FORUM

Thorns and Roses: Kleist's Marquise von O- and Her Sleeping Sisters

DAN LATIMER

Dormeuse, amas doré d'ombres et d'abandons... [Sleeping girl, golden shape of shadow and surrender...]
- Paul Valéry

Sie hat's im Schlaf getan. [She did it in her sleep.]
Commandant, Colonel G-,
Citadel at M-,
The Marquise von O-

I.

Few readers of Heinrich von Kleist's great novella, *The Marquise von O-* (1808), would readily associate it with the genre of children's literature. The commentary Kleist attracts has had a stern and sober coloration, understandably, given Kleist's characteristic ruminations on the epistemological catastrophe of his Kant-crisis, the tragic paradoxes involving morally punctilious murderers like Michael Kohlhaas, and the author's dreams of suicide with real-life girlfriends. Moreover, it is an unavoidable fact of literary history that the Grimms' *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen* (1812), so hegemonic an event for the German children's repertory, appeared *after* the *Marquise*. Though both Grimms took unusually positive note of early editions of Kleist's work as it appeared, scholarship has not asserted the matter of influence, either of the Grimms on Kleist or of Kleist on the Grimms.[1] Studies of direct influence with regard to the *Marquise* have taken a different direction.

Readers have long asserted the importance to Kleist of a short anecdote in Montaigne's essay "Of Drunkenness" (1595). Here a peasant woman falls asleep during a wine-soaked country festival and is discovered lying in an

1 Helmut Sembdner (1966) 19-20, 25-27. Wilhelm Grimm commented on the "audacity" of the plot of Kleist's play, *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, a comment which Anthony Stephens accounts for by the play's *Märchen*-like sequences. See Stephens 145. See also Laurs 175.

Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée
CRCL/RCLC June / Juin 1999
0319-051X/99/26.2/$10.00/©Canadian Comparative Literature Association

immodest if inviting posture by "un jeune valet de labourage." When she later finds herself pregnant, she has to go to embarrassing public lengths to identify the father of her child, since she has no memory at all of the festival. However, the character of this hapless alcoholic is as unlike Kleist's heroine as the most responsible and selfless ingénue of the Grimms (Lorenzo Bianchi 40 ff.)[2] The same is true of Boccaccio's narrative, harsher and more prurient even than Montaigne's, the 1353 *Decameron* tale of Frate Alberto (4,2), assumed to have influenced Kleist as well. The rogue priest Alberto seduces a vain and dopey Monna Lisetta by pretending to be the Angel Gabriel. Lisetta's boasting of her frequent celestial visitations leads to a merciless public exposure and humiliation for Alberto. And scholarship has recognized the influence of a Cervantes story, "La Fuerza de la Sangre" (1613) on Kleist as well. Here the connection would supposedly be Leocadia's tendency to faint at moments of emotional crisis, as when the rowdy high-born Rodolfo abducts and impregnates her during her swoon. While Rodolfo is away in Italy, Leocadia delivers his son, who is later injured by a horse, rescued and cared for by Rodolfo's father, whose richly-appointed rooms are recognized by Leocadia when she comes to find her child and faints again during her narration of the boy's conception. When Rodolfo then returns from Italy at the behest of his parents, renewed desire brings on the third fainting spell of Leocadia. This time Rodolfo faints as well, coming to rest with his face on her bosom. Their marriage restores her lost honor and happiness.

A far more satisfying scenario than linear influences of this sort could well prove to be the mutual participation by all these stories, and many others like them, in a common source, which, with Heinz Rölleke, one could call "ein vielleicht archetypisch verstehbares Grundmuster" [a deep structure, perhaps of an archetypal sort] (Rölleke: 1984, 136). What is archetypal for Rölleke is the association of the pattern of sleep and waking with events in a woman's erotic life. Helmut Sembdner, too, is moved to remark, as he connects Montaigne with Kleist, that stories of a woman's unconscious conception are widespread in world literature ("in der Weltliteratur verbreitet ist das Motiv, dass eine Frau im Schlaf oder in der Ohnmacht unwissentlich empfängt") (Kleist:1961, 897-98; qtd. in Politzer 107).

Some readers have mentioned *Märchen* (fairy tales) in connection with the *Marquise*, only immediately to reject the connection. To them Kleist's

2 Bianchi cites an article from 1884 identifying Montaigne as Kleist's source. An expanded French edition of Montaigne's *Essays* appeared in 1793 and was translated into German the same year by J. J. Ch. Bode. Bianchi also mentions the possible influence of Boccaccio's story in the *Decameron* of Frate Alberto (Fourth Day, Second Tale). The point of the story is essentially anti-clerical. See also Gerhard Dünnhaupt's essay on Kleist and Cervantes. A German translation of "La Fuerza de la Sangre" (Spanish, 1613) appeared in 1753.

novella would seem alien to the *Märchen* repertory if only because of the occasional off-color nature of its material, not to mention the horizon of expectations for the novella genre itself, presumed to have nothing to do with the fantastic, set as the novella normally is in a "realistic context"(Borchardt 147).[3] The context of the *Marquise* is indeed realistic, though the events narrated there are bizarre in the extreme. One could venture that the fantastic is present for a time, only to be replaced, not so much by untroubled realistic clarity, as by deeper mysteries of a psychological nature.

II.

But perhaps not everyone is familiar with Kleist's story, which opens with its heroine, Giulietta, taking out a newspaper advertisement asking whether the father of the child about to be born to her won't please come forward and make himself known, for no matter how mercilessly she cudgels her brains, she can't remember having done anything at all that could have led to her embarrassing condition. Her respectable family is of course mortified, nauseated, and appalled. Her mother, unable to bear the disgrace, curses the day she bore poor Giulietta, then disowns her. Giulietta's father rants and raves, discharges a pistol into the ceiling, and throws her out of his house. He no longer *has* a daughter, he exclaims.[4] For her part, though, Giulietta's conscience is clear. She quite genuinely doesn't remember anything. She abandons herself to the "great, sacred, and inexplicable order of the world," and retires to the country to await the arrival of her mysterious gift from God.

It is perhaps one's first impulse to account for the uncomfortable familiarity of the narrative by recognizing Kleist's playful and perverse

3 See also Dorritt Cohn 141. Cohn does allow the word *Märchen* to cross her lips in connection with the happy ending of the story, but that is as far as she seems willing to go into the fairy tale aspects of the novella. Borchardt insists that she and Cohn are in essential agreement that the Kleist novella has "nothing to do with the genre of *Märchen*, since the novella is a realistic literary form." See also Edith Borchardt's article on Eric Rohmer's film version of the *Marquise*. There Borchardt takes issue with Pauline Kael, who says that the Russian Count F – is "Prince Charming with a rape for a kiss, and she [Giulietta] is too repressed to know it" (130). Borchardt says, "This is not a fairy tale, as Pauline Kael imagines...." And Borchardt thinks what the Russian allows himself is anything but "charming." See, however, Petra Perry for a dissenting opinion on the fantastic.

