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Sonorous Bodies:
Representations of Female Sexuality in *fin-de-siècle* Austro-German Opera, from the *Wiener Moderne* toward the Weimar Republic

by

Kathleen Hulley

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

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in

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Stony Brook University

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The Graduate School

Kathleen Hulley

We, the dissertation committee for the above candidate for the

Doctor of Philosophy degree, hereby recommend

acceptance of this dissertation.

Joseph Auner – Dissertation Advisor
Professor of Music, Music Department, Tufts University

Ryan Minor – Dissertation Co-Advisor
Associate Professor, Music Department

Sarah Fuller – Chairperson of Defense
Professor, Music Department

Sherry D. Lee – Outside Member
Associate Professor, Music History and Culture, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto

This dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School

Charles Taber
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Dissertation

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This dissertation examines shifting musical and visual representations of female sexuality in *fin-de-siècle* Austro-German opera, and demonstrates the ways in which these operatic representations attest to the changing conceptions of women during this era. From theatrical, visual, and literary representations, to legal and medical writings, numerous discourses proliferated regarding normal and "abnormal" femininity, often in relation to the health of society. Moreover, with the era's widespread belief that theater and opera fulfilled a social and often didactic role, the stage was understood as a place that could not only shape and regulate society, but also offer new social paradigms.

In this dissertation, I contextualize and examine the sonic and visual representations of female sexuality in several *fin-de-siècle* operatic works: Wagner's *Parsifal* (1882); Strauss's *Feuersnot* (1901), *Salome* (1905), *Elektra* (1909), and *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911); Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* (1905); Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge* (1906), Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* (1912); and Max von Schillings's *Mona Lisa* (1915). Each chapter focuses on a different musical and

textual manifestation of the sexual "Woman" (from "the hysteric" and "the fallen woman," to "the muse"), with the aim of illustrating the transformations and contradictions in relation to historical conceptions of female sexuality and femininity. For these various manifestations, specific moments in the above-mentioned operas are analyzed. Moreover, a central concern of this research is the "cultural work" that these operas performed: How did these operas actively participate in shaping attitudes about women through their musical and visual presentation of the female characters? And what response did these representations garner? As this project demonstrates, the multiple layers of these operas – from the vocal and the orchestral music, to the prescribed bodily movements in the stage directions – articulate the changing cultural norms of respectable femininity of the era.

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List of Abbreviations

HHSA	*Haus-*, *Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, *Wien*
ÖNB-Mus.	*Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Musiksammlung*
ÖTM	*Österreichisches Theatermuseum*
ÖTM-FS	*Österreichisches Theatermuseum Fotosammlung*
WSB	*Wien Staatsoper Bibliothek*

When referring to specific moments in the score, I list rehearsal numbers in bold font and indicate the number of measures before or after the rehearsal number the passage in question begins:

Ex: **81** = rehearsal number **81**
Ex: 7 before **81** = 7 measures before rehearsal number **81**

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Introduction

> Disruptive power did not inhere in the "acting-up" itself, but rather, in the historical context in which that acting took place. Only a specific set of historical conditions could unleash the disruptive potential of performance. How people interpret a woman's disruptive behavior depends on the moment in which they observe it, as well as their own desire to see it a certain way.
>
> – Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*[1]

> The theater reinforces worldly justice – but still a broader field is open to it alone. A thousand vices that are unpunished, the theater punishes; a thousand virtues about which everyone is silent, are praised from the stage.
>
> – *Österreichische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, 1891[2]

Fin-de-siècle Germany and Austria witnessed considerable social, intellectual, and political change. In addition to the formation of Germany as a nation state, there were regional developments, such as the dismantling of Vienna's city limits and the construction of the *Ringstraße*, which redefined the city's identity. Such changes occurred alongside transformations in demographics and class politics, reconceptualizations of subjectivity via psychoanalysis, new understandings of the human body in the sciences, and the emergence of new musical and artistic languages.[3] On this shifting terrain, the women's movement and the reconsideration of women's roles in society were amongst the most destabilizing of these changes. During the second half of the nineteenth century, industrialization resulted in alterations to traditional social structures and

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[1] Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-siècle France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 15.

[2] Cited in Camille Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna: Operetta and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27.

[3] For a general discussion of these changes, see Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981); Eda Sagarra, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century: History and Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001); Peter Gay, *Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture, 1815–1914* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002); William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History*, 1848–1938 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Jacques Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, trans. Rosemary Morris (New York: Continuum, 1993); Eric Kandel, *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind and Brain from Vienna 1900 to the Present* (New York: Random House, 2012).

to women's positions both inside the home and in civil society. From 1865, women's movements gained momentum through various organizations, with the early *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* (*General German Women's Association*, 1865) and its Austrian counterpart, *Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein* (*General Austrian Women's Association*, 1893), as well as the large *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (*The Association of German Women's Clubs*, 1894) and the *Verein der Schriftstellerinnen und Künstlerinnen* (*Association of Women Writers and Artists*, Vienna 1885), to name only a few.[4] By the turn of the century, the *Frauenfrage* was a fiercely debated issue in Austria and Germany. One measure of the visibility of such movements was the existence of the *Deutsche Bundes zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation* (*German League Against Women's Emancipation*, 1912), which fought against women's political advancement.[5]

The *Frauenfrage* not only dealt with women's legal rights within civil society, but also challenged predominant understandings of women, including their "natural" gender roles and their sexuality.[6] With the technological changes resulting from the Industrial Revolution – changes felt more in Germany and Austria than in France during these years because of Germany's and Austria's later industrialization – women's tasks within the household began to

---

[4] For a discussion of the various women's movements and organizations see: Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans, with Terry Bond and Barbara Norden (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1989), 73-168, 329 (Table 5); Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894–1933* (London: SAGE Publications, 1976); Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[5] Karen Offen, *European Feminism, 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 297.

[6] Women were able to access university education only in 1897 (for Arts) and 1900 (for Medicine) in Vienna. Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 34-35. For a discussion of the social destabilization resulting from the women's movement in nineteenth-century Europe, see Peter Gay's "Offensive Women and Defensive Men," in *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, vol. I, *The Education of the Senses* (New York: Oxford, 1984), 169-225. See also Offen, *European Feminism*; Frevert, *Women in German History*; and Anderson, *Utopian Feminism.*

shift, thus weakening the justification and need for a woman's "place" to be in the home.[7] The appearance of new models of "womanhood" raised a number of anxieties and questions, including: What type of woman was best for the health of society? Should women be demure, passive caretakers and mothers, insulated from the corruption of the everyday world? Were women inherently seductive, sexual creatures and themselves a corrupting influence from which society needed protection? Or should women and their sensuality serve as muse for male creativity? Prominent male and female intellectuals, *feuilletonists*, social activists, playwrights, artists, musicians, politicians, scientists, and sexologists all offered their conflicting and overlapping views on the subject. As Peter Gay writes:

> Man's fear of woman is as old as time, but it was only in the bourgeois century that it became a prominent theme in popular novels and medical treatises. It engaged the attention of journalists, preachers, and politicians; it invaded men's dreams and gave them subjects for their poems and paintings. Women's increasingly open display of her power seemed the public counterpart of that private power that men evoked, more and more anxiously, in the second half of the nineteenth century: both furnished them with formidable arguments against women's emancipation.[8]

Even amongst "modernists," who often held progressive views, there was much anxiety at this moment about "woman" – and in particular the sexual "woman" – as evidenced in both "high" and "popular" culture.[9] For example, these themes were pervasive in the arts: plays and stories by Robert Musil, Frank Wedekind, and Arthur Schnitzler dealt with morality, female sexuality, and bourgeois hypocrisy; Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt unabashedly painted and drew prostrate, nude young women; while Karl Kraus wrote incisive essays and pithy aphorisms about the women's movement and female sexuality. Understandings of "female sexuality" were

---

[7] Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller, "Introduction," in *German Feminist Writings*, ed. Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller (New York and London: Continuum, 2001), xvii-xviii.

[8] Gay, *Education of the Senses*, 169.

[9] For example, even Loos and Klimt, who supported the women's movement, held regressive ideas about the role of women in practice. See Megan Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," *Austrian History Yearbook* 39 (2008): 92-120.

complex and contradictory. These anxieties and concerns created a rise in the number of problematic stereotypes of women in relation to class, illness, and the women's movement; the hypersexual *femme fatale*, the masculinized asexual feminist, and the pure *Ewig-Weibliche* were all exaggerated portraits, distant from *actual* women and their complex and differing realities. As Eva Rieger has noted, male representations of women were their "phantasies, longings and fears [...] projected onto [them] but the realities of women's everyday existence were ignored."[10]

Moreover, as suggested by the second epigraph to this introduction, there was a widespread belief that opera and theater fulfilled a social, and often didactic, role. The stage was not only a place that shaped and regulated society, maintaining the status quo, but also a place that could offer new social paradigms. With its multiple facets – from the narrative structure to the visual and musical elements and their corresponding, interwoven layers of meaning – the operatic stage was a space in which issues, emerging transformations, and the potential "disruptive behavior of women" could be explored and understood. *Fin-de-siècle* concerns with female sexuality pervaded the operatic stage, and a study of opera provides particular insight into how women and their sexuality were projected in the arts at the time. This dissertation contextualizes and historicizes sonic and visual representations of female sexuality in several *fin-de-siècle* Austro-German operatic works in order to examine just how female sexuality was addressed in opera. The works examined are: Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* (1882); Richard Strauss's *Feuersnot* (1901), *Salome* (1905), *Elektra* (1909), and *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911); Franz Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* (1905); Alexander Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge* (1906, premiered 1980); Franz Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* (1912); and Max von Schillings's *Mona Lisa* (1915). Despite stylistic differences, the presentation of the sexual woman and the female body is

[10] Eva Rieger, "*Dolce semplice?* On the Changing Role of Women in Music," in *Feminist Aesthetics*, ed. Gisela Ecker, trans. Harriet Anderson (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 137.

significant in each work discussed here, and these works offer varying messages about femininity, sexuality, and the female body. Indeed these *sonorous bodies* are the locus of representation, the place in which ideas are embodied and made visually and aurally manifest. From within the immediate confines of the opera hall, they resonate with and reverberate through their very cultural milieu.

In this dissertation, I contend that the representations of the sexual woman in these *fin-de-siècle* Austro-German operas directly attest to shifts in understandings of and attitudes toward women and female sexuality during the first two decades of the twentieth century. There is a marked differentiation between the treatment of the sexual female character in the operas examined at the beginning this project and the more subtle and complex presentation of women examined in the operas at the end. Moreover, hearing and seeing operatic bodies performing hysterical, ill, dangerous, or chaste characters would likely have impacted social perceptions of gender relations and gendered identity both for men and for women, particularly within the context of the era's ongoing debates about female sexuality and morality. Given its centrality within bourgeois culture and its compelling visual and musical representations of women, opera actively participated in the conflicting, tangled, and shifting web of discourses about "woman," bourgeois respectability, female sexuality, and female subjectivity.[11]

Each chapter in this dissertation examines a different musical and textual manifestation of

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[11] Two recent dissertations from 2009 have contributed to new understandings of gender within Viennese musical life at this moment. For example, Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers' dissertation, *Music on the Fault Line: Sexuality, Gender and the Music of the Second Viennese School, 1899–1925* (PhD diss., McGill University, 2009), is concerned with changes in the musical language of the second Viennese school in relation to contemporary changes in gender and sexuality. The second dissertation is by Carola Darwin entitled *The "I" of the Other: Opera and Gender in Vienna 1900–1918* (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2010), which examines representations of gender and the "autonomous woman" in opera in Vienna. Although Darwin's project is not concerned with sexuality or the body, nor does it examine the reception of the works, as I do here, it offers much insight into the Viennese soprano Marie Gutheil-Schoder and her attitudes toward the roles she performed.

the sexual "Woman" – visions such as "the hysteric," "the fallen woman," or "the muse" – with the aim of illustrating the transformations and contradictions in conceptions of "proper" femininity in *fin-de-siècle* Germany and Austria. For these various manifestations, specific moments in the works mentioned above are analyzed and situated within their cultural context. This approach reveals how these operas both represent bodies that are shaped and marked by period discourses, and present bodies that are normative, thereby musically articulating acceptable female sexuality for their audiences. Indeed, a central concern in my research is the "cultural work" that these operas performed – the way in which they actively affected their cultural surroundings, specifically through the response that the operatic representations of women garnered, and the way in which they worked to shape attitudes about women.[12] I do this by situating an analysis of the works themselves and the archival traces of their early productions within their specific historical context. Moreover, I consider the reception of these works as evidence of just how they could be understood as reinforcing or rejecting contemporary perspectives on female sexuality. Traditionally, respectable bourgeois femininity was chaste, de-sexualized, and non-corporealized, while the sexual woman was often associated with a lower-class and socially corrupting femininity. Yet, the presentation of the sexual woman is reconfigured over the course of the operas studied in this project. She is transformed from the

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[12] I am borrowing the term "cultural work" from other musicologists. For the use of the term see: Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; Or, the Envoicing of Women," in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 255; see also Marcia Citron, who writes that a "musical composition can do important cultural work" in that it "can function as a discourse that reproduces societal values and ideologies," and it "constructs values and ideologies." Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), 121; Susan McClary's book *Modal Subjectivities* also opens with a chapter entitled "The Cultural Work of the Madrigal." Susan McClary, *Modal Subjectivities: Self-Fashioning of the Italian Madrigal* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004). In addition, in her Introduction to *Musicology and Difference*, Ruth Solie raises the question of the "role musics play in the construction and reinforcement of ideologies of difference, and conversely, how they may challenge or resist those ideologies." Solie, "Introduction," in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 19.

reductive representation of the dangerous sexual woman, for instance in *Parsifal* and *Salome*, into modernism's complex "Modern Woman," a woman whose expressions of sexuality are intrinsic to her subjectivity, as depicted in later operas, such as *Mona Lisa* and *Der Rosenkavalier*.

This operatic reconfiguration mirrors changes in the medical, psychological, and cultural discourses that gradually developed into more complex understandings of woman and female sexuality in the years around the First World War. I resist, however, offering a linear, teleological or strictly chronological narrative that charts the "development" of female sexuality in these operas, given that it impossible to create such a reductive narrative of the changing cultural attitudes toward women during these years. Conceptions of female sexuality, femininity, "woman," and the female body were often contradictory and in flux during this period. Nevertheless, during the first decades of the twentieth century, many new and more nuanced accounts of women and their sexuality emerged. Unlike the simplistic nineteenth-century male "fantasies" of women, as discussed by Bram Dijkstra, the representation of women in the later operas began to capture the complexities and depth of "real" women.[13] By the end of World War I and the advent of the Weimar Republic, there appeared to be new understandings of women and female sexuality that are also manifest in opera.

Before turning to the specific context and content of this dissertation, it is necessary to briefly establish some of the theoretical terminology used in this project. I take the term "female subjectivity" to mean the way in which women conceive of themselves and the way in which they, as characters in operas, are represented as human beings with a sense of individuality,

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[13] As Dijkstra notes, these male fantasies – which include many negative images of women – were broadly disseminated through visual and print culture. Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of feminine Evil in* fin-de-siècle *Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

agency, and emotional depth. Subjectivity is historically and culturally constituted, as well as negotiated, through acting bodies and social discourses. This follows Michael P. Steinberg's conception of the term in music:

> [A]s both a theoretical and historical category, subjectivity does not denote a property of the subject, in either sense of the word property – that of quality and that of ownership. Rather, I want the term to denote the *life* of the subject, conceived in such a way as potentially to produce an internal critique of the category of 'the subject,' a category that I also believe often to be inadequately interpreted against its historical contingencies and existential realities. Subjectivity thus marks, in my usage, the subject in motion, the subject in experience and analysis of itself and the world.[14]

Whether or not a type of subjectivity for women exists in the operas considered here remains an important question throughout. I also make a distinction between "sex" and "gender": "sex" refers to the physical, biological body, such as the "female body"; "gender" refers to woman and the culturally and historically variable social attributes that are associated with "woman," "feminine," and "femininity."[15] Understandings of women both by women themselves and by men change, making "women" an historically situated, constructed, and thus unstable category, which I explore in more detail later in this introduction.[16] Finally, with the term "female

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[14] Michael P. Steinberg, *Listening to Reason: Culture, Subjectivity, and Nineteenth-Century Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 5.

[15] Sociologist Ann Oakley defines the terms as follows: "'Sex' is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible differences in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. 'Gender' however is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into 'masculine' and 'feminine.'" Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender and Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 16. Judith Butler further notes that we *make* our gender through our actions, practices, and "performances." "Because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis." Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 140. Of course as Butler and Grosz separately point out, sex and gender are not inseparable, isolated categories, but rather influence how one experiences the other. Grosz writes: "Sexual difference, like those of class and race, *are* bodily differences […] the body must be reconceived, not in opposition to the culture but as its preeminent object." Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 32.

[16] See Denise Riley, who offers an epistemological exploration of the concept "women," examining the way that "women" is constructed as an unstable and historical fluid "category." There are historical,

sexuality," I mean the sexual desires and expressions of the characters in the opera, and I draw from both sides of this sex/gender division without privileging either. "Female sexuality" is neither purely bodily, nor merely cultural. In all cases there is a female body (with bodily desires) that navigates culturally constructed desires and expectations. Subjectivity is constructed through this negotiation.[17] When I use the phrase "female sexual subjectivity," particularly toward the end of the dissertation, I intend this to reflect the way in which a woman's sexuality, drives, and desires are incorporated within and shape her identity and development as an individual. Indeed, in Freud's Vienna, sexuality and sexual experiences were understood to shape the psychological and social development of an individual. "Sexual subjectivity" as a term is meant to capture this aspect of individual development, which is also connected to the concept of *Bildung.* Following feminist critiques, however, I am wary of using the term Feminist *Bildung* for these works without qualification because of *Bildung*'s implication of a subject's internalization of and acquiesce to the era's societal norms that were largely restrictive regarding women and their expressions of sexual desire.[18] As Maierhofer points out, the concept of Feminist *Bildung* is problematic within a nineteenth-century context because *Bildung* means for a subject to develop by internalizing the norms and yielding to the social framework. For women, however, this would be a "contradiction in terms" in the nineteenth century because

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contextual, and temporal dimensions to the term "Women," and as Riley writes, it is "discursively constructed, and always relatively to other categories which themselves change." Denise Riley, *Am I that Name? Feminism and the Category of Women in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 2, 5-7. At times I use and capitalize the term "Woman" to signify that there was a monolithic understanding of women at that time (the ideal Woman was passive and chaste), whereas, as this dissertation demonstrates, there was a broadening of the social roles of wom*en* over these years. No longer understood as a singular entity, "women" signifies the complex and rich understandings of women (and the multiple new *types* of women, such as *garçonne*, etc.) that emerged in the 1910s and following the war. I address this in greater depth in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

[17] It is important to note, however, that I am still discussing representations of characters, and thus not addressing the actual subject formation of individuals, such as the singers.

[18] Waltraud Maierhofer, "Bildungsroman," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. Friederike Eigler and Susanne Kord (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 46.

their "development" into a subject is antithetical to the prevailing ideologies; thus traditionally only male characters can undergo *Bildung*. In the twentieth century, the idea of Feminist *Bildung* begins to be possible in literature, and as we shall see, in opera.

Geographic and Temporal Framework

As an important center not only for musical culture but also for research on sexuality, Vienna will receive significant attention in this dissertation. And yet, late-nineteenth-century Vienna had ties in two geographic and cultural directions: North, toward Germany, and Eastward. As the center of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, many of the city's well-known authors, librettists, composers, and artists came from the Eastern provinces. Vienna also simultaneously maintained and fostered a strong, though complex, cultural relationship with Germany.[19] Thus, rather than focusing solely on Vienna or Austria, this dissertation takes a broader approach and covers Austro-German opera because musical and cultural ideas at the time went beyond the national boundaries created in the nineteenth century.[20] For many, Germany and Austria shared a similar cultural background, in spite of differing religious majorities, and Austria was sometimes seen as part of the German "*Volksgeist*." Despite the failure of the *großdeutsche Lösung* (Greater German solution),[21] many Viennese maintained and shared a cultural affinity with Germany and

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[19] See Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 144-87; and Pieter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 193-222.

[20] For a discussion of Vienna's importance as a center for research on sexuality see: David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 36-44, esp. 36.

[21] In the mid-nineteenth century, the "*Großdeutsche*" solution, which included Austria in the unification of the German states, was abandoned following Austria's loss in the war and the collapse of the "German Confederation" in 1866. Austria was ultimately excluded from the unified German nation. For more on the relationship between Germany and Austria, and in particular on the balance of power between Austria

the idea of a common identity amongst German speakers, a common "*deutsche*" linguistic and cultural identity. For example, composers Mahler and Wolf belonged to the *Pernerstorfer Kreis*, whose members were ardent supporters of a shared German identity that was based upon a common cultural and intellectual tradition.[22] And although by the end of nineteenth-century German nationalism in Austria had begun to take on a right wing and virulent anti-Semitic, racial tone, the idea of a shared "German-Austrian" identity was still common amongst many Viennese liberals and non-liberals alike.[23]

Moreover there was a frequent exchange and fluidity of people, ideas, and literary and musical works from Germany to Austria, and the reverse.[24] Many of the writings about sexuality, female sexuality, and the "New Woman" that were published across Europe were quickly disseminated throughout this Germany-speaking region. In addition, many Germans lived in or had ties to Vienna, such as Brahms and Kalbeck, while Wagner's influence was felt beyond the borders of Germany, and particularly in Vienna. Numerous "German" operas were given prominence on the Viennese stage, while Wagner's works were frequently performed in both Germany and Vienna (for instance, by 1879 all of Wagner's works except for *Parsifal* had

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and Germany in the *großdeutsche*, *kleindeutsche*, and *mitteleuropa* solutions, see: Bascom Barry Hayes, *Bismark and Mitteleuropa* (Cranbury, NJ and London: Associated University Press, 1994), 29-36.

[22] For a discussion about the Viennese *Pernerstorfer* circle and its belief in a shared common culture with Germany, see: William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Popular Politics in Austria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), especially 182-208.

[23] Concerning liberal German identity in Austria, see also Steven Beller, "German Culture," in *Vienna and the Jews,* 144-65. There were two types of meanings for "deutsche": the "exclusionary," increasingly Anti-Semitic version of the Christian Socials and Karl Lueger; and the liberal "deutsche." Although the former does briefly come up at points in the dissertation, I am more concerned with the cultural and intellectual idea of a shared German identity. See also Judson, who argues that Austrian Liberalism included all races and nationalities as long as they strove for "Germanness." Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*, 1-10.

[24] As Schorske has noted in his essay "Operatic Modernism," the geographic borders were fluid, with ideas and works circulating back and forth. Carl Schorske, "Operatic Modernism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 26, no. 4 (Spring 2006): 676.

appeared at the *Hofoper* and even a Wagner museum existed alongside a Wagner *Verein*, while Richard Strauss's operas occupied an important position on the Viennese stage).[25] Finally, numerous operas that had a Viennese genesis were premiered in German centers (for instance, Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*; or again, Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, with the libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, a prominent member of Viennese literary circles, although Strauss was from Southern Germany). Thus, much like other intellectual and cultural exchanges and debates about women and sexuality from the era, I examine operas that share common cultural strands and traverse national and geographical borders. *Parsifal*, *Feuersnot*, *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Rosenkavalier*, *Der ferne Klang*, *Die lustige Witwe*, and *Mona Lisa* were performed both in Vienna and across Germany, from Leipzig and Frankfurt to Stuttgart and Munich. Indeed, this project will reveal the ways in which cultural and intellectual ideas about gender that were prevalent in Germany were closely connected to those reverberating in Viennese coffeehouses and opera halls.

The primary temporal boundaries of this project are 1901 and 1915, years between which new gender possibilities and roles emerged alongside the increased public activity of the women's movement, yet still prior to the significant legal changes for women that were instituted following the war. The last chapter deals with a paradigm shift that happened between 1914 and 1918, the years of World War I, whereas the Epilogue looks beyond, toward the early years of the Weimar Republic.[26] 1918 marked both the fall of the Habsburg Empire and the extension of voting rights to women in Austria, while 1919 saw the Weimar Republic's new constitution,

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[25] See Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 210.

[26] Much scholarship dealing with Germany and Austria uses 1914 as a temporal boundary and views 1914–1918, the years of the war, as separate. As Katharina von Ankum notes, there was a marked shift in the social and political role played by women in the early years of the Weimar Republic not only from before the war, but also from a few years into the Weimar Republic. Katharina von Ankum, "Introduction," *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 3-4.

which also gave women the vote in Germany.[27] This temporal framework almost maps onto 1890–1914, years traditionally understood as the "*fin-de-siècle*," the conclusion of the long nineteenth century, with World War I ushering in a new era.[28] As historian David S. Luft notes, Vienna in 1900 had nineteenth-century understandings about sexuality, yet in the following years, discourses about sexuality permeated the intellectual terrain, embedded within the articulation of new ideas about the individual, society, medicine, and the role of art.[29]

With the emerging new sciences of sexology and psychoanalysis, these years witnessed shifting attitudes and concerns over female sexuality.[30] This was particularly the case in Vienna and Germany; for instance, thousands of scientific publications and pamphlets concerning sexuality appeared in Germany between 1898 and 1908.[31] This extraordinary volume of published work about sexuality attests to the centrality of, as well as the anxieties about, the sexual woman within the cultural landscape. Much of this literature had a fairly large readership, which ensured its penetration into the public consciousness.[32] Not only were many of these texts

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[27] For Vienna see Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 118-20; for Germany see Frevert, *Women in German History*, 168-72.

[28] Fout has divided understandings of sexuality into different phases: 1890–1914 was a phase and 1918–1933 another. This corresponds to the changes that I document in these operas. John C. Fout, "Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, no. 3, Special Issue: The State, Society, and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe (1992): 389.

[29] Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna*, 36-44.

[30] See Foucault regarding the "repressive hypothesis." Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), esp. 15-49.

[31] Over one thousand of these publications concerned homosexuality alone appeared between 1898 and 1908. Scott Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination*, vol. 2, *Fin-de-siècle* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 122. See also Fout, who writes: "the period beginning about 1890 is a 'new', historically specific stage in the history of sexuality." Fout, "Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany," 391.

[32] In Vienna in particular, the scientific world was closely connected to artistic, literary, and social circles. For instance, Schnitzler briefly served as managing editor for the *Internationale medizinische Rundschau*, a medical journal founded by his father (see Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, "Introduction," in *A Companion to the*

and representations normative, prescribing a "proper" femininity, but they also condemned female sexual desire as harmful to society. Indeed, the "health" and "degeneracy" of society in relation to female sexuality reappears as a common concern in many of the writings from this era – an era often anxiously described as "decadent," "decaying," or "degenerate," with the very term "*fin-de-siècle*" carrying these negative connotations.[33] Indeed, an array of discourses regarding "normal" and "deviant" femininity and sexuality proliferated.

Women and men weighed in on female sexuality and the proper role of woman, both positively and negatively, from feminists such as Grete Meisel-Hess and Rosa Mayreder, to writers including Karl Kraus, Peter Altenberg, and Robert Musil. Otto Weininger, author of the immensely popular *Geschlecht und Charakter* (*Sex and Character*, 1903), offered a highly misogynistic metaphysics (with what Sengoopta identifies as his "metaphysical theory of femininity"), asserting that women lacked reason and morality, and that they were naturally hysterical and inherently sexual, bound by their instincts.[34] In opposition to Weininger,

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Works of Arthur Schnitzler, ed. Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 2), while members of the medical community, such as Emil Zuckerkandl and Krafft-Ebing, engaged with artistic figures at Berta Zuckerkandl's salons. See: Berta Szeps Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History*, trans. John Sommerfield (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), 123-34, 165.

[33] For a detailed discussion of the negative connotations of "*fin-de-siècle*," see: James Shedel, "Fin-de-siècle or Jahrhundertwende: The Question of an Austrian Sonderweg," in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, ed. Steven Beller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001): 80-104. For Shedel, the term *fin-de siècle* needs to be exchanged for a less limited and judging "*Jahrhundertwende*." *Ibid.*, 101. Many of the discourses of the time, however, reflected fears of "degeneration" and social decay, which emerged alongside ideas that changing gender roles and sexuality threatened the "health" of society. For example, the term was often used by Nordau in *Degeneration* (1892). Therefore, the French term *fin-de-siècle* and all of its negative connotations aptly captures the era's attitude and anxieties, and will be used throughout this project.

[34] Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*, trans. Ladislaus Löb, ed. Daniel Steuer, with Laura Marcus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). For Weininger, who was influenced by Kant's understanding of the transcendental subject, women are incapable of being rational, moral, and autonomous subjects. Woman "had no intelligible or noumenal self." Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science, and Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 104. Weininger's *Sex and Character* was immensely popular amongst modernist circles, and even by those in the musical world. For example, both Berg (to his wife) and Webern (to Schoenberg) wrote about Weininger favorably. See Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination*, II: 126.

prominent sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing thought that "normal" women possessed little, if any, sexual desire; it was "abnormal" and pathological for women to display sexual desire at all.[35] Freud's *Three Essays on Sexuality*, in which he explored the psychological, biological, and social basis and stages of female sexuality in relation to psychological neuroses, appeared in 1905. Meanwhile Meisel-Hess condemned the sexual double standards of the time in *Die sexuelle Krise* (*The Sexual Crisis*, 1909), while feminist Mayreder, also critical of this hypocrisy, wrote positively about female sexuality in *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit* (*A Survey of the Woman Problem*, 1905).[36]

Visual representations during these years also captured women's sensuality, while literary works engaged with the morality surrounding women, the women's movement, and bourgeois sexuality. Paintings, most famously those by Klimt and Schiele, presented the nude female body, while essays in journals and newspapers discussed the relationship among "das *Weib*," sexuality, morality, and women's rights. The fallen woman often figured in novels, as a *Dirnenkult*, "cult of the prostitute,"[37] while the *süßes Mädel*, the young lower-middle class woman who is seduced by a bourgeois man, was a literary topos, particularly in Schnitzler's literary writings that critiqued bourgeois society and its double standards.[38] Numerous plays and

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[35] Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis, with Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, trans. Francis Joseph Rebman (New York: Physicians and Surgeons Book Company, 1927).

[36] Grete Meisel-Hess, *The Sexual Crisis: A Critique of Our Sex Life* (New York: Critic and Guide, 1917) [Original: *Die sexuelle Krise* (Jena: Diederichs, 1909)]; Rosa Mayreder, *A Survey of the Woman Problem*, trans. Herman Scheffauer (Wesport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1913) [Original: *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit* (Jena: Diederichs, 1923)]; see also Rosa Mayreder, *Gender and Culture*, trans. Pamela S. Saur (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 2009) [Original: *Geschlecht und Kultur* (Jena: Diederichs, 1923)].

[37] Nancy McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim, or Whore? The Prostitute in German Literature, 1880–1925* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 6.

[38] For a discussion of the *süßes Mädel* see: Brenda Keiser, "The 'süßes Mädel' in Fin-de-Siècle and Modern Vienna," in *Commodities of Desire: The Prostitute in Modern German Literature*, ed. Christiane Schönfeld (London and Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), 62-76.

short stories from German authors such as Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, and Gerhart Hauptmann (*Rose Bernd*, 1903) to German translations of August Strindberg (*Miss Julie*, 1888, translated in German in 1888/1890), Henrik Ibsen (*The Doll's House*, translated into German in 1887), and George Bernard Shaw all broached – some with criticism, others with sympathy – the issue of the women's movement, women's independence, and women's social role in relation to sexuality. While the idea of female sexuality as muse circulated within artistic circles alongside condemnations of bourgeois morality's narrow attitudes toward sexuality, outside such circles ideal womanhood was often defined as chaste. For example, numerous moral purity organizations, such as the *Sittlichkeitsvereine* (Morality Associations), with strong ties to the Protestant Church in Germany and the Catholic Church in Austria, emerged during these years, and promoted traditional gender order and heterosexual marriage.[39]

"What kind of woman" was necessary for the health and formation of a nation state? Respectability and the nation were linked, and this was a question reiterated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as European nation states emerged and borders solidified, as historian George Mosse has noted.[40] Nation and womanhood became increasingly intertwined over the course of the nineteenth century. The ideal woman was Mother, nurturing culture as well as safeguarding and "mothering" the nation, which suggests that women's bodies were the "slate" upon which men imagined the state.[41] In other words, the ideal woman was central to

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[39] See Fout," Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany," 390-91. See also Frevert, *Women in Germany History*, 134-35.

[40] George L. Mosse, "What Kind of Woman?" in *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 90-113. Mosse writes: "If woman was idealized, she was at the same time put firmly in her place. Those who did not line up to the ideal were perceived as a menace to society and the nation, threatening the established order they were intended to uphold. Hence the deep hatred for women as revolutionary figures." *Ibid.*, 90.

[41] For a discussion of the role of women as mothers in the formation of individuals and the state, see Friedrich Kittler, "The Mother's Mouth," in *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. Michael Meteer, with

state formation. Moreover, this articulation of the ideal woman was enacted in cultural institutions, from the theater to the operatic stage.[42]

Yet, there was a simultaneous fear of the increasing feminization of society – particularly regarding female influence beyond the confines of the home. As Jill Scott notes, "the function of gender transcended the bounds of salon, lecture halls and the theater to encompass the larger sphere of nationality" and "[t]he view that femininity was sapping the foundations of moral order and the faith in progress permeated the Vienna of Freud and indeed Hofmannsthal."[43] Period writings and organizations often blamed the perceived "degenerate" culture on the era's morality, sexuality, and shifting gender roles, but many also lamented the negative effects of social and cultural "feminization" on the health of society. Alongside the rise of various

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Christ Cullens, forward David E. Wellbery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 25-69; Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger, "Introduction," *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, ed. Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 1-20.

[42] Regarding the relationship between nationalism and gendered discourses in music, see: Marcia Citron, "Gendered Reception of Brahms: Masculinity, Nationalism, and Musical Politics," in *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, ed. Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 141-60, especially 147-51. In their respective works about French Opera, Jane Fulcher and Steven Huebner both discuss the important social role French opera and opera practices played in the solidification of "French" culture. As Huebner writes, "at a deeper level, *abonnés* presented a socially well-grounded microcosm of the greatness of France as a nation, one side of a two-way mirror that also reflected the aesthetic qualities of the spectacle presented on stage." Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the* fin-de-siècle*: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9. See also Jane Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). I argue that opera in Germany and Vienna played a similar role in articulating "German" culture, from its turn to older Germanic myths and legends with Wagner, to its representation of women in the operas I explore in this dissertation.

[43] Jill Scott, *Electra after Freud: Myth and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 12. Scott suggests that there was a feminization of Austria within Europe: "Austria itself is personified as the feminine other to Bismarck's masculine German empire with the image of Empress Maria Theresa as matriarch and patron saint of the nation's identity." (*Ibid.*) This idea of a feminine Austria was prevalent much earlier as well, with Hofmannsthal arguing that the feminine Maria Theresa was the center of the Austrian empire, and Grillparzer even writing years earlier that Austria was "lying, a pink-cheeked youth, between the child Italy and the man Germany." Cited in Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity*, 104. It was this perceived feminization of culture that Weininger railed against. Indeed, the resonance of Weininger's work documents the larger perceived threat of the feminization of Austria and human development. See Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 12-13.

women's organizations and groups with their calls for changes to gender roles and attitudes toward sexuality, the idea that the feminization of culture undermined society emerged from writers such as Weininger and Nordau.[44] Indeed, the often-demonized New Woman ("*Neue Frau*") of these early years sparked a fear of social change. Following World War I, however, a *new* "New Woman" – "Modern Woman" ("*Moderne Frau*") – emerged in many cultural representations. This new "Modern Woman," who gradually appeared over the course of operas in the 1910s, was more complex and often granted sexual liberties and sexual subjectivity, mirroring increasingly complex, although still problematic, discussions about women from writers at the time.[45] Thus it is not surprising that opera also performed an important role on this cultural landscape, both offering theatrical and sonic commentaries on femininity and sexuality, as well as documenting, at times even circumscribing, different concepts of womanhood and female typologies.

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[44] Of course, themes of nationalism are also central to discussions of the feminization of culture. See Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity*, 100-6; George L. Mosse, "Introduction," *Degeneration* by Max Nordau, trans. George L. Mosse (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), xxii-xxiii.

[45] Ute Frevert uses the term "Modern Woman" for women in Germany between 1914 and 1933. After 1933 and the rise of the Nazi party, there was a retreat back to a "traditional," more nineteenth-century model of womanhood. See "The Discovery of the 'Modern Woman' 1914–1933," and "Between Tradition and Modernity: Women in the Third Reich," in Frevert, *Women in German History*, 149-204; 205-52. A Viennese women's journal from 1926 was also entitled *Die Moderne Frau*, and its cover presents a "modern woman" wearing a short skirt and short hair, talking on the phone by a desk. *Die Moderne Frau: Magazin für die Frau* 1 (1926). In writings about France, the term "Modern Woman" is also used to differentiate the early post-war women from the earlier "New Woman" who advocated for suffrage. Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 249. Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer have also differentiated between the "New Woman" and the "Modern Woman," the latter as a new, post-World War I manifestation of women. Indeed, there was a shift away from the *fin-de-siècle*'s "New Woman" and a move toward the "Modern Woman" of the 1920s. See Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer, "Becoming Modern: Gender and Sexuality after World War I," in *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars*, ed. Whitney Chadwick and Tirza True Latimer (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 3-20.

Opera's Cultural Influence

A central concern in this dissertation is the "cultural work" that these German-language operas performed in relation to the multiple discourses on "woman" and female sexuality, in particular the responses that these operatic representations of women garnered and the effects that they may have had on the population at large. Many of the works that I investigate were popular, controversial, and/or frequently staged during this era. While their emphasis on sexuality may very well explain some of their popularity, this popularity in turn also indicates the degree to which their representations of women participated in the era's cultural and intellectual debates. I intend the term "representation" in this dissertation to have an active connotation in order to convey the way in which these operatic representations helped to shape conceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality.[46]

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has argued that certain cultural institutions are given more power through "symbolic legitimization" and "symbolic capital."[47] Cultural production legitimizes certain types of behavior, and there is a "legitimizing function by reproducing"[48] – perhaps such as when a work was well received or frequently performed. The very institution of the opera house legitimizes the work and an ideology. This is particularly the case when

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[46] My theoretical framework and questioning are influenced by the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, in particular by their positions that subjects identify with and internalize social structures. For Bourdieu, cultural production is intertwined in these social structures (Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29-73), while for Foucault, "docile bodies" internalize these social structures. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 135-70. Behind the operas discussed here, there is the danger that the "real" subjects could identify and internalize the represented social situation, as I will discuss shortly.

[47] Bourdieu, *ibid.*, 75-76, 128; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 282.

[48] Bourdieu, Notes to "The Market of Symbolic Goods," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, 291.

performances took place in serious opera spaces.[49] The opera house was a space in which dominant bourgeois mores could be reinforced *or* new modes of behavior and understandings could be presented and legitimized. For instance, *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Der ferne Klang*, and *Parsifal* were all very popular operas, performed at the venerable *Hofopern* in multiple German cities and across Europe. With their frequent performances and popularity, and despite their accompanying scandals, the *Hofopern* would have bestowed upon them a certain degree of cultural capital and thus symbolic authority and power. In turn, this would legitimize their representations of women.

In his work on gender, Bourdieu also makes the claim that there is often a symbolic violence with the way that unequal social structures are valued and reiterated.[50] In opera a certain degree of symbolic violence occurs – in this case through the musical representations of women that have accrued cultural meaning. The presentation, or domination, of women on-stage could arguably be internalized by women and men offstage through the reiteration of these operas and their musical symbols. Through the plot and powerful musical symbols of "good" and "bad" female bodies – and sometimes with even a symbolic death – the message is reiterated, exerting a potentially powerful effect on the women in the audience and their bodies. As Michel Foucault contends through his notion of the "docile body," bodies are socially constructed through a series of moral codes, shaped and (unconsciously) forced to conform through discourses and practices that constitute what is acceptable or unacceptable, normal or abnormal.[51]

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[49] For a discussion of legitimizing institutions, such as theaters, museums, opera and concert halls, and education, and how they reproduce culture through what is "conserved, transmitted and acquired, the distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate way of dealing with legitimate works," see Bourdieu, *ibid.*, 121-23, 127. For example, the way in which the initially popular *Der ferne Klang* fell outside of the operatic canon could be seen as a delegitimization of the opera that occurred post-1933.

[50] Moreover, the social structures between the sexes become internalized and embodied through cultural legitimization of gender and sex differentiations. Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 7-23.

[51] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 135-70.

The degree of censorship, particularly amongst court theaters and operas houses in Germany and Austria, attests to the important moral role that staged works were recognized as having in shaping society and in contributing to the *Bildung* of the nation's youth.[52] German intellectual thought has a long history of considering what appeared on stage to have an effect offstage. In 1784, for instance, Schiller wrote an essay entitled "The Stage Considered as a Moral Institution." Or again, Kant speculated in a 1798 publication about the effects of performance on individuals, writing, "[f]or if human beings portray these roles, the virtues, whose semblance they have created artificially for some time, will at last be awakened in reality and will blend into their minds."[53] Wagner also considered his operas as having a didactic function for the audience.[54]

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[52] There was more political and social concern about *live*, embodied performance rather than printed materials. See Gary D. Stark, "Germany," in *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theater in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Robert Justin Goldstein (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), in particular 24, 29; Norbert Bachleitner, "The Habsburg Monarchy," in *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theater in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Robert Justin Goldstein (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 228-64. Austrian censorship was a result of the Theater Act from 1850, which detailed what could or could not be presented onstage, including anything critical of the Habsburgs, the constitution, religion, privacy of individuals, and, of course, public decency. A theater who needed the censor to approve a work would have to submit two copies of the text, and the censor would return one of these with all the necessary modifications written in it. See Sandra Mayer and Barbara Pfeifer, "The Reception of Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw in Light of Early Twentieth-Century Austrian Censorship," *Platform* 2, no. 2 (2007), 61-63. For censorship regarding sexuality in Germany, see, Gary D. Stark, "Defending the Moral Order," in *Banned in Berlin: Literary Censorship in Imperial Germany, 1871–1918*, Monographs in German History 25 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 189-232.

[53] Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Practical Point of View* (*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht,* Vol. 7 *Kants gesammelte Schriften*), Paragraph 14. Translated and cited in Elisabeth Krimmer, *In the Company of Men: Cross-Dressed Women Around 1800* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 30. Although Kant is writing in a broader context about how an individual's behaviors and actions in daily life – whether or not they are authentic or inauthentic – could sediment into their daily behavior and disposition, the implications for performance are clear, particularly as discussed in Chapter 6 with Judith Butler's work and in relation to how singers felt about performing Octavian.

[54] Nietzsche wrote in 1876 about Wagner's request for him to help discover and articulate the role between music and society: "Help me…discover that culture whose existence my music, as the rediscovered language of true feeling, prophesies; reflect that the soul of music now wants to create for itself a body, that it seeks its path through all of you to visibility in movement, deed, structure and morality." Not only does Wagner's request and this excerpt reveal the way that Wagner sought to capture

This belief in the social role of theater and public performance continued in the *fin-de-siècle*, as Camille Crittenden has emphasized in her work on operetta. Much of Viennese society knew what was going on at the opera house – from the operas themselves to the dramas surrounding them.[55] As argued in the 1891 essay mentioned above in the epigraph, "Die culturelle Macht der Bühne" ("The Cultural Power of the Theatre"), that appeared in the *Österreichische Musik und Theater-Zeitung*, not only did performance present a moral compass, but it also regulated society. The essay states that, "[t]he theatre reinforces worldly justice – but still a broader field is open to it alone. A thousand vices that are unpunished, the theatre punishes; a thousand virtues about which everyone is silent, are praised from the stage."[56] As Austrian critic and author Ernst Decsey later wrote in 1924, not only do women die onstage because they have sinned, but also "[t]he public enjoys the sweetened catharsis of fair morals."[57]

Opera held an important social and cultural role at this moment, further giving weight to the presentations of these women. Recalling *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in his memoir *Die Welt von Gestern* (*The World of Yesterday*), Stefan Zweig explains the influential social role that the theater and opera played at the time, as attested by the amount of attention given to the events at

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culture in his music, but this excerpt also demonstrates Wagner's desire for music to outline not only cultural acts, but also a "morality" for society. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 217. Discussed in Amanda Glauert, *Hugo Wolf and the Wagnerian Inheritance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

[55] Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, esp. 27-30.

[56] Cited and translated in Crittenden, *ibid.*, 27. Hermann Broch also wrote that: "[T]o a far greater extent than a novel, [the theater] has a social and economic function." Cited in *Ibid.* For example, in a review of Elektra in *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, David Bach criticized "art for art's sake" and wrote: "All true art is moral; it works not on the emotions, on the nerves alone, but rather on the perception and the understanding, which it enlarges." Cited in Louise Rose, *The Freudian Calling: Early Psychoanalysis and the Pursuit of Cultural Science* (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1998), 77.

[57] "Das Publikum genießt die gezuckerte Katharsis gerechter Moral." Ernst Decsey, *Franz Lehár*, 2nd ed. (Munich and Berlin: Drei Masken Verlag, 1930), 55. Although Decsey was uncritical, his remark resonates with Catherine Clément's critique of how the woman is always punished and always dies in opera. Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

these stages: "In the Vienna Opera and the *Burgtheater*, nothing was overlooked; every flat note was remarked, every incorrect intonation and every cut were censured; and this control was exercised at premieres not by the professional critics alone, but day after day by the entire audience, whose attentive ears had been sharpened by constant comparison."[58] As Zweig attests, the opera singer was a central figure in Viennese society at the turn of the century for the general population, regardless of class. "The Prime-Minister or richest magnate could walk the streets of Vienna without anyone turning around, but a court actor or an opera singer was recognized by every sales girl and cab driver."[59] *Wiener Hofoper* singer Maria Jeritza also recalled about Vienna:

> Everybody went to the opera; the opera and the theaters played a very important part of the life of the city. I remember that an editorial writer on one of the biggest papers, *Das Fremdenblatt*, once said to me: 'If we have an important political article already set up in type, and we get some opera news at the last moment, the serious political article goes out and the opera news story takes its place!' Yes Vienna was an opera and theater town, and the first interest of the local newspapers was operatic gossip and speculation.[60]

For instance, the dispute between *Wiener Hofoper* singer, Selma Kurz, and the music director, Hans Gregor, was given considerable attention in the daily press as the "Kurz-Gregor Affäre," while Gustav Mahler's 1907 departure from the *Hofoper* was major news for the city.

Other stages also instigated change. For example, cabarets such as Vienna's *Café Fledermaus*, Munich's *Die Elfscharfrichter*, and Berlin's *Überbrettl*, challenged contemporary

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[58] Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 19.

[59] *Ibid.*, 15. Opera was also a central cultural force during this time, with many knowing what was going on in the opera house. While I have reservations about the importance of the opera singer and the world of the opera house for many belonging to the lower, working-class Viennese world, Zweig's statement is still indicative of the cross-class influence of the operatic stage at that time.

[60] Maria Jeritza, *Sunlight and Song: A Singer's Life*, trans. Frederick H. Martens (New York and London: D. Appleton, 1924), 153-54. Jeritza also writes: "In Vienna it is practically impossible for an artist of any fame to live unobserved. Her comings and goings, every least little detail of her life, receive a great amount of public attention […] A celebrated actress, a famous *prima donna* in Vienna was a person of much greater interest to the Viennese public than any member of society, diplomats or statesmen." Jeritza, *ibid.*, 156.

morals and values, including ideas about sexuality and the relationship between the sexes.[61] As Mary Louise Roberts suggests about *fin-de-siècle* theater in the epigraph to this introduction, the cultural context of staged performance is crucial for understanding the possible ways in which gendered performance could resonate. What is particularly significant about women's behavior in these operas, whether "disruptive" or not, is the way in which these performances were heard, seen, interpreted, and read, offering new models of womanhood.

Womanhood and the Stage

"Women" is not a stable category, but rather a concept that is reshaped over time, a concept discursively and historically constructed, as Denise Riley argues. As a term that is constantly used in everyday language, "women" and the theoretical work that this term accomplishes need to be examined.[62] Echoing this concern with "women" and "gender" as culturally constructed terms, Janet Wolff notes that there is a strong "role of culture in producing and maintaining the social divisions of life." She continues: "But culture does not simply reflect social life, responding to transformations in ideology by producing different images and texts. Nineteenth-century cultural practices and institutions were also changed by those same processes

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[61] An example of this is seen with Kokoschka's short play *Sphinx and Strawman* (1907/1909), which was influenced by Strindberg, Wedekind, Freud, and captures Weininger's understanding of women from *Geschlecht und Character.* In this play, the "sexually ravenous" wife Lilly is only able to express physical desires. See Harold B. Segal, *Turn of the Century Cabaret* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 209-11.

[62] In her epistemological examination of "women," Riley in fact offers a Foucauldian genealogy of "women," and points out that there have been different meanings of "women" both synchronically and diachronically. Riley, *Am I that Name?*, 1-17. For a discussion of the importance of looking at gender (rather than "Woman") as a theoretical mode of analysis with which to explore power relations and relations between sexes, as well as to examine gender (masculine and feminine) as socially and culturally constructed categories that are historically situated, and thus fluid, see Joan W. Scott, "Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053-75. I contend that gender is a "useful category of analysis" for opera within this period to see what it reveals about opera and culture from this time.

which produced the middle class and its ethic [and] the virtual exclusion of women from 'public' cultural institutions of various types."[63] Thus it is important to interrogate how society shaped opera's presentations of women, and how operatic works in turn could reinforce or reshape "woman" and understandings of female sexuality. As Foucault acknowledges, sexuality itself is an historical construct: "Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover."[64]

Although the possibilities presented on stage that are discussed in this dissertation clearly did not always correspond with the lives of actual, "real" women, they likely had an effect on them, materially and/or psychologically, by projecting "ideal" models of womanhood and sexuality, as well as by articulating differing understandings of "woman" for them. Some theatrical works reinforced the traditional nineteenth-century narrative of ideal femininity and women's role in society, while other modernist plays offered other possibilities. For example, Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was promoted around 1900 amongst Viennese and German "New Women" for suggesting new ways of being.[65] Indeed, as I will examine, within post-Wagnerian understandings of the social role of opera, the regulation and disciplining of women onstage could potentially affect both the body and the sexual subjectivity of women offstage.

Thus, seeing and hearing the female singers enacting these operatic roles would likely have contributed to conceptions of the ideal "woman" for the men and women in the audiences, particularly against this backdrop in which femininity, womanhood, and the role of "woman"

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[63] Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 22.

[64] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 105. Indeed, throughout this text, Foucault demonstrates the ways in which sexuality was constructed through various discursive strategies.

[65] See Emilie Bardach, "Meine Freundschaft mit Ibsen," *Neue Freie Presse*, March 31, 1907. Here Bardach discusses her acquaintanceship with Ibsen, demonstrating the role of Ibsen and his plays in *fin-de-siècle* Viennese culture.

within society was increasing contested.[66] These sexualized bodies onstage in the operas are sonorous (resonating on multiple levels) and visual (affecting not only the ears, but also the eyes), creating in a powerful dialectic between what we hear and see on stage and what we expect to find around us. Yet, it is impossible to discuss the way in which these operas contribute to understandings of female sexuality without considering both representation and embodiment.

Opera and the Body

> The body produces music, often from the depths of its interiority, as with singing and the exhaustion of breath into wind-driven instruments. Whatever else music is 'about', it is *inevitably* about the body; music's aural and visual presence constitutes both a relation to and representation of the body.
>
> – Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*[67]

Philosopher Elizabeth Grosz argues that bodies are constructed as "networks of meaning,"[68] and "[f]or writers as diverse as Lyotard, Irigaray, Deleuze, Derrida, and Foucault, the body is conceived as a fundamentally historical and political object; indeed, for many it is the central object over and through which relations of power and resistance are played out."[69] Building on Nietzsche's existential understanding of the body, Michel Foucault has regarded the body as an unsettled and changing entity, constituted through a specific historicized set of beliefs

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[66] Although Riley argues that the body cannot be the origin of an investigation of "women" because the body is merely an effect (Riley, *Am I that Name?*, 102), in this project I take the body to be important – a point of origin – in that that it both shapes and is shaped by understandings of women. In opera the body *must* be a point of origin because it is both what we *see* and the *source* of the singing voice.

[67] As Leppert contends, the body is central to music and the very idea of "sonorous" implies bodily. Richard D. Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xx, xxvi. While Leppert focuses on instrumental music, his ideas about the body and its relation to sound and music help inform approaches to opera.

[68] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 117.

[69] Elizabeth Grosz, "The Body of Signification," in *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, ed. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 81.

and cultural practices.[70] While Foucault has contended that "the body is the inscribed surface of events" and that the body is "totally inscribed by history," Judith Butler has critiqued understandings of the body as a blank "surface" and calls for a reinsertion of the material body – the materiality of real bodies do matter.[71] In somewhat similar terms, the operatic body has been the scene of much debate in recent music scholarship, from examinations of the physical presence of particular singers onstage to theoretical claims about the body's relationship to the voice. Often influenced by Foucault and post-structuralist theories of the relationship among the body, society, and subjectivity, or phenomenology's explorations of what it means to be a lived body, opera scholarship has begun interrogating both the singing, embodied body and the body represented onstage.[72] For example, Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon as well as Mary Ann Smart examine the significance of bodily gesture and the presence of the gendered body in opera, arguing that representations of the body contribute to musical meaning. For Smart, musical gestures and the body's physical gestures can interact, providing the singer power, as though she is controlling her gestures, while Carolyn Abbate makes the compelling point that the potent sounds emerging from the singer's body that "stands before us" grants authorial power to the

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[70] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, trans. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 76-100.

[71] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History," 83. Butler is specifically responding to Foucault and Nietzsche, and the way in which history overrides *real* material bodies in their narratives that position the body as a blank slate inscribed through a "single drama." Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 164-66. For an examination of the importance of the material body in discussions of gender, see Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993).]

[72] A similar exploration has occurred in non-operatic musicological scholarship as well, such as with Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body.* Another example, which focuses on the performance and bodied oriented musicology, is: Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

female singer.[73] As Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon have also argued, in contrast to much of the scholarship that privileges the voice, "opera has always been a body-obsessed art," with the body speaking where music left off.[74] In opera, bodies articulate cultural and temporal ideologies because "bodies are never 'natural'; they are cultural and historical."[75] Thus opera captures specific historical attitudes about the body: "No body ever simply appears on stage. Bodies are, rather, made to appear in performance, rendered visible as the encoded tissues interwoven by systems of ideological representation that mediate the anxieties and interests at play in specific historical moments. On stage the naked body represents not natural material, but the matter of history."[76] For example, the presentation and treatment of the ill, ailing body, such as Violetta in *La Traviata*, reveals nineteenth-century anxieties about female sexuality and health in Europe.[77]

Yet most of this scholarship has been concerned with nineteenth-century French and Italian opera, and discussions of the body in German opera have tended to focus exclusively on the more prominent works: Richard Strauss's *Salome* (1905) and *Elektra* (1909), operas whose

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[73] Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Berkeley: University of California, 2004); Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Bodily Charms: Living Opera* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). Concerning voice scholarship see Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2001), especially ix-x; Abbate, "Opera, or the Envoicing of Women," especially 28-29 and 54-55. For scholarship about singers and a greater emphasis on the actual appearance of the singers and their voices see Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[74] Hutcheon and Hutcheon, *Bodily Charms*, 26.

[75] "Theatrical performance assumes warm, material bodies – existing in space and time – with visible markings of, for instance, gender, race, and age. But […] those bodies are never 'natural'; they are always cultural and historical." *Ibid.*, 25.

[76] John Rousse, "Comment," *Theater Journal* 49 (1997), 394. Cited in Hutcheon and Hutcheon, *Bodily Charms*, 25-26.

[77] Arthur Groos, "'TB Sheets': Love and Disease in 'La Traviata,'" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7, no. 3 (1995): 233-60.

sexual content has been inescapably controversial from the beginning.[78] Aside from these two striking examples, and Marc Weiner's examination of corporeality in Wagner's music dramas, representations of the body – particularly the sexualized female body – in a broader range of this era's German operatic repertory has remained relatively unexplored. Following Hutcheon and Hutcheon, it is important to insert the body into the traditional metaphysical and disembodied understandings of German music.[79] As Foucault has noted, turn of the century culture was fascinated with the body, and I would argue this was particularly the case in Germany and Austria (specifically Vienna), as evidenced in the discussion above. The body was hidden, covered-over, and restrained, while paradoxically discussed, painted, and analyzed as the object of both implicit and explicit discourse.[80] Thus, Mark Weiner's concept of the "iconography of the body," or what I will call here the "iconography of the sexualized female body," following Sander Gilman's important work on sexuality, illness, and visual culture, is central to this project.[81] The ways in which bodies are presented in opera conveys particular ideologies and

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[78] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University, 2000), 204-21; Lawrence Kramer, *Opera & Modern Culture: Wagner & Strauss* (Berkeley: University of California, 2004); Sonja Bayerlein, *Musikalische Psychologie der drei Frauengestalten in der Oper Elektra von Richard Strauss* (Tutzing, Germany: Hans Schneider, 1996).

[79] See also the discussion of Adorno, German high culture, and music, in: Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 28-29.

[80] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, esp. 17-35. Kant based his critical philosophy on the rational transcendental subject and the rational principle of the mind over the body. Although turning away from Kant's rational metaphysics, for Schopenhauer, it was essential at the time to reject and transcend the trappings, urges, and desires of the physical body. Both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, two of the most influential philosophers for composers and artists in the turn of the century, both addressed the role of the body in society. See Paul Redding, *Continental Idealism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 158-59.

[81] As Weiner argues, the represented corporeal images operated as metaphors in Wagner's operas. See Marc Weiner, *Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 29-30. The concept of the "iconography of the sexual body" is influenced by Sander Gilman's work on representations of sexuality.

plays into social concerns and anxieties; thus, the corporeal representations of these women – from their costumes and makeup to their gestures – carried specific semantic weight.

Moreover, the body offers an important avenue into the study of these works because the body is the origin of the voice and the source of the sounds that the audience hears. The body can perhaps be considered the "vessel" for sound, one of the possible sources of the "composer's voice," to borrow Cone's terminology. Or to follow Abbate's work, in its materiality and its physical presence the body can be considered as an authorial source, a powerful modality by which meaning itself is communicated.[82] Unfortunately, when the female opera singer sings her "downfall," she participates in her own domestication or "undoing," as Catherine Clément has famously argued.[83] Furthermore, the way that the body is presented on stage has a potential impact upon both the singer's and the female audience members' understandings of their sexuality, their own bodies, and their subjectivity as "women," as discussed above and as will be further explored in moments in this dissertation.[84]

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[82] See Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974). For a further consideration of Cone in relation to performance and the idea of multiple "voices," see Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 11-13, as well as Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Women," 234-35.

[83] "[O]n the opera stage women perpetually sing their eternal undoing." Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, 5.

[84] Claims regarding how specific women were affected can, unfortunately, only be put forth at a largely theoretical level due to the absence of primary materials in this area. Although a few descriptions by women of the impact these operas had exist, much of this was not documented, or, if documented, is unfortunately lost or unavailable. Whenever possible though, I draw on extant material left by singers and the women watching them (including several opera reviews by Austrian critic Elsa Bienenfeld) to gain insight into the way these specific performances influenced their understandings of themselves and women in their society.

Methodology: From the Score to the Traces of Performance

As David Levin has recently suggested, opera is constituted by the "opera text," which is the opera's material "prior to performance" such as the score and libretto, and the "performance text," which is how the opera appears on stage, in constantly new manifestations reinforcing or challenging the "opera text."[85] Thus at one level I will examine the "opera text," from the musical details of the operatic score to how sexuality is treated within the libretto and the stage directions, all of which are arguably relatively stable from performance to performance. What are the prescribed gestures in the stage directions, and how do they present the female body on stage to the audience? How do the other characters engage with the female character's body? For example, in Strauss's *Salome*, Salome's body is a focal point within the drama. Not only is it foregrounded for the audience (with her sexualized dance), but the characters also repeatedly speak of her body and are directed to explicitly "gaze" at it.

At a second level, I will examine how the music of each opera contributes to its textual and visual representations by examining the interplay among orchestral timbres, rhythms, audible themes, and vocal lines. As Richard Strauss wrote, "[n]ot only does the orchestra paint in the background, not only does it serve to explain and remind, but it provides the content itself,

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[85] For the terms "performance text" and its relation to the "opera text," which is the opera's material "prior to performance," see David Levin, *Unsettling Opera: Staging Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Zemlinsky* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), especially 11-12, 164. For a further examination of the differences between "performance" and "production" see Gundula Kreuzer. The difference, cited by Kreuzer and based on Erika Lichte-Fischer's work, between "performance" and "production," or "*Inszenierung*," is that "the former is a unique, irretrievable event that depends on the presence of performers and spectators at a given time and place; the latter is the 'planned performative generation of materiality' – a performance strategy, if you will, that always allows for contingent factors, such as changes in the cast, spontaneous acting, or the reactions of spectators." See Gundula Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's *Don Carlos*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 2 (2006): 153. Based upon these useful definitions, it is impossible to account for a "performance," but is possible to try to glean something of the "performance" from the "production" materials.

reveals the ideal and embodies an innermost truth."[86] Leitmotifs are indicative of modes of listening and convey specific meanings culturally and historically. Given the numerous musical analyses of operas that delineate the relationship among the characters, ideas, and specific identifying music, it is clear that this was a central listening practice in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth century.[87] Moreover, certain musical elements and gestures had semiotic (and specifically gendered) meaning for a particular audience.[88] With the numerous leitmotivic and listening guides (such as those by Wolzogen, Röse and Prüwer, Gilman, and Gräner) and the gendered language used to discuss specific musical themes and motives as well as identifying music with specific characters in certain operas, the music in these operas would likely have been heard as operating within identifiable gender assignments.[89]

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, in particular in the Wagnerian operatic

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[86] As Strauss notes in Richard Strauss, "Remarks on Richard Wagner's Work," in *Recollections and Reflections*, ed. Willi Schuh, trans. L. J. Lawrence (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 69.

[87] Many of the operas in this dissertation are analyzed and their leitmotifs discussed in early twentieth-century writings, in books about the composers or articles in music journals. For a discussion of bourgeois listening practices of leitmotifs in Germany, particularly as they pertain to Wagner, see Christian Thorau, *Semantisierte Sinnlichkeit: Studien zu Rezeption und Zeichenstruktur der Leitmotivtechnik Richard Wagners.* Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 50 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003). Approximately 160, 000 of Wolzogen's guides were sold by 1910, which attests to their popularity and the way in which they were an important mode of engagement with Wagner's works. As Thorau argues, Wolzogen's *Thematische Leitfaden durch die Musik zu Richard Wagners Festspiel Der Ring des Nibelungen* from 1876 "inaugurates a new method of analyzing Wagner's works that would remain the dominant musical-critical approach to this oeuvre up to World War I."Christian Thorau, "Guides for Wagnerites: Leitmotifs and Wagnerian Listening," in *Richard Wagner and his World*, ed. Thomas S. Grey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 133.

[88] As Marcia Citron writes, "meaning(s) imputed to a piece of music vary not only from one historical period to the next but within a given period, based on crucial factors such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality." (120) This cultural situatedness needs to be balanced with our own "present culture" and its perspective. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 121.

[89] George Gräner, ed. *Richard Strauß: Musikdramen*, Meisterführer 9 (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1909); Lawrence Gilman, *Strauss' "Salome": A Guide to the Opera with Musical Illustrations* (London and New York: J. Lane, 1907); Otto Röse and Julius Prüwer, *Elektra: Ein Musikführer durch den Werk* (Berlin: Fürstner, 1909); Hans von Wolzogen, *Thematic Guide through the Music of* Parsifal, trans. J. H. Cornell, 8th ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1891) [Original: *Thematischer Leitfaden durch die Musik des* Parsifal (Leipzig: Senf, 1882)].

tradition and in narrative program music, certain instrumental sonorities and thematic gestures were often gendered. In Wagner's operas, for example, the softer sonorities of the strings, harps, and woodwinds, in particular the clarinets and flutes, frequently accompany the chaste, female characters, such *Tannhäuser*'s Elisabeth or *Die Meistersinger*'s Eva, while heroic title male characters, such as Siegfried, Parsifal, and Lohengrin, are often associated with horns, trumpets, and trombones playing more triadic or fanfare-like music.[90] Nearly all of the operas in this study are marked by Wagner's influence, and thus contain leitmotifs that create strong associations between the music and the characters, concepts, gender roles, and characterizations. Building upon Abbate's work on the operatic voice, I will trace the female character's bodily presence through musical leitmotifs and the correspondence of the libretto with these leitmotivic and musical structures. Even when a character is not singing or present on stage, the orchestral music can allude to her physical presence. As Wagner wrote, "eye and ear must mutually assure each other of a higher-pitched message, before they can transmit it convincingly to the feeling."[91] In my discussion of relevant passages, I will examine both the vocal lines and the orchestral music (including timbre, rhythm, leitmotifs) to understand the degree to which the music itself articulates a perspective on femininity and female subjectivity.[92]

As recent opera scholarship has investigated, not only is the sounding body important, but so too is the staged, seen body. Thus, I will attend to relevant stage designs and extent

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[90] For a discussion of the musical characteristics associated with male and female characters in Wagner's works, see Eva Rieger, "Wagner's Influence on Gender Roles in Early Hollywood Film," *Wagner and Cinema*, ed. Jeongwon Joe and Sander Gilman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 139-45.

[91] Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, cited in Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera*, 259.

[92] Although attention could be given to the bodily and sensuous aspects and implications of the music and performance itself – for instance the discourse of sensuality surrounding Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* suggests the way the opera was heard – in this dissertation, I have chosen to largely focus on the systematic (and structural) relationship written into the operatic text between a particular character and specific musical material, relationships that contemporary listening practices encouraged.

staging directions, as well as to detailed descriptions of the physical appearance of the characters in the "opera text." As Susan Rutherford notes: "Opera has always been seen as well as heard."[93] Gesture was central to opera, with important manuals and teaching methods in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offering ways of coordinating the body with movement. François Delsarte's popular system of "Gymnastics" spurred a series of *fin-de-siècle* publications that focused on the expressive, moving body and how the inner expressions of the singers were to be exteriorized in their gestures, while Anna Bahr Mildenburg's *Tristan und Isolde: Darstellung des Werkes aus dem Geiste der Dichtung und Musik* (1936) analyzed all the bodily gestures in the entire opera, presumably passed down to her from Wagner via Cosima's teachings.[94] Rutherford suggests that, "gesture is a form of communication."[95] Moreover, as Smart and Rutherford have rightly argued, music itself can imply certain gestures, even though they may not be clearly delineated in the stage directions written in the score.

For Abbate, opera "does not exist except as it is given phenomenal reality – by performers."[96] Thus, the visual representation (or presentation) of these operatic women in performance is important to this investigation. In addition to the music, libretti, and stage directions of the "opera texts," I will consider the "performance text" by examining extant

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[93] In this essay, Rutherford is concerned with the visual aspects of the singer – "the visible expression of dramma per musica as embodied physically by the singer." Susan Rutherford, "'Unnatural gesticulation' or 'un geste sublime'? Dramatic Performance in Opera," *Arcadia* 36, no. 2 (2001): 236. She is less interested in the staging and set design. Although I will include some discussions, like Rutherford I am concerned with the singer's visual appearance and will only address the setting when relevant.

[94] Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, *Tristan und Isolde: Darstellung des Werkes aus dem Geiste der Dichtung und Musik* (Leipzig and Vienna: Musikwissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1936). For an excellent, historically situated discussion on the relationship between musical gesture and physical gesture in Wagner, see Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania*, 163-204.

[95] Rutherford, "'Unnatural gesticulation' or 'un geste sublime'?" 253.

[96] While Abbate is speaking primarily of the power that the singer has in performance in relation to the composer, her argument again supports the idea of the importance of the "phenomenal reality" of specific performances by specific performers. Abbate, "Opera; Or, the Envoicing of Women," 234.

archival materials (in particular the costume sketches and posed photographs hinting at what the represented body looked like for the *fin-de-siècle* audience) from important productions of the operas, such as the premieres and some of the operas' subsequent performances in significant Austro-German musical centers, to get a sense of the dominant visual representations of the operatic women. These visual traces will create an iconography of operatic female sexuality, addressing the following: How are they costumed in important productions? How do their bodies figure in the publicity photographs for the operas? And more importantly, how do these operas re-present femininity, articulating the changing and contested conceptions of respectable womanhood through their depictions of women, from the sexualized Kundry and Salome, to the tragic Grete in *Der ferne Klang*?

It is worth noting some important details regarding *fin-de-siècle* operatic staging practices and the surviving materials from certain performances – the *traces* of performances. I attempt to look as much as possible at traces from opera productions to gain an understanding of what was happening or not happening on the operatic stage. As dance scholar Sally Banes has aptly argued, there is a gap between performance and "plot description." She writes, "[p]rivileging plot descriptions over performance descriptions, however, overlooks the most crucial aspect of dance. It is, after all, a *live*, interpretive art. It is not fixed on the page, nor can all its meanings be accurately conveyed through verbal means. And bodies can impart different meanings – sometimes diametrically opposed meanings – than words suggest."[97] Through the opacity of historical distance, however, it is only ever possible to get a fractured and incomplete view of a historical performance.[98] The two World Wars and the constant reusing of performance scores

[97] Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), 8.

[98] Susan Rutherford also acknowledges that, "trying to determine precise performance modes also presents other problems: in part because reception of this ephemeral art is so subjective (each spectator

and materials unfortunately make it difficult to reconstruct the musical and visual performances of the operas in this study in much detail.[99] Not only are some materials missing, perhaps destroyed over the years, or vanished, perhaps hidden away in a descendant's attic (which was the case for Wilhelm Wymetal's *Regiebuch* for the Viennese productions of *Der Rosenkavalier*), but the piano rehearsal scores, conducting scores, and *Regiebücher* or *Regieanweisungen* also often have numerous notations in different inks and in different hands. This makes it very difficult to make definite claims about what certain stagings looked like and how they differed from what was printed in the score. In some cases, we are lucky. Some *Regiebücher* – the books used by the *Regisseur* as well as the *Souffleur* (the "prompter" who would guide the singers from the side of the stage) – survived, and they sometimes reveal stage directions and/or passages that are excised, gestures and movements added, or sketches of the stage design and how the performers should move in this designed space. At moments in this dissertation, I examine traces from particular stagings. But in many cases, it is impossible to know modifications to the published score and texts with any certainty.

notes the details that most interested him or her, that most confirmed or contrasted with their own ideas)." Rutherford, "'Unnatural gesticulation' or 'un geste sublime'?" 233.

[99] Many of the extant performance scores were used by multiple singers in different performances over a span of many years, making it difficult to assess which singer wrote what when. Germany and Austria did not have the same staging practices as the Paris opera, which would publish staging manuals to sell to smaller cities around France. These published manuals convey, to a certain degree, what was seen onstage – some of the information in them pertained to how the stage or various scenes should look, the layout of the stage, the placement of the characters, and the precise movements of the singers onstage. See H. Robert Cohen, *The Original Staging Manuals for 12 Parisian Premières* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998). Yet German language opera did not publish these types of manuals, nor would the staging have been preserved necessarily, making it more difficult to discuss specific details regarding opera productions. In fact, staging practices in Germany and Austria, as Wagner would lament, were behind the Paris opera houses, with the *Regisseur* only assuming the role of organizer. According to Hanslick, Wagner was the first "*Regisseur*" for German language opera. Patrick Carnegy, "Designing Wagner: Deeds of Music Made Visible?" in *Wagner in Performance*, ed. Barry Millington and Stewart Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 48.

Fortunately, numerous photographs of specific productions remain.[100] Photographs were taken (often made into postcards) of the singers in character offstage, assuming various poses in order to "perform" the role for the camera. There were also "action" photographs of the singers on-stage, performing a scene with other characters.[101] Although it is not clear if these poses would have been actually assumed during performances, the message communicated by these postcards would have been connected to the performed characters. Moreover, these photographs wonderfully document performers' ideas of their roles, offer insight into the interaction between the characters, and present the visual messages that complement and sometimes contradict the operatic score and narrative.[102] While certain singers tended to sing a certain role repeatedly, creating an association between a singer and a particular character, roles were nevertheless still switched, with the lead female role sometimes performed by a guest singer. The main singers at one opera house would be the guest singers at another opera house, presumably creating an exchange of musical ideas of how the characters and roles should or could be performed. For example, Anna Bahr-Mildenburg and Marie Gutheil-Schoder, two of the *Wiener Hofoper*'s most illustrious singers, occasionally asked for leave to perform as guest singers at other opera houses,

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[100] The *Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek* Bildarchiv, Musiksammlung, and Theatermuseum (with its Fotosammlung) were particularly useful collections for these materials. The Theatermuseum is henceforth cited as *ÖTM*, the Theatermuseum Fotosammlung as *ÖTM-FS*, and the *Musiksammlung* as *ÖNB-Mus.*

[101] It is unclear whether or not these "action" photographs were taken during rehearsal or staged specially for the camera.

[102] As Sally Banes argues: "In dance, as in music and drama, a score or text provides the skeleton on which the musculature of the individual performer's interpretation is built. The performance aspect is as important a consideration as (if not a *more* important consideration than) the plot to the interpretation of a dance. Indeed, the plot and the performance can come into direct conflict, as when dancers stress the nuances of gesture or posture that seem to undermine or render ironic the narrative flow." Banes, *Dancing Women*, 9-10.

with Bahr-Mildenburg performing at Bayreuth.[103] Thus, what the audience would see and hear on one day would not be the same as on another day. In fact, I am interested in looking at multiple performances rather than at one specific performance, because with the limitations of the extant materials it is impossible to fully reconstruct one single performance. Moreover, it is important to consider the fragments of the performances because there is no universal "Opera," no singular, static, or definitive performance of the score.[104] Thus, when examining these productions, I will attend to the surviving visual vestiges, whenever possible, such as the staging manuals, the publicity surrounding the opera, costume and stage sketches, and photographs of the singers and sets.

When looking at these traces of the "performance text" in relation to the "opera text," I am aware that are two bodies on the operatic stage: the singing body and the represented, staged body. This "represented" or "staged" body is the body of the character that the singer must enact: the way that the body is treated and commanded in the stage directions, its presence on stage, the way it is costumed. It is a *represented* body, created by the composer, librettist, stage director, costume director, and so on. The singing body, on the other hand, is an *embodiment*. It is the actual body of the singer, how it comes across, sometimes in contradiction to the represented body: the way that the singer's body emerges through their vocal presence.[105] Given the

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[103] This is documented in the *Hofoper* materials at the *Haus-*, *Hof- und Staatsarchiv* in Vienna (Henceforth this archive will be abbreviated as *HHSA*). This seems to be a common practice at the time, although these demands met with resistance by the *Hofoper* administrators.

[104] Susan Rutherford explores the need to examine both onstage and offstage facets of "the idea of the singer and the female voice, the actual experience of real singers, and the collision/collusion between the singer and the representation of women in opera." Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera*, 3. While Rutherford's work focuses more on the Italian and French operatic stages, many of the questions she poses and her illumination of understandings of "divahood" and the singer are important for my project.

[105] This is similar to Abbate's claim about the power of the female singer in "Opera, or the Envoicing of Women." For another discussion of the force of the voice, see also Michelle R. Duncan, "The Operatic

historical distance of these works, it is much easier to approximate the staged, represented body than the embodied, singing body. For the operas above, the operatic text as well as numerous costume sketches and posed photographs hint at what the represented body looked like for the *fin-de-siècle* audience – yet it is impossible to have an accurate sense of the singing body in these older performances. There are no recordings of these particular performances, apart from a 1921 recording of a duet from *Mona Lisa*, with Barbara Kemp as Mona Lisa, the title role she created in 1915 in the eponymous opera by her future husband, Max von Schillings.[106] While recording devices today can reproduce live performance, even audio and visual recordings arguably still fail to fully capture the physicality of the performance.[107] Indeed, the physicality of the singer's performance depends even on where one sits in the opera house. The "represented" body is not stable, but rather always influenced by the "singing body," taken up by different singers, perceived by different audiences, and thus constantly changing in its differing embodiments. So although there are no recorded performances of the historical "singing body" in these operas – the sonorous body of the singer and the ways in which the audience perceived the physicality of the singer – there is a pathway to the singing body and its interaction with the represented body through the traces of reception materials and what these materials reveal.[108]

This project will thus offer what Lindenberger calls an "interpretative history," but

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Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004): 283-306.

[106] On this recording of the duet between Giovanni and Mona Lisa, Josef Mann is Giovanni and Max von Schillings is conducting. Max von Schillings, *Das Hexenlied und andere Kompsitionen* (Wien: Preiser Records, 90294, 1996).

[107] See Carolyn Abbate, "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?" *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 505-36. For an alternative emphasis on the value of DVD recordings in examining opera performance, see Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, 10-11.

[108] While this would be somewhat possible with recording devices today, even recording devices, such as film, still fail to accurately capture the physicality of the performance because the physicality of the singer's performance depends even on where one sits in the opera house.

always with an emphasis on how the female characters were understood within the works.[109] Each chapter discusses contemporary responses, from newspaper reviews to letters, looking in particular for any references to the sexuality or "respectability" presented.[110] The musical press carried much weight in shaping the perception of operas at this time, and is thus a good indicator of the influence of a particular work on the cultural imaginary.[111] Although the majority of newspaper and journal reviews were written by men, musicologist Dr. Elsa Bienenfeld, who reviewed opera for the *Neues Wiener Journal*, was one of the few female music critics at that time. Additionally, scattered reactions by contemporaneous women also exist, and these voices will be included whenever possible. Indeed, women would likely have had a different relationship with and response to the sexual, punished woman on stage; it is likely that there was a dislocation between the actual women in the audience and the "women" presented onstage.[112] The differing locations in which these works were presented, with their varying classes of

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[109] For a discussion of the multiple approaches to analyzing the relationship between opera and society, see Herbert Lindenberger, "On Opera and Society (assuming a relationship)," in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*, ed. Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher, and Thomas Ertman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 294-311. I borrow his term "interpretative history," which includes "the experience of directors, audiences, and critics" for the opera (*ibid.*, 299). Of course, to narrow my object of study, I will only examine performance and reception materials from important operatic centers in Austria and Germany at the time.

[110] There was a significant amount of writing about music in the daily newspapers of the time. For example, *feuilletons*, which often appeared on the front page, would describe a work and sometimes its performance in detail, often offering an analytic perspective, while most newspapers contained review sections in which the latest opera and its performance would be briefly discussed. As Zweig attests, what was written in the *feuilleton* was given much weight: "Whatever appeared in the *feuilleton* seemed vouched for by the highest authority." Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 110.

[111] Benjamin Korstvedt notes the influence that the press had on public taste: "At times, music criticism actually seems to have been designed as a mechanism to organize, direct, and even discipline the perception of musical works […] words predicate hearing." Benjamin Korstvedt, "Reading Music Criticism Beyond the fin-de-siècle Vienna Paradigm," *Musical Quarterly* 92, nos. 1-2 (2011): 20.

[112] For an interesting discussion of women watching women in art that offers much to consider regarding spectatorship for operatic performance, see Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," in *Vision and Difference: Feminism, femininity, and the histories of art* (London: Routledge Classics, 2003), 73-74.

patrons, are significant and would have carried different connotations of legitimacy and respectability; what was acceptable in a lower-class venue, such as the operetta hall, was not "respectable" enough for the *Hofoper*.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is divided into an introduction, three parts (which are subdivided into seven chapters), and an epilogue. Part I, "Resisting Female Sexuality" (Chapters 1, 2, and 3), examines negative representations of female sexuality in popular works by Strauss and Wagner in the *fin-de-siècle*, and positions them within late nineteenth-century discourses of female sexuality as associated with hysteria and illness. "Reevaluating Female Sexuality" is Part II (Chapters 4 and 5). Here I examine how, despite the critique of bourgeois mores and the valuation of female sexuality amongst modernists, female sexuality is nonetheless still presented in a two-dimensional manner with little attention to how their sexuality impacts the development of the female characters. Part III, "Reconfiguring Female Sexuality" (Chapters 6 and 7), turns to positive presentations of female sexualities that resonated with the emerging (and contested) discourses of female sexuality, gender, and the body at the time. Different ideas of the social role of women co-existed, as manifested in these operatic representations of female subjectivity and sexuality. Chapters 2 through 7 each focus on operas that present a particular strand in the tangled web of attitudes about "woman" and female sexuality. The common thread woven throughout these chapters is the relationship between female sexuality and society, regarding social health, pathology, class, creativity, and respectability, and how this is played out in the music and on the stage.

Chapter 1: Female Sexuality amidst Discourses of Illness, Hysteria in the **Fin-de-siècle***: Seeing Sexuality and Images of the* **Ewig-Weibliche**

This brief first chapter outlines prevailing understandings of female sexuality amidst medical and cultural discourses of illness at the time, including hysteria. Not only were these understandings of illness closely tied to sexuality, but there was also a specularization – a making visible – of these illnesses of the nerves, which, as I argue in the later chapters, played out in the representations of the sexual woman on the stage. This chapter also establishes the visual presentation of the traditional "*Ewig-Weibliche*" and the chaste women as a backdrop against which Kundry, Salome, and Elektra can be read in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2: Kundry's Arrival in Vienna, 1914: Wagner's Visual and Musical Depictions of Female Sexuality, Illness and Degeneration in **Parsifal**

This second chapter positions the representation of Kundry, the sexualized *femme fatale* in Wagner's *Parsifal*, within a discussion of *fin-de-siècle* anxieties over illness and female sexuality. Degeneracy and illness, in particular hysteria, were common tropes connected to female sexuality, while a common theme in writings of the time was the idea of the "New Woman," in particular the sexual woman, as threatening the health of society. In *Parsifal*, not only do discourses surrounding the opera itself resonate with concerns of "health," "illness," and "hysteria," but Kundry is also depicted as a dangerous "Other" who threatens the health of the Grail community, as reflected in her disruptive musical material as well as her visual presentation. Rather than examining early reception of Kundry following the opera's 1882 premiere, I focus primarily on the presentations of Kundry in the Viennese productions of *Parsifal* in 1914, the expiration of the *Lex Parsifal*, which had previously restricted performances of the opera in Europe to Bayreuth.

In both the operatic text and in the 1914 performances, which often followed Bayreuth staging conventions fairly closely, Kundry's musical and visual characterization documents a traditional mid-nineteenth-century attitude toward woman's sexuality, one that would change during the following thirty years as women's sexuality was debated. The musical presentation of Kundry demonstrates the idea of woman's sexuality as dangerous to the physical and musical health of the Grail society. Not only does Wagner's sexualized portrayal of Kundry and her harmful musical and physical effects upon male society encapsulate contemporary conservative attitudes toward woman's sexuality in public discourse, but the very way that Kundry was performed and visually characterized in the Vienna 1914 performances also reinforced these themes.

Chapter 3: Staging Female Hysteria after Kundry
Richard Strauss's* Salome *and* Elektra *in Vienna

Chapter Three examines similar themes of hysteria and illness in *Salome* and *Elektra*, exemplars of *fin-de-siècle* "decadence," sexuality, and illness. The sexualized body is central to these operas, and much excellent scholarship has not only considered the tropes of madness, female sexuality, and decadence within *Salome*'s cultural context, but also examined Salome's disruptive musical characterization. Although *Salome* and *Elektra* were considered "modern" operas with their explicit treatment of sexuality and the psychological, Salome's and Elektra's musical and visual characterizations, particularly in these Viennese productions, ultimately place these works within a nineteenth-century paradigm, similar to *Parsifal*; indeed, striking musical similarities exist among these three women. On one hand, they represent the sexual woman as physically and musically dangerous for men and society, and, on the other hand, as suffering from illness herself.

Through an examination of the orchestral music (leitmotifs, harmony, orchestration, and rhythm) and vocal lines, this chapter demonstrates how the sexualized woman is depicted as destabilizing to her musical surroundings and musically manipulative. Musically coded as different, her musical presence – with its unstable harmonies, chromaticism, shifting timbres, and unsettling rhythms – often disrupts or corrupts the prevailing sound world's musical texture, and rhythmic and harmonic stability. In addition, Salome and Elektra both dance, granting them further visual power and control of the gaze. An examination of the visual traces (from costumes to bodily gestures in photographs) and reception of these operas reveals that the particular stagings and performances of these roles in Vienna further contributed to Salome's and Elektra's reception within discourses of illness, degeneracy, and hysteria – opposites of the ideal *Ewig-Weibliche*.

Chapter 4: Operatic Characterizations of Bourgeois Respectability: From the* Ewig-Weibliche *to the "Fallen Woman"

The dichotomy between the *Ewig-Weibliche* and the *femme fatale* was common in the nineteenth-century imagination, as manifest in the well-known dramatic and musical opposition between Elisabeth and Venus in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Yet many cultural and musical representations of female sexuality were defined and analyzed in relation to class and bourgeois mores, particularly amidst the changes in *fin-de-siècle* gender and class politics. Respectable bourgeois femininity, epitomized in the *Ewig-Weibliche*, was chaste, de-sexualized, and non-corporealized, whereas the sexualized body was connected to an often lower-class, socially corrupting femininity, and even to prostitution.

This fourth chapter examines the nexus of sexuality, class, and bourgeois respectability in Strauss's *Feuersnot*, Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, as well as Lehár's popular operetta *Die lustige*

Witwe. Themes of respectability are implicit in the surrounding chapters, but here I focus specifically on the musical characterization of the prostitute or "fallen" woman, and her antithesis, the respectable woman. The tension between the "chaste" women and the "fallen" woman was common in artistic, literary, and theatrical representations of women at the time and also played out in these musical works. I investigate the ways in which these types of women are presented differently through orchestral, vocal, and visual means. Susan McClary famously writes that the dangerous woman is often the "chromatic" Other.[113] And yet these particular operas were written in a highly chromatic language, such that female difference (danger or solace) cannot be primarily communicated through chromaticism. I therefore consider what additional musical codes, from instrumentation and vocal presence to leitmotifs, operate specifically in these works to signify the good woman versus the sexualized, fallen woman. Exactly how are "fallen" versus "respectable" women made musically and visually distinct?

In terms of *Feuersnot*, I examine Diemut's musical characterization and agency within these structures. Strauss's post-Wagnerian opera relies strongly on leitmotivic structures and a series of gendered codes, which he established in earlier tone poems such as *Ein Heldenleben* and *Symphonia Domestica*. Not only does Diemut's musical characterization in relation to her initial presentation change following the kiss and her deceptive seduction of Kunrad, but her resistance to Kunrad is also demonstrated vocally, orchestrally, and visually. I then turn to Schreker's popular impressionistic opera *Der ferne Klang*, and focus on how the central female character, Grete (who becomes "Greta" in Act II and "Tini" in Act III), is characterized through the music when she transitions from the respectable young woman into a courtesan in a brothel,

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[113] McClary also looks at other aspects, such as genres and popular music, etc. to see how the sexual woman is characterized. Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet:* Carmen, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge Opera Handbook, 1992), 54-77; McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 56-67, 100-5.

and eventually a prostitute. Finally, I consider the ways in which codes of representation functioned in operetta, specifically in *Die lustige Witwe*, a playful operetta full of intrigue and affairs that places "respectable" bourgeois women alongside cabaret dancers. Through these disparate works and their varying representations, I investigate how musical codes for different types of women operated within this musical epoch and in varying locales.

Chapter 5: Woman as Muse: Female Sexuality as Inspiration in **Feuersnot, Der Traumgörge,** ***and*** **Der ferne Klang**

The fifth chapter explores an important emerging *fin-de-siècle* trope: female sexuality as muse and source of inspiration for male creativity and modern society. This is a more "modern" understanding of "Woman" and female sexuality than the ones encountered in the previous chapters. From artists Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, to poet Peter Altenberg, numerous modernist writers, artists, and thinkers, reacted against bourgeois sexual morality and found a muse in woman's sexuality and their perception of the sensuousness of her body. This theme manifests itself in the operatic works of the time, and I again turn to Strauss's *Feuersnot* and Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, and extend the analysis to Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge. Feuersnot* is Strauss's and librettist Ernst von Wolzogen's critique of both contemporaneous bourgeois morality and conservative musical attitudes in Munich. With the title *Feuersnot* serving both as a symbol for creativity and as an innuendo for sexual desire, the Nietzschean opera presents sexuality as a positive and necessary criterion for life and male inspiration. In discussing *Der Traumgörge*, I examine not only the way in which Zemlinsky himself was inspired by a muse – Alma Mahler – when creating the opera, but also the way in which the central character Görge is spurred into action by his dream of "The Princess."

Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* draws on a similar theme of woman as muse. Here, however,

the muse is the "sound," frequently described as sensual by contemporary commentators and associated with Grete and the idea of her, rather than her sexual acts or body. While Schreker's musical and textual portrayal of Grete critiques hypocritical bourgeois sexual attitudes, the opera still participates in the idea of woman as passive muse for male creativity. Here Grete is musically characterized as the "*ferne Klang*" (distant sound) itself, which Franz searches for without realizing that it is her. Thus, I analyze the implications of Grete's musical identity. As muse it seems that she is reduced to a non-semantic, shimmering orchestral sound. Moreover, this sound is perhaps merely Fritz's projection onto her, rather than her own musical identity, and we often perceive Grete from Fritz's perspective. Yet is this "*ferne Klang*" her only musical identity? Or, as in other post-Wagnerian operas, are there leitmotifs that characterize her as well? In order to ascertain her depiction as a sexual woman, I explore what type of musical agency she possesses, both vocally and motivically, and examine the ways in which her musical identity and vocal lines interact with the other characters. As I argue in this chapter, the women in these operas are imbued with neither sexual nor musical agency. Although these works offer a social commentary on bourgeois sexual mores, the female characters are ultimately represented as objects, sources for male creativity, rather than granted their own subjectivity within the dramatic and musical narratives.

***Chapter 6: Travesty as Subversion: Re-Negotiating the Sexed Body, Gender, and Female Sexuality in Richard Strauss's* Der Rosenkavalier**

In this chapter, I examine Strauss and Hofmannsthal's *Der Rosenkavalier* and the way in which the opera's use of the trouser role raised timely questions about the relationship between woman and fixed gender attributes, and played upon anxieties concerning female sexuality, cross-dressing, and homosexuality. With Octavian performed by a mezzo-soprano, who then

dresses up again as “Mariandel” – a female playing a man playing a woman – the instability of gender is highlighted against a backdrop of anxiety and concern about “proper” gender roles. Octavian’s performances of Mariandel have multiple fissures in the musical presentation, with parts of Octavian’s music breaking through his performance of Mariandel.

Female sexuality takes center stage in *Der Rosenkavalier*, with the opera’s sympathetic examination of women, their sexual desire, and their sexual agency. Indeed, the opera presents a spectrum of issues for the era regarding female sexuality and class. The older (and arguably more sexually experienced) Marschallin has a mutually satisfying extramarital affair with Octavian, while Sophie and Octavian’s more conventional love is also explored. Not only would the sexual innuendos and acts between the Marschallin and Octavian have been quite risqué for the time, but Octavian’s cross-dressed performance further results in explicit sexual moments between two women onstage, which would have offered a titillating presentation of lesbian sexuality. These acts are clearly between two women because Octavian’s *voice* always reminds the audience that Octavian’s body is female body. Importantly, the multiple, playful layers of dressing up as a female playing a man playing a woman in the opera touch on contemporary insecurities about sexuality and the stability of gender in relation to the sexed body.

***Chapter 7: Envoicing the “New Woman”: Operatic Representations of Sexuality and Subjectivity in* Mona Lisa**

In this last chapter, I further examine changing presentations of female sexuality during World War I. Preceding the war, a new type of woman began to emerge on the operatic stage, one far more complex than her predecessors, possessing musical agency and dominating the musical landscape differently from before. With this reconfiguration, opera offers a glimpse onto the discursive and intellectual shifts of the period. Female sexual desire is no longer

pathologized, but rather presented as a positive part of subjectivity, and "Modern Women" begin to appear on the operatic stage.

As evident in Max von Schillings and Beatrice Dovsky's popular Verismo opera *Mona Lisa*, the central female character is not only granted a sexual subjectivity, but she is also not punished for it as she was in earlier operas such as *Parsifal* and *Salome*. This chapter investigates the music characterization of Mona Lisa, in addition to considering possible interpretations of her mad scene. Should it be read as a rebellious performance of hysteria? It is significant that this is also one of the few operas by a female librettist, Beatrice Dovsky, an Austrian writer and actress involved in the Austrian women's movement. Although modernism is often gendered male, as Rita Felski famously points out, there are also many female voices within modernism, although these voices are often obscured by the histories of "Modernism," or delegitimized by being excluded from modernism as an institution.[114] Thus, this chapter also addresses issues of female agency and female authorship.

Conclusion: Contributions

One of the goals of this dissertation is to contribute to current understandings about gender, sexuality, and the cultural role of opera in *fin-de-siècle* Austria and Germany through a

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[114] Felski discusses how modernism is gendered male in addition to examining women's participation in modernism, while Gubar and Gilbert have pointed out that there are "feminine modernisms" and "masculine modernisms." Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 11-34. For a discussion of modernism's focus on the male artist, see: Wolff, "Feminism and Modernism," in *Feminine Sentences*, 51-63. These narratives of "Modernism" as male seek to speak of "Modernism" as an institution, whereas the period of modernism was pluralistic, with many more female voices. See also Pollock, who notes the ways in which women *practiced* modernism, although they are often excluded from the homogenization of modernism as an institution. Griselda Pollock, "Feminism and Modernism," in *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement, 1970–1985*, ed. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (London: Pandora Press, 1987), 103. For a discussion of musical modernism and gender specifically in a Viennese context, see Elizabeth L. Keathley, *Revisioning Musical Modernism: Arnold Schoenberg, Marie Pappenheim, and* Erwartung's *New Woman* (PhD diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1999), 11-33.

close examination of the varying representations of the sexual woman in a broad number of operas. The issue of woman and her sexuality has become a prominent locus of study, from Sengoopta's and Gilman's intellectual and cultural histories of sexuality, otherness, and pathology in Vienna and Germany, to Djikstra's foundational work about male artistic representations of women in a larger European context. Yet in discussions about sexuality and gender during this time period, music has remained largely absent, apart from *Salome* and *Elektra*, a significant oversight that prevents a full understanding of the cultural moment.[115] By offering an aural and visual perspective as to how concepts of gender, sex, and sexuality operated, this examination of operatic representations of women and their sexuality aims to enrich and deepen our understanding not only of the time period, but also of opera's participation in the multiple discourses and social constructions of women at the time.[116] Opera can shed light on the intersections between the musical arts and larger cultural and social issues, as well as illuminate another facet of emerging modernisms in Germany and Austria. As Christopher Hailey has noted: "To tell the story of Viennese modernism through its operas would necessitate

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[115] Recent exceptions, as noted earlier in this introduction, are the dissertations by Pedneault-Deslauriers and Darwin, as well as Sherry D. Lee's article, "A Florentine Tragedy, Or Woman as Mirror," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 33-58.

[116] As Janet Wolff (*Feminine Sentences*) and Toril Moi ("Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture," *New Literary History* 22, no. 4 (Autumn 1991): 1018) argue, there is a pressing need in any type of feminist scholarship to analyze the relationship between textuality, gender, and social structures and institutions, as well as a need to understand the social and cultural modes of cultural production in a sophisticated and subtle manner, while maintaining attention on the text itself. Specifically, it is important to not overdetermine the text itself, but to keep in mind that it is an "historically and socially situated act of utterance" and account. (Moi, "Appropriating Bourdieu," 1019) While Wolff and Moi are concerned with writing and the literary act of "enunciation," I believe this type of Bourdieu-based theoretic questioning of the social modes and structures of cultural production also applies to opera. They highlight the need to place the text in a dialogic relationship with its social institutions, processes, and practices. Indeed, as Wolff believes, analyses of cultural productions fail if they do not take into account the text itself in dialogue with its specific social institutions and processes. Only recently have Bourdieu's theories been applied to opera, notably in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu,* ed. Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher, and Thomas Ertman (Cambridge, 2007).

redrawing the city's artistic faultlines."[117]

A second goal of this project is to bring well-known and lesser-known Austro-German operas into dialogue with other opera scholarship concerning gender, sexuality, and performance. Recent musicological studies, notably those by Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, Lawrence Kramer, and Mary Ann Smart, have investigated the presence of the gendered body in music, specifically as represented and envoiced.[118] As noted above, most of this scholarly work has examined nineteenth-century French and Italian opera, while the existing Austro-German opera scholarship that does engage with these themes has tended to focus exclusively on Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra*, both operas renowned for their controversial sexual content. There is indeed a blind spot: representations of female sexuality – particularly of the sexual and sexualized female body – in other Austro-German operatic works from this period remain relatively unexplored. As I will demonstrate, Strauss's scandalous staging of female sexuality through the *femme fatales* Elektra and Salome was not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, the sexual woman was a pervasive trope amongst a broad range of popular *fin-de-siècle* works, from "high" opera to "low" operetta, in both Austria and Germany. Furthermore, the treatment of the sexual woman changed and evolved, much like scientific and social conceptions of female sexuality, over the course of the first two decades of the twentieth century.

A third aspect of this project is the way in which it offers further insight into how the musical and cultural codes operated at this moment – beyond only leitmotivic associations – to include timbral, textural, and rhythmic codes and the ways that these musical structures accrue

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[117] Christopher Hailey, "Franz Schreker and the Pluralities of Modernism," *Tempo*, no. 219 (2002): 5. Hailey's claim illustrates the way in which including Schreker in current understandings of musical modernism expands its scope.

[118] Smart, *Mimomania*; Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*"; Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss*, esp. 167-220.

meaning, specifically gendered meaning, for audiences. As Susan McClary has written:

> The codes marking gender difference in music are informed by the prevalent attitudes of their time. But they also themselves participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music. Moreover, music does not just passively reflect society; it also serves as a public forum within which various models of gender organization (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested, and negotiated.[119]

In this dissertation, I aim to offer further insight into how musical and cultural codes operated and interacted during this tumultuous period, and consider how listening practices at times drew on gendered meanings. Approaching the operas at hand through the lens of gender, specifically examining how different types of women are represented both musically and visually (or bodily) makes one aware of the need to look beyond leitmotivic and pitch-based analysis of this repertoire. As the musical and visual analyses reveal, operatic representations of women and gender of the period offer another perspective on how the complex, contradictory, and evolving debates and understandings of women and female sexuality operated and changed in the arts and society at the time.

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[119] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 7-8.

PART I: Resisting Female Sexuality

Chapter 1: Sexuality amidst Discourses of Illness and Hysteria in the *fin-de-siècle*: Seeing Sexuality and Images of the *Ewig-Weibliche*

Audiences are often captivated by the visual spectacle in opera. In *Parsifal* we listen to Gurnemanz's monologue in Act I with a sense of anticipation for the alluring and decorative Flowermaidens and the seduction scene between Parsifal and Kundry. In *Salome* we wait with expectation for Salome's infamous dance of the seven veils, arguably the central moment in the opera. Our eyes follow her until she is covered by Herod's soldiers' shields, just as they follow Kundry, from her dramatic visual appearance in Act I, through the kiss, to her *Entseelung* in Act III. Elektra is another visually fascinating woman, from her wild animal-like appearance in the opening scene, to her demise onstage at the end of the opera. In these works, we are often directed by both the music and the other characters to gaze at these women. For example, in *Parsifal* the knights all look at Kundry, shifting the focus of the opera's action to her dramatic entrance. We stare at Salome, just as Herod and Narraboth do, and our eyes follow Elektra while the maids watch her wild behavior with apprehension. But what is the significance of this emphasis on the visual in these operas? How did these visual representations interact with the musical characterizations of the sexual operatic woman as well as correspond to the cultural discourses in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna concerning female sexuality?

The key point that I would like to establish in Part I of this dissertation is the relationship between the visual and musical representations of the sexual operatic woman in *Parsifal*, *Salome*, and *Elektra*, and the cultural discourses of the late nineteenth century that connect female sexuality with illnesses such as hysteria. It seems that the visual presentations of Kundry, Salome, and Elektra in early Viennese productions drew upon a larger iconography of the "ill" and "degenerate" woman. Kundry arguably marked the appearance on the German operatic

scene of the hysterical, sexually-driven woman. In addition to seducing Parsifal, she dashes around the stage, falls to the ground, and goes into convulsions. As many observers of the time remarked, Kundry, like Salome and Elektra, was *sick*, manifesting symptoms evocative of a series of mental and psychological illnesses that were associated with sexuality. Thomas Mann was not alone in recognizing the "unsparing clinical accuracy" and "mythical pathology" in *Parsifal*.[1] Even early commentators mentioned these elements. Nietzsche contended that Wagner's work itself elicited hysteria, and this hysteria was connected to sexuality: "as regards the true 'Maenads' who worship Wagner, we can without hesitation conclude hysteria and sickness: something is not right with their sexuality."[2] A critic from 1888 wrote that in *Parsifal* the "hysterical laughter of the agonized woman rings through the hall," while a year later another critic noted Kundry's "*hysterisch-fatalistischen Zustand*" (hysterical-fatalistic condition).[3] Salome and Elektra were met with similar moral outrage, with many critics deriding their explicit sexuality and voicing a concern for the effect that this sexuality might have on the audience's nerves and psychological well-being. In the *Dresdner Nachrichten,* Friedrich Brandes wrote that *Salome* was a "symphonic poem with the transparent title Hysteria. Hardly another composer could have written it. [...] Hysteria is nowadays a fashionable disease. And Strauss follows this trend."[4] Robert Hirschfeld asserted that, "[t]he art of Richard Strauss bears, like

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[1] Thomas Mann, "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner," in *Pro and Contra Wagner*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: Faber, 1985), 99.

[2] Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, XI, 674. Translation from George Líebert, *Nietzsche and Music*, trans. David Pellauer and Graham Parkes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 266. In "The Case of Wagner," Nietzsche also noted that "Wagner's art is sick." Nietzsche, "The Case of Wagner," in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1967), 166.

[3] Respectively, John Telford and Benjamin Aquila Barber, "Richard Wagner and the Music Drama," *The London Quarterly Review* LXX (April-July 1888): 268; "hysterical fatalistic condition," Ferdinand Pfohl, "Nachklänge an Bayreuth," *Der Salon für Literatur, Kunst, und Gesellschaft* 1 (1889): 151.

[4] Friedrich Brandes, "Salome," *Dresdner Anzeiger*, December 10, 1905: 62.

Salome, deep traces of decay,"[5] while Paul Stefan reported that *Salome* and *Elektra* were "violent, hysterical, perverse" operas that "tormented the ears, reveling in cruelty."[6] If Kundry*,* Elektra*,* and Salome were perceived as representative of hysteria, decay, and perversity, then we are led to ask: Was it written in the operatic text itself, or was it brought out in particular performances? Was it their musical presentation? The storyline? Or, how these women expressed their sexual desire? Given the importance of the gaze at the female body in these operas, was there something about how they *appeared* that invited these reactions? And did these three now canonical works all offer similar representations of the sexual, ill woman?

Prior to addressing these questions through an examination of the visual and musical representations of Kundry, Salome, and Elektra in Vienna, this brief chapter establishes a backdrop against which these operatic women can be read, and thus serves as an introduction to Part I of this dissertation. Here I outline some of the contemporaneous medical and cultural discourses of hysteria, mental illness, and nervous illness, as well as the perceived relationship between female sexuality and these illnesses of the nerves, attending in particular to the cultural and visual force of hysteria. Although Freud's understanding of hysteria as resulting from a repression of trauma or sexual desire was a major development in the study of the disease, older ideas still dominated. The earlier, pre-Freudian nineteenth-century etiology of hysteria strongly associated it, along with a series of other illnesses such as neurasthenia, with expressions of female sexuality and desire. These beliefs existed at the time of *Parsifal*'s composition and were still powerful in the cultural imaginary in the early years of the twentieth century. Furthermore, with the new field of sexology, ideas about female sexuality also participated within discourses

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[5] Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, May 26, 1907.

[6] Stefan continued: "Strauss, it is clear, can no longer succeed in 'normal.'" Paul Stefan, "Die Musik," *Die Schaubühne* 11, no. 5 (1911): 120.

of social health and degeneration.[7] In the late nineteenth century, women who displayed sexual desire were often diagnosed as abnormal, stricken with some mysterious illness, such as hysteria, neurasthenia, and so forth. On the other hand, there was a very clear image of the pure, chaste woman, who also figured in opera. In this chapter, I first outline the connection between illness and sexuality, then turn to discuss images of this *Ewig-Weibliche* in opera.

***Illness and Female Sexuality in the* fin-de-siècle**

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century experienced a shift away from what Foucault calls the "anatomo-clinical gaze," the medical gaze that looked inside bodies, to a psychiatric gaze that metaphorically looked "inside" the mind.[8] Alongside this expansion of mental illness as a scientific object of study, there was an increasing concern about female mental illness and its relationship to sexuality. As historian Sengoopta writes: "From the mid-nineteenth century, sexuality and gender had become medical concerns, and no serious researcher at the turn of the century could possibly ignore the enormous biomedical literature on the subject."[9] Indeed, there was a need to look to the *mental* condition of the patients, and sexuality was a central part of these new investigations.

"Hysteria," like many other "nerve" diseases of the late nineteenth century, had a broad definition and was used as an umbrella term for a series of physical and mental afflictions. As

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[7] They resonated with discourses about contagion that appeared during these years, which associated female sexuality with disease, and resulted from anxieties about female sexuality. See Sander Gilman, *Sexuality: An Illustrated History: Representing the Sexual in Medicine and Culture from the Middle Ages to the Age of AIDS* (New York: Wiley, 1989), 263-307, and *Picturing Health and Illness*, 9-32. As Foucault notes, the hystericization of women's bodies was an articulation of power. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 104-5.

[8] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1994), 163. See also Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of the Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2; Kandel, *The Age of Insight*, esp. 3-27.

[9] Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, 45.

Feminist theorist Elaine Showalter notes, “hysteria has been the designation for […] a vast, shifting set of behaviors.”[10] Illnesses such as anorexia nervosa, hysteria, and neurasthenia became fluid names for common “female” ailments. Neurasthenia, a new illness coined by American George M. Beard in 1869, was exhibited through symptoms ranging from anxiety, insomnia, and fits, to mood swings and fatigue, and was diagnosed in upper-class women – and particularly those who used their minds.[11] But it was “hysteria” that quickly became a popular catch-all for nervous conditions and achieved prominence in late nineteenth-century culture, permeating newspapers and becoming well known as a “culture syndrome” and social disease.[12] Hysteria surfaced in literature, the arts, and, as I will demonstrate, in opera. From popular novels to painted canvases, hysteria captured the public imagination. Many of the advertisements at the end of newspapers and journals offered cures and elixirs to treat illnesses of the nerves, and were often marketed toward women.

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[10] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Showalter also argues that neurasthenia affected more middle class women and was considered an “hysteria of the elite.” Moreover, “hysteria [was] a mimetic disorder; it mimics culturally permissible expression of distress.” Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 50, 14. Although Showalter primarily discusses England, many of her theoretical points are pertinent to Vienna and Germany.

[11] See Sabine Wieber, “The Allure of Nerves: Class, gender, and neurasthenia in Klimt’s Society Portraits,” in *Modernity and Madness: Mental Illness and the Visual Arts in Vienna 1900*, ed. Gemma Blackshaw and Leslie Topp (London: Lund Humphries, 2009), 129.

[12] See Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 61-62; and Showalter, *Hystories*, 9. According to Micale, “hysteria” became the “wastebasket term of social, political, and cultural commentary” to the point that it was so broadly used in the early twentieth century that it began to lose its meaning and declined. Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and Its Interpretations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 20, see also 182-200. The term hysteria originated from the Ancient Greek word for womb, *hystera*. In Ancient Greece, there was the belief that the uterus or womb was independent within the female body, and desired to produce children. When this desire was unfulfilled, the uterus would anger and travel throughout the body, causing illness, i.e.: hysteria, when it put pressure on other organs. Hysteria was also called a “wandering womb.” For a detailed history of hysteria and its association with women see: Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); and Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*.

Although the term had a long history and changed meanings over time, hysteria was primarily considered to be a female illness and, up until the turn of the century, was diagnosed more commonly in women, particularly in those who challenged social norms.[13] As Elaine Showalter writes:

> That hysteria became a hot topic in medical circles at the same time in the United States and Europe does not seem coincidental. During an era when patriarchal culture felt itself to be under attack by its rebellious daughters, one obvious defense was to label women campaigning for access to the universities, the professions, and the vote as mentally disturbed. […] In every national setting where female hysteria became a significant issue, there were parallel concerns about the ways that new opportunities for women might undermine the birthrate, the family, and the health of the nation.[14]

But despite its role in studies and diagnoses, there were many contradictory ideas about the etiology of hysteria. Some thought it had a physical origin from lesions on the brain. Others believed it had an emotional or psychological cause to which women were particularly prone.[15] Indeed, common "causes" of hysteria spanned a wide gamut, from shocks to the system, extreme physical and mental labor, and infection, to "excitation of sense organs" and "too much sexual activity."[16] There was also the belief that women were particularly predisposed to hysteria when they were not, as a commentary from 1878 described, performing tasks that "especially belong to

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[13] Hysteria in men was labeled as an "effeminate" illness, and tied to negative stereotypes of femininity, unmanliness and homosexuality. Showalter notes that hysteria, regarded as a feminine disorder, reflected attitudes and insecurities about masculinity. For specific examples, see Elaine Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, ed. Sander L. Gilman et al. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 288-89.

[14] Showalter, *ibid.*, 305. Yet, as Showalter critiques, he fails to interrogate the motives of the power struggle, and in his narrative, women are passive objects with little agency. See Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," 304.

[15] Gilman, "The Image of the Hysteric," in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, ed. Sander Gilman, et al. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 416-18.

[16] Hannah S. Decker, "Freud's 'Dora' Case in Perspective: The Medical Treatment of Hysteria at the Turn of the Century," in *Freud and the History of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Toby Gelfand and John Kerr (Hillside, NJ: Analytic Press, 1992), 274; and Hannah S. Decker, *Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 6.

them such as the rearing of children, domestic vocations, and the like."[17] By not directing their "superfluous energies" to what was perceived as "natural female tasks," "the whole system becomes disordered, and […] hysteric symptoms ensue."[18]

Sexuality, Degeneration, and Illness

Although a lack of sexual desire was occasionally identified as the source of illness, more often it was the overstimulation of sexual desire in women that was taken to be a primary cause of hysteria in the later half of the nineteenth century.[19] The former of these two contradictory understandings, most infamously developed by Weininger in *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), was the idea that women were purely sexual beings, driven by their instincts, and were detrimental to the health of society. In Weininger's misogynistic theory, women were considered innately sexual and unable to transcend their bodily drives to become a rational subject. Hysteria in women resulted from the deception of hiding their sexual self.[20] The second and more common mode of understanding amongst the medical community was that it was "abnormal" for women to display sexual desire at all. A "respectable lady was sexless and a sexually eager woman was sick."[21] For example, the controversial Cesare Lombroso's popular work on female criminality, co-authored with Guglielmo Ferrero and entitled *Criminal Woman, the Prostitute,*

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[17] Samuel Wilks, *Lectures on Diseases of the Nervous System* (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1878), cited in Decker, "Freud's 'Dora' Case in Perspective," 275.

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] This is something Freud would refute only a few years later.

