The Major Female Characters in Georg Buechner's Dramas.

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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in

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by
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ABSTRACT

The treatment of the women in the plays of nineteenth-century dramatist Georg Büchner reveals the duality inherent in his view of man and the world. On the one hand he idealizes women and presents his most positive feelings through his female characters. On the other hand, in some female characters he reveals his pessimistic view of man's determination by forces outside himself. In keeping with this duality, the women in Büchner's dramas may be divided into two distinct groups. The first group, which may be termed the idealized women, reflects traditional, often romantic ideals of love, purity, and faithfulness. These women--Julie and Lucile in Dantons Tod, Rosetta and Lena in Leonce und Lena--are a testimony to Büchner's satisfying relationships with the women in his own life: his mother, Caroline Reuß; and his fiancée, Wilhelmine Jaegle. While the idealized women differ greatly in characterization, all of them reflect Büchner's ideals of womanhood.
The other two female characters discussed in this study, Marion in Dantons Tod and Marie in Woyzeck, comprise the second group of women in Büchner's plays. These women are anti-idealistic both in their realistic treatment and in the ideas implicit in their roles. In his sympathetic portrayal of these women as helpless victims of their sexuality, Büchner illustrates his deterministic view of man.

The present study of the women, which includes a survey of the treatment of women and love in Büchner's literary heritage, shows how his presentation of the female characters relates to his work in general. The discussions of the individual women emphasize the themes implicit in their characterization, themes which are essential to an understanding of the contradictory nature of Büchner's Weltanschauung.
INTRODUCTION

In spite of the conspicuous number of critical studies made of Büchner in the last few decades, the complexity of his work continues to invite renewed evaluation. One aspect of Büchner's writing which has received only cursory attention is the role played by the female characters in the portrayal of his most significant ideas. Although the main characters of all Büchner's dramas are men, a study of the women reveals the fact that Büchner not only pays special attention to their characterization, but even makes them the primary vehicles for certain important themes. It is my thesis that in the female characters Büchner presents the essence of his philosophy with both its positive and negative aspects.

While many critics have taken notice of the fact that Büchner's handling of the female characters is highly sympathetic and free from irony, no one has undertaken the task of exploring this treatment in depth. Karl Viëtor, whose book on Büchner is certainly one of the most comprehensive to date, writes of the women in Dantons Tod:
Wo sie sprechen, da schwingt sich in der tragi-
schen Symphonie die helle Melodie auf, ein Ton der Be-
ständigkeit, Reinheit, des unproblematischen Gefühls
als der Quelle aller Beziehungen von Mensch zu
Mensch.  

Fink, in his conclusive study of Büchner's use of
the folksong, notices that Büchner has a special feeling
for the female characters in his works: "Im Gegensatz zu
den Männern erkennen sich Büchners Frauengestalten gerne
im Volkslied wieder, zumal ihr Los die Liebe ist."^ Fink
refers to this treatment of the women as Büchner's "Romant-
isierung der Frau,"^ but does not attempt to relate it
to the author's overall view of the world.

Other recent critics have contributed to an under-
standing of the women in Büchner's works, without, however,
making a unifying investigation of the topic. Of these,
Helmut Krapp's excellent study of Büchner's language, Der
Dialog bei Georg Büchner (München: C. Hanser, 1958),
deserves special mention. In his detailed analysis of

1 Karl Vištor, Georg Büchner: Politik, Dichtung,

2 Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Volkslied und Verseinnlage
in den Dramen Büchners," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift 35
(1961), 576.

3 Ibid.
the women's speech, including both their monologues and their conversations with the men, he adds much to an understanding of their characters.

Wolfgang Martens, in his comparison of the "Marion scene" in Dantons Tod with Woyzeck, contributes a fresh interpretation of Marion's monologue, effectively refuting some long-held misconceptions about her character. Likewise Franz H. Mautner's study of Woyzeck provides a great service to the analysis of Marie, whose tragic conflict Mautner considers "einen vielleicht nicht genügend beachteteten Aspekt des Dramas."

Despite the abundance of criticism concerning the works of Büchner, no investigation has been made of the overall philosophy underlying Büchner's characterization of women. It is the purpose of the present study to fill this gap.

In order that the analysis of Büchner's treatment


5 Cf. pp. 126-127 of the present study.

of women be kept in historical perspective, two topics shall be reviewed as background material: first, Büchner's aesthetic theories and his admiration for certain writers; second, the concepts of women and love in the literature which most influenced Büchner.

Although no completely formulated aesthetic theory of Büchner's exists, his ideas on art and beauty are clearly indicated in his letters, in Dantons Tod, and in his incomainted Novelle, Lenz. In all of these he consistently defends realism in art and denounces idealism, which he considers "die schmählichste Verachtung der menschlichen Natur." In July of 1835 Büchner writes to his parents from Strassbourg as follows:

Der dramatische Dichter ist in meinen Augen nichts als ein Geschichtschreiber, steht aber über letzterem dadurch, daß er uns die Geschichte zum zweiten Mal erschafft und uns gleich unmittelbar, statt eine trockene Erzählung zu geben, in das Leben einer Zeit hinein versetzt, uns statt Charakteristik en Charakere und statt Beschreibungen Gestalten gibt. . . . Was noch die sogenannten Idealdichter anbetrifft, so finde ich, daβ sie fast nichts als Marionetten mit himmelblauen Nasen und affektiertem Pathos, aber nicht Menschen von Fleisch und Blut

7 Georg Büchner, Lenz, in Werke und Briefe: Gesamtausgabe, ed. Fritz Bergemann (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1958), p. 94. All subsequent references to Büchner's works will be based on this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.
gegeben haben, deren Leid und Freude mich mitempfinden
macht und deren Tun und Handeln mir Abscheu oder
Bewunderung einflößt. Mit einem Wort, ich halte viel
auf Goethe oder Shakespeare, aber sehr wenig auf
Schiller. (pp. 399-400)

Büchner's sole requirement for a work of art is
that it have life. In his Novellenfragment Büchner uses
the character Lenz to propound his aesthetic theories:

Ich verlange in allem—Leben, Möglichkeit des
Daseins, und dann ist's gut; wir haben dann nicht zu
fragen, ob es schön, ob es häßlich ist. Das Gefühl,
daß, was geschaffen sei, Leben habe, stehe über diesen
beiden und sei das einzige Kriterium in Kunstsachen.
Übrigens begegne es uns nur selten: in Shakespeare
finden wir es, und in den Volksliedern tönt es einem
ganz, in Goethe manchmal entgegen. . . . (p. 94)

Besides his own statements, the memoirs of his
school friends point out some of Büchner's reading prefer-
ences. Friedrich Zimmermann writes,

Büchner liebte vorzüglich Shakespeare, Homer,
Goethe, alle Volkspoesie, die wir auftreiben konnten,
Äschylus und Sophokles; Jean Paul und die Haupt-
romantiker wurden fleißig gelesen. Bei der Verehrung
Schillers hatte Büchner doch vieles gegen das Rhetori-
sche in seinem Dichten einzuwenden. Übrigens erstrek-
kte sich der Bereich des Schönliterarischen, das er
las, sehr weit; auch Calderon war dabei. . . . Während
er Herders Stimmen der Völker und Des Knaben Wunder-
horn verschlang, schätzte er auch Werke der franzö-
sischen Literatur. . . . Kein Werk der deutschen
Poesie machte . . . auf ihn einen so mächtigen
Eindruck wie der Faust. 

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8 "Schulerinnerungen Friedr. Zimmermanns," in
Werke und Briefe, p. 553.
The immeasurable influence on Büchner's work by the two great poets, Shakespeare and Goethe, is demonstrated in numerous individual passages as well as in general atmosphere and philosophy. While the present investigation is not intended as a source study, no study of Büchner's women can be undertaken without at least a brief consideration of the female figures in the works of these two writers.

The scope of Shakespeare's drama is so broad and each character so individually created that any overall comments about his women run a high risk of becoming pointless generalizations. However, certain characteristics do prevail among many of his prominent heroines. While the shrew is a common figure for Shakespeare's drama, his most beautifully characterized heroines are the maidens. Stoll makes some general comments about the young girls in Shakespeare's drama, comments which also apply to the more romantic of Büchner's heroines:

9 The interested reader is referred to two works: Heinrich Vogeley, Georg Büchner und Shakespeare (Diss. Marburg 1934); and Armin Renker, Georg Büchner und das Lustspiel der Romantik (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1924).

10 Cf. Frank Harris' discussion of this type, in The Women of Shakespeare (New York: Kennerley, 1912).
When in love [Shakespeare's women] are not ordinarily the centres of dramatic interest; in fact, it is their peculiar excellence . . . that they seem to exist only in their attachment to others. . . . They love, are lovable, and seek love in turn. The emotion is the centre, though not the sum, of their existence.  

Stoll writes further, "Though love is to be their chief interest in life, it is the human, earthly, fairly sensible sort, in its simplicity and purity. . . ."  

Ophelia, Juliet, Portia of Belmont, Desdemona--these are the simple, unphilosophical women whose influence may be seen in Büchner's Julie, Lucile, and even Rosetta. (Lena, while pure and open to the world of love, is more philosophical and problematic.) Shakespeare, however, seems to offer no models for Büchner's creation of Marion and Marie, whose non-romantic, even anti-idealistic natures will be discussed at length.

Not only do the individual female figures in Shakespeare's works often influence Büchner's women, but other aspects of Shakespeare's dramas are also reflected in Büchner's treatment of his female roles. Lucile, for

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12 Ibid., p. 49.
example, is obviously influenced by the insane Ophelia in Hamlet. But she also reflects the speech of Lear in which the king laments his daughter's death:

No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all?13

In spite of Majut's assertion that "no influence of Shakespeare on Büchner can be traced in Woyzeck,"14 Woyzeck's desperate commentary on the lewdity and bestiality of man's sexual nature, called forth by the observation of Marie's sexuality, resembles Lear's ranting on the general lewdity of mankind:

die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.

Behold yond simpering dame,
Whose face between her forks presages snow;
That minces virtue, and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name;
The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to 't
With a more riotous appetite.15

13 Lear, V.iii.305-7. Quotations are taken from The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Hardin Craig (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1961).


15 Lear, IV.vi.113-25.
As another example, the murder scene in *Woyzeck* bears a certain resemblance to Othello's murder of Desdemona. Just before killing his sleeping wife, Othello refers to his intentions with some gruesomely humorous puns on the word *light*. Similarly, Büchner has Woyzeck toy with the words *kalt* and *frieren*. Further, Woyzeck's reference to Marie's "Hurenatem" and "heiße Lippen," which he would give heaven to kiss once more, could be inspired by Othello's final kiss of Desdemona:

Ah, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade Justice to break her sword.

In view of Büchner's lifelong admiration of the Englishman, such similarities, which abound throughout Büchner's work, can hardly be dismissed as coincidental.

The influence of Goethe on Büchner is even more readily apparent than that of Shakespeare; in fact, some of the similarities between Büchner's characters and Shakespeare's are undoubtedly a result of Goethe's mediation. For example, Lucile in her insanity resembles Gretchen in the *Kerkerszene* much more closely than she

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16 *Othello*, V.ii.7-13.

17 *Othello*, V.ii.16-17.
Unlike the Romantics, Goethe did not theorize a great deal about women and love, although there are numerous references to these subjects scattered throughout his creative works as well as in his letters. One of the most prevalent ideas reflected in the diverse comments is Goethe's feeling of the inevitability of renunciation ("Entsagung") in love, the knowledge that the happiness of love is only short-lived. In the Venetian Epigramms, for example, he writes, "Eine Liebe hatt' ich, sie war mir lieber als alles!/ Aber ich hab' sie nicht mehr! Schweig' und ertrag' den Verlust!"\textsuperscript{18}

Goethe's repeated theme of Entsagung, however, is primarily affirmative in nature, for each experience, though not enduring, aids in the development of the individual Ich. In Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre Goethe reflects this educational aspect of experience:

\textit{... wenn sich eins vom andern losreiβt, entsteht in der Seele eine ungeheure Kluft, in der schon manches}
Goethe views women as having a civilizing, formative effect on man's coarser nature. Thus Iphigenie is able to restrain the more uncontrolled passions of both Thoas and Orest. The same idea of femininity is reflected in the words of the Princess in Torquato Tasso: "Nach Freiheit strebt der Mann, das Weib nach Sitte." Sitte here, as Kluckhohn points out, has the broad meaning of the voluntary ordering of oneself into the forms and laws of human society.

Woman's ability to have this influence is a result of the unified nature of her being. Simmel sees the basis

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20 Tasso, Vol. 12, Goethes Sämtliche Werke: Jubiläums-Ausgabe, II.i.1022.

of Goethe's concept of women as his feeling of woman's capacity to be completely at one with herself:

Es ist . . . in vielen Goetheschen Frauen eine Art von Fertiggewordensein, die sich an keiner seiner männlichen Gestalten findet, eine seinshafte Vollkommenheit jenseits singulärer Äußerungen und Eigenschaften. An all diesen Frauen, an Lotte und Klärchen, an Iphigenie und der Prinzessin, an Dorothea und Natalie und manchen anderen noch spüren wir diesen unzerlegbaren und im einzelnen gar nicht greifbaren Zug von Vollkommenheit-in-Sich, der zugleich eine Beziehung zum Ewigen bedeutet und der in dem Ewig-Weiblichen, das uns hinanzieht, sozusagen begrifflichen Ausdruck gefunden hat.\(^{22}\)

It is this completeness that can have the most beneficial effect on a man, as Frau von Stein had on Goethe when he first arrived in Weimar. His concept of the ideal totality and integrity of a noble woman (the "schöne Seele") also explains why Goethe, as Kluckhohn asserts, does not share the dualism of his time between "Sinnen- und Seelenliebe."\(^{23}\) The trait of the "Vollkommenheit-in-Sich" of many of Goethe's women is also clearly visible in Büchner's characters Julie and Lena.

Since Goethe, like Shakespeare, creates people rather than mere types, it is difficult to classify


\(^{23}\) Kluckhohn, p. 273.
Goethe's female figures. However, Kluckhohn does venture to order the women into some approximate categories for purposes of comparison. Relatively rare, Kluckhohn writes, are "die empfindsamen Frauen, die letztlich etwas Qualendes für den Mann haben": Maria in Götz and Clavigo, Cäcilia in Stella, Aurelia in Wilhelm Meister. More important are two other types. The first consists of the "einfach natürlich liebenden ganz unkomplizierten Naturen, die ihrer Liebe unbefangen sich geben und dem Manne das beruhigende Glück des Augenblicks, die 'Gegenwart' zu schenken vermögen." Büchner's creation of Lucile is especially indebted to the women in this group, which includes Gretchen, Klärchen, and Marianna.

The second group, which includes Natalie in Wilhelm Meister, Iphigenia, and the Princess in Tasso, upholds Goethe's most idealistic concept of woman: woman as the formative, guiding influence on man. These women illustrate the "höchste Verkörperung der Ideale des Humanitätsgedankens, der erlösenden Kraft der Wahrheit und Reinheit

24 Ibid., p. 277.  
25 Ibid.  
26 Ibid.
While many of the women in Goethe's own life are reflected in the female characters in his works, the ideal woman, "der Typus Frau," is based not on a specific personal experience (in spite of the importance of Frau von Stein), but on the ideal which is part of Goethe's own being. 

Besides the two important figures of Shakespeare and Goethe, the writers of the Sturm und Drang have been shown to play a role in the development of Büchner's own dramatic talent.

The concept of love during the time of the Sturm und Drang in general reflects both the sensual and the sentimental concepts typical for the eighteenth century, but in the drama the sensual tends to predominate. Love is seen as an irresistible power which forces everything to

27 Ibid., p. 278.
28 Simmel, p. 195.
30 Kluckhohn, p. 204.
its will. In Klinger's Das leidende Weib, for example, Malgen, a happily married woman, becomes so enflamed with passion for von Brand that she betrays her husband in spite of her vigorous inner struggle. The passionate Graf Louis, who also pines for Malgen's love, exclaims at one point, "Wenn Sie zu den Leidenschaften sagen: Tobt nicht; ists eben als sagten Sie zum Wind, stürme nicht!" Sensual love, far from being viewed with moral horror, is reflected in the literature of that period as a primarily positive force, although, like any great force, it is capable of destruction. The title hero of Klinger's Simsone Grisalda, who has one liaison after another, is by no means condemned by the author for his licentiousness. Instead Klinger attacks the sexual inhibitions of European society in a speech by the Saracen prince Zifaldo: "Das ist eine Anständigkeit, Sittlichkeit, womit hier alles überschmiert ist, es scheint, ihr habt Offenheit und Natur mit Fleiß aus und von euch

31 Ibid., p. 207.
33 Kluckhohn, p. 208.
Klinger views sensual love as a healthy element of human life.

Lenz's opinion of the sexual drive is not so affirmative as Klinger's, but Lenz, too, considers it an irresistible force. The ideal, according to Lenz as well as Klinger, is to recognize the power of sex and not allow it to lead to the detriment of innocent people. The seduction of a virgin, for example, is considered a very harmful and irresponsible act. Lenz writes in *Der neue Menoza* in defense of brothels, "Liebe ist Feuer und besser ists, man legt es zu Stroh, als an ein Ährenfeld." Similarly *Die Soldaten* ends with the suggestion by the Obriste that each town establish a public brothel, thus sacrificing the virtue of a few women for the protection of society as a whole from the devastating effects of the soldiers' sexual promiscuity.

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35 Kluckhohn, p. 209.


The roles of the women in the works of the period generally incorporate the view of sensual love as a powerful force, although the ideal woman is not necessarily the most sensual one. According to Kluckhohn, the writers of the Sturm und Drang consider two very different types of women as ideal. The first is the simple, natural girl of the folksong, who makes decisions based on her feelings rather than her intellect.38 Descended from the ideal woman of Empfindsamkeit, this type is widespread. One example is the figure of Lotte in Goethe's Die Leiden des jungen Werther, in which she is contrasted with the "gelehrten Pastorenfrau."39

The second ideal, contrasting vividly with the gentle maid, reflects the period's awareness of the daemonic power of sex. This is the Machtweib as portrayed by Adelheid in Goethe's Geschichte Gottfriedens von Berlichingen. Stronger than most men, such a woman attracts all by her "dämonischen und auch liebreizenden Zauber" but chooses only the strongest for herself.40 Although the sensuality which attracts men to her may destroy them,

38 Kluckhohn, p. 213. 39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., p. 214.
it is nevertheless viewed with admiration and pride by most authors of that period. The writers of the Sturm und Drang present, as Walzel expresses it, "a hymn glorifying strong, titanic womanhood." 41

The writers of the Romantic Period are far more idealistic about love and sex than those of the Sturm und Drang. Whereas in many works of the earlier period (Klinger's Simsone Grisaldo, for example) sensuality per se is accepted openly and joyfully as a positive aspect of life, in the major works of the Romantic Period sensual love is only a portion of the ideal. Kluckhohn considers the longed-for synthesis of sensual and spiritual love ("Sinnen- und Seelenliebe") the essence of the romantic concept of love. 42 Friedrich Schlegel, for instance, in accordance with his feeling of the unity of these two aspects of love, employs such seemingly paradoxical phrases as "die geistige Wollust" and "die sinnliche Seligkeit." 43


42 Kluckhohn, p. 606.

Ricarda Huch writes that the romantic ideal of love is a mixture of sensuality and spirit which equally concerns "die irdische und die göttliche Natur im Menschen." However, Huch considers such love not as important in and of itself but rather as a symbol of the ideal, all-encompassing love of all nature, and quotes Friedrich Schlegel's statement that such love is "nur Hindeutung auf das Höhere, Unendliche, Hieroglyphe der einen ewigen Liebe und der heiligen Lebensfülle der bildenden Natur."

The works of Novalis reflect the symbolic importance of love in an even broader sense than those of Friedrich Schlegel. With Novalis, as reflected in the Hymnen an die Nacht, love is a religious symbol for the mystical union of man, nature, God, and the beloved. It is significant for the romantic concept of love that such symbolic importance nevertheless preserves the erotic aspects of love. Novalis' vision of the lovers' union beyond the grave contains both erotic and spiritual ele-


45 Friedrich Schlegel, quoted by Huch, p. 228.
ments: death, for example, is conceived as an eternal embrace, "eine Brautnacht, ein Geheimnis süßer Mysterien."\textsuperscript{46}

Ricarda Huch writes,

\begin{quote}
Das muß man . . . nie vergessen, daß die Romantiker durchaus keine Spiritualisten waren: mit der unan-tastbaren Seligkeit der himmlischen [Liebe] wollten sie die elementare Kraft und Süßigkeit der irdischen verschmelzen.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

Both aspects of love are considered necessary. That the high demands placed on love were rarely actualized goes without saying: in fact, the personal lives of the Romantics were marked by a relatively high incidence of divorce, extra-marital liaisons, and even \textit{ménage-à-trois}. The fact that final, perfect union can never be entirely successful "machte die Liebe damals notwendig zu einer nie gestillten Sehnsucht."\textsuperscript{48}

Such a lofty view of love necessarily demands a great deal from the woman in terms of spiritual and intel-

\textsuperscript{46} Novalis, quoted by Kluckhohn, p. 486.

\textsuperscript{47} Huch, p. 248.

lectual capacity. Many writers of the Romantic Period, such as Friedrich Schlegel, consequently urge better education for women, a demand which does not extend to social or political emancipation. 49

As will be discussed at various times throughout the present study, Büchner's treatment of women is indebted to the Sturm und Drang and the Romantic Period as well as to the two literary giants, Shakespeare and Goethe. Only when viewed from the perspective of this literary background can the innovative aspects of Büchner's female characters be thoroughly understood.

It is perhaps due in part to the diverse components in his literary background that Büchner's work contains so many contradictory, even paradoxical elements. For example, Büchner's intensely polemic tract Der hessische Landbote is obviously intended as a revolutionary pamphlet. Yet in a letter from Strassbourg in 1836, Büchner states his opposition to the view that literature can be used to bring about political change (p. 408). Another inconsistency occurs in his religious views. While some of his characters, because of their reaction to human suffering,

49 Kluckhohn, p. 608.
express atheism, Büchner on his deathbed makes the assertion, "Wir haben der Schmerzen nicht zu viel, wir haben ihrer zu wenig, denn durch den Schmerz gehen wir zu Gott ein."50

The duality in Büchner's thought is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the female characters, which may be divided into two quite distinct groups. The first consists of the women whom we may term idealistic. Although, in keeping with Büchner's essentially realistic concept of art, they are presented in an objective, matter-of-fact manner, they are idealized in that they embody Büchner's ideals of total, everlasting love and faithfulness. This group, which includes Julie and Lucile in Dantons Tod and Lena and Rosetta in Leonce und Lena, reflects to a great extent the romantic ideals of womanhood.

