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The *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* is sponsored by the Canadian Comparative Literature Association and supported by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the University of Alberta. The review is published four times each year, in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. Single copies \$11.00, one-year individual subscriptions \$28.00 (\$37.00 for foreign subscribers) and institutional subscriptions \$50.00 (\$60.00 for foreign subscribers). Members of the CCLA receive the review as part of their membership; 1987 dues are \$35.00 for regular members and \$17.50 for students; life memberships are \$350.00. Subscriptions and all related correspondence should be addressed to: Academic Printing & Publishing, P.O. Box 4834, South Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 5G7. Members of the Canadian Comparative Literature Association and our Canadian and foreign colleagues are invited to submit papers, notes and queries, reviews of research ('Forschungsberichte'), review articles, and suggestions about possible contributions to the editor (M.V. Dimić, Department of Comparative Literature, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2E6.

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Published quarterly/publiée trimestriellement

JULIE A. STORME

'An Exit so Happy': The Deaths of Julie and Clarissa

The suffering but virtuous heroine is one of the most common figures in the eighteenth-century novel.¹ Many examples come to mind: Richardson's Clarissa, Mme de Tourvel in *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, Justine in *Les Infortunes de la vertu*, and Rousseau's Julie to name a few. Although the nature and the degree of each heroine's suffering varies, its source is most often the heroine's struggle to be true to virtue by resisting forces of vice or her own weaknesses. The common fate of these female champions of virtue is death.²

Virtue's torment, however, is not meant to be its condemnation. The creators of these suffering heroines clearly intend to praise and glorify virtue while condemning vice.³ Understandably, unchallenged virtue neither makes for an engaging novel nor teaches much about virtue's rewards, but how do authors such as Richardson and Rousseau resolve the apparent contradiction between their didactic intentions and the death of their heroine? If death is the fate of both vice and virtue, virtue's glory seems slight; if virtue dies while vice lives on, virtue's victory seems suspect; and if virtue dies soon after its victory, its reward seems small. How, then, does the author manage to avoid undermining his moral lesson and tarnishing virtue's image when he has his heroine die, and why does he have his heroine die at all?⁴ Is a

- 1 This is R.F. Brissenden's conclusion in *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan 1974).
- 2 Nancy Miller, in fact, calls 'the death of a beautiful girl' 'the hallmark of 18th-century fiction' (Nancy Miller, 'The Exquisite Cadavers: Women in 18th Century Fiction,' *Diacritics* 5 [1975] 37).
- 3 See for instance Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Edition 1930), I, xx; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Cécile complètes (La Nouvelle Héloïse)* (Paris: L'Édition de la Pléiade 1959), II, 6; Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (Paris: Garnier Frères 1961) 5.
- 4 Elaine Showalter suggests that the tragic death of the heroine permits the hero of a text to contemplate his experience and resolve himself to failure (*The Evolution of the French Novel, 1641-1782* [Princeton: Princeton University Press 1972] 303-4) and Nancy Miller suggests that authors have their heroines die in order to neutralize their threatening female sexuality (see 'The Exquisite

heroine's death merely virtue's final trial, or does it play a more pivotal role with regard to the author's moral lesson and thus his heroine's virtue? It is my contention that the heroine's death not only does not undermine virtue's glory, but rather serves to elevate the heroine to the very pinnacle of her virtue, thereby strengthening both the author's moral lesson and his glorification of feminine virtue. In the words of Pierre Fauchery, a heroine's death in eighteenth-century fiction does not merely provide a happy or an unhappy ending,⁵ but both explains and justifies her life: 'C'est dans la mort que "la femme se réalise" pleinement, laisse jaillir sa note la plus haute.'⁶

Julie and Clarissa are perhaps the two greatest of the eighteenth-century heroines and no two authors devote more attention to their heroine's death than do Richardson and Rousseau. *Clarissa* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* have been compared on the basis of numerous criteria since the publication of Rousseau's novel; nonetheless, little criticism has been devoted specifically to a comparison of the heroines' deaths.⁷ I aim to contribute to past studies by highlighting both the similarities and the differences of their deaths as well as by responding to critical charges that Julie's death seems to subvert the ideality of her life at Clarens and the strength of her virtuous recovery.⁸

Clarissa and Julie each embody a different but exemplary notion of virtue. Each heroine's virtue is shaped by her author's didacticism; thus the differences between Julie's and Clarissa's virtue can be traced to the different didactic methods of Richardson and Rousseau. Richardson's didactic approach is expressed through a virtue based on strength while Rousseau's moral founts itself upon Julie's *faiblesse*. Richardson

indicates in his preface that he meant Clarissa to be as near perfection as humanly possible: 'As far as is consistent with human frailty, and as far as she could be perfect, considering the people she had to deal with, and those with whom she was inseparably connected, she is perfect.'⁹ Richardson hopes to deliver moral instruction through the trials and the earthly defeat of this most perfect virtue. Clarissa's many trials allow her to reaffirm continually her loyalty to virtue; this steadfast reaffirmation in the face of hardship is at the heart of Richardson's didacticism. In response to readers' laments concerning Clarissa's tragic fate, Richardson, citing Addison, writes in his Postscript:

I cannot think but that the instruction and moral are much finer, where a man who is virtuous in the main of his character falls into distress, and sinks under the blows of fortune, at the end of a Tragedy, than when he is represented as happy and triumphant. Such an example ... teaches him [the beholder] not to judge of mens virtues by their successes. (Postscript VIII, p. 312)

Victimization of his heroine is thus an inherent characteristic of Richardson's didactic method. Clarissa's suffering is instructive because, being inflicted upon her by external forces, it does not in any way mar the perfection of her virtue. Clarissa teaches by the strength of her resistance to those who would compromise her virtue. No matter how numerous her trials, no matter how great her suffering, Clarissa remains true to herself and her virtue. She is a model of virtue maintained.

