

ROLE-PLAYING AS A LITERARY DEVICE
IN SELECTED SHORTER WORKS
OF ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis intends to analyze role playing in the following shorter works of Arthur Schnitzler: Der grüne Kakadu (1898), Die letzten Masken (1901), Grosse Szene (1917), and Traumnovelle (1926).

These shorter works of Schnitzler are selected with the intention to show that roles, as Schnitzler uses them, are frequently developed as extensions of life rather than as imitations of life, and that in these developments, roles are associated in some way with death and/or social disintegration. The study further tries to prove that in Schnitzler's later writing one is aware of a positive outlook which is not found in his earlier writing. A quotation from Feise and Steinhauer shows that these critics, among others, consider Schnitzler's outlook on life purely negative:

The truth is that Schnitzler shows a society in disintegration because man no longer has any integrating principle by which to live. His works are a series of demonstrations of Nietzsche's triumphant cry, "God is dead." Only Schnitzler is not triumphant about the event; for he has no Dionysian philosophy to offer mankind in place of the traditional faith it has lost. He cannot get beyond the negative stage of showing the world in ruins. The young Hugo von Hofmannsthal had gone through the same phase; indeed many of the best fin-de-siècle minds did so. For some of them it was only a phase, a mood. Hofmannsthal found peace in religion and conservatism . . . Thomas Mann slowly fought his way to a democratic dialectical humanism. Schnitzler never emerged from the negative stage.¹

¹Harry Steinhauer, and Ernst Feise (ed.), "Arthur Schnitzler," German Literature since Goethe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), p. 107.

The following statement from Rey's study of Traumnovelle shows the possibility of a positive outlook: "Aber wir haben dennoch allen Grund zu der Annahme, dass das Wagnis des Guten nicht vergebens unternommen wird . . ."2 The study of the four pieces chosen for this thesis will attempt to support the conclusion that the first quotation above is valid for the early period of Schnitzler's writing, and that the second quotation is valid for his later writing.

These shorter works of Schnitzler are chosen also because they cover best the variety of his writing. Schnitzler's work includes thirty-two plays and one-acters, fifty-six stories (both short sketches and novellen), and only two novels of length. The selections cover the early, the middle, and the late writing periods of Schnitzler. Another reason for studying the above named works is that they best illustrate the different genres in which he wrote and the subject considered in this study.

The dictionary defines the word role, as: "a character assigned or assumed, a part played by an actor or singer, a function." The questions and analyses possible in the study of roles are most varied, but beyond the dictionary definition, two viewpoints of the role will be considered.

The play on the stage, the roles men play, the mask, may all be thought of as characterizations of life situations in terms of detachment from life. This concept presents, for instance, the successful

²William H. Rey, "Das Wagnis des Guten in Schnitzlers Traumnovelle," The German Quarterly, XXXV (May, 1962), No. 3, p. 264.

actor carrying out his role in an historical drama so expertly that the viewer feels that he has experienced something of the original life itself. It is not life, it is not real, it is detached, and as such, this sort of role imitates and runs parallel to the life situation without being a part of it.

Since this role playing finds two lines of action running parallel, without actual involvement of one with the other, this type of role playing will be referred to in this study as a "parallel concept." Imitation, and not involvement is the central thought. Encyclopedia Britannica points out the original idea of the drama as a "thing done," and the theater as "seeing place."³ Aristotle's Poetics emphasizes this importance of imitation:

Imitation is a part of men's nature from childhood, and he differs from the other animals in the fact that he is especially mimetic and learns his first lessons through imitation.⁴

The Greek idea of "drama" and "theater" is no different from the idea of the arena of life itself. Drama in itself is imitation, and imitation is the characteristic active ingredient of the drama.

The mask is also seen as an imitation of a real life situation. Again, in Poetics, Aristotle says: ". . . the mask is traditionally associated with impersonation of departed spirits."⁵ Masks and roles

³Bertram Leon Joseph, "Drama," Encyclopedia Britannica (14th ed.), VII, p. 576.

⁴Gerald F. Else (ed.), Aristotle's Poetics (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 124.

⁵Ibid., p. 576.

played in masks were primarily religious and ceremonial. Today, we know masks as an appliance of the theater. The Schnitzler title Die letzten Masken suggests the figurative use of the mask idea. The theater mask may be worn or discarded with ease, and with its disappearance the role with which it was associated also ends. These masks may be as detached from the actor as the actor is from the role he is playing. The mask and the roles of the theater are associated closely with the concept of parallel roles.

The mask need not be of this nature. It may exist not as a detached parallel part of the role, but as a real involvement in the role and in reality. Role playing can be seen consequently not as something imitative and parallel to life, but rather as an extension of life itself, and not necessarily detached. From this viewpoint, the role that an actor plays is not only a characterization of a situation that was once real or figment, but is actually an extension of the original act or idea. This extension of life permeates all of the situations surrounding the role, the actor, the viewer, and takes into consideration also the dimension of time. The concept of the role as "extension" and not as "parallel" may be thought of as describing the roles that everyone plays throughout life. One plays this sort of role whenever he tries to impress others, or makes himself out to be something that he is not.

The works considered here employ parallel roles and the mask in many imitative role situations on and off the stage, but even more often they make use of roles as an extension of life.

This study will show that both imitative parallel roles and extension roles are devices used by Schnitzler to treat the dialectic concepts with which he is so preoccupied. These dialectic situations include: life and death, real and unreal, dream and reality, play and earnest.

These often quoted lines from Schnitzler's Paracelsus illustrate this concept, as Cyprian asks:

Doch eh' Ihr geht, erklärt Euch, denn verwirrt
Lasst Ihr uns alle hier zurück. War's Ernst,
War's Spiel?

Paracelsus answers:

Es war ein Spiel! Was sollt' es anders sein?
Was ist nicht Spiel, das wir auf Erden treiben,
Und schien es noch so gross und tief zu sein!
Mit wilden Söldnerscharen spielt der eine,
Ein anderer spielt mit tollen Abergläubischen.
Vielleicht mit Sonnen, Sternen irgend wer,
Mit Menschenseelen spiele ich. Ein Sinn
Wird nur von dem gefunden, der ihn sucht.
Es fliessen ineinander Traum und Wachen,
Wahrheit und Lüge. Sicherheit ist nirgends.
Wir wissen nichts von andern, nichts von uns;
Wir spielen immer, wer es weiss, ist klug.⁶

⁶Arthur Schnitzler, "Paracelsus," Gesammelte Werke (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1962), p. 497.

CHAPTER II

DER GRÜNE KAKADU

The actors who perform Der grüne Kakadu are really playing roles about people who are playing roles. Contrasting Paris at the time of this drama, the time of the French Revolution, with Vienna of Schnitzler's day, the turn of the 20th century, is necessary because, in a sense, the whole play is a role and a mask for the Vienna of Schnitzler. As the roles of this drama came to an end on the stage in Vienna, the perceptive theatergoer saw not only the storming of the Bastille, but the disintegration of his own present-day society.

The actors in the play are closely identified with the death of people, and with the death of a social system. From start to finish, this drama is cast in an atmosphere of violence. The first actor to appear sets the scene historically with the mention of Desmoulins, an actual political leader in the history of the French Revolution; a revolution which saw the demise of one form of government and, actually, the death of the culture of the period. There is much about this period which mirrored the time in which Schnitzler lived. The link is particularly strong since the period at the turn of the twentieth century saw the decline of the Hapsburgs in Austria, whereas one hundred years earlier, at the time of the setting of Der grüne Kakadu, the French revolution saw the end of the Hapsburg relationship with the royal line in Versailles, with the beheading of Marie Antoinette. The interesting contrast is that in the establishment of the new French Republic in

France, something of a vigorous, new political life came out of the death of the old. Schnitzler saw nothing so hopeful in the roles being played in Austria at the turn of the twentieth century. Since, in many ways, Vienna is compared with Paris in the spirit of art and culture, the disintegration of the prevailing society must have been easily equated by Schnitzler.

The story, briefly, centers around a wine house where the innkeeper has developed a high-class, and at times, a royal clientele who come to be amused by the actors playing the roles of criminals. There is the aura of violence and anxiety cast over the place even though the upper-class customers know that the rough talking "criminals" are really only actors who insult the guests, and titillate the fancies of a society saturated with the amusements of Paris. The customers are not aware that some of the actors are actually what they say they are, namely, thieves and murderers. The actor who plays his finest role as a murderer is taken so seriously that he is suddenly aware that the yarn he has woven about the infidelity of his betrothed is really founded in fact, and as a result, he actually commits the murder that he has previously innocuously played as a parallel acting role. The insults hurled at the royalty throughout the evening of role playing turn into a full-fledged demonstration, in fact, we learn that the Bastille has just been stormed (July 14, 1789).

In the wineshop of Der grüne Kakadu, Schnitzler brings together the two political forces of Paris. Der Grüne Kakadu as the place, and the roles as the modus operandi, show this contrast of intellectual

values as a prelude to the death of a way of life, symbolically portrayed when Henri stabs the Herzog von Cadignan.

Grasset, the first speaker in Der grüne Kakadu, introduces the problem treated by the drama, and concludes the drama with the last speech. The reader will notice that the role of the first speaker in Die letzten Masken also carried through to the last speech.

With Grasset's first speeches we learn that although he is by profession an actor, he is playing the role of a political revolutionist. Is Grasset a revolutionist? Or is he only playing a role? Since the characters in this piece slip in and out of their roles constantly, it is difficult to know exactly when one is playing his conventional role, or a special one.

The innkeeper is also the theatrical director of his group, and Grasset has previously been in his employ. Very early he clarifies their relationship: "Ich bin der Gast - du der Wirt."¹ But even as he introduces his friend Lebrét, a flattering stooge, to the innkeeper Prospère, one is aware that he is still acting. Grasset's speeches set the theme of the play. He describes his appearance at the Cafe Palais Royal, where he has just made a stirring speech:

Hörst du's, Prospère? Ich habe mich auf den Tisch gestellt . . . ich habe ausgesehen wie ein Monument. . . . jawohl - und alle die Tausend, Fünftausend, Zehntausend haben sich um mich versammelt - gerade so wie früher um Camille Desmoulins . . . und haben mir zugejubelt.²

¹Arthur Schnitzler, "Der grüne Kakadu," Gesammelte Werke (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1962), p. 516.

²Ibid., p. 517.

Grasset has been playing Desmoulins, who spoke before, and who is a well-known revolutionist. He continues to say, ". . . Und nun ziehen sie alle hin zur Bastille . . . und ich darf sagen; sie sind meinem Ruf gefolgt."³ But where did Grasset go? To the Bastille? No, he slipped off with his follower Lebrêt to the inn to take his applause, and to quench his thirst. He tells Prospère, the innkeeper, "Aber sie würden nicht schiessen, wenn wir nicht geredet hätten. Mein lieber Prospère, die Macht der Geister ist gross."⁴

Through playing parallel roles for Prospère in the wineshop, he learned the role which he is now playing in life, ". . . hier hab' ich meine erste Rede gehalten, als wenn es zum Spass wäre . . . und hier hab' ich die Hunde zu hassen begonnen . . ."⁵ In describing to Lebrêt the kind of place the Green Cockadoo is, Grasset says: "Es ist ein seltsamer Ort! Es kommen Leute her, die Verbrecher spielen - und andere, die es sind, ohne es zu ahnen."⁶

Grasset further qualifies this observation as "sehr geistreich." But what does not occur to Grasset is that when he was an actor, he was not criminal, but now, here, he is actually one of the others who are really criminals without suspecting it. Grasset does not see his role of anarchist as criminal. He even suggests to the innkeeper that he be

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 519.

⁶Ibid., p. 518.

engaged to play his role in the inn, but the innkeeper says, ". . . ich hätte Angst, dass du dich einmal vergessen könntest - und über einen meiner zahlenden Gäste im Ernst herfielst." To which Grasset answers, "Das wäre allerdings möglich."⁷

Never are we told that Grasset participates in the real revolution. At the end of the drama, he returns to bring news of the storming of the Bastille, and news of the chopping-off of heads, but it is just a dramatic report. At the end, he declaims that nowhere can the cry of "Freedom" be more beautiful than over the dead body of a duke. And as the aristocracy run from the place in fear, Grasset says, "Lasst sie für heute - lasst sie. Sie werden uns nicht entgehen."⁸

Henri, his antagonist of the theater, has killed the duke, but Grasset has not deigned to dirty his hands with violence, and is satisfied to play to the end the role of a political genius for which he has only the recommendation as an actor.

