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Revelation and betrayal in pre-romantic German literature

Kandutsch, Carl Emil, Ph.D.

Yale University, 1987

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REVELATION AND BETRAYAL
IN PRE-ROMANTIC GERMAN LITERATURE

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Carl Emil Kandutsch
May, 1987

ABSTRACT
REVELATION AND BETRAYAL
IN PRE-ROMANTIC GERMAN LITERATURE

Carl Emil Kandutsch
Yale University
1987

This dissertation begins with an assumption that by the late eighteenth century, in Europe, serious art and literature could no longer be created by following the paradigms of significance established by a predominantly religious, pre-Enlightenment tradition. These paradigms had come to seem artificial or strained, no longer capable of conveying the kind of truth recognized by an enlightened, "scientific" culture. Art which remained within these outmoded paradigms had come to be seen as inherently "theatrical" or manipulative of its audience, offering a brief and superficial escape from the difficulties of living in a world of revolutionary upheaval.

Writers such as Diderot and Lessing held out the possibility of a "naive" art which would regain the genuineness of experience traditionally demanded of high art. The naive artwork was to have a self-subsisting integrity or openness equivalent, in its own terms, to that which modern science had found in natural objects. My hypothesis, following the art critic Michael Fried's

investigations into the origins of modern painting, is that the call for a naive art meant that if it were to continue as something more than entertainment, art would have to defeat or suspend its condition as something made to be viewed, read, listened to, etc., insofar as this condition had been structured by outmoded paradigms of comprehensibility.

This dissertation purports to discover what this meant for the practices of critical, dramatic, narrative and philosophical writing. Following an introductory section outlining the dialectic of the naive and the "theatrical," five different works are examined, by writers for whom the problem of "theatricality" was particularly pressing: Lessing's Laokoon (criticism), Diderot's Paradoxe sur le comedien (theater), Kleist's Amphitryon (theater) and Die Marquise von O . . . (narrative) and Kant's Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (philosophy). In each case the author attempts to demonstrate how the conditions of the work's readability, rather than being taken for granted, are set forth within the work itself. It is argued that only by insisting upon its own conditions of readability, rather than by meeting formal criteria inherited from tradition or prescribed by criticism, does the work succeed or fail as an instance of critical, theatrical, narrative or philosophical writing.

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I. INTRODUCTION: THEATRICALITY AND THE NAIVE

No statement so epitomizes late eighteenth century German culture as this from Winckelmann's Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst: "Der einzige Weg für uns, ja wenn es möglich ist, unnachahmlich zu werden, ist die Nachahmung der Alten . . ." ¹ Two features establish the historical centrality of this statement. First of all, it records a cultural absorption in, if not obsession with the theme of a lost origin, i.e., with the concepts of originality and imitation. Modern man finds himself belated, and therefore somehow inadequate with respect to the originality of the ancient Greeks. And secondly, the statement establishes the essentially paradoxical, perhaps even neurotic ² structure of this obsession. On the one hand we moderns may to some extent bridge the distance which separates us from Greek originality by imitating their achievements. And on the other hand, Winckelmann suggests that this practice of imitation, by means of which we acknowledge our belatedness with respect to the Greek model, is also our only way of becoming ourselves inimitable, i.e., original. Winckelmann's statement appears to promise both the inevitable defeat, and, at the same time, the possible triumph of the cultural program called "modernism." The more the Greek model is worthy of imitation, all the more impossible it is to imitate. But also: the more successful

the modern imitation, the further the imitation--because it is "mere imitation"--is removed from its model. Thus Winckelmann seems to suggest a different kind of originality, an originality which is peculiarly modern because it is not opposed to, but is achieved precisely by means of: imitation.

This dissertation purports to understand the period following Winckelmann--roughly, the birth of Romanticism--as an attempt to pose this paradox as a paradox, and thereby, perhaps, to disengage the mind from its grip. More specifically, I shall try to examine, through selected works of various late eighteenth and early nineteenth century authors, the problems of writing in a time which conceives of itself as essentially incomplete. I say essentially incomplete in order to distinguish the modern compulsion to imitate from an empty nostalgia. For as long as the classical age is thought to be exemplary by virtue of something intrinsically Greek, hence temporally prior, the modern wish to appropriate this ideal will remain a kind of historical accident. But if this ideal is disengaged from its historical determination, the moderns are free to conceive of themselves not as contingently, by virtue of their historical removal from an earlier age, incomplete, but as essentially insufficient. And to say that the modern age is intrinsically incomplete is to say that it is incomplete with respect to nothing outside of itself, but in relation to itself, to its own ideal. The perfection or

wholeness of classical culture becomes its limitation, and in its own insufficiency, the modern age finds the possibility of its fulfillment. We can therefore think of Romanticism as the birth of dialectic out of the spirit of imitation.³

The classical ideal is severed from its historical determination in Schiller's essay Über Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung (1797), a pivotal work in the overcoming of neo-classical aesthetics. Like Winckelmann's conception of classical beauty, Schiller's notion of the "naive" remains associated with the idea of bodily perfection. Nature, meaning sensuous presence, had not yet withdrawn from the Greek world. In ancient Greece, "artete die Kultur nicht so weit aus, dass die Natur darüber verlassen wurde. Der ganze Bau ihres gesellschaftlichen Lebens war auf Empfindungen, nicht auf einem Machwerk der Kunst erdichtet . . . da also der Grieche die Natur in der Menschheit nicht verloren hatte, so konnte er, ausserhalb dieser, auch nicht von ihr überrascht werden."⁴ Thus the ancient Greek could create art merely by faithfully copying the world around him. Schiller characterizes the naive poet as a "Bewahrer der Natur," in the sense that "das Objekt besitzt ihn gänzlich;"⁵ this is why his poetry is beautiful to the extent that its subject is beautiful, ugly if its subject is ugly: "Soweit die Natur in ihnen und ausser ihnen schön ist, sind es auch die Dichtungen der Alten; wird hingegen die Natur gemein, so ist auch der Geist aus ihren

Dichtungen gewichen."⁶ The naive poet is not free to choose the manner in which he shall present the world; the world presents itself to him, and his poetry is but a correct imitation of actuality. "Da der naive Dichter bloss der einfachen Natur und Empfindung folgt, und sich bloss auf Nachahmung der Wirklichkeit beschränkt, so kann er zu seinem Gegenstand auch nur ein einziges Verhältnis haben, und es gibt, in dieser Rücksicht, für ihn keine Wahl der Behandlung."⁷

In modern times nature no longer exists, or exists only in fragments. Yet nature remains the sole resource for genuine poetry, even in the age of "artificial man." The realm of poetry is divided into those who are nature, and those who seek nature. But to seek nature does not mean to imitate nature, nor does it mean to imitate ancient poets. In fact, the "nature" which the sentimental poet seeks bears not the slightest resemblance to the nature which possesses the naive poet. The sentimental poet must supply from within himself what the world outside him withholds, namely nature. Schiller wrote to Goethe, here addressed as the central poet of the sentimental age, that his poetic task was to give birth from the womb of his own imagination to that which he is actually denied: a Greek world. "Nun da Sie ein Deutscher geboren sind, sa Ihr griechischer Geist in diese nordische Schöpfung geworfen würde, so blieb Ihnen keine andere Wahl, als entweder selbst zum nordischen Künstler zu werden, oder Ihrer Imagination das, was ihr die

Wirklichkeit vorenthielt, durch Nachhülfe der Denkkraft zu ersetzen, und so gleichsam von innen heraus und auf einem rationalen Wege ein Griechenland zu gebären."⁸ The sentimental poet can produce only an idea of nature, and his poem is always, in some sense, a scene of mourning for nature lost rather than, as was the ancient naive work, a celebration of nature's immediate presence. "Die Übereinstimmung zwischen seinem Empfinden und Denken, die in dem ersten Zustande wirklich stattfand, existiert jetzt bloss idealisch; sie ist nicht mehr in ihm, sondern ausser ihm, als ein Gedanke, der erst realisiert werden soll, nicht mehr als Tatsache seines Lebens."⁹ In other words, the naive poet begins with a limited, finite subject, a subject which in itself is indifferent, and becomes poetic by virtue of the transparency of its presentation. The sentimental poet, on the other hand, begins with a subject which is already infinite, the idea of nature no longer present. His language is never sufficient to make nature present, and the poem presents the idea of nature by virtue of this very inadequacy.

Here we can begin to see the undermining of the neoclassical practice of imitation in favor of a dialectical conception. The sentimental poet who merely borrows his subject from the naive poet forgets that his insufficiency with respect to the classical model is also his poetic advantage over that model. For if the ancient work was "whole," it was by virtue of its limitation to sensuous,

finite subjects; the sentimental acknowledgement that this wholeness is no longer attainable releases the modern poet from all limitation. Nature becomes infinite (an idea) to the extent that it is lost and unattainable; an ideal nature strived for, but not attained, is a poetic goal worthier than the sensuous nature actually embodied in naive art.

Weil aber das Ideal ein unendliches ist, das er niemals erreicht, so kann der kultivierte Mensch in seiner Art niemals vollkommen werden, wie doch der natürliche Mensch es in der seinigen zu werden vermag. Er müsste also dem letztern an Vollkommenheit unendlich nachstehen, wenn bloss auf das Verhältnis, in welchem beide zu ihrer Art und zu ihrem Maximum stehen, geachtet wird. Vergleicht man hingegen die Arten selbst miteinander, so zeigt sich, dass das Ziel, zu welchem der Mensch durch Kultur strebt, demjenigen, welches er durch Natur erreicht, unendlich vorzuziehen ist. Der eine erhält also seinen Wert durch absolute Erreichung endlichen, der andre erlangt ihn durch Annäherung zu einer unendlichen Grösse. (10)

Ancient and modern poetry, the naive and the sentimental, are thus metaphysically different enterprises. The critic who recognizes this difference will not even so much as compare the ancient with the modern. It is absurd, for example, to "honor" a poet such as Milton with the title of a "neuern Homer."¹¹ Not because the modern poet invariably falls short of the level of quality established by the ancient epic, but because the term "epic" can no longer mean what it did in the classical age. "Satire," "elegy" and "idyll" do not, as in prior criticism, denote formally identifiable, trans-historical genres, instances of which the critic may observe anywhere, anytime. Rather these terms designate "modes of perception," by which the

sentimental poet presents the idea of an absent nature. Thus a poem may have a predominantly elegiac aspect (or Ton as Hölderlin would say), and still not meet the formal criteria of the Elegy.

Dass ich die Benennungen Satire, Elegie und Idylle in einem weitem Sinne gebrauche, als gewöhnlich geschieht, werde ich bei Lesern, die tiefer in die Sache dringen, kaum zu verantworten brauchen . . . ich sehe bloss auf die in diesen Dichtungsarten herrschende Empfindungsweise, und es ist ja bekannt genug, dass diese sich keineswegs in jene engen Grenzen einschliessen lässt. Elegisch rührt uns nicht bloss die Elegie, welche ausschliesslich so genannt wird: auch der dramatische und epische Dichter können uns auf elegische Weise bewegen. (12)

Moreover, a single work may combine more than one such mode of perception. Schiller hints that a particular work may be constituted by a dialectic of satirical, elegiac and idyllic modes.¹³ The final step in this logic offers the notion of the absolute work which would be, as Friedrich Schlegel prophesized, a genre unto itself, a set with only itself as a member.

In a work such as Schiller's essay, the concept of genre no longer functions as it did in traditional criticism. So long as a tradition of poetic practice is binding upon the artist and his audience, the inherited forms of "Elegy," "Satire" and "Idyll" may be said to generate their instances: But when the tradition has lost its authority, these inherited genres are no longer even identifiable. "Viele Werke der Alten sind Fragmente geworden. Viele Werke der Neuern sind es gleich bei der Entstehung."¹⁴ Not that the modern reader cannot identify

the genre of ancient works, but the traditional concepts of genre are no longer capable of guaranteeing the poetic identity of any particular work. It is no longer possible to write an elegy because the concept of elegy no longer ensures that a particular formal configuration of words (traditionally called "elegy") will be experienced as a poem at all.

This is why the romantic notion of an absolute work is not a conception of a "new" genre. When Schlegel wrote that each romantic novel or dialogue was to combine all the traditional genres within itself, he meant to question the very notion of "genre" in general. Each new work would not create a new instance of its genre, but would exist as an absolute realization of the concept of genre, which means: of poetry as such. If the romantics can be said to have invented a new genre, it is not the novel or the dialogue, but the fragment. And the fragment is not a genre. The point of designating a work as fragmentary is not to classify it as another instance of the genre "Fragment", but to proclaim the work the absolute realization of its own unique genre. That the concept of genre should have lost all generality, hence all applicability, signals a mutation in the concept of art as such. The necessity of the fragment is the necessity that each particular work succeed (as poetry) only by insisting upon the specific mode of existence of poetry in general, as if Poetry itself were being continually reinvented with each new work. With the

eclipse of an authoritative tradition of poetry, this means: as a fragment of a poem still being written.

Thus, the concept of genre will no longer provide access to particular works. This is a way of saying that art, as circumscribed by traditional criticism, no longer provides access to the world. At this point we may acknowledge Kant as a precursor of Romanticism generally, and of Schiller in particular. In his Critique of Pure Reason Kant attempted to ward off skepticism (the threat represented by the thought of David Hume) by demonstrating the possibility of certain knowledge of the world via the categories of the understanding. Because Kant's categories apply only to objects of possible experience (Erscheinungen), the price of this affirmation is that of foregoing any claim to know things as they are in themselves. Thus, one may think of Romanticism, with Stanley Cavell, as "a response at once to the threat of skepticism and to a disappointment with philosophy's answer to this threat . . . a disappointment in the idea of taking the success of science, or what makes science possible, as an answer to the threat of skepticism, rather than a further expression of it."¹⁵ Kant's bargain with philosophy left literature with no other option than to become a rival of philosophy, for the burden fell on literature to establish "an intimacy with the world which exists before, or after, the expression of beliefs or propositions that may be true or false, certain or nearly certain or doubtful."¹⁶ The

"naive" is Schiller's word for such an intimacy, a connection to the world which is closer than the claims of knowledge, or the various poetic genres, can provide. The naive is a way of speaking of what cannot be spoken (by aesthetics, philosophy, politics or religion): the thing in itself.

What does this mean? In the first place, that the "naive" presents itself as a kind of bargain between philosophy and poetry. Schiller describes the terms of this bargain when he recalls his horror upon first encountering a naive work of art, a scene in Homer's Iliad in which the enemies Glaucus and Diomedes meet and exchange armor, agreeing to bury their hostilities. The way in which Homer presents this scene of high pathos as if it were an ordinary, unremarkable occurrence seemed to Schiller nothing more or less than insensitivity, "als ob er selbst kein Herz im Busen trüge . . ." ¹⁷ A later (sentimental) poet, Aristo in Orlando Furioso, describing a similar scene, cannot conceal his own wonder and satisfaction in the action he depicts. The reader brought up on sentimental poetry is happy, remarks Schiller, to approach the poem from a position twice removed, through the medium of the poet's reflection. But it is Homer's "insensitivity" to the (modern) reader which marks his work as naive. Then, as if to demonstrate that the naive is not the exclusive possession of the ancient poets, Schiller recalls his revulsion upon reading Shakespeare for the first time. He

did not yet realize that the poet's "coldness," the "insensitivity" which allows him to interrupt a tragic scene with a fool's speech, is also the source of Shakespeare's poetic power. Accustomed to reflecting with the poet on the characters and actions presented, Schiller was not prepared for the immediacy of Shakespeare's representation.

Durch die Bekanntschaft mit neuern Poeten verleitet, in dem Werke den Dichter zuerst aufzusuchen, seinen Herzen zu begegnen, mit ihm gemeinschaftlich über seinen Gegenstand zu reflektieren; kurz das Objekt in dem Subjekt anzuschauen, war es mir unerträglich, dass der Poet sich heir gar nirgends fassen liess und mir nirgends Rede stehen wollte. (18)

The "bargain" struck by the naive poet is that in order to present the world in his work, he may not himself appear in the work. What Schiller found intolerable in his first encounter with naive poetry is exactly what Plato (and later Rousseau), in Book III of the Republic, found intolerable in the theater as such: the poet's mimetic diction does not allow the reader to identify the poet in the work. "Wie die Gottheit hinter dem Weltgebäude, so steht er hinter seinem Werk; er ist das Werk, und das Werk ist er; man muss des erstern schon nicht wert oder nicht mächtig oder schon satt sein, um nach ihm nur zu fragen."¹⁹

The naive work, in a word, presents itself immediately, as if it had no author, which is to say, as nature rather than as art. "Nature" means simply "das Bestehen der Dinge durch sich selbst"²⁰, a thing's independence of or indifference to its witnesses. The "terror" of the naive work for the modern reader, the insensitivity which Schiller

found in the works of Homer and Shakespeare, has the same ground as its fascination: the naive work exists as though it had no audience.

The sentimental poet, by contrast, gives us nature not in the immediacy of sensory experience, but as something lost. His work is always a scene of mourning and recuperation, an attempt to recover the world in the only way it can be recovered: as an idea. Hence the sentimental work is inherently theatrical, in the sense that it exists essentially for its audience. The poet himself, because he presents nature through the medium of his own reflection, is always the first reader of his creation. Inevitably, says Schiller, the sentimental poet "verlässt auf einmal das Gemälde des Gegenstandes und erscheint in eigener Person..."²¹

In banning the tragedien from the city, Plato affirmed the necessity that the poet appear in his own person, which meant, as something other than a poet: a citizen first of all. The dramatic theater is censored because it threatens to expose the philosophical theater which is the Republic. We might measure the distance separating classical Greek culture from that of late eighteenth century Europe with the hypothesis that by Schiller's time such an exposure had already taken place, and irreversibly. Rousseau, for example, unmaskes the city (Paris) as theatrical through and through. The Actor (for Diderot, in Le Paradoxe sur le comédien) is no longer a threat because he has become the

norm: we are first of all actors and actresses, and thereby citizens. "Ohne falsch zu sein, redet man öfters anders, als man denkt; man muss Umschweife nehmen, um Dinge zu sagen, die nur einer kranken Eigenliebe Schmerz bereiten, nur einer verderbten Phantasie Gefahr bringen können."²² Schiller values the mimetic poet, whom he calls naive, for the very reason that Plato condemned him: he discloses the theatricality of society.

There is a good deal to say about the politics implicit in the concept of the naive, but here I only want to emphasize that in holding out the naive as a redemption from the theatrical, Schiller does not (as he emphasizes in his critique of Rousseau²³) promise a "return to nature." Schiller's warnings on this point originate not in practical or political convictions, but in the nature of the naive itself. The naive work, as I suggested earlier, presents itself as if it had no author, i.e., as nature rather than as art. This is only possible because the naive poet's relation to nature is much closer, more familiar or more intimate than any relation of reflection or knowing. The naive poet, as Schiller says, is nature; he is at home in the world. At the same time, however, this familiarity or intimacy can only strike us--we who are removed from nature--as strangeness, insensitivity or indifference. It is as if the world which presents itself in the naive work is a true or genuine world only to the extent that we are excluded from it.

Wie kommt es, dass wir, die in allem, was Natur ist, von den Alten so unendlich weit übertroffen werden, gerade heur der Natur in einem höhern Grade huldigen, mit Innigkeit an ihr hangen und selbst die leblose Welt mit der wärmsten Empfindung umfassen können? Daher kommt es, weil die Natur bei uns aus der Menschheit verschwunden ist und wir sie nur asserhalb dieser, in der unbeseelten Welt, in ihrer Wahrheit wieder antreffen. (24)

Naive art cannot offer a "return to nature" because the condition of the world appearing to us, in its truth, is that we have withdrawn from the world, made it lifeless (leblose, unbeseelte). That it should be a matter of indifference whether we describe the naive work as intimate or distant, as familiar or strange, or even as "sentimental," suggests that the "naive" is finally a paradoxical concept. For it is the concept of an artwork which would deny or suspend the fundamental condition of art generally: that it is made to be read, or viewed, or listened to, etc.

At one point in his essay Schiller expresses this idea by remarking that nature itself is naive only as it is presented in sentimental art, just as childishness is naive only to the extent that we forget that the child is incapable of artifice.

Die Handlungen und Reden der Kinder geben uns daher auch nur so lange den reinen Eindruck des Naiven, als wir uns ihres Unvermögens zur Kunst nicht erinnern und überhaupt nur auf den Kontrast ihrer Natürlichkeit mit der Künstlichkeit in uns Rücksicht nehmen. Das Naive ist eine Kindlichkeit, wo sie nicht mehr erwartet wird, und kann ebendeswegen der wirklichen Kindheit in strengster Bedeutung nicht zugeschrieben werden. (25)

This is why the naive cannot be the exclusive possession of ancient poets. Schiller describes not only Homer and Sophocles, but Shakespeare, Dante, Tasso, Sterne and of course Goethe (sometimes) as naive poets. And yet the term "naive" remains, in accordance with Schiller's apparently neoclassical taste, associated with the art of ancient Greece. It is as if works produced in the distant past are, were it were, inherently anti-theatrical, not because of some identifiable formal quality ("Greek beauty") which has been lost to the Christian era, but by virtue of their historical, hence metaphysical removal from the modern audience. These works are automatically, as if as a fact of nature, oblivious to their audience. The term "naive" does not describe ancient works, but our (non)relationship to particular works insofar as they are naive, but not necessarily ancient. The feeling of the naive "ist also nicht das, was die Alten hatten; es ist vielmehr einerlei mit demjenigen, welches wir für die Alten haben. Sie empfanden natürlich; wir empfinden das Natürliche."²⁶ Thus one can understand the persistence of neoclassical taste in the "progressive" criticism of Schiller and Schlegel, even without the antiquarian motivation of Winckelmann. We could also say: taste, for these critics, had ceased to be a fundamental motivation for criticism.

I assume that each of the works considered in the following pages is concerned, in one way or another, with

the concept of the naive. This only means that in a very broad sense the authors of these works labored under a prevailing suspicion, in the wake of Kant, that the criteria we share, the ground of our artistic, religious, political and philosophical discourses, may have done as much to shut out the world as they have to bring us into its presence. This suspicion resolves itself into an anxiety regarding the conventionality of language generally, and thus the possibility that inherited conventions may no longer be sufficient to constitute an audience for art.

Therefore, to say that each of the works considered is concerned with the concept of the naive is to say that these works may be seen as posing the question: how is it possible to create art after the eclipse of an authoritative tradition which would assure the relation between art and its audience? Perhaps all works which we think of as "modern" respond to some version of this question. However, the peculiar power of the works I have chosen originates in the fact that they do not deny the force of the question by offering a generalized answer. These works are concerned with the concept of the naive not so much thematically as structurally, in the way they structure their relationship to the reader. The "modernity" of these works does not consist in their repudiation of the past, but in their acknowledgement that the past can no longer assure that the work shall have any audience. The necessity that art shall be naive is the imperative that a particular work establish,

as if for the first time, the conditions of its own readability.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that such a question or problem defines or delimits a historically identifiable period or era. In particular it would be wrong to say that these authors "answered" the question by inventing new forms of significance. The historical problem, as Schiller's remarks on the naive suggest, was with the notion of significance itself, i.e., with how writing could any longer be a vehicle for significance. Thus, in his Laokoon, Lessing may be seen as asking: after the decline of the traditional doctrine of genres, how is art criticism possible? What is art criticism to be if not the classification of particular paintings and sculptures under authoritative generic categories? Kleist's Die Marquise von O. . . and Amphitryon, as well as Kant's critical ethics pose a similar question with respect to narrative, dramatic and philosophical writing.

The concept of the naive presents itself, on the one hand, as an alternative to traditional modes of significance which have lost their force; but more profoundly, the naive promises redemption from the notion of significance itself. The redemptive power of the works I shall consider depends, in each case, upon their acknowledgement that insignificance is not an alternative to, but a mode or possibility of significance. Silence, whether it be the muteness of the Laokoon sculpture even as it screams, the inarticulateness

of Alkmena's final "Ach!" in Amphitryon, or the dumb opaqueness of the Marquise's pregnant body, is not the natural condition of art, but its highest achievement. This is because the "natural condition" of any artistic medium is to demand an audience; artworks are made to be read, viewed, listened to, etc. The achievement of the works I have chosen to consider is their insistence upon the radical conventionality of this condition. To assess this achievement will mean realizing the precariousness of the reader's position in confronting these works. For the academic context in which we encounter such works cannot guarantee our relation to them. These pages will succeed as criticism to the extent that they demonstrate that our distance from these works is not merely a matter of our historical removal from the time of their creation, but a precondition of their existence as art.

II. CRITICISM: LESSING'S LAOKOON

Friedrich Schlegel, probably the best literary critic of his time (before Nietzsche), considered Lessing an exemplary critic for the Romantic movement. Exemplary as a critic, and because he was a critic through and through. Everything Lessing did and wrote was conceived and executed in a spirit of criticism. "Alles was Lessing getan, versucht und gewollt hat, lässt sich am füglichsten unter den Begriff der Kritik zusammenfassen..."²⁷ Schlegel seems to have been fascinated by what we may call Lessing's "style," the style of a writer in transition, of a figure marking the historical turn from the classical to the modern age. In particular, Schlegel points to two tendencies in Lessing's writing which insure his importance for the destiny of Romantic poetry: Lessing's self-imposed task (in Laokoon) of distinguishing among the several genres of art, of discovering, as we would now say, the essential medium of each art; and his invention (at any rate consolidation) of a new "genre" of writing, the polemic. "Die grosse Masse seiner andern Schriften, antiquarischer, dramaturgischer, grammatischer, und eigentlich literarischer Untersuchungen, gehört selbst nach dem gemeineren Begriff hierher; und ich weiss nicht, ob nicht auch alle Polemik wenigstens als eine der Kritik sehr nah verwandte Gattung betrachtet werden sollte."²⁸ By "polemic" Schlegel means "die Absonderung des Unechten, the critical separation of the true from the false

art of his own time, which Lessing displays to great advantage, for example, in his Hamburgische Dramaturgie.

As a critic Lessing was concerned as much with judgments of quality ("polemic") as he was with the a priori rules of artistic creation, rules which would seem to insure quality independently of anyone's personal judgment. In Kantian terms, he was a dogmatist, who would derive everything empirical (including works of art) from a priori principles, as well as a skeptic, who would deny the existence of such a priori principles altogether. And just as Kant defined the task of critical philosophy as one of finding a way between, and thereby disarming both dogmatism and skepticism, so I would claim that in his critical writings, Lessing looked at art as a dogmatist and as a skeptic, and that both viewpoints were inseparable. I mean: the question of the quality of an art work implied the question of its classification; and conversely, the "essence" of art in general could be discovered only through the qualitative judgment of individual works.

I have stated this general impression of Lessing's criticism in terms which are somewhat contradictory, if not paradoxical, for two reasons. First, because Lessing has often been accused, at worst, of contradicting himself, and at best, for taking a somewhat dogmatic position on aesthetics, only to undermine that position through the brilliance of his own perceptions of individual works. And second, because I believe this way of stating it points to a

state of affairs which is itself paradoxical, and which is, moreover, constitutive of what is known as "modernism."

That Lessing's argument in Laokoon is inconsistent, at any rate confused, is the position of Rensselaer Lee in his fine study of "the humanistic theory of painting." Lee's book is an attempt to trace the history of the concept of "ut pictura poesis"--the doctrine that painting, like poetry, ought to represent the expressive unity of the human figure in action--between its rise in the Renaissance, and the beginnings of its decline in the early 18th century. What began as an heroic effort to save painting from triviality (at least in comparison with poetry and especially tragic drama) became, thanks to a misapplication of Aristotle's aesthetics of the theater, a sacrifice of the value of the pictorial as such, of "the clear insistence that painting is primarily an art whose function it is to represent to the eye the forms and beauty of the external world."²⁹ Nature could be sacrificed because painting, like poetry, was "ideal imitation," an imitation of "ideal nature" rather than the empirical, visible world. For where was this ideal nature to be found? The answer was: in the art of ancient Greece, and the consequence was the rather sterile classicism of Winckelmann, among others, for whom the only way the modern artist could imitate "ideal nature" was to copy the works of ancient Greek sculptors. "For the antique is already that ideal nature for which the painter strives, and 'the ancient statues contain all the perfection

of art."³⁰ The restoration of the value of the pictorial as such, and hence the origin of modern painting (which may be seen as a search for the essence of the pictorial medium tout court), begins with the overcoming of the doctrine of classicism in the late 18th century.³¹

It is in this context that Lessing was a crucial transitional figure. Crucial because he was probably the first writer to explicitly commit his critical powers to separating the arts of painting and poetry, which implied uncovering the media of painting and poetry in their essential distinctness. And transitional because, although such an enterprise anticipates the "modernist" conception of the artistic medium (the acknowledgement of which constitutes the standard of value according to which modernist painting is to be judged³²), Lessing was barred from the further reaches of his project insofar as his critical sensibility remained imprisoned within a prior moment in the history of taste, that of Winckelmann's classicism.

Lee describes Lessing as a writer whose revolutionary theory was subverted by his own fundamentally conservative sensibility:

In the mid-eighteenth century Lessing was in the curious position of objecting not only to ut pictura poesis as it was exemplified in the historical painters, but also to those critics of the doctrine who, like DePiles, approved an enlargement of the painter's legitimate sphere of activity. Looking backward like the theorists of the Italian Renaissance to the authority of Aristotle, and opposed to romantic tendencies in eighteenth-century criticism, he was,

moreover, influenced by the rather narrow purism of Winckelmann's tendency to identify beauty with Greek statuary...For although Lessing's avowed purpose in the Laokoon was to dispel a confusion between the temporal art of poetry and the spatial art of painting, in defining the end of painting as the representation of bodily beauty he unconsciously confused painting with sculpture. Seeking to destroy a confusion that originated in the Renaissance, he fell into another that originated in the antiquarian research of the eighteenth century and was, in a sense, "hoist with his own petard." (33)

Such a description of Lessing's "curious position" is obviously well-grounded in passages from Laokoon itself. Moreover, it is not my purpose here to "refute" Lee's version of Lessing which, after all, occupies a rather marginal position in a book which remains one of the finest on its subject in any language. It does seem to me, however, that Lee's version of Laokoon rests on certain assumptions about the nature of an artistic medium, and that these assumptions are gathered from a representative reading which may obscure rather than reveal the most interesting aspects of Lessing's essay.

