NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Representing “The Marquise of O—”:
Disruptions and Subjectivity

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Field of Performance Studies

By
Lisa Tatiana Parkins

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

December 2006
ABSTRACT

Representing “The Marquise of O—”:
Disruptions and Subjectivity

Lisa Tatiana Parkins

This study examines contemporary theatrical, filmic, and pictorial representations of Heinrich von Kleist’s 1807 novella, “The Marquise of O—.” It particularly focuses on the development of a solo music theatre production by a team of German/American, independent theatre artists, of which I was one, in the auditorium of the German Consulate of New York in April 2003. The study integrates research on Kleist, Bertolt Brecht, Bauhaus Theatre, cabaret, representation, feminist theory, and performance aesthetics.

Chapter One considers how a music theatre adaptation from the Western canon may articulate a response to the mind/body split. The plot of “The Marquise of O—” is discussed. The impetus for conceptualizing a solo performance of the novella is explained.

Chapter Two provides an overview of Kleist’s life, his work, and its reception from the Romantic era to the present. “The Marquise of O—“ is analyzed. Kleist’s influence on twentieth-century artists is considered.
Chapter Three analyzes construction of mother and daughter characters in “The Marquise of O—” and Brecht’s theatre. Concepts of alienation and historization in epic theatre and their use in contemporary feminist-based performance are examined.

Chapter Four is an overview of early cabaret traced through its geographical centers from fin de siècle Paris through to Berlin and Munich in the Weimar Republic. Representations of women cabaretists are considered. Cabaret’s legacy is addressed.

Chapter Five investigates the aesthetic and philosophical influence of Kleist’s “On the Puppet Theatre.” Puppet theory relative to human simulacra used in the solo music theatre production is considered.

Chapter Six discusses the score for the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of O—.” My musical lineage is traced in context with an investigation of the show’s lyrics and music.

Chapter Seven examines the solo music theatre production’s staging. The production team, co-adaptation process, rehearsal period, performance, and its reception are discussed.


The conclusion situates the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of O—” in post 9/11 America. It summarizes this study and provides suggestions for further research.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was made possible through the sustained support of my teachers, colleagues, friends, and family. All of them gave me much needed guidance, criticism, and encouragement. Without their assistance, this dissertation would never have come to completion.

My very special thanks go to my advisor Professor Carol Simpson Stern for her genuine commitment to this study. Her astute commentary, attention to detail, and absolute integrity has inspired me to think more deeply and be more articulate about the material.

I want to express my warmest thanks to the other members of my committee: Professor Craig Kinzer, for contributing to my understanding of the theatre of Bertolt Brecht; and Professor Frank Galati, for his insightful feedback during the development of the solo recital of “The Marquise of O—.” Several other Department of Performance Studies faculty members helped me to clarify my thinking in the early stages of my research. My sincere thanks go to Professors Susan Manning, Paul Edwards, and Margaret Thompson Drewel for their unique intellectual contributions.

I am grateful to Lawrence J. Henschen, Associate Dean of the Graduate School for providing me with eleventh hour support. Kudos must be expressed to Alan Shefsky, Department of Performance Studies Coordinator, for always being so helpful.
I would like to acknowledge all those who helped to bring the full-length production of “The Marquise of O—” into being. First and foremost, I am indebted to Dr. Eelka Lampe for generously devoting so many hours to the project as co-adaptor, dramaturge, and director. Her artistic vision, intellectual prowess, and keen ability to meet every challenge has taught me what collaborative art making is at its best. I want to convey my deep appreciation to the other members of the production team: Carol Mullins, Neal Borowsky, and Caroline Gioanni. Thanks also to Fattah Abehal. Their superb contributions help to make The Marquise of O— a reality.


Several of my colleagues and friends deserve mentioning. I wish to thank Katt Lissard for sparking my interest in Weimar era cabaret. Thanks also to Maude Merlo for the lively discussions about the “feminine principle”. I thank my former colleague from the Department of Performance Studies, Dr. Audrey Colby, for her suggestions after reading an early draft of the study. I want to express my appreciation to Natalie Mosco, Peter Solow, and Susan Weeks for many things, great and small.

My family has been an invaluable source of encouragement and support. Thanks to Roland Parkins for recording the musical score and for his critical input on my musical analysis.
I am grateful to Loretta Parkins and Andrea Parkins for their incisive comments on the work in progress. Finally, I thank Iromie Weeromantry, Zeena Parkins, and Dr. Marilyn Plotkins for graciously aiding and abetting my cause.

I dedicate this study to all of you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. “My Daughter, You Must Leave My House!”: Pop Music Culture and the Mind/Body Split ............................................. 10

2. Heinrich von Kleist’s “The Marquise of O—”: Writing the Poetics of Paradox and Disruption from Romanticism into the Postmodern Era .............................................. 33

3. The Construction of Mothers and Daughters in “The Marquise of O—” and the Theatre of Bertolt Brecht ................................................................. 95

4. Representations of Women in Early European Cabaret .................................................. 127

5. Re-imagining Kleist’s “On the Puppet Theatre” and the Discourse of Grace ............ 164


7. Staging Disruption and Subjectivity: A Solo Music Theatre Production of “The Marquise of O—” ......................................................... 268
8. “The Marquise of O—” on Film: Éric Rohmer’s Opium Tea Dreamer and Christoph Stark’s Schoolgirl in the Grass ................................................................. 337

9. Conclusion: When Tall Letters Collapse .......................................................... 368

Appendix ........................................................................................................... 377

Works Cited ..................................................................................................... 409
CHAPTER ONE
“My Daughter, You Must Leave My House!”:
Pop Music Culture and The Mind/Body Split

The mind/body split that has plagued Western culture for centuries shows up most paradoxically in attitudes toward music: the most cerebral, nonmaterial of media is at the same time the medium most capable of engaging the body. This confusion over whether music belongs with mind or with body is intensified when the fundamental binary opposition of masculine/feminine is mapped on to it. To a very large extent that mind is defined as masculine and body as feminine in Western culture, music is always in danger of being perceived as a feminine (or effeminate) enterprise altogether. And one of the means of asserting masculine control over the medium is by denying the very possibility of participation by women. (151)

— Susan McClary, 
Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality.

A work of fiction is a cultural product that is reflective of the author’s vision within the place and time in which it was created. Psychological, social, and historical portents are manifested in the social reality presented by that fiction, among them, the relative feminization of consciousness in western society. Performance of fiction allows for re-interpretation of the text using various strategies that determine its multi-layered representation. In Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht’s (1898-1956) epic theatre, songs served as one of a number of alienation devices to problematize social relations, particularly in terms of class. Because of the subversive connotations implicit in its history, music theatre is an ideal mode through which to explore representation. Through free interplay between the literary canon of high culture and popular song, in the spaces between high and low culture, social commentary emerges. This type of performative event fulfills the postmodernist objective, for as Hal Foster wrote, “post-modernism
is best conceived as a conflict of new and old modes” (1983 xi). In 1983, art critic Craig Owens explained that the postmodernist work of art undermines the universal authority of aesthetic forms and attempts to destabilize the Western male system of representation. Owens specified the agenda of contemporary women artists, working for the most part, within the existing repertory of cultural imagery: “their subject, feminine sexuality, is always constituted in and as representation, a representation of difference” (58, 71).

The present study documents the process of co-adapting, composing, performing, and co-producing Heinrich von Kleist’s (1777-1811) novella, “Die Marquise von O——” (“The Marquise of O——”) (1808), in the form of a solo, music theatre piece by a German/American production team of independent theatre artists, of which I was one. The production took place in the German House Auditorium at the German Consulate of New York in April 2003. A videotape of The Marquise of O—— is on file with the Northwestern University Archives at the Evanston Campus and the script for the production is included in the Appendix of this study. The dissertation examines this production in terms of its historical and aesthetic antecedents, the composition, co-adaptation, and rehearsal process, the performance and its reception. Alternate contemporary film representations of the novella are analyzed. The purpose of this study is to consider how a performative reading of a fiction such as “The Marquise of O——” may articulate subjectivity within a tale of disruption, thus generating a response to the mind/body split.

“The Marquise of O——,” a parodic melodrama, is the tale of an aristocratic young widow, Julietta, the daughter of Colonel G——, the Commandant of a citadel in M——, a town in Northern Italy. As the story opens, this respectable mother of two children, who has been living a
secluded life with her parents, publishes a notice asking that the father of her unborn child make himself known, thereby exposing herself to public ridicule. In flashback, the reader is transported back to a wartime scene at the citadel. Colonel G— defends the citadel against an attack by Russian forces. When the residence is set on fire, the Marquise and her children are inadvertently separated from the rest of the family. At a back door, she is accosted by a gang of Russian soldiers and dragged into a courtyard. A Russian officer appears, and with his sword drives the attackers away from their prey. To the Marquise, the officer is like an angel. Speaking in French, the officer escorts her into another wing of the fortress “in which the flames had not yet reached” (Kleist 69). Here, the Marquise swoons. Then, texually represented by a dash, the officer rapes the unconscious woman. Afterward, he summons the servants to call for a doctor to attend to the Marquise, and returns to the scene of battle.

Meanwhile, the Commandant is unable to hold the fortress. At the main gate, he hands over his sword and the citadel to the Russian officer. Reunited with her family, the unsuspecting Julietta considers the officer, Count F—, to be her savior. The Russian general arrives. He asks Count F— to name the soldiers that had attacked the Marquise, but the Count is evasive. However, the perpetrators are found out, and the general orders them shot by a firing squad. The Russian forces, including the Count, depart before the Marquise has a chance to thank her rescuer. Soon after, the family is informed that Count F—, fatally wounded in battle, had called out at the moment he was shot, “Guilietta, this bullet avenges you” (Kleist 73).

The Marquise assumes that Count F— was referring to some one else with the same first name. Presuming he is dead, she is heartbroken. The family moves into a house in town, where
the Marquise resumes her customary activities: reading, drawing, and educating her children. Several weeks later, she begins to exhibit signs of ill health. At morning tea with her mother, Julietta remarks that she feels much as she had during her second pregnancy. The women joke at the impossibility of Julietta’s being pregnant given her sequestered life: Morpheus would have to be the father. Soon after, to the family’s surprise, Count F— turns up fully recovered from his wounds, according to the narrator, “looking as beautiful as a young god” (Kleist 74).

Count F—, questioning the Marquise as to her physical state, concludes what no one else yet knows: the lady is pregnant. Intending to cover up his crime, the Count abruptly proposes. Count F— recounts that, during his convalescence, delirious, he saw Julietta at his bedside and confused her image was a childhood incident in which he threw mud at a swan. The swan dove under fiery water and resurfaced, purified. The Count threatens to abandon his official duties to stay on at the Commandant’s house, hoping to expedite a wedding. This hysterical demonstration prompts Colonel G—, speaking for his daughter, to ask for more time to consider the proposal. The Marquise promises not to marry any one else in the meanwhile. At this, Count F— departs for Naples, intending to return as his duties are fulfilled.

The Marquise’s symptoms recur. She is examined, first by a doctor, and then, by a midwife. The doctor curtly informs her that she is pregnant. The midwife confirms the doctor’s diagnosis, assuring her that, “the gay corsair that has come ashore in the dark would come to light in due course” (Kleist 90).

At this, the Marquise faints. Once revived, she claims not to know who the father is, but her mother, presuming that her daughter is lying, leaves her side in disgust. She asks the
midwife if perhaps Immaculate Conception were possible, but is assured that only the Virgin Mary could accomplish it. The Marquise receives papers drawn up by Colonel G—, tearfully dictated by his wife, disowning their daughter. Rushing to her father’s rooms, Julietta tries to claim her innocence. Colonel G—, after unsuccessf ully shutting the door in her face, fires off a pistol. The Marquise makes immediate preparations to leave the house with her children. Her brother, following his father’s orders, requests that Julietta leave her two children behind.

In a moment of defiance, the Marquise takes her children by coach out to the country estate at V— she had lived in with her late husband. Shut off from the outside world, she resumes her children’s education and repairs her rundown estate. She decides that her unborn child is a gift from God. Although convinced her rapist must be from the lowest social strata, in order that the baby be accepted in society, the Marquise devises the public notice with the intention of marrying the unknown father.

The Count returns to M— and learns from Julietta’s brother that she is in exile. Galloping out to V—, Count F—is turned away at the main gate, but he sneaks through an open gate. The Count finds Julietta seated in a garden, where he aggressively renews his proposal. She refuses Count F— vehemently. Slowly riding back to M—, the Count decides to write a letter confessing his crime. At a tavern, Count F— runs into Julietta’s brother. The Commandant’s son points out the notice that she has placed in the paper. The Count decides to print a reply saying that the father of the child will appear at an appointed day and time at the house of the Commandant.
Meanwhile, Colonel G—‘s wife is frustrated by her husband’s refusal to consider the possibility of their daughter’s innocence. On her own initiative, she decides on a plan to find out if Julietta is lying. The Colonel’s wife takes a coach driven by Leopardo, the family’s groom, out to V—. Here, she sorely tests her daughter, falsely stating that the rapist had come forward. Mystified, Julietta asks his name. The mother asserts that the culprit is Leopardo. Horrified, Julietta recounts that once, on awaking from a mid-day nap on a sofa, she had seen Leopardo moving away from her. At this, the mother begs her daughter’s forgiveness, “I want no greater honor than your shame” (Kleist 104).

Julietta assures her mother that she forgives her. In the coach on the return trip, they joke about Leopardo even as they wonder whom it is that will show up to confess. Once back at the house, Colonel G—’s wife finally convinces her husband that their daughter is telling the truth. She leaves Colonel G— and Julietta alone and a passionate reconciliation scene ensues. Peeking through a keyhole, Colonel G—’s wife delightedly observes her husband kissing and caressing their daughter, “just like a lover” (Kleist 107).

On the appointed day, Count F— appears at the family’s house wearing the battle dress he wore when first storming the citadel. In the presence of Julietta and her mother, a contrite Count F— admits his guilt. Julietta is outraged at his deception. She now perceives Count F—

---

1 Michel Chaouli has pointed out that Kleist calls the servant, “Leopardo der Jäger,” meaning hunter or huntsman, inferring that Leopard’s prey is Julietta. This study uses the Luke and Reeves translation, which identifies Leopard as “the groom,” a pun that sets up the irony of the ensuing scene. See Michel Chaouli, “Irresistible Rape: The Lure of Closure,” Yale Journal of Criticism 17.1 (2004): 51-81.
as a devil. Julietta’s mother urges her to forget and forgive. But Julietta, as if to purify her family, defiled by their willingness to accept the Count’s transgression, throws holy water on them and rushes from the room. The Commandant orders Count F— to show up for a wedding ceremony at the Church of St. Augustine. Julietta refuses to listen to her uncomprehending family’s advice. Colonel G— submits a legal document to Count F— guaranteeing marital responsibilities while limiting conjugal relations whereupon Julietta agrees to the marriage.

After the wedding, the new Countess continues to live in her father’s house. When a boy is born, Count F— awards a large sum of money to the child, and in event of his death, makes his wife heir to his fortune. After a year, Julietta forgives her husband. A second wedding is celebrated. They all move back to V—, where normal marital relations between the couple result in “a whole series of young Russians” (Kleist 113). The Count asks his wife why she repulsed him when he confessed to his crime. “. . . she answered that she would not have seen a devil in him then if she had not seen an angel in him at their first meeting” (Kleist 113).

It is helpful to revisit the “Why?” of the production. The impetus for me to conceptualize a solo performance of “The Marquise of O—” came about as a result of my experiences as a dancer, singer, and songwriter seeking a place in the mainstream entertainment industry in New York City from 1980-1985. I began my professional life as a concert dancer following ten years of classical, modern, and jazz training. I studied keyboard theory, harmony, and voice intensively. I became a serious singer and songwriter. I performed my songs solo on guitar and piano. I fronted art rock bands in downtown Manhattan venues. My long-term goal was to be a commercially successful recording artist. To that end, I tried out several performance personas:
waif/woman folkie, sexy chanteuse, and chick singer with a brain. For this last incarnation, I adopted the pseudonym of Lisa Bartok. Identifying myself with a canonized male composer was my ironic way of signaling that I was a “serious” artist too.

But no matter how I styled and presented myself, I encountered a considerable amount of sexism from male musicians, producers, and other entertainment industry workers. In one example, a male photographer at a photo shoot advised me to “dress sexier, or you won’t get a deal.” But I was purposely trying to down play my curvaceous body because I wanted to draw attention to my face, my voice, and the songs. John Berger wrote that presence for a man expresses embodied power, whereas a woman internalizes her identity according to how she is perceived:

By contrast a woman’s presence expresses her own attitude to herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her. Her presence is manifest in her gesture, voice, opinions, expression, clothes, chosen surroundings, taste—indeed there is nothing she can do which does not contribute to her presence. Presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that men tend to think of it as an almost physical emanation, a kind of heat or smell or aura . . . And so she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituted not yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman.

She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance to what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another. (46-47)

I took a job as Night Manager at A & R Recording in New York City, a state-of-the-art facility that recorded many pop music icons, important film scores, and commercials. Sitting

---

2 The name choice was inspired by Hungarian composer, pianist, and pioneering ethnomusicologist Béla Bartók (1881-1945).
behind a desk in the lobby, I observed the inner workings of the popular music industry for three years. Studio time at A & R was $250 an hour. I was paid $5 an hour for my job, but by agreement with the studio manager, I had access to any of the four A & R studios for my own recording purposes whenever one wasn’t booked. In this, I was not alone. Staff and assistant engineers alike were keen to record their own projects. Nominal hourly fees were negotiated by and at the whim of the studio manager. More often than not, employee use of the studios far exceeded those hours scheduled by the manager. This practice of recording on “down time,” as fellow workers and I did, with management turning a blind eye, recalls Michel de Certeau’s description of what the French call la perruque (the wig):

La perruque is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of value is stolen. It differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job . . . Under different names in different countries this phenomenon is becoming more general, even if managers penalize it or “turn a blind eye” on it in order not to know about it. Accused of stealing or turning material to his own ends and using the machines for his own profit, the worker who indulges in la perruque actually diverts time (not goods, since he uses only scraps) from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit. In the very place where the machine he must serve reigns supreme, he cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products whose solo purpose is to signify his own capabilities through his work and to confirm his solidarity with other workers or his family through spending time in this way. (25)

In the process, I learned studio performance techniques and picked up some engineering basics. I inquired about becoming an assistant engineer but the studio manager told me that as a woman, I could not handle such a job. What did this mean? Did women have some biological impediment rendering them unfit to turn knobs on a recording console or set up a mike stand? In fact, I was generally perceived as the “bimbo” behind the front desk, hired to answer the phone,
receive the sushi platters, and let the musicians know when the man in the white suit arrived with their drugs. For me, sitting behind that desk, it was just as Berger explained:

Men survey women before treating them. Consequently how a woman appears to a man can determine how she will be treated. To acquire some control over this process, women must contain it and interiorize it. That part of a woman’s self which is the surveyor treats the part which is the surveyed so as to demonstrate to others how her whole self would like to be treated. . . One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves being looked at. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object—and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (46-47)

But I was determined to transcend any misconceptions that I was working at a recording studio in hopes of becoming a rock star groupie. Through continued networking with producers and recording artists alike, I was eventually hired to sing on a few commercial and recording dates.

Meanwhile, I observed other women artists attempting to climb a patriarchal glass mountain. Each woman had the same unspoken task: negotiate the mind/body split with male musicians, producers, entertainment lawyers, managers, and record executives. Female singers were often asked to perform sexual favors in exchange for a deal. In the case of one talented jingle singer who did get signed, material for her debut album was chosen by her “legendary” producer against her own preferences. When the record bombed, the artist felt that he had deliberately sabotaged the project: her recording career was over. I watched another “legendary” producer call in favors from a major label for a vanity production for his girlfriend. The label spent a veritable fortune on recordings and a video. But the girlfriend could neither sing nor
dance. The project was ridiculous. This producer was not honoring his woman. He was making fun of her. In “The Fallacy of Feminism in Rock” (Keyboard, April, 1990), Margaret Mifflin wrote:

Despite occasional magazine articles celebrating the changing roles of women in rock and pop, the progress of feminism in this industry was negligible in the eighties. In fact, we enjoyed more musical freedom and diversity in the seventies than we do now. The “new” image of women in rock—tough, serious, potentially threatening—applies to looks, not art . . . [I]n 1981, MTV stalled the feminist momentum we had gathered up to that point. The avowed irony of Madonna’s Boy Toy belt just didn’t jibe with her lingerie fetish and on-screen autoeroticism, and “Papa Don’t Preach,” in which she condoned teen motherhood was hardly progressive. For six years a flurry of airbrushed babes shimmed, bounced and giggled across the TV screen—Annie Lennox perhaps being the only beauty with a brain—until 1987, when Suzanne Vega was signed to A & M and the chain was broken. . . . Close your eyes and listen to the new women in rock; you’ll find that for all their alternative accolades, they sound frighteningly homogeneous; sentimental, and harmonically uninventive. They’re living proof that our current dilemma has less to do with being asked to show a little leg than with being forbidden to show our fangs. So if you have any delusions about becoming the Grace Slick of the nineties—or even better, gaining fame as an instrumentalist—put that to rest. No one in the industry is interested. Throw out those unwholesome Bad Brains records and perfect your waif-like, wounded folkie image. Before you know it, you’ll be the subject of an article about the changing roles of women in rock. (77-79)

Successful female musical artists were not exempt from the mind/body phenomenon. I witnessed two more “legendary” producers recording a folk diva’s album. The artist was given star treatment during the recording process. But as soon as she left at the end of the day, the producing team turned on porno movies. Then, they mixed the tracks. These middle-aged married men, editing and shaping her work, acted like pre-adolescent boys in a tree house giggling over a Penthouse centerfold. I was struck by their compulsion to weave pornography into the texture of this intelligent, literate woman’s music without her conscious knowledge.
I presented my music to several entertainment industry professionals. The producer that had arranged for his girlfriend’s vanity production liked my voice. I was hired to sing background vocals on her album. He said that he liked my music as well. I began to entertain hopes of working with him. Once night, around 4 a.m., this producer, who had a nasty cocaine habit, took a break from a mix session for a “top of the charts” male songwriter’s album. In the lobby, the producer stopped in front of my desk. Abruptly, he leaned into my face, stuck a spoonful of cocaine up my nose, and murmured, “If you’re ever tired or bored . . .” This was not the offer I’d had in mind. In another instance, a “legendary” producer’s dismissive response to my music was, “This stuff is weird!” Undaunted, I replied, “No, it’s interesting.” But as far as that producer was concerned the subject was closed. One entertainment business attorney with a roster of “super star” clients said to me, “You look great. You sound great. But, I’m not going to sell you to a label. This is what I’m looking for.” The attorney then played me a tape by a woman artist that he was representing. The singer’s voice and music were hopelessly bland. In another case, I happened to meet an “A-list” talent manager. I watched him look me over, make up his mind, and turn away.

Simultaneously, I performed at venues including CBGB’s, S.N.A.F.U., The 80s, and Folk City in New York City. After three years of performing with a band, I recorded a body of co-written songs with A & R staff engineers. A “young, hot” producer heard these recordings and pitched the band to a major label. But at this point, the band fell apart. I lost a shot at the deal along with a catalog of co-written songs. I went back to performing solo. I composed and recorded new songs but was unable to get either a record or publishing deal. The entertainment
industry had no use for my “weird” music. In *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, Andreas Huyssen wrote:

Not only does the artist depend on an efficient organization of the distribution apparatus, but even the reception of the work of art takes place within the framework of the culture industry. By advertising and promoting the works it distributes, the industry generates certain expectations. The aesthetic objectification achieved in the work of art does not reach the consumer directly; it is filtered through the mode of mediation . . . The culture industry sees the legitimization of producing art only in art’s exchange value, not in its use value. In other words, the objective content of art works and their enlightening role become irrelevant in a system based on profit maximization, against which an adequate reception of art would rebel. (150)

For female musical artists, mainstream success was, and is still largely dependent on self-censorship. Young women artists usually work(ed) under the guidance of older male songwriters and producers. Rarely were/are the female artists permitted by the label to write the songs solely by themselves. The industry regularly promotes ear candy songs advertised by bump and grind videos on MTV. In *Rock She Wrote: Women Write About Rock, Pop and Rap*, Margaret Mifflin explained the frustrations and strategies of women musicians facing the feminist backlash as it played out in the industry in the late 1980s:

But what about hard-rocking women? Where’s our mainstream role model? . . . In 1988, Robert Longo attempted a well-placed act of subversion by creating an MTV “Artbreak” that showed a woman banging her fists on a table while watching girls “jiggle” on TV . . . We theorized about how to compose lyrics that implied a feminist consciousness without sounding preachy, which proved to be impossible, so we kept the politics out of our music and simply tried to avoid clichés. (78)³

³ Robert Longo (1953-) is an American painter, sculptor, and film director.
Among the female musicians in the 1980s who got the green light by the entertainment industry, The Go-Go’s appeared on the cover of their album, *Beauty and the Beat*, wrapped in terrycloth towels, their faces covered in moisturizing cream, presumably getting ready to go out on a date. Considering the album’s hit songs, “We Got The Beat” was spirited and fun, but “Our Lips Are Sealed” begs questions: Why are their lips sealed? If their lips weren’t sealed, what would they say? Why do women have to silence themselves in order to speak, or to sing? As Linda Hutcheon wrote, “. . . pop music is made popular not by the youths who buy it as much as by the authorities that manipulate their consumption—New York publishers and marketing experts (who pre-censor and peddle), multi-national record companies, and even commercial radio stations” (81).

Having had the door of the culture industry shut in my face on numerous occasions, I saw no reason to go on as before. Apparently, I was not alone. In *Rock She Wrote*, Evelyn McDonnell, referring to women musicians and critics alike, describes this phenomenon: “In a sense women—like many cultural freedom fighters—went underground in the eighties, refueling and finding a new sense of independence” (19-20).

I dropped the pseudonym. I decided to present my music in venues other than rock clubs: for an audience that was neither drugged out nor drunk; that did not openly suffer from the mind/body split. At the same time, a developing awareness of psychology and feminism led me

---

4 In 2006, Papa John's Pizza used The Go-Go's hit single, "We Got The Beat" in a commercial campaign. Their "Papa's Perfect Pan" meat specialty pizza commercial changed the chorus of the song from “We got the beat” to "We got the meat" to reflect the amount and variety of meat available on their pizzas. (http://www.Wikipedia)
to investigate open movement and improvisation, intentionally dismantling my once refined dance technique.5

Attempting a synthesis of forms, I created a performance piece in 1985. In *Clean and Jerk*, I began to unravel the patriarchal paradigm as it is expressed in classical Western dance. This six-minute piece marked my first performed response to mainstream culture. I composed a song about a weight lifter to accompany my dance in and around a sculptural construction of endless streams of pink ribbon from which pointe shoes dangled. In the song, the weight lifter, with great effort, accomplishes his goal: he gets the barbells over his head. But unlike the weight lifter, my dance leads to complications. I reach for the shoes, put them on and become entangled in the ribbons. *Clean and Jerk* premiered as part of a series of shared co-produced concerts by three choreographers at a downtown performance venue in New York City. A review by Jack Anderson in the *New York Times* states:

Lisa Parkins demonstrated her versatility as a dancer, choreographer and composer . . . Perhaps Ms. Parkins was showing that she agreed with those critics who maintain that, by trying to imitate ballet too much, modern dance has lost some of its individuality. Whatever her intentions may have been, her satire should have been sharper and clearer. (26 Nov. 1985)

---

Apparently, Anderson missed my point. *Clean and Jerk* was not a meditation on current trends in modern dance. In the act of putting on the pointe shoes, I performatively restated the patriarchal directive that I had, as a young girl, innocently accepted in my quest to embody supreme physical strength, beauty, and grace through the art of dance. But here was that girl, grown into a woman, pulling on the ribbons, questioning a patriarchal signifier, and by extension, the hidden agendas of domination in Western culture. In ironic contrast to the successful weight lifter, rewarded with a cheering crowd and an Olympic gold medal, the task of confronting that history proves to be overwhelming. Yet, a continuum is suggested, for that labored dance among the ribbons continues even as the lights fade to black. Social scientist and philosopher Luce Irigaray has explained the phenomenon of woman breaking away from acculturated dogmas that I had attempted to describe in *Clean and Jerk*: “Women can not work on the question of their own oppression without an analysis and even an experience of institutions — institutions governed by men” (161).

I continued to explore female subjectivity in collaboratively created performance pieces. In 1987, New York city-based actress and writer Suzanne Khuri and I co-created *Wedding Ending*, a tragicomic spectacle about bridal rituals. The piece combines original and adapted text, instrumental music and songs, choreography, slide projections, minimal props and transparent chairs. In one segment of the show, Khuri and I performed the everyday life of little girls that recalls Irigaray’s description: “They describe a circular territory around themselves, around their bodies . . . Sometimes girls whirl around in silence or else they giggle, and chatter,
and chant nursery rhymes. Perhaps chant is not quite the right word, they make-up variants, 

invent phonic and syllabic games” (98).

**Wedding Ending** also includes an adapted scene from Charles Dickens’ *Great 

Expectations* focusing on the perverse mother and daughter relationship of Miss Havisham and 

Estella. Even as the embittered Havisham teaches her pretty ward to take revenge on men, 

Estella wraps up her benefactor in a veil of misery. Then, with Havisham confined to her chair, 

Estella sings, “You Made Me What I Am.” This song explains how an impressionable young 

girl, emotionally malnourished on a decrepit wedding feast with a collapsed cake, will become so 

hard, proud, and cruel as to be incapable of loving anyone, including her adopted mother.

In 1990, I appeared in *Idiots Brood the Century*, a performance piece by New York City- 

based playwright Katt Lissard. I was cast as Czarina, the cabaret singer, in this ensemble work 

about the beginnings of the Weimar Republic. In addition to acting duties, I composed and 

performed music on accordion and sang lyrics to Weimar era songs by Kurt Tucholsky and Eric 

Hollaender. The production was presented at Chez LaRoe, a loft performance space in Chelsea, 

Manhattan. *Idiots Brood the Century* played to full, enthusiastic houses during the production’s 

three performances. A scout from an established commercial theatre in New York City came to 

see the show. He decided that *Idiots Brood the Century* was “too political” for a legitimate 

venue.

Meanwhile, I began to see parallels between the rise of nationalism during the Weimar 

Republic, and the increasingly repressive domestic and foreign policies of the U.S. government. 

*Idiots Brood the Century* sparked my interest in female artists working in Weimar cabaret. How
had these women forged their careers? In what ways had their representation been a response to
the volatile socio-political climate of that era? To what extent did they participate in mainstream
theatre and film? What could I learn from them that I could apply to my own career trajectory?

I chose to study and practice theatre in a university setting. This choice was based on my
desire for focused study, as well as the economic realities I faced as an American artist working
outside the culture industry. Sally Banes addressed this phenomenon in “Institutionalizing
Avant-Garde Performance: A Hidden History of University Patronage in the United States” in
Contours of the Theatrical Avant-Garde: Performance and Textuality:

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, when Congress and the White House are at
loggerheads and both corporate and private sponsorship are shrinking, the university still
supports the avant-garde . . . In terms of performance art, Laurie Anderson may earn
income on hit records and Spalding Gray, Eric Begosian, Willem Dafoe, John Leguizamo
and Steve Buscemi may find work in Hollywood films and or television. But for every
Laurie Anderson or Spalding Grey there are scores of performance artists who either
shun the capitalist marketplace and showbiz, or find their work shunned by popular or
mass-media venues. Teaching jobs and guest residencies in the university system can
sustain those noncommercial avant gardists with both money and research time. (222-23)

I enrolled in the M.F.A. Theatre program at Sarah Lawrence College. My studies
included acting, directing, movement for theatre, and writing. I created and performed a solo
music theatre piece, Vicarious Life (1989), for my thesis project. The work incorporates my
songs, monologues, choreography, and visual elements. The frame for the piece is Futura Chips,
a tense, talking head appearing on “WMON.660: The Woman’s Channel!” Futura sells
“Vicarious Life;” a virtual experience of womanhood, from a catalog of historical, literary, and
mythic female archetypes. In between pitching simulated lives, Futura signals an off screen,
unresponsive, cameraman to cut to the news, a comment on the dearth of real coverage of the issues on major media outlets. In the course of the show, selections from the “Vicarious Life” catalog were brought to life. “The Eternal Girl” was a tableau vivant based on “Little Fourteen Year Old Dancer,” a bronze statue of a ballet dancer by Edgar Degas. The Eternal Girl is tired of holding a pose. She wants to get off the pedestal and out of the museum. This segment was as much about commodification in the arts as it was about female objectification. “Happy Ever After Wife” was a song and dance evocation of Gustave Flaubert’s Madame Bovary. The lyrics to “Happy Ever After Wife” revisit the narrative from the perspective of a contemporary female reader. I designed a very tall, wood and Plexiglas chair and choreographed a dance for Emma confronting the fate that has been written for her. The piece is an extra-diagetic moment that problematizes Flaubert’s fiction.

For subsequent performances of Vicarious Life at Kampo Cultural Center in New York City and at the American Festival held at the StaatTheater Mainz, Germany, another character, the Chosen One, from Vaslav Nijinsky’s 1913 ballet, Le Sacre du printemps was added. Le Sacre du printemps, with music by Igor Stravinsky, and costumes and sets by Nicholas Roerich, tells the story of spring rites in a primitive Slavic society culminating in the ritual sacrifice of a virgin maiden. Le Sacre du printemps premiered to scandalous public reception, but is now considered a prime example of early-twentieth century modernism. Restagings of Le Sacre du printemps include those by Mary Wigman (1957), Maurice Bejart (1959), Kenneth MacMillan (1962), Pina Bausch (1975) and Paul Taylor (1980). Millicent Hodson reconstructed Nijinsky’s Le Sacre du printemps with the Joffery Ballet (1987). In Molissa Fenley’s State of Darkness
a solo work set to Stravinsky’s score, fear and acceptance of the Chosen One’s fate alternate.

But in *Vicarious Life*, the Chosen One managed to escape certain death. Reading Joseph Campbell’s works on myth and culture, I had learned that the universal symbol for sickness is a crooked nose. I built a white mask featuring a crooked nose for the Chosen One. It was as if she had, shaman-like, taken on the ills of society. I created a wig of long gray braids and hand-painted a muslin dress evoking Roerich’s costumes. I choreographed a series of weighted steps within the *mise-en-scène* of *Vicarious Life*. I chose to omit Stravinsky’s score, substituting a music box instrumental version of the song “Evergreen.” This ancient but wised up Chosen One was a homeless wanderer filling a shopping cart with the detritus of Western culture.

In *Vicarious Life*, canonized art works were viewed within their historical and social framework, while simultaneously, through imbuing each character with self-consciousness, peeling away layers of cultural assumptions. In so doing, I generated a feminist response to their legacy in contemporary mainstream culture.

When I began this artistic journey, I didn’t have the theoretical training to articulate what I was doing. Doctoral work in Performance Studies at Northwestern University, which I began in 1991, made me more conversant with theories of performance aesthetics and feminist performance. I researched art and performance in the Weimar Republic, and studied representations of women in European literary cabaret. I also composed music for, and performed in a main stage production of Brecht’s *A Man’s A Man* (1926) directed by Professor Craig Kinzer of the Theatre Department.
In researching Weimar era cabaret, I discovered a fact that struck me as important: the work of German Romantic author Heinrich von Kleist became extremely popular during the Weimar Republic. I decided to explore, in the form of a performance, links between Kleist’s theme of disruption in “The Marquise of O—,” Weimar era performance, and feminist theories of representation. It seemed to me that as a cultural artifact, “The Marquise of O—” offered psychological, social and historical portents that might well address the current manifestation of the mind/body split. I conceived the idea of staging the novella in the form of a solo music theatre work. I adapted and performed the first half of “The Marquise of O—“ as a solo recital as a doctoral student in Performance Studies in 1992.

My solo performance of the full length, English language, music theatre production of ‘The Marquise of O—” premiered at the German House Auditorium in the German Consulate of New York on April 10, 2003. Dr. Eelka Lampe was director and dramaturge for the production. Lampe and I co-adapted Kleist’s novella, working from the original German and English translations of the text. The piece featured my lyrics, musical score, and choreography. Surreal visual elements included metal performing objects and three life-size, Bauhaus-inspired puppets designed and fabricated by “Steel Neal” Borowsky. Lighting design was by Carol Mullins. The stage manager for the show was Caroline Gioanni.

This dissertation analyzes the above-mentioned production’s history. The following four chapters establish a framework for that analysis in Chapters Six and Seven. Chapter Two provides an overview of Heinrich von Kleist’s life and times as a writer of fiction, drama, essays, and letters. It examines Kleist’s major works, featuring an analysis of ‘The Marquise of O—.”
Public reception to Kleist’s work during his life, and his gradual emergence as an acknowledged “great” German writer are examined. Kleist’s cult status in the Weimar Republic is considered in context with the socio-political instability of that era. Contemporary representations of Kleist’s major works are considered. This chapter’s conclusion argues for a reading of “The Marquise of O—” in terms of the current state of the American collective unconscious.

A point of focus in “The Marquise of O—” is the complex relationship between Julietta and her mother. Chapter Three analyzes Kleist’s construction of these characters relative to that paradigm in the plays of Brecht, responding to Sarah Lennox’s statement, “The role and status of women in Brecht’s works are not problematized like other forms of human relationships, but are simply presented.” It examines Brecht’s concepts of alienation and historization in epic theatre and their use as a subversive device in contemporary feminist-based performance.

Chapter Four is an overview of early European cabaret traced through its geographical centers: music hall and cabaret-artistique in fin-de-siècle Paris, Vienna, and Munich; Dada after World War I in Zürich and Berlin; and cabaret during the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) in Munich and Berlin. The conclusion focuses on representation of contemporary artists that have been influenced and inspired by European literary cabaret.

In Chapter Five, Kleist’s essay, “Über das Marionettentheater” (“On the Puppet Theatre”) is discussed. Critical reception to the essay is investigated. The essay’s aesthetic and philosophical ideas are considered in terms of other artists in the Romantic era. The influence of the essay on artists in fin de siècle cabaret, Dada, Bauhaus Theatre, Weimar cabaret and links to contemporary performance practice are explored. Contemporary theories of puppetry are
considered relative to the toy soldiers, Bauhaus-inspired puppets, and Marquise doll used in the full-length production.

Chapter Six documents my process of creating the musical score for the solo production of “The Marquise of O—.” Major influences on my music are considered and my composing process. The production’s music and lyrics are analyzed for content, style and structure. Particular attention is paid to the score’s use of parody. Brechtian concepts of epic opera and gestic music are examined.

Chapter Seven explores the staging of the solo production. The process of co-adapting the novella into a performance text is examined. The dynamic interplay of scenic elements contributed by the production team is analyzed. The rehearsal process is investigated, focusing on subjectivity established through actor-subject-object transformation. The Marquise’s visual representation is considered. The performance and its reception are explored.


The conclusion considers “The Marquise of O—” in terms of the events of September 11, 2001, summarizes this study, and provides suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

Heinrich von Kleist’s “The Marquise of O—”: Writing the Poetics of Paradox and Disruption from Romanticism into the Postmodern Era

The wicked spoor in time’s wake as it flees us. You precursors, feet bleeding . . .
Simply go on, they think. We know what is coming. (3, 119)

— Christa Wolf,
No Place on Earth

This chapter analyzes “The Marquise of O—” in context with the trajectory of Heinrich von Kleist’s life and in terms of his other major works. The current state of scholarship on Kleist is examined. Significant themes, motifs, and narrative devices in Kleist’s plays and stories are considered relative to “The Marquise of O—.” Reception to Kleist’s work during his lifetime, the rise in his popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century, and his cult status in the Weimar Republic are investigated. The chapter includes a discussion of contemporary representations of Kleist’s work in various media by twentieth-century artists exclusive of “The Marquise of O—,” which are addressed in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight of this study. The conclusion reflects on how the feminine ethos expressed in “The Marquise of O—” is reflected in the American collective unconscious of the present moment.

Kleist, a writer of prose fiction, drama, essays, and poetry, is considered one of the most important German authors of the early nineteenth century. His taboo-breaking subject matter and eccentric dramatic universe problematized the moral, philosophical, and intellectual issues of his
epoch. Kleist came of age during the era of Classicism, most notably represented in German literature by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) that coincided with the Enlightenment, Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress), Empfindsamkeit (Sensibility) and Romanticism. This period in Germany was later identified as Weimar Classicism to identify a group of authors including Goethe and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) who lived in the duchy of Saxe-Weimar. Kleist was influenced by the leading writers of the day including Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel, as well as Goethe and Schiller. Like his contemporaries, Kleist’s work explored themes associated with Romanticism: mythology, nationalism, idealism, the relationship between nature and mind, transcendence, irony, melancholy, nostalgia, and a fascination with death. Yet Kleist’s radical approach, incorporating outrageous scenarios, moments of extreme brutality, eroticism, and grotesque imagery, foreshadowed modernism. Kleist had little public success as a dramatist during his lifetime, although his short stories were widely read. Aged thirty-four at his death, Kleist left behind seven dramas, eight novellas, a dozen critical essays, and over a hundred letters and anecdotes. He was nearly forgotten in the years following his death, but by the beginning of the twentieth century, Kleist’s work became extremely popular in Germany. Today, Kleist’s plays are performed regularly in theatres throughout Germany. In Europe and the U.S., Kleist’s work has inspired ballet, opera, theatre, television, film, sculpture, painting, and multi-media works.

According to Kleist biographer Joachim Maass and scholar Bernd Fischer, Bernd Heinrich Wilhelm Von Kleist was born in Frankfurt an der Oder on October 10, 1777 into an aristocratic family of military officers, generals, and one poet, Ewald von Kleist. Kleist’s early
education was obtained through a tutor, Christian Ernst Martini, and a clergyman, Samuel Heinrich Catel. At age eleven, Kleist’s army captain father died. In 1792, barely fifteen years old, Kleist joined the military as a corporal and officer cadet in the Royal Guard. The following year, his mother died. Kleist participated in a Prussian campaign against the French Revolutionary armies in the Rhineland. Afterwards, stationed in Potsdam, Second Lieutenant Kleist played clarinet and flute in a quartet with other officers. Kleist, disillusioned with the tyranny of military life, resigned his commission. In 1799, he enrolled at the University of Frankfurt where he studied mathematics, physics, law, and philosophy for three semesters. Kleist continually formulated his Lebensplan (plans for an effective life). He wrote a letter to his half-sister Ulrike in which he expressed his concerns:

It is so really incomprehensible to me how a person can live without a plan for his life, and in the secure way I make use of the present, I feel with such inwardness the calm with which I look to the future, the priceless happiness that my life plan affords me; while the condition of being without a life plan, without a firm vocation, forever hesitant between uncertain desires, ever in contradiction to my sense of duty, a plaything of Chance, a puppet on the string of fate—such an ignoble condition would seem to me so contemptible, would render me so unhappy, I would by far prefer death. (28)

In Frankfurt the following year, Kleist became engaged to the daughter of a Prussian general, Wilhelmine von Zenge. Kleist wrote many letters to his fiancée in an attempt to develop her moral and spiritual purpose. He encouraged von Zenge to prepare for the role of a devoted wife and mother. Kleist requested that she trust him implicitly. Yet, Kleist seemed unable to settle on a profession, and as such, he was untrustworthy himself. He applied for a civil service job in Berlin. On the advice of, and with his friend Ludwig von Brockes, Kleist traveled to
Würzburg. It is speculated that Kleist was seeking medical treatment for sexual dysfunction.

From Würzburg, Kleist continued on to Berlin. He wrote to von Zenge about the construction of a stone arch he had noticed in Würzburg. Kleist pointed out that the stones of the arch exist in a state of tension and that removal of a single keystone will cause the arch to collapse. Similarly, one’s life depends on forces that are potentially destructive. Kleist sent his drawing of the arch to his fiancée with instructions for her to contemplate this aspect of life.

By 1801, Kleist experienced serious epistemological doubt upon reading the Critiques of German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kleist questioned Kant’s concept that optimism is the foundation of faith beyond empirical knowledge. Kleist explained to Ulrike:

> The thought that we here on earth may know nothing, nothing at all of Truth, and that what we call Truth has quite another name after death, and that therefore all attempts to win a possession that goes with us to our grave are quite in vain and fruitless: this thought has shattered me in the innermost sanctum of my soul. My single, my highest goal is sunk from sight and I have no other. (97-98)

For Kleist, skepticism was the only logical response to the limitations of human perception. Truth was not to be found on earth. Pursuit of knowledge and reason was futile, leading to a life of uncertainty and inner turmoil.

Kleist traveled with Ulrike to Paris. At this time, he read the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). Kleist’s disillusionment with the precepts of the Enlightenment was reinforced by his condemnation of the excesses of the French post-revolutionary world he observed while visiting Paris. He met the novelist Heinrich Zsholle, publisher Heinrich Gessner, and Ludwig Wieland, the son of famed German author Christof Martin Wieland. Kleist came up
with a new life plan. He wrote to von Zenge suggesting that the couple should pursue a simple
life of farming in Switzerland, but she was not at all enthusiastic about the idea.

In 1802, Kleist rented a house on Delosea Island near the River Aare. Here, he began to
write seriously. Having decided that writing would be his vocation, Kleist abruptly broke off his
engagement to von Zenge. After three months, he became ill, returned to Bern, and then with
Ulrike, to Prussia. In Ossmannstedt, near Weimar, he moved into the house of the elder
Wieland. Kleist, who had a tremor of the upper lip and a tendency to blush, stammer, and mutter
under his breath, recited a fragment of an unfinished drama, Robert Guiskard, Herzog der
Normänner (Robert Guiskard, Duke of the Normans) to his host. Weiland, in turn, proclaimed
his houseguest to be a writer of great genius. That year, Kleist completed a tragic drama, Die
Familie Shoffrenstein (The Shoffrenstein Family), conceived of a comic play, Der zerbrochne
Krug (The Broken Jug) and became ill.

The Shoffrenstein Family was published and favorably reviewed in 1803. Kleist traveled
with his friend Ernst von Pfuel and Ulrike to eastern Germany, Switzerland, Northern Italy, and
France. While in Paris, he burned the unfinished manuscript of Robert Guiskard in frustration.
Traveling on foot to the French town of St. Omer, Kleist tried to enlist in the French army in
preparation for an invasion of England. He hoped that a glorious death on the battlefield would
amend for his failure to achieve literary greatness. Turned away by the French commander,
Kleist returned to Paris. He tried again to join the invasion and was taken into custody. The
Prussian ambassador issued Kleist a passport and Pfuel brought him back to Mainz, where he
suffered a breakdown. For eight months, Kleist received medical attention from George Wedekind, a Jacobin physician.

In 1804, The Shoffrenstein Family premiered in Graz and was well received by the press. Recovered from his breakdown, Kleist returned to Berlin where Karl Leopold von Kokertiz, general adjutant to the King, reprimanded him for neglecting his duties. The following year, through the influence of a cousin, Marie von Kleist, Kleist received a civil service job. Meanwhile, the French conquered the Prussian army. The Ministry of Finance sent him to study political science, economics, and law in Königsberg, the new seat of the Prussian court. Although overstressed, Kleist worked on a play, Amphitryon: Ein Lustspeil nach Molière (Amphitryon), and three novellas: “The Marquise of O—,” “Der Findling” (“The Foundling”), and “Der Zweikampf” (“The Duel”). In 1806, during a six-month sick leave, he completed The Broken Jug.

In 1807, Kleist traveled to Dresden, and presumed a spy, was arrested by the French in occupied Berlin. He was transported to two different prisons in France. During his imprisonment, he completed a tragic drama based on a Greek legend, Penthesilea. While working on the play, Kleist said to Pfuel of the highly respected Goethe, “I’ll tear the wreath off his brow” (177). Kleist was released from prison in July, after the Peace of Tilsit was signed between France and Prussia. Returned to Dresden, Kleist was introduced to political philosopher Adam Heinrich Müller (1779-1829), who had recently published Amphitryon to great critical acclaim. Müller introduced Kleist to literary circles in Dresden. With financial help from
Ulrike, Kleist and Müller co-founded and co-edited a literary journal, Phöbus: Ein Journal für die Kunst.

In January 1808, scenes from Penthesilea appeared in the first issue of Phöbus. Kleist’s retelling of the Amazon Queen’s battle with Achilles, with its explicit expression of female sexuality and violence, was negatively received by Dresden society. In a letter to Goethe, Kleist had offered the play, “on the knees of my heart” (176). Goethe’s response was contemptuous. “The Marquise of O—” was published in the journal’s second issue. The public, particularly women, was shocked by the novella, deeming it shameless. On March 2, in Weimar, Goethe directed a production of The Broken Jug. Originally a one act, Goethe staged The Broken Jug in three acts. The production was a fiasco, for which Kleist blamed Goethe. That year, Kleist completed two more plays, Das Käthchen von Heilbronn oder Die Feuerprobe: Ein Grosses Historisches Rittershauspeil (Kate of Heilbronn, or The Test of Fire: A Great Historical Chivalric Drama), and Die Hermannsschlacht (The Battle with Hermann). In later issues of Phöbus, a reconstructed fragment of Robert Guiskard, a novella, “Michael Kohlhaas,” The Broken Jug, and Kate of Heilbronn appeared in partial or complete form. Goethe, having read Kate of Heilbronn, swore he would not let it be performed and burned the manuscript. Unquestionably, Goethe deliberately withheld acknowledgement of Kleist’s greatness that would have established the younger man’s career.

By March 1809, Phöbus failed after twelve issues, due to lack of interest by eminent writers invited to contribute to the journal. In May, Kleist and historian Friedrich Christoph Dahlmann visited the scene of Austria’s momentary victory over Napoleon’s troops on the
battlefield at Aspen. At that time, Kleist was a member of the anti-French resistance movement, possibly working as a courier between Prussian and Austrian groups. At the battle of Wagram, Napoleon vanquished Austria. In Prague, Kleist made a vain attempt to publish a patriotic journal, *Germania*, even as friends in Berlin heard reports of his death.

Returning to Berlin in 1810, Kleist lost his pension following the death of his benefactor Queen Luise (1776-1810). He received a concession for Berlin’s first daily newspaper, the *Berliner Abendblätter*, that he edited himself. According to David Luke and Nigel Reeves, translators of “The Marquise of O—” and Other Stories, the *Berliner Abendblätter* included sensational news items that helped to make the paper popular. Prominent Berlin intellectuals contributed theatre reviews, philosophical essays, and political commentary. Kleist also published his own writings in the *Berliner Abendblätter*. These included, on 13 October 1810, a lengthy introduction for “Sentiments before Friedrich’s Landscape, ‘Monk by the Sea,’” a review of an 1809 painting by Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840). *Kate of Heilbronn*, which had been rejected by the National Theatre of Berlin, was performed in Vienna with moderate success. Kleist wrote several essays, among them, “On the Puppet Theatre.” He published a volume of stories (*Erzälungen*) that included, “Michael Kohlhaas,” “Das Erdbeben in Chili” (“The Earthquake in Chile”) and “The Marquise of O—.” As a result of family pressure, Kleist became estranged from his stanch supporter, Ulrike.

By 1811, Kleist completed *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* (*Prince Friedrich of Homburg*), also called (*The Prince of Homburg*). According to scholar Karen Achberger, the Royal Court Theatre of Prussia rejected the drama on basis of, “... the prince’s unheroic character... the
officers’ rebellion and the play’s ambiguous treatment of absolutism . . . that . . . betrayed Kleist’s critical attitude toward the reactionary rule of Emperor Friedrich Wilhelm III (53).

Kleist published a second volume of stories; “Die Verbolung in St. Domingo” (“The Betrothal in Santo Domingo”), “Der Findling” (“The Foundling”), “Das Bettleweib von Locarno” (“The Beggarwoman of Locarno”), “Die heilige Cäcilie oder die Gewalt der Musik” (“St. Cecilia, or the Power of Music”), and “Der Zweifkampf” (“The Duel”). French and Prussian censorship led to the demise of the _Berliner Abendblätter_ in March. Kleist was again in need of money. He requested posts in publishing and in the civil service to no avail. Kleist met with King Friedrich Wilhelm III, who ordered him to join the military, presuming that war between Prussia and France was imminent. In September, Kleist visited his family, asked for money to buy a uniform, and was refused. Meanwhile, Adam Müller had introduced Kleist to Henriette Vogel, a young married woman suffering from an incurable cancer. Kleist, who had in the past made several unsuccessful attempts to interest his friends and family members in a suicide pact, invited Vogel to be his partner in death. After making elaborate preparations, on the shores of the Warmsee near Potsdam, Kleist fatally shot Vogel, and then, putting the gun inside his mouth, killed himself on November 21, 1811.6

---

6Cervantes’ _Don Quixote_ was perhaps the last book Kleist read, as a copy was found among his Kleist’s possessions.
Kleist criticism is extensive. Countless journal articles and full-length studies analyze Kleist’s life and works. It is beyond the scope of this study to fully address the large body of Kleist scholarship, however it is useful to consider key critical concerns in recent decades. According to Allan, a recurring theme during the existentialist wave of the 1950s and 1960s was that Kleist’s writings were, to great extent, responding to his dissatisfaction with Kant. Allan, having analyzed Kleist’s correspondence, asserted that the writer’s existential despair over Kant’s philosophy was “short lived,” although scholars have continued to link Kleist’s Kant crisis to the discrepancy between appearance and reality, called the “Als Ob” (“as if”) of his characters’ universe. Scholar Tim Mehican explained that Kleist’s Kant crisis occurred in

---

two stages: first through attending lectures, followed by direct contact with Kant’s works.

Mehican discussed to what extent Kantian philosophy informed Kleist’s writings:

The project of Enlightenment reason, as propounded by Kant, is tested again and again in Kleist’s works against the underlying skepticism, which it both implicitly and explicitly opposes. Kleist asks whether the conduct of human life is truly informed by the general principles of understanding laid down by Kant’s philosophy . . . The traumatic second encounter with Kant’s philosophy, therefore, leads Kleist to address what is arguably the most pressing issue of the late Enlightenment period: whether reason, properly considered, has the capacity to say anything at all about the world. (178)

Allan asserted that while critics tend to disagree about the meaning of Kleist’s work, attention is often paid to its formal aspects. He separated Kleist’s stories into four categories: tales of justice and revenge, revolution and social change, education, and the nature of evil, the latter of which includes “The Marquise of O—.” Scholars have addressed the dualistic forces motivating much of Kleist’s work. E.K. Bennett, author of A History of the German Novelle, commented on the presence of irreconcilable conflict in Kleist’s novellas also to be found in his dramas:

In all of the Novellen, the characters are confronted with a situation that shatters their belief in the world order and produces in them a state of mind which may be described as an agonizing questioning in respect to the sum total of things . . . the harshness of conflicting antitheses, which finds expression sometimes in the character of the persons, sometimes in the situation. It is a presentation by means of concrete examples of that inherent dualism of the universe of which the tragic dramatist is so acutely aware. (40)

Paradox characterizes all of Kleist’s works with an unusual simultaneity: innocence and dishonor, justice and revenge, heroism and cowardice, love and hate, truth and duplicity, bravery and fear of death, despair and joy. Gearey explained:
There is hardly a paragraph in Kleist that ends on a note of hope which is not immediately followed by one that points toward despair; hardly a scene in his dramas that creates a feeling of security which is not soon negated; hardly a movement in thought or action which is not somehow aborted, frustrated, or brashly extended to an extreme and then dramatically destroyed. It is almost as if we were observing in this fictional world the physical phenomenon of forces exerted in one direction automatically producing their equal and opposite force. (15-16)

Gearey suggested that compulsion rather than intention is at the heart of Kleist’s artistic process. Indeed, many of Kleist’s themes recall his ruminations on the archway in Würzberg, in which opposing forces in a character’s life collapse. McGlathery explained that twentieth-century critics, in consideration of Kleist’s suicide, tend to view his writings as fundamentally tragic while agreeing that a tension between the characters’ conscious and unconscious features in much of his work. But Kleistian narratives are often determined by erotic episodes that imply an ironic form of comedy McGlathery wrote, “It seems reasonable to ask whether the emotions Kleist invites us to fathom are not sexual in nature and whether he was in many instances engaged in portraying the psychology of desire from a sublimely comical, teasingly ironic perspective” (31-32).

Kleistian sentences are syntactically complex. Simple past tense verbs move major events forward while relative clauses explicate the details such that the reader’s perception of the narrative shifts. Eschewing monologues, the character’s unconscious, responding to a situation, is revealed through gestures, words, and actions. Ellis explained that, as a central figure in Kleist’s mature work, the narrator is, “the one who tries continually to think and rethink what he sees” (142).
Kleist’s female protagonists are complex and resonant. March asserted that Kleist’s writing of the feminine was ground breaking: “The subtleties of his psychological insight, especially his intuitive understanding of female impulses and emotions, reveal aspects of the personality that had hitherto been neglected, or else treated timorously with elaborate euphemism” (11).

Kleist based “The Marquise of O—” on Michel Eyquem Seigneur de Montaigne’s (1533-92) essay, “Of Drunkenness” (1580). A virtuous woman from a village near Bordeaux mysteriously finds herself pregnant. In church, the woman has an announcement read stating that should her violator confess, she would forgive his crime and marry him. A laborer comes forward, explaining that on a holiday, coming upon the woman in a drunken sleep, he had sex with her. The two marry and live happily ever after. Kleist was also familiar with “La Fuerza de la Sangre” (“The Power of Blood”) (1613) by Spanish novelist, poet, and playwright Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616), one of his Novelas Ejemplares (Exemplary Novels). The tale is set in Toledo. At age seventeen, Leocadia is abducted and sexually assaulted by Rudolpho, an upper class young man. She takes a crucifix with her from the dresser of his room as proof of the event. Leocadia bears a child by the culprit. Avoiding dishonor, Leocadia ultimately marries him. Two epistolary novels also informed “The Marquise of O—”: Clarissa, Or the History of A Young Lady (1748) by Samuel Richardson (1689-1751), in which the heroine is raped while unconscious and Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse lettres de deux amans, habitans d’une petite ville au pied des Alpes (The New Héloïse) (1761) by Rousseau, inspired by the medieval figures of Héloïse and Pierre Abélard. In Kleist’s version, the heroine is an aristocratic widow and mother,
while the location is a town in Northern Italy. Luke and Reeves explained that the story’s motif of a passionately jealous father and devoted daughter was typical of the era, but was exaggerated to the point of parody by Kleist.

Like Kleist’s travels back and forth across Europe during wartime, the narrative moves from states of seclusion to war and back again. The novella plumbs the depths of human emotion and moral contradiction: seemingly tender parents exhibit extremely cruel behavior and a moral model turns out to be a dissembler. Julietta faces two major crises. First she must face the consequences of an unwelcome pregnancy. Then, the man she presumes to be her savior turns out to be her rapist. Colonel G— exhibits an excess of rage and passion for his daughter. Colonel—’s wife proves unable to stand by Julietta during a crisis. Julietta’s brother is very much his father’s son, exemplified by his readiness to act on Colonel G—’s orders to take away her children. Count F— has to reconcile his noble public image with his unbridled lust and the dark side of his nature. The news chronicle, often the basis for early Romantic novellas, appears in “The Marquise of O—” in subverted form. It is useful to note that the device of embedded information was common in newspapers of the day, affirming that what was written was true. The narrator’s objectivity is established through the recitation of Julietta’s notice in the newspaper, after which events are related in a neutral manner without commenting on the characters’ general lack of consciousness. According to Erika Swales, this narrative voice fulfills two functions:

It reflects by its sheer discretion that socio-moral mode which informs the character’s incapacity for—and rejection of—analysis and self-scrutiny. It also radically confronts
us, the readers with precisely that problem of human cognition which the story is concerned to explore. Yet, on closer examination, this seemingly imperceptive narration emerges as a marvel of carefully controlled structural implications underneath the linear chronicling we find a web of patterns of interlocking phrases, images, scenes. (146)

The tale is full of ambiguities. An epigram, “Based on a true incident, the setting of which has been changed from the north to the south,” primes the reader to question the veracity of all that is to follow (Kleist 68). The surnames of the main characters (Marquise of O—, Colonel G—, Colonel G—’s wife, Count F—, Lieutenant Colonel of the — Rifle Corps, and General K—) and most of the locations (M—, P—, B—, Z—, and V—) are not spelled out. Count F— is reported killed in a battle but he turns up alive and well. The truth of the rape evidenced in Julietta’s swelling body is denied until confirmed by the midwife who corroborates the doctor’s findings. The question of who made Julietta pregnant is also ambiguous. While it is Count F— that confesses, it is possible that one of the Russian soldiers, the family groom, Leopardo, or Colonel G— did the deed.

War and courtship are conflated throughout. The rape is accomplished during the battle for the citadel, soon after, the Commandant, in a gesture of surrender, hands over his sword, to Count F—. Later, the family, referring to Count F—’s abrupt marriage proposal, agrees that, “He seemed accustomed to taking ladies hearts, like fortresses, by storm.” Whereupon, Colonel G— states, “This makes twice I must surrender to this Russian.” When the Count finally confesses to his crime, he wears full battle dress (Kleist 79, 84).

Each location is fraught with meaning. The citadel, where the widowed Julietta lives with her parents and children, is a metaphor for her celibacy. Julietta is driven by fire to a back door.
From here, the soldiers take her to “an innermost courtyard” where the assault takes place (Kleist 69). The threshold marks the change in Julietta’s status from protected noblewoman to war booty, while the courtyard is a metaphor for her sexualized body. Count F— escorts Julietta to a wing of the fortress untouched by fire, symbolic of safe haven: this is the site of the rape. The Commandant surrenders the fortress to Count F— at the main gate, a public event. The family relocates to the house in town. Here, the consequences of the rape unfold. The anteroom where Count F— reappears is transitional space. Admitted to the family gathered in the living quarters, the Count makes his proposal. The servant’s quarters, where Count F— goes to prepare his dispatches are symbolic of the baseness of rape. It is noteworthy that his inappropriate behavior annoys Colonel G— such that he invites him to continue his activities in his apartments.

Once disowned, the Marquise must leave her father’s house and public respectability behind. The Marquise’s carriage ride, “on the open road with her beloved prize, the children” represents her liberation (Kleist 93). It is important to note that her moment of defiance is contained within the framework of her maternal status. The Marquise’s seclusion at V— alludes to the potential for a world unmediated by male violence. In this neutral space, the Marquise repairs her soul and her estate, educates her children, and awaits the birth of the child, even as she attempts to resolve her dilemma. She knits baby clothes in the summerhouse, indicating that is in the fullness of the pregnancy. At V—, the Count’s deceit continues: he lies about his identity when turned away by the major domo. Nature is a metaphor for the Marquise’s fecundity and newly re-established privacy, which the Count re-violates: “By a door which he found unlocked, he came into the garden” (Kleist 56). The Count storms the Marquise in a scene
parallel to the rape at the fortress. Colonel G—‘s wife, like Count F—, comes to V— unannounced, this time the Marquise hurries to the gate to meet her guest. Once inside the house, the Marquise endures an emotional assault, her mother’s cruel test of her virtue. A parallel is drawn between Count F— and Leopardo when, looking for a reaction that will determine if the Marquise is lying or not, Colonel G—‘s wife informs her that Leopardo is in the anteroom, waiting to be admitted in the same architectural space in which Count F— appeared at the house in town. The journey back to M— is an occasion for female bonding. Returning to the Commandant’s house, Colonel G—‘s wife directs the Marquise to wait in her old rooms. This intimate space is the scene of the inappropriately erotic reconciliation between father and daughter. Count F— appears to confess before the Marquise and her mother in the reception room.

The Commandant’s choice to hold the wedding ceremony at the Church of St. Augustine is key to Kleist’s intended meaning of the tale. Here, Julietta does not look at her bridegroom: “she stared rigidly at the painting behind the altar” (Kleist 111). This gesture indicates that through her faith, she is able to reconcile marriage to a man who embodies both good and evil. It is important to note that St. Augustine represented the doctrine of privatio boni (deprivation of the good) to refute the Dualism of the Persian, second century, philosopher Mani. John A. Sanford, a Jungian analyst and Episcopal priest explained:

Mani taught that light and darkness, good and evil, creation and destruction, are in eternal conflict. Like the Gnostics, he related the world of spirit to the realm of the good, and the material world to darkness and evil. Man is imprisoned in the world of darkness and evil because he is imprisoned in his body, and salvation for man consists of separation from
his body via right knowledge, plus a rejection of the passions and sexual appetites that keep him enslaved to the evil, material principle. (18)

The basic idea of the doctrine of *privatio boni* is that the good alone has substance and that evil has no substance of its own, but exist by means of a diminution of the good . . . St. Augustine perhaps elaborated the doctrine of *privatio boni* more than any other Christian thinker . . . It was Augustine’s difficult task to maintain Christian monotheism and the Christian insistence on the goodness of the world and its creation by God, and at the same time to account for the existence of evil without laying the blame for it at the doorstep of God or making evil a principle co-equal with God . . . Evil according to Augustine, would cease to be in the end, because ultimately God’s plan for creation would be perfectly fulfilled. Since evil exists because of the loss of this fulfillment, evil by definition would therefore cease to exist when the creation is fulfilled. (135)

It is important to note that Jung argued that *privatio boni* is dangerous in that it denies the reality of evil. Sanford explained that Jung’s view was that the Christ image does not have a dark side, calling into being the Anti-Christ as a “psychic complement . . . to restore the balance” (136):

> Jung says the Christian attitude could not contain the image of the Self as a union of the opposites because of its inability to accept paradoxes . . . a doctrine such as the *privatio boni*, which he feels tends to diminish evil’s reality, does mankind a disservice. It is the failure to take evil seriously that created the tendency for people to fall prey to it, either by being possessed by evil and being a perpetrator of it, or by becoming a victim of it. (138)

According to theologian Paul J. Griffiths, St. Augustine made an ontological argument against duplicity. To St. Augustine, lying was always a sin in that it compromises God’s image in man. Significantly, Kleist represented Julietta’s unwavering commitment to her faith, whereas Count F—, who must reconcile his false, honorable, public face with his real, duplicitous, private nature, is not depicted as remorseful while in the house of St. Augustine.
After the wedding, the new Countess continues to live with her parents. Following the second wedding, they all move back to V—. The final move to the estate Julietta once shared with her first husband marks the official end to her celibacy.

Objects, articles of clothing, and furniture ground the narrative. Printed materials frame the novella; beginning with the Marquise’s notice and ending with the Count’s deed of inheritance. Acts of writing/not writing and reading are important. Recovered from his wounds, Count F— takes up a pen intending to write to the Marquise and her father, but is unable to do so, a metaphor for his continued deception. Colonel G—’s wife enters her husband’s room to find him writing. In M—, the Count balks at delivering dispatches to Naples. Significantly, the Marquise’s estate papers and her father’s letter, which is written by her mother, precipitate her exile. From Naples, the Count writes a second letter to the Marquise, which her father sends out to V-- and which she does not read. The Colonel’s wife reads Count F—’s published reply and is prompted to reconsider her daughter’s plea of innocence. The Marquise writes her father a letter that he tears up, seals in an envelope, and returns to the sender. Another allusion to reading, the Marquise’s books allude to her intelligence. Her painting easel signifies her sensibility. Count F— replaces his hat after the rape, as if to hide his act. The Marquise wraps her child in several garments, at once protection against the elements and her family. The Commandant’s sword, surrendered to Count F—, is both an emblem of war and a phallic symbol. At tea with the Colonel’s wife, Julietta observes and remarks on how, picking up a teacup, she feels pregnant. The vessel’s curving shape and signification as an object common to cultivated society, evokes a domesticated femininity. Colonel G—’s pistol, shot into the ceiling,
signifies his power, passion, and rage. The Marquise recounts to her mother that she once fell asleep on a sofa “in the mid-day heat” and awoke to find Leopardo walking away from her (Kleist 103). Seen from the servant’s viewpoint, the Marquise’s body on the sofa, which is seating of Turkish origin, conjures up European stereotypical images of Oriental eroticism. In the reception room on the morning of the third, the Marquise and her mother are “festively attired as if for a betrothal” (Kleist 109). It is a clock in the reception room striking eleven that signals the arrival of the culprit. He is dressed in the uniform he wore on that fateful day in M—, recalling his status as “an angel sent from heaven” (Kleist 69). The Marquise fends off her family with drops of holy water.

The characters’ physicality is important throughout. After driving her attackers away with his sword, Count F— offers the Marquise his arm: a formal gesture. The proposal scenes are elaborately choreographed in the gestural vocabulary of civilized society: leaping, standing, sitting, kneeling, hand-kissing, pausing, bowing, brow-wiping, rising, hand kissing, hand holding, and embracing. These movements are punctuated with smiles, blushes, and eye movements; staring, glancing, casting downward, looking out of windows, and down the street. Unable to get a definite answer to his proposal, the Count’s gesture indicates that his life is on hold: “He paused for a moment, standing by the wall with his chair in his hand” (Kleist 78). Later, when the sobbing Colonel G— seeks to reconcile with Julietta, his wife positions herself between them, signifying her role as family mediator.

Three successive scenes are structured like music. The doctor’s visit is a mannered social dance: he sits on the sofa—she jests and explains her quandary; he examines her and gravely
gives her the news—she expresses doubt; he smiles—she rings the bell with a “severe sidelong
glance;” he picks up hat and cane, opens the door, bows and exits (Kleist 86). The midwife’s
visit is at a higher pitch with alternating tempos: Julietta’s breast heaves—the midwife examines
her, accompanied by light-hearted commentary; Julietta faints—the midwife and her mother
revive her; her mother stalks out—Julietta trembles violently; she clings to the midwife who
consoles her—Julietta regains her authority and concludes the interview. The next scene is
characterized by shorter phrases and the climax is like a cymbal crash: Julietta sinks down
outside her father’s door—she cries out; her brother opens the door—she pushes herself into the
room, arms outstretched; Colonel G—tries to slam the bedroom door—she follows him; he
strides away without facing her—she throws herself at his feet, clasping his knees; he fires the
pistol into the ceiling—she rises and flees.

Other scenes are equally rife with tension. The garden scene at V— is an Apache dance
for Julietta and the Count. The parents’ arguments are pure farce. The scene of Count F—’s
confession is high melodrama: Julietta reaches for a handkerchief and tries to run out, her mother
grabs her hand, Julietta collapses on the sofa, head in hands, the Count kneels, cries, kisses the
hem of the mother’s hand, the door is thrown open.

Scholar Marjorie Gelus pointed out that Colonel G—’s wife jokes with Julietta when she
first suspects that she is pregnant. Julietta also jokes with the doctor before the exam, she,
“jestingly told him what condition she believed herself to be in,” yet afterwards, she is in no
mood for jokes (Kleist 86). Colonel G—’s wife, having observed the reconciliation of her
husband and daughter “talked jestingly” (Kleist 109). In each case, laughter is a response to a situation that is fundamentally wrong as a defense against dealing with it.

The Marquise is problematized by an unwillingness to remarry after the death of her first husband. As a wealthy widow, she is free to read, paint and educate her children. But her empowerment is socially transgressive, setting the stage for the events to follow. Ultimately, the Marquise accepts her social reality, yet Kleist has drawn a complex portrait of an intelligent heroine attempting to reconcile the limited freedoms of her gender in that era. In 1977, scholar Denys Dyer focused on the Marquise’s struggle to reconcile absolutes: “She has to learn to accept both sides of the count and the emotions he embodies, to accept him as a complete and loved person, fallible, as the world is fallible, this world with its ‘gebrichliche Einrichtung’” (72-73).

The new Countess’ forgiveness, granted “in consideration of the imperfection inherent in the order of the world” implies a fundamental paradox inherent in Western patriarchal culture: disruption is resolved such that social order is rein scripted (Kleist 113). By virtue of his class, Count F— must be absolved of his war crime. Since the Countess has no choice but to accept the situation, the marriage must be a “happy” one. As she bears “a series of young Russians,” it is doubtful that she has much time for reading and painting. On this basis, her transformation into an ideal woman is complete. (Kleist 113).

It is worth comparing the Marquise’s reactions to her ordeal and Count F—‘s hysterical behavior throughout. Once the Marquise’s life is disrupted by the pregnancy, her emotional states shift from bewilderment to righteous indignation. Just before and after it is medically
established that the Marquise is pregnant, she tells her mother that she is on the verge of
madness. After Count F—’s confession, the Marquise again fears for her sanity. Her passionate
refusal to marry is harshly disavowed by the Commandant: “Her father, to whom it seemed
obvious that she was in a hysterical state of mind, declared that she must keep her word” (Kleist
111).

Immediately after the rape, Count F— hysterically runs around with a hose putting out a
fire, an obvious sexual metaphor. He risks his life “right inside the arsenals rolling out powder
kegs and live grenades (Kleist 70). When Count F— suddenly turns up at the house
unannounced, his proposal is abrupt and he is ready to jeopardize his military appointment to get
what he wants. The family takes stock of his odd behavior. Learning that the Marquise has been
exiled, Count F— gallops out to V— and aggressively renews his offer. Only after the marriage
does he behave within the stringent demands laid down by Colonel G—.

These character constructions recall commonly held societal views of insanity in Kleist’s
era. Prior to the nineteenth century, it was customary for the upper classes and nobility to keep
their mad relatives at home, but new institutions for the insane were established during Kleist’s
lifetime. Out of curiosity, many well-to-do persons including Kleist, visited mental institutions
at this time. In German Romanticism and Its Institutions, Theodore Ziolkowski noted: “The
famous Julius Hospital in Würzburg attracted many visitors, including Heinrich von Kleist, who
described it at length in a letter of September 30 to his fiancée” (145). Arguably, the
Commandant’s behavior could very well be called hysterical, but the rest of the family is either
too afraid to argue the point, or they are not conscious that it is so.
Kleist’s very particular linguistic strategies warrant investigation. The “O” in the Marquise’s title subliminally focuses attention onto the widow’s unoccupied womb. The rape is textually explicated by a dash in the second paragraph: “Then—” (Kleist 70). An ironic silence, an empty telling of the untold, the dash was well described by Dorrit Cohn as “the most pregnant graphic sign in German literature” (129). Initially, the reader might miss its significance, but this discrete device raises questions. How is rape read as absence? Does the dash suggest repressed desire? What are this device’s linguistic implications?