[20] For Weininger, sex was the "transcendental function of the female." Cited in Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, 105-7. Moritz Benedikt, a Viennese neuropsychologist, also argued that female hysterics had a hidden sexual personality.

[21] Carol Diethe, *Aspects of Distorted Sexual Attitudes in German Expressionist Drama with Particular Reference to Wedekind, Kokoschka, and Kaiser* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 3. I return to this distinction in Chapter 4.

and the Normal Woman (1893, translated from Italian into German in 1894), discussed the connection among sexuality, hysteria, and prostitution.[22] For Lombroso, female sexual desire, or the female libido, was "volatile, capricious, even rampaging – was revealed as inherently dysfunctional, dangerous even."[23] In Vienna, leading sexologist and psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing argued that "woman, however, if physically and mentally normal and properly educated, has but little sensual desire," and the "woman who seeks men [is a] sheer anomal[y]."[24] Women were supposed to be "passive and submissive," and psychiatrists such as Krafft-Ebing classified women who experienced sexual desire or gratification as "pathological," connecting sexual desire and overstepping sexual roles with illness. Sexologist Iwan Bloch also observed the heightened sexuality amongst women in asylums: "Noise, uncleanliness, and sexual depravity in speech and demeanor, are much more commoner [sic] in the women's wards of asylums than on the male side. In all forms of acute mental disorder […] the sexual element plays a much more prominent part in woman than in man."[25] In *Die Psychologie des Verbrechens* (*The Psychology of Crimes*, 1884), Viennese physician August Krauss noted that

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[22] In this book, Lombroso even includes a chapter on the "Biology and Psychology of Female Criminals and Prostitutes," and examines the physiognomy of Italian, French, and German criminal and sexual women. Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman*, trans. Nicole Hahn Rafter and Mary Gibson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004). See also the discussion of Lombroso in Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 215. Jann Matlock and Charles Bernheimer also noted the connection in the late nineteenth century with prostitution and hysteria, with the appearance of the "hysterical prostitute" in fiction from this era. See Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), esp. 234-65; Jann Matlock, "Pathological Masterplots: Hysteria, Sexuality, and the Balzacian Novel," chapter 5 in *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 162-96.

[23] Cited in Roy Porter, "The Body and the Mind, the Doctor and the Patient: Negotiating Hysteria," in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, ed. Sander L. Gilman et al. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 251. Cited as well in Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," 211.

[24] Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 14.

[25] Iwan Bloch, "The Sexual Life of Our Time," in *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 33.

the "source of hysteria lies in the sexual system," and "extreme intensification of sexual desire to the point of nymphomaniacal ecstasy" was one of the primary symptoms of hysteria.[26] With the rise of the "hysteric nymphomaniac," hysteria became identified with the female sexual experience: "The hysterical seizure, *grande hystérie*, was regarded as an acting out of female sexual experience, a 'spasm of hyperfemininity, mimicking both childbirth and the female orgasm.'"[27]

As Foucault contends, the nineteenth-century medical community in particular was fascinated with the ill, *pathological* sexual body and the effects that it had on society.[28] There were a variety of ways that the hysteric, sexualized woman was connected to social ills. A woman's primary role was to be a "civilizer," that is, a mother in the home. Progress and survival of the species would only occur within the confines of middle-class sexual morality and self-discipline over passion, and those who did not adhere to these "rules" were considered "degenerate."[29] Yet in the mid to late nineteenth century, "the prostitute, who challenged the social order by her active and autonomous sexuality, was imputed with impurity and pathology," and "women rather than men were singled out as the human agents of infection, posing a threat to national health."[30] Social scientists and novelists often not only connected hysteria to

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[26] August Krauss, *Die Psychologie des Verbrechens* (Tübingen: Laupp, 1884), 35. Cited in Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 185, see also 130.

[27] Showalter citing Micale, "Hysteria and Its Historiography: A Review of Past and Present Writings, II," *History of Science* 27 (1989): 320. Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," 287.

[28] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 146-47.

[29] Mosse, "Introduction," *Degeneration*, xxii-xxiii.

[30] Yet, Krafft-Ebing also diagnosed married women who did not experience sexuality as also victims of hysteria. See Kas Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 31, 64. For a discussion of the relationship between nationalism, abnormality, normality, and female sexuality, see also Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 10-18, 90-113.

sexuality, but also interpreted hysteria as symptomatic of social decline.[31] "Degeneration" became a popular concept during the years following Max Nordau's *Entartung* (*Degeneration*, 1892). Although Auguste Morel coined the term in *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine* (*Treatise on the physical, intellectual, and moral degeneracies of the human species*, 1857) to describe deviations from the "norm" in humans, by the *fin-de-siècle* "degeneration" became increasingly used and associated with hysteria and sexuality.[32] Nordau, who used "degeneration" and "hysteria" interchangeably, connected degeneration to "nervous excitement" and ailments of the nerves.[33] Wagner was a particular target for Nordau and, in a long passage on mysticism in Wagner, he linked degeneration and

[31] Such examples include sociologist Émile Durkheim as well as Naturalist author Émile Zola, whose *Nana* exhibits nymphomania, hysteria, and decline. Other instances of hysteria in literature include: the Frères Goncourt, whose *Germinie Lacerteux* 1864 examined nymphomania and hysteria; Émile Zola's Rougon-Macquart series (1870–1893), influenced by French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's work on hereditary evolution, is an extended study of the relationship between nervous pathology, hereditary, and social environment, with sexuality, crime, alcoholism, prostitution, and suicide linked to hysteria for women; and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. For greater detail, see Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 218-20.

[32] The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century saw a number of publications on the topic of "degeneration" in Europe, including the following: Hirsch, *Genie und Entartung* (1894); Arndt, *Biologische Studien II, Artung und Entartung* (1895); Dallemagne, *Dégénérés et déséquilibrés* (1895); Robin, *Dégénérescence de l'espèce humaine* (1896); Möbius, *Ueber Entartung* (1900); Charpentier, *Dégénérescence mental et hystérie* (1906); Danel, *La notion de dégénérescence, particulièrement dans l'étude du mouvement littéraire et artistique contemporain* (1907); Brumke, *Über Nervöse Entartung* (1912). See Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 20.

[33] Nordau wrote about two types of hysteria: "acquired" and "hereditary." *Degeneration* was so popular that it went through several printings and translations between its appearance in 1892 and 1909. Mosse, "Introduction," to *Degeneration*, xxi.

hysteria both to "eroticism" and "morbidly excited states of the sexual centers."[34] In fact, Nordau seemed to connect Wagner's degeneration and illness with feminization.[35]

Documenting the Symptoms of Hysteria: Envisioning Illness

As Sander Gilman has argued, illness, particularly hysteria and illnesses related to sexuality, was *visualized*, and the "stigmata of degeneration" associated with illness were widely disseminated. There was an increase in the number of medical works that cautioned about the visible physical warnings of illness in sexual women, including the "corrupting touch" of the sexual woman for men; thus there developed an "iconography of sexuality," or a series of images that marked decay in the fallen, sexual woman.[36] With diseases such as hysteria, neurasthenia, and sexual perversion, the illness often manifested itself physically (although there was not

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[34] Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans and intro. George L. Mosse (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 34, 43, 188. For discussion of the relationship between mysticism and eroticism amidst his extended discussion of Wagner, see *Degeneration* 171-213. For Nordau, Wagner's leitmotifs represented degenerate thought and "musical mysticism" (*ibid.*, 199). Moreover, Wagner suffered from "erotic madness" (*ibid.*, 182), while Kundry should redeem herself (*ibid.*, 186). Nietzsche also referred to Wagner and his music as "decadent" in *The Case of Wagner*, 155, 165-72.

[35] Just as Brahms's detractors feminized his music and his supporters considered his music "manly" and "healthy," there was also a feminization of Wagner's music by his detractors. See Citron, "Gendered Reception of Brahms: Masculinity, Nationalism, and Musical Politics," 141-60, esp. 144 and 147. Moreover, this feminization was often embedded within discussions of illness and social danger, as demonstrated in Nordau's and Nietzsche's reactions to Wagner.

[36] There was also a shift in the understanding of the body over the course of the nineteenth century. The images in medical publications document a departure from Renaissance understandings of the body (as schematized and flesh) dominant at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and a move toward investigations of the hidden, microscopic causes of bodily conditions and a concern with physical manifestations of *degeneration*. Sander Gilman, *Seeing the Insane: A Cultural History of Madness and Art in the Western World* (New York: J. Wiley, 1982) and Sander Gilman, "The Images of the Hysteric," 231-40. In *Introduction to Psychiatry* (1919), Heinrich Schlöss wrote about the ability to recognize the ill: "In the face: the unequal enervation of the cranial hemispheres. In the limbs: congenitally flat feet; a greater than usual number of fingers or toes. Further indications: curvature of the spine, abnormal body hair." Cited in Gemma Blackshaw and Leslie Topp, "Scrutinised Bodies and Lunatic Utopias: Mental illness, psychiatry, and the visual arts in Vienna, 1898–1914," in *Modernity and Madness: Mental Illness and the Visual Arts in Vienna 1900*, ed. Gemma Blackshaw and Leslie Topp (London: Lund Humphries, 2009), 16. Several years later, between 1911 and 1915, Schreker composed *Die Gezeichneten* (*The Stigmatized* or *The Branded*) about a man whose body is physically marked.

always a clear physical cause). For instance, psychiatrist Henry Maudsley, writing in 1874, noted that the "insane temperament" was visible by "bodily and mental marks" such as "an irregular and unsymmetrical conformation of the head, a want of regularity and harmony of the features […] malformations of the external ear […] tics, grimaces […] stammering and defects of pronunciation…peculiarities of the eyes."[37] The ill *body* spoke.[38] The psychological was made visual, given weight and a specific set of meanings as a culturally and historically situated image. Micale, writing about how hysteria is given both metaphorical as well as medical significance, notes that "hysteria is not a disease; rather, it is an alternative physical, verbal, and gestural language, an iconic social communication [….] and the role of the physician is that of semiotician: to decode the hysterical symptoms."[39]

In fact, one of Jean-Marie Charcot's most significant legacies was having systematized the visual image of hysteria. As chief physician from 1862, and then director, of *Salpêtrière*, he was one of the most widely known and respected doctors in the field, and his work on the signs and cures of hysteria had a wide-ranging effect on perception of the illness amongst both the medical profession and the larger public.[40] Not only did he have the hysteric female patients "perform" hysterical attacks (the famous "*grand-hystéro-épilepsie*" or "*grandes hystériques*") at his weekly *Leçons du mardi matins* (1887–1888), but his work at *Salpêtrière* also produced numerous images and photographs intended to document the visual manifestations of the illness.

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[37] Maudsley, *Responsibility in Mental Disease* (London: H. S. King, 1874), cited in Showalter, *Female Malady*, 106.

[38] This was often, however, at the expense of the actual speaking woman. For example, when the "hysteric" Augustine, Charcot's famous young patient, spoke she was ignored, but signs of her body became *listened to*, and the focus of the doctors' attentions. See Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," 312.

[39] Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 182.

[40] *Ibid.*, 109, Charcot also stabilized the term "hysteria," which previously was merely a vague diagnosis of any nervous ailment. He gave it a clear definition with a list of symptoms and causes, although many of Charcot's ideal cases were in fact quite rarely manifested. *Ibid.*, 153.

For example, beginning in 1878, he worked on a series of widely disseminated images, published in *Iconographie photographique*, with Paul Richer, who was his intern and medical artist at *Salpêtrière.*[41] Charcot's *Étude descriptive de la grande attaque hystérique ou attaque hystéro-épileptique et de ses principales variétés* (1879, revised 1885), introduced four stages of hysteria and provided corresponding visual diagrams of the symptoms: 1. *Période épileptoïde* (epileptic episode), in which epileptic like convulsions occur; 2. *Période des contortions et grands movements* (episode of contortions and large movements), sometimes called the *clownism* period with bodily contortions and awkward poses, including the iconic *arc-en-cercle*, an arch in the back when the patient was prostrate; 3. *Période des attitudes passionelles* (episode of passionate attitudes), in which patients performed everyday gestures of roles, such as the penitent, and performed past memories; 4. *Période terminale* (final episode), in which the patient experienced delirium and melancholia (See Fig. 1.1).[42] Other additional symptoms of hysteria ranged from fainting, convulsions, paralyses, and coughing, to "hypersensitivity to physical and emotional stimulations."[43] The hysterical women's poses were also captured in photographs of Augustine, a young female patient of Charcot, whose frequent "performances" of the hysterical attack at Salpêtrière were caught on camera by Régnard.[44] Later, Freud's patient Anna O. would repeat

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[41] There were three volumes of *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière* between 1876–1880; also *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière: Clinique des Maladies du Système Nerveux* also appeared, vols. 1-4 (Paris: Lescronier et Babbé, 1888–1891; vols 5-8 (Paris: L. Bataille, 1988–1895); vols. 9-30 (Masson et Cie.: Paris, 1896–1918). Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 101-16.

[42] *Ibid.*, 117-20. Bryan Hyer also references these in his article "Parsifal *Hystérique*," 285.

[43] Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction*, 3.

[44] These photographs were taken by Régnard and also published in the volumes of *Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*. They appear throughout Didi-Huberman's *Invention of Hysteria*.

aspects of these physical manifestations, including the loss of hearing, contracting extremities, and "bizarre visual aberrations."[45]

Charcot's images are filled with sexual associations as well, from the iconography itself (many of the images of hysterics are decidedly sexual, with women ripping their shirts away from their breasts, or arching their back and pushing their chests outward) to Charcot's naming of the stages – "amorous supplication," "ecstasy," and "eroticism."[46] Indeed, the gestures in the multi-volume *Iconographie photographique Salpêtrière* publications were performative and eroticized.[47] With journals such as *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière: Clinique des maladies du système nerveux* appearing between 1888 and 1918, Charcot's images of the afflicted female body were readily available for public and medical consumption in across Europe, including Vienna. These dramatic bodily positions and gestures were important contributions to the iconography of the hysteric, and are images against which the operatic women could be read.

With its highly regarded medical school and centers for the treatment of mental illness, Vienna was one of the leading European cities for research on psychological disorders. Freud, who studied under Charcot in Paris, translated Charcot's *Leçons du mardi à la Salpêtrière* in 1887–1888, and many of Charcot's writings and Richer's images were available in Vienna.[48]

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[45] Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 59-60; Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer, *Studies in Hysteria*, trans. Nicola Luckhurst (London and New York: Penguin, 2004), 25-50.

[46] Charcot also noted that the ovarian region was the most sensitive area. See Showalter, *Female Malady*, 150, and 164.

[47] See Gemma Blackshaw, "The Pathological Body: Modernist Strategising in Egon Schiele's Self-Portraiture," *Oxford Art Journal* 30, no. 3 (2007): 384. See also the discussion by Didi-Huberman, "Repetitions, Rehearsals, Stagings," Chapter 7 in *Invention of Hysteria*, 175-258.

[48] Freud, who was central to developments in Viennese psychiatry and conceptions of mental illness, encountered Charcot's emerging ideas when he did research in Paris at the Pathological Laboratory at *Salpêtrière* between 1885 and 1886. See Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 8-53. The holdings at the *Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek* in Vienna also

Following Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), the Austrian government also invested in psychiatric reforms. The "First Psychiatric Clinic" at the *Vienna Asylum for Lower Austria* opened in 1870, and the "Second Psychiatric Clinic" at the *Vienna General Hospital* in 1875; *Mauer-Öhling*, a state psychiatric hospital, was built between 1898 and 1902; Krafft-Ebing's private clinic the *Purkersdorf Sanatorium* (1890) was redone by the *Wiener Werkstätte* during 1904–1905; and the architecturally impressive state psychiatric hospital *Steinhof* opened in 1907, and with its 60 buildings designed by Viennese Secessionist Otto Wagner and its 300 patient capacity, it was the largest psychiatric hospital in Europe at that time.[49] This medical community and the treatment of mental illness and illnesses of the nerves was thus very much integrated into Viennese society.

According to Blackshaw, images of Charcot's patients as well as other medical images of the ill body circulated in Vienna during the *fin-de-siècle*. Popular journals published numerous images of bodies suffering from nervous disorders, while artists painted them, making these images very much part of visual modernism.[50] In addition to advertisements in the daily papers for nerve treatments and cures, writers, such as Hofmannsthal and Bahr, addressed the "ethic of modern nerves," the "nervous romanticism," and "mysticism of the nerves."[51] Moreover, "the patient's body became – in many ways – a public body, to be reassuringly displayed to audiences as a pacified, ordered, 'cured' object which could no longer threaten or disrupt the social fabric."[52] As Blackshaw asserts, the visual arts community was closely linked with the medical

include an extensive selection of publications by Charcot and Richer dating from the nineteenth century, which reflects Charcot's influence in Vienna.

[49] See Blackshaw and Topp, "Scrutinised Bodies and Lunatic Utopias," 18.

[50] According to Blackshaw and Topp, *ibid.*, 16.

[51] Cited in Wieber, "The Allure of Nerves," 128-29.

[52] Blackshaw, "The Pathological Body," 389.

world in Vienna, and there was what Richer called an "invasion of pathology into art, and art in the imaging of pathology."[53] The images of diseased and distorted bodies that emerged from the institutions made their way into numerous medical journals, but they were also well known amongst members of the artistic community, and given shape on their canvases. Egon Schiele, one of several artists with connections to the medical community, was given permission to use patients as models, while Schiele's friend, Edwin Osen, also sketched portraits at the Steinhof Asylum. In Schiele's stylized and expressionistic paintings and sketches, the psychologically ill body is captured, with its contortions, grimaces, angular and distorted hands, and limbs. In Klimt's images of diseased women there is often a progression from sexuality to death, with Klimt also painting the physical marks of psychological illness on his subjects' bodies.[54] Critics often saw his works as closer to the medical museum than an artistic space, for example in criticisms in the *Wiener Morgenzeitung*. Writing about Klimt's university paintings, Kraus even remarked in *Die Fackel*, his journal that was widely read in Viennese cultural and intellectual circles: "the chaotic tangle of decrepit bodies is a symbolic representation of conditions at the Vienna General Hospital."[55]

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[53] Richer is, of course, speaking of a wider context than Vienna. Cited in *ibid.*, 388.

[54] Blackshaw, *ibid.*, 399; See also, Wieber, "The Allure of Nerves," 129. Although some of Schiele's paintings are of the ill female body, he actually held progressive views of women, and considered sexuality as a "metaphor of creativity and transcendence," a theme I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 5. Patrick Werkner, "The Child-Woman and Hysteria: Images of the Female Body in the Art of Egon Schiele," in *Egon Schiele: Art, Sexuality, and Viennese Modernism* (Palo Alto, CA: SPOSS, 1994), 59.

[55] "auf dem die chaotische Verwirrung bresthafter Leiber die Zustände im Allgemeinen Krankenhaus symbolisch darstellt." Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel*, lxxiii (April 1901): 13. Translated and cited in Blackshaw, "The Pathological Body," 399.

Staging Illness

As Didi-Huberman suggests, what was seen at Charcot's *Leçons* and documented through either Richer's sketches or the camera's lens, were performative, staged theatrics.[56] Other contemporaries also noted the "performative" aspect of the women's hysteria. For instance, P.C. Dubois wrote in 1904: "The hysteric is an actress, a comedienne, but we never reproach her, for she doesn't know that she is acting."[57] Just as early medical exploration of hysteria arguably borrowed from the stage for its theatrical executions of symptoms, so too did theater and opera borrow from the increasingly well-known medical iconography that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Modern theater began to stage and imitate the bodily aspects of hysteria in what Ortrud Gutjahr calls "*körperlich theatralische Formen*" (bodily, theatrical forms). Indeed, opera scholarship recognizes that some of the qualities of operatic heroines draw from characteristics of untreated "*nosologie*."[58] Thus, following Didi-Huberman's interpretation that Charcot and his patients staged the performances of hysteria, it is not difficult to consider if and how hysteria was re-presented on the operatic stage. Although the operatic portrayals discussed in the following chapters are not precise reenactments of Charcot's "hysterics," based on the reception and the physical markers in the visual traces of these performances, the presentation of these operatic women was certainly evocative of these illnesses. Numerous facial and bodily

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[56] See Didi-Huberman for an interesting discussion of the performative and theatrical aspects regarding presentations of hysteria in these public lectures. He contends that the female patients knew what Charcot wanted to see, and this was reflected, although perhaps unconsciously, in their performances. Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria*, 175-258.

[57] P. C. Dubois, *Des psychonévroses et leurs traitement moral* (Paris: Masson, 1904), 14. Cited in Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," 341.

[58] Ortrud Gutjahr, "Sentas erkennender Schrei und Kundrys kastrierendes Gelächter: Die hysterische Stimme des Erlösungsopfers in Richard Wagners *Der fliegender Holländer* und *Parsifal*," in *Kundry & Elektra und ihre leidenden Schwestern: Schizophrenie und Hysterie: Frauenfiguren im Musik-Theater*, ed. Silvia Kronberger and Ulrich Müller, Musik und Text 53 (Salzburg: Müller-Speiser, 2003), 66. Members of the medical community would likely have attended the operatic performances.

gestures and contortions replicated the movements of and bore striking resemblance to the images that emerged from late nineteenth-century studies of mental illness and hysteria.

Images of the **Ewig-Weibliche**

All of this is juxtaposed, either consciously or unconsciously, against the ideal image of the "healthy" "normal" woman from the nineteenth century, as presented in *fin-de-siècle* art journals, paintings, literature, and on the stage. Alongside the emerging iconography of the dangerous, diseased, sexual woman, there was her counterpart: the chaste woman or the *femme fragile*.[59] According to Mosse, the ideal, chaste woman, such as the German models of the national symbol Germania and her real-life counterpart, Queen Luise of Prussia, were passive, angelic, and embodied "traditional female virtues."[60] The function of these symbolic women was to "protec[t] the normal in society, the health of the nation," and they were "significant [figures] in the more general history of nationalism and its function in controlling the role of the sexes within society."[61] While Germania was often depicted in the heroic role as protective "mother" of the nation, she was also frequently the innocent young woman, immobile, passive, and sedate. For instance in Heine's *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* (1844, *Germany: A Winter's Tale*), she is "the dear, strange, golden-haired virgin Germania."[62] The real-life Queen Luise, likewise, became an icon often made to resemble the Virgin Mary – a "Prussian Madonna."[63] The *Ewig-*

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[59] For a discussion of the various manifestations of the *femme fragile* in art and literature across Europe, see Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 3-24.

[60] Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 16-21.

[61] *Ibid.*, 93. See also: Patricia Herminghouse and Madga Mueller, "Introduction: Looking for Germania," in *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Production of Nation*, ed. Patricia Herminghouse and Madga Mueller (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997), 1-20.

[62] Cited and discussed in Herminghouse and Mueller, "Looking for Germania," 3-6.

[63] Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 93-97.

Weibliche (Eternal Feminine or Eternal-Womanly), exemplified in Gretchen from Goethe's *Faust*, was also understood within late nineteenth-century culture as a chaste and feminine ideal.[64] The concluding line of Goethe's second volume of *Faust* famously references this pure woman and her redemptive role for men: "*Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan*" ("Eternal womanhood leads us above").[65] This *Ewig-Weibliche* was "the feminine principle of love, of mercy and grace, which leads the spirit upwards to the highest perfection […] the beauty of the ideal, symbolized in womanly form."[66]

Operatic equivalents of these women might be found in Elisabeth from *Tannhäuser*, Eva from *Die Meistersinger*, or Margarethe from *Faust*, women who "serve" men and sacrifice themselves and their own desires. In fact, a 1902 study, *Die Frauengestalten Wagners als Typen des "Ewig-Weiblichen"* (*Wagner's Female Figures as Types of the Eternal Feminine*), by Frieda Schwabe explored how Elisabeth from *Tannhäuser*, Senta from *Der fliegende Holländer*, Elsa from *Lohengrin*, and Brünnhilde from *Der Ring des Nibelungen* all were examples of the *Ewig-Weibliche*.[67] Some of the images of these operatic women offer a visual counterpoint to those of Kundry, Salome, and Elektra, which are discussed in the following two chapters. The first two

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[64] This general understanding of Gretchen as a pure ideal was a contradiction since Gretchen has Faust's child out of wedlock, drowns the child, and then is convicted of murder. As Diethe aptly points out: "There was some irony in the way that Gretchen, the archetypal fallen woman, came to be seen as a *Madonna* by cultured Germans, since Goethe had leveled his own critique at society by making the outcast child-murderess Gretchen his ideal: the irony was lost on a society obsessed with its own need to divide women into categories as 'Eves' and 'Madonnas.'" Carol Diethe, *Nietzsche's Woman: Beyond the Whip* (New York: de Gruyter, 1996), 24. Gretchen has already suffered, she acted under the spell of true love rather than sexual desire, and she regretted her transgression. Thus for Goethe, with her sacrifices she represents the Eternal Feminine. For a further discussion of Goethe's Gretchen/Margarethe, see: Adrian del Caro, "Margarethe-Ariadne: Faust's Labyrinth," *Goethe Yearbook* 18 (2001): 223-44.

[65] Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, trans. Philip Wayne (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1959), 288.

[66] Harold Jantz, "The Place of the 'Eternal-Womanly' in Goethe's *Faust* Drama," *PMLA* 68, no. 4 (1953): 792.

[67] Frieda Schwabe, *Die Frauengestalten Wagners als Typen des "Ewig Weiblichen*" (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1902).

photographs are of the *Wiener Hofoper* soprano Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Eva, or "Evchen," in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, a role she performed between 1900 and 1905 at the *Hofoper* (Figs. 1.2 and 1.3). The third is of Lucie Weidt as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, her 1902 debut role at the *Wiener Hofoper* (Fig. 1.4), and the fourth is Maria Jeritza also as Elisabeth (Fig. 1.5).

In these images, the characters embody the "ideal" woman of German iconography, with their downward gazes, their long hair, and their robes fully covering their bodies. They have passive expressions on their faces, and sometimes hold their hands clasped together, resembling what Dijkstra calls the "household nun" and "woman as housekeeper of the male soul."[68] These images present a striking difference to the images discussed in the following two chapters of Weidt as Kundry, one of her best-known roles (compare Fig. 1.4 to Fig. 2.3), and Gutheil-Schoder as Salome and Elektra (compare Figs. 1.2 and 1.3 to Figs. 3.10, 3.15, and 3.16).[69] While Weidt is looking passively downward as Elisabeth, her comportment and mien are entirely different when cast as Kundry. The very same singers moved from depicting these ideal chaste woman – reiterated across a number of operas – to depicting and embodying the "dangerous" sexual woman.

Conclusion

This focus on the physical body in this era, and particularly in Austria and Germany, calls for a further investigation of the very physicality of the female performers and, more generally, an examination into just what the body in *fin-de-siècle* performances communicated. As evident

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[68] Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 8, 13-15. Also, compare the image of Elisabeth here to Edgard Maxence's 1903 painting, *Rosa Mystica*.

[69] In fact, Gutheil-Schoder played a number of important female characters over the course of her career (Salome, Elektra, Carmen, Isolde, Octavian, the premiere of the Woman in Schoenberg's *Erwartung*), and she is discussed at several moments in this dissertation.

from this exposition, there was an iconography of the sexual woman in culture that was intimately tied to discourses of illness, and in particular to hysteria. Given the extent of these discourses and iconography, it seems that there was a significant anxiety about women's social roles and a growing unease with the possibility of their being subjects possessing sexual desires. Indeed, this very possibility of woman possessing sexual desire was often negated through a "diagnosis" (or representation) of pathology or hysteria. As a counterpoint, in *fin-de-siècle* operatic productions there was also a clear iconography of the "chaste" woman, a woman against which the operatic sexual woman could be read as negative. As will be discussed in the following two chapters, the gestures, physical appearance (costume, hair, etc.), and facial expressions together created an iconography of the ill, sexual operatic woman, which in turn worked with the music to reinforce the message of female sexuality as a dangerous, contaminating force, drawing upon and reinforcing the contemporary discourses examined in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Kundry's Arrival in Vienna, 1914: Wagner's Visual and Musical Depictions of Female Sexuality, Illness, and Degeneration in *Parsifal*

> There is about all Wagner's heroines a touch of grand hysteria, something somnambulistic, enraptured and visionary, which lends a curious and disquieting modernity to their romantic posturing. But the figure of Kundry, the "rose of hell," is nothing less than an exercise in mythical pathology; in her agonizing schizoid condition, an instrument of the Devil and penitent hungering after redemption, she is portrayed with an unsparing clinical accuracy, and an audacious naturalism in the exploration and representation of a hideously diseased emotional existence.
>
> –Thomas Mann[1]

In *Parsifal*, Kundry's power is not only musical, but also *visual*. Her music and voice compel us to look at her: when the knights all look in Kundry's direction in Act I and Parsifal directs his gaze toward Kundry in Act II, the music changes strikingly, shifting the focus to Kundry and her dramatic arrivals. The first time she rushes onto the stage, she is accompanied by a pulsing riding theme that interrupts the musical world of the grail, but her convulsions, sexual presence, and gestures also command and disrupt the visual field. In *Parsifal*, the theme of bodily renunciation and the danger of female sexuality are paradoxically placed alongside a focus on drawing the viewer's attention to bodily movement, and particularly to Kundry's body – the female body. But just *what* were the knights and the fascinated audiences in Bayreuth and at the *Wiener Hofoper* looking at? How were understandings of Kundry as a character and overall perception of the opera shaped by what the audiences *saw*? And how did this correspond both with the musical representation of the character and with the larger cultural discourses about female sexuality at the time? Indeed, the men in *Parsifal* are rendered powerless, victims of the musical and physical spectacle of the *femme fatale*.[2] Yet unlike Wagner's Venus from *Tannhäuser* or Ortrud from *Lohengrin*, Kundry is not presented as the typical dangerous operatic

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[1] Mann, "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner," 99.

[2] This is a typical effect of the *femme fatale*. Sabine Hake, "Femme Fatale," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. Friederike Eigler and Susanne Kord (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 163-65.

femme fatale. Rather, with her oscillations between the helpful woman and the dangerous seductress, she plays out on the stage contemporary themes linking female sexuality and illness. As Thomas Mann's comments used in the epigraph reveal, Kundry was "nothing less than an exercise in mythical pathology," with a "touch of grand hysteria" and an "agonizing schizoid condition."[3]

As I argue in this chapter, when *Parsifal* was finally performed in Vienna in 1914, Kundry's musical and visual presentation strongly harmonized with the manifold images and ideas prevalent during the *fin-de-siècle* that connected female sexuality with illness and "degeneration" discussed in the previous chapter.[4] Kundry is a musical disturbance or contagion. She unsettles and disrupts the aural fabric of the musical text and performance. Yet, as I demonstrate, these musical disturbances written in the score are reinforced and furthered through the opera's visual presentations of Kundry, not only as indicated in the stage directions of the "opera text," but also further realized through the details of the performance itself. Indeed, in this opera it seems as though the visual presence of this protagonist is equally important to her musical representation. As both the operatic score and the visual traces of specific performances reveal, the "danger" and unrest created in the libretto and through the sonic signifiers of the opera are given visual resonance for a *fin-de-siècle* audience. Kundry's poses and gestures bear a striking resemblance to those in images of the pathological, hysterical women that circulated in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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[3] Mann, "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner," 99.

[4] See Nordau, *Degeneration*. I will build on Bronfen's, Hyer's, and Smart's important readings of hysteria in *Parsifal* and Kundry, as well as McClary's and Kramer's interpretations of Salome and Elektra. Elisabeth Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," *New German Critique*, no. 69 (1996): 147-61; Brian Hyer, "Parsifal *Hystérique*," *Opera Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2007): 269-320; Smart, *Mimomania*, 195-98.

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the performances of Wagner's *Parsifal* in Vienna in 1914 and shortly thereafter, although I also engage with the details from the score and the influential legacy of the Bayreuth productions.[5] Although *Parsifal* was premiered in 1882 in Bayreuth and was restricted to that venue for the thirty years following Wagner's death, the work itself was familiar to many. Not only did many Viennese travel to Bayreuth to see the opera, but there were also many publications about Wagner in general, and *Parsifal* specifically, that circulated in German and Austrian culture.[6] The 1914 expiration of the *Lex Parsifal* and the new performances of the music drama were much-anticipated events.[7] Here I will read the images of Kundry associated with these early performances in Vienna in relation to predominant contemporaneous images and discourses of illness. As Gilman's work has demonstrated, semiotic understandings of the body are historically, culturally, and locally situated.[8] Although I cannot fully capture exactly how the visual representations of these women were understood, I try to unravel what the representations could have meant *then*, rather than what they mean now.

In this chapter, I examine Kundry's characterization at key moments in *Parsifal*. The sexual Kundry is presented as not only musically but also as visually destabilizing, cast as a danger and threat to the community of the Grail, just as female sexuality and the illnesses associated with it were considered a threat to the health of *fin-de-siècle* society. As Marc Weiner

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[5] *Parsifal* was premiered at the Vienna *Hofoper* on January 14th, 1914 and at the *Volksoper* on January 25th, 1914. It was performed twenty-seven times at the *Hofoper* that season. See *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM.*

[6] See Amanda Glauert, "The Reception of Wagner in Vienna, 1860–1900," in *Wagner in Performance*, ed. Barry Millington and Stewart Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 120-29. In addition, theater and music journals (such as *Die Schaubühne*, *Der Merker*, and *Die Musik*) contained numerous articles about Wagner and his operas prior to *Parsifal*.

[7] For example, daily Viennese newspapers devoted much attention to *Parsifal* in the days preceding the work's Viennese premieres. See especially the *Neue Freie Presse* from January 13th, 1914 and the *Reichspost* from January 13th, 1914.

[8] Sander Gilman, *Sexuality: An Illustrated History*, 1-2, and Sander Gilman, *Picturing Health and Illness: Images of Identity and Difference* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

notes: "The most threatening body in *Parsifal* belongs to Kundry, Klingsor's supreme flower of seduction."[9] The social and musical fabric of the surrounding world is literally disrupted by Kundry and her musical presence, as demonstrated in the first part of this chapter. I begin with an examination of the leitmotifs that draws on historical interpretations of *Parsifal*. Deepening the musical analysis, I then consider Kundry's voice and the orchestral timbres associated with her, alongside her thematic, harmonic, and rhythmic characterization. Her sexuality acts as a potential contagion that must be either reined in through social or tonal laws, or silenced.

As David Levin argues, opera is always a "text in performance," so it is important to look at how *Parsifal* appears/ed on stage, in this case in early twentieth century Vienna.[10] In order to glean some insight into the specific visual representations of Kundry in these Viennese *performances*, in the second part of this chapter I turn both to the "operatic text," which reveals how Kundry is visually characterized in the stage directions, score, and libretto, and to the traces of the performances themselves, including the posed photographs, stage materials, and descriptions of the performances that hint at what the "represented body" looked like for turn of

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[9] Weiner, *Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*, 239. Weiner's discussion of Kundry concerns her "Jewishness" within Anti-Semitic late nineteenth-century discourses. Indeed, much commentary exists about Kundry as a "Wandering Jew" (which Wagner himself noted in a prose sketch) and about her signs of "Jewishness." But, for the sake of space, I will not examine the ways in which the characterization of Kundry draws on nineteenth-century concepts of Jewish culture and "race" in *Parsifal*. Rather, I choose to limit my focus here to her sexual representation within discussions of hysteria as a social disturbance. While these themes of sexuality and hysteria are also related to Anti-Semitism, as Gilman's work on Salome has shown, I instead choose to focus the attention on female sexuality in general. For a discussion of Kundry as a threat in this context, see Weiner, who looks at the bodily and aural markers of "Jewishness" in *Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*, 229, 238-47, 304-6; and Nike Wagner, who examines nineteenth-century discourses of "Jewishness" and Anti-Semitism in relation to Kundry in: Nike Wagner, *Wagner Theater* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1998), 201-26. Another recent article that discusses Kundry's "Jewish Voice" and markers of Jewish identity is: Benjamin Binder, "Kundry and the Jewish Voice: Anti-Semitism and Musical Transcendence in Wagner's *Parsifal*," *Current Musicology* no. 87 (2009): 47-131.

[10] For the terms "performance text" and its relation to the "opera text," the opera's material "prior to performance," see Levin, *Unsettling Opera*, especially pages 11-12, 164. See also the introduction to this dissertation.

the century audiences. There were numerous productions in Vienna over the course of many nights and years, resulting in the impossibility of writing about a "Performance" of *Parsifal* in Vienna. There was no single "Performance" but were, rather, multiple *performances* with different singers, conductors, and varying details that created an overall impression of *Parsifal*.[11] The represented operatic body is not stable, but always taken up and constantly changing from performance to performance. Thus, in this chapter I examine different productions and performances of *Parsifal* in order to get an overall sense of the opera in early twentieth century Vienna, a method I repeat in the following chapter for *Salome* and *Elektra*. The reception of these *Parsifals* will also be considered in order to ascertain how Kundry was read and understood. Therefore, I analyze the reception materials alongside the musical and visual materials to demonstrate how the overall depiction of Kundry in the Vienna *Parsifals* could be read within the symptoms and iconography of sexuality and illness of that era.

Parsifal *in Context*

Much compelling work has appeared about *Parsifal* in recent years, including excellent scholarship on how illness figures in the work. For example, in "Syphilis, Suffering, and the Social Order," Hutcheon and Hutcheon examine the metaphor of illness, and argue that given the symptoms, the manner in which it is temporarily alleviated, and the textual associations between the injury and sexuality, Amfortas's injury seems to be a syphilitic infection. The injury, contracted from Klingsor's spear, is the result of Amfortas falling victim to Kundry's sexual

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[11] Again as Gundela Kreuzer notes, citing German theater scholar Erika Lichte-Fischer's work, the difference between "performance" and "production," (or "*Inszenierung*"), is that "the former is a unique, irretrievable event that depends on the presence of performers and spectators at a given time and place; the latter is the 'planned performative generation of materiality' – a performance strategy, if you will, that always allows for contingent factors, such as changes in the cast, spontaneous acting, or the reactions of spectators." See Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's *Don Carlos*," 153. See also the dissertation's "Introduction."

allure, and it is characterized in a similar way as syphilis was in the nineteenth century.[12] In terms of hysteria in *Parsifal*, Elizabeth Bronfen, Mary Ann Smart, and Brian Hyer have all offered convincing analyses of this particular illness in the music drama. *Parsifal*, as Bronfen notes, was composed during the historical moment of what Didi-Huberman calls the "invention of hysteria," so it is indeed important to examine the music drama within this framework. While Bronfen focuses on hysteria in Kundry and her "hystericization of others" – Parsifal and Amfortas – Hyer examines how hysteria figures in the character Parsifal, noting that "the hysterical seizures being performed before audiences at the *Salpêtrière* in Paris were being dis/simulated on stage before the same audiences at the *Festspielhaus* in Bayreuth."[13] Slavoj Žižek also suggests that Kundry represents "(hysterical-seductive) femininity,"[14] and Anthony Winterbourne interprets Kundry's split personality (specifically referencing Kundry's laughter) as indicative of hysteria based on the Freudian symptom of the "splitting of the mind." For Winterbourne, Kundry can be read as an hysteric with additional signs such as "guilt," "ecstatic, intoxicated states," and "psychic fragmentation."[15]

While Bronfen considers Kundry's hysteria within the psychoanalytic framework of trauma and repression that is informed by Freud and Lacan, I am interested in placing Kundry within a contemporary cultural understanding of sexual desire as one of the causes of hysteria – a

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[12] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, "Syphilis, Suffering, and the Social Order," in *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 67-76. Kundry and the way in which her presence in the Grail community is treated also conveys the message of contagious illness and is another example of Kundry's sexuality causing illness and threatening the community.

[13] Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," 153; Hyer, "Parsifal *Hystérique*," 287. In the second part of the article, Hyer maps Charcot's four stages of the "*grande attaque hystérique*" onto *Parsifal*, and notes that Parsifal's second-act aria in fact conforms to Charcot's description of the *grande attaque* down to the detail – "the correspondences are extraordinary." Hyer, "Parsifal *Hystérique*," 287.

[14] Slavoj Žižek, "Forward: Why is Wagner Worth Saving," in *In Search of Wagner*, by Theodor Adorno, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 2005), xxv.

[15] Antony Winterbourne, *A Pagan Spoiled: Sex and Character in Wagner's* Parsifal (London: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), 70.

reading informed by the cultural context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses on female madness rather than a reading that draws on later psychoanalytic theory. At this historical moment, Freud's own idea of trauma as a cause of hysteria was not yet widely taken up within society.[16] Thus it is within an earlier cultural framework that I examine the Viennese Kundrys and consider how contemporaneous descriptions of the character resonate with this context. I hesitate to claim that an exact *attaque* appears with Kundry, although given the strong reaction not only to Wagner's *Parsifal* in general, but specifically to Kundry as hysteric in the contemporary press, it is important to look at *why* Kundry could be read this way in specific performances.

Female sexuality and the negative effect it has on male society is an important thread in Wagner's *Parsifal*. In Act I, Amfortas is not strong enough to withstand Kundry's sexual allure. In Act II, we are transported to Klingsor's magic gardens, which Adorno referred to as "dreamland brothels" that "no one can leave unscathed,"[17] where the maidens try to seduce Parsifal. Through her call, Kundry seduces him to stay. Yet by thinking of the men of the community and Amfortas, Parsifal is able to withstand her sexual advances. In Act III, Kundry renounces her sin and is redeemed, but at the same time, she is silenced. No longer the wild, sexual woman, no longer disturbing the Grail society, she disappears.

Kundry, her seduction of Parsifal, and her contradictions have long been a topic of consideration. Is she redeemed at the end of the opera? Or does she redeem Parsifal? How should her duality be interpreted when she shifts from the helping, healing Kundry of Act I, to the

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[16] While I agree with Bronfen's excellent reading of Kundry as an hysteric, here I am interested in the sexual etiology of hysteria in relation to Kundry rather than reading Kundry as an example of hysteria's etiology of trauma or understanding Kundry's hysteria as a resulting "strategy of representation" and "self-expression," as Bronfen does. Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," 154.

[17] Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 83.

harmful seductress of Act II? Her sexuality is very much a central facet of *Parsifal*, and seemed to be part of Wagner's conception of the character. For example, Wagner explicitly makes her sexual through his alterations to the narrative; Kundry becomes an amalgamation of more than one character from Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal* poem, the source of the libretto, when he merges the seductress Lady Orgeluse with "Cundrie."[18] Wagner's letters to Mathilde Wesendonck are further evidence of his conceptualizing Kundry as a "wild" woman who exemplifies sexual desire. In an August 1860 letter emphasizing Kundry's sexuality, he wrote:

> Didn't I tell you once, that the fabulous wild errand-woman of the Grail is to be one and the same with the temptress of the second act? […] This strange uncanny creature that slavelike serves the Grail-knights with unwearying zeal, fulfills the most untold commissions, and lies cowering in a corner till she's told to execute some office of uncommon hardship […] then suddenly we meet her again, worn, gruesome, wan and haggard […] her eye seems ever seeking for the right one, – already has she fancied to, but never found him; nor what she's seeking, does she really know: it is sheer instinct. – When Parzival, the dullard, comes into the land, she cannot turn her gaze away from him; some strange thing must be passing in her; she knows it not, but fixes on him […] Plainly, she looks to him for something never-heard, – but all is vague and shadowy, no knowledge, only craving, gloaming.[19]

In his writings and earlier music dramas, Wagner, under the influence of Feuerbach, advocated what he perceived to be a healthy, chaste type of love, rather than a "modern" love.[20] Yet, here in *Parsifal*, a work that Nietzsche disparagingly called "a praise to chastity," Wagner nonetheless depicts an explicitly physical and highly sexual desire in the character of Kundry.

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[18] Wagner combines "Cundrie" and Lady Orgeleuse. Lucy Beckett, *Parsifal*, Cambridge Opera Handbook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 10.

[19] Paris beginning of August, 1860. *Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 2nd ed. (New York: Vienna House, 1972), 241. Original in: *Richard Wagner an Mathilde Wesendonck: Tagebuchblätter und Briefe, 1853–1871*, ed. Wolfgang Golther (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1913), 243-44. Another earlier example is from a letter Wagner wrote to Wesendonck in mid-December, 1858: "The *Parzifal* has occupied me much: in particular a singular creation, a strangely world-daemonic woman (the Grail's messenger), is dawning upon me with ever greater life and fascination." *Ibid.*, 93-94; *ibid.*, 110. With Wagner's language – "instinct," "only craving" – one cannot help but think of Weininger's descriptions of women.

[20] According to Laurence Dreyfus, *Wagner and the Erotic Impulse* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 50-51, 64-65.

Although one could argue that Wagner's earlier works, such as *Der fliegende Holländer, Tristan und Isolde*, *Das Liebesverbot* celebrate love, reactions to *Parsifal* reveal what was perceived to be a distinct break from his earlier works. For example, in a 1907–1908 article in the journal *Die Musik*, the author notes that Kundry is a "*hysterisch lachenende Weibes*" ("hysterical laughing woman"), entirely different than Wagner's earlier female characters.[21]

At this stage in Wagner's life, Schopenhauer was an influential figure for him, and according to the pessimistic philosopher, women were considered destined to be immoral, unable to control their impulses and instincts. Ultimately a woman's inability to surmount the "will-to-live" "expresses itself most strongly in the sexual impulse."[22] Schopenhauer critically viewed the "will-to-live" as one's base, animalistic bodily and sexual instinct, or basically the natural instinct of survival, and his nihilistic metaphysics argues for the necessity of overcoming and

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[21] See Richard Zimmermann, "Das Künstlerdrama in Wagners *Parsifal*," *Die Musik* VII, no. 19 "Wagner Heft" (1907–1908): 5-6. As Steven Burns has recently remarked, there was a shift in how Wagner perceived women between when he created Brünnhilde and Isolde, and when he created Kundry: "[B]y the time he wrote *Parsifal* his main female character, Kundry, suggests that the woman's place in the universe is to be the *object* in which 'only a *subject* [a man] will be able to attain consciousness of itself.'" Inner citation of Weininger, "Über die letzten Dinge," 39, in Steven Burns, "Introduction," *A Translation of Weininger's* Über die letzten Dinge *(1904/1907) On Last Things* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 2001), xxxiv. Thus, it is not surprising that Wagner's representations of women, the body, and sexuality shift, as is clear from Nietzsche's reaction below. (Nietzsche, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 616), Nietzsche writes that *Parsifal* is: "a praise to chastity" "a work of perfidy, of vindictiveness, of a secret mix to poison the presuppositions of life – a bad work. The preaching of chastity remains an incitement to perversity [*Wildnatur*]: I despise everyone who does not experience *Parsifal* as an attempted assassination of basic ethics." Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke* VI (1980), 431). Nietzsche dismissed Schopenhauer's "Will" and was critical of any rejection of the body, calling for a "will to life." (See "The Despisers of the Body," in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 61-63). Ironically, Wagner's operas were perceived as what Kalbeck called "unleashing the senses." Margaret Notley, "Brahms as Liberal: Genre, Style, and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna," *19th-Century Music* 17, no. 2 (1993): 107.

[22] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1966), 330, see also 114. Schopenhauer critically views the "will-to-life" as one's base, animalistic bodily and sexual instinct, or basically the natural instinct of survival, and his nihilistic metaphysics argues for the necessity of overcoming and denying the physical "will-to-life" as part of the ascetic's higher goal. I consider the Grail community's desire to continue not the same instinctual desire that Schopenhauer means with the term "will-to-life." Their very celibacy, asceticism, and rejection of the sexual, namely Kundry, is an example of Schopenhauer's denial of the "will-to-life." Indeed, the opera demonstrates that succumbing to one's individual "will-to-life," leads to ruin for the community.

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***Vienna's* Parsifals**

By 1914, Wagner's operatic works were well known in Vienna. Numerous influential members of society, artists, composers, literary, medical, and political figures made the journey to Bayreuth to see his operas and to participate in the cultural experience of the festival. Moreover, Vienna itself was a central location for Wagnerian performance, with multiple performances of Wagner's music dramas at the *Hofoper*, and numerous singers, such as Anna von Bahr-Mildenburg and Eric Schmedes, who performed the same roles on both the *Wiener*

[23] "Elsa, the Woman [...] that most positive expression of the purest instinct of the senses." Richard Wagner, "A Communication to My Friends," in *Prose Works*, vol. 1, *The Art-Work of the Future*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (New York: Broude Brothers, 1892), 347. "Elsa, das Weib [...] – diese notwendigste Wesenäußerung der reinsten, sinnlichen Unwillkür." Richard Wagner, "Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde," in *Dichtungen und Schriften*, vol. 6, *Reformschriften 1849–1852*, ed. Dieter Borchmeyer (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1983), 278.

Hofoper and Bayreuth stages.[24] While Bayreuth was the Wagnerian summer destination, Vienna acted as an important Wagner center during the winter.[25] All of Wagner's other operatic works were frequently performed at the *Hofoper*, while Mahler and Roller undertook a completely new staging of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1903 and (an ultimately incomplete) *Ring* Cycle beginning with *Das Rheingold* in 1904. Along with Wagner societies and even a Wagner museum in Vienna, the sheer number of articles and essays about Wagner attest to his cultural importance at the time. Commentaries analyzing *Parsifal* and Wagner's music dramas appeared in *fin-de-siècle* music journals and newspapers, while there were tensions between the Wagnerites and the Brahms supporters, with journalists taking sides in the debates.[26]

Parsifal was staged in two different productions in Vienna in 1914 following the lifting of the *Lex Parsifal*. The first production was at the *Hofoper* on January 14th under conductor Hans Gregor, with staging by Wilhelm Wymetal, and staring Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry.[27] The second production was at the *Volksoper* on January 25th. Audreieth conducted, Rainer Simons was responsible for the stage direction, and Maria Ranzenberg sang Kundry. For a list of these productions, see Appendix A. Both 1914 productions stayed fairly close to the original Bayreuth

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[24] The complete *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, as well as *Die Meistersinger*, *Tristan und Isolde* (a new production with Roller), *Der fliegende Höllander*, and *Tannhäuser* were all performed in the years leading up to *Salome*'s and *Elektra*'s performances. See the *Wiener Hofoper Theaterzettel* held at the *ÖTM*. For contemporaneous comments on performances of these operas and these singers, see: Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Diaries 1898–1902*, trans. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

[25] See Steinberg, *Listening to Reason*, 198. Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 211.

[26] See Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 210-11; Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25-30, and Sandra McColl, "The Politics of Art in the Aftermath of Wagner," in *Music Criticism in Vienna 1896–1897: Critically Moving Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 108-65. Music and theater journals, such as *Die Weltbühne*, *Die Schaubühne*, *Der Merker*, *and Die Musik*, all contained numerous articles about Wagner and his operas during these years.

[27] On the second night, Paula Windheuser sang Kundry, while other singers between 1914 and 1918 included Lucille Weidt, Emma Hoy, and Marie Gutheil-Schoder. Roller and Brioschi did the stage design. *Wiener Hofoper Theaterzettel* held at the *ÖTM*.

versions, likely offering Viennese audiences a presentation of Kundry similar to those seen in Bayreuth from 1882 onward, although with some variation. "The largest houses hired singers trained in their roles at Bayreuth and copied the production with any first-hand assistance available."[28] For example, the first Viennese *Hofoper* Kundry, Bahr-Mildenburg, had prior experience with the role at Bayreuth, and Schmedes (Parsifal) and Mayr (Gurnemanz) also had sung their roles at Bayreuth under Cosima Wagner.[29] Yet, given the particular context of Vienna, even visual cues developed in Bayreuth would resonate and be read differently in this new setting. Furthermore, there were indeed some minor changes. Alfred Roller, who had garnered much attention for the symbolism, lighting, and designs in his 1903 *Hofoper* production of *Tristan und Isolde*, worked on the stage design, while at the *Volksoper*, Heinrich Lefler designed more delicate *Jugendstil* costumes.[30]

Much attention was given to the Viennese premieres at the *Hofoper*, where it was performed twenty-seven times that year, and at the *Volksoper*.[31] These two productions of *Parsifal* were important cultural events in Vienna. The satirical weekly illustrated *Die Bombe* made fun of *Parsifal*'s high prices for several weeks (from January 9th until February 1st, including on the cover of the February 1st edition), while newspapers devoted much space to discussing the upcoming event. For example, the *Neue Freie Presse* contained *feuilletons* to

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[28] Beckett, *Parsifal*, 94-95. Indeed, Cosima closely followed Wagner's wishes regarding *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, and many of the later 1914 productions of *Parsifal* seemingly attempted to follow the "ideal" *Parsifal* production. See Katherine R. Syer, "*Parsifal* on Stage," in *A Companion to Wagner's* Parsifal, ed. William Kinderman and Katherine R. Syer (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 285, 293. Perhaps *Parsifal* had been built up so much that these early new productions had to replicate the "ideal" *Parsifal*.

[29] Bahr-Mildenburg first performed the role at Bayreuth under Cosima in 1897. See "Bayreuth," from *Bayreuth Stimme*, in which Bahr-Mildenburg chronicled her experiences studying Wagnerian roles under Cosima at Bayreuth, and how these roles remained close to Wagner's "ideal." See Anna Bahr-Mildenburg and Hermann Bahr, *Bayreuth Stimme*, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, 1912).

[30] For details of the various stagings of *Parsifal*, see Syer, "*Parsifal* on Stage," 277-99.

[31] *Ibid.*, 296. *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM.*

introduce the work to the public in the days leading up to the premiere, while there were also public talks about the work (as advertised in the *Reichspost*). This cultural and media anticipation set the stage for what the audience would expect in *Parsifal*. And indeed, by the time the Viennese performances took place, many Viennese opera regulars would have already experienced the spectacle at Bayreuth. For those who had not yet seen it, there was plenty of published material to familiarize themselves with the music drama. Not only did the publisher Schott print pocket size copies of the full score starting in 1902, but there were also numerous articles devoted to *Parsifal*, including thematic and character analyses, as well as several guidebook or *Opernführer* available for purchase.[32] Wolzogen's 1882 thematic guidebook, *Thematischer Leitfaden durch die Musik des* Parsifal (*Thematic Guide through the Music of* Parsifal), which named, analyzed, and interpreted the musical themes and connected them to particular characters or concepts, would have circulated prior to the Vienna premieres – it went through nineteen editions between its appearance in 1882 and 1911. Maurice Kufferath, Albert Heintz, and Oskar Eichberg also wrote some of the better-known guides.[33] According to Christian Thorau, this was a new way of analyzing the music, or as I would add, a new way of listening and seeing.[34] Regarding contemporaneous attitudes toward the function of the

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[32] *Ibid.*, 281. The article about Kundry is: Wilhelm Lubosch, "Kundry und der Dritte Akt des Parsifal: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Dramas," *Die Musik* 1, nos. 20-21 (1902): 1883-91.

[33] Wolzogen lists 26 leitmotifs, Heintz lists 66, and Eichberg lists 23. As Stephen C. Meyer observes, many of the guidebooks that appeared following Wolzogen's work were influenced by his leitmotivic analysis. See Stephen C. Meyer, "Illustrating Transcendence: *Parsifal*, Franz Stassen, and the Leitmotif," *The Musical Quarterly* 92, nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer, 2009): 9. See also Maurice Kufferath, *Parsifal de Richard Wagner* (Paris: Librarie Fischbacher, 1890); Hans von Wolzogen, *Thematic Guide through the Music of* Parsifal [original: *Thematischer Leitfaden durch die Musik des* Parsifal (Leipzig: Senf, 1882]. For an in-depth discussion of Wagner's guidebooks, including the number of publications and editions, see: Thorau, *Semantisierte Sinnlichkeit: Studien zu Rezeption und Zeichenstruktur der Leitmotivtechnik Richard Wagners*, esp. 168-75.

[34] Even though Wagner neither rejected nor fully endorsed these leitmotifs, they remain an important window into how people listened to and understood his music. See Thorau, "Guides for Wagnerites:

guidebooks and leitmotifs, Hanslick wrote that Wagner's "explicit direction is characteristic. If the listener is to understand and enjoy *Parsifal* he must have first committed the leitmotifs to memory." [35] Despite Wagner's lack of endorsement of the guidebooks, Wolzogen's "*thematischer Leitfaden*" were immensely popular.[36] Thus the 1914 Vienna audience would likely have been familiar with these guidebooks. So even before the audience set foot in the opera house, Kundry's themes could be familiar and recognized as outside the established musical order of the Grail Community because the musical motives, textures, and rhythms associated with Kundry are different from the music of the other characters (apart from Klingsor), and this is made clear in the inclusion and description of her thematic material. In fact, at several times in *Parsifal*, Kundry's themes disrupt the rhythm and texture of the music, which is immediately apparent in performance. Several of these guidebooks, such as Kufferath's, take the reader step by step through the music drama, and make explicit how Kundry's musical material and "wild," "beastly" actions should be interpreted and understood – although the press and the analyses of the opera as well likely shaped attitudes toward the work even before the audience stepped inside the opera house.

Leitmotifs and Wagnerian Listening," 133-50. Weiner also notes that Wagner's audience also had a certain mode of listening to the music as well, and that certain keys had specific meanings. Weiner, *Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*, 25-26.

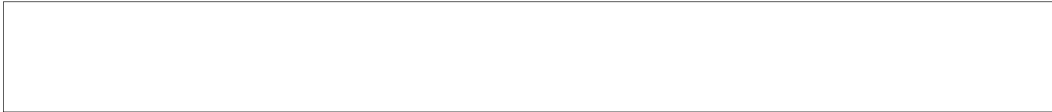
[35] Hanslick, *Parsifal* review in the Viennese newspaper, *Neue Freie Presse*, July 1882. Translated in Eduard Hanslick, "Parsifal Review," in *Bayreuth: The Early Years: An Account of the Early Decades of the Wagner Festival as seen by the Celebrated Visitors and Participants*, ed. Robert Hartford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 122.

[36] Meyer, "Illustrating Transcendence," 9-10. According to Meyer, in "Über die Anwendung" Wagner worried that the leitmotifs will be fixed to single dramatic moments rather than musical. *Ibid.*, 29. See also Richard Wagner, "On the Application of Music to Drama," *Prose Works*, vol. VI, *Religion and Art*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (New York: Broude Brothers, 1897), 184. Richard Wagner, "Über die Anwendung der Musik auf das Drama," in *Dichtungen und Schriften*, vol. 9, *Beethoven: Späte dramaturgische Schriften*, ed. Dieter Borchmeyer (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1983), 324-42.

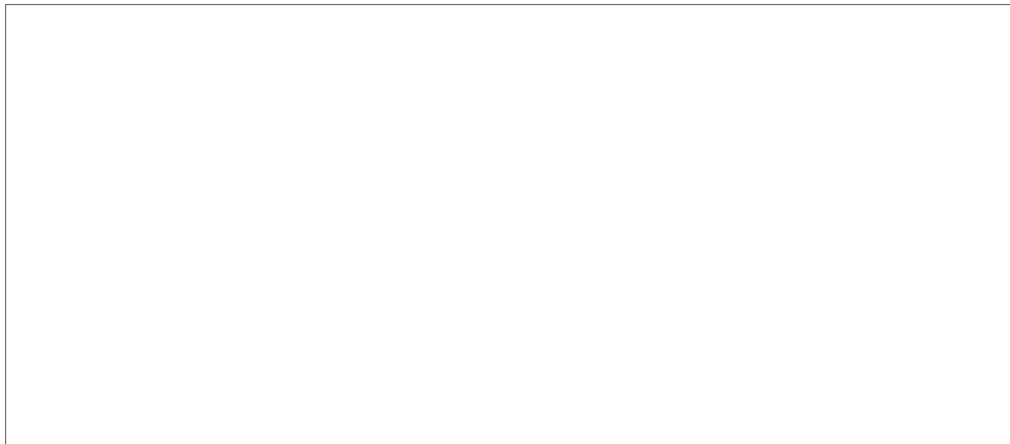
Kundry as Musical Disruption

From the opening moments of *Parsifal*, Wagner establishes the musical atmosphere of the Grail Brotherhood for the audience as a diatonic and harmonically stable world, except when Kundry's chromaticism disrupts it.[37] For example, the Communion theme of the Brotherhood is in A♭ major (Ex. 2.1), and the Grail theme and the Faith theme are also in A♭ major (Ex. 2.2).

Ex. 2.1: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Communion Theme (Prelude to Act I, mm. 1 – 5).



Ex. 2.2: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Grail theme followed by Faith theme (Prelude to Act I, p. 4).[38]



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[37] Some of the scholars who mention the musical qualities of these two realms are: William Kinderman, "The Genesis of the Music," in *A Companion to Wagner's* Parsifal, ed. William Kinderman and Katherine R. Syer (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 133-76; Ursula Kienzle, "*Parsifal* and Religion: A Christian Music Drama?" in *A Companion to Wagner's Parsifal*, ed. William Kinderman and Katherine R. Syer (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 81-132; Arnold Whittall, "The Music," in *Parsifal*, ed. Lucy Beckett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 86. Ryan Minor also notes the diatonicism, arguing that the realm of the Grail community is a separate musical "space" from the chromatic space of "yearning" of the soloists and the orchestra. See also Ryan Minor, "Wagner's Last Chorus: Consecrating Space and Spectatorship in *Parsifal*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 17, no. 1 (2005): 34. It is also noteworthy that in earlier works such as *Tannhäuser*, the overtly sensual world of Venusburg is associated with E major, a sharp key area, while the Divine Pilgrims' realm is associated with E♭ major, a flat key area. For a discussion of Wagner's "associative tonality," see Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution," *19th-Century Music* 1, no. 1 (1977): 52.

[38] The piano musical examples will have the page number listed. All the inserted musical examples are from: Richard Wagner, *Parsifal: Ein Bühnenweihfestspiel*, English trans. Stuart Robb (New York: G. Schirmer, 1962), unless otherwise indicated.

Themes associated with individual members of the community also are musically compatible with the Brotherhood's music, often sounding in closely related keys. Gurnemanz's opening passage in E♭ major is closely related to the musical realm of the A♭ major Communion theme, and his vocal entry melodically and harmonically continues the orchestral theme (Ex. 2.3). Even the knights' entrances are in A♭ major, while Titurel's music is in C♭. Yet, with Klingsor in b minor and Kundry generally occupying sharp key areas, it seems as though Wagner delineated a polarity between flat keys versus sharp keys, major versus minor, stable versus unstable harmonies, that correspond to "good" and "evil." Although this reading of Wagner's music operating within binaries may seem reductive and perhaps overly simplistic, Wagner himself established these types of musical oppositions in many of his earlier works. For example, in *Tannhäuser*, Elisabeth and Venus are overtly characterized by diatonicism versus chromaticism. Scholars have also commented upon the "associative" use of tonality in Wagner's music dramas, as well as the contrast opposition between chromaticism and diatonicism in *Parsifal* specifically.[39]

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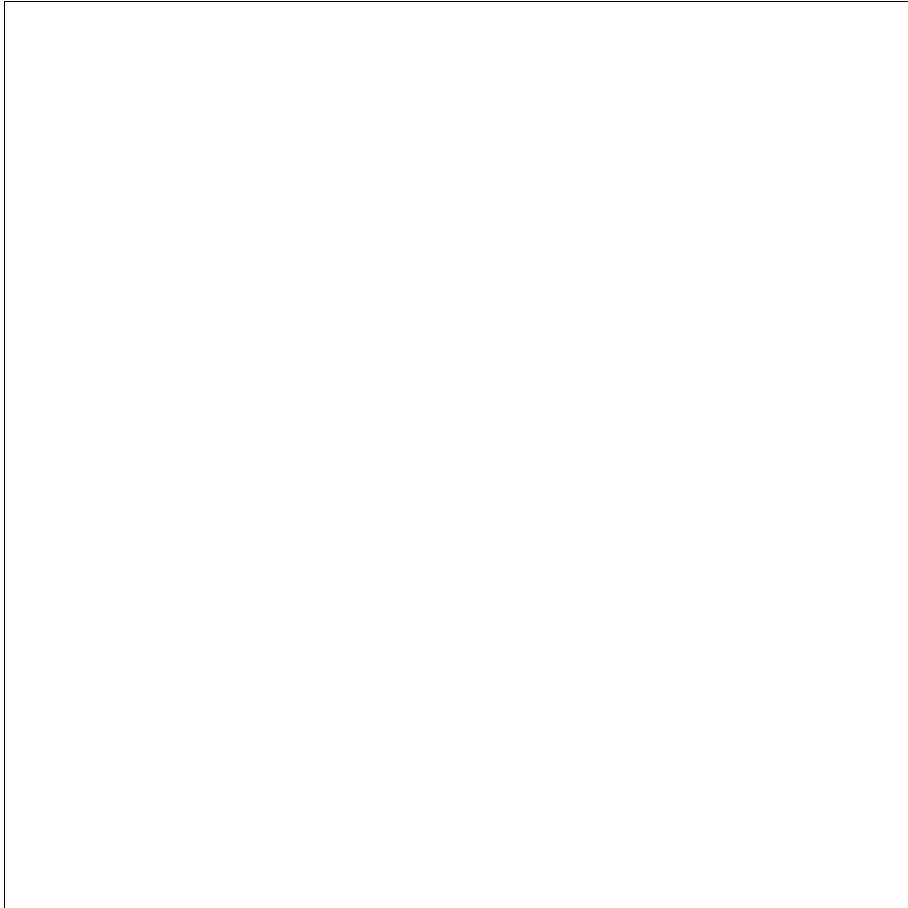
[39] Dahlhaus mentions the diatonic/chromatic split amongst characters. Carl Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 151. See also, Whittall, "The Music," in *Parsifal*, 69-70; Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Syphilis, Suffering, and the Social Order," 67-68.

Ex. 2.3: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Gurnemanz accompanied by Communion and Grail themes (Act I, p. 8).

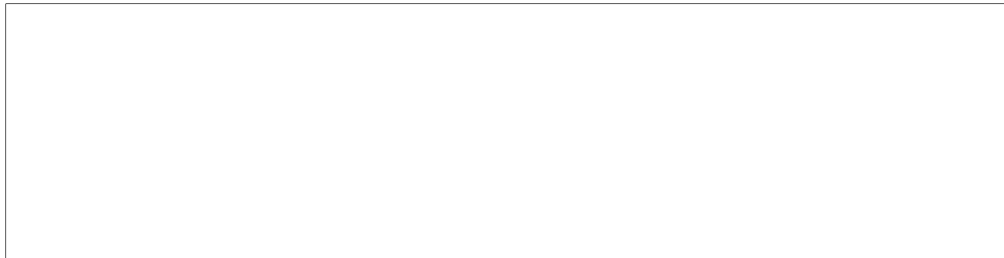


Kundry's strikingly different musical presence disturbs the sound world of the Grail community. Her themes are chromatic and musically unstable, frequently containing unresolved dissonances. Amfortas's music is chromatic because he was contaminated by Kundry's sexuality, while Parsifal's music also alters, shifting away from his strongly tonal music to adopt her chromatic language when he is confronted with Kundry – first when she tells him of his mother in Act I, and later following the kiss in Act II.

Even prior to her first appearance onstage, Kundry's destabilising presence is heard in the Grail and Communion themes. According to Paul Bekker, Kundry's Tristan-like theme "passes

into a chromatic distortion of the Grail theme."[40] As William Kinderman has also argued, her very presence alters the "Communion" theme, with the descending minor second from A♭ to G preventing the proper resolution to A♭ major in the theme, which indicates that the Grail Community is contaminated, suffering. The initial presentation of the Communion theme begins in A♭ major then veers unexpectedly toward c minor in measure three, as though led astray (Ex. 2.1). The disruption is only eliminated in Act III following Kundry's *Entseelung* and musical silencing (Ex. 2.4).[41] Cosima Wagner reported Wagner's description of the Communion theme in her diary as: "Amfortas's sufferings are contained in it."[42] Kundry causes Amfortas's physical wound, and this injury is projected into the music.

Ex. 2.4: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Upward resolution of the Communion theme (Act III, 7mm – 3mm from the end).



[40] Paul Bekker, *Wagner: His Life in Work* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971), 495. [Original: *Wagner: Das Leben im Werk* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstatt, 1924)].

[41] William Kinderman, "Wagner's *Parsifal*: Musical Form and the Drama of Redemption," *Journal of Musicology* 4, no. 4 (Autumn, 1986): 432-34, 442-46. Minor also notes that this A♭ Communion theme is not only associated with the ritual of communion, but also with appearances of the Grail. Minor, "Wagner's Last Chorus," 4. Interestingly the "Communion" theme is also called the "*Leibesmahlthema*" (Agape Theme) in some early scores and guides, such as in the "*Motivangabe*" (motive indications) by Carl Waack found at the beginning of the 1914 Breitkopf und Hartel vocal score of *Parsifal*. Carl Waack, "*Motivangabe*," in *Parsifal: Bühnenweihfestspiel in drei Aufzüge* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914).

[42] "'Die Schmerzen Amfortas' sind darin enthalten', sagt mir R." Cosima Wagner's report of Wagner's description of the Holy Communion ("*Abendmahl*") theme in her diary entry. Cosima Wagner, "August 11, 1877," *Diaries*, vol. I, *1869–1877*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, trans. Geoffrey Skelton (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 977. Original found at: Cosima Wagner, "Sonnabend 11ten, 1877," *Cosima Wagner: Die Tagebücher*, vol. I, *1869–1877*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack (Munich and Zurich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1976), 1065. Cited also in Kinderman, "Wagner's *Parsifal*," 432-33.

With her first dramatic entrance, Kundry directly disrupts the musical texture along with the melodic and harmonic palette of the Brotherhood. Prior to her arrival, the music in the community is calm, tonally and rhythmically stable (apart from the A♭–G in the Communion theme), with sparse orchestral gestures accompanying Gurnemanz's narration (Ex. 2.3). Yet, the leitmotifs that accompany Kundry's entrance (Ex. 2.5) are rhythmic and melodic intrusions to the already established texture and the rhythmic simplicity of the Grail domain.[43] Her riding theme has pulsing dotted rhythms and an angular, leaping melodic line that is accompanied by anxious oscillations in the lower strings. This accompaniment is, in Wolzogen's description, a "driving *unisono* of buzzing octaves," with a theme described as a "riding motive" that "leaps forth from it, chromatically pressing upward from below, and in short, violent leaps galloping to the height, from which place the real, personal *Kundry-motive* then plunges down through four octaves."[44] Wolzogen continues, "the wild witch has swung herself off!" and "it is the expression also of her insatiable demoniacal laughter."[45] Kufferath calls this theme "bizarre and savage […] the theme of Kundry, the demon. Wagner seems to have sought the satanic laugh of the seductress and the malediction that weighs on her."[46]

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[43] Minor also states that the early presentation of the Communion theme is "timeless" because of its free, loose rhythm. Minor, "Wagner's Last Chorus," 7.

[44] Wolzogen, *Thematic Guide through the Music of* Parsifal, 30.

[45] *Ibid.* Wolzogen thought that the "development of the themes themselves, is the constant lively image of the drama, viewed from the musical side, i .e. According to the inner psychical potencies of its poetical moments and motives." *Ibid.*, 21. Thus the music mirrors and deepens the drama, showing its psychic inner side that cannot be completely conveyed in the drama. Following Wolzogen's understanding of the themes, Kundry's agitated riding music potentially reveals her inner wildness and unrest.

[46] "bizarre et sauvage…le thème de Kundry, la démone. Wagner semble avoir cherché, le rire satanique de la séductrice et la malédiction qui pèse sur elle." Kufferath, *Parsifal de Richard Wagner*, 227-28. Adler also calls this theme Kundry's wild essence, Guido Adler, *Richard Wagner: Vorlesungen* (Munich: Drei Masken, 1923), 340.

Ex. 2.5: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Kundry's "Riding" motive & chromatic descending theme (Act I, p. 14).[47]

The ascending 32nd-note motives that the strings play anticipating her arrival create mounting tension and the knights look to the right then announce her arrival ("See there, the wild rider! […] How the mane of her devil's mare is flying"), while the sequential appearances of this thirty-second note motive and the riding motive sound throughout the orchestra, over an oscillation between F♯ and E♯, which together create harmonic instability.[48] Following a jarring, unresolved half-diminished seventh chord, two downward arpeggiations of this chord culminate in a descending chromatic motion to end on an e minor chord. A few moments later, Kundry's chromatic "otherness" and disruptive nature is further reinforced with a chromatic upward

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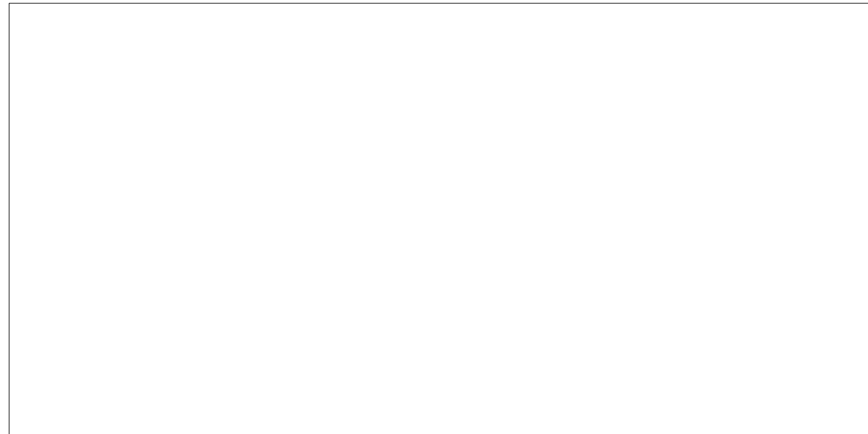
[47] This excerpt is from: Richard Wagner, *Parsifal: Ein Bühnenweihfestspiel*, piano reduction R. Kleinmichel, English trans. H. &. F. Corder (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, n.d.).

[48] "Seht dort, die wilde Reiterin!" "Hei! Wie fliegen der Teufelsmähre die Mähnen!"

passage emerging from the orchestra following Gurnemanz's description of her within the Grail community (Ex. 2.6).[49]

Ex. 2.6: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Gurnemanz sings about Kundry (Act I, p. **25**).



Throughout all of these passages, Kundry is timbrally "othered" through distinct instrumentation. For example, trumpets and low brass play the Grail theme, while Parsifal is associated with French horns and the whole orchestra. From her very first entry, Kundry is identified with strings, which play the riding theme. Then her first words are accompanied by sustained descending line in the clarinets, instruments with a very different sonority and gendered as female in contemporary writings, such as in Strauss's 1904 revision to Berlioz's treatise on orchestration, that often relies on excerpts of Wagner's music as illustrative examples. The clarinet's "voice is that of heroic love; and if the mass of brass instruments in grand military symphonies suggest the idea of warriors covered with glittering armor, marching to glory or to death, so do numerous clarinet playing in unison seem to represent loving women," attention is

[49] Wolzogen describes this music that accompanies Gurnemanz's description of Kundry as: "impetuously flying hither and thither, rapid, passionate figures, chromatically rushing upward, akin to the character of her 'riding motive.'" Wolzogen, *Thematic Guide through the Music of* Parsifal, 34.

also drawn to the “feminine quality of tone present in the clarinets.”[50] Yet, the music is not the only striking aspect of Kundry’s entrance. The visual is central to Wagner’s music dramas, and when Kundry appears, she is unquestionably “wild.” This is not only written in the stage directions, but also emphasized by an early *Volksoper* singer playing the role, who wrote “*Wild*” in large blue letters on a rehearsal score at a moment later in the act.[51]

Wagner and the Visual

As Smart maintains, instead of the customary disembodied “aesthetics of transcendence” bestowed upon Wagner’s works, attention needs to be given to the “manifest, visible aspects of the theater” in his music dramas. Indeed, the visual is particularly important in Wagner, as Smart has convincingly argued with her emphasis on the “visible, audible body.”[52] The primacy of the singer’s body in Wagner’s music dramas, including *Parsifal*, infuses another layer of meaning into the works.[53] With their detailed stage directions (far more than in earlier German operas),

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[50] In Berlioz’s *Treatise on Orchestration*, which was expanded and revised by Strauss in 1905, the sonority of the clarinets is gendered as feminine, while the brass, as masculine: Hector Berlioz, *Treatise on Orchestration*, enlarged and rev. Richard Strauss, trans. Theodore Front (New York: Dover, 1991), 209-10. [Original French: Hector Berlioz, *Grand traité d’instrumentation et d’orchestration modernes* (Paris: Schoenberger, 1843); Strauss’s revision: Hector Berlioz, *Instrumentationslehre*, ed. and rev. Richard Strauss (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1905).] Amfortas is also associated with the bass clarinet, creating another musical connection to Kundry and reflecting how she affected him.

[51] “Wild” is written into the score above the moment when Kundry tells Parsifal about his father. *Parsifal* (*Volksoper*) score at the *Wien Staatsoper Bibliothek*, uncatalogued. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know either specifically which singer wrote this comment or the precise performance that concerns this comment because some of the scores held at the *Staatsoper* would have been used a few times following the 1914 performance at the *Volksoper*. The *Wien Staatsoper Bibliothek* will henceforth be cited as *WSB*.

[52] Smart, *Mimomania*, 165-66. In particular she critiques Dahlhaus’s valuation of Wagner’s “inner drama” over the “outer” drama, as well as Abbate’s privileging of Wagner’s “acoustic allegory” over his “scenic allegory” in the essay “Immortal Voices, Mortal Forms,” *Analytical Strategies and Musical Interpretation: Essay on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Craig Ayrey and Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 288-300.

[53] Smart reminds us of the degree to which Wagner was influenced by the use of the body as well as its mimetic relationship to music in nineteenth-century French opera, and she looks at moments that present

and his concern with the overall experience of the viewer at the *Bayreuther Festspielhaus*, a significant amount of attention ought to be given to these indications, particularly because of the reverence granted to Wagner.[54] For instance, many of these details from the Bayreuth stagings carried over into the Viennese performances. Wagner specified the gestures, positioning, movements, and facial expressions required very precisely, granting the relationship between the visual and musical characterizations great importance, although he simultaneously also wanted every movement, expression, and articulation to come across as natural.[55] The importance of the visual to Wagner is also evident in his writings. For example, he praised the acting abilities of German soprano Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, and considered his own works as "deeds of music made visible."[56] In *Parsifal*, Wagner was particularly concerned with Kundry's visual appearance, describing her physical characterization in an early draft of the music drama dated August 28th, 1865: "She has presently a bleached, almost sunburned complexion; her black hair hangs long and wild around her, sometimes she braids it together in strange [*wunderlich*] plaits,"

"the notion of a melody based in and fused with movement." Smart, *Mimomania*, 166, 173. French Grand opera of the nineteenth century influenced Wagner's interest not only in the *aural* performances of the singers, but also in their visual presentations of the characters. With Wagner's exacting demands upon the overall production and visual performance, according to Carnegy, modern stage design and came into being with Wagner. See Carnegy, "Designing Wagner," 48. Even Wagner's critic, Hanslick, recognized this and called him "the world's first Regisseur" ("dieses ersten Regisseurs der Welt"). Eduard Hanslick, *Die moderne Oper*, vol. III, *Aus dem Opernleben der Gegenwart: Neue Kritiken und Studien* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für Deutsche Literatur, 1889), 324. Cited also in Carnegy, *ibid.*, 48.

[54] This is particularly clear with the way in which Bayreuth, with Cosima's insistent adherence to what she interpreted as Wagner's interpretive decisions, remained the important center for Wagnerian performance. For a discussion of Cosima's staging and the *Festspiele*'s intransigent staging that stuck to Wagner's "original," see Nicholas Baragwanath, "Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, Gesture, and the Bayreuth Style," *The Musical Times* 48, no. 1901 (Winter 2007): 64-66.

[55] Heinrich Porges, *Wagner Rehearsing the* Ring: *An Eye-Witness Account of the Stage Rehearsals of the First Bayreuth Festival*, trans. Robert L. Jacobs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3; Porges, a devotee of Wagner, recorded notes of the *Ring* rehearsals and trained the Flower Maidens in *Parsifal*. He published these notes in installments in the *Bayreuther Blätter* between 1881 and 1896.

[56] For his praise of Schröder-Devrient, see Wagner, "A Communication to my Friends," 294-95 and 320-21. "[I]ch meine Dramen gern als ersichtlich gewordene Taten der Musik bezeichnet hätte." Richard Wagner, "Über die Benennung 'Musikdrama,'" in *Dichtungen und Schriften*, vol. 9, 306. Cited also in Carnegy, "Designing Wagner," 48.

she wears a "dark red robe, which she girdles with a strange [*wunderlich*] belt made of snake skin. Her black eyes dart around often, like burning coal from deep caverns; presently her gaze is erratic and meandering, later fixed and unmoving." To the grail community, she is like a "strange, magical beast."[57]

As Smart has argued, Wagner wanted much attention given to the mimetic qualities of the music. For instance, according to Porges's transcription of the rehearsals for the 1876 *Ring*, Wagner demanded that "the stage action *must* be in keeping with these passionate outbursts." In *Der fliegende Holländer*, Wagner carefully coordinates the Dutchman's steps with the music, and in *Die Walküre* the physical contour of Sieglinde bending over Siegmund in the first scene mirrors the arch contour of the accompanying triadic gesture.[58] In *Oper und Drama*, Wagner also examined the relationship between operatic melodies and staged gestures, while he elaborated upon the importance of gesture and miming for opera singers in *Über Schauspieler und Sänger* (1872).[59] Indicative of his investment in the visual in *Parsifal* as well, Wagner even mailed the

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[57] "[S]ie hat bald, bleiche, bald sonnenverbrannte Hautfarbe; ihre schwarzes Haar hängt ihr lang und wild herab: manchmal flicht sie es in wunderlichen Flechten zusammen; stets sie man sie nur in ihrem dunkelroten Gewande, welches sie mit einem wunderlichen Gürtel aus Schlangenhäuten aufschürzt: ihre schwarzen Augen schießen oft wie brennende Kohlen aus den tiefen Höhlen hervor; bald ist ihr Blick unstet und abschweifend, bald wieder starr und unbeweglich fest." "Behandelt wie ein seltsames, zauberhaftes Tier." In Act II, Kundry appears in a "new, entirely unrecognizable form." See "Dokumente zur Entstehung und ersten Aufführung des Bühnenweihfestspieles *Parsifal*," in *Wagner: Sämtliche Werke* 30, ed. Martin Geck and Egon Voss (Mainz: Schott, 1970), 70. Interestingly, Bahr-Mildenburg was highly critical of the red costume, commenting on it publicly in the *Neue Freie Presse* in 1914. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, "Kundry-Kostüm," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 12, 1914: Ostenbeilage, 42-43.

[58] See Smart's discussion of these examples and of Porges in *Mimomania*, 177-87.

[59] For example, he praised Wilhelmina Schröder-Devrient for her dramatic and powerful *physical* performances, from her use of gestures to her glances. See Thomas S. Grey, "A Wagnerian Glossary," in *The Wagner Compendium*, ed. Barry Millington (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 233.

choreographer Richard Fricke a copy of the *Parsifal* libretto, with the message: "Especially composed, set to music, and with 'visible ballet' plotted out."[60]

As mentioned in the Introduction, Weiner's work has not only drawn attention to the cultural significance of the body in Wagner's music dramas, but has also emphasized the role that seeing and the visible have on the Wagnerian stage, within the works themselves and for the audience. There is an "iconography of the body," as Weiner notes, and the represented "corporeal images" in Wagner's music dramas – from the physicality associated with the voice, to smell and gait – operated as metaphors, conveying a set of meanings to a particular audience.[61] Wagner's music dramas have "polyvalent signification" and are "cultural and historical documents."[62] Indeed, with Stassen's visual work on Wagner's music dramas, such as *Parsifal: 15 Bilder zur Richard Wagners Bühnenweihfestspiel* (1901), and the numerous postcards of characters and productions coming out of Bayreuth, there was a veritable visual culture surrounding Wagner and his music dramas.[63] Alongside the visual representations of Kundry in the opening, images of an imagined Kundry would have been constructed for people with the wealth of iconography surrounding the work. Thus it is important to consider the ways in which this iconography, and particularly the visual presentations in Vienna, may have contributed to the representation of Kundry and her sexuality as an illness, or a disturbance that threatens the very existence of the Grail community.

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[60] "Ganz besonders gedichtet, komponiert und mit scheinbarem Ballett versehen." Fricke, cited and translated in Smart, *Mimomania*, 239-40. Detailed staging notes also remain.

[61] Weiner, *Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*, 22-23, 29-35. Weiner devotes an entire chapter of his book to the visual in Wagner, and what specific visual signs might have meant for Wagner's late nineteenth-century German audience, although he does not discuss Kundry at great length.

[62] *Ibid*., 359.

[63] For a discussion of Stassen's illustrations for *Tristan und Isolde: 12 Bilder zu Richard Wagners Tondichtung* (1899), see Meyer, who notes that: "Stassen illustrated the entire Wagnerian oeuvre, and his influence on the *fin-de-siècle* reception of the composer's works was both broad and deep." Meyer, "Illustrating Transcendence," 11.

More than any other character in *Parsifal*, Kundry's music involves the most gestures and draws the most attention to the singer's body. For example, Smart considers the specific relation the riding motif has with Kundry's appearance.[64] Kundry consistently draws the visual gaze of the audience and the other characters onstage toward her, and her dramatic entrance at the beginning of the work causes all eyes to turn toward her. The knights are instructed to "eagerly look off right," and with her wild entrance of "staggering" in, accompanied by her riding theme, the audience is riveted to the visual interruption. A wild Kundry dashes across the stage – movement unlike that of any of the other characters – and the stage directions are explicit: "Kundry *rushes in*, almost *staggering*. She hurries to Gurnemanz and presses on him a small crystal phial."[65] A few moments later, she "throws herself to the ground" ("*Sie wirft sich an den Boden*"). This corresponds with the musical shift discussed above that accompanies her arrival: the sudden interruption with her chromaticized, rhythmic riding theme, and the downward chromatic flourishes, as well as the changes in instrumental writing and timbres. Here the strings are used differently: with the quick gestures, skipping around their range, and with the timbral shift when Kundry starts to sing amidst the rushed, nervous gestures in the strings, the bassoon-clarinet timbre sounds, creating a stark contrast to the warm brass and string chorales heard up to this point. This is reinforced by Bekker's comments about Wagner's "visible manifestations of music" and the relationship between the visual and the aural in his music:

> It states two beliefs: firstly that all tonal activity – the activity of modulation, of melody and of rhythmic accents – is a music 'act,' a drama of tones and tone-relations; secondly, that the dramatic action on the stage is the *visible manifestation* of this tonal activity, the

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[64] Smart, *Mimomania*, 195-98.

[65] My emphasis. "Kundry stürtz hastig, fast taumelnd herein. Sie eilt auf Gurnemanz zu und dringt ihm ein kleines Kristallgefass auf." See also the staging sketches from the rehearsals that prescribe the movement of the characters for the 1882 performances. "Erinnungsblätter an die 1. und 2. Aufführung von Richard Wagners Bühnenweihfestspiel *Parsifal* in Bayreuth am 26 und 27. Juli 1882," in *Wagner: Sämtliche Werke* 30, ed. Martin Geck and Egon Voss (Mainz: Schott, 1970), 139.

> projection of music into visible scenic form […] tones are the actors, harmony is the mimetic action, or in other words, the singer we see on stage personifies tone and the action represents harmonic activity.[66]

Not only does Kundry's violent entrance disturb the atmospheric calm that has dominated in Act I so far, but her gestures once on stage and her visual appearance also jar the spectator. When Kundry arrives, the stage directions describe her as: "in a wild garb, her skirts tucked up by a snakeskin girdle with long hanging cords, her black hair is loose and disheveled, her complexion deep ruddy-brown, her eyes dark and piercing, sometimes flashing wildly, more often lifeless and staring."[67]

Austrian soprano Bahr-Mildenburg premiered the role in Vienna, and her bodily comportment and intense facial expression in her role as Kundry are telling. Bahr-Mildenburg's costume bears a striking resemblance to how the hysteric or ill woman appeared in popular images of the time (apart from the snakeskin girdle), with her tattered long dress and her long, wild, untamed hair. In the first image (Fig. 2.1), her eyes are open wide (much like the images of Elektra that we will see in the next chapter), and with her crouching position and raised leg, she resembles the variation of Charcot's second and fourth periods of the hysterical attack (section I), "*période des attitudes passionelles*" (episode of passionate attitudes), from Charcot and Richer's chart of the "complete and regular great hysterical attack" in *Études cliniques* (1881)

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[66] Paul Bekker, *The Story of Music: An Historical Sketch of the Changes in Musical Form*, trans. M. D. Heter Norton and Alice Kortschak (New York: Norton, 1927), 228-29.

[67] "Wilde Kleidung, hoch geschürzt; Gürtel von Schlangenhäuten lang herabhängend; schwarzes, in losen Zöpfen flatterndes Haar, tief braunrötliche Gesichtsfarbe; stechende schwarze Augen, zuweilen wild aufblitzend, öfters wie todesstarr und unbeweglich." *Parsifal*, Act I. According to Sander Gilman, the typical markers of both the *femme fatale* and the "*Belle juive*" in the nineteenth-century German-language drama were dark hair and black eyes, while hysteria was also linked with Jewish sexuality. With these physical features and her "hysteric" behavior, Kundry seem to be drawing on these discourses. For the markers of the "*Belle juive*," see Sander Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the 'Modern Jewess,'" *German Quarterly* 66 (1993): 202. Regarding images of the hysteric, see Gilman, "The Image of the Hysteric," 402-36. For a further discussion of how Kundry's singing and musical voices operated within nineteenth-century Anti-Semitic ideas, see Binder, "Kundry and the Jewish Voice," 47-131.

(See Fig. 1.1 cont.).[68] This position strikingly resembles a moment in the hysteric attack with a sexual allusion.[69] In the second image (Fig. 2.2), Bahr-Mildenburg's extremely long black hair is again "loose and disheveled," the robe is falling off her shoulders and she is slightly hunched over while her bare arms tightly clasp the horn.

As these images of Bahr-Mildenburg also reveal, her eyes are important, a significant feature in Wagner's music dramas according to Weiner.[70] In the second image, her eyes are wide open, staring at the camera, as though she is shocked. Yet, as the directions for her eyes suggest ("her eyes dark and piercing, sometimes flashing wildly, more often lifeless and staring"), her temperament and behavior constantly shift in a nervous, unsettling manner. Bahr-Mildenburg had trained under Cosima, particularly for the role of Isolde, but also for all the major Wagnerian female characters, including Kundry. Although it is unclear how accurate these staging images were, their careful documentation attest to the significance of the physicality and bodily gestures to the performance, particularly for an important singer at that time.[71]

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[68] The images from *Salpêtrière* were published before *Parsifal*'s premiere in 1882. While I hesitate to argue that Wagner was directly influenced by these images, I believe that he could have been envisioning the opera within a field of common visual meanings. Kundry's costume was initially designed by Joukowsky, and then redesigned by Mario Fortuny for a later Bayreuth production. As mentioned earlier, Bahr-Mildenburg, who sang Kundry in Bayreuth, under Cosima's direction and at Vienna 1914 performances, called the costume "ridiculous" (*lächerliche*). Bahr-Mildenburg, *Bayreuth*, 70.

[69] In an earlier image of Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry from 1897, she is again positioned in such a manner.

[70] For a discussion of vision and the eye in Wagner's works, see Weiner, "The Eyes of the Volk," in *Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination,* 35-102.

[71] See Bahr-Mildenburg, *Tristan und Isolde.* It is unfortunate that Bahr-Mildenburg did not create such a document for *Parsifal* because there is little documentation concerning the staging of the Vienna performances. Although the *Wien Staatsoper Bibliothek* contained one of the *Volksoper* rehearsal scores for *Parsifal*, there was little written by hand in the score – much less than would be in a staging manual, or in some rehearsal books by other singers who often notated more performance details in the score. Baragwanath, however, casts doubt on the authenticity of Bahr-Mildenburg's and Cosima's stage directions. He considers them a distortion of Wagner's intentions regarding stage movement and gesture with how they are overly specific, particularly with how Bahr-Mildenburg's Isolde directions line up to particular textual and musical moments. Although they are extremely specific – calling for the singer to perform gestures a specific number of times – her directions do not always correspond to the stage

Compare the image of Lucie Weidt (Fig. 2.3), another singer who performed the role of Kundry, alternating with Bahr-Mildenburg in 1914, with the earlier image of Weidt in the role of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* (Fig. 1.2).[72] As Kundry, Weidt's back is now hunched, her hair tangled and in disarray. She glares at something or someone outside the frame of the photo and her hands are clenched, somewhat in a claw. Clenched hands were another marker of hysteria, based on Charcot's images, as well as a symptom of mental illness at that time, evident in numerous paintings, such as those by Schiele.[73] As Bahr-Mildenburg's writings reveal, hand positions were also an important detail in Wagnerian and Post-Wagnerian opera.[74]

At several moments in the work, Kundry lies on the ground like a wild animal. The 1882 stage rehearsal notes indicate that when she lies on the ground, listening to the knights, her chin even touches the ground (a pose suggestive of one from Charcot's "*période épileptoïde*," perhaps Row C, 3rd from the bottom). She then "looks at the knights with an derisive look, and uses her undone hair to veil her face," a look perhaps captured in the photo of Weidt (2.3).[75] As Bronfen writes, Kundry at this moment in the opera is "[u]ncannily resonant of the iconography of hysteria installed by Charcot." She is a "wild animal," "running onto the stage in a fit of spastic motions only to fall into a cataleptic death-like paralysis," and "while in this trance enacts in

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directions. Baragwanath, "Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, Gesture, and the Bayreuth Style," 67. Despite these inconsistencies between the actual stage directions and the extremely precise directions that Bahr-Mildenburg prescribes, Bahr-Mildenburg's text is still an important document that offers insight into how the role was played.

[72] Weidt actually performed Kundry twenty-four times at the *Wiener Hofoper* between 1914 and 1932. Bahr-Mildenburg may have performed the January 1914 premiere at the *Hofoper*, but she only sang the role four times in Vienna. See the *Wiener Hofoper Theaterzettel*, held at the *ÖTM*.

[73] See Blackshaw, "Pathological Body," 392-94. I discuss hand position in greater detail in Chapter 3.

[74] Not only did the singer's hands have to be positioned in particular ways (based on the staging records by Wagnerian vocal coach, Kittel), but Cosima Wagner was very specific about gestures, while Mahler was particular about hand gestures, not wanting them to be overly staged. See Baragwanath, "Anna Bahr-Mildenburg," 64-65, 70.

[75] "Erinnungsblätter an die 1. und 2. Aufführung," *Wagner: Sämtliche Werke*, 141.

tormented agitation."[76] Contemporaneous critics equally noted Kundry's resemblance to the hysteric. For instance, a 1913 article in *Die Musik* mentions how the Kundry's "hysteric rolling around on the floor… easily become[s] ridiculous."[77]

Kundry's visual disruption is present at several other moments in the work. After Parsifal's entrance, the stage directions instruct Kundry, "who during Gurnemanz's recital of the fate of Amfortas has been violently writhing in furious agitation, now, still lying in the undergrowth, eyes Parsifal keenly and, as he is silent, hoarsely calls." She then succumbs to another "attack," with the stage directions calling her to "fall into violent trembling."[78] The Kundry from the early Vienna *Volksoper* production indicated that these movements should be emphasized, circling the directions.[79] Written rehearsal directions from an early Bayreuth production for the work again bring these gestures even closer to those enacted by a hysteric, and were possibly transmitted, influencing the Vienna performances. They describe Kundry as follows:

> Staggers a few steps backward, falls into violent trembling, crosses her arms on her chest, pulls her head down and then, during her last words that she sings, staggers toward the way from which she had appeared, the gaze is ever-present and oriented with ferocity toward Parsifal and Gurnemanz; when she has reached the bushes, she falls to the ground twitching, lying in a way in which she is no longer visible to the public.[80]

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[76] Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," 157.

[77] "Das hysterische Umherwälzen auf dem Boden im [Akt] I, die unartikulierten Schreie im II. Akt werden zu leicht lächerlich." "Kundry," *Die Musik* 12 (1913): 356. This passage also refers to Kundry's voice in the opening of Act II, which I discuss later.

[78] The stage directions are: "Sie verfällt in heftiges Zittern; dann lässt sie die Arme matt sinken, neigt das Haupt tief und schwankt matt weiter." Smart offers a compelling discussion of these moments and notes that Kundry "exhibits many of the classic symptoms of the disorder as it was described by Freud: in textbook fashion she speaks little, often stammering, repeating words, or breaking into senseless laughter […] quivering, trembling, throwing herself in a heap on the ground and then gradually raising herself up again." Smart, *Mimomania*, 195.

[79] *Parsifal*, Volksoper rehearsal score, *WSB*.

[80] "[W]ankt einige Schritte nach rückwärts, verfällt in heftiges Zittern, kreuzt ihre Arme auf der Brust, zieht den Kopf ein und wankt sodann während ihren letzten Worten, die sie singt, gegen den Weg zu, auf welchem sie aufgetreten war, den Blick hierbei stets und mit Wildheit auf Parsifal und Gurnemanz

This added gesture of crossing her arms to her breast recalls the famous image of religious ecstasy of the "*attitudes passionelles,*" mostly famously reproduced in the photographs of Augustine, one of Charcot's patients whose frequent "performances" of hysteria were caught on camera and disseminated across Europe.[81]

Comments made by the Bayreuth "special correspondent" for *The Musical Times* remind us that it is not just Kundry's gestures that we have to attend to: Kundry is "wild of aspect and convulsive alike in speech and motion."[82] For instance, Hanslick wrote that her voice and vocal performance, which are half cries, disturb the texture. Writing about Act I, he observes that Kundry is "a psychological and physiological hybrid, she sings, or rather cries and stammers, brokenly and in the most hair-raising intervals, at the same time being required to accomplish unheard of tasks in the art of pantomime."[83] Even in Act II, her behavior evokes, for Bronfen, "the performances of Charcot's hysterics, she wails, whimpers, writhes in seemingly meaningless contortions of the body."[84]

Act II: Kundry as Seductress

Although the focus of this section is on the kiss between Kundry and Parsifal, there are a few aspects in the "opera text" worth mentioning that precede the kiss and further connect

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richtend; beim Gebüsch angelangt, sinkt sie zuckend auf den Boden und zwar so, dass sie dem Publikum, liegend, dann nicht mehr sichtbar ist." The added material is underlined. "Erinnungsblätter an die 1. und 2. Aufführung," *Wagner: Sämtliche Werke*, 143-44.

[81] These images were published in the volumes of *Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* (1875–1880). Reproductions appear throughout Didi-Huberman's *Invention of Hysteria.*

[82] "Notes Abroad: *Parsifal* at Bayreuth," *The Musical Times* 23, no. 475 (1882): 493.

[83] Hanslick, "*Parsifal* Review," 124.

[84] Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," 158. Smart also draws attention to specific moments in which the stage directions call for Kundry to behave like a hysteric in Act II. Smart, *Mimomania*, 194-96.

Kundry's sexuality to sonic distortion and to disruptions characteristic of illness. For instance, when Klingsor wakes Kundry to again perform the seductress in the garden, she "utters a terrible scream" ("*Schließlich stößt sie einen gräßlichen Schrei aus*"), which is followed by a "loud wail that subsides to a frightened whimper" ("*Klageheul, von größter Heftigkeit bis zu bangem Wimmern sich abstufend, vernehmen*"). Not only does Kundry's "uncanny, ecstatic laughter" turns into a "convulsive wail" ("*unheimliches ekstatisches Lachen bis zu krampfhaftem Wehegeschrei*") when she and Klingsor see Parsifal entering the garden, but there are also shifts in emotion whenever her sexuality is evoked. When Klingsor reminds her of her sexual seduction of Amfortas, her speech is broken like the hysteric's, with the stage directions instructing the performer to sing "hoarsely and brokenly, as if striving to regain speech."[85] She struggles for several minutes, singing with halting interruptions. Hanslick specifically addressed Kundry's vocal performance at the beginning of Act II, writing: "The vocal line is again precipitate, jerky and recitative, the orchestra a witches' cauldron of bubbling leitmotifs; and Kundry a musical-dramatic convulsion."[86] Recall the 1913 article in *Die Musik* that noted how "the inarticulate cries in Act II become ridiculous."[87]

Kundry's musical interaction with Parsifal in Act II is the moment when she is explicitly presented as musically disruptive and threatening for the male community. In the first act, Parsifal's musical realm is clearly established, with his noble, martial hunting theme (Ex. 2.7), one of two relatively stable diatonic leitmotifs that continuously appear associated with him in

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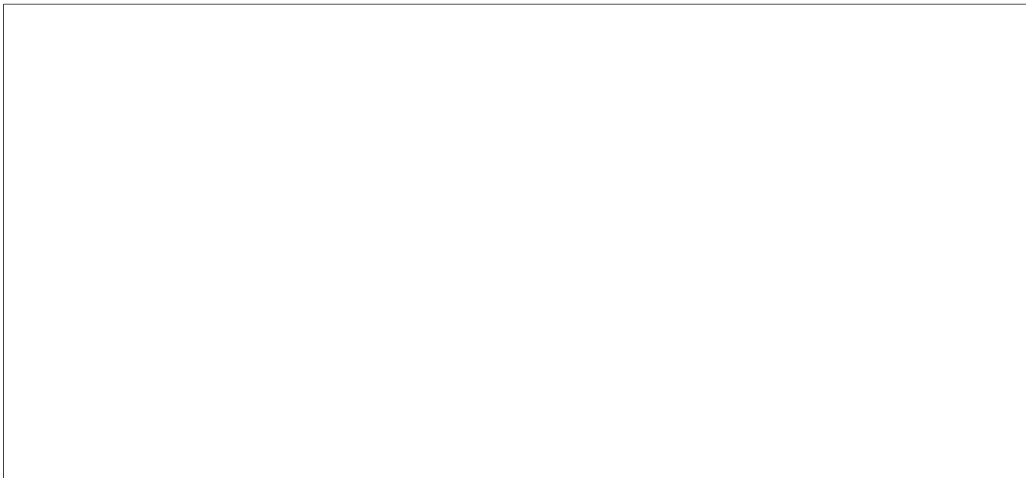
[85] "Rauh und abgebrochen, wie im Versuche, wieder Sprache zu gewinnen." Bronfen reads the opening of Act II as another performance of hysterics. She writes, "Kundry is again revived from a death-like trance, and, once more recalling the performances of Charcot's hysterics, she wails, whimpers, writhes in seemingly meaningless contortions of the body as Klingsor reminds her of her complicity in the wounding of Amfortas." Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," 158.

[86] Hanslick, "*Parsifal* Review," 125.

[87] "[D]ie unartikulierten Schreie im II. Akt werden zu leicht lächerlich." See "Kundry," *Die Musik*, 356.

the first act.[88] He is able to maintain this leitmotif throughout his encounter with the Flower Maidens in the first part of Act II, and his leitmotif continues to appear in the orchestra with his insistence that they leave him alone. Yet with Kundry's appearance, Parsifal's musical language abruptly dissipates. After Kundry calls out his name, he immediately begins to imitate her, singing a variation of her seductive call of a falling 5th (Ex. 2.8). He loses his sense of musical identity when he hears her voice and freezes, "*betroffen still steht.*"

Ex. 2.7: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Parsifal's martial theme (Act I, p. 48).



The critical moment of *Parsifal* occurs a few minutes later in Act II. This seduction scene, in which Kundry kisses Parsifal on the lips, is musically destabilizing for Parsifal as well as for the music associated with the Grail Brotherhood. It is also noteworthy that this is the longest continuous musical passage that Kundry sings, a period in which she is *continuously* musically animated, unlike earlier passages where she retreats to silence or broken utterances.

[88] In Act I when Kundry tells him that his mother is dead, Parsifal's leitmotifs are briefly disrupted and destabilized and her chromatic passage sounds. Yet this disruption is momentary, and Parsifal is able to return to his musical language after this.

Ex. 2.8: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Kundry calls to Parsifal and he imitates her (Act II, p. 167).

During the kiss, a distorted, chromatically infected version of the Communion theme sounds in the orchestra (Ex. 2.9). The descending minor second *Wunde* motive is still encapsulated within the Communion theme, only now it is repeated and then inverted to resolve upward first in the strings, then in the woodwinds. After this kiss, the distorted version of the Communion theme continues, violently articulated in the orchestral brass, which contrasts with earlier chorale-like presentations. Parsifal responds to this seductive kiss by now singing "Amfortas" to the descending minor second *Wunde* theme, as Amfortas did earlier in Act I. He then sings a tritone to the words "*Wunde*," and "*Klage*," with a variation of Kundry's descending

musical gesture in the strings interrupting each utterance (Ex. 2.9). After this assertive, seven-measure long kiss, Parsifal recoils, and the oboe, clarinet, and high string sonorities, associated with Kundry rather than Parsifal, dominate and play her theme. The way in which a singer who performed Kundry in an early production at the *Volksoper* wrote "triumph" above when Parsifal sings "*wehe*," suggests how Kundry should act at this moment.[89] Yet after Parsifal rebukes these sexual advances, she reacts strongly, again performing the iconography of illness: "She seeks to embrace him. He thrusts her violently away;" "She rises up in a wild frenzy and calls into the background."[90]

In Act II, Kundry appears differently than she did earlier. Now wearing all red, she recalls the visual imagery of seductive characters for an audience familiar with Wagner's earlier works (Fig. 2.4). Indeed, in order to capture Kundry's alluring quality the Bayreuth costume was intended by costume designer Joukowsky to be in a decorative, sensual style, reminiscent of Viennese painter Hans Makart's images of women.[91] In addition, Bahr-Mildenburg wrote in her 1914 diary that when she realized she would again be wearing the same costume as the Bayreuth Kundry, she altered the cut, making it lower, and eliminated some of the excess fabric.[92]

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[89] Written in a rehearsal score for the *Volksoper Parsifal* held at the *WSB* (uncatalogued).

[90] "Sie will ihn umarmen. Er stösst sie heftig von sich"; "rafft sich mit wilden Wutrasen auf und ruft nach dem Hintergrunde zu." *Parsifal*, Act II.

[91] For example, Venus in the Grotto, which was built for Ludwig II at Linderhof, used red lighting. See Herbert Barth, with Egon Voss and Dietrich Mack, *Wagner: A Documentary Study*, trans. P. R. J. Ford and Mary Whittall (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 151-53. Kundry's costume was red as well. Gabriele Parizek, *Anna Bahr-Mildenburg: Theaterkunst als Lebenswerk* (PhD diss., Universität Wien, 2007), 224. Perhaps Kundry's red costume created associations with *Tannhäuser*'s Venus.

[92] Parizek, *Anna-Bahr Mildenburg*, 224-25.

Ex. 2.9: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Kundry's kiss affecting the Communion theme and Parsifal (Act II, p. 184).

Perhaps these alterations made the costume more seductive. In many of the images of Kundry in Act II, she is reclined seductively on a bed of flowers, which harmonizes with early accounts of

the music drama.[93] The staging directions in an early *Volksoper Regiebuch* for *Parsifal* even calls for a spotlight to shine on Kundry when she calls his name, "*Besonders Lichtstrahl auf Kundry*," directing visual attention toward Kundry just as in the first act.[94] The images of Bahr-Mildenburg at Bayreuth – recall the costume was the same – (Figs. 2.4 and 2.5) and the Flower Maidens (Fig. 2.6) reveal how Kundry's costume, although equally revealing, was much more eye-catching than those of the Flower Maidens, with her jewels and the ornamented bodice of her dress. Note too Bahr-Mildenburg's intense gaze in Figure 2.5.

Act III: Kundry's Silencing

Bronfen finds that "even in Act III, Kundry continues to perform the hysteric's gestures," from her "initial state of paralysis" to how she "wakes up screaming."[95] Again, typical of hysteria and madness, Kundry modulates quickly from one symptom to another, moving from the paralysis and screams, to silence and religious gestures, other common signs of hysteria. In the third act, her voice is silent. Moreover, with the absence of her actual voice, it is as though she is suffering from *aphasia*, a classic symptom of hysteria, and evident in Freud's famous Viennese case of Anna O.[96]

With her penitent robe and religious poses, with an upward gaze and her hands clasped together in prayer, it could be argued that Kundry's hysteria in the last act seems to have developed into what Charcot called the "*période passionelles*," the phase of symptoms

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[93] "étendue voluptueusement sur un lit de fleurs." Kufferath, *Parsifal de Richard Wagner*, 141.

[94] Again, although it a score that dates from the early twentieth century, it is unsure for specifically which production this was used. *Wien Staatsoper Bibliothek.*

[95] Bronfen, "Kundry's Laughter," 160. Smart also notes that in Act III, Kundry moves differently and her gestures become more abstract. See also Smart, *Mimomania*, 201.

[96] For a discussion of Anna O., see: Dianne Hunter, "Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna. O.," *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 467; Decker, *Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900*, 1.

associated with religious trance (see Fig. 1.1 cont., Rows I and J). Yet, the images and gestures of Act III resemble the visual cues of the *Ewig-Weibliche* more strongly than those associated with the hysteric.[97] Indeed, there is another way of reading Kundry here. Gone are the wild hair, the bare arms, and the dress falling off her shoulder of the first act. Absent too is the red costume and jewels, and fitted décolleté dress of Act II, and her attempts to seduce Parsifal. Rather than the sexualized, distracting woman of Act II, or the wild woman of Act I, Kundry is now de-sexualized, silenced, and calm. When she wakes, "the wildness has vanished from her looks and behavior […] raising herself, she arranges her clothing and hair and immediately sets to work like a serving-maid."[98] Rather than disrupting the visual space, she now acts in harmony with her surroundings, imitating Parsifal with her religious gestures. Moreover, she has now lost her voice – not only vocally by no longer singing except to briefly utter "dienen…dienen" ("serve…serve"), but also musically in terms of the disappearance of the orchestral themes associated with her – she is no longer a musical threat to the grail brotherhood. As Kinderman notes, she is musically "purged" from the work, her disturbance, captured in the semitone, is "cleansed" from the theme. Her semitone is removed from the Communion theme, which can now ascend to its melodic resolution on C, its progression no longer thwarted by the chromatic melodic gesture associated with Kundry.[99] Now that she is no longer articulating her sexuality, she is no longer cast as the ill woman, but rather encapsulates the characteristics of the chaste operatic woman discussed in the previous chapter. In the image of Ranzenberg as Kundry in the 1914 *Volksoper* production (Fig. 2.7), Kundry is much calmer than in the earlier images and

[97] Although Kundry screams, it is only at the very beginning, when Gurnemanz wakes her up. In the rest of Act I, she is more passive and only offers to serve.

[98] "Aus Miene und Haltung ist die Wildheit verschwunden […] erhebt sie sich, ordnet sich Kleidung und Haar und läßt sich sofort wie eine Magd zur Bedienung an."

[99] Kinderman, "Wagner's *Parsifal*," 443-44.

reverently clasping onto Parsifal, with her hair now resembling Gutheil-Schoder's as Eva in *Die Meistersinger* (Figs. 1.2 and 1.3).