4 This seems hardly the place to discuss the incest motif in children's literature, but it is certainly present, for example, in the Grimms' "Allerleirau" (1812) and in Perrault's "Peau d'Ane" (1694). The most powerful part of Erika Swales' treatment of the *Marquise* deals with the erotic competition between the Commandant, Giulietta's father, and Count F – . See also Irmela Krüger-Fürhoff's theories of *Vaterliebe*, which she explains is a resonant German term meaning both "a father's love" and "loving one's father" (82).

allusions to our Virgin's immaculate conception. References to Mary's supernaturally-generated Son appear more directly in those places where the Commandant, Giulietta's father, is a "doubting Thomas" (105). Moreover, the Russian officer, Count F-, seems for a moment to play the role of Gabriel, appearing to Giulietta first as "an angel sent from heaven" (69), then later as "a young god" (74). For the rest, Kleist does keep us in suspense and puzzlement about the pregnancy for a long time.[5] It is safe to say that even when the mystery is cleared up, if indeed it *is*, some readers will still be unclear about what has happened.[6] Certainly the faint, familiar music drifting up from the story's deep structure is designed to evoke the Annunciation. But it might also help to remember the comments of Rölleke and Sembdner and ask whether the *Marquise* may have even more to do with an ancient repertory of stories about sleeping women who, while they are unconscious and vulnerable, are secretly visited by an amorously inclined suitor, thanks to whose fervent ministrations, more often than not, they will eventually find themselves expecting a child. That is, the *Marquise* is more properly a story about Sleeping Beauty than about the Virgin. That is not to say that the story of Mary is so unique that it couldn't itself belong to the Sleeping Beauty repertory. The Grimm story may be the most familiar version of the ravishing sleeper, though the brothers are careful to leave out the parts of the story that involve the mechanics of ravishment. There are earlier versions less colored by the Biedermeier attitudes toward sexuality than those deployed by the Grimms, attitudes which we recognize are largely still our own. And there are many such immodest variants. Sleeping Beauty is one of the most

5 See Cohn, p. 136. "...The only qualified respondent to [Giulietta's] want ad would be the Holy Ghost." Steven Huff traces the O- of the Marquise's name to the "Madonna de la O" of Spain and Portugal, the Madonna invoked by pregnant women and women in labor. Huff finds the rounded "O" as indicative of the distended belly of the Virgin. And there are the various liturgial antiphons for the days preceding Christmas: "O Virgo virginum." Huff explains that Kleist's empirical treatment of the metaphysical deliberately courted the disfavor of his contemporaries. See Huff's "Kleist and Expectant Virgins," 367-375. Likewise Walter Silz claims that Kleist was thinking of his impressions of the Madonna of Raphael in the Dresden Gallery, where he sat for hours entranced by this great work of the Italian master. See Silz 254.

6 Neither Heinz Politzer nor Curtis Bentzel believes the mystery of the pregnancy is entirely clarified by Count F's confession. For them the trick of Giulietta's mother apropos of Leopardo the Tyrolian Hunter and the subsequent jokes at the expense of his broad shoulders do not put Leopardo entirely in the clear. Axel Laurs points out that on the day the rapist is to announce himself Leopardo is the first to appear, causing both ladies to blanch (Laurs 182). Petra Perry does not think the mysteries are ever resolved, since a certain residue of puzzlement must by definition remain in all works dealing with the fantastic. Erika Swales likewise finds the peace at the end of the narrative is qualified by the characters' still-reverberating "journey through turmoil" (Swales 147).

universal literary fantasies that we have, with every different literary tradition giving this enchanted recumbent its own particular spin and coloration. What I want to do here, aside from tying Sleeping Beauty to Kleist's Giulietta, is to identify several other instances of the story and give some thought as to why its theme may be so ancient, so modern, so universal in world literature. Our comatose Beauty is a fantasy so ubiquitous, in fact, that even the adolescent Nietzsche seems to have written a "Dornröschen" poem about her.[7]

But I mustn't prolong suspense about Giulietta, who does in the fullness of time receive an answer to her newspaper advertisement. There is an initial outburst of fury at both the man who comes forward and her mother, who (as in Cervantes) is far too eager to forgive him. Over both of them Giulietta flings holy water, then flees in revulsion. Her reaction is followed by a relatively long period of probation during which her gay corsair is obliged to keep his distance, evincing humility and restraining his impulses. Giulietta eventually agrees to marry the devil – or angel – who has confessed, learning to live happily with him and their quickly growing family forever after. As the Sabine women forgave the Romans, so Giulietta forgives her assailant, and all misbehavior, even her parents' revulsion and the discharged firearm, is forgotten. What in a word has happened to Giulietta is that the very same gallant Russian officer who saved her from his own rampaging soldiers on the night Giulietta's home castle was under attack, himself took advantage of her as soon as he had carried her to safety! Paradoxically, then, it is her savior who is her ravisher, and paradoxically, again, it is *after* she is perfectly safe that Giulietta suspiciously falls into the deep swoon which arouses the ardor of her hero and plunges her once again into danger. In fact, this is how you know you are dealing with the Sleeping Beauty, with a case of the Comatose Beloved: the lover is awake and the beloved is asleep and this fact doesn't inhibit anyone's amorous impulses. Indeed, quite the contrary.[8]

What Kleist is interested in demonstrating with his Beauty is that not only are we mysteries to each other, but that we are actually mysteries to

7 See Richard Perkins, "Little Brier Rose: Young Nietzsche's Sleeping Beauty Poem as Legend and Swan Song," in Donald Haase 127-148. Nietzsche eventually concluded, according to Perkins, that the whole enterprise of *Märchen* was riddled with *Sklavenmoral* and gave it up. Lorenzo Bianchi has located analogues to Giulietta's odd circumstances in every sphere from demonic lore (27 ff.) to epistolary reports on actual cases to Goethe (32 ff.) to the cases of Boccaccio (30 ff.) and Montaigne we have mentioned (40 ff.). For more on the letter to Goethe dated January 31, 1807 see footnote 9.

8 One of the most chilling ideas of Director David Fincher's 1992 *Alien 3* film is that the toothy, drooling leer of the creature, as he purrs at the cheek of the cringing Lieutenant Ripley (Sigourny Weaver) and mysteriously disdains to slaughter her, is the grin of a lover, reflecting, if not on past pleasures, then protectively on the condition of our heroine, pregnant during her suspended animation and carrying now the future queen

ourselves as well, there being aspects of ourselves that other parts of us neither know nor recognize.[9] In Giulietta's case, everything unrecognizable has to do with an outrageous erotic predilection for giving herself to a perfect stranger and enemy of her father, the man to whom her father has had to surrender his citadel, and whose enlisted soldiers have brought up the topic of erotic violation in the first place and are eventually shot for dreaming to do what their commanding officer did in fact.

As far as the Russian officer is concerned (whom now we are reluctant to call "gallant"), the great central metaphor of his narrative is the memory of the swan (Tinka), of his childhood and native Russian lakes.[10] When wanton boys throwing mud besmirch Tinka, she dives down below the surface of the lake, defiantly to reemerge as white and pure as ever. During the fever of a war wound received during what seems to be a moment of suicidal daring, the Russian Count dreams of the swan again and, upon waking, understands its connection to Giulietta, namely that it is precisely the purity of the swan, its whiteness and its proud grace, that has led him to try to sully it. There are other parallels to Giulietta as well, as the reader will eventually come to

of the Alien race. Francine Prose in a recent article on "Sleeping Beauty" finds Alfred Hitchcock's film masterpiece *Vertigo* (1958) especially relevant to our theme here. Eventually Prose will decide that the problem treated in the Sleeping Beauty archetype is "sexual Calvinism, erotic predestination" according to which our object of desire must be asleep or dead in order to be a more perfect repository, a "cleaner slate" on which we can project longings that have nothing to do with her as an individual. See Bernheimer 283-294.

9 Cohn puts it this way: "The Marquise's words seem to reveal a cognitive duplicity, as though Kleist had endowed her with an unconscious form of knowledge unacknowledged by her conscious self" (132). See also Richard Rorty, "Freud and Moral Reflection" 147. Rorty speaks of Freud as having demolished the "commonsense assumption that a single human body typically contains a single self." The "partitioning" of the self into a conscious and an unconscious part "...leaves open the possibility that the same human body can play host to two or more persons," and that we could easily get the impression that "some unknown persons are causing us (or...causing our bodies) to do things we would rather not do...." (148). The notion that the "ego is not at home in its own house" is a common theme of German Romanticism long before Freud claims credit for it himself. See Freud 1966, 16:284-5. Heinz Politzer's essay on the *Marquise* is a straight Freudian reading: "Die Marquise ist krank: sie leidet an einer Hypertrophie ihres Über-Ichs" (111). Lorenzo Bianchi mentions an actual case of a Giulietta-like pregnancy in his book on Kleist (32 ff.). The source is a letter from J. Heinrich Voss to Goethe (31 January 1807).

