical fact, he does intend it to be a representation within the frame-work of history. For him,



literature (Dichtung) is both past and present, born from spirit and truth. <sup>37</sup>. If Arnim is subjective in his pronouncements, it must be realized that his fervour is due to the issues which he feels to be at stake; namely, to fill in the gaps of historical documentation by interpreting the human situation.

It must be admitted that the reproaches of non-literary research have not been altogether without grounds. The failure of writers of fiction to recognize and appreciate the significance of documented history has led them often to theatrical and fanciful representation rather than works of just proportion, vision and insight. As C.V. Wedgwood re-affirms in her reconciliation of literature and history, writers concerned with the discipline of history, and accepting this discipline as the stronghold of pure and unadorned fact, have often been offended by subjectivity in literary representation.

Kolbenheyer's work, however much its interpretive character might be termed subjective, maintains a rigorous balance between objectivity and imagination within the total frame-work of history. He was convinced that:

"...every theme must be given a suitable form of its own, if the presentation is to attain a degree of intrinsic probability such that the reader not only finds plot and description and entertainment, but is himself brought to experience the artist's fundamental meaning". <sup>38</sup>.

As the objection might arise that the events of this trilogy are not faithful to those of documented history, it is important to understand the author's approach to the problem of the historical novel. It is his conviction that historical events in such novels need not necessarily agree precisely with the contents and assertions of documents which have survived the ages, but that these events must give the substance and life to something of which documents only give the precipitate. For him, the historical novel is not to provide an analogy with the present, but to make vital epochs of history affect the reader so directly that he is able to perceive the living spirit at work.

This point of view, supported as was seen, by the poet Arnim and reconciled by the historian C.V. Wedgwood, has been labelled "romantic" by certain critics -- a criticism which they understand as being capable of committing tabula rasa with artists who profess its validity as an aesthetic approach to human expression. Yet such branding of this literary approach to historical subject-matter is too categorical to be just. It represents more a revolt against popularisation of history than a revolt against those "...determinations of relation, those preponderant right instincts and saving divinations..." of which Henry James spoke.<sup>39</sup> Yet the result of this revolt condemns writers of power and vision along with their inferior and disastrous imitators.<sup>40</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

### PARACELSUS: THE MAN AND THE ALCHEMIST

The dominant trait to be seen in Paracelsus is that of the restless and lonely quest of the "daemonic" man. Yet however central the sense of the "daemonic" may be, it is significant that the works of Goethe, Browning and Kolbenheyer are the only ones which make truly effective use of it. It was Goethe who wrote that the "daemonic" appears in its most frightening form whenever it proceeds excessively from any one person, and that it is a tremendous force which is not to be overcome by anything except the Universum itself with which it had begun the struggle.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that Paracelsus was both willing and obliged to become bound up with the wheel of constant becoming, for he valued the search for truth more than its ultimate possession. "Besser ist rue, dann unrue", he wrote in one of theological treatises, "sanctissimi mortalium mortales, nutzers aber unrue dan rue".<sup>2</sup>

Paracelsus' quest, invigorated by his restlessness and matured in loneliness, was in essence to seek the active and regenerative (wirkende) deity in all its manifold expressions. The Godhead was for him a prerequisite of Nature rather than a result, hence a great

part of his research was to find facts which fitted into the pattern of his theories and innate convictions. His compulsion is expressed in the words that: "God gives us no art that does not bear in itself the necessity of its fulfilment." 3.

The fundamental concern or Leitgedanke of Paracelsus is that of the predominance of the macrocosm over the microcosm. The macrocosm, or 'large world' is the infinite universe of creative sources pervaded and suspended by Deity, whereas the microcosm or 'little world' is the world of man's transient existence. The relationship between these spheres is taken to be dynamic and fructifying, for its power lies in the knowledge that:

"...der Makrokosmos im Mikrokosmos wese und schaffe wie im Keim die Frucht". 4.

Within this context the force of polarity is made more complex by the turn of an apparent simplification, for experience leads him to assert that man is born of two fathers, an earthly and a heavenly. 5. The wholeness of man, then, rests upon the interdependence of the paternal inheritance, for the earth engenders the body and heaven the character; the earth moulds man's shape, and heaven endows it with the Light of Nature. 6.

Despite the obscure and often redundant language to which Paracelsus has recourse to express the results of his

research, he is often much more lucid than any of his apologists when expressing his moments of insight. Hence he writes of nature that:

"Nature emits a light, and by its radiance she can be known. But in man there is still another light apart from that which is innate in nature. It is the light through which man experiences, learns, and fathoms the supernatural." 7.

Nature is to be understood as both inside and outside man, and while writing on diet and dosage he concludes that everything external in nature points to something internal. 8. Once again the principle of organic unity is stressed.

The principle of polarity, which is seen to be active rather than dogmatic, implies that a Steigerung or "enhancement" will result from the tension of the pairs of opposites. This dialectic force turns duality into trinity. Thus re-iterating former principles in new terms, Paracelsus writes:

"Drei Ding seind da zu wissen: Des Himmels Kraft, die irdisch Natur und der Microcosmus. Den Himmel, als ein zweifachen Werkmann, sichtbar und unsichtbar: Die irdisch Natur, die ohn den Himmel gar nichts ist: Und den Microcosmus als den, der da leidet." 9.

(Von der Wassersucht)

By referring to his alchemical writings it is seen that Paracelsus equates the elements salt, mercury and sulphur with Body, Soul and Spirit: Sulphur is the principle of combustion, salt the principle which

gives form, withstands fire and putrefaction and gives unity to the body, while mercury is the fleeting Intelligenz of nature.<sup>10</sup> Later critics have thereby suggested that Paracelsus thus recalls the common Christian doctrine that the Trinity is represented in man by the former three principles of being.<sup>11</sup>

Paracelsus admits that it is necessary to speculate on the fundamental questions of life, but just as he insists that everything must stand the test of experience and stand or fall thereby, so he demands that the postulation must be a result of practice. Principles and practice are by definition inseparable.

"Ich bekenn, dass die Sachen müssen gespekuliert werden, aber so, dass sich die Spekulation aus der Praktik erhebe." 12.

The nature and goal of Paracelsus' quest may be summarized by referring to Goethe's Faust monologue which represents a poetic transfiguration, and which shall be discussed in a later chapter:

"Dass ich erkenne, was die Welt  
Im Innersten zusammenhält,  
Schau' alle Wirkenskraft und Samen,  
Und tu' nicht mehr in Worten kramen." 13.

The goal of this quest is symbolised by the Philosopher's Stone.

It was implicit in the life of this "Luther of Medicine", as Paracelsus has often been called, that

the acquisition of knowledge was of little or no value unless it was translated into action. Keeping faith with his motto that one must always be true to one's nature, this meant for him founding his life upon the Four Pillars of Medicine: "Philosophia, Astronomia, Alchimie, Heilkunst oder Virtus".<sup>14</sup> These were the four realms in which Nature wove its unity and multiplicity. An examination of each of these disciplines will give a broader understanding of the man and his thought.

The term Philosophia corresponds more to the discipline of natural history than to philosophy, yet as neither of these four disciplines can be considered mutually exclusive, they each seem to make incursions into foreign ground. As Paracelsus understood and practised it, Philosophia meant none other than that a physician should see through man as through distilled dew; it was in essence the knowledge (Wissen und Erkenntnis) of Nature seen in the reflection of a mirror.<sup>15</sup> Its basis lay in intuitive perception.

Although Astronomia is related as a science to that practised by Galileo and Copernicus, the implication of knowledge concerning the stars and planets in their mobile relationship to the earth evokes the concepts Macrocosm and Microcosm. Philosophic overtones

predominate over scientifically demonstrable facts. For Paracelsus, the heavens were the bearers of the right moment and different conditions of maturity, of blossoming and withering, rotting and budding. The state of the stars was the sign of these conditions. Thus this discipline is much more closely related to astrology. It is the mixture of superstition and Christian faith which permitted Paracelsus to draw the analogy that:

"There is nothing that nature has not signed in such a way that man may discover its essence.... The stars have their orbits by which they are known. The same is true of man." 16.

This discipline of Astronomia was considered vital in permitting man to generalise on his relationship to the universe, and in enabling doctors to cure. With the supremacy of macrocosm over microcosm, and heavenly bodies over earth, there followed the conclusion that it was not possible to recognise, diagnose and cure diseases from man himself, but only out of the total relationship in which he existed. Man was considered only a member of a vast whole, and as such, had a signature or 'sign' upon him and his ills. 17.

Proprietas (Virtus) has its closest analogy with what today is understood as medicine, and it is in this field that Paracelsus follows empirical lines.



Diagnosis became an art of perceptive analysis which afforded him renowned success in the cure of plague, 'French disease' (venereal disease), gout and even, it is claimed, paralysis. Enthusiastic apologists have claimed him as the forerunner of pharmacology, gynaecology, and pharmacy, yet he was never one-sided. Despite his insistence on critical examination, and his great insight into and understanding of herbs and his own derived medicines, he was not above resorting to folk remedies. It is reported that he treated frost blisters with "children's hair boiled by a red-haired person", and bubonic pustules with "live toads"; hemorrhages were to be cured by "moss grown on a skull", and "steamed pigeons dung" heaped on raw wounds. 18

The fact that he was often prone to prescribe such folk remedies serves to indicate the degree to which he was a man of transition. He was rooted in the tradition of defining man in terms of values, and had not yet reached the modern approach of defining the universe in terms of matter and laws. However much he might have foundered in the realms of superstition, his basis was nonetheless to be demonstrable by human experience.

"Darumb dass ich so weit die Artzney für, in so vil ander Faculteten, Religionen, Kunst, unnd Scientas, soll mirs niemandt verachten. Dann ein Artzt soll der höchst, der best, der ergründest sein, in allen theilen der Philosophey, Physica unnd Alchimey, une

in den allen soll ihm nichts gebresten: Und was er ist, das soll er mit Grundt sein, mit Wahrheit und höchsten Erfahrnuss. Dann under allen Menschen der Natur und seines Liechtes ist der Artzet der höchste Erkennen und Lehrer, darnach ein Helffer der Krancken." 19.

The point of departure for the disciplines discussed is that of alchemy, the fourth Pillar of Medicine. It is central to the understanding of Paracelsus as a historical figure as well as to the understanding of the literary tradition which shall be studied. Alchemy is essentially the name attributed to the art whereby man is to recreate, overpower, and even complete the forces and matter of nature. It permits three possible interpretations: (i) the art of separating gold and its symbolic attributes from its dross; (ii) the process of insight into the essence of the Universum or the quest of the Philosopher's Stone, and (iii) in Jung's terms, the projection of the subconscious mind. This esoteric discipline was itself in a state of transition, and later became resolved into natural science and Protestant mysticism. The men responsible for this eventual dichotomy were Paracelsus himself, and Jakob Böhme. 20.

The understanding of alchemy is fraught with potential difficulty in as much as its method of explanation was "obscurium per obscurius, ignotum per ignotius" (the obscure by the more obscure, the unknown by the more

unknown).<sup>21.</sup> This method, however, was considered justifiable by Paracelsus, for as he wrote:

"When the goal of the seeking is hidden, the manner of seeking is also occult: and because knowledge is inherent in the art, he who seeks the art also finds knowledge in it".<sup>22.</sup>

In his work Alchimia Paracelsus defines his own terms of reference:

"Denn die Natur ist so subtil und so scharf in ihren Dingen, dass sie ohn grosse Kunst nicht will gebraucht werden: Denn sie gibt nichts an Tag, das auf sein Statt vollendet sei, sondern der Mensch muss es vollenden: diese Vollendung heisset Alchimia. Denn der Alchimist ist der Bäcker in dem, so er Brot backt: Der Rebmann in dem, so er den Wein macht: Der Weber in dem, dass er Tuch macht. Also was aus der Natur wächst dem Menschen zu nutz, derselbige der es dahin bringt, dahin es verordnet wird von der Natur, der ist Alchimist".<sup>23.</sup>

The art of alchemy then, was the mediator between macrocosmic powers and microcosmic materia; it afforded real insight rather than mere knowledge.

Although the alchemists were accused of sorcery and black magic by Christian society, their approach to coming to terms with God differed basically in one point. Whereas the Church prescribed that the search should be through faith, the alchemists preferred to seek and strive through knowledge. Paracelsus is the outstanding example of an alchemist who, while rooted in the mediaeval tradition and bound to his art, never considered himself anything but a good Christian.<sup>24.</sup>

Gold was the most highly esteemed metal as it was symbolic of the sun according to the alchemic schema of magic relationships between stars, body and metals; however it was not considered an end in itself. The tangible end of experimentation in crude laboratories and workshops was the Philosopher's Stone, capable of rendering all metals into gold. Yet this Stone itself held other implications, for it was both the first and final cause of divine creation. (There is a striking resemblance between this and the Aristotelian entelechy, or actuality).

In as much as there were two conditioning factors in Paracelsus' view on Nature, an all powerful, all-loving God as revealed in the Bible, and the highly conditioned world of suffering creatures, <sup>25.</sup> the association of the Stone with the Christian God was natural. Christ-symbolism pervades alchemic terminology, and the Lapis-Christus parallel therefore occupies a key position. Georg von Welling expressed in his work Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum that it was not the intention of alchemy to teach how to derive gold, but rather to show how Nature may be seen and recognized out of God and God in Nature;

"...wir wünschen von Hertzen, dass alle Menschen, an statt des Goldes, Gott suchen und finden mögten". <sup>26.</sup>

Knowledge of God also implied knowledge of the Devil and his works, and Paracelsus implied that the diabolic or daemonic was a prerequisite for insight into the nature of deity. Indeed, evil, the enemy of the soul, is conceived as being God-given. This in turn implied two types of magic: a white magic which was the legitimate use of occult powers for good ends, and black magic, the art of sorcery and league with the diabolic for evil ends. Again there was often no clearly defined line between these powers in the popular mind nor, for that matter, from Paracelsus' view-point when he wrote in his Opus Paramirum that:

"Kein Ding ist so schwarz, es hat eine Weisse in ihm; nichts ist so weiss, es habe eine Schwärze in ihm." 27.

The lack of an immediately apprehendable definition between these two was to have been cast by God into the face of humanity as a challenge to man's free will.

While being aware of the pull of opposite forces, Paracelsus strove to live the ritual of his life by practising white magic. This type of Magia was for him the most esoteric of arts and the greatest wisdom of supernatural things on earth. What could not be apprehended by man through reason was to have been rendered scrutable by the virtuous occult.

Within the baffling complexity of alchemic symbolism and expression we encounter numerous metaphors for death and rebirth, putrefaction and regeneration. Allied to these is the image of the Crucifixion which reiterates the conviction that individual man must accept renunciation in order to enter into a new life. This moral and spiritual regeneration is expressed as the return to the materia prima, to the womb of all being, and to the Mother. Although free-will is implicit in this process of becoming, magnetic necessity is still felt to be present:

"Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan." 28.

The alchemists felt that they had to bear the burden of redemption themselves, and that suffering and the need for redemption was traceable to the anima mundi imprisoned in matter. 29. Within this broad scope of the Four Pillars of Medicine, the physician or Artzet was to be the interpreter of Nature.

It has been stated before that the central concern of this study is the mysteriously magnetic quality of a human destiny understood as symbol and myth. The terms "symbol" and "myth" are nearly synonymous, but not quite, for "symbol" (Sinnbild) is the harbinger of Truth whereas



'myth' is its ritual.

Writers in the English language have referred to Paracelsus as a legendary figure, whereas in the German language he is referred to as sagenhaft (legendary, mythical, fabulous). Although it is not being denied that Paracelsus is a legendary figure, it is significant to note the wide margin of interpretation which the term sagenhaft implies. By definition a legend is a traditional story popularly believed to have a historical basis, whereas among the many meanings inferred from 'myth', concerning which 'schools' have developed, two prominent interpretations emerge: myth as chronicle and myth as an explanation of natural phenomena. When, however, a myth is raised from the two-dimensional limits of the written page and placed in its rightful three-dimensional life-context, it will be recognized as a cultural function. The sense of myth is that of a ritual and therefore symbolic account of forces considered universal and active. It is not an explanation but a confession. The cultural fact is the form in which the myth is embodied and from which it weaves its existence.

"Myth is, therefore, an indispensable ingredient of all culture. It is...constantly regenerated; every historical change creates its mythology, which is, however, but indirectly related to historical fact. Myth is a constant by-product of living faith, which is in need of miracles; of sociological status, which demands precedent; of moral rule, which requires sanction." 30.

That the myth of the Paracelsus-Faustus theme has universal implications is aptly demonstrated by the results of certain studies which have attempted to show that the Faustus-spirit reaches as far back as the prehistoric rites of the god-priest-king. In the less dim past we also find allusions to this spirit in man which longs to reach the centre of things, such as the magus legend of Theophilus of Adana which was written in Greek between 650 AD and 850 AD.<sup>31</sup> Certainly many possible predecessors were credited with occult knowledge and magic powers equal to those of the theme under discussion, yet while not wishing to become involved in the overwhelming amount of research on the origins of Faust prior to his historical appearance in Germany, it is important for the understanding of the growth of popular tradition to examine two such figures: Simon Magus, and Pope Sylvester II.

It is a truism that the situation whereby a human figure stands apart from his own society either by design or accident is not limited to a particular time or place. It is possible to point to many individuals who either through inventive genius, intellectual gifts, or spiritual insight have broken through the climate of the times to gain either praise or condemnation of their contemporaries. It is the form of condemnation however,



that is pertinent to this study. In this regard it must be noted that their departure from recognized norms appealed to the folk imagination in such a way as to register censure by alleged association with magic and the devil.

The case concerning Simon Magus in the Acts of Apostles (Authorized King James Version) is limited to very few details. As set forth in the text, he was a sorcerer known by the populace as "the great power of God" who practised his arts in Samaria at the time of the Apostles. Having professed Christianity and having and having been baptised, he was later rebuked by St. Peter for trying to obtain spiritual powers from the Apostles for money. Beyond the substance of this narrative, a gnostic sect is purported to have originated from him about the third century AD, and St. Hippolytus referred to Simon the magician-god by saying that he again came into conflict with St. Peter in Rome and perished dramatically through a failure of his magic powers.<sup>32</sup> The centre of focus in this situation is that of the dichotomy cast upon an emotionally appealing historical figure by legend and tradition.

Some 900 years later another figure distinguished himself by breaking away from the main stream of society, thereby becoming the epitome of the self-same dichotomy

and castigation. Gerbert, famous scholar of tenth-century Gaul who was destined to become Pope Sylvester II in 999, had won the admiration of his contemporaries through his wealth of mathematical, astronomical and scientific knowledge. However the nature of his research led to the belief that he had acquired it all by magic. The atmosphere is captured by a modern historian who states:

"Later medieval legend made of him a magician and necromancer, but he seems to have done nothing more wonderful than to construct an abacus and build a pipe-organ." 33.

If the latter comment appears ludicrous, it also suggests the magnetic attraction which non-conformity holds for the popular mind.

In the cases of Simon Magus and Pope Sylvester II it may be presumed that the motivation for action lay in the individual's obedience to some inner law or compulsion which by its very nature was out of phase with the popular mentality with which it came into contact. Within the universal terms of the Perennial Philosophy this may be verified from the view that "...all that we are and will and do depends in the last analysis, upon what we believe the Nature of Things to be." 34.