Reception in Vienna

Throughout the late nineteenth century, numerous discourses connected Wagner's music dramas, his writings, and Wagnerianism itself to illness. For example, Munich psychiatrist Theodor Puschmann argued in *Richard Wagner: Eine psychiatrische Studie* (1873) that Wagner was the leader of a "*krankhafte Bewegung*" (pathological movement). Although writing several years before *Parsifal*, he noted: "it is well known that in the beginning of mental illnesses there often appears an unnatural increase in sexual desire […]. From the beginning of his career Wagner allowed sexual impulses to exercise a great influence on his inner life […] in his latest works the erotic element is emphasized so explicitly that in *Tristan und Isolde* he glorifies adultery and in *Die Walküre* even incest."[100] Nietzsche also famously described Wagner as a "decadent [who] corrupts our health – and music as well […] He makes sick whatever he touches – he has made music sick."[101] For Nietzsche, Kundry was a "*hysterisches Frauenzimmer*" (hysterical wench).[102] Weininger, writing in Vienna after having traveled to Bayreuth to see

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[100] Cited in Dreyfus, *Wagner and the Erotic Impulse*, 119-20.

[101] Cited in *ibid.*, 121. Nietzsche wrote: "I place this perspective at the outset: Wagner's art is sick. The problems he presents on the stage – all of them problems of hysterics, the convulsive nature of his affects, his overexcited sensibility, his taste that required, not least of all the choice of his heroes and heroines – consider them as physiological types (a pathological gallery!) All of this taken together represents a profile of sickness that permits no further doubt. *Wagner est une névrose.* Perhaps nothing is better known today, at least nothing has been better studies, than the Protean character of degeneration that here conceals itself in the chrysalis of art and artist. Our physicians and physiologists confront their most interesting case in Wagner, at least a very complete case. Precisely because nothing is more modern than this total sickness, this lateness and overexcitement of the nervous mechanism, Wagner is *the modern artist par excellence.*" Nietzsche cited in Dreyfus, *Wagner and the Erotic Impulse*, 124-25.

[102] Nietzsche Letter to Reinhart von Seydlitz from January 4th, 1878, in Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke* IV, 738.

Parsifal, also mentioned Kundry several times in *Geschlecht und Charakter*. He considered Kundry "the most profound female figure in all art": like all women, she is incapable of overcoming her sexuality, and is thus an hysterical woman.[103] To recall the opening epigraph, Thomas Mann even years later highlighted Kundry's disturbing emotional drives as representative of pathology: "[Kundry] is nothing less than an exercise in mythical pathology; in her agonizing schizoid condition, […] she is portrayed with an unsparing clinical accuracy, and an audacious naturalism in the exploration and representation of a hideously diseased emotional existence."[104]

The *Parsifal* performances in Vienna were prominent cultural events of 1914. As the *Wiener Bilder* noted, the music drama was the "*Gesprächsthema des Tages*" (talk of the day), and people lined up the day before the performance, from 6pm in the evening until 2:30am in the morning to buy tickets.[105] Photographs of Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry in Act I were also circulated throughout the city, with her image on the cover of both the *Extrablatt* and the *Wiener Bilder* (See Fig. 2.8). There were a variety of different impressions of Bahr-Mildenburg's Vienna performances. Critic and musicologist Elsa Bienenfeld commented that her sexuality was "*triebhaft*," animal-like and libidinous or primordial.[106] Max Springer of the conservative *Reichspost* noted that Kundry as a character was full of "*Wildheit*," and praised Bahr-Mildenburg's portrayal, writing that "the seduction scene was simply masterful," although he

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[103] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 289. Weininger wrote: "Women are incapable of overcoming their sexuality, which will always enslave them. We have seen that hysteria is such a helpless attempt on the part of Woman to ward off her sexuality. If her struggle against her own desire were honest and genuine, if she *sincerely wanted* to defeat it, she would be able to do so. But what hysterical women want is hysteria itself: they do not really *try* to be *cured. It is the falseness of this demonstration against slavery that makes it so hopeless.*" Weininger then cited Kundry as an example of this. Cited in *ibid.*, 251.

[104] Mann, "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner," 99.

[105] *Wiener Bilder*, January 18, 1914, 8. This image was also on the cover of *Wiener Bilder* only a few days after the premiere at the *Hofoper*.

[106] Bienenfeld, "'Parsifal' in der Hofoper," *Neues Wiener Journal*, January 15, 1914: 10.

noted that her tired voice could not sustain it all. Ludwig Karpath also wrote that Bahr-Mildenburg's representation was unparalleled ("*sondergleichen*") in its dramatic force and its performance of "first the unruly, wild animal, then the seductive woman in Klingsor's service."[107] Although some saw Ranzenberg's performance as "sordid" ("*schmutzig*") viewing her vocal and theatrical performance somewhat critically, others praised her voice and the way in which she executed the "difficult psychological figure."[108]

Conclusion

Although her body does not mirror exactly those in Schiele's paintings, nor does she precisely enact the "*grande attaque hystérique*" outlined in Charcot's images, Kundry's gestures and physical appearance, particularly in Act I, nevertheless approximate those of the hysteric and the mentally ill woman as understood at this cultural moment. Indeed, the images of Kundry in various Viennese performances key into a wide range of illnesses or hysteria, and bear resemblance to the images circulating in the medical community and society. Kundry's non-procreative sexuality is presented as dramatically and musically disruptive, and this is given further resonance with her visual representation as an hysteric.

While Wagner prescribed many of Kundry's disruptive, hysterical gestures in the music, leitmotifs, and stage directions, only an examination of the "performance text" in addition to the "opera text" can provide deeper insight into how Kundry was actually *seen* within the context of the era's iconography of illness and female sexuality. Indeed, the images from the early Viennese

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[107] Karpath, "'Parsifal' in der Hofoper," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, January 15, 1914: 13.

[108] R. B. (Richard Batka), "'Parsifal' in der Volksoper," *Fremden-Blatt*, January 26, 1914: 9; the latter: "psychologisch so schwer zugänglich Gestalt." M. S., "'Parsifal' in der Volksoper," *Reichspost*, January 26, 1914: 5. David Bach praised Ranzenberg's conception of the role, but was not satisfied with her voice in the seduction scene. David Bach, "'Parsifal' in der Volksoper," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, January 26, 1914: 5.

performances (as well as the Bayreuth performances, which certainly influenced these Viennese ones), the rehearsal notes, and reception materials all add further layers to the music drama, and demonstrate how the opera reinforced *fin-de-siècle* perceptions about female sexuality as abnormal, and thus closely tied to hysteria and illness, social threats that had to be isolated, "cured," or, in Kundry's case, musically removed – *entseelt.* But *why* was such a work that represented "illness" and "hysteria" so popular? Perhaps its popularity reveals something of the shifting landscape and curiosity toward female sexuality at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Over the number of years that people travelled hundreds of kilometers to Bayreuth to see *Parsifal*, understandings of female sexuality also deepened. Perhaps part of the music drama's popularity can be attributed to a question that was on many minds: what type of woman was best for society?

Chapter 3: Staging Female Hysteria after Kundry: Richard Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra* in Vienna

In *Salome* the subject is a trifle unpleasant, but Strauss has given us a marvelous study of the diseased woman's mind.
– Ernest Newman, 1910[1]

Hysteria is nowadays a fashionable disease. And Strauss follows this trend.
– Friedrich Brandes[2]

Although separated by almost thirty years from Wagner's last stage work, *Parsifal*, Strauss's *Salome* (1905) and *Elektra* (1909) share much in common with it, both musically and visually. Strauss draws on Wagner's musical language with his highly illustrative thematic material and complex, expressive orchestral apparatus to musically propel the drama.[3] More importantly for the purposes here, *Salome* and *Elektra* offer a presentation of women similar to the text in *Parsifal*. Earlier critics called Elektra the "matricidal stepdaughter of Wagnerian music dramas [who] follows in the footsteps of her sister Salome,"[4] while recently Jeremy Tambling considered Salome and Elektra "daughters of Kundry" and Ulrich Müller grouped all three as "leidenden Schwestern" (suffering sisters).[5] As the language and tone in the above

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[1] Newman in a letter to the newspaper *The Nation* on March 22, 1910, in response to George Bernard Shaw. Ernest Newman, "The Newman-Shaw Controversy Concerning Strauss," in *Testament of Music: Essays and Papers by Ernest Newman*, ed. Herbert van Thai (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963), 129. Cited also in Derrick Puffett, "Introduction," in *Richard Strauss:* Salome, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 7.

[2] Friedrich Brandes, "Salome," *Dresdner Anzeiger*, December 10, 1905: 62.

[3] As Gilliam also notes, *Salome* was subtitled "Music Drama," invoking Wagner. Gilliam, "Strauss and the sexual body: The erotics of humor, philosophy, and ego-assertion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, ed. Charles Youmans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 274.

[4] "muttermörderische Stieftochter des Wagnerschen Musikdramas in die Fußstapfen Schwester Salomes tritt." In a review of *Elektra*. m.k., "Elektra," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, March 25, 1909: 13. This reviewer, m.k., was likely the music critic Max Kalbeck.

[5] Jeremy Tambling has drawn a connection between these operatic women (specifically with how Strauss set Salome) and ideas of "degeneracy" in Part III, subtitled "Opera, Gender, and Degeneracy," of Jeremy Tambling, *Opera and the Culture of Fascism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), see esp. 174. See also,

epigraphs indicate, Salome and Elektra are closely related to Wagner's Kundry – women whose expressions of sexuality were marked and perceived as "hysterical" and "diseased."[6] Not only do Elektra and Salome share the same visual signifiers of illness and disease, but upon closer examination, Strauss's musical and visual characterization of these women as dangerous "Other" shares a resemblance with Wagner's presentation of Kundry.

As Lawrence Kramer reminds us, *Salome* is music meant to be seen and "depends so much on how the audience *sees* its protagonist."[7] Not only does Salome dramatically dominate a large part of the opera, but there are also moments where the visual prevails over the musical, where all eyes – both onstage and offstage – are on Salome and her scantily clad dancing body. The opera revolves around Salome's dance; audiences today wait for it anxiously, while audiences of the past, who clamored to see the opera, were shocked by this dancing woman whose movements and costume were better suited at that time for the Cabaret or variety theater than for the court opera stage.[8] We are all captivated. Our eyes follow Salome until she is crushed at the end of the opera, just as our eyes were attracted by Kundry's wild gestures. Like Herod and Narraboth in *Salome*, we stare at Salome in her gleaming, ornamented costume while she dances seductively, and like the maids in *Elektra*, our eyes follow Elektra as she lurks around the dark corners of the stage, in "convulsions." Our gaze is drawn to her as she creeps in and out of the shadows, and as she performs her frenzied dance that leads to her death.

Müller, who connects Kundry and Elektra to other hysterical operatic women from different eras: Ulrich Müller, "Kundry, Elektra und ihre leidenden Schwestern: Ein Überblick," in *Kundry & Elektra und ihre leidenden Schwestern: Schizophrenie und Hysterie: Frauenfiguren im Musik-Theater*, ed. Silvia Kronberger and Ulrich Müller, Musik und Text 53 (Salzburg: Müller-Speiser, 2003), 170-78.

[6] Recall the Thomas Mann epigraph in Chapter 2 as well as Nietzsche's comments from the introductory pages of Chapter 1.

[7] Lawrence Kramer, "Video as *Jugendstil: Salome*, Visuality, and Performance," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 168.

[8] In many of the early performances of *Salome*, the singer had a body double for the dance.

In this chapter, I examine how Salome and Elektra operate as musical and visual disturbances, like Kundry. Moreover, in the early productions (and particularly those in Vienna) their visual presentation also draws on the same surrounding discourses of illness, hysteria, pathology, degeneracy, and female sexuality. Many of Weiner's claims discussed in the pervious chapter about vision and the visual in Wagner's works have a bearing on these two Strauss operas. Indeed, the ways in which Wagner's presentation of Kundry resonated with contemporaneous images of illness and hysteria needs to be extended to a consideration of Salome and Elektra. Moreover, the musical characterizations – in terms of leitmotivic, instrumental, vocal, stylistic, and rhythmic treatment – in relation to the visual characterizations are also important to examine in *Salome* and *Elektra*.[9] After all, Strauss arguably built on Wagnerian visual and musical codes, and many have commented on his highly illustrative compositional style, or his *Tongemalde* (painting with tones).[10] With Wagner and *Parsifal* as very much part of the *fin-de-siècle* Viennese culture, even before the music drama's 1914 premiere, when *Salome* and *Elektra* were performed in Vienna beginning in 1907 and through the 1910s, their musical and visual representations would have resonated with Wagner's presentation of Kundry's sexuality.

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[9] Like Wagner, Strauss was highly attentive to the interactions between the libretto and the musical detail. As Bryan Gilliam notes, "harmonic annotations in the libretto form a fundamental part of Strauss's working method." Bryan Gilliam, "Strauss's Preliminary Opera Sketches: Thematic Fragments and Symphonic Continuity," *19th-Century Music* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1986): 177.

[10] r. h. (Robert Hirschfeld) wrote that Strauss's "*Tongemälde*" (tone painting) is "*kunstreich*" (masterful). r. h., "Elektra," *Wiener Abendpost*, March 26, 1909. According to Gilliam, numerous critics remarked on the "sonically graphic" music, and this Wiener *Abendpost* review is only one of many that comments on Strauss's ability to illustrate with music. See Bryan Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 12-13. Moreover, several of Strauss's operas have direct musical references to Wagner's music dramas. For example, Carpenter notes the direct harmonic quotations of *Tristan und Isolde* in *Elektra* (Tethys Carpenter, "The Musical Language of *Elektra*," in *Richard Strauss*: Elektra, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 88-91), while *Feuersnot*, to be discussed in the following chapter, was a critique of conservative Munich's rejection of Wagner and contains several musical references to *Die Meistersinger*.

Yet what is different with Strauss's treatment of the threatening sexual woman is that Salome and Elektra *dance*. Women's dancing has long been associated with not only the disciplining of the female body, such as in ballet, but also with madness and illness. Dance was tied to themes of morbidity and female sexuality at that time, as evidenced in Ibsen's *The Doll's House,* Strindberg's *The Dance of Death,* Wedekind's figure of Lulu from *Erdgeist* and *Der Büchse der Pandora*, and Wilde's *Salome*. Moreover, dancing in the *fin-de-siècle* was closely associated with modernity, with the highly popular "alternative expressions of female sexuality" of Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Maud Allan, whose dance "*Vision of Salome*," which débuted at the Vienna *Carlstheater* in 1906, had hundreds of performances around the world.[11] Hofmannsthal's very inclusion of the dance in *Elektra* was likely influenced by these dancers, who were popular in Vienna.[12] As Hutcheon and Hutcheon also note, Richer's drawings of Charcot's hysteric patients and their performances of the "*grand attaque hystérique*" are also reminiscent of the gestures and bodily contortions of modern dance.[13] The spectacle of a woman dancing alone, according to Scott, "posed a threat to the romanticized and heterosexual imperative of woman as wife and mother, narrated in the pas-de-deux."[14] Thus, when Salome and Elektra dance, they evoke these multiple, rich significations, from power and sexuality to hysteria and madness. As I later examine, Salome's dance is one that exerts power on and off the stage, yet it also marks the beginning of her descent into explicit sexual "degeneracy" and

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[11] For a discussion of modernism and dance, see Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 25-29. Maud Allan's version of Salome was performed to music by Marcel Remy and first performed on December 26, 1906. See Toni Bentley, *Sisters of Salome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 59.

[12] Particularly with her gestures, Elektra's dance is reminiscent of Isadora Duncan's modern free dance, and Hofmannsthal probably saw Duncan dance in Vienna in 1903. See *ibid*, 40.

[13] Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon also note that dance is linked with hysteria and pathology, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," 216. As I will later discuss in the chapter, Scott connects the movements of Charcot's hysterical patients to Elektra's dance.

[14] Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 27.

illness, paving the way for her demands for Jochanaan's head on a platter. Meanwhile, Elektra's concluding dance is a powerful spectacle, usurping dramatic and visual control from Orestes' murderous acts. Dance, signifying the modern and the dangerous, adds another level of visual meaning and further places the Viennese Salomes and Elektras within discourses of unruly female sexuality, degeneracy, and disease.

Section I: *Salome*

[Salome] has become, as it were, the symbolic incarnation of undying Lust, the Goddess of immortal Hysteria, the accursed Beauty exalted above all other beauties by the catalepsy that hardens her flesh and steels her muscles, the monstrous Beast, indifferent, irresponsible, insensible, poisoning, like the Helen of ancient myth, everything that approaches her, everything that sees her, everything that she touches.

– Joris-Karl Huysmann, *À Rebours* (1884)[15]

The figure of Salome has a long history of representation in the arts, most famously as a *femme fatale* in the *fin-de-siècle*, appearing, for instance, in Moreau's painting *L'Apparition* (1876) and Klimt's *Salome/Judith II* (1909), Huysmann's novel *A Rébours* (1884), and Flaubert's story *Hérodias* (1877).[16] Yet her various manifestations often elicited strong reactions, and she is treated in present-day scholarship as a disruptive and divisive figure. Some view the operatic Salome as dangerous, while others view her as a strong, empowered woman who is ultimately silenced both physically and musically.[17] Whatever the case may be, Strauss's Salome is a classic figure of twentieth century opera, and her musical and dramatic treatment has become iconic of opera's depiction of sexuality and female transgression. Indeed, much has been written about the musical characterization of Salome and how its sensual chromaticism both highlights her sexuality and paints her as a musical "Other." McClary views Salome and her "excessive sexuality" as ultimately "framed": Salome is visually and musically silenced within the frame of

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[15] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature (À Rebours)*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 53.

[16] For a discussion of the various literary permutations of Salome, see Françoise Meltzer, *Salome and the Dance of Writing: Portraits of Mimesis in Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[17] Lawrence Kramer, "Culture and Musical Hermeneutics: The *Salome* Complex," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2, no. 3 (1990): 269-94; Lawrence Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge: The *Salome* Complex," in *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss*, 128-66; McClary, *Feminine Endings*, esp. 80-111; Elliot Gilbert states that Salome represents a "corrosive, disobedient, unbridled female sexuality," while Francoise Meltzer calls her a "virgin and devoureress." Elliot L. Gilbert, "'Tumult of Images': Wilde, Beardsley, and 'Salome,'" *Victorian Studies* 26 (1983): 150, 156; Meltzer, *Salome and the Dance of Writing Portraits of Mimesis in Literature*, 18. Both Gilbert and Meltzer are cited as well in Abbate, "Opera; Or, the Envoicing of Women," 240-41.

the opera.[18] Kramer also contends that while Salome commanded the gaze during the dance, she ultimately loses visual control, and male power is safely restored at the end of the opera.[19] Abbate, on the other hand, suggests that Salome usurps the authorial voice from the male composer through the phenomenon of singing: "Women's singing voices themselves have an explicitly *authorial* force."[20] Even though Strauss is the composer, the singing voice emerges from the body of the soprano singing Salome in front of us, granting her authorial power. Indeed, as Abbate contends, the singer's power to "create" extends beyond the dance of the seven veils – it lies in her voice.[21]

Locating Salome within the opera's specific cultural moment, Gilman notes that Salome embodies the "danger of the Jewish woman [and] contains specific qualities ascribed to the destructive feminine within the world of culture as a means of constructing another exclusionary category analogous to that of the 'bluestocking' and the 'prostitute.'"[22] Kramer also places Salome within the opera's cultural context and contends that she was "a kind of all-purpose cultural symptom" and a "focal point for a bundle of instabilities produced in and around the fin-

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[18] McClary, "Excess and Frame: The Musical Representation of Madwomen," in *Feminine Endings*, 80-111, especially 99.

[19] Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 132-36.

[20] Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Women," 228.

[21] Seeing the voice emerge from a female body grants authorial power to the female character, particularly when the music would not be heard without the "phenomenal reality" of the performers. *Ibid.*, 228, 234.

[22] See Sander Gilman who places Salome within the Anti-Semitic *fin-de-siècle* perception of Jewish sexuality. Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the 'Modern Jewess,'" 198. In other writings, Gilman also notes that Salome is a "representation of a sexual hysteric" and "perverted sexuality," and that Strauss's version of *Salome* operated with a network of negative stereotypes about Jewish sexuality, "perversion," and homosexuality. Sander Gilman, "Opera, Homosexuality, and Models of Disease: Richard Strauss's *Salome* in the Context of Images of Disease in the *fin-de-siècle*," in *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 168-69. For a discussion of the opera's reception as a "*Judenoper*," see Anne L. Seshadri, "The Taste of Love: Salome's Transformation," *Women and Music* 10 (2006): 24-44.

de-siècle gender system."[23] Hutcheon and Hutcheon, arguing that Salome is empowered by the gaze, direct our attention to the body in the opera. Contextualizing Salome's dancing body within contemporaneous ideas about hysteria and pathology, they offer a convincing examination that situates the opera and its focus on the body within the popular medical discourses of the era.[24] Continuing in this direction, I want to consider how Salome's visual presentations specifically in the Viennese productions of the opera both operated in tandem with her musical characterization and resonated with contemporary discussions about female sexuality as not only socially harmful, but also as associated with illness and disease. I suggest, following Gilman's important work on iconographies of sexuality and disease,[25] that the visual performances of *Salome* in Vienna at the turn of the century were influenced by images of illness, specifically the predominant masculine perspective of the sexual and ill woman. Although Salome may possess authorial power with her voice and command the gaze with her seductive movements, she is still working within a broader musical and visual framework that oppresses her. The compelling nature of her presentation is found in her sexuality and its associations with madness and illness – she is the very opposite of the ideal image of the *Ewig-Weibliche*.

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[23] Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 129.

[24] They write: "Her open display of sexual desire for Jochanaan would have been seen by most as a sure sign of mental disease and proof (in the 'elementary force' with which she was attracted to him) of her nymphomania." Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," 214. Seshadri also notes how "Salome's fetishistic desire for Jochanaan would have been understood as symptomatic of hysteria," and she connects hysteria to the era's anti-Semitic discourses. Seshadri, "Salome's Transformation," 38.

[25] Gilman, "Opera, Homosexuality, and Models of Disease," 155-80; Gilman, *Sexuality: An Illustrated History*.

Reception and Early Productions

While opera houses clamored to perform Wagner's *Parsifal* after the *Lex Parsifal* ended, staging Strauss's third opera met with much resistance from the very same cities, including Vienna and Berlin, indicating the degree to which court censors dictated what could and could not be staged.[26] From the beginning, there were concerns over Salome's sexual content as disruptive and representative of decadence and illness. Despite praise from some critics, many perceived Strauss's controversial opera as a dangerous influence on both the singers themselves and the viewing public.

Strauss first saw Wilde's play *Salome* in November 1902 at Reinhardt's *Kleines Theater* in Berlin, with Eysoldt as Salome, and he immediately set to work on the opera.[27] While he tried to arrange for Mahler to conduct the opera's premiere in Vienna, the subject and treatment of sexuality and religion could not get past the *Hofoper*'s censor, Dr. Emil Jettel von Ettenach, even though Wilde's play had already been performed in 1903 at Vienna's *Deutsches Theater*. Jettel rejected the work, writing that, "the presentation of perverted sensuality, as embodied in the

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[26] In terms of the play's censorship, when the *Deutsches Volkstheater* in Vienna applied on March 14th, 1903 for permission to perform the play, it met several objections because of the religious depictions and the "sensuous moments" – the play was considered as bearing traces of Wilde's personal "morbid, deviant disposition." The play was performed on December 12th, 1903 and only on the condition that the head be hidden. For more on Austrian performances and Wilde's censorship, see: Mayer and Pfeifer, "The Reception of Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw in Light of Early Twentieth-Century Austrian Censorship," 61-63. For a general discussion of censorship regarding sexual matters in Austria and Germany, see Stark, "Defending the Moral Order," 189-232; Stark, "Germany," 22-69; Bachleitner, "The Habsburg Monarchy," 228-64.

[27] Although poet Anton Lindner first suggested *Salome* as an opera to Strauss and offered to write the libretto for him, Strauss himself shaped the libretto from female author and translator Hedwig Lachmann's German translation that was used in this 1902 Reinhardt production. Puffett, *Richard Strauss*: Salome, 4. According to Chapple, Lachmann's text emphasizes the naturalness of Salome's awakening sensuality unlike Wilde's perverse Salome. Yet as will be seen in this chapter, Wilde's understanding of Salome seemed to dominate through the way in which the role was performed and understood by critics. For a discussion of the differences between Wilde's *Salome* and Lachmann's translation of *Salome*, see Norma Chapple, *Re-(en)visioning Salome: The Salomes of Hedwig Lachmann, Marcus Behmer, and Richard Strauss* (Masters thesis, University of Western Ontario, 2006), 52-53.

figure Salome" was "morally injurious."[28] A month later he again refused to allow the work to be performed, noting that, "the representation of events that belong to the realm of sexual pathology is not suitable for our court theater."[29]

The premiere eventually took place in Dresden under Ernst Schuch on December 9th, 1905.[30] But echoing the Viennese censor, many early performers had reservations about the work. Schuch wrote to Strauss on December 9th, 1905 regarding the rehearsals, which Strauss summarized as follows:

> [D]uring the first reading rehearsal at the piano, the assembled soloists the singers returned their parts to the conductor with the single exception of Mr. Burian, a Czech, who, when asked for his opinion last of all, replied: 'I know it off by heart already.' Good for him. After this the others could not help feeling a little ashamed and rehearsals actually started. During the casting rehearsals Frau Wittich, entrusted the part of the sixteen-year-old Princess with the voice of an Isolde […], because of the strenuous nature of the part and the strength of the orchestra, went on strike with the indignant protest to be expected from the wife of a Saxon Burgomaster: 'I won't do it, I'm a decent woman,' thereby reducing the producer Willi Wirk, who was all for 'perversity and outrage' to desperation.[31]

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[28] "die Vorführung einer perversen Sinnlichkeit, wie sie in der Figur der Salomé verkörpert ist, sittlich verletzend." *HHSA* Box 3286, Oper 1905. Cited also in Clemens Höslinger, "'Salome' und ihr Österreichisches Schicksal 1905 bis 1918," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 32, nos. 7-8 (1997): 301.

[29] "[D]ie Darstellung von Vorgängen, die in das Gebiet der Sexualpathologie gehören, eignet sich nicht für unsere Hofbühne." *HHA*, Oper 168/1905. Cited as well in Höslinger, "'Salome' und ihr Österreichisches Schicksal," 303. Jettel's disapproval was not solely for the sexuality in the opera, but also for the irreverent treatment of a religious subject: "The first objection arises…from the repeated explicit or implicit references to Christ in the text [examples are cited]. All these passages would need to be cut or radically altered. A further difficulty is the presentation of John the Baptist on the stage. The poet admittedly gives him the Hebrew name Jochanaan, but just as this change of name is unable to create the illusion that it is not the person honored as Christ's forerunner, so equally would the choice of any other name fail to have this effect. But also, quite apart from these textual reservations I cannot overcome the objectionable nature of the whole story, and can only repeat that the representation of events which belong to the realm of sexual pathology is not suitable for your Court stage." English translation from: Puffett, "Introduction," *Richard Strauss*, Salome, 7. For an account of Mahler's multiple attempts to get *Salome* past the censor, see Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler, *Correspondence 1888–1911*, ed. Herta Blaukopf, trans. Edmund Jephcott (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), 83-95.

[30] *Salome*'s next performance was in Breslau on February 28th, 1906, then in Prague on May 5th, 1906.

[31] Strauss, *Recollections and Reflections*, 151.

Not only was producer Willi Wirk frustrated by Wittich's refusal to perform Salome with any sexuality, but she also took so long to learn the role that the premiere had to be delayed until December. Eventually a ballerina, Sidonie Korb, performed the dance in Wittich's place.[32] Strauss later wrote that the opera "prevailed in spite of Auntie Wittich."[33]

The first review (from a dress rehearsal) was published in the *Dresdner Nachrichten* on December 10th, 1905, and while praising Strauss's music, it points out the "perverted actions," confirming Wittich's worries: "the raw actions, the exaggeration of everything which Wilde's text demands of normal feelings by its perverted actions, the disgusting nature of the material, all of this is transfigured through the music."[34] Such comments continued after the premiere, with Strauss's father even remarking: "Oh God, what nervous music. It is exactly as if one has one's trousers full of maybugs."[35] Romain Rolland, who corresponded extensively with Strauss about the details of setting the French text, wrote to Strauss that "Wilde's *Salomé* and all that surrounds it […] are unhealthy, unsavory, hysterical, or drunken beings, stinking of worldly and perfumed corruption."[36] Although Strauss's work "lent moving accents to [his] *Salome*" and "transcended

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[32] Strauss and Mahler, *Correspondence*, 61; Richard Strauss and Ernst von Schuch, *Ein Briefwechsel*, ed. Gabriella Hanke Knaus, Veröffentlichungen der Richard-Strauss-Gesellschaft 16 (Berlin: Henschel, 1999), 66, footnote 3.

[33] Strauss to Hofmannsthal in the 1920s. Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *The Correspondence between Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, trans. Hanns Hammelmann and Ewald Osers, intro. Edward Sackville-West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 449.

[34] Cited and translated in Gilman, "Opera, Homosexuality, and Models of Disease," 167. Marie Wittich was also known for her performances of Kundry, thus further connecting these two characters for the Dresden audiences.

[35] Strauss later recalling his father's words in: Strauss, *Recollections and Reflections*, 152.

[36] "La Salomé de Wilde et tous ceux qui l'entourent, sauf cette brute de Iokanaan, sont des êtres malsains, malpropres, hystériques ou alcooliques, puant la corruption mondaine et parfumée." Romain Rolland to Strauss after seeing *Salome* in Paris. The letter is dated May 14th, 1907. Richard Strauss and Romain Rolland, *Correspondance Fragments de Journal*, preface Gustave Samazeuilh, Cahiers Romain Rolland 3 (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1951), 87.

[his] subject, [he] could not make one forget it."[37] In 1910, English music critic Ernest Newman remarked that "[i]n *Salome* the subject is a trifle unpleasant, but Strauss has given us a marvelous study of the diseased woman's mind," while in 1907 a critic in the *Neue Musikalische Presse* called it "a bloodthirsty, flesh drunk orgy."[38] Even some of Strauss's later biographers continued in a similar tone: Norman Del Mar called musical passages, such as immediately after Herod gives into Salome's demands, "a horrible display of hysterical triumph," while "after a performance of *Salome* one is left with a very nasty taste in one's mouth."[39]

Despite the ban from the conservative *Hofoper*, the opera finally made its way to Viennese audiences and was in fact produced in several different productions (see Appendix A). The first Austrian performance was in Graz on May 16th, 1906, and numerous Viennese travelled there to see the work.[40] On May 25th, 1907, a visiting company from Breslau staged the work at the private *Deutsches Volkstheater* under the direction of Dr. Theodor Loewe, with Fanchette Verhunk as Salome. There were a series of Vienna productions in the years following: at the *Deutsches Volksoper* on December 23rd, 1910, with Zemlinsky conducting, Klothilde Wenger as Salome, staging by Rainer Simons, and set design by Roller; at the *Volksoper* on April 9th, 1911, with Wenger again and Strauss conducting. Finally on October 14th, 1918, the *Hofoper*

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[37] "vous avez beau prêter à vôtre Salomé des accents émouvants: vous dépassez votre sujet, mais vous ne pouvez pas le faire oublier." *Ibid.*

[38] Newman, *Testament of Music: Essays and Papers by Ernest Newman*, 129. Anon, "Salome, München," *Neue Musikalische Presse* XVI, no. 2 (1907): 15.

[39] Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on his Life and Works* (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1962), I, 273, 282.

[40] Strauss conducted the performance in Graz, and numerous members of Vienna society were there from Gustav and Alma Mahler, to Alban Berg. According to contemporary reports, it seemed like the Graz premiere was the most successful. "Die Aufnahme war eine enthusiastische" (the reception was enthusiastic), and Jenny Korb as Salome was "ein Meisterwerk" (a masterpiece). F., *Wiener Abendpost*, May 17, 1906. See also Höslinger, "'Salome' und ihr Österreichisches Schicksal," 304.

performed the work under Franz Schalk, with staging by Wilhelm Wymetal and Maria Jeritza singing Salome.[41]

Hearing Salome

The opera was strongly associated with contemporary themes of decadence, and as Stephen C. Downes points out, the most shocking and "decadent" moments are matched with music that is a "dissolution of *Steigerung*" (intensification).[42] In Strauss, the keys, harmonies, leitmotifs, and individual chords all operate as "vehicles of symbolic reference."[43] Indeed, as Bryan Gilliam argues, the "associative role of keys in opera […] forms a central element in Strauss's tonal plan."[44] How Salome, Jochanaan, Herod, and Herodias are musically

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[41] Salome performances at the *Volksoper* were on the following dates: **1910**: 23/12; 25/12; 28/12; **1911**: 1/1; 5/1; 7/1; 15/1; 18/1; 20/1; 25/1; 27/1; 30/1; 1/2; 6/2; 20/2; 22/2; 9/3; 17/3; 9/4; 18.4; **1912**: 8/1; 16/1; 21/2; 7/3; **1917**: 12/1; 19/1; 26/1; 7/2; 11/3. Salome was sung by Wenger on the following dates: **1910:** December: 23, 25, 28; **1911:** January: 1, 5, 7, 13, 15, 25; February: 6; March: 9, 17; April: 9, 18; by Gemma Bellincioni on the following dates: **1911:** January: 18, 20, 27, 30; February: 1; by Aino Akté on the following dates: **1911:** February: 20, 22; by Engel **1912:** January 8, 16; March: 7. See Johann Trattner, *Richard Strauss in der Volksoper von 1910–1970* (PhD diss., Universität Wien, May 2007), especially 68. See Höslinger as well, "'Salome' und ihr Österreichisches Schicksal," 305-7. In 1911 Italian soprano Gemma Bellincioni also was a guest singer for several performances. From *Theaterzettel* at the *ÖTM.* See also Appendix A for a list of performances.

[42] Downes reads these moments as evincing "musical material of decay and destruction." Stephen C. Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 60, 188.

[43] Craig Ayrey, "Salome's Final Monologue," in *Richard Strauss:* Salome, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 112; many of Strauss's contemporaries noticed the importance of Strauss's painterly use of leitmotifs for dramatic means. See, for example, Edgar Pierson, "'*Elektra*' und die Richard Strauss Woche in Dresden," *Bühne und Welt: Zeitschrift für Theaterwesen, Literatur, und Musik* 11, no. 11 (1909): 442.

[44] According to Gillian, Strauss often marked key areas and sketched themes and harmonies on his copy of the libretto. Gilliam, "Strauss's Preliminary Opera Sketches," 178. This is evident with Strauss's many themes written in the margins of his handwritten libretto, such as an early sketch of *Der Rosenkavalier*. Mus. Hs. 41.960 (facsimile MS2798), *ÖNB-Mus.* For a discussion of Strauss's associative use of key areas see also: Eva-Maria Axt, "Das Ineinanderwirken von Bewusstem und Unbewusstem: Zum Stimmungs- und Symbolcharackter der Tonarten bei Richard Strauss," *Richard Strauss-Blätter* 29 (1993): 7-21; Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 67-75; and Derrick Puffett, "The Music of *Elektra*: Some Preliminary Thoughts," *Richard Strauss:* Elektra, 45-50.

characterized by melodic, harmonic, and formal structures is central to reading the opera, thus it is necessary to briefly address Strauss's important and much discussed musical characterization of Salome as disruptive and contagious, including perspectives from Strauss's contemporaries, before turning to examine Salome's visual presentation.

As McClary notes, Salome operates in a world of musical chromaticism. This chromaticism marks her as "Other" and pits her against the diatonic musical space of Jochanaan.[45] From the beginning of the work, Strauss associated Salome with c♯ minor, as he had notated in the margins of his copy of the libretto. Apart from her "Monologue," Salome often sings in c♯ minor. This key area marks her as musical "Other" to Jochanaan's stable C major or d minor tonality, which is articulated from his very first choral-like entry, a point to which I will return shortly.[46] As with Kundry, Salome's thematic material is made aurally manifest and outlined in contemporary guidebooks and analyses of the times, establishing the musical characterization of the characters even outside the opera hall. Salome's opening theme (Ex. 3.1), described as "capricious and nervous" by contemporary George Gräner in a 1909 guidebook to the opera, often appears in A major with an upward flourish and then seductively twisting around A.[47] This theme constantly returns throughout the opera, and is always connected to Salome. As a *Die Grenzboten* critic wrote in his 1906 review of the opera, "[t]he orchestra introduces her with a fawning-waltz motif, an enticing call that sounds like nature and

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[45] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 100-1.

[46] This key association is further reinforced with the references to the enharmonic equivalent D♭ of the moon, to which Narraboth compares Salome. See Puffett, "Editor's Note," to Roland Tenschert, "Strauss as Librettist," in *Richard Strauss:* Salome, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 47; Over the course of the opera, *Salome* has a series of other key areas associated with her, including C♯ major/C♯ minor. In the Monologue, when Salome has the head, she veers toward C Major/c minor, keys associated with Jochanaan's, and keys of "violence and death which are opposed to the C♯ major/C♯ minor world of desire." Ayrey, "Salome's Final Monologue," 117. See also, Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge," *Opera and Modern Culture*, 156-58.

[47] See George Gräner, "Salome," in *Richard Strauß: Musikdramen*, 85.

birds singing. Her stubbornness is heard from the beginning of her melody, tumbling throughout all her melodies."[48] The same critic continued, arguing that Strauss musically reoriented Salome's character through his music: "Strauss is in disagreement with the poet Wilde, in that he pointedly portrays her with an animalistic sexual appetite that drives her to insanity."[49]

Ex. 3.1: Strauss, *Salome*: Salome's Theme 1 (m. 1).

Her entrances and her bodily movements are often paralleled by temporal changes or passages with musical movement, such as the rapid descending 16th-note scales in the clarinets, bassoons, and strings, timbres linked to Salome and rhythmic gestures that musically mimic her steps toward the cistern (3 after **45**). When Salome enters "*erregt*," her appearance is accompanied by an *accelerando* in the music, building excitement (and anxiety). The directions read "*Äusserst schnell*," while a second "Salome" theme, called "*das unbestimmte Verlangen*" (indeterminate desires) by Gräner, sounds in the violins and oboes (Ex. 3.2).[50] This musical characterization sharply contrasts with Jochanaan's solemn, calm chorale-like music that precedes it. Every time Salome demands for Jochanaan, fragments of this theme are intoned, and while Salome waits for Jochanaan to appear, this theme permeates the soundscape.

Ex. 3.2: Strauss, *Salome*: Salome's Theme 2 (5 after **20**).

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[48] Anon., "Salome von Richard Strauss," *Die Grenzboten: Zeitschrift für Politik, Literatur, und Kunst* 65, no. 24 (1906): 587. Cited and translated in Seshadri, "The Taste of Love: Salome's Transformation," 37.

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] Gräner, "Salome," in *Richard Strauß: Musikdramen*, 88.

The musical material accompanying her third theme, labeled by Gräner's guidebook as "*Lockendes Verlangen Salomes nach Jochanaan*" ("Salome's enticing desire toward Jochanaan") is initially hinted at quietly in the clarinets as soon as she first sings after seeing Jochanaan (**69,** Ex. 3.3).[51] This theme again presents a sharp aural contrast to Jochanaan's somber, rhythmically and tonally stable theme heard earlier. Salome's loose, sensual clarinet theme is characterized by skittish melodies in the upper woodwinds and violins, shimmering, rapid ascending and descending lines in the harps and high strings. With its unstable, agitated gestures and fast 32nd notes it again appears in the clarinets (**76**) while she gazes at him, pronouncing him "*schrecklich*" (terrible). Now the theme also emerges from her body – in her voice – moving to the flutes then clarinets immediately after she imagines what it would be like to touch his skin: "His flesh must be cool like ivory" ("*Sein Fleisch muss sehr kühl sein, kühl wie Elfenbein"*), and again when she sings "I want to look at him closer" ("*Ich möchte ihn näher besehen*").[52]

Ex. 3.3: Strauss, *Salome*: Salome Theme 3, "Charming" theme (**76**).

Characterized by a calm, much lower register, with the low brass and horns solemnly intoning his themes, Jochanaan is Salome's musical opposite. With very different rhythmic figures, his chorale-like theme with its tonal focus (often in C or D) is audibly and dramatically different than Salome's (Ex. 3.4). In his analysis of the opera, Strauss's contemporary Ziegler

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[51] Gräner, "Salome," in *Richard Strauß: Musikdramen*, 91. Del Mar even associates the theme that appears at **85** and **89** with Salome's desire or love.

[52] German text and English translations are taken from: Richard Strauss, *Salome*, vocal score Otto Singer, trans. Alfred Kalisch (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1943).

noted the way in which Jochanaan's very first words spoken from the cistern mark him as different from Salome. They are "composed in C major, a key that has not been used, [they] are very powerful; they hit you, and immediately you see that this is a different, holy character."[53] The sustained notes in the double bass and low brass often associated with Jochanaan create a markedly different texture and sonority than Salome's higher fast, fluttering music, with its brighter timbres of the violins, oboes, clarinets, and harps. For example, a striking contrast arises between the lighter textures of Jochanaan passage (**39** – **41**) and Salome's entry (5 after **42**). Moreover, Jochanaan's vocal lines are primarily stepwise or arpeggiations of functional chords, while Salome's, especially when she begins to sing about Jochanaan's body, are disjointed, with large vocal leaps that cause her to alter her vocal timbre. For instance, when she sings of Jochanaan's body with her accompanying "desire motive" in the clarinets, her voice falls a 13th. This drop is followed by a series of other large leaps that alternate directions. Although modulating from entry to entry, Jochanaan's phrases, except when he sings about Herodias, generally remain in the same key for each passage, whereas Salome's phrases are harmonically meandering (for instance, around **76 – 79**).

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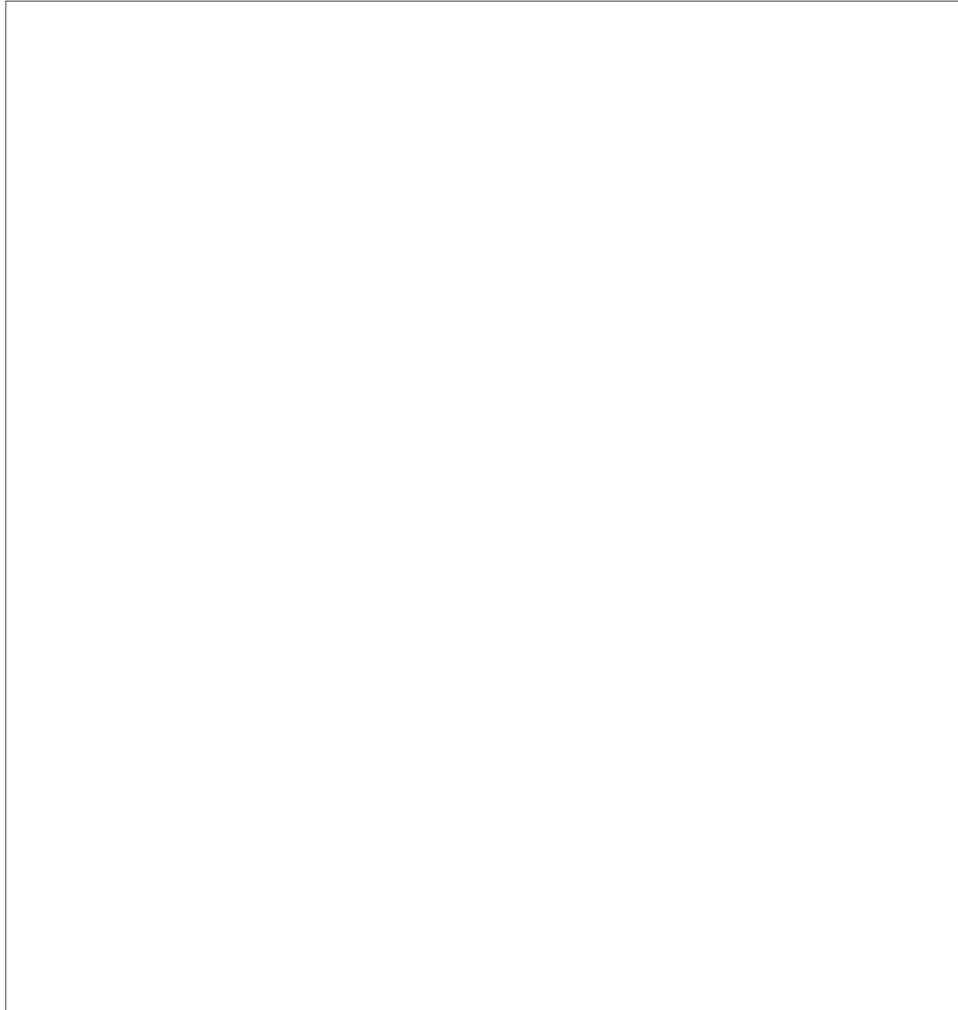
[53] "[M]it welch zwingender Macht mit einem Schlage das bis dahin aufgesparte C-dur bei Jochanaans ersten Worten aus der Cisterne und dann vor allem bei seinem wirklichen Auftreten uns den Propheten und heiligen Mann vor unsere Seele stellt." Eugen von Ziegler, *Richard Strauss in seinen dramatischen Dichtungen: Guntram, Feuersnot, Salome* (Munich: Ackermann, 1907), 61. (Translation from Seshadri, "The Taste of Love: Salome's Transformation," 35). Ziegler also described Jochanaan's music: it is solidly in a key (77), and the few modulations are well prepared, while "Herodias, Herod, and Salome, the strongest embodiments of sensual passion, are displayed with lively rhythmic figures and revealed by the incredible changes of tonality – how Jochanaan rises above that." Ziegler, *Richard Strauss in seinen dramatischen Dichtungen*, 65. Strauss later viewed John the Baptist as a comical character. Writing in 1930, he called him "a clown" and described him as a "preacher in the desert, especially one who feeds on locusts, seems infinitely ridiculous to me. Only because I had already caricatured the five Jews and also poked fun at Father Herod did I feel that I had to follow the law of contrast and write a pedantic-Philistine motif for four horns to characterize Jochanaan." Cited in Gilliam, "Strauss and the sexual body," 276.

Ex. 3.4: Strauss, *Salome*: Jochanaan before Salome's Arrival (2 before **11** – 6 after **12**).



Salome as Musical Disruption

As McClary has written, even from the onset of the opera, "Salome's sexual presence has contaminated the entire court."[54] Salome's themes interact with and alter the thematic material of the other characters, musically deepening the drama. For instance, there are even subtle differences in Jochanaan's accompanying music between his first entry (**11** – **15**) and his later

[54] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 100.

passage that he sings about Herodias in front of Salome (beginning 3 measures before **70** – **71**).[55] The calm and stately chorale-like passages in the low brass and double bass are replaced by descending 16th-note chromatic fragments in the upper woodwinds, which are rhythmically and timbrally evocative of Salome's themes. Later at **82**, Salome and her penetrating gaze agitate Jochanaan and he asks who she is while his theme, initially stable, gradually becomes tonally unglued. Between **82** and **89**, fragments of thematic material associated with Salome interrupt Jochanaan's music when he takes a break from one phrase to another, intoned either by the clarinets, upper strings, or Salome herself (Ex. 3.5). Sometimes the actual melodic contour of the theme sounds, while other times it is merely evoked through similar rhythmic and timbral gestures in the flute and clarinet. As Kramer points out, when Jochanaan sings about Herodias (between rehearsal numbers **83** and **85)**, he begins to move away from C toward Salome's key of C♯: Salome's "desire, which she will satisfy without regret on his severed head, is to raise him from his C and to kiss and possess him in her C♯."[56] Yet Jochanaan continues to resist, much as Parsifal tried to resist Kundry. By **96**, after Salome sings "let me touch your body," chromaticism has increasingly infiltrated his harmonic language and accompanying music. Only later, when Herod and Herodias arrive (**207**) and Salome is no longer gazing at Jochanaan's body, does Jochanaan return to a similar musical texture and to the tonal stability he possessed earlier. Salome later uses her triplet theme to seduce other characters. For example, when she sees

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[55] Between **70** and **74**, Jochanaan complains about Herodias's sexuality: "she gave herself to the young men of Egypt" ("die sich den jungen Männern der Egypter gegeben hat"); "let her get up from the bed of depravity and incest" (vom Bett ihrer Greuel, vom Bett ihrer Blutschande").

[56] Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge," *Opera and Modern Culture*, 157. Again at **89**, Salome begins to destabilize him musically, shifting him away from b♭ minor through the keys of f♯ minor–G major–F major–C major–B major–A♯ major. Susan McClary writes: "Jokanaan tries bravely to assert untainted C-major stability in several of his pronouncements, but even his music is driven to frenzy by his environment." McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 100. See also Tethys Carpenter, "Tonal and Dramatic Structure," in *Richard Strauss:* Salome, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 95.

Narraboth at **48**, this theme plays in the woodwinds before he begins to musically echo what she sings at **52**. Salome's music accompanies him as he acquiesces to her demands to see Jochanaan.

Ex. 3.5: Strauss, *Salome*: Salome's themes interrupt Jochanaan (3 before **82** – 3 before **83)**.

Seeing Salome

Vision is central to the opera, particularly with so much looking both *at* and *by* Salome. From the aforementioned Moreau painting of Salome, Beardsley's illustrations of Wilde's play, and Marcus Behmer's images accompanying Lachmann's German translation of the text, to specific Viennese iconography, such as Klimt's painting of "Judith," there was a strong visual

culture surrounding the figure of Salome and woven into the opera itself.[57] The plot, the stage directions, and the dialogue all revolve around watching, gazing, and the power and danger of vision. Salome is an object of the gaze even before the dance. As Hutcheon and Hutcheon write: "Together the narrative, the text, and the music worked to place not so much the *voice* but the *body* of Salome front and center – where the audience members (like Herod) cannot take their eyes off her."[58] Yet even from within the opera, there are warnings about the dangers of looking at Salome. For instance, when Narraboth stares at Salome, the Page warns him: "You look at her too much. It is dangerous to look at people in such fashion. Something terrible may happen" (**10 – 11**).[59] And indeed, bad things *do* occur when Salome looks at Jochanaan, when Salome demands that Jochanaan look at her, and when the Tetrarch looks at Salome dancing.[60] The opera culminates with Herod's fears that something even more terrible will occur, and so he extinguishes the torches and all vision.

The potential harm wrought by sexual desire is made explicit throughout the course of the opera, and the danger of the sexual, desiring gaze of a woman is brought out specifically in Salome's physical desire for Jochanaan's body. Narraboth's suicide follows a series of warnings of the danger of Salome, and occurs during the time that Salome expresses her sexuality and sings of her desire to kiss Jochanaan's mouth (**126**). Her love is not the love of Jochanaan as an

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[57] For a discussion of Behmer's images in relation to Lachmann's text, see Chapple, *Re-(en)visioning Salome*, 62-83.

[58] Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," 205.

[59] "Du siehst sie zu viel an. Es ist gefährlich, Menschen auf diese Art anzusehen. Schreckliches kann geschehn." Moments later the page reiterates this point: "You must not look at her. You look too much at her. Something terrible may happen." ("Du muss sie nicht ansehen. Du siehst sie zu viel an. Schreckliches kann geschehen.")

[60] Another instance of the discomfort of the gaze is when Herod looks at Salome, which Salome finds odd, singing: "Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole's eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that." ("Warum sieht mich der Tetrarch fortwährend so an mit seinen Maulwurfsaugen unter den zuckenden Lidern? Es ist seltsam, daß der Mann meiner Mutter mich so ansieht.") (**22**)

individual. Rather, Salome desires the *physicality* of his body. As she sang earlier: "Jochanaan, I am in love with your body" ("*Jochanaan, ich bin verliebt in deinen Leib*," **91** – 5 after **92**).[61] With her insistence on possessing and kissing this body – "*ich will deinen Mund küssen*" – Salome highlights the physicality of his body and her desire for it, and oversteps her femininity by articulating these desires for sexual fulfillment. She desires to look at him (when he appears she cannot take her eyes from his body and pronounces him "*schrecklich*" at **76**), she desires to touch the "whiteness" of his body, and she wants to touch his hair then kiss his "scarlet" "pomegranate" mouth. It is this desire to actually possess Jochanaan physically – her insistence that "I will kiss your mouth" ("*ich will deinen Mund küssen*" **122**) – and her desire to control the gaze via her sexual power that leads to the beheading of Jochanaan. The return of social order occurs when Herod orders Salome's death. With a flourish of all twelve notes, she and her triumphant C♯ major are destroyed, as McClary points out, with the silencing of her theme and a return to the order of the stable C major chord.[62] She is simultaneously destroyed physically (or at least visually) under the soldier's shields.

With so much emphasis on the visual in *Salome*, it is important to ask: *what* was the audience seeing? In many early images of the operatic and theater productions of *Salome* in German centers (Berlin, Dresden, or Vienna) and abroad (London, New York), Salome is often presented with her head back, wearing revealing clothing, her breasts thrust forward, and her arms open or clasping her chest, inviting the gaze toward her body. Susan Rutherford writes the following about Mary Garden's performances of Salome, which although not in Vienna, still reflect general ways of staging the figure: "As Salome, she sometimes wore a costume that gave

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[61] Translation modified from Kalisch translation.

[62] See McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 100. As Abbate observes, the stage directions call for her to be "*begraben*" (buried) by the soldiers' shields. Abbate, "Opera; Or, the Envoicing of Women," 227.

the impression that one breast was left unclothed […] and she adopts a pose more commonly found in Victorian erotica: one hand clutches at the exposed breast, whilst the other arm is thrown above her head in apparent sexual abandonment."[63] This allusion to erotic poses would have been linked to degeneration and physical illness during this time period. Salome, like Kundry of Act II, is a seductive dangerous Other, not only disrupting the musical soundscape, but also unsettling the visual framework. Her glittering, heavily decorated, seductive and almost exoticist costume, with its headpiece and jewelry, draws the eye toward her and creates a sharp visual contrast with Jochanaan's somber, presumably grey, garb. Several images reveal the visual similarity in the ornamented costumes of Kundry in Act II and Salome.[64] The first (Fig. 3.1) is of Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry in Act II of *Parsifal*, an image previously seen in Chapter 2. The second and third photographs (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3) are of Klothilde Wenger as Salome from the 1910–1911 production at the *Volksoper*.[65]

Wenger's ornamental costume is revealing for the operatic stage. Not only does the sleeveless outfit emphasizes her bare arms, covered with bracelets, but the fitted, décolleté bodice also exposes her chest and highlights her figure. The second image of Wenger (Fig. 3.3) clearly shows her bare midriff, and has her posed seductively gazing at and leaning toward Jochanaan's head. Although the following comment by Kramer concerns Fanchette Verhunk's body in the 1907 Viennese production by the Breslau company, it is applicable to Wenger's Salome as well: "The upper body of the performer is an ample plateau of casually punished flesh: bare shoulders under narrow straps, bare arms ringed by tight circlets rising to the level of

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[63] Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera*, 272. Garden's performances were likely in New York in 1909.

[64] In fact, as I will later discuss, while Salome is similar to Kundry of Act II, Elektra more closely resembles Kundry of Act I, with her long plain dress and tangled long hair. Salome also evokes the Flower Maidens and shares similar poses with them.

[65] These images, made into postcards, are among the few documenting Wenger in the role.

the bosom, bosom set off by a tight, low-cut bodice. The stance of the body symbolizes what its sumptuous clothing conceals."[66] Not only are the other characters directed to look at Salome, but Salome's very bodily gestures also draw the gaze toward her. She propels the plot with both her demands and her dancing body.

Salome's Dance

The dance is the visual and dramatic centerpiece to the opera. It marks a turning point in Salome's descent into necrophilic madness, as though her seductive performance itself triggers her descent. As Hutcheon and Hutcheon note, there is an "erotic power" in looking and being looked *at.* Salome disrupts the field of looking and is not merely the *object* of the gaze; rather she is the empowered *subject,* commanding and controlling the gaze at her own body, and looking back at those who gaze at her.[67] Through this control, she enacts what Kramer calls an "appropriation of the visual field." He writes: "While she dances, Salome turns the gaze back against itself by making it impossible for the male spectator to structure the visual field. Though she remains the object of the gaze, she usurps control of it; she subjugates the eye that subjugates her."[68] Even after the dance, we are still gazing at Salome, watching what she does with Jochanaan's head and remaining captivated by her. She has achieved such power that Herod is compelled to grant her wishes.

The incorporation of a visually compelling, sexualized dance within the title role was a contentious issue for some singers in an era in which the stage exerted a powerful influence.

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[66] Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 142-44.

[67] The only person who does not look at her is Jochanaan, who refuses to grant her this power. Even we, the audience, grant Salome the power of looking at her. Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," 218-20.

[68] See Kramer's analysis of Flaubert's *Salome* in "Modernity's Cutting Edge," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 132-33.

Marie Wittich, who created the role in Dresden, refused to dance, as mentioned above, and the 1910 *Volksoper* performance also had a dancer stand in for Klothilde Wenger. On the other hand, the critic for the *Neue Freie Presse* described Verhunk's 1907 dance as possessing "complete devotion." In the dance she is "lascivious, wild, gruesomely bacchanalian, always hysterical and substantially grows vocally in the closing scene."[69]

Strauss, however, did not envision the dance to as particularly lascivious: "Any one who has been in the east and has observed the decorum with which women there behave, will appreciate that Salome, being a chaste virgin and an oriental princess, must be played with the simplest and most restrained of gestures, unless her defeat by the miracle of a great world is to excite only disgust and terror instead of sympathy."[70] No stage directions are written in the actual score, but in the 1920s Strauss outlined staging directions for the dance.[71] Although it is unclear whether or not performances of the dance would have included these gestures, it is possible that many contained at least some of them, particularly since Strauss conducted numerous early performances of the opera himself, including some of the 1911 *Volksoper* performances and some of the 1918 *Hofoper* performances.[72] While Strauss does not directly prescribe movements

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[69] "Frau Verhunk tanzte mit aller Hingebung, den äußersten Realismus ersparte sie sich und uns. Sonst ist sie nach Wunsch lüstern, wild, grausam bacchantisch, immer hysterisch und wächst gesanglich ganz bedeutend in der Schlusssszene." Anon., "Salome," *Neue Freie Presse*, May 26, 1907: 15. The *Volksoper* guest performers Gemma Bellincioni and Aino Akté performed the dance themselves, while later Maria Jeritza and Marie Gutheil-Schoder performed the dance themselves in the 1918 *Hofoper* productions, according to numerous press reviews.

[70] "Appendix A: Strauss's Scenario for the 'Dance of the Seven Veils,'" in *Richard Strauss:* Salome, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 166-67. Of course the opera *did* excite "disgust and terror instead of sympathy," which reveals the way in which the opera was performed.

[71] He in fact relied on Gaston Vuillier's images in *La Danse* (Paris: Hachette, 1898). See 93-95. Instructions reproduced in Ernst Schuh, "Zum Tanz der Salome," in *Straussiana aus Vier Jahrzehnten* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1981), 91-95.

[72] Strauss also would have been involved in the original Dresden production and conducted the 1911 *Salome* at the *Volksoper*. Perhaps he even wrote out the directions in order for singers to execute *his*

of heightened sexuality or illness (or conceive of it as explicitly sexual, for that matter), many of the gestures in his version of the dance are evocative of both. The dance directions do not specify facial or hand gestures, but certain precise moments are salient to Salome's visual performance of sexuality and her desire. Amidst removing the veils at various moments, the directions call for Salome to perform "wooing" motions and charming movements, turning and moving toward and away from Herod, as well as bodily gestures that subtly evoke nervous illness as well as the convulsions of Charcot's hysertics.[73] The directions instruct her to gently flinch, cringe, and shudder, while a terrible pose "dissolves" in the next bar. She is asked to tense her body, and then relax it, sometimes swaying (at rehearsal number **K**, for example).[74] She performs seductive movements (rehearsal letter **M**), charming movements, holding herself high (near **N**, at this moment Strauss specifically references the image *Idylle* used by Gaston Vuillier in his book *La danse*, in which the woman has her arms raised, and chest out, seductively looking downward over her shoulder). Later Salome appears exhausted, then picks herself up again, continuing.

Although Strauss did not conceptualize the dance as overtly sexual, writing that it should be rather "as serious and measured as possible," he did comment elsewhere that "with the c sharp minor there should be a pacing movement and the last 2/4 bar should have a slight orgiastic

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vision of Salome's dance, although no evidence of this remains. While Strauss did not include these instructions in the original stage directions, he did provide this overview twenty-five years later.

[73] Some of the more significant directions include: "4 measures after E a swirling movement, Salome turns around quickly; At F begins a calm dance movement, that is more suggestive; At H Salome quickly removes the second veil […] Poco accelerando, A major: a few charming movements again turning toward Herod; Again in the earlier tempo: three measures before K mild shudders, these terrible poses dissolve in the next measure. […] somewhat livelier: two measures before N (F major): straightened pose, somewhat like Idylle (La Danse), again calmer reverting from this pose." In other sections of this summary, which is not included in its entirely here, Strauss refers to specific moments and pages from Vuillier's book *La Danse.* "Zum Tanz der Salome," 93-95.

[74] The dance section is marked by rehearsal letters instead of the usual rehearsal numbers.

emphasis."[75] This moment coincides with the stage directions indicating Salome to gaze in the direction of the cistern that contains Jochanaan ("*Salome verweilt einen Augenblick in visionärer Haltung an der Cisterne, in der Jochanaan gehalten wird*," 5 after **k**), who is the object of her desire, before she "collapse[s] at Herod's feet" ("*dann stürzt die vor und zu Herodes Füssen*," **l**).

Monologue, Kiss, and Transfiguration

As Craig Ayrey suggests in his analysis of *Salome*, three types of "unnatural passion" emerge: Narraboth toward Salome, because it crosses class lines; Herod toward Salome, because it is incest; Salome toward Jochanaan, because its nature is "unnatural." With her desire to kiss Jochanaan's head, the opera presents an unnatural, disturbed sexuality.[76] It is this last "unnatural" sensuality that is of concern here. Salome's obsessive repetitions and her desires are "unnatural," and yet she demands for these very desires to be recognized: Jochanaan ignores them, the knights ignore them, and Herod cannot believe her desires are serious. Even the physicality of her desire – to kiss and to touch his body, his hair, his eyes – is not an abstract desire, but rather a concrete, physical one. Both the text and the music in this section are hyper-sexual. The musical gestures in the orchestra reflect the sound of Salome's desires and tense, "expectant" body. As Strauss later wrote: "the high B flat of the double bass during the killing of the Baptist does not represent the cries of pain uttered by the victim, but sighs of anguish from the heart of an impatiently expectant Salome."[77] In addition, the monologue begins in C, but as Ayrey points out, Salome

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[75] Strauss to producer Erich Engel. Cited in Michael Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 146. Strauss specifically praised Gutheil-Schoder's interpretation of this dance.

[76] Ayrey untimately rejects this reading of "progression of increasing 'perversity.'" Ayrey, "Salome's Final Monologue," 109.

[77] Strauss, *Recollections and Reflections*, 151. Kramer also describes of the increasingly quickening high B♭s in the bass as capturing Salome's body: "The music simulates the pulsing of Salome's body in a state

leads us through a number of keys including, C, c♯, g♯, c, C♯, A, a, F♯, and back to c# over the course of the passage.[78] With the constant shifts to different keys, Strauss paints Salome's desire as leading the harmonic order even further astray.

Salome's voice is also significant in the monologue.[79] Her voice and speech present her as disruptive at several moments, and she begins to resemble the hysteric Kundry of Act I. For instance, the change in Gemma Bellincioni's voice after the dance was discernable to the audience in the 1911 *Volksoper* production. "Following this dance, it becomes clear that

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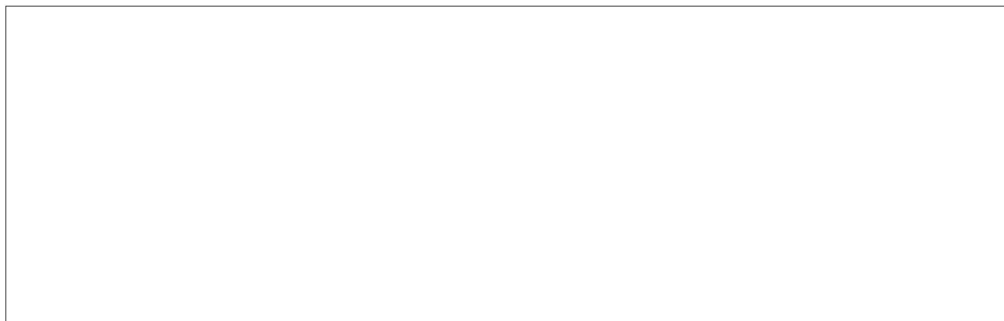
of distinctively feminine sensual excitement, and at the same time exposes the excitement as 'horrible…really horrible.'" Kramer, "Modernity's Cutting Edge," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 150.

[78] Although, as Ayrey does note, the overall harmonic scheme oscillates between C major and c♯ minor, Salome's key and the key of her physical desire (Ayery, "Salome's Final Monologue," 114-15). Roese also points out how a new theme sounds, and Salome "now rises transfigured" and is fulfilled. Roese praises how Salome's music changes here and becomes closer to Jochanaan's. Roese, cited in Seshadri, "Salome's Transformation," 41 (Original: Otto Roese, *Richard Strauss:* Salome (Berlin: Bard, Marquardt, and Co, 1906), 48-49). In his 1907 guide to *Salome*, Lawrence Gilman also observes that following Salome's kiss, "the motive of *Yearning*, with that of Jokanaan as an under voice, reaches a point of climax." Lawrence Gilman, *Strauss' "Salome*," 72.

[79] Although not central to the argument of this chapter, it is important to briefly note some of the ways in which Salome's "Jewishness" has been interpreted based on her voice, particularly when considering Salome in relation to Kundry, whose characterization by Wagner as Jewish and as a "wandering Jew" is well known. According to Sander Gilman, Salome would have been understood as a "modern" woman *and* an "Eastern Jewess," and her voice heard as a universal marker of her "race." At that time, the Jewish voice was understood as different, and this would have been heard with "her racial difference in her biology, her intonation, and her choice of words. Her larynx, practiced in pronouncing hard, guttural sounds for a thousand years, is used to these sounds, and their echo is still to be heard in her pronunciation of German" (Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the 'Modern Jewess,'" 207-9). Gilman also references the following passages from contemporary writings that could have easily be mistaken for a description of Salome: her pronunciation is "jumpy, disjointed; her sentences remain often incomplete, entire words and syllables are swallowed, the concluding syllables are only hinted at, and the intonation only marginally sketched in." Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the 'Modern Jewess,'" 208 (He is referencing: Else Croner, *Die moderne Jüdin* (Berlin: Junker, 1913), 92). For further discussion of the voice and "race" in *Salome* see Seshadri, "The Taste of Love: Salome's Transformation," 27-28. Sander Gilman's other work on *Salome* also examines the way that *Salome* resonates with nineteenth-century understandings of Jewishness, disease, and hysteria. Gilman, "Opera Homosexuality, and Models of Disease," 169-70. According to Anti-Semitic stereotypes about the Jewish woman at the time, she possesses a "greater sexuality," as a purely sexual being, driven by her biological drives, and desires to reproduce. Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the 'Modern Jewess,'" 208.

something is not right with the artist's misappropriate, choked, false tones."[80] The same review notes that she "sounds out with cries as though in heat, instead of cantilena."[81] Even in some performances today, Salome makes her voice ugly and distorted at moments.[82] While her incessant requests for the head approach madness, she distorts the vowels and the focus of her sound, perhaps a musical depiction of illness. For example, in the monologue (Ex. 3.6), Salome sings in a "wild," haggard, falling voice of her desire for "Joch-aana-an…" Her voice descends into its depths, resulting in a raspy, almost unhealthy sound at times, such as at **271**. Although Salome does not completely lose her voice, as Kundry does, these alterations could be symptomatic of the psychological illnesses of the time. "*Schreiend*" (screaming at **313**), she again tells Herod to command the soldiers to bring her the head. The "screaming," "choked" voice draws attention to Salome's physical body and its desires. Moreover, the vocal effects of her desire penetrate the sound world when she sighs and groans – sexual, instinctual sounds – while she waits in anticipation for Jochanaan's head.

Ex. 3.6: Strauss, *Salome*: Salome's jagged voice (3 before **298** – **298**).



[80] "Nach diesem Tanz wurde es klar, dass man mit der Künstlerin um unterschlagene, verschluckt, falsche Töne nicht rechten dürfte." r., "Salome," *Neues Freie Presse*, January 19, 1911, 11. Of course, this could also be on account of the demands of difficult role.

[81] "brünstigen Schrei zu setzen, anstatt zu Kantilene anzuholen." r., *ibid*.

[82] For instance, in a March 2009 performance of *Salome* at the Köln Oper with Catherine Naglestad as Salome.

Once Salome has the head in her arms, her voice is out of place, at times refusing to line up with the harmony or the accompaniment. Her voice is now much more harsh and uses heavy articulation compared to what has come before, while she sings disturbing lines: of how she wants to "bite it [the mouth on the decapitated head] with her teeth as one bites a ripe fruit," of "devouring" the head, of throwing it to the dogs, of "possessing" the head. She also asks the head questions: "but, why didn't you look at me Jochanaan?" ("*aber warum siehst du mich nicht an, Jokanaan?*" **323** – **24**).[83] Salome is "*ausser sich*" (beside herself), at which moment she sings of her desire for Jochanaan's mouth beginning on a high A♯: "In the whole world there was nothing so red as your mouth" ("*In der ganzen Welt war nichts so Rot wie dein Mund*," **336 – 37**).[84] Following the kiss, which takes place in darkness,[85] a persistent trill in the clarinets and flutes along with a *pianissimo* bitonal chord convey unease, above which Salome declares to a dissonant vocal line, "I have now kissed your mouth." This satiation of her physical desire for Jochanaan is sung to a c♯ minor first inversion triad (2 before **356**).[86] Then there is a period of stasis on c minor, with fragments of her "*lockendes Verlangen*" theme sounding in the upper woodwinds, c♯ minor chords in the organ, and a C♯ drone. Although the monologue began in Jochanaan's C major (with some superimposed chords), Salome and her physical desire transport

[83] Translation modified from Kalisch.

[84] As Downes notes, at this moment the inner musical line dramatically descends from D♯ to D♮. See Downes, *Music and Decadence*, 189. This D is one of the keys associated with Jochanaan.

[85] Hutcheon and Hutcheon point out this important detail, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," 219.

[86] As Downes contends, here "we hear the opera's most infamous, 'sickening' dissonance." Downes, *Music and Decadence*, 194. This bitonality shares much in common with Strauss's next female figure, Elektra, who is characterized by bitonality.

everyone to an even more unstable tonal plane. When Salome and her sexuality become too horrific, the scene darkens and Herod's soldiers crush her, returning the opera to C.[87]

For Richard Specht, writing in *Der Merker*, Salome's body and face mark the performance.[88] In early images of Wilde's play, actress Gertrud Eysoldt pushes her chest outward, with her head titled backward, a pose that figures repeatedly in early images of both Wilde's play and Strauss's opera. For example, in the production conducted by Strauss himself at the Berlin *Hofoper* (first performed on May 12th, 1906), Emmy Destinn is pulling her dress open, proffering her chest to the audience and Jochanaan, with her head titled backward seductively (Fig. 3.5). Even her mouth is open with desire as she looks at Jochanaan. Interestingly, this gesture of tearing open one's shirt resembles the familiar image of Blanche Whittmann, the woman in Robert Fleury's painting, *Pinel Delivering the Madwoman of the Salpêtrière* (1878) (Fig. 3.6).[89] In this image, the free "madwoman" in the background is lying on the ground, tearing open her shirt in a manner similar to Destinn.

Vienna's Salomes also had physical signs of illness and degeneracy. Korngold considered the scene when Fanchette Verhunk's Salome kisses Jochanaan's head as "revolting," and when she calls for the head, we witness her first "paroxysms,"[90] convulsions perhaps like Kundry's. In 1910, there was a new Roller staging at the *Volksoper* with Klothilde Wenger as Salome and

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[87] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 100.

[88] Richard Specht, "Salome in der Volksoper," *Der Merker* 2, no. 7 (1909): 315-16.

[89] Hunter, "Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna. O.," 481-83. The image is taken from Didi-Huberman, *The Invention of Hysteria*, 9. Blanche Wittmann was a longtime patient at *Salpêtrière* and considered "queen of the hysterics." Hunter, "Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna. O.," 481.

[90] Julius Korngold, "Richard Strauss' *Salome*: Ein Gespräch," *Neue Freie Presse*, May 28, 1907. English translation from Julius Korngold, "Richard Strauss's *Salome*," in "Strauss and the Viennese Critics," trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Richard Strauss and his World*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 344, 348.

with Strauss involved in the staging and Salome's costume.[91] The following year, the Italian singer Gemma Bellincioni took over the roll, and her performances were particularly noted for their physicality and wild sexuality. For instance, the *Neue Freie Presse* critic described her performance in great detail, writing that she performed the role with "orgiastic convulsions" ("*orgiastic[sch] Krampf*"), while "her ecstatic/lascivious groans become cries" ("*wollüstig Stöhnen zum Schrei wird*"). At the end of the dance, Bellincioni "threw the gracious cover away and showed the degenerate child in terrible nakedness."[92]

In the first image of Bellincioni as *Salome*, her fingers are clenched, another marker of psychological illness at that time, while she is gazing at Jochanaan (Fig. 3.7). Angular, clenched hands and twisted fingers in demonic or mentally ill figures were part of the iconography of illness at the time, from photographs of asylum patients, to Schiele's portraits.[93] For example, in the September 1910 edition of *Der Sturm*, the image of the cover is entitled "Die Dämonische" and shows the outline of a "demonic" woman hunched over, with her left hand in a distorted position with long, curled fingers (Fig. 3.8). As discussed in the previous chapter, hand positions were important in Wagnerian and Post-Wagnerian opera, as Bahr-Mildenburg's writings attest.[94] How Salome's hands resemble those of the hysteric is telling. In a second image, Bellincioni has a mad look on her face and she is hunched over, and her hands are in fists (Fig. 3.9).

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[91] Trattner, *Richard Strauss in der Volksoper*, 67-68.

[92] "Die Bellincioni wirft die gnädige Hülle fort und zeigt das entartete Kind in furchtbar Nacktheit. Der Zuschauer folgt in atemloser Spannung, hat gar keine Zeit." "r.," "Salome," *Neue Freie Presse*, January 19, 1911: 11.

[93] As I note later, Gutheil-Schoder also clenches her fingers, holding her hand in a grotesque manner in photographs of her as Elektra. See figures 3.16 and 3.17. For a discussion of the visual and artistic associations between the psychological and hands, see: Blackshaw, "The Pathological Body," 382.

[94] See Baragwanath, "Anna Bahr-Mildenburg," 64-65, 70.

For Strauss, Gutheil-Schoder, a singer known for her strong dramatic abilities who sang Salome in Berlin in 1915 and eventually performed the role in Vienna in 1918, was his ideal Salome: "I have only once seen the dance done really aristocratically and stylishly, by Frau Gutheil-Schoder."[95] Again in these images, Gutheil-Schoder wears extremely transparent clothing and performs expressive gestures with her hands reaching out toward Jochanaan (Figs. 3.10 and 3.11).[96]

Salome and the Viennese Press

Many members of the Viennese press latched on to *Salome*'s sexual content and the themes of illness and degeneracy. Despite the recurring message that Strauss's music somewhat redeemed the text, many nonetheless recognized hysteria in the opera and commented on Salome's sexuality. Max Kalbeck in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* (May 28th, 1907), described Verhunk's Salome as "a degenerate, shameless, and wanton paramour."[97] Although Kalbeck found Strauss's music a "relief," he felt that Wilde's text was rife with moral and psychological issues: "Adultery, incest, and sexual madness are the motives; suicide, execution, and necrophilia

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[95] Strauss cited in Kennedy, *Richard Strauss*, 146. Gutheil-Schoder was herself excited to play Salome: "I can't tell you how glad I am that I'll finally hear this work at the Opera and that I'll be singing the role in Vienna! You will be conducting, and you know well how happy I will be to work on it with you. I don't know if the date of the performance has been fixed, but do you think I should cut my holiday short? I was planning to return to Vienna on the 19th Sept, and had arranged things accordingly, but I'll willingly come back earlier, rather than miss any important rehearsals." Gutheil-Schoder in 1918 to an unnamed music director (most likely Schuch) in Vienna. Cited and translated in Darwin, *The "I" of the Other*, 204. A few days after Maria Jeritza premiered the role, Marie Gutheil-Schoder first performed Salome at the *Hofoper* on October 19th, 1918, immediately before a temporary restriction on theaters, cinema, and "Vergnügungslokale" (entertainment locals) because of the Spanish Flu epidemic. See *Fremden-Blatt,* October 20, 1918.

[96] In this post-1918 production, Salome's costume becomes even more revealing.

[97] Max Kalbeck, "*Salome*: Music Drama in One Act," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, May 28, 1907. Translation from "Strauss and the Viennese Critics (1896–1924)," trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Richard Strauss and his World*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 337.

the consequences of this drama, which sends itself in brutal effects and is so drastic that it seems to demand a palliative."[98] The conservative *Reichspost* review of 1907 praised Verhunk's performance, but wrote of Salome's "bottomless perversity" (*bodenlosen Perversität*) as a quality that was "confusing to the senses" ("*sinnverworren*").[99] Julius Korngold, *The Neues Wiener Tagblatt*'s critic, declared that Salome is not great "pathos"; rather "[i]n *Salome* we are talking about pathological lust."[100] Regarding Wenger's performance of the role, her dance and performance was noted in the *Reichspost* for how surprisingly well she "characterized […] the oppressive sensuality of the gruesome woman."[101]

Not only did some critics find the opera scandalous and blasphemous, some also perceived Strauss as drawing on prevalent *fin-de-siècle* themes and concerns. The representation of Salome's sexuality was often associated with a series of catchwords of the era – illness, decay, perversion, pathology, and hysteria. As Gilman remarks, the term "perversion," which was applied to Wilde's play by Kraus already in 1903, stuck to the opera as well.[102] Hirschfeld found the opera indicative of "the age of decline […] bear[ing] deep traces of decay," and mentioned how Salome "staggers to the excesses of impure blood and demands the head of John the Baptist."[103] Indeed, the way in which the opera drew on current themes of illness was also picked

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[98] Kalbeck, *ibid.*, 339.

[99] G. v. B., "Deutsches Volkstheater (Salome)," *Reichspost*, May 28, 1907.

[100] Korngold, *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, May 28, 1907. Translation from: Korngold, "Richard Strauss: Salome," in *Strauss and his Viennese Critics*, 344.

[101] M. M., "Volksoper (Salome)," *Reichspost*, December 24, 1910.

[102] Gilman, "Opera, Homosexuality, and Models of Disease," 167. As Pierson also remarked in a discussion about the 1909 Dresden "Richard Strauss Woche," Aino Akté's Salome was a "seductive, insane sensual woman" and a "product of her degenerate time." Pierson, "'*Elektra*' und die Richard Strauss Woche," 447.

[103] Robert Hirschfeld, "'Salome' von Richard Strauss," *Wiener Abendpost*, May 27, 1907: 1-2. Translation from "Richard Strauss's *Salome:* Premiere in Vienna at the *Deutsches Volkstheater* on 15 May, 1907 by the Opera Society of Breslau," in "Strauss and the Viennese Critics (1896–1924)," trans.

up on by Julius Korngold. Writing about Verhunk's *Deutsches Volkstheater* performance, he considered the opera as an improvement upon Wagner, but still observed its engagement with contemporary themes of degeneracy: "Salome is the defeat of Wagner and his impotent distortion, a step forward for art and its dismal decay, new music-dramatic territory and a monument to a sick era."[104] The opera was "very contemporary, in this time of neurasthenia, dispositions to hysteria, and sexual problems."[105] Even the way in which the performers sang was heard as reinforcing the themes of illness. Korngold wrote: "the singing in *Salome* – often nothing but droning, nervous speech, excited screams!" while the orchestra presents "[v]ague reveries, dark rushes of feeling, brutal lust, the failure of sick nerves, delirium, paroxysms, sharp screams, bellowing, howling."[106] Wenger's interpretation of "the moments of pathological (*krankhaft*), defiant, and overheated sensuality" was praised as particularly good in the *Neue Freie Presse*.[107] Other reviews, however, thought that Wenger might have sung Salome well, but that her representation was lacking because "sexual pathology is not everyone's thing."[108]

Susan Gillespie, in *Richard Strauss and his World*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 334. The second of these comments also bears anti-Semitic overtones, typical of Vienna's conservative, right wing newspapers, although Hirschfeld did not write for one of these. He wrote for *Wiener Abendzeitung*, the evening supplement to the *Wiener Zeitung*, an official government newspaper with strong Habsburg support. Hirschfeld also mentioned that *Salome* disrupts the listener's nerves: "It ceaselessly electrifies and discharges the spirit; it rattles and bangs until the emotions are worn out; it no longer wants anything but explosions, and the dynamic of these has no effect but that of dynamite." *Ibid.*, 335.

[104] Korngold, "Richard Strauss' *Salome*: Ein Gespräch," *Neue Freie Presse*, May 28, 1907. Translation from: Korngold, "Richard Strauss: Salome," in *Strauss and his Viennese Critics*, 342.

[105] *Ibid.*, 343.

[106] *Ibid.*, 346-47.

[107] r., "Volksoper (Salome)," *Neue Freie Presse*, December 24, 1910. The *Deutsches Volksblatt*, on the other hand, praised her performance for its moderation. e.i., "Volksoper," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, December 24, 1910: 7.

[108] "darstellerisch liegt die Rolle dem ganzen Wesen der ausgezeichneten Künstlerin etwas fern. Schließlich ist Sexualpathologie nicht jedermanns Sache." "yer, "'Salome' Erstaufführung in der Volksoper am 23. Dezember 1910," *Der Morgen: Wiener Wochenblatt*, December 26, 1910: 6. This sentiment about Wenger's abilities as a singer, but inability as a performer was echoed in a number of

Although Salome's illness and degeneracy were central concerns for most reviewers, some also found Herod and Herodias problematic. The *Neue Freie Presse* critic heard symptoms of neurasthenia in Herod's musical characterization: "Herod's motive itself captures neurasthenia with its whole tones,"[109] while Ziegler's analysis of *Salome* commented on Herodias's sensuality as well.[110]

Yet *Salome* was a triumph for Strauss, performed across Europe in the years following its premiere, and extremely popular in Vienna given the number of different productions that took place. Audiences were paradoxically repulsed by and drawn to Salome. Given these criticisms, many seem to have felt the need both to see and to reject this ill woman. With so many comments referring to nerves and the pathological, it seems that it is not just Salome's own nerves based on her visual presentations and gestures that caused concern for some, but rather the fear of contagion and disturbance of their *own* nerves through their experience of the operatic

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reviews. According to the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the *Volksoper* tried to perform the work with too few rehearsals, so although Wenger's performance was considered good physically, she was guilty in terms of her representation." Anon., "Volksoper (Salome)," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, December 24, 1910. The critic in the *Wiener Zeitung* also wrote that Wenger was pleasing in her "rhythmic precision" and "shining voice," but for "conceivable reasons," she could not succeed in "exhausting the totality of the character." ("Frl. Wenger erfreute in der Titelrolle durch rhythmische Genauigkeit und durch den Glanz ihres schönen Soprans. Die Figur in ihrer Totalität zu erschöpfen, konnte ihr aus begreiflichen Gründen nicht gelingen.") "Salome," *Wiener Zeitung*, December 24, 1910. The review in *Der Merker* also noted that she was vocally perfect, but her performance was unconvincing because her face and body did not fully capture Salome's ecstasy. The visiting soprano Aino Akté's performance as Salome in February 1911 was called "kokett," while her dance was praised for its "refinement and sensuality." "r.," *Neue Freie Presse*, February 21, 1911: 12.

[109] "[D]as Herodes-Motiv ist die in Ganztöne eingefangene Neurasthenie selbst." *Neues Freie Presse*, December 24, 1910. Translation from Seshadri, "Salome's Transformation," 31. Platzbecker, writing about the 1905 premiere, also noted Herod's "ruined physical and spiritual state" as well as Salome's "hysterical precocity, her pathologically sensual overexcitement, which is her hereditary burden, causes her to move from one extreme to another" (38). ("Die hysterische Frühreife der Salome, ihre Krankhaft sinnliche Überreizung, die auch in ihrer erblichen Belastung begründet ist, lässt sie von einem Extrem ins andere fallen.") See Heinrich Platzberger, "Korrespondenz: Salome," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (December 1905); translation from Seshadri, "Salome's Transformation," 38.

[110] Ziegler, *Richard Strauss in seinen dramatischen Dichtungen*, 64. Referencing Ziegler, Seshadri describes Herodias's sensuality connoting "Jewish sexual pathology." Seshadri, "Salome's Transformation," 33.

spectacle. Like many of the characters in these images, the audience recoils from Salome while watching her, as though moving away from the seductive Salome is safer than being drawn toward her. But would the opera have been as popular had Salome not been killed at the end, and the sexual woman allowed to reign, her actions left “unpunished”? Would audiences at that time been as comfortable with a victorious *Salome*?

Section II: *Elektra*

The whole thing impresses one as a sexual aberration. The blood mania appears as a terrible deformation of sexual perversity. This applies all the more because not only Elektra but all the females are sexually tainted.

– Unnamed critic, cited in Paul Bekker, "*Elektra*: A Study"[111]

As this epigraph suggests, *Elektra* resonated with similar themes as *Salome* and *Parsifal*. While we are presented with Salome's explicitly sexual demands and Kundry's seductivity, the operatic representation of Elektra's sexuality is subtle and complex, but still clearly connected to contemporary discourses of illness and degeneracy. Elektra indeed possessed what Bryan Gilliam calls a "distorted view of sexuality."[112] In addition to her dance at the end of the opera, her sexuality is presented as "aberrant" at various moments in the opera, as will be discussed.

Just as with Salome, multiple conflicting interpretations arise over whether or not *Elektra* offers a positive or negative presentation of women. Nancy Michael considers Hofmannsthal's play as misogynistic because it is an enactment of Elektra as tamed and quieted. She writes that "to see Elektra as an example of the 'emancipated woman' […] is a misperception," because at the end of the opera we witness the "punitive strategies imposed by the dominant male order."[113] Abbate reads Elektra otherwise, and argues that the way Elektra creates music actually makes her a powerful figure: "The protean Elektra of this reading is a far cry from the empty vessel, the woman without access to deed or action, envisioned by some critics (those, it must be said, who

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[111] Paul Bekker, "*Elektra*: A Study by Paul Bekker," trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Strauss and his World*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 376. Original: Paul Bekker, "*Elektra:* Studie," *Neue Musik-Zeitung* 14, 16, and 18 (1909): 293-98, 333-37, 387-91. All references to this essay will be to the English translation.

[112] According to Gilliam, Elektra, like Salome, has a "distorted view of sexuality." Gilliam, "Strauss and the sexual body," 278.

[113] Nancy C. Michael, *Elektra and her Three Sisters: Three Female Characters in Schnitzler, Freud, and Hofmannsthal* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 84, 97.

are deaf to the opera's voices, reading words alone)."[114] Abbate is certainly correct in that Elektra is not an "empty vessel"; in fact, she remains musically and vocally dominant throughout the opera.[115] Kramer, on the other hand, offers a "double reading" of the character: while Strauss "privileges" Elektra's subjectivity, offering a progressive reading of women by allowing the music to come *from* her, how he musically characterizes Elektra aligns her with misogynistic stereotypes and "atavistic traits" that must be suppressed at the end of the opera. Even if Strauss's Elektra is granted subjectivity at moments, she is what Kramer calls a "pure Weiningerian Woman in sadistic form," a sexual woman who "embodies all the physical and emotional anarchy that the patriarchal order of culture exists to suppress."[116] For Kramer, Elektra's dualistic musical presentation engages with the dualities of the opera's cultural moment, such as the "contrast between cultural progress and cultural regression, evolution and degeneration."[117]

Building on Kramer's culturally situated investigation into Elektra, I turn specifically to the early performances of the opera in Vienna to investigate just how Elektra's musical *and* visual presentation in these performances could have also resonated with the era's discourses regarding illness, hysteria, and female sexuality. Although the opera cannot be read as an explicit

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[114] Carolyn Abbate, "Elektra's Voice: Music and Language in Strauss's Opera," in *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 127. Abbate considers *Elektra* as a forward-looking opera in terms of gender. As I contend through this chapter, Elektra, like Salome and Kundry, actually share more with nineteenth-century representations of women specifically regarding the presentation of their sexuality than with what emerges in opera following these works.

[115] This again builds on Abbate's work on the vocal power of the female voice and how the singer can usurp compositional authority. Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Women," which I mentioned above.

[116] Lawrence Kramer, "*Fin-de-siècle* fantasies*: Elektra*, degeneration and sexual science," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 2 (July 1993): 144-47.

[117] *Ibid.*, 142. A later version of this essay appeared as Kramer, "*Fin-de-siècle* Fantasies: *Elektra* and the Culture of Supremacism," in *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 203.

illustration of contemporary theories of mental illness of the time, the gestures and performance of this sexual woman certainly need to be read within the emerging discourses of sexual science and psychology. Here I argue that although Elektra may be powerful musically, her dramatic, musical, and visual participation within a larger visual and cultural context ultimately undermines her as a positive representation, a position reinforced by the reception of the opera. In order to explore these claims, I draw on traces from the Viennese performances. In this section, I mostly follow the narrative of the drama: after establishing Elektra's initial musical and visual characterization, I explore how Elektra both differs from and disrupts Chrysothemis, before addressing Elektra's dance and the opera's reception.

***Situating* Elektra**

Strauss turned to *Elektra* shortly after completing *Salome*. In 1905 he saw the famous actress Gertrude Eysoldt in Hofmannsthal's play *Elektra* (first premiered on October 4th, 1903) in a staging by Max Reinhardt at the *Deutsches Theater* in Berlin. By the winter of 1906, Strauss had met with Hofmannsthal and was busy with the initial stages of modifying the libretto.[118] The opera received its premiere in Dresden on January 27th, 1909 (with a repeat performance on January 30) as part of a "Strauss-Woche" that included *Salome* and *Feuersnot.* Schuch conducted the two sold-out performances, and soprano Annie Krull sang the infamous protagonist. In contrast to the resistance *Salome* met at the *Wiener Hofoper*, conductor Felix von Weingartner

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[118] Although Strauss hesitated to write another opera on what he perceived to be a similar theme, he eventually acquiesced to Hofmannsthal's prompting. For a discussion about which performance Strauss saw and the genesis of the opera, see Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 18-20, 50-54.

was able to stage *Elektra* on March 24th, 1909, only two months after the opera's premiere in Dresden, with American singer Lucille Marcel (1887–1921) in the leading role.[119]

Despite *Elektra*'s Dresden premiere, the opera very much belongs to a Viennese context of Freudian psychiatry and sexuality. Elektra has been described as hysterical by many, sometimes even read as an operatic incarnation of Breuer and Freud's patient, Anna O., from their *Studien über Hysterie* (1895).[120] Jill Scott argues that Hofmannsthal looked to Freud's Anna O. case as a model, given the way that "each woman choreographs her madness as a theatrical production, turning pathology into performance" (a performance that recalls Charcot's patients), and with the opera's focus on "the dominant tropes of dance, disease, morbidity, and sexuality."[121] Indeed, Hofmannsthal was familiar with Freud and Breuer's *Studien über Hysterie* and Freud's *Interpretations of Dreams* (1900), and seemed to be concerned with these themes while writing *Elektra.*[122] For instance, shortly before writing *Elektra*, Hofmannsthal wrote to

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[119] Roller and Brioschi were responsible for the stage design and Roller for the costumes as well. Other Elektras during these years were: Hermine Rabl von Kriesten in 1910 and 1911, and Gutheil-Schoder starting in 1914. Annie Krull, who created Salome in Dresden, also sang the role at the *Wiener Hofoper* as a guest. The performers who sang Elektra the most frequently at the *Wiener Hofoper* were Marie Gutheil-Schoder and Lucie Marcel. *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM.* According to a letter dated October 18th, 1908 to Strauss, Hofmannsthal was worried about the Vienna opera administration's attitudes and the Viennese public's reception of *Elektra*. Hofmannsthal to Strauss, *Correspondence*, 24.

[120] Bayerlein, *Musikalische Psychologie der drei Frauengestalten in der Oper Elektra von Richard Strauss*; Silvia Kronberger also writes that Elektra is Freud's hysteric patient Anna O., and that Klytämnestra represents "sexus und Eros." See Silvia Kronberger, "Elektra: stark – allein – hysterisch," in *Kundry und Elektra und ihre leidenen Schwester: Schizophrenie und Hysterie: Frauenfiguren im Musik-Theater*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Silvia Kronberger, Musik und Text 53 (Salzburg: Müller-Speiser, 2003), 123, 125. Tambling notes that all three operatic women in *Elektra* are "marked by an equal hysteria which fastens on the subject of fertility." Tambling, *Opera and the Culture of Fascism*, 182-83.

[121] Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 14, 27. Scott in fact regards Elektra's final dance as a dance of liberation. This position is similar to that of feminist theorist Julia Kristeva, who interprets Elektra's dance as a revolt at the horror of her mother's sexual pleasure. According to Kristeva's reading of Sophocles' *Elektra*, Elektra wants "*jouissance* to be forbidden to the mother: this is the demand of the father's daughter, fascinated by the mother's *jouissance.*" Julia Kristeva, "About Chinese Women," trans. Seán Hand, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 152.

[122] As many Hofmannsthal scholars have noted, Hofmannsthal was interested in Freudian themes at the same time that he was writing *Elektra.* For Hofmannsthal's engagement with Freud see Gilliam, *Richard*

fellow Viennese author Hermann Bahr asking to borrow *Studien über Hysterie*: "Can you perhaps lend me Freud and Breuer's book on the healing of hysteria through the revelation of a repressed memory for a few days?"[123] And like Freud, he too drew a connection between sexuality and hysteria. Even contemporaries of Hofmannsthal and Strauss recognized *Elektra*'s relationship to its cultural milieu and its fascination with the psychological. In 1909, Bekker commented that "what appealed to [Strauss] was the portrayal of psychological problems," while critic David Bach noted in 1909 that Freud's theories offered Hofmannsthal much.[124] The adaptations that Hofmannsthal made to the classic Elektra myth mirror contemporaneous attitudes toward female sexuality and power. Hofmannsthal added elements of Freudian hysteria and inserts an ecstatic dance that not only leads to Elektra's death, but also heightened her sexuality given the connections between dance and sexuality.[125] While it is impossible to know the degree to which Strauss was familiar with contemporary discourses of hysteria, it is evident that Strauss's decisions concerning Elektra connect to these themes, although his cuts to Hofmannsthal's text did tone down the sexuality.[126] For instance, Strauss removed the passage in

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Strauss's Elektra, 28. Gilliam offers an excellent discussion of repression and memory, but I will focus more on the physical and aural manifestations of Elektra's madness and sexuality here, although the concept of repression and the constantly re-emerging Agamemnon motive that haunts the opera is a fascinating path. Scott also details the similarities between Elektra and the "Anna O." case studies. Scott, *Electra after Freud*, Chapter 3, "From Pathology to Performance: Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* and Sigmund Freud's "Fraulein Anna O."

[123] Hofmannsthal to Hermann Bahr in an undated letter from 1904. Cited and translated in Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 63.

[124] Bekker wrote that Strauss was concerned with the opera as a historical document, and "what appealed to him was the portrayal of psychological problems." Bekker, "*Elektra*," 376. Bekker also noted that *Elektra* was a "tragedy of the passions," *ibid*; David Bach, "'Elektra' von Richard Strauss," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, March 26, 1909, *Morgenblatt*, 1.

[125] Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 11. Hofmannsthal not only compressed all action into one act, unlike Sophocles five-act drama, but he moved away from the beauty in Sophocles' version, and played up the brutality and horror in Elektra's desire for revenge. See *ibid.*, 29-32.

[126] "[B]y his choice of cuts, Strauss seeks to underplay Elektra's warped sense of sexuality, a dramatic element that was important to Sophocles' version as well." Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 29.

which Elektra sings of her sexuality in relation to her father: "When I rejoiced in my own body do you think his sighs did not reach, his groans did not press upon my bed? … he sent me hate, hollow-eyes hate as a bridegroom."[127] He also excised some passages in which Elektra sings of her past sexual experience: "And I had to let the monster who breathes like a viper, come over me into my sleepless bed, who forced me to know all that goes on between man and woman"; "I am not without my wedding night as virgins are."[128] Elektra's "pathological" sexuality, however, is still present and made evident through Strauss's musical decisions, as will be discussed shortly. As Arnold Whittall writes, "there must therefore be a sense in which the music expresses hysteria, malevolence, menace, exultation."[129]

As in *Salome* and *Parsifal*, the visual presentation reinforces the musical characterization of the sexual woman, and can be read as another re-presentation of female hysteria. For Hofmannsthal, the gestures and body are central: "[i]n action, in deeds the enigmas of language are resolved."[130] As Gilliam notes, unlike other Elektras, "Hofmannsthal's Elektra is a lonely, isolated individual," and "the recurring allusions to animals, in stage directions and the dramatic language itself, provide an important metaphor for understanding Elektra's dehumanization."[131] Throughout Hofmannsthal's text, Elektra is described as an "animal" and "wild," by the other characters on stage – much as how Kundry is described as "wild" and animal or beast-like –

Gilliam mentions that Strauss reduced some of Klytämnestra's sexual scenes as well, such as her scene with Elektra, while Elektra's scene with Orestes was cut by as much as 40%. Gilliam, *ibid*., 36.

[127] Discussion of this cut and the translation are in Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 43.

[128] Again, a discussion of this cut and the translation are found in Gilliam, *ibid.*

[129] Arnold Whittall, "Dramatic structure and tonal organization," in *Richard Strauss* Elektra, ed. Derrick Puffett, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55.

[130] Writing shortly after *Elektra*, Hofmannsthal noted that "[i]n action, in deeds the enigmas of language are resolved." Cited in Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 27-28.

[131] *Ibid.*, 26. Bayerlein also writes, "Elektra's psychopathological character comes not only from her works, but also from her gestures." Bayerlein, *Musikalische Psychologie*, 107.

while the stage directions repeatedly instruct her to be "wild." Bahr recalls that even the first Elektra in Hofmannsthal's play, Gertrud Eysoldt, performed with "hysteria" and "personified for early modernism the 'ideal' of hysteric symptoms stylized on stage […] she captured there in her role as Elektra, with a fragile body, long, bony arms, cramped fists, and an expression on her face probably indicating the hallucinations she had to suffer in the play."[132]

Introducing Elektra

In the opening scene, the maids establish how Elektra is to be perceived.[133] The first four maids describe her as a wild beast: "always crouched where the smell of carrion attracts her," "she spat at us like a cat," and "she jumped up glaring horribly, stretching her fingers out at us like claws and screamed."[134] The maids' discussion of Elektra's bodily movements support this: she "comes running out" and "jumps back like a beast into its lair," and she responds with: "I'm nurturing a vulture in my body" ("*Ich füttre mir einen Geier auf im Leib!*" **11** – **12**). The maids continue, commenting on her "groaning," "wails" (*heulen*), her screams ("*schrie sie*"), and how "she just howled and threw herself into her corner" ("*Sie heult nur und warf sich in ihren Winkel*," **14**).

These gestures of madness are matched aurally, all marking Elektra as musical "Other" and unsettling the musical and visual scene. When Elektra "comes running out of the

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[132] Cited in Werkner, "The Child-Woman and Hysteria: Images of the Female Body in the Art of Egon Schiele," 69.

[133] They all look at her, and thus draw the audience's eyes toward her as well. The gaze is made conscious to the audience not only from how we and the other characters look at Elektra, but also with Elektra how looks at others.

[134] "da pfauchte sie wie eine Katze uns an" (3 before **5**); "da sprang sie auf und schoß gräßliche Blicke, reckte ihre Finger wie Krallen gegen uns und schrie" (**10**). All translations of *Elektra* from G. M. Holland in *Elektra*, cond. Georg Solti, Vienna Philharmonic, Libretto trans. G. M. Holland (London Decca 417345-2, 1967).

hallway…[and] jumps back like a beast into its lair with one arm shielding herself" (around **1**), there is an ascending chromatic flourish, followed by an angular melody with large leaps, concluding in a movement from b minor to f minor played by snarling, muted brass.[135] This musical introduction is reminiscent of Kundry's entrance in Act I of *Parsifal* with the chromatic passage in juxtaposition with a similar leaping rhythm – dramatic musical gestures that draw attention to the character's arrival. The melodically disjoint line appears in the strings whenever the maids describe Elektra's actions and speech.

Elektra's arrival also coincides with a *forte* bitonal chord that is associated with her. This "Elektra chord" is comprised of an E major chord, a tonality that Strauss frequently used to represent the sensual or erotic, again subtly referencing Elektra's sexuality through tonal allusion.[136] Yet it has a D♭ major chord superimposed, distorting the E major chord, and offering another aural allusion to Elektra's disturbed sexuality (Ex. 3.7), over which Elektra's theme of "hatred" also sounds in the violins.[137] As Kramer has noted in his work on Elektra's harmonic characterization, Elektra's bitonal chord is decidedly unstable, drawing on the tonality associated with her father and the bitonality of her mother.[138]

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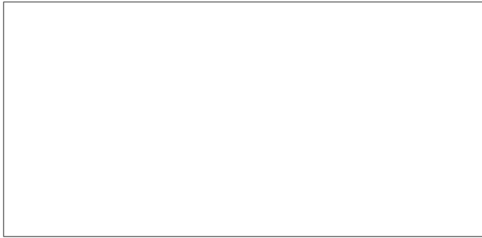
[135] "Elektra kommt aus der schon dunkelnden Hausflur gelaufen. Alle drehen sich nach ihr um. Elektra springt zurück wie ein Tier in seinen Schlupfwinkel, den einen Arm vor dem Gesicht." This melody is what the contemporary commentators Otto Röse and Julius Prüwer identified as the "Axe" motive in their guidebook for Elektra (1909; translated into English 1910). Otto Röse and Julius Prüwer, *Elektra: A Guide to the Music*, trans. Alfred Kalisch (New York: Schirmer, 1910), 1. Original: Otto Röse and Julius Prüwer, *Elektra: Ein Musikführer durch den Werk* (Berlin: Fürstner, 1909). As I discuss shortly, this b/f juxtaposition is indicative of Klytämnestra's bitonality and Elektra's hatred. See Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, 298.

[136] Strauss often uses E major "to express Dionysian, passionate, or even erotic sensations in his music," such as in his tone poem *Don Juan*." Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 68. For a discussion of Strauss's key usage in *Elektra*, see *Ibid.*, 69-106.

[137] Röse and Prüwer call this theme "The Hate of Elektra." Röse and Prüwer, *Elektra*, 2.

[138] Moreover, the role of the chord is split: it is simultaneously a functional, voice-leading chord, and a color chord. Kramer, "*Fin-de-siècle* fantasies" (1993), 152-53. For a longer theoretical analysis of the "Elektra chord," see also Carpenter, "The Musical Language of *Elektra*," 78-83, and Kurt Overhoff, *Die*

Ex. 3.7: Strauss, *Elektra*: Elektra's Chord with Elektra's theme of "hatred" superimposed (5 before **2**).



As in *Parsifal* and *Salome*, there is also an emphasis on the gaze at this moment. "Everyone turns round to look at her" ("*Alle drehen sich nach ihr um*," 2 before **1**), while the third maid comments on how "she cannot bear people looking at her" ("*sie hält's nicht aus, wenn man sie ansieht*," 2 after **4**). Elektra returns the gaze, looking at them "spitefully, like a wild cat" ("*giftig, wie eine wilde Katze*, **3**), as though she is reacting to the clinical observation by the maids.

Elektra's presentation, particularly in the Viennese performances, would have resonated with images of illness. While the stage is in half darkness,[139] Elektra is dressed in a garb that resembles institutionalized patients. In fact, it is very similar to Kundry's costume in Act I. As evident in the numerous images of the 1909 productions, Elektra was often clad in a shapeless robe that is torn and dirty. Her hair is undone, parted in the middle, but tangled and dirty looking, while her eyes are open wide, heavily painted with coal, giving the effect of illness. Her face is so striking that when Orestes finally appears in the "Recognition Scene," he is even taken aback

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Elektra-Partitur von Richard Strauss: Ein Lehrbuch für die Technik der dramatischen Komposition (Salzberg: Pustet, 1978), 32-45.

[139] Hofmannsthal's play called for the stage to have spots of red, representing blood, and for the lighting to create black lines, with a deformed tree on the palace, perhaps representing the sickness of the setting. Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 29. According to Roller's account of his Viennese staging for *Elektra*, his stage directions paint a picture of decay and gloom. The stage is lit, first with orange, then pink, then dark blue. The stage is also laid out in a terrain of two levels: rising bedrock is at the front of the stage, and there are nooks and crannies, with garbage heaps next to brown puddles of water. Elektra lives in a hole under the wall, but during her conversation with Orestes, she reaches the high point of the stage and then does not leave it until the end. Alfred Roller, "Anmerkungen zu den Dekorationsskizzen für 'Elektra,'" *Der Merker* 1, no. 5 (1909): 187. Roller arguably makes Elektra triumphant by placing her at the top of the stage at the end of the opera.

by her physical appearance, noting that her "eyes look ghastly" and her "cheeks are hollow."[140] Elektra describes herself as "only the corpse of your sister […] disheveled, dirty and degraded."[141] She is unquestionably the opposite of the *Ewig-Weibliche*.

In early photographs from the opera, Elektra often has a crazed look with her "kohl"-rimmed eyes staring intently. In the image of Annie Krull, the singer who created the role in Dresden in January of 1909, Krull's eyes are wide open, staring upward, her arm is raised dramatically, with her hand clasping her hair, which is in a disarray, and her clothes are in tatters (Fig. 3.12). Although this image is from the Dresden production, Krull also sang Elektra once at the *Wiener Hofoper* on November 9th, 1909, perhaps repeating the very same facial and bodily gestures in her Viennese guest performance.[142] Similar imagery continued in Lucie Marcel's Elektra from the 1909 *Hofoper* production, except that Marcel's torn dress is much shorter, revealing her legs. Again her long hair is wild and her eyes are wide open, lending a look of shock or wild ecstasy to her face (Fig. 3.13).[143] According to reports, Marcel executed Elektra's disruptive and ill animalistic behavior with great theatrical skill. A *feuilletonist* for *Die Zeit* remarked that Marcel followed the stage directions very closely and clearly, "in that she sprang onto the stage 'like a beast,' and there acted with large, frenzied gestures." The writer continues: "she was drastic, without becoming grotesque, realistic."[144]

The images of Marie Gutheil-Schoder, a singer well known for her acting abilities, capture the animal-like qualities in Elektra that the maids describe (Figs. 3.14 and 3.15).

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[140] "Furchtbar sind deine Augen […] Hohl sind deine Wangen!" (**139a**).

[141] "Ich bin nur mehr der Leichnam deiner Schwester" (**157a**), "versträhnt, beschmutzt, erniedrigt," (**162a**).

[142] *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM*

[143] I will discuss this image in greater detail in the section on the dance.

[144] n.n., "Elektra," *Die Zeit*, March 25, 1909: 4.

Although Marcel sang Elektra in the opera's Viennese premiere, Gutheil-Schoder also performed the role at the *Hofoper* beginning on June 10th, 1914, only a few months after the first Viennese productions of *Parsifal.*[145] In 1915, Strauss indicated that he was particularly impressed by Gutheil-Schoder's performance of Elektra after seeing her the role in Berlin, writing to the singer in a letter dated March 31st, 1916: "[T]he superb rendition of the character's facial expressions and physical performance, in short the achievement in every way, marks your performance of Elektra as one of the greatest events of my life as a dramatic composer. A thousand, thousand thanks!"[146] These photographs of Gutheil-Schoder accentuate Elektra's hands, which are stiff and contorted into claw-like positions, while her body is bent. In the first image, her eyes are wide-open and she looks as though she is shocked, while in the second image her hands clasp her head as though she is in pain. These images recall Bahr's comment about Eysoldt's "hysterical," ill Elektra from 1903, with her "cramped fists," and with "[t]he expression on her face probably indicating the hallucinations she had to suffer in the play."[147] Gutheil-Schoder's overall

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[145] Marcel sang the role nine times in 1909, Gutheil-Schoder 37 times between 1914 and 1925, and Hermine Rabl von Kriesten eight times between 1910 and 1911. *WSB.* Andreas Láng and Oliver Láng, eds., *Wiener Staatsoper – 140 Jahre Haus am Ring, 1869–2009* (Vienna: Wiener Staatsoper, 2009).

[146] "die grandiose Wiedergabe der Figur in Mimik und plastischer Darstellung, kurz die Vollendung nach jeder Richtung hin, geben der Elektra in ihrer Darstellung den Stempel eines der größten Ereignisse in meinem Leben als dramatischer Componist. Tausend, tausend Dank!" Marie Gutheil-Schoder in "Richard Strauß in Weimar," *Die Theater und Musikwoche*, January 19, 1919, 8. Cited in Darwin, *The "I" of the Other*, 211, (translation modified). According to Darwin, who devotes a chapter of her dissertation to Gutheil-Schoder, many of the responses to Gutheil-Schoder's performances praised her acting abilities, but were less favorable regarding her singing. *Ibid.*, 204-6. Even Mahler recognized that she was more talented as an actress than as a singer: "With her mediocre voice and its even disagreeable middle register, she might appear totally insignificant. Yet each sound she utters has 'soul' [*Seele*], each gesture and attitude is a revelation of the character she's playing. She understands its very essence and brings out all its traits as only a creative genius can do. Mahler cited in Henry-Louis de la Grange, *Mahler: Vienna Triumph and Disillusion (1904–1907)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 253. This passage is also cited in Darwin, *The "I" of the Other*, 206. According to Darwin, "Gutheil-Schoder clearly very much enjoyed the challenge of playing roles that transgressed contemporary rules of appropriate female behaviour." Darwin, *ibid.*, 204.

[147] Cited in Werkner, "The Child-Woman and Hysteria: Images of the Female Body in the Art of Egon Schiele," 69. Werkner also notes how Eysoldt, as well as the photographs of the actress Wiesenthal in

performance was praised, including "how [she] created the embodiment of Strauss's hysterical princess," while specific aspects of her "*hysterischer*" performance were noted, such as her hands and body: "the fingers were splayed out as if from cramps from nerves […] hatred contorts her body."[148]

Monologue and Waltz

When Elektra reemerges from the darkness (4 before **35**), her first vocal utterance on "*allein*" is harmonically jarring with a declamatory B♭ to D♮. Elektra's vocal lines are often angular, with many leaps, further depicting her instability. For instance, while she recounts the story (1 before **41** – 2 after **41**) about her mother, Klytämnestra, her voice falls from high F to low C♯, then slithers upward chromatically, until a jump of a seventh upward, then it falls an octave. Another symptom of her illness is how she is constantly haunted and obsessively driven by her memory. The first "Agamemnon" motive (a declamatory musical gesture that outlines a d minor triad, beginning with d–a–f, and that is arguably her memory of Agamemnon and her desire for revenge) that opened the opera is closely associated with Elektra and constantly pierces the sound world (Ex. 3.8). As Abbate contends, this first Agamemnon motive does not represent Agamemnon himself, but actually is Elektra's "cry of mourning," a representation of "Elektra's *voice*" that often appears in the orchestra.[149] Gräner's 1909 guide to *Elektra* also

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Erdgeist (1909), resemble Schiele's and Kokoschka's figures. *Ibid.*, 69. This is particularly true concerning their self-portraits and painting of figures with cramped hands and jagged bodies.