The second group of women, consisting of Marion in Dantons Tod and Marie in Woyzeck, are decidedly anti-idealistic, not only in terms of characterization but also in idea, reflecting the power of sex rather than love. In

his presentation of Marion and Marie, Büchner demonstrates the awareness of the power of sensuality illustrated in many works of the Sturm und Drang.

Running through Büchner's work like a thread connecting the diverse elements, certain themes basic to Büchner's Weltanschauung are presented in the characters of the women and their relationships to the men. One such theme is Büchner's idea of the loneliness of the individual and his subsequent longing for Gemeinschaft. The idea of loneliness, which occurs occasionally in Büchner's letters, especially during the unhappy period in Giessen,\textsuperscript{51} becomes almost a leitmotif in the Novelle, Lenz.\textsuperscript{52} One illustration of this theme is the recurring image of the dead (or abandoned) child in Leonce und Lena (II.iv.136), Woyzeck (21. Straße. 171-72), and Lenz (p. 102). Out of this feeling of loneliness arises the longing for love which characterizes many of Büchner's women.

\textsuperscript{51} Cf. Büchner's letter to Minna: "Ich bin allein, wie im Grabe" (Feb. 1834, p. 378).

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. for example these passages: "Es wurde ihm entsetzlich einsam; er war allein, ganz allein" (p. 86); and "Auch fürchtete er sich vor sich selbst in der Einsamkeit" (p. 100).
A second theme important to Büchner's work is the combined desire for death and peace, a desire which is pictured in varying perspectives throughout Büchner's creative writing. In Lenz the word Ruhe(n) occurs repeatedly. Likewise Danton exhibits a great deal of weariness with life and longing for peace, often expressed in sexual terms. Some of the women also indicate a death wish, a feeling which arises primarily through disappointment in love. More important than the death wish of individual characters, however, is the prevalence in Büchner's work of the Liebestod motif, a romantic tradition reflected in Julie's longing to join Danton in death and, thus be reunited with him beyond the grave. The necrophilic passages in Dantons Tod and Leonce und Lena illustrate still another aspect of this theme.

A third theme illustrated in the female characters is the idea which may be considered the most basic tenet of Büchner's philosophy: man's lack of free will. This theme is intrinsic to all Büchner's drama and recurs in Lenz and in the letters. Man, as Büchner sees him, is a driven creature with no will of his own, yet still condemned to suffer for his actions: "Das Muß ist eins von den Verdammungsworten, womit der Mensch getauft worden."
This theme is most convincingly illustrated in the characters Marion and Marie. Both of these women are driven by their sexual desire as if by an unseen daemonic force to actions over which they have no control. Any struggle against this force—and Marie does fight it—is doomed to failure. These women, robbed of their self-determination by the nameless power referred to by Baumann as the "übermächtiges 'Es'," illustrate Büchner's conviction of man's total lack of freedom.

The theme of the Muß is also reflected in the two idealized women of Leonce und Lena: both Lena and Rosetta are denied the freedom to determine their own futures. Even though their lack of freedom occurs in a comic setting, the basic tendency of the play is as pessimistic as that of the tragedies.

The absence of this theme in the characters of

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Julie and Lucile gives these women special significance to Bühner's thought. They are unique among all of Bühner's figures in that they are able to escape the "gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte" (p. 374) and perform acts of decision--their voluntary deaths. In the love of these idealized women Bühner presents the affirmative side of his philosophy, an idea which is never stated outright but only intimated. Although the pessimistic themes predominate, Bühner's work does contain unmistakable evidence of his hope for the world, a hope which rests in the power of faithful, unselfish love. While such a love in Bühner's drama occurs primarily in the context of a male/female relationship, the implication is made that such love could extend between all human beings. Danton subtly expresses this ideal once: "... wozu sollen wir Menschen miteinander kämpfen? Wir sollten uns nebeneinander setzen und Ruhe haben" (II.i.35).

Human love finds its clearest representation in the women of Dantons Tod. Such love--faithful, selfless, and enduring--has the power to give meaning to life and break the bonds of necessity by which man is imprisoned. Julie and Lucile, the purest embodiment of Bühner's ideal of love, are able to perform the only acts of freedom in a
Büchner's female characters reflect the paradox inherent in his philosophical outlook. While decidedly pessimistic, Büchner nevertheless portrays some women who must be termed idealistic in concept and characterization. The duality demonstrated in the female roles undoubtedly arises from his own contradictory experiences: the positive relationships with his mother and his fiancée and the negative experiences of his aborted political activity. Similarly the contradictory views of women and love in the literary periods of the Sturm und Drang and the Romantic Movement contribute to the two-sidedness of his thinking. By analyzing the role of women in Büchner's works, the present study will attempt to relate the duality of Büchner's presentation of the female characters to his complex view of the world in general.
CHAPTER I

JULIE

Despite the fact that Julie is not one of the principal figures in Dantons Tod, her role is of great importance to the play both dramatically and philosophically. The nihilistic tendency of the drama would be irrefutable except for the presence of Julie and, as will be seen in the following chapter, Lucile. By means of Julie's character Büchner leaves the spectator with a suggestion of hope for a possible alternative to the despair presented in the main events of the drama.

The fact that Julie is in no way patterned after her historical counterpart lends an even greater significance to Büchner's creation of her as a character of peace and love. It is doubtful that Büchner even knew of the historical Danton's wife, Louise Gély, a sixteen-year-old girl who had been married to Danton only six months before his execution and outlived him by many years.¹ Rather

than follow a historical model, Büchner created Julie according to his own ideals of womanhood and his dramatic insight.

Although Julie is not an essential character to the development of the main plot of the drama, her role has considerable dramatic significance: it alters the spectator's perspective toward certain characters or scenes, and it creates atmosphere and mood.

The play opens with a dialogue between Danton and Julie. This scene is the first of a plot subordinate to the main action of the play, a subplot which runs parallel to the main plot and affects the spectator's perspective toward it. In this scene the earnest dialogue between Danton and Julie, the contents of which will be discussed below, stands in vivid contrast to the frivolous interchange between Hérault and the lady at the card table. With the initial glimpse of Danton and Julie, Büchner prepares the spectator for subsequent scenes between them, scenes which in their warmth and sincerity stand apart from the flippancy and inflated rhetoric of much of the main plot.

While there is no formal exposition as such in the first scene, the next scene in the Danton/Julie subplot
(II.v) provides much background material. Up to this scene, which Jacobs considers the dramatic hub of the play, Büchner has given no explanation for Danton's malaise and his unwillingness to take the necessary steps to save himself. This dialogue with Julie provides the explanation. Although the scene essentially presents a monologue of Danton with Julie acting only as a foil, her presence gives a poignant, human air to his outburst and makes his anguish more dramatically touching.

Just as the first dialogue between the couple is starkly outlined by its placement within a scene marked by skepticism, so too the scene at the window is highlighted by its place in the drama. Büchner heightens the personal, emotional appeal of the scene by following it with an obscene dialogue between Simon and some citizens. Immediately following this Volkszene is a scene of rhetoric in the Nationalkonvent (II.vii.46). The window scene with Danton and Julie appears even more personal, warm, and sincere in comparison with these two following scenes.

The next scene in the Danton/Julie subplot opens the fourth act. Immediately preceded by the scene in which the political tide turns against the Dantonists, this short exchange between Julie and the messenger calls attention to the imminence of Danton's execution. Julie's words dramatically open the fourth act with the blunt declaration that Danton's fate is sealed.

The dramatic impact of Julie's decision to die with Danton is intensified by the contrast with the following scene. As he has done before, Büchner deliberately uses the placement of the scene to increase its emotional impact on the spectator. The citizen in the scene "Eine Straße" (IV.ii) accepts his wife's approaching execution with patriotic stoicism. His calm acceptance of political necessity increases the dramatic effect of the unconditionality of Julie's love for Danton.

Julie's monologue in the scene of her suicide (IV.vi.79) is of great importance to Büchner's delineation of her character. Besides this aspect of the monologue, which will be discussed at length below, the scene has considerable importance as dramatic contrast by its mood of peace in the midst of the tumultuous events of the main plot. Büchner creates the subdued atmosphere of
peace and beauty in order to alter the spectator's viewpoint toward the executions in the scene which immediately follows. The quiet mood of Julie's suicide is partially retained into the next scene, softening the harsh effect of the deaths of the men.

Up until her suicide monologue, almost all of Julie's speeches consist of short phrases, often only a word or two in length. In the technique which he perfects in Woyzeck, Büchner paints a full picture of Julie's personality through subtle gesture and intimation. The essence of her character is the love she bears for Danton.

The relationship between Julie and Danton centers around Julie's belief in the power of love to unite human beings and Danton's feeling of the inalterable alienation of the individual from his fellow man. Although Danton feels his spiritual separation from Julie acutely and longs for meaningful contact, he is incapable of touching another human being, seeing each individual as encased in his own impenetrable shell.

Not only is Danton alienated from other people,
but he is even alienated from himself. This remoteness from self is most clearly illustrated in his speech. He is incapable of expressing his innermost feelings directly except in rare, isolated instances. While Julie speaks spontaneously from the depth of her being, Danton disguises his deepest feelings in intellectual phraseology and clever metaphor.

The other characters in the drama notice this trait of Danton. Lacroix comments after one of Danton's long, cleverly phrased discourses, "[Er] glaubt kein Wort von dem, was er gesagt hat" (II.i.36). In another instance, Camille also implies that Danton does not voice his true feelings. Danton has expressed his willingness for death in his usual metaphoric manner: "Es ist besser,

3 Büchner here illustrates an instinctive knowledge of the psychological makeup of man, an awareness which has been substantiated in more modern times by both writers and theorists. Psychologist Karen Horney defines self-alienation as "the remoteness of the neurotic from his own feelings, wishes, beliefs and energies. It is a loss of the feeling of being an active, determining force in his own life. It is a loss of feeling himself as an organic whole...an alienation from the real self" (quoted by Frederick A. Weiss, "Self-Alienation: Dynamics and Therapy," The American Journal of Psychoanalysis [Nov. 1961], rpt. in Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society, ed. Eric and Mary Josephson [New York: Dell, 1962], p. 464).
sich in die Erde legen als sich Leichdörner auf ihr laufen; ich habe sie lieber zum Kissen als zum Schemel" (III.i.54). Camille says to Danton, "Gib dir nur keine Mühe! du magst die Zunge noch so weit zum Hals heraushängen, du kannst dir damit doch nicht den Todesschweiβ von der Stirne lecken" (III.i.54). Camille correctly perceives that Danton fears death while refusing to admit his fear even to himself.

This trait of Danton is contrasted with the spontaneous earnestness of the unintellectual Julie. Like many of Goethe's heroines, she is at one with herself and is thus able to express herself directly and openly. The first lines of the play clearly establish the theme underlying the couple's relationship: Danton's alienation and Julie's answering love.

**Danton.** Ihr könntet einen noch in die Lüge verliebt machen.
**Julie.** Glaubst du an mich?
**Danton.** Was weiß ich! Wir wissen wenig voneinander. Wir sind Dickhäuter, wir strecken die Hände nacheinander aus, aber es ist vergebliche Mühe, wir reiben nur das grobe Leder aneinander ab,--wir sind sehr einsam.
**Julie.** Du kennst mich, Danton.
**Danton.** Ja, was man so kennen heißt. Du hast dunkle Augen und lockiges Haar und einen feinen Teint und sagst immer zu mir: lieber Georg! Aber er deutet ihr auf Stirn und Augen da, da, was liegt hinter dem? Geh, wir haben grobe Sinne. Einander kennen? Wir müßten uns die
Schädeldecken aufbrechen und die Gedanken einander aus den Hirnfasern zerrn.-- (I.i.9)

With her intensely personal human question—"Glaubst du an mich?"--Julie attempts to penetrate Danton's shell of loneliness. Interrupting the couple's serious conversation, the flippant sexual hints between Hérault and the lady at the card table serve as an apt illustration of Danton's skepticism toward human love.

When Danton makes the macabre declaration, "... ich liebe dich wie das Grab" (I.i.9), Julie turns away in horror. In spite of her belief in the possibility for real love between two people, in her instinctive rejection of Danton's idea of love, Julie unwittingly proves his assertion that everyone remains alone. Danton's declaration of love is immediately followed by the remark by the unnamed lady at the card table: "Verloren!" (I.i.10). This comment, occurring as it does right at the end of Danton's speech, states explicitly the idea intimated in Julie's gesture of turning away: Danton is lost despite his wife's efforts to save him from his terrible isolation.

Julie's love and desire for Gemeinschaft reflected throughout this scene are more implied than stated out-
right. In contrast to the intellectual and often rather verbose speech of Danton, Julie's lines present no arguments and no philosophical discourses. Her love is inarticulate, illustrating Büchner's feeling that speech can only hint at the underlying wordless relationship.⁴

Similarly in the window scene (II.v) Julie's love is expressed in short, worried phrases: "Du zitterst, Danton!"/ "Georg, mein Georg!" (II.v.43). Although incapable of articulating her feelings for Danton, Julie reveals her concern for him in every line. While in the previous scene she is unable to save Danton from his feeling of isolation, in the window scene Julie provides Danton with some measure of comfort by her quiet, loving presence:

Danton. Jetzt bin ich ruhig.
Julie. Ganz ruhig, lieb Herz?
Danton. Ja, Julie; komm, zu Bette! (II.v.45)

In the first scene of the fourth act, Julie sends Danton word that "er würde nicht allein gehn" (IV.i.70). Büchner portrays the depth of Julie's feeling in the very absence of words of love: "Es ist aus. Sie zitterten vor

⁴ Cf. Helmut Krapp's discussion of the inability of speech to express the deepest feelings, in Der Dialog bei Georg Büchner (München: C. Hanser, 1958), p. 113 and elsewhere.
Julie's love for Danton, reflected throughout the play, responds to his need for someone to relieve him of his feeling of isolation. A second need portrayed in Danton's character is his longing for peace, a feeling that reveals itself in his marked death wish. This need, too, is answered in Julie's personality, in her portrayal as a character of inner peace and serenity. This aspect of Danton and Julie's relationship is delineated in two different ways: the necrophilic passages give sexual expression to Danton's longing for death; and his dependence on Julie as a mother figure demonstrates his death wish—in Freudian terms, a desire to return to the womb.

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5 Krapp provides a perceptive discussion of this technique, which he refers to as "die Sprache der Gefaßtheit" (pp. 71 f.).

6 John S. White's interesting, if somewhat sensationalistic psychoanalysis of Büchner ("Georg Büchner or the Suffering through the Father," The American Imago 9 [1952], 365-427), explores in detail Büchner's longing for his mother, his death wish, and his necrophilia.
In his declaration of love to Julie in the first scene of the drama, Danton shows the relationship between his tendency towards necrophilia and his desire for peace:

Die Leute sagen, im Grab sei Ruhe, und Grab und Ruhe seien eins. Wenn das ist, lieg ich in deinem Schoß schon unter der Erde. Du süßes Grab, deine Lippen sind Totenglocken, deine Stimme ist mein Grabgeläute, deine Brust mein Grabhügel und dein Herz mein Sarg.-- (I.i.9-10)

It is significant that this passage is the only instance in the entire drama in which Danton refers to Julie in an erotic context. For a character whose speech abounds with double-entendre and outright obscenities, Danton's relationship with his wife is surprisingly free from erotic references. It will be seen in the discussion of Lucile and Camille that Büchner does not ignore the role of sex in a relationship of love, for there is much sensuality in the feelings of these two lovers. But Büchner does not emphasize the sexual side of Julie's relationship with Danton. The reason for this lack of emphasis lies in Büchner's conception of Danton as a character possessed by his desire for peace. Danton's love for Julie is so closely related to his need for her maternal comfort and her inner peace that it cannot be expressed in erotic terms, except for necrophilia.
Julie's role as a mother figure is given clearest portrayal in the scene at the window. Danton, brooding over the September massacres and his own part in them, is overcome with guilt, and he unconsciously calls out, "September!" (II.v.43). Julie comes to comfort him and listens sympathetically as he discloses his innermost feelings, which, as Jacobs points out, are revealed to no one but her. Here Danton, stripped of all masks of self-deception, reveals himself as a frightened individual, panic-stricken and helpless in the face of the events which control him.

As Danton begins telling Julie his feelings of guilt, Julie, responding to his need, tries to help him convince himself that the murders were necessary. Büchner increases the effect of Julie's maternal role by giving this portion of their dialogue the form of a recitation lesson, with Julie leading the discussion as a teacher a schoolboy:

Julie. Die Könige waren nur noch vierzig Stunden von Paris...
Danton. Die Festungen gefallen, die Aristokraten in der Stadt...

7 Jacobs, p. xiii.
Throughout the scene Julie's relationship to Danton resembles that of a mother to her child, rather than a wife to her husband. This portion of the dialogue is similar in tone to passages in some of Büchner's letters to Wilhelmine Jaegle. For example, following the famous passage in his letter concerning the "gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte," he laments, "Könnte ich aber dies kalte und gemarterte Herz an Deine Brust legen!" (p. 374). In Lenz the distraught young man is comforted by the calm presence of Frau Oberlin (pp. 87 and 100). Similarly Danton in this scene derives some solace from Julie's maternal strength.

Danton's death wish is illustrated in many individual passages as well as in his overall mood of weariness with life and his Hamlet-like hesitation to act to save himself. In the Conciergerie scene of Act III Danton again comments on the peace Julie provides him: "Und wenn

8 Cf. the following lines: "... das Leben ist nicht die Arbeit wert, die man sich macht, es zu erhalten" (II.i.36); "Ich werde mit Mut zu sterben wissen; das ist leichter, als zu leben" (II.iii.41).
ich ganz zerfiele, mich ganz auflöste: ich wäre eine Hand-
voll gemarterten Staubes, jedes meiner Atome könnte nur
Ruhe finden bei ihr" (III.vii.67). But here, while he
obviously longs for peace, he shows a sudden will to live:
"Ich kann nicht sterben, nein, ich kann nicht sterben. Wir
müssen schreien; sie müssen mir jeden Lebens­tropfen aus
den Gliedern reißen" (III.vii.67).

Viëtor's interpretation of this scene demonstrates
a misunderstanding of Danton's feelings at this point.
Because of the fact that the thought of Julie immediately
precedes Danton's sudden desire for life, Viëtor considers
this passage a dramatic presentation of Schopenhauer's idea
of sexual love as "der in der Gattung sich darstellende
Wille zum Leben."9 The comparison of Büchner with
Schopenhauer on this point is not well founded, for
Danton's sudden will to live springs from his fear of lone-
liness after death rather than from sexual desire. His
thought of Julie is free from all erotic content here and
is related instead to his desire for human companionship:
"O, Julie! Wenn ich allein ginge! Wenn sie mich einsam
ließe!" (III.vii.67). Schopenhauer's theory of the con-

9 Schopenhauer, quoted by Viëtor, Büchner, p. 112.
nection between sexual desire and the will to live does not apply here, although it will be seen to apply to Camille's feeling for Lucile.

Julie's characterization as a person of perfect serenity and inner peace reaches its climax in her suicide monologue. Similarly, Danton's need for union with her achieves here its ultimate response. In his presentation of the couple's union in death, Büchner illustrates the culmination of his themes of love, loneliness, and desire for peace.

Julie, with a knowledge beyond intellect, senses Danton's need to have her with him and therefore decides to join him in death. Danton's reaction to her message is as she knew it would be: he is grateful to her and soothed by the thought that they will be together (IV.iii. 73). Although the romantic idea of Liebestod is not fully developed in the drama, Büchner does indicate the couple's belief that they are to be united in death.

In prison, after thanking Julie for her message to him, Danton gives a lyric description of the manner in which he would prefer to die:

...doch hätte ich anders sterben mögen, so ganz mühelos, so wie ein Stern fällt, wie ein Ton sich
selbst aushaucht, sich mit den eignen Lippen totküßt, wie ein Lichtstrahl in klaren Fluten sich begräbt.
(IV.iii.73)

This description is strikingly similar in mood to the scene of Julie's suicide, a similarity which serves to portray stylistically the two lovers' union in death. Julie actually dies the way Danton wishes he could: in peace and beauty.

Julie's death monologue occurs in the scene immediately preceding that of Danton's execution. This sequence of scenes further emphasizes the couple's spiritual togetherness in death. Significantly, the scene opens with Julie's statement that she does not want him to have to wait one moment for her (IV.vi.79).

In contrast with the short utterances Julie makes elsewhere in the play, this monologue is a poem of great beauty and subdued passion, expressing lyrically her inner peace of spirit. As Julie waits to die, she watches the light fade from the city after the setting of the sun. The earth's features are softened in the dimming light, growing more and more pale. Personified as a dying woman, the earth moves eternally into darkness, longing for someone to stop and bury her. The monologue ends with the peaceful evocation of sleep: "Ich gehe leise. Ich küsse
There is a hinted comparison here between Julie's image of the dying earth moving forever down towards darkness and Danton's thought of death as a continuing process (III.vii.67). But here the image is gentle, free of bitterness, all tragic aspects of it overshadowed by the beauty of the picture.

The lyric images evoked in the scene are not the sole basis for its mood of quiet certainty. Krapp writes,

... es ist die Bruchlosigkeit der Sprachkomposition selber, nicht eigentlich ihr motivischer Inhalt, die die Sicherheit im Sterben dieser Figur mitteilt, kraft deren sie den manchmal einsam und verzweifelt erscheinenden Tod des Danton umdeutet und ihn positiv durch ihren eigenen Tod bestätigt.

This scene, which is reminiscent of Klärchen's suicide in Egmont, shows Julie's characteristic inner serenity, imparting not sorrowful resignation but quiet beauty. It

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10 For an analysis of death as Vorgang (with Julie) and Gestalt (with Lucile), see Anneliese Bach, "Das dramatischen Bild in Georg Büchners Tragödie Dantons Tod," in Unterscheidung und Bewahrung: Festschrift für Hermann Kunisch, ed. K. Lazarowicz and W. Kron (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1961), pp. 6-7. See also p. 75 of the present study.

11 Krapp, p. 146.
is a positive scene, and Julie's death is an act of freedom, the final proof of her devotion to Danton.

In her character of peace and love, Julie serves to illustrate the positive side of Büchner's philosophy. The impact of the play's presentation of Büchner's deterministic view of man's place in the universe is softened by Julie's presence.