Critical response to the dash, and the rape, reveals the writers’ biases. While existentialist readings cast Julietta as a pure, incorruptible female, psychoanalytic-based analyses focused on Julietta’s suppressed desire. Recent feminist-based studies situate Julietta’s predicament and its resolution within her social reality. Allan’s view:

. . . it is not Kleist’s intention to downplay the horror of rape, rather it is a literary device that enables him to explore—and reject—the standard repertoire of reactions with which the rape victim is liable to be confronted. (173)

McGlathery’s psychoanalytical approach ignores the set up to the event. The Marquise’s faint occurs in the aftermath of the assault by Russian soldiers. In Kleist’s words, “. . . already stricken speechless by her ordeal, she now collapsed in a dead faint” (70). But McGlathery wrote, “Die Marquise von O . . . would appear then to be a tale of love at first sight made interesting by the heroine’s struggle with suppressed shame over having so suddenly, if unconsciously surrendered to desire” (84).
Cohn suggested that Julietta unconsciously desired the Count’s seduction and repressed her knowledge of the event. Cohn cited Julietta’s response to Count F—’s protestations of affection in the garden at V—, “I do not want to hear anything” as indicative of a deeper truth (Kleist 97, 132).

Scholar Jean Wilson pointed out that Luke and Reeves downplayed the rape and its consequences in their introduction to “The Marquise of O—” and Other Stories, an excerpt of which follows: “Although it must be conceded that the Marquise has in some sense been raped and that rape is not an unserious matter . . . at no point is she threatened with anything more grave than a certain amount of social scandal and at worst a breach with her aristocratic family, of whom she is in any case financially dependent” (18).

In contrast, Susan Winnett’s essay on “The Marquise of O—” in Rape and Representation, focuses on how Julietta’s body, specifically her womb, takes over the narrative in a downward displacement that is presaged in the tale’s epigram, “the setting of which is transposed from the north to the south” (Kleist 68). Winnett is critical of Kleist’s treatment of rape, asserting that Count F—’s remorse and Julietta’s forgiveness constitute a strategy that reaffirms patriarchal norms:

The closural processes that lead us to the novella’s happy end depend first upon our reading the rape as an accident, an unpremeditated, impulsive act about which the Count is subsequently truly remorseful, and second on our regarding rape as something for which one can adequately atone . . . This interpretation demands that we condone a cultural reading of male sexuality as by nature—and therefore pardonably—beyond the control of even the otherwise most exquisite soul. (6)
Scholar Laura Martin’s 2000 study investigates the Marquise’s predicament within the social structures that governed Kleist’s era: “Die Marquise von O... is not ‘about’ a repressed woman or a bad man, it is ‘about’ the social contingencies which govern the relationship of man and woman, of parent and child, more explicitly of father and daughter and mother and daughter” (90-91).

It is important to consider that these “social contingencies” extend to nineteenth-century adherence to class structure. Russian soldiers face a firing squad for their assault, whereas Count F—, given his high social position and extreme wealth, gets off scot-free through marriage to his victim.

The reconciliation scene between father and daughter is particularly disturbing: Julietta, with closed eyes, lies passively in the Commandant’s arms while he strokes and kisses her. Interestingly, this section of the novella was virtually ignored by the critics until the 1970s. In 1976, Hermann F. Weiss pointed out that, “this episode could be read as a parody of the innumerable sentimental scenes of reunion in the popular fiction and domestic drama of Kleist’s day” (541). Some critics were unable to address the scene’s problematic core. McGlathery referred to these strange goings on as, “poignant moments of reconciliation,” asserting that Colonel G—, “is only behaving like a stereotypically doting father whose devotion causes him to go to foolish extremes” (85). In Heinz Politzer’s psychoanalytical reading of this moment, the Marquise experiences the “submission, consciousness and pleasure” that she has forbidden herself in the arms of the Count (114).
I argue that the mother’s voyeuristic pleasure at witnessing her husband “stroking and kissing his daughter’s mouth” calls the entire family dynamic into question (107). Kleist’s close-up on this scene through the mother’s eye at the keyhole of Julietta’s bedroom door brings the father/daughter dysfunction into focus, yet the mother’s conscious mind is unable to make the connection.

Colonel G— and Count F— share a passion for, and contest for ownership of Julietta. In order to analyze Kleist’s construction of this love triangle, it is helpful to recall the system by which a woman is valued in patriarchal society. Irigaray explained, ” . . . the properties of a woman’s body have to be suppressed . . . Her value invested form amounts to what man inscribes in and on its matter: that is her body . . . woman derives her price from her relation to the male sex” (126). Julietta’s contested body may also be considered through a Marxist paradigm. In Psychoanalysis and Cinema, Anne Friedberg wrote: “To Marx, the commodity was a fetish, its value transformed from a product of labor with a use value to an object in a system of capital with an exchange value. The commodity fetish is an object that has value beyond its use, in the ‘social hieroglyph’ of exchange” (43). It might well be argued that Count F— buys Julietta from Colonel G— on the basis of the wedding contract. After the birth, the large sum of money awarded the infant son and the deed of inheritance buys Julietta’s forgiveness.

In analyzing “The Marquise of O—,” it is useful to consider significant themes, structures, and motifs that appear in other of Kleist’s major works. The theme of a woman’s body as a contested site is featured in Amphitryon, The Broken Jug, and “The Foundling.” Begun as a translation of a play by Molière, Kleist infused Amphitryon’s heroine with
psychological depth and incorporated an element of tragedy into an otherwise comic plot. The important character in Molière’s version is the philandering god, Jupiter. Kleist’s version focuses on the faithful wife, Alkmene. Jupiter takes on the form of her spouse, the Theban general Amphitryon, while he is away at war. The God’s servant, Mercury, accompanies him in the guise of Amphitryon’s servant Socias. Tricked into an affair, the deluded Alkmene’s sexual pleasure with Jupiter surpasses anything she has experienced with her husband. Meanwhile, Socias attempts to return to Thebes but is unable to enter: Mercury beats him at the gate, insisting that the real servant is an imposter. Amphitryon and Socias return to Thebes. Jupiter wants Alkmene to identify him as a superior lover to her husband, who realizes he has been deceived. The God reveals himself. Despite the divine disruption, Amphitryon and Alkmene resume their lives together. Twins are to born from the union of Alkmene and Jupiter, one of which will grow up to be Hercules. Alkmene’s final response to her predicament, “Ach!” is poignant. Translator Martin Greenberg considered this tale of Alkmene’s lost innocence and “its dialectical Jupiter” (xxxiv). “It is, I think, the story of the soul, the place where all this is happening is in the modern soul, ‘the haunt and the main region’ of his verse, to quote Wordsworth) as it is of the greatest works of the twentieth century” (Greenberg xxxiv). Certainly there is a parallel to be drawn between the duplicitous god Jupiter and the equally deceptive Count F—. When the Count, who had been thought dead, suddenly turns up, the narrator described him as “looking as beautiful as a young god” (Kleist 74). Alkmene’s pregnancy occurs courtesy of a god while Julietta wishes vainly it were so. Alkmene, like
Julietta’s protestations of innocence, defends her truth, believing that she has been faithful. But their pregnancies are irrefutable, thus calling their truths into question.

In the comic verse play, *The Broken Jug*, the virginity of a peasant girl, Eve Rull, is contested as a pretext for questioning authority and justice in a small town. Judge Adam, lusting after Eve, convinces her that the recently recruited lover Ruprecht will be shipped off to Bavaria unless he forges a medical certificate. That night, Adam, soused, enters Eve’s bedroom through the window. Putting his judicial wig on an antique illustrated jug that is on the sill, Adam is about to assault Eve when Ruprecht, suspecting the worst, bangs on the door. In Adam’s haste to escape, he knocks over the jug. Eve’s mother, the widow and midwife, Frau Marthe, enters to find Ruprecht and assumes that he has shattered her prize possession. The next day, Adam’s court convenes under the keen eye of Justice Walter’s official review. Adam conducts his court bareheaded and appears to have sustained bruises, as if from a fall. Licht, the wily clerk, eager to get Adam’s job, is suspicious. Frau Marthe demands justice for the loss of her jug. Spouting lies, Adam blames Ruprecht, but ultimately, the truth is revealed: the judge is the culprit.

David Constantine, editor and translator of Kleist’s writings, explained that a Dutch engraving of a court in session outside a brothel inspired *The Broken Jug*. The fragments of Frau Marthe’s jug symbolize more than Eve’s lost virginity. According to scholar Helmut J. Schneider, the midwife’s description of the jug’s pictorial content, a transfer of power leading to the independence of the Netherlands, problematizes a patriarchal world that “wreaks havoc with the Enlightenment endeavor to rationalize the unrationalizable” (158-59). The truth is revealed in the form of a long flashback, also the structural basis of “The Marquise of O—.” In both
works, comedy arises out of the paradox of uncontrolled Eros in a man presumed as above reproach that is publicly revealed. In “The Marquise of O—” the humor is more ironic, subtler than in The Broken Jug, in part because the protagonists are nobility, not peasants.

It is noteworthy that Frau Marthe is a midwife and that a midwife motivates a central narrative shift in “The Marquise of O—.” Summoned at Julietta’s request to rebut the doctor’s findings, the midwife delivers the news that Julietta’s inner knowledge suspects to be so. Interestingly, Colonel G—’s wife is reluctant to allow this neutral, outside character to intrude on the scene: “a pure conscience and a midwife!” (Kleist 88). Kleist’s inclusion of a midwife into these narratives was inspired by Kant’s 1797 work, “Die Metaphysik der Sitten” (“The Metaphysics of Morals”), a discussion of methodologies for teaching the doctrines of practical reason. Kant concludes that a dialogical method is the most effective:

For if someone wants to examine the reason of another, that can only take place dialogically, that is, in such a manner that teacher and student ask and answer each other reciprocally. The teacher guides the student apprentice’s line of thought by merely unfolding the disposition to certain concepts in the student by means of presented case studies (the teacher is the midwife to the pupil’s thoughts). (209)

Kleist’s 1805 essay, “Über das Verfertigen der Gedanken beim Reden” (“On the Gradual Formation of Thoughts in the Process of Speech”) contains a reference to Kant’s midwife:

8 This story recalls the national public guffaw responding to the revelation of former President Bill Clinton’s extra-marital exploits with Monica Lewinsky.

It is very difficult to play upon a human mind and induce it to give forth its particular music, to elicit its proper music, it so easily out under clumsy hands goes out of tune, that even the most practiced connoisseur of human beings, a real master in what Kant calls the midwifery of thinking, even he, not being acquainted with the one whose labour he is assisting at, may make mistakes. (409)

Rightly, scholar John H. Smith contends that the midwife in “The Marquise of O—” functions “in the same way that dialogic interchanges are needed to deliver the untold directly” (207).

The passionate contest in “The Marquise of O—” is between a father and a younger man for possession of his widowed daughter. In “The Foundling,” a man and his adopted son contest for the older man’s wife. Set in Renaissance Rome, “The Foundling” is the tale of an elderly merchant, Piachi, whose much younger second wife, Elvira, passionately mourns Colino, a Genoese knight who died from wounds sustained in rescuing her from a fire. After Piachi’s own son dies of the plague, he adopts an orphaned boy, Nicolo. Piachi is generous to the young Nicolo, but in seeking to mold his adopted son’s character into a suitable legal heir, engenders resentment and hatred. Nicolo, anagram for Colino, strongly resembles the dead knight, in whose memory Elivra has created a shrine. Nicolo sees Elivra kneeling before Nicolo’s portrait and mistakenly believes that he is the object of her worship. Nicolo appears before Elvira dressed as Colino. His stepmother faints from shock. While Elvira is unconscious, Nicolo attempts to rape her, but Piachi discovers him in the act. Piachi attempts to throw Nicolo out of the house. In response, Nicolo claims that he is now lord and master. Piachi runs to “his friend in the law,” Doctor Valerio, and faints before him. When a corrupt judge sides with Nicolo, an
enraged Piachi kills Nicolo, stuffing the petition against him down his son’s throat. Brought to justice, Piachi welcomes death, hoping to continue his revenge on Nicolo in hell.

The three main characters in “The Foundling” resemble stock commedia del l’arte types. Scholar Tim Mehigan pointed out how Kleist’s portrait of Piachi highlighted the consequences of a “dogged allegiance to rationalist ideals” as evidenced by the old man’s misplaced endeavor to teach Nicolo and thus, form his character (178): “In “Der Findling” he reenacts the Enlightenment project of education, only to describe its spectacular failure. Instead of regularity between ideas and reality, there is only accident and contingency” (182-83).

According to Ziolkowski, Kleist’s knowledge of the law informed not on his fiction and drama: as a journalist, Kleist addressed changes in Prussian legal reforms. A legal document is literally stuffed down Nicolo’s throat, symbolic of patriarchal order, whereas, in “The Marquise of O—,” adherence to a legal document brings about reconciliation for the disruption brought about by Count F—’s rape. The marriage contract drawn up by Colonel G— insures that the Marquise is financially protected. Only on this basis, does she go through with the ceremony. After the birth of their son, Count F— places a deed of inheritance on the baby’s cradle. This act ensures the family’s forgiveness while facilitating the transformation from a marriage that exists in name into a real one.

It is interesting to draw parallels between erotic scenes in the two tales. Nicolo spies on Elivra worshiping at Colino’s shrine at the keyhole. The Colonel’s wife similarly observes her husband’s passionate reconciliation with their daughter. When Elivra swoons, Nicolo surveys her vulnerable body before the rape. There is no such moment in which Count F— similarly
appraises his victim. The motif of death for the rescuer appears such that Elvira worships Colino’s memory long after his death. In contrast, Julietta, presuming Count F— is dead, mourns her rescuer for several months before she moves on with her life.

In “The Earthquake in Chile,” opposing forces: structure and chaos, optimism and pessimism, good and evil all meet in a rigid, Catholic, patriarchal society. The young unmarried lovers, Jeronimo and Josephe, are condemned to death for their affair through which a son, Philipp, has been born. The Viceroy has sentenced Josephe to death by fire, but commutes her sentence to a beheading. The procession to Josephe’s execution is in progress with all the pious women of the town looking on. Jeronimo is in prison standing next to a pillar, just about to put a noose around his own neck. A sudden earthquake devastates the area, killing many, while sparing others, among them the accused. Miraculously, the prison in which Jeronimo stands and a building opposite fall simultaneously, creating an arch that protects Jeronimo. Once free, hope and despair alternate as Jeronimo frantically searches for Josephe. Josephe escapes when the procession dissolves in panic and runs to a convent to snatch Philipp from the arms of the Abbess just before the flaming building collapses. Death and destruction are everywhere. As if through divine intervention, the whole corrupt town is punished for having condemned the lovers. But with typical Kleistian perversity, good persons die as well as evil ones, complicating the reader’s take on the moral lesson engendered by the catastrophe. The survivors gather outside the gates of the city. Here, Jeronimo, Josephe, and their child are reunited. In nature, the couple enjoys a romantic idyll despite the misery of others around them. Don Fernando approaches them, asking for Josephe to give her milk to his baby as the earthquake had injured
the boy’s mother. The couple is uneasy about their safety, but Don Fernando and his family are friendly and all goes well. The survivors gather for a mass in the only cathedral left standing in town. Jeronimo and Josephe go along too, assuming that the basic humanity of the townspeople has been restored, inspired by the intensity of the event. But during the sermon, the preacher denounces the couple. Unable to escape an angry mob, Jeronimo and Josephe are clubbed to death. Don Fernando’s baby, mistakenly identified to be the offspring of Jeronimo and Josephe, is killed, but Philipp survives. Don Fernando stoically accepts his own child’s death. The story ends with Don Fernando’s expressed intention to adopt Philipp.

“The Earthquake in Chile” is based on a devastating earthquake in Lisbon of 1755 that prompted much philosophical debate on the workings of the universe. According to Ellis, the events of “The Earthquake in Chile,” filled with numerous reversals of fortune, are less important than the ways in which the narrator gives them meaning:

Throughout, the narrator struggles to understand the story, forming one view of it after another, and visibly abandoning each in turn . . . He tries to be strictly objective and factual, and yet finds himself dwelling on certain aspects of the story more than others . . . Kleist does not even leave us the belief that we can believe nothing, for the story ends on a note that at least raises the possibility of optimism again. (69-70, 67)

This tale, as with “The Marquise of O—,” highlights how members of a patriarchal society, particularly women, will uphold prevailing moral tenets. In “The Earthquake in Chile,” Eros is an anarchistic force, despite repressive attempts to deny and destroy it. The gates to the city, like the Commandant’s citadel, are thresholds to an alternate moral world. It is interesting to compare how nature figures in “The Marquise of O—” and “The Earthquake in Chile”: in the
former, a garden symbolizes Julietta’s fertility. In the latter the Eden-like interlude symbolizes the momentary happiness of Jeronimo and Josephe with their baby. The motif of the birth of a son through illicit sex signifies a return to patriarchal order, comparable to the sons born as a result of rape in “The Marquise of O—” and Amphitryon.

Scholar Silke Maria Weineck examined the important relationship between paternity and legal documents in “The Marquise of O—“ and other of Kleist’s works:

In general, in seems as if Kleist’s fathers win all the battles. Many scholars have noted that the various orders of paternity—biological, cultural, symbolic—while either subtly undermined or violently threatened, are consistently reestablished at the end. Power always returns to the fathers, to the Marquise’s father and the Count; to Rugera the Elder, the Canon, and Don Fernando; to Piachi, the pope and the law. (84)

The theme of deception, integral to “The Marquise of O—,” Amphitryon, and “The Foundling,” motivates the tragic conclusion of “The Engagement in Santo Domingo,” a tale of love and hatred set during the Haitian uprising against Napoleon’s forces (1802-03). Congo Huango has killed his former master and his family by setting his house on fire. Huango, intent on vengeance against all whites, has instructed Bebekan, an old mulatto, to help her daughter Toni, a light skinned mestizo, lure white men that come to the plantation where the two women are ensconced. Caught off guard, Huango kills each man in turn. One night, Gustave von der Reid, a Swiss officer in the French army appears looking for shelter. Bebekan and Toni offer Gustave a meal, during which time he tells them the story of a slave girl that had been abused by her master. When she falls sick with yellow fever, the girl invites her unsuspecting master to bed and infects him with the deadly illness. Convinced that the girl’s revenge is unjustified, Gustave
asks Toni if she were capable of such a betrayal. Further, he tells Toni that she reminds him of Mariana Congreve, a woman who had sacrificed her own life for him. That night, Gustave seduces Toni and promises to marry her. Toni, in love with Gustave, ties her sleeping lover to the bed to protect him from an armed fight with Huango and his men. Toni hurries off to find Gustave’s uncle, Herr Stromli, to rescue Gustave. When Toni enters holding a black child in one hand and Stromli’s in the other, Gustave, mistakenly believing that Toni has betrayed him shoots her. When Gustave realizes the truth, he kills himself.

Scholars have read “The Engagement in Santo Domingo” alternately as a political allegory, a commentary on the values of the Enlightenment, and either a pro-white or pro-black tale. Suzan Zantop’s study focused on the relationship between colonial and anti-colonial violence and the full spectrum of skin color variations represented in this work: “The tragic ending of all stories of miscegenation in this failed ‘betrothal’ suggest that love between the ‘races’ is impossible, as long as an exclusive fixation on skin color and historical preconceptions about the meaning of black, white, yellow, red and white persist” (204). Allan placed this story of oppression and revenge in a historical context:

As the novella shows – and here its relevance for an understanding of the French Revolution cannot be underestimated – when prevailing structures collapse, conventional notions of humanity are likely to be swept away in a blood-bath of violent retribution . . . what the story underlines, above all are the different types of revenge available to the strong and the weak. (232, 235)

McGlathery asserted that Gustave kills Toni out of his own guilt at having seduced her in the first place. Toni represents the purity of faith that society does not allow for, recalling
Julietta’s innocence denied. It is interesting to consider parallels in construction of the mother and daughter relationship in this tale and in “The Marquise of O—.” Bebekan’s doesn’t trust Toni’s commitment to betray Gustave, while Colonel G—’s wife finds it hard to believe that Julietta doesn’t know ‘whodunit.’

In German Romantic literature, animals were often characterized as closer to nature than humans and thus associated with the divine. A white swan is a stand-in for the Marquise in Count F—’s fever dream: “For she had preferred merely to glide about, arching her neck and thrusting out her breast” (Kleist 82). The Marquise is at once eroticized and ennobled by the reference. Animal imagery is featured in several of Kleist’s other works. A bear uses his paw to parry with a fencing master in Kleist’s “On the Puppet Theatre.” This essay is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. A bear kills a man in The Battle with Hermann, Kleist’s contribution to Prussian patriotism. This play investigates revolt by Germanic people against Roman colonization. Hermann is a freedom fighter, determined to exact revenge at the expense of ethics. Angered when German chieftains are willing to bargain peacefully with their Roman oppressors, Hermann divides the corpse of Hally, a woman raped by Roman soldiers into fifteen parts, and distributes the flesh to each of the chieftains so as to incite them to exact retribution. Meanwhile, Hermann’s German wife, Thusnelda, dresses in the Roman fashion, believes that Romans can be humane, and has a Roman lover, Ventidius, who views his mistress condescendingly as a typically simple German woman. Ventidius doesn’t realize that he is in danger. When Thusnelda sees Ventidius for the seducer he really is, she arranges that a bear savagely slay him. At the play’s end, the chieftain Arsitan challenges Hermann rather than
submit to his tyranny, equal in his eyes to that of the Romans. In the ensuing duel, Hermann kills him.

Allan explained that The Battle with Hermann is more than a straightforward endorsement of nationalistic fervor: “Kleist is at pains to depict the horrific consequences of any war for victors and vanquished alike and wanted to dispel the sentimental notion that the struggle against Napoleon and the French would be a chivalrous display of courage between noble antagonists” (220-21).

Kleist was responding not only to the chaos brought about by the Napoleonic Wars, but also to the failings of the Enlightenment he perceived to be present in French society and culture. As in “The Marquise of O—,” Amphitryon, and “The Foundling,” a rape is the catalyst for the narrative. It is worth noting that in a Germanic barbarian society, Hally is literally cut into pieces and Thusnelda fully vents her rage at Ventidius, whereas in Romantic era Italy, Julietta is socially cut and only lashes out verbally at Count F—.

In Penthesilea, a pack of dogs symbolize the bestial nature of their owner. Inspired by Euripides’ Bacchae, Kleist’s dramatic tragedy is set in ancient Troy. An Amazon army plans to capture Greek warriors in order to couple with them during an orgiastic celebration at Themiscyra, the Amazon capital. The Amazon queen, Penthesilea, pursues the great warrior Achilles, desiring that he impregnate her. The two warriors do combat. Achilles inflicts a blow with his lance on the virgin queen, whereupon she falls in love with him. Conversely, Achilles is filled with desire for Penthesilea and willingly becomes her captive. Like Ventidius in The
Battle with Hermann, Achilles underestimates the danger he is in. Intending to be defeated, the unarmed warrior challenges Penthesilea to a duel. Enraged by Achilles’ complacent submission, Penthesilea shoots him through the throat with a bow. Penthesilea turns her pack of dogs loose on the fallen Achilles, and then she too, eats at his flesh. The queen places the corpse at the feet of the High Priestess. Penthesilea, horrified at what she has done, dies of grief. Her forbidden desire leads to tragedy, as she cannot reconcile her passion with the mandate of her society. In contrast, Julietta having fallen for Count F—, despite his deception, forgives him.

Joel Agee, translator of Penthesilea, a version with illustrations by Maurice Sendak (1998), asserted that the Amazon queen’s trance is, in fact “possession by her nation’s goddess, Artemis” (xxvii). Psychoanalytic and postmodern scholars have explored parallels between the dual deaths of Penthesilea and Achilles, Kleist’s suicide pact with Vogel, and his possible bisexual tendencies. Hermand explained that feminist theorists have situated Penthesilea in terms of the eternal feminine, potential equality between the sexes, and the end of the matriarchy (46-51).

A team of prize, black horses are symbolic of the protagonist’s higher self in “Michael Kohlhaas.” The novella, based on a sixteenth century historical figure, explores the theme of justice and revenge. Kohlhaas, a prosperous horse-dealer on his way to market, becomes embroiled in a legal battle. The Junker Wenzel von Tronka takes Kohlhaas’ two prize black horses unjustly, simply because, given new regulations, he lacks a state permit allowing him to cross the border. Kohlhaas leaves his horses behind, watched over by his groom, Herse, at the Junker’s tollgate. The horses are turned into field nags, as Herse, beaten to a pulp, crawls back
home. Kohlhaas draws up a petition. Kohlhaas’ wife Elisabeth attempts to deliver the petition to the Elector, but is mortally wounded by a bodyguard. Meanwhile, the Elector, overcome by emotion, swoons, and remains in a fever for several days. Kohlhaas, seeking revenge, goes on a murderous rampage and sets fire to Tronka castle. He anoints himself the archangel Michael sent to restore justice, meets with Dr. Martin Luther, and convinces him that violent measures are justified. A Gypsy woman appears that foretells the future. Finally, Kohlhaas’ horses are returned, restored to their former health and beauty, and the Junker is sentenced to two years in prison. Condemned to death, Kohlhaas bequeaths the horses to his sons. Kohlhaas dies willingly, knowing that justice has been done.

According to Gelus and Ruth Crowley, “Michael Kohlhaas” is a “timeless portrait of a man’s desperate quest for equilibrium between subjective and objective reality” (24). As in “The Marquise of O—,” a legal document is important in “Michael Kohlhass.” The Gypsy, like the witch in The Family Shoffrenstein, is the female principle, necessarily manifesting after Kohlhass’ wife dies. Kohlhaas’ faithful groom, Herse, recalls Colonel G—’s groom, Leopardo, whose integrity, based on Julietta’s reminiscence, is somewhat suspect.

Fire is a frequently used Kleistian symbol featured in both the stories and dramas. While fire is a metaphor for Kohlhaas’ rage at the Junker, in “The Marquise of O—” the burning citadel signifies Count F—’s lust before and after the rape. The Count’s fever dream focuses on a white swan swimming on the “fiery surface” of the water (Kleist 82). Significantly, Count F— saves Julietta from the Russian soldiers’ assault. It is noteworthy that in the novella, fire is linked with rescue and this motif is found in several works: Kate of Heilbronn, “The Earthquake in Chile”
and “The Foundling.” Kleist’s poetic drama, Kate of Heilbronn is a medieval fairy tale. Despite all obstacles, a marriage decreed in heaven ultimately takes place on earth. Kate, an innocent, common born girl, becomes infatuated with Strahl, a prince. Strahl projects onto the beautiful Kate a corresponding purity of soul. In contrast to Kate, Kunigunde, a somewhat older enchantress, must construct her beauty at a dressing table. Kunigunde is aware that the soul’s purity, like physical beauty, can be artificially conveyed. Strahl and his friends Freiburg and Stein, rivals for Kunigunde’s attentions, distrust her conscious artifice. When Kunigunde offers herself to Strahl, the prince declines her offer. Kunigunde plots to poison Kate in order to marry him. Kate’s puppet-like devotion to Strahl is tested when she braves a fire to rescue his portrait. Miraculously, a cherub rescues the girl. When Kate turns out to be the Kaiser’s daughter, Strahl decides that she is the woman of his dreams. At the play’s end, all of Kunigunde’s suitors are reunited in a shared act of revenge: banishing the woman that threatened their illusory ideas of femininity.

Allan asserted that Kate and Kunigunde are “…the same image viewed at two different points in time” (182). Kunigunde’s artifice is as transgressive as Julietta’s choice to not re-marry after her husband’s death. Here, the theme of rescue appears ironically: Kate risks her life not to save Strahl, but rather a portrait of her beloved. In contrast, Colonel G— removes Julietta’s portrait from the wall.

---

10 This phenomenon well describes the double bind of psychologically complex women that, two centuries later are still routinely banished from mass cultural representation in favor of Kate-like, unrealized, girl-child types i.e., Britney Spears, Lindsey Lohan, Paris Hilton, et al.
In “The Earthquake in Chile,” death by fire is an expression of Huango’s pure rage. Fire associated with anger also marks the conclusion of “The Beggarwoman of Locarno.” An old crippled woman begs for shelter at the house of a rich man and his wife. Grudgingly, the husband directs the woman into a corner to sleep on some straw behind the stove. During the night, the old woman dies. Afterwards, her ghost haunts the house. Terrified, the wife runs away. The enraged man sets fire to the house with himself inside.

This anecdote is in the form of a ghost tale, a popular Romantic era genre. Here, the feminine principle, represented by the hag, is rebuffed, thus bringing disaster to the house and its occupants. As in “Michael Kohlhaas,” the female principle is expressed by the appearance of an older female character. In both works, an old crone suggests unresolved psychic integration.

Relative truth is common to “The Marquise of O—” and The Prince of Homburg such that a man is reported killed in battle, is mourned, and then turns out to be alive. The Prince of Homburg is based on a historical event during a war between Prussian and Swedish forces. The prince dreams, trance-like, of attaining glory on the battlefield observed by the Elector, Princess Natalia and the Court. Just as Natalia holds a laurel wreath over the head of the sleepwalking prince, he faints. On awakening, Homburg finds one of Natalia’s gloves and thus believes that his dream has a basis in reality. The next day, despite the Elector’s orders not to do so, the prince charges into battle and is victorious. The Elector is reported killed in battle. When the Elector appears unharmed, learning that Homburg has disobeyed the law of the state, he court-martials him. Although imprisoned, the prince is free to leave his cell. Sentenced to death, he is filled with terror at the sight of his newly dug grave. He begs the Elector’s wife and Natalia to
plead his case before the Elector. Natalia, in love with Homburg, and the prince’s regiment, both appear before the Elector, asking for clemency. The Elector leaves it up to the prince to decide if his impulsive actions at the expense of the state are acceptable. Homburg chooses to face death willingly to uphold military law. The Elector stages a mock execution viewed by the court and the prince’s regiment. The prince’s blindfold is removed just as Natalia places the wreath on his head. All hail the prince.

The Prince of Homburg concerns freedom of choice and the consequences of diverging from state rule, explored through the interplay of conscious action and unconscious motives. The Prince’s swoon recalls Julietta’s dead faint just before the rape, her fainting fits during her pregnancy and after the midwife asserts, “the gay corsair who had come ashore in the dark will come to light in due course,” and her swoon-like passivity in the arms of her father (Kleist 90). After Colonel G— shoots off the pistol, his wife faints. March explained the significance of the Kleistian faint, a device that also appears in The Shoffrenstein Family, Amphitryon, “The Foundling,” and Kate of Heilbronn: “. . . the faint as the expression of an unconscious movement of the soul reveals the innermost urges and conflict in the personality at a moment of spiritual crisis” (47).

The faint appears in the opening scenes of The Shoffrenstein Family, a five-act drama about two warring feudal families, Rossitz and Warwand. Count Sylvester is accused of killing his nephew, Peter. At this, Sylvester falls unconscious. He attributes his recovery to his own inner strength. Count Rupert, assuming Sylvester is guilty, vows revenge, while assigning his wife Eustache what he considers a woman’s task: the business of mourning. In contrast to the
autocratic Rupert, Sylvester believes in man’s inherent goodness. Sylvester’s suspicious wife, Gertrude, is a character not unlike Rupert. When Jeronimus, a friend of Rupert and Sylvester, attempts to reason out the truth, he is killed by an angry mob. To her horror, Eustache learns that Rupert facilitated Jeronimus’ death. Rupert’s son Ottokar and his illegitimate son Johann both fall in love with Sylvester’s daughter, Agnes. During a tryst in the mountains, Ottokar and Agnes exchange garments in order to protect Agnes. In a case of mistaken identities, the two fathers kill their own children. A witch appears, brandishing the finger of the dead Peter, who, it turns out, had drowned, and throws the finger at the parents. Illusion has led to tragedy. Through the death of their children, the families are reunited.

The story borrows from Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth. Helbling asserted that The Shoffrenstein Family describes how the limitations of consciousness may determine human interactions:

Essentially, The Shoffrenstein Family illustrates that human beings are forever locked in their own subjectivity and upon interacting cause nothing but chaos and destruction. In the process, absurd chance happenings become focal points at which the inability of all the faculties of human consciousness to perceive truth is glaringly revealed. If a tenuous analogy with Kantianism is indeed permissible, it would suggest that the individual’s subjective way of perceiving and interpreting the events and people around him is comparable to the predicament of human “consciousness-in-general,” which is irremediably entrapped in its own limited mechanism of understanding. (88)

The two couples represent diametrically opposing philosophical views. Jeronimus, representing altruism, is betrayed because the family can’t to deal with reality. It is a hag that restores order, albeit in the midst of tragedy. The witch, representing the female principle, reveals truth through the presentation of the boy’s cut finger, also symbolic of male castration.
Fainting and unconscious seduction are featured motifs in “The Duel.” Count Jakob Rothbart is accused of murdering his brother, the Duke. The Count, needing an alibi, admits to a tryst with the widowed Lady Littegarde at the time of the murder. Rothbart’s love letter to Littegarde is taken as proof of the affair. Despite Littegarde claim that she is innocent, her brothers disown her. Exiled and in despair, Littegarde turns to her friend, the Chamberlain, Friedrich von Trota. He challenges the Count to a trial by combat to discover the will of God. In the course of the duel, Friedrich is gravely wounded, and Rothbart is only slightly hurt. Based on the duel’s outcome, Littegarde is assumed to be guilty. Friedrich and Littegarde are imprisoned. Attended by his mother and his sisters, Friedrich recovers. They all visit Littegarde in her cell, who is distressed, as she now doubts her own innocence. Friedrich faints on the spot. His mother curses Littegarde for allowing her son to fight the duel, for he and Littegarde are condemned to death by burning. But mysteriously, Rothbart’s wounds do not heal. It is discovered that Littegarde’s love smitten maid, impersonating her mistress in a darkened room, had tricked the Count into believing he had spent the night with the Lady. The putrefying Count admits to the murder of the Duke and is burned at the stake. Littegarde and Friedrich are pardoned and marry.

In “The Duel,” the motif of death by fire appears such that the innocent are spared and the villain is immolated. Stereotypes are established only to be undone with typical Kleistian skepticism: the villainous Count is drawn sympathetically, while the heroic Friedrich is physically weak and under the influence of his female relatives. The decision for Littegarde and Friedrich to marry is made as an afterthought. Uncontrolled Eros results in anarchic energy
embodied in Rothbart’s rotting body. Like Kleist, Rothbart and Count F— are aristocrats. The catalysts for the characters’ sexual transgressions are lower class persons: Littegarde’s maid deceives Rothbart, and the Russian soldiers assault Julietta. “The Marquise of O—“ and “The Duel” share another motif that recalls their author’s life—family rejection. Julietta is banished on moral terms, whereas Littegarde’s exile is, in part prompted by her brothers’ greed.

Following Kleist’s death, his works were virtually forgotten for many years. Tieck published a collected edition of his work in 1821. Through the rest of the nineteenth century, Kleist’s plays were occasionally performed in municipal German theatres. In the 1880s, Kleist was rediscovered with the advent of literary Naturalism. By the early twentieth century, Kleist was considered a major German author.

Kleist became enormously popular during the Weimar era. According to Peter Gay in Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider:

In the Weimar period, Kleist scholarship became a passion, a cult, a crusade. The great directors of the Weimar theater revived Kleist’s plays, trying out a whole spectrum of interpretations ranging from the psychoanalytical to the patriotic, the sentimental to the Expressionist. . . . Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig and others . . . obsessively returned to Kleist. (62-63)

---

11 According to Reeve, Gertrude Eysolt gave the first “pathological-psychological interpretation” of Penthesilea’s Amazon queen at the Deutsches Theater in 1811 (83). Reinhardt directed a fairy-tale spectacle Kate of Heilbronn at the Deutsches Theater in Oct. 1905 at Deutsches Theatre, Berlin, complete with “plastic trees, authentic bird calls, real grass, and live spruce” a revolving stage, and a drop curtain (119). Jürgen Fehling’s 1923 Kate of Heilbronn, with sets by Caspar Neher at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus, featured “a tavern sign with the drama’s title” (120). Leopold Jessner directed an Expressionistic Amphitryon in Berlin in Sept. 1926.
In order to understand why Kleist was so revered during the Weimar years, it is useful to consider the sociopolitical ferment that existed in Germany at that time. According to historians Alex de Jonge and Peter Gay, after suffering a terrible defeat in World War I, Whilhemene law collapsed all over Germany during the November Revolution of 1918. Three factions vied for power: the Spartacists, the Social Democrats, and the Independent Socialists. Attempts by Communists, anarchists, and leftist Socialists to create a Bolshevik government resulted in violent fighting between right wing, Freikorps troops of ex-soldiers and Red Guards. Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered in Berlin on January 15, 1919. Meanwhile, at Weimar, a coalition of Social Democrats, the Catholic Center Party, the Democratic Party, the National People’s Party, and the Independent Socialists held a national election on January 9, 1919. The Assembly opened on February 9, led by the Social Democrats, the Center, and the Democrats. The coalition’s constitution became law on August 11, 1919. Germany was now a democratic republic. The capitalists retained economic power, while army leaders continued to control the military. In March 1920, the Kapp Putsch unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the new Republic. Throughout the Republic’s fourteen-year existence, right-wing Nationalists actively campaigned against the government, democracy, women’s rights, and the Jews.

In the early years of the Republic, the economy suffered intense inflation, completely destroying the savings of the middle-class. Domestic violence continued, including general strikes and desperate uprisings. Meanwhile, Germany struggled to pay war reparations. Food
shortages were common and apartments were scarce. Germany was culturally and politically outcast from the rest of Western Europe, while the heavy inflation affected the nation’s cultural life. Although the new Socialist government ended censorship, many people couldn’t afford art, books, or entertainment. The hard economic climate affected artists seriously. In some instances, jobless artists became wards of the state, while others committed suicide.

Germany became the first major nation to get woman’s suffrage. Meanwhile, millions of men reclaimed the jobs that women had held during the war. This resulted in massive unemployment for thousands of women used to working as nurses in hospitals and in jobs that were traditionally the exclusive province of men, such as delivering mail and driving trams. German women divided into two opposing camps. Middle-class women called for a return to traditional roles as homemakers, supportive of war-torn male soldiers. The Socialists supported the rights of women to continue working. According to historian Claudia Koontz: “Politicians, artists, writers, and publicists balanced the promise of emancipation against the fear of chaos, weighing the prospect of an uncertain future against myths about the past” (36).

Given the general instability of the Weimar era, it is hardly surprising that Kleist’s themes of paradox and disruption, and explicit sexuality resonated with the public. Gay explained that Kleist represented different things to different factions of Weimar society: aristocrat, rebel, and poet. Importantly, Gay asserted, “During the Weimar Republic, Kleist’s plays were being widely revived to serve the cause of militant nationalism” (117).12 There is

---

12 According to Reeve, Reinhardt’s Aug. 1907 production of Prince of Homburg at the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin, “called into question the Prussian military tone“ of the play. By Sept 1933, Nazi
also a correlation between Kleist’s suicide and what Gay calls, “the love affair with death that
loomed so large over the German mind” (62).

Kleist’s oeuvre has influenced and inspired many twentieth-century artists in various
media. Austrian-Hungarian Franz Kafka (1883-1924), according to John M. Grandin, author of
Kafka’s Prussian Advocate, studied Kleist’s writings and correspondence. Grandin cites
estrangement from family members as a biographical similarity that became a thematic presence
in the texts of both authors. Kafka used other stylistic devices that are to be found in Kleist’s
fiction. Grandin explained: “Kleist and Kafka also share a number of shock techniques in their
prose . . . both authors tend to startle their readers with disturbing opening lines that plunge one
into the midst of chaotic and often irrational situations” (89). Allan remarked on the two
writers’ frequent use of paradox: “Kleist’s works too would appear to be shot through with the
same elements of paradox . . . which by a strange quirk of fate, has rendered both writers so well
suited to modernist—and even postmodernist—modes of reading” (7).

German author, Thomas Mann (1875-1955), too, was heavily indebted to Kleist. Scholar
Marquerite De Huszar Allen noted similarities between Mann’s last work of fiction, Die
Betrogne and “The Marquise of O—”:

endorsement of Prince of Homburg extended to Hitler, who attended a performance (165).
Reeve noted that while the protagonist of The Battle of Herman was identified with Bismark
before WWI, the Nazis used the play to justify “the doctrine of the chosen leader . . . total war . . .
the nation as one common people” and “ . . . promoted Kleist’s patriotic drama as a natural cult
celebration performed in predominately rural areas in open-air theatres” (148, 150). While The
Prince of Homburg was used during the Third Reich to promote Nazi Socialism, Kleist’s other
works were virtually ignored.
the structural pattern of denial and acceptance defines the heroine’s experience in both works. Physical intimacy between male and female is first attained when they are momentarily isolated in a castle or fortress. The female faces possible rejection by other, primarily or initially family members, and in both the mother-daughter bond is crucial. Each ends with the heroine reconciled to the reality she had denied. (121-22)

A swan is the primary dream symbol in both works. In “The Marquise of O—,” a white swan represents Julietta’s pure soul, whereas in Die Betrogene is a black swan is symbolic of the heroine’s impending death.


American author E.L. Doctorow (1931- ), whose essay, “Heinrich von Kleist” in Creationists: Selected Essays 1993-2006, originally the foreword to The Plays of Heinrich von Kleist, re-imagined the world of Michael Kohlhaas in New York and environs, circa 1910, in his novel, Ragtime (1975), which was adapted as a feature film directed by Milos Forman (1932- ) in 1981 and a Broadway musical (1998) directed by Frank Galati (1943- ). Coalhouse Walker Jr. is a successful African-American ragtime musician. Like Kohlhaas’ horses, Walker’s prize possession, a Model T, is confiscated. As with Kohlhaas, Walker’s wife is killed. Seeking justice, Walker embarks on a rampage at the end of which his car is restored and returned to him.
Walker too, willingly faces death in order to atone for his crimes. Gelus and Crowley examined the similarities in these two fictions:

Doctorow’s borrowings go beyond parallels in situation, character and name. There are similarities in mood, dominant theme . . . the underlying philosophical attitudes expressed in the narrative voice. Doctorow also makes use of favorite Kleistian themes from other stories . . . the foundling child . . . and the pregnancy out of wedlock coupled with the courtship after the fact of pregnancy. (22)

A Hollywood, a made for TV movie, The Jack Bull, (1999), directed by John Badham, starring John Cusak and John Goodman, was based on “Michael Kohlhaas.” Little else besides the locale and the characters’ names were changed. Set in the early years of the American West, Myrl Redding was a stand-in for Kohlhaas and Henry Ballard was a substitute for the Junker.

According to scholar Jost Hermand, it was only at the turn of the century, in light of “battle of the sexes” dramas popularized by August Strindberg (1849-1912) and Frank Wedekind (1864-1918), that Penthesilea was reconsidered by modernist scholars and artists. The play gained further acceptance by the Expressionists. Marxist critic George Lukács condemned Penthesilea as barbaric. German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl (1902-2003) made elaborate preparations for a film version of Penthesilea in which she planned to play the lead role. Due to World War II, the film was never made. British film theorist and filmmaker Laura Mulvey (1941- ) and political journalist, film theorist, writer, and director Peter Wollen (1938- ) co-wrote and co-directed Penthesilea: Queen of the Amazons (1974). This version of the tale was a low-budget film in which women's language and mythology were rendered mute under the structures of patriarchy. Director, writer, and film producer Hans Neuenfels (1941- ) directed a multimedia
production of *Penthesilea* at the Schiller Theater in Berlin in 1981. In Neuenfels’ 1983 film of the play, the battle of the Amazons and the Greeks was set among Berlin cityscapes, bringing ancient characters into the modern world.

Three plays by Eric Bentley (1916-), *The Kleist Variations* (1982), are inspired by Kleist’s plays. Bentley’s *The Fall of the Amazons*, based on *Penthesilea*, retells the mythic story of Penthesilea and Achilles through the story of Abraham and Issac. East German author Christa Wolf’s (1929- ) *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays* (1984) retells in monologue form, the fall of the Troy, including the tale of Penthesilea, accompanied by the author’s response to her travels and studies in Greece. German filmmaker, dramatist, essayist, and cultural critic, and director Hans Jürgen Syberberg (1935-) staged a solo performance of *Penthesilea* in Berlin with German actress Edith Clever in 1990. The four and one-half hour production used simple visuals including death masks of Kleist and Frederick the Great, and a bust of Goethe. Bentley’s *Wansee* is a tragicomedy based on *Kate of Heilbronn* in which a cherub from heaven attempts to dissuade Kleist from suicide. The play considers the opposition of “hope/despair” and “optimism/pessimism. Bentley explained that *Wansee* is meant to speak to the young: “For young people to act. For young people to see” (128).

French novelist and dramatist Jean Hyppolite Giraudoux’s (1882-1944) *Amphitryon 38*, starring Louis Jouvet (1887-1951), premiered in Paris in 1929. An English adaption by N.S. Behrman was performed on Broadway in 1938. The title is a reference to thirty-seven prior versions of the play. The Gods are presented as ordinary human beings, their divinity having been taken from them. The *mise-en-scène* was a mix of Greek architecture and cubism. Other
German language versions of Amphitryon include Georg Kaiser’s Double Amphitryon (1943) and Peter Hacks’ Amphitryon (1968). Olympus on my Mind, a musical by Barry Harman and Grant Sturiale, was performed at the Lamb’s Theater in 1986. Eric Overmeyer adapted Amphitryon for a production directed by Brian Kulick at New York’s Classic Stage Company in 1995. The title of the CSC version strikes a comic note: Amphitryon: A Comedy after Kleist by Way of Molière With a Little Bit of Giraudoux Thrown In.

There have been several noted versions of The Broken Jug. Emil Jannings became famous for his crude, slapstick interpretation of Adam in The Broken Jug. This classic film version adapted by Thea von Harbou, directed by Gustave Ucicky, starring Jannings as the village judge, was released in 1937. During World War II, Viktor Ullmann composed a forty-minute one act opera of The Broken Jug based on a section of the play including the Latin phrase, “Fiat justicia!” ("Let there be justice!") Ullmann, a former student of Arnold Schoenberg, was a conductor at Prague’s German Theater. In Nazi-occupied Prague, Ullmann self-published the opera two years before he was killed in Auschwitz. The opera was not performed until conductor Israel Yinon conducted the world premiere at the Weimar Opera on May 17, 1996. Conductor Gerd Albrecht with Berlin’s German Symphony Orchestra on the Orfeo label recorded the opera for ten singers and sixty-three players. In Bentley’s Concord, based on The Broken Jug, the action takes place in Concord, Massachusetts during the early days of the American republic. The priceless jug is figured with scenes from the life of Sir Walter Raleigh.
Austrian poet and novelist Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-73) wrote an opera libretto for Der Prinz von Homburg with a score by Hans Werner Henze (1960). According to scholar Karen R. Achberger, Bachman was influenced by reading Bertolt Brecht’s 1939 sonnet, “‘Über Kleist’s Stück, Der Prinz von Homburg” (“On Kleist’s Play, The Prince of Homburg”) which “portrays Homburg’s subjugation as capitulation and defeat” (53). Achberger explained that Bachmann was conflicted about adapting a play with nationalistic themes in post-war Germany that would fulfill the aesthetic concerns of opera. Bachmann simplified themes for this controversial libretto:

In eliminating from the libretto the dramas more nationalistic aspects while at the same time isolating its romantic elements, especially in the opening dream scene and in the final reconciliation, Bachman has produced a Homburg whose lack of patriotism is so distant from the Elector’s values and the demands of the state that the internalization of these values that comprises the central development in Kleist’s drama no longer seems plausible in the libretto. (54-55)

German director Peter Stein’s (1937- ) production of The Prince of Homburg at the Schaubühne an Halleschen Ufer in Berlin included the subtitle, Kleist’s Dream of the Prince of Homburg. According to Peter Lackner in The Drama Review, Stein and dramaturge Botho Strauss altered the script in order to realize a figure that embodied both the prince and Kleist. It was a puppet prince that the court finally proclaimed a hero, while the real prince fell to the floor. Well-executed classical acting and Stein’s subjective, historical perspective distinguished the production. Other German-language versions of The Prince of Homburg include a film adaptation by Volker Schlöndorff (1939- ) and Syberberg’s The Cave of Memory, a multi-media installation at Documenta, Kassel, Germany (1997), which explored themes of Fascism and
Romanticism and featured a reading of excerpts from *The Prince of Homburg* and Goethe’s *Faust.*

In 1997, Andrea di Stefano starred as the prince in Marco Bellocchio’s (1939-) Italian language film of the play. Carlo Orevelli’s moody score complements Bellocchio’s painterly directorial style. Candles, torches, and moonlight accompany the nocturnal visions of the sleepwalking prince. Subjectivity is suggested in a scene in which Natalia reads while the Elector’s wife and ladies-in-waiting do needlework. In two scenes, the Elector considers the maneuvers of the Prussian army by moving toy soldiers on a large table, perhaps a reference to Kleist’s proposed substitution of puppet for man in “On the Puppet Theatre.”

In 1976, Robert Kalfin (1933-) directed Chelsea Theater Center’s production of *The Prince of Homburg* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and on Broadway (1976). In a telephone interview, Kalfin explained that the primary source for his interpretation of the play was Carl Gustav Jung’s (1875-1961) *Man and his Symbols,* particularly the chapter on the individuation process by Marie Luise von Franz. Kalfin remarked on Kleist’s uncanny ability to tap into twentieth century concepts of existentialism and psychoanalysis (13 June 2005 Telephone int.). Davi Napoleon’s study on the Chelsea Theater Center includes a discussion of Kalfin’s production of *The Prince of Homburg:*

Kalfin saw the play as an archetypal dream. This he interpreted in Jungian terms, inviting analyst Erlo Van Waveren to several rehearsals to “interpret the script as if it were a dream presented by a patient.” As in a dream, Kalfin saw all the characters as aspects of the prince himself. “The prince evolves from one state of consciousness to another” Kalfin said, describing the Jungian search for a centered self. (186)
PBS produced Kalfin’s *The Prince of Homburg* for television on The American Theater Series. Kalfin noted that the stage version, incorporating projections, was far more abstract than the PBS production, which was filmed entirely on location on a large Southern estate (13 June 2005 Telephone int.).


A movement piece based on Kleist’s letters, *Do You Want To Die With Me*, was directed by Andrew Dawson concept by Sven Till, choreographed and performed by Hiekyoung Kim and Sven Till. Music composition and live performance was by Matthias Herrmann. *Do You Want to Die With Me* was created on invitation by the festival Kleist Festtage in Frankfurt / Oder in 2005.

In French author and feminist critic Hélène Cixous’ (1937- ) *Le Troisième Corps The Third Body* (1970-72), part of a trilogy, the narrator’s relationship to her male lover and herself form a separate entity, a third body. The novel interweaves anecdotes, memories, myths, fairy tales, dreams, and textual references to Count F— in “The Marquise of O—,” Jeronimo in “The Earthquake in Chile,” Sigmund Freud’s essay, “Delusion and Dream” and William Jensen’s
novel Gradiva (1907). The open form of the text is true to Cixous’ theoretical writing from the body l’écriture feminine.

Wolf’s novel, No Place on Earth (1979), features a fictionalized meeting between Kleist and German Romantic poetess Karoline von Günterrode (1780-1806) among other artists and intellectuals at a tea party. The two authors have much in common: spiritually at odds with their era, both were to commit suicide at a young age. Their meeting occurs when Kleist is twenty-six and Günterrode is twenty-four. Kleist, frustrated with his writing, has recently destroyed his Robert Guiscard manuscript. Günterrode and Kleist take a long walk, during which they discuss their views on writing and death. The narrative integrates historical and biographical information with passages appropriated from the authors’ letters and other work. Party conversations and internal meditations are woven together without narrative signifiers. Thus, the reader is brought into the world of the early Romantics and simultaneously made to ask questions. Scholar Margit Resch explained links between Wolf’s position as a writer in the GDR and the conflict between individual and society keenly felt by Prussian Romantic authors under French rule: “At the turn of the nineteenth century, she thought society started to disown literature as a vital element of its own identity, which made it more difficult for the creative artist to integrate life and work. Estrangement of the individual and renouncement of the writer were the inevitable processes of alienation, which Wolf painfully experienced in her own era” (108).

Certainly, I agree with those critics who posit that the Marquise demonstrates a nobility of spirit in the process of forgiving and forgetting her family’s violence, deception, and abandonment, and Count F—’s rape and duplicity. But as an American citizen and artist, my
interest in “The Marquise of O—“ is not unlike Christa Wolf’s novelistic engagement with disenchanted Romantic authors Kleist and Günderrode as a response to suppression in the GDR.

In May 2004, American playwright Arthur Miller (1915-2005) wrote of the current U.S. Administration:

A few years back, it would have been hard to believe that a modern Administration would so quickly and successfully dismantle the social network of protections built up for nearly a century . . . For a long time now the very notion of social responsibility as a necessary part of the corporate culture has seemed as unfamiliar as it was in the Roaring Twenties, before the Great Crash of ’29 after which Franklin Roosevelt spoke of the “malefactors of great wealth” with very little contradiction. (1)

Corporate interests, having systematically “dumbed down” America over the last twenty-five years set the stage for the current Administration’s successful political coup. I argue that the Marquise’s story is a parable for the current state of America’s collective unconscious, having been besieged and assaulted by an onslaught of vapid, tuneless music, mind-numbing films, journalistic untruths, and network news-hour flag-waving. Mass cultural representation of humanistic values, tyrannically banished in the name of the bottom line, has given way to a slew of reality shows that broadcast the disassociated core of a national disturbance.

Recalling the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, contestants on Fear Factor willingly lie down in coffin-like beds crawling with electric eels, get dragged through troughs of raw sewage, eat horse rectum, and gobble up big platters of tomato hornworms. On one episode, the money hungry vied to see who could suck the most milk from a goat’s teats. If the goat is a signifier for the devil, then the show’s creators have found the perfect metaphor for the current state of American mass culture.
Americans, grown ever more obese from a diet of nutrient-deficient fast food, are encouraged to turn to full body plastic surgery for a quick, if painful solution on *Extreme Makeover* and *The Swan*. Female contestants on *The Swan* are separated from their families and flown to Los Angeles. There, a team of medical experts examines them. The women endure nose jobs, brow lifts, microdermabrasion, lip, chin, cheek, and breast implants, tummy tucks, liposuction, laser eye surgery, and full-mouth dental surgery. All mirrors are removed from the contestants’ rooms during their post-surgical convalescence so that they may not see themselves. Psychological counseling ensures that the women will feel good about what they have done. For the final “reveal,” each formerly ugly duckling, dressed in an evening gown, travels by limousine to a large hall. Officiated by a glamorous hostess and with the doctors in attendance, the woman is led before a closed curtain. Music plays, the curtain is opened, and the woman sees her much altered reflection in a large mirror. Then, the woman thanks all the doctors profusely. The TV audience is led to expect that these newly made “swans,” once returned to their families, will live happily ever after. Just as in his delirium, Count F— throws mud at a swan, a representation of Julietta, these shows, created for the benefit of the medical industry, are a manifestation of corporate culture throwing mud at the feminine.

Stupefied Americans, presented, like the Marquise, with no alternative, have accepted the equivalent of Colonel G— and his wife as national parent figures: President George Bush and First Lady Laura Bush. Bush, the official representation of democracy, is a puppet for corporate interests; Laura is his puppet-like wife. In times of war, Bush, cast in the role of Commandant, demonstrates a Kleistian, ironic lack of consideration for his family, the American people, as
evidenced by funding cutbacks for social programs and environmental protections. With much of the National Guard deployed to Iraq, FEMA’s criminal negligence in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina resulted in a catastrophic loss of life and property. Meanwhile, billions of dollars continue to be spent on “The War on Terror,” yet Bush, like Colonel G—, appears oddly indifferent:

The Colonel announced to his family that he would simply act as if they were not present. (69).

The Marquise, already traumatized by news of her unwitting pregnancy, is further traumatized when, begging for mercy, Colonel G— fires off a pistol. After the flooding of New Orleans, violence was similarly implicit in Bush’s “zero tolerance” for looters, many of whom were Afro-American people desperate for food and water. While local police looted, mercenary security companies, most notably Blackwater, were brought in strike fear in New Orleans’ citizenry. Like the Marquise, the victim was victimized. Meanwhile, the media was shocked by such an egregious system failure. In the words of the Marquise herself, running away from her lover/rapist:

I do not want to hear anything. (97)

Just as Colonel G— tries to shut the door in the Marquise’s face when she attempts to reason with him, this Administration refuses to hear the truth about the violent heart of America, as when Amnesty International’s microphones were shut off during Congressional investigation of the Abu Ghraib scandal. The iconic photographs: a hooded Arab detainee, arms outstretched, being electric shocked; the human pyramid of naked bodies; and that of American soldier Lynndie England holding the leash of a dog collared naked detainee, willingly objectified in
photos taken by her commanding officer, Charles Graner, are not so different from corporate music videos’ crude displays. The Abu Ghraib images of humiliated and degraded Iraqi detainees did outrage millions of Americans even as federal government spokesmen called these incidents isolated. But the American public has yet to realize that those soldiers at Abu Ghraib did what they did, at least in part, because theirs is a generation raised on a surfeit of violent, over-sexualized images on TV, film, and in music.

On a global level, U.S. bombing of Iraq is an unconscious assault on the feminine, for Iraq, located in the Fertile Crescent, was once part of ancient Mesopotamia. Here, in Sumer, oral literature was first written down in cuneiform in the middle of the third millennium BC. In the war for control of Iraq’s natural resources, the U.S. military’s blatant disregard for the Iraqi people extends to the unprotected looting of cultural treasures from Baghdad’s Iraq Museum.

The truth of the rape, represented by the Marquise’s pregnant body, is ultimately undeniable. But Julietta’s defiance is short-lived. Given the lady’s religious faith and her social reality, the betrayed daughter must honor the mandate of her family. She has no choice. Similarly, post 9/11, dumbed-down Americans, believing that they have no choice, have accepted the Patriot Act and the war in Iraq, all in the name of a God invoked by the religious Right that, like Count F—, fails to confront the fundamental paradox: the reality of evil within

---

13 Similarly excessive prisoner abuse has occurred all over Iraq. On an episode of Frontline, “The Torture Question,” (23 October 2005), an interrogator explained that U.S soldiers have been inflicting burns and breaking the bones of Iraqi citizens while in their homes.
itself. Jung explained the danger implicit in St. Augustine’s *privatio boni*. I argue that this is why the prayerful Bush Administration has thus perpetrated evil.

But like the Marquise’s pregnancy, the consequences of this administration’s betrayal are ever harder to deny. Although, as Robert Fiske, Middle East Correspondent for *The Independent of London*, has pointed out, major media, “refuses to show the truth of war,” the government’s gross mishandling of Hurricane Katrina was televised, and Cabinet indictments are the most recent evidence of wrongdoing (Radio Interview with Amy Goodman for *Pacifica Radio Network*, 17 Nov. 1998). The untold wants to be told. In my attempt to understand why and how the dark side of corporate capitalism, having raped the American people, has thus far, gotten away with it, I have found some way to account for this phenomenon in “The Marquise of O—.”
CHAPTER THREE

Construction of Mothers and Daughters in
“The Marquise of O—” and the Theatre of Bertolt Brecht

There was once a time when mother and daughter formed a paradigm for nature and for society. The couple was the guardian of nature’s fruitfulness in general and of the relation to the divine. During that era food consisted of the fruits of the earth. Thus the mother-daughter couple guaranteed human food supplies and was also the place where oracles were spoken. This couple watched over the memory of the past: then the daughter respected her mother, her genealogy. The couple also cared for the present: food was brought forth by the earth in serenity and peace. Foreseeing the future occurred thanks to women’s relation to the divine, to the work of the oracle. (191)

— Luce Irigaray

In the process of developing a performance text and staging “The Marquise of O—,” Lampe (director/co-adaptor/dramaturge) and Parkins (actor/co-adaptor/composer) probed the problematic relationship between Julietta and her mother. The following analyzes that relationship relative to construction of the mother/daughter paradigm in the theatre of Brecht. There are reasons for this exploration. First, as established in Chapter Two, Kleist’s popularity soared during the Weimar era, during which time Brecht, a Bavarian born poet, playwright, and theorist who used drama as a social and ideological forum, came to the fore. Kleist’s romantic vision of instability and chaos along with his complex construction of the feminine resonated in post-World War I Germany, anticipating an era in which mass media representation of Germany’s new woman epitomized modernity. Western modernity, or modernism, is a movement beginning in late eighteenth century Enlightenment in which universal progressive values took hold: reason over ignorance; order over disorder; science over superstition. These values foreshadowed capitalism as a dominant mode of production and a transformation of the
social order into an industrial society. As scholar Barbara Kosta has pointed out, modernity was a phenomenon that offered distance from the emotional trauma wrought by World War I that had specific implications for the mother/daughter paradigm: “For daughters, this meant leaving the sphere of the mother” (272). Significantly, in “The Marquise of O—,” the terms of Julietta’s post-war exile include separation from her mother, which she responds to with rebellion and autonomy. This scenario, the prescient vision of a Romantic era author, anticipates in Weimar what Kosta calls “. . . a rapidly growing rift between mothers and their modern daughters” (273). This trend has not been much investigated. Kosta explained: “Little research has focused on the mother-daughter relationship during the Weimar period, despite its central role in understanding modernity (economic relations of production, consumption, organization, and the rearticulation of normative systems)” (273).

Since Brecht’s work reflects his agenda to transform the culture in which he lived, investigation of his construction of mothers and daughters helps clarify to what extent his ideological biases dovetailed with post-war trends for women to reformulate their roles in private and public spheres. Considering that in “The Marquise of O—,” Kleist excuses Count F—’s rape by virtue of his class and wealth, it is also worth investigating how Brecht treats the subject of rape. Another reason that an exploration of Brecht’s theatre is useful is that contemporary feminist theatre artists have incorporated Brechtian strategies of social gest, Verfremdungseffekt (alienation), and historization into their practice. Certainly, we employed these strategies in the process of co-creating a performance text, composing a score, and staging the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of O—.” The following discussion of mothers and daughters in
Brecht’s work lays the groundwork for consideration of how and to what extent our production utilizes those strategies in order to create a dynamic relationship between actor, character, and spectator.

Before looking at Brecht’s construction of mothers and daughters, it is useful to analyze to what extent Julietta and her mother mirror each other. Chapter Two explains that the “O” signifying the widowed Marquise’s surname is a double entendre, focusing attention on her womb as a vessel of containment. Julietta is thus represented as incomplete. Julietta’s mother is also linguistically rendered incomplete in that she lacks a forename. This character is variously called “the Colonel’s wife,” “the Commandant’s wife,” “the Marquise’s mother,” and “the young lady’s mother” (Kleist 69, 74, 79, 99). While the Colonel’s wife addresses her husband by his forename, “Lorenzo,” he does not address her similarly (Kleist 99). Through this omission, Kleist has represented a character that is defined solely in relation to her family. She appears in the role of wife and mother but not as an entity unto herself.

In the first paragraph, the narrator says that Julietta’s “excellent mother” invites her daughter, “a lady of unblemished reputation” to leave the estate at V— and return with her children to the parental fold in their residence at M— (Kleist 68). The inference is that Julietta and her mother, both moral paragons, have mutually loving and respectful relations. War, specifically the invasion of the citadel, literally separates the women despite the Commandant’s recommendation that they seek safe haven elsewhere:

But before the ladies had even concluded their deliberations, weighing up the hardships to which they would be subject in the fortress against the horrors to which they would be
exposed in the open country, the Russian troops were already besieging the citadel and calling on it to surrender. . . . the left wing of the Commandant’s residence was set ablaze and the women were forced to leave. The Colonel’s wife, hurrying after her daughter who was fleeing downstairs with her children, called out to her that they should all stay together and take refuge in the cellars below, but a grenade exploding inside the house threw everything into complete confusion. The Marquise found herself, with her two children, in the outer precincts of the castle . . . (Kleist 68, 69)

The violent explosion is a metaphor for the dynamic split between mother and daughter that is both spatial and psychological. The assault on Julietta follows, transforming her from a cloistered, aristocratic woman into a victim of war. This daughter is not a mirror reflection of her mother. Julietta is reunited with her family seemingly unharmed, that is, not penetrated. She stays in bed “in deference to their excessive solicitude,” but does not converse directly with them about her ordeal (Kleist 70). Nor does she participate in the leveling of accusations. The offending soldiers are captured and executed. The matter is closed. It is only after the family is ensconced in the house in town that Julietta confides in her mother that all is not as it should be:

One morning, when the family were sitting at tea and her father had left the room for a moment, the Marquise, emerging from a long reverie, said to her mother: “If any woman were to tell me that she had felt just as I did a moment ago when I picked up this teacup, I should say to myself that she must be with child.” The Commandant’s wife said she did not understand, and the Marquise repeated her statement saying that she had just experienced a sensation exactly similar to those she had had a few years ago when she had been expecting her second daughter. Her mother remarked with a laugh that she would no doubt be giving birth to the god of Fantasy. The Marquise replied in an equally jesting tone that at any rate Morpheus, or one of his attendant dreams, must be the father. (Kleist 73-74)

This light-hearted, intimate interchange, unmediated by a male presence, shows the extent of their intimacy. But as Gelus has pointed out, their joking has serious implications:
Unlike her mother, who relegates the very real embryo to the realm of fantasy (she will give birth to the “Phantasus”), the Marquise posits the existence of an infant and also suggests the existence of a father, Morpheus, the god of dreams. It is not an uncommon interpretation of the story to see her fainting as a way of avoiding confrontation with a wish or feeling that is unacceptable to her, namely, the wish to engage in precisely the sexual act that her fainting permitted. From this perspective, “Morpheus”—her own dormant wish—is as much responsible for the pregnancy as is the Count. Thus she makes her joke with the intention of extending her mother’s line of denial, yet unwittingly points to a truth more dangerous even than that of pregnancy: the truth of her own forbidden wishes. With her joke, she stands point-blank range before the truth, yet she refuses to allow it to penetrate to her conscious awareness. (454)

Julietta’s initial perception of the Count F— is that he is like an “angel sent from heaven” (Kleist 69). The transposition from heaven-sent rescuer to Morpheus is not so far. Julietta’s “forbidden wishes” for the Count are inextricably mixed up with the economy of war, a system in which a woman is considered, like any other property, to be bounty for the victor. While Winnett asserted that, “ . . . the Marquise’s perception of her pregnancy is entirely pragmatic,” the mother’s perception of her daughter’s predicament is no less so (83).

Colonel G—’s entrance abruptly cuts short the journey into the subconscious that these women have begun. But why is that so? Colonel G— is more than husband and father: he is a military officer and as such, he is a representative of the institution of war. During the invasion of the citadel, he had been inadequate in his defense of the women, having surrendered the fortress to Count F—. On an unconscious level, the possessive father has already lost the battle for his daughter. For although she still lives with and appears to belong to the Commandant, Count F-- has acted out the father’s desire. This affront to the Commandant is the unknown truth that the mother and daughter are poised to understand but must not (yet) understand.
The scene at morning tea sets the stage for the women’s relationship to fall apart after the
doctor’s visit. On hearing his diagnosis, Julietta rings the bell (alarm) so that a servant will usher
him out. Repressed knowledge (the rape) has been made conscious (pregnancy) and it is
disturbing to her psyche. The Colonel’s wife is much in denial as her irate daughter. At first,
she defends Julietta’s honor, calling the doctor, “a shameless and contemptible wretch” (Kleist
86). But when Julietta articulates the possibility that his diagnosis might actually be correct,
changes in her mother’s attitude are signified by subtle variations in gesture and intonation: “the
mother gazed at her steadily” and “Her mother replied a little ironically, ‘And yet of course, it
must necessarily have been one or the other’” (Kleist 88). The adverb “ironically” recalls
Hutcheon’s analysis:

The pragmatic function of irony, then, is one of signaling evaluation most frequently
of a pejorative nature. Its mockery can, but need not, take the usual form of laudatory
expressions employed to imply a negative judgment; on a semantic level, this
involves the deployment of manifest praise to hide latent mocking blame. Both of
these functions – semantic inversion and pragmatic evaluation – are implied in the
Greek root, eironeia, which suggests dissimulation and interrogation: there is both a
division or contrast of meanings, and also a questioning, a judging. Irony functions,
therefore, as both antiphrasis and as an evaluative strategy that implies an attitude of
the encoding agent towards the text itself, an attitude which, in turn, allows and
demands the decoder’s interpretation and evaluation. (53)

Julietta’s response to the judgment implicit in her mother’s ironic tone is expressed
physically: she blushes and kisses her mother’s hand. Julietta requests a midwife. Now her
mother is furious. “A midwife!” exclaimed the Commandant’s wife indignantly, “A clear
conscience and a midwife” (Kleist 88). Here, Julietta falls on her knees, signifying her debased
status. The mother’s anger escalates in direct proportion to Julietta’s abject state, again signified through gesture:

“But the confinement, if you please, will not take place in my house.” And with these words, she rose and would have left the room. Her daughter, following her with outstretched arms, fell right down on her face and clasped her knees. (Kleist 88)

From this most deferential position, Julietta attempts to fan the maternal flames by reminding her mother that she emulates her:

If the irreproachable life I have led, a life modeled on yours, gives me any claim to your respect, if there is in your heart any maternal feeling for me at all, even if only for so long as my guilt is not yet proved and clear as day, then do not abandon me at this terrible moment. (Kleist 88-89)

This speech is accompanied by a gesture, “laying a hand on her breast.” But her mother is unmoved:

Think carefully. If you have committed a fault, though that would grieve me indescribably, it would be forgivable, and in the end I should have to forgive it; but if, in order to avoid censure from your mother, you were to invent a fable about the overturning of the whole order of nature, and dared to reiterate blasphemous vows in order to persuade me of its truth, knowing that my heart is all too eager to believe you, then that would be shameful; I could never feel the same way about you again. (Kleist 89)

So, in terms of the mother’s moral code, sexual transgression is forgivable but lying about it is not. The gestural seesaw continues: Julietta reaffirms her innocence whereupon the Colonel’s wife presses her daughter to her heart. Presuming that Julietta has lost her reason, the mother attempts to put her to bed. Again, Julietta asks for a midwife. This time, it is the mother that rings the bell (alarm), not to deny truth but to summon truth in the person of the midwife. The truth that the midwife delivers causes Julietta to swoon, thereby delaying her mother’s ire.
Once Julietta recovers, the Colonel’s wife, “still disposed towards reconciliation” again asks, “Will you tell me who the father is?” Julietta’s reply, “she would go mad” engenders her mother’s conclusive response, “I curse the day I bore you!” together with “. . . she rose from the couch and left the room” (Kleist 91). Thus, the mother literally sets herself above and away from her debased daughter. Significantly, the Commandant’s letter announcing to Julietta that she is disowned is “wet with tears” and “in one corner, half effaced, stood the word ‘dictated,’” reveals the mother’s misgivings at this loss (Kleist 91-92).

When the dispossessed Julietta publishes the notice stating that she will marry the man in question, the sexually jealous Colonel G—, presuming she has a lover, flies into a rage. But the narrator explains that Colonel G—‘s wife comes to a very different conclusion:

His wife . . . said that if she was to believe one of two incomprehensible things, then she found it more credible that some extraordinary quirk of fate had occurred then that a daughter that had always been so virtuous should now behave so basely. (Kleist 100)

Colonel G—, in denial about his frustrated desire, shuts his wife down. She must necessarily resort to duplicity in order to restore order in the family. Her first act of deception is to bribe Leopardo to keep their trip to V— a secret. Arriving at Julietta’s estate, the Colonel’s wife necessarily reminds the gatekeeper of her special status: “. . . she would be received by his mistress, as she was her mother” (Kleist 101). In the reconciliation of mother and daughter, gestures again signify changes in social status. Julietta hurries to the gate to greet her “on her knees” whereupon the Colonel G—‘s wife raises her daughter from the ground, anticipating the following scene (Kleist 102). Once in the house, the mother launches into a deceitful tale in which the rapist has confessed. As if to hurt Julietta all the more, she identifies him as coming
from the lower class. When the Colonel’s wife announces Leopardo is the culprit, Julietta launches into the anecdote about her nap on the sofa. Indeed, Leopardo really could have done the deed, yet the mother does not even pause to address his viability as a suspect. Rather, she is impressed by Julietta’s gullibility, which she takes as proof of her daughter’s innocence. Falling on her knees, she begs Julietta’s forgiveness. This gesture is a repetition of Julietta’s gesture at her mother’s feet in M—. Then, she buries her head in Julietta’s lap, now putting herself in proximity to the truth. Next, the mother refers to herself as having a “corrupted soul,” as opposed to Julietta: “you are purer than an angel . . . splendid heavenly creature” and “I want no greater honour than your shame” (Kleist 104). The mother’s literal fall symbolizes her departure from the social collective that has condemned her “fallen” daughter. Thus, the Colonel’s wife attempts to mirror Julietta. But Julietta does not allow her mother to be debased. Rather than object to her mother’s trickery, Julietta kneels beside her and says, “Under such extraordinary circumstances, how was it possible for anyone to trust me” (Kleist 104).

During the carriage ride back to M—, the women joke about Leopardo’s broad shoulders. Their laughter makes light of the mother’s duplicity the day before, while recalling their former intimate relations at tea before Julietta’s exile, thus reestablishing the mother/daughter bond.