The character, Herzog von Cadignan, tells a story which has come out of the community of Lelange. This strange piece of role-playing really symbolizes what the mood of the people of France is:

Herzog : . . . in Lelange haben sie einen Bürgermeister der sehr unbeliebt ist.

Francois : Wenn Sie mir einen nennen können, der beliebt ist.

Herzog : Hören Sie mir. - Da sind die Frauen des Dorfes vor das Haus des Bürgermeisters gezogen - mit einem

⁷Ibid., p. 519.

⁸Ibid., p. 552.

Sarg . . . Und ein paar von dem Weibern sind darauf in die Wohnung des Bürgermeisters und haben ihm erklärt, er müsse sterben - aber man werde ihm die Ehre erweisen, ihn zu begraben.⁹

This is essentially what the people of France and Paris at this moment are telling the government. The country wives have played their roles which give a presentiment of the violence to come. The duke plays a role which epitomizes the very thing the bourgeoisie is resisting.

The duke comes early to see the activities of the Green Cockadoc. He feels old at twenty-four, and indeed he has lived fast and richly. When Albin, a naive country Chevalier, calls the duke a wonderful man, François evaluates the duke somewhat differently: "Das ist schon wahr . . . aber dass solche Menschen existieren, ist beinahe ein Grund, nicht zu heiraten."¹⁰

The duke is playing a role that represents all that the bourgeoisie is against. His role is the role of disintegrating society, and he plays it well. He has a title that is real, and he tries to live up to the fashionable image of it. He remarks twice: "If I were king, . . . etc." He would like to emulate Alexander the Great and lives life dangerously and for the moment. He tries to quote Rollin's lines, but he cannot remember the verse, he has only the feeling. The duke agrees with Rollin's idea that:

. . . die Jugend, die man nicht genießt, ist wie ein Federball, den man im Sand liegen lässt, statt in die Luft zu schnellen.¹¹

⁹Ibid., p. 534.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 536.

¹¹Ibid., p. 535.

The duke takes the innkeeper's insults as jest and even says that if he were king, the innkeeper would be one of his jesters. The duke takes his high station in life for granted. He believes he was born to be better than others, and he believes others are born to greatness, even a harlot. He says about Léocadie's marriage:

Es ist zu dumm, Léocadie ist geschaffen, die grösste Dirne der Welt zu sein . . . Gibt es etwas Unverständigeres, als jemanden seinem wahren Beruf entziehen? . . . Ich meine das nicht im Scherz. Auch zur Dirne muss man geboren sein - wie zum Eroberer oder zum Dichter.¹²

The vacuousness of Viennese society of Schnitzler's day is represented by the role of the duke. The duke represents an aristocracy which, instead of giving leadership to the people, has indulged itself and squandered the country's taxes. Just as this role of an oppressive society must die, as predicted by the roles of the women of Lelange, the role of the duke must end in death. In his frivolity and licentiousness, the duke disregards the sacraments that have always been valid for both the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. As the duke returns, the innkeeper says, "Ist es ein Gespenst?" The duke replies:

Nicht dass ich wüsste . . . spielt man hier noch, während draussen . . . weiss man denn nicht, was da draussen für Dinge vorgehen? Ich habe den Kopf Delaunays auf einer Stange vorbeitragen sehen. Ja, was schaut ihr mich denn so an . . . Henri - 13

The duke has played his role to its end. For the crowd at the inn, he was dead already, and so was the aristocracy. The burning and beheading had already been reported. The innkeeper calls him "a ghost."

¹²Ibid., p. 536.

¹³Ibid., p. 551.

The duke says, "are you still 'playing' here at the inn?" For him the play is over. He is not "playing" anymore. As the duke has returned from his affaire, coming through the streets of Paris, his mask has been torn away by the reality of the social scene, and in his personal confrontation with Henri in the wine shop, the mask drops completely.

Grain gives an example of Schnitzler's expertise in his use of role-playing as a device in achieving contrast and balance in his one-acters. Grain appears to the innkeeper-director in such lamentable shape that the innkeeper asks him to take off his disguise. He has no disguise. He is simply an unkempt, dirty person. This is understandable when Grain reveals that he is just out of prison, looking for work as an actor at the suggestion of his former cell-mate, Gaston, who once acted in the role of a pickpocket for the wineseller. As long as Gaston acted the part he was successful, but Grain reveals that when Gaston tried his art in the streets, he got caught immediately and was thrown in jail. Grain readily admits that, at his father's side, he was once a pickpocket himself. Before he takes on his role of actor, Grain is genuine. He conceals nothing; he is exactly what he says he is. Although he passes himself off as an honorable man, Grain is a murderer. He killed his aunt under circumstances which seemed to him justifiable, and was saved from execution only because of his youth. The wineseller suggests that Grain tell his story at an appropriate time during the evening's "play," to shock the guests. During the activities of the evening, a chance does come to "act" out the tale of murder before the prominent guests. The wineseller sets it up for Grain with the question:

- Wirt : (zu Grain) Also, wie war das?
- Grain : Was?
- Wirt : Die Geschichte mit der Tante, wegen der du zwei Jahre im Gefängnis gesessen bist?
- Grain : Ich sagte Ihnen ja, ich habe sie erdrosselt.
- Francois : Der ist schwach. Das ist ein Dilettant. Ich hab' ihn noch nie gesehen.¹⁴

As an actor, Grain becomes in this moment a colossal failure. Paradoxically, the Vicomte Francois recognizes him immediately as a fake. And yet he is one of the few in the troupe of actors who is the real thing. Schnitzler previously builds up some case for Grain's honor, simply because of his candor. But Grain did commit murder, and the innkeeper finally loses all respect for Grain when he later catches him with the duke's wallet which he has stolen. Has the Vicomte recognized the real Grain? Or has he recognized a bad actor? We hear no more from Grain because the innkeeper cuts him off later: "Auf der Stelle . . . oder es geht Ihnen schlecht."¹⁵

Certainly, when Grain tried to play a parallel role as an actor, portraying the past, even though the past was a genuine situation involving himself personally, it comes off badly. The Vicomte has recognized a bad actor, but not the real Grain, the bourgeois criminal that he is. The Vicomte joins the duke in a role-playing situation which precludes, as long as this mask is in place, the possibility of a responsible reaction to the social disintegration of the time.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 541.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 544.

The character of der Wirt, or innkeeper, is often found in German drama as a man who stands on the social ladder between master and servant, that is to say, between the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. The innkeeper of the Green Cockadoo plays four roles with an assortment of masks for each. First, he is an innkeeper. Second, and just as important, he is a theatrical director. Third, he is an actor, and fourth, he is a citizen of Paris. He wears masks of friendship, hatred, envy, disgust, charm, truth, and chicanery in different roles at different times. Around this figure, a portrayal of the contrast of society is possible. It is through the innkeeper in his different roles that Schnitzler finds it possible to let his characters weave in and out of reality.

At first, Schnitzler seems to use him to demonstrate the classic "Wirt," an entrepreneur. He is an opportunist, but still not without some concern for his co-workers. One sees in the first scene a man who seems interested in the art of the theater, and yet at the same time, in a profit from the wine he sells. He is interested in Henri as a friend and actor, but more in Henri's ability to fill the wineshop with customers. The innkeeper seems to be just one step above the bourgeoisie politically. He identifies himself with the common people, and yet he is loath to venture too much in this direction too soon:

Lebrét : Auf, ihr Bürger, auf!

Grasset : Auf! . . . Sperre deine Bude und komm jetzt mit uns!

Wirt : Ich komme schon, wenn's Zeit ist.

Grasset : Ja freilich, wenn's keine Gefahr mehr gibt.

Wirt : Mein Lieber, ich liebe die Freiheit wie du - aber vor allem hab' ich meinen Beruf.¹⁶

The innkeeper has courage, but wears the masks of his various roles to protect him from an unpropitious and untimely discovery of his true sentiments.

An interesting aspect of the innkeeper is the manner in which he receives his patrons. The customers know that he is really the director of the group, and that as such he must also play the part of a scoundrel. They want to believe that his insults are only a role, but sometimes find it hard to do so, especially for the Kommissär. As the aristocratic customers first appear, they are greeted:

Wirt : Guten Abend, ihr Schweine.

François : . . . Wir kommen heute etwas früh, wie mir scheint. Bring uns Wein.

Wirt : Ja, das will ich. Es wird schon die Zeit kommen, wo ihr mit Seiwasser sehr zufrieden sein werdet.

François : Gewiss, gewiss. (Wirt zum Schanktisch)

Albin : Das ist ja ein schauerlicher Kerl.

François : Denk' doch, dass alles Spass ist. Und dabei gibt es Orte, wo du ganz ähnliche Dinge im Ernst hören kannst.¹⁷

What the patrons take to be acting by the innkeeper, is, for the innkeeper, the expression of a real feeling:

Ach, mein Lieber, mir genügt das, was ich in meinem Fach leisten kann. Es macht mir Vergnügen genug, den Kerlen meine Meinung ins Gesicht sagen zu können und sie zu beschimpfen nach Herzenslust -

¹⁶Ibid., p. 518.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 530.

während sie es für Scherz halten. Es ist auch eine Art, seine Wut los zu werden. (Zieht einen Dolch und lässt ihn funkeln.)¹⁸

However, the fact that he is covering up this real feeling with the attitude of acting, is in itself a mask.

Only at the end of the play do we get the feeling that the innkeeper is seriously on the side of the Bürger.

Kommissär : Prospère, ich mach Sie verantwortlich für alle die aufreizenden Reden . . .

Grasset : Ist der Kerl verrückt?

Wirt : Der Spass ist zu Ende, begreift ihr nicht? Henri, so sag's ihnen doch, jetzt darfst du's ihnen sagen! Wir schützen dich . . . das Volk von Paris schützt dich.¹⁹

The innkeeper has been playing a role which he has passed off as a farce and as part of the show, but which he wants to think of as expressing the way he really feels. Now he says, "the play is over." He is still an innkeeper, and he is still a director, but now he drops the mask of actor and validates his role as a citizen of Paris. He identifies himself and hides behind no mask. It is at this moment when he drops the mask from this uncertain role, that he unwittingly unleashes a chain of events which ends with Henri's awareness of the truth, and which leads ultimately to the murder of the duke.

The most significant role in the drama is played by the strongest character in the play, Henri, an actor of real ability. The proprietor-director considers Henri the chief drawing card in his troupe, and the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 530.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 519.

aristocratic patrons await his appearance above all others. The director is chagrined at Henri's announcement that he has just married his mistress, Léocadie, who is a talented actress and a well known courtesan. Henri announces that he will play his last role this evening, and his finest. The action of the play has established that Léocadie is in fact also the mistress of the Herzog von Cadignan. During the evening, Henri has masterfully played the part of an enraged husband who has killed the duke. The actors and director, in the light of what they know of Léocadie, believe it is no act, but the real thing. When Henri perceives this, he is aware that Léocadie really is guilty of an affair with the duke, and when von Cadignan walks into the Green Cockadoo, he stabs him.

The superb roles that Henri plays in his imitations of scoundrels never accomplish more than a good performance. He is simply a talented Frenchman who becomes volatile at times. He is one of the bourgeoisie who plays his roles, takes his wage, falls in love, and marries. The roles he usually plays are parallel. When Henri is first introduced on the stage, we see a "different" Henri, at least in the eyes of the innkeeper. He has taken on a new role which he is trying to play, but not without some anxiety. When the innkeeper greets Henri's well-known actress-mistress with a kiss, Henri says:

Henri : Lass das! (Sein Blick ruht öfters auf Léocadie mit Stolz, Leidenschaft, aber auch mit einer gewissen Angst.)

Wirt : Was schreist du denn immer so mit mir? Weil du wieder einmal mit ihr beisammen bist?

Henri : Schweig! - Sie ist seit gestern meine Frau.