While Julie does not approach Clarissa's perfection, her weakness enlarges rather than diminishes her virtue. Julie's crime is neither vile nor base. Rousseau tells us that it is 'd'une si touchante faiblesse que la vertu sembloit y gagner.'¹⁰ Nonetheless, Julie is more culpable than Clarissa. In the first half of the novel Julie does not, indeed cannot resist her own inclination towards love and passion which leads her away from virtue. Unlike Clarissa, she is not coerced into a correspondance with her seducer; furthermore she gives St. Preux his first kiss without his so much as asking for it, and she willingly becomes his lover. The menaces to Julie's virtue come from within herself; her love of St. Preux

Cadavers', p. 40), but both of these theories avoid the question of how the heroine's death advances the author's didactic purposes within the text.

5 Pierre Fauchery, *La Destinée féminine dans le roman européen du dix-huitième siècle, 1713-1807, un essai de gynécomythie romanesque* (Paris: A. Colin 1972), 788

6 Fauchery, 790

7 Studies comparing Clarissa and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* include Gregory L. Ulmar's *Clarissa and La Nouvelle Héloïse, Comparative Literature* 24 (1972) 280-308, and François Jost, 'Richardson, Rousseau, et le roman épistolaire,' *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises* 20 (1977) 173-85. Roseann Runte does compare the deaths of Julie and Clarissa as well as Mme de Tourvel's, but mainly from a stylistic and linguistic point of view in 'Dying Words: The Vocabulary of Death in Three Eighteenth-Century English and French Novels,' *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 6 (1979) 360-8.

8 This conclusion is effectively presented by Aram Vartanian, 'The Death of Julie: A Psychological Post-mortem,' *L'Esprit Créateur* 6 (1966) 77-84.

9 Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Edition 1930), I (Preface) xiii-xiv. All further references are to this edition and will appear parenthetically within the text.

10 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes (Les Confessions)* (Paris: L'Édition de la Pléiade, 1959) I, 430. All further references to Rousseau's works are to this edition and will appear parenthetically within the text.

alone makes possible her seduction. Yet, Julie's flaw is as fundamental to Rousseau's didactic method as Clarissa's perfection is to Richardson's. As his interlocuter says to Rousseau in the *Entretien sur les romans*, 'si votre Héloïse eût été toujours sage, elle instruirait beaucoup moins' (II, p. 26). Although her fall cannot be excused, it can be turned into a didactic tool; her virtue rises from its ashes to overcome the very weakness which overpowered it. Julie's weakness would not be instructive without her subsequent return to virtue's realm. As such, Rousseau offers his readers a model of virtue regained. It is essential that Rousseau's heroine be depicted as happy and contented once she regains her virtue. Victimization and unhappiness play a role in Rousseau's didacticism only to the extent that these conditions afflict the heroine as she falls away from virtue. Thus, Julie suffers only when she strays from virtue's path and thereby betrays herself and her virtue; her distress is more psychological than physical.¹¹ Her love of virtue torments her until she finds the strength to conquer a part of herself and regain in full the virtue she once possessed.

The fundamental elements of the author's didactic method shaping the nature of his heroine's virtue, attributes such as perfection versus weakness or suffering versus self-conquest, re-emerge in the portrait of the heroine's death. The over-determination of these elements reveals the author's purpose motivating the heroine's death.¹² The author's continual return and insistent attention to these aspects allows him to transform the heroine's death into a showcase for her virtue. The persistent presence of the author's didactic formula in all aspects of the heroine's death serves to transform death from an ultimate defeat into the heroine's final glory. The remainder of this study is dedicated to an examination of these didactic elements with regard to the nature and origin of the heroine's death, to the consequences of her death, and to her portrait in death.

¹¹ Julie does, of course, suffer some physical abuse at the hands of her father. It is important to note, however, that such abuse does not form the mainstay of her suffering and occurs, unlike Clarissa's suffering, in an isolated instance. Furthermore, Julie's suffering, physical and mental, reaches its peak at the moment when she has fallen furthest from society's notion of virtue, when she is pregnant with her lover's child and anxious to thwart parental authority.

¹² Thus I work under the same assumption as does Nancy K. Miller in the *Heroine's Text*, that an ending overdetermines narrative logic revealing *telos* (*The Heroine's Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722-1782* [New York: Columbia University Press 1980] xi). In fact, Ms Miller and I concentrate on different *telos*, she studies the sexual and social aspects of the heroine's death while I choose to study its didactic aspect.

THE CAUSE OF DEATH

The origin of Clarissa's death lies in a single incident, her rape. The question of life and death arises immediately after the rape; just a week after the crime Clarissa expects to live only a short while longer (V, p. 380). Even Lovelace assesses the rape in terms of life and death when he writes to Belford, 'The affair is over. Clarissa lives' (V, p. 314). Lovelace's statement is ironic in hindsight since Clarissa has in fact begun to die at the time of his letter. Clarissa rightly sees her violation as her destruction and Lovelace as her destructor; she calls him an 'eating Canker-worm, that preyed upon the opening Bud, and turned the damask Rose into livid yellowness!' (V, p. 331). It takes very little time to discover whose assessment is correct; Clarissa is soon at death's door, calling hers a death from grief (VII, p. 410).

That rape should be the cause of Clarissa's death is appropriate given the tremendous importance Clarissa's virginity holds as a symbol of her virtue, of her perfection. Critics have long recognized that Clarissa's struggle to keep her virginity and her struggle to maintain her personal honor are synonymous.¹³ The difficulty Lovelace faces in his efforts to take Clarissa's virginity demonstrates the steadfastness of her virtue and her resistance to corruption. Both her physical and moral resistance are formidable. Lovelace himself is impressed by her ability to elude him physically after he gains access to her room through the ruse of a fire: 'considering the delicacy of her frame, her force was amazing, and shewed how much in earnest she was in her resentment; for it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to hold her' (IV, p. 392). In the face of Clarissa's resistance, Lovelace is forced to abandon his original plan of seduction and is reduced to raping a drugged victim. Although Clarissa considers herself ruined she remains morally inviolate; even Lovelace admits that he has not conquered or damaged her moral fortitude (V, p. 319). A symbol of purity and innocence, Clarissa dies a martyr to her virginity.

If Clarissa's virtue is epitomized by purity and innocence, conditions necessary to a victim, Julie's virtue is epitomized by her role as a mother.¹⁴ During her liaison with St. Preux, maternity eluded Julie. Julie

¹³ See, for instance, Pierre Fauchery, *La Destinée* p. 307 and Dorothy Van Chent, *The English Novel: Form and Function* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1953) 55 and 61-2.