10 Thomas Dutoit's cryptographic theories have much to recommend them. He ingeniously claims that the German word for swan, *Schwan*, is encrypted in the German word for "pregnant," *Schwanger*. What Count F's dream tells him, among other things, is that Giulietta is expecting. I am tempted also to mention Dutoit's theory about the exact position adopted during Giulietta's insemination. See his "Rape, Crypt, and Fantasm," p. 48 on the swan; p. 52 on Count F's probable "back door" entrance.

understand. Kleist's point is not just that the Tinka story is crucial for understanding the transgressive nature of the officer's erotic nature, but, more daringly, that the state of Giulietta's willnessness is essential to them both, to the officer for reasons he recognizes are entirely Satanic, and to Giulietta because her swoon allows her to ignore, and yet at some level exploit, an entire side of herself that her conscious mind finds perverse and unacceptable. It is perhaps not beside the point here to mention that 19th century medical opinion considered conception impossible unless accompanied by female pleasure, another reason perhaps for Giulietta's determined mnenomic evasiveness (Krüger-Fürhoff 73).

III.

In the aftermath of such tortured antinomies it might seem inappropriate, if not delirious, to think of parallels to works in the children's repertory, either Jacob Grimm's "Dornröschen" (1812) or one of the versions of "Snow White" ("Sneewittchen"), that appear in the Grimms' inexhaustible *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, which we said were almost contemporaneous with the February 1808 journal appearance (in *Phöbus*) of the *Marquise*, the *Märchen* appearing four years later in their first edition, in 1812, while the Grimms' Ölenberg Manuscripts, the *Märchen* raw material, as it were, date from 1807 to 1810.[11] We find in both Grimm and Kleist that our intrepid prince, like the Russian Count, is enraptured by a sleeping girl, a fifteen year-old who has been asleep longer than teenagers normally are, even on Saturday mornings. Our heroine of "Thorn Rose" is in a small room in a high tower at the top of a narrow winding staircase. The lovely recumbent, along with the castle and all its attendants, is kept in a perfectly inviolable state by a deadly, impenetrable briar hedge which, over the hundred-year enchantment, grows tall enough to make the tower itself invisible from outside the grounds. Though others have lost their lives in the hedge, our Prince forges fearlessly ahead. He arrives at exactly the right time as far as the Princess is concerned, at the end of the enchantment, as the briars turn to roses at his approach and open of their own accord to let him through, then close again protectively behind him. He finds the tower with its rusty lock and the sleeping Princess who is so beautiful he can't take his eyes off of her. He leans over and awakens

11 See *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm*, with introduction by Kurt Waselowsky. This particular edition comprises the 1857 version of the tales. In English see Jack Zipes' translation of *The Complete Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. In Zipes "Briar Rose" is number 50, "Snow White" is number 53. The Grimms had sent the Ölenberg Manuscripts, original versions of their tales, collected between 1807 and 1810 and discovered in 1920 in a monastery in Alsace, to Clemens Brentano, who had abandoned them. The Grimms destroyed their own copies of the same papers. See Zipes, *Happily Ever After*, p. 145.

her with a kiss, the only element of erotic presumption admitted in this version of the story.

"Thorn Rose" is admirable not only for its enchanting, enchanted, and rather Waldmüller detail of an entire castle in suspended animation, but for the image of the thorn rose itself, which expresses so elegantly the simultaneous enmity and attraction of an adolescent girl, her only apparently antinomical resistance and acceptance where her future is concerned, as she pauses on the cusp of adult life and the mature responsibilities of motherhood. Dornröschen's name, if I can be permitted to shuttle backward to Kleist's Giulietta again, is an allegorical form of what is dramatically portrayed in *The Marquise von O-*, and one reason why it is a mistake to think Kleist's novella has nothing to do with the genre of *Märchen*. To put the point more schematically, "thorn" is to "rose" as the proud and pristine swan, Tinka, is to her muddied, sullied self, and as an outraged and oblivious Giulietta is to her own unacknowledged erotic *Doppelgänger*.[12]

Thorn Rose's counterpart in the Grimms's Snow White has a far more disturbing time of it, with her adult competition – who, in the 1812 version of the story, is her own biological mother, not a stepmother – openly hostile to and envious of her daughter's beauty, even to the extent of wanting to cannibalize the poor girl's lungs and liver.[13] After her assigned executioner, the huntsman, shows mercy, there are three other attempts on her life by the wicked queen, one of which apparently succeeds, so that Snow White winds up dead in the dwarfs' glass coffin where she so enchants a passing prince that he offers her diminutive keepers anything to take her off their hands. He just can't go on living without her as his "dearly beloved."[14] His servants are making off with her when she is fortuitously jostled and the piece of poisoned apple fortunately dislodged. She awakens and prepares for a wedding especially memorable as the one in which her maternal nemesis dances herself to death in the red-hot iron slippers of coercive celebration.

12 Richard Perkins draws our attention to the fact that "Brier-Rose" also alludes to a German proverb: "Without briers, no roses." *Keine Rose ohne Dornen*. Donald Haase 135.

13 See Heinz Rölleke and Ulrike Marquardt's 2 volume edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen, Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm*. These volumes are facsimile reprints of the Grimms' 1812 edition with the Grimms' handwritten corrections and additions. See Vol. 1, 238 ff.

14 The dwarfs wouldn't take all the gold in the world for their Snow White ("nicht um alles Gold in der Welt"), so they give her to the young Prince for nothing. "Die guten Zwerglein...gaben ihm den Sarg." Ellen Cronan Rose traduces the hapless dwarfs by saying that they part with Snow White "no doubt for a suitable compensation," since the programatic feminist reading of the dwarfs requires that they be representatives of the "cash nexus of capitalist patriarchy." See Ellen Cronan Rose 215.

Charles Perrault's version of the story, "La belle au bois dormant" (1697), has its own unique charm and characteristic humor, in which the young prince discreetly refrains from commenting on how out of fashion his Beauty's clothes are after he has waked her up.[15] The cannibalistic rival here is Beauty's mother-in-law, who, after the secret little family of the "sleeping wood" comes to light, wants to devour not only Beauty but her two children as well, stipulating sauce Robert, perfect for rather bland meats with its slight edge of sauteed onions, Dijon mustard, and red wine vinegar. Perrault closes with one of his characteristic impertinent *moralités* where he recognizes that young girls these days don't sleep as tranquilly as they used to and are certainly too impatient to wait a hundred years for their lovers to appear on the scene. "On ne trouve plus de femelle, // Qui dormit si tranquillement" is a comment that must have elicited smiles from the worldly ladies of his audience at Louis' court. But he hesitates,he says, to be the one to condemn modern women for their agitation and impatience. The following lines are from Robert Samber's translation of 1729.

> . . . Very often Hymen's blisses sweet,
> Although some tedious obstacles they meet,
> Which make us for them a long while to stay,
> Are not less happy for approaching slow:
> And that we nothing lose by such delay.
> . . .
> The sex so ardently aspires
> Of this blessed state the sacred joy t'embrace,
> And with such earnest heart pursues them:
> I've not the will, I must confess,
> Nor yet the power, nor fine address,
> To preach this moral to them.
>
> [Que souvent de l'Hymen les agréables noeuds,
> Pour être différés, n'en sont pas moins heureux,
> Et qu'on ne perd rien pour attendre;
> Mais le sexe avec tant d'ardeur,
> Aspire à la foi conjugale,
> Que je n'ai pas la force ni le coeur,
> De lui prêcher cette morale.]

15 See Zipes' edition of *Beauties, Beasts and Enchantment, Classic French Fairy Tales*, 44-51. Heinz Rölleke has written some amusing pages on Jacob Grimm's honest recognition that "Dornröschen," originally transmitted to Grimm by the 20 year-old Marie Hassenpflug, clearly bore the stamp of Charles Perrault. See *Antiker Mythos* 130-2.