[148] "wie geschaffen zur Verkörperung von Strauss' hysterischer Prinzessin"; "die Finger wie von Krampfe der Nerven gespreizt […] Der Hass krümmt ihre Leib." "Elektra," *Neue Freie Presse*, June 10, 1914.

[149] Abbate, "Elektra's Voice," 111-15. Kramer notes that Elektra's second Agamemnon cry "slips chromatically out of focus, eroding the chiasmus at its edge and marking Elektra's always implicit expulsion from the closed moral and mental order to which she is so compellingly devoted." Kramer, "*Fin-de-siècle* Fantasies," in *Opera and Modern Culture*, 213. As Downes notes, Elektra's groans are matched with a chromaticization of Agamemnon's motive. Downes, *Music and Decadence*, 164.

associates this "shrill" (*gellenden*) "Agamemnon" motive with Elektra and that it serves as a call of battle, revenge, and lament throughout the entire opera.[150] While her memory of her father is represented in the reiterated "Agamemnon" motives in the orchestra and even in her voice at times, her vocal line remains unsettled, betraying her disturbance and capturing the "irrationality" of what she sings. Along with a triplet Agamemnon motive (Ex. 3.9), also identified by Bekker as representing her memory of her dead father, which sounds immediately after Elektra calls out the first Agamemnon motive ("Agamemnon! Where are you father?"), there is a *forte*, heavily articulated 16th-note motive that often begins in the brass and leaps upward in octaves (Ex. 3.10), described by Bekker as exhibiting "demonic fanaticism."[151] This 16th-note motive emerges from the whole orchestra when Elektra calls out for her father later in the monologue, to Agamemnon motive 1 then Agamemnon motive 3 in her voice, singing: "Agamemnon! Father! I want to see you, don't leave me alone today!" (**44** – 3 after **45**).[152] These motives often reoccur in various permutations – musical repetitions arguably evocative of the repetitions of hysteria discussed by Freud and Charcot. They appear in either Elektra's voice when she talks to other characters, or in the orchestral voices that accompany her as the haunting memory of her father.[153]

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[150] George Gräner, ed. "Elektra," in *Richard Strauß: Musikdramen*, Meisterführer 9, *Opernführer* (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1909), 118.

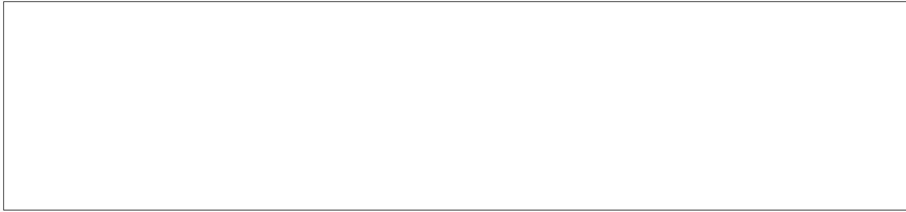
[151] Bekker, "*Elektra*," 383.

[152] "Agamemnon! Vater! Ich will dich sehn, laß mich heute nicht allein!" A fragment of this Agamemnon Motive 3 also appears in her voice 4 before **44**.

[153] Contemporary guidebooks also identify numerous other motivic material associated with Elektra. For the sake of space, I focus only on these particular motives. For further examples see Röse and Prüwer, *Elektra: a Guide to the Music* (original 1909); Gräner, "Elektra," in *Richard Strauß: Musikdramen* (1909); Bekker, "*Elektra*" (1909).

Ex. 3.8: Strauss, *Elektra*: Agamemnon Motive 1 (mm. 1 – 3).

Ex. 3.9: Strauss, *Elektra*: Agamemnon Motive 2 in the bass (6m before **37** – 2 before **37**).



Ex. 3.10: Strauss, *Elektra*: Agamemnon Motive 3 (44).

Even the musical genre associated here with Elektra is distorted. Her first extended monologue is accompanied by a waltz that Scott identifies as a "sign of schizophrenia," with its oscillation between times signatures (2/2 and 6/4).[154] While the traditional waltz was commonly associated with diversion and entertainment in Vienna, the waltz also taps into *fin-de-siècle* discourses about sexuality and degeneracy. As Francesca Draughton has noted: "the waltz's conflation of feminine sexual energy, grotesquerie, and masquerade is particularly significant because it relies on the rhetoric of female degeneracy that was becoming common currency in the late nineteenth century."[155] Here Elektra's waltz is bacchanalian and mad, most joyous and

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[154] Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 88.

[155] Francesca Draughton, "Dance of Decadence: Class, Gender, and Modernity in the Scherzo of Mahler's Ninth Symphony," *The Journal of Musicology* 20, no. 3 (2003): 401. Viennese music critic, musicologist, and contemporary Max Graf also later wrote: "If there exists a form of music which is a direct expression of sensuality, it is the waltz." Max Graf, *Legend of a Musical City* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1945), 49.

distorted at moments when she sings of revenge.[156] Instead of lulling the listeners with *gemütlich* "entertainment," Elektra's waltz is disruptive and discordant. For example, her musical entries often appear on the offbeat or are syncopated (for instance, 3 after **53**; **58**), upsetting the waltz's rhythmic lilt, while part of the orchestra pounds out the aggressive, driving pulse of the waltz. After Elektra sings "in ecstatic pathos" (*in begeistertem Pathos*, **57**) over the waltz about how she will dance, the music of the waltz gradually shifts toward E major, Strauss's key of sensuality and passion.

Chrysothemis versus Elektra

As Abbate observes, "the opera *Elektra* is a play upon sounds, voices, and music itself."[157] Thus it is important to examine how the sounds, music, and voice of Elektra are set in relation to other characters, in particular her younger sister Chrysothemis, arguably a presentation of the *Ewig-Weibliche*.[158] Chrysothemis offers a radically different presentation of

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[156] As Scott notes, the waltz Strauss writes parodies the iconic Viennese waltz and captures the "*fin-de-siècle* hysteria and the nostalgia for the waning Hapsburg Empire." Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 14.

[157] Abbate, "Elektra's Voice," 107. Abbate continues, specifying that it is not just Elektra's actual voice that concerns her, but rather the multiple *voices* in the opera, including the actual music that operates as a "kind of indirect discourse, at times a representation of the characters' words in another language, at times the voice of an outsider, a narrator, at times the voice of music *en pur*." *Ibid.*, 108.

[158] Although I do not discuss Klytämnestra much in this section, it would be interesting to explore in greater detail her musical characterization in terms of illness in comparison to Elektra. Not only is she musically closer to Elektra than Chrysothemis, it is arguable that Klytämnestra is also "ill." In the extended scene between the two women, Klytämnestra sings of her pains and torments. She sings of the physical marks she bears: "do you not cry out that my eyelids are swollen, and my liver diseased […] do you not show me the marks on my flesh" ("Schreist nicht du, dass meine Augenlider angeschwollen und meine Leber krank ist […] zeigst du nicht die Spuren mir an meinem Fleisch" 5 before **158** – **162**). With her guilt-driven, haunting dreams, she feels as though she is "perish[ing]" like a "rotting carcass" and "devoured by moths" ("zefressen von den Motten" **191** – **193**). The Viennese Klytämnestra was Bahr-Mildenburg, Vienna's first Kundry and a highly-regarded singer praised for her dramatic interpretations of Wagner. Regarding her performance of Klytämnestra, she was described as a "wasted and contaminated woman" ("versiechte und versuchte Frau"). Margarethe von Schuch Mankiewicz, "Anna Bahr Mildenburg," *Der Merker* 2, no. 20 (1911): 63. Klytämnestra is reasonably close to Elektra in terms of her mental state, and thus not very different in terms of musical setting. For example, Carpenter also

femininity, singing: “I want to have children before my body shrivels up […] No, I am a woman and want a woman’s lot.”[159] Some early critics pointed out that Chrysothemis presented a “naturally fashioned femininity.”[160] In his 1909 essay on *Elektra*, Bekker considered Chrysothemis’s desires as normal for a young woman: “Anyone […] who considers the musical characterization of Chrysothemis, which is quite free of sultry passion, must recognize that the quintessence of the wishes and desires of Elektra’s young sister […] does not differ in the slightest from the feelings of a normal young woman.”[161]

This “normal” sexuality, however, differs from Elektra, whose sexuality is presented as incestuous or disturbed throughout the opera. Although Elektra sings about how she has renounced her sexuality, she seems to be preoccupied with the erotic nonetheless.[162] At several moments during the opera she sings of her sexual experience, of the sexuality of her family members, or of her desires. She mentions her mother’s bed and her stepfather’s sexual prowess in bed.[163] She tells her brother about her sexual torments:

> I have had to abandon all that I was. I have sacrificed my modesty [meine Scham], the modesty that is sweeter than anything; the modesty that, like the milky, silvery vapour of

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notes that Klytämnestra is the only other character harmonically characterized by a bitonal chord (b minor and f minor), only in this case rather than superimposed, the chords appear as paired. See Carpenter, “The Musical Language of *Elektra*,” 82-85.

[159] “Kinder will ich haben, bevor mein Leib verwelkt […] ich bin ein Weib und will ein Weiberschicksal.”

[160] “weiblich natürlicher gestaltete.” n.n., “Elektra,” *Die Zeit*, March 25, 1909: 4.

[161] Bekker, “*Elektra*,” 379.

[162] Kennedy writes that Elektra has “killed her own sexual desire” (Kennedy, *Richard Strauss*, 151), while Puffett points out that much has been said about Elektra’s “sexual deprivation.” Puffett, “Introduction,” *Richard Strauss*: Elektra, 13-14.

[163] “[I]t is the hour, it is our hour, the hour when they slaughtered you, your wife and the man who *sleeps with her in one bed your royal bed*” (my own emphasis, “Es ist die Stunde, unsere Stunde ist’s! Die Stunde, wo sie dich geschlachtet haben, dein Weib und der mit ihr in einem Bette, in deinem königlichen Bette schläft,” **38** – **40**); “Why my mother and that other woman, that weakling Aegisth, the brave assassin, he who *performs heroic deeds only in bed*” (my own emphasis, “Nun, meine Mutter und jenes andre Weib, die Memme, ei, Aegisth, der tapfer Meuchelmörder, er, der Heldentaten nur im Bett vollführt,” 3 before **69** – 2 after **70**).

> the moon, surrounds every woman and keeps horrors away from her body and her soul […] Those precious feelings I have had to sacrifice to our father. Do you think when I rejoiced in my body, that his sighs and groans did not penetrate to my bedside? (**163a** – 3 after **168a**)[164]

The moments in which Elektra most clearly expresses her sexual desire are when she sings of her admiration of and incestuous desire for her sister's body. Employing sexually charged language in her duet with Chrysothemis, she admires her sister's physical appearance and sings of the feel of her body in her arms:

> How strong you are! Your virgin nights have made you strong. There is so much strength in you! […] How slender and supple your hips are, I can easily put my arm around them! […] Let me feel your arms: how cool and strong they are! As you push me away I can feel what arms they are […] With your hair it streams down over your strong shoulders! Through the coolness of your skin I can feel the warm blood, with my cheek I can feel the down on your young arms! You are full of strength, you are beautiful, you are like a fruit on the day it ripens (**52a** – **69a**).[165]

Elektra focuses on Chrysothemis's mouth: "*Mund auf Mund*" (mouth to mouth) (3 before **103a**); "your mouth is beautiful […] out of your pure, strong mouth a terrible cry must come" (8 before **98a** – **99a**). She even physically grabs Chrysothemis several times in this scene: "I embrace your body […] I will creep around you, sink my roots into you and infuse my will into your blood" (**71a** – **75a**). Immediately before Chrysothemis declares she cannot help with the murder of Aegisth, Elektra sings with sexual overtones of how Chrysothemis will be rewarded: "The shuddering that you now overcome will be repaid with shivers of ecstasy night after night" (4

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[164] "Ich habe alles, was ich war, hingeben müssen. Meine Scham hab' ich geopfert, die Scham, die süßer als Alles ist, die Scham, die wie der Silberdunst, der milchige des Monds, um jedes Weib herum ist und das Grässliche von ihr und ihrer Seele weghält […] diese süßen Schauder hab' ich dem Vater opfern müssen. Meinst du, wenn ich an meinem Leib mich freute, drangen seine Seufzer, drang nicht sein Stöhnen an mein Bette?"

[165] "Wie stark du bist! dich haben die jungfräulichen Nächte stark gemacht. Überall ist so viel Kraft in dir! Sehnen hast du wie ein Füllen. […] Wie schlank und biegsam leicht umschling ich sie deine Hüften sind! […] Lass mich deine Arme fühlen: wie kühl und stark sie sind! Wie du mich abwehrst, fühl' ich, was das für Arme sind. […] Sie flutet mit deinen Haaren auf die starken Schultern herab. Ich spüre durch die Kühle deiner Haut das warme Blut hindurch, mit meiner Wange spür ich den Flaum auf deinen jungen Armen. Du bist voller Kraft, du bist schön, du bist wie eine Frucht an der Reife Tag."

before **106 – 107**).[166] Much attention is given to Elektra's physical body as well in the opera text – the groans she makes and her wild gestures, particularly in the dance, which will be discussed shortly.[167]

Not only does Chrysothemis sing of ideal womanhood, which encompasses being a wife and mother, but she is also characterized as Elektra's opposite with lyrical music mostly played in the woodwinds and strings that can be heard within a post-Wagnerian context as more "feminine."[168] As Richard Batka noted in his 1909 review of *Elektra*, Strauss painted Chrysothemis with different musical colors than Elektra, and with Chrysothemis, the music becomes "somewhat banal."[169] While Elektra is singing, the heavily articulated Agamemnon motives sound and dominate the soundscape. In fact, this motive constantly interrupts the opera. The syncopated, *forte* Agamemnon motive (Ex. 3.10) is forceful and aggressive, while Elektra sings of revenge. This contrasts with the lyrical, lilting themes that Röse and Prüwer associated with Chrysothemis in their guide to *Elektra*, which was published even before the opera's premiere (Ex. 3.11 and Ex. 3.12).[170] In the first scene between the sisters, there is an incongruity between the disjointed musical material associated with Elektra, particularly with her mad waltz that we just heard, and that of Chrysothemis, whose song-like music is much more lyrical, and

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[166] "Was du jetzt an Schaudern überwindest, wird vergolten mit Wonneschaudern Nacht für Nacht."

[167] This is particularly true with Lucie Marcel's costume, as discussed earlier.

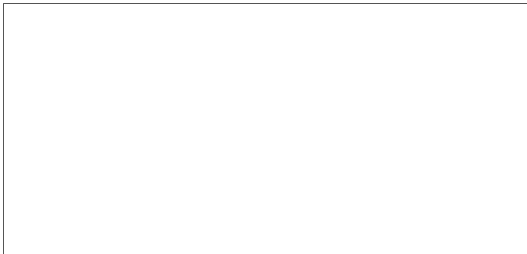
[168] Recall Rieger's essay, "Wagner's Influence on Gender Roles in Early Hollywood Film," 139-45.

[169] R.B., "Elektra," *Fremden-Blatt*, March 25, 1909: 22. Klytämnestra's music is characterized by many gestures in the woodwinds, while her vocal line occupies a lower range. As Whittall also notes, Strauss's formal symphonic compositional practices also articulate a certain relationship between the two women. Although Elektra's monologue is in multiple keys, a large part of it is also in C (major and minor). Thus, Chrysothemis's musical material in E♭ major acts as a dutiful and subordinate second theme, appearing in a closely related key to Elektra's C major/minor. See Whittall, "Dramatic structure and tonal organization," 58-59.

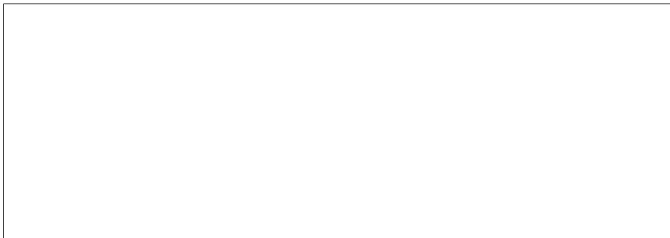
[170] Although the score was typically for sale before an opera's premiere, in the case of *Elektra*, the score was not. Only Röse and Prüwer's detailed motivic guide that went through the opera moment by moment was available though. Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 11.

often in step-wise motion. For instance, when Chrysothemis sings about having children (around **86**), she sings more melodically and in a clear key – of course with some modulation, but still in a tonal center, unlike Elektra's bitonality. She is accompanied by strings that double and support her voice, unlike the thematic fragments that constantly interrupt Elektra.[171] (Ex. 3.13) Many of Chrysothemis's phrases end with an articulation of a triad, constantly returning the listener to a tonal center, even if only briefly. This contrasts with the harmonic and rhythmic instability of Elektra thus far, from her waltz and its shifting time signatures, to the way that her voice leaps, alters the tonal centers, and undermines rhythmic stability. In addition, the vocal timbre and style required for the two singers is different. While Chrysothemis's first entry at **64** is *leise*, quiet and lyrical, Elektra's voice and screams are sonically intrusive.

Ex. 3.11: Strauss, *Elektra*: Chrysothemis's Theme (**66**).



Ex. 3.12: Strauss, *Elektra*: Chrysothemis's second theme (**75**).



[171] In fact when she sings of her desire for fulfilling a "natural" "woman's fate," much of the passage is set in E♭. Her vocal lines outline the key, while her final passage about women's fate concludes with an E♭ major cadence at **109**.

Ex. 3.13: Strauss: *Elektra*. Chrysothemis singing about wanting children (8 before **87** – 5 after **88**).

Chrysothemis also *appears* different than Elektra. Although Chrysothemis also wears a long robe, hers is untattered, more feminine, and hugs her body to outline her feminine shape (Fig. 3.14). In the photograph of Margarethe Siems as Chrysothemis and Annie Krull as Elektra in the January 1909 Dresden production of the opera, an image that was also published in a 1909 issue of the journal *Bühne und Welt*, Krull's is gazing upward, transfixed.[172] She has a look of madness in her wide-open eyes and tension on her face, while her long, disheveled hair and tattered clothing create a resemblance to Kundry from Act I. Siems as Chrysothemis, on the other hand, is much more sedate, with tied back hair and a tranquil, (ironically) beatific gaze. She

[172] The image appears in an article by Pierson, "'*Elektra*' und die Richard Strauss-Woche in Dresden," 445.

resembles the images of the *Ewig-Weibliche* of Gutheil-Schoder as Eva (see Fig. 3.15) or Lucie Weidt as Elisabeth mentioned in Chapter 1.

At moments throughout the opera, Elektra's aggressive motivic material interrupts Chrysothemis, shifting the tempo, harmony, and atmosphere of the music and Chrysothemis's vocal style (such as at **81** – **84**). By the end of the first scene between the sisters, Elektra has musically transformed Chrysothemis. Chrysothemis no longer sings in a clear E♭, and there is much less difference in the musical material accompanying the two women.[173] In the scene between Klytämnestra and Elektra, Elektra even manages to destabilize her mother, both musically and dramatically.[174] By the end of the scene and after Elektra's long speech, Elektra has rattled Klytämnestra, just as Kundry disrupts Parsifal's music after the kiss and just as Salome alters Jochanaan's music at moments. Klytämnestra is "speechless with terror" (**237**). After Elektra's piercing high C and B♭ over an unstable harmonic progression, Elektra stands there in "wild intoxication" ("*wilder Trunkenheit*") while Klytämnestra is left "gasping in horror" ("*gräßlich atmend vor Angst*," **258 – 260**).

Later in the opera, when Elektra tries to convince Chrysothemis to join her in killing Aegisth and Klytämnestra, Elektra sings in what Derrick Puffett calls a "Bavarian style waltz."[175] This "waltz," which is similar to Chrysothemis's earlier music, is used by Elektra to persuade her to help. As Whittall notes, throughout the entire passage when Elektra tries to convince Chrysothemis that she should help her because she is so strong, "the principal tonal and metrical

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[173] This begins as Elektra asks: "What are you howling? ("*Was heulst du*?"). As Whittall points out, from rehearsal number **114** on, the harmony is "disorienting" from the earlier E♭. Whittall, "Dramatic structure and tonal organization," 62. Later on when announcing her brother's death, Chrysothemis again musically resembles Elektra. She enters "howling loudly like a wounded animal" ("*laut heulend wie ein verwundetes Tier*"), while strings and flutes play a rapid, swirling passage.

[174] As Abbate remarks, the A–D Agamemnon motive (Ex. 3.8) is "thunderously phatic, is heard, interrupts, derails and redirects the passage." Abbate, "Elektra's Voice," 120.

[175] Puffett, *Richard Strauss*: Elektra, 50.

association here is, appropriately, that of Chrysothemis's own earlier, E flat major, outpouring."[176] This passage is also when Elektra admires Chrysothemis's body, sings of feeling her body in her arms in highly charged sexual imagery, and embraces her body (Ex. 3.14). Although often beset by episodes of wildness, Elektra even tries to imitate the "*leise*" of Chrysothemis, with the stage directions calling for her to sing "*leise*" twice. It is as though Elektra adopts Chrysothemis's musical material to seduce and manipulate her.

In these scenes leading up to her dance of death, Elektra's voice also conveys both her "abnormality" and her disturbed sexuality.[177] She is often instructed to sing in a "*schreiend*" (screaming) manner or to "*heulen*" (to howl). In addition, the repetitions in Elektra's speech disclose her illness, just as Salome's did when she repeatedly demanded to have Jochanaan's head. For instance, earlier in the speech between Elektra and Klytämnestra, Elektra repeats "*Ich, ich, ich, ich, ich*…" (**239** – **240**). As Abbate notes, when Chrysothemis later delivers the news that Orestes is dead, Elektra again keeps on verbally and motivically repeating herself with her denials.[178] Outlining the pitches D–A or the contour of the Agamemnon motive 1, she sings, "*Es ist nicht wahr! Es ist nicht wahr! Ich sag' dir doch! Es ist nicht wahr!*" (1 before **11a** – **13a**, **17a**). Later she screams: "Orestes! Orestes! Orestes! Orestes!" The latter three intonations of his name are on the same pitches, and again a few lines later: "Orestes! Orestes! Orestes! Orestes!"

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[176] Whittall, "Dramatic structure and tonal organization," 68. See also Kramer, "*Fin-de-Siècle* Fantasies" (1993), 147.

[177] Kramer comments that the "vocal shrillness and orchestral mayhem" of Elektra was "virtually the norm," just as abnormality was at that time. Kramer, "*Fin-de-Siècle* Fantasies" (1993), 142. Moreover, Weininger's understanding of women as a purely sexual being influenced Strauss's depiction of Elektra. *Ibid.*,141.

[178] Strauss even created further repetition with his alterations to Hofmannsthal's libretto. Abbate, "Elektra's Voice," 120-21. While Abbate gives the example "seine sie still, Reden sie nichts," the proximity of Elektra's repetitions of "es ist nicht wahr" (it is not true) is even more striking.

Ex. 3.14: Strauss: *Elektra*. Elektra imitating Chrysothemis (**52a** – **54a**).

Several phrases beginning with "*selig*…" ("blessed is…") later occur in Elektra's voice, again a reiteration of the same word.[179] With these repetitions and instructions to scream, Strauss creates a connection between Elektra's harmonic, melodic, and vocal depiction and her behavior and speech, offering a musical illustration of Elektra's "wild" hysteria.

[179] Not only are the repetitions contemporary symptoms of illness, but Elektra's sudden turn to the religious could also be read as another sign. Gilman, "The Image of the Hysteric," 372-74.

Elektra's Dance of Death

The opera concludes with Elektra's dance – an event witnessed by only Chrysothemis, and us, the audience. This dance and the moments leading up to it are arguably the most harrowing moments in the opera, the pinnacle of Elektra's wild, ecstatic desires, cries, and beast-like behavior. Prior to the dance and the appearance of Orestes, she digs for the murder weapon, "like an animal" ("*wie ein Tier*"). When Orestes goes to kill Klytämnestra, Elektra is in darkness and instructed to stand "alone, in terrible tension. Elektra runs in a line back and forth in front of the door, with her head down, like an captive animal in a cage."[180] Later she is "crouching on the threshold" ("*auf der Schwelle kauernd*," 3 before **229a**), and then instructed to "spring up before Chrysothemis, without paying attention to Chrysothemis."[181] As Scott writes, with its "somatic contortions," movements, and gestures, Elektra's dance resembles Charcot's patient's performances of the *grand attaque hystérique.*[182] At the onset of her dance, the stage directions call for a mad performance: "Elektra steps down from the threshold, throws her head back like a maenad. She jerks her knees up, flings her arms around in some unknown dance…"[183] Thus, Elektra is instructed to act like a Maenad – a figure who possesses dangerous, uncontrolled

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[180] "Elektra allein, in entsetzlicher Spannung. Sie läuft auf einem Strich vor der Tür hin und her, mit gesenktem Kopf, wie das gefangene Tier im Käfig." (**187a**)

[181] "springt auf, vor sich hin, ohne auf Chrysothemis zu achten." (**236a**)

[182] Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 77. Scott also notes that this dance can be seen as a "*danse macabre*, a maenad's ecstatic frenzy, and ultimately as a moment of triumphant liberation." *Ibid*, 28. She interprets this last act as freeing and an appropriation and performance of "the medical discourse and disease as a defensive strategy" in parody. *Ibid*, 57-59. Here Scott echoes Irigaray, who advocates mimicry to jam and expose the existing masculine logos. *Ibid.*, 59. See Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine," in *This Sex which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 77-78. I believe that Elektra here is actually reinforcing the discourse, particularly since this moment is a continuation of themes established at the beginning of the opera. Chapter 7 explores the ways in which hysteria could be used to alter, resist, and reject existing social structures.

[183] "Elektra schreitet von der Schwelle herunter. Sie hat den Kopf zurückgeworfen wie eine Mänade. Sie wirft die Knie, sie reckt die Arme aus, es ist ein namenloser Tanz…" (**247a**)

sexuality and whose dance is one of mourning. For Scott, Elektra's dance is not graceful, but frenzied.[184]

Not only was the dancing woman often read as an incarnation of sexuality in the *fin-de-siècle*, as many have argued, but coming so shortly after Salome's dance, Elektra's moving, half nude body would have likely been read as sexual. According to Scott, Elektra's *Totentanz* here is "Elektra's performance of raw sexuality."[185] Hofmannsthal's description of the costume also reveals how it forefronted Elektra's body, and would have done so particularly in the dance, when it was more common for modern dancers, such as Loie Fuller and Grete Wiesenthal to wear longer garments. Hofmannsthal wrote: "Elektra wears a despicable awful garb, which is too short for her. Her legs are naked, as are her arms."[186] Marcel's costume exposes her body and legs – drawing the viewer's eyes to her exposed, moving body (Fig. 3.13). Musically, this dance also draws on E major themes, the Dionysian key of sexuality.[187] Elektra's sexual yet frenzied dance is filled with pleasure, *jouissance*, however, it is also her disturbed celebration of the murder, and resonates with images of illness, thus further connecting female pleasure to pathology.

While numerous photographs of Salome exist (in the play, dance, or opera versions), either dancing with veils, or gazing a Jochanaan's head, fewer images document Elektra's dance itself. The majority of extant images of Elektra have her interacting with Chrysothemis or with Klytämnestra. The image taken of Lucie Marcel playing *Elektra* is telling and perhaps is a frozen moment of the dance seen by the 1909 Viennese audiences (see again Fig. 3.13). This image,

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[184] She is also relieved of the weight when she dies. Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 40.

[185] *Ibid.*, 14.

[186] Cited in *ibid.*, 65.

[187] For a discussion of the tonal regions and the significance of E major, see Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 68-72.

made into a postcard, is held at both the *Österreichisches Theatermuseum* and the *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Bildarchiv)*, perhaps an indication that this was a popular image from the opera that circulated fairly widely. In the photograph, Marcel is "performing" Elektra's mental instability. She holds her body straight, posing, with her arms spread upward and her fingers spread outward. Her knee is "jerked up," and the photo captures the madness and animality of Elektra's dance and facial expressions. Furthermore, Marcel wears a robe that is shorter, revealing her legs, in line with Hofmannsthal's description of the costume, while her upper body is also exposed. Marcel's costume is decidedly more revealing and sexual than Krull's is, a costume perhaps particular to Marcel's Elektra (compare Figs. 3.11 with 3.12).

Elektra's *Reception in Vienna*

Many in Austria and Germany were fascinated with *Elektra*, and numerous reports on the opera's progress and production created a build-up to the actual premiere.[188] Annie Krull's Dresden performance was highly praised: "In the title role, which is unusually high and the vocal and dramatic art equally demanding for the performer, Ms. Krull achieved a triumph, which places her name in the very first rank."[189] In addition, there were many comparisons with *Salome*. For instance, Geissler wrote in his 1909 *Die Musik* review that Strauss so shortly after *Salome* again latched onto such "ghastly and terrible material," with the opera's "bloodthirsty,

[188] Yet until the premiere, the score and rehearsals were kept as secret as possible. See Bekker, "*Elektra*," 373.

[189] "In der Titelrolle, die ungewöhnlich hoch liegt und an die gesangliche und darstellerische Kunst ihrer Vertreterin gleich hohe Ansprüche stellt, errang sich Frau Krull einen Triumph, der ihnen Namen in die allererste Reihe gerückt hat." Geissler, "'*Elektra*' von Richard Strauss: Uraufführung im Königlichen Opernhaus zu Dresden am 25 Januar, 1909," *Die Musik* VIII, no. 10 (1908–1909): 245.

pathological anomalies," and contended that the music has even more "nervous unrest" ("*nervöse Unruhe*").[190]

Central to reviews was Elektra's "madness." Geissler argued that the opera was not musical because its main focus was to display the insanity of the three female characters.[191] Others in Vienna commented on the music's psychological portrayal of Elektra. Hirschfeld (*Wiener Abendpost)* wanted to hear different music than what Strauss offered in *Elektra*, and wrote: "More than half of this score was accomplished through animalistic howling, screeching, hissing, scratching, grating." Words such as "*tier*" (animal) and "*blut*" (blood) permeated the review.[192] Viennese reactions to Elektra also connected the opera's sexuality and violence to themes of hysteria and mental illness.[193] While praising the work, Elsa Bienenfeld remarked that it contained both "cruelty and perversity" with "stock images of pathology," and, like Salome, it "invades the nerves of the listener with extreme violence."[194] Hirschfeld mentioned Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* in his *feuilleton* piece on Vienna's *Elektra*, and noted that the "atrocious act" is covered with "perverse sexuality." Alluding to the long-standing connection of hysteria with female reproductive organs, Hirschfeld also wrote that Strauss and Hofmannsthal's Elektra was an "exceptional being, as a woman, whose organ was not in order and needed

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[190] "So grausigen und entsetzlich Stoffe"… "dem blutrünstigen, auf pathologische Anomalien." *Ibid.*, 243-44.

[191] *Ibid.* These include Elektra's revenge madness, Chrysothemis's insanity because of her desire to escape and her denial, and Klytämnestra's guilt-driven insanity.

[192] "Mehr als die Hälfte dieser Partitur ist von tierischem Heulen, Kreischen, Pfauchen, Scharren, Knirschen erfüllt." Robert Hirschfeld, "Elektra," *Wiener Abendpost*, March 26, 1909: 1.

[193] Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 9.

[194] "Strauss hat in der *Elektra* wie in der *Salome* Werke geschaffen, mit äußerster Gewalt auf die Nerven der Hörer eindringen." Elsa Bienenfeld, "Elektra," *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 25, 1909: 2.

clinical repairs."[195] In his *feuilleton* for the *Neue Freie Presse,* Julius Korngold also drew attention to the sexual nature to her illness, and wrote: "And again the animal springs from the woman; Elektra's desire for murder is of a sexual origin. One can speak of a metastasis of desire (*Begierde*). And she dances, like Salome – only for contentment. Both times the dance is nothing more than sexual, taken from the formula of Dionysius."[196] Korngold, however, praised Marcel's Elektra and felt that Marcel gave the "craze of Elektra full feeling" and "hysteria with grace."[197] In fact, many of the reviews praised Marcel's particular skill at representing Elektra's hysteria, even though they often criticized her voice.[198] For example, Richard Batka thought that Marcel gave a gleaming, theatrical performance, while Bienenfeld also commented that Marcel presented "*wildheit*" and "*hysteria*," even though her voice was heard as "weak" (*schwach*) at times.[199] Yet Elektra's premiere was sold out at the *Wiener Hofoper*, and the work performed 18

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[195] "als ein Weib, dessen Organe nicht in Ordnung sind und klinischer Reparatur bedürfen." Hirschfeld stated that the "hideous act was wrapped in perverse sexuality." ("gräßlich Tat in verkehrte Sexualität zu hüllen.") Robert Hirschfeld, "Elektra," *Wiener Abendpost*, March 26, 1909: 1-2. Julius Korngold noted the relation between her illness and her sexuality. He wrote: "The immoral oriental princess [Salome] is followed by the hysterical Mycenaean." ("Der lasterhatfen orientalischen Prinzeß ist die hysterische mykenische gefolgt.") Julius Korngold, "Feuilleton: *Elektra*," *Neue Freie Presse*, March 25, 1909: *Morgenblatt*, 1.

[196] "Und wieder springt das Tier aus dem Weibe. Auch die Mordgier Elektras ist geschlechtlichen Ursprungs; man kann von einer Metastase der Begierden sprechen. Und sie tanzt, Salome gleich – nur nach der Befriedigung. Beidemal ist der Tanz nichts anderes als Geschlechtliches, auf die Formel des Dionysischen gebracht…" Korngold, *ibid*.

[197] "Den Wahn der Elektra gab sie voll zu fühlen […] Hysterie mit Grazie." *Ibid.*, 4.

[198] Critics generally praised Marcel's theatrical performance, although her singing was at times faulted.

[199] R. B. (Richard Batka), "Elektra," *Fremden-Blatt*, March 25, 1909: 22. He does mention, however, that she was vocally not up to the role, with her voice not carrying over the orchestra, which made her audibly tired. Batka, *ibid.*, 22. See also Elsa Bienenfeld, "Elektra," *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 25, 1909: 2. In addition, Weingartner wrote to Strauss about the difficulties of a singer performing Elektra too often; the role was too taxing vocally and Marcel insisted she needed a greater rest period. She reported that it felt as though her throat was being attacked. Weingartner to Strauss, April 21st, 1909: "Da außerdem durch einen Arzt festgestellt war, dass ihr Hals tatsächlich angegriffen war." See *HHSA*, Box: 224, Oper 1909, Nr. 120-299.

times in 1909 alone.[200] The degree of influence *Elektra* had on Viennese audience can be gauged by the number of performances it had in Vienna during these years, as well as the public attention that it generated. By December 1909, the avant-garde *Café Fledermaus* had already created a parody with an *Elektra* operetta starring the actress Mela Mars as Elektra.[201]

Conclusion

While Strauss offered a critique of bourgeois social mores in his earlier opera, *Feuersnot*, as I will examine in the following chapter, with *Salome* and *Elektra* he presented shocking dramatic subjects and musical material with his advanced harmonic palette. Yet, Salome and Elektra were regressive presentations of female sexuality, and regardless of Strauss's intentions, how Salome and Elektra were taken up in performance and received in Vienna keyed into a particular conservative strand of contemporary discourses concerning sexuality. As this chapter has demonstrated, the sexual Salome and Elektra are musically and visually presented as ill and easily read within contemporaneous understandings of the relation between female sexuality, illness, and degeneracy, thus reducing their expressions of sexuality to symptoms of illness rather than the desires of a normal subject. Indeed, the narrative of the sexual woman here resonates with regressive, nineteenth-century understandings of female sexuality, despite the operas' avant-garde musical languages. Expressions of female *physical*, sexual desires here are

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[200] See Hans Liebstockl, "Elektra," *Illustrirtes Wiener Extrablatt*, March 25, 1909: 6. For the number of performances, see *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM.*

[201] This parody was written by Julius Brammer and Alfred Grünwald and set to music by Béla Laszky, Mela Mars's husband. Chrysothemis is a "Barfußtänzerin" (barefoot dancer), Klytämnestra, a divorced woman, and Aegethius (now Egoist), a director of the "Nervenpeitsche" (nerve whip) Cabaret. Elektra's hair is wild from an electrical shock and she parodies the dance. Claudia Feigl, "Die Chronologie der 'Fledermaus' 1907 bis 1913," in *Kabarett Fledermaus 1907 bis 1913: Ein Gesamtwerk der Wiener Werkstätte, Literatur, Musik, Tanz*, ed. Michael Buhrs, Barbara Lesák, and Thomas Trabitsch (Vienna: Christian Brandstätter Verlag-Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 2007), 111, 203-4.

presented as ill, as obsessive and necrophilic with Salome, and as incestuous and animalistic with Elektra. Perhaps Strauss was trying to recoup the losses to his reputation from *Feuersnot* by offering a shocking and compelling drama. Nevertheless, with how he "enframes" these sexual women and presents their desires as pathological symptoms of illness, these operas were acceptable given the era's expectations and social boundaries.[202]

While Salome and Elektra are different in terms of how they are musically characterized (Salome is often identified with sinewy, chromatic lines, while Elektra is frequently associated with loud and aggressive motives), both women disrupt the musical texture and are thus presented as dangerous. Both *Salome* and *Elektra* conclude with a strong, triumphant C major chord, musical material that symbolizes order and that is the opposite of their heroine's musical characterizations: with Salome the C major coincides with her visual removal, and in *Elektra* the wrench away from her bitonal chord toward C major coincides with the fall of the curtain after Elektra's collapse.[203] As Kramer contends, "like Salome, Elektra is crushed to death: not by a mass of shields, musically illustrated with clanging dissonance, but by the Straussian orchestral machine churning out its elephantine waltz, the very waltz that 'comes straight out of' its victim."[204] Ultimately the hysterical power that Salome and Elektra gain through their dance require that they be extinguished. Recall Bienenfeld's comment that these operatic women

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[202] For a discussion of "framing" the disruptive, dangerous woman see McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 80-101.

[203] Elektra "falls" then "lies still" (*liegt starr*) to an E♭ major chord, which Kramer notes is the same key associated with the hyper-feminine Chrysothemis, and the return to this E♭ is perhaps how the Lacanian "law of the Father" or "the natural order of gender has its revenge." Kramer, "*Fin-de-siècle* Fantasies" (1993), 147, 155, 161. In *Elektra*, the last bars wrench away from a bitonal chord to a ***ff*** C major, with a fleeting E♭ minor penultimate chord. The final ***fff*** notes in Salome move between also E♭ then C before the triumphant C chord to an identical flourish.

[204] Kramer, *ibid*., 151.

"invade[d] the nerves of the listener with extreme violence."[205] Salome's and Elektra's very voices and bodily gestures forcefully resonated through the opera hall, and their deaths would curb their effect on the women in the audience. While Kundry seemingly disappears, *entseelt* in *Parsifal*, Salome and Elektra are removed with a visual and aural violence that matches the violence that critics such as Bienenfeld perceived in the work.

Yet, did Salome always seem crushed? And was Elektra's death always read as a defeat? Did the performances allow for other interpretations, perhaps more in line with how Abbate reads Salome?[206] As the reviewer for the *Neue Freie Presse* suggests, Bellincioni's *Salome* left doubts in the audience's minds as to who was victorious at the end: Salome or society? "The audience followed in breathless tension, […] and felt, from their conclusion of their nerves, that Bellincioni's horrible art had won."[207] As the reception of *Salome* and *Elektra* indicates, the operatic women, the singers, and what Strauss achieved musically and dramatically were not constrained within the operatic frame. Through performance, these characters spilled over in their excesses and infiltrated both musical culture and society.[208] Indeed, Salome's dangerous sexuality and Elektra's obsessions, as well as Kundry's screams and images, weighed upon women in the other operas discussed in this dissertation, and even on later operatic women. These operatic women were much discussed in the musical journals as well as the Viennese dailies, and perceived as cultural markers of decay. In some ways, however, they also belonged

[205] "Strauss hat in der *Elektra* wie in der *Salome* Werke geschaffen, mit äußerster Gewalt auf die Nerven der Hörer eindringen." Elsa Bienenfeld, "Elektra," *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 25, 1909: 2.

[206] Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Woman," 252-58.

[207] "Der Zuschauer folgt in atemloser Spannung, […] und spürt nur am Schlüße an seinen Nerven, dass die grausamen Künste der Bellincioni gesiegt haben." "r.," *Neue Freie Presse*, January 19, 1911: 11.

[208] This is reminiscent of feminist philosopher Grosz's work in *Volatile Bodies*, in which she explores the way in which bodies can exceed and "extend the frameworks which attempt to contain them," and offer a challenge to rethinking bodies. See Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, xi. In addition, Žižek argues that this feminine excess is "another name for subjectivity." Slavoj Žižek, "The Feminine Excess," in *Opera's Second Death* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 193.

to a series of dramatic works that ushered in new modes of female ways of being. Through their audacious staging of sexuality, *Salome* and *Elektra* challenged bourgeois understandings, thus laying the groundwork for further, *positive* expressions of female sexuality.

PART II: Reevaluating Female Sexuality

Chapter 4: Operatic Characterizations of Bourgeois Respectability: From the *Ewig-Weibliche* to the "Fallen Woman"

Amidst shifting and unstable gender dynamics and class politics, the notion of bourgeois morality was increasingly called into question toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. This occurred on multiple fronts, from politics and literature, to visual arts and opera. In contrast to the earlier nineteenth-century understandings of "normal" women as not possessing any sexual drive, female sexuality began to be reexamined and reevaluated in new ways.[1] As Freud even so boldly argued in *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905)*,* the very *repression* of these sexual drives for bourgeois women could lead to neuroses and hysteria – a view that contrasted sharply from those explored in the preceding chapter. This attention to female sexuality upended societal mores and likely raised questions for bourgeois society: What type of women possessed a sexual drive? How could a young woman maintain her "respectability" while existing as a sexual being with desires? It seemed that female sexual subjectivity was inherently threatening to the social structures of gender at the time. As Peter Gay writes:

> The denial of female sexuality emerges as a tremulous self-fulfilling prophecy. To deny women native erotic desires was to safeguard man's sexual adequacy. However he performed, it would be good enough […] And if woman's erotic urges should prove merely dormant, it seemed all the better to leave them undisturbed, for what might woman not do to man once she was aroused?[2]

Indeed, certain segments of society did not want to acknowledge that women possessed a sexual drive or sexual subjectivity, and preferred to interpret any displays of sexual desire as

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[1] See Chapter 1 for a discussion of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century understandings of female sexuality as "abnormal." Around the turn of the century, Freud began to write about the ways in which women did in fact experience sexual desire and possess a sex drive, for example in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, which I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 7. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1962).

[2] Gay, *Education of the Senses*, 197.

compromising the respectability of young bourgeois women. Alternatively, displays of female desire were understood as disturbed, ill, and animal-like, as discussed thus far.

Bourgeois, or middle class, respectability was thus legitimized and strictly governed by a series of social and moral codes.[3] The sheer number of etiquette books – *Anstands-* and *Benimmliteratur* (literature on propriety and manners) – attests to the inculcation of these very codes as well as their graduals shifts. Geared toward young women, some etiquette books offered ways to maintain proper female behavior amidst transformations in the social fabric, while others disregarded social change, and continued to reinscribe the prevailing norms. Although *Anstands-* and *Benimmliteratur* existed well before the late nineteenth century, 1890–1910 was a high point for the genre, with over 250 publications emerging during these years. Women were to learn: how to act respectably in private and public spaces (ex: the theater, the concert hall, museums, on the street, etc.), how to dress and speak, to how to comport one's body, how to physically move and act, and how to respond in an emotionally appropriate manner.[4] The promulgation of these books indicated an effort to counter social change by sedimenting traditional notions of female propriety into the minds and bodies of young women.[5]

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[3] As sociologist Norbert Elias wrote, "middle classes […] legitimate themselves primarily through a *moral* code." Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Michael Schröter, trans. Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 96-97.

[4] Some of the titles include: Natalie Bruck-Auffenberg: *Die Frau 'comme il faut'* (Vienna, 1896); Adele Bacsila: *Anstandslehre und Haushaltskunde: Kurzgefaßte Ratschläge und Winke für junge Mädchen* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910); Adele Gräfin von Hoffelize, *Kurze Unterweisungen in den christlichen Tugenden für Frauen die in der Welt leben* (Mainz, 1887); and Hermann Klencke: *Das Weib als Jungfrau: Eine Körper- und Seelendiätetik zur Selbsterziehung der Natur, guten Sitten und Gesellschaft für Beruf, Lebensglück, Familien- und Volkswohl* (Leipzig, 1877). For a discussion of these etiquette books, see Karin Schrott, *Das Normative Korsett: Reglementierungen für Frauen in Gesellschaft und Öffentlichkeit in der deutschsprachigen Anstands- und Benimmliteratur zwischen 1871–1914* (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), 77-85.

[5] For a general discussion of the ways in which society instills these morals into individuals (and their bodies), see Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, and "Docile Bodies" in *Discipline and Punish*, 135-70.

The presentation of women in literature, in art, and on the stage often worked to reinforce and internalize ideal, chaste bourgeois femininity. The *Prostitutionsfrage* became not only a central concern for politicians, scientists, sociologists, and the public, but also a popular trope, with the "fallen woman" emerging in visual images and on the bourgeois stage, particularly between the 1890s and 1920s. The prostitute or "fallen woman" became a frequent antithesis to the *Ewig-Weibliche*.[6] Theatrical works, such as Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, however, critiqued bourgeois gender norms and revealed how the social expectations of "respectable" womanhood were unattainable and unrealistic ideals. Bourgeois mores stifled women, as increasingly demonstrated in contemporary novels, such as Theodor Fontane's *Effi Briest* (1895) and Schnitzler's *Therese: Chronik eines Frauenlebens* (1928), and plays, such as Schnitzler's *Liebelei* (1894) and Otto Erich Hartleben's *Die Erziehung zur Ehe* (1893).[7]

As I explore in this chapter, the concern with bourgeois notions of female respectability extended to the operatic stage and played out through the musical presentation of female characters. By examining Strauss's *Feuersnot* (1901), Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* (1912), and Lehár's *Der lustige Witwe* (1905), I demonstrate that opera and operetta participated in these debates, offering commentaries and posing similar challenges to traditional bourgeois understandings of female sexuality, with the added element of musical representation. The "fallen woman" increasingly appeared on the operatic stage, and in this chapter I deal specifically with characters who *become* "fallen women" or prostitutes, or who risk being viewed

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[6] McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim or Whore? The Prostitute in German Literature, 1880–1925*, 1-2; Christiane Schönfeld, ed. *Commodities of Desire: The Prostitute in Modern German Literature* (London and Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), esp. introduction; Diethe, *Aspects of Distorted Sexual Attitudes in German Expressionist Drama*.

[7] For a discussion of the Hartleben plays *Die Erziehung zur Ehe* and *Hanna Jagert* and their censorship in Wilhelmine Germany, see Karl Leydecker, "Prostitution, Free Love, and Marriage in German Drama of the 1890s," in *Commodities of Desire: The Prostitute in Modern German Literature*, ed. Christiane Schönfeld (London: Camden House, 2000), 31-45.

as “fallen women” because of their behavior. The operatic figures are bourgeois women who have reached, or who almost reach, moral destitution within bourgeois norms.[8] Through the denouement and musical representation, the works examined here offer a positive reevaluation of female sexuality – the sexual woman is no longer presented as “ill.” Nevertheless, these works also could have presented another sort of danger. When the “fallen” woman appeared, issues of class and social status arose, drawing not only on anxieties about female sexuality and changing gender roles, but also on fears of shifting politics and class dynamics.[9]

As much excellent musicological scholarship has shown, the sexual woman is often musically coded as different, as musical “Other” to the “good” woman through chromaticism and harmonic instability or disruption.[10] As this chapter explores, a common strategy was to have not only harmonic but also other musical shifts, including stylistic, rhythmic, and timbral changes, to musically characterize a woman’s respectability. “Respectable” and “fallen” women are often musically coded as opposites, with “fallen” women often associated with “popular” music and differing orchestral colors. Yet sometimes a character’s musical presentation oscillates between these differing musical characterizations, offering a further commentary on bourgeois attitudes toward sexuality and moral boundaries.

After contextualizing the “fallen” woman amidst *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois anxieties in the first part of the chapter, I turn to examine how respectability and sexuality figure in the

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[8] I hesitate to include Salome – who was musically coded as “Other” – on this list because a “fallen” woman typically is seduced over the course of the work.

[9] Here I focus on the implications of class and social status within the operas.

[10] In this chapter, I engage with and build on the ways in which this musical coding of the sexual woman functions in opera, as examined by scholars including, McClary and Kramer, whose work focuses on musical signification. McClary, *Feminine Endings*; McClary, *Georges Bizet:* Carmen, esp. 44-77; Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture*, 128-66, 190-220; Rieger, “‘I married Eva’: Gender Construction and *Die Meistersinger*,” trans. Nicholas Vazsonyi, in *Wagner’s* Meistersinger*: Performance, History, Representation*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 209-25.

representation of bourgeois women in two operas and one operetta: Diemut in *Feuersnot*, Grete in *Der ferne Klang*, and Valencienne in *Die lustige Witwe*. The dramatic and musical representations of these women demonstrate the degree to which bourgeois notions began to be challenged on the musical stage. As Sally Banes observes about the dance stage: "the tendency is to represent on stage bourgeois, rather than working-class, values toward sexuality and marriage. This is not to say that bourgeois values are always upheld; they may well be contested. But they structure the conversation, which tends to be far more polite than that of the popular stage."[11] The same analysis could be extended to the court opera house, which traditionally reinforced bourgeois politics, and values. This chapter interrogates the sexual as bad/non-sexual as good dichotomy in opera and evaluates these judgments. In *Feuersnot*, a shift in musical writing occurs when the central female character, Diemut, embraces sexuality, while in *Der ferne Klang*, the musical treatment of the fallen woman, particularly in Act II, reveals an alternative (and sympathetic) musical and visual characterization. Popular music in nineteenth-century Europe, including Vienna, also had its own distinct set of musical styles and features, while the operetta hall was a space with more flexibility, although still negotiating bourgeois expectations.[12] Thus a brief examination of *Die lustige Witwe* allows for an analysis of how female respectability is musically conveyed not only in another musical genre and viewing space (of the operetta hall), but also how it is depicted within different spaces within operetta itself, from the homes of "respectable" women, to the world of the cabaret and the "Grisettes."[13] The end of this chapter

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[11] Banes continues: "Prostitutes rarely populate the high-art dance stage, even in eras when they proliferate in literature, drama, and visual art." Banes, *Dancing Women,* 6-7.

[12] See Derek B. Scott, *The Nineteenth-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

[13] As I discuss toward the end of this chapter, in Vienna, for instance, there were a variety of different stages with audiences of differing socio-economic backgrounds, from the *Hofoper* to private theaters

will briefly assess the intersection among class, varying musical spaces, and the audience, and consider the social effect that musical representations of respectability could have had on the bourgeois female viewers.

Section 1: *The Fallen Woman as Perceived Social Threat*

> Like a child from the lands of fables, you speak of this 'other world.' As if there would be any sort of limitations of this kind… Here is 'virtue'! – and there 'vice.' Life is not so simple, my good Doctor. The boundaries would indeed be very comfortable for you – only they do not exist.
>
> – Schnitzler, *Das Vermächtnis*, 1899[14]

During the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, prostitution became an increasing concern within the rapidly growing urban centers in Germany and Austria. Approximately 20,000 – 50,000 women were said to be working on the Berlin streets, and around 330,000 in the entire Wilhelmine Empire.[15] How to regulate and eliminate prostitution was a constant debate in the German Empire, nevertheless a simultaneous "suppression" and "availability" of the women occurred.[16] Vienna had a high number of both legal and illegal prostitutes – 7,000 official and 30,000 unofficial – to whom young men could

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outside the reach of court censors, such as *Theater an der Wien*, to the "lower" class spaces theaters of the *Vorstadt* (suburbs) and Prater.

[14] Emma to Ferdinand in Schnitzler's play *Das Vermächtnis*, 1898. "Wie ein Kind von Fabelländern reden Sie von dieser 'anderen Welt.' Als wenn's irgend welche Grenzen dieser Art gäbe! ... Hier 'die Tugend' – und dort 'das Laster.' So einfach ist das Leben nicht, mein guter Doktor. Die Grenzen wären ja sehr bequem für Sie – nur existieren sie nicht." Arthur Schnitzler, "Das Vermächtnis," in *Die Dramatischen Werke*, Gesammelte Werke 1 (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1962), 437.

[15] This number rose from 311 accounted prostitutes in 1809. See Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 6. In Berlin there were just under 4000 official, regulated prostitutes and speculations of 20, 000 to 50, 000 unofficial ones around 1900. Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe* (New York: The Century, 1914), 26-28. The population of Berlin in 1905 was 2,000,000 and the outer suburbs added another 1, 500, 000 (Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 7), thus prostitutes represented up to 2.5 percent of the overall population, or approximately 5 percent of women.

[16] In 1871, the new German Empire passed a clause in the Criminal Code (Paragraph 180) concerning brothels and regulating prostitution. In 1891, Clause 180 of the Criminal Code was altered in Germany that allowed police-controlled brothels to operate, which was a concern for urban bourgeois society in particular. Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 6, 8; and McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim or Whore*, 12, 27.

turn during their first years of sexual activity, as was expected and socially condoned.[17] As Zweig noted in his memoir, prostitution was an enormous social problem, yet an inescapable part of the Viennese landscape. While many prostitutes worked illegally, some were also registered to work on the streets or in Cabarets, thus closely surveilled and regulated by the city, particularly regarding their compliance with the strict codes on hygiene, sexual examinations, and fees. The *Sittenpolizei* (morals police) closely monitored female prostitution, keeping track of the women, but not their clients.[18] As Shannon Bell suggests, nineteenth-century laws "identified sex as a public issue, differentiated male from female sexuality, marked certain types of sexual activity as dangerous, and produced the prostituted body as the site of disease and pollution."[19] Indeed, the *Prostitutionsfrage* was a pressing subject for medical and social scientists in their discussions about "normal" and "abnormal" female sexuality. Sexologist Iwan Bloch published *Die Prostitution* in 1912, his first book in his projected twelve volumes on *Sexualwissenschaft* (Sexual science), and its popularity in bourgeois circles indicates the degree of interest in and concern with female sexuality, which moved beyond the purview of politicians and scientists.[20]

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[17] Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe*, 27-28. The Viennese population in the census of 1900 was just over 1, 750, 000, greater than today. See census records of the city of Vienna: <http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen_registerzaehlungen/bevoelkerungsstand/index.html> accessed March 5, 2012.

[18] See Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 83-89; See also Peter Vergo, *Art in Vienna, 1898–1918: Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele, and their Contemporaries* (London: Phaidon, 1975), 14; Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany*, 16-17.

[19] Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 55. Although Bell is writing specifically about the "British Royal Commission on the Contagious Disease Acts" of the 1860s, her comment is also reflective of attitudes in Vienna and Germany, as Schönfeld's work attests. Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 8.

[20] Some further examples of nineteenth-century publications on prostitution include, in chronological order: *Memoiren einer Prostitution in Hamburg* (1847); F. J. Behrend's *Die Prostitution* (Berlin, 1850); Franz Seraph Hügel's *Zur Geschichte: Statistik und Regelung der Prostitution* (1865). The following all treat prostitution within the framework of psychoanalysis and sexology: Julius Kühn's *Die Prostitution im 19. Jahrhundert* (1892); Alfred Blaschko's *Syphilis und Prostitution* (1893); Robert Hessen's *Prostitution in Deutschland* (1910), and Stephan Leonhard's *Die Prostitution* (1912). Much of this scholarship dealt

Prostitution was a cause taken up by some in the women's movement, with different factions calling either for more government monitoring and protection for women working in the sex industry, or for the eradication of the "social vice" of prostitution.[21]

Young bourgeois women were meanwhile insulated from the world of sexuality in order to protect their respectability: they went to boarding schools, had governesses, were chaperoned, and their every move was observed and guarded. They were sheltered, physically and socially distanced from the world of sexuality.[22] For example, one of the main reasons for young Viennese men to turn to a prostitute or to find a "*süßes Mädel*" – a young, innocent unmarried woman of a lower class with which they could have a sexual relationship, often to the detriment of her future – was in order to preserve the respectability of young bourgeois women.[23] Men were not expected to marry until they were older and financially established, and in the hypocritical double standard often denounced by social critics, they were permitted to explore

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with the bourgeois notion of women's duality, of "pathological" versus "Normal." Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 9-10.

[21] The latter was advocated by the more conservative Christian feminist organizations, such as the *Mutterschutz League.* According to Anderson, while prostitution was not dealt with much by women in literature, it was a central political cause of the women's movement. Others argued that the government monitoring was corrupt, often mistreating and punishing the women more than benefiting them, and they wanted prostitution to be free of this government control. For examples, Viennese feminist Meisel-Hess, critiqued the social mores and hypocrisy of society and blamed the social conditions that led to selling sex; this was a key concern for Mayreder, who was a leader of the General Austrian Women's Association; and writers such as Else Jerusalem's fiction demonstrates that women are not to blame, but are rather victims. These feminist figures were critical of a society that publically condemned prostitution, while privately supporting it. Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 216-19; Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 14. See also Grete Meisel-Hess, *The Sexual Crisis: A Critique of our Sex Life*, and Mayreder, *Gender and Culture*.

[22] Of course in reality, women could not be fully isolated from sexuality.

[23] The *"süßes Mädel*" was a naïve young lower-middle class woman who young wealthy men would seduce with no intention of marrying them. Schnitzler's works were populated by the *süßes Mädel*. In writings, such as *Therese*, he sympathetically presented the woman and the deleterious consequences of the relationship on her, and he critiqued bourgeois hypocrisy, which condoned sexual freedom in men and condemned the same in woman. Keiser, "The 'süßes Mädel' in Fin-de-Siècle and Modern Vienna," 62-76; Bruce Thompson, *Schnitzler's Vienna: Image of a Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), esp. 57-72.

their sexual desires. "Respectable" women, however, were not allowed such freedom to explore their sexuality. As sociologist Norbert Elias observes, the social code "demanded a strict observance of the rule of celibacy until marriage only from young women, while it allowed young men informal infringements."[24] Women's bodies were often hidden, protected under layers of clothing and shielded from the male gaze – although their bodies were tightly laced in corsets, the S-curve of the girdles favored at the end of the nineteenth century accentuated the female figure to the point of distortion, masking her actual shape.[25] As Zweig wrote:

> The true lines of the body of a woman had to be so completely hidden that even her bridegroom at the wedding banquet could not have the faintest idea whether his future life-partner was straight or crooked, whether she was fat or lean, short-legged, bowlegged, or long legged [...] The more of a 'lady' a woman was to be, the less was her natural form to be seen.[26]

In addition, visual materials labeled as sexual were carefully controlled, kept out of view from bourgeois women. For instance, concerns existed about women being exposed to Klimt's sexualized nudes, while a 1913 Berlin regional law forbade window displays of postcard

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[24] Men were "absolutely forbidden to push erotic relations with girls of the same rank to the point of sexual intercourse." See Elias, *The Germans*, 105-6. See also Frevert, *Women in German History*, 133. German men in the late nineteenth century were expected to marry the "untouchable" women from their own class. Elias writes, "The conventions of good society applied to them, one bowed, kissed their hand, danced with them in the prescribed way, kissed them when they allowed it, called, when necessary, on the parents – in short contact with them was ruled by a quite well-established, strictly formalized code of behaviour." Elias, *The Germans*, 35.

[25] Several essays by modern German and Austrian artists and designers concerned female clothing. While some felt that women's clothing should be loose to allow women to move freely, others felt that clothing should accentuate the natural female body and shape. In a 1902 essay in *Dokumente der Frauen*, Wiener Werkstätte architect Adolf Loos discussed the relationship between female sexuality and clothing, arguing that women's clothes direct relate to morality and sexuality. For Loos, the Austrian legal code with its paragraphs on morality is the best barometer of women's fashion. Adolf Loos, "Ladies Fashion 1898/1902," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, CA: Ariadne, 1998), 106-11. See also Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850 –1920: Politics, Health, and Art* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2003), 172-94.

[26] Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 72-73.

reproductions of nude paintings, even of well-known masterpieces.[27]

As discussed in the previous chapters, the sexual woman was often demonized because of the fear that she would harm the health of society. Yet in accordance with the nineteenth century's penchant for dualities, the "fallen" woman and the *Ewig-Weibliche* were often presented as antitheses in literature. According to Schönfeld, "sexualization, however, was intrinsically divided into normal and pathological – be it women, bodies, or sexualities – and thus fits very well into the tradition of one of the more aggressive aspects of bourgeois ideologies: the dual nature of women."[28] The *Ewig-Weibliche* (Eternal Feminine or Eternal-Womanly), paradoxically exemplified in Gretchen from Goethe's *Faust*, was placed in opposition to the sexual woman, who was an exemplar of destitution, warning young innocent girls of the dangers of promiscuity and their body. As Diethe aptly points out, however: "There was some irony in the way that Gretchen, the archetypal fallen woman, came to be seen as a *Madonna* by cultured Germans, since Goethe had leveled his own critique at society by making the outcast child-murderess Gretchen his ideal: the irony was lost on a society obsessed with its own need to divide women into categories as 'Eves' and 'Madonnas.'"[29] Nevertheless, the redemptive *Ewig-Weibliche* was held up as an ideal to which young girls ought to strive. Queen Luise of Prussia and the national symbol *Germania*, ideal women who supported and helped the nation, as discussed in Chapter 1, were both chaste and immensely popular female models in the

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[27] The law reads: "For the public visiting the museum buys the cards and uses them to serve as a lasting souvenir of its general enjoyment of art, and not in order that the depicted images may serve as a potential source of sensual arousal." Cited in Tobias G. Natter, "The Naked Body and Public Space in Viennese Art," in *The Naked Truth: Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka, and Other Scandals*, ed. Tobias G. Natter and Max Hollein (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2005), 29. There was the idea of protecting the bourgeois woman from any eroticism, as discussed later.

[28] Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 9-10.

[29] Diethe, *Nietzsche's Women*, 24.

nineteenth-century German imaginary.[30] Those exemplifying female sexual desire were usually cast as radical, exceptions, or pathological and ill.

Sexuality, Class, Hypocrisy, and Fear in Literature and on the Stage

Between the 1890s and the 1920s the prostitute became an increasingly popular female figure in modernist German literature, beginning with Naturalism and extending through to Expressionism.[31] As Schönfeld writes, "the question of love as *commodity* has served male and female reflection and social criticism to saucy entertainment."[32] For male readers, the "fallen woman" was a source of pleasure. Although she may have been a pleasure for female readers as well, her primary intention for female readers was to warn them of the perils of losing one's respectably.[33] The chaste woman and her Other, the fallen woman, were pitted as opposites. One helped elevate society, following the traditional *Ewig-Weibliche*, reinforcing the idea of the woman in the home and hearth and as a central figure for German society to raise itself to a

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[30] Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 96. In a *Berliner Illustrierte* poll, Germania was ranked as the most popular figure. Germania, although most commonly associated with nation building in Germany in the nineteenth century, also was understood as a cultural ideal, a mother figure protecting all Germans. Herminghouse and Mueller, "Looking for Germania," 2-5.

[31] See Schönfeld, who writes, "[i]n German literature of the nineteenth century, the use of the prostitute gains further popularity and complexity, although compared to the numerous examples of famous sex workers in French literature, her use by German authors remains sporadic until the second half of the century." Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 2. While the prostitute was a common figure in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French and English literature, in Germany it was only during the late nineteenth century that she began to appear with any prominence in German writing. At this point, she actually emerged as a prominent theme in literature, form plays and poems to stories, and McCombs attributes this to industrialization. Of course, there were several exceptions, but as McCombs notes, when she appeared in this earlier literature, she was often a secondary character, unlike her French and English counterparts, such as Nana and Moll Flanders. See McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim or Whore?*, 2-9.

[32] Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 1.

[33] For example in Fontane's novel *Effi Briest*, Effi is a warning for women about what happens when one follows one's physical desires. On the other hand, while *Thérèse* may seem to be a portrayal of a woman's descent, the way in which Schnitzler depicts the eponymous heroine's suffering and ostracization transforms the novel into a critique of bourgeois double standards.

higher level.[34] On the other hand, the fallen woman was a dangerous hindrance, trapping men and leading society into a social morass.[35] Thus, the bourgeois woman was distanced, held afar from the seductress, who often belonged to another class or social standing. Of course this duality was a constructed illusion, rather than an accurate reflection of how society actually functioned – indeed, the binary was a false binary, as the opening epigraph of this section suggests. Bourgeois women were in reality just as caught up with the sexual world and their sexual desires as men, only this was usually an unspoken social reality.

The representation of prostitutes in German literature from the *fin-de-siècle* onward varied from moralistic condemnations to a growing number of shocking provocations, alongside sympathetic portrayals and reconsiderations that challenged the status quo. Kraus relished in pointing out bourgeois hypocrisy in his acerbic writings, such as in his short story "The Good Conduct Medal" ("*Das Ehrenkreuz*," 1909) in which a young woman is criminally charged for pretending to be a prostitute with no license, when she is really not even a prostitute. The anxieties surrounding female sexuality were also increasingly played out on the bourgeois stage, and the potential to upset social values was particularly exploited in a number of *fin-de-siècle* staged works, not only in Schnitzler plays, but also in Wedekind's *Erdgeist* (1895, *Earthspirit*) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1904, *Pandora's Box*).[36] In Schnitzler (*Liebelei*, 1894; *Reigen*,

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[34] Consider again, Goethe's well-known line from *Faust*: "das ewig Weibliche zieht uns hinan." Goethe, *Faust,* Part II, 288. In Hegel's philosophical system, articulated in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, woman is also not part of active society. She is left in the home in order for society (and self-consciousness) to reach a higher level. G. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), especially pages 274-78 (nos. 456-63), and note 457 (page 553).

[35] These traditional understandings of female sexuality were challenged and women's behavior questioned anew, as the following chapters discuss.

[36] Wedekind's Lulu plays were privately staged by Kraus in Vienna with Kraus giving introductory lectures. Later in Expressionist works, the prostitute appears as the "New Woman, as the icon of modern capitalism, as the personification of the power of Eros, as a streetwalking personification of destruction and liberation at the same time." See Christiane Schönfeld, "Whore," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of*

1898–1899; *Das Vermächtnis*, 1898), bourgeois morality is often exposed as nothing more than a veneer, and the separation of the lower-class and upper-class worlds is undermined with how the upper-class men engage in sexual relations with lower-class women – *süßes Mädel* of the *Vorstadt* or prostitutes. For instance, his controversial play *Reigen*, given a partial reading in 1905 Vienna and considered morally harmful, demonstrates the sexual intersections of all segments of Viennese society: men *and* women, from the nobility to the poor. The scenes of the play are an interlinking chain of sexual encounters, beginning in scene 1 with the Whore (*die Dirne*) and the Soldier (*der Soldat*), and eventually completing the circle by returning in scene 10 to the Whore, who is now with a Count.[37] *Liebelei* (*Flirtation*) also presents how the upper-class men were very critical of any formal association with lower-class sexuality, but they hypocritically cover up their own sexual indiscretions.

The fallen women became a common figure on the French and Italian operatic stages over the course of the nineteenth century, most famously with *La Traviata*'s Violetta. The theme of respectability was also dealt with in Charpentier's *Louise*, which premièred at the *Opéra Comique* in Paris in 1900. With its lush operatic writing and contemporary social themes, the popular opera was performed multiple times in Vienna and Germany beginning in 1908.[38] *Louise*, which directly addresses middle-class respectability and female sexuality, is about a young milliner from a working-class home who falls in love with a poor, young artist. For her

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German Literature, ed. Friederike Eigler and Susanne Kord (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 560; McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim or Whore?*

[37] Schnitzler's *Reigen* did not appear in a complete performance until 1920. In 1905 it was given a public reading in Vienna, yet at a third of the way into the play, the reading was stopped. *Reigen*'s eventual premieres in Berlin and Vienna in 1920 and 1921 were scandals. See Gerd K. Schneider, "The Social and Political Context of Arthur Schnitzler's *Reigen* in Berlin, Vienna, and New York: 1900–1933," in *A Companion to the Works of Arthur Schnitzler*, ed. Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 27-37.

[38] *Louise* was performed at the *Wien Hofoper* in March 1903.

family, Louise's liaison with Julien raises the issue of safeguarding her reputation – he introduces her to the *demi-monde* of the variety theater and threatens her petit-bourgeois respectability.

These themes slowly made their way onto the German operatic stage.[39] Nineteenth-century German opera often presented an idealized woman, sometimes pitted again a dangerous, threatening female character. For instance, *Lohengrin* contrasts Elsa and Ortrud, while *Tannhäuser* presents the antithetical Venus and Elisabeth. Moreover, many of these depictions present the sexualized women in an entirely negative light, and assign music to the binary of good woman/bad woman in a rather formulaic fashion: the "good" women almost always exists in the realm of stable tonality, while the sexual or "bad" woman is cast in a chromatic world. Venus's music is highly chromatic and harmonically unstable,[40] while Elisabeth's music relies upon diatonic melodies and functional harmonies. Wagner's Kundry is another example of the dangerous sexualized woman onstage. As discussed in Chapter 2, Kundry's musical presence creates a destabilization not just harmonically, but also motivically, rhythmically, and timbrally within the Grail community. While some operas presented the fallen woman as a force to be eliminated, *à la* Carmen, some modern composers increasingly treated her with sympathy and as a mode of social commentary, as in *Louise* or, as will be discussed shortly, in *Der ferne Klang*. One instance is the highly popular *Tiefland* (1903) by Eugen d'Albert, an early step toward a critique of male treatment of women, which was already appearing in literature and the theater. Marta is treated as "property" and "given" as a wife by the landowner, Sebastiano, to the

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[39] It seems that opera follows the pattern of lateness that McCombs identifies in German literature, as mentioned earlier.

[40] In the *fin-de-siècle*, the same singer sang the opposing roles of Venus and Elisabeth. Playing the chaste Elisabeth would perhaps counterbalance the negative associations of performing the sensuous Venus on the operatic stage for the singer's reputation.

shepherd, Pedro. Although she falls in love with Pedro, the story condemns the actions of Sebastiano and creates sympathy for Marta with how she is treated as a possession and exchanged by men.[41]

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the relationship between the actual singer and her roles often blurred, and singers were often concerned with the respectability of the character they portrayed onstage. If a singer performed a provocative role too well, with too much "realism" or accuracy, this could be shocking for the audience and raise questions about her personal reputation.[42] A female singer's performance was indeed intertwined with the prevailing notions of femininity, and this tendency to conflate the roles one plays with one's personal life perhaps explains Marie Wittich's resistance to performing *Salome* in Dresden in 1905, as discussed in Chapter 2. Rutherford suggests sexual knowledge could be inferred from a "knowing" performance of the fallen woman. At other times, the singers used gestures from the upper classes rather than the class of the fallen woman they were portraying in order to create an empathy and connection with the female spectators in the audience.[43] According to Rutherford: "the singers were often acutely aware of the performative constraints of gender. At times, they deliberately enhanced the femininity of their roles: if the early prima donnas were criticized for

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[41] *Tiefland* is about a young woman, Marta, her marriage to the shepherd Pedro, and the controlling, wealthy landowner, Sebastiano. Yet, how Marta is exchanged by men is central to the plot. She is exchanged for a mill by her family and forced to live with Sebastiano. Later, when Sebastiano wants to marry an heiress but keep Marta as his mistress, he has her marry Pedro, his shepherd, in order to keep her in a subservient position nearby. In the end of the opera, Pedro kills Sebastiano, accepts Marta as his love, and returns to the mountains with her.

[42] See Smart for a discussion of the ways in which Rosina Stolz's roles and real life merged in the public mind in 1830s Paris. Mary Ann Smart, "The Lost Voice of Rosine Stolz," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6, no. 1 (1994): 31-50. As Joy H. Calico has recently pointed out, singers Marie Wittich and Ernestine Schumann-Heink both used the press to distance themselves from the roles they performed, Salome and Klytämnestra respectively. Joy H. Calico, "Staging Scandal with *Salome* and *Elektra*," in *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1800–1920*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61-82.

[43] Rutherford, *The Prima Donna in Opera*, 265-68.

being insufficiently genteel, those of the late 1830s and 1840s were sometimes reproved for being too ladylike and reluctant to engage with the drama."[44] The idea that these female performers should at least temper the lasciviousness of their roles was often raised. As a late nineteenth-century French critic wrote of Galli-Marie's performance of Carmen: "[T]his distinguished artist could have corrected what was shocking and antipathetic in the character of this heartless, faithless, lawless gypsy. She has, on the contrary, exaggerated Carmen's vices by a realism that would at best be bearable in an operetta in a small theater. At the *Opéra Comique*, a subsidized theater, a decent theater if ever there was one, Mlle. Carmen should temper her passions."[45]

Section II: *Strauss's and Wolzogen's* Feuersnot

Strauss's second opera, *Feuersnot*, tackles bourgeois respectability and sexuality with a deliberate directness. The story is set in Munich on midsummer's night (*Subendabend*) in a "*fabelhaft Zeit*" (fictional time), and revolves around Kunrad, a young, solitary magician. He is genial, open, and eager to participate in the town celebrations.[46] Early in the opera, Kunrad suddenly kisses Diemut, the chaste, reserved young daughter of the *Burgomeister*. Mortified and morally outraged, Diemut vows to get her revenge, and with her friends she plots her retaliation against the bold Kunrad.[47] She tricks him into believing that she loves him, and convinces him to

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[44] *Ibid.*, 261.

[45] Jean-Pierre-Oscar Comettant's 1875 review of *Carmen* in the journal *Le Siècle*. Cited in Rutherford, *ibid.,* 265-67.

[46] Perhaps this is also Strauss and Wolzogen's commentary on the isolated artist. When Kunrad learns that it is *Subend*, he immediately chastises himself for being out of touch with the town and the local events: "delv[ing] in old, musty manuscripts" while "the sunshine dances so light."

[47] Many of the townspeople are also indignant, which is supposed to reflect their conservative morality.

climb into a basket so he can come visit her in her room. But when the basket is halfway up to her window, Diemut suddenly stops pulling and leaves him trapped, hanging outside her window, his sexual desire for her unfulfilled and exposed, and his ego injured. In revenge for Diemut's rejection of love and sexuality, Kunrad curses the town of "Philistines" and casts a spell, extinguishing all the fires (a thinly veiled metaphor for sexuality) until Diemut succumbs to him sexually.[48] As can be seen with their anguish when Kunrad extinguishes the flames, the town suffers because of Diemut's prudery – hence the name of the opera, *Feuersnot* (fire deprivation or fire famine). At the end of the opera a submissive Diemut realizes her mistake and succumbs to Kunrad sexually, saving the town. The "lovers" disappear into her bedroom to consummate their love – a racy ending for 1902!

Feuersnot, called a *Singgedicht*, literally a poem to be sung, was intended as a critical satire against Munich's bourgeois attitudes, as well as retaliation for their rejection of the "master" Wagner, and for their harsh reception of *Guntram*, Strauss's first opera.[49] In true

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[48] The term "*Feuersnot*" (fire famine or fire famine) seems to be a metaphor for sexuality. At **57**, Diemut's friends Elsbeth, Wigelis, and Margret sing of the "herz heißer Subendbrand." Immediately before kissing Diemut, Kunrad sings of being "consumed by fire" ("*verbrannt*") (**65**) while he gazes at her. Later when he sings of his love, it is always using words such as "burning" and "fire," and during the seduction scene, the stage directions call for sparks and flames to be visible behind the town gate. These associations between fire and sexual desire were prevalent in the opera's cultural context. For example, they also occur in Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, as well as in *fin-de-siècle* writings, such as in Kraus's *Der Fackel*. For instance, in Act II of Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, the count sings of the "*heiß Liebe*," while in the concluding moments of the opera, Fritz also makes the connection between the sound, love, and fire. "Die Harfe erklingt mir – als klängen die Sphären – …Und dort auf den Bergen – dort auf den Bergen flammen Feuer hoch auf!" (*Der ferne Klang*, Act III, scene 2: 1 before **104** – 2 before **106**). This connection between heat and erotic passion dates back to Galen, as pointed out by Kramer in "Musical Form and *fin-de-siècle* Sexuality," in *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 136-37, and Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender for the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 25-62.

[49] Strauss later recalls: "the idea of writing, with personal motives, a little intermezzo against the theater. To wreak some vengeance on my dear little native town where I, little Richard the third […] had just like the great Richard the first forty years before, had such unpleasant experiences." Strauss, *Recollections and Reflections*, 148. Regarding the music, several Wagnerian musical references appear in the opera, such as the "*unendlich Melodie*" when Kunrad's master is sung about by Kofel, and the "*Heia*" shouts by

"*Überbrettl*" style, the opera is a political commentary and satire mocking the city.[50] While the young magician Kunrad is a stand-in for Strauss, the older, revered master, misunderstood by the townsfolk, represents Wagner.[51]

Feuersnot was intended as a celebration of sexuality. Diemut and the townspeople are punished for Diemut's morality and rejection of bodily lust. Strauss's operatic representations of the sexual woman are well known; he infamously pathologized female sexuality in *Salome* and *Elektra* (as discussed in Chapter 3), while he dealt with female sexuality in a more subtle and sympathetic way in *Der Rosenkavalier* (as will be discussed in Chapter 6). Following his failed 1893 opera *Guntram*, Strauss clearly wanted to write about sexual matters, considering libretti by various playwrights (including Wedekind, who proposed a ballet entitled *Die Flöhe* (*The Fleas*) about a flea that was caught up a young girl's skirt) until he settled on Ernst von Wolzogen, whom he met in Berlin in 1901.[52] Wolzogen (1855–1934), best known today for his *Überbrettl* theater in Berlin, is characterized by Boyden as "an emotive, unpredictable satirist in the mould of Hauptmann, a dedicated critic of Wilhelmine stupidity and complacency and, like Strauss, one

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the maidens, which are reminiscent of the Rhinemaiden's shouts and voice exchanges and interactions from the beginning of *Das Rheingold.* Most notable is the monologue in which Kunrad sings about his master, "Reichart der Meister," a direct reference to Richard Wagner, during which the Valhalla motive is heard along with other vague Wagner motivic and harmonic references. For a discussion of the Wagnerian references in Kunrad's monologue, see Charles Osbourne, *The Complete Operas of Richard Strauss* (London: O'Mara, 1988), 34. There are also a number of other similarities between Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* and *Feuersnot*, including between Walther and Kunrad. See Stephan Kohler, "'Ein Operntext ist keine Kinderfibel': Zur Geschichte des 'Feuersnot'-Librettos," in *Richard Strauss: Feuersnot*, ed. Klaus Schultz and Stephan Kohler (Munich: Bayerische Staatsoper, 1980), 30-34.

[50] *Till Eulenspiegel* (1898) also mocks the "backward" townspeople of Munich, and this is played out in the musical conflict in the work. Gilliam, "Strauss and the sexual body," 270-72.

[51] Kunrad's monologue at **178** directly presents Strauss as Kunrad and as Wagner's heir, even weaving Strauss's and Wagner's names into the text (**185**). As Del Mar notes, this autobiographical insertion was characteristic of Strauss's compositional output at that time, also seen in the tone poems *Symphonia Domestica* (1902–1903) and *Ein Heldenleben* (1898). Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I: 204.

[52] Matthew Boyden, *Richard Strauss* (Boston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 147. Concerning Strauss's desire to find a libretto that dealt with sexuality see: Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I, 200; Gilliam, "Strauss and the sexual body," 274.

of Munich's most passionate antagonists."[53] Wolzogen disliked the increasing conservativism embodied by the Kaiser and German bourgeoisie, particularly in Munich, and Strauss's suggestion of the Flemish story *Das erloschene Feuer zu Audenaerde (The Extinguished Fire of Audenaerde)*, which appeared in the 1843 German collection *Sagas of the Netherlands*, resonated with him. Together Wolzogen and Strauss conceptualized the opera as a somewhat vengeful satire in Bavarian dialect of conservative Munich and its citizens.[54] In a letter to Strauss, Wolzogen commented on the message of the opera:

> I now have the following idea: *Feuersnot* in one act – setting old Munich in a legendary Renaissance period. The young romantic hero is himself a magician; the great old magician, his teacher, whom the worthy citizens of Munich once threw out, does not appear. At the end, in order to free the town from its dearth of fire, the town council and citizens beg the heartless girl to offer her maidenhood to the young magician, which she does. When love is combined with the magic of genius, then even the worst philistine must see the light…![55]

Indeed, the Munich bourgeoisie, with their repressive and restrictive bourgeois mores, are mocked for not grasping the important role of sexuality for society and the arts. In his reminiscences, Wolzogen recalled the moral message of the opera and how this message was misunderstood: "All creative power springs from sensuousness […] The Philistines naturally were morally upset as usual but even the professional art *cognoscenti* remained without any idea

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[53] Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 147. Ernst Wolzogen, half brother of Wagnerite Hans Wolzogen, ran the influential *Überbrettl* in Berlin. *Ibid.*, 148. For a discussion of Wolzogen, Munich, and the *Überbrettl*, see Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss before *Salome*: The Early Operas and Unfinished Stage Works," in *The Richard Strauss Companion*, ed. Mark-Daniel Schmid (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003), 248-49.

[54] By March 1899, Wolzogen sent Strauss alterations to the story, and by September 1900, he had sent Strauss a draft of the libretto. Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss before *Salome*," 247-50.

[55] Letter from Wolzogen to Strauss March 23, 1899. Translation from Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 148-49. Original in Franz Trenner, 'Richard Strauss und Ernst von Wolzogen," in *Richard Strauss Jahrbuch 1954*, ed. Willi Schuh (Bonn: Boosey and Hawkes, 1953), 111-12.

[…] ‘All warmth springs from woman, All light stems from love…’”[56] Wolzogen rejected Schopenhauer’s ascetic understanding of the will, and aligned himself with Nietzsche’s notion of redemption by embracing rather than denying the will and physical sexuality.[57] Gilliam notes that Strauss’s own writings back in 1893 also dealt with female sexuality and sexual enjoyment in a modern Nietzschean manner. Strauss wrote: “That smile – I have never seen such [an] expression of the true sensation of happiness! It is not the way to redemption of the Will to be sought here (in the condition of the receiving woman)! [...] Affirmation of the will must properly be called affirmation of the body.”[58] With its “reevalutation” of the body and lust, the opera is certtainly Nietzschean – Strauss even described himself as a “naughty Nietzschean” when encouraging Cosima to see *Feuersnot*. Kunrad’s rejection of traditional morality, conveyed in his description of himself as “too good for virtue” in his monologue, is, as Kristiansen points out, reminiscent of Nietzsche’s critique of “herd morality.”[59] Despite the opera’s Wagnerian

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[56] Wolzogen in his autobiography, Ernst von Wolzogen: *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte* (Braunschweig: Georg Westermann, 1922), 146-47. Cited and translated in Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I, 227. For a discussion of Wolzogen’s other writings and sexuality – *Das dritte Geschlecht* (1899); *Die arme Sünderin* (1901); *Geschichten von Lieben süßen Mädeln* (1898) – see Kristiansen, “Strauss’s First Librettist: Ernst von Wolzogen Beyond Überbrettl,” *Richard Strauss-Blätter* 59 (June 2008): 79-82, 106-9.

[57] As Gilliam notes, Wolzogen believed in “redemption not from the love of a pure woman, rather from the libidinal flames of physical passion.” Bryan Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 76-77. Although Wolzogen’s comments here are indicative of a progressive view of sexuality, Kristiansen points out that Wolzogen’s own stories are often quite conservative and prudish, which “points to Strauss as the source of the opera’s sexual directness.” Kristiansen, “Strauss’s Road to Operatic Success: *Guntram, Feuersnot*, and *Salome*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, ed. Charles Youmans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 112.

[58] From Strauss’s diary. Published in Willi Schuh’s *Richard Strauss: A Chronicle of the Early Years*. Cited and discussed in Gilliam, “Strauss and the sexual body,” 273. Charles Youmans also noted the similarity between this diary entry and marked passages in Strauss’s copy of Nietzsche’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Charles Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2005), 98.

[59] Kristiansen, “Strauss’s Road to Operatic Success,” 111. Wolzogen was also attracted to Nietzsche’s elevation of the *Übermensch* and criticism of the *Sklavenmoral* (slave morality) of conformity. Kristiansen, “Richard Strauss before *Salome*,” 251-52.

influence, the opera treats themes of love and redemption in a decidedly Nietzschean manner with its focus on *physicality* and sexuality as redemptive.[60]

It takes the young magician, Kunrad (i.e.: Strauss), to show Diemut and the townspeople their mistake. Yet it is not just sexuality, but bourgeois respectability and bourgeois attitudes toward female sexuality that are paramount to the opera. Diemut is mortified by the kiss because Kunrad's brash sexual act does not follow the rules of courtship, offends her petit-bourgeois sensibility, and potentially affects her respectability. Although some of the townsfolk berate Kunrad because of the kiss, Diemut is encouraged by others to return Kunrad's affection. At the end of the opera, the town fires are relit, love and sexuality are celebrated, and the town rejoices while Kunrad and Diemut are making love in Diemut's room.[61] Strauss and Wolzogen even tamed some of the vulgarity of the original plot for their opera, perhaps due to foreseen problems with censorship. In the original Flemish story, a wizard curses the town and the curse is withdrawn:

> [O]nly if they produce the girl responsible for the boy's humiliation, stripped her of her clothes and forced her to her hands and knees on a table in the middle of the market square […] as they forced the girl to her knees a huge flame shot from her rear end. One by one, each of the townsfolk had to use this source to light their candles. It took many hours and the girl endured much laughter before the spell was lifted.[62]

What Strauss and Wolzogen presented was "redemption through sex" rather than echoing the

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[60] Of course, this return to sexuality and the body is not particularly positive for women, as revealed later in this chapter.

[61] The concluding *Liebesszene* can be heard as a musical description of their love making, much like the Overture to *Der Rosenkavalier* arguably captures Octavian and the Marschallin's sexual escapades.

[62] Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 148. There are several other changes to the story, which are of lesser concern here: in the original story, a young boy is rejected by a young girl he has longed after for a long time, and after fleeing the town in humiliation, he meets a wizard in the woods. The wizard helps the boy exact revenge on the town by extinguishing the fire. In the opera, Kunrad himself casts the spell to put out the fires.

Wagnerian "redemption through love."[63]

***Musical Characterizations in* Feuersnot**

As Christopher Morris has demonstrated, despite the opera's visually conservative presentation – from the kitschy traditional costumes to the overemphasized medieval quality of the set design evident in the images referenced below – the sexuality in *Feuersnot* is conveyed through the orchestral music. The orchestra, particularly in the orchestral interludes and the concluding moments, depicts the concealed sexual encounters that occur behind the curtains. "What is denied to the eyes is granted to the ears…[m]usic, it seems, was deemed capable of testing the very limits of theatrical representativity, of revealing what the stage dare not reveal."[64] With the music performing the crucial role of illustrating what is unsaid in the libretto and left out of the stage directions, in *Feuersnot* the musical presentation of Diemut and the other women becomes a particularly significant mode of articulating both their identity and their respectability. As usual, Strauss establishes clear thematic and harmonic material for the characters. In a tongue-in-cheek manner, Strauss even set specific themes to depict the *Spießbürger* (petit-bourgeois).[65] When Diemut is first introduced in Act I (4 after **11**), she is depicted as a "pure" innocent young woman in the text and through the music. She sings of

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[63] See Gilliam, "Strauss and the sexual body," 273. As Kristiansen notes, Strauss's conception of love here is physical rather than metaphysical. Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss before *Salome*," 252.

[64] As Morris also writes: "As direct substitutions for the staging of a sexual encounter, these orchestral interludes offer a vivid illustration of the hermeneutic codes embodied in the musical signification of sex and sexuality in the context of *fin-de-siècle* culture." Morris is particularly concerned with the orchestral interludes of the opera and how they contribute to meaning in the opera. Christopher Morris, "What the Conductor Saw," in *Reading Opera between the Lines: Orchestra Interludes and Cultural Meaning from Wagner to Berg* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 38.

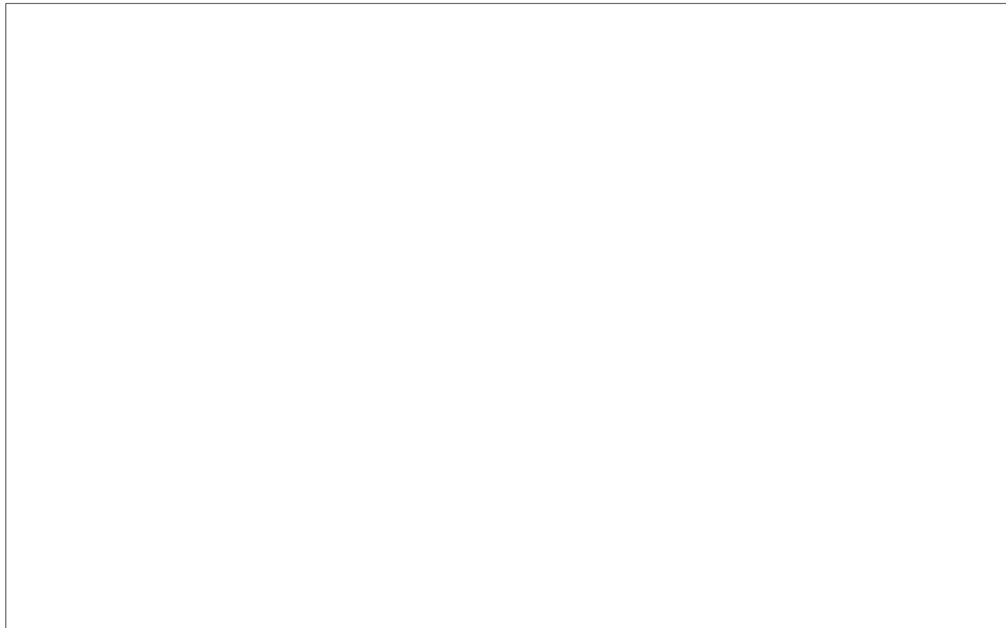
[65] Strauss relied on a "very abundant and original thematic characterization of a variety of Munich bourgeoisie" ("einer sehr reichlichen und originellen eigenthematischen Charakterisierung der verschiedenen Münchner Spießbürger verwendet.") Ziegler, *Richard Strauss in seinen dramatischen Dichtungen*, 43.

"Süsse Amarellen" (sweet fruit/cherries) to a simple, diatonic folk-like melody, with regular phrase structures (with a two bar antecedent and two bar consequent, and then another two bar antecedent and extended consequent phrase), a style uncharacteristic of Strauss's operatic writing. Her folksong is lyrical and *sostenuto*, providing a calming contrast to the immediately preceding hectic musical material, which characterized the townsfolk. Paradigmatic of the musical characterization of the "ideal," virtuous woman, such as Wagner's Elisabeth and Elsa, there is little chromaticism in either the vocal line or the harmonies – the theme both begins and ends in the key, while its melodic gestures are either stepwise or restricted to outlining tonic or dominant chords. Moreover, the harmonically and rhythmically stable melody in B♭ major is accompanied by a countermelody in the flute then cello and an ornamental line in the solo violin, a chamber-like setting with instruments that typically characterize "virtuous" women (Ex. 4.1).[66] Moreover, Diemut's costume is extremely reserved with its high collar, as evident in an image from a later Dresden production from 1921, and remains constant throughout the entire opera (Fig. 4.1 and Fig. 4.2).[67] Even her name, Diemut, seems to be a play on *Demut*, meekness. Immediately after singing, she is described by another woman as an "angel" (**12**).

[66] Recall Rieger, "Wagner's Influence on Gender Roles in Early Hollywood Film," 139-45.

[67] The images from this 1928 production were the earliest images from the Dresden productions that I could locate. The soprano Elisa Stünzner is Diemut.

Ex. 4.1: Strauss, *Feuersnot*: Diemut's Song (2 after **11** – 6 before **12**).



Diemut's flirtatious three friends are dramatically and musically portrayed differently than she is. They move "coquettishly" close to Kunrad ("*neckisch nahe vor ihn hin*") as the stage directions indicate, they actively seek husbands as they sing, and their music is far more playful, chromatic, and harmonically complex than Diemut's music. The trills and accompanying woodwind lines are passed from instrument to instrument, while the phrasings of the fast paced vocal lines are metrically at odds with the time signatures, creating rhythmic disruption and an atmosphere of wild excitement that differs from the folk-like music associated with Diemut. Moreover, their somewhat angular and broken vocal lines either skip about or shift harmonic centers (**38**). Later they sing of Kunrad's eyes ("*schwartzbraune Äuglein*"), while the chorus of girls in the town sings of their physical desires: "Create a sweetheart for me, so that I don't suffer

any misery during the long wintertime."[68]

Diemut's morality is best exemplified in her response when friends tease her about her desire for Kunrad and in her reaction to the kiss.[69] Throughout this entire passage (**52** – **59**), Diemut responds with anger to the teasing, which is reflected in the heightened agitation in her voice and accompanying music.

> Margret: Does your brain well up in heat and confusion?
> Elsbeth: Do you want to win the fine fellow?
> Diemut: All you three are trying to act up!
> May you fight yourselves for the fool,
> Who ran here by chance!
> Wigelis: If we were to lock him up in a small house,
> In the end would you find the key?
> Diemut: Do you want to make me angry? Leave me in peace!
> You take the house and the man in it!
> Elsbeth: Look how he fixates on you! (8 before **55** – **57**)

She now sings with a rapid and heavily articulated vocal line with large leaps, vocally resembling her friends, while interjections in the woodwinds and brass punctuate her anger. In the moments leading up to the kiss, Kunrad sings about "burning" (*verbrenne*) and springing through the flames, then kisses her to a trumpet fanfare (perhaps representing his "conquest" given its similarity to trumpet passages in *Ein Heldenleben*). This is followed by a strong harmonic dissonance over a raucous passage in the full orchestra (**66**). Some of the townspeople, including Diemut's three friends who ask if she "drank the potion of courtly love" ("*Diemut, trankst du den Minnetrunk?*"), find the situation humorous. Shame instantly envelops her and she covers her face with her hands ("*die Hände vor's Gesicht schlagend*," **71**). Because of her

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[68] "[S]chaffts mir ein lieb' Schatzel an, daß ich keinen Kummer leid', in der langen Winterszeit." (5 after **46**).

[69] In the moments leading up to the kiss, Kunrad "observes Diemut with growing delight" ("mit wachsendem Entzücken Diemut beobachtet hat"), while a lyrical passage in the high strings begins at **60**.

modesty, Diemut is morally outraged at Kunrad's cheekiness and audacity.[70] Moreover, she wants revenge (**73**).[71] Following this kiss, Diemut's shame and distress are captured in her immediate musical transformation: she now sings musical fragments that are not set in any key, but instead are marked by chromaticism and diminished seventh chords, while her vocal lines are no longer metrically regular. In an often-declamatory style, she enters on off-beats and abandons her earlier lyrical, four measure phrases (Ex. 4.2, **73** – 7 before **75**).[72] Commenting on the contrast in orchestral texture between Diemut and Kunrad, Morris writes that Kunrad's music is "characterized by full, thickly orchestrated textures [and] Diemut's by transparent chamber-like scoring."[73] Yet this could also describe the shift from the music associated with Diemut at the opening of the opera, to that which follows the kiss.

To avenge the attack on her honor, Diemut tricks Kunrad. She imitates his "Romantic" musical language and style, with its thick orchestral textures, chromaticism, with similar melodic contours, in order to seduce him and convince him to come to her (**106**) – it seems as though adopting another character's musical language to manipulate them is a common strategy, as seen in the previous chapter. For the seduction, the stable A♭ tonality of Diemut's *Mitsommersnacht* song that she used to seduce Kunrad is increasingly broken up with passing chromaticism and

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[70] There is also the issue about whether or not she enjoys the kiss, although this will not be dealt with here because it would be contingent upon staging decisions made in a particular performance.

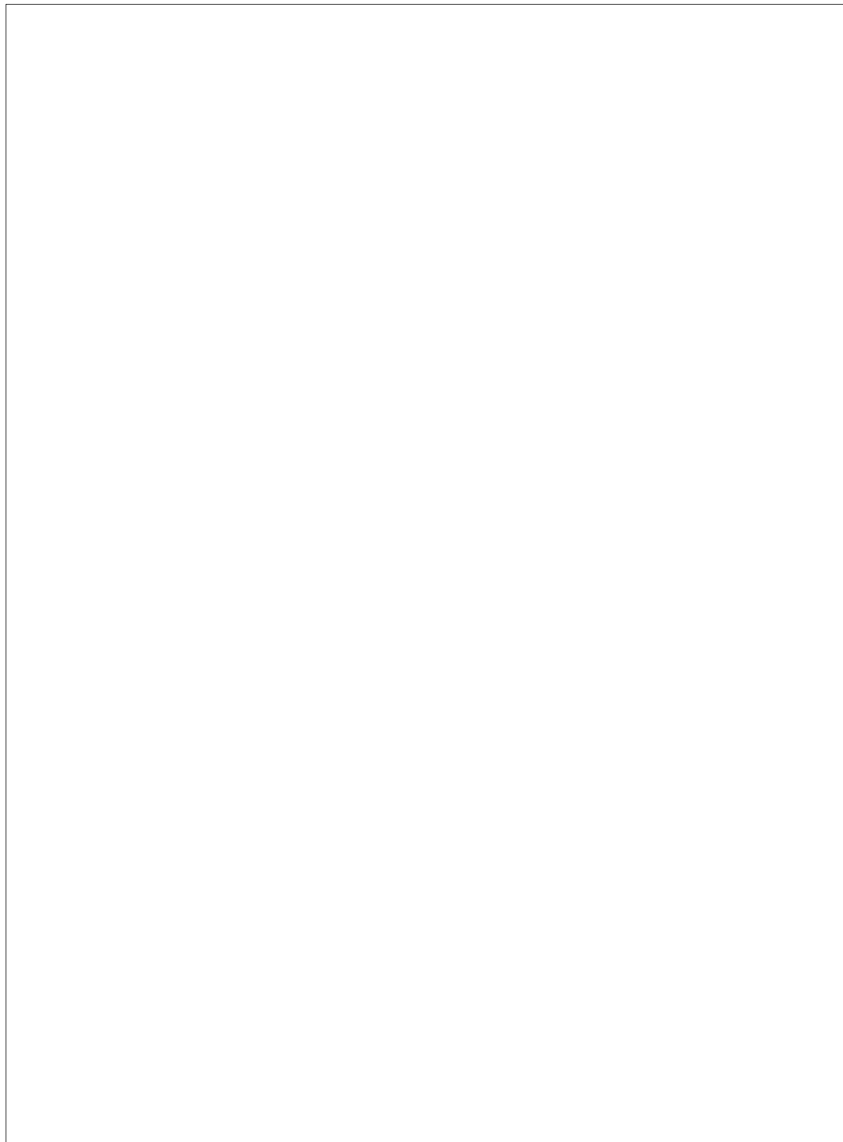
[71] "He courts like a cheeky man – oh! He should atone for it!" ("Er freit als wie ein Frecher – oh! Büßen soll er das!") Strauss certainly wanted the opera to be a parody, encouraging the conductor Schuch to [cited] "give due emphasis to the burlesque, impudent, brazen, parodistic element!" (Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 149-50). Yet, even if the opera was intended as a simple mockery, the critique of bourgeois morality is still present, not undermined by the humor.

[72] Kunrad also changes following the kiss. As Del Mar writes, "at this point the emotional level of the music deepens as the characterization of Kunrad takes on a warmer and richer color. His whole being has been transformed by this awareness of Diemut, and he expresses his new emotions in metaphysical terms full of allusions to the magical conquest of fire and the burning pain of glorious longing." Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I, 219.

[73] Morris, *Reading Opera between the Lines*, 52.

somewhat unstable harmonies (8-9 after **108**, and 4 **109**). This harmonic ambiguity and rhythmic uncertainty continues in the passage following **109**, until Kunrad responds to Diemut.

Ex. 4.2: Strauss, *Feuersnot*: Diemut's angry reaction (**73 –** 7 before **75**).



She later echoes Kunrad again, and he imitates her as well (**118** – **125**). Yet Diemut's "seduction" is a ruse. She refuses to pull Kunrad all the way up to her balcony, and Kunrad is left

hanging, stuck in a compromising position in a basket halfway up the building, unable to complete his ascent to Diemut.[74] (See Fig. 4.3)

In a monologue with a Nietzschean tone, a furious Kunrad chastises Diemut's rejection of love: "You who has disdained the blessing of love, remain benighted from fire famine" (**155**); "I showed her sense of virtue that I am too good for virtue, that I am not a soft, whining wretch – therefore I extinguished your fire and light" (9 after **199**).[75] Accompanied by the full orchestra, he criticizes Diemut's ignorance and asserts that, "all warmth springs from love, all light stems from love; only from hot-young-womanly love can fire be kindled once more."[76] The townspeople blame Diemut: "Oh Diemut, you foolish, naïve child! O Diemut, how dumb and blind you were! O Diemut, Diemut if I was in your position I would make it bright as daylight! Your godforsaken prudishness brought us this gloomy suffering!"[77] They implore her to turn toward love and physical affection and "delight," again a very Nietzschean affirmation of the sexual body, love, and the passions.[78] "Maiden, be kindly: love will requite"; "Diemut, bring back our sacred light! Diemut, listen to love's pure delight, Diemut, bring back our Beltane-fire!"; "Diemut your lover is waiting for you. Give to the Master holiest peace!" (**201** – **213**).

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[74] As Osbourne notes, toward its climax, the duet resembles a parody of *Tristan und Isolde*'s love duet, while Strauss called for the performers to perform with exaggerated "pathos." Osbourne, *The Complete Operas of Richard Strauss*, 33. Perhaps this exaggerated "pathos" is an indication of how Strauss wanted to convey Diemut's trickery.

[75] "Habt ihr verachtet Minnegebot, bleibt ihr umnachtet von Feuersnot." (**155**); "Da zeigt' ich ihrem Tugendsinn, daß für die Tugend zu gut bin, daß ich kein weicher, winselnder Wicht – darum verlöscht, ich Euch Feuer und Licht." (9 after **199** – **200**)

[76] "All' Wärme quillt vom Weibe, all' Licht von Liebe stammt – aus heiß-jung-fraulichem Leibe einzig das Feuer Euch neu entflammt!" (9 after **200 – 202**).

[77] "O Diemut, du thöricht einfältig Kind! O Diemut, wie wart du doch dumm und blind! O Diemut, Diemut, wär ich an deiner Stell', ich schüf' es taglichthell. Deine gottverlass'ne Sprödigkeit bracht' über uns finst're Leid." (**206** – **208**)

[78] Again this is clearly Nietzschean with the turn to the sexual body, love, and the passions, although she is ironically implored *by* the herd.

After Kunrad's speech and amidst the confusion and anger of the townsfolk, Diemut discreetly emerges onto the balcony and pulls Kunrad into her bedroom. While the crowd echoes Kunrad's declaration, "[a]ll warmth springs from woman, [a]ll light flows from light, only through womanly passion will the fire glow once more for us" (**213** – **214**), a light from the rekindled fire is gradually seen in Diemut's window (**219**). Diemut overcomes her stuffy bourgeois morality, and yields to Kunrad.

Liebesszene

The opera culminates in a love duet that is reminiscent of the one found in *Tristan und Isolde*, with its rhythmic and melodic gestures and the orchestra's important role. When Diemut succumbs to Kunrad and no longer resists his advances, they sing together and her vocal lines are drastically different than they were at the beginning of the opera (recall Ex. 4.1). She imitates his lyrical melodies, echoing him or singing with him, having abandoned the reserved musical style that characterized her earlier (Ex. 4.3). Even though her melody from the "Süsse Amarellen" returns, it is now in a different guise. After initially reappearing in a chamber like texture with similar instrumentation (**217**) that is interrupted by Kunrad's passionate thematic material, it reappears briefly with an added harmonium, harp, and glockenspiel (**219**), before finally resounding throughout the full orchestra (8 after **228**), a musical blossoming that is a stark contrast from the earlier delicate chamber setting. The opera concludes with a celebration of physical love: the lovers sing of *Minnegebot* (the commanding power of love) and of their love for one another, while the orchestra plays what Max Graf called a "symphonic love night orgy" in a review.[79]

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[79] "symphonische Liebesnachtorgie." Max Graf, *Neues Wiener Journal*, January 30, 1902: 2.

Ex. 4.3: Strauss, *Feuersnot*: Diemut and Kunrad's duet (1 after **230** – 7 after **231**).

Reception

Early reception mentioned the opera's celebration of the sexual. For example, Oscar Bie recognized how the opera strikes a new tone: "Now one can strike a new tone, deride the tragic, *praise lust* and sing cheerful songs about solstice."[80] Yet as Wolzogen wrote: "Not a soul had understood the hidden sense of this allegory. The Philistines naturally were morally upset as usual but even the professional art *cognoscenti* remained without any idea."[81] Indeed, the difficulty with staging *Feuersnot* provides a sense of the ways in which the opera's sexual content and attack on bourgeois norms were perceived by the censors and public. Strauss initially wanted to have the premiere at the *Wiener Hofoper*, but according to his correspondence with

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[80] "Denn jetzt konnte man neue Töne anschlagen, die Tragik verlachen, *die Lust loben* und heitere Lieder singen von der Sonnwende." (My emphasis). See Oscar Bie, *Die Moderne Musik und Richard Strauss*, ed. Richard Strauss (Leipzig: R. Linnemann, 1907), 65.

[81] Wolzogen in his autobiography: *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte*, 146-47. Translation from Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I, 227.

Mahler, the court censor was "making difficulties for the work." Mahler foresaw particular problems with the chorus that sang: "Your godforsaken prudishness has brought us this gloomy suffering."[82] The opera was finally premiered – with minor revisions – at the Dresden *Königsliches Opernhaus* on November 21st, 1901, with Schuch conducting and Annie Krull as Diemut. *Feuersnot* did not appear under Mahler's baton in Vienna until January 29, 1902 (see Appendix A).[83] Regarding the Dresden production, even Strauss noted that the "alterations which the General Management insist on making to the libretto are quite unacceptable…"[84] *Feuersnot* had further troubles in conservative Berlin, where the censor took considerable time to approve of the opera. Originally the opera was scheduled for March 1902, but because of censorship issues, the opera was not performed until October 28th, 1902, with Emmy Destinn as Diemut. The Kaiser and Kaiserin did not attend the opera, but the accusations of the opera's "obscenity" caused the work to be withdrawn after its seventh performance.[85]

Feuersnot met mixed reviews. Many of the Munich papers referenced the work's

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[82] Mahler wrote to Strauss in June/July 1901: "Concerning *Feuersnot*, the *censor* seems, *horrible dictu*, to be making difficulties, since the work has not yet been passed, so that I am not in a position to send the contracts to Fürstner. I fear that you may have to accept changes. At any rate the '*lirum larum*' will need changing, not only the words themselves but probably more widely!" Strauss and Mahler, *Correspondence*, 53-54. One of the changes Mahler noted was to the line of the chorus at the end of the opera: "Deine gottverlass'ne Sprödigkeit bracht' über uns das finstre Leid […] Da hilft nun kein Psallieren, noch auch die Klerisei: das Mädlein muß verlieren sein – Lirum larum lei." (Your godforsaken prudishness has brought this terrible grief upon us […] No singing of Psalms will help, or even the clergy; the girl must be the loser, Lirum larum lei.")

[83] *Feuersnot* was premiered with Annie Krull as Diemut and conducted by Ernst von Schuch at the *Dresden Hofoper*, beginning the operatic collaboration between Strauss and Schuch that lasted for a decade, until Schuch's death in 1914. For the Vienna production, Margarethe (Rita) Michalek sang Diemut, and Demuth sang Kunrad, while Wilhelm Wymetal was the stage director, and Brioschi and Löfler did the staging. *Feuersnot* was only performed nine times in 1902, but Mahler programmed the opera again in the 1903–1904 and 1904–1905 seasons. See *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM*; Strauss and Mahler, *Correspondence*, 66-75.

[84] Strauss cited in Krause, *Richard Strauss: The Man and his Work*, 291.

[85] The Empress forced *Feuersnot* to be removed from the Berlin *Hofoper*'s repertoire, while the Berlin Intendant, Count Bolko von Hochberg resigned because of the cancellation of the opera. See Strauss, *Recollections and Reflections*, 149.

enthusiastic reception at its 1905 Munich premiere, an ironic occurrence given the thinly veiled critique of the city.[86] Following the Dresden premiere, however, Carl Söhle critically commented upon the *Überbrettl* quality to the work, and that "paragons of virtue" (*Tugendbolden*) will feel somewhat "queasy" (*blümerant*).[87] While the audience hissed following the performance in Vienna, critics attacked the work for its modernity with its "nervousness, overrefinement, dissonance, virtuosity and individuality."[88] *Feuersnot* was not particularly well received in Vienna, as Graf stated: "The critics have unanimously rejected the work, it was salvo from right to left, conservatives and radicals."[89] Graf also called the story "a dirty anecdote" that "lacked not in erotic vividness, but in musical ideas,"[90] while Viennese Brahms supporter Kalbeck decried the opera, writing that it was "indecent in the extreme" and "at the height of bad taste."[91] Hirschfeld of the *Wiener Abendpost* declared that "[o]ne need not be thoroughly prudish to sense

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[86] See the following reviews: J.S. *Münchner Zeitung*, December 29, 1905; Arthur Hahn, "Zweipremieren im Hoftheater," *Münchner Zeitung*, December 27, 1905; "Hoftheater: Zweipremieren," *Bayerischer Courier*, December 27 and 28, 1905.

[87] Carl Söhne, *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 32 (1901), 665. From Franzpeter Messmer, ed. *Kritiken zu den Uraufführrungen der Bühnenwerke von Richard Strauss* (Pfaffenhofen: W. Ludwig, 1989), 22.

[88] Julie Dorn Morrison, "Mahler, Strauss, and *Feuersnot*: Emblems of Modernity at the Vienna Court Opera," *The Opera Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (1999): 377, 386.

[89] Max Graf, *Die Musik* (1902): 1023. Trans. and cited in Strauss and Mahler, *Correspondence*, 67. Of the critics who praised the work, many also felt that it had no lasting value.

[90] "Richard Strauss macht ein symphonische Musik dazu, der es nicht an erotischer Deutlichkeit, aber an musikalischen Ideen fehlt." Max Graf, "Feuersnoth," *Neues Wiener Journal*, January 30, 1902: 1. Referenced in J. Morrison, "Mahler, Strauss, and *Feuersnot*," 380. Graf also noted the music's "artificiality" and the "torturous harmonies, causing physical pain." "That which is tormenting and artificial outweighs every natural resolution of the harmony, every natural declamation, avoiding the natural melodiousness of the voices so much that one receives no pure pleasure." ("Im Ganzen überwiegt das Gequälte, Verkünstelte, das jener natürlichen Auflösung einer Harmonie, jeder natürlichen Deklamation, dem natürlichen Wohlklang der Stimmen sorgsam aus dem Wege geht, so sehr, dass man zu keinem reinen Vergnügen gelangt." Graf, "Feuersnoth," 2. Translation from J. Morrison, "Mahler, Strauss, and *Feuersnot*," 383.