¹⁴ See Renée Lelievre's article, 'Julie d'Étange ou la maternité frustrée' (*Revue Littéraire de la France* 62 [1962] 363-70) in which she argues that one of the earliest expressions of Julie's virtue is her desire and attempts to become pregnant with St. Preux's child.

explains her miscarriage as a consequence of her fall from virtue: 'Le Ciel rejette des projets conçus dans le crime; je ne méritois pas l'honneur d'être mère' (II, p. 345). Once she regains her virtue and becomes the wife of Wolmar and mistress of Clarens, she becomes a quintessential mother. Not only does she bear two children, all of the servants of Clarens treat her as a mother feeling great remorse when they have disappointed her (II, pp. 465-6).¹⁵ She is so universal a mother figure that Claire relinquishes her own maternal duties to her cousin, asking Julie to be responsible for Henriette's upbringing. At Clarens, Julie's primary concern is her children (including, of course, Henriette). She does not take her task lightly, as is reflected in Letter III of Part V in which she describes her philosophy on pedagogy. Quite appropriately then, Julie dies as a consequence of her successful efforts to save her drowning son; her own minister calls her a martyr to maternal love. (II, p. 717). It is equally appropriate for Rousseau to have Julie die as the result of her maternal devotion as it is for Richardson to have Clarissa die of rape since Julie's motherhood symbolizes her return to virtue in much the same way that Clarissa's inviolate virginity symbolizes her virtue maintained.

THE CONSEQUENCES

The significance and meaning of a heroine's death cannot fully be understood without looking at the consequences resulting from her death. If Clarissa's death were to reinforce her status as a suffering victim, it would indeed undermine her role as a virtuous model to emulate and admire. Although Clarissa's death does belong to the code of victimization it also encodes the attributes of perfection and, above all, innocence. As a direct consequence of her death, Clarissa's innocence is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt and she thereby sheds the status of victim. During her lifetime Clarissa lived as an unrecognized victim of Lovelace and her family (unrecognized by all but her readers). The early stages of her death afford her recognition as a victim; only at death's door does she find herself surrounded by people who are not hostile or menacing towards her. She acquires an entirely new set of friends including Belford, her landlady Mrs. Smith, and her neighbor Mrs. Lovick. These people look kindly upon Clarissa and pro-

vide the first textual recognition of Clarissa as an extraordinary victim of extraordinary cruelty.

Ironically, it is this recognition which ultimately permits Clarissa to reject the status of victim. She refuses to accept their assessment by refusing to act like a victim. Although victimized, Clarissa never submits to her suffering. Margaret Anne Doody writes that Clarissa 'manifests a strength of will and desire which resists all obstacles and humiliations and, fiercely asserting her integrity, refuses to be a mere victim.'¹⁶ It is Clarissa's death, however, which allows her to shed fully the role of victim because through her death Clarissa conquers her persecutors and vindicates herself by offering unquestionable proof of her morality: she could not continue to live after such a violation of her honor. Her persecutors, primarily Lovelace and her family, are forced to see the truth: Clarissa is and was innocent of any immorality. Only by dying does she win her family's favor, only by dying does she convince Lovelace of her virtue. Lovelace's response to Belford's reproaches indicates that he had been doubtful of Clarissa's virtue prior to the onset of her final illness; he recalls his impression of Clarissa before she had begun to die: 'admirable as she was in all she said, and in all she did, occasion had not at that time ripened, and called forth, those amazing perfections which now astonish and confound me' (VII, p. 345). Clarissa triumphs because Lovelace loses the battle of principles.

More importantly, by dying, Clarissa the victim punishes her persecutors. Her family suffers tremendously from her death; her mother has hourly fits, and her brother receives the blame of the entire family (VIII, p. 41). Morden describes each member of Clarissa's family as the picture of woe. Their forgiveness and self-blame come too late, however, and their burden is to bear this guilt; the lateness of their 'pardon' illustrates that they could have been punished by nothing less than Clarissa's death. Of course, no one is more punished by Clarissa's death than Lovelace. He suffers a retributive and poetically just punishment when the news of Clarissa's death sends him into a delirium which closely parallels Clarissa's behavior after the rape.¹⁷ The extent of Lovelace's punishment, however, is illustrated not by the similarities between his and Clarissa's torment, but instead by the

15 Jean H. Hagstrum in *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980) even argues that St. Preux's return to Julie at Clarens is more akin to a son's reunion with his mother than to a lovers' reunion (p. 238).

16 Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1974) 101-2.

17 For a description of Lovelace's raving and mad behavior see his servant's account to Belford in *Clarissa*, VII, 465-6.

different nature of their delirium. Despite Lovelace's tyrannical manipulation of Clarissa, she remains uncorrupted and untouched by him. Referring to the whole of her ordeal with him, she writes, 'I bless God, it has not tainted my mind; it has not hurt my morals' (VII, p. 232). Unlike Clarissa, Lovelace is forced to reexamine his life and his principles; regretting his undisciplined upbringing, he writes, 'What a punishment, to have my first very great disappointment touch my intellect!' (VIII, p. 146).

Clarissa's virtuous example depends upon both her victimization and her ultimate victory. Without the former, she would not in Richardson's eyes be an effective virtuous model. On the other hand, if Clarissa dies as nothing more than a victim, she would be a poor model of moral fortitude. She must be both victimized and triumphant, and only her death allows this. Her death gives her victory without eradicating her victimization; on the contrary it represents the ultimate injustice, the death of innocence. But through death the victim conquers; only through death can Clarissa become an undefeated victim.¹⁸

Julie's relationship to her friends and family contrasts markedly with Clarissa's, and thus the consequences of her death and the effect it has upon her loved ones are quite different. During her virtuous reign at Clarens, Julie lived not as a victim of those around her but as the ideal center of their world. St. Preux, Claire, and Wolmar seem like satellites drawn to her. Declaring her love and fidelity, Claire remarks upon Julie's charismatic magnetism, 'Nas-tu jamais remarqué, mon Ange, à quel point tout ce qui t'approche s'attache à toi? ... que les amis, les connoissances, les domestiques, les voisins et toute une ville entière, t'adorent de concert et prennent à toi le plus tendre intérêt!' (II, p. 203). Claire continues to explain how Julie manages to enchant all who know her: 'Sais-tu bien quelle est cette cause? Ce n'est ni ta beauté, ni ton esprit, ni ta grace, ni rien de tout ce qu'on entend par le don de plaire: mais c'est cette âme tendre et cette douceur d'attachement qui n'a point d'égal; c'est le don d'aimer, mon enfant, qui te fait aimer' (II, pp. 203-4).