The Italian version of the story of which Perrault's is an expurgated version comes from a collection by Giambattista Basile, the *Pentamerone* (1634). If "Sun, Moon, and Talia" is a children's story, then we have to conclude either that children have changed since the 17th century or our attitudes toward them have.[16] Here our beauteous damsel, Talia, is felled by a piece of flax wedged under her finger nail while she is spinning. Her wretched father closes her up in one of his country houses, seating her on a velvet throne under a dais of brocade. Years pass and a young king out hunting with falcons loses one of his birds, who flies up to the open window of Talia's forgotten manse. The king borrows a vintager's ladder and climbs up after the falcon. He beholds Talia through the window, and feels his blood course hotly as he contemplates the many charms of the comatose girl, who, since she is sleeping, cannot interrupt his gaze with an apotropaic gaze of her own. He picks her up and moves her from her velvet chair to a neighboring bed, gathering the first fruits of love without her ever coming around. At this point he goes about his kingly business and forgets about her for a time. After nine months pass, two helpful fairies deliver Talia of twins called Sun and Moon. Even the pangs of childbirth, like the earlier pleasures of love, are insufficient to wake her up. What brings her to consciousness finally are the classic needs of the hungry children who do some exploratory sucking on her fingers before finding what they are actually looking for. In the course of their explorations, they dislodge the "aresta de lino," and when the king remembers her and returns, he's delighted to find his second family awake and thriving. Talia's menacing rival in Basile's version is the king's jealous first wife who attempts to cook the children, serve them to their father, and then to incinerate Talia, who delays matters by taking off one article of clothing after the other until she arrives at her nether garments, at which point the king finally arrives to burn the jealous queen in her own fire. To the king's great joy, the compassionate chef produces the children he's supposed to have cooked for dinner, and all live happily ever after.

Basile's tale seems itself to have been expurgated from an even earlier French novel of endless proportions called *Perceforest*, printed in 1528, though

16 Giambattista Basile, *Il Pentamerone*, translated by Richard Burton. See Day 5, Tale 5. Basile's *Le Cunto de li Cunti* appeared in 1634. Basile in turn seems to have had access to the Italian translation (1531) of the gigantic romance, *Perceforest* (printed in 1528) which contains a version of the Sleeping Beauty, itself translated from French by Susan McNeill Cox. See Marina Warner 220, 436. See also James M. McGlathery 75-6. Heinz Rölleke gives the date of the *Perceforest* novel as "*um 1340*" and says that the similarities between the medieval novel and Basile's narrative are so close, "dass man mit direktem Einfluss rechnen muss" (*Antiker Mythos in unseren Märchen* 133). Perrault could no doubt have known *Perceforest* as well as Basile's *Pentamerone*. For an account of *Perceforest*, see below.

Rölleke puts its origins in medieval times, "um 1340."[17] The novel's point of interest for us here are four chapters from Book III (46, 48, 55, and 56), where we meet Troylus and Zellandine. Troylus is a knight from Royalville in Scotland. Zellandine of the island of Zelland is hidden away in a high tower in a castle surrounded by a moat. A chip of flax has wounded her while she was weaving. She is asleep and can't be waked. Troylus, who loves her but has lost track of where she is, finds her again in Zelland, then loses his memory, recovers, crosses the moat, flies up to her window on the back of a "huge extraordinary bird," and confronts his beloved lying on her bed, not clothed now in antiquated fashions as in Perrault but totally naked. Troylus has earlier received instructions that if he is doughty enough ever to penetrate the tower where the noble lady sleeps, as stiff as stone, he must

> through the opening
> Find the fruit where lies a remedy...
>
> [*Puis qu'eslissiez par la raiere*
> *Le fruit ou gist la medecine...*]

and he will cure Zellandine of her enchanted sleep. A more modern French word than *la raiere* for the "opening" the author has in mind is what we would call now *la meurtrière*, the vertical slit in a castle wall through which arrows can be discharged in the castle's defense. The word is an efficient encapsulation of the paradoxical defensive invitation that Jacob Grimm caught in his botanical thorn-rose phrase. The danger of the genitalia is somewhat more frightening in French, even if *la raiere* does not suggest "murderess," as the more modern word does, but the distribution of light.[18] In any case, what is so clear to us is obscure to the knight, who has to have yet more instruction from the "feminine voice," Venus's, as it happens, who has spoken earlier. Venus tells him to undress and lie beside the maiden, until eventually the meaning of the verses dawns on him. Zellandine sighs heavily, but she doesn't wake. Troylus exchanges rings with her to memorialize his visit and flies away on the bird again. The aunt who attends her surmises from the condition of the sheets a visit by the god of war, Mars. When a son is born, the child removes the flax in the way Basile will agree to, and Zellandine wakes up.

17 *Antiker Mythos* 133. See also note 19. The point of the novel as a whole is the reconciliation of the legends of Alexander with the legends of Arthur. The titular hero gets his name from having eliminated a magician who lived in a forest of theretofore impenetrable density.

18 One of Robert Coover's postmodern fantasies in his *Briar Rose* (1996) includes the thought both of the vertical perforation of the castle wall and the thought that our heroine is a murderess. See p. 13.

The exchanged rings allow the lovers to identify each other again just before Zellandine is to be married off to an unwanted suitor, Neroen, promoted by her imperceptive father. She and her champion flee to Great Britain to attend a party hosted by Perceforest in volume IV of the novel.

IV.

The affiliations between the fanciful French and Italian romances of the irresistible sleeping woman and the more tragic, Teutonic material of heroic saga are surprising, though undeniable. One of the most stimulating of these parallels is the story of Brunhild and Sigurd in the medieval *Volsunga Saga*, in which our Valkyrie heroine Brunhild is lying in full armor on a hill, Hindfell, surrounded by a wall of intimidating fire.[19] Like the boy leaving home in the Grimms #4, Sigurd has yet to learn what fear is, is consequently undaunted by the fire, and plunges through it. Nor is his further progress slowed appreciably by the skin-tight chain mail, the *Brünne* ("byrny" in William Morris' formulation) which gives this sleeping beauty her name. Sigurd's trusty sword Gram makes short work of her armor as its edge gently peels her down to her soft, feminine undergarments, though here I may be hallucinating forward in time to details in Wagner's magnificent opera *Siegfried* (1876), which closes with the waking and wooing of Brünnhilde. "*Das ist kein Mann*!" as the startled Siegfried discovers when he gets to that point (Wagner 85).[20] The *Abwehr und Warnung* of the chain mail in combination with the reassuring softness beneath it provides the counterpart here of the familiar "rose/briar," *l'amour/la meurtrière* antinomy we have noted elsewhere. In her Nordic incarnation, Brunhild wakes and is glad to see Sigurd, offering him the "drink of love" as well as a great deal of information about the powerful efficacy of runes for all occasions. That she does more than just lecture him about magic writing we know for a fact, because together they have a daughter, Aslaug, who turns up later to live with foster parents when Brunhild, to her surprise and dangerous annoyance, winds up married to Gunnar, when she has already given herself to Sigurd.

19 See especially Chapters 20, 23, 24, and 27 of Willam Morris' translation of *Volsunga Saga, The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs*. The poems were not written down until 1200 AD in Iceland but go back in time centuries earlier, perhaps to 7th century anonymous authors in Norway. Jacob Grimm himself recognized the affinities between Sleeping Beauty and Brynhild. See James M. McGlathery 73. See also Robert Petsch 80-97.

20 "Brünnhilde liegt vor ihm in einem weichen, weiblichen Gewande. Er fährt erschreckt und staunend auf." The German phrase in the next line belongs incidentally not to Wagner but to Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies* (1922), number 7, line 92.

A later episode (Chapter 24) of the same saga contains the detail, familiar from Basile, of the hunting hawk gone astray to perch on Brunhild's high window, where she's spotted by Sigurd doing flattering needlework-narratives of his mighty exploits. The sight of her makes him so love-sick that he loses interest even in hunting. Moreover, the image of the swan on the blue wave, familiar from Kleist's *Marquise*, can also be found in the *Volsunga Saga* (Chapter 27) where it bodies forth Brunhild's severity and pride as she tries to discourage the man who claims to be Gunnar (it's Sigurd in disguise) from pestering her with unwelcome questions of marriage.