Back in M—, the Colonel’s wife, facilitating the reconciliation of her husband and daughter, literally puts her body between them while the father bawls like a baby. Later, when the mother is confronted with the Commandant and Julietta in a lovers’ attitude, she is delighted. Martin explains why:
In a social order where women are property, the father must desire his daughter (in
other words, this situation would not play itself out between a father and daughter who do
not know their relation; it has to do with their social relationship to one another, not the
biological) and the daughter must submit to the dynamics of the exchange. She becomes
the object of desire of another after her father gives her up as an object of desire. (102)

The Colonel’s wife, happy to see her husband reclaim his property, also functions as an
agent for Count F—. When the Count first proposes, the mother tells him to return to the family
after his trip to Naples. She prevails upon Julietta to assure Count F— that she won’t marry
anyone else while his suit is under consideration. On the morning of the third, having effected
her husband’s reconciliation with Julietta the night before, the Colonel’s wife makes light of her
shock when Count F— appears on the morning in the reception room:

Why Giulietta, whom have we been expecting—? . . . Who else? . . . Who else but
him? How stupid we have been—! . . . Poor wretched girl . . . What has happened
that can have taken you by surprise? (Kleist 109)

The Count, who has fallen on his knees before Julietta, turns his attention to the
Colonel’s wife, kissing the hem of her dress, for he knows that he must get in the mother’s good
graces if he is to win the day. Indeed, he is successful: she expresses no anger at Count F—.
Instead, she is all business:

“Stand up Count,” she answered. “Stand up! Comfort my daughter; then we shall all be
reconciled and all will be forgiven and forgotten.” (110)

Martin’s explanation for the mother’s pragmatism is on target:

The Colonel’s wife is too hasty in her acceptance of the Count as rapist-become-
husband; but perhaps this speaks for her longer life and greater experience in the world
of men, not so much her superficiality. (103)
Once Julietta remarries, the Marquise of O— is no more. Her new title, “the Countess,” signifies that the social rupture caused by the rape has, at least in the public sphere, been resolved (Kleist 112). In the novella’s last paragraph, the Colonel’s wife successfully effects full (conjugal) reconciliation between Count F— and “the Countess, his wife” (Kleist 113). Thus, the Commandant’s wife facilitates the end of her daughter’s rocky road from widowhood to remarriage and new motherhood. Mother and daughter once again mirror each other.

In contrast to Kleist’s psychologically nuanced Julietta and other of his female characters, Brecht’s major plays present a clearly observable collection of female stereotypes. These women never go beyond stereotypical models and they all resemble one another. Scholar Sarah Bryant-Bertail explained:

Brecht uses women as didactic stereotypes . . . The plight of women in these plays is significant if looked at from a contemporary feminist perspective, because the role assigned to them by society and aesthetics is always strategically designed to harmonize the ideologically disharmonious and to conceal the ruptures between those ideologies and the real conditions they attempt to justify. At the same time that women characters are disenfranchised and exiled from power, they are, as didactic objects accorded the double task of veiling society’s seams and reflecting its values . . . A character in one play often could be an older or younger version of a character in another, as if one woman were changing her name many times. (44-45, 46)

It is helpful to note a few biographical details so as to situate his theatre in a socio-political context. The son of a Catholic manager of paper mills in Augsburg, Brecht was raised in his mother’s Protestant faith. Initially, Brecht studied medicine in Munich from 1917-21 and briefly served in an army hospital. Early on, Brecht developed an antibourgeois attitude concomitant with his generation’s response to the atrocities of World War I and its aftermath.
Brecht’s literary influences included Rimbaud, Villon, and Kipling. Brecht associated with the
dadaists, notably Wedekind. He was much impressed by the Bavarian clown and satirist Karl
Valentin (1882-1948). Brecht honed his performance skills, singing his songs in cabarets.
Brecht’s first play, Baal, was well received. His second play, Trommeln in der Nacht (Drums in
the Night) (1922) won him the coveted Kleist-Preis, an annual German literary award established
on the one hundredth anniversary of Kleist’s death. From 1924-33, Brecht lived in Berlin,
during which time he worked for the directors Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator and staged his
own works. Brecht collaborated with composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950) on Die
Dreigroschenoper (The Threepenny Opera) in 1928, and the opera Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt
Mahagonny (Rise and Fall of the Town of Mahagonny) in 1930. He also wrote Lehrstücke
(exemplary plays), with music by Weill, Hindemith, and Hanns Eisler. During these years,
Brecht, influenced by Asian theatre and American musical theatre, developed his epic theatre.
By the late 1920s, through Brecht’s association with Marxist theoretician Karl Korsch, he
became a Marxist. Brecht’s film Kuhle Wampe, oder, Wem gehört die Welt? (Kuhle Wampe, or
Where in the World?) (1932), represented a supportive stance for the decriminalization of
abortion. In 1933, Brecht went into exile in Denmark, then Finland and the U.S. in 1941. In
Hollywood, Brecht wrote a screenplay, Hangman Also Die, for Fritz Lang. Brecht’s plays while
in exile include Life of Galileo (1938), Mutter Courage und der Kinder (Mother Courage and
Her Children) (1939), The Good Person of Szechuan (1941) and Caucasian Chalk Circle (1944).

In 1947, Brecht appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee. In
1948, Brecht’s Short Organum for the Theatre was published and he returned to Berlin. The
following year in East Germany, Brecht and his second wife, actress Helene Weigel formed the
state-subsidized Berliner Ensemble, which presented his plays to great acclaim. Brecht died in
1956 leaving behind, in addition to his works, one illegitimate son, three other children by two
wives, and several mistresses cum collaborators.

It is helpful to consider to what extent Brecht was influenced by Kleist’s oeuvre. His 1939
sonnet based on *The Prince of Homburg*, translated by Eric Bentley, appeared in the *Evergreen
Review* in 1960:

The Prince of Homburg

In Staub mit allen Feinden Brandenburgs!
O garden in the Brandenburgian sand!
O visions in the steel-blue Prussian night!
O hero prince, whom death can so affright!
Pride of a warrior! Soul of a hired hand!

O backbone broken by a victor’s crown!
You won the battle—but weren’t ordered to.
Nikki won’t hug you now. The Elector’s crew
Will fetch the axe and, grinning cut you down.

And thus we see him then: the mutineer
Cold, sweaty, purified (no doubt) by fear
Of death; his laurels crown his agony.

There is his sword, still at his side—in bits.
Not dead, but flat upon his back, he hits
“The dust with Prussia’s every enemy.” (55)

In *Brecht and Method*, Marxist critic and theorist Fredric Jameson explained that Brecht
rewrote classic plays including *Prince of Homburg* to suit his pedagogical ends. Jameson refers
to the last two lines of Brecht’s poem as an example. “Kleist’s Prince of Homburg, crushed under the inhuman authority of the Prussian tradition, must go down celebrating it” (Jameson 90).

Although the setting was changed from Germany to China, there are definite thematic similarities between Brecht’s didactic play The Measures Taken (1930) and Prince of Homburg. A young communist disobeys party rules for personal reasons thus undermining the authority of the party. The protagonist admits his guilt. Accepting his execution for the good of the party, the young man is able to face death willingly.

Several scholars have noted connections between Kleist and Brecht. Diana Stone Peters and Frederick G. Peters, translators of a 1978 edition of Prince Friedrich of Homburg, compared Kleist’s Kant crisis with Brecht’s becoming a communist:

Brecht’s life and work provide a striking and illuminating parallel, for he, too, possessed a highly emotional and sensitive personality that often seemed at the mercy of compulsions beyond his conscious control. About 1930, however, he underwent an amazing dialectical reversal: he provided himself with an anchor in the objective world by becoming a fervent communist. Brecht affirmed the discipline of the party, which required the individual to sacrifice the needs of his own merely personal emotional life to the requirements of the common good as enumerated by the doctrines of the communist state. Thus, both Kleist and Brecht, feeling themselves threatened by the dangers of emotional isolation within their own pure subjectivity, as well as by the terrors of philosophical weightlessness in a world without God, affirmed the role and structure of external political authority. A twofold benefit accrued from such a decision: the tumultuous inner life could be disciplined as its importance was devalued, while at the same time the individual’s existence was provided with a higher purpose as a social being through voluntary participation in the realization of the state’s ever-growing power. (ix-x)

Both dramatists created works glorifying the state that were viewed negatively or with suspicion by the governments of their respective eras. Stone Peters and Peters explained why:
In treating the theme of the individual’s relationship to the state, neither Kleist nor Brecht was able to suppress the psychological complexities and moral ambiguities inherent in such a relationship in order to deliver a simple propagandistic message. Because of their own ambivalence toward the inner life, they created more than they knew (x).

In October 1986, art historian Yve-Alain Bois pointed out that, “the tradition of agit-prop art and literature” that Brecht refined and used as a strategy in his theatre can be traced back to Kleist’s 1809 “Manual of the French Press, which dramatically mocked the disinformation organized by the French government during the Napoleonic wars . . .” (132).

Scholar Peter Heller asserted that Kleist’s Penthesilea represented “. . . his own failure to create a perfect tragedy (Robert Guiskard)” through which he exhibited a behavioral trait he calls “. . . the fantasy of masochistic or self-destructive rebellion” (205). Heller included Brecht among a group of six twentieth-century authors whose works similarly explore masochistic rebellion as exemplified by the hero of Brecht’s Baal (1918):

. . . always appears as one of the elect, he has a mission, however vague it may be. He stands in special relation to superior powers or forces. The hero—a depraved and inspired singer of ballads appears as favorite of divine (vital) forces, as incarnation of god or as a satanic enemy of the deity . . . Ultimately Baal’s rebellion only serves the purpose of self-annihilation. He dies as a persecuted criminal, unknown, despised, and beyond all human communities. (Heller 205)

It is noteworthy that Kafka, who had seriously studied Kleist’s work, was much admired by Brecht. John Willett and Ralph Manheim, editors of Bertolt Brecht: Short Stories explained:

Though Brecht was for the most part highly critical, if not positively insulting in his view of his German language fellow-writers, he put Kafka among a very small nucleus of avant-garde writers from whom realistically-inclined socialists could learn about technique; and in conversation with Walter Benjamin he praised Kafka’s
precision and visionary powers, even if these were restricted to seeing ‘what was coming, without seeing what is.’ (xii)

However, Brecht demonstrated some ambivalence about according Kleist his due. According to Brecht biographer Ronald Hayman, in 1951, when the dramatist was staging The Mother with the Berliner Ensemble, German actress and director Therese Giehse starred in and directed The Broken Jug. The Berliner Ensemble subsequently toured The Mother Courage and The Mother together with The Broken Jug in Poland. Apparently, Giehse and Brecht argued heatedly about the Kleist production: “In her opinion he was jealous of Kleist’s talent” (Hayman 361).

In any case, it does not appear that Brecht drew inspiration from Kleist’s complex female characters such as Eve from The Broken Jug, who silently withholds the truth in order to test her lover Ruprecht’s trust, or for that matter, Julietta from “The Marquise of O—,” who must reconcile good and evil in the father of her child. In “Women in Brecht’s Works,” Sara Lennox identified female types that are narrowly defined in terms of “their relationship to men” beginning with selfless and or mourning mothers of sons in early stories, followed by a bevy of sexual conquests in Baal, the pregnant and therefore burdensome Anna from Drums in the Night (1919), the sexually available Jane and Marie from In the Jungle of Cities (1922) and the “figures of satire,” Widow Begbick from A Man’s A Man (1926) and to some extent, Polly Peachum from The Threepenny Opera (1928) (Lennox 85). In later, Marxist informed works, stereotypical mothers appear: Mother Courage from Mother Courage and her Children (1939), the prostitute Shen Te from The Good Person of Szechuan (1941), and Grusha from The
Caucasian Chalk Circle (1944). The daughter Kattrin from Mother Courage has qualities of both mother and child. Brecht’s tendency to construct women as stereotypes suggests that he regarded women from an essentialist position. Lennox elaborated:

The role and status of women in Brecht’s works are not problematized like other forms of human relationships, but are simply presented as if they were natural. Though the audience may participate in a learning process with respect to the mutability of many forms of social relationships, the plays do not challenge in any fundamental way existing forms of sexual relationships. Even in terms of his own theory of drama, Brecht’s plays would seem to perpetuate women’s oppression in the same way that the bourgeois theater perpetuates human and particularly working class oppression. (91)

In Drums in Night, faithfulness and true love triumph over bourgeois morality. The play is set during the Spartacist rebellion during the winter of 1918. Anna Balicke, after waiting four years for Kragler, her fiancé, to return from the war, has taken a new lover, Murk. Her parents, Mr. And Mrs. Balicke, are a conventional bourgeois couple duly hoping to get Anna married. In the play’s first scene, Mrs. Balicke shows regard and concern for the missing Kragler. At first, Mrs. Balicke argues with her husband against Anna marrying Murk:

BALICKE (shaving by the window): He’s been missing for four years. He’ll never come back now. Damn uncertain times. Any man’s worth his weight in gold. I’d have given my blessings two years ago but your blasted sentimentality loused things up. Right now I’d stop at nothing.

MRS. BALICKE (looking at a photograph, on the wall of Kragler as an artilleryman): Such a good fellow he was, such a nice boy.

BALICKE: He’s rotten now.

MRS. BALICKE: Supposing he came back!

BALICKE: Nobody ever comes back from heaven.
MRS. BALICKE: By all the hosts of heaven! Anna would drown herself!

BALICKE: If she says that, she’s a goose, and I never saw a goose drown.

MRS. BALICKE: All the same, she’s just sick about it.

BALICKE: Then tell her to lay off the blackberries and pickled herrings. That Murk’s a fine fellow. We can thank God on our knees for him.

MRS. BALICKE: Sure he earns money. But compared to the other! It brings tears to my eyes.

BALICKE: Compared to the corpse! Listen I’m telling you: now or never! Is she waiting for the Pope? Does she want a black man? I’m sick of these fantasies.

MRS. BALICKE: And if he comes, the corpse you say is rotting – from heaven or from hell – “My name is Kragler . . .” Who’s to tell him he’s stone cold and his girl’s been sleeping with another man?

BALICKE: I'll tell him! And now you tell the silly creature I’ve had enough and it’s Wedding March time and Murk’s the man . . . (99-100)

Mrs. Balicke capitulates to her husband’s edict. Together they encourage Anna to marry Murk. Anna, although still emotionally attached to Kagler, has become pregnant by Murk and agrees to marry him. Then, Kragler returns home after four years as a prisoner of war in Africa. He shows up at the house looking for Anna. Her parents brush Kragler off:

MRS. BALICKE: Don’t take it so hard, Mr. Kragler. There’s lots of fish in the sea, you know. Learn to suffer without complaining.

KRAGLER: Anna . . .

BALICKE (harshly) Wife! (She goes up to him, hesitantly. With sudden firmness.) Down with sentimentality! Let’s go! (Leaves with wife.) (112)
At the engagement party at the Fatherland Café, Mrs. Balicke is manipulative with her daughter. She doesn’t let Anna know that Kragler is back in town:

MRS. BALICKE: Shouldn’t we have invited more people to the engagement party? This way, nobody knows about it. And people ought to know about it. (114)

When Kragler shows up, Anna turns to her mother for assistance:

ANNA who sits facing the door, has seen KRAGLER. She slumps, and looks at him fixedly . . . he moves, rather fast but heavily toward ANNA who still sits alone, her glass trembling before her. He takes the glass, leans on the table, stares at her.

BALICKE: He’s stinko, that’s what.

MURK: Waiter, this fellow’s disturbing the peace. Throw him out. (Runs to wall, draws curtain back. Moon.) . . .

ANNA: (has run from table, clings to her mother) Mother! Help!

Kragler goes around table . . . to ANNA.

MRS. BALICKE: (about simultaneously with following) Spare my child! You’ll go to jail! Jesus, he’ll kill her! (116)

The pregnant Anna leaves Murk for Kragler, who is willing to forgive her. Their unconventional social contract belies bourgeois morality. Anna’s out of wedlock pregnancy and impending motherhood may be considered in light of Sue Ellen Case’s commentary:

His mothers are single mothers, whose motherhood is variously established . . . The mothers are defined by their mothering roles and have no sexual definition . . . it can be shown that Brecht’s definition is the restrictive, patriarchal one. Mothers are central to plays which exclude desire/sexuality in their political content/function and focus upon asexual political issues with a sense of necessary dedication to the future. (66-67)

Through the strength of Anna’s convictions, she is reinvented from the child-woman that she was, proving herself to be morally superior to her mother. While Polly Peachum, the Beggar
King’s daughter in *Threepenny Opera*, does not become a mother, after marriage, she evolves from child-woman to a forthright businessperson.

Polly’s mother, like Mrs. Balicke, has an eye on her daughter’s economic future. Mrs. Peachum too, does whatever is necessary to get rid of her daughter’s lover. Yet within Brecht’s construction of the upside down world of London’s criminals, beggars, and corrupt officials, Mrs. Peachum’s emotional abandonment does not seem out of place. In the prologue, a street singer at an open-air market recounts the exploits of a white-gloved thief, rapist, and murderer, “Mac the Knife,” while Mr. Peachum accompanies his wife and daughter on a walk about the city. Then, in Peachum’s “The Beggar’s Friend Ltd.,” he and Mrs. Peachum who works with her husband, outfit young Filch, a new recruit to the ranks of the profit-minded downtrodden. The couple discusses Polly’s courtship by a mysterious man:

MRS. PEACHUM: Don’t be so suspicious, Jonathan, there’s no finer gentleman. The Captain takes a real interest in our Polly.

PEACHUM: I see.

MRS. PEACHUM: And if I’ve got half an eye in my head, Polly thinks he’s very nice too.

PEACHUM: Celia, the way you chuck your daughter around anyone would think I was a millionaire. Wanting to marry her off? . . . A husband! He’d have us in his clutches in three shakes! In his clutches! Do you think your daughter can hold her tongue in bed any better than you?

MRS. PEACHUM: A fine opinion of your daughter you have.

PEACHUM: The worst. The very worst. A lump of sensuality that’s what she is . . . I expect my daughter to be to me as bread to the hungry . . . It even says so in the Bible somewhere. Anyway marriage is disgusting. I’ll teach her to get married.
MRS. PEACHUM: Jonathan, you’re just a barbarian.

MR. PEACHUM: Barbarian! What’s this gentleman’s name?

MRS. PEACHUM: They never call him anything but ‘the Captain.’

MR. PEACHUM: So you haven’t even asked him his name? Interesting.

MRS. PEACHUM: You don’t suppose we’d ask for a birth certificate when such a distinguished gentleman invites Polly and me to the Cuttlefish Hotel for a little hop . . . A gentleman who has always handled me and my daughter with kid gloves. (71-72)

Mrs. Peachum allows herself to be hoodwinked, presumably because she expects the alliance will be profitable. But Polly’s beau is none other than the infamous Macheath AKA Mac the Knife. Meanwhile, Macheath and Polly celebrate their nuptials in a stable filled with stolen wedding paraphernalia. Polly’s irate father wants her to get divorced. The Peachums devise a scheme to entrap Macheath and get a reward. Sure that Macheath will return to his libertine ways, Mrs. Peachum offers money to the prostitute, Jenny, in exchange for ratting on him. Macheath visits the brothel and is arrested. Meanwhile, Polly has capably taken charge of her husband’s criminal gang. Police Chief Tiger Brown conspires to help his old friend Macheath to escape. Brown’s daughter Lucy appears enraged that Macheath has married someone else. Lucy and Polly get into a catfight and Mrs. Peachum drags her daughter away. Lucy helps Macheath escape. Peachum threatens Brown: if he doesn’t arrest Macheath, his beggars will disrupt the Coronation. Macheath is condemned to death. Polly and the others refuse to help. Just as Macheath is about to be hanged, in a parodic finale, Peachum announces that while real life demands his death, mercy, at least in art, exists. The Queen’s messenger arrives and Macheath is pardoned and made a baronet.
It is worth noting that in G.W Pabst’s film of *Threepenny Opera* (1933), Mrs. Peachum (Veleska Gert) and Polly (Carola Neher) stroll around town sans Mr. Peachum. The two women listen to a street singer, and then pause in front of a bridal shop window to gaze approvingly at a wedding dress. Mackie Messer (Rudolf Forster) first appears in the reflection of the shop’s window. He invites the women to join him in the bar at the Cuttlefish Hotel. Here, Mrs. Peachum appears to act as a procurer for her daughter. Meaningful looks are exchanged and all three laugh heartily. Macheath finds a gang member to keep Mrs. Peachum entertained while Macheath and Polly disappear up the stairs to a private room. Although Mrs. Peachum later tries to break up Polly’s marriage, there is no doubt in the film that she is the facilitator for her daughter’s liaison with a con man, a crook, and a rapist.

Like the Colonel’s wife, Brecht’s Mrs. Balicke and Mrs. Peachum attempt to control their daughters’ marital fates. These mothers pragmatically uphold the prevailing social systems within which they function while recalling Jane Flax’s description of psychological tensions that may arise between mother and daughter: “. . . the mother’s rage, her envy of the daughter’s potential freedom, her desire for her daughter to be the selfsame and not different and separate from her, as well as, the daughter’s fear of differentiation, of separation, of boundaries . . .” (172).

In “The Marquise of O—,” Kleist, who was well acquainted with war and its consequences, focused on the dilemma of an upper-class victim of war. The novella charts the trajectory of her displacement from society and subsequent reintegration. Kleist draws a clear line between classes: the Russian soldiers are executed for their assault while the upper-class
rapist is forgiven once he has handed over the cash and the victim is legally protected through marriage. The pragmatic Colonel’s wife sees to it that her daughter is recast in her own image, i.e. married, thus facilitating a dysfunctional union that is no less so than her own marriage. Julietta willingly returns to the patriarchal fold in order to protect her unborn child. In Mother Courage and Her Children, a play with music in three acts, Brecht and his uncredited co-writer, Margarete Steffin, point to the economic systems that perpetuate war as the underlying cause of war-related victimization. Physical assault seems to be solely the victim’s problem. The mother character is for the most part, brutal with the child-woman daughter.

Anna Fierling, known as Mother Courage, is tougher than either Mrs. Balicke or Mrs. Peachum. At once a capitalist and a hypocrite, Mother Courage looks out for her own best interests. Ironically, this unmarried, merchant-mother is unable to keep her three grown children from harm’s way. Kattrin, the daughter, is constructed in opposition to her emotionally deficient mother: a helpless child-woman suffering under her mother’s reign. Hungry for love, Kattrin vainly aspires to become a mother. But she only attains maternal status symbolically through an act of self-sacrifice.

The play begins in 1624 during the Thirty Years War. Mother Courage appears with a loaded canteen wagon pulled by her sons Eilif and Swiss Cheese in Dalarna, a Swedish province. Courage’s cart follows the army in order to sell the soldiers drink and clothes. She claims to be concerned with protecting her children, who all have different fathers, from the dangers of war. Yet she relies on them and the war to keep her business running smoothly. When Eilif wants to sign up for the army, Mother Courage fakes a fortune telling in which she draws death cards for
each of her children so as to keep them close by and out of harms way. Ironically, her predictions turn out to be prophetic as one by one, she loses them. Eilif is first: the Recruiting officer conscripts him for an army campaign in Poland. Kattrin responds with guttural cries.

Mother Courage’s attitude towards Kattrin’s womanhood is harshly protective. She rubs Kattrin’s face with ashes to protect her from sexual assault:

*MOTHER COURAGE:* *(She rubs Kattrin’s face with ash).* Keep still, will you? There you are, a bit of muck and you’ll be safe. What a disaster. Sentries were drunk. Hide your light under a bushel, it says. Take a soldier, especially a Catholic one, add a clean face, and there’s your instant whore. For weeks they get nowt to eat, then soon as they manage to get it by looting they’re falling on anything in skirts. That ought to do. Let’s have a look. Not bad. Looks like you been grubbing in muckheap. Stop trembling. Nothing’ll happen to you like that. *(29)*

Mother Courage follows the army into Poland, with Swiss Cheese and Kattrin pulling the wagon. Haggling over a capon, Courage overhears the Swedish Commander listening to Eilif’s tale: having stolen some peasants’ cattle for his men to eat, he kills off the peasants. The Commander is impressed with Eilif, but afterward, Mother Courage boxes his ears for not having surrendered.

While folding the wash, Yvette Pottier, the regiment’s prostitute, tells Mother Courage and Kattrin the tale of her lost love, Pieter Piper. Mother Courage lectures Kattrin to not take up with a soldier. When Courage takes Cook and Chaplain behind the wagon to get some brandy, Kattrin struts around wearing Yvette’s hat and red boots. Mother Courage denigrates her daughter’s need for love:

*MOTHER COURAGE* *clambering out of the cart with a basket:* What have I found, you shameless creature? *She holds up the red boots in triumph.* Yvette’s red high- heeled boots. Coolly went and pinched them, she did. Cause you put it in her head she was an
enchanted young person. *She lays them in the basket.* I’m giving them back. Stealing Yvette’s boots! She’s wrecking herself for money. That’s understandable. But you’d do it for nothing, for pleasure. What did I tell you: you’re to wait till its peace. No soldiers for you. You’re not to start exhibiting yourself till its peacetime. (32)

It is interesting to note that while the hard-working Mother Courage is tough with Kattrin, she is hard on Swiss Cheese too:

**MOTHER COURAGE:** The two of you will have me in my grave yet. Sooner be minding a bagful of fleas. (32)

Three years later, the Catholics are in power, and Mother Courage must switch flags. The Protestant regiment chaplain, disguised as a Catholic, joins Courage. Swiss Cheese, now army payroll master, hides the cash box in the wagon. When Swiss Cheese decides to move the cash box, Catholic spies arrest him. Mother Courage and her son must act as if they don’t know each other. **Mother** Courage comes up with a plan to bargain for Swiss' freedom but she is too intent on the bottom line. **Soldiers** carrying the body of Swiss Cheese enter. Kattrin wordlessly looks on as her mother, for fear of giving herself away, refuses to identify her brother’s corpse.

Several years later in an embattled town, the chaplain calls out for bandages to help people injured in a building collapse. Brecht’s stage directions indicate that Kattrin, vainly trying to persuade her mother to hand out shirts for linen, rages at her mother:

**MOTHER COURAGE:** I can’t give you a nowt. What with all my expenses, taxes, loan interest and bribes! *Making guttural sounds, Kattrin raises a plank and threatens her mother with it.* You gone plain crazy? Put that plank away or I’ll paste you one, you cow. I’m giving nowt, don’t want to, got to think of meself. (49)

The chaplain lifts Mother Courage off the cart and tears up the shirts. Hearing the cry of a
child, Kattrin rushes in to the building. Courage shows concern for her daughter as well as her linen. Kattrin emerges holding a baby. Kattrin cuddles and sings to the baby, intent on keeping the child. Mother Courage commands that she return the baby to its mother. Parallel to the event, Courage, seeing a soldier steal a bottle of schnapps from her wagon, takes his fur coat. Both the baby and the coat are spoils of war.

Courage sends Kattrin into the town to buy supplies. Kattrin returns with the goods and a disfiguring facial wound that she received en route. Once again, the human cost of war is manifested in Kattrin’s person. The mother bandages her up but the mutilated Kattrin will never be a wife and mother:

MOTHER COURAGE: What I call a historic moment is them bashing my daughter over the eye. She’s half-wrecked already, won’t get no husband now, and her so crazy about kids; any road shoe’s only dumb from war soldier stuffed something in her mouth when she was little . . . War be dammed. (59)

Once disfigured, Kattrin no longer wants the red shoes and climbs into the cart. In an act of perversity, her mother gives Kattrin the shoes. Courage blames the war on Kattrin’s troubles yet celebrates war when she becomes prosperous. The chaplain proposes but Courage turns him down, claiming only to care about seeing that she and her children survive. A year later, war ends and Mother Courage is ruined. The ragged, homeless cook and chaplain, vying for Courage’s favor, argue. After the chaplain calls Courage a "hyena of the battlefield," she asks him to leave (Brecht 64). Yvette, now a colonel’s widow, comes to visit Mother Courage and identifies Cook to be her betraying lover, Pieter Piper. Yvette goes with Courage go to sell off her goods before the prices drop. Eilif, brought on in chains, tells the chaplain and the cook that
he again killed peasants to take their cattle and has been arrested. The chaplain accompanies Eilif to be executed. Courage arrives with news that war has begun again. Cook does not tell her that her son is dead.

In 1634, the cook, having inherited an inn, invites Mother Courage join him. He considers that the dumb, scarred Kattrin won’t present well and wants Courage to leave her behind. Kattrin overhears their conversation and intends to flee but her mother prevents her from doing so. Courage turns down the cook’s offer but her maternal affection is strangely problematized feeding Kattrin soup from a spoon:

MOTHER COURAGE: Don’t start thinking it’s on your account I gave him the push. (78)

In 1636, near Halle, where Mother Courage has gone to buy goods, Kattrin remains with the wagon. Catholic soldiers seize a group of peasants, and make one of them lead the soldiers silently into town to kill the townspeople. Suddenly, Kattrin gets a drum out of the wagon, climbs on a farmhouse roof, and pulls the ladder up behind her. She pulls the drum out from underneath her apron as if giving birth. Her drumming noise brings back the soldiers. They try to bribe her to stop in exchange for sparing her mother. Kattrin beats the drum harder. In tears, Kattrin drums loudly until she is shot. Ironically, daughter of a mother that can never hear her, she raises such a racket that she alerts the town and saves the day.

Mother Courage’s dead daughter is laid at her feet. In the early morning, Courage sings a lullaby to the corpse and pays the peasants to bury her. Then, having harnessed herself to the front of the wagon, Mother Courage resumes business as usual, following the regiment.
Amidst this hopelessly dark vision of wartime opportunism and loss, one may discern contradictions in the hardhearted Anna Fierling. Hayman considers Mother Courage’s character as part and parcel of the vast arsenal of alienation effects Brecht commanded in his later plays: “Courage as a contradictory character is useful as an epic theater device so that the audience never fully emphasizes with her so that they will see the horrors of war and the participation in the economic machine that continues war” (228).

Hayman pointed out that these contradictions might be emphasized or not depending on how the role is played. Implicit in the script is the potential for Mother Courage to mirror the sympathetic Kattrin. Wiegal reacted with a silent wide-mouthed scream to the death of her son. Her mute response is also a potent reminder that Courage, although only momentarily silenced, is not so unlike her daughter. When Courage does not want to give up the shirts for bandages, Kattrin brandishes a board at Courage mirroring her mother’s violence. Brecht noted in Couragemodell, a production book published in 1958, that Mother Courage and Kattrin are not so different: the mother steals a fur coat and the daughter steals a child. The good daughter Kattrin then, is not quite the antithesis of her own bad mother; for in this scene she proves to be just as amoral. Certainly, Courage’s lullaby to her dead daughter is a repetition of Kattrin rocking and singing to the baby she saved from the collapsing house. In the 1949 Berliner Ensemble production, Helene Weigel took coins out of a moneybag at her neck to pay the peasants but then puts some back, thus problematizing her grief.

Anna Fierling, the feisty parasite of the war machine, inevitably loses the children that she undervalued. Byrant-Bertail pointed out that Courage “sends her daughter onto the track of
the whore . . . and the entrepreneur,” the latter path one which the mother followed herself (57). But the journey of the voiceless Kattrin necessarily ends at the point when she speaks metaphorically through her drumming. From a feminist standpoint, Kattrin belongs to a category of long-suffering female characters in the Western canon that can be traced back as far as English poet Geoffrey Chaucer’s (1342-1400) Patient Griselda in The Canterbury Tales. According to Ferris, “This idea of the silent woman as heroine, as a model offered and advocated for womankind, incorporates the notion that nobility at its most articulate suffers in silence” (104).

It is interesting to note that both Kattrin and Julietta manifest the high cost of war in their bodies. Kattrin’s disfigurement is the catalyst for her martyrdom. Julietta’s pregnancy causes her to marry against her will.

It is usually Brecht’s male characters that condemn or forgive moral transgressions, if not the dramatist himself. In scene sixteen of Baal, the Rabelaisian, sex addicted protagonist violently takes The Young Woman without any repercussions. In Caucasian Chalk Circle, the judge, Adzak, lets a stable boy off for having raped a woman. As the rape trial is not central to the story of Grusha, a child-woman seeking to become the legal mother of another woman’s son, its significance might be lost. In court, Adzak pits Grusha against the natural mother, Natalia, who only wants the child in order to inherit her husband’s estate. Standing on either side of a chalk circle, Natalia and Grusha are made to pull the child, Michael. Natalia keeps a tight grip on Michael while Grusha gently holds his hand, thereby proving her love. Adzak awards Grusha

14 Patient Griselda also appeared in Boccaccio’s The Decameron.
the boy and grants her a divorce so that she may marry the man she loves. Thus, Grusha joins Brecht’s bevy of mother archetypes.

Importantly, when Adzak rules in Grusha’s favor, it is a compassionate verdict. But in the rape case, Adzak is merciless in that he blames the victim for being seductive:

The rape has been proved . . . you have raped the poor man. Do you imagine you can go around with a bottom like that and get away with it in court? (Brecht 76).

Considering that Brecht was a notorious womanizer, Adzak metes out a sentence straight out of the mouth of the author that imagined him: “And now, Ludovica, come with me to the stable so that the Court may investigate the scene of the crime” (Brecht 77).

In “The Ascent of the Criminal in German Comedy,” Rudolf Koester pointed out that unlike Judge Adam, Adzak is a secondary character in a comic play within a play that is not a comedy and thus is presented as alienated. Scholar Linda Hill sees Adzak as a composite of Adam and Walter in Kleist’s The Broken Jug: “Adzak shares his predecessors’ ingenuity, but his simultaneous justice and dishonesty is untraditional and puzzling, as if he combined in one person the contrasting roles of Adam and Kleist’s judicial inspector Walter, who like Azdak presides at the heroine’s trial by coincidence and extricates her” (318).

Brecht’s theatre has stimulated innovative approaches to representation, form, and content in contemporary theatre practice. Conceptual models derived from Brechtian theatre theory are of particular use in feminist-based performance. Specifically, the voyeuristic gaze is undermined, thus allowing for a multiplicity of readings of the female body. Theatre scholar Elin Diamond explained:
If feminist theory sees the body as culturally mapped and gendered, Brechtian historization insists that this body is not a fixed essence but a site of struggle and change. If feminist theory is concerned with the multiple and complex signs of a woman’s life . . . Brechtian theory gives us a way to put the historicity on view—in the theatre. In its conventional iconicity, theater laminates body to character but the body in historization stands visibly separate from the “role” of the actor as well role of the character; it is always insufficient and open. (89)

Epic theatre calls into question the language and conventions of theatrical realism. For that reason, it is possible to use Brecht’s social gest, alienation, and historization to bring down the master’s house. It may be true that Brecht himself would applaud these efforts. Lennox explained: “Brecht reiterates again and again in his theoretical writings that his theater is intended to show the world as changing and changeable. He wishes to ‘alienate’ events and characters on the stage so that they are seen to be, not natural and inevitable but historical and transitory” (90-91).

While there are textual limitations and problems with Brecht’s portrayals of mothers, daughters, child-women, and prostitutes, his plays continue to be deconstructed and reinvented. Brechtian historization and alienation in the form of gesture, props, sets, and music supply directors and actors with a rich range of theatrical materials. As Brecht stated “. . . that is why we are inquiring into naturalness: we want to alter the nature of our social life.” (219).

The solo music theatre production, The Marquise of O—, recalls epic theatre in several ways. Gestural vocabularies were generated and assembled that deconstructed realistic behaviors including the conflicted, contradictory relationship between mother and daughter. One performer played both male and female roles, thereby problematizing the construction of gender.
Props, costume elements, and set pieces had significant semiotic meaning beyond their function. Music, lyrics, and sound were used as a way of distancing. In Chapters Seven and Eight, the ways in which these Brechtian theatrical techniques characterize the production are thoroughly explored. These devices were not used in the service of Socialism but rather to bring The Marquise of O— in to the post-modern world.
CHAPTER FOUR

Representations of Women In Early European Cabaret

[What about visual signifiers which hold sway over the stage? All representation is an extremely dense semantic act . . . It might even be said that the theatre constitutes a semiotically privileged object, since its system is apparently original (polyphonic) compared to that of language (which is linear). (29)

— Roland Barthes
“Barthes on Theatre.”

It is useful to establish an historical frame of reference for an analysis of the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of O—.” Exploration of cabaret traditions—when, where, and why cabaret developed as a mode of small forms; the songs, sketches, and dances often of a satirical bent; the innovative costumes, make-up, and performance styles; the unique shadow and puppet shows, masks, and other performing objects—all offer insights into the changing relationships between performance practice and politics at the interstices of high art and popular culture. There are key points to consider in this regard. Chapter Two explains that “The Marquise of O—” situates Julietta’s body as a contested site. The solo music theatre adaptation of the novella offers an opportunity to investigate representation. Therefore, the strategies by which early female cabaretists claimed subjectivity, subverting class, gender, and race are of particular interest. The work of male artists that were instrumental to the development of cabaret will be cited in order to provide a context for the women’s contributions to the genre. Cabaret, whether satirical and political or of the entertainment variety, was a popular, dynamic means of expression in 1920s Germany. Given the phenomenon of Kleist’s cult status during the Weimar Republic, analysis of a performance mode that so well reflected that era sheds light on the socio-
It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the entire history of cabaret. The following overview investigates cabaret’s origins in French café-concert, the trajectory of its development from Kleinkunst in Munich to Dada in Zürich and Berlin after World War I, and concludes with Cabaret and Kabarett in Munich and Berlin during the Weimar Republic. The focus is on women cabaretists throughout.

According to author and broadcaster Lisa Appignanesi in The Cabaret, the modern artistic cabaret officially began in Paris in November 1881 when poet, painter and graphic artist Rodolphe Salis, the son of a wealthy brewer, opened Le Chat Noir (Black Cat) in Montmartre. Poor workers, prostitutes, and social outcasts populated the area in which the cabaret was located. The first cabarets opened here because club owners could not afford the rents in the more fashionable entertainment area of the Latin Quarter. The word cabaret is derived from the French wine cellar or tavern. In Domination and the Arts of Resistance, James C. Scott wrote:

The importance of the tavern or its equivalent as a site of anti-hegemonic discourse lay less in the drinking it fostered or in its relative insulation from surveillance than in the

15 The use of shadow shows, puppets, and dolls in early European cabaret are discussed within an investigation of aesthetic response to Kleist’s “On the Puppet Theatre” in Chapter Five.

16 Kleinkunst is the German name for this genre of small forms, that is, theatre reduced to essentials that was designed for small stages. In Berlin Cabaret, Jelavich explained that in “the German language . . . since the 50s, Cabaret has referred to a strip show, while Kabarett is reserved for social criticism and political satire” (1). See Peter Jelavich, Berlin Cabaret (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993).
fact that it was the main point for unauthorized assembly for lower-class neighbors and workers . . . [T]he tavern was the closest thing to a neighborhood meeting of subordinates. The development of the coffeehouse and the club-room during the eighteenth century created a similar social space for growing middle class and in turn fostered the growth of a distinctive middle-class culture, leaving the alehouse more exclusively to the working classes. (122)

Cultural theorist Jacques Attali defined cabaret as a variety of the café-concert based on the audience to which it catered:

The café-concert, originally intended for the bourgeoisie, under the Second Empire became a popular festival, transformed into the café-concert. . . . The café-concert vogue was due in part to the talent of the artist and composers, but a large part of it had to do with the unrestricted atmosphere (smoking and drinking were allowed) and how cheap the admission fee was, when there was one at all. . . . In contrast, the cabaret, a variety of the café-concert, attempted to organize the commercialization of high-quality songs. . . . The clientele was not the same: that of the café-concert was the common people, while that of the cabaret was “bohemian,” student, or bourgeois. The bourgeoisie also directed much more criticism toward the café-concert, the “place of debauchery” of the common people, than toward the cabaret. (75-76)

At the Chat Noir, Salis initially served drinks once a week. Bourgeois customers at the café-artistique drank while enjoying the performances of parodic songs, texts, and dances designed to shock them. Cabaret chanson was not complex. Since the ruling class controlled most newspapers, chanson’s secondary function was as a vehicle for transmitting news from a different perspective. Local Montmartre artists decorated the Chat Noir with their paintings. The Hydropathes (Wet Apostles), a group of artists and writers of which Salis was a member, set up a newspaper Le Chat Noir that appeared from 1882 to 1895.

The sole woman member of the Hydropathes was the Polish-born Symbolist poet and composer Marie Krysinska (1857-1908). The daughter of a Warsaw lawyer, Krysinska had
come to Paris to study music at the Conservatoire National de Musique but soon decided to pursue a non-traditional approach to the composition of music and poetry. Krysinska, writing in French, was the first poet to use free verse. Her work was published in Le Chat Noir and she became the accompanist at the Chat Noir where she was known as La Calliope du Chat Noir.

The following poem by Krysinska, dated 4 November 1882, is dedicated to Salis:

Symphonie En Gris

Plus d’ardentes lueurs sur le ciel alourdi,
Qui semble tristement rêver.
Les arbres, sans mouvement,
Mettent dans le loin une dentelle grise. -
Sur le ciel qui semble tristement rêver,
Plus d’ardentes lueurs.
Dans l’air gris flottent les apaisements,
Les résignations et les inquiétudes.
Du sol consterné monte une rumeur étrange, sur-humaine.
Cabalistique langage entendu seulement
Des âmes attentives. -
Les apaisements, les résignations, et les inquiétudes
Flottent dans l’air gris. -
Les silhouettes vagues ont le geste de la folie.
Les maisons sont assises disgracieusement
Comme de vieilles femmes -
Les silhouettes vagues ont le geste de la folie. -
C’est l’heure cruelle et stupéfiante,
Où la chauve-souris déploie ses ailes grises,
Et s’en va rôdant comme un malfaiteur. -
Les silhouettes vagues ont le geste de la folie. -
Près de l’étang endormi
Le grillon fredonne d’exquises romances.
Et doucement ressuscitent dans l’air gris
Les choses enfuies.
Près de l’étang endormi
Le grillon fredonne d’exquises romances.
Sous le ciel qui semble tristement rêver. 17

Salis moved the Chat Noir in 1885 to more luxurious surroundings. Here, Salis, was the cabaret’s conférencier, that is, master of ceremonies and more. Laurence Senelick explained: “In addition to introducing the acts, he provided commentary on the audience itself, recited his own songs and jokes, and supplied the unifying mood to link the variegated performance elements of the evening” (24).

Contributors to the cabaret, in addition to Krysinska, included poet-chansonnier Emile Goudeau, composer Claude Debussy, monologist/storyteller Alphonse Allais, writer and dramatist Maurice Donnay, chansonniers Jules Jouy, Maurice Mac-Nab, Xanrof, and Aristide Bruant. The son of impoverished landowners, Bruant had been sent to Paris to work as a lawyer’s clerk where he learned street argot that was later incorporated into his songs. After Bruant finished military service, he worked on the railway. Bruant began to perform in café concerts including Chat Noir. When the Chat Noir moved in 1885, Bruant opened Le Mirliton (The Reed-Pipe) on the premises. Bruant cultivated a distinctive personal presence and dress. He greeted his customers at the door with insults. Street life was the subject matter of his songs: tales of criminals and prostitutes. Bruant’s unique presentation was the basis of the chanson style.

Chansonnière Yvette Guilbert (1867-1944), the daughter of a milliner, developed a signature style of vocal performance in Montmartre’s café-concerts and cabaret-artistique. In The Song of My Life: Memories, Guilbert explained that between 8:30 and 9 p.m. she sang for an audience of trades people at the Moulin Rouge music hall and from 10 to 11 p.m. she performed different repertoire to “Brilliant Bohemia” at Divan Japonais, a Japanese-themed establishment complete with waiters and orchestra in Japanese costumes (81). The success of the “diseuse fin de siècle” (end-of-the-century teller) continued at Le Concert Parisian and Les Ambassadeurs. Guilbert, despite a limited range, possessed expert diction, timing, and characterization. Her own songs as well as medieval chansons were part of her extensively researched repertoire. She wore simply styled evening gowns and long black leather gloves. According to Senelick, Guilbert broke the music hall mold: “The usual music hall singer was a plump beauty with opulent curves and deep cleavage; Guilbert was scrawny, red-haired, chinless, and long-nosed” (39). Guilbert was a favorite subject of artists of the day: Sinet, Bac, Steinlen, Jules Roques, A. Willette, Capiello, Charles Léandre, Joseph Granié, Ernist Brod, Métivet, Antoon Van Weilie, Maurice Neumont and Bernstamm and others. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) did numerous lithographs, drawings, and paintings of Guilbert. His poster of Guilbert, distributed all over Paris, was, more than any photographic representation, an important promotional tool.

Toulouse-Lautrec’s subjects were performers, prostitutes, criminals, and music hall audiences. In Ways of Seeing, Berger asserted that visual representation of women changed dramatically as male artists, including Toulouse-Lautrec, began questioning the category of the
nude in painting: “The ideal was broken. But there was little to replace it except the ‘realism’ of the prostitute – who became the quintessential woman of early avant-garde painting” (63).

Appignanesi pointed out that although Guilbert’s stylistic innovations had a lasting influence on cabaret, she built her audience performing in Parisian music hall and on variety stages, not in cabaret. Guilbert subsequently appeared in concert halls and universities during tours on Europe and America.

Marya Delvard (1874-1965), the daughter of a Parisian professor, achieved star status in cabaret in Munich and Vienna. In order to understand how and why Delvard came to public attention, it is important to consider that Parisian cabaret inspired a movement across Europe. Cabarets opened in Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Barcelona, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Zürich. In Berlin, according to Harold B. Segel, of Berlin’s major revue theatres, the Wintergarten featured variety stage while the Metropol specialized in revues combining satirical cabaret, operetta and spectacle. Several dozen cabarets opened in Berlin between 1901 and 1905. These tended more towards vaudeville than cabaret artistique. Senelick wrote: “. . . the innovators of the cabaret intended to distil form the vaudeville, circus, and music halls their vitality, immediacy, and vivacity; to adopt the rapid alternation of attractions; and then, to harness these demotic features in order to convey a rarefied artistic style or a liberal political

---

18 Alan Lareau explained the difference between revue and cabaret: “Another form closely related to the cabaret is the revue, which like the cabaret is a montage of different genres or numbers. It differs from the cabaret first in its frequent use of a unifying theme to make the diverse performances into a unifying whole, and secondly and more significantly, its size.” See Alan Lareau, The Wild Stage: Literary Cabarets of the Weimar Republic (Columbia: Camden, 1995). 6.
message or a skewed vision of the world” (8).

In Berlin, aristocrat and poet Ernest von Wolzogene opened the Überbrettle (Popular Stage), a 650-seat variety theatre in 1901. Due to censorship, the Überbrettle lacked the satirical bite of cabarets elsewhere in Europe. Von Wolzogene also published a satirical journal, Simplicissimus, with its own cabaret, Simpl,’ run by Kathi Kobus. The journal allowed for anti-establishment sentiment, well exemplified by “The Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life.” Number Seven is explicit regarding correct behavior for women spectators:

If you’re a woman, then criticize the dress of the performing artiste boldly and with wit. (Don’t forget your lorgnette as a prop for this). (63)

Reinhardt’s Schall und Rauch (Sound and Smoke) opened in 1901, wrote Segel, with “members of the company serving as attendants garbed in white Pierrot costumes and wearing black pom-poms on their heads” in a program that featured “dramatic parody” (Segel 139). But Schall und Rauch did not last long as a literary cabaret. Within two years, it was renamed Kleines Theatre and turned into a venue for presenting serious drama (126). It is worth noting that while Schall and Rauch was a left-wing venue, cabarets were not necessarily sites of political subversion. Scholar Alan Lareau explained:

In reality, the cabaret movement from the beginning of the century until the end of Second World War did not see itself primarily as an art of political resistance or agitation. Instead, it was an attempt by intellectuals and artists to reconcile high art and popular culture, which had drifted far apart: an attempt to create a cultivated entertainment. (471)
At this time, Munich was a model of the Whilhelmine Empire’s authoritarian structure. A strictly imposed law, the Lex Heinze, permitted police interference in art. Methods of censorship included confiscation of books and magazines, imprisonment of artists, and curtailing of performances. In response, artists formed the Goethe Alliance for the Protection of Free Art and Science. In 1901, during the annual Fasching carnival, artists paraded through the streets of the Schwabing District carrying placards and singing protest songs. After the Lex Heinze was defeated, Munich became the artistic center of Germany and the cabarets were located in Schwabing, a bohemian quarter much like Montmartre. A group of painters, students, and actors founded Die Elf Shafrichter (Eleven Executioners), a cabaret where, Peter Jelavich explained, the era’s modernist sensibility was expressed. The artists attempted to reconcile liberal politics with public interest in vaudeville and music hall entertainment while attaining some measure of notoriety and financial success. The space was decorated with implements of torture, and skulls in judicial wigs. Called a club to avoid censorship, the Eleven Executioners invited guests on a weekly basis. Wedekind, a regular performer with the group, was considered a revolutionary. He waged a battle with authorities for having mocked the Kaiser that resulted in a six-month jail term. Wedekind wrote and performed dark, moralistic, satirical ballads called Moritaten, literally, “mord” (murder) and “tat” (deed), accompanying himself on lute in a signature style that Brecht would later incorporate into his epic theatre.

At the Eleven Executioners, Delvard, made a notable debut performing a song by Wedekind when the dress she had planned to wear was torn beyond repair. According to an account by Otto Falkenberg in Appignanesi’s The Cabaret, Delvard’s partner, journalist Marc
Henry, pinned her black street dress tightly around her and added violet lighting to great affect.

Tall, thin, and pale, the convent-schooled Delvard sang:

I was a child of fifteen
A pure, innocent child
When I first experienced
How sweet the joys of love are.

He hugged me round and laughed
And whispered: Oh what joy!
And then he bent my head gently, gently
Down onto the pillow

Since that day I love them all,
Life’s most beautiful spring is mine
And when I no longer please any one,
I will gladly be buried. (46)

Jelavich explained that Delvard’s repertoire included a translation of Solomon’s *Song of Songs* by Catholic playwright Heinrich Lautensack, an “equally devoted disciple of Wedekind” (260). Delvard’s compelling presence engendered critical response from the audience. Segel reprinted several descriptions of Delvard onstage from different perspectives. Here is an enthusiastic account by writer Hans Carossa:

All at once, the tiny theatre was suspended in a magical lilac light, and as if arisen from her coffin, Marya Delvard stood in front of the pale curtain. It grew as quiet as a church, not a plate rattled any more. She did not perform as dead still as she appears in illustrations; nevertheless, an unexpected encounter with her in solitude might really have frightened someone. She was frightfully pale; one thought involuntarily of sin, vampirically parasitical cruelty, and death . . . She sang everything with a languid monotony which she only occasionally interrupted with a wild outcry of greedy passion. The high point of the evening, however, was Lautensack’s poem “Der Tod singt” (“Death
Sings”); she spoke and hummed the words which Emanuel Franz then sang as one of a circle of watchmen walking around the deeply darkened stage. (qtd. in Segel 151)

But Franz Kafka was not similarly impressed in 1911:

Delvard is ridiculous, she has the smile of an old maid, an old maid of the German cabaret. With a red shawl that she fetches from behind the curtain, she plays revolution. Poems by Dauthenday in the same tough, unbreakable voice. She was charming only at the start, when she sat in a feminine way at the piano. At the song, “A Batignolles” I felt Paris in my throat. (qtd. in Segel 151)

Jelavich pointed out Delvard and other artists at the Eleven Executioners used that stage as a platform from which to critique modernist culture. Self-parody was one way in which to affect that critique. In that spirit, Delvard “impersonated Thomas Theodor Heine’s ghoulish depiction of her on the most famous of the Scharfrichter advertisements” (Jelavich 177). That poster portrays Delvard as a femme fatale vampire with the eleven executioners heads behind her looking like so many devilish disciples.

The Eleven Executioners closed by 1903. Delvard and Henry moved on to Vienna, a city in which popular comic theatre, opera, and song flourished. The literary weekly Feuilleton was as important as the premiere of a new opera. Vienna’s cafés were the creative homes of the artists. In 1906, Delvard, Henry, and composer Richard Weinhoppel opened Nachtlicht (Nightlight), which became a very popular cabaret. The program included repertoire from the Eleven Executioners as well as work by Viennese authors and performers including Otto Julius Bierbaum, Wedekind, Erich Mühsam, Peter Altenberg, Roda Roda, Egon Friedell, Carl Hollitzer and dancer Gertrude Barrison, formerly of one of the Barrison Sisters. Nightlight closed its doors within one year.
In October 1907, a new cabaret and theatre, Café Fledermaus (The Bat), opened in Kärntnerstrasse. The décor and the props were from the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop). The artistic director was Marc Henry. Participants included Marya Delvard, Alfred Polgar, Oscar Straus, Carl Hollitzer, Oskar Kokoschka, Roda Roda and Egon Friedell, who later became artistic director. At Café Fledermaus, writers and performers of feuilliton, concise, topical, and witty prose, were featured. Actress Lina Vetter, the wife of architect Adolf Loos, recited “Kakberettlied” (Cabaret Song) by Viennese writer and storyteller Peter Altenberg (1859-1919).

Segel retells Altenberg’s tale:

[A] woman . . . coolly contemplates the spiritual anguish and emotional agony of her lover who out of fear and envy of her giving herself to another man comes closer to the brink of self-destruction. The more she holds herself aloof, the greater the torment not just of her man but of all men, and thus the greater her sense of power, her excitement. Seeing the pain she is capable of inflicting, which becomes, above all, demonstration of her own power to herself, she sees herself as man’s “highest good on earth.” A fleeting insight into the essential “evilness” of the game engenders a brief sensation of pity for her lover and even doubts as to the durability of his faithfulness. But the moment yields to the conviction that it is best for her to remain as she is, for the longer the game goes on, the longer age is kept at bay! (203-04)

Segel also cited Altenberg’s playlet, Masken, with music by Hannes Ruch, featuring nine women in masks and costume performing the author’s conceptualized representation of feminine types: “The Philosophical One,” “The Thirster after Knowledge,” “The Coquette,” “The Complicated One,” “The Dancer,” “The Tragedienne,” “The Poetess,” “the Painter,” and “The Woman of the World” (Alternberg qtd. in Segel 205). Each woman stepped forward in turn to “declaim short, aphoristically ‘pointed’ sentences characteristic of the individual ‘mask’ and collectively meant to typify the outlook of the age” (Segel 205). The women concluded as a
chorus, “Do you see in us only dissolute painted little playthings? We can’t help it. If anything is made with taste, it also lives without any idea” (Altenberg qtd. in Segel 205).

Dance was also featured at Café Fledermaus, including the Wiesenthal sisters’ interpretive waltzes, pioneering efforts in Ausdrucktanz (expressive dance). Café Fledermaus, as with most cabarets, did not last long: the venue was transformed into a revue-theatre by 1913.

As in France, cabarets in Germany featured songs and poetry that drew from people’s theatre. Munich’s Karl Valentin (1882-1948), a folk comedian and actor, performed in beer halls as well as small and large legitimate theatres. But Valentin best exhibited his unique clowning talents in cabarets. Valentin portrayed characters from middle-class family life and spoke the local dialect. In Valentin’s sketches, overcoming hardships became an occasion to exclude someone and thereby regain a feeling that the spectators, by comparison, were secure in society. Comedienne Leisl Karlstadt (1892-1960), the daughter of a Shwabing baker, was Valentin’s partner for over thirty years. Born Elisabeth Wellano, Valentin, in honor of his boyhood hero, Karl Maxstadt, re-named her Karlstadt. Photos of Karlstadt in Gunna Wendt’s Liesl Karlstadt Ein Leben Mit 39 Fotos, reveal a wide range of travesty personas including Der böhmische Ladislaus (Ladislaus the Bohemian), Der Kapellmeister (Bandmaster), Tschthinzscht, chinesischer Salonkomiker (Chinese Comedian), Musiker-Lehrling (Apprentice Musician), Der Jockey, (Jockey), Der Pikollo (Boy Waiter), and Der Lucke von der Au (Lucke of the Mountain Valley).
In some sketches with Valentin, Karlstadt also appeared dressed as a boy. The duo appeared in many films. Acting as Valentin’s secretary, Karlstadt wrote down Valentin’s improvised plays and dialogues. But Karlstadt’s own contributions were largely unaccredited.

It is helpful to recall aesthetic movements that were taking place in Europe in the early part of the twentieth century. Expressionism was an aesthetic movement that cut across all the arts. Theatre scholar Bert O. States wrote:

Expressionism was an unwitting overture to experimentalism: what the expressionist breakthrough produced, as an almost ironic by-product of its displays of social victimization and soul salvation, was the discovery that theater was not necessarily tethered to the real world. The distorted world of the perturbed protagonist gave way to a world distorted by the artist’s personal project. (101)

Man was emphasized. Elements of expressionist performance included exaggerated physical gestures and vocal production, and painted sets emphasizing light and shadow. Expressionist plays used a series of tableaux as a means of narration. One of the most famous early expressionist plays, Murderer, Hope of Women (1909), by painter and dramatist Oskar Kokoshka (1886-1980), involves a violent interaction between a man and woman. Nerves painted on the costumes, expressive of the inner turmoil upset the audience. Mel Gordon, editor of Expressionist Texts, divides German Expressionist theatre into a pure early stage (1917-1921) and a second stage (1921-1924) that espoused spiritual revolution. Second stage expressionism combined with avant-garde trends including the Bauhaus, constructivism, New Objectivity, and movements in modern dance and opera. Gordon articulated three expressionist performance styles: the Geist (spiritual or abstract), the Shrei (scream or ecstatic), and the Ich (I or ego). The
Geist style, practiced by artists including Vassily Kandinsky (1886-1944) and Lothar Schreyer (1886-1966), abstracted and separated form, color, movement, and sound. The Shrei style, at least in terms of acting and scenography, is well exemplified by trance-like states of being and the distortions and shadows used to sets used to depict a medieval village in Robert Wiene’s *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). The Ich style featured a single actor surrounded by a chorus moving in unison.

Early theatrical expressionists were influenced by innovations in dance. Gordon explained that many dancers and choreographers rejected classicism, including Isadora Duncan’s (1878-1927) Greek-inspired lyrical movement, Emile Jacques-Dalcroze’s (1865-1950) eurhythmics (a method of translating sound rhythms into movement), Rudolf von Laban’s (1879-1953) eukinetics, a system by which emotional states are expressed in pure movement without music. Laban and the Wiesenthals, along with Laban’s lead dancer and assistant, Mary Wigman (1886-1973), were leading proponents of the Ausdrucktanz movement. Wigman combined eukinetics with primitivism and the grotesque to create demonic, ecstatic dances. Solo grotesque dancer Valeska Gert (1900-1978), discussed at length later in this chapter, performed in Kokoshka’s *Job*, Ernst Toller’s *Transfiguration*, and Wedekind’s *Franziska*, among other expressionist plays. She, as much as Wedekind, well exemplified the Expressionist style of acting.

The bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia welcomed World War I. It was presumed that heroic idealism would make a clean sweep of materialism. However, the war proved to be a ghastly enterprise as 10,000,00 people died. Zürich became an international center for war resisters. Here, a new artistic group developed, responding to the war’s grimness that was critical of
bourgeois society. They wanted to negate the spirit that had produced war. The group consisted of poet, dramaturg, theorist, and performer Hugo Ball (1886-1927), his partner, poet/chanteuse Emmy Hennings (1885-1948), painter, sculptor, and poet Hans Arp (1887-1966), Romanian painter Marcel Junco (1895-1984), and poet Tristan Tara. (1896-1963). Philosophically, they were committed to exploring unreason in order to find sanity.

In February 1916, Ball and Henning persuaded the owner of the tavern Holländische Meirei to allow them to open Cabaret Voltaire on the premises. Hennings, who had previously appeared at the Café Simplizissimus in Munich, sang Aristide Bruant’s songs at the opening. By April, the group adopted the name Dada.19 At the Cabaret Voltaire, performances of anti-logical poetry and prose were provocative and satirical. Short sketches mocking the state theatre and other social institutions were also featured. Dadaists, drawing from Expressionism, Futurism, and Cubism, used abstraction as a form of protest. Cabaret proved an ideal mode in which to reject conventional representations and exploring new media. In an intimate space, performers of both sexes appeared in Cubist-inspired costumes that de-emphasized gender and explored the

19 According to Richard Huelsenbeck, the name "Dada" (French for “hobbyhorse”) was chosen at random from a French-German dictionary by Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck. See Richard Huelsenbeck, En Avant Dada: A history of Dadaism (Hanover: P, Steegemann, 1920), qtd. in Robert Motherwell, The Dada painters and Poets: An Anthology (Cambridge Mass, 1981) 24.

19 The use of a non-traditional theatre space harkens back to Futurism. According to Günther Berghaus: “The Futurists were among the first to move out of traditional theatre spaces and organize performances in a variety of venues not intended for theatrical use. These could be public buildings, meeting-halls, clubs, or galleries.” See Günther Berghaus, Theatre, Performance, and the Historical Avant-garde (New York: Palgrave, 2005) 121.
use of Japanese and antique theatre masks. Spectators were encouraged to become an integral part of the spectacle. Huelsenbeck commented on the absence of women in the venue: “There were almost no women in the cabaret. It was too wild, too smoky, too way out. [characterized by] . . . bustle and stir, the joy of the poet, cries, the cosmopolitan mixture of god and brothel . . . [sic]” (82). Ball, an admirer of Wedekind, was carried onto the stage in the dark. In a costume of blue and gold tube-shaped cardboard, he recited a tone poem:

```
gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri
galassassa laulitalomini (112)
```


```
She stepped onto the cabaret stage, ribboned about the neck, her face waxen. With her cropped yellow hair and the stiffly layered ruffles of her skimpy dark velvet dress, she was separated from all of humanity . . . old and ravaged . . . A woman has infinities, gentlemen, but one need not absolutely confuse the erotic with prostitution . . . Who can stop this girl, who is hysteria herself . . . from swelling to an avalanche? . . . Covered with make-up, hypnotizing with morphine, absinthe, and the bloody flame of the electric “Gloire,” a violent distortion of the Gothic, her voice hops over corpses, mocks them, soulfully trilling like a yellow canary. (213)
```

There is an obvious dichotomy between the “old and ravaged” woman described in Siurlai’s review and decidedly glamorous publicity photograph of Hennings taken the following year. Further, the review misleads in that Hennings was a published poet from the working
class. It is interesting to consider Siurlai’s demonization of Hennings in terms of Leslie Ferris’ analysis of an archetypal theatrical image, the wilful woman:

. . . I argue that the wilful woman is a central female image in our theatrical canon, an image driven by its own double edged meaning of adult strength and childish obstinacy; a source of anarchy, an attack on the status quo, and therefore traditionally presented as an ‘evil woman.’ Additionally, there is a subtext to the term ‘wilful’ in the world of the theatrical patriarchy which views women simply as children, at times uncontrollable and destructive, incapable of maturity and adulthood. (111-12)

Besides Hennings and Ball, another couple made significant contributions to Zürich Dada: Laban-trained dancer and visual artist Sophie Täuber (1889-1943) and her husband, Hans Arp. Scholar Jill Fell explained that Täuber, known after her marriage as Täuber-Arp, a lecturer at the Zürich School of Applied Arts, performed at Cabaret Voltaire under a pseudonym so as not to jeopardize her professional status through association with the anti-establishment dadaists. Täuber’s aesthetic and mystical spiritual affinities were closely aligned to those of Laban with whom she trained. Two other Laban dancers, Suzanne Perrottet and Claire Walter also performed at Cabaret Voltaire. Fell pointed out that Täuber’s friend and fellow Laban dancer Wigman did not perform her ecstatic, demonic dancers in Zürich Dada. Täuber’s dances were at once humorous and abstract. Influenced by American Indian culture, her textile designs were characterized by their symmetrical geometry and primitive quality that was also evident in her dancing. According to Fell, Täuber’s Labanesque choreography represented “natural phenomena—a bird, a flower, a star” (8).

At Cabaret Voltaire, Täuber danced, as did Ball and others, wearing Janco’s over-sized painted cardboard masks with rearranged human features and costumes decorated with organic
and geometric shapes. In a 1916 photograph from Cabaret Voltaire, Täuber, wearing one of Janco’s feature-changing masks, dances. Cardboard tubes encase Täuber’s forearms. Cutout claw-like shapes cover her hands. Her costume includes seemingly random cut out shapes. Täuber’s torso is oddly juxtaposed with the big rectangular head. If considered in terms of negative space, this is a study in abstract geometry: Täuber’s arms and head nearly form an isosceles triangle; her front hand extends beyond the rear forearm and hand to describe an inverted V—; her gesture repeats the movement of fabric draped from bodice to ankle both of which are suggestive of a long arc; this shape is in contrast to the back arm, held, from shoulder to elbow on the perpendicular in a small, dark curve. Täuber’s masked figure is vital, aggressive, and disturbing yet is as formally composed as one of her textiles.

Cabaret Voltaire was shut down in July in 1916 in part because of a 10 p.m. curfew in Zürich. A Dada evening was held at Zunfthaus zur Waag in Zürich. In 1917, a new venue, Galerie Dada, opened, featuring works by Tzara, Arp, and Ball, catering to the Zürich bourgeoisie. On 29 March 1917, Täuber performed her “Song of the Flying Fish and the Sea Horses” and Claire Walther performed Expressionist dances. On 28 April 1917, Suzanne Perrottet danced, accompanied by piano and violin compositions by Laban, Arnold, Schönberg and herself.

Dadaist artist Hans Richter recollected another Dada event in which Täuber participated: “The whole Laban school got finally involved with the DADA show at the Kaufleuten and danced in abstract settings by Arp with abstract masks by Janco and the choreography by Sophie
Täuber. I don’t know whether that was the first abstract dance performance ever done, but it was sensational anyhow” (21).

Ball described Täuber’s abstract dance:

A gong beat is enough to stimulate the dancer’s body to make the most fantastic movements. The dance has become an end in itself. The nervous system exhausts all the vibrations of the sound, and perhaps all the hidden emotion of the gong beater too, and turns them into an image. Here, in this special case, a poetic sequence of sounds (composed by Ball) was enough to make each of the individual world particles produce the strangest visible effect on the hundred-jointed body of the dancer. (102)

Although the even-tempered Täuber’s “abstract guignolesque” dance pursuits were limited to the years 1915-19, it is worth noting that her contributions to Zürich Dada were much appreciated by her husband, Arp, as well as Richter and the rest of the group (Fell 281).

A magazine was published, Dada, run by Tzara, who admired the work of Futurist F.T. Marinetti. In 1917, Hennings and Ball, increasingly disillusioned with Dada, broke from the group in order to pursue their interests in mysticism and Catholicism. The last Dada evening in Zurich on 9 April 1919 resulted in a riot.

Dada flourished in Paris, Berlin, Hanover, Cologne, and New York. Parisian dadaists included Tzara, Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, André Breton, Philippe Soupault, and Louis Aragon. In 1919, Breton, Soupault, and Paul Éluard founded the review Littérature. The sole issue of Tzara's review, Le Coeur à barbe, published in April 1922, included a cover designed by the Tzara. Performance events in 1920 included Picabia's Festival manifeste presbyte at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre with Breton costumed as a sandwich man and the Dada Festival at the Salle Gaveau, followed, in 1923, by Tzara's play Le coeur à gaz at the Théâtre
Michel with costumes by Sonia Delaunay. Meanwhile, in Cologne, Max Ernst made paintings and collages and in Hanover, Kurt Schwitters created sculptures from juxtaposed debris and cast-off objects he coined Mertz.

Berlin Dada began with Richard Huelsenbeck reading “The First Dada Manifesto” at a gallery in January 1918. That same year, appearing as Dada Death, a masked George Grosz walked the Kurfurstendamm. Other Berlin dadaists included Johannes Baader, John Heartfield, Raoul Hausmann, and Hannah Höch. Focusing on publishing, media, and events, Berlin Dada was more aggressively political than in neutral Zürich because World War I had particularly devastated Berlin. Dada manifestos opposing Expressionism were published. According to Dick Hebdige:

The radical aesthetic practices of Dada and Surrealism—dream work, collage, ‘ready-mades’, etc.—are the classic modes of ‘anarchic’ dis-course. Breton’s manifestos . . . established a basic premise of surrealism: that a new ‘surreality’ would emerge through the subversion of common sense, the collapse of prevalent logical categories and oppositions . . . and the celebration of the abnormal and the forbidden. (105)

In 1920, the First International Dada Fair featured a pig-headed dummy in German officer’s uniform suspended from the ceiling. The public was shocked by the dadaists’ aggressive, Communist-influenced approach to art.

Höch and Hausmann developed the technique of photomontage (photos collaged on paper) between 1915-22. The juxtaposition of visual fragments was an ideal form through which to comment on an instable era. Photomontages by the bi-sexual Höch critiqued the German bourgeoisie, government, and mass media representations of gender and identity. Her
photomontage, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (1919-20), combines seemingly disparate images: male government and military officials, Communists, and radicals; female athletes, performers, and artists; man-made objects; the word DADA. This work was one of nine shown at the First International Dada Fair of 1920. According to art critic Leah Ollman, Höch, who had trained in design and applied arts, was granted admission to Berlin Dada’s otherwise all male club only because of her personal relationship with Hausmann:

Despite her natural affinity for the Dada anti-program, Höch was marginalized by the men in the group, including her lover, Hausmann. While Hausmann defended her inclusion in the Dada Fair despite the objections of Grosz and Heartfield, he otherwise tended, like his peers, to deny women artists professional status. As vocal as the dadaists were in support of a social revolution encompassing new freedoms for women, their actions lagged behind their words. Several of them mistreated their wives and lovers, according to Höch. The contradiction between the men’s enlightened rhetoric and chauvinistic behavior yielded “truly Strindbergian dramas,” she later wrote. This hypocrisy and patronizing dismissal came as a bitter shock to Höch, though it echoed the disillusionment suffered by Weimar women in general. (103-04)

As explained earlier in this study, the early years of the Weimar Republic were a time of great cynicism as violent political events unfolded. The Dadaists came out against the new Weimar Republic. After the chaos of war, return to normal life did not occur easily. Women’s lives were deeply affected. Prostitution became an economic necessity for thousands of women that had lost their jobs when the men returned from war. While Höch created photomontages gleaned from the illustrated press commenting on the conflicts and contradictions of Weimar’s New Woman, cabaret star Rosa Valetti responded to the predicament of German women after the war performing a song with lyrics by Kurt Tucholsky:
I saw the work
In fire unfurled –
The women bent with sorrows
The reaper cut
And they were struck
With a hundred thousand horrors.
And for what did they scream and die?
Hahho! For a filthy lie!
The corpses – the corpses –
They lie in the earth,
We women – we women –
Now what are we worth? (53)

The Weimar constitution was against abortion. According to Atina Grossman, the 1926 amended version of Paragraph 218 of the Penal Code read as follows:

. . . jail sentences for women who aborted their fetuses and for anyone aiding them. Those who performed abortions without the consent of the pregnant woman or for “commercial gain” faced indefinite penitentiary sentences. (68)

In addition, contraception could not be advertised, driving many women to illegal abortions. Artists and Socialists campaigned against Paragraph 218. Tucholsky gave voice to the unwanted unborn in “The Embryo Speaks”:

Oh, I am a valuable thing. Everybody cares about me:
The church, the state, doctors, judges—
For nine months,
But when those nine months are past . . .
Well, then I have to look out for myself. (983)

Artists’ lives at that time were extremely difficult. Although the Brotherhood of German Stage Artists had pensions, life insurance, and disability funds, inflation made these funds
virtually useless. De Jonge explained that the actor Ernst Aufricht was hired for his first job with a touring company “because he was the proud possessor of a suit in good condition” (153). In 1921, representatives of the provincial ministries of culture met in Munich to discuss emergency measures for Germany’s arts. Entertainers in the unions and performers working in non-establishment halls were given rights and benefits previously given to artists in the state supported institutions.

By 1922, the new government stabilized. Expressionism died out. Many dadaists moved on to surrealism. Although international relations had returned to normal, social and political unrest continued to be reflected in satirical cabaret performance through the middle of the decade. Theatres stopped producing large-scale dramas in favor of operettas. Unsubsidized managements had to change the nature of the theatrical events to attract an audience. Actors took matters into their own hands, grouping together to form short-lived theatre companies in any venues that were available. Scholar, author, and translator John Willett described the changeover: “If times of economic hardship tend to favor small-scale forms like the cabaret and the poetry reading, more expansive periods are good for those like the opera and the musical spectacular, which demand a costly apparatus” (99).

As the economy stabilized, Berlin audiences preferred to attend large-scale revues. By 1926, nine theatres were producing revue programs with audiences of eleven thousand in attendance daily. For the performers, getting work in the legitimate theatre was an economic necessity. Directors such as Piscator and Brecht welcomed the cabaret performers’ distinctive performing style within the music theatre form.
Investigation of the social organization of Weimar era cabaret is not simply effected. Unlike most large-scale theatres, cabaret owners generally did not keep documentation of sales receipts so that records are not available. However, it is possible to learn something about these cabarets through a comparative look at mainstream theatre in Germany during this period. Historically, Germany had publicly supported theatrical institutions. As an empire, Germany was divided into small kingdoms and duchies each with its own court theatre. De Jonge interviewed Austrian born Gerda Redlich, who worked in German theatre in the 20s. Redlich made clear how important theatre was to the public: “In those days in Germany everyone went to the theater, it was part of their life. In the Berlin of my youth in the middle classes it was the done thing to go, to talk about theater, music, books in quite ordinary homes . . . One lived with theater as an essential part of one’s life” (152-53).

Productions of plays in large-scale theatres were motivated by a single creative mind, that of the director. State theatre producer/director Reinhardt bought a circus in 1919 and built a huge performing space with three thousand seats. Here, performance spectacles were performed in repertory. Choruses of actor/dancers performed en masse. Alternately, director Piscator developed a people’s theatre at the Frie Volksbuhne in Berlin in order to encourage a militant proletariat. This theatre catered to middle and lower class organizations. Ticket prices were kept low to ensure a packed house and state endowments insured financial security for the individuals affiliated with these institutions. A new Schall und Rauch opened in a large Berlin cellar in 1919 featuring Gussy Holl performing texts by Kurt Tucholsky. Holl’s prior experience included appearances at the Bonbonniere in Munich, the Chat noir in Berlin, and the Metropol Theater.
revues. Tucholsky felt that Holl’s talents were perfectly suited for cabaret. Holl, as well as cabaret star Trude Hesterberg (1892-1967), performed Tucholsky’s comic song, “Zieh, dich aus, Petronella” (“Undress Petronella”):

As Iphigenia you should wear
Only a little underwear
Get undressed, Petronella, get undressed. (136)

Lareau explained that Tucholsky’s song responded to the public’s lack of interest in high culture. However, public interest in nudity was not necessarily prurient. Before World War I, several German intellectuals had endorsed nudity as healthful. With the end of censorship, the back to nature movement became extremely popular. According to George L. Mosse: “The workers’ nudist movements, which had a considerable membership split between various left-wing associations, saw the emancipation of the human body from constraints as part of the liberation of the proletariat” (53).