Wirt : Deine . . ? (zu Léocadie) Macht er einen Spass?²⁰

Henri is now playing a role of which he is uncertain. He is aware that his friends know what kind of woman Léocadie is. He is trying to make the break from the free, violent, but exciting life of Paris to a settled existence in the country, and he is not quite sure that he can carry it through. He wants reassurance:

Henri : Schweig! Léocadie wird mit mir gehen. Sie wird mich nie verlassen. Sag' mir, dass du mich nie verlassen wirst, Leocadie. (Brutal) Sag's mir!

Léocadie : Ich werd' dich nie verlassen!

Henri : Tättest du's, ich würde dich . . (Pause) Ich habe dieses Leben satt. Ich will Ruhe, Ruhe will ich haben.²¹

Now, in this new role, life is serious. The threats he once made in jest are now made in earnest. He is playing this scene for his friends, and yet, too, for himself. The roles he is used to playing have had no depth. There were no tenacles reaching down into a stable life. The new role of husband is now an integral part of himself. It is a role that is an extension of his life, rather than an imitative parallel. The whole mood in which Schnitzler casts this scene is one of anxiety and presentiment of evil. Léocadie is already known to be having an affaire with the Herzog von Cadignan: "(Wirt zu Léocadie) Ich rate dir, gib acht du blöde Kanaille. Er wird dich einmal umbringen."²² Henri is trying to hold up a mask of respectability in front of his new

²⁰Ibid., p. 526.

²¹Ibid., p. 529.

²²Ibid.

wife, Léocadie. The troupe at the Green Cockadoo is not fooled. As Henri leaves to take Leocadie to her theater for her final performance, he promises to return and play his finest performance ever. The final role which Henri will play will lead to death.

Henri returns to the Green Cockadoo and plays such a convincing tale of finding his new wife with the duke, and of subsequently killing him, that he is completely believed. He is particularly believed by the innkeeper, who unwittingly reveals that this could so easily have been possible. Henry denies the allegation of the innkeeper:

Henri : Es ist nicht wahr.

Wirt : Jetzt brauchst du dich nicht mehr zu fürchten, jetzt kannst du's in die Welt hinausschreien. Ich hätte dir schon vor einer Stunde sagen können, dass sie die Geliebte des Herzogs ist.²³

Now the theatrics are over. Henri is cast back dramatically into his new role as the genuine outraged husband who has been betrayed.

When the Herzog appears in a few moments, he plays the role to its end.

The end of his role results in the death of the Herzog.

Beyond this, there is a depth to Henri's role which must be studied. From Henri's first appearance on the stage, the air is charged with excitement, expectation, and the presentiment of death.

In the new role that he has cast for himself, he sees a life and a society which represents the bourgeois impression of the ideal. Consistent with this is the absolution which has come, or which he imagines has come, through the sacrament of marriage. He says it is not a

²³Ibid., p. 549.

sacrament of man, but of God. This is the only formula by which Henri can justify the new marriage following the licentious lives which they both have led. Without his new role, the sins of the past cannot be swept aside. It not only demands a new role for Henri, but also for Léocadie, and he repeatedly asks for her assent to his commitment to the new life. The new role in which Léocadie finds herself is hardly possible for her to play, because even though she loves Henri enough to marry him, she doesn't feel the demand for cleaving with the old, to assure the success of the new. When the innkeeper protests his leaving the stage, Henri says, ". . . Ich will die Ruhe. Du begreifst das nicht, Prospère, du hast nie geliebt . . wie ich liebe."²⁴

On what does Henri base this love? He bases it on the fact that she has always come back. After Henri returns to the Green Cockadoo to play his last role, he acts out the story of his love. He tells about Léocadie's faithlessness. Her eyes, lips, kisses, - all were lies; and he knew it. Then he says:

Henri : Und dabei hat sie mich geliebt, meine Freunde, kann das einer von euch verstehen? Immer wieder ist sie zu mir zurückgekommen - von Überall her wieder zu mir - von den Schönen und den Hässlichen, den Klugen und den Dummen, den Lumpen und den Kavalieren - immer wieder zu mir. -

Séverine : (zu Rollin) Wenn ihr nur ahntet, dass eben dieses Zurückkommen die Liebe ist.²⁵

Séverine has grasped the central truth. It is true that Léocadie has come back, but Henri's commitment is complete and real. It was to

²⁴Ibid., p. 529.

²⁵Ibid., p. 546.

be found in forgiveness, commitment, and involvement; the three elements necessary for his ideal. For Léocadie, this was never true. All that she did was to come back, and at the end of the drama she says:

Léocadie : Warum hast du das getan?

Henri : Warum?

Léocadie : Ja, ja, ich weiss warum. Meinetwegen. Nein, nein, sag' nicht meinetwegen. Soviel bin ich mein Lebtag nicht wert gewesen.²⁶

Even beyond the role which Henri plays involving his own situation, there is a more profound role to be found in his playing. The serious problem treated in the play is to be found in Henri's speech:

Und ich verspreche dir, der Abschied wird ihnen schwer werden - ihnen, nicht mir. Für heute - für mein letztes Auftreten hab' ich mir was zurechtgelegt, dass es sie alle schaudern wird . . . eine Ahnung von dem Ende ihrer Welt wird sie ansehen . . . denn das Ende ihrer Welt ist nahe. Ich aber werd' es nur mehr von fern erleben . . . man wird es uns draussen erzählen, Léocadie, viele Tage später, als es geschehen . . . Aber sie werden schaudern, sag' ich dir. Und du selbst wirst sagen: So gut hat Henri nie gespielt.²⁷

Here, early in the play, we find the foreboding of death. For the casual theater-goer, it was fulfilled in the death of the duke, the fall of the Bastille, and the new revolution. But in the above speech Schnitzler lays bare the current social dilemma. When he has Henri say, "the end of their world," he is also speaking to the crumbling society of the world as Schnitzler saw it one hundred years later. When Henri drops his mask, and the duke meets reality for the first time in facing death, Schnitzler's actors have played for posterity once again the old

²⁶Ibid., p. 551.

²⁷Ibid., p. 529.

story of the reaction of a hungry majority against a decadent government; a government rotten with luxury, greed, and arrogance.

The actors Balthasar, Scaevola, Jules, Georgette, and others, play their parts as professionals. They are never really involved with the roles they play as extensions of their lives. And these lives are bourgeois. What they are really involved in is the social revolution. When Georgette and Balthasar put on their act in which Georgette plays the professional money maker, the Vicomte François explains to the Marquise:

Marquise, auf die passen Sie auf. Die ist in Wirklichkeit die Frau von diesem Balthasar, von dem sie eben spricht und der sehr bald kommen wird. - Sie stellt eine ganz gemeine Strassendirne dar, Balthasar ihren Zuhälter. Dabei ist es die treueste Frau, die man überhaupt in Paris finden kann.²⁸

When the show is over, these actors will go their separate ways. They will go home, or to the cafes, detached from their roles as actors and take up their life-roles in the turbulent bourgeoisie of Paris.

The characters of the Vicomte, the Marquise, and his wife Séverine, who come for excitement and stimulation, represent the satiated aristocracy of France, whose roles amount to nothing more than "slumming." The young Chevalier, Albin, fresh from the country, lacks the imagination to join in the fun. Rollin, the enamored follower of Séverine, is an intellectual who disdains the whole show in his preoccupation with the Marquise's wife. The aristocracy, for the most part, has come to play the bourgeoisie, but only on the periphery. These

²⁸Ibid., p. 541.

actors don't want to become too involved. They never really leave their stations and positions in society. Only Séverine is so stimulated that she involves herself with the actors, but we know that later she will find fulfillment, not with the bourgeoisie, but with Rollin.

However, among all of the aristocracy, only the roles of Rollin and Séverine do not seem to fit. Rollin is a member of the aristocracy, but he can claim his position as a true artist. His art is real and reflects the only vestige of a valid contribution to society that has been made by any of this group of aristocracy. He, at least, has written. Of the Vicomte, when he reaches out for a piece of the stage money, the innkeeper says, "Nimm nur . . . so ehrlich hast du in deinem Leben nichts verdient."²⁹ The Vicomte never has, nor ever will make a valid contribution to society. Rollin seems the most perceptive of the group, even though his attention is lost in his preoccupation with Séverine. After a few of the actors have played their parts, Severine says:

Séverine : Ich schwöre, dass das keine Komödie ist.

Rollin : Freilich nicht, überall blitzt etwas Wirkliches durch. Das ist ja das Entzückende.³⁰

Who is Séverine? Only she seems not to be harnessed to a role that is phoney. She is a woman who is completely feminine. She is a member of the aristocracy only incidentally. She even gets so captivated by the play of the street girls, that she suggests to Rollin that

²⁹Ibid., p. 544.

³⁰Ibid.

she compete with them. She gets such a vicarious thrill out of the spice of the play and the violence of the evening, that she tells Rollin that she will throw down her key to him later.

The riddle of the real Séverine is partly comprehended, and partly only apprehended, when Albin, the Chevalier, cannot make out whether or not Séverine is the real Marquise or one of the players:

Albin : (zu Rollin) - Sagen Sie mir, Herr Rollin, spielt die Marquise oder ist sie wirklich so - ich kenne mich absolut nicht aus.

Rollin : Sein . . . spielen . . . kennen Sie den Unterschied so genau, Chevalier?

Albin : Immerhin.

Rollin : Ich nicht. Und was ich hier so eigentümlich finde, ist, dass alle scheinbaren Unterschiede sozusagen aufgehoben sind. Wirklichkeit geht in Spiel über - Spiel in Wirklichkeit. Sehen Sie doch einmal die Marquise an. Wie sie mit diesen Geschöpfen plaudert, als wären sie ihresgleichen. Dabei ist sie . . .

Albin : Etwas ganz anderes.

Rollin : Ich danke Ihnen, Chevalier.³¹

Is Séverine any different from the other creatures of the street? Only in the sense that fate has cast her in the role of an aristocrat. Her greater role as a woman she plays with complete candor. She seems to need no masks. Her beauty and feminine mystique seem to be mask enough.

³¹Ibid., p. 543.

CHAPTER III

DIE LETZTEN MASKEN

Die letzten Masken is a drama of death, and of its dialectic, life. In this one-act play Schnitzler most completely uses roles as a device for presenting the theme with which he is preoccupied in the majority of his shorter works; namely, death.

Die letzten Masken is one of the few Schnitzler compositions which is not to some extent fragmentary. Most of his works find a certain charm and enchantment in leaving unanswered questions, intimations, and blurred images. Two examples of roles which are not brought to a conclusive end are given here as illustrations. Die dreifache Warnung, for example, shows this inconclusive role development in a dramatic way, ending with the question:

Warum war ich verurteilt, sie zu hören, dreimal, die mir doch nichts nützen durfte? Musste auch dies sein? Und warum o Hohn über allem Hohn, muss ich noch im letzten Augenblick mein ohnmächtiges Warum dir entgegenwismern?¹

In the Novelle Das Tagebuch der Redegonda Schnitzler leaves one with the question in his mind, Did it happen or not? In sharp contrast to this usual Schnitzler style, the one-act drama Die letzten Masken offers a positive outlook. The play begins with the foreboding of death, and ends with the actuality of death. The role for the central character, Rademacher, is ended; the mask is dropped.

¹Arthur Schnitzler, Die dreifache Warnung (from Drei Szenen aus Anatol und zwei Erzählungen, New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1960), p. 60.

This play points up the fact that for Schnitzler, roles lead to a concept of death that is not a quiet transition to another world; on the contrary, it is a very real event, an event full of anguish, struggle, and drama. His characters do not believe in a hereafter, or can not seem to conceive of it. For Schnitzler, and for the main character in this drama, the awareness and keenness of life is most poignantly felt in the hours or days preceding the definite knowledge of death. As Liptain says, "We are all marked men. The sentence of death has been pronounced on us at birth, and our final hour is constantly drawing nearer."² In Die letzten Masken the final hour has come, and the roles are played up to the final fifteen minutes.

Set in a ward of the Viennese "Allgemeines Krankenhaus," the theme of the play centers itself around a hack journalist, Rademacher, who knows that he is about to die, but who, at the same time, seems consumed by a desire to have a final word with a friend of his youth, Weigast, who has become a famous writer. He wants to spill out the venom of his hate for his old friend's success, and even rehearses what he will say with Florian, another "morituri," who shares his hospital room. Finally, however, this venting of anger never comes off, and is even replaced by supreme indifference.