This relationship between Thought and Being leads into the personal motto of Paracelsus himself: *Alterius non sit qui suus esse potest*. Although open to inter-

pretation the implication is: 'let no one who can be his own belong to another', or 'Do not be anything else but that which is consistent with yourself'. The adoption of this motto is sufficient to suggest the frictions which a titanic individual could cause within his society, and that the ad hominem argument would lend itself most readily for common use against it. Paracelsus' victories and despair were the result of faithful adherence to this motto throughout his life, and he experienced the singular phenomenon of acquiring a legend in his own life-time. Through a confusion of Christian-monotheistic concepts and polytheism, Paracelsus was said to have a devil with him. In the tales which surrounded Paracelsus and his students in their striving for knowledge there was a fusion in the common mind with the equally mythopoeic figure of Johann Faust, for as historical figures they were contemporary.

In the present context it only needs to be added that Paracelsus was aware of his growing legend. Referring particularly to the learned men of his time, Paracelsus wrote in the first volume of his Chirurgische Buecher that: "They begrudge the honor I won healing princes and noblemen, and they say my powers came from the devil." 35. The legend and resultant myth of Paracelsus' league with the devil arose either through

conscientious belief or professional jealousy. That reformers have always been subject to defamation of character is brought out in Schiller's Inaugural Lecture in Jena when he said that the Brotgelehrter struggle against the Genie with bitterness, malice and despair for their very existence. There is no more irreconcilable enemy, more envious official colleague, or person more willing to create and condemn heretics than the Brotgelehrter. 36.

Despite this double parentage of the myth, it is the folk-tradition of Faustus and Paracelsus which bears out the theme compellingly in fragmentary anecdotes and tales. As these were the fore-runners of the more highly controlled literary forms, it is valuable to recount the allusions to Paracelsus by commencing with an early literary reference and then progressing to the folk-tradition by specific examples.

The immediacy of the growing tradition is best seen in John Donne's satirical work Ignatius (see appendix A) in as much as it appeared just 69 years after the death of Paracelsus, and was written by a man whose life provides a good index to the intellectual, religious, social and literary movements of the time. There is also the fact that Donne took none of his literary predecessors or contemporaries as models for

his own work, and that his style makes him the first of Metaphysical poets.

The narrative of Donne's work takes place in purgatory with Ignatius and Lucifer, before whom the figures of Donne's attack appear in order to give account of themselves. After Copernicus has been summarily dismissed, Paracelsus presents himself - condemned as the bondsman of Lucifer. Paracelsus confesses reluctantly to having brought his art into contempt and to have had as his constant aim the creation of remedies from his "ragged" experiments which turned men into "carckases". The ironic benediction of Ignatius in the face of the historical Paracelsus is that he is proclaimed to have attempted great deeds in a manner "... well becoming a great officer of Lucifer,...." As Paracelsus withdraws, Machiavelli comes forth to receive his due.

Turning to the oral and written folk tradition, it will be seen that the character of Paracelsus as presented in a Knittelvers of about 1600 (see appendix B) is more shadowy and hence subject to less condemnation. In the jogging lines of this popular verse form, Paracelsus is described as an unprecedented healer who possessed knowledge of all things in heaven and earth. Yet the compulsion toward condemnation is intimated by

lines which relate that Paracelsus' works were studied thoroughly in order to establish whether or not he had had any knowledge of Holy Scripture; there was some doubt as to whether his art was from the devil, but the possibility of this was already firmly implanted. The concluding lines redeem Paracelsus by claiming his having been an enemy of the black art and that he had actually succeeded in making the Philosopher's Stone. In a final turn which lightly suggests the endearing qualities of the man, the last line asks God to grant the great doctor eternal life.

A farcical poem appearing in 1912 (see appendix C) while very much a jocular spoof, yet illuminates the lively attraction of Paracelsus in the popular imagination. It not only suggests his short-comings but at the same time raps the mentality of humanity at large. The poem speaks of the old genuine elixir of life - its deepest sources - as being old Bavarian beer (altbayrisch Bier) to Paracelsus' spirit. With lively beer-hall humour, it relates Paracelsus' emptying out the last liter of hells brew (Hölllenbräu) at midnight, and with froth bubbling at his lips, hearing the music of the spheres in his delirium. The concluding lines strain at pointing a moral to the rollicking narrative by adding that Paracelsus was fetched away by the devil because he was

too smart for the cunning and crafty world, yet not pious enough for heaven.

The final allusion to be considered is that of a ballad which appeared in Jena in 1931 (see appendix D). The tale begins with Paracelsus, the most famous of physicians, returning home from a celebration singing his song that there are creatures beneath the spheres with whom he is in intimate communion. The devil appears at midnight, and a raucous, boisterous duel takes place between them amidst the chaos of broken retorts, glass, black smoke and Mixturengestank. However the devil is repulsed and is forced to scurry off into the night followed by a screaming hoard of horse-flies. Paracelsus thanks the four elements - earth, air, fire, and water - and continues his song:

"Hoho, viel Freunde unter der Sphär,  
Nicht Mensch, nicht Teufel, doch gottesher."

One can conclude from these brief representations of folk literature that the popular imagination always saw in the figure of Paracelsus the unusual, the strange, and even the uncanny and sinister. Yet it is significant that this attitude was never couched in bitterness.

With the realisation that the warring opposites of good and evil, God and the devil are very much a part of the Paracelsus-Faustus tradition it is necessary to find

a balance or point of reconciliation which will maintain the figure in healthy perspective. This balance is all the more vigorous when seen as close as possible to the age of Paracelsus himself. It is to be found in a passage from Ben Jonson's play The Alchemist, a contemporary of Donne's earlier mentioned work. Although frequently fraught with obscure alchemical jargon, this product of Jonson's maturity maintains a vigour which would be all the more striking when actually staged. As Goethe was often most telling when making pronouncements through the medium of his Mephisto, Jonson makes his statement more poignant by placing it on the lips of the character Tribulation Wholesome, a pastor of Amsterdam and needy Puritan who found himself in plague-stricken London.

"The children of perdition are oftimes  
 Made instruments even of the greatest works:  
 Beside, we should give somewhat to man's nature,  
 The place he lives in, still about the fire,  
 And fume of metals, that intoxicate  
 The brain of man, and made him prone to passion.  
 Where have you greater atheists than your cooks?  
 Or more profane, or choleric, than your glass-men?  
 More antichristian than your bell-founders,  
 What makes the devil so devilish, I would ask you,  
 Satan, our common enemy, but his being  
 Perpetually about the fire, and boiling  
 Brimstone and arsenic? We must give, I say,  
 Unto the motives, and the stirrers-up  
 Of humours in the blood. It may be so,  
 Whenas the work is done, the stone is made,  
 This heat of his may turn into a zeal,  
 And stand up for the beauteous discipline....." 37.



These words stress a theme in the life of Paracelsus: man is a conditioned being in the great Universum. Metaphorically speaking, he is a field wherein is sown the seed of either God or the Devil, yet over which God remains always the master. It is the conscientious striving for wholeness and unity which is of importance. Indeed the most disparate aspects of human culture lead to the problem of man's destiny. It is due to this dynamic spirit within the unfolding of human self-realisation that the figures of both Faust and Paracelsus may claim their right to multifarious re-incarnations, and that as both symbol and myth they should be the expression of man's concern with good and evil, misery and joy, damnation and redemption.

"Therefore, man, learn and learn, question and question, and do not be ashamed of it; for only then can you earn a name that will resound in all countries and never be forgotten." <sup>38</sup>

- Paracelsus

## CHAPTER THREE

### THREE PERSPECTIVES OF THE FAUST THEME

Christopher Marlowe: The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus

The vigour and potential magnitude of the Paracelsus myth could not be contained by the narrow canvas provided by Spies in his Faustbuch of 1587, but as the work does not claim to be anything else than a folk-book it cannot be criticised for what it did not intend. Yet what this work lacks in depth and self-perpetuating immediacy is expressed in full measure in Christopher Marlowe's final play: The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus. If Marlowe has varied his work only slightly in action from its German predecessor, he has created a new dimension by grasping the dynamic quality in the myth and by re-casting it in the innovations of his dramatic form. This re-creation draws its strength from a vivid sense of actuality which continues to inform the Faust theme.

Marlowe is often called a predecessor of Shakespeare, but he gains in stature by being called a man of transition. He is a dramatist who has spanned the distance between the stereotypes of the Morality Play and the all-too human humanity of Shakespeare's dramas. Like Paracelsus, he is the Mensch der Mitte, a balance between two worlds, a focal point between two

traditions. The form of the Tragical History is marked by the tradition of earlier forms while at the same time bearing the seed of a much richer dramatic period. Marlowe's tragedy represents the transition of both a form and a theme at a critical point.

Marlowe's innovations permit his treatment of the theme being called the first modern Faust work: In the first instance, he has broken with tradition by embodying in his text a powerful defiance of authority which results in the suggestion of an inner or spiritual interpretation of the nature of tragedy. Secondly, he has reconciled the departure by uniting this sense of tragedy with the elements of the morality play; this serves to deepen the sense of the irreparable dichotomy. Finally, Marlowe has presented the element of character development whereby Faustus moves from absolute self-assurance to abject despair. <sup>1</sup>.

The character of Faustus, whose body and soul have been damned "...by a surfeit of deadly sin..." <sup>2</sup>. is subject to a subtle but nonetheless relentless movement downward, and the dramatic power of Marlowe's tragedy is formed by the contrasting elements which drive the root action of the drama onward. The rigidity of the chorus, angels, and Seven Deadly Sins have a contrapuntal relationship to the inner turmoil of a human soul which

cannot repent. Yet within this ensemble of pathos and tragedy one must not harden against the strength of profuse farce which, although often pushing the action to ridiculous lengths, is constantly counterbalanced by the depth and grandeur of Faustus' monologues. The work is unified and consistent with the purpose which the chorus states in the opening lines:

" . . . we must perform  
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad." 3.

These words introduce the drama as the ritual performance of fateful action with its overpowering consequences; they also illuminate the scope for the element of free-will which runs tangent to the theme. It is significant that this theme is inseparable from the character of the protagonist.

The perspective opened up by Marlowe to the Faust material is centered in the volcanic desire of a lowly-born scholastic to aspire to the power of a man-god-king through knowledge of black magic. Through the Cabbala and his pact with Mephistophilis and Lucifer, Faustus becomes a mighty god and emperor of the world who is able to summon his "servile spirits" for his narrow and disastrous purposes. There is tragic irony in his acknowledgement that his pursuit of inevitable doom is as resolute as the tenacity with which humanity clings to

life.

Magic is clearly defined and there is no intimation of its being understood as knowledge of the occult in Paracelsian terms. It is the supernatural use of evil powers whose end is the pure indulgence of his need for power, grandeur, pleasure, bliss and voluptuousness. The character of Faustus thus inclines toward a one-sided approach to life which eventually topples. The inordinate lack of balance and the catalyst of conscience crush his spirit. Faustus is not however a rigidly stereotyped figure, for even in his moments of diabolic pleasure and delight there is still the tenuous thread of a crippled conscience which holds him to earth and thence binds him to heaven; he has a constant and biting awareness of his damnation and of the spiritual reality from which he has alienated himself.

The tragedy of Faustus has always been regarded as lying in the hiatus between the man and the divine powers which grant him his being. This separation is symbolised by the disparate forces of Heaven and Hell, and is the stage upon which the demonstration of evil is played. There is, however, another aspect which is even more tragic in human terms bringing, as it does, Marlowe's work more closely in line with the alchemic background of

the historical Paracelsus,-the misapprehension of organic unity. It is an ironic touch whereby Faustus questions Mephistophilis about the movement of the spheres and pointedly asks why all their powers are not summoned together into one dynamic eclipse, conjunction, or opposition. Mephisto's reply: "Per inaequalem motum respecta totius" <sup>4</sup>. is the very pith and core of the tragedy of Faustus whose ultimate destruction is caused by his own unequal motion with respect to the whole. This represents a negative Bildung, a process of reduction instead of a process of growth. Faustus is the victim of opposing forces which he does not reconcile; his world is defined by forces imposed from without and constrained from within, and which do not find their balance.

The fall of Faustus is not the long incline which leads to the void experienced by modern writers; it is a violent turmoil which runs to the hell of despair. It is his dissatisfaction with scholasticism which precipitates his disillusioning adventure, and his preoccupation with himself and with pleasure which seals his fate. Being dissatisfied with scholasticism he then moves toward the satisfaction of a felt-need rather than of the real need for salvation of which he has not become aware.

Having risen through the ranks of scholarship from lowly stock and having mastered theology and philosophy he was able to enjoy the "sweet delight" of disputation; "...Till swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit... Heaven conspired his overthrow." <sup>5</sup>. This first statement of lack of harmony implies the involvement of divine forces which are bent upon bringing the man to terms with himself under the most rigorous conditions. The committed agents of the Divine are none other than the fallen angels -- the Princes of Hell, who foreshadow Faustus at every stage.

Faustus' new life in league with Mephistophilis is a qualitative leap into pleasure of a different order. His bond with scholarship had not been the search for truth, but mere delight, yet nonetheless a delight whose superficiality could not satisfy the deeper yearnings of an unfulfilled man. Thus the mighty swing of the pendulum of revolt led to a precipitous inclination toward the pleasures of power and sensuousness; it led to a lack of proportion and an abandon to which Faustus was the all-too willing slave. This motivation is parodied in the comical scene of Wagner's arid mock-scholasticism. Yet while this scene remains a parody on Faustus and the skills of his achievements, it

nonetheless serves to emphasize the limitations of scholastic endeavour and the superficiality both of reason and the ideational processes.

Convinced that the source for fulfilling his desires was to be found in the esoteric books of magic rather than in the congruent book of life, Faust indulged his conceit, for:

"O what a world of profit and delight,  
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence  
Is promised to the studious artisan!" 6.

"A sound magician is a mighty god....", 7. he confessed, yet his decision to ally himself with Mephistophilis was not just a flagrant display of free-will. His ecstatic out-cry: "'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me." 8. is a pronouncement not so much on the man, as on the influences which had found him fruitful. These were forces which had sought him and not he them! He has been ravished and subdued; his innocence has been torn away. Thus Marlowe emphasizes the human situation itself while at the same time preparing Faustus for his own destruction.

The nature of magic is a key to the struggle of Faustus, for it defines the elements with which he has identified himself, and what is more important, the



means.

"He that is grounded in astrology,  
Enriched with tongues, well seen in minerals,  
Hath all the principles magic doth require." 9.

Faustus is thus concerned with principles. He does not revel in the static realm of ideas or concepts, nor does he deal in abstractions. These are things of the past -- a rejected past which has lost its significance.

The complexity of the problem within which this Faust figure is cast is also demonstrated in the scene in which Dr. Faustus withdraws to a grove to conjure in "...the gloomy shadow of the earth, Longing to view Orion's drizzling look...." 10. It is noteworthy that there is an allusion to the constellation of Orion, which Kolbenheyer later refers to as "Das Gestirn des Paracelsus" in his trilogy, and that the method of Faustus' exhortation illustrates that very mixture of Christian and superstitious elements which have lent vigour and mystery to the Paracelsus-Faustus myth as a whole. By uttering anagrams of Jehovah's name and abbreviated names of saints, as well as by calling upon the spirits of earth, air, fire and water, Faustus expresses his desire to avail himself of universal powers, and foreshadows the type of person Auseinandersetzung so characteristic of the renditions of later authors.

Within the context of Marlowe, it is titanism which is the foil of all developments, in comparison with which Mephistophilis is so "...pliant...full of obedience and humility." <sup>11</sup>. This willing subservience of evil powers which further man's aims and lead to his final destruction is an external force which incites man to blasphemous action. Faustus charges Mephisto to wait upon him on the grand scale, --even to the extent of breaking universal laws and offending what he must deem the will of God to be.

"Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,  
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world". <sup>12</sup>.

These lines may be seen in a wider context by referring to Genesis, with which Faustus the theologian may have been familiar. "...neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." (Gen. 9:11) Hence Faustus' new-found power of magician-god taunts the ultimate Will.

From this point in the drama, the development of Faust may be characterized as moving two paces downward and one pace upward. Forces are at war within him, yet in his desire to "...live in all voluptuousness", <sup>13</sup>. repentance is quenched by pleasure, and he reaffirms his vow that he shall dedicate himself to one principle alone: the supremacy of Belzebub. <sup>14</sup>.

The movement of Faustus finds an ironic echo and a forbidding parallel in the power won by Lucifer, Prince of Devils. The fall of the nobility of Hell foreshadows the fall of Faustus. This is the confession of Mephisto:

"O, by aspiring pride and insolence;  
For which God threw him [Lucifer] from the face of  
Heaven." 15.

Yet despite this foreshadowing, Mephisto's words also emphasize the warnings of the voice of conscience and the pangs of torment:

"O Faustus! leave these frivolous demands,  
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul." 16.

The apparent irony of Mephisto's warning is resolved by understanding the interdependence of the white and black powers in alchemy. The relation of these powers in the cosmos permits Mephisto to be an agent who can influence Faustus to knowledge of Heaven. This interdependence is further enhanced by Mephisto's reference to his having a soul which is necessarily in torment and condemned to hell on earth.

"Why this is hell, nor am I out of it." 17.

The ramifications of Mephisto's statement are developed to a critical point in the Helen scene (Scene XIV) wherein Faust once more seeks pleasure to extinguish despair. The turmoil of the earth-bound

Faustus encompasses in its broad sweep the realms of his own personal heaven and hell.

"Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.  
Her lips suck forth my soul; see where it flies! -  
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.  
Here will I dwell, for Heaven be in these lips,  
And all is dross that is not Helena." 18.

Thus the god of Faustus has become his own appetite, and is little else but a projection of his own personality for which he intends to establish his own institution and ritual modeled on the Christian Sacraments. This misapprehension of Faustus is re-affirmed by Goethe's Erdgeist: "Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst." 19.

It is Lucifer's introduction to the appearance of the Seven Deadly Sins which restates the dilemma, for he urges Faustus to speak neither of Paradise nor creation, but to give heed to the show which is about to commence. The important word in Lucifer's self-critical admonition is the word 'show'; it underlies the tragedy that everything is superficial and a display which never pierces the core of life.

Not until the moment of ultimate and hopeless despair is Faustus willing to come to terms with the universe in which he has his being. He thus protects himself romantically with a shell of scorn, thereby

maintaining his distance and preventing that involvement which would have forced a decision upon him:

"What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate  
For being deprived of the joys of Heaven?  
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,  
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess." 20.

The spiritual erosion of Faustus lies in the gradual break-down of his shell of scorn, and in his volatile thrashing between sensual bliss and abject despair. The focal point is fateful resignation. Yet this resignation remains unacceptable to him no matter how often he reflects on the necessity of damnation and the loss of salvation. Spurning passivity, he is moved to hearken to the voice of conscience which causes his resolution to waver; contemplating, he is subject to the inner voice which urges him to abjure magic and return to God. Only at one point -- and this during the pact with Mephistophelis -- does he acknowledge the fallibility of the senses: but he is irrevocably caught up in cataclysmic aspirations which prevent him from taking heed to flee.

Throughout the course of Faust's fall, control of the elements is shared by the powers of Heaven, Hell, and by Faust himself. However there are two mighty streams for which no bid has been made, though they carry all life with them: Time and Fate. Faustus'

recognition of this inexorable force indicates his first step in coming to terms with the principles of existence and having to decide upon a course of action.