The overtly stated philosophy of Dantons Tod is overwhelmingly pessimistic. Throughout the Conciergerie scenes the overall tone is that of despair with the meaninglessness of life. For example, Danton, reminded of a story he once read as a child, exclaims bitterly, "Ja, als Kind! Das war der Mühe wert, mich so groß zu füttern und mich warm zu halten. Bloß Arbeit für den Totengräber!" (IV.iii.72). In similar passages throughout the prison scenes numerous cynical remarks are made in reference to life, death, and decay.

The last conversation of the Dantonists in prison has a shattering effect on the spectator in the utter unconditionality of its nihilism. This passage takes the form of a mounting series of rhetorical questions:

Danton. Aber wir sind die armen Musikanten und unsere Körper die Instrumente. Sind denn die häßlichen Töne, welche auf ihnen herausgepfuscht
werden, nur da, um höher und höher dringend und
endlich leise verhallend wie ein wollüstiger
Hauch in himmlischen Ohren zu sterben?

Hérault. Sind wir wie Ferkel, die man für fürst-
liche Tafeln mit Ruten totpeitscht, damit ihr
Fleisch schmackhafter werde?

Danton. Sind wir Kinder, die in den glühenden
Molochsarmen dieser Welt gebraten und mit Licht-
strahlen gekitzelt werden, damit die Götter sich
über ihr Lachen freuen?

Camille. Ist denn der Ather mit seinen Goldaugen
eine Schüssel mit Goldkarpfen, die am Tisch der
seligen Götter steht, und die seligen Götter
lachen ewig, und die Fische sterben ewig, und
die Götter erfreuen sich ewig am Farbenspiel des
Todeskampfes?

Danton. Die Welt ist das Chaos. Das Nichts ist der
zu gebärende Weltgott. (IV.v.78-9)

The devastating nihilism of this passage provides the
basis for some critics' assertion that Büchner is an
absolute nihilist.12

Various attempts have been made to assign a more
positive interpretation to Büchner's philosophical position
in Dantons Tod. Camille's enthusiasm for "der Schöpfung,
die glühend, brausend und leuchtend, . . . sich jeden
Augenblick neu gebiert . . ." (II.iii.40) is sometimes

12 This is the thesis of Robert Mühlher, "Georg
Büchner und die Mythologie des Nihilismus," in Dichtung der
Krise (Wien, 1951), rpt. in Georg Büchner, ed. Wolfgang
Martens (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft,
1965), pp. 252-288. Cf. also Hans Mayer, Georg Büchner und
seine Zeit (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1947); and Egon
Schwarz, "Tod und Witz im Werke Georg Büchners," Monats-
cited in refutation of the claim of Büchner's nihilism.\textsuperscript{13}

The tendency to search for proof of a positive side to Büchner's \textit{Weltanschauung} undoubtedly arises from the general but vague impression of hope which the play imparts. Krapp correctly perceives that it is wrong, "das Nihil als Prinzip zu fixieren, unter dem sich die Materie des Werks habe organisieren lassen."\textsuperscript{14} Instead the nihilistic elements are only a part of the contradictory philosophy of the play. Contradictions arise, Krapp maintains, because of the nature of Büchner's dialogue: the characters speak without thinking; they are "nur gegenwärtig, neu in jedem Wort und neu in jeder Szene."\textsuperscript{15} No one statement may be taken as representative for the overall philosophy of the play.

Höllerer agrees that the nihilistic passages do not provide Büchner's final answer. The pathos of the Conciergerie scenes is over as the Dantonists face the guillotine; here they demonstrate their feeling of brotherhood in the face of their deaths: "Vom Nichts ist in der


\textsuperscript{14} Krapp, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 70.
Szene der Hinrichtung nicht mehr die Rede; wohl aber bleibt die Sehnsucht nach Menschennähe.\textsuperscript{16}

The positive theme of the play, vaguely intimated between the lines, is clearly presented in the characters of Julie and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Lucile. While Julie presents no philosophical arguments in refutation of the pessimistic view of life expounded in the Conciergerie scenes, her character of peace, beauty, and abiding love helps override the despair of the nihilistic passages.

One critic, in exploring Julie's role in the drama, finds philosophical significance in the fact that Danton's only statement of an implied belief in a deity occurs just after a reference to Julie. This critic feels that it is the thought of Julie and the proof of human "Mitfühlen" that leads Danton directly to the thought of God.\textsuperscript{17} This interpretation reads more into the passage than is substan-


\textsuperscript{17} Anneliese Bach, "Verantwortlichkeit und Fatalismus in Georg Büchners Drama Dantons Tod," Wirkendes Wort 6 (1955/56), 227.
tiated by the text. The reference to a deity occurs in Danton's last monologue of the play: "Wie schimmernde Tränen sind die Sterne durch die Nacht gesprengt; es muß ein großer Jammer in dem Aug sein, von dem sie abträufelten" (IV.iii.73). This line occurs immediately after Danton's description of the manner in which he would prefer to die. The thought of Julie's message concerning her suicide leads Danton to the thought of a peaceful death, and Danton's quiet musing about this ideal death in turn leads him to his observation, in the same peaceful mood, of the stars. The connection between the thought of Julie and the image of a weeping God is tenuous at best. Julie cannot be credited with directly inspiring in Danton any positive religious experiences.

Yet from the beginning of the drama Julie's very being provides a rebuttal of the play's pessimistic tendency. The question of man's attempt to reach another human being on a meaningful, intimate level is raised in the first scene of the play. In that scene Danton remains ultimately alone, misunderstood in spite of Julie's efforts to reach him. In the window scene, as has been shown, Julie's love provides Danton with a measure of comfort. By the end of the drama Büchner has provided a more affirm-
ative answer, for Danton and Julie find a unity in death which they could only strive for in life. In their death the couple achieves a triumph over the alienation between human beings which in the first scene divided them.

Julie's voluntary death, in its utter tranquility and absence of bitterness, not only bridges the gap between her and Danton as human beings, but also shows the possibility of a harmony between man and the laws of the universe. Abutille makes the point that Julie in the suicide monologue "bezeugt . . . eine Übereinstimmung mit der Natur und dem Kosmos, dessen Gesetzen sie sich fügen will."18 In Julie's death all differences are reconciled in the mood of absolute peace. With a full consciousness of her deed, she freely chooses death, thus deliberately placing herself in harmony with the inexorable laws of the universe. The freedom of her action brings a triumph over the "gräßlichen Fatalismus" (p. 374) that governs the actions of the main characters, and gives her death true tragic dignity.

There is a definite paradox in Büchner's stated

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view of the world, for while he presents an uncompromising argument for the meaninglessness of life, he nevertheless clings to a belief in the possibility of human love. The character of Julie cannot overshadow the brutal events of the drama or the decisiveness of the nihilistic passages; however, her role does provide a ray of hope that to some extent mitigates the pessimism of the play. As Udo Poseck writes,

Die Gemeinsamkeit im Tode hebt die leidvolle Unordnung dieser Welt zwar nicht auf, in der Liebe der Frauen wird aber doch die Möglichkeit des Menschen erkennbar, nur der Stimme des Herzens vertrauend, sich dem furchtbaren "Muß" zu entziehen.

Thus Büchner's final answer, while not resoundingly affirmative, at least admits to the possibility of love as an enduring force capable of overcoming the forces of necessity and giving meaning to life. In her uncompromising love for Danton, Julie presents the positive side of Büchner's philosophy, an implicit refutation of the statements in the Conciergerie on the meaninglessness of life and death. This positive statement will gain strength in the character of Lucile.

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CHAPTER II

LUCILE

Although the youthful Lucile, wife of Danton's friend Camille Desmoulins, plays only a minor role in the drama, her importance to the play is considerable. Not only does she stand out as Büchner's most moving example of ideal love, but the vitality of her character provides a deliberate contrast to the skeptical, problematic personalities of many of Büchner's figures. Lucile, even more than Julie, gives the play its positive aspect.

Because both Julie and Lucile embody Büchner's ideals of womanhood in their passionate devotion to their husbands and their willingness to follow them in death, the similarities in their characters tend to be overestimated.¹ A more careful study reveals that, in spite

¹ This is the tendency of Herbert S. Lindenberger, Georg Büchner (Carbondale: Southern Ill. Univ. Press, 1964); and Karl Viëtor, Georg Büchner: Politik, Dichtung, Wissenschaft (Bern: Francke, 1949). While Viëtor admits that Lucile is "reizvoller, geistiger, beredter als Julie" (p. 147), he asserts that they belong to the "gleichen Typus" as Büchner's fiancée (p. 148).
of their superficial resemblance, the two women are basically quite different, each maintaining her individual identity.

A comparison of Büchner's figure of Lucile with her historical counterpart reveals the fact that the author freely changed her character to suit his own dramatic purpose, retaining only those features which fit his concept of ideal womanhood. A sentence in one of Büchner's sources relates that Camille's wife loved her husband with passion and walked around the prison unceasingly with her children. She was put to death for attempting to free her husband. Unrelated to the case of Camille, an anecdote in Honoré Riouffe's Mémoires sur les prisons relates the fact that many women, not daring to take poison, cried "Vive le roi," thus giving the responsibility for their deaths to the tribunal. Büchner not only chooses to have Lucile bring about her own arrest in this dramatic manner, he also departs from history by omitting any reference to


3 Lindenberger, p. 38.

4 Quoted by Viëtor, "Quellen," p. 379.
the couple's children, since it was inconsistent with his conception of Lucile as a child/woman for her to be a mother.

The similarity between Lucile and Shakespeare's Ophelia has often been remarked upon. Fink, for example, refers to the song "der ophelienhaften Lucile." The critic Friedrich Gundolf even goes so far as to state that Lucile is merely one of Büchner's "Kopien von Vorbildern aus Shakespeare. . . ." Such an assertion is grossly unfair to Büchner's creation, for although Ophelia is undoubtedly an influence on his conception of Lucile (as Hamlet as a whole is on Dantons Tod), Büchner's figure is too fresh, alive, and uniquely characterized to be considered a mere copy. Moreover, Ophelia, as Frank Harris points out, is herself not thoroughly developed by Shakespeare, who seems to have been more interested in


the personality of Hamlet's mother, Gertrude.\textsuperscript{7} Shakespeare's heroine is presented as a rather weak, although charming young woman who suffers passively, never attempting any action on her own. This is very different from the resolute Lucile, who even in her insanity retains a sense of purpose in her self-willed death. Ophelia's insanity undoubtedly inspired Büchner's characterization of Lucile, but even this detail shows the influence of Goethe (specifically Gretchen in the \textit{Kerkerszene}) more than Shakespeare. Rudolf Majut, in discussing Büchner's indebtedness to the great Elizabethan, writes,

\textit{... Camille's wife is by no means a mere copy of Polonius's daughter; nor is Dantons Tod as a whole an imitation of a \textit{Shakespearean} play. One may call it a second-hand imitation in so far as it is modelled after the fashion of Götz, \textit{Die Räuber}, and other \textit{Sturm und Drang} dramas which, in their turn, are inspired by \textit{Shakespeare}.}\textsuperscript{8}

There are two important aspects of Lucile's role in the drama. In terms of dramatic function, the scenes in which she appears serve primarily as contrast to the

\textsuperscript{7} Frank Harris, \textit{The Women of \textit{Shakespeare}} (New York: M. Kennerley, 1912), p. 171 and elsewhere.

main events of the play. In addition to her dramatic function, Lucile's vital character provides a subtle but important vehicle for the positive side of Büchner's thought. Each of these aspects will be discussed in detail.

Like the Danton/Julie subplot, the action between Lucile and Camille, which begins in the middle of the second act, parallels the primary events of the drama and changes the spectator's view of the main plot. Occurring just after Danton and Camille's discussion about aesthetics is a short scene-within-a-scene, a personal vignette of Camille and Lucile. This little scene must be quoted in full:

Camille. Was sagst du, Lucile?
Lucile. Nichts, ich seh dich so gern sprechen.
Camille. Hörst mich auch?
Lucile. Ei freilich!
Camille. Hab ich recht? Weißt du auch, was ich gesagt habe?
Lucile. Nein, wahrhaftig nicht. (II.iii.40-41)

The dramatic effectiveness of the scene lies primarily in its utter simplicity in contrast to the rhetoric of the main scenes of the drama. Sandwiched in between the philosophical-aesthetic discussion and the pending catastrophe of the political events, the brief dialogue
reminds the spectator of the enduring presence of human love throughout the turmoil.

This short interlude provides one example of what Höllerer calls the "Du-Sätze" of the drama. In this and similar personal scenes, including the scenes between Danton and Julie, the timeless human truth of the drama is presented. While totally devoid of "action," these "Du-Sätze" are more important to the play than the great scenes of political and philosophical moment.

Other critics have commented on the significance of this dialogue between Lucile and Camille. Viëtor calls it "ein winziges Menschliches Zwischenspiel im dröhnden Schauspiel der Geschichte." He writes,

Nur für einen Augenblick leuchtet hier die Ordnung bewußtloser Naturrichtigkeit auf. Aber sie ist auch sonst im Gang des Dramas vertreten, und zwar immer nur durch Frauen. Wo sie sprechen, da schwingt sich in der tragischen Symphonie die helle Melodie auf, ein Ton der Beständigkeit, Reinheit, des unproblemati-

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10 Ibid., pp. 67-68 and elsewhere.

11 Viëtor, Büchner, p. 147.
The personal glimpse of Lucile and Camille is interrupted by Danton's return and with him a return to political matters. However, due to this short interlude, the spectator's viewpoint toward the momentous political events has changed: the events themselves are now clearly set against the background of the individual human condition.

After Danton's departure, Lucile once more talks with Camille, this time voicing her fears and instinctively perceptive premonitions. Her fears, especially her irrational recalling of the folksong, "Ach Scheiden," serve as a foreshadowing of the impending disaster. Lucile's premonitions, based on what Baumann calls her "nachtwandlerische Hellsichtigkeit,"\(^{13}\) help more than the events themselves to create an atmosphere of tension and foreboding. Likewise Lucile's appearance in the prison scene (IV.iv.75) heightens the dramatic impact of the

\[^{12}\text{Ibid.}\]

Büchner dedicates the final scene of the drama not to philosophical discussions or political debates but to the self-sacrifice of Lucile, thereby giving the scene special dramatic importance aside from the philosophical implications of her deed. As atmosphere, her final scene brings a mood of quiet reconciliation after the bitterness of the Conciergerie scenes, a mood which softens the harsh impact of the executions of the men and, like Julie's suicide, sounds a positive note.

Besides the dramatic function of her role in terms of atmosphere and perspective, Lucile's character is of considerable philosophical significance to the play. With Lucile, Büchner creates an impressive example of ideal love, presenting in her freshness and youthful vitality a view of life radically different from the weary skepticism of Danton. The positive message of the play is presented implicitly in Lucile's character rather than in any specific statements.

In the scenes in which Lucile appears, Büchner carefully develops her character, providing a full portrait of her personality in a surprisingly few lines. In his characterization of Lucile he emphasizes two aspects
of her personality, traits which gain philosophical implications in the course of the play's events. Lucile is pictured as a congenial combination of child-like openness and innate sensuality.

These characteristics become immediately evident in the first scene in which she appears (II.iii). Lucile, unembarrassed by her lack of understanding of Camille's ideas, demonstrates her devotion to him in her assertion that she likes to hear him speak. Unintellectual and unconcerned with aesthetic or political ideas except as they are related to the well-being of her beloved Camille, she is content merely to sit and watch, taking satisfaction in Camille's presence.

Lucile's child-like, natural quality is even more clearly illustrated in her expression of concern for Camille's safety. Realizing instinctively that his life is in danger, she anxiously turns to him for reassurance: "Wenn ich denke, daß sie dies Haupt--! Mein Camille! das ist Unsinn, gelt, ich bin wahnsinnig?" (II.iii.41). She longs for him to tell her that her fears are groundless. Her choice of the word "wahnsinnig" here has an ironic twist as a foreshadowing of her eventual insanity.
It is typical for Lucile's personality that she picks up the word "Haupt" and thinks of it quite literally, as a child would: "Die Erde ist weit, und es sind viele Dinge drauf--warum denn gerade das eine [i. e., his head]? Wer sollte mir's nehmen? Das wäre arg. Was wollten sie auch damit anfangen?" (II.iii.41).

After Camille's departure Lucile is overcome by the terrible premonition that he will never return to her, a premonition that takes the form of the unbidden appearance of a folksong in her mind. Her mind, unfettered by too much intellectualizing, senses the impending doom that most of the other characters miss. The only character in the play governed solely by instinct, Lucile has a truer picture of her husband's mortal danger than either Camille or Danton. Both men, trusting more in reason, fail to give full credence to the approaching disaster until it is too late. Camille, for example, tries to reassure Lucile with his statement that he has just spoken with Robespierre, who, he says, was friendly to him. Camille's attitude here is similar to that reflected in Danton's repeated, "Sie werden's nicht wagen." Lucile, with little understanding of the political events, has by her reliance on instinct a more realistic judgment of the danger.
Büchner's presentation of Lucile's infallible instinct as superior in judgment to the men's intellects reflects his skeptical view of human reason. Although their personalities are very different, both Danton and Camille, refusing to face the truth about their political adversaries, deceive themselves with what they feel are reasonable considerations. In the contrast between the men's assumed reason and Lucile's instinct, Büchner demonstrates his disdain for the idealization of man as a rational being. Büchner feels that man, because of his tendency towards self-deception, is incapable of perceiving his situation accurately through reason alone.

In her lack of sophistication and reliance on pure feeling, Lucile bears a strong resemblance to Gretchen in Faust. Goethe's heroine, because of her simplicity and closeness to nature, has the innate ability to sense the presence of evil, as for example when she is around Mephisto.\textsuperscript{14} Lucile's irrational fears for Camille's life,\hfill

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like Gretchen's misgivings about Mephisto, serve to heighten dramatic tension and provide a mood of foreboding.

In Lucile's next appearance (IV.iv.75) she has gone insane due to the thought of Camille's execution. Her child-like quality is exaggerated now as fantasies engulf her mind. Although Lucile in this scene is reminiscent of the insane Ophelia in Hamlet, her similarity to Gretchen is even more striking. The Kerkerszene in Faust presents an unforgettable picture of Gretchen, who in her mad raving still shows an uncanny grasp of the situation. She is obviously a literary forerunner of the insane Lucile, whom Büchner keeps, as Oppel expresses it, "auf der Grenze zwischen Unsinn und Tiefsinn."^15

In her madness Lucile seems more ingenuous than ever, but also more sensual. Her sensual quality has been hinted at in the earlier scene with Camille. For example, as Camille takes leave of her, she objects mildly: "So schnell, mein Freund? Geh! Komm! Nur das sie küßt ihn und das! Geh! Geh!" (II.iii.42). Likewise in the scene before the prison she speaks to him in sensual terms, as

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reflected in her choice of a song, a suggestive invitation to a lover, followed by the directions, "Komm, komm, mein Freund! Leise die Treppe herauf, sie schlafen alle. Der Mond hilft mir schon lange warten" (IV.iv.75). This scene illustrates the natural, unforced quality of Lucile's sensuality.

Lucile's personality, the blend of ingenuousness and sensuality, has greater significance than simply dramatic effectiveness. The contrast between her relationship with Camille and Julie's with Danton illustrates Büchner's two-sided view of life, reflecting his desire for death and peace as well as his unquenchable affirmation of life and joy in the creation. In their relationships with their wives, Danton and Camille represent two contradictory but not mutually exclusive elements crucial to Büchner's Weltanschauung. In this duality Danton and Camille are reminiscent of many characters in Goethe's drama, characters who similarly reflect two conflicting aspects of their creator: Götz and Weislingen, Egmont and Oranien, Faust and Mephisto, Tasso and Antonio--these characters, all of whom are somewhat autobiographical, portray Goethe's sense of the dual nature of man.
The relationship between Lucile and Camille is far different from that of Julie and Danton, for the two men differ greatly in the qualities each desires and needs in a wife. Danton looks to Julie for comfort and peace. She is the calming, maternal influence which he requires. What Camille finds desirable in Lucile, on the other hand, are her freshness, vitality, and youthful exuberance. If either of the latter two could be said to play a parental role, it would be Camille, with Lucile turning to him for comfort and reassurance.

In the first scene in which the couple appears together, Camille clearly is the calming influence on Lucile, rather than vice versa, as is the case with Julie and Danton. When she hears of Danton's danger, Lucile is frantically afraid for Camille's life. Camille, remaining at least outwardly composed, attempts repeatedly to comfort her by telling her to be calm ("ruhig") and assuring her that all is well between him and Robespierre. Whether Camille is actually as confident of his position as he maintains is doubtful, but in any case he assumes the role of a steadying influence on Lucile. This role is in contrast with that of Danton, who voices his thoughts and
fears freely to Julie, knowing she has the inner strength to accept them calmly and be a comfort to him.

Another important aspect of Camille's personality is reflected in his response to Lucile's sensuality. Camille is a positive figure, a yea-sayer to life, free from the weariness that debilitates Danton. While Danton expresses in both speech and action his disgust and disappointment with life and, until the last, his readiness for death, Camille clings to life with all his strength. More than any of the other Dantonists, Camille expresses openly his desire to live:

Höre, Danton, unter uns gesagt, es ist so elend, sterben müssen. . . . Ich will dem Leben noch die letzten Blicke aus seinen hübschen Augen stehlen, ich will die Augen offen haben. (IV.iii.72)

It is actually out of character for Camille that he should choose Edward Young's gloomy Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality as his reading matter in prison (IV.iii.74). Camille has too much joy in life for such a choice.16

16 Paul Landau notes that Büchner took this detail from one of his sources, Riouffe's Mémoire sur les prisons de Paris ("Dantons Tod," in Georg Büchners Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Paul Landau [Berlin, 1909], I, rpt. in Georg Büchner, ed. Wolfgang Martens [Darmstadt:
Camille's lust for life is closely connected with his love for Lucile. Lucile, the closest to nature of all characters in the drama, is spontaneous in her speech and in the demonstration of her feelings, a character completely free from artifice. It is appropriate that such a woman be the wife of Camille, the joyous affirmer of "der Schöpfung, die glühend, brausend und leuchtend . . . sich jeden Augenblick neu gebiert. . . ." (II.iii.40).