V.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention a text at the far end of the spectrum from all head-cracking, bone-crunching Valkyries and fearless hero-spawn of Wälse, but one which depends no less on the erotic magnetism of the sleeping beloved, one which gives the motif its own unique and troubling spin. I refer to Marcel Proust's fifth volume of *Remembrance of Things Past*, the one he called *La prisonnière* and was still correcting at his death in 1922.[21] Tormented by jealousy just as much as Swann had been by Odette de Crécy, Marcel tries in several places in these pages to account for the appeal of his beloved Albertine as she is stretched out on his bed sleeping. He feels that, as she sleeps, she divests herself, one by one, of all the different identities with which she has always deceived him in waking life and becomes something far more authentic, something more purely physiological than her waking self, something plant-like, more a hollow reed, a convolvulus thrusting out its tendrils than a human being. She becomes a creature that breathes and is nothing else besides, something at whose shore of sleep he can relax and muse at leisure, his concentration unbroken by her conscious gaze, her questions, his obligation to answer her. At such times, he thinks, she belongs more to him than at any other time of the day. Her whole physiological existence is spread out before him, at his disposal. He climbs noiselessly into bed and holds her, kissing her without interrupting her oblivion. She becomes an instrument on which he plays to extract various modulations, her breathing changing ever so slightly by the touch of his fingers on her body. "I felt at such moments that I had possessed her more completely, like an unconscious and unresisting object of dumb nature" (67). Her nature at such times is free from all deception and hypocrisy. Presumably he does not worry about her dreams, since whatever she is dreaming would be involuntary even if she is not dreaming of him. Her breath is paradisiacal, he says enthusiastically, her essential being drawn from the pure song of angels. At yet other times he sees

21 See esp. pp. 64-9; 109; 366-67. In English the volume is entitled *The Captive*.

the sleeping girl as dead, her sheets wrapped around her body like a shroud. He has warned the employees of his house not to wake her when she sleeps late. He hears the sarcastic and hostile Françoise telling the other servants in the house passing on his commands not to "wake the Princess."

In Yasunari Kawabata's *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* (1969) waking the princess is hardly an option, since the drug she has willingly taken prevents it. Kawabata imagines the enchanted castle as an inn of adventure for older clients, all trusted gentlemen, who are of a status and beyond the age of taking unfair advantage of such oblivious passivity but who nevertheless still like to lie next to a young woman, look at her in the soft light, breathe in the odors of her skin and hair, dream of the youth that has passed, lose themselves in emotion, and recover some modicum of rejuvenation without the inevitable shame should the girl awaken. Eguchi, though sixty-seven, is hardly safe physiologically, though he decides after some hesitation to honor the rules of the house. Each of the young women evokes in her uniqueness different modulations of emotion and memory, and all the flowers of his past life bloom again in response to the powerful erotic force flowing from his naked, and still untouched, companions. He is not unaware of the dangers to both parties of such an arrangement, nor is the adventure of the House of the Sleeping Beauties without dire consequences. The result is a mood as strange and chilling as it is erotic.

VI.

After all these versions of passion unleashed, not just in young men, by a girl so unconscious that she doesn't know what she is doing, her magnetic power transmitted, not by coquettishness, conversational skills, or even an ability to cook, but by her inanimate physical form alone, one might be tempted, especially if one were a woman, to produce bitter generalizations about what it is, exactly, that men want women for. And by and large, if we survey what has been said by women in the last, say, thirty years, beginning with Anne Sexton's *Transformations* (1971), we find that women have done just that, concluding, as Hélène Cixous puts it in *The Newly Born Woman*, that it is men, not women, who like to play dolls (1975, 66). Sexton, for her part, has some robust things to say about how important it is for men that they arrive first on the scene, how crucial is the value men place on a girl's virginity, her "unsoiled," "bonefish whiteness," as she opens her china-blue doll's eyes to say "Good Day" and closes them, as Sexton says, "for the thrust of the unicorn," the virgin's legendary companion of tradition, transformed by Sexton into a phallus-bearer for a male culture that prizes the girl as an odalisque, a passive receptacle for its passion.[22]

22 I am much indebted to Ellen Cronan Rose (see footnote 5 above) and to Mary Trachsel who recommended the piece to me as a summary of the recent scholarship.

Male culture becomes for Sexton synonymous with rape culture. Andrea Dworkin puts the meaning of the comatose beloved even more uncompromisingly when she says that, for men, "the only good woman is a dead woman," implying that a woman of such slavish passivity might as well be dead, or a Stepford wife (Dworkin 41; cited in Rose).[23] Dworkin would certainly find her thesis confirmed by Kawabata's *House of the Sleeping Beauties*.

In the late 1970s, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar continue this critique by identifying the conflict between Snow White and the jealous queen as a conflict over the message of the mirror, the assurance that one of them is the fairest woman of all, a program followed, say the authors, by almost every Western literary text, devised as these texts all are in the minds of men to transmit to the world male fantasies of power over everything that threatens them (36). Hence women do appear in these male stories, as Carol Christ says, but "only in roles defined by men"(4). That is, women are deflected from engaging meaningfully with the world and discovering their identity in that engagement. Instead they become reactive and narcissistic, wondering endlessly what men think of them, listening to that voice in the mirror, becoming what Diana, Princess of Wales, so lamentably was, an empty golden vessel to be filled with media attention, ideally of the purest sort, with all indecent reference to lovers and colonic irrigations purged away.

These pioneering feminist insights have in turn given occasion for the various revolutionary retoolings, reformulations of the old stories to carry a point of view more compatible with the point of view of women. Thus Sexton's Rapunzel, fixated on the rampion of the neighboring witch's garden, suggests the ineffable mystery of woman's own sexuality, fecund, luxuriant, insatiable, as Rapunzel gazes ravenously on the witch's herb, "fancying that she would die if she could not have it." For the lesbian poet Olga Broumas, in an homage to her precursor Sexton's influential icon, only the witch's fertile garden, or rather the witch herself, can provide the herb that stills the young girl's appetite.[24] "You might have been, though you're not my mother," says Broumas to her witch, denying that a girl's erotic allegiance is properly to men, implying instead the notion that heterosexuality is just a fabrication

23 Edith Borchardt is similarly outraged by Pauline Kael's admiration for the Russian Count F – who rapes the Marquise von O- "It is hardly dashing to take a woman when she is unconscious, depriving her of her right to struggle against the violation in self-defense." See Borchardt's "Eric Rohmer's *Marquise von O...*," cited above.

24 Also see Rose, 217. The "O" that Broumas has in mind is the Greek Omega, the horseshoe-letter, which in its shape suggests the vowel-cistern, the "cave of sound" in which Broumas will find the language of the ancestral mothers. Hence Broumas' "politics of transliteration" announced in her poem "Artemis." She will rediscover the lost language of woman. Apparently she does not have Kleist's Marquise in mind, though she would find Steven Huff's speculations about the "meaning of the O" in Giulietta's name quite apropos. See note 5 above.

of the male sex-factory, that it is actually quite as natural that a woman's erotic yearning be for other women as for men, since both boys and girls are aboriginally "matrisexual."

And finally there are Angela Carter's various powerful revisions – I'm thinking of "The Tiger's Bride," "The Werewolf," "The Company of Wolves," or "Wolf Alice" of *The Bloody Chamber* (1980) – of the old stories in which Carter encourages little girls, though one doesn't imagine her audience as "little," exactly – to grow beyond the point simply of exchanging one master, their fathers, for another, their husbands, and to accept their own primal independent animality, undoing their culture's supposed repression of sex, accepting as Kleist's Giulietta could not so easily do, the uncompromising, anarchic importunities of the body.[25]

In the light of such impressive arguments in favor of unfettered womanhood and against the voyeuristic, manipulative, imprisoning, obstreperous, though somehow furtive, nature of male desire, it is no wonder that the relations between the sexes have seemed dicey over the past few decades, if not over the entire history of human kind, and that the products of the male imagination which constitute the Western literary tradition have been rejected wholesale as ideologically contaminated and repulsive, as patriarchal and phallocentric. All our male texts have usurped the voice of woman, allowing only tiny fragments of that voice to remain, "mangled into our language," as Olga Broumas says. Those seductive Hessian raconteurs, the Grimms, have Thorn-Rose passively waiting to be awakened by a stranger's kiss, while Zellandine and Basile's Neapolitan Talia respond finally to the primal hunger of infants they have unwittingly conceived and borne. The gentle edge of Sigurd's mighty sword disarms Brunhild, peels her down to her essential female softness. Without Sigurd's insensate courage she would still be lying seductively atop Hindfell surrounded by the forbidding fire. Marcel prefers to love Albertine while she is unconscious, a thing of mute nature. Since woman is the deceptive, inconstant creature she is, only in her vegetal state can we enjoy the illusion of possessing her, we think, completely. Only when she's asleep can we tell ourselves she is not imaginatively substituting someone else for ourselves, as Goethe reminds us that lovers have been known to do.[26] Even more calumnious is the point Kleist makes when he implies that his Giulietta faints precisely by way of invitation to her Russian hero to help himself to her defenseless person. Nor in Kawabata is

25 See also Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* pp. 282-291.

26 See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Kindred by Choice*.. A case in point is the ill-fated Otto, Charlotte's child. See Book I, Chapter XI, for Otto's conception; Book II, Chapter VIII, for the child's multiple resemblances.