"Now, Mephistophilis, the restless course  
That Time doth run with calm and silent foot,  
Short'ning my days and thread of vital life,  
Calls for the payment of my latest years." 21

The quietude which marks these lines betrays the two faces of Faustus: that of the man who has finally learned he must submit, and that of the man who would wish it need not be so. Both faces are confronted by eternal laws which are beyond the power of Faustus and Mephistophilis to overcome. Yet the resignation is one of tense helplessness. It evokes the image of Goethe's chained titan Prometheus whose tempestuous outburst against Zeus is a fitting expression of the suppressed spirit in Faustus:

"Hat nicht mich zum Manne geschmiedet  
Die allmächtige Zeit  
Und das ewige Schicksal,  
Meine Herrn und deine?" 22

It is Marlowe's Faustus who replies rhetorically:

"What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemned to die?  
The fatal time doth draw to final end." 23

The conflicts presented by Marlowe are emanations of one central preoccupation without which there could not have been any Faust Theme. It is the constant awareness of the reality of the Soul. Three circumstances

in the drama will serve as an illustration. In the early action of the work Faustus refers to men's souls as being nothing more than "vain trifles", <sup>24</sup>. yet in almost the same breath the once-admitted valueless soul is overtly expressed and used as a bargaining point for gaining the world.

"Had I as many souls as there be stars,  
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.  
By him I'll be great Emperor of the world,...." <sup>25</sup>.

Through a series of scenes of self-revelation, this overtly unacknowledged but tacitly confessed value of the soul increases to universal proportions which ends as the final cause of his despair:

"Why were thou not a creature wanting soul?  
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?" <sup>26</sup>.

Only in these terms can the opposition of struggling forces have any validity, and cause Faustus to ask:

"Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:  
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?" <sup>27</sup>.

Faust is neither glorified nor absolved in this work, but he is touched by a sympathy which has not been seen before.

Goethe: Faust

Goethe's Faust confronts us with a marked change in perspective from the destructive hedonism of Marlowe's work, for it proposes a sense of vitality wherein life is the constant condition of being and becoming. Despite this terminology, there is no suggestion of a system, but rather of an adventure in meaning based upon an indefatigable optimism and affirmation of life. Goethe places less emphasis upon titanism than upon the overwhelming desire for knowledge and understanding (Wissensdurst). Thus the adventures of Goethe's Faust can be typified as a process which both chastens and clarifies human striving.

This stress upon striving and seeking does bind the work to the traditional theme, yet it is significant that the Faust theme is here lifted out of its old associations and re-created in new terms. Whilst the old conflicts remain, the breadth of their new scope signifies a poetic transfiguration of Paracelsus' longing to experience:

"Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt,  
Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt!" 28

The form Goethe has bestowed upon his work is of the utmost importance, and is indeed inseparable from its meaning; but the key to the form does not lie in



Goethe's own term 'Tragödie'. Taking this sub-title at its face value, one should expect a work conforming to the requirements of drama, but this the work cannot do. The characters do not develop, nor is there a plot to lead them through a series of crises to a dénouement and resolution. There are only three crises, which are not necessarily linked to one another: the death of Gretchen, the disappearance of Helena, and the death of Faust himself. Hence if the term 'tragedy' is to have any meaning it can only suggest action on a high plane of seriousness; it cannot mean tragedy in the sense of Oedipus Rex or King Lear. 29

Despite the tendency of many critics to grapple with Faust as a drama of tragic consequences, it must be recognized as a magnificently panoramic poem embracing dramatic, epic, and lyrical elements. It is by virtue of its being a poem that it can and does express the magnitude of its theme without being subject to the canons of time, place, and action. With the complete freedom of the poetic imagination, themes, motifs, and imagery may weave their pattern as the spirit of the work demands, and the sense of infinity evoked by the form may enhance the timelessly valid quality of the theme.

The poem is dominated by the figure of the wanderer,

an image which reflects the changing faces of Goethe's life, and which is inseparable from his works. Thus Faust the wanderer, seeking his goal through unrestrained experience, becomes involved in a journey which leads him to ultimate unity and serenity in the resolution of his conflict. The first implication of conflict and the need to venture abroad arises during the scene Prolog im Himmel when Mephistophiles, in a manner reminiscent of the Book of Job, speaks of Faust's spiritual ferment --"Ihn treibt die Gärung in die Ferne".<sup>30</sup> This is echoed by Faust after the pact with Mephisto when, ready for his venture into new realms he asks "Wohin soll es nun gehn?".<sup>31</sup> The scope of longing is then seen not only in terms of the journey which operates both as recurrent motif and line of progressive action, but also in the two terminal points of the poem. The Prolog im Himmel, with which the action takes its beginning, serves to emphasize the universal significance of the action in a purposeful and ordered universe; whereas the final lines of the poem --"Das Ewige-Weibliche / Zieht uns hinan",<sup>32</sup> suggest the conclusion that the poem is representative of an episode or episodes in an infinite continuum of human experience.

The journey and the ferment, however, are only symptomatic of a deeper and more rigorously waged

struggle which Faust express in the scene Vor dem Tor:

"Zwei Seelen Wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,  
Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;  
Die eine hält, in derber Liebeslust,  
Sich an die Welt mit klammernden Organen;  
Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich vom Dust  
Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen." 33

This problem of two opposing forces warring within the human breast has its counterpart in the conflict presented by Marlowe, but it can be traced to earlier sources. Paracelsus was keenly aware of this dichotomy or antithesis which he attributed to man's relationship with the cosmos. There are two forces or bodies, he wrote,

"The visible, material body wants one thing, and the invisible, ethereal body wants another thing, they do not want the same thing....Therefore there dwells in each of these bodies an urge to exceed that which is given to it. and neither wants to follow a middle course and act with measure. Both strive to exceed their bounds, and each wants to expel the other; thus enmity arises between them. For everything that exceeds its measure brings destruction in its train." 34

The potential for human tragedy, and hence, for the tragedy of Faustus, finds expression in these lines. Burdened with this dilemma, and the grave dissatisfaction with the limitations of his earthly existence, he desires to give vent to his aspiration for the highest knowledge and the enjoyment of the Beautiful. Thus he places his trust in the active impulse in order to experience joy and sorrow, bliss and despair, pleasure and pain; yet at

the same time he has contemptuously allied himself with Mephisto, the spirit of contradiction and negation for whom creation has no sense, and who at Faust's death confesses his love for the void (das Ewig-Leere). From this initial problem and through the later verbal clashes between himself and Mephistophiles, Faust's progression follows distinct lines which pass from Magic to Nature, then to the Earthly realm, and thence by way of the Beautiful to the Heavenly. One cannot really speak of character development but rather of changes of mood which reflect his altered awareness.

Faust's rejection of his scholastic life and his later claim to freedom and supra-humanity is a result of the Paracelsian principle that experience is the judge of all things; it is the ultimate test by which things are accepted or rejected. The turn to the use of magic, however briefly this occult art is invoked by contemplation of the sign of the Macrocosm, is indicative of the despairing revolt against his human incapacity to comprehend the universe. It is for this that Faust first turns to the secret work of Nostradamus in the hope of its being the key to release from intellectual bondage.

"Dass ich erkenne, was die Welt  
Im Innersten zusammenhält,  
Schau' alle Wirkenskraft und Samen,  
Und tu' nicht mehr in Worten kramen." 35.

This one moment of sorcery which exhorts the Erdgeist is vital in Goethe's re-creation of the Faust tradition, for beyond this point magic has no relation with hell or evil spirits. It is the direct perception of the living forces of nature wherein organic unity is to be found. Admittedly the Erdgeist is a magic apparition, yet it is the embodiment of those dynamic forces of life from which Faust had been so painfully removed as a scholar. It is the Archeus Terrae of Paracelsus, or the anima terrae of Giordano Bruno. Faust's deep inclination to nature is due to his affinity with those forces which reflect his own inner image.

"Aber die Sonne duldet kein Weisses:  
Überall regt sich Bildung und Streben,  
Alles will sie mit Farben beleben;" 36.

The resolution of this statement will be seen later in Faust II, but it is sufficient at this point to recall the words of Paracelsus who believed that one should look upon man as a part of nature whose end lies in heaven. 37.

Deep insight into nature, which is alluded to throughout in tones ranging from the farcical to the serious, requires of Faustus experience in earthly life as vast as the modes which give it expression. This lends scope and purpose to the scenes Auerbachs Keller, a satire on university life, and the Hexenküche, a

confused world of fantasy which almost despite itself first suggests love and womanhood as being not merely sensual, but symbolic of the divine.

"Muss ich an diesem hingestreckten Leibe  
Den Inbegriff von allen Himmeln sehn?" 38.

This is more pointedly expressed in the 'Helena' scene of the second part wherein Helena is symbolic of classical beauty as opposed to the diabolic eroticism represented by her counterpart in Marlowe's work.

The Gretchen episodes, however, bear the burden of proof in Faust's earthly endeavours, for here he is inextricably involved in a desperate situation which bears the seed of redemption. The ambivalence in Faust is most strikingly portrayed in these episodes by the union of form and meaning which illuminates the conflict of dramatic and lyrical inspiration. In terms of form, Faust has two roles to play, a lyric one which identifies him with Gretchen, and a dramatic one which sets them in opposition. 39. From the point of view of meaning, the commencement of the episodes sees Mephisto and Faust bent on the seduction of Gretchen, while the conclusion sees Faust and Gretchen allied against the spirit of negation. The focal point of these oppositions is self-less love which foreshadows Faust's supreme and last moment of satisfaction which is the cause of his death.

The study of image patterns in a work is a fruitful critical approach, and this is particularly true in the case of Goethe's Faust. Here the most pervasive and insistent image pattern is that of shadow and light, but due to the magnitude and complexity of this pattern it is again necessary to follow selective rather than comprehensive principles.

Within this pattern one finds the suggested images of light which are evoked by words of burning, flaring, glowing, gleaming and reflecting; the tangible images such as sunset, moonglow, and sunrise emitting a light in which Faust longs to bathe himself to health. On another level, stand the implied images which are evoked by reference to nature, faith and grace. The significance of these implied images is to be understood in terms of Paracelsus' thought, for he spoke of the key to insight being the Licht der Natur, Licht des Glaubens, and Licht der Gnade. The corollary to light is darkness which stands in the same relationship as Heaven to Hell, and Good to Evil; but the active principle of Paracelsus, and hence of Faust is that God has given to each man the light that was his due so that he need not go astray. 40.

The commencement of this pattern lies in the scene Prolog im Himmel wherein the first words give expression

to the eternity of the sun which constantly moves in its ordained course around the magnificence of earth. The fluctuation from light to darkness as an ordered movement is given expression by the Arch-Angel Gabriel who describes the brightness of paradise changing with the awful depths of night.

"Es wechselt Paradieseshelle  
Mit tiefer, schauervoller Nacht;" 41.

The magnitude of this eternal law is brought down to finite terms in the first scene of the poem proper which significantly is entitled Nacht (Night). Despite the envelopping blackness of night, the contrast between the ever-present light Faust seeks and the dismaying obstinance of his scholastic world is pronounced, if not stark. Faust's quietly solicitous apostrophe to the moon is of vital and dire consequence for illuminating the abyss in which he exists and the road he must follow as a restless wanderer.

"O sähst du, voller Mondenschein  
Zum letztenmal auf meine Pein,...." 42.

Pain and torment are the first conditions in which his restless spirit moves; but the reason for his despair and dissatisfaction is found in his own description of his study in which he broods and ferments.

"Verfluchtes dumpfes Mauerloch,  
Wo selbst das liebe Himmelslicht



Trüb durch gemalte Scheiben bricht!" 43.

For descriptive purposes these lines may be taken at their literal level describing his cursed dank hole-in-the-wall where even the light from the sky breaks only gloomily through painted window panes. However the understanding of these lines demands closer examination. Indeed the under-current of meaning insists upon being revealed. The words 'das liebe Himmelslicht' are meant to refer to the blessed light of heaven to which Faust as yet unwittingly aspires and which breaks gloomily through the panes because of the sophistication of his present way of life which frustrates grace. The image of light takes a more subtle turn in the same scene when the voices of the chorus of angels singing the Easter message force him to refuse the cup of suicide. Torn between despair and hope he cries out that he hears the message yet lacks the faith to act upon it:

"Die Botschaft hör' ich wohl, allein mir fehlt der Glaube;" 44.

The implied image is the Light of Grace itself. But as everything must ripen in its time and not before, Faustus is not yet ready for the faith he despairs of having. Again it is Paracelsus' principle that knowledge must come first, to be followed by faith, and only

then by the fruit of striving.<sup>45</sup> It is faith which raises man above his mortal nature and through faith that he becomes like spirit.<sup>46</sup> These lines draw us back to the image of the Erdegeist which Faust described as a form of flame (Flammenbildung) and with whom he was not ready to come to terms. At this point the Earth-Spirit is a dynamic force generating heat whereas at the conclusion of the poem its spirit and significance becomes resolved into a form emitting light. This transformation of the image represents a progression from romantic pre-occupations to classical considerations, from dissonance to harmony, and from restlessness to repose. For the literary development of Faust this represents the change from romantic to classic.

When Faust makes the momentous decision to place his trust in action he expresses his desire in the scene Vor dem Tor to soar into the evening sun to drink of the eternal light. It is a sacramental desire to keep the day constantly before him and the night irrevocably behind.

"Allein der neue Trieb erwacht,  
 Ich eile fort, ihr ew'ges Licht zu trinken,  
 Vor mir den Tag und hinter mir die Nacht,"<sup>47</sup>

These images weave themselves throughout the work with steady purpose and growing subtlety until they break forth in the final scene (Kerker) of Part I as the early

morning glow of a new day. It is a signal day for Margarete ('Ja, es wird Tag! der letzte Tag dringt herein;)<sup>48</sup>. for heaven saves her from her from her despair; but Mephisto entreats Faust back to the world of earthly experience. His experience is not yet complete.

That the effect of these image patterns is different in Faust I and II is seen in the nature of the poems themselves. Whereas the first part is subjective and proceeds from a passionate individual, the second part has lost its subjectivity and deals with a higher, broader, brighter and more impassionate world. 49.

The first monologue of Faust II finds Faust in a pleasant country-side at dawn, bedded down among flowers, fatigued, restless and endeavouring to sleep. His state of mind is the result of the turmoil of his past experience, and the sun which will rise bears great portent of his final goal. But, strongly reminiscent of Plato's Analogy of the Cave, the light blinds him, and he must turn away his eyes for pain.

"Hinaufgeschaut! -- Der Berge Gipfelriesen  
Verkünden schon die feierlichste Stunde;  
Sie dürfen früh des ewigen Lichtes genießen,  
Das später zu uns hernieder wendet.

. . . .

Sie tritt hervor! - und leider schon geblendet,  
Kehr' ich mich weg, vom Augenschmerz durchdrungen. 50.

The concluding line of this scene expresses Faust's dazzling recognition of human life in its relation to the truth he is seeking. Seeing a rainbow which for him reflects human striving as a law which endures through change (des bunten Bogens Wechseldauer) he comes to understand that life is not the pure light itself, but its coloured and refracted reflection.

"Am farbigen Abglanz haben wir das Leben". 51.

This affinity for nature recalls the earlier quoted lines of Faust when he speaks of the sun suffering nothing to be white but invigorating everything with colour. Nature is marked by the vigour of formation, transformation, and striving.

It is evident that this recognition will direct Faust along much more positive lines than in the first part, and that his either willed or forced withdrawal from the appearances of things will lead him into direct communion with the pure light. The poem reaches a startling turning point when in Faust's final act of renunciation of Light he refuses to recognize Care or Sorrow; for this he is blinded and thus must grope in outer darkness amidst the world whose joys and pain he knew so well. Significantly the scene takes place at midnight when day and night are held in balance. His first statement in blindness shows his awareness of the

balance of ultimate powers.

"Die Nacht scheint tiefer tief hineinzudringen,  
Allein im Innern leuchtet helles Licht." 52.

As so many passages in this work, these lines defy translation. On a literal level, Faust's words signify that the night seems to press more deeply upon him but that a bright light gleams in his innermost being. Another aspect is suggested by the word "scheint" which can also mean "shines". Thus the first three words are an oxymoron such as mystics often use to express their vivid revelations when other modes failed. This experience culminates in the action of grace (Licht der Gnade) which precedes his death to earthly life. As the chorus of angels bears Faust's soul heavenwards, it expresses the sense of grace by a word which implies the other manifestations of light which have been cast into the pageant of Faust:

"Heilige Guten!  
Wen sie umschweben  
Fühlt sich im Leben  
Selig mit Guten." 53.

The panoply of light and shadows is the ordained fabric upon which the light of nature, faith and grace must play. The striving of Faustus is an attempt at bringing the parts together into a harmony of the whole by suppressing his own freedom and thereby recognizing it again on a higher plane. Once having been the Ohrenmensch

of romantic longing, he is now the Augenmensch of classical balance and serenity. The parallel with Job in the Prolog im Himmel closes the circle of the poem, for Job said in his final reconciliation with God: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." (Job 42:5) Nature, faith and grace are the harbingers of the completely resolved man, for as Paracelsus, the forerunner of the traditional Dr. Faustus wrote:

"Just as man cannot exist without divine strength, so he cannot live without the light of nature. For only these two together make a man complete....And as regards man, he is nothing by himself, and what he fancies himself to be has no worth. His true essence must dwell in him like a guest without whom he is nothing and can accomplish nothing." 54.

Paul Valéry: Mon Faust

"Il ne demeure rien, ni des vérités ni des fables...." 55.

Paul Valéry's fragment Mon Faust is a representation of the dilemma of modern man projected from the traditional background of defined and credible forces. It is a cynical allegory of humanity whose value has been subjected to a process of reduction by the lucidity of pure mind. If there were no educated imagination behind the creation of this work, it would be desperate art indeed, yet the union of the artistic and critical faculties in Valéry do not condemn the human condition. The dramatic sketches which comprise Mon Faust were inspired by both Goethe and the present condition of man, and whereas the influence of Goethe is fully evident throughout, the difference between the two authors is that Valéry has approached his subject as a sceptic. Valéry's scepticism, however, is not the philosophy of a person who denies the possibility of real knowledge of any kind, but the principles of one who must necessarily doubt and question, and suspend judgement upon matters which are generally accepted. Thus whereas this work presents man as cut off from any heritage and therefore held spiritually incommunicado, its author is able to

conclude with a question which demands positive response. Upon the answer to this question hangs the conclusion of Faust's search, and the fate of man. Conscience abhors the void ('La conscience a horreur du vide'<sup>56</sup>) wrote Valéry prior to the creation of his Faust, and for this, an eternal voice in man links this work with the great tradition of Faust literature.

The theme of Faust in the works of Marlowe and Goethe has been shown to be the vital desire of man to complete himself and to grow into greater awareness of the ultimate mysteries. What is experienced in Valéry's work is the complete reversal of this tradition through retrospective analysis and definition. Valéry's Faust does not aspire to 'become', but to slice through the imbroglio of myth and legend which has formed his public personality and thus to be freed from self-hood. Although the sense of growth is totally absent in this work, the release from the confines of self does entail a process of self-revelation or self-confession. Faust's writing of his Memoires hence forms the only source of redemption. From this singular beginning, wherein Faust is typified as the culmination of the whole Faust tradition, the purposes of the dramatic fragment is to re-cast the spirit behind the events. The aim, however, is fraught with potential difficulty, for Valéry's Faust confesses



that his life is necessarily marked by ambiguity and abstraction. It is not this alone which gives this work such a modern stamp, but Faust's introduction to his memoirs wherein he laments his loss of identity.