¹⁸ Both Terry Eagleton and Leslie Fiedler recognize the victory of Clarissa's death: Eagleton calls her death a 'Samson-like act' which brings her enemies to their knees (*The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class-struggle in Samuel Richardson* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1982] 93); Fiedler likens Clarissa's death to the Crucifixion: 'An archetypal representation of victory that can only be wrung from defeat' (*Love and Death in the American Novel* [New York: Criterion Books 1960] 32).

Julie was the gravitational force which held the society of Clarens together; when she dies, the world of Clarens, robbed of its center, disintegrates. Claire's fate best illustrates the unhappy results of Julie's death, deprived of her loving and much loved cousin, Claire can no longer lead a meaningful life. Her overwhelming grief brings her to a state closely resembling death, 'tout-à-fait hors de sens, ne voyant rien, n'entendant rien, ne connoissant personne' (II, p. 734). Claire herself implies that she will not long survive her dear cousin (II, p. 745). Although we do not see St. Preux's reaction to Julie's death, we do see his reaction to a premonitory dream of her death. St. Preux's reaction to his dream is remarkably similar to Claire's reaction to Julie's death; he is unable to see or hear anything and this numbness alternates with frantic fits of violent behavior (II, p. 617). His silence after Julie's death is in itself an ominous sign with regard to the future of Clarens. Considering Wolmar's usual reticence, the depth of his reaction to his wife's death is extraordinary; he writes, 'J'ignore ce que je devins moi-même' (II, p. 734). He asks St. Preux to come share his 'ennuis,' suggesting that without Julie he cannot return to the contented and ordered life he once knew. Clarens and Julie die with a single breath. This does not, however, undermine the ideality of Clarens providing it to have been only an illusion, but instead emphasizes the essential role Julie played in that society. Thus, the consequences of her death serve only to illustrate the exceptional force of her virtue in life.¹⁹

THE HEROINE'S PORTRAIT IN DEATH

Julie and Clarissa die very conscious deaths; consequently, they are able to make pointed decisions with regard to their appearance and their final actions.²⁰ Furthermore, both heroines have ample opportunity to profess and elaborate upon their attitude towards their own deaths. These three factors, the heroine's appearance, her final actions, and her attitude towards death converge to form a portrait of the dying heroine, which, like the cause and consequences of her death, reflects the author's particular form of didacticism and serves to elevate the heroine to new heights of virtue.

¹⁹ See Fauchery, 816-17.

²⁰ As Fauchery tells us, an eighteenth-century heroine's death was usually abundantly prepared and foreshadowed (*La Destinée*, p. 774). There are, of course, some notable exceptions, in particular Sade who uses the abrupt and disfiguring death of Justine in *Les Infortunes de la vertu* to meet ends entirely opposed to those of Richardson and Rousseau, i.e., to undermine his heroine's virtue to whose glorification he pays nothing more than lip service.

As a model of virtue maintained, Clarissa must submit to many trials and yet remain innocent. Her appearance in death emphasizes both her victimization and her innocence. Richardson symbolically underlines her innocence and her sustained virtue and simultaneously unites them to Clarissa's struggle for her virginity by continually dressing his dying heroine in white (e.g. VI, p. 298 and VII, p. 438). Belford does not leave the virginal allusion unspoken, writing 'We beheld the Lady, in a charming attitude. Dressed, as I told you before, in her virgin white ...' (VII, p. 449).

Physical weakness also accompanies Clarissa's death; she is plagued by shortness of breath, fainting spells, and convulsions. There are numerous references to her physical weakness and her declining health (e.g. VI, p. 377 and p. 431; VII, p. 143). This physical frailty serves to remind the reader of her victimization as well as the vigorous moral and physical resistance with which she countered Lovelace's efforts to corrupt her. The heroine's virtue remains and grows as her vitality sinks; she becomes a saintly sufferer. Her dying image, deserving of both pity and admiration, provides pathos for the innocent victim.

Julie's healthy appearance in death contrasts dramatically with Clarissa's frailty. Julie is the picture of health up until the moment of death. At one point she appears so vigorous and healthy that even her physician suspects a recovery may be possible (II, p. 732). As a model of virtue regained, Julie's virtue is firmly anchored in the profane. Her appearance and preoccupations at death emphasize the importance of her earthly happiness: she savours her last meals, indulging her appetite (II, p. 712, pp. 730-1). She directs her energy towards making her appearance and surroundings agreeable, as Wolmar observes when he writes,

... je remarquai en rentrant que l'appartement étoit arrangé avec soin; il y regnoit de l'ordre et de l'élégance ... on n'eut jamais cru être dans la chambre d'un malade. Elle avoit fait sa toilette avec le même soin: la grace et le goût se montroient encore dans sa parure négligée. Tout cela lui donnoit plutôt l'air d'une femme du monde qui attend compagnie, que d'une campagnarde qui attend sa dernière heure. (II, p. 710)

Unlike Clarissa the unhappy victim, Julie, as a model of happy virtue, wishes to surround herself with all that had been part of her virtuous and happy life. Gathering her loved ones around her she practices all of the family traditions one last time: she dines with them in the 'salle d'Apollon' discussing virtue, happiness and religion — subjects which were as great a concern to her in life as they are in death. Julie attempts

to sustain the normal activities and traditions of Clarens for as long as possible. She makes no final religious preparation before her death, choosing instead to spend her last days absorbed in her duties as mother, wife, cousin, and friend. She says of her last days,

[Dieu] me les laisse pour être donnés à ceux qu'il m'a fait aimer et qu'il veut que je quitte; je leur fais mes adieux pour aller à lui; c'est d'eux qu'il faut que je m'occupe: bientôt je m'occuperai de lui seul. Mes derniers plaisirs sur la terre sont aussi mes derniers devoirs. (II, p. 715)

Through this effort to maintain an agreeable atmosphere, Julie gives death the semblance of an ordinary day in her life, and in this way she dies as she has learned to live, the very model of happy virtue.