Through the 1920s, frequent exercise and nudism became a way of life for many Germans. Claudia Koontz explained: “Thousands of people went to open-air swimming baths or lay down on the shores of the rivers and lakes, almost nude, and sometimes quite nude” (43).

In Der Mensch und die Sonne (Man and Sunlight) Major Hans Surén envisioned a world in which a happy, free humanity would attain the perfection and nobility of nude ancient Greeks at the Olympic games. Anthropologist Ted Polhemus commented on Surén’s Utopian philosophy: “He contrasted the ‘obscene nakedness’ of the cabarets and the saloons of the modern world with the “purity” and ‘sacredness’ of “natural nakedness” and asked ‘Is not the
entirely naked body, when it has had some degree of culture and is governed by a moral sense, the best means for the upbringing and uplifting of man?” (78).

German cabarets in which “obscene nakedness” was popular were based on the French, pure entertainment model. Unlike Parisian clubs that included scenic backdrops, in Berlin, the nudity was without any pretence to style. After performing, the women dancers dressed, mingled with the audience, and for a fee, danced with the customers. One of the nude dancers, Anita Berber, was known for her wild performances as much as for her excessive lifestyle, including booze and drugs. Berber’s self-promotion included frequenting boxing matches, bicycle races, and nightclubs. Lyrics from a song about Berber expressed the escapist atmosphere prevalent during the Weimar era:

What interests the audience:
Hunger, misery, suffering millions
Thousands rotting away in jail?
Does that interest the audience?
Alas, the naked bottom of Anita Berber:
That interests the audience. (162)

20 A sobering parallel may be drawn between Weimar era nude dancer Berber, who offered public distraction during the rise of Nationalism in Germany, and pop icon Madonna, who commanded media focus during the ascendency of Far Right-wing Republicans in the U.S. While Madonna borrowed the decadent trappings of Weimar entertainment cabaret, effectively titillating the MTV generation, except for “Material Girl” in which she played a diamond hungry blonde, her pop/dance lyrics have none of the satirical flavor and savvy that distinguished that era’s songmeisters: Tucholsky, Mehring, and Brecht. Martha Bayles, author of Hole In Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music, rightly asserted that Madonna’s persona is neurotically motivated, “acting out unresolved psychosexual conflicts” (335). A middle-class Catholic girl from Bay City, Michigan, the Material Girl hit the mother lode with her S&M visuals—the puritanical ethos that is the bedrock of America. I argue that her claims to feminism are absurd and offer fuel for Pro-life fundamentalists eager to discredit the women’s movement. Madonna’s crude, nasty mien well reflects the cynical era in which she
A peculiar custom in Berlin clubs was Resi. Telephones were located on each numbered table from which customers could call over to another. Resi, while a good way to find a date for the evening, was more popular among tourists than the Berlin audience.

It is important to distinguish between pure entertainment cabaret, literary cabaret, and Kabarett, commercial venues that featured satirical songs, skits, and monologues without offending the customers. Lareau points out that literary cabaret “did not denote what we think of as high literature and esoteric poetry, but merely a more sophisticated brand of nightclub or pub entertainment” (133). French style chanson, characteristically sentimental, rhythmic, melodic, and witty reemerged in Kabarett. Unlike conventional nightclubs, Kabaretten featured the conférencier, or Master of Ceremonies. As in early French cabaret, the Kabarett conférencier acted as an anchorman for the evening, linking the individual acts, told jokes, and commented on political events. Conférenciers in nude clubs specialized in lewd jokes and sexualized commentary. In the latter years of the Republic, Conférencier Werner Finck satirized the Nazis, thereby risking his life. De Jonge wrote of Finck: “He would raise his hand to the Hitler salute, and say, ‘That’s how deep we’re in the shit’” (160).

In the 1920s, one expression of modernity was the emergence of the New Woman. However problematic, women had entered the labor force. Writers and artists conflated woman

__________________________

with images of the city. Masculinized and sexually ambiguous images of women were to be found in Weimar film, print matter, fashion modes, and cabaret. A cross-dressed Claire Waldoff (1884-1957) sang her own lyrics to social protest songs. Lareau explained that Waldoff performed “did not reveal her own lesbian desires in her songs” rather her lyrics were “heterosexual” or at most intimated “a winking suggestion of bisexuality” (22). Early in her career, Marlene Dietrich (1901–92) performed Mischa Spoliansky’s “Die beste Freundin” (“My Good Friend”) with singer/actress Margo Lion in the Neue Sachlichkeit revue “Es ligt in der Luft.” In a publicity photograph, the two women appear arm in arm wearing matching black silk dresses and large broad brimmed hats. The photo recalls German philosopher Walter Benjamin’s (1892-1940) consideration in 1938 of French poet, translator, and literary and art critic Charles Baudelaire’s (1821-67) odes to lesbian love in Fleurs du Mal (The Flowers of Evil (1857): “The lesbian is the heroine of modernism” (128). Benjamin’s look at Baudelaire’s Paris of the 1850s, the locus of new production processes, anticipates the economic conditions and social ferment of Germany in the twenties. Dietrich’s character Lola Lola in Der Blaue Engel (The Blue Angel) (1930) has come to signify the quintessential Weimar era female cabaret artist. Segel has pointed out that The Blue Angel was not a cabaret but a Tingel-Tangel, that is, a low-class nightclub. In the opening scene, a woman in a dark dress and apron hangs up a Lola Lola poster. Then, the theatre worker imitates Lola Lola’s impudent stance. The camera dissolves to Lola Lola dressed in ruffled underwear visible as outerwear, gartered and black stockinged legs, and a man’s top hat. The persona is that of a blasé, sadomasochistic, femme fatale. Gaylyn Studlar explained the significance of such an image in “Masochism, Masquerade and the Erotic”: 
If, as Mulvey has claimed, woman are phallic substitutes whose erotic spectacle is constructed to cover their lack, then the superficial details of costuming ultimately must be dismissed as unimportant in determining the deeper unconscious pleasures which film provides for its male spectator: Mae West’s phallicized representation providing essentially the same fetishistic psychological pleasure as Jayne Mansfield’s decollate or Dietrich’s gams. (231)

Höch’s photomontage, Marlene (1930) pays homage to those “gams,” upended on a pedestal. The lower half of a woman smiles from the corner UR and two men gaze upward from the corner DR. Scholar Patrice Petro interprets this photomontage as seeming to “reference the appeal of the Dietrich image to both male and female audiences at that time” (122).

Another woman artist witnessed the ascent of Dietrich from cabaret artist to film star: Valetti, playing the cabaret owner’s wife in The Blue Angel. Valetti also worked with Brecht, appearing as Mrs. Peachum in the stage version of Threepenny Opera, in which she refused to sing “The Song of Sexual Obsession.”

Several women cabaretists rose to prominence, most notably, Valetti, Gert, and Hesterberg. Analysis of their onstage representations reveals that these artists took decidedly different approaches. Hesterberg, trained in operetta like Guilbert, was known for her diversity. Hesterberg sang numbers such as “The Prostitute Press,” and “Petronella Get Undressed” as well as light comedic chansons. She adopted a variety of stage personas, which while designed to reinforce the critical nature of her performance texts, were not sexually deviant. Hesterberg performed in a wide range of evening gowns, at times wearing elaborate face-paint. Appearing in Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, Hesterberg blurred traditional gender roles with a man’s bow tie, and an off the shoulder V-neck dress with medal-like trim on the arms, which are
crossed. The overall impression is masculine. Hesterberg’s face is painted, the treatment is two-dimensional and the overall abstraction of the design recalls modernism. In another example, Hesterberg’s signifiers suggest overdetermined femininity. She again wears a bow around her neck, but this time it is enormous. Her dress features a plunging lace bodice and hoop skirt with a front slit that reveals her legs to the thigh. Long evening gloves complete the costume. This persona is in sharp contrast to Hesterberg’s self-presentation performing Walter Mehring’s satirical “Song of the Stock Exchange” in front of a mural of desperate financiers. While acknowledging her gender, the costume draws focus away from a sexualized body: the dark, high collared dress she wears is painted with dollar signs. Hesterberg is a moving extension of the painted figures behind her. This performance was a resonant commentary on an era marked by terrible financial hysteria and collapse. Costumes worn by Hesterberg and other cabaretists may be considered in terms of style expressed within a subculture. Dick Hebdige analyzed this phenomenon in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*:

The meaning of subculture is, then, always in dispute, and style is the area in which the opposing definitions clash with most dramatic force. . . . As in Genet’s novels, this process begins with a crime against the natural order. . . . [b]ut it ends in the construction of a style in a gesture of defiance or contempt, in a smile or a sneer. It signals a Refusal. . . . Subcultures are therefore expressive forms but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives. (3, 132)

Hesterberg appeared in many films in the 20s and 30s. The author Heinrich Mann had intended that Hesterberg should play the leading role in his film *The Blue Angel*.

Valeska Gert (1892-1978) was one of the most distinctive performers of the era. A
German Jew originally trained as an actress, Gert became known for her grotesque dance characterizations. She began her career dancing between movie reels at a Berlin movie house. In “Valeska Gert,” Belgian choreographer and dancer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (1960-) described an early Gert performance: “Dressed in bright orange baggy trousers, her face chalky white, blue ribbons tied around her ankles and yellow circles painted around her eyes, Gert started dancing in a sexually impudent and provocative fashion” (57).

Gert’s outrageous performance provoked insults from the audience, while others walked out. The police were called and “announced that during this serious period of war, one should not dance so obscenely and self-indulgently” (58). Gert embodied states of being in her characters. Although Gert’s pieces may be read as provocative, closer analysis reveals that social critique was implicit her work. Those at the bottom of the social scale inspired her parodic characterizations: “Since I didn’t like the bourgeois, I danced those people dismissed by them, whores, procuresses, cast-offs, those who had slipped . . . it was from the beginning to the state of being broken. In the beginning, energy and youth, and then more and more kaput” (58). In Canaille (The Prostitute), Gert lifted her skirts, revealed black garters, opened her legs, and mimed intercourse. She altered her persona with costumes of her own design. In Kupplerin (The Procuress), Gert wore a long green dress with blood red painted spots. This expressionistic costume captured the essence of this character. In Vergnugte Verzweiflung (Joyous Despair), Gert wore a matching jacket and skirt of contrasting colored squares. The narrative of this costume together with her extravagant gesture, implies a clown popping out of a jack-in-the-box, or in this case, a basket, perhaps representing the New Woman. This costume invites
comparison with work by modernist artist and designer Delaunay. In a 1925 fashion photo, a model wears Delauney’s Cubistic inspired dress: oblongs contrasting colors dress and matching hat posed next to a roadster covered in matching colored oblongs with a woman in the driver’s seat. These works by Gert and Delaunay can be read in terms of Elizabeth Wilson’s comparative analysis of modernist objectives and oppositional dress:

One definition of modernist art has been that it lies in the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself . . . When we look at the relationship of fashion to art, we can see that in the 1920s fashion was directly influenced by modernism . . . What is sometimes missed from the analysis of youth oppositional fad styles is their surprising closeness, very often to the latest mainstream fashions. (62-63, 87, 191)

Gert created a number of dances based on sports. In preparation for Boxer Match, Gert studied the gestures of male boxers. In perhaps Gert’s most complex visual representation, Japonaische Groteske, she appears as a bald, oriental man. Wearing an above-the-knee-length silk kimono, Gert’s legs are revealed, and she wears ballet slippers with ribbons tied around her ankles, traditional signifiers of femininity. Here, Gert freely mixed gender signifiers to create a startling effect. As mentioned earlier, many artists were opposed to the anti-abortion law. While Berlin’s Volkesbune responded with the play, Cyanide, Gert’s solo work, Amme (Wet Nurse), also made a strong statement. She is costumed in a long shirtwaist white dress with a full petticoat underneath. Her entire head, down to her ears, is covered with a white bandage. Moaning and looking around as if for a lost child, a spotlight focused on her belly and her moans became a lullaby. De Keersmaeker categorizes Gert’s work as “character portrayals, environmental pieces, satirical imitations of existing dance styles, and sound studies” (60). For
the latter, Gert voiced the sounds of people and objects in daily life. She used music with simple melodies that was altered and reassembled.

It is interesting to consider eroticized representations by Gert and other women cabaretists working in Weimar cabaret in terms of the growth of nationalism. George L. Mosse asserted that, “respectability provided society with an essential cohesion that was as important in the perceptions of men and women as any economic or political interests” (191). Certainly, Gert’s unique combination of dance, music, and drama radically reflected the tumultuous era in which she lived. In her second autobiography, Die Bettler-Bar von New York, she commented on reviews of her work:

The critics write I’m sparkling as champagne, fresh as a forest, clear as glass, poisonous as a toadstool and I rush to their head like heavy wine. I remind them of Rodin, Garlach, George Grosz, Baldun Grien, Toulouse-Lautrec, Daumier, Pascin, Felicien Rops, Thackeray and Goya. They find me grotesque, bizarre, tragic, comic, vicious, classic Gothic, expressionistic, surrealistic, dadaistic, baroque. Ivy Litvinoff, the wife of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote that my dances are so primeval that they have the effect of the most extravagant Modern Art. (56)

As with numerous other cabaret performers, Gert appeared in the work of major stage and film directors. A favorite of the Expressionists, she performed in Reinhardt’s Schall and Rauch as well as Brecht’s Red Grape cabarets. Brecht favorably compared Gert to his epic theatre. In film, Gert appeared as the procuress in Pabst’s Die Freundlos Gasse (Friendless Street), the head mistress of a reform school in Diary of A Lost Girl, and as Mrs. Peachum in Threepenny Opera. Some of Gert’s later film work included roles in Jean Renoir’s Nana, and Frederico Fellini’s Juliet of the Spirits.
Several women successfully ran their own cabarets. Valetti ran Grossenwahn in Café des Westen in the Kurfürstendamm. The popular Grossenwahn became a center for new writers. Here, Valetti was a formidable conférencier, a role usually taken by a man. Trude Hesterburg’s Wild Bühne was situated in the basement of the Theatre des Westens in the Kantstrasse. Hesterberg brought the most innovative performers working in cabaret into her club. Lareau recalled an important Weimar performer that appeared at Wild Bühne: gay comedian Wilhelm Bendow, “performing the ‘Lavender Song’ dressed in a purple tuxedo” (Hesterberg 123-24) (Lareau 11). Valeska Gert’s Kohlkoppe (Cabbagehead) was a critical success, but Gert was unable to keep accounts and the venue was a financial failure. During World War II, Gert came to the United States as a Jewish exile. In spite of what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu would call plenty of cultural capital, based on her highly visible European career in theatre and film, Gert failed miserably in Hollywood, where she was deemed too outrageous for American audiences. Gert worked as a dishwasher in Provincetown before she opened two cabarets: the Beggar Bar in New York City and Valeska’s in Provincetown. Gert returned to Germany after the war and ran the cabaret Hexenküche (Kitchen Witch) in Berlin and another venue, Ziegenstall, on the island of Sylt.

In Weimar era cabarets, as in earlier incarnations of cabaret on the continent, artists of both sexes found an alternative to the monolithic structure of the state theatres. Ephemeral in nature, cabaret performance was from its inception, an ironic and informal mode perfectly suited to express modernist movements. The first women cabaretists found in this theatre of small
forms, a means through which to explore modernism, subvert representation, and comment on the sociopolitical issues of the day.

Characteristics of The Marquise of O—production can be discerned in the tropes of early European cabaret. The German House Auditorium, as in cabaret, is a relatively intimate sized venue and therefore puts the performer in close proximity to the spectators. The audience was comprised of German natives and Americans whom attend programmed cultural events at the consulate, not unlike the intellectually minded enthusiasts of early cabaret. The performance text incorporated short dialogic scenes structured like cabaret sketches. The interrelation of songs and classical text, are, in part an attempt to reconcile high art and popular culture in a cultivated entertainment, recalling cabaret’s position within the larger cultural spectrum from its inception through World War II. Looped effects in the sound design, unconventional use of a grand piano, primitive props, and surreal sculptural objects integrated into the mise en scène are evidences of the Dada’s legacy. Other aspects of the performance are reminiscent of work by several women cited: Täuber’s geometric abstraction and aggressive humor; Valetti’s attention to women’s issues; Hesterberg’s distanced personas and alienated song styling; the satirical lyrics of Waldorff; Gert’s expressionistic costumes, grotesque characterizations, and gendered movements. The Marquise of O—was presented only once. Early European cabaret was also ephemeral. In that regard, it is noteworthy that documentation of early European cabaret, generally consisting of photos and second hand accounts, leaves much to the imagination of the researcher, whereas The Marquise of O—production was video taped in performance. A conceptual, idiosyncratic aesthetic resulted from the collaborative efforts of the production team
to re-interpret a classical text so as to bring Kleist’s timely themes of war and exile, woman’s place in society, and the duality of good and evil to a contemporary audience. Likewise, cabaret’s unique manifestations developed through the participation of artists crossing boundaries in response to the socio-political ferment of their eras.
CHAPTER FIVE

Re-imagining Kleist’s “On the Puppet Theatre” and the Discourse of Grace

Only then did the dancer come.
Not that one. Enough!
No matter how light his movements,
he is disguised and becomes a bourgeois
and enters his dwelling through the kitchen.
I do not want these half-filled masks,
but rather the puppet. It is whole, I want
to endure the shell and the wire and
its face looking only outward. I stand before them. (275)
—Rainer Maria Rilke,
Fourth Duino Elegy

Toy soldiers on a game board evoking the invasion of the citadel at M—; a doll facsimile
of the Marquise; three life-size, abstract, metal puppets representing Colonel G—, his wife, and
the Marquise’s brother—these performing objects, contributing to a dynamic mise-en-scène in
the telling of the tale, were integral to the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of
O—.” My choice to feature human simulacrum in the piece came about through seemingly
unrelated research on representations of women in early European cabaret. While studying
photos of hand-held dolls and puppets used by women cabaretists in Dada performance, I came
on to a photo of puppets used in a performance at the Bauhaus (1919-1933) that was based on
Kleist’s 1810 essay, “On the Puppet Theatre.” Intrigued by the resonance of these Kleist-

21 Folklorist Frank Proschan defined performing objects: “material images of humans, animals,
or spirits that are created, displayed, or manipulated in narrative or dramatic performance” (4).
See Frank Proschan, “The Semiotic Study of Puppets, Masks and Performing Objects,”
inspired figures, I read the essay and was impressed by its philosophical complexity. Questions emerged. Might not “The Marquise of O—” staging be in part, through the inclusion of puppets, an associative, discursive exploration of “On the Puppet Theatre”? The production had been conceived as a highly physicalized solo performance. Particularly, given my feminist reading of the novella, how would inanimate puppets help reveal subjectivity, subvert representation, and offer a visual counterpoint to the stylized acting? Should, and if so, how could, early theatrical avant-garde aesthetics affect the design of puppets created for this twenty-first century production of a Romantic era text?

Only the toy soldiers on the game board were realized for my recital performance. Lampe, who was familiar with “On the Puppet Theatre,” readily agreed that other human simulacra should be featured in the production. It is important to note that our choices as to materials, design, and the use of performing objects in the show were not based on reviewing critiques of Kleist’s essay. Consistent with my general practice of exploring interpretation through art, we chose to allow connections between “On the Puppet Theatre” and “The Marquise of O—“ to emerge intuitively during the staging process.

The dominant ideas expressed in “On the Puppet Theatre” dramatize the dilemma of modernity in the paradoxical superiority of unconscious automata over conscious man, the mind-body dialectic, aesthetics, the spontaneous nature of grace, and the quest for transcendence. It is

---

useful to put Kleist’s essay in an historical context. In “L’homme machine” (“Machine Man”) (1748), French doctor Julien Offray de la Mettrie described the human body in terms of a machine composed of mechanical parts like a clock. Mechanical human automata were popular as entertainment in Europe throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century. Huyssen has pointed out that the automata phenomenon was linked to materialist critiques of church and state and the growth of industrialization (69). By the end of the eighteenth century, interest in mechanical automata as entertainment had waned but continued in the literary and dramatic realm. In “Über Anmut und Würde” (“On Grace and Dignity”) (1793), Schiller called for aesthetic freedom and a harmony of body and soul. Goethe, who had a marionette theatre as a child, wrote a marionette play, Das Jahrmarkts-Fest zu Plundersweilern Jahmarjs (Junkdump Fair) (1769), inspired by a shadow show at a fair. Years later in Weimar, Goethe directed with a puppet master’s authority, drawing from his “Rules for Actors” (1803). He divided the stage floor into a grid on which the actor practiced expressive poses choreographed with detailed specificity.

Kleist, as did other Romantics, seeking to break from Classicism, turned to folk culture for inspiration. Maas noted that Kleist expressed the conceptual basis of “On The Puppet Theatre” in an Aug. 6, 1806 letter to his friend Rühle von Lilienstern:

Every primary, involuntary movement is beautiful, and everything that understands itself is crooked and distorted. Oh reason! Wretched reason! (227)

Kleist’s essay was published in the *Berliner Abendblätter* in four installments from December 12-15, 1810. A fictional narrative, this text is in three parts; the following is a summary:

In 1801, a dialogue took place in the public garden in the town of M— between the narrator and an old friend, Mr. C., the leading dancer in the local opera company. The narrator was surprised by his interest in a marketplace marionette theatre. Mr. C. explained that there was much to learn from it. The marionette, controlled from above, embodies absolute grace unattainable by any living dancer. The marionette is not subject to gravity. Other than its center point of gravity, all else is dead, so the motions of the limbs easily fall into order. The puppeteer’s fingers in relation to the marionette’s movements are like numerals to logarithms or the asymptote to the parabola. It is a question of mechanics having nothing to do with emotions.

Mr. C. asked if he had heard of the artificial legs built by an English technician that, while limited in motion, allow for graceful movements by their amputee wearers. The marionette, in contrast to the human dancer, is incapable of affectation. Mr. C. cited his fellow dancers’ misplaced souls as examples of human fallibility:

“Just observe Madame P . . . when she plays Daphne . . . her soul settles in the vertebrae at the small of her back . . . Observe the young dancer F . . . as Paris . . . His soul (fearful to behold!) actually settles in his elbow. Such blunders,” he added, interrupting himself, “are unavoidable, since we have eaten of the tree of knowledge. But Paradise is locked and bolted and the Cherub is behind us. We must make a journey around the world, to see if a back door has perhaps been left open.” (Kleist 213)

The narrator pointed out that only a god could resolve the paradox of the puppet’s superiority to man. Amazed, Mr. C., “taking a pinch of snuff,” remonstrated him for not being
familiar with the third chapter of the *Book of Genesis* (Kleist 214).

The narrator responded with an anecdote. Three years prior, he had observed a young acquaintance lose his innocence and therefore, Paradise. Until this moment, he had been unconscious of his beauty. “Only the first signs of vanity, induced by the favors of women, could be seen, as it were, in the furthest distance” (Kleist 214). After swimming, the ephebe, in the act of drying himself, glanced in a mirror as he raised his foot to a stool. The young man noticed that his gesture resembled that of the Spinario, a Greek statue of a youth removing a thorn from his foot we had seen together in Paris and remarked on that similarity. The ephebe, like a common reproduction of the statue, repeatedly tried to duplicate the pose but was unable to attain that grace he had at first inadvertently embodied. The young man, obsessed with his reflection, became self-conscious and lost his innocent charm.

Mr. C. replied with an anecdote. While traveling in Russia, he had visited a nobleman, Mr. von G., at his estate. One of Mr. von G’s two grown sons challenged him to a fencing match. A master fencer, Mr. C. easily beat the young man. Afterwards, the brothers brought Mr. C. to a stall in which a bear was chained to a post. They invited him to fence with the bear. Mr. C. tried to strike the bear but the animal easily parried each thrust. The bear, looking directly into his opponent’s eye and soul, did not react to his feints. The unconscious bear proved to be an unbeatable swordsman. Mr. C. used two mathematical analogies to summarize his thesis:

We see in the organic world, as reflection grows darker and weaker, grace emerges every more radiant and majestic. But just as the intersection of two lines, on one side of a point, suddenly turns up, after the passage through infinity, on the other side, or the image in a concave mirror, after it vanishes into infinity, suddenly reappears right before our eyes, so will grace, having traversed the infinite, return to us once more in that bodily
form that has either no consciousness at all or an infinite one, which is to say, either in the puppet or a god. (Kleist 216)

The narrator remarked that in order for humans to regain paradise through knowledge of the infinite, “we would have to eat of the tree of knowledge a second time to fall back into the state of innocence” (Kleist 216). Mr. C. concluded that this would be “the final chapter in the history of the world” (Kleist 216).

What a vast array of critical response “On the Puppet Theatre” has elicited! Indeed, scholar William Ray has described Kleist’s enigmatic essay as a “text which means too much” (521). Critiques are wide ranging: philosophical, aesthetic, historical, theological, linguistic, psychoanalytical, etc. Some interpretations are rooted in a single discipline, while others are multi-faceted.24

---


Significant ideas from critiques of recent decades are relevant to a discussion of the human simulacra in *The Marquise of O*—production. But before addressing this material, it is useful to mention thematic similarities between “On the Puppet Theatre” and “The Marquise of O—.” Kleist’s essay is, like his novella, set in an ambiguous location. Secondly, the essay’s motif of the ephebe’s fall from innocence is comparable to the Marquise’s fall into an unconscious state in the arms of Count F—, her fainting fits early in her pregnancy, and her collapse when the midwife confirms her condition. Scholar Thomas Dutoit noted another shared motif. Mr. C.’s contention that paradise can only be found through a back entrance is analogous to Count F—’s furtive entry into the Marquise’s garden in V—. Count F— associates his earthly love for her with heavenly ecstasy:

> ‘I found a back door open and came through it into the garden; I felt sure you would forgive me for doing so . . . I have come,’ he concluded, still without releasing her, ‘to repeat my proposal and to receive, if you will accept it, the bliss of paradise from your hand.’ (Kleist 96-97)

---


There is another correlation between the two texts. Kleist’s essay ennobled a performance mode that in the early nineteenth century was considered common entertainment. In 1995, Segel explained the reason that this folk art form was of particular interest to romantic era artists: “The quest was for authenticity in art, an authenticity that came to be identified with the indigenous national culture” (14). Considering that Kleist uses the fairground marionette as a metaphor for philosophical truth, I argue that within his romantic worldview, these signifiers, the puppet (low culture) and the Marquise (defiled feminine) are interchangeable. The absolute grace of the puppet corresponds to the sublimity of the dishonored Marquise. Finally, both texts feature nonhuman creatures that are transcendent, unknowable. The fencing bear easily beats his adversary, the dancing master. Similarly, the diving purified swan triumphs over her assailant, Count F—.

Critical reviews of “On the Puppet Theatre” offer insights into our theatre production. It is essential to account for the staging in terms of language. Cixous’ 1974 reading of Kleist’s essay in Prénoms de personne (Nobody’s Name), stressed that the sentence construction, the back and forth repartee between the narrator and Mr. C., and their gestural specificity all are reminiscent of the pendulum-like movements of the puppet. In 1984, literary critic Paul de Man affirmed in “Aesthetic Formalization: Kleist’s Über das Marionettentheater,” that the puppet is analogous to a system of tropes, a concept that is rooted in Schiller’s aesthetic theory of the dance. De Man interpreted C.’s thrusts and feints with the bear as metaphors for the interplay of language. The bear’s ability to evade blows and distinguish feints represents complete mastery
of the construction of meaning (223). In 1988, scholar James A. Rushing, Jr. pointed out that Germanists of earlier generations and contemporary scholars share the view that Kleist’s authorial voice is implicit throughout. He asserted that “On the Puppet Theatre” “is the fictional narration of a philosophical discourse. The tension between these two levels of narrative creates an all-encompassing structural irony which has an even more profound undermining effect than the ironies within the discussion” (528).

In my production, the neutral narrator moves back and forth between the puppets in a pendulum-like fashion. Further, the solo actor, performing the tensions of Kleist’s text, is reminiscent of the bear’s virtuosity. Kleist, the author, was not represented in the production, rather the narrator assumed the authorial role. In part, my musical score was a discourse with the narrative, creating tension and irony. The Marquise, who reads, draws, and educates, represents language and culture in exile. As the staging made her creative proclivities abundantly clear, it may be said that language and writing were undermined.

Psychoanalytical analyses of “On the Puppet Theatre” are also relevant. In 1975, scholar Margret Schaefer posited that Kleist’s narcissistic tendencies are evidenced through a preponderance of imagery evoking self-disintegration, grandiosity, and homosexuality. Schaefer, citing Walter Siltz (1961) and Heinz Kohut (1972), whose studies on Kleist’s oeuvre informed her argument, interpreted Kleist’s puppet as symbolic of an integrated self. In 1992, scholar Janet Lungstrum noted similarities between Kleist’s texts and the theories of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-81), based in part on her reading of “On the Puppet Theatre.” She asserted that Kleist’s evocation of a god of “unending consciousness” leads to
“the creation of a transcendental work of art” (70). In “The Marquise of O—,” disintegration threatens all the characters: the Marquise, who must cope with her situation, Count F—, who must come to terms with his crime, and the Marquise’s family, representing social order under attack.

Because Lampe and I were sympathetic to the Marquise (ours was a feminist interpretation) the puppet family and the Marquise doll were manifestations of her attempt to forestall disintegration. The other characters had to fend for themselves! Following Shaefer’s perception, Kleist’s grandiosity was played out in the character of Count F—. In the production, the Count’s grandiosity was expressed through exaggerated phallic gesture.

Theological viewpoints are germane to a production in which a solo actor manipulates performing objects. A central point of Kleist’s essay is that the puppet’s absolute grace necessarily implies an absence of spirit. In 1977, scholar Ilse Graham asserted that the essay’s reference to Genesis which relates the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise, offers a key to interpretation of Kleist’s other works. Graham compared the Biblical telling of man’s coming to self-consciousness with the ephebe’s epiphany in front of the mirror. Another critique in 1995, by literary historian Scott Cutler Shershow, pointed out that the first part of “On the Puppet Theatre” recalls a theological theatre “in which player-puppets are seen to embody

26 Lungstrum compares Kleist’s essay to Lacan’s Symbolic realm, which Ellie Ragland-Sullivan has defined as “the sphere of culture and language” (131).
the sovereign intentions of an author-creator” (9). He asserted, “It is the disjunction of mind and body, rather than puppet theat[r]e as such, that is Kleist’s basic point in the dialogue” (185).

In the solo performance, there was a change in representation from actor to puppet. At the moment when Colonel G—, the Colonel’s wife, and the Marquise’s brother exhibit less than graceful behavior, they become inanimate. The narrator becomes a puppet-master, a god-like figure. In contrast, I was costumed to represent the Marquise, a character struggling to find power in a situation in which she is powerless. She is the human, subject to the whims of fate. The Marquise—human and doll—represents the disjunction of mind and body. The speaking actor is mind; the inanimate doll is body. Such representation is paradoxical, ironic.

An historically-based critique of Kleist’s puppet essay is pertinent to this production of his wartime novella. In 2000, scholar Stefani Engelstein called attention to the essay’s reference to amputated limbs, asserting that, “Kleist explores the threat to real bodies implicit in the claims to authenticity staked upon them” (226). Engelstein explained that Kleist’s reference to mutilation was based on his having witnessed amputations on the battlefield and his visit to a Würzburg hospital that pioneered the use of artificial limbs. Engelstein noted that Kleist’s readers too, were familiar with the theatre of war (230).

Certainly, our production represents such ravages. The featureless toy soldiers on a game board suggested the anonymity of battle. The rape was evoked by means of light playing over the Marquise’s motionless body. A bamboo stick slowly lowered in between the spokes of a metal wheel represented the near fatal wounding of Count F—. The firing squad was represented by music.
An aesthetic consideration of “On the Puppet Theatre” also corresponds to our production. In 2003, scholar Hinrich C. Seeba considered the presence of eye imagery in the anecdote about the ephebe, obsessed with recapturing his unconscious pose in the mirror. Seeba writes, “The framed view offers him insight, however disturbing, into the visual construction of his own self, as if it were a piece of art” (106).

Several times in the show, the Marquise looked into the eyes of the doll as if into a mirror. At these moments, she was offered “insight” into Kleist’s construction of her character. By extension, the spectator was offered “insight” into this “piece of art.”

Finally, it is useful to consider the implications of Kleist’s puppet as symbolic ideal in terms of Romantic era acting theories. Scholar Victoria Nelson has noted that “On The Puppet Theatre” called into question the concept put forth by French mathematician, philosopher, and physicist René Descartes (1596-1650) in Discourse on the Method (1637) that the body is superior to any man-made machine. Rather, Kleist’s ideas were akin to those of French encyclopedist and philosopher Denis Diderot (1713-84), whose treatise on acting, le Paradoxe sur le comédien (1773), refuted Descartes.27 In The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting, Joseph R. Roach explained Diderot’s approach to the actor’s body as a sublime physical instrument devoid of sensibility. Like English actor, David Garrick (1717-79), who mapped out

---

27 In 1986, Jeffery Cox pointed out that Kleist had likely read Goethe’s translation of Diderot’s Le neveu de Rameau (1765), a dialogue between two men about philosophy, aesthetics, and genius (259). This dialogue form is used in “On the Puppet Theatre.” See Cox, “The Parasite and the Puppet: Diderot’s ‘Neveu’ and Kleist’s ‘Marionettentheater,’” Comparative Literature 38.3. (Summer, 1986): 256-69.
the passions, Diderot’s theories exemplified the era’s emphasis on the performer’s technical virtuosity. Roach acknowledges the relationship between Diderot’s mechanically ordered actor and Kleist’s gravity-defying puppet: “By rendering expressive automatisms perfectly unconscious, Kleist’s marionette recalls Diderot’s specifications for the grand acteur: only in “the complete absence of sensibility” does the possibility of sublime acting exist.” (164)

It is possible to draw connections between these Romantic era theories and the non-naturalistic acting style featured in The Marquise of O—production. Notably, a vocabulary of repeatable gestures was created for each character. A detailed explanation of this approach follows in Chapter Seven.

Since it was published, “On the Puppet Theatre” has inspired numerous aesthetic creations in various media. A discussion of works responding to the essay across time, featuring those by theatre practitioners, provides a framework for analysis of the performing objects in our production. Kleist’s essay fired the imagination of German author E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), whose stories, “Der Automata” (“The Automata”) (1814), “Der Sandmann” (“The Sandman”) (1814) and “Nußknacker und Mausekönig” (“Nutcracker and the King of Mice”) (1816) merged folklore, automata, and the mechanical with the grotesque and the demonic.28 In “The Sandman,” Nathanael falls in love with Olympia, the doll-like daughter of his physics professor, Spalanzini. Nathanael learns that Olympia is a wooden creature created by Spalanzini, with stolen human eyes supplied by the evil Coppellius. Horrified, Nathanael seems cured of his

---

28“The Sandman” was one of Hoffmann’s Nachtstücke (Night Pieces). Freud’s interpreted the story in “The Uncanny” (1925), considering the ambiguity of Hoffmann’s language in terms of the author’s castration anxieties.
fixation. He is briefly reunited with a former love, Klara, but confusing her for Olympia, attempts to throw the girl from a tower. Klara’s brother saves her, but hopelessly mad, Nathanael falls from the tower. This story inspired theatrical works that have become part of the cultural canon: Léo Delibes’ ballet, *Coppélia ou La Fille aux yeux d’ émail* (*Coppelia*) (1870) and Jacques Offenbach’s opera, *Contes des Hoffmann* (*Tales of Hoffmann*) (1881). Meanwhile, Hoffmann’s “Nutcracker and Mouseking,” interpreted in Marius Petipa’s ballet, *The Nutcracker* (1892), with music by Igor Tchaikovsky, has achieved iconic status as a Christmas-time storytelling tradition.

The unconscious puppet, praised by Kleist and demonized by Hoffmann, was reconceived as a social automaton and satirized by German dramatist, Georg Büchner (1813-37). In his play, *Danton’s Death* (1835), Camille Desmoulins, a deputy of the National Convention, decries public fascination for “wooden copies” in every facet of the arts (50). The social automaton motif was reaffirmed in Büchner’s *Leonce und Leona* (*Leonce and Lena*) (1838). Prince Leonce, the son of King Peter of Popo is consigned to marry Lena, princess of Peepee, sight unseen. The pessimistic Leonce rails against his inability to live like a dummy and runs away, as does the optimistic Lena. Wandering, the two meet, fall in love, and wed. Simultaneously, King Peter plans to marry them in effigy. Valerio is the puppet master, uniting, “a little man and a little woman . . . Nothing but art and machinery, nothing but cardboard and watchsprings.” (168)

While Büchner constructed man-as-puppet from a critical standpoint, throughout the nineteenth century, the puppet found adherents elsewhere in Europe. French dramatist and director Maurice Sand (1823-89), son of novelist George Sand, wrote a collection of works for
his puppet theatre, Theatre of Friends.\textsuperscript{29} Belgian symbolist poet and playwright Maurice
Maeterlinck (1862-1949) brought for the first time what Segel calls a “metaphysical
deterministic basis” to the man/puppet paradox \textsuperscript{(49)}. Maeterlinck published a trilogy of puppet
plays in 1894, \textit{Alladine et Palomides} (Alladine and Pallomides), \textit{L’Intérieur} (On the Inside), \textit{La
Mort de Tintagiles} (The Death of Tintagiles), which questioned the presence and voice of
humans and extolled the power of the inanimate object.

“On The Puppet Theatre” informed Austrian poet, dramatist, and essayist Hugo von
Hofmannsthal’s (1874-1929) poems, “Terzinnen II” (1894) and “Ein Traum von grosser Magie”
(1895), as well as his rhymed puppet play after Calderón, \textit{Das kleine Welttheater} (The Little
Theatre of the World) (1897-98). Despite textual similarities to Kleist’s text, Hofmannsthal’s
early works took issue with the essay’s premise that unconsciousness is the ideal. In his view,
man is more complex and cannot be reduced to the level of an inanimate puppet. Yet,
Hofmannsthal, in \textit{Neue deutsche Beiträge} (1922) elevated Kleist among Germany greatest
teachers.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} Concurrently, Baudelaire addressed childrens’ obsession with playthings in “The Philosophy
of Toys” (1853). He asserted that toys are actors in youngsters’ abstract productions. To get at
the toy’s hidden metaphysical truth, the child twists, shakes, and throws it until broken, then,
takes it apart, revealing its mechanism. “But \textbf{where is the soul?} This is the beginning of
melancholy and gloom.” (Baudelaire 203). Social commentary is implicit in Baudelaire’s
contention that, to a wealthy child, a poor boy’s pet rat is more interesting than the most
expensive doll.

\textsuperscript{30} Hofmannthal’s involvment with “On the Puppet Theatre” is fully explored in Benjamin
Bennett, “Kleist’s Puppets In Early Hofmannsthal,” \textit{Modern Language Quarterly} 37.2 (June,
At the turn of the century, French novelist, essayist, and poet Alfred Jarry’s (1873-1907) revolutionary play, *Ubu Roi* (*King Ubu*) (1896) ushered in major avant-garde movements—Dada, Surrealism, and Absurdism. While at school, Jarry collaborated with Charles and Henri Morin on a puppet play, *Les Polonais*, lampooning their physics and mathematics teacher. Jarry reworked this play, and facilitated by theatre director Aurélien-Marie Lugné-Poë, directed two performances of *Ubu Roi Ou Les Polonais* (*King Ubu or The Polish*) with live actors at the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre in Paris (1896). This production featured sets and masks designed by Pierre Bonnard, Paul Sérusier, Edouard Vuillard, Paul Ranson, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Jarry, with music composed by Claude Terrasse. Crude and wickedly sardonic, *King Ubu* ridiculed royalty, religion, and social conventions. Shershow has explained that Jarry directed the actors to perform with the robotic energy of a Punch and Judy show (188). The comic grotesque production caused such a scandal, that the play was not performed with live actors again until 1907. However, *King Ubu* was remounted with puppets at the Theatre des Pantins in 1898, and a two-act version, retitled, *Ubu sur la butte* (*Ubu On the Hill*), was presented with puppets at the Quat'z'Arts cabaret in 1901. Jarry followed up *Ubu Roi* with two other plays, *Ubu Cocu* (*Ubu Cuckolded*) and *Ubu Enchaîné* (*Ubu Enchained*).

The power of puppetry prompted the development of innovative shadow shows that became featured entertainment in early European cabaret. At Salis’ Le Chat Noir, artist Henri Rivière, inspired by Japanese wood block prints, created *Les ombres japonaises* (Japanese shadows). The cabaret’s puppet theatre was transformed into Théâtre d’Ombres. Rivière’s method featured cardboard figures of man, animals and settings realized as silhouettes of various
sized. Mounted in three tiers on a wooden framework of runners behind a large screen, the silhouettes were lit so as to create shadow gradations from black to gray. In later productions, cardboard silhouettes gave way to zinc cutouts mounted before painted glass panels, adding to the effect. Subject matter ranged from dramatic works to a review of current events. Leading playwrights and visual artists contributed their expertise along with improvised commentary by Salis. Alternately mystical, parodic, patriotic, and satirical, Théâtre d’Ombres’s beautiful and elaborate productions realized German composer Richard Wagner's (1813-83) gesamtkunstwerk (total artwork).

Due to the success of Théâtre d’Ombres, “Chatnoiresque” puppet theatre and shadow shows were featured in cabarets throughout Europe. According to Segel, at the Bat cabaret in Moscow, living-doll productions incorporated Russian folk culture into colorful spectacles. He also noted that Les Quatre Gats (The Four Cats) in Barcelona included a puppet stage and featured shadow show entertainment. At the Green Balloon in Cracow, szopka dolls, rod puppets, were used in satirical sketches and songs.

At Munich’s The Eleven Executioners, the cabaret’s founders performed a grotesque march that offered a practical solution to God’s puppeteer-like manipulations. According to Jelavich, they were costumed in red robes and wielded enormous axes. Group member Hans Richard Weinhöppel composed music for Leo Greiner’s lyrics:

A shadow-dance, a puppet’s joke!
You happy, polished people—
In Heav’n above the ancient bloke
Guides puppets from his steeple.

For good or ill he guides their moves,
Each doll an anthem sings,
But then, just when it least behooves:
We cut the puppets’ strings. (100)

“On the Puppet Theatre” was a significant text for the pioneers of Modernism. British actor, artist, and scenographer Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), in “The Actor and the Über-Marionette” (1908), suggested that the actor be replaced by an inanimate figure, the Über-marionette, in order to regain the symbolic force of primitive stone images: “The über-marionette will not compete with Life – but will rather go beyond it. Its ideal will not be the flesh and blood but rather the body in Trance – it will aim to clothe itself with a death-like Beauty while exhaling a living spirit” (52). Craig’s vision recalls Mr. C.’s reference to the puppet’s limbs, “dead, pure pendulums, which follow the basic law of gravity” (213). But his interest in the puppet was not merely theoretical. Craig’s “A Game of Marionettes” in his publication, The Mask, explains how to create a puppet theatre, write a play, make puppets, and operate them. At Craig’s theatre school in Italy, which opened in 1913, students made puppets and Italian woodworkers contributed carved marionettes. For many years, Craig was an avid puppet collector.

For Russian theatre actor, director, and filmmaker Vsevolod Emilovich Meyerhold (1874-1940), actor training was rooted in the study of body mechanics. Meyerhold’s work with Biomechanics was based on Frederick Winslow Taylor’s concept of labor efficiency and
industrial time-and-motion. Taylorism, according to Edward Braun, translator and editor of *Meyerhold on Theatre*, is “an absence of superfluous, unproductive movements; rhythm; the correct positioning of the body’s centre of gravity and stability” (19). Meyerhold did not explicitly support the mechanistic ideal. He posited that, “the art of the actor is the art of plastic forms in space” and his process for “rousing the emotions” included “physical culture, acrobatics, dance, rhythmics, boxing, and fencing” as “auxiliary exercises in a course of biomechanics” (Meyerhold 199-200). His actors practiced etudes, “an example of the ‘acting sequence’ which comprises intention, realization, and reaction” (Meyerhold 203).

The man-marionette debate also played out in the futurist movement. For the futurists, scholar Julian Olf explained, the marionette was “a romantic symbol of the age in which they lived” (491). In Italian futurist Tommaso Marinetti’s play, *Poupées Electriques* (1909), American inventor, John Wilson, treats his wife like a puppet. Wilson creates two life-size electric puppets that talk and move—M. Prudent and Mme. Prunelle. Enrico Prampolini’s manifesto, *Scenograpfia Futurista* (1915), called for a mechanical figure with funnel-shaped ears and a megaphone-shaped mouth. Artist Fortunato Depero (1892-1960) designed sets and costumes for *Balli Plastici* (1918) at the Roman Palazzo Odescalchi along with marionettes representing clowns and animals. Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), who had studied at the University of Bonn, was probably acquainted with Kleist’s essay (Douglas Radcliff-Umstead 15). The puppet motif is evident in Pirandello’s plays, *Sei personaggi in cerca*
d’autore (Six Characters in Search of an Author) (1921) and Enrico IV (Henry IV) (1922) in which characters demonstrate puppet-like logic and behaviors (Radcliff-Umstead 16).\footnote{Scholar Marianne W. Martin has noted that Italian artist Giorgio De Chirico (1888-1978), who represented man as automata, may have also read “On the Puppet Theatre” (345). See Marianne W. Martin, “Reflections on De Chirico and Arte Metafisica,” The Art Bulletin 60.2 (1978): 342-53.}

Dadaists experimented with masks and cubistic costumes evoking inanimate figures. Raoul Hausmann’s sculpture, Mechanischer Kopf/Der Geist unserer Zeit (The Spirit of Our Time/Mechanical Head) (1919), incorporates a ruler, a measuring tape, a metal plate, and a tin cup engraved in a heart shape stuck into a tailor’s head. According to scholar Hanne Bergius, Hausmann’s wooden figure recalls Duchamp’s ironic sculptures and is commentary on man and modernity (163-64).

A photograph of Hennings’s Puppen (Dolls), in the sole issue of Cabaret Voltaire (1916), represents three marionette-like figures. In another photo, Hennings, dressed in a tuxedo jacket, silk shirt, and pearls holds a Voodoo doll-like figure. In a 1918 photo, Täeuber and Arp posed in front of small wood and fabric puppets used in Dada performances. It was this photo that first prompted me to feature puppets in The Marquise of O— production. Täuber’s explorations with masks and ornamented costumes at Café Volaire and Galerie Dada anticipated her series of abstract marionettes. According to Fell, Täuber received a commission from the Arts and Crafts museum to design seventeen marionettes for a 1918 production of Carlos Gozzi’s play, König Hirsch, a “parody of Freudian psychiatry” (270). Her ironically humorous figures comprised of spheres, cones, and cylinders, trimmed with bits of brass, feathers, and tulle, were carved by
Carlos Fischer and painted by Täuber. “Garde” is a multi-legged, multi-headed, and multi-armed marionette and while abstract, is very threatening, as its appendages wield blunt-edged swords. Other marionettes in this series include Dr. Complex, Angel, King Cerf, and Freudianalytikus. Interestingly, Arp has described these marionettes in terms of Kleist’s essay.

At the second Schall und Rauch, in 1919, Mehring’s satirical play, Simply Classical!, featured two-foot marionettes designed by George Grosz (Gordon 122). The marionettes, wearing contemporary dress and “given the facial and body characteristics of Grosz’ Weimar types,” recalled Greek mythological figures (Gordon 122). Gordon has explained that the First International Dada-Messe exhibition at a Berlin gallery in 1920, presented puppets by Höch. Puppets continued to be of interest to Höch. In a 1925 photo, the artist wears a cubist-inspired costume and holds a doll-like figurine that is a facsimile of her personae.33

33 An admirer of Kleist, Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) wrote “Puppen” (“Dolls”) (1914) on viewing an exhibition of wax figures by Lotte Pritzel. Rilke’s essay reflects on how, to a child, the doll simultaneously represents comfort and alienation. Rilke’s Duineser Elegien (Duino Elegies) (1915-22) is a meditation on man’s limited nature. His “Fourth Elegy” (1915), cited at the beginning of this chapter, is set in a theatre of the heart. Scholar Eric Heller pointed out that in the “Fourth Elegy,” Rilke pays homage to Nietzsche’s Child-Übermensch as well as to Kleist’s marionette (423). See Erich Heller, “The Dismantling of a Marionette Theater; or, Psychology and the Misinterpretation of Literature,” Critical Inquiry (Spring, 1978): 417-32. In this section, Rilke substitutes an angel for Kleist’s super-conscious god:

When I am in the mood
To wait before the puppet stage, no,
To watch it so intensely that, in order
Finally to compensate for my watching, as puppeteer
An angel must come to set the puppets in motion.
Angel and puppet. Now we will have a play.
Now will there come together what we always
Divide because of our presence. Now for the first time
Kleist’s theories were investigated and realized in the Bauhaus Theatre Workshop under the directorship of Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943) from 1923 to 1929. The Bauhaus, founded by architect Walter Gropius in April 1919, was proposed as a place where a synthesis of art and technology could be explored. Influenced by Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity), the Bauhaus responded to American technological advances much admired by many Germans. Initially located in Weimar and later moved to Dessau, the school was intentionally distant from the art center of Berlin. The Bauhaus was comprised of workshops and studios including painting, design, architecture, weaving, and sculpture conducted by master teachers.

A painter and sculptor with a dance background, Schlemmer’s influences included Javanese theatre, variety theatre, and circus performance. He considered painting to be a means of theoretical research and performance to be the site in which he would execute his theories. He implemented a concept called Total Theatre, intentionally restricting his experiments to pantomime and a choreographic performance mode, Kleinkunst. Student performers practiced dance exercises at the barre and circus juggling. Schlemmer generated work in which the body was reduced to geometric shapes. Actors moved in spatial patterns like automata. Paths of motion notated in gesture dances illustrated his abstract theories. He asserted that costume and mask transform the body based on four laws of abstraction which results in “ambulant architecture . . . the marionette . . . a technical organism . . .” or “dematerialization” (26-27).

will the completed cycle of all change emerge from our seasons as well. Now will the angel perform over us. (276)

34 Schlemmer began teaching in the Sculpture Workshop in 1920.
Costume and masks, together with improvised text, were often used for parodic effect. His non-verbal, object theatre integrated printed signs and abstract paintings.

“On the Puppet Theatre” was a subject of discussion in the Theatre Workshop. Students explored puppet-like movements in order to “reconstruct God in man through the puppet-creature” (Roters 79). Schlemmer theorized that the laws of gravity physically restrict the body unless the human is replaced by “the mechanical human figure (Kunstfigur): the automaton and the marionette. E.T.A. Hoffmann extolled the first of these, Heinrich von Kleist the second” (28).

Schlemmer’s Triadische Ballett (Triadic Ballet) imbued man with inanimate characteristics. The piece, based on the Trinity, began as a collaborative effort with painter Albert Burger and dancer Elsa Hotzel, with music by Marco Enrico Bossi in 1912. Triadic Ballet, with music for mechanical organ by Paul Hindemith, was performed at Stuttgardt’s Landestheater in 1922 with one woman and two men, one of them Schlemmer, performing twelve dances wearing eighteen different costumes. There were three settings, the first was gay burlesque, the second was ceremonious and solemn, and the last, mystical fantastic. Costumes were made of wood, cardboard, glass, wire, metal, padded fabric, and stiff papier-mâché forms coated with metallic or colored paint. The weight and shape of the costumes limited the performers’ movements. The music-box-like score and mathematically inspired costumes complemented the dancers’ evocations of wooden dolls, robots, machine tools, and geometric forms. Schlemmer, reflecting on Triadic Ballet in his diary entry of July 5, 1926 referenced Kleist’s essay:
Now one might say, why should not the dancers be marionettes, controlled by wires, or better still, by a device of perfect mechanical precision which would work automatically almost without human interference except thorough an invisible control panel? Yes! It is only a question of time and money before the experiment can be perfected in this way. In Über das Marionettentheater, Heinrich von Kleist described the effect this would produce. (203)

While Schlemmer’s works reflected his interest in the mechanical Kunstfigur, “On the Puppet Theatre” was the inspiration for a marionette play at the Bauhaus.35 “Die Abenteuer des kleinen Buckligen” (The Adventures of the Little Hunchback) (1924) was designed by student Kurt Schmidt and executed by T. Hergt. A moveable stage was constructed. Characters included the Tailor, Frau Schneiders, the Hunchback, the Ointment Merchant, the Doctor, the Servant, the Hangman, the Bandit, and the Signal Figurine. Photos of Schmidt’s marionettes reveal cubistic, wooden, painted figures, jointed and trimmed with wire. Some of them have no features or primitively rendered facial characteristics; some are marionettes, others are free standing.

Other Bauhaus artists investigated marionettes, mechanical figures, and found objects in their works. Created by a student, Mechanical Ballet (1923) reflected on progress and machines by means of abstract figures with moveable joints. Visual artist Paul Klee created a puppet theater with fifty marionettes. For Circus (1924), theatre workshop member and architect Alexander (Xanti) Schawinsky created inventive dance sketches that incorporated found objects into the costumes.

35 Schlemmer’s other Bauhaus works in the early years of his directorship include Figural Cabinet (1922, 1923), a satire of progress and order in which nonsensical figures come to life, and Meta or the Pantomime of Places (1922), a parodic improvisation incorporating placards and utilitarian props in which the presence of the performer offered a contrast to technology society.
Kleist’s puppet ideal was realized on a monumental scale in Schlemmer’s *Die beiden Pathetiker* (Two Solemn Tragedians) (1924). Power and Courage, Truth and Beauty, Law and Freedom were personified by larger than life, three-dimensional figures that were transported in wagons. Papier-mâché masks and torsos were covered with metallic foil. The figures’ arms were hinged. Megaphones amplified human voices.

Schlemmer’s man-as-puppet explorations continued into the latter half of the decade. In *Treppenwitz* (Step Dance) (1926-27), masked performer Andreas Weininger appeared in a white padded costume with a violin embedded in one leg carrying an accordion and umbrella spokes. In *Stäbetanz* (Pole Dance), first performed in Dessau in 1926, a dancer dressed in black, with twelve white poles cut to golden mean proportions attached to the limbs and torso, danced in geometric order. In *Reifentanz* (Hoop Dance) (1928), a dancer manipulated five concentric metal hoops while hoops were suspended from the flies. A male and a female puppet comprised of hoops were lowered onto the stage. This piece exemplifies Schlemmer’s late Bauhaus work. Due to conflicts with administration, he resigned from the Bauhaus in 1929. The Bauhaus closed in 1933.

German director Max Reinhardt was preoccupied with theatrically rendering the puppet/man paradox from early in the century until the mid-1930s. Reinhardt, who as a child had his own puppet theatre, believed that the director should control every element of a production. Early on, Reinhardt directed a production of *Tales of Hoffmann*. Significantly, from 1905 to 1934, he directed thirteen different productions of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in Europe and the U.S., including a lavish production at the Hollywood Bowl (1934).
His 1935 Hollywood film of the play, co-directed with Wilhelm Dieterle, realizes the dual
worlds of magical fairies and ordinary mortals. Dancer, choreographer, and scholar Mark Franko
explained how this film exemplifies Kleist’s ideal:

The cinematic image of Oberon and Titania flying into the court of Athens in Max
Reinhardt’s 1935 *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* provides a perfect visual illustration
of the reality of the movement quality Kleist’s ballet master is at pains to describe.
While the actors suspended at the ends of the wires are real people, their bodies are to
all intents and purposes inert like those of puppets as their limbs follow their center of
gravity. (65)

The puppet-like movement quality Franko remarked on is particularly evident in the figure
of Oberon (Victor Jory). Jory’s torso is immobile, one leg is extended, the other is bent in a
balletic passé, and the feet are pointed. The film’s fairy king and his gossamer-like queen (Anita
Louise) personified enchantment, suggestive of a higher consciousness.36

Irish novelist and playwright Samuel Beckett (1906-89) often referred to “On the Puppet
Theatre” while directing his actors.37 States explained that Kleist’s puppet was for Beckett, “a

---

36 Published fifteen years after Reinhart’s film, Mann’s 1947 novel, *Doctor Faustus: the Life of
the German Composer, Adrian Leverkühn, as Told by a Friend*, contains a reference to “On the
Puppet Theatre” with political implications. Composer Adrian Leverkühn makes a pact with the
devil in exchange for genius. In search of creative inspiration, Leverkühn reads works by
Shakespeare and “On the Puppet Theatre” (305). He considers Kleist’s vision of freedom in
aesthetic terms. But his friend Serenus Zietblom puts “On the Puppet Theater” in a context that
is wholly German. See Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus: the Life of the German Composer,
Adrian Leverkühn, as Told by a Friend*, Trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1948)
307-08.

37 Concurrently, German-born French surrealist illustrator and graphic designer Hans Bellmer
(1902-75) created life-size pubescent dolls and photographs of female mannequins consisting of
dismembered and recomposed body parts set in erotic, domestic, and violent scenarios.
metaphor for a kind of body-honesty . . . inhuman—economy and absence of affectation, or actor-consciousness (462).

While Beckett used “On the Puppet Theatre” as a director’s resource, Polish visual artist and theatre director Tadeusz Kantor (1915-90) created post-modern theatre works that literalized Kleist’s human/puppet dichotomy in context with his response to the violence of World War II. Kantor’s manifesto, “The Theatre of Death” (1975), acknowledges that Kleist, Craig, and the dadaists influenced his thought. But unlike Kleist and Craig, Kantor was not interested in replacing the actor with the puppet. Rather, mannequin doubles of live characters were featured in his productions. As a staging device, the mannequins were “a non-material extension, a kind of additional organ for the actor, who was their ‘master’” (Kantor 111). The director imbued metaphorical power to his “empty” dummies: “endowed with a higher consciousness after the completion of their lives . . . stamped with the sign of death” (Kantor 111).

It is worth noting that I attended Kantor’s productions of I Shall Never Return in 1988 as well as The Dead Class and Today Is My Birthday in 1991 with his company, Cricot 2 Theatre, at LaMama in New York. Arguably, the mannequin doubles illustrated Kleist’s theories.

Bellmer’s “Les Marionettes” (1970) are delicate copper engravings on paper responding to “On the Puppet Theatre.” Bellmer’s comments in “Notes au sujet de la jointure è bole” bring to mind Kleist’s puppet (Tiffany 12):

As in a dream, the body can change the center of gravity of its images. Inspired by a curious spirit of contradiction, it can add to one what it has taken from another; for example, it can place the leg on top of the arm or the vulvus in the armpit in order to make ‘compressions,’ ‘proofs of analogies,’ ‘ambiguities,’ ‘puns,’ strange anatomical ‘probability calculations.’ (91-92)
Further, the director was always present onstage observing, signaling to the actors, and stepping in to adjust their gestures. The specter-like Kantor manipulated his characters as if he were a puppet master handling his inanimate creations. The effect was entirely paradoxical.

The legacy of “On the Puppet Theatre” is evident in works by contemporary dance and theatre artists. American scholar and choreographer Debra McCall, who reconstructed several of Schlemmer’s Bauhaus dances, noted that Kleist’s heritage is evidenced in the work of choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919- ), whose concerns are with, “formal abstraction, non-narrative structure, chance composition, and collaboration with visual artists” (149).38 She asserted that Schlemmer’s theories also influenced choreographer Alwin Nikolaus (1912-93), whose abstract works featured dancers costumed in stretch materials. The performers assumed organic shapes while moving within light projections to electronic music. McCall cited other examples of this heritage: choreographers Lucinda Childs and Laura Dean, The Judson Dance Theater, multi-media artists Meredith Monk and Laurie Anderson (149-50).

Anderson’s (1947- ) Puppet Motel (1995) is a CD ROM interactive program created with multimedia artist Hsin-Chien Huang. Participants enter an imaginary universe that is divided into thirty-three rooms, based on Anderson’s previous works and objects. These include videos of a violin-playing ventriloquist’s dummy resembling Anderson designed by Fred Buchholtz.

Actors looked and moved like Bunraku puppets in French director Ariane Mnouchkine’s

---

production of Cixous’ Tambours sur la Digue (Drummers on the Dike) (1999) with Théâtre du Soleil. Based on the Chinese legend of a town threatened by a flood, the play represents the best and worst qualities of man. The actors wore elaborate Bunraku style costumes and makeup and were manipulated by other actors dressed and hooded in black. These living marionettes effectively deconstructed the story. To represent the flood, the wooden platform stage was filled with water. The townspeople, characters that had been literally and figuratively acting like puppets, drowned, transformed into tiny puppet replicas floating on the water. At the end, a puppet master retrieved them.

Kleist’s oeuvre influenced Austrian novelist, dramatist, and poet Thomas Bernhard’s (1931-89). The discursive model of “On the Puppet Theatre” is evident in Bernhard’s Ein Fest für Boris (A Party for Boris) (1968) (Christoph Lepschy 256). At a gathering for thirteen legless cripples, Boris beats a drum, collapses, and dies, after which the text ends. As it turns out, the text is a killer. Lepschy asserted that for Bernhard, the marionette is “an allegory of the movement of an independent text” (256). Bernhard’s play, Die Jagdgesellschaft (The Hunting Party) (1974) is prefaced by a citation from “On the Puppet Theatre.”

Performing objects in two productions by theatre director Lee Breuer of the New York

City-based Mabou Mines are directly comparable to those featured in our production of “The Marquise of O—.” I viewed The New York Public Library’s Theatre on Film and Tape Archive’s video recording of Breuer’s 1976 production of Beckett’s Le Dépeupleur (The Lost Ones) (1971) with David Warrilow as the narrator at the Little Theatre of the New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theater, New York, NY. Music was by Philip Glass and set design was by Thom Cathcart. Beckett describes a hellish world: “Inside a flattened cylinder, fifteen meters round and eighteen high for the sake of harmony” and its denizens, “lost bodies” seeking escape (7). A single circle of light revealed the cylinder Beckett described in miniature, underscored by delicate-sounding music. From a box, the narrator removed tiny white figures attached to ladders that were leaned against the cylinder wall. This represented the lost ones vainly climbing. He arranged other thumbnail-sized figures at the base of the cylinder. In concert with the text, the narrator knocked over a figure with a tweezers, signifying a death. He slid a figure down his knee, representing a descent. Relating a trek through a tunnel that goes nowhere, the narrator put a figure in one ear and removes a figure from the other. Figures were dropped, implying a fatal fall. Then, standing naked and pressing against a wall, the narrator was transformed into one of these lost ones.

Like the minuscule figures in Breuer’s The Lost Ones, the toy soldiers of The Marquise of O— were too small to express interiority. In the former production, the difference in scale between the human narrator and the inanimate figures, as well as the actor’s off-hand manipulations of them, suggested a god-like omnipotence that, in the latter production, is akin to the way the narrator handled the tiny soldiers on the game board. While I turned the game board
from side to side to suggest battle maneuvers, I didn’t go so far as to knock the soldiers off the board so as to depict their demise. A further point of comparison: in *The Lost Ones*, when the narrator enacted the desperate physical action of those he described, there was a shift in perception that is analogous to the movement of a camera from a long shot to a close-up. A similar shift of perception was suggested when the narrator of *The Marquise of O*— momentarily was transformed into a soldier so as to depict the wounding of Count F—.

Dolls and marionettes were integral to Breuer’s 2003 production of *Dollhouse*, adapted from Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen’s (1828-1906) *Et Dukkehiem* (*A Doll House*) (1879). I attended a performance of this production at St. Ann’s Warehouse in New York in 2003. The setting was a dollhouse-sized living space. At six feet, Nora Helmer was literally too big for her barely four-foot tall husband, Torvald. In one scene, Nora sat on a little sofa cuddling with a look-alike doll belonging to her daughter. Literally and spiritually hungry, she opened the doll’s head, retrieved macaroons, and gobbled them up. Later, finding the doll’s head empty, the enraged woman tore off the doll’s hair. When Nora revealed the rotten truth of her marriage to her spouse, the set opened, revealing miniature tiers of stage boxes. Formally dressed marionette couples, male and female, witnessed her operatic declaration of independence. The climax: Nora tore “her” hair off, revealing the shaved head of the twenty first century actress. In response, the female puppet spectators collapsed under the weight of Nora’s feminist history making exit.

*Dollhouse* and *The Marquise of O*— both used a doll to subvert the text. But the similarity ends here. Nora handled her macaroon-brained alter ego, the plaything of her daughter, with violence. This moment, while comic, implied self-hatred. This was an unflattering
representation of dissatisfied, late nineteenth-century womanhood. On the other hand, Julietta’s
double was an elegantly graceful, surreal doll, not a narcissistic extension of her child. Breuer’s
Nora was shrill on leaving. While I also transformed into a twenty-first century actress, this
change was very restrained. I kept my hair on! Further, the transformation occurred in silence.
The opera house marionettes and the puppet family can also be compared in terms of design.
The marionettes had human features, minimizing the distancing effect, whereas the Father,
Mother, Brother puppets were abstract.

Although The Marquise of O— is the first production in which I worked with life-size
puppets, from my earliest works and onward, I have investigated the interplay of performer and
object. In my 1985 piece, Clean and Jerk, I manipulated seemingly endless lengths of pink
ribbons suspended from a metal grid. Like Schlemmer’s performers, my movements were
contained inside the space described by the ribbons. Several characters from my piece,
Vicarious Life, are also worth considering. The Degas-inspired, bronze ballet dancer, The
Eternal Girl, demonstrated puppet-like behavior. She “lived” on a pedestal in a surreal museum
next to another exhibit, a wooden, life-size Daisy Duck, an inanimate confrère. After exhibition
hours, The Eternal Girl would sneak off her pedestal to play. During these interludes, her
movements, integrating classical ballet steps, were puppet-like. But, the voice inside her head,
Papa Degas, invariably commanded her to return to the pedestal. Consigned to her assigned
spot, The Eternal Girl assumed various poses for an unseen puppet master:

Dancer Moving Forward the Arms Raised Right, 1890!
Dancer Ready to Dance, the Right Foot Forward, 1890!
Fourth position front on the left leg, 1885!
Fourth position front on the left leg 1890!

Vicarious Life’s urban eccentric, Doris Allswell, held forth on the sorry state of the world sitting in a plastic wading pool full of water. A rag doll was both Doris’ cleaning mop and a Voodoo doll warding off the abyss. Another Vicarious Life character, Suburban Molly, lived in a world described by a pink, remote-controlled toy car that zipped around the stage. Molly, an avid gardener, tended to plastic flowers that turn in the wind and mechanical toys absurdly planted in Astro-turf. The production’s talking head, Futura Chips, framed within a television screen, responded to her containment with constrained gestures and facial tics. For Vicarious Life’s evocation of Emma Bovary, the choreography to my song, “Happy Ever After Wife,” responded to the architecture of the nine-foot, ladder-back chair. The piece’s final character, The Chosen One, was represented with a chalk-white death mask and knee-length, grey braids.

My solo installation piece, Young for Those Who Think, (1993) recalls Schlemmer’s principles. A spinning wheel surrounded by a hundred small bread rolls was set on blue cloth all of which implied movement, life, and consciousness. In a corner, atop a wooden framed structure, I embodied a music box, slowly turning while playing the accordion. Then, I strung clothesline at a diagonal across the space, narrowing the physical limits of the performance, and hung a basket of clothes on the line.40

40 Young for Those Who Think was created for Memoryscape, at the Block Gallery, Evanston, IL, 1993. This piece was subsequently performed at The Knitting Factory, New York City, 1995, and at the International Performance Festival at the Kunst Akademie, Dusseldorf, Germany, 1998.
Finally, performing objects were featured in the musical, Song of the Greatest (2001), I created, designed, and directed with children based on the life of Muhammad Ali. For the scene in which Ali fights George Foreman at the Rumble in the Jungle in Kinchasa, Zaire, the illusion of cheering crowds packing the stadium was suggested by painted Styrofoam heads mounted in rows on planks draped with African cloth. Behind the boxers, the actors held the rows of “spectators” aloft. Building on this body of work, puppets were logically featured in The Marquise of O—.

In analyzing the puppets design and use in this production it is helpful to consider pertinent classifications and terminology used by puppet theorists. The etymology of the puppet is worth noting. Dolls and puppets are linguistically closely related: the word for doll in French is poupée, in German it is Puppe, in Latin it is pupa. The word marionette is derived from Italian morio, (fool or buffoon) and from the mariolettes, (little figures of the Virgin Mary). Tiffany pointed out that Kleist’s “marionette is not strictly an automaton,” and that interchangeability between automatons, dolls, marionettes, and puppets during the eighteenth century was indicative of the “demechanization of the automaton, in a manner that, paradoxically, only enhances the autonomy of the device as a simulacrum” (64-65). The full range of simulacrum used in this postmodern theatre production then, was reminiscent of that era’s usage, and in part, functioned as an historical allusion. The moment at which the puppets were introduced is also

41 Song of the Greatest, retitled and revised from “Ali: The Champ,” was commissioned by the Martin Luther King Cultural Center in Beacon, New York. This work was performed by children from MLKCC at Beacon High School, Beacon, NY on June 9, 2001.
historically appropriate. Shershow pointed out that puppet theatre can be considered a paradigm of popular European "sub"-culture, and a "metaphor for the entwined processes of cultural definition and appropriation" through which to examine conflicts between high and low culture (2). It is logical then, that the Marquise’s story became a puppet show at the point when she was exiled from her family and by extension, the upper reaches of society.

There are several ways in which the puppet family harkens back to that era in which Kleist attained cult status—the Weimar Republic. First, the puppets were made from metal, a material favored by Bauhaus artists.42 Next, the puppets’ abstract design, and humorously drawn characterizations are reminiscent of the playful designs of Schlemmer and other artists in the Bauhaus Theatre Workshop. Another design similarity: Schlemmer’s “Two Solemn Tragedians” were transported on wagons. Similarly, the puppets’ frames were mounted on wheels. In several scenes, the puppets were juxtaposed with the doll. The relative difference between the life-size Father, Mother, and Brother puppets and the doll-sized representation of the Marquise is comparable to “Two Solemn Tragedians,” in which man was miniaturized relative to the monumental figures.

Unlike the puppet master in “On the Puppet Theatre,” Mother, Father, and Brother were not string marionettes manipulated from above but rather from behind, as in Bunraku. Each puppet was contained within its own frame. The frames, initially attached, were easily separated with a pin mechanism.

42 During the Weimar Republic, metal symbolized technology. The Bauhaus Metal Workshop created numerous innovative designs.
Stephen Kaplin, in 1991, explained the puppet/actor dynamic in terms of distance and ratio. Distance refers to the extent of displacement between actor and performing object. Ratio refers to the number of puppets relative to the manipulators. In the production, the distance between actor and performing object varied. Regarding the puppets: I embodied a character standing behind the puppet, otherwise, standing on a platform, I pointed at the puppets with a stick. Ratios were either:

- Many: 1 (toy soldiers/actor)
- 1: 1 (doll/actor)
- 1: 1, 2:1, or 3:1 (one to three puppets/actor)
- 2: 1, 3: 1, 4: 1 (doll and one two or three puppets/actor)

My retrospective analysis is also informed by Steve Tillis’ *Towards an Aesthetics of Puppets* (1992). Tillis wrote that double-vision refers to how, “an audience sees the puppet in two ways at one time: as a perceived object and as an imagined life” (7). There were several instances of double-vision in the production. The three puppets first appear when the Marquise receives the letter informing her that she is disowned. To suggest a letter, the frames of the three linked puppets formed an oblong and were draped with black ribbon. Simultaneously, the three figures were visible, suspended inside their frames. A second example: the Marquise begs her brother to allow her to enter her father’s rooms. Here, Brother’s frame was used as a door. A third instance: for the drive from M— to V— and back again, as Leopardo, I pulled Mother’s wheeled framed behind me, suggestive of the lady’s carriage.
Tillis considered the three sign systems used to describe puppet design, movement, and speech: abstracted signs pertaining to the puppet along a continuum of representation “range from the imitative to the stylized to the conceptual (123). According to Tillis:

The size-sign of the puppet is either relative when compared to scenery and props, or absolute when compared to human scale. Material-signs are those various materials used in constructing the puppet including costume . . . [C]ontrol mechanics are the means by which the operator exerts control; second, control points are those places on the puppet at which the control is exerted; and third, articulation points are those places where the puppet is joined to allow for differential movement of its parts. (134-35)

Certainly, the puppets were highly stylized and conceptual in design. The puppets were suspended from frames by a wire attached to a hook at the center of the head. The hook and wire set up recalls the earliest marionettes that were operated by a rod or stick attached to a ring in the head. But this was a vestigial, historical allusion, as the puppets were not similarly operated. The arms of Mother and Father were suspended by filament. Brother’s arms were jointed at the shoulders. The extent to which the toy soldiers, Marquise doll, and the Father, Mother, Brother puppets reflected interiority can be assessed based on differences in scale, feature signs, and material. The toy soldiers on the game board had no interiority. The Marquise doll, fourteen inches in length, had discernable features. Styled in imitation of the actor’s representation, reflecting interiority to great extent. The features of the puppets focused on one aspect of their character, suggesting partial, fixed interiority. Control and articulation points varied among the three puppets: Mother’s arms had articulation and control points between the shoulder and top of the arm, with control points halfway down the arm and at the base of the arm (there were no hands); Father had one moveable arm that was jointed at the shoulder; Brother had articulation
and control points between the neck and shoulders, between the upper arms and the forearms, and between the base of the arms and the wrists.

It is useful to put the Marquise doll in a historical context. Benjamin’s 1928 essay, “Toys and Play,” comments on the propensity of “dolls dressed as grown ups . . . well into the nineteenth century,” asserting that, “the adult was the ideal in whose image the educator aspired to mold the child” (118). As the doll was an important German Romantic era toy, the Marquise doll functioned as a signifier of German Romanticism and was commentary on women’s socio-economic position in that era.