The memoirs of Faust are not only significant as a device with which to cast doubt upon the complex relationships inherent in human growth, but also to introduce and justify the reversal of the traditional roles of Faust and Mephisto. Faust's work is to be the most sincere book ever written, consisting of his speculations, observations, ideas, theses, together with an account of his relation with men and things; and besides, "...quelque très haut personnages, ou de très bas, qui ne sont ni hommes ni femmes." 57. But as Faust longs to be rid of himself and to be delivered of existence, the scope of his book is so vast that he requires Mephisto's aid. For this, Faust becomes the tempter who draws Mephisto into a bargain of fair exchange. Mephisto is to help Faust write the memoirs, and Faust in return will reinstate the now defunct devil in a world which no longer believes in him.

The image of Mephisto stands in a startlingly new perspective, for no longer is it the embodiment of the limited diabolic force which traditionally coerced and enticed man astray, but the personification of hypocrisy

in the dress of a clergyman. But Mephisto is far more than just himself; he is symptomatic of a deeper aberration and a more destructive sense of evil. Valéry's devil is the principle of evil which is placed in man himself and which is therefore fatal and precluding any possibility of redemption. This idea of evil is more sinister than the older convention because it is like a fermenting agent breaking down the individual. It is the power that, once having probed with ceaseless curiosity into the meaning of things, turns inward upon itself and is capable of destroying everything. Mephisto's description of Faust is a concise definition of the modern man and his self-made dilemma:

"Ta tête docte est si abstruse, si compliquée, si brouillée de connaissances bizarres, si pénétrée d'analyses extrêmes, pétrie de tant de contradictions, à la fois super-délicante et extra-lucide (....)" 58

The world of Spies, Marlowe, and Goethe has undergone a drastic metamorphosis to become the dissolute world depicted by Valéry. The French Faust lives in a boundless and bare realm of intellect wherein nothing abides, neither truth nor fiction, 59 and where even the fate of Evil itself hangs in the balance. That all is not completely severed from man's beginnings is exemplified by the singularly omniscient position of 'le docteur' Faust who can describe his world of the vacuous void while living in the shadow of the very

reality whose spirit he denies. His is the world wherein vice and virtue are nothing more than imperceptible distinctions which melt into the mass of what his generation terms 'the human material'. With meaning squeezed mentally from life, death itself, the great and feared unknown of earlier ages of man, is reduced to a statistical quantity of living matter which has lost its dignity and significance. Faust explains to his alienated Mephisto that even the immortality of souls had to follow the same fate as death which once defined life and gave it its sense and infinite value.<sup>60</sup> In such a world as this, the traditional methods of Mephisto are out-dated, and the figure of the devil has been relegated to something far less than mythical. As Faust points out, hell no longer appears but in the last act,<sup>61</sup> and significantly enough for the lost identity of modern man, the fourth and final act of Valéry's fragment is precisely the one which is missing.

Mephistophiles, however, has only ceased to exist as a person, but not as an entity. Intangible as he is, he is nonetheless defined by Faust's secretary Lust, when she meets him in Faust's study.

Lust: '(...) mais vous ressemblez à tout le monde.'  
 Mephisto: 'Prenez garde...Rien n'est plus dangereux que tout le monde'.<sup>62</sup>

In these words Mephisto becomes the only durable quality

in existence; by his own admission he is more absolute than the Omnipotent, ignoring and even being ignorant of compromise, redemption, mercy and grace.<sup>63</sup> This is the devil who makes Lust feel that her natural desires are unclean and evil, for she is one of the generation of vipers by which she defines tout le monde and which Mephisto symbolizes by appearing in Faust's garden as a green serpent. In this nightmare world, the infinite is definite ('L'infini est defini'),<sup>64</sup> and all creatures live for themselves alone.

The relationship between Faust and Lust is as vital as that between Faust and Gretchen in Goethe's work, but as the German name implies, Lust is pleasure as opposed to love. She is represented as having about her an impenetrable mystery, and a heart which embarrasses Mephisto and even disconcerts him as much as the extreme intelligence and excessive lucidity of Faust.<sup>65</sup>

Lust: 'Mon coeur vous soit obscur!...Il me l'est a moi-meme.'<sup>66</sup>

The tragedy of the relationship is that there is no communication between them; there is no mutual sharing, no 'Gespräch'. This problem is the tragic experience of many of the chief exponents of 20th century literature. Lust desires Faust, but Faust demands only tenderness at

the most, thus the relationship does not represent a true affinity.

Lust: 'Maître, je n'entends pas tout ce que vous dites. Vous parlez; vous ne me parlez pas.' 67.

'Il [Faust] parle, et je me parle; et nos paroles ne s'échangent point.' 68.

In the light of this relationship, Mephisto's constant warning to beware of love becomes all the more significant. Love brings about an involvement wherein all the barriers are down and all analysis falls away. Love, as the union of Eros and Agape, would then reinstate the traditional principles of good and evil. The profound sadness of the relationship between Faust and Lust is that they cannot come to terms, and for this, the devil has had a hand in it. Faust realizes that he can find no understanding and must be alone; Lust realizes that she cannot understand. Thus from this relationship arises Faust's realization that he must begin a search for the loneliness which will bring him harmony.

The second part of Valéry's Faust work, Le Solitaire, finds Faust climbing upward into the heights of an unknown mountain whose crests are so high that even Mephistophiles is left behind. The tone of this part is that of cynical 20th century disillusionment

which stands in such sharp contrast with the awe, faith and trust of Goethe's FaustII. Valéry's Faust is already lost before he reaches the summit, for a static idea has become his sole motivation.

"L'idée d'atteindre un lieu de notre monde où l'on peut mettre tout juste le bout du nez hors de ce qui existe...(....)". 69

Faust's search is rewarded by finding le solitaire, an abstract intelligence which is stark raving mad. This is an intelligence which has no spirit and is a-human, the pursuit of which is to run to madness and the dissolution of the personality. Le Solitaire taunts Faust, a struggle ensues, and Faust is cast back down into the abyss, there to be revived by the powers of nature.

The only positive element in an otherwise nightmarish representation of the human situation is this abrupt return to nature. It casts Man, of which Faust is the representative, back into his own realm and back to his beginnings, wherein he might gain new perspectives and fresh insight. From his vantage point of three score years and ten, Valéry can thus justify his having undertaken to write a Faust work so late in life. He boldly confronts the spectre of his generation with a question aimed at the deeper nature of man to which the myth of Faustus has ever spoken.

"La seconde Fée: Tu ne sait que nier  
La prime Fée: Ton premier mot fut NON...  
La seconde Fée: Qui sera le dernier." 70

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THREE PERSPECTIVES OF THE PARACELSUS THEME

Robert Browning: Paracelsus

....life, death, light and shadow,  
The shows of the world, were bare receptacles  
Or indices of truth to be wrung thence,  
Not ministers of sorrow or delight:  
A wonderous natural robe in which she went." <sup>1</sup>

The theme of Paracelsus has its own distinctive voice and as such has called authors to involve themselves in its ritual confession. This is especially true of the youthful poem by Robert Browning, for the mask of his rendition reveals itself as a mirror of the inner man. In this sense, Browning's Paracelsus is a Seelendrama, a drama of forces yet to be resolved which lays bare the struggle of a young spirit in its attempt to find itself. The sources of the work are rich and varied, at times clouded over by academic demands, but again and always illuminated by the perceptive grip of the artistic imagination.

Scholars <sup>2</sup> have judged that Browning's work has raised itself above the more modest stream of Paracelsus literature but that it concludes in a most 'unparacelsian' manner to bear witness to the vague outlines in which the theme has continued to live. Yet the contrary conclusion

would be more justified and to the point. Within the bounds of the poem itself, and quite apart from the later development of the poet as seen in his works, there is a strong consciousness of a growing process which matures from canto to canto. The first lines grope quietly with a brittle uncertain quality to end five cantos later with a firm assurance and pronouncement which affirms the fruitful sense of experience. The disparate shadows of rejection, negation, and denial in which the historical figure abounds are dispersed by the poet's own aspirations into the light of resolved repose. This is the spirit behind the form, the truth behind the fact, which is all-too "Paracelsian" to be overlooked. The evaluation of the theme as handled by Browning must proceed in terms of spirit, not in terms of historicity. To this end the study shall be directed.

Myth and symbol, as has been argued earlier, are complementary elements in the theme of Paracelsus, and this being so, it is not surprising to find their recurrence in Browning. A noteworthy and characteristic feature is the poet's personal Auseinandersetzung within these terms. The same images - fire, stars, light, darkness - appear in his work, yet they all point to an interpretation which emphasizes, rather than detracts from, the vigour of the theme. The longings of a



finite being for infinity are unflinchingly adhered to, the limitations of aspiration are reconfirmed, and the dependence of the human spirit born of frailty and craving strength finds a new song.

It is significant that the first canto begins with Paracelsus being twenty-one years of age - just two years younger than the poet who reaffirms his desires. Thus at an age which promises the fullest scope of life yet to come, the figure remains within the limitations of youthful selfishness; his aspirations are necessarily one-sided, if not narrow. In Browning's version, youth's desire for well defined issues incommensurate with reality is prominent, and for this his early argument is inconsistent although compelling. Paracelsus aspires to attain pure knowledge unblended with hope, joy, fear or woe; being sated with the possibilities of power and success he constrains his life and neglects the totality of existence. The regaining of balance is thus the perspective of this work, a balance to be achieved by the reconciliation of three principles of God, through union of knowledge and love.

The validity of these principles for the resolution and cause of conflict is attested to be the traditional pattern of the theme which subordinates man to God, and

microcosm to macrocosm. This is the justification for Paracelsus to acknowledge a mystic relationship between himself and God without which, as he says, he could not succeed any more than the sages. This permits the expression of a two-fold elemental passion-- an unbridled monomania on the one hand, and an organic cohesion with universal forces on the other. His elemental nature compels his conviction that he is the organ of God as well as the negator. As the historical Paracelsus bound himself by the claim that nothing exists which does not bear within itself the necessity of its fulfilment, Browning's figure finds motivation in the conviction that:

"What fairer seal  
 Shall I require to my authentic mission  
 Than this fierce energy? - this instinct striving  
 Because its nature is to strive?" 3

Paracelsus' awareness and sense of mission is a condition of being not prompted by mere volition but guided by external powers. Or, as these tend to fuse and become focused within him, his awareness is also both willed and obligatory. The cosmic laws which demand his submission to harmony, and his own motivation, are a unity struggling within itself. Within this pattern, Paracelsus commences his aspiration as

"...ambitious, self-sufficient, rebellious, and arrogant...early disillusioned and destined to be triumphant."<sup>4</sup> Experience thus modifies desire, and the voice of conscience, a power brooding within him and chiding him as a despondent child, urges the resolution of discord into harmony. Paracelsus' mission is to prove his soul, to justify it and test it, and thus to wander through the darkness whose nature it is to obscure.<sup>5</sup>

Human striving within the thematic pattern of the Paracelsus myth and tradition presupposes an Absolute; but Browning's version has altered perspective by focussing attention upon the relative forces of such principles. The significance of this is that the Absolute is not tacitly defined by the thematic growth but rather enacted as a relationship between elements which are attributes of the Infinite.

Proceeding from first principles, Browning's Paracelsus is a figure first intent upon gratification in immediate and finite terms. He thus gathers unto himself the scant gains of negative self-limitation and all but loses the sense of totality and wholeness for which his nascent flame longs. This, however, does not admit of defeat but rather of a hesitation in the germ,

a pause with knowledge, and a momentary arrest of progress. It is through the uninterrupted process of maturing alone that Paracelsus concludes that the fundamental law of existence is progress itself, a continuum of influences converging in man through Nature. Yet being a part of an introspective process, the development of Paracelsus is not one of aggressive action but rather of successive states of mind and conditions of soul. There is a subtlety of expression wherein striving is not conditioned by expansive longing but restrained by:

"A restlessness of heart, a silent yearning,  
 A sense of something wanting, incomplete --  
 Not to be put in words, perhaps avoided  
 By mute consent----...." 6

Herein lies the crucial point of a finite mind at war with its own spiritual potential, for the human heart is raised to a symbol of a personal, almost private, battleground for the evil and the divine. The words "evil" and "divine" belong to the language of the finite, and as such can only reflect a deeper language which is the expression of the potential for perfection and the tendency to deny. For this, Paracelsus is all too painfully aware that the human heart has been cursed by God and claimed by devils; it is his re-expression of a human frailty which finds

strength in self-centeredness, selfishness, and the pride of earth-won glory. This is the dramatic element in an otherwise undramatic poem, for it presents the conflict and suggests its resolution.

By his own admission, Browning's Paracelsus speaks confusedly. Although his principles of life remain unaltered, his expression of them is subject to changes dependent upon his growth and progress. That which he is innately, and often subconsciously, exerts itself upon him in such a way as to carry him from one stage of progress to another in a series of organically interconnected levels. Thus whenever he makes an avowed pause with knowledge and seems to hover between indecision and despair, he is experiencing the vicissitudes of a period of consolidation without which progress would be impossible. It is not until the fourth canto when he confesses this, but the process has been at work without his acknowledgement. Its significance for the progress of Paracelsus as a whole is that he is ever moving and living in a universe of omnipresent but only tacitly defined powers and values. His articulation of these elements parallels his capacity to acknowledge them and submit to their formative (bildende) force. The stages of Paracelsus' growth appear far less irregular and isolated when seen in relationship to his final

confession of the nature of God, for his spiritual journey follows the labyrinth of the heart.

"Thus he dwells in all,  
From life's minute beginnings, up at last  
To man - the consummation of this scheme  
Of being, the completion of this sphere  
Of life: whose attributes had here and there  
Been scattered o'er the visible world before,  
Asking to be combined, dim fragments meant  
To be united in some wondrous whole,  
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,  
Suggesting some one creature yet to make,  
Some point where all those scattered rays should meet  
Convergent in the faculties of man." 7

These lines formulate the conclusion of a hazardous path of striving; they both summarize and prophesy. Far from being vague or nebulous, they focus precisely upon active relationships for which silence is often the better apologist. Indeed, the 'Paracelsian' view of a pre-ordained whole consisting of potentially perfect qualities and beneficent light is given valid expression. The generative force of this expression can be found by a return to the earlier cantos of Browning's poem.

The first definition of God which Browning's figure offers serves to emphasize the destructive element in his approach.-

"God! Thou art mind! Unto the master-mind  
Mind should be precious." 8

This self-justification pre-figures Le Solitaire of Paul Valéry: it postulates the cold realm of pure

Intelligence. The cancer in such a formulation is its manifest concentration upon a single attribute of the Ultimate creative force which thereby forces him to deny the others. It is no mere presumption that other attributes are implied within the poem, for these lines are prophetically qualified by the words: "Yet God is good:...." <sup>9</sup> The prophecy of these words revolves most obviously around the understanding of the word 'good'; all sophistry aside, it is sufficient to note that within the terms of the historical source, the supreme good is love itself. Thus the poetic Paracelsus has defined his own vortex of spiritual pleasure and pain. He has given strength to his predisposition for the rational, and at the same time has illuminated his own insufficiency. His words in Canto III bear further witness:

"....From God  
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,  
Intelligence exists which casts our mind  
Into immeasurable shade. No, no:  
Love, hope, fear, faith - these make humanity;  
These are the signs and notes and character,  
And these I have lost!" <sup>10</sup>

The counterpart to these desperate exclamations is the character of Festus, the fictional friend of Paracelsus. His orientation has ever been toward that faculty of man which Paracelsus had denied and it is he who is to reaffirm Paracelsus' conclusions.

"God! Thou art love! I build my faith on that!"<sup>11</sup>

These words of Festus underline the same type of limitation to which Paracelsus was a victim, yet this definition opens onto a broader sphere for later development. Throughout the poem, the element of love grows into the proportions of a human faculty, at first "...a mystic, transcendental, and romantic passion....",<sup>12</sup> and finally a decidedly Christian principle. Whereas it once could be scornful, it becomes resolved into compassionate insight. Love, then, is the principle which solves the contradiction between morality and religion and which bridges the chasm between man and God. But as God is the source of this love, it returns to itself through man and thus closes the circle of perfection. The growth of Festus to the point of transmitting his belief in love into action has not been free from doubt, for it is in the nature of love to bear out its own antagonism. Thus as both definition of God and principle of life, it caused Paracelsus to shrink back from coming to terms with what promised to be the key to his dilemma. As Festus said:

"... since all love assimilates the soul  
To what it loves, it should at length become  
Almost a rival of its idol?"<sup>13</sup>

A more vigorous centre for Paracelsus' struggle



to "know" is represented by the fictitious character of the Italian poet Aprile. The attainment of the heavenly via the beautiful as presented by Goethe is here once more brought to bear upon the problem of salvation and self-fulfilment. Their relationship is a living parallel wherein each lacks the principles of the other, yet longs for the same goal; their encounter arouses a new awakening and a mutual enlightenment. For Paracelsus, Aprile is:

"My strange competitor in enterprise,  
Bound for the same end by another path." 14

As these two figures converse there is an awareness of a true Gespräch, a mutual and reciprocal sharing on a personal level which is the very essence of the drama of the soul.

Paracelsus: "I too have sought to KNOW as thou to LOVE-  
Excluding love as thou refusedst knowledge:  
Still thou hast beauty and I, power.  
We wake:....."

Aprile: "God is the perfect poet,  
Who in his person acts his own creations." 15

The reflective element in Browning's work weaves a pattern both backwards and forwards, thus binding the cantos together in a vital and meaningful way. It is because of this technique that earlier elements of the poem do not demonstrate their full vitality until other threads have been woven into the network of principles

and passions. It is in this sense that the encounter of Paracelsus and Aprile remains in a shadowy light, and although fully constitutive, only shows its true force when Paracelsus has summoned all facets of his experience into a close relationship. Taken in its full context, Aprile's understanding of God is the very Universum which embodies all elements alluded to in the poem; it is a rich formulation of the creative process itself.

In terms both of art in general and the Paracelsus theme in particular this reference to the creative process presents a problem of definition. Arbitrary value-judgements overshadow it by regarding this process as one of inspiration and accident, outbursts and feeling-toned elements. Yet the allusion to God as the perfect poet demands deeper recognition in the light of the Paracelsian tradition. It demands the evaluation of the unerring instinct of a perfected consciousness which is totally committed. This is 'Paracelsianism' in action.

Browning's figure of Paracelsus remains constantly true to the spirit of its source by adhering to the principles of the growth of human awareness and the necessity of submission to macrocosmic values. He is more sought than seeking, yet remains a prophet of

experience. Having begun his struggle as a man determined to become "The greatest and most glorious man on earth",<sup>16</sup> the attraction of knowledge and power subsides into a controlled balance between love and understanding. Whenever he felt inclined to negate his world, this action found its justification as the only positive approach which he could grasp. More effective than arguments, he felt, was the bold denial of dogmas which had become sanctified by time. Hence in Browning's version as well, he could burn the books of Avicenna and cast aspersions upon the peddlars of pedantry. "Boldly deny"<sup>17</sup> became his watch-word.