[91] Max Kalbeck, "Hofoperntheater (Feuersnot)," *Neues Wiener Journal*, January 30, 1902. Translated and cited in Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 152.

this long-winded unraveling of the plot as being painful or even repugnant."[92] With its storyline and musical treatment of material, the opera was even compared to an operetta, a comparison that would also be made years later regarding *Der Rosenkavalier*: "From the lighted heights of the fires of midsummer rises Richard Strauss, who in general need of megalomania names himself the representative of Richard Wagner, and is taken by the hand of Wolzogen down to the lowlands of operetta, which, however, with all their frivolities, were always prepared with considerable less annoyance."[93] The Vienna *Volksoper* performance on January 26th, 1912, ten years later, also attracted criticism.[94] The music critic in the right-wing *Reichspost* (January 27th, 1912) noted that, just as *Salome* and *Elektra*, Feuersnot was concerned with perversity, and it dealt with an "immoral idea, the theme of sensual love, in that the young wizard, Kunrad, is drawn up in a basket to the window of the beloved for a rendezvous."[95] "[P]articularly toward

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[92] Robert Hirschfeld, "Feuersnoth, I: Die Dichtung," *Wiener Abendpost*, January 30, 1902: 2. Translation from J. Morrison, "Mahler, Strauss, and *Feuersnot*," 383. Morrison also references this and aptly points out how critics such as Hirschfeld and Graf felt that "modern" music was "equated with a denial of natural forms and a nervous hysteria approaching physical illness; in essence, it demanded the breakdown of normalcy." (*Ibid.*, 383) Moreover, many, including Graf and Kalbeck, were taken aback by Strauss's audacity at proclaiming himself the new Wagner. *Ibid.*, 381, 384.

[93] "Von den lichten Höhen der Sonnwendfeuer steigt Richard Strauss, der sich in der allgemeinen Noth des Größenwahns zum Statthalter Richard Wagners ernennt, an der Hand Wolzogens in die Niederungen der Operette herab, die aber mit allen Frivolitäten noch immer weiniger Ärgernis bereitete und im entscheidenden Momente auf die Mitwirkung der Stadtbevölkerung und eines Kinderchors verzichtete." Hirschfeld, "Feuersnoth, I: Dichtung," translated in J. Morrison, *ibid.*, 384.

[94] For this *Volksoper* production, Carl Leopold Hollitzer designed the stage decoration, Rainer Simons, responsible for the staging for *Salome*, worked on the staging, while Pitterroff conducted. Jeritza, who later sang the title role in the premier of *Salome* at the *Hofoper*, sang Diemut. See Trattner, *Richard Strauss in der Volksoper*, 72-76. Jeritza's voice for the performance was criticized for possessing a "peinlichen überscharfen Klang" (agonizingly overly sharp sound), *Neues Wiener Journal* (January 27, 1912). On the other hand, the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* (January 27, 1912) wrote that she was "tadellos in Gesang und Gebärde" ("impeccable in voice and gestures").

[95] "'Feuersnot' behandelt eine zum mindesten unsittliche Idee, das Motiv der sinnlichen Liebe, indem der junge Zauberer Kunrad in einem Korbe zum Fenster der Geliebten zu einem Stelldichein hinausgezogen wird." The same review writes before how one is now accustomed to "perversity" from Strauss: "Man hatte damals Strauss in seiner musikalischen Eigenart noch nicht so verstanden wie jetzt und man ist heute durch die 'Salome' und die 'Elektra' an die Perversität der von ihm so sehr geliebten dramatischen Stoffe schon mehr gewöhnt." G. v. B., "Volksoper (Feuersnot)," *Reichspost*, January 27, 1912.

the end, however, it is strong, inspiring, music that moves the nerves, which obliterates the impression of the immoral storyline."[96] Although many criticized the work's modernity, some critics and writers praised *Feuersnot* and its musical innovation. Karl Storck, who was critical of the flippant equation of love with sexual enjoyment and called the opera a "victim of *Überbrettl*," acknowledged that Strauss's music elevated the work, while critic Geissler thought that Strauss's music removed the text from Wolzogen's "*Überbrettl* milieu."[97] In his 1907 book analyzing Strauss's operas, Ziegler wrote that it was not simply a new guise covering an older opera, but rather the opera embodied a new and realistic dramatic life.[98] In another book about Strauss from the same year, Eugen Schmitz thought that *Feuersnot* captured the "modern spirit" of the *Überbrettl* with its satire and its "most blatant treatment of *sexual problems* that exist at the center of all life."[99]

Although some of these attacks reveal the discomfort with which challenges to bourgeois codes of morality were themselves taken (and possibly a hesitation at moving away from notions of redemption through chaste love), the praise also suggests the opera's participation in modernist critiques of bourgeois sexual morality. What is most interesting about Strauss's representation of the chaste Diemut versus the sexual Diemut is the music: Strauss characterizes sexuality in a much more interesting manner than how he musically presents the prudish

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[96] "die besonders gegen das Ende zu ergreifende, begeisternde, stark an die Nerven rührende Musik jedoch ist es, welche den unmoralischen Eindruck der Handlung verwischt und den Zuhörer eben nur es, auf das musikalische Gebiet hinlenkt." *Ibid.*

[97] Karl Storck, "Richard Strauss: 'Feuersnot' Ein Opfer der Überbrettl," *Der Tümer* 5, no. 4 (1903): 508; F. A. Geissler, "Kritik: Dresden (Feuersnot)," *Die Musik* 8, no. 9 (1909): 183.

[98] Ziegler, *Richard Strauss in seinen dramatischen Dichtungen*, 42. Josef Scheu's review was also positive: J.S. "Feuersnoth," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, January 30, 1902: 1-2.

[99] "modernen Geistes" … "ungeniertesten Behandlung des im Mittelpunkt alles Lebens stehenden *sexuellen Problems*." Eugen Schmitz, *Richard Strauss als Musikdramatiker: Eine ästhetisch-kritische Studie* (Munich: Der. Heinrich Lewy, 1907), 35.

Diemut.[100] Yet, as Morris notes, "[t]he only active libido is Kunrad's, flowing in a narcissistic circle."[101] Despite the work's "modernity," Diemut's musical identity seems to largely disappear over the course of the opera and is replaced by music that is closely associated with Kunrad, raising questions about female authorship, agency, and subjectivity that I examine in the following chapter.

Section III: *Schreker's* Der ferne Klang

I am (unfortunately) an erotomaniac and seem pernicious to the German public (the erotic is apparently my innermost invention despite *Figaro*, *Don Juan*, *Carmen*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan*, *Walküre*, *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Rosenkavalier*, etc.)
– Franz Schreker, "Mein Charakterbild"[102]

Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* (1912) also addresses themes of sexuality and female respectability. The opera opens with Fritz bidding farewell to his fiancée, Grete. Fritz wants to pursue "the distant sound," "*der ferne Klang*," that beckons him and pursue his ambitions as a composer, even if it means leaving Grete temporarily. After he departs, Grete is gambled away by her drunken father. She flees the village in order to escape her situation and to find Fritz. Lost and alone in a forest clearing, she experiences a dream-like sequence and meets a strange older

[100] This difference is reminiscent of the difference between Hans Sachs's song versus Walther von Stolzing's song in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*. While Sachs's songs are dominated by simple 4 measure phrases, etc., Walther von Stolzing's song is an endless melody, overflowing the bar lines as well as surpassing the harmonic and melodic simplicity of his opponent's music. Although Stolzing's song breaks the rules of the competition, everyone is swayed by his artistry and expressivity.

[101] Morris, *Reading Opera between the Lines*, 61.

[102] "Ich bin (leider) Erotomane und wirke verderblich auf das deutsche Publikum (die Erotik ist augenscheinlich meine ureigenste Erfindung trotz *Figaro*, *Don Juan*, *Carmen*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan*, *Walküre*, *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Rosenkavalier*, usf.)." This was Schreker's sarcastic response in 1921 to public reactions toward the sexual content of his music. Franz Schreker, "Mein Charakterbild," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 3, no. 7 (April 1921): 128.

woman, a procuress, who leads her away to a new life.[103] In Act II, we again encounter Grete, now a popular courtesan at *La casa di maschere*, where the patrons, the Count and the Chevalier, are having a song competition to win her.[104] When Fritz arrives, drawn to the brothel island by the "distant sound," he rejoices when he sees Grete. But in his joy, he is blind to the gaudy surroundings of the brothel. He rejects and abandons her when he realizes that Grete, now "Greta," has fallen to working as a courtesan. In the opening of Act III, which is set five years later at a bar next to a theater, we again encounter Grete, who has now plunged to a low-class city prostitute, or streetwalker, known as "Tini." She has just left the premiere of Fritz's autobiographical opera, *Die Harfe* (*The Harp*), and when she learns of its failure, she is overwhelmed with emotion. In the final half of the act, Fritz is suffering from the failure of his opera and dying. An acquaintance from her hometown, Dr. Vigelius, takes Grete to Fritz's deathbed, and Fritz is inspired to rewrite the final act of the opera. Yet he dies in her arms, just as he finally realizes that the distant sound, resounding from the orchestra, is actually tied to Grete.

The opera was premiered in Frankfurt on August 18th, 1912 under Ludwig Rottenberg, receiving twenty-five curtain calls. Soprano Lisbeth Sellin, known for her performances in French and Italian opera as Mélisande, Ariadne (in Dukas's *Ariadne et Barbe-bleue)*, and Cio-Cio San, created the first Grete, while Karl Gentner was Fritz.[105] Although the opera ironically

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[103] Kienzle has noted the similarity between Grete's dream sequence and that of *Erwartung*'s Woman; both works present a woman in a forest, searching for her lover, and both women experience moments of psychological anguish. Ulrike Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum: Franz Schrekers Oper "Der ferne Klang" und Wiener Moderne* (Schliengen, Germany: Argus, 1998), 25-27.

[104] Again, as in Schnitzler's play, *Reigen*, the nobility and aristocracy are depicted as engaging with prostitutes, while in *Liebelei* well-to-do members of the social elite treat women as their playthings.

[105] Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878–1934: A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 34; Hans W. Heinscheimer, "Schreker Centennial," *Musical Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (1978): 244. The Intendant was Emil Claar, the stage director was Christian Krähmer, and the stage designer was Alfred Roller. Lisbeth Sellin sang the German premiere of Debussy's Mélisande and

did not receive a Viennese performance until much later in the twentieth century, it was performed multiple times in Frankfurt alone, and appeared on the German stage numerous times in the years following, notably in Munich (1914), Hamburg (1914), Dresden (1917), and Berlin (1925).

Franz Schreker was, as Christopher Hailey notes, "the most frequently performed opera composer of his generation."[106] Yet, as Jens Malte Fischer has observed, through the middle of the twentieth century Schreker's works were largely absent from the operatic world, and his operas even described as late as 1978 as possessing "*krankhafter Erotik*" (pathological eroticism).[107] Schreker's comment in the epigraph above is a response to the many early critics who condemned the sensuality and eroticism of his operas, including his popular *Der ferne Klang*, in terms of their narratives as well as their musical sonorities. The popular opera was given much critical attention, and both positive and negative reactions drew attention to *Der ferne Klang*'s "*sinnvollendes*" (sensibility) quality or its "*Gefühl*" (feelings).[108] Many even commented on how eroticism was infused in the musical language and sound of the opera.[109]

Dukas's Ariadne, as well in the Frankfurt premiere of *Madame Butterfly*. K. J. Kutsch, Leo Riemens, and Hansjörg Rost, *Großes Sängerlexikon*, 3rd ed. (Bern and Munich: K.G. Saur, 1987), 3205.

[106] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, i.

[107] Fischer citing Rudolf Kloiber's 1978 *Handbuch der Oper*. Jens Malte Fischer, "Franz Schreker – Autor und Komponist: Zur Neubewertung eines einst Erfolgreichen," in *Oper und Operntext*, ed. Jens Malte Fischer. Reihe Siegen: Beiträge zur Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft 60 (Heidelberg, Germany: C. Winter: 1985), 179-80. For a more detailed discussion of Schreker reception, including that of *Der ferne Klang*, see: Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 36-53, 304-25. For a discussion of Adorno's reception of Schreker and *Der ferne Klang*'s see: Sherry D. Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity* (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003), 26-81; Sherry D. Lee, "A Minstrel in a World without Minstrels: Adorno and the Case of Schreker," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 3 (2005): 637-94; and Adrian Daub, "Adorno's Schreker: Charting the Self-Dissolution of the Distant Sound," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 2006): 247-71.

[108] For a detailed discussion of *Der ferne Klang*'s reception in general, see Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 34-53.

[109] This is often related to the *Klang*, another common theme for writers discussing the opera. For a discussion of the eroticism of the *Klang* as understood by Schreker's contemporaries, and in particular by Bekker, see Elizabeth Aileen Carmen Morrison, *The Dead/ly Feminine: Violence and Eroticism in Three*

Bekker praised the opera and its eroticism in *Klang und Eros* (1922),[110] while Graf later remarked that Act II of the opera was "filled with the orgies of a brothel."[111] In a generally positive 1913 review of *Der ferne Klang*, critic August Spanuth stated that Schreker, much like other "modern writers," "goes at the sexual problem with plebian abandon, stomps around with wild bravura in the morass of prostitution until he has presented his 'heroine' to us as a streetwalker of the lowest kind. With this he gets himself into situations that others would find psychologically and technically impossible to compose."[112] Richard Specht described Schreker's operas as possessing "red-hot poetic and musical intensity," metaphors that appear within the libretto of *Der ferne Klang* itself,[113] while Carl Heinzen's 1922 article about "Sexualbeiträge" (sexual contributions) in Schreker's music, noted that Schreker seeks to disprove any accusations of "*Unsittlichkeit*" (immorality).[114]

The opera's presentation of sexuality, however, also elicited a series of negative responses. In a 1921 discussion about *Der Schatzgräber* (1918), right-wing critic Heuss called Schreker's operas "*sexuellen Kitschopern*," writing that they included "prostitutes, murderesses,

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Expressionist Operas (PhD diss., McGill University, 2001), 444-74. See also, Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 178-181.

[110] Paul Bekker, *Klang und Eros* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1922), see especially 336-53; Bekker also examined the erotic in Schreker's music in: Paul Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper* (Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler, 1919).

[111] Max Graf, *Modern Music: Composers and Music of our Time*, trans. Beatrice R. Maier (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1946), 125.

[112] August Spanuth, "Schreker-liches Neuland," *Signale für die musikalische Welt* 71, no. 7 (1913): 241. Translation from Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 38.

[113] Richard Specht, "*Der ferne Klang*," Der Merker 3, no. 18 (1912): 685. Translated in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 33. Again this rhetoric that links "red-hot" and sexuality is connected with *Feuersnot*, and it seems to be a common trope in *fin-de-siècle* discourses. Graf also wrote that Schreker's music "possesses the same artful colored luster, the same decorative glamour, the same erotic heat" as the artwork of Klimt. Graf, *Modern Music*, 125.

[114] Carl Heinzen, "Ein Beitrag zur Sexualpathologie der Oper (Mit Beziehung auf Franz Schrekers Schatzgräber)," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 4, no. 7 (1922): 108-11.

perversely sensual invalids, and marked women (*Gezeichnete*) of all kinds."[115] By the 1930s, criticism deriding Schreker's operas became even more pointed; his operas were now "degenerate" and "perverse." In the accompanying book to the 1938 *Entartete Musik* exhibition in Düsseldorf, Hans Severus Ziegler compared Schreker to a famous sexologist, writing that he was the "Magnus Hirschfeld of opera composers. There was no sexual-pathological aberration that he would not have set to music."[116] Yet, even the strong reactions and attention given to the sensual/sexual in the reviews from the 1910s reveal the boldness and progressiveness of Schreker's operatic presentation of female sexuality, particularly regarding his sympathetic portrayal of Grete, the "fallen woman." Schreker's family friend and former patron Princess von Windischgrätz, his mother's godmother, even refused to let Schreker enter her salon after reading the libretto.[117]

Schreker began work on *Der ferne Klang* around 1903, finished the score by the summer of 1910, after a series of interruptions, and completed the finishing touches in September 1910 while working on his next opera, *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin*.[118] With Schreker as librettist, the entire work, from the story, text, and stage directions to the musical setting all encapsulate Schreker's attitudes regarding class, gender, sexual desire (*Triebe*), and bourgeois

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[115] Alfred Heuss, "Über Franz Schreker's Oper 'Der Schatzgräber': Seine Geschäftspraxis, die Schreker-Presse, und Anderes," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 88, no. 22 (1921): 567-68. Passage cited and translated in Christopher Hailey, "At the Border," in *Musik des Aufbruchs: Franz Schreker. Grenzgänge – Grenzklänge*, ed. Michael Hass and Christopher Hailey (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2004), 129. According to Hailey, Schreker's operatic characters "aroused indignation amongst those obsessed with racial purity and health." *Ibid.*, 129.

[116] Cited and translated in Hailey, *Franz Schreker,* 326. Original: Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik – Eine Abrechnung* (Düsserldorf: Der Völkische Verlag, 1938), 133. Magnus Hirschfeld was one of Germany's preeminent sexologists in the early twentieth century. He created the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* in 1919 Berlin (Institute for Sexual Science), whose collection was destroyed by the Nazis at the 1933 *Opernplatz* book burning.

[117] Julius Kapp, *Franz Schreker: Der Mann und sein Werk* (Munich: Dreimasken Verlag, 1921), 18.

[118] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 21, 32. Differing views exist about when Schreker began the work, with Gösta Neuwirth dating its conception a couple years earlier.

morality.[119] His *Der ferne Klang* starkly presents "high" and "low" class worlds, and critically depicts the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality in a manner reminiscent of the Naturalist plays of Strindberg, Hauptmann, and Ibsen.[120] Schreker later commented in an essay about the important relationship between art and social issues: "The future of German musical art (I speak about my own activity and artistic circle) is intimately linked with political and economic conditions."[121]

In this section, I examine Schreker's critique of bourgeois morality and how he musically characterizes Grete's "descent" as "fallen woman." *Der ferne Klang* is, as Hailey describes it, "a thinly veiled portrait of Vienna."[122] Despite its Frankfurt premiere and the fact that it was not performed in Vienna until the 1990s – apart from the Act III interlude as a "*Nachstück*" in 1909

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[119] For a discussion of Schreker's attitudes regarding "Triebe" and "Geschlecht" within a Freudian *fin-de-siècle* context, see Ulrike Kienzle, "'Nuda Veritas:' Zur Psychologie der Frau bei Franz Schreker," in *Frauengestalten in der Oper des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts (Internationales Franz Schmidt- Symposium, Wien 26-28 April, 2001)*, ed. Carmen Ottner (Vienna and Munich: Döblinger, 2003), 212. See also *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, in which Kienzle does excellent work situating the opera within its cultural and psychological context, as well as examining the relationship between the psychological and musical presentations of the characters. Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*. For an examination of Grete's psychological portrayal in relation to the genesis of the opera, see also: Gösta Neuwirth, "Greta-Grete," in *Franz Schreker: Der ferne Klang*, ed. Ralf Waldenschmidt (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 2001), 86-96.

[120] See Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 33. Frisch also notes that the opera bears much resemblance to Naturalist plays of the era, such as those by Hauptman and Ibsen. Indeed, moments such as the scenes in Act I between Grete and her family seem to be an operatic interpretation of German Naturalism, with the harshly spoken text accompanied by a dark ominous low angular bass movement. Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 77-80.

[121] "Die Zukunft der deutschen musikalischen Kunst (ich spreche von meinem eigenen Wirkungs- und Schaffenskreis aus) ist innig verknüpft mit den politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnissen." In the essay "Zukunft der deutschen musikalischen Kunst" ("The Future of German Musical Art") dated January 12th, 1923. Held in the Fonds Schreker (F3 Schreker 69), at *ÖNB-Mus.* Cited in Christopher Hailey, "Franz Schreker in Seinen Schriften," *Österreichische Musik-Zeitung* 33, no. 3 (1978): 122.

[122] "But *Der ferne Klang*, a thinly veiled portrait of Vienna, went much further [than *Louise*] in depicting selected and not so especially flattering scenes of contemporary life: a shabby lower-middle-class home in a colorless provincial suburb, the sultry atmosphere of an elegant bordello, the unsavory clientele of a metropolitan café. It was a combination of settings both disturbing and intriguing, inhabited by characters of a uniquely modern stamp." Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 38.

– the opera very much belongs to Schreker's *fin-de-siècle* Viennese context.[123] The popular opera received numerous performances across Germany, while some Viennese would likely have been familiar with it through the published vocal score, the libretto, and the press surrounding it. Thus I consider the opera amidst its intellectual backdrop of Vienna alongside broader reactions to it across Germany. Indeed, *Der ferne Klang* speaks to many of the themes discussed by Schreker's contemporaries, such as Schnitzler, Kraus, Freud, and Weininger.[124] For instance, Kienzle notes that the opera illustrates how "hindered" or "misdirected" female sexuality leads to psychic "deformation," connecting Grete's presentation to Breuer and Freud's *Studien über Hysterie* (1895).[125] Moreover, Freud's essay "'Civilized' Sexuality Morality and Modern Nervousness" (1908), which will be discussed in greater detail later in the dissertation, critically addressed the negative effects that "civilized" bourgeois mores could have on individuals – a

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[123] It was circumstance that resulted in the opera premiering elsewhere than Vienna: Frankfurt was simply the first contract that Schreker could obtain following the cancelation of the Viennese production and his failed attempt in Budapest. For a discussion of Schreker's difficulties in securing a performance of the opera, see Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 31-33.

[124] Schreker was very much embedded within the rich cultural and intellectual community of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, and he would have been exposed to the contemporary discourses and attitudes about women and their roles. For a discussion of Schreker's relationship to the literature of his era, see Chapter 5.

[125] Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 214. In *Das Trauma hinter den Traum*, along with situating the opera within its cultural context, Kienzle bases much of her argument and analysis of Grete upon Schreker's acquaintance with Freud's ideas. Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter den Traum*, see esp. 66-69. Kienzle also examines the degree to which the music reflects the characters' inner psyches, and particularly focuses on *Waldszene* (Act I, scene 7), where Grete is alone in the forest at the end of Act I. For Kienzle, the *Waldszene* is Grete's ecstatic experience and an exhibition of hysteria that results from sexual repression. Here not only is Kienzle's reading of Grete through a Freudian lens, but she also argues that a Freudian influence (and particular the influence of Freud and Breuer's *Studien über Hysterie*, 1895) is evident with how Schreker dramatically and musically represented Grete in this scene The wandering melodic fragments that appear in different instruments reflect Grete's tormented inner psyche, and "they document the mangled continuity and fragmented disunity of Grete's apprehending consciousness." Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 214-15. For further discussion of Schreker's vivid and innovative psychological depiction of the characters through the music as well as a discussion of the psychoanalytic context, see also Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, especially 358-59.

theory that resonates with Schreker's opera.[126]

Thematic and Stylistic Characterizations in **Der ferne Klang**

Schreker's work has been recognized for its stylistic diversity, vivid exploration of orchestral color, use of montage, and musical juxtaposition, and *Der ferne Klang* certainly exemplifies these musical characteristics. Identified with Impressionism, Symbolism, Naturalism, as well as the *Märchenopern* of German Romanticism, *Der ferne Klang*'s disruption and pluralistic mélange, or "multiplicity," is in fact characteristic of pre-1918 Viennese modernism and cosmopolitanism.[127] According to Kienzle, who has extensively classified the thematic material in *Der ferne Klang*, although Schreker relied on leitmotifs, albeit differently from Wagner, they are not the only way in which *Der ferne Klang* musically portrays the psychological aspects of the characters.[128] Schreker also relies on musical variety, harmonic color, and instrumental color to closely represent the characters' interactions, psychological states, and troubles.[129] While Leipzig critic Eugen Segnitz noted in 1913 that Schreker composed in "two languages," capturing both beauty and harsh reality,[130] an anonymous reviewer in the

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[126] Although it is not known whether Schreker knew this particular essay, it is still significant that scientific discourses critiquing the sexual double standard emerged while Schreker was working on the opera.

[127] Hailey, "Franz Schreker and the Pluralities of Modernism," 2-7. As Hailey argues, Schreker's pluralistic musical style discounted him from the standard, and what he considers the reductive, narrative of music history of Vienna and its modernism. With its disparate musical styles, or "multiplicity," Schreker's music does not fit into the organicism later praised as "modern" for this particular moment. *Ibid.*, 2-4.

[128] Kienzle, *Der Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 30, 128-33, 405-6, and the accompanying *Motivtafel*.

[129] For a detailed discussion of the modernity of musical language, see Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, *passim*. Regarding Schreker's largely non-functional harmonic language, see Gösta Neuwirth, *Die Harmonik in der Oper "Der ferne Klang," von Franz Schreker* (Regensburg: G. Bosse, 1972), 79-197. For a discussion of contemporary responses these elements, see: Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 49-53.

[130] Eugen Segnitz, "*Der ferne Klang*," (Review), *Leipziger Tageblatt*, February 10, 1913. Cited in Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 39.

Graz *Tagespost* remarked: "One experiences in Schreker's musical works the spiritual conflicts of modern man in a fully natural form […] this music burns into us with all the inborn intensity of truth, even when it doesn't always sound 'pretty.'"[131] This type of "real-life ugliness," however, made others uncomfortable (such as the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*'s critic, Max Mahler).[132] In *Der ferne Klang*, the music often depicts what is occurring in the drama precisely and vividly. In Act I, for instance, the clatter of falling kingpins in the game between Grete's father and the local men is depicted through the grace notes in the xylophone, the rhythms, and the angular melody.[133] This meticulous musical characterization establishes early on that the music throughout the opera will closely parallel the dramatic action, informing what we will hear in the opera. Schreker was seen as forging a new musical path in German opera with this innovative, descriptive musical language and ability to realistically capture deep, human expression in both the text and music. For instance, Friedrich Brandes wrote:

> This poem is born from the spirit of the music, and this music could be written for no other plot. In 'ferne Klang' a musician-poet speaks, who can express himself in no other way. The effect is like that of nature, not like that of a composition […] we see what genius can make out of his surroundings and the impulses of his age.[134]

Critic Karl Werner also praised Schreker's innovation: "At last a poet-composer who takes seriously the ageing Wagner's words, 'Children create anew!' […] the fullness of melodic, harmonic, and coloristic invention towers above everything that has appeared in these last

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[131] From Anon (likely Ernst Decsey), "Die Uraufführung von Franz Schrekers Oper *Der ferne Klang*," *Tagespost*, August 22, 1912. Translated and cited in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 335.

[132] Max Mahler, "Der ferne Klang," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, March 1, 1914. Translated and cited in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 38.

[133] Dahlhaus notes the degree of "Naturalism" that Schreker achieves through his musical expression in this scene. Carl Dahlhaus, "Schreker and modernism: on the dramaturgy of *Der ferne Klang*," in *Schoenberg and the New Music*, trans. Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 195.

[134] Friedrich Brandes, "Der ferne Klang," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 80, no. 9 (1913): 122. Translated and cited in E. Morrison, *Three Expressionist Operas*, 436.

years."[135] But what is of concern here is how Schreker tells the story and presents Grete through his musical characterizations and techniques, and what this reveals about post-Wagnerian operatic approaches to depicting the "good" versus the "fallen" woman. The musical juxtapositions reflect the altering social status of the characters, and allow for the multiple and contradicting understandings of women that I discuss here and in this dissertation. After all, Schreker was perceived by many as ushering in a new style of composition, and celebrated as the first significant German-speaking opera composer since Wagner.[136]

From Grete to Greta: Musical Changes from Act I to Act II

Not only does Fritz's abandonment alter Grete, but as Kienzle observes, how Grete is gambled away anticipates her turn to prostitution: the "father behaves in the manner of a white slave trader […] and the innkeeper himself takes over the role of procurer."[137] At the beginning of the opera she is still innocent "Gretel" and her sexuality muted, but over the course of the opera, Grete's musical portrayal shifts, reflecting the way others perceive her altered social status. Telling changes occur in the thematic material, musical styles, and timbres associated with her, in addition to subtle alterations in the *Klang*, the mysterious sonority heard by Fritz, which is represented through the orchestra and ultimately connected with Grete.[138] In the

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[135] Karl Werner, "Der ferne Klang von Franz Schreker," *Der Merker* 3 (Sept. 1912): 664. Translated and cited in E. Morrison, *Three Expressionist Operas*, 437.

[136] See Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper*, 11-20. Others include Cesar Saerchinger in a *Musical Courier* article "Franz Schreker, an Austrian, Hailed as the Messiah of German Opera" (1919), and Joachim Beck, in a 1919 review in *Weltbühne*. Many of these responses were influenced by Bekker's pamphlet on Schreker. Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 84-85. According to Hailey, "there was a general notion that Schreker was a radical reformer whose works would lead German opera out of its post-Wagnerian morass." Hailey, *ibid.*, 4.

[137] Kienzle, *Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 236.

[138] As Lee notes, even when the *Klang* changes, it is still identifiable: "Despite slight harmonic differences in the *Klang* when it recurs later in the opera, it is still immediately identifiable, largely due to

opening scene between Grete and Fritz, Fritz's vocal lines contain long, lyrical phrases over gently pulsing lower-strings, while Grete alternates between anxious recitative and more lyrical lines. When she tries to convince Fritz to stay, her declamatory, recitative vocal line becomes lyrical, melodic, and stepwise with longer melodic lines, evocative of his singing style, while clarinets, oboes, and strings accompany her – sonorities linked with the *Ewig-Weibliche* (Ex. 4.4). As Franklin notes, it is only here, when Grete tries to "exert persuasion over Fritz," that she is assigned a "clear melodic phrase [that] introduces Grete's *potential* for power."[139] Fritz describes Grete as his future "*seligste Braut*" (blessed bride), telling her he will ("lay at her feet riches and renown, all of his love."[140] This entire opening scene before Grete's fall contains music that paints an entirely different world than the frenzied dances and montage of Act II.[141]

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consistencies of interval class, articulation, and timbre, most noticeable in the prominent role of the harp and celesta arpeggios." Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 53.

[139] Italics added. Peter Franklin, "Distant sounds – Fallen music: *Der ferne Klang* as 'woman's opera,'" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 2 (1991): 164. Interestingly, Grete is depicted with accompanying clarinets, an instrument representative of the loving, waiting woman. See Berlioz, *Treatise of Orchestration*, 209-10.

[140] "leg' ihr Füßen Reichtum und Ruhm, alle meine Liebe" (4 before **15**).

[141] I have chosen not to discuss the *Waldszene* in which Grete is alone (until the old woman arrives) because it consists primarily of Grete's self-reflection rather than her interaction with other characters and their perception of her. I am particularly interested here in *Fritz*'s perception of Grete, and thus do not examine other moments in Act I because Fritz leaves Grete after this opening scene. It is noteworthy, however, that once Grete decides to follow the old woman and accept her "help," her alteration is foreshadowed with the dance themes from Act II sounding in the orchestra in the concluding moments of Act I.

Ex. 4.4: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: Grete's response to Fritz (Act I, scene 1, **9** – 8 after **9**).

In Act II, Schreker highlights the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality. As Gösta Neuwirth contends, the music even establishes Fritz as belonging to the world of the petit-bourgeoisie,[142] and as is clear from his reaction to Grete, the storyline does as well. Fritz is initially overjoyed to discover Grete at the *La casa di maschere*, and he announces: "I want you now more – Grete – beloved" ("*ich will nur mehr Dich – Grete – Geliebte*," **115 – 116**). Grete is delighted and sings of her hope and relief that he, Fritz, has won her from the other men. Yet after hints by the other courtesans, and after noticing his surroundings at *La casa di maschere* (the garish marble steps, groups of young women, "gypsy" music, and festive atmosphere of a reconstructed Venice), it finally dawns on Fritz that Grete is in a brothel. Her question of "do you still want – that I – become your wife?" ("*Willst Du jetzt noch, dass ich dein Weib werde?*" 3 before **128**) reveals her

[142] Neuwirth, *Die Harmonik in der Oper "Der ferne Klang*," 165. Musically Fritz could be characterized as belonging to a different world than that of *La casa di maschere*. For instance, in Act II, scene 8 (the scene where he arrives at *La casa di maschere*), the music is different in terms of texture and character from that which surrounds his arrival.

doubts as to whether or not Fritz still loves her after learning of her new life. Indeed, after her confession of her "descent," he recoils. He refuses to accept a "fallen" woman, even though he was suffering without her and was initially so happy to see her again. Fritz's bourgeois morality triumphs when he renounces her, leaving her to the Count, and sings: "I do not want to fight for a – prostitute!" ("*Ich schlage mich nicht einer – Dirne willen*!" **131**). The stage directions instruct him to "gasp" out these final two words, perhaps to emphasize his disgust, and when he sings farewell, his comportment is "contemptuous" ("*verächtliche Haltung*"), a stark contrast to his compassionate farewell of Act I. As Greta's confessional song reveals, the earlier Grete is considered dead once she had embarked upon this new life: "You surely confuse me with the little Gretel, who you left years ago for the sake of that sound – ah! That is over – she is dead!"[143] She has now transformed into "*schöne Greta*" (beautiful Greta), no longer the same as Fritz's "Gretel." Grete has even internalized the idea that she is no longer the same woman now that she had compromised herself morally, as revealed in her confession. She resembles Schnitzler's "*süßes Mädel*," a mere plaything for men, such as the Count.[144] By turning to the brothel, she is no longer in the same moral (and social) standing as Fritz, who now rejects her with contempt.

Grete's transformation transpires beyond the narrative and text – *musically* she is no longer the same woman. Her vocal lines are no longer as melodic as they were in Act I, and her vocal tessitura is now lower, marked audible changes in musical characterization.[145] This lower voice arguably creates an association between this new "Greta" and other fallen women, such as

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[143] "Du verwechselst mich wohl mit der kleinen Gretel, die Du vor Jahren verlassen, um jenes Klanges willen – ah! Das ist vorbei – die ist tot!" (Act II, **124**)

[144] Kienzle notes that the Count "will soon weary of her." Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 215.

[145] As Rutherford writes, "[o]peratic lust belonged primarily to the lower register." For example, Bizet's Carmen and Saint-Saens's Dalila use their lower registers for musical moments infused with sexuality. Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera*, 228.

Carmen. Although the vocal line does attain some high points (especially at **26**), at the beginning her voice is strikingly much lower and more sustained, creating a darker vocal tone. When Fritz first appears and still holds her in high esteem, not yet knowing her situation in *La casa di maschere*, she returns to the vocal characterization of Act I. This brief return further highlights the musical alteration of Greta with her earlier self, Grete.

Changes to the style and melodic character of her musical presentation also parallel her altered social status. While Act I, set in a rural village, conveys the harsh world of Naturalism through its dark, somber music and recitative, the contrasting Act II presents the chaotic sonic world of *La casa di maschere*, with its songs, dances, "*Zigeunermusik*" (Gypsy music) in the violins, and allusions to operetta.[146] With the emphasized off-beats in the orchestra, the melody, and the choral singing by the women, the Chevalier's song, "Die Bluhmenmädchen von Sorrent," the scene draws on the sounds of operetta. The world of *La casa di maschere* is captured not just through the melody or increased chromaticism – after all, Act I was already infused with chromaticism and extended tonality – but also through musical allusions in the orchestra, through dance rhythms and references to the waltz. As Francesca Draughton has suggested, the waltz in the *fin-de-siècle* was "a marker of feminine degeneracy and often becomes more specifically a marker of the prostitute."[147] Greta sings waltz-like melodies, something that only figured in lower-class characters earlier, such as the Schauspieler, in Act I

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[146] Adorno used the terms "highbrow" and "lowbrow" music in his essay on Schreker. Adorno, "Schreker," in *Quasi una Fantasia*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (New York: Verso, 1998), 137. Given Schreker's critique of bourgeois morals, it is perhaps odd that he assigned the "exoticist" and popular styles to *La casa di maschere.* Although this could be explained by the sound world of the popular *Venedig in Wien,* which was the likely model for Act II, as Kienzle has noted, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 204-7.

[147] For example, the waltz also represents Violetta's world in *La Traviata.* Draughton, "Dance of Decadence," 402. Perhaps the waltz is also a commentary on the disintegrating *fin-de-siècle* world of the Viennese aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Concerning this theme, see Scott's discussion of Elektra's waltz. Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 94.

(see **30** and the more distorted version at **37**, both in Act II). This other world that Greta inhabits with her "fall" is further characterized by sounds from popular culture. Greta's association with dance and gypsy music (for instance, Act II, **36**) connects her musically with earlier fallen women in the operatic canon, such as Carmen. Although Carmen's chromaticism is a much-noted feature of her sexuality, her social status (and exoticism) is also conveyed through the use of popular music references, such as the *Habañera*.[148] When Greta later sings to Fritz, who she initially does not recognize, of how she has "seen many men, but doesn't recognize them all," the instructions call for the music to have a *"Tanzrhythmus*."[149] Grete also sings with the other women at *La casa di maschere*; they echo each other in imitation (Act II, **43**), thus solidifying her belonging to the sphere of the courtesans.[150] While Greta adopts almost a *Sprechstimme* style, another vocal change from her earlier, more lyrical passages, the other women in the *casa* sing to a waltz in the background of their "burning" physical desires and "hot" love, and of seducing lovers, but acting coldly. Their song draws attention to their physical sensations and bodily desires: "Come anyone, whom my beauty pleases – it happened to me! But in cool words I contain the wild fire that consumed me. […] Though my body trembles in hot desire, my gaze is dull and cold."[151] This is positioned in stark opposition to the first act in which Grete does not confess to any strong physical desire or lust.

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[148] McClary, *Georges Bizet:* Carmen, 54-77; McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 56-67.

[149] "Viele Männer schon sah ich, ich merke sie mir nicht alle!" (Act II, 1 – 3 after **99**)

[150] Similarities also exist with the Flowermaidens in *Parsifal*, as Lee notes in *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 66.

[151] "Kommt Einer, dem meine Schönheit gefällt – ist' um mich geschehen! Doch in kühlen Worten berg' ich das wilde Feuer, das mich verzehrt. […] Doch bebt auch mein Leib in heißem Begehren, matt und kalt ist mein Blick." (Act II, 3 before **37** – 3 after **42**). While the vocal writing in this passage is reminiscent of the Blühmenmädchen from Wagner's *Parsifal*, the overall chaotic texture – with the choir, Greta's *Sprechstimme*-like vocal style, the orchestral music, and the accompanying piano – is reminiscent of the piano scene in Berg's *Wozzeck*. Interestingly, Berg copied the score and made the piano reduction for *Der ferne Klang*. For Berg's involvement with *Der ferne Klang*, see Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 32.

The permutations of the *Klang* also reflect Grete's alteration. The *Klang* reappears surrounding Fritz's arrival and sounds, with its distinctive celesta, glimmering strings, and harp instrumentation (beginning at **107**), until Fritz's pronouncement: "I see a magnificent woman!" ("*Da seh' ich ein herrliches Weib!*" **114**). Grete responds that she feels attractive again. Yet Grete's words in her "confession" and the accompanying orchestral music soon highlight her alteration. She sings much more assertively than Fritz expects about her physical love, sometimes to what Kienzle identifies as her "Seduction" motive (**120**).[152] These words and sonorities shock Fritz.[153] When she sings: "You surely confuse me with the little Gretel, who you left years ago for the sake of that sound – ah! That is over – she is dead," only short fragments of the *Klang* sonority emerge from the *Klang* instruments. Fritz's *Klangvision* is broken (Compare Ex. 4.5 and Ex. 4.6).[154] Following evocations in the high strings and celesta that is an altered, diluted, and thwarted appearance of the *Klang*, these *Klang* instruments repeat a rapid, upward arpeggiated motive. Grete then asks: "Do you still want me to be your wife?" ("*Willst du jetzt noch, daß ich dein Weib werde*?" 3 before **128**, Act II). The *Klang* is now weakened, disintegrated, reflecting her alteration. It is no longer the "pure" enveloping sonority of Act I, nor is its character the delicate "*rätselhafter Klang*" that Fritz earlier described as gently strummed

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[152] See Kienzle's "Motiftafel" for *Der ferne Klang* that accompanies *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*.

[153] The stage directions call for Fritz to be "verwirrt, stößt Grete, jedoch nicht heftig von sich hastig" (confused, pushes Greta, although not hard, away from him quickly) and while he asks: "Was ist das? Du sprichst so seltsam! …Ich dachte ich wollte als mein Weib." (Was is that? You speak so strangely! I thought I wanted you as my wife!) (4 before **121** – **121**). Grete's alteration breaks Fritz's lyrical, romanticized vocal lines and the lush orchestral music that accompanied him earlier. Now he sings in an agitated syllabic manner over tremolos, dissonances, and diminished chords, until he screams "was ist denn mit dir!? Grete!" (What is wrong with you?! Grete!).

[154] "Du verwechselt mich wohl mit der kleinen Gretel, die Du vor Jahren verlassen – um jenes Klanges willen – ah! Das ist vorbei – die ist tot!"

by the wind, thus revealing Fritz's changed impression of Grete and of her "respectability."[155] Fritz's idea of Grete is shattered, and he once again abandons her.

A corresponding shift is manifest in the visual presentation between Act I's Grete and Act II's Greta. Although some of these images show different singers, it is possible to glean the drastic shift in costumes and overall visual presentation of Grete-Greta in these two acts. While Lisbeth Sellin's Grete clings onto Fritz and is attired as a respectable middle-class young woman, with a high-collared long dress (Fig. 4.4), her Greta wears a long evening dress that exposes her shoulders and chest. As Greta she stares at the camera with assertiveness, and coyly holds her body, inviting the gaze (Fig. 4.5). Eva von der Osten's Greta, wearing a revealing party dress, has her hand seductively on her hip, emphasizing the curves of her body (Fig. 4.6). The 1925 Berlin production had a more outrageous costume for Greta, with Maria Schreker donning a large bright-pink wig. Again, her arms are bare, now she is clothed in the evening style of the Modern Woman of the 1920s (Fig. 4.7).[156] Once Grete reconnects with Fritz in Part II of Act III, he now recognizes the earlier Grete in her. She correspondingly resembles her former self (Fig. 4.8), with the stage directions calling for her to be dressed in pale clothes (Act III, scene 14), and the original *Klang* is heard again.[157]

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[155] As I discuss in the next chapter, where I examine in narrative function of the *Klang* in greater detail, the *Klang* is in fact tied to Fritz's *idea* of Grete.

[156] Lisbeth Sellin created the role in Frankfurt in 1912, Eva von der Osten performed it in Dresden in 1917, and Maria Schreker, Schreker's wife, sang the role in the 1925 Berlin productions. In later productions from the opera form the 1920s and early 1930s, the sexuality in Act II is even more pronounced. For example in other images of Grete in Act II, she has men surrounding her.

[157] It is unclear how Grete looks when she is "Tini" because the stage directions do not describe her appearance, nor have I found any images that seem to be of Grete as "Tini."

Ex. 4.5: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: The *Klang* sonority in the strings and harp (Act I, **11**).

Ex. 4.5 (cont.): Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: The *Klang* sonority in the strings and harp (Act I, **11**).

Ex. 4.6: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: Fragment of the *Klang* (Act II, **124** – **125**).

Act III and Schreker's Critique of Sexual Hypocrisy

Grete's sexuality is central to the opera and one of the primary reasons for which the opera was shocking at the time. Although Grete arguably exhibits desire for Fritz in Act I, this is presented as the traditional love and desire of a woman toward a husband.[158] Only in Act II are her *physical* desires for Fritz clearly articulated: "With quivering lips, drunkenly proclaim you – the most blissful joys! Come then, my beloved – in passionate hours life laughs to you."[159] When Fritz abandons Greta a second time, wild dance music plays while she looks at the Count with a "gloomy and wild gaze" ("*düster-wilden Blick*") in her eyes after telling him that she is "ready" (6 after **133**). Indeed, it is only after she *expresses* sexual desire, embracing her sexuality, that she "falls" and becomes a street prostitute – a connection that likely would have been made by audiences of the time given the prevalent discourses associating female sexuality with immorality and vice. At the conclusion of Act II, the opera initially appears to condemn and reject the "fallen" woman, but by Fritz's death in Act III, Schreker's critique of the social structures has become apparent. During his conversation with Rudolf, who came to tell him that he could have another chance at the theater if he revises the last movement of the opera, Fritz confesses all his guilt and sorrow about how he treated Grete in Act II when he discovered her identity as a courtesan.

> Whore! Yes, yes – that was it – with this word I pushed her away from me – even deeper down into the den of iniquity – saw the mute poignant plea – and did not hear the desperate cry – in [my] small-minded pride I denied the poorest a helping hand – and yet – friend, she, she I have in my conscience.[160]

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[158] Drawing on Freud, Kienzle writes that Grete's "newly awakened sexuality is misdirected," and because Grete cannot love Fritz, she "project[s] her erotic desire onto all men, almost to man as a species: Grete is a prostitute." Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 215.

[159] "Mit bebenden Lippen, trunken Dir künden – Die seligsten Freuden! Komm doch, Geliebter – in heißen Stunden lacht Dir das Leben" (3 before **119** – 2 after **120**).

[160] "Dirne! Ja, ja – das war es – Mit diesem Wort stieß ich sie von mir – noch tiefer hinab in den

In *Der ferne Klang*, Grete's musical characterization can also be read as sympathetic. As Kienzle points out, "Schreker's sensitive music characterizes Grete's suffering with deep empathy" and he demonstrates that "prostitution and hysteria arise not from moral depravity, but rather psychic and social adversity [*Not*]."[161] Rather than castigating a single woman for the downfall of society, in the way that Kundry and Salome are portrayed, Schreker's understanding of sexuality, human desire, and bourgeois social structures was far more nuanced, and perhaps even the reverse – castigating society for the downfall of this 'single' woman. In the manner of his Viennese contemporaries, such as Schnitzler and other members of the *Jung Wien* literary circle, Schreker's work offers a critique of the hypocritical moral codes of the bourgeoisie that existed throughout Europe at the time. Describing attitudes in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, Thompson writes: "The hypocrisy of the bourgeois facade can be seen in the fact that despite the availability of sexual pleasure, the subject was not to be mentioned within the sanctity of the bourgeois home."[162] Indeed, the work tapped into some of the concerns and realities about class and prostitution in Vienna. As an abandoned, single young woman she had few options once she left home. And just as in the real world, sexuality was pervasive and inescapable – and only a misstep away for a vulnerable young woman.

Class figures in these depictions as well, not only raising questions of audience participation through spectatorship, but also exposing the tragic consequences of adhering to *Kleinbürgerlich* notions of respectability and morality. Only at the end of the opera does Fritz realize his mistake in rejecting Grete because of her fallen position: she is still the same woman,

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Sündenpfuhl – und sah nicht das stumme, rührende Flehn – und hörte nicht den verzweifelten Schrei – in kleinchem Stolz verwehrt' ich der Ärmsten die rettende Hand – und doch – Freund, die, die hab' ich am Gewissen." (Act III, scene 10, **65** – 5 after **66**).

[161] "Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 215.

[162] Thompson, *Schnitzler's Vienna*, 59-60.

and he finally seems to associate Grete with the distant *Klang*.[163] Economic and social causes forced her into such a life, not any inherent moral failure in Grete's character. Her "fall" was arguably Fritz's fault: he abandoned her to follow *his* individual desires – to pursue the elusive sound and to find his compositional voice – at the expense of Grete's needs and feelings. The opera seems to even acknowledge both the naturalness of female sexuality and the social injustices and difficulties faced by many women of the time. Alluding to Klimt's painting *Nuda Veritas* in which a woman holds an empty mirror up to the viewer, Kienzle aptly writes: "He holds a mirror up to the society of his time, in which he exposes their hypocrisy."[164] Like the young *süßes Mädel*, Grete is forced into her situation based on the inescapable social realities of the era.[165] Thus Schreker draws attention to *why* women "fall," and looks at the social causes: in Grete's case, not only is she abandoned by Fritz, but she comes from a loveless home where she is gambled away as if she is property, much as prostitutes' bodies are exchanged for money. Indeed, Schreker seems to deflect the blame away from Grete, and place it more on Fritz and society. As Dr. Vigelius comforts Grete in Act III: "Poor woman […] God only knows that this

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[163] In Chapter 5, I closely examine how Grete inspires Fritz, and how his idea of Grete and her sexuality serve as his muse.

[164] Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 215.

[165] Other moments in the opera also document Schreker's sympathetic attitude to women's situations and shine a light onto the social injustices that many women of the time faced. In Act I, scene 3, Grete complains about how she and her mother are always working and paying the Father's pension bills, while he whittles away his time and money at the Kneipe or Pension. The Mother responds that the father has wasted all of Grete's inheritance. During this time, a young girl's prospects at marriage were largely dependent on her family's financial and moral situation, and any financial, legal, or moral indiscretions greatly diminished a daughter's chance at marriage. Grete's marriage prospects, like Else's in Schnitzler's novella *Fräulein Else*, have been reduced because of the father's financial and social ruin. A second similarity between Grete and Else is the way in which the daughter is forced onto an older man in order to solve the father's debts. Arthur Schnitzler, *Fräulein Else*, trans. Robert A. Simon, in *Viennese Novelettes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931), 123-200.

is a serious guilt! How the world sins, and we all with it!"[166] (Act III, **28** – **29**).

Section IV: *Operetta, Class, and Women*

Although its "Golden Age" was beginning to wane during this period, operetta was still very much part of Viennese cultural life and able to command a large audience.[167] Operettas and the locations in which they were performed – *Carlstheater*, *Theater an der Wien*, *Theater in der Josefstadt*, and the *Johann Strauss Theater*, to name a few – were indeed musical places that further articulated ideal bourgeois mores, only to a wider and more diverse audience.[168] During this time, numerous operettas focused on women and their "proper" behavior, with works entitled *Die neugierigen Frauen* (*Curious Women*, Wolf-Ferrari, 1903), *Die geschiedene Frau* (*The Divorced Woman*, Fall, 1908), *Das süße Mädel* (Reinhardt, 1901), *Die ideale Gattin* (*The Ideal Wife*, Lehár, 1913), *Wiener Frauen* (*Viennese Women*, Lehár, 1902), and *Die anständige*

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[166] "Arme Frau […] das ist weiß Gott eine schwere Schuld! Wie sündigt die Welt und wir alle mit ihr!" At this moment we hear a shimmering harp sound, although it is not the Klang sonority.

[167] Mayerhöfer calls 1887–1899 the "Ende der goldenen Ära," with the turn of the century beginning the "Silber Ära." Josef Mayerhöfer, ed. *Operette in Wien: Ausstellungs-Katalog* (Wien: Österreichische Theatermuseum, 1979),

70. According to Linhardt, operetta in fact changed with *Die lustige Witwe*, which ushered in a new style of "Modern" operetta. Marion Linhardt, "Einblicke in den Theateralltag der Moderne," in *Stimmen zur Unterhaltung: Operette und Revue in der publizistischen Debatte (1906–1933)* (Vienna: Johann Lehner, 2009), 15.

[168] Other *Vorstadt* theaters in Vienna that presented operettas and other musical acts included: *Raimund Theater*, *Kaiser-Jubiläums Theater*, *Danzers Orpheum Theater*, *Lustspieltheater*, *Theater in der Josefstadt*, and the *Deutschen Volkstheater*, where *Salome* was premiered in 1907. For a list of theaters see: *Deutscher Bühnen Spielplan* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1909-1910); the *Wiener Almanach: Jahrbuch für Literatur, Kunst, und öffentliches Leben* (Wien and Leipzig: Perles, 1903-1908), and McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna 1896–1897: Critically Moving Forms*; Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna.*

Frau (*The Respectable Woman*, Stoltz, 1917).[169] For the sake of space, I only examine Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* (*The Merry Widow*, 1905), an extremely popular work that explicitly dealt with themes concerning women, such as the suffrage movement and bourgeois respectability, and thereby belongs to the operatic context that I have established in this chapter. As an immensely popular genre, operetta also performed an important role in reinforcing and challenging bourgeois norms of female sexuality. With the sheer number of performances, *Die lustige Witwe* was given legitimacy, albeit as a less "serious" genre in a different space.[170] Well-known differences exist between opera and operetta, and, as Crittenden notes, these include audience expectations and what could be presented on stage. Operetta was often presented in *Vorstadt* theaters rather than court theaters, further away from the city center and not "endorsed" by the government or court, thus avoiding the stricter court censors. Operetta was also available to a broader audience base than opera, and women had more active roles in the management and as directors. Lastly, as Crittenden writes, the "plot could be 'lascivious,' not held to high moral standard." Moreover, operetta included spoken dialogue that was sometimes improvised and for that reason passages could escape censorship.[171] Yet, was operetta's message concerning female respectability altogether different from what was occurring in contemporary operas at court theaters? And, how was "respectable" female sexuality articulated in the musical language of

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[169] Other operettas include: *Die Primadonna* (1901), *Das Teufelsweib* (1890), and *Der Triumph des Weibes* (1906).

[170] Crittenden suggests that Hanslick's writings on operetta in fact legitimized the genre. See Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 9. See also the discussion of Bourdieu in the Introduction.

[171] *Ibid.*, 10-18, 59-60. For instance, singer Marie Geistinger directed the *Theater an der Wien* between 1869 and 1875, then actress and director Alexandrine von Schönerer, the right-wing politician Georg von Schönerer's sister, owned and managed the *Theater an der Wien* between 1884 and 1900. *Ibid*., 72, 76. As Linhardt's work has demonstrated, women in fact played a very active and significant role in the world of operetta in nineteenth-century Vienna, unlike in opera. Marion Linhardt, *Inszenierung der Frau-Frau in der Inszenierung: Operette in Wien Zwischen 1865–1900*, Publikation des Instituts für Österreichische Musikdokumentation 19, ed. Günter Brosche (Tutzing, Germany: Hans Schneider, 1997).

operetta?

Die lustige Witwe

One of the most popular operettas of the *fin-de-siècle* was *Die lustige Witwe*. Composed by Franz Lehár to a text by Victor Léon and Leo Stein, the three-act operetta had almost 20,000 performances between its premiere at the *Theater an der Wien* on December 30, 1905 and 1909.[172] Set in 1905 Paris, the humorous work is about a widow, Hanna Glawari, who, at a gathering at the embassy of the fictional country Pontevedro, is courted by a number of potential suitors who are after her money. The Paris envoy for Pontevedro, Baron Zeta, wants her money to remain within the penniless country, and he tries to direct her affections to fellow Pontevedrians. He thinks Danilo, Hanna's former lover and a Pontevedrian playboy who spends his nights enjoying the women at the restaurant *Maxim's*, is an ideal match for Hanna, although Danilo sees otherwise. But during the ball, Hanna is exasperated by all the male attention, and seeks out Danilo, the only man who ignores her. Meanwhile, Baron Zeta is ignorant of his own wife Valencienne's affair with Camille. After a series of twists and turns in which Valencienne tries to pair off Camille with Hanna, the unenlightened Zeta tries to convince Camille to marry the married woman with whom he is having an affair – which Zeta does not realize is his own wife. A series of subterfuges and mistaken identities naturally ensue. In the final scene, Hanna has transformed her apartment into a Cabaret and invited "The Grisettes" from *Maxim's.* Here everyone is reconciled: Hanna and Danilo declare their love for one another, Valencienne

[172] Brigit Meyer, "Die Uraufführung," in *Franz Lehár: Die lustige Witwe Volksoper Wien* (Vienna: Volksoper Theater Verlag, 2009), 18-21. Franz Lehár conducted the premiere, while Hanna was sung by Mizzi Gunther, Danilo by Louis Treumann, Valencienne by Annie Wünsch, Baron Zeta by Sigmund Natzler, and Camille by Karl Meister. Further indicative of the rich connections between operetta and opera in Vienna, one of the librettists, Victor Léon, was the brother of Leo Feld, the librettist for Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge*, an opera discussed in the following chapter.

convinces Zeta that she really is his "respectable" wife, and the operetta ends with the septet "Ja, das Studium der Weiber ist schwer" ("Yes, the study of women is difficult"). For an image that captures the playful affection between Hanna and Danilo, see figure 4.9.

Die lustige Witwe presents several contemporary themes, from patriotic duty and politics, to infidelity (including mocking the cuckold husband, Baron Zeta) and the difficulties of understanding women. In fact, one of the best known songs is "Ja, das Studium der Weiber ist schwer!," a repetitious and comedic take on the fickleness of women. At the end of the operetta, a repetition of this song serves as a finale, with both men and women declaring once again how all women are the same and able to easily seduce men: "Woman, woman, woman, woman! [...] If their/our hair is dyed black, or red, or blonde, it's the same for we/they still are struck!"[173] In addition, the suffrage movement is mocked in the finale to Act I; all the characters and the chorus sing in an iconic waltz about a "*Damenwahl*" (ladies' vote or election), with Hanna choosing which man to dance with.[174] Yet, the issues of sexuality and bourgeois respectability are also central, particularly concerning the Baroness Valencienne. Indeed, the concluding scene recreates the world of *Maxim's* with its dancing "Grisettes" in Hanna's home, a world whose clientele ranged from noble, powerful, and moneyed men to prostitutes and courtesans of the

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[173] "Ob sie/wir schwarz oder rot oder blond sind gefärbt, es ist egal, man/er wird doch gegärbt!"

[174] The text to this "Damenwahl" reveals how they are making fun of the women's suffrage movement while touching on contemporary concerns about the social effects that women obtaining the vote could have: "Women have fought for a long time for the same rights as men. Now Madame here has the right to vote and makes no use of it! And so I agitate… Oh please, read my campaign poster! Vote for Cascada! Vote for St. Brioche! He's the most deserving dance candidate!" (Es kämpfen die Damen schon lange um das nämliche Recht mit dem Mann. Jetzt haben Madam' hier das Wahlrecht und fangen damit gar nichts an! Drum agitier' ich…Ach bitte, lesen Sie mein Wahlplakat! Wählen Sie doch Cascada. Wählen Sie doch St. Brioche! Das ist der würdigste Tanzkandidat!") Hanna responds, articulating a belief held by some women and men that women's involvement in politics could harm both women and society: "To this I must reply that I detest politics. They destroy men's characters, and rob women of charm." ("Darauf muss ich Ihnen entgegnen, verhasst ist mir Politik; verdirbt sie beim Mann den Charakter, so raubt sie uns Frauen den Schick!")

demi-monde.[175] Over the course of the operetta, there are also class relations that are negotiated at multiple levels: nobility mixes with non-nobility, respectable women consort with non-respectable women, while respectable women even dress up as dancers. Both Mizzi Günther, as Hanna, and Louis Treumann, as Danilo, were highly praised in their roles, and the critic Karpath was enthusiastic about the work.[176] Many noted the sensuality and erotic themes of the popular operetta. In "Die Operettenseuche" ("The Operetta Plague," 1914), Josef Stoltzing wrote that operettas are "a pathological mass hysteria" ("*ein krankhafte Massenpsychose*"), while Felix Salten pointed out *Die lustige Witwe*'s originality and modernity in his 1906 article "Die neue Operette," writing that it was a new type of operetta with "sexual lust" and "unveiling of desire."[177] As Marion Linhardt has recently suggested, *Die lustige Witwe*, which premiered within a month of *Salome*, ushered in the eroticization of operetta, making sexuality central to the genre.[178] Yet the operetta focuses not only on sex, but also on bourgeois morality specifically, as I now explore.

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[175] *Maxim's* was a cabaret-restaurant located near the *Palais Royal* in Paris. At *Maxim's* multiple worlds mixed: the cancan dancers, actresses from the *Folies-Bergères*, and prostitutes, with counts and *flâneurs*. A 1920s *Guide des plaisirs à Paris* summarizes the atmosphere as the following: "Champagne flows like water there, and well into the night a crowd of viveurs, theater people, mondaines and demimondaines have a noisy wild time." Cited and translated in Charles Rearick, *Paris Dreams, Paris Memories: The City and its Mystique* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), n.p.

[176] See Decsey, *Franz Lehár*, 46.

[177] Salten writes of "geschlechtliche Wollust" and "Enthüllung des Triebhaften." Felix Salten, "Die neue Operette," *Die Zeit*, December 8, 1906. For example, Salten argued that Truemann embodied a new type of man in operetta. Discussed in Marion Linhardt, *Residenz und Metropole: Zu einer kulturellen Topographie des Wiener Unterhaltungstheaters (1858-1918)* (Tubingen, Germany: Niemeyer, 2006), 163-65. Cited and discussed in Linhardt, "Einblicke in den Theateralltag der Moderne," 17. As Decsey later notes, Lehár offered a new type of operetta with *Die lustige Witwe*, particularly regarding his instrumental writing. The operetta's instrumental sonorities and use of the orchestra is reminiscent of Strauss, Puccini, and Mahler. Decsey, *Franz Lehár*, 49, 55-56.

[178] Linhardt notes that the operetta, which raised issues including the role of women and the "sexual question," occurred within a larger "eroticization in text and music." Marion Linhardt, "Einblicke in den Theateralltag der Moderne," 17-18.

"Ich bin eine anständige Frau"

The first example of bourgeois "respectability" concerns Valencienne, who is having an affair with Camille Rosillon, unbeknownst to her husband, Baron Zeta. Baron Zeta naïvely believes that, "my wife is a shining example of wifely virtue. Look how innocently she chats with Herr von Rosillon."[179] In Act I, no. 2, Valencienne sings, "Ich bin eine anständige Frau" ("I am a respectable woman") to Camille, reminding him that she is an upright bourgeois woman. For the musical characterization of Valencienne's insistence of her "respectability," Lehár draws on musical depictions of the "good" versus "bad" woman from opera. As Eva Rieger has demonstrated, the *femme fragile* – the chaste woman – often has a vocal line that is more legato, with smaller intervals, while the more dangerous or "lower-class" woman has a melodic line that often contains larger intervallic leaps.[180] Rather than resorting solely to heightened chromaticism in this scene, Lehár turns to subtle means of articulating sexuality or sensuality versus respectability within the musical language of operetta. Valencienne begins with the line "ich bin eine anständige Frau," sung very quietly to a stately melody with a narrow vocal range, and little movement with a simple, straight-forward harmonic progression, as though she is musically representing the confines and quiet nature of the ideal bourgeois woman (Ex. 4.7).[181] Yet, when she mentions "adventure," chromaticism increases, there is brief modulation to D via secondary

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[179] "Meine Frau ist ein leuchtendes Beispiel von Sittsamkeit. Schauen Sie nur, wie harmlos sie mit Herrn von Rosillon plaudert."

[180] Rieger uses examples from *Die Meistersinger* to illustrate this point: in a scene with both Eva and Magdalene: Magdalene has multiple large leaps of a 7th, while Eva only has one. Eva Rieger, "'I married Eva': Gender Construction and *Die Meistersinger*," 212.

[181] In fact, this is one of the catchier songs in the opera, and it is likely that many female audience members went home humming this melody – another form of internalization.

dominant seventh chords and diminished chords, the volume increases to *forte*, and Valencienne's vocal range ascends to a high G.

Ex. 4.7: Lehár, *Die lustige Witwe*: Valencienne: "Ich bin eine anständige Frau" (Act 1, no. 2, mm. 32 – 40).

When she sings of the dangers of fire burning, another connection between sexuality and fire, the harmony first becomes more complex, and once the harmony returns to a simple harmonic pattern, there is a playful rhythmic shift, followed by a large leap upward in the vocal line.[182] She later sings of how she can only "lose" regarding her predicament with Camille, and the music shifts to triplets and increased chromaticism (Ex. 4.8). Yet, every time Valencienne reiterates the line "ich bin eine anständige Frau," she returns to the same simply melody sung quietly with which she began the song.

Furthermore, Valencienne's deceptions, as well as her vacillations about what she wants, are played out in the interaction between the voice and the instrumental lines. As Haffner points out, the flute contradicts the text.[183] Mocking grace notes in the oboes and clarinets, sounding much like the mocking use of the woodwinds in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, also

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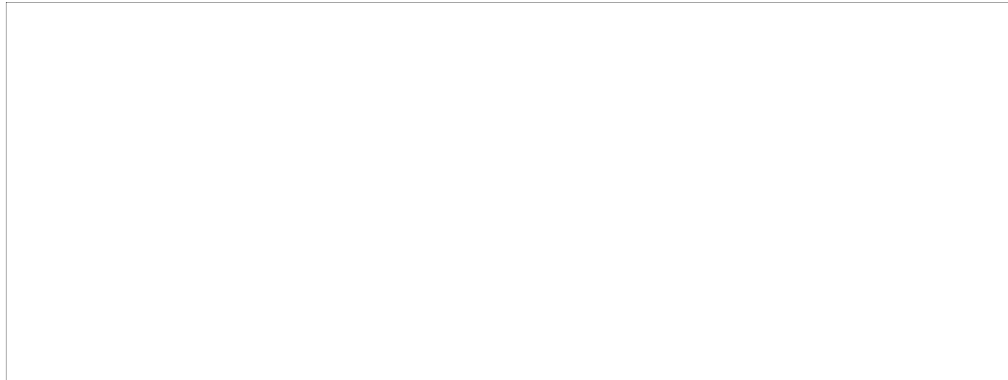
[182] Valencienne sings, "The fire's force is very dangerous if one doesn't control and watch it." ("Sehr gefährlich ist des Feuers Macht, wenn man sie nicht bezähmt, bewacht!) Translation modified.

[183] Ingrid Haffner und Herbert Haffner, *Immer nur Lächeln: Das Franz Lehár Buch* (Berlin: Parthas, 1998), 61. As Descsey notes, *Die lustige Witwe* was a new type of operetta, particularly with how Lehár borrows from opera, such as motivic development. Decsey, *Franz Lehár*, 53.

undermine what she is singing. When Camille answers, “You are a respectable woman, yes I unfortunately, know that just that” (“*Sie sind eine anständige Frau, das weiß ich ja leider genau*”), he reiterates what she sings. And again, the instrumental writing reveals his sarcasm with the grace notes in the oboes and clarinets.

Ex. 4.8: Lehár, *Die lustige Witwe*: Valencienne: “Ich bin eine anständige Frau” (Act I, no. 2, mm. 46 – 53).



The Musical World of the Grisettes

Upon entering Hanna’s house, Baron Zeta immediately asks: “What kind of music is that?” to which Njegus, the Embassy secretary, responds “these sounds come from the improvised Cabaret of the Grisettes which I have set up in the grounds of Frau Glawari’s palace. The Baroness Valencienne is also taking part.” The shocked and concerned Baron asks: “What? My wife?” to which Njegus again responds: “Oh – I mean – she’ll only pretend that she is a Grisette.” In this last act, the worlds of the “respectable” woman and the “non-respectable” woman combine and mingle, something that traditionally did not occur in proper society.

The music here is repetitive, with the cancan dancers, the Grisettes – Lolo, Dodo, Jou-jou, Clo-Clo, Margot, and Frou-Frou – who resort to singing in French at moments, again reminding the viewers of the operetta’s location in Paris, a city known for its vices and yet

physically distant from Vienna.[184] Valencienne even adds "*et moi*" to the Grisettes' chorus. For a visual example of The Grisettes, see Fig. 4.10, although it is unclear which of these women is Valencienne. The Grisettes sing about "*flanieren*" and "*coquettieren*," Germanized French words closely associated with the Parisian world of the *demi-monde*, as well as a series of non-sensical syllables and words: "trippel-trippel trippel trapp!" Halfway into the number, the music accompanying the cancan dancing becomes a "Galopp," a common style in French operetta.[185] The cancan-style music, with lots of trills in the clarinets, and the playful yelps sung by the Grisettes, is drastically different from how Valencienne sang "*Ich bin eine anständige Frau*" (Ex. 4.9).

By bringing the world of *Maxim's* and the Grisettes into Hanna's home, circulating among upper-class society, Lehár blurs the two worlds. The music and the people of both are intertwined, much as the worlds of the upper and lower classes are intertwined in Schnitzler's *Reigen.* Indeed, it would have been scandalous to have "upper-class" women at *Maxim's.* Moreover, women watching women within the framework of the opera, and allowing the female members of the audience to watch the cabaret onstage would add another layer to the operetta's meaning and its challenges to conventions.

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[184] Another instance of a Paris as a city associated with sexuality is later found in Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf!* (1927).

[185] Additionally, the music, particularly the use of cancan and the "Galopp" is in the style of French operetta. As Crittenden notes, French Operetta relied on dances such as the cancan and the gallope, while Viennese operetta relied on the waltz and polka rhythms. Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 12-13. Even Danilo's earlier "Maxim Lied" relied on melodies reminiscent of Parisian motives. Decsey, *Franz Lehár*, 57.

Ex. 4.9: Lehár, *Die lustige Witwe*: "Grisetten-Lied" (Act III, no. 14).

Musical Spaces, Opera Audiences, and the Politics of Viewing

As Janet Wolff writes about the distancing of sexuality in nineteenth-century artistic works, "the nude which would have shocked in contemporary scenes is somehow acceptable when set in Ancient Greece or Rome."[186] This tendency was also increasingly prominent on the German theatrical and operatic stage, with presentations of sexuality frequently displaced onto a distant physical or temporal location.[187] *Feuersnot* is set in the distant past of medieval Germany, while *Der ferne Klang*'s brothel in Venice is supposed to be somewhat distant geographically. Yet, worlds and classed spaces cross. Venice was distant but close: an eroticized space called "Venedig in Wien" (Venice in Vienna), in which boats and canals were set up and all segments

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[186] Wolff, *Feminine Sentences*, 27.

[187] Examples of this tendency include *Rosenkavalier* (set in the eighteenth century); *Die lustige Witwe* (Paris); *Salome* (distant past and location); *Elektra* (distant past), *Mona Lisa* (fifteenth century), *Feuersnot* (distant, "*fabelhaft*" time). Indeed that was what was so shocking about Charpentier's *Louise*, which was staged in *fin-de-siècle* Paris and concerned a lower-middle class girl, a liaison, and her respectability.

of the population mingled, was created in 1902 in the lower-class amusement park, "The Prater."[188] Venice was also familiar through the Cabaret and operetta stage with the extremely popular 1883 operetta by Johann Strauss II entitled, *Eine Nacht in Venedig*.[189] And again, *Die lustige Witwe* is set in Paris – a distant location.

Yet, with Hanna's invitation, *Maxim's* world of the *demi-monde* even infiltrates the bourgeois home. This intertwining of public and private spaces in *Die lustige Witwe* touched on common, but eroding, gender divisions in the *fin-de-siècle.* Respectable women belonged to the private sphere, the space of the home, while the public sphere was a realm left to men.[190] What is significant in these works is the way in which they could reinforce or blur the spaces of "respectability," just as the musical characterizations of the women could oscillate, thus challenging the strict dichotomy. The public display of sexuality in *Feuersnot* shocks Diemut; while the kiss was public, Diemut at the end seems to accept sexual desire in the private world – although the townspeople actually see "the light in her room." In *Der ferne Klang*, there is a move from home (private spaces) to the *La casa di maschere* (a public space), to the bar outside the theater (*Vorgarten des Theaterbeisels*, another public space), back to Fritz's home (a private space). While these oppositions can be seen as a reinforcement of bourgeois spaces of respectability, they can also offer a challenge and critique of these very norms. In *Der ferne*

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[188] Max Graf captured the atmosphere of this recreated Venice in Vienna: "[A] make believe city had been built of canvas and wood. On water-filled canals, gondolas were manned by gondoliers imported from Venice […] Vienna's best society sat in the restaurants and coffee-houses of the amusement section, or walked among the cheap settings of gothic palaces, laughing, flirting, or throwing confetti." Graf, *Legend of a Musical City*, 136. See Kienzle also for a discussion of Venice in Vienna and the poster advertising it. Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 204-6.

[189] By the 1970s *Eine Nacht in Venedig* had 252 performances on ten different stages, attracting over 200, 000 people over the course of its performances. Mayerhöfer, ed. *Operette in Wien: Ausstellungs-Katalogue*, 12-13.

[190] See Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, *Respectability and Deviance: Nineteenth-Century German Women Writers and the Ambiguity of Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 266-67. See also Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Know (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), Paragraph 166.

Klang, the musical spaces are defined, and there is a strong musical and visual contrast between Acts I and II.[191] Yet what is radical for *Der ferne Klang* is that, despite the prevailing bourgeois interests in safeguarding female purity, Schreker takes the female audience into the brothel. This space is made public, and the bourgeois female spectators at the opera house watch the events in the brothel unfold.

But were there similar problems in a different genre in a different space, such as *Die lustige Witwe*?[192] It seems that these themes were not only expected to be more daring and titillating in operetta, but they also did not seem to cause as much concern. While *La casa di maschere* raised alarm in the *Hofopern* houses, the world of the Grisettes was portrayed onstage with little moral outrage from the press. Indeed, many negative reviews of the time would often compare an opera to an operetta, such as Hirschfeld's reviews of *Feuersnot* ("lowlands of operetta") and discussions of the sexuality in *Der Rosenkavalier.*[193] Was it because they were different theatrical spaces with different audiences that the world of the *demi-monde* was more acceptable in *Die lustige Witwe*? Both spaces attracted the same aristocrats, wealthy businessmen, and bourgeois patrons. As Crittenden reveals: "The Viennese bourgeoisie who made the pilgrimage to Bayreuth also prided themselves on having box seats for [Johann] Strauss's operettas."[194] But while the audiences were not always that different, there were no court censors at the private theaters, such as the *Theater an der Wien* where *Die lustige Witwe*

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[191] Yet the articulation of spaces through music also bears a critique and raises the point that Grete is blurred – these spaces are not neatly parsed nor are individuals "good" or not, as Emma tells Ferdinand in Schnitzler's *Vermächtnis*, but rather blurred and easily traversed. Fritz's rejection of Greta's fall is itself criticized at the end of the opera.

[192] In both *Die lustige Witwe* and *Der ferne Klang*, the audience is transported into the *demi-monde*, viewing, watching, and aligning their gaze with the male gaze in the real world.

[193] For a discussion of *Rosenkavalier*, see Chapter 6.

[194] Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 210. As soprano Maria Jeritza also noted, these spaces were different, although some members of the aristocracy also visited the *Volksoper.* Jeritza, *Sunlight and Song*, 29-30.

was performed.[195] Moreover, as was the case in Vienna, the *Volksoper* and the *Theater an der Wien*'s very locations also create a very different sense than what one experiences at the *Hofoper*. Although not as far outside the city as some of the other *Stadtstheater*, these spaces were located in what was then the outskirts of the city, the *Vorstadt* (suburbs) close to the second Ring. It was a physical displacement to travel from the *Innenstadt* all the way to the *Vorstadt* theaters. The *Hofoper*, however, was located in the literal heart of the city, on the inside of the *Ringstraße*, just minutes away from *Stephansdom* and the *Reichsrat.*

Moreover, the ways in which women watched women raises questions of what it would mean for a female viewer to be given male perspective into the world of the *demi-monde*? As Pollock also suggests, "structures of looking are not natural, but historical."[196] Often the masculine way of looking is privileged, and these works encourage a male gaze. But what happens when the gaze really is a *female* gaze that is filtered through the male gaze? What happens when female audience members watch these women navigate these different spaces? When they watch Diemut acquiesce, Grete "descend," Valencienne flirt, and the Grisettes dance at Hanna's house? In this era women and men had separate spheres – women were traditionally relegated to the private world of the home, while the public realm belonged to men. Moreover, men could move between both private and public spaces.[197] Yet as feminist art theorist Griselda Pollock has argued, the public spaces of modernity were spaces in which gender roles could be reworked: "They became the sites for the negotiation of gendered class identities and class gender positions. The spaces of modernity are where class and gender interface in critical ways,

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[195] Regarding censorship, see Bachleitner, "The Habsburg Monarchy," 228-64; Stark, "Germany," 22-69; Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 59-60.

[196] Griselda Pollock, "The Visual," in *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, ed. Mary Eagleton (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 176.

[197] Wolff, *Feminine Sentences*, 26.

in that they are the spaces of sexual exchange."[198] Thus, what could the effects of watching this delineation and blurring of spaces, or the plight of "respectable" or "fallen" women, have had on the contemporaneous audience, particularly on the female viewers? Do these works at the *Theater an der Wien* or the court opera participate in modernism's renegotiation of gender and class positions?

Writing about the reception of Klimt's *Hope* paintings, Tobias G. Natter notes the concern contemporary journalists had about the moral effects of the *public* display of Klimt's lewd paintings on "wives" and "sisters"; Klimt's nudes were perceived as a danger for women's eyes.[199] As Natter writes, citing *fin-de-siècle* journalist Hugo Ganz's reaction, "[t]he 'decent' woman, who would be unable to look at Klimt's erotic drawings without blushing, was equated, through the display of such images, with the 'prostitute, before whom no one need feel ashamed.'" For Ganz, woman was a "tender, easily injured sex."[200] By lacking in "Reason," as many such as Weininger claimed, women were more susceptible to these dangerous images. Thus, the bourgeois woman would "lower" her morals and potentially damage her purity by even looking at the nude images by Klimt. These understandings of the effect of spectatorship on women raise interesting questions about the perceived effect these operas could have on women at the time, and offer insight into their reception.

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[198] Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2003), 98-99. As Pollock notes, women treat themselves as subjects, not just bodies. In her discussion of the works of female artists Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, Pollock demonstrates how their theme of the balcony "demarcate is not the boundary between public and private, but between the spaces of masculinity and of femininity inscribed at the level of both what spaces are open to men and women and what relation a man or woman has to that space and its occupants." *Ibid.*, 86-87. See also Wolff, *Feminine Sentences*, 59-63.

[199] Natter, "The Naked Body and Public Space in Viennese Art," 31.

[200] Hugo Ganz, "Erotik und Obszönität: Zur neuen Klimt-Ausstellung," *Frankfurter-Zeitung und Handelsblatt*, December 3, 1910. Cited in *ibid.*, 31.

Conclusion

In these three works, dominant bourgeois ideas regarding female sexuality are challenged: *Feuersnot* presents prudishness as harmful for society, *Der ferne Klang* offers a sympathetic portrayal of how a woman can "fall" due to social circumstances, while *Die lustige Witwe* pokes fun at the social mores through tricks, deception, and humor. These works begin to offer a possibility of overcoming the traditional sexual roles of women through their criticism of the blind spots and hypocrisy that haunt bourgeois mores. While the female bodies in the previous chapters are presented as sick and harmful, there is a "good body" offered in opposition here. Yet this division, or binary, between "good" and "bad" becomes blurred and not as rigidly defined in the works examined in this chapter. Some operas work to present, and in turn construct, ideal female bodies through representing degenerate ones.[201] Indeed, this strict binary is challenged in the operas discussed in this chapter. By the end of the nineteenth century, the opposition between the ideal respectable woman and the fallen woman began to be revised, and the simplistic dichotomy reconsidered, as evidenced in the more complex female figures that begin to appear onstage as well as their musical and dramatic treatment within the works. As the later operas examined in this dissertation reveal, this blurring and rendering ambiguous the difference between good and bad women occurs increasingly throughout the early years of the twentieth century.

The shame of female sexuality shifts in these works. Rather than sexuality *causing* shame in the bourgeois women and the audience, both *Feuersnot* and *Der ferne Klang* confront the audience and demonstrate through critique that the shame is rather in the bourgeois judgments of

[201] Indeed, what is represented on the stage also allows people to scrutinize their own behavior, to enact what Foucault recognizes as the increasing "self-surveillance" of the era. The audience members would witness this opposition onstage – for instance how the sexualized woman who threatens society is punished. These works taught *how* women should monitor their appearance and behavior.

female sexuality itself. A more subtle portrayal of these women occurs, perhaps reflecting the increasingly subtle understanding of female sexuality amidst social expectations. Indeed, rigid categories are undermined through the characters' abilities to move from one world and musical characterization to another (ie: Grete and Valencienne) at different moments. The musical characterization of the "respectable" woman versus the "fallen" woman demonstrates the ways in which the division could be undermined, blurred, and malleable (for example with Valencienne and Grete-Greta-Tini-Grete). Yet, as explored in the following chapter, the musical characterizations of these women are problematic: although they are no longer "ill," they are nonetheless not given agency, creative expression, or sexual subjectivity. Female sexuality becomes a *vehicle* for male creativity, a modern reinterpretation of the *Ewig-Weibliche* who supports male creativity, rather than an end in itself. Barbara Wright identifies this problem in the work of Expressionist authors and thinkers: "[They] reject the time-honored equation of sex with sin, and thus the obligatory pairing of woman with sexual sinfulness. But they continue to view women as essentially sexual beings."[202] Although female sexuality here is celebrated, as I will discuss in greater detail in the following chapter, women are merely sexual objects rather than sexual *subjects*. These women are products of the male imagination and arguably lack character development, agency, or *Bildung*.

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[202] Barbara Wright, "'New Man,' Eternal Woman: Expressionist Responses to German Feminism," *German Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (1987): 587. As Wright demonstrates, although Expressionist writers were progressive and engaged in contemporary philosophical questions, they were ultimately concerned about the Male subject and his "emancipation" from the material world. As their writings attest, they were influenced by the Neo-Kantians, Weininger, Nietzsche, and Freud, but dismissed the works of those involved in Feminism (such as Bebel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, J.S. Mill's *The Subjugation of Women*, or the writings of Clara Zetkin and Helene Lang) as contributing to social "sickness." They viewed women as tied to the natural, material world, a world that they strove to transcend. See Wright, *ibid.*, 588. For a discussion of society limiting women to the realm of "immanence" rather than allowing them to move outward, see Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction," to *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Knopf, 2010), especially 16-17.

Chapter 5: Woman as Muse: Female Sexuality as Inspiration in *Feuersnot*, *Der Traumgörge*, and *Der ferne Klang*

Feminine sensuality is the primal spring where male spirituality draws renewal.
– Karl Kraus[1]

The artist needs the woman, the woman annihilates the artist.
– Rudolf St. Hoffmann, *Franz Schreker*[2]

For thinkers and artists, women are nothing more than an accidental stimulant that he uses to raise his spiritual metabolism…for him women are like alcohol, nicotine, black coffee. He only needs them in the moment…and when the necessary strength has been released, they cease to exist for him.
– Egon Friedell[3]

As the above quotations suggest, women and their sexuality were a source of inspiration and muse for many *fin-de-siècle* creative male artists, from writers, such as the poet Altenberg, to painters, such as Klimt and Schiele. Recently, however, there has been a move to "re-theorize and redefine the term 'muse,'" and to examine if and when the female muse began to assume a more active and creative role. According to Gayle Levy, "the figure of the muse itself changes, and, like women of the *belle époque*, begins to be liberated from the conventional nineteenth-century concept that keeps the trope frozen in a passive role."[4]

This chapter explores the relationship between the concept of the female muse and female sexuality by returning to Strauss's *Feuersnot* and Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, in addition to

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[1] "Des Weibes Sinnlichkeit ist der Urquell, an dem sich des Mannes Geistigkeit Erneuerung holt." Karl Kraus, *Aphorismen: Sprüche und Widersprüche, Pro domo et mundo, Nachts* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 13. Translated and discussed in: Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 93.

[2] "Der Künstler braucht das Weib, das Weib vernichtet den Künstler." Rudolf St. Hoffmann, *Franz Schreker* (Leipzig, Wien, and Zurich: E. P. Tal Verlag, 1921), 70.

[3] Egon Friedell in an unpublished letter to the actress and "muse" Lina Loos, wife of architect Adolf Loos. Cited in Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 101.

[4] Gayle Levy, *Refiguring the Muse* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 1. Levy, who focuses primarily on the French history of the muse, contends that there is a change only in 1928, when Valery writes about the female muse as a catalyst with an active role. *Ibid.*, 9. For a discussion of how the muse plays a more active role in a specifically Viennese context see Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 92-120.

considering Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge*.[5] While I examined the breakdown of bourgeois norms regarding sexuality in *Feuersnot* and *Der ferne Klang* in the previous chapter, here I am concerned with how some modernists viewed the sexual woman as positive and essential for their creativity, serving as their *muse*. Although the concept of the female muse has been examined in areas such as literature and art history, less work has been done within musicological studies. Beyond investigating the way in which women performed the role as patrons, supporting male music making and composition, little attention has been given to how the role of the muse figures *within* musical works and specifically within operas of this era.[6] Although I will briefly discuss how women served as artistic inspiration for the composers themselves, as is the case for Zemlinsky composing *Der Traumgörge*, I am primarily interested in the role of the muse *within* the operas themselves. How are women depicted as muses? How do they as muses shape male action and creativity? Moreover, what is the relationship among female sexuality, male creativity, and music?

The first part of the chapter will examine broader historical and cultural understandings of the female muse, before considering the role of female sexuality as an artistic inspiration, a theme prevalent amongst the Vienna Moderns.[7] Then I turn to Strauss's *Feuersnot*, Zemlinsky's *Traumgörge*, and Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, works that exemplify modernist attitudes toward female sexuality by presenting it as an inspiration for male creativity. Despite Schreker and

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[5] Although *Der Traumgörge* was not premiered during the historical span of this dissertation, it was still part of public life, almost receiving a premiere in Vienna in 1907, as I later discuss.

[6] One notable exception is Downes' recent book in which he examines how the muse has figured in nineteenth-century French and German instrumental music. Stephen C. Downes, *The Muse as Eros: Music, Erotic Fantasy, and Male Creativity in the Modern Romantic Imagination* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

[7] Brandow-Faller uses the term Vienna Moderns for "those individuals involved in the development of modernism in art, architecture, design, music, and philosophy in the Austrian *Haupt-un-Residenzstadt* around the turn of the century." Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 92. The discussion will also draw on Brandow-Faller's work.

Zemlinsky belonging to differing social and artistic circles than Strauss, upon closer examination a common theme emerges with the ways in which the sexual woman appears in these three operas: woman is sonorous and her role as muse is a sonic source of inspiration, thus drawing on a nineteenth-century trope that identifies women with music. As I demonstrate, the role of female sexuality as muse for male creativity intersects with discourses of woman as music in these operas. Yet while the operas in this chapter all fall into a later modernist conception of female sexuality as muse, through their text and music, each of these operas also reinforces problematic traditional understandings of "Woman" as an object rather than an active, creative subject. Despite the modernist leanings and explicit sexuality in the operas, these operatic women are still not granted sexual subjectivity – they remain passive sexual objects whose identities are imposed from the outside, rather than active subjects whose own desires and sexualities shape their identities from within. It seems that while the sexual woman (and the music that the men associate with her) serves as an inspiration for the male characters, how her sexuality fails to enrich her own identity is reflected in her musical development, or lack thereof.

Section I: *The Muse in History: Traditional Conceptions of the Female Muse*

The muse has traditionally been a female figure who guides the artist and offers him insight. Passive at some moments in history, active during others, the muse is often understood as inspiring men's behavior, actions, or creative acts. The concept of the female muse dates to Greek myths, prior to becoming a cultural archetype. Often depicted as Zeus and Mnemosyne's daughters, the three original muses were: Aoidê (muse of song or voice), Mnême (memory), and Mélétê (meditation). Six more muses were later added – Calliope (poetry), Thalia (comedy), Melpomene (tragedy) Terpsichore (dance), Clio (history), and Euterpe (music). Euterpe, the

muse of music, and Aoidê, the muse of song, are of particular importance here.[8] In many early narratives, the female muses are active. They wield control over the male artist and his creative capabilities by helping shape the artistic creation, while he played a passive role. For instance, the muses helped Greek poets Hesiod and Homer decide what to sing. From ancient Latin and Greek works through to the seventeenth century, the female muse was granted a powerful position: early narratives cast the muse herself as goddess, while the seventeenth century figures considered her a guide, although no longer able to "possess the passive poet."[9]

Yet an interesting shift in the conception of the muse occurred by the nineteenth century: the male artist now controlled the muse. Alongside the emergence of the idea of the creative male genius, the female muse became understood as a silent, passive source of inspiration for the male artist.[10] As Levy writes: "According to our modern conception of this trope, the artist's muse is a woman whose beauty, goodness, and grace inspire the man to create; within this notion the artist effectively usurps any power the woman may have in the name of his art. She enables his art by passively inspiring his act of creation."[11] Levy continues: "[t]he muse's beauty or purity traditionally impels the artist to create. Thus her qualities, as opposed to her actions, inspire him."[12] This reconceptualization began in the eighteenth century and crystallized in the nineteenth century. Although she may inspire him, *he* was agent and author. Even the figure of

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[8] Levy, *Refiguring the Muse*, 9-10. Given the traditional relationship between the Greek muses and music, it is fitting to examine the appearance of the muse in the operas here.

[9] Levy, *ibid.*, 12, 19. "Not only do they furnish the poet with the topic for his ballad, the subject matter so to speak, but they also give him the structure of the verse, the arrangement of the song, the poem itself." *Ibid.*, 12-13.

[10] Downes, *The Muse as Eros*, 2.

[11] Levy, *Refiguring the Muse*, 9, 18. According to Levy, the 1920s witnessed another change in attitude toward the muse, with the muse "compel[ling] the poet to do her bidding." *Ibid.*, 9.

[12] *Ibid.*, 19. As I will later discuss, these qualities can be *projected onto* the woman, as is the case with Fritz and Grete.

the *Ewig-Weibliche* can be considered a type of muse who passively inspires either redemption or creativity. Yet as Levy also notes, "[t]his female character does not provide the poet with the words and structures of the poem, but instead she is simply the catalyst for the poetic work" and "her body passively furnishes him with the subject."[13] Her role is reduced to a passive one rather than an active one.

Mary K. DeShazer offers a feminist critique of the way in which the female muse inspired male writers:

> As divine inspirer, idealized woman, sexual and creative stimulus to the poet, the muse represents an important symbolic aspect of the male literary imagination. These definitions of the muse as object identify her, and by extension women, as 'Other': that which is not the self and in contrast to which, therefore, man can best define himself subjectively.[14]

The muse is sometimes dangerous, sometimes helpful, but always exterior to the male artist and thus objectified and "Othered." As DeShazer writes, these "muses are linked by their objectified status, by their roles as vehicles, catalysts, emblems, against and through whom the active male poet asserts his imaginative power."[15] Despite images in which the poet is often "possessed" by the muse, as creator he is in the position of power, in that he names the creation.[16] As I will examine in this chapter, she is merely a vehicle for male creation, but she herself never creates.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the discourse surrounding the muse began to take on a different, more sexualized tone, and she became what Downes calls the "Modern Muse."[17] The sensuality of the female body became the explicit source of inspiration. Although

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[13] Levy, *ibid.*, 18, 10.

[14] Mary K. DeShazer, *Inspiring Women: Reimagining the Muse* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1986), 2.

[15] *Ibid.*, 26.

[16] *Ibid.*, 2.

[17] Downes writes: "The woman as 'Modern' Muse, however, characteristically breaks out of domestic containment and from an elusive position of distance acquires increasing sexual allure. As such she becomes a problematic figure of alterity in the patriarchal system of cultural production." Downes, *The*

still passive, it was her passive sexuality that inspired the contemporaries of Strauss, Schreker, and Zemlinsky. Indeed, in the operas themselves, such as *Der Traumgörge* and *Der ferne Klang*, the woman performs the passive role, inspiring man – even if it is merely his imagination of her rather than her actual self. In this chapter, I highlight the difference between "female sexuality" as muse and the "sexual woman" as muse. It seems that the latter is present in many of the representations and sources of inspiration. The "sexual woman" occupies the position of a passive object, something to assist in creativity, rather than the active sexuality of a female subject – "female sexuality." The term "sexual woman" implies that woman's sexuality as an *object* of male desire is what is inspiring. In these operas, as well as in contemporaneous visual and literary works, it is the sexualized body of the woman itself – an object of the artistic gaze – that serves as muse rather than female sexual subjectivity.

***The Muse of the* fin-de-siècle**

The figure of the female muse was certainly prevalent in *fin-de-siècle* German and Viennese society, particularly amongst avant-garde artists and writers in Vienna. Alma Mahler was an inspiration for men, from Klimt, Mahler, and Kokoschka, to Walter Gropius and Franz Werfel, while actress Lina Loos (formerly Vetter) inspired many others within the artistic scene.[18] In her work on Lina Loos, Lisa Fischer suggests three central categories into which women fell for the Vienna Moderns: 1. "*die imaginierende Frau*" (the imagining woman); 2.

Muse as Eros, 3. DeShazer notes that the sexuality of the female muse also existed for the Ancient Greeks, with Plato as one of the first to describe the sexual aspect of the artist-muse relationship. DeShazer, *Inspiring Women*, 9.

[18] Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 93. As Ilona Sármány-Parsons argues, the Eros associated with woman was an "artistic device" in the era, a source of inspiration, a contrast to the dangerous *femme fatales*. She writes: "Women were their models, muses, lovers, and patrons, and even symbols, but were not feared as enemies or treated as equals." Ilona Sármány-Parsons, "The Image in Painting: Clichés and Reality in Austria Hungary, 1895–1905," in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, ed. Steven Beller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 226-27.

"*die inspirierende Frau*" (the inspiring woman); and 3. "*die imaginierte Frau*" (the imagined woman).[19] I later consider the interrelatedness of these last two categories, the inspiring woman and the imagined woman: the "inspiring woman" is often the "imagined woman" that men *project onto* her rather than an accurate reflection of her identity.

Women operated as muses for the Vienna Moderns in a variety of ways – from functioning as patrons and financial supporters, to serving as subjects for their works. For instance, many wealthy Viennese society ladies, or *Salonnières*, hosted salons for artists. Berta Zuckerkandl's Sunday afternoon salons brought together a variety of thinkers, political figures, and artists, from sexologist Krafft-Ebing and future French President Georges Clemenceau to Johann Strauss Jr., as well as Modernists, such as Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, Klimt, and Reinhardt. Alma Mahler's home and Eugenie Schwarzwald's salon also were meeting grounds for artists, including composer Arnold Schoenberg, architect Adolf Loos, and writer Egon Friedell, while Adele Bloch-Bauer hosted figures such as politician Karl Renner and writer Stefan Zweig at her Schillerplatz Palais.[20]

Many of the same women who provided financial and intellectual support with their salons

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[19] Lisa Fischer, *Lina Loos oder Wenn die Muse sich selbst küßt* (Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 15-22. For a more detailed discussion of several important women who functioned as muses in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna see: Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 92-120; Hertha Kratzer, *Die unschicklichen Töchter: Frauenporträts der Wiener Moderne* (Vienna: Überreuter, 2003); Heike Herrberg and Heidi Wagner, *Wiener Melange: Frauen Zwischen Salon und Kaffeehaus* (Berlin: Ebersbach, 2002).

[20] See Brandow-Faller, who describes these as "spaces in which the Vienna Moderns met, mingled, and found physical and spiritual sustenance." "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 97. According to Brandow-Faller, these salons were also held at specific times, so people could move from one to another. Zuckerkandl's was on Sunday afternoons, Mahler's on Sunday evenings, and Eugenie Schwarzwald's place at Schillerplatz was neighboring the Mahler home. *Ibid.*, 97. For a discussion of the relationship between Viennese *Salonnières* and modernism, and particularly the Zuckerkandl salon, see: Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun, "The Salons of Modernism," in *Jewish Women and their Salons: The Power of Conversation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 85-99. Berta Zuckerkandl also wrote political articles in *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Neuen Wiener Journal*, as well as articles about women's dress and about advances in women's education. For a description of Krafft-Ebing at her salon, see Berta Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History*, 164-65.

were painted by these artists, in particular by Klimt, thus operating as muses on another level. For instance, Bloch-Bauer's image is captured two portraits by Klimt, while she also served as a model for his *Judith* paintings (*Judith I*, 1901 and *Judith II*, 1909).[21] In addition to the Viennese society portraits, the women in Klimt's personal life also functioned as inspiration in his art. For instance, his mistress Mizzi Zimmerman was his model and muse for several of his nude works, including the painting *Hope I.*[22] Although many of the paintings of society women are not explicitly sexualized, an underlying sensuality is present. Indeed, Klimt often chose women as the subjects of his works, clothing their bodies in complex dresses that merged into the highly ornamented, colorful, and sometimes gilded background, immobilizing the women as decorative objects.[23] According to art historian Alessandra Comini, "following the technique of the old masters, Klimt drew his figures nude and then, especially in the case of virgins he gradually adorned them with ornaments of repeated and suggestive shape until their bodies were defined and penetrated by a cumulative symbolic overlay."[24] The nude female body is central to Klimt's art, yet in many of his works the sexual woman is often reduced to a mere passive ornament

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[21] Susanna Partsch, *Gustav Klimt: Painter of Women* (New York and Munich: Prestel, 1994), 78. Bloch-Bauer, with whom Klimt was involved in a relationship, is also considered as a possible model for the woman in Klimt's well-known "Kiss" painting. *Ibid.*, 78, 87.

[22] See Partsch, *Gustav Klimt*, 45-70, 98. Although the fashion designer Emilie Flöge was a central figure in Klimt's life, he only painted a couple of images of her fully clothed in her own designs, while Brandow-Faller makes the important point that Gustav Klimt served as muse for Flöge; his geometric and naturalistic ornate decoration and patterns influenced the designs for Flöge's fashion house, *Schwestern Flöge Modehaus*. Thus it was not a one-sided artistic relationship, as was often the case for this time period, but rather one of mutual inspiration. Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 101.

[23] It seems that with many of Klimt's paintings, the face of the woman is painted in a flat, different style, making her fade, locked onto a secondary plane, overshadowed by the highly ornamented and often gilded clothes. Her body is even subsumed into the highly designed background. As Partsch argues, "in his portraits [Klimt] deprived women of her body and her intellect." *Ibid.*, 98.

[24] Alessandra Comini, "Vampires, Virgins and Voyeurs in Imperial Vienna," in *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730–1970*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 219.

rather than celebrated as something in itself.[25]

Klimt's contemporary, Egon Schiele, also relied on the sexualized female body as inspiration, painting and drawing numerous controversial and explicit portraits of women reclining.[26] As Peter Vergo remarks, Schiele's "preoccupation with sexual subject-matter goes, however, far beyond merely business interests [...] sexuality was for him a vital source of inspiration, although his treatment of erotic subjects is nearly always more unabashed; at times, his nude studies, especially of the period 1909 – 1911, have an anatomical, almost gruesome character."[27] Schiele turned to woman as a source of inspiration for his paintings, making their bodies available for himself as an artist, but also making their bodies available to the male gaze of the viewer. For example, in Schiele's drawings and watercolors, women are passively reclining, their sexualized bodies openly on display for the viewer, while the viewing angle is often from above. Kokoschka, another artist inspired by the women of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, wrote to Alma Mahler in 1913 about her role as his muse: "I must have you for my wife soon, or else my great talent will perish miserably. You must revive me at night, like a magic potion […] You are the woman and I am the artist."[28]

Female sexuality and the *Frauenseele* (the woman's soul) also served as inspiring muse for writers, such as for the poet Altenberg. As recounted in his essay "Wie ich ein Schriftsteller

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[25] Natter, "The Naked Body and Public Space in Viennese Art," 38. Some examples include the curled up nude woman in *Danae*; the controversial ceiling painting commissioned for the University of Vienna Medical Department that included a naked woman leaning backward; *Hofnung I* (1903); and the "Malevolent Powers" part of the large *Beethoven Frieze* (1902). In addition, Klimt has multiple sketches of solitary women as well as women in pairs involved in explicit sexual activity, such as "Reclining Woman" (n.d.).

[26] For example, *Naked Girl, Reclining* (1911); *Reclining Nude* (1914); *Reclining Nude with Left Leg Raised* (1914); *Reclining Female Nude on red Drape* (1914). In Klaus Albrecht Schröder, *Egon Schiele: Eros and Passion* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2006), 28, 37, 40.

[27] Vergo, *Art in Vienna, 1898–1918*, 214.

[28] Kokoschka to Alma-Mahler Werfel in 1913. Cited in Elizabeth Keathley, *Revisioning Musical Modernism*, 107.

wurde," two young girls inspired Altenberg to begin writing prose in 1894, and the innocent sexuality of young women continued to motivate his writings over his career.[29] Altenberg's creativity was even energized after glimpsing Schreker's young wife, Maria Binder Schreker, at a dress rehearsal for the infamous 1913 *Musikverein Konzert*. He wrote to Schreker: "I don't understand anything about this latest 'modern music' […] But I do understand the countenance of the modern woman […] For that I allow myself the right to utter my blessing upon this tender, remarkable, indeed other-worldly countenance of your wife!"[30] With some poems even scrawled on the backs of postcard images of women, he reveals the inspirational role that woman and female beauty had on his art. As Altenberg's wrote: "Nature and woman ought to work the same way, transforming us to noble, all-understanding, gentle creatures of the world."[31] The sexual woman functioned as a muse equivalent to nature, and served to invigorate male creativity.

For the sharp-witted Kraus, "feminine sensuality [was] the primal spring where male spirituality draws renewal."[32] In *Die Fackel* and in writings such as *Aphorismen: Spruch oder Widerspruch*, Kraus incisively commented on women's roles in society, the women's movement, and women's sensuality, often presenting woman and culture as opposites.[33] A deep-seated misogyny surfaces in Kraus's writings, despite his praise of women's sensuality and critique of

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[29] Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 97. Altenberg's obsession with young women and the inspiration he received by them is discussed in greater depth in: Sander L. Gilman, "Male Stereotypes of Female Sexuality in fin-de-siècle Vienna," in *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 48-52. For a discussion of Altenberg, the *Frauenseele*, and the *Frauenkult*, as well as his interests in Berg's future wife, Helene Nahowski, see David P. Schroeder, "Alban Berg and Peter Altenberg: Intimate Art and the Aesthetics of Life," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, no. 2 (1993): 262-69.

[30] Original *Schreker Fonds*, *ÖNB-Mus*. Cited in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 72.

[31] From the "Weg im Winter," the third section of "Texte auf Ansichtskarten," from Altenberg's *Neues Altes*, discussed and translated in Schroeder, "Alban Berg and Peter Altenberg," 279.

[32] Kraus, *Aphorismen*, 13. Kraus also wrote: "Men's eroticism is the sexuality of women." ("Die Erotik des Mannes ist die Sexualität des Weibes.") *Ibid*., 15.

[33] Comini, "Vampires, Virgins and Voyeurs in Imperial Vienna," 211.

bourgeois sexual mores. Kraus considered women able to inspire male creation, but unable themselves to create; women simply lacked the mental and physical capacity to actively create. "Woman" was an empty vessel, and she and her sexuality were best suited to serve as muse rather than artist. Kraus wrote:

> The lust of the male draws sustenance from the sterile mind of the woman. Female lust nourishes the male intellect, creates its work […] Books and paintings are created by womankind, though not by those who write and paint themselves. A work is brought to life: here a woman conceives what a man bore.[34]

Kraus's words resonate with themes in contemporary discourses about woman, exemplified in works by Weininger, who believed that woman was purely sexual and an empty vessel. Indeed, her beauty (and existence) lies in men's projections upon her: "The beauty of a woman is only created by man's love […] But Woman is nothing, she is a hollow vessel covered for a while in makeup and whitewash."[35] This recalls Nietzsche's understanding of woman as unable to create and thus relegated to the role of procreation.[36]

Women also served as muses in artistic spaces, such as the *Kabarett Fledermaus*, a variety cabaret created in 1907, where most notably, the Wiesenthal sisters danced and Lina Loos read poetry. In addition to the members of *Jung Wien* writing theater pieces or composing songs for

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[34] Cited in Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 98. Kraus, however, was highly critical of much of Viennese culture, referencing its decay and feminization in numerous aphorisms in *Sprüche und Widerspruch*.

[35] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 268. Reinhard Erman also references this same passage from Weininger and comments how Weininger prefigured the way in which women served a muse for men: "Weininger does not fail to recognize the cruelty that woman's husband does to her by conceding to her only the role of the muse on the path of mental production." ("Weininger verkennt nicht die Grausamkeit, die der Mann der Frau antut, indem ihr auf dem Weg zur geistigen Produktion einzig die Rolle der Muse zugesteht.") Although I discuss the significance of how women are to serve as "muse on the path to mental production" within *Der ferne Klang*, Erman considers it most closely realized in Schreker's later opera, *Die Geziechneten*. Reinhard Ermen, "Der 'Erotiker' und der 'Asket,'" in *Franz Schreker (1878–1934) zum 50. Todestag*, ed. Reinhard Ermen (Aachen: Rimbaud Press, 1984)*,* 52.

[36] For Nietzsche, men create their idea of women: "Man has created woman – out of what? Out of a rib of his God – of his 'ideal.'" Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 144. See also Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), 120-21.

this avant-garde cultural space, women were present, both *on* and off the stage.[37] As art critic Ludwig Hevesi wrote, Egon Friedell's *Kabarett Fledermaus* was "a place where immaturely dressed muses in the latest cosmopolitan fashions have an artistically reliable place to go, where no cultured person should feel bored, or at least only in the manner of his own choosing."[38] As Egon Friedell's quotation opening to this chapter above suggests, women were among many "stimulants" in Vienna's lively *Kaffees* and *Cabarets.* Yet, with their roles as performers, they also were *active*.

Muses and Music

Many women have been considered the source of inspiration for male composers. Irish actress Harriet Smithson inspired Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and was musically characterized through the *idée fixe*; Clara Schumann, herself a talented composer and virtuoso pianist, influenced Robert Schumann's music, often figuring in musical ciphers and in his lieder; and Sibelius's wife, Aino, is considered to be the inspiration and muse behind many of his symphonic works.[39] Wagner's attempts to work through his love for Mathilde Wesendonck led to the "Wesendonck Lieder," and, according to some, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Walküre*.[40] Just

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[37] In addition to Lina Loos, other women included cabaret actress Mela Mars, modern dancer Gertrude Barrison, and modern dancer Grete Wiesenthal. See Michael Buhrs, Barbara Lesák, and Thomas Trabitsch, eds., *Kabarett Fledermaus 1907 bis 1913: Ein Gesamtwerk der Wiener Werkstätte: Literatur, Musik, Tanz*, Exhibition at *Österreichisches Theatermuseum* (Vienna: Österreichisches Theatermuseum-Christian Brandstätter Verlag, 2007).

[38] Ludwig Hevesi, "Kabarett Fledermaus," in *Altkunst-Neukunst* (Vienna: Konegan, 1909), 240. Translation from Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 100.

[39] Downes, *The Muse as Eros,* 28-29. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 address how their muses influenced each composer's music.

[40] Chris Walton, "Voicing Mathilde: Wagner's Controlling Muse," in *Richard Wagner's Zurich: The Muse of Place* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), 201. As Žižek writes, "Wagner erected a memorial to Mathilde Wesendonck and to his immortal love for her so that he was able to get over his infatuation and return to normal bourgeois life." Žižek, *Opera's Second Death*, 114.

as Wesendonck served as a muse for Wagner's compositions, in *Die Meistersinger* the character Eva seems to be the source of inspiration for Walther von Stolzing's song. She (or at least his idea of her) and his desire to win her as wife, is what arguably compels Walther's to sing in the competition and, more importantly, to create a new type of music.[41] This pattern of women influencing the composer's musical output continued into early twentieth-century Vienna. Alma Mahler's influence marks not only Gustav Mahler's 5th and 6th Symphonies, but also the conclusion of his 8th Symphony, whose choral ending extols the uplifting role of the *Ewig-Weibliche* when the mystical choir sings the famous concluding passage from Goethe's *Faust* about women guiding men toward higher realms: "Eternal woman draws us upwards."[42] Alban Berg, whose wife Helene Nahowski-Berg is sometimes represented through the key of d minor in his music, wrote of his wife: "the kindly muse-figure, the wise counselor and helpmate, the dispenser of general kindness and love."[43] Details of Berg's relationship with Hanna Fuchs-Robettin are also woven into his music, most famously in the *Lyric Suite*.[44] Yet Downes points out the *erotic* aspect to this inspiration.[45] This is particularly the case in opera at the beginning of the twentieth century, as we will now see.

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[41] Although there is nothing necessarily sexual about Eva, she could thus be interpreted as a muse in *Die Meistersinger*.

[42] The *Adagietto* movement of Mahler's fifth symphony is supposedly based upon a love letter between the couple, while a melody in his sixth symphony depicts Alma. Downes, *The Muse as Eros*, 112-46. For the line from *Faust* see: Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, 288.

[43] Berg refers to his wife in the d minor interlude in *Wozzeck*, and also wrote to her: "I kiss that hand of yours, my most glorious Symphony in D minor!" Cited and discussed in Diane M. Paige, "Janácek and the Captured Muse," in *Janácek and his World*, ed. Michael Beckerman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 82-83.

[44] Constantin Floros, *Alban Berg and Hanna Fuchs: The Story of a Love in Letters*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

[45] Downes, *The Muse as Eros*, 6-16.

Section II: Feuersnot: *Diemut as Muse*

All creative power springs from sensuousness. Creative spirit possesses the magic power to fashion a living entity out of nothing.
– Wolzogen, *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte*[46]

While Strauss's *Feuersnot* challenged bourgeois sexual mores, the opera also presented female sexuality as inspiration for male creativity throughout the operatic text. As discussed in the previous chapter, Kunrad becomes infatuated with Diemut, staring at her and boldly kissing her in front of the entire town. Diemut's sexuality inspires him, but when she prudishly rejects him and her role as muse, she angers him and stifles his creativity. In turn, he punishes the town. As he sings in his speech, only the love of a good woman will allow him to do his work.[47] At the end of the opera Diemut embraces sexuality and Kunrad's love, thus "rekindling" the town's spirit and life. Only through physical sexuality can the town be saved. The fires are relit, coldness banished, and Kunrad is inspired once again. In Strauss's reconfiguration of Wagner's redemptive love through woman, the woman's *sexuality* is now what is redemptive, and no longer her purity.

While the previous chapter explored how *Feuersnot* celebrated sexuality and critiqued bourgeois morality, this chapter seeks to explore the way in which Diemut as a sexual woman functions as muse within the opera for Kunrad. *Feuersnot*, much like Strauss's other operas and tone poems, is characterized by strong leitmotivic structures that play an important role in the opera's narrative. Thus, I examine Diemut's musical presentation (both through the orchestra and her voice), in order to assess her function as muse in the opera: What types of leitmotifs are associated with this Diemut? And what role do they play at various moments in the opera?

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[46] Wolzogen, *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte*, 146-47. Translation from Del Mar, *Richard* Strauss, I: 227.

[47] For a summary of the plot, see Chapter 4.

Ultimately it seems that this opera that celebrates sexuality in fact only focuses on male sexuality and subjectivity.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in the original Flemish tale, *The Extinguished Fire of Audenaerde*, on which the opera is based, the townspeople rekindle their fire from Diemut's actual body. Yet Wolzogen altered the libretto by transforming women as a physical source of fire to women's *sexuality* as the figurative source of fire. Diemut's virginal sexual sacrifice and submission to Kunrad is what restores the town's fire or, in other words, life, and creativity. Recall from the previous chapter (and the epigraph above) Wolzogen's ideas about sensuality and creativity in *Feuersnot*:

> All creative power springs from sensuousness. Creative spirit possesses the magic power to fashion a living entity out of nothing. Now, if this magic can only becomes effective through the fire of the senses, then I claim full right to clutch this fire to myself where ever I may find it. I have given poetic expression to this artistic bravado in the *Singgedicht*, *Feuersnot*, which I thought out together with Richard Strauss in Munich and wrote down in a few days on the island of Rügen in the splendid elation of a delightful love affair. Not a soul had understood the hidden sense of this allegory. The Philistines naturally were morally upset as usual but even the professional art *cognoscenti* remained without any idea. Only art invests life, at least for men of culture, with light, color, warmth and depth of meaning. Each true artist is a Prometheus who creates mankind in the likeness of God. But he has no need to steal the distant light of heaven for his creation; he can take fire from the earth, since, 'All warmth springs from woman, All light stems from love…'[48]

The line "All warmth springs from woman, all light stems from love" even makes its way into Kunrad's speech. In the opera, only a "hot blooded young maiden," Diemut, and her physical love will allow the fire to glow. Immediately before kissing Diemut, Kunrad sings of love burning and consuming – "*heiße liebe*" (hot love) – again drawing attention to her physicality.[49]

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[48] In his autobiography, Wolzogen, *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte*, 146-47. Translation from Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I, 227. For a discussion of Wolzogen's other writings and sexuality – *Das dritte Geschlecht* (1899); *Die arme Sünderin* (1901); *Geschichten von Lieben süßen Mädeln* (1898) – see Kristiansen, "Strauss's First Librettist: Ernst von Wolzogen Beyond Überbrettl," 79-82, 106-9.