The play opens with the theatrical antics of Rademacher's roommate, Florian, who is mimicking the patients and doctors to the delight of the nurse. He is perhaps as much of a hack actor as Rademacher is

²Sol Liptain, Arthur Schnitzler (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1932), p. 4.

just visited him, are people who play roles. Florian believes in these people of the stage. His life has been integrated around the theater and the people of the theatrical world. "Es gibt noch Treue beim Theater."⁵

In the opening scene, Florian imitates Dr. Halmeschlöger, the "Sekundararzt," so well that the nurse remarks, "Wie Sie die Leute nachmachen können."⁶ This stimulates Florian to imitate other doctors and patients, ending in the portrayal of a man who has just recently died. Contrary to the nurse's displeasure over this role, Florian feels that any situation is fair game for theatrics, even the hospital situations. He says, "Da kann man was lernen."⁷ As Rademacher awakens, Florian explains, "Ich mache hier nämlich meine Studien."⁸ To Rademacher's questioning "So?" he explains:

Ja, für unsereinen rentiert sich das, im Spital zu liegen. Sie meinen, ich kann das nicht brauchen, weil ich Komiker bin? Gefehlt! Das ist nämlich eine Entdeckung, die ich gemacht habe, Herr Rademacher. (Wichtig) Aus dem traurigen, ja selbst dem schmerzstarrenden Antlitz jedes Individuums lässt sich durch geniale schauspielerische Intuition die lustige Visage berechnen. Wenn ich einmal einen sterben gesehn hab', weiss ich akkurat, wie er aussieht, wenn man ihm einen guten Witz erzählt hat⁹

Florian never passes up an opportunity to act. To accommodate Rademacher, who is rehearsing what he will say to his old friend

⁵Ibid., p. 151.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 152.

Weihgast, Florian plays Weihgast's role. Florian's life is so permeated with roles that reality is nebulous.

Most of the roles that Florian plays are the parallel acting roles, but he plays one important role for which he has no model to mimic. This life extension role is found in his playing of the lusty, healthy man. The mask he wears is one of optimism, confidence, and cheer. The parallel roles he plays support this feeling. His constant acting is an escape from the reality he suspects, but refuses to accept. He is always on the defensive, with the nurse, with Rademacher, and with the doctor. He doesn't pass up the opportunity to imitate sleep, but he refuses to sleep when he is supposed to. For sleep is too close to life,--and ultimately to death.

For Florian, none of the patterns of life is divorced from the play. Even in consideration of the after-life he says, "Ich hab' mir sogar ausstudiert, wem ich als Geist erscheinen würde, wenn ich einmal gestorben bin."¹⁰

Does Florian play the role that has been protecting him to the end? Does his mask completely fall as it does with such finality for Rademacher? When Schnitzler named the play Die letzten Masken, he must have had in mind more than one mask, as a "last" mask. Perhaps he had in mind the masks that all of the central characters are wearing up to the point that they are finally dropped in death. It is submitted here that Florian, through the traumatic confrontation with Rademacher's end,

¹⁰Ibid., p. 168.

drops his mask too. Perhaps Florian doesn't drop his mask with the finality with which Rademacher drops his. Perhaps Florian will even pick up his mask for the few remaining days, but nevertheless, the mask is dropped. Florian's lines as he sees Rademacher die substantiate this: "Herr Rademacher! (Er betrachtet ihn genau)."11

Here Florian sees the situation of death exactly. There is no false stage, no unnecessary scenery, no imitating; it is exact and real. Florian says with terror in his voice, "Was wollen Sie denn von mir? - Frau Paschanda!"12

Now, for the first time, total comprehension brings total anxiety. Florian is caught up in a role which is life,--and death itself. He is no longer able to imitate this scene, and in his consternation he calls for the nurse. Even the play's last line is Florian's:

Rademacher : (lässt die Hand Florians los) . . .

Florian : (am Vorhang; hält sich mit beiden Händen daran; zur Wärterin) Aber jetzt - nicht wahr?13

As Rademacher lets go of his own role, he lets go of Florian's hand. Now the moment of truth has arrived for Florian even if it has not been completely lived through. He grasps at something, certainly not Rademacher, but at the curtains, at something of this world. He hasn't capitulated, he hasn't gone all the way, but he has seen, if not experienced, the reality of life without mask or role, through the death involvement to which his own role has led.

11Ibid.

12Ibid.

13Ibid., p. 169.

The action and development of the play swings, as on a pivot, around the character of Dr. Halmschlöger, the "Sekundararzt." Does Dr. Halmschlöger play a role in the drama? Does Dr. Halmschlöger involve himself more deeply than would any other doctor in the same situation? Halmschlöger is cast in a role which he need not have played, nor would even have been considered by Dr. Tann, who is more interested in making the rounds as quickly as possible, in order to get to the coffee shop. The two roles are contrasted as follows:

Tann : Na, und du gehst hin? Ja, sag', bist du denn ein Dienstmann? Na, hör' zu, die Leut' nützen hier einfach deine Gütmütigkeit aus.¹⁴

Rademacher sees Halmschlöger as more than a doctor who makes his rounds according to the rules. He sees him as a human:

Rademacher : . . . aber, Sie sind ja doch ein Mensch, Herr Doktor, und fassen die Dinge menschlich auf. Nicht wie manche andere, die nur nach der Schablone urteilen.¹⁵

Halmschlöger plays the role of humanitarian not just for that reason alone. He, too, is interested in the enigma of death:

Halmschlöger : (zu Tann) Lieber Freund, das ist Empfindungsache. Meiner Ansicht nach sind gerade solche Dinge das Allerinteressanteste in unserem Beruf.¹⁶

Rademacher insists on the truth, even though the doctor tries to inject cheer by telling him that his temperature is down. Rademacher wants to know how long he has yet to live:

¹⁴Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 156.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 157.

Halmschlöger : Die Wahrheit . . . Ich hoffe zuversichtlich - - -
Nun, die Zukunft ist in gewissem Sinn uns allen
verschlossen - aber ich kann sagen . . .¹⁷

Halmschlöger drops his mask of cheer where he says that in a "certain sense" the future is unknown. He doesn't deny that Rademacher's end is imminent. Dr. Tann is just a doctor with his careless dress and unlit cigar. Halmschlöger is the professional, well dressed, and playing the part of a professional for which he is costumed. Yet he is more than a competent professional man. He is human. His propinquity with the phenomenon of death is shown when he breaks with the conventions of the living to say, "Drum halt' ich auch jede Strenge für überflüssig. Regeln für Sterbende - das hat doch kein rechten Sinn."¹⁸

The mask that Halmschlöger wears is a mask of cheer, hope, and encouragement in the face of the sure prognosis of death.

Understanding of the central theme of the play, and even of the play's title, is to be found in the role played by Rademacher. Does Rademacher play his role to the end? Is the mask that Rademacher wears finally dropped only in his physical demise? Not only does Rademacher's role complete the action of the drama, but it also affords some understanding of Schnitzler's concept of roles as they lead to death.

The role of Rademacher is best analyzed concurrently with that of Weingast, the famous author and friend of his youth. The roles that one might have in mind at the beginning of the drama are found, at the drama's end, to be transposed.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 167.

For Rademacher, the moment of truth has come. His concern is for just enough time to vent the repressed anger of years. He wants the truth from the doctor, and submits his reason:

Rademacher : Herr Doktor, wenn ich nun aber noch etwas wichtiges vorhätte - irgendwas, wovon das Schicksal anderer Leute abhängig ist - und meine Ruhe - die Ruhe meiner Sterbestunde . . .¹⁹

Rademacher supports his plea for the interview with Weingast on the grounds that it is his destiny to make some impact on the lives of others, and in so doing, find peace in his hour of death. But this is not Rademacher's fate. He expects to torture and humiliate this literary giant, whom he sees as only an imitation of greatness. But "anderer Leute" includes Weingast's wife whom he will drag down too, in his revelation of their affaire of years ago.

Rademacher has played the role of thwarted talent for years:

Rademacher : . . . Ja, das ist wahr, Florian Jackwerth, seit ich einen Beruf habe, bin ich sein Opfer - vom ersten Augenblick an bin ich ein Opfer meines Berufes gewesen.²⁰

Now, after his inability to find fulfillment, he extends his role to include the baseness, and littleness of his own feelings. He plays to the limit of his ability and tries to be punitive and destructive. He sees in his mind, and even rehearses, the scene before the great man comes. He tells Florian:

¹⁹Ibid., p. 154.

²⁰Ibid., p. 162.

Rademacher : . . . Den Herrn müssen Sie anschauen (sic) wenn er hereinkommt zu mir, und nachher, wenn er wieder von mir fortgeht - - - ah!²¹

Florian does this. He looks at him when he arrives, and again when he leaves, only to conclude:

Florian : (rasch zu Rademacher hin) - - - Ich versteh' mich doch auf Physiognomien - aber ich hab' ihm nichts angemerkt.²²

The change that Rademacher predicted never takes place. Weihgast enters with his role and mask, and leaves without their slightest alteration. Great as his literary production may have been, Rademacher has judged Weihgast's role correctly; he is a fake. Schnitzler describes Weihgast's entrance: "(die Wärterin hat ihm den Überzieher abgenommen; er hat sich gesetzt; sehr herzlich, beinahe echt)" ²³

Almost genuine! But he isn't genuine. His role is a facade which covers a life fraught with family and professional problems, his literary brilliance notwithstanding. Since Rademacher doesn't carry out his plan of destruction, Weihgast leaves as he came, playing the same role, and wearing the same mask. This is why Florian saw no difference in his physiognomy. There is only one time when he drops his mask, and that is when he speaks to Rademacher of his wife's suffering:

Rademacher : Hoffentlich nicht ernst.

Weihgast : (drückt ihm die Hand) Gott sei Dank, nein. Mein Lieber, dann stünd es auch mit mir schlecht.

²¹Ibid., p. 158.

²²Ibid., p. 168.

²³Ibid., p. 163.

Wahrhaftig, bei ihr find' ich mich selbst - den
Glauben an mich selbst wieder, wenn ich nah daran
bin, ihn zu verlieren - die Kraft zu schaffen, die
Lust zu leben.²⁴

Here Weihgast is as genuine as it is possible for him to be. One has the feeling that the press of the hand is real. He realizes his "self," the real Weihgast, only in his personal relationship with his wife. But Weihgast leaves with the same mask he wore upon entering.

How long does Rademacher wear his mask? When is it dropped to become "the last mask"? Why is Rademacher unable to play the role he has rehearsed? The answers are to be found early in Weihgast's visit, when he asks Rademacher for what reasons he has summoned him. Rademacher almost speaks, but he doesn't. He starts again to open his lips, but nothing comes out. Why?

Weihgast : . . . Nun, ich bin bereit. Warum lächelst du? - Nein, es ist der Schimmer von dem Licht. Die Beleuchtung ist hier nicht ganz auf der Höhe. - Nun, ich warte. Ich werde Herrn Doktor Halmeschlöger erklären, dass du von den ersten fünf Minuten keinen Gebrauch gemacht hast. Nun? - (Rademacher hatte schon einige Male die Lippen geöffnet, halb, als wollte er reden. Auch jetzt; aber er schweigt wieder. - Pause)²⁵

At first, Rademacher smiles at everything Weihgast has said, which Weihgast excuses as a trick of the light. Weihgast refuses to take anyone but himself seriously. This brushing off of the smile only reinforces Rademacher's growing comprehension of the reality of the situation. As Weihgast continues, Rademacher tries to interrupt; he

²⁴Ibid., p. 165.