No matter how positive the intention, negation and denial drew repercussions in their wake; Paracelsus' plans became makeshift and had to be adjusted and re-evaluated in the light of new experience. This clash of values and aspirations, of success and failure, marks Browning's poem as a proponent of the Paracelsus-theme in its widest sense, for constant 'becoming' is the criterion for a human perfection which does not end even with the attainment of the God-head. These were indeed the words of Browning's Paracelsus, yet although they were overtly motivated by egotism, they gave the lie to deeper elements which were part of his nature

despite his intentions.

"I still must hoard and heap and class all truths  
With one ulterior purpose: I must know!  
Would God translate me to his throne, believe  
That I should only listen to his word  
To further my own aim." 18

Like Goethe's Faust, Browning's Paracelsus wished to continue to strive without ultimate fulfilment, for as he expressed in the final canto when insight had been attained:

"But in completed man begins anew  
A tendency to God." 19

Knowledge had then taken on new meaning of a much more forceful and immediate nature, for no longer was it intuition,

". . . but the slow  
Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,  
Strengthened by love: . . ." 20

As with the other literary renditions of the Paracelsus-Faustus theme, the power of Browning's version does not lie in its historicity. This is only one facet of faithfulness to the theme, and in terms of the power of literature to move men on to new life, it is perhaps the least significant. Browning's historical material for the poem, however, was found in his father's 6000-volume library, of which three works may be claimed as sources. In their probable order of consultation they are Biographie Universelle

(Paris, 1822), Melchoir Adam's Vitae Germanorum Medicorum (Heidelberg, 1620), and Frederick Bitiskius' edition of the works of Paracelsus in three folio volumes (Geneva, 1658).<sup>21</sup> If historicity were to be the criterion, then the validity of Browning's poem would have to be seen in the congruence of the five dates and places for the enactment of each of the cantos: Wurzburg 1512, Constantinople 1521, Basel 1526, Colmar in Alsatia 1528, and Salzburg 1541. Of these, the latter is the only clearly documented and generally accepted 'fact'. Certainly the figures of Festus, Michal and Aprile, which play such a prominent role in the poem, are entirely fictitious. On the other hand, to paraphrase Wordsworth, there is a sense of something far more deeply interfused which pervades the poem and makes it a genuine response to Paracelsus as both symbol and myth. Thus, by way of concurrence, it stands as a fitting conclusion to this study to quote the words of Browning which prefaced the first edition of his Paracelsus.

"The liberties I have taken with my subject are very trifling; and the reader may slip the foregoing scenes between the leaves of any memoir of Paracelsus he pleases, by way of commentary."<sup>22</sup>

Schnitzler - Paracelsus

"Es fliessen ineinander Traum und Wachen,  
Wahrheit und Lüge. Sicherheit ist nirgends.  
Wir wissen nichts von andern, nichts von uns;  
Wir spielen immer, wer es weiss, ist klug." 23

The perspective of Arthur Schnitzler's Paracelsus brings with it its own characteristic limitations which spring from the medium chosen for his treatment of the theme and the view-point which he brings to bear upon it. Whereas the myth of Paracelsus has up to now been given a panoramic treatment with a firm sense and grasp of reality, Schnitzler has reduced this myth to the restricting form of a one-act play which questions reality itself. The sense of paradox is sharpened by the fact that the artist stands back from his work even though he remains unmistakably involved in his theme. He has viewed it through a diminishing glass.

The particular dramatic form which Schnitzler thus chose for his work immediately suggests that the scope of the theme, its vital power, has been cramped. The dramatic movement is required to progress with rapid steps in the development of a single but close-knit problem. This reduction, however, has its positive quality; Schnitzler's Paracelsus offers a tight but well-sustained presentation of a focal point of his own choice.

The questioning proceeds impersonally; it is as devoid of symbolism as it is of the very universe which other literary renditions have accepted. Schnitzler's handling not only distils the theme by calling Reality itself into question; it moreover challenges the division between dreaming and waking, truth and untruth. The artistic subtleties of the play are the very mark of its craftsmanship.

It is not fortuitous that Schnitzler was attracted to his theme both as a poet (Dichter) and as the practising physician he was, and it is because of this duality of his devotion that his work never suffers from one-sidedness. The world of poetry and the world of medicine, with decisive influences flowing freely from both these worlds, become intermingled in Schnitzler and act as complementary forces. Yet despite this union, each facet plays a distinct part in his works.

"The doctor's part in his works is the unerring, diagnostician's eye devoid of illusion; that of the poet a deep understanding of humanity, for the comedies and tragedies of life." 24

There is then more than an intimation of a fellow-doctor's understanding and sympathy which link the author with his theme, albeit his work has been given a balance which its robust historical image frequently

fell short of sustaining. But like Paracelsus, Schnitzler was perceptive, understanding, and creative; he was not glued to a text-book in either art or medicine, but followed his living experience and sensitivity for the individual Physis and Psyche.

"...ein scharfblickender, verstehend kluger, schöpferischer dazu, der nicht am Lehrbuch klebt, sondern der seiner lebendigen Erfahrung und seiner Empfindung für individuelle Physis und Psyche folgt." 25

Thus although Schnitzler has restricted his interest in the theme to its finest limits, the challenge of the myth has still been accepted on a personal level. There was a 'Paracelsian' spirit within him which accorded well with his artistic design.

The plot of Paracelsus is very simple. Prior to the opening of the play, Paracelsus had been a pious student in Basel who was deeply loved by a young girl, and far more so than he knew. After he had left the city to wander through life the girl, Justine, having suppressed her secret love for Paracelsus, married a pharisaic smith (Waffenschmied). She gave him her love but not her heart or soul. The curtain rises on the return of Paracelsus as a famous doctor and wonder-healer. The conflict which is precipitated asserts itself between Paracelsus and



Cyprian the smith. Paracelsus seeks revenge upon the self-assured and complacent smith whose only concern with his wife is his audacious possession of her as mere chattel. By hypnotising Justina, who has been trying to dissuade an ardent youth, Paracelsus suggests a kind of psychodrama from which none of the characters can free himself. As the protagonist exclaims to Cyprian when truth and illusion have over-shadowed one another:

"Mehr als die Wahrheit, die da war und sein wird,  
Ist Wahn, der ist...." <sup>26</sup>

The supporting clashes in the play are those of insight versus reason, bourgeois values versus enlightenment, traditional medicine versus innovation, and love versus egoism. These elements cause a massive but delicately balanced confrontation of illusion which converges upon the foil of hypnotic suggestion.

That the sense of illusion has any validity at all in the play is seen in the frame-work into which the motif has been placed. The frame-work is formed by dramatic characters who accept as true all that they feel, see and hear, and all to which tradition has taught them to conform. Except for the figure of Paracelsus, none of the characters has any epistemological or ontological doubts. Sympathetic irony

pervades the whole fabric of Schnitzler's work, for the medium by which Paracelsus clarifies illusion is at best only an analogy in itself. Hypnosis, the "magical" medium of Hohenheim the charlatan, is a psychically induced "sleep-like" condition. Is this, then, life? Or is it an extension of it? Life is perhaps nothing but a game. These are the questions to which Schnitzler refuses an outright answer. They are the justification for his drama.

The character of Paracelsus is fundamental to the development of the brief plot, for in both mythical and literary terms he is surrounded by an aura of mystery. It is Cyprian who sums up the protagonist, and it is due to this Bürger's traditional view-point that the description is so striking:

"Der Mann, um den Geheimnis webt und Dunkel,  
Der Ruhelose, dem die wilde Fabel  
Vorausseilt wie ein tollgewordener Herold,  
Der Hexenmeister ist der Hohenheim,  
Den wir als frommen Studiosus kannten." 27

Thus even in this drama Paracelsus as a figure remains sagenhaft in his own time -- a figure whose organic relationship to the universe amounts to a personification of mystery. This brief description also points out that Paracelsus has grown and changed as life has progressed. His non-conformity has elicited the censure of league with witches and all

that is contrary to traditional society. The myth which Cyprian proclaims is one of contrary experience which first affronts and then unites. The difference in approach between Paracelsus and Cyprian is one of kind. Cyprian claims that only the present confines human life; Paracelsus avows that the moment rules. Hence the protagonist admits the influence of present, past and future, but attributes the meaning of life to an understanding of the significance of the moment. This union of past and present is reflected in human longing and spiritual power. It is fused into a consciousness which dies to itself each night and which gives itself over to will-less sleep. Paracelsus manipulates hypnotic powers, yet it is he who is fate itself.

Although "reality" and "truth" are splintered by doubts and challenged by illusion, there is still a deeper unity which suggests that human life is a mirror of a universal principle. It is for this reason that the work is not destructive and that it does not lead to the void of a Paul Valéry. That life is not a bartered security for human trust remains implicit.

"Denn das Gedächtnis trägt fast wie die Hoffnung--  
Geheimnis alles....  
Bedenkt dies Eine nur: dass jede Nacht  
Uns zwingt hinabzusteigen in ein Fremdes,  
Entledigt unsrer Kraft und unsres Reichtums,

Und alles Lebens Fülle und Verdienst  
 Von weit geringerer Macht sind als die Träume,  
 Die unserem willenslosen Schlaf begegnen." 28

These lines run counter to the belief of Cyprian, who felt that dreams lay behind sleep. For Paracelsus, however, it was a fate which was the power of ultimate things. Thus sleep is only significant as an analogy to the state of inanimate suspension in which influences exert themselves.

However elusive Schnitzler's representation might be, there is an Auseinandersetzung and a "coming to terms" with both the 'fact' of illusion and the secret meaning of life. This very lack of definition is the challenge to the finite mind determined to resolve appearances into a principle which will direct a search. Indeed, passive acceptance is not enough, for

"Was ist nicht Spiel, das wir auf Erden treiben,  
 Und schien es noch so gross und tief zu sein!  
 . . . . Ein Sinn  
 Wird nur von dem gefunden, der ihn sucht." 29

Throughout this play Paracelsus has remained non-committal, neither denying nor affirming the accusation of charlatanry. This is its dramatic strength, for the challenge is dynamic and turned inwards upon opposing dramatic characters and upon the spectator as well. But when the curtain of hypnotism has been lifted, and illusion has been compounded with doubt, Cyprian no

longer cares to define Paracelsus. Whatever the ritual might have been, it is not supposed to matter; Cyprian has perceived the road which leads out of delusion. The question is, whither does it lead? Schnitzler's interpretation of the mythical element has posed the question. Kolbenheyer's work provides an answer.

Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer: Paracelsus-Romantrilogie

-Wie tief wirst du deine  
Wurzel noch treiben müssen, deutscher  
Lebensbaum, bis du die Wasser findest,  
die dich wunschlos sättigen? 30

Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer's achievement in his trilogy Paracelsus is that the scope of his historical novel embraces both an era of man and the development and growth of an individual. He has not only created a mood of Bildung which informs the pattern of his work in the formation and transformation of the protagonist, but also a dynamic extension which reaches out to the reader and involves him in meaningful experience. The many disparate elements which had to be harmonized in this work of art betray the danger that it might have become unwieldy and contrived, and that the profusion of influences at work within it might alienate the reader. However Kolbenheyer's principle of the historical novel has been translated into action and power of the highest order. The work so affects the reader's power of intuitive grasp that he lives through the epoch and grows with it without being aware of its remoteness. This personal relationship is not a characteristic of a particular literary genre, but is peculiar to an individual work which gives us a

sensitive interpretation of the positive values in human experience.

Critics <sup>31</sup> have suggested that the attraction of the Paracelsus theme lay in its possibility of being raised to the level of a national myth whereby Goethe's "titanic" Faust could be recreated in new terms. The use of this theme meant, then, nothing more than masked literary imitation whereby one symbolic figure was replaced by another without any essential change in meaning. Indeed Boeschstein points out that Kolbenheyer's Trilogy

"was at once raised by critics to the level of a nationally representative work...in a jargon that was almost bodily lifted from Faust criticism". <sup>32</sup>

The examination of the representative works in this study has shown the contrary to be true. The recreation of the Paracelsus-Faustus theme is by no means an artificial prop; it is a genuine response to a timeless personal challenge. While it is acknowledged that Kolbenheyer's work is biographical in the minutest detail, it remains to be shown that it is the culmination of the interpretations which have preceded it. It does not replace any one of them, but rather takes its rightful place within the thematic pattern

so that each work complements the other. The particular contribution of Kolbenheyer's trilogy to this pattern is its expression of the potential in man to realise more and more of his possibilities by understanding the relation of the part to the whole. It does not outmode this concept to term it 'Paracelsian', for modern science can still attest to its present day validity. As Père Teilhard de Chardin wrote in his Phenomenon of Man:

"However far knowledge pushes its discovery of the 'essential fire' and however capable it becomes some day of remodelling and perfecting the human element, it will always find itself in the end facing the same problem-- how to give to each and every element its final value by grouping them in the unity of an organized whole." 33

Before commencing a closer examination of Kolbenheyer's trilogy, it is necessary to discuss the concept of Bildung. This is important both for an understanding of the trilogy within an established literary genre (Bildungsroman), and for an appreciation of his interpretation of the Paracelsus myth.

Bildung is the term applied to the organic growth of an individual in his physical and spiritual life. It implies a process whereby man comes to terms with himself and his environment, and consists of the formation,



transformation and fruition of his faculties. Within the context of the life of Paracelsus, Bildung is dependent not only upon the dictates and attitudes of human society, nor alone upon the individual's own power for action; more particularly, it rests upon the interaction of both these spheres. The individual must influence himself by transforming his weaknesses to sources of strength through recognition of their presence; he must be receptive to new influences in their ramifications, and nurture the power and conviction to change thought into action. Although society acts as a cumulative force, its influences are not solely the outstanding events which may rupture, uproot or inspire a growing mind. Equally, if not more important influences are evoked by the smaller events of every-day as they become absorbed into the individual and pervade his being-- forces and impressions which later crystallize and imbue a life with meaning. In Paracelsus one is made constantly aware of the modulation between society and the individual, between spiritual purpose and ethical conviction. This modulation forms a significant element in the term Bildung in this novel in that it is a supra-human influence which at the same time seeks out society and the individual. It is a

reflection of the differences in directed sensitivity and capability of individuals that all the characters in the novel are not aware of this process.

For Kolbenheyer's figure Theophrastus (Paracelsus), the process of Bildung begins in the small world of his childhood. Even here organic formation of personality is informed with an awareness of controlled perception and purpose. The development is directed from the child's perception of the symbolic flame which comes to stand for a vital principle. This central factor leads to a rapprochement between the universal and the particular, the body and the soul, God and man. Bildung however is a process of constant becoming which admits of no conceivable end. In terms of the symbolic content of the novel, even the death of Paracelsus does not end the process of formation and transformation. On his grave a tree is planted whose roots will reach down into the earth to have their being in this world, and its branches will grow ever upward so as to transcend their own beginnings. The tree is a symbol of organic growth. It is an archetypal pattern of growth such as the mandala of which Kolbenheyer also avails himself. It is because of the tone of the trilogy, with its receptive acquiescence and purposeful adherence to the tensions of human development, that the process does not end with the conclusion of the novel. The story is in itself a

Bildungserlebnis which provokes an empathy and sympathy in the reader.

In terms of Paracelsus' thought, the implications of human development militate against the exclusion of forces which lie beyond human perception. There are cosmic or divine influences which constantly seek out the unsuspecting, ready to touch fertile receptiveness which then must reserve the right to make judgements consistent with conviction. As a tree expands in ever increasing rings of growth, building on what has gone on before, human experience by the same token compounds itself so that both within generations and beyond them, men may stand on the shoulders of giants and perceive new realms. This is the pattern of Kolbenheyer's Paracelsus, a pattern whose three stages are each introduced by an allegory of gentle mysticism. The three stages in the pattern are synonymous with the three books of the trilogy: Book I (Die Kindheit) is the period of early formation; Book II (Das Gestirn) represents transformation and action; the final book (Das Dritte Reich) is the fruition and resolution. The three individual preludes to each of the three books together form one narrative, and one of the unifying elements in the entire work. The interpretation

of the allegorical preludes and the first two books of the trilogy will bring to light the relevance of specific instances of growth and self-realization, and will elaborate instances of decisive influence in the development of the novel itself. These elements will be related to the myth of Paracelsus in terms of the thought of the historic person. In this way the forces which are urging the protagonist to understand life will be fully revealed. As the mystic allegories represent the symbolic pattern enacted by the novel, they will have to be presented in greater detail than the main narrative of the trilogy. The method of dealing with the allegories will be that of narrative form, and critical commentary. The third book, however, is far more than just a sequel to the first two; it is a summation and prognostication as well. For this reason, the interpretive approach will be on much broader lines. It will serve to focus all the elements into a whole and to bring the study to its conclusion.

The prelude of Book I of the trilogy portrays a mood of tense and restless expectation, a foreboding of animistic proportions. Entitled Einaug und der Bettler, it opens at Advent at the turn of the new moon when mild weather has eased away a biting frost. Lead-coloured cloud banks swim into the heights of the heavens. The dark fields seem to flow into nothingness and the warm moist wind rustles through black branches and bushes. A raven responds to the stirrings of an undefined force. Humanity has withdrawn from the night and the animal world has slipped away. In the midst of this tense atmosphere appears the figure of the Wanderer who is to dominate the prelude.

"Er musste weither aus dem Norden kommen; in seinem ellenlangen Barte hing Eis, er führte als Stab und Wehr einen Spiess, dessen Bronzespitze mit Elchsehnen an das Eschenholz geflochten war, eine Waffe des äussersten Nordens.  
Vor ihm lagen die Schwarzen Höhen der schwäbischen Alb, und über ihnen flammte das Siebengestirn des Orion." <sup>34</sup>

The allegory is a metaphysical ritual which arrests the imagination. The imposing bearing of the Wanderer grows out of the description of the scene as his hands brush through the tree-tops and as he measures himself against the spire of the church which is surrounded by grave stones. Overhead hover the

pleiades, a constellation of one-hundred twenty stars of which the naked eye can only perceive seven. An impatient moaning fills the air as the Wanderer's feet tread the grave mounds and wooden crosses; he quietens the restlessness of departed spirits: "Ich will euch nicht beschweren, ihr Ruhebedürftigen." 35

The night becomes personified, aware that it is also involved in the process of Becoming; it too, like all that claims participation in the mystery of existence, must admit of the ambivalence in the cycle of progress and renewal.

"O wundersame, tiefe, tiefe, Nacht, die nach dem kürzesten Tage über der Erde liegt, eine besiegte Siegerin. Sie weiss, dass sie sterben muss, und ruht unter dem Föhnwind geschwächt, matt vom Siegeslauf. Ihr ist, als gehöre das Rauschen der Wasser nicht zu ihr, und fremd lautet das Wehen. Sie lauscht allen Stimmen, als sängen sie wunderbar das Lied ihres Todes, den ihr der leuchtend schöne Tag, der wachsende, der verjüngte geben wird." 36

The quiet spectral grandeur of the Wanderer, who exists in and for the natural world, becomes aware of the revolution of time; Time, the indefinable force which reckons its own pace, seems a greater force than the principles of Being and Becoming. Many forces are felt to be at work in the growing display of potential action. These are forces which, for all their individuality, are parts of a more essential and fateful principle of evolution (Menschwerden, or, hominisation).

The Wanderer's presence is made more significant through contrast with the man-made world of sincere misapprehension and error. Leaning the point of his spear against a church window the Wanderer whispers, only to hear the whisper return from empty stillness; the only reply from humanity is the cool and sweet fragrance of burned incense.