The doll can be discussed in psychological terms. British psychoanalyst D.W. Winnecott’s “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena” (1971) considered that the child’s attachment to transitional objects allowed for gradual independence from the mother. Similarly, the Marquise is like a child in that she undergoes a painful period of awakening self-consciousness and separation from her mother that is epitomized by the doll’s presence. Lacan’s The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1964) also considers surreal dolls and mannequins. Lacan's asserts that the human psyche is divided between a narcissistic total being (moi) and a speaking subject (je). This divided state fuels the attempt of the self to validate its (fictional) unity of being by convincing the outside world to pronounce it authentic. Following Lacan, as a result of her trauma, the Marquise exists in a divided state. In the staging, this physic split is represented by the doll (moi) and the Marquise (je). Austrian psychologist Otto Rank’s

---

43 Tiffany noted that Lacan, having defined Aristotle’s terms tuché and automaton as “the encounter with the real” and “the network of signifiers” respectively, turned to Roger Caillois’ theory of mimicry in formulating his own theory for repetition compulsion (82-83).
Der Doppelgänger (The Double) (1914) investigated the motif of the double in relation to mirror reflections, shadows, spirit guardians, the soul, and fear of death. Rank pointed out that the human double offers protection against the destruction of the ego, denial of death, and signifies the soul’s immortality. Recalling Rank’s assertions, at times, the Marquise held the doll as if looking into a mirror. The Marquise doll was not menacing, rather it manifested as an angel soul.

It is arguable that the doll has a specific connection to “On the Puppet Theatre.” When the ephebe sees his beauty reflected in the mirror, he loses his innocence and becomes self-conscious. The Marquise too, loses her innocence and undergoes a change in consciousness. The doll signifies her choice to respond to her situation with defiance.

In “Man and Object in the Theater,” (1964) Czech structuralist scholar Jírí Veltrusky theorized that in theatre, “a lifeless object can be perceived as a performing subject, and a live human being may appear as an element completely without will” (84). Veltrusky asserted that the “relationship of man to object in the theater can be characterized as a dialectic antinomy” (90). During the rape scene, the Marquise was utterly motionless and as such was “without will” (Veltrusky 84). The actor represents the family until the Marquise was disowned, then the puppets remained onstage throughout.

Tillis commented, “To speak of a person, metaphorically as a puppet is to speak of that person with a certain degree of contempt” (168). Therefore, the change in the family’s representation from actor to puppets, from human to inanimate, conveyed to the spectator that
the family’s behavior was cruel and inhuman. Here, literally soulless puppets were a metaphor for heartless humanity.

Puppeteer Roman Paska pointed out that the puppet differs from the automaton, the mannequin, and the doll in terms of its “theatrical destination”:

> In the puppet theater the use (fullness) of the object is far more significant than the object in itself. And when the object does take human form, sometimes even reproducing anatomical features quite extraneous to its integrity as a puppet, it often does so self-consciously, as if the attempt to camouflage its otherness were in fact a subterfuge for displaying it. (412)

The design of the puppet family bears out Paska’s assertions. No attempt was made to actualize characters in human form. Rather, one significant behavioral aspect of each family member was featured within an overall abstract representation. Mother’s altogether rounded body was formed from a series of question marks, drawing attention to her manipulative nature. Father’s head, in the shape of a house, represented the citadel at M— and the patriarchy. Violence was implicit in his gun-shaped arm. Brother’s leaf-shaped head and waffled torso indicated that his father easily manipulated him.

It is helpful to mention Bunraku, Japanese traditional puppet theatre. French literary critic, essayist, and academic Roland Barthes’ (1915-80) Empire of Signs (1970), is a meditation on Japanese culture that includes an investigation of Bunraku. Barthes, focusing on Bunraku’s relationship between the animate and inanimate, points out that Bunraku, “practices three separate writings . . . the puppet, the manipulator, the vociferant: the effected gesture, the effective gesture, and the vocal gesture” (49). Three visible, impassive men dressed in black,
two of whom are hooded, move each Bunraku doll through its actions. Narrators, providing voices for the characters are on a side stage. Samisen players provides accompaniment.

Bunraku theatre, Barthes explains, “separates action from gesture” (54). Like Brecht’s theatre, Bunraku does not attempt realism or simulation:

Bunraku does not aim at “animating” an inanimate object so as to make a piece of the body, a scrap of a man, “alive,” while retaining its vocation as a “part”; it is not the simulation of the body that it seeks but, so to speak, its sensuous abstraction. Everything which we attribute to the total body and which is denied to our actors under cover of an organic, “living” unity, the little man of Bunraku recuperates and expresses without any deception: fragility, discretion, sumptuousness, unheard-of-nuance, the abandonment of all triviality, the melodic phrasing of gestures, in short the very qualities which the dreams of ancient theology granted to the redeemed body, i.e., impassivity, clarity, agility, subtlety, this is what the Bunraku achieves, this is how it converts the body-as-fetish into the lovable body, this is how it rejects the antimony of animate/inanimate and dismisses the concept which is hidden behind all the animation of matter and which is, quite simply, “the soul.” (Barthes 60)

As in Bunraku, in The Marquise of O—, the actor/puppeteer was on stage manipulating the puppets. Rather than a theatre of three writings, there were two writings: one actor serving the dual functions of manipulator/voiciferant, and the performing object. The three metal puppets were brought in by the actor and two women dressed in black, an homage to Bunraku. The doll, like those in Bunraku, had no strings. Each puppet had a rod at the center of the head and two side strings that led not to a puppeteer, but to the top of the metal frames that contained them, conjuring the impression of marionettes. The toys soldiers on a game board, the puppet family, and the doll, were handled like Bunraku puppets, that is, the actor/manipulator moved them through their actions.
In "The Actor Occluded: Puppet Theatre and Acting Theory," Tillis considered the actor as operator of the puppet in terms of the extent to which the actor is occluded:

[W]ho, if anyone, is the actor in this puppet performance, and what ramifications follow for acting theory? . . . [W]e should conceive of the actor as the producer of the signs that communicate a dramatic character, rather than as, necessarily, the producer and the site of those signs . . . this conception of the actor implies an inescapable tension between the producing and the siting of signs that contradicts the virtual disappearance of the actor behind the created character. (109)

In the production, the actor standing behind the life-size metal puppet was partially visually and aurally occluded. No attempt was made to conceal the actor from the spectator. Tillis extends the notion of occlusion and exposure, based on “the tension between the person of the actor and the site of signification,” to a theory of acting (117). Moments at which the actor manifested presence and/or took “conscious and artistic advantage” of “exposure, at the same time striving to occlude it” are taken up in Chapter Seven (Tillis 117).

Throughout the production, the spectator was presented with the man/puppet dichotomy. At the beginning of the show, the Marquise danced with doll-like steps. My non-naturalistic gestures when embodying the characters were in a sense, robotic. As the narrator, I made pendulum-like transitions when moving behind the puppets. Aspects of the puppets’ design reappeared in my highly physicalized characterizations of the family. Finally, the performing objects signified what they were. The toy soldiers were nameless, faceless, and dispensable military playthings. The doll was purity. The puppets, Colonel G—, Colonel G—’s wife, and the Marquise brother, were in a sense, less than perfect. Those traits remained the same throughout.
Each of these inanimate objects functioned as a discursive site in which the social-cultural oppositions implicit in Kleist’s novella were illuminated.
CHAPTER SIX

Scoring The Marquise of O—:

Songs of Subjectivity and the Music of the Disrupted Body

Music is a language related to the invisible by which a nothingness suddenly is there in a form that cannot be seen but can certainly be perceived. (120)

— Peter Brook,
The Empty Space

Kleist was well aware of the transcendent force of music. In his tale, “St. Cecilia and The Power of Music,” published in the year of his suicide, violent young men are subdued by the sublimity of sacred music. Set in sixteenth century Aachen in the aftermath of the Reformation, four Dutch Protestant brothers incite their followers to ravage the French convent of St. Cecilia, patron saint of music, amid the celebration of Corpus Christi. The nuns, aware of the impending danger, are terrified. The Abbess, in an act of faith, decides to hold the service. Miraculously rising from her sick bed, Sister Antonia, or perhaps the martyred St. Cecilia herself, leads an orchestra of holy women in an inspired performance of an ancient Italian mass. Mixed in among the congregation, the brothers, along with their astonished acolytes, are overwhelmed by the celestial harmonies. The siblings fall to their knees in fervent prayer. Afterwards penitent, the four men subsist on bread and water and are compelled to shriek the Gloria in Excelsis at midnight. A town doctor pronounces them insane. Confined to an asylum, the mad brothers spend their days in silent contemplation of a crucifix. At the stroke of midnight, they rise and for an hour hideously howl the Gloria in compulsive religious ecstasy.
It is worth noting similarities between “The Marquise of O—“ and ”St. Cecilia and the Power of Music.” The citadel at M— and the convent in Aachen are both protective environments for their sequestered female occupants. Kleist constructed both the Marquise and the nuns as creatively active, whether as an individual (reading, painting, care giving) or as a group (playing music). The Marquise’s swoon in the arms of the man who appears like an angel from heaven is comparable to the brothers’ prostration in the presence of the divine music of the nuns. The Marquise faces a crisis occasioned by male violence, as does St. Cecilia’s order. Colonel G— and Count F— vent extreme rage and passion for the object of their desire, analogous to the wildly divergent behavior of the lunatic siblings. While Eros, not music, vanquishes the beast in Count F—, it may be said that on hearing the pure song of his victim’s soul, the Russian officer intuits the possibility of salvation. The two tales end very differently. Having committed rape, Count F— is long in coming to repentance; the brothers’ violent plans are thwarted and their remorse immediate. The Countess comes to enjoy earthly pleasures with her spouse whereas the nuns and the brothers remain celibate, locked in parallel worlds, wedded to holy music.

On first reading the novella, I suspected that the Marquise had more to say than what was on the page. This character fairly called out to me to voice her emotional turmoil by musical means. The music and lyrics I subsequently created for The Marquise of O— are as much reflective of my own intensely felt relationship to the “power of music” as it is an intellectual response to Julietta’s story. The following discusses my musical antecedents and creative
process as a composer leading to a comprehensive analysis of this crucial aspect of the production.

As a music-maker, I find truth in British pop songwriter/performer Elvis Costello’s (1948-) anti-critical maxim: “Writing about music is like dancing about architecture. It’s a really stupid thing to want to do” (52). Yet, despite the inherent difficulty in describing a time-based event and conveying the emotionality that characterizes it, I will attempt to do so through a variety of formal means. I am neither a literary critic nor a musicologist. I write about my score from the perspective of a practitioner that relies as much on instinct as from a formal understanding of poetics and music theory. The advantage to author-based commentary is obvious. Such readings are not subject to the presumptive interpretation of reader/listener-centered critiques that are necessarily limited to analysis of available sketches and drafts.

It is useful to distinguish between music theatre, musical theatre, and opera. Composer, author, and co-founder/artistic director of the American Music Theater Festival Eric Salzman offered a definition of music theatre:

44This maxim has also been variously attributed to Frank Zappa, Thelonious Monk, and Laurie Anderson.

45I have been a serious songwriter of songs in various genres since my early teens. My experience as a teacher of songwriting has also informed my process. My formal music training: seven years of classical piano; three years of jazz piano theory, harmony, and repertoire; five years of vocal training. To date, I have not studied music composition formally. I have made an independent study of a wide range of novelists, poets, songwriters, and composers from various genres. My composition process is also informed by formal studies in choreography, theatre, and painting.
Music-theater is sometimes exclusionary (not-opera, not-Broadway) and sometimes a catchall for everything, operas and musicals included. At one end of this complex new-work spectrum, is experimental opera; at another is the serious, contemporary musical . . . In between is a large and growing third stream—music-theater in the exclusive, narrow sense—that has grown out of performance art and live multimedia. (November 28, 1999, New York Times)

In The New Singing Theatre: A Charter for the Music Theatre Movement (1991), Michael Bawtree explored the parameters of a performance mode he calls the new singing theatre: “At the heart of the singing theatre, there is a performer who acts and sings a role, in a dramatic performance, with musical support, in a performance area, in front of an audience” (12).

Following Salzman and Bawtree, this production of The Marquise of O—falls into both the categories of third stream music theatre and new singing theatre.

I turned to the music theatre form following a lengthy exploration of pop music genres. In that regard, it is important to acknowledge that folk, blues, and Rock and Roll musicians differ from musical theatre composers, lyricists, and performers in fundamental ways. Folk music and the blues are based in a primal relationship to the self, often expressive of existential loneliness and loss. The folk persona is that of a workingman or woman; the blues persona is a survivor or world-weary wanderer. Early folk and blues artists had untrained voices. The first Rock and Rollers too, were often self-taught musicians that performed their own songs. Indeed, rough,

---

46 For consideration of why the personal expression of solitude and separateness characterizes classic blues music, see Leroi Jones, Blues People: Negro Music in White America. New York: Grove, 2002. 61, 82, and 86.
idiosyncratic vocal sounds and instrumental eccentricities are part of the unique appeal and beauty of these musical genres. Rock, rhythm and blues, and the blues are groove-oriented, having to do with dancing. In the words of early twentieth century American bluesman Wesley Wilson (1893-1958):

> Check all your razors and your guns.
> Do the shim-sham shimmy to the rising sun.  

Musical theatre songs are not groove oriented. There is an attitude towards love that is excessively sentimental. Musical theatre composers and lyricists do not generally perform their own music. In musical theatre there is a tendency to aestheticize the vocal performance in favor of pure tone and virtuosity so that the writer’s approach to melodic line and the emotional content of the lyric tends to bathos over pathos. Efforts to move from theatre to rock are inevitably kitsch, well exemplified by Andrew Lloyd Weber/Tim Rice’s musical Jesus Christ Superstar (1971). Yet, from 1967 on, numerous pop songwriters have gravitated to theatre, often to critical success.  

---


48 The Beatles’ Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967) was in essence a score for an unwritten musical; The Who brought a Rock and Roll toughness to Broadway with their rock opera album Tommie (1969); British songwriter/performer David Bowie created numerous theatrical personas; the British progressive rock band Genesis composed a two-record concept album, The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway (1974); Paul Simon scored a pop opera, The Capeman (1997) in collaboration with book writer Derek Walcott and director Mark Morris; Elton John scored the Broadway musicals Aida (1998) The Lion King (1997) and Lastet, (2005); Tom Waits scored the music theatre work The Black Rider (1990) in collaboration with book writer William S. Burroughs (1914-97) director Robert Wilson that was first produced in Hamburg, Germany; American composer/performer David Byrne collaborated with choreographer Twyla Tharp on The Catherine Wheel (1981); songwriter/performer Martyn
Relevant scholarship on popular music bears mention. In “Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto” (2004), Philip Auslander drew attention to the dearth of writings in theatre and performance studies on the subject of music-based performance. Auslander’s assertion made me eager to add my performance studies informed analysis of a music-based production to an apparently partial body of scholarship. Auslander cites several works that have attempted to redress the issue: sociologist and pop music journalist Simon Frith’s Performing


... I learned more about writing opera from listening to Chuck Berry and the Beach Boys that I did from listening to Puccini or Wagner because in Italian, of course, every word rhymes with every other word and because of the vowels that means that there’s this huge tradition of hundreds of years of Italian opera for vowel embellishment that is very beautiful. It just doesn’t happen to work in English because we don’t have the vowels.

See “A Conversation with Robert Ashley,” Frank J. Oteri, New Music Box: The Web Magazine from the American Music Center, April 1, 2001.)
Rites: On the Value of Popular Music (1996); music educator Christopher Small’s Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (1998); and musicologist and professor Susan Fast’s In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music (2001). Frith drew attention to the difference between lyrics and poetry:

Good lyrics by definition . . . lack the elements that make for good lyric poetry. Take them out of their performed context, and they either seem to have no musical qualities at all, or else to have such obvious ones as to be silly . . . the best pop songs, in short are those that can be heard as a struggle between verbal and musical rhetoric, between the singer and the song. (182)

In my opinion, Frith is wrong on this point. I argue that pop song lyrics are at times on a par with the best lyric poetry. Costello as well as American songwriter/guitarist Bob Dylan (1941- ), Canadian songwriter/guitarist Joni Mitchell (1943- ), American songwriter/guitarist Lou Reed (1942- ), English rock singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, producer, arranger, mixer, actor, and artist David Bowie (1947-), British songwriter/guitarist Andy Partridge (1953-), American singer/songwriter and poet Patti Smith (1946- ), American singer/songwriter David Byrne (1943- ), and Icelandic singer/songwriter Bjork (1965- ) have all written lyrics that stand up apart from their musical settings. I too, approach my lyric writing with all the intent and craft of a poet.

Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis  (1997) offers diverse readings of a number of musical artists using harmonic, rhythmic, melodic, formal, and textual approaches. I found David Headlam’s “Blues Transformation in the Music of Cream” particularly useful in identifying early twentieth century American blues influences in songs I wrote for The Marquise
of O—. In *Disruptive Divas: Feminism Identity & Popular Music* (2002), musicologist Lori Burns and recording artist and cultural critic Mélisse Lafrance analyzed songs by four women musicians known for “their disruptive meaning and potential” (xi). Burns and Lafrance’s used a “transdisciplinary approach” in close readings of the music and lyrics leading to assertions about the evolving role of women in contemporary popular music (xiii).

It is helpful to characterize the scope of my work as a lyricist and composer. I draw from an eclectic array of influences including folk, acoustic pop, classical, blues, rhythm and blues, American Rock and Roll, Motown, British invasion, Broadway and Hollywood film musicals, art music, European cabaret, classic jazz idioms, improvisation, and ambient music responding to technology. My music is much informed by my formal studies of other art forms: dance, theatre, and visual art. Mesmerized by the unique music of American songwriter/performer Laura Nyro (1947-97), I began writing songs in my early teens. In search of my own style, I studied the work of numerous artists with a visceral command of music and or poetics: American classical composer Charles Ives (1874-1954); Welsh poet, prose writer, and dramatist Dylan Thomas (1914-53); French author and physician Louise Ferdinand Céline (1894-61); American singer/songwriter/guitarists Bob Dylan (1941- ) and Jimi Hendrix (1942-70); songwriting team Burt Bacharach (1928- ) and Hal David (1921- ); American composer, arranger, and performer Frank Zappa (1940-93); and British songwriters John Lennon (1940-80), Paul McCartney (1942- ) and Ray Davies (1944- ). Listening to the music of Russian-born composer Igor Stravinsky

---

49 The four singer/songwriters analyzed by Burns and Lafrance are Tori Amos, Courtney Love, Me’Shell Ndegéocello, and P.J. Harvey.
(1882-1971), American jazz masters Duke Ellington (1899-74) and Mose Allison (1927- ) as well as works by Brecht/Weill broadened my musical range.

There is an underlying playfulness that is present in the language and music of my songs. Harmonic complexity is a hallmark of my style. I inevitably work against cliché. For example, I often introduce unexpected changes in meter and irregular phrase length that are stylistically unconventional. Mutually dependent meanings of lyrics and music are usually unified. When contradictory, they highlight meaning. Sometimes, I begin with lyrics, sometimes with music—always generated through improvisation. If the lyrics are completed first, I find that matching them with music can be problematic. I am conscious about how the music carries the power of the song even as I refine every detail of my lyrics.

Composing a catalog of acoustic pop music in the 70s, I learned to come up with catchy lyric phrases in service to a single idea. I mastered the technique of creating definitive melodic rhythms and motifs that make a song instantly understandable and memorable. For example, in my 1972 song, “Please Don’t Cry,” the chorus lyric articulates unity in a love relationship but is undercut by contrary motion that implies separation:

Please don’t cry, I won’t leave you tonight
I will be there, there in the morning by your side.

The song is compelling because of a canny use of harmonies. The listener is taken on a journey in space and time that is soaring and full of yearning, comparable to “Georgia On My Mind” (1930) by Stuart Gorrell and Hoagy Carmichael, most notably recorded in 1966 by African American musical legend Ray Charles (1930-2004).
Like the female artists whose work I emulated, notably Nyro and Mitchell, a poetic vision and a deep exploration of the conceit was always essential to my modus operandi. I mine the metaphor to yield layers of meaning, a strategy that is apparent in the score for The Marquise of O—.

Extensively trained in dance, my earliest songs reflect the extent to which I was, and am still, conscious of rhythmic intent. All of my music is danceable in some sense. An internalized physicality informs my response to language. Dance, like music, is time-based, and I sometimes use choreographic strategies in my songwriting: I improvise movement based on my response to the initial musical gestures. These improvisations are developed into movement motifs. Then, these motifs are reinterpreted in terms of musical phrases.

In the late 70s and early 80s, the post punk movement known as No Wave was characterized by an anti-music approach, incorporating electronics while avoiding the virtuosity of progressive rock. Also responding to punk, the New Wave movement wrought a slew of British and American bands, many of which had come out of art schools, that played reggae, ska, and experimental music with quirky lyrics. Influenced by these trends, I wrote songs and performed in bands that explored non-virtuosic performance, complex melodic structures,

50 Two studies have been written on influence of British art schools on popular music since the 1960s: John A. Walker, Cross-Overs: Art Into Pop, Pop Into Art (New York: Methuen, 1987); Simon Frith and Howard Horne, Art Into Pop (New York: Methuen, 1987). In Theodore Philip Cateforis’ dissertation, Are We Not New Wave?: Nostalgia, Technology and Exoticism in Popular Music at the Turn of the 1980s, (State University of New York at Stony Brook, 2000) draws attention to the fact that in the U.S., art schools were the source of numerous New Wave bands.
harmonies, rhythms, and textures, and danceable grooves together with lyrics from an existential viewpoint.

I began to consciously apply visual concepts to my music making as a consequence of two-years of drawing and painting studies that coincided with a stint assisting an art photographer in museums and galleries in the mid-80s. This visual immersion has caused me to think more conceptually and texturally about my musical compositions. My lyrics are richly imagistic—painterly in terms of how I describe a scene, filmic in that I deliberately set up a scene in terms of close up, medium shot, or long shot.

I began composing scores for dance and theatre in the mid-80s. Acting and theatre studies influenced my songwriting process. My method for writing a song for character draws on Russian actor, director, and producer Konstantin Stanislavsky’s (1863-1938) approach to creating a dramatic role. I write a biography and then gradually take on the skin of the character. Initially, I free associate lyrics and music based on mining the character’s unconscious. In subsequent drafts, I refine my understanding of the character’s emotional state. I use embodiment as a strategy to explore the interiority of the character. This process recalls Bert States’ assertion that, “the playwright himself becomes the actor in the act of writing” (130). States, citing Grotowski, explained that the playwright, like the actor preparing for a role, performs “the same act of self-extension” (131). Similarly, composing songs for character, I enter this realm of “possibilities” (States 131).

From the mid-90s to the present, I have composed a body of work exploring social and political issues, myth, and psychology. In “Dancing Chicken Song” (1997), about the rise and
fall of a greedy Wall Street trader, I mined my impressions of New York City’s Chinatown. The song title refers to a live chicken in a Plexiglas coop set among the video games at the Chinatown Fair. One only has to pay fifty cents to be entertained by the chicken, who, in order to avoid contact with an electrified wire grate, performs a convulsive dance in reaction to the jolts:

See the dancing chicken hopping to the music
Sha la la la la la la la hey!

“Dancing Chicken” is mocking and demonic, like Zappa’s subversive use of doo-wop tropes and dissonance in “Who Are the Brain Police?” (1966). The chorus “Sha la la” pays homage to Reed’s subverted soul music trope in “Walk on the Wild Side,” his paean to transvestites in the post Stone Wall era. My sardonic lyrics, emphasized by needling, melodic rhythms, are like a schoolyard taunt, recalling The Doors’ 1967 cover of “Alabama Song (Whiskey Bar)” from Brecht/Weill’s Rise and Fall of the Town of Mahagonny, also covered by Bowie in the late 70s and Marilyn Manson in 2003. In fact, many of the artists I regularly listened to including Zappa, The Stones, Bowie, Sting, Waits, Reed, British singer and actress Marianne Faithfull (1946- ), were influenced by and or performed songs by Brecht/Weill. I also have a practical understanding of Brecht’s theatre as regards music, having composed music

51 “Walk on the Wild Side” was included on Reed’s 1972 album, Transformer.

52 September Songs: the Music of Kurt Weill (1997) includes versions of Weill’s songs by Costello, Reed, Nick Cave, and PJ Harvey among others.
for Craig Kinzer’s production of *A Man’s a Man* at Northwestern in 1992. Given the extent of Brecht’s influence on my work, it is useful to consider his theories on the function of music in epic theatre. Differentiating between dramatic and epic opera, Brecht felt that dramatic opera’s tendency to synthesize into a homogeneous mélange degrades its integrity:

> When the epic theatre’s methods begin to penetrate the opera the first result is a radical separation of the elements. The great struggle for supremacy between words, music and production—which always brings up the question ‘which is the pretext for what?’: is the music the pretext for the events on the stage, or are those the pretext for the music? Etc.—can simply be bypassed by radically separating the elements. So long as the expression ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ (or ‘integrated work of art’) means that the integration is a muddle, so long as the arts are supposed to be ‘fused’ together, the various elements will all be equally degraded; and each will act as a mere ‘feed’ to the next. (37-8)

Elements characterizing Weill’s music are dissonance, clarity, harmonic sophistication, and early twentieth century American jazz influences. As the Brecht/Weill songs are steeped in the sound and smoke of Weimar cabaret, it may be said that by extension, well-known late twentieth century musicians who have performed their work and or incorporated their devices into their own songs have kept alive public interest in pre-WWII German cabaret traditions. However, the Brecht/Weill opus was rooted in a particular socio-political agenda whereas pop musicians that have turned to Brecht/Weill for creative inspiration have not similarly turned to their politics.

There is another reason why cabaret is so integral to my music for *The Marquise of O*—. Unlike the trend in recent years toward corporate sponsored, spectacle-style musical acts, most of the musical artists of the late 60’s and early 70’s whom I emulated honed their skills in small
clubs and cabarets, developing an intimate relationship with their audience. This approach informed these artists’ performing styles even when they graduated to larger venues. Certainly, my conception for the production reflects my having internalized that aspect of cabaret’s legacy.

Creating music theatre pieces for children including adaptations of fairy tales, biography, and original works from the early 90’s to the present, I learned to manipulate musical theatre conventions and use compressed language including rap to carry metaphor, advance a story, and reveal character. In “Put the Whup ‘Em in Your Fight,” from Song of The Greatest (2001), animals and nature images were incorporated into a motivational song incorporating colloquial speech for the young Cassis Clay, who is heartbroken because his birthday present, a new bicycle, has been stolen:

```
Baby step in boxing ring
Train to be a knock out king!

Does bullfrog croak to hear your mouth
Scrappin’ with a rhyme?
Is your left hook fast?
Does river bass hang on every line?
Practice jab with bear cub in the early rounds of life.
Sly little fox—someday box
With a rough, tough fist in a glove!

Put the whup ‘em in your fight
Train to the left, train to the right!
Put the whup ‘em in your fight
Put the whup ‘em in your fight!
```

Other than works for juveniles, my music theatre compositions have investigated intricate melodies and harmonic shifts in service to the text, disregarding conventional expectations for memorable tunes. In a deep exploration of the lyric, I don’t necessarily repeat a prior structure or trope as originally stated. Rather, I allow myself complete freedom to musically follow every thought, a method that is not endemic to pop music. A clear structure is not paramount. Language may comment on itself. At its furthest extreme, multiple bridges and embellished melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic sections are integrated. These variants are not gratuitous—they serve the development of a psychological or emotional journey of the character. My compositions tend to be orchestral in conception. I may alter a musical phrase slightly or insert a measure of odd time, perhaps reharmonize a phrase in exploring a nuance of meaning and emotion resulting in a conglomeration of interwoven melodic phrases. Admittedly, this compositional style requires more from the listeners because they can’t be certain that they will hear the same structures repeated. However, not all my songs are complex. At times, I impose a minimalist structure. My theatre music is less about making horizontal music that starts at point A, develops through point B, and ends at point C in a logical progression. Rather, I conceive a sequence of interactions. I often use a pick-up before the first strong downbeat to focus attention on the opening line. This device is a feature of the score for The Marquise of O—
Since 1987, I have explored female representation through song. I call this body of songs inspired by women from literature, drama, art, myth, and history Chapter and Skirt. The song form allows for a poetic voice that, in the space of three to five minutes, explores these characters in an emotional way with a heightened sense of reality. I treat both the literary work and the pop song form as artifacts to be deconstructed. I find the musical tensions that arise from contrasting past and present, high and low culture extremely compelling. If I write in the third person, it is in the voice of a contemporary feminist narrator reflecting on the author's construction of his female character, for example, “Happy Ever After Wife” (1989), inspired by Flaubert’s Madame Bovary (1856-57):

---


She is forever in his debt
He gives her everything she needs
A charming face, translucent skin
A work of fiction to be in
Like the sentimental tales she reads
A tragic heroine she wants to be
More than just a simple life
Pretty young provincial wife
Happy ever after wife.

Happy ever after wife
Happy ever after wife
The habits and the patterns
Of a hundred thousand days
Always the same
Wouldn’t be a novel life
For an amorous provincial wife
Happy ever after wife.

The verse of “Happy Ever After Wife” has a lyrical, sensuous melodic line but the chorus, characterized by herky-jerky melodic rhythms and tense harmonies, is very much in the Brecht/Weil tradition. The contrasting melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and lyrics all hint at the author’s relationship to the corrupt character he created. Huyssen wrote:

Flaubert fetishized his own imaginary femininity while simultaneously sharing his period’s hostility toward real women, participation in a pattern of the imagination and of behavior all too common in the history of modernism. (45)

The legato music I composed for the third person narrative voice of “A Certain Lady” similarly intimates an investigation of Kleist’s early nineteenth century construction of the Marquise that reads as sympathetic.
As a feminist strategy, I may explore the first person voice of the female protagonist. In this way, the character may develop a deeper relationship with other characters in her world and herself. My intention may be a corrective. For example, “The Song of the Blue Fairy” (1997) was inspired by a 1994 Hollywood film adaptation of Carlo Collodi’s The Adventures of Pinocchio in which the Blue Fairy was replaced by a love interest for Pinocchio’s father, Geppetto. In Collodi’s tale, it is the Blue Fairy’s unconditional love that allows the wooden Pinocchio to become human. It occurred to me that this film adaptation was yet another corporate media punch in the jaw of humanism. I decided that remedial action was necessary—the Blue Fairy must come to life! I composed a song fit for a sorceress: the music is a tarantella of shifting harmonies and odd time; using deconstruction, I gave free rein to my poetic imagination:

I am the Blue Fairy that lives in the wood  
For a thousand years and more  
I’ve been waiting to serve up more than a meal  
To a fantasy boy who wants to be real  
Now I’m here to be yo’ mama  
The pure projection of your pre-pubescent need  
So dear one don’t delay  
Now you come here to me . . .

The strategy used in “Song of The Blue Fairy”—first-person direct address enriched by a playful use of deconstruction—also characterizes the Marquise’s song to her family, “I Put the Shame on You.”

The score for The Marquise of O—consists of melodic motifs, accompanied recitative, short songs, and an operatic aria with contemporary harmonies and complex rhythmic structures.
In preparation, I transcribed the novella verbatim. In this way, I came to understand the arc of the narrative and find the places where music and/or song would logically explicate the plot or reveal the emotional state of the characters. For the workshop production of the first part of the novella, I composed and recorded three instrumental themes and a song for the Marquise that was performed with live vocals over a backing track. After Lampe and I completed the adaptation, I reassessed the function of music in terms of the arc of the narrative. Then, I fleshed out additional songs and instrumental pieces and decided where it was appropriate to reiterate themes. The aural aspect of the piece included a minimal sound design. In the weeks prior to the performance additional songs were composed. The completed score is comprised of short instrumental pieces and songs performed live with piano accompaniment or on tape. I used a formalist approach. The instrumental themes are programmatic, functional, and manipulative as in a conventional narrative film score. The songs propel the action, convey information, and or illuminate character. A great deal of material is conveyed that is free-floating emotional information. Social commentary is implicit in all of the music. Lampe was enthusiastic about the use of deconstruction in my musical interpretation:

Your music and lyrics bring attention to things that happen, in that way, deconstruction doesn’t have to be negative criticism. In that Derridian sense, you tease out what is already there so that what is consciously intended is what emerges. It becomes clear that what is there, the music and the songs and the spaces in between, allow you to bring out that sentiment in a subtle form. (2004 Personal int. 1)

When performing a performance text, the subtext is suggested by the staging. But songs can fully articulate the subtext. Lampe explained:
That’s why putting a music theatre version of “The Marquise of O—“ on the stage is Brechtian. He was intrigued with the American musical and his own ideas about political theatre. What we have done here is already distinct from my perspective. What I like about it is that distancing. It makes you think, why is she singing this? It is seductive. I like that tension. On a structural level, it is a device, but then, it works on a subtler level. Through my rereading of Derrida, I feel what we’ve done is find subtle meanings that compliment. I look at your songs as an alienation device but not in the old Brechtian way. (2004 Personal int. 1)

In our early discussions of how music might establish subjectivity, Lampe suggested we have a cellist perform the score on stage. There were logical reasons to do so. First, I had arranged the song for the Marquise, “I Put the Shame on You” with a poignant cello line that evoked her graceful mien amidst a rotten predicament. Secondly, the cello is shaped like a stylized female body: the top and bottom of the body are wide and the middle is narrow; the neck extends upward from the body, ending in a head-like scroll; the tailpiece is mounted towards the bottom of the body with the endpin below. Given the potential visual impact of the cello, adding a musician to the piece was certainly viable. But Lampe and I agreed that one of the strengths of the piece was my acting all the roles while performing the score. So the production had to be kept a solo work. Lampe’s next suggestion was intended purely for comic visual effect: “After that idea was discarded, my slapstick suggestion was for a cardboard cello. It was inspired by a lecture I attended on Romanticism and the music of the time. But the cardboard version was nixed because I wanted to see you play the piano live. The pregnant body was the piano” (2004 Personal int. 1). So, it was decided—I would sing live and accompany myself on the piano and we would explore the instrument as a metaphor for the Marquise’s pregnant body.
At the top of the show, an instrumental theme in a 3/4 time signature, “Minuet in A Minor” mirrors the Marquise’s aristocratic nineteenth century milieu, personal engagements, and entanglements. This music was prerecorded so as to accompany my dance. The theme’s minor key sets the tone—elegiac and disturbing. Here is an instance of classical borrowing: “Minuet in A Minor” evokes Romantic era music by German composers Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47), and Robert Schumann (1810-56) as well as early twentieth century compositions by Russian composer Dmitri Kabalevsky (1904-87). Like Kabalevsky, I interweave diatonic harmony and chromaticism, along with major/minor interplay. “Minuet in A Minor,” as elsewhere in the score, incorporates odd time signatures to maximize the dramatic impact of a gesture, reflecting the influence of Russian-born composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). This initial theme has several recognizable leitmotifs, that is, a melody or a few notes that are repeated.


New Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music defined leitmotif:

A musical fragment, related to some aspect of the drama, that recurs in the course of an opera. The term leitmotif is used most often in connection with Wagner’s later works. Leitmotifs combine both dramatic and musical functions. They may serve simply to emphasize aurally what is seen on stage, or suggest to the listener something unseen that is being thought by one of the characters—a recollection, intuition, or prediction. Beyond presenting an exegesis of the action, the leitmotifs are the material from which the musical substance is constructed, just as motifs would be for an instrumental composer (370). See “Leitmotif,” New Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music, 1999 ed. 370.
The first phrase establishes a fanfare, appropriate to the beginning of a performance and the aristocratic setting through the use of intervals (fourths and fifths) that are conventionally employed in Western music to convey those ideas. This is immediately undercut by the responding gesture, a movement to the dominant seventh flat 9 chord which creates tension and evokes longing and loss all within the first four to five seconds. This chord is characteristic of Romantic music such as Schumann’s “Gloomy Forebodings” (“Leides Ahnung”) (1835) from Album – Leaves, Opus 124, which features a dominant 7 sharp 9 chord resolving to the 1. The dominant seventh flat 9 chord incorporates dissonance typical of the harmonic vocabulary of Beethoven, who like Kleist, responded in his work to the turbulent, heroic political movements of his era.

The motif is restated. Then, the listener is surprised by a melodic and harmonic gesture that establishes an unexpected tonality: F major, a temporary key change that evokes a new emotional, heroic territory. This gesture is responded to with a phrase that establishes an E suspended four to E major cadence, a trope prevalent in the mid to late 60s pop music. Simultaneously, I change the 3/4 time to a single 4/4 measure, then return to the 3/4 time. By extending the gesture, I compel the listener to focus attention on the transition from tension to resolution. But despite the return to 3/4 this moment is still “tense” and calls out for further resolution. At this point, the listener has experienced an eight measure rhythmic narrative structure consisting of an initial phrase in 3/4 and a response in 3/4. This couplet is repeated

57 A cadence is a chord progression that conveys an emotional movement through time from tension to resolution.
three times followed by a fourth statement in 4/4 and its final response in 3/4. The overall strategy is asymmetrical. The overall harmonic movement of the music has been from A minor to E7, to A minor to E7, to F major to E suspended 4, to E major. I then utilize the strategy of displacement, that is, a melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic idea that is restated in a way that works against expectations. In this instance, the F major to E major movement that had responded to the A minor to E7 gesture is refashioned as the opening statement of this section. It is answered by a new harmonic gesture (D minor to E major). The initial A minor to E7 to A minor to E7 statement is played a third and final time. The responding gesture is a D minor to E major to A minor cadence. This is accompanied by a descending scalar flurry, a last surprise that shortens the gesture by one beat. This cascade functions as a denouement, representing the Marquise’s futile attempt to escape her limited world. The rhythmic narrative structure is truncated: two 3/4 couplets are followed by a third couplet which is 3/4 and 2/4, and then a final 3/4 couplet with its accompanying melodic gesture that is funereal and resigned.

In essence, “Minuet In A Minor” is a miniature, a complete narrative. The theme is easily accessible, as in the first minor movement of Beethoven’s “Pathétique” Sonata (1789), Kabalevsky’s “Sad Story” from Thirty Children’s Pieces for Piano, Opus 27 (1937-38), or a pop tune such as Lennon/McCartney’s “Eleanor Rigby” (1966). In Act II, I performed “Minuet in A Minor” live to underscore the wedding ceremony. In this context, the theme’s minor key served to heighten the tension of the event.

There are two variations on “Minuet in A Minor” suggestive of the Marquise’s story as it unfolds: the stately andante, “Julietta” and a frenetic scherzo, “Panic Dance.” A prerecorded
“Julietta” was first used to underscore the moment at morning tea when the Marquise unaccountably drifts off into reverie. Here, self-questioning is implicit. Given her physical symptoms, could she be pregnant? “Julietta” is in the form of a courtly dance in triple meter, a two-step with accents on the downbeat. Yet the music is strange and unsettling, like the score for a B-movie when the ingénue loses her mind in a hall of mirrors at the Fun House. The theme begins with the Marquise’s prename, “Julietta” sung in a terse melodic gesture that is extended by means of heavy reverb, suggestive of a cavernous space. The intimate, vocal represents her inner voice and dawning subconscious awareness. The spatial effect signifies the Marquise’s pregnant belly. The melody starts on an upbeat followed by a single melodic rhythm that is derived from the sound of her name against which is counterpoised the response of the accompaniment of eerie, inexorable, descending chromatic figures. This initial four-measure phrase is then repeated with embellishment. This establishes the presumption on the part of the listener that all the following gestures will continue in the same fashion. However, the responding gesture breaks out of that assumption and is five measures long. In terms of the dance, when the “Julietta” vocal line is restated, the Marquise is literally on the wrong foot. The melody of the release gradually circles downward. Compared to the first gesture, the release is a longer and more elaborate narrative, taking longer to come to its resolution. In this phrase, I move back and forth from minor to major tonalities, evoking constantly shifting emotional states. The piece ends with a fade out because at this point the Marquise’s story is unresolved. In the incidental sub themes of the A section I restate the opening melodic gesture of the main theme of the show.
“Julietta” was reiterated on two other occasions in the show. After the Marquise decides to publish a public notice, “Julietta” was used to underscore a private moment, expressed through movement, in which she asserts her autonomy and celebrates her fecundity. But the “Julietta” music is hardly celebratory. The spectator was reminded that the Marquise’s free will is limited and her pregnancy unwanted. “Julietta” also underscored the wedding preparations. Here, this strange, formal music was suggestive of the Marquise’s acquiescence in the face of family pressure and societal expectations while setting the tone for the nuptial scene that followed.

“Panic Dance” was first introduced to underscore the scene in which the Marquise receives the Commandant’s dismissive letter. This prerecorded instrumental theme reiterates the harmonic minor key and the V-I-V form of “Minuet in A Major.” The melody and harmony evoke an Eastern European lament. The music is rhythmically unpredictable, employing shifting phrase lengths by means of odd time. This music thwarts the listener’s expectations and engages his/her attention in a game of cat and mouse. For example, I start with a measure of three, followed by a measure of four, then I restate the melody, but instead of resolving it in four measures, I cut it short, making it into a bar of three, followed by two more three bar melodic gestures. Then, with a four bar statement, I bring the whole idea to a close. Like the Marquise, the listener never knows what to expect next. Throughout the first section, upbeats color all the gestures—the feel is insistent, needling, goading. Within the unpredictable structure, there are lyrical gestures intended to signify the Marquise’s inherent grace. A new idea is introduced—dissonant clusters suggest that something is amiss. As the piece ends, the gestures, no longer lyric and consonant, are harsh and dissonant. The final phrases, in three, are again thwarted by
one last gesture of four, responded to with a final dissonant cluster in a lower register signifying chaos and fatality.

“Panic Dance,” like “Julietta,” is reminiscent of the score for a horror movie. In Act II, “Panic Dance” was reiterated, underscoring the moment when Count F—, learning that the Marquise has been disowned, takes a horse and gallops out to V— to renew his proposal. The melodic rhythm of “Panic Dance” recalls a galloping horse. The reiteration of this music links the Count to the emotional world of the Marquise.

British poet, novelist, and performance artist Anthony Howell, characterized the use of song in performance art: "Song is particularly interesting if used out of context; a newspaper can be sung aloud instead of read aloud” (156). Indeed, this device appears in the song, “A Certain Lady,” the narrator’s reading of the Marquise’s public notice. “A Certain Lady” was sung live accompanied by piano. The song’s musical style, that of yearning and nostalgia is reminiscent of parlor ballads by American nineteenth century composer Stephen Collins Foster (1826-64) and traditional Scottish or English ballads. Scholar Charlotte Greig’s “Female Identity and the Woman Songwriter” investigates the history of songs that have addressed pregnancy and motherhood. Greig cited an early English ballad as an example of a traditional song that explores the father/daughter confrontation over pregnancy. Greig pointed out that for the most part, female ‘new country’ artists rather than rock icons have mined this topic (175). I argue that “A Certain Lady” and for that matter all of the songs in The Marquise of O— may be considered as part of that body of work, from traditional to contemporary songs in various genres, that explore motherhood and domesticity.
The lyrics to “A Certain Lady” were based on the opening lines of the novella:

. . . a lady of unblemished reputation and the mother of several well-brought up children, inserted the following announcement in the newspapers: that she had without knowledge of the cause, come to find herself in a certain situation; that she would like the father of the child she was expecting to disclose his identity to her; and that she was resolved, out of consideration for her family to marry him. (Kleist 68)

I chose significant words, underlined above, that were employed so as to create an idiosyncratic lyric. For example, I conflated “a certain situation,” a euphemism for pregnancy and “lady,” a reference to the Marquise:

A certain lady, a certain lady
Requests the presence of the father of the child.
She was expecting to have a baby
Soon the newborn would arrive. (377)

The song features a long melodic and harmonic arc that commands the listener’s attention within which each phrase offers a surprise, mirroring the recent unexpected events in the Marquise’s life. The song begins on a C major 6 harmony moving to G9 to G7, which is immediately poignant because the inner voicings of the chords create a dialogue with the melody line. These movements are small and suggest intimacy. After this first couplet, the rate at which new harmonies are introduced doubles up as the melody moves upward in a consonant fashion on C major to D minor to E minor. This focuses emphasis on the emotional importance of the lyric: “. . .requests the presence of the father of the child.” Then, on “She was expecting” I jump from an E minor to a B flat major7th chord, which is lush and emotional, but still consonant, although relative to the prior material, is tense. The rate of change reverts to the initial one
harmony per measure focusing attention on “she was expecting . . . to have a . . . baby” (12). On “to have a baby,” I go to F major, which implies resignation. The last line of the stanza occurs within a conventional cadence (V-I) returning to the C major resolution. But in the release, the rate of harmonic change is quadrupled (one chord per each quarter note):

For in consideration of her family, her dear family. (337)

“For in consideration of . . .” implies consonance but is emotionally removed from the initial tonic chord, which implies nostalgia. On “family” I go to an A flat, a tense choice. While the lyrics to “A Certain Lady” suggest social/familial acquiescence, this is a deceptive strategy, as an otherwise consonant melody is undercut by moments of ironic dissonance. This is affected through re-harmonizing the accompaniment. The first time the music falls on “Lady,” it is consonant but when it comes around the second time, on “marry,” the harmony is dissonant. The third time on “the father” the music returns to consonance, in effect a musical happy ending:

For in consideration of [DISSONANT] her fam-i-ly [RESOLVES] Her dear family
It was resolved [DISSONANT] that she would marr-y [RESOLVES] That she would marry the father of the child. (337)

The dissonance infuses the song with subverted rage.58 It was Lampe who suggested this subtle choice:

58The New Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music defined consonance and dissonance:

“Popularly, combinations of pitches that are, respectively, pleasing or displeasing . . . More narrowly, consonances are those combinations of pitches that have been used in Western tonal music as suitable points of at least momentary repose and not necessarily requiring resolution. Dissonances are those combinations that, in Western tonal music,
In rehearsal, working in the space with the piano, it came to me that the ad was screaming out for dissonance. Given when the novella was written, she is bold to do this. But she subjects herself by saying she is willing to marry her rapist. So there is that tension, that contradiction. But the music you wrote for that song is very sweet, a ballad. I said, “Let’s have a moment of dissonance that resolves.” Maybe that’s the blues part. She is honest with herself with a big grain of salt. Yet she’s doing it. She is so bold. (2004 Personal int. 1)

The bridge section, devoted to explaining that the Marquise’s family is the catalyst for her action, is followed by the second and last verse that is musically a repetition of the first verse. This repeated music as well as the lyrics suggest a parallel relationship between the Marquise and the man she is looking for: “certain lady” and “unknown father;” “lady’s unborn child” and “father of the child;” “expecting” and “honor;” “newborn would arrive” and “by name be identified.”

So as to encourage the spectator to observe the other characters’ reactions to the notice, “A Certain Lady” was reiterated in a prerecorded instrumental version when the Commandant’s wife reads the notice to herself and to her husband. In M—, the Marquise’s brother points out the notice in the newspaper to Count F—. At this moment, the prerecorded instrumental version of “A Certain Lady” underscores the Count reading.

I needed to evoke the invasion of the citadel through sound. Working from a CD of musical effects, I “looped” a sequence of artillery fire that was repeated so as to be a quotation of do not serve as points of repose but require, instead, resolution to some consonance.” (116)
the sounds of war rather than a realistic approximation of the event: “War!” Later, when the Commandant shoots a pistol into the ceiling rather than work with prop gun onstage, the sound of a gun (“Gun Shot!”) was an economical solution that allowed me, playing the Marquise, to react to the situation.

When the Russian General asks Count F— to name the soldiers that assaulted the Marquise, his response is evasive. Lampe and I agreed that this was an important moment and so I composed, “I Could Not Tell.” Lampe explained why: “Because he is guilty himself. We had glossed over it. It had to be heightened. When we decided to make a song out of it, you whipped it out quickly because it was right. It’s a terrific song. It’s actually hilarious. It’s an apology set in a nervous melody that’s part of the deconstruction” (2004 Personal int. 1).

“I Could Not Tell” is martial sounding, particularly the line:

I could not tell in the dark! (380)

On “dark,” the melody makes a heroic leap to the perfect 5th followed by a full stop to intensify the drama. The music is evanescent on the word “glimmer.” The octave on “Impossible” is rhythmic and melodic which changes to new harmonic territory on “faces” that is Brechtian in style.

“Death Shots” is a musical description of the moment in which the soldiers are shot by a firing squad. We considered using recorded gunfire as I had in “War!” but Lampe suggested that I play “Death Shots” at the piano so as to create a moment that was both unnerving and amusing:

The “Death Shots” are very brutal actually—all ten fingers—but funny, screwed humor because you expect more recorded gunfire. That is the first overt humor in the show. We
teased the humor out of the piece by our very conscious adaptation. Working on the text, before we ever put it on its feet, we were cracking up. (2004 Personal int. 1)

My performance of “Death Shots” was very specific. Standing, I adopted the rigid stance of a member of a firing squad. Each chord crash was another rifle shot.

When the Marquise asks her father to name the man who saved her from the soldiers’ assault, the Commandant breaks into a jubilant march, “Count F—!” The lyric of this song consists of enumerating the young officer’s military accomplishments. This is musical fanfare, comic and light, befitting the mood in which he is received and perceived in this social order. The key is C major—the relative major both to the opening theme and to “Julietta.” The song is reminiscent of “The Lollipop Guild” by Yip Harburg (1896-1981) and Harold Arlen (1905-86) from The Wizard of Oz (1939) and “Major-General’s Song” by W.S. Gilbert (1836-1911) and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) from Pirates of Penzance (1879). I wanted to convey a farcical aspect of the Count—a man of honor who is in reality, a dog. I am also poking fun at the unquestioning acceptance of mores and appearances. His name is the song’s frame, followed by his title. The melodic line ascends to “Colonel” and is martial on “Rifle Corp.”:

Count F—! Count F—!
Lieutenant Colonel of the Rifle Corps. (380)

The music outlines a V-I resolution as in the main theme, but resolves to a major tonality as opposed to a minor, poignant state. As elsewhere in the score, formal variations are used to surprise the listener. Consider the line:

Knight of an Order of Merit! (380)
The word “merit” is broken out into a unique intervallic gesture that is followed by new information, a parodic musical aside.

And various others . . . (380)

The frame is completed:

Count F—! Count F—! (380)

“Count F—!” is reiterated at the family’s house in town when the Count pays them an unexpected visit. Sung by the footman, “Count F—!” functions as an entrée. In this context the listener is reminded that the family still believes the man to be all that he appears to be. “Count F—!” is restated again when, having been turned away at the gate, the Count enters the Marquise’s garden at V—. Here, the song is in the voice of the startled Marquise.

I underscored the moment when Count F— recounts his fever dream about the swan to the family with another prerecorded theme: “Tinka.” Using stock sounds in a synthesizer, I created pulsating music in a repetitive pattern that suggests the psychological truth implicit in the Count’s speech.

Dissonance characterizes the music played when the doctor and the mid-wife examine the Marquise. Standing beside the piano, the doctor opens the lid, transforming the instrument’s insides into pelvic body of the Marquise. The piano lid represents a drape sheet that shields the modest lady from seeing her naked torso even as a medical professional examines her. The doctor holds two bamboo sticks in the shape of a speculum and then plays the strings of the piano with the sticks. The doctor confirms the pregnancy. Standing at the keyboard, the
Marquise attempts to peek over the piano lid (drape sheet) in a vain effort to view the spectacle. As the Marquise, I play a high note trill, implying anxiety and vulnerability while saying:

What exactly do you mean? (385)

Then, as the doctor, I play a sustained Middle C, underscoring his reply:

You are perfectly well. You need no doctor. (385)

As the Marquise, I play another high note trill, underscoring her retort:

I request you to leave. Mother! The doctor just said I am pregnant. (385)

The midwife’s exam is a repetition of the doctor’s exam with variation. In rehearsal, I had experimented with different timbres so that variations in sound alluded to differences in the gender of the examiner. While the doctor scrapes the sticks across the low strings with long sweeping gestures, the midwife’s music was characterized by short plunking motions on the higher strings. This performance of gender merely imitates the human voice. Masculine findings within the geography of the Marquise’s body are different than feminine findings.

This improvised music played on the strings of the piano, devoid of harmony or melody, was intended as comic and disturbing commentary on the representation of women in nineteenth century Western music. Here, the piano was a sonic device highlighting percussive aspects of the instrument, recalling string piano compositions, an approach first developed by American composer, musical theorist, pianist, and educator Henry Cowell (1897-1965). In string piano
compositions, sounds are produced by direct manipulation of the strings either by means of plucking, scraping, or sweeping with the hands, bows, or brushes.  

“Leave My House!” is the Commandant’s letter informing Julietta that she is persona non grata in song form. Colonel G—’s bellicose behavior is evoked by the martial rhythm and tempo, along with a terse lyric. Composed in three sections, there is an eight bar verse, a four bar refrain which is repeated followed by a tag. This structure is repeated. “Leave My House” was intended as a parody of patriarchal privilege. Colonel G—, confusing his position as a high-ranking military officer with his status as a father, acts as if he is addressing an errant subordinate, not speaking to his daughter. He identifies himself to his daughter with overweening formality:

I, Colonel G—, your father! (386)

The formal tone continues—he alludes to the pregnancy in terms of “circumstances.” (10). By the end of the verse, the Commandant has issued what are, in effect, marching orders. In a four bar refrain which is repeated, Colonel G—’s psychological and economic dominance over his progeny is evidenced by the parallel construction of “my daughter” and ”my house” (10). The final line was intended as Sprechstimme:

59 Other composers of string piano works include George Crumb, David Tudor, and Stephen Scott.

Get out! Get out! Get out! (386)

In the first section, the rhythmic emphasis is always on the downbeat as if the Commandant is striking her with his words. Harmonically, I start on an A flat minor, then, I jump to a tri-tone, a typically jarring interval in Western music. I outline a diminished 7th chord in the bass line using a combination of shifting minor and major tonalities. This underscores the father’s raging rebuke. The accompaniment for the second section is more active rhythmically using upbeats. Using a downwardly moving chromatic line, I shift from minor to major and to minor again with more urgency. In essence, the Marquise gets slammed with dissonance. In the verse repetition, there is variation:

1st verse: I, Colonel G—, your father, requests you to leave.

2nd verse: I, Colonel G—, hope that God above will spare me From seeing you before you leave! (386)

The novella does not include a soliloquy for the Marquise. In “I Put the Shame On You,” performed at the end of Act I, the Marquise rails against the cruelty of her family while affirming her determination to be strong. The song, conceived as an extra-diagetic moment for the Marquise, fulfilled the function of a soliloquy or Brechtian gestic monologue, which scholar Deborah R. Geis asserts is an effective strategy for feminist concerns: “. . . the gestic monologue marks a locus for the struggle for female subjectivity as it enacts the ‘drama’ of the gendered speaking body and its polyvocal signifiers. The monologue’s conquest of narrative space might thus be viewed as a reification of the feminine “subject in progress”” (293).
Because this song is so densely packed with images, puns, and allusions, in order to do a close reading, the entire lyric of “I Put the Shame On You” follows:

Like a butterfly in a box  
I am caught, pressed, and pinioned  
Shunned by my family in my hour of need  
Am I not in the court of public opinion?

Hermione stood in stone behind a curtain  
Waiting for a sound cue  
Philomela sat silently weaving  
Would you cut out my tongue too?  
Well, I simply can't account for my inner situation  
Aren't I still your reigning paragon of virtue  
Not some mute bird to fly into the wild blue?

You put the blame on me but it's wrong what you do.  
I put the shame on you.  
You put the blame on me but from my point of view  
I put the shame on you.

Mother dear, you quiz and you stare  
Father “jump the gun” you got me in your sights  
Brother can't you see through a forest of trees  
Are you so blind you buy what's officially right?

If Balthus painted me when I was sleeping  
Would you all forgive me for that?  
I could swear on a stack, I wouldn't hide the facts  
Not if God himself accomplished the task.

Well, I dried my many tears out on the open road  
Now I really have to draw a different picture of you all  
But I'm a strong proud Mary  
Gonna stand up tall!

You put the blame on me but it's me you misuse  
I put the shame on you  
You put the blame on me but it's you I accuse  
I put the shame on you.
Even if I carry the bad seed inside of me
You should welcome me to your breast
Even if bear a horn-headed devil
For a coven of witches from Central Park West!

Well, I can take a hint, I'll go and I'll sit
In my own house, knitting caps and stockings
Mama will get by without some mockingbirds
Sitting on a fence flocking and talking.

Did I drink from a bottle of Miracle-Gro?1
Well, I have no such memory
I'm as pure as Tess, but should I die like poor Lucrece
Just to please my family?

Well, I won't go that far, not for love or money
No, you won't catch me sobbing in a strawberry patch
You can read this Marquise as a matter of fact.

You put the blame on me when compassion is due
I put the shame on you
You put the blame on me but from my point of view
I put the shame on you. (387-89)

In The Empty Space, Brook considered Shakespeare’s use of different orders of speech within the same text:

. . . a single line of space can have certain pegs of natural speech round which twists unspoken thoughts and feelings rendered apparent by words of another order. This change of style from the apparently colloquial to the evidently stylized is so subtle that it cannot be observed by any crude attitudes. If the actor approaches a speech looking for its form, he must be aware not to decide too easily what is musical, what is rhythmic . . . A passage of verse can be understood more like a formula carrying many characteristics – a code in which each letter has a different function. (122)

Similarly, I employ colloquial and lyrical speech, allusions, puns, and clichés all of which enlivens the lyrics.
Terry Bloomfield, in “Resisting Songs: Negative Dialectics in Pop,” considered the Romantic era’s preoccupation with self-consciousness and subjectivity as expressed in classic lieder or art songs:

According to the Romantic view, lieder were the vehicles by which the human spirit, often seen as mirrored in ‘Nature’, was laid bare to the sympathetic bourgeois ear. But it ought to have been obvious then that there were no simple ‘soul’ to be uncovered, for the rendering of the lied to an audience required at least three preconditions to be met: the text, often from one of the (minor) German Romantic poets, the musical version from the composer, and the voice and piano keyboard which ‘realised’; this hybrid before the listeners. So whose was the interiority exteriorised in a lieder recital? To that question there can be no simple answer. The song of that period was a complex construct whose three enmeshed layers required a fourth for its actualization in performance: the active participation of the listener in its forms and conventions. (14-15)

Certainly, the song was inspired from a German Romantic tale, self-consciousness and subjectivity were investigated, and there are several references to nature. To that extent, “I Put the Shame On You” can be characterized as an art song. However the song’s lyrics subvert the mellifluous textures of the music, inclusive of many influences and impulses. As the listener may not comprehend all of the allusions, I have strategically created definitive and memorable melodic gestures to sustain interest. The lyrics are playful in that other levels of reality are suggested and that the spectator is jury in a “court of public opinion” (12). “I Put the Shame on You” recalls the work of Partridge, who, as a founding member of the band XTC (1977- ) has received acclaim as a master of lyric conceit comparable to an Elizabethan poet. Partridge may bring a literary character into the present, for example, “Desert Island” (1983), inspired by Daniel Defoe’s The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719):
Cast away on a desert island
Me and poor Crusoe are sharing the same fate
Cast away on a desert island
With Great Britain written on its name plate

With my umbrella I go walking
Through all the sands on a building site
Across the shopping malls and motorways
Birds from Heathrow fill the
Night with people flying to escape
Friday comforts me and says it's pay day

Cast away on a desert island . . .

Unlike Partridge’s “Desert Island,” the lyrics for “I Put the Shame on You” are blues influenced. In effect, Julietta sings the blues. My knowledge of the blues is based on listening extensively to recordings by African American early twentieth century blues diva Bessie Smith (1893-1929), urban blues inspired songs by Nyro, lyrical blues songs of Hendrix, as well as restyled African American blues, rhythm and blues, country, and electric blues by white British rock artists The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Animals, and The Yardbirds. Michael Taft, in The Blues Lyric Formula (2006) identified the formulaic content of early twentieth century commercial blues lyrics:

As lyrics, they are commentaries on some situation, rather than narratives about some situation. If there is an implied narrative in blues songs, this narrative is usually developed in an indirect fashion through pithy and aphoristic statements on the effect of the narrative on the persona, the persona’s reaction to the narrative, or the emotional atmosphere that surrounds the narrative. (17)

Taft pointed out that love is a “definite feature” in blues lyrics including songs about social issues or family and indeed, “I Put the Shame on You” comments on the corruption of familial ties. Negation, according to Taft, another extra-formulaic element found in blues lyrics, is also a feature of my song (74):

Am I not in the court; I simply can’t account; Aren’t I still your reigning paragon; Brother can’t you see through a forest of trees?; I won’t go that far, not for love or money; No, you won’t catch me sobbing in a strawberry patch. (387-89)

According to Taft: “I am worried,” and its variants, “What am I going to do” and “Something is on my mind,” are common expressions of anxiety found in blues songs of this era (194). Although not stated directly, anxiety is implicit in the Marquise’s song. Throughout, she chews out her family, which also puts the song in the category of “I tell you,” another blues motif cited by Taft. Taken altogether, my use of blues stylings in “I Put the Shame on You” is arguably an effective way to articulate the Marquise’s lack of power in her situation.

“I Put the Shame On You” differs from a formulaic pop structure in that the verse is in three parts: first statement, second statement, and pre-chorus. The three verses are each comprised of four lines stating one musical gesture, four lines stating a responding gesture, and a three-line pre-chorus that sets up the chorus. The chorus has an A B rhyme scheme. The bridge consists of a four lines in an A B rhyme pattern. There is a false rhyme in the first four lines.

Classical poetics are featured in the first stanza. The butterfly and bird, metaphors for the Marquise, are consistent with eighteenth and early nineteenth century fascination with natural
My use of a butterfly specimen as a metaphor for the Marquise’s containment and suppression is not unlike Kleist’s use of the swan as a metaphor for her as the Count’s unattainable object of desire. The displayed “pressed” butterfly is conflated with a sexual inference, “pinioned,” as a means of visualizing the rape of innocence.

In the second part of the verse, I introduce a leitmotif, referencing women characters misjudged for sexual impropriety in the Western canon, here representing innocence oppressed. These women are variously dishonored, raped, disfigured, exiled, and/or killed. Hermione, from Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale (1623) is the first of these allusions. The story: King Leontes unreasonably accuses Queen Hermione of unfaithfulness in court despite an Oracle that declares otherwise. Their young son is declared dead. Hermione collapses and is presumed dead. The King, presuming that Hermione’s baby daughter is not his, banishes the child. Leontes becomes a bitter recluse. Sixteen years later, the daughter, Perdita, returns to court and is acknowledged by Leontes. The dead Queen’s gentlewoman Paulina presents Leontes with a marble statue that resembles Hermione and calls for music. Miraculously, the statue comes to life. Hermione,

62 “Animals” a 2006 exhibition at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh co-curated by the Van Gogh Museum in Den Haag, Holland was devoted to exploring man’s evolving relationship with animals during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The exhibition featured ceramics decorated with butterflies, frogs, and dragonflies as well as a painting of a young dreamy woman mourning her dead bird both recalling allusions I used in “I Put the Shame On You.”

having been in seclusion, steps down to embrace her remorseful husband and daughter. By
refashioning the moment at which Hermione is restored to life and honor, the Marquise is calling
to be similarly redeemed to a respectable position within her family and society. The “sound
cue” allusion is a humorous, modern locution intended to make an Elizabethan story accessible
to the postmodern listener.

In book six of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (2-8 A.D.), the story of Philomela echoes the
Marquise’s resourcefulness. This is a very brutal, tough, classical allusion: Tereus rapes his
sister-in-law Philomela. Afterwards, so as to prevent the truth from ever being told, he cuts out
her tongue. But seated at her loom, Philomela creates a tapestry that depicts her story. Scholar
Patricia Klindienst Joplin wrote:

> Philomela and her loom speak to us because together they represent an assertion of
> the will to survive despite everything that threatens to silence us, including the male
> literary tradition and its critics who have preserved Philomela’s “voice” without
> knowing what it says. (54)

Having referenced this character, the Marquise directly confronts her family mirroring
their brutality:

> Would you cut out my tongue too? (387)

This line simultaneously references Philomela the Marquise as well as myself, the
composer, weaving at the loom of my creation. This is primal, visceral language as in traditional
Scottish, Irish, or Appalachian folk songs.

The first pre-chorus line is significant for several reasons:

> Well, I simply can’t account for my inner situation. (388)
The line employs locutions that are commonly found in blues songs.\textsuperscript{64} The word “situation,” which I omitted when reinterpreting Kleist’s text for “A Certain Lady” was appropriately included in this context. Here, “situation” is a euphemism for her pregnancy. The next line is a rhetorical question, a sarcastic reference to her formerly upper class status and seemingly secure position in the family:

AREN’T I STILL YOUR REIGNING PARAGON OF VIRTUE? (388)

The last line is heightened poetic language, the Marquise’s flight to V—is compared with that of a bird on the wing:

NOT SOME MUTE BIRD TO FLY INTO THE WILD BLUE. (388)

The voiceless bird refers both to Philomela, whom is ultimately turned into a nightingale, and “OFF WE GO INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER” (1938) by Robert Crawford (1899-1961), the official song for the U.S. Air Force. This is an example of how as a postmodern artist I playfully use the whole field of cultural styles, eras, music, etc. in order to create layers of meaning. In the latter case, what I don’t say has as much weight as what I do. The complete phrase from Crawford’s song is “wild blue yonder.” By omitting the last word, the listener subliminally fills

\textsuperscript{64}“Well,” an exclamatory, is used here as elsewhere in the song. According to Taft, the exclamatory is commonly used in blues songs. A modal auxiliary is introduced: “simply can’t” which Taft asserted is also to be found in blues tunes: “will (going to), must (have to), may, ought, can, do, shall, dare, and need” (Taft 65). This device appears elsewhere in my song: I could swear; I wouldn’t hide; I really have to draw; I can take a hint; I’ll go and I’ll sit (13).
for themselves the word’s meaning, “vast and trackless distance.” The action of the bird also refers back to the containment of the butterfly.

The chorus lyric is not at all poetic. Here is blues locution that is confrontational and implies dialogue.

In the second verse the Marquise chastises each member of her family. Here was an opportunity to call attention to their prior actions and attitudes through the use of cliché The Commandant was particularly playful:

Father jump the gun, you got me in your sights. (12)

This line is an allusion to Lennon’s “Happiness is a Warm Gun” from The Beatles also known as The White Album (1968):

    I need a fix cause I'm going down
    Down to the bits that I left uptown
    I need a fix cause I'm going down
    Mother Superior jump the gun
    Mother Superior jump the gun . . .

The line about the Marquise’s brother is a play on a figure of speech, “Can’t see the forest for the trees,” here meaning the forestry official has lost his way, that is, unable to see his sister’s situation for what it really is.

In the second part of the verse, I subvert twentieth century visual representation, specifically images of passive, prepubescent girls in various states of undress by French painter

---

65 “Yonder” means “something that is or is in an indicated more or less distant place.” See “Yonder,” Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 9th ed. 1985.
Balthus (1908-2001) that invite the viewer to entertain the possibility of voyeurism and violation:\footnote{The painter’s full name is Count Balthus Klossowski de Rola. According to Balthus’ biographer, Nicholas Fox Weber, Balthus’ early influences were Piero della Francesca, Courbet, and Joseph Reinhardt. See Nicholas Fox Weber, \textit{Balthus: A Biography}, New York: Knopf, 1999.}

If Balthus painted me when I was sleeping, would you all forgive me for that? (12)

In his paintings, Balthus tries to seduce the viewer into becoming complicit in a perverse and criminal act. The sexual availability of Balthus’ female subjects recalls Count F—’s gaze at the unconscious body of the Marquise on the sofa before the rape and the Commandant’s caress of his acquiescent daughter lying in his lap in her bedroom. By conflating Count F— and Colonel G— with Balthus, the modernist master, I draw attention to the fact that patriarchal society generally condones such violations.

I could swear on a stack I wouldn’t hide the facts
Not if God himself accomplished the task. (388)

Here is a blues style idiomatic phrase alluding to the practice of placing one's hand on a bible while taking an oath. Next, the listener is reminded of the Marquise’s vain hope that her pregnancy might be Immaculate Conception.

In the pre-chorus, I clarify that at this point, the Marquise is traveling:

Well I’ve dried my many tears out on the open road. (388)

Once again, I have used a blues-based motif, in this case, the theme of migration. Taft pointed out that the “travel motif reflects the state of African American society in the early part
of the twentieth century” in the move from farm to city (194). As this German Romantic noblewoman’s road trip from M—to V— did not occur as a result of economic hardship, this appropriation is admittedly problematic, however, the theme of a woman cast out of society was a frequently used blues trope. LaFrance, discussing British singer/songwriter P.J. Harvey’s lyric “lays open like a road” in “Angelene” (1998) cited “the Lacanian thesis that desire is a series of distances, all of which the subject will inevitably travel but in none of which the subject will ever find completion of satisfaction” (181). The idea of the Marquise “out on the open road” certainly bears out Lacan’s assertions—desire, having been left behind, is also not in the perceivable distance in front of her.

Early on in the novella, Kleist establishes that the Marquise paints. In the song, she turns a critical eye on her family that is empowering. The pre-chorus ends with a double entendre alluding to the Virgin Mary while referring to pop diva Tina Turner’s (1939- ) soulful 1971 cover of John Fogarty’s rock classic “Proud Mary” produced by Ike Turner:"

Big Wheel, Keep on Turnin’
Proud Mary Keep on Burnin’
And We’re Rollin’
Rollin’
Rollin’
Rollin’
Rollin’
Rollin’ On the River. 67

Turner suffered physical and mental abuse at the hands of her husband and was rejected by the male dominated music industry yet, eventually she recharged her career and public

67 “Rollin’ on the River” was first recorded on Fogarty’s swamp rock band, Creedence Clearwater Revival Bayou Country (1968).
persona to become known as a soul survivor. In effect, “Proud Mary” is “proud Julietta.” This motif—once fallen, the act of standing up represents strength and renewal—is found elsewhere in Kleist’s oeuvre.

The Marquise continues her harangue in the bridge section. In a righteous tone, she reminds the family, who have just attempted to take her own children away from her, of their duty to take care of her despite the circumstances. Here, I playfully reference two films. The first allusion is to the 1956 film The Bad Seed directed by Mervyn LeRoy in which a 1950s teenage daughter turns out to be no good. This idea is reinforced by a reference to Rosemary’s Baby (1968), Roman Polanski’s classic horror movie starring Mia Farrow. The story: a struggling New York actor and his bride move into the Dakota Apartments on Central Park West. The wife, Rosemary, dreams that she has intercourse with a beast. Finding herself pregnant, Rosemary learns that her husband has cut a deal with their elderly neighbors in exchange for his career success—her half-devil baby is to be used for their own ritual purposes. It is true that neither the Marquise, nor her family articulates doubt that that the unborn child is tainted. The inference is that Count F— is rather more devil than man.

The third verse opens with Marquise making plans for her new life in V--:

Well, I can take a hint, I’ll go and I’ll sit
In my own house, knitting caps and stockings  (389)

The knitting image evokes maternity and domesticity. Then, I anthropomorphize birds for a second time, conflated with the derogatory expression, “sit on a fence,” that is, lacking the courage to decide on an issue. In the next line:
Did I drink from a bottle of Miracle-Gro?
Well, I have no such memory (389)

Here, I refer to Miracle-Gro™, a plant food product, the name of which is a pun on the growth spurt that presumably results from its use. This brand name is conflated with a subtle reference to Charles Dodgson AKA Lewis Carroll’s *Alice Adventures In Wonderland* (1865). Alice, having falling down a rabbit hole, drinks from a bottle labeled “DRINK ME” whereupon she shrinks down to a mere ten inches. When she eats a piece of cake marked “EAT ME” she grows too tall. Only when Alice drinks from yet another bottle labeled “DRINK ME” does she return to normal. The Marquise’s fecundity is as much a mystery to her as Alice’s transformations are in Wonderland.

The second half of this verse features two more literary allusions: Tess Durbeyfield of British novelist, short story writer, and poet Thomas Hardy’s (1840-1928) *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891) and Lucrece, a character “celebrated by Livy, Ovid, Chaucer, and Shakespeare” (Coppelia Kahn 41). Like Kleist’s construction of the Marquise, Hardy portrayed Tess sympathetically. However these two victims of rape come to very different ends. Alec, through trickery, rapes Tess, whom subsequently bears a child that dies. Later, Tess falls in love with Angel, who, on discovering her past, abandons her even though he too had been unfaithful. Alec convinces Tess to go back to him. When Angel returns, Tess murders Alec so as to be free. She is caught, tried, and executed.

Lucrece, the faithful wife of the Roman commander Collatine, becomes the object of uncontrollable lust for Prince Tarquin, the son of the Roman King. The prince connives to visit
Lucrece while she is alone. As Tarquin is her husband’s friend, she welcomes him. That night, Tarquin enters Lucrece’s room, rapes her, and runs away. Afterwards, Lucrece calls the Roman lords to listen to her tale of violation after which she stabs herself. Kahn explained the significance of Lucrece’s tale: “The story of Lucrece . . . is one of the founding myths of the patriarchy. Like so many of those myths, it entails the heroine’s death, in this case accomplished by her own hand” (141).

Author Ted Hughes, in Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being calls attention to a parallel relationship between Lucrece’a violated chastity and Tarquin’s depraved soul:

. . . Tarquin’s rape of Lucrece is also the violation of his own soul, who is evidently a divine, immortal royal female, now dethroned and imprisoned by depraved, damned, mortal appetites and powers. . . It is her chastity that marks her out for Tarquin as a projection of his soul, from which he is . . . estranged . . . In so far as the Lucrece figure and the hero’s soul are aspects of each other, Shakespeare’s metaphysical concern with ‘chastity’ is actual a concern with the most sacred quality of the soul. (81)

Lucrece kills herself because she has been defiled. But Julietta, asserts her intention to go on living in terms of a colloquial expression, “Not for love or money.” The last line of the pre-chorus is confrontational, a dare:

You can read this Marquise as a matter of fact. (389)

Here “Marquise” is a play on words meaning “marquee,” a theatre canopy on which a show title appears in lights.

While the lyrics overall are blues influenced, they are not structured in a classic A A B blues format nor does the music contain blues harmonies. The music is consonant. The song
was arranged so as to be melodically and harmonically accessible. The first four bars of each verse have a tense melody and leading tone. The second four bars are lyrical and rhapsodic harmonically; starting from a high point, the pattern descends. The pre-chorus uses 9th, 11th, and 13th extensions of a dominant 7th structure. For the workshop production, I had performed the song live over a backing track arranged for keyboards, strings, and drums. The arrangement featured a repetitive mid-tempo, drum pattern that was contrapuntal to a legato cello line and lush melodic gestures. The feel of the drum pattern evoked the carriage horses trotting along on the road to V—. I felt that this arrangement was well conceived. Romantic era chamber music textures were evoked that were complimentary to the fugue-like lyric.