Although Clarissa remains a kind and generous person throughout the novel, her final preoccupations are not at all altruistic; in fact, all of her final actions are fundamentally egocentric. She becomes utterly engrossed with her death: every single action she undertakes after her escape from Lovelace is a preparation for her death. She spends her last days securing an account of her ordeal so that her story may be known after her death, writing letters of farewell and her will, appointing an executor to it, purchasing a coffin, and praying for salvation. Foremost among her preoccupations is her desire to dispose of her possessions before her death. Remaining fiercely independent, Clarissa jealously guards control over her death and tries to leave as little responsibility as possible to those who will survive her. In order to facilitate both the disposition of her affairs as well as her financial independence, she sells much of her jewelry and clothing (VI, pp. 301, 355-6, 430). Clarissa's haste and anxiousness to rid herself of all of her belongings are part of the psychology of the victim: she ardently wishes to cleanse herself by disposing of any possession which might recall her violation, and thus victimization remains an ever-present element of her virtue.

Death is a deeply religious experience for Clarissa: her sense of religion permeates her final activities. As a suffering heroine, her virtue always looks to the divine for compensation and reward, approaching her demise, she immerses herself in a religious preparation for death and salvation. Even Clarissa's appearance in death can be explained in terms of her religious devotion. Having been quite careful of her appearance in the beginning of the novel, Clarissa takes little care of it near her death. Belford mentions this in his description of Clarissa in jail:

I was told afterwards, that her laces had been cut, when she fainted away at her entrance into this cursed place; and she had not been solicitous enough about her dress, to send for others. Her head-dress was a little discomposed; her charming hair, in natural ringlets ... but a little tangled, as if not lately comb'd (VI, p. 298)

While Clarissa's latest trials are in part to blame for her disordered appearance, her lack of concern stems from her religious disdain for worldly vanity, a disdain which increases as she approaches death. As Doody points out, clothes represent all worldly vanities in *Clarissa*: wealth, pride, greed, etc.²¹ That Clarissa should sell her clothes or be unsolicitous of her appearance is consistent with her religious devotion near death.

That salvation becomes Clarissa's primary concern soon after the rape is evident when she says to Lovelace: 'The evils I have suffered ... how-ever irreparable, are but *temporary* evils. Leave me to my hopes of being enabled to obtain the Divine forgiveness, for the offence I have been drawn in to give to my parents, and to virtue; that so I may avoid the evils that are *more than temporary*. This is now all I have to wish for' (VI, p. 34). Clarissa considers that all actions prior to death ought to be oriented towards religious preparation and contemplation; she considers death to be 'that great and awful moment, *in* which, and even in the ardent preparation *to* which, every sense of indignity or injury that concerns not the immortal Soul, ought to be absorbed in higher and more important contemplations' (VII, p. 232). Part of this preparation consists in religious punctilio. Despite her failing health, Clarissa continues to practice faithfully the sacraments. Doody maintains that Clarissa's death provides a manual for holy dying; her actions and attitude are those considered to be proper to a religious and untroubled death.²² Clarissa practices her religious punctilio in an orderly fashion: her first concern is to beg for the removal of her father's curse which would, in her eyes, prevent her salvation (VI, p. 422); she then proceeds to seek her family's final blessing and to do everything required by true repentance and for salvation, including forgiving Lovelace. Clarissa admits that she forgives Lovelace, at least in part if not entirely, because religion, and thus her salvation, demand it: 'Religion enjoins me, not only to forgive injuries, but to return good

for evil ... And accordingly I tell you, that, wherever you go, I wish you happy' (VII, p. 105).

Clarissa's sense of honor and religious devotion supersedes any worldly concern. She wishes to live and die in a manner consistent with her sense of personal honor. Thus she refuses to take the only path which would redeem her in society's eyes: she refuses to marry Lovelace. Such a marriage would violate Clarissa's sense of honor and the respect she holds for the institution (VI, p. 409, VII, p. 328). Furthermore, this social solution would be inconsistent with her religious devotion since it would place worth on the greatest vanity of all, public appearances. She tells Anna Howe, 'I should not think my penitence for the rash step I took, anything better than a specious delusion, if I had not got above the least wish to have Mr. Lovelace for my Husband' (VI, p. 408).²³

Since religious ceremony was never a large part of Julie's life or a fundamental part of her religion, one is not particularly astonished at the lack of sacrament in her preparation for death. She avoids religious ritual in part because she feels it makes death morbid (II, p. 717), but also because, as mentioned earlier, she prefers to dedicate her last days to her loved ones since she will soon be separated from them to be with God. More surprising, however, is the fact that Julie discontinues her frequent prayer during the last days of her life. Prayer is at the heart of Julie's sense of religion. She spends so many hours in prayer that St. Preux accuses her of nearly being 'une dévote' (II, p. 685). Several psychological theories have been offered as explanations for this radical change in Julie's behavior, but let us first turn to its religious significance. Julie, unlike Clarissa, does not believe that her dying days possess any particular importance with regard to the preparation of her salvation. In her eyes, her life alone in its entirety will determine her salvation or her damnation. She tells her pastor,

Quant à la préparation à la mort, Monsieur, elle est faite; mal, il est vrai, mais de mon mieux, et mieux du moins que je ne la pourrais faire à présent. J'ai tâché de ne pas attendre pour remplir cet important devoir que j'en fusse incapable. Je priois en santé; maintenant je me résigne. La prière du malade est la patience: La préparation à la mort est une bonne vie; je n'en connois point d'autre. (II, p. 715)

21 Doody, 172-3.

22 Doody, pp. 168-9. See also John A. Dussinger, 'Conscience and the Pattern of Christian Perfection in *Clarissa*' (PMLA 81 [1966] 245).

23 It is Clarissa's refusal to accept society's solution which, as Eagleton argues, condemns the patriarchal society which she so revered, and yet whose claim over her personal destiny she so ardently rejects (Eagleton, pp. 76-8).