From the darkness which presses over the land two distant lights glow as though they are sparks whose nearness to one another make them seem one. The sparks are the Beggar's humble and down-cast eyes which call through the gloom. The Beggar, whose presence has been intimated earlier in the prelude, becomes increasingly significant as the relationship of these two figures grows more compact. The Beggar's purpose is a projection or realisation of that of the Wanderer, and evokes comparison with the Father-Son relationship of Christianity even before the naked Beggar shows his stigmata. He has returned again from glory to fulfil a purpose which requires someone of the blood of man to recognize the Beggar's nakedness. Maligned and misunderstood, he has returned in wretchedness (armselig).

"Ich muss wieder aufgehoben werden wie damals unter dem Holze. Meine Füße müssen wieder über warme

Menschen-Herzen gehen, sie frieren von den Marmorfliesen. Vielleicht erbarmt sich einer von ihnen, deren treibendes Blut du spürest, vielleicht noch ein anderer und ein dritter und viele. Mich dürstet nach Herzenslaut, nach Muttersprache. Sie haben mich so tief in das gläserne Latein begraben, dass mir die Auferstehung und Flucht schwer geworden ist." 37

These lines symbolise the complete alienation of Spirit by the imposition of impoverished form and symbol. The drive for revaluation is echoed in the trilogy proper by the prescience of Paracelsus' mind which wholesomely responds to influence on all levels of meaning. Within the context of the first prelude the Beggar signifies the return of an impoverished principle to be crucified by man who, ironically, crucifies himself through lack of insight. The Wanderer, who claims to be the seal of Man's longing, blesses the Beggar, takes him into his arms, and wraps his cloak about him, so that the wretched one might be renewed from his exhaustion and desire by union with the secret sources of Being. In such communion, the figures subdue the hills, valleys, cities and villages. Everywhere there surges the turbulent movement of forces which have passed from generation to generation, and which are the only proof of existence.

"Und sie hörten die kräftigen Schreie der kreissenden Mütter, das widerspenstige Röcheln der Sterbenden hallte zu ihnen auf, sie vernahmen den wilden Atem



der Zeugenden."

...."Die Gestalten der Träume quollen aus den Köpfen der Schläfer zu ihnen, einem wirbelnden Nebel gleich. Und sie lasen aus dem verwegenen Spiele, wie die Herzen, bis zum Rande angefüllt, zitterten." 38

The brief exchange of words between the Wanderer and the Beggar complements the atmosphere of the prelude in describing their mission toward the human world: they represent the Light of Nature, the Light of Faith, and the Light of Grace. As symbolic of their problem, the two figures hover over a people which has no gods but eternally desires to gaze upon God. As the fruitful moment is yet to come, the figures withdraw into infinity; only the air remains trembling as over a great blaze of flame, and the sighs from the hearts of the sleepers rise toward heaven.

The majestically flowing imagery of this first allegory fuses the diversity of colours, tones and realities which converge and become bound into an ineffable unity. It is the unity in diversity or the Dauer im Wechsel which lends strength to the narrative. The human physical reality is contrasted with an all-pervasive spiritual reality; the two greater than life-size figures breathe in both spheres and sustain themselves on the tension which binds the two. The dream-world of humanity projects the endless desires and unfulfilled longing for the unknown. Kolbenheyer

has fused his controlled ideas into an impressionistic pattern which will later inform the mood and spirit of the first book.

Were it not for this prelude, the impact of the first book of the trilogy would not be as forceful. The sense of directed purpose and eternal values behind the external forms of human society would not be so apparent; nor, once we have perceived them, as revealing of the Bildung of Paracelsus. The prelude has introduced among the forces of human experience the prior claim of Spirit upon existence. It has forecast the tasks which will confront the young Theophrastus (Paracelsus) in the first book: intuitive perception of an eternal inward value, re-establishment of the maligned spirit, and the reduction to understandable terms of those forces which have been rendered incomprehensible by human sophistication and blindness.

These problems presuppose the posing of a question when the young mind of Paracelsus begins to probe its world. Indeed, this prelude, with its filtered light that effaces the sharp distinction between black and white, insists upon that very possibility.

The second prelude dwells on the aspects of three figures: the Sturmjäger, who is an extension of

the Wanderer; the Triumphant One, or the Beggar; and the Monk. The Wanderer has now lost his quietude and storms through the narrative with the vigour of an Old Testament Jehovah imbued with pagan grandeur. The Beggar, whose strength has increased as his spirit has ventured into closer contact with his mission, lives as the arisen redeeming principle of life. The Monk, whose symbolic presence has replaced the sweet odour of burnt incense, embodies the faithful inability to transcend form. This prelude, entitled Das lohende Herz, reveals the vibrant dichotomy between Christian and pagan ideals, the physical and the spiritual, action and inertia.

The narrative opens with powerful contrast between the two spheres of man's spiritual striving; Christianity and Magic. The scene is during the nights of Easter when witches and sorcerers withdraw from their crafts, and dare not grope for the sacred seal to the spiritual world; a time when the breezes are pure, and human frenzy falls silent. The rejuvenating forces of spring bear a personified tremble of joy as they mingle and interfuse with the unsated longings of man. All is hushed, waiting for the bells to sound the resurrection. The Wanderer now comes in

storm, his heart singing for triumphant bitterness, hovering between two heavens. The overpowering and dominating strength of this brute primal power stakes its will against the freezing Beggar with the five stigmata and the thorn-scarred forehead. Redemption hangs in the balance of supra-human desires.

The central symbol of this prelude is that of the mandala, the archetypal pattern of growth. Its force is ambivalent here, for it is seen as the figure of the coat-of-arms which has attracted the Wanderer ('Ein Rad, sein Heiliges Sonnenrad'),<sup>39</sup> as well as the halo of the Beggar ('Die Glorie war nach Gestalt der mystischen Mandel zweimal gespitzt, zu Häupten und zu Füßen').<sup>40</sup> The ambivalence lies in its use as a continuation of ritual and form by unsuspecting man. Its application to the Beggar is more fundamental; it stands for the potential fusion of form with spirit. The extension of this symbol into Book Two (Das Gestirn) embodies both these elements, for Paracelsus is seen to grow with wholesome direction in ever-increasing circles of experience in response to the totality of his universe. Once having been sought out and touched by Influence as such, he draws his thread of development and Becoming from himself in the only way he can, confirming and reconfirming his

convictions as each line of circular growth crosses the outward-reaching paths of his searching mind. The less dynamic implication of this mandala is its pattern as the pure form of convention held by the titans of his society whose complacency strives to confound Paracelsus in the fulfilment of his Being.

The Beggar appears to the Wanderer as though sated on his own hunger for spiritual fulfilment after resurrection --this same hunger which makes earth so bitter and heaven so sweet. Yet the Wanderer enforces their relationship by invoking the Beggar to fall silent in the awareness that this hunger has proceeded from the Wanderer's realm. This reference to the bitter-sweet tension between two forms of reality underlies the pattern of human striving. When understood as a linear relationship, it assumes its place as a spoke in the wheel of being. The relationship between the Wanderer and the Beggar, the latter being the active agent of the former, is extended into the human relationship between Paracelsus and his father, and the ramifications which follow upon paternity. The father will call the son to enter into the throes of experience and action in order to come to terms with heaven and earth. The admonition of the

Wanderer to the Beggar has force in both realms:

"Wehe dem Meister, der seinen Schülern ein Dach wird, darunter sie friedlich hausen können... Deine Kraft bleibt ein Lehen, und, die ihre tiefste Quelle nicht ahnen, wuchern damit." 41

Conversation between these two super-human protagonists is always pointed and direct; meaning is never lost in parables; as in the first prelude their exchange served to stress the problem toward the world, in this second prelude the same need is fulfilled. However, the significance for the later development of Paracelsus is more condensed, for it presages in graphic and unequivocal terms the struggle of practice and principles which will confront him as his mandala grows.

"Die Gleichnisse altern....Jung bleibt nur die Sehnsucht, auch wenn sie im Schatten der Gleichnisse ruht, da sie müde geworden sind. Sie erhebt sich immer wieder gegen die Gleichnisse. Sie kennt keinen Dank. Setzt das Dach in Brand. Zertritt den Becher, wenn der Wein getrunken ist. Ein Spott sind alle, die den Hunger der Sehnsucht betäuben, und darüber gross und satt werden." 42

The supernatural power in this prelude is countered by the figure of the fervent monk in his cell who wrestles with his spirit in order to find himself. He feels no guilt which he could embrace, yet all his being lies stifled and tormented under the

ineffable burden of the sin of creatureliness. His fervour is contrasted in his mind with other men who sate themselves on sin, then on penitence, and once more step up to the table of the devil. The Monk's introspection brings him to a passage in the Bible, whose translation had caused Luther to be assailed by his critics:

"So halten wir es nun, dass der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, allein durch den Glauben...allein durch den Glauben." 43

These words evoke the image of Saul's conversion in the mind of the Monk. Overcome by the implication of "...allein durch den Glauben...", the pious brother feels God within him. His search is thus over, and the chain of becoming has ended for him. As the struggling Monk gains his 'self', the features of the Wanderer become more peaceful, and yet without harshness he turns to the Beggar to make his final judgement on the goal which the monk had achieved.

"Hörst du...sie können nicht dienen. Auch wo sie zu glauben meinen, suchen sie den Gott in der eigenen Brust." 44

The struggle between the form and the spirit remains unresolved within the context of this prelude, for symbols are replaced by other symbols, and meaning becomes involved in artifice.

"Sie brauchen das Gleichnis, zu dem sie aus ihrer Einsamkeit flüchten können, wenn sie die bange

Stunde überfällt. Und wehe den Sterblichen, die keine Gleichnisse haben in der Einsamkeit." <sup>45</sup>

The eyes of the crucified victor beam in boundless love. The Wanderer spreads his cloak and is assumed painfully and victoriously into an atmosphere of eternal longing which knows no likeness. Yet a smile plays around his immortal lips.

As the third and final book represents the fruition and resolution of a life of active formation which leads to death and the continuation of the formative principle of the protagonist, the third prelude establishes the mood conducive to this denouement. Firm lines are drawn between realms of reality, and the mystic allegory both reinforces the earlier prelude narratives and projects their symbolic action. Once more there is a mingling of pagan with Christian rituals, and cosmic with terrestrial symbols.

The setting in time of the final prelude is the festival of Mid-summer. The final glow of the solstitial fire in the central square of the city has turned to ash; the lords and lackeys of the world have been overcome by sleep. Their souls have been released from the bondage of the hour and no longer belong to their bodies; naked as flames they hover as before the



final judgement of God. In bold contradistinction to the veiled appearance of human life stand three more figures: HE, the mighty one, who is the final projection of the Wanderer; the Dead One, in the form of the Beggar; and a Benedictine Monk. The mood of the narrative is set by the description of tongues of flame which lap at a thousand years of bondage, ashes which covet their last glow of fire, and finally ice and snow. HE stands apart, raises the clod of earth on which the city rests, and drinks of the flames of the afflicted souls. The juxtaposition of space and time, which is central to this prelude, serves both as a continuation of the two previous preludes, and as an implication of the broader scope of the final book. Appropriately the title is Requiem.

As the powerful form of the Wanderer enters the vaulted cathedral and penetrates the mystery of the transept, he lays his hand upon the cold forehead of the Dead One, a forehead still covered with the scars of thorns. The obvious analogy with the crucified Christ is in no way forced or contrived; it flows evenly throughout the symbolic movement as though reflecting the image of true spirit which pervades the trilogy. The Wanderer symbolically summarizes the

developments of the previous books, and implies action beyond the scope of these books. The action in each of the preludes weaves a pattern into harmony.

The contrast between form and spirit is further deepened with the Wanderer's admission that the voices in the cathedral sing only of the crucified body. The Word was arisen among men "...und wütete unter ihnen mit der zersetzenden Schärfe seiner Silben und Buchstaben, Punkte und Titel." <sup>46</sup> With gathering intensity the Wanderer repeats the judgement he was forced to make in the previous prelude whereby he castigated an unparalleled people who had no gods yet eternally demanded to gaze upon God. The network of tension between reality and illusion, desire and fulfilment, clarity of vision and spiritual blindness extends in depth through the allegory. Despite the richness of imagery the spiritual dilemma is still clarified.

The Wanderer gathers the dead figure into his arms as a father raises a child from a cradle, and both forms are assumed into the expanse of universal categories as they move over the expanse of the Alps to slice their way through cragged ice. The dead figure is lain amongst the peaks as the Wanderer, wrapping his cloak as a boiling fog, envies the three-fold sacrificed God who

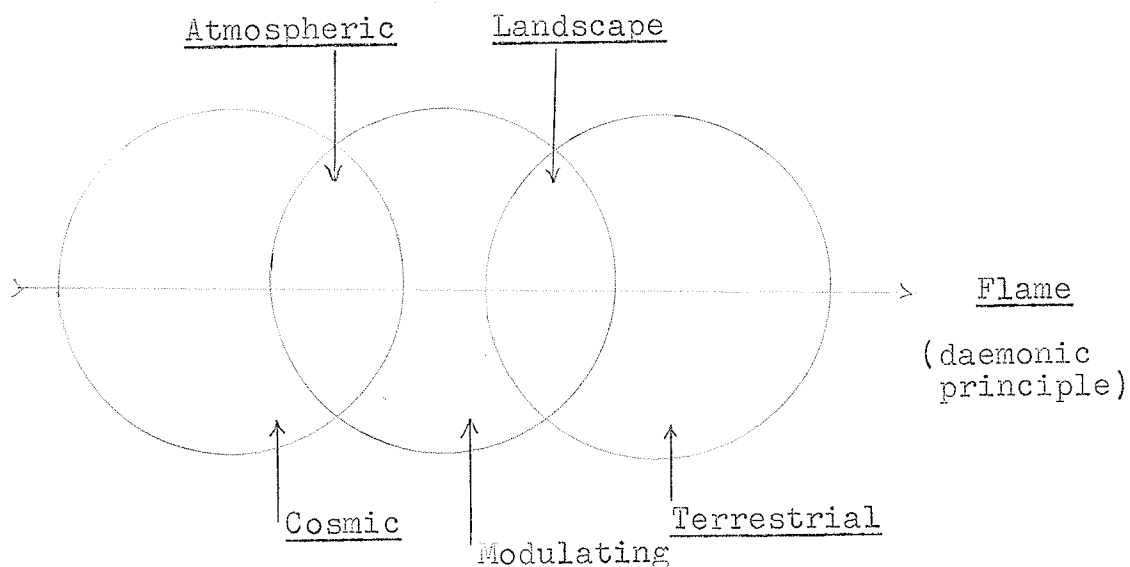
can rest under stones and ice.

"Könnte ich ruhen wie du unter Stein und Eis, du dreimal geopferter Gott, dessen Wesen endlich erfüllt ist! Seid beneidet, Menschengötter, die ihr alles das Siegel des Todes empfangt, wenn die Menschen euch zum ersten Male ewig heissen. Dass ich nicht ewig bin aber immer und immer! Sie bekennen mich nicht mehr, denn sie haben nur mehr Zungenlaut für ihre ewigen Götter, die das Siegel des Todes tragen. Alles andere scheint ihnen klein." 47

The slowly revolving circle of time, season, and emotion completes its rotation as inexorably as it had begun; as the night once felt the vigour of its growing strength, it now wanes on the approach of a new day. The ambivalence of ideas and forms follows the supreme law of growth and progress wherein birth holds the seed of death and the child is father of the man. This is the final invocation of the Wanderer. As the morning glow reaches across peaks untrod by man, a monk wends his way to a well, fills his bucket with water, and with a deep sigh concludes the evolution of these mystic allegories: "Et ne nos inducas in tentationem." 48

Three symbolic levels of equal magnitude may be inferred from these preludes: a cosmic, a terrestrial, and a modulating sphere. The core idea which runs

through each of these is that of the flame of longing and desire which is also seen to be central to the development of the three books of the trilogy. It is the daemonic principle. As these symbolic spheres overlap and intensify each other throughout the preludes, it will clarify the difficulty of interpretation by representing their relationship graphically.



The sphere of cosmic symbols includes the figures of the Wanderer and the Beggar, the idea of soul and heart, and moon. The terrestrial symbols are those of the order of graves, churches, cathedrals, monasteries, altars and candles. The modulating symbols are the different representations of the mandala, the dream

scenes, allusions to Latin and the Alps. Where the spheres of the cosmic and the modulation overlap is an area where the allusions to natural atmospheric phenomena reinforce the narrative. On the other hand, the overlapping of the modulation and the terrestrial spheres suggest the human world and the imagery of nature. If these circles are understood to be revolving on their axis and casting light in all directions as their lines cross, then the complexity of the symbolic plan of the preludes will be appreciated. This graphic portrayal will also serve to illustrate the multiplicity of influences which participate in the Bildung of Paracelsus, but which are directed by the daemonic principle. It must be added that one element is excluded from this graphic scheme and indeed from the symbolic levels themselves; this is the element of time-- the only frame-work which delimits the trilogy.

The time sequence of the preludes runs from Advent, Easter to the Summer Solstice, and moves in a cycle toward the completion of a lunar year. The comparison of the preludes with the three novels of the trilogy suggests that time is an immeasurable element in absolute terms. This insistence upon the

relativity of time is pertinent to the principle of Bildung in that the possibilities for development in human terms are thereby made limitless. Being aware of the disparity in the element of time, Kolbenheyer can find further justification for the image of the tree which is planted on Paracelsus' grave, and can thus raise the implication of Bildung to new heights.

The purpose of the preludes is to suggest and forecast the struggle of Spirit and Influence to become resolved in human terms, and the presentation of these vast and complex principles outside the body of the trilogy is justified from the point of view of realism. If these principles had been as consciously included within the text of the historical novel, the work would have seemed forced, contrived, and unconvincing. Yet the use of mystic allegories have enabled the author to suggest the larger struggles behind the ethical, moral and spiritual development of the protagonist by creating an overpowering mood of tension and purpose which draws the reader into the spirit behind the form of the novel. That Kolbenheyer's use of the technique of the allegory has particular validity for his book Paracelsus is seen clearly and with complete justification by referring to the

historical life of the protagonist. Paracelsus noted that:

"Innumerable are the Egos of man; in him are angels and devils, heaven and hell, the whole of the animal creation, the vegetable and mineral kingdoms; and just as the little individual man may be diseased, so the great universal man has diseases, which manifest themselves as the ills which affect humanity as a whole. Upon this fact is based the prediction of future events." 49

The Trilogy

The three books of Kolbenheyer's trilogy are concerned with the life-span of a dæmonic individual who is completely and irrevocably engaged. As indicated by the preludes, Paracelsus' involvement with his universe does not reflect the 20th Century concern of a Sartre with the void (le néant), nor the scepticism of writers such as Valéry. Kolbenheyer and the historical Paracelsus suggest a profound unity in things; their concern is with the harmonious submission of the human Will to a benevolent fatality. It is for this, then, that the novel does not commence just at the beginning, but at the end as well, for the opening chapter follows the final fitful hours of a figure homeward-bound who struggles in an atmosphere which the future protagonist has not yet begun to breathe. A world is immediately brought into focus: a world of contesting powers, personal gain and communal loss; a world whose constant motion seems only to be stilled by some spiritual quiescence as yet undefined. Yet there is gentleness in this swirl of colour, as well as a compelling tension. The approach of death leads the returning figure back to his beginnings to make propitiations for actions against his own family. Driven by inner necessity, he fulfils



this final longing before succumbing to his battle wounds. His death is the resolution of his striving, and yet his passing heralds greater things. Before coldness has gripped his rigid form, the sound of birth rings through his home-- his kinsman, Theophrastus Paracelsus, is born. A new life is to run its own course, yet the direction is determined by the spirit and purpose of what has gone on before. The Dauer im Wechsel of Goethe (continuity in change) has again been expressed in a dynamic principle.