The assumptions which guide Lee's reading of Laokoon are, schematically, the following:

1. That Lessing was committed to an aesthetic classicism of the sort usually associated, almost like a cliché, with Winckelmann. And that this prejudice of taste effectively subverted Lessing's own finest insights. In particular, it committed him to the doctrine of the hierarchy of genres, in which "descriptive" or "realistic" painting (landscapes and still-lives) occupied the lowest

rung, and "idealized" paintings of the human figure, the apex. Unfortunately for Lessing's argument, however, the supremacy of the human figure as a subject for the plastic arts referred implicitly to the same doctrine of ut pictura poesis which it was his purpose to refute;

2. Moreover, Lessing's allegiance to Winckelmann committed him to a classical conception of timeless beauty which, based as it was on the idealized human figure of hellenic sculpture, prevented Lessing from recognizing the expressive beauty of the finest art of his own time, which was history painting;

3. Finally, that Lessing sought to justify his classicist taste by "deducing" the "law of beauty" from the physical nature of the plastic arts. Since painting is a spacial art, it may depict only fully visible bodies, objects which persist unchanged over time, while poetry, as the temporal art, may represent only actions. In other words, the opposition poetry/painting corresponds to the opposition expression/beauty.

What I have designated Lee's third assumption can hardly be called an assumption at all, since it is a virtual paraphrase of the beginning of Chapter XVI of Laokoon. Lessing writes that he will try "die Sache aus ihren ersten Grunden herzuleiten."³⁴ The signs of painting are "Figuren und Farben in dem Raume;" those of poetry are "artikulierte Töne in der Zeit." In each art, "die Zeichen [müssen] ein bequemes Verhältnis zu dem Bezeichneten haben." Now objects

which exist in space are called "Körper," and objects which follow each other in time are called "Handlungen." Therefore, "Körper mit ihren sichtbaren Eigenschaften [sind] die eigentlichen Gegenstände der Malerei," while "Handlungen [sind] der eigentlich Gegenstand der Poesie."³⁵

Painting, as the spatial art, can present to the beholder only a single moment of time. An action is comprehensible, according to the law of causality, only over an extended period of time. Painting which tries to represent action can only present a single moment of that action, which is to say, it cannot represent action at all, and such painting will verge on incomprehensibility. That the painter must choose bodies for his representation is mandated by the physical (i.e., spatial) nature of his medium.

To the extent that Lessing held to this literal construal of the concept of an artistic medium, which prescribes subjects according to its physical characteristics, Lee is justified in writing that Lessing denied to painting "virtually all but the depiction of corporeal beauty."³⁶ Accordingly, the fact that painting can, in fact, represent bodies in action (figures frozen at a phase of movement which suggests a prior and a future state), as well as at rest--this capacity will remain a secondary possibility of painting, as Lessing at this point suggests: "Doch alle Körper existieren nicht allein in dem Raume, sondern auch in der Zeit...Folglich kann die Malerei

auch Handlungen nachahmen, aber nur andeutungsweise durch Körper."³⁷

The trouble is that Lessing does treat in fact, if not in principle, paintings of actions as something more than a mere secondary possibility of the medium. As Lee points out, Lessing subscribes to the doctrine of the hierarchy of genres, which places representations of the human figure above "descriptive" paintings of inanimate nature, and this would seem to imply the supremacy of historical painting. In the sketches for Laokoon, for example, Lessing wrote the following, which is a fairly succinct articulation of the hierarchy of genres:

Der Ausdruck körperliche Schönheit ist die Bestimmung der Malerei
 Die höchste körperliche Schönheit also ihre höchste Bestimmung.
 Die höchste körperliche Schönheit existiert nur in dem Menschen, und auch nur in diesem vermöge des Ideals.
 Dieses Ideal findet bei den Tieren schon weniger, in der vegetabilischen und leblosen Natur aber gar nicht statt.
 Dieses ist es, was dem Blumen- und Landschaftsmaler seinen Rang anweist.
 Er ahmet Schönheiten nach, die keines Ideals fähig sind; er arbeitet also bloss mit dem Auge und mit der Hand; und das Genie hat an seinem Werke wenig oder gar keinen Anteil. (38)

Not simply "Körper," but "körperliche Schönheit," the human body, is the true subject of painting. This is a classical, Greek principle which the "descriptive" painters of the modern ("Dutch") school tend to ignore:

...die Kunst hat in den neuern Zeiten ungleich weitere Grenzen erhalten. Ihre Nachahmung, sagt man, erstreckte sich auf die ganze sichtbare Natur, von welcher das Schöne nur ein kleiner Teil ist. Wahrheit und Ausdruck sei ihr erstes Gesetz; und wie die Natur selbst die

Schönheit höhern Absichten jederzeit aufopfere, so müsse sie auch der Künstler seiner allgemeinen Bestimmung unterordnen und ihr nicht weiter nachgehen, als es Wahrheit und Ausdruck erlauben. Genug, dass durch Wahrheit und Ausdruck das Hasslichste der Natur in ein Schönes der Kunst verwandelt werde. (39)

The ancient Greek, on the other hand, understood that the "law of beauty" must govern the visual arts, and so chose to paint only objects which were beautiful:

...so hat der weise Greiche ihr weit engere Grenzen gesetzt und sie bloss auf die Nachahmung schöner Körper eingeschränket. Sein Künstler schilderte nichts als das Schöne...Die Vollkommenheit des Gegenstandes selbst musste in seinem Werke entzücken; er war zu gross, von seinen Betrachtern zu verlangen, dass sie sich mit dem blossen kalten Vergnügen, welches aus der getroffenen Ähnlichkeit, aus der Erwägung seiner Geschicklichkeit entspringet, begnügen sollten;... (40)

This restriction, which Lessing at one point calls the "Gesetz der Schönheit," is comprehensible only to the imagination, and not to the eyes alone. While the painter of flowers and landscapes works "bloss mit dem Auge und mit der Hand," the painter of "körperliche Schönheit" must have "das Genie." In the hierarchy of genres, the descriptive painter ranks low exactly because his pictures are directed only to the eye, whereas the figure painter paints for the imagination. "...denn was wir in einem Kunstwerke schon finden, das findet nicht unser Auge, sondern unsere Einbildungskraft durch das Auge, schon."⁴¹ The imagination, however, is the organ of poetry, and so Lessing seems to have been lead back to the principle of ut pictura poesis. Or rather, the "law of beauty," insofar as it was informed by "the rather narrow purism of Winckelmann's tendency to

identify beauty with Greek statuary"--this law, which was introduced in order to distinguish painting from poetry, in the end leads back to their confusion.

Such a slippage of concepts is inevitable to the extent that Lessing's notion of beauty is indeed determined by the timeless criteria of harmonious proportion and symmetry, as these values were embodied in Greek sculpture. To the extent, that is, that the "law of beauty" is an alien restriction, a more or less arbitrary prejudice of taste, imposed upon painting as a prescription of the kind of subject it must represent. "Schönheit" remains, however, a mercurial concept in Laokoon, remarkably undetermined for having such a pivotal role in the argument. So let us ask why it is that a picture of the human figure is more beautiful than, say, a descriptive painting of the Dutch school.

When Lessing writes that a painting must confine itself to the representation of a single moment, he means that the painting must be immediately comprehensible, without any labor of interpretation. "Von dem ersten Blicke hängt die grösste Wirkung ab, und wenn uns dieser zu mühsamen Nachsinnen und Raten nötiget, so erkaltet unsere Begierde, gerühret zu werden..."⁴² And for a painting to be immediately comprehensible (as a painting, we might say, rather than as an object), the subject it represents must be immediately comprehensible. The power of a painting to move the beholder is the power of its subject, even in nature, to

move us.

Now this emphasis on the primacy of subject matter rather than on technical facility⁴³ was, for anti-Rococo critics of the 18th century, "one expression of a new explicitly dramatic conception of painting."⁴⁴ Specifically, it was used to demonstrate the supremacy of history painting. Descriptive painting of indifferent nature, on the contrary, because its subjects are not intrinsically interesting, depends for its success on brilliance of technique, and even if its accurate rendition of visible nature astounds the beholder, his enjoyment will never be anything but a kind of admiration. It will be a "kalten Vergnügen," mediated by "Erwägung seiner Geschicklichkeit." Unless the subject of a painting is in itself interesting and capable of concentrating the beholder's attention, the painting on the whole lacks unity.

Descriptive painting was to be avoided, but not primarily because ordinary nature does not exhibit the characteristics of classical beauty, nor because it is not a sufficiently "noble" or "morally elevated" subject. These faults counted as criticisms of painting, were relevant to painting at all, only because these (mundane) subjects could not be taken in at a glance. And this suggests that Lessing was committed to Winckelmann's classical conception of beauty only to the extent that paintings of these subjects exhibited that "absolutely perspicacious mode of pictorial unity"⁴⁵ which would allow them to involve the beholder at

first glance. Whatever "Schönheit" means in Laokoon, it is not a secondary attribute, a set of formal characteristics which delimit a sub-set of the group of subjects painting may or may not choose to represent. An object's being beautiful and its being a subject for painting are essentially related, in the same way as are the subject of a painting and the "single moment" of that subject which painting represents--and this only means that "beauty," as the aim of painting, cannot be determined apart from the experience of particular paintings.

That subject is beautiful which, when represented in painting, provides that painting with a unity such that the picture may be taken in a single glance. Michael Fried has demonstrated that this new emphasis on the dramatic or causal mode of pictorial unity was linked, in 18th century art criticism, to the doctrine of the hierarchy of genres. As a version of ut pictura poesis, the hierarchy of genres was used to justify painting against poetry, to affirm that painting, like poetry, found its highest form in the representation of significant human action, which to most critics meant history ("heroic") painting.

Lessing's own version of the doctrine is, one might say, decapitated: history painting, normally the apex of the hierarchy, is placed below its base, even below landscape painting. In Nachlass C, from which I quoted above, immediately after remarking that the landscape painter works "bloss mit dem Auge und mit der Hand," Lessing continues:

Doch ziehe ich noch immer den Landschaftsmahler demjenigen Historienmahler vor, der ohne seine Hauptabsicht auf die Schönheit zu richten, nur Klumpen Personen mahlt, um seine Geschicklichkeit in dem blossen Ausdrücke, und nicht in dem der Schönheit untergeordneten Ausdrücke, zu zeigen. (46)

True to the hierarchy of genres, Lessing did have a low opinion of landscape painting, but "he had an even lower opinion of historical painting wherein he thought that painters showed their cleverness in mere expression without subordinating the latter to bodily beauty."⁴⁷ Lee's word "wherein" is deceptive, for in this passage Lessing does not condemn all history painting, but only "demjenigen...der ohne seine Hauptabsicht auf die Schönheit zu richten, nur Klumpen Personen mahlt, um seine Geschicklichkeit in dem blossen Ausdrücke...zu zeigen." History paintings of figures which are more expressive than they are beautiful are placed in the same category as paintings of mute landscapes or still-lives, and both exhibit the same fault: both history painters and landscape painters are overly concerned with displaying their own Geschicklichkeit, rather than the inherent beauty of their subjects. And to this extent, both genres lack the causal unity necessary to involve the beholder at a single glance. Lessing leaves open the possibility that some history painters--those who the beauty of their subjects to an exhibition of their technique--may not suffer from this defect.

Lessing notes that what he called paintings of "körperliche Schönheit" were traditionally included under

the rubric "Historienmahlen": "Um körperliche Schönheiten von mehr als einer Art zusammenbringen zu können, fiel man auf das Historienmahlen."⁴⁸ The painter of bodily beauty was a painter of the human body in action, which is to say, of history, for whom "history" was only the means, or the best way to paint bodily beauty. "Der Ausdruck, die Vorstellung der Historie, war nicht die letzte Absicht des Mahlers. Die Historie war bloss ein Mittel seine letzte Absicht, mannichfaltige Schönheit, zu erreichen."⁴⁹ The fact that paintings of bodily beauty are much closer to history painting than they are to, say, landscape painting, suggests that Lessing used the term "körperliche Schönheit" in a way that did not entirely exclude "expression" [Ausdruck]. For what distinguishes the human figure from a landscape, or a bouquet of flowers is, in the terms we are discussing, precisely its expressiveness; to paint the human body is to paint the human soul. Hence, Lee goes too far when he writes that "Lessing considered expression far more appropriate to poetry than to painting, believing that in the latter it tended seriously to interfere with the all-important depiction of bodily beauty."⁵⁰ There is a world of difference between asserting categorically that painting cannot depict an expressive subject without straying into the realm of poetry, and remarking that, when painting borrows its mode of representing passion from poetry, that passion becomes overly expressive and unnatural. If the latter formulation still restricts the painter in a way that

"leaves little room for the expression of human emotion," the reason is likely to be more complicated than "[Lessing's] utter lack of understanding of the pictorial significance of the development of modern painting, and the dominant influence of the antique..."⁵¹

Painting which borrows its representation of expression from poetry, and in this sense, sacrifices beauty to expression, is called allegorical painting. In Chapter VIII Lessing discusses Spence's idea that virtually everything in a poem ought to be representable in painting. On this account, Spence finds it strange that in ancient paintings and sculptures, the wine-god Bacchus almost never appears with horns, whereas the poets usually described him with horns. Lessing answers that "dem Dichter mehr erlaubt ist als dem Bildhauer und Maler..."⁵² A god or spiritual being such as Bacchus is an entirely different kind of being in poetry than it is in a painting. "Bei dem Künstler sind sie personifizierte Abstrakta, die beständig die nämlich Charakterisierung behalten müssen, wenn sie erkenntlich sein sollen. Bei dem Dichter hingegen sind sie wirkliche handelnde Wesen, die über ihren allgemein Charakter noch andere Eigenschaften und Affekten haben, welche nach Gelegenheit der Umstände vor jenen vorstechen können."⁵³

The horns of Bacchus are to be counted among these "andere Eigenschaften." Not part of Bacchus' natural form, the horns were ornaments which he could put on in particular circumstances. "Die Hörner des Bacchus waren keine

naturliche Horner, wie sie es an den Faunen und Satyren waren. Sie waren ein Stirnschmuck, den er aufsetzen und ablegen konnte."⁵⁴ When Bacchus wished to appear in his "virgin beauty," he appeared without horns; hence, to represent him in painting with horns would be to obscure that natural beauty. To the artist, writes Lessing, the horns were "Hinderungen, grossere Schonheiten zu zeigen..."⁵⁵ But in a poem, there is nothing to cover up; the poetic Bacchus is recognizably Bacchus not by virtue of his natural (read: visual) appearance, but by being called "Bacchus." For the poet, then, the horns are conventionalized symbols (like the name "Bacchus") which make "feine Anspielungen auf die Taten und den Charakter des Gottes..."⁵⁶

A painting of Bacchus with horns tries to be too expressive, in the sense that it attempts to show something which the natural form of Bacchus, his "jungfraulichen Schonheit," cannot, by itself, reveal. Lessing's objection to expression in painting is twofold: to show something beyond what can be revealed by the figures themselves within the painting, the artist must either have recourse to conventional, literary symbols, in which case his painting becomes allegorical, or he must place these figures in unnatural, contorted positions, in which case the painting is simply ugly. What the figures within the painting, by themselves, can show, is whatever can be taken in at a glance, from a single viewpoint. Everything, we might say,

which these figures would ~~reveal~~ even if they were not in a painting, if there were no beholder to which something may be revealed. What the beholder may grasp in a moment from a single viewpoint is whatever the painting (or the figures within the painting) does not actively display: the beholder is able to grasp, from a single viewpoint, whatever the painting reveals--to anyone, by not actively exhibiting--to someone in particular, the beholder. The importance of natural law, i.e., the law of causality, in organizing pictorial structure follows from the fact that the painting's relation to the beholder (what the painting reveals to him or her) must be governed by an automatism for which the artist is not (or does not appear to be) responsible. Everything which is not revealed in this way, by nature herself, must be read through conventional signs added by the artist, which is to say, for the sake of the beholder.

When the painter borrows from Homer the cloud in which Apollo carries Hector out of danger,⁵⁷ he borrows not a real, visible cloud, but a figure of speech through which Homer makes palpable to the reader "die äusserste Schnelligkeit der Entrückung, welche wir das Verschwinden nennen..."⁵⁸ In a painting, however, a cloud is first of all just a visible, "natural" cloud, and not a sign; if it is to fulfill its poetic function, the cloud must be read as "eine wahre Hieroglyphe, ein blosses symbolisches Zeichen, das den befreiten Helden nicht unsichtbar macht, sondern den

Betrachtern zuruft: ihr müsst ihn euch als unsichtbar vorstellen. Sie ist nichts besser als die beschriebenen Zettelchen, die auf alten gotischen Gemälden den Personen aus dem Munde gehen."⁵⁹ And to the extent that these signs are perceived as such, as arbitrary signs constructed by the artist, the unity of the beholder's view of the painting is broken up, divided between what the figures themselves reveal, and what the artist has added.

Lessing's exclusion of expression from painting rests, apparently, on a dubious distinction between ornaments and natural forms. Dubious because it seems, in principle, impossible to decide, with respect to representations of the human figure, which features are natural and essential, and which are mere ornaments, expressive symbols. Lessing's difficulty with the example of Bacchus epitomizes his general difficulty in purifying (virginal) beauty of expression. For if, as Lessing asserts, Bacchus' horns were not natural horns (like those of fawns and satyrs), why couldn't Spence in turn ask why they are any less natural than any other of Bacchus' visual features? If Bacchus is from the beginning a poetic, i.e., ideal and therefore invisible being, who can say which of his visual features are natural and which are ornamental? Lessing himself remarks that Bacchus was given the name Biformis, "weil er sich sowohl schön als schrecklich zeigen konnte."⁶⁰ And if it was an essential characteristic of the poetic Bacchus that he could alter his visual appearance at will, that any

visual appearance whatsoever was merely an "accidental" property of this deity, how can painting be restricted to representing only his "natural" appearance, his "jungfrauliche Schönheit"?

In Chapter X Lessing considers another of Spence's dilemmas, which is really the inverse of the problem presented in Chapter VIII. "'Was die Musen überhaupt betrifft', sagt er, 'so ist es doch sonderbar, dass die Dichter in Beschreibung derselben so sparsam sind, weit sparsamer, als man es bei Göttinnen, denen sie so grosse Verbindlichkeit haben, erwarten sollte.'"⁶¹ Spence has again failed to consider the difference between the two arts. In a poem, a spiritual being is sufficiently characterized by his or her name and function; there is no reason, consequently, for the poet to adorn this being with allegorical ornaments. In a painting, on the other hand, this same ideal being would be unrecognizable without these ornaments:

Die Sinnbilder dieser Wesen bei dem Künstler hat die Not erfunden. Denn er kann sich durch nichts anders verständlich machen, was diese oder jene Figur bedeuten soll. Wozu aber den Künstler die Not treibet, warum soll sich das der Dichter aufdringen lassen, der von dieser Not nichts weiss? (62)

Recall, however, that in Chapter VIII the natural form of the figure was sufficient to make the picture intelligible. To adorn Bacchus with horns would only obscure his virginal beauty. In Chapter X, the painter not only can, but positively must "seinen personifizierten Abstraktis Sinnbilder

zugeben, durch welche sie kenntlich werden."⁶³ And while in the earlier discussion, such ornaments are "Hinderungen, grössere Schönheiten zu zeigen," here they are the means by which a mere figure may be raised to an ideal conception. "Wenn der Künstler eine Figur mit Sinnbilder auszieret, so erhebt er eine blosser Figur zu einem höhern Wesen."⁶⁴

This comparison of Chapter VIII and Chapter X reveals a restatement of what we found in Lessing's sketches for Laokoon: the uncanny proximity of the highest painting to the lowest painting, the deep-seated possibility of confusing classical representations of bodily beauty with expressive caricatures of bodily beauty. The expressive ornaments which, in Chapter VIII, appear as secondary attributes--which may, at a risk, be appended to a self-sufficient substance, the virginal beauty of natural form--seem to usurp the position of that substance in Chapter X. It is true that in these chapters Lessing is considering only ideal subjects such as Bacchus, but the problem would seem to be generalizable insofar as all (classical) representations of the human figure are a species of "ideal imitation" rather than "exact imitation."⁶⁵ In any representation of the human figure it is impossible to decide a priori at what point pure beauty becomes (too) expressive. It is as if the act of representing the body turns it into a medium of expression; and beyond this, as if the fact of having a body commits one to the responsibility of expressing the soul, and hence exposes one to the risk of

falsifying one's position in the world, and of being misunderstood.

In criticizing expressive painting, Lessing was, as Lee remarks, objecting "to something that the critics of the sixteenth century who developed the doctrine of ut pictura poesis had insisted upon as fundamental."⁶⁶ He was also aligning himself with an entire generation, in the mid-18th century, of anti-Rococo artists and critics. And this generation of critics and artists, which included, incidentally, "classicists" such as Jacques-Louis David, reacted against the expressive art of the Rococo and Baroque periods in the name of--expression. Among other things, they were repulsed by what Lee calls "the special psycho-physiological character of the theory of expression"⁶⁷ in 17th century aesthetics.

Specifically, they ridiculed the notion that inner states of the soul could be deduced, according to rules, from a catalogue of facial and bodily attitudes like that of LeBrun (in his Traité des passions (1698)). This kind of rule-bound theory of the passions suggests a mechanical, external relationship between the soul and its expression. Now if the relationship between passion and expression is external, it can only be because one is expressing passion for the sake of another, a witness. And to this extent, such expression is false, and, in Diderot's sense, "theatrical" (since it presupposes an audience). Thus, when artists and critics of Diderot's and Lessing's time,

rejecting the hopelessly mannered, theatrical conventions of rule-bound expression, proposed "absorbative" states as an ideal subject for painting--figures involved in a minimum of overt, demonstrative expression--it was in order to maximize the overall expressiveness of the painting. In Absorbition and Theatricality, Michael Fried notes that "More generally, the demand that painting maximize expression, one of the basic tenets of anti-Rococo criticism and a keynote of Laugier's account of the Salon of 1753, finds satisfaction primarily in and through the representation of absorbative states and activities...⁶⁸

The rather paradoxical demand that painting maximize its overall expressiveness by minimizing the overt, public expressiveness of its subjects gave rise to the difficulty we have already encountered in Laocoon: the highest art often looks very much like the lowest art, just as genuine expressiveness is often almost indistinguishable from feigned, theatrical expression. If writers like Diderot and Lessing cleared a new path for art criticism (the only path available after the collapse of the Academy), in which the function of the critic was not to rationally judge the conformity of individual works to canonical rules inherited from tradition, but to separate the authentic from the inauthentic, the genuine article from the fake--the success of such criticism may depend upon nothing more or less than the tenuous ability of a finely tuned sensibility to distinguish between a true passion and a "grimace." "Il ne

faut pas prendre de la grimace pour la passion; c'est une chose à laquelle les peintres et les acteurs sont sujets à se méprendre. Pour en sentir la différence, je les renvoie au Laocoon antique, qui souffre et ne grimace point..."⁶⁹

Lessing begins his discussion of the Laokoon group in a way which suggests that he regarded all expression in the plastic arts as "grimace," and hence an inappropriate subject. The sculpted Laokoon is relatively calm; he does not cry out (as does Virgil's Laokoon) because his pain is one of those emotions "die sich in dem Gesichte durch die hasslichsten Verzerrungen äussern und den ganzen Körper in so gewaltsame Stellungen setzen, dass alle die schönen Linien, die ihn in einem ruhigern Stande umschreiben, verloren gehen."⁷⁰ It is worth remarking that Lessing's statement was meant as a criticism of what he took, correctly or incorrectly, to be Winckelmann's explanation of why Laokoon is not more expressive. Lessing interprets the Winckelmannian formula "stille Grösse und edle Einfach" to mean that the noble Greek soul did not express itself outwardly. If the sculpted Laokoon seems relatively restrained, it is because Laokoon was a noble Greek, who felt it a weakness to show his pain. One should not miss the anti-classicist tone with which Lessing defends the Roman Virgil by declaring that the Greeks did indeed (as much as noble Romans) express their feelings, and far from showing weakness, this was the essence of their heroism. A

reading of Homer reveals that the Greek "fühlte und furchte; er äusserte seine Schmerzen und seinen Kummer; er schämte sich keiner der menschlichen Schwachheiten; keine musste ihn aber auf dem Wege nach Ehre, und von Erfüllung seiner Pflicht zurückhalten."⁷¹ The modern view of the Greeks as a stoical people is an anachronism, largely due, Lessing implies, to French classicists: "Dank sei unsern artigen Nachbarn, diesen Meistern des Anständigen, dass nunmehr ein winselnder Philoktit, ein schreiender Herkules die lächerlichsten, unerträglichsten Personen auf der Bühne sein wurden."⁷² These objections to Winckelmann at least suggest that Lessing's "law of beauty" does not so much exclude expression altogether--for how could Greek artists renounce this thoroughly Greek virtue?--but attempts to delineate a mode of expressiveness proper to the visual arts.⁷³

Lessing quotes a passage from Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments to represent this "stoical" view. All expression of physical pain, says Smith, is indecent and unmanly, and arouses contempt to the extent that the witness cannot feel the same pain.⁷⁴ But "nichts ist betrüglicher als allgemeine Gesetze für unsere Empfindungen." So while it is generally true that violent expression is repulsive, it is not always true: "nicht zum ersten Male; nicht, wenn wir sehen, dass der Leidende alles mögliche anwendet, seinen Schmerz zu verbeissen; nicht wenn wir ihn sonst als einem Mann von Standhaftigkeit kennen; noch weniger, wenn wir ihn selbst unter dem Leiden Proben von seiner Standhaftigkeit

ablegen sehen, wenn wir sehen, dass ihn der Schmerz zwar zum Schreien, aber auch zu weiter nichts zwingen kann, dass er sich lieber der längern Fortdauer dieses Schmerzes unterwirft als das geringste in seiner Denkungsart... andert..."⁷⁵ Not, that is, when he expresses his pain heroically, as does Sophocles' Philoctetes.

"Heroic" expression is involuntary, "naive" expression, expression which is not meant to appeal to anyone in particular. Those who would deny expression to the tragic actor confuse heroism with the skill of the gladiator. In the arena, writes Lessing, all expression of pain is banned because the purpose of this spectacle is to amuse the viewer. A cry of pain would surely arouse pity, and since in the arena there is no essential reason why one should not come to the victim's aid (i.e., there is no dramatic illusion), "Öfters erregtes Mitleiden würde diesen frostig-grausamen Schauspielen bald ein Ende gemacht haben."⁷⁶

In the theater, however, the hero is in a different world than the spectator. There is nothing that we can do, and so pity is the appropriate emotion for the passive spectator. Expression is permitted in the theater so long as it does not appeal directly to the spectator, in which case it would destroy the illusion. Thus, in his version of the play, Chateaubrun sealed off Philoctetes' suffering from the audience's sympathy when he provided his hero with a companion, a noble woman, on the island. As soon as Philoctetes has company, as soon as he has "Hoffnung...nun

bald die trostlose Einöde zu verlassen und wieder in sein Reich zu gelangen..."⁷⁷, his cries of pain are no longer natural and involuntary, but contrived and theatrical, for they are now heard as pathetic appeals for sympathy, from the princess and from the audience. Sophocles' Philoctetes succeeds because he lets his hero suffer in solitude, without hope and without witnesses; "sein Schmerz [macht er] aller Verstellung unfähig..."⁷⁸ The fact that we, the spectators, do not and cannot comfort him seems not an arbitrary (though perhaps necessary) convention of the theater, but a fact of his condition; we are separated from Philoctetes not by the pit before the stage, but by oceans.

Lessing's apparent reduction of expression in painting is therefore not a radical exclusion, but a delimitation of a mode of pictorial expressiveness. A delimitation which takes into account the asymmetry between passion expressed and expression perceived. We may call it a moment in the history of the Western sensibility, when the soul's placement in the body is at once more integrated and more desperate, when a minimum of pictured expression is most moving and expressive to the observer. As if what is most moving is the hero's resignation, his soul's acceptance of the fact of never being fully and transparently embodied; of being revealed, but also isolated, captured, in every sense, within a frame. When Lessing remarks that the artist of the Laokoon had the fine sense to soften the scream to a sigh, it is not because a screaming Laokoon would contradict some

timeless, classical criterion of visual beauty, but because only a figure possessed of pain and restraint at the same time is fit to inspire pity, rather than mere admiration. The beautiful restraint of Laokoon's suffering renders him more expressive, hence more inspiring of pity. "...der Anblick des Schmerzes [erregt] Unlust, ohne dass die Schönheit des leidenden Gegenstandes diese Unlust in das süsse Gefühl des Mitlieds verwandeln kann."⁷⁹

Similarly, the second deviation of the sculpture from Virgil's poem, the fact that the sculptor left his Laokoon unclothed, was a sacrifice of "das Übliche" for the sake of "dem Ausdruck."⁸⁰ The beauty of Laocoon's naked body consists in its expressiveness: "Hat ein Gewand, das Werk sklavischer Hände, ebensoviel Schönheit als das Werk der ewigen Weisheit, ein organisierter Körper?...Hatte er dem Laokoon auch nur diese Binde gelassen, so würde er den Ausdruck um ein grosses geschwächt haben. Die Stirne wäre zum Teil verdeckt worden, und die Stirne ist der Sitz des Ausdruckes."⁸¹

Lee does recognize the place Lessing leaves open for expression, but it can only remain a compromise: "Lessing's approbation of expression of emotion in painting is characteristically confined in the Laokoon to certain ancient paintings, e.g., Timanthes' Sacrifice of Iphigenia, about which he had read in Pliny or elsewhere. He has nothing to say in favor of expression in any modern painting."⁸² Chapter XVIII, however, contains a perceptive

discussion of the fact that a modern painter, Raphael, has apparently contradicted the law of beauty by including, in his depiction of drapery, two separate moments in a single painting. Unless "das Gewand wäre denn von sehr steifem Zeuge, der aber eben darum zur Malerei ganz unbequem ist," such a collapsing of moments is practically inevitable. Despite or perhaps because of the fact that the painter has violated the principle that painting can only represent a single moment, Lessing goes on to praise Raphael for just this deviation, for it heightens the expressiveness of the figure: "Demohngeachtet, wer wird es mit dem Artisten so genau nehmen, der seinen Vorteil dabei findet, uns diese beiden Augenblicke zugleich zu zeigen? Wer wird ihn nicht vielmehr rühmen, dass er den Verstand und das Herz gehabt hat, einen solchen geringen Fehler zu begehen, um eine grössere vollkommenheit des Ausdrucks zu erreichen?"⁸³

In this passage Raphael is to be praised not for having conformed to the law of his medium by depicting a single moment, but for having violated this law by depicting the right moment, which happens to be the most expressive moment. Perhaps Lee ignores this passage because he can only consider "Lessing's excellent doctrine of the fruitful moment" as a kind of unwilling concession to expression in painting. "It should not be forgotten," Lee notes, "that Lessing himself made an important concession to the temporal imagination in his doctrine of the most fruitful moment, according to which the painter who confines himself to a

single moment of time must choose that moment in action or expression--always a moment of relative restraint in which emotion will not quarrel with beauty--that will be most suggestive of what is past and of what is still to come. Unfortunately, Lessing does not seem to have realized the implications of this doctrine for anything but ancient art."⁸⁴ The doctrine of the fruitful moment is then a concession to expression which risks violating the law of beauty.