During her lifetime, religion and prayer served as the safeguard of her virtue. For Julie, God functions as an all-seeing witness. It is this sense of divine overseeing which inspires Julie's conversion and her continuing virtue at Clarens. St. Preux writes of Julie 'Dans l'injuste crainte que lui inspirait sa timidité naturelle, elle n'imagina point de précaution plus sûre que de se donner incessamment un témoin qu'il falut respecter, d'appeller en tiers le juge integre et redoutable qui voit les actions secretes et sait lire au fond ces cœurs' (II, p. 593).²⁴ Since the few days left to her represent no threat to her continued virtue, Julie need not take strength or look for guidance from prayer.

The heroine's happiness at death, like her appearance, is also a natural expression of her virtue. Neither Clarissa nor Julie regrets having to die. In fact, the joy with which each heroine greets death can be interpreted as an expression of a death wish or even as a psychological cause of death.²⁵ Both heroines are happy to die, but the source of their happiness is dramatically different. With Clarissa, we see once again the traces of victimization; she welcomes death as any sufferer would, as an end to her trials and torment. Clarissa consistently refers to death as the end of life's unhappiness and suffering (e.g. VII, p. 221 and p. 406; VIII, pp. 2-3). She calls death 'The refreshing Inn after a fatiguing journey: The end of a life of cares and troubles' (VI, p. 410). She tells those around her death-bed: 'mourn not for one who mourns not, nor has cause to mourn, for herself. On the contrary, rejoice with me, that all my worldly troubles are so near their end' (VII, p. 459). Any promise of happiness in life would make death less welcome; she says of her family, 'if I found they still loved me, [I might] wish to live; and so should quit unwillingly that life, which I am now really fond of quitting' (VII, p. 278). For Clarissa, death surpasses the cessation of life. Her metaphorical references to it, references such as 'her enlarge-

ment' or her 'weaning-time from the world' (VII, pp. 340, 445) indicate that death is Clarissa's reward. She frequently suggests that she will be happy after death (e.g. VII, p. 406 and VIII, pp. 2-3) and on one occasion refers to death as 'the beginning of a life of immortal happiness' (VI, p. 410).

Thus Clarissa's joy at death stems from two different aspects of her virtue: as a virtuous victim, she is glad at the relief that death shall bring her; as a figure of religious virtue, she is glad to join God's kingdom.²⁶ In Clarissa's eyes, true happiness cannot be found until earthly existence is disdained and shed. As a religious heroine, she recognizes the vanity of earthly life, the love of which prevents salvation. She writes to Miss Howe,

If I die not now, it may possibly happen, that I may be taken when I am less prepared. Had I escaped the evils I labour under, it might have been in the midst of some gay promising hope; when my heart had beat high with the desire of life; and when the vanity of this earth had taken hold of me. (VI, p. 411)

Clarissa is sure that she will be happy as soon as she rids herself of her 'tags of mortality' (VII, p. 410). The biblical inscriptions on her coffin reflect these three different aspects of her attitude towards death: the first inscription describes death as the cessation of suffering: 'HERE the wicked cease from troubling; And HERE the weary be at rest'; in the second inscription, death is treated as a heavenly reward: 'Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul! For the Lord hath rewarded thee'; with the final inscription, we see death as the shedding of a trivial existence: 'The days of man are but as grass. For he flourisheth as a flower of the field: For, as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more' (VII, pp. 338-9).

Death holds no threat for Julie because she has reached the pinnacle of happiness; she knows this even before her final illness. One day, surrounded by her loved ones, she calls out to death 'O mort, viens quand tu voudras! je ne te crains plus, j'ai vecu, je t'ai prévenue, je n'ai plus de nouveaux sentimens à connoître, tu n'as plus rien à me dérober' (II, p. 669). Julie does not hope for death, but neither does

²⁴ Julie defends her frequent prayer by explaining to St. Preux that prayer both guides her and gives her increased strength: 'Je crois valloir autant qu'une autre, et mille autres ont vécu plus sagement que moi. Elles avoient donc des ressources que je n'avois pas. Pourquoi me sentant bien née ai-je eu besoin de cacher ma vie? Pourquoi haïssois-je le mal que j'ai fait malgré moi? Je ne connoissois que ma force; elle n'a pu me suffire. Toute la resistance qu'on peut tier de soi je crois l'avoir faite, et toutefois j'ai succombé: comment font celles qui résistent? Elles ont un meilleur appui' (II, pp. 692-3).

²⁵ See, for instance, Aram Vartanian, pp. 82-3 and Michel Fougères, *La Liebestod dans le roman français, anglais et allemand au XVIII^e siècle* (Sherbrooke: Naaman 1974), p. 126 with regard to Julie's death wish and Pierre Fauchery, p. 339 or Terry Eagleton, p. 76 with regard to Clarissa's.

²⁶ Clarissa often uses bridal metaphors to describe death in order to emphasize that, to her, death represents a joining with God. For instance, she refers to her burial clothes as wedding garments (VII, p. 406) and tells Mrs. Norton on the subject of her death: 'I am upon a *better preparation*, than for an earthly Husband' (VI, p. 410).

she regret its arrival. She recognizes that her death has come at the best possible moment. On her deathbed she tells Wolmar and Claire, 'Mon bonheur monté par degrés étoit au comble, il ne pouvoit plus que décroître' (II, p. 726). Death brings not the loss of Julie's earthly happiness, but its perpetual preservation. Julie feels that her happiness can only diminish and her sorrow increase in the future. The loss of her happiness would be devastating and would necessitate a less agreeable death: 'Plus on vit, plus on aime à vivre, même sans jour de rien: J'aurois eu l'ennui de la vie et la terreur de la mort, suite ordinaire de la vieillesse. Au lieu de cela, mes derniers instans sont encore agréables, et j'ai de la vigueur pour mourir' (II, p. 726). Julie's rationale inverts Clarissa's feared that any earthly happiness after her great sorrow might make her death less welcome whereas Julie wishes her death to coincide with the peak of her earthly contentment. Julie's contentment at death stems from her happiness in life whereas Clarissa's stems from her sorrow in life.