The childhood of Kolbenheyer's Paracelsus is a panoply of innocent experience. Unencumbered by the dogmatism of a maturer world, he tastes the beginnings of wisdom and feels the seeds of doubt. His child-like innocence gives a new dimension to freedom of spirit and gives his experience the lustre of poetry. This union of innocence and poetry, the one of which cannot exist without the other, is suggested in Goethe's sense. In these terms, to be a poet is to recognize a host of relationships amongst objects kept easily and unquestionably apart by the ordinary mind, the multitude and startling propriety of which are the very proof of the poet's vocation. This is the pattern of discovery which is as central to Kolbenheyer's

interpretation of the Paracelsus theme as the daemonic spirit itself. As a babe in arms, everything bears the name of unity for Theophrastus, and he bestows his unerring trust in life from an existence to which he shall never return save in an aged body and an enlightened mind.

The period of childhood is portrayed as one of constantly altering perspectives which prepare the basis for mature insight and physical death. His first perspective was an uncompromising one, for he had to admit that:

"Finster sehen die Dinge aus, wenn man sie an-  
kriechen muss...." 50

His observations, whose simple wisdom was to inform the life of Paracelsus, inspired his aggressive and dominating attitude to the dilemmas he later had to face. Yet as he grew in stature and pitted his eager mind and body against the elements which taunted his imagination, he was able to rise above his first level of awareness to perceive new realms. It is only when he has risen above a realm that he feels an amicable affinity towards it: the challenge is thus first accepted as an antagonism, and mastered through resolution with its polar opposite. The life process is constituted as a progressive challenge, for in the same measure that new

ground is gained the horizon moves ever outward maintaining its respectable but beckoning distance. But faithful to the myth, Paracelsus', longing knew no end and communed with

"...das Wunderbare, das über der Welt liegt, darin man laufen lernt." 51

The wonder and vitality of the child's world of minute discovery are bound inseparably with the fact that it cannot cede wholesomely to theories. Process and principle are always dominant. Kolbenheyer's interpretation of the child is a fine balance between innocent sensitivity and sophisticated perception.

The most striking feature about the workmanship in the novel is the subtlety with which the myth is cast in this new form. The themes of freedom, justice, theology, and love are skilfully woven into a pattern pre-determined by tradition. The mastery of these themes lies in their limitation to a biographical interpretation wherein the relevance of each element has been carefully weighed. It is for this reason that Kolbenheyer has first restricted the sense perception of Paracelsus to the period in childhood before he has learned to speak. Theology and justice are introduced before he has learned to reason. Love grows before he has become sophisticated,

and the need to enter the world as a young man arises when all these elements are fused. Thus the protagonist remains always one step ahead of the force which would kill his understanding of the moment.

Paracelsus' first intimation of what was later to become a mature philosophy was not the result of a study but of a game. Peering through three holes in an attic wall, he could see three distinctly different spheres beyond his home: a street-scene, a landscape, and a river. His imagination played with these views which became his three realms of longing. Later he was to find names for these realms, but at this stage he was content to 'know'.

"Er nannte es auch Firmament, das mit dem Kinde wird geboren, das zwischen Geburt und Todesstunde abläuft, zwischen Creatz und Prädestinat<sup>z</sup> wie er es nachmals hiess." 52

It is in the context of this experience that the German word for imagination (Einbildung) is of main importance. It signifies a Bildung which is drawn inward rather than evolved outward.

It is the technique of the novel to approach climactic scenes through slight variations in perspective. This makes the work realistic in the sense of faithfulness to the totality of human experience, and

permits the author to concentrate the most significant experiences of his protagonist and to project their meaning. Although specific scenes crystallize particular experiences and their resultant principles, the total pattern is that of a gradual process.

Paracelsus' first encounter with human justice held more implications than just those of man's relationship to his society; cosmic laws were involved. The adult world is contrasted with that of the child, the social conscience with an intuitive sense of right. The scene in question achieves its aim by juxtaposing two acts and two punishments. A petty thief is hanged for having stolen a doublet, and young Theophrastus is reprimanded for having attacked a cat which was preying upon a bird. The child, upon questioning the discrepancy in such justice, is stilled by being told that it is the cat's nature to kill-- human folly remains unjustified. Paracelsus' life was to bear the mark of this experience, for his process of perfection was to centre about the reconciliation of human nature with the divine Will. His answer lay in intuitive philosophy.

As the myth demands that the approach to truth be by way of the abyss of doubt, new doubts assail the growing mind. His despair is very marked during the

scene of the great pilgrimage to Einsiedeln. Impressions converge upon him of pilgrims carried along in waves of feeling, crying they know not what, and making offerings without knowing to whom. Neither justice nor the institution of the Church could be justified in terms of divine love, and the freedom of an innocent mind is threatened by the pressure of dogmatic conformity.

"Was der liebe Gott tuet, ist recht, Frästli,  
Do darf keiner nit fragen!

"Warumb nit?  
Weils der liebe Gott ist." 53

This is not the last time that Paracelsus is to feel the restless loneliness of the human heart, nor the desire for freedom. What marks the mythical element in the narrative is precisely the understanding that his freedom is the fortune of the outcast. The theological dilemma which will haunt the mature man also finds its beginnings in early childhood. The anticipation of the preludes and its later confirmation by the vigorous exponent of individual truth, is the imbalance between belief in a form and faith in its spirit. A memorable conversation between the young Paracelsus and an old parishioner while awaiting a miracle during the pilgrimage emphasizes the problem

with warm irony.

"Seind die Engel do gewest?"

"Unser Heiland ist do gewest?"

"Wo ist er hin?"

"Er ist ufgeopfert und ingenommen."

"Ich hab ihn nit gesehn."

"Bis guetes Muetes, Kind, die mehristen  
hant ihn nit gesehen." 54

The power of love as a redemptive principle is consistently adhered to throughout the novel. This links with the literary expression of Marlowe whose Faust was condemned by a surfeit of deadly sin in the form of self-love; it concurs with Goethe's Faust who was saved by self-less love; it is the polar opposite of Valéry's Faust in whose heart it found no place. It is significant for Kolbenheyer's work that the compassionate love of his protagonist becomes active before society is able to wean him from his innate feelings. Theophrast's power for action both in terms of himself and the world stands in direct proportion to his ability to give of himself. It is the haunting figure of the little rope-dancer --so reminiscent of Goethe's Mignon in Wilhelm Meister -- who is forced to entertain during the pilgrimage, and who first arouses Paracelsus. Her life in subjection to hard-ship and cruelty opens new vistas for him of which he can only just be aware.

The similarity between the rope-dancer and Mignon is deeper than the description of character and circumstance, for as elements in both novels they share a mutual purpose. As in Goethe's Bildungsroman Mignon symbolizes the mysterious element of the human constitution which speaks through the voice of conscience, the rope-dancer crystallizes Paracelsus' understanding with a penetrating warmth whose simple truth confounds.

"You should practise humility first toward man", writes the historical Paracelsus, "and only then toward God. He who despises man has no respect for God".<sup>55</sup>

In Paracelsian terms, this humility is expressed through love which is the reflection of the Light of Nature. Compassion has brought a moment of happiness to the rope-dancer; love has soothed the innermost tortures of a mother who is to die of insanity. Thus Paracelsus' father utters words of unknown prophecy which are to be fulfilled in later years:

"Wahrlich ein Arzet soll sin als du und soll sich nit sperren in kein Weis! Er soll alleinig dem Willen der Nature helfen, und er ist hie uf ein sanftes Verstreichen gericht."<sup>56</sup>

All elements of the first part of the trilogy have shaped the movement to indicate that the protagonist's life has reached beyond the bounds of



personal limitation. They have suggested a course of life which could only be foreseen intuitively, and which is subject to an as yet undefined universal principle. The energy of this principle has culminated in Paracelsus, yet the reflective element of the novel draws his father into the pattern. During his own growth into manhood, Theophrast's father:

"...war zu oft durch die Sternnacht geritten. Auch er wusste, dass jene funkelnden Gewalten mit bildender Influenz den Menschenleib durchdrängen, aber er fühlte, dass sie die äussersten Maschen und Knoten seien, darin eines Menschen Leben befangen ist." 57

The title of the second book, Das Gestirn, (The Constellation) serves a two-fold purpose. It suggests the transcendental nature of the ensuing narrative and focuses the position of Paracelsus in his ever-expanding circle of transformation. Paracelsus is a being of two distinct yet inter-acting worlds: the firmament, bearing a society which shall militate against the fruition of his aspirations; and the realm of Spirit to which he is intuitively drawn. By now his early life has been tempered by a profound organic growth whose stirring potential strength awaits the touch of articulate experience. For the historical Paracelsus articulate experience is a necessity for the process of redemption and freedom from

creatureliness. It is the motivating factor which transfers metaphysical awareness into conscious action and verbal symbols. It is a realization of what has earlier been implied by sensation.

Paracelsus has become the Mensch der Mitte,<sup>58</sup> living at the cross-roads of institutions, social forces, and transcendent thoughts. He is the man to whom it has befallen to experience the freedom of the outcast which his earlier years had presumed to know. Bitter loneliness is a burden which has to be borne in order to attain self-knowledge. With recognition of the forces converging within him comes the key to the harmonic structure underlying the unity and purpose of life.

"Die Zwischenwelt der Gestirne, sie umkreist dich und füllt - was du nur fühlend ahnst - dein innerstes Wesen mit Kräften und Trieben, die deinen elementarischen Sinnen erst offenbar werden, wenn du schon längst dem Willen deines Gestirnes nachlebst. Lern dein Gestirn erfassen, dein Firmament erschliessen, und du wirst dich selbst erkennen."<sup>59</sup>

At no time in the process of Becoming does the value of his experience become reduced to a common denominator which is socially acceptable; rather does it forcibly lead to a sharpened sense of Welteinsamkeit, the tension of which is one of the creative agents which

urge the resolution of vying principles and actions. Although the beginnings of the period of transformation and action harbour a drive which first barely breaks through the veil of consciousness, there is an affinity with the stirrings of a subliminal life-force. This is increased to the conception of a will to reach beyond the form of things in order to penetrate their ultimate nature. Whatever this will might be, it is as yet unclarified and unconscious, yet both hopelessly inescapable as well as tantamount to vigorous growth. The man in the centre of things (Mensch der Mitte) has received a pre-ordained call to find his God by following a road which cannot admit of rest or release. Just as his father before him had stood alone under the arch of heaven, so Theophrast Paracelsus:

"...sah die Sterne über sich von einem bedeutenden Wirken erfüllt, das ihn im Innersten treffen und auch gegen Wunsch und Furcht verborgenen Zielen zuleiten sollte." 60

The early part of Theophrastus' life, the period of formation, was the period in which he gradually came to perceive the diversity in life on innocent terms, and the ensuing cycle of growth demanded a unification of these factors in relation to the particular and the

universal. This implies that he first had to be submerged in the elements which would later evoke his censure. The convergence of polarity permitted him to develop a tangible point of departure for a fruitful course of life.

As the second book opens, Paracelsus has spent two of his most impressionable years as a pupil in a latin school maintained in a monastery of closed orders. The import of the preceding mystical allegories has been projected into the narrative with the result that one is strongly aware of the dichotomy of the situation. The current which flows beneath the level of the narrative infuses the work with a sense of impending crisis between ideology and ritual, ethics and practice. With a gentleness which can still resort to rather strong lines of distinction, Kolbenheyer has anticipated the seed of alienation and loneliness by contrasting the young lad with the regulated self-satisfaction of the latin monks. The impact of the descriptions eradicates the suggestion of fore-shadowing as a mere literary device, and expands the potential of this technique into a concept of Reality.

"Die Mönche hielten ihn für einen Homunculus und für einen dienstbaren Teufel, der zum Scheine nur das schwarze Schüलगewand trug." 61

Yet the mysterious attraction of what might be called elective affinities between the Bishop and his pupil restrained the momentum of what otherwise might have become an overt expression of latent collapse in the boy's development.

The real and symbolic element of the flame has united these two persons in the alchemic kitchen in a protracted search for meaning and unity in life. The knowledge gained by devotion to the flame, whose powers can both destroy and unite, is transposed into the symbol of language which bears the same profuse powers. Concentric and eccentric circles of growth are woven into one another to give continuity to the passage of time and life; as the Bishop is about to die he bequests his writing to Paracelsus with the warning to flee the monastery and never to return. The Bishop, who even after death is to remain an influence in Paracelsus' life, in no way negates his calling to religion by his words of warning. He represents a positive pole of human growth which must be considered a Paracelsian axiom in the principle of Bildung: a solid basis which may even only contain a modicum of the pure light of truth is prerequisite to development into higher spheres. The solidly-rooted and constantly

striving figure of the Bishop is by his action the symbol of the limitations of humanity, and provides the key to the fulfilment of longing.

The departure of Paracelsus from the latin school marks the close of another cycle whose conclusion permits a qualitative leap into a new and challenging milieu. The skills in the latin language have laden the young man's tongue rather than freed it, yet his basis is re-formed. He is later to learn in Italy that each person draws from the ground that understanding which has a necessary affinity for him. Yet he knows that he has to be able to progress equally from foreign ground in order to understand man. Bearing the Bishop's research papers as his sacred trust, Paracelsus moves into the uncloistered divided world, his mind possessed of an idea which is to direct his search:

"Aber du sollst meine Schrift nicht nur lesen. Alle Worte haben ein doppeltes Gesicht. Du sollst das innere sehen." 62

Before the full momentum of life can draw the protagonist to many lands and peoples in order to nourish his soul on experience, the simple longings for his beginnings lead him back to his father, who also has moved as life demands. It is an important but brief visit which underlines the inevitable necessity of

separation on diverging lines of growth. The volcanic flame of his father's chemist's furnace, which at one time had been his centre of attraction, is now inessential to the goal Paracelsus seeks. It represents a glow which, although inseparable from life, disease and death, is yet not the very heart of the art Paracelsus has to master. With secret longing he slips away from the path of his father to seek the fire in man. Thus just as fruit releases itself from the branch which gives it sustenance, Paracelsus sets off on another road, -this time into academic life. His father's only consolation is that the son seeks the well-springs of his art, not an honoured title.

The progression of life from this point onwards is directed toward the fulfilment of a prophecy which the father had felt and which the allegorical preludes had intimated. The movement, conforming to the tenets of staging a drama in its cycles of conflict, is dramatic without being theatrical. The conflict of will, which reveals itself in specific acts of volition, is seen from the first confrontation of an obstacle through its increasing complexity and partial resolution, to a reaffirmation of the original goal and a new effort of will. It is a continuing process, yet by no means

dialectical, as no third distinct element arises from the conflicts. It implies rather a re-instatement of the original conviction in new terms. The motive force for the continuation of the process is constituted by the tension or gap between the aim and the result. This process, which operates both on the physical and spiritual levels, is presented as Paracelsus' encounter with two large areas of experience: the world of theories as exemplified by his experience in universities, and his experience as battle-surgeon in war and doctor during pestilence.

Paracelsus' introduction to scholasticism, which all too quickly reveals its arid core, is a disillusionment of traumatic proportions. At no time is his world more painfully torn apart and scarred as after his irresponsible interjection during a debate in Tübingen when the irrelevant quotation he utters cuts through the icy sophistry of the learned faculty. That his brief and jocular participation in the disputation is not at once discredited serves only to shatter his vision of men whom he had thought worthy of esteem. Yet this negative reaction has its positive role, as is the case for all experience. Paracelsus now realises with great and painful clarity that these



scholars, who claim to serve truth, are unaware they are merely creating factions to dispute a word. Their goal is a skill and a doctoral honour which they can wear in their caps; his is a revelation. Everything he sees in the area of higher learning is:

"...Bericht und Bericht des Berichtes, nirgends lebendige Anschauung." 63

The inner conviction which invades his mind from distant realms of Being moves him to dream of the great art whose source he seeks -- the art which tears the innermost power from living things and binds it to other powers by the force of hot and assuaging fire. The image of fire is a real and symbolic representation of the alchemist's oven and the Philosopher's Stone. It signifies the search for the first and final cause of creation through harmony of the physical and spiritual worlds.

The unity of development in the narrative is enhanced by the recurrence of motifs and moods which act as leitmotifs of a subtle order. The reflective element is constantly active in this work in order to reduce the whole trilogy to one moment of immeasurable time. The author's vision of organic unity is a masterly reflection of the protagonist's striving, each of which paces the other with a measured tread. The

unity of the work and the unity of Bildung are one. Yet despite the subtlety of this contrapuntal progression, there are moments when unity is actually mentioned in relation to Paracelsus:

"Er überflügelte nicht nur Chymisten, er rang, indem er sie überflog, darnach, die Schlucht zu überwinden, die zwischen Medizin, der Kunst am Menschen, und Alchymie, der Kunst am Mineral, klaffte --eine neue unerhörte Einheit!" 64

The desire for unity leads him to ponder the mysteries of nature with its structure of humanity and deity, and to grasp for the flow of power which nourishes the human body until death. Once experience has taken root, his intuitively derived principles cause him to propound unheard-of theories. He is moved by principles whose provisory resolution lure him to new paths of thought along which man has not yet so profitably ventured. The final clarification of this contemplation relieves him of a burden and permits him to direct his life anew. He no longer seeks his revelation in the word or in faith, but in man himself. With the same conviction which later leads him to confess his trust in experience and the necessity of having his sleeves burned by the flames of personal discovery, he now fuses his understanding of the physical world with the sphere of philosophy. For, as he feels, if existence be unity:

"Warum suchte der Mensch sein Schicksal und Wesen dort in der ungemessenen Ferne? War er nicht selbst im Innersten ungemessen und grenzlos, so dass ein jedes noch so gewaltige Schicksal in der eigenen Lebenstiefe sein Bett finden konnte und nicht einer Sternwelt entströmen musste?" 65

What Paracelsus is to pass on to his students by words and to humanity by example, is first revealed within him as a prerequisite to the law of growth. As he has learned from his father to recognize humanity beneath the scars and to find himself in loneliness, by the same token he has to follow what he will later call the CODEX NATURAE. His summons is to wander in loneliness from country to country as leaves fall at the turn of their season when the sap has ceased to flow; to tread the book of nature with his feet in a conscious way so unlike the aridly scholastic Theoricus or Klosterbruder. The action of wandering and seeking afar in loneliness leads to the fruition of his transformation, for adversity holds both the challenge and the promise of fulfilment.

Of all the experiences which assail these impressionable and thirsty years of learning, it is from human chaos and misery that he perceives the road to an innate truth. Pestilence strikes in Italy, and Paracelsus puts his art to the test. The risk of participation amidst disease and death is not primarily

enhanced by the promise of a doctoral degree, for within Paracelsus there has sprung a deeper motive implicit in his motto:

Alterius non sit, qui suus esse potest!  
 Du sollt keins andern sin, do du bestohn kannst  
 in dir! 66

The virtue of this conviction lies within the very art he is called to practice. The spirit of his search calls him to come to active terms with the illnesses of man, rather than to dispel them with the leather tongues of conventional theories. In contrast to the learned doctors who flee the challenge, Paracelsus comes to grips with the plague and thereby invigorates (beseelt) his ethics by being true to himself.