But when Lessing introduces the doctrine in Chapter III, it is not as a concession to expression, but as a further confirmation of what the doctrine of beauty has already demanded, namely, the reduction of expression. He begins by repeating that the modern artist ignores the doctrine of beauty in favor of "Wahrheit und Ausdruck." Lessing grants them this:

Gesetzt, man wollte diese Begriffe vors erste unbetritten in ihrem Werte oder Unwerte lassen: sollten nicht andere, von ihnen unabhängige Betrachtungen zu machen sein, warum demohngeachtet der Künstler in dem Ausdrucke masshalten und ihn nie aus dem höchsten Punkte der Handlung nehmen musse? (85)

Even if the depiction of overly expressive subjects did not rebel against the reign of beauty in the visual arts, analysis of the "single moment" to which painting must confine itself will lead to the same conclusion: action must not be represented at its climactic moment. Why not?

As the spatial art, painting can represent only a single moment of action. But once that moment is chosen, it

remains fixed, frozen within the frame for as long as the picture is viewed. Now if the moment chosen is an expressive, transitory one, the climactic phase of an action, "alle solche Erscheinungen, sie mögen angenehm oder schrecklich sein, erhalten durch die Verlängerung der Kunst ein so widernatürliches Ansehen, dass mit jeder wiederholten Erblickung der Eindruck schwächer wird und uns endlich vor dem ganzen Gegenstande ekelt oder grauet."⁸⁶ A picture of a smiling LaMettrie becomes, after it is viewed over a period of time, a grinning La Mettrie; and Laokoon's screams must be abated to sighs, for his scream would soon become a grimace. Not that such subjects would simply contradict the "law of beauty." Recall that a violently expressive man, contra-Adam Smith, is not necessarily dispicable; "nicht zum ersten Male," not when his screams seem involuntary, but only when, as they persist, they seem calculated to gain the sympathy of a witness. So here, paintings of expressive subjects, if viewed only once, for an ideal instant, might be the highest achievement of art. But paintings and sculptures are made to be viewed, i.e., viewed over a period of time, and if the screaming Laokoon is to be avoided, as a subject for sculpture, it is less because such a subject would be "in itself" ugly, than because it would become ugly, because unnaturally frozen:

Wann also auch der geduldigste standhafteste Mann schreiet, so schreiet er doch nicht unablässlich. Und nur dieses scheinbare Unablässliche in der materiellen Nachahmung der Kunst ist es, was sein Schreien zu weibischem Unvermögen, zu kindischer Unleidlichkeit

machen würde. (87)

The depicted expression appears unnatural because the climactic moment seems suspended as the result of its being represented, frozen and framed, by the spatial art of painting, rather than as a result of the depicted action itself. And to the extent that the suspension of this moment seems forced by the physical nature of the medium in which it is represented, rather than a moment which happens to endure in the action itself, the expression appears calculated by the artist to produce a specific effect on the beholder.

This is why Lessing recommends that the artist choose a "pregnant moment" of the action which is his subject, a moment either slightly preceding or slightly succeeding the climactic moment, when the subject is not so much acting as contemplating his action. That moment is "pregnant" or "most fruitful" in which the action is suspended by virtue of the subject itself. The fact that the temporal extension of the depicted moment coincides with the actual duration of the beholder's experience of viewing the picture appears as a merely contingent, unobtrusive fact. A fact about the world, we may say, rather than about the way art may enclose, isolate, or otherwise limit the world.

If Medea, for instance, is pictured a few moments before murdering her children, the fact that this moment of "fortdauernde Unentschlossenheit" could endure, and virtually does endure, forever (such decisions are eternal,

not only in their consequences, but in their preparation), has nothing to do with the fact that she is framed for all eternity in Timonachus' painting. The fact that the beholder's extended experience of viewing is absorbed into, and thematized by, Medea's experience of indecision assures her indifference to the world, her survival of us, and hence the naturalness of her "pose." "...wir wünschen...es wäre in der Natur selbst dabei geblieben, der Streit der Leidenschaften hätte sich nie entschieden..." We wish that Medea's indecision would last for at least as long as we stand before the picture. The beauty of the pregnant moment inheres in the way it absorbs or neutralizes or renders as unobtrusive as possible the fact of the beholder's physical presence before the painting, quite as if the beholder did not exist at all.

The beauty which Lessing attributes to the pregnant moment resembles classical beauty, for it does indeed displace the overt expression of the climactic moment of action. But we might equally reverse the terms of this comparison and say that Lessing was attracted to "classical beauty" because it resembled the beauty of the pregnant moment: the beauty of classical art was overdetermined to the extent that it "naturally," as a matter of historical fact, lacked, in the 18th century, an audience. In any case, the pregnant moment suspends actual, overt expression in order to attain a virtual expressiveness of the painting as a whole.

As we have already remarked, Lessing's own "hierarchy of genres" is decapitated; expressive history painting is submerged at the bottom, but only in order that it may resurface in that empty space at the top which one can only label "good painting," painting which succeeds as painting. The hierarchy of genres is formally reconstituted, but its function has changed. From being an officially sanctioned, authoritative hierarchy of possible subjects for painting--which, in effect, measured a priori a painter's ambition and set the terms of his possible success--it has become, with Lessing, an ad hoc model for describing an experience of quality which cannot be guaranteed in advance. It may be, for example, a model for describing how a painting succeeds in being expressive by minimizing the overt, visual expressiveness of its figures. Thus, the reason why Laokoon sighs rather than cries out loud, it may be in order that the sculpture of Laokoon may cry out louder in the beholder's mind.

Wenn Laokoon also seufzt, so kann ihn die
Einbildungskraft schreien hören; wenn er aber schreiet,
so kann sie von dieser Vorstellung weder eine Stufe
hoher noch eine Stufe tiefer steigen, ohne ihn in einem
leidlichen, folglich uninteressanteren Zustande zu
erblicken. Sie hort ihn erst ächzen, oder sie sieht
ihn schon tot. (88)

Medea is far more expressive, in a painting, when "die mütterliche Liebe noch mit der Eifersucht kämpfet," than when she is caught in her violent act. Similarly, if viewed only once, for an ideal instant, Ajax in the midst of his murderous rampage may be a supremely expressive subject.

For Lessing, however, such an ideal beholder could no longer be taken for granted; the fact that paintings are made to be viewed by finite beings (i.e., in space, over a period of time) had emerged as a problem which painting could not ignore. And this finite beholder would inevitably see a raging Ajax as performing or posing, like an actor.

The "true" raging Ajax is, as far as the beholder is concerned, Ajax no longer raging: "Und das ist wirklich der rasende Ajax; nicht weil er eben jetzt raset, sondern weil man siehet, dass er geraset hat..." The true Ajax, inasmuch as he is pictured, is, paradoxically, the Ajax nobody can see, for he is alone, ontologically isolated: Ajax as "er nach diesen wahnwitzigen Heldentaten ermattet dasitzt und den Anschlag fasset, sich selbst umzubringen." His action has exhausted him. But he is pictured as exhausted in order that he (physically, literally) can no longer act, which, in a painting, means perform--for the beholder. We can, says Lessing, "die Grösse seiner Raserei am lebhaftesten aus der verzweiflungsvollen Scham [abnehmen], die er nun selbst darüber empfindet."⁸⁹ He is ashamed not only of the moral content of his action, but that he has acted at all, which now takes on its own moral significance; he is ashamed of the fact that he is seen, and of the pretense that "what he has done," his action, could be a vehicle of expression at all, intelligible to the spectator.

The point of these examples is, or ought to be, that it is impossible to determine in advance just how much depicted

expression will make an expressive painting. Only a painting which succeeds can reveal just how much must be shown in order that the beholder may see. In Fried's terms, only a successful painting can reveal the extent to which the beholder's existence before the canvas must be negated in order that his presence may be secured. Although I lack the competence to discuss the art-historical aspect, one could point to the decline of the Academy around Lessing's time, as well as the rapid expansion of the art-audience as explanations for this state of affairs. One thing, however, is clear: with the decline of an authoritative tradition which could establish limits (e.g., as LeBrun's inventory of gestures established a limit between depicted expression and pictorial expressiveness), it became imperative for the art of painting itself to find and set its own limits. (The analogue in philosophy is, of course, Kant's concept of "Kritik.")

There is a profound difference between the way in which Lessing's criticism seeks to discover the limits of painting and the way in which aestheticians of the Academy prescribed rules for art. One way of stating this difference might be: Lessing's investigations of the essence of the medium of painting do not answer the question of limits (i.e., the limit between poetry and painting); they are, rather, a way of posing this question. In particular, the discovery of the essence of the medium does not result in a set of formal rules prescribing a specific genre of subjects for painting.

As I have tried to demonstrate, the fact that painting must confine itself to representing a single moment does not mean that painting can only represent spatially static ("classically beautiful") forms. Rather, the opposite. Painting which remains faithful to its medium, which acknowledges the limits imposed by the physical nature of its medium, allows the medium not to be felt as limiting, in this negative sense.

Lessing advises against painting static bodies (e.g., landscapes or still-lives), as he warns against painting the climactic moment of action: both drawing the beholder's attention to the artist's "Geschicklichkeit," his technique and refuse to let the subject "speak for itself." Whether they seem "chosen" by the spatial nature of painting (as do still-lives), or suspended by the painter's medium (as do expressive historical subjects), both kinds of subject invariably appear to be determined by the physical nature of the medium of painting. On the other hand, when action is convincingly or successfully depicted, the single moment to which painting must necessarily confine itself is also the enduring moment which we, the viewers, happen to spend before the canvas. Just as it suspends action, so the pregnant moment suspends the physical, literal character of the medium, and in this way affirms its existence as a painting. The fact that painting can only depict a single moment seems as necessary, and as accidental, as the fact that Medea, to follow Lessing's example, is resting just

here, just now (where we can see her), and not somewhere else.

Of course, the happy effect of such paintings depends on the artist having painted the right moment and no other. But this only means that the single moment to which painting must confine itself is, essentially, the right moment which the painting does, in fact, represent, if it succeeds. To miss this moment is to make a bad painting, which is to make something other than a painting. The achievement of Lessing, Diderot and others, as critics of art, was to have recorded a condition which modernism merely insists upon: the inseparability of the question of the essence of art from the question of the quality of particular works of art.



iv. Der Mönch am Meer, Berlin, Schloß Charlottenburg, Kat. Nr. 77

III. THEATER: DIDEROT'S PARADOXE

Of Caspar David Friedrich's Monk by the Sea (Ca. 1809, exhibited in Berlin in 1810), Kleist wrote: "Dazu gehört ein Anspruch, den das Herz macht, und ein Abbruch, um mich so auszudrücken, den einem die Natur tut."⁹⁰ As in many of Friedrich's paintings, one sees a lonely figure gazing out into a boundless landscape, here the ocean. Like any sublime (in Kant's sense) work of art, the "subject" of this painting is the viewer's relation to it, the painting, and the fact that we see only the back of the monk, gazing into space only underscores Kleist's point: we see ourselves rejected by the painting.

To see ourselves rejected by the painting is a somewhat paradoxical proposition. Since paintings are made to be seen, our rejection by this painting occurs not by virtue of something we see, but by having our seeing rejected, by something we see perhaps, on the edge of our seeing. Thus Kleist writes that our appeal and the painting's rejection of it "ist vor dem Bilde unmöglich, und das, was ich in dem Bilde selbst finden sollte, fand ich erst zwischen mir und dem Bilde..."⁹¹ The painting's "rejection" of its viewer occurs not in the painting, but between him and the painting, as if what is rejected is exactly the "vor," namely, our position before, in front of the painting. What Kleist means can only be suggested by following the analogy of the spectator's position to that of the monk in the

painting: I, the viewer, am (in the position of) the monk, and the painting itself is, surprisingly, the sand dune upon which the monk stands, which rises out and up before him, partially blocking his view of the sea. The sea, the object of the monk's nostalgic gaze, is lost in the analogy, blocked out by the dune/painting: "...das aber, wo hinaus ich mit Sehnsucht blicken sollte, die See, fehlte ganz." I do not look through the painting (this painting is not a window), and "mit Sehnsucht" identify with a nostalgic image of absence. Rather, is the sheer physical presence of the painting, which rejects, by turning its back on, the beholder. Kleist may be thinking of the spatial ambiguity of the dune on which the monk stands, which simultaneously recedes, according to traditional perspective, into an ideal point beyond the monk, yet also rises upward in front of him, asserting the blocking verticality of the picture's surface, which in turn deprives the viewer of the ground upon which he stands, the ideal distance in which a viewer may locate himself in front of the painting. The picture, "in seiner Einförmigkeit und Uferlosigkeit, nichts, als dem Rahm, zum Vordergrund hat, so ist es, wenn man es betrachtet, als ob einem die Augenlider weggeschnitten waren."⁹² One cannot divert one's glance, close one's eyes before this painting. The only foreground in the painting is the literal framing edge, so that the bounds of the painting are exactly the bounds of our vision of the world. By denying the virtual distance which would allow the

beholder to confront and look through the painting, by absorbing him into itself, this work seems to occupy our own "real" space, a space which can as little be mastered or contained within a frame as nature itself. In this sense, Monk by the Sea is not a view of the world which we may enjoy and turn away from, as we may an object within the world. Rather, it exists for us in much the same way that the seascape exists for the monk: as an empty expanse in which we find ourselves isolated and therefore fixated. The monk's back is not a metaphor for our position before the painting, but a transcription of our immersion in the world. Kleist is recording this condition of immersion, indeed of disorientation, when he offers his observations of the painting from the perspective of the monk, that is, from the perspective of one who is himself observed, perhaps from behind, overhearing the comments of others who pass by. "Doch meine eigenen Empfindungen, über dies wunderbare Gemälde, sind zu verworren; daher habe ich mir, ehe ich sie ganz auszusprechen wage, vorgenommen, mich durch die Äusserungen derer, die paarweise, von Morgen bis Abend, daran vorübergehen, zu belehren."⁹³

I have begin with Kleist's description of Friedrich's painting in order to locate his writing within an epoch in the history of aesthetics. I mean the epoch we think of as defined by the concerns of Lessing, Rousseau and Diderot (among others), and which is characterized by the reciprocal relationship of the arts of painting and drama. Let us say

that the relation of painting to drama was thought of as one of reciprocity to the extent that the overall concern of major artists in both mediums was to overcome the "theatricality" with which history had burdened these media.

In Absorbtion and Theatricality, Michael Fried has interpreted Diderot's writings on painting and drama as articulating a fundamental contradiction in the relation between art and its audience. The contradiction (which would be revealed to be a paradox by Diderot subsequently) namely, that at this moment in history (roughly, the second half of the 18th century), in order to secure the art work's presence to its beholder (i.e., his fixation, absorbtion, enthralment, before, in or with the work), the work had to actively deny or negate the beholder's position in front of the work, his status as a spectator.

The preeminence given to the notion of the "naive" in the art and aesthetics of this period is certainly related to the growing sense that the representation of action in art was inherently "theatrical," meaning contrived or mannered. And it was surely in response to what Fried has called the "theatricalization of action" that Diderot (in his Entretiens sur le Fils naturel and Sur le poesie dramatique) called for a revolution in the theater based on the minimization of "dramatic" action and discourse in favor of the tableau, in which actors would remain as indifferent to their audience as a mute picture hanging on a wall.

Yet by the late 18th century, even the pictorial

representation of figures absorbed in non-dramatic action had come to seem theatrical. Fried writes that "By the 1780s in France no representation of absorbed beholding, perhaps no representation of absorption as such, was capable in itself of bringing that result about: that by then the bare fact of the beholder's existence--a fact posited by the primordial convention that paintings are made to be beheld--threatened to become so disruptive of the Diderotian ideal that it needed to be dealt with, to be structured..."⁹⁴

"Dealt with" and "structured" rather than ignored.

Gericault and Courbet, for example, attempted to overcome the inherent theatricality of the medium of painting through the sheer physicality of their subjects--Gericault by the depiction of "dumb" animals, and Courbet, of his own corps vivant. And Fried calls Manet the inaugurator of modern painting largely because in his art one finds a conscious declaration of the theatricality of the medium of painting, which entailed a complete renunciation of action as the subject of representation.⁹⁵

Fried's story of the birth of modernism in painting is the story of a struggle against the theatricality of the medium, at first, one might say, thematically (through the representation of "naive" subjects), and later structurally (through the formal attempt to declare the essence of the medium). Is such a description, however inadequate my summary, applicable to the history of literature, and to dramatic literature in particular? Can the relation of

Diderot's Paradoxe sur le comedien to his earlier essays on the theater be understood, for example, as something like a shift to a "structural" from a "thematic" strategy for overcoming the theatricality of the theater? This section proposes such an interpretation of Diderot's Paradoxe, suggesting that this work may be read as a renunciation of the concept of the "naive" in the theater, in favor of an explicit acknowledgement of the theatricality of the medium, as a means of overcoming theatricality. The succeeding section attempts to demonstrate that Diderot's program may be used to interpret the dramatic works of a "romantic" writer like Heinrich von Kleist, in particular his Amphitryon.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Lettre à d'Alembert sur des spectacles presents the situation of the theater in late 18th century Europe as a brute historico-aesthetic fact: the passions and exploits of the classical theater's heroes and willians had become thoroughly irrelevant to its enlightened bourgeois audience, other than as superficial and morally suspect entertainment. Even if it could accomplish the moral goal which its defenders imagine--to make virtue attractive and vice repellent--the theater would have little or no value because virtue is already, by nature, lovable and vice repugnant. "Before there were dramas, were not virtuous men loved, were not the vicious hated, and are these sentiments feebler in the places that lack a theater?"⁹⁶ As this passage suggests, the historical fact

of the theater's irrelevance is grounded in a generalized view of theatricality as such. The theater is, according to Rousseau, essentially amusement. The spectator at the theater takes an interest in the actions and passions presented on stage exactly to the extent that they do not implicate or involve him. The theater is institutionalized hypocrisy.

The unavoidable question for those who seriously believed in the possibility of a modern theater was: how can the theater be made interesting to its audience as something more than mere passive entertainment? Diderot's proposals for a reformation of the theater in his Entretiens sur Le fils naturel (1757) and De la poesie dramatique (1758) present one answer to this question. The theater would remain valuable only so long as it could compel a morally sympathetic response from its audience. To this end the conventions which establish or reinforce the metaphysical distance separating the audience from the characters on stage must be abandoned or modified. The playwright should avoid coups de theatre (spectacular twists of plot) in favor of tableaux (simultaneous, and in appearance accidental groupings of characters on the stage); pantomime and gesture should replace theatrical declamation; the embodiment of pregnant situations should take precedence over the machinery of incident, etc. Drama, in other words, should not proceed like a narrative, but should aspire to the condition of painting, in which the entire picture is

present to the audience at any given moment. Painting can achieve this instantaneous presentness to the spectator because the actual, literal circumstances of its viewing are essentially indifferent to the situation it presents. In the theater, however, the drama unfolds according to the spatio-temporal conditions of its audience. To counter, or at least render as discreet as possible this primitive convention, Diderot recommends that the drama proceed as if there were no audience.

Dans une représentation dramatique, il ne s'agit non plus du spectateur que s'il n'existait pas. Y-a-t-il quelque chose qui s'adresse à lui? L'auteur est sorti de son sujet, l'acteur entraîne hors de son rôle. Ils descendent tous les deux du théâtre. Je les vois dans le parterre; et tant que dure la tirade, l'action est suspendue pour moi, et la scène reste vide. (97)

The audience may not be flattered, indulged or otherwise manipulated; they must be treated as if they were not there, in order that a genuinely sympathetic relationship may be forged.

This program of reform had clear implications for the art of acting. Since it is imperative that the actor not appear to be addressing himself to the audience, the actor must not be "entraîné hors de son rôle." Only the actor's complete immersion in his character will assure that his expressions of passion do not appear feigned. In Diderot's time this meant that the actor's relationship to his role must itself be sympathetic, in order that the audience may genuinely sympathize with the character. Thus the talent of the actor consists first of all in his sensibilité, his

capacity to place himself--emotionally, rather than by means of his intellect--in the position of another.

Heureusement une actrice, d'un jugement borné, d'une pénétration commune, mais d'une grande sensibilité, saisit sans peine une situation d'âme, et trouve, sans y penser, l'accent qui convient à plusieurs sentiments différents qui se fondent ensemble, et qui constituent cette situation que toute la sagacité du philosophe n'analyserait pas. (98)

The actor of great sensibilité does not so much express passion as he allows passion to express itself through him, as through a medium. The sensibilité of the actors would overcome the theatricality of the theater.

In the Paradoxe sur le comédien (written for the most part in the 1770s, but appearing posthumously, in 1830) we read:

Les grands poètes, les grands acteurs, et peut-être en général tous les grands imitateurs de la nature, quels qu'ils soient, doués d'une belle imagination, d'un grand jugement, d'un tact fin, d'un goût très sûr, sont les êtres les moins sensibles. (99)

Diderot seems to have taken a step backward from his previous position. In particular, reflexion, "beaucoup de jugement," has replaced sensibilité as the preeminent quality of the great actor. I do not propose to explain or otherwise resolve this contradiction, but to suggest, preparatory to a reading of Kleist's Amphitryon, that the Paradoxe ought to be read first of all as the presentation of a paradox, i.e., "l'échange infini ou l'identité hyperbolique des contraires."¹⁰⁰ To take the Paradoxe seriously as a paradox would mean opening oneself up in the possibility that the reflexion required of the actor to the

later text may be paradoxically identical to the sensibilité demanded in the Entretiens.

The actor who does not identify himself with his role is paradoxically better able to embody the role than the actor of sensibilité, who actually experiences the passion he projects as a character. Diderot justifies this proposition early in the dialogue by appealing to a traditional distinction between truth in nature and truth in the theater. "Truth" in the discursive sense means the conformity of representations with actuality, while theatrical truth has to do with the attainment in performance of "une modèle ideal imaginé par le poète..."¹⁰¹ A dramatic performance, if it is worth anything at all, should present an exalted version of nature, rather than our actual surroundings, as it is bound to do so long as the actor remains himself on stage. It is only through his reflective self-abnegation that the performer may rise above the everyday and embody the ideal character worth of the theater.

If the Paradoxe simply substituted reflexion for sensibilité as the characteristic talent of the actor, based on a distinction between the real and the ideal, it would not present a paradox at all, and hardly an original piece of thinking. The Entretiens and De la poesie dramatique make it clear that the nature of the theatrical ideal is precisely what is in question. The innovations proposed in the earlier pieces were based on the assumption that the

traditional ideal of the theater could no longer sustain a modern theater, because this ideal had come to seem terribly unreal and fantastic. If the theater was to be something other than passive entertainment, a new ideal would have to be found, and the earlier pieces imagined this new ideal as the naive, the anti-theatrical. If the Paradoxe represents a critique of the naive, it is not by virtue of a simple restoration of neo-classical theatricality.

What then is wrong with sensibilité in the theater? The sensitive actor of the Entretiens proposes to bridge the gap separating character from audience by eliminating the unreal quality of the role. The being of the character is grounded in the actor's own sensibilité, as the actor remains, to a relative degree, himself, even as he plays his role. Of course this method of acting will be successful only if the role is such that the actor's natural sensibilité can find expression through it. In particular, the actor must not be asked to deliver lines which neither he nor the audience could imagine themselves uttering in private life. Diderot remarks in the Entretiens that the contemporary audience is moved not by overblown declamation in verse, but by the expression of private, domestic feelings through movement and gesture.

Ce qui émeut toujours, ce sont des cris, des mots inarticulés, des voix rompues, quelques monosyllabes qui s'échappent par intervalles, je ne sais quel murmure dans la gorge, entre les dents. . .C'est l'acteur qui donne au discours tout ce qu'il a d'énergie. (102)

It is as though, unlike declamation in verse, "des mots inarticulés, des voix rompues," etc., do not so much signify the character's inner state, as they embody it. Only the actor of sensibilité, who cannot avoid, as it were, embodying himself while on stage, is capable of such expressiveness. True expressiveness cannot be feigned, and a truly expressive theater would be populated with actors of fine sensibilité.

In the Paradoxe Diderot imagines the effect of such a heartfelt, half-articulate recitation, which would be profoundly moving in the drawing room, if it were performed in the theater. The naive tone would elicit laughter rather than tears, transforming domestic tragedy into theatrical farce.

Mais portez au théâtre votre ton familier, votre expression simple, votre maintien domestique, votre geste naturel, et vous verrez combien vous serez pauvre et faible. Vous aurez beau verser de pleurs, vous serez ridicule, on rira. Ce sera une parade tragique que vous jouerez. (103)

A reader of the Entretiens wants to respond that this is because of the protocol of the theater as it has existed up to now, by which elaborate conventions have stifled the natural expression of emotion. Transform the protocol so as to make room for the private, the domestic, and the theater will gain the intimacy of the drawing room. Is Diderot merely noting the discrepancy between nature and theatrical convention? Does the comic effect of the "sensitive" actor on stage originate in the inappropriateness of private

emotion in the public space of the theater?

At one point in the dialogue Le Premier asks Le Second to imagine this argument--that the actor best able to portray sensibilité on stage lacks all sensibilité of his own--made to two actors, one excellent and one mediocre. The novice actor will surely reject the argument. He will insist that he really feels the emotion he projects as a fictional character.

Les acteurs médiocres ou novices sont faits pour les rejeter, et l'on pourrait dire de quelques autres qu'ils croient sentir, comme on a dit du superstitieux, qu'il croit croire; et que sans la foi pour celui-ci, et sans la sensibilité pour celui la, il n'y a point de salut. (104)

Le Premier does not really deny that the sensitive actor feels the emotion he expresses; he asks what it means to say of anyone that he "really feels," as opposed to "merely expresses" an emotion or so-called inner state. The sensitive actor, who insists on this difference--it is the key to his acting technique--is comical in just the way a superstitious believer, or a hypocrite is comical. To believe that one is angry, for instance, is a rather weak retreat from genuine anger. If he believes he is angry, he might also not believe it, or he might be angry and not know it, which (in this context) is absurd. And yet this is necessarily the stance of the sensitive actor. Inasmuch as he claims the feelings he expresses (as a character) are his own, the sensitive actor implies that there are criteria by which these feelings may be identified, apart from their

expression. As if to be angry were simply a matter of having certain characteristic sensations.¹⁰⁵

The great actor, on the other hand, has nothing to say on the subject. "Ces vérités seraient démontrées que les grands comédiens n'en conviendraient pas; c'est leur secret."¹⁰⁶ It is significant that he neither confirms nor rejects Le Premier's argument. In so doing, he denies that the distinction real/feigned has any relevance at all to his craft. There is no evidence relevant to the existence of a passion or state of mind beyond its expression, whether in words or conduct. And this is so because the expression of a passion is not evidence for knowledge or belief, but a declaration of one's position with respect to another, as a subject for sympathy, pity, etc., which may be accepted or rejected. Someone is indeed angry on the stage, namely, whoever expresses anger; whether one thinks of him as the character or the actor is finally unimportant to our response to the play. "Et que nous importe en effet qu'ils sentent ou qu'ils ne sentent pas, pourvu qu nous l'ignorions?"¹⁰⁷ The reflective actor's silence regarding the argument suggests that "real" passions have the same mode of existence as do the roles he inhabits, and the reverse. The character he (re)creates on stage does not admit of--because it does not need--any verification in any supposed character of his own, just as his expressions of passion outside the theater cannot be verified by reference to his private sensations. His "secret" is that there is no

secret, no special trait or hidden technique which could explain his success.

Far from being based on a distinction between the natural and the conventional (the real and the fictional), Le Premier's argument in fact undermines this distinction, or at least denies its pertinence to theatrical performance. The sensitive actor does not take us outside of the theater, but gives us more theater, and bad theater at that. As we have indicated, this is not due to the inappropriateness of natural expressiveness within the stylized conventions of the theater. It is rather due to the fact that natural sensibilité is already, prior to its entrance into the theater, itself thoroughly theatrical.

The sensitive actor, once again, professes to remain himself even as he plays his role. Diderot forces us to think about what this means. To have sensibilité, says Le Premier, is not the same as feeling certain sensations. "C'est que être sensible est une chose, et sentir est une autre."¹⁰⁸ Sensibilité is something like an inclination to feeling.

La sensibilité, selon la seule acception qu'on ait donnée jusqu'à présent a ce terme, est, ce me semble, cette disposition compagne de la faiblesse des organes, suite de la mobilité du diaphragme, de la vivacité de l'imagination, de la délicatesse des nerfs, qui incline à compatir, à frissonner, à secourir, à fuir, à crier, à perdre la raison, à exagérer, à mépriser, à dédaigner, à n'avoir aucune idée précise du vrai, du bon et du beau, à être injuste, à être fou. (109)

Not quite a susceptibility to various affects, sensibilité is not a positive attribute at all. It is the pure being-

affected, or being-subject (to) of the subject. In the Paradoxe, "sensibilité" points to the primitive--neither natural nor conventional--fact of the self's being-incarnate as flesh, a fact which both binds us to (through sympathy) and isolates us (as amour-propre) from others.

Because it is not a positive attribute of the soul, the expression of sensibilité cannot be controlled or otherwise mastered, for example through an exercise of the will. Indeed we might think of sensibilité as the revealedness of the soul insofar as the soul is embodied. Thus the sensitive man is necessarily honest and frank. "L'homme sensible obéit aux impulsions de la nature et ne rend précisément que le cri de son cœur." Like the clumsy lover in *Le Premier's* anecdote¹¹⁰, the sensitive man wears his heart on his sleeve. And this is why he is such a poor actor: he cannot but be himself. "S'il est lui quand il joue, comment cessera-t-il d'être lui? S'il veut cesser d'être lui, comment saisira-t-il le point juste auquel il faut qu'il se place et s'arrête?"¹¹¹ That there is no such "point juste" indicates that the sensitive man does not so much "have" or "possess" an identity as he is impaled upon his identity. Thus, while the sensitive man can be said to be always himself, it could also be said, and for the same reasons, that he is never quite himself. Like the madman in the passage just cited, or like a woman lacking the capacity to reflect upon herself¹¹², the sensitive man is always "hors de lui-même," as one in the grip of a passion is said

to be "beside himself."

Le Premier accounts for this non-coincidence of the sensitive man with himself by remarking that he is always already on stage.