Sleeping Beauty just for young men. For Eguchi, our Japanese Baudelaire, the odor of an inanimate woman's skin and hair becomes a drug to transport aged gentlemen back to their youth, releasing the springs of memory and energy. Or, since stormy weather seems to accompany Eguchi's visits to his sleeping beauties, we can borrow the nautical metaphor from "La chevelure" of *The Flowers of Evil*. "I will go where trees and men are filled with sap and swoon away their days in the tropical air."

> *Fortes tresses, soyez la houle qui m'enlève!*
> [Strong tresses, be the surge that lifts me!]

VII.

As a man one feels implicated in such aggressions and predations committed against the other sex by our literary representatives. One hangs one's head with shame at an erotic drive getting up its head of steam in the presence of a comatose recumbent, as helpless to choose as to resist us, unconscious even of our presence, gazeless herself, abandoned without defense to the gaze of our desire.

Because we are keeping in mind these, our regrettable shortcomings (*Homines sumus*, hence nothing human is alien to us), it is all the more startling to stumble upon the old story, a story older indeed than any of the ones mentioned earlier, of Endymion and his lover Selene, Goddess of the Moon. I will explain in a moment where in our literature one comes upon this story. There is a version of it in John Keats, of course, but I do not have him in mind at present. The *muthos* is straightforward enough. It seems that Selene once saw Endymion lying asleep in a cave on Mount Latmus, just north of Miletus in Caria (Southern Turkey). It all happened at night, Selene's preferred time. Endymion was so ravishing, so vulnerable, that she lay down next to him and kissed his eyelids, ensuring a dreamless sleep from which he has yet to awaken. Night after night she visits him. With the years he never grows a day older. His downy cheeks never lose their rosy bloom. All told, she has borne him fifty daughters. What kind of lover would it be who prefers her beloved never to wake when she visits him? A timid, modest creature, perhaps, who prefers anonymous pleasures? But perhaps not necessarily timid or modest. One clear advantage of Endymion's condition is that Selene always knows where her lover is. He won't go hunting after boar with the other boys and run unnecessary dangers like Venus' much-lamented Adonis or Astarte's Thammuz. He won't boast to others about his arrangement with her, compromising her reputation, much less sell his story to the tabloids as Diana's ungallant cavalry officer James Hewitt did. He won't ever be tempted to leave her for someone younger. He won't get drunk and slap her around.

And he is available at any time of the night when Selene feels compelled to see him. As Spenser, thinking of another such possessive lover, puts it:

> But she her selfe, when ever that she will,
> Possesseth him, and of his sweetness takes her fill.
> (*F.Q.* III, vi, 46)

The strange thing about the Selene story is that it seems to originate from only one source, and, though it is about a woman's desire, it could still be seen as a story confirming the justifiable outrage of Sexton, Gilbert, Gubar, Andrea Dworkin, and others over the rape-mentality of men, who tell calumnious stories of value only to their exploitative selves. Such outrage would continue to be justified, that is, if our source for the story were not herself a woman, namely the great poet, Sappho of Lesbos. The verse that has generated the speculation about her tastes on the heterosexual side of desire is rendered by Paul Roche in *The Love Songs of Sappho* (94, 189-90). The fragment is number 72 in his collection: "So I am not the only woman who haunts the Latmian Cave" [Ouk ar'ego moune meta Latmion antron alusko...]. Roche implies the line is embedded, perhaps as a direct Sappho quotation, and certainly as an allusion, in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (Bk. IV.57, 298-99).[27] In that context we find a highly indignant Selene exulting over the anguish of Medea, who has in the past repeatedly "disorbed" the Moon-goddess, conjured her right out of the sky, with her witchy incantations on the nights that Medea was practicing her craft and Selene had love on her mind, hence entertained notions of visiting her comatose Latmian playmate. Now Medea is painfully in love as well, and Selene feels all the thrills of *Schadenfreude*. It is of course a fact that Sappho (625 B.C.) antedates Apollonius

27 The new translation by Peter Green has helpful notes; see pp. 152, 294-295. Green's rendering of lines IV.57-8:

> So, I'm not the only one to rush off to the Latmian cave,
> nor do I alone burn up for handsome Endymion!
>
> Ouk ar'ego moune meta Latmion antron alusko,
> oud' oie kalo peridaiomai Endumioni.

See also Pausanius, *Guide to Greece*, vol. 2, p. 198. Mt. Latmos is the present-day Besparmak Dagi. Endymion's tomb was displayed at Eleia. At Herakleia, however, they said Endymion went away to Mt. Latmos, where there is a natural rock shrine which may have belonged to him. The article on Endymion in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Volume V, pt. 2, p. 2559) explains that the story must have originated from the way the moon rests on the dark mountains, then disappears behind them.The article also states that Sappho is mentioned "als ältester Zeuge dieser Fabel."

by at least four centuries. The scholiast on Apollonius identifies Sappho herself as the authority for the Endymion story in the Loeb *Greek Lyric*. The connection between Sappho and the Endymion reference is so strong and persistent, in fact, that Arthur Weigall in his reconstruction of her life in *Sappho of Lesbos* (1932) says that not only did Sappho originate the story but that she is herself the model for the Moon-goddess.[28] Endymion for Sappho is the ideal man, not at all to be feared, not to be associated with the kind of manly forcefulness which always displeases her. One thinks in this connection of her poem "To Anaktoria": Some say the fairest thing on the fine black earth is a marching column of men. Some prefer a flotilla of advancing warships. Not for Sappho, though, such bellicose demonstrations. She insists the fairest thing in the world is the one you love.[29] Nor is she apparently ever tempted, as Keats is, to praise the boon of wine, so often responsible for propelling men too energetically into the company of women. It seems that, in the matter of men, Sappho prefers to retain control, and it is this sort of control that Selene retains over her sleeping Endymion. Weigall adds: "Something in her temperament, moreover, [i.e., Sappho's] reached with warmth to the thought of Selene's active, not passive, part in these tender pleasures of the night."

Those who have read *The Laughter of Aphrodite* (1966), the novel about Sappho by the distinguished classicist Peter Green, will recognize that to some degree Green adapts Weigall's assessment for his version of our heroine as well.[30] Green has Sappho's Aeolian kinsman Alcaeus mention that in Western parts of Hellas the story of Endymion's "strange interlude in the Latmian cave" is quite unknown. The story is not common currency in the West. The waspish Alcaeus goes on to wonder, "What sort of lover *was* the Moon, I wonder? As cold as she looks?" Alceaus' point would seem to differ slightly here from Weigall's to imply in Sappho the sort of mechanical approach to pleasure normally associated with the male gender. Green is also moved to imagine an unpleasant amorous encounter between Sappho and

28 Arthur Weigall, *Sappho of Lesbos: Her Life and Times* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1932), p. 283.

29 *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Translated by Willis Barnstone, Introduction by William McCulloh (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 66. In Campbell, *Greek Lyric*, see p. 67.

30 See especially pp. 265-66. See also p. 19. As for notions of Sappho's relative aggressiveness as a lover of her own sex, Green apparently disdains to make use of the almost horrified reconstruction by Denys Page of one of Sappho's lines in his *Sappho and Alcaeus, An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Lesbian Poetry*, p. 145: "It looks as though we must admit . . . that Sappho used in her poetry a word of quite unusual coarseness, referring to practices about which silence is almost universally maintained." The word to which Page seems to be referring is *olisbos* (dildo).