Julie's happiness at death has yet another source: ironically, her death, like Clarissa's, can be considered as the end to her trials. Julie's trials are not suffering and unhappiness, but rather her struggle to sustain her regained virtue. This struggle does not deprive her of happiness, but instead robs her of tranquility; she writes to St. Preux,

O mon ami! si la vie est courte pour le plaisir, qu'elle est longue pour la vertu! Il faut être incessamment sur ses gardes. L'instant de jouir passe et ne revient plus; celui de mal faire passe et revient sans cesse: On s'oublie un moment, et l'on est perdu. Est-ce dans cet état effrayant qu'on peut couler des jours tranquilles, et ceux mêmes qu'on a sauvés du péril n'offrent-ils pas une raison de n'y plus exposer les autres? (II, p. 667)

Death means the end of her struggle; it brings her the tranquility she never had in life. Virtue in Rousseau's works founds itself upon sacrifice. Starobinski observes in *La Transparence et l'obstacle* that 'L'art de Rousseau consiste à indiquer ce qu'il en coûte d'être vertueux.'²⁷ This is no less true in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* which is characterized by the tension of an internal struggle; St. Preux reminds Julie of virtue's inherent struggle when he writes to her 'Chère amie, ne savez-vous pas que la vertu est un état de guerre, et que pour y vivre on a toujours quelque combat à rendre contre soi?' (II, p. 682) Julie herself admits that

to maintain her virtue was a struggle involving risks to her honor. In her posthumous letter to St. Preux she writes,

J'ose m'honorer du passé; mais qui m'eût pu répondre de l'avenir? Un jour de plus, peut-être, et j'étois coupable! Qu'étoit-ce de la vie entière passée avec vous? Quels dangers j'ai courus sans le savoir! A quels dangers plus grands j'allois être exposé! Sans doute je sentois pour moi les craintes que je croyois sentir pour vous. Toutes les épreuves ont été faites, mais elles pouvoient trop revenir. N'ai-je pas assez vécu pour le bonheur et pour la vertu? (II, p. 741)

Thus, Julie's death not only preserves her happiness, it preserves her honor by bringing her virtuous struggle to a happy end.

For many critics Julie's contentment at death and her posthumous letter seem to lessen the strength of her return to virtue. Her joy at death is considered to be relief from her fear of betraying her husband and her honor. Citing Julie's own words to St. Preux, 'Je me suis longtemps fait illusion. Cette illusion me fut salutaire; elle se détruit au moment que je n'en ai plus besoin. Vous m'avez crû guérie, et j'ai crû l'être' (II, p. 740), such critics see Julie's return to virtue as a false one, full of fear and self-deception.²⁸ But do Julie's fears of a new offense against virtue really undermine the success of Clarens and the authenticity of her recovery? As previously mentioned, Julie's virtue is founded upon an internal struggle; virtue is demanding and requires many sacrifices. Without the threat of a second offense there would be no struggle for Julie; without her continued love of St. Preux, there would be no threat of a second offense. Fear of a second fall is a necessary and natural part of her particular concept of virtue, a virtue, as Rousseau says, inherently linked to his heroine's *faiblesse*. Julie is not unaware of her self-doubts; she continually questions herself and supposes that the worst is possible. When Wolmar proposes to take a short trip leaving herself and St. Preux, newly reunited, alone, Julie writes to Claire, 'Mais, mon ange, est-ce assés que mon coeur me rassure, quand la raison doit m'allarmer? J'ai perdu le droit de compter sur moi' (II, p. 499). Julie's doubts do not undermine her virtue; on the contrary,

²⁷ Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: la transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: Galimard 1971) 115

²⁸ Aram Vartanian, for instance, writes 'It can reasonably be supposed that Julie's behavior in Part IV reflected, in many ways, the system of illusion concerning her relationship to St. Preux, and that, consequently, what she herself thought about her actions and feelings at the time cannot be taken at face value any more than her mistaken affirmations about the success of the ménage à trois' (p. 80). See also Miller, *The Heroine's Text*, p. 114 and Fougières, p. 143.

they indicate its strength. Julie can be neither totally fearful nor totally confident, but unquestioned confidence is to be more feared than self doubt; she writes to St. Preux about herself as well as him, 'Le grand défaut de la sagesse humaine, même de celle qui n'a que la vertu pour objet, est un excès de confiance qui nous fait juger de l'avenir par le présent, et par un moment de la vie entière' (II, p. 673). To fear and reproach herself is part of Julie's virtue as it is part of her humility.²⁹

A second fall functions as a hypothetical threat to remind Julie of virtue's demands. The threat remains forever hypothetical; despite opportunity, reminders from the past, and the emotional climate of her excursion on the lake with St. Preux, Julie does not give into temptation, but instead continues the struggle which is virtue itself. To fall once again is not a genuine possibility for Julie (even though Rousseau must present it as such for his didactic purposes), because, as she points out, the results would be unbearable; even in an attempt to convince St. Preux that there exists a true danger, Julie undermines its likelihood, ending her depiction of the risks with the cry 'non, non, cela ne sauroit être; on n'a jamais de maux à craindre que ceux qu'on peut supporter' (II, p. 689, my italics).

Finally the question remains of what precisely constitutes the illusion to which Julie confesses in her last letter. Surely it is not false security because Julie never feels completely secure and openly admits her fears. The illusion does not concern her virtue either; rather, it touches upon the nature of her feelings for St. Preux: 'Oui, j'eus beau vouloir étouffer le premier sentiment qui m'a fait vivre, il s'est concentré dans mon cœur. Il s'y réveille au moment qu'il n'est plus à craindre; il me soutient quand mes forces m'abandonnent; il me ranime quand je me meurs' (II, p. 741). There is no matter for reproach in either the confession of love or the illusion. Illusion in Rousseau often carries a positive value. Starobinski writes with regard to the illusion of equality created by the harvest celebration, 'On sera même très excusable de tromper les autres, si c'est pour leur bien, c'est-à-dire si c'est pour leur

inspirer d'heureuses illusions.'³⁰ Julie's illusion would seem to be for her own good since she calls it 'salutaire' and since it allows her more easily to carry on virtue's struggle. The illusion does not in any way alter Julie's virtue. She writes about her final avowal of love: 'Mon ami, je fais cet aveu sans honte; ce sentiment resté malgré moi fut involontaire, il n'a rien coûté à mon innocence; tout ce qui dépend de ma volonté fut pour mon devoir. Si le cœur qui n'en dépend pas fut pour vous, ce fut mon tourment et non pas mon crime' (II, p. 741). Julie's illusion concerning the end of her passion for St. Preux is a natural manifestation of the confident side of her continual dialectic between fear and confidence: a dialectic which served as the foundation of her virtue.