Les hommes chauds, violents, sensibles, sont en scène; ils donnent le spectacle, mais ils n'en jouissent pas . . . Dans la grande comédie, la grande comédie du monde, celle à laquelle j'en reviens toujours, toutes les âmes chaudes occupent le théâtre; tous les hommes de génie sont au parterre. Les premiers s'appellent des fous; les seconds, qui s'occupent à copier leurs folies, s'appellent des sages. (113)

Thus, far from offering an alternative to the theater, the sensitive man is the theatrical being par excellence. And to this extent the sensitive man is the twin brother of the virtuoso of mimesis, the reflective man. What, after all, is the difference between them?

The sensitive man, it was said, is a poor actor because he cannot avoid being himself. The reflective man, on the other hand, is never himself. He is the perfect actor because he has no sensibilité, no character of his own to conceal as he plays his role. He can proceed directly, by means of his intellect, to embody the ideal type of his role, a model which resembles no one, least of all himself. The reflective actor "n'aura pas à se séparer de lui-même, il se portera tout à coup et de plein saut à la hauteur du modèle idéale."¹¹⁴ In this sense, they could hardly be farther apart; the difference between the sensitive and the reflective actor is the difference between the actual, which means the common, and the fictional, i.e., the ideal.

We have seen, however, that the sensitive man, like the madman who lacks the capacity to reflexively determine his identity, is always outside himself, never quite coinciding with himself. His identity is fixed in a way he cannot control, by the views other people take of him. Seen in this light, the sensitive man resembles no one so much as his opposite, the reflective man. Moreover, if Le Premier's portrait of the reflective man has any significance at all, it is to undermine the distinctions between actual and fictional, natural and theatrical, etc., which supposedly separate him from the sensitive man in the first place. Recall that the reflective actor is able to embody the character of another for the very reason that he possesses no character of his own. "Et peut-être est-ce parce qu'il n'est rien qu'il est tout par excellence, sa forme particulière ne contrariant jamais les formes étrangères qu'il doit prendre."¹¹⁵ The reflective man has no "true self" against which the fictionality of his roles can be measured; hence the distinctions real/ideal, natural/theatrical are simply not applicable to him.

What is the significance of the paradoxical identity of the sensitive and reflective actor? Near the beginning of the dialogue, Le Premier remarks:

C'est à la nature à donner les qualités de la personne, la figure, la voix, le jugement, la finesse. C'est à l'étude des grands modèles, à la connaissance du coeur humain, à l'usage du monde, au travail assidu, à l'expérience, et à l'habitude du théâtre, à perfectionner le don de nature. (27)

Nature gives us all of our qualities, attributes and talents; sensibilité, in short, is a gift of nature. But nature cannot give us our ability to imitate. Mimesis is strictly a matter of art.

Et comment la nature sans l'art formerait-elle un grand comédien, puisque rien ne se passe exactement sur la scène comme en nature, et que les poèmes dramatiques sont tous composés d'après un certain système de principes? (117)

Nature cannot, by itself, create a great actor. This may be symptomatic of the conventionality of the theater; as Diderot says, it is not the function of the theater to copy nature. However, it may also be because, as I have suggested, nature, meaning sensibilité, is not "there" to be copied. For sensibilité is not--no more than genius--a personal attribute or quality or talent. Sensibilité, as the being-incarnate of the subject, designates the fact of our presentness to, but also our separateness from, one another. If this is a gift of nature ("don de nature"), it is not a gift of anything which may or may not be given, i.e., something already present and therefore representable. In the theater, this condition is not imitated, but literalized in the relation of the actor to his role. We might say that the fact of our embodiment is the medium of the theater as such; but this would only mean that in particular instances of the theater (e.g., Kleist's Amphitryon) this fact is a vehicle of dramatic significance.

Once again, Le Premier says:

C'est à l'étude des grands modèles, à la connaissance

du coeur humain, à l'usage du monde, au travail assidu, à l'expérience, et à l'habitude du théâtre, à perfectionner le don de nature. (118)

Art which "completes" ("à perfectionner le don de nature") nature imitates the condition rather than the look of nature, which is one way of describing "naive" art. If it was an imperative, during the age of Diderot, that art be naive, one can readily understand the extravagant claims made for theater in general, and for the actor in particular, as the epitome of such art. For only in the theater is art able to substitute itself for nature.

Mon ami, il y a trois modèles, l'homme de la nature; l'homme du poète, l'homme de l'acteur. Celui de la nature est moins grand que celui du poète, et celui-ci moins grand que celui du grand comédien, le plus exagéré de tous. Ce dernier monte sur les épaules du précédent, et se renferme dans un grand mannequin d'osier dont il est l'âme . . . (119)

But one can also understand the overdetermined reaction of some, notably Rousseau, going back to Book III of Plato's Republic, against the theater. The extraordinary power of the theatrical character, his magical presence to the audience, is conditioned upon the absence of the actor, his absence from himself as he becomes his role. The paradoxical identity of the sensitive and reflective actors records a suspicion that in the theater art can attain the presentness of nature only because nature itself has withdrawn from us, becoming theater. Rousseau's censorship of the theater in his Lettre à d'Alembert may be seen as an attempt to defuse the threat that our relationship to the

world might be as spectators to a show. For Diderot the theatricalization of the world had become a fact which could no more be evaded than the fact of our embodiedness, hence our separation from one another. Diderot's unmasking of the sensitive man as inherently theatrical suggests that the cult of sensibilité, like amour-propre, is merely another attempt to evade this fact, by theatricalizing ourselves and one another. Outside the theater, in "la grande comédie du monde," the sensitive man is always on stage; within the theater, he is a spectator to a drama in which his evasions are played out, with comic or tragic results. The Paradoxe does not alter Diderot's earlier vision of what the theater is or could be; it merely acknowledges that there can be no escape from the theater outside its four walls, and therefore no escape into the theater as an indulgently passive entertainment. Even if we may not defeat theatricality, we may control it by revealing it; but only, paradoxically, in the theater.

IV. THEATER: AMPHITYRON

In the preceding section I stated that the theme of the soul's embodiment or incarnation as flesh is literalized in the theater in the relation of the actor to his role, and that this may be thought of as the medium of theater generally. To make a claim about the medium of theater generally is to say something about the physical basis of the theater, without which there would be no such thing as "theater," as there would be nothing we call "painting" without paint and canvas, nothing called "music" without sound. But so far such a claim remains empty, as empty as the "claim" that wood is the medium of wood carving. While this may say something about wood carving as a kind of amusement, it says nothing at all about the ways in which the carving of wood may create works of art, i.e., the art of sculpture. It says nothing because, as Stanley Cavell has written, "wood or stone would not be a medium of sculpture in the absence of the art of sculpture."¹²⁰

Proponents of so-called post-modernism will point out that this formulation presupposes the existence of "the art of sculpture"; and that the reason for saying that "wood" or "stone" or "metal," or "space as such" is the medium of sculpture is that "the art of sculpture" can no longer be taken for granted. At this point we can say: the existence of "the art of sculpture" is self-evident, which amounts to saying that our experience of particular works which we

accept as sculpture renders the question of the existence of "the art of sculpture" irrelevant. With the decline of an authoritative tradition, in the late 18th century, which could assure--a priori, as it were--the artistic identity of particular works, it became the task of the artwork to continually discover or rediscover what is essential to our experiencing these works as sculpture, drama, narrative, criticism, etc. To say that embodiment is the medium of the theater is to say of particular works that the fact of the soul's incarnation in a body is a vehicle of dramatic significance, of these works' significance as theater.

Kleist's Amphitryon (1806) raises the question of its medium from the very beginning. I am thinking of the moment in Act I, scene 1, when the servant Sosias stops in the woods near Amphitryon's house to rehearse his encounter with Alkmena, when he must tell her of Amphitryon's victory on the battle field, and of his impending return. He must rehearse his report because he was not present at the battle he must describe, and he must make up a heroic tale of valor and bloody victory. It is a role which doesn't really suit him, and Sosias complains of his master's "schlechter Streich" in sending him out in the dead of night, rather than waiting until morning, as if to test his courage, whereas "Ein wenig Rücksicht wär, und Nächstenliebe,/So lieb mir, als der Keil von Tugenden,/Mit welchem er des Feindes Reihen sprengt."¹²¹ But however many terrors the darkness may have in store for Sosias, his vulnerability at this

moment has as much to do with his being the first character sent out on stage, alone before the hidden eyes of the audience. It is as if the eyes of the audience, as much as his master Amphitryon, had the power, reified by a thousand years of theatrical convention, to enslave him, to force him into roles and ridiculous poses which do not suit his modest personality. And it is at this moment of self-alienation that Sosias encounters his double, Mercury, who has the terrible but fascinating power to treat the private being "Sosias" as nothing more than a dramatic role.

Sosias is comic in the same way that Diderot's sensitive actor is comic; neither realizes what it means to be on stage, in the presence of an audience. Finding himself in the bizarre position of having to prove his identity to Mercury, and thereby to himself, Sosias does what any of us would do: he pinches his flesh and asserts "I am I." But this cartesian certainty will not suffice to ward off the evil demon Mercury, because the "I" which cannot doubt that it doubts is not necessarily "Sosias." That this, this body abused first by Amphitryon, and now by Mercury's stick, that this flesh which he cannot throw off like an old coat, although he would just as soon do so, is called "Sosias," is finally just "ein unverbürgtes Gerücht." It is with the wisdom that comes of too many beatings--a wisdom which Amphitryon will not acquire until the end of the play--that Sosias finally turns over his identity to Mercury, free to go his way with the gratifying assurance

that if he is not Sosias, he must surely be something.

I say that Sosias' submission shows wisdom because Mercury's power over him, like the power over the Diderot's reflective actor over the sensitive man, is absolute. Unlike Sosias, Mercury can afford to treat the referent of "Sosias" (whatever else it might be) as a collection of mannerisms, speeches and appetites, in short, as a theatrical role. Mercury, and Jupiter (who will abuse Amphitryon in the same way) can afford this luxury, which constitutes the perfection of their impersonations, only because they are not, respectively, Sosias and Amphitryon. Who or what are Jupiter and Mercury? The remainder of this section will be concerned with answering this question. My hypothesis is that this question is in fact a question regarding the medium of the theater generally, which meant, for Kleist writing in the early nineteenth century, a question of how the physical conditions of the theater could be a vehicle of dramatic significance at all.

The encounter between Sosias and Mercury is, of course, a premonition of Amphitryon's meeting with Jupiter, which occupies the action of the play. Before we get there, however, he should try to locate Sosias in relation to what will follow. Specifically, we should try to answer Sosias' question: why did Amphitryon send him on his mission in the dead of night rather than waiting until morning?

According to the myth surrounding the birth of Hercules, Electryon, King of Mycenae, had called upon his

nephew Amphitryon to rule while he was absent avenging the death of his eight sons during a cattle raid perpetrated by Pterelaus. During Electryon's absence, Amphitryon paid a ransom and retained possession of the cattle from the King of Elis. When Electryon learned of Amphitryon's concession, he became angry and hurled a club at one of the cows. The club rebounded off the cow's horn and killed Electryon, Alkmena's father. Amphitryon then fled to Thebes, where he was purified by King Creon. But the chaste Alkmena refused to love Amphitryon until he had redeemed himself by avenging the death of Alkmena's eight brothers. Thus, in order to gain the right to Alkmena's love, Amphitryon took an army to Boethias, where he soundly defeated Pterelaus.¹²²

This is where the various dramatic presentations of the myth begin. Jupiter, seeing in Amphitryon's absence the opportunity to make love to Alkmena, whether to impregnate her with the child who would turn out to be Hercules, or merely for his own pleasure, disguised himself as Amphitryon and spent with Alkmena the night before Amphitryon's return.

The ancient sources, for example Hesiod in The Shield of Hercules, compel us to regard Amphitryon's war with the Taphians and the Teleboans as a kind of purification rite which would make possible a marriage of Amphitryon and Alkmena. In avenging the death of Alkmena's brothers, Amphitryon is completing Electryon's unfinished business, and thereby redeeming himself from the curse brought upon him when he caused the death of Electryon, his bride's

father. It is surely no accident that war which is to purify Amphitryon, and thus enable him to deflower the virginal Alkmena, also provides the opportunity for another father-surrogate, Jupiter, to perform this act in his stead.

In an essay on, among other matters, the difficult compatibility of sex with marriage, Freud remarks that the husband's defloration of his bride is often the beginning of the end of their marriage. As far as the young wife is concerned, "a husband is, so to speak, never anything but a proxy, never the right man; the first claim upon the feeling of love in a woman belongs to someone else, in typical cases to her father."¹²³ The man who takes her virginity will invite upon himself the wrath of a bride whose repressed desire for her father has been only inadequately fulfilled. This, according to Freud, is the origin not only of many divorces, but of various primitive rites in which the bride is deflowered by someone other than her husband, with whom she must create a life. In these ceremonies, the man who punctures the hymen is usually a sacred figure, for only the bride's identification of this figure with her father will permit the discharge of her infantile fixation. "Primitive custom appears to accord some recognition to the existence of the early sexual wish by assigning the duty of defloration to an elder, a priest, or a holy man, that is, to a father-substitute."¹²⁴ Thus, one should not be surprised to find "divine figures too, among the father-surrogates to whom defloration is entrusted." The

possibility of a successful marriage rests upon the tenuous and somewhat paradoxical ground staked out by the "taboo on virginity": only an initial act of infidelity holds out the possibility of later fidelity.

Earlier in the same essay, Freud discusses the same discrepancy between an initial and subsequent choice of the love object in marriage, this time from the husband's point of view. The husband's choice of a wife depends upon his initial fixation on his mother. That his father has sexual access to his mother comes as a catastrophic discovery; the male child, remarks Freud, can only regard his mother's relations with his father as an "act of infidelity on her part."¹²⁵ If his subsequent development does not lead him to view the situation otherwise, he will be unable to reconcile the sensual side of his love-life with the affectionate side. In this condition, which Freud calls "psychic impotence," the man will be unable to admit sensuality into his relations with the object of his affection, and will desire only women he regards as degraded, or "loose." "The erotic life of such people remains disassociated, divided between two channels, the same two that are personified in art as heavenly and earthly (or animal) love. Where such men love they have no desire, and where they desire they cannot love."¹²⁶ The victim of psychic impotence--which, according to Freud, is almost universal in greater or lesser degrees in civilized culture, reserves his desire for objects already possessed or

possessable by other men, women of "loose" morals, "who (cannot) know the rest of his life."¹²⁷ He will only reveal his desire to a woman who cannot know him, and who, being no virgin, is not worthy of his desire.

While Freud's dialectic of the virgin and the whore will surely seem familiar to anyone who knows Kleist's female characters, for the moment I want only to retain Freud's remarks on the "taboo of virginity" insofar as they are relevant to the setting of Amphitryon. For if only an original act of infidelity (the ceremonial breaking of the hymen by a quasi-divine figure) can assure the possibility of the bride's later fidelity in marriage, here we have the tragic paradox at the center of the Amphitryon myth: "So scheint er (Amphitryon) die Gattin gerade auf dem weg verlieren zu sollen, auf dem er sie einzig gewinnen konnte: die tragische Dialectik ist auch heir am Werk."¹²⁸

Montaigne's essay "Sur des vers de Virgile" is, like Freud's essay, concerned with the difficulty of compatibility of sex with marriage. More in the spirit of Kleist, however, its real subject is perhaps the morally established limits of our knowledge of other people. According to the principle that "les maux de l'ame s'obscurcissent leur force," the more we attempt to harness sexual energy through institutions like marriage, all the more will desire escape our control. Men desire chastity of their wives; but chastity is seductive. Hence to idealize chastity is to risk becoming a cuckold. A husband's curiosity regarding

his wife's chastity is deadly: "C'est folie de vouloir s'esclaircir d'un mal auquel il n'y a point de medecine qui ne l'empire et le rengrege; . . ."129 Montaigne refers to several amusing practices designed to quiet the husband's curiosity regarding his wife's chastity. Among these we find the following:

Et pourtant a introduit certaine nation que le prestre ouvre le pas à l'espousée, le jour des nopces, pour oster au marié le doubte et la curiosité de chercher en ce premier essay si elle vient à luy vierge ou blessée d'un amour estrangère. (130)

While this example could have come straight out of Freud's "Taboo on Virginity," the example immediately preceding may serve us as an apt description of the mise-en-scene of

Amphitryon:

Et avoyent les Romains en coustume, revenans de voyage, d'envoyer au devant en la maison faire scavoir leur arrivée aus femmes, pour nes les surprendre. (131)

Here we have one possible answer to Sosias' initial question. Amphitryon has sent Sosias on his mission in the dead of night in order that he may warn Alkmena, and whoever is with her, of Amphitryon's impending return the following day. If this is a reasonable characterization of Sosias' mission, two lines of interpretation immediately present themselves. For this suggests, first of all, that Amphitryon's "problem" in this play will have something to do with his curiosity, his will to know of his wife's fidelity. As if Alkmena's chastity, for the same reason that it is sacred, signifying metaphysical purity, has a terrifying aspect as well, which Amphitryon has as much

reason to fear as her infidelity. And second, if we allow that Sosias' mission is to warn Alkmena, it follows that Amphitryon already knows, or has reason to know what is happening this night, in his absence, on his marriage bed. Now Amphitryon would have reason to know if what is happening that night were something like the ritual breaking of his bride's hymen by a divine figure, Jupiter, in order that they, as husband and wife, may later consummate their marriage. If Jupiter's function here is ceremonial, clearly his relation to Amphitryon is not simply that of a libertine, a finite rival, to a cuckolded husband. The success of the rite will depend, as Freud suggests, on the bride's ambivalent identification of the ceremonial figure (Jupiter) with the husband (Amphitryon). Jupiter must be identified with Amphitryon in order that the bride's "thralldom" with her first lover may be transferred over to her husband; but this identification must not be carried too far, in order that the bride's vengeance may be discharged during the rite and not brought into the marriage.

If all of this seems suspiciously "psychological," let us only bear in mind that by emphasizing the ceremonial aspect of Jupiter's visit, we leave open the central question of Alkmena's fidelity to Amphitryon. If only an initial act of infidelity can assure the possibility of the bride's later fidelity in marriage, one must hesitate to call this an "act of infidelity." Or, to put it another way, if Jupiter is Amphitryon's rival, it may be because

Amphitryon needs a rival, or rivals himself for Alkmene's affections.

Upon his return, Amphitryon prays to the Gods:

Der Himmel gebe,
Dass meine Gattin nicht vor mir erschrickt,
Nicht fürcht ich, dass nach dieser fluch'gen Trennung
Alkmene minder zärtlich mich empfängt,
Als ihr Amphitryon zürucke kehrt. (11.2, v. 759)

This is Kleist's "translation" of the following lines in Moliere's version:

Fasse le Ciel qu'Amphitryon vainqueur
Avec plaisir soit revu de sa femme,
Et que ce jour favorable à ma flamme
Vous redonne à mes yeux avec le même coeur,
Que j'y retrouve autant d'ardeur
Que vous en rapporte mon âme! (132)

In Moliere's version, Amphitryon's prayer is based on the continuity of his past self with his present self. He prays that Alkmene will receive him with the same passion with which she bade him farewell; that her love for him will be as constant as his own self-identity over time.

Kleist's Amphitryon is much less confident. His prayer is framed in negatives. It has the tone of one who wishes to allay fears that already haunt him ("Nicht fürcht ich . . ."), his fear that she will receive him with less love ("dass . . . Alkmene minder zärtlich mich empfängt . . ."), indeed that she will be repulsed by him ("Dass meine Gattin nicht vor mir erschrickt . . .") Thus our hypothesis of Amphitryon's premonition is confirmed. But why should she receive him with less tenderness after only a "flucht'gen Trennung"? Perhaps because he is no longer the same

Amphitryon that he was before the battle, or he can no longer be the same. Whereas Moliere's Amphitryon prays that Alkmena will recognize that he is the same loving husband as before, Kleist's Amphitryon prays that she will receive him no less lovingly than her version of him. "Nicht fürcht ich, dass nach dieser flucht'gen Trennung/Alkmene minder zärtlich mich empfängt,/Als ihr Amphitryon zurücke kehrt." It is as if during or because of their "flucht'gen Trennung" (which now suggests a dimension other than temporal), a being other than the husband she has known as "Amphitryon" has emerged, and stands naked and vulnerable. Our source materials have prepared us to recognize just such a second Amphitryon: up to this point he has been Alkmena's husband; but now that he has won the war, avenging the loss of her eight brothers, Amphitryon prepared to win the right to be her lover.

After Alkmena's startled "Quoi? de retour si tôt?", Molière's Amphitryon says, "Certes, c'est en ce jour/Me donner de vos feux un mauvais témoignage . . ." (v. 857) Kleist's Amphitryon, on the other hand, is still talking to himself, or only indirectly to Alkmena: "Was! dieser Ausruf,/Fürwahr, scheint ein zweideutig Zeichnen mir,/Ob auch die Götter jenen Wunsch erhört." (II.2, v. 765). Whereas "un mauvais témoignage" refers directly to "vos feux," for Kleist's Amphitryon her reaction is a "zweideutig Zeichnen" in answer to his own wish. And if her puzzled greeting is an ambiguous sign, this may be because

Amphitryon's initial wish, couched in negatives, is already "zweideutig." His prayer is expressed in terms which imply that he has anticipated Alkmene's "betrayal," and he is not disappointed in this.

Treulose! Undankbare!
 Fahr hin jetzt Mässigung, und du, die mir
 Bisher der Ehre Forderung lähmtest, Liebe,
 Erinnerung fährt, und Glück und Hoffnung hin,
 Fortan in Wut und Rache will ich schwelgen. (II.2, v.
 981)

In these lines, which are missing from Molière's version, Amphitryon equates his love for Alkmene with a "Mässigung," so that in renouncing his love, which he seems all too prepared to do, he is freeing himself from what has until now, paralyzed his sense of honor. Kleist has given to his Amphitryon a barely audible sigh of relief, which is all the more powerful for being expressed as exaggerated anger: Amphitryon's relief that in renouncing his love for Alkmene, he may also renounce his newly won right to intimacy with her.

Just as Kleist has given Amphitryon considerable psychological depth which is lacking in Molière's version, so his Jupiter bears little resemblance to Molière's. In the earlier play, Jupiter's appearance in the form of Amphitryon is merely a disguise, an inconvenience made necessary by the fact that in this rare case, the woman he wishes to seduce is absolutely faithful to her husband. As Mercury says in the Prologue:

Son stratagème ici se trouve salutaire;
 Mais, près de maint objet chéri,

Pareil deguisement seroit pour ne rien faire,
 Et ce n'est pas partout un bon moyen de plaire
 Que la figure d'un mari. (v.71)

Jupiter's divine authority is subverted by the most human of crimes, but men must swallow the "gilded pill" of metaphysics, because exposing their gods would mean exposing themselves, the arbitrariness of the laws we have given ourselves.

Kleist's Jupiter is not, or not merely an ordinary rival of Amphitryon, who must hide his more or less human desires behind his human disguise. Who or what is Jupiter in this play? Critics like Wolfgang Wittkowski¹³³ and Laurence Ryan¹³⁴, whose polemics remain emblematic of the present state of Amphitryon-criticism, seem separated by an abyss on this point. In general one may say either: Jupiter is a more or less human imposter, the limits of whose power are exposed only at the tragic expense of Alkmene's ("Promethean") sanity (Wittkowski). Or: Jupiter is a "divine" version of Amphitryon, who has descended to earth to teach this couple an important lesson about the sublimity of love, a lesson which the humans' comic obtuseness--their narcissistic attachment to the institution of marriage--prevents them from learning (Ryan).

The gap which separates readers of Amphitryon is opened by the ambiguity in Jupiter's use of the first person pronoun "ich" in his conversations with Alkmene, while disguised as Amphitryon. In the first scene between them, for example, Jupiter says:

Ich möchte dir, mein süßes Licht,
 Dies Wesen eigner Art erscheinen sein,
 Beseiger dein, weil über dich zu siegen,
 Die Kunst, die grossen Götter mich gelehrt. (I.5, v.
 474)

As far as Alkmene is concerned, the "ich" points to the speaker, Amphitryon, who is asking to be loved not because he is her husband, and this is her duty, but for himself, "dies Wesen eigner Art." The audience knows, however, that the speaker is not Amphitryon but Jupiter; that the desire to be recognized as "dies Wesen eigner Art" is merely a strategy of seduction, a trick to get her to admit that his love is superior to that of her husband.

Thus Jupiter asks her to distinguish between her lover of the previous night and her husband, Amphitryon:

Du weisst, dass ein Gesetz der Ehe ist,
 Und eine Pflicht, und dass, wer Liebe nicht erwirbt,
 Noch Liebe vor dem Richter fordern kann.
 Sieh dies Gesetz, es stört mein schönstes Glück.
 Dir möcht ich, deinem Herzen, Teuerste,
 Jedwede Gunst verdanken, möchte gern
 Nicht, dass du einer Förmlichkeit dich fügtest,
 Zu der du dich vielleicht verbunden wähnst.
 Wie leicht verscheuchst du diese kleinen Zweifel?
 So öffne mir dein Innres denn, und sprich,
 Ob den Gemahl du heut, dem du verlobt bist,
 Ob den Geliebten du empfangen hast? (I.4, v. 446)

It is important to see that Jupiter's strategy cannot work, and why. He would like to use the distinction between Geliebter and Gemahl to mark a distinction between himself and Amphitryon. But Jupiter's strategy presupposes that Alkmene is already in possession of the distinction between Geliebter and Gemahl, that she can compare her Amphitryon-

lover of previous nights with her present Jupiter-lover, and find the latter superior. The problem is that prior to this night, Alkmena has never been called upon to distinguish lover from husband: Amphitryon has never been anything other than her Gemahl. In fact, Amphitryon has been away fighting his war in order that he may have the right to become her lover.

If we take seriously the possibility that Jupiter's nocturnal visit may have a ritual function, we must admit that it is Jupiter, disguised as Amphitryon, who has introduced Alkmena for the first time to the distinction between husband and lover. When he asks her to recognize him as her lover, the problem is not that she cannot draw the distinction, but that "Geliebter" can only refer to whomever she was with the previous night: Amphitryon, of course!

This is how Alkmena distinguishes between her lover and her husband:

Ach was das Vaterland mir alles raubt,
 Das fühl ich, mein Amphitryon, erst seit heute,
 Da ich zwei kurze Stunden dich besass. (I.4, v. 440)

The rapture at this moment has less to do with a tacit acknowledgement of Jupiter's superhuman prowess as a lover (when compared with Amphitryon), than with her initiation into the game of love for the first time: "erst seit heute" she knows her husband as lover as well. Her ecstasy here is an instance of what Freud, in "The Taboo on Virginity," calls the bride's "thralldom" with the man who has

deflowered her.

Du müsstest denn die Regung mir missdeuten,
 Dass ich ihn schöner niemals fand, als heut.
 Ich hätte für sein Bild ihn halten können,
 Für sein Gemälde, sieh, von Künstlerhand,
 Dem Leben treu, ins Göttliche verzeichnet.
 Er stand, ich weiss nicht, vor mir, wie im Traum,
 Und ein unsägliches Gefühl ergriff
 Mich meines Glücks, wie ich es nie empfunden,
 Als er mir strahlend, wie in Glorie, gestern
 Der hohe Sieger von Pharissa nahte.
 Er war's, Amphitryon, der Göttersohn! (II.5, v. 1187)

Alkmena noticed a difference, but not a difference between this night's lover and her lover of previous nights. Amphitryon seemed different, but as a portrait differs from its model, a kind of unheimlich difference which only confirms a deeper familiarity, or makes the familiar stand out. He seemed different, that is, in being more himself. When she declares that she could no more mistake another lover for her husband than she could doubt her "innerste Gefühl,/. . .das mir sagt, dass ich Alkmena bin" (II.4, v. 1155), we must take her words literally. Her recognition of her lover, like her recognition of her own body, could no more be mistaken than it could be correct. We must measure Alkmena's faithfulness to Amphitryon not by her devotion to this lover, Amphitryon, among others, but by her "innerste Gefühl" that this--he whom she received the previous night-- is what "lover" means. She is not merely conventionally attached to her husband, as Laurence Ryan supposes.¹⁵ On the contrary, she is absolutely faithful to Amphitryon, the invisible lover, who revealed himself to her on this night. Except that this lover is another, not her husband. So that

if Jupiter is unable to cast off his Amphitryon-mask, this is not due to Alkmena's faithfulness to this mask (among others). It is because the greater the difference she remarks between her lover of this night and the husband she has known, all the more convinced she becomes that this--her lover--was Amphitryon. Jupiter has succeeded where Amphitryon has failed, and succeeded because he is someone "other": he has revealed to Alkmena the "true" Amphitryon, the lover concealed within the husband.

How is it possible that the true Amphitryon may be revealed to Alkmena by someone who is not Amphitryon? Only because in Amphytryon's own mind the lover and the husband, the private being and the public persona are incompatible. This is the meaning of what I have called Amphitryon's initial duplicity with respect to Alkmena. It is especially manifest in his anxiety when he returns, and in his extraordinary rage at having been betrayed, which resonates with what I am tempted to call a sigh of relief at having renounced his love, which he identifies as a paralysis ("Lahmung") of his pursuit of honor. Indeed throughout the play Amphitryon is presented as almost obsessively concerned with his honor. This concern is reflected in his excessive reliance on concrete, visible manifestations of spiritual matters, as if he were unable to admit the existence of feelings and ideas which he cannot, in a literal sense, grasp.¹³⁵ Amphitryon is Kleist's version of the philosophical skeptic who has imagined the world, the make-

up of things, in such a way that his curiosity, his will to know is inevitably frustrated. Thus the skeptic's partition of the world into sense data and things-in-themselves is grotesquely parodied when Amphitryon complains that after today, now that his outward bodily appearance is no longer sufficient to distinguish himself from others, he must remain unrecognized:

In Zimmern, die com Kerzenlicht erhellt,
 Hat man bis heut mit funf gesunded Sinnen
 In seinen Freunden nicht geirret; Augen,
 Aus ihren Höhlen auf den Tisch gelegt,
 Von Lieb getrennte Glieder, Ohren, Finger,
 Gepackt in Schachteln, hätten hingereicht,
 Um einen Gatten zu erkennen. Jetzo wird man
 Die Ehemänner brennen, Glocken ihnen,
 Gleich Hammeln um die Hälse hängen müssen. (III.1, v.
 1681)

It is as if Amphitryon can know himself only in the way that others recognize him, i.e., as the husband, the general, etc. And now something has come between his vision of himself and the public's vision of him--something we might call a private self, the Geliebter, and he is only able to recognize this private self as someone other: his rival, Jupiter.