That life and Lucile are closely connected in Camille's mind is shown by the frequent references to his wife when he contemplates his imminent death. After the great religious discussion in the Luxembourg, Danton expresses his casual acceptance of his approaching death in his typically clever, metaphoric speech: "Es ist besser, sich in die Erde legen als sich Leichdörner auf

Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965], p. 19). A further consideration is pointed out by Rudolf Majut, who feels that Büchner was probably aware of the book's principal ideas and general atmosphere but had not read the work himself. Majut argues convincingly that Camille, far from a moralist and sentimentalist, could "by no means derive any comfort from the pseudo-philosophic theodicy of the orthodox clergyman Young," any more than Danton or Büchner himself could have (p. 32). The mention of the Night Thoughts is a bit of carelessness on Büchner's part, a break in his technique of characterizing Camille.
ihr laufen; ich habe sie lieber zum Kissen als zum Schemel" (III.i.54). Hérault replies to him in the same vein. It is Camille who admits freely to his fear of death. He says to Danton, "... du magst die Zunge noch so weit zum Hals heraushängen, du kannst dir damit doch nicht den Todesschweiß von der Stirne lecken.--0 Lucile! Das ist ein großer Jammer!" (III.i.54).

In the scene before the "Revolutionstribunal" Camille again shows his preoccupation with Lucile as he thinks with dismay of his death. As Fouquier tells the Tribunal that the defendants will be excluded from the debates over their guilt, Danton addresses those present with a passionate defensive statement. But Camille's first thought is his wife: "Die Elenden, sie wollen meine Lucile morden!" (III.ix.68). In Camille's mind the thought of Lucile always occurs when he thinks of his approaching death, and shows his desire to live. His will to live is closely related to his desire for her.

Viétor's comparison between Büchner and Schopenhauer, made in relation to Danton's sudden change from "Lebenssekel" into "Lebenswillen," is better applicable to Camille. Viétor writes,
Die Liebe, so wäre von Schopenhauer aus zu interpretieren, ist "der in der Gattung sich darstellende Wille zum Leben." Sie treibt den todessüchtigen Danton ins Dasein zurück. Der plötzliche Umschlag von Lebenssekel in Lebenswillen aus Liebesleidenschaft, das ist Psychologie in Schopenhauers Geist.\textsuperscript{17}

While Camille does not show the disgust with life which characterizes Danton, he does illustrate Schopenhauer's view of love, for Camille's will to live is reflected in his sexual longing for Lucile.

A comparison between Danton and Camille on this point reveals the two-sided nature of Büchner's view of love and death. While Camille equates Lucile with the fullness of creation, Danton compares Julie to the grave. Camille clings tenaciously to life; Danton longs for death and peace. While Danton consistently uses the word \textit{Ruhe} in relation to Julie, it never occurs to Camille to apply that word to Lucile, for Camille's feeling for Lucile is a vital, driving force. As the key to Julie's effect on Danton is peace, the key to Lucile is vitality. She does not possess Julie's inner serenity of spirit, but neither does her husband require it of her.

\textsuperscript{17} Victor, Büchner, p. 112. See also pp. 41-42 of the present study.
As was discussed in the previous chapter, sex plays a relatively minor role in Danton's relationship with Julie; surprisingly so, since sexual references and even obscenities abound in Danton's speech. The only erotic references to Julie occur in the context of Danton's longing for death. This combination of love and death colors Danton's whole relationship with Julie. Closely related to Danton's erotic love/death longing for Julie is his dependence on her as a mother figure. Because of this maternal role Danton's references to Julie, with the notable exception of the passage equating his love for her with the grave, are free of sexual content.

Although Camille's personality is not so openly sexual as Danton's, sex is an important aspect of Camille's relationship with Lucile. As discussed above, Lucile, in her natural, innocent way, is a very sensual woman. Her attitude toward her husband is that of a lover as well as a wife, and she is openly expressive of the physical side of her love for Camille. Likewise Camille's thoughts of Lucile are highly colored with the physical. In prison he praises her beauty with the gushing enthusiasm of a young lover: "Sie können die Hände nicht an sie legen! Das Licht der Schönheit, das von ihrem süßen Leib sich aus-
gießt, ist unlöschar. . . . Lucile, deine Küsse phantasieren auf meinen Lippen. . . ." (IV.iii.71-2). After Lucile's appearance outside the Conciergerie, Camille muses on her insanity. Here, too, he shows his physical attraction to her: "Was sie an dem Wahnsinn ein reizendes Kind geboren hat! Warum muß ich jetzt fort? Wir hätten zusammen mit ihm gelacht, es gewiegt und geküßt" (IV.v.77). This emphasis on the physical side of Camille's relationship with Lucile strengthens his characterization as a vital, positive figure, a trait which contrasts vividly with the weariness of Danton, who desires in love only the peace it brings him.

The two conflicting views of life and love are reflected in Büchner's letters to his fiancée, Wilhelmine Jaegle. On the one side Büchner shows his need for a mother figure to bring his tortured spirit some peace. After the much-quoted passage reflecting the crisis in Büchner's thinking precipitated by his study of the French Revolution, he writes her, "Könnte ich aber dies kalte und gemarterte Herz an Deine Brust legen!" (p. 374). In other letters his good-humored words reveal a relationship as warm and loving as that of Camille and Lucile. For example, in a letter from Zürich dated just before
his death, Büchner expresses his desire for "Deiner göttlichen Unbefangenheit und Deinem lieben Leichtsinn und all Deinen bösen Eigenschaften, böses Mädchen. Addio, piccola mia!—" (p. 422). The duality of the view of love portrayed in Dantons Tod results from the duality in Büchner's own personality and experience.

The positive relationship of Lucile and Camille culminates in her decision to follow him to the grave. This action is of great philosophical significance to the play, for with Lucile's gesture the forces of necessity are defeated by an act of free will, performed out of love. Her deed changes the philosophical tone of the play, admitting the possibility for an alternative to the nihilism expressed elsewhere in the drama.

In the scene immediately following the execution of the Dantonists, Lucile appears on the street, still trying in her insanity to grasp the reality of the situation. She comes to her senses enough to understand the meaning of the word sterben, but she cannot comprehend how life can go on as usual if Camille dies: "Der Strom des Lebens müßte stocken, wenn nur der eine Tropfen verschüttelt würde. Die Erde müßte eine Wunde bekommen von dem Streich" (IV.viii.81). When her screams fail to halt
the continuing life, Lucile reaches a sort of resignation
to reality: "Wir müssen's wohl leiden" (IV.viii.81). Although, as Viëtor suggests, this phrase could be taken
as an epitaph on life itself as Büchner sees it, it is
not Lucile's final answer; for while she does come to
accept reality, she does not remain passively resigned to
life without Camille, as the following scene demonstrates.

The final scene of the play finds Lucile at the
Revolutionsplatz. Here, sitting on the steps to the guil­
lotine, she begins to become reconciled with death. She
calls the guillotine the "stillen Todesengel" (IV.ix.82),
an image of death that contrasts strikingly with the
macabre pictures of death and decay evoked by the
Dantonists in the Conciergerie. Her singing of the folk­
song also reflects a more positive view of death as a
harvester: "Es ist ein Schnitter, der heißt Tod,/ Hat

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18 Fink comments on this line as follows: "Dieses letzte Erkennen ist jedoch kein Verzweifeln, sondern ein

19 Büchner, p. 208.
Gewalt vom höchsten Gott" (IV.ix.82). The guillotine is addressed as "du liebe Wiege, die du meinen Camille in Schlaf gelullt. . . . Du Totenglocke, die du ihn mit deiner süßen Zunge zu Grabe sangst" (IV.ix.82). All of these pictures of death, vastly different from those earlier in the play, create a mood of reconciliation with death, a sweet melancholy with all bitterness removed.

The mood of reconciliation and peace is changed to affirmative action as Lucile, "sinnend und wie einen Entschluß fassend," shouts, "Es lebe der König!" thus ensuring her own execution. The fact that she brings about her death by shouting words in which she does not believe gives an ironic twist to her deed and saves it from any trace of sentimentality.

While this scene should not be taken as a glorification or transfiguration of the deaths (as Egmont's death is glorified in his dream of freedom, for example), it is

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20 Fink lists the Knaben Wunderhorn as Büchner's source for the "Erntetlied" ("Volkslied," p. 558). The song actually dates from the Baroque. Fink feels that Büchner's deliberate omission of the last line ("Freu dich, du schönes Blümlein") stresses the "Grausamkeit des Schnitter's Tod" rather than religious comfort (pp. 563-4). For a similar omission of a last line, see p. 103 of the present study.
a positive scene, for Lucile's death is an act of free will, defying the forces of necessity. Krapp writes that with this deed "reift Lucile . . . zur tragisch ergreifenden Gestalt—der einzigen in Büchners Werk." Here death is seen in a more positive light than in Julie's suicide. There, as Bach observes, death, in the image of the corpse moving forever westward, is still considered an eternal process ("Vorgang"). But Lucile's view of death adds a positive dimension: death as the harvester of ripe grain, a necessary, meaningful activity. Where death, according to Bach, was earlier seen as Vorgang, here it is viewed as Gestalt, a sign of absolute conclusion, and attains a dignity and mystery that it lacked before. Bach carries the contrast a bit too far, for Julie's suicide, whatever image of death it evokes, occurs in a scene of great peace. But the point is well made that with Lucile's death the note of reconciliation is sounded even more


23 Ibid.
strongly, and death comes to be viewed as the natural culmination of the life process.

The magnitude of Lucile's deed is by no means diminished by the fact that she is insane. Camille questions the concepts of sanity and reason in the Conciergerie with his remark, "Die allgemeinen fixen Ideen, welche man die gesunde Vernunft tauft, sind unerträglich langweilig" (IV.v.76). This statement, reflecting the absurdity of the so-called normal world, indicates Büchner's intention that Lucile should be taken seriously. It does not necessarily follow, however, that only an insane person can perform a meaningful act. Julie's death, for one example, is certainly as meaningful as Lucile's, and there is no question of Julie's sanity. Lucile's insanity simply serves to lend an extra measure of poignance and dramatic impact to the scene.

Like Gretchen in the Kerkerszene, Lucile is pictured as insane but nevertheless instinctively cognisant of the reality of her situation. As Gretchen wills her

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24 This is the contention of Lindenberger, who writes, "Only in madness, [Büchner] implies, can one perform an act that has a meaning in a meaningless world" (p. 53).
own execution by refusing to escape with Faust and Mephisto, Lucile deliberately brings about her own arrest by her traitorous shout. While Lucile seeks union with Camille, Gretchen sees her death as retribution for her guilt and purification for her sin as well as an escape from the temptation of further evil. Although their motivation differs, both women, in spite of their insanity, attain tragic greatness by the freedom of their choice of death.

The two lovers, Lucile and Camille, present the most positive picture in the pessimistic *Dantons Tod*. Their love, youthful and vigorous, is strong enough to overcome death and provide hope for a reunion beyond the grave. This hope, which Fink refers to as a "romantische Umdeutung des Todes,"\(^\text{25}\) shows many similarities with the love/death ideas of the romantic writers, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel. Indeed, the love of Camille and Lucile fulfills the ideal of marriage typical for the Romantic Period: a total union, both spiritual and physical. With Büchner, however, the lovers are never

\(^{25}\) Fink, "Volkslied," p. 579.
sublimated or in any way sentimentalized but are treated realistically and naturally.

The picture of their love is so tenderly drawn that it helps to some extent to repudiate the nihilistic passages of the play. The characters of Camille and especially Lucile are more important to the development of the affirmative side of Büchner's philosophy than any of the positive statements Büchner makes on the beauty of the creation.²⁶ It is no coincidence that Büchner ends the tragedy with Lucile's quiet, conciliatory acceptance of her fate and her choice of death, rather than with a scene of rhetorical nihilism such as some of the scenes in the Conciergerie.

Höllerer writes of the positive aspects of the final scene as follows:

Nachdem alle Masken zerstört und alle Täuschungen dem ewigen Gelächter ausgeliefert sind, wird im Schmerz noch eine Stimme der Liebe hörbar, die alle Masken und Trostillusionen hinter sich gelassen und

²⁶ Cf. Camille's praise of creation (II.iii.40). Cf. also Büchner's aesthetic statements in Lenz, as in the following example: "Die schönsten Bilder, die schwellendsten Töne gruppieren, lösen sich auf. Nur eins bleibt: eine unendliche Schönheit, die aus einer Form in die andre tritt, ewig aufgeblättert, verändert" (p. 95).
The "voice of love" heard here represents the positive side of Büchner's Weltanschauung, by no means negating the nihilistic portions of the play but indicating that they are not meant to be the final answer. While nothing can obliterate the impact of the tragedy's unswerving gaze into the Nichts, the mere presence of the faithful Lucile and the possibility of such love soften the effect and provide an irrepressible glimmer of hope.

The philosophy implicit in Lucile's unquestioning, unproblematic nature and her act of decision provides a view of life which admits the possibility of finding meaning through love of another human being. As Poseck writes, "[Luciles] Tat, die frei ist, weist hin auf die Sinnhaftigkeit des Daseins." Through love for Camille, Lucile is able to escape the determinism which governs the main characters and perform an act of freedom affirming human dignity. Viëtor supports this point of view but

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27 Höllerer, p. 88.

28 Udo Poseck, "Georg Büchner: Dantons Tod: Bei-
spiel einer Drameninterpretation in einer Arbeitsgemein-
adds the dimension of the divine to the concept of freedom:
"Hier einmal, und nur hier, erhebt sich in der düstern Tragödie der fatalistischen Notwendigkeit die Idee der Freiheit, in der die untergegangene Welt des idealistischen Glaubens das Göttliche im Menschen erblickt hatte."^29

Büchner's ultimate philosophical position is to be found in the overall view of life reflected in his presentation of the characters rather than in any specific philosophical statements. Some of his most important ideas are presented between the lines, in the lovingly sketched scenes of human concern and understanding. Of these, the scenes between Lucile and Camille provide the most convincing evidence of Büchner's faith in human love, a faith which goes beyond his skeptical intellectual questioning of values and gives a sustaining meaning to life.

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29 Viëtor, Büchner, p. 148. By his use of a phrase limiting this idea to Lucile's deed, Viëtor ignores the philosophical implications of Julie's suicide. There, too, the idea of freedom is implicit in her action.
CHAIRPH III

ROSETTA

Leonce's neglected mistress, Rosetta, makes only one short appearance in Büchner's comedy and is never mentioned again. Nevertheless, her role has dramatic significance in that it illustrates some of the important ideas of the play and prepares the reader for the further development of these ideas in the character of Lena. Many of the themes of Dantons Tod which recur in Leonce und Lena—for example, the loneliness of man and his longing for Gemeinschaft, the emptiness of life, and the combined motif of love and death—are given dramatic expression in the scene between Rosetta and Leonce.

Rosetta, the character in Büchner's work who most resembles the "Holzpuppen" he repudiates in Lenz (p. 94), is unique among his female figures in that she is a completely stylized creation. This is a distinct contrast to Julie and Lucile, who, while they are idealized characters in that they embody Büchner's ideals of love, are essentially realistic figures, speaking in a down-to-earth,
everyday manner. Their actions are natural and unforced, and their speech, even when most lyrical (such as Julie's suicide monologue), is never stilted. They are psychologically real, believable characters. This is not the case with Rosetta.

The fact that she is a stylized rather than realistic figure does not prevent Rosetta from being pitiable; further, it is not true that as a mere puppet she is easily resigned to her fate, as maintained by Abutille. Although she does not compel the reader to identify with her, she does elicit sympathy. Lindenberger misinterprets the scene with his statement that "Büchner, of course, never allows the comic artifice to break down by letting us pity the girl." It is precisely the weakness of this comedy that the "comic artifice" cannot be effectively maintained under the weight of the pessimistic ideas, both in relation to Rosetta as well as throughout the play.

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Like Marion in *Danton's Tod*, Rosetta's one appearance is tied into the main plot only loosely and does nothing to further the action. But while Marion, with her long monologue, dominates the scene in which she appears, Rosetta is not the principal character in the scene, which is dominated by Leonce. Rosetta's character is revealed primarily by her reactions to his comments and actions. Her character, which is not well drawn, presents the portrait of a rejected mistress desperate to hold on to her lover but unable to do so.

The scene opens with Leonce's call for candles, music, and Rosetta. While he clearly considers her simply another commodity for his amusement, Rosetta is actually in love with Leonce and is deeply hurt by his frivolous treatment of her.

From the beginning of their dialogue it is clear that Rosetta seeks a word of love from Leonce, who continuously disappoints her. At first appearance she tries to act seductive: the stage directions read, "näher sich schmeichelnd" (I.iii.120). The following exchange is comic, but as Rosetta's disappointments mount, it ceases to be lighthearted:
Rosetta. Deine Lippen sind träge. Vom Küssen?
Leonce. Vom Gähnen!
Rosetta. Oh!
Leonce. Ach Rosetta, ich habe die entsetzliche Arbeit...
Rosetta. Nun?
Leonce. Nichts zu tun...
Rosetta. Als zu lieben?
Leonce. Freilich Arbeit!
Rosetta beleidigt. Leonce!
Leonce. Oder Beschäftigung.
Rosetta. Oder Müßiggang. (I.iii.120)

This exchange and the following lines present a series of disappointments for Rosetta, who longs for a declaration of love from Leonce. When Rosetta, confused by his evasive answers, finally asks him directly whether he loves her, Leonce still avoids the question and refuses to swear eternal love to her.

Rosetta joins Leonce in a series of puns on the words time and love, but her remark is not humorous:

Leonce. . . . wir können uns Zeit nehmen, uns zu lieben.
Rosetta. Oder die Zeit kann uns das Lieben nehmen.
Leonce. Oder das Lieben uns die Zeit.

The whole dialogue depicts the conflict between Rosetta's desire for an enduring relationship of love and Leonce's feeling of love simply as a means of filling the empty hours. She is desperate to regain his love, which she senses she has lost.
When Leonce bids Rosetta to dance, "daß die Zeit mit dem Takt deiner niedlichen Füße geht!" she answers sadly, "Meine Füße gingen lieber aus der Zeit" (I.iii.121). Instead of a love song, Rosetta's song is one of longing for death:

O meine müden Füße, ihr müßt tanzen
In bunten Schuhen,
Und möchtet lieber tief, tief
Im Boden ruhen. (I.iii.121)

Meanwhile Leonce, unmoved by her unhappiness, is musing about his "dying love," which he declares is "schöner als eine werdende" (I.iii.122). Rosetta, approaching him with tears in her eyes, still is unable to move him. Like a true aesthete, he simply comments on the beautiful picture her tears would make in the sun. He will not let her embrace him, and as she tries to joke with him, he closes his eyes lest his dead love be revived. In total dejection Rosetta departs, singing another sad little song as she goes:

Ich bin eine arme Waise,
Ich fürchte mich ganz allein.
Ach, lieber Gram--
Willst du nicht kommen mit mir heim? (I.iii.122)

The scene with Rosetta is only loosely connected with the main plot of the drama. Plard suggests that
Büchner, following Musset's example, was perhaps thinking of a parallel plot, an idea which he then abandoned.\(^3\) The scene is not without dramatic purpose, however, for in serving as a prelude to the great love affair with Lena,\(^4\) the scene with Rosetta illustrates Leonce's state of mind on the subject of love. As background, it gives the reader a better understanding of Leonce's subsequent relationship with Lena. Moreover, the dialogue between Leonce and Rosetta is connected to the main plot in the serious themes introduced here.

The theme of loneliness, which is important to Dantons Tod and Woyzeck as well as to subsequent scenes in the comedy, is clearly developed in this scene. Rosetta, trying unsuccessfully to win Leonce's love, is another of Büchner's examples of an individual longing for the love of another human being. It is loneliness which makes


Rosetta so desperate to reach Leonce, an idea which is expressed later in the play by the more articulate Lena: "Man geht ja so einsam und tastet nach einer Hand, die einen hielte, bis die Leichenfrau die Hände auseinander nähme und sie jedem über der Brust faltete" (I.iv.129).

This love unto death is the love which Rosetta desires from Leonce as she asks whether he will love her forever. Rosetta's illustration of this theme is less poignant than Lena's, due to the fact that Rosetta's character is not as thoroughly developed. But the problem of loneliness introduced in the Rosetta scene is the eternal question of man's loneliness expressed so vividly in other passages in Büchner's work.\(^5\) Baumann perceptively observes that Rosetta may be considered "eine ältere Schwester des verlassenen Kindes aus der Großmutter-Parabel im Woyzeck."\(^6\)

Rosetta's longing for death arises directly out of her disappointment in love. Unlike Leonce, Rosetta does

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\(^5\) Cf. Dantons Tod (I.i.9), Lenz (pp. 86 and 100), and Büchner's letter from Giessen: "Ich bin allein, wie im Grabe" (p. 378).

not from the beginning show a weariness with life. As Fink points out, Rosetta, like other figures in Büchner's work, would much rather embrace life, if only her love were returned. As she appears at the beginning of the scene, her mood is truly lighthearted. Only after the successive disappointments with Leonce do her thoughts turn to death. The motif of the "müden Füße," which recurs in a scene between Leonce and Lena, is expressed by Rosetta only after it is clear that she has lost Leonce's love. Rosetta's first indication of tiredness with life occurs in the interchange playing on the words time and love: "Meine Füße gingen lieber aus der Zeit" (I.iii.121). Here she begins her song about weariness with life and longing for death. Büchner clearly implies that death is preferable to a life without love, for without love, time becomes unbearably long.

Although her unhappiness and her longing for an escape from loneliness are quite genuine, Rosetta's char-

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8 "Für müde Füße ist jeder Weg zu lang. . . ." (II.i.iii.134).
acter is too puppet-like to be considered tragic. Even the song reflecting her desire for death is far from the deeply personal use of the folksong by Lucile. Rosetta's song, while well motivated psychologically, is stylized rather than spontaneous. Fink writes that

\[\text{die Ichform ist schließlich das einzige Persönliche am Lied, denn mit seiner Rhetorik, den Kontrastwirkungen seiner drei antithetisch aufgebauten Strophen kommt dieses Gedicht der intellektuellen, kühlen Atmosphäre der Szene entgegen.}^{9}\]

For this reason Rosetta's songs do not have the dramatic impact of the intensely personal songs of Lucile and Marie.

The character of Rosetta, while illustrating one of Büchner's most important themes, is not the center of interest in the scene. Her main function is the dramatization of Leonce's character in preparation for Lena's entrance, for in this scene some of his most significant qualities are delineated.

The most striking aspect of Leonce's personality shown in this scene is his casual cruelty to the girl. He seems blind to her pain, wrapped in his introspection. When he tells her to dance, she begins the song that

\[\text{9 Fink, "Volkslied," p. 574.}\]
expresses her disillusionment with life and her desire for death. Oblivious to her unhappy words, Leonce broods on his own feelings about love. When he sees her crying, he is actually brutal to her: "Stelle dich in die Sonne, damit die köstlichen Tropfen kristallisieren, es muß prächtige Diamanten geben. Du kannst dir ein Halsband daraus machen lassen" (I.iii.122). Leonce stands firmly unmoved by all Rosetta's pleading, refusing even to look at her as she departs.