[49] The association of *heiß liebe* (hot love) and/or fire with love seems to be a common theme during the *fin-de-siècle*. See the discussion about heat and love in the previous chapter.

Not only does "[a]ll creative power springs from sensuousness," but Wolzogen has Kunrad and the chorus echo this sentiment: "[a]ll warmth springs from woman, [a]ll light flows from light, along through womanly passion once more the fire for us will glow." Indeed, for Wolzogen, "*Sinnlichkeit*" is a mix of sexuality and creativity, and women's sexuality enables creativity to flourish. As Kristiansen notes, the above passage demonstrates Wolzogen's rejection of artistic creativity as emerging from a metaphysics and suggests that artistic creation can be "derived" from sexuality.[50] These concepts appear elsewhere in Wolzogen's work. For instance, in his novel *Der Erzketzer*, the central character experiences a bout of creative inspiration after a sexual encounter, while in the novel *Der Kraft-Mayr*, Wolzogen has the character Franz Liszt say: "An artist cannot exist without ecstasy: the rapture of the senses fertilize the imagination, and it is quite certain that a person devoid of sensuality cannot be an artist."[51]

Musical Muse: Diemut's Lack of Orchestral Voice

In the case of *Feuersnot*, how Diemut serves as muse for Kunrad is evident through the changes in Kunrad's music, which reflects the inspiration he achieves from Diemut's sexuality. As Ziegler demonstrated in his 1907 analysis of the work, Kunrad's musical development is apparent in moments such as the scene between him and Diemut, with its proliferation of thematic materials that differentiate this passage from Kunrad's earlier musical

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[50] Kristiansen writes: "In addition to the idea of sexuality as a source of artistic inspiration, [Wolzogen's] fanciful yet conventional image of the Promethean artist shows his allegiance to the antimetaphysical principles of Realism. The artist needs no metaphysics for his creation, but can derive it all from his sexuality." Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss before *Salome*," 253.

[51] Cited in Kristiansen, "Strauss's First Librettist: Ernst von Wolzogen Beyond Überbrettl," 106-7. Yet as Kristiansen notes, Wolzogen was somewhat conservative in his sexual presentation and decency onstage, even noting that Wolzogen avoided explicit eroticism in his *Überbrettl* while the sexual encounter his novel *Der Erzketzer* is a "Sündenfall" ("fall from grace"). *Ibid.*

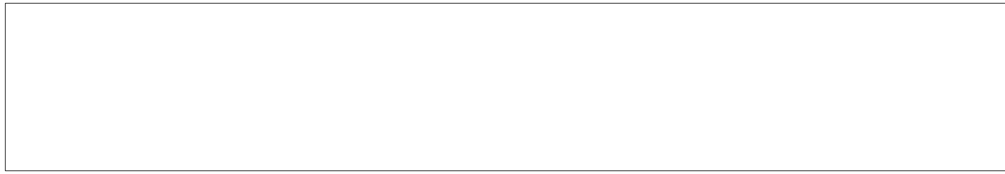
characterization.[52] Even when Kunrad begins to stare at Diemut and to think about her, his music changes from what he sang earlier, while an expressive new theme is heard (**62**). Her friends comment on his gaze (**57**) and a few moments later the stage directions instruct him to gaze at her (7 after **59**): "With growing excitement his gaze remains turned toward Diemut" ("*mit wachsender Begeisterung den Blick fest auf Diemut gerichtet*"). After the kiss (**66**), when he begins to sing of "Feuersnot, Minnegebot," his music is more lyrical, now evocative of a Wagnerian "endless melody" – we can literally *hear* how he is inspired after gazing at and kissing Diemut (6 after **98**). Moreover, he is driven to express himself in a new musical language by his idea of Diemut and her love. Example 5.1 shows the thematic material that is initially associated with Kunrad (a fragment of which is first heard when he first sings), identified in Wossidlo's 1903 guidebook to *Feuersnot*.[53] Example 5.2 shows the "Courtly love" theme that sounds in the orchestra after he begins to gaze at Diemut with "growing excitement," while example 5.3 is the theme that emerges after he kisses Diemut (**66)**. Kunrad's thematic material changes due to his love for Diemut, and "Courtly love" theme becomes central in the opera, particularly when he sings of love and desire for Diemut.

Ex. 5.1: Strauss, *Feuersnot*: Kunrad's Theme (opening 2 measures first heard at **33,** then this version after **45**).

[52] Ziegler, *Richard Strauss in seinen dramatischen Dichtungen*, 50. Ziegler does not note any parallel development for Diemut. Del Mar also points out Kunrad's evolving thematic material and its presentation, writing "his whole being has been transformed by his awareness of Diemut." Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, I, 209-15.

[53] Walther Wossidlo, *Feuersnot*, Populärer Führer durch Poesie und Musik 93 (Leipzig: Rühle & Wendling, 1903), 7, 13.

Ex. 5.2: Strauss, *Feuersnot*: Kunrad's "Courtly Love" Theme (first heard **62**, after he sees Diemut).



Ex. 5.3: Strauss, *Feuersnot*: Kunrad's Theme (complete version 8 before **100** – 1 before **100**).

Yet while Kunrad's desire for her dominates the opera, Diemut's *own* sexual desire and development are relatively absent in both the text and the music. There is no reference to Diemut's own sexual development or awakening in the libretto. For instance, Diemut represses her sexuality, denying it when her friends notice that she is staring after Kunrad. Kunrad, however, is given ample opportunity to explain to his audience what he thinks about love. Although Diemut welcomes Kunrad into her bedroom at the end of the opera, we are never given insight into her change of heart, into her developing feelings toward him, nor any evidence of a genuine sexual awakening. Diemut's own desire is never expressed in the music or text, but the focus is on Kunrad and fulfilling his desire so the town can be saved. We only hear her sing of the wonders of love *with* Kunrad, often echoing him.

Although Diemut alters Kunrad's musical language by inspiring him, she never seems to develop her *own* musical language beyond the opening song, even after she embraces Kunrad.[54]

[54] Although, as I noted in Chapter 4, Diemut's musical material does shift slightly (her folksong theme is now in the full orchestra) following her sexual experience. She is only able to take up *Kunrad*'s thematic

As discussed in the previous chapter, Diemut first sings a simple accompanied folksong, "Süsse Amarellen," with clear phrase structures, a stable diatonic melody (in B♭major), and simple melodic lines (5 after **11** – **12**, see example 4.1 in Chapter 4). This thematic material associated with Diemut disappears after the kiss, only retuning in the orchestra in the concluding moments. Despite minor changes to the treatment of this thematic material (as discussed in Chapter 4), her musical language does not change to reflect a sexual awakening in the same way that Kunrad's does. She neither takes up the song that characterized her at the beginning of the opera, nor is she characterized by "new," "original" thematic material. We *hear* the excitement of love that allows Kunrad to sing in a Wagnerian manner with the new thematic material, but Diemut seems unmoved in both speech and song. The thematic material that she sings at the end of the opera is derivative of Kunrad's in the musical changes discussed earlier; she merely *imitates* or *echoes* him.

As Morris aptly notes in his work analyzing the concluding *Liebesszene*, not only does the orchestral music seem to use "'feminine' voices as sources of masculine pleasure and empowerment," but the passage "can be seen to address and ultimately reinforce the male subject, remodeling the perceived threat of female sexuality as desire for him."[55] Recall also Morris's comment, mentioned in the previous chapter, that "[t]he only active libido is Kunrad's, flowing in a narcissistic circle."[56] Although Morris retreats from this position over the course of

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material, imitating him, while her original thematic material sounds, only now with a full orchestra. Diemut's thematic material does not develop as Kunrad's does, nor is she inspired to create new thematic material. Although it could be argued that the seductive "love theme" is new musical material, it is in many ways derivative (in terms of melodic contour and style) of music that Kunrad sang immediately before.

[55] Morris, *Reading Opera between the Lines*, 39.

[56] *Ibid.*, 61. Morris, who is concerned with *how* orchestral music can "signify sexuality," discusses the way that the orchestra's musical patterns resemble sexual behavior, from its gestures to climaxes. *Ibid.*, 66.

his article, and reconsiders the opera as "present[ing] a picture of mutual sexual fulfillment," I contend that Kunrad ultimately remains the focus when one considers identifying musical materials.[57] Diemut's identifying music fades, reflecting that the opera is not about her sexual experience or agency. Even when her theme finally reappears at the end, sounding briefly in the orchestra in the concluding moments, its treatment is telling. As Morris points out, it appears in a chamber-like setting, but now with an *offstage* harp, glockenspiel, and harmonium, a spatial placement that marks her as "Other" to Kunrad, who "has command of the orchestra in the pit – no offstage ensembles for him."[58] While Diemut's folk-song theme initially appears in a chamber setting, it is quickly overtaken by the "courtly love" theme in the full orchestra, thematic material and an orchestral texture associated with Kunrad and his desire (**218,** see Ex. 5.4), while Kunrad's theme dominates in their voices and the concluding moments of the opera. Furthermore, the opera ends in the D major of the townspeople, not the B♭ major of Diemut's song.[59] As documented in the music, there is little focus on Diemut's sexual experience, and she even seems to sacrifice her (musical) identity over the course of the opera.

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[57] *Ibid.*, 63. Recall also how Strauss's contemporary, Ziegler, noted the proliferation of Kunrad's music.
[58] *Ibid.*, 52.
[59] Kristiansen notes that the opera ends in D major. Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss before *Salome*," 263.

Ex. 5.4: Strauss: *Feuersnot*. Diemut's theme, then Kunrad's Courtly Love motive overtakes it (**217 –** 4 after **218**).

Diemut's Embodied Voice

Of course, opera does not merely occur within the orchestral and musical structures. Opera is embodied and given voice by female singers, whose voices have the capacity to sway audience perception of both the plot and music.[60] Perhaps one of the ways for the opera to present a "modern" sexuality for Diemut would be through her voice. While Diemut lacks a "voice" of her own in the orchestra, her actual singing voice and vocal identity could be a way of overcoming her unarticulated sexual identity. Yet in the end, this does not occur. Diemut completely

[60] See Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Women," 228-29, 254-55.

abandons her vocal identity (so strongly characterized by the song "Süsse Amarellen"), sings Kunrad's music, and calls him "*meister*" (**230** – **231**, Ex. 5.5). In Strauss and Wolzogen's "operatic text," Diemut's sexual awakening in terms of both the plot and the music serves as inspiration and creative stimulus for male creativity – for Kunrad and society by rekindling the fire for the townspeople – rather than as a positive celebration of female sexuality as tied to the development of female subjectivity. There are no moments of vocal virtuosity or dancing in which she can express changes in her own subjectivity following the kiss.[61] The only moments in which she sings are with Kunrad, and even in those she remains within *his* musical language. In the following example, she echoes his phrases, singing music that is derived from Kunrad rather than a music of her own, which could have indicated a change in her identity (again Ex. 5.5).[62] This structure resonates with the series of male/female binaries in Western culture, critiqued by Hélène Cixous and other feminist theorists, in which women are often associated with the "derivative," while men are associated with the "origin."[63] Diemut is a mirror, dissolving into a musical reflection of Kunrad and his idea of her.

[61] While Diemut seems angered after the kiss, the musical material at this moment is not significant to the development of the opera or to Diemut's character.

[62] Again, although her music appears briefly at the end, it is only fleeting and quickly subsumed into the music of the duet.

[63] See Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 65.

Ex. 5.5: Strauss: *Feuersnot*, Duet between Diemut and Kunrad (1 after **230** – 7 after **231**).

Ultimately, it is not Diemut's voice or Diemut herself, but Kunrad's desire for and imagination of her that is key in the opera.[64] It is *his* idea of her and *his* desire for her that inspire him, rather than the actual woman who is in front of him. Despite the opera's progressive celebration of sexuality and its criticism of Diemut's bourgeois morality, Diemut's identity and

[64] Morris initially suggests that because Diemut does not really return Kunrad's love (she was only pretending to love him), the inspiration Kunrad experiences is because "he had projected that desire onto her," and "it would seem that the source of fire/libido lies not in Diemut, but in Kunrad's desire *for* Diemut" (Morris, *Reading Opera between the Lines*, 61). Yet Morris's position shifts when analyzing the conclusion of the opera, and he contends that they do develop mutually. In the end, Morris argues that both Diemut and Kunrad are fulfilled sexuality: "The *Liebesszene* presents a picture of mutual sexual fulfillment, paving the way for a post-coital declaration of love." Morris, *ibid.*, 63. As I contend, it seems that Diemut's sexuality is not developed in either the text or the music, making it impossible for the opera to be about *mutual* fulfillment.

sexual development seem to be the least concern, as reflected in her lack of musical development. Instead, Kunrad's development and creativity is privileged, along with that of the community. Recalling nineteenth-century conceptions and representations of the muse, Diemut is there to serve, just as Kundry is with her "*Dienen*," both dramatically and musically, but in this case, as inspiration.[65]

Section III: *Zemlinsky's* Der Traumgörge

Eternal woman leads us upwards.
– Goethe, *Faust*, Part II[66]

[The] Eternal-womanly drags us down.
– Nietzsche, *Human all the Human*[67]

Zemlinsky's opera *Der Traumgörge* also explores the association between creative inspiration and women. In addition to dealing with the oppositions between "life and dreams, naiveté and awareness, nature and civilization,"[68] both the composer Zemlinsky and the central character Görge were inspired by a female muse. *Der Traumgörge* is about Görge, a young bookish, dreamer who has inherited a mill and who is engaged to Grete, a young woman who does not understand his naiveté and dreamy nature. One day, Görge falls asleep by a brook only to be "woken" to the appearance (or apparition, or dream) of a Princess. Although this scene is

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[65] Incidentally, Kundry could be interpreted as muse as well with the way in which her sexuality inspires Parsifal to reject her, and thus save the grail community.

[66] Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, 288.

[67] The entire passage, which is about Wagner, reads: "Such music weakens, softens, feminizes. Its 'eternal womanly' drags us down." ("Solche Musik entnervt, erweicht, verweiblicht, ihr 'Ewig-Weibliches' zieht uns hinab!") From Nietzsche, *Human, All too Human*, cited in Roger Hollinrake, *Nietzsche, Wagner, and the Philosophy of Pessimism*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 126.

[68] Hörst Weber identifies these as central themes in the opera. Hörst Weber, *Alexander Zemlinsky: eine studie*, Österreichische Komponisten des XX. Jahrhunderts 23 (Wien: Verlag Elizabeth Lafite, 1977), 44. Weber has also identified Jugendstil compositional tendencies in Zemlinsky's music. See Hörst Weber, "Jugendstil und Musik in der Oper der Jahrhundertwende," *Die Musikforschung* 27 (1974): 171-74.

not included in the opera, Görge describes this appearance of the Princess to his disbelieving fiancée, Grete, as well as Hans, Grete's former sweetheart. Then in a second meeting, which we do witness, the Princess inspires him to pursue his aspirations and explore the world. Act I concludes with Görge leaving the village in search of the "distant" sound that "calls," much as Fritz does in *Der ferne Klang.*[69]

Act II is set in another village three years later. Now full of despair and a drunk, Görge's quest has gone nowhere. Amidst the glowing Whitsun bonfires – another connection between love and fire – Görge declares his love for his sympathetic new friend Gertraud, another outsider. Gertraud is the daughter of a disposed nobleman, and the villagers, who falsely suspect her of witchcraft and arson, despise her. Meanwhile Kaspar, who leads the villagers in planning a revolt, wants Görge to be the mouthpiece. Görge refuses once he learns that the uprising may be violent and that he must give up Gertraud. The townspeople, however, are furious. Led by Marei, a temptress whose affection Görge rejected, they direct their anger and violence toward Gertraud.[70] Görge, inspired by Gertraud and her love, is compelled into action in order to save her from the vengeful villagers. In the *Nachspiel*, Görge and Gertraud are now happily married and back in the village of Act I, where he has reclaimed his inheritance and helped the townspeople. In the concluding duet he sings of how Gertraud is the Princess of his dreams: "Princess Gertraud, it is you that I have sought […] Princess Gertraud, I love you."[71] Indeed, his

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[69] Albright notes the similarities with the use of sound between *Der Traumgörge* and *Der ferne Klang*. Daniel Albright, *Music Speaks: On the Language of Opera, Dance, and Song* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2009), 81-83.

[70] Although Marei is a temptress, or *femme fatale*, who desires Görge, she does not play a significant role here. Görge desires Gertraud, whose sensuality serves as muse for him, as will be discussed.

[71] "Prinzessin Gertraud, dich hab' ich gesucht […] Prinzessin Gertraud, ich liebe dich!" (*Nachspiel*, Scene 3, mm. 240 – 256). The English translations of the libretto used throughout this chapter are my slight modifications of the translation by Lional Salter in *Der Traumgörge: Libretto* (Königsdorf, Germany: Caprioccio, 1988).

love and idea of both the Princess and Gertraud, whose identities blur by the end of the opera, inspire all of the wistful daydreamer's actions.

Zemlinsky's Muse

Zemlinsky composed *Der Traumgörge*, his third opera, between 1904 and 1906 to a libretto by Leo Feld (originally Leo Hirschfeld), a protégé of Jung Wien writer, Hermann Bahr, and brother of Victor Leon, the well-known operetta librettist of *Die lustige Witwe*, *Wiener Blut*, and *Der Opernball.*[72] The opera, with two acts and a *Nachspiel*, was based upon an amalgamation of Heine's *Der arme Peter* (Poor Peter) and Volksmann's *Vom unsichtbaren Königreich* (The Invisible Kingdom).[73] Although *Der Traumgörge* was not premiered during the same historical span as the other works examined in this dissertation – in fact, it was not premiered until 1980 in Nurnberg, which prevents any investigation into *fin-die-siècle* responses to the work – it was still part of public life and documents contemporaneous ideas of female sexuality as muse for male creativity. The opera score was published by 1906, and Gustav Mahler had scheduled the opera to be premiered under him at the *Wien Hofoper* in October 1907.[74] The singers had their parts and the opera rehearsals were well underway before the

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[72] Horst Weber, "Über Zemlinsky's Oper, *Der Traumgörge*," in *Musik und Traum*, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, Musik-Konzepte 74 (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1991), 111. Zemlinsky began to think about the opera in 1901, but only started to compose it in 1903. Anthony Beaumont, *Zemlinsky* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 136-39.

[73] Marc Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky: A Lyric Symphony* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2010), 97. According to Anthony Beaumont, Hermann Sudermann's novel *Der Katzensteg*, one of Alma Mahler's favorite works, also was influential for the opera, while Goethe's *Werther* and Gottfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorf* (*A Village Romeo and Juliet*), were earlier considered as possible sources for the libretto. See Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 136, 142.

[74] Karczag and Wallner published the opera, and the *Hofoper* had a contract with the publisher to stage the work. Yet following Mahler's sudden resignation, his successor, Felix von Weingartner, refused to honor his predecessor's agreements, first postponing and then cancelling the performance and relegating the work to the *Hofoper* archives in 1908. *Traumgörge* was finally premiered on October 11th, 1980 in

premiere was indefinitely postponed by his successor, Felix von Weingartner.[75]

Zemlinsky's commencement of *Der Traumgörge* coincided with the end of his courtship to Alma Schindler (the future Alma Mahler), and there is a strong connection between the subject matter and his real life relationship with her.[76] Alma served as Zemlinsky's muse during these years before she met Mahler, particularly for his early work on *Der Traumgörge*.[77] In a 1901 letter to her, Zemlinsky confessed his goal of depicting her in his opera:

> I'm looking for material for an opera in which you shall take the leading female role. I wouldn't include everything of you: the dazzling festivities, dinner parties, dances, admirers, etc. I have no talent for soubrette parts! But all the rest. And then myself: much of me. That could even turn out a tragedy, don't you think?[78]

Alma arguably appears in both the "Dream-Princess" and Gertraud. According to Anthony Beaumont, "[a]s the Dream-Princess – noble, beautiful, inspiring – she displays those attributes Zemlinsky perceived as the highest ideals of womanhood; as Gertraud she possesses those

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Nürnberg. For a discussion of the fate of *Traumgörge* in the wake of Mahler's resignation, see Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 154-58; and Moskovitz, *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 99-108. Mahler likely wanted to stage the opera following the success of Zemlinsky's *Es war Einmal* at the *Hofoper* in 1900. Alfred Clayton, "Zemlinsky's One Act Operas," *The Musical Times* 124, no. 1686 (1983): 474.

[75] The rehearsal schedule book for the *Hofoper* (held at *HHSA*) reveals that the rehearsals for *Der Traumgörge* continued well past the delayed premiere date of October 4, 1907. As Darwin notes, many of the rehearsals even took place in early November. See Darwin, *The "I" of the Other*, 88.

[76] Schreker's 1913 opera *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin* was also dedicated to Alma Mahler. Schreker met her in 1911 and she was taken aback by his resemblance to Gustav Mahler. She wrote to Schreker: "Ah why did you leave me your picture? Now I'm done for – It is beautiful, – and there is so much in it – in your head… I am so happy to have found you." Schreker Fonds, *ÖNB-Mus.*, Cited in Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 73.

[77] For a longer discussion on the relationship between Alma Mahler and Zemlinsky see: Lorraine Gorrell, "Zemlinky and the Eternal Feminine, Alma Schindler," in *Discordant Melody: Alexander Zemlinsky, His Songs, and the Second Viennese School* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 98-116. See also: Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 207, 211; Weber, "Über Zemlinskys oper *Der Traumgörge*," 110-11.

[78] "Ich suche einen Stoff für eine Oper: das Mädchen darin musst Du sein! Nicht alles von Dir: die glänzenden Feste, Soupers, Bälle, Freier etc. dürfen nicht vorkommen: Ich habe kein Talent für Soubrettenpartien! Aber alles andere. Und dann ich: vieles von mir. Das kann schließlich eine tragische Oper geben. Nicht wahr?" Zemlinsky to Alma Mahler, in an unpublished letter dated "September 26, 1901(?)." The exact date of this letter is unknown. Translated and discussed in Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 136.

qualities – compassion, humility, sincerity – Alma herself knew she lacked."[79] Although I am not going to make any conjectures about the degree of intimacy between Zemlinsky and his young, attractive composition student, passages in Alma's own diary attests to their sexual tension.[80] While the opera's ending is very different from Alma and Zemlinsky's ending – in 1902 she married Gustav Mahler – Alma nonetheless played an important and inspirational role at this stage in Zemlinsky's creative output.

Görge's Muse

In Der *Traumgörge*, we do not witness Görge's first encounter with the mysterious Princess, his muse, who sends him into a state of enrapture. We, along with Hans and Grete, are only privileged to hear about her rather than to see her firsthand. In the case of this opera, we literally "hear" her through Görge's narrative, initially only granted perspective of her filtered through the male character and his emotions. Görge's description of the mysterious woman to Hans and Grete provides an interesting commentary about the role of woman as an inspiring, but also at times threatening, muse. When Görge describes the Princess's arrival, we hear a filigree of fluttering harps, tremolos in the violins, and ostinato in the flutes that create a general sonic impression of the Princess – the orchestra matches his description of the "silver harps resounding." Over this rustling, sensual sound, Görge sings a version of what Beaumont calls the "Joy" theme.[81] This animated theme, which seems to capture Görge's pleasure at seeing the Princess, consists of an ascending arpeggiation of E major, followed by two step-wise

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[79] *Ibid.*, 142.

[80] References to Zemlinsky appear scattered throughout Alma Mahler's early diaries. Mahler-Werfel, *Diaries, 1898–1902*. An investigation of Alma Mahler's music in relation to Zemlinsky's would be interesting, particularly in relation to *Der Traumgörge*.

[81] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 148. Albright also identifies this passage as the "sound" associated with the Princess. Albright, *Music Speaks*, 81-82.

descending triplets, before settling on the dominant (Ex. 5.6). This sonority and theme connect to Görge's idea of the Princess here, a connection further reinforced in later moments of the opera.

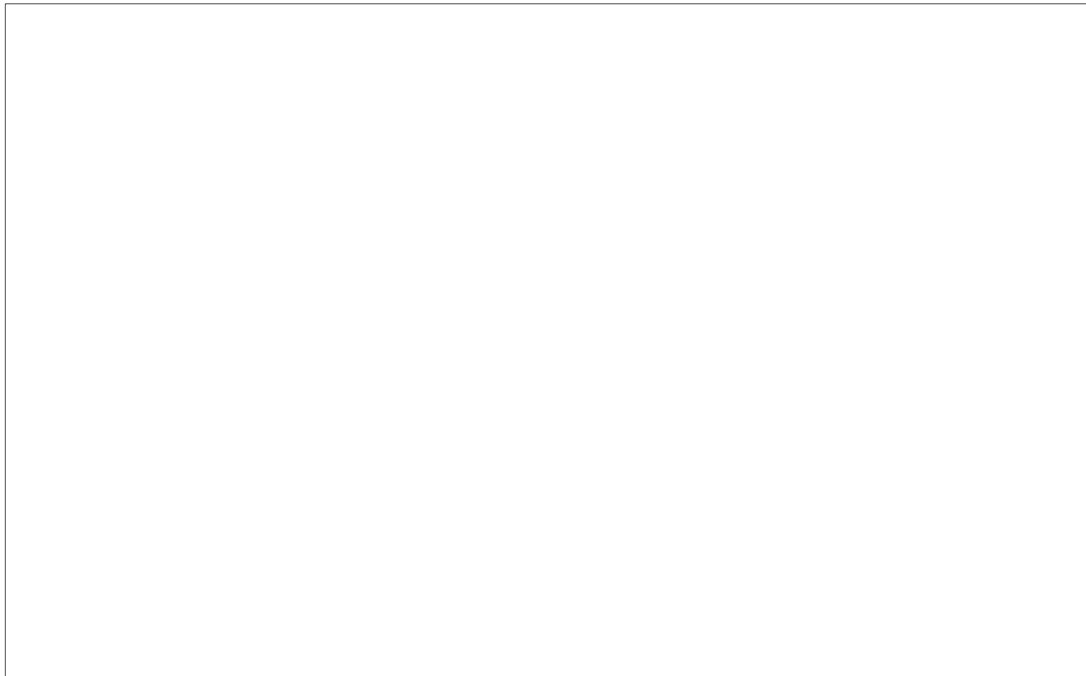
Ex. 5.6: Zemlinsky, *Der Traumgörge*: Görge describes the Princess's Arrival: "Joy" theme in the vocal line; sonorities of Görge's idea of the Princess in accompaniment (Act I, scene 5, mm. 95 – 101).

Text: She came, and the forest became sunny and light, and silver harps resounded…

Görge's idea of the Princess is also associated with other motivic material. For instance,

when he sings of how she disappeared and when he describes how she looks.[82] Albright notes that the theme sung by Görge here is a type of "*Naturthema*," a theme based on harmonics that can be played on a horn (Ex. 5.7).[83] With its forward movement and "heroic" quality, this theme seems to capture Görge's inspiration. It is also found earlier when he sings: "A dream, a dream that comes true, that comes to me from distant shimmering expanses."[84] Again the accompanying music that introduces this phrase draws on the sonority associated with Görge's idea of the Princess, and seems to enliven him as reflected in the new forward-directed melody.

Ex. 5.7: Zemlinsky, *Der Traumgörge*. Görge "describes" the Princess as a "breath" and "song." "Nature" theme in the vocal line, while the accompaniment at mm. 140 – 143 plays the sonorities associated with Görge's idea of the Princess (Act I, scene 5, mm. 140 – 147).



Text: A breeze, a song – whereto, wherefrom? Created from air, dispersed in air, and yet so rich and so strong!

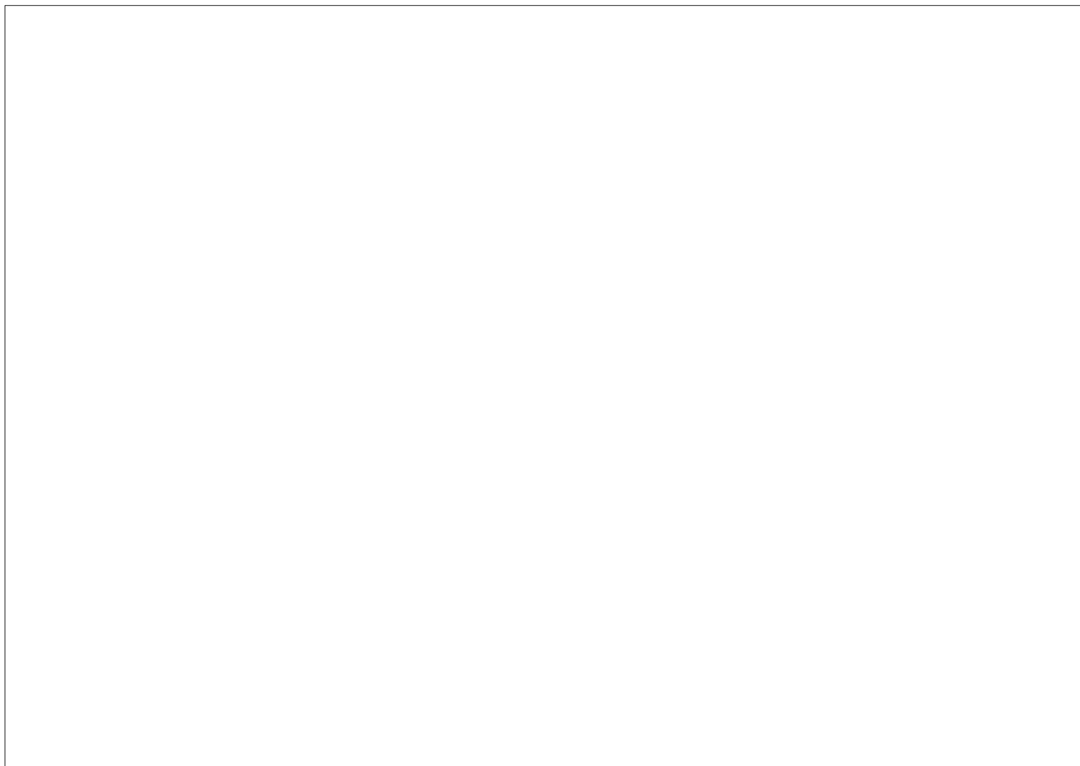
[82] Albright notes this same motive appears when Görge describes how the Princess looks with her crown and "shimmering dress," and when he sings about how the "apparition vanished." *Ibid.*, 81.

[83] Albright, *ibid.*, 82-83. Conductor Burkhard Rempe calls this theme the "*Traum*" motive. *Ibid.*, 82.

[84] "Ein Traum, ein Traum, der sich erfüllt! Der aus den fernen, schimmernden Weiten zu mir." (mm. 50 – 61)

Even when Grete first questions Görge, the music accompanying his answer is telling – it includes an arching melody in the high strings that will appear in another instantiation in Act I, scene 6 with the Princess (Ex. 5.8). The music associated here with his idea of the Princess is bright and shimmering with a repeated melodic figure in the flutes and arpeggiation in the harp. This shimmering sensual sonority represents the woman for Görge, but it is also an imagined sonority that inspires him.

Ex. 5.8: Zemlinsky, *Der Traumgörge*: Melody in high violins and sonorities associated with Görge's idea of the Princess (Act I, scene 5, mm. 35 – 42).



Text: It is nothing– there at the edge of the meadow I had a most beautiful dream, and that's all

The Princess, however, is reduced to sound, just as Grete is in *Der ferne Klang* – a sonority of harps and high-strings that is very similar to the *Klang* in Schreker's opera. In his attempts to describe the Princess, Görge not only characterizes her in an obfuscating manner, barely

providing a vague impression of her through words, but he also focuses on recounting the sensory effect that she had on him. His description of her most notably captures what he heard rather than what she said or did, while with the shimmering high violins, flutes, and harps in the orchestra (variants of this orchestral sound found in Ex. 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8), we *hear* the sonority that he heard.[85]

In response to Grete's question, "What did she confide in you?" (*Was hat sie dir denn anvertraut?*), Görge sings, as though recalling the sound: "That isn't to be told! Everything is so loud, so loud and clear. We want silence, silence."[86] Görge does not seem to hear or understand what the Princess says, preventing him from clearly articulating either his experience of the situation or what she told him. We are told that the only meaningful impression she left on him is sonic – "a song" and "a breeze" – thus drawing on two traditional associations with the feminine: music and nature. Görge sings: "A breeze – a song – whereto, wherefrom? Created from air, dispered in air, and yet so rich and so strong" (ex. 5.7).[87] The Princess only leaves an indeterminate, sonic impression on him, which is recounted to Grete, Hans, and the audience

[85] According to Hörst Weber, Zemlinsky relies on a leitmotivic style that develops constantly, changing with each situation, which makes it difficult to restrict motives to a single meaning. Weber, "Über Zemlinsky's Oper *Der Traumgörge*," 116. Although some motives are clear enough, particularly those that relate to the Princess, to identify motivic return and variation. The same can be said for sonorities that vary slightly, as in these three examples.

[86] "Das sagt sich nicht! Das alles ist so laut, so laut und klar. Wir wollen schweigen, schweigen." (Act I, scene 5, mm. 155 – 162)

[87] "Ein Hauch, ein Lied – wohin, woher? Aus Luft geworben, in Luft zerstorben und doch so reich und doch so schwer!" This connection of women with a fleeting "breeze" and "air" reinforces the trope of women associated with nature and men associated with culture. For instance, Altenberg's work presents woman as akin to nature, inspiring men. Schroeder, "Alban Berg and Peter Altenberg," 264, 279. Hegel also reinforced the connection of women to nature and instinct, denigrating women's intellectual role in the state: "The difference between men and women is like that between animals and plants. Men correspond to animals, while women correspond to plants because their development is more placid and the principle that underlies it is the rather vague unity of feeling. When women hold the helm of government, the state is at once in jeopardy, because women regulate the actions not by the demands of universality but by arbitrary inclinations and opinions. Women are educated – who knows how? – As it were by breathing ideas, by living rather than acquiring knowledge." Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Additions, Paragraph 166.

only indirectly – filtered through Görge's memory and the sensual, shimmering sonority. Grete and Hans are left in confusion. Grete: "Do you understand anything of it all?" (*verstehst du was von dem Allen?*) Hans: "Not a single word: even in sleep nothing like this would have ever occurred to me" (*Kein Sterbenswörtel, mir wär auch im Schlaf so was nie eingefallen*). Hans's comment raises the issue of the dream-like or hallucinatory aspect of Görge's encounter with the muse.[88] With his inability to explain what this muse says to him, we wonder, did he really see this woman? Or is this woman merely part of his dream world?[89]

Görge's inability to recount what the woman, his muse, says to him is significant. For Grete and Hans, for the audience, and even for Görge, she seems to lack linguistic capabilities, unable to express herself semantically with words at this point. We are given a sonic impression of her, subjectively characterized by Görge. But what if Görge's impression of her is misleading? Because we "hear" her filtered through Görge's reverie, it is possible that she actually does say something, which he reduces to non-semantic sound.[90] She is perhaps de-voiced, and thus her subjectivity removed. At this point, we are merely left with Görge's version of her.

When the Princess finally "appears" in Act I, scene 7, surrounded by roses and wearing a

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[88] An exploration of dream sequences in *fin-de-siècle* operas would be of particular importance. Indeed, dream sequences are central to both *Der Traumgörge* and *Der ferne Klang*. The dream sequence in *Der Traumgörge* has been discussed in symposium proceedings published as: *Alexander von Zemlinsky und die Moderne: Interdisziplinäres Symposion vom 31. Mai bis zum 3. Juni 2007*, ed. Katharina John (Berlin: Deutsche Oper Berlin, 2009).

[89] This is reminiscent of Fritz's "distant sound" in *Der ferne Klang*, which I will discuss again later in this chapter. Yet, much of the audience perception of this "woman" and her existence can depend on the staging. As Katherine Bergeron argues in "Mélisande's Hair," the 1998 Paris *Opera Comique*'s staging and costuming in *Pélleas et Mélisande* made it seem like Mélisande belonged to Golaud's inner psyche. See Katherine Bergeron, "Mélisande's Hair or the Trouble in Allemonde," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary-Ann Smart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 160-86.

[90] This resonates with the early nineteenth-century Romantic notion of music as "ineffable," and thus its position for some as the most elevated art. Although music does arguably have semantic value, as I argue through this dissertation, it is not as specific as writing or speech. For a discussion about female musical language, see Sanna Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 15-20.

flowing white dress, she calls to him. Yet the stage directions are unclear as to whether she is supposed to be merely Görge's vision, or if she really exists. Immediately before, in scene 6, we see him falling asleep ("*im Entschlummern*," mm. 166), and then hear "dream voices from behind the stage" ("*Traumstimmen hinter der Szene*"). Görge reacts to the chorus of "dream voices" "restlessly, always in sleep" ("*unruhig, immer im Schlaf*," Act I, scene 6, mm. 237), while in scene 7, the stage directions indicate that the passage should be "slightly intensified, but always as if in a dream" ("*etwas gesteigert, doch immer wie im Traum*," Act I, scene 7, mm. 57). The Princess sings the "*Naturthema*" (Act I, scene 7, mm. 24), further connecting this thematic material to her, although it is the same theme that Görge first sang, making it seem as though he is the author. She also "fades" like an apparition, further reinforcing her status as merely Görge's dream. The stage directions read: "quietly fading away," then "the brightness goes out, the appearance has vanished."[91]

The audience is now able to hear the non-diegetic music in Görge's head (just as how we hear the beckoning and seductive distant sound in *Der ferne Klang*), which also inspires Görge to not marry Grete and to go out into the world: "Oh go forth from your closed world into the heat of the throng, into the joyful flood! Seek out what lies dreaming in your heart!"[92] Immediately before Görge begins this passage about leaving, there is an upward harp flourish, a sonority associated with his memory of the Princess. Over harps and lyrical strings, Görge sings of how he will follow the sound: "It calls, it calls, and distant veils flutter, and the wind carries blessed

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[91] "ganz leise verklingend" (mm. 140); "Die Helle verlischt, die Erscheinung ist verschwunden" (mm. 153).

[92] "Oh fort aus der Enge, ins heiße Gedränge, in die lachende Flut! Such, was dir träumend im Herzen ruht!" (Act I, scene 7, mm. 82 – 91) [modified translation].

voices! I come, I come!"[93] We still hear the sonic impression of the Princess that sounds in Görge's imagination and memory. At the end of Act I, the Princess appears to be Kraus's "primal spring"; she has transformed Görge, reanimated him, and given him agency. Yet as we the audience quickly learn, there is also a downside to his encounter with this mysterious woman who serves as his muse.

Act II and **Nachspiel***: From Passivity to Action*

In Act II, Görge recounts how the muse has derailed him: "From place to place, desperately poor, so ragged in body and soul that God should pity him! Cringing, foul, a paunch, a drunk, that's what I am! A piece of spleen with a throat attached!"[94] In a long passage, Görge laments his current life. He sings an impassioned, angry version of the "*Naturthema*" previously heard when he was inspired by the muse, an aural reminder that *she* is the cause of his actions (Act II, scene 6, mm. 168 – 170). The muse can lead men astray through her seductive voice. As a dangerous siren, luring him away from his friends, family, and life. She causes him to deviate from his path, just as the voices of the sirens in Homer's *Odyssey* or in the Lorelei myth caused sailors to fatefully deviate from course and crash into the rocks.[95] Moreover, how she called his name, is reminiscent of Kundry's seductive and dangerous call to Parsifal. The muse disrupts order and reason, and renders Görge inarticulate. By Act II, scene 6, Görge bemoans his

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[93] "Es ruft, es ruft, die Schleier wehen, und selige Stimmen trägt der Wind! Ich komm! Ich komm! Mein Wunder soll geschehen!" (Act I, Scene 9, mm. 30 – 38)

[94] "Da und da, so bettelarm; so zerlumpt an Leib und Seele ein Geschöpf, das Gott erbarm! Hündisch, faul, ein Wanst, ein Säufer, das bin ich! Ein Stückchen Geifer und dazu noch eine Kehle!" (Act II, scene 6, mm. 79 – 92) [translation modified slightly]

[95] The well-known Lorelei myth, created by Bretano in 1802 and recounted by Heine in the poem "Lorelei" from *Das Heimkehr* (1823–1824), was important in German literature. Lorelei has been analyzed as representative of feminine chaos and the supernatural power and force of the feminine. For more information on the Lorelei figure in German culture and music, see: Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 101-4.

suffering and loss, almost as though he blames it on the muse. Although he feels more creative, she disrupts his world with how he now experiences passion, irrationality, and disorder. Zemlinsky and Feld remind us, with their depiction of the negative consequences of the sexual woman who inspired Görge and led him off-course, that there is a dangerous side to the muse. As Albright notes about the passage in example 5.6: "Görge is caught in shivers of sound that seem to promise everything, but in fact enclose him in a kind of cage, since the chord patterns simply keep circling back to where they started."[96]

Toward the end of Act II, we also witness how Görge's encounters with this mysterious muse and his love for Gertraud positively transform him. Paradoxically, the Princess-muse has led Görge to a new life and to his new love and wife, Gertraud. Here in Act II, scene 8, Gertraud also performs the role of redemptive woman, the *Ewig-Weibliche*, when she offers to sacrifice herself for Görge's well being and social acceptance by the townspeople. As Görge sings: "From your sorrows you give me life, and so I call you mother, sister, wife! Take this poor troubled body, and give it soul from your heart."[97] Inspired by Gertraud's love, Görge is finally granted courage, and he defends Gertraud, roused by the threats and injustices directed toward her. In the concluding moments of the opera, Gertraud is about to be burned by the townspeople for witchcraft and Görge saves her. Again, Görge is only compelled to action by his muse. Gertraud is his second muse, and in the *Nachspiel* she "merges" both dramatically and musically with the princess, his earlier muse. Or another way of interpreting this moment is that he maps his "muse" onto a real woman, and for him Gertraud embodies the Princess of Act I. The *Nachspiel*'s concluding duet between Görge and Gertraud is permeated with the sonorities, the musical

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[96] Albright, *Music Speaks*, 84.

[97] "Du gibst mein Leben mir aus deinen Schmerzen, so nenn' ich dich Mutter, Schwester, Weib! Nimm hin den armen, ruhelosen Leib und gib die Seele ihm aus deinen Herzen." (Act II, scene 8, mm. 157 – 170)

motives, and the ostinato in the clarinets and harp from his earlier encounters with the Princess, while the text and stage directions further reinforce the amalgamation of Gertraud and the Princess for Görge and for the audience.

After hearing the fragments of motivic material associated with the Princess (the "Joy" motive above the shimmering sonority), and shortly after singing the nature theme originally associated with the Princess (mm. 157), Görge makes the connection more explicit, declaring: "you my princess" ("*du meine Prinzessin*," mm. 167). They are beside the stream from Act I, where Görge first saw the Princess, and the orchestra plays the rustling clarinet and harp ostinato passage that was first heard at the beginning of Görge's second encounter with the Princess in Act I, scene 6 (compare *Nachspiel*, scene 3, mm. 184 – 225 to Act I, scene 6, mm. 1 – 25, also Ex. 5.9). Over this D♭ passage that oscillates between major and minor, the solo violin plays a theme evocative through its similar character and melodic contour to the theme that accompanied Görge when he first mentioned his dream to Grete (Act I, scene 5, mm. 35 – 42, Ex. 5.8), again further connecting Gertraud and his dream Princess.

Görge then sings to Gertraud: "The rose…Princess, O give it to me."[98] The stage directions that follow are: "The moon shines on Gertraud's hair, in which the flowers sill remain, so that she resembles the dream vision of Act I."[99] Whereas the Princess appeared in white and surrounded by roses, Gertraud now wears a white dress and roses in her hair – roses that were placed there by Görge.[100] These textual, musical, and visual cues reinforce Gertraud's transformation into Görge's muse, the Princess. In some performances, the two roles are often

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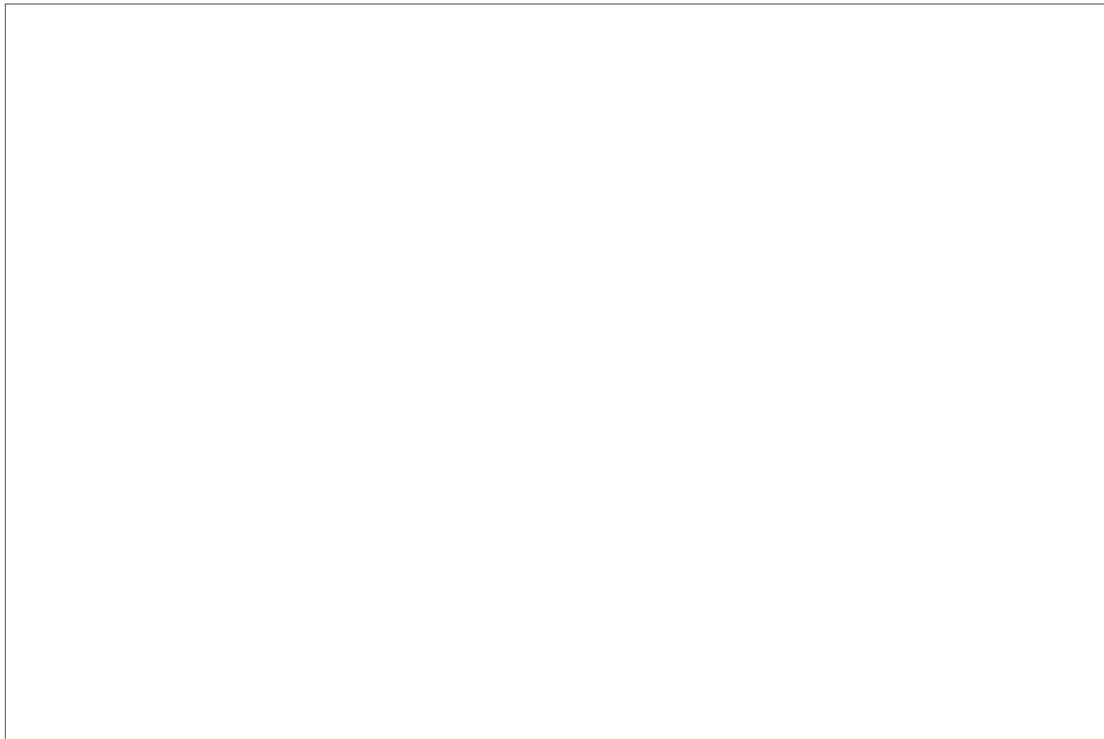
[98] "Die Rose … Prinzessin, o gib' sie mir, gib." (*Nachspiel*, scene 3, mm. 223 – 226)

[99] "mit gelöstem Haar, in dem noch die Blumen stecken, vom Mondlicht überglänzt, so dass sie der traumhaften Erscheinung des ersten Aktes sehr ähnlich ist." (*Nachspiel*, scene 3, mm. 225 – 226)

[100] An ambiguity occurs in the libretto. While Görge first places "Blühmen" (flowers) in her hair (*Nachspiel*, scene 3, mm. 165 – 166), a few moments later Gertraud takes a "Rose" from her hair (*Nachspiel*, scene 3, mm. 225).

even sung by the same singers, further solidifying their sameness. Mahler had the singers Marie Renard and Irene von Fladung learn both roles although he had not yet decided whether to split the role in two or to have one of the singers perform both Gertraud and the Princess, while in the 1980 Nürnberg premiere of the work, both roles were sung by the same singer.[101]

Ex: 5.9: Zemlinsky, *Der Traumgörge*: Act I, scene 6, mm. 1 – 12 (mm. 5 – 12 almost identical to *Nachspiel*, scene 6, mm. 186 – 191).



What most strongly characterizes the Princess and Gertraud is the music associated with Görge's description of the Princess from Act I. Thus, while these women inspire Görge, their musical identity is predominantly characterized by Görge's imagination and projection onto them. Even though Gertraud is given a poignant moment in Act II, scene 5, when she sings of her suffering and anguish, the way in which she is folded into the Princess arguably undermines

[101] Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, 159-60. Recent performances, such as at the 2011–2012 season at the *Deutsche Oper* in Berlin, cast Gertraud and the Princess as different singers.

her subjectivity.[102] Musically and dramatically, she merges into Görge's *idea* of her, becoming Görge's ideal love rather than her own person. Ironically, for an opera that explores the relationship between reality and dreams, neither of Görge's ideal women in the opera (the Princess and Gertraud) is a representation of a "real" woman with subjectivity – ultimately they both seem to be projections of his dreams.[103]

Section IV: Der ferne Klang – *Woman as Ephemeral Sonority and Muse*

The fundamental motif behind *Der ferne Klang* is through *love* or *passion* an inner *Klang* is awakened, which is the only thing capable of moving us to great deeds.
– Franz Schreker[104]

Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, like Zemlinsky's *Traumgörge*, not only presents an ethereal sonority, but also addresses male striving, artistic creation, dreams, and the role of women in relation to these dreams.[105] Although the previous chapter discussed the revaluation of the sexual woman in *Der ferne Klang* – Schreker presents female sexuality sympathetically and critiques conservative bourgeois attitudes toward sexuality and the fallen woman – the opera's treatment

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[102] Darwin interprets Gertraud as an active character, especially with her soliloquy that gives the "audience the opportunity to see her [...] from the inside." Darwin, *The "I" of the Other*, esp. 109-10. I disagree with this interpretation of Gertraud. Ultimately Gertraud merges with Görge's idea of woman, and she is unable to retain her identity as an individual, as the stage directions, libretto, and music reveal.

[103] The Princess is not a "real" woman, and once Görge has fallen in love with Gertraud, he imprints Gertraud with his idea of the Princess (including her musical material).

[104] Schreker, "Vorbemerkung des Autors zu dem Märchen von 'Der Prinzessin und dem Spielwerk." (Autograph). Cited by Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 70. Translated in E. Morrison, *Dead/ly Feminine*, 443.

[105] Daniel Albright has also recently noted the similarity between the two opera's themes. Both works present a "young dreamer [who] refuses the satisfaction of a homey, comfortable life in order to chase after the ghost of a sound." Daniel Albright, *Music Speaks*, 81. See also Hörst Weber, "Über *Der Traumgörge*," 114; Daniel Albright, "Zemlinsky's Lost Chords," in *Alexander von Zemlinsky und die Moderne: Interdisziplinäres Symposion vom 31. Mai bis zum 3. Juni 2007*, ed. Katharina John (Berlin: Deutsche Oper Berlin, 2009), 67-68.

of Grete also poses problems. Franklin points out the ambiguity in Schreker's presentation of female characters in his operas and argues that Schreker's women are paradoxically "performatively triumphant" yet "undone by narrations of male anxiety and power."[106] In the conclusion of his article on *Der ferne Klang*, he suggests that, "Grete, the fallen woman, comes to represent the fallen muse that Fritz has so long sought, perhaps even a fallen Music, lost to manly control."[107] While Franklin focuses on the sound as feminine, we need to further explore his suggestion with regard to Grete as muse. As I argue in this section, Schreker's progressive critique of bourgeois hypocrisy (through his sympathetic depiction of Grete's fall and Fritz's mistaken rejection of her) is complicated and even "undone" by the narrative, Grete's musical characterization, her role as muse for Fritz, and how we, as the audience, are often aligned with Fritz's perspective of Grete through the music.

Often viewed as somewhat autobiographical, Schreker's second opera, *Der ferne Klang*, is about a young composer, Fritz, who searches after the "distant sound" he hears, a sound that inspires him and that he believes will allow him to complete his masterpiece.[108] While I summarized the plot in the previous chapter, focusing on Grete's social status and respectability, I will now draw attention to key moments in the opera that concern the "distant sound" that Fritz

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[106] Peter Franklin, "Style, Structure and Taste: Three Aspects of the Problem of Franz Schreker," *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* 109 (1982–1983): 138.

[107] Franklin, "Distant sounds – Fallen music," 171. For Franklin, the music here is feminized as a "sensuously materialized sound." *Ibid.*, 161.

[108] In early sketches, Schreker dedicated the opera to an unknown woman. "Meiner lieben ~~F~~ angebeten [sic]/ Frau gewidmet" is written alongside the idea for an one-act opera "Greta," the genesis of "*Der ferne Klang*." Cited Neuwirth, "Greta-Grete," 87. Hailey also writes, "one cannot overemphasize the autobiographical element in the libretto and score of *Der ferne Klang*, for their genesis accompanied Schreker through years of struggle and traces the emergence of his artistic personality." Christopher Hailey, "Preface: Nachstück," in *Nachstück* by Franz Schreker (Vienna: Universal Editions, 1997), iv. Even in the early part of the century, the opera was viewed as somewhat autobiographical, with Fritz as Schreker. See for instance the review: "Notes from Abroad: Schreker's 'Der ferne Klang,'" *Musical Times* 66, no. 988 (June 1925): 553.

hears.[109] When Fritz abandons his young love, Grete, he leaves to search for the "*ferne Klang*" that inspires him, and to find his path both as an individual and as a composer. In Act II, when Fritz encounters Grete ten years later in a Venetian brothel, he fails to associate the emerging sound he heard when he approached the brothel with Grete. She is now the main attraction at *La casa di maschere*, which scandalizes him, and his moral revulsion causes him to abandon her a second time – inadvertently also turning away from the sound and his inspiration. At the end of the opera, Fritz is on his deathbed when he finally realizes that Grete has always been the source of his distant, elusive sound, and the source of his creative inspiration. In Grete's presence, he is enveloped by the "distant sound," but he dies just as he is inspired to recompose the final act to his failed opera.[110] His abandonment of Grete in pursuit of the sound was futile; like Görge, he pursued an idea to the point of despair and ruin. On the surface, the opera recounts the story of a man who mistakenly thought that he needed to be independent from women to find his disembodied and transcendental source of inspiration, while at another level the opera emphasizes the prevalent *fin-de-siècle* belief that the creative male artist needs a female muse.[111]

As discussed in the previous chapter, Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* deals directly with sexuality in a radical manner for the operatic stage of the time. Schreker was abreast of the multiple discourses about sexuality surrounding him. Not only was he embedded within the cultural community of the *Wiener Moderne*, and thus exposed to the contemporary discourses and attitudes about women and their societal roles, but he was also fairly well read. His library

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[109] For a more detailed summary of the opera, see Chapter 4.

[110] The association with sexuality, death, and creative inspiration was prevalent amongst *fin-de-siècle* Viennese Modernists. Cited in Downes, *The Muse as Eros*, 26.

[111] Although Grete is the other central figure in the opera, the audience is only at times granted insight into her psychological and emotional state at the trauma that she suffers. In Act I, we witness her frustration, in Act II we hear of her pain and sorrow at the beginning of the scene when she sings about her unhappiness, her confession to Fritz, and her panic following Fritz's departure. As I discuss toward the end of this chapter, the focus is arguably on Fritz and *his Bildung*.

contained authors who dealt with women as either a negative or positive force: Dehmel's *Weib und Welt*, Wedekind's collected works, some Altenberg, Max Brod, Kraus's *Die letzte Nacht*, and the epilogue to Kraus's *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (in his sole copy of the journal *Die Fackel*).[112] He was also familiar with Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter*, as well as some Freud.[113] Schreker's pantomime, *Der Geburtstag der Infantin* (based on a story by Oscar Wilde) with Grete Wiesenthal as dancer, was even written for the 1908 *Wiener Kunstschau*, while Schreker's use of Roller as set designer for his operas further underscore his affiliation with Vienna's modernist artistic circles.[114] Schreker's own writings bear traces of his belief that female sexuality was socially important.[115] Therefore, the way in which Schreker characterized the relationship between Fritz, the *Klang*, and Grete likely would have been influenced by the representations and understandings of women from within his cultural moment, both positively, in terms of challenging bourgeois values, as discussed previously, but also negatively, in terms

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[112] Noteworthy lesser-known materials on Schreker's shelves included: Eduard Fuchs' *Die Frau in der Karikatur* (1907), Eduard Fuchs's *Geschichte der erotischen Kunst*, and the 6 volume: *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte* (1909–1912). Christopher Hailey, "Unpacking Schreker's Library," in *The Schreker Library/Franz Schrekers Bibliothek*, ed. Dietmar Schenk, Schriften aus dem Archiv der Universität der Künste 9 (Berlin: Universität der Künste, 2005), 8.

[113] Schreker's familiarity with Weininger's work is evident in his letter to Bekker on July 19, 1918 in which he recalls reading Weininger's text shortly after it appeared: "Weininger – ich habe dessen Buch vor langen Jahren, gleich nachdem es erschienen lesen. Mein Verstand hat zu vielem 'nein' gesagt, mein Gefühl – so scheient es – ja. Ich habe auch viele Frauen kennen gelernt, glücklicherweise manche interessante – ein oder das andre tragische Erlebnis blieb mir nicht erspart – ich komme nicht los davon: Es ist so wie Sie sagen; das Verhältnis des Mannes zur Frau und alles was damit zusammenhängt – eine Tragödie. Auch in den glücklichsten Fällen." Schreker to Bekker, in *Bekker-Schreker Briefwechsel*, 61. See also Kienzle, *Der Trauma hinter dem Traum*, esp. 66-69; Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 212-13; Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 179-80. Jens Malte Fischer also notes the likelihood of Schreker knowing Weininger's text, while Reinhard Ermen situates the eroticism in Schreker's work within Weininger's theory. Jens Malte Fischer, "Schrekers Frauengestalten," in *Franz Schreker (1878–1934) zum 50. Todestag*, ed. Reinhard Erman (Aachen: Rimbaud, 1984), 43-44; Ermen, "Der 'Erotiker' und der 'Asket,'" 51.

[114] For a discussion of *Der Geburtstag der Infantin* see Kienzle, "Nuda Veritas," 212. Kienzle also notes that like Klimt's *Nuda Veritas*, sexuality offers a multiple of contradictory possibilities for the male protagonist, from life to death and horror to promise, while the male protagonists encounter with the female confronts them with their life drives (*Trieblebens*), such as completing artworks. *Ibid.*, 213.

[115] *Ibid.*, 213.

of the *function* of women for men, as discussed here.

*The Sensuous "*Klang*": Sensuality and the Feminization of Sound*

Der ferne Klang has long been noted for its musical experimentation, from its polyphonic collage of sounds and musical sources in Act II, to the timbral explorations, such as the "*Leitklänge*" (leading sounds), as a new form of expression.[116] As discussed in the previous chapter, the opera uses sound to express the inner psyche of the characters, from the sonorities to depict Grete's anguish and fears in Act I, to the *Klang*, which captures Fritz's striving and his idea of Grete. Fritz sings of the *Klang*'s ability to stir longing in him and entice him (Act III, **83**). This *Klang* is central to the opera musically, textually (references to it appear scattered throughout the libretto), and conceptually. Much scholarly discussion about Schreker has focused on his reception and place as a "modernist" in music history, often dealing with the sonorities of his music and the status of this "*Klang*."[117] The "*Klang*" has often been viewed as a central musical facet and innovation of the opera, giving the opera a type of harmonic unity in spite of Schreker's near eschewal of functional harmony.[118] In his 1911 *Harmonielehre*, Arnold Schoenberg singled out the harmony of the *Klang* as an example of an unresolved chord with more than six tones,[119] while contemporary scholarship deals with the musical and timbral

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[116] For the term "*Leitklänge*," see Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 30.

[117] See Franklin, "Distant sounds – Fallen music"; Neuwirth, "Greta-Grete"; Lee, "Adorno and the Case of Schreker"; Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 26-81; Daub, "Adorno's Schreker," 247-71; see also E. Morrison, *Dead/ly Feminine*, 444-74.

[118] For further detail on Schreker's harmonic language and how it is structured through his system of "*Zentralklängen*" (central sounds) and "*Klangfeldern*" (sound fields) rather than traditional functional harmony, see: Neuwirth, *Die Harmonik in der Oper "Der ferne Klang.*" Neuwirth also describes Schreker's harmonies in *Der ferne Klang* as often "built of verticalities of seconds, fourths, and sevenths." *Ibid.*, 27.

[119] Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Porter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 419.

function of this innovative orchestral sonority and/or considers its reception.[120] Bekker praised the opera's innovative use of *Klang*, and considered Schreker the first German opera composer to move beyond Wagner, as mentioned earlier.[121] Yet the opera and its distinctive sonority were not always well received because of the overwhelming sensual sound and its effect on the senses. According to Hailey, "at the heart of this antipathy was a deep-seated distrust of the sensual, hedonistic roots of the style so at odds with Germany's own austere and cerebral musical traditions."[122] Indeed, for some listeners, such as Adorno, this "feminized," "erotic," "sensual" *Klang* was also the opera's downfall. Numerous contemporaneous reviewers and music critics either positively or negatively viewed Schreker's music as more "sensual" than intellectual.[123] For Adorno, the opera was popular, "complete with kitsch and halo" and akin to a commodity that appeals to the masses.[124] Moreover, the *Klang* was considered dangerous because of its phantasmagoric quality.[125] As Sherry D. Lee points out, Adorno focused primarily on the music,

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[120] Such as Hailey, Lee, Daub, Franklin, E. Morrison, and Kienzle, to name a few scholars.

[121] Bekker, *Franz Schreker: Studie zur Kritik der modernen Oper* (1919); Bekker, *Klang und Eros*, 76. See also Chapter 4.

[122] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 41.

[123] For example: Karl Menninger, "Inszenierung von Schrekers 'Fernen Klang,' in Darmstadt," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 6, no. 2 (1924): 65. Menninger wrote about the "*seelische*" (spiritual) and "*geistiges*" (mental) opposition. "Oper erspart dem Menschen die geistige Aktivität, um seine seelische umso voller zu beanspruchen." In an unsigned review the 1925 Berlin production of the opera, Schreker's *Klang* is noted as a "leitmotive" in all his works and as sensual by Schreker himself, according to the author. "Der ferne Klang," *Musical Times*, 553. For an extended discussion of how the *Klang* and *Der ferne Klang* were associated with eroticism by critics in 1910s and 1920s, see E. Morrison, *Dead/ly Feminine*, 444-51, in particular her examination of Bekker's understanding of the *Klang*, 451-74.

[124] Adorno, "Schreker," in *Quasi una fantasia*, 138. Fleischmann also writes about the "sense bewitching eroticism" ("*sinnbetörenden Erotik*") in Schreker's work, but in a positive light. H. R. Fleischmann, "Franz Schreker: Sein Wirken und Schaffen," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 83, no. 16 (August 1920): 262.

[125] Adorno wrote: "what Schreker borrowed from Wagner was the element of the phantasmagoria which he then made into the centerpiece of his own work." Adorno, "Schreker," in *Quasi una Fantasia*, 132. For Adorno, rather than capturing the modernist conflict of the individual within society – in this case the artist through a dialectical struggle in the music – Schreker's opera centered upon an easily accessible and sonically pleasing sensual wash of sound. Indeed, the opera lacks the dialectical working out of harmonic tension along with other musical parameters, and fails to represent the individual at odds with society.

which he dismissed, but by leaving aside the libretto he missed important musical relationships and dramatic aspects of the opera that can only be discerned when taking the text into consideration.[126] Franklin further observes how the feminization of the sound is central to Adorno's dismissal of the opera, and argues that for Adorno the sound was linked with pleasure, making it a potentially dangerous sonority.[127]

Grete as Muse: Grete as Klang

The concept of Grete as muse for both Fritz and other men is played out on multiple levels of the opera, from the text and the corresponding music, to the body movements prescribed by the stage directions. Unfortunately, the remaining iconography surrounding productions of the opera – stage photos, set photos, Roller's set designs – does little to fill in the gaps about how the visual representations in the opera depicted Grete as muse. The concept is articulated more clearly in the operatic text, as I will now discuss.[128]

Although the *Klang* is initially heard in Act I, scene 1 (**11**), at the beginning of the opera there is little sense yet that Grete is so strongly associated with the sound or that she is Fritz's

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Thus for Adorno, there was little social "truth" inherent in the opera. Adorno, *ibid.*, 133-40. For a discussion of Adorno and phantasmagoria in *Der ferne Klang*, see: Lee, "Adorno and the Case of Schreker," 649-61; Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, esp. 34-42; and Daub, "Adorno's Schreker," 259-60. In addition to addressing the relationship between *Klang* and technology, Daub is concerned with how the means of sound production are distant from the actual sound, something that Wagner had done earlier.

[126] Adorno focused his critique of the alienation resulting from the "phantasmagoric" music, but failed to note that the opera is about people, Grete and Fritz, who are alienated from society. As Lee demonstrates, the relationship between the text and the music actually conveys the modernist alienation of the artist and his dialectical relationship with the world. Lee, "Adorno and the Case of Schreker," 672-73, 683; Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 26-81.

[127] See Franklin, "Distant sounds – Fallen music," 159-60. Franklin also argues that entertainment music was dismissed as feminine, while modernist "high art" was understood as "masculine." "A British Schreker? – Fantasiestück in fin-de-siècle Form," in *Musik des Aufbruchs: Franz Schreker – Grenzgänge – Grenzklänge*, ed. Michael Haas and Christopher Hailey (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2004), 138.

[128] Of course the opera's staging itself – including how Grete appears visually in a particular performance – could greatly affect how Grete comes across as muse.

muse. After describing the "*rätselhaft ferne Klang*" (mysteriously distant sound) to Grete, Fritz is determined to leave in search of the elusive sound. Grete tries to convince him to stay, but he abandons her, not yet knowing how she inspires him. This follows the traditional treatment of the muse, which the artist casts off, consumes, or appropriates.[129] Grete's sexuality, along with the influence her sexual body has on men, becomes particularly explicit in Act II. For instance, the male choir sings in a cacophony about how her body is beautiful and a source of delight for them: "Is she not beautiful like Venus? Enticing like Circe? Just look at the figure! The beautiful shapes! Every inch a goddess! Damn those lips! Enchanting woman!"[130] They do not recognize her as an individual, but rather reduce her to her physical attributes. They command her to turn around, "*Sei drum!*," and overtly gaze at her body, to which Greta, naively unaware of her role for these men, sings: "Oh, am I really – so beautiful?"[131] The Baron and Count, literally moved to song, participate in a singing contest for her, and later Fritz is inspired and renewed by Grete in Act II, excited to find her and to hear the sound again.

Traditionally, woman's purity inspires men to create. Yet, in keeping with his contemporaries' reactions to a woman's sexuality as muse, Schreker presents Grete as the source of the ephemeral, inspiring sound and as muse despite, or even *because* of, her sexuality. Even after her "fall" in Act II, the inspiring *Klang* continues to sound for Fritz at the end of the opera.[132] The opera concludes with Fritz's realization that he is a failure without Grete. Once he

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[129] DeShazer, *Inspiring Women*, 6. Perhaps foreshadowing her creative influence on him, Fritz's vocal lines often shift from recitative to a melodic figure when he says her name or calls her an endearing term.

[130] "Ist sie nicht schön wie Venus? Lockend wie Circe? Sieh nur die Gestalt! Die herrlichen Formen! Jeder Zoll eine Göttin! Verflucht diese Lippen! Berückendes Weib." (Act II, scene 6, 5 before **19** – **20**)

[131] "Ach, bin ich den wirklich —so schön?" (Act II, scene 6, **21**)

[132] As I demonstrate, however, this sound is heard only when Fritz is present. This supports my later point that it is not Grete that creates the sound, but it is Fritz's *idea* of Grete. It does not seem as though Grete's

abandons her, he loses his creativity and drive; without Grete's presence, Fritz lacks the necessary inspiration and is unable to complete a successful opera. Reception of Fritz's opera *Die Harfe* almost parallels the narrative arc of *Der ferne Klang*. As we learn from the audience, Act I is very well received, but Act III is a disaster. Grete was present in Fritz's life in Act I, but by the first part of Act III she is absent for him. Now that Grete has returned, Fritz believes that he is able to rewrite the third act: "Say Rudolf – I want – to complete it – the last – act – is wrong – now I found you [Grete]."[133] Yet, it is too late – he dies in her arms while we, the audience, are moved, listening to the shimming distant *Klang*. At the end of the opera, Grete performs the role of the *Ewig-Weibliche*, allowing Fritz to feel relieved, be forgiven, and die in peace with her at his bedside. Just as Goethe's Faust is called up to heaven by an angelic choir, Fritz fades away, lulled by Grete's presence and the mysterious "*Klang*."

But what might this concept of *Klang*, or sonority, mean in the opera's play of gender, power, and inspiration? Specifically, what is Grete's relationship with the *Klang* in terms of her identity? Does it change throughout the opera? Who else hears the *Klang*? Is Grete really represented by the *Klang*? And if so, what is her authorship regarding the *Klang*? Could it even be argued that the *Klang* is Fritz's idea of Grete? In the concluding moments of the opera, Schreker confirms our suspicions and we the audience, like Fritz, finally associate the elusive "*ferne Klang*" with Grete. When Fritz was drawn in Act II to the Venetian Island by the *Klang*, he was actually drawn there by Grete, the source of this enigmatic sound. Throughout Act III, the sound gets increasingly louder as Fritz begins to reminisce about Grete and when Dr. Vigelius speaks about her arrival. For example, Fritz sings, "it wails and jubilates so longingly" ("*Es klagt*

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visual presence is required for the sound – merely the thought of her *approaching* triggers the sound for Fritz.

[133] "Sage Rudolf – ich will – es vollenden – der letzte – Akt – ist verfehlt – nun ich Dich gefunden." (Act III, **110**)

und jubelt so sehnsuchtsvoll"), remarking upon the sensual sound (**83**). When Grete finally appears, hurries toward him, and embraces him, the sound reaches a pinnacle in the scene, increasingly to a "powerful roaring flood of sound."[134] In fact, the intensification of the sound corresponds to Grete's arrival, their embrace, and when they gaze at each other until Fritz's death at the end of the opera. The stage directions read: "The music rises gradually during the following to a passionate fervor. The song of the forest, the chorus of birds, the love motives sound out, surrounded by the roaring harp sound."[135]

The *Klang* is both a harmony and a general sonority, toward which the above criticism and praise seems to be directed. The *Klang* harmony is six or more tones that hover in an unresolved tension (Ex. 5.10a and 5.10b), and the sound is an iridescent orchestral color in the celesta, harp, and high strings (often playing harmonics) that returns throughout the opera (Ex. 5.12).[136] Thematic material that Fritz sings in proximity to the *Klang* is also associated with it, soaring in Fritz's voice above the shimmering sound when he first sings the melody to "I don't have or hold the mysteriously other-worldly sound" (Ex. 5.11).[137] A second theme associated with the *Klang* emerges to which Fritz describes the sound he hears: "with a ghostly hand that strums over the

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[134] Here the stage directions read for Grete to "hurry toward him" ("eilt ihm entgegen") before "they both embrace each other. The harp sonority rises more and more to a powerful roaring flood of sound." ("[d]ie beiden halten sich umschlungen. Der Harfenklang erhebt sich mehr und mehr zu mächtig einherbrausender Tonflut" Act III, scene 14, **92**).

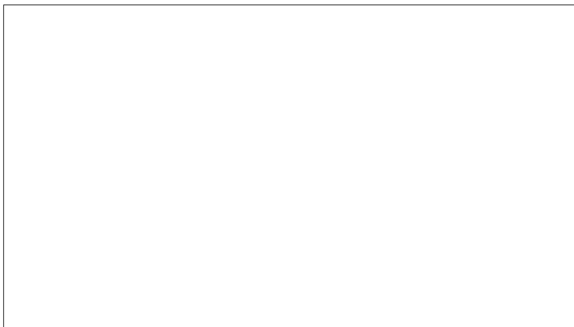
[135] "Die Musik erhebt sich nach und nach während des Folgenden zu leidenschaftlicher Glut. Das Lied des Waldes, der Chor der Vögel, die Liebesmotive klingen an, umrauscht von brausenden Harfenklängen." (Act III, scene 14, **97**)

[136] The *Klang* harmony can be interpreted two ways: either as an e minor chord (i) with the dominant of B superimposed (V then V7), or as an Augmented chord with a minor third sounding above and below. Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 49-51; Lee, "Adorno and the Case of Schreker," 642-43.

[137] "ich ihn nicht habe und halte, den rätselhaft weltfernen Klang." (Act I, 6 after **10)**. Kienzle identifies these themes in her Motivtafel.

harp" (Ex. 5.13).[138] The sound inspires Fritz, and to an animated "quest-like" theme he sings: "And I search for the master, which the harp stirs, and I search for the harp, that bears the *Klang*, and when I hold the *Klang*, I will be rich and free, an artist of God's grace" (See. Ex. 5.14).[139] But what is most memorable about the *Klang* is the distinctive iridescent quality of the sonority and how it inspires Fritz to song. With its decorative harp tremolos, celesta ornamentation, and shimmering high strings, the instrumental sonority is the most distinctive instantiation of the *Klang*, and it would likely have been heard as "feminine" within Viennese modernist's aesthetics.[140]

Ex. 5.10 (a): Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: The *Klang* (Act I, **11**).

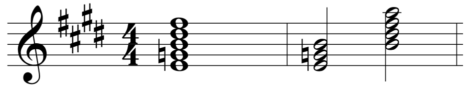


[138] "mit Geisterhand über Harfen streicht." (Act I, **12**)

[139] "Und den Meister such' ich, der die Harfe rührt, und die Harfe such' ich, die den Klang gebiert, und halt ich den Klang, bin ich reich und frei, ein Künstler von Gottes Gnaden!" Lee notes that the theme is "*Wunderhorn*-like" in character and "evokes the Wanderer setting for in the world." Lee, "Adorno and the Case of Schreker," 668-69.

[140] Kraus lamented the feminization of writing and culture with the late nineteenth-century emphasis on decoration. Architect Adolf Loos also abhorred decorative elements, considering them as feminine. See Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 99-101. According to Franklin, the music in the opera is feminized in a deliberate way, drawing on musical qualities considered feminine for the time period, such as "wayward, improvisatory, emotional, and given to collage rather than 'linear development.'" Franklin, "Distant sounds – Fallen music,"168. Thought and reason are associated with thematic development, whereas the *Klang* is an indistinct, non-directional, floating sonority rather than theme or motive. For an extended discussion of these qualities and how they and the *Klang* were heard by Schreker's contemporaries (and by Bekker in particular) as *feminine* and linked with *eroticism*, see: E. Morrison, *Dead/ly Feminine*, 438-74.

Ex. 5.10 (b): Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: Harmonic reduction of the "*Klang*" (Act I, **11**).

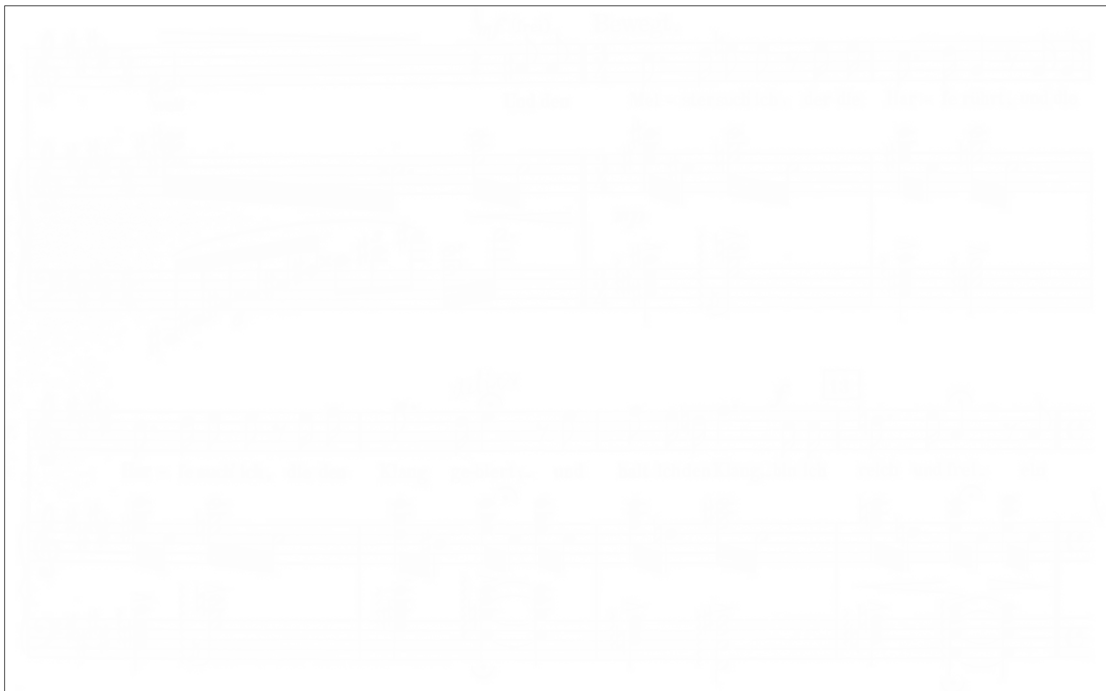


Ex. 5.11: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: Fritz's theme, closely associated with *Klang* (Act I, 4 before **11 – 11**).

Ex. 5.12: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: The "*Klang*" sonority (Act I, **11**).

Ex. 5.13: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: Fritz's theme, closely associated with *Klang* (Act I, 2 before **12 –** 2 after **12**).

Ex. 5.14: Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*: Fritz's "Quest" theme, closely associated with *Klang* (Act I, 5 after **12 – 13**).



Grete as the* Klang*: A Feminist Critique

While Schreker successfully offers a critique of bourgeois moral codes and a sympathetic portrayal of Grete's plight, as I discussed in the previous chapter, Grete's presentation remains problematic from a contemporary feminist perspective. Indeed, Schreker's critique exists alongside his characterization of her as an object rather than as a subject, and concerns regarding Grete's identity arise in both the libretto and the music itself. Grete is Fritz's inspiration and thus strongly linked to the sound, which Schreker makes quite explicit in the final act. Yet, it seems that Schreker's use of the sound and how he composes Fritz's perception of it conveys the message that the sound is Fritz's *imagination* of her rather than anything she does herself. Neither Grete nor anyone else in the opera seems to actually hear the sound.[141] In fact, Grete seems to be completely unaware of the sound and its relation to her personhood and body. Although Grete is most closely tied with the *Klang*, she is arguably given little memorable thematic material of her own. Fritz has his own recurring thematic material that expresses his own aspirations (for instance, his striving theme, Act I, 4 after **12 – 13**), while the *Klang* is his image of her. Although we are granted introspective moments with Grete, such as in the final scene of Act I in which the *Waldszene* music is heard and in Act II when she sings of the past,[142] it is Fritz's perspective and music that dominate the opera. The music and "Schlummerlied"

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[141] For instance, in Act I, the way in which Grete sings about the sound with Fritz could be interpreted as her merely imitating what she heard Fritz sing a few moments earlier. Lee also draws attention to this passage and asks: "Is Grete merely repeating what she heard Fritz sing earlier, or is she joining him in describing a phenomenon that she too can hear?" Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 68.

[142] Lee notes that this material returns in Act II, when Grete is reminiscing of her experience in the woods. Lee. *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 58. Kienzle also writes: "More than the text, Schreker's music speaks to Grete suffering under her alienated existence." "Nuda Veritas," 215. While Kienzle gives much emphasis to Grete's subjectivity here, I contend that Grete's moments of subjectivity are fleeting. Fritz and the *Klang* overshadow this musical material associated with Grete. Ultimately Fritz's relation to the *Klang* and his development as a subject (his *Bildung*) seem to be the main concern.

heard in the *Waldszene* arguably are sounds from Grete's *environment* – from the rustling sounds of the trees, further reinforcing the connection between woman and nature – rather than something she creates or projects herself. Even the directions read: "The forest sings a lullaby" ("*Der Wald singt ein Schlummerlied*," Act I, 4 after **84**).

In *Der ferne Klang*, Schreker was concerned with capturing the characters' psychological interiors.[143] As Schreker wrote, the *Klang*-filled *Nachstück* was composed from Fritz's perspective. In a 1906 letter to friend Grete Jonasz, Schreker described the orchestral *Nachstück*: "I believe this piece, which is not really indicated in the libretto, has added something new to the plot, something that isn't expressed in the text; that is, that in [Fritz's] dreams – understandably – the longing for that one night that he could have spent with her […] still looms large."[144] Again it is Fritz's ideal Grete and his dreams of this night. It is thus important to consider the possibility of the sound as emerging from inside Fritz's mind – from his imagining of Grete rather than emerging from Grete herself. Just as we were privy to Grete's inner psychological crisis at the end of Act I, so too are we granted an aural lens into Fritz's psyche and mind. In fact, Bekker even described the *Klang* as "what [Fritz] hears inside his head."[145] The *Klang* sonority is Abbate's noumenal sound, a powerful sound apparently unheard by the characters onstage.[146] But it is also paradoxically of the phenomenal world; it is noumenal for the other characters, but

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[143] Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, esp. 128. See also Chapter 4 in this dissertation.

[144] Schreker to Jonasz, in a letter dated December 15, 1906. Cited in Hailey, "Preface: Nachstück," v. Regarding the *Nachstück*, the orchestral interlude that bridges Act III, scene 1 with Act III, scene 2, there is debate as to whether or not it is Fritz's music or Grete's music that we hear. While Neuwirth notes that there is an "interior monologue" associated with the *Klang* here (Neuwirth, *Die Harmonik in der Oper "Der ferne Klang*," 169), Kienzle argues that both Fritz *and* Grete are present in this interlude. The *Nachstück* begins with musical themes associated with Grete's reminiscences, but then Fritz's musical material takes over. Kienzle, *Das Trauma hinter dem Traum*, 298-301.

[145] "was er innerlich gehört hat." Bekker, *Klang und Eros*, 23.

[146] See Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 119-121. See also Tomlinson's discussion of the noumenal limits of a character. Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 89-90.

experienced, heard and commented on as sound in the world by Fritz. Indeed, Fritz is the only one who hears the sound, apart from when he composes it directly into his opera – in Act III everyone can hear traces of it floating into the bar from the theater because Fritz transcribed what he heard in his head into the score of *Die Harfen.* At the end of *Der ferne Klang*, he holds onto the sound as he desperately holds onto Grete: "Do you hear the sound? The sound never fades for me – I hold it firmly, just like I will no longer let you go."[147] Although the audience also hears this sound, Grete does not and neither do the other characters onstage.[148] Grete never responds to Fritz's question: "*Hörst du den Klang*?" Nor do Dr. Vigelius or Rudolf react to Fritz's announcements of the *Klang*.

When the *Klang* theme appears in Act II, it is only at the ship's approach and immediately prior to Fritz's appearance. The quest-like melody (Ex. 5.14) sung by Fritz in the opening scene now sounds, fragmented and in starts, played by the oboe while Grete sings: "But you, your look, your smile, and how you conduct yourself reminds me in a strange way of someone who I knew years ago."[149] The *Klang* sonority is also completely absent until once Fritz is on stage and has recognized "Gretel." The high strings, strummed harp sonority, and distinctive celesta, now playing an ascending chromatic scale, sound until Fritz's pronouncement: "There I see a delightful woman!"[150] Grete's words and accompanying orchestral music in her confession

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[147] "Hörst du den Ton–? Der schwindet mir nimmer – den halt ich so fest, wie ich Dich nicht mehr lasse." (Act III, scene 14, **102**)

[148] This only instantiation of the Klang without Fritz is in Act III at the bar, where Dr. Vigelius and the Schauspieler are talking. It is unclear whether or not the *Klang* here is the *Schauspieler*'s or Dr. Vigelius's image of Grete as well, again revealing his inner psyche for us the audience, or if the *Klang* sound is merely traces of music from Fritz's opera *Die Harfen*, which is playing in the theater across the street from the bar. The concluding cadence that we hear a few measures later to which the Kellerin asks "Das Theater schon aus?" suggests that the *Klang* sonorities are more likely traces of Fritz's opera.

[149] "Doch Sie, Ihr Blick, Ihr Lächeln und wie Sie sich gaben das mahnte mich eigen an Einen, den, den kannt' ich vor Jahren." (Act II, scene 7, 3 before **95 – 95**)

[150] "Da seh' ich ein herrliches Weib!" (Act II, scene 8, **114)**

reveal Fritz's altered image of her. When she sings "you are confusing me with the little Gretel, who you left for the sake of the sound… ah! That is gone – she is dead," only evocative fragments of the *Klang* sonority sound in the high strings and celesta, while the harp repeats a rapid motive.[151] These thwarted, brief attempts at the *Klang* further reflect Fritz's changed impression of Grete. The music is no longer the full, "pure" shimmering *Klang* heard earlier (such as at Act II, scene 8, **114**).[152]

Despite Grete's strong association with the *Klang*, it seems that we never actually hear Grete's own voice or her own musical material, just as we never really hear Diemut's music in the orchestral *Liebesszene.* By presenting the distant sound as Fritz's *imagining* of Grete, Grete's musical identity is weakened and almost negated. Although Fritz can articulate the sound within *Der ferne Klang*, Grete can never generate the *Klang* themes or sound that are so closely associated with her. Even when Grete sings with Fritz – "when the wind with a ghostly hand strums over the harp" ("*wenn der Wind mit Geisterhand über Harfen streicht*") – to the *Klang* theme (Act I, **20**), she is singing in a duet *with* him. Here she and Fritz echo the words and theme that he sang moments earlier (Act I, **12**).[153] Yet the *Klang* melody never appears in her voice alone, as it does in Fritz's voice in Act I. The *Klang* does not sound when Grete is alone in Act I in the forest, nor while she is amongst the crowd at *La casa di maschere* in Act II. It never sounds when Fritz is absent and it seems that we only hear the *Klang* when Fritz thinks of Grete. Moreover, the sound fades as Fritz fades at the end, until it is extinguished when Fritz dies. The *Klang* can be understood as emerging from inside Fritz's head, a sound that he images as Grete,

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[151] "Du verwechselst mich wohl mit der kleinen Gretel, die du vor Jahren verlassen um jenes Klanges willen…ah! Das ist vorbei – sie ist tot!"

[152] This thwarted *Klang* is found in Act II (4 m. after **113**, and **124 – 125**).

[153] In fact, when Grete sings about Fritz finding the *Klang*, the *Klang* sound is absent from the orchestra and she sings to her own melody instead of imitating Fritz's, thus further supporting her lack of awareness of the sound.

although it takes him the length of the opera to give a name and face to the sound.[154]

While the sound that inspires him is associated with Grete, it is his *imagined* Grete, the "Gretel" from Act I rather than the actual woman, Grete, "Greta," and "Tini." Recall Fischer's three central categories: 1. "*die imaginierende Frau*" (the imagining woman); 2. "*die inspirierende Frau*" (the inspiring woman); and 3. "*die imaginierte Frau*" (the imagined woman"). In *Der ferne Klang*, the woman who *inspires* Fritz emerges from his mind, as his *imagined* idea of Grete, just as the *Klang* that inspires him is his sonic exteriorization of his imagination, rather than something that exists as *embodied* in the woman in front of him – much like Görge's initial recollection of the Princess. It drives Fritz onward when he thinks of her, but when faced with Grete (in Acts I and II), he is still searching for his inspiration, as though the "real" woman in front of him does not live up to his ideal. As Levy observes about the relationship between the muse and woman: "there is a marked contrast between the 'real' woman and the image the artist has created; he does not see her 'as she is,' but rather as he would like her to be."[155] Fritz even at times privileges his idea of Grete over Grete's actual experiences and identity, as heard in his reverie in the closing scene. He changes her name back to Grete, retreating to his idea of her, while the *Klang*, which is also strongest here, returns to almost how it was at the beginning of the opera – he negates her development and experiences, placing her back to who she was when he first knew her.[156] The "purity" of the original sound corresponds to his imagination of the ideal Grete. Yet Fritz only sees the "solution" to the opera once he associates her, the sexual Grete, with the Klang. Thus he also needs the sexual woman as muse to

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[154] As Lee writes, for Fritz the *Klang*, "ringing from an indeterminate location, is an element in his unconscious, which he vaguely senses and struggles to bring forward to consciousness." Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 57.

[155] Levy, *Refiguring the Muse*, 67.

[156] When the *Klang* first starts to sound, the celesta is played from backstage. When Grete appears, the celesta has now returned to join the orchestra.

compose a successful conclusion.[157]

If we can hear the sound, we are also aligned with Fritz and his perspective. Thus, the narrative (and aural) structure lends itself well to Laura Mulvey's theoretical analysis of the scopophilic, or phallocentric, male gaze in cinema. In her feminist analysis of the visual and of spectatorship in film, Mulvey contends that the visual structures in cinema direct our gaze to perceive the film (and the film's world) from the perspective of the male character, following his surveying, voyeuristic gaze and glances at the female body.[158] Although Mulvey is entirely focused on the visual, an exploration of her understandings of identification and objectification and the *pleasure* in looking at the spectacle of woman can also be extended to a consideration of sound. In Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, we are granted a male sonic gaze. We share Fritz's, the active figure's, aural perspective onto the world in the village, *La casa di maschere*, and the city, because we hear what he alone seems to hear – the *Klang* – which is his imagination of Grete, his muse. We listen to the sensual, *pleasurable* sound, and perhaps even participate in the objectification of Grete through Fritz's sonic lens. As in Adorno's critique of the consequences of the phantasmagoric sound, we are also perhaps caught up in the wash of sound and risk loosing our critical and analytic perspective of the gendered implications of the sound. We are only briefly positioned as Grete to see and hear things through a female perspective: in Act I, once Fritz has departed (in the Forest scene when we briefly see Grete's psychological turmoil), and in Act II, prior to Fritz's arrival. Indeed our aural lens into the world of *Der ferne Klang* is predominantly reduced to Fritz's. While Abbate is right to point out that Mulvey's gaze does not

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[157] Yet it seems that Fritz needs the sexual Grete as well. The sexual Grete is not the original part of his ideal, imagined woman, but by Act III this changes. His previous idea of her is a problem and he is incapable of successfully writing Act III of *Die Harfe*.

[158] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Narrative, or Other Visual Pleasures* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 1989), 14-30.

generally work the same way in opera, in this case it does because Grete is arguably not "envoiced."[159] Grete has little vocal virtuosity or memorable thematic material of her own, and her moments of musical reflection (such as the *Waldszene* in Act I, and her reminiscences and confession in Act II) are largely overshadowed by Fritz's (personal and aural) perspective. The *Klang* dominates and ultimately envelops Grete at the end of the opera; it is Fritz's *Klang* that remains with us.

Reconsidering *Der ferne Klang* in terms of identity formation, I would argue that while the opera negotiates Fritz's identity formation, it does not allow for the development of female identity and subjectivity with the character of Grete, notwithstanding the opera's critical stance toward the era's sexual hypocrisy and injustices toward women. Fritz "develops" over the course of the opera, and by the end realizes that he was mistaken. While we gain some insight into Grete's psychological anguish at moments, such as the Forest scene, there is arguably much less development of her as a nuanced character in relation to her sexuality.

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[159] Abbate writes that Mulvey's theoretical understanding of the gaze does not adapt itself easily to opera: "Listening to the female singing voice is a more complicated phenomenon. Visually the character singing is the passive object of our gaze. But, aurally, she is resonant; her musical speech drowns out everything in range, and we sit as passive objects, battered by that voice. As a voice she slips into the 'male/active/subject' position in other ways as well, since a singer, more than any other musical performer, enters into that Jacobin uprising inherent in the phenomenology of live performance and stands before us having wrested the composing voice away from the librettist and composer who wrote the score." Abbate, "Opera, or the Envoicing of Women," 234.

Conclusion: *Woman as Music, Music as Muse, and Woman as Muse*

Music is the bearing woman, the Poet the begetter (*Erzeuger*) […] Music is woman.
– Wagner, *Oper and Drama*, Part I (1852)[160]

In *Der Traumgörge* and *Der ferne Klang*, music serves as inspiration for the male character. Yet it is not just any music, nor simply women who serve as inspiration; rather it is music associated with women that operates as a muse for male creativity and action in these works. With Aoidê as the muse of song or voice and Euterpe as muse of music, it is fitting to consider the relationship between woman as muse and music in this closing section. Nineteenth-century culture frequently drew analogies between women and music. While women were associated with interiority and emotional irrationalism, music was also linked to the senses and to direct uncontrolled emotion.[161] As the famous passage from Wagner suggests, the idea circulated that woman was music, while man was poet. Music, like woman, kindled the artistic spirit; woman, like music, served as muse. Wagner's discussion of woman as music reveals that woman is intended as *bearer*, a vessel for the creative material, while man is the *begetter*, creating and shaping the music. He wrote: "*but every musical organism is by its nature – a womanly*; it is merely a *bearing*, and not a *begetting* factor; the begetting force lies clean *outside it*, and without fecundation but this force it positively cannot bear."[162] In Wagner's idea of woman as music, man's "poetic intent," as Thomas S. Grey writes, is the "fertilizing seed

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[160] Richard Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, vol. 2, *Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (New York Broude Brothers, 1966), Part I, 111. Original: "Die Musik ist die Gebärerin, der Dichter der Erzeuger […] Die Musik ist ein Weib." In this section in *Oper und Drama*, Wagner also discusses different types of music (Italian, French, etc.) and what types of women they would be. *Ibid.*, 112-14.

[161] As Solie points out, there are further connections amongst woman, the maternal, the irrational, and music through the voice, as revealed through Julia Kristeva's work. Solie, "Introduction," *Musicology and Difference*, 13-14.

[162] Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, Part I, 109.

received and nurtured by the womb of music."[163] Indeed, Wagner reinforced the idea that woman was a passive vessel or mirror, reflecting and containing the male, and whose sole identity is this reflection: "Woman […] receives her soul through love of a man. The look of innocence in a woman's eye is the endlessly pellucid mirror in which the man can only see the general faculty for love, till he is able to see in it the likeness of himself."[164]

The muse was not merely a literary concept or visual symbol; it also inspired composers, and in these operas it is clear that there is a sonic quality to the muse. Yet woman is disembodied and the sound is not coming from her, but rather from elsewhere: the man's idea of the woman. She and her sexuality serve as muse, inspiring and compelling the male characters to action with Görge or creative acts with Kunrad and Fritz, but she has no authorship over the sound. She is an empty a vessel for the male imagination, often naïvely unaware of her role, with no identity and little voice of her own. This resonates with contemporary understandings of women and creativity, such as in Weininger's problematic notion of woman as an empty sexual being who lacks the ability to create.[165] Moreover, this corresponds with contemporary expectations of women during this era, a time when numerous women relinquished their creative roles for the sake of their male partners. For example, Alma Mahler famously gave up composition at Mahler's request: "Would it be possible to regard *my* music as *yours?* […] You only have *one* profession from now on: *to make me happy!* […] The 'role' of composer, the 'worker's' role,

[163] Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 130.

[164] Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, Part I, 111.

[165] Contrasting views from members of Vienna also co-existed. According to Luft, Robert Musil "caricatured the madness in this idealization of the woman and came to the defense of the woman who no longer wished to be the screen for male projections but rather to invent her own ideals." Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna*, 113.

falls to me – yours is the loving companion and understanding partner!"[166] Helene Nahowski, Berg's wife, herself echoes this idea in a letter to her husband: "I quench my own flame, and shall only exist for and through you."[167] As Gayle Levy notes, traditionally, going back to Orpheus, the male "retains the powerful subject position since he is the poet, the genius, the active 'singer-creator.' Her body passively furnishes him with the subject matter from which he creates."[168]

In these three operas, the male is presented as the active creator, reiterating the trope of the creative male genius, which was sedimented in the nineteenth century, while the woman is there to inspire him.[169] In *Feuersnot*, Kunrad has the power (and desire) to extinguish and rekindle the fire, the town's source of energy, depending on whether or not Diemut will succumb to his advances. Diemut serves as muse for Kunrad, not only altering his music, but ultimately also saving the town by physically succumbing to him. Yet even after her union with Kunrad, Diemut has little musical identity; she is merely a mirror, echoing Kunrad in her voice. In Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge*, we never grasp the Princess's identity. Our knowledge of her is primarily

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[166] Mahler to Alma in 1901, cited and translated in Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973), 687-88.

[167] Helene Nahowski to Berg, *Alban Berg: Letters to his Wife*, trans. Bernard Grun (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 123. As Alma Mahler's later writings attest, she regretted having given up composition as a creative outlet. For a discussion, see Gorrell, "Zemlinsky and the Eternal Feminine," 110-11.

[168] Levy, *Refiguring the Muse*, 10. According to DeShazer, myths such as Orpheus and Eurydice transformed women from active participants to passive source of inspiration. DeShazer, *Inspiring Women*, 7.

[169] For a discussion of the relationship between gender and genius see: Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*. Contemporary sexologists also discussed female versus male creativity. For instance, Iwan Bloch wrote in *The Sexual Life of Our Time* in 1907: "In respect of *artistic endowment* the male sex is unquestionably superior to the female. The long series of male poets, musicians, painters, sculptors, of the highest genius cannot be matched by any notable number of striking female personalities in the same sphere of artistic activity […] Without a doubt the differences in sexuality are the principle causes of this deficiency." Bloch, "The Sexual Life of Our Time," 32-33. Bloch here is conflating sexuality (sexual desire) with sex (physical, biological sex).

embedded within Görge's perspective, imagination, and dreams, while his *idea* of her inspires him. Even by the end of the opera, Görge projects the Princess onto Gertraud, blurring them together into a single "Woman." In *Der ferne Klang*, Fritz composes the opera, inspired by his imagined *Klang* – his idea of Grete. We hear through the filter of the male characters inventing their idea of the elusive muse, and we hear the woman through the notes that the male composer wrote. As Lee has argued about another operatic female character, Bianca from Zemlinsky's 1917 *Eine florentinische Tragödie*, woman is ultimately a "passive mirror in whose eyes the male characters see their own idealized images."[170]

This reveals much about contemporary attitudes toward women and their roles in the creative act. Although many early twentieth-century artists held progressive political ideas, with some even supporting the women's movement, there was still a lack of positive representation of female subjectivity in their art and little support of female creativity itself.[171] As Faller maintains, "even within the progressive circles of the Viennese avant-garde, artistic 'modernism' did not necessarily align with so-called 'modern' gender relations or favorable opinions of the women's movement."[172] Women were still cast in the silent passive role, only now they were to inspire through their sensual beauty (for the artists their visual beauty, for these composers, their aural

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[170] According to Lee, *Eine florentinische Tragödie* is about "constructions of male desire" and subjectivity, which is very much something that emerges in the three operas under consideration here. See Lee, "A Florentine Tragedy, or Woman as Mirror," 33.

[171] Schreker's opera *Die Gezeichneten* (1917) presented a female artist, Carlotta, who is inspired by the male character and even paints *her* own vision of him. Schreker's daughter, Haidy Schreker-Bures even describes Carlotta as "An intellectual, emancipated type of woman." ("Ein intellektueller, emanzipierter Frauentyp.") Haidy Schreker-Bures, *Hören, denken, fühlen: Eine kleine Studie über Schreker's Operntexte* (Buenos Aires: Eigenverlag, 1970), 39. Carlotta's identity as artist, however, is ultimately overshadowed and "undone" by her sexual desires. She cannot sublimate her desires into her art, but rather must act on them. Lee notes that, as a Weiningerian woman, Carlotta is "unable to resist her true, sexual nature, and succumbs to the sensuality that Weininger would assert is her true and only essence." Lee, *Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity*, 193-94.

[172] Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 96.

beauty). Indeed, these operas reinforce the modernist idea of the male creative artist, which, as Janet Wolff notes, is central to narratives of modernism.[173]

In all of these cases, it is the male artist – the composer, the librettist, the stage director – who casts the women as the passive muse for the male artist, something that Faller argues is often repeated in contemporary scholarship itself, even in studies about the muse during this era. Only the concept of woman as muse *for* men has been given scholarly attention, perhaps due to Kraus's and Altenberg's explicit written statements on the role and women, and the numerous female images painted by artists, such as Klimt or Kokoschka. Yet in reality, numerous *fin-de-siècle* women, such as Lina Loos, Gabrielle Münter, Emilie Flöge all were *active* creators.[174] Even *Salonnière* Berta Zuckerkandl wrote for the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Wiener Journal*, and *Ver Sacrum*. Indeed, with emerging modernism's reconfiguration of gender roles and the advances of the women's movement, the possibility of a reversal with women looking toward men as their muse began to appear.

Yet in the operas discussed in this chapter, woman is imagined and passive, as reflected in the music – nothing she does, nor any act that she performs in the operas give her agency. She is immobilized as muse, frozen as an idea that they have of her, while she serves as a source of inspiration. Rather than offering a truly progressive understanding of women with the avant-garde turn to sexuality, these operas again offer a more traditional understanding of woman and

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[173] For a criticism of the narrative of modernism's reliance on the male creative artist, see Wolff, "Feminism and Modernism," in *Feminine Sentences*, 51-66.

[174] Brandow-Faller rectifies this one sidedness and raises the issue of how men were also the muse and inspiration, for female artists. In her article she argues that an examination of the letters between artists and their female muses – Gustav and Alma Mahler, Lina and Adolf Loos, and Klimt and Emilie Flöge – also reveals that the men were muses "who inspired and enabled the genesis, creation and completion of works of art" for the women as well. Drawing inspiration from the opposite sex worked in two directions, although not in all the cases. She also raises the concept of "private" and "public" modernism. While women were the muses in the public narrative of modernism, in the private lives of the Vienna Moderns, men assumed the role of muse for some women's creative activities. Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 94.

her role in the creative act. The focus is on the construction of masculinity and the "*Bildung*" of the male character – we are caught up in the development of Fritz and Görge rather than the sexual development or awakening of Grete or Gertraud.[175] Female sexuality is ultimately defined in relation to male identity and drives, in these cases the development of the male artist (Fritz) and male desires (Fritz, Kunrad, and Görge), rather than explored in terms of how sexuality contributes to a woman's subjectivity. Moreover, these operas present woman as muse, while female sexuality is read always in relation to the male character, as dependent on them. As Luce Irigaray has written, "female sexuality has always been defined in relation to male parameters."[176] But where is female sexuality located, and what is its relationship to autonomous female subjectivity? Moreover, what is the relationship of these imagined women to *real* women? These are questions I turn to in the concluding chapters.

[175] In the late nineteenth century, only the male characters could undergo "Bildung," which is "the ultimate achievement of a harmonious relationship with the inner self and society" that reinforces bourgeois norms. Maierhofer, "Bildungsroman," 46.

[176] See Luce Irigaray, "This Sex which is Not One," in *This Sex which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter, with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 23. One of the fundamental critiques Irigaray offers is how female sexuality is often placed in relation to, and thus defined by, male sexuality, as Freud has done. "*Ibid.*, esp. 23-24. Simone de Beauvoir also makes this claim in the "Introduction" to *The Second Sex*, 3-20.

PART III: Reconfiguring Female Sexuality

Chapter 6: Travesty as Subversion: Re-Negotiating the Sexed Body, Gender, and Female Sexuality in Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*

The curtain opens revealing a mid-eighteenth-century setting in which a woman reclines on a large bed center stage, half-embraced by a boy. These lovers, Octavian and the Marschallin, are suddenly interrupted by Baron von Ochs, the Marschallin's vulgar, oafish cousin, who announces his recent engagement to the beautiful Sophie. To conceal his affair with the Marschallin, Octavian dresses up as a young chambermaid, Mariandel. In the first of the opera's many performances of gender, Octavian exchanges his boots, long coat, and sword for a dress. The Baron immediately falls in love with Octavian (dressed up as "Mariandel"), a predictable twist for a comic opera, and to complicate things further, Octavian in turn falls in love with the Baron's fiancée, Sophie. Octavian, however, is outraged at how Baron Ochs treats Sophie. In order to prevent the marriage, Octavian again cross-dresses as Mariandel and tricks the Baron into having a romantic *rendezvous*. At the end of the opera, Octavian un-costumes himself, revealing that "she" is really a "he," exposing the lecherous Baron's infidelity. And yet this moment of "revelation" is hardly one for the audience, for throughout the opera, when Octavian sings, "he" sings with a woman's voice – undermining the masculine surface and revealing the underlying female sex of the body.

Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, from its rococo setting and seemingly anachronistic music to its use of the travesty role, has frequently been perceived as a regressive and musically "conservative" opera. While composer Judith Bingham describes it as a "kitschy, decadent, indulgent patisserie," critic and composer Robin Holloway hears "music of a bygone aesthetic"

at best, and at worst, "late Wagnerism plus early Strauss gone rotten and ridiculous."[1] Charles Rosen has observed that "after *Elektra* Strauss quickly retreated into eighteenth-century pastiche and the delicious pastry of *Der Rosenkavalier*."[2] Del Mar also discerned an "abrupt volte-face" following *Salome* and *Elektra.*[3] Strauss certainly abandoned the avant-garde musical language of *Salome* and *Elektra* in *Rosenkavalier*, in that the opera contains traditional harmonies, charming Viennese waltzes, and Mozartean melodies, with only traces of the complex harmonic language and innovative orchestral and melodic writing of his earlier operas.[4] Yet, as Richard Taruskin recently suggested, *Rosenkavalier* is more modernist because the opera's "social and sexual conceits are even more avant-garde."[5] *Rosenkavalier*'s very turn to the past could also be considered "modern," or an earlier precursor of neoclassicism, and its "ahistorical anachronisms" convey "the disunities of modern life" and make it a work that is very much part of the twentieth century.[6] Moreover, this very return to the musical past, and in particular to the travesty role,

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[1] Judith Bingham, Brian Ferneyhough, Nicholas Mauw, Christopher Rouse, David Schiff, Kurt Schwertsik, and Robin Holloway, "Richard Strauss: Ready for the Millennium?" *Tempo*, no. 210 (October 1999): 2, 4.

[2] Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 16.

[3] Del Mar, *Richard Strauss*, II, 2.

[4] One such moment would be the "silver rose" music at the end of the opera. The harmonic progression here is complex and goes against the rules of harmonic progression, which is even more aurally jarring given its proximity to the closing duet. Thank you to Ryan Minor for noting this element.

[5] Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4, *The Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 453. For another reevaluation of *Rosenkavalier* as a modern work with a focus on how the opera navigates the aesthetics of "kitsch" and "camp" with its presentation of homosexuality, see: Gary LeTourneau, "Kitsch, Camp, and Opera: *Der Rosenkavalier*," *Canadian University Music Review*, no. 14 (1994): 77-97.

[6] Michael Walter, "Music of Seriousness and Commitment: The 1930s and Beyond," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 286. Carl Schorske comes to a similar conclusion, noting *Rosenkavalier*'s place within "operatic modernism" because the opera bridges the past with the present. Schorske, "Operatic Modernism," 680. As Lewis Lockwood also writes, it is mistaken to consider *Rosenkavalier* as indicative of compositional "regression," for "no serious analyst would claim that *Meistersinger*'s tonal language is a 'regression' from that of Tristan. Rather, it represents a deliberate decision on Wagner's part to find an idiom that effectively intermingles chromatic and enriched harmonic chords and progressions within a

raises timely questions about the relationship between sung gender and the singer's body, further transforming the opera into a progressive text amidst *fin-de-siècle* understandings and debates about gender, the sexed body, and female sexuality.

In this chapter, I examine the significance of *Rosenkavalier*'s use of the travesty role within the context Strauss and Hofmannsthal's milieu. Throughout the opera, categories of "femininity" and "masculinity" are playfully destabilized, taken on and off much like costumes, revealing gender as created and contested through performative – and musical – acts. Moreover, a woman's adoption of a male role, from attire to mannerisms, and the resulting sexual moments between two women – particularly when staged at a court opera – would have been subversive amidst this era's pervasive social, medical, and psychological discourses and taxonomies about the New Women, female sexuality, and cross-dressing. After examining these contemporaneous discussions to ascertain how the opera participates within a larger discursive framework, I turn to the text and then the music itself. Through the thematic associations and the voice, the opera offers a reconsideration of the relationship between sexed body, gendered body, and gendered sound. Moreover, it poses a challenge to some of the dominant beliefs about ideal womanhood, gender, and female sexuality. Indeed, the interaction between the voices and bodies during the opera's intimate moments between Octavian and the other women are significant. Unlike the operas in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 that examine modernist responses to the sexual woman, in *Rosenkavalier* female sexual desire and love are central. In addition to examining how, through performance, *Rosenkavalier* calls attention to *Frauenliebe*, or same-sex female desire, the

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basically diatonic framework [. . .] Is it not possible that the idiom of *Rosenkavalier* could have taken shape after that of Elektra as an approximately comparable artistic progression?" Lewis Lockwood, "The Element of Time in *Der Rosenkavalier*," in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 50-51.

conclusion of the chapter briefly considers the Marschallin.[7] The Marschallin is a female character whose subjectivity, expressivity, and sexuality present a more subtle and modern understanding of woman and desire than what has been seen in the operas examined thus far in the dissertation.

Changing Gender Roles and Homosexuality in **fin-de-siècle** *Austria and Germany*

During the second half of the nineteenth century, women increased their demands for social, legal, and educational change, and by the turn of the century the *Frauenfrage* and the challenges it posed to traditional gender roles became a concern throughout Austria and Germany, as discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation.[8] Feminists not only debated women's legal rights regarding education, the vote, and working conditions, but also questioned their social role as mother or independent New Woman. They strove to throw off external constraints on their behavior, their dress, and their sexuality. Feminist demands for change were accompanied by a widespread reactionary fear that changes in gender roles would lead to social decay. In *Die Fackel*, Kraus often lamented the threat raised by the *Frauenfrage*, while numerous popular, yet misogynistic, "scientific" writings about women emerged, some of which have already been discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1. For instance, in *Geschlecht und Charakter*, Weininger argued against the New Woman's emancipatory tendencies and warned of their dangers:

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[7] *Frauenliebe*, also the title of a lesbian journal (*Frauenliebe: Wochenschrift für die gesamten Fraueninteressen*), was a term for sexual desire or love between women at that time. Some other terms for lesbian sexuality then used in Germany and Austria were "*Invertierte*" (invert), "*drittes Geschlecht*" (third sex), "*konträre Sexualempfindung*" or *Konträre Sexualgefühl* (contrary sexual feeling), or "female Uranism" (from Karl Ulrichs' terms *Urning/Urninde* coined in the 1860s). Bonnie Zimmerman, ed., *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, vol. 1 (Garland: New York, 2000), 328-29.

[8] For a detailed discussion of the women's movements in Germany and Austria see: Anderson, *Utopian Feminism* and Frevert, *Women in German History*.