These considerations should alert us to the possibility that Jupiter's relationship to his Amphitryon-disguise is considerably more complex than Moliere's version of the play might lead us to suspect. To give some shape to this complexity, we should return to Jupiter's ambiguous use of "ich" in his conversation with Alkmena. Recall that in Act I, scene 4, Jupiter, playing the part of Amphitryon, says:

Du weisst, dass ein Gesetz der Ehe ist,
 Und eine Pflicht, und dass, wer Liebe nicht erwirbt,
 Noch Liebe vor dem Richter fordern kann.
 Sieh dies Gesetz, es stört mein schönstes Glück.
 Dir möcht ich, deinem Herzen, Teuerste,
 Jedwede Gunst verdanken, möchte gern
 Nicht, dass du einer Förmlichkeit dich fügtest,
 Zu der du dich vielleicht verbunden wähnst.
 Wie leicht verscheuchst du diese kleinen Zweifel?
 So öffne mir dein Innres denn, und sprich,
 Ob den Gemahl du heut, dem du verlobt bist,
 Ob den Geliebten du empfangen hast? (I.4, v. 446)

In order to make out Jupiter's relation to Amphitryon, we should try to listen to Jupiter's words here as Alkmena hears them, which means: as if they were spoken by Amphitryon.

"Amphitryon" is worried that in receiving him this night she might merely have been fulfilling her duty as his wife, in conformity with "ein Gesetz der Ehe." Kleist's own dissatisfaction with Kant is echoed in Amphitryon's worry that in acting for the sake of duty alone, Alkmena may have received only his phenomenal appearance ("der Gemahl") rather than his noumenal self ("der Geliebter"). So long as she loves her husband, the Amphitryon who is visible and in principle accessible to others, Alkmena is open to the suspicion that she may be simply responding to his own desire for her--in which case her love is worth nothing. Thus he demands that her love for him be unconditional; not only that her desire should not be conditional upon his own desire for her, but that it should not be conditional upon any phenomenal appearance as such, including that of her husband, Amphitryon. When "Amphitryon" demands to be loved

unconditionally, as "dies Wasen eigner Art," he expresses a desire not that she should love him, but a desire for her desire as such. The desire to be loved unconditionally is thus a desire which must conceal itself in order that it might be fulfilled.

(Kleist expressed such a desire in his letters to Wilhelmine von Zenge, his fiancée, especially around the time of his Wurzburg trip, when he emphatically demanded her Trust. One senses, reading these letters, Kleist's need to be recognized despite his mysterious secrecy; but also, more importantly, a desperate strategy of fabricating mystery, of casting himself as a secret, in order that he might demand her Trust. As if any love she might express for him as he appears to her is necessarily less than absolute. Hence the wish to reveal himself to others becomes a need to conceal himself, with a tragic result.)

Who is in a position to express such a desire? Who is in a position to demand Trust? A desire to be loved unconditionally, apart from one's own expressions of desire, is a desire which must conceal itself in order that it might be fulfilled. As soon as this desire reveals itself, it has necessarily been betrayed. Assuming, as Alkmena must assume, that Amphitryon reveals a desire to be loved unconditionally, as Geliebter rather than as Gemahl, such a desire could only be expressed from the concealed perspective of Jupiter--disguised as Amphitryon. So far as Alkmena is concerned, Amphitryon, when he demands her

unconditional love, might just as well be a god disguised as her husband. Which is to say: the desire to be loved unconditionally even if expressed by the all-too-human Amphitryon, is a divine wish. It is a wish to be recognized apart from any phenomenal appearance, a wish for incarnation rather than embodiment, for revelation rather than expression. In a world in which there is no revelation, divinity may consist in the immeasurable otherness, or infinite inaccessibility of others. Thus skepticism reveals its solidarity with superstition.

I do not mean to imply, following Laurence Ryan, that Jupiter is somehow a divine or ideal version of Amphitryon. I want to say: between Jupiter the imposter, posing as the husband Amphitryon, in order to steal Alkmena's love, and Jupiter the lover, a truer, divine version of Amphitryon, "der Gott des innersten Gefühls" (Gadamer), there is no decision possible. If Jupiter is a truer or ideal version of Amphitryon, it is because or by virtue of the fact that he is an imposter. If it were Amphitryon's desire to be loved as he is, rather than as he appears, this desire could only be expressed by another, i.e., an "Amphitryon" whom Alkmena does not recognize. And this is because, as we have seen, the desire to be loved unconditionally--apart from one's expression of desire--is necessarily betrayed as soon as it is expressed. To the degree that Alkmena loves her husband, the only Amphitryon she knows, she has already betrayed Amphitryon the lover, and the reverse. The true,

ideal Amphitryon is always another--an imposter.

This interpretation would account for one's sense that Kleist's version is much more upsetting, less easily classified as a "comedy" than Molière's Amphitryon. For if one grants that Jupiter's divinity is inextricably linked to his function as an imposter, it follows that the reader/spectator can no more decide as to who is the "real" Amphitryon than can Alkmena, who occupies something like the position of the spectator in this play. The reader/spectator's claim to recognize the "true" Amphitryon distinguishes his own from Alkmena's perspective. But such a claim presupposes that we know what it means for a character, Amphitryon, to appear on stage. Our problem is reflected in the problem Jupiter represents for Alkmena: does she know what it means for a God to appear on earth? Both problems, an audience's and Alkmena's, are in this play variations of the question: what is it to know another person?

By the time we get to Act I, scene 5, Jupiter--by altering the initial on the diadem from "A" to "J"--has brought Alkmena to the point of doubting whether her lover of the previous night was in fact her husband. For Alkmena this is equivalent to doubting her own identity, so sure is she of their relationship. Her anguish which this doubt awakens in her is not a consequence of having violated, even unwittingly, the laws of marriage, but of having been deceived at her moment of greatest clairvoyance, when she

knew Amphitryon for the first time. Alkmena's pain in Act II, scene 4 is as profound as her rapture in Act I, scene 4, for if this was not Amphitryon, there could hardly be another.

Was Alkmena deceived or wasn't she? Again, our answer will depend upon who or what we take Jupiter to be in relation to Amphitryon. Only by forcing her to remark the difference between the imposter of the previous night and her husband Amphitryon can Jupiter preserve the possibility of identifying himself, as her lover. Act II, scene 5 consists of a series of brilliantly ludicrous sophistries designed to compel Alkmena to recognize just this difference. And Alkmena refutes each of Jupiter's sophisms with the argument of her own graceful innocence. But why must Jupiter resort to this elaborate tactic, rather than simply casting off his disguise and revealing his true identity?

In the first place, there is the obvious, farcical sense in which Jupiter cannot reveal himself as her lover of the previous night without also giving away his deception. Molière gets a good deal of comic mileage out of the paradox that Jupiter ^{cannot} show himself to be a god without also appearing as an ordinary human libertine. Kleist, however, has added a further dimension which seems to link Jupiter's fate inextricably to that of his rival Amphitryon. Unlike Molière, Kleist stresses the theme of the God's loneliness, of Jupiter's wish to be loved as humans are (occasionally)

loved by one another, especially as Amphitryon is loved by Alkmena. In this potentially tragic sense, Jupiter cannot reveal himself to Alkmena precisely because he is a God, and therefore can have no human or phenomenal appearance. Thus Jupiter cannot throw off his disguise first of all because Alkmena will love him only so long as she believes him to be Amphitryon; but also because he is a being for whom any (human) appearance is necessarily a disguise: he is a god. My hypothesis is that Jupiter's problem--by what criteria can a god identify himself without reducing himself to human stature?--is fundamentally identical with what I take to be Amphitryon's problem: how can a human being express a desire to be loved unconditionally, as Gieliebter rather than as Gemahl?

Jupiter begins Act II, scene 5 by denying that her visitor was an imposter at all:

Wie könnte dir ein anderer erscheinen?
 Wer nahet dir, o du, vor deren Seele
 Nur stets des Ein- und Ein'gen Züge stehn?
 Auch selbst der Glückliche, den du empfängst,
 Entlässt dich schuldlos noch und rein, und alles,
 Was sich dir nahet, ist Amphitryon. (II.6, v. 1256)

Only the fact that this soothing sophistry seems a little too magnanimous (Alkmena: "Geh, deine Gut erdrückt mich.") to have been spoken by a cuckolded husband might hint that it is also a momentary admission of defeat by the libertine behind the mask. But one must not reduce the ambiguity of these lines, for Jupiter has not conceded, and his strategy depends on the fine tuning of just this ambiguity. He must

admit that the visitor was an imposter in order to distinguish himself, her lover, from her husband,
Amphitryon:

...Er war
Der Hintergangene, mein Abgott! Ihn
Hat seine böse Kunst, nicht dich getäuscht,
Nicht dein unfehlbares Gefühl! (II.5, v. 1288)

Again Jupiter seems to concede defeat. Her nocturnal visitor was an imposter, but in thinking that he could sway her "unfehlbares Gefühl," he was mistaken, deceived by his own "böse Kunst." In order to gain access to Alkmena's bedroom, the villain must have been transformed, in her imagination, into Amphitryon. At this point Jupiter miraculously translates defeat into a rhetorical victory which may not be as empty as it sounds. Let us again try to hear Jupiter's words as Alkmena hears them:

Mich fester hat der Kuss, den du ihm schenktest,
Als alle Lieb an dich, der je für mich
Aus deinem Busen loderte geknüpft. (II.5, v. 1301)

An impossibly generous Amphitryon, Amphitryon the invisible lover, insists that the kiss Alkmena unknowingly gave to the imposter binds him to her more profoundly than all the love she could consciously her husband. Alkmena is asked to believe that the fact that she allowed herself to be deceived by a physical likeness only proves her indifference to appearances in the face of her transcendent knowledge of Amphitryon's spiritual essence. Her knowledge, namely, that the connection of Amphitryon the lover to his bodily appearance as her husband is a mere convention, an

unfortunate concession to worldly existence. Once again, Alkmena hears an ideal Amphitryon whose right to claim her unconditional love hinges upon his relationship to her husband, the Amphitryon she has hitherto known, being exactly that which Jupiter bears toward Amphitryon: the relation of an actor to his role. Jupiter's identification with this idealized, impossibly generous Amphitryon allows him to cast off his disguise because the speaker's claim to be the true Amphitryon is dependent upon his remaining concealed, as the actor must conceal himself behind his role.

After Alkmena's "Geh, deine Gut erdrückt mich," Jupiter attempts a different strategy. He admits, for the first time, that her nocturnal visitor was a God.

Es war kein Sterblicher, der dir erschienen,
Zeus selbst, der Donnergott, had dich besucht. (II.5,
v. 1337)

Jupiter visited her last night in order to punish her for the same virtue which "Amphitryon" had praised only a moment ago: her idolatry of Amphitryon. Again the terrified woman must draw the distinction Jupiter has sought all along.

. . .Ich weiss
Auf jede Miene, wie er ausgesehn
Und werd ihn nicht mit dir verwechseln. (II.5, v.
1471)

And once again, Jupiter cannot use the distinction he has forced her to make. If none other than Jupiter visited her last night, he was still an imposter, and couldn't have been him, the Amphitryon who speaks to her now.

But there is another reason for Jupiter's impotence here. He knows that Alkmena's "Ich weiss auf jede Miene wie er ausgesehn . . ." is only an evasion, because last night he appeared, if anything, more like Amphitryon than Amphitryon himself, if such a thing is possible. And it is possible because Jupiter, "Der Gotter ewger, und der Menschen, Vater," is nature itself; Jupiter is as fully present in the bodily form of Amphitryon as he is in the sunset, the mountains and in the song of a nightingale.

Nimmst du die Welt, sein grosses Werk, wohl wahr?
Siehst du ihn in der Abendröte Schimmer,
Wenn sie durch schweigende Gebüsche fällt?
Hörst du ihn beim Gesäusel der Gewässer?
Und bei dem Schlag der üppgen Nachtigall? (ll.5, v.
1418)

Jupiter's power is that he is present in all things. Alkmena seems ready to acknowledge this power when she promises "so bliebe meine Ehrfurcht ihn,/Und meine Liebe dir, Amphitryon." Jupiter reveals that his power is also his limitation when he rejects her homage. He can be present in all things only because he is identical to none of them. Jupiter's "problem," the reason he cannot reveal himself to Alkmena, is that-- like Kant's noumenal subject-- he has no sensuous appearance, and therefore no identity of his own. He does not want the Ehrfurcht due a faceless, infinite God, but the Liebe which mortals share, particularly the erotic love which Alkmena shared with "Amphitryon" the previous evening.

Du wolltest ihm, mein frommes Kind,
Sein ungeheures Dasein nicht versüssen?

Ihm deine Brust verweigern, wenn sein Haupt,
 Das weltenordnende, sie sucht,
 Auf seinen Flaumen auszuruhen? Ach Alkmene!
 Auch der Olymp ist öde ohne Liebe.
 Was gibt der Erdenvölker Anbetung
 Gestürzt in Staub, der Brust, der lechzenden?
Er will geliebt sein, nicht ihr Wahn von ihm.
 In ewge Schleier eingehüllt,
 Möcht er sich selbst in einer Seele spiegeln,
 Sich aus der Träne des Entzückens widerstrahlen.
 (II.5, v. 1514).

So far as Alkmene is concerned, the speaker is Amphitryon, pleading on behalf of Jupiter, the lonely God. Yet Amphitryon's plea on behalf of Jupiter, "Er will geliebt sein, nicht ihr Wahn von ihm," cannot fail to recall Amphitryon's earlier plea, made on his own behalf, to be recognized as her lover rather than as her husband: "Ich möchte dir, meine süßes Licht, dies Wesen eigner Art erschienen. . ." As we have seen, this plea for unconditional recognition, even if it were made by Amphitryon, could only have been expressed from the concealed perspective of a God, pretending to be Amphitryon. From Alkmene's viewpoint, the lonely God's desire to be loved as a human is merely the reverse side of her husband's divine plea to be loved as a God.

Is Alkmene deceived? A better way of asking this question is to ask: what is it that the audience knows, which Alkmene does not? An obvious answer is that the spectator knows that Jupiter, and not Amphitryon, has made the plea on his own behalf. It is a plea for acknowledgement, for recognition and for love. But unlike a human wish to be acknowledged, this plea is made by one for

whom the condition of being unknown is not, apparently, something which he or Alkmena has created. It is essential to the God's nature that he should remain unknown, "in ewge Schlier eingehüllt." Yet this God rejects the Ehrfurcht by which humans acknowledge his presence, and desires to be loved as a human being. Why should a God express nostalgia for the human? The answer I wish to suggest is that Jupiter is a figure for the unacknowledged Romantic ego, and for Amphitryon's rather delicate ego in particular. The rivalry of Jupiter and Amphitryon gives us a picture of one who cannot conceive of his separateness from Alkmena, hence his privacy, as anything but secrecy, so that being known by another would mean giving away or betraying a secret.

What then do we, the audience, know? We know that the actor who plays the part of Jupiter--our program notes tell us this much--is playing Jupiter impersonating Amphitryon. And we know that the role of Jupiter is that of a consummate actor who, like Diderot's "reflective" actor, is able to take on the identity of others because he lacks any identity of his own. Jupiter, in other words, is the God of mimesis.

That Jupiter is able to play the role of "Amphitryon" more convincingly than Amphitryon himself, ought to make us question whether we really know who or what "Amphitryon himself" is, i.e., what sort of being this is on stage. For if I am correct, Amphitryon himself conceives of his relation to his outward, public appearance as that of an actor to his role, and that this relation is dramatized or

played out in his rivalry with Jupiter. To the extent that this is true, this play, by dramatizing its own medium, denies the privileged position of its audience, as if to declare that what we, the audience, need in responding to the play, is not more knowledge of the world, but more faith, faithfulness to the condition of the theater.

Thus Jupiter cannot cast off his Amphitryon-disguise, and the reason is not that Alkmene is in love with this disguise, but that any appearance he could reveal to her would be just as much a disguise. If Jupiter must distinguish himself from Amphitryon, it is not so much to divert Alkmene's love from Amphitryon to himself, but to experience the very same love which she expresses for Amphitryon. For he is Amphitryon, Amphitryon for her.

Jupiter: Entscheide du. Amphitryon bin ich.

Alkmene: Amphitryon --

Jupiter: Amphitryon, dir ja. (II.5, v. 1544)

The subject who declares himself to be Amphitryon to her implies, however, that there is another Amphitryon whom Alkmene does not yet recognize. It is as if Alkmene's love for Amphitryon can be experienced in its purest state only be someone who is not Amphitryon. Someone who is both an imposter (he is not her Amphitryon) and a God (he is omniscient). Thus Jupiter asks Alkmene to suppose that he is the God. What would she do should Amphitryon appear?

Alkmene's answer is:

Wenn du, der Gott, mich hier umschlungen hieltest
Und jetzo sich Amphitryon mir zeigte,
Ja -- dann so traurig würd ich sein, und wünschen,

Dass er der Gott mir wäre, und dass du
Amphitryon mir bliebst, wie du es bist. (II.5, v.
1563)

The beauty of Alkmena's words lies in their irreducibility.

The cunningness of her answer refuses that of Jupiter's
diabolical question. Why then is Jupiter so complacent?

Mein süßes, angebetetes Geschöpf!
In dem so selig ich mich, selig preise!
So urgemäss, dem göttlichen Gedanken,
In Form und Mass, und Sait und Klang,
Wie's meiner Hand Äonen nicht entschlüpfte! (II.5, v.
1568)

Wolfgang Wittkowski, who believes that Alkmena has once
again refused Jupiter and "chosen" Amphitryon, writes that
Jupiter has been led to an "Eingeständnis seiner endgültigen
Niederlage. . .", and that his satisfaction is a mere
display: "Er macht gute Miene zum bösen Spiel."¹³⁶

Laurence Ryan, on the other hand, thinks that Alkmena
accepts the premise of Jupiter's hypothesis--that he who
holds her is the God--and that Alkmena has chosen Jupiter
over Amphitryon. "Damit entscheidet sie sich allerdings in
einem gewissen Sinne für Jupiter und gegen Amphitryon, aber
nur so, dass sie--indirekt--dem Jupiter, der zugleich
Amphitryon ist, recht gibt gegenüber dem Amphitryon, der vor
dem Tor steht und im feldherrischen Befehlsten auf sein
lächerliches Menschenrecht pocht." Of course, opting for
this benevolent deity, in Ryan's mind, does not amount to
adultery on Alkmena's part: ". . .ihrem Mann wird sie damit
keinesweg untreu, Jupiter will sie auch nicht zur Untreue
überreden."¹³⁷

To see Alkmena's answer as a "choice" presupposes that she recognizes Jupiter and Amphitryon as two distinct entities, and that she can tell them apart. I think both critics are being unduly serious. Alkmena is responding to her lover's sophistic logic with some of her own; the point of her answer is that it cannot be construed decisively one way or the other. She would remain the in the God's arms, but only on condition (her "Wunsch," which is both sad and triumphant, counters Jupiter's "hypothesis" with one of her own, equally mad) that the Amphitryon who appears would be the God, in order that the God who speaks could remain Amphitryon, "wie du es bist." She is completing, and thus disarming a fantasy, not making the most important decision of her life. Now if this is the mood of their exchange, couldn't Jupiter's apparent satisfaction with her answer express his sense of relief that he himself is no longer compelled to envision his doubling of Amphitryon as a rivalry, a matter of choice?

Whether we take the speaker to be Amphitryon (as Alkmena "knows" him to be) or as Jupiter (as we "know" him to be), the fantasy expressed in Act II, scene 5 has been a fantasy of privacy. The speaker has imagined his position with respect to Alkmena to be one not merely of otherness, but of difference, hence secrecy. As if our separateness from one another could be overcome if only we could know each other's secrets. And now Alkmena, by her answer, has in effect confirmed what her innocent deception has

proclaimed all along: that there is nothing more she could know, nothing this man who holds her could reveal to convince her that he is other than who she knows him to be, call him "Amphitryon" or call him "Jupiter." She loves him not because of, but despite who he is.

One will say that this is wrong because it overlooks the final, climactic decision Alkmena is forced to make in Act III. But the important decision here is made by Amphitryon, not Alkmena. What does Amphitryon do when he allows that Jupiter is the true "Amphitryon"? Evidently he releases himself from his bondage to Jupiter, and thus regains his identity. How?

I have tried to show that the relation between Jupiter impersonating Amphitryon, and Amphitryon demanding that Alkmena love him unconditionally, as a pure noumenal "ich," is strictly speaking a relation of indifference. I do not mean to say that Jupiter is somehow a "projection" of Amphitryon's. But Jupiter betrays Amphitryon only insofar as he fulfills a fantasy of Amphitryon's, a fantasy of total immediacy, of non-theatricality. And, in a post-Kantian world, this fantasy betrays itself as a fantasy of inaccessible otherness, of privacy interpreted as secrecy: in order that the self may reveal itself as it is, outside of any pose or role, paradoxically, the self must not be seen at all, or may be seen only as Jupiter is seen, in disguise.

Of course, this will be the case only as long as

Amphitryon's desire is expressed in these terms. Only as long, that is, as he conceives of the relation of his self to its revelation as one of betrayal. In the climactic recognition scene, when Amphitryon and Jupiter are for the first time brought together, Alkmena identifies Jupiter as her husband. Rather than continue to fight a battle he cannot win, Amphitryon elects to accept her decision. Amphitryon's decision is characteristically expressed in terms of trust, in recognition of the fact that his demand for her Trust will always be betrayed unless it is based on his trust (with a small "t") of her:

O ihrer Worte jedes ist wahrhaftig,
 Zehnfach geläutert Gold ist nicht so wahr.
 Läs ich, mit Blitzen in die Nacht, Geschriebnes,
 Und riefte Stimme mir des Donners zu,
 Nicht dem Orakel würd ich so vertraun,
 Als was ihr unverfälschter Mund gesagt.
 Jetzt einen Eid selbst auf den Altar schwör ich,
 Und sterbe siebenfachen Todes gleich,
 Des unerschütterlich erfassten Glaubens,
 Dass er Amphitryon ihr ist. (III.2, v.)

When Amphitryon allows that Jupiter may be Amphitryon to her, he recognizes Alkmena's vision of him as constitutive of his relation to himself. He assumes his placement in this body, before the eyes of others, hence his separateness from her. And it is at this moment that Jupiter restores to Amphitryon his identity. Not as a further instance of his power over Amphitryon, but because Jupiter has lost his power over him. Jupiter's self-revelation, his ascension into the clouds, is hurried, almost embarrassed, as if an actor had shed his costume on the stage, threatening to

ruin, as Molière's Mercure would say, the "divine decorum" of the theater.

There is, of course, no way to "prove" that Jupiter's motives betray a fantasy of Amphitryon's. Perhaps it will help to displace the question away from problems of proof to say that Amphitryon's fantasy is shared by the audience to this play. For if the theater in general literalizes our condition of hiddenness--in the curiously omniscient yet helpless position of the audience with respect to the characters on the stage--this play in particular refuses to allow this condition to determine our response to it. The point of describing the relation of Jupiter the betrayer to Amphitryon the betrayed as a relation of indifference is to suggest that our casting of one another as enigmas, as not merely other, but different, hence concealed, is something we, like Amphitryon (Jupiter: "Was du, in mir dir selbst getan . . ." (III.12, v. 2322)), have inflicted upon ourselves. The theater becomes a place in which to acknowledge that the metaphysical gap which separates us cannot be bridged by more knowledge, for it is not a species of ignorance at all. What Alkmena has demonstrated to Amphitryon is that only he who would possess his identity (as the actor who may be said to possess his role, apart from his relation to others) may have his identity stolen.

V. NARRATIVE: DIE MARQUISE VON O...

Das rein Körperliche kann unheimlich sein. Vergleich die Art und Weise, wie man Engel und Teufel darstellt. Was Man "Wunder" nennt, muss damit zusammenhängen. Es muss sozusagen eine heilige Gebärde sein. (Wittgenstein)

Upon learning from her family that the Marquise of O... has been exiled in disgrace to her country estate, the Russian Count F declares that "ihre Erklärung über ihre Unschuld vollkommen Glauben bei ihn fände..."¹³⁸, and leaves, with his customary haste, to once more ask her hand in marriage. Deceiving the porter who guards her solitude, the Count confronts the Marquise in her garden. Before she has time to react, he declares his absolute conviction in her innocence. He has come, he says, "durch eine hintere Pforte, die ich offen fand. Ich glaube auf Ihre Verzeihung rechnen zu dürfen, und trat ein...doch von Ihrer Unschuld völlig überzeugt...Der Welt zum Trotz...und Ihrer Familie zum Trotz, und dieser lieblichen Erscheinung sogar zum Trotz...so überzeugt...Julietta, als ob ich allwissend ware, als ob meine Seele in deiner Brust wohnte..."¹³⁹

From the beginning until almost the very end of the story, the Count has a supernatural presence, an apparent ability to look into people's minds, as well as foretell the future. His entrances are invariably sudden, as if he had descended from the heavens; his appearance is impeccable, his manners perfect, and, in his wooing of the Marquise, he seems animated by a force (call it "love") which seems to

render all the formal rules of courtship pointless and trivial.

The Marquise's family finds his manner quite incomprehensible, and for that reason, all the more compelling. The very unreasonableness of his behavior confirms for them his lack of ulterior motives, hence the utter spontaneity of his action, as well as the sincerity of his love for the Marquise. How ironic, therefore, that this overwhelming frankness of the Count originates in the fact that he has a secret. The Count alone--for even the Marquise herself begins to have doubts (as when she declares herself on the verge of madness)--knows with certainty the Marquise's innocence. As certainly, that is, as he knows his own guilt. His own superior knowledge, and the power this gives him are measured, apparently, only by the Marquise's ignorance of what he knows, so that when she learns the truth, in the "recognition scene," he reappears as a devil among men.

The Marquise, on the other hand, has her own kind of grace, a grace which may seem closer to awkwardness. While the Count's secrecy gives his behavior a power of conviction which supercedes convention, the Marquise is, thanks to the changing shape of her body, all too comprehensible. Every graceful quality which the Count seems to possess, the Marquise in fact possesses. The Count's openness, the sincerity which appears to emanate from somewhere beyond intentionality, all of this is mirrored on the surface of

the Marquise's pregnant body, but with inverse effect. Secrecy, as I said, gives the Count his power to convince; the Marquise's complete lack of privacy deprives her of all credibility. When she protests her innocence, her body publicly contradicts her. But soon the contradiction becomes so blatant that she doesn't appear to be lying, so much as somewhat crazy. Her mouth and her body are speaking of two completely different things. Like the Count, she seems not to have the power to deceive. But whereas this is, so to speak, the Count's ultimate deceit, the Marquise has literally lost the capacity to deceive, as she has lost control over her body. She cannot lie; not because we believe in her, as everyone seems to believe in the Count, but because the truth is there, in plain view, written on her swollen abdomen, as a fact of nature.

If the Count, by virtue of his spontaneity, possesses the grace of a very good dancer, in that the gap between intention and action, between will and expression, has been purified, and almost, in his impulsive moments, made to disappear, the Marquise's grace is that of a marionette. Here the gap between will and expression disappears altogether, because there are not two "things" to come between. Her body expresses--itself; it is the Marquise's fate to discover the price of this kind of grace, since it is no longer clear whether this is "her" body or not.

How one reads Die Marquise von O... will largely depend upon how one answers the question: In what sense is the

Marquise innocent? And this depends on the sense in which the Marquise tells the truth, that is, how we envision the relation between the truth expressed by her pregnant body and the truth of what she says.

In the preceding I have set forth the elements of a kind of comedy. The Count, by concealing the truth, convinces everyone of his authenticity; the Marquise, in speaking the truth, is contradicted by her own inner sensations, by her own body, so that even she begins to doubt that most intimate of truths, the voice of her own conscience. Thus while the Count becomes a sort of god in the eyes of the world, and particularly before the Marquise, she, on the other hand, is publicly reduced to the status of a whore, as when she advertises for a husband in the newspaper. When the truth comes out, this underestimation of the Marquise is corrected, along with the overestimation of the Count, and they are reconciled to the life of a normal married couple.

Nevertheless, the story does not strike one as comic, at least not in this way. There is too much at stake in the roles the characters are forced to play. The Count's sincerity, his spontaneous power, even his divine aura, seem too genuine to be merely the obverse of his reality. And the Marquise's degradation seems too necessary to be the result of a mistake. The Marquise's pregnant body, for instance, really does appear to express some truth about her character, a truth which does not simply contradict her

protestations of innocence.

Take, for example, the scene mentioned at the outset, in which the Count enters the Marquise's garden through a back door, and affirms his unconditional conviction in her innocence. He is as convinced, he says, as if he were omniscient: "...von Ihrer Unschuld völlig überzeugt...so überzeugt...als ob ich allwissend wäre, als ob meine Seele in deiner Brust wohnte..." This ought to strike us as rather comic: as in Kleist's anecdote "Sonderbarer Rechtsfall in England" (1811), the true criminal knows, as if by a special kind of intuition, and against all evidence, the innocence of the accused. Yet the Count is not a comic figure. For if the first part of his claim ("...als ob ich allwissend wäre...") seems ludicrous, the second part ("...als ob meine Seele in deiner Brust wohnte...") has the ring of literal truth, as a description of the mystery of conception. Moreover, the Count's entering the garden through the back door (after deceiving the porter) ought to recall the description of the path to salvation presented in Kleist's essay Über das Marionettentheater (1811). "Solche Missgriffe," says Herr C, "sind unvermeidlich, seitdem wir von dem Baum der Erkenntnis gegessen haben. Doch das Paradies ist verriegelt und der Cherub hinter uns; wir müssen die Reise um die Welt machen, und sehen, ob es vielleicht von hinten irgendwo wieder offen ist."¹⁴⁰ Entering Paradise through the back door means sinning, stealing from the tree of knowledge a second time, in order

that we may fall back into the state of innocence. "Mithin, sagte ich ein wenig zerstreut, müssten wir wieder von dem Baum der Erkenntnis essen, um in den Stand der Unschuld zurückzufallen?"¹⁴¹

Kleist does not say what man ingests in his second meal from the tree of knowledge, for the important thing seems to be our mode of access to this knowledge. We are locked out, excluded; knowledge is not a temptation to which we submit. Entering the garden through the back door suggests that knowledge is something to be taken, whether by deceit or by violence, and that it redeems in being stolen.

If nothing else, bringing in the "Marionettentheater" at this point at least suggests the possibility that the Count may be not simply the perpetrator of a rape, but something of a redeemer as well. And that these functions are not necessarily at odds. If the redeeming knowledge is to be gained through stealth and/or violence, then rape, the act of violating someone else's private garden, may be an apt figure for this knowledge. The Count's claim to omniscience would then be a claim to know something more than the Marquise's innocence of this particular crime. It is a claim staked on his planting the seed of his soul in her body, a claim to know her, her innocence in the sense that every self is innocent, untouched by experience.