In the monologue that follows, Leonce makes a statement that helps explain his behavior to Rosetta: "Meine Herren, meine Herren, wisst ihr auch, was Caligula und Nero waren? Ich weiß es" (I.iii.123). He is horrified at the time which yawns before him, and does not know how to fill it.

How one can fill the hours that stretch before him—this is a recurrent question for Büchner, who introduces the subject of boredom in virtually all of his creative works.10 Like Danton, Leonce turns to prosti-

10 Cf. Leonce und Lena (I.i.115-16); Dantons Tod (II.i.33-6); Woyzeck (I. Beim Hauptmann. 151); Lenz (p. 105). See also Leroy R. Shaw, "Symbolism of Time in Büchner's Leonce und Lena," Monatshefte 48 (1956), 221-30.
tutes simply to help pass the time. That Leonce seeks primarily release from boredom is obvious in the following exchange with Rosetta:

Leonce. . . . wir können uns Zeit nehmen, uns zu lieben.

Rosetta. Oder die Zeit kann uns das Lieben nehmen.

Leonce. Oder das Lieben uns die Zeit. Tanze, Rosetta, tanze, daß die Zeit mit dem Takt deiner niedlichen Füße geht! (I.iii.121)

Leonce's last remark is reminiscent of Danton's farewell to Marion: "So viel Zeit zu verlieren! Das war der Mühe wert!" (I.v.28). Indulgence in physical pleasure is for Leonce, like Danton, an attempt to escape the emptiness of his days. Although Büchner seldom mentions boredom in his letters directly, the problem is evidently one which he felt acutely and one which is directly related to his feeling of the meaninglessness of existence.

Another important aspect of Leonce's character illustrated in the scene with Rosetta is his erotic fascination with death. As Rosetta dances, Leonce sits musing to himself, entranced with the image of a dying love:

11 For example: "Das ganze Leben [der abgelebten modernen Gesellschaft] besteht nur in Versuchen, sich die entsetzlichste Langeweile zu vertreiben" (Strassbourg, 1836, p. 412).
O, eine sterbende Liebe ist schöner als eine werdende. . . . Wie ihr das Rot von den Wangen stirbt, wie still das Auge ausglüht, wie leis das Wogen ihrer Glieder steigt und fällt! Adio, adio, meine Liebe, ich will deine Leiche lieben. (I.iii.122)

The necrophilic image of the beloved corpse is the same as that which occurs in the garden scene with Lena. In his tiredness with life, Leonce, like Danton, is fascinated with death and expresses his desire for death in sexual terms.\textsuperscript{12} Leonce's weariness with Rosetta is symptomatic of his general weariness with life. Consequently he is enamored with death and relishes the introspective view of his dying love. While a death wish is common to many of Büchner's characters, including Rosetta at the close of the scene, the highly erotic flavoring of Leonce's necrophilic thoughts are comparable only to the identical ideas expressed by Danton. Based on his analysis of these characters, White considers Büchner's sexuality seriously impaired.\textsuperscript{13} Rosetta's desire for death, on the other hand,

\textsuperscript{12} Cf. the many necrophilic passages in \textit{Dantons Tod}: for example, Danton's declaration of love to Julie (I.i.9-10), his comments about flirting with death (II.iv.42), and Hérault's reference to the "hübschen Dame Verwesung" (III.i.54).

\textsuperscript{13} John S. White, "Georg Büchner or the Suffering through the Father," \textit{The American Imago} 9 (1952), 365-427.
is much simpler: the longing for an end to the meaninglessness of a life without love.

The characterization of Leonce presented in this scene is a rather unflattering one. The cruelty in his treatment of Rosetta, while understandable in light of his monologue, makes his humor more sadistic than funny. Paul Landau, comparing this scene with the corresponding one in Brentano's *Ponce de Leon*, writes, "Wie grausam wahr ist dagegen das kalte GenieBen einer erloschnen Liebe, wenn Leonce sich an den Tränen Rosettas erfreut. . . ." (writer's italics). Rosetta, too, although a flat rather than rounded character, is too unhappy for effective comedy. These two figures, along with the earnestness of the ideas presented in the scene, overshadow the witty dialogue and preclude the scene as real comedy.

Gundolf criticizes *Leonce und Lena* in general as a work which comes "aus gewollter und darum unwirksamer Laune, aus schwitzendem Willen zum beschwingten Witz, aus fleißigem Leichtsinn." While Gundolf considers the

14 Landau, "Leonce und Lena," p. 64.

play's "papierne Herkunft" as the basic cause of its weakness, its lack of genuine humor stems rather from Büchner's pessimistic view of the world. Although capable of creating such truly comic characters as Valerio, King Peter, and the Governess, Büchner is hampered in his comic sense by the underlying seriousness of his concept of reality and his deep skepticism.

The above remarks about the comedy as a whole are also applicable to the scene with Rosetta. Her character, while too stylized to be considered really tragic, presents nevertheless the picture of a human being trying to escape her loneliness. In this respect, as well as in her genuine longing for death expressed at the close of the scene, Rosetta is a character who reflects Büchner's deepest feelings of man's need for love in an otherwise meaningless world.

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16 Ibid., p. 391.

CHAPTER IV

LENA

The female protagonist of Leonce und Lena is the least realistic of all Büchner's female characters. Where the other women, with the exception of the stylized figure of Rosetta, are characterized by their authenticity, Lena is an idealized character whose predecessors are to be found in the romantic comedy.¹ Not only does her personality reflect the feminine ideals of her creator, but she also fulfills the ideal of a romantic heroine. Although related to the previously discussed women of Dantons Tod in her closeness to nature and her embodiment of pure feeling, Lena stands apart from them in both the idealism of her characterization and her elevated speech. Just as Leonce und Lena resembles a romantic fairy tale, so Lena

resembles a fairy-tale heroine. Where Dantons Tod has a definite historical setting and Woyzeck a contemporary German one, Leonce und Lena takes place in two imaginary kingdoms with ridiculous names.

In spite of her romantic quality, however, one aspect of Lena's role reflects her author and sets her apart from her sources. Lena, almost as much as Leonce and Danton, serves as spokesman for Büchner's ideas. Both sides of Lena's character, her romantic characterization and her illustration of Büchner's ideas, will be discussed in this chapter.

The relationship between Leonce und Lena and the romantic comedy in the style of Brentano and Tieck has been variously interpreted. Landau feels that Büchner consciously fulfills the ideal of a romantic comedy as described by Friedrich Schlegel.² Gundolf is much less

² Paul Landau discusses Friedrich Schlegel's criteria for an ideal romantic comedy as follows: "Besonnenen Mutwillen und überschäumende Lebensfülle verlangte Friedrich Schlegel von der Komödie; sie sollte wie die sокratische Ironie 'das Heiligste mit dem Fröhlichen und Leichtfertigen verweben.' Das romantische Mysterium von der unbeschränkten geistigen Freiheit des Genies erlebte in dem romantischen Ideal der Komödie seine Verwirklichung. Ironie und Witz, die beiden liebsten Kinder ihrer philosophischen Laune, konnten und sollten hier ein ewig
flattering of the work, but still considers it strictly a romantic piece, "ein Rückfall in die bloße Literaturkomödie der Romantik nach Shakespeares Muster." Helmut Krapp, on the other hand, considers the work a parody of romantic comedy rather than "eine mit hohem Kunstverstand geübte Zusammensetzung überliefeter und gängiger Motive zum Zwecke einer glaubwürdig erfüllten und . . . effizienten Form."  

All of these studies are excelled by the enlightening work of Gonthier-Louis Fink, who interprets the comedy in light of Büchner's general view of the world as expressed in his work as a whole. Fink reaches the conclusion that Büchner, far from being a mere imitator of Tieck, Musset, or Brentano, gives the romantic world of heiteres Spiel entfalten. . . . Die Begebenheiten, die Menschen, kurz das ganze Spiel des Lebens sollte wirklich auch als Spiel genommen und dargestellt werden" ("Leonce und Lena," in Georg Büchners Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Paul Landau [Berlin, 1909], I, rpt. in Georg Büchner, ed. Wolfgang Martens [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965], p. 53).


the fairy tale an entirely new meaning: "Direkt oder indirekt verrät . . . alles [in the play] Büchners Auffassung von der Wirklichkeit und seinem abgrundtiefen Skeptizismus . . . ."\(^5\) Of all the conflicting opinions concerning this play, Fink's interpretation explains most satisfactorily the supposed inconsistency between this and Büchner's other works. In spite of its closeness to the tradition of the romantic comedy, the primary theme of *Leonce und Lena* is as serious as that of Büchner's tragedies. In keeping with this interpretation, Lena is a serious vehicle for many of Büchner's important themes as well as the perfect embodiment of a romantic heroine.

Following the romantic ideal, Lena, while not a natural, i.e., realistic creation, is a person closely identified with the world of nature, nature here being taken to mean the flowers, birds, and gentle, passive creatures of nature, the moon, the night wind—in short, the idealized nature of the Romantics. The landscape

descriptions in romantic works such as Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde, Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen, and Tieck's Franz Sternbalde Wanderungen reflect an idealized view of nature far removed from that presented in Dantons Tod and even more radically different from the harsh natural world of Woyzeck. In contrast to most of Büchner's characters, Lena feels herself completely at one with nature.

Lena has the delicate beauty of a flower, tender, fragile, and utterly passive. In the first scene in which she appears this passive quality is clearly demonstrated. All she can do is lament her plight, and, significantly, she does so in terms that reflect her feeling of communion with the natural world: "Die Blumen öffnen und schließen, wie sie wollen, ihre Kelche der Morgensonne und dem Abendwind. Ist denn die Tochter eines Königs weniger als eine Blume?" (I.iv.129). Here Büchner uses the contrast with the world of nature to point out succinctly Lena's lack of freedom. It is the governess, rather than Lena herself, who conceives the idea of fleeing the unwanted marriage. Left on her own, Lena would be as incapable of preventing her marriage as a flower of being trampled.

In the second act, as Lena and the governess draw near to the inn on their flight, the governess mentions
the fact that night is coming. Lena remarks that the plants are going to sleep and they, likewise, should prepare for night. Here, too, Lena shows her feeling of identification with the world of nature.

In the following scene Lena compares herself directly to a flower. The governess has objected to Lena's going outside the inn at night. Lena replies, "Du weißt, man hätte mich eigentlich in eine Scherbe setzen sollen. Ich brauche Tau und Nachtluft, wie die Blumen... Ich kann nicht im Zimmer bleiben. Die Wände fallen auf mich!" (II.iii.136). She has no fear of the world of nature; rather, as Baumann points out, she sees the union of man and nature and feels the need for physical contact with the natural world.

The other characters, as well as Lena herself, sense Lena's affinity with the world of nature. The governess, tearfully lamenting Lena's approaching marriage

6 Büchner's characters frequently feel oppressed by the confines of the room. Cf. Woyzeck (p. 165), Marie (p. 155), Lenz (p. 98), and Lucile (II.iii.42).

against her will, says, "... du bist doch ein wahres Opferlamm!" (I.iv.129). Here again Lena is compared with a passive, gentle creature of nature. Leonce is especially attuned to Lena's closeness to nature. When Valerio asks him whether he knows who she is, Leonce replies scornfully, "Dummkopf! Frag doch die Nelke und die Tauperle nach ihrem Namen" (III.i.138).

A comparison with Lucile helps illustrate Lena's characterization as an idealized romantic heroine. Lucile is also a child of nature, but in a very different sense: Lucile is portrayed realistically, her speech and her use of the folksong reflecting her affinity to the natural world. Never stated outright, the kinship is revealed in the directness of her feelings and her openness in expressing them. It would be out of character for the unintellectual Lucile to compare herself to a flower. In this sense she is a much more natural character than Lena. Yet Lucile does not have Lena's communion with the physical world of nature or her fragile delicacy. If one were to compare Lucile directly to a creature of nature, it would not be to a passive being such as a sacrificial lamb or a plant, but rather to a spirited, active crea-
ture. Lucile is a part of the real world; Lena of a romantic nature-idyll.

The view of nature presented in Lena's characterization is radically different from that of Büchner as reflected in his other works, and betrays Lena's romantic origin. In Dantons Tod and especially in Woyzeck Büchner tends to stress the bestial side of nature.\(^8\) Apparently in this, the least original of his works, Büchner is content to leave the fairy-tale view of the natural world intact, even though it contradicts his own concept of nature. The explanation for the discrepancy is provided by Fink, who feels that Büchner deliberately removes the work from all ties with reality, thereby gaining the freedom to explore the problem of human existence without concern for the facts of everyday life.\(^9\) In the idealized way in which she is identified with nature, Lena is the typical fairy-tale heroine; in the ideas portrayed in her character, however, she shows her kinship with Büchner's other figures.

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\(^8\) Cf. the present study, pp. 160f.

\(^9\) Fink, "Leonce und Lena," p. 495 and elsewhere.
Like many of Büchner's characters, notably Leonce and Danton, Lena is preoccupied with the thought of death. This, too, is in sharp contrast with the affirmative, life-loving nature of Lucile. While Lucile is an embodiment of the life force and a very sensual woman, Lena illustrates Büchner's "shuddering admiration" for death.\(^{10}\)

In her first appearance Lena, preparing for her wedding, expresses her desire for death: "Sieh, ich wollte, der Rasen wüchse so über mich, und die Bienen summten über mir hin. . . . Gibt es nicht ein altes Lied: Auf dem Kirchhof will ich liegen,/ Wie ein Kindlein in der Wiegen" (I.iv.128). Fink points out that Büchner omits the last line of this song, which is taken from the Knaben Wunderhorn: "Das die Lieb thut wiegen ein."\(^{11}\) In omitting this line, which for the Romantics contains the picture "des von der Liebe gewiegten Dornrösenschlafs, der gleichzeitig ewige unbefleckte Treue versinnbildlicht,"\(^{12}\)

\(^{10}\) John S. White, "Georg Büchner or the Suffering through the Father," The American Imago 9 (1952), 402.


\(^{12}\) Ibid.
Büchner leaves the remaining verse with only the meaning of a death wish, a flight from the world. This death wish is the more striking since it contrasts sharply with feelings one normally associates with a girl on her wedding day.

Viètor considers Lena a completely positive character and maintains that her unhappiness stems not from her view of life in general (as Leonce's does), but simply from the fact that she is being forced into an unwanted marriage: "Einen ungeliebten, ungekannten Mann heiraten, wenn man zur rechten Liebe gemacht und bereit ist--das hat zu allen Zeiten als guter Grund gegolten für Frauenleid und -klage."¹³ Contrary to Viètor's interpretation, Lena's preoccupation with death stems from a more basic cause than this and continues even after she believes herself to have escaped the undesired marriage.

It is significant that Lena's first attraction to Leonce is associated with her fascination with death: he is brought to her attention by his comment, "Für müde Füße ist jeder Weg zu lang" (II.ii.134). She shows that she

understands, although she does not entirely share his weariness with life: "Und müden Augen jedes Licht zu scharf, und müden Lippen jeder Hauch zu schwer, lächelnd: und müden Ohren jedes Wort zu viel" (II.ii.135).

In the scene after this first meeting, Lena confides in the governess, "Er war so alt unter seinen blonden Locken. Den Frühling auf den Wangen und den Winter im Herzen!" (II.iii.135). While she pityes Leonce for it, this very aspect of his personality attracts her to him.

The scene in the garden, the only "love scene" for the couple, is remarkable in the abundance of images of death. Lena, sitting on the lawn, admires the beauty of the night and compares the moon to a sleeping child. Suddenly, with no external stimulus, she exclaims, "O, sein Schlaf ist Tod. Wie der tote Engel auf seinem dunklen Kissen ruht und die Sterne gleich Kerzen um ihn brennen! Armes Kind! Es ist traurig, tot und so allein" (II.iv.136).14

14 Cf. Leonce's image of the dead child in the Rosetta scene (I.iii.122).
This passage, which is faintly reminiscent of the end of the grandmother's tale in *Woyzeck*, emphasizes the loneliness of man, particularly the loneliness that faces man after death. While Lena in this instance does not actively wish for death, even here she does not appear to shudder at the thought.

In the exchange with Leonce a few lines farther, Lena, again with no external stimulus, returns to the image of death:

*Lena.* Wer spricht da?
*Leonce.* Ein Traum.
*Lena.* Träume sind selig.
*Leonce.* So träume dich selig und laß mich dein seliger Traum sein.
*Lena.* Der Tod ist der seligste Traum. (II.iv.137)

Because of the frequency of Lena's thought of death, one must conclude that she expresses Büchner's intense preoccupation with the subject. Nearly a third of all Lena's lines in the play contain references to death in one form or another, indicating that her concern with death must stem from a more basic cause than simply a forced marriage.

Krapp fails to get to the underlying cause for Lena's death wish when he writes that her expression of pain and death "entsteht--romantisch--aus der Eingebunden-
heit in der Natur und kombiniert sich wie dort mit den Motiven des Traums und der Nacht und des Schlafs..."15

Rather than being merely an illustration of her union with nature, Lena's absorption with the thought of death reflects Büchner's own concern with the topic and arises from her (and Büchner's) essentially tragic view of life. This is the opinion of Abutille, who writes, "Lena sieht ja den Grund des Unglücks in der Existenz selbst beschlossen."16

In her preoccupation with death Lena shows her affinity with Leonce, but unlike him she does not appear to wish actively for death, except in her first despair over the approaching wedding. The difference between Lena's and Leonce's feelings of death becomes clear in the garden love scene. Following the exchange on dreams quoted above, Leonce bursts into ecstatic praise of Lena's beauty as a corpse: "Schöne Leiche, du ruhst so lieblich auf dem schwarzen Bahrtuch der Nacht, daß die Natur das Leben haßt und sich in den Tod verliebt" (II.iv.137).

15 Krapp, p. 162.

At this Lena jumps up and runs away. She does not share Leonce's necrophilic tendencies and is startled at his macabre declaration.\(^{17}\) Her death wish is without the erotic connotations of Leonce's, whose feelings about love and death will be discussed below.

Lena shows her affinity with Leonce in more ways than her fascination with death. Many of her statements serve as reiterations of the themes Büchner presents through Leonce and Danton.

Lena's first scene with the governess brings out Büchner's frequently expressed theme of man's loneliness. Although unwilling to marry the unknown Prince Leonce, Lena is by no means opposed to love. On the contrary, she shows a strong desire to be united with another person in love and thereby to be saved from the loneliness that faces all people. She exclaims, "O Gott, ich könnte lieben, warum nicht? Man geht ja so einsam und tastet nach einer Hand, die einen hielte, bis die Leichenfrau die Hände auseinander nähme und sie jedem über der Brust fal-tete" (I.iv.129). Like Rosetta, Lena longs for a love

\(^{17}\) Cf. Julie's turning away from Danton's necrophilic declaration of love (Dantons Tod I.i.9-10).
faithful unto death, a love that can provide an escape from loneliness. The illustration of this theme in the character of Lena resembles that in the character of Danton, as reflected in his words, "... wir strecken die Hände nacheinander aus, aber es ist vergebliche Mühe, ... wir sind sehr einsam" (I.i.9). Like Danton, Lena reflects Büchner's feeling of man's loneliness.

Besides reiterating Büchner's important theme of the isolation of the individual, Lena also reflects his most significant philosophical treatise, man's absence of free will. Dantons Tod as a whole reflects Büchner's feeling that man is a creature with no free will of his own. He is driven by unseen forces, manipulated like a puppet by a whimsical fate. Leonce und Lena, ostensibly a comedy, illustrates the same pessimistic outlook of man's lack of freedom: the two predestined lovers, trying to escape their marriage, fly straight into the fate they were attempting to avoid. Man's lack of self-determination in deciding his future is clearly depicted in the character of Lena as well as in the events of the play as a whole.

In the first scene in which she appears, Lena is portrayed as a person with no freedom of choice. She
asks, "Bin ich denn wie die arme, hülfllose Quelle, die jedes Bild, das sich über sie bückt, in ihrem stillen Grund abspiegeln muß?" (I.iv.129). Aside from the possible sexual implications of this simile, Lena's question touches on the same issue of human freedom that is raised so many times in Dantons Tod. Lena's question in particular, and the question of free will in general, is decisively answered by the end of the play, when she learns that fate has indeed married her to Prince Leonce.

Another question important to Büchner, the problem of human suffering, which is explored at length in the Conciergerie scenes in Dantons Tod, is also voiced by Lena. Her two rhetorical questions in the same scene discussed above are stylistically as well as thematically similar to the successive rhetorical questions in the Conciergerie, in which Danton, Hérault, and Camille express man's suffering and the gods' unconcern. In that instance the questions are climaxed by Danton's nihilistic statement: "Die Welt ist das Chaos. Das Nichts ist der zu gebärende Weltgott" (IV.v.79).

Baumann (p. 102) suggests the comparison with Danton's question in the Conciergerie: "Sind wir Kinder . . . ?" (IV.v.78).
Lena asks in a similar passage,

Mein Gott, mein Gott, ist es denn wahr, daß wir uns selbst erlösen müssen mit unserem Schmerz? Ist es denn wahr, die Welt sei ein gekreuzigter Heiland, die Sonne seine Dornenkrone, und die Sterne die Nägel und Speere in seinen Füßen und Lenden? (I.iv.129)

Lena's question is left unanswered here, but the question of human suffering occurs again in the play, this time in relation to Leonce. After the lovers' first meeting, Lena says to the governess, "Es kommt mir ein entsetzlicher Gedanke: ich glaube, es gibt Menschen, die unglücklich sind, unheilbar, bloß weil sie sind" (II.iii. 135-6). This perceptive statement, reflecting Büchner's belief in man's fate to suffer through no fault of his own, has implications fully as pessimistic as the ideas expressed in the Conciergerie. In Leonce und Lena the problem of human suffering is not explored at length, as to dwell on it would have utterly destroyed the comedy. As it stands, these statements by Lena keep the tone of

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the play serious rather than light, betraying the depth of Büchner's concern with the problem.

More than any of the women in the other plays, Lena is a spokesman for Büchner's ideas. More articulate and problematic than Julie or Lucile, Lena, although close to the physical world of nature, is not the simple Naturkind that Lucile is. Innocent and pure of spirit, Lena nevertheless possesses much philosophical insight and is well capable of articulating her thoughts.

Seen from the philosophical standpoint, Lena is a female counterpart of Leonce, reiterating many of the ideas which Büchner expresses in his character. She is no mere mirror of his personality, however, for Lena, like Camille, is capable of real enthusiasm for the world and appreciation of its beauty: "O, sie ist schön und so weit, so unendlich weit! Ich möchte immer so fort gehen, Tag und Nacht" (II.i.132). Such a heartfelt outpouring is inconceivable for the skeptical Leonce. Lena here depicts Büchner's positive feeling for the beauty of the world.