> Further, the emancipation that I have in mind is not a woman's desire for external *equality* with a man. The *problem* that I wish to solve in my search for clarity in the Women's Question is that of a woman's *will* to *become internally equal* to a man, to attain his intellectual and moral freedom, his interests and creative power. And what I will argue now is *that W has no need and accordingly, no capacity, for this kind of emancipation.*[9]

Weininger feared that these women would not only usurp men's roles and upset social stability, but also further contribute to the disintegration of what he and others, such as Max Nordau, perceived to be the increasingly "decadent," "feminized" society of *fin-de-siècle* Europe.[10]

Moreover, the public image of the Feminist became increasingly masculinized, as revealed in numerous late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century caricatures, which by poking fun at the women in the movement also reveled underlying fears accompanying changes in traditional gender roles and behavior. The stereotypical visual iconography of the Feminist and the New Woman in much of the era's literature and press, conflated her "masculine" desires for education or the vote with a masculine appearance, such as wearing short hair or trousers.[11] Meanwhile, the rising science of sexology taxonomized and fixed gendered characteristics and behavior to sexed bodies, frequently classifying any deviations as pathological, while conflicting scientific theories of bisexuality emerged. Sexologists Albert Moll, Havelock Ellis, and Iwan Bloch separately contended that in advanced society men and women were highly differentiated; yet the emancipated women of the era threatened these roles with their assumption of masculine

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[9] Weininger, "Emancipated Women," in *Sex and Character*, 58.

[10] *Ibid.*, 58-65. In fact, much of Nordau's *Degeneration* focused on the perceived harm "feminine" artistic works (such as those by Wagner, Ibsen, and Zola to name a few) had on the health and survival of society. See also the discussion of "degeneration" in the Introduction to this dissertation.

[11] Michael Sibalis, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism," in *Europe: 1789–1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of Industry and Empire*, ed. John Merriman and Jay Winter (Detroit: Charles Scribner and Sons, 2006), II: 1084. An alternate presentation of the New Woman that contrasted with the stereotype (a mannish old maid with glasses and short hair) depicted her as an alluring, beautiful, and intelligent woman who could hold her own with men, but who was incompetent in terms of traditional female duties, such as maintaining a happy marriage or organized household. Ute Lischke, *Lily Braun: 1865–1916: German Writer, Feminist, Socialist* (London: Camden House, 2000), 27.

activities and male rights.[12] Bloch wrote: "The contrast between the sexes becomes with advancing civilization sharper and more individualized […] Certain phenomena and aberrations of the movement for the emancipation of women, such as the adoption of a masculine style of dress and the use of tobacco, are no more than *relapses* into a primitive condition."[13] Weininger went so far as to suggest that emancipated women were proportionally more male, drew more on their masculine qualities, and even had deeper voices. As he wrote: "*All those women who really strive for emancipation* [...] *always display many male properties, and the more perceptive observer will always recognize in them some anatomically male characteristic, an approximation to the physical appearance of a man.*"[14] Although Weininger was not specifically discussing cross-dressing or operatic performance here, one cannot help but consider how seeing a female singer in the role of Octavian (a woman who acts like, *looks* like, and even "passes" for a man) would have played into these beliefs and fears.

At the same time, a related anxiety over homosexuality and its relation to shifting gender roles existed, with numerous conflicting opinions contributing to a complex web of ideas about sexuality and gender attributes. These debates and anxieties appeared alongside contemporaneous examinations of homosexuality in German and Austrian literature. For example, Aimée Duc's 1901 novel, *Sind es Frauen? Roman über das drittes Geschlecht* (*Are these Women? A Novel about the Third Sex*), is about a circle of women who identify as belonging to the "third sex." By criticizing a former member of their circle for having married a

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[12] Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 24. Ellis was supportive of the feminist movement at times though.

[13] Bloch, "The Sexual Life of our Time," 31. Bloch wrote that the "difference between the sexes is the *original cause* of the human sexual life […] We find that there is *an increasing differentiation of the sexes induced by civilization*." *Ibid.*, 30-31.

[14] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 64. Weininger discussed George Sand's masculinity and deep voice as an example of the "mannish" physical qualities found in woman who behaved like a man. *Ibid.*, 59.

man, they question what sexuality means at the time.[15] Maria Eichhorn's novel *Fräulein Don Juan* (1903) and Maria Janischek's collection of short stories *Die Neue Eva* (1909) also featured women who turn to other women for love or pleasure, while Robert Musil's novel *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (*The Confusions of Young Törless*, 1906) examines homosexual desire in young male students. Wedekind's *Lulu* plays, *Erdgeist* (*Earth Spirit*, 1895) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (*Pandora's Box*, 1904), include a lesbian character, Countess Geschwitz, while Wedekind's infamous *femme fatale* Lulu, who appears to be a "New Woman," has a romantic relationship with Countess Geschwitz.[16]

Der Rosenkavalier also premiered in the wake of the highly publicized homosexuality cases of Oscar Wilde (1895), steel magnate Alfred Krupp (1902), and Prince Eulenberg (1906–1907), the last a member of the German aristocracy.[17] Furthermore, while lesbian sexuality was already criminalized in Austria, the opera's appearance shortly followed debates in 1909 concerning the addition of lesbian sexuality to Paragraph 175, a German law criminalizing male

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[15] Aimée Duc was a pseudonym. For a discussion of the novel from a feminist perspective, see Biddy Martin, *Femininity Played Straight: The Significance of Being Lesbian* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 54-69.

[16] Many of the works of that time that dealt with lesbian sexuality presented it negatively. Often the woman was presented as a "woman-loving man hater." *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, vol. 1, 328-29. What is interesting with *Rosenkavalier* is that the opera is a positive, sympathetic, and tender presentation of female sexuality.

[17] The "Eulenberg affair," specifically the Molkte versus Harden case (1906–1907), was a public suit of libel in Germany between a journalist (Maximillian Harden) and Graf von Molkte, who was accused by Harden of having a sexual relationship with Prince Eulenberg, another member of Kaiser Wilhelm's inner circle. See Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 88, 147. The case was yet another example associating the aristocratic circles with homosexuality. Indeed, one's class seemed to have a weakening influence against accusations of homosexuality. For a further discussion of how class and social influence played out in the persecution of homosexuals in the *fin-de-siècle*, see Scott Spector, "Where Personal Fate Turns to Public Affair: Homosexual Scandal and Social Order in Vienna, 1900–1910," *Austrian History Yearbook* 38 (2007): 18-22.

homosexuality.[18] According to Mosse, there was "a new attitude towards lesbianism at the very end of the nineteenth century. It was now seen as a sickness, not unlike male homosexuality, and thus as [another] menace to gender distinctions."[19] At the same time homosexual rights activists, such as Magnus Hirschfeld, deployed a counter-discourse through the Berlin-based *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee* (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, founded in 1897) and the German gay rights journals *Die Eigene* and the *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (*Yearbook for Sexual Intermediates*, 1909–1923).[20] He advocated that homosexuality was not "pathological" or "abnormal," but natural – a "third sex" – and thus ought to be decriminalized. Debates occurred about whether or not homosexuality was part of "nature," occurring naturally and thus not an "illness," or acquired, as advocated by a number of members of the medical community.[21] Some even noted a connection between one's sexuality and adopting the behavior and attire of the opposite sex, both literally and figuratively. While Weininger associated women acting like men – in particular emancipated women – with homosexuality, other *fin-de-siècle* sexologists pathologized both homosexuality and cross-dressing, claiming that women taking on men's roles in behavior or attire would encourage sexual "inversion," a prevalent *fin-de-siècle*

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[18] While Lesbian sexuality was "criminalized" in Austria from 1852 onward under Paragraph 129b, lesbians did not seem to be persecuted as much as homosexual males. Oosterhuis, *Krafft-Ebing and the Making of Sexual Identity*, 37.

[19] Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 104-5.

[20] The goals of these publications and the organization were twofold: to study sexuality in a more scientific context, and to work to repeal Paragraph 175. In 1897 homosexual rights activist Hirschfeld also formed a petition to repeal Paragraph 175, getting signatures from intellectuals, artists, writers, and politicians, including Zweig, Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Kautsky, Lou Andreas Salomé, and even Krafft-Ebing. See Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919–1939* (New York: Algora, 2006), 61-70.

[21] Ellis argued the former claim, while the medical journal *The Lancet* claimed the latter. Laura Doan and Chris Waters, "Homosexualities: Introduction," in *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 42.

term used by sexologists for homosexuality.[22] As Krafft-Ebing wrote in his popular *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886): "Uranism may nearly always be suspected in females wearing their hair short, or who dress in the fashion of men, or pursue the sports and pastimes of their male acquaintances; also in opera singers and actresses who appear in male attire on the stage by preference."[23] Although resisting the tendency to label same sex desire a "perversity" or "pathology" as Krafft-Ebing did, sexologist Havelock Ellis also argued that "masculinity" in superficial appearance or bodily comportment was a sign of inversion when occurring in upper-class women. Masculine attire, habits including smoking, a preference for male activities over female activities, as well as physical features such as a longer "masculine larynx" with its resulting lower voice, all connoted inversion. According to Ellis and John Addington Symonds in *Sexual Inversion* (1897, published first in German as *Die Konträre Geschlechtsgefühl*, 1896), "the brusque, energetic movements, the attitude of the arms, the direct speech, the inflexions of the voice, the masculine straightforwardness and sense of honour, and especially the attitude toward men, free from any suggestion either of shyness or audacity" are all signs indicative of lesbian sexuality.[24] The transvestite or cross-dresser – both male to female and female to male –

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[22] Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia sexualis*; Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*, 61. Freud also classified homosexuality as an "inversion" in "Sexual Aberrations," the first section of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), and considered homosexuality or bisexuality as something that all people have an inclination toward that is brought out (or "acquired") through an individual's sexual development. Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 5-10, 36-38. Showalter also notes that for Weininger, "homosexual women were mannish lesbians, women with a high percentage of essential masculinity." Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the fin-de-siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), 172.

[23] Despite supporting some changes, Krafft-Ebing still labeled sexuality as "normal" or abnormal." Oosterhuis, *Krafft-Ebing and the Making of Sexual Identity*, 43-55. Krafft-Ebing's ideas were circulated widely through lectures, according to prominent *fin-de-siècle* writer and socialite Berta Zuckerkandl, who sometimes also hosted him at her salon. See: Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History*, 123-24, 165. See also Kandel, *The Age of Insight*, 29-41-42.

[24] Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, "Sexual Inversion in Women," in *Sexual Inversion* (1897), ed. Ivan Crozier (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2008), 175. *Sexual Inversion* first appeared in

endured similar pathological classification along with social and legal persecution during this period. As noted in Hirschfeld's 1910 study *Die Transvestiten: Eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb* (translated as *Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress*), transvestitism was frequently perceived as depraved and punished socially and legally. Following the 1909 motion to criminalize lesbian acts under the same law that persecuted male homosexuality, cross-dressing as either a man or a woman could be punished by imprisonment for "indecency," and women who dressed up as men could be committed to an asylum or even arrested.[25]

In light of these contemporaneous attitudes toward sexuality, *Rosenkavalier*'s performance of cross-dressing and the resulting sexual moments between the Marschallin and Octavian as well as Octavian and Sophie were significant. Although there is no explicit "New Woman" as a character, apart from traces of her in the Marschallin with her expressions of sexuality and agency, the opera's overall presentation of a cross-dressed woman and her sexuality is evocative of the New Woman. Thus, not only the opera's use of the trouser role, but also its sexual implications regarding understandings of gender, as well as class and respectability, would have reverberated within this era's conflicting and highly charged debates and anxieties.[26]

German translated by Lombrosian Hans Kurella as *Die konträre Sexualgefühl* in 1896. See Ivan Crozier, "Introduction: Havelock Ellis, John Addington Symonds, and the Construction of *Sexual Inversion*," in *Sexual Inversion: A Critical Edition* (1897), ed. Ivan Crozier (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2008), 58.

[25] See Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 105. For a contemporary perspective, see Magnus Hirschfeld, *The Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross Dress*, trans. Michael A. Lombardi-Nash (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), 369 [Original: *Die Transvestiten: Eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb* (Berlin: Pulvermacher, 1910].

[26] This evocation of the threatening New Woman may be one of the reasons why Strauss and Hofmannsthal set the opera in the past, and thus reduced the explicit connections to the concerns of their time. The ornamental and quaint late eighteenth-century setting most likely allowed them much more freedom than if the opera had been set in the early twentieth century.

Der Rosenkavalier ***and its Musical Context***

Opera, of course, has a long history of cross-dressing, and earlier operas with travesty roles were certainly performed on numerous stages across Austria and Germany. Before turning to the music itself, it is important to briefly consider the relationship between *Rosenkavalier*'s cross-dressing and sexuality and other operas: *how* was *Rosenkavalier* different? How important was the sexuality to opera's conception? And how was *Rosenkavalier* actually staged?[27] (For Roller's costume sketches of Octavian dressed as a young aristocrat, see Figs. 6.1 and 6.2). Despite the near disappearance of the travesty role during the nineteenth century, Strauss's Octavian has a direct antecedent in Mozart's Cherubino, while French and Viennese operetta continued to rely on the trouser role through the 1910s.[28] Yet use of the trouser role in *Rosenkavalier* is different. Not only was the opera catering to a different audience in a different performance space than operetta, but it also enacted a heightened female sexuality in an era of restrictive bourgeois notions of respectability.[29] In contrast to earlier trouser parts, *Rosenkavalier* demands a much greater degree of sexual activity involving the travesty character. Although the opera's opening scene is in a bedroom, as in *The Marriage of Figaro*, the connotations are very

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[27] Although the cross-dressed woman appeared in novels earlier in the century, it is not the same as an embodied, live performance, as in the case with *Rosenkavalier*, amidst contemporary understandings of the moral and educating function of the stage.

[28] Strauss himself even initially associated *Rosenkavalier* with Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. After *Elektra* Strauss remarked: "Das nächstemal schreibe ich eine Mozartoper" ("The next time I'll write a Mozart opera"). See Max Steinitzer, *Richard Strauss* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1914), 211. Hofmannsthal also turned to Beaumarchais's *Le marriage de Figaro* (1784), the basis for Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, as one of several sources when working on the libretto. Concerning the trouser role in Viennese operetta, see Linhardt, *Inszenierung der Frau-Frau in der Inszenierung*, esp. 108-27. For a discussion of the trouser roles in Italian opera in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early-Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), esp. 103-28.

[29] For instance, in contrast to the operettas mentioned earlier, *Rosenkavalier* would have been performed at the Court Opera, a venue that catered to wider audience than operetta theaters did. Moreover, Strauss was concerned about the opinion of the Viennese modernes regarding the opera. In a letter dated August 9th, 1909, Strauss asked Hofmannsthal: "Have you let Beer-Hofmann, Schnitzler, Bahr, etc. read the first two acts yet?" Strauss and Hofmannsthal, *Correspondence*, 47.

different and the sexual body is always very present. Octavian seems older, more seductive and experienced, and less of an adolescent than characters such as Cherubino. Whereas Cherubino merely flirts with Barbarina and unrequitingly longs after the Countess, Octavian begins the very first scene in bed with the Marschallin.[30] Indeed, *Rosenkavalier* opens with a post-coital love scene that calls for Octavian to embrace the Marschallin in bed, while many later stage directions instruct Octavian to kiss both the Marschallin and Sophie. A furtive kiss even occurs between Mariandel and the Marschallin, with the stage directions indicating: "She kisses him quickly" ("*Die küsst ihn schnell*," 3 after **98)**. Based on stage and costume designer Alfred Roller's 1911 sketches from *Rosenkavalier*, the unmade bed is conspicuous and very much part of the opera's conception (Fig. 6.3).[31]

That the potential scandal of this sexual content in *Rosenkavalier* did not escape the careful eye of the censor serves to establish how different Octavian is from his predecessors. The opening scene was often modified for various performances, with Octavian and Marschallin's cuddling shifted away from the bed to a sofa in the middle of the stage in order to diffuse the scene's suggestions about what might have been happening before the curtain rose. According to materials from an early German production of *Rosenkavalier*, the staging of the opera even removed all traces of the bed.[32] The same was true in Vienna, where the recently found *Regiebuch* from the 1911 *Hofoper* production reveals that Wymetal's staging also eliminated the

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[30] Other differences include the reasons why the travesty character initially is disguised as a woman; in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Cherubino is disguised as Susanna to trick the count, while Octavian initially dresses up in order to conceal his affair with the Marschallin. Only later does he dress up to deceive Ochs, the equivalent of the Count.

[31] Roller designed the original Dresden production's sets and costume. While Roller was also involved in the project in Vienna as stage designer, Wilhelm Wymetal was the stage director for the productions.

[32] An example of this modification is documented in the *Regieanweisungen* for a production of *Rosenkavalier*, mostly likely in Köln. *Schloss Wahn Theaterarchiv* (Köln) INV.-NR: M 754.

bed from the stage, thus toning down the sexual implications of the opening scene.[33] Similarly, in her writings on Strauss's operas, Lehmann also wonders if "prudery prompted th[e] change in staging" in the early performances in Hamburg when the bed was also removed.[34] When *Rosenkavalier* was finally performed in Berlin in late 1911, following much resistance from the censors and opera Intendant, the work, which the Kaiser noted was "*keine Musik für mich*" (not music for me), was a heavily censored production known as the "Berlin version." The Marschallin's instructions to Octavian to hide "[t]here behind the bed" became "[t]here, take cover!," even removing any allusion to the bed from the libretto.[35]

The enhanced sexuality that makes this travesty role different from its antecedents is again confirmed by a brief examination of its genesis and its stage directions. As the letters between Strauss and Hofmannsthal reveal, Octavian's sexual passion was central to the opera's conception. In a letter to Hofmannsthal about an early draft, Strauss wrote: "From page 19 onwards, the scene between Sophie and Octavian doesn't quite suit me yet. What I need here is something more passionate […] As it reads now, it is too tame, too mannered and timid, and too lyrical."[36] In another letter, he suggested that Sophie should "fall into Octavian's arms. Now a short passionate duet ending with their kiss."[37] In the final act, the directions in the score call for Sophie to gaze into Octavian's eyes, and a "moment later she is clasped in his arms," while at the

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[33] Wymetal's *Regiebuch* was returned to Vienna only a few years ago, and is now held in the *Wien Staatsoper Bibliothek* (*WSB*, uncatalogued). These changes were most likely made to appease the conservative Vienna censor.

[34] Lotte Lehmann, *Five Operas and Richard Strauss* (New York: MacMillan, 1964), 123.

[35] Alan Jefferson, *Richard Strauss*: Der Rosenkavalier, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 90.

[36] Strauss and Hofmannsthal, *Correspondence*, 48.

[37] *Ibid.*, 40. Strauss also wrote to Hofmannsthal that: "Unfortunately, I'll need very good actors again; the ordinary operatic singers won't do." *Ibid*., 30.

end of their concluding love duet, she "sinks into his arms" and Octavian "kisses her quickly."[38] Earlier drafts of the opera also reveal that Strauss wanted the passages in which Octavian explains his intimate relationship to the Marschallin to be longer and more explicit than how they eventually appeared in the opera.[39] The resulting lesbian overtones permeated the opera to such an extent that Mary Garden, Hofmannsthal's ideal Octavian, refused to perform the role, even though she was well known for singing other trouser parts, including Massenet's *Chérubin* (1905). She commented, "[o]h I didn't care for that opera at all…Everyone said I would have made a wonderful Octavian. Perhaps. The role didn't appeal to me at all. Making love to a woman all night long would have bored me to death."[40] Indeed, *Rosenkavalier* is different from previous trouser roles. From the conception of the opera by the composer and the librettist, to the perception of the opera by singers and court censors, those involved with *Rosenkavalier* could agree that female sexuality was very much central to this (hardly-regressive) opera.

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[38] Act III, **291** and **306**. *Der Rosenkavalier*, 441, 450.

[39] See Joseph E. Jones, "*Der Rosenkavalier*"*: Genesis, Modeling, and New Aesthetic Paths*" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009), 83.

[40] Mary Garden and Louis Biancolli, *Mary Garden's Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 220. Cited as well in LeTourneau, "Kitsch, Camp, and Opera: *Der Rosenkavalier*," 93. In her famous essay "Notes on 'Camp,'" Susan Sonntag defines "camp" as having a "love of the unnatural," artifice, exaggeration, and stylization. Camp is a "mode of aestheticism," or a "way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon." It is "decorative art, emphasizing texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content." Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Picador, 1966), 274-78. Sontag also addresses the role of gender and sexuality in camp, noting that camp is often androgynous and about "going against the grain of one's sex." (*ibid.*, 279) Although Sontag classifies Strauss's operas in general, and *Rosenkavalier* specifically, as camp (*ibid.*, 280), I would argue that although it is possible to *perform* the opera as "camp," *Rosenkavalier* "opera text" itself (nor the 1911 performances most likely) do not necessarily qualify as camp based on Sontag's famous definition. The opera is too serious and touches on deeper issues, not only on the relationship between gender, the body, and female sexuality, but also on loss, ageing, passing of time, class, and social and political change. Both Hofmannsthal and Strauss wanted the opera to be serious.

Playing with Gender Textually and Musically

As Heather Hadlock has argued, in opera "we expect to disregard a singer's body and instead see the 'voice.' Yet trouser roles require a more elaborate scaffolding from which to suspend our disbelief, for in order to accept the character *en travesty* as *male*, we must rationalize away the evidence of both our eyes and ears."[41] In *Rosenkavalier*, the audience is asked to suspend belief and assume that Octavian is really a young man.[42] It is only through this suspension that we can laugh at how the Baron falls for Mariandel and how he repeatedly fails to see her resemblance to Octavian. But if we laugh at the Baron, perhaps we should also laugh at ourselves. Does our very laughter at the Baron's "mistake" reveal that we too may have easily fallen for the female singer's performance of a young male by getting so caught up in the performance? Are we also fooled? Or have we suspended "seeing" the sexed body underneath the performance and mistaken a female body for a male body?

In *Rosenkavalier*, gender undergoes a constant process of negotiation and explicit construction at multiple levels: the textual, the visual, and the musical. The text contains numerous playful verbal references – by Octavian and other characters – to Octavian's masculinity. Although it is a turn toward contemporary theory, Judith Butler's work on gender construction and the body offers a way of thinking through the gender negotiations in *Rosenkavalier* amidst an era in which a number of reconsiderations and reinforcements occurred regarding gender attributes and sexed bodies. In her work on performativity and gender identity,

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[41] Hadlock's article focuses on Massenet's *Chérubin* (1905), another early twentieth-century travesty role. Heather Hadlock, "The Career of Cherubino, or the Trouser Role Grown Up," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 69.

[42] Abel offers an amusing anecdote that reveals that not all audience members, even today, can classify the travesty singer by gender. In his story, Abel's friend genuinely does not know whether or not Mozart's Cherubino is male or female. See Samuel D. Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 146.

Butler draws on J. L. Austin's theory of performative speech acts and Althusser's concept of interpellation to examine the implications of spoken utterances that can articulate or call forth one's subjectivity.[43] For Butler, speech acts, or utterances, such as "I now pronounce you" or "it's a girl!" work to interpellate a subject, creating or affirming a gendered identity. Although Butler resists equating staged performances with performativity – it is not possible to simply equate a consciously chosen role to be performed on a stage with the gender roles that we are consciously and unconsciously compelled to take up in our lives – her work nevertheless offers insights about gender, the body, and society that are fruitful for an analysis of operatic performance.[44] It is therefore worthwhile to carefully extend her concepts to the operatic stage as a starting point.[45]

Throughout *Rosenkavalier*, the characters sing gendering verbal utterances that are reminiscent of Butler's work on speech acts. Shortly after the opening love scene between

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[43] See Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

[44] Interpellation also has a political implication in Althusser's work, as well as in Butler's work on gender that is influenced by him. For Butler, subjects are "hailed," often normatively, into genders. There is, however, no political imperative presented in *Rosenkavalier* because the operatic characters are not "subjects," even though the singer is one.

[45] Butler's work can be extended to address the way that the reiterated performance of masculinity and femininity onstage potentially affects the lived body, both during the performance itself and offstage; a public performance can either reinforce the dominant gender reality, or present a new paradigm of fluid gender possibilities to the audience, potentially affecting their lived experience. As I will later examine in the last section of this chapter, an onstage performance has consequences for the lived body within this particular historical and cultural context, a context in which many believed that gender traits were directly linked to the biological body. I want to suggest that lending one's body to the role of Octavian and performing masculine gestures *could* possibly make a singer reconsider their experience or perception of their gendered body in their day-to-day lives, although I am reluctant to make strong claims about exactly how it would affect any individual singer. There are very few comments from early Octavians to ascertain how the female singers felt about embodying the role. Lotte Lehmann, who wrote extensively on singing Strauss's operatic roles, primarily sang the Marschallin, while Mary Garden's comment is only a glimpse into what she thought of the role, rather than an insight into how she *felt* performing the role. The Viennese Octavian, Marie Gutheil-Schoder, also wrote about her operatic roles; however, the only insight we get into her lived experience is her comment that she wore breeches early on in the dress rehearsals in order to get into the character more and that she seemed to like playing characters who challenged the feminine "norms" of the time.

Octavian and the Marschallin, Octavian wonders about his gender. He declares "I am your boy," then playfully asks, "but when sight and hearing forsake me, where is your boy then?" The Marschallin replies, "You are a boy, you are my dear! I love you!" (**24** – 2 after **26**).[46] In Act II, the Baron repeatedly calls Octavian a "boy," while in an intimate moment Sophie speaks in an aside of Octavian, "Of course you are a man, you are what you are" (2 before **54**).[47] This playful repetition and naming of gender works to construct the character of Octavian as "male," despite the contradicting evidence of the singer's voice. Furthermore, the term "boy" (or "Bub" in German), which is used by the Marschallin to address Octavian at times, also carried specific connotations. "*Bub*" and "*Bubi*" were terms for men or types of mannish women or androgynous lesbians at that time.[48] For *Rosenkavalier*'s early audiences – and for those keyed into this terminology – Octavian's and the Marschallin's assertions that he is her "Bub" likely added another layer of meaning by alluding to a same-sex relationship.

The music further contributes to the gendering of Octavian. In much of his *œuvre*, Strauss assigned characters distinct musical themes and accompanying orchestral music, both of which have dramatic import in articulating gender. Although I am hesitant to simply impose gender

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[46] While Octavian sings the first line, declaring himself a boy, the theme appears in the horns. With his questioning, the accompanying melody immediately shifts to a lyrical descending line the bass and bassoon. "Ich bin dein Bub – aber wenn mir dann Hören und Sehen vergeht – wo ist dann Dein Bub?" "Du bist mein Bub, Du bist mein Schatz!" The English translations of the libretto used throughout this chapter are my modifications of the translation by Alfred Kalisch that appears in *Der Rosenkavalier (The Rose-Bearer): Comedy for Music in Three Acts of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Music by Richard Strauss*, trans. Alfred Kalisch (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1943).

[47] "Freilich, Er ist ein Mann, da ist Er, was Er bleibt."

[48] As Sutton writes, *Bubi* was a virile butch type "that embodied youthful playfulness and sexual enthusiasm and was often depicted in relationships with powerful and wealthy old women." Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 126. Other examples of the term in popular culture include: Felix Dormann and Adolf Altmann had an operetta entitled "Bub oder Mädel?" (1908); sexologist Max Hodann wrote a book with the same name in 1926; in May 1920, the *Berlin Illustrierte Zeit* held a contest called: "Bub oder Mädel?" See also Maurice Berger, *Modern Art and Society: An Anthology of Social and Multicultural Readings* (New York: Icon, 1994), 129.

categories onto a piece of music, it is likely that *Rosenkavalier*'s music would have been heard as operating within the musical language and codes with which *fin-de-siècle* opera audiences would have been familiar.[49] Important writings, such as the French composer Hector Berlioz's *Treatise on Instrumentation* (1852), which Strauss revised in 1905, a few years before composing *Rosenkavalier*, contained numerous passages connecting instrumental usage and sonorities with masculinity or femininity. For example, in the following excerpt describing the role of the clarinets, both brass and woodwinds are gendered: The clarinet's "voice is that of heroic love; and if the mass of brass instruments in grand military symphonies suggest the idea of warriors covered with glittering armor, marching to glory or to death, so do numerous clarinet playing in unison seem to represent loving women." The passage continues, noting the moving sonority of the "feminine quality of tone present in the clarinets."[50] Furthermore, Strauss was noted for carefully crafting his themes to bring out certain qualities in the characters in both his texted and non-texted music. Specht wrote that Strauss composed a "*Metaphysik der Instrumentation*" in his music, and he was able to achieve a "*Seelenporträt durch besondere Klangfarbe*," (the portrait of a soul through particular tone colors), used the terms "*Mannesthema*" and "*Mannesmotiv*" to describe certain themes in Strauss's *Symphonia Domestica.*[51] He also analyzed numerous passages in terms of gender, calling some themes "virile" and others "*weibliche*." There was nothing inherently gendered masculine or feminine in

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[49] Moreover, based on the numerous late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century leitmotivic guides (such as those by Wolzogan, Lawrence Gilman, Gräner, that are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) and the gendered language used to discuss specific musical themes and motives as well as which music is assigned to which character in certain operas, the music in *Rosenkavalier* arguably would have been heard as operating within gender assignments.

[50] This passage appears in Berlioz's original French text, *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*, of 1843. This suggests the gendering of themes from the nineteenth century through to the early twentieth century. Berlioz, *Treatise on Orchestration*, enlarged and rev. Richard Strauss, 209-10.

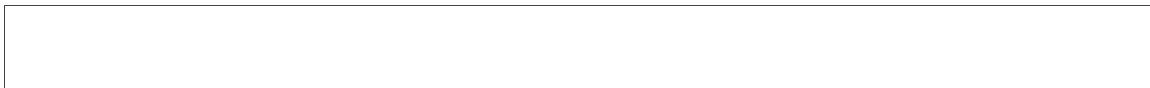
[51] Richard Specht, *Richard Strauss und seinen Werke* (Leipzig: E. P. Tal & Company, 1921), 305, 307.

the music itself, but Specht's comments and the *Treatise of Instrumentation* suggest that some musical characteristics were heard as cultural symbols of masculine and feminine.

At the beginning of Act I, Octavian is given a "virile," rapidly ascending horn theme that bears a striking aural resemblance to the heroic masculine themes Strauss had established in earlier works, such as the tone poems *Don Juan* and *Ein Heldenleben.*[52] (Compare Ex. 6.1 and Ex. 6.2). Strauss assigned a similar horn theme to both the womanizer in *Don Juan* and the "Hero" in *Ein Heldenleben*, while assigning a contrasting lyrical theme to the hero's companion. Not only do both the second Don Juan theme and the "Hero" theme rely on a *tutti* French horn passage, but they also resemble each other with the similarity in their overall contour, volume, articulation, and character.

Ex. 6.1: Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben* (1898): Opening horn *tutti* (mm. 1 – 8).

Ex. 6.2: Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*: Octavian's horn theme (Introduction, mm. 1 – 6).



On the one hand, Octavian's horn theme can be simply heard as a noble hunting theme, evocative of either the aristocratic class of the character, or the military associations of the Marschallin's husband, the Field Marshall. On the other hand, with its musical gestures and instrumentation, this theme could also heard as masculine. In his description of *Ein Heldenleben*,

[52] Gilliam notes that Strauss had assigned a similar E major theme with a "rapid surge" upward for the womanizing Don Juan in his orchestral tone poem (measure 9) and another similar theme in E major for the Husband in *Symphonia Domestica*. See Gilliam, "Strauss's Preliminary Opera Sketches," 179; and Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's* Elektra, 69.

Specht calls the "hero's" horn theme "virile," while the solo violin plays "*des Helden Gefährtin*" (the hero's companion), and these two themes are played in dialogue, between "*Manneshoheit*" and "*Weibeskunst*."[53] The horn theme appears with Octavian and is used to affirm his masculinity on numerous occasions. Not only did critics and contemporary writers hear this theme as Octavian's, but Strauss himself also wrote this E major theme in the margins of an early working copy of the text Hofmannsthal's sent him and connected it to Octavian.[54] For example, when Octavian asserts, "Here, I am master," the heroic theme appears both in his voice and in the horns (Ex. 6.3). When he reaches for his sword in Act I to protect the Marschallin from an intruder, or to defend himself against the potential threat of the Field Marshall, the heroic horn sounds alongside these traditionally "masculine" gestures (Ex. 6.4). Again, in Act II, when Octavian fights Baron Ochs in order to defend Sophie's respectability and injures him with his sword, this horn theme returns, musically reiterating Octavian's masculinity. The stage directions read: "Octavian takes off angrily toward him. The Baron draws, clumsily fails, and Octavian's

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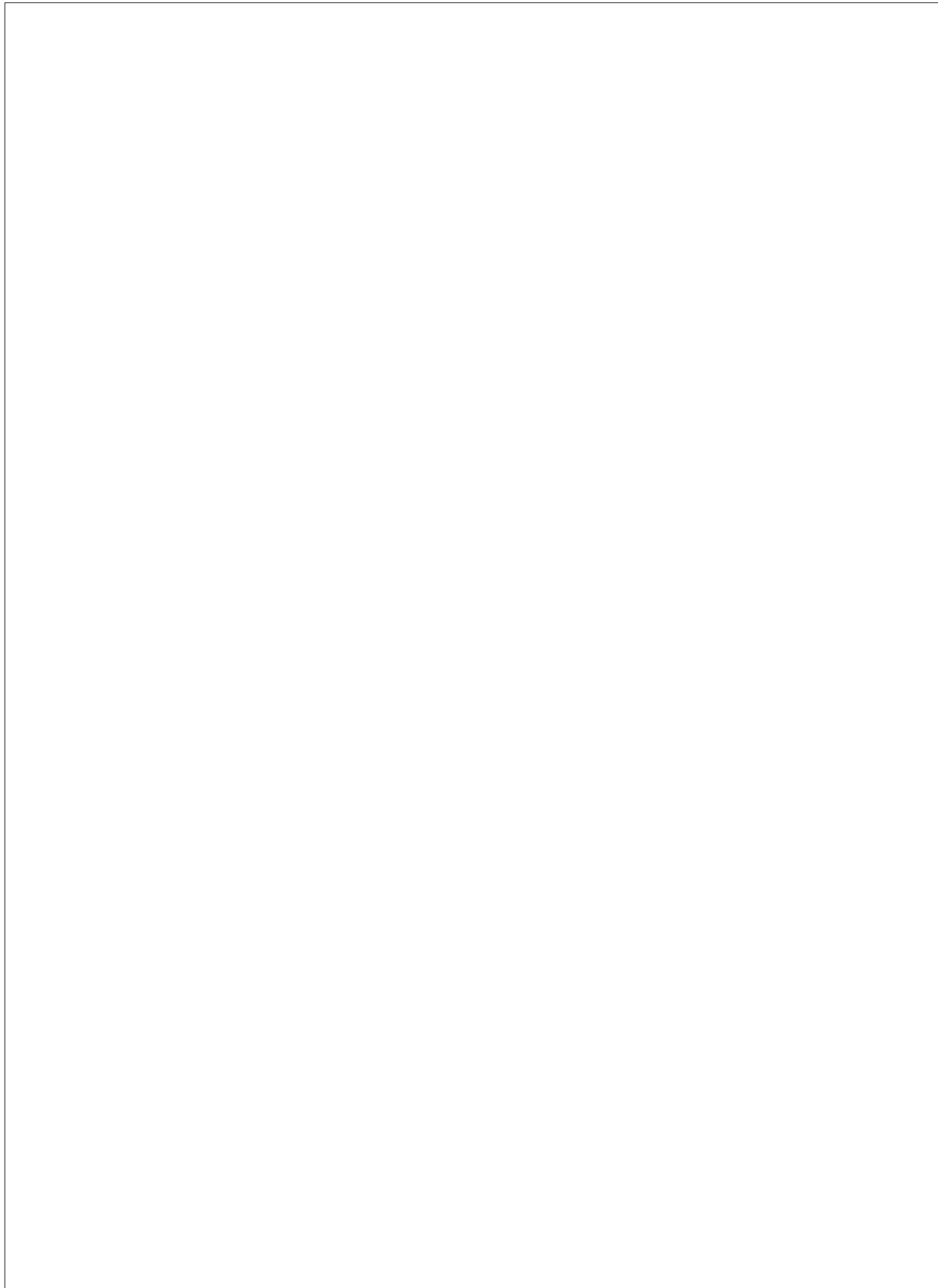
[53] Specht also writes that the second theme assigned to Don Juan is full of "Adventurous desire, arrogant youth, and the beauty of the victorious conqueror, radiant in strength and pride" ("Abendteuer Lust, hochmütiger Jugend und Schönheit des siegreichen Eroberers, leuchtend in Kraft und Stolz"). Specht, *Richard Strauss und seinen Werke*, 187. Specht contrasts this with the oboe playing "*das weibliche Liebesthema*" ("the theme of womanly love"). *Ibid.*, 188.

[54] The link between this theme and Octavian's character was clearly understood by the audience, as shown by the contemporary writings and reception. Korngold, for instance, noted that this theme was obviously Octavian, writing in his review of *Der Rosenkavalier*: "The theme of young, happy Octavian, bubbling over with life, with which the orchestral prelude begins, is genuine Strauss: one of his venturesome E-major themes that burn upward, like a flame." (*Neue Freie Presse*, (April 9, 1911), translated in "Strauss and the Viennese Critics," 256-57). Moreover, Strauss sketched this theme in the margins of his working copy of the text Hofmannsthal sent him. Strauss, Mus.Hs. 41.960. Facsimile, ÖNB-*Mus.* Strauss's early compositional sketches actually often involved working out musical material in the margins of the *Reichschrift* (his annotated text from Hofmannsthal) with which he was working (Jones, "*Der Rosenkavalier*," 37). The E major Octavian theme (along with the related "Mariandel" theme) were sketched fairly early on, and in the version that appears in a 1909 Sketchbook (Sketchbook Tr. 20, p. 28), E major and Octavian's short introductory theme for oboe are written alongside Octavian's first vocal entrance (Jones, "*Der Rosenkavalier*," 85). Even in sketches for Act II (in sketchbook Tr. 22, p. 100), Strauss modulates to E major when Marianne sings that Octavian is coming: "Er kommt! Er kommt!" (Jones, "*Der Rosenkavalier*," 145-46). Alan Jefferson also associates the Marschallin with E major. See Alan Jefferson, "Tonality of the Rose," *Richard Strauss-Blätter* 25 (June 1991): 34.

sword is already in his upper arm," while the horn theme sounds in the horns and celli before a sweeping upward scale.[55]

Ex. 6.3: Strauss, *Der* Rosenkavalier: Octavian declares he is the "master" (Act I, **37**).



[55] "Octavian fährt wütend auf ihn los. Baron zieht, fällt ungeschickt aus und hat schon Octavians Degen im Oberarm." (4 before **160**)

Ex. 6.4: Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*: Octavian protects the Marschallin (Act I, **76** – **77**).

Marschallin: Quinquin, it is my husband! [...] Not there, that's the anteroom. My tradesmen and half a dozen lackeys will be there. Over there! [...] Too late! They're already in the dressing-room! Now there's only one way! Hide! There!
Octavian: (*Goes toward his sword and runs to the right. Runs across to the small door*). I'll bar his path! I'll stay with you![56]

Mariandel's Musical Undoing

Part of what is playful about *Rosenkavalier* is the constant changing of costumes, roles, personas, and classes. Explicitly set in the distant eighteenth century and cast with comedic aristocratic characters such as Baron Ochs, class politics are yet another concern of the opera,

[56] **Marschallin**: Quinquin, es ist mein Mann! […] Nicht dort, dort ist das Vorzimmer. Da sitzen meine Lieferanten und ein halbes Dutzend Lakaien. Da! […] Zu spät! Sie sind schon in der Garderob'! jetzt bleibt nur eins! Versteck' Er sich! Dort! **Octavian**: (*fährt nach seinem Degen und läuft gegen rechts, läuft hinüber zur kleinen Türe*) Ich spring' ihm in den Weg! Ich bleib' bei dir. [Modified translation].

just as they were in early twentieth century Europe.[57] When Octavian cross-dresses as Mariandel, the Marschallin's fictitious "chambermaid," he also moves between social and economic classes, raising the issue of boundaries and respectability in *fin-de-siècle* class politics.[58] And just as gender codes shape the music, class too is conveyed by Strauss's musical decisions. For instance, the instrumentation transforms from "noble" horns to "pastoral" oboes and clarinets when Octavian's speech changes into Mariandel's lower-class Viennese dialect. Moreover, Strauss and Hofmannsthal at times seem to be offering a commentary on the waning world of the aristocracy. As Walter Frisch notes, when the Marschallin sings "*Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit*" ("Everything has its time"), the music evokes Johann Strauss's waltzes and is filled with iconic references to the sound world of the bourgeoisie in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Vienna.[59]

Yet there are also clearly practical reasons, internal to the drama, for Octavian to dress as a chambermaid rather than as an aristocratic young woman. For Octavian to "perform" a young aristocratic woman would have been an impossibility. Baron Ochs would surely have questioned her title and why he did not already know her within tight-knit aristocratic circles. Furthermore, Octavian's successful "performance" as a convincing eighteenth-century upper-class woman

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[57] The aristocracy faced significant shifts during these years. For instance, the 1890s witnessed the rise of both the Socialist Party in Vienna and the right wing parties such as the Christian Social Party, groups that opposed the Habsburgs. See John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848–1897* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[58] Count Kessler, with whom Hofmannsthal extensively discussed the storyline when he began work on the project, was displeased by the class politics and the way in which tradition class interactions were challenged in the libretto. He even pressed Hofmannsthal to make alterations to the libretto. Jefferson, "Appendix C: Textual Variants," in *Richard Strauss:* Der Rosenkavalier, 133.

[59] Frisch writes: "the modern bourgeois world into which the Wagnerian vocabulary is ironically placed, in this case in the bedroom of an eighteenth-century noblewoman." Frisch, *German Modernism*, 218. Carl Schorske in fact considers the opera forward looking because of its commentary on class politics amidst social change. Although Baron Ochs represents what was considered to be a problem with the aristocracy, Octavian is not characterized in the same way. Thus Schorske reads the union between Octavian and Sophie as a merging between and the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. Schorske, "Operatic Modernism," 681.

with learned mannerisms and dress – let alone a rapid transformation into a fully dressed and coiffed aristocratic woman behind a bed in a couple of minutes – would likely have been less convincing for the audience. Beyond these practical dramatic considerations, an aristocratic "man" impersonating an aristocratic woman may well have been taboo for the audience.[60] Perhaps it was thought that performing the lower-class Mariandel would require less enculturation and knowledge of gender, an attitude that reveals upper-class misperceptions and lack of knowledge about the lower classes. Perhaps this gender masquerade is also only possible across class because the double-crossing makes it all the more comedic, and nullifies the socially unsettling themes of the drama. Or perhaps Octavian descending to a chambermaid rather than transforming into a woman of his own class would have created less anxiety for the audience, the majority of whom would have likely belonged to the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. I will return to these considerations at the end of this chapter, but first it is important to examine the musical and dramatic effects of Octavian's cross-dressing.

When Octavian changes into Mariandel, he moves seamlessly between masculine and feminine markers, changing costumes, physical comportment, and musical material. In Act I, for instance, Octavian is first presented costumed in typical fashion for a young late eighteenth-century aristocrat, with his long waistcoat, trousers, and tall boots. He then disappears behind the bed and emerges as the young girl, Mariandel, "in a skirt and short jacket, his hair bound with a handkerchief and a ribbon, like a cap, emerges and curtseys" (Act I, **96**).[61] He replaces his masculine wooing of the Marschallin with an exaggerated femininity that attracts the attention of

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[60] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, noble women could marry below their position, but they would be exiled from their community. Men who married a non-aristocrat, however, remained part of their society. See J. Trygve Has-Ellison, "Nobles, Modernism and the Culture of fin-de-siècle Munich," *German History* 26, no. 1 (2008): 12.

[61] "in einem Frauenrock und Jäckchen, das Haar mit einem Schnupftuch und einem Bande wie in einem Häubchen, tritt hervor und knickst."

the licentious Baron. These fractured and fragmented performances of masculinity and femininity allow the audience to perceive multiple, at times conflicting, genders from a single body. Strauss and Hofmannsthal have Octavian break out of character at moments only apparent to the audience. The stage directions read: "Octavian bursts out laughing" ("*platzt lachend heraus*"), then "instantly playing his part again" ("*sofort wieder in seiner Rolle*") to tell the Baron that "she won't go courting with him" ("*Na, zu dem Herrn, da ging' i net*," Act III, **191**). In Act III, another masculine gesture interrupts "Mariandel's" performance of femininity. "Octavian feels in his pocket not like a woman, but like a man," while his riding boots can be seen underneath his skirt (Act III, **33**).[62] Later, when Octavian reveals his "true" identity to the Baron, we are again witness to how easily he shifts genders markers. The feminine clothes are "thrown piece by piece" over a wall and he emerges again as a man (Act III, **200**).

The music and its fissures further contribute to this unstable presentation of gender. When Octavian transforms into Mariandel, the sweet chambermaid who sings in a heavy Viennese dialect, the music also shifts to project a feminine quality. Frequently accompanied by oboes and clarinets – instruments gendered as "women" in Strauss's revisions to the *Treatise on Instrumentation*, as mentioned above – Mariandel awkwardly sings to lilting Viennese waltzes, whose tender, folk-like quality is different in character from Octavian's virile horn themes. Although Mariandel's theme is actually a waltz variation of Octavian's, its shift in character and timbre allow for the music itself to function as a performative utterance, articulating not only Mariandel's femininity, but also her class (Ex. 6.5).[63]

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[62] "Octavian greift in die Tasche, nicht wie eine Dame, sondern wie ein Herr, und man sieht, dass er unter dem Reifrock Männerkleider und Reitstiefel anhat, aber ohne Sporen."

[63] This is brought out particularly in Brigitte Fassbaender's performance of Octavian. As Jones notes, the three chord harmonic motive (V6–V–I in the clarinets and bassoons) from *Till* Eulenspiegel that

Ex. 6.5: Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*: Mariandel's theme (Act I, 5 before **96** – 7 after **96**).

Marschallin: Quinquin, what are you up to? Where on earth are you?
Octavian: (*In a skirt and short jacket, his hair bound with a handkerchief and a ribbon, like a cap, emerges and curtseys*) So it please Your 'ighness, oi ain't bin long in your 'ighness' household.[64]

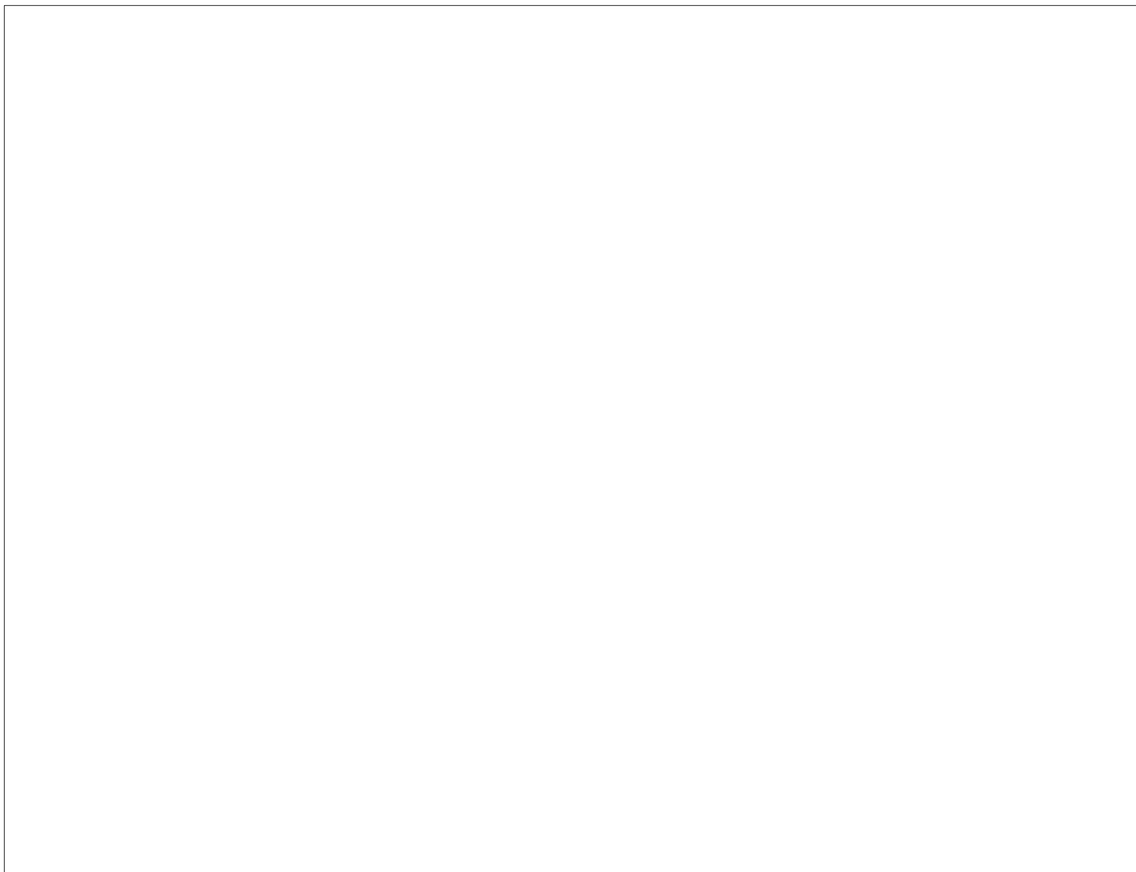
Yet, at moments Octavian's "performance" of Mariandel is also disrupted by his stylistically different "masculine" music – musical slippages that create a disjunction. In Act 1, Octavian's theme breaks through when Baron Ochs caresses an annoyed Mariandel. His horn theme disrupts the musical performance of femininity and undermines Mariandel's outward

introduces Till's pranks," appears in the woodwinds shortly before Octavian changes into Mariandel, setting the stage for "disguise and trickery." See Jones, "*Der Rosenkavalier*," 182-83.

[64] **Marschallin**: Quinquin, was treibt Er denn? Wo steckt Er denn? **Octavian**: (*in einem Frauenrock und Jäckchen, das Haar mit einem Schnupftuch und einem Bande wie in einem Häubchen, tritt hervor und knickst*) Befehl'n fürstli' Gnad'n, i bin halt noch nit recht lang in fürstli'n Dienst.

appearance for the audience (Ex. 6.6). When the Marschallin suggests to Baron Ochs in Act I that Octavian be the "Rosenkavalier" (the messenger who delivers a rose to Sophie on behalf of the Baron), she shows him a miniature portrait of Octavian, whose theme plays while the Baron registers the resemblance to Mariandel (Act I, **212**). Another example of this slippage is found in

Ex. 6.6: Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*: Octavian's Theme Interrupts (Act I, **145**).



Ex. 6.6 (cont.):

Baron (*to Oct)*: Have you ever had a *tête-à-tête* while dining with a gentleman? No? That would open your eyes!
Octavian: (*Octavian feigns embarrassment*) Oi really don't know as 'ow I ought.[65]

Act III, when Mariandel and Baron Ochs are dining in a private room at an inn. Baron Ochs embraces Mariandel, but when he tries to kiss her, he recoils while Octavian's theme resounds loudly in the horns, bassoons, trombones, and violas. He immediately admits: "That face! Accursed boy! Haunts me while waking and sleeping!" ("*In* ein *Gesicht! Verfluchter Bub! Verfolgt mich also wacher und im Traum!* Act III, **87** – **89**).

What would have been socially unsettling about these performative breaks, fluctuations, and exaggerations is that they suggest that gender is not as stable as believed, or, to borrow the terminology from post-structuralist feminist theory, gender is a construction and the body a

[65] **Baron**: Hat Sie schon einmal mit einem Kavalier im tête-à-tête zu Abend gegessen? Nein? Da wird Sie Augen machen. **Octavian**: (*leise, verschämt*) I' weiss halt nit, ob i' dös derf. [modified translation].

surface.[66] Some characters are convinced that the gender performed is aligned with the sex of the body, that Octavian is a male and Mariandel a female. But, resonating with Butler's work, gender here is presented as never fixed. It is fluid and multiple, always constructed and contested.[67] While Butler is wary of conceptualizing gender as a type of costume that can be easily taken on and off,[68] the continual process of *re*-presenting gender with Octavian alternating between gender signifiers – from the changes in costume and comportment to the shifting musical characterizations – could have destabilized the rigid gender differences that this historical moment taxonomized and sought to preserve. As I have discussed above, many from the new field of sexology, such as Ellis and Moll, held the belief that in "advanced" society, men and women were highly differentiated, and that the women's movement and the emancipated women of the era threatened these rigid borders with their assumption of masculine attire and activities, as well as male rights. Strauss and Hofmannsthal's audience would have perceived Octavian as "taking on" and alternating between masculine and feminine signifiers at a time when the sexed body was often considered to have particular set attributes. Moreover, performing both masculinity and femininity with the same voice and body could have also unglued, or at the very least revealed and challenged, the contemporary medical and psychological efforts to essentialize and pin down gender as a fixed, biological "essence," bound to a given sexed body. As Marjorie Garber has aptly noted, cross-dressing pulls at social threads and threatens gender roles within society. She writes:

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[66] While I am not suggesting that Strauss's viewers would have conceptualized Octavian's cross-dressed performance in these terms, it is still important note that these "stable" categories were being destabilized and challenged in a playful way – with Octavian falling in and out of character, from aristocratic man to working-class woman – that would have been apparent for the audience.

[67] I have chosen the term constructed, but could easily have used the verbs manufactured or fabricated to reflect Butler's argument that gender is never a fixed and stable identity, but rather a constant *doing* or *making* of an identity. See Butler, "Preface 1999," in *Gender Trouble*, vii-xxvi.

[68] Sara Salih, with Judith Butler, eds., *The Judith Butler Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

> To transgress against one set of boundaries [is] to call into question the inviolability of both, and the set of social codes – already demonstrably under attack – by which such categories were policed and maintained. The transvestite […] is both terrifying and destructive precisely because s/he incarnates and emblematizes the disruptive element that intervenes, signaling not just another category crisis, but – much more disquietingly – a crisis of 'category' itself.[69]

Butler also theorizes how performing in drag can subvert the given assumptions of gender "norms." She argues: "drag is an example that is meant to establish that 'reality' is not as fixed as we generally assume it to be. The purpose of the example is to expose the tenuousness of gender 'reality' in order to counter the violence performed by gender norms."[70]

The opera was not only subversive in the way that it challenged contemporary categories of male and female, but also in the perceived effect that this could have on material bodies onstage and offstage, potentially exacerbating gender instability of the time even further. While I cannot presume to fully understand Strauss's original audience, nor do I want to make claims about modern audiences, my analysis of the opera considers these challenges and the possibility they present as something that *could* potentially be perceived by and resonate with any audience.[71] As mentioned in the Introduction, German intellectuals, from Schiller to Wagner, have a long history of considering what appeared on stage to have an effect offstage, and many

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[69] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 32. In an essay about cross-dressing in France in the nineteenth century, Berlanstein also posits a complex relationship between the stability of gender within society and the popularity of cross-dressing on the stage. Leonard R. Berlanstein, "Breeches and Breaches: Cross-Dress Theater and the Culture of Gender Ambiguity in Modern France," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38 (April 1996): 350. Indeed at this moment, as Sedgwick points out in *The Epistemology of the Closet*, there was the drive to classify everyone into male/female binaries as well as homo-/hetero-sexuality: "What *was* new from the turn of the century was the world-mapping by which every given person, just as he or she was necessarily assignable to a male or female gender, was now considered necessarily assignable as well to a homo- or a hetero-sexuality, a binarized identity that was full of implications, however confusing, for even the ostensibly least sexual aspects of personal existence." Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 2.

[70] See Butler, "Preface 1999," to *Gender Trouble*, xxiii-xxiv.

[71] Of course they would resonate differently with different audiences based on that audience's understanding of gender in relation to the sexed body.

felt that theater performed a social and moral role for its audiences and society in general.[72] The woman singing the role of Octavian is required to embody traditional masculinity: to move like a man, to be regarded by others and treated like a man, and to be costumed as a man. Could this have been considered potentially dangerous given contemporary understandings about the relationship between performance and society? Would this performance of masculinity – especially with the assumption of power involved – have affected the audience? The singers would have been given the power of acting and being treated like a man, experiencing both a power and sexuality onstage that they could not deploy offstage without destabilizing gender norms.[73] Some singers even noted the discomfort of embodying the role of Octavian and "his" masculine gestures. For instance, *Hofoper* soprano Maria Jeritza later commented on the difficulty and discomfort of assuming another gender for the role of Octavian, particularly regarding bodily comportment:

> Of course, some roles in which the character is sympathetic, may offer serious technical difficulties. There is *Octavian*, the dashing young hero in "Rosenkavalier." It is a man's part, sung by a woman, and I am the farthest removed from being "mannish" that a woman could possibly be. Hence wearing *Octavian*'s knee breeches as they should be worn; moving about in them with ease and unconcern, worried me much more than any of the vocal difficulties of the role. A woman walks, sits, stands and moves in a way altogether different from a man, and I had to struggle, actually struggle – sometimes in despair, sometimes with shrieks of laughter – to deny my sex in a convincing manner. I practiced standing and sitting and moving about in my knee breeches, and walked miles in my room before I reached the point of being able to forget that I was wearing them […] I think every woman will agree with me that making a change from gowns to knee breeches, and acting as though you had always worn the latter, is not a moment's work.[74]

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[72] See the "Introduction" to this dissertation for a further discussion of this point.

[73] I hesitate to make strong claims about how this would affect an individual singer's own subjectivity though. Sutton writes: "trousers can be used to signify the accessing of masculine privileges and protections, enabling actions that would be impossible in a skirt or dress." (126) Moreover, "the possibility that the *Hosenrolle* actor could step off the stage in her male costume became a powerful metaphor into various realms of male privilege." Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany*, 132.

[74] Jeritza, *Sunlight and Song*, 171-72.

Not only do these reflections indicate how the body was experienced for some singers in a way that was new and uncomfortable given prevailing norms, but Jeritza's comments also draw attention to the relationship between the sexed body and gender and the way in which the experience of gender affects the body – even on the opera stage. As Butler acknowledges, the body is not merely a surface of inscription, but is lived and shaped through performances of gender.[75] Thus, a female performing, or embodying, the role of a man could likely have been perceived as another threat to real bodies and their societal roles, just as the New Woman was in the imaginary of *fin-de-siècle* culture.

Staging Sexuality

The sexuality that results from Octavian's travestied performance goes even further, and it is important to examine the singing body and its relationship to the gendered voice in the context of this opera. Recalling Hadlock's questions about the body and voice in travesty roles cited earlier in this chapter, I now want to consider if we really do "disregard a singer's body and instead see the 'voice'" in *Rosenkavalier*. As Hadlock notes, "in order to accept the character *en travesty* as *male*, we must rationalize away the evidence of both our eyes and ears."[76] The discussion thus far has "suspended" any acknowledgment of the physical female body that exists beneath the performance of Octavian, and at the level of the drama what has been essential is the mistaking of the male character for a female one. But can we fully "rationalize away the evidence of both our eyes and ears" in a live performance? And if not, does this insertion of the

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[75] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 164-66. I am using the term "lived" body here in its phenomenological sense. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Preface," in *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2011), lxx-lxxxv.

[76] Hadlock, "The Career of Cherubino," 69.

sexed body allow us to see the interactions between the singers on stage from a different perspective?

In *Rosenkavalier* there is a queerness in the relationship between the presented gender and the sounding voice that calls attention to the *disjunction* between the manifest gender and the sex of the body. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests, any "aberrant" relation between sign and referent is revelatory, a symptom that exposes a fracture, a disjunction.[77] There is a disjunction in the relationship between what we see and what we hear in the sounding orchestra and voice. This aberrant relation presented onstage is an indicator, or a symptom, of the sexed material body. The audience cannot fully ignore the voice, particularly in opera as a genre, where the voice carries the drama and the music. Despite all of the shifting gender surfaces in the costumes and in the music, the ear unmistakably recognizes with the vocal quality, the very *Fach*, that this is a female *body*. The materiality of the body bursts through, in disjunction with the textual, gestural, and orchestral utterances presented throughout the opera. As Michelle Duncan writes, "the body constantly interferes in those registers, inserting its own 'knowledge,' 'meaning' and 'intent,' and thus tempering and tampering with the speech act."[78] The singer's body "interferes" despite all the verbal and non-verbal utterances of masculinity from Octavian. Thus, the *voice*, as a

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[77] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity: Henry James's 'The Art of the Novel,'" *GLQ* 1 (1993): 2. She writes, "[f]ollowing on [Paul] de Man's demonstration of 'a radical estrangement between the meaning and the performance of any text,' one might want to dwell not so much on the non-reference of the performative but rather to its own reference – the torsion, the mutual perversion as one might say, of reference and performativity." *Ibid.*

[78] Duncan, "The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity," 293. According to Duncan, Shoshana Felman argues in *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* that, "it is the infelicitous relationship between language and body which constantly conspire against each other." *Ibid*., 294. Of course here Felman's body is the psychoanalytic body, which is not a concern in this chapter. The relationship between the body and the speech for Felman is always "scandalous" because "the body always and inevitably undermines intentional language" (*ibid.*). In her article, Duncan notes that Butler and Felman do not locate the voice in the body, and this is where Duncan's project takes over. Duncan writes: "As anyone who has ever heard opera knows, the singing voice has moments where it tears language apart, or tears itself apart from language. Certainly the voice as well as and in addition to the body, says more, or says differently, than it means to say." Duncan, *ibid.,* 294.

source of tension, is the locus of gender subversion in the trouser role, upsetting the border of regimented categories. The voice is always heard, reminding us with its timbre and register that the body is female, and that the singer performing Octavian is always interacting with other bodies onstage as a female body.

As Naomi André has argued about listening and seeing practices in nineteenth-century French and Italian opera, there is a relationship between the singer's voice and gender for any period audience, a possibility for "hearing gender through sound."[79] A singer's voice is gendered masculine or feminine for a particular culturally and historically situated audience. The first Octavian, Eva von der Osten, was a core singer at the Dresden *Hofoper*, where she sang prominent roles, from Carmen and Kundry to Louise, roles that surely "gendered" her particular voice as female and feminine for the audience. The Viennese Octavian, Marie Gutheil-Schoder, was also well known for her earlier performances, from Venus and Carmen, to the three soprano roles in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*. These singers were heard night after night, envoiced as sexed voices in iconic soprano roles. Despite the masculine surfaces of costume and musical markers in the role of Octavian, these singers' voices would likely have been recognized and heard as female voices. Furthermore, the roles these Octavians had previously sung were often *femme fatales,* potentially connecting their Octavians to the *femme fatale*'s association with moral and social danger.[80]

Consider the photographs of Sophie and Octavian from the Viennese *Hofoper* productions of *Rosenkavalier* in 1919 (Figs. 6.4 and 6.5) that document their affection and

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[79] André, *Voicing Gender*, 33.

[80] Although Marie Gutheil-Schoder later sung the role of the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, another trouser role, and had earlier performed Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* (she sang the role between 1901 and 1905), at this point she would have been heard and seen numerous other in women's roles, from Eva (*Meistersinger*), Venus (*Tannhäuser*), Carmen (*Carmen*), Mimi (*La Bohème*), Antonia, Olympia, and Guiletta (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*), Louise (*Louise*), and Mignon (*Mignon*).

playfulness. In the first image, Sophie coyly glances back at Octavian, who cheerfully offers her a rose, while in the second image, Sophie eagerly reaches toward Octavian to take the rose. In a photograph of the Viennese premiere, published on April 12th, 1909 by the illustrated weekly *Wiener Bilder* (Fig. 6.6), the affection between Octavian (Gutheil-Schoder) and Sophie (now sung by Selma Kurz) is again clear, given Sophie's smile and the way in which Octavian is leaning toward her.[81] What is significant about these images is that they capture the ways in which early performers of these roles interpreted the interactions between Sophie and Octavian – from their playful glances to their comportment toward each other. Gutheil-Schoder sang Octavian at the *Wiener Hofoper* ninety-nine times between 1911 and 1926 to much critical acclaim, including the 1911 Viennese premiere, shaping the role and the opera in Vienna. She wanted to perform the role early on, and, as his correspondence to Strauss reveals, Hofmannsthal thought she would be the ideal Octavian: "Mme. Gutheil is canvassing energetically for the leading part (Quinquin), and has already, I hear, tried to get at you through Mahler, Roller, and Walter. I must say myself that as far as acting goes, she is the *only* person worth considering, and she also looks the part."[82] As is clear in her later writings, Gutheil-Schoder wore Octavian's breeches very early on in rehearsals to get into the character's "*Gefühle*" (emotions) and to properly develop the role. Moreover, as her writings attest, she was very aware of when the roles she performed transgressed social expectations.[83]

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[81] This image was published in the illustrated paper, *Wiener Bilder*, April 12, 1911, 8. For the 1911 Viennese premiere, Sophie was sung by both Gertrud Förstel and Selma Kurz, who alternated performances. See *Theaterzetteln* held at the *ÖTM.*

[82] Hofmannsthal to Strauss, *Correspondence*, 70.

[83] Marie Gutheil-Schoder, *Erlebtes und Erstrebtes: Rolle und Gestaltung* (Wien and Leipzig: Verlag Rudolf Krey, 1937), 43-45. As Darwin writes in her chapter devoted to Gutheil-Schoder, she "clearly very much enjoyed the challenges of playing roles that transgressed contemporary rules of appropriate female behaviour." Darwin, *The "I" of the Other*, 204. Gutheil-Schoder, who at the age of 16 and at the

Voices and the Sexed Body

In *Rosenkavalier*, the unmistakably female *voice* also calls for a re-thinking and re-hearing of the many physically and musically intimate moments between Octavian and Sophie and Octavian and the Marschallin as occurring between two women. Thus, with all the explicit and implicit sexual moments, Octavian's female voice transforms the opera into a homoerotic performance, as Terry Castle has observed about Brigitte Fassbaender's passionate realization in particular.[84] In the trio between Sophie, the Marschallin, and Octavian, and the duet between Octavian and Sophie, it is impossible to ignore the femaleness of Octavian's voice: the female voices blend, sharing similar timbres, crossing registers, and exchanging musical lines – an aural reminder of the similarity of their sexed bodies.

In the Act II duet "Mit ihren Augen voll Tränen," Octavian and Sophie's voices move together, crossing over each other, sometimes moving in thirds or sixths, and often in close intervals, creating dissonance and musical tension. Their voices are literally moving against one another in a sonic space, analogous to the movement of two bodies. Octavian begins, and Sophie's voice enters on the same Eb. The voices blend, weaving motives back and forth, and share a similar tessitura, making their voices at times indistinguishable (Ex. 6.7). This effect is an exception for a duet between a mezzo-soprano and a soprano, in which the mezzo's tessitura is usually lower.

A sensual wash of sound with these female voices in *Rosenkavalier*, in particular in the famous concluding trio between Octavian, the Marschallin, and Sophie, envelops the audience.

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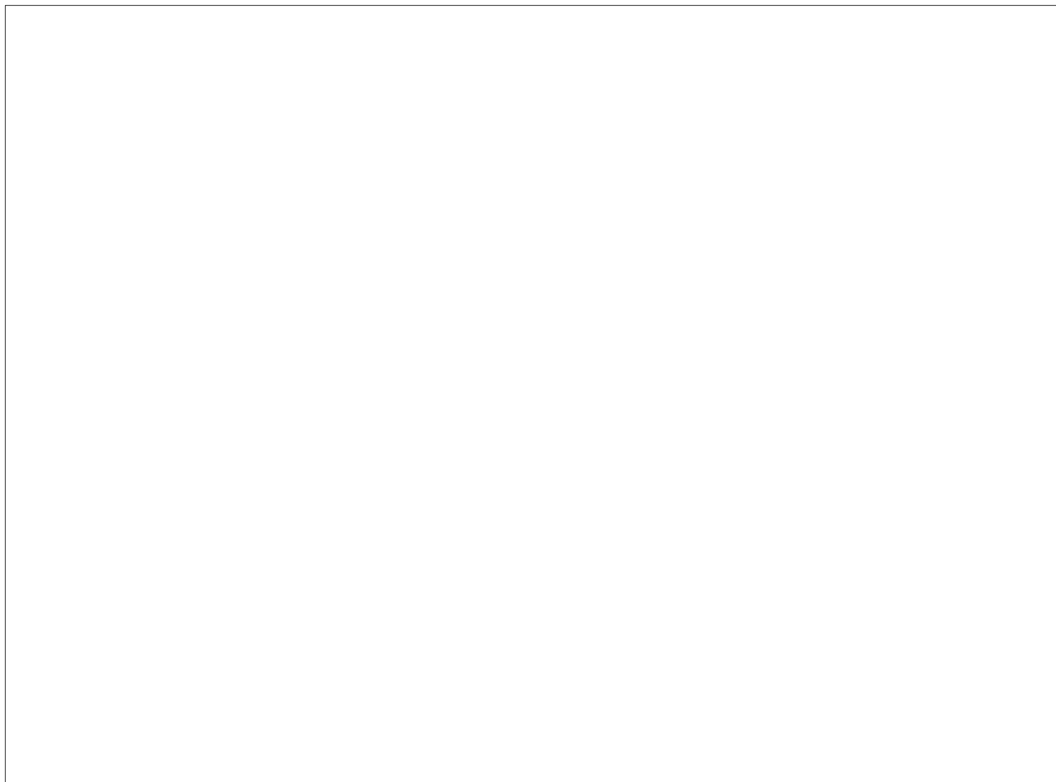
beginning of her career was hired and coached by Strauss himself in Weimar, wrote about her rehearsal techniques and approach to operatic roles in *Rolle und Gestaltung*.

[84] Terry Castle, "In Praise of Brigitte Fassbaender: Reflections on Diva-Worship," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 35-49. As Hadlock notes, the love song for a travesty role was relatively new and carried a new potency socially. Hadlock, "The Career of Cherubino," 76-77.

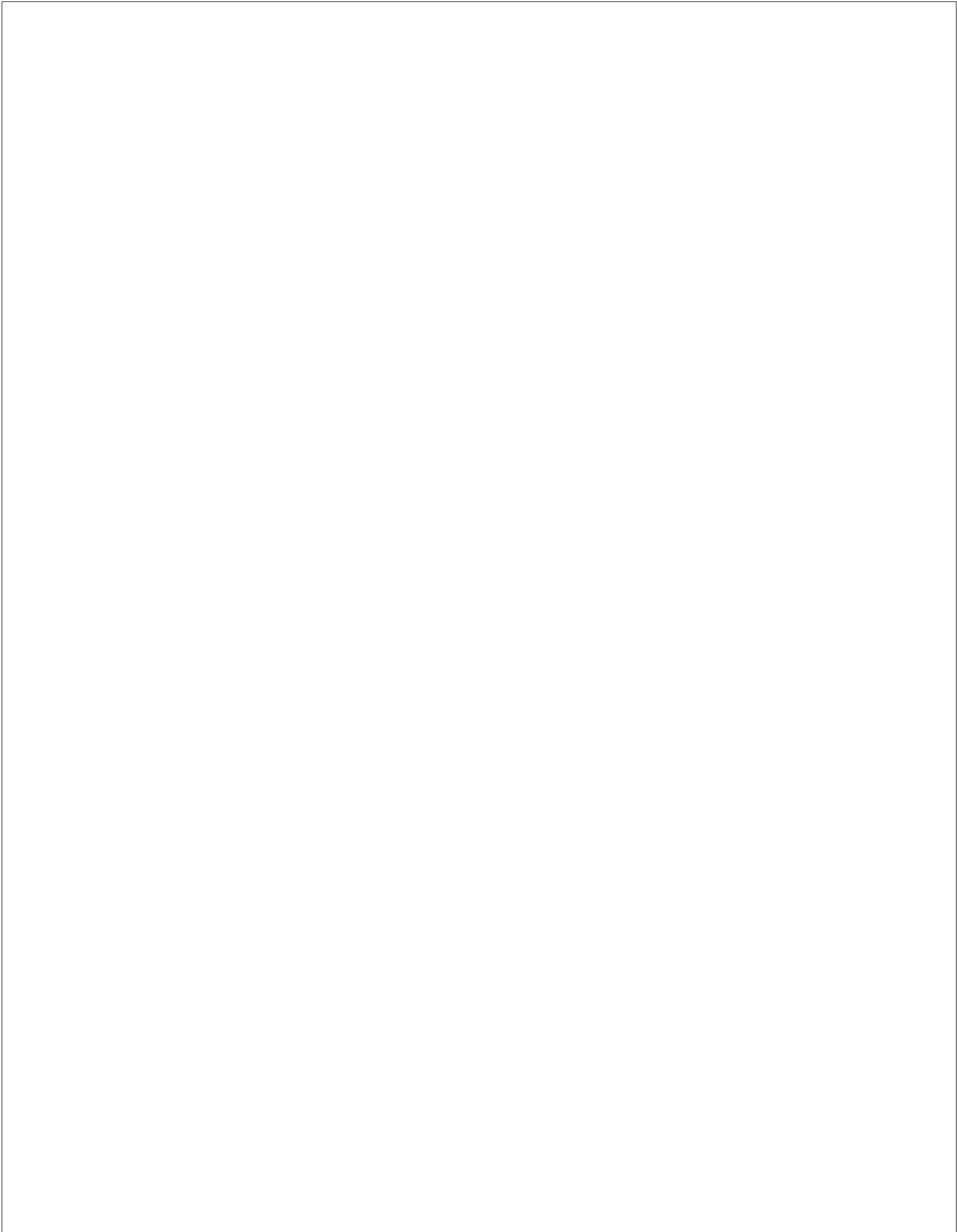
Strauss's vocal writing in this bittersweet conclusion again reiterates the femaleness of Octavian's voice. While Sophie generally occupies a higher tessitura here, the Marschallin and Octavian share a similar range, with Octavian's vocal lines even soaring above the other women's voices at moments (see for instance, Act III 2 after **287**; Act III, 2 before **289**; and 3 before **291**). Perhaps Žižek is correct when he suggests that the trio of female voices is where the "secret libidinal message" resides.[85] Although their bodies stand apart on the stage, their voices are close in range, with the passing dissonance in the overlapping voices, again highlighting the sexual sameness of their bodies at precisely the moment they sing about their love for each other. The serious tone of this moment compared to the preceding lighthearted scenes, gives further weight to this conclusion.

Ex. 6.7: Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*: Octavian and Sophie's duet "Mit ihren Augen voll Tränen" (Act II, **117 – 120**).



[85] Žižek, *Opera's Second Death*, 208.

Ex. 6.7 (cont.)



The Marschallin's Sexuality

While the discussion has primarily focused on Octavian as a character and the singer's body and voice, the figure of the Marschallin also offers an important commentary on female sexuality and subjectivity for the time, although one that I will only address briefly here.[86] Indeed, the Marschallin played a significant role not only in the formation of the opera, but she also occupies a central role within the opera itself. Through the Marschallin, Strauss and Hofmannsthal offer a deeper glimpse into female expression, experience, and personhood. For instance, in a 1910 letter to Strauss, Hofmannsthal wrote about the importance of the Marschallin and how her role in Act III could not be reduced. Based on the reaction of Viennese author Princess Mechtilde Lichnowsky, Hofmannsthal considered the potential influence the Marschallin might have on his female audience: "Princess Lichnowsky will show you how strongly women feel about this, how they, who make up such an important section of our public, look upon the whole vivid unfolding of the action from the point of view of the Marschallin."[87] In another letter to Strauss, Hofmannsthal reiterated the importance of the Marschallin for the female audience: "She [the Marschallin] is the central figure for the public, for the women above all, the figure with whom they feel and *move*."[88] This can be interpreted as the author's acknowledgement of the degree to which the sonorous bodies of the singers *onstage* could affect the feelings and embodiment of women *offstage*.

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[86] I have decided not to discuss Sophie, who is given less import than either Octavian or the Marschallin. Hofmannsthal himself commented to Strauss on Sophie's lesser role in *Rosenkavalier*: "The Marschallin remains the dominant female figure […] Sophie always stands one step below these chief characters." Letter dated July 12th, 1910. Strauss and Hofmannsthal, *Correspondence*, 60.

[87] Hofmannsthal to Strauss, in the same letter mentioned above. *Ibid*. Cited also by Beth Hart, "Strauss and Hofmannsthal's Accidental Heroine: The Psychohistorical Meaning of the Marschallin," *Opera Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (1999), 416. In this article, Hart reinterprets the Marschallin as the heroine of the opera, and examines subtleties in different singers' interpretations of the role.

[88] Hofmannsthal to Strauss in a letter dated June 6, 1910. *Correspondence*, 57. This again reinforces the important role staged works had on its female audience.

The Marschallin’s expressions of sexuality and subjectivity are apparent throughout. Over the course of the opera, her words and gestures reveal her desire for Octavian. We witness her affection and love for Octavian in the opening scene, as discussed above, and watch their playful, sexually charged interactions throughout Act I. Lehmann, who initially performed Octavian then the Marschallin in the 1920s, described the Marschallin as “a woman well versed in the pleasures of love […] she had to wait for illicit affairs of the heart in order to discover the joys utterly lacking in her marriage.”[89] Later the Marschallin muses about gender roles and expectations when reminiscing of her youth: “I too can recall a young girl who was ordered from the convent into holy wedlock.”[90] In the same monologue, her private anxieties are expressed. She mourns the passing of time and sings of her fears of loss – loss of her youth and loss of Octavian.

Clément has interpreted the Marschallin as “an old woman giving up on love” and commented that her loss and change represents the conclusion to woman’s sexuality: “Hers is a sad little death, the sort one might expect from Vienna, a death with no external drama, an entirely inner death, the shattering finish to a woman’s sexuality.”[91] But while the Marschallin is certainly saying farewell to Octavian and her relationship with him, there is another, more positive way to read the Marschallin. Indeed, the depth of character created by Strauss and Hofmannsthal and her proximity to *real* women is captured with nuance; her introspection at these moments greatly contrasts with her playful, amorous side so evident earlier in Act I. In a later letter to Strauss comparing the Marschallin to Ariadne, Hofmannsthal wrote: “I imagine the

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[89] Lehmann, *Five Opera and Richard Strauss*, 124.

[90] “Kann mich auch an ein Mädel erinnern, die frisch aus dem Kloster ist den heiligen Ehstand kommandiert worden.” (Act I, **274-275**)

[91] Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, 107, 110.

character of Ariadne gently outlined, but altogether *real*, as real as the Marschallin."[92] As Hart notes, the music also conveys the Marschallin's complexity: "The music captures her significance, her merry and melancholy sides, her charm and depth, her adventurousness and tenderness, her quiet dignity."[93] In the opera's closing moments, we again witness the Marschallin's sympathetic and introspective character (which reveals her own personal development over the course of the opera). She now sacrifices Octavian, and is aware of her own evolution. She councils Baron Ochs to "preserve dignity" and to "put a good face on it" – words of advice that she herself follows. She recognizes that Octavian has found a new lover, and she relinquishes him with dignity and grace. Interestingly, this introspection and consideration is never displayed by the male characters in the opera, particularly not by Baron Ochs, who, even at the end of the opera, still seems baffled by his blunders and the unfolding of events.

What is also significant about the opera is that the many sexual moments, and the only glimpses of genuine intimacy and affection, occur between the female singers – the Marschallin and Octavian, Octavian and Sophie. Meanwhile some of the most comical moments in the opera involve the male character, Baron Ochs, and his desire, while only the female characters express deep emotions and genuine desire. Baron Ochs's displays of love and affection are incomplete, either humorously misguided, or boorish. Take, for instance, his affection for "Mariandel." His wooing of the chambermaid is awkwardly rejected by her in Act I, and is presented as foolish in Act III when he learns that "Mariandel" is actually Octavian in disguise. Octavian, on the other hand, is outraged at the injustice of the "marriage of convenience" rather than a marriage of love when he witnesses Baron Ochs' attitude and behavior toward Sophie, his future wife, in Act II

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[92] May 19th, 1911, Hofmannsthal to Strauss, *Correspondence*, 80.

[93] Hart, "Strauss and Hofmannsthal's Accidental Heroine," 417. As Hart also contends, there is a maternal quality in the Marschallin's attitude toward Octavian at moments.

(**79** – **80**). It seems that the only sexuality given legitimacy in *Rosenkavalier* is by women and between women.

***Early Responses to* Der Rosenkavalier:**

Rosenkavalier garnered mixed reactions in the years immediately following its premiere, with some critics specifically mentioning its connection to operetta, and others highlighting its sexual or decadent content. A critic for the *Wiener Abendpost* remarked that, "all [Straus and Hofmannsthal] offer in their work is cheap, low-class wit."[94] The *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* described it as "a farce which sometimes sinks to the level of operetta, sometimes deeper still, to a burlesque set to music,"[95] while after the Leipzig premiere, Brandes wrote that it was "operetta, naturally high operetta."[96] The opera's cross-dressing and heightened sexual moments were closer to that which was staged in the Viennese *Vorstadt* Theaters, the Prater, or the burlesque theaters. It was, as some critics concurred, simply not material for the *Hofoper*. Korngold's comments on *Rosenkavalier* in the *Neue Freie Presse* again reveal what audiences expected to see in an opera staged at the *Hofoper*, rather than in an operetta staged at one of the local theaters: "The feminine coquetry of a man disguised as a woman must, by itself, already provide a source of inexhaustible operetta-style amusement […] But we will take issue with its unmotivated leaps into nonorganic, tiresomely burlesque, or embarrassingly realistic add-ons.

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[94] r.h. (Robert Hirschfeld), "Der Rosenkavalier I (Hofopertheater)," *Wiener Abendpost*, April 10, 1911. Translation from Jefferson, "The Critical View," in *Richard Strauss:* Der Rosenkavalier, 98.

[95] *Wiener Abendzeitung*, cited in Jefferson, *Richard Strauss:* Der Rosenkavalier, 98-99. Strauss in fact clearly wanted to distance *Rosenkavalier* from the world of burlesque, as evident from his September 12th, 1909 response to Hofmannsthal's suggestion that the opera be called a "Burlesque." Strauss wrote: "Burlesque Opera is impossible: after all there's nothing burlesque about it. Just think what the public would expect: Offenbach, Mikado, etc. 'Opera' by itself would do." Strauss and Hofmannsthal, *Correspondence*, 68.

[96] Friedrich Brandes, "Der Rosenkavalier: Nach der Leipziger Aufführung," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 78, no. 39 (1906): 525.

Things that would be experienced as shallow in a farce on the *Prater* are no less tiresome when they are tolerated by a Hofmannsthal."[97]

Indeed, with its presentation of a woman playing a man masquerading as a charming chambermaid, and its explicit sexuality between two, or at times three, female bodies, *Rosenkavalier* seemed to elicit strong reactions by provocatively engaging with the conflicting and intertwining *fin-de-siècle* German and Austrian anxieties about the New Woman, homosexuality, and cross-dressing. Korngold considered "Hofmannsthal's play […] lacking, not least of all, in taste," and criticized how Hofmannsthal "exaggerates the sexual element, which has assumed a broad stance in *Der Rosenkavalier,* following the fashion of the times, and unfortunately overpowers a fine, appealing sexual event with one that is coarse and repugnant."[98] Moreover, Korngold aligned Strauss and Hofmannsthal's presentation of the Marschallin and her sexuality with modern attitudes toward female sexuality: "To sympathize more deeply with the amorous lady will be possible only for people who are able to see things from the erotic perspective of today's young Viennese."[99] Despite some of the critical reviews, Strauss's opera was well received amongst the general public. In the year following its premiere in Dresden on January 26th, 1911, the work was performed not only fifty-three times on that stage, but also in numerous other European opera houses. It was so popular amongst audiences that to cater to Berliners, who were not immediately able to see a production in their own conservative city, the

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[97] Julius Korngold, "Der Rosenkavalier (Hofopertheater)," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 9, 1911. Translation from: "Strauss and the Viennese Critics (1896–1924)," trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Richard Strauss and his World*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 352-53. Korngold also noted that the "elements of *Feuersnot*, *Elektra*, singspiel, and operetta, combined, provide neither a new style nor the style of musical comedy at all." *Ibid.*, 350.

[98] *Ibid.*, 353-54.

[99] *Ibid.*, 353.

German railway organized trains to transport audience members to Dresden on what were known as *Rosenkavalier* trains.[100]

Amidst the debates about the threat of the New Women taking on traditionally male roles, and the threats of the sexually dangerous woman, the opera's enormous popularity and its numerous performances suggest that its playful presentation of gender roles and sexuality was titillating entertainment for *fin-de-siècle* audiences, at least insofar as it unfolded onstage. As McClary has argued, theatrical and operatic performances of madness or sexuality are at times permissible because they are restricted to the confined space of an aria or an opera.[101] Were the gender masquerade and resulting sexual taboos of *Rosenkavalier* acceptable because they occurred within this confined space of a staged performance, the risqué transgressions safely veiled behind the final curtain? Or were they acceptable because they were within the conventions of a comic opera set in a distant past?[102]

Conclusion

In *Der Rosenkavalier*, it is impossible not to see or hear Octavian, the Marschallin, and Sophie as expressing their sexuality. These women are not merely sexual, but also express subtle emotions and concerns related to their sexuality and love. While the opera focuses on female sexual desire, the development of the Marschallin over the course of the narrative also presents the way in which female sexuality is intertwined with the *Bildung* of the female characters.

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[100] Jefferson, *Richard Strauss:* Der Rosenkavalier, 87. See also the letter dated March 17th, 1911 from Strauss to Hofmannsthal. Strauss and Hofmannsthal, *Correspondence*, 75.

[101] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 80-111.

[102] Operetta and the theater were considered cathartic places to release these energies. See Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna*, 5. For a discussion of cross-dressing made "safe" through theatrical performance, see also Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany*, 127.

Within the opera text itself, *Rosenkavalier* presents female sexualities and focuses on female subjectivity, and these aspects are even further amplified through the act of performance itself.

While the opera in some ways could be considered as merely another version of *Marriage of Figaro*, I have argued in this chapter that Octavian is different from the trouser roles of the past. Not only is this trouser role presented with a heighted and explicit sexuality, but an incongruity also exists between Octavian's voice that announces his gender and the singing body. At the beginning of the opera, Octavian knowingly inquires, "but when sight and hearing forsake me, where is your boy then?" The materiality of the voice forsakes him here, and the performative failure is almost inherent in this singing act. Yet as Butler has noted, speech acts are bodily acts and, in their failure, can open the possibility for resistance.[103] While, I hesitate to label Octavian's performances as "failures" to reproduce gender norms, I do want to read these performances as posing a challenge. It is here, through operatic singing, that the reproduction and imitation goes astray. Indeed, the *voice* is the locus of gender subversion in the trouser role, upsetting the borders of regimented binaries and categories.

Yet, with the decline of the Habsburg Empire and the contemporaneous sexual scandals amongst the aristocracy, such as the Eulenberg case, it is likely that the mid-eighteenth-century aristocratic world of Octavian and the Marschallin would have resonated with *fin-de-siècle* themes of change, decadence, and cultural decay for the largely bourgeois and petit-bourgeois audience.[104] By contributing to – and even undermining – essentialist period discourses about

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[103] See Butler, *Excitable Speech*. See also Salih and Butler.

[104] During these years, the Habsburg Empire was weakening, particularly after a series of military defeats, the formation of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1860, and the creation of the *Reichsrat* with a constitutional parliament for both Austria and Hungary. Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 124-96. See also: Norbert Bachleitner, "The Habsburg Monarchy," in *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship in the Theater in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Robert Justin Goldstein (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 229. Moreover, a discourse

gender and the body, *Rosenkavalier* served as a progressive and potentially subversive text. The opera's performance of gender challenged contemporary understandings about the relationship between gender and the sexed body as a fixed, scientific reality – a female singer performing the role of a man could likely have been perceived as another threat to real bodies and their societal roles. While the opera's cross-dressed performance touched on anxieties about the "New Woman" and cross-dressing, this performance also offered a space on a respectable stage in which this cross-dressing was not only legal, but even accepted, as its popularity suggests. Thus, the opera offers an alternative understanding about the relationship between the body, gender, and sexuality. While the Marschallin's words in *Rosenkavalier* speak of loss, and the passing of time, there is also a positive opening up of a new space of possibilities for women and their expressions of sexuality with this passing of time, particularly for Octavian and the Marschallin.

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about "effeminacy" and decadence surrounded the waning Habsburg Empire and aristocracy in general in the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. For example, in Robert Musil's novel *Die Verwirrung des Zöglings Törleß* (*The Confusions of Young Törless*, 1906), the narrator characterizes Prince H., a member of "one of the most influential, oldest and most conservative aristocratic families in the Empire" as "effeminate." Robert Musil, *The Confusions of Young Törless*, trans. J. M. Coetzee (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 7. In the classic *fin-de-siècle* text *À Rebours* by Huysmans, des Esseintes is also portrayed as effeminate and degenerate. Furthermore, according to Robert Müller, Austria was read as "feminine" in opposition to the masculinized Prussian Empire within late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses, political and otherwise. See Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination*, II: 120.

Chapter 7: Envoicing the Modern Woman: Operatic Representations of Sexuality and Subjectivity in *Mona Lisa*

I have another duty just as sacred…my duty towards myself.
– Nora to Torvald, Act III, Ibsen, *The Doll's House*[1]

Woman today happens to have a new and different attitude to the sex problem; she expects a man not only to act but to act with a real understanding of the feminine.
– Bonadea to Ulrich, Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*[2]

An impenetrable mystery is woman,
In her soul about a thousand possibilities slumber unconsciously…
The enigmatic being 'woman' is altering.
– The Brother, Dovsky's *Mona Lisa*[3]

Playwrights such as Ibsen with *A Doll's House* (1879, German trans. 1887) and Wedekind with *Frühlings Erwachen* (1906) critiqued social attitudes toward female sexuality beginning in the late nineteenth century. Ibsen's plays valued the independent woman more than the traditional *Ewig-Weibliche*, and offered negative portraits of the men who treated women as mere sexual servants.[4] Meanwhile writers such as Schnitzler and Zweig explored female sexual desire, presenting complex new women whose sexual desires are very much part of their identities. And yet opera remained, for the most part, silent. Female sexual desire remained

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[1] Ibsen, *The Doll's House*, in *Six Plays by Ibsen*, trans. Eva Le Gallienne (New York: Modern Library, 1957), 77. Ibsen's *The Doll's House* was popular in Vienna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among feminists. Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 205-6.

[2] Ulrich finds his former lover, Bonadea, altered after her conversation with Diotima about sex. Although Musil wrote *The Man Without Qualities* between 1930 and 1933, the novel depicts the world of pre-War Vienna, and this quote can thus be indicative of the changing attitudes women themselves had toward sexual matters. Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Sophie Wilkins (New York: Vintage, 1996), II: 959.

[3] "Ein unergründlich Rätsel ist das Weib. In seiner Seele schlummern unbewusst an tausend Möglichkeiten […] Verwandelt sich das rätselvolle Wesen 'Weib'" (4 before **16 –** 2 after **16;** 5 after **19 –** 7 after **19)**. The English translations of the libretto used throughout this chapter are my modifications of the translation by M. Makart that appears in: *Max von Schillings Mona Lisa.* Cond. Klauspeter Seibel, Kiel Philharmonic. Libretto (CPO Records 7227961, 1995), 63-135.

[4] As Templeton writes, through satire and character development, Ibsen's plays critiqued the "ideology of women as the servicing sex." See Joan Templeton, *Ibsen's Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 327.

"pathological" and needed to be punished, and little was said or sung about female sexuality and desire as intrinsic to normal human experience. As we have seen above, in *Salome* and *Parsifal* female sexuality is treated as an illness to be expunged from the community, and while the sexual woman is celebrated with Grete and Diemut, their sexuality is primarily presented as serving male creativity. The early twentieth century, however, witnessed numerous positive reconfigurations and new understandings of female sexuality. For instance, in addition to literary works that included women with individual desires that conflicted with social expectations, Freud reoriented scientific discourse about female sexuality by arguing that women's repression of sexual desire was in fact a *cause* of hysteria and neurosis. With the appearance of works such as *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud's writings presented the possibility and even normalcy of female sexual desire and theorized the female libido.[5] Within the first two decades of the twentieth century, many gender roles and understandings of female sexuality that were so strongly sedimented in the nineteenth-century imagination began to unravel.[6] Glimpses of more complex, *real* women with more depth were increasingly discussed and presented in scientific writings, literature, and the arts, and eventually made their way onto the operatic stage.[7]

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[5] As we have seen, many considered women either as purely sexual (Weininger) or as asexual, or at least having much less sexual desire than men. See Oosterhuis, *Krafft-Ebing and the Making of Sexual Identity*, 30-31.

[6] Many identify a shift in attitudes in the early years of the twentieth century and recognize the effect that these shifts had on changing expectations for women. As DeShazer notes, marked differences existed between the New Woman of 1890 and that of 1910. DeShazer, *Inspiring Women*, 1. See also the Introduction to the dissertation.

[7] Although Riley is hesitant to use the term "real women" because of the implications of stasis – for Riley there are "differing temporalities of 'women'" – I use the adjective "real" here to indicate a connection between some of the actual women (and their varying and changing experiences, desires, and complexities) who lived in the 1910s and the operatic women. Following Riley, however, I do not intend for "real women" here to be read as a static, stable, and essentializing category applicable to *all* women.

In this chapter, I examine how attitudes toward female sexuality began to change in the 1910s, changes that serve as a basis for some of the more radical shifts in the Weimar Republic to be briefly discussed in the Epilogue. Although World War I is traditionally understood as marking a break from the nineteenth century, the events and ideas *leading up to* and *during* the war contributed to the formation of post-war attitudes, society, and real political change. Still disenfranchised – women would not be allowed to vote until 1918 and 1919 in Austria and Germany, respectively – women's social roles gradually changed in the years leading up to and over the course of the war. During the war, there was increasing independence and what seemed to be a loosening of critical attitudes toward female sexuality, which materialized in various cultural representations, and later flourished in cinema, visual arts, and on the stage following the war.

Women of this era not only increasingly moved from the private to the public sphere in bourgeois culture, performing active roles in the work force and in public debates on social issues, but also increasingly contributed to the cultural milieu through their creative roles.[8] Meanwhile, opera began to partake more explicitly in the exploration of a wider range of gendered identities, and women on stage began to possess a sexual desire that was no longer necessarily pathologized, treated as deviant or ill. Instead, female sexuality was explored as a normal part of life or human existence for women, and as a possibility that could be positively presented in the libretto, music, and voice, and embodied by the singer. Indeed, the sexual woman in opera is increasingly granted subjectivity and *re*-presented as a more complex, realistic character. This is particularly the case in *Rosenkavalier* with the opera's intertwining of

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Again, I see "women" as an evolving term that includes the multiplicities of differing states of being. See Riley, *Am I that Name?* 6.

[8] See Gail Braybon, "Women, War, and Work," in *World War I: A History*, ed. Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 149-62; and Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, esp. 205-15.

female voices in the duet and trio, and the sympathetic portrayal of the Marschallin, as already discussed in the previous chapter.

Another pathway to examining portrayals of female sexuality during the *fin-de-siècle* is to look at the ways in which women represent themselves and how this participates in the changing representations of women from literature and art to opera. Although thus far in this narrative of representations of female sexuality I have focused on works by men that bear little female authorial contribution or input prior to the actual staging and performance, here I turn to questions of female authorship and examine popular works in which women also had a role as author of the opera text. Women were active, creative participants during this time, helping to shape the era's cultural moment.[9] Therefore, it is important examine operas with libretti written by woman to investigate any potential changes in the representation of women and female sexuality. Indeed, in a critique of her contemporary Laura Marholm's belief that men defined women, Rosa Mayreder advocated the need for women to define themselves.[10] Although there were a number of female composers and writers, Marie Pappenheim and Arnold Schoenberg's *Erwartung* (1909) and Mayreder and Hugo Wolf's *Der Corregidor* (1896) are amongst the better-known Austro-German operatic works that have female authorship.[11] Another example is Beatrice Dovsky and Max von Schilling's *Mona Lisa* (1915), which will be the focus here. As this final chapter demonstrates, women contributed to the creative world of modernism, articulating their own experiences, and it is important to acknowledge and examine how this

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[9] As discussed in Chapter 4, Alma Mahler actively created as a composer, only subduing her creative voice when she married Mahler, while Emilie Flöge was not only Klimt's partner, but also better known for her creative fashion designs of "*Reform Kleider*." For a discussion of Flöge's creativity and Klimt as her muse, see Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 102-7.

[10] Mayreder, *A Survey of the Woman Problem*, 142-71.

[11] Of the works performed at the *Wien Hofoper*, only *Mona Lisa* and *Der Corregidor*, which premiered in Vienna in 1904, had female authorship of the opera text. *Theaterzettel*, *ÖTM*.

played out in specific operas.[12] Women's authorial voices and their creative contributions offered another way in which female sexuality and subjectivity began to be reconfigured in operas in the 1910s. In the first part of the chapter, I examine some of the positive reconsiderations of female sexuality that began to emerge, before turning to questions of female authorship and to how women themselves discussed female sexuality. After briefly considering Elizabeth Keathley's reading of *Erwartung* and Pappenheim's contribution to the work, I turn to address how female sexuality and subjectivity are presented in Dovsky and Schillings's *Mona Lisa*. Through the libretto and the narrative's open-ended conclusion, *Mona Lisa* offers a complex presentation of the sexual woman, and can be interpreted as opening a new space of possibilities for women.

Changing Understandings of Sexuality: From the Scientific Community to the Literary World

Paul Robinson identifies "a major transformation in sexuality" between 1890 and 1910, with Edward Carpenter, Albert Moll, Auguste Forel, Ivan Bloch and Magnus Hirschfeld's work on sexuality.[13] Indeed, traditional beliefs were uprooted as major shifts in scientific understandings of female sexuality and experience occurred during and following these years. Although Freud's understanding of female sexuality was problematic – he took male sexual development as the standard – he also rethought female sexuality.[14] He posited female sexual

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[12] For a discussion of modernism as gendered male, see Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*; Wolff, *Feminine Sentences*, 51-66. Regarding modernism as gendered masculine in musicological work, see Keathley, *Revisioning Musical Modernism*, 5, and Chapter 1. See also the discussion in a footnote earlier in the Introduction.

[13] Paul Robinson, *The Modernization of Sex: Havelock Elis, Alfred Kinsey, and Virginia Johnson* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976). According to Robinson, Ellis was particularly important in contributing to "modern" views of sexuality.

[14] Many feminist critiques of Freud have legitimate complaint. In addition to positing the male as the "norm" in his model of sexual development, he considered the clitoris as an inversion of the penis (Freud, *Three Essays on Sexuality*, 61). For feminist readings of Freud that critique his understandings of sexual identity as phallocentric, see in particular, Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); Toril Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy: Sexuality

desire and drives as a normal part of human experience and being, challenging the beliefs of the medical and scientific community. Numerous colleagues denied female sexuality, considering it non-existent, limited, or, if exhibited at all, "ill" or proof of their irrationality, as I discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Recall Krafft-Ebing's comment that "woman, however, if physically and mentally normal and properly educated, has but little sensual desire." The "woman who seeks men [is a] sheer anomal[y]," and she consequently denigrated as abnormal.[15] Otto Adler, a specialist from Berlin, wrote about female desire in 1904: "[T]he sexual drive (desire, urge, libido) of the woman is markedly smaller, in its first spontaneous origins as in its later manifestations, than that of the man."[16] With his 1905 publication *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (*Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*), Freud not only gave sexuality a prominent position by arguing that sexual development began in infancy, but by examining what "normal" sexuality was for both men and women, he also legitimized female sexuality. At moments, he even pointed out where other theories of sexual experience failed to account for female sexuality.[17] He recognized that women have sexual drives, although he called these "active" sexual drives "masculine" and considered female sexuality (or the "feminine") on the whole as

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and Epistemology in Freud's Dora," in *In Dora's Case: Freud – Hysteria – Feminism*, ed. Claire Kahane and Charles Bernheimer (New York: Columbia University, 1985), 181-99; and Cixous in Cixous and Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, esp. 150-60, and in her play *Portrait de Dora* (1976).

[15] Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 14. See also, Oosterhuis, *Krafft-Ebing and the Making of Modern Sexuality*, 30-32. In *The Sexual Question* (1906), sexologist August Forel also wrote: "In the sexual act the role of the woman differs from that of the man not only by being passive, but also by the absence of seminal ejaculations." Yet when women have sexual instincts, they are "much more the slaves of their instincts." August Forel, "The Sexual Question," in *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 28-29. For Bloch, like Ellis, women could be equal sexually, but usually under normal circumstances they were passive. Lucy Bland, "Gender and Sexual Difference: Introduction," in *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 13.

[16] Cited in Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time*, 513.

[17] For instance, Freud critiqued Krafft-Ebing's theory of sexual excitement because it only accounts for male sexuality. See Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 79-80.

passive: "the libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or *in women* and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman."[18] Moreover, he identified sexual development and its expression as key components in identity formation and subjectivity for men *and women.*

In "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness" (1908), Freud offered a new perspective on the etiology of women's hysteria and neuroses. He argued that the origin of "modern" neuroses lay in the contemporary sexual moral codes and expectations placed on women, rather than seeing female sexuality itself as a cause of hysteria. It was not biology or heredity that affected people, but rather the "undue suppression of the sexual life in civilized peoples (or classes) as a result of the 'civilized' sexual morality which prevails among them."[19] Indeed, the extreme sexual morality that he identified in his social milieu, "promotes modern nervousness, which under our present social conditions is rapidly spreading."[20]

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[18] Freud, *ibid.*, 85 (my emphasis). Freud commented in 1908 that women's sexual drive was sometimes weaker than man's although this was not always the case (Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time*, 514). Moreover, as revealed in the above quotation, some of his terminology is problematic in terms of its use of gendered language. By using "masculine" to describe the "active" libido, he relied on gendered metaphors that aligned active with masculine and passive with feminine (although not explicitly making a judgment about the essential attributes of real men or women) (Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 85).

[19] Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness," trans. E. B. Herford and E. Colburn Mayne, in *Sigmund Freud: Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 14. Others such as Krafft-Ebing, Ehrenfels, Binswanger, and Erb located modern neuroses in modern society and sometimes the fast pace of society and technology. Freud contributed another etiology – one that he found to be most important – to contemporary debates on the causes of modern illness (*Ibid.*, 10-14). Freud specifically argued that the problem resulted from the current idea of sexual abstinence except within marriage. He recognized his current moment as a third stage in civilization (the most "civilized" stage) and critically assessed it, writing, "only *legitimate* procreation is allowed as a sexual aim […] demands from both sexes abstinence until marriage, and lifelong abstinence for all those who do not enter into legal matrimony." *Ibid.*, 17, 20.

[20] Freud, *ibid.*, 11. This resonates not only with themes in Chapter 1, but also those in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. Later in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud would revise this position, and, incorporating his later work on the Superego, Ego, and Id, argue that individual repression of sexuality affects society. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005).

> Clearly, education does not look lightly on the task of suppressing the sensuality of the girl until marriage, for it employs the most drastic measures. It not only forbids sexual intercourse and sets a high premium upon the preservation of sexual chastity, but it also protects the developing young woman from temptation by keeping her in ignorance of all the facts concerning the part she is ordained to play, and tolerates in her no love-impulse which cannot lead to marriage.[21]

Continuing his critique of the double standards of society, he noted that those who "stunt" their sexuality because of current social are mores are deeply and negatively affected. Those who have a strong sexual drive, including women, exhibit modern neuroses as a result of abstinence and the repression of their drives.[22] Moreover, as he observed with criticism, those who experience sexuality as pleasure rather than as a means of procreation are criminalized – something that was seen in the treatment of Kundry, Elektra, and Salome earlier.[23]

Even if problematic, Freud's work scrutinized and invariably posed a challenge to the patriarchal system. As Jill Scott writes: "We should not forget, for example, that the very act of inviting young women to speak openly about their experiences of mistreatment and abuse was radical in every way. Freud may have bungled the analysis, but he took risks merely by listening to women and taking seriously what they had to say."[24] For instance, in his famous case study of Dora, he concluded that her manifested hysteria is a result of her hindered sexual desire, a thoroughly modern account of female sexuality, although one for which he could be criticized for speaking *for* women.[25]

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[21] "'Civilized' Sexual Morality," 24-25.

[22] *Ibid.*, 19.

[23] For Freud, very few women are able to "sublimate" their drives and express them in creative outlets. Freud, *ibid.*, 15-21.

[24] Scott, *Electra after Freud*, 4. See also Boyer, who discusses Freud's contribution to the marriage debate in 1905. John W. Boyer, "Freud, Marriage, and Late Viennese Liberalism: A Commentary from 1905," *Journal of Modern History* 50 (1978): 91-99.

[25] Freud has also been criticized for *speaking for* women, particularly regarding his analysis of the Dora case. See Toril Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy," 188; and Cixous, *Portrait de Dora* (1976). Hélène Cixous wrote the play *Portrait de Dora* to show that there are multiple narratives – including Dora's – to

New possibilities for women also emerged from a variety of sources by women and women's groups, from publications such as pamphlets, journals, and political essays, to plays, poetry, novels, and short stories.[26] Feminists such as Rosa Mayreder, Grete Meisel-Hess, Helene Lang, socialist Adelheid Popp, and many others increasingly participated in the social debates of the era, from education and women's inclusion in universities, to working conditions. Many of these examinations by women also included considerations of female sexuality. Meisel-Hess's *Die sexuelle Krise: Eine sozialpsychologische Untersuchung* (1909, *The Sexual Crisis: A Critique of Our Sex Life*) addressed female sexuality in relation to societal expectations, emphasized women's sexual desire, and critiqued the era's sexual double standard. Mayreder wrote her influential *Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit* (1905, translated in 1913 as *A Survey of the Woman Problem*) in which she critiqued current scientific and philosophical discourses about women from a feminist standpoint, advocating for the recognition of women's subjectivity and their status as "differentiated individuals." Women, like men, possess sexual desire, and Mayreder is critical of how society prevents women from acting upon their desires.[27] The *Wiener Frauenclub* formed in 1900, while the *Bund für Mutterschutz und Sexualreform*, which first printed Freud's essay "'Civilized' Sexual Morality" in its journal *Mutterschutz* in 1908, formed in 1905 and advocated sexual equality for women. The organization was founded to stop

Dora's story, challenging Freud's privileged masculine position. In the play, she presents Dora's perspective through "dream-like sequences." She also distorts and quotes Freud's analysis of Dora both to challenge and undermine Freud's patriarchal position as "author" of Dora's story, and to offer new interpretations of Dora. See Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy," 182.

[26] Some women's journals include: *Neues Frauenleben*, *Dokumente der Frauen*, *Die Frau* (the journal of the *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine*), and *Mutterschutz*. Other journals include: *Die Frauenbewegung* (from 1895), which catered to progressive bourgeois feminism, and *Die Gleichheit* (*Equality*), published by the Social Democratic faction of the women's movement. Lischke, *Lily Braun*, 25, 35-36.

[27] For a discussion of this text in addition to Mayreder's fiction that engages with feminist perspectives, see Jane Sokolosky, "Primitive or Differentiated? Constructions of Femininity in Rosa Mayreder's Theoretical and Fictional Texts," *Modern Austrian Literature* 30, no. 2 (1997): 65-83, especially 74. In *Geschlecht und Kultur* (*Gender and Culture*), published in 1923 although written over a number of years, Mayreder also examines the ways in which social expectations limit and harm women.

discrimination against unwed mothers, and dealt with issues concerning female sexuality and morality, including contraception, government acknowledgement of cohabitation between men and women, and government support for single mothers.[28]

In literature, there was an increasing recognition of and concern with the sexual experiences and subjectivity of women. As David Luft has noted, literature also charted the weakening division between the sexes.[29] For example, after meeting his future wife Martha Heinemann, writer Musil was increasingly concerned and preoccupied with a "woman's experience of sexuality,"[30] while several of Zweig's and Schnitzler's works were written from the point of the view of the female protagonist, including the novellas *Angst* (Zweig) and *Fräulein Else* (Schnitzler). Meanwhile, contemporaneous debates around 1900 reconsidered iconic, chaste female figures in German speaking culture, such as Gretchen from *Faust*, asking: Is Gretchen a woman actualizing her desires, or is she a passive, chaste male construction?[31]

In observing the appearance of new women in the literature of the 1910s, Marylu Hill writes that these women and the way in which they are depicted reveal that "the gender of modernism is not strictly or preferably male."[32] Indeed, texts by female authors can be read as expressions of women's lives, according to Janet Woolf.[33] Although there were certainly female

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[28] For a discussion of differing ideas regarding female sexuality, see Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany,* especially 130-39. See also Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*.

[29] Regarding Musil, see Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna*, especially 106 and 183.

[30] For instance, in *Vereinigungen* (1911), Musil writes about Claudine's sexual experience from her own perspective. Luft, *ibid.*, 106. Later in *The Man Without Qualities*, Musil examined female sexuality in relation to male sexuality and sexual hierarchies. For instance, Bonadea's comments about women and sexuality in "Bonadea; Or, the Relapse," in *The Man Without Qualities*, II: 953-68.

[31] Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 205.

[32] Marylu Hill, "Introduction: From New Women, to Modernists," in *Mothering Modernity: Feminism, Modernism, and the Maternal Muse* (London: Garland Press, 1999), 2.

[33] Wolff, *Feminine Sentences*, 4. Wolff examines these voices in modernism in the chapter "Feminism and Modernism," 51-66.

authors earlier, there was a surge in creative expression in the *fin-de-siècle*, as attested by the multitude of lexica and anthologies of women's writings that appeared between 1895 and 1910, as well as the emergence of literary organizations, such as the *Verein der Schriftstellerinnen und Künstlerinnen in Wien* (Association of Female Writers and Artists in Vienna, 1885).[34] Writers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Lou Andreas-Salomé (*Eine Ausschweifung*, 1898; *Das Haus*, 1921) and Wilhelmine von Hillern (*Ein Arzt der Seele*, 1869), "depict heroines torn between emancipatory and conventional womanhood."[35] They are torn between social expectations and their personal desires. Irma von Troll-Borostyáni explored sexual freedom for women in stories such as *Onkel Clemens* (1897) and *Hunger und Liebe* (1900), although she was more concerned with acknowledging the possibility of female sexuality rather than presenting female desire directly.[36] Viennese author Else Jerusalem employed social critique to show that sexual women are not morally corrupt, but rather can be "exemplary" figures, such as in her 1909 story *Der heilige Skarabaüs*.[37] Lina Loos's poetry and plays criticized restrictive bourgeois feminine roles, including the autobiographical play, *Wie man wird, was man ist*, in which an older man tries to shape his young wife into an ideal object.[38] Other examples from Germany and Austria include Duc's *Sind es Frauen*, mentioned in the previous chapter, as well as Mayreder's novels and short stories that reconfigured female

[34] Chris Weedon, "The Struggle for Emancipation: German Women Writers of the Jahrhundertwende," in *A History of Women's Writing in German, Austria, and Switzerland*, ed. Jo Catling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 111.

[35] Beth Muellner, "Hysteric," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. Friederike Eigler and Susanne Kord (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 250.

[36] Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 220.

[37] *Ibid.*, 219. For a longer discussion of Feminist literature in Vienna specifically see *ibid.*, 205-15.