Of course, if the Count is a redeemer, we must also imagine the Marquise as standing in need of redemption. We might think of her as redeemed from the state of prolonged

mourning for her lost husband, a rather barren and cloistered state into which she has cast herself as she has isolated herself from the world, having promised herself never to marry again. (In this case, we might find a picture of the Marquise among those 18th century paintings of mourning widows discussed by Robert Rosenblum in his Transformations in Late 18th Century Art. The interest of the theme of the "virtuous widow" for painting seems to lie in her personification of a state at once fallen, yet virginal. Projected into a state of inconsolable mourning for something quite unspecific, these women suffer, we might say, merely from being there, at this moment, from being seen (in a painting), as if this fact alone were the cause and effect of the loss, hence of her damnation, a fact unavailable, of course, to the innocent widow herself. Rosenblum remarks: "Just as the deathbed motif could enlist emotions associated with the Pieta, the theme of the grieving widow could likewise secularize Christian sentiments familiarly related to images of the sorrowing virgin or the melancholy Magdelane."¹⁴² The Count frees the Marquise from her obsession with her dead husband by replacing him in her fantasy, by becoming the object of her desire, and giving it issue, thus forcing her to acknowledge her desire, hence her finitude.

This is roughly the scenerio presented by Professor Dorrit Cohn in her fine article "Kleist's 'Marquise von O...': The Problem of Knowledge." In her view, the Marquise

represses her erotic desire for the Count; her somewhat overdetermined claims not to know the father of her child are evidence of her unconscious recognition of that very desire, together with the threat it represents. The Marquise seems to deliberately confuse her own ignorance of what happened during the storming of the castle with her innocence of whatever part she may have played. The fact that her ignorance seems willful ("Ein einziges, heimliches, geflüstertes--! sagte der Graf, und griff hastig nach ihrem glatten, ihm entschlüpfenden Arm. --Ich will nichts wissen, versetzte die Marquise..."¹⁴³) is evidence that on another level (unconscious) she knows what she denies:

But the statement "Ich will nichts wissen" opens up further vistas, and must further retain our attention: can one refuse to know something one totally ignores? does a refusal to know not indicate that somewhere in oneself one already knows what one does not want to know? The Marquise's words seem to reveal a cognitive duplicity, as though Kleist had endowed her with an unconscious form of knowledge unacknowledged by her conscious self. And this repressed depth of the psyche seems to have preserved the memory of the experience incurred during her state of unconsciousness. (144)

The answer to the general, theoretical question ("...does a refusal to know not indicate that somewhere in oneself one already knows what one does not want to know?") will depend upon, among other things, the identity of the person to whom the refusal is addressed. In this case, the Marquise's "Ich will nichts wissen" is directed not, first of all, to herself (as Cohn appears to assume), but to another, the Count. She is not, as it were, describing her

mental process ("I don't want to know what I already, unconsciously, know"), but reacting, in exasperation and anger, to the Count's intrusion into her privacy, as if to say "What I need now (after the doctor and the midwife) is not more information; you of all people, can tell me nothing new; I know what I must do." Whether or not this refusal is evidence of her secret knowledge will entail a description of the position from which she is driven to speak (sealed within her private garden), and of why the Count, in particular, threatens that position (because he has driven her there).

Cohn's reading finds its explanation--although not therefore its justification--in the fact that the memory in question is of an erotic event. That is: the evidence that the Marquise is not simply ignorant of the event, but actively evades this knowledge (and therefore, in a sense, "remembers" it), is also evidence for the ambiguity of the event itself. The Marquise desires her savior; her fainting is then as much an expression of desire as it is its suppression. Cohn puts it this way:

But the unconscious memory that survives the Marquise's state of unconsciousness in turn casts an ambiguous light on that state itself. For it suggests that her refusal to know the threatening event may be the cause as well as the effect of her loss of consciousness...Could not Kleist be implying that, in this turmoiled moment, the Count elicits illicit feelings in her, as she does in him, and that such feelings bring foreknowledge of the impending erotic happening?...In this light, her flight into unconsciousness appears as an instant reaction to salvage the purity of consciousness in the moment of emerging eros. (145)

The moral of the story emerges as the Marquise's "unconscious knowledge" inevitably forces its way into her consciousness. As the Count is transformed, in her eyes, from an androgynous angel, to a beautiful young god, to a fully sexed devil¹⁴⁶, and finally into a quite human husband, so the Marquise is freed from her barren fantasy of purity, and brought back, through an acknowledgement of her sexuality, to normal married life. "For with the realization that the moment of his conception--the moment elided by the Marquise's consciousness and by Kleist's text--hides nothing more satanic and nothing more divine than human nature, knowledge--Wissen--in every sense of the word has won the day."¹⁴⁷

I do not wish to deny the truth of Cohn's reading, but to question what sort of discovery it represents. That is: not to engage the theoretical question as to if and to what extent a fictional character may be said to "have" an unconscious mind. (I suppose this may be said of a fictional character as much or as little as of an empirically real person.) Rather more interesting is the matter of what sort of discovery this might be, for it raises the question of the manner in which literary texts conceal, and reveal, meaning to their readers. So, faced with the claim that the Marquise unconsciously knows what she consciously ignores, the question is: how might one find out?

Since we have nothing beyond the text to go on, and in the text the Marquise innocently insists not to know the father of her child, why say that she knows what she claims not to know? In general, to doubt the truth (not the sincerity) of a statement like "I know that I desire..." is to hear what we might call an admission or confession (the "I know..." being more or less redundant of "I desire...") on the model of its third person variation, "He knows that he desires..." Here the "He knows..." conveys a significant piece of information; its truth is a matter of evidence, and there are ways of finding out. To hear the admission (or denial) in this way is not wrong, but it does suppose a particular picture of the subject of the statement, according to which his or her desire (to follow the example) is something he or she may know or fail to know in the same way another may know or fail to know it. If, for example, someone's confessions are unreliable or untrustworthy, then to "know" that person is to understand him (rather than, say, to recognize him), to know what he knows, but conceals, to know his secret. And if this is our picture of the Marquise of O..., it corresponds to a particular picture of the meaning of the literary work, as something concealed, blocked out, by language, and thereby capable of being revealed. The inner life of the Marquise is made available, as it were, by being located out of reach, beyond words:

If Kleist so rarely presents inside views of his characters, it is because their psyches are usually subject to such violent and conflicting emotions that

words are powerless to describe them, the narrators' as well as their own. The fact that Kleist's Marquise has an inner life that is literally beyond description seems to me the crucial trait that makes her into such a prototypical Novelle character. (11)

Again, I do not wish to "refute" Cohn's reading, by insisting, for example, that the Marquise's confessions of ignorance ought to be believed. That it doesn't, in general, make sense to doubt the truth of statements like "I know that I desire...", does not imply that they have a kind of self-evident certainty which their third person variations lack; certainty, as Wittgenstein would say, does not enter in. But to doubt the truth of the confession, one will have to imagine a context in which one could (conceivably) find out. Evidently, such a context exists in Die Marquise von O...; who has imagined (created) it?

This question re-poses the epistemological "problem of knowledge" as a moral dilemma. For if the Marquise's ignorance is willed, if her "refusal to know" is "the cause as well as the effect of her loss of consciousness," we will want to describe the syncopated event, the first encounter between the Marquise and the Count, as something closer to seduction than to rape. I can imagine a modern lawyer, in defense of the Count, buttressed with the latest theories of psychology, pointing to the lack of a struggle, etc., and asking the jury if they are prepared to call this "rape." (Though her fainting may seem amply motivated by physical circumstances (the siege, the fire, the threat of rape by the soldiers), as a reaction of terror, it seems unduly

delayed. While she was in actual danger, she effectively resisted the inclination to faint, intoning instead a more functional "Zetergeschrei". She faints only after the Count has led her to presumed safety. This temporal succession raises the possibility that the encounter with the Count is itself the immediate cause for her mental vacancy"¹⁴⁹, and asking the jury if they are prepared to call this "rape. (And I can imagine a more subtle (Kleistian) lawyer for the prosecution granting the Marquise's inclination to faint, but protesting that her provoking fantasy did not involve the Count at all, but someone else--her dead husband; since the Count took it upon himself to play that role, one can hardly call this "seduction," etc.¹⁵⁰)

The point of all this is simply that if the Marquise's confession of ignorance is not to be trusted, her ignorance willed, as a flight from the recognition of her desire for the Count, so that the Count, in taking advantage of her faint, was also responding to the Marquise's desire, then, in an important sense, our sense of the Count's responsibility, of his violation of the Marquise, disappears. He seems more like an unorthodox but benign psychiatrist than the man who confuses his vision of the Marquise with that of a swan which, as a youth, he had tried to lure closer to shore by throwing mud at it (as if the swan's whiteness, its purity, were a source of both admiration and repulsiveness to him, so that he could only express his attraction to the swan--by calling its name--

after having sullied its purity with mud). This seems to me particularly crucial because, with our sense of the Count's responsibility, we lose the sense of our own responsibility as readers. Cohn says that the Marquise occupies something like the position of the reader within the story, in being forced to reconstruct the enigmatic event. "We may note, first of all, that to this point, the narrator, both by what he tells and what he conceals, has structured his novella as a mystery story...And by so doing, he has placed us in exactly the same position as the Marquise."¹⁵¹ But the reader can reconstruct the facts of what happened, long before the Marquise. And gathering facts is not what is at stake in reading. Rather more difficult is deciding what these facts amount to, and in this story, this means deciding our relationship to the Count. So, if there is a stand-in for the reader within the text, it is not the Marquise, but the Count. In claiming to know what the Marquise "knows" but cannot recognize, we place ourselves in exactly the position of the Count. As readers, we must ask ourselves: have we been seduced by language? And is the only alternative to seduction, rape?

Furthermore, if we are prepared to describe the syncopated event at the beginning as a scene of seduction rather than of rape, our sense of the Marquise's innocence also disappears. Not, first of all, her innocence of this particular "crime" (about this I remain undecided), but the innocence which emerges from her submitting to her

"Feuerprobe," her test of faith. When the Marquise's mother, in order to convince herself and her husband of their daughter's forthrightness in placing the advertisement in the newspaper (hence her innocence), announces to her that the respondent appeared at their home, we should understand this piece of deception on the model of the ancient tradition of the ordeal, as a ritualized method of revealing the truth about a person, where that person's confession is insufficient evidence for judgment. She tells the Marquise that a young man presented himself at their home on the previous day and announced that he is the father of the Marquise's child; furthermore, that the Marquise should not be alarmed to learn that the mystery man is of humble station, lacking all the qualifications she might hope of her prospective husband. It seems to me essential to the moral economy of the story that one cannot doubt the genuineness of her reaction: "Gleichviel, meine vortreffliche Mutter, sagte die Marquise, er kann nicht ganz unwürdig sein, da er sich Ihnen früher als mir, zu Füßen geworfen hat. Aber, wer? wer? Sagen Sie mir nur: wer?"¹⁵² It was, answers her mother, Leopardo, the groom from Tyrol whom your father recently hired; whereupon the Marquise vaguely recalls an occasion on which she had fallen asleep on her divan, and awakening, she had noticed Leopardo walking away from her... Her mother (and the reader) cannot doubt the truth of her response to the extent that it is involuntary; the possibility of her daughter's feigning the

words "Aber, wer? wer? Sagen Sie mir nur: wer?" is as remote as her feigning her blush: "Und damit legte sie ihre kleinen Hände vor ihr in Scham erglühendes Gesicht."¹⁵³ The truth of her words consists not in what she says, but in the fact that they seem to escape from her mouth, almost in spite of herself. (It is further significant that, in order to fabricate a situation in which the Marquise's deceit is impossible, her mother must deceive the Marquise, with her story about Leopardo. The imperative that one must conceal oneself in order to compel the other to reveal him or herself seems to me an important theme in Kleist's works, particularly Amphitryon, and of his correspondence with Wilhelmine. One might view the entire Wurzburg medical mystery as just such a stratagem to gain Wilhelmine's trust.)

The Marquise's ordeal culminates in the "recognition scene," where the Count appears "in genau demselben Kriegsrock, mit Orden und Waffen, wie er sie bei der Eroberung des Forts getragen hatte..."¹⁵⁴ The point of the ordeal is to force the Marquise into a state which Goethe, referring to Pentheselia, correctly called "confusion of the senses"--as if only in this state is one capable of genuine self-revelation. "Die Marquise glaubte vor Verwirrung in die Erde zu sinken...`ich werde wahnsinnig werden, meine Mutter!"¹⁵⁵ At the sight of the Count, the Marquise changes from a melancholic but innocent young widow into a woman possessed, a fury not unlike the raging Pentheselia.

She "schlug mit einem Blick funkelnd, wie ein Wetterstrahl, auf ihn ein, indessen Blässe des Todes ihr Antlitz überflog...Die Marquise blickte, mit tötender Wildheit, bald auf den Grafen, bald auf die Mutter ein; ihre Brust flog, ihr Antlitz loderte: eine Furie blickt nicht schrecklicher."¹⁵⁶ Her violent reaction amazes everyone, everyone except the Count; it is as if she were confronting Satan himself: "...gehn Sie! gehn Sie! rief sie, indem sie aufstand; auf einen Lasterhaften war ich gefasst, aber auf keinen --- Teufel!"¹⁵⁷ She then sprays her family with holy water to ward off the evil spirit.

What then is the difference between a "Lasterhaft," a vicious man, who, she concludes, must belong to the "Auswurf seiner Gattung," and a devil? The vicious man whom she expects (such as Leopardo, the groom) is someone who is indifferent to her, arbitrary because unknown to her. The devil, on the other hand, is not indifferent, but all too familiar. The Count, as Cohn says, is, in some sense, the man of her choice, and in recognizing him at this point, the Marquise is compelled to recognize her choice, her desire. Her calling him a devil would then express her resistance to the dawning of this knowledge, her disappointment that the God who saved her is in truth a man, a man whom she has seduced, and a devil for having revealed himself to be a man.

I find that this explanation does not fully record the exceptional nature of the Count, along with the horror

released in the Marquise's recognition of him. The Count differs from the vicious man, let us say, in that he knows something about the Marquise, that she desired him at the moment he saved her. But is this merely human knowledge, accessible, in principle, to others--to Leopardo, for example--as well? Which is to say: is the Count a devil only metaphorically? If so, the Count is not only a man, but a rather weak man for having taken advantage of that knowledge at that moment, and I cannot account for the depth of the Marquise's horror. I am inclined to say that her horror originates not from her disappointment that the apparent God (who saved her from rape) is in fact a man (whom she has seduced), but from the recognition that his saving her (not only from the rapists, but from something else, metaphysical isolation) entailed, was identical with, his violation of her, that they were one and the same act. So that if he appears to her as a devil for having revealed the true (sexual) nature of her desire, he is, in truth, a devil for having fulfilled that desire. If, that is, her desire is such that only a devil--or a god--could fulfill that desire. And this strikes me as a description of a desire which is essentially inexpressible, which is to say, innocent.

Die Marquise von O... is structured not like a mystery story (a "who-done-it"), but like an ordeal. The principle of the mystery is the confession, which, in the end, fills in the void, the crime at the beginning, by explaining it,

by identifying its author. The ordeal begins not with a void, but, as it were, with a blank (here a dash), and its principle is not the confession, but violence, usually some kind of torture. The point of the ordeal is not to identify the author of the crime, for the crime exists only in order that its victim might reveal him- or herself, in a spectacle of suffering. A spectacle, and not a confession, because the truth must come not from within, but from above.

To say that Die Marquise von O... is structured like an ordeal is to say that the crime, the event covered over by the dash, exists essentially in order to force the Marquise to reveal herself, to place her in a position from which she cannot help but reveal herself. Her self-revelation will take place not as confession, but as spectacle. Indeed, her "innocence" may well consist, or insist, in her not being able to confess, for it is not clear that there is anything to confess. If, as Cohn implies, the Marquise desires the Count, this is her true desire, truly hers, the key to her true self, only insofar as it is inexpressible. This is why the ordeal, not the confession, can reveal it. The truth of the Marquise is true by virtue of being secret, so secret, in fact, that it is inaccessible first of all to the Marquise herself, so that she can hardly be said to "possess" the secret at all.

In order to give some sense to this distinction between confession and ordeal, we should consider first of all the dashed event, the first encounter between the Marquise and

the Count, for this event initiates the ordeal in the first place.

Cohn has very helpfully pointed out that throughout Die Marquise von O..., where one would expect to find the word "Gewissen" (or its variants), referring to moral conscience, Kleist uses instead the word "Bewusstsein" (or its variants), a more neutral term for the cognitive faculty generally. After the Marquise has curtly dismissed the doctor for confirming that she is indeed pregnant, the Marquise's mother asks her "Wenn dein Bewusstsein dich rein spricht: wie kann dich ein Urteil, und wäre es das einer ganzen Konsulta von Ärzten, nur kümmern?"¹⁵⁸ To which the Marquise replies: "Ich schwöre, weil es doch einer Versicherung bedarf, dass mein Bewusstsein, gleich dem meiner Kinder ist; nicht reiner, Verehrungswürdigste, kann das Ihrige sein."¹⁵⁹ By substituting "Bewusstsein" for "Gewissen," the Marquise seems to assume that her ignorance of an explanation for her condition insures her innocence of whatever that condition might imply. Cohn goes on to argue that the Marquise's "Bewusstsein," unlike her "Gewissen," is something over which she has some control, so that in willfully blocking out her consciousness (her fainting is induced), she can stifle the voice of her conscience. "...the state of unconsciousness becomes a state of 'unconscience' as well, a state that suspends the capacity for moral purity, even as it suspends the capacity for cognition...a flight from consciousness...serves to preserve

her reines Bewusstsein."¹⁶⁰

There is, however, at least one precedent for the Marquise's apparent confusion, in biblical terminology. In the very next scene, the Marquise has called in a midwife who, like the doctor, confirms the Marquise's dark suspicion. She inquires of the midwife "wie denn die Natur auf ihren Wegen walte? Und ob die Möglichkeit einer unwissentlichen Empfängnis sei?"¹⁶¹ If we take this as a question regarding the possibility of becoming pregnant unawares (as some critics have), the answer is, empirically, yes. In which case, the midwife's reply is baffling. "Die Hebamme versetzte, dass dies, ausser der heiligen Jungfrau, noch keinem Weibe auf Erden zugestossen wäre."¹⁶² Cohn remarks, however, that in understanding "unwissentlichen Empfängnis" as "immaculate conception," the midwife is entirely faithful to the German of Luther's Bible. "For Luther, though he elsewhere uses the verb erkennen for carnal knowledge, in the Annunciation scene uses the verb wissen. Mary replies to the angel 'Wie soll das zugehen? sintemal ich von keinem Mann weiss.'"¹⁶³ Biblical terminology provides the needed link between the moral and epistemological themes: "wissen" means erotic knowledge, and, by implication, "rein Bewusstsein" suggests moral purity.

My question regarding Cohn's article is this: if the biblical connotations of the word "wissen" account for the transposition of "Gewissen" into "Bewusstsein" in this

scene, why not in the scene with the doctor, and elsewhere? If biblical language provides a direct link between cognition and carnal knowledge, and between "rein Bewusstsein" and innocence, why assume that the Marquise's claim that her Bewusstsein is "rein" covers over (and reveals) a more profound "moral impurity"? Perhaps the best approach to the manner in which the Marquise's ignorance might support her moral innocence, is to consider that the Count's claim to know the Marquise's innocence absolutely, "als ob ich allwissend wäre, als ob meine Seele in deiner Brust wohnte...", is based on his erotic knowledge of her. The Count's quasi-divine insight into the Marquise's innocent soul originates with the dash at the very beginning. What does the Count know?

Whatever he knows, he knows it unconditionally, which is to say, without the Marquise having revealed it, and in this sense her ordeal is comparable to Job's. Job suffers not so much from the particular catastrophes which are his lot as from being exposed and isolated as the object of divine knowledge.¹⁶⁴ God's wager with Satan has placed Job in the position of representing all humanity, in a test of faith. This is what Job, at the outset, cannot understand. He believes that God must have mistaken him for someone else ("...for I know I am not what I am thought to be." (9:35)), for God would not punish without reason, and he has given God no reason. He wishes that he could escape the divine gaze for a moment; God's anger would abate, and He would

welcome Job back (14:13). But there is no place he can hide from God, and by the same token, there need also be no crime which Job has committed. God's knowledge being absolute, He requires no occasion or reason (such as the discovery of a fault) for singling out Job. Thus, Job's temptation to curse the Lord becomes a temptation to knowledge. He is victimized by the divine gaze for as long as he seeks a causal explanation of his predicament; as long, that is, as he views his undeserved troubles as punishment for some transgression he has committed. God's series of rhetorical questions ("Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations?" (38:4); "Doubtless you know all this; for you were born already, so long is the span of your life!" (38:21)) parodie the human model of causal knowledge. Since the causal mode of explanation must logically reach back to the creation of the world, this model can be of no comfort to Job, who is part of the created world. In foregoing causal explanation, Job learns to be silent ("What reply can I give thee, I who carry no weight? I put my finger to my lips. I have spoken once and now will not answer again: twice I have spoken, and I will do so no more." (40:4)), and thereby is taught a kind of innocence, the only innocence available in a world over which God shares His power with Satan.

In Job's case, causal explanations are useless because God's knowledge of Job, and hence Job's "victimization" by divine knowledge, is unconditional, independent of anything

Job has said or done. It is not Job's history which is being scrutinized, but his bare self, specifically, the extent to which his history can be annihilated and still leave that self intact.

Like Job, the Marquise suffers from being the object of absolute knowledge. But a man's knowledge of another cannot be unconditional in the divine sense. The Count can know the Marquise only insofar as she reveals herself, in action and speech, through the medium of the body. If this is the natural condition of my knowledge of others, it may also seem like its unnatural limitation, for the body is unreliable evidence of the soul, and the other may be deceiving me. So I want to know what the other does not, or better yet, cannot reveal. In such a mood, the other is cast as not merely separate, but Other, mysterious, harboring a secret self, the purity of which depends upon its being concealed from (my) view. To justify the other's separateness, and thereby overcome it, the body becomes the barrier which blocks out the soul.

All of this is nothing new, but it does provide a context for Kleist's taking up of the biblical theme of the erotization of knowledge (the transposition of "Gewissen" and "Bewusstsein") in a non-religious age. In the absence of God, other persons may occupy a similar structural position, as the object, or subject of unconditional knowledge. As the body is reduced to mere flesh, like an opaque screen, what is behind the screen, the other's mind,

is coincidentally elevated to the transcendental level of a divinity. If, from the Count's position, the Marquise's body is the barrier to her soul, and therefore, knowledge of her is knowledge of her secret, this knowledge will naturally be eroticized, like the transgression of a taboo. The body is the soul's veil, and knowledge of the soul will consist in penetrating the body, stealing its secret, whether by deceit or by violence. Jupiter, in Amphitryon, uses the former strategy, the Count, in this story, uses the latter. Love has always been the best answer to skepticism; when knowledge is eroticized, love is always, to some extent, an instrument of power, a means of appropriating the other's freedom (Romantic sado-masochism).

I am suggesting that we read the dashed event as the figure of the Count's knowledge of the Marquise, so far as this knowledge is unconditional, and, in this sense, pure. It is obvious, and adequately demonstrated by readings such as Cohn's, that Kleist's famous dash is a highly ambiguous sign for the Count's rape of--or seduction by--the Marquise. But the dash may be there exactly in order to preserve the ambiguity, to prevent the reader from deciding between rape and seduction as a description of the encounter, implying that it is somehow both. For the plausability of reading the dashed event as a figure for the Count's unconditional knowledge of the Marquise will depend upon the event itself, as an act of knowledge, being utterly ambiguous, at least from a moral viewpoint. Insofar as the Count has discovered

the Marquise's deepest desire, it is fair to speak of seduction; but just because it is her deepest, most intimate and secret desire, the Count's knowledge implies a violation of her, i.e., rape. If the purity of the Marquise's soul consists in its being hidden within or behind her body, the Count's knowledge of that purity--hence the purity of his knowledge--is paradoxically bound up with his violation of her; i.e., of her purity. The fact that the Count rapes her in the very act of saving her (from rape), is no more accidental than the fact that the Marquise confuses the rape with the Immaculate Conception, the perpetrator of the rape with God: the more degraded the occasion, all the more sublime the result. (Kleist explicitly formulates a logic of this kind in his short essay "Brief eines Malers an seinen Sohn" (1810). The young painter confesses to his father, also a painter, that the profane and material process of painting a picture makes him ashamed and unable to attempt the sublime subject of the Virgin Mary. The elder reassures his son that the most earthly occasions invariably produce the most divine results. "...die göttlichsten Wirkungen, mein lieber Sohn, gehen aus den niedrigsten und unscheinbarsten Ursachen hervor."¹⁶⁵ This advice should not be confused with a (perhaps Classicist) theory of representation, according to which the loftiness of the subject matter may redeem the impurity of the means. On the contrary, the degradation of the process, which here signifies its lack of reflection, contributes, even

constitutes the ideality of the subject. The whole essay can be taken as an allegorical comment on Kant's concept of "das Erhabene.")

The Marquise's ordeal is to become the object of the Count's omniscience. That his knowledge of the Marquise is unconditional means that what he knows is something she cannot reveal, and this shows itself to be something she cannot avoid revealing. One of the reasons why Die Marquise von O... is a particularly apt subject for film treatment (as Eric Rohmer realized), is that the camera has a way of capturing the opaqueness of the body to consciousness, the way in which flesh shields the mind, and also, at the very limit of one's awareness, gives it away, betraying the unspeakable. As the Marquise's body swells, as if it had (and it in fact does have) a life of its own, it becomes both more opaque and more revealing, like a sign from the heavens which absorbs all of its possible human meanings, turning the word into flesh. The Marquise's pregnant body has the double function of both blocking out, or containing her soul, as within a prison, and at the same time, of giving her away, revealing what she cannot hide. Her pregnancy literalizes, as it were, the inescapable, brute fact of being embodied, of the soul's implication in what does not belong to it. If the Count's wish for unconditional knowledge of the Marquise is based on, or demands, the fantasy that the body is the barrier to the soul, her pregnancy literalizes this fantasy, and in so

doing, gives it away, turns it back upon itself. How?

Earlier, I stated that the reader's claim to know the secret (unconscious) desire of the Marquise is staked upon his hearing her confession ("I know that I desire...") as a description of her mental state ("She knows that she desires..."), as though her own access to her inner life were the same as another person's access to it. I did not wish to argue with this reading because this is, in fact, the position of the Marquise with respect to herself. I did not wish to accept this reading either, for it ignores the Count's role in the story. He is, after all, responsible for creating the rift between her secret soul and her very public body; this is not, as it were, her natural condition. The Count's rape of the Marquise succeeds in providing him with a transcendent intuition into her soul exactly because it forces her into the position of being concealed, or imprisoned within her body, as if her body belonged to someone else. Her body begins to send her all too familiar messages, messages which contradict her recollections, her conscience, her entire conscious self. She becomes mistrustful of her own conscience. "Sie durchlief, gegen sich selbst misstrauisch, alle Momente des verflossenen Jahres, und hielt sich für verrückt, wenn sie an den letzten dachte."¹⁶⁶ The rape can be a figure for the act of (absolute) knowledge inasmuch as it disorients the Marquise, orients her within her body in such a way that the reader cannot help but know her better than she knows herself. Her

confession, at this point, is quite irrelevant to knowing her, for her body, her means of self-revelation, has betrayed her. "O Gott!" sagte die Marquise, mit einer konvulsivischen Bewegung: "Wie kann ich mich beruhigen? Hab ich nicht mein eignes, innerliches, mir nur allzuwohlbekanntes Gefühl gegen mich? Würd ich nicht, wenn ich in einer andern meine Empfindung wüsste, von ihr selbst urteilen, dass es damit seine Richtigkeit habe?"¹⁶⁷

The anxiety, and the humor ("Ein reines Bewusstsein, und eine Hebamme!") of the situation originates in the Marquise's sense of being betrayed--contradicted and revealed--by her own body. It is emblematic of the anxiety inherent in the fact of one's soul being implicated in one's physical bodily position in the world, as when one tries to grasp the essence of one's self as that which is left over, were the body annihilated: we grasp at thin air, an emptiness. That such a situation can be comic is demonstrated by Amphitryon, when the hero and his servant Sosias encounter their doubles on stage. Their identities are stolen, not by other people (Jupiter and Mercury are gods), but by the eyes of the audience, by the necessity to enact their lives, as bodies. They are powerless against their rivals because the latter are, in a sense, their own egos. Sosias, being a slave, can live with this; the hero, Amphitryon, cannot.

In the grip of this anxiety, we might wish that the connection between inner feeling and outward manifestation

were stronger, like the relation between two things; that the body were expressive of the soul in the manner of a natural process, independently of any decision on our part. In our story, this wish is granted, in the ease and naturalness with which the Marquise's body grows, inasmuch as this growth is governed by natural necessity rather than by her own will. The Marquise's ordeal culminates in the realization of the fantasy that the body is the barrier to the soul, in the spectacle of her body, divorced from her control, revealed as pure flesh. What she cannot express (we need not identify it as her desire) is revealed as that which she cannot hide, as she cannot hide the slowly but visibly changing shape of her body.

However, if the Marquise's pregnant body realizes or answers the Count's fantasy of transparency (she cannot feign what she cannot hide), her body's very opaqueness mocks this same fantasy. The Count's intuition is absolute, and is also absolutely empty, a caricature of divine knowledge. For if the Marquise's pregnancy incarnates her desire, and incarnates it perfectly, since it is beyond her power to conceal it, this very perfection shows it to be completely unspecific, a desire for anyone who has the courage, or the nerve, to answer her newspaper notice. The text answers the reader's desire to know its secret, but at the same time shows this knowledge to be of the most common, even vulgar sort. In this sense, Die Marquise von O... addresses the reader in precisely the way the Marquise's

notice addresses the public: it asks the reader to reflect on his own anonymity, which is both the comfort, and the terror, of reading.

How then does the Count differ from "ein Lasterhaft"? In everything, and in nothing. Kleist affirms this identity at the crucial moment, when the hour has arrived for the Count to reveal himself as the father of the Marquise's child. As if to confirm her mother's ploy, Leopardo appears--the women turn pale--and announces the Count. "Der eilfte Glockenschlag sumtete noch, als Leopardo, der Jäger, eintrat, den der Vater aus Tirol verschrieben hatte. Die Weiber erblassten bei diesem Anblick. 'Der Graf F...', sprach er, 'ist verfahren...'"¹⁶⁸ It is further confirmed in the fact that the Count must woo, and marry the Marquise twice; first, purely formally, as ein Lasterhaft, as she would marry Leopardo, for the sake of her children; and a second time, for her own sake, as the man who has answered her prayers.