The question of how I should perform “I Put the Shame On You” was the only time Lampe and I disagreed on concept. Lampe vetoed the live vocal/backing track presentation on theatrical grounds, asserting that an a cappella version of “I Put the Shame On You” was appropriate to the mid-sized auditorium at the German Consulate. She encouraged me to explore a more intimate, nuanced vocal interpretation:

At first, I said, “If anything, sing it live against the arrangement.” I gravitated to that approach when you showed me the recital production video in which you used the fully produced arrangement. My reaction was to go the opposite route, “Go for something very raw.” I gently forced you to be basic. You wanted to use a mike. I said, “No!” Because that kind of rawness makes you very vulnerable as a performer. But that goes with the nature of the piece. Both the vulnerability and the strength within it. Once you embraced this idea of singing live at the piano, it became a great tool to keep working with for the rest of the piece. The text is so strong and the music is so strong and beautiful. It didn’t need all that other stuff. (2004 Personal int. 1)

In the end, I sang the first verse accompanied by piano, after which I continued the song a cappella while moving through the performance space. In a sense, this presentation was a
deconstruction. In Western music there is typically a primary melody on a leading instrument or voice and a second melody that is the bass line. The movement of each melody through time is horizontal. The two melodies heard together create the harmonic structure that, sounding together, creates a second dimension that is vertical. As I move away from the piano and out into the performance space, the song was unhinged from the harmonic ground of the bass. The audience collectively responds to that ambiguity implicit in the absence of the bass and subliminally takes over that position.

At the top of Act II, after the narrator establishes that the Marquise had moved in to her house at V—, I composed three songs for the Marquise that were performed in succession: “Which Room,” “Stigma of Disgrace,” and “Scum of Mankind.” The first two songs were sung live with piano accompaniment while the third was performed a cappella from atop the piano.

“Which Room?” draws attention to Kleist’s construction of the Marquise as creatively active while living at V—. The novella states, “Her beautiful country house was in disrepair. She made arrangements for its restoration in a few weeks time” (Kleist 93). The song explores the idea that her rundown estate is a metaphor for her violated soul. The redecorating process was an act of purification and renewal. This song in A major is operatic in style. The lyrics remind the listener that the Marquise is creatively active:

Which room will contain my books?
Which room will contain my easel? (390)

The arc of first melodic gesture is imitative of self-questioning. The melodic rhythm of the second gesture incorporates triplets. An operatic flourish occurs on:
I must protect my very soul
From the damage done by the world  

The lyric suggests that the Marquise is well ahead of her time; in effect she creates “a room of one’s own.” Lampe was in agreement about my concept:

That’s not in Kleist’s text: you teased that out of it. The husband is dead. The patriarchal thing, it’s a unscripted place. That’s why she’s redecorating: her reflection. I’m saying this after watching Rohmer’s film and there is all that extra writing. Your music and lyrics bring attention to things that happen, in that way, deconstruction doesn’t have to be negative criticism. In that Derridian sense, you tease out what is already there so that what is consciously intended is what emerges. It becomes clear that . . . the music and the songs and the spaces in between allow you to bring out that sentiment in a subtle form. (2004 Personal int. 1)

“Which Room?” was followed by another short song, “Stigma Of Disgrace.” Here, the Marquise expresses concern that her baby not be a bastard. Sung in first person, the music starts off with an upwardly floating melody, underscored by piano trills. This angelic-sounding, delicate music is brought back to reality with punchy quarter beats at the end of the last line:

Why should this child be made to bear
The stigma of disgrace?  

Performed a cappella, “The Scum of Mankind” was decidedly Brechtian in style. Julietta awakens from a troubled sleep. She attempts to erase the stain of rape from her defiled body with her coverlet. Then, singing, this noble lady is transformed into a washerwoman scrubbing the floor, or rather, the piano body. This moment was inspired by a scene in the Rogers and

68 Quoted from Virginia Woolf’s A Room of One’s Own. (1929).
Hammerstein classic musical *South Pacific* (1952): Army nurse Nellie Forbush in an attempt to suppress her desire for an officer sings, “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair.”

The lyric is as follows:

He must irredeemably belong  
To the scum of mankind  
I imagine he occupies a low position in society  
His origins could only be  
From its lowest, vilest dregs  
From the bottom  
The very bottom  
The scum of mankind. (391)

Lampe commented on “The Scum of Mankind”:

For me, that song is homage to Brecht: you could be Helene Weigal. It’s like a Weill song. That is social criticism. It’s a break. It’s us teasing out those concerns. It’s just not realistic theatre . . . postmodern. Allowing oneself a wink at Brecht. You came in with the lyrics and I said, “Improvise the melody.” Since my obsession was using the piano, I said, “Just climb on top of it and scrub it!” (2004 Personal int. 1)

Howell considered the psychological implications of grooming, an action that is often featured in women’s performance art:

Grooming is almost as urgent an impulse as the desire for sex. While not governed by the absolute necessity which distinguishes the drives, grooming is more than a behavior pattern acquired through conditioning. It is, rather, an activity we have inherited from the animals. Grooming has a traditional link with Narcissism. The tidying of a place is its extension. It is one of the deficiencies of psychoanalysis that it has never identified grooming as one of our instinctual urgencies. Compulsive grooming is a common neurosis, and can indicate severe mental derangement. “Out, out, damn spot!” sighs Lady MacBeth. Women artists have made much of obsessive scrubbing and ironing, the interminable brushing of hair, bathing, and the repetitive washing of hands. The nagging compulsions of grooming are about as ubiquitous in performance as the urge
to bring about a reversal of its excessively neat outcome and create a ‘godawful’ mess. (101)

“The Morning of the Third” was Count F—’s anonymously published statement set to music. The lyric is in third person. The song was a faux tango so as to foreground the Count F—’s Russian, passionate nature and because the prior scene between the Marquise and the Count at V— had been staged as an Apache. As with other music in this show, this theme is rhythmically irregular and complex. The tango feel in 4/4 is established by the melodic rhythm of the bass line but the strict dance form is immediately subverted in order to accommodate the melodic rhythm of the lyric, which I lifted nearly verbatim from the text. Consequently there is interplay between the vocal gestures, which are of varying lengths and the 4/4 rhythms of the tango passages. The melody and harmony move through diatonic scale tone 7th chords and their extensions. The IV major to IV minor to I gesture is a common mid-1950s, rhythm and blues doo-wop trope that in this context, conveys poignancy. In the middle of the melodic gestures, I add a caesura followed by the completion of the thought. The pause sets the gesture off just as a dancer would extend the peak of an arabesque at its peak so as to set the image for the spectator.

If the Marquise of O— [Rest] Would be present [Rest] at eleven o’clock [Rest] (395)

The influence of Nyro, who characteristically used diatonic 7th chords and melodic extensions, is evident in “Morning of the Third.” Harmonically sophisticated but still very accessible, Nyro’s music was steeped in Tin Pan Alley and doo-wop traditions. She changed the frame of reference associated with these forms to include existential statements. “Morning of the
Third” has the emotional directness and vulnerability typical of Nyro’s deeply personal and poetic lyric writing. The song shows a facet of Count F—’s personality not revealed thus far—rather than bluster through with violence, he is emotionally vulnerable. As in cabaret music, “Morning of the Third” uses dramatic devices like stop time:

The man she wishes to trace [Stop]
Will be there to cast himself [Stop]
At her feet (395)

The second stop time is followed by a two beat rest that indicates his depth of feeling and that much is at stake in terms of longing and desire. The final legato phrase weaves to a close. “The Morning of the Third” is reiterated when the Commandant’s wife reads the Count’s notice to her husband, during which time she dances, indicating that that she is caught up in the sway of her daughter’s budding romance.

“She Did It In Her Sleep” is Colonel G—’s angry retort to his wife’s suggestion that perhaps their daughter might be innocent. Here, the Commandant is spokesperson for patriarchal society. It is a Brechtian moment, comparable to the duet for Chief of Police Tiger Brown and MacHeath’s duet “Canon Song” (“Der Kanonen-Serenade”) from Three Penny Opera (1928):

We chop ‘em to bits because we like our hamburgers raw.

My concept for this song was inspired by the harmonic complexity and ironic humor of Zappa and his band, The Mothers. Despite Zappa’s claim, ”My lyrics are there for entertainment purposes only—not to be taken seriously,” his lyrics and his music are full of wacky and wonderful harmonic shifts and parodiac devices that have very serious intent (185). For example, employing a dumb guy vocal on “It Can’t Happen Here,” (1996) Zappa parodies American
political naiveté. The musical parody of “She Did In Her Sleep” recalls Hutcheon’s writings on the subject in *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*:

In music, parody has two distinct meanings that recall the range of parodic ethos we have been examining. Its first meaning is closer to the respectful ethos of parody or even to the renaissance practice of imitation. As a genre, musical parody is an acknowledged reworking of preexistent material, but with no ridiculing intent. The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* defines parody in this sense as a genuinely re-creative exercise in free variation. We have seen that parody has once again become important in modern music but one element must be stressed, one that would reinforce the definition of parody as repetition, but repetition with difference: in musical parody like Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella*, there is a distance between the model and the parody that is created by a stylistic dichotomy. This is even true of the reverential ethos of parody in music: Prokofiev paid tribute to the wit and urbanity of Haydn and others in his “Classical” Symphony, but there is still a sense of difference. (65)

Parody is, then, an important way for modern artists to come to terms with the past—through ironic recoding or, in my awkward descriptive neologism, “trans-contextualizing.” Its historical antecedents are the classical and Renaissance practices of imitation, through with more stress on difference and distance from the original text or set of conventions. (101)

The mocking tone of “She Did it In Her Sleep” is comparable to “Dancing Chicken.” The music puts the emphasis on “did”:

She did it!
She did it!
She did it in her sleep! (397)

The song’s ending is abrupt. After the last “sleep,” starting a minor second apart (F and G), I play a flurry of minor thirds in which the ascending treble figure splits apart from the descending bass figure, followed by a final dissonant chord crash. This concluding cacophony represents Colonel G—’s stormy exit.
“Julietta’s Response” is the Marquise’s letter to the Commandant in the form of a song. While the lyrical melody is typical of other music associated with the Marquise, the song is an upbeat march, implying relationship with her father the military man. To indicate the changing power relationships between them, key words were emphasized in the music. First, the Commandant’s superior position is made evident:

Since I have been deprived of the privilege of
Setting foot in your house. (398)

Then, the vulnerability of the daughter’s position is reinforced:

I beg you my father
Most respectfully and sincerely
To be so kind as to send the person
Who presents himself at your house. (398)

A legato phrase calls attention to the impending important event:

On the morning of the third
At eleven o’clock

At the very end, the Marquise’s autonomy is asserted by means of a stop time after “out” and “my house”:

Out to my house at V—. (398)

The very last cadence “at V—“ is somewhat triumphant in feeling but the chromatic movement of the melody leaves the listener with a sense of expectancy and desire for further resolution. Overall, the Marquise sings a diplomatic, self-sufficient song that conveys a circumspect attitude appropriate to the daughter of a military man.

Several short songs parody operatic recitative. In considering the intent of these songs I return to Hutcheon: “In music today, parody has offered a way out of modernist closure, again
through self-reflexivity. In the face of the isolation caused by the loss of a shared musical syntax, composers often turn to establish explicit links with older musical traditions which offer, ‘a kind of historical resonance’” (109).

Certainly, I wanted to achieve “historical resonance” in the music for these songs. When the Colonel’s wife visits her daughter at V—, she explains that she has come to beg her daughter’s pardon. Julietta’s surprise at her mother’s sentiment is reflected in the form of a song, “Forgiveness,” the lyric of which is a single word:

Forgiveness! Forgiveness! Forgiveness! (400)

This music starts on E flat (a flat III major, that is an altered chord) moving to a G major that resolves to a C major. This chord progression is stated three times. The melody of the first statement ascends, corresponding to the mother’s intent to redeem her daughter. The second melodic statement descends, corresponding to the forbearing Marquise, who is ready to forgive the inexcusable. The third statement ascends again. Rather than use a fourth chord progression to create an even frame, the song ends here. What should be an exultant apotheosis becomes a mockery—my authorial commentary.

Then, the Colonel G—’s wife tricks her daughter into believing that the rapist has confessed. Julietta’s response, “How, Where, When?” is operatic in style:

Who is he? Who is he?  
How? Where? When?  
But who? But who?  
Please tell me, who? (400)
This song is parallel to the Commandant’s “She Did It In Her Sleep” in form. Descending cadences on the first and second lines replicate questioning. The melody of “How? Where? When?” is the same as the music for the children’s nursery rhyme “Three Blind Mice.” On each of the “who?” the music is like the hoot of an owl.

Colonel G—’s wife drags out the lie. The bewildered Marquise repeats her question musically:

Who is he, who is he?
How? Where? When?
Please tell me who? (400)

On the morning of the third, the Marquise and her mother await the arrival of the culprit. Here, I played the eleven strokes of the clock at the piano, a repetition with variation of “Death Shots.” Then, Count F— arrives and begs the Marquise to forgive him. Colonel G—’s wife encourages Julietta to let bygones be bygones. The music that follows is parodic:

Forgiven! Forgotten! Forgiven! (405)

This is the entire lyric of the song. It is repetition with musical variation. The last song in the show is “Forgiven By All!” The lyric is simple and to the point:

Forgiven by all. Forgiven by all. Forgiven by all of them! (407)

This lyric is repeated once more. The music is lighthearted. As in “Forgiveness,” the song is a means through which to make sardonic commentary.

At the very end of the production, there is one last reference to music in the form of a visual surprise. This allusion must be necessarily explained in context with the show’s staging in the following chapter.
In considering the music and lyrics for *The Marquise of O*— overall, I integrated a variety of musical styles and lyric conceits so as to draw the listener’s attention to the subtleties of the performance text. Consistent with a fragmentary postmodern theatre aesthetic, the score was a primary sign system that deconstructed the text. The piano functioned as an expressive voice that at times subverted and disrupted the narrative. To the extent that there was a pre-recorded sound design, sonic devices were used in support of the text rather than to subvert it. The musical themes were very closely united with the lyric narratives. Through invoking artistic products from different eras, each with a specific set of connotations, I created a musicalized resistance against early nineteenth century European social constructs and institutions while intimating a historical continuum.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Staging Disruption and Subjectivity:

A Solo Music Theatre Production of “The Marquise of O—”

“Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented.”

— William Shakespeare, Richard II, 5.5.31

This chapter discusses the production team involved in the solo performance of “The Marquise of O—,” investigates the process of co-adapting the novella, and analyzes the staging. A consideration of the performance site and the audience is included. The methodology used is an eclectic integration of semiotics, phenomenology, and feminist theory.

Lampe and I began work on The Marquise of O— in Fall 2001. We soon realized the multiplicity of influences particular to our collaboration. Lampe brought European intellectualism, a cultural affinity for Brecht’s theatre and German Tanztheater, as well as an understanding of Asian martial arts and American experimental theatre to the project. Incidentally, she had specialized in Kleist’s life and work as part of her literary studies in Germany. I had explored physical theatre incorporating ballet, modern, jazz, postmodern dance, and musical theatre enhanced by Brechtian strategies. My performance work expresses an American energy yet I am strongly influenced by European aesthetic traditions. Expertise as a performing musician and composer further enriched my idiosyncratic contribution. Certainly, our shared interest in combining naturalistic and non-naturalistic acting techniques to create
feminist-based theatre provided common aesthetic and philosophical grounds from which to
develop a stylistically cohesive work. Our creative alliance would bring a singular tension,
richness, sophistication, and depth to the final product.

We did not read secondary criticism during the adaptation and staging process. However,
Lampe is oriented, as am I, towards creating theatre that is informed by theory and this
orientation was reflected in our process. This practice puts us in a minority position among
American theatre artists. As Herbert Blau writes, “aversion to theory is customary in the English
theat[r]e where it is considered a bore, and in the American theat[r]e, where it has been until very
recently – and then mostly among academics – next to non-existent (41).

Our source work included visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art to study Friedrich’s
landscape painting, “Two Men Contemplating the Moon” (1825-30), early on in the process. We
wanted to absorb an impression of Romanticism through the visual medium and perhaps
determine some thematic commonalities between the works of Kleist and Friedrich that would
stimulate our intuitive responses to the novella.69 There are three versions of “Two Men
Contemplating the Moon.” The painting at the Met is the last variant. In Caspar David Friedrich
and the Subject of Landscape, art historian Joseph Leo Koerner described the 1819 version of
this image: “The artist and his student stand dressed in ‘jackets like [their] fathers wore’, flanked
to the right by a ruined tree, perhaps symbolic of the passing of old order, and to the left by an

69 At that time, I did not yet realize that Kleist had reviewed Friedrich’s ”Monk by the Sea” in
Berliner Abendblätter. See Heinrich von Kleist, “Sentiments before Friedrich’s Landscape,
‘Monk by the Sea,’” Berliner Abendblätter (Berlin: Hitzig October 1810).
evergreen, symbolizing hope. They gaze into a moonlit landscape, there to discern a future Germany” (243).

The duo in “Two Men Contemplating the Moon” are Rückenfiguren, or human figures looking in, a motif that Friedrich explored in many of his paintings. Koerner explained the significance of Friedrich’s Rückenfiguren: “Appearing alone, in symmetrical pairs . . . or in groups contemplating a sublime view . . . they dominate the natural scene with the presence, defining landscape as primarily the encounter of subject and world” (163).

Standing before Friedrich’s painting, Lampe and I were akin to that twosome gazing at the moon. Twenty-first century women artists at the start of our collaboration, we were travelers in time, pondering a poignant landscape. We were inspired to infuse the color, light, and nostalgic sublimity of this romantic work of art into our theatre piece.

It is important to acknowledge that this 2003 work was not conceived and realized in a vacuum and is consistent with works by other contemporary theatre artists whose performance practices explore representation and socio-cultural critique. In order to understand Lampe’s staging of this two hundred year old text, it is helpful to review her artistic background. A German native, Lampe began acting in plays and directing while in high school and took a directing internship at a regional theatre, Landesbühne Wilhelmshaven. She acted and did dramaturgy at the Studio Bühne Köln while a student of theatre, literature, and philosophy at the University of Köln. Studying Brecht’s theatre, she became interested in how process informs product. Concurrently, she noticed an absence of this vital connection in German theatre criticism. Lampe began her professional life as visiting assistant director to Jürgen Bosse at a
municipal theatre, the Nationaltheater Mannheim, where he was artistic director. While she enjoyed the collaboration with Bosse, she was curious to see other notable directors work. She observed highly conceptual German “Regietheater” (director’s theatre) productions by Jürgen Peymann and George Tabori in Bochum as well as Hans-Günther Heyme in Essen, an opera production directed by Ruth Berghaus in Frankfurt, Pina Bausch’s Tanz Theater (dance theatre) in Wuppertal, and Jochan Kresnik’s choreographic theatre in Heidelberg.\textsuperscript{70} At the 1981 International Theatre Festival in Köln, Lampe was exposed to a wide array of production styles and genres—traditional whirling dervishes, Javanese shadow puppet theatre, the Russian company Satire Teatre Moscow, experimental performance by New York’s Squat Theatre as well as solo performance art pieces by Americans Laurie Anderson and Robert Wilson all of which catapulted her into a multiple aesthetic culture shock. While no particular style of performance entirely convinced her, she began to question the efficacy of literary theatre. This led her to join a fringe seminar on semiotics as a means of analyzing theatre, “Theory of Aesthetic Action,” with Happening artist and professor Dietrich Sauerbier. She took a Grotowski workshop near Béziers, France in 1981 and was inspired by visiting productions of theatre scholar and educator Eugenio Barba’s Odin Teatret in Köln.

\textsuperscript{70} In \textit{European Tanz Theater: an Overview of its Past and Present}, Kresnik pointed out that Tanz Theater “remains largely in the realm of dance . . . image based” whereas, “the choreographic theater originated in the 60s . . . has a social, critical content . . . of political nature . . . often based on biographies . . . could have language . . . but, the image is what communicates.” See Jochan Kresnik, interview, \textit{European Tanz Theater: an Overview of its Past and Present}, dirs. Isa Partsch-Bergson and Harold Bergson, written by Isa Partsch-Bergson, Pennington, N.J.: Dance Horizons Video, 1997.
Reacting against the institutional strictures of German theatre and the aesthetic limitations of traditional literary theatre, Lampe decided against a career in the German theatre system. She received a Fulbright to attend the doctoral program in Performance Studies at NYU. Early on, Lampe met director and educator Anne Bogart at the Experimental Theatre Wing and knew that she was going to follow her work and ways of working. Bogart’s aesthetics offered a vibrant alternative to the “talking heads” of German Regietheater. Lampe also became intrigued by the work of director Linda Mussman’s company, Time and Space Limited. Like Bogart, Mussman featured a non-hierarchical approach to working with language, movement, and music. She took a workshop with Barba in 1984 focusing on actor physicality and presence, as well as Asian theatre practice. Encountering Robert Wilson again, this time observing him in the director’s chair rehearsing Heiner Müller’s Hamletmachine at ETW, Lampe was puzzled by Wilson’s puppeteer-like directing style. While conceptually appealing, he prescribed every single move the actors were allowed to make, thereby stifling their creativity. The results reminded her of Heyme’s puppet-like productions. Watching Wilson, Lampe’s suspicions were confirmed—such an oppressive process would inevitably lead to deadly theatre. She was inspired by French-born interdisciplinary performer Rachel Rosenthal’s 1983 solo performance, Traps, at Franklin Furnace because she combined a message with powerful performance craft. Lampe was instrumental in bringing Rosenthal to NYU for a two-week workshop in 1985. Lampe’s growing interest in how the historical and contemporary avant-garde had been influenced by East Asian performing techniques and concepts found expression in her master’s thesis, “Theatricality and Performance Art: The Work of Rachel Rosenthal.” This thesis prompted an essay, “Rachel
Rosenthal: Creating Her Selves,” published in TDR, Spring, 1988. Critiquing Michael Kirby’s Acting, Non-acting scale, Lampe developed a performing versus acting model inspired by Rosenthal’s use of personae and Asian-influenced performance techniques to create feminist performance art. Lampe started training in martial arts in 1984, finding her long-term T’ai Chi Chuan teacher, Jean Kwok in 1988. Since 1997, Lampe has been teaching Tai Chi at a private studio and at Regis High School in New York City where she also teaches German language and literature.

Lampe continued her path of discovery by working with and writing about Anne Bogart. She was Bogart’s assistant director in Paris for six months on the production, 1951—Les Traces. Working with a cast from ETW, the production’s performance structure was developed from a collectively created script that Bogart and Lampe edited (Lampe 74). Lampe’s doctoral dissertation, “Disruptions and Representations: The Directing Practices of Anne Bogart” (1994) was preceded by her 1992 TDR article, “From the Battle to the Gift: The Directing of Anne Bogart,” 36.1 (14-47), the first feature article published on Bogart. This essay piqued the interest of actors and academics alike. According to Lampe, Bogart’s directing practice features “collaborative kinesthetic composition” based on the Viewpoints, an improvisation technique originally articulated by post-modern dance choreographer Mary Overlie in the 1970s, to

---


72 While in Paris, Lampe explored mask work with Erhardt Stiefel from Théâtre du Soleil and was invited to observe French director and playwright Ariane Mnouchkine’s (1938-) in rehearsal with the company.
generate expressive theatre work with groups of actors (8).\textsuperscript{73} Originally, Bogart adapted Overlie’s Viewpoints categories to include shape, spatial relationship, kinesthetic response, gesture, architecture, and repetition. Over the years, Bogart has added and refined the Viewpoints approach. Lampe calls Bogart’s approach to performing/acting a technique of “dissociation” wherein a (potentially non-gendered) reproducible movement score disconnects the performer from her realism-imbued verbal expression (37). This method opens the door for a potential feminist critique of the patriarchal status quo as it is reinforced by Western body language.

Incidentally, Bogart had studied with the same T’ai Chi Chuan teacher as Lampe. T’ai Chi is based on the philosophy of Taoism and Lampe saw a twofold influence of Asian performance concepts in Bogart’s work: the preference for a movement score for the actors (developed from Viewpoints work) and her directing style of non-interference. Lampe teased out this Asian connection in Bogart’s work years before Bogart officially joined forces with actors trained in Tadashi Suzuki’s eclectic Asian system, which led to the founding of her SITI Company.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{73} Overlie analyzed performances in terms of the way they handled space, time, shape, movement, story, and emotion. Through improvisation, she derived internally focused movement stories. Overlie called this approach Six Viewpoints (compare Lampe 1994).

Understanding through Lampe’s own T’ai Chi practice the profound influence this meditation and martial arts form had on Bogart, she observed that Bogart works with a “‘feminist subjectivity’ that is ‘centered but egoless’” (16). Bogart espouses open-mindedness, a principle endemic to Taoist philosophy. She reframes directorial authority during the composition process by means of breaking down the ensemble into groups that create movement material “directed” by the actors. But it is Bogart who focuses, edits, and integrates these contributions into the piece.

In a post-production reflection on The Marquise of O—, Lampe reflected on how Bogart has influenced her directing practice:

I keep finding it very useful to have a movement vocabulary, and to then see later on where it fits in. . . . Of course, when I worked with Anne there was always the chemistry of an ensemble of many different performers. It’s a whole different situation when you are a solo performer. But there is still your relationship to the space and the other elements in the space that also overlap with what is one of the original Viewpoints: Architecture. I always intuitively liked that and definitely found that in Anne’s directing—to not ignore the space that one works in . . . If you work with a real stage, which we didn’t, you also take into account the other parts of the room . . . and work off that aesthetically. Those simple structural ideas like repetition and the idea of working on a movement score . . . we did that—the same gestures would come back and they would be smaller and larger and they would be repeated. . . These are tools I like. But, I never thought of it like a recipe . . . at a certain point, that approach became mine, but in a different way . . . part of it is conscious and part of it is unconscious. It’s more of an intuitive thing . . . What . . . she was doing, if I put a label on it, was really a postmodern Brechtian approach. . . . So, if you have a text where there is a lot of emotional stuff and psychological engagement going on and you bring that together with a structural approach to gesture that is not motivationally based but is more an abstraction of those ideas and feelings . . . there is a potential tension and clash that lends itself to deconstruction . . . In Anne’s work there is that gender construction and gender deconstruction . . . a feminist critique . . . I think that some of the things that we did also have that effect. To have the Marquise and her mother, father, or brother do their actions
in contrast to what they are saying, there is that potential insight or revelation that the spectator can have. Anne used to say she liked a visual cohesion at every given time—there’s a tableau, a unified visual whole . . . With you as a solo performer, we also worked for that overall visual tapestry. (2005 Personal int. 2)

From my perspective as a solo performer working with Lampe on The Marquise of O—, her score-making process was not unlike the way Bogart works with her actors. I improvised extensively, generating movement material that Lampe then edited. Lampe too, directs with a feminist’s subjectivity and her training in T’ai Chi Chuan is also reflected in her open-minded approach so that the actor is encouraged to contribute much to the piece.

Differences between the directing practices of Lampe and Bogart are less about methodology than subject matter. While Bogart’s work revisits the American experience, Lampe mines German cultural history in her pieces. At Regis High School, Lampe annually produces and directs cabaret-style productions with her German students to celebrate “Oktoberfest.” Since Regis is a boys’ school, these performances necessarily incorporate cross-dressing. As Bogart did with 1951—Les Traces, Lampe creates a framework for collective creation. Deconstructed stagings of Grimm’s fairy tales are featured, including Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Rapunzel, and The Bremen “Political” Town Musicians. Lampe’s Sleeping Beauty was a cogent response to the World Trade Center disaster of September 11, 2001. A cross-dressed Beauty did not prick her finger on a spindle and fall sleep for a hundred years. Rather, Beauty was playing around with a toy airplane that, like a boomerang, came back to hit her, alluding to how a sleeping America woke up as a result of 9/11. Along with these parodies, Lampe dramatized Kurt Schwitter’s Dada poems, created “William Tell: the Short Version”
based on Schiller, and featured parodic tableaus for Wagner’s opera Tristan and Isolde (Lampe 9-10). However, Lampe’s 2003 article, “Oktoberfest with German Cabaret: A Young Tradition at Regis Comes of Age” in the Regis Alumni News, explains that Oktoberfest cabarets since 1995 also have included parodies of American pop culture culled from network television shows including “Politically Incorrect,” “The Weakest Link,” “Star Trek: The German Generation,” and “The Finkelstaffs” based on “The Simpsons.” Celebrities are spoofed: entertainer Michael Jackson, newscaster Bill O’Reilly, and political figures Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and George Bush. In “Arnold for President” a time traveling Arnold Swartzenegger rewrote the U.S. Constitution so as to legally run for President.

It is useful to consider the extent to which my acting methods dovetail with Lampe’s directing practice. Like Lampe, I have devised theatre that reaches beyond the boundaries of realism, that is, reality reproduced on stage. Unlike Lampe’s investigation of Asian-based techniques, my relationship to movement is rooted in Western dance forms. I have long been preoccupied with exploring how codified, precise movement drawn from the acculturation techniques of classical ballet and modern dance, social gestures, and pedestrian movement generated through improvisation may be interwoven so as to enhance, embellish and or deconstruct text in performance. In the preface to physical theatre educator Dymphna Callery’s Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre (2001), Dick McCaws pointed out that

75 I studied classical, modern, jazz, and character dance intensively at North Carolina School of the Arts, followed by ballet studies in New York City at New York School of Ballet with Richard Thomas and Barbara Fallis, and a traineeship with the Harkness Ballet Company. I have studied choreography with Pauline Koner, Nancy Meehan, and Lynn Blom.
while “there is no canonical body of physical theatre performance, there is a body of knowledge
that has been slowly built up over the last century” (ix). Indeed, I can attest to this evolutionary
process in terms of how certain training, performing, and directing experiences have broadened
my understanding of physical theatre.

In 1989, I attended a month long acting course at Oxford University with the British
American Drama Academy. The course included sessions with actors and directors from the
Berliner Ensemble and the Moscow Art Theatre. This experience allowed me to investigate
Stanislavsky’s realistic theatre in context with Russian and German methodologies. I was struck
by a demonstration by actors from the Moscow Art Theatre of a scene from Chekhov’s The Sea
Gull. The scene was presented twice in exactly the same manner. I found the Russian actors’
performance very moving. Interestingly, the actress playing Nina had such control that she
appeared to duplicate when and how she cried. Despite the appearance of realism, these actors’
every breath was premeditated. Their behaviors and responses were so rehearsed as to become
automatic. This astonishing demonstration was a revelation for me in terms of how a rigorous
physicality may support emotionally truthful acting.

In a class with Berliner Ensemble director, Joachim Tenschert, scenes from Brecht’s Fear
and Misery In The Third Reich, also known as The Private Life of the Master Race (1938) were
staged. As Tenschert incorporated Verfremdungseffekts or A-effects into these scenes, it is worth
noting that, in 1964, Brecht explained the A-effect or alienation-effect as a way in which the
actor, through “a definite gest of showing,” creates a striking effect in context with dropping the
assumption of a fourth wall and the illusion of realism on the stage (136).
Fear and Misery in the Third Reich is comprised of twenty-four sketches that exemplify the repressive nature of daily life under Nazi rule. The actors were instructed to come up with social gists at key moments that historicized their characters. I soon understood that Brechtian gestus has no relation to pantomime, pedestrian movement, or the expressive gestures of dance. According to Brecht, “The actor must play the incidents as historical ones (140). The actor must employ an attitude of detachment so as to encourage the spectator to be critical of what is depicted onstage. Emotions need to be externalized in the form of gestures.

Cast as the Housewife, I performed a scene in which my character observes her husband in a politically ominous conversation with another man. I improvised the setting out of food and drink. Then, I ritualistically stirred a spoon in my cup. Tenschert liked this action and instructed me to integrate it into my performance of the scene. Working with Tenschert, I gained a deeper awareness of how to use alienation effects to reveal social situations as Brecht did. As a former dancer, acting as demonstrating immediately felt organic to me. Returned to the U.S., I began to incorporate social gestures into my own pieces.

In another pivotal experience, I applied my knowledge of Brechtian gest and the theatrical construction of the social mask while receiving an introduction to Meyerhold’s biomechanics when I was cast as Marie, the maid, in a theatricalist, multi-lingual production of Romanian-born playwright Eugène Ionesco’s (1909-94), The Lesson (La Leçon) (1951). The Lesson was produced at Theatre Access in New York City in 1996 and restaged for a production that was presented in the Prosser Studio at Stanford University in 1998. The director, Kathryn Syssoyeva, currently a doctoral candidate in Drama/Humanities at Stanford, trained with
Gennadi Bogdanov, founder of the Moscow School of Biomechanics and protégé of the late Nikolai Kustov, actor and teacher in Meyerhold’s company. Syssoyeva has demonstrated and lectured on Biomechanics at Yale School of Drama, the New England Theatre Conference, the International Federation for Theatre Research, and SUNY/Binghamton.

In The Lesson, a professor browbeats his female pupil into acquiescence in anticipation of the thirty-ninth serial rape/murder of his girl student. Syssoyeva’s directorial concept called for Marie to be on stage during the entire production. A complex, detailed, physical score was developed that commented on the issues inherent in the play: patriarchal dominance, unchecked male aggression, and how women must negotiate within that world. Syssoyeva and I wanted to make evident Marie’s ambivalence towards her master through developing a relationship between the maid and the pupil that was expressed through movement. I choreographed a ritualistic movement sequence that occurred during one of the Professor’s interminable lectures. In this “Femininity Dance,” Marie is the “professor” teaching the Pupil how to perform stereotypically constructed images of femininity. Marie demonstrates various seductive strategies in the form of a jazz-style dance routine featuring shoulder isolations, hip rotations, and pelvic thrusts combined with a syncopated walk. The Pupil imitates Marie’s moves, at first tentatively, and then with increasing confidence. Marie instructs the Pupil in the behaviors of a coquette: seductive grinning, how to flirt with a fan, the mincing walk of a geisha. The “Femininity Dance” recalls Irigaray’s thoughts on the masquerade of women “on the market”:

---

76 Russian-born actor, Alexei Syssoyev played the Professor in both productions. At Theatre Access, Syssoyeva played the Pupil. At Stanford, French actress, Catherine Schidlovski performed this role.
I think the masquerade has to be understood as what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in man’s desire, but at the price of renouncing their own. In the masquerade, they submit to the dominant economy of desire in an attempt to remain “on the market” in spite of everything. But they are there as objects for sexual enjoyment, not as those who enjoy.

What do I mean by masquerade? In particular, what Freud calls “femininity.” The belief, for example, that it is necessary to become a woman, a “normal” one at that, whereas a man is a man from the outset. He has only to affect his being-a-man, whereas a woman has to become a normal woman, that is has to enter into the masquerade of femininity. In the last analysis, the female Oedipus complex is woman’s entry into a system of values that is not hers, and in which she can “appear” and circulate only when enveloped in the needs/desires/fantasies of others, namely men. (133-34)

I choreographed another gestural scenario for Marie. This sequence was inspired by the German, made for television, mini-series adaptation of Alexander Döblin’s _Berlin Alexanderplatz: The Story of Franz Biberkopf_ (1980) that was directed by German playwright and filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1946-1982). As with other of Fassbinder’s work, a Brechtian influence is evident in moments of distanced intensity in this tale of emotionally conflicted relationships in Weimar era Berlin. In this instance, Marie executes a repetitive, ritualistic domestic task that similarly employs a distancing effect. While the Professor lectures the Pupil upstage, the maid enters unnoticed with a closed food hamper down left. Opening the basket, she pulls out and unfolds a red-checkered napkin. Kneeling on the napkin, Marie removes a small wooden box from the hamper and sets it down beside her. She removes a fork and spoon from the box. She lays the silver out as if in preparation to serve the Professor a meal. But something is amiss. Marie’s task occurs on the floor rather than on a table. Also, the table setting does not include a knife. She places another fork and spoon to the right of the first.
Then, moving rhythmically and methodically from L to R she repeats the action over and over while periodically adjusting the checkered cloth under her knees. Marie arrives with the empty hamper DR. In effect, the row of place settings represents the death of each of the Professor’s pupils. She pauses to look at her handiwork. Then, Marie performs the ritual in reverse. Kneeling, she carefully returns each place setting to the hamper until she arrives with the basket DL. Her task complete, the maid stands, returns the napkin to the hamper, closes it and exits. Performed in silence, this scenario is a warning to the Pupil that she is in danger of becoming the Professor’s next meal.

It is important to note at this point in my performance as Marie, as with the classroom exercise in which I played Brecht’s Housewife, my attention was more focused on accomplishing the task at hand than in conveying character. My experience working on The Lesson directly informed my thinking about how to establish subjectivity and disrupt the text through gesture in The Marquise of O—.

I learned about the power of theatrical abstraction through conducting theatre workshops for several years in a program sponsored by Hospital Audiences. The participants, either clients in day clinics or residents in homes for the mentally ill, had no prior theatre training. The sessions were held in recreation rooms and public lobbies where disruption was inevitable. With this population, I facilitated the creation of original performance texts. These scripts were an amalgam of one-liners, pop culture references, plaints about the mental health system, prayers, holiday allusions, political jibes, Shakespearean verse, old radio songs, and themes from TV and movie musicals. Lines were assigned. I asked the clients, seated in a large circle, to generate
movement inspired by their lines. I gave them the option of performing from their seats or to enter the open space in the center of the circle. In one instance, an elderly woman had to describe a journey from here to there. She remained seated, reached for the back of the empty chair next to her, and spoke her lines while inching the chair forward and back—an elegant, economical solution. The ensemble pieces, each created and performed in a single two-hour session, were funny, poetic, and resonant. Inspired by this work, I have since incorporated an element of playful abstraction into my own pieces.

Directing children in original music theatre works, two interesting motifs have become apparent that I find useful. First, I have learned to compose effective stage pictures and choreograph using pedestrian movement that is easily accomplished by untrained youngsters. At times, these stagings, while seemingly simple, are also remarkably resonant. Further, I have observed the extent to which children inadvertently breaking the Fourth Wall have enlivened my stagings. These unwitting theatrical surprises have inspired me to deliberately incorporate incongruities into my work with adult theatre professionals.

Finally, I have attended Viewpoints and Composition workshops with Bogart and director Tina Landau, who has collaborated frequently with Bogart. I found that Viewpoints

---

77 My own early studies with creative movement specialist Genevieve Jones in Pittsburgh, Pa. are significant in this regard. Jones, author of Seeds of Movement, was particularly adept at facilitating children’s kinesthetic awareness through the creation of movement stories.

78 By the time I encountered Viewpoints, I had already formulated my own methods for composing physical theatre. My approach is grounded in dance technique, improvisation and choreography studies, acting studies at Sarah Lawrence College and at Oxford University, as well as workshops with postmodern dancer/choreographer Simone Forti, who developed an
immediately felt organic to my process. To the extent that Lampe incorporates Viewpoints into her directing practice, I comprehend that vocabulary and am comfortable working with it.\(^7\)

I first approached the German Consulate of New York about producing *The Marquise of O*— in the German House Auditorium in 2000. The Cultural Department’s Director expressed interest in the project but as I had not yet assembled a production team, no definite dates were set. In 2001, when Lampe took on the venture, we decided to propose the project to the Goethe House of New York. Our intention was to stage the novella as a site-specific work in Goethe House’s Fifth Avenue townhouse. But our project was turned down due to potential insurance problems. We went back to the German Consulate. This time, Lampe and I met with Sabine Haake, Vice Counsel of the Cultural Department. We explained our shared concepts for the piece. Haake was excited at the prospect of premiering a German/American production of a German literary classic in the German House Auditorium. She arranged for the German Consulate to co-produce and present *The Marquise of O*— as part of the following season. Lampe and I wanted to do the show several times but the terms of the co-production included only one performance. Funds were allocated to cover a portion of the production costs.\(^8\)


\(^7\) Although Lampe and I never discussed the Viewpoints during the rehearsal process, it is worth noting that the production fulfilled the Viewpoint categories.

\(^8\) As the consulate’s financial contribution did not cover all production costs, additional money was supplied by donations to Ad Astra Performance Company, a non-profit theatre company of which I am co-founder.
Performances at the German Consulate are usually free. But Lampe and I asked Haake if a box could be set up at the door with a suggested donation posted. Haake agreed to our request. She explained that publicity would consist of an e-mail press release sent to regular subscribers who are mostly German nationals and Americans with a strong interest in German language and culture.81

Lampe and I spent time in the auditorium considering how to best make use of the space. Wooden double doors open up into a rectangular-shaped hall seating between 150-200 people. The space has a high, arched ceiling with numerous overhead spotlights. There are no theatre lights. The wall to the right of the double doors is lined with floor-to-ceiling windows. The wall to the left of the double doors is wood paneled with a door leading to the dressing room. On the long wall opposite the double doors, areas of cream-colored fabric are interposed by floor to ceiling half-columns paneled in wood. Auditorium performances are usually presented with three wooden platforms pushed together adjacent to the window wall. Two wooden steps provide access to the platforms. At the far right of the window wall, there is a square-shaped space where a bar is usually set up for a reception after the performance. A sound booth is located above and to the right of the dressing room door. A grand piano is available to the performers.

81 The German Consulate’s offerings in the German House Auditorium for the 2002-03 season included an evening of cabaret by German singer/actress Ute Lemper, a readers’ theatre performance of a German play, and an evening of chamber music.
We established a central site such that the platforms were put together and set up alongside the long wall opposite the double doors creating a three-quarter thrust stage with a single step on either side. The window wall was L while the opposite wall was R. The audience was in the center of the action: seating was divided into Right, Left, and Center sections. In front of the platform, there was an ample area in which to perform. A diagonal aisle on the right created a path to a door leading to the dressing room. The diagonal aisle on the left led to the off-stage space used as a holding area for the puppets. A center aisle offered access between the area in front of platform and the wooden doors. The piano was situated to the left of the platform with seating beyond. Overall, this configuration signaled that some sort of disruption was imminent. This arrangement recalls playwright, actor, director, poet, and artist Antonin Artaud’s (1896-1948) writings on the subject of stage and auditorium in *The Theatre and its Double* (1970).

We intend to do away with stage and auditorium, replacing them by a kind of single, undivided locale without any partitions of any kind and this will become the very scene of the action. Direct contact will be established between the audience and the show, between actors and audience, from the very fact that the audience is seated in the centre of the action, is encircled and furrowed by it. This encirclement comes from the shape of the house itself... a central site will be retained which, without acting as a stage properly speaking, enables the body of the action to be concentrated and brought to climax whenever necessary. (115-16)

Lampe and I looked for a lighting designer who was accustomed to working in a non-traditional performance space. Carol Mullins proved an ideal choice. Since 1982, Mullins, winner of three New York Dance and Performance Awards (Bessies), has been resident lighting
designer at Danspace in St. Marks Church in New York City. Mullins has designed lights for
dance and theatre artists including Andy De Groat, Art Bridgeman, Myra Packer, Yoshiko
Chuma, Vicky Shick, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Bill T. Jones, Douglas Dunn, Tere O’Connor, and
Neil Greenberg. Mullins also has designed lights for Bogart’s productions of Danton’s Death
Wendy Parron for the New York City Public Library Dance Collection in 1998 and 1999,
explained that she prefers designing lights for dance and non-naturalistic theatre: “I like to do
theatre that isn’t totally straightforward, where you don’t have the day scene and the night scene
and that’s it” (1998 Parron int.). Mullins commented on the architecture of the performance
space at St. Marks Church:

(You) could draw a line right into medieval pageantry . . .It’s a theatrical space even
when all the walls are lit. It isn’t a theatrical space as in a black box, but it’s a theatrical
space as in a place that is dramatic and not real life, to me, I don’t see it as a gallery. I
see it as painting those walls, covering them with life, and unlike a gallery, where the
light just on the painting or just around everywhere, I do think of it as theatrical . . .
unless there is some specific attention made to make it not theatrical. (1998 Parron
int.)

In view of Mullins’ painterly use of light, it is interesting to note that she found her
vocation through her professional affiliation with Robert Wilson, who has had a profound
influence on her aesthetic development. Mullins studied engineering at Duke University and
received her degree from George Washington University in Washington, DC. She worked in
Thailand for the Ford Foundation. Beginning in 1970, she attended workshops at Wilson’s loft
on Spring Street. Mullins performed in Wilson’s early pieces at the George School, a private

Lampe, Mullins, and I met with Haake and the house electrician to scope out lighting possibilities in the German House Auditorium. At first, Mullins was unsure that enough wattage was available but in the end she decided that it was possible to create a lighting plot with a minimum of instruments that felt complete. These were to be rented from a theatrical lighting company in New York City. It was decided that she would run lights from a board set up in the square-shaped space near the window wall.

Lampe suggested that union welder and performance poet Neal Borowsky AKA Steel Neal, The Future Primitive, be hired to design and fabricate the puppets and other visual elements. Lampe had attended the 2000 Halloween Day Parade in Greenwich Village, where she had been impressed by Borowsky’s monumental steel sculpture, The Agony of Man. Transported on an open cart by means of a small tractor, Borowsky’s sculpture consists of the skeleton, muscles, and tendons of a man on his knees. The man’s head is bent back and the

¹⁸² Mullins offered this assessment of Wilson:

Bob Wilson is the . . . most dramatic theatre artist I have ever seen. When you say its so slow and everything, he’s a master of real theatrical feeling . . . Well, one of the major significant points in my life was naturally meeting Bob Wilson. I mean it totally changed my life, affected my vision, affected my future . . . the rest of my life. (1998 Parron int.)
mouth is wide open in anguish. Borowsky’s website, entitled Art Saves the World, explains his persona:

The Future Primitive is the last man on earth. After the world was destroyed by our carelessness, namely a nuclear mishap, the earth already weak from years of abuse was unable to recover. The sky never cleared, the few remaining plants and trees stopped photosynthesizing and the people withered away. Except for one: The Future Primitive. In his loneliness and despair he was compelled to create a monument to the memory of man which he calls, The Agony of Man. It is his attempt to capture all the pain and suffering that humanity has inflicted upon itself for as long as we have been able to think. In this way, “The Future Primitive” and “The Agony of Man” have helped save the world by taking away from our reality the anxieties and fears (energies) of at least one man and encapsulated them into an alternate reality where the end of the world already happened. This allows the world in which we live to continue to exist in a relatively peaceful manner. Believe it, or not. Yet evil forces still exist. Corruptive and corrosive powers continue to grow. We as a collective whole must not be ignorant to what The Future Primitive now knows. Hindsight is 20/20 and The Future Primitive has made a quantum leap in understanding. What he understands is something we all must learn. Wake up and help save the world! (www.steelneal.com)

Considering that Borowsky had no prior theatre experience, initially it seemed to me that Lampe had made an odd choice. Further, I had trouble envisioning how my puppet designs

83 Borowsky described the materials used to construct The Agony of Man:

The Agony of Man is a 1200 pound, 3 times life size anatomically correct rendition of the human form built entirely out of steel (scrap metal). Some of the components include: I beam, railroad track, rebar, boilers, New York City garbage cans, and bits (the teeth) from road resurfacing equipment. The Eye/Zygoma bone is salvaged from the original park benches at Madison Square Park. The ribs are salvaged from the original concrete island of Worth Square, where all the water from upstate New York comes to lower Manhattan. The inner thigh muscle (Sartorius) is made from an extinct type of rebar salvaged from the original foundation of the Union Square Subway Station. Some of New York’s construction history can be found in the construction of The Agony of Man. (www.steelneal.com).
would translate into metal forms. But Lampe insisted that Borowsky was “outrageous and brilliant.” In a post-production interview, she explained why metal was the right material: “I intuitively thought of the Bauhaus. What was so odd is that, years ago, I found some metal figures on the street in the West Village, one being a strange flat face with abstract blowing hair. I still have them in my apartment. I figured that one could make the puppets out of metal. It was a pure gut feeling” (2004 Personal int. 1).

Lampe, Borowsky, and I met at a café on the Lower East Side. We told him the story and showed him my puppet designs. Borowsky took out a pen and pad and immediately sketched definitive designs for three metal puppets—Father, Mother, and Brother. He drew the Commandant (Father) in the shape of a house. The top of Father’s head was a peaked roof, recalling his position as head of the house and a gun-shaped nose called attention to his violent temper. Borowsky gave Father one rigid but moveable arm while the other would be immobile, signifying his stubbornness. Borowsky’s design for Colonel G—‘s wife (Mother) was created entirely from question marks of various sizes. The curving shapes signified this character’s femininity as well as her suspicious attitude towards her daughter. Borowsky translated my concept of the forestry official (Brother) as a fir tree into a design in which the puppet’s head was a flat, unlobed leaf shape, suggestive of this character’s “leaf in the wind” obedience to his blowhard father. Borowsky added a monocle and a chest full of medals to describe this shortsighted, self-important character. He recommended that the puppet’s torso be a single piece of twisted rusty metal. Borowsky envisioned that Brother’s arms be narrow rods jointed at the elbow and shoulder. Attached at the base of each arm were three short rods suggestive of hands
and fingers. In order to make the puppets mobile, they had to be suspended in frames.

Retrospectively, Lampe recalled our early design discussions: “Would the puppets be in one frame or in separate frames? I have pages of drawings based on your drawings where we tried to make these work on a pragmatic level” (2004 Personal int. 1).

We agreed with Borowsky that the three puppets should “live” inside individual frames that were each six feet high and three feet wide. Wheels attached to short metal bars welded to each frame base at either end and in the middle would make the puppets mobile. The frames could be linked together by means of a pin and hook located at the top of each frame.

Lampe asked Borowsky to design two other metal visual elements: a bullet-shaped pedestal and a carriage wheel. So as to make a circular tabletop, the wheel was to rest on top of a shaft set inside the pedestal. A pivot at the top of the shaft would allow the wheel to turn 360 degrees. The wheel could be easily removed from the pedestal so as to be used in other contexts. Lampe commented on the significance of the carriage wheel:

That was a pragmatic choice because of the time period in the novella and all that back and forth from M— to V— in the coach. The wheel is for me an extremely strong image. On an anecdotal level, in Germany, I saw a talk show featuring an author who researched coach and carriage travel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It fascinated me how truly uncomfortable they were. Whatever time period, the public transportation system is what that culture’s about. I was in Cologne riding the subway and trams and it was an immersion in the real life and culture of the people. For this time period, the symbol of the wheel is an icon. (2004 Personal int. 1)

It is interesting to note that the carriage wheel is a linguistic metaphor in Kleist’s essay, “On the Formation of Thoughts While Speaking” (“Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der
Gedankan bein Reden”) (1808). Kleist uses the imagery of wheels joined by an axle to illustrate the relationship between thought and word.

Several weeks later, Lampe and I visited Borowsky’s metal shop in Brooklyn so as to view his handiwork. This visit occurred in the dead of winter. The shop was unheated, but Borowsky didn’t seem to mind. Lampe and I stamped our feet as much to keep warm as from excitement. The life-size puppets, at once abstract, ironic, and monumental, were reminiscent of Schlemmer’s “Two Solemn Tragedians” at the Bauhaus. Each puppet was suspended in its frame by filament. The bullet-shaped pedestal and carriage wheel more than met our expectations. For technical reasons, Borowsky was unable to enclose the bullet-shaped pedestal on both sides. Later, staging the scenes in which the Marquise is examined by the doctor and the midwife, this design problem turned out to be an opportunity. Turned sideways, the shape of the pedestal suggested a washbasin used by these characters.

We needed a stage manager. Caroline Gioanni, a theatre artist from Nice, France and visiting scholar in French at Montclair University in Montclair, New Jersey took on the job. Gioanni had previous experience as a stage manager with theatre groups in London and Toronto and she had created theatre pieces with inner city children in France. She immediately made herself indispensable.

Since Lampe is a teacher at Regis High School, she asked the principal if we could rehearse in the school’s theatre on weekday evenings. The principal agreed to Lampe’s request with the caveat that any school functions would take precedence over our rehearsals. On those
occasions when the theatre was unavailable, we could rehearse in classrooms. Props were to be stored in the theatre. Considering our limited budget, free access to rehearsal space was a boon.

At a New York City props house, Lampe and I found a small sofa upholstered in pink damask, framed in a light stained wood. Importantly, the sofa’s arms were embellished with the carved head and neck of a swan, offering a visual reference to Count F—’s fever dream in which he throws mud at a swan. The sofa’s symbolic importance in the production brings to mind States’ discussion of the chair on stage in Great Reckonings In Little Rooms: On The Phenomenology of Theater:

In the modern theater the chair (or such derivatives as Edward Albee’s park bench and Beckett’s urns) becomes territorial preserver, weapon and shield (Ibsen and Pinter); the curse of the material world (Ionesco); the seat of anxiety, of time and place as enemy, of the problematic nature of existence among “the things” (Chekhov and Beckett). (46)

Following States, the sofa in The Marquise of O—, is a metaphor for Julietta’s body as well as the seat of psychological truth.

Another important image in the piece is Knight of the Swan, a costume drawing by Italian Mannerist painter, sculptor, designer, and architect Francesco Primaticcio (1504-70). The drawing depicts a warrior mounted on an angry swan out of water. At once classical, mythological, and bestial, the image takes the metaphorical meaning of Count F—’s dream in which he slings mud at a swan to its logical conclusion. In my recital performance of the novella at Northwestern, the image appeared painted on a six-foot, three-panel screen with a curved top. Closed, the screen was a sculptural, phallic presence. During the exam, the doctor opened the screen and Night of the Swan was revealed to the audience although not to the Marquise. This
image was used differently in the consulate production. The intuitive, artistic Marquise moves her hand as if drawing before her easel, conjuring Knight of the Swan out of her subconscious need to see the truth.

Two other visual elements were retained from the solo recital: the toy soldiers on a game board and an oversized white teacup and saucer, an image gleaned from Kleist’s text:

If any woman were to tell me that she felt just as I did a moment ago when I picked up this teacup, I should say to myself that she must be with child. (74)

I made an armature from chicken wire and covered it with plaster strips, creating a cup and saucer with a rough surface. The end result was a primitive-looking exteriorization of the pregnancy, an ironic reference to a woman suffering from morning sickness leaning over a toilet bowl. This over-sized prop also corresponds to my lyric reference in “I Put the Shame On You” to the surreal world of Alice’s Adventures Underground. The big cup and saucer, like the body of the piano, playfully calls attention to the physical changes wrought by pregnancy.

Lampe suggested one more visual element—bamboo sticks. These sticks could be utilized in various ways throughout the show. In a post-production interview, she explained the cultural significance of these multi-use props: “They are minimal, organic, crude and reminiscent of German fairgrounds and the market place—basic, primitive, and a counterbalance to the metal” (2005 Personal int. 2).

Lampe and I had no preconceived ideas as to a costume for the Marquise. In the solo recital, I had worn a pale pink wrap dress with an apple green underskirt. The loose gown suggested the possibility of pregnancy while the color of the underskirt evoked the Marquise’s
fecundity. We agreed that while this costume implied affluence and elegance, it did not convey all that might be visually communicated about the Marquise. We approached several costume designers affiliated with New York City theatre and dance companies as well as the resident designer at a liberal arts college. But before settling on a designer, we explored the possibility of renting a costume. At the Costume Collection in New York City, Lampe and I looked through long racks packed with period costumes. To our mutual surprise, we found a silk and organza morning gown that was absolutely right: the Empire silhouette was historically accurate; the purple underskirt signified the Marquise’s high social status; the grey overskirt signaled solemn dignity; the black, high necked bodice and sleeves suggested widow’s weeds; pin tucks on the bodice and embroidery on the overskirt evoked her feminine mien. Best of all, the costume was slightly worn and tattered. Unlike the ambiguous recital dress, this distressed costume alluded to the soldiers’ violent attack in the citadel. The image of the ravished Marquise, worn throughout the show, was a constant reminder to the spectator of the human cost of war. Scholar Jane Gaines, in Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body, explained how costume functions in support of a narrative in film:

Clothes, as lower elements in a hierarchy of screen discourses, primarily work to reinforce narrative ideas. On occasion an accessory planted as a prop may come to narrative fruition . . . But primarily costumes are fitted to characters as second skin, working in this capacity for the cause of narrative by relaying information onto the viewer about a “person.” (181)

84 The Costume Collection is a program sponsored by the Theatre Development Fund of New York.
It is useful to compare this defiled representation of the aristocratic Marquise with Gert’s expressionistic evocations of Weimar’s lower strata: prostitute, procuress, wet nurse, and boxer. Here, the Marquise has been jettisoned forward from Kleist’s Romantic era of Enlightenment into the era of Weimar instability.

We also incorporated lengths of tulle in various colors. These sheer fabrics functioned as costume elements and were imbued with symbolic meanings. The veils provided hints about changes in the Marquise’s emotional states while evoking images of Romanticism and femininity. Interestingly, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar pointed out in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* that romantic authors sometimes disseminated unfavorable impressions of the veil:

That such Romantics as Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Emerson, and Shelley sought to lift the “veil of familiarity” to “see into the life of things” is apparent in their repeated attempts to recapture a time with the countenance divine shone forth upon hills since clouded. Conscious that the veil divides the holy from the most holy place (Exodus 26:33), the Romantic poet seeks the wisdom of a priest/bard to confront the presence of power. Shelley, at the end of *Adonis*, Browning in “By the Fireside,” and Swinburne in a number of poems are convinced that they can penetrate to the heavenly harmony behind the veil of mutability. . . . while they sometimes tore aside the veil, the Romantics also advised themselves to “Lift not the painted veil” because of what would be glimpsed behind it. In this respect, they perpetuate a long gothic tradition which embraces the veil as a necessary concealer of grotesque revelations of sin and guilt, past crimes and future suffering. (469)

Indeed, the veils interspersed in this production share the symbolic associations found in Victorian author George Eliot’s (1821-81) novella, “The Lifted Veil” (1859). As Gilbert and Gubar explained:

. . . Eliot mediates between its traditionally Romantic meanings and its uniquely female significance. An image of confinement different from yet related to the imagery of
enclosure that constantly threatens to stifle the heroines of women’s fiction the veil resembles a wall, but even when it is opaque it is highly impermanent, while transparency transforms it into a possible entrance or exit. Unlike a door, which is either open or shut, however, it is always potentially both—always holding out the mystery of imminent revelation, the promise or the threat that one might be able to see, hear, or even feel through the veil which separates two distinct spheres: the phenomenal and the noumenal; culture and nature; two consciousness; life and death; public appearance and private reality; conscious and unconscious impulses; past and present, present and future. (468-69)

Having decided on the Marquise’s costume and accoutrements, we decided that my hair should be styled in ringlets in imitation of “Portrait of Frau von Cotta” (1802), a portrait by German neo-classical/Romantic painter Christian Gottlieb Schick (1776-1812). And so, my “look” was resolved.

Lampe agreed with my idea to integrate a doll facsimile of the Marquise into the staging. I scoped out the New York Doll Hospital, a well-known second floor shop on Lexington Ave., where an assortment of dolls and doll parts were piled on tables like forgotten corpses. Antique dolls and carrying cases filled the shelves nearly to the ceiling. Doll wigs spilled out of drawers. But despite the great quantity and variety of dolls, I couldn’t settle on any particular one. A few days later, I returned to the shop with Lampe and Gioanni. This time, we came upon a blued-eyed, fifteen-inch, plastic doll that, although a blonde, resembled me. Later, at a props house, Lampe and I found an oblong, brass handled, yellow-green velvet traveling case in which the doll fit perfectly.

We discussed costume options for the doll. The dress needed to echo the colors and lines of the Marquise’s costume and when held at eye level, had to drape onto the floor so that the doll
appeared in effect, woman-sized. I gave the job to Marrakech, a custom tailoring shop on the lower East Side owned and operated by Fattah Abehal. Abehal and his assistant had a good laugh when I pulled the doll out of my bag. I gave Abehal the necessary fabrics and a drawing of the proposed doll dress. Three days later, I returned to the shop and Abehal presented me with his handiwork. The newly costumed doll was a miniature evocation of Julietta in a black, organza bodice with long-sleeves trimmed with a tiny collar and cuffs while the black and purple skirts trailed poetically below.

Lampe and I sat down to co-adapt the novella. My script for the recital had left much of the language intact, recalling Robert S. Breen’s suggestion in Chamber Theatre to “... try not to distort the shape of the story in the process of abbreviating it” (86-87). But Lampe fully intended to trim the fat:

You showed me the video of the solo recital without looking at the script. I loved the idea but I found it hard to listen to the text and to you as a performer because the sentences run on with all those details. That’s how Kleist is, even in English. My reaction was to make the text more tangible. But it’s a challenge because here is this very verbose novella all in prose. So my pragmatic instinct was to turn it into drama, make it dialogic and get away from the prose. Given the nature of the text, it made sense to keep the narrator to provide those links and use what you had done as a foundation. I threw this concept at you as a suggestion. (2004 Perron int. 1)

In weekly meetings held over several months, Lampe and I developed the script. We decided that the performance would be in two acts with one intermission, a convention that Richard Schechner pointed out, “confirms the existence of the ‘gathering,’” a group assembled specifically to attend a particular theatrical event” (196). We also decided to dramatize whenever possible. So as to create natural sounding dialogue, Kleist’s complex syntax had to be
clarified. Although the songs and music are characterized by deconstruction and dissonance, we did not similarly alter the spoken word. I created dialogues for several scenes. Meanwhile, Lampe referred to a German language version of the novella to see what had been lost in translation. She reworked certain sections, teasing out the subtleties. She kept the flavor of Kleist’s language without being verbose. Some plot details were confusing, necessitating further cuts. Emotional contradictions were highlighted for maximum irony. Significant scenes were edited and lesser scenes were merged. Secondary characters were fleshed out. The third person narrator was retained.

As the rehearsals progressed, Lampe and I deliberated as to whether critics should be invited to attend. We were both encouraged by the results of our work. But there was only one performance scheduled. I needed to run the show before an audience repeatedly in order to feel really comfortable. We agreed that it would put too much pressure on us.

Once we had a working script, Lampe and I began staging the piece. We discussed the pros and cons of adding on other actors. For example, a male actor/musician might well play all of the male roles while enriching the musical aspect of the show. But, Lampe was firmly in favor of keeping the production a solo performance: “I was strongly against that. I felt that would have changed the equation. The beauty, the power, the strength of the piece is that you are taking that ownership in your subject position. That’s the meaning of the piece” (2004 Personal int. 1).

Our goal was to create an intricate but organic performance score. In The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theatre Anthropology, Barba explained that the performer’s score, “first used by
Stanislavsky and taken up by Grotowski refers to an organic consistency” (122). Barba defined the performance score in specific terms:

-- the general form of the action and the outline of its course (beginning, climax, conclusion);
-- the precision of the fixed details: the exact definition of the individual segments of the action and the joints which connect them (sats, changes of direction, different qualities of energy, variations of speed);
-- the dynamo-rhythm, the speed and intensity which regulate the tempo (in the musical sense) of every individual segment. This is the metre of the action, the alternation of long or short, accented or unaccented segments;
-- the orchestration of the relationships between the different parts of the body (hands, arms, legs, feet, eyes, voice, facial expression). (122)

Once it was decided that I would sing live with piano accompaniment, we wanted to optimize the instrument’s presence. In the prior chapter, I explained that the interior of the piano was exploited as a metaphor for the Marquise’s pregnancy during the exams and that it was transformed into her bed and a floor she scrubs in “Stigma of Disgrace.” In rehearsal, I tried turning the wheel-mounted piano in a circle to signify location changes, but this operation proved unwieldy. We found other non-conventional uses for the instrument: the reverse side of the music rack became a writing board; the piano body was also a container for a veil; the piano bench represented a divan.

Lampe and I carefully worked through the text to find the underlying rhythms and fix the details. My characterizations needed to be very precise, as there were no costume changes. Everything had to be accomplished physically and vocally. At times, a task inspired by the narrative was the impetus for emotionality. A vocabulary of social gests was developed for all
the main characters. Then they were used in other contexts to deconstruct the text. Sometimes, I found it hard to coordinate my speech with these gestures performed out of context. In order to highlight meaning, movement sequences, or short dances were created that at times incorporated some of the character’s gestures.

The Marquise’s gestures included responses to the assault. “Fear # 1: Arm Catch at Shoulder” is performed as follows. The right hand, with a smacking sound, pushes the left hand that is held in a fist against the left shoulder, so that the left arm is bent and held close as if to protect her body. “Fear #2: “Holding the Waist,” is a complex action that simultaneously represents the attackers and the victim. Forcefully, as one of the attackers, I swing one arm across the front of my body so that the arm and hand wrap around the waist and with a loud slapping sound hits my lower back (representing the Marquise). The first arm naturally swings back to its original position at my side. Simultaneously, I repeat this same swinging motion with the other arm (representing another soldier). Performed several times in a deliberate, rhythmic tempo, my arms and hands belong to the assailants, while my torso and head are that of the Marquise engaged in resistance. Some of the Marquise’s other gestures include ”The Vision,” in which she evokes a swan, “Devotion” suggesting filial love, and “Drawing.” Lampe commented on the latter: “We constructed the Marquise. She is the creator who draws and paints and that’s a phallic thing” (2005 Personal int. 2).

The primary gesture for Colonel G—, “The Commandant,” is performed standing, legs apart, with the hands clasped behind the back. The gesture suggests the Commandant’s repressed physical desire for his daughter.
“Question Mark Walk,” inspired by the tendency of the Colonel’s wife to doubt her daughter, is derived from punctuation—a question mark. “Question Mark Walk” is based on the ballet step rounde des jambe en l’aire (round the foot in the air), in which one leg circles from the front of the body to the back or vice versa, at a forty-five degree angle above the floor. Walking forward or backward, the ronde de jambe is performed first on one foot and then the other. Simultaneously, the skirt is raised just above the ankle. “Question Mark Walk” suggests a nervous tic yet anticipates the curving shapes of Mother. “Leg Notice” is a variation of “Question Mark Walk,” accomplished with a single leg ronde de jambe while simultaneously lifting the skirt. The rhythmic gesture, “Hand Wringing” denotes the mother’s manipulative machinations. The arms are held a few inches away from the body with the hands at waist level. The right hand’s fingers are placed over the left palm. Then, the left hand’s fingers are placed over the right palm. Next, the right hand’s fingers are placed over the left palm. A beat. Then this structure is repeated. For the gesture, “Efficient Wife,” the head is tilted, the arms are raised above the head in a V shape, and the palms are held face out with fingers of both hands outstretched.

Borowsky’s subtle design for Brother inspired a gesture. “Forestry Official” is performed standing with the torso held erect, the left arm bent, with the palm laid flat on the chest. This gesture pre-figures Brother’s chest full of medals while suggesting this character’s pomposity.

Count F—’s signature gesture, “F— Kick,” is performed by stepping on the right leg, followed with a straight-legged kick of the left leg, the foot flexed, at pelvis level. The gesture,
requiring careful balance, ironically signifies the Count’s military heroism and the phallus. “F—Kick” was derived from Lampe’s nuanced understanding of the German language. According to Lampe:

I remember when we were sitting at the table reading the text. In German, the word for Count is Graf. I looked up the word’s etymology. Graf comes from the Greek word “to write.” It implies a low position that comes from counting money. A person of that rank of nobility would write down. It’s a phallic thing . . . Lacan . . . logos. As Derrida says, every spoken word is also writing. It’s always writing. You can’t get away from the writing because that’s Western culture. That’s what Plato had already said. We are locked into language, the writing thing. The person who is the phallic symbol in the novella, who rapes her, his name in German is Graf. Of course, the English word Count dilutes the meaning. Subtextually it means counting money, writing down numbers, what people owed him. Out of this discussion of “Graf” inspired by Derrida we came up with Count F—’s gesture . . . The phallic thing makes so much sense because of the etymology. (2005 Personal int. 3)

Another Count F— gesture, “Sleazy,” consists of smoothing back the moustache. “Replaces Hat” is based on the moment just after the rape:

The Russian officer replaced his hat and returned to the fighting. (379)

When displaced, “Replaces Hat” calls attention to the Count’s efforts to conceal his crime. The Count’s “Sneaky Foot” is an inappropriate gesture performed in a social setting, accomplished by kneeling with one leg on the sofa, the Marquise’s body, while the other foot drags on the floor.

Over a period of several months, I collected and practiced dozens of gestures and poses for each character. This work was not unlike German actor Helene Weigel’s preparations for the 1949 production of Mother Courage at the Berliner Ensemble. Theatre historian Claudio
Meldolesi, cited in A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer observed Weigal’s process:

She began to rehearse using a criterion which Brecht had established in the Berliner Ensemble: she worked through the whole part over and over again, concentrating only on approximated interpretive sketches. By the time of the opening, Weigal had at her disposal about a hundred different details and narrative poses which she could use to reveal the relationship between Mother Courage and the other characters; and she developed other details and poses in subsequent performances. (234)

I embodied Colonel G—, his wife, and the forestry official until mid-show when the puppets were introduced. Then, speaking the characters’ lines, I stood behind the puppets while maneuvering their metal appendages or, standing a few feet away from them on the platform, I pointed at them with a stick. In the script, these puppets are named: Colonel G— is Father; Colonel G—’s wife is Mother; the forestry official is Brother so as to differentiate them from the actor. My partial visibility standing behind the puppets proved an effective distancing effect. The narrator assumed a neutral state when moving back and forth between the puppets. In rehearsals, I practiced moving the wheeled frames smoothly and economically around the space. This enlivened the misé en scene, but I had to be careful that the frames did not tip over. The light clinking noise of the metal puppets hitting against their frames as I moved them around created a subtle alienation. The sound was reminiscent of Schlemmer’s glass and metal costumes in the Bauhaus Theatre.

Initially, I had envisaged the narrator as a well-heeled gossip holding court in an elegant salon. She delights in sexual innuendo while at times adopting an indignant tone expressing all
the class prejudice common to nineteenth century German aristocracy. But I had trouble finding the right tone for the narrator’s account of the Russian invasion of the citadel. Here, Lampe suggested that the narrator should be imbued with the gestures and vocal inflections of Christiane Amanpour, Chief International Correspondent for BBC Television reporting live from the front lines of Sarajevo, Kuwait, and Baghdad. At first, I found it difficult to merge this model of a modern female war correspondent with a nineteenth century rumormonger, but over time, I got it.

There are three servants mentioned in Kleist’s text, Leopardo the groom, and the unnamed porter and footman. These ancillary characters are represented as voiceovers. Yet they are witnesses to the goings-on. Bahktin explained the importance of the servant as spectator:

Servants are the most privileged witnesses to private life. People are as little embarrassed in a servant’s presence as they are in the presence of an ass, and at the same time the servant is called upon to participate in all intimate aspects of personal life . . . The servant is that distinctive, embodied point of view on the world of private life without which a literature treating private life could not manage. (125)

By not representing the servants physically, we reinforced their low social position. For comic relief, we decided that Leopardo should be an unattractive dolt. I gave Leopardo a Dickensian, unctuous sounding voice.

In staging the songs, we were very deliberate about how I made the transition from speech to singing. Indeed, Brecht felt strongly about how this transition should be accomplished:

When the actor sings he undergoes a change of function. Nothing is more revolting than when the actor pretends not to notice he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing. The three levels—plain speech, heightened speech and singing—must always
remain distinct, and in no case should heightened speech represent an intensification of plain speech or singing of heightened speech. (44)

We also made conscious choices as to how to maximize the dynamic potential of the auditorium. The platform was designated as the site of the rape, domestic space both in the citadel and the town house in M—, as well as the Marquise’s garden at V—. All three aisles were utilized, as well as the center space below the platform, and the area around the piano.

The overall concept for the production was to create a dream-like world in which the spectator experiences combinations of images, signs, and symbols. Our intention, although created for one actor in an intimate setting, recalls Wilson’s operas that have been described as “. . . theatrical visions . . . the hypnotic blend of non-linear disjunction and deeper coherence” (Stearns 10).

At the top of the show, the sofa is set on the platform, facing the audience DR. The easel, on which rests a drawing pad, is UL. The wheel table/bullet pedestal is in front of the platform. The door opens DR. I enter, holding the book, cross in full view of the spectators, step onto the platform, sit down on the sofa, open the book, and begin to read. A beat. The spectator considers this as yet undefined character engrossed in the act of reading. Then, the opening music of “Minuet in A Minor” prompts a transformation to character. The Marquise, still holding the book, dances. Her circumscribed steps, like the music, are a prelude to the tale about to be told. The doll-like movements also anticipate the presence of the doll. At the dance’s end, where he finishes dressing, and crosses the hashigakari, or bridge, to the stage in full view of the audience. See: Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer, Trans. Richard Fowler (New York: Routledge, 1991) 126.
the Marquise spins around and around. She collapses as if exhausted by the fate that Kleist has written for her. Then, a transformation—the narrator begins the storytelling:

The Marquise of O—! Based on a true story, the setting of which has been transposed from the north to the south... She had, without knowledge of the cause, come to find herself in a certain situation. (377)

Next the narrator sings, “A Certain Lady.” The book is beside her on the piano. The ambiguity of the narrator/actor at this point is problematic. Who is it that takes ownership of the writing? Lampe explained: “Well, it’s collapsed. It’s the multiplication of ownership. Its you, the twenty-first century actor who’s claiming her subjectivity putting yourself on stage not as an object of desire, but as the auteur. You are the performer, the dancer playing the narrator. And you are in control of the book, the writing” (2004 Personal int. 1).