²⁵Ibid., p. 164.

tries to open his mouth, but he is stopped. By what? The final revelation is in the words, "Well, I'm waiting. I'll explain to Dr. Halmeschlögger that you haven't made use of the first five minutes." Now the trap is sprung, and Rademacher is caught in total reality. The mask has dropped. The hospital, as a stage, has fallen away. Doctors, patients, and nurses have played their supporting roles. Now stark reality in his total comprehension of his role for the first time separates him from the living, and places him with the dying. When Weihgast comes in with his fame and loquaciousness, Rademacher begins to feel that nothing has changed. He sees Weihgast as he is, and as he waits for a moment to begin his tirade, the slow awareness comes, that destroying Weihgast and his wife, who is the only person who represents real, honest involvement for both men, is a price he isn't willing to pay, just to maintain the role that he sees himself playing. In this role he sees himself as the real possessor of the wife, and as the possessor of a real talent, as against the fake facade of Weihgast. At first he only smiles, but then when Weihgast says, "you haven't made use of the first five minutes," the impact is total. Rademacher sees at this instant that the first five minutes he hasn't used here with Weihgast is symbolic of the first years of his life with Weihgast which he never used either. The values are the same; it's still the same old Weihgast, and the same old second-rate Rademacher, waiting for a chance to speak. Now he doesn't take the chance to speak. Now he knows, in this instant, and for the first time, that life is very real, because the mask is gone. Now, as he drops his mask and dies, he remarks:

"Wie armselig sind doch die Leute, die noch leben müssen."²⁶ He carries Florian into the realization of his own impending death as he grasps his hand and says, "Was hat unsereiner mit den Leuten zu schaffen, die morgen noch auf der Welt sein werden?"²⁷

²⁶Ibid., p. 168.

²⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

GROSSE SZENE

The drama Grosse Szene is a story about a well-known actor and his estranged wife. Their final reconciliation is brought about through the efforts of an astute theater director. Although the story is very simple, the roles of husband and wife are more complex than they first appear to be.

The theater director Falk is the mediator and counselor throughout the play. There is no doubt about his role as a theater director. Because all of his interests and all of his decisions seem to be dictated by his business and financial interest in the theater, one is likely to miss a role which he is covertly playing.

Schnitzler's description of Falk upon his first entrance establishes a gestalt which is significant: ". . . kleiner, magerer Herr, bartlos, kluge Augen, Hornswicker, den er zuweilen abnimmt"1 His description fits his job. The "kluge Augen" suggest an insight somewhat beyond the duties of his profession. Upon his entrance, he finds not only the wife Sophie but an aspiring young actress in the room. Falk has no time for the young girl who had been invited earlier by Sophie's husband Herbot, the theater's leading actor. He has time for her during professional appointment hours, that is to say, during his role as a professional theater manager. He functions during the rest of the play in his role as a friend and counselor.

¹Arthur Schnitzler, "Grosse Szene," Gesammelte Werke, Erster Band (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1962), p. 495.

The first part of the play contains a long dialogue between Sophie and Falk. This dialogue not only develops the plot, but presents two approaches to the problem of the play, which is the nature of truth.

The two main characters must be analyzed as their roles correlate with that of Falk, but Falk plays a role that is deeper than even he suspects. One first gets a glimpse of Falk's deeper role in his answer to Sophie's question about Falk's interest in Herbot's women:

Sophie : Sie führen ja genau Buch, Doktor.

Falk : Nun ja, man ist doch auch ein wenig der Vater.²

Not until the very last of the play is one certain that Falk's role contains an altruism. Falk seems to have directed all of his speeches throughout the play toward his own financial and professional gain. His final speeches with Sophie deny this appraisal:

Sophie : (nach links). Leben Sie wohl!

Falk : Ich will Sie nicht länger zurückhalten, Frau Sophie, reisen Sie glücklich, aber wenn Sie mich fragen, wohin, so sage ich: nicht in die Einsamkeit, sondern - anderswohin -

Sophie : Sie sind wahrhaftig -

Falk : Es verpflichtet ja zu nichts. Nicht einmal zum Zurückkehren. Sie können ja dort bleiben. Vielleicht ist das Ihr Glück. Es wäre ja möglich. Ich glaub' es freilich nicht Auf Wiedersehen, Frau Sophie³

At the end of the play, when Herbot is appealing to Sophie to come with him, Falk never suggests to Sophie that she stay with her

²Ibid., p. 502.

³Ibid., p. 527.

husband. He insists that Herbot gets to the stage in time. Perhaps he is astute enough to know that his intrusion isn't necessary, and that through his speeches with Herbot, his mission will be accomplished. The abiding conviction for Falk is that regardless of his theater, the play, the money, or even Sophie's choice of action, the future and fate of this couple lie only in their union. Even though Sophie may elect to go to the hunting lodge of her friend, Falk says, ". . . ich komme hin, und wär's auch nur, um Sie abzuholen, - um Sie einem zurückzubringen, der nun einmal Ihr Schicksal ist, da mögen Sie tun, was Sie wollen . . ."4

Although his role is one of genuineness of purpose and concern, Falk's role of conciliator is covered-over by the role which is so easy to accept, namely, the role of a sharp, ambitious, and greedy theater director.

Falk's role is that of a Sophist. After one of his defenses of Herbot, Sophie says, "Sie sprechen wie ein rechter Sophist."⁵ When Sophie says at one point that she is unworthy, Falk says, "Sie bleiben ja doch, wer Sie sind in jedem Fall. Man bleibt es immer."⁶ Falk senses what is right for Sophie and Herbot. He believes that the end justifies the means. Since man remains what he is, one is justified in applying the ethics to suit the situation. This is the philosophical

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 526.

⁶Ibid.

struggle between Falk and Sophie, because for Sophie, truth is a quality, and never involves quantity.

Falk never leaves his role. His purpose is fulfilled at the very close of the play, but he never drops his role. When Herbot and Sophie are united and leave for the theater, Herbot's lines, which are directed to Sophie, make no impression on Falk. He is thinking now only of the theater:

Herbot : (steht auf, fasst sie um die Mitte, nimmt den Degen in die Hand, den Falk aufgehoben hat). Ward je in solcher Laun - - -

Falk : Das ist nicht Hamlet, das ist Richard.

Herbot : Also, Arm in Arm mit dir - - -

Falk : Das ist auch woanders her. Du wirst mir noch eine Konfusion machen.⁷

Falk makes his first entrance on the stage in a rush. He makes his exit the same way, still playing the same role.

Herbot is an actor in every sense of the word. He has played parallel roles for over twenty of his forty-three years. He is a product of the Viennese theater, an aspect which is no particular recommendation to Falk. Even his parents were aware that he was destined for the stage. The disconcerting thing is, particularly for Sophie, that he never stops acting. In her tirade against Herbot she says:

. . . Man kann zu einem zurück, der bereut, auch zu einem, der nicht bereut. Aber er muss doch wissen, was er getan hat. Herbot weiss es nicht. Er versteht nichts von mir und nichts von sich und nichts von den andern. Liebe, Betrug, Mord, alles das wiegt in der

⁷Ibid., p. 529.

Wirklichkeit nicht schwerer für ihn, als wenn es in einer seiner Rollen stünde.⁸

The constant irritating problem between husband and wife is his proclivity for momentary love affairs with young women of the theater, or anywhere else, who are ready to "fall in love" with a popular leading man. Sophie has almost become resigned to these affairs, particularly if they limit themselves to the "eternal triangle":

. . . Damals vor drei Jahren hatten nur wir zwei, Herbot und ich, es miteinander auszumachen. . . . Und schliesslich, wenn ein Mann mit so einem Wesen hundertmal hintereinander die gleiche gefährliche Rolle spielt - es ist fast wie eine Schicksalsnotwendigkeit.⁹

However, the affaire which precipitated Sophie's latest separation involved a young girl who was to be married shortly to a fine young man, Edgar Gley. Through an anonymous letter, the young man is apprised of the affaire and seeks out Herbot to ask, face to face, whether or not it is true. All he really wants is the truth, with no theatrics:

. . . Wir wollen hier keine Szene mit grossen Worten spielen, Herr Herbot, wir wollen, wenn es möglich ist - und mir ist es möglich - miteinander reden wie zwei Männer . . .¹⁰

Edgar wants no "grosse Szene," and above all, no lies. Edgar says that for him the truth is possible. For Herbot only that which fits the role he is presently playing is possible. Sophie and Herbot have already discussed what he should say to Edgar. Sophie advises him: "Mach nur jetzt keine Dummheiten. Einmal noch darfst du - musst du lügen."¹¹

⁸Ibid., p. 526.

⁹Ibid., p. 501.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 516.

¹¹Ibid., p. 513.

Herbot assures his wife that he will handle the situation with finesse. He only asks that she not be present while he speaks with Edgar. For his evil roles, Sophie is no support for him. For his good roles, Sophie remains his only continuing support.

Herbot finds it impossible to tell his lie in a simple, direct way, with simple finality. He has to act his "big scene." He not only indulges in a lengthy explanation, he delivers a regular theatrical declamation, complete with gestures and facial expressions. During one of his theatrical pauses, he even sneaks a look at the clock before resuming his speech. Edgar asks for no lies, and yet everything that Herbot tells is a lie. He even produces a trumped-up letter which he and Edgar's betrothed have written to cover the eventuality of discovery. Herbot even plays his scene further by reading the letter to Edgar instead of simply handing it to him:

. . . Ich bitte um die Erlaubnis, ihn selbst vorzulesen. Sie können dann selbstverständlich nachprüfen, ob ich eine Silbe unterschlagen habe. Aber er muss auch im richtigen Ton gehört werden, sonst könnte man ihn missverstehen . . .¹²

This continuous role playing is so much a part of Herbot that truth and untruth are indistinguishable for him: "Ja und Nein! Und Wahrheit und Lüge! Und Treue und Untreue! Wenn es so einfach wäre, junger Fr - Herr Gley. Aber so einfach ist es eben nicht."¹³ Later, when discussing the big scene with Sophie he says:

¹²Ibid., p. 518.

¹³Ibid., p. 517.

. . . Aber - soll ich dir was sagen, Sophie? Es gab Momente, in denen ich so mitgerissen war - es hat nicht viel gefehlt und ich hätte die ganze Geschichte selber geglaubt.¹⁴

Herbot has always played his roles, which really never cease to cover his basic insecurity. He is immature. He himself understands that he has never really grown up:

. . . Ich will dir was verraten, Sophie. Wenn ich selbst an mich denke oder von mir träume, da seh ich mich eigentlich nie als einen ziemlich erwachsenen, schon etwas graumelierten Herrn, sondern gewissermassen als kleinen Buben, der von irgend jemandem an der Hand geführt wird . . . die Leute so mit mir reden, wie mit einem ganz vernünftigen, vollkommen erwachsenen Menschen.¹⁵

Emotionally he is a child, and it is Sophie who must lead him by the hand.

Falk is aware of Herbot's faults and of his genius. Herbot has the intuitive grasp of the theater. Along with the parallel roles of the theater, go the life roles that attach themselves to the current public favorites.

There is a paradox in this drama. The part which relates to Sophie's role will be presented later, and the other stems from Herbot's seemingly continuous role playing. All of his cheating and lying doesn't really make Herbot untrue to Sophie. In his complete acknowledgement of his rascality, he becomes, in a sense, more true than Sophie. One thing clearly indicates this: His inability to live, to be anything, to go on acting, without her:

¹⁴Ibid., p. 523.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 528.

. . . Ohne sie rühr ich mich nicht weg . . . Was gehn uns denn die andern überhaupt an? Ich habe ja nie eine andere geliebt als dich. Wenn du nicht kommst, so spiel ich nicht.¹⁶

Without Sophie he cannot perform. Since everything is a play, a role, a lie, Herbot's unshakeable dependence on Sophie gives his role validity. Because he is the leading man, the genius that he is, Herbot's need for Sophie can be equated with a love as great as hers.

When Sophie and Herbot discuss the outcome of Herbot's interview with Edgar, Sophie doubts that Daisy will play her part in the deception as well as Herbot. Herbot, with his intuitive understanding of women, answers: "Vielleicht noch besser. So ein Mädcl - Überhaupt die Frauen - bei denen ist es ja angeboren . . ."¹⁷ Sophie must be included with these women who are "born" to play roles of deception. The role playing of Herbot is so evident that Sophie's role is obscured. The fragrance of Herbot's role-playing is not matched by Sophie's role-playing, but qualitatively, the immorality in both cases is the same.

The answer to the question of Sophie's role may lie in the questions: Why does she leave? Why does she return, and why does she decide not to leave again, but rather to stay?

In the first place, we know that the perceptive Falk thinks of her as a respectable lady. Falk honors her with the following speeches:

. . . verehrte Frau Sophie? was, in unser geliebtes Deutsch übertragen, nicht mit Unrecht Frau Weisheit bedeutet.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., p. 528.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 523.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 500.