[38] Brandow-Faller, "Man, Woman, Artist? Rethinking the Muse in Vienna 1900," 111-12.

subjectivity through their presentations of women with sexual desires.[39] These social, scientific, and literary changes in attitudes toward female desire and sexuality were matched on the operatic stage, as we will now see. As the layman sings in the opening of *Mona Lisa*, "sensual enjoyment had caught the world…"[40]

Female Authorship in Opera: Taking **Erwartung** *as a Model*

Keathley's reading of Pappenheim's authorship and "the Woman" (*Frau*) in *Erwartung* offers a starting point for examining *Mona Lisa*. Before turning to *Mona Lisa*, I briefly consider some of her points about female authorship and female subjectivity, although I do not address the subtleties of *Erwartung* itself.[41] Keathley's examination of the monodrama addresses the role that female authorship played in the emerging modernism of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. She reevaluates the influence that librettist Marie Pappenheim had as author and as part of the compositional process in creating *Erwartung* with Arnold Schoenberg, and demonstrates the way in which Pappenheim's participation in the creative process calls for reading the work from a feminist perspective.[42]

In the one act opera, *Erwartung*, the "Woman" exceeds traditional female sexuality and social expectations. She is an unmarried woman searching for her lover in the woods at night, and, in the final section of the work, she comes across his body in the woods. In contrast to the

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[39] For a discussion of Mayreder's writings, see Sokolosky, "Primitive or Differentiated?," 65-83; for a discussion of Duc's novel, see Biddy Martin, *Femininity Played Straight*, 54-69.

[40] "ein Sinnentaumel hatt' die Welt erfasst…" *Mona Lisa*, 3 before **22**.

[41] I have chosen not to address *Erwartung* in-depth because it was performed later, outside the temporal framework examined here, and thus is not part of the narrative of this dissertation.

[42] Keathley looks at Pappenheim's cultural and intellectual context and background, noting Pappenheim's involvement in the women's movement and sexual reforms. See Keathley, "Interpreting *Erwartung*: Collaborative Process and Early Reception," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schoenberg*, ed. Jennifer Shaw and Joseph Auner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 92, and *Revisioning Musical Modernism*, 70-90.

long history of interpreting the Woman in *Erwartung* as acting out hysteria, Keathley suggests another interpretation of the opera.[43] For instance, McClary famously reads the Woman as mad, or as an hysteric. She argues that by "dispens[ing] with tonal reference or goal orientation altogether" Schoenberg depicts her madness through a "semiotic construction of the madwoman through discontinuity and extreme chromaticism."[44] McClary views the madwoman as "overwhelm[ing] the social order," a mode of resistance not only through her behavior, but also achieved through Schoenberg's musical language of atonality and chromaticism.[45] On the other hand, Keathley's reading gives more weight to librettist Pappenheim's authorial voice as well as her intellectual context. Despite coming into existence amidst the emerging field of psychoanalysis and concerns over hysteria, Pappenheim's collaborative involvement in the work, the details within the monodrama, and the opera's "open" ending invite a different interpretation. Indeed, for Keathley, who takes account of Pappenheim's feminist context, the opera is a feminist statement.[46] This avoids casting the Woman as one of Freud's patients; the Woman is not Freud's passive hysteric, but is rather *active* and "acting": "*Erwartung*'s Woman may be

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[43] For works that interpret the Woman in *Erwartung* as hysteric, see: Alexander Carpenter, "Schoenberg's Vienna, Freud's Vienna: Re-examining the Connections between the Monodrama *Erwartung* and the Early History of Psychoanalysis," *Musical Quarterly* 93, no. 1 (2010): 144-81; McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 80-108; Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 148-57. For an exploration of Keathley's reading in relation to this other literature, see: David Metzer, "Madness," in *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76-86.

[44] "Schoenberg dispenses with tonal reference or goal orientation altogether, as the woman's paranoid utterances range from catatonic paralysis to chaotic flailing." McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 104. With these and the following comments, McClary seems to almost equate atonality with madness: "The chromatic excess of the madwoman became even more intense with Elektra, and she finally escaped her would-be captors altogether in Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, where the secure frame of tonality has been murdered, where atonality reigns in supreme, unchallenged lunacy." *Ibid.*, 101.

[45] *Ibid.*, 104, 107-8.

[46] Keathley, *Revisioning Musical Modernism*; Keathley, "'*Die Frauenfrage*' in *Erwartung*: Schoenberg's Collaboration with Marie Pappenheim," in *Schoenberg and Words: The Modernist Years*, ed. Charlotte Cross and Russell A. Berman (New York: Garland, 2000), 139-77; see also Keathley, "Interpreting *Erwartung*," 93.

'hysterical' in some colloquial, non-clinical sense – the sense frequently used to discredit women who display discomforting levels of emotion – but not according to Freud."[47] The monodrama's open ending – unlike the definitive conclusions that befell the women of *Elektra*, *Salome*, and *Parsifal* – allows for an alternative reading of the opera. As Keathley writes, "like much twentieth-century feminist fiction, *Erwartung* has no definitive conclusion, nor does its music resolve, but the Woman finally achieves awareness of *herself* as utterly alone in a world without meaning except what she imparts to it. This flicker of insight opens up the possibility for an independent and meaningful existence."[48]

Furthermore, the Woman's complexity is achieved through the presentation of her struggle, her emotions and frustrations, and her evolving reactions to a particular situation. As Keathley notes, through the genre of monodrama, the Woman is portrayed with sympathy, as a victim who moves forward. The Woman develops from "passive dependency" to a "heightened self knowledge" over the course of the opera, in what Keathley calls a "feminist *Bildungsroman.*"[49] Indeed, the musical details correspond to the text, and for Keathley the cry that Pappenheim and Schoenberg wrote, "make[s] the Woman's frightening journey more palpable for the audience, helping us to hear and feel what she hears and feels."[50] As I will now examine, in *Mona Lisa*, much like *Erwartung*, Dovsky's contribution as librettist shapes the

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[47] Keathley, "Interpreting *Erwartung*," 87.

[48] Keathley, *ibid.*, 93. She rejects her passive role, and is "holding out the possibility – but not guarantee – of the Woman's self-realization." See also Keathley, "*Die Frauenfrage*' in *Erwartung*," 161-62.

[49] Keathley, "Interpreting *Erwartung*," 92. Through the monodrama, Pappenheim and Schoenberg take us through a woman's "journey toward self-determination" in a type of "feminist *Bildungsroman*," (Keathley, *Revisioning Musical Modernism*, 8, 376-77), which resonates with Rosa Mayreder's idea of "individual subjectivity" (Mayreder, 88). For a general discussion and critique of the term "*Bildungsroman*" and the possibility of *Bildungsromane* by women as only a recent phenomenon, see Maierhofer, "Bildungsroman," 44-47.

[50] Keathley, "Interpreting *Erwartung*," 90. Keathley also writes: "The Woman more closely resembles monodrama's archetypal persecuted heroine than she does opera's demented diva." *Revisioning Musical Modernism*, 8.

story told about female sexuality and personhood.

Mona Lisa: *"The enigmatic being 'woman' is altering…"*[51]

Schillings and Dovsky's *Mona Lisa* engages with popular contemporary themes, from its return to the Renaissance and incorporation of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, to its presentation of women and female sexuality illustrating how the "enigmatic being 'woman' is altering." The first decades of the twentieth century witnessed a fascination with the Renaissance and the figure of Mona Lisa. The 1911 theft of the painting from the Louvre and its eventual return garnered much media attention, while numerous fiction and non-fiction works of the time concerned either the character or the painting *Mona Lisa*. In 1901, a German translation appeared of the very popular interpretation of *Mona Lisa* by Walter Pater, while a translation of Dimitrij Merezhkovsky popular novel *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci* came out in German in 1903, which included details about Mona Lisa.[52] Gabriele d'Annunzio explored the duality of women in the tragedy "La Giocconda" (1899), shortly after writing a one act play about a jealous husband's revenge, *Sogno d'un mattino di primavera* (1897), which influenced Hofmannsthal's play *Die Frau im Fenster* – a theme that also occurs in the opera *Mona Lisa*.[53] In 1910, Freud wrote an essay entitled "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," in which he considered the image of *Mona Lisa* in relation to da Vinci's childhood and Oedipal relation to his

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[51] "verwandelt sich das rätselvolle Wesen 'Weib.'" (5 after **19 –** 7 after **19**)

[52] This novel was translated into German in 1903. According to Detig, Dovsky took some details, such as Mona Lisa's favorite flower, from the novel. Christian Detig, *Deutsche Kunst, deutsche Nation: Der Komponist Max von Schillings*, Kölner Beiträge zur Musik (Kassel, Germany: Gunter Bosse Verlag, 1998), 224.

[53] Matthias Brzoska, "Zur Renaissance-Rezeption in Max von Schillings Oper *Mona Lisa*," in *Deutsche Oper zwischen Wagner und Strauss*, ed. Sieghart Döhring, Hans John, and Helmut Loos (Chemnitz, Germany: Gudrun Schröder, 1998), 203.

mother.[54] Even hostesses at nightclubs dressed up like Mona Lisa.[55] Not only was the figure of Mona Lisa popular, but Renaissance themes were also fashionable. Like several other contemporary operas, including Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* (1918), Pfitzner's *Palestrina* (1917), and Korngold's *Violanta* (1916), *Mona Lisa* is set (primarily) in the Renaissance. Only the framing scenes of the prologue and the epilogue are set in the present era. With the love triangle in addition to the setting in Renaissance Italy, the opera also bears a strong resemblance to both Korngold's *Violanta* and Zemlinsky's *Eine florentinische Tragödie* (1917), although with a different outcome for both married couples. While Korngold's Violanta dies and Zemlinsky's Simone and Bianca reunite, Mona Lisa's act of revenge sees both men in her life dead.[56]

The opera opens with a Prelude in which a Brother (*Der Bruder*) giving an older stranger (*Der Fremde*) and companion, a younger woman (*Die Frau*), a tour of a Renaissance palazzo, begins to tell the story of Mona Lisa. His narrative segues into the internal narrative of the opera, which is set in the 1492 Carnival season in Florence. A rich older nobleman, Francesco Giocondo, is jealous regarding his attractive, much younger wife, Fiordalisa Gherardini (or Mona Lisa). There is something disconcerting about the way in which she looks and smiles in

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[54] Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," in *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Leonardo da Vinci, and Other Works*, trans. James Strachey, with Anna Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud XI (1910) (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 57-137. Freud also mentioned the numerous cultural and literary considerations of *Mona Lisa.*

[55] Cordula Engelbert, "Max von Schillings and his Opera *Mona Lisa* (Liner Notes)," trans. M. Markert, *Max von Schillings Mona Lisa*, cond. Klauspeter Seibel, Kiel Philharmonic (CPO Records 7227961, 1995), 35.

[56] Mertens notes similarities between *Mona Lisa* and several contemporary operas, including Zemlinsky's *Eine florentinische Tragödie* (1917), Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* (1918), Korngold's venetian tragedy *Violanta* (1916), and Puccini's *Tosca* (1900), which was first premiered in Vienna in 1910. Volker Mertens, "Max von Schillings *Mona Lisa* und die Wiener Moderne: 'Ganze' Frau und 'halbe' Mann," in *Kundry und ihre leidenden Schwestern: Schizophrenie und Hysterie: Frauenfiguren im Musik-Theater*, ed. Silvia Kronberger and Ulrich Müller, Music und Text 53 (Salzburg: Verlag Mueller-Speiser, 2003), 134-35. For a discussion of *Eine florentinische Tragödie*, see Lee, "A Florentine Tragedy, or Woman as Mirror," 33-58.

the portrait he has of her – it is a tender expression that Francesco himself has never seen before from his wife. He is also suspicious of Mona Lisa's earlier love, Giovanni de Salviati, who is in Florence to get a pearl from Francesco's famous collection. After Giovanni and Mona Lisa reunite, Francesco overhears Mona Lisa's plan to run away with Giovanni the next morning. When Francesco suddenly appears, Giovanni hides in the very small room in which Francesco's pearls are displayed. Francesco pretends to not have overheard anything or to not know that Giovanni is hiding in the room, and "by chance" locks the door to the small room with the pearls, trapping Giovanni inside. Francesco deliberately misinterprets Mona Lisa's distraught behavior as her preference for the pearls over him, and in order to "test" her love for him over the pearls, he cruelly throws the key into the river below, all the while knowing that Giovanni is inside the airtight room. Overnight the imprisoned Giovanni suffocates; Mona Lisa is devastated. Her anguish at the loss is captured not only in the moment when Francesco throws away the key, but also the next morning, when she wakes up hoping the event was a dream, and calls Giovanni's name to silence. In a strange twist, Francesco's daughter arrives with the key to the safe; she found it in her boat where it had by chance landed. Mona Lisa persuades a bewildered Francesco – who now believes that Mona Lisa had unlocked Giovanni the previous night – to get some pearls from his safe. She then pushes Francesco into the room and locks him inside with Giovanni's body. She reverses the power dynamic of the relationship, now victorious herself as she sings before she collapses and the curtain closes. The story concludes with a return to the trio that opened the opera and creates multiple parallels across the narrative. Not only does the Brother comment on the resemblance between *Die Frau* and Mona Lisa, but the same singers also play both roles: the Brother is also Giovanni; the Layman, Francesco; *Die Frau*, Mona Lisa. These connections help shape how one reads Mona Lisa's position at the end of the opera.

The opera was written by Schillings between 1913 and 1915 to a libretto by the Austrian actress, writer, and feminist Dovsky.[57] Although Schillings originally wanted to use an earlier text by Dovsky, she suggested the story of Mona Lisa instead. The opera is a combination of impressionistic, Verismo, post-Wagnerian styles unlike Schillings's earlier works, which were much more Wagnerian in language.[58] *Mona Lisa* premiered at the Stuttgart *Hoftheater* on September 26th, 1915 with Schillings conducting and the German-Brazilian soprano Hedy Brügelmann in the roles of *Die Frau* and Mona Lisa.[59] Emil Gerhäuser was the stage director and the stage décor and costumes were by Bernhard Pankok (Pankok's sketches of Mona Lisa and Francesco can be seen in Figures 7.1 and 7.2).[60] Shortly after its premiere, *Mona Lisa* was performed in Vienna, then in Breslau, Hamburg, Berlin, Budapest, as well as in a number of other cities.[61] There were some complaints from the Catholic Church about the moral and religious content of the work, and the opera was even restricted by the war censor for "religious

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[57] In this discussion, I focus on the message about female sexuality and consider Dovsky's biographical position because it relates directly to the theme of female expression and subjectivity. Although important to acknowledge, I choose to not discuss Schillings's biographical information (including his anti-Semitism and his expulsion of numerous artists and composers from the Prussian Academy of the Arts during his tenure as its President) because it is unrelated to the subject at hand. For an examination of Schillings's biographical information and information on Schillings as president of the Prussian Academy of the Arts, see Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 308-18.

[58] Engelbert, "Max von Schillings and his Opera *Mona Lisa*," 33. Earlier operas by Schillings that were composed in a post-Wagnerian style include: *Ingwelde* (1894), *Der Pfeifertag* (1899), and *Moloch* (1906). Frisch, *German Modernism*, 73.

[59] Aargard Oestwig was Giovanni and John Forsell, Francesco. Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 204.

[60] For a discussion of staging Mona Lisa and Pankok's sketches of the sets and costumes see: Emil Gerhäuser, with Bernard Pankok, *Stuttgarter Bühnenkunst: Inszenierung der Königlich württembergischen Hofoper von Werken Mozarts und von Schillings'* Mona Lisa (Stuttgart: Wilhelm Meyer-Ilschen, 1917).

[61] Maria Jeritza performed the role for all the 12 performances at the Vienna *Hofoper* between April 10, 1915, and February 7th, 1916. Gregor conducted, while the staging was by Pühringer and Brioschi. There was a new production in 1923. See Láng and Láng, eds., *Wiener Staatsoper – 140 Jahre Haus am Ring*, 276-77.

or 'moral' policing reasons."[62] Despite some criticisms of the opera plot as "crass," it was, as Volker Mertens notes, the "most successful German opera since *Der Rosenkavalier*."[63]

Mona Lisa's Madness

Often the female is punished for her curiosity in opera, from Elsa's desire to know her husband's origins in *Lohengrin* to Judith's need to know what is lurking behind the locked doors in Bluebeard's home. In *Mona Lisa*, the husband's jealousy and his curiosity about the cause of her smile in the portrait instigate his downfall. He is punished for his curiosity, a reversal of the typical story. Francesco certainly exhibited moments of madness as well.[64] Yet it is Mona Lisa who seems to be portrayed as mad in the opera. Some have noted the similarities between the mad scenes at the end of *Mona Lisa* and those in *Salome* and *Elektra*.[65] Indeed in his 1915 analysis of the work, Mennicke described it as an "aria of revenge,"[66] while Maria Jeritza, who sang the roles of The Frau and Mona Lisa at the Viennese premiere of the work, considered

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[62] Cited in Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 206. People found the religious material too scandalous. In Munich the Catholic Church and conservative press both protested, while the role of the Brother had to be altered to a porter in Cologne and a Senator in Berlin. *Ibid.*, 206. For a discussion of *Mona Lisa*'s reception amidst war concerns, see *Ibid*., 206-7.

[63] Mertens, "Max von Schillings *Mona Lisa*," 129.

[64] In the opera, it seems that the men are treated critically. As Mertens argues, the opera is a feminist critique of men because it presents the men as split – both "fixated" and narcissists "addicted to conquests" – and the women as a homogenous unity. For example, Giovanni is a "nervous man without a solid identity." Mertens, "Max von Schillings *Mona Lisa*," 139-40, 142.

[65] Frisch, *German Modernism*, 74; Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 231. For example, Detig contends that Dovsky continued these female typologies: Dovsky "brought Salome to the stage, but had [Ibsen's] Nora in her head." Detig, *ibid.* I contend, however, that through the narrative devices in the opera, it is indeed Nora, *not* Salome, who ultimately emerges on the stage.

[66] Karl Mennicke, *Über Max Schillings* Mona Lisa*: Eine Einführung in das Werk* (Berlin: Drei Masken-Verlag, 1915). Frisch also notes this characterization by Mennicke. Frisch, *German Modernism*, 74.

Mona Lisa "maniacal" and commented how "in the second act, *Lisa* [sic] goes insane."[67] In her memoirs, Jeritza describes even visiting Steinhof, Vienna's asylum, to prepare for the role and she "observed the gestures, the attitudes and the expressions on the faces of the poor unfortunate creatures."[68]

Immediately after Francesco locks Giovanni in the pearl chamber, Mona Lisa repeats, "Francesco…Francesco," first "beside herself, stammering" ("*außer sich, stammelnd*") in a vocal line that jumps downward, sung over tremolos in the orchestra. To these continuing tremolos and increasing intensity in the orchestra, she repeats his name, now "more agitated" ("*noch gesteigert*") and at a higher pitch (Act I, 6 – 9 after **173**). "With desperation" she yells at him to kill her: "Francesco, kill me!" ("*Francesco, tote mich!*") (Act I, **198**). While she hears the voice of her trapped lover, the stage directions call for her to sing with "wildly bursting out laughing" ("*wild auflachend*") (Act I, 2 before **205**). After Francesco throws the key into the river, she screams shrilly and then throws herself onto the couch ("*Lisa schreit gellend auf und wirft sich hinüber auf das Ruhebett*") while her theme resounds in a violent *forte* in the orchestra. When Francesco pulls her close to him, "she laughs quietly as though mad" ("*sich lacht leise, wie irre*"), then passes out (Act I, 2 before **215 – 216**).

When Mona Lisa wakes up in Act II, she initially believes that everything was a dream. Yet once she realizes that the previous night's events actually occurred, she screams, then repeats then phrase: "I slept! I slept!"[69] She calls Giovanni's name repeatedly, "desperately sobbing" ("*verzweifelt schluchzend*"), then, after rattling the door to the chamber, she sings his name on a

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[67] Jeritza, *Sunlight and Song*, 28, 170. The same singer often performed these two roles, a significance that I discuss later.

[68] *Ibid.*, 170.

[69] "Ich hab' geschlafen! Ich hab' geschlafen!" (Act II, **18 – 19**)

sustained high C. Once she realizes that he must be dead, all she can sing is "*er ist tot*" and "*tot*" ("he is dead," "dead") repeatedly. At other moments, she is only able to utter his names a few times in a row – she has lost her ability to clearly express herself and this is perhaps an indication of her shattered mental state (Act II, **27 – 29**). The stage directions call for her to "sink down as if broken and to weep. Then she laboriously moves on her knees forward a few steps, lifts herself up, and stares with mad, helpless eyes."[70]

Mona Lisa's victorious concluding aria can be interpreted as further indicating her madness. Recalling the language of the hysteric from the first two chapters, the hysteric has a fragmentary, discontinuous, and repetitive mode of expression. Breuer and Freud wrote of the "broken language" and "multi-lingual" nature of the hysteric's speech. Their language is nonsensical and must be rearranged by the therapist for it to make any sense.[71] As seen earlier, Elektra reiterates the same word in her moments of madness and frustration, while Salome's deranged demands for the head are also musically and textually repetitive.[72] It seems at this point that Mona Lisa's expressions of sexuality result in hysteria, just as Elektra's and Salome's sexuality is also tied to hysteria and illness. After pushing Francesco into the room, Mona Lisa repeats "wildly": "So! So! I have you! So! So! I hold you!" before laughing.[73] This scene, the most vocally dramatic and operatic moment as well as the height of the opera, is broken up with bursts of mad laughter. As Mennicke noted, Schillings uses instrumental color to articulate

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[70] "Sie sinkt wie gebrochen zusammen, und weint. Dann rutscht sie auf den Knieen mühsam ein paar Schritte fort, erhebt sich schwer, starrt vor sich hin mit irren, hilflosen Augen." (Act II, **28 – 29**)

[71] If the hysteric could remember the incident and recount it in a coherent narrative, she could then be cured. Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," 318.

[72] As Ellen Rosand has shown, repetition to represent madness in an operatic character occurred even much earlier, in late Renaissance and early Baroque music. See Ellen Rosand, "Operatic Madness: a Challenge to Convention," in *Music and Text*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 241-87.

[73] "So! So! Hab' ich dich! So! So! Halt' ich dich" (**61** – 2 before **63**)

dramatic effects. For instance, in Mona Lisa's aria, instrumental color rather than harmony conveys her rage. The "turmoil of the small drum," and the "insane laugh of the xylophone" as well as the muted trumpets were heard as conveying her "inner breakdown."[74] Mona Lisa "looks around with mad eyes" ("*Mit irren Augen herumsehend*"), she "stammers incoherently" ("*stammelt abgerissen*") (Act II, **69**), and the grammatical logic of her speech eventually breaks down and she repeats words "the key – hide – hide – nobody discovers – Ah – cool – cool – does good – does good – does good."[75] The vocal line and the accompanying music shift quickly from a quiet, lyrical passage, to a frenzied outburst with muted trumpets and trills in the high woodwinds. She is "suddenly wildly flies into a rage" … "turns in circles" … "suddenly yells" … then "grasps at her heart, staggers and collapses."[76]

Reclaiming Hysteria?

At first glance, it seems that she is Clément's traditional hysteric, or mad woman, singing her own operatic "undoing."[77] Yet, could this moment also be read as a rebellious performance of hysteria, different than the hysteria presented in Part I of this dissertation? Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century diagnoses of hysteria are often understood as problematic from a feminist perspective, in that they create a powerful but detrimental narrative of the ill woman. Hysteria or madness was, as Showalter writes, a diagnosis often used against women, as a mode of

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[74] Mennicke, *Über Max Schillings* Mona Lisa, 41. The earlier use of instrumental color with the flutes and clarinets to portray the impassive Mona Lisa was also significant. This differs from McClary's explorations of operatic madness as reflected through musical "disunity" and "extreme chromaticism." McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 104.

[75] "Den Schlüssel – verstecken – verstecken – niemand – niemand entdecken– Ah – kühl – kühl – tut wohl – tut wohl – tut wohl." (Act II, **69 – 70**)

[76] "plötzlich wild auffahrend…sie dreht sich im Taumel um sich selbst…plötzlich aufschreiend…sie greift nach dem Herzen, wankt und bricht zusammen." (Act II, 3 before **71 – 73**)

[77] Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, 118-36.

diagnosing their "irrationality" and "the essential feminine nature unveiling itself before scientific male rationality."[78] Despite Freud's understandings of sexuality and morality that were progressive for the era, even the narrative of hysteria that Freud tells is one in which Dora is diagnosed by the authorial male figure.[79]

French feminist scholarship has critiqued and re-read hysteria, reinterpreting it as a strategic (and I would add, creative and sonorous) mode of resistance and protest for women. According to Cixous, hysteria is a powerful tool to break down the patriarchal system and to speak *outside* of it.[80] Cixous calls for woman to rebel against the history of hysteria, and she considers Dora as an example of utilizing hysteria as a mode of resistance. Dora is:

> [T]he one who cannot stand that the family and society are founded on the body of women, on bodies despised, rejected, bodies that are humiliating once they have been used. And this girl – like all hysterics, deprived of the possibility of saying directly what she perceived, of speaking face-to-face or on the telephone as Father B. or Father K. or Freud, et cetera do – still had the strength to make it known. It is the nuclear example of women's power to protest.[81]

As Cixous contends, this reclaiming of hysteria is another way for women to speak and articulate their needs, desires, and frustrations.[82] It is a way to tell *their* story. For example, Dora's hysteria

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[78] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, 3.

[79] Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy," 187.

[80] Cixous, like Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, contends that modernism is a revolt against the past. While Cixous has attracted criticism for arguing that modernist literature is "feminine," Cixous defends this position because for her any writing that explores language and undermines traditional patriarchal structures in language is *l'écriture féminine.* The sex of the writer does not matter. For a discussion of criticisms of Cixous, see Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 35-38.

[81] Cixous, in Cixous and Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, 154. In Cixous's exchange with Catherine Clément, the two thinkers differ in their interpretation of hysteria as mode of freedom and expression for women. For Clément, hysteria reinforces the existing social structures and "makes them comfortable." *Ibid.*, 155. Cixous, on the other hand, sees hysteria as occurring on a scale, and Dora "broke something" in the larger social structure. Through her performances of hysteria, Dora was able to challenge and alter the system. Cixous, *ibid.*, 156-57.

[82] Cixous, *ibid*, 154-55.

was an act of protest, a "silent revolt against male power."[83] As Muellner writes:

> [The] figure of the hysteric in women's literature often masks a rebellion against women's oppression, through a conscious or an unconscious pathological identity. From the feminist psycholinguistic perspective, the hysteric's specific mode of communication – that of a nonverbal body condition – reveals that she avoids the language of patriarchy and therefore its symbolic order.[84]

But is it possible to reclaim Mona Lisa's hysteria through Cixous's *écriture féminine*, which is a mode of expression outside of the dominant symbolic order, a creative mode of expression that emerges from desire and the (female) body?[85] Not only does Mona Lisa literally use her body and its physical weight to lock Francesco in the room ("*wirft sich Lisa mit dem ganzen Körper gegen die Türe*," Act II, **61**), but her reaction through song is also the quintessential turn to the body as mode of expression. Mona Lisa is a "*speaking subject*," or in this case, a *singing subject*. Indeed, there is a recalibration of the focus, shifting power to the female author, or the physical voice and the body of the singer, which is the source of the sound. An important aspect to consider is the striking vocal power and prowess of Mona Lisa at the end of the opera.[86] Just as Dora's voice is obscured, filtered through Freud's pen, so too is Dovsky's story of Mona Lisa altered through Schillings's input. Yet, the singer has a powerful authorial role through performance that can transcend the written narrative. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, for Abbate the vocal performance in opera is where the female singer can possess power and undermine the plot, almost assuming authorship with a "female authorial voice,"

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[83] Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy," 182.

[84] Muellner, "Hysteric," 250.

[85] Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 875-93

[86] The brother's anxious closing lines of the opera reveal a fear of Mona Lisa and her power: "Wer bist du? - - - Eva? Magdalena? - Bath-Seba? - - Versucherin! Mona - Lisa! - - Mona - Lisa!" (Act II, **84 – 86**)

rather than acting as a pawn within the operatic structure.[87] Abbate focuses on "the *physical* force of music" and, summarizing Paul Robinson's critique of Clément, she writes: "Clément neglected their triumph: the sound of their singing voices. This sound is […] unconquerable; it cannot be concealed by orchestras, by male singers, or, in the end, by murderous plots."[88] Mona Lisa is the opposite of Freud's patients with their lost voices. Mona Lisa becomes "hysterical," and not only reclaims her voice through her hysteria, as Cixous would argue, but also through the powerful act of singing itself. In this penultimate scene, the soprano reigns vocally, commanding the operatic stage with her embodiment and voice. Thus, through the rage aria, Mona Lisa tells her own story with her own voice, making the aria an even stronger medium for resistance. By taking back authorship, Mona Lisa arguably also practices Cixous's *écriture féminine*.[89] As critic Oscar Bie wrote about Schillings's wife Barbara Kemp's powerful presentation of Mona Lisa in a 1921 performance in Berlin: "From this strong healthy body, from this face, which is free from conventional beauty, moved entirely in the loveliest expression of the moment, swelled a

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[87] As already mentioned earlier in this project, Abbate has made the compelling claim about the power of the female singer and her embodied authorship in opera. Unlike many other critiques of opera that interpret the operatic text itself as a closed document and that base their critique solely on what the composer wrote for the female performer in the opera, Abbate argues that the actual *performance* and its *embodiment* need to be taken into consideration rather than treating an opera as a closed, text. Indeed, as she demonstrates in her reading of Strauss's Salome, the female voice is incredibly compelling, and by means of her voice, the female singer could reclaim authorship. Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Women," 228-29, 254-55.

[88] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, ix. Paul Robinson offers a critique of Clément in which he compellingly argues that "while the operatic text tells a story of woman's undoing, the music tells just the opposite story: of her empowerment." See Paul Robinson, "It's Not Over Until the Soprano Dies," review of *Opera, Or the Undoing of Women*, by Catherine Clément, *New York Times Book Review*, January 1, 1989.

[89] Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa." Janet Woolf notes the way in which the term *écriture féminine* can appear in the visual arts as *peinture féminine* (Woolf, *Feminine Sentences*, 68), while MacArthur and Iitti separately explore the term's relevance for musical works and composition. MacArthur, *Feminist Aesthetics in Music,* 11-25; Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 15-20.

soprano who carried the strongest dramatic emphasis and whose soul trembled throughout."[90] Indeed, the woman frozen in the infamous image is freed, now animated through Dovsky text, Schilling's music, and the performance.

Yet without access to the subtleties of the female singer's performance through traces of the performance text, and without *experiencing* a particular performance, it is difficult to get a sense about whether or not Mona Lisa's performance of hysteria offered much resistance. Moreover, it seems that hysteria, as a mode of resistance to the patriarchal structure that Cixous writes about, is one that cannot be found in the music by Schillings. He concludes the entire opera with music associated with Mona Lisa, and, although Mona Lisa's most vocally impressive musical material occurs in her rage aria, there is no significant change in Mona Lisa's musical language at the very end of the opera. And although Cixous's rebellious language of hysteria could be sought in Dovsky's libretto, it seems that Dovsky follows the traditional syntax and language used at the time (and throughout the course of the entire opera) rather than offering a new mode of expression. Ultimately, the opera text does not allow for a reading in the style of Cixous. Moreover, a problem with reading hysteria as positive is that it was so often used in this cultural moment to disenfranchise women, rather than as a rebellious and constructive mode of expression *for* women.

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[90] "Aus diesem starken gesunden Körper, aus diesem Gesicht, das frei von jeder konventionellen Schönheit, ganz im lebendigsten Ausdruck des Augenblicks sich bewegt, quillt ein Sopran, der die stärksten dramatischen Akzente in sich trägt und von Seele durchzittert ist." Oskar Bie, *Barbara Kemp*, Der Schauspieler: Ein Monographiensammlung, ed. Herbert Ihering (Berlin: Reiß, 1921), 14. Cited in Mertens, "Max von Schillings *Mona Lisa*," 140.

Dovsky's* Mona Lisa *and the Multifaceted Complexity of Women

Rather than reading Mona Lisa's hysteria at the end of the opera either as an illness or as a revolt against the patriarchal discourse, which would follow Cixous's reclaiming of hysteria for women, there is a third way of interpreting Mona Lisa, particularly regarding the concluding moments, that takes into account the musical and textual details without overinterpreting the text. In his recent interpretation of Mélisande in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Attfield makes the excellent point that there is a reversal of power and that these female characters actually had an immense influence on these men and their work. Rather than reading the female character within the traditional narrative of hysteria that represses the character, presenting her as an ill victim, he considers an alternative way of reading the hysteric and the death of a female character in opera.[91] Attfield navigates a position between Freud (hysteria as oppression) and French feminist theory (hysteria as resistance), arguing for a middle ground. For instance, while it may seem like Mélisande is "undone" with her death at the end of the opera, the ending offers a possibility of continuation (in Mélisande's case, through her baby daughter), or even "a powerful symbol of the new beginnings of psychoanalysis, the sexual revolution, and feminism itself."[92]

Indeed, it seems that the "resistance" and "feminist" quality in *Mona Lisa* is to be found not in the structural intricacies of a resistant language, but in the very details of the musical and textual narrative that present Mona Lisa's complexity as a character. Her angered reaction and frustration toward her traumatic loss and her horrific deed of revenge led to her outburst and "hysterical" reaction following Francesco's death. Her "madness" is a *result* of and *reaction* to a series of events (her frustrations at being in a loveless marriage, the loss of her lover, Giovanni,

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[91] Nicholas Attfield, "A Study of Hysteria: Reinterpreting the Heroine of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*," *Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2010): 503

[92] *Ibid.*, 520-21.

and her murder of Francesco). Mona Lisa as a character undergoes a development and, following Keathley's reading of the Woman in *Erwartung*, Mona Lisa's outburst should not be read and dismissed as "hysteria," but rather interpreted more subtly and understood as an emotional reaction to a devastating situation. While *Hofoper* singer Maria Jeritza (the Viennese Salome, Carlotta, and Mona Lisa, to name only a few of her many roles) described *Die Gezeichneten*'s Carlotta as "a perfectly dreadful creature, with nothing really decent or womanly about her," she reserved a different description for the character of Mona Lisa: "[T]he character of the unfortunate heroine is a thoroughly human and sympathetic one."[93]

Female identity and sexual subjectivity are indeed turned around by Dovsky. Working amidst broadening possibilities for woman, she was able to challenge notions of power in *Mona Lisa*. As a progressive author and actress, Dovsky (1870–1923), was clearly connected to artistic modernism in Vienna, like Pappenheim.[94] Although little is known about Dovsky, some important details emerge. She was an actress and Soubrette linked to the Raimund Theater in 1898.[95] Her voice was also known to the public through her contributions to the weekly illustrated magazine, *Wiener Bilder*, in which she wrote columns about women from various walks of life, such as "Die gnä' Frau," "Der Weiner Fratz," and "Hallo Mädl."[96] She already had

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[93] Jeritza continues: "But, though it is a great role in a dramatic way, though I scored a great personal success in Vienna, I remember it as one of the most harrowing I ever studied." Jeritza, *Sunlight and Song*, 169-70.

[94] The degree to which Dovsky and Schillings shared authorial roles has not yet been established. This would be a different project and entail an investigation into their correspondence and manuscripts, if these still exist, as Keathley has done with Schoenberg and Pappenheim's *Erwartung.*

[95] Arthur Schnitzler, *Briefe, 1875–1912*, ed. Therese Nickel and Heinrich Schnitzler (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1981), 355.

[96] Her *Wiener Bilder* contributions include the following series in chronological order: *Der Wiener Fratz: Memoiren der Huber-Gusti* (1903–1904); *Die gnä' Fra: Aufzeingnungen der Gusti Graf, geb. Hub.* (1904–1906); *Am häuslichen Herd: Frauen-Zeitung* (1906–1907); *Ein ärarisches Mädel: Tagbuch einer Offizierstochter* (1907–1910); *Schneepepperl: Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben der Maria Josepha Frelin Falck v. Kackerfeldt* (1910–1911); *Schneepepperl: Memoiren der Mansell Herlibusch* (1911–

success as a playwright after the premiere of her play "Der alte Herr" in December 1905 at the *Wien Burgtheater*. Her other plays include *Lady Godiva*, which was the text Schillings originally wanted for a libretto, and for which she received the Lower Austrian regional prize.[97]

In *Mona Lisa*, Dovsky created a complex title character who moves beyond merely the "hysteric," and we, like Francesco, are presented with more than one type of woman. Mona Lisa is the well-known enigma: a puzzling woman with a mysterious, ever-changing smile that hints at the multivalency of women and their subjectivity. Renner calls the Mona Lisa figure a "*Frau ohne Eigenschaften*" (A woman without qualities), a playful reference to Musil's tome, and notes that she is a series of "ambivalent projections of male fantasies."[98] According to Freud's account of contemporary readings of the painting *Mona Lisa*, there exists "in the beautiful Florentine's expression the most perfect representation of the contrasts which dominate the erotic life of women; the contrast between reserve and seduction, and between the most devoted tenderness and a sensuality that is ruthlessly demanding – consuming men as if they were alien beings."[99] Within the opera, Mona Lisa has multiple names, just as Kundry and Grete do: Francesco calls her Eve, Helena, Semiramis, Bathsheba, and Cleopatra; the Brother calls her Eve, Magdalene, Bathsheba, and Temptress. At times, such as in Act I, she can be interpreted as an ideal *Ewig-Weibliche* or as a *femme fragile*, a meek, submissive woman, while at moments in Act II she

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1912); *Hallo Mädl: Indiskretionen einer seligen k. k. Telefonistin* (1912–1914); *Alte Wiener Chronik* (1914); *Das Landsturm Mädel* (1914–1918); *Der kecke Schnabel: Lose Blätter aus dem Lebensbuch der Gretl Fröhlich* (1918–1923).

[97] Mertens, "Max von Schillings Mona Lisa," 133-34. See also Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 199. Other folk plays are: *Von Penzing nach Peking*, *Unser einigs Kind*, and *Der alte Herr*. "Beatrice Dovsky," in *Österreichisches Biographishes Lexikon 1815–1950*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1956), 197.

[98] Ursula Renner, "Mona Lisa – 'Das Rätsel Weib' als 'Frauenphantom des Mannes' im Fin de Siècle," in *Lulu, Lilith, Mona Lisa…Frauenbilder der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Irmgard Roebling (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989), 150.

[99] Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," 108.

seems to transform into the “hysteric.” But just like the woman in Leonardo’s painting, there is an ambiguity to her. She is also passionate, and the meek woman can paradoxically also be understood as a *femme fatale* who kills men. For Horst Weber, Mona Lisa merges two types of women one after another: “namely the ‘Kindweib’ and the vamp.”[100] Mertens explores how Mona Lisa encapsulates the duality of women – “frigid” or “nymphomaniac” – typical of the *Wiener Moderne*. With her behavior, Dovsky’s Mona Lisa figure could be from the pages of Weininger’s *Sex and Character* – a Weiningerian woman with neither morals nor ethics. However, as the “archetypal riddle of women,” she can also be powerful, with men turned into “marionettes of her desire.”[101] Like Kundry, she vacillates between “*Entsagung*” (renunciation) and “*Verlangen*” (longing). She is also, however, Dovsky’s feminist critique of traditional clichés of the *femme fatale* and a rejection of the typical presentation of women at the time.[102] According to Brzoska, Mona Lisa changes throughout the opera: “Mona Lisa transforms from the chaste penitent to the erotic, desiring, modern sinner later, to eventually die with a repetition of the penitent choir on her lips.”[103] Detig notes that she is a projection for the men in the opera – an “erotic wish-fulfillment dream” for the Brother. Although Detig recognizes how Dovsky critiques these nineteenth-century male fantasies and clichés of women, he is dismissive of her success in writing an original feminist work: “And as a ‘woman’s opera’ *Mona Lisa* is no new variation of the genre, but rather [it is] much more of an adaptation” that draws on traditional

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[100] Cited in Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 231.

[101] Mertens, “Max von Schillings *Mona Lisa*,” 135-36.

[102] *Ibid.*, 139; for the critique see 140-41.

[103] Brzoska views Mona Lisa as representing a series of archetypal figures, such as Eve etc. Brzoska, “Zur Renaissance-Rezeption,” 207. The moment was a period of intellectual “Aufbruchs” and increasing sexual freedom for women, and as Brzoska notes, this is fitting given the sexual themes in *Mona Lisa*: “In this perspective it appears as an epoch of intellectual departures and violation of the norms, particularly thanks to the excessive erotic liberality, which one must believe in to recognize in her.” *Ibid.*, 201.

images of women from the *fin-de-siècle*.[104]

Here I suggest that Dovsky's libretto presents Mona Lisa as a complex and multi-dimensional woman rather than merely as a projection of male fantasies. No longer the simple *Ewig-Weibliche* (Gretchen, Eva, Mary) or the revengeful hysteric (Elektra) or the *femme fatale* (Salome), she now incorporates aspects of all of these figures, reflecting her changing emotions and desires, and demonstrating the actual complexity of women rather than the reductive constructions of her that prevailed. Her expressions of rage and madness at the end of the opera are a reaction to and critique of a particular situation. Mona Lisa is a woman in a loveless marriage who remains mysterious to her husband and to those around her, but who opens up and unleashes a new self once she experiences desire for a past lover. Through her sexual reawakening, she transforms from meek and emotionless, to passionate, then to vengeful with her loss. She possesses sexual desire – "lasciviousness for forbidden fruit" and "sinful-amorous desire" – but she is also able to have "Mary's purity, leniency and mercy." In his description of the character Mona Lisa, Dovsky has the Brother speak of the complexity of this particular woman and of "woman" in general:

An impenetrable mystery is woman.
In her soul about a thousand possibilities
Slumber unconsciously […]
Love gives her strength –
And hate makes her invincible!
The woman's heart, it contains in its depth
Eve's lasciviousness for forbidden fruit;
And Magdalene's sinful-amorous desire
And her wonderful power of repentance,

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[104] Detig also examines the multiple different types of women that she could be, in addition to noting that she is a male projection. Detig's criticism with Dovsky is that she does sufficiently interrogate the gap between reality and the image of Mona Lisa. Indeed, Dovsky only offers Giovanni as a lover as a solution, thus "trivializing her own goals." Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 230-33. This is a valid criticism, although one that is dismissive of Dovsky in tone. I think that Dovsky instead presents a feminist critique in other ways: by presenting a more realistic woman that undermines the simple woman than Francesco expects of his wife.

The thirst for blood and revenge of John's murderer,
And Mary's purity, leniency and mercy!
Depending on how the dice of life are cast,
The enigmatic being 'woman' is altering.[105]

As evident in these lines, Mona Lisa exemplifies multiple types of women, and her diverse facets are certainly central to the opera. She oscillates between these poles, or between these different types, but most importantly these are carefully coordinated with her expressions of sexuality and her sexual desire. Sexual imagery occurs throughout and female sexuality is treated in a new way. Even the Courtesan, Ginestra, who we meet in Act I, is presented positively much as feminist author Else Jerusalem presented the women of the brothels positively in the novel *Der heilige Skarabäus*. Ginestra is a ludic character who sings of her sexuality, "to throw ourselves into sin's tender arms, into ill-fated blissful spells," and tells men, "one of you my heart desires." Ginestra is characterized by "capricious phrases" in the high woodwinds that are supported by "soft and shimmering harmonics," as described by Mennicke in his analysis of the opera. The clarinet executes playful octave leaps and trills, reminiscent of Salome's music (Ex. 7.1).[106] Flirtatious exchanges even occur between her and the men regarding her sexuality, sinning, and them visiting her later. Yet everyone treats Ginestra kindly, calling her the "most beautiful" and "dearest" sinner who has forgiveness. Initially, Mona Lisa is demure, while the courtesan Ginestra is presented as her opposite. While Mona Lisa casts her eyes shyly downward, Ginestra sensually bites into ripe fruit and sings: "Only then, trust me, you take pleasure in [sins]…This

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[105] "Ein unergründlich Rätsel ist das Weib. In seiner Seele schlummern unbewusst an tausend Möglichkeiten [...] Lieb' macht sie stark – und Hass unüberwindlich! Des Weibes Herz, es birgt in seiner Tiefe die Lüsternheit der Eva nach verbotener Frucht; Der Magdalena sündhaft-buhlerischen Trieb und ihre wunderbare Kraft der Reue, den Blut und Rachedurst der Mörderin Johannis, und der Maria Reinheit, Größe, Milde und Erbarmnis! Je nachdem des Lebens Würfel rollen, verwandelt sich das rätselvolle Wesen 'Weib.'" (**18 –** 7 after **19**)

[106] Mennicke, *Über Max Schillings* Mona Lisa, 22.

fruit tastes delicious! [...] I tell you: sin is the spice of every desire!"[107] As Ginestra states, Mona Lisa is "cold like snow" (*kalt wie Schnee*) (3 before **83**).

Ex. 7.1: Schillings, *Mona Lisa*: Ginestra's playful theme (5 after **81** – 13 after **81**).

Yet Mona Lisa in the painting presents another facet – with love, she takes on a different character. When Francesco describes how she appears in the painting and uncovers it to reveal her smile, we are again presented with a new perspective on Mona Lisa. As Francesco observes, while the living Mona Lisa has "lips without a smile, eyes without a question, so silent, with such lack of will in every movement, and in her clear voice, no expression," the Mona Lisa in the painting is "mysteriously beguiling, and this mouth, how it smiles offeringly! My wife never

[107] "Dann erst, glaubt mir, hat man Genuss davon. (*Nimmt von Tisch eine schöne Frucht*). Wundervoll schmeckt diese Frucht! […] Ich sage euch: die Sünde ist die Würze jeder Lust!" (4 before **81 –** 4 before **83**)

smiles, never trembles, is like a shadow, and this painting lives!"[108] But over the course of the opera, the living Mona Lisa presented on stage changes. For instance, she transforms when she recognizes Giovanni as her former lover, and later when he is killed, she morphs into a furious *femme fatale* seeking revenge. Interestingly these are also moments relating to Mona Lisa's sexual desire. Yet, when her love and sexual desire are stifled, there is a drastic shift in her identity and behavior.

In the progress of the opera, Dovsky's text provides a glimpse into Mona Lisa's frustration. Francesco jealously protects Mona Lisa as a possession, much like how he treats and guards the pearls. To protect them, he even ties them around Mona Lisa's neck, and her "young blood nourishes them, brightens them with her heart's glow."[109] Francesco sings of how he "collects" pearls, "follows" them, "courts" them, and "takes them home pressed to his heart," much like he would court a woman, which creates a connection between Mona Lisa and the pearls.[110] It seems that she even "purifies" his pearls – she must wear the one with a "fleck" on it to make it perfect for the next day (**130** – **131**). Mona Lisa is indeed trapped, owned like the pearls, which she must wear every night so that they do not fade. She sings of the pearls and the fate of the vessel that nourishes them in a passage that could also be about her own position in relation to Francesco: "For every pearl, the mussel that bore it dies a painful death, as for the love it bears, like many a heart … Like tears they glimmer, secret tears, which, out of sleepless

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[108] "Die Lippen ohne Lächeln, die Augen ohne Frag,' so still, so willenlos in jeglicher Bewegung, und in der klaren Stimme keine Regung." (**88**) "Geheimnisvoll betörend, und dieser Mund wie lächelt er gewährend!" Meine Weib, das niemals lächelt, niemals bebt, ist wie eine Schatten und dies Bildnis lebt!" (**91 – 92**)

[109] "Sie nähret sie mit ihrem jungen Blut, belebet sie mit ihres Herzens Glut." (**125 – 128**)

[110] "Seit zwanzig Jahren sammle sich die Perlen, wenn ich von einer höre, dass sie schön, reis' ich nach und werb' um sie und trage sie an meinem Herzen heim." (7 before **125 – 125**)

eyes, hot yearning squeezes … I do not love them, the pearls…"[111] She continues: "With my heart's blood I feed his pearls, I feel, how they suck from my marrow… how they poison my soul!"[112]

Mona Lisa's Musical Identity

Although little is known about the working relationship between Schillings and Dovsky, it is interesting that the sensuality of the female protagonist presented in this opera is what Schillings disliked elsewhere. Indeed the material of the opera was not typical for the conservative composer.[113] In a letter to Humperdinck, he even noted that he did not want the opera to be about a woman such as Mona Vanna, an emancipated, modern woman who is "reborn" from Maeterlinck's play of the same name: "For me it is not about a Monna Vanna."[114] This discrepancy raises questions about how powerful Dovsky's voice was in the creation of the opera. Some early criticisms pointed out the distance between the serious music and the scandalous libretto. Critic Max Marschalk of the conservative, right wing newspaper *Vossische Zeitung*, praised the music in relation to the content: "There lives and weaves a pathos in his music, which lets you forget to a certain degree the crassness of the stuff, and it almost achieves

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[111] "Um jede Perle starb die Muschel, die sie trug, qualvollen Tod, wie um die Liebe, die es trägt, so manches Herz… Gleich Tränen schimmern sie, heimlichen Tränen, die aus schlummerlosen Augen heiße Sehnsucht presst… Ich lieb' sie nicht, die Perlen!" (**123 –** 4 after **124**)

[112] "Mit meinem Herzblut nähr' ich seine Perlen! Ich fühl' wie sie am Mark mir saugen… die Seele mir vergiften!" (2 after **127 –** 6 after **128**)

[113] This irony is pointed out by Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 206-8. As Detig also mentions, Schillings thought works during the war should be "morally ennobling" and was highly critical of popular entertainment.

[114] Schillings to Humperdinck, letter dated November 9th, 1913, about Maeterlinck's play *Mona Vanna*, which was first performed in Germany in 1902. Cited in Detig, *ibid.*, 225.

it, to bring us humanly closer to the tragic fate of Mona Lisa."[115] But how do the musical structures and leitmotifs play out? How is Mona Lisa musically characterized, and how does this musical characterization change? Does she have musical agency? And if so, how does this agency play out in her "mad" scene and the concluding epilogue? As I now examine, despite Schillings's rejection of Monna Vanna and the type of woman she represents, his musical characterization of the seductive Mona Lisa evolves throughout the opera. Schillings thereby reinforces Mona Lisa's transformations and expressions of passion, ultimately granting her musical force.

When Mona Lisa first appears and interacts with Francesco, she is musically characterized by a lackluster theme: a simple triadic melody in the orchestra (Theme A, Ex. 7.2).[116] Even her responses to Francesco are syllabic and set either to a monotone or to a very narrow melodic line, which reflects her apathy toward him.[117] What Mennicke calls "*Mona Lisas Maske*" (Ex. 7.3), a chromatic descending series of chords associated with Mona Lisa's secret, is also accompanied by the initial notes of Theme B in the flutes and clarinets, again instrumental timbres typically associated with the *Ewig-Weibliche.*[118] This "Maske" chord progression occurs when Francesco realizes the he knows little about his wife – other dimensions of her identity are

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[115] "Es lebt und webt ein Pathos in seiner Musik, das die Kraßheiten des Stoffes bis zu einem hohen Grade vergessen läßt, und das es beinahe erreicht, uns das tragische Schicksal der Mona Lisa […] menschlich nahezubringen." Max Marschalk, "Mona Lisa: Erstaufführung im Königlichen Operhause," *Vossische Zeitung*, October 10, 1915. Cited in Detig, *Deutsche Kunst*, 209.

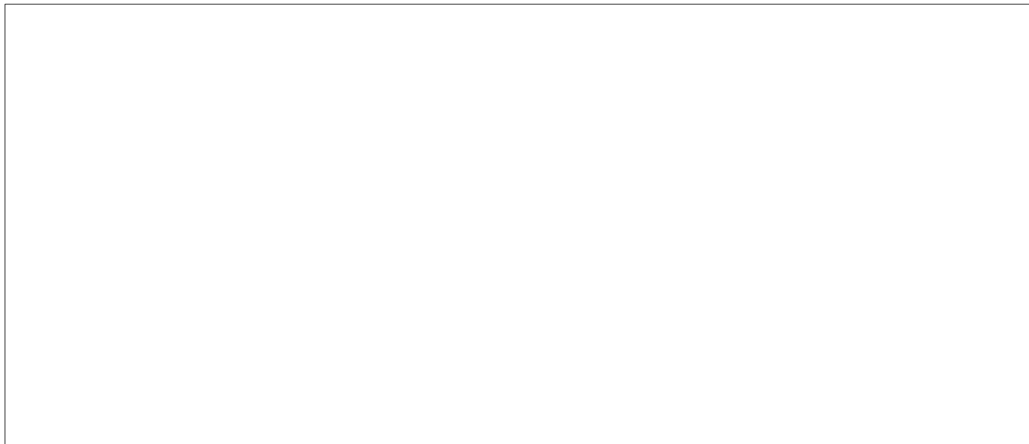
[116] Engelbert identifies this version of the theme as associated with Mona Lisa's entrance. Engelbert, "Max von Schillings and his Opera *Mona Lisa*," 32-35, 44. A few other themes are associated with Mona Lisa, as identified by both Engelbert and Mennicke. These themes are less important to the narrative than the moments that I focus on, so I will not examine them here.

[117] Her responses to the other characters are more melodic. Just a few moments later, she nods to a nun and her theme quietly sound in the flutes and oboes. Even later, such as at **175**, when Mona Lisa is battling with Francesco about Giovanni, her phrases alternate between calm monotone and hysterical screams with large leaps.

[118] Mennicke, *Über Max Schillings* Mona Lisa, 24-25.

hidden from him.[119] Mona Lisa's increased musical complexity is in fact relational to expressions of her sexuality. When Francesco describes her in the painting and uncovers it to reveal Mona Lisa's smile, a lyrical, arching theme (Theme B) with much movement and passion emerges from the strings to match Mona Lisa's changed character (Ex. 7.4).[120] While Theme B initially sounded when Francesco unveiled the image of Mona Lisa, this theme is brief and fleeting, quietly played in the oboes and clarinets. But later Theme B becomes more musically animated, complex, and lyrical, indicating a shift in Mona Lisa as a character when she engages with her lover. Theme B is related to Theme A that introduced her, but musically presents another facet of Mona Lisa; Theme B shares a similar contour and is in fact a variation of Theme A.

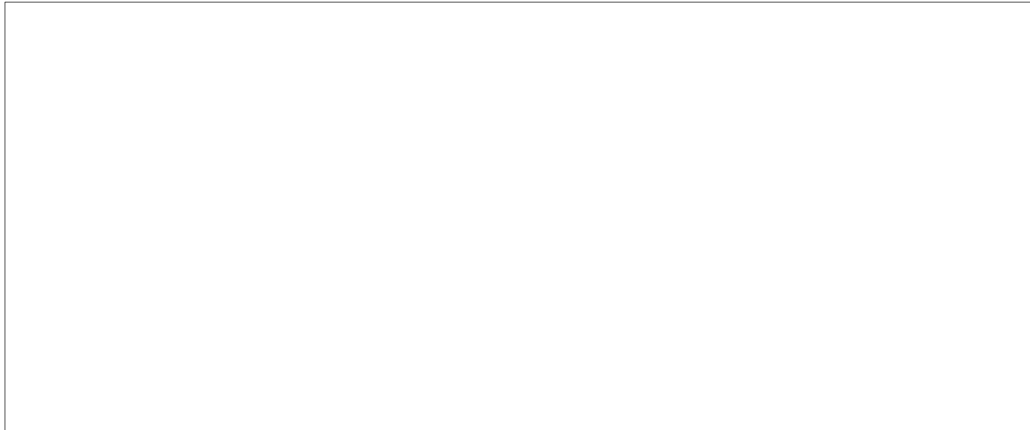
Ex. 7.2: Schillings, *Mona Lisa*: Mona Lisa's **Theme A** (**77** – 4 after **77**).



[119] The text is as follows: Francesco: "Who gave you flowers?"; Mona Lisa: "No one gave them to me – they were lying on the way. They are my favorite ones: Irises, white irises!"; Francesco: "You love irises? I knew nothing of that"; Mona Lisa: "How would you?"; Francesco: "Have you spoken to anyone on the way?" (F: "Wer gab Dir die Blumen?" ML: "Niemand gab sie mir, sie legen auf dem Weg, meine Lieblingsblumen sind es, Iris, weiße Iris." F: "Du liebst die Irisblüten? Davon wusst' ich nichts." ML: "Woher solltest du?" F: "Sprachst du mit jemand unterwegs?" 4 before **78 –** 4 after **78**). This exchange reveals Francesco's jealous nature, and his lack of knowledge about his wife. Moreover, Giovanni could have left the mysterious flowers for Mona Lisa.

[120] For a musical contrast see 3 before **95**: "*und sie bleibt kalt*," then **95**: "*und sie bleibt stumm*." There is little melodic movement in the accompaniment here.

Ex. 7.3: Schillings, *Mona Lisa*: Mennicke's "Maske" theme and part of Theme B (4 after **77** – 3 after **77**).



Ex. 7.4: Schillings, *Mona Lisa*: Mona Lisa Theme B (4 before **90**).

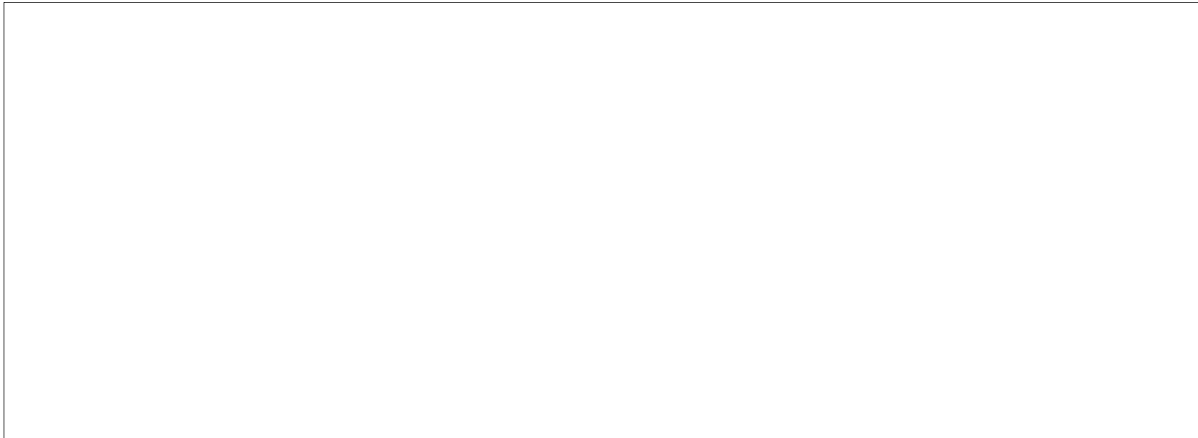
Ex. 7.5: Schillings, *Mona Lisa*: Mona Lisa Theme C (**132** and **149**).

Later, in the recognition and love scene between Giovanni and Mona Lisa, we are presented with a more passionate instantiation of Mona Lisa's thematic material (Theme C), which closely resembles Theme B and is a musical characterization that matches her fervent expression of desire for Giovanni.[121] After an ascending step-wise motion, the lyrical theme leaps upward in a passionate gesture and the higher notes are now sustained longer before the melody descends downward. Once they are alone and Giovanni sings of running away with her, this theme sounds,

[121] This theme first clearly sounds when Mona Lisa approaches Giovanni while he is looking at the pearls (**132**). It emerges quietly in the orchestra, played by a muted trumpet, before Giovanni takes it up in his voice, whispering her name.

now soaring over pulsing triplets in the lower strings, reflecting Mona Lisa's increased passion (Ex. 7.6). The directions even read "very fiery" (*sehr feurig*). This theme, which Mennicke described in his analysis of the opera as the "most expressively emphasized" (*ausdrücklichsten Betonung*), then combines with Giovanni's thematic material.[122]

Ex. 7.6: Schillings: *Mona Lisa*: Mona Lisa Theme C (1 before **149 –** 2 after **149**)



Mona Lisa's Subjectivity

Michael P. Steinberg examines the relationship between female subjectivity in opera and musical control, often regarding leitmotivic structures and the voice as means of expressing subjectivity, even when these are at odds with the text. For instance, Steinberg argues that Brünnhilde achieves subjectivity in the *Ring* with how she controls the musical language, at times even surpassing the leitmotivic structure of the work through her voice:

> Brünnhilde easily controls the motivic language and achieves subjectivity and lyricism by liberating herself from the burden of leitmotivic submission; she makes music, yelling herself out of the musical, hegemonic structure of the *Ring* and its musical rhetoric […]

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[122] Mennicke, *Über Max Schillings* Mona Lisa, 30.

Paradoxically, Brünnhilde is deluded in words and action but lucid in music.[123]

It seems as though Mona Lisa also achieves musical subjectivity through her laughter and her yelling toward the end of the opera, thus conveying her subjectivity as a person whose (sexual) desires have been thwarted. Mona Lisa's dominance and use of music over the course of the opera, however, is also significant. When she takes revenge against Francesco, it is achieved through both the plot *and* the music. She tricks him into entering the chamber and then locks him inside, while the musical recollections at this moment reveal a shift in power away from Francesco. Thematic material heard earlier when Francesco brandished a dagger, threatening Mona Lisa because of the adultery, now returns in Mona Lisa's revenge aria, documenting Mona Lisa's increased power.[124] Mona Lisa is almost a *femme fatale,* yet one granted a subjectivity. Moreover, the way in which she ultimately controls the musical landscape of the opera further reinforces this subjectivity.

Indeed, Mona Lisa's aria is the only moment in the opera in which a character sings alone for any length of time, making this climactic ending arguably the most powerful moment in the opera. In reaction to her suffocated desires when Giovanni is killed, Mona Lisa unleashes her deepest emotions through her "*Rachearia.*"[125] Over a cacophony of muted brass, Mona Lisa tells a trapped Francesco: "You have awoken the devil in me, you have summoned the demon hidden

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[123] Steinberg, *Listening to Reason*, 157. Earlier in his book, Steinberg discusses the way in which music can "organize subjectivity," and he differentiates between a language of subjectivity and an "experience of subjectivity." *Ibid.*, 4.

[124] Mennicke, *Über Max von Schillings* Mona Lisa, 41.

[125] Although she is now vengeful and sings, "You have killed in me all humaneness," she also asks for mercy, and so too does the sympathetic Woman (with whom Mona Lisa merges) asks for a mass to be said on Mona Lisa's behalf.

in every woman."[126] She sings of her frustration at the loss of her lover: "Ah, just for a moment I enjoyed happiness, and you punished me with torments of hell!"[127] She now seeks retribution: "Now you shall feel my diabolical revenge."[128]

While the ending to the interior story presents Mona Lisa as "vanquished" – she collapses right before the curtain falls – both the music and Dovsky's text that concludes the opera suggest a different interpretation, particularly with the textual connections between the present-day *Die Frau* and Mona Lisa. The Brother admits that suspiciously nothing else is known about Mona Lisa; her name has vanished, creating an ambiguity and openness to the fate of the woman. *Die Frau* sympathetically requests the Brother to: "Have a mass said for poor Mona Lisa." While she walks away, she drops a small bouquet of white irises, the very flowers that Mona Lisa carried at the beginning of the opera. Upon picking up the irises, the Brother asks the departing woman who she is, and he realizes that she too is Mona Lisa – Mona Lisa continues to exist: "Who are you? Eve? Magdalene? Bathsheba? Temptress? Mona – Lisa! Mona – Lisa! Mona-Lisa!" (6 before **85**).[129] Mona Lisa not only lives at the end of the opera in Dovsky's telling, but also lives on through the music (**86**). Although Mona Lisa collapses at the end of the story, of her broken heart ("she grasps at her heart and collapses," 3 after **173**), her theme of love dominates the

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[126] "Den Teufel hast du in mir geweckt, den Dämon hast du beschworen, der in jedem Weibe steckt." (**66** – 6 after **66**)

[127] "Ah, nur ein Augenblick genoß ich ein Glück, und du straftest mich mit der Hölle Qualen!" (1 before **63** – 4 after **63**)

[128] "Sollst du nun meine teuflische Rache fühlen!"

[129] Brzoska also notes that the Monk makes the connection between Mona Lisa and *Die Frau*, which is reinforced by the references to the pearls and the thematic material. Although Brzoska views the framing characters as archetypes, I would argue that *Die Frau* actually represents a more modern woman. Brzoska "Zur Renaissance-Rezeption," 204-5.

conclusion and still sounds at the closing moments of the opera.[130] Two of Mona Lisa's themes appear in the orchestra: a sequence of the opening of "Mona Lisa Theme B" at **85**, then a compressed version of her "Mona Lisa Theme C" in the last five measures (see Ex. 7.7).

Ex. 7.7: Schillings, *Mona Lisa*: Mona Lisa's themes conclude the opera (**85 –** end).

It seems that the layers of meaning in the text and the music converge in the concluding moments of the opera. We hear Mona Lisa's music, however, it is not just the music with which she was introduced. Rather, it is the music that we associate with her love and desire of Giovanni – it is the music of Mona Lisa as a subject with sexual desires. Schillings allows Mona Lisa to dominate when her leitmotifs sound at the end. Although Mona Lisa dies, there is no symbolic

[130] Even when she confronts Francesco right before killing him, her theme sounds, revealing her powerful position throughout the scene.

death because her story and musical identity are very much alive.[131] Through the multiple allusions (from the white irises to the pearls), the Brother's recognition of Mona Lisa in the present-day *Die Frau*, the doubling of the roles, and the musical connection, Mona Lisa clearly continues to exist in *Die Frau*.

As in *Erwartung*, the openness of the conclusion invites a positive way of reading the fate of the female protagonist. Although Mona Lisa collapses at the end of the opera, her reincarnation through *Die Frau*, who in the concluding moments literally walks away from the narrative's ending, suggests that Mona Lisa/*Die Frau* will recover, that she will move on, and that her story is not yet over. Moreover, Dovsky titles this section "Interlude," perhaps indicative of Mona Lisa/*Die Frau*'s continuation in another chapter.[132] Recall again McClary's point that the dangerous madwoman is often contained within the operatic frame.[133] On the surface, Mona Lisa and her expressions of outrage are safely "contained" within the story from the Renaissance past, temporally distant from twentieth-century Vienna.[134] Yet, with the connections that exist between the framing present and the seemingly temporally distant story, Mona Lisa surpasses the inner frame of the work. By drawing a parallel between the present-day *Die Frau* and Mona Lisa (with the same singer performing both roles in addition to the textual allusions), the frame is broken, and Mona Lisa is brought closer to the present for the audience. Through her emotions, frustrations, situation, and extension into the present-day *Die Frau*, the figure of Mona Lisa

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[131] Salome, Elektra, and Kundry – hysterical, "ill" women – all died a (Lacanian) symbolic death as well as a literal, physical death (or de-souling in the case of Kundry). Their identifying musical material was removed, dead, at the end, while in *Mona Lisa*, her identifying music dominates.

[132] Interestingly, this section is subtitled, "Vision of Doomsday" ("Vision des jüngsten Gerichtes"). On this "day of judgment," Mona Lisa's music continues.

[133] McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 80-111.

[134] While it was not unusual to set things in the Renaissance, as discussed earlier, it certainly made it "safe."

becomes a *real* woman; she is granted a personhood, much like the Woman in *Erwartung*.

The varying responses to *Mona Lisa* are perhaps a result of the complexity of the female protagonist, and reflect the ambivalence of the opera's open-ended treatment that allows Mona Lisa/*Die Frau* to walk off the stage, free to move on from the traumatic events of the story. Some praised Dovsky's creation of *Mona Lisa* as a work about "female deviousness, revengefulness, and disgrace."[135] Others saw the framing technique as presenting the "*ewig gleichbleibenden Natur des Weibes*" (eternal unchanging nature of women).[136] Writing in the left-leaning *Der Merker*, Specht, who disliked Schillings, even accused Dovsky of having stolen the story from Schnitzler.[137] Other early commentators, such as Mennicke, noted the way that Dovsky created realistic portraits of women: "Beatrice Dovsky sets her heroine in the most realistic life; for her Mona Lisa suffered an almost everyday fate to be married at a young age to an unloved, rich husband, from whom she is separated by a long number of years and a world of sensations."[138] Mennicke even remarked how sympathetically Dovsky portrays Mona Lisa and her actions: "We forgive her sin because we understand her love."[139] This complexity is reflected in the music as well. Mona Lisa is not only granted musical agency and power through how her music both opens and closes the opera, but she is given varying musical characterizations that reflect her multifaceted subjectivity, complex emotions, and desires.

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[135] "weiblicher Verschlagenheit, Rachsucht und Gemeinheit gemacht." Alexander Eisenmann, "Mona Lisa, Stuttgart," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 82, no. 41 (1915): 314.

[136] Leopold Schmidt, "Mona Lisa," *Berliner Tagblatt*, October 16, 1915.

[137] This undermines her authorship of the work. Specht wrote: "sie hat sich ungeniert bei Schnitzlers 'Frau mit dem Dolche' bedient." (She had blatantly made use of Schnitzler's "Woman with the Daggers.") Richard Specht, "Mona Lisa," *Der Merker* 6, no. 20 (1915): 710.

[138] "Beatrice Dovsky stellt ihre Heldin sogar in das wirklichste Leben hinein; denn ihre Mona Lisa erleidet ein fast alltägliches Schicksal: in jungen Jahren einem ungeliebten, reichen Gatten vermählt zu werden, von dem sie eine lange Reihe von Jahren und eine Welt von Empfindungen trennt." Mennicke, *Über Max Schillings* Mona Lisa, 4.

[139] "Wir verzeihen ihre Schuld, weil wir ihre Liebe begreifen." Mennicke, *ibid.*, 5.

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of changing understandings of female sexuality and of its relation to subjectivity, composers and librettists also contributed their own narratives. Works such as *Der Rosenkavalier*, as well as those with female authorship of the operatic text, such as *Erwartung* and *Mona Lisa*, offer narratives of female sexuality and female expression of this sexuality – visual and aural representations that resonated with the changing discourses. In the operas discussed here and in the previous chapter, we are presented with different types of women who articulate and develop their own individual identities. This is particularly true of Dovsky's complex Mona Lisa, whose frustration and rage at the suppression of her identity and desires are prominent in both the text and music. And it is fitting that this role made its debut in Vienna, created by Maria Jeritza, a member of a new generation of *Wien Hofoper* sopranos.[140] With Mona Lisa's reactions, we are presented with a degree of depth not seen in the representation of the sexual woman in earlier works. Over the course of the opera, Mona Lisa as a character evolves. She presents a more complex notion of female sexuality, identity, and possibility than the reductive, unrealistic duality between the *femme fatale* and the *Ewig-Weibliche* so dominant on the nineteenth-century stage. It could even be argued that with Mona Lisa's development over the course of the opera and her realization of her desires, the opera, like *Erwartung*, could be interpreted as a Feminist *Bildungsroman* – but not "*Bildung*" in the sense of integrating into an existing (nineteenth-century) way of being, but as a development of a self that also introduces a new woman and that is reinforced with how the *Die Frau* is a *real* and complex

[140] Maria Jeritza only began singing at the Hofoper in 1912. Láng and Láng, *Wiener Staatsoper – 140 Jahre Haus am Ring*, 141-42.

individual in the concluding scene.[141]

[141] Recall Maierhofer's critique of a "Feminist" *Bildung* mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation: the concept of a Feminist *Bildung* in nineteenth-century works is problematic because the concept of *Bildung* means the development of a subject and their internalization of social norms. While traditionally male characters can undergo *Bildung*, for women it is a "contradiction in terms" in the nineteenth century because their "development" into a subject is antithetical to the norms. According to Maierhofer, *Bildung* begins to be possible in literature in the twentieth century. See Maierhofer, "Bildungsroman," 46. Here Mona Lisa/*Die Frau* undergoes *Bildung* because she develops over the course of the opera, and steps into a new way of being at the end.

Epilogue: Toward the Weimar Republic: Expressions of the Modern Woman in the Weimar Years

To each time its art, to each art its freedom.
– Vienna Secession motto, credited to Ludwig Hervesi[1]

This well-known motto of the Viennese Secession resonates with this project. The representations of women in the earlier operas in this dissertation reflected broader cultural attitudes about women at the time. They drew on archetypes and tropes of the mad woman, woman as muse, and the good woman, common late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century characterizations of women. Yet following World War I, new representations of women emerged across the arts that reflected the significant political, social, geographic, and cultural changes of the era. Court operas and theaters disappeared along with their censors, replaced by state institutions, opening the possibility for a series of works that presented ideas that had been unacceptable under the auspices of official court theaters.[2] As Hailey notes: "After the war, theater censorship had largely been abolished and a new generation of stage directors, designers, authors, and composers was granted ample state support – both financial and moral – to carry out even the most daring experiments."[3] Amidst post-war developments and the accompanying material and social changes, a space opened up, both legally and socially, for new types of women – the new, "Modern Woman" of the 1920s appeared. Moreover, there was an increased

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[1] "Der Zeit ihre Kunst; der Kunst ihre Freiheit." This is the motto written above the door of the Vienna Secession Building and is credited to Viennese critic Ludwig Hevesi. Cited in Robert Weldon Whalen, *Sacred Spring: God and the Birth of Modernism in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (Grand Rapids, MI: Erdsmanns, 2007), 113.

[2] For example, it was only post 1918 that Schnitzler's highly sexual plays, such as *Reigen*, could be performed publically. See Schneider, "The Social and Political Context of Arthur Schnitzler's *Reigen*," 27-28. Of course the Court theaters and Operas houses were not the only stages, but they certainly were extremely important cultural arbiters, legitimizing what they presented onstage. In Vienna, the *Hofoper* became the *Staatsoper*, while Berlin had the *Staatsoper* in addition to the new, experimental *Kroll Oper.*

[3] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 125.

recognition of female sexuality and sexual experience, and Germany in particular was progressive regarding sexuality. Esau writes that in Weimar Germany, "the important revision was the acknowledgment of women's sexuality and her rights to sexual fulfillment in marriage outside of the need for procreation." [4] This "Modern Woman" – a new "New Woman" – was understood and portrayed as independent, and her sexuality was very much part of her identity.[5] Moreover, there was no universal Woman who appeared, but rather multiple *women*, from the traditional "Gretchen" figure, to new possibilities such as the "Girl," the androgynous "*garçonne*," and the modern, emancipated woman.[6] Hints of these women began to appear in the operas of the 1910s, such as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Die Frau* in *Mona Lisa.* As Peter Gay observes about the developments of the Weimar Era: "the Weimar style was born before the Weimar Republic."[7]

New Possibilities for Women

World War I has been described as a "catalyst in the modernization of Germany."[8] Along with the 1918–1919 revolutions in Germany, the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the collapse of the Wilhelmine and Habsburg worlds, events and social changes during the

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[4] Erika Esau, "The Künstlerehepaar: Ideal and Reality," in *Visions of the 'Neue Frau': Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany*, ed. Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1995), 30-31.

[5] I want to differentiate between the "New Woman" of the late 1890s–1900s and the independent, working, sexual woman who appears following the war. Hence, my use of the term "Modern Woman," a *new* "New Woman." Recall the discussion in the Introduction.

[6] Gretchen, Girl, and *garçonne* were terms used in a 1927 article in the *8-Uhr-AbendBlatt*, a Berlin publication, as discussed in: Lynne Frame, "Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne? Weimar Science and Popular Culture in Search of the Ideal New Woman," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 12-40.

[7] Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 5.

[8] Frevert, *Women in German History*, 151.

war years affected the way society would reform and rebuild itself after the war, both legally, with new constitutions, and socially, with reconfigurations of class and gender relations. The First Austrian Republic was established in 1919, and its new constitution was signed in 1920. Germany was declared a "Republic" in November 1918, and the Weimar Constitution was signed in 1919. In November 1918, women were granted the right to vote in the National Assembly in Austria, while the Reich Congress of Councils in Berlin called for universal suffrage the following month.[9]

Amidst ongoing resistance and fear of the changing gender relations and women's increased participation on the social stage, significant social developments took place in addition to the above-mentioned legal changes. Although there has been debate as to what degree these changes affected women materially, the legal promise of equality allowed women new possibilities, and overall there were different attitudes toward women with their increasing presence in the public sphere.[10] Women became active publically, playing sports, joining the workforce, and taking part in political life.[11] For instance, in the first municipal election following the war, twelve women joined the Vienna city council, while the National Assembly elections in March 1919 saw ten women elected.[12] Although women had certainly worked prior

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[9] For Austria: Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 119; Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, 73-74; for Germany: Detlev J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 30-31, 284.

[10] Richard W. McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film, Literature, and "New Objectivity*" (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 14-16.

[11] Of course in the nineteenth century, working-class women were also part of the work force, laboring in factories under harsh conditions. It was different following the war, however. Middle class women took up jobs in offices as typists, and the shop girl became an increasingly common phenomenon.

[12] Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 119. Legal changes for women in Austria included being able to be a witness in court and being granted full legal equality in the constitution in 1920. Other changes include: the faculty of law as well as the Colleges of Technology and Agriculture finally admitting women, changes to inheritance laws, improvements in conditions for servants, and state funding of girls' secondary education. However, there were still problems regarding discrimination with how these new

to the war, during the war their jobs changed, shifting from domestic service, factory jobs, and millinery work, to service, office, industrial, and teaching positions traditionally held by men, while their salaries increased by 158 percent. The number of women working during the war was not a sudden jump, but rather a reflection of gradual changes and a pattern that had already begun in the end of the nineteenth century.[13] While women in the workforce may not have experienced immediate, perceptible change to gender dynamics after the war, women performing work considered male, and work to which many men returned, would have given them visibility in the public sphere, and thus at least would have had some effect on the role of women in post-war society.[14] Some feminists viewed this war work as proof of the "civilizing" function of femininity and social motherhood ("*soziale Mütterlichkeit*") to give them the vote and to allow women to have a more public presence.[15] In addition to these material changes, there were also shifts in *attitudes* toward and *understandings* of women and female sexuality, as we began to see at the end of this dissertation, that contributed to these material changes.

Of course, amidst these changes there were still fears of moral decay and the disintegration of the family, which resulted in the continued reinforcement of traditional values

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regulations were practiced and the number of women able to actually partake in these new possibilities. *Ibid.*, 120.

[13] See Frevert, *Women in German History*, 156-57. Although as Peukert notes, while women gave up certain jobs following the war, they also stayed in new jobs. Women moved into jobs in education, industry, including jobs such as assembly worked, shop assistant, primary school teacher, and shorthand typist, jobs that became known as "women's" jobs. White-collar jobs for women rose from 6.5% in 1907 to 12.6% in 1925. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 96-97. The numbers of women working in German industry increased from 22 percent (1913) to 35 percent (1918). The jobs that women held earlier in areas such as domestic service, millinery and light industry were disrupted because of the war, and the employment for women moved to industries connected with the war, although they were not yet given jobs as skilled workers. See Gerard J. De Groot, *The First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 144-45.

[14] Yet, as Gail Braybon argues, it was not a single decisive aspect that gave women the vote or fostered change, nor did all women share in the same work experience; women's experiences during World War I varied based upon geographic location, class, age, and marital status. See Gail Braybon, "Women, War, and Work," 149.

[15] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 97-98.

and mores from some circles.[16] Even some traditional feminists criticized the "new," modern type of women in the popular imagination (the apolitical, young white-collar worker caught up in consumerism, such as the movies, the media, and mass-products), while others reminisced about the easier traditional roles for women (the happy mother and ideal wife.[17] In addition, there was actually a falling away of the women's movement, a decrease in membership and publicity, despite advances.[18] Yet, as Herrberg and Wagner note, there was a marked difference in the situations and opportunities for women between pre-war and post-war culture. The degree of activity of women in the arts and culture shifted, and they took on significantly more active social roles. "Vienna between 1918 and 1938 stood for an exciting female epoch in literature and photography, music and dance, pedagogy and psychoanalysis. The artistic milieu of the Austrian first republic's capital was affected by women as it never was before."[19] The ushering in of a new era, with new rights and expectations, led to new identities for women and new conceptions of womanhood. As Butler's work has shown, individual identity is constructed and negotiated through performative acts and social legitimization.[20] Indeed, the arts, literature, and operas of this new era documented and legitimized entirely different roles for women, opening up new possibilities for female identity.

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[16] *Ibid.*, 105. This desire to of moral protection from changes resulted in the 1926 "Harmful and Obscene Publications Law." Even in 1927, comments such as the following were still expressed: "The emancipation of women is a sign of the decline of the populace and accelerates the advance of this decline; it promotes the end of every true freedom." Eberhard, *Feminismus und Kulturuntergang: Die erotischen Grundlagen der Frauenemanzipation*, cited in Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 120.

[17] Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 99. Messages were communicated to young women about the hardships of being a "modern" woman in the city. See von Ankum, "Introduction," *Women of the Metropolis*, 1-11. Arguably these dominant images that trivialized women also undermined advances made by the women's movement and the new possibilities of the "modern" woman.

[18] Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 118-37, 249-54; Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany*, 235-53.

[19] Herrberg and Wagner, *Wiener Melange*, 13.

[20] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, *passim*.

Representations of a New Type of Woman

The liberalization and changes in attitudes regarding women, sexuality, and particularly female sexuality during these years, are revealed through a range of post World War I artistic and cultural documents. Women's journals such as *Illustrierte*, *Frauenkleidung und Frauenkultur* and *Die Dame* were increasingly popular in the 1920s, while literature presented new female figures. For example, Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* (*The Artificial Silk Girl*, 1932), explored the gap between the heroine's dream of becoming the glamorous woman presented to her in magazines and her reality, and ultimately presented the female character's development, sexual desires, and independence.[21] Other examples from literature include Vicki Baum's populist *Helene Willfüer* (1929), which is about a modern woman (and had a cover depicting a female chemist), while Anna Elisabet Weirauch's trilogy *Der Skorpion* (1919–1921) critiqued understandings of sexual difference and presented female same sex desire.[22] As Musil wrote in an essay entitled "Die Frau gestern und morgen" ("Woman Yesterday and Tomorrow," 1929), women can become their *own* ideal rather than man's ideal.[23] And indeed, notes Esau: "That so many publications dealing with sexuality and gendered relationships gained such enormous popularity in this period is evidence of a public audience eager to accept and acknowledge a transformation in social expectations concerning male and female roles."[24]

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[21] Ward offers a positive analysis of the female narrator's overall development in the Irmgard novel: "by the end of her tale she demonstrates a learned independence of authentic action and thought that more assuredly grants her the status of New Woman after all." Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 85.

[22] For discussions of these texts and authors see: Lynda J. King, "The Image of Fame: Vicki Baum in Weimar Germany," *German Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (1985): 381; Nancy P. Nenno, "*Bildung* and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*," in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in Germany Literature and Culture*, ed. Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews (Columbia, SC: Camden, 2008), 208.

[23] Musil's article is found in a 1929 publication, *Die Frau von Morgen wie wir sie wünschen*. Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces*, 84-85.

[24] Esau, "The Künstlerehepaar," 32.

In addition to these new possibilities in writing and literature, the world of Cabaret and the new media of film reinforced these new roles and expressions of female subjectivity. With the implementation of a new constitution, imperial censorship laws were lifted during the early years of the Weimar Republic, and a wealth of performances, dances, and theater appeared that dealt directly with sexual issues and presented sexual content onstage.[25] Plays, such as Schnitzler's *Reigen*, were finally performed, while after 1918, the film industry took off and produced a number of erotic and pornographic works.[26] Anita Berber not only appeared on the stage with her erotic nude dancing, but she also starred in "sexual enlightenment" films by Austrian director Richard Oswald, including *Prostitution* (1919) and *Anders als die Anderen* (*Different from Others*, 1919), the latter of which questioned restrictions on homosexuality.[27] Indeed, many of the Weimar films described as "educational" contained explicitly erotic moments pertaining to expressions of female sexuality. For example, *Verlorene Töchter* (*Lost Daughters*) and Pabst's *Die freundlose Gasse* (*Joyless Streets*, 1925) dealt with prostitution; Josef von Sternberg's *Der Blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*, 1930), set in a brothel, also explored prostitution and bourgeois morality; Brecht's *Kuhle Wampe* (1932) had not only a strong political message, but also presented sexuality as natural;[28] and *Mädchen in Uniform* (*Girls in Uniform*, 1932), an all-female film directed by Leotine Sagan, dealt with lesbian sexuality.

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[25] McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity*, 1-15. As Marhoefer points out, however, the early years of the Weimar Republic still witnessed some state concern and management over sexualities and censorship. Laurie Marhoefer, *Among Abnormals: The Queer Sexual Politics of Germany's Weimar Republic* (PhD diss., Rutgers, 2008), 64-65.

[26] Schneider, "The Social and Political Context of Arthur Schnitzler's *Reigen*," 40.

[27] Susan Laikan Funkenstein, "Anita Berber: Imagining a Weimar Performance Artist," *Women's Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (2005), 27.

[28] Stephen Lamb, "Women's Nature? Images of women in 'The Blue Angel', 'Pandora's Box', 'Kuhle Wampe' and 'Girls in Uniform," in *Visions of the 'Neue Frau': Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany*, ed. Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1995), 131-35. See also Barbara Hales, "Projecting Trauma: The Femme Fatale in Weimar and Hollywood Film Noir," *Women in German Yearbook* 23 (2007): 224-43.

Cabaret Songs, often mocking social mores and habits, also drew on sexual stereotypes and fears while presenting new expressions of female sexuality. Scantily clad performers sang songs, such as “Ich bin eine Vamp!” (“I am a vamp!” by Marcellus Schiffer in 1932), which parodied and celebrated the image of the *femme fatale* (“I’m not mild-mannered like you, and oh no and oh no, my passion takes over and off I go, I should really be kept in a zoo”); “Sex-Appeal” (Marcellus Schiffer, 1930) which has the woman sing “I want to be pure sex appeal”; and “Zieh dich aus, Petronella!” (“Take it off Petronella,” by Theobald Tiger, 1920), whose lines include: “Strip for me, Petronella, strip for me, release your body from its torments.” Homosexual rights were sung about in songs such as “Das lila Lied” (“The Lilac Song”), “Gesetz den Fall” (“O just suppose”) and “Wenn die beste Freundin” (“When the Special Girlfriend”), which presented women leaving their husbands for each other, while “Maskulinum-Femininum” playfully challenged normative gender roles and attributes:

> And the feminine went out as masculine
> She wore [a] top hat and tails each night
> And the masculine went out as feminine
> He even wore high heels despite his height
> And the feminine supports the masculine
> At home the masculine cooks for the feminine.[29]

Although the ban on censorship that was lifted in 1918 was reinstated by 1920, sexuality remained very present, although at times with risk to the authors.[30]

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[29] From the lyrics to these songs, including the song “Maskulinum-Femininum” by Marcellus Schiffer. Text from *Ute Lemper: Berlin Cabaret Songs*, trans. Jeremy Lawrence (London: London Decca, 1996, CD452 601-2), 22-50.

[30] Schneider, “The Social and Political Context of Arthur Schnitzler’s *Reigen*,” 40. The 1920s saw harsh pornography laws reinstated. For example, painter Otto Dix was taken to court over his painting *Girl in Front of Mirror*.

Operas, Modernism, and the Weimar Republic

As Schorske argues, there were in fact two sides to operatic modernism: one was to break with the past and have new modern subjects, themes, and language celebrate the current situation; the other was to engage and renegotiate the past, subtly reconfiguring the past to make the new.[31] While *Parsifal*, *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Rosenkavalier* continued to be popular, their treatment of women and the issues they raised concerning sexuality most likely became less shocking.[32] As Hailey notes, in the 1920s even Schreker's treatment of the "dilemmas of sexual passion was irrelevant to an era in which sexual license had revolutionized morals and mores."[33] The backdrop had changed, and what was once "radical" and progressive in opera, no longer had the same effect. Weimar operas dealt with sexuality, and particularly female sexuality, differently and often more openly within this new political and social milieu.

The operas written after the war are further examples of the representations of female sexuality that we began to glimpse in the post-1910 operas examined in the last two chapters. Women are depicted differently – although sometimes still problematically – and even the prostitute is presented in a more positive light. For instance, in Brecht's *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1928), just as in Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, the prostitute is made into an "ideal: a selfless, blessed teacher of physical pleasures."[34] Weill and Brecht's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1928), with Jenny, and Krenek's *Jonny Spielt auf!* (1927), with Anita, also present another perspective on sexual women. Hindemith's *Cardillac* (1926) contains a flirtatious and sexual bedroom scene, while *Sancta Susanna* (1922) has a scene in which the naked nun

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[31] Schorske, "Operatic Modernism," especially 681.

[32] Although Strauss continued to compose operas, his later works are more in line with earlier manifestations of women, with *Die Frau öhne Schatten* exploring motherhood.

[33] Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 193.

[34] Schönfeld, *Commodities of Desire*, 6

expresses her sexual desire. *Neues vom Tage* (1929), also by Hindemith, tackles not only marital conflict with a "divorce duet," but also includes the infamous "bathtub" coloratura aria in which the lead female, Laura, sings in admiration of modern plumbing while naked in a bathtub.[35] Schoenberg's twelve-tone *Zeitoper*, *Von heute auf morgen* (1928), with a libretto by his second wife, Gertrud (Kolisch) Schoenberg under the pseudonym of Max Blonda, concerns marital troubles between a husband, who is attracted to an "emancipated" woman, and his wife, who flirts with a singer.[36]

With numerous contrasts, this certainly is not a linear, teleological narrative nor a straightforward "development" of female sexuality. Rather, understandings of women shifted throughout the early twentieth century, regressing at moments and advancing at others, with coexisting contradictions. Although the early years of the Weimar Republic witnessed many advances, with the rise of Nazism in the 1930s and their regressive *Kinder, Küche, und Kirche* (children, kitchen, and church) attitude toward women, the figure of Gretchen and the figure of the woman in the home was again "officially" valorized (and sometimes enforced) in Germany.[37]

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[35] Although just a few years earlier, Hindemith wrote the expressionistic opera *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (1921) to Kokoschka's revised play from 1917. The story, very much influenced by Weininger, is about the violence and desire of a sexual encounter between a nameless man and a woman, in which a man and a woman battle each other, as though representing the battle between the sexes. See Daniel Albright, ed. *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 264-65. *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* was the first opera in a group that also included *Das Nusch-Nuschi* and *Sancta Susanna*, Op. 21.

[36] Despite its female authorship, the conflict between traditional womanhood and the emancipated woman presents the "Modern Woman" in a negative light.

[37] Indeed, Nazi Germany witnessed a return to conservativism regarding women. See also Frevert, *Women in Germany History*, 217-39.

Other Paths

There are indeed multiple paths that could be pursued regarding gender in this era. For instance, an examination of shifting social mores and new models of womanhood in Germany and Austria of the 1920s in relation to some of the above-mentioned works would offer a particularly fruitful exploration of female sexuality in opera. While compelling work has been done on *Zeitoper*, it would be interesting to further examine the representation of the female body and female sexuality in the era of the cult of *Nacktheit*, new technology and media, and political arts, with *Lehrstücke* and *Gebrauchsmusik*.[38] Another alternative lens on gender and opera in this era could concentrate on operatic compositions by women themselves, or further focus on female singers and their roles, such as Maria Jeritza or Marie Gutheil-Schoder, who both created and premiered many important operatic roles in the early years of the twentieth century. This type of project would complement the recent interest in operatic "divas" in non-Austro-German opera.[39] Such a line of inquiry could further explore questions about female subjectivity – how did performing certain roles affect the subject formation of these women? Singers were certainly aware of what was "proper" behavior and how their performances negotiated social expectations. Recall, for instance, Marie Wittich's resistance to performing Salome, and Jeritza's discomfort with playing Octavian. Perhaps another mode of inquiry into

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[38] For scholarship on *Zeitopern*, see for instance: Susan C. Cook, *Opera for a New Republic: The Zeitopern of Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

[39] Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1930* (2006); Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds. *The Art of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1800–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Smart, "The Lost Voice of Rosine Stolz," 31-50; and Karen Henson's work on singers, the diva, and the divo – including "Maurel and fin-de-siècle Operatic Performance," and her "Introduction: Divo Worship" in the special edition devoted to Divos of the *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19, no. 1 (2007). Instances of existing scholarship on German singers include: Darwin, "Marie Gutheil-Schoder – from score to performance," in *The "I" of the Other*, 188-214; Gabriele Parizek's dissertation *Anna Bahr-Mildenburg: Theaterkunst als Lebenswerk*; Nicholas Baragwanath's essay "Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, Gesture, and the Bayreuth Style," and Calico's recent chapter, "Staging Scandal with *Salome* and *Elektra*," (2012), 61-82.

female subjectivity and sexuality in the early twentieth century could be through an examination of operas with female librettists, and in addition to Pappenheim's *Erwartung* and Dovsky's *Mona Lisa*, include Mayreder's libretto to *Der Corrigidor* and Gertrude Schoenberg's libretto to *Von heute auf morgen* (1928), further investigating what their texts communicate about female identity and authorship. Feminist questions about spectatorship could also be explored, including: Who is represented and who does the representing? Who is seen and who is looking? Whose interests, eroticism, and desires does an image encode? Who becomes the object of that desire?[40]

Conclusion

> There is no sphere of public life in which a series of factors – the emancipation of women, Freudian psychoanalysis, physical culture, the independence of youth – have brought about so complete a change within one generation as in the relationship between the sexes.
>
> – Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*[41]

The arch of this project resembles that of a Feminist *Bildungsroman*, in that I chart the fractured, non-teleological, and shifting representations of the sexual operatic female figure over the course of the first years of the twentieth century.[42] Part I presented women who arguably exhibited sexual desires, but whose sexuality and subjectivity was undermined and *resisted*

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[40] Pollock, "The Visual," 174.

[41] Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 67-68.

[42] Indeed, this dissertation has not focused on the of inner development of the characters, but rather concerns representation and the possibility of representing female sexuality in opera as part of a woman's *Bildung.* Moreover, I hesitate to consider the project an ideal operatic "*Bildungsroman*" because a central component of the *Bildungsroman*, according to Maierhofer, involves "integrating a mature person into a patriarchal society." (Maierhofer, "Bildungsroman," 45). I do not want to emphasize that these operatic women are integrated into and take up the prevailing ideologies and "norm" and are now acceptable, but rather wanted to show that these operas and the women in them can present a different mode of discourse, a *shifting* mode that challenges the dominant one. Although, it is still possible for *Bildung* to exist in individual works, as discussed in Chapters 5 (male *Bildung*) and Chapter 7 (female *Bildung*, although not "*Bildung*" in the sense of integrating into the norm, but rather a development that challenges it).

through their musical and visual characterizations as ill and harmful for society. While Part II examined more positive modernist attitudes toward and *reevaluations* of sexuality, the sexual woman ultimately served as muse for men. Her sexuality never contributed to her own development as an individual. Part III considered new articulations of female sexuality as intrinsic to a *modern* woman's identity, and examined the way in which these operas resonated with emerging attitudes about female sexuality. Moreover, the works themselves documented new understandings and *reconfigurations* about the body, female sexuality, desire, and identity.

As we have seen, the pure opera text is complicated by the sonorous bodies of the women singing – they affected the staging (the "performance text"), as well as the way in which the audience received the opera, and the ways in which they were discussed amidst the bodies of various discourses surrounding the work. These operas serve as another thread in the complex narrative of the *fin-de-siècle*, operating amidst a variety of discourses and cultural forces. Indeed, as I have demonstrated, these works responded to and participated in the shifting and contested understanding of female sexuality and subjectivity in Germany and Austria that occurred in first two decades of the twentieth century.[43]

Rather than re-presenting male projections of womanhood and reiterating the duality of the "good" woman versus the "bad" woman, complex and *real* women were increasingly presented onstage, mirroring the shifts in attitudes toward women and female sexuality. Moreover, in these operas there were multiple *women* rather than a monolithic "Woman" – a point that resonates with beliefs held by women themselves in the early twentieth century. As Mayreder argued in *A Survey of the Woman Problem*, women have individual needs and desires

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[43] While women characters in earlier operas were certainly characterized as subjects with desires at times, their sexuality often was neither so central a concern nor so explicitly presented. Moreover, my interest here was to examine the changes characterizing representations of female sexuality in opera in the particular context of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Germany and Austria.

and there is no universal “Woman” – “Certainly differences so great exist among women, that the understandings which arises from the mere community of sex is, in many cases, entirely suspended.”[44]

[44] Mayreder, *A Survey of the Woman Problem*, 153-54.

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Schloss Wahn, Cologne, Germany
Staatsoper Bibliothek, Vienna
Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (formerly the *Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek*)

Appendix A: Selected Performances[1]

Elektra: Music: Richard Strauss; Text: Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Place	**Date**	**Singer (Salome)**	**Conductor**
Dresden (P)	January 25 and 28, 1909	Annie Krull	Schuch
Berlin Königlichen Hofoper	Feb. 15, 1909	Thila Plaichinger	Leo Blech
Vienna Hofoper	March 24, 1909	Lucie Marcel	Reichenberger
Vienna Hofoper	June 10, 1914	Gutheil-Schoder	Reichenberger

Der ferne Klang: Music: Franz Schreker; libretto: Franz Schreker

Place	**Date**	**Singer (Grete)**	**Conductor**
Frankfurt (P)	August 18, 1912	Lisbeth Sellin	Ludwig Rottenberg
Dresden	October 21, 1917	Eva von der Osten	Fritz Reiner
Berlin Staatsoper	May 11, 1925	Maria Schreker-Binder	Erich Kleiber

Feuersnot: Music: Richard Strauss; Text: Ernst von Wolzogen

Place	**Date**	**Singer (Elektra)**	**Conductor**
Dresden (P)	November 21, 1901	Annie Krull	Schuch
Vienna Hofoper	January 29, 1902	Margarethe (Rita) Michalek	Mahler
Berlin Königlichen Hofoper	October 28, 1902	Emmy Destinn	Strauss
Munich Hoftheater	December 23, 1905	Irma Koboth (Annie Krull, guest performance)	Strauss
Dresden	January 26, 1909 (part of “Richard Strauss-Woche”)	Eva von der Osten	Schuch
Vienna Volksoper	January 26, 1912 March 28, 1912	Maria Jeritza	Strauss

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[1] Although there are many other performances during these years of certain ones of these operas, these tables include the premieres and the performances discussed in the dissertation. When there is clearly a new staging or a new singer for a period of time, I include these as a new performance. These do not include the operas discussed in passing, such as *Erwartung.* The information is compiled from press reviews, *Theaterzettel* held at the *ÖTM*, the Strauss and Mahler, *Correspondence*, and Láng and Láng, eds., *Wiener Staatsoper – 140 Jahre Haus am Ring.*

Die lustige Witwe: Music: Franz Lehár; Text: Victor Leon

Place	Date	Singer (Hanna)	Conductor
Vienna Theater an der Wien **	Dec 30, 1905	Mizzi Günther	

** The operetta also toured throughout Austria

***Mona Lisa**:* Music: Max von Schillings; Text: Beatrice Dovsky

Place	Date	Singer (Mona Lisa)	Conductor
Stuttgart	September 26, 1915	Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann	Schillings
Vienna	October 4, 1915	Maria Jeritza	Gregor
Berlin	October 15, 1915	Barbara Kemp	Strauss

Parsifal: Music: Richard Wagner; Text: Richard Wagner

Place	Date	Singer	Conductor
Bayreuth (P)[2]	July 26 and 28, 1882	Amelie Materna/ Marianne Brandt	Hermann Levi
Vienna Hofoper	January 14, 1914	Anna Bahr-Mildenburg (Also: Lucie Weidt and Paula Windheuser)	Franz Schalk
Deutsches Volksoper (Vienna)	January 25, 1914	Maria Ranzenberg (Also: Klothilde Wenger)	Rainer Simons

Rosenkavalier: Music: Richard Strauss; Text: Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Place	Date	Singer	Conductor
Dresden (P)	January 26, 1911	Eva von der Osten (O) Margarethe Siems (M) Minnie Nast (Sophie)	Schuch
Vienna Hofoper	April 8, 1911	Gutheil-Schoder (O) Weidt (Windheuser) (M) Kurz (Förstel) (S)	Schalk

[2] P designates the premiere.

***Salome*:** Music: Richard Strauss; Text: Oscar Wilde (trans. Hedwig Lachmann)

Place	**Date**	**Singer (Kundry)**	**Conductor**
Dresden (P)	December 1905	Marie Wittich Dancer: Sidonie Korb	Schuch
Graz	May 16, 1906	Jenny Korb	Strauss
Deutsches Theater (Vienna) (visiting company from Breslau)	May 25, 1907	Fanchette Verhunk	Julius Prüwer
Deutsches Volksoper (Vienna)	December 23, 1910	Klothilde Wenger	Alexander Zemlinsky
Deutsches Volksoper (Vienna)	Spring 1911	Klothilde Wenger (Also: Gemma Bellincioni)	Strauss
Vienna Hofoper	Oct 4, 1918	Maria Jeritza (Also: Marie Gutheil-Schoder)	Schalk

***Der Traumgörge*:** Music: Alexander Zemlinsky; Text: Leo Feld

Place	**Date**	**Singer (Gertraud/ Princess)**	**Conductor**
Vienna *	October 4, 1907	Marie Renard (both roles) Irene von Fladung (both roles)	Mahler
Nürnberg	October 11, 1980	Johanna-Lotte Fecht	Hans Gierster

* This scheduled premiere never took place, but was under preparation through Fall 1907.

Appendix B: Images Consulted[3]

Chapter 1

Figure 1.1: Charcot, *Études cliniques* (1881): Stages of the "*grande attaque hystérique.*" Reproduced in Didi-Huberman, *The Invention of Hysteria*, 118-19.

Figure 1.2: Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Eva ("Evchen"). Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, Act III. *Wiener Hofoper*, *ÖTM-FS.*

Figure 1.3: Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Eva ("Evchen"). Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, Act III, *Wiener Hofoper*. *ÖTM-FS.*

Figure 1.4: Lucy Weidt as Elisabeth. Wagner, *Tannhäuser*. *Wiener Hofoper*, 1902. *ÖTM-FS* E1094/67.439Th.

Figure 1.5: Maria Jeritza as Elisabeth. Wagner, *Tannhäuser*. *Wiener Hofoper*. *ÖTM-FS* PK62.

Chapter 2

Figure 2.1: Anna Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*. *Wiener Hofoper*, 1914. *ÖTM-FS* E1609/107.399Th.

Figure 2.2: Anna Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*. *Wiener Hofoper*, 1914. *ÖTM-FS* E3597 PP/240.065.
Another copy found also at: http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=505961
For another image of Kundry with a similar effect, see:
http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=505964

Figure 2.3: Lucie Weidt as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act I. *Wiener Hofoper*, 1914. *ÖTM-FS* E1094/67.438Th. (also PA67512)
Found also at: http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=403295

Figure 2.4: Anna Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act II. *Bayreuther Festspiele*, c. 1897. *ÖTM-FS* P629/302 668.

Figure 2.5: Anna Bahr Mildenburg as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act II. *Bayreuther Festspiele*, 1911. *ÖTM-FS* PP369 303334.
Also found at: http://www.deutschefotothek.de/obj70254973.html

Figure 2.6: Blümenmädchen. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act II. *Wien Volksoper*, January 25th, 1914. *ÖTM-FS* "Blümenmädchen *Parsifal*" PS6.

Figure 2.7: Ranzenberg as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act III. *Wien Volksoper*, 1914. *ÖTM-FS.*

Figure 2.8: Cover of *Wiener Bilder*, January 18th, 1914.

[3] Due to copyright, the figures have been removed from this version of the dissertation.

Chapter 3

Figure 3.1: Anna Bahr-Mildenburg as Kundry. Wagner, *Parsifal*, Act II. *Bayreuther Festspiele*, c. 1897. *ÖTM-FS* P629/302 668.

Figure 3.2: Klothilde Wenger as Salome. *Salome*, Wien Volksoper, 1910–1911. *ÖTM-FS* PP/50.990 Rol. Ph.
Found also at: http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=403356

Figure 3.3: Klothilde Wenger as Salome. Strauss, *Salome*. *Volksoper*, December 23, 1910. *ÖTM-FS* PA 108960.

Figure 3.4: *Idylle* from Gaston Vuillier, *La danse* (Paris: Hachette, 1898).

Figure 3.5: Emmy Destinn as Salome (*Salome*, Berlin, c. 1909). *ÖTM-FS.*

Figure 3.6: Robert Fleury, *Pinel Delivering the Madwomen of the Salpêtrière* (*Pinel délivrant les aliénés à la Salpêtrière*), 1878.
Found also at: http://www.photo.rmn.fr/cf/htm/CPicZ.aspx?E=2C6NU04Q8SV4

Figure 3.7: Gemma Bellincioni as Salome, Kriener as Jochanaan. Strauss, *Salome*. *Wien Volksoper*, 1911. *ÖTM-FS* E1051/67.420Th.
For another image of Bellincioni in the role see:
http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/15503/4F9772F724D674C308E67A16EE E0C906F9A14422.html?start=9&query=bellincioni

Figure 3.8: Cover of *Der Sturm*, no. 27 (Berlin/Vienna), September 1, 1910.

Figure 3.9: Bellincioni as Salome. Strauss, *Salome*. *Volksoper*, 1911. *ÖTM-FS* E1051/6417Th.

Figure 3.10: Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Salome. Strauss, *Salome. Wiener Hofoper*, c. 1918. *ÖTM-FS* PP488 Tr. E979/ 74.054Th.

Figure 3.11: Marie Gutheil-Schoder. Strauss, *Salome*. *Wiener Hofoper*, c. 1918. *ÖTM-FS* PP487 Tr. E979/ 74.055Th.
For an image from the same series, see also:
http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/92060/9525B3A18466B37CA117C2D9E 765DE14606FA10B.html?start=6&query=salome+gutheil%5C-schoder

Figure 3.12: Annie Krull as Elektra. Strauss, *Elektra*. *Dresden Hofoper*, 1909. *ÖTM-FS* PP/1 Rol.Ph. Found also at: http://edocs.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/volltexte/2003/7805054/

Figure 3.13: Lucille Marcel as Elektra. Strauss, *Elektra*. *Wiener Hofoper*, c. 1909. *ÖTM-FS* E1669/67.420Th. Another photograph from the same series is found at: http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Pages/ImageDetail.aspx?p_iBildID=9839891

Figure 3.14: Margarethe Siems as Chrysothemis and Annie Krull as Elektra. Strauss, *Elektra*. Dresden, 1909. *ÖTM-FS* PSP/167.351. Found also at: http://edocs.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/volltexte/2003/7807644/

Figure 3.15: Gutheil-Schoder as Eva. Wagner, *Die Meistersinger*, Act III. *ÖTM*

Figure 3.16: Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Elektra. Strauss, *Elektra*. *Wiener Hofoper*, c. 1915. *ÖTM-FS* PP497 Tr.E979/74.026Th.

Figure 3.17: Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Elektra. Strauss, *Elektra*. *Wiener Hofoper*, c. 1915. *ÖTM-FS* PP491 Tr.E979/74.017Th.
For more images of Gutheil-Schoder in the same photo series, see:
http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Bildarchiv//340/B307931T4439490.jpg
http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Bildarchiv//410/B307906T4679564.jpg
http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/92060/5345BB0DC486CC4C496DAE4BFB85C733522AC350.html?query=salome+gutheil%5C-schoder

Chapter 4

Figure 4.1: Diemut (second from left) and her friends. Strauss, *Feuersnot*. *Sächsische Staatstheater Oper*, Dresden 1921. *ÖTM-FS Ri 544 Feuersnot.*

Figure 4.2: Elisa Stüntzner as Diemut. Strauss, *Feuersnot*. *Sächsische Staatstheater Oper*, Dresden, 1921. *ÖTM-FS Ri 544 Feuersnot.* Found also at:
http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/01004/3D88836B2455CE0F48D8CEDB91D2919A5C2999D7.html?start=6&query=feuersnot

Figure 4.3: Diemut and Kunrad, with Diemut's three friends watching. Strauss, *Feuersnot*. *Sächsische Staatstheater Oper*, Dresden, 1928. *ÖTM-FS Ri 544 Feuersnot.*

Figure 4.4: Lisbeth Sellin as Grete, Karl Gentner as Fritz. Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*, Act I. Frankfurt am Main, 1912. *ÖNB-Musik* F3 Schreker Fonds 197/6.

Figure 4.5: Lisbeth Sellin as Grete. Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*, Act II. Frankfurt am Main, 1912. *ÖNB-Musik* F3 Schreker Fonds 197/1. See also another image from the same series at Frankfurt am Main: Stadt- und Universitäts-Bibliothek, S36_F06509.
Found at: http://edocs.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/volltexte/2003/7806509/

Figure 4.6: Eva von der Osten as "Greta." Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*, Act II. Dresden, 1917. Source: Frankfurt am Main, Stadt- und Universitäts-Bibliothek: S36 F05655. Found online at: http://edocs.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/volltexte/2003/7805655/

Figure 4.7: Maria Schreker as Grete. Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*, Act II. Berlin, 1925. *ÖNB-Musik* F3 Schreker Fonds 48/5. Another image of Maria Schreker in Act II is found at:
http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/15503/F0646FA2D4A7C21B29D9759E2D38F11FDF5F371B.html?query=Maria+Schreker

Figure 4.8: Maria Schreker as Grete. Schreker, *Der ferne Klang*, Act III.
ÖNB-Musik F3 Schreker Fonds 187/24.

Figure 4.9: Mizzi Gunther as Hanna and Günther Treumann as Danilo
Lehár, *Die lustige Witwe*. Theater an der Wien, December 30, 1905.
ÖTM-FS PSP *Die lustige Witwe* NB 608.587D. A similar image is found at:
http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Pages/ImageDetail.aspx?p_iBildID=13834119

Figure 4.10: Die Grisetten. Lehár, *Die lustige Witwe*, Act III. Theater an der Wien, December 30, 1905. *ÖTM-FS* PSP Lustig Witwe NB 608.587D.

Chapter 6

Figure 6.1: Alfred Roller's sketch of Octavian. *Der Rosenkavalier*, Act I, 1910. (Source: *Richard Strauss: 100 Jahre Rosenkavalier*. Vienna: Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 2011), 23.

Figure 6.2: Alfred Roller's sketch of Octavian. *Der Rosenkavalier*, Act II, 1910. (Source: *Richard Strauss: 100 Jahre Rosenkavalier*. Vienna: Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 2011), 46.

Figure 6.3: Alfred Roller, stage sketch for Act I, *Der Rosenkavalier*. (Source: *Richard Strauss: 100 Jahre Rosenkavalier*. Vienna: Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 2011), 52-53. Alos found at: http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=632284

Figure 6.4: Elisabath Schumann as Sophie, Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Octavian. Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*, Act II. *Wiener Hofoper*, 1919. *ÖTM-FS* 609.5343. Another photo from the same series found at: http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=500135

Figure 6.5: Elisabath Schumann as Sophie, Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Octavian. Strauss, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Wiener Hofoper*, 1919. *ÖTM-FS* NB 609.5343.

Figure 6.6: Selma Kurz as Sophie, Marie Gutheil-Schoder as Octavian. Viennese premiere of *Der Rosenkavalier*, Act II. Published in *Wiener Bilder*, April, 1911.

Figure 6.7: Caricature of Gutheil-Schoder as Octavian. Published in *Der Morgen*, April 10, 1911, p. 3.

Chapter 7

Figure 7.1: Mona Lisa Sketch by Bernard Pankok. Schillings, *Mona Lisa*, Stuttgart, 1917. (From: Emil Gerhäuser, with Bernard Pankok, *Stuttgarter Bühnenkunst: Inszenierung der Königlich württemburgischen Hofoper von werker Mozarts und von Schillings'* Mona Lisa. Stuttgart: Wilhelm Meyer-Ilschen, 1917).

Figure 7.2: Francesco sketch by Bernard Pankok. Schillings, *Mona Lisa*, Stuttgart, 1917. (From: Emil Gerhäuser, with Bernard Pankok, *Stuttgarter Bühnenkunst: Inszenierung der Königlich württemburgischen Hofoper von werker Mozarts und von Schillings'* Mona Lisa. Stuttgart: Wilhelm Meyer-Ilschen, 1917).