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20 This point is made by Ludwig Büttner, Büchners Bild vom Menschen (Nürnberg: H. Carl, 1967), p. 70.

21 Cf. Camille (Dantons Tod II.iii.40) and Lenz (p. 95).
Yet Lena cannot be termed an entirely positive character, and Viêtor misinterprets the play when he writes that Lena provides a healing for the diseases of Leonce's soul.\(^{22}\) In spite of her closeness to nature and her capacity for love, she is incapable of healing him, for she is as aware as he is of the general tragedy of human life. Moreover, it is true, as she declared to the governess, that he is incurable (II.i.iii.136). It is even questionable whether she would really want to heal him; for, as has already been shown, it is his skeptical outlook on life which attracts Lena to him in the first place. In a milder, less cynical manner Lena echoes many of Leonce's sentiments. Lena's view of the world, like Leonce's, is essentially tragic.

The complicated figure of Leonce, like that of Danton, needs to be seen in a variety of perspectives in order to be understood. His relationship with the women in his life is highly important to Büchner's delineation of his character. The scene with Rosetta has been shown to throw much light on the problematic nature of his per-

\(^{22}\) Viêtor, Büchner, p. 179.
sonality. His scenes with Lena provide added insight into his complex character.

In the monologue following Rosetta's exit, Leonce philosophizes about women and love in general:

Ein sonderbares Ding um die Liebe. Man liegt ein Jahr lang schlafwachend zu Bett, und an einem schönen Morgen wacht man auf, trinkt ein Glas Wasser, zieht seine Kleider an und fährt sich mit der Hand über die Stirn und besinnt sich—und besinnt sich. (I.iii.122-3)

Here speaks a man who has known the romantic torpor that love can bring. But now, for the totally sober Leonce, love has lost its romantic haze. It can no longer satisfactorily fill the long hours, for he has come to feel that it is meaningless. He asks bitterly, "Warum ist der Dunst über unserer Erde ein Prisma, das den weißen Glutstrahl der Liebe in einen Regenbogen bricht?" (I.iii.123). This question reveals Leonce, in spite of all his skepticism, as a man in search of the one true, ideal love that could give meaning to his life. The question necessarily arises: Does Lena provide this ideal love?

In the first meeting of the two, Lena seems to speak directly to his heart, providing hope for his salvation through love. She understands his tiredness of spirit and expresses it in a manner which has a remarkable effect on Leonce, drawing forth words seemingly reflec-
ting a profound change in his being. Suddenly his feelings of boredom and meaninglessness are erased; the tragic loneliness yields to love. 23 Leonce says,

O diese Stimme: "Ist denn der Weg so lang?" Es reden viele Stimmen über die Erde, und man meint, sie sprächen von andern Dingen, aber ich habe sie verstanden. Sie ruht auf mir wie der Geist, da er über den Wassern schwebte, eh das Licht ward. Welch Gärten in der Tiefe, welch Werden in mir, wie sich die Stimme durch den Raum gießt!—"Ist denn der Weg so lang?"

(II.ii.135)

There is hope here, although expressed half ironically, for a new meaning for Leonce's existence. It seems that new life has come to Leonce, the dawning of a new day. The scene is prevented from becoming too serious by Valerio's monologue which immediately follows it: "Nein, der Weg zum Narrenhaus ist nicht so lang. . . ."

(II.ii.135).

In their second meeting Leonce is obviously still caught up in this temporary romantic glow. Before he sees Lena in the garden, he gushes enthusiastically, "O Nacht, balsamisch wie die erste, die auf das Paradies herabsank!"

(II.iv.136). His reference to the creation still reflects his feeling that a new period of his life is beginning.

But as the scene continues, Leonce's words lose their positive, vigorous tone.

Leonce hears Lena praising the beauty of the moon and is delighted with her image of the dead child. He continues with the picture she has drawn: "Steh auf in deinem weißen Kleid und wandle hinter der Leiche durch die Nacht und singe ihr das Sterbelied!" (II.iv.137). He goes on to the macabre glorification of Lena's beauty quoted above. This is too much for Lena's sensibilities, and she runs away. Leonce, however, is so moved that he tries to commit suicide: "Zu viel! zu viel! Mein ganzes Sein ist in dem einen Augenblick. Jetzt stirb! Mehr ist unmöglich" (II.iv.137). One is reminded here of Leonce's statement earlier to Valerio that he still has a certain portion of enthusiasm left (II.ii.133). After Valerio prevents his suicide, however, Leonce regains his sanity. This is the last instance in the play that Leonce shows himself capable of any real feeling. His enthusiasm is used up.

This episode reveals as premature the hope that Leonce could begin a new, purposeful life with Lena. Victor misinterprets the scene when he concludes that Leonce has actually been cured:
This interpretation overlooks the tone of the remainder of the play: Leonce, who can generate enthusiasm only at the thought of death, cannot be cured through Lena's love. His attempted suicide illustrates the impossibility of his finding positive meaning to his life.

When in the following scene Leonce tells Valerio of his decision to marry Lena, he is as devoid of real emotion as he was before he met her. Leonce describes his reasons for desiring marriage as follows: "Weißt du auch, Valerio, daß selbst der Geringste unter den Menschen so groß ist, daß das Leben noch viel zu kurz ist, um ihn lieben zu können?" (III.i.138). As Fink points out, Leonce here shows none of his earlier feeling that time is too long. Although it appears that Leonce has indeed changed, the following sentences resume the tone of the skeptical Leonce of the first scenes with Valerio:

24 Viëtor, Büchner, p. 179.

There is no sign here of any transformation in Leonce's cynical outlook on life. Leonce has not changed.

The last scene of the play illustrates this point even more clearly. The presentation of the two lovers as automatons is a masterful stroke on Büchner's part, for their love, robbed of all real meaning, has become only mechanical. Their future together is the same empty expanse of time that Leonce was trying to fill with Rosetta.

As they first recognize each other and realize their fate, Leonce exclaims, "Ei, Lena, ich glaube, das war die Flucht in das Paradies" (III.iii.145). In the garden Leonce could be overcome with emotion and believe himself master of his own fate. Now reality has descended, and he is required to go on as before with a meaningless existence.

26 Cf. Büchner's letter from Giessen in November, 1833, in which he writes, "Ich bin ein Automat; die Seele ist mir genommen" (p. 375).
Before he met Lena, Leonce was always seeking some means of passing time, such as throwing up handfuls of sand or tormenting Rosetta. At the end of the play he must still search for something to fill the long hours that stretch before him: "Nun, Lena, siehst du jetzt, wie wir die Taschen voll haben, voll Puppen und Spielzeug? Was wollen wir damit anfangen?" (III.iii.146). This is the same attitude as that reflected in Leonce's repeated insistence, "Komm, Valerio, wir müssen was treiben, was treiben!" (II.ii.133). The new meaning given to his life by his love for Lena is seen to be only a temporary change for Leonce, for time now is as empty as it was before he met her.

The future idyllic kingdom which Leonce describes to Lena will have no greater significance than the ridiculous absolutist state of King Peter. Life in the fairy-tale paradise will be as pointless as Leonce's spitting on a stone 365 times in succession. Lena has proved incapable of providing Leonce with a reason for living.

27 Also, "Wir müssen was anderes treiben" (I.iii.127).

28 Fink, "Leonce und Lena," p. 505.
Although Fink states that Büchner would hardly have entered a tragicomic drama in the competition for the best comedy, it is conceivable that he actually set out to do precisely that. As an admirer of Reinhold Lenz, Büchner was familiar with the concept of tragicomedy as carried out by the earlier dramatist in Die Soldaten and Der Hofmeister. However, although Büchner's intentions for the play are not hinted in any of his extant letters, it is more likely that he intended to write a comedy. Valerio, Peter, and the governess are all comic characters, and the plot is a typical one for romantic comedy, complete with hidden identities, masks, and a love story. Nevertheless, the serious questions which Büchner raises in the play, the questions of man's loneliness, of fate, and of human suffering, together with the basic problem of life in a meaningless world, keep the mood from being light. What should have been a typical comic ending--the marriage and happy unmasking of the characters--has far too many tragic overtones to be lighthearted. Whatever genre Büchner intended for Leonce und Lena, the play stands as a tragi-comedy due to the inescapable earnestness of his ideas.

29 Ibid., p. 496.
Viewed in the light of Lena's inability to provide meaning for Leonce's existence, *Leonce und Lena* is a more pessimistic play than *Dantons Tod*. The freely chosen deaths of the women in the tragedy help to mitigate the nihilism of the rest of the play and indicate Büchner's belief that love can give meaning to life and death. In the character of Lena and her relationship to Leonce, this possibility is decisively rejected.

While an idealized romantic heroine in her flower-like delicacy and her union with the world of nature, Lena illustrates the serious questions which are basic to Büchner's philosophy. In the ideal purity of her character she raises the hope for a cure for Leonce's malaise, a hope which Büchner then exposes as futile. Lena's inability to heal Leonce has philosophical implications far more pessimistic than the deaths of Julie and Lucile. Büchner indicates with the ending of *Leonce und Lena* that life is indeed without meaning or purpose, for the future existence of these two lovers is as hopeless as that of the insane Lenz: "So lebte er hin... ."30

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30 The comparison between the endings of *Leonce und Lena* and *Lenz* is suggested by Abutillé, p. 82.
CHAPTER V

MARION

Perhaps one of the most interesting figures in the works of Büchner is the prostitute Marion in Dantons Tod. Although she makes only one appearance in the drama, she nevertheless stands out as a significant vehicle for Büchner's ideas. The two idealized women in Dantons Tod, Julie and Lucile, have been discussed as characters illustrating the affirmative side of Büchner's philosophy. These women keep the nihilism of the play from being complete by providing hope that through love man can find meaning to his life. Büchner's view of women in Dantons Tod is not entirely idealistic, however. The character of Marion illustrates the pessimistic aspect of Büchner's Weltanschauung: man's lack of individual freedom.

Marion's forerunners in literature have been traced to several sources. Landau cites Victor Hugo's Marion de Lorme (1831), the "Urbild aller edlen Hetären,"
as the origin of the name,¹ he adds that Marion's "Seelen-geschichte" stems from some of the female figures of the Romantic Period, notably Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and Brentano's Violetta and Annunciata in Godwi.² Viëtor classifies the Marion scene with the group of literary "Dirnenbilder" modelled after Prévost's Manon Lescaut, a group which also includes the character of Philine in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister.³ In citing these sources, however, both critics stress the originality of Büchner's figure. Landau writes,

Die innere Wahrhaftigkeit und die realistisch tiefbohrende seelische Erhellung ihres Wesens, die ihre Geschichte zu einem so ergreifenden Aufschrei aus tiefster Brust gestaltet, ist ihr . . . von Büchner gegeben worden, dem hier ein Meisterwerk der weiblichen Psychologie gelang.⁴

The one scene in which Marion appears stands apart from the action of Dantons Tod: Marion does not


² Ibid.

³ Karl Viëtor, "Die Quellen von Büchners Drama Dantons Tod," Euphorion 34 (1933), 363.

⁴ Landau, "Dantons Tod," p. 22.
affect the events of the drama and is never mentioned again. This independent nature of the scene gives it significance and attracts special attention to it. While the scene is unrelated dramatically to the rest of the play, Büchner incorporates it into the main plot by means of its ideas. He effectively uses the character of Marion to emphasize a theme important to the drama as a whole: man's lack of freedom and the related question of moral responsibility.

Marion's monologue is a completely self-sufficient little drama, with "Vorgeschichte, Verwicklung und Katastrophe" of its own. It begins with the simple introduction, "Ich will dir erzählen" (I.v.22). The autonomous nature of this monologue is increased by the fact that Danton does not ask for the narrative; on the contrary, he tries to dissuade Marion from telling it: "Du könntest deine Lippen besser gebrauchen" (I.v.22). Marion evidently feels the need to tell him her history.


6 This does not mean she feels the need to confess ("beichten"), as stated by Helmut Krapp, Der Dialog bei Georg Büchner (München: C. Hanser, 1958), p. 51.
Marion begins with her childhood. Her mother, who believed "die Keuschheit sei eine schöne Tugend," tried to keep her ignorant about sex, shielding her from people or books that could enlighten her and trying to shame her for her questions. Later the girl's curiosity was whetted by passages in the Bible that she did not understand. Then came puberty and the awakening of undefined, troubled feelings within her.

At this crucial period a young man began to visit their house. Marion did not understand what he wanted, but she enjoyed his visits, which her mother encouraged. "Endlich," she reports, "sahen wir nicht ein, warum wir nicht ebensogut zwischen zwei Bettüchern beieinander liegen, als auf zwei Stühlen nebeneinander sitzen durften" (I.v.23). She enjoyed the sexual activity more than his entertaining speech and could not understand "warum man mir das geringere [Vergnügen] gewähren und das größere entziehen wollte" (I.v.23). Although the affair continued happily for awhile, eventually Marion's desire seemed to consume her and she was unfaithful to her young lover. When he became aware of her infidelity, his first impulse was to strangle her, but he drowned himself instead. On
seeing his body being carried past her, Marion cried for the first and only time.

Marion then describes the contrast between herself and other people. While others lead regular, ordered lives, working six days and praying on the seventh, Marion remains always the same, the embodiment of insatiable sexual desire. Her mother died of a broken heart, and people point at the girl, but Marion cannot understand this behavior. She feels everyone has joy in something, be it sex or religion, and it is all the same feeling. She ends her monologue with the hedonistic statement, "... wer am meisten genießt, betet am meisten" (I.v.24).

Lipmann, in his study of Büchner and the Romantic Period, interprets Marion's character from the point of view of the last line of the monologue. He considers her the high priestess of a new religion of hedonism. With this view Lipmann, who calls Marion the "vollgültiges Symbol des Büchnerschen Gesamtwerkes," misinterprets not only the Marion scene but the play as a whole. Contrary

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8 Ibid.
to Lipmann's interpretation, Marion is not the personification of a new Dionysian religion, but rather a daemonically driven creature closely akin to Marie in Woyzeck, a victim of powers beyond her control. This is the view of Wolfgang Martens, whose study of the scene effectively relates it to Büchner's general image of man.

The idea of man's lack of freedom is implicitly expressed in the overall events of the drama: the inexorable grinding of the revolutionary machinery which crushes everything in its path. Besides this dramatic expression of his theme, Büchner chooses to state the idea outright in the words of the characters. Throughout the play phrases occur echoing "den gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte":

Wir haben nicht die Revolution, sondern die Revolution hat uns gemacht. (II.1.35)

Das Schicksal führt uns den Arm, aber nur gewaltige Naturen sind seine Organe. (III.iv.58)

Es muß; das war dies Muß. Wer will der Hand fluchen, auf die der Fluch des Muß gefallen? Wer hat das Muß gesprochen, wer? Was ist das, was in uns lügt, hurt, stiehl und mordet?


Puppen sind wir, von unbekannten Gewalten am Draht gezogen; nichts, nichts wir selbst! (II.v.45)

In the famous Conciergerie scene (IV.v) a series of rhetorical questions expounds man's helpless suffering at the hands of unseen powers. Philippeau, taking the traditional Christian view of suffering, states, "Es gibt ein Ohr, für welches das Ineinanderschreien und der Zeter, die uns betäuben, ein Strom von Harmonieen sind" (IV.v.78). Danton answers, "Aber wir sind die armen Musikanten und unsere Körper die Instrumente" (IV.v.78). The rhetorical questions follow, leading up to the bitter climax: "Die Welt ist das Chaos. Das Nichts ist der zu gebärende Weltgott" (IV.v.79).

The philosophy expressed verbally here, the most brutally nihilistic in the drama, is presented in a personal way in the Marion scene. Marion is a living illustration of the "Unterjochung des Ich." The power of sexual desire is one of the forces that determine man's actions and rob him of all freedom. Lipmann's view of the Marion scene as a call to a positive new religion of

the flesh\textsuperscript{12} is a misinterpretation of the scene, contradicting the idea of the drama as a whole as well as Marion's own story.

Aside from the last line, nothing in Marion's narrative implies any joy in her situation. In fact, the images she uses as well as her very vocabulary serve to strengthen the impression that Marion is an apt illustration of Büchner's pessimistic belief in man's lack of freedom.

As Marion relates her approach to puberty, she states, "Da kam der Frühling; es ging überall etwas um mich vor, woran ich keinen Teil hatte. Ich geriet in eine eigne Atmosphäre, sie erstickte mich fast" (I.v.23). She did not choose these changes and was not comfortable with them. Her enjoyment of the affair with her young lover undergoes a change, as is evident from her remark, "Aber ich wurde wie ein Meer, was alles verschlang und sich tiefer und tiefer wühlte" (I.v.23). This image of insatiable desire hardly seems to connote real pleasure. In fact, the word \textit{aber} between her description of her happy love affair and the beginning of her infidelity implies a

\textsuperscript{12} Lipmann, p. 20 and elsewhere.
a contrast between the two periods in her life.

Her description of herself as "ein ununterbrochenes Sehnen und Fassen, eine Glut, ein Strom" (I.v.24), likewise shows the absence of choice in her actions. These images indicate no joyous abandonment to pleasure, only endless desire.

After describing her unfaithfulness to her lover, Marion states explicitly that she had no choice in her actions: "Meine Natur war einmal so, wer kann da drüber hinaus?" (I.v.23). She also reflects her lack of free will in her use of the word mußte. When the young man first spoke "tolles Zeug" to her, she "mußte lachen" (I.v.23); and when the people carried his body past her, she "mußte weinen" (I.v.23). Here as elsewhere in Büchner's work, the word muß(te) implies man's determination by forces outside himself. Even more than most of Büchner's characters, Marion is shown to be driven by forces against which she is powerless.

Martens sees a kinship not only between Marion and Marie, but also between Marion and the mutely suffering,

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13 Cf. "das Muß" in Dantons Tod (I.v.45) and in Büchner's letter, p. 374.
driven figure of Woyzeck. This comparison carries the point too far; for Marion, while a restless creature with no will of her own, nowhere expresses any unhappiness with her situation. She shows neither happiness nor unhappiness with her fate; she simply accepts her character and her isolated existence as an unchallengeable fact of life. She never analyses her unquenchable desire and never ponders the universal questions of man's helplessness which trouble Danton. The style of her monologue—uncluttered, beautifully simple, and utterly lacking in rhetoric—reflects her unquestioning, matter-of-fact mind.

It is Marion's fate to bring tragedy to those who would be close to her: her lover killed himself; her mother died of a broken heart. Yet Marion has no sense of guilt. And indeed, Büchner asks, why should she? Marion has literally no concept of the moral "laws" that govern society and can feel no guilt because she remains outside these "laws." It is incomprehensible to her that her mother should have been broken-hearted, or that people should point at her. The codes that govern the others do not apply to her. She remains an outcast, but she shows

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no bitterness and no sadness at her apartness. While she feels no shame, she also feels no anger or resentment. Her loneliness is just another inalterable fact of her existence. As Lindenberger writes, this point is "reflected dramatically in the isolation which the monologue form suggests."  

The most important function of the Marion scene is the light it sheds on Büchner's view of morality. Marion discusses the question of morality in her comparison between herself and other people. Those people, she says, "haben Sonn- und Werktage, sie arbeiten sechs Tage und beten am siebenten, sie sind jedes Jahr auf ihren Geburstag einmal gerührt und denken jedes Jahr auf Neujahr einmal nach" (I.v.24). For these people, morality means the leading of regulated, conventional lives. Büchner implies that morality, as society sees it, is based on superficialities. One is reminded here of Valerio's description of the automatons in Leonce und Lena: "Sie sind sehr moralisch, denn sie stehn auf den Glockenschlag auf, essen auf

According to the society in which she lives, Marion is a shamelessly immoral creature: "... die Leute weisen mit Fingern auf mich" (I.v.24). But Marion's character in its innocence and naivety presents an argument against conventional standards of morality. She behaves as her nature bids her; what else can she do? In defense of her way of life she makes the epicurean statement which is echoed by other characters later in the play: "Es läuft auf eins hinaus, an was man seine Freude hat, an Leibern, Christusbildern, Blumen oder Kinderspielsachen; es ist das nämliche Gefühl. ..." (I.v.24). In this statement, with its juxtaposition of "Leibern" and "Christusbildern," Marion, and with her Büchner, questions the traditional concept of morality, a morality which Büchner feels fails to take the power of nature into account. A belief in man's lack of free will presupposes such a questioning of man's moral responsibility. This view of moral responsi-

16 Cf. also Woyzeck: "Wenn ich ein Herr wär und hätt ein' Hut und eine Uhr und eine Anglaise und könnt vornehm reden, ich wollt schon tugendhaft sein" (I. Beim Hauptmann. 152).
bility is also reflected in one of Büchner's letters from Giessen in 1834: "Ich verachte niemanden, . . . weil es in niemands Gewalt liegt, kein Dummkopf oder kein Verbrecher zu werden. . . ." (p. 377).

In the meeting of the two political opponents, which, significantly, immediately follows the scene with Marion, Danton elaborates on the ideas on morality expressed by Marion. In this discussion Danton grants anyone the right to behave "righteously" but denies that such a person can feel morally superior to another.

Robespierre always wears "einen sauber gebürsteten Rock. . . . Wenn [andere Leute] sich nicht genieren, so herumzugehn, hast du deswegen das Recht, sie ins Grabloch zu sperren? Bist du der Polizeisoldat des Himmels?" (I.vi.29). Then Danton makes a statement expressing the identical idea Marion presented: "Jeder handelt seiner Natur gemäß, d. h. er tut, was ihm wohl tut" (I.vi.29).

Payne, in the religious discussion in the Luxembourg, makes a remark in the same vein:

Was wollt ihr denn mit eurer Moral? Ich weiß nicht, ob es an und für sich was Böses oder was Gutes gibt. . . . Ich handle meiner Natur gemäß; was ihr angemessen, ist für mich gut und ich tue es, und was ihr zuwider, ist für mich bös und ich tue es nicht und verteidige mich dagegen, wenn es mir in den Weg kommt. (III.i.53)
Finally the scoundrel Laflotte, in a parody of this same argument, states: "Der Schmerz ist die einzige Sünde, und das Leiden ist das einzige Laster; ich werde tugendhaft bleiben" (III.v.61).

It is Marion's character, however, rather than any philosophical arguments that makes the most poignant statement of Büchner's morality. The moral standards of the others deny what Baumann terms the "übermächtiges 'Es'," the nameless power of nature, of history, or whatever force controls man. Büchner feels that any concept of morality which denies this power is invalid. Marion, the innocent prostitute, is driven by her nature to the life she leads. How, then, Büchner questions, can she be considered a sinner?