. . . dass Sie eine so fabelhaft anständige Person sind, das ist es ja . . .¹⁹

Sophie left her husband because she felt his faithlessness and continual lying to be an insult. Hurt pride and continuous personal embarrassment were involved. In her absence, she has been vacationing at a resort where she has at times been in the company of a charming young friend of Falk's. She tells Falk how pleasant it is to do nothing but read or lie in a boat and look at the sky, ". . . in den blauen Himmel schauen und - keine Lüge hören müssen, keine Lüge den ganzen Tag."²⁰

This speech poses the question which is basic to the problem. Truth and untruth, lying and honesty, yes and no; these same questions which were always basic problems for Schnitzler are basic to the plot of this drama. Later, Herbot discusses these dialectic values in a long declamation with Edgar, and in his role playing and immaturity, Herbot has convinced himself that these are not qualitative values, but quantitative ones. For Sophie, who is not that kind of role player, this easy solution is not possible. To her speech about not having to listen to lies the whole day, Falk replies:

Na, Frau Sophie, Sie übertreiben wohl ein wenig. Lüge - ! Es gibt überhaupt keine Lüge auf der Welt. Es gibt nur Leute, die sich anschmieren lassen. Und zu denen haben Sie doch nie gehört, Frau Sophie.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., p. 526.

²⁰Ibid., p. 498.

²¹Ibid.

Of course, this is sophistry, and Sophie accuses him of it, but it makes her consider her own actions of the past several weeks. She is bothered with the moral question of whether or not her attachment to the young Herr von Bolschan, no matter how innocent, is any less "Lüge" than those she has been obliged to listen to from Herbot.

The whole long dialog between Falk and Sophie treats this problem of truth and lie. Falk has noticed Sophie's interest in the young gentleman and brings it to her attention:

Nun, ich will sagen, ich hätte mich gewundert, dass Sie die Dinge so laufen liessen, wenn ich nicht gerade zur kritischen Zeit Sie selbst innerlich anderweitig beschäftigt gefunden hätte.²²

At first Sophie laughs at this keen observation, but later she says:

(sehr ernst). Vielleicht haben Sie recht. Vielleicht bin ich wirklich nicht ganz ohne Schuld. Sonst wäre ich möglicherweise doch nicht hierher zurückgekommen!²³

The question of the reason for her return is now answered. Sophie, the respectable woman, has questioned her own ethical position, and rather than leave Herbot, she feels constrained to return as a matter of responsibility. The question which remains for her is: Since my deviation from duty was so slight, am I not less guilty? Can truth be a quantitative value? Falk poses this interesting question:

Und ob Ihnen nicht sogar - rhetorische Frage des unmoralischen Moraltheoretikers - ob Ihnen heute nicht viel wohler sumate wäre, wenn Sie - wenn auch Sie, wie sag ich nur - völlig schuldig geworden wären.²⁴

²²Ibid., p. 503.

²³Ibid., p. 504.

²⁴Ibid.

Sophie answers, "Schon möglich." Sophie is playing a role in which she is not comfortable. She is playing the injured wife who has so often sacrificed her pride. Now that she is aware of her true motives, she questions this role she has been playing.

In several ways she plays her role just like Herbot has played his. Herbot read the alibi letter to Edgar for effect. Sophie reads the letter she has received from the young man to Falk. In reading the letter, she reads only the parts that she wants to read. She gives the letter her interpretation much as Herbot did when he read his letter to Edgar. The young man wrote the letter to reaffirm his feeling for Sophie and to invite her to visit him at his hunting lodge. Through honesty and a wish to influence Sophie, Falk tells her that he, too, as well as others, have received invitations to the young man's hunting lodge. This completely deflates Sophie:

(den Brief sinken lassend). Ah, wie ist man dumm. Warum ist unsereiner so geschaffen, dass er einem Menschen völlig verfallen sein kann, - so einem, der's nicht einmal verdient, der es nicht einmal versteht.²⁵

Sophie feels that she is one of the ". . . Leute, die sich anschnieren lassen."²⁶ She sees now that her life with a prevaricator like Herbot is morally no better or worse than the life she "fell for" when she was alone.

Now Sophie is ready to take Herbot back. However his ruthless handling of the affairs with Edgar completely disenchants her:

²⁵Ibid., p. 506.

²⁶Ibid., p. 498.

Dass ein Mensch so lügen kann, das hab ich nie geahnt. . . . Sie müssten es gehört haben. Und er - er spürt nichts davon, er freut sich noch dran. Oh, hätten Sie's gehört, Sie würden begreifen, dass ich nicht einen Tag, nicht eine Stunde länger bei diesem Menschen - 27

Falk doesn't give up. He insists on substituting the word "love" when Sophie uses "hate." Sophie is playing the role of the injured wife just as she has been doing. She has once again lost sight of the real moral issue. Falk finally acknowledges that he will not stop her from going, nor even argue further, but he still believes she is making a mistake. Falk thinks that revenge is her best answer, "Verzeihen - und Rache nehmen. Besonders die letztere is bekanntlich süß."²⁸

Determined as she is to leave forever, something happens to make her stay. Why does she change her mind?

With only a few minutes until curtain time, Herbot suddenly appears again: "Ja, was ist denn? Wo steckst du denn, Sophie? Ich schau durchs Gucklock in die Loge hin und du bist nicht da."²⁹ Sophie doesn't reply, but the line in the text reads: "sieht ihn nur starr an."³⁰

At this moment she sees Herbot more meaningfully than ever before. He is Herbot, the lying husband. He is Herbot, the leading actor, and now he is dressed in the classic Hamlet costume. His very

²⁷Ibid., p. 524.

²⁸Ibid., p. 529.

²⁹Ibid., p. 527.

³⁰Ibid.

presence there at this crucial curtain time carries its own impact. She sees him too, now, as the man who loves her. Falk complains about the time, but Herbot says: "Sie sollen warten! Ich spiele nicht früher, als Sophie in ihrer Loge sitzt."³¹ Hearing this line, Sophie drops her pride-protecting role and silently follows Herbot to the theater.

"Sophie in ihrer Loge" is more than the box at the theater. This is the main idea of the play. This is what Falk has been talking about, Sophie's proper place. Sophie's place is with Herbot. His place is in the theater, where the loges are, and the one loge which must be occupied, if he is to continue, is Sophie's. Now love and honesty are not measured in quantitative terms. Sophie accepts love and life as qualitative concepts.

of the novelle 1

³¹Ibid.

CHAPTER V

TRAUMNOVELLE

Traumnovelle is immersed in roles, costumes, and masks. In this novelle, the masks are both figurative and real.

The tale begins with the description of the events which took place at a masked ball on the previous evening. This introductory story leads into a discussion between Fridolin and Albertine, a discussion which poses the main problem. The little narrative of the masked ball is more than an introductory device. It is one of several independent accounts within the whole, and these stories themselves are masquerades. This first introductory story is masquerading as an introduction, and yet it is a parallel miniature of the novelle itself.

At the ball, about which Fridolin and Albertine talk, everyone was masked. But the masked guests at the ball carry their covert sensual whims farther than they would ordinarily. They are protected by the mask. The inhibitions are relaxed and Albertine finds stimulation in the advances of a foreigner with an accent, but his crude aggressiveness insults her. Even with her mask on, she can carry her sensuality only to certain limits. Fridolin, too, has been excited by two masked women in red dominoes. These women seem to know him, and promise to return unmasked. They never return, and Fridolin becomes disenchanted with the ball.

Neither in the little prologue nor in the main story do the masks that Fridolin and Albertine wear perform the desired function in the

area of sensuality. Husband and wife end the evening at the ball without their masks in a happy rediscovery of their own sensual love. The same positive rediscovery of love is central to the theme of the story as a whole. Schnitzler makes use of the mask repeatedly in Traumnovelle, when treating the subject of sensuality.

Schnitzler not only uses the face mask to protect from recognition, but he also uses costumes throughout the story as devices. Furthermore, the colors, not only of the costumes, but of other properties are significant. The dominoes at the masked ball were red. It will be apparent throughout the story that Schnitzler uses this common symbolic color in the situations involving the sensual, and black in the situations of death, moral censorship or judgment.

Nachtigall plays his role of an itinerant piano player who could never complete medical school. To be sure, it is easy to think of the band which he wears over his eyes when he plays piano before the naked at the monk's ball, as a mask. It is not a mask for Nachtigall, however. He is hiding nothing. The "mask" he is wearing is really a curtain appropriated by the dancers to shield themselves from his view. He is outside the cult. Here he plays piano, not a role: "Ich spiele - ich spiele - mit verbundene Augen (sic)."¹ The name, "Nachtigall," is a thinly veiled symbol of his role in the story. He plays at night - really in the early morning, when the nightingale sings.

¹Arthur Schnitzler, Traumnovelle, from Die Erwachenden Novellen (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1928), p. 212.

In the story segment of the costumer's shop, the questions must be asked: Why does Fridolin go there? What does he find? How does it relate to the other parts of the story?

Obviously Fridolin goes to the costumer's shop because he needs a mask. He needs the mask, because he wants to engage in a sensual activity which will fulfill what he thinks of as an unfulfilled facet of his life. He finds at the costumer's shop not only a mask, but something more. He finds, that when you go looking for a real mask to hide your identity in the search of the sensual, you may find other manifestations of the sensual itself. When he first saw the girl and the two men at the end of the corridor, they were masked, and hidden from recognition of any involvement in something sensual. When the costumer grasped the wig from the girl, she became, in a sense, the same naked (in spirit or body) role player as Marianna, or the harlot, and she, too, crushed herself against Fridolin as a protector. Now she is unmasked, but as Fridolin leaves, he sees himself masked as a monk, and he recognizes himself in the mirror:

Fridolin erblickte in einem grossen Wandspiegel rechts einen hageren Pilger, der niemand anderer war als er selbst, und er wunderte sich darüber, mit so natürlichen Dingen es eigentlich zugeing.²

His mask has not freed him from his responsibility as a moral man, driven even now to involve himself in the pitiable case of the depraved girl. Without a mask, but in a mask shop, the costumer has rationalized the moral problem. The shopkeeper says, "'Nun, mein Herr,' entgegnete

²Ibid., p. 218.

Gibiser mit einem Ton wie auf dem Theater, 'Ist der Wahnsinnige nicht verworfen vor Gott?'"³ During this transaction in the costume shop, the symbolic mourning coach is waiting outside. It is waiting to lead him, with his rented mask to hide behind, to the sensual involvement where the roles are played to the end. This story within a story is closed completely when Fridolin returns the next day with the rented clothes. The shopkeeper says, "Wenn der Herr Doktor wieder einen Bedarf haben sollten . . . Es muss ja nicht gerade ein Mönchsgewand sein."⁴ The shopkeeper is saying to the doctor that when he is looking for something sensual, he need not hide behind the mask of morality, as represented by the monk's garb. He is intimating that, as Fridolin has seen in what happened at the costume shop, the sensual is to be had without the mask, even in the midst of thousands of masks, and that there are masks being worn everywhere. As she clings to Fridolin, the young girl in the pierrot costume imagines a different role for Fridolin. She thinks of him not as a monk, but as a lover in sensual red:

"Nein," sagte die Pierette mit leuchtenden Augen, "einen Hermelinmantel musst du diesem Herrn geben und ein rotseidenes Wams."⁵

The roles played in this independent story segment are connected to the rest of the story through the forgotten mask. Fridolin left the mask, or perhaps subconsciously dropped the mask intentionally, in his own home. The location of the mask now is important. Now the mask lies on

³Ibid., p. 219.

⁴Ibid., p. 253.

⁵Ibid., p. 217.

his bed, still masking Fridolin's self realization. The mask is there on the bed, where Albertine lives through her dream. Her dream, which needs no mask, is a parallel experience, the re-telling and acknowledgment of which leads to the catharsis for their problem. The story can now be concluded with hope for a positive future.