The song ends. The narrator explains that the widowed Marquise has returned to live with her parents. Stepping back on to the platform clarifies this location as domestic space. The narrator announces:

War filled the neighborhood with the armed forces of almost all the powerful European states including Russia. (382)

Lighting changes (“War! and “Attack by Night”) establish the invasion of the citadel. The narrator steps off the platform, brings out the game board filled with toy soldiers, and places the battle scene on the wheel tabletop set above the bullet-shaped pedestal. She turns the wheel back and forth to suggest battle maneuvers. The human actor, relative to the tiny inanimate figures suggests deus ex machina turning a wheel of fortune.
The soldiers’ assault is staged amid the spectators. The proximity of the event, intensified by lighting effects, together with precisely choreographed movements, create maximum tension. The Marquise, separated from her mother, attempts to flee the burning building. Here, she frantically runs down the center aisle to the (locked) double doors, runs back upstage, and runs the length of the right diagonal to the rear door. Tempo change. The door opens. Here, an intensely bright, white light signifies the marauding soldiers. The Marquise’s response is the gesture, “Fear #1: Arm Catch at Shoulder.” The soldiers advance toward her. Holding the pose, the Marquise slowly backs up until, reaching the platform, she can go no further. A beat. Then, the cry, “Help!” suggests that the soldiers have grabbed her (3). Tempo change. Now, the gesture, “Fear #2: “Holding the Waist,” represents the attackers and the victim. All the while, the narrator describes the assault. This scene differs markedly from realistic theatrical depictions of violence, in which actors uses voluntary and involuntary vocal sounds to reinforce the movement of a fight. Rather, the rhythmic movements, the sounds made by the body, and the narrator’s objective speech recalls Artaud’s theory of spectacle:

We intend to base the theater upon spectacle before everything else, and we shall introduce into the spectacle a new notion of space utilized on all possible levels and in all degrees of perspective in depth and height, and within this notion a specific idea of time will be added to that movement . . . The overlapping of images and movements will culminate through the collusion of objects, silences, shouts, and rhythms, or in a genuine physical language with signs, not words, as its root. (124)

Count F— rescues the Marquise. The novella’s representation of rape as an ellipse needed to be accounted for. This staging was distinguished by an absence of action. This event was played on the platform, distant from the spectator so as to engender objectivity. The Count
escorts the Marquise “into a place where the flames had not yet reached” (3). Here, as Count F—, I step onto the platform. Here, it is apropos to consider Russian philosopher and literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1895-1975) discussion of threshold as it applies to a literary chronotope, a term meaning “literally time space . . . the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (84). According to Bakhtin:

[I]t can be combined with the motif of encounter, but its most fundamental instance is as the chronotope of crisis and break in a life. The word “threshold” itself has already a metaphorical meaning in everyday usage (together with its literal meaning), and is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecision that fails to change a life), the fear to step over the threshold. In literature, the chronotope of the threshold is always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly but more often implicitly. (248)

Indeed, the Count’s stepping on to the platform alerts the spectator that a crisis is imminent. The Marquise collapses onto the sofa, immobile. Red light plays over her motionless body. A beat. Then, the narrator sits up and says:

Then—. (379)

The rape is in progress. The seated narrator is neutral. Next, I rise as Count F— from the sofa. Standing behind the sofa facing upstage, the Count does up his trousers and smooths back his hair. He turns around and looks down at the sofa, now representing the Marquise. The scene concludes with the gesture, “Replaces Hat,” as the Russian officer heads back into battle.

The Count steps off the platform (L) representing a location change as well as a transformation back to the narrator, who sings “Minuet in A Minor,” a cappella, while entering the space in front of the platform. The unadorned vocal implies the Marquise’s vulnerability.
The narrator, peering down at the game board, describes Count F—’s heroic exploits. The retreating Commandant meets him at the main gate. Here, I embody the Count, who asserts his domination with a high “F— Kick” on top of the table amidst the soldiers. Then, as Colonel G—, I perform the gesture “Sword” to signify his submission before the young man.

The Commandant visits his daughter who is recovering from her ordeal. The Marquise asks who her rescuer is. Her instinctual response to her father’s answer, the song, “Count F—,” is the gesture, “Fear#1 B: “Leaning Forward in Chair,” in which she relives the soldiers’ assault.

The general inquires about the assault. Count F— responds with the song, “I Could Not Tell.” Afterward, the narrator says:

The general expresses surprise. (381)

The gesture that follows, “World Weary,” in which the narrator sighs, rests her head on one hand with the arm bent, the elbow resting on top of the piano, is commentary. Next, I stand at the keyboard so as to embody the firing squad playing the music, “Death Shots.” The Count sends his respects to the Marquise accompanied by the gesture, “Sleazy,” and leaves the citadel.

The narrator removes the game board from the table to mark the departure of the Russian troops. The Count’s near fatal battle wound is represented by ritualistically thrusting a stick like a sword between the spokes of the wheel tabletop.

Several actions represent the family’s move into town. First, the narrator removes the tabletop from the pedestal and holds the wheel vertically at eye level, looking through the spokes as if it were a carriage window. Next, the wheel is rolled over to the piano and leaned against the
instrument so as to suggest a carriage. Then, the narrator steps on to the platform and turns the sofa facing upstage. The narrator says:

The Marquise brought out her easel and her books. (6)

This is the cue for “Tracing Rape,” a movement sequence that reveals the Marquise’s chaotic inner state. Standing several feet distant from the easel, she performs the gesture, “Drawing.” Then, this gesture is extended by means of prolonged and distorted substitution. This “prolongation and distortion,” which according to American choreographer and educator Doris Humphrey (1895-1958) are “the two essentials” for “the whole process of turning mime, or natural gesture, into movement,” gradually moves from the arm to the rest of the body—head, torso, and legs (123). The grotesque quality of this movement around the entire stage suggests a situation that is out of control. Finally, the Marquise, unable to bring to consciousness the disturbing truth, sits down to contemplate the blank page on the easel.

The narrator describes morning tea. The Marquise remarks:

If any woman were to tell me that she felt just as I did when I picked up this teacup I should say to myself that she must be with child. (381)

This line segues into “Teacup Dance,” accompanied by the instrumental theme, “Julietta.” “Teacup Dance” involves manipulating the oversize plaster teacup while executing mincing steps. At the dance’s end, the Marquise puts down the teacup and saucer and bends forward as if suffering from morning sickness. Here, a transformation. Colonel G—’s wife, having examined the cup, looks up with the gesture, “Efficient Mother,” exclaiming, “Daughter, you would no doubt be giving birth to the God of Fantasy” (381).
The Marquise walks over to the easel and turns the page to reveal the evocative, *Knight of the Swan*, saying:

No doubt, Morpheus would be the father. (381)

Count F—, who has been presumed dead, visits the family and abruptly proposes to the Marquise. In this scene, the characters are embodied in conversation while the rape is retold through gesture, voice-over, visual image, sound, and lighting. The real-time dialogue of an aristocratic family gathering is deconstructed so that the scene reads as dreamlike, ironic, absurd. This subverted, fragmentary staging collapses present and past, destabilizes public and private, and undermines convention as submerged memory intrudes:

The Marquise asserts that she is feeling well, but her gesture, “The Collapse,” is imitative of her faint. Then, rather than kneel at the Marquise’s feet to propose, Count F— kneels on the sofa, representing her unconscious, available body. Colonel G— delays his daughter’s answer even as he stands uncomprehending before *Knight of the Swan*, the symbolic image of the rape. Count F—’s vainglory is belied by the gesture, “Sneaky Foot.” Then, red light plays over the body. Underscoring creates a distancing effect. The narrator, in voiceover speaks:

He was struck by a memory in which he had once thrown some mud at a swan, whereupon it silently dived under the surface and reemerged washed clean by the water. It always seemed to be swimming about on a fiery surface. (383)

During this speech, the Marquise is immobile, kneeling on the sofa with her arms extended behind, suggestive of the swan (“The Vision”). Count F— calls out, “Tinka!” and the interlude is concluded (383).
Once more, Count F— proposes. He kneels on the sofa as if to reassert his ownership of the Marquise. She springs off the sofa, a negation. The Count’s visit concludes with his signature “F— Kick,” combined with a militaristic half-turn.

Afterwards, the family discusses the man and his proposal as well as Julietta’s feelings about him. A break in the action follows. The narrator states:

Several weeks passed. (384)

Here, the passage of time is physicalized by means of pedestrian movement arranged in a simple choreographic structure. “Time Passing” begins with the neutral narrator standing downstage parallel to the edge of the platform facing R. The arms hang loose while the narrator walks four steps forward ending in a full stop. A beat. Then, the narrator takes four steps backward and comes to a full stop. Concluding the sequence, the narrator walks four steps forward to a full stop. “Time Passing” recalls the ironic humor conveyed by the pedestrian movement of Schlemmer’s 1927 Bauhaus work, _Block Play_.

The preceding chapter discusses use of the piano’s interior to represent the Marquise’s body during the pregnancy exams. It is worth investigating how gesture is used in these scenes. The spectator’s view of the actor playing the male doctor and the female midwife manipulating the speculum inside the piano “body” subverts gender and class. Preparations for the exams were deliberate to the point of comic absurdity. The narrator turns the bullet-shaped pedestal so

---

that it is transformed into a washbasin. Methodically, the doctor lathers up his hands, rinses
them off, and rubs them dry (“Hand Washing”). Then, he opens the piano lid. Here, mimesis is
used playfully. The doctor holds two sticks aloft, then inserts them as a speculum into the piano
body, and begins to play the strings—a moment of slapstick. Irigaray’s assessment of feminine
display that is applicable to this moment:

To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation
by discourse, without allowing herself simply to be reduced to it. It means, to resubmit
herself—inasmuch as she is on the side of “perceptible,” of “matter”—to “ideas,” in
particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by masculine logic, but so as to
make “visible,” by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible:
the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language. It also means to
“unveil” the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply
reabsorbed into this function. (qtd. in Russo 76)

In “Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory,” Russo considered the feminist
implications of Russian social theorist and linguist Mikhail Bakhtin’s discourse on the medieval
carnival in Rabelais and His World. Russo reflected on Bakhtin’s “semiotic model of the body
politic” or the grotesque body:

The grotesque body is the open, protruding, extended, secreting body, the body of
becoming, process, and change . . . opposed to the classical body, which is monumental,
static, closed, and sleek, corresponding to the aspiration of bourgeois individualism; the
grotesque body is connected to the rest of the world . . . the figure of the socialist state to
come. (219)

Russo asserted that the feminine grotesque body of the pregnant or aging woman
destabilizes conventional notions of female beauty. Indeed, the grotesque evocation of the
doctor and midwife scrutinizing the Marquise’s pregnant body incited “carnival” laughter into
otherwise serious proceedings. This scenario was not meant to anticipate socialism but is a
reminder that the social order has been disturbed. The doctor concludes his exam by putting the
sticks (speculum) away with ritualistic formality. The piano lid is left open. During the doctor’s
post-exam “Hand Washing,” he says, accompanied by the gesture, “Smirk:

The Marquise has judged correctly how things are. (384)

Next, the sight of the anxious Marquise in the subject position behind the open piano lid,
representing the drape sheet, is commentary on the contemporary Western medical gynecological
exam, a topic which has been fully researched by Terri Kapsalis in Public Privates: Performing
Gynecology from Both Ends of the Speculum (1997).

The midwife’s preparations, like the sounds she elicits from the piano strings, are unlike
those of the doctor. After washing her hands, she air-dries them with a shaking motion at
shoulder height, and then rubs them on her skirt in the vicinity of her ovaries. The exam ends.
The midwife’s findings are conclusive. She snaps the piano lid shut, as if removing the drape
sheet, signifying that the instrument is returned to its usual function.

The Colonel’s wife confronts her daughter. Her anger and frustration are expressed by
means of the gesture, “Hand Wringing.” She exclaims:

Julietta! Will you tell me who the father is?” (385)

Lampe had a very specific take on how I should play the Marquise’s response to her
mother’s ire:

I shall go mad. (386)

The accompanying gesture,” Dead Pan,” is intimate, like a close-up shot in a dramatic
film that reveals subtle emotionality. “Deadpan” recalls Elisabeth Lenk’s 1985 essay, “The Self-
Reflecting Woman” in Feminist Aesthetics: “Woman often believes when she enters into this relationship to herself to herself for the first time, when she first reflects herself, that she has gone mad. But this apparent madness is no madness; it is the first step towards sanity” (57).

The Commandant dictates the letter to his wife disowning their daughter. Colonel G—, his wife, and their son are embodied through my acting until the Marquise is estranged from them so that their depiction becomes necessarily symbolic and abstract. Lampe and I explored ways through which the puppets might be retrieved from the holding area DL. As the narrator, I tried pulling the puppets behind me into the performance space but the frames kept folding into each other and tipping over. Lampe suggested that a person dressed in black be added to control the puppets from behind. As soon as the puppets were in place, this unobtrusive person was to exit L. A friend of Gioanni’s was enlisted for this job and this solved the problem. Similarly, Barba and Nicola Savarese described the function of a kurogo (“black man” or “nothing”), a device commonly used in Japanese theatre:

A silent stage servant, the kurogo is a highly appreciated, essential element in the economy of classical Japanese theatres: his presence, indispensable for costume changes in full view of the public and for the placing of properties on the stage throughout the performance, eliminates the illusion of realism from the Japanese stage. (174)

Initially, Lampe and I had planned to cover the puppets with white paper so as to represent a letter. At the climax of “I Put the Shame On You,” the Marquise would slash into the paper. After the reconciliation, the paper would be taped up—an ironic commentary on the fragility of human relations. But as the Marquise was not subject to violent outbursts, we decided against this approach. Instead, black ribbon in the shape of an envelope was draped over
the puppet frames, signifying that, for the Commandant, his daughter is dead. The neutral narrator removes the ribbon from the puppets, steps onto the platform, and lays the ribbon down on the sofa.

The Marquise sings the letter, “My Daughter You Must Leave My House.” To create the illusion of reading, she stands motionless on the platform holding the sticks horizontally in front of her, one hand slightly above eye level, the other at the waist. The moment is poignant. Her eyes focus on the invisible space described by the sticks. At the same time, her family, or rather the puppets—Mother, Father, and Brother—are in her line of vision.

The song ends. The neutral narrator puts down the sticks. The Marquise responds with the hysterical “Panic Dance.” The choreography for “Panic Dance” is reminiscent of the trance-like, distorted gestures found in German Expressionist film. Scholar Janet Bergstrom’s commentary in *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* on the representation of madness in Weimar cinema is relevant:

> Madness recurs frequently in Weimar Cinema and with nightmarish connotations. There are two rather different kinds of mad characters: those who become mentally deranged during the course of the narrative and those who embody the very principle of madness from the outset. In the first case, madness can be caused by the kind of symbolic fall from a secure position in society to powerlessness, humiliation and impotence that Siegfried Kracauer describes, a sudden and unacceptable change. This results in the destruction of a positive self-image, and at its most extreme, a loss of identity in every sense, loss of contact with the world around the character. This is frequently represented by the inability of this character to see the external world any longer, staggering as if in a trance. (175)

> Indeed, the Marquise experiences a humiliating descent from respectable society. “Panic Dance” incorporates the doll-like movements from “Minuet in A Minor,” and gestures from the
assault, Fear #1, Fear #2, as well as “Tracing Rape.” These oppositional gestures, performed at a frenetic tempo, suggest disturbance and distraction.

The Marquise rushes to her father’s rooms. Her brother tries to prevent her from entering, but she pushes him aside. This moment was represented by her pushing Brother’s frame as if it were a door. The Commandant turns away from her. The narrator moves Father’s arm back and forth suggesting his hurried steps.

Colonel G—fires his pistol. Fearing for her life, the Marquise prepares to flee. In this intense scene, several objects are revealed, suggesting that she discovers inner resources for survival. First, the Marquise pulls a length of blue veil from the washbasin, signifying the waters of the unconscious. The veil is immediately transformed into a traveling cloak. She dresses her children, represented by wrapping the veil around both wrists. The fabric touches the floor, signifying each child beside her. The cloak is symbolic protection for the Marquise and her children. The Marquise, reaching into the washbasin, reveals a second object—the yellow-green velvet traveling case. Lampe commented retrospectively on the significance of these objects:

That cloak is her innocence, because it’s blue. When I see that rich saturated blue I think of paintings of the Virgin Mary in a blue gown: the Immaculate Conception. Where the Virgin Mary got impregnated by God and didn’t know it had happened to her. When you brought those colored veils in and we were improvising I thought, “Oh this is great.” Not a white innocence. Then the Marquise pulls the traveling case out of the washbasin. It’s a survival strategy. You’ve talked about that in psychological terms. (2004 Personal int. 1)

Then, standing next to the piano, she opens the traveling case and stands it upright, revealing yet another object—the Marquise doll. The Marquise sits at the keyboard and sings the
opening bars of “I Put the Shame on You.” Here, the audience is witness to the bifurcation of the Marquise into singing actor and inanimate doll. The theatrical realization of the double in this context is the Marquise’s psychic protection. The doll takes on her trauma. The Marquise leaves the keyboard and continues singing A Cappella. She removes the doll from the case and holds it aloft, singing:

Aren’t I still your reigning paragon of virtue
Not some mute bird to fly into the wild blue. (388)

Then, the carriage wheel is rolled away from the piano. The journey to V— has begun. The daughter has left the house of her father. The song continuing, the Marquise lays the doll on top of the carriage wheel on the line:

If Balthus painted me when I was sleeping
Would you all forgive me for that? (388)

Then, she lays the wheel flat on the floor and spins it, suggesting both a wheel of fortune and travel: “Well, I’ve dried my many tears out on the open road.” (389)

Next, the doll is placed in between the spokes and she spins the wheel once more. This image of the doll represents the Marquise’s fate spinning out of control. The Marquise mines pregnancy on the line:

Did I drink from a bottle of Miracle Gro?
Well, I have no such memory. (389)

On the last refrain, the Marquise, holding the doll aloft as she rolls the carriage wheel along, walks through the house, and exits.
At the top of Act II, the doll dangles precariously by one arm off the edge of the bullet-shaped pedestal. Mother and Father are linked in front of the platform. Brother is DR. The wheel is on the platform leaning against the wall. The narrator enters wearing an overlong shawl of green tulle. The green color evokes the Marquise’s fertility, while its sheerness conjures up images of veiled women in Middle Eastern harems. Indeed, it is possible to draw a connection between harems and the “secluded life” favored by the Marquise in M— as well as her confinement in V— (2). According to scholar Ella Shohat in Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film:

Whereas Western discourse on the harem defined it simply as a male-dominated space, the accounts of the harem by Middle Eastern women testify to a system whereby a man’s female relatives also shared the living space, allowing women access to other women, providing a protected space for the exchange of information and ideas safe from the eyes and ears of men . . . In other words, the “harem,” though patriarchal in nature has been subjected to an historical discourse where Eurocentric assumptions left unquestioned the sexual oppression of the West. The Middle Eastern system of communal seclusion then must also be compared to the Western system of domestic “solitary confinement” for upper-middle class women. (78)

The Marquise sings “Which Room” and “Stigma of Disgrace” at the piano. Next, I play dual roles speaking as the narrator while physically portraying the Marquise. The Marquise comes up with a way to discover the identity of the father. Her sleep is troubled. Here, the Marquise climbs on top of the piano, lies down on it, and uses the veil as a coverlet. Then, the veil is transformed into a washrag. Kneeling on the piano, the Marquise sings, “Scum of Mankind.” Having exorcized the rapist, she climbs off the piano, and standing motionless on the
step, considers her self-worth: “A precious stone retains its value no matter what its setting might be” (392).

The Marquise’s gesture, “First Kick of the Baby,” motivates her positive response to the impending birth—a movement sequence, “Dance of Pride and Rebellion.” This short dance, performed in silence while standing on a step, is suggestive of containment. The long green veil is draped around the Marquise’s shoulders. Both arms are stretched outward as if to extend the force of her aura. But while the Marquise’s outstretched arms may reach for the cosmos, the movement of the veil conjures up an impression of a bird in flight. This image corresponds to the bird image in the lyric of “I Put the Shame on You.”

The dance ends. Next, I had to get rid of the green veil so as to have my hands free to write the public notice on reverse side of the music rack. Lampe suggested that the Marquise fold up the veil and put it inside the body of the piano. In this context, the green veil represents her soul. Lampe reflected on the meaning of this choice: “This is the symbol of her new freedom, the assertion of her subjectivity in V—. In German it is called Snaragd, green jade” (Personal Interview 5 Nov. 2005).

Next, the Commandant’s son receives Count F—. First, I push Brother before me as if the forestry official is stepping forward to greet the Lieutenant Colonel. Brother’s arm is manipulated as if shaking hands with him. To suggest the two men in dialogue, I stand opposite Brother while embodying the Count. Learning that the Marquise is in exile, the Count is dismayed. Standing behind Brother, the long metal rod arms are raised in the gesture,
“Surprise.” The Count ends their conversation with the gesture, “Replaces Hat,” a reminder of his continued evasiveness.

Count F— gallops out to V— to renew his proposal to the exiled Marquise. Here, there is a contrast in what the spectator sees and hears. To allude to the Count’s hysteria, the journey is underscored by the frenetic instrumental theme, “Panic Dance.” However, the Count holds one bamboo stick like a riding crop and ritualistically walks around the bullet pedestal. The porter, represented by a voiceover, turns Count F— away at the gate. The Count places the crop between the spokes of the wheel, an allusion to his battle wound, and steps onto the platform, signifying his entry into the garden and the presence of the Marquise.

The following scene is characterized by split-second character transformations. The scene was tightly choreographed, reminiscent of the tense passion and violent sensuality of an Apache dance. The stick representing a riding crop is an essential prop. Count F— sits down on the sofa and stretches his arm along the back as if holding the Marquise’s waist. (Change.) The Marquise rises from the sofa and walks over to the wheel. She grabs the riding crop in self-defense and cries out, “Go away!” (394).

(Change.) He grabs the free end of the crop and draws her towards him. (Change.). She turns around. (Change.) He kneels at her feet. (Change.) The Marquise turns away on the line, “I do not want to hear anything!” (394).

(Change.) The Count drops the crop so as to run after her. Realizing that his attempt is doomed, Count F— retrieves the crop and leaves the garden. Stepping off the platform, the narrator explains:
Bitterly vexed with himself for allowing her to slip from his arms, he went to find his horse. He rode slowly back to M—, thinking over the wording of a letter he now felt compelled to write. (395)

The Count’s letter is the tango, “Morning of the Third,” underscoring another ritualistic walk around the bullet-shaped pedestal—a contemplative return.

The Commandant’s son again receives the Count. Brother repeats his welcoming handshake. The Count greets him with an “F— Kick.” Brother’s hands are folded over his twisted metal stomach as he expresses his regret that Count F— is going mad with passion for his sister. Count F— reads the Marquise’s notice (“A Certain Lady”). Here, the Count holds the sticks vertically, describing the perimeter of a newspaper.

New scene. The Commandant and his wife argue. The staging of this moment recalls the opening scene of Three Penny Opera in which a carnival barker recounts the exploits of Mack the Knife by pointing a stick at crude figure drawings. Similarly, the narrator on the platform points with a stick to identify Father and Mother in conversation while I represent them vocally. Lampe commented on this staging choice:

You’re exposing the family like a freak show at a circus or a fairground because it is a freak show with the parents reacting in that way. I don’t know why, but I’ve always been fascinated with old-fashioned fairgrounds. On a theatre level it might have to do with my affinity with Brecht. I always felt the power of basics, telling the news in the marketplace, pointing at a picture with a stick, primitive storytelling. (2004 Personal int. 1)

The Commandant flies into a rage over his wife’s insinuation that Julietta might be innocent. The choreography that accompanies his song, “She Did It In Her Sleep,” is a travesty
of the rape. Now, the Marquise, the narrator, and the postmodern actor converge. A dance
carnavelesque, “She Did It In Her Sleep” begins with a gesture imitative of the Marquise’s
swoon before the Count. “She” lies on her back, kicking up her legs, subverting Colonel G—’s
presumption that she colluded in the act, a bit of slapstick. The tragic-comic image of the
Marquise flat on her back with her legs up also recalls early silent films in which the ruffian
ravishes the heroine. At the song’s end, “she” rises from the sofa and mimes sleepwalking, an
ironic reference to somnambulism, which was a popular Romantic era literary theme. Such
carnavalized satire is reminiscent of the comic grotesque described by Bakhtin in medieval
carnival. The dance reinforces the parodic tone of the music both of which undermine paternal
authority.

Colonel G—’s wife reads the anonymous printed reply to Julietta’s newspaper ad. In the
next movement sequence, the mother’s desire for Count F— is teased out of the text. She
performs a tango to the instrumental version of, “Morning of the Third.” Her fantasy dance of
vicarious pleasure with this newspaper suggests narcissistic tendencies that are otherwise
expressed as an utter disregard for her daughter’s emotional distress. This performed expression
of longing for Count F— is concomitant with her husband’s passion for their daughter.

The tango ends. The Colonel’s wife calls her husband’s attention to the newspaper
notice. The Commandant flies into a rage. Again, the narrator points with the stick at Mother
and Father while speaking the couple’s dialogue.

Then, the Commandant receives a letter from the exiled Marquise. She requests that the
mystery man, presenting himself at her father’s house, be sent on to V—. At the piano, the
Marquise sings this letter (“Julietta’s Response”). A transformation into Colonel G—’s wife takes place, identified by “Question Mark Walk.” She steps behind Mother. To suggest intimacy, Mother’s arm is put inside the arm of Father.

Colonel G—’s wife proposes a scheme. She asks her husband permission to go out to V—. She will determine by means of trickery, whether or not their daughter is telling the truth. The Commandant forbids her to do so. On the sly, Colonel G—’s wife, gets Leopardo to drive her out to V—. Here, the narrator removes the pin at the top of Mother’s frame so as to separate her from Father. Then, Mother’s frame is wheeled forward to represent the journey.

Colonel G—’s wife visits Julietta in V—. This scene, in which the mother cruelly manipulates her pious and despairing daughter, is characterized by complex dynamics between actor and object. The dialogue is deconstructed by means of gesture and song. Here, the three representations of the Marquise, either by actor, actor/doll, or piano body, converge. Similarly, the two representations of Colonel G—’s wife by actor or actor/puppet, converge. The Marquise doll is made to bow and prostrate itself before Mother. Then, the Marquise holds the doll aloft as if looking into a mirror, standing immobile during the pre-recorded song “Forgiveness?” This poignant moment is in contrast to the Marquise’s live vocal of “How? Where? When?” at the piano, heightening the parodic effect.

The gestural vocabulary includes previously used referents: the Marquise’s “Fear #1,” “Drawing,” and “Fear #2: Holding the Waist,” as well as the Colonel’s wife’s “Question Mark Walk” and “Hand Wringing.” New gestures are introduced. The Colonel G—’s wife becomes over excited in the act of lying, signified by “Fanning” Mother. Her assertion that Leopardo is
the culprit is destabilized by four gestures: “Mounting,” in which one leg is kicked high, swings over the top of the piano, and rests atop the closed lid; “The Vision,” in which the torso, head, and arms evoke a swan; “Leg Notice” calls attention to her condescending ways ; Avoidance” hints at the mother’s inner conflict. Performed simultaneously, “Mounting” and “The Vision” recall both rapist and victim. The Marquise’s responding gesture, “Resignation,” signifies gullibility.

Colonel G—’s wife finally admits to the hoax and begs in earnest for forgiveness. The Marquise’s deferential reply is reinforced by the gestures, “Inverted Prayer,” in which her head leans inside Mother’s frame and “Devotion,” in which the hands, with fingers outstretched, touch either side of Mother’s frame, as well as each other. It is as if the Marquise is praying. Irigarary has described this gesture: “A phenomenology of the passage between interior and exterior (161). Indeed, for the Marquise, this was an intimate, interior moment.

Responding, Colonel G—’s wife makes a heartfelt speech:

Now, I shall love and cherish you . . . I want no greater honor than your shame. If only you can love me again and forget the hard-hearted way in which I rejected you. (402)

Here, Mother’s arms are turned so as to make a heart shape. Then, the narrator, explaining that the Marquise reassures her, places the doll on Mother’s arm, suggestive of an embrace. This scene’s staging portrays Colonel G—’s wife in a harsh light. Lampe’s retrospective commentary:

We really exaggerated her. She put the Marquise on an emotional roller coaster when she gives her daughter the boot just after the exams. I do think we did allow for a lyrical
moment when she realizes that she wronged her daughter. The Mother says, “Can you still love me?” There is that intertwined thing. To speak in a Brechtian way, we showed all the conflicts within her. The mother is a much more contradictory character. She is so bound by social conventions. I had seen the mother as the family diplomat. But of course, even today, mothers often are figuring out how to smooth things out. (2004 Personal int. 1)

Triumphant, Mother, daughter, and the children return to M—. On the journey, Leopardo is embodied, “driving” Mother and the Marquise doll. To mark their arrival, the narrator leans the wheel against the bullet-shaped pedestal, and on the platform, turns the sofa around.

The Colonel’s wife leaves her daughter in order to sort things out with her spouse. The Marquise doll sits on the sofa awaiting her return. This interlude is denoted by the movement sequence, “Time Passing.” Colonel G—‘s wife enters with the surreal white plaster cup and saucer, now frothy with tulle, signifying the ladies’ tea. Her evident pleasure is denoted by the gesture, “Efficient Wife.” The Marquise, who wants to go to her father, hugs the doll to her breast.

The Commandant appears. The Colonel’s wife puts herself between her weeping husband and upset daughter. She goes to the kitchen to fix her man a meal. An impassioned Colonel G— reconciles with a compliant Julietta. Her delighted mother secretly observes the lover like reunion. This scene was staged so that critical distance is accomplished through the substitution of inanimate objects for human beings. There is subtle slippage between actor and object. The life-sized puppets, monumental relative to the doll, emphasize the Marquise’s powerlessness. The narrator is a discreet witness throughout. First, Mother is set between the
doll and Father. Colonel G—’s wife puts the doll in Father’s arm. Then, the narrator wheels Mother L where, the puppet’s arms are manipulated, suggestive of scraping vegetables and stirring a stew pot, a humorous moment. Next, the narrator describes the Colonel G—’s ardor, Julietta’s passivity, and her mother’s voyeurism. Here, the Marquise doll lying motionless on Father’s arm implies submissiveness. Mother is wheeled opposite Father and the doll to observe the goings on. Peeking her head around Father’s frame, the Colonel’s wife gaily addresses her spouse, now made aware that he is being watched.

In this scene, the actor was the narrator and did not embody the Marquise or Colonel G—. As Lampe pointed out retrospectively, “In the incestuous scene, again we used the doll. But “she” is outside” (2005 Personal int. 2). While the spectator watches the living actor “boldly put the ad in the paper” and create “good times for herself in V—“, it is the doll that takes on the business of willingly and summarily returning to the parental fold (Lampe 2005 int. 2). Further, unlike the scene in V— in which Colonel G—’s wife was represented by both the human actor and the puppet, here, the spectator observes the inappropriate behavior of a puppet, not a person, presumably with more detachment than if a human being had done so. This use of human simulacra recalls Tillis’ commentary: “The puppet, not being a living person, cannot be held responsible for its actions and words, yet these actions and words are not directly those of the puppet-artist, and so neither does he or she seem to bear responsibility for them. Thus the puppet is especially suited to the flaunting of social conventions and consequences” (33).

The family gathers for dinner. Father, with the Marquise doll resting in his arm, Mother, and Brother are set up around the table. The doll, relative to the three puppets, suggests the
family’s power structure. Standing behind each puppet and the doll, I speak their lines. The Commandant comes up with a solution to suit a worse case scenario in which the Marquise will continue to live with the family and the child will be adopted by the parents. Here, the Marquise takes issue with her father, a logical response in that by denying her motherhood, he is diminishing the power of her experience. Further, she doesn’t want to receive the mystery man by herself. To indicate her emotional shift, the doll is removed from Father’s arm and dangles from the tabletop. The Marquise stands opposite the doll as if looking into a mirror.

The next day, the abject Count F— appears before the Marquise and her mother. The mother calls for reconciliation. The Marquise appeals to Colonel G— to no avail. He orders the wedding take place the following morning. This scene features split-second character transformations, gestural deconstruction, puppetry, use of the piano as instrument and object, voiceover, and pre-recorded song. In order to evoke time and place, the neutral narrator plays eleven dissonant chords on the piano like clock strokes and sets the piano bench in front of the piano like a reception room divan. The Marquise responds to the Count’s entrance with the gesture, “Fear #1” yet is inner directed on the line, “Mother, I shall go mad” (27). Kleist’s text specifies that Count F— kneel before the Marquise, after which Colonel G—’s wife exhorts him to rise. This nuance was included in the staging. The mother’s call for resolution is rendered parodic by the song, “Forgiven, Forgotten.” The contrast between the unhappy daughter and her practical-minded, insensitive parents is heightened by the actor’s embodiment of the Marquise before the lifeless Father and Mother.
The family argues in favor of the marriage. The Marquise responds with a tantrum. Here, the actor embodies the Commandant, the Colonel’s wife, and the forestry official. The Marquise pulls the overlong white veil from inside the teacup. Transforming the veil into a coverlet, she reiterates “Slapstick Rape.” The white veil variously signifies purity, death, and the nuptials.87 Rising, the Marquise ritualistically wraps the sofa with the white tulle like a protective cocoon. This action recalls Howell’s commentary: “If a stick is a phallic object, a cloth is a vaginal thing.” (23). Indeed, at this moment, the sofa functions as a signifier for the Marquise. The repeated wrapping action makes visual the Marquise saying, “No!” over and over to herself.

The Commandant dismisses his daughter’s feelings as hysterical. Here, the sofa, or rather the Marquise, is unwrapped. Sticks laid on the divan represent the Count’s contract.

The wedding preparations follow. The instrumental theme, “Julietta,” underscores the action. The narrator steps off the platform with the veil. The Marquise doll is on the floor leaning against the bullet-shaped pedestal. Above the doll, the wheel tabletop is wrapped in the white tulle. One end of the fabric trails to the floor. The narrator, straightening out the veil suspended above the doll, evokes a bridesmaid at a noble wedding. Then, a transformation—the narrator moves towards the doll, and the Marquise raises the veil-draped wheel over her head—a strange bridal wreath! Momentarily, the doll and the living evocation of the Marquise are doubled. The music stops, contrary to the usual musical cliché, “Here Comes the Bride.”

87 Red was the customary color worn by German brides in Kleist’s era.
shotgun bride walks among the spectators. The wheel is placed vertically atop the bench adjacent to the front end of the piano. One end of the veil is pulled over the top of the wheel and the piano body. Once the entire piano is covered with tulle, the Marquise steps behind the keyboard and puts one end of the veil over her head. The pregnant bride image is complete.

Another transformation—the narrator plays “Minuet in A Minor” while simultaneously describing the ceremony.

The Countess bears a son. At the christening, the Count awards the mother money and makes her heir to his estate. The Colonel’s wife opens the house to him. Here, the narrator unwraps the white tulle from the piano and drapes it over and around the puppet frames surrounding the Marquise doll, a dollhouse image. Two sticks, representing the Count’s papers are placed on the “rooftop.” The draped tulle is drawn back on two sides signifying that the Count is welcome.

The Countess forgives Count F—. He asks her why she had perceived him as a devil when he finally confessed to his crime. Here, the Marquise, holding the doll aloft, explains that it was because she had seen him as an angel at the moment when they first met. This is the last speech in the show, but the performance is not quite over. The following is executed in a measured, ritualistic manner. Once more, the Marquise holds the doll opposite her as if looking into a mirror. Then, the doll is set down on the sofa. A beat. Standing beside the sofa, multiple selves are represented: actor, narrator, Marquise, and her doll image. Now, the Marquise doll is left behind to accommodate the text’s happy ending while the living evocation of the Marquise steps off the platform. She leaves.
The last scene of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* inspired this moment. The doll-wife, Nora, walks out on Torvald, the husband who belittles her. The Marquise/actor walks over to the piano and lifts the lid. Then, like an emerald out of a jewel box, she retrieves the bundle of green tulle symbolizing her soul. A beat. Then, the Marquise/actor walks over to the puppets. She stands before Mother, Father, and Brother. A beat. Then, she exits through the house. Blackout. My performance in these final moments is comparable to Barba’s and Savarese’s description of the traditional Japanese theatre actor’s transformation from character into an “intermediate state” so as to perform “absence” at the end of a performance (195).

The show took place at a momentous time in America. Even since the 9/11 disaster, security in New York City had been an issue. Further, the U.S. invasion of Baghdad started April 3, 2003, one week prior to the performance. The load-in at the consulate was scheduled for April 8. When Lampe and I arrived that morning, Haacke greeted us in a serious mood. The Vice Consul explained that the production might be cancelled at the last minute for security reasons. It was rumored that New York City’s terror threat rating level might to be raised to High Alert. If that were to occur, the Consulate would immediately be closed to all visitors. Presuming that all would be well, we proceeded with the load-in as planned. But the stress of the situation made us tense.

Mullins had fewer instruments than usual to work with due to voltage limitations in the auditorium. Yet her lighting plot for the show felt complete. The pastel lights and leaf patterned gobos used to evoke the garden at V— were particularly effective.
A fire alarm on the upstage wall behind the platform was distracting. I rummaged through my bags offering up various pieces of colored fabric to camouflage it, even the discarded *Marquise of O*— recital costume. Lampe recalled the fortuitous solution: “We had to cover that alarm on the back wall. We ended up putting the costume from the solo recital over it. I said, ‘Oh, stick it up there. That’s it!’ And there it was. There are these glorious concepts and choices and then there are these decisions that are pragmatic” (2004 int. 1).

Under the lights, the pink morning gown appeared to be floating on the wall—a poetic statement. On a personal note, I liked having the costume that I had worn in an earlier incarnation of the Marquise on stage with me during this performance. The dress was a reminder of the stimulating creative journey that I had taken with this character.

Other visual elements were set up in preparation for a tech run. But the center pivot on the shaft inside the bullet-shaped pedestal had been lost en route. Without it, the wheel could not turn. The battle and the wedding scenes would be compromised. Gioanni was sent off to a hardware store to buy another pivot while Lampe got on the phone to order two back up pivots in case Gioanni didn’t find the right size. But none of these pivots fit the shaft. Borowsky was called in to solve the problem. High anxiety!

The auditorium’s platform and single step configuration was different than the stage and multiple steps I had been rehearsing on at Regis High School, but I soon made the necessary spatial adjustments. Or so I thought. Meanwhile, I was exhausted. The tech rehearsal was going well until I slipped while stepping off the platform. I twisted my knee badly and worse yet, broke the big toe of my left foot. I could barely walk. The rehearsal had to be cut short. I
consulted my neighbor and friend Susan Weeks, a physician’s assistant. Weeks administered the homeopathic remedy, Arnica, to my knee, and tightly bandaged my toe. Even so, the pull in my knee was excruciating and my foot throbbed in pain.

At the dress rehearsal the following day, I was ready to work. Then, Gioanni arrived in tears. Earlier, at a Starbucks in Montclair, New Jersey, she was refused service because of her French accent. Apparently, the barista needed to express his patriotic support of American anti-French sentiment in the aftermath of France’s opposition to the U.S. government’s invasion of Iraq. Lampe, Mullins, and I were dumbfounded and furious.

On an amusing note, the production team had become absurdly fond of the Marquise doll. We had originally planned to shave the doll’s blonde curls and cover its head with a dark brown wig. So as to not to cut off the doll’s hair, we had tried dying it, but the synthetic hair proved dye resistant. Only at the dress rehearsal did Gioanni reluctantly shave the doll’s head and glue on a long curly haired brown wig from the Doll Hospital that approximated the hairstyle of the Marquise.

Borowsky arrived with a replacement pivot that fit the wheel and shaft. The production team, having encountered Murphy’s Law, looked forward to a trouble-free show the following evening.

The show went extremely well. For me, performing among the spectators, the space felt enlivened. Several scenes prompted strong audience response. The tension was palpable during

---

88 As a means of censoring France, on March 11, 2003, cafeteria menus in the U.S. House of Representatives’ office buildings were changed so that French fries were called freedom fries.
the invasion of the citadel, the assault, and the rape. The gynecological examinations provoked much laughter. The puppets were the source of much amusement, particularly Brother, as his arms and hands allowed for life-like movements: shaking hands, gesticulating surprise, the complacency of folded arms. Moving around the performance space with the doll and the wheel while singing A Cappella, “I Put the Shame on You,” I could feel that the audience sensed the Marquise’s vulnerability. During the reconciliation of father and daughter, the spectators’ growing awareness of the family’s dysfunction caused them to fidget and titter uncomfortably.

Lampe compared our handling of this scene with Rohmer’s film adaptation:

Rohmer has cut it. He doesn’t have the father slobbering all over his daughter. In the book, it’s totally graphic the way he kisses her. But we had that great alienation device of having the doll in the metal arm of the father puppet. So there’s this very abstract situation. I remember someone sitting next to her friend in the audience. In the video of the performance, you can see when they “got it.” They look at each other—appalled. (2004 int. 1)

The wedding scene was nerve-wracking for me to perform. I had to manipulate thirty feet of tulle and the wheel in and around the doll, the puppets, the pedestal, the piano and the spectators. The seemingly endless length of fabric happened to fall so that walking through the space I couldn’t see my feet.

Afterwards, a German beer and wine reception took place in the lobby of the Consulate. The audience feedback, including Haake and other German Consulate officials was extremely enthusiastic. Only then, did Lampe and I wish that critics had been invited. For me as a solo

---

89 Our staging of the ravages of war did not allude to current events. While I can’t presume to know what was in the minds of the audience, it is true that Germany officially opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq.
performer, the production had been a formidable technical challenge. But because Lampe is such an expert, positive-minded director, I was able to stay focused on the job at hand. The musical score was compelling. Mullins’ lighting was exquisite. Borowsky’s puppets were powerful. Gioanni was a first-rate stage manager. Certainly, we felt that our goal—to bring Kleist’s timely tale to life for an interested and informed audience—had been accomplished.
CHAPTER EIGHT

“The Marquise of O—” on Film:

Éric Rohmer’s Opium Tea Dreamer and Christoph Stark’s Schoolgirl in the Grass

This is no novel for you, my daughter! Unconscious?
What a shameless farce! All she did was shut her eyes!

— Heinrich von Kleist
(qtd. in Dyer (60f.)

This chapter comparatively considers two feature-length, film versions of “The Marquise of O—”: French born film director and writer Éric Rohmer’s (1920-) adaptation, Die Marquise von O— (1976) and German director Christoph Stark’s film, “Julietta,” (2001), which is loosely based on the novella.90 My interest is in determining to what extent these filmmakers, in translating Kleist’s text into the film medium, found new meaning and relevance so that, whenever appropriate, this analysis is read against the solo music theatre production. These two Kleist films, made twenty-five years apart, are necessarily subject to different socio-historic formulations. Inquiry into the films’ stylistic approach is not separate from understanding how the directors chose to situate themselves relative to Kleist’s authorial voice. Mary Rhiel, whose

90 Other representations of “The Marquise of O—” include American painter Frank Stella’s (1936- ) mixed-media collage panels, The Marquise of O— (2004), part of his series of painting and sculpture inspired by Kleist’s oeuvre; a ballet directed and choreographed by Vittorio Biagi, The Marquise of O—, presented at La Scala starring Oriella Dorella as the Marquise, Denus Gabyo as Count F—, and Biagi as the Commandant; Die Marquise von O —: Schauspiel by Ferdinand Bruckner (1891-1958); Marquesa of O—: Opera in Three acts, music by Elie Siegmeister, libretto by Norman Rosten, with vocal score in English, set in 1846 at the Mexican border, Julietta (1957), an opera in four acts by Heimo Erbse (1924-2005).
study of authorial subjectivity in West German Kleist films includes analysis of Die Marquise of O—, has argued that, “in literary films, the author-function operates as the means by which the film can organize its own appropriation by the viewer. In the films that bear his name, “Kleist” functions semiotically as a means of constructing spectator positions” (6). Following Rhiel, analysis of the author-function in Die Marquise von O— as well as Julietta is accounted for. In classic cinema, as Mulvey has pointed out, woman is represented as an object of the male gaze. Differences between the two films’ representation of Julietta and male desire bear mention. Since my musical score is integral to the theatre production of The Marquise of O—, particular attention is paid as to how music functions in these films. In the case of Julietta, this discussion also takes into account the story’s setting within the world of rave culture. Raves have been popular all over Europe and North America since the mid to late 80s and have spawned specific styles of music, dance, drugs, and fashion. Since the young protagonists of the film identify with this subculture, their actions and reactions need be read as not separate from that cultural phenomenon.

It is useful to consider certain terminology pertinent to film production. Film music may be diatomic, non-diatomic or metadiatomic. Diatomic music occurs within the narrative and is attributable to some visible source. The characters of the film can hear this music. Nondiatomic music is music that is not part of the narrative, is not attributable to a source, and is not heard by the characters in the film. Metadiatomic film music has no narrative source; it pertains to a secondary narrator (Gorman 22-23). Gorbman elaborated on French musician and critic Michel Chion’s definitions of soundtrack music:
(1) “empathetic” music, the sort most frequently heard on soundtracks, which participates in the characters’ emotions, vibrates in sympathy with their actions; (2) music of didactic counterpoint—nondiegetic music to signify a contrapuntal idea . . . anempathetic music, music, in relation to the intense emotional situation on screen (death, crisis, madness). . . (159)

Rohmer’s Die Marquise von O—, a German/French co-production, won the Special Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival as well as Best Foreign Language Film in 1976. While Rohmer’s other films are in French, his adaptation of Kleist’s novella used German actors speaking in their native language. This was Rohmer’s first feature-length, non-cyclical film. The film’s cinematography is by Spanish cinematographer, critic, and director Néstor Almendros (1930-92), who is famed for his work with Rohmer as well as with French film director François Truffaut. Notably, following Die Marquise von O—, in 1978, Alemendros won the Academy Award for Best Cinematography for Terrence Malick’s film, Days of Heaven.

Rohmer’s thematic affinities and filmmaking style are worth reviewing. Rohmer is a significant figure in French, post-war, la nouvelle vague (New Wave) cinema. Born Jean-Maurice Henri Schérer, he was originally a French literature professor and journalist. He adopted the pseudonym, Éric Rohmer, and from 1957 to 1963, was editor of the French film journal Cahiers du Cinéma, where his colleagues included the directors Jean-Luc Goddard and François Truffaut. Rohmer was much influenced his associate, French film critic and film theorist André Bazin’s phenomenological “cinema of realism” which rejected montage aesthetics (Angela Dalle Vacche 4-5). Rohmer was also literary critic for Revue du cinéma, Les Temps
modernes, La Parisienne, and Arts Editor-in-chief of La Gazette du cinéma. Rohmer collaborated with Claude Chabrol on a film study, Hitchcock (1957).

Typically, Rohmer's protagonists are intelligent people who fail themselves. He does not judge his characters. His work at times utilizes New Wave filmmaking strategies including hand-held cameras and realistic dialogue. Rohmer has incorporated literary references into his films including, Jules Verne in The Green Ray, Shakespeare in A Winter's Tale, and Pascal's Wagner in My Night at Maud.

Rohmer's first feature, Le signe du lion (The Sign of Leo) (1959), was followed by a film cycle, Six contes moraux (Six Moral Tales). Inspired by F. W. Murnau’s 1927 film, Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans, each of these films delves into the personal, emotional, or moral dilemmas of young people. Two of these films, Ma nuit chez Maud (My Night at Maud’s) (1969) and Le genou de Claire (Claire’s Knee) (1969), brought Rohmer international recognition.

It is worth noting that Kleist had been popular among German filmmakers in the 60s (Elsaesser New German Cinema 48). According to Rhiel, George Moorse’s Der Findling (1966), Volker Schlöndorff’s Michael Kohlhaas (1969), and Hans Jürgen Syberberg’s San Domingo (1970) each turned to Kleist, “inspired by the political events and activities of the student movement . . . the relationship of the individual to the oppressive structures of social authority was explored . . . the continuity of Germany’s past and present” (10). But as will be seen, Rohmer’s film is not about Germany. Rather, Die Marquise von O— is a continuation of the filmmaker’s realist agenda that pays homage to the author.

Rohmer creates distance in the telling of this moral tale. The film features medium shots that direct attention to the formal architecture, emphasizing the decorum and constraint of the period. His compositions are painterly. White is used for symbolic effect. Costumes and décor feature rich browns, greens, and ochres, reminiscent of German romantic works by Friedrich. Dalle Vacche has also cited works by French artists Fragonard, Jacques-Louis David, and Jean-Baptiste Greuze, and Delacroix, as well as Flemish painter Georg Friedrich Kersting, as visual sources. In several scenes, neoclassical busts and landscape paintings are visible behind the characters, suggesting their thoughts (Rhiel 12). Candles, doorways, and mirrors are also
significant. The mirrors literally reflect the characters’ conflict back to the spectator, recalling Breen’s comments on use of the mirror as a literary device: “. . . a mirror is not a simple reflector devoted to verisimilitude in its presentation of exterior form. The mirror which literature holds up to nature is not only looked at, but looked through. To see through a mirror there must be illumination from the lamp within the viewer so that he or she actually becomes a participant in the story by virtue of empathic identification” (13). Importantly, Dalle Vache has pointed out that the characters rarely do themselves look directly into these mirrors (6).

Rohmer has remarked, “The guiding principle of our adaptation was to follow Kleist’s text word for word” (7). He discussed his strategy for translating Kleist’s characteristically indirect discourse to dialogue in “Film and the Three Levels of Discourse”:

All the people I spoke to in Germany about my project to film The Marquise of O, book in hand, with no other script than the text itself, in an effort to maintain its integrity, threw up their hands and said, ”But what would you do with the indirect style?” To which I responded that I would merely take out the subjunctives in the German. My interlocutors then condescendingly explained to me that there is much more than a difference of mood between the two styles and that neither the words used nor the expressions and thoughts were the same. I objected that the same was true in French and that it had not prevented me from writing certain parts of my tales in the indirect style that I later transcribed, as was my plan here. “Yes,” they said, “but if Kleist used indirect discourse, he had his reasons.” “That is why I don’t want to use indirect discourse. It even is a preliminary script. If it had been in the direct style, it would have seemed theatrical. And the most difficult dialogues to speak are certainly the direct ones, because of this theatricality.“

The shooting confirmed my predictions beyond all hopes. The indirect passages, less, somber, less marked by interjections and metaphors of the period resemble real film dialogues. (89, 91)

It is useful to consider Rhiel’s assertion that, “the director’s pronouncements about his film
begin a process of constructing a relation between the spectator and the film, which in this case is characterized by creating a figure of authority though the proper name of Kleist.” (7). Indeed, Rohmer’s textual homage is furthered by means of inter-titles, quoting the novella, which appear before each significant plot change. These inter-titles, Gothic white letters on a black background, are the reverse of the printed page, reminding the spectator that this is an adaptation.

The primacy of the text is reinforced by an almost total absence of secondary sound. There are minimal camera movements and physical action. Rather, the conflict is mined through speech. The acting style, characterized by the use of significant gestures, is theatrical, even histrionic.

The opening credits of Die Marquise von O— are underscored with a martial fife and drum. This spare instrumental music subliminally signals that this is a war story. Then, the novella’s opening paragraph appears as an inter-title. The first scene takes place in a tavern. According to Scott, the tavern is a distinct site of public discourse:

Patterns of discourse are regulated through the forms of corporate assembly in which they are produced. Alehouse, coffee-house, church, law court, library, drawing room of a country mansion: each place of assembly is a different site of intercourse requiring different manners and morals. Discursive space is never completely independent of social place and the formation of new kinds of speech can be traced through the emergence of new public sites of discourse and the transformation of old ones. (24)

Indeed, the “manners and morals” of this tavern are determined by the exclusion of women. Here, the narrator’s first speech is divided up among several men, representative patriarchal voices. A barkeep prepares drinks at a bar behind which hangs a large rectangular mirror. He brings the drinks to a table of several men. At a second table, a chess game is in
progress. At a third table, an elderly man brandishes a newspaper in which is published the
Marquise’s notice. A close-up of the advertisement follows, “positioning the spectator as a
reader of Kleist” which, considering that this takes place in a men-only site, infers a male reader
(Rhiel 28). Another man remarks that the Marquise is “. . . a lady of unblemished reputation.”
Bemused, the first man reads the notice aloud to his companions. One of the chess players (Otto
Sanders) bears silent witness to “the derision of society” (Kleist 68).

Next, in a large parlor, the Marquise (Edith Clever) and her mother (Edda Seippel) appear
momentarily in a domestic tableau. They sit on either side of the space, creating a frame
indicating “symmetry and harmony,” that foreshadows the disruption that will separate them
(Rhiel 31). Then, the invasion begins. Colonel G— (Peter Lühr) announces to the panicked
women that he will defend the citadel and summarily leaves. The Marquise, her mother, the
children, and maidservants flee. Reaching a vine-covered archway, an artillery blast prompts the
mother and one servant to run off in one direction, while the Marquise, her children, and the
other servant take flight through the archway. The mother vainly waves a red scarf—a
significant gesture. Suddenly, the soldiers appear and wrestle the Marquise to the ground. The
next shot is of Count F— (Bruno Ganz), in a white uniform and cape, standing on a stone wall,
backlit. The Marquise looks up to see the Count, sword drawn, leap off the wall. Count F—
drives the men off and escorts her into a building. A carriage wheel leans against the wall.

In the novella, the rape takes place immediately after Count F— rescues the Marquise. In
Rohmer’s film, the event is delayed. The Count leads her down a flight of stairs into a cellar.
The camera follows their descent. The “claustrophobia and confinement” of this back stairway
recalls the use of stairs as a motif in the expressionistic German Kammerspielfilm Die Hintertreppe (Backstairs) (1921), directed by Leopold Jessner (Petro 176). In the cellar, the Marquise is reunited with her children and the maidservant. Interestingly, this is the only location in the film in which there is no mirror. Count F— requests a doctor, but the maidservant suggests that sleep, facilitated by a cup of poppy seed tea will restore her mistress. Count F—, walking up the stairs, brushes past a handsome young man leaning against the wall with an attitude of bemused curiosity. This is Leopardo (Bernhard Frey), who is sent off to obtain the sleeping potion. Rohmer commented on this alteration in the text in “Notes on the Direction”: “Let us hope that our solution will prevent [the spectator] from asking himself during the course of the film questions about the “how” of the matter—questions that will distract him from the real subject” (10).

For Rohmer then, “the real subject” is how, in the face of the disruption precipitated by wartime violation, the characters make the necessary concessions to recreate social order. Lampe and I too, did not allow for ambiguity in staging the rape. But while I performed in period dress, the deconstruction provided by my gestures, the puppets, and the music implied critical commentary.

In the film’s next scene, Colonel G— addresses his troops before the archway. Count F— surprises him from behind, claiming victory. This visualization metaphor highlights the older man’s vulnerability and anticipates his daughter’s violation. Colonel G— hands over his

---

92 The Kammerspielfilm (chamberplay film) was popular in Germany during the Weimar Republic, exploring personal stories about everyday people.
sword and is reunited with his wife. Count F— assures them that the Marquise is safe and that he will stand guard over her that night. Lantern in hand, he pauses to tuck in the sleeping soldiers, indicating that the lieutenant colonel genuinely cares about his troops. Certainly, our solo theatre production offered no such representation.

The film follows Count F— return to the cellar. He passes by the sleeping Leopardo, the children, and the maidservant. He pauses in the threshold of the next room. Then, he sees the drugged Marquise, resplendent in a shimmering, white nightdress, lit by candlelight. The bedclothes and drapes are a sensuous ruby red. On a table behind the bed is a large water basin. The drugged Marquise moans in her sleep. What or who is she dreaming of? Her pose is nearly identical to that of the sleeping female figure in “The Nightmare” (1781) by German-Swiss painter and writer Henry Fuseli (Johann Heinrich Füssli) (1741-1825). In Fuseli’s painting, an incubus sits on the stomach of the woman. A horse appears in the background. The effect is both erotic and demonic. In the film’s next shot, a close-up, Count F— takes in this scene of unguarded, available femininity. The scene ends abruptly. The spectator intuits what is going to happen next. In this way, the ellipse signifying the rape in the novella is represented. Rohmer does not show Count F— in the aftermath of the rape.

In contrast to Rohmer’s erotized female subject, in the solo theatre production, my neutral embodiment of the Marquise on the sofa was intended to distance the spectator from the event. Lampe and I were very deliberate about staging this moment. Our theatre production depicts Count F— as cynical. As shall be seen, in Julietta, Stark too, also shows his fallen “hero” afterwards, but in this representation, he is full of remorse.
Rohmer’s film resumes with the depiction of a lone soldier at daybreak playing reveille, a spare musical allusion that frames the rape as a wartime occurrence. This diatonic music infers that Count F— committed an egregious act because the Marquise was, at that moment that he took her, war booty. A gunshot wakes the Marquise, signifying the firing squad. The change in mood in the cellar from candlelit night to daylight is striking. Colonel G— enters, overjoyed to see his daughter. Sitting next to her on the bed, he wraps her in his voluminous fur-lined greatcoat in a fond embrace, recalling the off-camera rape of the prior evening. Then, the mother appears in the threshold and regards this intense reunion with delight, foreshadowing the overly sexualized father/daughter reunion in the scene that is to come.

Rohmer’s Marquise registers the extent of her distress immediately following the assault but by the next morning, she appears to be completely recovered. The theatre production revisits her fear in the aftermath of the assault by means of non-realistic gestures.

The film depicts the Russian general interviewing Count F— about the assault. Three Russian officers gathered around a map observe this interchange. Rohmer plays one of the officers bearing witness. The director’s momentary presence in the film implies that he has entered the world of the story yet, removed from the action of main characters, he is an impartial observer. Count F— denies having seen the soldiers’ faces. Behind him, the bust of a woman on a pedestal suggests that his thoughts are elsewhere. This sculpture consists of a head and shoulders only, implying that Count F—’s memory is selective, distanced from the full-bodied, unconscious woman he encountered the night before.
After the troops leave, the messenger reports Count F—’s false death to the family.

Rohmer commented on the problem of translating to film the scene in which the messenger’s reports Count F—’s false death to the family by means of an overlong sentence:

Dividing up the sentence would have meant playing with the natural speech of two centuries ago which was unknown to me and which I did not know how to manipulate. Instead, the text continues, at times off camera, throughout the entire scene. And is it so unrealistic for a soldier or a messenger to express himself concisely in such grave circumstances? (91)

This scene includes Colonel G—’s reaction to the Count’s presumed death. He moves off to the side, expressive of deeply felt emotion. This moment humanizes him. In our solo theatre production, I performed simultaneously as the messenger and as Count F—’s assailant. I did not embody Colonel G—’s response as it was not articulated in the text.

The family moves into town. In a sun-filled parlor, the Marquise paints a landscape. Her creative activity is reflected in a full-length mirror. What is she painting? Perhaps she has intuitively represented the view from her estate where she will soon seek sanctuary. The Marquise wears a white gown and red headscarf. Her clothing recalls her nightdress and bedclothes on the night of the rape. A red leather-covered book lying on a sofa is a reminder that she is part of a fiction. The Marquise’s daughter hands her mother a page of neatly executed calligraphy. Pleased with her child’s handiwork, she places the calligraphy on the easel next to her painting, suggesting a generational continuum while reinforcing the act of writing. The Marquise picks up the book and accompanied by the child and the maid, walks down the main

---

93 Delle Vacche asserted that the pictorial source for this moment is likely attributable to French painter Constance Marie Charpentier’s (1767-1849) portrait, Madesmoiselle Charlotte du Val d’Ognes (14).
staircase until, mid-stairs, she has a fainting fit. She sits down with the book beside her. This front stairs episode parallels the Marquise’s descent into the cellar with Count F—, who of course is the source of her indisposition.

Reflected in a large mirror above a mantle, the Marquise and her parents have tea. Colonel G—’s wife observes the Marquise reading the red book. Then, she lays the book down. Following the novella, the Marquise, lost in reverie, tilts a teacup on its side. Her father leaves the room with a sidelong glance, after which the women laughingly imagine a fantasy father that is a god, not a man. This moment was articulated in the theatre production through music and dance.

In the novella, Leopardo is identified solely as the groom, but in Rohmer’s film, his duties extend beyond the stable—he also attends in the drawing room and at table. In the position of house servant, Leopardo claims a somewhat higher status and is privy to the inner workings of the family. As such, he is representative of the male spectator, recalling Teresa de Lauretis’s commentary:

The male spectator’s identification with the protagonist allows him a point of entry into the film’s address, and allows the representation to replicate the process of sexual differentiation in the meaning it delivers. The male spectator’s position is the point from which the text is most intelligible; the representation constructs the ideal (gendered) spectator at the point of its address. (39)

Leopardo announces Count F—, who, wearing non-military dress, is first seen as mirror reflection, walking down a long hallway adjacent to the drawing room. Here, Colonel G— and the Marquise’s brother play chess. Now, the spectator realizes that the latter is the chess player
that had listened in on the conversation in the tavern. Why had he said nothing in her defense? The Marquise, seated on a burgundy sofa next to her mother, is sketching. Both women are dressed in white. Count F— proposes. A large harp in a corner subtly evokes the music of the Marquise’s soul. Colonel G— responds standing next to a fireplace above which a mirror reflects the goings on. The brother’s gesture, crossing his arms, is telling. Count F— informs the family that he is ready to abandon his duties.

In the novella, Count F— prepares his military dispatches in the servant’s quarters. In here, the Count sits on a large traveling trunk in front of the house to do so. Colonel G— remarks, “You are expediting your business on an inappropriate table.” Of course, his unconscious allusion is to Count F—’s transgression in a makeshift cellar bedroom.

Evening falls. In the drawing room, Leopardo puts a candle down on a table beside the Marquise, bent over her needlework. The wooden harp is visible behind her. Here, and at dinner, during which Count F— recounts his convalescence, the Marquise’s head is covered with a black textured veil, alluding both to her violation and the muddied swan. Leopardo, waiting at table, is privy to this scene.

Having received assurances that the Marquise will not marry anyone else, Count F—’s leave-taking is unduly affectionate. The family is uncomfortable with his openhearted expression—a comical moment. But the scene belies the truth of the situation. Count F— appears to be a passionate man in love rather than a rapist eager to cover up his crime. Once again, Leopardo is witness to this decisive shift in the Count’s relationship to the family.
The next scene takes place some weeks later in the Marquise’s rooms. The Colonel’s wife notices her daughter’s pregnant profile reflected in a mirror. The mother takes in the truth of this secondary image. No mirrors are present in the following scenes in which the Marquise is examined. The doctor examines the Marquise in the drawing room. He is minimally invasive, placing his hands gently over the Marquise’s belly. The midwife’s exam is set in the Marquise’s room, suggesting an intimate, feminine domain. Her bed is covered and draped in white veils. The midwife, dressed in white, touches the Marquise’s stomach more insistently. As in the novella, the mother storms out, and the Marquise asks the midwife about the possibility of a virgin birth.

The film acknowledges the Marquise’s fragile mental state and her mother’s fury. In a typically Kleistian gesture, the Marquise falls to her knees crying, “I’ll go mad!” Later, she cries, “Mother, I shall go mad!” off screen. Now, the spectator is witness to the enraged mother’s reaction: Colonel G—’s wife pulls back her arms in a gesture of refusal and rejection.

Leopardo delivers the Colonel’s letter to the Marquise. Frantic, she runs down the main staircase to her father’s rooms. Colonel G— wears a voluminous black robe, visualizing his dark mood as well as conjuring up an image of a judge. Rohmer used a close-up of the Commandant reaching for and firing the pistol followed by a medium shot of him standing over his daughter (John Gerlach 84). The deliberate tempo—he fires off his pistol, his wife faints, he fans her—furthers the melodrama. The Marquise’s departure follows the book: she dresses her children; the brother orders her to give them up; she rejects his directive. In the coach with her children, the Marquise’s brown cloak and affectionate gestures suggest an earth mother’s inviolability.
The film does not account for the Marquise’s renovation of her estate. The estate is depicted as a sanctuary. In two garden scenes, a feminine ethos is implied. The Marquise, in the full bloom of pregnancy, pauses in her knitting to contemplate an idyll: her daughter, crowned with flowers, puts blooms in a basket. The blooms signify her mother’s fecundity. The Marquise confides in her, saying, “I am mad to tie myself to the father of the child.” In a second garden scene, the Count, having scaled a wall so as to renew his proposal, finds her alone, reading.

Leopardo delivers the newspaper to Colonel G—’s wife in which the anonymous answer to the Marquise’s advertisement is published. Later in M—, the Colonel’s wife, dressed in red, reads the red-leather covered book. Colonel G— and his wife receive the Marquise’s letter requesting the man in question should be sent out to V—. Furious, Colonel G— tears up the letter and commands his wife to have nothing to do with their daughter. But Colonel G—’s wife goes off to tell Leopardo to prepare the carriage for the following morning. Slipping him some money, she tells the servant to keep the trip a secret from everyone, “even the Governor.” This particular is not in the novella.

Colonel G—’s wife arrives in V—. The camera lingers on the groom observing the tearful reunion at the gate. In the house, the red book is open on a table. The Colonel’s wife goes through with her lie—Leopardo has confessed. The gullible Marquise stands at the window saying, “The night the garrison was taken. He was there.” This is the truth. The groom is a real contender. The two women make amends.
On the return trip, Mother and daughter share a laugh over Leopardo’s “broad shoulders.”

Here, a point of view shot shows the groom wearing a tall hat, from the back, a phallic image. The women go on with their joking. There is a second point of view shot of Leopardo turning around, suggesting that he has overheard them. In 2002, film critic Tamara Tracz pointed out that this sequence draws attention to the meanness of this servant/master relationship: “The characters treat Leopardo like a thing . . . Conversely, the filmmaker shows Leopardo to be human and unworthy of such treatment. Such a comment is startlingly overt for a Rohmer film, and more surprising coming as it does directly after such a moving scene of mother/daughter reconciliation” (www.sensesofcinema.com). I would also argue that such socially disdainful behavior is in keeping with a mother who is capable of deception and a daughter who is ready to capitulate for the sake of social form.

Returned to M—, the mother goes off to explain things to her husband. Then, she and the daughter wait for Colonel G— to apologize. Rohmer commented on the difficulty of working with Kleist’s direct discourse in this scene:

As the rehearsals progressed, we floundered more and more in an atmosphere resembling that of the “théâtre du boulevard.” I knew that hinting at an action off camera and the father’s expected appearance at the back door were not enough to create this very trivial atmosphere. All of the sudden, I understood. “It’s the direct discourse! That’s why it’s so difficult to say!” Not this direct discourse of grand, pathetic tirades, marked by an appropriate eloquence, but rather an effort at verisimilitude as it was understood in the theat[r]e of the 1800s, and which seems naïve to us today. But I had resolved to keep all of the text. This “natural” part had to be conveyed, as had the artificial parts of other sequences. It was more difficult, but we managed, I think, by refusing to fall into its traps. We used a diction that was more sensitive to the musical quality of the words than to their meaning and that reestablished the lofty style of this falsely colloquial scene. (91-92)
Considering that Rohmer wanted the actors to emphasize the “the musical quality of the words,” it is probable that he decided against a typical film score on that grounds that it would distract from the primacy of the language.

Colonel G—’s wife instructs Leopardo to order a meal for the Commandant. But in the novella, it is she that goes to the kitchen, not the servant. Now, the father/daughter reconciliation scene takes place in the Marquise’s bedroom. Prior to his arrival, the Marquise sits at a dressing table before a mirror. This is the only time in the film that a character looks directly at their mirror image. What truth is reflected in her eyes? Perhaps, if only for a moment, she has an insight into the family dysfunction that is about to be played out. Irigaray questions the efficacy of the mirror as an effective method of representation:

For relations among subjects have always had recourse, explicitly or more often implicitly, to the flat mirror, that is, to what privileges the relations of man to his fellow man. A flat mirror has already subtended and traversed speculation. What effects of linear projection, of circular turning back onto the self- (as the) same, what eruptions in signifying-points of identity has it entailed? What “subject” has ever found in it, finally, its due? What “other” has been reduced by it to the hard-to-represent function of the negative? A function enveloped in that glass—and also in its voice of reflections—where the historical development of discourse has been projected and reassured. Or again, a function assigned to the role of “matter” an opaque and silent matrix, a reserve for specular(riza)tions to come, a pole of a certain opposition whose fetishist dues have still not all been paid. To interpret the mirror’s intervention, to discover what it may have kept suspended in an unreflected blaze of its brilliance, what it may have congealed in its decisive cut, what it may have frozen of the “others” flowing, and vice versa of course: this is what is at stake.

Thus it was necessary both to reexamine the domination of the specular and the specularative over history and also—since the specular is one the irreducible dimensions of the speaking animal—to put into place a mode of specularization that allows for the relation of woman to “herself” and to her like. What presupposes a curved mirror, but also one that is folded back on itself, with its impossible reappropriation “on
the inside” of the mind, of thought, of subjectivity. Whence the intervention of the speculum and of the concave mirror, which disturb the staging of representation according to too-exclusively masculine parameters. For these latter exclude women from participation in exchange, except as objects or the possibility of transactions among men. (154-55)

The Colonel’s wife lights her way to her daughter’s room with a candle. She looks through the keyhole at her husband tenderly kissing and caressing her passive daughter.

The scene on the morning of the third closely follows the novella. Leopardo announces Count F—. He again wears his white uniform. The Marquise, seeking escape, flies to the window like a trapped bird. In a Kleistian gesture, she sinks down on a sofa, the Count at her feet. The Colonel’s wife calls for forgiveness. Here, the Count kisses the hem of her dress. Colonel G— is about to strike Count F—. Instead, he places his hand on the younger man’s shoulder in a gesture that signifies arrest. Interestingly, this gesture is can also be interpreted as paternal affection

The novella states, “Her father, to whom it seemed obvious that she was in a hysterical frame of mind, declared that she must keep her word” but here, the father stops short of calling her hysterical (Kleist 111). At the wedding ceremony, the Marquise again wears the same dark veil that recalls the muddied swan. Following Kleist’s text, the she focuses on a large canvas above the altar depicting Lucifer’s fall from Heaven (Dalle Vacche 13).

In the final scene, Count F— having visited the Marquise, her family, and his infant son, leaves. The Countess sits alone on the sofa, crying. Count F—, walking down the hall, hears her. The spectator sees his reaction reflected in a mirror. He hurries back to her. Rohmer has moved Count F—‘s anecdote about the swan in his fever dream from an earlier point in the
novella to this, the film’s final moment. As Count F— relates the anecdote, the Countess bends forward, revealing the line of her neck, reminiscent of the swan. Hearing the story, Julietta embraces him, indicating her genuine forgiveness. The end credits are underscored with a snare drum, completing the martial musical frame.

Rohmer explained why Kleist’s text translated successfully to film:

First because of the dialogues of the future film were already worked out in a thoroughly untheatrical form. They could, I think, be projected smoothly onto the screen since they were written in direct speech or, when in direct speech, were easy to transpose.

Second, because the narrator refrains from giving the slightest indication of the characters’ internal processes. Everything is described from an external standpoint and viewed with the same lack of emotion as through a camera lens. We can only suspect the characters’ motivations through the descriptions of their behaviors. The film therefore is not at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the tale since the narration at no point exploits the possibilities for introspection.

Third, because Kleist offers us information about his characters’ habits, movements and expressions with extreme precision, better than the most conscientious scriptwriter.

Like Rohmer, Lampe and I followed the text closely our solo theatre adaptation. We also used classical imagery as source material. But our production also pays homage to Brecht as well as a variety of pop music sources.

---

It is worth mentioning how *Die Marquise von O*— was packaged. The videotape’s front cover features a three-quarter length shot of the Marquise, her head covered by a white veil, apparently in flight from Count F—. Behind her, the Count peers through a dark curtain opposite a naked cherub on a pedestal. The back cover is a production still in the cellar of the citadel the morning after the rape. Julietta, seated in Colonel G—‘s lap is covered with her father’s fur cloak. His arms are wrapped around her in a gesture that can be interpreted as paternal or otherwise.

Reception to Rohmer’s “realist” film was mixed. According to film critic Renny Harrigan, an Upper East Side audience in New York City responded to *Die Marquise von O*— with laughter, presumably due to the actors’ emotionality, a quality unfamiliar to most American filmgoers (3). *New Yorker* film critic Pauline Kael was not impressed. She asserted that Rohmer “treated” the novella “as if it were an official nineteenth-century stage classic, to be given a wooden, measured reading . . . a historical work re-created for educational television” (67). Rohmer “isn’t the director to bring us Kleist’s hero” (Kael 67).95 I argue that Rohmer’s interpretation has more aesthetic resonance than typical PBS fare and that since Kleist constructed Count F—as a character whose heroism is relative to the darker aspect of his nature, Kael did not do a close reading of the text.96


Director and screenwriter Stark’s German language, 93 minute film, *Julietta*, uses the theme of Kleist’s novella in the telling of a coming of age story. Screenplay is by Stark and Jochen Bitzer. Cinematography is by Jochen Stablein. Music is by Ballistic Affair and DJ Fetisch.

The director’s background: according to German Films and Marketing GmbH, Stark was born in 1965 in Esslingen, Germany and studied film at the Academy for Television and Film (HFF/M) in Munich. Stark worked in London on music videos and in advertising. In addition to directing, he is also a screenwriter and editor. He wrote two screenplays for the television series *Die Feuerengel* (1996/1997) as well as for the feature film *Der Baer ist los!* (1998). Stark, working with Alex Berner, edited trailers for documentary and feature films including the *House of Spirits* and *Maybe - Maybe Not*. Prior to *Julietta*, Stark directed *In the Ghetto* (1999) and *Das suendige Maedchen* (TV, 2001). Following *Julietta*, Stark has continued as a writer and director of German television films including, *Die Rückkehr* (2002), *Der Vater Meiner Schwester* (2005), and *Die Wut Blöch* (2006).

As the first ten minutes of this one hundred-minute film was filmed on location during the Berlin Love Parade 2001, it is important to review the socio-cultural significance of this event. The Love Parade is an annual festival to celebrate electronic music culture held in July that is attended by hundreds of thousands of German and European youth. The Love Parade originated in Berlin in 1989 soon after the Berlin Wall came down and has taken place almost

---

97 *Julietta* is a Beta Film presentation of a Worx/Berlin production in co-production with ZDF and Arte. Produced by Nico Hoffmann, Bettina Reitz, and Sascha Schwingel.
every year since. Similar celebrations have occurred at several cities around the world. Love Parade music includes Trance, House, Techno, Drum N’ Bass, and Schranz music. Masses of people dance euphorically to sound systems mounted on dozens of trucks, some of which include feature dancers. Leading DJ’s from Germany and countries around the world officiate. Since the Love Parade is a response to German reunification, Stark, by situating the story in context with that celebration, has called attention to the social upheaval occasioned by this significant political event.