The statement with which Marion concludes her monologue ("... wer am meisten genießt, betet am meisten") should not be taken as Büchner's advocation of a hedonistic life style. Büchner presents no such clear-cut answer to the moral questions he raises. Rather, Marion's statement serves merely to shatter the moral-
izing arguments of a character such as Robespierre and to question the traditional concept of morality. By the innocence of her character, which has been called her "naive Lasterhaftigkeit," Marion demands a broader definition of morality. The innovative aspect of Büchner's treatment of Marion lies in the fact that, not only does he not condemn her, but he even presents her as an innocent creature, a victim of forces that drive her to a life at odds with society.

With the prostitute Marion, Büchner has created one of his most original and memorable characters. The complete absence of self-pity or pathos in her narrative gives her lack of freedom an air of dignity rare in Büchner's work. In the moral issues raised by her characterization, Büchner gives additional depth to his recurring theme of man's helplessness.

CHAPTER VI

MARIE

In his vivid portrayal of Marie, the beautiful wife of the soldier Franz Woyzeck, Büchner reveals the ability to convey in a few brief scenes a profound picture of the conflict within a human being. From the first scene in which she appears, the essence of Marie's personality is presented with a piercing quality unexcelled in literature. In his characterization of Marie, Büchner manages in the most unobtrusive manner to illustrate the major theme of all his writing. The tragedy of Marie's personality is that she has no choice but to betray Woyzeck. Marie presents Büchner's most profound and least philosophic illustration of his theme of the "Muß."

In writing Dantons Tod Büchner relies heavily on his source material, modelling many of his main characters, notably Danton, after their historical counterparts and
even quoting some speeches verbatim from the sources. In Woyzeck, too, Büchner adheres closely to history. Not only the principal facts of Woyzeck's situation but even many small details, such as his idée fixe about the Freemasons, are taken directly from the documents concerning his trial and execution. In the character of Marie, however, Büchner departs markedly from historical record.

According to the Gutachten of Hofrat Clarus, the physician in charge of determining the sanity of the historical Woyzeck, the widow Frau Woost was several years Woyzeck's senior and admittedly no beauty ("keineswegs schön"). She was courted seriously by Woyzeck, who wanted to marry her but whose material circumstances were too uncertain for marriage. However, Frau Woost was never faithful to Woyzeck. She was a sexually promiscuous woman who was particularly attracted to soldiers, a characteristic which caused friction between the lovers but which

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did not seriously threaten the relationship until she began to deny Woyzeck her company. The day of the murder Frau Woost promised to meet him, but went for a walk with another man instead. At this occurrence Woyzeck purchased a knife with the idea of killing her. However, Woyzeck forgot his intention when she met him on the street by chance and invited him home with her. All might have been well when they reached her house, had she not suddenly changed her mind and told him to leave. At this point Woyzeck suddenly remembered the knife he was carrying with him and stabbed her repeatedly, "ohne daß er sehr in der Hitze oder in heftigem Grimme gewesen wäre."^3

Even superficially the Marie of Büchner's drama does not resemble the promiscuous Frau Woost. Not only is Marie young and strikingly beautiful, but she also considers herself married to Woyzeck and is a devoted mother to their child. There is not the slightest hint that she has ever been unfaithful to Woyzeck before the affair with the Tambourmajor. ^4 Moreover, she is by no means callous

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^3 Ibid., p. 544.

^4 Cf. the remark made by the neighbor Margret: "Ei, was freundliche Auge, Frau Nachbarin! So was is man an ihr nit gewöhnt" (3. Die Stadt. 154).
about Woyzeck's goodness, and when she betrays him, she fully realizes the enormity of her guilt. As he does with Lucile in *Dantons Tod*, Büchner chooses to remake his historical model into a sympathetic character that suits his sense of dramatic effectiveness.

A source for Büchner's characterization of Marie is likewise not to be found in German literature before Büchner. Although in the realism of her characterization she must be inspired by some of the women in the drama of the *Sturm und Drang*, none of them are portrayed with such vividness. Goethe's Gretchen is certainly an influence on Büchner's figure, but even Gretchen lacks the humanness and the earthy realism of Marie. Marie is a woman drawn from life, demonstrating Büchner's ability to understand and portray the depths of a woman's being.

For the sake of clarity in the following discussion of Marie, it would perhaps be well to review briefly her action in the play. In her first appearance Marie, seeing the Tambourmajor leading the soldiers on parade, is immediately attracted by his swaggering masculinity. After a

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5 There are numerous similarities with the girl Marie in Lenz's *Soldaten*, for example.
short courtship, during which the Tambourmajor presents her with some gold earrings, Marie betrays her common-law husband. When he discovers her infidelity, he gradually loses all control over himself, and, egged on by voices, determines to murder her. Unaware of this decision, Marie, her sexual appetite satisfied, faces in anguish the realization of her sin against Woyzeck and against God's laws. Finally Woyzeck, considering himself morally bound to punish Marie, whom he sees as the embodiment of lewdness in the world, stabs her to death.

No sketch of Marie's action in the play can indicate the depth of her characterization, for in the rapid succession of brief scenes Büchner portrays Marie as a complex, even tragic figure, torn by the conflict between her overpowering sensuality and her realization of her wrong. It is a gross misinterpretation of her role in the drama to consider Marie a frivolous character. Spalter writes that "horrendous and terrifying as Woyzeck's misbegotten life may be, it is the only one in the play which has dimension, the only one that is not in the final anal-
ysis cold and depersonalized" (writer's italics). Marie is by no means "cold and depersonalized"; instead she is convincingly portrayed as a character of great warmth and credibility, good and bad as nature itself.

In his characterization of Marie, Büchner skillfully conveys a comprehensive picture of her strong personality, concentrating on certain traits which, as they dramatically motivate her actions, simultaneously illustrate some themes important to Büchner's general view of man and the world. The single most significant aspect of Marie's character is the vehemence of her emotional make-up, a personality trait which motivates her infidelity and at the same time illustrates Büchner's idea of fatalism.

From the beginning of the drama Büchner demonstrates that Marie is a woman of uncontrollable emotions. As such, she is shown to be drawn to the boasting sexuality of the Tambourmajor with an intensity that overpowers her ability to resist. Marion's statement about herself could also apply to Marie: "Meine Natur war einmal so, wer kann

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da drüber hinaus?" (Dantons Tod I.v.23).

In every scene in which she appears, Büchner delineates the passionate nature of Marie's personality, introducing as a leitmotif the frequent reference to her eyes. In the scene Die Stadt Marie and her neighbor Margret watch the soldiers passing by on parade. Büchner has Margret immediately comment on the unusual light in Marie's eyes, a reaction to the Tambourmajor's greeting: "Ei, was freundliche Auge, Frau Nachbarin! So was is man an ihr nit gewöhnt" (3. Die Stadt. 154).

Marie's irrepressible spirit manifests itself in her answer to this remark as she sings, "Soldaten, das sind schöne Bursch. . . ." (154). Again Margret comments on her eyes: "Ihre Auge glänze ja noch--" (154). Marie continues to respond spiritedly to Margret's remarks, and when at length the neighbor insults her, she slams the window and sings a song of defiance to the world and its opinion of her.

In this brief introduction to Marie, Büchner effectively conveys the undaunted spiritedness of her person-

8 References will be cited parenthetically in the text and will include the scene number, the scene title, and the page number from the Bergemann edition. When it is obvious which scene is under discussion, only the page number will be cited.
ality and in so doing prepares the spectator for her surrender to the Tambourmajor. The dialogue with Woyzeck which immediately follows, showing Woyzeck's preoccupation with his incomprehensible visions, contrasts vividly with the first half of the scene and indicates that Marie's passionate nature is not comfortable with the brooding strangeness of her husband.

Buchner again emphasizes the strength of Marie's spirit when Woyzeck surprises her with the Tambourmajor's present. At his mild questioning of her assertion that she found the earrings, Marie becomes defiant, even bellicerent: "Bin ich ein Mensch?" (6. Mariens Kammer. 158). Her strength compels Woyzeck to drop the subject.

The leitmotif of her eyes, which are also noticed by the Tambourmajor in the scene Buden, Lichter, Volk, recurs in the erotic meeting with the Tambourmajor. When

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10 Cf. the scene in Lenz's Soldaten in which Marie's father discovers her with the present from the Baron (I.vi.270).
Marie, suddenly annoyed ("verstimmt"), temporarily resists his embrace, the Tambourmajor is taken aback by the fire in her eyes: "Sieht dir der Teufel aus den Augen?"

(Büchner deliberately creates the impression that Marie's passionate personality, symbolized by her eyes, intimidates everyone whom she meets.

In the next meeting of Woyzeck and Marie, Woyzeck confronts her with his knowledge of her infidelity. Marie neither confesses nor invents excuses, but instead defies him with insolent answers to his questions:

Woyzeck. Teufel!—Hat er da gestanden? so? so?
Marie. Dieweil der Tag lang und die Welt alt is,
können viel Menschen an einem Platz stehn, einer nach dem andern.
Woyzeck. Ich hab ihn gesehen!
Marie. Man kann viel sehn, wenn man zwei Auge hat und nicht blind is und die Sonn scheint. (10. Mariens Kammer. 163-64)

Marie cannot be intimidated by him, even when he lunges for her in a jealous fury, but boldly dares him to touch her: "Rühr mich an, Franz! Ich hätt lieber ein Messer in den Leib als deine Hand auf meiner. Mein Vater hat mich nit anzugreifen gewagt, wie ich zehn Jahr alt war, wenn
ich ihn ansah" (164). Here again Büchner uses the image of her eyes to portray the strength of her spirit. Finally Woyzeck, made uncertain by the vehemence of her resistance, withdraws without striking her.

As in the erotic meeting with the Tambourmajor, Marie is seen in the inn completely intoxicated with sensual pleasure. With the Tambourmajor she dances past Woyzeck, shouting with reckless abandon the words which for Woyzeck become a motif: "Immer zu, immer zu--" (12. Wirtshaus. 165). Once more Marie's passion so overwhelms her that she is entirely unconscious of anything but the pleasure of the moment.

Just as he portrays the boundlessness of her desire, so in the Testamentszene Büchner illustrates the equal fervor of Marie's remorse. Her sexual desires appeased, Marie is left with her feeling of guilt, for she feels she has sinned not only against Woyzeck but against God, whose judgment she fears. Büchner reveals in Marie's passionate breast-beating the intensity of her repentance.

11 It should be noted how often Marie unconsciously foreshadows her death. Cf. "Ich könnt mich erstechen" (6. Mariens Kammer. 158) and "Das Kind gibt mir einen Stich ins Herz" (19. Mariens Kammer. 170).
While the emotion here is far different from that in the erotic scenes, the intensity of Marie's remorse, like the vehemence of her desire, illustrates Büchner's point that Marie is a woman of violent, uncontrollable emotions.

Even in the scene of the murder Büchner emphasizes the strength of Marie's spirit. Woyzeck's comments as he stabs her demonstrate Marie's vitality: "Kannst du nicht sterben? So! so!—Ha, sie zuckt noch; noch nicht? noch nicht? Immer noch" (22. Waldsaum am Teich. 173). As Mautner writes, "der nicht zu unterdrückende Lebenstrieb wird Wortgestalt im viermaligen 'noch'." Just as Woyzeck cannot intimidate her even with the evidence of her guilt, so here he has difficulty killing her as her vigorous nature struggles energetically against death.

In his marked emphasis on the violence of Marie's emotions, Büchner provides a dramatic illustration of the theme presented in varying perspectives throughout all his writings: man's inability to determine his own actions. This theme, which emerges repeatedly in Büchner's work, is first presented in the letter from Giessen on the French Revolution: "Das Muß ist eins von den Verdammungsworten,

12 Mautner, p. 530.
womit der Mensch getauft worden. Der Ausspruch: es muß ja Ärgernis kommen, aber wehe dem, durch den es kommt—ist schauderhaft" (p. 374). Sexual desire is one of the omnipotent powers of nature which rob man of his free will.

Büchner sees the drive of nature as inexorable: Marie is compelled toward the Tambourmajor by the passion of her personality as an animal to its natural mate, while her conscience and will struggle feebly against her emotions. Since nature is ultimately responsible for Marie's infidelity, her guilt is only superficial. Like Marion in Dantons Tod, Marie is not condemned for her actions, for Büchner considers her powerless against the forces within her. In words which apply to Marie, Danton expresses man's unavoidable inclination toward wrongdoing: "Es wurde ein Fehler gemacht, wie wir geschaffen wurden; es fehlt uns etwas, ich habe keinen Namen dafür. . . ." (II.1.35). Marie's personality leaves her no choice but to betray Woyzeck.

Büchner stresses a second factor motivating Marie's adultery: social distinctions as the decisive element in

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13 As pointed out in the index to the Bergemann edition of Büchner's works (p. 644), this Biblical reference is also made in Lenz's Hofmeister (V.x).
morality. This factor is intimately related to his idea of the "Muβ" in that it relentlessly determines man's actions. Marie's situation implicitly illustrates this point, for besides her own powerful emotional makeup, Marie's social position motivates her surrender to the Tambourmajor.

In the scene Die Stadt Büchner clearly portrays Marie's low standing in the community through the words of the neighbor Margret, who must be taken as a representative of Marie's society. When Margret becomes annoyed at Marie's saucy air, she seizes upon the fact of Marie's illicit relationship with Woyzeck as a means of insulting her: "Frau Jungfer! Ich bin eine honette Person, aber Sie, es weiß jeder, Sie guckt sieben Paar lederne Hose durch!" (3. Die Stadt. 154). As is evident by the prefacing phrase "Es weiß jeder," Margret is not the only person in the community to consider Marie a dishonorable woman. As the mother of an illegitimate child, she is something of a social outcast.

Marie's reaction to this insult demonstrates her awareness of her low social status and poor reputation: "Komm, mei Bub! Was die Leut wolle. Bist doch nur ein arm Hurenkind und machst deiner Mutter Freud mit deim
unehrliche Gesicht! Sa! sa!" (154). Her reference to her son as a "Hurenkind," like her later reference to herself as "ein schlecht Mensch" (6. Mariens Kammer. 158), indicates her poor opinion of her moral position, but her reaction to her dishonorable status is far from humble: she is defiant of society and salves her wounded pride with a demeanor of indifference, as reflected in her song:

Mädel, was fangst du jetzt an?
Hast ein klein Kind und kein' Mann!
Ei, was frag ich danach?
Sing ich die ganze Nacht
Heio, popeio, mei Bu, juchhe!
Gibt mir kein Mensch nix dazu.
(3. Die Stadt. 154)

Abutille, whose interpretation of Marie stresses her supposed "unconcern,"\(^{14}\) considers this song an illustration of her "frivolous" acceptance of the child's illegitimacy.\(^{15}\) Fink, showing a much more profound understanding of Marie's attitude, reaches a different conclusion about the scene. Fink argues that Marie feels deeply the social stigma of her child's illegitimacy; her choice of a frivolous song illustrates her attempt to

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\(^{15}\) Ibid.
defy with feigned nonchalance the social order from which she is unfortunately excluded. ¹⁶

The scene in which Marie admires the Tambourmajor's gift of the earrings provides an important dramatization of Büchner's theme of Marie's poverty and low social standing as motivation for her infidelity. This scene, highly reminiscent of the Schmuckszene in Faust, to which it may be a conscious challenge, ¹⁷ is one of the most significant in the drama in terms of Marie's characterization. Büchner shows Marie alternately admiring herself in the mirror and trying to put her child to sleep. The constant juxtaposition of the two roles--Marie as object of seduction and as mother of Woyzeck's child--lends the scene unusual credibility and spontaneity and accentuates the tragedy of the conflict within Marie.

Marie, who has never had any jewelry before,


¹⁷ Viëtor, Büchner, p. 204.
admires herself in the mirror. In wondering how the jewels will become her at the dance, she indicates not only vanity but also her desire to make an impression on other people. This musing directs her to a commentary on her poverty:

Unsereins hat nur ein Eckchen in der Welt und ein Stückchen Spiegel, und doch hab ich ein' so roten Mund als die großen Madamen mit ihren Spiegeln von oben bis unten und ihren schönen Herrn, die ihnen die Händ küssen. Ich bin nur ein arm Weibsbild! (6. Mariens Kammer. 157)

Marie's proud, head-tossing defiance of the "großen Madamen" and her desire to compete with them make her very susceptible to the Tambourmajor's attentions.

Inserted into her musings is a song to her son, a song which, like the "Mädel, was fangst du jetzt an?" (3. Die Stadt. 154), dramatizes what is taking place in Marie's mind:

18 Based on his misinterpretation (author's italics) of the line, "Was sind's für? was hat er gesagt?”, A. H. J. Knight contends that no relationship has been established between Marie and the Tombourmajor (Georg Büchner [Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1951], p. 120).

19 Mautner (p. 535) points out the theme of "Armut" as one of the five or six "Motivgruppen" in the drama, along with "Erotik," "Natur," etc.
Mädel, mach's Ladel zu,
's kommt e Zigeunerbu,
Führt dich an deiner Hand
Fort ins Zigeunerland. (157)

The Tambourmajor, while no gypsy lad, offers Marie a temporary escape from the poverty and bleakness of her surroundings.

While the main emphasis of the erotic scene with the Tambourmajor is the sexual attraction of the two lovers, Büchner indicates in one line that social position is a contributing factor to Marie's infidelity. As she admires the physical attributes of the Tambourmajor, Marie exclaims, "So ist keiner!—Ich bin stolz vor allen Weibern!" (8. Mariens Kammer. 160). The Tambourmajor, as intimated by the neighbor's praise of him in the parade scene, is the most splendid man in the village. To capture the favor of such a lover is a chance for Marie to scorn the other women for their low opinion of her.

20 As Landau points out, the Tambourmajor is a character taken from life, "eine im hessischen Volksleben nur allzu gut bekannte Gestalt." The Drum Majors of Büchner's time were "die schönsten stolzesten Burschen, die recht eigentlich nur zu Prunk und Zierde des Heeres da waren" (Paul Landau, "Wozzeck," in Georg Büchners Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Paul Landau [Berlin, 1909], I, rpt. in Georg Büchner, ed. Wolfgang Martens [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965], p. 80).
Such an interpretation does not in any way diminish the erotic impact of the scene, for Marie's feeling of competition with other women on the basis of her beauty is highly sexual in origin, as one bird's flaunting its plumage over another's. The social dimension, a combination of the poverty motif and class distinction, merely gives additional strength to Marie's powerful sexual longings for the Tambourmajor.

The social aspect of Marie's seduction by the Tambourmajor illustrates Büchner's view that bourgeois morality is an artificial distinction based on superficialities. This idea is reflected in some of his letters. For example, following his reference to the "Muß," Büchner asks this question about man's morality: "Was ist das, was in uns lügt, mordet, stiehlt?" In another letter he provides one possible answer: "Ich verachte niemanden, weil es in niemands Gewalt liegt, kein Dummkopf oder kein Verbrecher zu werden--weil wir durch gleiche Umstände wohl alle gleich würden und weil die Umstände außer uns liegen" (Giessen, Feb. 1834, p. 377).

21 The same question is asked in Dantons Tod: "Was ist das, was in uns lügt, hurt, stiehlt und mordet?" (II.v.45).
This remark, providing a basis for the Marxist interpretation of Büchner, should not be construed as Büchner's belief in social distinction as the only source of immoral conduct. Marion's sexual promiscuity, for one example, has nothing whatsoever to do with poverty. Nevertheless, Büchner clearly considers poverty and class distinction a contributing factor in Marie's infidelity, a factor which exposes bourgeois standards of morality as ethically insufficient.

The social aspect of morality implied in the case of Marie is reflected in Büchner's revolutionary pamphlet, Der hessische Landbote, in which Büchner enumerates the injustices perpetrated by the "Vornehmen" upon the peasants. (The original version reads "Reichen." One of the items he mentions is the nobility's exploitation of the "Töchter des Volks" as "ihre Mägde und Huren" (p. 339). Büchner obviously does not consider such women

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immoral because of their sexual conduct. This attitude is also reflected in his highly sympathetic portrayal of the prostitutes in Dantons Tod.

Büchner's view of morality is further indicated in the discussion between Woyzeck and the Hauptmann, in which the concept of society (representing traditional bourgeois morality) is contrasted with the idea of nature. The Hauptmann asserts his supposed moral superiority: "Woyzeck, Er hat keine Moral! Moral, das ist, wenn man moralisch ist, versteht Er. Es ist ein gutes Wort" (1. Beim Hauptmann. 152). The Hauptmann considers Woyzeck a man without virtue because he has a child "ohne den Segen der Kirche, wie unser hochehrwürdiger Herr Garnisonsprediger sagt. . . ." (152).

Woyzeck sees virtue from a social standpoint. While the rich can be virtuous, the poor are governed by nature:

Sehn Sie: wir gemeine Leut, das hat keine Tugend, es kommt einem nur so die Natur; aber wenn ich ein Herr wär und hätt ein' Hut und eine Uhr und eine Anglaise und könnt vornehm reden, ich wollt schon tugendhaft sein. Es muß was Schönnes sein um die Tugend, Herr Hauptmann. Aber ich bin ein armer Kerl! (152)

Marie's infidelity is based both on the power of her sensual nature and on her social situation, both of
which factors reflect her lack of choice in her actions. Consequently Büchner, rather than condemning Marie, expresses his own skeptical view of conventional standards of morality in his sympathetic characterization of her.

While Büchner makes no moral judgment of Marie, she herself does not possess such sophisticated insight. Instead, once she has satisfied her sexual longing, she views her infidelity with the eyes of society and considers herself a terrible sinner in need of forgiveness both by Woyzeck and by God, the two of whom she confuses in her mind. Her view of her sin is the same as the Hauptmann would take, with no consideration of mitigating circumstances.

It is as a moral judge as well as a jealous husband that Woyzeck kills Marie, for when it comes to her betrayal of him, he cannot excuse her with the ideas on virtue which he presents to the Hauptmann. With the Hauptmann he defends his class for its lack of virtue, but when Marie betrays him, his reaction is that of a stern moral judge. As such a judge, however, Woyzeck realizes that the whole world is guilty of the same wickedness that she is.
Immediately after the murder, Woyzeck appears at the inn, in which scene he expresses his moral condemnation of the world as a lewd and licentious place:


Back at the scene of the murder, Woyzeck again reveals his feeling that he was acting as a moral agent to requite Marie for her sin. He speaks to her dead body as follows: "Was hast du eine rote Schnur um den Hals? Bei wem hast du das Halsband verdient mit deinen Sünden? Du warst schwarz davon, schwarz! Hab ich dich gebleicht?" (24. Am Teich. 174).