After leaving the costume shop, Fridolin disguises himself by slipping into his costume in the coach, before reaching the house where the party is to be held. Fridolin is aware of the feeling of the new role that he has when he daily slips into his professional jacket at the hospital:

Fridolin fiel es ein, dass es höchste Zeit war, sich zu maskieren. Er zog den Pels aus, fuhr in die Kutte, gerade so, wie er jeden Morgen auf der Spitalabteilung in die Ärmel seines Leinenkittels zu schlüpfen pflegte . . .⁶

Now he is seeking a sensual involvement without being recognized. To enter the door he must give the password of the evening. When Nachtigall tells him that the password is "Dänemark," Fridolin can scarcely believe it: "Dänemark! Bist du toll, Nachtigall?"⁷ This word, which this same night had conjured up the romantic reminiscences in the conversation with his wife, is now the key word which gives him entrance into another adventure. This new adventure is a story within a story, a story that could be superimposed on the main plot pattern. His entrance into the ball immediately arouses some suspicion, but he plays his role to the point of his expulsion, without removing his mask. Even

⁶Ibid., p. 221.

⁷Ibid., p. 219.

though he offers to sacrifice himself and remove his mask, he finds that it would be in vain, and that the beautiful "nun" who has tried to save him through repeated warnings must still pay the extreme price in sacrifice. It is interesting that Fridolin offers to remove his mask only if the others remove theirs: "Doch meine Maske werde ich nur in dem Falle ablegen, dass Sie alle das gleiche tun, meine Herren."⁸ If this happens, then the moralistic structure which stifles natural sexual involvement also falls, and then no masks are necessary.

Wer immer Sie sein mögen, meine Herren, Sie führen in jedem Fall noch eine andere Existenz als diese. Ich aber spiele keinerlei Komödie, auch nicht hier, und wenn ich es bisher notgedrungen getan habe, so gebe ich es jetzt auf.⁹

Fridolin cannot overcome his feeling of moral responsibility even behind the mask of concealment and protection. The role of the masked woman parallels all of the other women who, in a sense, have literally or figuratively found themselves naked before him, and who have sacrificed themselves for him. In the room with death, Marianne bares her love for him. In the room with disease, the harlot actually undresses for him, but sacrifices her profession and pride to save him from discovery or disease. Now, at the ball, the beautiful woman gives herself, naked, with her mask removed, to the men for the sacrifice of death.

What is this ball in reality? It is a contrast of values which exemplify Schnitzler's constant preoccupation with dialectic situations. The music he hears on entering is first sacred and inspiring, and then,

⁸Ibid., p. 230.

⁹Ibid., p. 232.

after the disrobing, it is secular and sensual. The black of the monk's costume is contrasted with the red of the cavalier's suit. Fridolin describes his entrance:

. . . dann trat er in den Garten, nahm die Larve vor. . . Masken, durchaus in geistlicher Tracht, schritten auf und ab, sechzehn bis zwanzig Personen, Mönche und Nonnen.¹⁰

Again the black and red are contrasted, as he says of the beautiful woman: "Unter den schwarzen Seidenspitzen der Larve leuchtete ein blutroter Mund."¹¹ When the dancing started, the monks had all removed their black monk's costumes for white, yellow, blue, and red cavalier costumes. Only Fridolin remained in black. The others could actually make the transition to sensualism. Fridolin could not. He felt the only possibility to do so would be in dropping his mask, even as the beautiful woman would do. He never dropped his mask, however. He never made the leap to the sensual. As he left the ball, he was not immediately thrust back into his role of doctor. He was obliged to ride in the carriage of death out of the area of recognition. In the early morning hours Fridolin returns home to Albertine. Robert Donald Spector says, "While the bizarre events in the surface narrative of Rhapsody [Traumnovelle] are intriguing and carry their own suspense, Schnitzler . . . is employing them as a device for examining the depth of his characters."¹²

¹⁰Ibid., p. 222.

¹¹Ibid., p. 223.

¹²Robert Donald Spector, "Observations on Schnitzler's Narrative Techniques in the Shorter Novel," Studies in Arthur Schnitzler, ed. Herbert W. Reichert and Herman Salinger (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 113.

Because of the structure of this novelle, which integrates the foregoing independent story segments, the roles of Fridolin and Albertine will now be considered as separate roles.

The role of Albertine can best be understood by analyzing her dream. She begins by saying:

So fing der Traum nämlich an, dass ich in dieses Zimmer trat, ich weiss nicht woher - wie eine Schauspielerin auf die Szene.¹³

Albertine never loses complete contact with the image of Fridolin and thus with the world of reality. It seemed even that her sensations during the dream are stronger than she is capable of experiencing during her everyday life:

Aber so wie jenes frühere Gefühl von Entsetzen und Scham über alles im Wachen Vorstellbare weit hinausging, so gibt es gewiss nichts in unserer bewussten Existenz, das der Gelöstheit, der Freiheit, dem Glück gleichkommt, das ich nun in diesem Traum empfand.¹⁴

This dream parallels, as do the other segments, the whole of the story, and also the parts of the story themselves. The beginning of this dream was already told earlier in her admission to Fridolin that he could have possessed her the day before their engagement, if he had wanted to. The whole scene about her parents, and the ever-returning image of a vacation home, returns. She relates these vacation or excursion situations to sensual experiments. It is her "getting away" from life.

Images come to her in her dream which are a reconstruction of what Fridolin has actually lived through in reality. The queen who

¹³Ibid., p. 241.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 245.

offers him pardon, for example, and his refusing, supports the conclusion that for Fridolin, it is impossible to leap the bounds of his moral censor. In the dream, he is even dressed for the part, and as usual, in black: ". . . mit gefesselten Händen, doch in einen schwarzen Mantel gehüllt . . ."15 Fridolin's physical expulsion from the ball, his experience after he left, the couples standing against the wall muttering and threatening, - all of these are paralleled in the dream.

The dream parallels her real life too. The honeymoon experience in the dream is followed by an impasse when entering a clearing with a high wall and mountains. This suggests the re-living of the hopeful early days of their marriage, which were to be followed by the confrontation with life's realities. It was in this clearing, with the wall, that the Dane appeared. He even passed her by again, just as he did before on the stairs during their vacation. Just as he considered her on the stairs in reality, he now considers how to conquer the wall of resistance, mores, and customs. In the dream he conquers her. But now, the Dane slips in and out of recognition in the dream, as he now comes to represent a man from a time and age when sexual gratification was natural, and uninhibited. Here one is aware of the role which Schnitzler played for Freud, and Freud for Schnitzler.¹⁶ The concept of Freud that time elements, and spacial elements lose all proportion in dreams, is dramatically appropriated here by Schnitzler in Albertine's role:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 246.

¹⁶Letter 123, Freud to Schnitzler, Vienna, May 8, 1906 (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1960).

"Also - mir war, als erlebte ich unzählige Tage und Nächte, es gab weder Zeit noch Raum . . ."17

The dream is long and detailed, and Albertine's reconstruction of this role is the important accomplishment, as Freud pointed out,¹⁸ not just the dream itself. She says, that she realizes that the queen offering Fridolin the diadem and who moved toward him with a naked body, was the girl at the seashore in Denmark. This is the only girl of her knowledge who would fit into her dream. Actually, for Fridolin, this gestalt fits them all; the harlot, the pierette, Marianne, and the beautiful woman at the ball.

When Fridolin returns for lunch, he can scarcely believe how composed Albertine is in her role as housewife and mother. Albertine has lived through, in dream, unmasked, both shame and terror, together with sensual love beyond the point that she has ever been able to do in reality. And yet she says, even when lying in the sea of nakedness with thousands of couples: "Und dabei hörte ich keinen Augenblick lang auf, von dir zu wissen."¹⁹

Albertine found in the acceptable medium of dream, the resolution of the drives that Fridolin is unable to resolve in reality. Yet, all through her dream, Albertine sees a higher reality possible. In her description of the clearing in the mountain, which parallels the arena of life, she says:

¹⁷Schnitzler, Traumnovelle, op. cit., p. 247.

¹⁸Letter 123, Freud to Schnitzler, loc. cit.

¹⁹Schnitzler, Traumnovelle, op. cit., p. 241.

Über uns aber war ein Sternenhimmel so blau und weit gespannt, wie er in Wirklichkeit gar nicht existiert, und das war die Decke unseres Brautgemachs. Du nahmst mich in die Arme und liebtest mich sehr.²⁰

Albertine's composure and confidence in Fridolin's return, and in his love, is predicted for her in this dream experience.

The first clue to the real role of Fridolin is discovered when Albertine mentions that her life has not always been "pure." She says that there was a night, just before they were engaged, when she would have given herself completely, and that a man came to court her with whom she would have done anything at all. But the man only kissed her hand, and later asked her to marry him. It was, of course, Fridolin. Although he had had his student affairs, with Albertine he accepts, and plays throughout the tale, the role of morality.

After these first confessions of latent sexual interests that the couple exchange, Fridolin makes his first "walk through life," the life he knows, playing his role as doctor, human relations counselor, husband, and father.

As he goes to attend the serious illness of an old patient, he is met by a situation of death, in the patient's demise. Here he has his first confrontation with sensuality. Not unlike all men, Fridolin is preoccupied covertly with this enigma of sex. Until the end of the story, he analyzes Albertine's sensual dream experiences as shameful insults, and as preclusions to the fulfillment of their marriage. He feels justified in toying with these whimsical excursions into the

²⁰Ibid., p. 242.

erotic, and Marianne, who is quietly sitting by her dead father's side, awaiting the doctor's arrival, he recognizes as a likely prospect. He knows that she has grown fond of him during his long attention to her father. The events that follow confirm the possibility of an affaire, when Marianne throws herself at his feet, willing to give up anything for him. She bares herself just as completely as the women he later meets who are naked. This is the first of a series of affaires which are always played in the proximity of death, disease, or violence. There is always something morbid present when Fridolin plays this role of the sensual searcher. His final search is made in the ultimate climate of death,--the morgue. Marianne's engagement to Dr. Roediger does not seem, at this point, to pose any stumbling block in the way of consummation of the affaire. When he leaves Marianne, his steps lead him into a back-street where he meets a harlot who leads him to her room. He sees her painted red lips in the street, the invitation to the sensual. However, when she sits naked on his lap, he notices that her lips are not painted, but are real. In a sense, this girl who wears no mask for her sensuality, is the one girl who is real. Why doesn't Fridolin respond to her offered lips? Something stops him, just as it did with Albertine before their engagement. He asks her what her name is: "No, wie wir (sic) i denn heissen? Mizzi natürlich."²¹ Why Mizzi, "naturally"? Mizzi is short for the common name of Mary, and this, along with the "Mary" in Marianne, and the "Pierette," whose name we do not

²¹Ibid., p. 202.

even know, gives the impression that Schnitzler uses these common names to symbolize Woman. Mizzi grasps Fridolin's real feeling and puts on her robe, and even resists his advances later. She sees in Fridolin an unusual type. "Too bad," she says. In a sense, she has sacrificed her fee and her pride for this man. She knows the danger which lies ahead for him. She is diseased, and she protects him from it. As he leaves, he really feels relief in escaping from the involvement, and in order to avoid going home, he stops at the restaurant where he meets Nachtigall, and lives through all of the experiences of the monk's ball.

When he returns home, he observes his wife while she is still sleeping, and just at the time when she is ending her dream. She ends the dream with a little scream, and as she awakens Fridolin lies beside her and encourages her to relate the dream. As she begins her re-telling, he takes her hand, and even at the end of the dream, when his ego has been shattered, and as he sees her dream as perfidy, he finds he is still clinging to her fingers, with even more sensitivity than ever. He involuntarily kisses her fingers. Fridolin cannot leave his role completely with Albertine, and he hasn't found escape in dream. He is even more vengeful with this new revelation and proceeds to retrace the course he took yesterday, and to carry out vengefully every sensual opportunity as an insult to his "faithless" wife.

This is another role for Fridolin. It isn't the idle curiosity over sexual experimentation. Now it is revenge he is planning, which will demand the sacrifice of his moral code. First, he goes to the costumer's girl, overtly to return the costume. He can't forget the

girl and her predicament. When he finds out that the girl is accessible, he is almost revolted. Here would have been a convenient place to launch his new vindictive life, but he eschews it. He proceeds to visit Marianne, who says when he arrives, "Sie lassen mich lange warten", sagte sie mit einem schwachen Lächeln."²² It is perfectly clear that Marianne is his for the taking. He continues an innocuous conversation with her and as he does so, he is increasingly aware that he will not take her. She becomes aware of this too, and cries piteously, not even answering him when he leaves. Her dream has been shattered. She was ready to sacrifice all, and he has made a fool of her.