The Marquise's "rein Bewusstsein" is not merely her ignorance of certain facts (the identity of the father of her child), but a total "confusion of the senses," which delivers her from the burden of self-revelation altogether. Her ordeal is to have what is closest and most intimate to her, her own body, her feeling of "selfhood," revealed to her as completely foreign, possessable (according to the newspaper notice) by everyone except its "owner," the Marquise herself. This is the price she must pay in

achieving grace, and thereby (because grace (Anmut), in Über das Marionettentheater, names not the power to create an aesthetic (beautiful) illusion, but the (sublime) inability to deceive at all), her innocence.

In Kleist's essay, the human dancer, because he must constantly fight the law of gravity, must also conceal this fight, erase from the spectator's vision all trace of a struggle. (This may be thought of as the motive force of his movement; he moves to avoid stopping.) The marionette, on the other hand, does not struggle with natural law, for there is no law, and this is because it wholly and entirely submits to the law. The marionette is, so to speak, lighter than air, not in spite of, but because of the fact that its "limbs" are simply dead, pure pendulums, falling objects. "...so sind alle übrigen Glieder, was sie sein sollen, tot, reine Pendel, und folgen dem blossen Gesetz der Schwere..."³²

(The paradox that the marionette appears as "anti-grav" because it is completely subject to the law of gravity, reformulates Kant's paradox of human freedom: the moral subject's freedom derives from his submitting wholly to the Law. The marionette, for which there is no distinction between "sein" and "sollen" ("alle übrigen Glieder (sind) was sie sein sollen"), is the subject for whom the moral law is not an imperative ("Act as though your maxim were a universal law of nature"), but a fact of nature--a holy or divine subject. The fact that such a subject is revealed to

be a mechanical puppet can be taken as an explanation of why the divine will is, for creatures of nature, an object of both esteem and dread¹⁷⁰: the lawfulness to which morality strives (this striving is the moral law, insofar as it is expressible only in the imperative mood) is not in itself moral. The divine will, so far as it appears on earth (as the sublime) is satanic.)

Any evidence of the dancer's struggle against gravity (his resting on the stage, the joint between his landing and his next leap) will appear as not really part of the dance. "...ein Moment, der offenbar selber kein Tanz ist, und mit dem sich weiter nichts anfangen lässt, als ihn möglichst verschwinden zu machen."¹⁷¹ In the puppet theater, however, every moment of the marionette's movement, including those moments when it touches the floor, is wholly and equally part of the dance. Not because it is somehow better at concealing the awkward moment, but because there is nothing to conceal. The marionette, in a word, is utterly present in the dance; it is perfectly incarnated in its movement, and only because it incarnates--nothing.

Similarly, the bear, in his fencing match with Herr C, inevitably has the advantage because C cannot fool the bear with feints. "Aug in Auge, als ob er meine Seele darin lesen könnte, stand er, die Tatze schlagfertig erhoben, und wenn meine Stösse nicht ernsthaft gemeint waren, so rührte er sich nicht."¹⁷² The bear's advantage derives not from the fact that he "knows everything," and thus "could tell

feint from thrust"¹⁷³ (in which case he would simply be a better fencer), but from the fact that he knows nothing.

"Nicht bloss, dass der Bär, wie der erste Fechter der Welt, alle meine Stösse parierte; auf Finten (was ihm kein Fechter der Welt nachmacht) ging er gar nicht einmal ein..."¹⁷⁴ The bear's ignorance can save him because it is not a gap in his knowledge, but an incomplete ignorance of the game of fencing, of the fact that such a game exists at all. Far from being able to "tell feint from thrust," there is, for the bear, no such thing as a feint. Just as every movement of the marionette is part of the dance, so for the bear, every thrust of C's sword is "ernsthaft." His feints are simply not thrusts, hence they do not exist; they are nothing more than empty and null movements, like so many shrugs of the shoulder. The concept of the feint is not part of the bear's "world." He does not react to C's feints, nor could he produce a feint of his own. (That the bear does not himself attack indicates that "attacking" implies "feinting.")

The bear's ignorance of the game of fencing gives him the advantage in his match with Herr C in that he cannot be deceived (nor can he deceive). We may think of this as the bear's innocence, but this is not very convincing: we do not think of an animal as honest because it does not lie. On the other hand, we are to think of the Marquise's lack of knowledge, her "rein Bewusstsein," as her innocence, i.e., her "rein Gewissen." And only because her "ignorance" is

not a lack of knowledge, but a pervasive inability to recognize her own body, to acknowledge it as "her own." She becomes pure spirit, occupying her body as if it belonged to someone else. The message proclaimed to the world by her mere bodily appearance drowns out her protests of innocence. But we cannot doubt her insistence on her innocence, no more than her family can ignore the altering contour of her body. And this is because as she loses her power to express her innocence, so she also loses the capacity to deceive. Her pregnancy does not so much contradict her words as it deprives them of any possible referent. But a word's power to refer is also its power to deceive, and so in being deprived of all exterior support, all evidence, her words gain another kind of truth. We do not doubt her confession. But we do not believe her either; no more than we "believe" in, say, the existence of the world, or of poems.

VI. PHILOSOPHY: KANT'S ETHICS

In Kleist's Marionettentheater, the gap between intention and action is annihilated. But the fact that the supreme dancer is a puppet and not a human being seems to suggest that this same gap is essential to the concept of human action in general. Kleist would likely have agreed that the most perspicacious characteristic of actions is that they go wrong, fail to realize intentions, fall short of responsibilities, etc. So that in imagining a theater devoid of theatricality, in which intention is perfectly transparent in action, Kleist has done away with the concept of action altogether, erased the distinction between human action and physical movement. One wants to ask: what could our interest be in viewing the puppet theater?

Perhaps all ethical theories are aesthetic in that they imagine moral life as play. The theory of moral law must determine, and fix, the boundaries between necessity and freedom, between rules and strategies, and only in games, or in the theater, are these marked off once and for all. What one must do (in order to play the game) can be settled by checking the rule book; what one ought to do (in order to win the game) is entirely up to the player, and will be determined by his expertise, his experience, his natural grace, his ability to respond to and alter any given situation. Given the analogy between the theater and moral life, it looks as though Kleist's puppet theater represents

the aesthetization of ethical theory. The transcendental beauty of the puppet's dance consists in the fact that there is no distinction between "must" and "ought," between rules and strategies, a tension which accounts for the human dancer's struggle with gravity. If action in this world is comparable with the moves of a game, it is not a competitive game of skill, but a game of chance, in this sense: there is no distinction between playing the game at all (following the rules) and playing the game well (using the most effective strategy). And this is because every move which is possible in the game of chance, is also necessary, i.e., determined by the rules. The only "freedom," or contingency in this game belongs to nature, not to the players.

It was in order to bring out the sublimity, and also the terror, of this model of action, that I compared Kleist's marionette to the moral subject of Kant's ethical works. The perfectly moral subject--the will which Kant calls "holy," on the ground that it knows no distinction between the imperative and indicative moods--is, in Kleist's essay, identified with the mechanical puppet. Of Kleist's marionette is it literally true to say what Kant wishes to say of the moral will generally: its freedom (from the law of gravity) derives from its submitting to the law.

Applied to the moral concept of human action, the puppet metaphor points to what has often been perceived as the excessive "formalism" of Kant's thought on ethics. Theorem III of the Kritik der praktischen Vernunft says:

"Wenn ein vernünftiges Wesen sich seine Maximen als praktische allgemeine Gesetze denken soll, so kann es sich dieselben nur als solche Prinzipien denken, die nicht der Materie, sondern bloss der Form nach den Bestimmungsgrund des Willens enthalten."¹⁷⁵ This statement is meant to provide a specific logic to the moral claim that I ought to do something not on the ground that to do so would benefit me (or anyone else, or society in general), but simply because it is right. It records our intuition that the morally right is independent of any empirical good. The "maxim" of a morally right action must be capable of being thought without logical contradiction as a universal law of nature. The morality of an action is simply its lawfulness in general. Thus, for instance, if I have promised to do something, I ought to do it because promises in general must logically be kept.

Denn die Allgemeinheit eines Gesetzes, dass jeder, nachdem er in Not zu sein blaibt, versprechen könne, was ihm einfällt, mit dem Vorsatz, es nicht zu halten, würde das Versprechen und den Zweck, den man damit haben mag, selbst unmöglich machen, indem niemand glauben würde, dass ihm was versprochen sei, sondern über alle solche Ausserung, als eitles Vorgeben, lachen würde. (176)

If I were to do something different, thereby breaking my promise, I would have failed to act morally, and this has nothing to do with the independent value of "doing X" (as I promised), but with the fact that the "maxim" of my contrary action cannot coherently be thought as a universal law. No one would make promises; not because there would be,

empirically, no one to accept our promises, but because there would be nothing like (what we call) promising at all.

One way to articulate the charge of "formalism" is to say that Kant assumes that an action like promising, inasmuch as it is a moral action, must be a more or less ritualized procedure, governed by formal rules which can be known a priori. Only a formal rule of promising allows us, in accordance with the categorical imperative, to think the maxim, "I ought to keep my promise (to do X)" as a universal law, independently of what I have promised to do. This seems to say at once too little and too much. Too little because to the extent that there are formal rules for moral actions like making a promise, there are also formal rules for actions like spilling the coffee, soiling the table cloth, bumping the pot, provoking my host, etc., actions which may have little or nothing to do with morality.¹⁷⁷

And too much because it assumes that the moral value of any of these actions can be determined apart from the particular circumstances which motivate one to describe "what happened" as this action rather than another. That is: if everyone could agree that these events, in these circumstances, amount to "making a promise" ("spilling the coffee," etc.), there would be no specifically moral problem (deriving "ought" from "is") regarding what I ought to do: I ought to do as I promised. The moral problem, we might say, occurs at the level of description, in determining what the maxim of the action shall be, which means determining, in each

case, how much of what in fact occurs (in the world) I must take responsibility for as my action, what I did. I want to follow this line of thought (at which I am admittedly philosophically incompetent) only sufficiently far to enable us to approach an apparently quite different charge of "formalism" against Kant: the formalism of Kant's mode or style of exposition. My hypothesis is that to see that the two aspects of Kant's formalism in ethics are related, indeed that they reciprocally imply one another, would allow us some concluding remarks regarding the necessary and reciprocal relation between philosophy and literature after Kant.

Characteristically, Kant does not derive his concept of "reason" (Vernunft) from any notion of human nature, as a capacity of man. Rather, "human nature," to the extent this notion appears at all in Kant's thought, is derived from the concept of reason. Man is imperfectly--because embodied or sensuously conditioned--rational being. Inasmuch as we are not wholly or purely rational, we humans do not choose a course of action merely because the performance of this action would be right (morally good), meaning lawful, or universally justifiable. Rather, man requires incentives (Triebfedern), nonmoral goods, to determine his will, and this is why the moral law is addressed to us as a command, an imperative that we ought to disregard any (nonmoral) incentives in determining a course of action.

We should not assume, however, that every rational

being is sensuously conditioned as humans are. Kant derives the notion of human being from that of a purely rational being that does not require any (nonmoral) incentive to determine its will. Since pure reason, not itself an incentive, logically determines the will of a wholly rational being, each of its actions is necessarily lawful, which is to say, morally good. Hence, there is no moral imperative for such a being, if it is not the "imperative" of natural law; it cannot but choose the morally right, and what is for us expressed as "I ought . . ." is, for such a being, "I will . . ."

Ein vollkommen guter Wille würde also eben so wohl unter objektiven Gesetzen (des Guten) stehen, aber nicht dadurch also zu gesetzmässigen Handlungen genothigt vorgestellt werden können, weil er von selbst nach seiner subjektiven Beschaffenheit, nur durch die Vorstellung des Guten bestimmt werden kann. Daher gelten für den göttlichen und überhaupt für einen heiligen Willen keine Imperativen; das Sollen ist hier am unrechten Orte, weil das Wollen schon von selbst mit dem Gesetz nothwendig einstimmig ist. (178)

For the holy will of such a rational being, there is no gap between "I promise to do X" and "I ought to do X," for the "I ought . . ." is replaced by "I will . . ." The logical rule, that promises are, by definition, kept, is also the empirical rule of its natural constitution, so that "I promise to do X" means "I will do X."

Thus Kant's derivation of human morality from that of a purely rational being allows an initial insight into the necessity of what I am calling his formalism in ethics. For if the morality of an action is no longer to be found in our

obedience to divine commandments, what will distinguish moral actions from other actions? Kant's thought of the human being as the lowest of rational beings, rather than the highest of animals, provides an answer: morality consists in our capacity, by virtue of the faculty of pure reason, to act freely, unconditioned by any incentive.

However, Kant's derivation of human morality from the notion of a purely rational being also gives rise to what I believe is a certain ambiguity or duplicity in his use of locutions like "I ought . . ." In the first place, "I ought . . ." is expressive of the concept of morality generally, that is, of the intuition that moral actions are actions we choose, and for which, consequently, we must bear responsibility. The concept of wholly rational being, which could never face such a choice, is of no help in illuminating the reach of our responsibilities. On the other hand, "I ought . . ." expresses our aspiration toward true morality, as this is exemplified in the concept of a wholly rational being.

In der allgeruegsamsten Intelligenz wird die Willkür als keiner Maxime fähig, die nicht zugleich objektiv Gesetz sein könnte, mit Recht vorgestellt, und der Begriff der Heiligkeit, der ihr um deswillen zukommt, setze sie zwar nicht über alle praktischen, aber doch über alle praktische-einschränkende Gesetze, mithin Verbindlichkeit und Pflicht weg. Diese Heiligkeit des Willens ist gleichwohl eine praktische Idee, welche notwendig zum Urbilde dienen muss, welchem sich ins Unendliche zu nähern das einzige ist, was allen endlichen vernünftigen Wesen zusteht, und welche das reine Sittengesetz, das darum selbst heilig heisst, ihnen beständig und richtig vor Augen hält, von welchem ins Unendliche gehenden Progressus seiner Maximen und Unwandelbarkeit derselben zum beständigen

Fortschreiten sicher zu sein: d.i. Tugend, das Höchste
ist, was endliche praktische Vernunft bewirken kann,
. . . (179)

The "ought" expresses our imperfectly rational nature, our metaphysical distance from the holy will, from true morality. I ought to will a course of action for no other reason that it is morally good, i.e., lawful. I ought to act as a purely rational being must act; my promise ought to bind me with the same necessity according to which, for example, the law of gravity constrains Kleist's marionette. To the extent that Kant's "ought" is expressive of both of these imperatives together, his ethics inherits a double bind which others (notably Nietzsche) have found inherent in the doctrine of Christianity: we are bound, as human beings, to imitate Christ, and thereby (we may hope) free ourselves from being human, while acknowledging that only Christ, among us, has been able to bear human being.¹⁸⁰

This duplicity becomes evident in the way Kant continues the passage I have just cited: our endless striving to imitate the truly moral being is virtue itself (but not morality as such), the highest that finite reason can attain, "die selbst wiederum wenigstens als natürlich erworbenes Vermögen nie vollendet sein kann, weil die Sicherheit in solchem Falle niemals apodiktische Gewissheit wird und als Überredung sehr gefährlich ist."¹⁸¹ What exactly is "dangerous" (gefährlich)?--The "opinion" (Überredung) that I have chosen a course of action on wholly rational grounds, simply because it is right. Why is this

dangerous? Is it merely because I can never attain certainty as to the true motivation of my actions, and might therefore delude myself into thinking myself better than I really am?

We can approach this question by asking: what would it be like for a finite being to attain holiness, to act purely for the sake of duty? Or: what would it be like for the holy will to make a promise? The holy will cannot but act on purely moral grounds. As Kant puts it, the objective law of morality is identical with the subjective law of its nature. The holy will would necessarily keep its promise, for no other reason than that promises are, logically, kept. "I promise to do X" means "I will do X," where "I will . . ." expresses not commitment or resolve, but a prediction of natural occurrences, a prediction with the certainty of "A causes B." It would keep its promise with the same inexorable necessity with which bodies, according to the law of gravity, fall.

Is this moral, i.e., what we must mean in calling an action "moral"? To say that the holy will cannot but act morally is to say that the moral law causes the will to choose one course of action rather than another. And inasmuch as it causes the will to act, the moral law does not offer a reason to act (morally). So we are entitled to ask: does the holy will act as a morally responsible agent, or does it simply make certain movements? The sublimity of Kleist's Marionettentheater is to suggest that the answer to

this question is: both, at the same time. We may think of the Marionettentheater as the sublime analogue of the arabesques and English gardens which Kant presents as instances of his conception of beauty in art.

For the finite will, these very distinctions--between reasons and causes, actions and movements--constitute the "problem," the essence of morality itself. Intentions are not yet actions, and actions are not only events; what we are responsible for, as moral agents, are not only intentions, but events which outstrip intentions. The "problem," we might say, is not deciding what I ought to do (although this is often a problem), but making sure that what in fact happens is (or is not) intelligible as something I have done (or left undone).

Again, why does Kant say that it is "dangerous" to emulate the holy will even as it must remain an ideal model of morality? Human virtue, as a naturally acquired faculty, can never be perfect, because we never can know, with "apodiktische Gewissheit," the true motivation of our action, hence the moral value of that action. An action may be performed according to the letter of the law, but not in the spirit of the law. "Man kann von jeder gesetzmässigen Handlung, die doch nicht um des Gesetzes willen geschehen ist, sagen: sie sei bloss dem Buchstaben, aber nicht dem Geist (der Gesinnung) nach moralisch gut."¹⁸² For the holy will, this distinction between the letter and the spirit of the law would be impossible; to know the moral value of its

action would simply be to know that the action has been performed. Of human action, on the other hand, we can never know, according to Kant, whether it was performed for the sake of some incentive, or out of a repudiation of all incentives, for the sake of its lawfulness alone. ". . . es ist schlechterdings unmöglich, durch Erfahrung einen einzigen Fall mit völliger Gewissheit auszumachen, da die Maxime einer sonst pflichtmassigen Handlung lediglich auf moralischen Gründen und auf der Vorstellung seiner Pflicht beruhet habe."¹⁸³

What kind of limitation does Kant have in mind here? Suppose that an insincere promise is made, according to the letter of the law, but not in the spirit of promising. Someone says the words "I promise . . .", but with no intention of doing what he has promised to do. That such a possibility exists is hardly remarkable, but it is no doubt one reason why writers on ethics have long argued about the "logic" of moral arguments. Someone has said "I promise . . ."; how do we know that he is sincere? Since "I promise . . ." does not mean (is not analysable as) "I ought . . .", how can the fact of my saying "I promise (to do X)" imply something which is not (in the same way) a fact, namely my moral obligation to act ("I ought to do X")? A short answer is: saying "I promise . . ." does not imply "I ought . . .", but nor is saying "I promise . . ." the same as making a promise. What could make the utterance "I promise . . ." into a promise, such that it would express my commitment to

act? The entire set of circumstances which would make these words intelligible as a promise in the first place: an occasion in which saying "I'll try . . ." or "I intend . . .", etc., is for some reason not enough. Now if someone were to insist that in these circumstances my saying "I promise . . ." does not "imply" or "entail" "I ought . . .", the objection has lost its force. If the fact that I spoke these words, on that occasion, in this way, does not distinguish, with "certainty," between my "going through the motions" of promising, and my being committed to a particular course of action, then nothing could. What then does the finite will lack in being unable to grasp the moral ground of its action? Nothing, in this sense: nothing further could be evidence of the moral value of an action which is not evidence or a criterion, that the action has been performed in the first place.¹⁸⁴ If I do not know my own motivation, that saying these words in this situation to that person, obliges me to perform this action, I have not made a promise at all, I do not know what "promising" is.

Promising can epitomize moral action in general in this respect: to act according to the letter, but not in the spirit of the law, is not to act at all, or, at best, to perform a different action altogether. (There are criteria for mumbling, or for leading someone on, just as there are for promising.) In other words, to the extent that "making a promise" is a morally responsible action, the spirit of the law is constitutive of its letter. And this is because

there is, strictly speaking, no "letter" of the law (of promising).

This seems to suggest that we are at once closer to, yet further away from the holy will than Kant imagines. We are closer in the sense that there can be no more distinction between the letter and the spirit of the law for the finite will than there can for the holy will. If what I have done is properly described as "keeping my promise," then I have acted morally. On the other hand, we are further away from the concept of a holy will than ever because the moral value of my action does not consist in its being performed "for the sake of the law." I do not mean that we cannot act merely because "promises are kept," but that there is no law (of promising) which could prescribe what, in any given case, would constitute "keeping my promise."

This is why an action cannot in general be morally justified by citing the lawfulness of the action. If someone asks me to justify my course of action (where I have acted as I had promised), the answer, "Because I promised (and promises are kept)," will likely seem hollow as a moral justification. The questioner knows that I promised; he wants a specific reason why doing this, in these circumstances, is morally preferable to doing something else. He asks for a moral justification, not a logical explanation. To cite the "law" that promises must, logically, be kept, is an evasion of the moral issue, which

is a question of why doing this, in this situation, would constitute "keeping my promise," or, if it clearly would, how keeping my promise will discharge my responsibilities.

Because the law (of promising, for example) stands as much in need of justification as its instances ("I ought to meet her at six o'clock, as I promised"), the problem of deriving "ought" from "is" does not succeed in recording a specifically moral dilemma¹⁸⁵. This is not to deny that there are actions which can only be justified by referring to their lawfulness. But the content of these actions is completely specified by the rules which define the actions. And to this extent, these actions do not raise moral issues. If someone asks why I had two witnesses present at the execution of my will, I can justify my action by referring him to the rules regarding a valid will. If I do not have two witnesses present, I simply have not made a valid will. On the other hand, the fact that this action can only be justified by reference to the law indicates why this justification has nothing to do with morality. There would be no point in saying "You ought to have two witnesses present"; you must have two witnesses present, or you have not made a will. You refer to the rules in justifying your action because you have no alternative course of action, and this is why this action is neither moral nor immoral.

A testator is bound by the terms of his will merely because it was lawfully made. Moreover, in order to discover whether a will is binding one need only examine

what has been done, in the world, and compare this with the law of wills. For this reason I may be commanded or forced (at gunpoint) to make a legally binding will (according to the letter, but not in the spirit of the law), just as I may be forced to raise my arm. On the other hand it would be pointless--an expression of frustration--to attempt to force someone to make a promise. The most I can be compelled to do is utter the words "I promise . . .", and this is not the same as making a promise. The "promise" would not be morally binding; not because the intention (to promise) would be missing, but because there is nothing I can be forced to do which would constitute a promise. If there are criteria or rules governing what it means to "make a promise," it is essential that these rules do not prescribe what I must do (in order for my promise to be morally binding), but are re-invented or re-discovered each time a promise is responsibly made. Acknowledging that my promise is binding does not mean knowing a rule or law, but recognizing when and where saying "I promise . . ." for the same reason that I ought not say "I promise . . ." just anytime, to anyone, where, for example, it is unlikely that I will be able to live with my commitments.

A moral action such as making a promise differs from a rational procedure (making a will) in that only the latter is specified by a priori rules. Only of actions of the latter type is it sensible to speak of "performing the action merely for the sake of the law." Were what Kant

calls the holy will to "keep its promise," it would act with the same rational necessity which in fact governs a finite being in making a will. But this only means that "keeping its promise" would not be, for the holy will, a moral action. We can take this as an indication of why Kant writes that it is "very dangerous" for humans to "believe" that they have acted purely for the sake of duty. The danger originates not in the delusion that holiness of the will is humanly attainable, but in the fact that holiness of the will, once attained, is not moral. A being which cannot but act morally, cannot act morally any more than immorally. The "ought" expresses a human limitation, but this limitation is also a delimitation of the concept "human" of what it means to say that a finite will "acts," acts morally or immorally. Only of creatures possessing the possibility of addressing one another (and themselves) in the modes established by "ought," "should," "must," etc., (modes of advising, counseling, commanding, admonishing, and so on) do we say that their actions are moral or immoral.

FORMALISM AND THE SUBLIME

At this point I want to turn to a related aspect of the charge of "formalism" against Kant's ethical writings. Specifically, the notion that the quality or (lack of) style of Kant's presentation is too tediously scholastic to impart anything of practical value to the average reader. This is far from being an empirical matter of taste, on at least two

counts. In the first place, ethical philosophy has historically understood itself as instruction, as essentially teachable. As long as the moral value of actions is measured by the goods, whether spiritual or material, which result from these actions, morality could be taught as rules of prudence, conveyed or demonstrated by examples from everyday life. With Kant, however, the moral value of an action is completely divorced from the results of that action, from anything empirically observable in the exterior world, or intuitable within the self. Because moral value is not measurable in terms of any observable good, examples are useless, even harmful, in the presentation of moral principles.

Man könnte auch der Sittlichkeit nicht übler rathen, als wenn man sie von Beispielen einlehnen wollte. Denn jedes Beispiel, was mir davon vorgestellt wird, muss selbst zuvor nach Prinzipien der Moralität beurtheilt werden, ob es auch würdig sei, zum achten Beispiele, d.i., zum Muster zu dienen, keinesweges aber kann es den Begriff derselben zu oberst an die Hand geben.
(186)

Yet, if examples may be harmful, they are also necessary. For the transcendental exposition of moral principles demonstrates merely that the moral law, the categorical imperative, logically must be absolutely binding on all persons. It proves that we ought to act morally, that the moral law ought to be the sole incentive of action; it does not show that duty can in fact be the strongest incentive for the finite will, and, to this extent, remains incomplete. Part II of the second Kritik, the brief section

entitled "Methodenlehre der reinen praktischen Vernunft," affirms the (pedagogical) necessity that the real possibility of morality be demonstrated by means of examples. The Methodenlehre will demonstrate "wie man den Gesetzen der reinen praktischen Vernunft Eingang in das menschliche Gemüt, Einfluss auf die Maximen desselben verschaffen, d.i., die objektiv praktische Vernunft auch subjektiv praktisch machen könne."¹⁸⁷ It may seem extremely unlikely, almost impossible¹⁸⁸, that the finite will can, in fact, choose to act for the sake of some good. It is possible, however, for it must be; we can act morally, despite our sensuous nature, and "wäre es nicht so mit der menschlichen Natur beschaffen, so würde auch keine Vorstellungsart des Gesetzes durch Umschweife und empfehlende Mittel jemals Moralität der Gesinnung hervorbringen. Alles wäre lauter Gleisnerei, das Gesetz würde gehasst oder wohl gar verachtet, indessen doch um eignen Vorteils willen befolgt werden. Der Buchstabe des Gesetzes (Legalität) würde in unseren Handlungen anzutreffen sein, der Geist desselben aber in unseren Gesinnungen (Moralität) gar nicht."¹⁸⁹

Examples, and the narrative art of presenting examples occupy a thoroughly ambiguous position in Kant's ethics. On the one hand, they are necessary because the transcendental exposition of moral principles is necessarily incomplete. It can demonstrate, according to the logic of pure practical reason, that in order to act morally, we must act solely for

the sake of duty. Examples are necessary to show that moral action is more than a logical possibility. At the same time, however, examples are dangerous because they tend to present the possibility of moral action either as something extraordinary (to be admired rather than imitated), or as already realized, i.e., as something commonplace and therefore not requiring discipline or exertion. It is because of their inherently ambiguous status that one should not suppose Kant's deep distrust of popular examples to express his contempt for the common man's capacity for truly moral action. If he criticizes the standard exemplars of moral conduct (drawn from novels and other "sentimental" writings), it is to preserve the stringent logic of that which is exemplified, the uncompromising law of duty.

Doch kann man den letzteren (i.e., those prone to criticize examples) nicht immer die Absicht beimessen, Tugend aus allen Beispielen der Menschen gänzlich wegvornünfteln zu wollen, um sie dadurch zum leeren Namen zu machen, sondern es ist oft nur wohlgemeinte Strenge in Bestimmung des echten sittlichen Gehalts nach einem unnachsichtlichen Gesetze, mit welchem und nicht mit Beispielen verglichen der Eigendünkel im Moralischen sehr sinkt . . . Dennoch kann man den Verteidigern der Reinigkeit der Absicht in gegebenen Beispielen es mehrenteils ansehen, dass sie ihr da, wo sie die Vermutung der Rechtschaffenheit für sich hat, auch den mindesten Fleck gerne abwischen möchten, aus dem Bewegungsgrunde damit nicht, wenn allen Beispielen ihre Wahrhaftigkeit bestritten und aller menschlichen Tugend die Lauterkeit weggeleugnet wurde, diese nicht endlich gar für ein blosses Hirngespinnst gehalten und so alle Bestrebung zu derselben als eitles Geziere und trüglicher Eigendünkel geringschätzig gemacht werde. (190)

Thus, Kant's predilection for academic formalism, while it may indicate a simple lack of literary style, embodies a

logic of its own, a logic by no means exterior to that of morality itself. The (aesthetic, pedagogical) necessity that the writer on ethics present examples, is identical with the (moral) necessity that the law be--not only logically, but in fact--the strongest incentive for the finite will. Accordingly, Kant's distrust of given examples may not originate from an epistemological uncertainty as to whether the exemplary figure in truth acts for the sake of duty alone, or from some other motive. We should consider the possibility that this distrust records a doubt concerning the concept of morality itself, in particular, whether the subject who acts for the sake of duty alone can be said, on that account, to act morally.

It is, Kant writes, "an insoluble problem for human reason" how the will can be determined by the moral law. The finite will is, as a fact of nature, bound by sensuous inclinations, by the desire for personal well-being, and the moral law is moral only insofar as it is free from any empirical content. Hence it seems psychologically inconceivable that the moral law, the mere idea of lawfulness in general, can be for the finite will a stronger incentive than all inclinations. The critical or transcendental question is: how is it possible that the will, by nature determined by the desire for happiness, should be moved to set aside self-interest and act merely for the sake of duty?