Clearly Woyzeck considers himself morally bound to pass judgment on Marie, to cleanse her of the blackness of her guilt, and thereby to help rid the world of evil. This motivation is inextricably bound with the more obvious one of jealousy. Indeed, Büchner hints that it is Woyzeck's sexual weakness that causes him to react the way he does. It is Woyzeck's jealousy which leads him to view the sexuality of the world with such disgust.

The duality of Woyzeck's motivation may be seen in his ambiguous comments to Marie in the scene of the murder:
"Was du heiße Lippen hast! heiß, heißen Hurenatem! Und
doch möcht ich den Himmel geben, sie noch einmal zu
küsson" (22. Waldsaum am Teich. 172). Woyzeck is both
drawn to the sexual side of the world and repulsed by it.
His rejection of that side of life and his decision to
purify the world by killing Marie, the symbol of sin in
the world, grow out of his inability to hold Marie.

Although Büchner in the first scene uses Woyzeck
as a means of exposing the shallowness of the Hauptmann's
morality, Büchner's own concept of morality should not be
identified with Woyzeck's. While Woyzeck condemns Marie
and demands retribution for her crime, Büchner himself
places no blame on her. As noted by Martens, both Marie
and Marion are characterized as "triebhaft, triebbe-
stimmte, triebunterworfone Wesen." Like Marion, Marie
falls prey to the devastating power of sexuality. Martens points out that Marie, just as much as Woyzeck, is

gezeichnet mit der Wahrheit der Armen, Verachteten,
der Huren, Zöllner und Sünder der Bibel, und das heißt

24 Wolfgang Martens, "Zum Menschenbild Georg
Büchners: Woyzeck und die Marionszene in Dantons Tod,
Wirkendes Wort 8 (1957/58), 14.

25 Ibid., p. 15.
zugleich auch: nicht als gesunde, unschuldige, unverbildete "Natur"-Wesen "aus dem Volk," sondern als Geschöpfe, die des Erbarmens, der Heilung, der Erlösung bedürftig sind. . . .

As with Marion in Dantons Tod, Büchner places no blame on Marie. Like so many of Büchner's creations she is trapped by the social and natural forces that govern her. It is her fate to bring destruction to Woyzeck, to destroy his only hold on life. Marie is no more condemned for her action than Woyzeck is for his reaction to it.

Besides her importance as a vehicle for Büchner's concept of morality, Marie's role in the drama makes a highly significant point about the nature of man. As both Martens and Mautner have noted, Marie's language abounds with animal images. More than just in her language, even in her gestures, especially with the Tambour-major, Marie exhibits very animalistic behavior. These animal-like characteristics echo some of the animal references in Dantons Tod and implicitly make a strong statement about Büchner's view of man.

26 Ibid., p. 20.  
27 Ibid., pp. 15-16.  
28 Mautner, p. 525 and elsewhere.
In the speech of the Budenbesitzer (5. Das Innere der hellerleuchteten Bude), with its emphasis on the humanness of the horse, Büchner makes a grotesque inference about the animality of man. As the Budenbesitzer shows his trained horse to the audience, it "behaves indecently."

The Budenbesitzer says,


Woyzeck, in his inarticulate way, also expresses the idea of nature commanding man to behave instinctively. When the doctor berates him for urinating on the wall "like a dog," Woyzeck defends himself with the protest, "Aber, Herr Doktor, wenn einem die Natur kommt" (7. Beim Doktor. 158). The doctor, in an unconscious parody of idealistic philosophy, argues that man is superior to nature:

Die Natur! Hab ich nicht nachgewiesen, daß der Musculus constrictor vesicae dem Willen unterworfen ist? Die Natur! Woyzeck, der Mensch ist frei, in

^29 Cf. Büchner's statement on his deathbed: "Wir sind Tod, Staub, Asche, wie dürften wir klagen?" (p. 580).
dem Menschen verklärt sich die Individualität zur Freiheit. (158-59)

The animalistic theme is also dramatically illustrated in the character of Marie and the portrayal of her innate sexuality. Mautner, who points out that, with one exception, every scene in which Marie appears has erotic content or nuances, notes the contrast between the two women's reactions to the parading Tambourmajor. Margret remarks admiringly, "Was ein Mann, wie ein Baum!" (3. Die stadt. 154). Marie answers, "Er steht auf seinen Füßen wie ein Löw" (154). Mautner comments, "Das statisch Leblose 'wie ein Baum' ist ins körperlich Animalische gewandelt."

In the scene of the erotic meeting of the lovers, the number of animal references is striking and gives the scene its tone. Marie's admiration of the Tambourmajor's physical attributes is expressed in animal terms: "Über die Brust wie ein Rind und ein Bart wie ein Löw. So ist keiner!" (8. Mariens Kammer. 160). The Tambourmajor's

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30 Cf. the passage in Leonce und Lena in which King Peter confuses the philosophical concept of free will with the fly in his trousers (I.ii.118).

31 Mautner, p. 526. 32 Ibid., p. 525.
remarks to her are also highly flavored with animal refer-
ences: "Sapperment, wir wollen eine Zucht von Tambour-
majors anlegen. He?"/ "Wild Tier!" (160).

Even the physical movements of the couple in the
scene suggest the courtship of animals. First the Tambour-
major, at Marie's request, struts proudly before her. She
in turn entices him by walking past him ("tritt vor ihn
hin") and then suddenly resisting him as he tries to
embrace her. All of these actions suggest the stylized
mating antics of animals in courtship.

In Woyzeck's words on seeing the couple dancing,
Büchner again emphasizes the animalistic--here actually
bestial--side of man. Woyzeck is overcome with his feeling
of the general lewdness of the world, which he sees per-
sonified in the behavior of Marie. He cries,

Dreht euch, wälzt euch! Warum bläst Gott nicht
die Sonn aus, daß alles in Unzucht sich übereinander
wälzt, Mann und Weib, Mensch und Vieh?! Tut's am
hellen Tag, tut's einem auf den Händen wie die Mücken!
(12. Wirtshaus. 165-66)

Büchner's repeated reference to the animal side
of man serves to deny the possibility of viewing him as
a God-like creature. Instead Büchner sees man as part of
the earth in its basest sense, far removed from the ideal-
istic image of man as a noble being. Büchner's character-
ization of Marie, with its emphasis on the animalistic aspects of her sexuality, expresses his anti-idealistic view of man and nature and strengthens the nihilistic tendency of the play.

In spite of the overriding pessimism of the drama, however, Woyzeck cannot be considered entirely nihilistic. There is a positive aspect of the play provided by the depth of Woyzeck's love for Marie. The positive tendency is to be found in the sympathy and love reflected in Büchner's creation of this simple man and his passionate wife. Woyzeck, despite all the skepticism and the occasional hints of nihilism, is a work of tragic affirmation of life, reflecting Büchner's "Freude am Schaffen [seiner] poetischen Produkte."33

"Aber, Andres, sie war doch ein einzig Mädel" (16. Kasernenhof. 168). These words, spoken entirely without passion, are Woyzeck's epitaph for Marie. As Mautner points out, Büchner effectively expresses the tragedy of Woyzeck's conflict in a surprising paucity of words:

[Woyzeck] verwendet das Imperfektum zu einem Zeitpunkt, da Marie noch lebt und er sie wiedersehen wird.

33 Letter to Minna, Zürich, Jan. 1837, p. 421.
Auf die leiseste, aber bestimmteste Weise verkündet er so zugleich seinen Abschied von ihr und daß er ihren Mord beschlossen hat. Sein Konflikt zwischen der Anerkennung ihrer Einzigartigkeit und dem Zwang, sie zu töten, ist in sechs Worten Sprachgestalt geworden.34

These six words, which May calls "die erschütterndsten Worte des ganzen Werkes,"36 reflect the tragedy of Woyzeck's love. The positive tendency of the play centers around the suffering goodness of Woyzeck and the unconditionality of his love for Marie.

The Testamentszene, in which Marie laments her guilt and seeks God's forgiveness, makes an important point about Woyzeck's significance to Büchner's thought. The most interesting aspect of this scene is the juxtaposition of Woyzeck and Jesus in Marie's thoughts. The first Biblical reference, which refers to Christ's absence of sin, could also apply to Woyzeck's purity: "Und ist kein Betrug in seinem Munde erfunden" (19. Mariens Kammer. 170). The scene continues as follows:

"Aber die Pharisäer brachten ein Weib zu ihm, im Ehebruch begriffen, und stellten sie ins Mittel dar...

34 Mautner, p. 524.


The mention of Woyzeck between the two Bible readings gives a deeper meaning to the second quotation and a new dimension to the scene: Marie, while reading about Jesus and attempting to pray, is thinking primarily about Woyzeck. In Marie's mind Woyzeck becomes confused with Christ, whom he resembles in his suffering, his goodness, and in the strength of his love. With this scene Büchner hints that Woyzeck should be compared with Christ, the highest representative of love and suffering.

Mautner views this scene as closely related to the following one in which Woyzeck takes leave of Andres. This critic considers the religious verse in that scene decisively significant for an interpretation of the drama: "Herr! wie dein Leib war rot und wund,/So laß mein Herz
sein aller Stunđ" (20. Kaserne. 170). According to Mautner, this scene shows a profound transformation in Woyzeck: "Er ist in ihr [this scene] völlig gefaßt, völlig geläutert, fühlt sich nicht mehr verdammt. Ein tief-gehender Wandel hat sich in ihm ereignet." The reason this transformation is not reflected in the rest of the play is due to the fact that these two scenes are the last ones Büchner wrote before his fatal illness. Mautner feels that Büchner, by his deliberate identification of Woyzeck with the figure of the suffering Christ, intends for Woyzeck to become "Vertreter des Leidens in der Welt." While he is quick to admit that it would be ridiculous to try to make Woyzeck into a Christian drama, Mautner does feel that Büchner's inclusion of Woyzeck's leave-taking from Andres "deutete eine positivere Einstellung zum Leiden der Welt an, verglichen mit der in den Entwürfen, nenne man diese nun . . . nihilistisch oder nicht. Sie ist religiös und kommt der christlichen

36 Mautner, p. 545. 37 Ibid., pp. 545-46.
38 Ibid., p. 543. 39 Ibid., p. 547.
In the Testamentszene there is definitely a hint that Büchner intends Woyzeck to be considered a Christ-figure. However, Mautner's assertion that this implied identification denotes a more positive view of suffering is not substantiated by the drama as a whole. For one thing, Mautner, in declaring that Woyzeck has undergone a transformation, seems to overlook the fact that Woyzeck is just as composed in the previous scene (16. Kasernenhof. 168) as in this one. As for Mautner's contention that these two crucial scenes are the last ones written, the textual problems of the work are so great that such a certainty, in spite of Bergemann's impressive work, seems highly questionable. Even if it were true, as Mautner later maintains, that in Woyzeck's words "findet sich ... kein einziges Wort der Anklage Gottes oder der

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40 Ibid., p. 554. Mautner uses Büchner's last remark on suffering as further support for this interpretation: "Wir haben der Schmerzen nicht zu viel, wir haben ihrer zu wenig, denn durch den Schmerz gehen wir zu Gott ein!" (p. 580).

Verzweiflung über die Leitung der Welt," the fact remains that Woyzeck is not Büchner, nor does he necessarily reflect Büchner's own feelings about God and the world. Büchner's ideas, as presented in his work overall, are highly contradictory, precluding any one character's being accepted as his unqualified spokesman.

The Testamentszene shows that Marie does confuse Woyzeck with Christ and therefore compels the spectator to compare the two, a comparison which gives the suffering of Woyzeck an air of universality. However, such a comparison should not be considered a perspective for viewing the drama as a whole. Büchner's main purpose for the scene is not philosophical but dramatic: to reveal in an extremely moving manner the torment of guilt in the mind of a simple woman. Büchner's inclusion of the Bible readings enables him to give effective verbal expression to Marie's feelings and at the same time avoid the danger that her words will become mere pathos.43


The positive side of Büchner's thought is not to be found in an explicit philosophical statement. Rather, the affirmative aspect of his Weltanschauung is implicit in his treatment of the characters of Woyzeck and Marie. In words which apply equally well to Marie as to Woyzeck, May sums up Büchner's philosophy of tragic affirmation as follows: "Das leidenschaftliche Leben ist diesem modernen Dramatiker Büchner das Wesentliche. Es ist als 'Möglichkeit des Daseins' zu bejahen, wie es auch sei, auch wenn es Leiden ist."44

Just as the unconditionality of Woyzeck's love raises him above his downtrodden existence and gives him tragic dignity, so Marie's strength and authenticity lend her character an affirmative aspect. As Viëtor expresses it, Marie is

wahr und echt wie die Natur, in ihrer Verliebtheit, ihrem mutigen Trotz, . . . der einfachen, unsentimentalen Kraft ihres Fühlens und in der Leidenschaft ihres Bereuens. Ein Geschöpf, das unterhalb der bürgerlichen Gesitten lebt, das auf eine andere Weise empfindet und handelt, ohne Tugend und Empfindsamkeit--aber ganz Leben, erdfhaftes, echtes, starkes Leben.45


45 Viëtor, Büchner, p. 205.
Like Lucile in *Dantons Tod*, Marie is vibrantly alive, a character drawn from life with sympathy, understanding, and appreciation for the ever-changing face of human nature.

Marie is the most profound of Büchner's female figures; for although a completely non-philosophical character, she is nevertheless a vehicle for some of Büchner's most significant thoughts: the themes of the "Muß," of morality, and of the nature of man are all reflected in the most unobtrusive manner by her role in the drama. Moreover, in the realism of her characterization she effectively illustrates the highest criterium of Büchner's art and, in so doing, makes a positive statement of his affirmation of life.
CONCLUSION

The study of Büchner's treatment of his female characters reveals the fact that they illustrate some highly significant aspects of his Weltanschauung. On the one hand Büchner idealizes women and uses his female characters to express his highest views of humanity. On the other hand he also creates women who are anti-idealistic; this second group of women illustrates his most pessimistic ideas of man's nature. Taken as a whole, the women in his works illustrate the contradictory nature of Büchner's view of the world.

One theme which occurs repeatedly in Büchner's portrayal of the women is his feeling of the loneliness of the individual and his need for Gemeinschaft. Another important theme is the combined motif of love and death, which sometimes occurs as necrophilia. The most essential theme illustrated in the female roles, however, is Büchner's idea of necessity ("das Muß") and the related question of the meaninglessness of life. The investigation of the women in relation to these themes reveals a distinct dual-
ity in Büchner's thought, a paradox which accounts in part for the difficulty in criticism in clearly evaluating his philosophical position. Although Büchner demonstrates a pessimistic view of man's place in the universe and a questioning attitude toward the values which traditionally give meaning to existence, at the same time Büchner reflects a positive feeling of affirmation of life and a belief in the possibility of love to make life meaningful.

The question of loneliness introduced by Danton in the opening scene of Büchner's first play is given well-developed treatment in the character of Julie. In the course of the play's events, Julie's qualities of peace and love prove capable of easing Danton's feeling of isolation and comforting him with the thought of reunion after death. The picture of their togetherness in death provides a positive answer to the question of human loneliness, refuting Danton's belief that everyone remains ultimately alone. Julie's role presents Büchner's faith that meaningful human contact is possible.

Julie's role also reveals some interesting insight into Büchner's view of death. Danton's attraction to Julie as a figure of peace is related to his fascination with death, as indicated by his declaration of love equating
Julie with the grave. Büchner's portrayal of Julie achieves its climax in her suicide, through which she fulfills her own death wish, expressed in the quiet evocation of sleep, and joins Danton in Liebestod.

Julie's decision to die with Danton also reveals a positive side to Büchner's view of the "Muß." In voluntarily placing herself in harmony with the universe, Julie defies the forces of necessity and performs an act of freedom which helps refute the deterministic philosophy of the main events of the play and provides Julie with a tragic dignity most of the characters lack.

The relationship between Lucile and Camille presents the most positive picture of ideal love in all of Büchner's works. In the total union of the young couple there is none of the striving which distinguishes Julie's attempt to penetrate Danton's shell of loneliness, for from the start Lucile and Camille demonstrate that real Gemeinschaft is possible. In Lucile's personality, vital and life-loving, as illustrated in the open sensuality of her feeling for Camille, Büchner avoids the preoccupation with the thought of death typical for many of his characters. Lucile and Camille represent his most affirmative view of life.
Lucile is portrayed as a child-like, unproblematic woman whose only concern in life is her husband. The short scenes in which she appears, while generally bereft of real action, present a dramatically effective picture of the warm simplicity of her unquestioning love. In her unphilosophical character Büchner presents a view of humanity which contrasts markedly with the weary skepticism of many other characters.

Lucile's decision to follow her husband to the grave is an act which affirms human freedom, overcoming the "gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte" (p. 374). The strength of her love and the decisiveness of her gesture of self-sacrifice serve to repudiate the nihilistic passages of the play.

Büchner's comedy, Leonce und Lena, presents a much more pessimistic view of life than Dantons Tod. The figure of Rosetta, introduced as a Vorstufe to Lena, also illustrates Büchner's important themes. With Rosetta, Büchner suggests that love has the possibility for giving meaning to life; without love at its center, life becomes pointless.

Rosetta's feeling of weariness with life and desire for death, expressed in the image of the "müden
Fuße" (I.iii.121), is not an integral aspect of her personality, for at first she indicates her willingness to embrace life if her love were returned. Only after the disappointment in her affair with Leonce does she turn to death as a preferable alternative to a life without love.

The scene is also important in its elucidation of some aspects of Leonce's character. His necrophilia, a motif which is more thoroughly developed in the love scene with Lena, is introduced here. Leonce's boredom, the basis for his cruelty towards his former mistress, is also illustrated in the scene with Rosetta. As a dramatization of Leonce's feelings on love, the scene prepares the reader for a better understanding of Leonce's relationship with Lena.

Despite the fact that Lena, the most idealized of all Büchner's heroines, exhibits her romantic origin in her closeness to nature and her flower-like delicacy, she nevertheless illustrates the themes important to Büchner. More than any of the other women, Lena, who is as articulate and philosophical as the men, serves as a vehicle for Büchner's ideas of loneliness, death, and man's lack of freedom.
Unlike Rosetta's death wish, Lena's interest in death is an integral part of her being. She demonstrates her preoccupation with death in nearly every scene in which she appears, even after seemingly escaping the physical cause of her unhappiness (i.e., her unwanted marriage). Even though she does not accept Leonce's necrophilic declaration of love in the garden, Lena nevertheless represents a female counterpart for him in her intense fascination with death.

Lena also articulates the idea of loneliness and longing for love expressed indirectly in other female characters: "Man geht ja so einsam und tastet nach einer Hand, die einen hielte, bis die Leichenfrau die Hände auseinander nähme und sie jedem über der Brust faltete" (I.iv.129). In her beauty, purity, and desire for love, Lena seems the ideal woman to be united in love with Leonce and provide both a cure for his diseased soul and a purposeful focus for his life.

By the end of the play this hope has proved futile, as reflected by Leonce's question, "Nun, Lena, siehst du jetzt, wie wir die Taschen voll haben, voll Puppen und Spielzeug? Was wollen wir damit anfangen?" (III.iii.146). Not only has the couple learned to their chagrin that they
have been the puppets of fate, but their love does not solve the problem of boredom. Although in Dantons Tod the women, through love, are able to find meaning for life and triumph over the fatality which controls the main characters, in the comedy love fails in both respects.

The remaining two women in Büchner's work, Marion and Marie, differ sharply from the idealized characters not only in their radically anti-idealistic treatment but also in the philosophy implicit in their roles. While the four other women reflect Büchner's concern with the problem of fate, Marion and Marie portray Büchner's outlook on the subject in greatest depth. At the same time they reflect his concern with the related questions of morality and the nature of man.

The prostitute Marion is presented as an innocent victim of her nature, driven by her sexual appetite to actions over which she has no control. While she feels no guilt about her way of life, neither does she sense any higher purpose or significance in it, merely accepting her fate in a matter-of-fact, unquestioning manner.

The presentation of Marion's rejection of bourgeois morality is closely related to her portrayal as a character without choice. Marion's view of the contrast
between herself and other people presents society's moral
code as a matter of leading a regulated, conventional life,
an attitude which indicates Büchner's feeling that bour­
geois morality is based on superficialities. Although
Büchner's delineation of Marion's personality is not
intended as his advocation of hedonism, his sympathetic
treatment of her demonstrates his conviction that tra­
ditional morality ignores the true basis of human actions.

Marie is similar to Marion in that she, too, is
compelled by her uncontrollable sexual desire to betray
her lover and destroy his only hold on life. However,
Marie's situation is infinitely more complex, for while
Marion feels no guilt and accepts her sexuality as an
unquestioned part of her nature, Marie considers herself
a terrible sinner and is tormented by the thought of her
unfaithfulness. Büchner's sympathetic treatment of her
infidelity, on the other hand, reflects his feeling that
the sexual drive is one of the forces of necessity which
prohibit a person's acting freely.

In Marie's personality Büchner emphasizes certain
traits which motivate her action and simultaneously drama­
tize his view of man's lack of freedom. Both her violent
emotional makeup and her low social position contribute to
her irresistible attraction to the Tambourmajor and make her infidelity inevitable.

Besides the problem of necessity, Marie's role reflects Büchner's exploration of the related question of the meaning of life. In the animalistic, often even bestial treatment of sex in her characterization, Büchner denies the possibility of viewing man as a noble creature. Marie's animalistic drive toward the Tambourmajor implies a highly negative view of the nature of man and his purpose in the universe.

In spite of the pessimistic themes dramatized in her role, Marie nevertheless reflects Büchner's bittersweet joy in creation. Like Marion and Lucile, Marie, beautiful in her verisimilitude and utter lack of pretentiousness, fulfills Büchner's aesthetic criterion: "Ich verlange in allem--Leben, Möglichkeit des Daseins, und dann ist's gut" (Lenz, p. 94). In her realistic presentation, illustrating both the good and the bad in mankind, Marie demonstrates Büchner's feeling that life, for all its tragedy, is to be affirmed.

As has been shown in this study, Büchner's treatment of his female characters reveals the contradictory nature of his Weltanschauung. While pessimistic in his
general view of human nature and his feeling of man's lack of freedom, he nevertheless retains a belief in the possibility for an individual, through love, to find meaning to life and to act freely. Moreover, in his vivid characterization of the women he illustrates his joy in the endless variety of the world of humanity, which despite its flaws is nevertheless beautiful: "Nur eins bleibt: eine unendliche Schönheit, die aus einer Form in die andere tritt, ewig aufgeblättert, verändert" (Lenz, p. 95).
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VITA

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