Now Fridolin thinks of the one woman who seemed the most honest in her simple life of "easy living." With her he can begin his philandering, but first he stops at a shop to buy some delicacies to take as a present. Why does he buy these things? Is it customary to bring a harlot these things on such a fleeting acquaintance? No! He is acting like a doctor might act. He never intends to buy this girl, and the gift is a buffer between them. He finds another girl, an attractive one, who takes the delicacies and promises to take them to Mizzi, who is in the hospital. Presumably, she is in the hospital for the treatment of the disease from which she spared Fridolin. The harlot who takes the gift displays a provoking body, but it doesn't occur to Fridolin to avail himself of this opportunity either. This is a role he cannot play. It is really a parallel imitating role. He is an actor--not a participant. His attempts at overt immorality are never successful.

²²Ibid., p. 262.

Fridolin is captured by the desire to follow to its end the mystery of the beautiful woman of the ball. He discovers that she is probably dead, a suicide, because his investigations seem to confirm a newspaper account which he feels can be of no one else but of the beautiful woman of the ball. He cannot be sure though and satisfies his curiosity through a personal examination of the corpse at the morgue, to which he has access as a doctor.

The morgue scene is more than a plot situation which gives Fridolin the opportunity to learn the identity of the corpse. It is his own identity which begins to emerge at this point. It makes little difference, really, whether the body he examines is or isn't the beautiful woman whom he once thought himself able to love. In his search for this truth, he begins to find another, a truth that will later be made more certain in his confession and self denial.

As Fridolin enters the morgue he is still playing his role. When the doctor in charge, an old friend, asks, "Suicidum?" Fridolin tries to soften the cold scientific approach to, "Ja, Selbstmord." Then he finds the body and goes through a soul searching examination of himself, his motives, and his involvement, as he relates to the woman on the slab, and at the same time, he begins an intense observation of the corpse. Now, in this place, the mask is down. He forgets even the doctor in charge. He feels the body, the skin, the head. He touches this dead body objectively, whereas he could not in his recent experiences touch the bodies of the living. Now he is the doctor. Now he is himself, the personality which has, up to this point, made his life meaningful. He

is startled to hear the doctor say, "Aber was treibst du denn?"²³ Now he very professionally replaces the position of the arm and steps away. He is not the same man. As he steps over to wash his hands, clinically, he figuratively washes his hands of his vindictive, searching, sensual role. As he leaves the morgue, he is seriously caught up in the highly technical conversation with the doctor about a new sample staining process. At leaving, the doctor asks him, "Also, war sie es?"²⁴ to which Fridolin nods assent. He doesn't know whether he has lied or not,--and it really makes no difference now.

Fridolin leaves the morgue and the role he has been playing. When he enters his bedroom, he sees on the pillow the mask which he has both physically, and figuratively dropped:

Fridolin aber, mit einem Male am Ende seiner Kräfte, liess die Maske zu Boden gleiten, schluchzte, sich selbst ganz unerwartet, laut und schmerzlich auf, sank neben dem Bette nieder und weinte leise in die Kissen hinsin.²⁵

Now the mask has really fallen; the role is over. He hopes that Albertine will be able to accept what he must now tell her, even as he has listened to her dream experience.

Fridolin tells his whole story, and in the re-telling, confession, sharing, and self realization that comes from these experiences of dream and reality, one concludes that fulfillment of their love is possible. The conversation ends:

²³Ibid., p. 277.

²⁴Ibid., p. 278.

²⁵Ibid., p. 281.

"Was sollen wir tun, Albertine?"

Sie lächelte, und nach kurzem Zögern erwiderte sie; "Dem Schicksal dankbar sein, glaube ich, dass wir aus allen Abenteuern heil davongekommen sind - aus den wirklichen und aus den geträumten."

"Weisst du das auch ganz gewiss?" fragte er.

"So gewiss, als ich ahne, dass die Wirklichkeit einer Nacht, ja dass nicht einmal die eines ganzen Menschenlebens zugleich auch seine innerste Wahrheit bedeutet."

"Und kein Traum," seufzte er leise, "ist völlig Traum."²⁶

²⁶Ibid., p. 282.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to analyze the ways in which Arthur Schnitzler used roles as literary devices, in a selection of four of his shorter works.

The analysis here has shown that two types of roles have been employed by Schnitzler in the selections studied, namely, parallel imitative roles and roles which are seen as life extensions.

In the introduction it was suggested that the extension roles led to, or were associated with death or disintegration of society and several roles in the works treated have proved this point. We further see that an analysis of the roles do not show Schnitzler to be as negative as his literary critics have generally considered him to be.¹ Schnitzler's Traumnovelle, for example, demonstrates a positive conclusion, as was indicated by Rey.²

The main roles studied may be separated into three groups: First, the roles that are used to the greatest extent as protective roles are those of Prospero, Leocadie, and at times Henri (Der grüne Kakadu), Weihgast and Florian (Die letzten Masken), Sophie (Grosse Szene), and Gibiser and Albertine (Traumnovelle).

Secondly, the roles that are used as a natural consequence of profession or life situation include the characters who may hardly be

¹Steinhauer and Feise, loc. cit.

²Rey, loc. cit.

considered to be role-playing. The roles are: Grain, Severine, and most of the aristocracy (Der grüne Kakadu), Halmschlöger (Die letzten Masken), Falk and Edgar Gley (Grosse Szene), and Nachtigall and Mizzi (Traumnovelle).

Thirdly are the roles played by those who play their roles dramatically and in depth as extension roles. These roles are extensions of life that show dramatic change, and lead ultimately to death, or are associated with the death or disintegration of society. These are the roles of Henri (Der grüne Kakadu), Rademacher (Die letzten Masken), Herbot (Grosse Szene), and Fridolin (Traumnovelle). One recognizes these immediately as the leading roles of each literary piece.

To be sure, in each of the above three groups the characters use both parallel and extension roles, since, with the exception of the very young or the insane, all men play roles continuously.

Beginning with the dramas from Schnitzler's first period, these roles were used as follows:

In Der grüne Kakadu (1898), Henri plays parallel roles and life extension roles. Schnitzler uses Henri's extension role, which involves his love for Léocadie, as a device to lead to the death of the duke, symbolic of the death of the societies and cultures of both Paris of 1800, and of Vienna of 1900.

In Die letzten Masken (1901), Rademacher's role is played to the point at which he drops his mask, the last mask, and sees the reality of life just before he dies. The whole problem and purpose of the play was served by Schnitzler's use of this role as a device to treat, through drama, the concepts of life and death.

The early writing period of Schnitzler marked him as "negative" and associated him with decadence. Steinbauer and Feise in their analysis of Schnitzler which was quoted in the introduction ends with the lines:

. . . Hofmannsthal found peace in religion and conservatism . . . Thomas Mann slowly fought his way to a democratic dialectical humanism. Schnitzler never emerged from the negative stage.³

The roles in the first two dramas studied here show this interest of Schnitzler in the disintegrating society of Europe before World War I.

Grosse Szene is not a drama about death. Schnitzler uses Herbot's role to study the dialectic of truth and falsehood. The role only leads figuratively to death.

The colors of red and black are used symbolically throughout Schnitzler's works and specifically in Traumnovelle and Grosse Szene. In Grosse Szene Herbot's role leads him to his final appearance, where he represents truth in terms of his commitment to Sophie. His life is the very image of decadent society and Schnitzler has him play this role in Hamlet's costume. Symbolically Hamlet's black costume carries with it the connotation of all of the tragedy, intrigue, and deception of the Hamlet role: "Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother, nor customary suits of solemn black . . ."⁴ Herbot's role does lead to the conclusion of decadence.

Schnitzler uses role playing in Traumnovelle to present the dialectic concepts of consciousness and unconsciousness, dream and reality,

³Steinbauer and Feise, loc. cit.

⁴William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I, Scene II.

morality and immorality. The role of Fridolin leads to death in this story, but only as an incidental consideration. In defense of the positive viewpoint in Schnitzler's writing William Rey says:

. . . Schnitzler erscheint als Repräsentant des sogenannten österreichischen Impressionismus oder der Wiener Dekadenz und wird zuweilen recht bedenkenlos identifiziert mit einer Gestalt aus seinem Frühwerk, nämlich mit jenem notorischen Anatol . . .⁵

Schnitzler belonged to a literary circle and to a society of thought which was representative of Vienna. Benno von Wiese says:

Es gibt im heutigen Österreich keine Gesellschaft . . . Das Wien Schnitzlers und Hofmannsthal's hatte noch eine Gesellschaft. Eine Gesellschaft mag dekadent und korrupt sein, so lange sie existiert, vermag sie ein Drama zu produzieren.⁶

Although the role of Fridolin leads to death, it is more important to consider that Schnitzler, with this novelle which was written late in his career, presents either a heretofore unseen, or a new and positive outlook on life. Fridolin's role does not end in "nothing," which was an end so often found in Schnitzler's early writings. Schnitzler uses Fridolin's role as a device to postulate the belief that a positive outcome is possible for moral man. In Rey's study of Traumnovelle he concludes: "Aber wir haben dennoch allen Grund zu der Annahme, dass das Wagnis des Guten nicht vergebens unternommen wird . . ."⁷ The study of Fridolin's role here supports this conclusion.

⁵William H. Rey, "Das Wagnis des Guten in Schnitzlers Traumnovelle," The German Quarterly, XXXV (May, 1962), No. 3, p. 254.

⁶Wolfgang Kayser, B. von Wiese, W. Emrich, F. Martini, M. Wehrli, Fr. Heer, Deutsche Literatur in unserer Zeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), p. 150.

⁷Rey, op. cit., p. 264.

Letters of Richard

1920 Year: 1920

1920

1920. "Urena," Das Tier

1920. H. von Mises, W. Sarsich, F. Hartl, A. ...
Das Tier in ... Göttingen: Vandenhoeck
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SIGNIFICANT DATES IN THE LIFE AND WORK
OF ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

- 1862 May 15. Arthur Schnitzler born to Dr. Johann Schnitzler and Louise (Markbreiter) Schnitzler, in Vienna.
- First dramatic attempt at the age of nine.
- 1879 Began medical study, University of Vienna.
- 1885 Received the degree, Doctor of Medicine.
- Until 1888 served as assistant surgeon at General Hospital, Vienna.
- 1886 First published work appeared in various journals.
- 1888 Work on Anatol, continued until 1891.
- 1889 Publication of his work: Über funktionelle Aphonie und ihre Behandlung durch Hypnose und Suggestion.
- 1890 Beginning of letter exchanges and friendships with Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Richard Beer-Hofmann, and Georg Brandes.
- 1893 Premiere performance of Abschiedssouper from Anatol at the State Theater, Bad Ischl.
- Premiere performance of Märchen in Vienna, which was considered a failure.
- 1895 Premiere performance of Liebelei at the Burgtheater, Vienna.
- Publication of Sterben.
- Beginning of life-long friendship with Otto Brahm, Berlin theater producer.
- 1896 First public performance of Die Frage an das Schicksal at Leipzig.
- Premiere performance of Freiwild in Berlin.
- 1898 Premiere performances of several pieces from the Anatol cycle.
- Publication of Der grüne Kakadu. Performance in Berlin forbidden.
- 1899 Premier performance of Der grüne Kakadu together with Paracelsus and Die Gefährtin in Vienna.

- 1900 Schnitzler privately printed 200 copies of Reigen for distribution to his friends.
- Premiere performance of Der Schleier der Beatrice at Breslau.
- Publication of Leutnant Gustl.
- 1901 Publication of Die letzten Masken.
- 1903 Married Olga Gussmann.
- Premiere performance of Der Puppenspieler in Berlin.
- 1904 Premiere performance of Der einsame Weg in Berlin.
- 1906 Premiere performance of Der Ruf des Lebens at Lessingtheater, Berlin.
- 1910 Premiere performance of Der junge Medardus, Vienna.
- 1917 Publication of Grosse Szene.
- 1920 First performance in Austria of previously banned Professor Bernhardt.
- 1926 Publication of Traumnovelle.
- 1931 October 21, Schnitzler's death.