Kant finds the answer in the concept of respect

(Achtung), which names our relation to the moral law. The law obligates by virtue of striking down our self-conceit, but this very striking down is also an elevation of the spirit, called respect. "...so ist die Herabsetzung der Ansprüche der moralischen Selbstschätzung, d.i. die Demütigung auf der sinnlichen Seite eine Erhebung der moralischen, d.i. der praktischen Schätzung des Gesetzes selbst auf der intellektuellen..."¹⁹¹ However, the notion of respect can be an answer to the question, "How can the moral law be the strongest incentive for the finite will?", only if respect is itself a feeling which outweighs all other (pathological) feelings. Somewhat paradoxically, Kant identifies respect as the moral feeling for the very reason that it strikes down all inclinations, suspends the very faculty of feeling, our sense of self-conceit. "Mit welchem Namen aber könnte man dieses sonderbare Gefühl, welches mit keinem pathologischen in Vergleichung gezogen werden kann, schicklicher belegen? Es ist so eigentümlicher Art, dass es lediglich der Vernunft und zwar der praktischen reinen Vernunft zu Gebote zu stehen scheint."¹⁹² As the bridge between "ought" and "can," respect is utterly unique, the only feeling which is not pathological but practical, comparable neither to pain nor to pleasure. "Nun aber ist es ein Gefühl, was bloss aufs Praktische geht und zwar der Vorstellung eines Gesetzes lediglich seiner Form nach, nicht irgend eines Objekts desselben wegen anhängt, mithin weder zum Vergnügen noch zum Schmerze gerechnet werden kann und

dennoch ein Interesse an der Befolgung desselben hervorbringt, welches wir das moralische nennen..."¹⁹³

Whatever the difficulties involved in formulating the concept of respect, they recur when it is a matter of presenting examples of actions which we ought to respect. The object of respect is the moral law, insofar as it is embodied in action. We respect the person for whom the idea of lawfulness is the strongest incentive for action, in comparison with which all (other) incentives, all considerations of well-being, are worthless. But where are such examples to be found? Educators should, according to Kant, search the biographies of ancient and modern times for examples of virtue, but "nur wünsche ich sie mit Beispielen sogenannter edler (überverdienstlicher) Handlungen, mit welchen unsere empfindsamen Schriften soviel um sich werfen zu, verschonen..."¹⁹⁴ Kant's restraint here resembles that of critics like Diderot and Lessing as they advise the dramatist or painter to avoid subjects traditionally seen as "noble" or "heroic," in favor of more inward, self-absorbed subjects. In fact, it is difficult to assess whether the aesthete on moral grounds (as is often thought), or the moralist on aesthetic grounds, rejects subjects which may be called "theatrical" insofar as they inspire the audience to enthusiastic imitation rather than to reflective contemplation. "Kindern Handlungen als edle, grossmütige, verdienstliche zum Muster aufzustellen in der Meinung, sie durch Einflössung eines Enthusiasmus für dieselben

einzunehmen, ist vollends zweckwidrig . . . auch bei dem belehrteren und erfahreneren Teil der Menschen ist diese vermeinte Triebfeder, wo nicht von nachteiliger, wenigstens von keiner echten moralischen Wirkung aufs Herz, die man dadurch doch hat zuwege bringen wollen."¹⁹⁵

What is wrong with presenting "noble" actions as examples of virtue? In the *Methodenlehre*, Kant considers the example of a man who throws caution to the wind and perishes while saving the lives of his shipwrecked companions.¹⁹⁶ Such an act is truly extraordinary and therefore admirable, but still should not be presented as an example of virtue. The problem with such an example is not that it only partially or imperfectly embodies the moral principle, and so leaves in doubt the hero's true motivation. That the hero acted purely for the sake of duty, without regard to any personal advantage, is all too clear. But the very perfection of the example is also its ambiguity, "und doch, ob es auch so vollkommen Pflicht sei, sich von selbst und unbefohlen dieser Absicht zu weihen, darüber bleibt einiger Skrupel übrig, und die Handlung hat nicht die ganze Kraft eines Muster und Abtriebs zur Nachahmung in sich."¹⁹⁷

The problem with the heroic example is not that his Absicht is something other than the mere idea of duty, but that he devotes himself to this idea "von selbst und unbefohlen . . ." Kant objects to the exemplary hero precisely because he acts only for the sake of duty, as if,

like the holy will, virtue were his natural inclination, so that he cannot but act morally. Duty obliges one to make the moral law one's sole incentive; the heroic example reveals, however, that to the extent that the law in fact becomes its own incentive, duty ceases to be a constraint or command. The hero's example is suspect for the very reason that his action is exemplary in the first place: the hero is inclined to ignore self-interest and act solely for the sake of duty. And to be inclined (rather than commanded) to do one's duty is not to act morally:

Die Gesinnung, die ihm dieses zu befolgen obliegt, ist: es aus Pflicht, nicht aus freiwilliger Zuneigung und auch allenfalls unbefohlener, von selbst gern unternommener Bestrebung zu befolgen, und sein moralischer Zustand, darin er jedesmal sein kann, ist Tugend, d.i., moralische Gesinnung im Kampfe, und nicht Heiligkeit im vermeinten Besitze einer völligen Reinigkeit der Gesinnungen des Willens. Es ist lauter moralische Schwärmerei und Steigerung des Eigendünkels, wozu man die Gemüther durch Aufmunterung zu Handlungen als edler, erhabener und grossmütiger stimmt, dadurch man sie in den Wahn versetzt . . . (198)

The heroic figure is someone who, we might say, takes to heart that "Gesetz aller Gesetze," "Liebe Gott über alles und deinen Nächsten als dich selbst." He understands and follows the biblical directive as a command that we act morally. The dubious status of the heroic example reflects an uncertainty as to whether the commandment may be taken in this way. The anatomy of Kant's interpretation is roughly this: the directive "Love God . . ." does not refer to "love" as a pathological inclination, because love as a passion cannot be commanded. It must therefore refer to

practical, moral love, so that to love God means to "like to" (i.e., freely, as a matter of course) practice our duties toward Him, freely, as a matter of course "...es steht in keines Menschen Vermögen, jemanden bloss auf Befehl zu lieben. Also ist es bloss die praktische Liebe, die in jenem Kern aller Gesetze verstanden wird. Gott lieben heisst in diesser Bedeutung: seine Gebote gerne tun..."¹⁹⁹

It is in in this sense that Kant understands the commandment as the "Kern aller Gesetze"; it commands that we make duty our sole incentive and thus affirms the bindingness, the morality of morality generally. The question is: is such an affirmation necessary, or so much as possible? Is there even room for an imperative which would make all imperatives binding?

The problem with Kant's reading is that it only defers or reformulates the same difficulty. For how does "practical" love differ from "pathological" love? To "like to" practice one's duty ("...seine Gebote gerne tun..."), toward God and toward one's neighbors, means to freely choose to practice one's duty, to make duty one's sole incentive. The commandment affirms that we must choose to act according to and for the sake of our sense of duty. But this can no more be commanded than pathological love, or any other inclination. "Denn ein Gebot, dass man etwas gerne tun soll, ist in sich widersprechend, weil, wenn wir, was uns zu tun obliege, schon von selbst wissen, wenn wir uns überdem auch bewusst wären, es gerne zu tun, ein Gebot

darüber ganz unnötig (würde)..."²⁰⁰ If one were already inclined to perform one's duty, no further law would be required to make duty imperative. But if one is not (already) so inclined, if one does not feel the burden of obligation, what could supplement this lack? Surely not another command. (If one is not inclined to keep one's promises, what could supplement this lack? --Not the rule that "promises are kept.") That the blindingness of duty cannot be explained or justified by an appeal to rules is demonstrated by the fact that inasmuch as moral action must be commanded, it is no longer moral action which can be commanded, but a movement or procedure which is neither moral nor immoral. "Practical" love can no more be commanded than "pathological" love, for the imperative mood destroys the disposition it commands. "...und, tun wir es zwar, aber eben nicht gerne, sondern nur aus Achtung fürs Gesetz, ein Gebot, welches diese Achtung eben zur Triebfeder der Maxime macht, gerade der gebotenen Gesinnung zuwider wirken würde."²⁰¹

The law is moral only because it is not dictated by any authority, by other persons, or by our own inclinations. Duty is binding upon us, i.e., our duty, only inasmuch as we freely choose to submit to the law. Thus the logic of duty cannot explain or justify moral responsibility because duty is itself binding only upon those who are, or are capable of, moral responsibility. It is to avoid this conclusion, I think, that Kant insists that moral duty must be a

constraint, respected but not loved, despite the fact that love of the law is the goal for which we strive. Duty must not be based on love, "gleichwohl aber diese letztere, nämlich die blosse Liebe zum Gesetze (da es alsdann aufhören würde, Gebot zu sein, und Moralität, die nun subjektiv in Heiligkeit überginge, aufhören würde, Tugend zu sein) sich zum beständigen, obgleich unerreichbaren Ziele seiner Bestrebung zu machen."²⁰²

Still, the heroic example appears to force Kant to this conclusion. Since his action is based on "mere love of the law," the hero is exemplary: but for this very reason, the law ceases to be a command, and morality, passing over into holiness, ceases to be a discipline of virtue. He does not so much exemplify a given principle as he seems to discover or establish, as if for the first time, the moral principle, through the sheer force of his private will. The danger implicit in the heroic example is that it can make morality seem more or less arbitrary, a "mere" convention, so that the origin of morality appears indistinguishable from the history of this particular individual.

This is why we both esteem, yet dread the heroic figure, for the very reason that he succeeds in embodying the ideal of morality in his action. "Denn an dem, was wir hochschätzen, aber doch (wegen des Bewusstseins unserer Schwächen) scheuen, verwandelt sich durch die mehrere Leichtigkeit, ihm Genüge zu tun, die ehrfurchtsvolle Scheu in Zuneigung und Achtung in Liebe..."²⁰³ So far as he

embodies the ideal, the hero presents the moral principle not as a rule to be followed, but as a character to be imitated. The logic of exemplification, like the logic of mimesis, is hyperbolic: the more the example approaches the ideal of morality (acting purely from duty), the less inclined is Kant to judge the example moral.

This is perhaps another way of saying that the exemplar of morality is sublime. Morality after Kant is grounded in the idea of freedom rather than in any humanly imaginable good, and the idea of freedom, like that of God, cannot be presented in any sensuous form which we might see as beautiful. ". . . buchstäblich genommen und logisch betrachtet, können Ideen nicht dargestellt werden."²⁰⁴ However, an image which lacks beauty--because it is inadequate to present or embody the idea--may still be sublime, by virtue of this very inadequacy. That is: if it is an error to think that the sublime image embodies or presents the idea, it is no less an error to suppose that it fails in this regard. For it is precisely because, and to the extent that it contradicts our power of imagination, and thereby forces us to abandon all hope of appropriating it, that the sublime image succeeds in arousing the supersensuous faculty of pure reason, a sense of our moral vocation.

Aber in dem, was wir an ihr erhaben zu nennen pflegt, ist so gar nichts, was auf besondere objektive Prinzipien und diesen gemäße Formen der Natur führte, dass diese vielmehr in ihrem Chaos oder in ihrer wildesten, regellosesten Unordnung und Verwüstung, wenn

sich nur Grösse und Macht blicken lässt, die Ideen des Erhabenen am meisten erregt. (205)

In this passage we can recognize the two contradictory principles which make the heroic figure both attractive and dangerous as an example of morality in general. Because he appears to obey no law other than that of his own freedom, and thereby embodies the moral law as such, the heroic figure also represents nature "in ihrer wildesten, regellosesten Unordnung und Verwüstung," i.e., chaos itself. To say that the heroic figure is necessarily sublime is to say that he is in no way an indirect or otherwise dialectical representation of the idea. Ideas of reason cannot, grammatically, be presented, and this is why the very inadequacy of the image, its purely sensuous or chaotic texture, is a sublime presentation of the idea. ". . . denn das eigentliche Erhabene kann in keiner sinnlichen Form enthalten sein, sondern trifft nur Ideen der Vernunft, welche, obgleich keine ihnen angemessene Darstellung möglich ist, eben durch diese Unangemessenheit, welche sich sinnlich darstellen lässt, rege gemacht und ins Gemüt gerufen werden."²⁰⁶

What idea is presentable through and as the very inadequacy of its presentation? --The idea of the world's exteriority to us. Or rather: the transcendental idea of freedom is realized in the sublime image of the world as complete, completely present, only without us, i.e., in the absence of we who observe, represent or otherwise

theatrically occupy the world. The "inadequacy" (Unangemessenheit) which Kant speaks of, the inadequacy of every aesthetic object for presenting the idea (of the world's exteriority, of its presence to me, hence of my freedom), resides in the irreducible fact of an audience for art. Sublime art is anti-theatrical because only by delivering the aesthetic object from its audience can it approach the status of nature.

That the idea may be presented only through or as the inadequacy of its presentation affirms at once the inescapable essence of art, as well as the historical fate that art must overcome or defeat that essence. Art demands an audience, and if this is a "convention," it is as deeply rooted in the nature of art as our presence or implication in the world. It is equally necessary, however, that with the eclipse of the category of the beautiful (around the time of Kant), art become sublime, that it address the world as if from the moment of the world's creation, prior to its occupation. In order to remain worthy of viewing (in order to remain art), art must overcome itself, i.e., its own nature as something viewed. Sublime art aspires to philosophy.

This in itself ought to suggest why the sublime cannot be understood as yet another style or manner in art. The concept of the sublime is born out of a sense that our accesses to the world no longer reveal the world so much as undermine its coherence. So what it needed is not a new

access to the world, but a revolution in our notion of the world's accessibility. The sublime declares the very concept of style decrepit. Sublime art must address the world as if from the well of own absence; the sublime "style" consists in the utter lack of any style or tone.

Aber (welches befremdlich scheint) Affektlosigkeit (apatheia, phlegma in significato bono) eines seinen unwandelbaren Grundsätzen nachdrücklich nachgehenden Gemüts ist und zwar auf weit vorzüglichere Art erhaben, weil sie zugleich das Wohlgefallen der reinen Vernunft auf ihrer Seite hat. Eine dergleichen Gemütsart heisst allein edel; welcher Ausdruck nachher auf Sachen, z.B. Gebäude, ein Kleid, Schreibart, körperlichen Anstand u. dgl. angewandt wird, wenn diese nicht sowohl Verwunderung (Affekt in der Vorstellung der Neuigkeit, welche die Erwartung übersteigt) als Bewunderung (eine Verwunderung, die beim Verlust der Neuigkeit nicht aufhört) erregt, welches geschieht, wenn Ideen in ihrer Darstellung unabsichtlich und ohne Kunst zum ästhetischen Wohlgefallen zusammenstimmen. (207)

We may approach the question of the "formalism" of Kant's writing on ethics by asking: if sublime art aspires to the condition of philosophy, what becomes of philosophy? Reading the passage cited above as a description of Kant's own "style"--ideas undesignedly and artlessly accord with their presentation, arousing admiration rather than astonishment--provides us with a provisional answer, or at least a framework for the question: if sublime art aspires to the condition of philosophy, philosophy must become sublime. This is to say that philosophy and art are fundamentally identical exactly at the point of their radical divergence. The "sublimity" of philosophy, of Kant's philosophy at any rate, is to be found in the singular "artlessness" of its presentation.²⁰⁸

To return to our initial question: what could be our interest in Kleist's theater of marionettes? It could not be an interest in the soul of the puppeteer as it is expressed in the puppet's dance, because, as Kleist notes, the puppeteer might easily be replaced by a simple crank. The vis motrix, the moving force of the puppet, is always identical with its center of gravity. The peculiar grace of the puppet, like that of Adam and Eve before the Fall, consists in the fact that its actions are always reducible to its physical movements. This is perhaps to say that we could have no interest in the puppet theater as Kleist imagines it. But it is also to say that our interest in Kleist's imagining of the puppet theater, in the fact that he imagined at all, is necessarily an allegorical interest. Like every image of a state of grace, the Marionettentheater is an allegory of history, of that point beyond time "wo die beiden Enden der ringformigen Welt in einander griffen." Grace will return to us when we acknowledge that the door to paradise is locked and bolted, and the Marionettentheater will find its audience only with the disappearance of the human from earth.

NOTES

1. J.J. Winckelmann, Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst, Heibronn, 1885, p. 8.
2. See Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Hölderlin et les Grecs," in Poétique, no. 40, 1979.
3. See Peter Szondi, Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie I, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1974.
4. Friedrich v. Schiller, Über Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung, in Samtliche Werke V, Winkler-Verlag, München, 1968, p. 449.
5. Ibid., p. 451.
6. Ibid., p. 493, note.
7. Ibid., p. 458.
8. Letter to Goethe of August 23, 1894, in Der Briefwechsel Zwischen Schiller und Goethe, ed. E. Staiger, Insel-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1966, p. 34.
9. Schiller, op. cit., p. 455.
10. Ibid., p. 456.
11. Ibid., p. 458.
12. Ibid., p. 466, note.
13. See Ibid., p. 482, note.
14. Friedrich v. Schlegel, Kritische Schriften, Carl Hanser Verlag, München, 1964, #24.
15. Stanley Cavell, "In Quest of the Ordinary," in Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism, ed. M. Eaves and M. Fischer, Ithaca, 1986, p. 190.
16. Ibid., p. 185.
17. Schiller, op. cit., p. 453.
18. Ibid., p. 451.
19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 433.
21. Ibid., p. 452.
22. Ibid., p. 445.
23. Cf. Ibid., p. 446 f.
24. Ibid., p. 449.
25. Ibid., p. 438.
26. Ibid., p. 450.
27. Friedrich Schlegel, Schriften zur Literatur, Deutsche Tachenbuch Verlag, Munschen, 1970, p. 250.
28. Ibid.
29. Rensselaer W. Lee, Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1967, p. 59.
30. Ibid., p. 11.
31. On this point, see Peter Szondi, Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie I, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1974.
32. This is the version of "modernism" presented by Clement Greenberg throughout his work, and particularly in his seminal articles "Modernist Painting," in The New Art: A Critical Anthology, ed. Gregory Battcock, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1966; and "After Abstract Expressionism," in New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970, ed. Henry Geldzahler, New York, 1970.
33. Lee, op. cit., pp. 20-1.
34. G.E. Lessing, Laokoon, Herausgegeben von Hugo Blumer, Berlin, 1880, p. 250.
35. Ibid.
36. Lee, op. cit., p. 68.
37. Lessing, op. cit., p. 251.
38. Ibid., pp. 440-1.
39. Ibid., p. 164.
40. Ibid., p. 155.

41. Ibid., p. 194.

42. Ibid., p. 233.

43. "Die Vollkommenheit des Gegenstandes selbst musste in seinem Werke entzucken; er war zu gross, von seinen Betrachtern zu verlangen, dass sie sich mit dem blossen kalten Vergnügen, welches aus der getroffenen Aehnlichkeit, aus der Erwägung seiner Geschicklichkeit entspringet, begnügen sollten; an seiner Kunst war ihm nichts lieber, dunkte ihm nichts edler, als der Endzweck der Kunst."
Ibid., p. 155.

44. Michael Fried, Absorbition and Theatricality: Painter and Beholder in the Age of Diderot, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980, p. 75.

45. Ibid., p. 76.

46. Lessing, op. cit., p. 441.

47. Lee, op. cit., p. 20.

48. Lessing, op. cit., p. 440.

49. Ibid.

50. Lee, op. cit., p. 22.

51. Ibid., p. 21.

52. Lessing, op. cit., p. 213.

53. Ibid., p. 214.

54. Ibid., p. 212.

55. Ibid., p. 213.

56. Ibid.

57. This episode occurs in XX.446 of Homer's Illiad.

58. Lessing, op. cit., p. 241.

59. Ibid., p. 240.

60. Ibid., p. 212.

61. Ibid., p. 224.

62. Ibid., p. 225.

63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p. 226.
65. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 9ff.
66. Ibid., p. 23.
67. Ibid., p. 27.
68. Fried, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
69. Denis Diderot, "Salon de 1763," in Salons I, ed. Jean Sez nec and Jean Adhemar, Oxford, 1975, p. 208.
70. Lessing, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
71. Ibid., p. 152.
72. Ibid., p. 153.
73. Numerous critics have noted that in his Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums Winckelmann revised his explanation for the Laokoon statue's relative calm. In this later work Winckelmann, anticipating Lessing, points to the fundamentally different ways in which poetry and the plastic arts represent passion: the poet has a wider choice of subjects than the painter or sculptor, who must restrict his subject's expressiveness in order that it not detract from its formal beauty. (C.f., Sammelte Werke IV, ed. Eiselein, Verlage deutschen Klassiker, 1825-29, p. 204.) Despite Lessing's suggestions that he hadn't yet read the Geschichte ("Des Herrn Winckelmanns Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums, ist erschienen. Ich wage keinen schritt weiter, ohne dieses Werk gelesen zu haben." Lessing, *op. cit.*, p. 324), evidence in the sketches suggests that Lessing had read the work before completing the fragment we know as Laokoon. Several remarks in Nachlass A indicate that Lessing was aware that Winckelmann had already formulated something like a "Gesetz der Schönheit" to explain the tranquility of the Laokoon sculpture: "Herrn Wink. selbst hat es in s. G. d. Kunst eingesehen, dass der Bildhauer zu dieser Ruhe wegen der beizuhaltenden Schönheit verbunden gewesen, und dass diese kein Gesetz für den Dichter..." (*Ibid.*, p. 389) In his Einleitung to the edition I have used, Blumer discusses the probable dates and sequences of composition of the sketches for Laokoon. Even in the Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke, which Lessing cites at the outset of Laokoon, it is doubtful whether Winckelmann held the "stoical" view of Greek sculpture which Lessing attributes to him. The point of Winckelmann's comparison of the Greek soul to an ocean, the

depths of which remain calm beneath an agitated surface, is not that the Greek suppresses his passion behind a calm exterior, but that his appearance was all the more expressive for not being carried over into "Parathyros." In general, the question of Winckelmann's "influence" on Laokoon ought to be posed together with the question of Lessing's motivation in suppressing his own proximity to his teacher.

74. Smith is quoted on page 176 of Laokoon.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-6.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
81. *Ibid.*
82. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
83. Lessing, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
84. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
85. Lessing, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
90. Heinrich von Kleist, "Empfindungen vor Friedrichs Seelandschaft," Werke und Briefe, ed. S. Streller, Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin, 1978, Vol. III, p. 502.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. Fried, Michael, Absorbition and Theatricality, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980, p. 157.

95. On Gericault see Fried's essay "Thomas Couture and the Theatricalization of Action in 19th Century French Painting," Artforum, 8, No. 10, 1970; on Courbet, Fried, "The Beholder in Courbet: His Early Self-Portraits and Their Place in His Art," Glyph 4: Johns Hopkins Textual Studies, 1978; on Manet, Fried, "Manet's Sources: Aspects of His Art, 1859-65," Artforum, 7, No. 7, 1969.

96. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theater, trans. A. Bloom, Ithaca, 1960, p. 22.

97. Denis Diderot, Entretiens sur Le Fils naturel, Oeuvres esthetiques, ed P. Vernier, Gernier, Paris, 1968, p. 102.

98. Ibid., p. 104.

99. Diderot, Paradoxe sur le comédien, Oeuvres esthetiques, p. 310.

100. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Diderot, le paradoxe et la mimesis," Poétique, No. 43, 1980, p. 270.

101. Diderot, op. cit., p. 317.

102. Diderot, Entretiens sur Le Fils naturel, p. 111f.

103. Diderot, Paradoxe sur le comédien, p. 314.

104. Ibid., p. 311.

105. In Section #258 of his Philosophische Untersuchungen, Wittgenstein has imagined someone recording the occurrence of a certain sensation by writing "E" in his diary, where "E" has no significance other than that he has given it. Wittgenstein objects that the sign "E" cannot have even this "private significance because, given that its "meaning" is known to the diarist alone, he can have no criterion for the correctness of its use. "E" will mean something like: "whatever happens when I write "E" in my diary." The diarist defends himself in #260: "'Nun ich glaube, dass dies wieder die Empfindung E ist.'" Wittgenstein's response to the diarist who would make his "inner experience" an object of belief is, like Diderot's to the sensitive actor, sarcastic: "Du glaubst es wohl zu glauben!" As in the Paradoxe, the problem is not that the meaning of "E" (like the sensitive actor's manifestations of passion) is unverifiable. Rather the point is that insofar as writing "E" is an expression of (rather than a reference to) the sensation E, and perhaps its only expression, the question of verification makes no sense.

106. Diderot, *op. cit.*, p. 311.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 358.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 343.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 307.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 310f.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 341.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
120. Stanley Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say?, Cambridge U. Press, Cambridge, 1976, p. 221.
121. Heinrich von Kleist, Amphitryon, Act I, scene 1, verse 21, Werke und Briefe, Aufbau Verlag, Berlin und Weimar, 1978. All citations from Amphitryon are taken from this edition, and I shall include the Act, scene and verse numbers in the body of the text.
122. This summary of the myth is taken from Robert Graves' The Greek Myths, New York, 1960, Vol. II, Chapter 118.
123. Sigmund Freud, "Contributions to the Psychology of Love III: The Taboo of Virginity," 1918, in P. Rieff, ed., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love, New York, 1963, p. 81.
124. *Ibid.*
125. Sigmund Freud, "Contributions to the Psychology of Love I: A Special Type of Object Choice Made By Men," (1910) in P. Rieff, ed., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love, p. 55.

126. Sigmund Freud, Contributions to the Psychology of Love II: The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Love (1912), in P. Rieff, ed., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love, p. 62.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

128. Peter Szondi, "Funfmal Amphitryon: Plautus, Moliere, Kleist, Giraudoux, Kaiser," in J. Bollack, ed., Schriften II, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, p. 175.

129. M. de Montaigne, "Sur des Vers de Virgile," in M. Rat, ed., Essais, Garnier, Paris, 1962, Vol. II, p. 296.

130. *Ibid.*

131. *Ibid.*

132. Molière, Amphitryon, in R. Jouanny, ed., Oeuvres complètes, Garnier, Paris, 1962, Vol. II, verses 851-56. In future references to Molière's Amphitryon, I will enclose in parentheses the Act, scene and verse numbers, respectively.

133. Wolfgang Wittkowski, "Der Neue Prometheus: Kleist's Amphitryon zwischen Molière und Giraudoux," in Kleist und Frankreich, ed., W. Muller-Seidel, Jahresgabe der Heinrich von Kleist Gesellschaft, Berlin, 1969.

134. Laurence Ryan, "Amphitryon: doch ein Lustspiel," in Kleist und Frankreich, ed. W. Muller-Seidel, Jahresgabe der Heinrich von Kleist Gesellschaft, Berlin, 1969.

135. Ilse Graham emphasizes this point in her Heinrich von Kleist: Word into Flesh, Berlin and New York, 1977.

136. Wittkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

137. Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

138. Heinrich von Kleist, Die Marquise von O..., Werke und Briefe, ed. S. Streller, Gufhav Verlag, Berlin and Weimar, 1978, p. 139.

139. *Ibid.*, p. 140f.

140. Über das Marionettentheater, in *ibid.*, p. 476.

141. *Ibid.*, p. 480.

142. Robert Rosenblum, Transformations in Late 18th Century Art, Princeton, 1974, p. 40f.

143. Kleist, *op. cit.*, p. 141; quoted in Dorrit Cohn, "Kleist's 'Marquise von O...': The Problem of Knowledge," Monatshefte, Vol. 67, No. 2 (1975), p. 132.

144. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

145. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

146. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

147. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

148. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

149. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

150. Something like this happens in Kleist's story Der Findling (1811), when Nicolo dresses up as Colino and rapes Elvire, again, after the latter has fainted. On the one hand, Nicolo has access to her bedroom only because of his uncanny resemblance to Colino, the object of Elvire's obsession; but Nicolo is all the more diabolical for having brought the dead Colino back to life, and, in this way, fulfilled Elvire's secret desire.

151. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 129f.

152. Kleist, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

153. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

155. *Ibid.*, p. 153f.

156. *Ibid.*, p. 153f.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

158. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

159. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

160. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 131ff.

161. Kleist, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

162. *Ibid.*

163. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

164. For the most part, I am following Northrop Frye's remarks on Job in The Great Code: The Bible in Literature,

New York, 1982, p. 197f.

165. Kleist, Brief Eines Malers an seinen Sohn, Werke, p. 461.

166. Ibid., p. 131.

167. Ibid., p. 132.

168. Ibid., p. 153.

169. Kleist, Über das Marionettentheater, Werke, p. 476.

170. Kant is discussing the notion that one ought to follow the moral law out of the sentiment of love, rather than out of respect: "Denn an dem, was wir hochschätzen, aber doch (wegen des Bewusstseins unserer Schwachen) scheuen, verwandelt sich durch die mehrere Leichtigkeit, ihm Genüge zu tun, die ehrfurchtsvöller Scheu in Zuneigung und Achtung in Liebe...", (Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft, ed Karl Vorländer, Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 1974, p. 98.

171. Kleist, op. cit., p. 477.

172. Ibid., p. 480.

173. Paul DeMan, "Aesthetic Formalization: Kleist's Über das Marionettentheater," in Rhetoric of Romanticism, New York, 1984, p. 285.

174. Kleist, op. cit., p. 480.

175. Immanuel Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1974, p. 31.

176. Immanuel Kant, Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten, Harald Fischer Verlag, Bayreuth, 1984, p. 55.

177. Cf. J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers, ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979.

178. Kant, Grundlegung, p. 39.

179. Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, p. 38.

180. Stanley Cavell, The Claim of Reason, p. 416.

181. Kant, Grundlegung, p. 38.

182. Ibid., p. 84.

183. Kant, Grundlegung, p. 26.

184. "There are (can be) no criteria for something's being a real X over and above the criteria for its being X. . . there are no criteria for a thing's being so over and above the criteria for its being so." Cavell, *ibid.*, p. 51.

185. "Rules are binding only subject to our commitment." Stanley Cavell, *ibid.*, p. 307. In his remarks on "following a rule" (in the Philosophical Investigations), Wittgenstein persistently impresses upon the reader that the a priori rule for the use of a word is always yet to be discovered, empirically, in speech. Is this itself a rule? Wittgenstein's mode of teaching, hence the "style" of his writing, particularly in his use of "language games," may be said to continually re-discover, or re-invent, this question for itself.

186. Kant, Grundlegung, p. 29.

187. Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, p. 173.

188. In #80 of his Kritische Fragmente, Friedrich Schlegel speaks of the need for adding a category of the "almost" to Kant's table of primitive concepts.

189. Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, p. 174.

190. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

191. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

192. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

193. *Ibid.*, p. 93f.

194. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

195. *Ibid.*, p. 179f.

196. *Ibid.*, p. 180f.

197. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

198. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

199. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

200. *Ibid.*

201. *Ibid.*

202. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

203. *Ibid.*

204. Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteilskraft, Felix
Meiner, Verlag, Hamburg, 1974, p. 114.

205. Ibid., p. 89.

206. Ibid.

207. Ibid., p. 120.

208. This point of the subject of Jean Luc Nancy's Le
Discours de la syncope, Flammarion, Paris, 1976.

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