While diegetic music in the film creates an illusion of reality, Stark’s rapid camera movement style is typical of pop music videos. Bright, primary colors are featured. The acting style does not incorporate Kleistian gestures or the intentional theatricality of Rohmer’s film. Unlike Rohmer’s adaptation, there are no explicit references to Kleist as author, or to other historical and cultural references that might relate the film to its original context.

The story is that of eighteen-year old Julietta Schumann (Lavinia Wilson), a university student from a wealthy family in Stuttgart. She and her girlfriends head off to Berlin to attend the Love Parade. During the opening credits, theme music underscores the Love Parade in progress. Then, the opening shot is a close-up of Julietta’s eye, as she wakes up on the train, suggesting that the tale is going to be told from her point of view. But this shot misleads. The spectator observes her looking out the window of the train, a fresh-faced girl. But arriving on the platform, she is transformed by a black wig and makeup into a young woman ready for action.

---

98 Schranz is a German-based style of Techno music featuring bass-heavy kick drum, driving percussion, and synth noise.
The limitations of her suburban world are left behind. Liberation, as represented by the city, is before her.

Julietta meets up with her boyfriend, Jiri (Matthias Köberlin), a part-time medical student and taxi driver. Julietta and Jiri take drugs and head into the massive crowds partying to the pounding music. When Julietta enters into this immense outdoor event, she becomes, to all intents and purposes, a participant in the world of rave culture, so it is worth investigating this phenomenon. This is a social universe in which one dances continuously to electronic music, often combined with drug-taking, most commonly, the drug, Ecstasy, engenders feelings of liberation from the self and unification with the collective body (McRobbie 418). According to Pini: “rave could be seen as the representation of a different kind of politics. This politics is not one concerned with ‘changing the world’, but rather with the constitution of a particular mind/body/spirit/technology assemblage with makes for alternative experiences of the self” (118). In considering Julietta’s subjectivity, it is interesting to note that, in a liminal space in which techno music occurs, women ravers “dissolve social divisions based upon sex, sexuality, age, race and class” (Pini 118). Julietta is part of this ecstatic world in which women share with men the possibility for transgressing boundaries. This moment, according to Pini, “represents less the escape of mind from body than the absorption of the individual into a wider body” (124). Julietta, through drug taking and proximity to the mass of bodies in motion, experiences freedom from conventional gender and class expectations.

After dancing with her friend on a Love Truck moving through the crowd, Julietta and Jiri break into a closed U-Bahnhof. They fool around on the vast, empty platform. In a photo
booth, the couple documents their bad behavior, underscored by a song. Two policemen on patrol appear. Jiri grabs the pictures as he and Julietta make a run for it. They successfully escape by running back into the crowd, but lose sight of each other.

Julietta, stoned, wanders through the partying crowd. Day turns to night. She joins other revelers in a public fountain. She dances with masked men—death and the devil. Hallucinating, she sees a woman pushing a stroller along in the water. Julietta collapses. Silence. A handsome young ambulance driver, Max (Barnaby Metschurat) saves her from drowning. Sound returns. He carries the semi-conscious girl to a secluded grassy place next to a river. Standing, she speaks briefly, and then faints. Max unsuccessfully attempts to revive her. Then, he pulls off her pants, removes her wig, and rapes her. Afterwards, there is a shot signifying the event—a boat docked under the arch of a bridge. Then, Max returns to his buddy in the ambulance.

In this scene, Stark recalls the novella in that Julietta “falls” but otherwise the event is very different: Max saves Julietta from a drug-related drowning, not a gang attack; the rape takes place outdoors. Like Ganz as Count F—, Max wears white, but unlike his depiction of the rape, Stark does not allude to the ellipse that is central to the novella’s structure. Since the wig is the means by which Julietta intentionally had masked her real person, it is interesting that Max returns her to that state before violating her. By force, he has access to Julietta’s soul in a way that her boyfriend does not.

The next morning, Julietta awakens to find that Max has prepared tea and fruit for her. The young men drive her to the train station. En route, she plays a CD—Max’s music. At the station, she bids a hasty farewell to Jiri, and returns with her girlfriends to Stuttgart. Meanwhile,
Max, backing up the ambulance, has accidentally damaged Jiri’s moped parked behind him. A fight ensues and the two are hauled in to the police. While at the station, they become friends. Max takes an apartment for his production studio across an airshaft from Jiri’s place. Visiting Jiri, Max sees the pictures taken in the photo booth and learns that his victim from the Love Parade is Jiri’s girlfriend. The dented moped, a metaphor for the cab driver’s violated property—his girlfriend, is comparable to the swan image in the novella. The contest in this film is between these two young men, not Juiletta’s father and a younger rival.

In school, some weeks later, Julietta confides in a girlfriend that she is pregnant and assumes that the Jiri is the father. Intending to tell her parents, she arrives at their upscale home only to discover her mother is having an affair. No sooner does the lover leaves, than her father shows up bearing gifts for his wife. Reflecting on this sham of a marriage, Julietta begins to question the efficacy of male/female relationships.

Julietta, in red leather, drives her parents’ car back to Berlin. Looking for Jiri, she runs into Max. He is evasive and unfriendly. She follows him into his red painted production studio. She eats an orange. Together they go looking for Jiri, among the taxi fleet, but as he is snoozing in his cab, he doesn’t hear them. Julietta and Max go out for a bite but she gets nauseous, a reminder of her situation. Max’s wife Maria calls. Max gives Julietta his apartment keys. Here, she sees a picture of Max with his family. By now Stark has completely left the plot of the novella behind. The Chinese food scene corresponds to the Rohmer’s scene on the main stairs.

Max goes off with his friends to a bowling alley for a night of male bonding. In a beer-swigging stunt, the young men strap themselves to bungee cords that are attached at one end of
their respective lanes. They race down their lanes, simultaneously pulling away from their cords. Even as they grab for the beer at the end of the lane, they reach the end of their tether and are pulled back up the lanes, commentary on their arrested emotional development. Underscored by Bossa Nova music, Max arrives home drunk. Maria is furious. Max cries. They attempt to make love but he feels too guilty to follow through. By morning, he arrives outside his studio. Meanwhile, Julietta plays his CD. Hearing the music, Max turns away. Here, the diagetic music on the stereo repeats the underscore for the Love Parade.

Julietta, in a reckless mood, sets a wood plank down between the two men’s apartments over the airshaft, symbolic of her precarious circumstances. Below is the abyss. Julietta scurries over the plank. Once in Jiri’s apartment, she cleans up the place. Then, a drug dealer shows up. Apparently, Jiri has a debt problem. The dealer trashes the apartment. Meanwhile Jiri has got a new girl. Max goes back to his studio and Julietta asleep, a reference to the rape. She wakes up. They fight. Maria, suspecting that Max is having an affair, appears with her son. Julietta and Max take off in her parents’ car.

That night, Max is DJ at a club. Here, Julietta dances among the crowd. She notices the drug dealer and then sees that Jiri is about to enter the club. She attempts to warn him, but he disappears. Julietta, returning to the dance floor, looks at Max in a new way. At this point, it is interesting to consider Gorbman’s assertion concerning “melodrama’s predilection for classical musicians,” that is, men of supposed “depth and passion” (151). While Max is not a classical musician, it is arguable that, as Julietta becomes attracted to Max on the basis of his vocation, Stark is playing on that concept.
At sunrise, Julietta and Max go swimming. The moody natural setting is a departure from the urban cool that Julietta aspires to and the suburban chic of her parents that she rejects. The two race off the dock into the water—an innocent moment. Afterwards, on the dock, Julietta initiates sex. The underscore changes from romantic to melancholy. Max, feeling guilty, turns away. Returning to his studio, Max confesses to the rape. Julietta walks the plank to Jiri’s place and hides in the bathroom. Jiri arrives, needs to use toilet, but she won’t let him in. He urinates on a plant in the stairwell. Then, Jiri and Julietta make up, seen from Max’s view across the airshaft.

Underscored by Rock music, Julietta sells her father’s car. The score continues as Julietta listens to music on headphones so that it on the significance of the Rohmer’s book. Julietta becomes friendly with Maria, who gives her a stroller. She prepares dinner. Max, watching her chop vegetables from his window, plays his techno music, cranking the volume so that she will hear it. Julietta responds by playing Edvard Greig’s opera, “Arabian Dance” loudly. Here, conflict is represented by the war between two kinds of music, which bears out Gorbman’s assertions: “Symphonic concert music aligns with respectability, repression; in the other column goes lowbrow music, desire, sexuality” (152). Max switches off his music, angering Julietta. She walks back over the plank wielding the chapping knife. They fight about the rape.

Julietta’ parents come to Berlin to see her. Rock music. There is a nasty confrontation in which nothing is resolved. Jiri, on returning from his latest conquest, gives Julietta the plant he had sullied as a present, but she doesn’t realize that his gesture is less than it should be. She has prepared a formal candlelight dinner. She shows him the money she has gotten for the car. Jiri,
seeing the stroller, learns that she is pregnant. Jiri, assuming paternity, is pleased. He brings Max over the plank to tell him the news. Max confesses. Jiri beats him up but accidentally strikes Julietta. When Max leaves, Jiri offers Julietta cocaine to ease her pain. As if that would help! Realizing that Jiri is not capable of stepping up to the situation, furious, she hides in a bathroom. For this modern-day Julietta, there is no beautiful estate to which she may retreat. Jiri breaks down the door, but she has escaped out the window.

Underscored by dramatic music, Julietta wanders the streets trying to come to terms with her situation. She goes to see Maria. Then, she meets up with her parents in the lounge their hotel. In two separate, glass elevators, the parents, both wearing white hotel robes, descend to the lounge, signifying their isolation and estrangement. But they greet Julietta affectionately, after which the cuckolded husband kisses his wife in a gesture of forgiveness and reconciliation. There follows an intense conversation indicating that the parents’ are fully supportive of their daughter.

Max goes back to the scene of the crime—the fountain. Morning comes. The fountain goes on. Max walks into the water as an act of purification. Oddly, Max, not Julietta, embodies the symbolic action of Kleist’s swan. He turns himself into the police, a reminder of his earlier visit to the station. Meanwhile, Jiri shows up at the hotel. He mother watching approvingly as Julietta gives him the brush-off. But the parents resume fighting—nothing has changed. But like the Marquise, the daughter has returned to the parental fold.

Julietta goes to the police station and, in short order, forgives Max, presumably because, like Count F—, he has public admitted guilt. Julietta and Max go off together in a soft focus,
long shot underscored by a cloying, English language song, “Love Can Change So Much.” Kleist is mentioned in the final credits.

The promo for Julietta on the German language DVD features a still of Julietta and Max making love on the dock. The caption aptly reads, “It is not what you think.” On the reverse side, Julietta appears in her Love Parade regalia. The English language caption reads, “Ready to party.”

The fact that a German filmmaker chose to situate Kleist’s story in post-unification Germany indicates that a literary classic is relevant in the twenty-first century. However, lacking the real social imperative of early nineteenth century mores, the film’s ending is highly improbable.

Rather than use a single orchestral underscore, following the traditional dramatic film score, Julietta mixes songs and instrumental music from various sources to create a musical collage, or composite score (K. J. Donolly 155). The diagnostically-motivated music during the parade, in the club scene, and at Max’s studio provides atmosphere. The non-diagnostic music in the last scene seems reductive and solipsistic. My agenda for the musical score for The Marquise of O— was in part, social commentary, but perhaps more importantly, through adding a secondary female authorial voice, I wanted to recuperate Julietta’s voice. In contrast, the music for Julietta belongs in rave culture.

Stark’s Julietta is literally a schoolgirl, hardly comparable to the mature woman suggested in the novella that is so aptly embodied by Clever in Rohmer’s film. Further while Julietta is depicted as a student, she neither paints nor reads, so there is no indication of a deeper
sensibility. It is also worth noting how Stark constructed the parents relative to Colonel G—and his wife. Starks’ twenty-first century father, Paul Schumann, is an economically successful man. He readily forgives his wife’s infidelities and ready to participate in solving his daughter’s predicament. But there is no intimation of dysfunction in his relationship to Julietta. As for Julietta’s mother, there is no scene in which she vents her fury and her child. Instead, the focus is on the parents’ dysfunctional marriage and the daughter’s coming to terms with the imperfect world of adulthood. Ultimately, Stark is, like Rohmer, concerned with ‘the stabilization of social relations within the family’ (Rhiel 121).

Julietta does not situate rape as a wartime occurrence. However, it is arguable that participants in the mega-dance phenomenon of Love Parade exist in a heightened state that is comparable to war. Both Rohmer and Stark represent rape as an inappropriate expression of desire that leads to the rapist falling in love with the victim. In both films, the victim forgives their assailants because they publicly own up to their crime. Whether or not portraying rape as a forgivable offence is justifiable—whether in the name of a faithful “realistic” rendering of a classic text or in a contemporary setting, is a matter of debate.
CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion: When Tall Letters Collapse

If all people had green glasses instead of eyes they would be bound to think that the things they see through them are green—and they would never be able to decide whether the eye shows them things as they are or whether it isn’t adding something to them belonging not to them but to the eye. It is the same with our minds. We cannot decide whether what we call truth is truly truth or whether it only seems so to us. (421)
— Heinrich von Kleist, from a letter to Wilhelmine von Zenge, March 1801

Several years before two commercial airliners flew into World Trade Center Tower I and II in New York City, Michel de Certeau considered the metaphorical power of those enormous twin structures:

On this stage of concrete, steel and glass, cut out between two oceans (the Atlantic and the American) by a frigid body of water, the tallest letters in the world compose a giant rhetoric of excess in both expenditure and production . . . The 1370 foot high tower that serves as a prow for Manhattan continues to construct the fiction that creates readers, makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilizes its opaque mobility in a transparent text.

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city’s grasp. One’s body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law, nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors and spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Dedaleus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was “possessed” into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more. (91-92)

While de Certeau muses on the multitudes below, he is also cautious:
Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth, crowds
that, though visible from on high, are themselves unable to see down below? An Icarian fall. On the 110th floor, a poster, sphinx-like, addresses an enigmatic message to the pedestrian who is for an instant transformed into a visionary. It’s hard to be down when you’re up. (92)

Of course, those “two tallest letters in the world” are no more. The mythic events that unfolded on September 11th, 2001 have rendered de Certeau’s consideration of that panoptic view irrelevant. It is all too easy to remember the day. Mine is the remembrance of a New Yorker:

The television screen is the Eye from which, morning coffee cup in hand, I watched the prow of Manhattan on fire. The commentator reported on the distant view. I was transfixed by these images of smoke, flames and fluttering papers. Prior to September 11th, I had been “temping” at several firms in lower Manhattan. It was only by chance that at that moment, I was not making a hasty exit from the offices of Brown and Wood on the 57th—59th floors of Tower I. Instead, I was very lucky to be some 80 blocks north, watching people, neither gods nor voyeurs, jumping from the upper floor windows, not flying above, but returning to the city’s grasp. When Tower II fell at an implausible speed, transforming into a furious rolling cloud, it was as if the whole city screamed as one. Not a fiction. Readers ran away from the text in every direction: uptown on Manhattan streets, across the Brooklyn Bridge and the Manhattan Bridge, onto ferries and small boats that moved out into the water. Then, Tower I repeated the gesture, unleashing a second swirl of hell. Nearly three thousand souls arose—or what?

That afternoon, having finally turned off the TV, I sat in an Upper Westside café. I watched the constant, pure flow of humanity, still headed uptown, attempting to get away from
the catastrophe. The quiet was eerie. Buses were free, filled to overflowing with traumatized riders. As the days went by, the enormity of the occurrence brought a different, deeper sense of shock and mourning to the city. Like many New Yorkers, I stood on line to give blood, an action that felt futile. Along with other volunteers, I made sandwiches for the rescue workers. With no particular goal in mind, I walked around the town. To me, the American flags draped everywhere seemed like ever so many Band-Aids on a worrisome wound. Soldiers with M-16s were positioned on street corners and subway entrances eyeballing the nervous, passing crowd. The firehouse memorials were heartrending. At the Armory, I watched the loved ones of the missing, coming and going. I studied the smiling snapshots of “Have You Seen?” posters that were taped up on buildings, phone booths, and light poles. A cellist bowed the music of tragedy. I had no interest in sneaking past the barricades to witness that world apart below 14th Street. But at night, I heard the trucks headed uptown taking all analyzable evidence away. It took five days for the acrid smell to arrive, blowing through my open window. It dissipated six weeks later.

In the following months, like many New York City-based artists, I made a piece responding to the tragedy, creating and directing 9/11: The Musical with youngsters at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange, a community-based, performing arts school.99 I asked the children to write their responses to 9/11 in the form of letters to imaginary friends in other countries so as to encourage them to think globally rather than as isolated Americans. Their crayon drawings of the flaming towers and imagined portraits of people lost when they fell were affecting visual

99 The first meeting of this musical theatre class fell three days after the event. “9/11: The Musical” was presented to an enthusiastic audience of parents and friends at the BAX Spring recital in June 8 and 9, 2002.
elements. They performed their letters and sang my songs within tableaus chronicling the event. I found an age-appropriate way for them to sing this story:

There’s a little brown bird in a sycamore tree
And he sings a song of a tragedy
Of a tale so terrible the shiny green leaves
Of the sycamore tree turned brown
And brought autumn early to town.\(^{100}\)

In 1981, Kleist translator and author Idris Parry remarked on the fact that Kleist has been declared timely before. “On the centenary of his death, the critics agreed he was a hundred years ahead of his time. In 1977 they said he’d come into the world (on 18 October 1777) one hundred years too early. Anybody can say at any time ‘Kleist belongs to us’ because this author is concerned with a human truth which only the naïve think is a recent development” (9). Indeed, I believe that ‘Kleist belongs to us’ once more at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The destruction of the Twin Towers can be compared to the disruption in the fictional world of the Marquise. Their instantaneous falling reads like a Kleistian faint. Resolving the wartime disturbance, Julietta patches up her relationship with her family, marries Count F—, and in time, forgives her spouse. In the end, all is well. Similarly, the debris at ground zero has long since been cleared away. Planning has begun on the Freedom Tower in a complex of buildings at the World Trade Center site. This new, conspicuously tall letter will again lift the viewer above the city in which endless fictions continue to be written.

But the memory of disruption is ever present. The television images do not go away. Since 9/11, one reads stories relative to the intensity of that event. A glance skyward at a passing plane triggers feelings of apocalyptic dread. Terrorist attacks in Britain, Spain, Egypt and India have broadened the scope of collective anxiety worldwide. In the U.S., the War on Terror has resulted in diminished personal freedoms. The pundits analyze. And the public mourning goes on in the form of patriotic news segments, films, and the like. This collective trauma has gone deep inside the American psyche. For the first responders, the dust particles linger. Terror and toxicity. Recalling Kleist’s ruminations on an archway in Würtzberg, once the keystone is removed, the whole structure collapses. It’s hard to be up when you’re down.

The present study inquires into the cultural, historical, and aesthetic antecedents of the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of O—.” The impetus for staging this novella grew out of my experience as a performer, composer, and director living and working in the U.S. during a turbulent era. Inspired by my first-hand observations of how the mind/body split has played out in pop music culture in recent decades, I felt that that this two hundred-year old German text offered relevant truths about contemporary American society. My concept for a solo music theatre production was an opportunity to synthesize my research on literary cabaret, Weimar era performance, the theatre of Bertolt Brecht, and feminist theatre in a performative context. Further, I felt that that “The Marquise of O—” was an ideal vehicle through which to explore my craft as a songwriter/composer and physical theatre practitioner.

Along the way, I encountered problems particular to this production. First, I had to find a New York City-based director with expertise in physical theatre capable of revealing the nuances of this classic German text. Then, there was the pragmatics of securing an interested producer
and an appropriate venue for an esoteric theatre project with an unknown performer. Finally, there were the vagaries of assembling a production team comprised of artists that have never worked together before for the purpose of realizing a single project. As explained in the preceding chapters, it turned out that my goals for *The Marquise of O*—were realized to great extent. Lampe and I found much common artistic ground and our process developed as a dynamic, invigorating, creative partnership. The German Consulate of New York offered an appropriately sized venue and a receptive audience, if not a full run. Each production element claimed a singular narrative power within the *mise en scène*.

When I began my work on this study, my intent was to examine “The Marquise of O—” in context with Kleist’s life and other works and to consider interpretations of his opus by various scholars and artists over the last two hundred years. I now have a deeper understanding of the author’s insights into feminine subjectivity and see the themes explored in this novella—war as a catalyst for social instability, the duality of man, the complexity of familial relationships—as not separate from the rest of his oeuvre. Certainly, common traits may be discerned among all of his characters. Of Kleist’s female characters, Julietta is as psychologically complex and no less poignant than Alkmene. Of his male protagonists, the flawed heroism of Count F— recalls the impetuous Prince Friedrich. Considering Kleist’s families: Colonel G— is no less jealous than Piachi, but like the Elector, shows forbearance with a younger man; the Colonel’s wife has the duplicitous tendencies of Kunigunde; like the forestry official, Littegarde’s brothers sell out their sister. The more I read, the more I comprehend the reasons for Kleist’s popularity in the tumultuous Weimar era and the extent to which his tales of disruption resonate in the postmodern ethos. Although “Earthquake in Chile” is about a natural
disaster, Kleist’s description of destructive forces unleashed on a town is strikingly apropos to
the havoc reeked when the towers fell in New York City. Moral questions raised in The Prince
of Homburg correspond to the ethical concerns of soldiers serving in Iraq, while the wartime
barbarism described in The Battle with Hermann is equivalent to the gruesome reports from the
Middle East that belie patriotic zeal. And as I argued earlier in this study, Julietta’s banishment
in “The Marquise of O—” is reminiscent of humanism’s exile in American mass culture at the
present moment. My interpretation alludes to, but does not probe into the underlying causes of
such trends. That is the subject for another study.

Reading Kleist’s construction of the Colonel’s wife and Julietta against Brecht’s mother
and daughter characters, I became more aware of how the latter author’s personal proclivities
and political biases influenced his construction of the feminine. A potential form for future
research is a comparative analysis of the works of Kleist and Brecht focusing on the construction
of fathers and sons. Considering the use of Brechtian strategies in service to a feminist agenda in
the solo music theatre production of “The Marquise of O—,” I hope that this study adds a fresh
perspective to that body of research on Brecht and feminism.

Regarding my research into representations of women in early European cabaret, two
points are worth noting. First, long years ago, I conceived of a theatre project based on
reconstructing work of several early European female cabaretists. As a result of my inquiry into
Täuber-Arp as a designer of puppets, I learned that she also made dances. Now, revisiting my
original production concept, I would certainly include Täuber-Arp among that group of
innovative, charismatic female performers whose work warrants reconstruction. Secondly, I
began this study curious to learn about women cabaretists who performed their own music.
Based on my research, it would seem that few did so—Guilbert and Krysinska were notable exceptions. Presuming that there were indeed other women lyricists and composers during this era, inquiry into where they did find an outlet for their music as well as why they did not perform in cabaret venues is an intriguing direction for future research.

The fact that Kleist had written an essay on puppets was reason enough to use them in the production. In so doing, I became thoroughly enchanted by them. The puppets’ indisputable presence set a tone for the piece that was at once graceful and humorous. As a solo performer, working with them was a revelation. Schechner has stated that aesthetic performance creates a performer-to-subject relationship that is transformational to the audience, not the actor, yet my experiential insight into the author’s epistemological intentions while onstage reminds me that such moments defy categorizations (192-93).

Admittedly, my songwriting and composition methods are to some extent intuitive, but reflecting on my close analysis of the lyrics and music for The Marquise of O—, I am struck at how much thought informed this process and to what extent the work is deeply justified. Unlike secondary analyses of works in which the lyricist and composer’s sources and intentions are, at least in part, conjectural, this investigation has a singular value in that I am certain of the groundwork and objectives of the lyricist/composer.

The present study considers how a performative reading of “The Marquise of O—” may articulate subjectivity and disruption. There were many ways in which the production accomplished that end. The grand piano’s use as a playful and disturbing representation of the Marquise best exemplifies our approach. At the intersection of my collaboration with Lampe was a confluence of American, European, and Asian aesthetic traditions and practices in which
movement is an essential element. Although we risked the possibility of “falling into syncretism and the confusion of languages,” our mutual interests in mining “The Marquise of O—” for literary, historical, and psychological truths, together with adherence to formal concerns, resulted in a performance style that was focused and unified (Barba 9).

Kleist’s “green glasses” quotation suggests that people have different perceived realities. Through comparatively analyzing Rohmer and Stark’s filmic representations of “The Marquise of O—,” I have considered how these two filmmakers’ very different interpretations reveal a great many truths about the text, filmmaking, acting, art, and culture. As a performance artist, I believe that through revisiting the literary past in performance, new truths are always discoverable. I strive in my work to open the spectator’s eyes, as well as other senses, to what I call, “truly truth” which, while grounded in aesthetic traditions, acknowledges the instabilities and complexities of the postmodern world. I hope that this study offers much to the reader: a model for inquiry into the production process for the performance practitioner, a performance studies and feminist perspective to the Kleist scholar, and to the layperson, insights into the rich pleasures of Kleist and into the underlying principles and methods that go into the making of a collaboratively created work of theatre.
WORKS CITED

[Explanatory notes: Critical materials pertaining to Kleist’s life and works not otherwise cited in this study are listed in the footnotes on pages 28-29 and 136-138. A partial listing of contemporary music theatre works is found in the footnotes on pages 173-174.]


Friedberg, Anne. “A Denial of Difference: Theories of Cinematic Identification.”


---. Das kleine Welttheater. Pan, 3 Dec. 1897.


---.  Personal Interview.  5 Nov. 2004.

---.  Personal Interview.  3 March 2005.


Rank, Otto. The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study. Trans., ed., and with an introd. Harry Tucker,


Schlemmer, Oskar. “Man and Art Figure.” *Theater of the Bauhaus*. Walter Gropius and Arthur S. Wensinger. 16-32.


----. The Tragedy of Richard II. Wright. 351-83.

----. The Winter’s Tale. Wright. 1259-96.


Great Reckonings In Little Rooms: On The Phenomenology of Theater.


Towards An Aesthetics of the Puppet: Puppetry as a Theatrical Art. New


---. Theater of Bertolt Brecht. A Study from Eight Aspects. London: Methuen,


Appendix: Performance Text

The Marquise of O–
A Solo Performance by Lisa Parkins

Co-adapted from the novella by Heinrich von Kleist by
Eelka Lampe and Lisa Parkins

Music and Lyrics by Lisa Parkins

Directed by Eelka Lampe

The German House Auditorium
The German Consulate of New York, New York City
April 10, 2003
ACT I

[Lights up on a platform CS. The citadel of Colonel G— in a town in Northern Italy. On the platform, an upholstered sofa R. UL is a large easel and a pad of white drawing paper. Below platform DL is a grand piano and bench. Below platform CS is a large metal table. The table's top is a carriage wheel. The table's pedestal is shaped like a bullet. The narrator enters DR carrying a small leather bound book. She steps onto the platform and sits down on the sofa. Theme music plays. The narrator transforms into the Marquise. She rises from the sofa like a somnambulist and dances in a contained doll-like way. Music ends. The Marquise transforms into the narrator.]

NARRATOR

The Marquise of O—! Based on a true story, the setting of which has been transposed from the north to the south. [Walks R. Puts book down on sofa. Circles around behind sofa.] In M—, an important town in northern Italy, the widowed Marquise of O—, a lady of unblemished reputation and the mother of several well brought up children, inserted the following announcement in the newspapers: "She had, without knowledge of the cause, come to find herself in a certain situation . . ." [Walks DL to piano. Puts book down on the piano.]

SONG: A CERTAIN LADY

[Sings live with piano accompaniment.]

A certain lady, a certain lady
Requests the presence of the father of the child
She was expecting to have a baby
Soon the newborn would arrive

For in consideration of her family, her dear family
It was resolved that she would marry
She would marry the father of the child
So would he please reveal his identity for the sake of the newborn child?

As the father, the unknown father
Of this certain lady's unborn child
He must do honor to the baby
And by name be identified. [Song ends.]

NARRATOR

The lady, who with such boldness, exposed herself to the derision of society was Julietta, the daughter of Colonel G—, Commandant of the citadel at M—. About three years earlier, her husband, the Marquis of O—, to whom she was most deeply and tenderly attached, had lost his
life while traveling to Paris on family business. At the request of her excellent mother, after his
death, she left her country estate at V— and returned with her two children to the house of her
father the Commandant.  

[Rises from piano.  Walks R onto platform.] Here she lived a very
secluded life, devoted to art and reading, the education of her children and the care of her
parents, until war [Lights/Sound: "War!"] filled the neighborhood with the armed forces of
almost all the powerful European states including Russia. Colonel G—, who had orders to
defend the citadel, told his wife and daughter . . .

COLONEL G—  
[Gesture: "The Commandant."] Withdraw either to Julietta's estate or to that of our son near
V—.

NARRATOR  
But before the ladies had time to weigh up the hardships in the fortress against the horrors of the
open country . . . [Walks off platform L.  Brings out a game board filled with toy soldiers
fighting.] . . . the Russian troops were already besieging the citadel and calling upon it to
surrender.  [Narrator walks DC.  Puts game board on table.] The Colonel announced to his
family . . .

COLONEL G—
I will now simply act as if you are not present.  [Sounds/Lights change: "Attack by Night."  
Russian troops are visible as shadows entering the left wing of the Commandant's residence.]

NARRATOR
[Walks R.] The Colonel's wife called to her daughter.

MOTHER
[Gesture: "Hand Wringing."] Julietta, we should all stay together and take refuge in the cellars
below!  [Marquise tries to exit DC through audience.  Gunfire.  Marquise panics and is driven
back into the burning building UC and DR.]

NARRATOR
Just as the Marquise was trying to escape though the back door, [Lights change.] she
encountered a troop of enemy riflemen [Gesture: "Fear #1" (Arm Catch at Shoulder).  Slowly
walks backwards.] As soon as they saw her, they suddenly fell silent and slung their guns over
their shoulders. With obscene gestures, they seized her and carried her off.

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "Fear #2 (Holding the Waist).] Help!

NARRATOR
Her terrified woman went fleeing back though the gate. The dreadful rabble dragged the Marquise into the innermost courtyard, assaulting her in the most shameful way. She was just about to sink to the ground, when a Russian officer, hearing her piercing screams, appeared on the scene. [Gesture: "My Hero."] He smashed the hilt of his sword in the face of one of the murderous brutes and the man reeled back, blood pouring from his mouth. He then addressed the lady politely, in French . . . [As Count F— walks onto platform R.] . . . offered her his arm and escorted her back into a wing of the palace where the flames had not yet reached. Here, already stricken speechless by her ordeal, she collapsed in a dead faint. [Marquise faints on sofa. Lights change (red). Long pause. Narrator sits up.] Then — [Count F— stands, walks L behind sofa facing U. Buttons up trousers and smooths back hair. ” Walks DL. Lights change.]

COUNT F—

[Gesture: "Sleazy."] Servants! Send for a doctor. I assure you, she will soon recover. [Gesture: "Replaces Hat."]

NARRATOR

The Russian officer replaced his hat and returned to the fighting. [Walks as Narrator off platform singing Theme Music R. Walks to game board DC. Describes scene as it unfolds.] Heroically, he takes charge of extinguishing a fire that is spreading. Hose in hand, he climbs among the burning gables directing the jet of water. In a short time, the fortress is completely taken by the enemy. The Commandant is retreating to the main gate in a weakened state. The Russian officer, his face very flushed, comes out through it.

COUNT F—

[Gesture: "Victory!" (F— Kick on carriage wheel.)] I call on you to surrender!

COLONEL G—

This command is all I have been waiting for. Here is my sword. [Gesture: “Surrender.”] With your permission, I will go into the house and look for my family. [Walks L onto platform.]

NARRATOR

The Commandant learned with utter consternation of the misadventure that had befallen his daughter. The Marquise was so overjoyed to see all of her family alive and well that she stayed in bed only in deference to their excessive solicitude. [Sits down on the sofa.]

MARQUISE

[Gesture: "Fear #1 (Leaning Forward in Chair).”] All I want is to be able to get up and thank my rescuer. Who is he?

SONG: COUNT F—

[Recorded music and voice. Gesture: "Fear 1B” (Leaning forward in chair).]
Count F—! Count F—!
Lieutenant Colonel of the Rifle Corps
[Count F—! Count F—!]
Knight of an Order of Merit and various others
Count F—! Count F—! Count F—! [Song ends.]

MARQUISE
Father, request him most urgently not to leave the citadel without paying us a short visit in the residential quarters.

NARRATOR
[Walks DL off platform.] The Commandant, approving his daughter's feelings, returned immediately to the fortifications where he found the Count busy with a multitude of military tasks.

COUNT F—
[Gesture: "The Sleazy."] I am only waiting for a moment's respite from my business to come and pay her my respects.

NARRATOR
The Count was in the act of inquiring about the lady's health when a report came that snatched him back into the turmoil of war. [Peers into game board DC.] The General in command of the Russian forces arrives and inspects the citadel. He compliments the Commandant on his courage. He grants him permission to go wherever he chooses. On hearing of the noble deed of Count F—, he calls him forward to name the evil perpetrators. [Walks to piano.] Count F— blushes and replies . . .

SONG: I COULD NOT TELL

[Sings live with piano accompaniment.]

The faint glimmer of the lanterns
Made it impossible to recognize their faces.
I could not tell in the dark
I could not recognize them by name.

The faint glimmer of the lanterns
Made it impossible to recognize their faces! [Song ends.]

NARRATOR
[Gesture: "World Weary."] The General expresses surprise. A man steps forward to report that one of the perpetrators wounded by Count F— had been captured. The General quickly interrogates the captive, who names his accomplices. In turn, all five are summarily shot. [Rises at piano, plays "Rifle Shots!"] The Russian General orders the withdrawal of enemy troops. [Walks R to carriage wheel.] Amid the confusion of general dispersal, the Count approaches the Commandant.

COUNT F—

[Gesture: "Sleazy."] Under the circumstances, I can do no more than send my respectful compliments to the Marquise.

NARRATOR

In less than an hour the whole fortress was again empty of enemy troops. [Walks DL with game board. Returns game board to bench. Walks DC.] The family was just trying to figure out how they would repay the Count when a report came that the Count had been fatally wounded in a battle that very same day. [Picks up bamboo stick from DC. Gesture (with stick): "Wound through tabletop.] It was said that at the moment the Count was struck he cried out, "Julietta, this bullet avenges you!" [Returns bamboo stick.] The family, especially Julietta, was inconsolable that she had missed the opportunity to throw herself at his feet. She found it remarkable that the Count had called out with his last breath for someone with the same last name. It was several months before she entirely forgot about the matter. It was now necessary for family to move out of the citadel and let the Russian commander take up residence there. [Rolls carriage wheel over to piano.] The family took a house in town and furnished as a permanent home. The Marquise resumed the long interrupted education of her children. She again brought out her easel and her books. [Gesture: "Drawing"] But she now began to be afflicted by repeated indispositions which made her unfit for company for weeks at a time. She suffered from nausea, giddiness and fainting fits and was at a loss to account for her condition.

One morning at tea, when her father had left the room, the Marquise, emerging from a long reverie, said to her mother . . .

MARQUISE

If any woman were to tell me that she felt just as I did when I picked up this teacup I should say to myself that she must be with child. [Picks up oversize teacup UR. Music: Julietta." Movement sequence: "Teacup Dance." Music ends. Puts teacup DL.]

MOTHER

[Looks in teacup.] Daughter, you would no doubt be giving birth to the God of Fantasy.

MARQUISE

[Walks IL to easel. Turns page to reveal image: "Knight Riding A Swan."] At any rate Mother, Morpheus, or one of his attendant dreams, must be the father.

NARRATOR
But the Colonel returned to the room and the conversation was broken off and since a few days later the Marquise felt quite herself again, the subject was entirely forgotten. Shortly after this, at a time when the Commandant's son, who was a Forestry official, also happened to be at home, a footman entered and announced.

FOOTMAN

COUNT F—!

SONG: COUNT F—! [Instrumental Music.]

NARRATOR

Amazement made then all speechless, for they had presumed him dead.

COLONEL G—, COLONEL G—S’ WIFE, BROTHER

[Voiceovers.] Count F—! Count F—! Count F—!

NARRATOR

He entered the room, his face a little pale, but looking as beautiful as a young god. The Count turned to the Marquise.

COUNT F—

[Walks to sofa.] Madam, how are you?

MARQUISE

[Sits on sofa.] I am very well.

COUNT F—

[Rises.] You could not be telling the truth. To judge by your complexion, you seemed strangely fatigued. Are you not perhaps suffering from some ailment?

MARQUISE

[Sits on sofa. Faces audience. Gesture: "The Collapse."] As a matter of fact, this fatigue could be interpreted as the aftermath of an ailment from which I was suffering a few weeks ago, but I have no reason to fear that it will be of any consequence.

COUNT F—

[Rises.] Neither have I! [Kneels on sofa.] Madam would you be willing to marry me?

NARRATOR

[Stands.] The Marquise did not know what to make of this strange behavior. Blushing deeply, she looked at her mother. The latter stared in embarrassment at her son and her husband.

COLONEL G—
Since the death of her husband, the Marquis of O—, my daughter resolved not to embark on any second marriage. Since you not long ago greatly obligated her, it is not impossible that her wishes might no be altered in accordance with your own. But allow her some time in which to think the matter over quietly.

COUNT F—

[Kneels on sofa with R knee only. Gesture: "Sneaky Foot (L)."] I predicted that this would be the outcome of my impatient desires. The one ignoble act I have committed is unknown to the world. I am taking steps to amend for it. In short I am a man of honor. This is the truth! [Full kneel on sofa. Lights change: Red.]

NARRATOR

[Voiceover. Music: "Tinka!"] He was struck by a memory in which he had once thrown some mud at a swan, whereupon it silently dived under the surface and reemerged washed clean by the water. It always seemed to be swimming about on a fiery surface. He called out to her . . .

COUNT F—


COLONEL G—

Count, I invite you to return to stay for a time in our family's house. If my daughter comes to feel that she can hope to find happiness with you, than I her father would be happy to hear that she gives you a definite answer.

COUNT F—

[Kneels on sofa with one foot. Gesture: "Sneaky Foot."] Unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I will be back in M— in four to six weeks time. [Kneels with both feet.] Yet, Julietta it is my dearest wish that before I leave we be married.

MARQUISE

[Rises from sofa.] Have you taken leave of your senses?

COUNT F—

I assure you a day will come when you will understand what I mean. And now, [Gesture; F—Kick (R leg to L. Turns in half profile.)] I must leave you all. Please take no further notice of my last remark. [Exits L off platform.]

NARRATOR

[Turns around to walk R to sofa.] The Commandant's son sat down next to his sister.

BROTHER

[Sits on sofa. Gesture: "Forestry Official."] Julietta, do you find the Count attractive?
MARQUISE

[Turns around to sit on sofa.] I find him both attractive and unattractive. I am willing to be guided by what you all feel. Since his wishes seem so pressing, I would consent to them for the sake of the obligation under which he has placed me.

COLONEL G—

[Walks over to easel UL.] That makes twice I must surrender to this Russian!

MOTHER

[Gesture: "Question Mark Walk."] His behavior is extraordinary.

BROTHER

[Gesture: "Forestry Official."] He seems accustomed to taking ladies hearts like fortresses by storm.

NARRATOR

[Stands DC.] Several weeks passed. [Walks L off platform R to stand DC. Movement Sequence: "Time Passing."] Inquiries about the Count were made and quite favorable reports received. In short, the engagement was regarded as virtually definitive, when the Marquise's indispositions recurred more acutely than ever before. [Gesture: "The Pregnant Sofa."] She noticed an incomprehensible change in her figure and confided in complete frankness in her mother.

MARQUISE

I do not know what to make of my condition.

MOTHER


NARRATOR

The Marquise sent for a doctor that enjoyed the confidence of her father. At a time when her mother happened to be out of the house, she invited him to sit down on the sofa, and after an introductory remark or two, jestingly told him of the situation she believed herself to be in. The doctor gave her a searching look. [Gesture: "The Doctor."] He then carefully examined her.

DOCTOR


MARQUISE
[Runs around piano to stand behind piano lid.] What exactly do you mean?

DOCTOR

[Stands at piano. Plays middle C.] You are perfectly well. You need no doctor.

MARQUISE

[Plays high note trill.] I request you to leave. Mother! The doctor just said I am pregnant.

MOTHER

[Stands R of piano. Gesture: "Hand Wringing." ] What is it you thought the doctor said to you?

MARQUISE

[Walks around perimeter of piano.] I am in full possession of my senses. The doctor just said I am expecting a child. Send for a midwife. [A beat. Reverses direction.] As soon as she tells me it is not so, I shall regain my composure.

MOTHER

["Question Mark Walk" DR.] Oh, by all means. But the confinement will not take place in my house.

MOTHER

[Voiceover with echo.] Not in my house! Not in my house! Not in my house!

NARRATOR

[Walks DC.] The midwife, as she carried out her investigations spoke of warm-blooded youth and the wiles of the world.

MIDWIFE

[Walks to wash basin. Gesture: "Hand Washing," Dries her hands on dress where here ovaries are. ] Walks over to piano. Picks up bamboo sticks as speculum. Gesture: "The Exam" (Plays piano strings with sticks).] Young widows such as your Ladyship always believe themselves to be living on desert islands. [Finishes exam. Returns sticks to piano.] But rest assured, the gay corsair who has come ashore in the dark will come to light in due course. [Closes piano lid. Repeats "Hand Washing." ]

NARRATOR

On hearing this, the Marquise fainted. Her mother was still sufficiently moved by natural affection to bring her to her senses, but as soon as she revived, maternal indignation proved stronger.

MOTHER

[Gesture: "Hand Wringing."] Julietta! Will you tell me who the father is?
MARQUISE
[Sits down on platform DL. Gesture: "Dead Pan."] I shall go mad.

MOTHER
[Gesture: "Disgust."] Go from my sight! [Gesture: "Outrage."] You are contemptible. I curse the day I bore you. [Exits DL.]

NARRATOR
[Enters with three life-size metal puppets suspended in metal frames; Mother, Father and Brother. The puppets are linked together and wrapped in black satin ribbon in the shape of an envelope.] A footman brought the Marquise a letter from her father in her mother's handwriting.

SONG: LEAVE MY HOUSE
[Recorded music and voice. Ritualistically, the black ribbon removed from the puppets.]

In view of circumstances that have come to light
I, Colonel G—, your father
Requests you to leave!

My daughter, you must leave my house
My daughter, you must leave my house
Get out! Get out! Get out!


Here I send you the papers concerning your estate
I, Colonel G—
Hope that God above will spare me
From seeing you before you leave!

My daughter, you must leave my house
My daughter, you must leave my house
Get out! Get out! Get out!

[Music/Movement Sequence: "Panic Dance." Music ends.]

NARRATOR
[Holds sticks as pointers.] The Marquise went to her mother's quarters but was told she was with the Commandant. Scarcely able to walk, she made her way to her father's rooms. Finding the door locked, she sank down outside and called on all the saints to witness her innocence. Her
brother emerged, his face flushed with anger.  [Puts down bamboo sticks.  Walks L off platform.  Walks R to Brother.  Opens Brother frame as if a door.]

BROTHER
As you already know the Commandant does not wish to see you.

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "Supplicant."]  Dearest brother!  Beloved father!

NARRATOR
She led out her arms to him but he turned his back on her and hurried into the bedroom.  [Closes frame as if a door.]  As she tried to follow him he suddenly desisted.  [Holds Father's arm.]  Letting her into the room, her strode across it with his back turned towards her.  [Sounds: "Pistol Shot."  Runs L away from Father.  Pulls an enormous length of blue tulle out of the bullet pedestal.  The tulle is transformed into a traveling cloak.  Runs R onto platform.]

MARQUISE
Oh, God preserve me!  Servants!  Pack my belongings.  My carriage should be made ready at once!

NARRATOR
[Facing U.]  She hastily dressed her children.  [Wraps tulle around wrists.]  Her brother entered.

BROTHER
I demand on the Commandant's orders that you leave the children behind and hand them over to me.

MARQUISE
[Faces Brother.]  These children!  Tell your inhuman father that he can come here and shoot me dead but he shall not take my children from me!  [Walks L off platform.  Walks to bullet.  Brings out an oblong traveling case.  Walks to piano.  Opens case on piano to reveal a doll facsimile of the Marquise.]

NARRATOR
Armed with all the pride of innocence, she packed her belongings, carried them with her to the coach, her brother not daring to stop her and drove off.  [Walks over to piano.]

SONG:  I PUT THE SHAME ON YOU


Like a butterfly in a box
I am caught, pressed, and pinioned
Shunned by my family in my hour of need
Am I not in the court of public opinion?  [Rises from piano. Walks to stand next to doll in box. Continues singing a Cappella.]

Hermione stood in stone behind a curtain
Waiting for a sound cue
Philomela sat silently weaving
Would you cut out my tongue too?  [Brings doll out of box.]

Well, I simply can't account for my inner situation
Aren't I still your reigning paragon of virtue
Not some mute bird to fly into the wild blue?

[Walks with Marquise doll as she rolls the carriage wheel DR.]

You put the blame on me
But it's wrong what you do. I put the shame on you.
You put the blame on me
But from my point of view, I put the shame on you.

Mother dear, you quiz and you stare
Father jump the gun, you got me in your sights
Brother can't you see through a forest of trees
Are you so blind you buy what's officially right?

[Marquise doll is made to "sleep" atop the carriage wheel.]

If Balthus painted me when I was sleeping
Would you all forgive me for that?
I could swear on a stack, I wouldn't hide the facts
Not if God himself accomplished the task.

[Puts carriage wheel on ground. Turns the wheel.]

Well, I dried my many tears out on the open road
Now I really have to draw a different picture of you all
But I'm a strong proud Mary; going to stand up tall.

You put the blame on me, but it's me you misuse
I put the shame on you
You put the blame on me, but it's you I accuse
I put the shame on you.
Even if I carry the bad seed inside of me
You should welcome me to your breast
Even if bear a horn-headed devil
For a coven of witches from Central Park West!

Well, I can take a hint, I'll go and I'll sit
In my own house, knitting caps and stockings
Mama will get by without some mockingbirds
Sitting on a fence flocking and talking.

[Mimes pregnancy with Marquise doll.]

Did I drink from a bottle of Miracle Gro?
Well, I have no such memory
I'm as pure as Tess, but should I die like poor Lucrecia
Just to please my family?

Well, I won't go that far
Not for love or money
No, you won't catch me sobbing in a strawberry patch
You can read this Marquise as a matter of fact.

You put the blame on me but my conscience is clear
I put the shame on you
You put the blame on me, but you choose not to hear
I put the shame on you.

You put the blame on me but its wrong what you do
I put the shame on you
But from my point of view
I put the shame I put the shame on you.

You put the blame on me but it’s me you misuse
I put the shame on you
But it’s you I accuse
I put the shame on you.

[Exits DC through house. Blackout.]

END OF ACT I
ACT II

[Light divides the platform DC into two playing areas at the Marquise's country estate at V—: a living area and a garden. The sofa faces U, DR. The easel, with a pad of paper stands UC. The Brother puppet stands in a corner DR. The Mother and Father puppets stand in the corner DL. Below platform DL is a grand piano and bench. The bullet pedestal is below platform DC. The Marquise doll is perched on the inside edge of the bullet. Her dress is wrapped around the bullet in the middle of the center aisle. The carriage wheel leans against the wall UL. The Marquise, wearing an enormously long green tulle shawl enters L.

NARRATOR
[Walks down aisle to platform.] Only a few days after her arrival at V—, the Marquise's grief had been replaced by a heroic resolve. [Walks onto platform. Sits down on sofa. Gesture: "Drawing." When work is completed, she contemplates her the results.]

MARQUISE

Let the world do its worst!

NARRATOR
[Still seated on sofa, turns to audience.] She resolved to withdraw entirely into her own life. She decided to devote her self zealously and exclusively to the education of her children and to care with full maternal love for the third which god had now given her. Since her beautiful country estate had fallen into disrepair owing to long absence, she made arrangements for its restoration to be completed in a few weeks time. [Rises from sofa, walks off platform to piano.]

SONG: WHICH ROOM?

[Sings live with piano accompaniment.]

Which room will I fill with books?  
Which room will contain my easel?  
Where will I find some peace of mind?  
Now it is time to repair my very soul

From the damage done by the world  
From the damage done by the world

I must repair my very soul  
From the damage done by the world. [Song ends. Rises from piano.]

NARRATOR
[Walks around piano sensually caressing its surface.] Thus, even before the expected date of Count F—'s return from Naples, she was quite reconciled to a life of perpetual cloistered seclusion.

MARQUISE

[Stands at piano.] Admit no visitors to the house!

SONG: STIGMA OF DISGRACE

[Sings live with piano accompaniment.] The little creature I conceived in utmost innocence
Of origin mysterious must be divine
But must I be eternally resigned
Why should this child be made to bear
The stigma of disgrace?

The little creature I conceived in utmost purity
Of origin mysterious must be more divine
Than other men of good society
But why should this child be made to bear
The stigma of disgrace? [Song ends.]

NARRATOR

[Rises from piano.] An unusual means to discover whom the father was occurred to her.
[Brings step over to piano. Stands on step. Sits on top of piano. Transforms tulle into a coverlet.] Restless and sleepless . . . [Gesture: "Lying in Bed."] for whole nights on end she turned it over in her mind trying to get used to an idea the very nature of which offended her innermost feelings. [Gesture: "The Offended."] She still felt the greatest repugnance at the thought of entering into any relationship with the person who had tricked her in such a fashion. She concluded . . .

MARQUISE

[Attempts to clean her self with coverlet.] He must belong to the very scum of mankind.

SONG: SCUM OF MANKIND

[Sings a Cappella. Coverlet is transformed into rag to "clean" the piano/body of the Marquise.] He must irredeemably belong to the scum of mankind
I imagine he occupies a low position in society
His origins could only be from its lowest, vilest dregs
From the bottom
The very bottom
The scum of mankind.  [Song ends.]

NARRATOR
[Gets off piano.  Stands on step.]  But with her sense of her own independence growing stronger . . .

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "First Kick of the Baby."]  A precious stone retains its value no matter what its setting might be.  [Music: "Julietta."  Movement sequence: "Dance of Pride and Rebellion."  Music ends.  Marquise folds up green tulle, opens lid of piano, puts tulle away inside piano, closes lid.  Opens piano top as if writing on a writing board.  Writes on it.]  See that this notice is inserted in the M— newspaper!  [Walks to platform R.  Picks up sticks (as letter).]  Count F—!  [Reads.]  I am detained in Naples by unavoidable duties.  [Walks as Narrator DC.]  I urge you to consider that circumstances may arise that will make it advisable that you abide by the tacit understanding you have given me."  [A beat.  Replaces sticks on platform.]

NARRATOR
The Commandant's son received the Count.  [Walks to Brother R.]

BROTHER
[Stands behind.  Gesture: "Right Hand Shake."]  Do you already know what has happened in the Commandant's house during your absence?

COUNT F—
[Small F— Kick DL.  Walks to stand in front of Brother.]  No sir, I do not.

BROTHER
[Stands behind.]  My sister has brought disgrace upon our family.

COUNT F—
[F— Kick DL.  Walks to stand in front of Brother.]  Why were so many obstacles put in my way?  If the marriage had taken place, we should have been spared all this shame and unhappiness!

BROTHER
[Stands behind.  Gesture: "Surprise" (Arms up on frame L and R).]  What?  Are you so crazy as to want to be married to my sister?

COUNT F—
[Stands behind Marquise doll hanging off pedestal.]  She is worth more than the whole world that despises her.  I absolutely believe in her innocence.  I will go immediately to V— and renew my offer to her.  Farewell sir.  [Gesture: "Replaces hat."]
NARRATOR
Taking a horse, he galloped out to V—. [Walks to platform U. Picks up bamboo stick as riding crop. Music: "Panic Dance." Slowly "rides" in a circle around bullet DC. Arrives at V—. Music ends. Walks to bullet UR. Gesture: "Ready for Action."]

PORTER
[Voiceover.] Her Ladyship is seeing no one and there are no exceptions.

COUNT F—
Are these instructions applied to a friend of the family?

PORTER
[Voiceover.] Are you not perhaps Count F—?

COUNT F—
No I am not. Under the circumstances, I will lodge at an inn and announce myself to her ladyship in writing. [Walks onto platform. Puts stick in carriage wheel UL.]

NARRATOR
But as soon as he was out of the porter's sight, he slipped behind the wall of an extensive garden that lay behind the house. Walking through it along the paths, he caught sight of the Marquise. [Sits on sofa as Marquise.]

SONG: COUNT F—
[Recorded music and voice. Gesture: "Fear 1B" (Leaning forward in chair.)]

Count F—! Count F—!
Lieutenant Colonel of the Rifle Corps
Count F—! Count F—!
Knight of an Order of Merit and various others
Count F—! Count F—! [Song ends.]

MARQUISE
Count F—!

NARRATOR
The Count sat down next to her . . . [Does so.] . . . and slipped his arm gently and lovingly around her waist.

MARQUISE
[Rises.] But how is this possible? Where have you come from?
COUNT F—
[Sits on sofa with crossed leg.] From M—, dearest lady. I entered the garden by a door that I found unlocked. I felt sure you would forgive me for doing so.

MARQUISE
[Walks away from sofa DR.] But when you were in M— did they not tell you?

COUNT F—
[Leans on sofa.] Everything, dearest lady, but fully convinced of your innocence . . .

MARQUISE
[Turns to walk to carriage wheel UL.] What! Despite that you came here?

COUNT F—
[Turns around.] Despite your family! Despite the world! And despite your present enchanting appearance . . .

MARQUISE
[Takes riding crop from wheel. Strikes the air with crop.] Go away!

COUNT F—
[Pulls on riding crop.] As convinced as if I were omniscient, as if my own soul was living in your body.

MARQUISE
[Turns away.] Let me go!

COUNT F—
[Kneels.] I have come to repeat my proposal and to receive, if you will accept it, the bliss of paradise from your hand.

MARQUISE
[Rises. Turns around.] I order you to let me go!

COUNT F—
[Drops riding crop. Walks DR.] Darling! Adorable creature!

MARQUISE
[Turns around.] I do not want to hear anything!

NARRATOR
Stands DC. Bitterly vexed with himself for allowing her to slip from his arms, he went to find his horse. [Picks up riding crop.] He rode slowly back to M—, thinking over the wording of a letter he now felt compelled to write. [Walks off platform L.]

SONG: THE MORNING OF THE THIRD

[Recorded music and voice. Slowly "rides" around bullet pedestal L.]

If the Marquise of O—
Will be present at eleven o'clock
On the morning of the third
At the house of her father
The man she wishes to trace
Will be there to cast himself at her feet.

[Song ends. Puts riding crop down on platform CS.]

NARRATOR
The Commandant's son again received the Count.

BROTHER
[Stands behind. Gesture: "Hand Shake."] Did you successfully make your proposal in V—?

COUNT F—
[Small F— Kick.] No sir, I have not.

BROTHER
[Stands behind. Gesture: "Hands Folded in Front."] I notice with regret that your passion for my sister is driving you quite out of your mind. But I assure you she is on her way to making a very different choice.

NARRATOR
Her brother handed the Count a newspaper in which was printed the Marquise's strange advertisement.

SONG: A CERTAIN LADY

[Recorded voice and music. Holds bamboo sticks as if a newspaper.]

A certain lady, a certain lady
Requests the presence of the father of the child
She was expecting to have a baby
Soon the newborn would arrive
For in consideration of her family, her dear family
It was resolved that she would marry
She would marry the father of the child
So would he please reveal his identity
For the sake of the newborn child?

As the father, the unknown father
Oh this certain lady's unborn child
He must do honor to the baby
And by name be identified.

[Song ends. Put sticks on platform. Walks to Brother R.]

BROTHER
[Stands behind.] Do you think she will find the person she is looking for?

COUNT F—
[Walks L.] Undoubtedly! Now everything is all right! Now I know what to do. I hope sir that we shall soon meet again.

NARRATOR
[Brings Mother and Father DC.] Meanwhile some very animated scenes were taking place at the Commandant's house. The Commandant's wife received the Marquise's strange advertisement. [Song: “The Father of the Child” (Recorded). Walks onto platform.] She went with it to her husband's rooms. She found him writing at a table. [Uses bamboo sticks as pointers.]

MOTHER
[Points to Mother.] Lorenzo, what do you make of this? So much in this whole affair is incomprehensible particularly Julietta's inclination to get married again, and to someone completely indifferent to her.

COLONEL G—
[Points to Father.] Oh, she is innocent!

MOTHER
[Points to Mother.] What! Innocent?

COLONEL G—
[Points to Father.] She did it in her sleep! [Puts sticks down on platform. Movement sequence: "Slapstick Rape."]
SONG: SHE DID IT IN HER SLEEP

[Recorded voice and music.]

She did it! She did it!
She did it in her sleep!
She did it! She did it!

She did it in her sleep!
Oh, she is innocent!
She did it in her sleep! [Song ends. Rises from sofa. Uses bamboo sticks as pointers.]

MOTHER
In her sleep! You mean to say such a monstrous occurrence . . .

Silly woman!

COLONEL G—

NARRATOR
The next day, the Commandant's wife was handed a newspaper. In it she read the following answer to the Marquise's announcement.

SONG: THE MORNING OF THE THIRD

[Recorded music and voice. Bamboo sticks as letter. Movement Sequence: "Mother's Tango with a Stranger."]

If the Marquise of O—
Will be present at eleven o'clock
On the morning of the third
At the house of her father
The man she wishes to trace
Will be there to cast himself at her feet. [Song ends. Uses bamboo sticks as pointers.]

MOTHER
[Points to Mother.] Now tell me in heaven's name Lorenzo, what do you make of that?

COLONEL G—
[Points to Father.] That infamous woman! The sanctimonious hypocrite! The shamelessness of a bitch coupled with the cunning of a fox multiplied ten times are nothing compared to her. So sweet a face, such eyes, as innocent as a cherub!
MOTHER

[Points to Mother.] And if it is trickery, what on earth can be her purpose?

COLONEL G—

[Points to Father.] Her purpose? She is determined to force us to accept her contemptible presence. She and that man have already learned by heart the cock and bull story the two of them will tell us when they appear here on the third at eleven in the morning. And I shall be expected to say, "My dear little daughter, I did not know that. What could have made me think such a thing? Forgive me and let us be friends again." But I have a bullet ready for the man who crosses my threshold on the third at eleven in the morning. Or perhaps it would be more suitable to have him thrown out of the house by the servants!

MOTHER

[Points to Mother.] I think it more credible that some extraordinary trick of fate had occurred than that our otherwise virtuous daughter should suddenly behave so basely.

COLONEL G—

[Points to Father.] Be good enough to hold your tongue! I cannot even bear to hear that hateful matter mentioned. [Puts sticks on platform.]

NARRATOR

A few days later, the Commandant received a letter from the Marquise referring to the second announcement. [Walks to platform L.]

SONG: JULIETTA'S RESPONSE

[Sings live at piano as Marquise.]

Since I have been deprived of the privilege
Of setting foot in your house
I beg you my father
Most respectfully and sincerely
To be so kind as to send the person
Who presents himself at your house

On the morning of the third
At eleven o'clock
Out to my house at V—. [Song ends. "Question Mark Walk" to Mother R.]

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] For if the whole thing is indeed trickery, what motive are we to impute to her now, since she seems to be making no sort of claim to your forgiveness? Lorenzo, I have plan, which my heart, though troubled by doubts has been harboring for some time. [Links Mother's
Would you allow me to go for one or two days out to V—? I will devise a plan in which our daughter, even if she is the most sophisticated deceiver, if she really knows the man who answered her advertisement, will undoubtedly betray herself.

FATHER
[Stands Behind.] As you well know, I wish to have nothing whatever to do its writer. I absolutely forbid you to enter into any communication with her.

NARRATOR
But his wife, exasperated by his headstrong obstinacy, decided to carry out her plan against his will. [Unhooks Mother's arm from Father's arm.] The very next day, when the Commandant was still in bed, she took one of his grooms and drove with him out to V—. [Walks in front of Mother DL. Lights change to V—.]

MOTHER
[Stands behind.] Go and announce the wife of Colonel G—.

PORTER
[Voiceover.] I am to admit no one to her Ladyship's presence.

MOTHER
[Stands behind.] I am her mother! Be good enough to do your errand without further delay.

NARRATOR
But scarcely had the man entered the house then the Marquise emerged and came in haste to the gate. [Takes bamboo sticks out of bullet pedestal. Puts down on pedestal. Picks up Marquise doll. Walks to Mother R.]

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "Low Bow" (with Marquise doll.)] My dearest Mother! To what happy chance do I owe the inexpressible pleasure of your visit? [Puts Marquise doll at Mother's feet.]

MOTHER
[Stands behind.] I have simply come to beg your forgiveness for the hard-hearted way in which you were expelled from your family's home.

MARQUISE
[Exchanges look with Marquise doll. To Mother.] Forgiveness?

SONG: FORGIVENESS
[Recorded music and voice. Walks with doll to piano. Puts doll on piano.]
Forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness!
Forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness!
Forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness!  [Music ends. Walks to Mother R.]

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] For not only did the recently published answer to your advertisement convince me and your father of your innocence, but I have also to tell you that the man in question, to our great delight and surprise, already presented himself at our house yesterday!

MARQUISE

[Gesture: "Drawing."] What man in question?

MOTHER

["Question Mark Walk" to stand behind.] Why, the man who wrote that reply, the man your appeal was directed to.

SONG: HOW, WHERE, WHEN? I

[Sings live at piano.]

Who is he? Who is he? How, where, when?
Who is he? Who is he? How, where, when?
But who? But who?
Please tell me who?  [Song ends.]

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] That is what I should like you to guess. Just imagine yesterday, as we were sitting at tea, a man with whom we are quite intimately acquainted rushed into the room with gestures of despair and threw himself at our feet. He said that his conscience was giving him no peace; it was he who had so shamefully deceived our daughter. He could not know how his crime was judged and what retribution was to be exacted from him. He had come to submit to that retribution.  [Gesture: Fanning.""] But my dear daughter, do not be alarmed to hear that he is of quite humble station and quite lacks the necessary qualifications a husband of yours might be expected to have.

MARQUISE

[Gesture: Drawing.] Nevertheless, my dear excellent mother, he cannot be wholly unworthy since he came and threw himself at your feet before throwing himself at mine.

SONG: HOW, WHERE, WHEN? II
Who is he? Who is he? How, where, when?
Who is he? Who is he? How, where, when?
But who? But who?
Please tell me who? [Song ends.]

MOTHER
[Long "Question Mark Walk" around piano.] Well, it was Leopardo, the groom from Tyrol . . .
and whom you may have noticed . . . [Gesture: "Leg Notice."] I have brought with me . . .
Gesture: "Avoidance."] . . . to present to you as your fiancé.

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "Fear #1"] Leopardo the groom! [Gesture: "Resignation."] How? Where? When?

MOTHER
[Gesture: "Hand Wringing."] That is something he wishes to confess only to you. But if you
like, I will leave the two of you together and you will see if you can elicit his secret from him.

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "Fear 2 (Holding the Waist)."] Dear God in heaven! It did once happen that I fell
asleep on the sofa in the midday heat, and when awoke he was walking away from it.

MOTHER
[Stands Behind.] Oh Julietta! You dear excellent girl! How contemptible of me!

MARQUISE
[Stands outside frame.] What is the matter Mother?

MOTHER
[ Straightens out frame. Stands behind.] For let me now tell you that nothing of what I just said
is true. You are purer than an angel. You radiate such innocence that my corrupted soul could
not believe in it without resorting to this shameful trick. If only you can forgive the baseness of
my behavior.

MARQUISE
[Leans head inside frame of Mother. Gesture: "Inverted Prayer."] Dearest Mother, am I to
forgive you?

MOTHER
[Stand behind.] I want to know whether you can still love me? Whether you can still respect
me?
MOTHER

"Leans head on frame. "Gesture: Devotion.""

My adored Mother! My heart has never lost any of its respect and love for you. Under such extraordinary circumstances how was it possible for anyone to trust me? How glad I am you are convinced I have done nothing wrong.

MOTHER

"Stand behind. Manipulates Mother's arms to form a heart."

Well, my dearest child. Now I shall love and cherish you. You shall have your confinement in my house. And I shall treat you with no less tenderness and respect than if your baby were to be a young prince. I want no greater honor than your shame. If only you can love me again and forget the hard-hearted way in which I rejected you.

NARRATOR

"Puts Marquise doll inside Mother's arm."

The marquise tried to comfort her with endless assurances but evening fell and midnight struck before she had entirely succeeded. The next day, "Rolls carriage wheel in front of Mother DS." . . . the mother, daughter and grandchildren drove back to M— in triumph. As soon as they arrived . . . "Lights change to M—. Leans wheel against bullet. Walks with marquise doll to platform. Puts doll on sofa. Turns sofa around."

MOTHER


Didn't I need an hour by the clock to convince him? But now he's weeping like a child. "Brings out teacup, now frothy with tulle."

If I had not been weeping myself, I should have burst out laughing.

MARQUISE

"Sits down next to Marquise doll."

Surely not my father? "Holds marquise doll to breast."

Mother let me go to him.

MOTHER

"Still seated, puts doll on sofa. Fixes doll dress."

You shall not budge! "Gesture: "Question Mark" (L and R)."

Why did he dictate that letter to me? Why did he shoot off that pistol?

NARRATOR

"Rises. Puts doll down at the edge of the platform DS opposite Father."

But at that moment, the Commandant entered the room, a handkerchief covering his face. "Sets Mother between Father and Marquise doll."

The Commandant's wife placed herself directly between her husband and her daughter. "Sets down on platform beside doll."

MOTHER

"Addresses doll."

You shall not go to him. You are to apologize to her.
MARQUISE

[Addresses Mother.] Oh, but he is weeping so! Father you will make yourself ill.

MOTHER

[Addresses Marquise.] Serves him right!

NARRATOR

The Commandant's wife left the two of them in the room, [Puts doll in Father's arm. Walks with Mother L.] She went to the kitchen . . . [Gesture: "Cooking. (Manipulates arms of mother shaving vegetables, cooking in pot as three dimensional cross)."] . . . and prepared for his dinner all the most nourishing and comforting foods she could devise. She warmed his bed, intending to up him into it as soon as the Commandant and his daughter reappeared hand and hand, but when the table was already laid and there was still no sign of him, she crept back into the room.

MOTHER

[Stand behind.] What on earth is going on? Why she's sitting in the Commandant's lap. He never permitted that before.

NARRATOR

The Marquise, her eyes tightly shut, was lying in the Commandant's lap. The latter, his eyes glistening with tears sat bent over her as if she were the first girl he had ever loved.

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] Just like a lover!

NARRATOR

[Walks Mother around Father to stand DL.] Just as the Commandant was again stroking and kissing his daughter's mouth in indescribable ecstasy, the Commandant’s wife leaned around the side of the chair.

MOTHER

[Peeks around frame at Father.] Oh what a face to make! Now come, cheer up and have dinner!

NARRATOR

[Brings Mother to bullet pedestal L.] The Commandant's wife led the way, as the Commandant walked along beside his daughter. [Brings Father to bullet pedestal R.] At table, [Puts carriage wheel on top of table.] he seemed very happy, though he said nothing, gazed at his plate and caressed his daughter's hand.

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] I wonder who will turn up tomorrow, for it will be the third.
NARRATOR
The Commandant, his wife, as well as the Commandant's son . . . [Walks to retrieve Brother R. Brings Brother to table. Puts Brother's arms on tabletop]. . . . who arrived to share in the general reconciliation were decidedly in favor of the marriage.

BROTHER
[Stands behind.] If the man is tolerably acceptable . . .

MOTHER
[Stands behind.] Everything will be done to insure Julietta's happiness.

FATHER
[Stands behind.] If on the other hand, the circumstances of the man fall too far short of our own, then we are resolved to have you come and live with us as before and adopt the child as our own.

MARQUISE
[Removes doll from Father's arm. No, it is my wish to keep my promise, providing the man is not a complete scoundrel and thus provide the child with a father. [Hands the Marquise doll by one arm on table top between Brother and Mother thus seating her at the table.]

MOTHER
[Stands behind.] How should the man be received? I am of the opinion that the marquise should be left by her self.

MARQUISE
[Stands at table between Mother and Father opposite the marquise doll.] No, I insist that you all be present, since I do not want to share any secrets with the expected person. I also think that would be his wish, since he suggested Father's house as the place for the meeting.

NARRATOR
The evening passed in a state of suspense and expectancy. At last the dreaded morning of the third arrived. [Walks to piano. Plays “Eleven Clock Strokes.” on piano. Brings piano bench to front of piano DL. Sits down on piano bench.] The two women sat in the reception room festively attired as if for a betrothal. Leopardo entered the room. The women turned pale.

LEOPARDO
[Voiceover.] I am to announce Count F— my lady. His carriage is at the door.

MARQUISE
[Gesture: "Fear #1." ] Count F—! Shut the doors! We are not at home to him!

MOTHER
[Gesture: "Hand Wringing."] Julietta, how stupid we have been! Why, who have we been expecting?

MARQUESE

[Gesture: "Deadpan."] Mother, I shall go mad.

COUNT F—

[Kneels.] Dear, sweet, noble lady.

MOTHER

[Rises.] Stand up Count! Stand up! Comfort my daughter and all will be forgiven and forgotten!

SONG: FORGIVEN, FORGOTTEN

[Recorded voice and music.]

Forgiven, forgotten, forgiven
Forgiven, forgotten, forgiven
Forgiven, forgotten, forgiven! [Song ends.]

MARQUESE

[Runs to father R.] Father, I cannot marry this man.

COLONEL G—

[Stands behind.] What has happened?

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] Do not ask. This young man sincerely repents everything that has happened. Give him your blessing. Give it! Give it! And all will still turn out for the best.

COLONEL G—

[Stands behind.] May the curse of heaven be averted from your head! When were you planning to get married?

MOTHER

[Stands behind.] Tomorrow! Tomorrow or today! I am sure not time is too soon for the Count, who has shown such admirable zeal in making amends for his wrongdoing.

COLONEL G—

[Stands behind.] Then I shall have the pleasure of seeing you tomorrow morning at the Church of St. Augustine.
NARRATOR

The family made vain efforts to explain the Marquise's strange behavior. [Removes tulle from teacup DL. Lies down on sofa. Gesture: "Slapstick Rape." with tulle as coverlet The wraps the sofa in tulle.]

COLONEL G—

[Gesture: "The Commandant."] What has made you change your mind?

BROTHER

[Gesture: "Forestry Official."] What makes the count more repugnant to you than any other suitor?

MOTHER

[Gesture: "Hand Wringing."] Have you forgot that you yourself a mother?

MARQUISE

[Stomps on the tulle.] Angels and saints be my witness, I shall not marry!

COLONEL G—

[Unwraps tulle from sofa.] Daughter you are hysterical. You shall keep your word!

NARRATOR

[Hold bamboo sticks as letter.] The Commandant submitted to the Count a marriage contract in which he would abide by any duties that would be imposed upon him. The contract came back wet with tears. The next morning, when the Commandant handed the contract to the Marquise, she had regained her composure.

MARQUISE

[Unwraps tulle from sofa.] I shall come to the Church of St. Augustine.

NARRATOR

[Music: "Julietta."] The Marquise rose, dressed without a word and got into the carriage with her mother, father and brother at the appointed time. [Wraps herself in the tulle as if it were a bridal gown. Walks off platform R and L to puppets DL. Puts tulle on wheel tabletop. Turns wheel. Walks with tulle as if preparing a bridal train for the doll. A beat. Stands underneath bridal train. Walks under bridal train to tabletop. Picks up wheel covered with tulle. Walks with tulle over head L.] The Count was not permitted to join the family until they reached the entrance of the church. [Music ends. Puts down on piano stool in front of piano. Dresses the entire piano. Marquise gets under veil to stand at piano. Plays theme music.] During the ceremony, the Marquise did not exchange even a fleeting glance at with the man with whom she was exchanging rings. After the ceremony, the Count offered her his arm, but as soon as they reached the entrance of the church, the Countess took her leave with a bow.
COLONEL G—

[Stands behind.] Count, I trust we shall have the pleasure of seeing you in my daughter's quarters from time to time.

NARRATOR

[Walks DL.] The Count bowed, murmured something unintelligible and disappeared. [Gesture: Replaces hat.] He took a residence in M—and was not seen for some months. It was due to his dignified, delicate and wholly exemplary behavior that when the Marquise was delivered of an infant son, that the Count was invited to the Christening. [Takes tulle off piano. Puts on top of, and drapes around puppets.] The Marquise, still confined to her bed, sat under richly embroidered coverlets. The Count saw her only for an instant, greeting her from a respectful distance. He threw onto his son's cradle two documents... [Puts sticks on top of tulle covered puppets.]... one a deed for twenty thousand rubles, and the other, making the boy's mother heiress to his entire fortune. After this, the Commandant's wife saw to it that he was frequently invited. In short, the house was open to him. [Opens up tulle draped on top and around puppets.] In consideration of the imperfection inherent in the world, he had been forgiven by all of them.

SONG: FORGIVEN BY ALL

[Recorded voice and music.]

Forgiven by all
Forgiven by all
Forgiven by all of them!

Forgiven by all
Forgiven by all
Forgiven by all of them! [Song ends.]

NARRATOR

The Count began a second wooing of his wife, the Countess. [Sits down on piano bench. Puts arm on piano.] After a year, he won from her a second consent. They even celebrated a second wedding happier than the first, after which the whole family moved out to V—. [Picks up doll DC. Walks on to platform. Stands next to sofa.] A whole series of young Russians followed the first. During one happy hour, the Count asked his wife why, on that terrible third day of the month, when she was ready to accept the most vicious of debauchees, she had fled from him as from the devil. Throwing her arms around him she replied,

MARQUISE
[Holds up doll.] I would not have seen a devil in you then if I had not seen an angel at our first meeting. [Exchanges look with doll. Walks behind sofa holding doll. Puts doll on sofa in standing position. Standing beside sofa, the Marquise looks at the doll as if into a mirror. A beat. Walks off platform to piano L. Opens piano lid, takes out green tulle. Closes piano lid. Holding the tulle walks to puppets DR. A beat. Exits through house DC. Blackout.]

CURTAIN