Finally, Julie's happiness at death has yet another source which transcends her love for St. Preux: like Clarissa, Julie is happy to die because she is happy to join God's kingdom. Although she cherishes her earthly happiness and although her virtue is firmly anchored in the profane, heavenly joy is always her ultimate aim. Earthly happiness by itself could never fulfil her; in an attempt to explain the joy she receives from prayer, she writes to St. Preux,

Ne trouvant donc rien ici-bas qui lui suffise, mon âme avide cherche ailleurs de quoi la remplir; en s'élevant à la source du sentiment et de l'être, elle y perd sa sécheresse et sa langueur: elle y renaît, elle s'y ranime, elle y trouve un nouveau ressort, elle y puise une nouvelle vie; elle y prend une autre existence qui ne tient point aux passions du corps, ou plutôt elle n'est plus en moi-même; elle est toute dans l'Être immense qu'elle contemple, et dégagée un moment de ses entraves, elle se console d'y rentrer, par cet essai d'un état plus sublime, qu'elle espère être un jour le sien. (II, pp. 694-5)

Starobinski explains Julie's happiness at death as the joy she feels to transcend the mediated contact with God that she experiences through prayer, thereby rendering her own soul transparent to God's; he writes of Rousseau's motives as the author of Julie's death:

Aussi a-t-il hâte de faire cesser l'état où Julie se trouve contrainte d'imposer des "objets sensibles." En mourant, Julie accédera bienheureusement à la "communication immédiate." En expirant, délivrée de l'obstacle de la vie charnelle, elle voit se lever le voile qui dissimulait Dieu.³¹

²⁹ This is Claire's point of view as well; she writes in response to her cousin's fears: 'Je t'entens, je t'entens bien, ma Julie; plus sûre de toi que tu ne le feras de l'être, tu veux t'humilier de tes fautes passées sous prétexte d'en prévenir de nouvelles, et tes scrupules sont bien moins des précautions pour l'avenir qu'une peine imposée à la témérité qui t'a perdue autrefois' (II, p. 500). Claire also suggests similar motives on Julie's part when her cousin blames herself for her mother's death (II, pp. 321-2).

³⁰ Starobinski, 125

³¹ Starobinski, 145

For Julie, as with Clarissa, life impedes her ultimate happiness, a union with God in his heavenly kingdom. So she, like Clarissa, greets death as the passageway to true happiness.

In conclusion, each heroine's death, like her life, is proposed as a virtuous model. Their martyrdom to their own form of virtue reinforces the authors' didactic message since the example of martyrs is to be honored and emulated. The heroine's death affords her the opportunity to soar to new heights of virtue unattainable in life. It is only through death that Julie and Clarissa become martyrs, only through death is Clarissa able to shed completely the role of victim, only at death's door is Julie allowed to be both a perfect lover and a perfect wife and mother. Thus, it is only through the heroine's death that the reader arrives at a complete understanding of her virtue, only through her death does he receive the moral lesson in its entirety. Every detail of Clarissa's or Julie's death examined in this study correlates to a particular aspect of the virtue she practiced in her lifetime. In Clarissa's death, the reader consistently finds reminders of her victimization, her innocence. Finally, the 'perfection' which Richardson gives to his heroine is never more inimitable than upon her death. Julie's death reflects the happiness as well as the personal struggle that virtue brought to her life. Julie's death brings all of her virtuous qualities to their apogée; as Wolmar says of her at her death: 'Jamais elle ne fut plus tendre, plus vraye, plus caressante, plus aimable, en un mot, plus elle-même' (II, p. 790).

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The Lost Shadow: Henry Kreisels and Carl Weiselberger's Use of Adelbert von Chamisso's Literary Motif

Peter Schlemihl, the man without his shadow, is a well-known figure in 19th century European literature. Made popular in Germany through Adelbert von Chamisso's fairy tale *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (1813), the literary motif had some pre-Chamisso and numerous post-Chamisso variations. Critics and literary sleuths claim to have traced Chamisso's shadow-motif to such disparate precursors as Christoph Martin Wieland's *Die Abderiten* (1781), its Greek sources and to legends, fairytales and stories of folk literature of areas as far apart as Spain, Scotland and Schleswig-Holstein.¹ In actual fact, Chamisso's shadow-motif belongs to a widely documented folkloric tradition. The belief that a person's shadow or mirror image is part of his/her life essence, strength, or soul, and is therefore affected by whatever may happen to it in the natural or supernatural realms has been found to exist since the earliest days among peoples in almost all parts of the world.² Some of the numerous variations of Chamisso's shadow-motif have been documented as early as the 1920s by Albert Ludwig.³ This work was later extended and brought up-to-date by Gero von Wilpert in his *Der verlorene Schatten: Varianten eines literarischen Motivs* (1978).⁴ Wilpert sees

1 Cf. Benno von Wiese, *Die deutsche Novelle: Goethe bis Kafka* (Düsseldorf: August Bagel Verlag 1964) 108; Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, unveränderter Nachdruck d. 4. Ausg. Berlin 1875), II, 855-6 and III, 302; Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel 1854-1954) VIII, 2231 f. and 2232 ff.

2 Cf. Ludwig Bieler, 'Schatten,' *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Ed. Hans Bächtold-Stäubli (Berlin, Leipzig: de Gruyter 1938-41) 9: Nachtrag 126-46; Raymond Deloy Jameson, 'Shadow,' *The Funk & Wagnell's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York: Funk & Wagnell 1949-50) 2: 1000-1.

3 Cf. Albert Ludwig, 'Schlemihle,' *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 140 (1920) Deutsches Sonderheft, 95-135 and 'Nachträge' in *ibid.* 142 (1921) 124-6.

4 Cf. Gero von Wilpert, *Der verlorene Schatten: Varianten eines literarischen Motivs* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag 1978).