The vital aspect of his plague experience is that he comes into contact with levels of the population which exist far out of reach of high-minded scholarship. The resolution of his medical problem represents for his Bildung an inter-weaving and interaction of learned sophistication and unschooled innocence, for even behind the shadow of superstition there lurks a small gleam of truth.

"Und sie wählten in ihrem Glauben an Gottes Fingerzeig Pflanzen und Tier, an denen sie Zeichen der Pest sahen ...Wesen die vom Gift leben oder Gift in sich tragen, ohne zugrunde zu gehen." 67

Despite the numerous deaths, his success in treatment gives his life a decisive direction. He now clearly recognizes the fiery nature of the poison which consumes the human body. Fire has to be fought with fire, and Paracelsus discovers medicines which bring on fever and thereby ease the dreaded scourge. The symbolic level of this experience is more significant than the fact itself.

Untested and equivocal theories have thus been condemned as anathema to the full utilisation of human faculties. There is a realisation of the absolute necessity of coming to terms with life within the frame-work established by human experience. The influences on Paracelsus have penetrated deeply, and although his action bears the stamp of originality, there is communion of human understanding which underlies the unity of life. Man is dust in a sunbeam; the subject of forces external to his own mind.

"Aber die Gedanken haben ihr eigenes Leben, sie suchen sich die Menschen auf, und nicht die Menschen sie. Man muss nicht alles gelesen haben, es ist immer dasselbe." 68

With this experience, the newly promoted "Doktor Pomposto ab Hohenheim Paracelsus" carries with him a lucid pronouncement on the spirit he has felt within

him for years, and which has been his aim: to get behind the external form of things in order to perceive their nature with his own shared spirit of truth.

"Und doch ist alles nur Form, nichts Gewissheit. Jede Form lügt aus einem Funken Wahrheit heraus, von dem sie zehrt. Was ist ein einzelner, mein Kind? Nichts. Sein Bestes ist ein Strahl jenes Funkens, der ihm nicht gehört....Meister ist, wer alle Erfahrungen meistert, vor dessen Augen die Sterne der andern zerrinnen, ein Spiel der Anschauungen, der Formen. Meister ist allein, dem das Eigene zu gering wird, der über das Gran seiner Erfahrungheit hinwegkommt und das Skrupel seiner Phantasie nicht überschätzt." 69

Assuming the attitude of the Wanderer of the allegories, his beard heavy with ice. Paracelsus moves on in search of the inner form. The freedom of the outcast which he perceived as a child weighs heavily upon him, yet he cannot lose his heart to dreams. His spirit is filled with the struggles of formulation. He has to act and live according to the will which drives him through his inner evolution-- the ENS PRIMUM of all being is the portion of his burden and his liberation as well. Spurned by those whose social status and esteem would have been slandered by the truth of new medical discoveries, and cast out by learned faculties whose esoteric arts he would have toppled, Paracelsus becomes ever more deeply immured in an uncompromising Welteinsamkeit. His only

hope is to write and learn with a basis in the law of nature.

His longing spreads wings and the martyr's road which has been his life slips by as in a dream.

"Sein verhehlter Schmerz, sein bitterer Trotz loderten auf, ein kaum bezwingbares Schamgefühl-- überall hochmütige, höhnische Gesichter unter den Baretten und überall neiderfüllte, hasskalte Blicke. Und sein Herz, vor Verlangen berstend, ihnen auszuteilen, was den Geist in Überlast der Erkenntnisse, Gesichte und Erfahrung bedrängte." 70

The title of the third book, Das Dritte Reich, has had disastrous consequences for the whole trilogy. It has been taken as the Third Reich of Nazism [instead of] as the Third Realm of Paracelsus' longing. It is to be expected that violence could be done to a work which bears such an ominous title as this; the deprecation of the novel is due to the Nazis who forced it to conform to their political jargon, and to critics who blame the author for the treatment which his work received at the hands of national interests. These have denied the work the right to speak for itself. The statement of this book concerns nothing but the condition which Paracelsus described as Prädestinatuz. In the more recent terminology of Père Teilhard de Chardin, Prädestinatuz is the con-

dition of 'ultra-hominisation' wherein the development of man has reached a point requiring new form.

The importance of this final book lies in its serving to conclude the literal narrative of the trilogy in terms of pure 'story', and in resolving the contrapuntal progression which has passed from stillness to Promethean greatness and back to its source. It is the closing link of a three dimensional mandala of form and spirit whose balance has been achieved by its controlled direction of vitality. The heat of the flame of romantic longing for the indescribable has here become the pure light of classical equilibrium. Indeed Kolbenheyer's style has not altered throughout the narrative, yet there is an uncanny awareness that his understanding of Paracelsus as a man has been projected into his own treatment of the theme. Thus the culmination of mood and import is close to the characteristics one might expect to see in a Spätwerk: there is an extraordinary assurance of man's ever-deepening and thus enduring identity.

Paul Valéry's description of Bossuet <sup>71</sup> is equally appropriate as the expression of Paracelsus' Bildung, for Paracelsus also set forth powerfully from silence, growing animated little by little, until he



ended in complete resolution of his strength. The sense of polarity, or opposition of principles and forces, operates on many levels throughout the books. The parallel development of Paracelsus' mind runs along two distinct paths: the understanding of form (life) and the understanding of spirit (art of medicine and philosophy). If we adopt the mathematical definition of parallel lines as being lines which meet in infinity, this understanding will produce immediate fusion of the aspects which are presented in the last book. Another positive approach to the balance of forces is to consider that there is an element which is central to literature in general and also to Bildung - the mysterious. From this one notices two beings or poles in the human or literary constitution: the known and the unknown, whose exchanges give birth to an entirely new constituent.

The presence of these subliminal factors in Paracelsus' development in no way implies that the book is abstract, for the vitality of their contribution lies in the fact that the protagonist is in the centre of an essentially human situation with fusion of the principles of Bildung and Entwicklung. His mind, which has always sought first principles,

remains ever alive to the individuals about him, and this movement is set in a constant condition wherein poetry, thought, and sheer living are all one.

The serene composure of the final book reflects the goal toward which the preceding two volumes have been striving: the perfection of consciousness. Here the meditations of Paracelsus are turned just as much outward as inward, and the balance in the resultant Weltanschauung suggests comparison with Goethe's mentality in later years. As it was with Goethe, Paracelsus' maturity lay between optimism and resignation, a state of mind which might more accurately be described as being a sentient acceptance based on trust and confidence. That this quiescent level of formation has been reached by Paracelsus is perceived through the mood which arises from the work itself, and equally through the statements which the protagonist is able to formulate. His intuitive formulations unify his life in terms of past and future and emphasize the presence of principles which apply directly to Bildung in action. Cohesive order pervades his sense of progress through the awareness of polarity. For him, the result of experience seen from the quietude of age demands that an individual transcend himself by growing outward to

humanity as well as upward to deity. Form and meaning are held in balance.

The pinnacle of the progress of Bildung is to be seen as the mature realisation of life after the release of Promethean energy has been expended and softened by organic experience. This progression, which Paracelsus saw retrospectively from the humanity he held behind the scars of life, draws the three books of the trilogy into one; it moreover surrenders their action into the broad meaning of the mystic allegories.

"Es hat Gott allen Dingen ihr Zit geben, ufdass sie wachsen sullen und darvor nit zittig sin. Und vor dem und es zur Frucht kumbt, so loufen viel für: am ersten die Sprosslen, darnach die Schössling, darnach die Blust, darnach die Frucht. Sullt aber die Frucht des Menschen, das ist sin Verstand und Gab, abzescheiden sin, do er ein Schössling war? Gott ist, der dich fliegen lässt, er lässt dich wähen, meinen, schätzen, achten. Und aber so du meinst, du sigest hoch in den dritten Himmel geflogen...." 72

The final resolution of the constant struggle between form and meaning in the life of Paracelsus takes a turn which offers a striking dimension in the Bildungserlebnis for the reader, for the narrative reaches beyond the scope of the printed word and at the same time offers a solution which moves beyond human rationality. The root of this statement lies in

Paracelsus' concept of man being dust in a sunbeam: the possessor and the possessed of ultimate Existence and Deity. In his final hours, the word of creatureliness has become quickened above the sleep and dream of Man's will, and the conviction holds firm that man is a part of God --a part which can say "I will" because God alone can say "I can". From this standpoint all outward form becomes extraneous to the search for meaning, and the circle of Becoming is completed by rejecting "...Wort, Schrift, Wille..." <sup>73</sup> in favour of a basis in man himself. The import of this suggests a further comparison with Goethe who understood growing old as a gradual receding from the appearances of things and a penetrating into the reality behind these appearances ("...stufenweises Zurücktreteten aus der Erscheinung...") <sup>74</sup>

If we agree with André Malraux that the most complete moment of an artist is based equally on the rejection of his masters and all that he himself once was, the waning figure of Paracelsus, which slips ghost-like but assuredly through the final pages of the trilogy, will seem equally complete. His precept and power have been in giving constantly of the force which was within him in accordance with the maturity

of the moment, but now "...Er konnte sich nicht mehr geben und hatte sich nie gespart. War das der Tod?" 75

Once the pinnacle of self-realisation and unity with life had been achieved, the process of development could be rejected by the more freely flowing spirit, for the transcendent resolution which was alluded to earlier lay "Jenseits von Staub und Scherben...." 76 and "...Über allem Staunen, Jenseits von Glauben und Wunder". 77 The resolution, has now assumed a static quality which no longer becomes but "is".

"Der im Wachsen War, ist reif. Die Zeit der Summers is hie. Von wannen er kumt, das weiss ich nit, wohin er geht, das weiss ich nit: er ist da". 78

The implication of this statement is harmony in existence.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

Extract from John Donne, Ignatius His Conclave, (p. 366ff)

Paracelsus replied, "It were an injurie to thee, ô glorious Emperour, if I should deliver before thee, what I have done, as thogh al those things had not proceeded from thee, which seemed to have bin done by me, thy organe and conduit: yet since I shal rather be thy trumpet herein, than mine own, some things may be uttered by me. Besides therefore that I brought all Methodicall Phisitions, and the art it selfe into so much contempt, that that kind of phisick is almost lost; This also was ever my principal purpose, that no certaine new Art, nor fixed rules might be established, but that al remedies might be dangerously drawne from my uncertaine, ragged, and unperfect experiments, in triall whereof, how many men have beene made carkases? And falling upon those times which did abound with paradoxicall, and unusuall diseases, of all which, the pox, which then began to rage, was almost the center and sinke; I ever professed an assured and an easy cure thereof, least I should deterre any from their licentiousnesse, And whereas almost all poysons are so disposed and conditioned by nature, that they offend some of the senses, and so are easily discerned and avoided, I brought it to passe, that that trecherous quality of theirs might bee removed, and so they might safely bee given without suspicion, and yet performe their office as strongly. All this I must confesse, I wrought by thy minerals and by thy fires, but yet I cannot dispaire of my reward, because I was thy first Minister and instrument, in these innovations"... Ignatius ... said; "You must not thinke sir, that you may heere draw out an oration to the proportion of your name. It must be confessed, that you attempted great matters, and well becomming a great officer of Lucifer, when you undertook not onely to make a man, in your Alimbicks, but also to preserve him immortall. And it cannot be doubted, but that out of your Commentaries upon the Scriptures, in which you were utterly ignorant, many men have taken occasion of erring, and thereby this kingdome much indebted to you....Neither doth Paracelsus truly deserve the name of an Innovator, whose doctrine, Severinus and his other followers do referre to the most ancient times. Thinke therefore your selfe well

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

satisfied, if you be admitted to governe in chiefe that Legion of homicide Phisitians, and of Princes which shall be made away by poyson in the midst of their sins, and of woemen tempting by paintings and face-phsicke. Of all which sorts great numbers will daily come hither out of your Academy."

Content with this sentence, Paracelsus departed;....

(Underscore replaces italics of original)



APPENDIX B

Gedicht in Knittelversen, das die Verdienste Hohenheims, des Arztes Theologen und Juristen, schildert, findet sich auf einem Paracelsus-Flugblatt, das um 1600 entstand und von Netzhammer in sein Buch aufgenommen: Theophrastus Paracelsus: Das Wissenswerte über dessen Leben Lehre und Schriften, in Bartscherer p. 307.

All kunst und artzeney man findt  
 Beim Theophrasto so geschwindt,  
 Als vor wol bey dreitausend jarn  
 Bei keinem menschen ward erfarn.  
 Als Pestilentz, Schlag, Fallend sucht,  
 Aussatz und Zipperlin verrucht  
 Sampt andre kranckheit mancher art  
 Hat er geheilt der hochgelart.  
 Wie Durer in der Molerej,  
 So dieser in der Artzeney:  
 Vor und nach ihnen keiner kam,  
 Der Ihm hierin den preis benam.  
 Must es darumb vom Teufel sein?  
 Dasselb sej fern, ach nein, ach nein.  
 Entdeckt der kunsten irthum all,  
 Missbrauch, abgangk, und gantzen fall.  
 Ob er in Heilger Schrift studiert,  
 Wird aus seinn büchern gnug probiert.  
 Dann aus seinn bej vierhundert schrifften  
 Leern Artzt, Theologen und Juristen.  
 Was nur in Himml und Erden ist,  
 Wust dieser Doctor z'allrer frist.  
 Doch war er feint der schwartzen kunst,  
 Die man Ihn bezichtigt aus Ungunst.  
 Auch Philosophisch stein hat gmacht,  
 Damit die menschen wider bracht  
 Vom Doot. Darzu die groben metall  
 Hat er fein säubern können all  
 In silber und in rotes Golt:  
 Wer wölt nun solchem nicht sein holt?  
 Hat all sein gut den armen geben,  
 Gott geb ihm jetz das ewig leben.

APPENDIX C

Franz Keim, Paracelsus v. Hohenheim in Aus dem Sturmgang des Lebens, Gesammelte Werke, Bd. I, Leipzig, 1912, p. 271 in Reclam p. 98.

1. O Paracelsus, heil'ger Mann  
In deiner Weisheit Völle  
Wir beten dich in Ehrfurcht an  
Im "Wirtshaus zu der Hölle".

2. Das echte Lebenselixier  
Der Wahrheit tiefster Bronnen,  
War deinem Geist altbayrisch Bier,  
Vom Zapfen frisch gewonnen.

3. Das gross und kleine Weltgebäu,  
Des Universums Tiefen  
Studiertest du beim "Höllensbräu",  
Wenn Tier und Menschlein schliefen,

4. Da blicktest du ins feuchte Glas  
Und tatest andächtig nippen,  
Es wurden dir die Auglein nass,  
Der Schaum stand vor den Lippen.

5. Allmitternächtlich tatest du stumm  
Den letzten Liter leeren,  
Du hörtest im Delirium  
Die Harmonie der Sphären.

6. Sie liessen dich in Acht und Bann  
Der bösen Dummheit sterben,--  
O, Paracelsus, heil'ger Mann,  
Sie liessen dich verderben!

7. Du warst der schlaun Welt zu klug,  
Du warst -- es ist kein Zweifel --  
Fürs Himmelreich nicht fromm genug:  
Drum holte dich der Teufel.

APPENDIX D

Hans Friedrich Blunck, Parazelsus singt, in  
Neue Balladen, Jena, 1931.

Herr von Hohenheim, Parazelsus genannt,  
Berühmtester Arzt für Gallen und Brand,  
Kehrt singend vom Fest. Die Mitternacht zieht,  
Die Winde tanzen nach seinem Lied:  
'Es sein Geschöpfe unter der Sphär,  
Nicht Mensch, nicht Teufel, doch gotteshher.  
Ich kenn sie alle nach Namen und Sinn;  
Der Doktor Luther hielt ungefähr  
Ein Wasserweib für eine Teufelin.'

Die Luft ist kalt, des ist er gefeit;  
Der Degen klirrt an seiner Seit,  
Und er singt zum Mond und er singt zum Stern,  
Hielt' fröhlich den weiten Himmel gern.  
'Ach Mensch und abermals Menschlein klein,  
Wer über dich sinnt, muss trunken sein;  
Von Luther befochten, vom Teufel versucht,  
Lad ich dich zu deinen Geistern ein,  
Zwiefach geheilt, zwiefach verflucht.'

Der Hohenheim, Parazelsus genannt,  
Klinkt offen die Tür mit starker Hand.  
- Da stand in der Kammer, die ihn behaust,  
Der Böse selbst, ein Schwert in der Faust.  
'He, Meister, er ward mir zu klug über Tag,  
Was spürt er den Wassern und Lüften nach?  
Nun messe er sich mit der Dunkelheit,  
Nun zieh er blank und parier meinen Schlag,  
Um Mitternacht kommt auch der Teufel weit.'

Der Hohenheim, Parazelsus genannt,  
Reckt' sich, da wuchs ihm die vierfache Hand.  
Aus Feuer und Wasser und Erde und Luft  
Vier Klängen blitzen: 'Verfluchter Duft,  
Hab auch meine Freunde unter der Sphär,  
Nicht Mensch, nicht Teufel, doch gotteshher;  
Versuch's!' Da prasselt der weisse Kalk,  
'He, hier! Und diesen! Parier, noch mehr?'  
Und der Globus stürzt und der Riesenalk;

APPENDIX D (cont'd)

Und Glaser in Stücken, Mixturengestank,  
 Das raucht und schwärt beim 'Gott sei Dank';  
 Der Teufel hüpft, vier Klängen zugleich,  
 Die fechten wie's heilige Himmelreich.  
 'Und dies, parier, und das, gib acht,  
 Das hatte der Herr sich wohl leichter gedacht?'  
 Und endlich ein Fluch, dass Gott sich erbarm:  
 Der Teufel saust in die flackernde Nacht,  
 Und mit ihm ein schwirrender Bremsenschwarm.

Der Hohenheim, Parazelsus genannt,  
 Horcht nach der Tür, wo der Teufel verschwand.  
 Er stiert um sich hin: Was er sich buk,  
 Retorten und Spiegel sind Scherben und Spuk;  
 Die Ofen qualmen ihm dick und braun,  
 Er tritt auf Kruken mit Pech und Alaun,  
 Und lacht und hockt sich zur Tinte und Brummt:  
 'Der Teufel verlor an Zähnen und Klaun,  
 Er weiss nun, was Parazelsus frummt.'

Und pfeift mit dem Wind und dankt seinem Ritt,  
 Dem Wasser, dem Feuer, das für ihn stritt,  
 Und schreibt, noch trunken, und kraust seine Stirn:  
 'Viel Geister hab ich in Königsgeschirrn,  
 Hoho, viel Freunde unter der Sphär,  
 Nicht Mensch, nicht Teufel, doch gottesher.  
 Mir dienen sie alle nach Namen und Sinn;  
 Der Doktor Luther hielt ungefähr  
 Ein Wasserweib für eine Teufelin.'

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gesehen/selbs angerichtet und getrieben/biss  
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-(Mehrertheils auss seinen eygenen hinderlassenen  
Schrifften/allen hochtragenden/fur witzigen und  
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