Pittacus, eventual *aesymnetes* ("dictator") of Mytilene, fond of wine himself and long-standing lover in Green's novel of Sappho's aunt Helen, not to mention a democratizing political enemy deliberately eroding the power of old aristocratic families like Sappho's own. A megrimish Sappho fights Pittacus off but can't rekindle her erotic interest in men until much later in life.[31] When she does, the last thing she would ever want is some battle-scarred hoplite with a hairy face and retsina-breath mashing her down. She imagines the ideal amorous encounter in quite another way. One could call it the Latmian Way, allowing it to run alongside Swann's and the Guermantes Way, since it is uncanny how far in the direction of Marcel and Albertine this Way actually goes.

VIII.

To move now from narrative enchantment and its mystifications into the harsh light of discursive analysis may be a chilling experience, but one which at this point, perhaps, we owe the patient reader. By now it should be obvious that Sleeping Beauty is a powerful erotic daydream with an efficacy, an emotive charge, for both men and women. For a woman the strategy is to imagine herself as the enchanted sleeper, taken without actually willing to be by a man animated by her form alone. To resist this desire scarcely occurs to him, so alluring is her appeal. On the woman's part, also, there is a radical disjunction between body and mind. Her body has issued a call to arms that her mind ignores. Her power exerted over another is all the more overwhelming for being entirely passive. Her admirer thinks the power is his, but it is in fact hers. She wakes to find her future firmly in place, sometimes even with her children already on the scene. She has not had to locate her lover, has not set her sights on him or aggressively competed for him to notice her, much less clawed her way through the ranks of other women to single him out and take possession of him. He has just fallen already passionate into her lap, carried by an élan worthy of Schopenhauer, a force greater than either of them as individuals. As for the male side of the fantasy, there is initially intense pleasure in looking at a woman who doesn't look back, in having visual access to features of her body which normally she would conceal if she were aware of the presence of a stranger. Such also is the appeal of the unguarded female torso painted by Gustave Courbet, *L'Origine du monde* (1866), in which the focus of the painting is on the model's lower body, her identity above the shoulders seemingly irrelevant, extending beyond the

31 See Green, Chapter 5. Heinz Rölleke recalls a different classical figure associated with miraculous sleep, Epimenides of Crete, mentioned in Plato and Diogenes Laertius. Epimenides, a kind of pagan saint and ascetic, lacks the sexy associations which are our focus here. See Rölleke 134. Also *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd edition, p. 399.

margins of the frame. The image is reminiscent in fact of Montaigne's inebriated rural sleeper from "Of Drunkenness." The undeniable power of the Courbet painting flows from the same dark regions of the human soul as empowers our sleeping beauty. There will be no asking permission for access to her or feeling shame for wanting it. And there is pleasure in the dream that she is there for his taking in all the other ways as well, that she will not remember him, will not be able to identify him, that he can get away from her as soon as he wants, and that is immediately, *triste post coitum*, returning if and when he wants. He can do anything he fancies to her; she can't resist some experiments and approve others. He imagines her completely in his power, at a time when, in fact, he is completely in hers. In some cases, as in Sappho's, woman can imagine herself as having access to man in precisely the same way as this, with the love object fetishized and dehumanized and permanently emptied of will, serving only as a source of pleasure, not at all as a friend or benign companion. What is the nature of human eroticism that it thrives so outrageously, so universally, upon the sleeping beauty fantasy? What is this passion that it clearly makes us so uncomfortable with each other? There have been others besides Neil Nertz to claim that *L'Origine du monde* is a painting about male hostility to women.[32] Certainly there is something suspect about these feelings, something secretive and furtive. When the Courbet painting was in his possession, Jacques Lacan apparently kept it concealed behind its own sliding cabinet doors. Courbet himself did the same. Was the painting their guilty pleasure–or an icon, an object of devotion, accessible only to the worthy initiate? One feels that the eroticism it represents is troubling on some important ethical level, that in enjoying it, one is doing what has been forbidden, giving rein to what John Updike calls the stiffening sense of sin. Courbet's model feels pleasure in her exposed vulnerability, if the erectile tissue of her breast is any indication. Giulietta, the Marquise von O-, ends in doing what she *herself* has forbidden and finds atrocious.

Fortunately there are studies of the dynamics of eroticism which shed some light on these murky depths where anger and desire rise out of the same root, studies in which the kinder relationships between human beings, their mutual familiarity and affectionate friendship, the non-possessive, gentle touch promoted by Rilke, the hands resting without pressure (*DE* 2:66 ff.), are only, alas, the signs of tedium, of desire's utter absence. Peace means an extinct libido. Even lower animals, says the physician/psychiatrist Robert Stoller,

32 Neil Hertz, *The End of the Line* (213-4). Hertz's phrase for the mood of the painting is "defensive misogyny." Shuli Barzilai writes a useful summary of feminist positions on the painting in her "Brief History of *The Origin of the World* (8-18)." Günter Metken raises the possibility that Whistler's friend Jo Heffernen was the model for *L'Origine du monde*, that it was she who generously offered the "intimacy of her lap" for Courbet's study (20).

are subject to boredom in the same erotic contexts as we (23-4). The sluggish flow of routine seems to be the problem. Untroubled normality induces tedium. Excitement lies elsewhere, in strangeness and transgression. The gentler arrangements between men and women, kinship or marriage, for instance, may certainly be the basis of civilized life, may be true friendship, *philía*, but *philía* is not *eros*. Let us think again of Courbet's painting. Hertz and the feminists are right in their way. What has to be there when eros is present is hostility, and hostility is inimical to normal friendship. The friendship of lovers is closer to the ungentle fellowship of the battlefield where mortal enemies find themselves bound together by a form of exhilarating rage. As we know from Phaeacian Demodocus's song in the *Odyssey*, Aphrodite has a taste for the god of war. Apollonius, too, imagines Aphrodite's breast reflected in the shield of Ares, one of the decorations of Jason's crimson cloak (I.742-6). The stranger you love is no guest-friend of your father. He is your father's enemy. Medea turns from Aiëtes to Jason, Giulietta from the Commandant to Count F-. Love generates itself from the struggle of combatants. In such contexts there is a sense of life-threatening danger, of the forbidden, of being where one should not be, of taking something that belongs to someone else. From a woman's point of view, one way to be complicitous in this fantasy is to give oneself away without knowing it, to be asleep when it happens, to be Kleist's Giulietta. The other way, apparently more uncommon, is for her to be the raptor herself, the Selene of Endymion. It is important to understand that the kind of raptor behavior identified here is the sort filtered through the aesthetic mode, without which there would be literal violence and damage. No one wants to think of Serbians and Kosovars, much less excuse that behavior as the way things have to be. Stoller reassuringly tries to make a distinction between aggression and hostility. Neither word is quite gentle enough for the thing we are trying to name. In any case, love is one of war's aesthetic translations. Raptor love depends upon pretending. What happens in the head does not necessarily happen on the bed. Stoller refers to inner "scripts" that we write for ourselves (30). What these scripts have in common, if they are erotic, is some form of revenge. The lover compensates in his own mind for the traumas that earlier life has inflicted on him. Everyone has such injuries, involving powerlessness and victimization. Eros is the means through which we convert this previous pain to pleasure. The beloved would be less than thrilled to know the ruthlessness, the selfishness, with which he or she is treated in our imagination, hence the necessary privacy of the script. Still, the more powerful the injury being palliated by the erotic encounter, the stronger the pleasure. These scripts have to be constantly rewritten, says Stoller, since they are as degradable by familiarity as anything else that is all too human. Rising boredom is a longing for hostility. It is not the case that affection, generosity, and ultimate concern

are not valuable, even essential qualities for human civilization to prosper. They just are not erotic. Erotic pleasure depends on neurotic mechanisms. For these mechanisms to function one does not have to be consumed with hatred. Such a strong emotion would be too obvious to others and finally repellent. Faint hostility is quite enough. What is the word, asks Stoller, for just a "whisper of hostility"? Surely the expression he is looking for is "Sleeping Beauty."

Auburn University

Works Cited

Apollonius Rhodios. *The Argonautika*. Translated by Peter Green. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Apollonius Rhodius. *The Argonautica*. Translated by R. C. Seaton. London: Heinemann, 1912.

Barnstone, Willis, ed. and trans. *Greek Lyric Poetry*. Introduction by William McCulloh. New York: Schocken Books, 1962.

Barzilai, Shuli. *Lacan and the Matter of Origins*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Basile, Giambattista. *The Pentamerone*. Translated by Richard Burton. New York: H. Liveright, 1927.

Bentzel, Curtis. "Knowledge in Narrative: The Significance of the Swan in Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...*" *The German Quarterly* 64 (1991), no. 3, 296-303.

Bernheimer, Kate, ed. *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.

Bianchi, Lorenzo. *Studien über Heinrich von Kleist*. Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1921.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Decameron*. Translated by Richard Aldington. New York: Doubleday, 1930.

Borchardt, Edith. "Eric Rohmer's *Marquise von O.* and the Theory of the German Novella." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 12 (1984), no. 2, 129-135.

——. *Mythische Strukturen im Werk Heinrich von Kleists*. New York: Peter Lang, 1987.

Broumas, Olga. *Beginning with O*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

Calvino, Italo. *Italian Folktales*. Translated by George Martin. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Campbell, David A., ed. and trans. *Greek Lyric*, volume 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Carter, Angela. *The Bloody Chamber*. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.

Christ, Carol P. *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1980.

Cixous, Hélène and Clement, Catherine. *The Newly Born Woman*. Translated by Betsy Wing, Foreword by Sandra M. Gilbert. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Cohn, Dorritt. "Kleist's 'Marquise von O...'; The Problem of Knowledge." *Monatshefte* 67 (1975), no. 2, 129-144.

Coover, Robert. *Briar Rose*. New York: Grove Press, 1996.

Cox, Susan McNeill, trans. "The Complete Tale of Troylus and Zellandine from the *Perceforest* Novel: An English Translation. *Merveilles et Contes / Marvels & Tales* IV, 1 (May 1990), 119-139.

Dünnhaupt, Gerhard. "Kleist's *Marquise von O...*and its Literary Debt to Cervantes." *Arcadia* 10 (1975), 147-157.

Dutoit, Thomas. "Rape, Crypt, and Fantasm: Kleist's *Marquise of O...*" *Mosaic* 27 (September 1994), no. 3, pp. 45-64.

Dworkin, Andrea. *Woman Hating*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Translated by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1966.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Gubar, Susan. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Kindred by Choice*. Translated H. M. Waidson. London: John Calder, 1960.

Green, Peter. *The Laughter of Aphrodite*. London: John Murray, 1965. Recently reissued by the University of California Press, 1993.

Hammond, N. G. L. and Scullard, H. H. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Haase, Donald, ed. *The Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993.

Hertz, Neil. *The End of the Line*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Tales of Hoffmann*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982.

Huff, Steven. "Kleist and Expectant Virgins: The Meaning of the 'O' in *Die Marquise von O...*" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* LXXXI (July 1982), no. 3, 367-375.

Kawabata, Yasunari. *The House of the Sleeping Beauties and Other Stories*. Translated by Edward Seidensticker, with an Introduction by Yukio Mishima. Tokyo, Palo Alto: Kodansha, 1969.

Keats, John. *Keats's Endymion: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Stephen T. Steinhoff. Troy, New York: Whitston, 1987.

Kleist, Heinrich von. *The Marquise von O- and Other Stories*. Translated and with an Introduction by David Luke and Nigel Reeves. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978.

Kleist, Heinrich von. *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*. Edited by Helmut Sembdner. Munich: Hanser, 1961.
Krüger-Fürhoff, Irmela Marei. "Epistemological Asymmetries and Erotic Stagings: Father-Daughter Incest in Heinrich von Kleist's *The Marquise of O...*" *Women in German Yearbook* Volume 12, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer & Patricia Herminghouse (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 71-86.
Laurs, Axel. "Towards Idylls of Domesticity in Kleist's *Die Marquise von O*," *AUMLA* [Journal of the Australasian Universities Language And Literature Association], Vol. 64 (November 1985) 175-189.
Levin, Ira. *The Stepford Wives*. New York: Random House, 1972.
McGlathery, James M. *Grimms' Fairy Tales, A History of Criticism on a Popular Classic*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993.
Metkin, Günter. *Gustave Courbet, Der Ursprung der Welt*. Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1997.
Montaigne, Michel de. *The Essays*. John Florio, tr. London: Dent, 1910.
Morris, William. *Volsunga Saga, The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs*. Introduction by Robert Gutman. New York: Collier Books, 1962.
Page, Denys. *Sappho and Alcaeus, An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Lesbian Poetry*. London: Oxford University Press, 1955.
Pausanius. *Guide to Greece*, vol. 2. Translated by Peter Levi. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
Perkins, Richard. "Little Brier Rose: Young Nietzsche's Sleeping Beauty Poem as Legend and Swan Song." *The Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Edited by Donald Haase. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993.
Perrault, Charles. *Contes*. Edited by Gilbert Rouger. Paris: Garnier, 1967.
——. *Histories: or, Tales of Past Times*. Trans. Robert Samber. Reprint of the 1729 edition. New York: Garland, 1977.
Perry, Petra. "Das Fantastische bei Kleist und Todorov." *The Germanic Review* 63 (1988), no. 2, 87-93.
Petsch, Robert. "Dornröschen und Brynhild." *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 42 (1917), 80-97.
Politzer, Heinz. "Der Fall der Frau Marquise, Beobachtungen zu Kleists *Marquise von O...*" *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft* 51 (1977), no. 1, 98-128.
Proust, Marcel. *Remembrance of Things Past*, Vol. 3, *The Captive*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin; and by Andreas Mayor. New York: Random House, 1981.
Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Duino Elegies*. Translated by J. B. Leishman and Stephen Spender. New York: Norton, 1963.
Roche, Paul, ed. and trans. *The Love Songs of Sappho*. Introduction by Page DuBois. New York: Signet Books, 1966.

Rölleke, Heinz. "Die Stellung des Dornröschenmärchens zum Mythos und zur Heldensage." *Antiker Mythos in unseren Märchen*. Wolfdietrich Siegmund, ed.. Kassel: Erich Röth, 1984. 125-37.
—— and Marquardt, Ulrike, eds. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen, Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm*, 2 vols. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986.
Rorty, Richard. "Freud and Moral Reflection." *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Rose, Ellen Cronan. "Through the Looking Glass: When Women Tell Fairy Tales." *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, ed. Elizabeth Abel, Marianne, Hirsch, & Elizabeth Langland. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1983.
Seago, Karen. "Nursery Politics: Sleeping Beauty, or the Acculturation of a Tale." *New Comparison*, Number 20 (Autumn 1995).
Sembdner, Helmut. *Heinrich von Kleist 1803-1862, Eine Bibliographie*. Stuttgart: Fritz Eggert, 1966.
Sexton, Anne. *Transformations*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971.
Silz, Walter. *Heinrich von Kleist: Studies in His Works and Literary Character*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961.
Stevens, A. *Heinrich von Kleist, The Dramas and Stories*. Oxford: Berg, 1994.
Stoller, Robert. *Sexual Excitement, Dynamics of Erotic Life*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.
Swales, Erika. "The Beleaguered Citadel: A Study of Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...*" *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft* 51 (March 1977), no. 1, 129-147.
Wagner, Richard. *Siegfried*. Introduction by Wilhelm Zentner. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973.
Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde, On Fairy Tales and their Tellers*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1994.
Waselowsky, Kurt, ed. *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm*. Vollständige Ausgabe with Introduction. Munich: Goldmann, 1990.
Weigall, Arthur. *Sappho of Lesbos: Her Life and Times*. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1932.
Weiss, Hermann. "Precarious Idylls: The Relationship between Father and Daughter in Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...*" *Modern Language Notes* 91 (1976), 538-42.
Wissowa,Georg, ed. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart: Druckenmuller, 1972.
Zipes, Jack, ed. and trans. *The Complete Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. New York: Bantam, 1987.
——, ed. and trans. *Beauties, Beasts and Enchantment, Classic French Fairy Tales*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989.
——. *The Brothers Grimm*. New York and London: Routledge, 1988.
——. *Happily Ever After*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.
——. *Myth as Fairy Tale*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994.